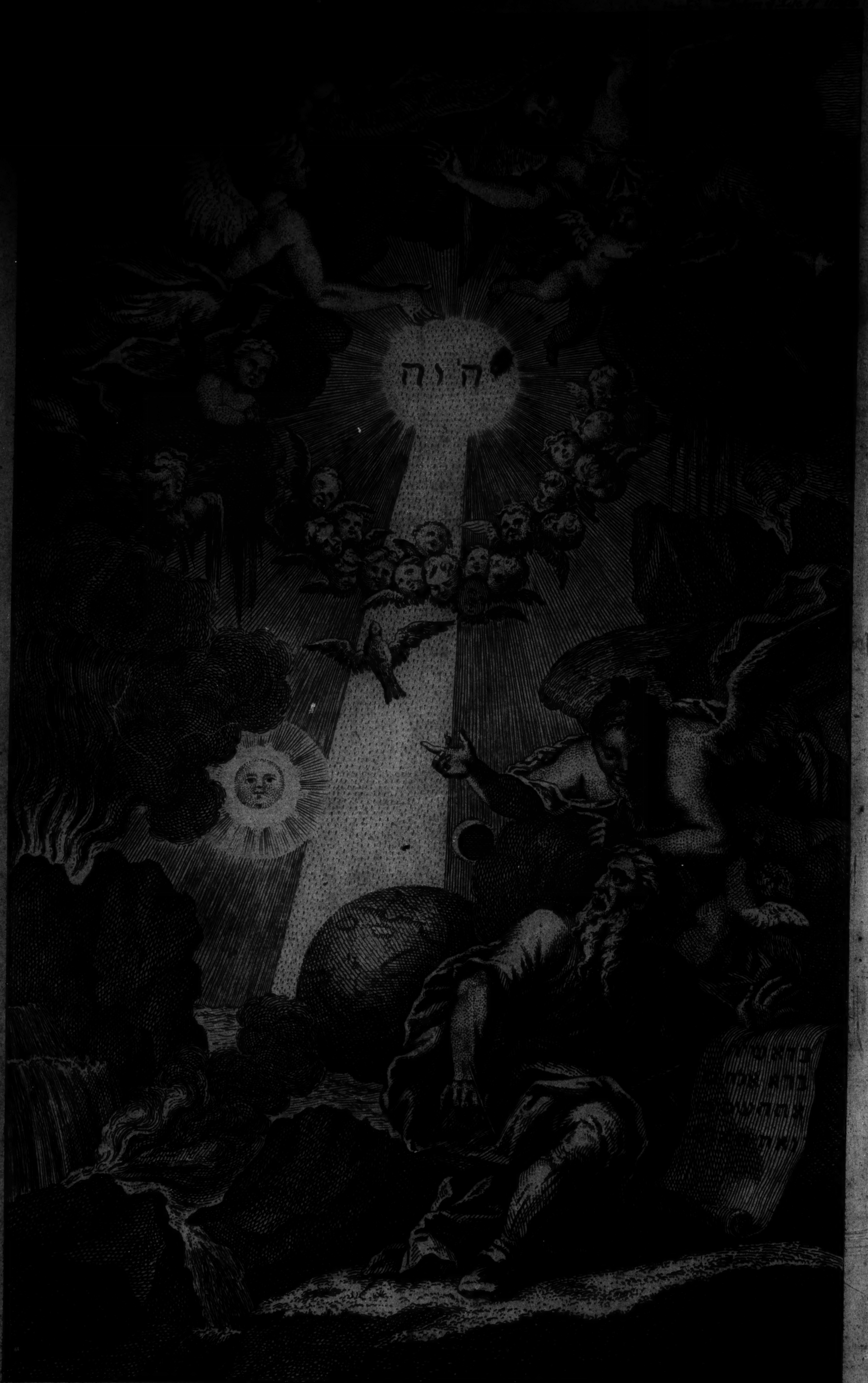

J Thornhill inv. G Bickham pin' delin' sculp.

To the Right Reverend **FATHER** *in God* **EDMUND**
Lord Bishop of London this Plate is most humbly
scribed by his Lordships most dutiful Son & Servant

THE CHRISTIAN's GUIDE;
OR, THE
HOLY BIBLE:
By Way of QUESTION and ANSWER.
BEING AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
Old and New TESTAMENT.
WHEREIN

All Difficulties that any-where occur in the Scriptures, are Methodically Solved; the Hiſtorical Part of Them regularly carried on; Passages ſeemingly oppoſite reconciled; and the Whole BIBLE made ſo Plain and Intelligible, as to enable a Common Underſtanding to Anſwer every Objection that can well be made to it.

LIKEWISE

This WORK gives Us the cleareſt View imaginable of all the History, Chronology, Laws, Prophecies, Doctrines, and Ceremonies contained in the Sacred SCRIPTURES.

Adorned with Maps, Cuts, *&c.* Deſigned by the beſt Artiſts.

c

By S. SMITH, *D. D.*

LONDON:
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BRITISH MUSEUM

The Names and Order of all the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, with the Number of their Chapters.

Geneſis hath Chapters	50	Proverbs hath Chapters	31
Exodus	40	Eccleſiaſtes	12
Leviticus	27	The Song of Solomon	8
Numbers	36	Iſaiah	66
Deuteronomy	34	Jeremiah	52
Joſhua	24	Lamentations	5
Judges	21	Ezekiel	48
Ruth	4	Daniel	12
1. Samuel	31	Hoſea	14
2. Samuel	24	Joel	3
1. Kings	22	Amos	9
2. Kings	25	Obadiah	1
1. Chronicles	29	Jonah	4
2. Chronicles	36	Micah	7
The Prayer of Manaſſeh.		Nahum	5
Ezra	10	Habakkuk	3
Nehemiah	13	Zephania	3
Eſther	10	Haggai	2
Job	42	Zechariah	14
Pſalms	150	Malachi	4

¶ The Books called Apocrypha.

1. Eſdras	9	Tobit	14
2. Eſdras	16	Judith	16
The reſt of Eſther	6	The Song of the 3 Children.	
Wiſdom	19	The Story of Suſanna.	
Eccleſiaſticus	51	Bel & the Dragon. Apogryph.	
Baruch, with the Epiſtle of Jeremiah	6	1 Maccabees	16
		2. Maccabees	15

¶ The Books of the New Teſtament.

Matthew	28	2. Theſſalonians	3
Marke	16	1. Timothy	6
Luke	24	2. Timothy	4
John	21	Titus	3
The Acts	28	Philemon	1
The Epiſtle to the Romans	16	To the Hebrews	13
1. Corinthians	16	The Epiſtle of James	5
2. Corinthians	13	1. Peter	5
Galatians	6	2 Peter	3
Epheſians	6	1. John	5
Philippians	4	2. John	1
Coloſſians	4	3. John	1
1. Theſſalonians	5	Jude	1
		Revelation	22.

A ſummary Account of the Books of the *Old Teſtament*.

The books of the *Old Teſtament* teach us, that God, whom *Adam*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *David*, and the other Patriarchs and Saints worſhipped, is the only true God, Almighty, and everlaſting; who, of his mere goodneſs, created heaven and earth, and all that is in them; from whom all things proceed, and do exiſt; without whoſe ſuſtaining power all things would fall into their firſt chaos and confuſion; who is juſt and merciful; who alſo worketh all in all, according to his own will; to whom it is not lawful to ſay, *Wherefore doeſt thou thus or thus?*

By theſe books we are likewiſe inſtructed, that this very God Almighty, after he created all things, formed alſo *Adam* the firſt man, after the image and ſpiritual ſimilitude of himſelf, and conſtituted him lord over all things that he had created on earth; that this ſame *Adam*, by the envy and fraud of the devil, tranſgreſſing the precept of his Creator, did thereby bring ſuch and ſo great ſin into the world, that we, his offspring by the fleſh, are in nature the children of wrath, ſubject to thrall and death, to damnation, to the yoke and tyranny of the devil.

Farther, we are informed by theſe excellent books, that God promiſed to *Adam*, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *David*, and to others of the ancient Fathers, that he would ſend that bleſſed ſeed, his Son *Jeſus Chriſt* our Saviour, who ſhould deliver all thoſe from ſin, from the tyranny of the devil, who by a lively and working faith, ſhould believe his promiſe, and put their truſt in *Jeſus Chriſt*, hoping, that of and by him they ſhould obtain this deliverance.

Theſe books likewiſe acquaint us, that in the mean time, while thoſe fathers the *Iſraelites* looked for the ſalvation promiſed (for ſuch is the nature of man, ſo proud and ſo corrupt, that they would not acknowledge themſelves ſinners, or ſtood in any need of a Saviour; but to convince them of their miſtake) God the Creator gave, by *Moſes*, his law, written on two tables of ſtone; by which ſin and the malice of man's heart being known, men might more vehemently thirſt for the coming of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who ſhould redeem and deliver them from ſin; which thing, neither the law, nor the ſacrifice and oblations of the law, did, or could perform; for they were but ſhadows and figures of the true oblation of the body of *Chriſt*, by which all ſin ſhould be blotted out, and quite put away.

A ſummary Account of the Books of the *New Teſtament*.

By the books of the *New Teſtament* we are taught, that Chriſt, promiſed, as aforeſaid, (who is God above all, moſt bleſſed for ever) was ſhadowed forth in the books of the *Old Teſtament*, and in ſacrifices figured, was, in the fulneſs of time ſent by the Father, at that ſelf-ſame time which by the Father had been appointed and decreed from all eternity; at the time when all manner of wickedneſs abounded in the world, then he was ſent; and this Jeſus, our Saviour, being born in the fleſh, ſuffer'd death, and roſe again from the dead. Which acts of his were not done by him in reſpect of the good works or merits of any man, (for we are all ſinners) but that God the Father ſhould appear true, in exhibiting the abundant riches of his grace which he promiſed, and through his mercy he might bring us to heaven and eternal happineſs.

To which purpoſe it is evidently ſhewn in the *New Teſtament*, that *Jeſus Chriſt*, being the true Lamb, the true ſacrifice of the world, who puts away the ſins of men, came in our nature, to purchaſe of the Father grace and peace for us, waſhing us from our ſins in his own Blood, and delivering us from the bondage of the devil, to whom by ſin we were ſlaves; and ſo by him we ſhould be the adopted ſons of God, and finally be made heirs with him of his moſt glorious and everlaſting kingdom.

Now, that we might be partakers of the ſingular and excellent benefits which Chriſt has purchaſed for us, Almighty God graciouſly gives us by his Holy Spirit; the fruit and effect of which is faith in God, and in his Son Chriſt Jeſus. For without the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, by whom we are inſtructed and ſealed; neither can we believe that God the Father ſent the Meſſias, nor yet that Jeſus is Chriſt. For no man, ſaith St. Paul, can ſay, that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt. The ſame Spirit witneſſeth with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God, and poureth into us that charity which *Paul* deſcribes to the *Corinthians*. Farther, the ſame Holy Spirit gives us hope, which is a ſure looking for, or expectation of eternal life, whereof he himſelf is the certain token and pledge. He likewiſe beſtows on us other ſpiritual gifts, of which we have an account in the Epiſtle to the *Galatians*. Therefore, the benefit of faith is not to be deſpiſed or undervalued. For by means of this truſt and faith in Chriſt, which works by charity, and diſcovers itſelf by works of charity, we are juſtified and ſanctified; that is to ſay, God and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt (who is made our Father alſo by him, who is our Brother) accounts us as juſt and holy through his grace, and through the merits of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, not imputing our ſins to us, in ſuch a manner, that we ſhould ſuffer the pains of hell for them.

Farther,

A ſummary Account of the Books of the *New Teſtament.*

Farther; Chriſt himſelf came into the world, to the intent that we through him being ſanctify'd and cleanſed from our ſins, being obedient to his will in good works, ſhould deny the things pertaining to the fleſh, and freely ſerve him in righteouſneſs and holineſs all the days of our life; and that by good works (which God hath commanded us to walk in) we make it evident that we are call'd to his grace, and gift of faith; which good works whoever is deſtitute of, plainly proves, that he has not that faith in Chriſt which is requir'd of us.

To Chriſt we muſt come, and follow him with a cheerful mind, and be willing to be taught by him; for he is our Maſter, lowly and humble of heart; he is an example ſet before us for our imitation, and is an exact pattern or rule of an holy and unblameable life.

He is likewiſe our Biſhop, and our High-prieſt, who himſelf did offer up for us his own blood, as being the only Mediator betwixt God and men; who now ſitteth at the right-hand of God the Father, being made our Advocate, and in that quality, making prayer and interceſſion for us; and who undoubtedly ſhall obtain for us whatever we ſhall deſire, either of him, or of his Father in his name, if theſe our deſires are accompany'd with a firm perſuaſion that he is both able and willing to anſwer our humble requeſts; for thus hath he promiſed. Therefore let us not doubt, if we ſin at any time, to come with repentance (to which, at the very beginning of his preaching, he invites and ſtirs us up) and with ſure truſt and humble confidence, to the throne of his grace, with this belief, that we ſhall obtain mercy. For therefore came he into the world, that he might ſave ſinners by his grace.

This is the ſame Chriſt Jeſus, who ſhall come at a certain time appointed by the Father, and ſhall ſit in great majeſty to judge all men, and to render to every man according to his works done in the body, whether they be good or evil: And he ſhall ſay to them who ſhall be on his right-hand, who in this world liv'd in a firm expectation of the good things to come, namely, life everlaſting, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:* But to them on his left hand, he ſhall ſay, *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And then ſhall the end be, when Chriſt having vanquiſhed all his enemies, ſhall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father.*

To the intent that we might underſtand theſe things, the ſacred books of the Bible were deliver'd to us by the Goodneſs of God through his Holy Spirit, with the preaching of that doctrine which is contain'd in them, and with the adminiſtration of his ſacraments, by which the truth of this doctrine is confirm'd and ſeal'd to us; that we might underſtand and believe, that there is one only true God, and one Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, whom (as he had promiſed) he hath ſent; and that we believing, might have, in his name, life everlaſting.

Beſides this foundation, no man can lay any other in the Church of Chriſt; and upon this foundation the Church is firmly built without any danger of being ſhaken. And St. Paul willeth him to be accurſed who ſhall preach any other faith or ſalvation, than by JESUS CHRIST, yea, though he were an Angel from heaven. For of him, and through him, and for him, are all things: to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be all honour and glory, world without end.

The Excellency of the Goſpel.

THE Author is no leſs than the Divine Wiſdom, who chiefly both ſpeaks and acts in the moſt material and grand occurrences of the Goſpel: For before, as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſays, Ch. i. ver. 1, 2. *God formerly ſpake to our fathers by the prophets, but in theſe latter days by his Son, whom he hath made Heir of all things, and by whom he made the world.* So that not Moſes or the Prophets, but the only begotten Son of God, hath by the divine mind of the Father diſcover'd to us the ſecrets of the eternal Wiſdom, and communicated them to us in the holy Goſpels, in which thoſe ſacred myſteries, conceal'd from antient times, and barely ſhadow'd out in the typical expreſſions of the law and the prophets, are plainly diſcover'd.

The method or manner of ſpeaking and reaſoning in the holy Goſpels is admirable, eſpecially in thoſe parts wherein it is ſymbolical; for the elegancy of the metaphors, the aptneſs of the ſimilitudes, and ſignificancy of the parables are ſo charming, that the Son of God, like a Celeſtial Proteus, in this variety of addreſs is very inſtructing. One while he compares himſelf to a king, celebrating the nuptials of his ſon; another while to a great man calling his ſervant to an account; now to a general waging war, then to a maſter of a family, a huſbandman, a ſhepherd, a fiſherman, a merchant, an uſurer, *&c.* in all which the compariſons are ſo proper, that he repreſents himſelf to our capacities, not ſo much by words, as by the things themſelves; ſo that in the Goſpel we may be ſaid to be inſtructed as much by the acts as words of Chriſt: And truly, as St. Gregory ſays, Every action of Chriſt is our inſtruction.

Moſes was legiſlator of the Jewiſh nation; Chriſt of the whole world.

Moſes purged the Iſraelites from their idolatry; Chriſt wherever he came did ſo.

Moſes by ſigns and wonders gave the law; Chriſt confirm'd the goſpel with greater.

Moſes deliver'd only his own people from bondage; but Chriſt ſet the whole world at liberty.

Moſes and *Chriſt*, compared.

Moſes promiſed to the Iſraelites a land flowing with milk and honey; Chriſt provided a kingdom abounding with eternal plenty.

Moſes, when but a new-born infant, was deſign'd to be murder'd by Pharaoh, who had condemn'd all the male children of the Jews; but Chriſt, whilſt an infant, and adored by the wiſe men, was forced to fly into Egypt from the cruelty of Herod, who intended to have kill'd all the male children that were not above two years old.

Moſes in his youth was well skill'd in all manner of learning in uſe among the Egyptians; Chriſt at twelve years of age was found in the Temple diſputing with the learned, who were ſurpriz'd at his great knowledge.

Moſes faſted forty days in the company of God in the mount; Chriſt was in the wilderneſs forty days without eating or drinking, in divine contemplation of God.

Moſes in the deſart miraculouſly fed the people with manna and quails; Chriſt more effectually ſatisfy'd five thouſand hungry ſouls with five loaves.

Moſes paſſed through the waters of the Red-ſea unhurt; but Chriſt walked upon the waters of the ſea.

Moſes by holding out his rod divided the ſea; Chriſt with a word rebuked the ſea, and preſently produced a calm.

The Iſraelites by reaſon of the dazzling luſtre of Moſes's face could not look upon it; Chriſt's diſciples were ſo terrify'd at the magnificence of his transfiguration, that they fell on their faces.

Moſes reſtored leprous Miriam to her former ſtate of health; but Chriſt out of his mercy abſolv'd penitent Magdalen from all her ſins.

Moſes choſe out twelve ſpies to view and obſerve the promiſed land; Chriſt choſe twelve diſciples.

Moſes choſe ſeventy elders to aſſiſt in the adminiſtration; Chriſt commiſſion'd ſeventy diſciples to preach the goſpel.

Of Moſes it is ſaid, That no man to this preſent time knows where his ſepulchre is; of Chriſt the Angels bore witneſs, *Ye ſeek Jeſus that was crucified; he is riſen, he is not here.*

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THO' *innumerable are the Comments, and Annotations, that have been publiſhed upon the* Old and New Teſtament, *yet ſo inexhauſtible a Fund of Knowledge are the Holy Scriptures, that ſhould as many more be written upon the ſame Subject, there ſtill would be Room enough for each Perſon to treat of them in a different Manner: They are, in ſhort, an ineſtimable Treaſury of all Arts and Sciences, and an* Encyclopœdia, *infinitely ſurpaſſing any other, that ever yet appeared in the World.*

AS *they are a Treaſury of all Arts and Sciences, infinitely excelling all others, that ever yet were publiſhed, ſo is the Study of them incomparably preferable to all other Studies; and the Reward to be acquired thereby, beyond Meaſure of more Value, than all the Rewards and Honours, we can poſſibly propoſe to ourſelves to acquire, by our Application to any other Study, Profeſſion, or Science. What are the greateſt Honours and Riches which the utmoſt Proficient in the Study of human Laws can acquire, in Compariſon of what will be enjoyed by thoſe, who have made the Law of God their continual Study! What is the largeſt Eſtate, which the greateſt Profeſſor of Phyſick can poſſibly amaſs, to that eternal Poſſeſſion which will be acquired by thoſe, who, by a right Uſe of the Medicines in the Holy Scriptures, have been ſkilful Phyſicians to their own Souls! What were the moſt ſplendid Triumphs of the* Romans, *or the moſt exalted Honours that can be heaped upon the moſt ſucceſsful General now-a-days, to the eternal Crown, and triumphant Entrance, into Heaven, of a Soldier of* Chriſt's, *when by his Warfare in this World, and exact Compliance with his Duty, preſcribed in the* New Teſtament, *he has overcome Sin and Death! We might expatiate much longer on this Head, but we believe this ſufficient to ſhew the immenſe Diſparity there is between this Study and all others; and how juſtly the Preference is to be given to that of the* Holy Scriptures.

Si *Chriſtum* diſcis, ſatis eſt, ſi cætera neſcis.
Si *Chriſtum* neſcis, nihil eſt ſi cætera diſcis.

WE *ſhall now proceed to ſay ſomething concerning our preſent Undertaking, which, we hope, will meet with a good Reception, as it is calculated for the Benefit of all Sorts of Readers. Beſides, it has one Thing to recommend it, which ſeldom fails of meeting with a favourable Acceptance, from the Generality of People; that is, it is, in a Manner, new; there not being as we know of, any Thing of this Kind, but a very ſhort Treatiſe, publiſhed at the End of ſome old Bibles, under the Title of,* The Way to true Happineſs, leading to the Gate of Knowledge, *from which ours is intirely different.*

AS *it is calculated for the Benefit of all Sorts of Readers, Care will be taken, not often to enter into ſuch nice and ſubtil Diſquiſitious, as are both of little Service, and too knotty for the Comprehenſion of any but Perſons of the greateſt Capacity; and, at the ſame Time, we ſhall equally avoid dwelling on ſuch trite, and threadbare Particulars, as are obvious to the meaneſt Underſtandings, and known even to Children: We ſhall alſo endeavour at an uniform Style, which ſhall neither be too florid to be eaſily intelligible, nor ſink ſo low as to be diſtaſteful to the better Sort.*

THAT *this Work will be of general Uſe, will appear from the following Conſiderations: It will be uſeful to the Learned, as it will probably recal to their Remembrance ſeveral Paſſages, which may perhaps have ſlip'd their Memory; it will alſo be a Means to imprint them the deeper in their Minds, by rendering the Connection thereof more preſent to them than it might poſſibly be before: It will be likewiſe ſerviceable to Perſons of leſs Learning, by inſtructing them, in a familiar Manner, in that which ought to be known by all Sorts of People; for which End, this Method of* Queſtion *and* Anſwer, *is peculiarly, and admirably adapted: But it will chiefly be of Uſe, to ſuch Perſons as are not well grounded in the Principles of their Religion; and conſequently are liable to be ſeduced, drawn away and perverted, by the enſnaring Arts, and ſubtil Impoſtures of* Popiſh Prieſts; *who of late Years, have lain, in Swarms upon the Catch, to delude the Weak, wherein they have met with but too good Succeſs: To ſuch Perſons, we ſay, this Work will chiefly be of Uſe, by arming them againſt all the Fallacies of the* Church *of* Rome, *and furniſhing them, from Scripture, with ſufficient Anſwers, to every Objection that can be made by the moſt artful Prieſt, to the Doctrine of the* Church *of* England. *In effect, as it is acknowledged, on all Hands, that* *the Impoſtures of the* Church *of* Rome *can no Way be ſo fully detected, and expoſed; nor the Doctrine of the* Church *of* England *ſet off in ſo advantagious a Light, as by having Recourſe to the* Holy Scriptures; *by which Means, the Conformity of the Latter therewith, and the groſs Deviations of the Former from them, will appear in the moſt glaring Colours; a better Method could not have been contrived, than this of* Queſtion *and* Anſwer; *to enable Perſons, even of the meaneſt Capacity, to refute ſuch Objections as are moſt commonly ſtarted, by the Adverſaries to our holy Religion; as it helps to lead on the Reader's Thoughts; to revive his Attention; and, as we obſerved before, to imprint Things the deeper in his Memory.*

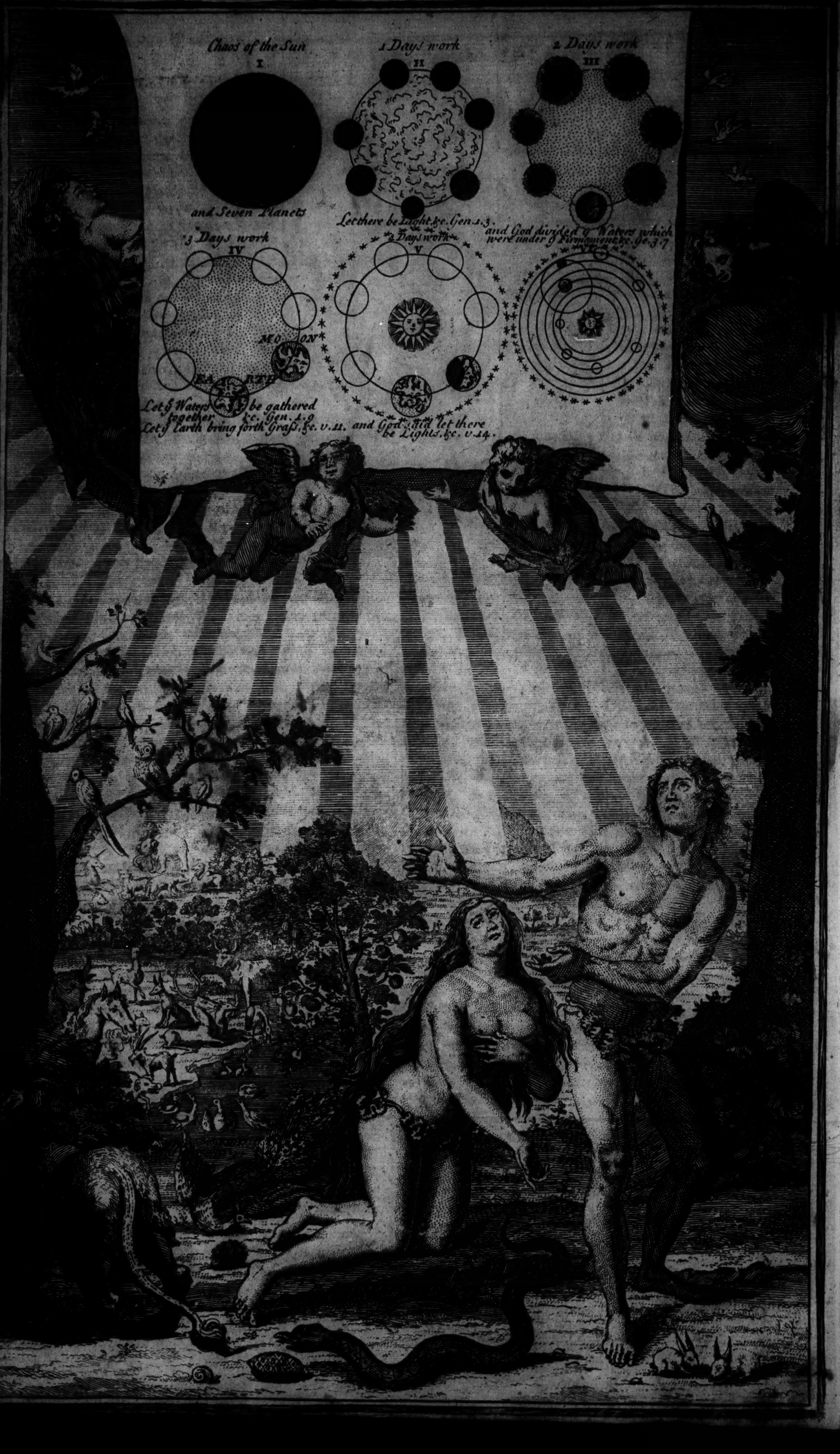
IN the Courſe of this Work, we ſhall not only give the Subſtance of each Chapter of the Old *and* New Teſtament, *with an ample, and plain Expoſition thereof, and Comment thereupon, but we ſhall endeavour to make an uniform Connection, of the whole Hiſtory of the* Old *and* New Teſtament, *and to reconcile the ſeeming Contradictions therein; as alſo to rectify the Chronology thereof: Inſomuch that our Readers will not only have an excellent Syſtem of Divinity, but a well connected Hiſtory, and an exact Chronology, from the Creation of the World; and all this, in a Manner, at one View, and at a Price not much above Half the intrinſick Value of the Book.*

IF Cheapneſs and Uſefulneſs, therefore, are of any Force to recommend an Undertaking, we may venture to aver, that never any Work was better entitled to a favourable Reception, than what we now offer to the Publick: And indeed, all Things rightly conſidered, what can be more worthy of a favourable Acceptance! The Subject we treat of is the Word of God; the End of that Subject is to bring Men to Salvation, by ſhewing them their Duty; and our Intent in having Recourſe to this Method of expounding it, is, to point it out to them more plainly; ground them therein more throughly; and imprint it the deeper in their Memories; that they may thereby be furniſhed from thence with ſufficient Arguments, to defend themſelves in the Obſervance of their Duty; and conſequently, may not be ſo ſoon liable to be perverted, by the ſubtil Objections of Seducers, and Deceivers, of whom St. Paul *fortelleth that many ſhall ariſe, in the latter Times.*

IT will now be neceſſary to ſay a Word or two, concerning our Manner of expounding each particular Chapter, of the Old *and* New Teſtament: *And here we think it requiſite to premiſe, that we ſhall not make a Paraphraſe upon every ſingle Verſe; but ſhall only dwell upon what is moſt remarkable and uſeful in the Whole, whether in Point of Doctrine, Hiſtory, or Chronology,* &c. *To do otherwiſe, would not only be of no Service, but very abſurd; for what Inſtruction can be drawn from moſt Part of the Fifth, Tenth, and Eleventh Chapters of* Geneſis, *from great Part of the Firſt and Second of* Numbers, *and the Second of* Ezra, *and particularly from the firſt twenty-eight Verſes of the tenth Chapter of* Nehemiah? *Or what uſeful Comment, could the ableſt Expoſitor poſſibly make thereupon? In Effect, it would be an Impoſition upon our Readers to pretend to it; and indeed, if every ſingle Verſe in the Bible required an Expoſition, it would be the whole Labour of a Man's Life to write one; nor would it take much leſs to carefully peruſe, and well digeſt it: As it is, there is ample Matter for the moſt indefatigable Expoſitor; and the moſt unwearied Reader may find abundant Employment, if he will but peruſe Half that has been written to expound the* Holy Scriptures. *It is not, therefore, becauſe there are not already a ſufficient Number of Comments, Annotations, Paraphraſes, and Expoſitions, on the ſeveral Parts of the* Old *and* New Teſtament, *that we have undertaken this preſent Work; but becauſe it requires many ſeveral Books, to form a compleat Syſtem of Divinity, and ground Perſons, not before tolerably inſtructed, ſo throughly in the Principles of their Religion, as to enable them to argue in the Defence thereof, and anſwer the Objections of ſubtil Adverſaries; and the Price of ſuch Books do not come within the Compaſs of every one's Pocket: Whereas our preſent Performance is at once calculated to anſwer the Ends of all thoſe ſeveral Books; and at the ſame Time, to come at ſo eaſy a Rate, that very few, or none, who are willing to be at any Expence for their Inſtruction, in their Duty, need be without it; 'tis but denying themſelves, once a Week, the ſmalleſt ſenſual Gratification, and the Price is paid: And it is to be hoped, even in the wicked Age we now live in, there are not wanting Thouſands, who would willingly and gladly conſent to a greater Self-denial than that, for the Advantage of being well-grounded in the Principles of their Religion. We had, beſides thoſe abovementioned, another Reaſon for our undertaking this Work, which ſhall always be of great Weight with us, in whatever we take in Hand; this was, its being the earneſt Deſire and Requeſt, of many of the Subſcribers to our former Labours, that we would attempt ſomething of this Nature: We have complied with their Sollicitations, and we both hope, and believe, we ſhall have no Cauſe to repent it; for, notwithſtanding there never were more Scoffers at Religion, than in the preſent licentious Age, we have had no Reaſon, thank Heaven, to complain, of our not having met with a favourable Reception. This would be no ſmall Encouragement to us, (were not all Works of this Kind their own Reward) to perſiſt in our Endeavours both to oblige our Readers, and to deſerve their kind Treatment, by ſparing no Pains, to render whatever we take in Hand worthy their Acceptance; accordingly, in the following Sheets, we have conſulted all the beſt Authors who have treated of the ſame Subject, in any Method, (to our no ſmall Expence, as well as Labour) and have extracted from thence whatever we have met with worth their Peruſal. Nothing now remains, but that we ſubmit both our Work and Ourſelves to their Candour; humbly hoping, that if any Faults have eſcaped us, as who is without them, (for Perfection is not to be expected on this Side the Grave) they generouſly will not impute them, to willful Neglect, or Want of Care, of which we aſſure them we will never be guilty; but either kindly overlook them as Errors of the Preſs, ſome of which are unavoidable in every large Work, tho' they ſhall be as few as poſſible in this; or charge them on our Want of Judgment, and as ſuch excuſe them, in Conſideration that we have done our beſt to pleaſe them.*

THE

GENESIS CHAP I.


Chaos of the Sun
I
and Seven Planets
1 Days work
II
Let there be Light, &c. Gen. 1.3.
2 Days work
III
and God divided y Waters which were under y Firmament, &c. Ge. 3.7
3 Days work
IV
MO ON
EA RTH
Let y Waters be gathered together &c. Gen. 1.9
Let y Earth bring forth Grass, &c. v. 11.
4 Days work
V
and God said let there be Lights, &c. v. 14.
VI

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED GENESIS.

The INTRODUCTION.

Queſt. *What is the Meaning of the Word* GENESIS?

Anſw. The Word *Geneſis* comes originally from the *Greek*, and ſignifies no more than the *Engliſh* Word *Generation*; and the Reaſon of its being affixed to this firſt Book of *Moſes* is, becauſe the Intent and Scope of this Book is, to give an Account of the Origin and Creation of this ſublunary World, and all that is therein; and more particularly of the Formation of *Man*, deſigned by his great Creator as *Lord of All*. Of theſe ſeveral Points, which proved unſurmountable Stumbling-Blocks to all the ancient Philoſophers, who had Recourſe to the wildeſt Opinions that ever entered into the Imagination of Man, in order to account for them, *Moſes* gives us a very plain and rational Solution: Which evidently proves that that great Man received it by Inſpiration, immediately from *God* himſelf, the Author of all Things. Proceed we now to the firſt Chapter.

CHAP. I.

The Creation of Heaven and Earth; the Earth ſeparated from the Waters, and made fruitful; the Creation of all living Creatures, and of Man, who has the Dominion given him over all.

Queſt. WHAT *do we learn from the firſt Verſe; In the Beginning God created Heaven and Earth?*

Anſw. We learn two Points of great Importance; *firſt*, That the World has not been from all Eternity, according to the erroneous Opinion of ſome of the old *Heathen* Philoſophers: And *ſecondly*, That it was not the Production of *meer Chance*, according to the more abſurd Opinion of others of the ancient *Pagans*, but was the glorious Handy-Work of an all-wiſe, omnipotent, and beneficent Creator.

Q. *What are we taught by the ſecond Verſe; And the Earth was without form, and void, and Darkneſs was upon the Face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters?*

A. We find thereby, that the four Elements, of which the Univerſe is compoſed, and which we now ſee diſpoſed in ſuch beauteous and admirable Order and Symmetry, were exiſtent ſome Time (how long, or how ſhort, no Man can tell, neither is it material for us to know) before it pleaſed the ſovereign Arbiter of all Things to aſſign each of them their proper Bounds, and to reduce the World into that glorious and wonderful Form wherein it now appears: In ſhort, the Account given thereof by *Moſes*, does not ill anſwer the Deſcription of the *Chaos*, which we find in *Ovid's Metamorphoſis*: This makes it highly probable that that Poet was acquainted with ſome *Jew*, who communicated to him the *Moſaical* Account of the Creation of the World.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by the Spirit of God's moving upon the Face of the Waters?*

A. That *God* by his Almighty Power, ſo agitated the heterogeneous Maſs, conſiſting of the conſtituent Particles of *Fire*, *Air*, *Water*, and *Earth*, which were then jumbled together in a wild Confuſion, and Diſorder, as to enable them to ſeparate themſelves from each other, in an Inſtant, the Moment he ſhould be pleaſed to command it.

Q. *What do we learn from the next Verſe; And God ſaid, let there be Light, and there was Light?*

A. That the Inſtant the *Almighty* gave the Word, the fiery Particles, which are the Cauſe of *Light*, put themſelves in a Readineſs to obey their Maker, and the Work was done. *Longinus* in his Treatiſe on the *Sublime*, ſpeaking of this Paſſage, ſays, the *Jewiſh Lawgiver* was the only One, who had ever made *God* ſpeak with a Dignity worthy of himſelf; and indeed what can give us a greater Idea of the *Deity*, than the Knowledge that every Thing in the Univerſe was inſtantaneouſly produced, the Moment he pronounced the *Almighty* FIAT.

Q. *What were the farther Operations of the Firſt-Day?*

A. Having brought forth and formed Light out of Darkneſs, *God* thought fit they ſhould no more be confounded together, wherefore he divided the Light from the Darkneſs, allotted to each of them their proper Limits; aſſigned the proper Times, when each ſhould ſucceed each other; and called the Light Day, and the Darkneſs Night.

Q. *What were the Operations of the Second Day?*

A. Having eſtabliſhed the Viciſſitudes of Day and Night, the *Almighty* thought proper to make a Firmament in the Midſt of the Waters, in order to divide thoſe Waters which he left under the Firmament, from thoſe whoſe proper Limits he was pleaſed to place above it: God then named the Firmament *Heaven*, and therewith was pleaſed to conclude the Operations of the *Second Day*.

Q. *What were the Operations of the Third Day?*

A. Having reſtrained the ſeveral Waters within their reſpective Atmoſpheres, the *Deity* next commanded all the Waters under the Heaven, to be gathered together unto one Place, and the dry Land to appear. No ſooner was the *Almighty* Command given, than the Mountains began to rear their lofty Heads; and the Waters falling away on all Sides from them, began to ſubſide, and ran into thoſe large extended Valleys, which had been cauſed by this Swelling of the dry Land, and which was prepared for their Reception, by Providence. This done, God called the dry Land, *Earth*, and the gathering together of the Waters, *Seas*. Whilſt we are upon this Head, it may not be amiſs to take Notice, that it has been the Opinion of divers learned Men, who aſſign very probable Reaſons for this their Belief, that before the Flood there were no inland Seas, nor no Iſlands, but only one vaſt Continent, of main Land; which was ſurrounded by one vaſt uninterrupted Waſte of Waters, or Ocean; and that the impetuous Eruption of the Waters, pent within the Bowels of the Earth, at the Deluge, cauſed thoſe Iſlands, and inland Seas, which have remained ever ſince, as *Great-Britain*, *Ireland*, *Sicily*, *Sardinia*; the *Mediterranean*, *Euxine*, and *Caſpian* Seas, &c.

Q. *Were theſe all the Operations of the Third Day?*

A. No, having ſeparated the Waters from the dry Land, *God* commanded the Earth to bring forth all Manner of Herbs yielding Seed, and the Fruit-Tree yielding Fruit after his Kind, whoſe Seed is in itſelf; in ſhort, all Manner of Herbs, Plants, Flowers, and Trees, which are any-where exiſtent to this Day. Thus from being void, and overſpread with Darkneſs, the Earth became enlightned; and its Surface covered with a beautiful Carpet, adorned with Flowers, Graſs, Trees, and Plants, in the utmoſt Variety, Bloom, and Verdure; a Proſpect ſo lovely, that even the moſt perfect of Beings beholding it, pronounced it good, and therewith ended the Labours of the *Third Day*.

Q. *What were the Operations of the Fourth Day?*

A. Having now formed the Earth, and made it capable of producing all Manner of Herbs, Flowers, Trees, &c. the *Almighty* thought proper to embelliſh the Heavens with numberleſs Lights, whoſe Office it was to divide the Day from the Night, and by their Revolution to diſtinguiſh the various Seaſons, and mark out proper Diviſions of Time, as Months, Years, &c. Amongſt theſe ſeveral Luminaries, as the fixed Stars, and Planets, wherewith the *Deity* adorned the Heavens, he placed there two vaſtly larger than the Reſt, (at leaſt they ſeem ſo to our Apprehenſion) the Greater called the *Sun*, to rule the Day, and the Leſſer called the *Moon*, to rule the Night; which done, he concluded therewith the Operation of the *Fourth Day*. Before we proceed any farther, however, it may not be amiſs to obſerve, that *Moſes*, when he ſays *God* placed the *Sun* in the Firmament to give Light upon the Earth, ſeems only to have adapted his Stile to the common Notions of the greater Part of Mankind; ſince, inſpired as he undoubtedly was, and beſides, an excellent Aſtronomer, it is highly improbable he ſhould he ignorant, of what is now well known, that the *Sun* is placed in the Centre of the Univerſe, and undoubtedly inlightens infinitely more Worlds, than this our ſublunary Globe.

Q. *What were the Operations of the Fifth Day?*

A. Having finiſhed the inanimate Part of the Creation, *God* proceeded to form that which has Life; and beginning with the Waters, commanded them to bring forth abundantly ſuch moving Creatures as had Life, and Fowls that might fly above the Earth in the open Firmament of Heaven. In particular, it is ſpecified that *God created Whales*, as being the largeſt living Inſtances of his almighty creating Power; not but his infinite Wiſdom, and Might, is as much to be admired, in divers Creatures, which are ſo ſmall, as not to be diſtinctly viewed without the Help of Microſcopes; but thoſe larger Inſtances of his Power, the *Whale*, and *Elephant*, are more apt to affect the Generality of Mankind with Awe and Wonder. Having thus formed all Sorts of Fiſh and Fowl, the Almighty Creator was pleaſed to bleſs them and to injoin them to be fruitful and multiply. which done, he concluded therewith the Operations of the Fifth Day.

Q. *What were the Operations of the Sixth Day?*

A. Having ſtock'd the Waters with Fiſh, and the intermediate Region between Heaven and Earth with Fowl (not that any Fowl can always ſubſiſt there, but, becauſe they were capable of remaining there for ſome Time, wherefore they are called Fowls of the Air) *God* proceeded to form ſuch Creatures as belong more properly to the Earth, namely, all manner of Beaſts, both wild and tame, and all manner of Reptiles and Inſects. The whole Creation was now finiſhed, all but *Man*; as if all that had been already made, had been only formed and prepared for his Reception, Service, and Entertainment; he being deſigned by his omnipotent and beneficent Creator, to be Lord and Governor of the Univerſe. Accordingly it has been obſerved by ſeveral learned Men that *God* makes an evident and very great Diſtinction between him and other Creatures, and ſeems to undertake his Creation with mature Deliberation, if not with a ſort of Conſultation with the other Perſons of the ever bleſſed Trinity; the Words are, *And* GOD *ſaid, let us make* MAN *in our Image, after our likeneſs*: However that be, and in whatever Manner *God* imprinted and ſtamp'd his Image and Likeneſs upon Man, the Almighty had no ſooner created Male and Female, but he bleſſed them, bid them be fruitful and multiply, and *gave them Dominion over the Fiſh of the Sea, the Fowl of the Air, and every living Creature that moveth upon the Earth.* An amazing Prerogative! What might not a Man do, who were now poſſeſſed of it! But our firſt Parents enjoy'd it not long, for they forfeited it by their Fall, and none of their Poſterity have ever been able to recover it ſince. There remained now nothing more for the Almighty to do before he concluded the Operations of the ſixth Day, but to point out to Man his Food and Suſtenance; accordingly he aſſigned him every Herb bearing Seed, and every Tree in which is the Fruit of a Tree yielding Seed for his Subſiſtence, as he did every green Herb for Meat to the Beaſts and Reptiles.

Q. *What may we infer from thence?*

A. That notwithſtanding there is no expreſs Injunction not to eat Fleſh, it is reaſonable to believe that our Forefathers before the Flood abſtained from eating any Thing but the Fruits of the Earth; and to that Temperance in a great Meaſure may be aſcribed, the prodigious longævity of the *Antedilevians*, few of whom died before they had attained to the Age of eight hundred Years; add to this, that Wine, that deſtroyer of Mankind, was not then known.

Q. *Is there any Thing farther to be learnt from this Chapter?*

A. That God ſaw every Thing that he had made, and behold it was *very Good*, whence we may learn not to find fault with any Part of *God's* Creation, ſince even what ſeems homelieſt to us, was pronounced *Good* by our Creator himſelf, and has its proper Uſe.

CHAP. II.

The Heavens and Earth finiſhed: The firſt Sabbath appointed: A more particular Account of the Creation of Man, and Woman: They are placed in Paradiſe, and forbidden to eat of the Tree of Knowledge: Adam *names all living Creatures: Marriage inſtituted: Man's Nakedneſs, and Innocence.*

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Thing to be learned from the ſecond Chapter?*

A. That, after having created the Heavens and the Earth, and all that in them is, the *Almighty* ceaſed creating any more, which is called ending his Work, and reſting on the *Seventh Day*; not that *God* was wearied with his Labour, like Mankind, but *Moſes* made uſe of that Expreſſion, as being moſt ſuitable to our Ideas, Capacities, and Underſtandings. Neither, indeed, in Strictneſs, can the *Deity* ever be ſaid properly to reſt from his Work; ſince it requires no leſs Omnipotence to preſerve and govern the World ever ſince, than it did at firſt to create it. *God* is therefore ſaid to have reſted from all his Work, for two Reaſons; *firſt*, becauſe he ceaſed creating any Thing more; and, *ſecondly*, becauſe, the Reſting of the *Almighty* on the *Seventh Day*, was deſigned as an Example and Pattern to be imitated by us ever after; in ſetting apart the *Seventh Day*, (or at leaſt one Day in the Week) to reſt from our Labours, in order to apply it, and appropriate it, more immediately, to the Service of our great *Creator:* It being certainly much more reaſonable, that we ſhould make ſome Acknowledgment to the *Divine Majeſty*, of whom we hold our Lives, for thoſe moſt ineſtimable Bleſſings our *Creation*, *Preſervation*, and *Redemption*, than for thoſe who only hold ſome trifling Tenures of an earthly Sovereign, and even of a petty Lord of a Manor, to pay them a Quit-Rent, or Acknowledgment for the Lands they hold of them. For this Reaſon it is added, *and God bleſſed the Seventh Day, and ſanctified it*, to ſhew that this was meant as a Pattern for our keeping the Sabbath.

Q. *I do not find that keeping the Sabbath was poſitively injoined, till the two Tables of the Law were given, which was ſome Time after the Flood; why then do you ſuppoſe this was deſigned as a Pattern for our keeping the Sabbath?*

A. Becauſe tho' we do not find there was any written Law, containing that Injunction, before that Time, it is agreed on all Hands, that before the Deluge *God* revealed his Mind, not only immmediately to *Adam*, but to ſeveral good Men of his Poſterity as *Seth*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, &c. It is therefore reaſonable to believe, and it has been ſo judged by all learned Men, who have made the Scriptures their Study, ever ſince, that the *Almighty* himſelf made known this his Intention of having the Sabbath kept holy to *Adam*, who communicated it to his Son *Seth*, and ſo it was handed down from Father to Son amongſt thoſe who feared *God*, till the Time of *Moſes*. And the receiving this Command from Tradition in thoſe Days, will not ſeem very ſtrange; when we conſider the long life of the *Antediluvians*, and that *Adam* himſelf lived to ſee *Lamech*, the Father of *Noah*. However that be, this Text has always been underſtood as the Inſtitution of the Sabbath, and we actually find in the fifteenth Chapter of *Exodus* before the Promulgation of the Law, that when the People gathered *Manna*, they only gathered enough to ſerve from Day to Day, for it would not keep, but on the Sixth Day, they gathered enough for two Days, and reſted the Seventh Day, nevertheleſs the *Manna* kept very well then.

Q. Moſes *had given us an Account of the Creation of Man, in the firſt Chapter, how comes he to return to it again in the Second?*

A. It is true, *Moſes* does take Notice, of *God's* creating Man, in the firſt Chapter, and even makes a manifeſt Difference in the Account he gives of his Creation, and that of other Creatures; as that the *Almighty* did it with Deliberation, and a Sort of Conſultation; *Let us make Man*; that he formed him after his own Image, and in his own Likeneſs; and that he gave him Dominion over the Earth, and all living Creatures? nevertheleſs, not thinking this Account ample enough, he reſumes it in the ſecond Chapter, and informs us of what Man was formed; namely, of the Duſt of the Ground; and how he became animated; by the *Almighty*'s breathing into him the Breath of Life; after which he does not ſay, he became a *living Man*, but a *living Soul*. This Expreſſion, and the Conſideration that *God* being a Spirit, it is impoſſible our Bodies ſhould be formed *in his Image and Likeneſs*, makes it reaſonable to believe that it muſt be our Souls upon which the *Almighty* ſtamped and imprinted his Image, and that it is in the rational Faculty of our Souls, and the Underſtanding, that our Likeneſs to the *Deity* conſiſts.

Q. *What farther do we learn from the ſecond Chapter;*

A. That *God* having created Man, placed him in the Garden of *Eden*, which is what is commonly called *Paradiſe*, wherein was every Tree that was pleaſant to the Sight, and good for Food; there was alſo the *Tree of Life* in the Midſt of the Garden, and the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil:* So that never had the greateſt Monarch in the Univerſe ſo glorious a Garden as *Adam*.

Q. *When the* Almighty *had placed him there, how was he to employ himſelf?*

A. We are expreſly told that he was to dreſs and keep the Garden.

Q. *What do we learn from thence?*

A. That Idleneſs is carefully to be avoided by all Men, as the Root of all Evil.

Q. *Was nothing elſe given in Charge to* Adam, *when he was placed in* Paradiſe?

A. Yes, he was told that he might freely eat of every Tree in the Garden, but One, which was, *the Tree of Knowledge, of Good and Evil*; but *God* told him, that if ever he preſumed to taſte of that Tree, he ſhould ſurely die; but of this more hereafter.

Q. *What farther do we find in the ſecond Chapter?*

A. That *God* having formed every Beaſt of the Field, and every Fowl of the Air, brought them to *Adam*, to ſee what he would call them, and whatſoever he called every living Creature, that has ever ſince remained the Name thereof.

Q. *What do we learn from thence?*

A. That the *Almighty* being graciouſly willing to confirm *Adam* in his Sovereignty, and Dominion over all living Creatures, would not take upon himſelf the naming of the Animals he had formed, but left it to our firſt Parents, that thereby he might have an Inſtance where to exerciſe his ſovereign Power.

Q. *What are we farther taught in the ſecond Chapter?*

A. That every living Creature having an Help meet for it, and *Man* having none, the Lord obſerved it was not good that the *Man* ſhould be alone, and therefore reſolved to make an Help meet for him alſo; upon which he cauſed *Adam* to fall into a deep Sleep, during which he took out one of his Ribs, and cloſed up the Fleſh inſtead thereof.

Q. *And to what Uſe did the* Lord *put that Rib?*

A. Of that Rib he made *Woman*, and brought her unto the Man.

Q. *What ſaid* Adam *thereupon.*

A. He ſaid, *This is now Bone of my Bone, and Fleſh of my Fleſh, ſhe ſhall be called* Woman, *becauſe ſhe was taken out of Man.*

Q. *What do the Scriptures obſerve from thence?*

A. Therefore ſhall a Man leave his Father, and his Mother, and ſhall cleave unto his Wife, and they ſhall be one Fleſh, Chap. ii. ver. 24. Which Words are thought to be the original Inſtitution of *Matrimony*: And, indeed, the Affection Man and Wife ought to have for each other, with the indiſſoluble Nature of their Contract, cannot be more emphatically deſcribed, than they are in that Verſe.

Q. *What farther is to be obſerved upon this Formation of* Woman *out of a Rib of* Man?

A. The infinite and unfathomable Wiſdom of the *Almighty*.

Q. *How ſo?*

A. Becauſe her being formed out of Man, was the greateſt Tie that could be to ſecure a mutual Affection between them; it being, in a Manner, impoſſible for him not to love his own Fleſh, as it would have been unaccountably unnatural in her, not to love and even honour the Stock from whence ſhe was derived; ſo that it was the moſt exquiſite Method that could have been imagined, not only to ſecure their Affection to each other, but to keep the Wife for ever ſubject to her Husband.

Q. *Is there nothing elſe to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. Yes, that both the Man and Woman *were naked*, and were not *aſhamed.*

Q. *What do you infer from thence?*

A. That where there is no *Guilt*, there is no *Shame*; and that Innocence is always bold, and undaunted.

CHAP. III.

The Serpent tempts the Woman and prevails; Man *falls*; *Sentence pronounced upon the Serpent, Woman, and Man*; *a Redeemer promiſed*; Eve *named*; *the Man and Woman expelled the Garden of* Eden.

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Thing we learn from this Chapter?*

A. That the Serpent was originally endued with greater Subtlety than any other Beaſt of the Field, for which Reaſon the Devil thought him the propereſt Inſtrument to make Uſe of in the tempting of the Woman.

Q. *But we find that ſome ſort of Diſcourſe paſt between the Serpent and the Woman, which looks as if that Animal had originally had the Gift of Speech, and reaſoning; how can that be reconciled with Credibility?*

A. The Serpent undoubtedly could not naturally ſpeak and reaſon; but the Devil might make Uſe of the Serpent's Organs, through which to convey his poiſonous Doctrine to the Woman, and ſeduce her.

Q. *As the Serpent was not naturally endued with Speech, how came it that the Woman was not terrify'd when ſhe heard it ſpeak?*

A. As ſhe had not been long created, it is probable ſhe might not know that Animal could not ſpeak; and beſides, before there was Guilt, there was no ſuch Thing as Fear, being innocent ſhe was naturally undaunted. Another Reaſon alſo may be aſſigned why *Eve* ſhould not be frightened, which is, that there were in the *Eaſt*, a Sort of ſhining Serpents, of ſo exquiſite a Form, that the Angels of the Preſence are called by their Name in the *Hebrew*, and are generally ſuppoſed to have appeared in this Shape upon the Earth; wherefore the Serpent that tempted the Woman might be one of that Kind, and *Eve* having probably been uſed to the Sight of thoſe Angelick Beings, might miſtake him for one of that Order, and therefore might hearken to him without either Fear or Suſpicion.

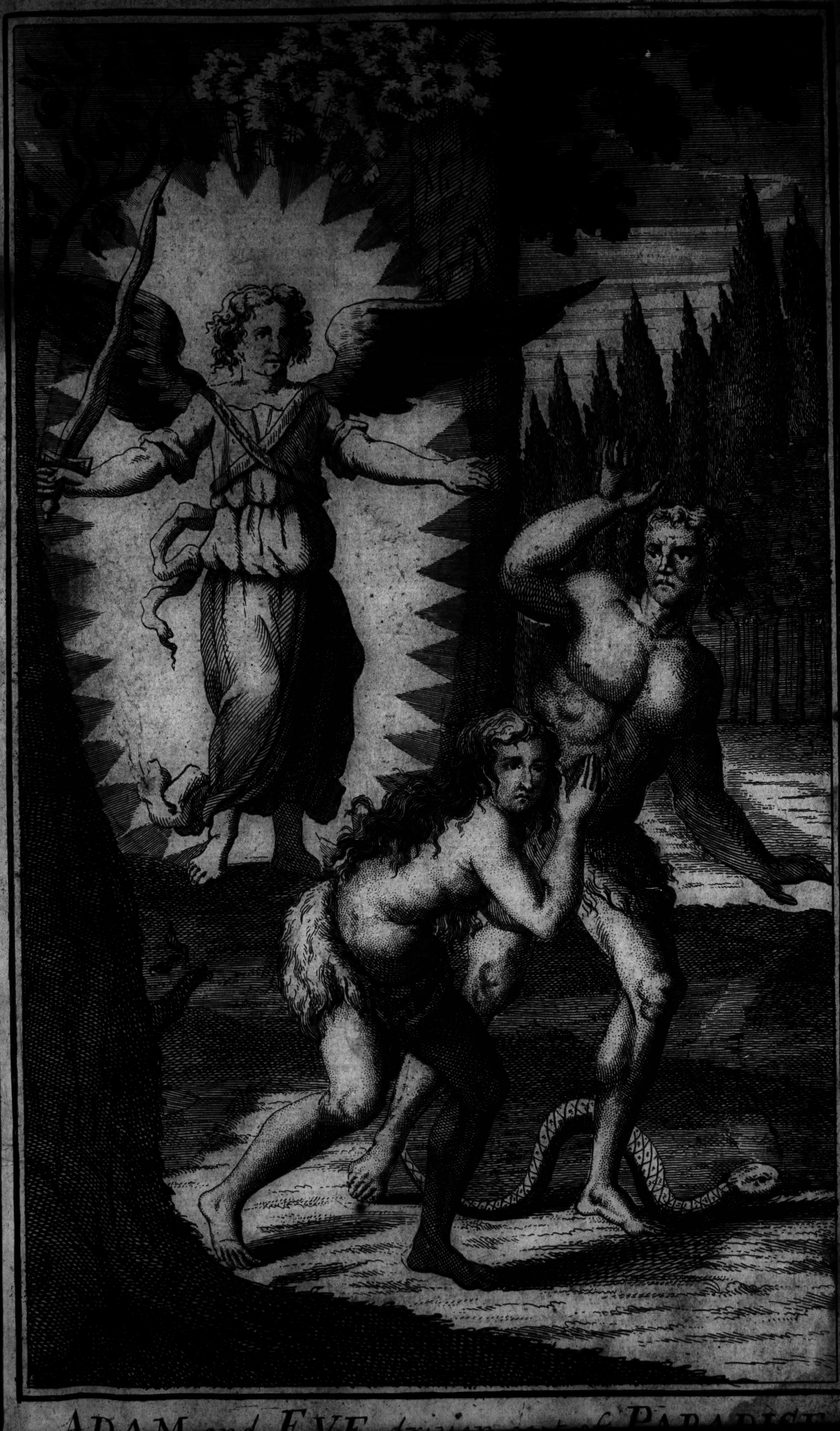
Q. *You ſay the Devil might make Uſe of the Serpent's Organs, through which to inſtil his poiſonous Doctrine into the Woman; what was that Doctrine?*

A. God aſſured Man, that if he preſumed to eat of the Tree of Knowledge he ſhould ſurely die; the Woman informs the Serpent of this Prohibition, upon which he being prompted by the Father of Lies, affirms that they ſhould be ſo far from dying, that they ſhould be as *God*, knowing Good and Evil. The weak Woman giving Credit to this Lie of the Serpent's, notwithſtanding it was a direct Contradiction to what *Adam* had been aſſured by *God*, and being deſirous of being made Wiſe, was too eaſily prevailed on to eat; and not content therewith, ſhe likewiſe perſuaded her Husband to commit the ſame Sin to eat thereof alſo.

Q. *What was the immediate Conſequence of this their Tranſgreſſion?*

A. Aſſoon as they had eaten of the forbidden Fruit their Eyes were opened; but how far! To ſee their own Nakedneſs and Miſery! Not that it is to be ſuppoſed they were ignorant of their being naked before;

GENESIS CHAP. III.



ADAM and EVE driven out of PARADISE

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fore; but not having been guilty of any Sin, they were innocent and free from all diſorderly Paſſions, and therefore, like Children, were not aſhamed of their Nakedneſs, as not having any Reaſon to be aſhamed thereof; but aſſoon as they had committed that Tranſgreſſion, they began to feel the diſorderly Motions of Concupiſcence, for which Reaſon they were aſhamed to ſee themſelves naked, and to conceal their Nakedneſs, ſowed Figleaves together, and made themſelves Aprons to cover them. Nor was this all, for hearing the Voice of the Almighty walking in the Garden in the Cool of the Day, they were ſeized with Fear; the inſeparable Companion of Guilt and Vanity; and fooliſhly endeavoured to hide themſelves from his Preſence amongſt the Trees of the Garden.

Q. *What followed thereupon?*

A. God called to *Adam*, and ſaid where art thou; upon which he anſwered I heard thy Voice in the Garden and was afraid, becauſe I was naked, and I hid myſelf.

Q. *What did* God *immediately obſerve thereupon?*

A. And the *Lord* ſaid, who told thee that thou waſt naked? Haſt thou eaten of the Tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou ſhouldſt not eat?

Q. *And how did Man attempt to excuſe himſelf?*

A. He was ſo far from being able to make any reaſonable Excuſe for his Tranſgreſſion, that on the Contrary, what he fooliſhly alledged as a Mitigation of his Crime, was a heinous Aggravation thereof; *the Woman* ſays he, *whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.* This was a tacit Reflection upon *God* himſelf; and carried with it an Inſinuation, that the *Almighty* was, in ſome Meaſure, the Occaſion of his Fall, by giving him the Woman, who had perſuaded him to commit that Offence.

Q. *What ſaid* God, *upon hearing this wretched, and, indeed, inſolent Excuſe?*

A. He immediately addreſs'd himſelf to the Woman, and asked her, What is this that thou haſt done?

Q. *And how did ſhe endeavour to excuſe herſelf?*

A. By ſhifting the Fault from herſelf, and laying the Blame upon the Serpent; the Woman ſaid, the Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Q. *How did the Lord proceed then?*

A. Having convicted this unhappy Pair out of their own Mouths, there remain'd nothing to do, but to paſs Sentence upon all the three Criminals; and there is not any Thing more remarkable, in the whole Courſe of this important Hiſtory, that the Order and Proportion that is obſerved therein; for *firſt*, the *Almighty* pronounces the Doom of the Serpent, as being the chief Offender. *And the* Lord God *ſaid unto the Serpent, becauſe thou haſt done this, thou art curſed above all Cattle, and above every Beaſt of the Field, upon thy Belly ſhalt thou go, and Duſt ſhalt thou eat all the Days of thy Life.—And I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed, it ſhall bruiſe thy Head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his Heel.*

Q. *What is to be obſerved from this Sentence?*

A. That *God* did not vouchſafe to enter into any Conference with the Serpent, to convict him, as he did with *Adam* and *Eve*, whoſe Sin was leſs than the Serpent's, and whom *God* deſigned to bring to Repentance; on the Contrary he denounceth the Curſe immediately againſt him, that is againſt the Devil, who lay hid under the Shape of the Serpent; as one that ſinned againſt much greater Knowledge, and from far worſe Principles than our firſt Parents; not from Miſtake, or Miſinformation, but from Choice and Rebellion; from his Hatred to God, and from meer Envy and implacable Malice againſt Mankind.

Q. *What farther is to be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the *Almighty*, in the Midſt of his Wrath againſt our firſt Parents, for their heinous Tranſgreſſion, was pleaſed to remember Mercy; accordingly, before he paſſed Judgment upon them, and even whilſt he was denouncing his Curſe againſt the Serpent, he gave the Man and Woman a Glimpſe of future Happineſs, by the Means of a Redeemer, who was alſo promiſed to come of her Seed, in order to endear the Woman again to her Husband; for it is not to be ſuppoſed but he muſt be highly incenſed againſt her, when he came cooly to conſider what a wretched Condition ſhe had reduced him to, and from how great Happineſs he was fallen.

Q. *Having curſed the Serpent, what was the next Action of the* Almighty?

A. He then proceeded to paſs Judgment upon the Woman, as being the next and greateſt Offender.

Q. *What was the Puniſhment inflicted upon her?*

A. Unto the Woman he ſaid, I will greatly multiply thy Sorrow, and thy Conception; in Sorrow thou ſhalt bring forth Children; and thy deſire ſhall be to thy Husband, and he ſhall rule over thee.

Q. *What is to be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the intolerable Pains of Childbearing, with a perpetual Subjection to their Husbands, was not originally deſigned to have been the Lot of Womankind, had it not been for the Tranſgreſſion of their Mother *Eve*; nor could they, conſidering the Temper of that Sex, have ſuffered a more grievous Puniſhment; the Pains of Childbearing being ſo ſharp, as to be compared in Scripture to the Pains of Hell; and it is notorious even to this Day, that nothing can be more irkſome to a Woman, than to be controuled, and reſtrained in any Thing to which ſhe has a Mind.

Q. *Is nothing elſe to be obſerved from thence?*

A. By the Nature of the firſt Part of the Puniſhment inflicted upon *Eve*, ſome have imagined that the Command of not eating of the *Tree of Knowledge* was only allegorical; and that by the *Forbidden Fruit* nothing elſe was meant, but the *Carnal Communion* that is between Man and Wife, for the Propagation of Children: For *ſay they*, the *Tree of Knowledge* ſtood in the Middle of the Garden, ſo are the Organs of Generation in Man and Woman; and why ſhould the Curſe inflicted on the Woman be, that in Sorrow ſhe ſhould conceive, and in Sorrow ſhe ſhould bring forth Children, but that the Organs of Generation were the Inſtruments wherewith ſhe committed her Tranſgreſſion? No other Reaſon can be aſſigned, ſay they, why the *Almighty* ſhould chooſe to allot her ſuch a particular Puniſhment; but allowing that to be the Woman's Tranſgreſſion, could not poſſibly have been condemned to one more rational, or more adequate to her Offence. If you ask, ſuppoſing this Syſtem true, how the World was to have been peopled. They anſwer, the *Almighty* either deſigned to continue creating them as he ſhould ſee Occaſion, or to have made them come into the World ſome other Way than by Carnal Copulation.

Q. *But are there not many Objections to this Syſtem?*

A. Undoubtedly; *firſt*, the Woman is generally agreed to have committed the Sin of eating the forbidden Fruit when the Man was abſent from her; for it is ſaid, "ſhe took of the Fruit thereof and did eat, and gave alſo unto her Husband with her, and he did eat:" Now if ſhe committed the Offence in her Huſband's Abſence, it is very plain it could not be the Sin of Carnal Copulation, ſince there was no other Man, with whom ſhe could commit it.

Q. *How do the Favourers of the foregoing Syſtem get over this Objection?*

A. They ſuppoſe that *Eve* admitted of the Embraces even of the Serpent himſelf; which allowing this Serpent to have been the moſt beautiful of his Kind, and that the *Seraphims* themſelves uſed to aſſume his Shape, when they appeared upon Earth, is not ſuch an abſurd Opinion, as one would naturally imagine at firſt Sight: And accordingly 'tis certain, that even ſome of the *Jews* themſelves have not ſcrupled to ſay, that *Cain* was born of a filthy Seed, which that Serpent caſt into *Eve*. However that be, it is evident, that in the Account of the Generations of *Adam*, *Gen.* v. *Cain* and his Offspring are wholly omitted, as if they did not belong to him.

Q. *What other Obſervations are there againſt this Syſtem?*

A. Several, but we ſhall only take notice of theſe two; *firſt*, that there is no mention made of *Adam*'s knowing his Wife, or her conceiving and bearing *Cain*, till after their Expulſion out of *Paradiſe*; which certainly there would have been, had their Sin conſiſted in Carnal Copulation: *Secondly*, that after *Cain*'s making his Offering unto the *Lord*, and being very Wroth that he had not that Reſpect to his Offering, as he had unto *Abel*'s, we find *God* expoſtulating with him thereupon, and telling him, *If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doſt not well, Sin lieth at thy Door*; after which, in ſome Meaſure to appeaſe him, the *Lord* promiſes him that he ſhall rule over his Brother: Whereas had *Cain* been of the Serpent's (that is the Devil's) Seed, it is not porobable that *God* would have entered into any Conference with him, ſince the *Almighty* has no Communication with *Satan*: And *thirdly*, that as *God* in his infinite Wiſdom, commanded the Earth, in the Beginning to bring forth the Herb yielding Seed, and the Fruit Tree yielding Fruit after his Kind, with its Seed in its ſelf, but ordained them ever after to ſpring out of their Seed; and as it is evident that Man was alſo created with his Seed in himſelf, capable of propagating his Poſterity, it is highly probable that he intended Man ſhould ever after propagate his Species by carnal Copulation, or otherwiſe the *Almighty* would never have endued him with that Faculty; which is certainly the greateſt Cement of that mutual Affection, which ought to be between Man and Wife.

Q. *You ſay* God *paſſed Sentence upon all the three Criminals; I deſire therefore, you would inform me what was Man's Puniſhment?*

A. Firſt, the Earth was curſed for his Sake, and he was to eat thereof in Sorrow all the Days of his Life: *Secondly*, he was to eat Bread in the Sweat of his Face; that is, he was to get his Living with hard Labour and Vexation: *Thirdly*, he was to return unto the Ground from whence he came; that is his Body, which had otherwiſe been immortal, as well as his Soul, ſhould now be Subject to Death.

Q. *What farther do we learn from this Chapter.*

A. That *Adam* named his Wife *Eve*, and that the *Lord God* made them Coats of Skins and cloathed them.

Q. *What do we learn from thence?*

A. That the Mercies and Goodneſs of the *Almighty* are infinite; ſince we find him immediately, notwithſtanding the heinous Provocation given him by Man's Tranſgreſſion, taking Care that he ſhould not be expoſed to the Injuries and Inclemencies of the Weather, and even condeſcending himſelf to cloath them. This in his infinite Wiſdom, he probably vouchſafed to do, not only to protect them from exceſſive Heats and Colds, Rairis, Snows, Winds or Hails, but to remind them conſtantly of their Sin, which made their Nakedneſs, that before was innocent and honourable, become now an occaſion of Sin and Shame, and therefore needed covering; as alſo, by this his Care, even of fallen Man, to encourage him to hope for Mercy, through the bleſſed Seed already promiſed, and thereby to invite him to Repentance.

Q. *What may be obſerved from theſe Words; and the* Lord God *ſaid Man is become as one of Us, to know Good and Evil?*

A. That it is an evident Proof of the Plurality of Perſons in the Godhead, ſince when *God* ſays *as one of Us*, he muſt certainly mean as one of the Perſons of the *Trinity*; for it would be an abſurd Opinion to imagine that he ſpoke it of the Angels, ſince that would be putting the Angels upon a Level with himſelf; whereas, however glorious Beings the Angels may be, there is ſtill an infinite Diſtance between them and their *Almighty Creator*; and *God* is too Jealous of his own Honour, to give them a kind of Equality with himſelf, as this Expreſſion intimates.

Q. *But did eating of the* Tree of Knowledge *actually endue Man with ſuch a Capacity and underſtanding, as to make him really reſemble one of the Perſons of the Godhead, And if not, how are we to reconcile this Paſſage with Truth?*

A. Far from it; for, on the Contrary, all the Knowledge we find he derived from thence, was to know he was naked and miſerable; and ſo weak was he, that he endeavoured to hide himſelf from the Preſence of the *Lord*, amongſt the Trees of the Garden; as if any Covert could ſcreen him from the All-ſearching Eye of this *Creator!* The beſt Way, therefore of underſtanding this Paſſage, and reconciling it with Truth, (for *God*, we know, cannot lie) is not to take it as meant literally, but ironically; and in that Senſe it will run thus: *Behold! all ye Angels, how the firſt Man hath over-reached Us, and got the Divinity which he affected! Behold! how happy he hath made himſelf by his Rebellion!* But the *Almighty* does not ſay this, to inſult over Man's Miſery, but to convince him of his Sin, Folly, Danger, and Calamity; and to oblige and incite him to a diligent Seeking after, and an eager Embracing the Remedy of the promiſed Seed, which *God* had offered him, and to ſtir him up to a greater Watchfulneſs over himſelf, a greater Reſpect to the Divine Commands for the Future.

Q. *And how are we to underſtand the latter Part of the ſame Verſe; and now, leſt he put forth his Hand, and take alſo of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever.*

A. There is ſomething wanting in this Speech, to make it intelligible, which muſt be ſupplied by the Words, *Care muſt be taken*, or, *Man muſt be driven hence*, (or in ſome ſuch Manner) *leſt he put forth his Hand*, &c. And when the Sentence is thus filled up, this ſeems to be another Irony, wherewith *God* upbraids Man's fond Preſumption, and thoſe vain Hopes with which he ſtill fed himſelf.

Q. *But did the* Almighty *leave him long in that Error?*

A. No, the *Lord* ſoon undeceived him, by ſending him out from the Garden of *Eden* to till the Ground, from whence he was taken.

Q. *In what Manner was Man ſent out of the Garden, and how was he prevented from returning again thither?*

A. Undoubtedly, he was expelled from thence with Shame and Violence; and to render his Return thither impoſſible, *the Almighty* placed *Cherubims* at the Eaſt of the Garden of *Eden*, with a flaming Sword that turned every Way, to defend the Avenues to the Tree of Life.

Q. *What were thoſe Cherubims.*

A. They are generally believed to be Angels; but the *Hebrew* Word may be taken for all Things in general that can ſtrike a Terror; and the flaming Sword may alſo be taken metaphorically for *Fire, Lightning*, or any other Body, which by its Brightneſs, and Awfulneſs hindered Man from approaching *Paradiſe.*

CHAP. IV.

The Birth of Cain *and* Abel, *and their Employments; their Offerings;* Cain's *rejected, and* Abel's *accepted;* Cain's *Diſcontent thereupon;* God *expoſtulates with him upon that Head;* Cain *murthers* Abel; God *Curſes him for it; His Complaint thereupon;* God *mitigates it;* Cain's *Poſterity;* Lamech *marries two Wives; he kills a Man; his Boaſting;* Seth *born, and* Enos; *Men begin to call upon the* Name of the Lord.

Q. WHAT *is to be obſerved from the firſt Verſe of this Chapter: And* Adam *knew* Eve *his Wife; and ſhe conceived and bare* Cain, *and ſaid, I have gotten a Man from the* Lord?

A. That *Adam* had then that Communion with his Wife, which has been appointed ever ſince for the Propogating of the human Species; the Conſequence of which was the Birth of her eldeſt Son; upon whoſe coming into the World ſhe was greatly tranſported with Joy; vainly and fondly imagining, as is ſuppoſed from his Name *Cain*, which ſignifies *Poſſeſſion*, that he was that *promiſed Seed*, who was to bruiſe the *Head* of the *Serpent*; whereas he was ſo far the Contrary, that he was the Occaſion of inexpreſſible Sorrow to his Parents.

Q. *What farther may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That *Eve*, and after her Example, all Mankind, ever ſince the Fall, have been ſo blind to their own Good, as to place their greateſt Hopes of Happineſs upon thoſe very Things, which often prove the greateſt Source of their Miſery; the *Almighty* in his infinite Wiſdom, having probably ſo ordered it, that it might remain as a convincing and perpetual Evidence, how far our firſt Parents were from obtaining that Knowledge they ſo eagerly, and wickedly aimed at, by eating the forbidden Fruit.

Q. *What next is to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. That *Eve* alſo bore another Son, whoſe Name was *Abel*, and who was a Keeper of Sheep, but that *Cain* tilled the Ground; that theſe two Brethren made each of them their Offering unto the Lord, the latter of the Fruits of the Ground, and the Former of the Firſtlings of his Flock, and the Fat thereof; and that God was pleaſed with *Abel's* Offering, but was not pleaſed with that of *Cain.*

Q. *What might be the Reaſon that the Offering of the one was more acceptable to the* Lord, *than that of the other?*

A. Undoubtedly from the Difference in the Diſpoſition of their Hearts; which *God*, to whom all Hearts lye open, perceiving, had Regard to the good Intention of the one, but had no Regard to the offering of the other; or rather was diſpleaſed with the Workings of Sin, which were at that Inſtant lurking in his Soul. The Generality, indeed, of Commentators, carry the Thing farther; and are of Opinion, that *Cain* offered the worſt of the Fruits of the Earth, whereas *Abel* offered the Firſtlings or beſt of his Flock: but we can hardly believe, that even *Cain*, as wicked as he was, could be guilty of ſo manifeſt and ſelf-evident a Diſreſpect, or rather ſo groſs an Affront to an *Almighty Creator*, who he knew, by the woful Experience of his Father and Mother, was able inſtantly to puniſh him ſeverely for it, and he had no Reaſon to expect he would not do it: It is, therefore, in our Opinions, more reaſonable to think, it was in *Cain's* bringing his Offering with a Sort of Grudging, that his Sin conſiſted; for he might very well be ſo blinded by his Folly, as not to imagine *God* could diſcern the evil Imaginations of of his Heart, when we find him ſoon after ſo far beſotted, as to fancy the omniſcient and omnipreſent *Deity* ignorant of the Murther of his Brother.

Q. *Is there nothing elſe to be obſerved from* Abel's *bringing of the Firſtlings of his Flock, and of the Fat thereof for his Offering?*

A. Yes, that *Abel*, in ſo doing, offered unto the *Lord*, what God afterwards reſerved to himſelf by an expreſs Law; as may be ſeen *Exod.* xiii. 2. and xxix. 13, 22. which, perhaps, may be one Reaſon why his Offering proved ſo acceptable, and the *Lord* ſhewed Reſpect to it.

Q. *In what Manner is God ſuppoſed to have ſhown that he had Reſpect to* Abel, *and to his Offering?*

A. According to the *Jewiſh* Tradition, and in all Probability, it was by conſuming his Offering by Fire from Heaven, as he frequently afterwards teſtified his Acceptance of Sacrifices, particularly that of *Gideon, Judges* vi. 21. that of *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* xviii. 38. that of *David*, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 26. and that of *Solomon* at the Conſecration of the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, 2 *Chron.* vii. 1.

Q. *So ſignal a Mercy muſt certainly very much mortify* Cain, *eſpecially as his Offering did not meet with the ſame Acceptance; did not, he therefore, humble himſelf, and teſtify his Sorrow by Repentance?*

A. No, quite contrary; for the Scripture ſays, "he was very wroth, and his Countenance fell."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How natural it is for one Sin to beget another, and that of a deeper Dye than itſelf; for this Wrath of *Cain's* was highly ſinful; ſince it was not only directed againſt his Brother *Abel*, which, in itſelf, was wicked to a great Degree, for having offered a better Offering than himſelf, and thereby obtaining from *God* more Honour than himſelf; but it was alſo directed againſt his *Creator*, for having caſt ſo publick a Diſgrace upon him, and giving the Preference to his younger Brother; whereas he ſhould have conſidered that the Fault lay in himſelf; and have repaired it by Repentance, and by offering a better Sacrifice, and with a more chearful Heart.

Q. *What ſaid the* Lord *thereupon to* Cain?

A. He mercifully expoſtulated the Caſe with him; asked why he was angry; told him it was no-body's Fault but his own, that his Offering was not reſpected; that if he did well, he need not doubt Acceptance, but that if he did not well, the Sin lay at his own Door; concluding all with kindly aſſuring him, that as for his Brother *Abel*, to whoſe Faith and Piety he had given this publick and honourable Teſtimony of his Acceptance, which had excited his Anger, Envy, and Malice, the Favour he had ſhown him, concerned only his ſpiritual Privilege, and the Happineſs of the World to come; but ſhould make no Manner of Change in his civil Rights, by transferring the Dominion from him to his Brother; neither did *Abel* ſo underſtand it; for, on the Contrary, his Deſire ſhould be unto *Cain*; that is, he ſhould be always ſubject to him, as his Elder, and he ſhould rule over him.

Q. *Had not this merciful and kind Expoſtulation a good Effect upon* Cain?

A. Far from it; for proceeding from bad to worſe, as the Nature of Sin is, he talked with his Brother; that is, he entered into a familiar Converſation with him, to remove from him all Suſpicion of Malice; drew him thereby inſenſibly into a Field, probably at ſome Diſtance from their Abode, as being fitteſt for his black and unnatural Deſign; and roſe up againſt him, that is, fell upon him with ſome Weapon, and ſlew him.

Q. *What followed upon ſo horrid a Murder?*

A. The divine Juſtice, which never ſlumbers, immediately calls him to an Account; *And the Lord ſaid unto* Cain, *Where is* Abel *thy Brother?* Not that the omniſcient Deity was ignorant where he was; but to convince him of his Sin, and lead him to Repentance; and alſo, probably, to ſet an Example to all Judges for the Future, to give a patient Hearing to all who come before them; to let the moſt notorious Criminal plead for himſelf, before they paſs Sentence; and not to come upon the Bench, prejudiced and prepoſſeſſed againſt any one, and reſolv'd to condemn him, whatever he may ſay in his Juſtification, as has been done but too often.

Q. *Was not* Cain *confounded and ſtruck dumb, upon hearing the* Almighty*'s Demand; What Excuſe could he poſſibly make for his inhuman Offence?*

A. He was ſo far from being confounded, that being harden'd to the laſt degree, he had the Audaciouſneſs to tell him a direct Lie, that he knew not; as if he ſtupidly imagined him ignorant of his Crime; beſides which, he had the Boldneſs inſolently to aſk him; *Am I my Brother's Keeper.*

Q. *What Anſwer did his Creator make him for ſo much Inſolence?*

A. To make him ſenſible of the Heinouſneſs of his Crime, he asks him, *What haſt thou done?* That is, what a horrid Crime haſt thou perpetrated? In vain doſt thou endeavour to conceal or deny it; for the *Voice of thy Brother's Blood crieth unto me from the Ground.* In *Hebrew*, it is the *Bloods*; either to aggravate the Crime, or to charge him with the Murder of all thoſe who might otherwiſe have deſcended from *Abel.* Having thus, not only charged, but convicted him of the Murder, and repreſented to him the Enormity thereof, the Almighty proceeds to his Puniſhment: "And now art thou curſed from the " Earth, which hath open'd her Mouth to receive " thy Brother's Blood from thy Hand. When thou " tilleſt the Ground, it ſhall not henceforth yield " to thee her Strengh. A Fugitive and a Vaga- " bond ſhalt thou be in the Earth."

Q. *What Impreſſion did this Curſe and Puniſhment make upon* Cain?

A. According to all the Verſions, *Cain* being amaz'd at that Curſe, began to be ſenſible of the Heinouſneſs of his Crime, and the Miſery to which he was reduc'd; but then he breaks out into a Fit of Deſpair, rather than Repentance; and notwithſtanding his Sentence was gentle, in compariſon of his horrid Crime, he cries out; " My Puniſhment is greater than I can " bear; behold, thou haſt driven me out this day " from the Face of the Earth; and from thy Face " ſhall I be hid, and I ſhall be a Fugitive and a Va- " gabond in the Earth, and it ſhall come to paſs, " that every one that findeth me ſhall ſlay me! And as for the vulgar *Latin*, it makes him ſay, *My Iniquity is too great for me to deſerve, or obtain Pardon,* which is but little better; whereas it may as well be tranſlated, as it has already been by ſome *Jewiſh Rabbins*; *Is my Iniquity too great to be ever pardoned?* This is an Expreſſion that ſhews ſome Signs of Repentance; and which is the moſt reaſonable way of tranſlating it; becauſe we find *God* immediately mitigating his Puniſhment, in ſome Meaſure, by diſpelling his Fears, with this merciful Aſſurance; that whoever ſlew him, Vengeance ſhould be taken on him ſeven-fold; and alſo by ſetting a Mark upon him, to prevent his being killed by any one.

Q. *We have hitherto heard only of the Birth of* Cain *and* Abel; *wherefore the Latter being murdered, how could* Cain *be afraid of being killed by any one, when it does not appear that there was any Man living but his Father, of whom undoubtedly he could not be under any ſuch Apprehenſions?*

A. This Objection ſeems at firſt to be well founded; and accordingly has given occaſion to ſome People to imagine, that there were another Race of Men before *Adam*; which Opinion was broach'd, in the laſt Century, by one *Peyrera*; who will have the Man whoſe Creation is mentioned in the firſt Chapter of *Geneſis*, and the Man whoſe Formation is mentioned in the Second, to be two different Perſons. For, ſays he, How could *Cain* otherwiſe be afraid that every one that found him ſhould ſlay him, ſince he went away from the Habitation of his Father, and *Seth* was not yet born, unleſs the Earth was already inhabited by another Race of Men. But to anſwer this Objection, we need only obſerve, that notwithſtanding there is not any Mention made, of any other Sons, then begotten by *Adam* and *Eve*, there is no doubt but they had then a very numerous Offspring, the Scripture having never deſigned to ſpeak of all *Adam*'s Children, but only of ſuch from whom *Abraham*, and conſequently *Chriſt* in the Fleſh was to proceed in a direct Line; or ſuch as it was neceſſary to mention for ſomething very remarkable done or ſaid by them, as is here the Caſe of *Cain*: There is no doubt therefore, but at the Time of *Abel*'s being murdered, *Adam* had a very numerous Progeny, if we conſider, that the Murder happened but a little before the Birth of *Seth*, which was not till *Adam* was 130 Years old; for it is to be ſuppoſed, that our firſt Parents, preſently after the Fall, and *God*'s gracious Reconciliation with them, did, immediately procreate Children, according to the *Almighty*'s Command of *increaſing and multiplying*; and that their Children did the ſame, when they came to a competent Age; and, as the Bleſſing of *God* may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to have attended their Endeavours, ſince it was in Obedience to his own expreſs Command, thoſe firſt Women might not only be endued by him with an extraordinary Fruitfulneſs, ſo as to be pregnant every Year, but they might have two, three, and four at a Birth, as divers had long after, and ſome have even now: This being allowed and ſuppoſed, and there is no Reaſon to the contrary, there might then be ſeveral Thouſands of Men and Women upon the Earth; who might have diſperſed themſelves as they grew numerous, in different Places, at ſome Diſtance from where *Adam* firſt ſettled.

Q. *This is a very rational Solution; but you was ſaying, that the Lord ſet a Mark upon* Cain, *to diſpel his Fears, and prevent any one's killing him; of what Nature might that Mark be?*

A. Various are the Conjectures, and ſome of them very ridiculous, and abſurd, which divers of the *Jewiſh Rabbins*, and even ſome *Chriſtian* Doctors have formed concerning it: Some imagine it was ſome of the Letters of the Name *Jehovah*, or of the *Hebrew* Alphabet, or even of the Word *Cain*, that were imprinted on his Forehead, or his Arms; others have fancied, that it was a Horn that grew out of his Forehead: Several of the Fathers, and ſome *Arabians*, have thought it to be a continual trembling of the Body; others that it was a Dog which always attended him, and others again, that the Earth always ſhook about him: Theſe are all extravagant Opinions; and ſuppoſing *Cain* actually had ſome Mark imprinted upon his Body, yet as the Scripture does not any where give an Account what that Mark was, it ſhews it is not material for us to know it; and it is a Piece of Raſhneſs, to call it no worſe, to pretend to gueſs at it. But the Miſtake lies in the Tranſlation; and all theſe Difficulties may be avoided, by rendering it another Way, which is perfectly agreeable to the Original; for whereas almoſt all the Verſions have tranſlated it, *That God ſet a Mark upon* Cain, *leſt any Man finding him ſhould kill him*, the Original ſays no ſuch thing, but it may be much better rendered thus; *That God ſet a Sign or Wonder before* Cain, *to perſuade him, that whoever ſhould find him ſhould not kill him.* This Expoſition is very natural, and perfectly agreeable to the Methods of Divine Providence in former Ages, which was wont to convince the incredulous by Signs and Wonders. Nor could any thing leſs than a Miracle aſſure *Cain*, in the Horror and Terror he was then under, that the firſt that met him, would not kill him, after what God ſaid to him, in upbraiding him with the Heinouſneſs of his Crime. The Rev. Mr. *Poole*, however, has given a quite different Turn to the Whole; and does not ſeem to think that the Mark ſet upon *Cain* (which he underſtands literally, according to the common Verſion) was intended as any Mitigation of his Puniſhment; but that it was ſome viſible Token of the Divine Diſpleaſure; and meant as an Aggravation thereof; that he might live long to be an Example to Mankind, of God's Vengeance upon Murderers, and to be a Terror to himſelf and others. This agrees very well with the vulgar Tranſlation in every Point; for taking *Cain*'s Complaint as an Inſtance of his Deſpair, rather than Repentance, which did not entitle him to any Mercy from the *Almighty*, *God* might very juſtly add to his Puniſhment; by imprinting a Mark on him; to render him a perpetual Terror to himſelf and others; and a laſting Monument of the Divine Vengeance.

Q. *What became of* Cain *after this?*

A. All we find of him afterwards is; that he went out from the Preſence of the *Lord*, and dwelt in the Land of *Nod*, on the Eaſt of *Eden*; that he there had a Son named *Enoch*, and built a City, which he called by that Son's Name.

Q. *What is meant by his going out from the Preſence of the* Lord; *ſeeing* God *is omnipreſent, and there is no ſuch thing as being hid from his Preſence?*

A. Undoubtedly it means no more, than that he went from the Place of *God*'s ſpecial and immediate Preſence; which might be his Father's Habitation, where was the only Church *God* then had upon Earth. For tho' *God* is omnipreſent, yet there are ſome Places where he may be ſaid to be more eſpecially and immediately preſent as in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, of the *Jewiſh* Temple formerly; and now in every Society of true Believers, that are met together to worſhip him.

Q. *Where is the Land of* Nod *ſuppoſed to be, and why was it ſo named?*

A. Somewhere in the *Eaſt*, beyond *Babylon*; and it was probably ſo named, either by *Cain* himſelf, or by ſome of his Poſterity, from the unſettled Life he led therein; having no Reſt; but continuing perpetually wandering up and down, in Completion of the Curſe and Sentence paſſed upon him.

Q. *What is next to be obſerv'd from this Chapter?*

A. Having finiſhed the Account of *Cain*, the next thing *Moſes* proceeds upon is, to enumerate his Poſterity for ſix Generations: This he probably did, both to ſhew who were the Authors and Inventors of certain Arts or Trades, and alſo who were inſtrumental in corrupting the better Seed of *Adam* afterwards. Amongſt theſe *Lamech*, the fifth from *Cain*, is particularly remarkable, or rather notorious, on ſeveral Accounts; 1. As he was the firſt who introduced *Polygamy*, by marrying two Wives; contrary to *God*'s original Inſtitution. 2. As the Father of *Jabal*, *Jubal*, and *Tubal-cain*; the firſt of whom invented the Uſe of Tents, and the Art of ordering Cattle; the ſecond Muſick, and muſical Inſtruments; and the third Armour and warlike Weapons, with all manner of brazen and Iron Tools; an Invention well becoming one of murdering *Cain*'s Poſterity. The latter of theſe *Tubal-cain*, who had alſo a Siſter, whoſe Name was *Naamah*, which ſignifies *Beauty*, by the Similitude of his Name and Profeſſion, with that of *Vulcan*, is probably the ſame whom the *Heathens* worſhipped under that Name; and his Siſter *Naamah* the ſame with their *Venus*, or Goddeſs of Beauty. *Lamech* is not only noted for the foregoing Circumſtances, but alſo for being the ſecond Murderer that ever was; and boaſting upon it, that if *Cain* was to be avenged ſevenfold, himſelf ſhould be revenged ſeventy and ſevenfold.

Q. *What are we to underſtand thereby?*

A. Commentators and Expoſitors are very much divided about the Senſe of theſe Words, and the Reaſon of *Lamech*'s thus boaſting; the moſt obvious and natural Meaning ſeems to be, that his Death ſhould be much more ſeverely puniſhed than that of *Cain*; and the Reaſon of his making that Boaſt may either be his Profanneſs and Impiety; in which caſe the Senſe will be; ſince *Cain* my Forefather, and Pattern in Murder, was ſo far from being puniſhed for it by the Hand of God, that he had a ſpecial Protection from him, that no Man ſhould dare to touch him; himſelf whoſe Murder was not ſo heinous as *Cain*'s, ſhould not fare worſe, and therefore had no cauſe to fear either God or Man: Or elſe it may proceed from his Preſumption, and Confidence of his Security; poſſibly by Reaſon of his Son *Tubal-cain*'s Invention of Armour, and Weapons, which he conſidered as a great Addition, as it undoubtedly was, to his own Power; wherefore he might ground his Aſſurance of eſcaping with Impunity thereupon.

Q. *What farther do we learn from this Chapter?*

A. That *Adam* again knew his Wife, and ſhe bore a Son whoſe Name ſhe called *Seth*, and ſaid; "the *Lord* "had appointed her another Seed, inſtead of *Abel*, "whom *Cain* ſlew."

Q. *You obſerved, and I think rightly, that* Adam *and* Eve *had undoubtedly divers other Children; why therefore is this Son ſpecified ſo particularly above the reſt; and why ſhould* Eve *imagine him a Seed appointed inſtead of* Abel, *rather than any other of the Sons ſhe had before and after?*

A. The Reaſon of *Seth*'s being particularized more than the Reſt, is becauſe our Saviour deſcended from him in a direct Line; and as to *Eve's* calling him another Seed, inſtead of *Abel* whom *Cain* ſlew, undoubtedly ſhe did it by divine Inſpiration; foreſeeing that he was the Perſon who was to ſucceed *Adam* in the Prieſthood, and keep up the Church of God, and the divine Worſhip in the World; ſhe being fully convinced from his Wickedneſs, that this was not to be done by *Cain*, nor any of his Offspring; and having perhaps the ſame Reaſon to fear it was none of her other Sons.

Q. *Is nothing elſe to be obſerved from this Chapter?*

A. Yes, that *Seth* had a Son, whoſe Name was *Enos*, at which time Men began to call upon the Name of the Lord.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by that; Did not Men worſhip God before then?*

A. Commentators are again divided about the Senſe of theſe Words; ſome interpreting it, that they then firſt began to eſtabliſh a publick Form of Worſhip, with certain Ceremonies; and others giving a different Turn to them, and expounding it, that they began then to profane the Name of the Lord, by worſhipping falſe Deities; but we cannot help looking upon the firſt Interpretation as moſt reaſonable; eſpecially as *Moſes* is here ſpeaking of *Seth's* Progeny, who, as we obſerv'd before, were the holy Seed, and the only Church *God* then had in the World.

CHAP. V.

The Genealogy, Age, and Death of the Patriarchs, from Adam *down to* Noah; *the Godlineſs and Tranſlation of* Enoch; Lamech's *Prophecy concerning his Son* Noah; Noah's *three Sons.*

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Thing to be learn'd from this Chapter?*

A. As *Moſes* in the former Chapter gives an Account of *Adam's* having another Son by his Wife, whom he called *Seth*, and that *Seth* alſo had a Son whom he named *Enos*; in this Chapter, after having obſerv'd that *God* created *Adam* in his own Likeneſs, he reſumes the Account of his Poſterity, and informs us, that *Adam* begat *Seth* in his own Likeneſs, after his Image. This is mentioned to ſhew there was a manifeſt difference between *Seth* that was begotten by *Adam*, and *Adam* himſelf as firſt created by *God*, ſince he is ſaid to have been made in the Likeneſs of his divine Creator; that is, he was created in a State of Innocence, Purity, and Glory; whereas *Seth*, tho' a worthy and good Man, was conceived and born in Sin. Having made this Obſervation, *Moſes* proceeds to give an Account of *Adam's* Poſterity by *Seth* down to *Noah* and his Sons, with the reſpective Ages of each of them to the Time of their Deceaſe.

Q. *What is there to be remark'd in the Account of* Adam's *Poſterity?*

A. That *Lamech* the ſhorteſt liv'd of them, except *Enoch*, who was tranſlated immediately to Heaven, and did not ſee Death, lived ſeven hundred and ſeventy ſeven Years; and that *Methuſelah* who was the longeſt liv'd of the antediluvian Patriarchs, lived nine hundred and ſixty nine Years.

Q. *To what might this Longævity of thoſe Fathers be aſcribed?*

A. Undoubtedly it was principally owing to the infinite Wiſdom of *God*; who ſo ordered it, in the firſt Ages of the World, for the more plentiful Increaſe of Mankind, and the more effectual Propagation of the true Religion, and other uſeful Knowledge; but beſides this, there might be many natural Reaſons given, why Men lived much longer at that Time than they have done ſince; as their Temperance, and the Plainneſs and Simplicity of their Diet; nothing contributing ſo much to the ſhortening Men's Lives, as Intemperance, Luxury, and Debauchery.

Q. *You mentioned juſt now, that* Enoch *was tranſlated immediately to Heaven, and did not ſee Death, how came he to obtain ſo particular, and ſo extraordinary a Favour?*

A. Moſes tells us, that he walked with *God*, and he was not, for *God* took him; that is, *God* was ſo well pleaſed with his good Life, and virtuous Converſation, in the Midſt of a wicked and licentious Age, that he thought fit immediately to reward him for it, by delivering him from the Puniſhment of Death, to which all other Men were ſubject, and taking him up to himſelf in Heaven. In Effect, we find from St. *Jude, v.* xiv. 15. that he proteſted and preached boldly againſt the wicked Practices of the Age he liv'd in, and reſolutely own'd the Lord and his ways in the Midſt of them.

Q. *It is ſaid of* Enoch, *that he walked with* God *after he begat* Methuſelah *three hundred Years, and begat Sons and Daughters; what is obſervable from thence?*

A. That notwithſtanding the pretended Refinements of the *Papiſts* in denying Marriage to their Clergy, and extolling Celibacy and Virginity, as a State of greater Purity and Perfection, the State and Uſe of Matrimony agrees very well with the ſtricteſt Courſe of Holineſs, and with the Office of a Prieſt, Preacher, and Prophet; ſince we can hardly believe the moſt rigidly Religious of the *Roman* Catholicks will have the Aſſurance to boaſt of greater Purity than *Enoch*, whoſe Holineſs was ſo ſingularly and eminently rewarded by *God* himſelf, as to obtain an Exemption from Death, and an immediate Tranſlation to Heaven.

Q. *What is farther to be obſerved from this Chapter?*

Q. That *Enoch* being endued with the Spirit of Prophecy, named his Son *Methuſelah*, to foretel the Deſtruction that would come upon the Earth ſoon after his Death; for the Meaning of the Word *Methuſelah* is, *He dies, and the Arrow of God's Vengeance comes*; or, *He dies, and the ſending forth of the Waters comes*; and that his Grandſon *Lamech* being endued with the ſame Spirit, and conceiving better Hopes of his Son, called his Name *Noah*, which ſignifies a *Comforter*; and prophecied that he ſhould prove a Comfort to his Family, becauſe of the Ground which the Lord had curſed; which Propheſy was verified but in another Manner; for *Noah* by his good Life delivered the Church, and preſerved it from periſhing by his Obedience: It may alſo be ſaid to have been fulfilled litterally; ſince it is ſaid in the eighth Chapter, upon *Noah's* offering Burnt-offerings to the *Lord*, that the *Lord* ſmelled a Savour, and ſaid in his Heart; "I will not again curſe the Ground "for Man's Sake."

Q. *Is any Thing elſe to be obſerved from this Chapter?*

A. Only that *Noah* was five hundred Years old, when he begat his three Sons *Shem, Ham,* and *Japheth*; which, conſidering that all the other Patriarchs begat Children long before that time, makes it probable, that *God* in his Mercy denied him Children till then, that he might not beget them to be involved in the general Deſtruction that was to come upon the Earth.

CHAP.

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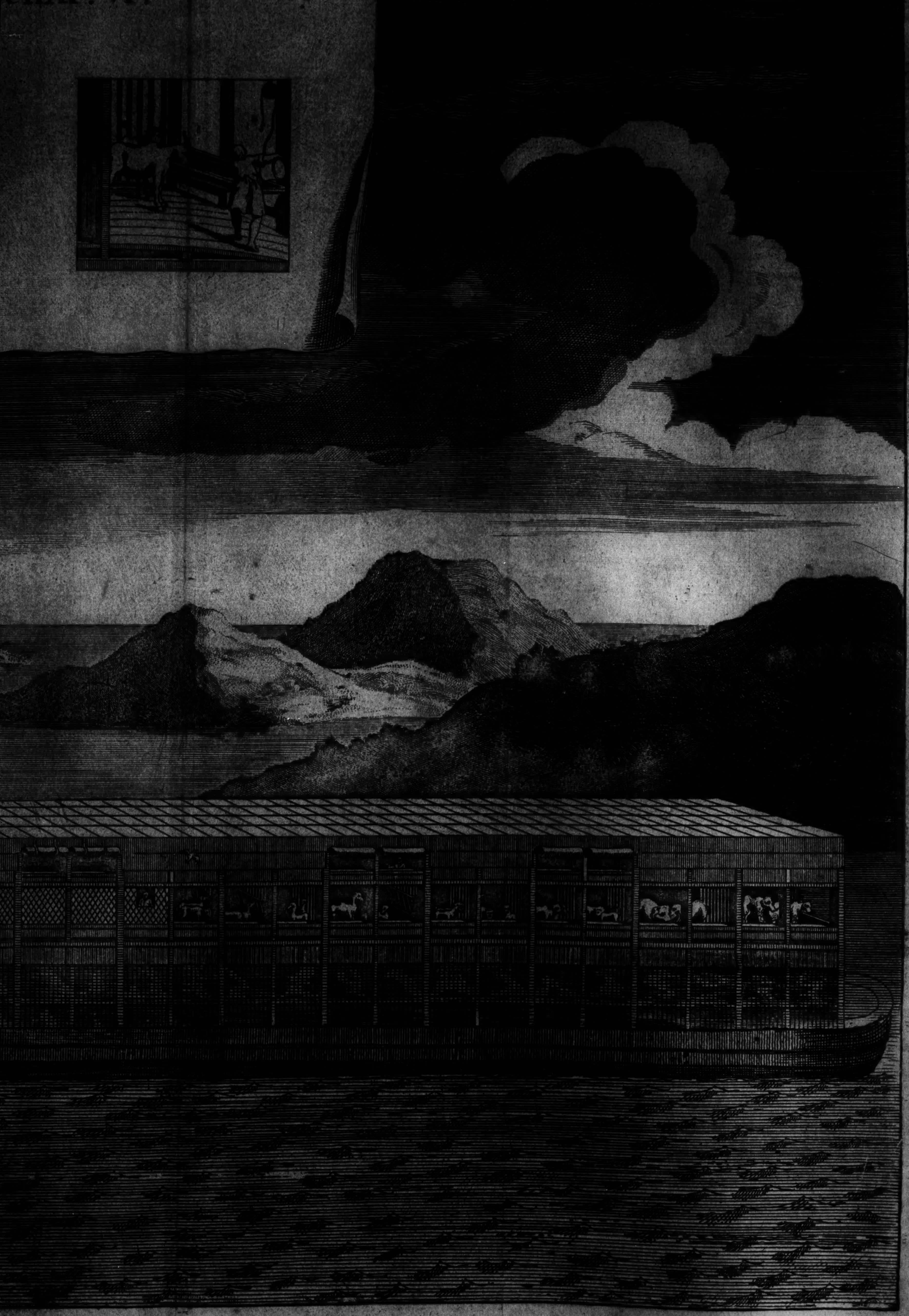
GENESIS CHAP.

NOAH'S ARK floating upon the Waters of the Deluge, containing



taining the Remains of Mankind; the rest perishing therein. Delineated according to B. LAMY

Chap. VI.

The unlawful Matches of the Sons of God, *with the Daughters of Men, grieve the Spirit of* God, *who threatens their Deſtruction; but graciouſly allows them a hundred and twenty Years for Repentance: Giants and Mighty Men born; Mankind in general degenerate;* God *repents of having made Man, and reſolves to deſtroy all Fleſh; but* Noah *is excepted and finds favour with* God; *his Character; the Earth is filled with Violence;* God *acquaints* Noah *with his Intention to deſtroy it with a Flood; and directs him to make an Ark; the Uſe and form of the Ark;* God's *Covenant with* Noah *to preſerve a Seed;* Noah's *Obedience.*

Q. W*HAT is the firſt Thing to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. 'That when Men began to Multiply upon the 'Face of the Earth, and Daughters were born unto 'them, the Sons of God ſaw the Daughters of Man, 'that they were fair, and took them Wives of all 'which they choſe."

Q. *What are we to underſtand by the Sons of* God *and the Daughters of Men?*

A. Commentators are greatly divided thereupon; ſeveral of the *Jewiſh* Writers, who have been followed therein by divers Fathers of the Church, have given into that extravagant Opinion, that by the *Sons of God* are meant Angels, and conſequently that they had come down upon Earth, and taken to themſelves Wives, upon whom they begot a Generation of Giants. Others again being no leſs extravagant in their Imaginations, have fancy'd by naming the *Sons of God*, in Oppoſition to the *Daughters of Men*, that by the latter were meant the *Devils*; but theſe Interpretations, though antient, are highly abſur'd and improbable; for *Moſes* ſpeaks of the Sins of Men, and not of thoſe of Angels or Devils; and in ſhort, Men were born of that Conjunction, which implies that thoſe *Sons of God* were then alſo. It will now be natural to ask who thoſe Men were, that were called the *Sons of God*, and wherefore that Name is given them? Two Anſwers, and both of them very rationable and plauſible, may be given to this Queſtion. The firſt, and the moſt commonly received Opinion is; that as the two great Families derived from *Adam*, that by *Cain*, and that by *Seth*, differed greatly in their Natures and Courſe of Life, they were accordingly diſtinguiſhed by very different Appellations: That the Offspring of *Cain* being wholly given up to worldly and ſenſual Pleaſures, and Abominations, and minding only earthly Things, were called Men, or the Sons of Men; but that the Poſterity of *Seth*, addicting themſelves to Virtue and Piety, and profeſſing the Worſhip of the true *God*, were called the *Sons of God*. The Meaning then this Way will be, that the Sons of *Seth* contracted Alliances with the Daughters of *Cain*, who probably being as wicked and debauched as the Men, ſpent their whole Time in ſetting off their natural Beauty with all Sorts of Ornaments, and even with the Allurements of a wanton and inticing, though graceful Behaviour, which the Daughters of *Seth* not daring to uſe (as no good Women will) the others were more fair, that is ſeemed more fair, in the Eyes of the fleſhly-minded Sons of *Seth*, who now began to degenerate.

Another Way of Solving this Difficulty, is by having Recourſe to a different and not leſs rational Tranſlation of the original *Hebrew*; the Word (*Elohim*) which is ſometimes rendered *God*, ſignifies often no more than a Judge, or Sovereign, or Perſon inveſted with Authority; and as the beſt Interpreters agree, that the *Hebrew* denotes the inferior Sort of People by the *Sons of Men*, the *Daughters of Men*, will ſignify no more than the Daughters of the inferior Sort. It is farther to be obſerved, that the (*Labach*) does not only ſignify to *take*, but to *take by Force*, or to *ſurprize*, or to *raviſh*, and that this Behaviour of the Sons of *God* is called a *Violence*, ver. 11. 13. Which Violence provoked *God* to ſend the Deluge upon the Earth. The Deſign of *Moſes* then is, to aggravate the Wickedneſs of that Age, by ſhewing that thoſe who were in Authority, and conſequently ſhould have been exemplary for *Piety* and *Virtue*, were nothing but Patterns of *Luſt* and *Violence*: So that the Words ſhould have been rendered, *That the Sons of the Sovereignty*, (or Perſons in Authority) *ſeeing that the Daughters of the inferior Sort were fair, took them by Force, and raviſh'd them at their Pleaſure*; as ſome Verſions and Interpreters have accordingly tranſlated them.

Q. *What next is to be obſerved from this Chapter?*

A. 'And the Lord ſaid, my Spirit ſhall not always 'ſtrive with Man, for that he alſo is Fleſh: Yet his 'Days ſhall be an hundred and twenty Years."

Q. *What are we to underſtand thereby?*

A. That *God* either told the Men of that Age by the Mouth of *Noah*, or determined within himſelf, that he would not any longer ſtrive with Men, as he had done till then, by inward Motions and Suggeſions to their Minds and Conſciences to rouze them to Repentance; or elſe that in Compaſſion to their Frailties, as they were Fleſh, and conſequently, naturally prone to Evil, though his Juſtice was continually provoking him to immediate Puniſhment, would ſuffer his Mercy to prevail, and allow them yet a hundred and twenty Years Reſpite, in which Time if they repented he would have Mercy on them. This rather ſeems to us the moſt reaſonable Interpretation; becauſe, if, by the Firſt is meant a withdrawing of all the inward Workings of Spiritual Grace, it is almoſt the ſame as delivering them up to a judicial Hardneſs of Heart as he did *Pharaoh*, after which there is no Poſſibility of Repentance; and becauſe *God* inſpired *Noah* to preach to them all that Time, which had they been judicially hardened, muſt have been entirely in vain; wherefore we rather believe he left open a Way for their Repentance, upon the Preaching of *Noah*, and his Denunciations of the Judgment to come, of the Truth of which, his Building the Ark was an undeniable Evidence: Not but we acknowledge *God's* Sovereignty and Right to harden whom he pleaſes, and have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy; but we can hardly think he would judicially harden all Mankind. Be that as it will, this is an eminent Inſtance of *God's* Forbearance and infinite Mercy, and the Difference between that of *God* and that of Man. For Man ſeldom gives Warning where he intends to ſtrike, and almoſt as ſeldom ſtrikes, but were he means to deſtroy. "Why "doſt thou give notice of the Judgments thou art "about to execute?" ſaith St. *Chryſoſtom*; "That I "may never execute thoſe Evils of which I give no"tice" adds he, anſwering in *God*'s ſtead. And to the ſame Effect ſays St. *Hierom*; "*God*, becauſe he "does not deſire to puniſh any Man, threatens them "with his Puniſhments like a Father; and ſhakes his "Rod, becauſe he has no Mind to correct his Chil"dren".

Q. *What is farther to be learnt from this Chapter?*

A. “ That there were Giants in the Earth in thoſe “ Days; and alſo after that, when the Sons of *God* “ came in unto the Daughters of Men, and they bare “ Children to them, the ſame became mighty Men, “ which were of Old Men of Renown.

Q. *What are we to underſtand thereby?*

A. The *Hebrew* Word is *Nephilim*, which is tranſlated *Giants*, but it may as well be rendered outragious *Perſons*, that inſult and kill others; wherefore, they may be called Giants, partly from their high Stature, but more from their Strength and Force, and the Abuſe of it in the oppreſſing and tyrannizing over others: And this is the more likely, becauſe this is mentioned as another Sin, and Occaſion of the Flood; whereas high Stature is no Crime, but the Abuſe of Strength, or Power, by Violence and Oppreſſion, is a great and crying one. As to the Children, which the Daughters of Men are ſaid to have bor, *after that*, to the Sons of *God*, they ſeem to have been a new Generation; but ſuch a Generation, as were mighty Men; that is Men of Strength, and that abuſed that Strength by Violence; and that to ſuch a Degree, as to become Men of Renown; that is, famous in their Generation for exceeding, in their Acts of Oppreſſion and Violence, thoſe which were of old; that is, all thoſe Tyrants who went before them. So that the ſame falſe Notion ſeems to have prevailed before the Flood, as has done ſince; and undoubtedly it obtained by the ſame Means, *viz.* by the Suggeſtions of that common Enemy to Mankind, the *Devil.* For theſe Men ſeem to have been named Men of Renown, from the ſame falſe Principle as *Alexander* the *Great*, and *Julius Ceſar* have been falſly ſtiled ſo ſince; *viz.* from a *tyrannical* Uſe, of an *exorbitant* Power, *unjuſtly* acquired, by ſucceſsful *Villany*; whereas, according to right Reaſon, they ought be held as no better than infamous Robbers, Murderers, and Tyrants.

Q. *Of what are we informed in the following Verſe?*

A. “ That *God* ſaw the Wickedneſs of Man was “ great in the Earth, and that every Imagination of “ the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually.

Q. *What do we learn from thence?*

A. That Man was perpetually either doing or contriving Wickedneſs; that not only his Actions were vile, but his Principles alſo; nay his very Soul, and the nobleſt Part of it, which might ſeem moſt unlikely to be contaminated with the Contagion; in ſhort, that his whole Mind and Thoughts were perpetually bent upon the moſt horrid Abominations and Corruptions; and, conſequently, that there was no longer any Room to hope for the leaſt Amendment.

Q. *When Men had thus delivered themſelves up to this abandon'd State, was not* God *infinitely exaſperated at them?*

A. Undoubtedly; for the Scripture expreſly ſays, *And it repented the Lord that he had made Man on the Earth, and it grieved him at the Heart.* Not that God can properly be ſaid to repent; becauſe he is unchangeable in his Nature and Counſels, and perfectly wiſe, and conſtantly happy, and, conſequently, not liable to Grief or Diſappointment. But *Moſes* here ſpeaks of God after the Manner of Man, and adapts his Words to our Capacity and Underſtanding; in the ſame Manner as Eyes, Ears, Hands, *&c.* are alſo aſcribed to him; and it denotes the Alienation of God's Heart and Affections from Men, for their Wickedneſs; inſomuch that *God* behaved himſelf towards them, like one that was truly penitent and grieved, by deſtroying the Work of his own Hands. In ſhort, the only Meaning of the Verſe is; that *God* was exceedingly incenſed againſt them.

Q. God, *whoſe Nature it is to hate Sin, as being himſelf the Author and Fountain of all Goodneſs, muſt neceſſarily abhor ſuch ſinners; Did he not accordingly make them feel the Weight of his Anger?*

A. Not immediately, to ſhew his Mercy, as well as his Juſtice, in leaving them Time for Repentance; but he reſolved within himſelf to do it, in caſe they perſiſted in their Iniquity; and accordingly ſaid, “ I “ will deſtroy Man, whom I have created, from the “ Face of the Earth, both Man and Beaſt, and the “ creeping Thing, and the Fowls of the Air; for it “ repenteth me that I have made them.

Q. *But how was it conſiſtent with God's Mercy, Goodneſs, and Juſtice, to deſtroy the Beaſts, creeping Things, and the Fowls, which cannot be ſuppoſed to have ſinned?*

A. As the Beaſts, Reptiles, and Fowls, had been made for Man's Uſe and Service, they might very well be deſtroyed for his Puniſhment, without any Infringement of God's Juſtice, or Mercy; beſides, God might do it, to ſhew the more evidently the Malignity of Sin, and his infinite Abhorence thereof; in puniſhing it even in thoſe brute Creatures, who, not improbably might have been ſubſervient, and the Inſtruments thereof though innocently; for ſuppoſing theſe *Antediluvians* to have been given up to Luxury, as well as other Vices, they could not be ſo, without a manifeſt, and groſs Abuſe of *God*'s Creatures.

Q. *Did* God *determine to deſtroy all Mankind; were none excepted from it?*

A. Yes, *Noah* found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord, becauſe he was a juſt Man, and perfect in his Generations, and walked with *God*; wherefore the Lord graciouſly reſolved to ſave him and his Family. Not that *Noah* was perfectly juſt; no, he had his Failings and Infirmities in common with all Men; ſo that he would not have been ſaved, had it not been for God's Grace and Mercy; but he was juſt and perfect, in Compariſon with that Generation of Men who then lived; he was good in bad Times; in Spite of evil Counſels and Examples; which is a high Commendation, and a Sign of great Integrity, Probity, Conſtancy, and Reſolution.

Q. *What farther do we learn from this Chapter?*

A. “ That the Earth was corrupt before *God*, and “ was filled with Violence, and *God* looked upon the “ Earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all Fleſh had “ corrupted his Way upon the Earth.

Q. *What are we to underſtand thereby?*

A. That all the Inhabitants of the Earth were become corrupt, that is given up to all Manner of ſenſual Luſts and Abominations; ſinning openly without Shame, in the Face of the Sun; which is called before *God*; and committing the moſt horrible Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, inſomuch that the Earth groan'd under their Violence: In ſhort, that they were corrupt in all their Duties both towards *God* and Man; towards *God*, by profaning his holy Religion with Superſtition, Idolatry, and the moſt filthy Impurities; and towards Man, by the moſt horrible Fraud, Rapine, and Oppreſſion.

What did the Lord thereupon?

A. “ And *God* ſaid unto *Noah*, the End of all Fleſh “ is come before me, for the Earth is filled with Vio- “ lence through them; and behold I will deſtroy them “ with the Earth.

Q. *What do we learn from thence?*

A. That *God* having before determined within himſelf to deſtroy all Mankind, now thought fit to acquaint *Noah* therewith, whom he had graciouſly reſolved to ſpare, with his Family, to re-people the Earth; which he may be ſuppoſed to have done for two Reaſons; *Firſt*, That *Noah*, by his preaching, might turn Mankind to Repentance; by warning them of the immediate Deſtruction that was otherwiſe coming upon them; which he might inculcate the more ſtrongly into them, as he had now received an expreſs Revelation thereof, immediately from *God*, who cannot lie; and 2*dly*, That *Noah*, by beginning to build the Ark, which we now find him directed to do, might give Mankind an evident and convincing Proof, (unleſs they thought him a Madman) that he preach'd to them no more than what he himſelf believed, and was aſſured to be true; which, conſequently, was the more likely to have a good Effect upon his Hearers: For we find it objected to many of our Preachers now-a-days, that they don't live as if they believ'd the Truth of what themſelves preach; and indeed, is it likely to reclaim any one, to hear a known Drunkard preach againſt Drunkenneſs; a known Letcher, inveigh againſt Whoredom; a noted Epicure againſt Luxury; or a noted Miſer and Extortioner, againſt Covetouſneſs, Uſury, and Extortion! Is not a Man likely to be finely edified, by hearing one preach up Charity, whom he knows never to have given a Half-penny to the poor in his Life; or another extol Self-Denial and Mortification, whoſe Roſy Gills and Fat Paunch give him the Lie every Word he ſpeaks! It is evident therefore, that a Preacher who expects to have what he ſays regarded, muſt live and act as if he believ'd the Truth of what himſelf preaches. This brings us again to *Noah*, who confirmed the Truth of his Doctrine, by his daily Employment for many Years, which was to provide againſt the approaching Deſtruction; an eminent and aſtoniſhing Inſtance of the Divine Mercy! Since, had they not been hardened to the greateſt Degree imaginable, this muſt have had a good Effect upon ſome of them; but we do not find ſo much as one converted thereby, of ſo many Millions as may then be ſuppoſed to be upon the Face of the Earth; prodigious Impenitence! No wonder it brought the Deluge upon ſo impious a Race.

Q. *What is next to be learn'd from this Chapter?*

A. Having acquainted *Noah* with his Deſign to deſtroy all Mankind, *God* then proceeds to give him an Order, and Directions for building the Ark; for the Preſervation of himſelf, and his Family; as alſo of a certain Number of all Sorts of Birds, Beaſts, and Reptiles, and Food for their Subſiſtence, to repleniſh the Earth after the Deluge.

Q. *Give me ſome Deſcription of the Shape, Size, and Matter of this Ark?*

A. It was to be made of *Gopher-wood*, about which Wood, Commentators are at Variance, what it was, that Word being but once uſed in Scripture: Some will have it a *Pine*, becauſe the Ancients built their Ships of that Timber; others a *Cedar*; and others again a *Cypreſs*; becauſe the one is a Wood that is not ſubject ſoon to decay; and conſequently was very proper for that Purpoſe; and becauſe the other is the ſame Wood of which *Alexander* the Great, afterwards built a Fleet; there being ſo great a Quantity thereof about *Babylon*, and ſo great a Scarcity of other Timber, that he was, in a Manner, obliged to uſe that, of mere neceſſity; beſides that it is a Wood not ſubject ſoon to decay, no more than the *Cedar*. To ſtrengthen the latter Opinion, which we think moſt probable, it may be added, that the Garden of *Eden* is generally believed to have been in *Meſopotamia*; that it is not likely, that Men, in the firſt Ages of the World, roved far from thence; that the Ark reſted upon the Mountains of *Ararat* in *Armenia*, which is at no great Diſtance from *Meſopotamia*; and that *Babylon*, where *Alexander* found ſuch vaſt Plenty of *Cypreſs* Trees ſo long after, was certainly the ſituated in the Land of *Shinar*, mentioned afterwards as the Place where the famous Tower of *Babel* was built, *Geneſis* xi. 2. Proceed we now to the Shape of the Ark. It was to conſiſt of ſeveral Rooms, and was to be covered or ſmeared over with a ſort of pitchy Subſtance called *Bitumen*, whereof there was Plenty in that Country, both to preſerve the Timber, keep out the Water, prevent its cracking or warping by the Heat of the Sun, after the Violence of the Deluge was over, and whilſt it was finiſhing; (for there was hardly any Sun to be ſeen during the Time of the Clouds pouring down their Rain,) and to make it glide more eaſily upon the Waters. The Length of the Ark was to be three hundred Cubits; the Breadth fifty; and the Height thirty; that is four hundred and fifty Foot, or one hundred and fifty Yards in Length; ſeventy five Foot or twenty five Yards in Breadth; and forty five Foot, or fifteen Yards in Height. The Scripture ſays, a Window ſhalt thou make to the Ark, and in a Cubit ſhalt thou finiſh it above: Upon which it is diſputed, whether there was only one or more Windows, (it being common in the *Hebrew* to put the Singular for the Plural) which were to be finiſhed in a Cubit above; or whether the whole Roof of the Ark was to be made ſloping, that the Rain might fall off, and the Middle of it was to be a Cubit, or a Foot and a half higher than the Reſt; the learned Mr. *Poole* gives a very good Reaſon, why the latter Senſe ſhould be preferred, which is from the Gender of the *Hebrew* Particle (*it*) which is *feminine*, and agrees with *Ark*, and not the *Window* which is *maſculine*. Beſides, a ſloping Roof agrees beſt with the Nature of the Thing, the *Ark* requiring it, ſo that the Rain might drain off, and not ſink in; and as the other Parts of that Veſſel, or Structure, were made with exquiſite Contrivance, doubtleſs the Roof was not defective therein. As to the Reſt of the *Ark*, it was to have a Door or entering Port in the Side, for the more convenient Entrance of the Beaſts that were to find Shelter therein; and was to conſiſt of three Stories, whereof the higheſt was probably for the Reception of Men and Birds; the ſecond for Proviſion for the Suſtenance of the Brute Creatures; and the lower for the Beaſts themſelves; under which might probably be the Sink or Drain of the Ark, which was a proper Receptacle for Serpents, and ſuch Reptiles, with their Proviſion; the Ark being probably made ſloping at the Bottom, as all Ships and Boats are.

Q. *Do no Difficulties ariſe from this Deſcription of the Size of the Ark, and from the vaſt Number of Beaſts, and Birds that were to be received, ſubſiſted, and even tended therein?*

A. Three Objections have indeed been ſtarted thereupon, but all of them are eaſily anſwered. The firſt is, that ſome have thought the Ark by theſe Dimenſions not capable of containing all the living Creatures that were to be received therein, with Stowage for their Proviſion; but this is a groſs Miſtake, made by the Ignorance of Infidels, and aggravated by their Malice againſt the Holy Scriptures, which prevents their giving themſelves Time to conſider, 1. That the different Kinds of Birds and Beaſts, which unlearned Men fancy to be innumerable, are obſerved by the learned, who have ſearched particularly into them, and written about them, to be but little above three hundred, whereof the far greateſt Part are but ſmall; and even many of theſe, which are now thought to differ in Kind, at their firſt Original were but of one Sort, tho' they are now ſo greatly altered in their Shape and Qualities; which may eaſily have ariſen from the Difference of their Climate, Food, and other Circumſtances, as alſo from the promiſcuous Conjunction of thoſe lawleſs Creatures. 2. That the Brute Creatures, when they were encloſed in the Ark, where they were idle, and conſtantly under a kind of Horror and Amazement, would be contented with far leſs Proviſion than they were before accuſtom'd to; and thoſe of another Sort, and ſuch as might lie in the leaſt Room, as Hay, and the Fruits of the Earth. *God* alſo, who altered their Natures, and made the ſavage Creatures mild and gentle, might by the ſame powerful Providence moderate their Appetites; or if he pleaſed, might have increaſed their Proviſion whilſt they were eating it, as *Chriſt* afterwards did by the Loaves and Fiſhes. 3. So vain and idle are the Cavils of wanton Wits, concerning the Incapacity of the Ark for containing Food for ſo many Beaſts, that ſuppoſing the ravenous Creatures fed upon Fleſh, there was alſo Space enough and to ſpare, for a ſufficient Number of Sheep for their Food for a whole Year; as will appear upon Computation; two Thouſand Sheep being more than ſufficient for them, and the Ark containing no leſs than 450,000 ſolid Cubits.

The ſecond Objection ſtarted, is; that as it is allowed on all Hands, that no more than eight Perſons were in the Ark, *viz. Noah*, his Wife, his three Sons, and their Wives, it was not poſſible they ſhould be ſufficient to give Meat and Drink to all the Beaſts in the Ark; to give the Birds Corn and Water; and to provide what was neceſſary for their own Suſtenance: But it may be eaſily made out by Computation, that *Noah*'s three Sons alone might have ſufficed to tend all the Beaſts; and then ſure it will be agreed, that *Noah* and his Wife, and their Daughters-in-law were more than ſufficient for tending the Birds, and providing what was neceſſary for themſelves.

The only Difficulty that now remains is, how *Noah* could bring all Sorts of Birds and Beaſts to one Place, and diſpoſe them to enter the Ark? But this Objection is ridiculous, if it be conſidered, that it was not *Noah* but *God* diſpoſed them thereunto: And yet this Objection may be anſwered, without having Recourſe to the Omnipotence of their Creator and ours. For, all Sorts of Creatures having been originally made in that Country, it is very rational to believe, that ſome of every Kind were ſtill remaining there; which being granted, and it is more reaſonable to believe ſo, than the contrary, *Noah*, without any Miracle, might have tamed ſome of each Kind in the Ark, ſome Time before the Flood, of which he had a Hundred and twenty Years Warning; ſo, that when the Deluge came on, they might naturally be brought to the Ark, at the Time when *Noah* entered it, and *God* ſhut him in.

Q. *Having given thoſe Directions for the building of the Ark, what next did the Lord tell him?*

A. And behold, I, even I, do bring a Flood of Wa-
" ters upon the Earth, to deſtroy all Fleſh, where-
" in is the Breath of Life, from under Heaven; and
" every Thing that is in the Earth ſhall die.

Q. *What do we learn from thence?*

A. That this Flood did not proceed from natural Cauſes, but from the immediate Hand and Judgment of God; that all Men, Birds, and Beaſts were deſtroyed therein: Mr. *Poole* has obſerved, that the Fiſh were exempted from this general Deſtruction. This, he ſuppoſes, might be either becauſe they did not live in the ſame Element wherein Men lived, and which they had polluted with their Sins; or becauſe Man had a greater Command over the Beaſts, than over the Fiſh, and greater Service and Benefit from them; wherefore the Deſtruction of the Former was a greater Puniſhment to Man, than the Deſtruction of the Latter. Theſe are the Reaſons alledged by the ingenious and learned Mr. *Poole*; but without condemning ſo great a Man, we rather imagine it might be, becauſe Water, which was made the Inſtrument of the Deſtruction of Men, Birds, and Beaſts, was the proper Element of the Fiſh; wherefore the Deluge enlarged the Bounds of their Territories, and Dominion, if we may uſe that Expreſſion; add to this, that as ſeveral Sorts of Fiſh feed upon dead Carcaſes, it was rather a Benefit to them than a Detriment, for they never had ſuch a Banquet before, nor will again; wherefore unleſs the *Almighty* would have added another Miracle, for the Deſtruction of Fiſh alone, either by changing their Nature, or any other Way, which can hardly be ſuppoſed by any Man in his Senſes, or would have had Recourſe to ſome other Element, which we think muſt neceſſarily have been Fire, for the Inſtrument of his Vengeance, there was, in a Manner, a Neceſſity that the Fiſh ſhould live. We know indeed, it may be objected, that *God* might have killed them all by the Putrefaction of the Waters, but even this would have required another Miracle; for the Putrefaction of the Waters muſt neceſſarily have corrupted the Air, and muſt conſequently have killed every Creature in the Ark, without the immediate Intervention of Providence for their Preſervation; it being impoſſible for any Creature to live where the Air is totally infected.

Q. *Having denounced that dreadful Sentence againſt all Fleſh, what did the* Lord *tell* Noah *to comfort him?*

A. But with thee will I eſtabliſh my Covenant, and thou ſhalt come into the Ark, thou and thy Sons, and thy Wife, and thy Sons Wives with thee.

Q. *What are we to underſtand thereby?*

A. Either that by this Covenant is meant ſome Promiſe, which had been made before to *Noah*, tho' not before mentioned, to preſerve him both till the Flood, and in it; notwithſtanding all the Scoffs, and Threats, which, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, he met with from the wicked World, all the Time of his Preaching, and building the Ark; which Promiſe *Noah* had ſufficient Need of for his Encouragement all the Time of his Miniſtry; or that it means *God*'s Promiſe concerning the ſending of the promiſed Seed, and the Redemption of the World by the *Meſſiah*, who was to come out of his Loins; wherefore he might aſſure himſelf, he ſhould be preſerved.

Q. *What farther is to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. *God* having aſſured *Noah*, that himſelf and his Family ſhould be preſerved, and promiſed to eſtabliſh his Covenant with him, proceeds to give him Directions for the Preſervation of all Kinds of living Creatures; which were, that he ſhould take two of every Sort, (that is at leaſt two of every Sort, even of the unclean; for we find *God* ordering him to take more of the clean, in the ſecond Verſe of the *next* Chapter) Male and Female, to preſerve and propagate their Species, upon the Earth. He was alſo to provide, and lay up a ſufficient Quantity of all Food that was then eaten, to be for the Subſiſtence of himſelf and them.

Q. *Did Noah exactly fulfill all the Almighty's Commands?*

A. Yes, it is expreſly ſaid; "Thus did *Noah*; "according to all that *God* commanded him, ſo did "he."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from thence?*

A. That he was a ſingular Example, both of Faith, Conſtancy, and Obedience; and accordingly he is mentioned both here, and by the Apoſtle, *Heb.* xi. 7. as an Example worthy of our Imitation. For, *firſt*, If we conſider the Building of the Ark, it was a Work of no ſmall Labour and Expence; beſides which, it was not only tedious, but dangerous, and to all Appearance, vain and ridiculous; eſpecially when all Things remained in the ſame Situation for ſo many Scores of Years together. Not to mention the Labour and Expence, which is obvious to any one, who will but conſider the immenſe Charge of a firſt Rate Man of War, which is a Veſſel infinitely leſs than the Ark, without her Sails, Rigging, or Ammunition, (and the Stores *Noah* was obliged to provide, muſt be infinitely more expenſive than all theſe put together) it muſt be a Work intolerably tedious; for it is not to be ſuppoſed, that *Noah* was aſſiſted therein by any but his three Sons; becauſe it was an Undertaking which every Body ridiculed, and expoſed *Noah* not only to the Scoffs of all the Wits, and Libertines of the Age, but even to the Injuries and Affronts of every one; as being a Reflexion upon the whole Race of Mankind then upon the Earth, and threatening them with a general and dreadful Judgment, for the Puniſhment of all their Sins and Impieties; eſpecially as *Noah*, by his Preaching at the ſame Time, acquainted them with the Uſe for which the Ark was deſigned: Conſidering then, that we have ſhewn it to be a Work of infinite Labour, Expence, Tediouſneſs, Danger, and in all human Appearance, Folly and Stupidity, no Wonder it is mentioned as an heroick Act of Faith in *Noah*, that he ſurmounted all theſe Difficulties; to which we may add, that it was equally an Act of the greateſt Reſolution, and Obedience.

CHAP. VII.

God *commands* Noah *to enter the Ark; the Reaſon of it;* Noah's *Obedience in all Things; his Age; his Entrance with his Family into the Ark; the Day on which the Flood began; how long it continued; it deſtroys every living Subſtance that was on the Face of the Earth.*

Q. W*HAT is the firſt Thing to be learnt from this Chapter?*

A. "And the *Lord* ſaid to *Noah*, Come thou, and "all thy Houſe into the Ark; for thee have I ſeen "righteous before me in this Generation."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the Ark being now finiſhed, and the Time of *God*'s Patience almoſt expired, the Lord ever mindful of his Promiſe, ordered *Noah* and his Family to enter therein, that they might be preſerved; giving it as the Reaſon of this his Care of him, becauſe he had ſeen him righteous; which ſhews that a righteous Man is *God*'s peculiar Care; and likewiſe, that none but righteous Men are entitled to his Care; or have any Reaſon to expect it.

Q. *Having thus taken Care for* Noah's *Safety, what next did the Lord proceed to do?*

A. In the next Place, he directs *Noah* to take to him of every clean Beaſt by Sevens, the Male and his Female, and of Beaſts that were not clean by two, the Male and his Female; that is, ſeven Couple of Beaſts that were clean, and but one Pair of ſuch as were unclean: He alſo directs him to do in the ſame Manner by Fowls, in order to keep Seed alive upon the Face of the Earth.

Q. *But does not a Difficulty ariſe here; for we don't find the Diſtinction of clean and unclean Beaſts made before the Promulgation of the Law; which was not till ſome Time after the Flood?*

A. Though there was not at that Time any written Law, there certainly was a Law then in Force; which, it is believed, was communicated by *God* immediately to *Adam*, and ſo was delivered down by Tradition from Father to Son; and by this traditional Law, it is to be ſuppoſed, this Diſtinction was made: Now that there certainly was a Law then in Force, and that a Law very well known, will evidently appear from hence; *That where there is no Law, there is no Tranſgreſſion*; and conſequently the People of the old World could not have been juſtly puniſhed for their Sins, had they not been very ſenſible, that thoſe Actions of which they were guilty, and which brought the Flood upon them, were highly criminal by the Law, and in the Eye of *God*.

Q. *What next do we learn from this Chapter?*

A. "For yet ſeven Days, and I will cauſe it to "rain upon the Earth forty Days and forty Nights: "and every living Subſtance that I have made, will "I deſtroy from off the Face of the Earth."

Q. God *had made the Declaration before; why is he ſuppoſed to have repented it again here?*

A. He had indeed made a general Declaration, that he would bring a Flood upon the Earth, and deſtroy all living Creatures; but then the Time before the Deluge was to come was ſo remote, that the threatning thereof made little or no Impreſſion upon the Reprobates of that Age; it is generally ſuppoſed, therefore, that *God* immediately gave this ſecond Warning, both for *Noah* to provide for his own Safety, and for him to advertiſe them how ſudden and univerſal a Deſtruction would overwhelm them all, unleſs they had Recourſe to Repentance, and amended their Lives; in which Caſe, no Doubt, their Doom would have been reverſed, as was afterwards that of the *Ninevites*, who repented upon the preaching of *Jonah*. Accordingly, Mr. *Poole*, from the firſt of *Peter* iv. 6. is of Opinion, that ſome of the *Antediluvians*, who had ſlighted the Threatening, when it was at 120 Years Diſtance, now hearing a ſecond Threatening, and conſidering the Nearneſs of their Danger, were more affected, and brought to true Repentance; and that tho' *God*, on Account of their former and long Impenitence, did not think fit ſo far to remit the Puniſhment due to their Crimes, as not to deſtroy their Bodies by the Deluge, they might nevertheleſs be ſaved in their Souls.

Q. *What further are we informed of in this Chapter?*

A. "That *Noah* did according to all that the "*Lord* commanded him; that he was ſix hundred "Years old, when the Flood of Waters was upon "the Earth; that he went in, and his Sons, and his "Wife, and his Sons Wives with him into the Ark, "becauſe of the Waters of the Flood; that of the "clean Beaſts, and of Beaſts that are not clean, and "of Fowls, and of every Thing that creepeth upon "the Earth, there went in two and two unto *Noah* "into the Ark, the Male and the Female, as *God*

“ had commanded *Noah*; and that it came to paſs “ after ſeven Days, that the Waters of the Flood “ were upon the Earth.”

Q. *This is all ſo plain, that it hardly needs any Explanation; all the Difficulty that occurs is; that* Noah *is ſaid to have been but ſix hundred Years old, when the Flood of Waters was upon the Earth. Now as it is ſaid,* Chap. v. 32. *that he was five hundred Years old, and begat* Shem, Ham, *and* Japheth; *and the* Lord *promiſes,* Chap vi. 3. *that notwithſtanding their Wickedneſs, he would allow Mankind* 120 *Years for Repentance, this Promiſe ſeems not to have been performed, ſince there were but a one hundred Years between that Time and the Flood. How will you remove this ſeeming Contradiction?*

A. Very eaſily; for notwithſtanding the Birth of *Shem, Ham,* and *Japheth,* is mentioned before this Promiſe, *Chap.* v. 32. it is very evident, this Verſe is added there out of its proper Place, only to compleat the Genealogy, for which Reaſon it is again repeated after this Promiſe, in the tenth Verſe of the next Chapter, which ſeems to be its proper Place. This Promiſe therefore, in all Probability, and for any Thing that appears to the Contrary, was made 20 Years before the Birth of *Noah*'s three Sons. And even ſuppoſing it otherwiſe, the increaſing Wickedneſs of that Race might juſtly haſten their Ruin, and forfeit this Indulgence which might only be meant conditionally on *God*'s Side.

Q. *This Anſwer ſeems very ſatisfactory; What is farther to be obſerv'd from this Chapter?*

A. “ In the ſix hundredth Year of *Noah*'s Life, “ in the ſecond Month, the ſeventeenth Day of the “ Month, the ſame Day were all the Fountains of “ the great Deep broken up, and the Windows of “ Heaven were opened. And the Rain was upon “ the Earth forty Days and forty Nights.”

Q. *What Month is meant by the ſecond Month; what by the Fountains of the great Deep; and what by the Windows of Heaven?*

A. Commentators are divided upon almoſt all theſe Heads: As to the firſt; as the *Jews* had two different Ways of computing the Beginning of their Year; the one for the Celebration of their ſacred Feſtivals; which commenced about the Middle of *March,* and took in Part of *April,* and was by them called the Month *Niſan*; and the other for the better ordering of their civil and political Affairs, which began in the Month *Tiſri,* which took in Part of our *September,* and Part of *October.* Some will have the ſecond Month, when the Flood came to have been, in the Month of *Zif,* or *Jair,* which takes in Part of *April,* and Part of *May*; and conſequently being the pleaſanteſt Seaſon of the Year, and a Time when the Weather is generally fair, made that wicked Race far from expecting or fearing a Flood at that Juncture; not conſidering that the *Almighty* can alter the Seaſons at his Pleaſure: Beſides, ſay the Favourers of this Opinion, as *Noah* was a compleat Solar Year in the Ark, from the Time of his going in, to the Time of his coming out, it follows he muſt come out at the very ſame Seaſon as he went in; and it is more probable this was about the Beginning of *May,* when the Trees and Plants began to bud and ſhoot out, and the Earth produced abundantly freſh Food for the Creatures preſerv'd in the Ark, and the Sun had a greater Power to dry the humid Earth than in the Beginning of *October,* when the Heat of the Sun is not near ſo intenſe, but, on the Contrary, the Face of Nature began to put on a leſs chearful Aſpect. The Favourers of the other Opinion alledge; that the moſt ancient and firſt Beginning of the Year among the *Jews* was in *September*; and that the other Beginning of the Year in *March,* was an Inſtitution of a later Date, with reſpect to their Feaſts and ſacred Affairs only, which have nothing to do with the Flood. We ſhall not pretend to decide which of theſe two Opinions is the beſt grounded, but leave that to our Readers to determine for themſelves; only we ſhall obſerve, that the moſt ancient Way of Computation among the *Jews* being to begin their Year in *September,* it ſeems moſt probable that *Moſes* would follow that Computation: This one Difficulty occurs; that this being at a Time of Year, when the Seaſon of Harveſt was juſt over, and the Earth which had been covered with a Flood, could not poſſibly have any Fruits or Herbage upon it, for the Subſiſtence of the Creatures preſerved in the Ark, nor was any to be expected till the Return of the Seaſon of the Year, it follows that *Noah* muſt have been obliged to have provided Food for all thoſe Creatures for two Years; which we don't find has been obſerv'd by any of the Favourers of this Opinion. As to the ſecond Article, the Fountains of the great Deep which are ſaid to have been broken up; ſome underſtand this only of the Ocean's breaking its natural Bounds, and overflowing the Earth like a Torrent; others of the Subterranean Waters pent up within the Caverns of the Earth, which now burſt out from their Priſons with great Violence, at the Command of the *Almighty,* and forcing their Way through the Surface of the Earth, made thoſe vaſt Chaſms, which have ſince gone by the Name of inland Seas, as the *Mediterranean, Baltick, Euxine,* and *Caſpian* Seas: The latter of which having no viſible Vent for its Waters, notwithſtanding divers Rivers diſembogue themſelves therein, and eſpecially the *Volga,* which flows into it, from innumerable Mouths, in great Abundance, muſt infallibly drown all thoſe Parts of the Earth, did not the Waters return to thoſe hidden Receptacles in the Boſom of the Earth, from whence they were forced by the *Almighty* at the Time of the Deluge. As to the third Article, the Windows of Heaven, which are ſaid to have been opened, and which the *Septuagint* renders *Cataracts* (as imagining, with great Probability, that the Rain did not fall then as uſual, but in great Sheets of Water, and continual Streams, like the Cataracts or natural Caſcades of the *Nile.*) Some underſtand this of the Clouds which then grew thicker and bigger with Waters, and ſent them down in greater Quantities; and others from *Gen.* i. 7. with more Probability, of the Waters, which are there ſaid to have been placed above the Firmament, and which they ſuppoſe to have been there kept, as it were in Priſon, till the Deluge, for that very Purpoſe: Mr. *Poole* adds, that there will be no Inconvenience, if we ſay, that *God* created a Quantity of Waters for this End, which he afterwards annihilated.

Q. *What do we learn next from this Chapter?*

A. “ In the ſelf ſame Day entered *Noah* and *Shem,* “ and *Ham,* and *Japheth,* the Sons of *Noah,* and “ *Noah*'s Wife, and the three Wives of his Sons with “ them, into the Ark: They and every Beaſt after “ his Kind, and all the Cattle after their Kind, and “ every creeping Thing that creepeth upon the Earth “ after his Kind, and every Fowl after his Kind, “ every Bird after his Sort. And they went in unto “ *Noah* into the Ark, two and two of all Fleſh, “ wherein is the Breath of Life. And they that went in, “ went in Male and Female of all Fleſh, as *God* had “ commanded him: And the *Lord* ſhut him in”.

Q. *What is to be obſerved from thence?*

A. This is little elſe but a Recapitulation of what has been ſaid before; only we may obſerve, from the ſpecifying here of *Noah*'s Wiſe, and the three Wives of his Sons, that it is highly probable, that as *Polygamy* was firſt introduced by *Lamech*, one of the wicked *Cain*'s Poſterity, that it was as yet confined to them; and that, however wicked the Sons of *God* might be in other Reſpects, it had not yet got Footing amongſt them, for, it is certain, that if ever *Polygamy* had been allowable, it muſt have been ſo in *Noah* and his Sons, for the re-peopling of the World, and repleniſhing the Earth: But, on the contrary, the firſt good Man whom we find taking two Wives is *Jacob*; and we reaſonably ſuppoſe he was betrayed into it by *Laban*'s Trick, and by ſeeing it was common amongſt thoſe Heathens, with whom he then was; ſo contagious is an ill Example, and evil Communication, even to the beſt of Men. We may likewiſe obſerve, that after *Noah* and his Family, and all the living Creatures had entered the Ark, it is expreſly ſaid; *And the* Lord *ſhut him in.* Now this was undoubtedly meant to ſhew, that he was faſtened in after ſome extraordinary Manner; and certainly this was highly neceſſary: For what leſs than *Omnipotence* could make a Faſtening ſufficiently ſtrong to reſiſt the impetuous Force of an enraged Ocean, ſwelling with Torrents of Rain that perpetually poured down in large Streams into it, and whole Seas which burſt out from the Bowels of the Earth; the whole probably impelled by a ſtrong Wind, or rather put into a wild Roar and Foam, by the united Efforts of all the four Winds in Conjunction, blowing furiouſly at once from contrary Corners! Add to this, that this was probably one continued Hurricane, of, at leaſt, forty Days, and as many Nights, without Intermiſſion or Reſpite. We know indeed, that Mr. *Poole*, from theſe Words, (*And the Rain was upon the Earth forty Days and forty Nights*) is of Opinion, that the Rain fell gradually as uſual at other Times; and that *God* thereby both awakened ſome of thoſe Sinners to Repentance, and allowed them Time for it; but with all Submiſſion to that learned Man, the Words of *Moſes* imply; that the ſame Day that the Rain began to fall, the ſame Day the Fountains of the great Deep were broken up, and even broken up with Violence; ſo that the Waves of the Ocean came rolling upon the Earth like a Torrent; wherefore, it as reaſonable to believe, that the Rain poured down with Violence likewiſe, and the Winds contributed their Aſſiſtance alſo, to increaſe that Scene of Horror and Confuſion; that ſo all the Elements, in a Manner, might unite their Efforts to revenge the Cauſe of their incenſed Creator: Beſides, had the Rain fallen in Drops as uſual, why ſhould the *ſeventy Interpreters* render that Word which our Verſion has the *Windows of Heaven*, by the Word *Cataracts*, which ſignifies a large Fall of Waters, in one continued Stream?

Q. *What is farther to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. “ And the Flood was forty Days upon the
“ Earth: And the Waters increaſed, and bare up
“ the Ark, and it was lift up above the Earth. And
“ the Waters prevailed, and were increaſed greatly
“ upon the Earth: And the Ark went upon the
“ Face of the Waters. And the Waters prevailed
“ exceedingly upon the Earth; and all the high Hills
“ that were under the whole Heaven were cover'd.
“ Fifteen Cubits upwards did the Waters prevail;
“ and the Mountains were cover'd.”

Q. *What is to be obſerv'd from thence?*

A. Moſes ſeems to have repeated theſe Circumſtances ſo often, both that they might make deeper Impreſſion upon the Minds of his Readers, well knowing the Hardneſs of Men's Hearts, and to convince us of the Truth of this dreadful Inſtance of *God*'s Juſtice upon Sin, and incorrigible Sinners: Perhaps being a Prophet, and inſpired, he might foreſee what Objections would be raiſed againſt this his Account of the Deluge, and might be willing to obviate them as much as poſſible; and accordingly Experience has ſhown that this his Caution was not needleſs.

Q. *Many objections have indeed, been ſtarted againſt this Account of the Flood, and particularly againſt the Univerſality thereof, for which Objections many ſpecious Reaſons may be aſſigned; it being beyond human Comprehenſion, whence ſuch a prodigious Quantity of Waters could iſſue, as would be ſufficient to overwhelm the whole Earth to the Height of fifteen Cubits (that is twenty-two foot and a half) above the higheſt Mountains. Some have pretended to prove (and their Calculations are not deſtitute of Probability,) that all the Waters in the Sea, the Cavities of the Earth, the Rivers and the Clouds put together, could never ſuffice to cover this whole Globe to ſuch a Height; that there is no conceiving whither ſuch an immenſe Quantity of Water could withdraw itſelf. They alledge likewiſe, that had the Deluge been univerſal, all Trees and Plants muſt have dy'd, as well as all living Creatures; which cannot be ſaid, ſince there were Trees and Plants after the Flood; that there are in all Countries ſome ſorts of Creatures peculiar to them; that if the Ark had been raiſed ſo high above the Earth, neither Men nor Beaſts could have lived, by reaſon of the Sharpneſs of the Air; that Men not being diſperſed over all the Earth, it was ſufficient to drown that Part of it which was peopled, in order to deſtroy them; and that though the Scripture ſays the Deluge cover'd all the Earth, it may very well be underſtood only of all that Part which was inhabited; the Expreſſion* (all the Earth) *being taken in ſeveral Places in Scripture for only ſome Part of it. How can all theſe Objections be anſwered?*

A. There is ſomething plauſible in theſe Objections, but they are not unanſwerable, as we ſhall endeavour to ſhew. As to the Univerſality of the Deluge, the Letter of the Text is expreſs for it; it being there ſaid, that *God* not only reſolved to deſtroy Mankind, but alſo all living Creatures, even to the Reptiles, and the Birds of the Air; and that as no Men were ſaved but *Noah* and his Family, ſo no other Creatures eſcaped but thoſe which were taken into the Ark, for the Preſervation of their Species. Beſides, had not all the Earth been drowned, the Building of the Ark would have been needleſs; ſince *God* could as well have warned *Noah* to remove to ſome other Country, which was not to ſuffer by the Inundation: It would alſo have required no leſs a Miracle, to keep up the Waters in one Part of the Earth, than to drown it all. As to there not being a Sufficiency of Waters to overflow the Hills to ſuch a Height, we think it an Objection of no great Weight, however plauſible, and incomprehenſible it may ſeem to ſome; for as it is generally allowed, that the whole Maſs of the Earth was covered with the Waters in the Beginning (and to how great a Height no one can pretend to determine) what ſhould hinder but thoſe very Waters, being forced out from the Receptacles provided for them by the *Almighty* at the Creation, whether in the Heavens, the Clouds, or the Bowels of the Earth, and meeting together again, might again cover the

Globe? Nor does its being ſaid, that the Waters prevailed to the Height of fifteen Cubits, above the higheſt Mountains, add any Weight to this Objection; unleſs a Man could be produced, who could either aſcertain the Height of the Waters above the Earth, in the Morning of the Creation, or who could Meaſure the Contents of the Clouds and the Heavens. As to the Objections, that all Plants and Trees muſt have been deſtroyed, as well as all living Creature; daily Experience ſhews that they might eaſily preſerve their Saps and Seeds for one Year, though under Water; and the *Olive Branch* (brought by the Dove,) which is called in our Verſion a *Leaf*, is a Demonſtration thereof. As to there being in all Countries ſome Sorts of Creatures peculiar to them; we have already obſerved, in another Place, that many of theſe Creatures, which are now thought to differ in Kind, were originally of one and the ſame Species, though they at preſent differ greatly in ſeveral Points; and this Difference may proceed from various Cauſes; as the Difference of their Food, or of the Climate they are bred in; and even from the promiſcuous Conjunction of thoſe Brute Creatures. For Inſtance; it is hardly to be queſtioned that the Sheep in *Turkey* are of the ſame Species with thoſe here in *England*, and that both Sorts came originally from thoſe in *Noah's* Ark; yet we hardly believe any one imagines, there were two Sorts of Sheep preſerved therein. As to the Impoſſibility of any Creatures breathing ſo much above the higheſt Mountains, it is evident, that the Maſs of Water having fill'd up the Spaces of the groſſer Air, forced that Air, which was before near the Earth, to riſe to the Tops of the higheſt Mountains; and conſequently all thoſe in the Ark breathed the ſame Air; they would have breathed at the Foot of thoſe Mountains. As to the Objection that Mankind were not then diſperſed over all the Earth, wherefore it would have been ſufficient to have drowned that Part which was peopled; it is very likely, though *Aſia* might be more populous than other Countries, when the Deluge happened, that the Curioſity and natural Reſtleſsneſs of Men, might have induced ſome to ſeek out and inhabit remote Parts; which might make it neceſſary for the Deluge to be univerſal, to anſwer the End of it, *viz.* the Deſtruction of all living Creatures. We imagine we have now anſwered all thoſe Objections; but nevertheleſs we think the beſt Anſwer on all ſuch Occaſions, is, that all Miracles are the Work of an *Omnipotent Being*; that there are no Degrees in Miracles; thoſe which ſeem the moſt amazing being as eaſy to the *Almighty* as thoſe which ſeem the eaſieſt; and that we muſt either disbelieve all Miracles in general, or believe all thoſe contained in the holy Scriptures.

Q. *What farther are we taught in this Chapter?*

A. "That all Fleſh died that moved upon the Earth, both of Fowl and Cattle, and of Beaſt, and of every creeping Thing that creepeth upon the Earth, and every Man. All in whoſe Noſtrils was the Breath of Life, of all that was in the dry Land died! (From whence Mr. *Poole* again remarks, that all Fiſh were exempted from this general Deſtruction.) And every living Subſtance was deſtroyed, which was upon the Face of the Ground, both Man and Cattle, and the creeping Things, and the Fowl of the Heaven; and they were deſtroyed from the Earth: And *Noah* only remained alive, and they that were with him in the Ark: and the Waters prevail'd upon the Earth an hundred and fifty Days."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That it is impoſſible to uſe Words more expreſſive, to eſtabliſh the Univerſality of the Deluge; and that it is evident *Moſes* repeats the Particulars ſo often, only that they may make the deeper Impreſſion upon our Winds, and to inculcate the Truth thereof into Us; as if he had foreſeen what *Infidels* we ſhould be in theſe latter Ages. Nevertheleſs, to ſuch a Proficiency are we arrived in *Infidelity*, or, to call it by its more modiſh Name, *Freethinking*, that whereas our Anceſtors, and the antient and wiſer *Heathens* have divers of them acknowledged the Truth and Univerſality of the Flood, (which all Antiquity believed, though they interlarded their Accounts thereof with Fables, as was uſual for them to do, and as may be ſeen by the Story of *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha*, in *Ovid's Metamorphoſes*,) yet our Modern *Heathens*, who miſcall themſelves *Chriſtians*, laugh at the Hiſtory of the Deluge, as an idle *Romance*, having too much Senſe, forſooth! to believe any Thing which their Reaſon cannot comprehend, or for which they cannot Account! Yet *Lactantius* appeals to the *Heathens* of his Age for the Truth of it; and there is not only Mention made of the Flood in General, but even of the Dove ſent out of the Ark, in *Plutarch*, *Beroſus*, and *Abydenus*: And the Memory of this general Flood is preſerved to this Day amongſt the poor ignorant *Indians*, who asked the *Chriſtians* that invaded them, whether they had ever heard of ſuch a Thing; and whether another Deluge was to be expected? And the *Chineſe* Writers relate, that but one Perſon, whom they call *Puoncuus*, eſcaped, with his Family, but all the Reſt periſhed in that univerſal Wreck of Nature.

Chap. VIII.

The Waters abate; the Ark reſts on Mount Ararat; *what Day the Tops of the Mountains were ſeen;* Noah *ſends out a Raven, and a Dove; the latter returns the firſt Time empty, but goes out again, and returns with an Olive Leaf or Branch; what Day the Earth was dry;* God *commands* Noah *and his Family to come out of the Ark;* Noah *builds an Altar, and offers Burnt-Offerings as an acknowledgment for his Preſervation;* God *accepts them, and promiſes not to curſe the Ground again, but to ſuffer the Seaſons to ſucceed each other regularly?*

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Thing to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. "That *God* remembred *Noah*, and every living Thing, and all the Cattle that was with him in the Ark: And *God* made a Wind to paſs over the Earth, and the Waters aſſwaged." From whence we may obſerve, that *God* never forgets thoſe that ſerve him: But how ſhould the *Lord* forget thoſe that ſerve him, when we find him ſo Merciful as ever to remember even the brute Beaſts! Nor is this the only Place where the Great *God* of Heaven and Earth condeſcends ſo far, as to have Regard to the brute Creation; for we find him again *Jonah* iv. 11. expoſtulating with that Prophet, who was angry for the Deſtruction of a Gourd, and yet would have had the *Lord* deſtroy *Nineveh*, becauſe he had prophecy'd her Deſtruction, and was loth to be counted a falſe Prophet; "And ſhould not I ſpare *Nineveh*, that great City, wherein are more than ſix-ſcore thouſand Perſons, that cannot diſcern between their right Hand, and their left, and alſo much Cattle." Nay, our Saviour aſſures Us, *God* carries his Condeſcenſion yet farther, for he ſays; *Luke*

xii. 6, 7. “ Are not five Sparrows ſold for two “ Farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before “ God? But the very Hairs of your Head are numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more Value “ than many Sparrows.” How grateful then ought Mankind to be, to ſo merciful and beneficent a Creator! We may farther obſerve how *God* is ſaid to have remembered *Noah, &c.* which was, by cauſing a Wind to paſs over the Earth, and aſſwaging the Waters. Whence we may learn, that the Way to ſhew we are mindful of any Perſons, is by our Actions; that is, by our relieving and aſſiſting them when under any Diſtreſs; not by mere Words, and barely ſaying we thought of them, or pitied them.

Q. *What is the next Thing to be learn'd from this Chapter?*

A. That *God* proceeded to take all the moſt effectual Means to abate the Violence of the Flood, “ by “ ſtopping the Fountains of the Deep, and the Win- “ dows of Heaven, and by reſtraining the Rain from “ Heaven.” From whence it is evident, that two different Things are meant by the *Windows of Heaven*, and the Clouds from which the Rain iſſues; becauſe otherwiſe, it had been ſufficient to have ſaid, either that the Windows of Heaven were ſtopp'd, or the Rain from Heaven was reſtrained, without uſing both thoſe Expreſſions: It is therefore moſt probable, that by the Windows of Heaven are meant thoſe Receptacles, provided by the *Almighty*, for the Waters above the Firmament, or viſible Heavens, at the Creation of the World.

Q. *What farther are we informed of in this Chapter?*

A. “ That the Waters returned from off the “ Earth continually; that after the End of the hun- “ dred and fifty Days they were abated; that the “ Ark reſted on the 17th Day of the ſeventh Month, “ upon Mount *Ararat*, (which is one of the higheſt “ Mountains in *Armenia*) that the Waters decreaſed “ continually till the tenth Month, on the firſt Day “ of which the Tops of the Mountains were ſeen; “ and that, at the End of forty Days after that, *Noah* “ opened the Window of the Ark, and let out a Ra- “ ven, which went forth to and fro, until the Wa- “ ters were dried up from off the Earth.

Q. *So far is pretty eaſy to be underſtood, without any farther Explanation; one only Difficulty remains; which is, why* Noah *ſhould chooſe to ſend out a Raven, rather than any other Bird?*

A. For a very ſubſtantial Reaſon, becauſe it was the fitteſt Meſſenger for his Purpoſe; both on Account of its ſmelling dead Carcaſes at a great Diſtance, and its flying far,. and then returning to its former Habitation: Accordingly it went to and fro till the Waters were dried from off the Earth, finding ſufficient Prey whereon to ſubſiſt, without entering the Ark again.

Q. *What next are we informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Noah* ſent out a Dove to ſee if the “ Waters were abated from off the Face of the “ Ground; that the Dove returned to him into the “ Ark, becauſe ſhe could find no Reſt for the Sole “ of her Feet; that he ſtay'd ſeven Days, and ſent “ her out again, when ſhe returned in the Evening “ with an Olive-Leaf in her Bill, whereby he knew “ that the Waters were abated from off the Earth; “ and that ſeven Days after he let her out again, “ and ſhe returned not to him any more.”

Q. *How came* Noah *to pitch afterwards upon a Dove for his Meſſenger?*

A. He had been partly diſappointed in his Deſign of making a Diſcovery how Things ſtood by the Raven; ſince he could only judge thereby, that there was Prey for it at no very great Diſtance; and conſequently, that, in all Probability, he was not very far from the Place where he entered the Ark, and that it was from the Tops of ſome of the higheſt Hills that were dry, and on which the Waters ſubſiding, had left ſome dead Carcaſes, that the Raven got its Food; Wherefore he reſolved to try by a Dove, which flies longer and lower than a Raven, and is remarkable for always returning from the greateſt Diſtance to its Habitation, as being loving and faithful to its Mate, whether the Waters were abated from off the Face off the Earth; that is, from off the Surface of the Earth, or the Low-lands. Accordingly, we find, that at the ſecond ſending out of the Dove, it returned in the Evening with an Olive-Leaf, as it is in our Verſon, but more probably an Olive-Twig or tender Branch (for the ſame Word in the *Hebrew* ſignifies either) in its Mouth; hereby *Noah* knew the Waters were abated from off the Earth; and upon his letting the Dove out the third Time, and her not returning any more, he found ſhe had met with Food and Lodging elſewhere; which as thoſe Birds feed only upon Pulſe, and Corn, he knew muſt be upon the dry Ground itſelf.

Q. *Having made this welcome Diſcovery, what did* Noah *proceed to do next?*

A. He prepared for going out of the Ark, by uncovering the Roof of it, on the firſt Day of the New Year, and found that the Surface of the Earth was dry.

Q. *And did he immediately leave his Confinement thereupon?*

A. No; he ſtaid yet fifty-five Days longer therein; becauſe he was willing to wait till *God* ſhould order him to leave the Ark, as well as he had his Commands to enter it; and to give the Earth Time to be fully dry, which muſt neceſſarily be, as yet, but damp, poachy, and unwholeſome.

Q. *What farther is to be learn'd from this Chapter?*

A. “ That on the twenty-ſeventh Day, of the “ ſecond Month; when the Earth was fully dry, “ *God* ordered *Noah* to come out of the Ark, to- “ gether with his Wife, his Sons, and his Sons Wives; “ as alſo to bring out with him every living Thing “ that was in the Ark, of all Fleſh, both of Fowl, “ and of Cattle, and of every Thing, that creepeth “ upon the Earth; that they might breed abundant- “ ly in the Earth, and be fruitful, and multiply “ upon the Earth; that *Noah* went out accordingly, “ with his Wife, his Sons, and his Sons Wives; as “ alſo, that every Beaſt, every creeping Thing, “ every Fowl, and whatſoever creepeth upon the “ Earth, after their Kinds, went forth out of the “ Ark.”

Q. *This ſeems not to need any Explanation, but that one Difficulty occurs, which is; That it being agreed on all Hands, that the Ark reſted on the Mountains of* Ararat; *that is, on one of the Mountains; (the Plural Number being put for the Singular, as is uſual among the* Hebrews) *which Mountains are in* Aſia; *and it being likewiſe agreed that* Noah, *and the Beaſts, came out of the Ark there; which Way could theſe Creatures poſſibly get from thence to* America, *and to the Iſlands remote from the Continent?*

A. It is not yet agreed among the beſt Geographers, whether *America* is joined to the Continent, or only ſeparated from *Aſia* by a very narrow Sea, over which divers living Creatures could eaſily ſwim:

Beſides, many living Creatures always were, and ſtill are, tranſported by Men in their Veſſels, either for their Subſiſtence, Profit, Buſineſs, or Diverſion, from whence the Reſt of their Kind may eaſily have been propagated there; but had it not been ſo, and had *America* been as far diſtant from *Aſia*, as it is from *Europe*, and *Africa*, could not the ſame *Almighty Being*, who made all thoſe Creatures, and cauſed them to come firſt to *Adam*, and then to *Noah*, both incline, and impower them afterwards to go whither he pleaſed.

Q. *Being now delivered from his melancholy Confinement, and made Lord of the new World, if we may uſe that Expreſſion, how did* Noah *at firſt employ his Time?*

A. The firſt Thing he did, when he came out of the Ark, was to build an Altar; very probably on the Mountain where it reſted; take of every clean Beaſt, and of every clean Fowl; and offer them as a Burnt-offering upon the Altar. This he did, in Acknowledgment of his merciful, and miraculous Preſervation, amidſt the general Wreck of Nature; well knowing, that had it not been for *God*'s Goodneſs in accepting of his weak and imperfect Endeavours, by Reaſon of his Faith in the Mediator to come, *Jeſus Chriſt*, himſelf and Family, muſt alſo have fallen a Sacrifice to *God*'s Juſtice.

Q. *What may we learn from thence?*

A. That we are bound both in Duty and Gratitude, to make our firſt Acknowledgments daily to *God*, for the Bleſſings he ſhowers down upon us, not only daily, but hourly, in our Preſervation and Support; for notwithſtanding *Noah*'s Deliverance from the Flood, may appear to moſt of us, a greater and more ſignal Inſtance of the Divine Mercy, than any Thing we have ever experienced in ourſelves; yet if we ſeriouſly conſider the numberleſs Caſualties to which the Life of Man is Subject; that there are thouſands of Ways out of the World, and but one Way of coming into it; we muſt allow, upon mature Reflexion, that the Preſervation of the Race of Mankind ever ſince, is no leſs eminent an Inſtance of the Divine Providence and Goodneſs, than that of *Noah*, and his Family in the Ark; nay even the Preſervation of every ſingle Man, to old Age, amidſt the infinite Accidents to which he is liable, is as remarkable a Monument of *God*'s Mercy, as the aforeſaid Deliverance and Preſervation of *Noah*, and as much demands his Acknowledgment.

Q. *What is obſerved in Scripture, upon* Noah's *making this Offering?*

A. "That the *Lord* ſmelled a ſweet Savour; and "ſaid in his Heart, I will not again curſe the Ground "any more for Man's Sake; for the Imagination of "Man's Heart is evil from his Youth; neither again "will I ſmite any more every living Thing, as I "have done. While the Earth remaineth, Seed-"time, and Harveſt, and Cold, and Heat, and "Summer, and Winter, and Day and Night ſhall "not ceaſe.

Q. *What may we learn from thence?*

A. That a Sacrifice offered with a grateful Heart is always acceptable to the *Lord*, and will not go unrewarded; accordingly, we find it ſaid, the *Lord* ſmelled a ſweet Savour; that is, was as well pleaſed therewith, as Men uſe to be with a ſweet Smell; for otherwiſe *God*, being a Spirit, cannot properly be ſaid to ſmell any Thing: Obſerve we now the Prevalence of a Sacrifice offered with a ſincere Heart! It drew down *God*'s Bleſſing on Men, on Beaſts, and on the Earth itſelf. The Bleſſing on Man, which is interwoven with that on the Earth, is, that *God* will not curſe the Ground any more for Man's Sake; that is, as he had before curſed the Ground for *Adam*'s Sin, he would now, in ſome Meaſure, remove that Curſe, and reſtore the Earth partly to its priſtine Fruitfulneſs; neither would he any more interrupt the Order of the Seaſons, as he had lately done by the Deluge; but Spring and Summer, Harveſt and Winter, Heat and Cold, Day and Night, ſhould regularly ſucceed each other, in their ordinary Viciſſitudes, as long as the World ſhould laſt. The Bleſſing on Beaſts is, neither will *God* again ſmite every living Thing as he had then done; that is he will not involve them in ſuch a general Deſtruction as he did in the Flood; otherwiſe he has not tied up his Hands from ſending a Sickneſs and Mortality among them, and ſweeping away great Numbers of them, as we ſee frequently done in divers Parts; and as, doubtleſs, will happen frequently again, whenever the Sins of Mankind call for ſuch a Judgment upon them. It remains now only to give the Reaſon why *God* promiſed not to curſe the Ground any more for Man's Sake, "nor to ſmite every living Thing as he had then "done;" and the Reaſon is contained in theſe Words, "for the Imagination of Man's Heart is evil from "his Youth," the Explanation of which we have reſerved to the laſt, becauſe the ingenious and learned Mr. *Howel* has obſerved thereupon; that the tranſlating of the *Hebrew* Particle *Chi* by the Word *(for)* is very injudicious and injurious; becauſe it makes the ſacred Author ſpeak quite contrary to what he deſigned; and is an Affront to the *Juſtice*, *Goodneſs* and *Wiſdom* of *God*; who, by this Tranſlation of *(for)* inſtead of *(though)* may ſeem to have bleſſed Man for his *evil Imaginations*. The Charge is heavy; but with humble Submiſſion to ſo great a Man (notwithſtanding the Particle *though* may do as well) we don't ſee, even as the Words ſtand, at preſent, in the vulgar Verſion, that any ſuch Inference is *neceſſarily* to be drawn from thence. The Words are, "I will not curſe the Ground any more for "Man's Sake; *(for)* the Imagination of Man's "Heart is evil from his Youth:" That is, becauſe all Men's Hearts are naturally corrupt, and from that filthy Spring evil Actions will continually proceed; wherefore, ſhould I hearken ſo entirely to my Juſtice, as to puniſh Men according to their Sins, I ſhould do nothing but ſend one Deluge after another; I will, therefore, let my Mercy prevail over it for the preſent, and leave the Puniſhment of Sin in general, as it is due to my Juſtice, to the laſt Judgment.

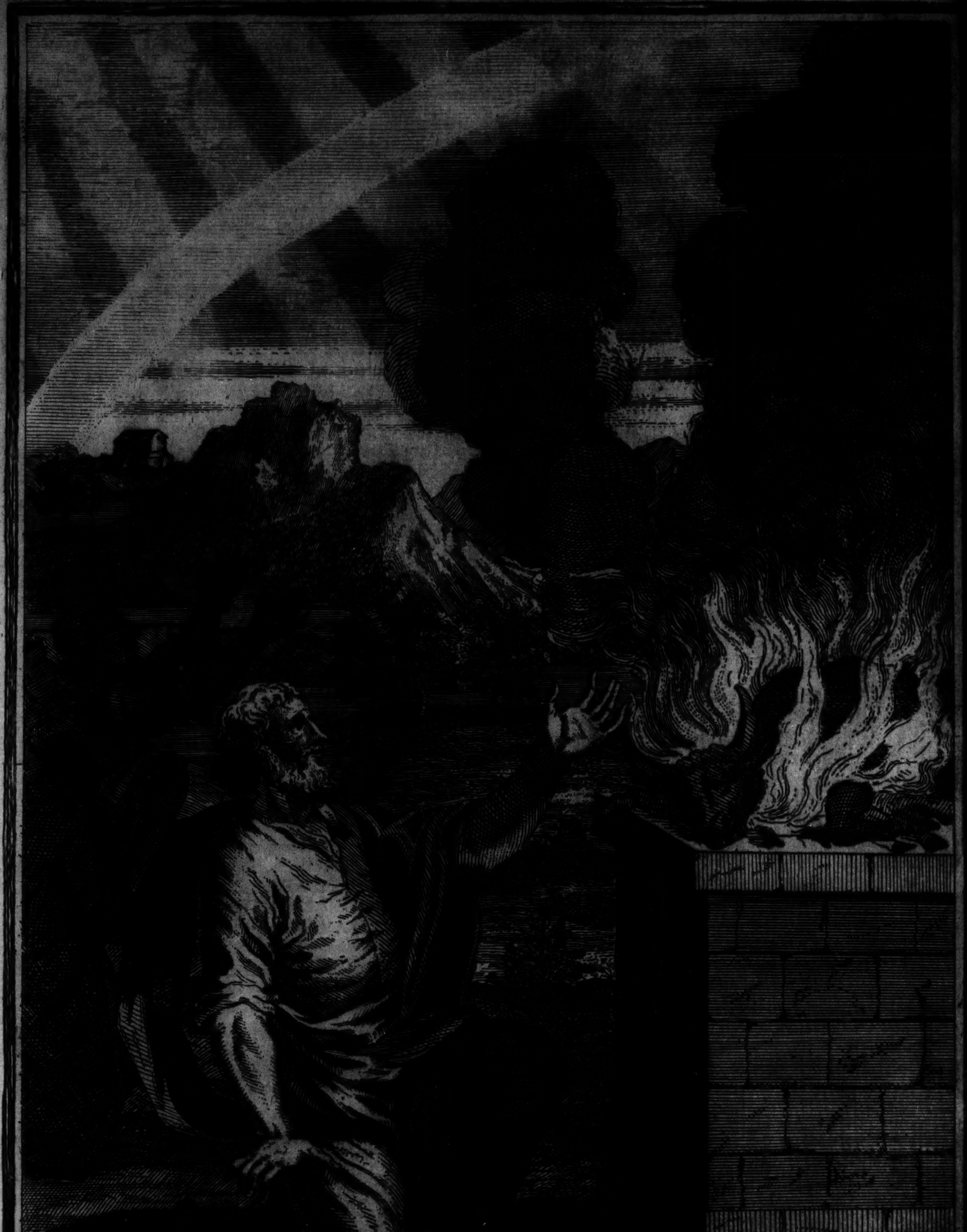
CHAP. IX.

God *bleſſeth* Noah, *and confirmeth Man's Dominion over all Creatures; the eating of Fleſh with the Blood thereof, is forbidden; Murder likewiſe is ſtrictly forbidden on Pain of Death;* God *covenants with* Noah, *and with all Creatures no more to drown the World; he confirms it by fixing the Rainbow in the Heavens in Remembrance thereof;* Noah *plants a Vineyard; drinks Wine, and is uncovered;* Ham *diſcovers it, and ſinfully reveals it;* Shem *and* Japheth *go backwards, and cover him;* Noah *knows it; curſes* Ham, *in the Perſon of* Canaan; *bleſſeth* Shem *and* Japheth; *and dieth full of Years.*

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Thing to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. "That God bleſſed *Noah* and his Sons, and "ſaid unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish

GENESIS. CHAP. IX.



GOD'S Covenant with NOAH

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"plenish the Earth;" from whence we may obſerve, that Fruitfulneſs is a very great Bleſſing.

Q. *Does this Command of increaſing and multiplying oblige all Mankind to Marriage, and Procreation?*

A. The *Hebrew* Doctors are of Opinion: That it does; but we think not abſolutely thus far, only we imagine it of Force to oblige Mankind to marry; that they are not to ſuffer the Extinction of Mankind; thus it abſolutely obliged *Adam* and *Eve*, as alſo *Noah*, and his Sons, and their Wives after the Flood; but that it does not oblige every particular Perſon to marry, is evident; both from the Example of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who lived and died in an unmarried State; and from his Commendation of thoſe who made themſelves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of *God*, *Matth.* xix. 12. And from St. *Paul*'s Approbation of Virginity, 1 *Cor.* i. 8, 26, 27, 32, *&c.* from whence we may conclude, that it is rather a Promiſe, or Bleſſing, than a Command, that they ſhould be fruitful, *&c.* as appears from *Chap.* i. 22. where the ſame Words are applied to the Brute Beaſts and Fiſh, who can hardly be ſaid to be ſubject to a Command; and becauſe, if this were a Command, it would equally oblige every Man to exerciſe Dominion over the Fiſh, and Fowl; being join'd in *Chap.* i. 28. with the Words "and ſubdue it, "(that is the Earth) and have Dominion over the "Fiſh of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and "over every living Thing that moveth upon the "Earth," which it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe: It is, therefore, rather a Permiſſion than a Command, though it be expreſſed in the Form of a Command, as other Permiſſions generally are, for Inſtance *Geneſis* ix. 16. *Deut.* xiv. 4, *&c.*

Q. *What is next to be learnt from this Chapter?*

A. That the *Lord* renewed in Part his Grant to Man of Dominion over all Creatures; "And the "Fear of You, and the Dread of You, ſhall be "upon every Beaſt of the Earth, and upon every "Fowl of the Air, upon all that moveth upon the "Earth, and upon all the Fiſhes of the Sea; into "your Hand are they delivered." It may be obſerved, however, that the Words in which *God* renews this Grant to Man, in the Perſon of *Noah*, and his Sons, are quite different from thoſe in which he made the ſame Grant to *Adam*; to the latter he ſays; "Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth, "and ſubdue it, and have Dominion over the Fiſh "of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and "over every living Thing that moveth upon the "Earth." But to *Noah* and his Sons he ſays; "And the *Fear* of You, and the *Dread* of You ſhall "be upon every Beaſt of the Earth, upon every "Fowl of the Air, upon all that moveth upon the "Earth, and upon all the Fiſhes of the Sea; into "your Hand are they delivered." Now theſe Words the *Fear* of you, and the *Dread* of You, make it very probable, that the Dominion the *Lord* now gave Man over all Creatures, was of a different Nature from that he had before given *Adam*; and accordingly Mr. *Poole*, upon this Head, makes this plauſible Diſtinction; *Before they reverenced You as their Lords, and Friends, now they ſhall dread you as their Enemies and Tyrants.* In Effect, the Words "into your Hand are they delivered," ſeem to imply as much; for we uſually mean, *we lye at a Man's Mercy*, when we ſay, *we are in his Hands:* Beſides, the expreſs Grant that is made in the next Verſes of *every moving Thing that liveth to be Meat for Us*, is both a Confirmation thereof, and the ſtrongeſt Reaſon in the World, why the Fear of Us ſhould be upon all living Creatures; ſince we are their profeſſed Enemies and Butchers; infinite Numbers of them being daily ſlaughtered, and laying down their Lives for our Uſe, Service, and Luxury.

Q. *What do we learn next from this Chapter?*

A. "Every moving Thing that liveth ſhall be "Meat for you; even as the green Herb have I given "you all Things."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. By the Words every moving Thing that liveth, we may obſerve, that the eating any Thing that died of itſelf, or was torn of Beaſts, was here implicitely forbidding, as it was afterwards expreſly, *Exod.* xxii. 31. *Levit.* xxii. 8. And from thence we may conclude, likewiſe, that though there is no other Reſtriction mentioned, yet this was only a Permiſſion to eat what was wholeſome, and fit for Food; nay, it is not improbable, that *Noah* and his Sons underſtood this Permiſſion to be limited only to ſuch Beaſts, Birds, and Fiſh, as were clean; the Diſtinction of ſuch as were clean, and ſuch as were unclean being then well known to them. As to the Words, *ſhall be Meat to you*, they are not meant as a Command, that they ſhould be obliged to eat the Fleſh of living Creatures, but only as a Permiſſion that they might now do ſo, if they thought fit. This makes it very probable, though we don't find the eating Fleſh expreſly forbidden before the Flood, that the Antediluvians were under ſome ſuch Prohibition; or, at leaſt, that they never had allowed themſelves the Uſe of Fleſh; ſince otherwiſe there would have been no need of an expreſs Grant of a Liberty they had before taken of themſelves.

Q. *What farther are we taught in this Chapter?*

A. "That we are not to eat Fleſh with the Life "thereof, which is the Blood thereof."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this Prohibition; and is it ſtill in Force?*

A. Some imagine the eating *Fleſh with the Life thereof*, to mean that we muſt not eat the Fleſh of any Creature, which is taken from it before it be quite dead; as has formerly been done, and is ſtill practiſed in ſome Caſes, by ſome luxurious Epicures; whereas others, by the Explication that follows, *which is the Blood thereof*, imagine it only a prohibition of eating Blood; and indeed from *Acts* xv. 20. it is evident that the Apoſtles thought the eating of Blood forbidden, and conſequently that the Prohibition is ſtill in Force: We ſhall not, however, pretend to determine authoritatively on either Side; becauſe as it is certain, on one Hand, that there are infinite Numbers of good *Chriſtians* who make no manner of Scruple of eating Blood, it is as certain, on the other Hand, that there are great Numbers even of the moſt ſtrictly Religious, who will not touch any Thing that has the Blood therein: Wherefore we ſhall only obſerve thereupon, that there is an expreſs Prohibition, which the Apoſtles underſtood to be in Force in their Time, and we can no-where find it to have been expreſly revoked ſince. Our Saviour, indeed, ſays that what goeth into the Mouth defileth not a Man; and we find *Peter* commanded not to call that Common which *God* hath cleanſed; but whether either, or both, of theſe are of ſufficient Force to make void an expreſs Command, we cannot pretend to ſay; eſpecially as we find the Apoſtles thinking themſelves bound thereby, after *Peter*'s being ſent to *Cornelius:* Be that as it will, one Thing is certain, that to any one who thinks eating Blood a Sin, to him it is Sin; and that it is undoubtedly an Error on the ſafeſt Side to abſtain from it.

The Reaſon of *God*'s prohibiting the eating of Blood, ſeems partly to have been; that by this Regard ſhewn to the Blood of Beaſts, it might appear how ſacred a Thing the Blood of Man was, and how much the *Almighty* abhorred the Sin of Murther; and partly, becauſe the Blood was appropriated and conſecrated to himſelf, and was the Means of Atonement for Man (which Reaſon *God* himſelf gives, *Levit.* xvii. 11, 12.) as repreſenting in a ſpecial Manner, the Blood of *Chriſt*, which was to be ſhed for the Redemption of Mankind.

Q. *What is the next Thing we are informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And ſurely your Blood of your Lives will I require: At the Hand of every Beaſt will I require it; and at the Hand of every Man, at the Hand of every Man's Brother will I require the Life of Man."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. By the placing of this, immediately after the Prohibition of eating the Blood of Beaſts, *&c.* the Meaning ſeems to be; If I am thus careful for the Blood of Beaſts, be aſſured I will be much more ſollicitous for the Blood of Men; that is, if ſhed by any violent, and unjuſt Means: I will make Inquiſition after ſuch Bloodſhed, as I did after *Cain*, and conſequently will ſeverely puniſh him; nay, ſays the *Lord* farther, to ſhew how much I deteſt and abhor the Sin of Murther, I will even require it of every Beaſt: Not for the Puniſhment of the Beaſts, which are not capable of committing any Sin, not being under any Law; but for a Caution to Mankind, for whoſe Uſe they were made, for which Reaſon it was no Abuſe of them, to deſtroy them for his Benefit, or Inſtruction. As to the Words, *at the Hand of every Man's Brother will I require the Life of Man*, which ſeem a little obſcure, and might make People imagine, that the Brother of a Murderer was accountable, in the Sight of *God*, for a Murder committed by his Brother, they may be explained two Ways. Either, that the Word *Brother* is there added, as an Aggravation of the Crime, becauſe the Man ſlain muſt neceſſarily be the Brother of the Murderer, as being both deſcended from one common Parent *Adam*; or as an Aſſurance, that the Murderer ſhould infallibly be puniſhed, without any Exception of the neareſt Relation; which tho' it makes the Sin the more heinous, has proved many Times a Security againſt Puniſhment; becauſe the Murderer is not likely to be very ſeverely proſecuted by his own Friends and Relations; who may think the Loſs of one a ſufficient Affliction, without adding to it by the Death of another, as a Victim due to Divine Juſtice.

Q. *What is the next Thing we are taught in this Chapter?*

A. "Whoſo ſheddeth Man's Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed; for in the Image of *God* made he Man."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. Undoubtedly theſe Words are to be taken in a limited Senſe, and mean only, whoever ſheds Man's Blood wilfully, or unwarrantably; for otherwiſe there is a double Exception to the Law; as in Caſes of caſual Murder, or as we call it amongſt us, Manſlaughter, in which Caſe there were Cities of Refuge for the Manſlayer to fly to, and ſave his Life, as may be ſeen, *Numb.* xxxv. 11, 12. *Deut.* xix. 2, 4. or in Caſes of Death inflicted by the Magiſtrate, for Crimes deſerving it. The latter Part of the Verſe, *for in the Image of God made he Man*, ſeems to be added as an Aggravation of the Crime; and ſhew that Murder is not only an Offence and Injury to Man, but alſo to *God*; being a Contempt of the Image of *God*, which all Men ought to reverence, in their Brethren.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed in this Chapter?*

A. That *God* having thus ſeverely prohibited Murder, proceeded again to bleſs *Noah*, and his Family, by bidding them be fruitful and multiply, 'and bring forth abundantly in the Earth, and multiply therein;' thereby ſhewing them, that he did not repent of the Bleſſing he had given them before, ſince he now renewed it to them.

Q. *Did the* Lord *confine his Bleſſing to bidding them be fruitful and multiply, &c.?*

A. No; he was graciouſly pleaſed likewiſe to eſtabliſh his Covenant with them, and their Poſterity, and with all living Creatures; mercifully promiſing, that he would no more cut off all Fleſh by the Waters of a Flood; neither would he any more deſtroy the Earth by a Deulge. This Promiſe of *God's*, however, meant no more than that he would never again drown the whole Earth, and therewith all living Creatures, as he had then done; and did not tie up his Hands from ſending Inundations to drown particular Towns, or Countries, with their Inhabitants and Cattle, whereof we have frequent Inſtances in Hiſtory; neither does it tie his Hands from viſiting the whole World with any other Judgment, as he hath declared he will by Fire at the laſt Day: His Deſign, then, in that Promiſe, ſeems only to have been graciouſly pleaſed to relieve them from thoſe perplexing Fears, which he knew they would otherwiſe have been apt to have laboured under, every Time he viſited the Earth with a copious Rain; for it muſt be confeſſed, had it not been for ſuch a Promiſe, it was as natural for them to be apprehenſive of a ſecond Flood, upon every violent Rain, as it is, according to the old Proverb, for a burnt Child to dread the Fire; wherefore, it was a great Condeſcenſion in the *Almighty* to diſpel their Fears by this gracious Aſſurance.

Q. *What farther do we learn from this Chapter?*

A. Notwithſtanding the infinite Condeſcenſion of the *Deity*, in giving Mankind this gracious Aſſurance; which as it came from the Mouth of the great *God* of Heaven, who cannot lie, one would think ſhould be ſufficient to prevent their having the leaſt Doubt of the Truth thereof, yet ſo well was the Lord apprized of the natural Diffidence, Hardneſs of Heart, and Unbelief of all the Children of *Adam*, that he vouchſafed to go yet farther, and to ratify this his Promiſe, by fixing a new Sign in the Heavens; as the Pledge and Seal of the Covenant he had made with the Earth to all ſucceeding Generations.

Q. *What might this new Sign be?*

A. It was the *Rainbow* which we now ſee in the Sky; and which was there placed by Providence for our Comfort; and continued there ever ſince, as an undeniable Evidence and Teſtimony of *God*'s everlaſting Truth, and Faithfulneſs in his Promiſes: Accordingly the *Jews*, as *Maimonides* teſtifies, whenever they ſee the *Rainbow*, bleſs *God* for being mindful of his Covenant, and faithful in his Promiſe: And have not *Chriſtians* the ſame Reaſon to bleſs, and thank the *Almighty* for his great Goodneſs therein? Since this Covenant was not made only between him and the *Jewiſh* Nation, but with all the Inhabitants of the World, and even with all living Creatures, and with the Earth itſelf, that he would no more drown it, with an univerſal Deluge. It is obſervable, likewiſe, that, as if even this were not enough to remove the Doubts, and diſpel the Fears of unbelieving Man, and eſpecially of *Noah*, and his Sons (whom tho' good Men, if we except *Ham*, the Remembrance of the late all-deſtroying Flood, had made exceeding prone to dread the like for the Time to come) *God* farther condeſcends to repeat it again and again, that he will remember his everlaſting Covenant, and that the *Bow* is the Token of his Covenant with all Fleſh. Amazing Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion, from an *Almighty Creator*, to ſuch worthleſs and ſinful Creatures!

Q. *What do we learn next from this Chapter?*

A. “That the Sons of *Noah* which went out of the Ark, were *Shem*, *Ham* and *Japheth*: and *Ham* is the Father of *Canaan*; that theſe are the three Sons of *Noah*, and that of them was the whole Earth overſpread.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Noah* had no more Children than theſe three Sons.

Q. *Why is* Ham *here ſpecified as the Father of* Canaan, *in particular, when he had more Sons; of which, for ought appears to the contrary in Scripture,* Canaan *was but the youngeſt; and when none either of the Children of* Shem, *or of* Japheth, *are mentioned there beſides?*

A. The Circumſtance of *Ham*'s being the Father of *Canaan*, ſeems to have been mentioned here, becauſe *Canaan* is particularly concerned in what follows afterwards; and it would have been abſurd to have inform'd us, that *Noah* curſed *Canaan*, without telling us firſt, that there was ſuch a Perſon as *Canaan* in being.

Q. *Is it not to be preſumed, that the old Heathens had ſome Knowledge of the World's having been peopled by* Noah, *and his three Sons?*

A. There is great Reaſon to believe they had, by ſeveral Circumſtances; notwithſtanding they diſguiſed the Truth ſo much, by the changing of their Names, and interweaving therewith divers of their Fables, as was uſual with them, that it is not obvious to every one: For they tell us, that *Saturn*, and his three Sons divided the World between them; and it is highly probable, that their *Saturn* was no other than our *Noah*; becauſe they affirm him to have been the common Parent, and Prince of all Mankind; as alſo a Huſbandman, and a Vine-dreſſer; all which Circumſtances agree very well with *Noah*. They add, that *Saturn* was born of the *Sea*, becauſe *Noah* lived in the Time of the Deluge, when the Sea covered the whole Earth, and eſcaped it by means of the Ark; and that he devoured all his Children but three, becauſe *Noah* condemned, and foretold the Deſtruction of all the Reſt of the World.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “That *Noah* began to be an Huſbandman, and he planted a Vineyard.”

Q. *What Buſineſs, then, did he follow before, that it is here ſaid he* began *to be an Huſbandman?*

A. It is doubtful whether he applied himſelf to Huſbandry or not, it being no where mentioned in Scripture what Employment he followed before; but the Words *began to be* are no convincing Proof that he was not an Huſbandman before; becauſe the Verb *began*, is often redundant or ſuperfluous, in Scripture; being frequently applied to one that continueth, or repeateth an Action begun before. Thus *Chriſt* is ſaid to *begin to caſt out*, Mark xi. 15. and to *begin to ſpeak*, Luke xii. 1. whereas, in *Matthew* xxi. 12. and xvi. 6. where the ſame Actions are referred to, he is only ſaid to *caſt out*, and *to ſpeak*.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of* Noah'*s planting a Vineyard?*

A. “He drank of the Wine and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his Tent.”

Q. *Drunkenneſs being a great Sin, how came* Noah, *who was a good Man, to be guilty thereof?*

A. The beſt of Men are ſometimes guilty of groſs Sins, as is evident from the Example of *David*, who was guilty of both Murder and Adultery; it is doubtful, however, whether *Noah* was guilty of any Sin, or not, therein; becauſe it is uncertain whether he knew the intoxicating Quality of the Wine, or not; and if he was ignorant thereof, it could not be any Sin in him. Moſt Commentators are of Opinion, that it was through Ignorance of the intoxicating Quality of the Wine, that *Noah* drank ſo much of it as made him drunk; and, as nothing appears to the contrary in Scripture, we ought, in Charity, to judge the ſame. As to his being uncovered; being within his Tent, he might not perhaps imagine he ſhould be ſeen in that indecent Poſture; or as his Garments were looſe, and Breeches were not then commonly worn, it might happen accidentally, by his tumbling in his Sleep; or he might uncover himſelf, to refreſh himſelf, by Reaſon of the Heat of the Climate, and his Blood's being inflamed by the Quantity of Liquor he had drunk; and as he was deprived of his Reaſon, by the Intoxication of the Wine, he might not conſider the Indecency of being ſeen in that Condition, and therefore was not apprehenſive of any ill Conſequence from it.

Q. *What followed upon* Noah'*s being drunk and uncovered?*

A. “*Ham*, the Father of *Canaan*, ſaw the Nakedneſs of his Father, and told his two Brethren without.”

Q. *Wherein is* Ham'*s Sin ſuppoſed to conſiſt; ſince he might go into the Place where his Father lay about ſome Buſineſs, and in that Caſe might ſee his Nakedneſs undeſignedly, which conſequently could not be criminal?*

A. His Sin undoubtedly conſiſted in his telling it to his Brothers; which in itſelf was criminal; becauſe he ought to have concealed his Father's Shame, and not to have revealed it; of which, being himſelf the Father of Children (which is therefore mentioned in the Text, as an Aggravation of his Crime,) he could not be ignorant. But his Sin is not ſuppoſed to be his barely mentioning it to his Brothers, which, tho' ſinful in itſelf, was not ſo highly criminal, as to have drawn down his Father's Curſe upon him, but his prophanely ridiculing, and expoſing his Father's Weakneſs, and inviting them to go and be Spectators thereof likewiſe; as being a Sight wherein himſelf took Pleaſure, and not queſtioning but it would pleaſe them likewiſe.

Q. *How did his two Brothers behave thereupon?*

A. “*Shem* and *Japheth* took a Garment, and laid it upon both their Shoulders, and went backward, and covered the Nakedneſs of their Father; and their Faces were backward, and they ſaw not their Father's Nakedneſs.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That good Children will be ſo far from delighting in ſeeing their Parent's Shame, and divulging it, that they will not ſuffer themſelves to behold it, if it be poſſible to avoid it; and will do their utmoſt to cover it, and conceal it.

Q. *Was not* Noah, *by this Means, made ſenſible, when he came to himſelf, that Somebody had been there, and ſeen him in that indecent Poſture?*

A. Yes; "And *Noah* awoke from his Wine, and "knew what his younger Son had done unto him." This he probably did, by the Information of his other Sons, upon his Enquiry; or, perhaps, it might be revealed to him by Inſpiration from Above; *God* acquainting him therewith, that ſo crying a Sin as the diſhonouring a Parent might not go unpuniſhed; and that the dreadful Curſe inflicted upon *Ham*, or rather *Canaan*, and his Poſterity for it, might be an everlaſting Warning to all future Ages, not to commit the like Sin, leſt they ſhould incur the like dreadful Fate.

Q. *But why is* Ham *called his younger Son, ſeeing that, wherever he is mentioned with his Brothers, he is always placed the Middlemoſt?*

A. By that Epithet (*Younger*, which in the *Hebrew* ſignifies alſo *little*) being here joined to the Word (*Son*) many are of Opinion, and the *Jewiſh Rabbins* affirm it, that *Canaan* partook with his Father in the Sin, and even that he was the firſt Diſcoverer of his Grandfather's Shame; becauſe, otherwiſe, the Word *younger* would have been improper, and unneceſſary; whereas, if *Canaan* be meant thereby, it is both proper, and very much to the Purpoſe, to ſhew that he ſpoke of his Grandſon, or his Son's Son; it being very uſual for Grandchildren to be called their Grandfather's Sons in Scripture, as *Geneſis* xxix. 5. 2 *Sam.* xix. 24.

Q. *What did* Noah, *upon being informed what his Son had done?*

A. He bitterly curſed him: "And he ſaid, Curſed "be *Canaan*; a Servant of Servants ſhall he be unto his Brethren."

Q. *But was it not great Wickedneſs in* Noah, *ſo to curſe his own Son?*

A. He is not ſuppoſed to have done it from a Spirit of Paſſion, and Revenge, but by divine Inſpiration, and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Q. *But ſince* Ham, *who was a Man grown, committed the Sin, why is the Curſe inflicted upon* Canaan, *who, in all Probability, was but a Child; and in whom, conſequently, the Crime could not be ſo heinous?*

A. Tho' *Canaan* only is mentioned, *Ham* is not exempted from the Curſe, but rather more deeply affected thereby; ſince he is declared accurſed, not only in his own Perſon (which is manifeſtly ſuppoſed, by his Commiſſion of that Sin for which the Curſe was inflicted) but alſo in his Poſterity, which, doubtleſs, was a great Aggravation of his Grief; as, on the contrary, *Joſeph* is ſaid to have been bleſſed, when his Children were bleſſed, *Gen.* xlviii. 15, 16. Beſides *Canaan* is here particularly mentioned by the Spirit of Prophecy, in Regard of the future Extirpation of the *Canaanites*, his Poſterity: And this is here remembered by *Moſes*, for the Encouragement of the *Iſraelites*, who, when he wrote this, were going on their Expedition againſt them; and tho' *Ham* had more Sons, he may be here deſcribed by his Relation to *Canaan*; becauſe the Curſe was ſtronger and more dreadfully fixed upon him, and reached to his utter Extirpation; whilſt the reſt of *Ham*'s Poſterity, in After-ages, were bleſſed with the ſaving Knowledge of the Goſpel.

Q. *What may we learn from this Curſe inflicted upon* Canaan, *and the dreadful Effects thereof upon his Poſterity?*

A. How careful we ought to be not to incur the Curſes of our Parents; which, if we draw them juſtly upon ourſelves, will certainly prove fatal; from hence alſo Parents may learn, to take Care how they curſe their Children raſhly, or upon any ſlight Occaſion; ſince ſuch dreadful Judgments may probably follow their Curſes; of which themſelves may heartily repent, when 'tis too late, and they ſee them take Effect.

Q. *Having pronounced this dreadful Curſe upon* Canaan, *what did* Noah *afterwards?*

A. He bleſſed his Son *Shem* for his Piety, and Modeſty; "And he ſaid, Bleſſed be the *Lord God* "of *Shem*, and *Canaan* ſhall be his Servant."

Q. *How can this be called bleſſing* Shem, *ſince it is* God, *and not* Shem, *who is here bleſſed?*

A. Shem alſo is here bleſſed, and that in the higheſt Degree, becauſe the *Lord* is here declared to be his *God*; now for the *Lord* to be ſaid to be any Man's *God*, is every-where mentioned as the Height of Bleſſedneſs; ſee *Gen.* xvii. 7. *Pſal.* cxliv. 15. *Jer.* xxxi. 33. *Matth.* xxii. 32. And the Expreſſion is altered here, for a very good Reaſon; the Curſe is fixed upon *Ham*, or *Canaan*, becauſe Man alone is the Author of his own Sin; but becauſe *God* is the Author and Fountain of all that good Men either do, or receive, therefore the Bleſſing is emphatically given to *God*, who alone doth the Work, and conſequently of Right ought to receive all the Glory; not but that it redounds to *Shem* alſo. And *Shem* is here particularly mentioned, without *Japheth*, both for the Comfort of the *Iſraelites*, whoſe Progenitor he was; and becauſe this Bleſſing firſt took Place, and long continued in *Shem*'s Poſterity alone, *Japheth*'s Poſterity being for a conſiderable Time excluded from it; and becauſe our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is often called *Lord*, and *God*, in Scripture, deſcended, according to the Fleſh, from *Shem*, and ſo the Incarnation may be foretold here; and *Shem* is highly honoured and bleſſed in this, that he was to be the Father of *Chriſt*, according to the Fleſh; *Rom.* ix. 5. Beſides theſe Words may be tranſlated two other Ways, as thus; *Bleſſed*, O Lord God, *let* Shem *be*; or, *Bleſſed of the* Lord God *be* Shem, *or ſhall* Shem *be*. So here is only the Particle *min* wanting, which is frequent in the *Hebrew*.

Q. *But* Japheth *having joined with* Shem, *in covering his Father's Nakedneſs, is not he, likewiſe, made Partaker of his Bleſſing?*

A. Yes, *Noah* proceeds next to pronounce *Japheth*'s Bleſſing; which is, "*God* ſhall enlarge *Ja*"*pheth*, and he ſhall dwell in the Tents of *Shem*, "and *Canaan* ſhall be his Servant."

Q. *Where is the great Bleſſing of this, ſince it ſeems as if he was to be perpetually dependent upon his Brother, which now-a-days would be counted no great Bleſſing?*

A. Even, taking it in that Senſe, it was a great Bleſſing; ſince it is certain that all Mankind muſt be dependent upon *Shem*; that is, upon the Seed of *Shem*, according to the Fleſh, *Chriſt Jeſus*, for the greateſt of all Bleſſings, *Redemption*; by which Means alone they are entitled to Salvation: But the Words will bear another Senſe; to *dwell* with a Man, often ſignifying a freindly Aſſociation, Communion, and Copartnerſhip with him; which is upon the Foot of an Equal, and not always denoting a Dependance upon him. In Effect, the Senſe ſeems to be here, that *God* ſhould enlarge *Japheth*'s Border; that is, in the Scripture Language, ſhould grant his Poſterity a large Extent of Land for their Portion; and they ſhould dwell amongſt the Offspring of *Shem*, where *Shem* dwelt; that is, where his Church was; and ſo ſhould be united to his Brother *Shem*, both in Affection and Religion. This was literally made good to *Japheth*; for he had a very numerous Poſterity, who poſſeſſed the largeſt Part of the World, even all *Europe*, a great Part of *Aſia*, and, as it is probable, *America* alſo. The Dwelling of *Japheth* in the Tents of *Shem*, may alſo be a Prophecy of the Succeſſion of *Japheth*'s Family to the Inheritance of *Shem*'s Poſterity; in the *Calling* of the *Gentiles*, moſt of whom were *Japheth*'s Offspring, and the *Rejection* of the *Jews*, who were deſcended from *Shem*, for their Infidelity, and crucifying our Saviour. As to the latter Part of the Bleſſing, which was common to both *Shem* and *Japheth*, namely, "that *Canaan* ſhould be their Servant," this was eminently accompliſhed; for tho' *Shem* and *Japheth*, in their Poſterity, ſucceſſively conquered, and ruled over each other, yet none of *Ham*'s Progeny did ever rule over *Japheth* for any Time (unleſs the preſent *Turks* ſhould be allowed to be his Deſcendants,) the Dominion of his Grandſon *Nimrod*, and that of the *Moors* over *Spain*, being but of a ſhort Duration: Whereas the *Aſſyrians*, *Chaldeans*, *Grecians*, and *Romans*, ruled the World for many Ages ſucceſſively.

Q. *What farther do we learn of* Noah *after this?*

A. "That he lived 350 Years after the Flood; "that all his Days were 950 Years, and he died."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That he lived, as the *Jews* affirm, till *Abraham* was in the fifty eighth Year of his Age; whence we may eaſily account for the Propagation of the true Religion, from the Beginning of the World to this Day; notwithſtanding the Depravity of Mankind, both before, and after the Flood. For *Noah* received it from his Parents, who had it from *Adam*'s own Mouth, and tranſmitted it to *Abraham*; and its Deſcent from *Abraham* to the *Jews*, and from the *Jews* to others, is ſufficiently known. We know, indeed, it may be objected from *Joſhua* xxiv. 2. That *Abraham*, and *Terah*, his Father, were Idolaters, and, conſequently, that the true Religion was not tranſmitted by *Noah* to them, but that *Abraham* received it by divine Inſpiration. To which we anſwer, That tho' it muſt be acknowledged they were Idolaters, that does not prove they were ignorant of the true Religion, tho' they had not the Grace to profeſs it; and it is the more reaſonable to ſuppoſe they were not ignorant thereof, becauſe we find both *Terah*, and *Abraham*, ſo readily obeying *God*'s Command, in leaving *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, to go into the Land of *Canaan*; having been prepared for this ready Obedience, by their previous Knowledge of the true *God*, and his Religion, tho' they had not, as we obſerv'd before, the Grace to profeſs it, till *God* gave it them. *Noah* lived alſo to ſee the building of the Tower of *Babel*; the Diſperſion of his Children; their horrid Wickedneſs and Idolatry; and the the bloody Wars which even then aroſe between ſome of them.

CHAP. X.

Noah*'s Poſterity; the Sons of* Japheth, *and of* Ham; Nimrod *a mighty one in the Earth, and the firſt Monarch; he reigns in* Babel, *&c.* Aſhur *builds* Nineveh, *&c. the Sons of* Canaan; *their Border; the Sons of* Shem.

Q. AS *this Chapter conſiſts almoſt wholly of Genealogies, it is not to be imagined that much Inſtruction is to be drawn from thence, in Point of Doctrine; but nevertheleſs, it is certain, it is not entirely uſeleſs, and unprofitable, becauſe then it would never have obtained a Place here; explain, therefore, what are the Uſes of this Chapter?*

A. 1. To ſhew the true Original of the ſeveral Nations of the Earth; about which all other Authors write fabulouſly and idly; and thereby to manifeſt the Providence of *God*, in the Government of the World, and his Church, and the Truth and Authority of the Holy Scriptures: 2. To diſcoverand diſtinguiſh from all others that People, among whom *God*'s Church was to be eſtabliſhed, and from which *Chriſt* was to come. 3. That *Noah*'s Prophecy concerning his three Sons might be the beter underſtood, and the Accompliſhment thereof rendered the more evident. We ought, therefore, neither to be over careleſs in the ſearching into theſe Genealogies, nor over curious; Length of Time, and the Alteration of Names having made it abſolutely impoſſible to trace out all; and yet there being divers of the moſt eminent of them diſcernible to this Day, which is ſufficient to evince the Truth of the Reſt. In general, we may find, that the World was divided into three Parts; whereof the moſt *Eaſtern* Parts were allotted to *Shem*; the moſt *Southern* Parts to *Ham*; and the moſt *Northern* Parts to *Japheth*.

Q. *Having premiſed thus much, let us know what is the firſt Thing to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. We have already been informed, that *Noah* had three Sons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japheth*; and we are now told, that unto them were Sons born after the Flood; from whence it is evident they had no Children, before the Deluge, or even whilſt the Waters were upon the Earth; *God* having providentially denied them Offspring till afterwards; ſince the Time of the general Wreck of Nature would have been a very melancholy and improper Seaſon for either the Procreation or nurſing of Children.

Q. *What is the next Thing we find in this Chapter?*

A. "That the Sons *Japheth*, were *Gomer*, and "*Magog*, and *Madai*, and *Javan*, and *Tubal*, and "*Meſhech*, and *Tiras*.

Q. *What is to be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Aſia Minor*, and by Degrees all *Europe*, and the *Northern* Parts of *Aſia*, were poſſeſſed by the Poſterity of *Japheth*; for the Offspring of *Gomer* are reckoned among the *Northern* Nations, *Ezek.* xxxviii. 6. and were firſt ſeated in the *Northern* Parts of *Aſia Minor*, and were called *Gomari*, and by an eaſy Change, *Cimbri*, or *Cimmerii*; *Magog* is counted the Father of the *Scythians*, as may be gathered from *Ezek.* xxxviii. 2, 3, 15. and xxxix. 3, 6. *Madai* of the *Medes*, who are called in *Hebrew* by the Name of their Father *Madai*, as appears, 2 *Kings* xvii, 6. *Iſa.* xiii. 17. *Jer.* xxv. 25. *Dan.* v. 28. and vi. 8. Of *Javan* came the *Grecians*, who are called by themſelves *Iaones*, and *Iones*; and in *Hebrew* *Jevanim*, and their Country *Greece*, *Javan*, as may be ſeen, *Iſa.* lxvi. 19. *Ezek.* xxvii. 13, 19. *Dan.* viii. 21. and x. 20. Of *Tubal* came the *Iberi*, called anciently *Thobeli*, a People of *Aſia*, near the *Euxine* Sea; ſee *Exek.* xxvii. 13. and xxxviii. 2, 3. *Meſhech* is deemed the Father of the *Moſchi*; and *Tiras* is eſteemed the Father of the *Thracians*, amongſt whom is a River, and a Haven called *Athyras*; and who worſhipped their God *Mars*, under the Name of *Thuras*.

Q. *Who were the Sons of* Gomer, *and what Countries are they thought to have poſſeſſed?*

A. “The Sons of *Gomer*, were *Aſhkenaz*, and *Riphath*, and *Togarmah*; the firſt of whoſe Deſcendants are thought to have poſſeſſed *Pontus*, and *Bythinia*, with the Neighbouring Parts; and from him to have given the Name of *Aſcanius* to a Lake and Haven ſo called, and of *Axenus*, or *Euxinus*, to the Sea now called the *Black Sea*. The Poſterity of *Riphath* are likewiſe ſuppoſed to have dwelled near *Pontus* and *Bythinia*, where *Pomponius Mela*, *Pliny*, and *Solinus*, place the *Riphæi*, and *Riphaces*. The Offspring of *Togarmah* are joined with his Father *Gomer*'s, as appears from *Ezek*. xxvii. 14. and xxxviii. 6. and were, as ſome think, the *Phrygians* and *Galatians*, from whom the *Gauls* and *Germans* were afterwards derived; or, as others ſuppoſe, the *Armenians*, from whom ſprung the *Turks*.

Q. *Who were the Sons of* Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meſhech. *and* Tiras?

A. The Deſcendants of *Magog*, *Madai*, *Jubal*, *Meſhech*, and *Tiras*, are not here ſpecify'd; but the Sons of *Javan*, were *Eliſha*, *Tarſhiſh*, *Kittim*, and *Dodanim*.

Q. *What Nations are ſuppoſed to have deſcended from theſe?*

A. The firſt is reckoned the Father of the *Greecians* properly ſo called; who have preſerved his Name and Remembrance in the Cities *Elis*, and *Eliſſus*; in a Tract of Land called *Ellas*; and in the *Elizian Fields*; and from theſe came the *Æolians*, a People of *Aſia Minor*, where many of the *Greecian* Colonies were ſituated. *Tarſhiſh* was the Father of the *Cilicians*, from whom their chief City *Tarſus*, in Hebrew *Tarſhiſh*, took its Name, ſee *Ezek*. xxvii. 12. *Jon*. i. 3. *Acts* xxii. 3. From him, likewiſe, the whole *Mediterranean* Sea is called the Sea of *Tarſhiſh*; becauſe the *Cilicians* were, in a great Meaſure Maſters, thereof. *Kittim*, or *Chittim*, was the Father of the *Macedonians*, and *Italians*, as may be gathered from both their Countries being called *Chittim* in Scripture; *Macedonia*, 1 *Mac*. i. 1. and viii. 5. and *Italy*, *Numb*. xxiv. 24. *Dan*. xi. 30. ſee alſo *Iſa*. xxiii. 1, 12. and *Jerem*. ii. 10. Beſides, there are other Evidences in prophane Writers, that the *Italians* came from the *Greecians*. The Poſterity of *Dodanim* are uncertain; but probably, he ſettled near his Brethren in ſome Part of *Greece*; and it ſeems to be him whom the *Greeks* worſhipped by the Name of *Jupiter Dodonæus*, whoſe famous Oracle was in the City of *Dodona*.

Q. *What next are we informed of in this Chapter?*

A. “By theſe were the Iſles of the *Gentiles* divided in their Lands; every one after his Tongue, after their Families, in their Nations.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this*; *for it ſeems ſtrange, that having their own Choice, they ſhould forſake the Continent for the Iſlands, and thereby cut off their Communication with their Brethren*; *beſides, where could they get a ſufficient Number of Ships wherein to tranſport themſelves?*

A. By the Word *Iſles* here, we are not to underſtand *Iſlands*, properly ſo called; that is, not Countries entirely ſurrounded by the Sea, like *Great-Britain*, or *Ireland*; but only ſuch Countries as had the Sea between them and *Judea*; it being the Cuſtom of the *Jews* to call all thoſe Countries *Iſlands*, from which they were any way ſeparated by the Sea; as appears *Iſa*. xi. 10, 11. and xl. 15. *Jerem*. ii. 10. and xxv. 22. *Ezek*. xxvii. 3. *Zepha*. ii. 11.

Q. *What farther may we obſerve from this Verſe?*

A. That notwithſtanding this Diviſion of the Earth is mentioned here before any Notice is taken of *Babel*, or its *famous Tower*, yet it is apparent, from the Words, *every one after his Tongue*, that it was not put in Execution till after the Confuſion of Tongues at *Babel*. From hence alſo we may obſerve the wiſe and gracious Providence and Mercy of the *Almighty*, even in the very Inſtant of his executing that Judgment of confounding the Language of Mankind; ſince he graciouſly diſtributed the ſeveral Languages, according to the Difference of Families and Nations; wiſely and mercifully providing, that each ſeveral Nation, and all the Branches and Families of that Nation, ſhould ſpeak one and the ſame Language; whereby both Union and Love was preſerved amongſt them, and the ſeveral Nations were diſtinguiſhed from one another. This was very proper and neceſſary for many Reaſons; as, that the Church of *God*, which was deſigned to be confined to the *Hebrew* Nation, from the Time of *Abraham*'s leaving *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, to the coming of *Jeſus Chriſt* in the Fleſh, might neither be mixed with, nor infected by idolatrous Nations; and that it might be evident to the whole World, that the *Meſſiah* was born of the Seed of *Abraham*, according to *God*'s Promiſe.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. That *Ham* had four Sons, *Cuſh*, *Mizraim*, *Phut*, and *Canaan*.

Q. *What Countries are* Ham, *and his Poſterity thought to have poſſeſſed?*

A. They are ſuppoſed to have poſſeſſed the Parts *South* of *Babel* in *Aſia*, and all *Africa*; ſee 1. *Chron*. iv. 40. *Pſal*. cv. 27. The firſt of his Sons, *Cuſh*, is reckoned the Father of the *Æthiopians*, and *Arabians*, who in proceſs of Time ſent out a Colony more *Eaſtward*, even to *India*; ſee 2 *Kings* xix. 9. *Job* xxviii. 19. *Jerem*. xiii. 23. and xlvi. 9. *Mizraim* was the Father of the *Egyptians*, who are frequently called in Scripture by that Name; from *Phut* ſprung the *Libyans*, amongſt whom is the River *Phut*, and the *Moors*; ſee *Jerem*. xlvi. 9. *Ezek*. xxvii. 10. and xxx. 5. and *Nahum* iii. 9. and as for *Canaan*, he is well known to have been the curſed Parent of that accurſed Race the *Canaanites*; who incurred the divine Diſpleaſure to that Degree, that they were, in a Manner, utterly extirpated by the *Iſraelites*, and that by *God*'s expreſs Command.

Q. *Who were the Sons and Grandſons of* Cuſh, *and what Countries are they ſuppoſed to have peopled?*

A. “The Sons of *Cuſh*, were *Seba*, *Havilah*, *Sabtah*, *Raamah*, and *Sabtecha*: And the Sons of *Raamah*; *Sheba*, and *Dedan*.” The firſt of theſe was the Father of the *Sabeans*, in *Arabia* the *Deſart*; ſee *Pſal*. lxxii. 10. *Iſa*. xliii. 3. and as ſome think of the *Abyſſines* in *Africa*. The ſecond was the Father of the Inhabitants of the Land of *Havilah*, which retained his Name, and is reckoned to lie in the moſt *Eaſtern* Part of *Arabia*; being oppoſed to *Sur*, a Deſart near *Egypt*, as the two remoteſt Bounds of *Arabia*, *Gen*. xxv. 18. 1 *Sam*. xv. 7. *Sabtah* is counted the Father of thoſe People who ſettled in the lower Part of *Arabia Fælix*, near the *Perſian Gulph*; they alſo ſent a Colony into *Perſia*: for in thoſe Parts we meet with the *Sabateri* in *Joſephus*, and with the *Staberi*, and *Meſſabathi* in *Ptolomy* and *Pliny*. From *Raamah* deſcended another People dwelling in that ſame *Arabia*; ſee *Ezek*. xxvii. 22. and *Sabtecha* was the Founder of another Nation adjoining to them. *Sheba*, the Son of *Raamah*, is eſteemed the Father of that People over whom the famous Queen of *Sheba* reigned; ſee 1 *Kings* x. 1, 4. *Ezek.* xxvii. 22, 23. *Matth.* xii. 42. *Acts* viii. 27. which People are, by ſome, ſuppoſed to have inhabited *Æthiopia*; and by others, to have been a People in *Arabia*; though by her being called Queen of the *South*, *Matth.* xii. 42. we ſhould rather believe ſhe reigned in that *Æthiopia*, which is in the *South* of *Africa*, and borders upon *Egypt*. As to the Poſterity of *Dedan*, ſee *Ezek.* xxvii. 15. and xxxviii. 13.

Q. *But had* Cuſh *no more Sons than theſe?*

A. Yes, he had another named *Nimrod*, who was more famous than any of the Reſt, and who is placed the laſt in Scripture, becauſe *Moſes* was to ſay more of him than any of the others. It is ſaid of him, that *he began to be a mighty one in the Earth*; and that *he was a mighty Hunter before the* Lord; wherefore it was ſaid, *Even as* Nimrod, *the mighty Hunter before the* Lord. From all theſe Expreſſions, it is evident, that he was the moſt famous Man of his Time; and it appears plainly from Scripture, that he was the firſt Monarch that ever was; but from his being called *a mighty Hunter before the* Lord, Commentators are mightily divided in their Opinions, whether he was a good Prince, and governed his Subjects by Laws made with their own Conſent, or whether he was a cruel Tyrant. They who are of Opinion that he was a good Prince, underſtand the Words a mighty Hunter in a literal Senſe, and want not very good Reaſons for ſo doing; for when the Earth was not very populous, and Men were ſcattered abroad into ſeveral Countries, moſt of which, if not all, abounded with wild Beaſts, there was a ſort of Neceſſity for their hunting and deſtroying them; and conſequently the Employment of a Hunter was not only very honourable in thoſe Times, but an univerſal Benefit to Mankind; who were greatly annoy'd by the vaſt Numbers of wild Beaſts that abounded then, eſpecially about *Babylon*, where *Nimrod* is ſaid to have reigned. They ſuppoſe then very probably, that *Nimrod* being of a very bold and active Spirit, and at the ſame Time a Man of good Senſe, perſuaded numbers of the youngeſt and ſtrongeſt Men to accompany him in hunting and deſtroying theſe wild Beaſts; and that having from thence ſhewn them the Benefit of being united, and incorporated into a regular Society (ſince they were thereby enabled to deſtroy theſe Beaſts of Prey, which would otherwiſe have deſtroyed them, had they been ſeparated, or in ſmall Companies) they mutually agreed to form themſelves into a Body, and to live together under certain Regulations, to which they all conſented to ſubmit; and that, as *Nimrod* had been the firſt Propoſer of this, and had always ſhewn himſelf the moſt active and undaunted in encountering the fierceſt Annimals, they with one Accord choſe him their Head, Captain, or Monarch. On the contrary, thoſe who will have him to have been a Tyrant, and to have made uſe of Force in ſubduing Mankind, allow, likewiſe, that he was a mighty Hunter in a literal Senſe; and that to this End, he gathered together great Companies of the youngeſt and ſtrongeſt Men, by whoſe Aſſiſtance he deſtroy'd Numbers of wild Beaſts, and acquired great Reputation and Favour amongſt the People where he lived; but that, having thus ingratiated himſelf with, and gained the good Opinion of the People round about him, Numbers of whom daily reſorted to him, he, by their means, compell'd others to ſubmit to him, and eſtabliſhed a Tyranny and abſolute Dominion over Mankind; and even oppreſſed and deſtroyed ſuch as oppoſed, and would not ſubmit to his Dominion. This their Opinion, they ground upon the Words *Mighty Hunter*; and obſerve that Tyrants, and Perſecutors are often called *Fowlers*, and *Hunters* in Scripture; as *Pſal.* xci. 3. *Jerem.* xvi. 16. *Lament.* iii. 52. and iv. 18. They even go farther, and from the Words *before the Lord*, conclude, that he was a Perſecutor as well as a Tyrant, oppreſſing thoſe who worſhiped the true God, and ſetting up a new Religion *before him*, that is in Defiance of him; and even that he compelled the People whom he ſubdued, to worſhip Fire, which ſort of Worſhip obtained long after in *Babylon* and *Chaldea*, where he fixed his Empire. Some, however, who believe him to have been a Tyrant, think the Words *before the Lord*, are only added, as an Aggravation of his Crime: That he perpetrated it in *God's* Preſence; that is, impudently, and in Contempt of the *Almighty*, who had ſo lately manifeſted his Deteſtation of this very Sin of Violence, that he aſſigned it as one of the chief Cauſes of his ſending the Flood, and deſtroying all Mankind; *Gen.* vi. 11, 13. and all this, even whilſt his great Grandfather *Noah* was living and preaching, and undoubtedly admoniſhed him of the Wickedneſs and Danger of this Practice. Upon the whole, it muſt be confeſſed, that neither of theſe Opinions are deſtitute of good ſpecious Reaſons to ſupport them; for, as, on one Hand, it is very ſtrange, he ſhould make uſe of Force to compaſs that, which he might as eaſily, with more Safety, have obtained by Perſuaſion, by convincing them of the great Advantages which muſt naturally reſult from Unity, and a ſettled Government; on the other, the Words, wherefore it is ſaid, *even as* Nimrod, *the mighty Hunter before the Lord*, ſeem to countenance the Opinion of his having been a Tyrant; and that ſo great a Tyrant, as to have grown into a *Proverb*, to repreſent a haughty and cruel Tyrant.

Q. *What next do we find in this Chapter worthy of Obſervation?*

A. Having given this Account of *Nimrod* himſelf, *Moſes* proceeds to give ſome Account of his Dominions, and the chief Cities therein. “And the Beginning of his Kingdom was *Babel*, *Erech*, *Accad*, and *Calneh*, in the Land of *Shinar*.” From hence we may obſerve that, the firſt of theſe *Babel*, which was certainly the ancient *Babylon*, was either his Capital, which is moſt probable, or the Place where his Dominion began, and from whence he extended it to other Parts: We muſt take Notice, however, as we obſerved before, that notwithſtanding this is mentioned here for the ſake of the Genealogy, it was not built till the Confuſion of Languages; no more than the others *Erech*, *Accad*, and *Calneh*, all of which are ſtill known, and were conſiderable Cities, though not ſo famous as *Babel*, or *Babylon*: *Calneh*, in particular, is mentioned by the Name of *Calno*, *Iſa.* x. 9. of *Canneh*, Ezek. xxvii. 23. and of *Calneh*, as it is here, *Amos* vi. 2. where it is placed amongſt the eminent Cities. The Land of *Shinar* is by all agreed to be *Meſopotamia*; and is named here for Diſtinction ſake; becauſe there was a *Babylon* in *Egypt*, and there might be other Cities of the ſame Name, with the Reſt in other Countries.

Q. *What farther do we learn from this Chapter?*

A. “That out of that Land went *Aſhur*, and built *Nineveh*, and the City of *Rehoboth*, and *Calah*; and *Reſen*, between *Nineveh* and *Calah*, the ſame is a great City.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. Commentators are very much divided about the Meaning thereof; ſome will have *Aſhur* to be the

Son of *Shem*; who forſook that Country, either becauſe he was forced to it, or becauſe he was weary of *Nimrod*'s Tyranny, and Impiety, and erected another Kingdom; but it is not likely that *Moſes* would here abruptly mention the Action of a Man, of whom no Notice is otherwiſe taken, till *Verſe* 22; or that one ſingle Son of *Shem*'s would be here placed improperly amongſt the Sons of *Ham*. Others will have it to be another *Aſhur* of *Ham*'s Race, which is not altogether improbable; ſince *Nineveh* is agreed by prophane Writers, to have been founded by *Nimrod*'s Son, to whom they give the Name of *Ninus*; who poſſibly may be the ſame with this *Aſhur*, as well as the *Saoſduchinus* of the Ancients is the ſame with the *Nebuchadnezzar* in Scripture. Others again, with great Probability likewiſe, judge the Word *Aſhur* to be here put for the Name of the Country *Aſſyria*, which in *Hebrew* is called *Aſhur*; and that the Words ſhould have been thus rendered, *he*, namely, *Nimrod*, went forth out of his own Land *to Aſhur*, to war againſt it, and add it to his own Empire; for *to go forth*, is commonly aſcribed to thoſe who go to War, or to Battle, as *Judges* ii. 15. and xi. 3. 2 *Sam*. xi. 1. *Pſal*. lx. 10. and the Particle *(to)* is here underſtood as it is, 2 *Sam*. vi. 10. and x. 2. compared with 1 *Chron*. xiii. 13. and xix. 2. As to *Niniveh*, it was one of the moſt celebrated Cities of Antiquity; being even larger than *Babylon*, as may be ſeen *Jonah* iii. 3. *where it is ſaid to be an exceeding great City of three Days Journey*; accordingly, we find that Prophet entered it a Day's Journey, when he began to cry againſt it. Even prophane Authors allow it to have been ſixty Miles in Circumference, nineteen in Length, and eleven in in Breadth; beſides which, they ſay, the Walls were one hundred Foot high, and above twenty thick, and had one thouſand five hundred Turrets on them, two hundred Foot diſtant from each other, and each of them as many Foot high; nevertheleſs it is now ſo entirely deſtroyed, according to the Prophecy of Prophet *Nahum*, that the Learned are not agreed where it was ſituated: *Rehoboth* and *Calah* were likewiſe famous Cities; as was alſo *Reſen*, which lay between them, and is thought to be the ſame which the *Greeks* called *Lariſſa*; and which is frequently mentioned in the Wars of the *Holy Land*.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Mizraim* begat *Ludim*, and *Anamim*, “ and *Lehabim*, and *Naphtuhim*; and *Pathruſim*, “ and *Caſluhim* (out of whom came *Philiſtim*) and “ *Caphtorim*.

Q. *What is to be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the Words *Ludim*, *Anamim*, *Lehabim*, *Naphtuhim*, *Pathruſim*, *Caſluhim*, *Philiſtim*, and *Caphtorim*, are not the Names of particular Perſons, but of whole Nations; and the Word *Father* is here underſtood, as is evident from the Word *Philiſtim*, or *Philiſtines*, a Nation well known in Scripture; ſo that the Meaning is, that *Mizraim* begat the Fathers or Founders of all theſe Nations; who all ſprung from the *Ægyptians*, and dwelt in *Africa*; and as they multiplied, went in Colonies *Weſtward*, and *Southward*, farther and farther from *Egypt*.

Q. *According to the laſt Verſe*, “ *And* Pathruſim, *and* Caſluhim *(out of whom came* Philiſtim*) and* Caphtorim,” *the* Philiſtines *ſeemed to have proceeded from* Caſluhim, *whereas they are ſaid, elſewhere, to come from* Caphtorim, *Jer.* xlvii. 4.

A. Therefore ſome make a Tranſpoſition here, which is not unuſual in Scripture, and read, “ And “ *Caſluhim* and *Caphtorim*, out of whom came *Philiſtim*;” but this ſeems forced, and is unneceſſary; for the Place may be read thus, without any Parentheſis, “ And *Caſluhim*, out of whom came *Philiſtim*, and *Caphtorim*;” for the two latter might be Brothers, and both the Sons of *Caſluhim*, and ſo might at firſt dwell together, whence their Names are promiſcuouſly uſed, one for another, and the *Caphtorims* are ſaid to have dwelt in *Azzah*, or *Gaza*, the known Seat of the *Philiſtines*, *Deut*. ii. 23. Afterwards, however, they might be divided, firſt in their Dwellings, and then in their Affections, and ſo might go to War with each other; for the *Caphtorims* ſeemed to have ſubdued and inſlaved the *Philiſtines*, and to have carried them into their Country; wherefore *God* is ſaid to *bring and deliver them from* Caphtor; *Amos* ix. 7. and the *Caphtorims* might be extirpated either then or afterwards, whence the *Philiſtines* in Aftertimes, are called the Remnant of the Country of *Caphtor*. Others will have it, as it ſeems in Scripture, that the *Caphtorims* are the Poſterity of the youngeſt Son of *Mizraim*; but, that ſettling in the Country on the other Side of *Egypt*, and being Neighbours to the *Caſluhims*, from whom the *Philiſtines* deſcended, the became one People; whence the *Philiſtines* are called *Caphtorim*, *Deut*. ii. 23. *Jer*. xlvii. 4. 1 *Chron*. i. 12. *Amos* ix. 7.

Q. *Who were the Offspring of* Phut, *and of* Canaan?

A. The immediate Offspring of *Phut* are not mentioned any where in Scripture, tho' it is known that the *Lybians* deſcended from him: But, as for *Canaan*, his Poſterity are all ſpecified; in all Probability, that it might be plainer ſeen, how *Noah*'s Curſe took Place upon them, and how viſibly *God*'s Judgments purſued them, in Conſequence thereof, to their utter Extirpation. The firſt-born of *Canaan*, was *Sidon*, the Father of the *Sidonians*, and probably, the Founder of the City of *Sidon*, which took its Name from him. His next was *Heth*, who was the Father of the *Hittites*. His third Son was *Jebus*, the Father of the *Jebuſites*, who poſſeſſed *Jeruſalem*, and the Country round about it. *Canaan* was alſo the Father of the *Amorites*, the *Girgaſites*, the *Hivites*, the *Arkites*, and the *Sinites*, the *Arvadites*, the *Zemarites*, and the *Hamathites*; all which People at firſt dwelt together; but as they multiplied, and grew numerous, they diſperſed, by Degrees, all over the Land of *Canaan*; inſomuch that the Border of the *Canaanites*, in general, “ was from *Sidon*, as thou “ comeſt to *Gerar*, unto *Gaza*; and as thou goeſt “ unto *Sodom*, and *Gomorrah*, and *Admah*, and *Zeboim*, even unto *Laſhah*. Theſe are the Sons “ of *Ham*, after their Familes, after their Tongues, “ in their Countries, and in their Nations.”

Q. *Having recited the Offspring of* Japheth, *and of* Ham, *let us now hear who were the Poſterity of* Shem; *why he is called the Brother of* Japheth *the elder; and why he is particularly ſtiled the Father of all the Children of* Eber?

A. As to his being called the Brother of *Japheth* the *elder*, two Reaſons may be aſſigned for it; one, that *Japheth* alone is here mentioned as his Brother, and not *Ham*, becauſe he was deſervedly excluded from *Noah*'s Bleſſing, and was accurſed of *God*; whereas *Japheth* was Partaker with *Shem* in his Father's Bleſſing, as having ſhared with him in the Reverence and Piety exerciſed towards their Father; the Word *Brother* being often applied, in Scripture, to ſuch as reſemble each other in Condition, Diſpoſition and Manners; as may be ſeen *Gen*. xlix. 5.

where *Simeon* and *Levi* are called Brethren, not ſo much becauſe they were really Brothers, as becauſe they reſembled each other in their cruel Tempers. Another, and we believe the true Reaſon, may be, that *Japheth* ſeems really to have been the eldeſt: For notwithſtanding the Words of this Text in *Hebrew* may ſeem ambiguous, ſo as that the Epithet Elder may be applied either to *Shem*, or *Japheth*, yet other Texts make it probable, that *Japheth* was the elder. For *Noah* began to beget Children in his Five Hundredth Year, *Gen.* v. 32. and *Shem* was but 100 Years old two Years after the Flood, *Gen.* xi. 10. therefore he was not the eldeſt; and *Ham* is concluded not to be the eldeſt, from *Gen.* ix. 24. conſequently *Japheth* muſt be the eldeſt: And *Shem* is generally named firſt; not becauſe he was the firſt-born, but becauſe he had the Privileges of the Firſt-born, and was the chief in Dignity and Authority in the Church of *God*.

As to *Shem*'s being particularly ſtiled “the Father of all the Children of *Eber*,” tho' he had divers other Sons, beſides *Arphaxad*, from whoſe Loins *Eber* ſprung, the Reaſon ſeems to be; that it was from *Eber*, the *Jews*, for whoſe Benefit and Inſtruction *Moſes* wrote, derived the Name of *Hebrews*, and that as they were the only People and Church *God* had in the World, when *Moſes* wrote, he particularizes *Shem* as the Progenitor of the *Hebrews*, rather than by any other Circumſtance, as being the moſt honourable Title he could give him. We are ſenſible, it may be objected, that *Eber* had a numerous Offspring by his Son *Joktan*, who were not of the Church of *God*, but were Idolaters; and who, nevertheleſs, were as well entitled to the Name of *Hebrews*, as the *Jews*; and conſequently that the Father of all the Children of *Eber*; or of all the *Hebrews*; is no ſuch honourable Appellation even in that Senſe. To which we anſwer, That tho' *Eber* had other Children, yet none of them were called in Scripture the Children of *Eber*, or, which is all one, the *Hebrews*, but *Abraham*'s Poſterity by *Iſaac*; even as, though *Abraham* had divers other Children, yet the *Iſraelites* are in many Places peculiarly called the *Children of Abraham*: and the ungodly *Jews*, when they degenerate, *God* takes away their Name, and denieth them to be *Jews*, as appears, *Rom.* ii. 28. and calls them *Sodomites*, *Iſa.* i. 10. Wherefore it is no Wonder, if *Joktan*, and his Poſterity forſook their Fathers *God*, as it is probable, and turned Idolaters, that they are diſowned as Baſtards, and blotted out of the honourable Catalogue of the Children of *Eber*.

To proceed now to the Sons of *Shem*; they were, “*Elam*, and *Aſhur*, and *Arphaxad*, and *Lud*, and “*Aram*. And the Children of *Aram*, *Uz*, and *Hul*, “and *Gethen*, and *Maſh*. And *Arphaxad* begat *Salah*; and *Salah* begat *Eber*. And unto *Eber* were “born two Sons, the Name of the one was *Peleg*; for “in his Days was the Earth divided, and his Brother's Name was *Joktan*.”

Q. *Of what Nations were theſe Sons of* Shem *the Founders?*

A. *Elam* is known to have been the Father of the *Elamites*, or *Perſians*, *Gen.* xiv. 9. *Iſa.* xxii. 6. *Jer.* xlix. 34. &c. *Dan.* viii. 2. *Acts* ii. 9. *Aſhur* was the Father of the *Aſſyrians*; *Arphaxad*'s Poſterity ſettled in the *Southern* Parts of *Meſopotamia*, from him called *Arphaxitis*, and corruptly by *Ptolomy*, *Arrapachitis*; the Vale of *Shinar* was Part of his Portion; and *Joſephus* ſays the *Chaldeans* were anciently called *Arphaxadites*. *Lud* was the Father of the *Lydians*, a well known People of *Aſia Minor*, who were conquered by *Cyrus*, and their King *Crœſus* taken Captive; and *Aram* was the Father of the *Aramites*, or *Syrians*, who are known by the Name of *Aramites*, both in ſacred and prophane Authors: Thus each of theſe five Sons of *Shem*, were the Founders of powerful Nations. As to the Children of *Aram*, it is uncertain what Nations they founded; neither do we find any Thing ſpecified of *Salah*; but as to *Eber*, he is well known to have been the Founder of the *Jewiſh* Nation; which deſcended from his Son *Peleg*, and were called *Hebrews*, and even *Eber*, *Numb.* xxiv. 24. from him. From *Peleg*'s being ſo called, becauſe in his Days the Earth was divided, many have imagined, and amongſt the reſt, the learned Mr. *Howel*, (but we think erroneouſly and improbably) that the Diviſion of the Earth was made the very Year he was born, which was in the hundred and firſt Year after the Flood; but it is hardly to be believed, that the Poſterity of *Noah* had multiplied ſufficiently in that Time, to people all the Earth; neither do the Words of the Text imply any ſuch Thing, as that the Earth was divided the Year *Peleg* was born: It was ſufficient the Diviſion happened in his Time, for him to have obtained the Name; which his Father might either give him at his Birth; foreſeeing that great Event, by the Spirit of Prophecy, or afterwards when the Diviſion happened. Thus the Diſperſion may be brought down to half or better of the Life of *Peleg*, and be placed two hundred Years after the Flood, a Time conſiderable enough for Mankind to multiply prodigiouſly, and make the peopling of the whole Earth by them more probable. Beſides, if it be conſidered, that it is not probable, that the Sons of *God*, or the Family wherein the Church of *God* was preſerved, join'd in the Attempt of building the City, and Tower; it being expreſly ſaid, *The City and Tower which the Children of Men built*, *Gen.* xi. 5. and, conſequently, that it is not probable they were affected by the general Judgment of the Confuſion of Tongues, but preſerved their ancient Language; and if it be again conſidered, that this Family was *Eber*'s, or, at leaſt, that Branch of his Family that deſcended from *Peleg*, it will be no Wonder, that either his Father ſhould give him that Name, or himſelf aſſume it, when the Diſperſion happened in Remembrance of ſo extraordinary an Event.

Q. *What next are we informed of in this Chapter?*

A. “That *Joktan* begat *Almodad*, and *Sheleph*, “and *Hazar-maveth*, and *Jerah*, and *Hadoram*, and “*Uzal*, and *Diklah*, and *Obal*, and *Abimael*, and “*Sheba*, and *Ophir*, and *Havilah*, and *Jobab*: “Theſe were the Sons of *Joktan*. And their Dwelling was from *Meſha*, as thou goeſt unto *Sephar*, “a Mount of the *Eaſt*.”

Q. *What Countries did theſe inhabit?*

A. Some imagine them to have peopled the various Nations of *India*, where there are Places by *Ptolomy*, and *Pliny*, *Maſæ*, *Sapanem*, and *Sabara*; others think them, with more Probability, to have poſſeſſed Part of *Arabia*, where there was a famous Port called *Maſa*, and near it, and *Eaſtward* from it, a People called *Sepharitæ*, and a Royal City named *Saphar*, from whence the famous and long Mountains, called by *Pliny*, *Climax*, derives its Name: In Effect, the ſeveral People that live in the innermoſt Parts of *Arabia*, profeſs themſelves to be the Poſterity of *Joktan*, and have a City near *Mecca*, called *Jeſtan*; and the *Homerites*, one Sort of them, are deduced from him by divers Writers. We ſee no Reaſon, however, why both of theſe Opinions may not be true; ſince the Poſterity might firſt ſettle in *Arabia*, and afterwards, as they grew more numerous, Colonies from them might diſperſe themſelves over *India*.

Q. *Are we taught any Thing any more in this Chapter?*

A. Only, “ That theſe are the Sons of *Shem*, after their Families, after their Tongues, in their Lands, after their Nations. And that theſe are the Families of the Sons of *Noah*, after their Generations in their Nations: And by theſe were the Nations divided in the Earth after the Flood.” Which Words need no Explanation.

CHAP. XI.

The whole Earth of one Language; a City and Tower built, to prevent a Diſperſion all over the Earth; God *obſerves it, diſapproves of their Deſign, and reſolves to prevent it by confounding their Language; they are ſcattered abroad all over the Face of the Earth, and forced to give over their Building; whence the Place was named* Babel; *The Poſterity of* Shem *down to* Abram; Abram *marries* Sarai, *who is barren; His Father,* Terah, *removes with him, and his Grandſon* Lot, *and* Sarah, Abram's *Wife, from* Ur, *of the* Chaldees, *to* Haran, *where he dies.*

Q. W*HAT is the firſt Thing to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. “ That the whole Earth, (that is, all the Inhabitants of the Earth) were of one Language, and of one Speech.” This is acknowledged even by Heathen Writers; and that Language was probably the *Hebrew*.

Q. *Of what does* Moſes *next inform us therein?*

A. “ That as they journey'd from the *Eaſt*, they found a Plain in the Land of *Shinar*; and they dwelt there.

Q. *From what Country are theſe People ſuppoſed to have journeyed from the* Eaſt, *ſince the Land of* Shinar *is known to be the Country of* Babylon, *which is not to the* Eaſt, *but to the* South *of Mount* Ararat, *where the Ark reſted, and near which probably* Noah's *Sons at firſt ſettled?*

A. Though it is probable, the Deſcendants of *Noah* ſettled at firſt at the Foot of the Mountains of *Armenia*, no doubt as they multiply'd they ſpread themſelves by Degrees into the neighbouring Countries, for more convenient Habitations; and as the Terreſtrial Paradiſe is ſuppoſed to have been in *Meſopotamia*; and *Adam*, when expelled from thence, is believed to have ſettled thereabouts, as the moſt delicious and fertile Country he could find; and as neither *Noah* nor his Sons can be imagined to have been ignorant of the Fruitfulneſs, and Pleaſantneſs of that Country, it is very likely they removed into *Aſſyria*, of which *Meſſopotamia* is a Part, and which lies to the *Eaſt* of the Land of *Shinar*.

Q. *Being ſettled in the Land of* Shinar, *what is the firſt Thing related of them there?*

A. “ They ſaid one to another, Go to, let us make Brick, and burn them thoroughly, and they had Brick for Stone, and Slime had they for Mortar.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That the Invention of building with Brick is very antient; and that this Account agrees exactly with what is related by prophane Authors of the City of *Babylon*; we having the joint and expreſs Teſtimony of *Beroſus*, *Cteſias*, *Dion*, *Curtius*, and many others, that the Buildings and Walls thereof were of Brick.

Q. *Having thus burnt Brick, and prepared Mortar, to what uſe did People put them?*

A. “ They ſaid, Go to, let us build a City, and a Tower, whoſe Top may reach unto Heaven; and let us make us a Name, leſt we be ſcattered abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How naturally Pride, Vain-Glory, Ambition and Fear, gain Entrance into the Heart of Man! They were for building a City and Tower; and what ſort of a Tower? Why, on whoſe Top might reach Heaven; that is, one of a prodigious Height; ſuch a one as had never been ſeen before, nor probably never would again. And wherefore were they for doing this? Why, one Reaſon was, to make themſelves a Name; that is, to make themſelves famous to all Poſterity, a very ſenſeleſs, and uſeleſs piece of Pride and Vanity! The other Reaſon was, for Fear, leſt they ſhould be ſcattered abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth.

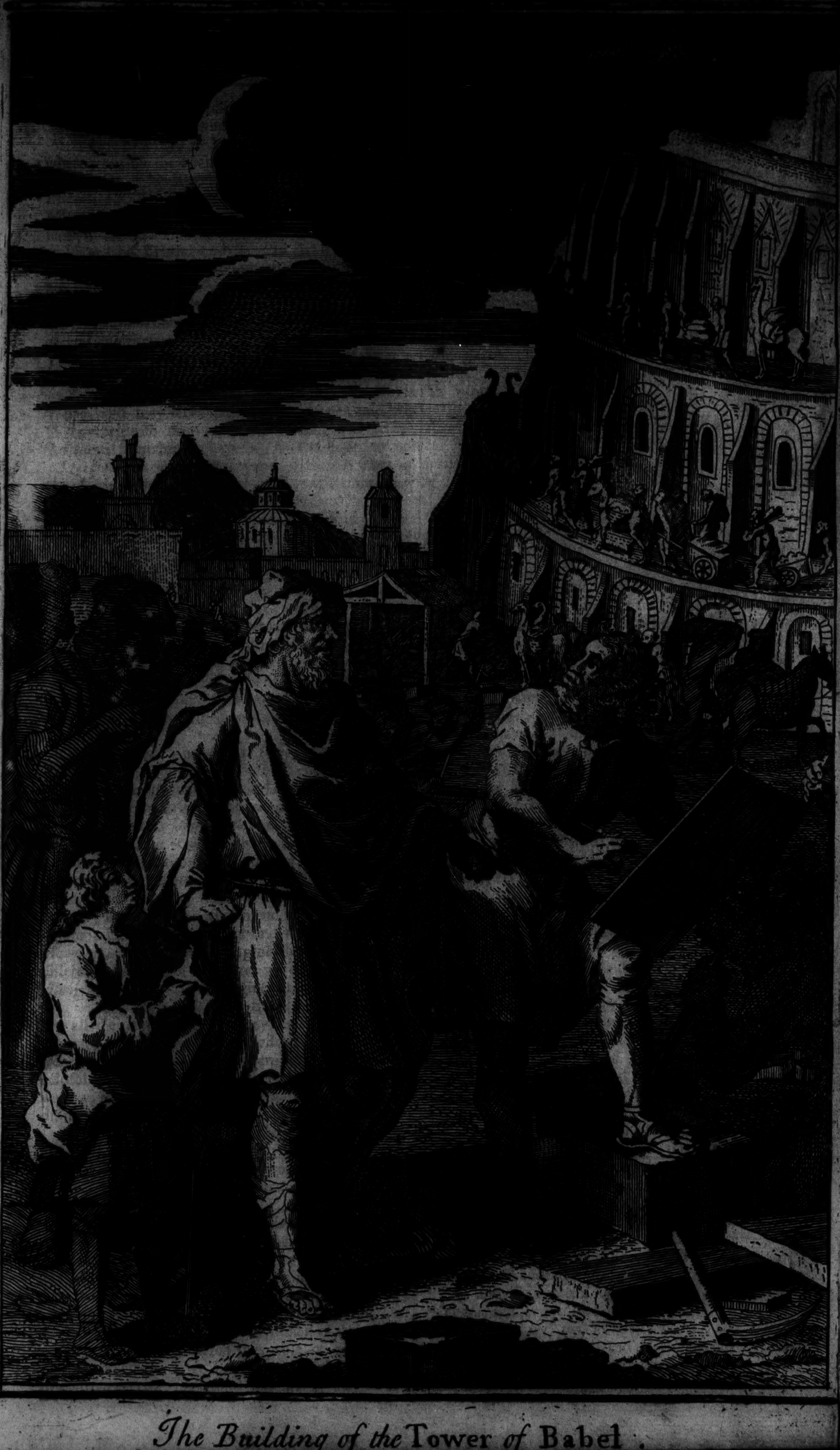
Q. *How would the Building of this Tower have prevented their being diſperſed abroad?*

A. Probably, from the prodigious Height of it, which would have rendered it diſcernible at a vaſt Diſtance, they intended it as a ſort of Landmark, and Rendezvous, to which they might have Reſort, on any emergent Occaſion by no Means: That is, they deſigned to form themſelves into one vaſt Empire, and to make this glorious City the Capital thereof; as a perpetual Tye, and Cement, to keep them together.

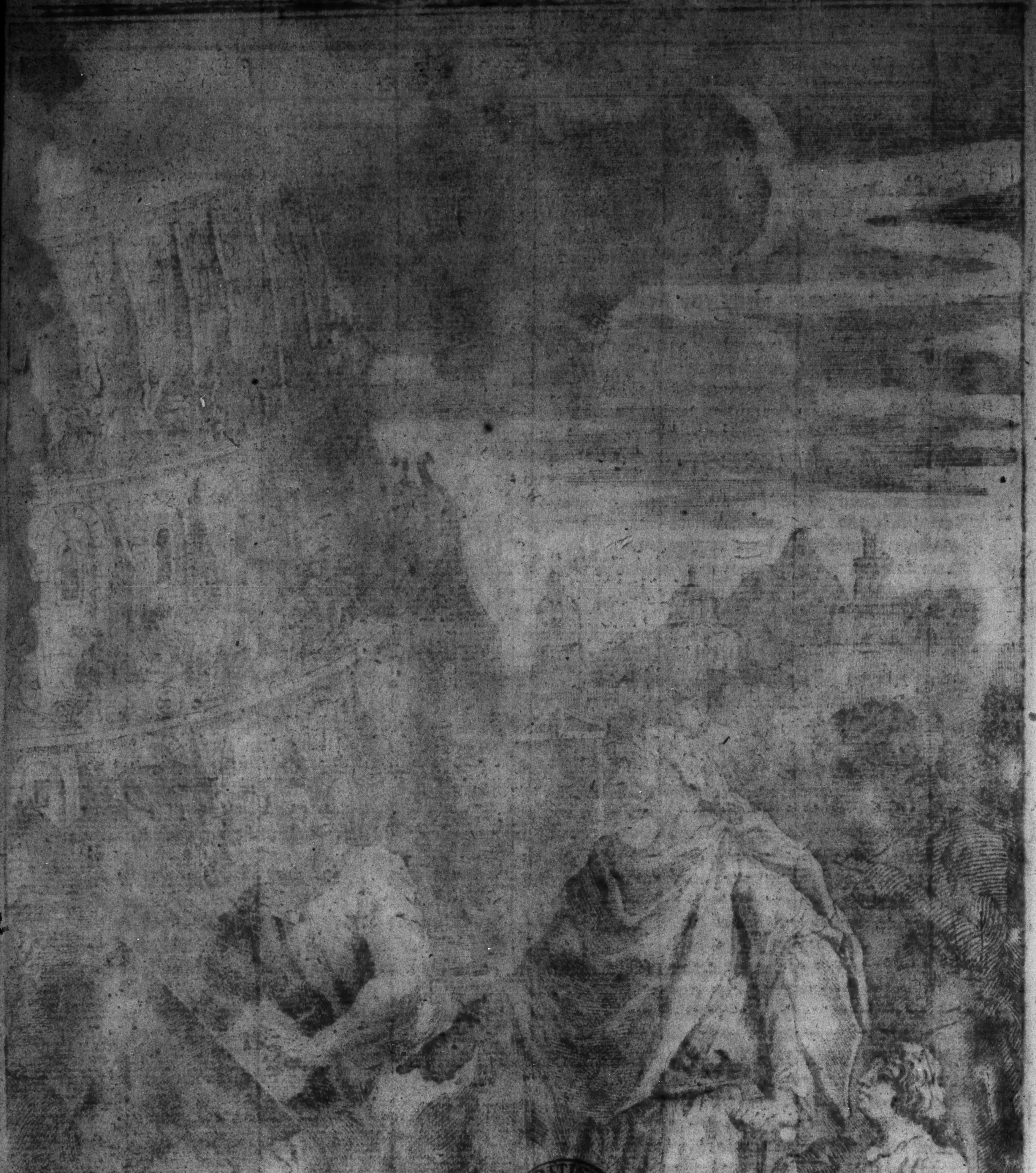
However, we can agree with ſome in their Conjecture; (which they found upon the intended Height of this vaſt Structure) that they deſigned it not only as a Monument of their great Power, but as a Place of Refuge in Caſe of another Flood; which ſhewed their Diffidence of *God*'s Veracity, in keeping his Covenant made with them, that he would not bring a general Deluge on the whole Earth again. For had this been their Deſign, they would never have built it in a Plain, but on the Top of ſome high Mountain; and what Mountain ſo proper, as that whereon the Ark reſted, which makes it probable that it is the higheſt thereabouts. In the ſecond Place, they would never have built it of Brick, which is a poor Fence againſt a Flood, but of Stone, which is much more capable of making Reſiſtance againſt Water; and will endure much longer. We are ſenſible it may be objected, that if they had deſigned it only as a Place of Rendezvous, and intended to have carried it to ſuch a prodigious Height, only that it be diſcernible at the greater Diſtance, they would certainly have choſen to build it on the Top of a Hill, as we urge they would have done, had they deſigned it as a Place of Refuge againſt a Flood. We allow this ſeems plauſible; but, it muſt be acknowledged, it flatter'd their Vanity much more, to erect an Edifice in a Plain, whoſe lofty Summit ſhould overtop the higheſt Mountains conſiderably, as being a Work of infinitely greater Labour and Difficulty; and as there were innumerable Hands, and they were all unanimous, they might purpoſely pitch upon a Plain, rather than a Hill; and the Difficulty of the Enterprize, might be one great Motive, to ſpur them on to undertake it.

Q. *What followed upon the building this great City, and Tower?*

A. “ The *Lord* came down to ſee the City, and



The Building of the Tower *of* Babel.



The Building of the Tower of Babel

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the Tower, which the Children of Men built.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. Not literally, by local Deſcent, for *God* is every where; but by the Manifeſtation of his Preſence, and the Effects of his Power in that Place: Beſides *God* in theſe Expreſſions condeſcends to the Capacity of Men, and ſuits his Words to their Underſtanding; ſo he is ſaid to come down to ſee the City, as it were to know the Truth, and thereby ſet a Pattern for Judges to examine into Cauſes, before they paſs Sentence; otherwiſe *God* ſaw this in Heaven, and could have ſeen it had it been done in Hell; there being no ſuch Thing as concealing any Action, from the View of an Omnipreſent Deity.

Q. *Having beheld this Undertaking of Mankind's, what ſaid the* Lord *thereupon?*

A. “ And the *Lord* ſaid, Behold, the People is “ one, and they have all one Language; and this “ they begin to do: And now nothing will be re“ ſtrained from them, which they have imagined to do.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand the latter Part of this Verſe, And now nothing ſhall be reſtrained from them, which they have imagined to do?*

A. Commentators differ upon this Head; ſome underſtand it as a holy Irony, as *Geneſis* iii. 22. ſince otherwiſe it would be both abſurd and falſe, for *God* ſoon put a ſtop to their Deſign, by confounding their Language, and ſcattering them abroad upon the Face of the Earth; whilſt others, with more Probability, affirm it to be wrong tranſlated; and rectify it by rendering it interrogatively, as it is by *Leuſden*, and the *Flemiſh Reviſers*; *ſhall they not be reſtrained in all that they have imagined to do?* Which is equal to the moſt expreſs Affirmation that they ſhould; accordingly we find he immediately put it in Execution.

Q. *How is the* Lord *ſaid to have put this in Execution?*

A. “ By confounding their Language, that they “ might not underſtand one another's Speech.”

Q. *How is this ſuppoſed to have been effected?*

A. By erazing out of Men's Minds, the Ideas they before affixed to certain Sounds, or Words; and by producing therein, inſtead thereof, a new Sett of Ideas, and adapting them to thoſe very Words or Sounds; this alone is ſufficient to make Men ſpeak different Languages, and not underſtand each other. However, we are not to imagine they were as many different Languages as there were Men; No, the *Almighty* in the midſt of Judgment remembered Mercy; and accordingly infuſed the ſame Sett of Ideas into all the Individuals of every diſtinct Family or Nation; whereby they all underſtood each other, and were naturally inclined to adhere together, and be helpful and aſſiſtant to each other; accordingly there were no more diſtinct Languages, than there were diſtinct Families or Nations.

Q. *Having thus confounded their Language, what did the* Lord *next?*

A. “ He ſcattered them abroad from thence, “ upon the Face of all the Earth; and they left “ off to build the City.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That they brought upon themſelves the very Thing they feared, by the very Means whereby they thought to avoid it; and that with more Diſadvantage to themſelves than could have been otherwiſe; for their being ſcattered abroad was the natural, and inevitable Conſequence of the Confuſion of their Language; for being rendered incapable of converſing with each other, what Benefit or Pleaſure, could ariſe from their aſſociating together; they were therefore all naturally diſpoſed to adhere only to ſuch as ſpoke their own Language, which conſequently formed them into ſeveral large Companies or Nations, and laid them under a neceſſity of parting, and inhabiting different Countries, to avoid the Inconveniencies which muſt have ariſen from their mutual and continual miſundoing each other. Thus *God* by his infinite Wiſdom, at once diſappointed their Deſign, and anſwered his own, which was to repeople the Earth more generally and ſpeedily, than it is probable they would otherwiſe have done of themſelves. Their leaving off building the City, was alſo another neceſſary Conſequence of the Confuſion of their Language; for if a Man called for one Thing, and thoſe he ſpoke to brought him another, it muſt neceſſarily diſable him from going on with his Work.

Q. *But if their Deſign was only to perpetuate their Name, and prevent their being ſcattered abroad upon the Face of the Earth, as the Scripture itſelf ſeems to intimate, what was there highly ſo criminal in either of theſe, to draw down ſuch a Judgment upom them?*

A. There ſeems to have been a Complication of Crimes therein. Firſt, in being ſo anxious for the perpetuating their own Name, and at the ſame Time taking no manner of Care for the Honour of *God's* Name, and the propagation of the true Religion; which was the higheſt Ingratitude, Impiety, and Irreverence to their beneficent Creator. Secondly, in relying upon their own Wiſdom, Power, and Strength for preventing the Evils they dreaded, and not upon *God*, which was the greateſt Pride, Self-ſufficiency, and Arrogance, the very Sin which tumbled *Lucifer* from Heaven.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. We have next the Genealogy of *Shem's* Poſterity down to *Abram*; that is, not of all his Poſterity, but only of thoſe from whom *Abram*, and conſequently our Saviour in the Fleſh, deſcended in a direct Line; it runs thus, “ *Shem* was an hundred “ Years old, when he begat *Arphaxad* two Years “ after the Flood. And *Shem* lived, after he begat *Ar*“ *phaxed*, five hundred Years, and begat Sons and “ Daughters” (ſo that he lived almoſt all the Time of *Abraham*) who was both a ſingular Bleſſing to himſelf, in that he ſaw his Children of the tenth Generation; and to the Church of *God*, which by this Means enjoyed the Counſel and Conduct of ſo great a Patriarch) “ And *Arphaxad* lived five “ and thirty Years, and begat *Salah*. And *Ar*“ *phaxad* lived, after he begat *Salah*, four hundred “ and three Years, and begat Sons and Daughters. “ And *Salah* lived thirty Years, and begat *Eber*. “ And *Salah* lived, after he begat *Eber*, four hun“ dred and three Years, and begat Sons and Daugh“ ters. And *Eber* lived four and thirty Years, and “ begat *Peleg*. And *Eber* lived, after he begat “ *Peleg*, four hundred and thirty Years, and begat “ Sons and Daughters.” (So he was the longeſt liv'd of all the Patriarchs, who were born after the Flood.) “ And *Peleg* lived thirty Years, and begat *Reu*. “ And *Peleg* lived, after he begat *Reu*, two hun“ dred and nine Years, and begat Sons and Daugh“ ters. And *Reu* lived two and thirty Years, and “ begat *Serug*. And *Reu* lived, after he begat *Se*“ *rug*, two hundred and ſeven Years, and begat “ Sons and Daughters. And *Serug* lived thirty “ Years, and begat *Nabor*. And *Serug* lived after “ he begat *Nabor*, two hundred Years, and begat “ Sons and Daughters. And *Nabor* lived nine and “ twenty Years, and begat *Terah*. And *Nabor* lived “ after he begat *Terah*, an hundred and nineteen

“ Years, and begat Sons and Daughters. And *Terah* lived ſeventy Years, and begat *Abram*, *Nahor*, and *Haran*.

Q. *So far needs but little Explanation; only we would know why* Abram *is placed firſt; whereas he ſeems to have been the youngeſt of* Terah’s *Children?*

A. Undoubtedly, for the ſame Reaſon as *Shem* is placed before *Ham*, and *Japheth*, and *Moſes* before *Aaron*; becauſe he was afterwards admitted, in an eminent Degree, into the Divine Favour, and was called the *Father of the Faithful*: for as to their reſpective Ages, *Haran* ſeems to have been the eldeſt, tho’ placed laſt, ſince *Nahor* married his Daughter; *Nahor*, in all Probability was the next; and there is good Reaſon to preſume, that *Abraham* was the youngeſt; becauſe his Father *Terah* is ſaid to have lived two hundred and five Years, *v.* 32. and when *Abram* went out of *Haran*, after his Father’s Death, he was but ſeventy five Years old, as appears from the fourth Verſe of the next Chapter. This ſhews the Falſity of that Notion of the *Jews*, that *Noah* lived to *Abram*’s fifty eighth Year, as we have obſerved before; whereas he was not begotten in *Terah*’s ſeventieth Year, when *Terah* is here ſaid to have begotten *Abram*, *Nahor*, and *Haran*, but in his hundred and thirtieth Year; from which there remains preciſely ſeventy five Years to *Abram*’s Departure. The Expreſſion therefore, that *Terah* lived ſeventy Years, and begat *Abram*, *Nahor*, and *Haran*, ought only to be underſtood, as that of *Gen.* v. 32. that he began then to beget Children.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Terah* begat *Abram*, *Nahor* and *Haran*; and *Haran* begat *Lot*. And that *Haran* died before his Father *Terah*, in the Land of his Nativity, in *Ur* of the *Chaldees*. That *Abram* and *Nabor* took them Wives; That the Name of *Abram*’s was *Sarai*; and the Name of *Nahor*’s Wife *Milcah*, the Daughter of *Haran*, the Father of *Milcah*, and the Father of *Iſcah*.

Q. *What has been obſerved from thence?*

A. Upon its being particularly ſpecified, that *Haran died before his Father* Terah, ſome Commentators have obſerved, and amongſt the Reſt, the learned Mr. *Howel*, that *Haran* was the firſt Son, who died in a natural Way, before his Father; for as the Fathers were born firſt; ſo they died firſt: But we are ſurprized how they could fall into ſo groſs an Error, ſince it is evident, that *Lamech*, the Father of *Noah*, died five Years before the Flood, in his ſeven hundred and ſeventy ſeventh Year, and, conſequently, that he died five Years before his Father *Methuſelah*, who is ſaid to have lived ſeven hundred and eighty two Years after he begat *Lamech*, and, conſequently to have died in the very Year of the Flood.

Q. *What elſe has been obſerv’d thereupon?*

A. By the mentioning of *Iſcah* here, and no farther Notice being taken of her any where in Scripture, the *Jews*, and many others, have imagined, that ſhe was the ſame with *Sarai*, and that the Name of *Sarai* was only given her, on Account of her Beauty and Houſewifry; but we can ſee no Ground for this Imagination; for *Abraham* being taxed by *Abimelech*, *Gen.* xx. 9, &c. with doing what he ought not to have done, in ſaying ſhe was his Siſter, anſwers, *She is indeed my Siſter, ſhe is the Daughter of my Father, but not of my Mother*, which he would hardly have ſaid, had ſhe been the Daughter of his Brother *Haran*.

Q. *Of what farther are we informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Sarai* was barren; ſhe had no Child; and that *Terah* took *Abram* his Son, and *Lot* the Son of *Haran* his Son’s Son, and *Sarai* his Daughter-in-law, his Son *Abram*’s Wife; and they went forth with them from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, to go into the Land of *Canaan*, and they came unto *Haran*, and dwelt there. And the Days of *Terah* were two hundred and five Years; and *Terah* died in *Haran*.”

Q. *What is ſuppoſed to have been the Reaſon of* Terah’s *leaving his native Country, and removing to* Haran?

A. It is believed that *Abram* communicated to him the divine Command, mentioned in the firſt *Verſe* of the next Chapter, which he readily and chearfully obeyed, tho’ it is natural for Mankind to love their Country, and to be loth to part with their Relations, Friends, and Acquaintance. For this Reaſon he is here mentioned ſo honourably, as the Head and Governor of this Action; tho’ the *Lord* took him away before he reached the Land of *Canaan*, probably that he might not ſhare with *Abram* in the Honour of taking Poſſeſſion thereof.

CHAP. XII.

God *calleth* Abram *from his own Country, and Kindred, to* Canaan, *promiſing to make of him a great and flouriſhing Nation, and to bleſs, in him, all the Nations of the Earth; he obeys, and* God *appears to him in* Canaan, *and promiſes to give that Land to him. He removes to* Bethel, *and there builds an Altar; he goes from thence to* Egypt *on Account of a Famine; he adviſes* Sarai *to equivocate; ſhe is taken into* Pharaoh’s *Houſe;* Pharaoh *ſhews Kindneſs to* Abram *for her Sake;* God *plagues* Pharaoh *becauſe of* Sarai; *he calls* Abram, *expoſtulates with him for deceiving him, and ſends him away in Safety.*

Q. *WHAT is the firſt Thing to be learned from this Chapter?*

A. “ That the *Lord* had ſaid unto *Abram*, get thee out of thy Country, and from thy Kindred, and from thy Father’s Houſe unto a Land that I will ſhew thee.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That this Command was given *Abram*, whilſt he was in *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, and was a very great Trial of his Faith and Obedience; being no leſs than to abandon his Native Country, and his Relations; and thoſe not diſtant Relations, but his Father’s Houſe; that is, his Family by the Father’s ſide; by which his Grandfather *Nabor* and the reſt of his Offſpring are ſuppoſed to be meant, becauſe it is evident his Father *Terah* was not included, ſince he went with him; and the Reaſon why *Abram* was ordered to get from amongſt them, is believed to be, becauſe they had either wholly forſaken the Worſhip of the true *God*; or elſe, if they did worſhip him at all, they mixed idolatrous Superſtition with their Worſhip, which was an Abomination to the *Lord*. The latter of theſe ſeems the moſt probable, becauſe we find *Laban*, *Gen.* xxiv. 31. ſaying to *Abram*’s Servant, *Come in thou bleſſed of the* Lord. And again, *Verſe* 50, we find both *Laban* and his Father *Bethuel*, ſaying, *The Thing proceedeth from the* Lord, *we cannot ſpeak unto thee bad or good.* He leaving his Country and Relations, however, was not the only Trial to which *Abram*’s Faith and Obedience was expoſed; for he was to go to a Land which the *Lord* would ſhew him; which Land is not ſpecified, the greater Teſt and Exerciſe of his Faith and Patience; as is expreſſly ſaid, *Heb.* xi. 8. *And he went out, not knowing whither he went.* From this his ſtrong Faith and Reliance upon *God*, on all Occaſions, he juſtly obtained the honourable Title of the *Father of the Faithful.*

Q. *What did the* Lord *promiſe* Abram, *to induce him to obey this Command?*

A. "That he would make of him a great Nation, "and would bleſs him, and would make his Name "great, and he ſhould be a Bleſſing." That is, that he would bleſs him with all Manner of Bleſſings, ſpiritual, and temporal, and eternal; and that he ſhould not only be bleſſed in himſelf, but ſhould be an Inſtrument of Bleſſedneſs to others; that is, to his Poſterity, who ſhould be bleſſed for his Sake; and to his Servants and Friends, who ſhould be bleſſed through his Means; that is, through his Inſtruction and Prayers.

Q. *What farther did the* Lord *promiſe* Abram?

A. "That he would bleſs them that bleſſed him, "and curſe him that curſed him; and that in him "all the Families of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed." An amazing Condeſcenſion, and Privilege! that *God* ſhould reckon all thoſe his Friends, or Enemies, who were Friends, or Enemies, to *Abram!*

Q. *How was the latter Part of the Bleſſing accompliſhed, that in him all the Families of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed?*

A. In the Birth of *Chriſt*; who was of *Abram*'s Seed according to the Fleſh; in and by whom alone all the Nations of the Earth ſhall be bleſſed; there being no other Name under Heaven, by which Mankind can be ſaved.

Q. *Did* Abram *immediately obey the* Lord's *Command?*

A. Yes: "So *Abram* departed, as the *Lord* had "ſpoken unto him; and *Lot* went with him: And "*Abram* was ſeventy and five years old, when he "departed out of *Haran.*"

Q. *What has been obſerved upon this Text?*

A. The learned Mr. *Howel* obſerves, that St. *Stephen* ſays, *Acts* vii. 4. that *Abraham*, after the Death of his Father, removed from *Charran* (or *Haran* as it is here) to the Land of *Canaan*; and *Gen.* xii. 4. it is ſaid, that *Abram* was ſeventy and five Years old, when he departed out of *Haran*; and *Gen.* xi. 26. it is ſaid, that *Terah* was ſeventy Years old when he begat *Abram*; and again *Verſe* 32, that the Days of *Terah* were two hundred and five Years, and he died in *Haran*; whereas, at this Rate, *Terah* muſt have lived ſixty Years after *Abram*'s Departure from *Haran*; for ſeventy five Years, the Number of *Abram*'s Days when he left *Haran*, being added to ſeventy, the Number of *Terah*'s Years when he begat *Abram*, make but juſt one hundred and forty five Years; whereas 'tis ſaid, *Gen.* xi. 32. that he lived two hundred and five Years: To reconcile this, Mr. *Howel* imagines, that ſome Error has crept into the Text of *Moſes*; and that of the two hundred and five Years which are aſcrib'd to *Terah*, when he died in *Haran*, he only lived one hundred and forty five, according to the *Samaritan* Verſion, and the *Samartian* Chronicle; which, doubtleſs, agree with the *Hebrew* Copy from which they were tranſlated. It muſt be owned, that this removes all Contradictions, and likewiſe agrees with the Opinion of the *Jews*, that *Noah* lived till the fifty eighth Year of *Abraham*'s Age; but, if we admit that *Abraham* was the youngeſt of *Terah*'s Sons, and was not begotten till his hundred and thirtieth Year, it will as effectually remove all Contradictions, and not put us to the Inconvenience of ſuppoſing an Error crept into the Text, which, we think, may be of dangerous Conſequence.

Q. *What next are we informed of concerning* Abram?

A. "That *Abram* took *Sarai* his Wife, and *Lot* "his Brother's Son, and all their Subſtance that "they had gathered, and the Souls that they had "gotten in *Haran*; and they went forth to go into "the Land of *Canaan*; and into the Land of *Canaan* they came." That is, they took all their Family, Children, Servants, and Cattle (for though *Abram* had not as yet any Children, *Lot* had) as deſigning to ſettle in the Land which the *Lord* ſhould ſhew them; and not to return any more either to their own Country and Relations, or to *Haran.*

Q. *What is the next Thing we hear of* Abram, *after his coming into the Land of* Canaan?

A. "That he paſſed through the Land unto the "Place of *Sichem*, unto the Plain of *Moreh!* and "the *Canaanite* was then in the Land."

Q. *What has been obſerved upon this Text?*

A. That the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe, and moſt of the *Rabbins* transform the *Oak* of *Moreh*, at which *God* appeared to *Abram*, into a *Plain*; and moſt Verſions, except the vulgar *Latin*, transform the *Oak* into a *Valley*; and if we were to give it another Signification, we muſt rather render it a *Valley* than a *Plain*; becauſe *Sichem* was ſituated in the *Valley* of *Aulon*, ſo called from the Word *Elon*, which ſignifies an *Oak.* 'Twas under this *Oak* that *Jacob* hid the ſtrange Gods which his Servants kept, and the Ear-rings; and 'twas likewiſe under it that *Deborah*, *Rebekah's*, Nurſe was buried, *Geneſis* xxxv. 4. 8. 'Twas alſo under it that *Joſhua* ſet up a great Stone, as a Witneſs unto the People of *Iſrael*, that they had choſen the *Lord* for their *God.* *Joſhua* xxiv. 26. and that *Abimelech* was made King. *Judges* ix. 6. where our Tranſlators render it *Plain:* But here in *Geneſis* xii. 6. the *Septuagint* render it *High-Oak.*

Q. *Why is it particularly ſpecify'd that the* Canaanite *was then in the Land?*

A. This is added to ſet off the more *Abram's* Faith, Obedience, and Reſolution; that he had the Courage to profeſs the true Religion, in the Midſt of ſuch a curſed, cruel, impious and idolatrous Nation; which he could not do without running an imminent Hazard of loſing both his Eſtate, and Life; the *Canaanites* being then the ſettled Inhabitants of the Place, and ſo to continue for ſome hundreds of Years; and having the Power of Life and Death in their own Hands; whereas *Abram* was but a Stranger, and Sojourner there; not having ſo much Inheritance there as to ſet his Foot on, as St. *Stephen* expreſſly ſays, *Acts* vii. 5.

Q. *Of what elſe are we informed in this Chapter?*

A. "That the *Lord* appeared unto *Abram*, and "ſaid, Unto thy Seed will I give this Land: and "there builded he an Altar unto the *Lord*, who appeared unto him."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The Strength of *Abram*'s Faith, and his Gratitude; for, notwithſtanding he had then no Children; and his Wife *Sarai* was barren; and the *Land* was then in the Poſſeſſion of the *Canaanites*; he firmly relied upon *God*'s Faithfulneſs in his Promiſes; and, to ſhew his Gratitude, erected an Altar in that Place to the *Lord*, who had made him ſuch a gracious Promiſe: Hence we may learn, that it is our bounden Duty to thank and praiſe God for all his Benefits.

Q. *What is the next Thing we hear of* Abram?

A. “ That he removed from thence unto a Moun- “ tain on the *Eaſt* of *Bethel*, and pitched his Tent, “ having *Bethel* on the *Weſt*, and *Hai* on the *Eaſt*; “ and there he builded an Altar unto the *Lord*, and called on the Name of the *Lord*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abram*, in all Probability, made it his conſtant Practice to build an Altar, and to call upon the Name of the *Lord*, in every Place to which he removed; an uſeful Leſſon and Inſtruction, that it is a conſtant Habit and Practice of religious Duties, and not only an occaſional calling upon his Name, or conforming to his Worſhip, which God expects from all thoſe who call themſelves his Servants.

Q. *Did* Abram *continue long at* Bethel, *or did he remove elſewhere?*

A. No, it is ſaid, “ he journeyed, going on ſtill “ towards the *South*.” This he did, probably, becauſe of the abominable Wickedneſs of the Inhabitants wherever he came, which was a perpetual Affliction to him; wherefore he removed from Place to Place, in hopes of meeting better Neighbours.

Q. *Of what elſe are we informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That there was a Famine in the Land, and “ *Abram* went down into *Egypt* to ſojourn there; for “ the Famine was grievous in the Land.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That there is no Land ſo fruitful, but *God*, if he pleaſes, can turn it into a barren Wilderneſs; for *Canaan* was a Country ſo fertil, that it is often called in Scripture a Land flowing with Milk and Honey; ſee the Character of it given by *God* himſelf, *Deut.* viii. 7, 8. *&c.*

Q. *What is the next Thing we are informed of concerning* Abram?

A. “ And it came to paſs when he was come near “ to enter into *Egypt*, that he ſaid unto *Sarai* his “ Wife, Behold now I know, that thou art a fair Wo- “ man to look upon. Therefore it ſhall come to “ paſs, when the *Egyptians* ſhall ſee thee, that they “ ſhall ſay, This is his Wife: and they will kill me, “ but they will ſave thee alive. Say, I pray thee, “ thou art my Siſter: That it may be well with me “ for thy Sake; and my Soul ſhall live becauſe of “ thee.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?* Sarai *muſt then have been above threeſcore Years old, and if ſo, how could ſhe be ſo fair at that Age? Beſides, as* Abram *had been married to her many Years, why does he ſay,* “ *Behold* now *I know thou art a fair Woman to* “ *look upon,*” *as if he had been ignorant of her Beauty till then? There ſeems alſo ſomething unwarrantable, and unjuſtifiable, in* Abram's *Expedient to ſave his Life, by* Sarai*'s ſaying ſhe was his Siſter; which though not a direct Lye, ſeems a Sort of* Jeſuitical *Equivocation; and, as it was meant to impoſe upon, and deceive the* Egyptians, *was certainly a Sin; beſides, it betray'd an evident Diſtruſt of* God's *Providence and Promiſe; how does this ſuit with the Character of the Father of the Faithful?*

A. As to the firſt Head, though *Sarai* was then upwards of ſixty-five, yet, as ſhe had born no Children, and had been extraordinary beautiful when young, her Charms might not be ſo much diminiſhed as thoſe of other Women of the ſame Age; beſides, in thoſe early Days of the World, Nature might be more vigorous in Mankind; and Women of ſixty or ſeventy might look as well, or better, at that Time, than Woman of thirty do now, as has been the Opinion of divers Commentators; however, the Preſervation of *Sarai*'s Beauty might be owing to *God*'s ſingular Providence, both for the Trial of *Abram*; and the Manifeſtation of the *Almighty's* Goodneſs, in watching over him, and his. As to the ſecond Article, undoubtedly, *Abram* knew very well his Wife was a fine Woman, when he firſt married her; but the Meaning of the Words *behold* now *I know*, &c. ſeems here to be; the upon his entering the Confines of *Egypt*, and obſerving that vaſt difference in point of Beauty, between *Sarai*, and the *Egyptian* Women (the latter being very ſwarthy, and almoſt *Negroes*, and the former extremely *fair*) ſo viſible a Diſparity in their Complexions, made *Abram* ſenſible, how deſirable a *fair* Woman muſt be to ſuch a ſwarthy Nation; and as he was likewiſe ſenſible that they were a very luſtful People, and himſelf was a Stranger amongſt them, it ſtruck him with Aprehenſions, that ſhould ſhe be known to be his Wife, they might kill him, that they might enjoy her; Adultery being, in thoſe Days, eſteemed a more heinous Sin than Murther. As to the third Point, his being guilty of an Equivocation, no doubt it was unwarrantable; and can only be accounted for from the Frailty of human Nature, from which the moſt perfect of Mankind are not exempted; it muſt be conſidered alſo, that *Abram* was not guilty of this Equivocation, on any leſs Account, than the ſaving his Life from manifeſt Danger.

Q. *What followed upon* Abram *and* Sarai*'s going into* Egypt?

A. “ And it came to paſs that when *Abram* was “ come into *Egypt*; the *Egyptians* beheld the Wo- “ man, that ſhe was very fair. The Princes alſo of “ *Pharaoh* ſaw her, and commended her before *Pha-* “ *raoh*: And the Woman was taken into *Pharaoh's* “ Houſe. And he intreated *Abram* well for her Sake; “ and he had Sheep and Oxen, and He-Aſſes, and “ Men-ſervants, and Maid-ſervants, and She-Aſſes, “ and Camels.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abram*'s Fears and Apprehenſions were far from being groundleſs; for, no ſooner had he entered *Egypt*, but his Wife's Charms, (and eſpecially the Clearneſs and Whiteneſs of her Skin) inflam'd the tawny *Egyptians*. Her Beauty being the common Subject of their Diſcourſe, the News of it, at laſt, reached the great Officers of the Court, who are here called *Pharaoh*'s Princes; and who having themſelves viewed her, and finding her extremely handſome, like true Courtiers, who would ſtick at nothing to gain their Prince's Favour, though it were in gratifying him in his Luſts, and ſtooping to be his Panders, acquaint him with the Arrival of this uncommon Beauty in his Dominions; and by extolling her to the Skies, ſo fire the amorous Monarch, that he immediately reſolves upon poſſeſſing ſuch a Treaſure, and orders her to be brought to his Palace. As *Abram*, however, paſſed only for her Brother, he was very kindly uſed, as himſelf had foreſeen, for her Sake; the King loading him with conſiderable Preſents, of Sheep, Oxen, Aſſes, Camels, Men-ſervants, and Maid-ſervants; in which the Subſtance of Mankind, in thoſe Days chiefly conſiſted.

Q. *And what was the Conſequence of the King's taking* Sarai *into his Palace?*

A. “ The *Lord* plagued *Pharaoh* and his Houſe “ with great Plagues, becauſe of *Sarai*, *Abram*'s “ Wife.”

Q. *But as* Sarai *paſſed only for* Abram's *Siſter, and conſequently* Pharaoh *was ignorant of her being married; and as* Pharaoh *uſed* Abram *very generouſly for her Sake, from whence it may be preſumed he would not uſe her ill; what very heinous Crime did he commit in* *taking her into his Palace; when we find even* Abram *himſelf, and the other Patriarchs, allowed themſelves in the Uſe of Concubines and Polygamy? Beſides, as it was* Pharaoh *who had taken* Sarai *for his own Uſe, why were his Houſe puniſhed as well as him?*

A. The Crime ſeems to have been in taking her by *Violence*, without conſulting her Inclinations, which made it a Rape; for, it is not to be ſuppoſed, that *Sarai* would have agreed willingly to have been his, had her Conſent been asked; though ſhe did not think proper to expoſe her Husband's Life, by declaring her Marriage: And, as to *Pharaoh*'s Houſe being plagued likewiſe, they might, poſſibly, ſome one Way, ſome another, be his Miniſters in the Execution of this *Violence*; and if not, they were undoubtedly guilty of many heinous Sins, for which *God* might juſtly take this Opportunity of chaſtizing them; thereby to add the more to *Pharaoh*'s Puniſhment.

Q. *What did* Pharaoh *upon finding himſelf thus afflicted?*

A. “ And *Pharaoh* called *Abram*, and ſaid, what is “ this that thou haſt done unto me? Why didſt thou “ not tell me that ſhe was thy Wife?”

Q. *How is* Pharaoh *ſuppoſed to have known that* Sarai *was* Abram's *Wife?*

A. Either by the Nature of the Plague wherewith he was afflicted; which was probably ſome grievous Sickneſs, that at once chaſtiſed him ſeverely, and effectually prevented him in the Execution of his Deſign upon *Sarai*; and which poſſibly might afflict him more than ordinary, whenever he was in her Company: Or by divine Inſpiration, as befel *Abimilech* in the like Caſe, *Gen.* xx. 3. or even by the Confeſſion of *Sarai* herſelf, whom probably he ſtrictly examined upon this Head; and ſhe, being awakened by this Warning, durſt no longer conceal the Truth; but thought ſhe might ſafely make it known.

Q. *After this Expoſtulation, what ſaid* Pharaoh *farther?*

A. “ Why ſaidſt thou, ſhe is my Siſter? So I “ might have taken her to Wife! Now, therefore, “ behold thy Wife, take her, and go thy Way. And “ *Pharaoh* commanded his Men concerning him: “ And they ſent him away, and his Wife, and all “ that he had.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Pharaoh*, though a Heathen, after expoſtulating with *Abram*, a little farther, and telling him, that by his having ſaid ſhe was his Siſter, he might have been induced to take her to Wife, by which it is plain, he meant her no Injury, was yet ſo ſenſibly awakened by the Hand of *God*'s being upon him, and ſo apprehenſive of future and worſe Judgments, if he detained her any longer, that he immediately reſtored her, and deſired him to be gone out of his Dominions. This he did, probably, from his Knowledge of the luſtful Temper of his Subjects, and how great an Incentive to unlawful Deſires, ſo fair a Woman muſt be to them; leſt any of them ſhould lay forcible Hands on her, and thereby again draw down the Judgments of Heaven upon them. And to provide effectually againſt this, he gave ſtrict Commands to his Subjects, not to moleſt or injure him in any Manner; and, as ſeems probable, from the Words, *they ſent him away*, he ſent a Guard with him, to conduct him ſafely out of his Territories. Neither did he lay Hands on any of the Preſents he had made him, though they were very conſiderable; and though he might juſtly have done it, as they were obtained by Deceit, that is, through a Belief that ſhe was only his Siſter; nay, tho' he had ſufficient Provocation to have done it, conſidering he had been a great Sufferer, and ſeverely afflicted, in his own Perſon and Family, by that Equivocation.

Chap. XIII.

Abram *returns from* Egypt *to* Canaan, *with* Lot, *and all that he had; he comes to* Bethel, *and there calls on the* Lord; Abram, *and* Lot, *being both very rich, are obliged to part;* Lot *chooſes the Plain of* Jordan, *with the Country about* Sodom, *and* Gomorrah; *the Men of* Sodom *are exceedingly wicked;* God *renews his Promiſe to* Abram, *concerning his giving him the Land of* Canaan, *and a numerous Iſſue;* Abram *removes to* Mamre, *and there builds an Altar to the* Lord.

Q. B*Eing thus ſent out of* Egypt *by* Pharaoh, *which Way did* Abram *ſteer his Courſe?*

A. “ And *Abram* went up out of *Egypt*, he and “ his Wife, and all that he had, and *Lot* with him “ into the *South*.”

Q. *By this it ſhould ſeem, that he went into* Ethiopia, *which is* South *of* Egypt.

A. True; but nevertheleſs, it is meant here, that he went into the Land of *Canaan*, which lay rather to the *North* than to the *South* of *Egypt*; but the Scripture being written principally for the *Jews*, and eſpecially the *Old Teſtament*, frequently ſpeaks of Places only as they were ſituated in reſpect of *Judea*; and it is in this Reſpect, *Abram* is here ſaid to go into the *South*, becauſe he removed to the *Southern* Parts of *Canaan*, which lay almoſt contiguous to *Egypt*.

Q. *What are we firſt told upon his Removal into* Canaan?

A. “ That *Abram* was very rich in Cattle, in “ Silver, and in Gold; that he went on Journeys “ from the *South*, even to *Bethel*, unto the Place “ where his Tent had been at the Beginning, be- “ tween *Bethel* and *Hai*; unto the Place of the Al- “ tar which he had made there at firſt; and there “ *Abram* called on the Name of the *Lord*.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Abram* choſe to remove to the Place whereof he had before had Experience, probably, for fear, that if he went elſewhere, he might meet with worſe Neighbours than he had found there; and therefore, being willing, as we ſay now-a-days, to take up with Naught he knew, rather than Naught he did not know: As alſo, that the firſt Thing he did when he got thither, was to call upon the Name of the *Lord*, and return him Thanks for his Preſervation, and the kind Uſage he had met with in *Egypt*.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Lot* alſo, which went with *Abram*, had “ Flocks, and Herds, and Tents; and the Land “ was not able to bear them, that they might dwell “ together: for their Subſtance was great, ſo that “ they could not dwell together: And there was “ Strife between the Herdſmen of *Abram*'s Cattle, “ and the Herdſmen of *Lot*'s Cattle; and the *Ca-* “ *naanite* and the *Perizzite* dwelt then in the “ Land.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That Increaſe of Wealth, which is in itſelf a Bleſſing, frequently proves an Occaſion of Strife, even between the beſt of Men, and the neareſt Relations;

and ſo far it proves a Curſe to them: It being very natural for Mankind to quarrel with thoſe, through whoſe Means they ſuffer in point of Intereſt. Now the Cauſe of the Strife between the Herdſmen of *Abram* and *Lot*, was, in all Probability; becauſe their Families growing large, and their Flocks increaſing conſiderably, they might begin to labour again under a Scarcity of Fodder for their Cattle, and, perhaps, of Food for themſelves. This might proceed, partly, from the late Famine which had been in the Land; and partly, from the *Canaamties*, and *Perizzites* being in Poſſeſſion of the beſt Paſturage, as being the Natives; whereas *Abram* and *Lot* were but Strangers in the Land, and were forced to take up, and be contented with, what they would be pleaſed to allow them; and this ſeems to be one Reaſon of its being here mentioned, that they dwelt here in the Land.

Q. *What ſaid* Abram *upon this Diſſenſion between the Herdſmen?*

A. "And *Abram* ſaid unto *Lot*, Let there be no
" Strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and be-
" tween my Herdſmen, and thy Herdſmen; for we
" be Brethren."

Q. *What may we learn from thence?*

A. Two Things; *1ſt*, That a wiſe and good Man will by all Means avoid Strife; and will endeavour by fair Words, to put an End to Diſputes in their very Birth: And *2dly*, How indecent, unnatural, and ſinful it is, for near Relations, who are bound, by the Ties of Blood, to love and aſſiſt each other, to give Way to Diſputes, and Diſſenſions, (much more to deadly Malice and Hatred) ſince the main Argument we find *Abram* uſing why they ſhould not differ, is; *for we be Brethren.* In Effect, even amongſt the *Turks*, at this Day, if any two of them are at Variance, there needs no more to reconcile them, even in the greateſt Heat of Paſſion, than for a third Perſon to ſay to them, *Fye! What*, Muſſulmans *and quarrel!* As to *Abram*'s terming *Lot* his Brother, whereas he was but his Nephew; it was cuſtomary amongſt the Ancients, and eſpecially amongſt the *Jews*, to term all ſo who ſprung from one common Root; tho' they were not begotten by one or the ſame Father, but were only collateral Branches of the ſame Family; and, in this Reſpect, *Abram* and *Lot* were Brethren, being both deſcended from *Terah*; they were alſo *Brethren* in a ſpiritual Relation, as both profeſſing the Worſhip of the true *God*: And, as to his ſaying, *Let there be no Strife between me and thee*, whereas there does not appear to have been any Diſpute between them, this only ſhews *Abram*'s great Care to avoid any Quarrel; of which he was juſtly apprehenſive, ſhould the Strife between their Servants continue.

Q. *What farther did* Abram *propoſe, to prevent having any Contention with* Lot?

A. "Is not the whole Land before thee? Sepa-
" rate thy ſelf, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt
" take the Left Hand, then will I go to the Right;
" or if thou go to the Right Hand, then will I go
" to the Left."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The infinite Value of Peace; and the great Condeſcenſion of *Abram* for the Sake thereof: For *Abram* was not only a greater, and better Man than *Lot*, in every Reſpect, but he was his elder, and his Uncle, and conſequently his Parent; on all which Accounts, he certainly had a Right to have his Choice in which Part of the Land he would ſettle; and *Lot*, in Duty, was bound to have acquieſced therewith, and been contented with what he left him; but on the contrary, we find him propoſing the Separation to *Lot*, as the moſt likely Means to preſerve Peace between them; and to induce him to comply therewith, giving him the Preference to chooſe which Way he would go; thereby evidently relinquiſhing his own Right to an Inferior, and leaving us a noble Example for our Imitation; the *Chriſtian* Religion obliging us much more to Peace, than that of the *Jews*, whoſe eſtabliſhed Doctrine it was to *love their Neighbour*, and *hate their Enemy*: See *Matth.* v. 43. But it may be objected, that *Abram* propoſed this through a Meanneſs of Spirit, as being apprehenſive of Danger from their quarrelling. But *Abram*'s reſcuing his Nephew *Lot* afterwards, when taken Priſoner by the four Kings, and recovering all they had carried away, ſufficiently ſhews, he did not want for Spirit and Courage, on a proper Occaſion. It may likewiſe be asked, how *Abram*, who was but a Stranger in the Land of *Canaan*, and had not ſo much as where to ſet his Foot, could bid him chooſe which Way he would take, when no Part thereof was at his Diſpoſal? To which we anſwer, That *Abram* only meant, and *Lot*, undoubtedly, underſtood him ſo, that he was free to chooſe which Part he pleaſed, as he could agree with the Owners, upon purchaſing it, or hiring it. Compare this with *Gen.* xx. 15. xxxiv. 10, 21. and xlvii. 6.

Q. *What followed upon this advantagious Propoſal of* Abram's; *did* Lot *comply with it?*

A. Yes, very readily; "And *Lot* lifted up his
" Eyes, and beheld all the Plain of *Jordan*, that it
" was well watered every where, before the *Lord*
" deſtroyed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, even as the Gar-
" den of the *Lord*, like the Land of *Egypt*, as thou
" comeſt unto *Zoar*. Then *Lot* choſe him all the
" Plain of *Jordan*; and *Lot* journeyed *Eaſt*; and
" they ſeparated themſelves the one from the o-
" ther."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How readily Mankind, even the beſt of them, are apt to be enſnared by worldly Advantages! The Inducement, we find, to *Lot*, to chooſe the Plain of *Jordan*, was, that it was well watered every where; a conſiderable Advantage in thoſe hot Countries! Now the Vale of *Siddim*, wherein *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were ſituated, was Part of the Plain of *Jordan*; and we find, *v.* 13. of this very Chapter, "That the
" Men of *Sodom* were wicked, and Sinners before
" the *Lord* exceedingly." That is, *they exceeded the very worſt of Sinners, even in that wicked Age.* Nevertheleſs, we don't find that *Lot* made any Enquiry into the Character of the Inhabitants of thoſe Cities, which muſt have been notorious; on the contrary, it is ſaid in the next Verſe; *he pitched his Tent towards* Sodom, and in Verſe 12 of the following Chapter, *that he dwelt in* Sodom; which muſt have been ſometime afterwards; in which Time conſequently, he had many Opportunities of being convinced of their prodigious Wickedneſs, above all the Reſt of Mankind. He was willing, however, to expoſe himſelf to all the Hazards, he might incur by their Neighbourhood and Familiarity, for the Benefit of the Sweetneſs, and Fertility of the Soil; an Error which is often committed by Men, in the Choice of their Habitations; and which frequently coſts them dear, as we ſhall find it did *Lot* not long after.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. "That *Abram* dwelled in the Land of *Canaan*,
" and *Lot* dwelled in the Cities of the Plain, and
" pitched his Tent towards *Sodom*; and that the
" Men

“ Men of *Sodom* were wicked, and Sinners before
“ the *Lord* exceedingly.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That it is poſſible *Abram* had enquired into the Character of the Inhabitants of *Sodom*; or elſe the Advantages which had induced *Lot* to chooſe that Country, might have induced him to have ſettled there before their Separation; which the Fertility of the Soil might have prevented, by affording Proviſion and Fodder enough for them both. As to the latter Part, we have already obſerved that the *Sodomites* were the wickedeſt of Sinners.

Q. *What is the next Thing we hear of* Abram, *after* Lot's *Separation from him?*

A. “ And the *Lord* ſaid unto *Abram*, after that
“ *Lot* had ſeparated from him, Lift up now thine
“ Eyes, and look from the Place where thou art,
“ *Northward*, and *Southward*, and *Eaſtward*, and
Weſtward; for all the Land which thou ſeeſt, to thee
“ will I give it, and to thy Seed for ever.

Q. *How are we to underſtand this; for in the firſt Place, it is expreſly ſaid,* Acts vii. 5. God gave him no Inheritance in it, no, not ſo much as to ſet his Foot on: *And, in the ſecond Place, it is evident, he did not give it to his Seed* (for ever) *ſeeing they were driven out from thence after the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem *by the* Romans, *and never have been in Poſſeſſion thereof ſince.*

A. God gave *Abram* the Right to it, tho' not the actual Poſſeſſion thereof, till his own appointed Time; as he gave the Right to the Kingdom of *Iſrael* to *David*, but not the Poſſeſſion of it till *Saul*'s Death: Beſides, the Expreſſion *to thee, and to thy Seed*, is a *Hebraiſm*; for to thee, that is, *to thy Seed*; the Particle *(and)* being frequently, in *Hebrew*, put for (that is) as may be ſeen, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 12. compared with 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 13. As to the Objection, that the Seed of *Abram* were driven out of the Land of *Canaan*, after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and have never ſince been in Poſſeſſion thereof, whereas *God* here promiſed it to his Seed *for ever*, it is eaſily anſwered, by obſerving, that this Promiſe was only made to them on Condition of their Obedience to his Laws, as is evident from *Levit.* xviii. 27, 28. *Deut.* iv. 25, 26. *Iſa.* xlviii. 18, 19. and, conſequently, upon their violating the Divine Laws, the Promiſe became void; and 2*dly*, That the *Hebrew* Word *Olam*, which is here rendered *for ever*, does not always ſignify Eternity, but for a long Continuance; as is evident from *Gen.* xvii. 13. *Exod.* xxi. 6. and many other Places in Scripture: Particularly, when it is applied to the *Jewiſh* Rites, and Privileges, it generally ſignifies no more, than during the ſtanding of that Commonwealth; or until the Coming of the *Meſſiah*: And ſo it may be underſtood here.

Q. *What farther did the* Lord *promiſe* Abram?

A. “ And I will make thy Seed as the Duſt of the
“ Earth; ſo that if a Man can number the Duſt of
“ the Earth, then ſhall thy Seed alſo be numbred.
“ Ariſe, walk through the Land, in the Length of
“ it, and in the Breadth of it, for I will give it un-
“ to thee.”

Q. *How is this to be underſtood ſince we find the numbering of* Iſrael *frequently in Scripture; and particularly,* David *numbered them not many Years before his Deceaſe, when his Kingdom was in its moſt flouriſhing Condition, and when the People are ſuppoſed to have been as numerous, as ever they were afterwards?*

A. Undoubtedly, it is only to be underſtood in a limited Senſe, for a very great Number; as we ſtill uſe the Word (*infinite*) in that Senſe, which otherwiſe ſignifies, in ſtrictneſs, *endleſs*, and can properly be apply'd to nothing but *God* himſelf.

Q. *What is the next Thing we hear of* Abram, *after this bounteous Grant?*

A. “ That he removed his Tent, and came and
“ dwelt in the Plain of *Mamre*, which is in *Hebron*,
“ and built there an Altar unto the *Lord*.

Q. *What has been obſerved upon this Text?*

A. That Tranſlators have been guilty of the ſame Fault, in rendering the *Oak* of *Mamre*, the *Plain* of *Mamre*, as before, in rendering the *Oak* of *Moreh*, the *Plain* of *Moreh*. Concerning the *Oak* of *Mamre*, we are informed by *Sozomen*, that it was famous, even in the Time of *Conſtantine* for Pilgrimages made to it, and for an Anniverſary Feſtival, which was ſolemnized there: That it was diſtant but ſix Miles from *Hebron*; and that there were ſome Cottages ſtill to be ſeen, which *Abram* had built near to the *Oak*, and a Well that he had digged, whither both *Jews*, *Pagans*, and *Chriſtians*, travelled every Year, either out of Devotion, or a Deſign to Trade: And *Brochard* aſſures us, that he had ſeen this *Oak*, and had carried Home ſome of the Fruit and Wood thereof; and he obſerves, that its Leaves are ſomewhat larger than thoſe of the Maſtick-Tree, but that its Fruit reſembles an *Acorn*. We ſhould have obſerved alſo, that wherever *Abram* removed, he continued his laudable Cuſtom, of building an Altar unto the *Lord*; and no doubt, he did not now forget to call upon his Name, and return him Thanks for all his Mercies and Goodneſs, when he had ſo lately ſuch abundant Reaſon to teſtify his Gratitude.

CHAP. XIV.

Four Kings make War with the Kings of Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *and three other Kings their Allies, and defeat them;* Lot *is taken Captive with all that he has;* Abram *and his Confederates reſcue him, and recover all; the King of* Sodom *congratulates* Abram *on his Victory;* Melchizedek *bleſſes* Abram, *who gives him the tenth of the Spoils; the King of* Sodom *offers* Abram *the Goods recovered from the Enemy, which* Abram *refuſes.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed of this Chapter?*

A. “ That it came to paſs, in the Days of *Amra-*
“ *phel* King of *Shinar*, *Arioch* King of *Ellaſar*, *Che-*
“ *dorlaomer* King of *Elam*, and *Tidal* King of the
“ Nations; that theſe made War with *Bera*, King of
“ *Sodom*, and with *Birſha* King of *Gomorrah*, *Shi-*
“ *nab* King of *Admah*, and *Shemeber* King of *Zeboi-*
“ *im*, and the King of *Bela*, which is *Zoar*.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence;*

A. We may obſerve from hence, once for all, that the Name of *Kings* is given both here, and elſewhere, by *Moſes*, to the Governors of Cities, and little Provinces, as is alſo done by *Joſhua*, Cap. xii. *ver.* 9. *&c.* to the End.

Q. *What is farther ſaid of theſe Kings?*

A. “ That all theſe (namely all the laſt five) were
“ joined together in the Vale of *Siddim*, which is
“ the *Salt Sea*.” That is, that they made an Alliance together, and joined their Forces in the Vale of *Siddim*, which at the Time that *Moſes* wrote this, which was ſome Ages after the Deſtruction by divine Vengeance of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Admah*, and *Zeboiim*, was transformed into a filthy Lake, called the *Salt-Sea*, or the *Dead-Sea*.

Q. *For what Reaſon did theſe five Kings make an Alliance together?*

A. “ Twelve Years they ſerved *Chedorlaomer*, “ and the thirteenth they rebelled.” That is, *Chedorlaomer* had held theſe five Kings in a tributary Subjection for twelve Years; being either their Lord by Inheritance, as the Iſſue of *Elam*, *Shem*'s Son, *Geneſis* x. 22; or by Conqueſt in a former War, as is ſaid by *Joſephus*. However that be, growing weary of his Yoke, they reſolved in the thirteenth Year to ſhake it off, and accordingly revolted, and joined Forces; fully determined to try their Fortune in a pitch'd Battle, which is the firſt we have any Account of in ſacred Hiſtory.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of this their Reſolution?*

A. “ In the fourteenth Year came *Chedorlaomer*, “ and the Kings that were with him, and ſmote the “ *Rephaims*, in *Aſhteroth-Karnaim*, and the *Zuzims* “ in *Ham*, and the *Emims*, in *Shaveh-Kiriathaim*. “ And the *Horites* in their Mount *Seir*, unto *El-paran*, which is by the Wilderneſs: And they re- “ turned, and came to *Enmiſhpat*, which is *Kadeſh*, “ and ſmote all the Country of the *Amalekites*, and “ alſo the *Amorites*, that dwelt in *Hazezon-tamar*.”

Q. *Who were all theſe People whom theſe Kings are ſaid to have ſmote?*

A. Undoubtedly they were the Subjects of the King of *Sodom*, or his Allies; and the Reaſon why *Chedorlaomer* with his Confederates firſt fell upon them muſt be, in all Probability, becauſe they were ſituated in the Way, through which they were to march, in advancing to meet the five Kings their Enemies; whoſe Forces were drawn up to wait for them in the Vale of *Siddim*; as being a Place where they might poſt themſelves to Advantage, and conſequently very proper for giving *Chedorlaomer* and his Confederates Battle.

Q. *What Account does the Scripture give of this Battle?*

A. “ And there went out the King of *Sodom*, and “ the King of *Gomorrah*, and the King of *Zeboiim*, “ and the King of *Bela*, (the ſame is *Zoar*) and they “ joined Battle with them in the Vale of *Siddim*. “ With *Chedorlaomer* King of *Elam*, and with *Tidal* King of Nations, and *Amraphel* King of *Shinar*, and *Arioch* King of *Ellaſar*; four Kings with “ five. And the Vale of *Siddim* was full of Slime- “ pits; and the Kings of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* fled, “ and fell there: And they that remained fled to “ the Mountain. And they took all the Goods of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and all their Victuals, and “ went their Way. And they took *Lot*, *Abram*'s “ Brother's Son (who dwelt in *Sodom*) and his Goods, “ and departed.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. By there being almoſt an equal Number of Kings on both ſides, four on one ſide, and five on the other, it is evident theſe were all petty Princes, or rather, only Governors of ſome particular Towns and their Dependencies, whom *Moſes* calls by the Name of *Kings*; and the Vale of *Siddim*'s being full of Slime-pits, ſeems to have been the Reaſon why the Kings of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* choſe it for the Field of Battle; hoping their Enemies might fall in unawares, in the Heat of the Engagement, whereas themſelves, by their Knowledge of them, might eſcape them: The Event, however, ſeems to have proved contrary to their Expectations, ſince the Words *and fell there*, being placed immediately after the mentioning the Slime-pits, make it doubtful, whether they only fell therein, or whether they were ſlain in Battle; eſpecially as the King of *Sodom* is afterwards mentioned, as coming out to meet *Abram*, on his Return from his Victory. As to the laſt Article, of *Lot*'s being taken Captive, with all that he had; we find he began now to ſuffer for his living with bad Neighbours, and we ſhall ſee him pay more ſeverely for it afterwards.

A. “ And there came one that had eſcaped, and “ told *Abram* the *Hebrew*; for he dwelt in the Plain “ of *Mamre* the *Amorite*, Brother of *Eſhcol*, and “ Brother of *Aner*, and theſe were confederate with “ *Abram*. And when *Abram* heard that his Brother “ was taken Captive, he armed his trained Servants, “ born in his own Houſe, three hundred and eigh- “ teen, and purſued them unto *Dan*.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That notwithſtanding *Abram* had five other Progenitors, between him and *Eber*, from whom the Word *Hebrew* is derived, yet he is diſtinguiſhed as if he were his immediate Deſcendant; the Reaſon of which ſeems to be, becauſe *Eber* being ſuppoſed to be the Perſon, who preſerved the primitive Language, and the true Religion, at the Time of the Confuſion of Tongues, from whence that Language has been ever ſince called *Hebrew* from him; and *Abram* being the Founder of the *Jewiſh* Nation, by whom that Language and Religion were preſerved for many Ages, he was rightly denominated from him, as the Perſon that eminently revived and preſerved the Memory and Work of that his great and good Predeceſſor. We may farther obſerve, that when *Abram* heard of *Lot*'s Diſtreſs, he did not ſtand to bewail his Misfortune, or to pray only for his Deliverance, but immediately armed his Servants, called his Confederates to join him, and flew to his Relief; whence we may learn that, in all our Troubles, we are not to call upon *God*, and expect him to ſhew a Miracle in our Favour, but to uſe the Means, and then rely upon him for Deliverance: We may alſo learn, that thoſe who have true Charity, will not be contented with ſaying, *Lord have Mercy upon you*, to any one Affliction, but will do their utmoſt to deliver him out of it. We have alſo here an eminent Inſtance of *Abram*'s Faith, and ſtrong Reliance upon *God* for his Aſſiſtance; ſince he flew to *Lot*'s Reſcue with only three hundred and eighteen ſervants, and thoſe of his three Confederates, who probably were not much more numerous, againſt the united and victorious Forces of four Kings, which undoubtedly were vaſtly ſuperior in Number to his ſmall Troop; It muſt be obſerved, however, that *Abram*'s Servants are called *trained* Servants, born in his own Houſe; whence it may be concluded, that they were trained up in the true Religon, as well as to military Exerciſes, and conſequently, they, as well as their Maſter, had a lively Faith in *God*'s Mercy, Goodneſs, and Power; it is thought alſo, that even his Confederates were by him brought over to the Knowledge and Worſhip of the true *God*; and if ſo, it is no great Wonder, that a ſmall Troop of true Believers, who had a firm Truſt, and Reliance upon *God*, ſhould be able to defeat a numerous Army of *Infidels*, and *Idolaters*.

Q. *What followed upon* Abram*'s purſuing the Enemy unto* Dan?

A. “ And he divided himſelf againſt them, he and “ his Servants by Night, and ſmote them, and pur- “ ſued them unto *Hobab*, which is on the left-hand “ of *Damaſcus*. And he brought back all the Goods, “ and the Women alſo, and the People.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. We may obſerve that, *Abram*, notwithſtanding his ſtrong Reliance upon *God*, without which he never would have undertaken ſuch an Expedition, has again Recourſe to the moſt likely Means to gain the Victory: Accordingly, the Night favouring his Deſign, he divides his Forces into ſmall Parties, and attacks the Enemy on all Sides at once. The Suddenneſs of the Attempt, which was intirely unexpected by the victorious Army; who lay (as they thought) in the greateſt Security; and, conſequently, were not in the leaſt upon their Guard; but, in all Probability, had been feaſting and rejoicing over their Spoils, and were therefore buried in a deep Sleep; join'd to the Midnight Alarms, from all Quarters at once, put them in the utmoſt Amazement and Confuſion; and ſtruck them with ſuch a Terror, that being utterly unable to defend themſelves, they fell an eaſy Prey to *Abram*, who obtained a compleat Victory, and following his Stroke, purſued them as far as *Hobab*, which is on the left of *Damaſcus*. *Chedorlaomer*, and all the Kings that were with him, fell in the Action; and their Defeat was ſo entire, that *Abram* not only recovered all the Priſoners, and Goods they had taken, but likewiſe gained conſiderable Spoils from the Enemy.

Q. *What followed on* Abram's *Return from obtaining this compleat Victory?*

A. “ The King of *Sodom* went out to meet him, “ (after his Return from the Slaughter of *Chedorlaomer*, and of the Kings that were with him) at “ the Valley of *Shaveh*, which is the King's Dale. “ And *Melchizedek*, King of *Salem*, brought forth “ Bread and Wine; and he was the Prieſt of the “ moſt high *God*. And he bleſſed him, and ſaid, “ Bleſſed be *Abram* of the moſt high *God*, Poſſeſſor “ of Heaven and Earth: And bleſſed be the moſt “ high *God*, which hath delivered thine Enemies “ into thine Hand. And he gave him Tithes of “ all.”

Q. *Who was this* Melchizedek, *who is here called* King of Salem, *and Prieſt of the moſt* God? *How came he to be ſettled, and even to have a Kingdom amongſt the idolatrous* Canaanites? *And how came the Patriarch* Abram, *who had the Promiſes, and was himſelf a Prieſt, to give him Tithes?*

A. The learned have always been, and ſtill are, very much divided in their Opinion who the *Melchizedek* was, and where that City *Salem* ſtood; the very bare Recital of all their different Opinions (ſome of which are ſtrangely wild and whimſical) would fill a large Volume. What has given Riſe to this Multiplicity of Opinions, is the Deſcription given of him by the Apoſtle, *Heb.* vii. 3. where it is ſaid of him, that he was *without Father, without Mother, without Deſcent; having neither Beginning of Days, nor End of Life; but made like unto the Son of* God, *abideth a Prieſt continually.* Theſe Words have occaſioned many odd Speculations. The *Jews* and many others with them, imagine him to have been *Shem*, who allowing *Abram* to have been born (according to their Opinion) when *Terah* was but ſeventy, was probably alive, and, no doubt, a great Prince. But this Opinion ſeems abſurd for many Reaſons; *firſt*, It is highly improbable, that *Shem* ſhould eſtabliſh his Kingdom among *Ham*'s accurſed Race; and *2dly*, This does not any ways agree with the Apoſtle's Deſcription of *Melchizedek*; for *Shem*'s Father, and Deſcent, and the Beginning, and End of his Days, are as expreſly mentioned, as thoſe of any other Patriarch. Others have imagined, that it was our *Saviour* himſelf, who then aſſumed a human Shape, and was figuratively called the King of *Salem*, becauſe *Salem* ſignifies Peace; but this, likewiſe, is liable to many Objections: Not to mention others, how can he then be ſaid to be an illuſtrious Type of *Chriſt*, when, according to this Opinion, he was *Chriſt* himſelf; and no one was ever yet ſaid to be a Type of himſelf; neither can this be ſaid of any one, with any manner of Propriety. The moſt probable Opinion then of him is, that he was a *Canaanitiſh* King, raiſed up by the Divine Providence, to be both a King over Men, and a Prieſt unto the true *God*, in the midſt of thoſe Idolaters; to the End he might be an illuſtrious Type of *Chriſt*, both as a King and a Prieſt; and that the mentioning his Parents, Birth, or Death, is purpoſely omitted, either that there might be the greater Similitude between the Type and the Original; or becauſe *Melchizedek*, being deſcended of wicked, and Idolatrous Parents, was the firſt and laſt Prieſt of the true *God* of his Race, converted by *God* himſelf, by divine Inſpiration, in which Circumſtances he eminently reſembled our *Saviour*. In Effect, we may obſerve, that the Apoſtle does not deſcribe him with thoſe Characters with Reſpect to his Perſon, but with Regard to his twofold Dignity of King and Prieſt, which made him like *Jeſus Chriſt*. Upon this Footing then, it will not be ſurprizing, that the Patriarch *Abram* himſelf, being divinely inſpired, paid Tythes to him, or rather to *Chriſt* whom he repreſented.

Q. *What is the next Thing we hear of* Abram *in this Chapter?*

A. “ And the King of *Sodom* ſaid unto *Abram*, “ Give me the Perſons, and take the Goods to thy “ ſelf.”

Q. *What ſaid* Abram *to this Offer?*

A. “ And *Abram* ſaid unto the King of *Sodom*, I “ have lifted up mine Hand unto the *Lord*, the moſt “ high *God*, the Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth, that “ I will not take from a Thread even to a Shoe-“ latchet; and yet I will not take any Thing that “ is thine, leſt thou ſhouldſt ſay, I have made *A*-“ *bram* rich.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this; does it not ſeem to ſavour of Pride?*

A. No; two Reaſons may be given, why *Abram* refuſed to take any Thing from him; one might be, That *Abram* was reſolved to be beholden to the Bleſſing of *God* alone for all his Riches; wherefore he would not accept of any Thing from an Infidel, that he might not claim a Share in that Honour with *God*; and the other might be, to avoid the Imputation of Covetouſneſs and Selfiſhneſs in what he had done; which might have brought a Scandal on the true Religion; whereas his acting otherwiſe, redounded to the Honour of the Religion he profeſſed.

Q. *Did* Abram *make no Exception to this his Reſolution of not accepting any Thing?*

A. Yes; “ Save only that which the young Men “ have eaten; and the Portion of the Men that went “ with me, *Aner*, *Eſhcol*, and *Mamre*; let them take “ their Portion.”

Q. *What was his Reaſon for making this Exception?*

A. A very good one; for, as *Abram* had a Right to the Spoils, ſo had they; whether they join'd with him in the Battle, as it is ſuppoſed they did, or abode by the Stuff; that is, guarded the Baggage; ſee 1 *Sam.* xxx. 24. and therefore, though *Abram* both might, and did, give away his own Right, he could not, in Juſtice, give away that of other Men.

Chap. XV.

A gracious Promiſe made to Abram *by* God *in a Viſion; he expoſtulates with* God *about his having no Heir of his Body; a Son is promiſed;* Abram *believes it, which is counted to him for Righteouſneſs; he deſires a Sign;* God *grants him one; he appears to him when in a deep Sleep; foretells him of the Evils, which ſhould befall his Poſterity; and their Deliverance; the Covenant concerning the Land of* Canaan *renewed.*

Q. WHAT *are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. “That after theſe Things the Word of the *Lord* came unto *Abram* in a Viſion, ſaying, Fear not *Abram*: I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward.”

Q. *What had* Abram *to fear, ſince he had juſt gained a glorious Victory; was highly honoured by the King of* Sodom; *and was Confederate with* Mamre *the* Amorite, *and his Brothers, amongſt whom he dwelt?*

A. He might nevertheleſs, have ſufficient Reaſon to fear; both the Return of thoſe Enemies whom he had defeated, and provoked, with freſh Reinforcements; and the Envy of his Neighbours, who had been worſted by thoſe Enemies, whom he had routed, notwithſtanding they had eminently reaped the Benefit of his Victory: For who could be a more bitter Enemy than *Saul* was to *David*, for his Conqueſt of *Goliah*, notwithſtanding he gained a conſiderable Advantage thereby, only becauſe the greateſt Honour was aſcribed to *David*, by the Women of *Iſrael?* He might likewiſe fear, becauſe of his deſolate Condition, being as yet Childleſs, and *Lot*, his only Relation in thoſe Parts, being removed from him; and no great Dependance being to be had upon his Confederates, if he ſhould happen to be looked upon with an evil Eye, by the Inhabitants of the Country who were their Brethren. The Promiſe then made him by *God* was but a neceſſary Encouragement to him, and what was ſufficient to arm him againſt any melancholly Fears; becauſe, though couched in a few Words, it contained all Manner of earthly Bleſſings: The Sum of it being, in Effect, as much as to ſay; *I will defend thee from all Evil, and will bleſs thee with all Sorts of good Things*, which two are ſufficient to make any Man compleatly happy: And *God* ſeems to have made this Promiſe to *Abram* at this Time, becauſe he had rely'd ſo ſtrongly upon him for his Aſſiſtance, in his late Expedition, and had ſo generally refuſed any Share of the Spoils. Since then, ſays the *Almighty*, thou haſt rely'd ſo firmly upon my Protection, I will be a Shield and a Protector unto thee, wherefore fear nothing; and ſince thou didſt ſo honourably for my Sake, refuſe Rewards from any other, thou ſhalt be no Loſer by it; for I will abundantly recompenſe thy Piety to me; thy Charity to thy diſtreſſed Kinſman; and thy Liberality and Generoſity to others.

Q. *What Anſwer did* Abram *make the Lord for this gracious Promiſe?*

A. “And *Abram* ſaid, *Lord God*, what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go Childleſs, and the Steward of my Houſe is this *Eliezer* of *Damaſcus?* And *Abram* ſaid, Behold, to me thou haſt given no Seed; and lo, one born in my Houſe is my Heir.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this? Does not this ſeem as if he repined, and murmured, that* God *had not granted him any Children?*

A. No, he only expoſtulates with the *Almighty* upon that Head, in a ſubmiſſive Manner; as we may be aſſured by the *Lord's* Anſwer to him in the next Chapter; whereas *God* would not have anſwered him in that gracious Manner, had he murmured, which would have been a Sin, that would have provoked his Anger. The Meaning, therefore, of this ſeems to be, what Pleaſure, *Lord*, can I take in any other Gifts, which it ſhall pleaſe thy Goodneſs to give me, ſo long as thou doſt withold from me that great and promiſed Gift, of that bleſſed, and all-bleſſing Seed, in the giving of whom, thy own Honour, and the World's Happineſs is ſo highly concerned! What Good will the whole World do me, if I have no Heir to poſſeſs it after my Deceaſe? What Happineſs can I expect to enjoy, if *God* loſe the Glory of his Truth in making good his Promiſe, and I loſe the Comfort of my long hoped for Child; and that ſuch a Child, the Effect of a divine Promiſe, out of whoſe Loins he muſt come, in whom all Nations ſhall be bleſſed? Behold, *Eliezer*, the Steward of my Houſe, and a Stranger to my Blood, though born in my Family, is the Perſon, whom for his Fidelity, and Honeſty, I deſign to be my Heir; little, therefore, does any farther worldly Happineſs, than I at preſent enjoy, through thy Goodneſs, ſignify to me, who am well advanced in Years, and not likely to live much longer.

Q. *What Anſwer did the* Lord *make to this Expoſtulation of* Abram's?

A. “And behold, the Word of the *Lord* came unto him ſaying, This ſhall not be thine Heir, but he that ſhall come forth out of thine own Bowels ſhall be thine Heir.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The great Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion of *God*, in removing the Doubts, diſpelling the Fears, and granting the Deſires of thoſe that faithfully ſerve him.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *to* Abram?

A. “And he brought him forth abroad, and ſaid, Look now towards Heaven, and tell the Stars, if thou be able to number them; and he ſaid unto him, So ſhall thy Seed be.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. Undoubtedly, in a limited Senſe; for notwithſtanding he was certainly the Father of many Nations, (not only the twelve Tribes, but the *Iſhmaelites*, the *Edomites*, the *Midianites*, and the Reſt of the Poſterity of *Keturah* deſcending from him) yet no doubt it was poſſible to number them; ſince it would have been no Impoſſibility to have numbered all the Subjects of the *Roman* Empire, in its greateſt Grandeur, who were unqueſtionably more numerous than the Poſterity of *Abram*.

Q. *How did* Abram *receive this gracious Promiſe of the* Almighty's?

A. “He believed in the *Lord*, and he counted it to him for Righteouſneſs.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. He believed in the Omnipotence of his Creator, that he was able to fulfill this his Promiſe; though it could not be done any otherwiſe than by ſtrengthening in an extraordinary Manner, or rather renewing in him, the Organs of Generation; ſince according to the Courſe of Nature, he was then paſt getting Children, being eighty-five Years old. He believed, likewiſe, in the Faithfulneſs of *God* to fulfil his Promiſe, that he would certainly do it, at his own appointed Time, and accordingly reſigned himſelf up patiently and contentedly to his Will. He believed alſo, in the Goodneſs and Mercy of God that the *Meſſiah* ſhould certainly come out of the Loins of that Child that ſhould be begotten by him, and that that *Meſſiah* ſhould, through his Merits, juſtify and ſave all thoſe who truly believed in him; and he truly believed in the *Meſſiah* himſelf, and that himſelf ſhould be juſtified, bleſſed, and ſaved in and thro' him. So that in this one Act of Faith, *Abram* ſhew'd at one and the ſame Time, his firm Belief in all the Attributes of *God*, and the *Meſſiah*; no wonder, therefore, that it was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs, ſince the ſame firm Faith and Belief in the *Meſſiah*, and the ſame Reliance upon *God*'s Faithfulneſs in his Promiſes, will be imputed to us for Righteouſneſs even at this Day.

Q. *What farther did the* Lord *ſay unto* Abram?

A. "And he ſaid unto him, I am the *Lord* that brought thee out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, to give thee this Land to inherit it."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. *God*'s infinite Goodneſs, in renewing ſo often this Aſſurance to him, leſt his Faith ſhould be ſtagger'd, and waver.

Q. *What ſaid* Abram *thereupon?*

A. "And he ſaid, *Lord God*, whereby ſhall I know that I ſhall inherit it?"

Q. *Did not this ſhew ſome Diffidence of the divine Promiſe?*

A. *God*, to whom all Hearts are open, ſaw otherwiſe, as we may be aſſured, by his giving him a Sign for the Confirmation thereof; wherefore it would be impious in us to ſuppoſe it, beſides, we find the Practice of aſking a Sign, which *Abram* does not expreſly do, was not unuſual even with good Men, not out of Diſtruſt, but as a farther Aſſurance and Confirmation of their Faith; as appears from *Judges* vi. 37. and 2. *Kings* xx. 8. neither are they reproved for it, for, on the contrary, we find *Ahaz* commanded to aſk a Sign, and reproved for not doing it, *Iſaiah* vii. 11, 12, 13. The *Lord* likewiſe is pleaſed to give *Moſes* three Signs for a Confirmation of his Faith, to induce him to go and undertake the Deliverance of the Children of *Iſrael*. *Exod*. iv. 3, 6, 7, 9.

Q. *What Anſwer did the* Lord *make him?*

A. "And he ſaid unto him, Take me an Heifer of three Years old, and a She Goat of three Years old, and a Ram of three Years old, and a Turtle Dove, and a young Pigeon." That is, take and offer them at my Command, and for my Service.

Q. *Wherefore was it ſpecify'd, that the Heifer, Goat, and Ram, muſt be three Years old?*

A. Becauſe at that Time they are come to their perfect Stature, and Strength, and therefore were fitteſt for God's Service.

Q. *Did* Abram *immediately obey the divine Command?*

A. Yes, "And he took unto him all theſe, and divided them in the Midſt, and laid each piece one againſt another: But the Birds divided he not."

Q. *How came* Abram *to do all this; and wherefore divided he the Beaſts, and not the Birds?*

A. Undoubtedly he did it by divine Inſpiration; and his dividing the Beaſts might be for two Reaſons: *Firſt*, to repreſent the torn and diſtracted Condition wherein his Seed were to lye for a Seaſon, as *God* afterwards informs him; and *Secondly*, to ratify his Covenant with *Abram* and his Seed; for this was a Ceremony uſed in making Covenants, as appears from *Jeremiah* xxxiv. 18. as alſo partly, to encourage Hope, that *God* would in his own Time, re-unite thoſe Parts together, and join thoſe dry Bones, to which the *Iſraelites* are compared, *Ezekiel* xxxvii. 11. and clothe them with Fleſh; and partly, that the Perſons entering into Covenant, might paſs between thoſe Parts, and ſo teſtify their Union and joining in one and the ſame Sacrifice. As to the Birds, they were not divided; either, becauſe there being two Birds, the one was laid againſt the other, which anſwered to the Diviſion of the larger Creatures; or becauſe they belonged not to the Ceremony of the Covenant, but were for the uſe of Sacrifice, wherein they were to be offered whole, as was afterwards preſcribed. *Levit*. i. 15, 17.

Q. *What farther did* Abram, *when he had thus offered them?*

A. "And when the Fowls came down upon the Carcaſes, *Abram* drove them away."

Q. *What is ſuppoſed to have been ſignify'd, by the Fowls coming down upon the Carcaſes? And how is* Abram *ſuppoſed to have driven them away?*

A. Either the Diſturbance and Diſtraction to which good Men are expoſed, from evil Spirits, and wicked Men; or the great Peril of *Abram*'s Poſterity, who were not only cut in pieces like theſe Sacrifices, but even the Remainder of them likely to be devoured by the *Egyptians*, whoſe King is compared unto an *Eagle*, the chief of the Birds of Prey, *Ezek*. xvii. 7. As to *Abram*'s driving the Fowls away, the *Hebrew* Word imports, that he did it by a Blaſt of his Mouth; to repreſent his Conqueſt over all his Enemies by Faith, and Prayer, whereby he engaged *God* to be the Preſerver and Deliverer of his People.

Q. *Of what are we next informed concerning* Abram?

A. "And when the Sun was going down, a deep Sleep fell upon *Abram*; and lo, an Horror of great Darkneſs fell upon him."

Q. *Is this Sleep of* Abram'*s ſuppoſed to have been natural, or otherwiſe?*

A. It might very well have been natural, and have proceeded from his Fatigue in killing the Heifer, Goat, and Ram, and offering them up in Sacrifice, and in driving away the Birds; but as the Horror of great Darkneſs, that fell upon him, is mentioned immediately afterwards, it is to be ſuppoſed that this Sleepineſs was ſent upon him from *God*, to make Way for the following Repreſentation. The Darkneſs might either denote *God*'s ſpecial Preſence, he being ſaid, 1 *Kings* viii. 12. *Exod*. xx. 21. to dwell in the thick Darkneſs; or it might be a Signification of the diſtreſſed and doleful Condition of *Abram*'s Seed; for the Word *Darkneſs* in Scripture is frequently uſed as an Emblem and Sign of great Miſery, as *Pſalm* lxxxviii. 6. and cvii. 14.

Q. *Gf what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And he (that is, *God*) ſaid unto *Abram*, know of a Surety, that thy Seed ſhall be a Stranger in a Land that is not theirs, and ſhall ſerve them, and they ſhall afflict them four hundred Years."

Q. *How was this fulfilled?*

A. By the ſojourning of the *Iſraelites* in the Land of *Canaan*, and their Slavery in *Egypt*, which laſted upwards of four hundred Years, as may be ſeen *Exod*. xii. 40. but it is uſual to leave out the odd Years in a great Number, both in ſacred and prophane Writers.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *unto* Abram?

A. "And alſo that Nation whom they ſhall ſerve will I judge: And afterward ſhall they come out with great Subſtance."

Q. *Was not this ſignally accompliſh'd?*

A. Yes; by the grievous Plagues the *Lord* ſent upon the *Egyptians*; by drowning *Pharaoh* and all his Army in the *Red-Sea*; and by making the *Iſraelites* find Favour with the *Egyptians*, ſo that they lent them their Jewels of Silver, and their Jewels of Gold, and Rayment, with which they went off. See *Exod.* iii. 22. xi. 2. xii. 35, 37, 38. and xiv. 28.

Q. *Did* God *ſay nothing farther unto* Abram?

A. Yes; He graciouſly aſſured him “ That he “ ſhould go to his Fathers in Peace; and that he “ ſhould be buried in a good old Age.

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. God's great Goodneſs to *Abram*, in aſſuring him of long Life, and that he ſhould not ſuffer any of the Afflictions, which ſhould befal his Poſterity, after his Deceaſe.

Q. *What was the laſt Aſſurance* God *gave* Abram?

A. “ But in the fourth Generation they ſhall come “ hither again; for the Iniquity of the *Amorites* is “ not yet full.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. That, at the Expiration of the four hundred Years, they ſhould return into the Land of *Canaan*, and ſhould be put in Poſſeſſion thereof; but not before, becauſe the *Canaanites* (for the *Amorites* which were one of the People of that Land, are here put for them all) had not yet ſinned to that Degree, to deſerve that utter Extirpation, which the *Almighty* had determined to inflict upon them, by the Hand of the *Iſraelites*, at his own appointed Time. Hereby we may find, that all Men's Sins are minuted down, as it were, in a Book of Remembrance, and not one of them forgotten; and as *God* exactly obſerves the Number and Meaſure of their Sins, ſo he determines within himſelf, how far, and how long he will bear with them, and what ſhall be the Period of his Patience; when that comes, their Meaſure is full, and Deſtruction inevitably follows; let all, therefore, endeavour to avoid wearying out the divine Patience and Long-ſuffering.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And it came to paſs that when the Sun went “ down, and it was dark, behold a ſmoaking Fur- “ nace, and a burning Lamp, that paſſed between “ thoſe Pieces.”

Q. *What did* God, *probably, deſign to repreſent thereby?*

A. God either intended the *Smoaking Furnace* to repreſent the future State of *Abram*'s Seed, during their Miſery and Afflictions in *Egypt*, which is called an *Iron Furnace*, *Jeremiah* xi. 4. and the *Burning Lamp* to denote their Deliverance from thence, like a Light ſhining out of Darkneſs; or he deſigned them as Emblems of his own Preſence; for *God* is called a *Conſuming Fire*, *Heb.* xii. 29. and both *Smoke* and *Fire* are elſewhere mentioned as the Signs of *God*'s Appearance; ſee *Exod.* iii. 2. xvi. 10. xix. 16. and xx. 18. And this Senſe ſeems to be favoured by the following Verſe; it being cuſtomary for Perſons entering into a Covenant, to paſs between ſuch Pieces, as has been obſerved before, and as appears from *Jeremiah* xxxiv. 18. And becauſe *God* hath no Body which could viſibly do ſo, therefore he did it by this Type or Shadow.

Q. *What follow'd after this Appearance of the* Furnace, *and the* Lamp?

A. “ In the ſame Day the *Lord* made a Cove- “ nant with *Abram*, ſaying, Unto thy Seed have I “ given the Land, from the River of *Egypt* unto the “ great River, the River *Euphrates*: The *Kenites*, and “ the *Kenizzites*, and the *Kadmonites*; and the *Hit-* “ *tites*, and the *Perizzites*, and the *Rephaims*; and “ the *Amorites*, and the *Canaanites*, and the *Girga-* “ *ſhites*, and the *Jebuſites*.

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. That *God* had decreed to give that whole Extent of Land to the *Iſraelites* for their Poſſeſſion, in his own due appointed Time; which made it as ſure to them, as if it had been then actually given to them in the Perſon of their Father *Abram*; and that he had delivered all thoſe Nations into their Hands to make them Tributaries or root them out: See the Accompliſhment hereof, 2. *Sam.* viii. 3. 1. *Kings.* iv. 21. and ix. 20, 21. It muſt be obſerved, however, that by the River of *Egypt* here mentioned is not meant the *Nile*, which was as large and famous a River as the *Euphrates*, but a ſmall River called *Sihor*, which divides *Egypt* from *Canaan*.

CHAP. XVI.

Sarai *bears* Abram *no Children; wherefore ſhe gives him her Servant* Hagar *to be his Wife;* Hagar *conceives, and deſpiſes her Miſtreſs;* Sarai *complains thereof;* Abram *leaves her to her Mercy; ſhe deals hardly with her;* Hagar *runs away; the Angel of the* Lord *meets her, and orders her to return, and ſubmit herſelf to her Miſtreſs, promiſing her a numerous Seed; he names the Child* Iſhmael; *and foretells his Diſpoſition, and future Fortune; ſhe is comforted by* God's *looking upon her; her Son born and named;* Abram's *Age at the Child's Birth.*

Q. W*HAT are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Sarai*, *Abram*'s Wife bare him no “ Children; and ſhe had an Handmaid an *Egyp-* “ *tian*, whoſe Name was *Hagar*. And *Sarai* ſaid “ unto *Abram*, Behold now the *Lord* hath reſtrain- “ ed me from bearing: I pray thee go in unto my “ Maid; it may be that I may obtain Children by “ her: And *Abram* hearkened to the Voice of “ *Sarai*.

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The anxious and earneſt Deſire *Sarai* had, that *Abram* ſhould have Iſſue of his own Body; ſince it induced her even to let her Servant *Hagar* ſhare his Bed, and ſhe intended to look upon his Children by her, as her own, as indeed they would have been hers by Law; See *Exod.* xxi. 4. how few are there now-a-days, who could be contented to follow *Sarai*'s Example, or would agree to ſhare their Husband with their Maid; much leſs, who would themſelves make the Propoſal! It muſt be confeſſed, however, that the Caſe is now vaſtly different; *Sarai* was greatly deſirous of having the bleſſed Seed, which was to iſſue out of her Husband's Loins, at any Rate; we are now no longer in Expectation thereof, ſince that Promiſe has been already accompliſhed in the Perſon of our Saviour; and we have now no Slaves, whoſe Children would be accounted, and indeed would be, by Law, our own. We may obſerve alſo, that *Abram* readily cloſed with the Propoſal, as hoping to have the bleſſed Seed this way, and not having conſulted the *Lord* about it, as he ought to have done; whence we may find, that even the beſt of Men have their Failings, and are guilty of great Overſights; and accordingly, we ſhall ſee hereafter, that this coſt *Abram* a great Deal of Uneaſineſs.

Q. *What followed upon* Abram's *hearkning to his Wife's Voice?*

A. “ And *Sarai*, *Abram*'s Wife took *Hagar* her

“ Maid, the *Egyptian*, after *Abram* had dwelt ten “ Years in the Land of *Canaan*, and gave her to “ her Husband *Abram*, to be his Wife.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The Prevalence of evil Cuſtoms, and the contagious Examples and Communication of evil Neighbours, even upon good Men: For, notwithſtanding *Polygamy*, or the having more Wives than one, was firſt introduced into the World by wicked *Lamech*, the Offspring of the curſed *Cain*; and probably, did not get Footing amongſt the Sons of *God* till after the Flood; ſince we don't find, that either *Noah*, or any of his Sons had more than one Wife each; yet ſo contagious are ill Cuſtoms, and bad Examples, that we ſee the Patriarchs afterwards allowed themſelves in the uſe thereof; as *Abram* does here, and his Grandſon *Jacob* did afterwards. Whether they did this by divine Permiſſion, or by a Miſtake, in imagining it lawful, is not certain; but the latter is the moſt probable: And to ſhew how hard it is to get rid of an ill Cuſtom, when once it has got Footing amongſt any People, we find the *Iſraelites* allowed themſelves therein, till the Time of *Solomon*, and his Son *Rehoboam*, who had each of them innumerable Wives; and, for ought we find to the contrary, might continue to do ſo long afterwards: And to ſuch a Height was the Abuſe of this Liberty grown, wherein they allowed themſelves, that *Solomon* had no leſs than ſeven hundred Wives, all Princeſſes, 1 *Kings* xi. 3. and his Son *Rehoboam*, no leſs than eighteen, beſides Concubines. To return to the preſent Caſe, however, it is evident *Abram* did not take *Hagar* through any luſtful Impulſe; but through an earneſt Deſire of having Children, and eſpecially of obtaining the Bleſſing of the *promiſed* Seed.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of her giving him* Hagar *to Wife?*

A. “ And he went in unto *Hagar*, and ſhe con- “ ceived: And when ſhe ſaw that ſhe had conceived, her Miſtreſs was deſpiſed in her Eyes.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How natural it is for an Inferior, and eſpecially an Upſtart, to grow inſolent upon Encouragement, and Proſperity! *Hagar* being taken into her Maſter's Bed, immediately imagines herſelf as good, or better than her Miſtreſs; and even now a-days we find it common, where Maſters take unbecoming Liberties with their Servants, for them to grow pert upon it, and to be ſaucy, not only to their Miſtreſſes, but to their Maſters themſelves; and in Reality, it is no more than they deſerve.

Q. *What was the Reaſon of* Hagar's *deſpiſing her Miſtreſs, when we find her ſo condeſcending as to admit her to ſhare his Bed?*

A. Barrenneſs in it ſelf was then eſteemed a Reproach, as, indeed, it is ſtill; but it was more eſpecially ſo to *Sarai*, than to any other: Becauſe ſhe ſeemed thereby to be rejected by *God*, as one whom he eſteemed unworthy of the Honour of being Mother of the *bleſſed Seed*: And *Hagar* being ſuddenly Partner with *Sarai*, in the Privilege of *Abram's* Bed, and ſuperior to her with Reſpect to the great Bleſſing of Child-bearing, it is no Wonder that ſhe grew inſolent upon it; eſpecially as ſhe might imagine ſhe ſhould be the Mother of the *bleſſed Seed*; to the Promiſe of which, probably, ſhe was no Stranger, having been inſtructed in the Worſhip of the true God.

Q. *How did* Sarai *brook her Maid's deſpiſing her?*

A. She cou'd not bear it all; “ And *Sarai* ſaid “ unto *Abram*, My Wrong be upon thee: I have “ given my Maid into thy Boſom; and when ſhe “ ſaw that ſhe had conceived, I was deſpiſed in her “ Eyes: The *Lord* judge between me and thee.”

Q. *Why ſhould ſhe ſay thus to* Abram, *he don't appear to have deſpiſed her?*

A. She might think her Husband had encouraged *Hagar* in her Inſolence, or elſe ſhe wou'd never have dared to have been guilty of it; at leaſt, ſhe might think it Encouragement enough, that he did not reprimand her for it, but permitted it, though it does not appear that he knew of it; however that be, Women in a Paſſion do not always conſult Reaſon; as was here the Caſe of *Sarai*, who ought to have conſidered, it was her own Propoſal, and all her own doing. Upon the whole, it muſt be owned, that it was a very ungrateful Return of *Sarai's* Kindneſs, and it is no Wonder ſhe was ſo highly incenſed thereat; in Effect, this Behaviour of *Hagar's*, ſeems to have been permitted by the Almighty as a Puniſhment, *Firſt*, to *Sarai*, for her Impatience under the all-wiſe Diſpenſations of *Providence*; and *Secondly*, Through her Means, to *Abram*, (to whom this his Wife's Anger, as it was not entirely without Cauſe, no doubt, gave no ſmall Uneaſineſs,) for complying ſo readily with her Propoſal, without conſulting him, as he ought to have done.

Q. *What Anſwer did* Abram *make to* Sarai, *upon her taxing him with ſo much Paſſion, and for ought appears to the contrary, unjuſtly, as being acceſſary to her being ill uſed by* Hagar?

A “ But *Abram* ſaid unto *Sarai*, Behold, thy “ Maid is in thy Hand; do to her as it pleaſeth “ thee. And when *Sarai* dealt hardly with her, “ ſhe fled from her Face.”

Q. *Does not this ſeem ſomething unjuſtifiable in* Abram, *to deliver up a Woman, whom he had taken to Wife, entirely into the Power of an enraged Miſtreſs; and to ſuffer that Miſtreſs ſo far to abuſe that Power, as to deal with her ſo hardly, as to make her run away; and expoſe herſelf to all the Dangers ſhe might meet with in a Deſart, rather than return; and this at a Time, when he knew her to be with Child, and that too by himſelf?*

A. We muſt confeſs, we don't think it can entirely be juſtified; and it muſt be acknowledged, that *Abram*, though an excellent Man, was guilty of ſome Failings; otherwiſe he muſt have been more than Man, nothing human being capable of Perfection in this World. We think then, that *Abram* was guilty of a Fault herein, which cannot be wholly juſtified; but though he cannot be wholly vindicated in this Action, much may be ſaid in Extenuation of this his Failing; wherefore, notwithſtanding his ſaying to *Sarai*, Behold, thy Maid is in thy Hand, *do to her as it pleaſeth thee*, this muſt not be underſtood as if he gave her an unlimited Power over *Hagar*, and left the Maid wholly to *Sarai's* Mercy, eſpecially as ſhe was now with Child, for that would have been highly ſinful; it muſt be underſtood then in a limited Senſe, that he gave her Power to chaſtiſe her only ſo far as her Strength might well bear, without hazarding her Life, or to impoſe ſuch Labour upon her, as ſhe was able to go through with, without ſinking under it. In Effect, *Hagar*, no doubt, deſerved Correction; and *Abram's* Fault ſeems to have been, not in ſuffering her to be corrected, but in leaving that Correction to her incenſed Miſtreſs, and not taking it into his own Hands; and in ſuffering *Sarai* to abuſe her Power ſo far, as to force her to run away. This is the utmoſt Blame that can juſtly be laid on *Abram*; and even in Mitigation hereof, it may be alledged; that it might not be ſo much *Sarai*'s exceſſive Severity which forced *Hagar* to fly, as her own high Spirit; which could not brook Correction from, nor Submiſſion to, her Miſtreſs; and what ſeems to favour this Opinion is, that we don't find either *Abram* or *Sarai* blam'd for what they had done; but, on the contrary, the Angel bids *Hagar* return, and ſubmit herſelf under her Miſtreſs's Hands.

Q. *What followed upon* Hagar's *flying from the Face of her Miſtreſs?*

“And the Angel of the *Lord* found her by a Fountain of Water in the Wilderneſs, by the Fountain in the Way to *Shur?*

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That there is no Place ſo forlorn, where the Mercies of God cannot find out his Creatures.

Q. *What ſaid the Angel of the* Lord *to* Hagar, *on finding her there?*

A. “And he ſaid, *Hagar*, *Sarai*'s Maid, whence cameſt thou? And whither wilt thou go? And ſhe ſaid, I flee from the Face of my Miſtreſs *Sarai*.

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That the Angel, by calling her *Sarai*'s Maid, reminds her, that though ſhe was *Abram*'s Wife, that did not free her from the Subjection ſhe owed to *Sarai*, as her Miſtreſs; wherefore ſhe could not lawfully withdraw herſelf from her Service, but was ſtill bound to pay her Obedience. For though ſuch Concubines, or ſubordinate Wives, were accounted true and lawful Wives, and their Iſſue were reputed legitimate, and they had a legal Right to the Marriage Bed, and might claim the Privilege thereof, as well as the chief Wife, yet in all other Reſpects they were inferior to her; and as they had no Manner of Authority in the Family, nor Share in the Houſhold Government, ſo, if they had been Servants in the Family, before they came to be admitted to their Maſter's Bed, they continued to be ſo afterward, and in the ſame Subjection to their Miſtreſs as before. The Angel then proceeds to examine *Hagar* whence ſhe came, and whither ſhe was going; not that he was ignorant of either; for ſhe was on her Way to her native Country *Egypt*; whither ſhe intended to have gone, but to make her reflect upon what ſhe was about; as if he had ſaid: Conſider within thy ſelf, what thou art doing, and what a ſad Exchange thou art going to make. Thou forſakeſt not only an excellent Maſter, and Husband, but alſo the true *God*, and his Worſhip, which thou wilt not find in any other Family; ſo thou art going to caſt thy ſelf out of the true Church, and to plunge thy ſelf again into a Place, where all Manner of Idolatry and Impiety reigns, to thy utter undoing; and all this merely through Pride, and Impatience of Submiſſion and Correction.

Q. *After having thus expoſtulated with* Hagar, *what Advice did the Angel give her?*

A. “And the Angel of the *Lord* ſaid unto her, Return to thy Miſtreſs, and ſubmit thy ſelf under her Hands.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. Though it is differently rendered here, to what it is in the ſixth Verſe, yet the Expreſſion in the *Hebrew* is the ſame, and might with the ſame Propriety have been rendered, Submit thy ſelf *under her hard Uſage*; whereby we may find, that far from countenancing her, in her running away, ſhe is adviſed to return, and ſubmit herſelf, even though her Miſtreſs ſhould perſiſt in uſing her ill, as being her Duty ſo to do; which her Submiſſion, however, was the moſt likely Means to prevent. Hence we may learn, that the Faults of thoſe to whom we are ſubordinate, neither cancel our Duty to them, nor will excuſe us, if we uſe any unwarrantable Means to relieve ourſelves, when under Oppreſſion.

Q. *What farther did the Angel ſay to* Hagar?

A. “And the Angel of the Lord ſaid unto her, I will multiply thy Seed exceedingly, that it ſhall not be number'd for Multitude.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the Angel having, by his Remonſtrances, rendered her tractable, and inclinable to return, and ſubmit to her Miſtreſs, proceeds next to comfort her, by aſſuring her; that notwithſtanding, ſhe appeared now to be in ſuch a deſolate Condition, ſhe ſhould be ſtill the joyful Mother of a numerous Progeny.

Q. *Did not the Angel add yet farther Particulars?*

A. “And the Angel of the *Lord* ſaid unto her, Behold, thou art with Child, and ſhalt bear a Son, and ſhalt call his Name *Iſhmael*; becauſe the *Lord* hath heard thy Affliction. And he will be a wild Man; his Hand will be againſt every Man, and every Man's Hand againſt him: And he ſhall dwell in the Preſence of all his Brethren.”

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That this Prophecy of *Iſhmael* was not only literally verify'd in *Iſhmael* himſelf, but that the Character here given of *Iſhmael*, ſuits exactly with the Nature of all thoſe Nations, who to this Day boaſt of their Deſcent from that Son of *Abraham*'s, as the *Turks*, and *Arabians*. In Effect, what could be a fuller and more compleat Verification of this Prophecy, than the many Cruſades, which were formerly ſo much in Vogue; wherein all the Princes in *Europe* united their Forces againſt the *Saracens*, who were the Deſcendants of *Iſhmael*, for the Recovery of the *Holy Land*? Were not their Hands then againſt every Man, and every Man's Hands againſt them; and do they not ſtill dwell in the Preſence of all their Brethren; ſince they have Poſſeſſions both in *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*?

Q. *What ſaid* Hagar *upon this gracious Prophecy?*

A. “And ſhe called the Name of the *Lord*, that ſpake unto her, Thou *God* ſeeſt me: For ſhe ſaid, Have I alſo here looked after him that ſeeth me?

Q. *What might be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Hagar* ſhewed no Diſtruſt of the divine Promiſes, but immediately repoſed a firm Faith therein, and made an Acknowledgment thereof by this humble and joyful Exclamation; the Purport of which ſeems to be; Has *God* condeſcended to look after me, and recal me when I was flying from his Church and Worſhip, through my Pride, and Impatience of being controlled, and of Submiſſion? Whence we may learn, that the Mercies of *God* demand our immediate Acknowledgment and Gratitude. But *Hagar* does not only ſhew her Acknowledgment and Gratitude, but immediately reſolves upon obeying the divine Injunction, and accordingly returns and ſubmits herſelf to her Miſtreſs; which ſhews, that our Actions muſt correſpond with our Words; and we muſt demonſtrate our Submiſſion to the Laws of *God*, by the Goodneſs of our Lives, and acting conformably to his Precepts.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed in this Chapter?*

A. That *Hagar* called the Name of the Well by which ſhe ſat *Beer-lahai-roi*; that is, *the Well of him that liveth and ſeeth me*; that it is ſituated between *Kadeſh* and *Bered*; that *Hagar* bare *Abram* a Son; and *Abram* called his Name *Iſhmael*; and that *Abram* was eighty ſix Years old when *Hagar* bare *Iſhmael*.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Hagar* ſeems to have been inſpired in giving that Name to the Well, ſince ſhe could not poſſibly have fixed upon one more proper; either, with Reſpect to the merciful Promiſe ſhe had juſt received; to *God* who gave it; or to her own deſolate Condition when ſhe received it. The Purport of the Name being; *the Well of him that liveth*, (that is, of the true and living *God*) *and ſeeth me*; that is, and takes Care of me, as he has ſhown by this gracious Promiſe; and alſo *the Well of her that liveth*; that is, when ſhe gave herſelf up for dead and loſt; but is now called, not only to Life, but to the Enjoyment of Life, in her own Perſon, and her Poſterity.

CHAP. XVII.

God *renews his Covenant with* Abram; *his Name changed in Token thereof; many Nations and Kings to be born of him; the Covenant eſtabliſhed with his Seed; the Promiſe of* Canaan *to his Seed repeated; Circumciſion inſtituted;* Sarai's *Name changed; a Son by her promiſed;* Abraham's *joyful Surprize; his Prayer for* Iſhmael; *the Promiſe of a Son by* Sarah *confirmed, with his Name;* Abraham's *Prayer for* Iſhmael *anſwered; but the Covenant eſtabliſhed in* Iſaac; Abraham, *and all the Males of his Houſe circumciſed.*

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Thing we learn from this Chapter?*

A. “ And when *Abram* was ninety Years old, “ and nine, the *Lord* appeared to *Abram*, and ſaid “ unto him, I am the *Almighty God*, walk before “ me, and be thou perfect.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the *Lord* who enjoins this, is *Almighty*, able to fulfil all he promiſes; able to enforce Obedience to all he commands, and able if they are not willingly complied with to puniſh Diſobedience: That the Way to pleaſe *God* is to walk before him; that is, to walk as if we conſidered that his Eye is continually over us: And that the Way of walking before *God*, is to be perfect; that is, as far as human Infirmities and Weakneſs will allow.

Q. *What farther did the* Lord *ſay to* Abram?

A. “ And I will make my Covenant between me “ and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly.”

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. The Faithfulneſs of *God* in his Promiſe; and his great Condeſcenſion to *Abram*, in renewing, and repeating it ſo often, for the Confirmation of his Faith.

Q. *How did* Abram *receive this renewing of the Covenant?*

A. With all Humility, Thankfulneſs and Reverence; a Diſpoſition wherein we ought to receive all divine Favours and Mercies; “ And *Abram* fell on “ his Face, and *God* talked with him, ſaying,” that is, through an humble Senſe of his being unworthy of ſuch Favours; and in Reverence and Worſhip to *God*, and a Thankful Acknowledgment of his infinite Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion.

Q. *What farther did the* Lord *ſay unto* Abram?

A. “ As for me, Behold my Covenant is with thee, “ and thou ſhalt be a Father of many Nations. “ Neither ſhall thy Name any more be called *Abram*; “ but thy Name ſhall be *Abraham*, for a Father of “ many Nations have I made thee. And I will make “ thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make Nations “ of thee, and Kings ſhall come out of thee.”

Q. *How was this Promiſe verified, and fulfilled?*

A. In the higheſt Degree, both literally, and ſpiritually; for he was not only Father of the *Iſraelites*, *Iſhmaelites*, *Edomites*, *Midianites*, *&c.* after the Fleſh, but he is ſpiritually the Father of Believers of all Nations; both as he was the great Example and Teacher of that Faith by which all the Elect muſt be ſaved; as *Jabal* is ſaid to have been the Father of ſuch as dwell in Tents, and of ſuch as have Cattle; *Jubal* of ſuch as handle the Harp and Organ; and *Tubal-cain* an Inſtructer of every Artificer in Braſs and Iron; *Gen.* iv. 20, 21, 22. And as he was made by *God* the Head of the Covenant, by, or through whom, the Right to the Covenant was conveyed, firſt, to all his natural Seed, and then to the ſpiritual Seed, all *Gentile* Believers: Accordingly the Change of his Name from *Abram*, which ſignifies only a *high Father*, to *Abraham*, which ſignifies a *Father of a Multitude*, was added as a farther Confirmation of his Faith. The Promiſe alſo of his being Father of many Kings, was prodigiouſly fulfilled, ſince all the Kings of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, of *Edom* and the *Saracens* deſcended from him.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *unto* Abram?

A. “ And I will eſtabliſh my Covenant between “ me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their “ Generations, for an everlaſting Covenant, to be a “ *God* unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee. And “ I will give unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee, “ the Land wherein thou art a Stranger, all the “ Land of *Canaan*, for an everlaſting Poſſeſſion; “ and I will be their *God*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. In this Promiſe is contained the Confluence of all Bleſſings, ſpiritual, temporal, and eternal: For no People can deſire greater Happineſs, than for the true and *Almighty God* to be their *God*; ſince to be under his Protection, is to be ſecured from all Harm, and to be aſſured of all Manner of Happineſs: We muſt obſerve, however, that this Gift of the Land of *Canaan* to *Abraham*'s Seed, for an everlaſting Poſſeſſion, was only conditional, upon a Proviſo of their Obedience to their divine Creator; and, conſequently, upon their notorious Failure therein, it is no Wonder they were ejected thence, and driven out, as having forfeited all their Right to it. Accordingly, we find the Prophet *Iſaiah* complaining, *Chap.* lxiii. 18. *The People of thy Holineſs have poſſeſſed it but a little while: Our Adverſaries have troden down thy Sanctuary*; and they are ſo far from being in Poſſeſſion thereof at preſent, that they are diſperſed all over the Face of the whole Earth.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *unto* Abraham?

A. “ And *God* ſaid unto *Abraham*, thou ſhalt “ keep my Covenant, therefore, thou and thy Seed “ after thee, in their Generations. This is my “ Covenant which ye ſhall keep between me and “ you, and thy Seed after thee; every Man Child “ among you ſhall be circumciſed.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. This ſhews that the Agreement was mutual, *God*'s Part was expreſſed before, now follows Man's Part, and the Condition to which the Promiſe and Bleſſing is annexed.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *unto* Abraham?

A. “ And ye ſhall circumciſe the Fleſh of your “ Foreskin, and it ſhall be a Token of the Covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight

“ Days old ſhall be circumciſed among you, every Man Child in his Generations, he that is born in the Houſe, or bought with Money of any Stranger, which is not of thy Seed. He that is born in thy Houſe, and he that is bought with thy Money muſt needs be circumciſed, and my Covenant ſhall be in your Fleſh for an everlaſting Covenant.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That every Male was to be circumciſed; not only every Male of *Abraham*'s Seed, but even every one that was born in his Houſe, or bought with his Money; to ſhew, that we are not to keep any one in our Families, who will not be in Covenant and Communion with *God*, leſt we ſhould be infected by them ourſelves. We muſt obſerve, however, that the Words *everlaſting Covenant* muſt be taken here in a limited Senſe, and only mean for a long Continuance; ſince this Covenant was only to laſt till the *Coming* of the *Meſſiah*, when it was to be aboliſhed, and Baptiſm ſubſtituted in its Stead.

Q. *What was the Penalty annexed to the wilful Neglect of this Duty?*

A. And the uncircumciſed Man Child, whoſe Fleſh of his Foreſkin is not circumciſed, that Soul ſhall be cut off from his People: He hath broken my Covenant.”

Q. *But as Children were to be circumciſed on the eighth Day after their Birth, does not this ſeem hard they ſhould be puniſhed with Death, if this were not performed, when the Neglect thereof would not be their Fault, but the Fault of their Parents?*

A. Undoubtedly, the Meaning therefore muſt either be reſtrained to grown Perſons; or elſe muſt relate to the Parent, who neglected to circumciſe his Son; the Fleſh of whoſe Foreſkin might be properly called his Father's, becauſe the Child is a Part, and the Poſſeſſion of the Parent.

Q. *What farther did the* Lord *ſay unto* Abraham?

A. “ And *God* ſaid unto *Abraham*, as for *Sarai* thy Wife, thou ſhalt not call her name *Sarai*, but *Sarah* ſhall her Name be.”

Q. *What was the Purport of this Change of her Name?*

A. It made a conſiderable Difference; for whereas *Sarai* ſignified only *my Princeſs*, which confin'd her Authority to *Abraham*'s Family, *Sarah* ſignifies a *Princeſs* indefinitely and abſolutely, without Reſtriction.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *unto* Abraham?

A. “ And I will bleſs her, and give thee a Son alſo of her: Yea, I will bleſs her, and ſhe ſhall be a Mother of Nations; Kings of People ſhall be of her.”

Q. *How was this fulfilled?*

A. Very evidently, ſince the Kings of *Iſrael*, and *Judah* deſcended from her.

Q. *How did* Abraham *receive this gracious Promiſe?*

A. “ Then *Abraham* fell upon his Face, and laughed, and ſaid in his Heart, ſhall a Child be born unto him that is an hundred Years old? And ſhall *Sarah*, that is ninety Years old bear?”

Q. *Does not this ſeem to ſhew a Diſtruſt of the divine Promiſe?*

A. *God*, to whom all Hearts lye open, ſaw otherwiſe; and that it did not proceed from any Diffidence, but from a holy Joy, and Admiration at ſo great a Bleſſing; which he was fully perſuaded the *Almighty* would grant him in his own due Time; as appears from *Rom.* iv. 19, 20, 21.

Q. *What ſaid* Abraham *thereupon to* God?

A. “ And *Abraham* ſaid unto *God*, O that *Iſhmael* might live before thee?”

Q. *What ſeems to be the Purport of this earneſt Supplication?*

A. Grant, O *Lord*, that the giving of one Son may not be joined with the taking away the other; but that *Iſhmael* may faithfully ſerve thee, and may partake of thy gracious Favour, and of thy Covenant.

Q. *What Anſwer made the* Lord *to this Prayer of* Abraham's?

A. “ And *God* ſaid, *Sarah* thy Wife ſhall bear thee a Son indeed; and thou ſhalt call his Name *Iſaac*, and I will eſtabliſh my Covenant with him for an everlaſting Covenant, and with his Seed after him. And as for *Iſhmael*; I have heard thee: Behold I have bleſſed him, and I will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: Twelve Princes ſhall he beget, I will make him a great Nation. But my Covenant will I eſtabliſh with *Iſaac*, whom *Sarah* ſhall bear unto thee at this ſet Time in the next Year, and he left talking with him, and *God* went up from *Abraham*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That though *God* did not think fit to grant *Abraham*'s Prayer ſo far, as to eſtabliſh his Covenant with *Iſhmael*, and his Seed, yet he was graciouſly pleaſed not entirely to reject it, but to grant it, in Part, by ſhowering down upon him all Sorts of Temporal Bleſſings; and it is even believed by the *Hebrew Rabbins*, that he granted him the chief Bleſſing of the Covenant, namely, the Forgiveneſs of his Sins, and eternal Life for himſelf, as they judge from *Geneſis* xxv. 17. though he did not vouchſafe to admit all his Seed to be Partakers thereof. It is to be obſerved alſo that *Abraham*'s Son was named *Iſaac* from his Father's Laughter; which evidently ſhews that it was not ſinful, and did not proceed from Diſtruſt of the divine Promiſe; we may obſerve alſo that *God* is ſaid to have gone up from *Abraham*, which ſeems to imply, that he converſed with him in ſome viſible Shape.

Q. *What was the firſt Thing* Abraham *did after* God*'s going from him?*

A. “ And *Abraham* took *Iſhmael* his Son, and all that were born in his Houſe, and all that were bought with his Money, every Male among the Men of *Abraham*'s Houſe; and circumciſed the Fleſh of their Foreſkin, in the ſelf ſame Day, as *God* had ſaid unto him.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abraham* made no Delay in executing the divine Commands, but immediately ſet himſelf about the Performance thereof, notwithſtanding it was a painful and ſevere Precept, eſpecially to a Man ſo far advanc'd in Years. A ready and chearful Obedience to his Injunctions, is always highly acceptable to the *Almighty*.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Abraham* was ninety Years old and nine, when he was circumciſed in the Fleſh of his Foreſkin. And *Iſhmael* his Son was thirteen Years old when he was circumciſed in the Fleſh of his Foreſkin: In the ſelf-ſame Day was *Abraham* circumciſed, and *Iſhmael* his Son. And all the Men of his Houſe, born in the Houſe, and bought with Money of the Stranger, were circumciſed with him.”

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. The great Force and Edification of a good Example; ſince we find all *Abraham*'s Servants alſo yielding a ready and chearful Obedience to this divine Injunction, notwithſtanding its being very Painful.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Lord *appears to* Abraham; *he entertaineth him, and two Angels; he receiveth again the Promiſe of a Son by* Sarah; Sarah *laughs at it; for which ſhe is reproved; the two Angels go on towards* Sodom, *but the* Lord *ſtays yet longer with* Abraham; *he acquaints him with his purpoſe of deſtroying* Sodom *and* Gomorrah; Abraham *interceeds for them; the* Lord *graciouſly hears his Interceſſion, and promiſes to ſpare them, on Condition of ten Righteous being found therein.*

Q. WHAT *are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. “And the *Lord* appeared unto him in the Plains of *Mamre*; and he ſat in the Tent Door, in the Heat of the Day. And he lift up his Eyes, and looked, and lo, three Men ſtood by him: And when he ſaw them, he ran to meet them from the Tent-Door, and bowed himſelf toward the Ground, and ſaid, My Lord, if now I have found Favour in thy Sight, paſs not away, I pray thee from thy Servant. Let a little Water, I pray you, be fetched, and waſh your Feet, and reſt your ſelves under the Tree. And I will fetch a Morſel of Bread, and comfort ye your Hearts; after that you ſhall paſs on: for therefore are ye come to your Servant. And they ſaid, So do as thou haſt ſaid.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The great Hoſpitality, and Humanity of *Abraham*, to Strangers, as alſo his great Humility; Virtues very little in vogue now-a-days: *Abraham* runs to meet them, he does not ſtay for their coming to him; he bows towards the Ground, and then does not only aſk, but earneſtly intreats them to accept of ſuch Refreſhments as his Tent afforded; addreſſing his Speech to one of them, who by the Majeſty of his Countenance, and the Reſpect the others paid him, ſeemed to be the Chief of them; as, indeed, he was, ſince he is generally ſuppoſed to have been the *Son of God*; wherefore, *Abraham* is ſaid, *to have ſeen his Day*, and *to have been glad* thereat. *John* viii. 56.

Q. *What is the next Thing we are told of* Abraham?

A. “And *Abraham* haſtened into the Tent, unto *Sarah*, and ſaid, make ready quickly three Meaſures of fine Meal, knead it, and make Cakes upon the Hearth. And *Abraham* ran unto the Herd, and fetcht a Calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young Man, and he haſted to dreſs it. And he took Butter and Milk, and the Calf which he had dreſſed, and ſet it before them, and he ſtood by them under the Tree, and they did eat.” We have here a farther Inſtance of *Abraham*'s great Humanity, and Humility; he does not call his Servants, though he had great Numbers of them, but he *haſtened* into the Tent; his Wife *Sarah* alſo, according to the Simplicity of Manners, uſual in thoſe Days, ſet herſelf about kneading the Cakes; in the mean while *Abraham ran* to the Herd; it is not ſaid he went, but he ran, to ſhew his Diligence in attending his Gueſts; fetched a Calf, which is expreſly ſpecify'd to have been *tender* and *good*, to ſhew that it was one of the Beſt he had; and giving it to one of his Servants to dreſs it, ſet it before them, when ready, with Butter and Milk, and waited on them himſelf whilſt they eat it.

Q. *How can Angels, who have no Bodies, be ſaid to eat?*

A. There is no neceſſity for underſtanding the Words, *and they did eat* literally; the Meaning ſeeming only to be, that they appeared to *Abraham*, to eat; it not being unuſual in Scripture to ſpeak of Things according to Appearance: Not but that, as the Angels had aſſum'd Bodies, we don't ſee any Abſurdity, in ſuppoſing they might actually receive the Meat into thoſe Bodies, where it might be conſumed by a divine Power.

Q. *What ſaid the Angels to* Abraham, *in Return for his great Hoſpitality?*

A. “And they ſaid unto him, where is *Sarah* thy Wife? And he ſaid, Behold in the Tent. And he ſaid, I will certainly return unto thee, according to the Time of Life; and lo, *Sarah* thy Wife ſhall have a Son. And *Sarah* heard it in the Tent Door, which was behind him.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That they did not aſk where *Sarah* was, becauſe they did not know, but to introduce what follows, which is a Renewal of the gracious Promiſe of a Son by his Wife *Sarah*, which ſhe being in the Tent-Door behind him, over heard.

Q. *Of what are we next informed, after* Sarah's *hearing this Promiſe?*

A. “That *Abraham* and *Sarah* were Old, and well ſtricken in Age: And it ceaſed to be with *Sarah* after the Manner of Women. Therefore *Sarah* laughed within herſelf, ſaying, after I am waxed Old, ſhall I have Pleaſure, my Lord being old alſo?”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That the Faith of *Sarah*, though a good Woman, was very far from being ſo ſtrong as that of her Husband; for being ſenſible ſhe ceaſed to have thoſe Monthly *Effluvia*, peculiar to her Sex, which are neceſſary to Conception; and which when they ceaſe, are a certain Sign that a Woman is no longer capable of Child-bearing; ſhe had a greater Regard to the Order of Nature, than to the divine Promiſe; and not believing what was ſaid, ſhe laugh'd within herſelf, at the Improbability, and, as ſhe thought, Impoſſibility of the Thing.

Q. *Was not this Diffidence of* Sarah's *highly ſinful?*

A. Undoubtedly; accordingly, we find the *Lord* reproving her immediately for it; “And the *Lord* ſaid unto *Abraham*, wherefore did *Sarah* laugh, ſaying, Shall I of a Surety bear a Child which am old? Is any Thing too hard for the *Lord?* At the Time appointed will I return unto thee, according to the Time of Life, and *Sarah* ſhall have a Son.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How infinitely piercing the Eye of Providence is, inſomuch that no Secret can be hid from it! *Sarah* fooliſhly thought, it was impoſſible to diſcover the inward Emotions of her Mind, wherefore, becauſe ſhe did not laugh outwardly, ſhe was far from expecting a Reproof for it. We may obſerve, alſo, the infinite Goodneſs of *God*; ſince notwithſtanding *Sarah*'s having committed, that Inſtant, ſo groſs an Offence againſt him, he contented himſelf with this Reproof, and again repeated his Promiſe.

Q. *What ſaid* Sarah, *upon hearing the* Lord's *Reproof?*

A. "Then *Sarah* denied, ſaying, I laughed not; And he ſaid, Nay, but thou didſt laugh."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How natural it is for one Sin to produce another! with Deſign to excuſe one Crime, *Sarah* aggravates it, by adding another, and denying that ſhe laughed, though ſhe knew herſelf guilty; it was in vain, however, for the *Lord* poſitively fixed it upon her, and told her, *Nay, but thou didſt laugh.* The only Excuſe ſhe could have made, (and that would have been but a poor one) was that her Laughter proceeded from her Incredulity, and not from any Contempt; and that her Denial thereof, proceeded from her Dread and Confuſion, on its being diſcovered; which did not ſuffer her to conſider the additional Guilt ſhe contracted thereby; probably the *Lord* ſaw, in Alleviation of her Crime, that ſhe bitterly repented it; but, however that be, we find he did not think fit to reproach her any farther.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. "That the Men roſe up from thence, and looked towards *Sodom*; and *Abraham* went with them, to bring them on the Way."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abraham*, not ſatisfied with having thus courteouſly entertained them, thought himſelf bound to extend his Humanity yet farther, and to ſee them partly on their Way; this was then, and long afterwards, a cuſtomary Civility to Strangers, probably, to ſet them right, for fear they ſhould loſe their Way; and *Abraham* would not omit it to theſe his Gueſts, though he could not but be ſenſible by this Time, that they were Angels, and, conſequently, did not ſtand in need of it.

Q. *What Inſtance of his Favour did* God *next confer upon* Abraham?

A. "And the *Lord* ſaid, Shall I hide from *Abraham* that Thing which I do? Seeing that *Abraham* ſhall ſurely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth ſhall be bleſſed in him? For I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the Way of the *Lord*, to do Juſtice and Judgment; that the *Lord* may bring upon *Abraham*, that which he hath ſpoken of him." That is, I will not hide from *Abraham*, on whom I have conferred ſo many yet greater Favours, my Purpoſe of deſtroying the Cities wherein his Relation *Lot* dwells, for their intolerable Wickedneſs; ſince I am aſſured he will command his Children and his Houſhold to keep my Laws, and walk according to my Precepts, that I may accompliſh for him, in their Perſons, the gracious Promiſes I have made him.

Q. *After the* Lord *had taken this Reſolution, what ſaid he to* Abraham?

A. "And the *Lord* ſaid, Becauſe the Cry of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* is great, and becauſe their Sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and ſee whether they have done altogether according to the Cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. This is another great Inſtance of *God*'s infinite Patience, Long-ſuffering and Juſtice; though he knew all without farther Enquiry, yet would not he condemn the moſt hardened and conſummate Reprobates, without due Examination and Trial. Before the Flood, *God* proceeded againſt the old World, upon ocular Evidence; *And God ſaw that the Wickedneſs of Man was great in the Earth*, Gen. iv. 5. Alſo at the building of *Babel*, it is ſaid; *The* Lord *came down to ſee the City and the Tower which the Children of Men built*, Gen. xi. 5. And now again before the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, though the Cry againſt *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* was great, becauſe of the Grievouſneſs of their Sin, yet the *Lord* would not proceed againſt them upon Generals, or upon common Fame, but *I will go down*, ſaith he, *and ſee whether they have done altogether according to the Cry of it; and if not, I will know.*

Q. *What followed upon the* Lord's *communicating this to* Abraham?

A. "And the Men turned their Faces from thence, and went towards *Sodom*, but *Abraham* ſtood yet before the *Lord*. And *Abraham* drew near, and ſaid, Wilt thou alſo deſtroy the Righteous with the Wicked?"

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That when the *Lord* had thus declared he would make Enquiry into the Iniquity of *Sodom*, whether they were ripe for Judgment, or not, the other two Gueſts of *Abraham*, who though they appeared in human Shape, were indeed miniſtring Angels, appointed to execute the divine Vengeance upon that City, immediately proceeded on their Way to the Place; upon which *Abraham* drew near to the *Lord*, and began to intercede with him, for the wretched Inhabitants thereof: Poſſibly, he rightly judged thoſe two were the Miniſters of the divine Decrees, ſent to make this Enquiry, and accordingly to execute Juſtice upon them.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Abraham *in Behalf of the wretched* Sodomites?

A. "Peradventure there be fifty Righteous within the City: Wilt thou alſo deſtroy, and not ſpare the Place for the fifty Righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this Manner, to ſlay the Righteous with the Wicked: And that the Righteous ſhould be as the Wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?"

Q. *What has been obſerved thereupon?*

A. That it is hardly poſſible to uſe more pathetick Words, or a more moving Tenderneſs of Expreſſion than *Abraham* uſes in this ſhort and fervent Prayer. He appears greatly concerned for the wretched Inhabitants of *Sodom*, through the extenſive Humanity of his Temper; and at the ſame Time gives a ſignal Inſtance of his exalted Piety, in the Zeal which he teſtifies for the Honour of *God*; unto whom, from the Title he gives him, *of Judge of all the Earth*, it is evident he now knew he was ſpeaking.

Q. *What Anſwer did the* Lord *make to this Prayer of* Abraham?

A. "And the *Lord* ſaid, If I find in *Sodom* fifty Righteous within the City, then will I ſpare the Place for their Sakes."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The great Love of *God* to the Righteous, which could induce him to have ſpared ſuch Multitudes of incorrigible Sinners for the Sake of ſuch a ſmall Number.

Q. *Having this gracious Aſſurance, what ſaid* Abraham?

A. "And *Abraham* anſwered and ſaid, Behold now, I have taken upon me to ſpeak unto the *Lord*, which am but Duſt and Aſhes. Peradventure there ſhall lack five of the fifty Righteous: Wilt

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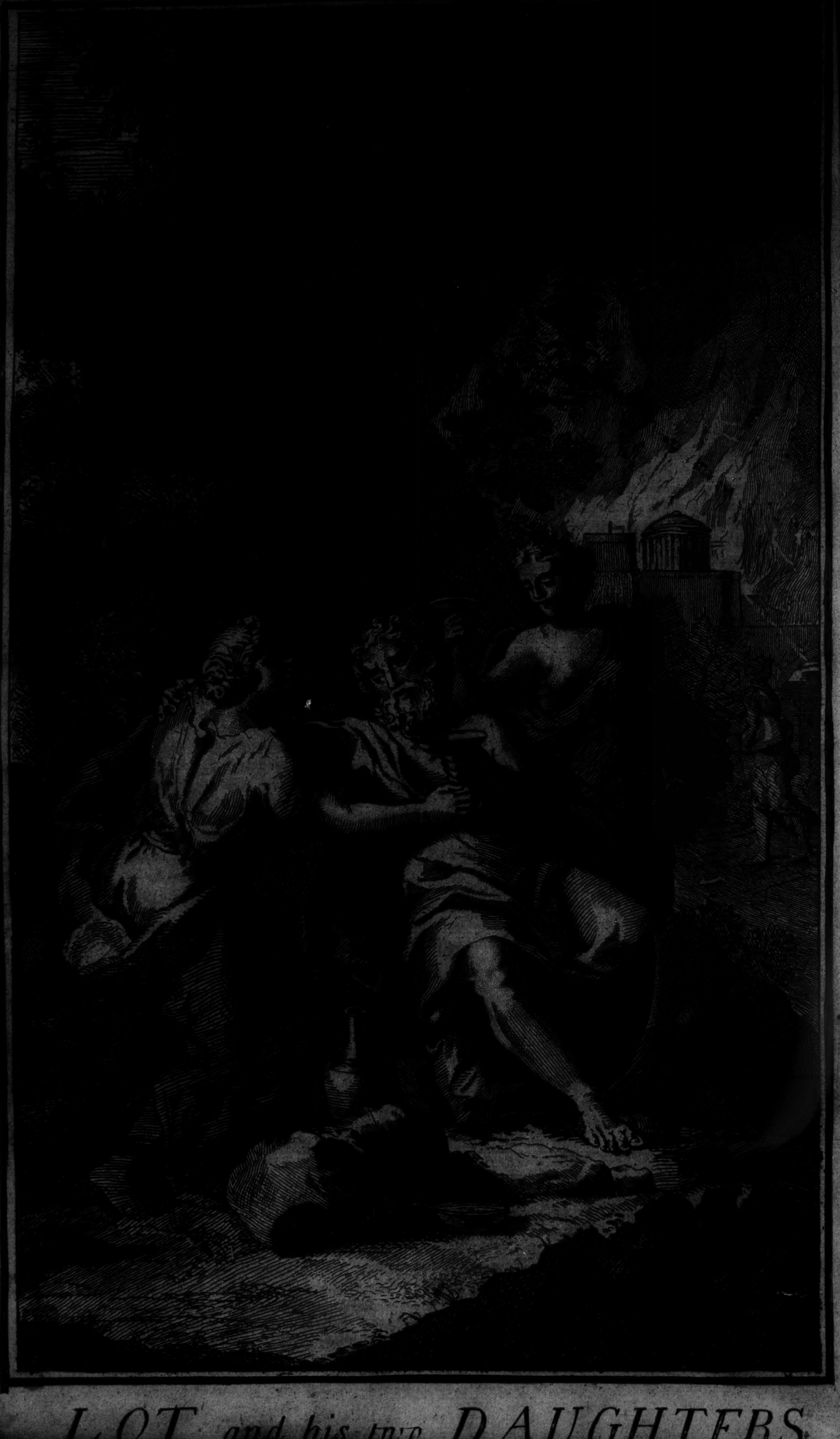
GENESIS, CHAP. XIX.



LOT and his two DAUGHTERS.

"Wilt thou deſtroy all the City for lack of five? And he ſaid, If I find there forty and five, I will not deſtroy it."

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. The great Humility wherewith *Abraham* introduces this ſecond Requeſt, confeſſing how infinitely unworthy he is to ſpeak to his *Almighty Creator*; at the ſame Time that he ſhews his great Humanity, Charity, and Compaſſion for theſe unfortunate Wretches, whoſe notorious Sins were about to draw down *God*'s Judgments upon them. We may alſo obſerve *God*'s infinite Condeſcenſion, and Mercy, and the mighty Prevalence of the fervent Prayer of a righteous Man with him.

Q. *Did* Abraham *deſiſt upon this, or did he again venture to renew his Petition?*

A. Yes; Finding ſo much Condeſcenſion in his *Creator*, he again petitioned him with the ſame fervent Zeal, and Charity; "And he ſpake unto him yet again, and ſaid, Peradventure there ſhall be forty found there." To which the *Almighty* returned with his uſual Mercy; "And he ſaid, I will not do it for forty's Sake."

Q. *Did* Abraham *proceed any farther upon meeting with ſuch Encouragement?*

A. Yes; Being loth to deſiſt, and finding the Mercies of the *Lord* boundleſs, he again renews his Attack, and even leſſens the Number ten at once, whereas before he had dropt but five at a Time; however, that he might not incur the divine Diſpleaſure thereby, he begins his Prayer by deprecating thereof; "And he ſaid unto him, Oh let not the *Lord* be angry, and I will ſpeak, Peradventure there ſhall Thirty be found there. And he ſaid, I will not do it, if I find Thirty there."

Q. *Did this embolden* Abraham *to preſume any farther?*

A. Yes; Finding the *Almighty* as ready to grant Mercy, as himſelf could be to aſk it, he again accoſts him; "And he ſaid, Behold now, I have taken upon me to ſpeak unto the *Lord*;" which is meant as an humble Confeſſion of his Unworthineſs ſo to do. "Peradventure there ſhall be Twenty found there. And he ſaid, I will not deſtroy it for Twenty's Sake.

Q. *What followed upon the* Lord's *condeſcending thus far to* Abraham?

A. Abraham ſtrongly agitated, both by Compaſſion, and by the Fear of offending *God*, in whoſe immediate Preſence he then ſtood, ventured to interceed yet once more for thoſe wretched People, but firſt he again deprecates the divine Diſpleaſure; "And he ſaid, Oh let not the *Lord* be angry, and I will ſpeak yet but this once: Peradventure Ten ſhall be found there. And he ſaid, I will not deſtroy it for Ten's Sake." 'Tis impoſſible to paint the Love of *God* to the Righteous, or the Prevalence of a good Man's fervent Prayers with the *Almighty*, in ſtronger Terms.

Q. *Did any Thing farther paſs then between the* Lord *and* Abraham?

A. No; *Abraham* being ſenſible he could not proceed any farther, without the higheſt Preſumption, deſiſted from making any farther Interceſſion for them; beſides, he thought, that including *Lot's* Family, there could not fail of being ſo ſmall a Number in that populous City. Wherefore we are only told, "That the *Lord* went his Way, aſſoon as he had left communing with *Abraham*: And *Abraham* returned unto his Place."

CHAP. XIX.

Two Angels come to Sodom; Lot *entertains them; the Inhabitants of* Sodom *ſurround* Lot's *Houſe, and order* Lot *to bring them out, that they might know them;* Lot *diſſuades them from ſo wicked an Action, and to ſave his Gueſts offers to deliver up his own Daughters; they threaten to uſe him yet worſe, preſs upon him, and endeavour to force into the Houſe; the Angels deliver* Lot, *by pulling him into the Houſe, and ſtriking the wicked Inhabitants with Blindneſs; they adviſe* Lot *to be gone forthwith from* Sodom *with his Family, becauſe they are ſent to deſtroy it;* Lot *informs his Sons-in-law thereof, who laugh at him, and refuſe to leave the City; the Angels lay hold on* Lot, *who lingers with his Wife and two Daughters, and lead them out; they are commanded not to look back;* Lot *begs leave to ſtay in* Zoar, *which is granted;* God *rains down* Brimſtone *and* Fire *upon* Sodom *and* Gomorrah; Lot's *Wife looks back, and is turned into a Pillar of Salt;* God *is kind to* Lot *for* Abraham's *Sake;* Lot *leaves* Zoar, *and removes to the Mountain;* Lot's *Daughters fearing the Extinction of their Father's Family, join together to make him Drunk, and lye with him;* Moab, *and* Ben-ammi *born of that inceſtuous Copulation.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And there came two Angels to *Sodom* at Even; and *Lot* ſat in the Gate of *Sodom*: And *Lot* ſeeing them, roſe up to meet them; and he bowed himſelf towards the Ground."

Q. *What has been obſerved upon this Text?*

A. Becauſe the Gates of the City were the Places where they adminiſter'd Juſtice in former Ages, and *Lot* was ſitting there, the *Jews*, who are fond of Fables, eſpecially ſuch as contribute to the Honour of *Abraham*, and his Relations, have a Tradition that he was Chief Juſtice of the Place; a Fiction, which is not only deſtitute of the leaſt Probability, but which is expreſly contradicted by the Words of *Sodomites*, verſe 9. where it is ſaid, *this one fellow came in to ſojourn, and he will needs be a Judge*, upon which they threaten him, which they would not have dared to do, had they made him ſo great a Magiſtrate over them. Probably, therefore, he only ſat there, as being the uſual Place of Reſort for the better Sort of Citizens; and through a hoſpitable Temper; that he might be in the Way to invite Strangers Home, thereby to ſecure them from the ill Uſage, it is likely he might know, they met with elſewhere. We may obſerve alſo, that he trod exactly in the Steps, of his excellent Relation *Abraham*.

Q. *What ſaid* Lot *to the Angels, when they approached him?*

A. "And he ſaid, Behold now, my Lords, turn in I pray you, into your Servant's Houſe, and tarry all Night, and waſh your Feet, and ye ſhall ariſe up early, and go on your Ways. And they ſaid, nay, but we will abide in the Street all Night."

Q. *What are we to obſerve from thence?*

A. That this Invitation of *Lot's*, and the former one of *Abraham*'s, may be a Pattern for all our Invitations now-a-days; ſince forcing any one to ſtay longer than his Buſineſs, or his Health will permit, is ſo far from being either a Kindneſs, Civility, or Good-manners, that it is a great Injury: We muſt obſerve

ſerve alſo, that this Denial of the Angels is to be underſtood in a limited Senſe, they would *abide in the Street*, unleſs he preſſed them farther; which they well knew he would, and only ſaid ſo, to give him an Opportunity of diſcovering his Charity and Hoſpitality; and to ſhew the great Difference between him and the brutal *Sodomites*; and, conſequently, the Reaſon, and Juſtice of his Deliverance, and their Deſtruction.

Q. *What did* Lot *upon the Angels giving him a Denial?*

A. “ And he preſſed upon them greatly; and they “ turned in unto him, and enter'd into his Houſe: “ And he made them a Feaſt, and did bake unlea- “ vened Bread, and they did eat.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence? And why did* Lot *bake unleavened Bread?*

A. By its being ſaid he made them a Feaſt, it ſhews the Plenty of his Entertainment, that he did not do it with Grudging, or by Halves; and the Reaſon of his baking unleavened Bread, ſeems to have been, becauſe that could ſooneſt be got ready, that they might ſup, and afterwards retire to Reſt in good Time.

Q. *What followed upon the Angels going to* Lot's *Houſe?*

A. “ But before they lay down the Men of the “ City, even the Men of *Sodom*, compaſſed the “ Houſe round, both Old and Young, and all the “ People from every Quarter.”

Q. *Why is it ſo particularly ſpecify'd, that it was both Old and Young, all the People from every Quarter?*

A. To ſhew how univerſally Wickedneſs and Corruption reigned in that abandoned Place; that it prevailed to that exceſſive Degree, that both Old and Young joined therein; the Old are particularly ſpecify'd, to ſhew, that after they were diſabled by Age, from perpetrating the Villany, for which their City has been ever ſince famed, it was ſtill pleaſing to them to be but bare Spectators thereof; which, likewiſe, ſhews, to what an Exceſs of Impudence they were grown; to perpetrate their unnatural Luſts in the open Streets, before Thouſands of Witneſſes.

Q. *What ſaid this abandoned Crew, upon ſurrounding the Houſe?*

A. “ And they called unto *Lot*, and ſaid unto him. “ Where are the Men which came in unto thee this “ Night? Bring them out unto us, that we may “ know them.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The abandoned Impudence, (as we obſerved before) of thoſe Inhabitants; who not contented with perpetrating that Sin in Private, as leſs notorious Sinners do, haughtily demand them to be brought out, and declare openly to what Intent.

Q. *What did* Lot *thereupon?*

A. “ And *Lot* went out at the Door unto them, and “ ſhut the Door after him, and ſaid, I pray you, “ Brethren, do not ſo wickedly. Behold now, I have “ two Daughters which have not known Man; let “ me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do “ ye unto them as is good in your Eyes: Only un- “ to theſe Men do nothing; for therefore came they “ under the ſhadow of my Roof.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. It is evident, *Lot* was no Stranger to the Temper and Violence of thoſe People, by the Precaution he uſed, in ſhutting the Door after him, to ſecure his Gueſts: It is evident, likewiſe, he knew that they were ſo prone to that Sin, which has ever ſince received its Name from them; and that they intended to have perpetrated that very Sin upon his Gueſts; otherwiſe he would never have bethought himſelf of ſuch an Expedient, as that of offering up his two Virgin Daughters a Sacrifice, to aſſuage their ungovernable Luſts; and even this Expedient failed him; which might be, in ſome Meaſure, owing to the uncommon Beauty of the Bodies the Angels had aſſumed, whereby their Luſt was the more inflamed: And yet, we find, notwithſtanding he was no Stranger to their unparallel'd Wickedneſs; notwithſtanding he was before very near ſuffering ſeverely, for living amongſt ſuch an impious Generation; when himſelf and his whole Family were carried away Captives by *Chedorlaomer*; ſo prevalent were the temporal Advantages he enjoy'd in that flouriſhing City, and the pleaſant and fertile Soil around it, that he ſtill reſolved to live therein; and was very loth to quit at the very laſt, even when it was threatened with immediate Deſtruction. Such a powerful Influence have worldly Advantages even upon good Men!

Q. *But was not* Lot's *offering to deliver up his Daughters a Prey to their Luſts highly ſinful in him?*

A. Undoubtedly it was, and can never be juſtify'd; Eſpecially if, as is believed by many, his Daughters were already contracted to others, though their Marriage was not yet conſummated; but yet many Things may be alledged, in Extenuation thereof; as, that he was under ſuch a perturbation of Spirits, and ſuch a Diſcompoſure of Mind, as hindered him from conſidering the Conſequences of what he offered; that it was an Expreſſion dropt from him in a Surprize, and extorted from him, in the Confuſion of his Thoughts, from the Apprehenſion of the Injury they were about to offer his Gueſts; and alſo that the one, tho' highly criminal in itſelf, was not a Sin againſt Nature, nor quite ſo odious to the *Almighty*; which might induce *Lot* to ſubmit to the one, in order to avoid the other, which appeared to him unavoidable any other Ways: Upon the Whole, however, we are to look upon it as a Thing, by no means fit for our Imitation.

Q. *What followed upon* Lot's *making this Propoſal to the* Sodomites?

A. “ And they ſaid, ſtand back. And they ſaid “ again, This one Fellow came in to ſojourn, and “ he will needs be a Judge: Now will we deal “ worſe with thee than with them. And they preſ- “ ſed ſore upon the Man, even *Lot*, and came near “ to break the Door.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How far the Hoſpitality and Charity of *Lot* tranſported him, even to the expoſing his own Perſon (and that to no ſmall Danger, had not the Angels interpoſed) and his Daughter's Chaſtity for the Preſervation of his Gueſts; which ſhews how ſacred the Laws of Hoſpitality were then held amongſt the Virtuous! We pray obſerve alſo how ungovernable and furious the Violence of their Luſt made the *Sodomites*; that no Arguments, no Shame, no Bars, no Bolts could with-hold or reſtrain them; it is obſervable, alſo, that during this Tumult no Magiſtrate offered to interpoſe, for the Defence of *Lot*, and his injured Gueſts; which ſhews that there was no Juſtice obſerved and that nothing but Luſt and Violence reigned there.

Q. *How did* Lot *eſcape this imminent Danger?*

A. “ The Men put forth their Hand, and pulled “ *Lot* into the Houſe to them, and ſhut too the Door.

“ and they ſmote the Men that were at the Door of “ the Houſe with Blindneſs, both ſmall and great: “ So that they wearied themſelves to find the “ Door.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That at the Time of their greateſt Diſtreſs, when their is no viſible Way for them to eſcape, Providence comes to the Aſſiſtance of thoſe that ſerve *God.* We muſt obſerve alſo, that this was not an ordinary Blindneſs, ſince we find Perſons that are born blind, can find out a Door very eaſily, by their feeling; but a ſupernatural Blindneſs, a Blindneſs both of Body and Mind. It was not a total Blindneſs, as if they quite loſt the Uſe of their Eyes, for they ſaw the Houſe, but not the Door; but it was a great Dimneſs and Confuſion of their Sight, join'd with a Diſturbance of their common Senſe; whereby they were rendered unable to diſtinguiſh between different Perſons and Places; as was that of the *Syrians,* whom *Eliſha* led from *Dothan* into the Midſt of *Samaria,* 2 *Kings* xvi. 18. as we ſee frequently now-adays, in Perſons who are drunk, who, tho' their Eyes are open, have not the Senſe to diſtinguiſh between different Objects: And this it was very eaſy for the Angels to effect, by a ſmall Alteration either in their Sight, or in the Medium of the Air; whereby the Door might appear to them like the ſolid Wall, or the ſeveral Parts of the Wall like ſo many Doors.

Q. *What ſaid the Angels to* Lot, *after having ſmitten the People with Blindneſs?*

A. “ And the Men ſaid unto *Lot,* haſt thou any “ here beſides? Son-in-law, and thy Sons, and thy “ Daughters, whatſoever thou haſt in the City, “ bring them out of this Place; for we will deſtroy “ this Place: Becauſe the Cry of them is waxen “ great before the Face of the *Lord,* and the *Lord* “ hath ſent us to deſtroy it.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. Having thus been Eye-witneſſes of the intollerable Wickedneſs of the Inhabitants of *Sodom,* whereby they executed one Part of their Commiſſion; which was, *to go and ſee whether they had done altogether according to the Cry of it, which had come unto the* Lord, *Chap.* xviii. 21. The Angels prepare for Execution of the Remainder of their Commiſſion; which was, to deſtroy them, but firſt to ſend *Lot,* and ſuch of his Family, that is, his Relations, as would take Warning, out from among them. In order to this, they command him to begone without Delay from thence; and to incite him to make the more Haſte, not only acquaint him with the divine Decree, but alſo that they are the miniſtring Angels appointed to put it in Execution.

Q. *What Effect had this Notice, and Order upon* Lot?

A. “ And *Lot* went out, and ſpake unto his Sons-“ in-law, which married his Daughters, and ſaid, “ Up, get ye out of this Place; for the *Lord* will “ deſtroy this City: but he ſeemed as one that “ mocked unto his Sons-in-law.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That, notwithſtanding the imminent Danger, to which *Lot* had been ſo lately expoſed, and from which he had been ſo miraculouſly delivered, his Love to his Sons-in-law was ſo great, that it prevailed on him to run the Hazard of being again inſulted, to deliver them from the impending Judgment; but his Exhortations, Intreaties, and Labours, were all thrown away upon the infatuated and hardened young Men, for they only laughed at him for his Pains. We muſt obſerve alſo, that from the Words *Sons-in-law, which married his Daughters,* and the ſubſequent Words in the next *Verſe,* thy two *Daughters which are here,* which two Daughters are ſaid before, *v.* 8. *not to have known Man,* a Doubt has ariſen; whether *Lot* had two other Daughters, who were actually married, and lived apart from him, with their reſpective Spouſes; and who, conſequently, periſhed with their Huſbands, in the Conflagration of *Sodom*; or whether the two Daughters mentioned in *Verſe* 8. and 15. were betrothed, but their Marriage not conſummated, and conſequently they might be ſtill Virgins. There is nothing improbable, in either of theſe Opinions, neither of them being Contradictions to what is ſaid in this Chapter; on the other Hand, there is nothing therein to determine our Judgment on either Side, Tradition and Conjecture being all that can be brought in Support of either; wherefore, it not being a Matter of any Moment, we ſhall leave it to our Readers to determine as they pleaſe: Only we ſhall obſerve, that it being agreed on all Hands, that the *Sodomites* were the moſt libidinous People upon Earth; it is not altogether ſo likely, that the Sons of *Lot* ſhould defer the Conſummation of their Marriage, any longer than to the Night wherein they were contracted: We might add, that it is highly probable, and that this Opinion is confirmed by the *Jewiſh* Traditions, that it was not long after this, that theſe two Daughters plotted to make their Father drunk, that they might raiſe up Seed to him; which being granted, there could not be any Reaſon, why their Marriage ſhould not have been conſummated immediately, ſince its plain, from this Contrivance, that they were not of ſuch tender Years, that that could have been any Obſtacle thereunto.

Q. Lot's *Sons-in-law having thus deſpiſed his Warning, what ſaid the Angels to him?*

A. “ And when the Morning aroſe, then the An-“ gels haſtened *Lot,* ſaying, Ariſe, take thy Wife, “ and thy two Daughters, which are here, leſt thou “ be conſumed in the Iniquity of the City. And “ while he linger'd, the Men *laid hold* upon his “ Hand, and upon the Hand of his Wife, and up-“ on the Hand of his two Daughters; the *Lord* be-“ ing merciful unto him: and they brought him “ forth, and ſet him without the City!”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The great Care of the Angels in the Execution of the divine Commands; and the great Mercy of *God* to them that ſerve him, notwithſtanding their Failings; the Angels haſtened *Lot*; one would think he could not want to be haſtened from a Place, againſt which immediate Deſtruction was denounced; but yet, we find, he did want haſtening, and even that that haſtening was not ſufficient; for we are told, immediately afterwards, that whilſt he linger'd the Men *laid hold* upon his Hand, *&c.* that is, in other Words, they *forced* him out: Good *Lord!* how *merciful* is our *God,* even to compelling thoſe that fear him to their own Safety! But why did *Lot* linger when there was ſuch imminent Danger? Alas! he had great Poſſeſſions in *Sodom,* which he could not eaſily bring himſelf to abandon, even though it was the only Way to ſave his Life: What an Influence have the Riches of this World even upon good Men!

Q. *Having brought* Lot *without the City, what ſaid they farther to him?*

A. “ And it came to paſs, when they had brought “ them forth abroad, that he ſaid, Eſcape for thy “ Life, look not behind thee, neither ſtay thou in

“ all the Plain: Eſcape to the Mountain, leſt thou be
“ conſumed.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That the Angels having brought *Lot*, not without ſome Compulſion, without the City, proceed next to give him the neceſſary Directions for providing for his Safety; which were, to eſcape for his Life, that is, with all Speed to the Mountains, and neither to loiter in the Plain, nor look behind. Theſe Precautions were given, becauſe they had obſerv'd, that *Lot* was apt to loiter, and parted from *Sodom*, and his Poſſeſſions therein with Regret. It is obſervable, therefore, that the *Hebrew* may as well be tranſlated, Eſcape *with* thy Life, as *for* thy Life. The Senſe then will be; be contented with eſcaping with thy Life; do not loiter in hopes of ſaving thy Riches, for them thou ſhalt loſe, as a Puniſhment to thee for thy Sin, and Folly, in chuſing to live with ſuch Reprobates, on account of worldly Advantages; thou ſhalt therefore now be juſtly deprived of thoſe very Advantages; neither look behind, as grieving for the Loſs of thy pleaſant Habitation, and vaſt Eſtate, or for thoſe curſed Miſcreants who are juſtly devoted to Deſtruction; for if thou doſt thy Life is ſtill in Danger.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Lot *unto this?*

A. “ And *Lot* ſaid unto them, Oh, not ſo,
“ my Lord. Behold now, thy Servant has found
“ Grace in thy Sight, and thou haſt magnified thy
“ Mercy which thou haſt ſhewn unto me in ſaving
“ my Life: And I cannot eſcape to the Mountain,
“ leſt ſome Evil take me, and I die. Behold now,
“ this City is nigh to flee unto, and it is a little
“ one; Oh, let me eſcape thither, (Is it not a little
“ one?) and my Soul ſhall live.

Q. *What has been obſerved from thence?*

A. Some have obſerved from theſe Words, that they ſhew an unworthy and unreaſonable Diſtruſt of the divine Power and Goodneſs, which *Lot* had juſt before experienced, and acknowledged; but this does not ſeem to be warranted by any Thing ſaid in Scripture; on the contrary, we have from thence all the Reaſon in the World to judge otherwiſe; ſince it is hardly to believed, that the *Lord* would have accepted of his Prayer, and granted his Requeſt, as we find he did, had he found in *Lot*, at the ſame a Diſtruſt of his Power and Goodneſs.

Q. *What ſaid the Angel to* Lot's *Petition?*

A. “ And he ſaid unto him, See, I have accepted
“ thee concerning this Thing alſo, that I will not over-
“ throw this City for the which thou haſt ſpoken. Haſte
“ thee, eſcape thither; for I cannot do any Thing
“ till thou be come thither: Therefore the Name
“ of the City was called *Zoar*. The Sun was riſen
“ upon the Earth, when *Lot* entered into *Zoar*.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The infinite Goodneſs, Mercy, and Condeſcenſion of our Creator, in ſaving a whole City for the Sake of one righteous Perſon; and that when we may be aſſured, *Lot* might have complied with the firſt Injunction, in flying to the Mountain; ſince otherwiſe the *Lord* would not have enjoined it *God*, not being uſed to require Impoſſibilities. However, *Lot* is again haſtened in his Flight, and the Angel expreſſes the Reaſon thereof, in a Manner, which evidently demonſtrates the Care and Tenderneſs of the *Deity*, to thoſe who truſt in his Promiſes.

Q. *What followed upon* Lot's *entering into* Zoar?

A. “ Then the *Lord* rained upon *Sodom*, and up-
“ on *Gomorrah*, Brimſtone and Fire from the *Lord*,
“ out of Heaven. And he overthrew thoſe Cities,
“ and all the Plain, and all the Inhabitants of the
“ Cities, and that which grew upon the Ground.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That it is here ſaid, the *Lord* rained Fire out of Heaven; to ſhew that this Judgment fell upon thoſe Cities, immediately from the Hand of *God*; and did not proceed from any natural Cauſes, nor can be accounted for by natural Philoſophy, as ſome have in vain attempted to do. It is ſpecified alſo, That he overthrew all the Plain, and all the Inhabitants of the Cities, and that which grew upon the Ground; to ſhew how general this Judgment was, and that nothing was ſpared, not even what grew upon the Ground. In Effect, the Ground itſelf was not ſpared; ſince of a fruitful and pleaſant Plain, as it was before, the moſt fertile and delicious in the whole World; (ſince it is compared in Scripture to the Land of *Egypt*, a Country noted for its Fertility, and even to the Garden of the *Lord*;) it is now become a *noiſome filthy Lake*, called *The Dead Se*[illegible]cauſe no Fiſh can live therein; and what Ground there is, is remarkably barren above any other Part of the World; ſince it will not bear any Thing whatſoever, that is ſowed therein, not even Graſs. A tremendous, and unparallel'd Judgment!

Q. *What do we learn next from this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Lot*'s Wife looked back from behind
“ him, and ſhe became a Pillar of Salt.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, ſince Salt will melt away when any Water touches it?*

A. Commentators vary exceedingly upon this Head; ſome are for underſtanding it figuratively, that ſhe was changed into a durable Pillar, which ſhould laſt a great while; as the Words, a *Covenant of Salt*, are uſed in Scripture, to ſignify a Covenant that is to be in Force for a long Continuance. We think, however, it is better to take the Words of *Moſes* literally, ſince in the literal Senſe, there is nothing repugnant to Truth. But then we muſt not underſtand this of common Salt, which would have melted away with the Rain; but of a metallick or Rock Salt, which is hewn out of a Rock, like Stone, and is uſed in Building, and as laſting, and even more laſting than Stone itſelf, as *Pliny*, *Solinus* and others witneſs. Now for thoſe learned Gentlemen, whoſe Learning only ſerves to make them Infidels, and who will hardly believe any Thing for which they can't account from natural Cauſes, we ſhall endeavour to give ſome Reaſons why *Lot*'s Wife was turned into a Pillar of Rock Salt, rather than Stone, Marble or any other Pillar. There is great Reaſon to believe, from a Paſſage in *Deuteronomy*, *Chap.* xxix *v.* 23. that vaſt Quantities of Salt, as well as Sulphur, fell down from Heaven, upon this devoted Region, when *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were burnt. The great Saltneſs of the Sea of *Sodom*, beyond that of any other Sea in the known World, without the leaſt Change, from the perpetual Influx of Water (and of Water remarkably ſweet, as *Diodorus Siculus* obſerves) running into it, is a ſtrong preſumptive Proof hereof; at leaſt, it muſt be allowed to be a Circumſtance of Weight, to corroborate any other Evidence upon this Head. And as Thunder ſtiffens every Animal it ſtrikes, in one Inſtant; and leaves them dead in the ſame Poſture in which it found them alive; there is no Sort of Difficulty in conceiving how this unhappy Woman's Body, being prepared by Heat, and penetrated and incruſted with Salt, might long ſubſiſt as a Statue of Salt, in the very Poſture wherein this Judgment from *Heaven* found her. Nor are we without Examples of ſuch

Transformations, in other *Writers* and *Hiſtorians* of undoubted Credit. We ſhall mention one: *Aventinus* an Hiſtorian of great Ability and great Integrity, in the *ſeventh* Book of his *Boian-Annals*, tells us, upon the Credit of *Conrad*, an eminent Phyſician and Mathematician, who was himſelf an Eye-witneſs of the Event, together with the Chancellor of *Auſtria*; that, at the Time of a great Earthquake, which happened *A. D.* 1348, fifty Cow-keepers and their Cattle, were turned into Statues of Salt, in a Village of *Bavaria*. We muſt add, that the Transformation of *Lot's* Wife, ſeems not to have been occaſioned by her barely looking back, but by her loitering unreaſonably behind her Husband; for it is evident enough, from the Relation before us, that the Judgment from Heaven did not begin, till *Lot* was ſafe in *Zoar*; and conſequently his Wife could not have been affected by it, had ſhe not both looked back, and ſtaid unreaſonably in the Plain, contrary to the expreſs Command of the *Angel*.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “That *Abraham* got up early in the Morning, “to the Place where he ſtood before the *Lord*. And “he looked towards *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and towards all the Land of the Plain, and beheld, and “lo, the Smoak of the Country went up, as the “Smoak of a Furnace.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the good Patriarch's Anxiety, and Commiſeration of that wretched People, would not let him reſt; till he ſaw whether his Interceſſion for them had any good Effect, or whether they had periſhed, through the want of ſo ſmall a Number as ten righteous Perſons amongſt them: But, alas! he too ſoon found what he dreaded; that the righteous Judgments of the *Almighty* had overtaken thoſe incorrigible Reprobates, and that they had all periſh'd in their Sins; nothing being to be ſeen, inſtead of that once pleaſant and delicious Country, and thoſe once famous Cities, but Ruin and Deſolation, and a dreadful and thick Smoak aſcending up to Heaven, as if the whole Country had been one vaſt fiery Furnace. A ſhocking Sight, no doubt, to a Man of ſo much Humanity, as *Abraham*.

Q. *But was not* Abraham *under ſome Concern for his Nephew* Lot, *for we don't find it any where mentioned that he interceeded for him in particular?*

A. Though we do not find it ſpecify'd, when *Abraham* was interceeding ſo fervently for the *Sodomites*, that he made any Mention of his Nephew *Lot* in particular, yet it is not to be doubted but that he did offer up his Prayers for him particularly, either then, or after his return Home; ſince we find it expreſly ſaid, in the next Verſe, “And it came to “paſs, when *God* deſtroyed the Cities of the Plain “that *God* remembered *Abraham*, and ſent *Lot* out “of the Midſt of the Overthrow, when he overthrew “the Cities in the which *Lot* dwelt.” This ſeems to make the Thing evident; but had this not been ſaid, we ought not to have queſtioned it; ſince it is highly improbable, that a Man of ſuch extenſive Humanity and Charity as *Abraham* whom we find praying fervently for Strangers, and thoſe too incorrigible Sinners, ſhould have been deſtitute of any Concern for ſo near a Relation; or even ſhould have been contented, with barely including him in his Interceſſion for the others, as being an Inhabitant of the ſame Place. Nay, this Verſe ſeems to carry with it an Inſinuation, that, notwithſtanding *Lot* was a righteous Perſon, and would have been ſaved eternally; yet *God* would have ſuffered him to have periſh'd temporally, with thoſe wicked People, with whom he had aſſociated himſelf, meerly for worldly Advantages; had it not been for *Abraham's* interceeding for him, and that earneſtly too.

Q. *What do we next hear of* Lot, *after his entering into Zoar?*

A. “And *Lot* went up out of *Zoar*, and dwelt in “the Mountain, and his two Daughters with him; “for he feared to dwell in *Zoar*; and he dwelt in a “Cave, he and his two Daughters.”

Q. *What could induce him to quit a Place, for which he had made ſuch earneſt Interceſſion but a little before; eſpecially to remove to the Mountain which before he ſo much dreaded?*

A. Scripture is ſilent as to the Motives thereof, but the moſt probable Reaſon ſeems to be; that finding the Inhabitants of *Zoar* much more wicked than he had apprehended; and that they continued impenitent, and hardened, and went on in their Sins, notwithſtanding the late tremendous Judgment on their Neighbours; he from thence grew afraid, that they might provoke the Wrath of *God* afreſh, and draw down ſuch another dreadful Judgment on themſelves; and that both himſelf and his Family might be involved in the general Deſtruction, if he ſhould continue long amongſt ſuch impious Profligates.

Q. *What followed upon* Lot's *removing to the Mountain, and dwelling in the Cave?*

A. “And the firſt-born ſaid unto the younger, “And there is not a Man in the Earth, to come in “unto us after the Manner of all the Earth.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, ſince they could not but know they had left many Men in* Zoar?

A. Undoubtedly, it muſt be underſtood in a limited Senſe; that there was not a Man *in that Land*, with whom they *might marry*; the ſad Experience of the dreadful Ruin wherein their Brothers-in-law, or their contracted Spouſes had been involved, making them abhor, and dread the Thoughts of intermarrying with any of the ſinful Inhabitants of *Zoar*; or of any other City equally wicked.

Q. *What was the Iſſue of this melancholy Complaint, which ſeems introductory to ſome Propoſal how to remedy it?*

A. So it was, to a moſt ſinful one; “Come let “us make our Father drink Wine, and we will lye “with him, that we may preſerve Seed of our Fa-“ther.”

Q. *Is this Contrivance of* Lot's *Daughters any ways to be juſtify'd; and what may be obſerved from thence?*

A. Undoubtedly it is not by any Means, ſince it had been much better in them to have ſuffered the Extinction of their Father's Family, than to have had Recourſe, for the keeping it up, to ſo horrid an Expedient, as Inceſt; and that too with an own Father. But, notwithſtanding the Heinouſneſs of the Sin, many Things may be alledged in Extenuation thereof, even in the Eye of right Reaſon; inſomuch that the antient Fathers of the *Chriſtian* Church, whom none can ſuſpect to have been Favourers of Inceſt, have differed much in their Opinions, as to the Crime whereof *Lot's* Daughter's were guilty. Without troubling our Readers with unneceſſary Quotations, we think it ſufficient to obſerve here; *Firſt*, that, it does not appear from any thing ſaid in Scripture, that what they did, proceeded from a violent and vicious Deſire of gratifying their carnal Inclinations; but, on the contrary, from the Fear of their Father's Family's being utterly extinguiſh'd, unleſs they had Recourſe to this extraordinary, though abominable Expedient. We muſt obſerve, hereupon, that their Fears were far from being altogether without Foundation. He had withdrawn himſelf from all Intercourſe, and Communication with Mankind; and did not ſeem to have any manner of Diſpoſition towards renewing a Correſpondence with them; much leſs towards contracting any Alliance with them in order to perpetuate his Family; this, therefore, ſeemed to them the only Expedient for ſo doing. That this was their real Motive, for acting in this Manner, ſeems highly probable, if not apparent, from their conſulting together upon this Head; for, had it been otherwiſe, it is altogether unlikely that they would have revealed their Intent to each other. The Names, likewiſe, given by them to their Offspring confirm this; and are a ſtrong Proof, that though the Action of which they were guilty, was highly criminal in itſelf, yet it did not appear ſo to them. *Secondly*, The Averſion they might have conceived againſt the impious Generation, amongſt whom they had formerly lived, might make them the more deſirous of having Children by their own Father; and might thereby have blinded their Conſciences in this Reſpect, and have extinguiſhed even the Light of Nature in their Minds: Add to this, that had they had Children by any other, it would not have been preſerving Seed of their Father, but of their Huſbands, and conſequently, their Father's Family would nevertheleſs have been extinct; and that they might think it leſs Sin, to commit Inceſt with their Father, who was a good Man, in Hopes of a righteous Seed, than to lye with any other, and thereby propagate an impious Generation. Upon the whole, however, they ſeem to have lived too long in *Sodom*, and to have imbibed too much of the Licentiouſneſs of that Place; and we may learn this uſeful Leſſon from this Act of theirs, that we ought to be moſt upon our Guard, when we think ourſelves moſt ſecure againſt falling; and when no apparent Danger is nigh; eſpecially, if we have a great deal of Leiſure-Time upon our Hands: The Devil being always moſt earneſt in tempting us, when he finds us idle.

Q. *What was the Succeſs of this their wicked Contrivance?*

A. It took Effect but too well; “ And they made “ their Father drink Wine that Night; and the “ firſt-born went in and lay with her Father; and “ he perceived not when ſhe lay down, nor when “ ſhe aroſe.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The pernicious and fatal Effects of drinking to Exceſs; as alſo, how naturally one Sin draws on another: For *Lot* could not plead the ſame Excuſe for his Drunkenneſs as *Noah*; that he did not know the intoxicating Quality of the Liquor; ſince it being known to both the Daughters, it is utterly improbable that the Father could be ignorant thereof. We may obſerve, likewiſe, from hence, that he who kept his Integrity in the midſt of all the Temptations of *Sodom*, now fell into one of the moſt grievous of Sins, in a Place where he might have ſeemed, in a Manner, ſecure from all Temptations; and this, juſt after he had ſeen, how dreadfully *God* puniſhed the Sins of Uncleanneſs, in the *Sodomites*: Providence permitting this, to teach all following Ages, how weak even the beſt of Men are, when they are left to themſelves; and what abſolute need they have of the divine Aſſiſtance. As to *Lot's* not knowing when ſhe lay down, nor when ſhe aroſe, there is nothing unuſual therein; it being common for drunken Men, to do many Things in that Condition, which they entirely forget when they come to themſelves: Wherefore, it is not impoſſible, but *Lot*, when under the Power of Wine, might forget what Judgment had befallen his Wife, and, conſequently, might miſtake his Daughter for her.

Q. *The eldeſt having met with this Succeſs, did the other follow her Example?*

A. Yes, “ And it came to paſs on the Morrow, “ that the firſt-born ſaid unto the Younger, Behold, “ I lay yeſternight with my Father: Let us make “ him drink Wine this Night alſo; and go thou in, “ and lye with him, that we may preſerve Seed of “ our Father. And they made their Father drink “ Wine that Night alſo: And the Younger aroſe “ and lay with him; and he perceived not when ſhe “ lay down, nor when ſhe aroſe.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the Sin of *Lot* was greater, in this ſecond inceſtuous Copulation, than in the firſt; for having been overtaken with Wine, but the Night before, he ought ſure to have been greatly upon his Guard againſt that Sin the next Night; we find, however, he committed a ſecond time the ſame Tranſgreſſion; ſo weak is Man, when left to himſelf, and it had the ſame Effect. We may obſerve alſo, that the eldeſt was always the moſt forward in this wicked Contrivance; which ſeems as if the youngeſt had ſome Doubts about it; but then when it was her Turn to put it in Execution, ſhe was not Proof againſt the Temptation; but as readily gave into it, as the other wickedly propoſed it.

Q. *What was the Conſequence thereof?*

A. “ Thus were both the Daughters of *Lot* with Child by their Father.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *God* ſometimes ſuffers Wickedneſs to proſper for a Time, but then it is for Ends quite different from thoſe, which the Perpetrators of that Wickedneſs propoſe to themſelves: Thus *Lot's* two Daughters might miſtake their Pregnancy, for an Evidence of the divine Approbation of their Contrivance; whereas it was the Deſign of *God* to make theſe Sons the laſting Monument of their Sin and Shame. Accordingly, we find the Poſterity of both of them to have been impious and hardened Sinners, and Idolaters; and ſo much deteſted by the *Almighty*, that he forbid, by an expreſs Law, the admitting them into the Congregation of the *Lord*, to the tenth Generation for ever. *Deut.* xxiii. 3.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That the firſt-born bare a Son, and called “ his Name *Moab*; the ſame is the Father of the “ *Moabites* unto this Day. And the younger ſhe “ alſo bare a Son, and called his Name *Ben-ammi*; “ the ſame is the Father of the Children of *Ammon* “ unto this Day.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That by the Names they gave their Children, the firſt of which ſignifies *of my Father*, and the latter *the Son of my People*, they had both learned of their wicked Neighbours in *Sodom*, to declare their Sin, and glory in their Shame; whereas they ought rather to have bitterly repented of it. We may obſerve alſo, that *Lot*, as if he abhorred the inceſtous Breed, would not take ſo much Notice of them as to give them a Name, but left that Care to their Mothers; whereas, otherwiſe, that was always done by the Father.

CHAP. XX.

Abraham *ſojourns in* Gerar; *equivocates concerning his Wife, and loſeth her*; God *warns* Abimelech *in a Dream*; *he expoſtulates with* God *about it, and proteſteth his Innocency*; God *receive his Excuſe, but commands him to reſtore her*; Abimelech *acquaints his Servants therewith, who are afraid*; Abimilech *expoſtulates with* Abraham *about his impoſing on him*; Abraham *excuſes it by her being both his Siſter and Wife*; Abimelech *reſtores her, with many Preſents; gives* Abraham *his Choice of the Land, to dwell where he pleaſes; and rebukes* Sarah; Abraham *prays for* Abimelech; *and God opens the Wombs of his Family, which he had faſt cloſed.*

Q. O*F what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And *Abraham* journeyed from thence towards “ the South Country, and dwelt between *Kadeſh* and *Shur*, and ſojourned in *Gerar*.”

Q. *What is ſuppoſed to be the Reaſon of* Abraham's *removing from the Plain of* Mamre, *where he had fixed his Abode ſo long, and, for what appears to the contrary, had been kindly uſed?*

A. Scripture is ſilent upon this Head; the moſt probable Reaſon ſeems to be the Noiſomneſs and Stench of the Country, where *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* lately ſtood; and the Neighbourhood of that filthy Lake, called the *Dead-Sea*, which aroſe out of their Ruins.

Q. *What was the firſt Thing that befel* Abraham, *after his ſojourning in* Gerar?

A. “ And *Abraham* ſaid, of *Sarah* his Wife, ſhe “ is my Siſter; and *Abimelech* King of *Gerar* ſent, “ and took *Sarah*.”

Q. *But is it not very ſtrange, that* Abraham, *with whom this Stratagem, to call it no worſe, had ſucceeded ſo ill once before, had it not been for* God's *immediate Interpoſition, ſhould have Recourſe to it a ſecond Time? Ought he not now to have rely'd on the divine Protection? And was not this an unreaſonable Diſtruſt of that Goodneſs he had before ſo eminently experienc'd?*

A. It was certainly a Failure in *Abraham*; which can be juſtify'd no other Way, than by conſidering that he was a Man, and, as ſuch, ſubject to human Frailty; from which no one is exempt; accordingly, we find *God* over-looked it, in Conſideration of his many Virtues.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of* Abimelech's *taking* Sarah?

A. “ *God* came to *Abimelech* in a Dream by Night, “ and ſaid to him, Behold, thou art but a dead Man, “ for the Woman which thou haſt taken: for ſhe is “ a Man's Wife.”

Q. *Wherein was* Abimelech's *Sin, ſince ſhe paſs'd only for* Abraham's *Siſter?*

A. As we before obſerved, in the Caſe of *Pharaoh*, it was in taking her by Violence; it not being to be ſuppoſed, that either *Abraham* or *Sarah* would have given Conſent thereto.

Q. *What ſaid* Abimelech *in anſwer to this Threat?*

A. “ But *Abimelech* had not come near her, and “ he ſaid, *Lord*, wilt thou ſlay alſo a righteous Na-“ tion?”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The abundant Goodneſs of *God*, in his Interpoſition this ſecond Time, in Defence of *Sarah*'s Chaſtity, and *Abraham*'s Honour; notwithſtanding his unwarrantable Diſtruſt thereof, after his former Experience of it in the like Diſtreſs: For, we find that *Abimelech*'s not having come near her, was entirely owing to his over-ruling Providence; which orders all Things for the beſt, to thoſe who truly ſerve him. As alſo the great Honour and Generoſity of *Abimelech*, though a *Heathen*; manifeſted in his being the *real Father of his People*; by interceeding for them, before he offers at any Apology for himſelf; and ſhewing greater Concern for their Safety, than for his own. How few are there, amongſt thoſe who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, who would act in ſo noble a Manner! Moſt of them ſeeming to look upon their Subjects, only as born to ſatiate their Avarice; the meaneſt and dirtieſt Vice whereof a Prince can be guilty!

Q. *Having thus interceeded for his People, how did* Abimelech *apologize for himſelf?*

A. “ Said he not unto me, She is my Siſter? And “ ſhe, even ſhe herſelf ſaid, He is my Brother: In “ the Integrity of my Heart, and Innocency of my “ Hands have I done this.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abimelech*, though a *Heathen*, had great and worthy Notions of the Deity; accordingly, he appeals to him, as the *Searcher of Hearts*, one of the moſt diſtinguiſhing Attributes of the *true God*, for the Purity of his Intentions.

Q. *How did the* Lord *receive this reaſonable Apology?*

A. He admits the Truth of it. “ And *God* ſaid “ unto him in a Dream, Yea, I know that thou didſt “ this in the Integrity of thy Heart; for I alſo with-“ held thee from ſinning againſt me; therefore “ ſuffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore re-“ ſtore the Man his Wife; for he is a Prophet, and “ he ſhall pray for thee, and thou ſhalt live: And “ if thou reſtore her not, know thou that thou ſhalt “ ſurely dye, thou and all that are thine.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That any Injury to our Neighbour, [illegible], indeed, to any of our Fellow-Creatures, is at the ſame Time a Sin againſt *God*, however we may imagine it; and yet much more ſo, if it is offered to a good Man: It is not ſaid, I with-held thee from ſinning againſt *him*, but againſt *me*; and that the only Way of having that Sin pardoned is; to make an Attonement for it, to the Party injured, by giving him Satisfaction; and to *God*, by a ſincere Repentance. Beſides, in this Caſe, it was, in a ſpecial Manner, a Sin againſt *God*; becauſe it would have rendered *Iſaac*'s Original, and, conſequently, *God*'s promiſe, doubtful.

Q. *What did* Abimelech *upon hearing this Anſwer of the* Lord's, *and that ſevere Penalty upon not obeying the divine Injunction?*

A. “ Therefore *Abimelech* roſe early in the Morn-“ ing, and called his Servants, and told all theſe “ Things in their Ears: And the Men were ſore “ afraid.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abimelech* roſe *early* in the Morning; he could not be eaſy till he had made an Attonement, by ready Obedience; and the firſt Thing he did was to call his Servants, that is his Head Miniſters, and tell them all that had happened: This he did, in all Probability, for fear any of them, through Ignorance, ſhould commit the like Offence: And his Miniſters, ſtruck with Terror, adviſed him to make immediate Reparation; to which he was before entirely diſpoſed.

Q. *What next did* Abimelech?

A. “ Then *Abimelech* called *Abraham*, and ſaid “ unto him, What haſt thou done unto us? and in “ what have I offended thee, that thou haſt brought on

“ me, and on my Kingdom, a great Sin? Thou
“ haſt done Deeds unto me, that ought not to be
“ done? And *Abimelech* ſaid unto *Abraham*, What
“ ſaweſt thou, that thou haſt done this Thing?

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The great Calmneſs and Moderation wherewith *Abimelech*, though, in Effect, the Party aggrieved, in having been ſo impoſed on, and a Sufferer in his Perſon thereby, expoſtulates with *Abraham*: An Example to make thoſe Chriſtians bluſh, who, upon conceiving themſelves in the leaſt injur'd, fly into the moſt violent and unjuſtifiable Paſſions.

Q. *What Anſwer did* Abraham *make, to this calm and rational Expoſtulation?*

A. “ And *Abraham* ſaid, Becauſe I thought, ſure-
“ ly the Fear of *God* is not in this Place; and they
“ will ſlay me for my Wife's Sake. And yet, indeed,
“ ſhe is my Siſter, ſhe is the Daughter of my Fa-
“ ther, but not the Daughter of my Mother: And
“ ſhe became my Wife. And it came to paſs, when
“ *God* cauſed me to wander from my Father's Houſe,
“ that I ſaid unto her, This is thy Kindneſs which
“ thou ſhalt ſhew unto me; at every Place whither
“ we ſhall come, ſay of me, He is my Brother.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Abraham*'s Equivocation, tho' not juſtifiable, in Strictneſs, was not without good Grounds: He was called out to wander in different Countries; among People of various Tempers, and Manners, but yet all *Pagans*; wherefore, conſidering *Sarah*'s uncommon Beauty, he judged this Equivocation neceſſary for his Security. We know, indeed, it may be objected, that as *Abraham* left his own Country, purely in Obedience to the divine Command, he ought to have relied entirely upon *God*, for his Protection. We allow it; but, notwithſtanding *Abraham* was a Man of the ſtrongeſt Faith, that ever was in the World, as is evident, from many Inſtances, yet we ſee his Faith was not always ſtrong alike; Providence ſo ordaining it, to ſhew, that all Fleſh is frail, and that the beſt of us ſtand hourly in need of the divine Aſſiſtance and Protection.

Q. *What did* Abimelech *after* Abraham's *making him this Anſwer?*

A. “ And *Abimelech* took Sheep, and Oxen, and
“ Men-ſervants, and Women-ſervants, and gave
“ them unto *Abraham*, and reſtored him *Sarah* his
“ Wife. And *Abimelech* ſaid, Behold my Land is
“ before thee, dwell where it pleaſeth thee.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abimelech* did not think bare Reſtitution a ſufficient Reparation; but alſo made him conſiderable Preſents, and gave him free Liberty to chooſe what Part of his Kingdom he pleaſed to dwell in. A noble Inſtance of Generoſity, and Greatneſs of Soul, in a Heathen!

Q. *And what ſaid* Abimelech *unto* Abraham?

A. “ And unto *Sarah* he ſaid, Behold, I have
“ given thy Brother a Thouſand Pieces of Silver:
“ Behold, he is to thee a Covering of the Eyes un-
“ to all that are with thee, and with all other, thus
“ ſhe was reproved.

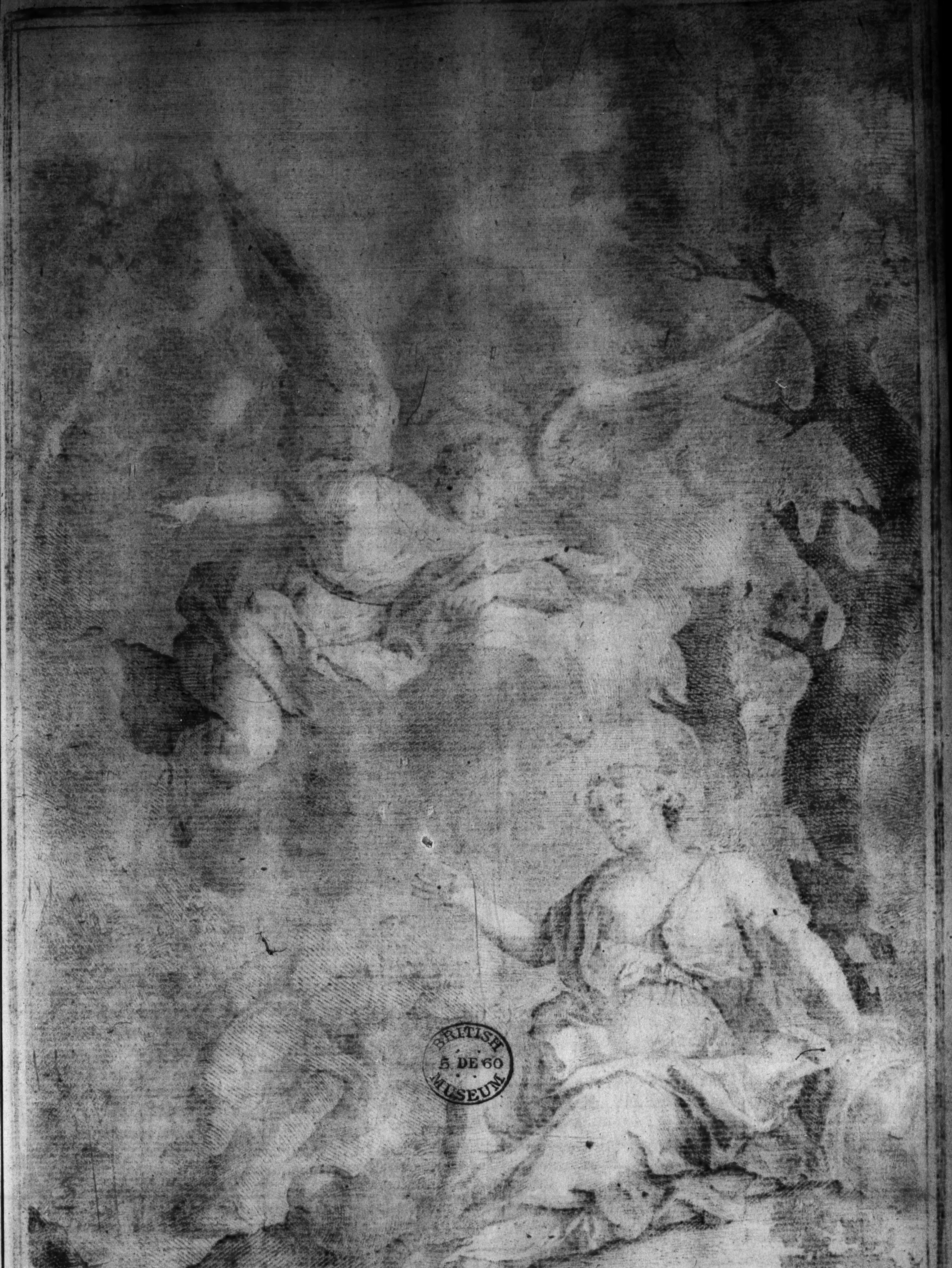
Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. Commentators are greatly divided thereupon; and, indeed it is one of the moſt obſcure Paſſages in all the Books of *Moſes*; the learned Mr. *Howel* will have it, That *our Tranſlators have committed a double Miſtake therein*; *for*, Firſt, *The Word which they have rendered* reproved, *never has that Meaning, but ſignifies to* ſearch *or* inquire *into a Thing till it is cleared, and put out of Doubt.* Secondly, *There was noo need then for a Reproof*; *for* Abraham *had already fully juſtified* Sarah, *and* Abimelech *had accepted of his Defence.* Thirdly, Abimelech *was ſo far from irritating* Abraham *or* Sarah, *by Reproaches, that, on the contrary, he endeavoured to gain their Friendſhip by a conſiderable Preſent: Nay, before* Abimelech *was ſatisfy'd, his Reproaches to* Abraham *were rather obliging Remonſtrances, than bitter Invectives. He therefore declares* Sarah *was fully juſtified, as the* Septuagint, *and* Chaldee *Paraphraſe have rendered it.*

But, according to Mr. *Howel*, *There is yet another Miſtake in that Tranſlation of this Text, for whereas that ſays of* Abraham *that* he was a Covering of the Eyes to Sarah, *the Original ſays this of the thouſand pieces of Silver; which were a publick Teſtimony that* Abimelech *rendered to her Virtue, as the Veils of the* Hebrew *Woman were the Symbols of their Modeſty, whereas the Harlots went barefaced.*” (Herein, however, we think the learned Mr. *Howel* ſeems to be greatly miſtaken, for it is expreſsly ſaid of *Thamar*, *Gen.* xxxviii. 18. that *Judah* took her to be a *Harlot*, *becauſe* ſhe had covered her Face; and again *ver.* 19. that *ſhe laid by her Veil from her, and put on the Garments of her Widow-hood*, which ſhews the Reverſe of this to be true, at that Time, however it may have been afterwards) *So that*, (*continues Mr.* Howel,) *this Preſent rather regarded* Sarah *than* Abraham, *to whom that Prince had already given Sheep and Oxen; Men-Servants, and Women-Servants; and reſtored him* Sarah *his Wife; making him alſo an offer of ſettling in any Part of his Country.* Abimelech's *Deſign then, by this Liberality was to juſtify* Sarah's *Virtue, not only to them who belonged to her, but alſo to all others; it being then uſual to give Preſents, to confirm the Truth of any Thing that might be called in Queſtion, as may be ſeen. Gen.* xxi. 30. 11.” We can't help thinking that this laſt Argument of Mr. *Howel*'s carries no little Weight in it; becauſe it is evident from the Place therein cited, that this *very Abimelech*, there receives *ſeven Ewe-Lambs*, which had been *ſet apart* for *that very Purpoſe*, and that by this *ſame* Patriarch *Abraham*.

On the other Hand, the beſt Criticks in *Hebrew* agree, that the *Relative* is of the *Maſculine* Gender, and conſequently muſt relate to *Abraham*, and not to *Silver*, which is the *Feminine* Gender. According to them, therefore, the Senſe ſeems to be, that *Abraham*, upon accepting the thouſand Shekels, ſhould cover her Eyes with a Veil, that is, let her appear without Fear, as his *Wife*, becauſe there ſhould be no Occaſion for being afraid, for, on the contrary, ſhe ſhould ſtill be honoured both by her own Domeſticks, and by all Strangers, notwithſtanding her having been under his, that is, (*Abimelech's*) Power.”

Having thus recited theſe two Opinions, which, with Submiſſion, we think, leave the Readers almoſt as much in the dark, as they find them; we are afraid it will be eſteemed a Preſumption in us, if we ſhould offer to their Conſideration, a third of our own, tho' we ſhall offer it merely as our Conjecture, and leave it entirely to them, to determine as they judge proper: We ſhall only add, that it ſeems to us, to ſolve all the Difficulties that occur, in this intricate Text. It is this: We think the Words *a Covering of the Eyes*, are to be taken only figuratively; and we imagine with Mr. *Howel*, the Thouſand Pieces of Silver; though given into the Hands of *Abraham*, to have been intended as an Acknowledgment to *Sarah* herſelf, for the Injury done her, in taking her away from her Husband; it being evi-



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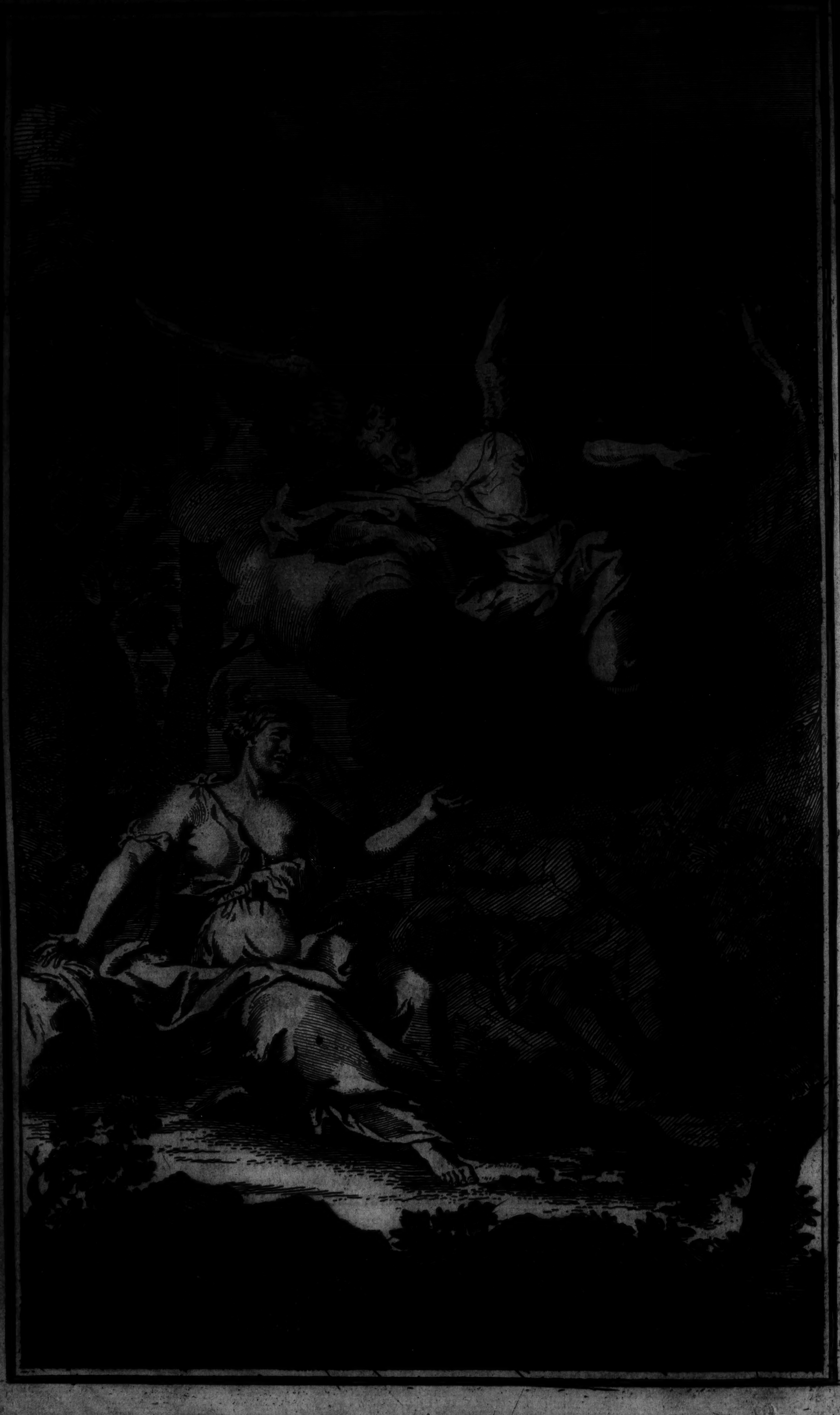


HAGAR and ISHMAEL.

dent, that *Abimelech* had before made conſiderable Preſents to *Abraham* himſelf. This being granted, the Senſe will be; Behold, I have given thy Brother a Thouſand Pieces of Silver, as a Teſtimony of the Homage I pay to thy Virtue, and to clear it of all Suſpicion, on account of thy having been under my Power; behold, he is to thee as effectual a Protection againſt any Inſults, either from any that are with thee, or any others whatſoever, as if thoſe uncommon Charms of thine, and thoſe bright Eyes which have been the original Cauſes of all this Miſchief, were to be hid from Mankind, under the thickeſt Veil. What confirms us in this Conjecture, is, that it is evident to us, that *Sarah* never uſed to wear a Veil; and the Reaſon why ſhe did not, is as apparent; becauſe it would have been highly diſhonourable to her Reputation; the Covering of the Face being in thoſe Days, the diſtinguiſhing Token of a Harlot, as we have already ſhewn, *Gen.* xxxviii. 15. In Effect, had *Sarah* worn a Veil, where would have been the Danger of her going either into *Egypt*, or any where elſe, ſince that would effectually have concealed her Beauty. We think it, therefore, highly improbable that ſhe did ſo; or even that it was cuſtomary in thoſe Days, for any Women of Reputation to wear them; for which Reaſon *Abraham* could not have Recourſe to this Method of concealing her Charms, unleſs he would have been willing to have had her paſs for a Harlot, which would have been highly diſhonourable to himſelf; and if he would have conſented to have ſecured his Life at the Expence of his Honour, which is not to be thought, it is not to be imagined that *Sarah* would have agreed to a Thing, ſo highly injurious to her own Reputation. The only Way, therefore, that remained, to ſecure at once his own Life, and his Wife's Honour, was to paſs for Brother and Siſter.

The only Difficulty that now remains, is in the Words, *Thus was ſhe reproved:* But if we conſider, that the Word which is here tranſlated *reproved*, is never uſed in that Senſe; but ſignifies to *ſearch* or *enquire* into a Thing till it is *cleared*, or *put out of Doubt*, as we think Mr. *Howel* has proved; and if we allow, that the Thouſand Pieces of Silver were intended for *Sarah*, as that Gentleman, in our Opinion, has likewiſe proved; if we conſider alſo, that it was then cuſtomary to give Preſents to confirm the Truth of any Thing, that had been called in Queſtion, as appears from the very next Chapter, *Verſe* 30. this Difficulty will likewiſe vaniſh; and the Senſe will be, *Thus was ſhe cleared*; or, *Thus was ſhe juſtified.* This Solution, we think, removes all Difficulties, and makes the Senſe plain and clear; we ſubmit, it however, to the Publick, who are at Liberty to determine as they pleaſe: We ſhall only add, that we ſhould not have been ſo prolix upon this intricate Text, but that all that has been hitherto ſaid of it, eſpecially in *Engliſh* Authors, renders it rather more perplexed, and obſcure than the Text itſelf.

Q. *What are we next informed of in this Chapter?*

A. "So *Abraham* prayed unto *God*; and *God* healed *Abimelech*, and his Wife, and Maid Servants; and they bare Children. For the *Lord* had faſt cloſed up all the Wombs of the Houſe of *Abimelech*, becauſe of *Sarah*, *Abraham*'s Wife."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That, notwithſtanding it is not mentioned any where before, it is evident, that *God* afflicted *Abimelech* himſelf with ſome Plague, or Diſtemper, as well as he is ſaid to have faſt cloſed up all the Wombs of his Houſe; otherwiſe it would not have been ſaid here, he healed him; for how could he be properly ſaid to *heal* him, if he did not labour under any Diſeaſe?

Q. *But by its being ſaid that* God *had faſt cloſed up all the Wombs of* Abimelech's *Family, it ſeems as if* Sarah *was ſome Time in his Houſe; for how could it otherwiſe have been known, that* God *had cloſed up all their Wombs?*

A. As it is certain all this happened ſome Time after *Iſaac*'s Conception, and alſo ſome Time before his Birth, we think it beſt to have Recourſe to a figurative Interpretation of this Text, which, its being ſaid that *God* healed *Abimelech*, will likewiſe countenance. For though, if theſe Women were all in general fruitful before, and bore Children every Year, there was a Poſſibility of judging, in four or five Months, by none of them having any Symptoms of Pregnancy in that Time, that their Wombs were miraculouſly cloſed; it is far from being probable, that either *God* would ſuffer *Sarah* to be ſo long with *Abimelech*, before he warned him, or that he being warned, and ſo ſeverely threatned, and actually afflicted in his own Perſon, would delay the Execution of the divine Command; nor yet, that upon his Obedience, *God* would delay removing his Puniſhment. If therefore, the *Lord* did any Thing that was adequate to cloſing up all their Wombs, he may be properly ſaid in the Text to have faſt cloſed them up: Now if *God*, by afflicting *Abimelech* and his Family with any Sore in their ſecret Parts, rendered them utterly unable to have any carnal Converſation with each other, he may be properly ſaid to have cloſed their Wombs; ſince he prevented their Conception as effectually, as if he had actually faſt cloſed up all their Wombs. And probably *Moſes* might have Recourſe to this Phraſe, becauſe of the Modeſty of the Expreſſion; about which that inſpired Writer, and indeed all the Writers of the Scripture, in general, are particularly cautious.

CHAP. XXI.

God *viſits* Sarah; *ſhe conceives, and bears a Son; he is named* Iſaac; *and circumciſed the eighth Day*; Sarah's *Joy thereat*; Iſhmael *mocks* Iſaac; Sarah *complains thereof to* Abraham, *and requires him and his Mother to be caſt out*; Abraham *is griev'd thereat*; God *commands it*; *the Reaſon*; *he promiſes to bleſs* Iſhmael *for* Abraham's *Sake*; Abraham *ſends* Hagar *and her Son away*; *they wander in the Wilderneſs, and are like to periſh for Want of Water*; God *calls to* Hagar; *he repeats his Promiſe of a Bleſſing to* Iſhmael; *opens her Eyes*; *ſhe ſees a Well*; *they dwell in the Wilderneſs, and* Iſhmael *is an Archer*; *he marries an* Egyptian; Abimelech *convinced that* God *was with* Abraham, *deſires to covenant with him*; Abraham *conſents*; Abraham *reproves* Abimelech *for his Servants taking a Well from him*; *he pleads Ignorance thereof*; *they covenant together*; Abraham *plants a Grove*; *and there calls on the Name of the everlaſting* God; *he ſojourns among the* Philiſtines *many Days.*

Q. WHAT *are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. "That the *Lord* viſited *Sarah* as he had ſaid; and the *Lord* did unto *Sarah* as he had ſpoken."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That our *God* is the *God* of *Truth*, and punctual in all his Promiſes; we may alſo obſerve his infinite Goodneſs, that he would not revoke it, notwithwithſtanding he might juſtly have done ſo, in Return for *Sarah*'s Diſtruſt.

Q. *In what did the* Lord *unto* Sarah *as he had ſpoken?*

A. “ *Sarah* conceived, and bare *Abraham* a Son, “ in his old Age, at the ſet Time of which *God* had “ ſpoken to him. And *Abraham* called the Name “ of his Son that was born unto him, whom *Sarah* “ bare to him, *Iſaac*. And *Abraham* circumciſed “ his Son *Iſaac*, being eight Days old, as *God* had “ commanded him.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That as *God* was punctual in the Performance of his Promiſes, *Abraham* was likewiſe punctual in his Obedience to the divine Commands: a punctual Obedience to *God*'s Commands, is the only Way to obtain farther Bleſſings.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And *Abraham* was an hundred Years old, “ when his Son *Iſaac* was born unto him. And “ *Sarah* ſaid, *God* hath made me to laugh, ſo that “ all that hear will laugh with me.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That this Laughter of *Sarah*'s was very different from her former Laughter; that proceeded from Diſtruſt, this from a holy Joy and Thankfulneſs; *Sarah* ſeems alſo here to remember this, and acknowledge her former Sin, in making uſe of the Word *Laugh* to expreſs her infinite Joy.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Sarah *thereupon?*

A. “ And ſhe ſaid, Who would have ſaid unto “ *Abraham*, that *Sarah* ſhould have given Children “ Suck? For I have born him a Son in his old “ Age.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Sarah*, though Miſtreſs of great Poſſeſſions, and vaſt Numbers of Slaves, who were capable of ſuckling *Iſaac*, did not think that either her Greatneſs, or her advanc'd Age, which undoubtedly made her not ſo ſtrong as if ſhe had been in her Prime, were ſufficient to excuſe her from performing that moſt neceſſary Duty of a Mother, the ſuckling of her own Child: An uſeful Leſſon to Perſons of Quality now-a-days; who may learn from hence, that their Greatneſs will be no Excuſe for them at the laſt Day, for the Omiſſion of that Duty, which chiefly endears their Children to them; and from the Neglect of which, we may, in a great Meaſure, account for the Undutifulneſs of Children to their Mother, in this Age: *God*, probably, permitting the one, as a juſt Return for the Omiſſion of the other.

Q. *What's the next Thing we are told concerning* Iſaac?

A. “ That the Child grew, and was weaned: And “ *Abraham* made a great Feaſt the ſame Day that “ *Iſaac* was weaned.” Which Words needno Explanation.

Q. *How did* Iſhmael, *who was now well grown, like to ſee ſo much Joy for the weaning of his younger Brother; eſpecially as no ſuch Doings had been made at his Weaning, as his Mother, no Doubt, took Care to inform him?*

A. He made a Deriſion of young *Iſaac*. “ And “ *Sarah* ſaw the Son of *Hagar* the *Egyptian*, which “ ſhe had born unto *Abraham*, mocking.

Q. *How did* Sarah, *who could not brook it in the Mother, bear it in the Son?*

A. Much in the ſame Manner; She reſented it to the higheſt Degree; “ Wherefore ſhe ſaid unto *Abraham*, caſt out this Bond-woman, and her Son; “ for the Son of this Bond-woman, ſhall not be “ Heir with my Son, even with *Iſaac*.

Q. *But is not this puſhing Things to great Extremities, for ſo ſmall an Offence, as one Boy's mocking another?*

A. Therefore it is thought, that the Word which is here rendered *Mocking*, ſhould have been otherwiſe tranſlated, and rendered *Beating*; eſpecially as the Apoſtle *Paul* calls it *Perſecution*, Gal. iv. 29.

Q. *How did* Abraham *approve of his Wife's Demand?*

A. Not at all; “ And the Thing was very grie- “ vous in *Abraham*'s Sight, becauſe of his Son.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the good Patriarch had a Fatherly Affection for his Son by *Hagar*, as well as for that by *Sarah*; and was not to be eaſily perſuaded, to turn him out of Doors, to ſatisfy the Paſſion of an enraged Woman; notwithſtanding ſhe was not ſo incenſed without juſt Reaſon, as we ſhall find immediately.

Q. *How was the Matter compromiſed then, between* Abraham *and his Wife* Sarah?

A. The *Almighty* graciouſly interpoſed, to make it eaſy to *Abraham*; “ And *God* ſaid unto *Abra-* “ *ham*, Let it not be grievous in thy Sight, becauſe “ of the Lad, and becauſe of thy Bond-woman; in “ all that *Sarah* hath ſaid unto thee, hearken to her “ Voice: For in *Iſaac* ſhall thy Seed be called. And “ alſo of the Son of the Bond-woman will I make a “ Nation, becauſe he is thy Seed.”

Q. *Did* Abraham *heſitate about it, after he had received this gracious Promiſe?*

A. No; he immediately complied therewith; “ And *Abraham* roſe up early in the Morning, and “ took Bread, and a Bottle of Water, and gave it “ unto *Hagar* (putting it on her Shoulder) and the “ Child, and ſent her away: And ſhe departed, and “ wandered in the Wilderneſs of *Beer-ſheba*.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. He who before delayed, and ſcrupled doing it, in Compliance with *Sarah*'s Paſſion, does it inſtantly, without Heſitation, when once he underſtands it to be the Divine Will; whereby he, at the ſame Time, gave an Inſtance both of his Piety and his Prudence; his Prudence, in not giving Way to the Suggeſtions of an incenſed Woman; and his Piety, in yielding a ready and chearful Obedience to *God*.

Q. *But was not the ſending away* Hagar, *and her Son, to ſeek their Fortunes, with nothing but a Loaf and a Bottle of Water, an Action of the greateſt Barbarity, in a Man of ſuch Poſſeſſions as* Abraham?

A. In all Probability, this was either done in Compliance with a particular Command from *God*, though it is not ſo expreſſed by *Moſes*; partly, to puniſh *Abraham*'s irregular Marriage with her; and partly, to correct and tame the haughty and rugged Temper of the Bond-woman, and her Son; or elſe *Abraham* gave this only for the preſent, and intended to ſend more after her, to a Place appointed by him, as undoubtedly he did, but ſhe might loſe her Way: And the Reaſon of his not giving her a ſufficient Proviſion along with her, ſeems to have been, for fear of diſobliging *Sarah*, in caſe he had then done what he thought neceſſary, in that Reſpect. It is the more reaſonable to believe this, not only from the natural Humanity and Liberality of *Abraham*'s Temper, whereof we have many Inſtances; but alſo, becauſe we ſee, but a little before, that the bare parting with *Iſhmael*, upon any Terms, was very grievous to him; much more then, muſt we imagine it would be ſo, to ſend him away ſo very deſtitute of all manner of Neceſſaries.

Q. *What became of* Hagar *and her Son in the Wilderneſs?*

A. “ And the Water was ſpent in the Bottle, and “ ſhe caſt the Child under one of the *Shrubs*. And “ ſhe went, and ſat herſelf down over-againſt him, “ a good Way off, as it were a Bow-ſhot: For ſhe “ ſaid, Let me not ſee the Death of the Child. And “ ſhe ſat over againſt him, and lift up her Voice, “ and wept.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, ſince* Iſhmael, *by this Time, muſt be near eighteen?*

A. Not as if ſhe carried him in her Arms, or upon her Shoulders; but he being weak and faint, and, no Doubt, greatly dejected in Mind, upon the Proſpect of his deſolate and diſtreſſed Condition, ſhe had been forced to ſupport, and lead him by the Hand; and now, deſpairing of his Life, ſhe laid him down under one of the Shrubs, and withdrew to ſome Diſtance from him, that ſhe might not be an Eye-witneſs of his Death.

Q. *And what became of the poor abandoned Lad?*

A. “ And *God* heard the Voice of the Lad: And “ the Angel of *God* called to *Hagar* out of Heaven, “ and ſaid unto her, what aileth thee *Hagar?* Fear “ not, for *God* hath heard the Voice of the Lad “ where he is. Ariſe, lift up the Lad, and hold “ him in thy Hand: For I will make him a great “ Nation.”

Q. *By this it ſeems as if it was the Lad who lift up his Voice and wept; whereas, in the other Verſe, this is ſaid of* Hagar, *how will you reconcile this?*

A. No Doubt the Boy, being left in this deplorable and forlorn Condition, wept as well as his Mother; there is no Doubt, likewiſe, as he had been carefully educated, in the Worſhip of the true *God*, by *Abraham*, that he cried out to him in this Diſtreſs; though it is a Queſtion whether his Tears proceeded from his Senſe of his Folly, and a ſincere Repentance, or were only extorted from him, by his preſent Diſtreſs: Be that as it will, *God*, for *Abraham*'s Sake, looked upon him with an Eye of Pity, and Compaſſion; heard his Prayers; and immediately relieved both him, and his Mother.

Q. *How did* God *relieve them?*

A. Firſt, by this comfortable Promiſe, which doubtleſs, gave them new Life, and inſpired them with freſh Vigour, and afterwards by opening her Eyes, and ſhewing her a Well of Water. “ And *God* “ opened her Eyes, and ſhe ſaw a Well of Water: “ And ſhe went and filled the Bottle with Water, “ and gave the Lad Drink. And *God* was with the “ Lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the Wilderneſs, “ and became an Archer. And he dwelt in the “ Wilderneſs of *Paran*: And his Mother took him a “ Wife out of the Land of *Egypt*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That it is very probable, that *Abram* did not ſuffer this his eldeſt Son, to remain long deſtitute of his Aſſiſtance; but that, on the contrary, he found him out, and afforded him ſuch Supplies, as enabled him to ſettle comfortably, wherever the Conveniency of the Soil, the Climate, and the Water, incited him to fix his Habitation. We may obſerve alſo, from his Mother's taking him a Wife out of *Egypt*, how natural it is for every one to love his own Country; not but there might be another Reaſon for *Hagar*'s chooſing an *Egyptian* for him, rather than a *Canaanite*; which is; that ſhe might have learnt, whilſt in *Abraham*'s Family, the accurſed State, and future Deſtruction of that People. We may likewiſe obſerve from hence, both the Obligation that lies upon Parents, and the Right inveſted in them, to diſpoſe of their Children in Marriage in a convenient Time; that is, unleſs the Children themſelves are not inclined to a married State; in which Caſe, we think, they ought not to oblige them to it by Compulſion.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And it came to paſs at that Time, that *Abi-* “ *melech*, and *Phichol*, the chief Captain of his Hoſt, “ ſpake unto *Abraham*, ſaying, *God* is with thee in “ all that thou doeſt. Now therefore ſwear unto me “ here by *God*, that thou wilt not deal falſly with “ me, nor with my Son, nor with my Son's Son: But “ according to the Kindneſs that I have done unto “ thee, thou ſhalt do unto me, and to the Land “ wherein thou haſt ſojourned.”

Q. *What is obſervable from hence?*

A. That the divine Protection attended *Abraham* ſo viſibly, that *Abimelech* thought it adviſable to court his Friendſhip, and to make a League with him, for the Security of himſelf, his Son, and Grandſon; fearing leſt, otherwiſe, as *Abraham*, or his Poſterity grew more powerful, they might attempt ſomething in their Prejudice, and ſupplant them in the Government.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Abraham *to this Propoſal?*

A. “ And *Abraham* ſaid, I will ſwear.”

Q. *How could* Abraham *lawfully do this, when* Canaan *was given to him by* God, *and to his Seed after him for ever?*

A. Neither *Abraham*, nor his Seed after him, had any actual Right to the Poſſeſſion of that Land till after three hundred and fifty Years after this Tranſaction; in which Time he might reaſonably ſuppoſe both *Abimelech*, his Son, and Grandſon, would be dead, and this Covenant was to extend no farther: It is evident, therefore, that *Abraham* did not hereby give away any of that Right conferred on him by *God*: Beſides, we find *David* entering into Covenant by Oath with *Jonathan*, ſome time after the *Lord* had promiſed him the Kingdom; he took Care, however, that he did not vacate by this Covenant, any of the Right to the Crown, transferred to him by *God*.

Q. *What farther paſſed between* Abraham *and* Abimelech?

A. “ And *Abraham* reproved *Abimelech*, becauſe “ of a Well of Water, which *Abimelech*'s Servants “ had violently taken away.”

Q. *Why did* Abraham *enter into any Arguments upon this Head, when he had juſt before conſented to make a League, or Covenant of Friendſhip with him?*

A. That no Bone of Contention might remain between them, or their Servants; but that the Foundation of true Friendſhip might be firmly laid; and the Peace be inviolably obſerved between them for the future; which, had not this Occaſion of Quarrel been firſt removed, would have been very precarious.

Q. *What ſaid* Abimelech *to this?*

A. “ And *Abimelech* ſaid, I wot not who hath done “ this Thing: neither didſt thou tell me, neither “ yet heard I of it but to-day.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That it is apparent, *Abimelech* was in no Fault; accordingly he tacitly rebukes *Abraham* for ſmothering this Grudge ſo long in his Mind; and not complaining immediately of this Injury, whereby to have had Redreſs; which he now gives him to underſtand he ſhould readily have obtained.

Q. *What could* Abraham *object to ſo juſt and reaſonable an Excuſe?*

A. Nothing; accordingly he acquieſced therewith; and indeed, we may obſerve, that what is here called *reproving*, ſeems only to have been a civil Expoſtulation, in Order to ſet Things upon a right Footing; that no Diſpute might ariſe between them, upon that Head, for the future.

Q. *What then did* Abraham *proceed to do afterwards?*

A. "And *Abraham* took Sheep and Oxen, and "gave them to *Abimelech*: And both of them made "a Covenant."

Q. *How came* Abraham *to take Sheep and Oxen, and give them to* Abimelech, *was this neceſſary to the making a Covenant?*

A. This was done, partly, as an Acknowledgement of his former Favour and Friendſhip; partly, as an Aſſurance of his own ſincere Friendſhip, both at preſent, and for the future; and of his Acquieſcence in his Anſwer about the Well; and partly, for Sacrifice, and for the uſual Rate in making Covenants; which was; that the Perſons covenanting might paſs between the Pieces of the ſlain Beaſts.

Q. *What farther did* Abraham?

A. "And *Abraham* ſet ſeven Ewe-Lambs of the "Flock by themſelves."

Q. *What was* Abraham's *Reaſon for ſo doing?*

A. It follows in the next Verſes: "And *Abimelech* ſaid unto *Abraham*, what mean theſe ſeven "Ewe-Lambs, which thou haſt ſet by themſelves? "And he ſaid, For theſe ſeven Ewe-Lambs ſhalt "thou take of my Hand, that they may be a Witneſs "unto me, that I have digged this Well. Wherefore, he called that place *Beerſheba*; (that is the "*Well of the Oath*:) Becauſe there they ſware both "of them."

Q. *What farther are we informed of concerning* Abraham *and* Abimelech?

A. "Thus they made a Covenant at *Beerſheba*: "Then *Abimelech* roſe up, and *Phichol* the chief "Captain of his Hoſt, and they returned into the "Land of the *Philiſtines*."

Q. *This needs no Explanation, proceed, and let us hear what follows?*

A. "And *Abraham* planted a Grove in *Beerſheba*, "and called there on the Name of the *Lord*, the "everlaſting *God*."

Q. *What has been obſerved upon this Head?*

A. Elwood has obſerved thereupon, how apt the Cuſtoms of the Places they live in, and the People they converſe with, are to ſteal, and prevail even upon good Men: *Abraham* had been drawn in juſt before, by a *Heathen* King, to ſwear; and from the Practice of the *Heathens*, he now plants a Grove, wherein to perform his Devotions. For that it was the Cuſtom of the *Heathens* to plant Groves, and therein to ſet up their Idols and Altars, will appear from the Command afterwards given to the *Iſraelites*, to deſtroy their Altars, break down their Images, and cut down their Groves; *Exod.* xxxiv. 13. and to burn their Groves with Fire, *Deut.* xii. 3. as alſo not to plant any Groves for that purpoſe themſelves; *Deut.* xvi. 21. And when the Kings of *Iſrael* departed from *God*, they ſet up Groves; and it was one of *Ahab*'s provoking Sins that he made a Grove; 1. *Kings* xvi. 33. But (*continues he*) in Mitigation hereof, though *Abraham* herein followed the Cuſtom of the *Philiſtines*, amongſt whom he lived, yet the Object of his Worſhip was *Jehovah*, the everlaſting and true God. Thus far Mr. *Elwood*, and we would have allowed of his Arguments, had *Abraham* lived after the Promulgation of the Law; but, as the Caſe then ſtood, it was an indifferent Point; unleſs it could be prov'd, that, any Traditional Law forbidding it, had been tranſmitted down, from Father to Son, amongſt the Worſhipers of the true *God*: But this is not to be ſuppos'd; becauſe, had any ſuch Prohibition been known, ſo excellent a Man as *Abraham*, would not have contravened it: Nay, it is even doubtful, whether this Cuſtom had as yet prevailed amongſt the *Heathens* themſelves; tho' it muſt be acknowledged that it did afterwards, to a great Degree; which occaſioned the abovementioned Prohibition.

Q. *What farther is ſaid in this Chapter, concerning* Abraham?

A. Only that "*Abraham* ſojourned in the *Philiſtine*'s Land many Days," which needs no Explanation.

CHAP. XXII.

God *tempts* Abraham *to ſacrifice* Iſaac; Abraham *readily obeys*; Iſaac *queſtions him about it*; Abraham's *Anſwer*; Iſaac *himſelf carries the Wood upon which he is to be offer'd*; Abraham *builds an Altar*; *lays the Wood in Order*; *finds his Son* Iſaac; *and lays him upon the Altar*; *He takes the Knife, and ſtretches forth his Hand to ſlay him*; *the Angel of the* Lord *calls him, and ſtops him*; *a Ram is caught in a Thicket*; *and offered inſtead of* Iſaac; *the Place named* Jehovah-jireh; *the Angel calleth* Abraham *a ſecond Time*; *the Promiſe to* Abraham *and his Seed confirmed by Oath*; Abraham *returns to* Beerſheba; *the Poſterity of his Brother* Nahor.

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And it came to paſs after theſe Things, "that *God* did tempt *Abraham*, and ſaid unto him, "*Abraham*. And he ſaid, Behold, here I am."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

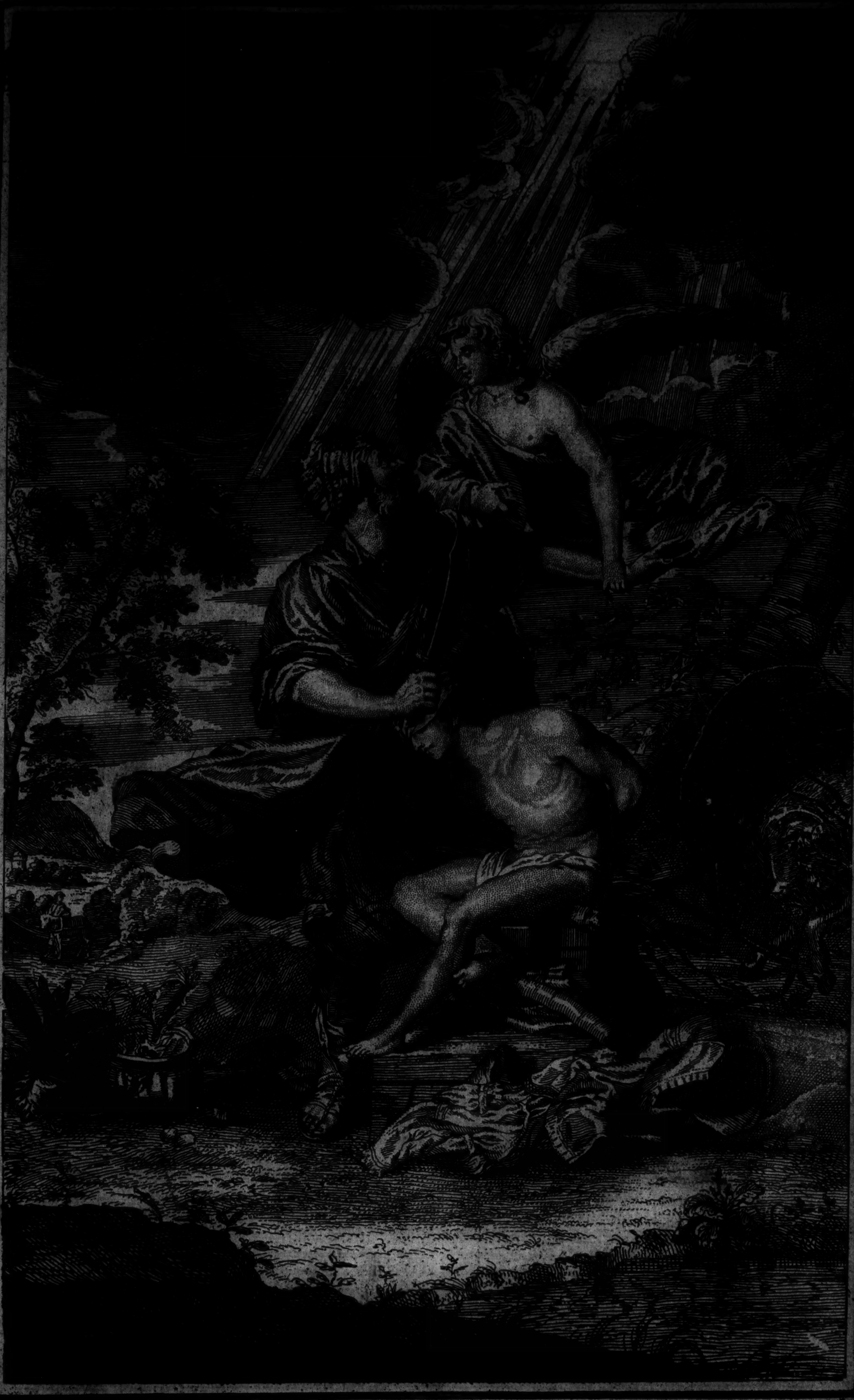
A. That after the Accompliſhment of the Promiſes made to *Abraham*, and ſpecially of that main Promiſe concerning the *Bleſſed Seed*, when he ſeemed to be in the moſt proſperous and ſecure Condition, then *God* thought proper to put his Faith and Obedience to the ſevereſt Teſt; and in this Senſe alone it is that *God* is ſaid to have tempted *Abraham*, by putting his Reſignation to his Will to ſo ſevere a Proof; for *God tempts no Man*. Jam. i. 13. that is, he does not *intice* them to *Sin*, as the Devil does, which it would be Blaſphemy to think: In the Senſe beforementioned, then it was, that *God* tempted *Abraham*; that is, he try'd the Sincerity and Strength of his Faith; the Univerſality or Conſtancy of his Obedience; and this for *God*'s great Honour; *Abraham*'s great Glory and Comfort; and the Churches Benefit in all ſucceeding Ages. *Abraham*'s anſwering, *Here I am*, denoted his Attention to hear, and Readineſs to execute whatever he ſhould be commanded.

Q. *What ſaid the* Lord *to* Abraham, *after his expreſſing his Attention, and Readineſs to obey?*

A. "And he ſaid, Take now thy Son, thine only "Son *Iſaac*, whom thou loveſt, and get thee into the "Land of *Moriah*; and offer him there for a Burnt "Offering, upon one of the Mountains which I will "tell thee of."

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That there is not a Word there but might pierce a Heart of Stone, much more ſo tender a Father as



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ABRAHAM offering his ſon ISAAC.

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Abraham. Take now; that is, without any Delay, I allow thee no Time for Reflexion or Conſideration; *thy Son*, not a Beaſt, as is uſual; nor an Enemy, which would ſeem more excuſable; nor a Stranger, which would not have been quite ſo difficult, tho' that would have been a hard Task for one ſo human to all Strangers; nor a dear Servant, a Friend, or Familiar; any of which, would have been infinitely ſhocking to *Abraham*'s tender and compaſſionate Nature; but *thine only Son*, not by Birth, for he had another, *Iſhmael*, but thy only Son by *Sarah*, thy firſt, legitimate, and beſt beloved Wife; who only has the Right of Succeſſion to thy Poſſeſſions, and to the Covenant and Promiſes; and this ſuch a Son as *Iſaac*, once Matter of great Joy, and Laughter, but now the Cauſe of inexpreſſible Sorrow; the Son of the Promiſe, and of ſuch great Hopes, ſuch pregnant Virtue and Piety as appears from this Story; *whom thou loveſt* peculiarly, and ſuperlatively; even as thy own Soul; *and get thee into the Land of* Moriah, a Place at a great Diſtance; and to which thou ſhalt go but leiſurely; that thou mayſt have thy Mind all that while fixed upon the bloody Act, which other Men, even the worſt and moſt barbarous of them, can ſcarce think of without the utmoſt Horror, and ſo mayeſt offer him, in a Manner, ten thouſand times, before thou giveſt the fatal Blow; *and offer him there*, with thy own Hands, thus cruelly taking away the Life, which thou haſt in ſome Meaſure, given him; *for a Burnt-offering*; by the Law of the Burnt-offering then known to *Abraham*, and afterward publiſhed to all *Iſrael*, his Throat was to be cut; his Body quartered; and his Bowels taken out, as if he had been ſome notorious Traytor, and vile Malefactor, and Miſcreant; and after all this, he was to be burnt to Aſhes, that, if poſſible, there might not be an Atom left of him: And this muſt be done, *upon one of the Mountains, which I will tell thee of*; not in a Corner, as if it were a Work of Darkneſs, and thou wert either aſhamed or afraid to own it; but in a publick and open Place, in the View of Heaven and Earth, *God*, Angels, and Men. What a Task was here impoſed on a Father, and a tender Father to go through! And yet theſe were not all the Difficulties *Abraham* had to encounter; let us but repreſent to ourſelves, how many Execrations, and what Blaſphemy this horrid and unnatural Act, was likely to occaſion, againſt the Name and Worſhip of the true *God!* What Stings and Tortures *Abraham* muſt have endured, not only from the ſecret Reproaches of his own Conſcience; but from the Suggeſtions of the *Tempter*, who would not have failed repreſenting it to him, as an Action abſolutely unpardonable; and by which he had deſerved, and would certainly be condemned to, everlaſting Damnation! Add to this, what perpetual Clamours he muſt have endur'd from his Wife! What Reprehenſions from his Friends and Allies! And what a pernicious and dangerous Example it would have been to all ſucceeding Generations! All theſe Things being maturely conſidered, it muſt be acknowledged, it is no Wonder, that the unparallel'd Faith, which could ſurmount all theſe, and many more Difficulties, and could readily, and chearfully reſt upon the Faithfulneſs of *God*, in the Diſcharge of ſo heart-breaking a Duty, ſhould be ſo honoured by the *Almighty*, and ſo celebrated by all Mankind; even by the *Heathens* themſelves, who have adopted this Story into their Fables.

Q. *Having received the above Command, what did* Abraham?

A. "And *Abraham* roſe up early in the Morning, "and ſaddled his Aſs, and took two of his young "Men with him, and *Iſaac* his Son; and clave the "Wood for a Burnt-offering, and roſe up, and "went unto the Place of which *God* had told him."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. With what Expedition *Abraham* goes about this heart-breaking Command; as if its being the Will of *God* was ſufficient to make the moſt painful Duty a Pleaſure to him: How few ſuch Servants has *God* now in the World!

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Abraham?

A. "That on the third Day *Abraham* lift up his "Eyes, and ſaw the Place afar off."

Q. *Why, Mount* Moriah *is not three Days Journey from* Beer-ſheba; *how comes it then, that* Abraham, *who was ſo expeditious in ſetting out, was ſo ſlow in purſuing his Journey?*

A. Several Reaſons might be given for this, and ſome of them directly contradictory to each other; the Scripture being wholly ſilent upon this Head, for which Reaſon, all we offer can be only conjectural: The learned Mr. *Poole*, from whom we have taken moſt of our Obſervations above, ſeems to think, that it was either by the immediate Direction of *God*, or, at leaſt, by his over-ruling Providence, that *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience might thereby be expoſed to the ſeverer Trials, in having ſo long to reflect on what he was going about: On the contrary, if *Abraham* was left to his own Option, what reaſonable Time to take, we ſee no Abſurdity in imagining, as excellent a Man as he was, and however ſtrong his Faith might be, that he was for putting the evil Day off as long as poſſible; hoping, perhaps, on the Way, to receive a Countermand, to that ſevere Injunction: We muſt own, we can't help thinking this the more probable Conjecture of the two. But excluſive of both theſe Conjectures, it muſt be conſidered, that *Abraham* rode upon an Aſs, which, in itſelf, is a dull and ſlow Creature; and that *Abraham* went no faſter than the reſt of his Company; who, for ought that appears to the contrary, were on Foot; and that the Proviſion they carried along with them, both for their own, and the Aſſes Subſiſtence, with the Wood for the Sacrifice muſt needs retard them conſiderably.

Q. *Being come within a ſmall Diſtance of the Place, what did* Abraham?

A. "And *Abraham* ſaid unto his young Men, A"bide you here with the Aſs, and I and the Lad, "will go yonder and worſhip, and come again to "you."

Q. *What was* Abraham's *Reaſon for ſo doing? And how could he ſay this, when he knew, or at leaſt, thought he was going to ſacrifice* Iſaac *there?*

A. Probably he bid the young Men ſtay there, for fear they ſhould attempt to hinder him in the Execution of his Deſign; and, as to his ſaying they ſhould come again, undoubtedly he believed it; for, though he did not know that *God* would preſerve him, by preventing his being ſacrificed, he knew he could raiſe him again from the dead, and reſtore him to him; and he firmly believed he would do ſo, for his Promiſe Sake, of the bleſſed Seed which was to proceed from him, as appears from what the Apoſtle ſays, *Heb.* xi. 19.

Q. *What did* Abraham, *after having thus ſaid to the young Men?*

A. “ And *Abraham* took the Wood of the Burnt-offering, and laid it upon *Iſaac* his Son; and he “ took the Fire in his Hand, and a Knife: And “ they went both of them together.”

Q. *What is obſervable therein?*

A. That *Iſaac* was hereby made an eminent Type of *Chriſt*, who carried the Croſs upon which he was crucified.

Q. *What ſaid* Iſaac, *as they were on their Way thither?*”

A. “ And *Iſaac* ſpake unto *Abraham* his Father, “ and ſaid, My Father: And he ſaid, Here am I, “ my Son. And he ſaid, Behold the Fire and the “ Wood, but where is the Lamb for the Burnt-of-“ fering?

Q. *What is obſervable therein?*

A. That this innocent Queſtion of *Iſaac*'s to his Father, muſt neceſſarily wound *Abraham* to the Soul, and make him reflect within himſelf, how unnatural in a Father, the Action was, about which he was going; but, nevertheleſs, that it did not alter his Reſolution: As alſo, that it is viſible, by his calling him, *my Son*, that he had not diveſted himſelf of Humanity, nor caſt off that Fatherly Affection he before bore him; that it is evident his Intention, therefore, did not proceed from any natural or barbarous Diſpoſition, or any Decay of his Love to his Son, but from a higher Cauſe, and a nobler Motive; even the declared Will of *God*, to which all Things muſt give Way.

Q. *What Anſwer did* Abraham *make his Son?*

A. “ And *Abraham* ſaid, My Son, *God* will pro-“ vide himſelf a Lamb for a Burnt-offering: So they “ went both of them together.”

Q. *How could* Abraham *ſay this, when he thought* Iſaac *was to have been ſacrificed?*

A. He might ſpeak it either prophetically, and mean, that *God* would provide a Lamb ſome Way or other, though he knew not how, for his Wiſdom and Power were infinite; or myſtically and typically as *Chriſt*, whoſe Type *Iſaac* was, is called a *Lamb*.

Q. *Of what farther are we informed concerning this remarkable Tranſaction?*

A. “ And they came to the Place which *God* “ had told him of, and *Abraham* built an Altar “ there, and laid the Wood in Order; and bound “ *Iſaac* his Son, and laid him on the Altar, on the “ Wood. And *Abraham* ſtretched forth his Hand, “ and took the Knife, to ſlay his Son.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. Two Things are very remarkable therein; the great Readineſs of *Abraham* to comply with ſo ſhocking and heart-breaking an Injunction, only becauſe it was the divine Command; and the abſolute Reſignation and perfect Obedience of *Iſaac*, which is as aſtoniſhing; ſince he was then arrived at Man's Eſtate, and was in the Flower of his Age; and conſequently of Strength ſufficient to have made effectual Reſiſtance, and rendered all his Father's Reſolutions to no Purpoſe. But, on the contrary, *Iſaac* willingly ſuffered himſelf to be bound; Providence ſo over-ruling in him, the innate Love of Life, which is imprinted in every one, that he might thereby be a more exact and eminent Type of the bleſſed *Jeſus*, who ſubmitted willingly to Death, for the Redemption of Mankind. It is, therefore, highly reaſonable to judge, that *Abraham* having, during the whole Journey, prepared *Iſaac* for ſuch a Work, by general, but pertinent Diſcourſes, particularly inſtructed him upon the Mount, in the plain and peremptory Command of *God*; at the ſame Time repreſenting to him, the abſolute Neceſſity thereto; the glorious Reward of his Obedience; and the diſmal Conſequences of his Diſobedience; together with the Power and Faithfulneſs of the *Almighty*, either to prevent the fatal Blow, or to reſtore him his Life with infinite Advantage, and Intereſt. Upon theſe Reaſons, or others to the ſame Purpoſe, it is to be preſumed, he readily laid himſelf down, at his Father's Feet, and reſigned himſelf up to the divine Will.

Q. *What followed upon this Submiſſion of* Iſaac's, *and this Readineſs of* Abraham *to fulfil the divine Command?*

A. The Angel of the *Lord* interpoſed, to ſave *Iſaac* from the impending Stroke: “ And the An-“ gel of the *Lord* called unto him out of Heaven, “ and ſaid, *Abraham, Abraham.* And he ſaid, Here “ am I.” He repeats his Name, to make *Abraham* hold his Hand, as knowing him to be very expeditious in every Thing that had Relation to *God*'s Service.

Q. *What farther ſaid the Angel, when he found* Abraham *hearkened to him with Attention?*

A. “ And he ſaid, Lay not thine Hand upon the “ Lad, neither do thou any Thing unto him: For “ I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt “ not with-held thy Son, thine only Son from me.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That hereby the *Lord* evidently declared, that he did not approve of that abominable Cuſtom of the Heathens, the offering human Sacrifices; and at the ſame Time ſhew'd his infinite Mercy, in accepting of the Will for the Deed; and made it appear that his Command was only meant as a Trial of *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience; for an Example to all future Ages, that their Reſignation to the divine Will, muſt be unlimited and without Reſerve: For otherwiſe, *God* knew the Sincerity and Reſolvedneſs of *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience before, without this Evidence, and from all Eternity foreſaw this Fact, with all its Circumſtances.

Q. *What did* Abraham *upon hearing this gracious and welcome Prohibition?*

A. “ And *Abraham* lifted up his Eyes, and looked, “ and behold, behind him a Ram caught in a Thic-“ ket, by his Horns: And *Abraham* went and took the “ Ram, and offered him up for a Burnt-offering, “ in the Stead of his Son.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abraham* by the Spirit of Prophecy, ſpoke the Truth without knowing it, when he ſaid the *Lord* would provide himſelf a Lamb for a Burnt-offering; for, notwithſtanding it is here called a Ram, on account of its Horns, it might be but a Lamb for its Age.

Q. *How did* Abraham *name the Place where he received this ſignal Mercy?*

A. “ And *Abraham* called the Name of that Place “ *Jehovah-jireh*: As it is ſaid to this Day. In the “ Mount of the *Lord* it ſhall be ſeen.

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That this Inſtance of *Abraham*'s exalted and exemplary Faith, and *Iſaac*'s Deliverance, conſequent thereupon, made ſo deep an Impreſſion upon the *Jews*, that the ſaying *Jehovah-jireh*, the Name he gave to the Place, the genuine Meaning whereof, is, *God will provide*, grew into a Proverb amongſt them; and was in Uſe at the Time when *Moſes* wrote this, to expreſs the wonderful Power of *God*, to deliver in the greateſt Extremities, when all probable Means for Relief were wanting, ſuch as firmly relied upon him.

Q. *How did* God *reward this extraordinary Inſtance of* Abraham's *exalted Faith?*

A. “And the Angel of the *Lord* called unto *Abraham* the ſecond Time, and ſaid, By my ſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the *Lord*; for becauſe, thou haſt done this Thing, and haſt not with-held thy Son, thine only Son: That in Bleſſing, I will bleſs thee, and in Multiplying, I will multiply thy Seed as the Stars of the Heaven, and as the Sand which is upon the Sea-ſhore; and thy Seed ſhall poſſeſs the Gate of their Enemies; and in thy Seed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed: becauſe thou haſt obeyed my Voice.

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That notwithſtanding *God* had before promiſed *Abraham* all that is contained herein, yet, as a Teſtimony how acceptable this heroical Inſtance of *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience was to him, he now thinks fit to confirm it to him by an Oath; and becauſe he can ſwear by none greater, he ſwears by Himſelf.

Q. *What did* Abraham, *after his receiving this gracious Confirmation of the* Promiſes?

A. “So *Abraham* returned unto his young Men, and they roſe up, and went together to *Beer-ſheba*, and *Abraham* dwelt at *Beer-ſheba*.”

Q. *This requires no Explanation; of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And it came to paſs, after theſe Things, that it was told *Abraham*, Behold *Milcah*, ſhe hath alſo born Children unto thy Brother, *Nahor*. *Huz*, his firſt-born, and *Buz*, his Brother, and *Kemuel*, the Father of *Aram*. And *Cheſed*, and *Hazo*, and *Pildaſh*, and *Jidlaph* and *Bethuel*. And *Bethuel* begat *Rebekah*: Theſe eight *Milcah* did bare to *Nahor*, *Abraham*'s Brother. And his Concubine, whoſe Name was *Reumah*, ſhe bare alſo *Tebah*, and *Gaham*, and *Thahaſh*, and *Maachah*.”

Q. *What is the Meaning of inſerting the Genealogy of* Nahor's *Children?*

A. Purely on Account of *Rebekah*, who was afterwards married to *Iſaac*.

CHAP. XXIII.

Sarah's *Age, and Death*; Abraham *mourns for her*; *He deſires a Burying-place of the Sons of* Heth; *they offer him the Choice of their Sepulchres*; *he deſires to purchaſe the Cave of* Machpelah, *with the Field of* Ephron; Ephron *offers to give it him*; Abraham *declines his Offer, but deſires to buy it*; *he purchaſes it for four hundred Shekels of Silver*; *the Field made ſure to* Abraham, *for a Poſſeſſion, before Witneſſes*; *he buries* Sarah *therein.*

Q. WHAT *are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. “And *Sarah* was an hundred and ſeven and twenty Years old: Theſe were the Years of the Life of *Sarah*?

Q. *What is obſervable therein?*

A. That this is an Honour peculiarly conferred on *Sarah* the Mother of the Faithful, to have the Years of her Life numbered in Scripture; the like not being done by any other, unleſs it be *Judith* in the *Apocrypha*.

Q. *This numbering the Years of* Sarah's *Life, implies that ſhe died at that Age; where did ſhe die?*

A. “And *Sarah* died in *Kirjath-arba*, the ſame is *Hebron* in the Land of *Canaan*, and *Abraham* came to mourn for *Sarah*, and to weep for her.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That it has been the laudable Cuſtom of all Ages, and Nations, to manifeſt their Senſe of *God*'s Hand being upon them, and of their own Loſs.

Q. *Having mourned ſome Time for her Death, what next did* Abraham?

A. “And *Abraham* ſtood up from before his Dead, and ſpake unto the Sons of *Heth*, ſaying, I am a Stranger, and a Sojourner with you: Give me a Poſſeſſion of a Burying-Place with you, that I may bury my Dead out of my Sight?

A. What may be obſerved from thence?

A. That even thoſe who, when living, were deareſt to us, and moſt delightful to our Eyes, when once Death has laid his Hands upon them, become a Torment to our Sight, inſomuch, that we are glad to get rid of them.

Q. *What Anſwer made the Children of* Heth *to* Abraham's *Requeſt?*

A. “And the Children of *Heth* anſwered *Abraham*, ſaying unto him, Hear us, my *Lord*; thou art a mighty Prince amongſt us; in the Choice of our Sepulchres bury thy Dead: None of us ſhall with-hold from thee his Sepulchre, but that thou mayeſt bury thy Dead.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The great Humanity of the Children of *Heth*, though they were *Heathens*, and of the Offspring of the curſed *Canaan*, in offering *Abraham* his Choice of their Sepulchres; whereas, amongſt us, who call ourſelves *Chriſtians*, there is not a Grave to be had, without paying for it before-hand, and that in many Places, unreaſonably too. We can't underſtand how Mr. *Howel* can call this Offer of the Children of *Heth*'s, anſwering with great *Coarſeneſs*.

Q. *What ſaid* Abraham, *in Return to the Civility of the Children of* Heth?

A. “And *Abraham* ſtood up, and bowed himſelf to the People of the Land, even to the Children of *Heth*. And he communed with them, ſaying, If it be your Mind that I ſhould bury my Dead out of my Sight, hear me, and intreat for me to *Ephron* the Son of *Zoar*: That he may give me the Cave of *Machpelah*, which he hath, which is in the End of his Field; for as much Money as it is worth he ſhall give it me, for a Poſſeſſion of a Burying-Place amongſt you.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That, notwithſtanding *God* had given *Abraham* a Right to the Land of *Canaan*, he did not think that ſufficient to authorize his taking Poſſeſſion of the leaſt Part thereof at the preſent; neither would he accept of ſo much as a Burying-Place, without giving the full Worth thereof, and having it made ſure to him, according to the Form then in Uſe amongſt that People: So cautious was he of giving any Umbrage, or bring any Scandal upon the true Religion. An Example, well worthy the Imitation of many *Chriſtians*, who ſcruple no Injuſtice, to get Poſſeſſion of Eſtates, to which they have no manner of Title!

Q. *What ſaid* Ephron *to this Propoſal of* Abraham's?

A. “And *Ephron* dwelt amongſt the Children of *Heth*. And *Ephron* the *Hittite* anſwered *Abraham*, in the Audience of the Children of *Heth*, even of all that went in at the Gates of the City, ſaying, Nay, my *Lord*, hear me; the Field give I thee, and the Cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the

“ Preſence of the Sons of my People give I it thee: “ Bury thy Dead.”

Q. *What is obſervable therein?*

A. The great Civility and Generoſity of this *Ephron*, who by his calling the People his People, ſeems to have been one of the Chief of them.

Q. *What anſwered* Abraham *to this Offer?*

A. “ And *Abraham* bowed down himſelf before “ the People of the Land. And he ſpake unto “ *Ephron* in the Audience of the People of the Land, “ ſaying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee hear “ me: I will give thee Money for the Field; take “ it of me, and I will bury my Dead there.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Abraham*, not willing to be outdone in Generoſity by *Ephron*, or to have too great Obligations to a *Pagan*, would not accept of the Field, and Cave, without giving him a valuable Conſideration for it; quite contrary to the Temper of many now-a-days, who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, and yet would not ſcruple poſſeſſing themſelves of other Men's Eſtates, without any Conſideration at all.

Q. *What ſaid* Ephron *then to* Abraham?

A. “ And *Ephron* anſwered *Abraham*, ſaying unto him, my *Lord*, hearken unto me: The Land “ is worth four hundred ſhekels of Silver; what is “ that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore thy “ Dead.”

Q. *What may the Value of thoſe four hundred ſhekels of Silver be?*

A. Biſhop *Cumberland* computes it at forty-ſeven Pounds, two Shillings and Eleven-pence; and Dean *Prideaux* at juſt ſixty Pounds; but the general Way of Computation is, that the *common Shekel* of the *Jews* was worth about Fifteen-pence of our Money, and the *Shekel of the Sanctuary*, half a Crown; conſequently, according to the one, the Value of this Land muſt be twenty-five Pounds; and according to the other, fifty.

Q. *What did* Abraham, *upon* Ephron's *ſo ſaying?*

A. “ And *Abraham* hearkened unto *Ephron*, and “ *Abraham* weighed to *Ephron* the Silver, which he “ had named in the Audience of the Sons of *Heth*, “ four hundred Shekels of Silver, current Money “ with the Merchant. And the Field of *Ephron*, “ which was in *Machpelah*, which was before *Mamre*, “ the Field and the Cave which was therein, and all “ the Trees that were in the Field, that were in all “ the Borders round about, were made ſure; unto “ *Abraham* for a Poſeſſion, in the Preſence of the “ Children of *Heth*, before all that went in at the “ Gate of the City.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The great Exactneſs, Solemnity, and Form, that was uſed in making Conveyances, even in thoſe early Days; in Effect, it is a Queſtion, whether our Method now-a-days is near ſo good; for it was ſcarce poſſible for a Man to have the Front to deny an Act ſo publickly done; or, if he had, it was impoſſible for the Falſhood not to be detected, when ſuch Numbers were Witneſſes to the Sale thereof. We may obſerve alſo how exactly the Limits, Borders and Trees of the Field were ſpecify'd; as likewiſe, that the Money paid for it was weighed out; which was certainly the exacteſt way in the World to avoid any Fraud or Impoſition; and is what we do with Gold at this very Day; if we ſuſpect it to be too light.

Q. *Having thus got Poſſeſſion of the Cave and Field, what did* Abraham?

A. “ And after this, *Abraham* buried *Sarah* his “ Wife, in the Cave of the Field of *Machpelah*, before *Mamre*: The ſame is *Hebron*, in the Land of “ *Canaan*: And the Field, and the Cave that is “ therein, were made ſure unto *Abraham*, for a Poſſeſſion of a Burying-place, by the Sons of *Heth*.”

Q. *What was* Abraham's *Reaſon for being ſo ſcrupulous, about the Place where he buried his Dead?*

A. As *God* had called him out from amongſt his Idolatrous Kindred, and from his Father's Houſe; and had given him the *Covenant of Circumciſion*; whereby to diſtinguiſh him and his Seed from all other People, wherefore, it was not lawful for him to mix with any of the other Nations, which did not worſhip the true *God*, he was careful not ſo much as to bury his Dead promiſcuouſly amongſt theirs; thereby to teſtify his utter Abhorrence of their Cuſtoms, Manners, and Religion.

CHAP. XXIV.

Abraham's *Age and Proſperity; He makes his oldeſt Servant ſwear, not to take his Son* Iſaac *a Wife from amongſt the* Canaanites, *but to take one from amongſt his own Kindred; The Servant enquires into the Condition of the Oath;* Abraham *ſatisfies him therein, and expreſſes his Faith in the Promiſe; the Servant ſwears; He goes to the City of* Nahor; *prays for his Succeſs; receives an immediate and ſatisfactory Anſwer; He wonders at the Goodneſs of Providence; makes a Preſent to* Rebekah; *enquires of what Family ſhe is; Her Anſwer; He bleſſeth the* Lord *for it; She acquaints her Friends with his Arrival; they provide for him, and invite him in; He goes in, but will not eat, till he has told his Errand; He informs them of his Buſineſs, and God's Providence to him; They conſent to his Propoſal; He praiſes God; makes Preſents to them all; deſires to return to his Maſter;* Rebekah *agreeing to it, they conſent, and bleſs her; She departs, and meets* Iſaac *meditating* in the *Field; He Marries her.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Abraham* was old, and well ſtricken in “ Age, and the *Lord* had bleſſed *Abraham* in all “ Things.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience did not go unrewarded, even in this World; for the *Lord* had bleſſed him, with all manner of earthly Bleſſings: Let us endeavour to imitate *Abraham* in the one, and we may hope to be made like unto him in the other.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed concerning* Abraham?

A. “ And *Abraham* ſaid unto his eldeſt Servant of “ his Houſe, that ruled over all that he had, Put, “ I pray thee, thy Hand under my Thigh: And I “ I will make thee ſwear by the *Lord* the *God* of Heaven, and the *God* of the Earth, that thou ſhalt not “ take a Wife unto my Son, of the Daughters of the “ *Canaanites*, amongſt whom I dwell: But thou ſhalt “ go unto my Country, and to my Kindred, and “ take a Wife unto my Son *Iſaac*.”

Q. *What may be the Meaning of* Abraham's *making his Servant put this Hand under his Thigh? And why might not* Iſaac *as well intermarry with the* Canaanites, *as with Nahor's Family, ſince they were all equally Idolaters?*

A. As to the firſt; it was a Ceremony uſed in ſwearing, about the Meaning of which, Commentators are divided in their Opinions; ſome think it was as a Token of Subjection; others imagine it to have had an Alluſion to the *Covenant of Circumciſion*, the Sign whereof they bore about that Part of their Body; and others again, with more Probability than either, judge it to have had a Reference to the *promiſed Seed*, that is, *Chriſt*, who was to come out of *Abraham's Loins* or *Thigh*; which is a modeſt Expreſſion of the ſacred *Hiſtorian's*; for, ſays one, *per Femur ſive Coxam, partes etiam genitales quæ inter femora ſunt, tacite intelliguntur*: As to the ſecond; notwithſtanding *Abraham's* Brother's Children were undoubtedly Idolaters, as we ſhall ſhew hereafter, in its proper Place, it was much better for *Iſaac* to intermarry with them than with the *Canaanites*; becauſe the latter were not only Idolaters, but they were under *God's* peculiar Curſe, and were devoted by his Decree, to Extirpation, and utter Deſtruction: And this Sentence was to be executed upon them in due Time, by *Abraham's* Poſterity.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Abraham's *Servant to this his Deſire?*

A. "And the Servant ſaid unto him, Peradventure the Woman will not be willing to follow me into this Land; muſt I needs bring thy Son again unto the Land from whence thou cameſt?"

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The Prudence and Piety of this Servant, in enquiring diligently into the Nature and Condition of the Oath, before he would take it, though at the Deſire of his Maſter.

Q. *What Reply made* Abraham *thereunto?*

A. "And *Abraham* ſaid unto him, Beware thou, that thou bring not my Son thither again. The *Lord God* of Heaven, which took me from my Father's Houſe, and from the Land of my Kindred, and which ſpake unto me, and that ſware unto me, ſaying, Unto thy Seed will I give this Land; He ſhall ſend his Angel before thee, and thou ſhalt take a Wife unto my Son from thence. And if the Woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou ſhalt be clear from this my Oath: Only bring not my Son thither again."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. Abraham's great Care that his Son ſhould not be corrupted by his idolatrous Relations; and alſo his firm Faith, and Reliance upon *God*.

Q. *What did the Servant, after having received this Anſwer; and Caution?*

A. "And the Servant put his Hand under the Thigh of *Abraham*, his Maſter, and ſware to him concerning that Matter. And the Servant took ten Camels, of the Camels of his Maſter, and departed (for all the Goods of his Maſter, were in his Hand:) and he aroſe, and went to *Meſopotamia*, unto the City of *Nahor*. And he made his Camels to kneel down without the City, by a Well of Water, at the Time of the Evening, even the Time that Women go out to draw Water.

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The ready and punctual Obedience of the good Servant, aſſoon as he had learned, that the Conditions of the Oath were no more than he might eaſily perform; as alſo his great Fidelity, which is evident, from the entire Confidence repoſed in him by his *Lord*, and from his whole Behaviour, on this Occaſion.

Q. *What was the firſt Thing he did, after his being come to the Well?*

A. He implored the divine Bleſſing upon what he was going about; "And he ſaid, O *Lord God* of my Maſter *Abraham*, I pray thee ſend me good ſpeed this Day, and ſhew Kindneſs unto my Maſter *Abraham*: Behold, I ſtand here by the Well of Water, and the Daughters of the Men of the City come out to draw Water: And let it come to paſs, that the Damſel to whom I ſhall ſay, Let down thy Pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and ſhe ſhall ſay, Drink, and I will give thy Camels Drink alſo: Let the ſame be ſhe, that thou haſt appointed for thy Servant *Iſaac*; and thereby ſhall I know, that thou haſt ſhewed Kindneſs unto my Maſter."

Q. *What may we learn from thence?*

A. That we ought to implore the divine Bleſſing, before we undertake any Thing, if we are deſirous of proſpering therein.

Q. *Did the Servant receive a gracious Anſwer to this Prayer?*

A. Yes, and that immediately; "And it came to paſs, before he had done ſpeaking, that behold, *Rebekah* came out, who was born to *Bethuel* the Son of *Milcah*, the Wife of *Nahor*, *Abraham's* Brother, with her Pitcher upon her Shoulder."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That Humility, and Induſtry, were the Ornaments of the fair Sex in that Age; not Dreſs, Pomp, and Idleneſs, as at preſent.

Q. *What farther are we told concerning* Rebekah?

A. "And the Damſel was very fair to look upon, a Virgin, neither had any Man known her: And ſhe went down to the Well, and filled her Pitcher, and came up, and the Servant ran to meet her, and ſaid, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little Water of thy Pitcher. And ſhe ſaid, Drink, my Lord: And ſhe haſted, and let down her Pitcher upon her Hand, and gave him Drink. And when ſhe had done giving him Drink, ſhe ſaid, I will draw Water for thy Camels alſo, until they have done drinking, and ſhe haſted and emptied her Pitcher into the Trough, and ran again unto the Well, to draw Water; and drew for all his Camels."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. How punctual and exact an Anſwer the Servant had to his Prayer; as alſo the great Courteſy, and Humility of *Rebekah*.

Q. *How was the Servant affected by this obliging Behaviour of* Rebekah's?

A. "And the Man wondering at her held his Peace, to wit, whether the *Lord* had made his Journey proſperous or not!

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. He admired in Silence the gracious Goodneſs of *God*, and the exact Conformity between *Rebekah's* courteous Behaviour, and what he had deſired of the *Almighty* in his Prayer.

Q. *What farther paſſed between* Rebekah, *and the Servant?*

A. "And it came to paſs, as the Camels had done drinking, that the Man took a Golden Earring, of half a Shekel Weight, and two Bracelets for her Hands, of ten Shekels Weight of Gold; and ſaid, Whoſe Daughter art thou, tell me, I pray thee: Is there Room in thy Father's Houſe for us to lodge in?

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the Servant, after having diligently obſerved her, and finding in her all the Accompliſhments he could wiſh for, in her whom he was to chooſe as a Wife for his Maſter's Son, proceeds next to enquire who ſhe is; and hearing ſhe is of the very Family from whence he was to take *Iſaac's* deſtin'd Spouſe, he makes her ſuitable Preſents: For we are not to imagine, notwithſtanding the making her theſe

"Preſence of the Sons of my People give I it thee: Bury thy Dead."

Q. *What is obſervable therein?*

A. The great Civility and Generoſity of this *Ephron*, who by his calling the People his People, ſeems to have been one of the Chief of them.

Q. *What anſwered* Abraham *to this Offer?*

A. "And *Abraham* bowed down himſelf before the People of the Land. And he ſpake unto *Ephron* in the Audience of the People of the Land, ſaying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee hear me: I will give thee Money for the Field; take it of me, and I will bury my Dead there."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Abraham*, not willing to be outdone in Generoſity by *Ephron*, or to have too great Obligations to a *Pagan*, would not accept of the Field, and Cave, without giving him a valuable Conſideration for it; quite contrary to the Temper of many now-a-days, who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, and yet would not ſcruple poſſeſſing themſelves of other Men's Eſtates, without any Conſideration at all.

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A. "And *Ephron* anſwered *Abraham*, ſaying unto him, my *Lord*, hearken unto me: The Land is worth four hundred ſhekels of Silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? Bury therefore thy Dead."

Q. *What may the Value of thoſe four hundred ſhekels of Silver be?*

A. Biſhop *Cumberland* computes it at forty-ſeven Pounds, two Shillings and Eleven-pence; and Dean *Prideaux* at juſt ſixty Pounds; but the general Way of Computation is, that the *common Shekel* of the *Jews* was worth about Fifteen-pence of our Money, and the *Shekel of the Sanctuary*, half a Crown; conſequently, according to the one, the Value of this Land muſt be twenty-five Pounds; and according to the other, fifty.

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A. "And *Abraham* hearkened unto *Ephron*, and *Abraham* weighed to *Ephron* the Silver, which he had named in the Audience of the Sons of *Heth*, four hundred Shekels of Silver, current Money with the Merchant. And the Field of *Ephron*, which was in *Machpelah*, which was before *Mamre*, the Field and the Cave which was therein, and all the Trees that were in the Field, that were in all the Borders round about, were made ſure; unto *Abraham* for a Poſſeſſion, in the Preſence of the Children of *Heth*, before all that went in at the Gate of the City."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The great Exactneſs, Solemnity, and Form, that was uſed in making Conveyances, even in thoſe early Days; in Effect, it is a Queſtion, whether our Method now-a-days is near ſo good; for it was ſcarce poſſible for a Man to have the Front to deny an Act ſo publickly done; or, if he had, it was impoſſible for the Falſhood not to be detected, when ſuch Numbers were Witneſſes to the Sale thereof. We may obſerve alſo how exactly the Limits, Borders and Trees of the Field were ſpecify'd; as likewiſe, that the Money paid for it was weighed out; which was certainly the exacteſt way in the World to avoid any Fraud or Impoſition; and is what we do with Gold at this very Day; if we ſuſpect it to be too light.

Q. *Having thus got Poſſeſſion of the Cave and Field, what did* Abraham?

A. "And after this, *Abraham* buried *Sarah* his Wife, in the Cave of the Field of *Machpelah*, before *Mamre*: The ſame is *Hebron*, in the Land of *Canaan*: And the Field, and the Cave that is therein, were made ſure unto *Abraham*, for a Poſſeſſion of a Burying-place, by the Sons of *Heth*."

Q. *What was* Abraham's *Reaſon for being ſo ſcrupulous, about the Place where he buried his Dead?*

A. As *God* had called him out from amongſt his Idolatrous Kindred, and from his Father's Houſe; and had given him the *Covenant of Circumciſion*; whereby to diſtinguiſh him and his Seed from all other People, wherefore, it was not lawful for him to mix with any of the other Nations, which did not worſhip the true *God*, he was careful not ſo much as to bury his Dead promiſcuouſly amongſt theirs; thereby to teſtify his utter Abhorrence of their Cuſtoms, Manners, and Religion.

Chap. XXIV.

Abraham's *Age and Proſperity; He makes his oldeſt Servant ſwear, not to take his Son* Iſaac *a Wife from amongſt the* Canaanites, *but to take one from amongſt his own Kindred; The Servant enquires into the Condition of the Oath;* Abraham *ſatisfies him therein, and expreſſes his Faith in the Promiſe; the Servant ſwears; He goes to the City of* Nahor; *prays for his Succeſs; receives an immediate and ſatisfactory Anſwer; He wonders at the Goodneſs of Providence; makes a Preſent to* Rebekah; *enquires of what Family ſhe is; Her Anſwer; He bleſſeth the* Lord *for it; She acquaints her Friends with his Arrival; they provide for him, and invite him in; He goes in, but will not eat, till he has told his Errand; He informs them of his Buſineſs, and God's Providence to him; They conſent to his Propoſal; He praiſes God; makes Preſents to them all; deſires to return to his Maſter;* Rebekah *agreeing to it, they conſent, and bleſs her; She departs, and meets* Iſaac *meditating* in the *Field; He Marries her.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. "That *Abraham* was old, and well ſtricken in Age, and the *Lord* had bleſſed *Abraham* in all Things."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience did not go unrewarded, even in this World; for the *Lord* had bleſſed him, with all manner of earthly Bleſſings: Let us endeavour to imitate *Abraham* in the one, and we may hope to be made like unto him in the other.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed concerning* Abraham?

A. "And *Abraham* ſaid unto his eldeſt Servant of his Houſe, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy Hand under my Thigh: And I I will make thee ſwear by the *Lord* the *God* of Heaven, and the *God* of the Earth, that thou ſhalt not take a Wife unto my Son, of the Daughters of the *Canaanites*, amongſt whom I dwell: But thou ſhalt go unto my Country, and to my Kindred, and take a Wife unto my Son *Iſaac*."

Q. *What may be the Meaning of* Abraham's *making his Servant put this Hand under his Thigh? And why might not* Iſaac *as well intermarry with the* Canaanites, *as with* Nahor's *Family, ſince they were all equally Idolaters?*

A. As to the firſt; it was a Ceremony uſed in ſwearing, about the Meaning of which, Commentators are divided in their Opinions; ſome think it was as a Token of Subjection; others imagine it to have had an Alluſion to the *Covenant of Circumciſion*, the Sign whereof they bore about that Part of their Body; and others again, with more Probability than either, judge it to have had a Reference to the *promiſed Seed*, that is, *Chriſt*, who was to come out of *Abraham's Loins* or *Thigh*; which is a modeſt Expreſſion of the ſacred *Hiſtorian's*; for, ſays one, *per Femur ſive Coxam, partes etiam genitales quæ inter femora ſunt, tacite intelliguntur*: As to the ſecond; notwithſtanding *Abraham's* Brother's Children were undoubtedly Idolaters, as we ſhall ſhew hereafter, in its proper Place, it was much better for *Iſaac* to intermarry with them, than with the *Canaanites*; becauſe the latter were not only Idolaters, but they were under *God's* peculiar Curſe, and were devoted by his Decree, to Extirpation, and utter Deſtruction: And this Sentence was to be executed upon them in due Time, by *Abraham's* Poſterity.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Abraham's *Servant to this his Deſire?*

A. "And the Servant ſaid unto him, Peradventure the Woman will not be willing to follow me "into this Land; muſt I needs bring thy Son again "unto the Land from whence thou cameſt?

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The Prudence and Piety of this Servant, in enquiring diligently into the Nature and Condition of the Oath, before he would take it, though at the Deſire of his Maſter.

Q. *What Reply made* Abraham *thereunto?*

A. "And *Abraham* ſaid unto him, Beware thou, "that thou bring not my Son thither again. The "*Lord God* of Heaven, which took me from my Father's Houſe, and from the Land of my Kindred, "and which ſpake unto me, and that ſware unto "me, ſaying, Unto thy Seed will I give this Land; "He ſhall ſend his Angel before thee, and thou ſhalt "take a Wife unto my Son from thence. And if "the Woman will not be willing to follow thee, then "thou ſhalt be clear from this my Oath: Only "bring not my Son thither again."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. Abraham's great Care that his Son ſhould not be corrupted by his idolatrous Relations; and alſo his firm Faith, and Reliance upon *God*.

Q. *What did the Servant, after having received this Anſwer; and Caution?*

A. "And the Servant put his Hand under the "Thigh of *Abraham*, his Maſter, and ſware to him "concerning that Matter. And the Servant took "ten Camels, of the Camels of his Maſter, and departed (for all the Goods of his Maſter, were in "his Hand:) and he aroſe, and went to *Meſopotamia*, unto the City of *Nahor*. And he made his "Camels to kneel down without the City, by a Well "of Water, at the Time of the Evening, even the "Time that Women go out to draw Water.

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The ready and punctual Obedience of the good Servant, aſſoon as he had learned, that the Conditions of the Oath were no more than he might eaſily perform; as alſo his great Fidelity, which is evident, from the entire Confidence repoſed in him by his *Lord*, and from his whole Behaviour, on this Occaſion.

Q. *What was the firſt Thing he did, after his being come to the Well?*

A. He implored the divine Bleſſing upon what he was going about; "And he ſaid, O *Lord God* of "my Maſter *Abraham*, I pray thee ſend me good "ſpeed this Day, and ſhew Kindneſs unto my Maſter *Abraham*: Behold, I ſtand here by the Well "of Water, and the Daughters of the Men of the "City come out to draw Water: And let it come to "paſs, that the Damſel to whom I ſhall ſay, Let "down thy Pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink, "and ſhe ſhall ſay, Drink, and I will give thy "Camels Drink alſo: Let the ſame be ſhe, that thou "haſt appointed for thy Servant *Iſaac*; and thereby ſhall I know, that thou haſt ſhewed Kindneſs "unto my Maſter."

Q. *What may we learn from thence?*

A. That we ought to implore the divine Bleſſing, before we undertake any Thing, if we are deſirous of proſpering therein.

Q. *Did the Servant receive a gracious Anſwer to this Prayer?*

A. Yes, and that immediately; "And it came to "paſs, before he had done ſpeaking, that behold, "*Rebekah* came out, who was born to *Bethuel* the "Son of *Milcah*, the Wife of *Nahor*, *Abraham's* "Brother, with her Pitcher upon her Shoulder."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That Humility, and Induſtry, were the Ornaments of the fair Sex in that Age; not Dreſs, Pomp, and Idleneſs, as at preſent.

Q. *What farther are we told concerning* Rebekah?

A. "And the Damſel was very fair to look upon, "a Virgin, neither had any Man known her: And "ſhe went down to the Well, and filled her Pitcher, and came up, and the Servant ran to meet "her, and ſaid, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little "Water of thy Pitcher. And ſhe ſaid, Drink, my "Lord: And ſhe haſted, and let down her Pitcher upon her Hand, and gave him Drink. And "when ſhe had done giving him Drink, ſhe ſaid, "I will draw Water for thy Camels alſo, until they "have done drinking, and ſhe haſted and emptied "her Pitcher into the Trough, and ran again unto the Well, to draw Water; and drew for all "his Camels."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. How punctual and exact an Anſwer the Servant had to his Prayer; as alſo the great Courteſy and Humility of *Rebekah*.

Q. *How was the Servant affected by this obliging Behaviour of* Rebekah's?

A. "And the Man wondering at her held his "Peace, to wit, whether the *Lord* had made his "Journey proſperous or not!

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. He admired in Silence the gracious Goodneſs of *God*, and the exact Conformity between *Rebekah's* courteous Behaviour, and what he had deſired of the *Almighty* in his Prayer.

Q. *What farther paſſed between* Rebekah, *and the Servant?*

A. "And it came to paſs, as the Camels had "done drinking, that the Man took a Golden Earring, of half a Shekel Weight, and two Bracelets "for her Hands, of ten Shekels Weight of Gold; "and ſaid, Whoſe Daughter art thou, tell me, I "pray thee: Is there Room in thy Father's Houſe "for us to lodge in?

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the Servant, after having diligently obſerved her, and finding in her all the Accompliſhments he could wiſh for, in her whom he was to chooſe as a Wife for his Maſter's Son, proceeds next to enquire who ſhe is; and hearing ſhe is of the very Family from whence he was to take *Iſaac's* deſtin'd Spouſe, he makes her ſuitable Preſents: For we are not to imagine, notwithſtanding the making her theſe

Preſents is mentioned before his enquiring who ſhe is, but that the Enquiry was firſt made, as we find, *Verſe* 47. the Value of theſe Things being about Nineteen Pounds; a Sum, in thoſe Days, equal to Two hundred now.

Q. *What anſwered the Maiden to the Servant, upon her receiving theſe handſome Preſents?*

A. Suitably to her former Affability and Courteſy, and to his great Aſtoniſhment, “ She ſaid unto him, “ I am the Daughter of *Bethuel*, the Son of *Milcah*, “ which ſhe bare unto *Nahor*. She ſaid, moreover, “ unto him, We have both Straw and Provender “ enough, and Room to lodge in.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The wonderful Providence, and gracious Kindneſs of *God* ſo immediately to *Abraham*, and his Servant, in bringing out to the latter, the very Perſon, whom he had deſtined to be *Iſaac*'s Wife; and ordaining that ſhe ſhould be a Perſon of ſuch Humanity, Courteſy, Affability, Beauty; and, in ſhort, all Manner of Perfections.

Q. *What ſaid the Servant, on his hearing this unexpected and welcome Anſwer?*

A. “ And the Man bowed down his Head, and “ worſhipped the *Lord*; and he ſaid, Bleſſed be the “ *Lord God* of my Maſter *Abraham*, who hath not “ left deſtitute my Maſter of his Mercy and Truth: “ I being in the Way, the *Lord* me to the Houſe of “ my Maſter's Brethren.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The exemplary Piety of this Servant; which teaches us, that we ought not only to aſk *God's* Bleſſing upon whatever we undertake, but gratefully to return Thanks for it, when we have obtained the ſame.

Q. *What did* Rebekah *upon hearing this?*

A. “ And the Damſel ran, and told them of her “ Mother's Houſe theſe Things. “ And *Rebekah* “ had a Brother, and his Name was *Laban*: And “ *Laban* ran out unto the Man, unto the Well. “ And it came to paſs, when he ſaw the Earring and Bracelets upon his Siſter's Hands, and “ when he heard the Words of *Rebekah* his Siſter, ſaying, Thus ſpake the Man unto me; “ that he came unto the Man, and behold, “ he ſtood by the Camels, at the Well. And he “ ſaid, Come in, thou bleſſed of the *Lord*, Wherefore ſtandeſt thou without? For I have prepared “ the Houſe, and Room for the Camels.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That by *Laban's* calling the Servant, *Thou bleſſed of the* Lord, it is evident his Family worſhipped the true *God*, though not with that Purity which the *Lord* requires of his Servants; ſince they either worſhipped Idols together with him, or worſhipped him under the Form of an Idol, as we ſhall ſee hereafter.

Q. *What followed upon* Laban*'s giving him this Invitation?*

A. “ And the Man came into the Houſe; and he “ ungirded his Camels, and gave Straw and Provender for the Camels, and Water to waſh his “ Feet, and the Mens Feet that were with him. And “ there was Meat ſet before him to eat: But he ſaid, “ I will not eat until I have told mine Errand. And “ he ſaid, Speak on.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The great Diligence of this faithful Servant; in diſcharging the Commiſſion about which he came, before he would take the leaſt Refreſhment for himſelf; how few ſuch Servants are there now-a-days!

Q. *What farther ſaid* Abraham's *Servant to Laban?*

A. “ And he ſaid, I am *Abraham's* Servant.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. His great Humility, in readily acknowledging his real Condition; notwithſtanding that, by his Appearance, he ſeemed a Perſon of more than ordinary Rank.

Q. *What farther did he ſay?*

A. “ And the *Lord* hath bleſſed my Maſter greatly “ and he is become great: And he hath given him “ Flocks, and Herds, and Silver, and Gold, and “ Men-ſervants, and Maid-ſervants, and Camels, “ and Aſſes.”

Q. *What may one obſerve from thence?*

A. That Riches were then as they are now, a great Inducement to Mankind to grant their Alliance; accordingly, we find *Abraham's* Servant giving an Account of his Maſter's great Wealth, before he communicates the Demand he had to make; as thinking that would induce *Rebekah's* Relations the more eaſily to grant their Conſent.

Q. *What farther did he tell them?*

A. “ And *Sarah*, my Maſter's Wife, bare a Son to “ my Maſter when he was old: And unto him he “ hath given all that he hath.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, ſince* Abraham *married again afterwards, and had ſeveral Children, to whom he gave their reſpective Portions?*

A. Undoubtedly; it is to be underſtood in a limited Senſe, in two Reſpects; as that he intended to give him, in a Manner, all he had at his Deceaſe; for it is not to be ſuppoſed but he reſerved to himſelf the Uſe and Enjoyment thereof during his own Life, as alſo the Power of giving away what Part thereof he thought proper, as we find he did afterwards to his other Sons.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Abraham's *Servant?*

A. “ And my Maſter made me ſwear, ſaying, Thou “ ſhalt not take a Wife to my Son of the Daughters “ of the *Canaanites*, in whoſe Land I dwell: But “ thou ſhalt go unto my Father's Houſe, and to my “ Kindred, and take a Wife unto my Son. And I “ ſaid unto my Maſter, Peradventure the Woman “ will not follow me. And he ſaid unto me, the “ *Lord* before whom I walk, will ſend his Angel “ with thee, and proſper thy Way; and thou ſhalt “ take a Wife for my Son of my Kindred, and of my “ Father's Houſe. Then ſhalt thou be clear from “ *this* my Oath, when thou comeſt to my Kindred; “ and if they give thee not *one*, thou ſhalt be clear “ from my Oath. And I came this Day unto the “ Well, and ſaid, O *Lord God* of my Maſter *Abraham*, if now thou do proſper my Way which I go: “ Behold, I ſtand by the Well of Water; and it “ ſhall come to paſs, that when the Virgin cometh “ to draw *Water*, and I ſay to her, Give me, I pray “ thee, a little Water of thy Pitcher to drink; and “ ſhe ſay to me, Both drink thou, and I will alſo “ draw for thy Camels: *Let* the ſame *be* the Woman whom the *Lord* hath appointed out for my “ Maſter's Son. And before I had done ſpeaking in “ mine Heart, behold, *Rebekah* came forth with her “ Pitcher on her Shoulder; and ſhe went down unto “ the Well, and drew *Water*: And I ſaid unto her, “ Let me drink, I pray thee. And ſhe made haſte, “ and let down her Pitcher from her *Shoulder*, and “ ſaid, Drink, and I will give thy Camels Drink “ alſo. And I aſked her, and ſaid, Whoſe Daughter *art* thou? And ſhe ſaid, The Daughter of *Bethuel*, *Nahor*'s Son, whom *Milcah* bare unto him:

“And I put the Ear-ring upon her Face, and the Bracelets upon her Hands. And I bowed down my Head, and worſhipped the *Lord*, and bleſſed the *Lord God* of my Maſter *Abraham*, which had led me in the right Way to take my Maſter's Brother's Daughter unto his Son. And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my Maſter, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right Hand or to the left.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The great Diligence of this faithful Servant, in executing his Maſter's Commands; the Moment he has acquainted them with the Intent of his Journey, he deſires a poſitive Anſwer, whether they would grant him *Rebekah*, or not; that, in Caſe of their Refuſal, he might ſeek out elſewhere.

Q. *What Anſwer gave they to him?*

A. “Then *Laban*, and *Bethuel*, anſwered and ſaid, The Thing proceedeth from the *Lord*: We cannot ſpeak unto thee, Bad or Good, Behold, *Rebekah* is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy Maſter's Son's Wife, as the *Lord* hath ſpoken.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That they had the Knowledge and Worſhip of the true *God* amongſt them, as we have remarked before, though they did not ſerve him with that Purity which he requires of thoſe that truly fear him.

Q. *What did the Servant upon hearing this agreeable Anſwer?*

A. “And it came to paſs, that when *Abraham*'s Servant heard theſe Words, he worſhipped the *Lord*, bowing himſelf to the Earth.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The great Gratitude of the Man, in returning immediate Thanks to *God*, for every Bleſſing he received; as alſo, his holy Reverence of him, in bowing himſelf to the Ground, when he worſhipped him.

Q. *What elſe did* Abraham's *Servant?*

A. “And the Servant brought forth Jewels of Silver, and Jewels of Gold, and Raiment, and gave them to *Rebekah*: He gave alſo to her Brother and to her Mother precious Things.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The Generoſity, Prudence, and good Senſe of the Servant; in doing Things in ſuch a handſome Manner, as might conduce to his Maſter's Honour; we may alſo find thereby, that it was then cuſtomary for Men to give Portions for their Wives, inſtead of receiving Fortunes with them, as they do now. It is to be feared this Cuſtom would prevent many Marriages, were it in Uſe now-a-days.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And they did eat and drink, he and the Men that were with him, and tarried all Night, and they roſe up in the Morning, and he ſaid, ſend me away unto my Maſter.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The great Diligence of this good Servant, and his uncommon Love to his Maſter; which would not let him reſt, till he had returned to him, and acquainted him with his Succeſs in his Undertaking: How contrary is this, to the Behaviour of moſt Servants now-a-days, who care not how long they loiter on an Errand!

Q. *What ſaid* Rebekah's *Friends to this?*

A. “And her Brother and her Mother ſaid, Let the Damſel abide with us a few Days, at the leaſt Ten; after that ſhe ſhall go. And he ſaid unto them, Hinder me not, ſeeing the *Lord* has proſpered my Way: Send me away, that I may go to my Maſter.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How anxious he was for his Maſter's Eaſe and Welfare, inſomuch that he would not conſent to ſo ſhort a Stay, though a very reaſonable Requeſt, becauſe he would not leave his Maſter ſo much longer in an Uncertainty, as to his Succeſs.

Q. *What anſwered* Rebekah's *Mother and Brother to this his Importunity?*

A. “And they ſaid, we will call the Damſel, and enquire at her Mouth.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That hereby they evaded giving their Conſent, by referring him to *Rebekah*, which he could not well oppoſe; not doubting but ſhe would be againſt departing ſo haſtily and abruptly from her Relations and Friends, and going with a Stranger; but, it ſeems, they were very much deceived therein.

Q. *And what ſaid* Rebekah?

A. “And they called *Rebekah*, and ſaid unto her, Wilt thou go with this Man? And ſhe ſaid I will go.”

Q. *What could make her ſo willing, ſo ſoon to part with all her Relations, and Friends, to go with a Stranger?*

A. Some imagine it might be to expreſs her ready Obedience to her future Huſband; but, we think, that a ſhort Stay could not have been counted any Inſtance of Diſobedience in her; wherefore we judge this to have proceeded from the over-ruling Power of Providence, which made her Love to her intended Spouſe, though unſeen and unknown, overballance in an Inſtant, and get the better of, that natural Affection all People have for their Relations.

Q. *What did her Mother and Brother, upon hearing this determinate Anſwer?*

A. “They ſent away *Rebekah*, their Siſter; and her Nurſe, and *Abraham*'s Servant, and his Men.”

Q. *What has been obſerved from this Text?*

A. Mr. *Poole* obſerves, that, in this corrupt Family, the Nurſe and the Mother are two diſtinct Perſons, but that in *Abraham*'s Family there was no ſuch Principle, or Practice; but with all Submiſſion to ſo learned, and ingenious a Man, we can ſee no Neceſſity for ſuch a Cenſure; ſince ſhe might be only a dry Nurſe, the having of which is not at all incompatible with the Duty of a Mother, in ſuckling her own Children.

Q. *Did no Endearments, no Ceremony paſs between them at parting?*

A. “And they bleſſed *Rebekah*, and ſaid unto her, Thou art our Siſter; be thou the Mother of thouſands of Millions, and let thy Seed poſſeſs the Gate of thoſe which hate them.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That notwithſtanding theſe Relations of *Rebekah* were not of the true and pure Church of *God*, they ſeem in this Bleſſing, to have been inſpired by the Spirit of Prophecy, ſince every particular herein mentioned was literally accompliſhed in an eminent Degree.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And *Rebekah* aroſe, and her Damſels, and they rode upon Camels, and followed the Man: And the Servant took *Rebekah*, and went his Way. And *Iſaac* came from the Way of the Well *Lahai-roi*; for he dwelt in the *South* Country; And *Iſaac* went out to meditate in the Field, at the even Tide: And he lift up his Eyes, and ſaw, and behold, the Camels were coming. And *Re-*

“ *bekah* lift up her Eyes, and when ſhe ſaw *Iſaac*, “ ſhe lighted off the Camel. For ſhe had ſaid unto “ the Servant, What Man is this that walketh in the “ Field to meet us? And the Servant ſaid, It is my “ Maſter: Therefore ſhe took a Vail and cover'd “ herſelf.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Iſaac* did not uſe to ſpend his Time, as moſt young Men do in this Age; he went out into the Field, not to take his Pleaſure, but to meditate; that is, to fix his Thoughts upon *God*, without Interruption, or Diſtraction; to ask his Bleſſing, and commit himſelf to his Protection, that he might lay himſelf down to Reſt at Night, without any Fear, in firm Confidence that *God* would watch over him. We may alſo obſerve the Modeſty, and Humility of *Rebekah*, ſhe alighted off her Camel, before ſhe approached *Iſaac*, in token of her Reverence of, and her Subjection to him, as her future *Lord*: There are not many ſuch Wives now-a-days.

Q. *What did the Servant the Moment he came to* Iſaac?

A. “ And the Servant told *Iſaac* all Things that “ he had done.”

Q. *What may we learn from thence?*

A. That it is the Duty of all Servants, to give their Maſters, a punctual, and immediate Account, of whatever they tranſact for their Service; and to ſubmit their Actions to their Judgment, for their Approbation, or Cenſure.

Q. *What did* Iſaac *with* Rebekah; *on her Arrival?*

A. “ And *Iſaac* brought her into his Mother *Sa-* “ *rah*'s Tent, and took *Rebekah*, and ſhe became his “ Wife; and he loved her: And *Iſaac* was com- “ forted after his Mother's Death.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The Meaning of *Iſaac*'s carrying her into his Mother's Tent, ſeems to have been in Token, that he thereby ſhared with her his Riches, and Poſſeſſions, as his Father *Abraham* had before ſhared his with *Sarah*; it was alſo in order to the Conſummation of their Marriage; it being then cuſtomary for the Men and Women to have different Tents, apart from each other: As to *Iſaac*'s ceaſing to mourn any longer for his Mother, after his Marriage; ſome refer it to his laying aſide his mourning Habit, which he had conſtantly worn till then, though his Mother had been dead three Years; but we ſee no Reaſon why it may not be underſtood literally, that he took ſo much Delight in his Wife, that it entirely comforted him for the Loſs of his Mother, which had ſat heavy upon him till that Time. One of the *Hebrew* Doctors has an extraordinary Obſervation upon this Head: “ From hence thou mayſt learn, ſays he, “ that until a Man takes a Wife, his Affection follows his “ Parents: But when he hath taken a Wife, his “ Love is transferred to her; as it is ſaid, Therefore “ ſhall a Man leave his Father and his Mother, and “ ſhall cleave unto his Wife.”

CHAP. XXV.

Abraham *takes* Keturah *to Wife; his Sons by her;* Iſaac *inherits the Bulk of his Father's Eſtate;* Abraham *provides for his other Sons, and ſends them away* Eaſtward *during his Life;* Abraham's *Age, Death, and Burial;* God *bleſſeth* Iſaac; Iſhmael's *Poſterity; His Age and Death; where his Poſterity ſettled;* Iſaac's *Age when married; He prays for Children; the* Lord *hears him;* Rebekah *conceives Twins; the Children ſtruggle within her;* Rebekah *enquires the Reaſon of the* Lord; *he informs her; She is deliver'd of Twins; The firſt-born red, and hairy; his Name; his Brother takes hold of his Heel; his Name;* Iſaac's *Age when they were born; the Eldeſt a cunning Hunter; the other a plain Man;* Iſaac *loves the eldeſt;* Rebekah *the youngeſt; the eldeſt ſells his Birthright, for a Meſs of red Pottage; whence he is called* Edom; *He confirms the Sale by an Oath; and deſpiſes his Birth-right.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That again *Abraham* took a Wife, and her “ Name was *Keturah*.”

Q. *How came* Abraham, *being ſo old, to marry again?*

A. Not from any inordinate Luſt, of which we may be aſſured from his great Age, and eminent Grace; but from the Deſire of having more Children, which was always predominant in *Abraham*, and of accompliſhing *God*'s Promiſe concerning the great Multiplication of his Seed.

Q. *What has been obſerved concerning this* Keturah?

A. The *Jewiſh* Writers abound with Fables concerning her, ſome ſuppoſing her to be the ſame with *Hagar*, and that *Abraham* recalled her, after *Sarah*'s Deceaſe; but, in all Probability, ſhe might be dead as well as *Sarah*; and if ſhe had been alive, ſhe muſt have been too old, to have anſwered *Abraham*'s Deſign, of having more Children; it is, therefore, highly improbable ſhe ſhould be the ſame; or that, if ſhe had, *Moſes* would have mentioned her only by the Name of *Keturah*. Laying aſide, then, all Fables and Whims, all we can find for certain, is, that ſhe was a Servant; for had ſhe been a free Woman, ſhe would not have been called a *Concubine*, as ſhe is in the ſixth Verſe: This has induced ſome to ſuppoſe, that he married her in *Sarah*'s Lifetime; the Name of *Concubine* not being uſually given to ſuch Wives as ſucceed others, but to ſuch as, during the Life of the Wife, are made Partakers of the Marriage-Bed.

Q. *Had* Abraham *any Children by this* Keturah?

A. “ She bare him *Zimran*, and *Jokſhan*, and “ *Medan*, and *Midian*, and *Iſhbak*, and *Shuah*. And “ *Jokſhan* begat *Sheba*, and *Dedan*. And the Sons “ of *Dedan* were *Aſhurim*, and *Letuſhim*, and *Leummim*. And the Sons of *Midian*; *Ephah*, and *Epher*, and *Hanoch*, and *Abidah*, and *Eldaah*. All “ theſe were the Children of *Keturah*.”

Q. *But how could* Abraham, *being now above one hundred and forty Years old, beget Children, when his Body is ſaid to have been as good as dead, in his hundredth Year?*

A. Becauſe that renewed Strength, which *God* then miraculouſly conferred upon him, remained ſtill in him, in a great Meaſure; being not only granted him for that Time, but for a Continuance.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Abraham* gave all that he had unto “ *Iſaac*. Which, as we have before obſerved, muſt be underſtood only in a limited Senſe, as is apparent from the very next Verſe.

Q. *What Proviſion did he make for his other Children?*

A. “ But unto the Sons of the Concubines which “ *Abraham* had, *Abraham* gave Gifts, and ſent them “ away from *Iſaac* his Son (while he yet lived) *Eaſtward*, unto the *Eaſt*-Country.”

Q. *What is ſuppoſed to be* Abraham's *Reaſon for ſo doing?*

A. A very good one; that there might not ariſe any Diſputes between them and *Iſaac*, after his Deceaſe, on account of his having a ſo much greater Share, than any of the Reſt.

Q. *What farther are we told concerning* Abraham?

A. "And theſe *are* the Days of the Years of "*Abraham*'s Life which he lived, an hundred threeſcore and fifteen Years. Then *Abraham* gave up "the Ghoſt, and died in a good old Age, an old "Man, and full *of Years*, and was gathered to "his People."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That his Soul was not required of him, as was that of the *Fool*, Luke xii. 20. not forced from him by ſharp and violent Diſeaſes, but was quietly, eaſily, and cheerfully yielded up by him, into the Hands of his merciful *God* and *Father*; as being ſatiated with Life, and firmly expecting a better State in the next World.

Q. *Where was he buried, and by whom?*

A. "And his Sons *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael* buried him in "the Cave of *Machpelah*, in the Field of *Ephron*, "the Son of *Zohar* the *Hittite*, which is before "*Mamre*; the Field which *Abraham* purchaſed of "the Sons of *Heth*: There was *Abraham* buried, "and *Sarah* his Wife."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That it is very probable from hence, that *Iſhmael* was at laſt reſtored to *Abraham*'s Favour, and that he ſhared now, at leaſt, in the Portions, which that Patriarch diſtributed to his Sons.

Q. *What are we told concerning* Iſaac, *after* Abraham's *Deceaſe?*

A. "And it came to paſs after the Death of *Abraham*, that *God* bleſſed his Son *Iſaac*: and *Iſaac* "dwelt by the Well *Lahai-roi*." Which needs no Explanation.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed of* Iſhmael *in this Chapter?*

A. "Now theſe are the Generations of *Iſhmael*, "*Abraham*'s Son, whom *Hagar*, the *Egyptian*, *Sarah*'s Handmaid, bare unto *Abraham*. And theſe "*are* the Names of the Sons of *Iſhmael* by their "Names, according to their Generations: The firſtborn of *Iſhmael*, *Nebajoth*, and *Kedar*, and *Adbeel*, "and *Mibſam*, and *Miſhma*, and *Dumah*, and *Maſſa*, "*Hadar*, and *Tema*, *Jetur*, *Naphiſh*, and *Kedemah*. "Theſe *are* the Sons of *Iſhmael*, and theſe *are* their "Names by their Towns, and by their Caſtles; "twelve Princes according to their Nations."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. How punctually *God* fulfilled his Promiſe made to *Abraham*, concerning *Iſhmael*; an amazing Inſtance of his great Faithfulneſs!

Q. *What farther are we told concerning* Iſhmael?

A. "And theſe are the Years of the Life of *Iſhmael*, an hundred thirty and ſeven Years; and "he gave up the Ghoſt and died, and was gathered "unto his People.

Q. *What has been obſerved from this Text?*

A. The *Jews* have obſerved from hence, that the Manner, in which his Death is recorded in Scripture, is a ſtrong Teſtimony that he died in the true Faith; and are fully perſuaded, that he was accordingly accepted of *God*; ſince the ſame Expreſſion is made Uſe of in the Relation thereof, as had been before uſed of the Deceaſe of *Abraham*, which Expreſſion they likewiſe obſerve is never uſed, but of good Men.

Q. *What is farther ſaid concerning* Iſhmael?

A. "And they dwelt from *Havilah* unto *Shur*, "that is before *Egypt*, as thou goeſt towards *Aſſyria*: "and he died in the Preſence of all his Brethren."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the Words here tranſlated, and *he died*, may as well be tranſlated, and he *fell* in the Preſence of all his Brethren*; this Verb in the *Hebrew* being moſt commonly uſed concerning a Lot, whereby Mens Portions are deſigned and divided; and we think it ought to have been ſo rendered here, becauſe his Death is mentioned but the Verſe before, which makes the repeating it here ſomething odd; we judge, therefore, *Moſes*'s Intent to have been, to inform us, that *Iſhmael*'s Lot fell in the Preſence of all his Brethren; as this was a ſignal Accompliſhment of *God*'s Prophecy concerning him, that he ſhould dwell in the Preſence of all his Brethren; as he did, ſince his Country lay between the Children of *Keturah* on the Eaſt, and the Children of *Iſaac*; that is, the *Iſraelites* and *Edomites* on the Weſt.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And theſe are the Generations of *Iſaac*, *Abraham*'s Son: *Abraham* begat *Iſaac*. And *Iſaac* "was forty Years old when he took *Rebekah* to Wife, "the Daughter of *Bethuel*, the *Syrian* of *Padanaram*, the Siſter to *Laban* the *Syrian*. And *Iſaac* "entreated the *Lord* for his Wife, becauſe ſhe was "barren: And the *Lord* was entreated of him, and "*Rebekah* his Wife conceived."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *God* expects his Servants to pray earneſtly for his Bleſſing, before he thinks fit to grant it; and that, notwithſtanding his Promiſes to *Abraham*, concerning the *Bleſſed Seed*, he expected *Iſaac* to uſe the Means, the moſt effectual of which, was his fervent Prayer to *God*, to implore his Bleſſing on his Endeavours. To which accordingly, we find, his Wife owed her conceiving, ſince it is expreſly ſaid, that the *Lord* was entreated of him, and *Rebekah* his Wife conceived.

Q. *What followed upon* Rebekah's *Conception?*

A. "And the Children ſtruggled within her: And "ſhe ſaid, If it be ſo, why am I thus? And ſhe "went to enquire of the *Lord*."

Q. *What is obſervable therein?*

A. That *Rebekah* being grown a good Proficient in the true Religion, by her Intermarriage into the holy *Abraham*'s Family, upon finding ſomething extraordinary in her Pregnancy, to what was uſual with other Women; as undoubtedly ſhe had been informed upon Enquiry; and being fearful ſhe ſhould not be ſafely delivered of her Burden; does not ſeek to Phyſicians, or Midwives, as worldly-minded Women would have done, but immediately applies to the *Almighty* Phyſician of Soul and Body, who was able to give her the moſt effectual Help; and accordingly ſhe ſoon receives a ſatisfactory and comfortable Anſwer.

Q. *What Anſwer then did the Lord give her?*

A. "And the *Lord* ſaid unto her; Two Nations "are in thy Womb, and two Manner of People ſhall "be ſeparated from thy Bowels: And the one ſhall "be ſtronger than the other People; and the elder "ſhall ſerve the younger."

Q. *How was this Prophecy accompliſhed?*

A. Very evidently and ſignally, under *David*; 2 Sam. viii. 14. under *Amaziah*, 2 *Chron.* xxv. 11. and under the *Maccabees*, 1 *Macc.* v. 3. when the *Iſraelites*, *Jacob*'s Offspring, ſubdued the *Edomites*, *Eſau*'s Poſterity. But much more eminently, under the Goſpel, when one of *Jacob's* Children, namely *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſhall obtain the Dominion, and ſhall rule the *Edomites*, as all other *Heathen* Nations, with his Iron Rod, and make them ſerviceable one Way or other to his Glory, and to the Happineſs and Felicity of the true *Iſrael*.

Q. *What farther are we told concerning* Rebekah's *Pregnancy?*

A. “ And when her Days to be delivered were “ fulfilled, behold, there were Twins in her Womb. “ And the firſt came out red, all over, like an hairy “ Garment: And they called his Name *Eſau*; and “ after that came his Brother out, and his Hand “ took Hold on *Eſau's* Heel; and his Name was called *Jacob*: And *Iſaac* was threeſcore Years old “ when ſhe bare them.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the *Lord* thought proper to exerciſe *Iſaac's* Faith and Patience twenty Years, before he vouchſafed to grant him the Bleſſing of Children; whence we may learn, that it is our Duty to wait *God's* appointed Time with Patience, and not to repine, if he does not immediately anſwer our Prayers.

Q. *What are we next informed concerning theſe Children?*

A. “ And the Boys grew: And *Eſau* was a cunning Hunter, a Man of the Field; and *Jacob* was “ a plain Man dwelling in Tents. And *Iſaac* loved “ *Eſau*, becauſe he did eat of his Veniſon: But *Rebekah* loved *Jacob*.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That even the beſt of Men have their Failings, and ſuffer their Inclinations to get the better of their Reaſon; ſince it is evident that *Jacob* was the beſt deſerving of his Love.

Q. *Of what are we next informed concerning them?*

A. “ And *Jacob* ſod Pottage: And *Eſau* came “ from the Field, and he was faint. And *Eſau* ſaid “ to *Jacob*, Feed me, I pray thee, with that ſame “ red Pottage; for I am faint: Therefore was his “ Name called *Edom*. And *Jacob* ſaid, Sell me “ this Day thy Birthright.”

Q. *Did* Jacob *well in thus tempting and taking Advantage of his Brother?*

A. No, certainly, becauſe he tempted him to an Act of Profaneneſs and Folly; and though *God* had deſigned and promiſed him this Privilege, yet he ſhould have waited till he had executed his Promiſe in his own Way, as *David* did, till the *Lord* gave him Poſſeſſion of *Saul's* Kingdom; and not have anticipated it, and ſeized it by an irregular Act of his own, as *Jeroboam* did the Kingdom from *Rehoboam*.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Eſau *to* Jacob's *hard Propoſal?*

A. “ And *Eſau* ſaid, Behold, I am at the Point “ to die: And what Profit ſhall this Birth-right do “ to me?”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That *Eſau* plainly ſhewed hereby that his Care and Affections extended no farther than the preſent Life.

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob *upon finding he made ſo light thereof?*

A. “ And *Jacob* ſaid, Swear to me this Day; and “ he ſware unto him: And he ſold his Birth-right “ unto *Jacob*. Then *Jacob* gave *Eſau* Bread, and “ Pottage of Lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and “ roſe up, and went his Way; thus *Eſau* deſpiſed “ his Birth-right.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. *Jacob's* great ſubtilty in tranſacting this whole Affair; he knew that Delays were dangerous; and *Eſau's* Conſideration on ſecond Thoughts, might have ſpoiled his Bargain; wherefore he requires Haſte both in the Sale, and the Oath. Herein he undoubtedly committed another Sin, in hurrying his Brother into an Oath by Precipitation; which his Brother ſhould neither have taken, nor *Jacob* have adviſed him thereto.

CHAP. XXVI.

A Famine in Canaan; Iſaac *goes to ſojourn at* Gerar; *he is forbid going into* Egypt; God *bleſſeth him, and renews the Covenant made with* Abraham *with him; he denies his Wife;* Abimelech *ſeeing him ſporting with* Rebekah, *charges him with her being his Wife;* Iſaac *owns it;* Abimelech *reproves him; He charges his People not to injure them on pain of Death;* Iſaac *bleſſed with great Plenty; the* Philiſtines *envy him; ſtop up his Wells; and deſire him to leave them; he removes to the Valley of* Gerar; *he digs Wells there, but the Herdſmen ſtrive with him about them; at laſt he is left at Quiet; he removes to* Beerſheba; *the* Lord *again renews his Covenant with him;* Abimelech *covenants with him; they make a Feaſt, and ſwear to one another;* Eſau *being forty Years old, taketh to him Wives of the* Canaanites; Iſaac *and* Rebekah *grieved thereat.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And there was a Famine in the Land, beſides the firſt Famine that was in the Days of *Abraham*. And *Iſaac* went unto *Abimelech* King of “ the *Philiſtines*, unto *Gerar*. And the *Lord* appeared unto him, and ſaid, Go not down into “ *Egypt*; dwell in the Land which I ſhall tell thee “ of. Sojourn in this Land, and I will be with thee, “ I will bleſs thee: For unto thee and to thy Seed I “ will give all theſe Countries, and I will perform “ the Oath which I ſware unto *Abraham* thy Father. “ And I will make thy Seed to multiply as the Stars “ of Heaven, and will give unto thy Seed all theſe “ Countries: And in thy Seed ſhall all the Nations “ of the Earth be bleſſed: Becauſe that *Abraham* “ obeyed my Voice, and kept my Charge, my Commandments, my Statutes, and my Laws.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That, in all Probability, *Iſaac's* Intention was to have gone to *Egypt*, had he not been forewarned to the contrary by *God*; being induced to it both by its being a very fruitful Place, and by his Father's Example, on the ſame Occaſion: We may alſo obſerve, that *God's* Covenant with *Abraham* was only conditional, upon his Obedience; wherefore, we need not wonder, that upon the *Iſraelites* Diſobedience, they forfeited all Right and Title to it.

Q. *Did* Iſaac *immediately comply with the* Lord's *Command?*

A. Yes, “ And *Iſaac* dwelt in *Gerar*.”

Q. *What are we next told of* Iſaac, *when he was there?*

A. “ And the Men of the Place asked him of his “ Wife; and he ſaid, She is my Siſter: For he feared “ to ſay, She is my Wife; leſt, ſaid he, the Men of “ the Place ſhould kill me for *Rebekah*, becauſe ſhe “ was fair to look upon.”

Q. *Is it not ſtrange that* Iſaac *ſhould have Recourſe to this Stratagem, when his Father* Abraham *had like to have ſmarted twice for it?*

A. This ſhews how ſubject the beſt of Men are to Failings; and that a firm Faith and Reliance upon Providence, is the immediate Gift of Heaven.

Q. *But was not this diſcovered to be a Falſhood?*

A. Yes; “ And it came to paſs when he had been “ there a long Time, that *Abimelech* King of the “ *Philiſtines* looked out at a Window, and ſaw, and “ behold, *Iſaac* was ſporting with *Rebekah* his Wife. “ And *Abimelech* called *Iſaac*, and ſaid, Behold of a “ Surety ſhe is thy Wife: And how ſaidſt thou, She “ is my Siſter? And *Iſaac* ſaid unto him, Becauſe I “ ſaid, Leſt I die for her. And *Abimelech* ſaid, “ What is this thou haſt done unto us: One of the “ People might lightly have lien with thy Wife, and “ thou ſhouldſt have brought Guiltineſs upon us.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That though Fornication was either eſteemed no Sin, or elſe a very little one, amongſt the *Heathens*, Adultery was reckoned a very heinous one; and that *Abimelech* here takes it for granted, that had any of his Subjects committed it with *Iſaac*'s Wife, their Ignorance of her being ſo, would not have been a ſufficient Excuſe for them.

Q. *Being now informed of the Truth, what did* Abimelech?

A. “ And *Abimelech* charged all his People, ſaying, He that toucheth this Man or his Wife, ſhall “ be put to Death.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The great Humanity, Juſtice, and Honour of this *Pagan* Prince, in laying ſo ſtrict a Command upon all his Subjects, for the Security of *Iſaac* and his Wife.

Q. *When his Fears were thus removed, what did* Iſaac?

A. “ Then *Iſaac* ſowed in that Land, and received “ in the ſame Year an hundred Fold, and the *Lord* “ bleſſed him. And the Man waxed great, and “ went forward, and grew until he became very “ great: For he had Poſſeſſion of Flocks, and Poſſeſſion of Herds, and great ſtore of Servants. And “ the *Philiſtines* envy'd him: For all the Wells which “ his Father's Servants had digged, in the Days of “ *Abraham* his Father, the *Philiſtines* had ſtoppod “ them, and filled them with Earth.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. How apt Riches are to create Envy; and how naturally Envy produces Hatred and Injuſtice.

Q. *What ſaid* Abimelech *to* Iſaac, *to prevent any ill Effects from thence?*

A. “ And *Abimelech* ſaid unto *Iſaac*, Go from us; “ for thou art much mightier than we.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abimelech* juſtly preferring Peace before continual Strife and Contention, candidly adviſed *Iſaac* to remove, and part Friends; leſt, if they ſtaid any longer together, Diſputes ſhould ariſe between them, which might make them Enemies. How commendable was this Love of Peace in a *Heathen*, and how odious is the contrary Diſpoſition amongſt *Chriſtians!*

Q. *Whither did* Iſaac *remove from thence?*

A. “ And *Iſaac* departed thence, and pitched his “ Tent in the Valley of *Gerar*, and dwelt there. “ And *Iſaac* digged again the Wells of Water, “ which they had digged in the Days of *Abraham* “ his Father; for the *Philiſtines* had ſtopped them “ after the Death of *Abraham*: And he called their “ Names after the Names by which his Father had “ called them. And *Iſaac*'s Servants digged in the “ Valley, and found there a Well of ſpringing Water. And the Herdmen of *Gerar* did ſtrive with “ *Iſaac*'s Herdmen, ſaying, The Water is ours: And “ he called the Name of the Well *Eſek*, becauſe they “ ſtrove with him. And they digged another Well, “ and ſtrove for that alſo: And he called the Name “ of it *Sitnah*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That it was not without good Reaſon *Abimelech* had adviſed *Iſaac* to remove; ſince even when he was gone farther from them, they could not ſuffer him to be at Peace, but were continually contending with his Servants; which made him name one of the Wells *Eſek*, that is, *Contention*, and the other *Sitnah*, which ſignifies *Hatred*.

Q. *Did not* Iſaac *again remove from thence, to avoid Diſputes?*

A. Yes, “ And he removed from thence, and digged another Well; and for that they ſtrove not: “ And he called the Name of it *Rehoboth*; and he “ ſaid, For now the *Lord* hath made Room for us, “ and we ſhall be fruitful in the Land.”

Q. *Did he continue long there?*

A. No, we are told immediately afterwards, “ And “ he went up from thence to *Beerſheba*.”

Q. *And what happened to him there?*

A. “ And the *Lord* appeared unto him the ſame “ Night, and ſaid, I am the *God* of *Abraham* thy “ Father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will “ bleſs thee, and multiply thy Seed, for my Servant “ *Abraham*'s Sake. And he builded an Altar there, “ and called upon the Name of the *Lord*, and pitched his Tent there; and there *Iſaac*'s Servants digged a Well.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That in Return to the *Lord*'s gracious Promiſe, *Iſaac* immediately builds an Altar, to make an Acknowledgement for the Divine Goodneſs; which ſhews, that we ought thankfully and immediately to acknowledge and return Thanks for all the Bleſſings we enjoy in this World.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Iſaac?

A. “ Then *Abimelech* went to him from *Gerar*, “ and *Ahuzzath* one of his Friends, and *Phichol* the “ chief Captain of his Army.”

Q. *And how did* Iſaac *receive them?*

A. Very coldly at the firſt; “ And *Iſaac* ſaid “ unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, ſeeing ye “ hate me, and have ſent me away from you?”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That even the beſt Men may expreſs a moderate Reſentment, when they have received a juſt Provocation.

Q. *And what Anſwer did they return to him?*

A. “ And they ſaid, We ſaw certainly that the “ *Lord* was with thee: And we ſaid, Let there be “ now an Oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, “ and let us make a Covenant with thee; that thou “ wilt do us no Hurt; as we have not touched thee, “ and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, “ and have ſent thee away in Peace: Thou art now “ the bleſſed of the *Lord*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Abimelech* was unwilling to revive old Diſputes; wherefore he addreſſes *Iſaac* with much Reſpect and Friendſhip; and tells him, that as they had not done him any real Injury, but had ſent him away in Peace, with all he had, he hoped he would enter into a League of Amity with him, concluding his Speech, with giving him that pleaſing Title of *Thou bleſſed of the Lord*, in order to induce him the eaſier to comply.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Iſaac *to this civil and friendly Propoſal?*

A. “ And he made them a Feaſt and they did eat and drink. And they roſe up betimes in the Morning, and ſware one to another: And *Iſaac* ſent them away, and they departed from him in Peace.” Which needs no Explanation.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Iſaac ?

A. “ And it came to paſs the ſame Day, that *Iſaac'* Servants came and told him of the Well which they had digged, and ſaid unto him, We have found Water. And he called it *Shebah*: Therefore the Name of that Place is *Beer-ſheba* unto this Day.

Q. *But as* Abraham *had given it this Name before, how can* Iſaac *be ſaid properly to have called it ſo?*

A. Though *Abraham* had formerly named it ſo, it is to be ſuppoſed that this Name was grown out of Uſe, and forgotten amongſt the People of that Country; wherefore *Iſaac* now revived that Name, which it retained till the Time that *Moſes* wrote this, and for many Ages afterwards.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ That *Eſau* was forty Years old, when he took to Wife *Judith*, the Daughter of *Beeri* the *Hittite*, and *Baſhemath* the Daughter of *Elon*, the *Hittite*: Which were a Grief of Mind unto *Iſaac*, and to *Rebekah*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That human Happineſs is ſeldom of long Continuance, even amongſt the moſt religious Perſons.

CHAP. XXVII.

Iſaac *being in Years, ſends* Eſau *for Veniſon, that he may eat thereof and bleſs him*; Eſau *obeys his Father*; Rebekah *over-hearing it, adviſes* Jacob *to ſupplant his Brother, by going in his Stead*; Jacob *is afraid of bringing a Curſe upon himſelf inſtead of a Bleſſing*; *his Mother encourages him*; *he complies, and obtains the Bleſſing*; Eſau *brings the Veniſon he had taken*; Iſaac *is exceedingly ſurprized thereat, but confirms the Bleſſing he had before given* Jacob; Eſau *weeps bitterly, and implores a Bleſſing likewiſe*; *he expoſtulates with his Father, and obtains one*; Eſau *hates* Jacob, *and threatens his Life*; Rebekah *is told thereof, and adviſes* Jacob *to go to her Brother to* Haran; *ſhe complains to* Iſaac *of* Eſau's *Wives.*

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Thing we learn from this Chapter?*

A. “ And it came to paſs, that when *Iſaac* was old, and his Eyes were dim, ſo that he could not ſee, he called *Eſau* his eldeſt Son, and ſaid unto him, My Son: And he ſaid unto him, Behold, here am I.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That the Dimneſs of *Iſaac*'s Sight ſeems to have been ordained by the Divine Providence, not only for the Exerciſe of his Patience, but alſo as a Means to transfer *Eſau*'s Right to *Jacob*.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Iſaac *to* Eſau ?

A. “ And he ſaid, Behold, now, I am old, I know not the Day of my Death. Now, therefore, take, I pray thee, thy Weapons, thy Quiver and thy Bow, and go out to the Field, and take me ſome Veniſon; and make me ſavoury Meat, ſuch as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my Soul may bleſs thee before I die.”

Q. *Why did he require this? Could he not have bleſſed him without all this Trouble?*

A. He might require it for ſeveral Reaſons; either that, being refreſhed and delighted therewith, his Spirits might be the more chearful, and conſequently, the fitter for giving this prophetical Benediction; for which Reaſon alſo, the Prophet *Eliſha* called for a Minſtrel, before he could utter his Prophecy, 2 *Kings* iii. 15. or he might do it by the over-ruling Direction of divine Providence, that *Eſau*'s Abſence might give *Jacob* the Advantage and Opportunity of getting the Bleſſing. Beſides, *Iſaac* ſpeaks not here of a common and cuſtomary Bleſſing, which Parents may beſtow upon their Children, when, and as often they pleaſe, but of the laſt, ſolemn, and extraordinary Bleſſing, whereby theſe Holy Patriarchs, by *God*'s Appointment, and with his Concurrence, did conſtitute one of their Sons Heir, not ſo much of the Inheritance, as of *Abraham's* Covenant, and all the Promiſes, both temporal and ſpiritual thereunto belonging.

Q. *Of what are we next informed concerning this Tranſaction?*

A. “ And *Rebekah* heard when *Iſaac* ſpake to *Eſau* his Son: And *Eſau* went to the Field to hunt for Veniſon, and to bring it. And *Rebekah* ſpake unto *Jacob* her Son, ſaying, Behold, I heard thy Father ſpeak unto *Eſau* thy Brother, ſaying, Bring me Veniſon, and make me ſavoury Meat, that I may eat, and bleſs thee before the *Lord*, before my Death. Now therefore, my Son, obey my Voice, according to that which I command thee. Go now to the Flock, and fetch me from thence two Kids of the Goats; and I will make them ſavoury Meat for thy Father, ſuch as he loveth. And thou ſhalt bring it to thy Father, that he may eat, and that he may bleſs thee before his Death.”

Q. *But was this a juſtifiable Action in* Rebekah?

A. We think not; for, notwithſtanding *God* had promiſed *Jacob* the Pre-eminency over his Brother, before they were yet born, ſhe ought to have waited till he had thought fit to fulfil his Promiſe in his own due Time, and his own Way; and not to have adviſed his anticipating it, and ſeizing it, in an unjuſtifiable Manner.

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob *to this Propoſal of his Mother's?*

A. “ And *Jacob* ſaid to *Rebekah* his Mother, Behold, *Eſau* my Brother is a hairy Man, and I am a ſmooth Man. My Father, peradventure, will feel me, and I ſhall ſeem to him as a Deceiver; and I ſhall bring a Curſe upon me, and not a Bleſſing.”

Q. *What could his Mother anſwer to ſo reaſonable an Objection?*

A. “ And his Mother ſaid unto him, Upon me be thy Curſe, my Son: Only obey my Voice, and go fetch me them.”

Q. *What could induce* Rebekah *to run ſuch a Hazard to riſque her Husband's Curſe?*

A. She was perfectly confident of the Succeſs of her Project, from the divine Promiſe ſhe had received during her Pregnancy; wherefore, ſhe did not think ſhe ran any Hazard.

Q. *And what did* Jacob, *upon hearing this Anſwer, and reiterated Command of his Mother?*

A. “ And he went and fetched, and brought them to his Mother: And his Mother made ſavoury Meat, ſuch as his Father loved. And *Rebekah* took goodly Raiment of her eldeſt Son *Eſau*, which were with her in the Houſe, and put them upon *Jacob* her younger Son; and ſhe put the Skins of the Kids of the Goats upon his Hands, and upon the Smooth of his Neck. And ſhe gave the ſavoury

“ Meat, and the Bread which ſhe had prepared, into “ the Hand of her Son *Jacob*.”

Q. *What may one obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Rebekah* having transferred her Affection, in a great Meaſure, from *Eſau* to *Jacob*, on account of the former's Diſobedience, in marrying the Daughters of *Heth*, was ſollicitous to ſhew her Love to him, by what would be the moſt effectual Proof thereof, the procuring him his Father's Bleſſing, and conſequently the Bleſſing of *God*; accordingly we find the whole of her Contrivance admirably ſuited for that Purpoſe. A uſeful Inſtruction for all fond Mothers, to endeavour to obtain the Divine Bleſſing for their Darlings, rather than by ſpoiling them, to breed them up in a fair Way to draw down the Anger of Heaven upon them!

Q. *What did* Jacob, *after he had taken the ſavoury Meat from his Mother?*

A. “ And he came unto his Father, and ſaid, My “ Father: And he ſaid, Here am I; Who art thou, “ my Son? And *Jacob* ſaid unto his Father, I am “ *Eſau* thy firſt-born; I have done according as “ thou badeſt me: Ariſe, I pray thee, ſit and eat “ of my Veniſon, that thy Soul may bleſs me.”

Q. *How can this groſs Falſhood and Impoſture be excuſed in* Jacob?

A. The learned Mr. *Howel* accounts for it, by ſaying, It is probable *Jacob* meant, he repreſented *Eſau*, or ſtood in the Place of *Eſau*, the firſt-born, by Virtue of the Purchaſe he had made of the Primogeniture, or Birth-right of his Brother: But even in this Senſe, it was an Equivocation, and meant to impoſe upon his Father, and, conſequently, was not juſtifiable on any Account; we think this, therefore, but a ſmall Extenuation of his Guilt, and judge this Action of his not to be imitated, or drawn into an Example by any good Man, as being wholly inexcuſable.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Iſaac *unto his Son?*

A. “ And *Iſaac* ſaid unto his Son, How is it that thou haſt found it ſo quickly, my Son? And he ſaid, Becauſe the *Lord* thy *God* brought it to me.”

Q. *But does not this ſeem another groſs Falſhood, and as inexcuſable as the former?*

A. We cannot help thinking it is; and yet Mr. *Howel* endeavours to extenuate the Guilt of this, likewiſe, and that much in the ſame Manner as the former, by another Equivocation. It is probable, he meant, ſays he, that the *Lord* had put the Invention or Contrivance of ſubſtituting the Kids inſtead of Veniſon into his Mother's Head; and by her had brought it to him. Such Equivocations, and mental Reſervations, may, indeed, ſuit very well with a crafty *Jeſuit*, but are by no Means agreeable to the Character of *Jacob*, who is ſaid to be a plain Man. Beſides, as we don't think this Action by any Means juſtifiable, either in *Rebekah* or *Jacob*, we don't know whether this Explanation does not make *God*, in ſome Meaſure, the Author of Sin, which he may permit, but never authorizes or commands. Upon the Whole, though it muſt be allowed that both *Jacob* was a good Man, and *Rebekah* a good Woman, we ſee no Neceſſity of pretending to juſtify all their Actions; neither do we ſee any Crime in affirming both *Jacob's* ſupplanting or over-reaching his Brother in his Birth-right, and both his and *Rebekah's* Fraud in obtaining *Iſaac's* Bleſſing, an inexcuſable Action; notwithſtanding *God*, in his unſearchable Wiſdom and Goodneſs, thought fit to ſuffer them to be attended with Succeſs.

Q. *What ſaid* Iſaac *unto* Jacob *upon hearing this his Anſwer?*

A. “ And *Iſaac* ſaid unto *Jacob*, Come near, I “ pray thee, that I may feel thee, my Son, whether “ thou be my very Son *Eſau*, or not.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Iſaac* was ſomewhat ſuſpicious of the Impoſture; which made him deſire to feel, that he might be convinced by his Touch, of what his Voice began to make him doubt, ſince he could not ſatisfy himſelf by his Eye-ſight: But this Caution proved to no Purpoſe, ſince the Foreſight and Contrivance of *Rebekah* had effectually provided againſt it; whence we may infer, that *God* in his unſearchable Wiſdom, might permit the Fraud to take Effect, though he by no Means ſuggeſted the Contrivance.

Q. *What did* Jacob *upon his Father's ſo ſaying?*

A. “ And *Jacob* went near unto *Iſaac* his Father; “ and he felt him, and ſaid, The Voice is *Jacob's* “ Voice, but the Hands are the Hands of *Eſau*. And “ he diſcerned him not, becauſe his Hands were “ hairy, as his Brother *Eſau's* Hands: So he bleſſed “ him.”

Q. *But is it not a Wonder, that, as* Iſaac *had this Doubt, he did not defer giving his Bleſſing, till he had ſent for them both together, whereby he muſt have diſcovered the Cheat?*

A. The only Way we can account for this Overſight, is, by aſcribing it to the over-ruling Power of Providence, which had ordained the Bleſſing for *Jacob*, though he obtained it by unjuſtifiable Means.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Iſaac *to* Jacob?

A. “ And he ſaid, Art thou my very Son *Eſau*? “ And he ſaid, I am?”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Jacob* having been already guilty of two Untruths, does not boggle at the Third; ſo true it is, that, one Sin naturally begets another.

Q. *Did* Iſaac *make any more Heſitations after this poſitive Anſwer?*

A. No; “ And he ſaid, Bring it near to me, and “ I will eat of my Sons Veniſon, that my Soul may “ bleſs thee. And he brought it near to him, and “ he did eat: And he brought him Wine, and he “ drank. And his Father *Iſaac* ſaid unto him, Come “ near now, and kiſs me, my Son. And he came “ near, and kiſſed him: and he ſmelled the Smell of “ his Raiment, and bleſſed him, and ſaid, See, the “ Smell of my Son is as the Smell of a Field which “ the *Lord* hath bleſſed. Therefore *God* give thee of “ the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatneſs of the Earth, “ and Plenty of Corn and Wine. Let People ſerve “ thee, and Nations bow down to thee; be *Lord* “ over thy Brethren, and let thy Mother's Sons bow “ down to thee: Curſed be every one that curſeth “ thee, and bleſſed be he that bleſſeth thee.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That this Bleſſing of *Iſaac's* to *Jacob* ſeems only to be temporal; but, nevertheleſs, it figuratively included all Manner of Bleſſings, both temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal; according to the Cuſtom of that Time, and the State of the Church; and it was eminently fulfilled temporally, the Land of *Canaan* being one of the moſt fruitful and plentiful Countries of the World.

Q. *Of what are we next informed, after* Iſaac *had made an End of bleſſing* Jacob?

A. “ And it came to paſs, aſſoon as *Iſaac* had “ made an End of bleſſing *Jacob*, and *Jacob* was yet “ ſcarce gone out from the Preſence of *Iſaac* his Fa-

“ ther, that *Eſau* his Brother came in from his Hunting. “ And he alſo had made ſavoury Meat, and “ brought it unto his Father; and ſaid unto his Fa- “ ther, Let my Father ariſe, and eat of his Sons “ Veniſon, that thy Soul may bleſs me.”

Q. *And what ſaid his Father, upon hearing this Speech of his beloved Son* Eſau?

A. Hoping, probably, that his Ears might have deceived him, and that he had not been impoſed on before, he haſtily queſtions him, “ And *Iſaac* his Fa- “ ther ſaid unto him, Who art thou? And he ſaid, “ I am thy Son, thy firſt-born, *Eſau.*”

Q. *How did* Iſaac *receive this unexpected Anſwer?*

A. “ And *Iſaac* trembled very exceedingly, and “ ſaid, Who, where, is he that hath taken Veniſon, “ and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before “ thou cameſt, and have bleſſed him? Yea, and he “ ſhall be bleſſed.

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. *Iſaac*'s great Affection to *Eſau*, which made him ſhudder with Grief and Horror, at the great and irreparable Miſtake he had committed; as alſo his entire Reſignation to the divine Will; which induces him to acquieſce patiently therewith, and even to confirm it, by reiterating it here again, as ſoon as it was revealed to him now, by the Spirit of Prophecy, that it was *God*'s Intent it ſhould be ſo.

Q. *What ſaid* Eſau *upon hearing this unwelcome News?*

A. “ And when *Eſau* heard the Words of his Fa- “ ther, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter “ Cry; and ſaid unto his Father, Bleſs me, even me, “ alſo, O my Father.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That he now dearly repented his former Sin, in deſpiſing his Birth-right; and would gladly have regained it, if it had been poſſible; beginning now to underſtand that it was of ineſtimable Value; but his Repentance was unavailable to that Purpoſe; as we find, *Heb.* xii. 17.

Q. *What anſwered* Iſaac *to his Son's earneſt Intreaty?*

A. “ And he ſaid, Thy Brother came with Sub- “ tilty, and hath taken thy Bleſſing.”

Q. *What Reply made* Eſau *to this?*

A. “ And he ſaid, Is he not rightly named *Jacob*? “ For he has ſupplanted me theſe two Times: He “ took away my Birthright; and behold, now he “ hath taken away my Bleſſing. And he ſaid, Haſt “ thou not reſerved a Bleſſing for me?

Q. *What is obſerveable herein?*

A. That *Eſau* perverſly puts a falſe Conſtruction upon *Jacob*'s Name, which ſignifies a *Supplanter*, as if it did not belong to him ſo properly, becauſe of the Manner of his Birth; See *Gen.* xxv. 26. as becauſe of his Treachery and Deceitfulneſs, and tripping up his Heels; he likewiſe accuſes him falſly of taking away his Birth-right, as if he had done it clandeſtinely, or by Treachery (hoping thereby, in ſome Meaſure, both to extenuate his own Offence, and appeaſe his Father, in order to obtain a Bleſſing;) whereas *Jacob* did not take it any ſuch Way, though he held his Brother to a hard Bargain; but *Eſau* ſold it profanely.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Iſaac *to his Son's reiterated Requeſt?*

A. “ And *Iſaac* anſwered and ſaid unto *Eſau*, “ Behold, I have made him thy Lord, and all his “ Brethren have I given unto him for Servants; and “ with Corn and Wine have I ſuſtained him; and “ what ſhall I do now unto thee, my Son?”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, could not* Iſaac *have bleſſed* Eſau, *with as good a Bleſſing as that he had given* Jacob?

A. No, by no Means; the Bleſſing he had given *Jacob*, made him Heir to *Abraham*'s Covenant, being done by *God*'s Appointment, and with his Concurrence, and Sanction; conſequently, it was not at *Iſaac*'s Diſpoſal, to give any one without his peculiar Approbation; and therefore the good Patriarch would not attempt it, well knowing that had he attempted any ſuch Thing, it would not have had the ſame Effect, ſince *God* would not have ratify'd it.

Q. *Did* Eſau *again renew his Requeſt, after his Father had given him this Anſwer?*

A. Yes, and that with great Earneſtneſs, and Importunity; “ And *Eſau* ſaid unto his Father, Haſt “ thou but one Bleſſing, my Father? Bleſs me, even “ me alſo, O my Father. And *Eſau* lift up his Voice, “ and Wept.”

Q. *What may one obſerve from hence?*

A. That *Eſau* either did not know the peculiar Excellency of *Jacob*'s Bleſſing and the abſolute Neceſſity thereof, *viz.* that it was impoſſible for him or his Poſterity to be happy without an Intereſt in the Covenant, and continuing in that Church to which it was appropriated; or he believed it was in *Iſaac*'s Power to get him adopted a Joint-Heir thereto with his Brother.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Iſaac *to his Son's earneſt and repeated Importunity?*

A. Perceiving by this Time, by the Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit within him, that it was agreeable to this Divine Will, he reſolved at laſt to gratify him in his Requeſt, as far as that Spirit would be pleaſed to give a Sanction to it, but no farther; “ And *Iſaac* “ his Father anſwered, and ſaid unto him, Behold, “ thy dwelling ſhall be the Fatneſs of the Earth, and “ of the Dew of Heaven from above. And by thy “ Sword ſhalt thou live, and ſhalt ſerve thy Brother: “ And it ſhall come to paſs, when thou ſhalt have “ the Dominion, that thou ſhalt break his Yoke from “ off thy Neck.”

Q. *Why this Bleſſing ſeems almoſt the ſame as* Jacob's, *where is the Difference?*

A. A very great one; ſince *Eſau*'s Bleſſing was only temporal, and ſeems rather a Prophecy of what ſhould befal him, then a Prayer that it might befal him; whereas *Jacob*'s was both ſpiritual and temporal; and beſides he had the Superiority promiſed him over his Brother, which could not but be very grating to one of *Eſau*'s haughty Temper.

Q. *Was* Eſau *pacify'd at laſt, upon receiving this Bleſſing from his Father?*

A. No, far from it; “ And *Eſau* hated *Jacob*, “ becauſe of the Bleſſing wherewith his Father bleſſed “ him: And *Eſau* ſaid in his Heart, the Days of “ Mourning for my Father are at Hand, then will I “ ſlay my Brother *Jacob*.”

Q. *Was this Reſolution of* Eſau's *ever put in Execution by him?*

A. No, for being very full of it, he ſeems to have dropt ſome Expreſſions of this Kind in his Father's Houſe, which were immediately carried to *Rebekah*; “ And the Words of *Eſau* her elder Son were told to “ *Rebekah*: And ſhe ſent and called *Jacob* her younger “ Son, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thy Brother *Eſau*, “ as touching thee, doth comfort himſelf, purpoſing “ to kill thee. Now therefore, my Son, obey my “ Voice; and ariſe, flee thou to *Laban* my Brother “ to *Haran*; And tarry with him a few Days, un- “ til thy Brother's Fury turn away; until thy Bro-

“ ther's Anger turn away from thee, and he forget
“ that which thou haſt done to him; then will I ſend
“ and fetch thee, from thence. Why ſhould I be
“ deprived alſo of you both in one Day?”

Q. *What may one obſerve from hence?*

A. It appears plainly from hence, that immediate Happineſs was neither the Conſequence of *Iſaac's* Bleſſing, nor was it expected ſo to be, either by *Rebekah*, or *Jacob*; and from thence it is evident, that both of them had form'd to themſelves a ſtrong and lively Idea, of thoſe vaſt future Advantatages, which were to be the Reward of their preſent Sufferings and Faith.

Q. *But was not* Iſaac's *Conſent neceſſary to the ſending his Son away; and was it likely he would grant it, conſidering his great Age, without a good Reaſon; or that ſhe would venture to acquaint him with the true Reaſon, which in all Probability, might not only have provoked him to Wrath, and thereby have drawn down a Curſe on her eldeſt Son, which, doubtleſs, ſhe would have been careful of avoiding, but might have proved a fatal Shock to the good old Man himſelf? How did ſhe manage to avoid all theſe Difficulties?*

A. With great Prudence and Subtilty; “And *Rebekah* ſaid to *Iſaac*, I am weary of my Life, becauſe of the Daughters of *Heth*: If *Jacob* take a Wife of the Daughters of *Heth*, ſuch as theſe which are the Daughters of the Land, what Good ſhall my Life do me?

A. What Connexion is there between this, and what ſhe was concerting before; about ſending away her beloved Jacob, *for fear of the Cruelty of his Brother* Eſau?

A. The greateſt that can be; for this was the moſt admirable Expedient, ſhe could have thought on for that Purpoſe; and at the ſame Time, to conceal from both *Iſaac* and *Eſau*, the true Reaſon of her deſiring *Jacob's* Removal; from the former for fear, of provoking him againſt his Son *Eſau*; and from the latter leſt he ſhould purſue and kill *Jacob*: Accordingly it had the deſired Effect, as we ſhall find immediately.

Chap. XXVIII.

Iſaac *calls* Jacob, *and charging him not to marry a* Canaanite, *ſends him for prevention to marry at* Padan-aram; *he renews and even enlarges the Bleſſing to him;* Jacob *goes thither;* Eſau *finding thereby his Father did not approve of the* Canaanites *marries* Iſhmael's *Daughter;* Jacob *being benighted in his Journey towards* Haran, *ſtops by the Way, takes of the Stones of the Place for his Pillows, and lies down there to Sleep; He has an extraordinary Viſion there, and the Covenant renew'd to him concerning* Canaan, *and the promiſed Seed;* Jacob *awakes, acknowledges* God's *Preſence there, and is ſtruck with a reverential Awe; He ſets up the Stones for a Pillar, pours Oil upon it, and alters the Name of the Place from* Luz *to* Bethel; *He makes a Vow to* God, *in Return for his gracious Promiſes.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And *Iſaac* called *Jacob*, and bleſſed him,
“ and charged him, and ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt
“ not take a Wife of the Daughters, of *Canaan*.
“ Ariſe, go to *Padan-aram*, to the Houſe of *Bethnel* thy Mother's, and take thee a Wife from thence
“ of the Daughters of *Laban* thy Mother's Brother.”

Q. *What are we to obſerved from thence?*

A. That this is the immediate Reſult of what *Rebekah* had remonſtrated to him in the laſt Chapter, concerning *Jacob's* intermarrying with the Daughters of *Heth*: The good old Patriarch rouzed by this Remonſtrance, and apprehenſive of the ill Conſequences of ſuch an Alliance; being by this Time ſenſible that the Promiſe made to *Abraham*, and renewed to himſelf, was to be compleated in the Iſſue of *Jacob*; ſet immediately about preventing his corrupting his Blood, by mixing with any of thoſe Nations which were to be deſtroyed; wherefore he forthwith calls him, gives him a ſtrict Charge againſt taking a Wife of the Daughters of *Canaan*, and orders him inſtantly away to *Padan-aram* for that Purpoſe.

Q. *What farther did* Iſaac *then ſay to* Jacob?

A. “And *God Almighty* bleſs thee, and make thee
“ fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayeſt be a
“ Multitude of People: And give thee the Bleſſing
“ of *Abraham* to thee, and to thy Seed with thee;
“ that thou mayeſt inherit the Land wherein thou
“ art a Stranger, which *God* gave unto *Abraham*.
“ And *Iſaac* ſent away *Jacob*, and he went to *Padan-aram*, unto *Laban*, Son of *Bethuel* the *Syrian*,
“ the Brother of *Rebekah*, *Jacob's* and *Eſau's* Mother.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That *Iſaac* not only confirms now, knowingly, the Bleſſing *Jacob* had before drawn from him by Deceit, but even adds to it, and increaſes it; for, whereas before he prophetically gave him only Riches, and Power, and Superiority over his Brethren, now he not only intreats the *Lord* for the ſame again, but deſires alſo, that he would graciouſly multiply his Seed, and make him Heir of the Promiſes, which he had vouchſafed to his Servant *Abraham*: Which Prayer, accordingly, we ſhall ſoon find the *Lord* was pleaſed graciouſly to hear, and grant.

Q. *And what did* Eſau *when this came to his Ears?*

A. “When *Eſau* ſaw that *Iſaac* had bleſſed *Jacob*,
“ and ſent him away to *Padan-aram* to take a Wife
“ from thence, and that as he bleſſed him, he gave
“ him a Charge, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not take a Wife
“ of the Daughters of *Canaan*; and that *Jacob*
“ obeyed his Father and Mother, and was gone to
“ *Padan-aram*; And *Eſau* ſeeing that the Daughters
“ of *Canaan* pleaſed not *Iſaac* his Father: Then
“ went *Eſau* unto *Iſhmael*, and took unto the Wives
“ which he had, *Mahalath* the Daughter of *Iſhmael*,
“ *Abraham's* Son, the Siſter of *Nebajoth*, to be his
“ Wife.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That *Eſau* finding by the ſending away *Jacob*, with a Bleſſing, and a ſtrict Charge not to intermarry with the Daughters of *Canaan*, how diſagreeable the *Canaanitiſh* Women, and conſequently his *Hittite* Wives, were to his Father and Mother, thought he would endeavour to mend the Matter, by taking to himſelf a third Wife, of another Stock, and accordingly marry'd one of his Uncle *Iſhmael's* Daughters, hoping thereby to ingratiate himſelf with his Father. But herein he ſeems to have taken very wrong Meaſures; *firſt*, he mends one Fault, by committing another; in taking a third Wife, when he had one too many before; *Secondly*, She was taken out of that Stock that was begotten to Bondage, and utterly incapable of the Inherritance; and *Thirdly*, She was Daughter to a Man who had ſet up a Claim, both to the temporal Poſſeſſions of *Abraham*, and to the Promiſes made to him; wherefore, we think it could not be very agreeable either to *Iſaac* or *Rebekah* though the Scripture has left us entirely in the Dark as to that Matter.

Q. *What is the next Thing we hear of* Jacob?

A. " And *Jacob* went out from *Beerſheba*, and " went towards *Haran*. And he lighted upon a " certain Place, and tarried there all Night, becauſe " the Sun was Set: And he took of the Stones of " that Place, and put them for his Pillows, and lay " down in that Place to Sleep. And he dreamed, " and behold a Ladder ſet upon the Earth, and the " Top of it reached to Heaven: And behold, the " Angels of *God* aſcending and deſcending on it. " And behold, the *Lord* ſtood above it; and ſaid, " I am the *Lord God* of *Abraham* thy Father, and " the *God* of *Iſaac*: The Land whereon thou lieſt to " thee will I give it, and to thy Seed. And thy " Seed ſhall be as the Duſt of the Earth; and thou " ſhalt ſpread abroad to the *Weſt*, and to the *Eaſt*, " and to the *North*, and to the *South*: and in thee, " and in thy Seed, ſhall all the Families of the Earth " be bleſſed. And behold, I am with thee, and " will keep thee in all Places whither thou goeſt, " and will bring thee again into this Land: For I " will not leave thee, till I have done that which I " have ſpoken to thee of."

Q. *What may be the Purport and Meaning of this Viſion?*

A. This Ladder may be conſidered, *Firſt* literally; and ſo it repreſented to *Jacob* the Providence of the *Almighty*, who, though he dwells peculiarly in Heaven, extends his Care likewiſe to the Earth; and to that End particularly makes uſe of the Angels, as Miniſtring Spirits, for the Good of his People: And theſe Angels did not appear idle, or ſtanding ſtill, but were always in Motion, aſcending to *God*, to receive his Commands, or deſcending to the Earth, for the Execution of them. This, therefore, was a moſt ſeaſonable Viſion for *Jacob*, in his forlorn, and ſad Condition, that he might thereby ſee, that notwithſtanding he was perſecuted by Men, and forced to fly away ſecretly, for the Preſervation of his Life, yet he neither was, nor ſhould be neglected, or forſaken by *God*, in this whole Journey. Or, *2dly*, it may be conſidered myſtically, and ſo it repreſents *Chriſt*, by whom a Communication is kept open between Heaven and Earth; who is the *Way* to Heaven, as this Ladder was; and who, as the Head of Angels is perpetually ſending them, either to, or from the Earth, to miniſter to the Heirs of Salvation: In Effect, our Saviour himſelf ſeems to allude to this Viſion, and to give it this Interpretation, when he ſays, *John* i. 51. *Hereafter ye ſhall ſee the Heavens open, and the Angels of* God *aſcending and deſcending upon the* Son of Man.

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob *when he waked out of his Sleep, after this Viſion?*

A. " And *Jacob* awaked out of his Sleep, and he " ſaid, Surely the *Lord* is in this Place; and I knew " it not. And he was afraid, and ſaid, How dread" ful is this Place! This is none other but the Houſe " of *God*, and this is the Gate of Heaven."

Q. *But why ſhould* Jacob *be afraid, at a Viſion that was ſo gracious and comfortable?*

A. It does not mean that he was under any Terror, from any Apprehenſions he was under of Danger in that Place; but only that he was ſtruck with a reverential Awe, as all good Men muſt be, at conſidering himſelf, and all his Actions, immediately under the Inſpection of his *Creator*.

Q. *What did* Jacob *when he aroſe in the Morning?*

A. " And *Jacob* roſe up early in the Morning, " and took the Stone that he had put for his Pillow, " and ſet it up for a Pillar, and poured Oil upon the " Top of it. And he called the Name of that Place " *Bethel*: But the Name of that City was called *Luz* " at the firſt."

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon? And how are to underſtand the Words, he named the Place* Bethel, *but that City's Name was* Luz *at firſt, when it appears from* Verſe 11. *that* Jacob *ſlept in an open Place, and had no better Pillow for his Head than a Stone?*

A. By *Jacob* riſing *ſoon* to perform his Devotions, we may obſerve, that it is our Duty to riſe early in the Morning, to return Thanks to our *Creator*, and *Preſerver* for the Mercies of the Night; and not to lie ſnoring in Bed till Noon, as is the Faſhion at preſent: By his ſtaying to do it, when he was upon a Journey, and conſequently in a Hurry, and eſpecially as he was in a forlorn Condition, we may learn; that no Pretence, no Circumſtances whatſoever are ſufficient to excuſe us, from this great and neceſſary Duty: And as to the naming the Place *Bethel*, that is, the *Houſe of God*, whereas it was called *Luz* at firſt, and terming it a City in one Verſe, whereas it ſeems to have been an open Place in the other; it may be accounted for divers Ways: *Firſt*, *Luz* might be the Name of the City neareſt the Place where *Jacob* lay; which City might afterwards run to Ruin, and another be built upon the very Spot where the Pillar was, and named *Bethel*; as it is evident the *Jewiſh Bethel* was, long after this, by the Tribe of *Benjamin*. *Secondly*, The City of *Luz* might be built by the *Canaanites* upon that very Spot, after the Event, and might afterwards have its Name changed, or rather reſtored by the Tribe of *Benjamin*, in Memory of this Event; ſince the Words *at the firſt*, ſeem to imply no more, than that the firſt City there built, was called *Luz*. Or, *Thirdly*, Notwithſtanding it is called a certain Place in one Verſe, and a City afterwards in another, it is not at all improbable, that *Luz* might be then built, and all this might happen in an open Part of the City: For as *Jacob* was *alone*, a *Traveller*, and in a *mean Condition*, and as there were no *Inns* in thoſe Days, by reaſon of his *mean Appearance*, none of the Inhabitants might have the Civility to offer him a Lodging, or to take him in; ſo that he might be forced to ſleep in an open Place of mere Neceſſity; and he might chooſe it rather than the Fields, as the moſt ſecure of the two; being within a walled Town, where he might call out for Aſſiſtance in caſe of Danger. The only Difficulty that occurs then, is about the Pillar; but we are not to imagine this a regular Pillar, but only three or four Stones laid upon one another in a Hurry, and a little Oil poured upon them, and ſo left; and all this, before the luxurious Inhabitants in that Part of the Town were up.

Q. *What next did* Jacob *after this?*

A. " And *Jacob* vowed a Vow, ſaying, if *God* " will be with me, and will keep me in the Way " that I go, and will give me Bread to eat, and Rai" ment to put on; ſo that I come again to my Fa" ther's Houſe in Peace: Then ſhall the *Lord* be my " *God*. And this Stone which I have ſet for a Pillar, " ſhall be *God*'s Houſe: And of all that thou ſhalt " give me, I will ſurely give the Tenth unto thee."

Q. *Does not this ſeem to argue a Diffidence of the Promiſes given him juſt before, and a mercenary Way of making Conditions, and bargaining, with his Creator?*

A. This Text has been often ſo miſconſtrued; but the Miſtake ariſes from the *Hebrew* (*im*) being rendered (*if*), which ought rather to have been tranſlated, ſtated, as it is frequently, *ſince*, or *ſeeing that*, or *inaſmuch as*: For the Caſe ſeems to have been this; *Jacob* having received ſuch gracious Promiſes in a Viſion; builds a Pillar; conſecrates it with Oil; and returns Thanks to his Maker for them, aſſoon as he awakes; amongſt the reſt, he ſays: Since, O *God*, thou haſt graciouſly promiſed to be with me, and to keep me in my Way; and to bring me again to this Land, and not to leave me deſtitute, thou ſhalt be my *God*; and, at my Return, this ſhall be the Place where I will offer my Prayers to thee; and I will ſet apart for thy Uſe and Service, the Tenth of all thou ſhalt give.

Chap. XXIX.

Jacob *comes to the Well of* Haran; *he enquires of the Shepherds about* Laban; *they tell him his Daughter* Rachel *is coming with the Sheep*; Rachel *cometh up to the Well*; Jacob *rolls away the Stone and waters her Flock*; *he kiſſeth her, weeps, and acquaints her who he is*; *ſhe runs, and tells it her Father*; *who runs to meet him, embraces him, kiſſes him, and carries him home*; *where* Jacob *informs him what had happened to him*: *He bargains to ſerve ſeven Years for* Rachel; *he performs his Service, and demands her*; Laban *makes a Feaſt, and invites all the Men of the Place*; *which done, at Night, he cheats him, by ſubſtituting* Leah *his eldeſt Daughter in her Stead*; Jacob *on promiſing other ſeven Years Service, obtains* Rachel *alſo*; Rachel *is loved more than* Leah; *for which Reaſon the* Lord *openeth the Womb of the latter, but the former is barren*; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, *and* Judah *born*.

Q. W*Hat did* Jacob *after having vowed this Vow?*

A. “ Then *Jacob* went on his Journey, and came “ into the Land of the People of the *Eaſt*.”

Q. *What Country is the Land of the* Eaſt?

A. Meſopotamia which lay *Eaſtward* from *Canaan*, whence *Jacob* came.

Q. *Being arrived there, what is the firſt Thing we are told befell him?*

A. “ And he looked, and behold, a Well in the “ Field, and lo, there were three Flocks of Sheep “ lying by it; for out of that Well they watered the “ Flocks: And a great Stone was upon the Well's “ Mouth. And thither were all the Flock's gathered: And they rolled the Stone from the Well's “ Mouth, and watered the Sheep, and put the Stone “ again upon the Well's Mouth in his Place. And “ *Jacob* ſaid unto them, My Brethren, Whence be “ ye? And they ſaid, Of *Haran* are we.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That the Divine Providence which *God* had promiſed ſhould be with him, ſo directed his Steps, without his Knowledge, that he came of his own Accord, to the very Place, to which he had been ordered by his Father to go: Whence we may obſerve, that the Man who has Providence for his Director, does not ſtand in need of any other Guide. Happy the Man who is under ſuch a Direction!

Q. *What Reply made* Jacob *to them, on hearing this welcome News?*

A. “ And he ſaid unto them, Know ye *Laban*, “ the Son of *Nahor*? And they ſaid, We know “ him. And he ſaid unto them, Is he well? And “ they ſaid, He is well: And behold, *Rachel* his “ Daughter, cometh with the Sheep.”

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob *upon this?*

A. Miſtaking their Meaning, and thinking they deſigned to fold their Sheep ſo ſoon, *Jacob*, who was throughly verſed in ſuch Matters, was willing courteouſly to direct them better; “ And he ſaid, Lo, it “ is yet high Day, neither is it Time that the Cattle “ be gathered together: Water ye the Sheep, and “ feed them.”

Q. *What Anſwer made the Shepherds to this?*

A. “ And they ſaid, We cannot, until all the “ Flocks be gathered together, and 'till they roll the “ Stone from the Well's Mouth; then we water the “ Sheep.”

Q. *But how are we to underſtand this, when we find but two Verſes after, that* Jacob *alone rolled the Stone from the Well?*

A. The *Jews* who have invented a hundred abſurd Stories, to the Memory of this their great Founder, do not ſcruple to affirm this to have been by the Means of a miraculous Strength then conferred upon *Jacob*; whereas it is obvious to any Man of common Senſe, that the Meaning of the Shepherds is no more than we *cannot*, becauſe we *may not*; that is, becauſe it is not the Cuſtom of this Place: The *Eaſtern* Nations being very exact in obſerving ſettled Cuſtoms in theſe Reſpects; as a Well is of great Value with them, by reaſon of the great Scarcity of Water, eſpecially good Water, in thoſe hot Countries; and hence it is, we read in Scripture, of ſo many Diſputes about Wells.

Q. *What happened in the Interim of this Diſcourſe?*

A. “ And while he yet ſpake with them, *Rachel* “ came with her Father's Sheep, for ſhe kept them. “ And it came to paſs, when *Jacob* ſaw *Rachel*, the “ Daughter of *Laban*, his Mother's Brother; that “ *Jacob* went near, and rolled the Stone from the “ Well's Mouth, and watered the Flock of *Laban* “ his Mother's Brother.”

Q. *What may we obſerve thereupon?*

A. That the Reaſon of *Jacob*'s being ſo ready to do this Act of Courteſy for *Rachel*, might probably be his imagining, this was the very Perſon deſtined by Providence to be his Bride; and this he might very reaſonably conclude, from the great Similitude of Circumſtances, between this his firſt Interview with her, and *Eliezer* his Grandfather's Servant's with *Rebekah*; many Years before, in the ſame Place, and on the ſame Occaſion: However that be, it is certain, he conceived a tender Affection for her, from the firſt Moment he ſaw her; which was the Reaſon of his agreeing afterwards to pay ſo dear for her.

Q. *What paſſed at this firſt Interview between* Jacob *and* Rachel?

A. “ And *Jacob* kiſſed *Rachel*, and lifted up his “ Voice and wept. And *Jacob* told *Rachel*, that he “ was her Father's Brother, and that he was *Rebekah*'s Son: And ſhe ran, and told her Father.”

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That *Jacob* now ſhed Tears of Joy, at this, as he thought, happy Interview; but he little imagined how tedious a Servitude, and to how hard a Maſter, ſhe was to coſt him.

Q. *And what did* Rachel's *Father, on hearing of the Arrival of his Nephew?*

A. “ And it came to paſs, when *Laban* heard the “ Tidings of *Jacob* his Siſter's Son, that he ran to meet “ him, and embraced him, and kiſſed him, and “ brought him to his Houſe. And he told *Laban* “ all theſe Things.”

Q. *What may we obſerve thereupon?*

A. That *Laban*, though a covetous Man, received him very courteouſly at firſt, not doubting, perhaps, but he ſhould either have an ample Recompence, from *Iſaac* and *Rebekah*, whom he knew to be very rich, or that *Jacob* would make but a ſhort Stay with him; but when he found it was likely to be otherwiſe, he ſoon contrived, *Jew* like, how to make as good a Bargain for himſelf, and as hard a one for *Jacob*, as he poſſibly could; without having any longer the leaſt Regard to him as his near Kinſman, and what was yet more, his Son-in-law, by a double Tie. Whereby we may learn, that as it is impoſſible for an *Ethiopian* to change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots, ſo it is impoſſible for a covetous Man long to diſguiſe his ſordid Temper; it will break out, ſpite of all Reſtraint; and no Tie is ſufficient to entitle one to any Favour or Mercy from him.

Q. *What ſaid* Laban to Jacob, *when he had acquainted him with all?*

A. "And *Laban* ſaid to him, Surely thou art my "Bone, and my Fleſh: And he abode with him the "Space of a Month. And *Laban* ſaid unto *Jacob*, "Becauſe thou art my Brother, ſhouldſt thou there"fore ſerve me for nought? Tell me, what ſhall thy "Wages be?"

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. No doubt, when *Laban* heard of the Arrival of his Siſter's Son, he looked for the Camels, and the Attendants that came to attend his Siſter *Rebekah*; not thinking but *Iſaac*'s Son ought to come, with at leaſt as good a Retinue, as *Abraham*'s Servant; but finding only a ſingle Man, with his Staff, he was ſomewhat ſurprized thereat. Underſtanding, however, from him the Reaſon, that he durſt not ſet out with any Retinue, for fear of being purſued by *Eſau*, he received him kindly; not queſtioning but his Siſter would ſend after him every thing that was ſuitable to his Birth, and the Errand about which he came; as indeed it is ſomewhat ſurprizing his Parents did not, eſpecially when they found he made ſo long a Stay there. But finding, after a Month's Reſidence with him, that no Preſents, or Attendants came, he began probably to alter his Notions, and look upon him as one abandoned by them; at leaſt, he altered his Carriage, and began to deal with him as if he thought ſo: For finding that *Jacob* underſtood Sheep admirably well, he ſoon bethought himſelf of a Way, how to make his Stay uſeful to him, inſtead of chargeable, which was to draw from him an exorbitant Dowry for his Daughters, by Way of Service; this makes him now aſk him craftily, What his Wages ſhould be? For as *Jacob* had informed him before, that his Buſineſs there was not only to fly from *Eſau*, but to take him a Wife out of his Family, and as he perceived he was ſmitten with the Charms of his youngeſt Daughter, he rightly judged he would demand her in lieu of his Service; and he was fully reſolved to make him pay dear enough for her, without having any Regard to his being a near Relation, whence we may obſerve both his Covetouſneſs and Cunning.

Q. *How many Daughters had* Laban? *And what were their Names; and what ſort of Perſons were they?*

A. "And *Laban* had two Daughters: the Name "of the elder was *Leah*, and the Name of younger "*Rachel*. *Leah* was tender-eyed, but *Rachel* was "beautiful, and well-favoured."

Q. *This needs no Explanation; proceed therefore to tell me, what Anſwer* Jacob *made to* Laban's *Queſtion, what his Wages ſhould be?*

A. "And *Jacob* loved *Rachel*, and ſaid, I will "ſerve thee ſeven Years for *Rachel* thy younger "Daughter."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. How enſnaring Beauty is, even to good Men; for we do not find that ſhe any ways excelled her Siſter in the Perfections of the Mind; which *Jacob* ought chiefly to have regarded, in the Choice of a Wife.

Q. *Did not* Laban *readily cloſe with ſo advantageous a Propoſal?*

A. Undoubtedly; "And *Laban* ſaid, It is better "that I ſhould give her thee, than that I ſhould give "her to another Man: Abide with me."

Q. *What may one obſerve from this Anſwer?*

A. That had there then been any *Jeſuits* Schools, one would have ſworn *Laban* had been brought up in one of them, ſince the moſt ſubtle *Jeſuit* could not have made a more cunning Equivocation: For he expreſſes himſelf ſo as that *Jacob* underſtood it as an abſolute Agreement, whereas he left himſelf a Hole to creep out; that is, Room to excuſe himſelf, for not performing the Conditions agreed on by *Jacob*; which, it is evident, by the Sequel, he never meant to fulfil, at leaſt, without a new Bargain. He did not therefore promiſe to give him *Rachel*, but only tells him, It was better for him to give her to him, than to another Man; which *Jacob* fondly interpreting in his own Favour (not remembering his own Equivocations with his Father *Iſaac*) the other obtained his Ends, and retained him in his Service.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Jacob?

A. "And *Jacob* ſerved ſeven Years for *Rachel*: "And they ſeemed unto him but a few Days, for "the Love he had unto her."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. It would ſwell our Comments to too immoderate a Length, ſhould we give the Reaſons why this Text, plain and obvious as it may ſeem to moſt Readers, is not to be underſtood literally; though ſeveral learned Men have been for ſo doing, notwithſtanding its being attended with the greateſt Abſurdities, which they have endeavoured, almoſt as abſurdly to reconcile. Theſe Abſurdities ariſe from the Chronology of *Jacob*'s Hiſtory, which will appear not only to be very much perplexed, but even perfectly incredible, or unintelligible, upon underſtanding it literally. Not to mention other Difficulties, let it ſuffice to ſay, that according to theſe Gentlemen, *Jacob* muſt have had twelve Children born to him in the laſt *ſeven* Years of his Service; which can hardly be reconciled to what *Moſes* tells us, in his Hiſtory; for therein *Leah* is ſaid to have left off Childbearing, for ſome Time after her being delivered of *Judah*; then ſhe gave her Maid *Zilpah* to *Jacob*, who bare unto him, firſt *Gad*, and afterwards *Aſher*; and after all this, *Leah* brought forth three other Children, having been the Mother of *Reuben*, *Simeon*, *Levi*, and *Judah* before. How this could happen in *ſeven* Years, can ſcarce be conceived: But this is only a trifling Difficulty, if compared with thoſe that ariſe from the following Part of the *Moſaic* Account; for immediatly after *Leah*'s Conception of her fifth Son, *Iſſachar*, *Reuben* her firſt-born was old enough to go out into the Fields, and gather *Mandrakes*, which is very ſurprizing. But this is not all; if we go on to the Relation of *Jacob*'s removing into *Egypt*, we ſhall have Numbers of improbable Events, break in upon us all at once, which are hardly to be accounted for under a Miracle. For *Judah* can be ſuppoſed to have been but forty-three, or forty-four Years old at moſt; he muſt have married at twelve, and have had *Er* at thirteen; he and his Brother *Onan* muſt have married at twelve Years old each; *Tamar* muſt have continued a Widow, and waited till *Shelah* was grown up, during which *Judah*'s Wife muſt have died, and *Tamar* have born *Pharez* to *Judah*; and all this, within the Compaſs of three Years: After this, *Pharez* muſt have married at twelve, and his Sons *Hezron* and *Hamul* muſt have been Twins, and have been carried into *Egypt* the very Year they were born; Computations ſo improbable, that we think they altogether deſtroy the Credit of their Suppoſition, who would have *Jacob* to have reſided ſeven Years in *Haran*, before his firſt Marriage.

We come now to ſhew the Reaſonableneſs of our own Interpretation; and we think, it is no weak Argument in its Favour, that by admitting it, all theſe Difficulties will be avoided. As to the Text of Scripture uſually cited, in Defence of the literal Explanation, we ſhall proceed preſently to examine them, and from thence it will appear, that our Sentiments are not irreconcilable with thoſe Expreſſions. Our Opinion then is, that *Jacob* married both his Wives, within ſix Weeks after his firſt Arrival at *Laban*'s. Let us now ſee whether this cannot be reconciled with what is ſaid, verſe 20. *And* Jacob *ſerved* ſeven *Years*. This, we think, may very well be underſtood to mean no more, then that he *covenanted* to ſerve ſeven Years, for ſuch a Manner of ſpeaking is both agreeable to the Idiom of the *Hebrew* Language, and to the Phraſes elſewhere made uſe of in Scripture. Then as to verſe 21. Where it is ſaid (*for my Days are fulfilled*) it hath Reference only to the Month of Probations, and might be paraphraſed thus; I have already ſerved a ſufficient Time for you to judge of my Ability; ſince, therefore, thoſe Days are fulfilled, and thou art ſatisfy'd with my Propoſal, of ſerving thee *ſeven* Years, give me my Wife, *&c.* As to his Expoſtulation which *Laban* wherein he is ſaid to have ſaid, *Did I not ſerve thee for* Rachel? It ſignifies no more then, did I not *covenant*, or *begin* to ſerve thee? That this is no uncommon Way of Speech, in the Scriptures, we might prove from various Examples; but to prevent this Note's ſwelling to too immoderate a Length, we ſhall only obſerve, that, *King*'s vi. 2. it is ſaid, *And the Houſe* which *King* Solomon built *for the Lord*, notwithſtanding it is evident that he then only began to build it; wherefore, without wreſting the Text, this Paſſage in *Geneſis*, may alſo be taken in the ſame Manner; from whence it follows, that what we have advanced, is a full Solution of all thoſe chronological Perplexities before recited, and at the ſame Time does no Violence to the Text. If Authority may be allowed to have any weight in this Caſe, we might quote ſeveral *Hebrew* Doctors, and learned Criticks, particularly the Reverend Mr. *Craddock*, and Mr. *Bedford* of our own Country, and above all, the judicious Lord Primate *Uſher*, in Defence of this Method, of computing the Time of *Jacob*'s marrying. As to its being ſaid, the ſeven Years ſeemed to him but a few Days, for the Love he had to her, this muſt not be underſtood of the Time, which in ſuch Caſes ſeems tedious, but of the Service, that he loved her ſo dear, that he thought ſeven Years Service not ſo much as ſhe deſerved.

Q. *What is farther ſaid concerning* Jacob?

A. "And *Jacob* ſaid unto *Laban*, Give me my "Wife, (for my Days are fulfilled) that I may go in "unto her." We have already explained above, how this is to be underſtood.

Q. *What did* Laban *upon* Jacob'*s making this Demand?*

A. "And *Laban* gathered together all the Men "of the Places, and made a Feaſt."

Q. *What might be* Laban's *Meaning in ſo doing?*

A. That the Marriage might be the more ſolemn and publick; and that *Jacob*, being over-awed by their Preſence and Authority, might not dare to diſannul the Marriage, and reject *Leah* afterwards, which otherwiſe he might have done.

Q. *And what did* Laban *in the Evening after the Feaſt?*

A. "And it came to paſs, in the Evening, that "he took *Leah*, his Daughter, and brought her to "him; And he went in unto her."

Q. *How could* Jacob *be ſo impoſed on, to miſtake one Siſter for the other?*

A. The Occaſion of this Deceit, was the Cuſtom of thoſe Times, which was to bring the Wife to her Husband, in the Dark, and with a Veil upon her Face; and *Leah* having been previouſly inſtructed by her Father, and being confederate with him in the Impoſture, was, undoubtedly, very careful not to diſcover herſelf to him, by her Speech, or any other Way.

Q. *And what Attendants did* Laban *give with his Daughter?*

A. "And *Luban* gave unto his Daughter *Leah*, "*Zilpah* his Maid, for an Hand-Maid."

Q. *Was not that a poor Retinue for his Daughter, conſidering his Subſtance?*

A. Undoubtedly it was, and ſhews his great Covetouſneſs and Injuſtice; that becauſe *Jacob* could give her no other Dowry for his Wife, than his Labour; therefore he would give her no other Portion than one Slave, or Hand-Maid.

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob, *when he came to find out the Fraud next Morning?*

A. "And it came to paſs, that in the Morning, "behold it was *Leah*: And he ſaid unto *Laban*, "what is this that thou haſt done unto me? Did not "I ſerve with thee for *Rachel*? Wherefore then "haſt thou beguiled me?"

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That though *Laban* could not fairly anſwer this Queſtion, *Jacob*, if he laid his Hand upon his Heart, could; *Jacob*, perhaps, might think, that becauſe his Impoſture, in deceiving his Father, was attended with Succeſs, he had committed no Sin therein; but the *Almighty*, here returns it home upon him, when he, probably, had forgotten it; and ſuffers him to be ſenſibly puniſhed in the ſame Kind, by the Sin of another, ſo that he might evidently read his Sin in his Puniſhment.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Laban *to* Jacob, *for ſo unjuſtifiable a Fraud?*

A. "And *Laban* ſaid, it muſt not be ſo done in our "Country, to give the Younger before the Firſt-"born."

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That this ſeems only to have been a falſe Pretence; but had it been never ſo true, Cuſtom ought to have given Place to Juſtice; beſides, he knew this, when *Jacob* firſt covenanted for her; why did not he object it then? Undoubtedly, becauſe that would have prevented his Deſign; which ſhews, that this was a premeditated Fraud, calculated to engage *Jacob*'s Service for fourteen Years.

Q. *What farther ſaid Laban in order to appeaſe Jacob?*

A. "Fulfil her Week, and we will give thee this "alſo, for the Service which thou ſhalt ſerve me yet "other ſeven Years."

Q. *What was* Laban's *Reaſon for requiring this?*

A. That a Week's Cohabitation with her, might either knit his Affections to her, or at leaſt confirm the Contract of Marriage with her, ſo as he ſhould not put her away; as *Laban* juſtly was afraid he would.

Q. *Did* Jacob *agree to this unreaſonable Propoſal of ſerving ſeven Years more?*

A. Yes, not ſeeing any Remedy, as he was a Stranger and Friendleſs, in a ſtrange Country; and being deſirous of having *Rachel*, on any Terms, tho' never ſo hard: “ And *Jacob* did ſo, and fulfilled her Week; “ and he gave him *Rachel* his Daughter to Wife “ alſo. And *Laban* gave to *Rachel*, his Daughter, “ *Bilhah* his Maid, to be her Hand-Maid.”

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That it was not ſo ſtrange for *Laban*, who was no good Man, to give, as it was for *Jacob*, who certainly was a religious Man, to agree ſo readily to the Propoſal, and take, not only two Wives, but two Siſters; which ſeems againſt the Law of Nature, and was expreſly forbidden by *God* afterwards, *Levit.* xviii. 18. This ſhews us how ſtrongly we ought to be upon our Guard againſt our Inclinations; and how powerful they are, even with the beſt of Men: It is certain, however, in *Jacob*'s Vindication, that *God* might diſpenſe with his own Inſtitution, (and we ought charitably to judge that he did ſo in this Caſe) and might permit ſuch Things in the Patriarchs, for ſpecial Reaſons, which are not to be drawn into Example.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Jacob?

A. “ And he went in alſo unto *Rachel*, and loved “ *Rachel* alſo more than *Leah*, and ſerved with him “ yet ſeven other Years.”

Q. *How did the* Lord *make* Leah *amends for her being loved leſs than* Rachel?

A. “ And when the *Lord* ſaw that *Leah* was hated, “ he opened her Womb: But *Rachel* was barren.”

Q. *What may we obſerve thereupon?*

A. How impartially and wiſely *God* weighs out to us, our Favours and Croſſes, in an equal Ballance; ſo tempering our Sorrows, that they may not overwhelm us, and make us ſink under them, and our Joys, that they may not tranſport us too much; each one hath ſome Matter of Envy to others, and of Grief to himſelf; *Leah* envies *Rachel* her Beauty and Love; *Rachel* envies *Leah* her Fruitfulneſs; yet *Leah* would not willingly be barren, nor *Rachel* blear-eyed. Each of them had ſome Reaſon to be contented with her own Lot, and as much Reaſon, at the ſame Time, not to deſpiſe the other: So admirably does *God* diſtribute and Proportion his Gifts to every one.

Q. *What next are we told of* Leah?

A. “ And *Leah* conceived and bare a Son, and “ ſhe called his Name *Reuben:* (that is, *Behold a* “ *Son:*) For ſhe ſaid, ſurely the *Lord* hath looked “ upon my Affliction; now therefore my Huſband “ will love me. And, ſhe conceived again, and bare “ a Son; and ſaid, Becauſe the Lord hath heard “ that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this “ Son alſo: And ſhe called his Name *Simeon*, (that “ is, *hearing.*) And ſhe conceived again, and bare “ a Son; and ſaid, Now this Time will my Huſband “ be joined unto me, becauſe I have born him three “ Sons: Therefore was his Name called *Levi* (that is, “ *joined.*) And ſhe conceived again, and bare a Son; “ and ſhe ſaid, now will I praiſe the *Lord:* Therefore ſhe called his Name *Judah*, (that is, *Praiſe*) “ and left bearing.”

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That *Leah* had good Reaſon to rejoice, and hope to gain her Huſband's Affection, conſidering how great a Bleſſing a numerous Offspring was accounted throughout the *Eaſt*; from whence ſhe believed that *Jacob* would eſteem her on her becoming fruitful, rather than her Siſter, who brought him no Children. Beſides Fruitfulneſs was, on good Grounds, to be reckoned a greater Bleſſing in *Jacob*'s Family than any other, and conſequently Barrenneſs a greater Reproach; becauſe the *bleſſed Seed* was to proceed from his Loins; all which made *Leah* conclude, and that not without great Probability, that ſhe ſhould now become the beſt beloved, though we do not find that *Jacob*'s Affection to *Rachel* abated in the leaſt, by Reaſon of her having no Children.

CHAP. XXX.

Rachel *continuing barren, envies her Siſter, and impatiently deſiring Children breaks out into a very unadviſed Speech to her Huſband; He is angry thereat and reproves her; She gives him her Handmaid* Bilhah, *who bears him* Dan *and* Naphtali. Leah *ceaſing to bear, gives him alſo her Handmaid* Zilpah, *who bears* Gad *and* Aſher; Reuben *goes into the Field, finds Mandrakes, and brings them to his Mother;* Rachel *deſires them;* Leah *gives her a churliſh Anſwer, but at laſt they bargain;* Jacob *purſuant thereto goes in to* Leah, *who bears* Iſſachar; *and afterwards* Zebulun, *and* Dinah; God *remembers* Rachel, *and opens her Womb; She conceives and bears* Joſeph; Jacob *deſires to return into his own Country, with his Wives, and Children;* Laban *intreats him to ſtay; finding by Experience that* God *bleſſed him for* Jacob's *Sake; They make a new Contract;* Jacob's *Policy, and the Succeſs thereof.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And when *Rachel* ſaw that ſhe bare *Jacob* “ no Children, *Rachel* envied her Siſter, and ſaid “ unto *Jacob*, give me Children, or elſe I die.”

Q. *But was not this a very unadviſed, and wicked Speech?*

A. Undoubtedly it was, for it bordered upon Blaſphemy, and ſtruck at *God* through *Jacob*'s Sides; for which, therefore, ſhe afterwards ſmarted, dying by that very Means, by which ſhe hoped to prolong her Life; *Geneſis* xxxv. 18.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Jacob *to this raſh Expreſſion of* Rachel's?

A. “ And *Jacob*'s Anger was kindled againſt *Ra-* “ *chel*; and he ſaid, Am I in *God's* ſtead, who hath “ held from thee the Fruit of thy Womb?”

Q. *What ſaid* Rachel *to this juſt and warm Reproof?*

A. She was not much amended by it, for perſiſting ſtill in her impatient Deſire of having Children, by any Means whatever, “ She ſaid, Behold my Maid “ *Bilhah*, go in unto her; and ſhe ſhall bear upon my “ Knees, that I may alſo have Children by her.”

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon?*

A. We may obſerve, in *Rachel*, the Image of her Grandmother *Sarah*, both in the Beauty of her Perſon, in her Actions, and her Succeſs; She, alſo, will needs ſubſtitute her Hand-maid, to make her a Mother, and at laſt, beyond all Hope, herſelf conceiveth. It is a weak Greedineſs and Impatience in us to acquire *God*'s Bleſſings by unlawful Means; what a Proof and Praiſe had it been of her Faith, if ſhe had waited *God*'s appointed Time, and would rather have endured her Barrenneſs, than her Huſband's Polygamy. Now ſhe ſhews herſelf the true Daughter of *Laban*; and as her Daughter through Covetouſneſs; ſo ſhe and her Siſter, through Emulation, drew Sin into *Jacob*'s Bed: He offended in yielding, but they more in ſolliciting him; and therefore the Fact is not imputed to him, but to them. In thoſe Sins which *Satan* draws us into, the Blame is his, and the greateſt Part and Puniſhment is due to the Tempter; but in thoſe which we draw each other into, the Blame is ours: None of the *Patriarchs* divided his Seed into ſo many Wombs as *Jacob*; nor was ever any one of them ſo much croſs'd in his Seed.

Q. *Did* Jacob *conſent to this Propoſal?*

A. It is to be ſuppoſed he did, ſince in the very next Verſe we are told, "And ſhe gave him *Bilhah* her Hand-maid to Wife, and *Jacob* went in unto her."

Q. *Did* Rachel's *Project ſucceed?*

A. Yes; "And *Bilhah* conceived, and bare *Jacob* a Son. And *Rachel* ſaid, *God* hath judged me, and hath alſo heard my Voice, and hath given me a Son: Therefore called ſhe his Name *Dan*." (that is *judging*.)

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That the having of Children was then reckoned ſo great a Bleſſing, that *Rachel* deemed it as an Anſwer of her Prayers, that ſhe obtained one, though but by her Hand-maid. We may alſo obſerve the miſerable Condition of thoſe Hand-maids, or rather Slaves; that even the Fruit of their own Bodies were not their own, but their Maſters; a Conſideration that ought to make a free People prize their Liberty; and take Care into whoſe Hands they intruſt the Guardianſhip of them.

Q. *Had* Jacob *any more Children by* Bilhah?

A. Yes; "And *Bilhah Rachel*'s Maid conceived again, and bare *Jacob* a ſecond Son. And *Rachel* ſaid, with great wreſtling have I wreſtled with my Siſter, and I have prevailed: and ſhe called his Name *Naphtali*." (that is, *my wreſtling*.)

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. How partial Judges we are apt to be in our Cauſes and Concerns; *Rachel* here ſays, She had prevailed over her Siſter, which was very falſe; for her Siſter exceeded her both in the Number of her Children, and in her Propriety in them; they being the Fruit of her own Womb, and not of her Handmaids, as *Rachel*'s were.

Q. *Did not* Leah *imitate her Siſter's Policy?*

A. Yes; "When *Leah* ſaw that ſhe had left bearing, ſhe took *Zilpah* her Maid, and gave her *Jacob* to Wife."

Q. *Did this Stratagem ſucceed with her likewiſe?*

A. Yes; "And *Zilpah*, *Leah*'s Maid bare *Jacob* a Son. And *Leah* ſaid, A Troop cometh, and ſhe called his Name *Gad*, (that is, a *Troop* or *Company*.) And *Zilpah*, *Leah*'s Maid bare *Jacob* a ſecond Son. And *Leah* ſaid, Happy am I, for the Daughters will call me bleſſed: And ſhe called his Name *Aſher*." (That is, *Happy*.)

Q. *This does not ſeem to need any Explanation, what occurs next?*

A. "And *Reuben* went in the Days of Wheat Harveſt, and found Mandrakes in the Field, and brought them unto his Mother *Leah*. Then *Rachel* ſaid to *Leah*, Give me, I pray thee, of thy Mandrakes."

Q. *What were theſe Mandrakes?*

A. Commentators are very much divided upon this Head; moſt of them will not agree that *Mandrakes* have any Thing deſirable in them, and therefore are for rendering the Word *Dudaim*, which occurs no where in Scripture but here and in *Canticles* vii. 13. *Delightful Flowers* or *Fruits*, but cannot agree what ſort of Flowers or Fruits they were; the learned Mr. *Poole*, however, ſays, that the *Mandrake* is allowed to be a Plant, or Fruit of a pleaſant Smell, both by *Dioſcorides*, and *Levinus Lemnius*, as alſo by St. *Auſtin* upon his own Experience; which being the Caſe, we ſee no Reaſon for either condemning or altering the vulgar Tranſlation. As to the Reaſon of *Rachel*'s deſiring them ſo paſſionately, the Scripture gives us no Light into it, wherefore we can only gueſs at it, and ſhall content our ſelves with ſaying, that whatever they were, either Fruit or Flowers, they muſt certainly have been very ſcarce, and very deſirable, or we can hardly believe *Rachel* would have gone to her Rival for them, and have agreed to pay ſuch a Price rather than go without them.

Q. *And what Anſwer gave* Leah *to* Rachel?

A. A very churliſh one, and not only ſo, but ſhe falſly charges her, with what ſhe herſelf alone was guilty of. "And ſhe ſaid unto her, Is it a ſmall Matter that thou haſt taken my Huſband? And wouldſt thou take away my Son's Mandrakes alſo? And *Rachel* ſaid, Therefore he ſhall lie with thee to Night for thy Son's Mandrakes."

Q. *What may one obſerve from thence?*

A. What Lengths ſome Women will go to ſatisfy their fooliſh Deſires; in all Appearance, conſidering the Enmity that was between them, *Rachel* would rather have been beholding to any one than her Siſter *Leah*, and conſequently would ſooner have parted with her Huſband to any one than her; yet ſo eagerly bent was ſhe upon ſatisfying her Deſign, that ſhe could condeſcend even to beg the Mandrakes of her Siſter, and upon her anſwering her churliſhly, to part with her Right to her Huſband's Company, which ſhe was otherwiſe to have had that Night, of Courſe.

Q. *Did not* Leah *readily cloſe in with this Propoſal?*

A. It is to be ſuppos'd ſhe did, ſince we are told in the very next Verſe;" "And *Jacob* came out of the Field in the Evening, and *Leah* went out to meet him, and ſaid, Thou muſt come in unto me, for ſurely I have hired thee with my Son's Mandrakes. And he lay with her that Night."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That *Leah* being fearful leſt her Siſter ſhould repent her Bargain, and endeavour to evade it, was fully reſolved to make ſure of *Jacob*; and accordingly ſhe went out into the Fields to meet her Huſband, and pre-acquaint him therewith; upon which *Jacob* obſerving the Equity of the Thing, and being willing to keep Peace between them, ratify'd the Agreement, by complying therewith; though otherwiſe it is not to be ſuppoſed, from the tender Love he bore *Rachel*, but he had much rather have had her Company then that of *Leah*.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of* Leah's *enjoying her Huſband's Company that Night?*

A. "And *God* hearkened unto *Leah*, and ſhe conceived and bare *Jacob* the fifth Son. And *Leah* ſaid, *God* hath given me mine Hire, becauſe I have given my Maiden to my Huſband: and ſhe called his Name *Iſſachar*. (That is, *Hire*.)

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That ſhe aſcribes the Child which *God* had granted her, in Anſwer to her Prayers, as granted in Recompence of what was really her Crime; her having

having given her Handmaid to her Husband as a Concubine. How blind are we in what concerns ourſelves!

Q. *Had* Leah *any more Children afterwards?*

A. Yes; “And *Leah* conceived again, and bare *Jacob* the ſixth Son. And *Leah* ſaid, *God* hath endued me with a good Dowry; now will my Husband dwell with me, becauſe I have born him ſix Sons; and ſhe called his name *Zebulun*: (That is *Dwelling*.) And afterwards ſhe bare a Daughter, and called her name *Dinah* (which is, *Judgment*.)

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That there does not ſeem to have been any joy at the Birth of this Daughter; whether it was, that it was not uſual at the Birth of Females, or from a Spirit of Prophecy and Foreſight what Sorrow ſhe would in Time coſt them.

Q. *But did* Rachel *always continue barren?*

A. No; “And *God* remembered *Rachel*, and *God* hearkened to her, and opened her Womb. And ſhe conceived and bare a Son; and ſaid, *God* hath taken away my Reproach. And ſhe called his name *Joſeph*; (that is, *adding*) and ſaid, the *Lord* ſhall add to me yet another Son.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. It is not to be doubted but *Rachel* continued in deep Affliction all this while, becauſe ſhe was barren; which, as we have before obſerved, was deem'd the greateſt of all Misfortunes amongſt the *Eaſtern* Nations; and it was yet more ſo in *Jacob's* Family, than any other; becauſe as the *Meſſiah* was to proceed from his Loins, it was reckoned a Curſe, as it was an evident Sign that the *bleſſed Seed* was not to proceed from her; as indeed he did not.

Q. *What followed upon the Birth of* Joſeph?

A. “And it came to paſs, when *Rachel* had born *Joſeph*, that *Jacob* ſaid unto *Laban*, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own Place, and to my Country. Give me my Wives, and my Children, for whom I have ſerved thee, and let me go: For thou knoweſt my Service which I have done thee.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That after fourteen Years hard Service, rich in nothing but Wives and Children, eſteeming his Charge his Wealth, *Jacob* was preparing to return home; but *God* in his all-gracious Providence, deſigned him more Good.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Laban *to this Demand of* Jacob's?

A. “And *Laban* ſaid unto him, I pray thee, if I have found Favour in thine Eyes, tarry; for I have learned by Experience, that the *Lord* hath bleſſed me for thy Sake. And he ſaid, appoint me thy Wages, and I will give it.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That even this *Heathen*, *Laban*, who was far from being either a religious or a juſt Man, could acknowledge a viſible Providence, over-ruling, and interfering in the Affairs of this World; to the great Shame of many now-a-days, who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, and yet would have been apt to have aſcribed all their thriving to their own Prudence, Diligence, and Induſtry. But *Laban* goes yet farther, for, as if conſcious of his own Unworthineſs of the Bleſſings of Providence, he acknowledges this Bleſſing to be confered on him for *Jacob's* Sake; and being deſirous to keep under his Roof, a Man ſo ſignally favoured by the *Almighty*, that whatever he took in Hand proſpered, he bids him name his own Wages, and he will give it.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Jacob *to this reaſonable Offer?*

A. “And he ſaid unto him, Thou knoweſt how I have ſerved thee, and how thy Cattle was with me. For it was little which thou hadſt before I came, and it is now increaſed unto a Multitude; the *Lord* hath bleſſed thee ſince my coming: And now when ſhall I provide for mine own Houſe alſo? And he ſaid, What ſhall I give thee? And *Jacob* ſaid, Thou ſhalt give me not any Thing; if thou wilt do this Thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy Flock: I will paſs through all thy Flock to Day, removing from thence all the ſpeckled and ſpotted Cattle among the Sheep, and the ſpotted and ſpeckled among the Goats: And of ſuch ſhall be my Hire. So ſhall my Righteouſneſs anſwer for me in Time to come, when it ſhall come for my Hire before thy Face: Every one that is not ſpeckled or ſpotted amongſt the Goats, and brown amongſt the Sheep, that ſhall be accounted ſtolen with me.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That even *Laban's* Covetouſneſs, by the over-ruling Providence of *God*, is made the Means to enrich *Jacob*; behold his worldly-minded Maſter courts him to accept of that Recompence, which made his Nephew wealthy, and his own Family envious: The *Almighty*, conſidering his hard Service, and Uſage, pays him ample Wages out of *Laban's* Folds. *Laban's* Herds and Flocks, probably, had but few ſpotted and ſpeckled Goats, or brown Sheep amongſt them, before *Jacob* made this Covenant; but after that, as if the Faſhion had been altered, they generally ran into various Colours, the moſt and beſt, as if they had been weary of their former Owner, changed the Colours of their young, that they might change their Maſter. In the very Shape and Colour of brute Creatures, there is a divine Hand, which diſpoſeth them to his own Ends; ſmall and unlikely Means will prevail, when *God* intends they ſhall take Effect: Little peel'd Rods of green Poplar, Hazel, and Cheſnut-Trees, ſhall enrich *Jacob* with an Increaſe of his ſpotted Flocks. *Laban's* Sons might have tried the ſame Means, and have failed; *God* was reſolved to let *Laban* know, that he made a great Difference between *Jacob* and him; and that, as for fourteen Years, he had multiplied *Jacob's* Charge of Cattle to *Laban*, ſo now, for the laſt ſix Years, he would multiply *Laban's* Flocks to *Jacob*, and if *Laban* had the moſt, yet *Jacob* ſhould have the beſt: Even in theſe outward Things, *God's* Children have many Times Taſtes of his Favour, above the Wicked; and ſo it happen'd now with righteous *Jacob*.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Laban *to this Propoſal of* Jacob's.

A. “And *Laban* ſaid, Behold I would it might be according to thy Word.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That *Laban* truſting to the Courſe of Nature, according to which, Cattle uſually bring forth their Young of their own Colour, thought he had an excellent Bargain, and therefore, was very willing and ready to take *Jacob* at his Word: On the other Hand, *Jacob* rely'd firmly upon the Providence of an *Almighty God*, and his gracious and merciful Father for his Wages; for he had found ſo much Fraud in his Father-in-law's Dealing, that he had little Reaſon to truſt to his Honeſty; we ſhall ſee preſently that *Jacob* had no Reaſon to repent his Dependance upon Providence.

Q. *Was the Bargain ſtruck accordingly?*

A. Yes; " And he removed that Day the He- " Goats that were ring-ſtraked, and ſpotted, and all " She-goats that were ſpeckled and ſpotted, and every " one that had ſome White in it, and all the Brown " among the Sheep, and gave them into the Hands " of his Sons. And he ſet three Days Journey be- " tween himſelf and *Jacob:* and *Jacob* fed the Reſt " of *Laban*'s Flocks."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That this Precaution of *Laban*'s, which was a very good one, according to the Rules of human Prudence, ſerved only, according to the over-ruling Power of Providence, to make *Jacob*'s Integrity ſhine the clearer, and brighter. *God's Providence is our Inheritance,* is now-a-days made the Motto of the *Charity Children,* as if it were but a poor Inheritance; but, nevertheleſs, whoever has a firm Reliance upon the divine Providence, will find it both a certain, and a plentiful Inheritance.

Q. *What Methods did* Jacob *take to make his own Advantage of this Contract?*

A. And *Jacob* took him Rods of green Poplar, " and of the Hazel and Cheſnut-tree; and pilled " white Strakes in them, and made the white appear " which was in the Rods. And he ſet the Rods " which he had pilled before the Flocks in the Gut- " ters, in the watering Troughs, when the Flocks " came to drink; that they ſhould conceive when they " came to drink. And the Flocks conceived before " the Rods, and brought forth Cattle, ring-ſtraked, " ſpeckled, and ſpotted."

Q. *But this does not ſhew his Reliance altogether upon divine Providence; on the Contrary, he ſeems to have had Recourſe to Means that were far from being juſtifiable; how will you reconcile this to moral Honeſty?*

A. Very eaſily; every one muſt allow, that, in common Juſtice, *Laban* ought before this, to have rewarded his Nephew, and Son-in-law, *Jacob,* according to his Merit; eſpecially as he acknowledged himſelf ſenſible that Providence favoured him for his Sake; whereas, on the contrary, it is manifeſt that he treated him with great Injuſtice; changing his Hire often, and ſeeking, by all the Methods he could contrive, to keep him in continual Subjection; as we find *Jacob* afterwards remonſtrating to his Wives, though they were the Daughters of this very *Laban.* For this Reaſon, the juſt Judge of all the Earth, who knew *Jacob*'s Affliction, and how he was oppreſſed, ſent an Angel to him, who taught him how to right himſelf, as we may find in the next Chapter, v. 9. 11. &c. Upon the Whole therefore, the Fact ſtands thus; *Jacob* having, by hard Labour, and upright Dealing, deſerved a conſiderable Return from *Laban,* who unjuſtly with-held it from him, the Omniſcient *God,* who knew the Secrets of both Hearts, gave *Jacob* the Power of doing himſelf Juſtice, notwithſtanding the Cunning and Diſhoneſty of *Laban.* Conſidering therefore, what *Jacob* did in this Light, we ſhall find he was not guilty in the leaſt of any immoral Action; only he, by the divine Direction, and Command, practiſed an extraordinary Thing, in order to obtain no more, than what was, otherwiſe, his Due, in Equity.

Q. *What farther did* Jacob *to that End?*

A. " And *Jacob* did ſeparate the Lambs, and ſet " the Faces of the Flocks towards the ring-ſtraked, " and all the Brown in the Flock of *Laban:* And he " put his own Flocks by themſelves; and put them " not unto *Laban*'s Cattle. And it came to paſs " whenſoever the ſtronger Cattle did conceive, that " *Jacob* laid the Rods before the Eyes of the Cattle " in the Gutters, that they might conceive among " the Rods. But when the Cattle were feeble he put " them not in: So the feebler were *Laban*'s, and the " ſtronger *Jacob*'s."

Q. *What was* Jacob's *Reaſon for acting in this Manner? And how did he know the ſtrongeſt Cattle from the weakeſt?*

A. A very good one; he made the Brown and ring-ſtraked go foremoſt, and the White follow, that the latter by continually beholding the former, in the Time of their Conjunction, might have their Colour the more ſtrongly imprinted upon their Fancies, and thereby convey it to their young ones; and he put his own Flocks by themſelves, for the ſame Reaſon; leſt the conſtant beholding of the white Ones in *Laban*'s Flocks ſhould make them bring forth the like. As to *Jacob*'s knowing the ſtronger Cattle from the weaker, it is well known that in thoſe Parts, the Cattle conceived and brought forth twice a Year, in Spring, and Autumn; and it is ſuppoſed that the Stronger, here mentioned, are ſuch as took Ram and coupled in the Spring; and the Weaker ſuch as coupled in the Autumn.

Q. *Did not* Jacob *thrive mightily by this Policy?*

A. Yes; " And the Man increaſed exceedingly, " and had much Cattle, and Maid-Servants, and " Men-Servants, and Camels and Aſſes."

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That this was a juſt Reward for *Jacob*'s firm Dependance upon Providence, and at the ſame Time, as juſt a Return, for *Laban*'s unrighteous Dealing with his Son-in-law; and for his deceiving him in his firſt Marriage, and impoſing upon him his deformed Daughter, inſtead of the beautiful *Raohel,* out of a covetous Deſire to enrich himſelf, by detaining him ſeven Years longer in his Service: Now therefore, the juſt and almighty *God,* takes from *Laban* the Riches, he had before given him for *Jacob*'s Sake, and beſtows them upon *Jacob*; and this, in ſuch a Manner, that *Laban* could neither help himſelf, nor juſtly find fault with *Jacob.* Had *Laban* uſed *Jacob* as he ought to have done, we make no Queſtion, but the divine Providence would have left him in Poſſeſſion of what it had given him, and have found ſome other Means of enriching *Jacob*; but, as it was, *God* at once rewarded *Jacob,* and puniſhed *Laban.* A uſeful Leſſon for all Miſers, to teach them to uſe Juſtice, and Mercy, in their Dealings.

CHAP. XXXI.

Jacob *hearing* Laban's *Sons murmur at his Riches, and obſerving that* Laban *did not look upon him ſo kindly as before, upon* God's *Command and Promiſe, and with the Conſent of his Wives, departs ſecretly;* Laban *goes to ſhear his Sheep;* Rachel *ſteals her Father's Idols;* Laban *hears that* Jacob *is fled, and purſues him; he overtakes him in mount* Gilead; *He is warned by* God *in a Dream, not to offer* Jacob *any Injury; He reproaches* Jacob *ſharply for his ſecret Departure, and taxes him with ſtealing his* Gods; Jacob *excuſes his ſecret Departure, but denies his having ſtolen* Laban's Gods, *or any Thing elſe, and bids him ſearch every where;* Laban *ſearches, but finds them not;* Jacob *is increaſed, and reproaches him ſeverely with all the ill Uſage he had ſuffered from him; He owns* God *as his Defence, in the Day of his Afflictions;* Laban's *Anger changes into a Fit of Fondneſs; they make a Covenant together, wherein* Laban *obliges* Jacob *to ſwear not to injure his Daughters, or take any other Wives to them*

them; Jacob *ſwears by the Fear of his Father* Iſaac, *and offers Sacrifice*; Laban *riſes early, kiſſes his Sons and Daughters, and bleſſes them, and departs.*

Q. HOW *did* Laban'*s Family like* Jacob'*s growing ſo Rich in his Service?*

A. They were highly diſſatisfy'd therewith; " And " he heard the Words of *Laban*'s Sons, ſaying, *Jacob* hath taken away all that was our Fathers; and " of that which was our Father's hath he gotten all " this Glory."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. Both their unjuſt Envy, and the Falſity of their Accuſation; for *Jacob* had not taken any Thing that ſtrictly ſpeaking could be call'd *Laban*'s; he did not take ſo much as one ſingle Goat or Sheep of his; on the Contrary, he propoſed a Contract, upon ſuch very equitable Terms, (and as *Laban* then) thought, ſo very advantageous to himſelf, that he greedily catch'd at it, and deſired no better than for *Jacob* to ſtand to his Bargain, as he did: Had *Jacob* turned the Tables upon *Laban*, and propoſed taking thoſe which came according to the Courſe of Nature, of the ſame Colour as their Dams, for his own Share, and the leaving *Laban* to truſt to Providence, we make no Doubt but *Laban* would have refuſed the Terms, as very diſadvantageous, and far from being equitable; and yet now when he does the Reverſe thereof, his Sons complain and murmur, which, in Effect, was little better than murmuring againſt Heaven.

Q. *But how did* Laban *himſelf take it, ſure he could not pretend to be diſpleaſed with a Covenant, to which he ſo readily aſſented?*

A. But he was, and that highly too; inſomuch that he alter'd the Terms thereof ten Times, as we ſhall find hereafter, though he was never the better for it, and at laſt envy'd *Jacob* ſo intolerable, that he could hardly bear his ſight, or if he did, he could not give him a good Look. " And *Jacob* beheld the " Countenance of *Laban*, and behold, it was not " towards him as before."

Q. *Things being ſo,* Jacob *was but it a bad Caſe; being far from his native Country; Friendleſs; and not only amongſt Strangers, but amongſt Enemies; and thoſe powerful Enemies, who had, in a Manner, the Law in their own Hands, and might uſe him juſt as they pleaſed themſelves; how did he extricate himſelf from this Perplexity?*

A. No Man is in a bad Caſe, who is under the divine Protection; *Jacob* was ſo, and accordingly, Providence now comes to his Relief, and encourages him; " And the *Lord* ſaid unto *Jacob*, Return unto " the Land of thy Fathers, and to thy Kindred, " and I will be with thee."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That the oppreſſed and helpleſs are under the immediate Eye of Providence; who will certainly either right them in this World, or ſeverely puniſh their Oppreſſors in the next. The Perſon here oppreſſed was *Jacob*, one ſingle Man, or, at leaſt, one ſingle Family, yet Providence here interpoſes in his Behalf, and that in a ſignal Manner; let thoſe overgrown Oppreſſors, who have ruin'd thouſands of Families, who cry continually to Heaven for Redreſs, think of this, and tremble.

Q. *What did* Jacob *on receiving this divine Encouragement?*

A. " And *Jacob* ſent, and called *Rachel* and *Leah* " to the Field, unto his Flock."

Q. *What was* Jacob'*s Reaſon for ſo doing, could he not as well have ſtaid 'till he went Home to them?*

A. A very good one, that he might there expoſtulate the Matter freely with them, and without Danger of being over-heard by any one.

Q. *When they were come to him, what ſaid* Jacob *to them?*

A. " And ſaid unto them, I ſee your Father's " Countenance, that it is not towards me as before: " But the *God* of my Father hath been with me. " And Ye know that with all my power I have ſerved your Father. And your Father hath deceived " me, and changed my Wages ten Times: But *God* " ſuffered him not to hurt me. If he ſaid thus, the " ſpeckled ſhall be thy Wages; Then all the Cattle " bare ſpeckled: And if he ſaid thus, the ring-ſtraked " ſhall be thy Hire; then bare all the Cattle ring-ſtraked. Thus *God* hath taken away the Cattle of " your Father, and given them to me. And it " came paſs at the Time that the Cattle conceived, " that I lifted up mine Eyes, and ſaw in a Dream, " and behold, the Rams which leaped upon the Cattle, " were ring-ſtraked, ſpeckled, and griſled. And " the Angel of *God* ſpake unto me in a Dream, " ſaying, *Jacob*: And I ſaid, Here am I. And he " ſaid, Lift up now thine Eyes, and ſee all the Rams " which leap upon the Cattle are ring-ſtraked, ſpeckled, and griſled: For I have ſeen all that *Laban* " doth unto thee. I am the *God* of *Bethel*, where " thou anointedſt the Pillar, and where thou vowedſt " a Vow unto me: Now ariſe, get thee out from this " Land, and return unto the Land of thy Kindred."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That we may be morally aſſured that *Jacob* alledged nothing but what was ſtrictly the Truth; ſince his Wives, though *Laban*'s Daughters, are ſo far from contradicting him therein, that they join with him in the ſame Complaint: We may obſerve alſo, that *Jacob*, in acting as he did, in laying the peeled Rods before the Cattle, did nothing but what he was authorized in doing, by the Direction of the Sovereign *Lord* of all Eſtates; who may take from one, and give to another, as he pleaſeth; and who, undoubtedly, did this, on obſerving *Laban*'s Injuſtice, in ſo often changing *Jacob*'s Wages. We may alſo obſerve *God*'s Mindfulneſs even of the paſt Service of his People, when they themſelves have, in all Probability, forgot them; and his Faithfulneſs in his Purpoſe now to fulfil the Promiſe made to *Jacob* at *Bethel*, when he was on his Way to *Haran*.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Jacob'*s Wives to this his Remonſtrance?*

A. " And *Rachel* and *Leah* anſwered, and ſaid " unto him, Is there yet any Portion or Inheritance " for us in our Father's Houſe? Are we not counted " of him Strangers? For he hath ſold Us, and hath " quite devoured alſo our Money. For all the Riches " which *God* hath taken from our Father, that is " ours, and our Childrens: Now then whatſoever " *God* hath ſaid unto thee, do."

Q. *What may we obſerve herein?*

A. That *Laban*'s Daughters far from taking his Part, join with their Husband in his Complaints againſt him; which ſhews that his Behaviour to them and their Children, had been ſo unworthy of a Father, and ſo unnatural, that it had quite alienated and eſtranged their Hearts from him; and that he had treated them more like Slaves than Daughters.

Q. *What did* Jacob, *upon his Wives agreeing thus to whatever he pleaſed?*

A. " Then *Jacob* roſe up, and ſet his Sons and his " Wives upon Camels. And he carried away all his " Cattle, and all his Goods which he had gotten in " *Padan-aram*; for to go to *Iſaac* his Father, in the " Land of *Canaan*."

Q. *What made* Jacob *depart ſo abruptly, and by ſtealth, ſince it no where appears that* Laban, *unjuſt and covetous as he was, attempted to detain him forcibly; for all his Contrivances hitherto had gone no farther than either to over-reach him, or detain him by Agreement?*

A. Jacob had not been twenty Years in *Laban*'s Service, without knowing his covetous and unjuſt Temper; and how great a Stab it would be to him, to part, with ſo juſt a Servant, under whoſe Care every Thing proſpered; and ſo many fine Cattle, and ſo much Riches, all acquired in his Service. He well knew therefore that *Laban* would by no Means conſent to his Departure; and that if fair Means failed, he would have Recourſe to Force for that Purpoſe; which made him (*Jacob*) prudently reſolve, upon ſtealing away as ſecretly as poſſible.

Q. *Of what are we next informed, relating to this Tranſaction?*

A. “ And *Laban* went to ſhear his Sheep: And “ *Rachel* had ſtolen the Images that were her Fathers. “ And *Jacob* ſtole away unawares to *Laban* the *Syrian*, in that he told him not that he fled.”

Q. *We may eaſily gueſs the Reaſon of* Jacob's *taking Advantage of* Laban's *Abſence, conſidering the latter's unjuſt and churliſh Diſpoſition; but what could induce* Rachel *to be guilty of Theft, and to ſteal away her Father's Images or Idols; eſpecially, as ſhe well knew he prized them at very great Rate, as will appear in the Sequel?*

A. Various are the Reaſons aſſigned by Commentators, for *Rachel*'s being guilty of this Theft, (for ſo it certainly was) the mentioning of all which would ſwell our Work to too great a Bulk, and make it exceed the Bounds we have preſcribed our ſelves therein; the moſt probable, are theſe: *Firſt*, according to ſome, that theſe Images, or Idols, being made either of Silver or Gold, *Rachel* might be induced from their Value, to take them as Part of the Portion, which ſhe imagined, her Father, according to natural Equity, ought to have beſtowed on her, when he gave her in Marriage. *Secondly*, according to others, ſhe might carry them away, in order to hinder her Father from continuing any longer in Idolatry. But then, no Reaſon can be aſſigned, if this had been her Motive, why ſhe might not as well have buried them, or deſtroyed them, as have hazarded their Safety, by carrying them away in her Baggage. *Thirdly*, others again imagine, that *Rachel*, knowing the bigotted Temper of her Father, ſtole them, as thinking, ſhe thereby retained in her Hands, a certain Security for making Peace, in Caſe of Things coming to Extremity. But this ſeems to be very ill grounded, becauſe ſhe never attempted it, but carefully concealed them, both from her Father, and her Husband. *Fourthly*, It has been judged, that ſhe ſtole them, to prevent her Father from inquiring, by them, which Way they had taken their Flight. But then her deſtroying them, would as effectually have prevented that, and that with more Safety to herſelf. *Fifthly*, Some go yet farther, and are inclined to believe, that *Rachel* herſelf, notwithſtanding ſhe might worſhip the true God, in Compliance with her Husband's Inſtructions and Commands, ſtill retained ſome Veneration, for thoſe Rites, and Idols, which ſhe had been accuſtomed to eſteem ſacred, whilſt ſhe was a Child. The Sequel of this Hiſtory renders the laſt of theſe Suppoſitions the moſt probable.

Q. *What farther are we informed concerning* Jacob's *Flight?*

A. “ So he fled with all that he had, and he roſe “ up, and paſſed over the River, and ſet his Face “ towards the Mount *Gilead*.”

Q. *How did* Laban *behave upon being informed of* Jacob's *Flight?*

A. “ And it was told *Laban*, on the third Day, “ that *Jacob* was fled. And he took his Brethren “ with him, and purſued after him ſeven Days Jour- “ ney; and they overtook him in the Mount *Gi-* “ *lead*.”

Q. *What may we obſerve fom thence?*

A. That it is hard to judge whether *Laban* was a worſe Father or Maſter; he can approve very well of *Jacob*'s Service, but not of his Wealth. As the Wicked have no Peace with *God*, ſo the Godly have no Peace with Men; for, if they proſper not, they are deſpiſed, and, if they proſper, they are envied. This Uncle, whom his Service had made his Father, muſt now be fled from, upon his growing rich, like an Enemy; and like an Enemy, accordingly, he purſues him: This ſhews *Jacob* judged rightly, when he fled ſecretly from him. If *Laban* had deſigned to have taken a peaceable Leave, of his innocent and upright Son-in-law, he would never have purſued after him for ſeven Days.

Q. *What was the End of this Purſuit of* Laban's? *And how did* Jacob *eſcape after his being thus overtaken, by him?*

A. Quite contrary to *Laban*'s Intent and Expectation, and perhaps, to *Jacob*'s own; *God* ſuffered his angry and unjuſt Father-in-law to purſue him thus far, and even to overtake him there; and what then? Why even as he ſaid to the Sea, *Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no farther, and here ſhall thy proud Waves be ſtaid*; even ſo he now deals with *Laban*. “ And *God* came to *Laban* the *Syrian* in a Dream “ by Night, and ſaid unto him, Take Heed that “ thou ſpeak not to *Jacob* either Good or Bad.” That is, take care that thou doeſt not attempt to bring him back by Perſuaſion, or to compel him back by Violence; otherwiſe, he would have offended in ſpeaking to him at all, which, we don't find, either he or *Jacob* imagined; on the contrary, he rebuked him for his clandeſtine Departure very ſharply.

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That the Man who is under *God*'s Protection need fear no Enemies, as we obſerved before.

Q. *What followed at the Interview between* Jacob *and* Laban?

A. “ Then *Laban* overtook *Jacob*. Now *Jacob* “ had pitched his Tent in the Mount; And *Laban* “ with his Brethren pitched in the Mount of *Gilead*. “ And *Laban* ſaid to *Jacob*, What haſt thou done, “ that thou haſt ſtolen away unawares to me, and “ carried away my Daughters, as Captives taken “ with the Sword? Wherefore didſt thou flee away “ ſecretly, and ſteal away from me? And didſt not “ tell me, that I might have ſent thee away with “ Mirth, and with Songs, with Tabret, and with “ Harp? And haſt not ſuffered me to kiſs my Sons “ and my Daughters? Thou haſt now done fooliſh- “ ly in ſo doing. It is in the Power of my Hand “ to do you Hurt: But the *God* of your Father ſpake “ unto me yeſternight, ſaying, Take thou heed, “ that thou ſpeak not to *Jacob* either Good or Bad. “ And now though thou wouldeſt needs be gone, “ becauſe thou ſore longedſt after thy Father's Houſe, “ yet wherefore haſt thou ſtolen my Gods?”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the firſt Part of *Laban*'s Accuſation is falſe; for *Jacob* did not carry away his Daughters, as Captives, for they went willingly; the next Part is alſo as falſe; for he would have been ſo far from ſending him away with Mirth, and Songs, *&c.* that he would not have ſuffered him to have gone at all, wherefore *Jacob* did not fooliſhly, but very prudently: The next Allegation is likewiſe falſe; for it was not in his Power to do *Jacob* any Hurt, ſince he was under *God*'s immediate Protection: The laſt Article, therefore, is the only one that had any Foundation, and even that is falſe, as far as it relates to *Jacob*; for it was *Rachel* who had ſtolen his Idols. And here we cannot but admire the amazing Folly and Stupidity of *Laban*, to call it no worſe; notwithſtanding the true *God* had appeared to him in a Dream, yet he perſiſted in calling thoſe his Gods which might be ſtolen, but tacitly diſclaims the *Almighty*, and renounces him for his *God*, by calling him only the *God* of *Jacob*'s Father; whereby at the ſame Time he ſeems to reproach *Jacob* for the Novelty of his Religion, juſt as the *Papiſts* now-a-days fondly do the *Proteſtants*, notwithſtanding, it is evident, that his was the moſt ancient Religion, and the other's was only introduced by the Poſterity of the curſed *Ham*.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Jacob *to this Expoſtnlation of* Laban's?

A. “And *Jacob* anſwered and ſaid to *Laban*, Becauſe I was afraid: For I ſaid, Peradventure, thou wouldſt take by Force thy Daughters from me. With whomſoever thou findeſt thy Gods, let him not live: Before our Brethren diſcern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee: For *Jacob* knew not that *Rachel* had ſtolen them.”

Q. *This needs no Explanation; but did* Laban *take* Jacob *at his Word, and proceed to ſearch, or did he believe him upon this poſitive Aſſeveration?*

A. No, he would not truſt to his Aſſeveration, but proceeded to make ſtrict Search every where, but juſt where they were; Providence ſo ordaining it, that he ſhould not find them. And *Laban* went into “*Jacob*'s Tent, and into *Leah*'s Tent, and into the two Maid-ſervants Tent; but he found them not. Then went he out of *Leah*'s Tent, and entered into *Rachel*'s Tent. Now *Rachel* had taken the Images, and put them in the Camels Furniture, and ſat upon them: And *Laban* ſearched all the Tent, but found them not. And ſhe ſaid to her Father, Let it not diſpleaſe my Lord, that I cannot riſe up before thee; for the Cuſtom of Women is upon me: And he ſearched, but found not the Images.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence? And why did* Rachel *make this Excuſe?*

A. We may obſerve that the ſtricteſt Search is unavailing, where *God* pleaſes to diſappoint Men; and the Reaſon why *Rachel* made this Excuſe ſeems to be, that even before the Promulgation of the written Law, menſtruous Women were eſteemed polluted; and were reckoned to pollute whatever they touched or ſat upon, as they were afterwards expreſly by the Law, *Levit.* xv. 19, 20, 21, 22. Wherefore *Laban* could not ſearch there without polluting himſelf; which ſhe rightly imagined he would not do.

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob *after* Laban's *having made this fruitleſs Search?*

A. “And *Jacob* was wroth, and chode with *Laban*: And *Jacob* anſwered, and ſaid to *Laban*, what is my Treſpaſs? What is my Sin, that thou haſt ſo hotly purſued after me? Whereas thou haſt ſearched all my Stuff, what haſt thou found of all thy Houſhold-Stuff? Set it here before my Brethren, and thy Brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. Theſe twenty Years have I been with thee; thy Ews, and thy She-goats have not caſt their young, and the Rams of thy Flocks have I not eaten. That which was torn of Beaſts, I brought not unto thee, I bare the Loſs of it; of my Hand didſt thou require it; whether ſtolen by Day, or ſtolen by Night: Thus I was, in the Day the Drought conſumed me, and the Froſt by Night; and my Sleep departed from mine Eyes. Thus have I been twenty Years in thy Houſe; I ſerved thee fourteen Years for thy two Daughters, and ſix Years for thy Cattle: and thou haſt changed my Wages ten Times. Except the *God* of my Father, and the Fear of *Iſaac* had been with me, ſurely thou hadſt ſent me away empty: *God* hath ſeen mine Affliction, and the Labour of thy Hands, and rebuked thee yeſternight.

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The Injuſtice and Unreaſonableneſs of *Laban*, and the Fidelity, Induſtry, Care, and Integrity of *Jacob*.

Q. *What Defence could* Laban *make againſt this juſt Charge of* Jacob's?

A. None at all; wherefore his Anger changes on a ſudden into a Fit of Fondneſs; “And *Laban* anſwered, and ſaid unto *Jacob*, Theſe Daughters are my Daughters, and theſe Children are my Children, and theſe Cattle are my Cattle, and all that thou ſeeſt is mine: And what can I do this Day unto theſe my Daughters, or unto their Children which they have born?”

Q. *What may we obſerve herein?*

A. That *Laban* with great Subtilty and Hypocriſy, pretends that to be owing to his Kindneſs and natural Affection, which was indeed purely the Effect of his Fear.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Laban *unto* Jacob?

A. “Now therefore, come thou, let us make a Covenant, I and thou, and let it be for a Witneſs between me and thee.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. How much *Laban*'s Tone is changed of a ſudden, that he ſhould want to enter into a Covenant with a Man, whom but a little before he had purſued with hoſtile Intentions! An evident Inſtance how much the Heart of Man is in the Power of *God*; and that it is altogether in vain for Man to purpoſe any Thing, to which the *Almighty* does not likewiſe give his Aſſent.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Jacob *to this friendly and reaſonable Propoſal of* Laban's?

A. “And *Jacob* took a Stone, and ſet it up for a Pillar. And *Jacob* ſaid unto his Brethren, gather Stones; and they took Stones, and made an Heap: and they did eat there upon the Heap. And *Laban* called it *Jegar-ſahadutha*; but *Jacob* called it *Galeed*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The eating together was, according to an old Cuſtom in the *Eaſt*, in token of their renewing their Friendſhip together; and the Reaſon of *Jacob*'s giving the Name to the Heap in *Hebrew*, whereas *Laban* gave it the ſame Name in the *Syrian* Tongue, both of them ſignifying the *Heap of Teſtimony*, ſeems to have been, thereby to teſtify his renouncing the *Syrian* Manners and Religion, together with their Language, and an implicite Profeſſion of his joining with the *Hebrews*, both in their Tongue and Religion.

Q. *What ſaid* Laban *after the making of this Heap?*

A. “And *Laban* ſaid, this Heap is a Witneſs between me and thee this Day. Therefore was the Name of it called *Galeed*: And *Miſpah*; for he ſaid, The *Lord* watch between me and thee, when we are abſent one from another. If thou ſhalt afflict my Daughters, or if thou ſhalt take other Wives beſides my Daughters, no Man is with us; ſee *God* Witneſs betwixt me and thee. And *Laban* ſaid to *Jacob*, Behold this Heap, and behold this Pillar which I have caſt betwixt me and thee. This Heap be Witneſs, that I will not paſs over this Heap to thee, and that thou ſhalt not paſs over this Heap, and this Pillar unto me, for Harm. The *God* of *Abraham*, and the *God* of *Nahor*, the *God* of their Father judge betwixt us. And *Jacob* ſware by the Fear of his Father *Iſaac*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How partial we are apt to be to ourſelves; tho' *Laban* had acted a moſt unnatural Part, by both his Daughters, and taken no Manner of Care to provide for them, yet he could overlook and excuſe that in himſelf; notwithſtanding which, he was not willing *Jacob* ſhould do the ſame. We may alſo obſerve his Idolatry, and even Blaſphemy, in joining the true *God* with his falſe Gods, and coupling the *God* of *Abraham*, and the God of *Nahor* together, although the true *God* had given him an Inſtance of his Power and his Omniſcience, in a Viſion, the Night before; whence we may ſee how far Idolatry infatuates Mankind.

Q. *What did* Jacob *after thus covenanting with* Laban?

A. “Then *Jacob* offered Sacrifice upon the Mount, and called his Brethren to eat Bread; and they did eat Bread, and tarried all Night in the Mount.”

Q. *What are we to obſerve from hence?*

A. That notwithſtanding it is here ſaid that *Jacob* offered Sacrifice, it is not very probable that he would chooſe that Time for performing ſuch an Action, when *Laban* was preſent; ſince he could neither admit him, who was an Idolater, to be preſent thereat, with any Decency or Honeſty, nor exclude him from it with any Civility, or Safety: Wherefore, as the ſame Word ſignifies *killing*, as well as ſacrificing, we think it ought rather to be underſtood of his killing Beaſts for a Feaſt, which he made for his Brethren, to expreſs his Joy for this Reconciliation between him and his Father-in-law. This is the more probable, becauſe we find it expreſly ſaid in the ſame Verſe, that he called his Brethren to *eat Bread*, under which Phraſe all Sorts of Victuals are uſually comprehended in Scripture.

Q. *What farther paſſed at the Interview, between* Laban, *and* Jacob *and his Family?*

A. “And early in the Morning *Laban* roſe up, and kiſſed his Sons, and his Daughters, and bleſſed them: And *Laban* departed, and returned unto his Place.” Which needs no Explanation.

CHAP. XXXII.

The Angels of God *meet* Jacob; *he names them* God's *Hoſt, and the Place* Mahanaim; *he ſends Meſſengers to his Brother* Eſau; *they bring back Word, that he is coming to meet him with four hundred Men;* Jacob *is terrified thereat, and divides his People and Cattle into two Bands, in order to ſave one of them. He gives Directions concerning them, and prays fervently to* God *for his Protection. He ſends Preſents to his Brother; gets his Wives and Children over the Ford by Night; he wreſtles with* God, *and prevails; is called* Iſrael; God *bleſſeth him; he asks his Name, and calls the Place* Peniel; *his Thigh is put out of Joint, and he halts; the* Jews *Obſervation in Remembrance thereof.*

Q. *OF what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And *Jacob* went on his Way, and the Angels of *God* met him. And when *Jacob* ſaw them, he ſaid, This is *God*'s Hoſt: And he called the Place *Mahanaim*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The gracious Goodneſs of *God*, in affording him ſuch an evident Inſtance of the divine Protection; for the Angels ſeem here to have met him viſibly, by Day-light, and he ſeems, by his calling them *God*'s Hoſt, to have known them not to have been Men, but Beings of a ſuperior Nature. Some Commentators, from the Name *Mahanaim*, which ſignifies *two Hoſts*, have imagined theſe to be two *Hoſts*, or *Armies of Angels*; one whereof was that of the Guardian Angel of *Meſopotamia*, who, with his Company, conducted *Jacob* ſafely to the Confines of *Canaan*; where the Guardian Angel of *Canaan*, with his Company, received him into their Care.

Q. *And what did* Jacob *upon his Arrival on the Confines of* Canaan?

A. “And *Jacob* ſent Meſſengers before him to *Eſau* his Brother, unto the Land of *Seir*, the Country of *Edom*. And he commanded them, ſaying, Thus ſhall ye ſpeak unto my Lord *Eſau*; Thy Servant *Jacob* ſaith thus, I have ſojourned with *Laban*, and ſtaid there until now. And I have Oxen, and Aſſes, Flocks, and Men-ſervants, and Women-ſervants: And I have ſent to tell my Lord, that I may find Grace in thy Sight.”

Q. *What was the Reaſon of* Jacob's *ſending this Meſſage to* Eſau?

A. Being apprehenſive *Eſau* might ſtill retain a Grudge againſt him, ſince he had received no Intelligence to the contrary from his Mother *Rebekah*, he judged it adviſeable to ſend this Meſſage beforehand, as an Inſtance of his Reſpect and Submiſſion, in order to ſoften his Brother's rugged Temper; accordingly, the Tenor of his Meſſage, was to inform *Eſau*, that he was bleſſed with a Competency of worldly Goods, wherefore he was not likely to be either a Burden or Diſgrace to his Family; and alſo to implore his Favour.

Q. *What Anſwer returned* Eſau *to this Meſſage?*

A. But a very doubtful one; “And the Meſſengers returned to *Jacob*, ſaying, We came to thy Brother *Eſau*, and alſo he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred Men with him.”

Q. *Was this News agreeable to* Jacob?

A. “Then *Jacob* was greatly afraid, and diſtreſſed: And he divided the People that was with him, and the Flocks, and Herds, and the Camels in two Bands; and ſaid, If *Eſau* come to the one Company, and ſmite it, then the other Company which is left ſhall eſcape.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That *Jacob*, though a very good Man, was, at that Time, but weak in Faith; ſince notwithſtanding the lately renewed Promiſe of *God*, his Deliverance from *Laban*, and the viſible Appearance of the Angels, to comfort him, and aſſure him of the Divine Protection, he immediately gave Way to his Fears, and ſuffered them to overwhelm him.

Q. *What elſe did* Jacob *in this his Fear and Diſtreſs?*

A. As all good Men ought to do, he addreſſed himſelf fervently to *God*, in Prayer; “ And *Jacob* “ ſaid, O *God* of my Father *Abraham*, and *God* of “ my Father *Iſaac*, the *Lord* which ſaidſt unto me, “ Return into thy Country, and to thy Kindred, and “ I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the “ leaſt of all thy Mercies, and of all the Truth “ which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy Servant; for “ with my Staff I paſſed over this *Jordan*, and now “ I am become two Bands. Deliver me, I pray “ thee, from the Hand of my Brother, from the “ Hand of *Eſau*: For I fear him, leaſt he will come “ and ſmite me, and the Mother with the Children. “ And thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good, and “ make thy Seed as the Sand of the Sea, which can- “ not be number'd for Multitude.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The great Modeſty and Humility of *Jacob*, in his Acknowledgment of his Unworthineſs of the Divine Mercies; His Gratitude in confeſſing the Bleſſings he had already received; and his Reliance on *God*'s Faithfulneſs, that he would certainly perform the Promiſes he had made unto him.

Q. *What did* Jacob *after having thus recommended himſelf to the divine Protection?*

A. “ And he lodged there that ſame Night; and “ took of that which came to his Hand a Preſent for “ *Eſau* his Brother. Two hundred She-goats, and “ twenty He-goats; two hundred Ews, and twen- “ ty Rams; thirty Milch Camels, with their Colts; “ forty Kine, and ten Bulls; twenty She-Aſſes, “ and ten Foals.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That notwithſtanding *Jacob*'s chief Reliance was upon *God*'s Protection, he would not neglect any other probable Means of gaining his Brother's Favour; the likelieſt of which, to a Man ſo worldly minded, and haughty as *Eſau*, was ſuch a noble Preſent, ſent with ſo much Reſpect and Submiſſion. Which ſhews that we are not to expect Miracles from the *Almighty*, but to uſe the Means, and then patiently reſign ourſelves unto his Will, whether he will be pleaſed to grant his Bleſſing thereupon or not.

Q. *After what Manner did* Jacob *order this Preſent?*

A. “ And he delivered them unto the Hands of “ his Servants, every Drove by themſelves; and ſaid “ unto his Servants, Paſs over before me, and put “ a Space between Drove and Drove.”

Q. *What was* Jacob's *Reaſon for ſo doing?*

A. A very politick one, both to make his Preſent ſeem the more magnificent, and ſet it off to the beſt Advantage, and to mollify his Brother's moroſe Temper, and conciliate his good Will by little and little.

Q. *What inſtructions did he give to the Servants who were to go with theſe Droves?*

A. “ And he commanded the foremoſt, ſaying, “ When *Eſau* my Brother meeteth thee, and asketh “ thee, ſaying, Whoſe art thou? And whither goeſt “ thou? And whoſe are theſe before thee? Then “ thou ſhalt ſay, They be thy Servant *Jacob*'s; it is “ a Preſent ſent unto my *Lord*, *Eſau*: And behold “ alſo he is behind Us. And ſo he commanded the Se- “ cond and the Third, and all that followed the “ Droves, ſaying, On this Manner, ſhall you ſpeak “ unto *Eſau*, when you find him. And ſay ye more- “ over, Behold, thy Servant *Jacob* is behind Us: “ For he ſaid, I will appeaſe him with the Preſent “ that goeth before me, and afteward I will ſee his “ Face; peradventure he will accept of me.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The admirable Prudence of *Jacob*, in contriving, by ſo much Humility to ſtrengthen the Impreſſion his Preſent might make on his haughty Brother; ſo that when, laſt of all, he ſhould come himſelf into his Preſence, the Edge of his Reſentment ſhould be taken off, and the Way paved for a ſincere and hearty Reconciliation.

Q. *What farther did* Jacob *after having thus ordered his Preſent?*

A. “ So went the Preſent over before him; and “ himſelf lodged that Night in the Company. And “ he roſe up that Night, and took his two Wives, “ and his two Women-Servants, and his eleven Sons, “ and paſſed over the Ford *Jabbok*. And he took “ them, and ſent them over the Brook, and ſent over “ that he had.”

Q. *This does not ſeem to need any Explanation, what befel him afterwards?*

A. “ And *Jacob* was left alone, and there wreſtled “ a Man with him, until the breaking of the Day.”

Q. *Who is this Man ſuppoſed to be?*

A. An Angel, even the Angel of the Covenant, that is, our *Lord Chriſt*, who aſſum'd a human Shape for this Purpoſe, as is evident from Verſe 28, 30.

Q. *What farther are we told concerning this Wreſtling?*

A. “ And when he ſaw that he prevailed not a- “ gainſt him, he touch'd the hollow of his Thigh; “ And the hollow of *Jacob*'s Thigh was out of Joint, “ as he wreſtled with him.”

Q. *What was the meaning of ſo doing, and what is obſervable herein?*

A. That *Jacob* might be ſenſible he did not prevail here by his own Strength; we may alſo obſerve, that he ſuffered more from his deareſt and beſt Friend, than from his worſt Enemies; for *Laban* departs from him with a Kiſs, and *Eſau* meets him with another; but he goes halting to the Grave, through the Hurt he receives from this Angel: not one of his Hairs ſuffered by *Laban* or *Eſau*, yet he loſt a Joint in this ſtruggle: A happy Loſs to *Jacob*, he loſt a Joint, and got a Bleſſing! It is a Favour to be made halt by *God*, yet this Favour is ſeconded by another; he is bleſſed becauſe he would rather halt than leap before he was bleſſed; that Man may go away Sound, but at the ſame Time he will go away miſerable, who loves a Limb better than a Bleſſing.

Q. *What ſaid the Angel to* Jacob *after this?*

A. “ And he ſaid, Let me go, for the Day break- “ eth: And he ſaid, I will not let thee go, except “ thou bleſs me.”

Q. *What may we learn from hence?*

A. That we muſt be importunate with *God*, if we will obtain his Bleſſing; and Wreſtle with him ſtrongly by fervent Prayer, and not let go our Hold till we have gained it. Importunity is diſagreeable, and unwelcome to earthly Princes, and great Men, but it is very acceptable to *God*, and the only Way to find Grace in his Sight; let us ſo ſtrive then, and wreſtle with *Jacob*, that with him alſo we may overcame.

Q. *What Anſwer made the Angel to* Jacob?

A. “ And he ſaid unto him, what is thy Name? “ And he ſaid *Jacob*. And he ſaid, thy Name ſhall “ be called no more *Jacob*, but *Iſrael* (that is, *Prince* “ *with God*:) For as a Prince haſt thou Power with “ *God*, and with Men, and haſt prevailed.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That if we conſider *Jacob*'s Condition at this Time, as he was ſtruggling with great Difficulties, and as it were wreſtling with *Eſau*, no Type could more evidently have foreſhown to him, that, by the wonderful Providence of *God*, continually watching over him, he ſhould overcome, and ſurmount all thoſe Troubles under which he then laboured: Such was the merciful Foreſight which the *Lord* gave his Servant for his Conſolation; whereby he knew that the *Almighty* would relieve him from all the Dangers wherewith he was ſurrounded.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Jacob *to the Angel?*

A. "And *Jacob* asked him, and ſaid, Tell me, I pray thee, thy Name: And he ſaid, Wherefore is it, that thou doſt ask after my Name? And he bleſſed him there."

Q. *What may we learn from hence?*

A. That our Curioſity may carry us too far, even in ſpiritual Matters; as *Jacob*'s did here: Wherefore we ought to be upon our Guard againſt it, and be contented with what *God* has been graciouſly pleaſed to reveal to Us, without endeavouring to dive into hidden Myſteries, which the *Almighty* has not thought fit to lay open; ſince our gracious Creator has made known to us what is abundantly ſufficient, to enable us to Work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling. We may obſerve alſo, that notwithſtanding the Angel's Queſtion to *Jacob*, carries with it both a Denial of his Requeſt, and a Reproof of his Curioſity, he granted him what was enough to ſatisfy him, and what might at the ſame Time, inform him who he was, by bleſſing him: Accordingly, we find, by what follows, that *Jacob* immediately knew him to be *God* by that very Action.

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob, *after having received this Bleſſing?*

A. "And *Jacob* called the Name of the Place *Peniel*, (that is, *the Face of God*:) For I have ſeen *God* Face to Face, and my Life is preſerved."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. Not that he ſaw *God* in his Eſſence, for no Man ever ſaw *God* in that Manner, as is evident from *John* i. 18. but in a moſt evident, ſenſible, familiar, and friendly Manifeſtation of himſelf, and not in a Dream, or a Viſion.

Q. *What Effect had this wreſtling with the Angel upon* Jacob?

A. "And as he paſſed over *Penuel*, the Sun roſe upon him, and he halted upon his Thigh."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That this was not an imaginary or viſionary, but a real Wreſtling of *Jacob*'s; and accordingly he felt the Effects of it, in his Lameneſs, all the Days of his Life; as the faithful of his Poſterity will feel the bleſſed Effects of it to all future Generations.

Q. *What did the Children of* Iſrael *in Commemoration hereof?*

A. "Therefore the Children of *Iſrael* eat not of Sinew which ſhrank, which is upon the hollow of the Thigh, unto this Day: Becauſe he touched the hollow of *Jacob*'s Thigh, in the Sinew that ſhrank."

Q. *What might be the Reaſon of their obſerving this Ceremony?*

A. The Minds of the Vulgar are generally very ill prepared for the Knowledge, and Remembrance of religious Truths: Wherefore, Signs, Ceremonies, and Circumſtances of this Nature, were exceedingly well contrived, for keeping up amongſt them, the Senſe of ſuch extraordinary Bleſſings, and Providences, as might beget a juſt Reverence, and ſettled Confidence in the *Lord God* of *Iſrael*; from whom all Bleſſings are derived. For it is not to be queſtioned, but that Children, when they were firſt hindered by their Parents, from eating this, as well as the other Parts of any Beaſt, would ask the Reaſon of this Reſtraint; and conſequently, as to this Fact, here was a certain, eaſy, and infallible Method, of perpetuating a Tradition, drawn from the Fact itſelf.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Jacob *ſets his Wives and Children in the Order wherein they are to travel; He meets his Brother; the great Reſpect he paid him;* Eſau *kindly embraces him, and receives him with great Brotherly Affection; His Wives, and Children preſent themſelves before* Eſau; Jacob *offers a Preſent to his Brother; He declines accepting it;* Jacob *preſſes him, and he takes it;* Eſau *deſires* Jacob's *Company in his Journey;* Jacob *declines it; He then offers to leave him ſome of his Retinue for a Guard;* Jacob *declines that likewiſe; They part nevertheleſs very amicably;* Eſau *returns to* Seir; Jacob *goes on to* Succoth; *He removes from thence to* Shechem; *where he purchaſes a Field; He erects an Altar, which he calls* El-elohe Iſrael.

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And *Jacob* lifted up his Eyes, and looked and behold, *Eſau* came, and with him four hundred Men. And he divided the Children unto *Leah*, and unto *Rachel*, and unto the two Handmaids. And he put their Handmaids and their Children foremoſt, and *Leah* and her Children after, and *Rachel* and *Joſeph* hindermoſt."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. How natural is it for us to take moſt Care of what we love beſt; and how natural it is, even in the beſt Men, to let their Affections get the better of their Reaſon; for *Leah* having ſix Sons, and one Daughter, the Loſs of them certainly ought, in Reaſon, to have been more dreaded by *Jacob*, than the Loſs of *Rachel*, who had only *Joſeph*; and conſequently, *Leah* and her Children ought to have been put in the laſt and ſafeſt Place, rather than *Rachel*; but we may find hereby, as we ſhall alſo afterwards by his Fondneſs of *Joſeph*, that *Jacob* was by no means exempt from human Frailties; from whence we may aſſure ourſelves, that there is no ſuch Thing as Perfection on this Side of the Grave.

Q. *After having thus diſpoſed his Wives and Children, what did* Jacob?

A. "And he paſſed over before them, and bowed himſelf to the Ground ſeven Times, until he came near to his Brother."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That notwithſtanding *Jacob*, according to all Appearances, and for any Thing we find to the Contrary, was naturally of a timorous Diſpoſition, he would not ſuffer it to prevail ſo far upon him, as to expoſe the Women and Children, for his own Preſervation; but choſe rather to run the Hazard of his own Life, than to riſque theirs; by which he ſhewed himſelf both a good Huſband and a tender Parent: Neither did his Prudence forſake him, at this critical and dangerous Juncture; ſince he took the moſt probable Means, by the great Humility of his Deportment, and the Reverence and Reſpect wherewith he approached him, to appeaſe a Man of *Eſau*'s haughty Temper; as we find, accordingly he did.

Q. *What ſort of a Reception did* Eſau *give his Brother?*

A. "And *Eſau* ran to meet him, and embraced "him, and fell on his Neck, and kiſſed him, and "they wept."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. The over-ruling Power of the *Almighty*; in ſo turning the Heart of *Eſau*, that now, when he had in his Power, the Brother whoſe Deſtruction he had vowed, inſtead of offering him any Injury, he falls upon his Neck and weeps, and they mingle Tears of Joy together; ſo true it is, that all Things work together for good, for them that ſincerely love and fear the *Lord*.

Q. *What followed after this tender and moving Scene?*

A. "And he lift up his Eyes, and ſaw the Wo-"men and the Children: And ſaid, who are thoſe "with thee? And he ſaid, The Children which "*God* hath graciouſly given thy Servant. Then the "Handmaidens came near; they and their Children, "and they bowed themſelves. And *Leah* alſo with "her Children came near, and bowed themſelves; "and after came *Joſeph* near and *Rachel*, and they "bowed themſelves. And he ſaid, what meaneſt "thou by all this Drove which I met? And he ſaid, "thoſe are to find Grace in the Sight of my *Lord*."

Q. *Why did* Eſau *ask this, ſeeing he muſt have been informed thereof by the Servants that drove them?*

A. Not becauſe he did not know before, but that he might have an Opportunity by *Jacob*'s Anſwer, civilly to refuſe the Preſent.

Q. *What Reply did he then make to* Jacob.

A. "And *Eſau* ſaid, I have enough, my Bro-"ther: Keep that thou haſt unto thy ſelf. And "*Jacob* ſaid, Nay, I pray thee if now I have found "Grace in thy Sight, then receive my Preſent at "my Hand: For therefore have I ſeen thy Face, "as though I had ſeen the Face of *God*, and thou "waſt pleaſed with me."

Q. *What may one obſerve from hence?*

A. That as *Eſau* had alledged, as a Reaſon for not accepting his Brother's Preſent, that he had already enough of his own, *Jacob*, to induce him the more eaſily to take it, compares him, by a Licenſe frequent in the Oriental Tongues, to the Divine Being; hinting thereby, that as *God* accepted of Sacrifices, though he did not need them, from thoſe who ſerved him; and his Acceptance thereof, was a certain Sign of his Favour; ſo he begged his Brother, notwithſtanding his great Affluence, in the ſame Manner to accept of his Preſent; in Token of his Good-will and Favour to him.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Jacob *to* Eſau *to induce him to a Compliance?*

A. "Take, I pray thee, my Bleſſing that is "brought to thee; becauſe *God* hath dealt graci-"ouſly with me, and becauſe I have enough: And "he urged him, and he took it."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That *Jacob* to leave no Room for his Brother any longer to ſcruple his Preſent, urges alſo the ſame Reaſon for his Acceptance thereof, which *Eſau* had alledged for his Refuſal, namely, that he had enough; accordingly, *Eſau* having no farther Objections to make, and being deſirous of giving his Brother all Manner of Teſtimonies of his Good-will, at laſt complied with his Requeſt.

Q. *This Matter being adjuſted, what farther paſſed between the two Brothers?*

A. "And he ſaid, let us take our Journey, and "let us go, and I will go before thee."

Q. *What Anſwer made* Jacob *to this Propoſal of* Eſau's?

A. "And he ſaid unto him, My Lord knoweth "that the Children are tender, and the Flocks and "Herds with young are with me; and if Men ſhould "overdrive them one Day, all the Flock will die. "Let my Lord, I pray thee, paſs over before his "Servants: and I will lead on ſoftly, according as "the Cattle that goeth before me, and the Children "be able to endure; until I come unto my Lord "unto *Seir*."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The Policy and Subtlety of *Jacob*; notwithſtanding his late Reconciliation with his Brother, he did not care to put himſelf ſo entirely in his Power; and yet he was afraid to incenſe him, by giving him a flat Refuſal; wherefore he prudently had Recourſe to a plauſible Excuſe, which *Eſau* could not well contradict, in order to evade going with him; wherein he ſucceeded as well as he could have deſired.

Q. *What did* Eſau *propoſe next, on* Jacob's *having made this Excuſe?*

A. "And *Eſau* ſaid, Let me now leave with thee "ſome of the Folk that are with me; And he ſaid, "What needeth it? Let me find Grace in the Sight "of my Lord. So *Eſau* returned that Day on his "Way to *Seir*. And *Jacob* journeyed to *Succoth*, and "built him an Houſe, and made Booths for the "Cattle; therefore the Name of the Place is called "*Succoth*."

Q. *What may one obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Jacob* again cunningly declined *Eſau*'s ſecond Offer; as thinking the Guard propoſed, would be rather a Guard upon himſelf, (and conſequently, that he ſhould be little better than a Priſoner,) than any Defence to him againſt Enemies; of which he was not apprehenſive: Beſides, he would then have been under a Sort of Neceſſity of going directly to his Brother at *Mount Seir*, which he was not inclined to do; though we cannot believe with moſt Commentators, that he never went thither, becauſe it is not mentioned in Scripture; ſince, according to the ſame Rule, we muſt believe, that he never viſited his Father *Iſaac* till ten Years after his Arrival in *Canaan*, which we think altogether incredible, being at ſuch a ſmall Diſtance from him.

Q. *Did* Jacob *ſtay long at* Succoth?

A. No; "And *Jacob* came to *Shalem*, a City of "*Shechem*, which is in the Land of *Canaan*, when "he came from *Padan-aram*, and pitched his Tent "before the City."

Q. *What has been obſerved upon this Text?*

A. That there is great Reaſon to believe it is wrong tranſlated in our Verſion, who have therein followed the *Septuagint*, and the vulgar *Latin*. But *Junius* and *Tremellius* render it, *Deinde venit* Jahakob *incolumis ad Civitatem* Shecemum. Then came *Jacob* in Safety to the City of *Shechem*, which we take to be the true Meaning of the Original, *Shalem* ſignifying *in Safety*; and this is far more agreeable to Probability, than either that the City, to which *Jacob* came, ſhould have two Names at once; or that *Shalem* ſhould be a City in the Neighbourhood of *Shechem*, of which no Footſteps now remain. There is yet another Reaſon of no ſmall Weight, which is this; as the Subjects of *Hamor*, the Prince of this Territory, could not be very numerous, ſince they were afterwards cut off by *Simeon* and *Levi*, it ſeems contrary, both to good Policy, and all Manner of Likelihood, that they ſhould dwell in two Cities; which is the Solution offered by thoſe, who think *Shalem* a proper Name, and yet ſay it was not the ſame with *Shechem*.

Q. *And what did* Jacob *when he came before the City?*

A. "And he bought a Parcel of a Field, where he had ſpread his Tent, at the Hand of the Children of *Hamor*, *Shechem*'s Father, for an hundred Pieces of Money. And he erected there an Altar, and called it *El-Elohe-Iſrael*.

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That, notwithſtanding *God* had given the Land of *Canaan* for an Inheritance to *Jacob*, and his Seed for ever, the good Patriarch did not imagine, this Grant authorized him to take it forcibly from the preſent Poſſeſſors; but rightly judged that he was to wait the *Lord*'s appointed Time, before he or his were to be put in Poſſeſſion thereof: Accordingly, we find him here purchaſing a little Spot of Ground of them for his preſent Purpoſe: We may alſo obſerve, that the Uſe he made thereof, was to erect thereon an Altar, to perform his Devotions, which he called *El-Elohe-Iſrael*, that is, *God, the God of Iſrael*; to ſhew that he thereby renounced all other Gods, and would only worſhip *Jehovah* the *true and everlaſting* God.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Dinah *going to ſee the Daughters of the Land, is raviſhed, and defiled by* Shechem *the Son of* Hamor; *he ardently loves her, and vehemently deſires her in Marriage*; Jacob *hears thereof, but takes no Notice of it till his Sons come from the Field*; Hamor *treats about it with* Jacob *and his Sons*; *the Sons anſwer him inſidiouſly, pretending to agree thereto, provided all the Males of the* Shechemites *will conſent to be circumciſed*; *they conſent, and are circumciſed*; *and* Simeon *and* Levi *taking Advantage of them when they are ſore, come upon them by Surprize, maſſacre all the Males, plunder the City, and carry away all the Women and Children Captives*; Jacob *exceedingly troubled and terrified thereat*; *they offer to juſtify themſelves.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And *Dinah* the Daughter of *Leah*, which ſhe bare unto *Jacob*, went out to ſee the Daughters of the Land. And when *Shechem*, the Son of *Hamor*, the *Hivite*, Prince of that Country ſaw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The fatal Conſequences of an indiſcreet Curioſity, and Goſſiping; had *Dinah* ſtaid at home, and not had a Fancy for gadding, amongſt her idolatrous and licentious Neighbours, ſhe had never ſuffered as ſhe did; nor had that dreadful Maſſacre followed.

Q. *How did* Shechem *treat* Dinah *after this Act of Violence?*

A. Very kindly; "And his Soul clave unto *Dinah* the Daughter of *Jacob*, and he loved the Damſel, and ſpake kindly unto the Damſel."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That, notwithſtanding *Shechem* uſed unlawful and wicked Means to obtain his Deſire of *Dinah*, it is very evident, from what follows, that he ſincerely loved her, and was willing to make any Reparation whatſoever for his Offence; but nothing leſs, it ſeems, would ſatisfy the bloody Sons of *Jacob*, than the utter Extermination of him, and all the Male Inhabitants of the Place. A moſt barbarous and inhuman Action!

Q. *How did* Shechem *offer to make* Dinah *Satisfaction?*

A. "And *Shechem* ſpake unto his Father *Hamor*, ſaying, Get me this Damſel to Wife."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That to ſhew the Sincerity of his Love, which was not in the leaſt abated by Enjoyment, he immediately propoſes the moſt honourable Way of making her Amends, by taking her to Wife. Few Princes now-a-days would act with ſo much Honour.

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob, *when he heard of the Injury done his Daughter?*

A. "And *Jacob* heard that he had defiled *Dinah* his Daughter; (now his Sons were with his Cattle in the Field:) and *Jacob* held his Peace until they were come."

Q. *What might be* Jacob'*s Reaſon for not taking Notice thereof till his Sons came home?*

A. He looked upon this Injury as a Thing that concerned his whole Houſe; wherefore he was willing to conſult with them, what Meaſures he ſhould take for the Reparation of the Honour of the Family.

Q. *In the mean Time what did* Hamor?

A. "And *Hamor* the Father of *Shechem* went out unto *Jacob* to commune with him. And the Sons of *Jacob* came out of the Field when they heard it, and the Men were grieved, and they were very wroth: Becauſe he had wrought Folly in *Iſrael*, in lying with *Jacob*'s Daughter; which Thing ought not to be done. And *Hamor* communed with them, ſaying, The Soul of my Son *Shechem* longeth for your Daughter: I pray you give her him to Wife. And make ye Marriages with us, and give your Daughters unto us, and take our Daughters unto you. And ye ſhall dwell with us: and the Land ſhall be before you; dwell and trade you therein, and get you Poſſeſſions therein. And *Shechem* ſaid unto her Father, and unto her Brethren, Let me find Grace in your Eyes, and what ye ſhall ſay unto me, I will give. Aſk me never ſo much Dowry, and Gift, and I will give according as ye ſhall ſay unto me: But give me the Damſel to Wife."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The Fairneſs and Friendlineſs of the Propoſal; which deſerved a better Return, than it met with from *Dinah*'s bloody Brothers.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Jacob'*s Sons thereto?*

A. "And the Sons of *Jacob* anſwered *Shechem*, and *Hamor* his Father deceitfully, and ſaid, (becauſe he had defiled *Dinah* their Siſter.) And they ſaid unto them, We cannot do this Thing, to give our Siſter to one that is uncircumciſed: For that were a Reproach unto us. But in this will we conſent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every Male of you be circumciſed; then will we give our Daughters unto you, and we will take your Daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one People. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumciſed; then will we take our Daughter, and we will be gone.

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The Treachery and Fraud of *Jacob*'s Sons, in making this inſidious Propoſal, with which it is evident they never intended to comply; they only had Recourſe thereto, the better to conceal the real Sentiments of their Hearts, and as the likelieſt Means to effect their bloody Purpoſe.

Q. *How did* Hamor *and* Shechem *approve of this ſtrange Propoſal?*

A. Very well; " And their Words pleaſed *Hamor*, " and *Shechem Hamor*'s Son."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That, notwithſtanding *Jacob*'s Sons were guilty of a horrid Crime, in committing ſuch an inhuman Maſſacre upon the Inhabitants of *Shechem*, it is apparent they were devoted to Deſtruction by the *Almighty*; otherwiſe they could never have been ſo infatuated, to agree ſo eaſily to ſo unreaſonable a Propoſal; ſince it is evident, they did it not out of any religious Motive; neither did they intend to embrace the true Religion, and to have renounced their Idolatry, notwithſtanding that they ſubmitted to this painful Operation; if they had, *Moſes* would never have omitted ſo material a Circumſtance: It is highly probable, therefore, that the *Shechemites* were notorious Sinners, and that the Meaſure of their Iniquity was full, otherwiſe the *Lord* would not have ſuffered them to fall under ſo ſtrange an Infatuation.

Q. *What next are we informed concerning this Tranſaction?*

A. " And the young Man deferred not to do " the Thing, becauſe he had Delight in *Jacob*'s " Daughter: And he was more honourable than all " the Houſe of his Father. And *Hamor* and *Shechem* came unto the Gate of their City, and communed with the Men of their City, ſaying, Theſe " Men are peaceable with us, therefore let them dwell " in the Land, and trade therein: For the Land, " behold it is large enough for them. Let us take " their Daughters to us for Wives, and let us give " them our Daughters. Only herein will the Men " conſent unto us, for to dwell with us, to be one " People, if every Male among us be circumciſed, " as they are circumciſed. Shall not their Cattle, " and their Subſtance, and every Beaſt of theirs be " ours? Only let us conſent unto them, and they " will dwell with us."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the Arguments uſed by *Hamor* and *Shechem*, to induce them to agree to be circumciſed, were purely temporal, and that Religion had nothing to do in the Caſe; wherefore it is the leſs to be wondered at, that *God* ſhould ſuffer them to fall into this Snare.

Q. *Were the* Shechemites *eaſily perſuaded?*

A. Yes; " And unto *Hamor* and unto *Shechem* " his Son, hearkened all that went out of the Gate of " the City: And every Male was circumciſed, all " that went out of the Gate of his City."

Q. *And what was the Conſequence thereof?*

A. " And it came to paſs on the third Day, when " they were ſore, that two of the Sons of *Jacob*, *Simeon* and *Levi*, *Dinah*'s Brethren, took each Man " his Sword, and came upon the City boldly, and " ſlew all the Males. And they ſlew *Hamor* and " *Shechem* with the Edge of the Sword, and took " *Dinah* out of *Shechem*'s Houſe, and went out. The " Sons of *Jacob* came upon the ſlain, and ſpoiled " the City, becauſe they had defiled their Siſter. " They took their Sheep, and their Oxen, and their " Aſſes, and that which was in the City, and that " which was in the Field, and all their Wealth, and " all their little ones, and their Wives took they " Captive, and ſpoiled even all that was in the " Houſe."

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. The prodigious Treachery, Inhumanity, Barbarity, and Injuſtice of this Action; they treacherouſly and baſely take Advantage of the innocent Inhabitants, when they were not apprehenſive of any Injury from them, and when their Wounds were at the ſoreſt, inſomuch, that they could not defend themſelves; and they not only murder all the Men, but plunder their Houſes, ſeize on all their Wealth and Subſtance, and carry away their Wives and Children Captives; a Complication of Murder, Cruelty, Theft, Robbery and Injuſtice. In ſhort, an Action ſo very black, all Circumſtances conſidered, that we queſtion whether it can be parallel'd in Hiſtory.

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob *on his hearing of this unjuſt and inhuman Execution?*

A. " And *Jacob* ſaid to *Simeon* and *Levi*, Ye " have troubled me, to make me ſtink among the " Inhabitants of the Land, amongſt the *Canaanites*, " and the *Perizites*: And I being few in Number, " they ſhall gather themſelves together againſt me, " and ſlay me, and I ſhall be deſtroyed, I and my " Houſe."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. How far the Deſire of Revenge is apt to blind Mankind; and make them guilty of Actions, not only inconſiſtent with Humanity and good Policy, but even inconſiſtent with common Prudence, and with their own Safety and Welfare. For, *Jacob*'s Apprehenſions were ſo far from being ill-grounded, that had not his divine Guardian and Protector, who watched over his Safety, ſtruck a Terror into the Minds of all the Inhabitants round about, they muſt certainly have utterly exterminated him and his whole Family; ſince we may well imagine, that this barbarous Maſſacre muſt make them odious to all the People of the Land: And who then could have prevented *Dinah*'s being raviſhed a ſecond Time, and that by thoſe who would not have treated her ſo kindly, or loved her ſo ſincerely as *Shechem*? But what do we ſay *Dinah*, when 'tis evident all their Wives, Daughters, and Handmaids, in general, muſt have been liable to the ſame Fate, and lain at the Mercy of the juſtly incens'd *Canaanites*! They blindly revenged, therefore, one Rape, by expoſing all their Females in general to the ſame Abuſe!

Q. *What Anſwer gave* Jacob'*s Sons to this their Father's juſt Reproof?*

A. " And they ſaid ſhould he deal with our Siſter " as with an Harlot?"

Q. *What may we obſerve thereupon?*

A. That they inſolently offer to excuſe one Crime, by committing another; and accuſing their Father of Stupidity, in being inſenſible of ſo great an Indignity, and Injury, as the raviſhing their Siſter; whereas, it is not to be ſuppoſed but he was as ſenſible thereof as his boiſterous Sons; notwithſtanding he would not have ſuffered his Anger to have tranſported him to ſuch inhuman and unjuſtifiable Exceſſes and Outrages as they had.

Chap. XXXV.

God *commands* Jacob *to remove to* Bethel, *and ſettle there; and erect an Altar for his Worſhip; he orders his Family to put away the ſtrange Gods which were amongſt them, and cleanſe themſelves, and prepare to go to* Bethel; *they obey;* Jacob *buries the Idols under an Oak near* Shechem; God *ſtrikes a Terror into the Cities round about them, that they durſt not purſue after* Jacob'*s Sons;* Jacob *arrives at* Bethel *with his Family, and builds an*

Altar there; The Death and Burial of Rebekah's *Nurſe;* God *appears again to* Jacob, *and bleſſes him, and renews the Promiſes heretofore made to him, and his Forefathers; he ſets up a Pillar, pours Oil thereon, and names the Place* Bethel; *he goes from thence to* Ephrath, *where* Rachel *dies in Labour of* Benjamin, *and is buried;* Jacob *erects a Pillar upon her Grave; he removes from thence beyond the Tower of* Edar, *where* Reuben *commits Inceſt with his Concubine* Bilhah; *the Names of* Jacob's *Sons;* Jacob *viſits his Father* Iſaac; Iſaac's *Age, Death, and Burial.*

Q. HOW *was* Jacob *comforted in the Affliction and Terror he was under?*

A. By the beſt and moſt effectual of all Comforts, *God's* revealing himſelf to him. And *God* ſaid unto "*Jacob*, Ariſe, go up to *Bethel*, and dwell there: "And make there an Altar to *God*, that appeared "unto thee, when thou fleddeſt from the Face of "*Eſau* thy Brother."

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon.*

A. God's gracious and infinite Goodneſs to thoſe who fear him; and truly ſerve him; for this was a Word in Seaſon, to comfort *Jacob's* troubled Mind; and we may obſerve therein, how graciouſly *God* vouchſafes to accommodate his Mercies to our finite Underſtandings: He could as eaſily have protected and defended *Jacob*, had he ſtaid where he was, though Millions had combined againſt him, and vowed his Deſtruction; but he condeſcends graciouſly to adviſe him to ſuch probable Means, as he muſt in himſelf judge the moſt likely to contribute to his Safety; namely, to remove from thence: But, beſides this, there ſeems to be a tacit Reproof therein, for his not having before then paid the Vows made in his Diſtreſs, of which the *Lord* here reminds him.

Q. *What did* Jacob, *upon the* Lord's *giving him this Command?*

A. "Then *Jacob* ſaid unto his Houſhold, and to "all that were with him, put away the ſtrange *Gods* "that are among you, and be clean, and change "your Garments."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That the being pure in Heart, and undefiled, (of which the frequent Cleanſings under the Law were an Emblem) is a neceſſary Qualification in whoever would worſhip the *Lord* acceptably.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Jacob *to his Family?*

A. "And let us ariſe, and go up to *Bethel*, and "I will make there an Altar unto *God*, who anſwered "me in the Day of my Diſtreſs, and was with me "in the Way which I went."

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That *Jacob* aſſigns *God's* anſwering him in the Day of his Diſtreſs, as an undeniable Reaſon, why he ſhould make an Altar to him, and worſhips him; whence we learn that Mercies received demand our Acknowledgement and Gratitude.

Q. *Did* Jacob's *Family comply readily with his Demand?*

A. Yes; "And they gave unto *Jacob* all the "ſtrange Gods which were in their Hand, and all "their Ear-rings which were in their Ears; and "*Jacob* hid them, under the Ark which was by "*Shechem*."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence? And why were the Ear-rings delivered up with the Idols?*

A. That ſome of *Jacob's* Family had probably polluted themſelves with Idols till this Time; and not improbably *Rachel* might be one of them; and this might be the Reaſon of her Stealing, and ſo carefully concealing her Father's Images. As to the Ear-rings being delivered up, as well as the ſtrange Gods, the Reaſon in all likelyhood was, that they had been made ſome way or other ſubſervient to idolatrous and ſuperſtitious Purpoſes; either by *Jacob's* Houſhold, or the Inhabitants of *Shechem*; to whom they might poſſibly have belonged, and have been been brought into *Jacob's* Family, amongſt the Reſt of the Spoils of that unfortunate People: However that be, it is certain, that divers *Heathen* Nations did wear Ear-rings, that were made for the Honour of their Idols, and had the Repreſentation and Figure of them engraven thereon; and there is great Reaſon to believe that theſe were of that Nature.

Q. *What did* Jacob *and his Family after having thus buried theſe Ear-rings and Idols?*

A. "And they journeyed: And the Terror of "*God* was upon the Cities that were round about "them, and they did not purſue after the Sons of "*Jacob*."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That it is evident, had not *God* ſo ſignally protected *Jacob*, and his Family, by infuſing ſuch a Terrour into the Minds, of all the Inhabitants round about, that they were ſo odious to them, by their Barbarity at *Shechem*, that they would not only have purſued after them, but would have cut them all in Pieces: Happy was it for *Jacob's* Sons, that they had ſo pious and religious a Father!

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Jacob?

A. "So *Jacob* came to *Luz*, which is in the Land "of *Canaan* (that is, *Bethel*) he and all the People "that were with him. And he built there an Altar, "and called the Place *El-bethel* (that is, the *God of* "*Bethel*:) Becauſe there *God* appeared unto him, "when he fled from the Face of his Brother; which "requires no Explanation."

Q. *What befel* Jacob *during his Stay at* Bethel?

A. "But *Deborah Rebekah's* Nurſe died, and ſhe "was buried beneath *Bethel*, under an Oak: And the "Name of it was called *Allon-bachuth*."

Q. *But how came* Deborah *into* Jacob's *Family; all the Mention that is made of her before, is that ſhe went with* Rebekah *into* Canaan, *when ſhe went to be married to* Iſaac, *and we know that when* Jacob *ſet out from his Father's to go to* Haran, *he went alone, and no Notice is taken of his having viſited his Father, till ſome Time after this?*

A. The mentioning of *Deborah's* Death here, has given Occaſion to various Conjectures amongſt Commentators; ſome are of Opinion, that after ſhe had brought her Miſtreſs *Rebekah* to her Husband, and ſeen her well ſettled in her Family, ſhe went back to *Haran* again, and there dwelt in *Laban's* Houſe; till on *Jacob's* return Home, ſhe having a Deſire once more to ſee her old Miſtreſs, was willing to put herſelf into the Company. This Opinion is not altogether deſtitute of Probability, however, we think it much more probable, that *Jacob* had paid his Duty to his Parents, before his going to dwell at *Bethel*; and that *Rebekah* dying alſo, before that Time, *Deborah*, her Nurſe, being deſirous of living with Perſons of her own Country, retired from *Jacob's* Habitation, after his Wife's Deceaſe, and went to live with *Leah* and *Rachel*, the Wives of *Jacob*. On admitting this Suppoſition to be true, we have a rational and eaſy Account, how the Death and Burial of *Deborah*, came to be placed here, ſo ſoon after *Jacob's* Arrival at *Bethel*, without any previous Relation of her coming into his Family: However that be, it is apparent ſhe was greatly reſpected by them, ſince they lamented her Loſs ſo much, that the Name of the *Allon-bachuth*, that is, the *Oak of weeping*, was given to the Oak under which ſhe was buried. It may perhaps, be objected to this Account of *Rebekah*'s Death, and *Deborah*'s Removal from the Service of *Iſaac*, to that of *Jacob*, that it is ſtrange *Moſes* ſhould paſs by Circumſtances of Moment, and yet take notice of a new Name given to a Tree. In order to obviate this, we are to conſider, that Things are either mentioned, or omitted, by that divine Author, not as they are of Conſequence to the Thread of the Hiſtory, but as they had more or leſs Reference to that End, for which the Book of *Geneſis* was compoſed; wherefore, as the *Iſraelites*, at their coming out of *Egypt*, were a very ſuperſtitious People, their prudent Legiſlator was careful to explain, the Reaſon of the Names given to ſeveral Places; in Order to prevent their imbibing any ſuch Notions, from theſe Names, as might miſlead them into Idolatry; to which they were prodigiouſly prone.

Q. *What elſe happened to* Jacob, *during his Reſidence at Bethel?*

A. "And *God* appeared unto *Jacob* again, when he came out of *Padan-aram*, and bleſſed him. *God* ſaid unto him, Thy Name is *Jacob:* Thy And Name ſhall not be called any more *Jacob*, but *Iſrael* ſhall be thy Name; and he called his Name *Iſrael*. And *God* ſaid unto him, I am *God Almighty*; be fruitful and multiply, a Nation, and a Company of Nations ſhall be of thee: And things ſhall come out of thy Loyns. And the Land which I gave *Abraham* and *Jacob*, to thee I will give it, and to thy Seed after thee will I give the Land.

Q. *What is remarkable herein?*

A. The wonderful Graciouſneſs of *God* to thoſe who ſerve him; in Return for *Jacob*'s having now performed his Vow, he condeſcends to give him repeated Aſſurances of the Stability of the Promiſes made to *Abraham* and *Iſaac*; and at the ſame Time adds new Bleſſings to himſelf.

Q. *What did* God *after having thus bleſſed* Jacob?

A. "And *God* here vouchſafed *Jacob* ſome viſible Manifeſtation of his Preſence; either by appearing to him in Human ſhape, as he did before when he wreſtled with him, or by ſuch a Manifeſtation of himſelf as was uſual in the *Schekinah*; a ſignal Inſtance of his extraordinary Favour to *Jacob*."

Q. *What did* Jacob *after* God's *withdrawing the Manifeſtation of his Preſence from him?*

A. "And *Jacob* ſet up a Pillar in the Place where he talked with him, even a Pillar of *Stone*: And he poured a Drink-Offering thereon, and he poured Oil thereon?

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That *Jacob* did this in grateful Remembrance of *God*'s Goodneſs and Mercy, making it at once a Monument of the *Lord*'s manifold Favours to him, and of his own Gratitude and Acknowledgment of the ſame; whence we may learn that we ought thankfully acknowledge all *God*'s Mercies, if we either deſire the Continuance thereof, and would have him confer more upon us.

Q. *What next did* Jacob, *after having erected this Pillar, and made this Offering?*

A. "And *Jacob* called the Name of that Place, where *God* ſpake with him, *Bethel*."

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That as *God*, on this Occaſion, had renewed the Grant of *Canaan* to *Jacob*, and his Poſterity, and had a ſecond Time, beſtowed on him the Name of *Iſrael*; ſo he alſo re-conſecrated the Place of *God*'s Appearance, and called it again *Bethel*, that is, the *Houſe* of *God*.

Q. *Did* Jacob *ſtay long at* Bethel *after this?*

A. No, he removed from thence ſoon afterwards, probably by the Direction of the *Almighty*, for we cannot well ſuppoſe he would have removed from thence without the divine Permiſſion, eſpecially as it was by the divine Command he went thither. "And they journeyed from *Bethel*: And there was but a little Way to come to *Ephrath*: And *Rachel* travailed and ſhe had hard Labour."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The juſt Retributions of the *Almighty* for our Sins; *Rachel*, through her vehement deſire of Children, had been guilty of a very raſh Speech, bordering upon Blaſphemy; and now, when ſhe had probably forgotten it, Child-bearing becomes her Puniſhment, and ſhe who formerly ſaid to her Huſband, with the utmoſt Impatience, *Give me Children, or die*, ſhall now die in bringing forth a Child to her Huſband: Poor *Rachel* might viſibly read her Sin in her Puniſhment, for which, no Doubt, ſhe then repented; but too late, Sentence was paſſed, and ſhe was to remain a Warning to ſucceeding Ages, to reſign themſelves up, without Murmuring, to the unſearchable Diſpenſations of the divine Providence.

Q. *What ſaid the Midwife to her to comfort her?*

A. "And it came to paſs, when ſhe was in hard Labour, that the Midwife ſaid unto her, Fear not, thou ſhalt have this Son alſo."

Q. *But did not her Skill fail her, this Time?*

A. In ſome Meaſure it did, for undoubtedly ſhe meant that *Rachel* ſhould recover to do well, after being deliver'd of this Son, which ſhe did not; "And it came to paſs, as her Soul was in Departing (for ſhe died) that ſhe called his Name *Benoni*, (that is the *Son of my Sorrow*:) But his Father called him *Benjamin*, (that is, the *Son of my right Hand*.) And *Rachel* died, and was buried in the Way to *Ephrath*, which is *Bethlehem*."

Q. *What may be ſuppoſed to have been* Jacob's *Reaſon for changing his Son's Name?*

A. That the frequent Repetition thereof might not add continually and to his Sorrow, by recalling to his Remembrance the Loſs of his beloved Wife.

Q. *And what did* Jacob *to do Honour to* Rachel's *Memory?*

A. "And *Jacob* ſet a Pillar upon her Grave: that is, the Pillar of *Rachel*'s Grave unto this Day."

Q. *What did* Jacob *after this?*

A. "And *Iſrael* journeyed, and ſpread his Tent beyond the Tower of *Edar*."

Q. *And what Diſaſter befel him whilſt he remained there?*

A. A very great one; "And it came to paſs, when *Iſrael* dwelt in that Land, that *Reuben* went and lay with *Bilhah* his Father's Concubine: And *Iſrael* heard it. Now the Sons of *Jacob* were twelve."

Q. *Was not this horrid Inceſt a grievous Affliction to* Jacob?

A. Undoubtedly it was; and accordingly we find he remembered it to his dying Day, which was forty Years after, and *Reuben* loſt his Birth-right for it; which was conferr'd, the Prieſt-hood upon *Levi*, the Dominion upon *Judah*, and the double Portion upon *Joſeph*. Yet here is no Mention made of any Reproof given him by *Jacob*, neither is any Cenſure annexed to the Account thereof by *Moſes*; poſſibly to teach us, that we are not to approve of every Fact which is mentioned in Scripture, without Cenſure, and that the Miſcarriages of Profeſſors of Religion, are rather to be ſilently bewailed, than publickly reproached; leſt Religion itſelf ſhould ſuffer, and be wounded through their Sides.

Q. *Enumerate the twelve Sons of* Jacob?

A. “ The Sons of *Leah*; *Reuben*, *Jacob*'s first-“ born; and *Simeon*, and *Levi*, and *Judah*, and “ *Iſſachar*, and *Zebulun*. The Sons of *Rachel*; *Jo-*“ *ſeph*, and *Benjamin*. And the Sons of *Bilhah*, *Ra-*“ *chel*'s Handmaid; *Dan*, and *Naphtali*. And the “ Sons of *Zilpah*, *Leah*'s Handmaid; *Gad* and *Aſher*. “ Theſe are the Sons of *Jacob*, which were born to “ him in *Padan-aram*.”

Q. *How can that be, when* Benjamin *was born but a little before, near* Ephrath?

A. This muſt be taken in a limited Senſe; and means only that greateſt Part of them were born in *Padan-aram*, or *Haran*; as indeed far the greateſt Part were; ſince eleven of them with their Siſter *Dinah*, who is not mentioned here, becauſe ſhe was not to be the Head of a Tribe, were born there.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Jacob?

A. “ And *Jacob* came unto *Iſaac* his Father unto “ *Mamre*, unto the City of *Arbah*, (which is *Hebron*) “ where *Abraham* and *Iſaac* ſojourneyed.”

Q. *But is credible that* Jacob *ſhould be ſo long near his dear and worthy Father and never once viſit him, ſince he had now been about ten Years in the Land of* Canaan?

A. We have already obſerved upon this Head, that it is utterly incredible; wherefore, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that he had often viſited him, together with his Wives and Children; but that they could not live together, on Account of their numerous Flocks, and Herds as happened to *Abraham* and *Lot*; and that the Reaſon of this Viſit's being mentioned rather than any of the Reſt is, that it immediately preceded *Iſaac*'s Death and Burial, of which *Moſes* was now to give an Account: It is not at all improbable therefore, that *Iſaac* finding his Death approaching, ſent both for him and *Eſau*, to take his laſt Leave of them, having been before informed of their ſincere Reconciliation. We cannot help obſerving here alſo, what we don't find obſerved by any other; that this Circumſtance of their meeting at their Father's makes it highly probable, that *Jacob* had before then performed his Promiſe, of viſiting *Eſau* in mount *Seir*, though no Notice is taken thereof by *Moſes*; ſince had it been otherwiſe, *Jacob*, in all Likelyhood, would have been extremely cautious, of coming into his Power; and it is certain, a Man of *Eſau*'s haughty Spirit, would hardly have forborn reproaching him ſeverely with his Breach of Promiſe, if he had ſtopt there, when he had nothing to dread from his Father, at whoſe Funeral they both aſſiſted. As no Mention, therefore, is made by *Moſes*, of *Eſau*'s upbraiding *Jacob* therewith, after his Father's Deceaſe, no more than there is of *Jacob*'s going to mount *Seir*, or viſiting *Iſaac*, before this Time, they all ſtand upon the ſame Foot in that Point; and the Forbearance of *Eſau*, in not reproaching *Jacob*, makes it highly probable, that the latter had both viſited his Father, who was, by that Means, informed of the Reconciliation of his two Sons, and that he had performed his Promiſe in going to Mount *Seir*.

Q. *What farther are we informed concerning* Iſaac?

A. “ And the Days of *Iſaac* were an hundred and “ fourſcore Years. And *Iſaac* gave up the Ghoſt, “ and died, and was gathered unto his People, be-“ ing old, and full of Days: And his Sons *Eſau* “ and *Jacob* buried him.” Which requires no Ex-“ planation.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Eſau's *Wives; and the Children he had born to him in* Canaan: *He removes from* Jacob *to mount* Seir; *The Reaſon thereof; His Poſterity; The Deſcendants of* Seir *the* Horite; Anah *the firſt who found Mules in the Wilderneſs; His Children; A Catalogue of the Kings and Princes of* Edom.

Q. O*F what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ Now theſe are the Generations of *Eſau*, who “ is *Edom*.”

Q. *Why are the Generations of* Eſau *mentioned here?*

A. Partly to ſhew how exactly the Prophecy of *Iſaac* in bleſſing him was accompliſhed; and partly, that the *Iſraelites* might be thereby admoniſhed, to treat the *Edomites* like Brethren, and not invade their Country.

Q. *Proceed now to the Generations of* Eſau, *and let us hear who they were?*

A. “ *Eſau* took his Wives of the Daughters of “ *Canaan*; *Adah* the Daughter of *Elon* the *Hittite*, “ and *Aholibamah* the Daughter of *Anah*, the Daugh-“ ter of *Zibeon* the *Hivite*.”

Q. “ *But how does this Account agree with that in* Geneſis xxvi. 34. *where the Daughter of* Elon, *the* Hittite, *is called* Baſhemath; *and his other Wife is named* Judith, *the Daughter of* Beeri *the* Hittite? *How can this be reconciled?*

A. Very eaſily, if theſe Things be conſidered; *Firſt*, that all agree it is very uſual in Scripture to call the ſame Perſons by ſeveral Names. *Secondly*, That the Names of ſome Perſons are given in Scripture to others, on Account of a great Reſemblance between them in ſome Points; for which Reaſon the Father of *Jeruſalem*, is ſaid to be an *Amorite*, and and her Mother an *Hittite*, becauſe of her Abominations, *Ezek.* xvi. 3. And the Rulers of *Jeruſalem* are called Rulers of *Sodom*, and the People, the People of *Gomorrah*, *Iſa.* i. 10. *John* the *Baptiſt* is alſo called *Elias*, *Matth* xvii. 12. *Thirdly*, That the ſame Men are often denominated from ſeveral Countries, as *Chriſt* is noted to have a threefold Country in Scripture; *Bethlehem*, from his Birth, *Nazareth* from his Education, and *Capernaum*, from his much reſiding, and frequent preaching there. *Fourthly*, That the ſame Names are common both to Men and Women. And *Fifthly*, that Perſons are called the Children, not only of their immediate Parents, but of their Grandfather, or of thoſe who adopted them. Theſe Things being premiſed, the ſeeming Contradictions between theſe two Texts which have been objected by *Infidels*, will vaniſh. She who was properly called *Judith*, *Gen.* xxvi. 34. is here named *Aholibamah*, an Appellation, which ſeems to have been given her, either by *Iſaac*, or *Moſes*, from her obſtinate Perſeverance in her idolatrous Courſes. And *Adah*, was alſo called *Baſhemath*. *Anah*, a Man, and the Son of *Zibeon*, as appears from ver. 24. called here an *Hivite*, is named *Beeri* the *Hittite*, *Gen.* xxvi. 34. either becauſe thoſe two People had made a Coalition, by Intermarriages, and dwelling Promiſcuouſly together; or becauſe the one People being larger than the other, the leſſer were included under their Names; or becauſe he was an *Hivite* by Birth, and an *Hittite* by Habitation or Incorporation

tion with them. Hence alſo we may learn, how *Aholibamah* comes to be called the Daughter both of *Anah*, and of *Zibeon*; the one being her real and proper Father, and the other either her Grandfather, or her Father by Adoption.

Q. *But had not* Eſau *another Wife beſides theſe?*

A. “ And *Baſhemath*, *Iſhmael*'s Daughter, Siſter of “ *Nebajoth*.”

Q. *Why ſhe is called* Mahalath, Gen. xxviii. 9. *how comes ſhe to be named* Baſhemath *here?*

A. Two Reaſons have been aſſigned for it; the *firſt* is, that ſhe is ſo called either, becauſe ſhe reſembled *Eſau*'s other Wife, who was ſo named, in her Principles and Courſe of Life; or to ſhew that *Eſau*'s Marriage to his third Wife, though *Iſhmael*'s Daughter, was no leſs a Diſgrace to him, and as diſpleaſing to his Parents, as his two former Matches. The *ſecond*, which we think the more probable, is, that *Eſau* himſelf gave her this ſecond Name, and the Interpretation of the *Hebrew* Names, gives us Reaſon to be of this Opinion; for *Mahalath* ſignifying *ſickly*, or *infirm*, it is probable it was given her on Account of her ill State of Health; and that, growing better after Marriage, *Eſau*, who loved her, called her *Baſhemath*, which is, *fragrant* or *aromatick*. This Conjecture, which is that of a modern Author, has at leaſt this to recommend it; that it is very ingenious, and not repugnant to the Words of Scripture.

Q. *And what Children had* Eſau *by theſe Wives?*

A. “ And *Adah* bare to *Eſau*, *Eliphaz*: And “ *Baſhemath* bare *Reuel*. And *Aholibamah* bare “ *Jeuſh*, and *Jaalam*, and *Korah*: Theſe are the “ Sons of *Eſau*, which were born unto him in the “ Land of *Canaan*.

Q. *What Perſons, who are hereafter mentioned in Scripture, are ſuppoſed to have deſcended from this* Eliphaz *the Son of* Adah, *and* Reuel *the Son of* Baſhemath?

A. Eliphaz, the *Temanite*, one of *Job*'s Friends, mentioned *Job* ii. 11. is ſuppoſed to have deſcended from the former, and *Reuel* the Father of *Jethro*, Father-in-law to *Moſes* from the latter.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Eſau?

A. “ And *Eſau* took his Wives, and his Sons, “ and his Daughters, and all the Perſons of his Houſe, “ and his Cattle, and all his Beaſts, and all his Subſtance, which he had got in the Land of *Canaan*, “ and went into the Country, from the Face of his “ Brother *Jacob*. For their Riches were more than “ that they might dwell together: And the Land “ wherein they were Strangers, could not bear them “ becauſe of their Cattle.”

Q. *What is to be ſuppoſed the Reaſon of* Eſau's *quitting the Country to* Jacob, *when, as he was the eldeſt, and the moſt powerful, one ſhould think he ſhould have made* Jacob *quit it to him?*

A. Undoubtedly he would have done ſo, but that he was already ſettled more to his Delight and Advantage in Mount *Seir*; where, we find, even at *Jacob*'s Return out of *Meſopotamia*, he was already grown ſo potent, that he brought four hundred armed Men in his Train, when he ſet out to meet his Brother. The firſt Reaſon of his going thither may probably have been, partly, his own Choice; that wild and mountainous Country being very commodious for hunting, wherein he placed his chief Delight; partly, the Sollicitations of his Wives, who were utterly averſe to living with *Iſaac*'s Family; and partly, ſome Diſcontent proceeding from the Reproofs of his Parents, for ſome Miſcarriages whereof he might have been guilty: And he might now have brought his Wives and Family, and Subſtance with him, as apprehending his Father's approaching Death, and being willing to ſolemnize his Funeral with the more Pomp; as alſo out of Oſtentation, to diſplay his own Grandeur; eſpecially as he was come to take Poſſeſſion of beſt Part of his Father's Eſtate, which made a conſiderable Addition to what he was already poſſeſſed of. Upon the Deceaſe, therefore, of *Iſaac*, his Brother and he being agreed about the Partition of his Effects, he finally, and wholly forſook the Land of *Canaan*; which being better peopled than Mount *Seir*, would not allow ſufficient Paſture for his and his Brother's Flocks, and Herds; ſince they were both but Strangers therein, and forced to be ſatisfied with what the *Canaanites* would leave them.

Q. *What farther are we told of* Eſau, *after his leaving* Canaan?

A. “ Thus dwelt *Eſau* in Mount *Seir*: *Eſau* is “ *Edom*.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That this Repetition at the End of the Verſe, *Eſau* is *Edom*, ſeems to be added by the *Holy Ghoſt*, by Way of Contempt and Reproach; as if it had been ſaid, This is he who *ſtupidly* and *meanly* ſold his Birth-right for a *Meſs* of *Red-pottage*; and therefore was called *Edom*, or *Red*.

Q. *What next are we informed of concerning him?*

A. “ And theſe are the Generations of *Eſau*, the “ Father of the *Edomites* in Mount *Seir*. Theſe are “ the Names of *Eſau*'s Sons, *Eliphaz*, the Son of *A-* “ *dah*, the Wife of *Eſau*; *Reuel*, the Son of *Baſhe-* “ *math*, the Wife of *Eſau*. And the Sons of *Eli-* “ *phaz* were *Teman*, *Omar*, *Zepho*, and *Gatam*, and “ *Kenaz*. And *Timna* was Concubine to *Eliphaz*, “ *Eſau*'s Son, and ſhe bare to *Eliphaz*, *Amalek*: “ Theſe were the Sons of *Adah*, *Eſau*'s Wife. And “ theſe are the Sons of *Reuel*: *Nahath*, and *Zerah*, “ *Shammah*, and *Mizzah*: Theſe were the Sons of “ *Baſhemath*, *Eſau*'s Wife. And theſe were the Sons “ of *Aholibamah*, the Daughter of *Anah*, the Daughter *Zibeon*, *Eſau*'s Wife; and ſhe bare to *Eſau*, “ *Jeuſh*, and *Jaalam*, and *Korah*. Theſe were “ Dukes of the Sons of *Eſau*; the Sons of *Eliphaz*, “ the firſt-born of *Eſau*, Duke *Teman*, Duke *Omar*, “ Duke *Zepho*, Duke *Kenaz*. Duke *Korah*, Duke “ *Gatam*, and Duke *Amalek*. Theſe are the Dukes “ that came of *Eliphaz*, in the Land of *Edom*: “ Theſe were the Sons of *Adah*.”

Q. *What were theſe Dukes, and what may we obſerve from hence?*

A. Petty Princes, who ruled each their own Dominions, moſt probably independent of, but in ſtrict Alliance with each other; and we may obſerve in the Diviſion, that *Eliphaz*, as he was *Eſau*'s firſt-born, had more than a double Portion; his ſix Sons being made Dukes, as *Eſau*'s immediate Sons were: We muſt obſerve alſo, that this Duke *Korah* not being mentioned amongſt the Sons of *Eliphaz*, was probably his Grandſon; and muſt not confound him with the *Korah*, the Son of *Aholibamah*, mentioned Verſe 5, 14, 18.

Q. *And what Dukes proceeded from* Reuel, Eſau's *Son by* Baſhemath?

A. “ And theſe are the Sons of *Reuel*, *Eſau*'s Son: “ Duke *Nahath*, Duke *Zerah*, Duke *Shammah*, “ Duke *Mizzah*. Theſe are the Dukes that came of “ *Reuel*, in the Land of *Edom*. Theſe are the Sons “ of *Baſhemath*, *Eſau*'s Wife.”

A. And what Dukes proceeded from Aholibamah, Eſau's *Wife?*

A. “ And theſe are the Sons of *Aholibamah*, *Eſau*'s “ Wife;

“ Wiſe: Duke *Jeuſh*, Duke *Jaalam*, Duke *Korah*: “ Theſe were the Dukes that came of *Aholibamah*, “ the Daughter of *Anah*, *Eſau*'s Wife. Theſe are “ Sons of *Eſau* (who is *Edom*) and theſe are their “ Dukes.

Q. *This needs no Explanation; of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ Theſe are the Sons of *Seir* the *Horite*, who “ inhabited the Land, *Lotan*, and *Shobal*, and *Zibeon*, and *Anah*, and *Diſhon*, and *Ezer*, and *Diſhan*: Theſe are the Dukes of the *Horites*, the “ Children of *Seir*, in the Land of *Edom*.”

Q. *Why are theſe mentioned here amongſt the Poſterity of* Eſau?

A. Partly becauſe of their Alliance with *Eſau*'s Family; and partly becauſe the Government was transferred from them to *Eſau*'s Family; who growing powerful, ſeized thereon by Force, and thereby verified *Iſaac*'s Prophecy, *By thy Sword thou ſhalt live*, Gen. xxvii. 40.

Q. *And who were the Dukes, Deſcendants of theſe* Horites, *till they were driven out by* Eſau's *Poſterity?*

A. “ And the Children of *Lotan* were *Hori*, and “ *Heman*: And *Lotan*'s Siſter was *Timna*.”

Q. *What may one obſerve from thence?*

A. That probably it was from this *Hori* the People derived the Name of *Horites*; and that *Lotan*'s Siſter *Timna*, ſeems to be particularly mentioned, becauſe ſhe was Concubine to *Eliphaz*; which was then a Thing unuſual in any but Slaves.

Q. *What other Deſcendants had theſe Sons of* Seir?

A. “ And the Children of *Shobal* were theſe: *Alvan*, and *Manahath*, and *Ebel*, *Shepho*, and *Onam*. And theſe are the Children of *Zibeon*; both “ *Ajah* and *Anah*: This was that *Anah*, that found “ the Mules in the Wilderneſs, as he fed the Aſſes “ of *Zibeon*, his Father.”

Q. *What has been obſerved upon this Text?*

A. Commentators are divided about the Meaning of this Word *Jemim*, which is here rendered *Mules*, it being no where elſe uſed; ſome underſtand it, that he found out the Generation of Mules, by the Conjunction of an Aſs and a Mare. Others render it *Waters*, and think he found out ſome fine Springs, which in thoſe hot Countries are very precious; but the *Chaldee* renders it *Giants*, and the *Samaritan* Edition *Emims*, a Sort of Giants mentioned, *Deut.* xxxvi. 11. who were alſo Neighbours to the *Horites* aftermentioned, as appears from *Gen.* xiv. 5, 6. and therefore, according to the Manner of thoſe Times, uſed to make Incurſions into each other's Territories. So *Jemim* is put for *Emim*, by the Change of the *Hebrew* Letter *Jod* to *Aleph*, which is frequent among the *Hebrews*. And then the Senſe is, that *Anah* the *Horite*, *found out* the *Emims*, that is fell in with them, or came upon them ſuddenly, and ſmote them; the Word *finding* being frequently uſed in this Senſe, as *Judg.* i. 5. 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 3. *Pſal.* xxi. 1. *Iſaiah* x. 10.

Q. *What farther are we told concerning theſe* Horites.

A. “ And the Children of *Anah* were theſe; *Diſhon*, and *Aholibamah*, the Daughter of *Anah*. “ And theſe are the Children of *Diſhon*; *Hemdan*, “ and *Eſhban*, and *Ithran*, and *Cheran*. The Children of Ezer are theſe; *Bilhan*, and *Zaavan*, and “ *Achan*. The Children of *Diſhan* are theſe; *Uz*, “ and *Aran*: Theſe are the Dukes that came of the “ *Horites*; Duke *Lotan*, Duke *Shobal*, Duke *Zibeon*, “ Duke *Anah*. Duke *Diſhon*, Duke *Ezer*, Duke “ *Diſhan*. Theſe are their Dukes that came of *Hori*, “ among their Dukes in the Land of *Seir*.”

Q. *This needs no Explanation; Let us hear what follows?*

A. “ And theſe are the Kings that reigned in the “ Land of *Edom*; before there reigned any King “ over the Children of *Iſrael*.”

Q. *Who are theſe now ſpoken of,* Eſau's *or* Seir's *Poſterity? And what Objection has been ſtarted to this Text?*

A. The Kings here meant are the Poſterity of *Eſau*, who after they had ſubdued the *Horites*, erected a Kingdom there: And Libertines have objected to this Text, that *Moſes* could not poſſibly write it, ſince there was no King in *Iſrael*, till many Years after his Time. To which we anſwer, that the Word *King* here may be taken for any chief Governor; in which Senſe, this Title is given to *Moſes* himſelf, *Deut.* xxxv. 5. and to the Judges after him, *Judg.* xvii. 6. as alſo to others who were not Kings properly ſo called, as *Pſal.* cxix. 46. *Luke* xxii. 25. *Acts* ix. 15. *&c.* Beſides *Muſes* might very well ſay this, becauſe he foreſaw by the Spirit of Prophecy, that the *Iſraelites* would demand a King, as is evident from *Deut.* xvii. 14, 15, *&c.* where, accordingly, he lays down Rules to be obſerved by the King when he is choſen: Wherefore, this Objection falls to the Ground. We ought, however, to obſerve, that *Eſau*'s Poſterity flouriſhed, and were great Princes, a long Time, whilſt *Jacob*'s Seed were Strangers in *Canaan*, Slaves in *Egypt*, and Wanderers in the Wilderneſs.

Q. *Tell us now what Kings reigned in the Land of* Edom?

A. “ And *Bela* the Son of *Beor* reigned in *Edom*, “ and the Name of his City was *Dinhabah*. And “ *Bela* died, and *Jobab* the Son of *Zerah*, of *Bozrah*, “ reigned in his Stead. And *Jobab* died, and *Huſham*, of the Land of *Temani*, reigned in his Stead. “ And *Huſham* died, and *Hadad* the Son of *Bedad*, “ (who ſmote *Midian* in the Field of *Moab*) reigned “ in his Stead: And the Name of his City was *Avith*. “ And *Hadad* died, and *Samlah* of *Maſrekah* reigned in his Stead. And *Samlah* died, and *Saul* of “ *Rehoboth*, by the River, reigned in his Stead. And “ *Saul* died, and *Baal-hanan*, the Son of *Achbor* “ reigned in his Stead. And *Baal-hanan* the Son of “ *Achbor* died, and *Hadar* reigned in his Stead: “ And the Name of his City was *Pau*; and his “ Wife's Name was *Mehetabel*, the Daughter of “ *Matred*, the Daughter of *Mezahab*.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That from the different Names of the Cities, which they either made their reſpective Capitals, or where they lived before they were Kings, it is highly probable, that theſe Princes did not come to the Crown by hereditary Right; but were either elected, or advanced themſelves to their Thrones by Force and Uſurpation; according to *Iſaac*'s Prophecy before-mentioned, *By thy Sword thou ſhalt live*, Gen. xxvii. 40. which was exactly accompliſhed.

Q. *What farther is ſaid here of* Eſau's *Poſterity?*

A. “ And theſe are the Names of the Dukes that “ came of *Eſau*, according to their Families, after “ their Places, by their Names: Duke *Timnah*, Duke “ *Alvah*, Duke *Jetheth*, Duke *Aholibamah*, Duke “ *Elah*, Duke *Pinon*, Duke *Kenaz*, Duke *Teman*, “ Duke *Mibzar*, Duke *Magdiel*, Duke *Iram*: Theſe “be the Dukes of *Edom*, according to their Habitations, in the Land of their Poſſeſſion; he is *Eſau* Father of the *Edomites*.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That by the four laſt Verſes, the State of *Edom*, between the Times of *Eſau* and *Moſes*, ſeems to have been this; it was firſt governed by Dukes, then by Kings, and then by Dukes again. If it ſhould be objected to this, that the Time ſeems too ſhort for a Succeſſion of ſo many Perſons; it may be replied, that what is confeſſed concerning the Dukes preceding the Kings, *viz.* that they were only petty Princes, who governed, at one and the ſame Time, in different Parts of the Country, may be true alſo of theſe Dukes who ſucceeded the Kings; and the *Edomites* either having taken ſome Diſtaſte at Kingly Government, or differing about the Choice of a new King, may have divided themſelves again in ſeveral petty Principalities: They ſeem, however, afterwards to have reſtored the Kingly Government again; ſince we often find the Kings of *Edom* mentioned in the Hiſtory of the Kings of *Iſrael*.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Jacob *ſettles in* Canaan; Joſeph *being ſent to his Brethren in the Field, brings an evil Report of them to his Father*; Jacob *loves him more than all his other Children; his Brothers hate him exceſſively; they hate him the more, becauſe of his Dreams; his Father rebukes him becauſe of his ſecond Dream; he is ſent by his Father to ſee his Brethren; on the Sight of him they conſpire his Death; upon the Interceſſion of* Reuben *they ſpare his Life, but ſtrip him, and throw him into a Pit*; Judah *moves for taking him thence, and ſelling him to ſome* Iſhmaelites; *they agree to it, and ſell him to them; they carry him into* Egypt; Reuben *grieves very much for him; his Brothers Contrivance to impoſe on their Father*; Jacob *mourns exceſſively for him, and refuſes to be comforted; he is ſold to* Potiphar, *the Captain of* Pharaoh's *Guard.*

Q. WHAT *are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. “And *Jacob* dwelt in the Land wherein his Father was a Stranger; in the Land of *Canaan*. Theſe are the Generations of *Jacob*, *Joſeph* being ſeventeen Years old, was feeding the Flock with his Brethren, and the Lad was with the Sons of *Bilhah*, and with the Sons of *Zilpah*, his Father's Wives: And *Joſeph* brought unto his Father their evil Report.”

Q. *What are we to obſerve hereupon?*

A. That *Moſes* having made a Digreſſion concernnig the Poſterity of *Eſau*, for the Reaſons before-mentioned, returns now to the Hiſtory of *Jacob*, and his Family; for the Word Generations here is put for Tranſactions; and the firſt Thing he informs us of, concerning them, is, that *Joſeph* being in the Field with them, helping to feed the Flocks, ſaw ſome Wickedneſs in their Behaviour, whereof he thought proper to acquaint his Father; what it was the Scripture does not inform us, neither is it any ways material for us to know; though the Criticks and Commentators, have given themſelves Abundance of needleſs Trouble on this Head; and ſtarted various Conjectures, ſome of which, we think, it would have ſhown more Charity to have omitted; eſpecially, as it is evident, that they have no Grounds to go upon, but Gueſs-work.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Jacob?

A. “Now *Iſrael* loved *Joſeph* more than all his Children, becauſe he was the Son of his Old Age: And he made him a Coat of many Colours.”

Q. *Does not there ſeem to be ſome Miſtake in this Tranſlation; ſince, if this had been* Jacob's *only Reaſon, for loving* Joſeph *more than the Reſt of his Children, he ought to have loved* Benjamin *better than him, as being born when he was yet older?*

A. We think there is; for the *Hebrew* ſays only, *becauſe he was Son of the Elders*, or *Senators*; for which Reaſon, the *Samaritan*, *Perſian*, and *Arabic* Verſions, as alſo the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe render it, *becauſe he was a wiſe and prudent Son*; and it might be yet better tranſlated *that he was as Wiſe as a Senator*; Wiſdom being a Quality, which juſtly makes Parents fond of a Child, and prefer him to his Brethren; and for this Accompliſhment *Joſeph* was conſpicuouſly eminent, as we ſhall ſee hereafter.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of* Jacob's *Fondneſs for* Joſeph, *preferably to all his Brethren; and giving him ſuch a diſtinguiſhing Mark of his Favour in his Cloaths?*

A. What is generally the natural Conſequence of ſuch Diſtinctions amongſt Children; “And when his Brethren ſaw that their Father loved him more than all his Brethren; they hated him, and could not ſpeak peaceably unto him.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That *Jacob*, though a good Man, was far from being exempt from Failings, as we have before obſerved; and this, amongſt the Reſt, was a very great One: For, notwithſtanding, it muſt be admitted, that *Joſeph* was vaſtly more deſerving of his Love, than any of his other Sons, nay, than all of them put together; and, therefore, it was natural for him to love him beſt; he ought not, in common Prudence, to have ſhown the Predominance of his Affection for him, ſo evidently, by ſo viſible a Mark of the Preference he gave him therein; eſpecially as all of them, except *Benjamin*, were older than him. Accordingly, we ſee the natural Conſequence thereof: It created ill-blood in them; and that to ſuch a Degree, that they could not ſo much as ſpeak peaceably unto him, notwithſtanding it was their Intereſt ſo to do, that they might thereby keep fair with their Father. In this, however, *Joſeph*'s Brothers ſhew'd themſelves yet vaſtly more to Blame than their Father, and indeed highly criminal; ſince, in Charity, as well as Prudence, they ought not to have ſuffered their hatred to have tranſported them to ſuch a Degree: Beſides, their Hatred, Envy, and Malice were ill-founded; ſince they ought rather to have amended their Lives, and have endeavoured to win their Father's Love, by acting in the ſame laudable Manner as *Joſeph*, and copying after his Virtues, and good Qualities.

Q. *What happened to* Joſeph, *to make his Brethren hate him yet more?*

A. “And *Joſeph*, dreamed a Dream, and he told it his Brethren: and they hated him yet the more.”

Q. *What was his Dream?*

A. “And he ſaid unto them; Hear, I pray you, this Dream which I have dreamed. For behold, we were binding ſheaves in the Field, and lo, my Sheaf aroſe, and alſo ſtood upright; and behold, your Sheaves ſtood round about, and made Obeiſance to my Sheaf. And his Brethren ſaid unto him, ſhalt thou indeed reign over Us? Or, ſhalt thou indeed have Dominion over us? And they hated him yet more for his Dreams, and for his Words.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. Two Things; *Firſt*, That this Dream was eminently Prophetical; for it not only prefigured *Joſeph*'s Advancement; and the Occaſion of that Advancement; which was from his Counſel and Care about the Corn; but alſo what was literally and eminently accompliſh'd, when his Brethren went to buy Corn of him in *Egypt*; and were not only glad to bow to him, but were forced to be very humble Supplicants to him, both for Liberty and Suſtenance. *Secondly*, it is obſervable, that *Jacob*'s Brethren readily interpreted this Dream; whereby, one would be tempted to imagine, that they had ſome ſtated Rule for the Interpretation of Dreams; ſince it is evident, they were none of them ſo religious, as to induce us to think, they were favoured with the Gift of Interpretation, in a particular Manner, from Heaven.

Q. *What befel* Joſeph, *after having told his Brethren this Dream?*

A. "And he dreamed yet another Dream, and he told it his Brethren, and ſaid, Behold, I have dreamed a Dream more: And behold, the Sun, and the Moon, and the eleven Stars made Obeyſance to me. And he told it to his Father, and to his Brethren; and his Father rebuked him, and ſaid unto him, What is this that thou haſt dreamed? Shall I and thy Mother, and thy Brethren, indeed, come to bow down our ſelves to thee, to the Earth?"

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That the doubling of a Dream uſed, at that Time, to be reckoned a certain Sign, that the Thing thereby portended, would certainly come to paſs, and that ſoon, *Gen.* xli. 32. accordingly, the Repetition of *Joſeph*'s Dream, was to ſhew them, that the Thing was both certain, and worthy of their Obſervation; all the Impreſſion, however, it made upon them, was to excite their Envy, and add to their Malice. It is obſervable alſo, that here is an additional Circumſtance in this Dream, which was not in the laſt; from whence good old *Jacob* readily inferred, that himſelf was likewiſe to bow down to him, as well as his Sons; which ſhews that the Interpretation of Dreams was familiar to *Jacob*'s Family. But it may be objected, that *Jacob* never did make Obeyſance to *Joſeph*; To which we Anſwer, *Firſt*, That this Circumſtance would never have been added in the ſecond Dream, whereas it was not in the firſt, had not *God* deſigned that it ſhould be punctually fulfilled; and it was not in the firſt Dream, becauſe only his Brothers went down into *Egypt* to him at the firſt. *Secondly*, That he did make Obeyſance to him, mediately by his Sons, as a Prince may do Homage to another, by Proxy, when at the ſecond Time of their going, they bowed down before him, in their Father's Name, and offered him the Preſents he ſent to him, as a Teſtimony of the Reſpect and Reverence he paid him. *Thirdly*, It is highly probable, that *Jacob* at his coming into *Egypt*, did pay his Son that Reverence, before the *Egyptians*, which all the Reſt did, and which was due to the Dignity of his Place; ſince that was not paying Homage to his Son, as his Son, but as *Pharaoh*'s Repreſentative; neither was his Son *Joſeph* to be blamed, for his accepting of his Obeyſance in that Quality: On the contrary, we find the *Roman* Conſul was commended by his Father, for requiring him to alight from his Horſe, as the Reſt did, when he met him upon the Way. As to *Jacob*'s rebuking *Joſeph*, it was not through Anger, nor in Contempt of his Dream, for we are told afterwards he *obſerved it*; but leſt he ſhould be too much puffed up therewith, and to allay the Envy and Malice, which he foreſaw it would excite in his other Sons.

Q. *What Effect had this ſecond Dream on his Brothers?*

A. "And his Brethren envied him: But his Father obſerved the ſaying."

Q. *What may one obſerve from hence?*

A. How naturally the Proſperity of others excites Envy in wicked Men.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Joſeph *and his Brethren?*

A. "And his Brethren went to feed their Father's Flock in *Shechem*. And *Iſrael* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, do not thy Brethren feed the Flock in *Shechem*? Come, and I will ſend thee unto them: And he ſaid, Here am I.

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. *Joſeph*'s ready Obedience to his Father; and his great natural Affection; ſhown in his Willingneſs to go to his churliſh Brethren, notwithſtanding he was ſure not to have a good Word of them, for his Pains.

Q. *What farther ſaid his Father unto* Joſeph?

A. "And he ſaid to him, Go, I pray thee, ſee whether it be well with thy Brethren, and well with the Flocks, and bring me Word again. So he ſent him out of the Vale of *Hebron*, and he came to *Shechem*. And a certain Man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the Field: And the Man asked him, ſaying, What ſeekeſt thou? And he ſaid, I ſeek my Brethren; tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their Flocks. And the Man ſaid, They are departed hence: For I heard them ſay, Let us go to *Dothan*. And *Joſeph* went after his Brethren, and found them in *Dothan*.

Q. *And what ſaid his Brothers when they ſaw him coming?*

A. "And when they ſaw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conſpired againſt him to ſlay him. And they ſaid, one to another, Behold, this Dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us ſlay him, and caſt him into ſome Pit; and we will ſay, Some evil Beaſt hath devoured him: And we ſhall ſee what will become of his Dreams."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The fell Malice of theſe bloody Brethren; their Anger kindles againſt him, before he ſo much as comes near them, or can ſo much as open his Mouth to them; inſomuch that nothing leſs than his Blood can ſatisfy and appeaſe them; and they are not ſo much as willing to grant him the common Privilege of Burial; what more infernal Malice could one except from the worſt of Enemies!

Q. *How eſcaped poor* Joſeph *the Rage of his implacable Brothers?*

A. "And *Reuben* heard it, and he delivered him out of their Hands; and he ſaid, Let us not kill him. And *Reuben* ſaid unto them, ſhed no Blood, but caſt him into this Pit, that is, in the Wilderneſs, and lay no Hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their Hands, to deliver him to his Father again. And it came to paſs when *Joſeph* was come unto his Brethren, that they ſtript *Joſeph* out of his Coat, his Coat of many Colours that was on him. And they took him, and caſt him into a Pit: And the Pit was empty, there was no Water in it.

Q. *But how can* Reuben *be ſaid to have delivered him, when it is plain they ſtript him, and caſt him into a Pit?*

A. Either he is ſaid to have delivered him, becauſe he was the Occaſion of his Delivery, in ſaving him from immediate Death, which the others propoſed and intended; or the Will is here taken for the Deed, becauſe it is evident he deſigned to have drawn him out of the Pit, and to have delivered him ſafe to his Father; that he might thereby have regained his Favour, which he had forfeited by his Inceſt.

Q. *What did* Joſeph's *Brothers after this unnatural and villainous Action?*

A. " And they ſat down and eat Bread; and they " lift up their Eyes and looked, and behold, a Com- " pany of *Iſraelites* came from *Gilead*, with their " Camels, bearing Spicery, and Balm, and Myrrh, " going to carry it down to *Egypt*.

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. The prodigious Hardneſs of their Hearts; to ſit down to feaſt themſelves, with what Refreſhments they had, juſt by him, and regardleſs of his Cries, immediately after they had caſt their innocent Brother into a Pit; where they knew he muſt inevitably periſh with Hunger, unleſs ſomebody relieved him; of which there was not then the leaſt Probability, few Perſons ever paſſing ſo near that Way as to hear him; and themſelves being, at that Time, reſolutely bent to deſtroy him.

Q. *How came he then to be delivered at laſt from the Pit?*

A. It was firſt by *Reuben*'s Advice, that the cruel Brothers did not put him to immediate Death, by imbruing their Hands in his Blood; and indeed who would wonder at any Barbarity in them, who could be guilty of the Maſſacre of the *Shechemites*. Now *Judah*, another of the Brothers, begins to feel ſome Remorſe of Conſcience. " And *Judah* ſaid unto his " Brethren, what Profit is it, if we ſlay our Brother, " and conceal his Blood? Come and let us ſell him to " the *Iſhmaelites*, and let not our Hand be upon him; " for he is our Brother, and our Fleſh: And his Bre- " thren were content. Then there paſſed by *Midi-* " *anites*, Merchant-men, and they drew and lift up " *Joſeph* out of the Pit, and ſold *Joſeph* to the *Iſhma-* " *elites* for twenty Pieces of Silver; And they brought " *Joſeph* into *Egypt*."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The hard Lot of poor *Joſeph*; for the preſent he is delivered from immediate Death, only to be caſt into a Pit, there to periſh for ought he knew by Hunger; and he is delivered from thence, only to be ſold a Slave to *Idolaters*, and thoſe the moſt luxurious and abandoned of *Idolaters*.

Q. *What did* Reuben *after this?*

A. " And *Reuben* returned unto the Pit; and be- " hold, *Joſeph* was not in the Pit. And he rent his " Cloaths. And he returned unto his Brethren, and " ſaid, The Child is not; and I, whether ſhall I " go."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That *Reuben* was abſent when his Brothers ſold *Joſeph* to the Merchants, or elſe it is probable he would have interpoſed a ſecond Time; ſince it is evident he was ſincere in his Intention to have delivered him ſafe to his Father, as is plain from his rending his Cloaths, which was only done on the moſt melancholy and mournful Occaſions, to expreſs the deepeſt Sorrow: And this is the firſt Inſtance we meet of that Cuſtom in Scripture.

Q. *What Anſwer made his Brother to* Reuben?

A. We don't find they ſaid any Thing to appeaſe him; but it is probable that they acquainted him with what they had done; and he, finding the Misfortune irretrievable, was pacify'd, and joined with them in endeavouring to conceal it from their Father, ſince otherwiſe it is likely he would have revealed it.

Q. *Which Way did* Jacob's *Sons contrive to conceal their Cruelty from their Father?*

A. " And they took *Joſeph*'s Coat, and killed a " Kid of the Goat's, and dipped the Coat in the " Blood. And they ſent the Coat of many Colours, " and they brought it to their Father, and ſaid, " This have we found: Know now whether it be " thy Son's Coat or no; and he knew it, and ſaid; " It is my Son's Coat, an evil Beaſt hath devoured " him: *Joſeph* is without Doubt rent in Pieces. " And *Jacob* rent his Cloaths, and put Sack-Cloth " upon his Loins, and mourned for his Son many " Days."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. The great Policy of their Contrivance to ſkreen themſelves; and the Hardneſs of their Hearts, that could give their old Father ſuch a Shock, and that ſo abruptly, which it was a Miracle he ſurvived; as alſo the exceſſive Sorrow of good old *Iſrael*, in that he was not contented with rending his Cloaths, as *Reuben* had done, but put on Sack-Cloth alſo; of which ſort of Mourning this is likewiſe the firſt Inſtance in Scripture; though we ſhall meet with it frequently hereafter.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Jacob?

A. " And all his Sons, and all his Daughters roſe " up to comfort him; but he refuſed to be com- " forted; and he ſaid, For I will go down into the " Grave unto my Son, mourning: Thus his Father " wept for him."

Q. *But how comes it to be here ſaid, And all his Daughters, when we have hitherto heard but of his having one Daughter by* Leah, *which was, the unfortunate* Dinah?

A. Undoubtedly, Daughters-in-law are here included under the general Title of Daughters; and *Jacob* might have a good Number of them.

Q. *And what became of poor* Joſeph, *after his being ſold a Slave to the Merchants?*

A. " And the *Midianites* ſold him into *Egypt*, " unto *Potiphar*, an Officer of *Pharaoh*'s, and Cap- " tain of the Guard."

Q. *But it was before ſaid he was ſold to the* Iſhmaelites, *how come they here to be called* Midianites?

A. It is very probable, from their being called *Iſhmaelites* in one Place, and *Midianites* in another, and *Medanites*, (as it is here in the *Hebrew*) in this laſt, that there were ſome of all theſe three Nations in the Company; and that they travelled then together for Safety, though of different Nations, as it is uſual in thoſe *Eaſtern* Parts to do even now; their *Caravans* being at preſent compoſed of Merchants of ſeveral Nations. *Joſeph*'s Brethren, therefore, might ſell him to the *Iſhmaelites*; theſe might again ſell him to the *Midianites*, in the ſame *Caravan*, than which nothing is more uſual; the *Midianites* might ſell him again to the *Medanites*; and theſe laſt might ſell him to *Potiphar*.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Judah *leaves him brethren, and goes to* Hirah *the* Adullamite; *He there marries a* Canaanitiſh *Woman; She bears him three Sons; He marries his Firſt-born* Er *to* Tamar; Er *does wickedly and the* Lord *ſlays him;* Onan *the ſecond Son is commanded to marry her; He alſo is wicked, and the* Lord *ſlays him;* Judah *promiſes her his third Son, but performs it not; She by a ſubtle Contrivance draws* *him to commit Inceſt with her; he gives her a Pledge; ſhe proves with Child from that Conjunction;* Judah *hears of her being pregnant, and commands her to be burnt; ſhe produces his own Pledge; he acknowledges it, acquits her, and condemns himſelf; ſhe is delivered of Twins.*

Q. O*F what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And it came to paſs, at that Time, that “*Judah* went down from his Brethren, and turned “into a certain *Adullamite*, whoſe Name was *Hirah*. “And *Judah* ſaw there a Daughter of a certain *Canaanite*, whoſe Name was *Shuah*; and he took “her, and went in unto her.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The miſchievous Effects of keeping ill Company; *Judah* contracts a Friendſhip with *Hirah* the *Adullamite*, which [he ought not to have done, ſince *Hirah* was an Idolater; and a Viſit made to this his idolatrous Friend proves a Snare to him. One Fault generally produces another; he there ſees a beautiful *Canaanite*, the Daughter of one *Shuah*; with whom he falls in Love, and he marries her, which was committing another Fault yet greater than the firſt; ſince he well knew this would be a great Grief to his Father, and what was more, that it was diſpleaſing to *God*. Some have been for adding a third Offence, which, if admitted, ought to have been named firſt; and that was the leaving his Father's Houſe, in Diſcontent at his Brethren.

Q. *And what were the Fruits of this Marriage?*

A. What one may reaſonably expect will be the Fruits of all ſinful Marriages; the Bleſſing of *God* did not attend it. “And ſhe conceived and bare a “Son; and he called his Name *Er*. And ſhe conceived again, and bare a Son; and ſhe called his “Name *Onan*. And ſhe yet again conceived, and “bare a Son; and called his Name *Shelah*: And he “was at *Chezib* when ſhe bare him. And *Judah* “took a Wife, for *Er* his firſt-born, whoſe Name “was *Tamar*. And *Er*, *Judah*'s firſt-born was wicked in the Sight of the *Lord*; and the *Lord* ſlew “him.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That this was the firſt Fruits of *Judah*'s ſinful Marriage; we ſhall ſee worſe follow hereafter: As alſo, that *Judah* ſeems to have committed a ſecond Fault in the Marriage of *Er*; ſince *Tamar* ſeems alſo to have been a *Canaanite*.

Q. *What did* Judah, *upon the Death of his firſt-born?*

A. “And *Judah* ſaid unto *Onan*, Go in unto thy “Brother's Wife, and marry her: and raiſe up “Seed to thy Brother. And *Onan* knew that the “Seed ſhould not be his: And it came to paſs, when “he went in unto his Brother's Wife, that he ſpilled “it on the Ground, leſt that he ſhould give Seed to “his Brother: And the Thing which he did diſpleaſed the *Lord*: Wherefore he ſlew him alſo.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That though there was not as yet any written Law, the Cuſtom of raiſing up Seed to a Brother, by marrying his Wife, was then known. We may alſo obſerve, the diſmal Conſequences of *Judah*'s ſinful Marriage; two of his three Sons drew down *God*'s Vengeance upon themſelves, and were ſlain by him in an extraordinary Manner. The Cauſe for which the laſt was killed, is very fully expreſſed in Scripture; as a Warning for all future Ages, to avoid the deteſtable Sin of Self-Pollution: But the Cauſe of *Er*'s Death is not ſo evident; though moſt *Hebrew* and *Chriſtian* Doctors agree, (we cannot ſee upon what Grounds) that his Sin was likewiſe that of Self-Pollution. As the Scripture leaves us entirely in the Dark upon this Head, and they can have no other Grounds to go upon than Gueſs-work, we cannot imagine, what ſhould make them judge *Er*'s Sin to have been of that Nature, for we are ſure it is utterly improbable; ſince he had not the ſame Cauſe, and indeed we may ſay Provocation, for ſo doing as *Onan*: ſince *Onan*'s raiſing Seed to his Brother, was in ſome Meaſure diſinheriting himſelf; as that Seed muſt have ſucceeded to the double Portion, to which himſelf was now entitled; and *Er* could have no other Reaſon for ſo doing, ſince he was juſt married to a young, and probably a beautiful Bride. To ſet the Improbability of this being *Er*'s Sin, in a ſtronger Light, we muſt obſerve, that, we believe, few married People are guilty of the Sin of Self-pollution; and, if any are, it is only ſuch ſordid Wretches, as are diſtruſtful of Providence, and afraid of the Charge of too many Children: But this could not be *Er*'s Caſe; and Marriage has always been eſteemed the beſt Remedy againſt that Sin; into which ſingle Perſons are betrayed; the Women for Fear of their being diſcovered by their Pregnancy; and the Men for Fear of an odious Diſtemper, the juſt Puniſhment of all unlawful Embraces. We think, therefore, we have evidently demonſtrated, that the Sin of *Er*, could not be that of Self-pollution; and we ſhall continue of that ſame Opinion, till thoſe who think otherwiſe, ſhall produce ſome better Authority than Conjecture, or *Jewiſh* Fables, for the Support of their Sentiments.

Q. *What ſaid* Judah *to* Tamar, *upon his two Sons dying in this extraordinary Manner?*

A. “Then ſaid *Judah* to *Tamar*, his Daughter-“in-law, remain a Widow, at thy Father's Houſe, “till *Shelah* my Son be grown; (for he ſaid, “Leſt “peradventure he die alſo as his Brethren did;) and “*Tamar* went and dwelt in her Father's Houſe.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The Deceitfulneſs, and indeed Baſeneſs, of *Judah*, in promiſing his Daughter-in-law what he never meant to perform; as alſo his Injuſtice, in defrauding her upon falſe Pretences of what was her Due; for ſhe had a Right to *Shelah*, aſſoon as he was marriageable; and his manifeſt Partiality to his own Family, in imputing the Death of his two Sons to ſome Fatality, or Contagion, in her Embraces, rather than to any Wickedneſs in himſelf or his Sons.

Q. *Of what are we next informed concerning* Judah?

A. “And in Proceſs of Time, the Daughter of “*Shuah*, *Judah*'s Wife, died: And *Judah* was “comforted, and went up unto his Sheep-ſhearers “to *Timnath*, he and his Friend *Hirah* the *Adullamite*.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That it was evident *Judah* never meant to fulfil his Promiſe; becauſe *Shelah* being now marriageable, ought to have been given to *Tamar*.

Q. *What did* Tamar *upon finding herſelf thus deprived of her juſt Due?*

A. “And it was told *Tamar*, ſaying, Behold, thy “Father-in-law goeth up to *Timnath*, to ſhear his “Sheep. And ſhe put her Widow's Garments off “from her, and covered her with a Vail, and wrapped herſelf, and ſat in an open Place, which is by “the Way to *Timnath*: For ſhe ſaw that *Shelah*

“ was grown, and ſhe was not given to him to Wife.
“ When *Judah* ſaw her, he thought her to be an
“ Harlot; becauſe ſhe had covered her Face.”

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon?*

A. We have already obſerved upon *Abimelech*'s ſaying to *Sarah*; *Behold he is to thee a Covering of the Eyes*, Gen. xx. 16. Upon which ſome have obſerved, that the Vails of the *Hebrew* Women, were the Symbols of their Modeſty, whereas the Harlots went bare-faced; that this ſeems to have been a groſs Miſtake; at leaſt in *Sarah*'s Time, whatever they might do afterwards; becauſe it is evident from this very Text, that the Harlots only went vailed; for it is not ſaid *Judah* took her for a Harlot, *becauſe* ſhe ſat in an *open Place*, but *becauſe* ſhe had *covered her Face*; and indeed, we think none but Whores need be aſhamed of ſhewing their Faces. Beſides, had it been cuſtomary for modeſt Women to have wore Vails at that Time, *Dinah* had never been raviſhed, neither had that dreadful Maſſacre followed; for it is evident *Shechem* was fired with her Beauty, which he could never have had a ſufficient View of, through a Vail, to have produced thoſe fatal Effects.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of* Judah's *taking* Tamar *for an Harlot?*

A. “ And he turned unto her by the Way, and
“ ſaid, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee,
“ (for he knew not that ſhe was Daughter-in-law;)
“ and ſhe ſaid, What wilt thou give me, that thou
“ mayeſt come in unto me?

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That *Tamar* in her Conduct in this Affair, acted much after the ſame Manner as the Harlots now-a-days; but upon a far different Motive, as we ſhall obſerve hereafter.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Judah *to this Demand of his Daughter-in-law's?*

A. “ And he ſaid, I will ſend thee a Kid from
“ the Flock: And ſhe ſaid, Wilt thou give me a
“ Pledge till thou ſend it?”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. It is probable that Kids or Lambs were uſual Preſents on ſuch Occaſions; and that *Tamar* being apprized thereof, and that he would not have them with him, knew he muſt neceſſarily leave a Pledge; as ſeems to have been likewiſe cuſtomary on ſuch Occaſions; which had induced her to form this Scheme, in order to obtain that by him, which he would not let her obtain by his Son; another fatal Conſequence of this ſinful Marriage. It is very probable, we ſay, this Cuſtom of leaving Pledges in ſuch Caſes, was common; as alſo the giving of Lambs or Kids, and not Money; becauſe otherwiſe *Tamar*'s whole Plot would have been defeated. For had he ſent firſt for the Kid, before he had enjoyed her, it would not have anſwered her Intent; ſince the Kid could not have been produced as a diſtinguiſhing Token, one Kid being like another; for the ſame Reaſon Money would not have anſwered her Purpoſe, ſince one Piece of Money is like another of the ſame Value; we, therefore, think it evident, that this Contrivance of *Tamar*'s was formed upon the moſt mature Deliberation, and admirably ſuited to her Purpoſe; how far it may be judged a Juſtification of her uncommon Way of proceeding we ſhall obſerve hereafter. The only Difficulty that remains, is how *Tamar* could poſſibly know, that *Judah* would covet her Embraces; to which we anſwer, that ſhe might probably judge ſo from the following Reaſons; *Firſt*, She knew he was a Widower, and, conſequently, more likely to be overcome by ſuch a Temptation, than a married Man: 2*dly*, She might know him to be of an amorous Complexion, and, conſequently, that ſhe ſhould attack him on his blind Side, where he was leaſt capable of making any Reſiſtance: 3*dly*, She knew that ſuch hackney Harlots as plied by the Way-Side, were not very common in thoſe Days; and therefore imagined, that the Difficulty of meeting with ſuch a one, would make the Temptation the greater, and accordingly more likely to ſucceed. In Effect, it is evident to us, that the whole of this Contrivance was formed upon the moſt mature Deliberation; and the Snare laid with ſo much Art, that ſhe knew *Judah* could hardly avoid falling therein; we ſay, *Judah*, becauſe we are fully convinced the Snare was laid for him, and only him, and that had any other attacked her, and offered her any Price whatſoever, he would not have ſucceeded: Nay, what may ſeem a Paradox, we are fully convinced, notwithſtanding this complicated Crime of Inceſt, and Adultery, knowingly committed by *Tamar*, that ſhe was a virtuous Woman; for which our Opinion, we ſhall produce our Reaſons hereafter. We acknowledge what we have here alledged to be altogether of our own Starting; and humbly ſubmit it to our Readers, leaving them to determine as they pleaſe for themſelves.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Judah *to* Tamar's *ſecond Demand?*

A. “ And he ſaid, What Pledge ſhall I give?
“ And ſhe ſaid, Thy Signet, and thy Bracelets, and
“ thy Staff that is in thine Hand: And he gave it
“ her, and came in unto her, and ſhe conceived by
“ him.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That it is evident the ardent Deſire of having Children by the Family of *Judah*, was the only Motive which induced *Tamar* to this extraordinary Way of proceeding; and *Judah* being obſtinately bent upon not giving her his Son, ſhe was determined, if poſſible, to have them by himſelf, not in the leaſt doubting, as is likewiſe apparent, the Bleſſing of *God*, who knew her Heart, upon her Endeavours, however unwarrantable they may ſeem, at preſent, to many: And, it is certain, *God* was ſo far pleaſed to bleſs her Endeavours, however they may be cenſured now, that *Chriſt* proceeded from her according to the Fleſh; and in the Genealogy of *Chriſt*, ſhe is named particularly by Name, (not by Way of Reproach, no more than *Ruth*, *Matth.* i. 3.) which thoſe who raſhly cenſure her, would do well to conſider. She is alſo mentioned with Honour, *Ruth* vi. 12. We ſay, therefore, that the ardent Deſire of having Children by *Judah*'s Family, and of being a Mother in *Iſrael*, was the only Motive that induced *Tamar* to this extraordinary Way of proceeding; and this is evident from her waiting patiently till ſhe found ſhe had conceived; and never attempting either to demand *Shelah* (who was her Right, and who could not have married any one elſe, till ſhe had been incapable of Marriage) or to draw to her Embraces any other Man; which ſhe would certainly have done, had ſhe been inſtigated, in the leaſt, by Luſt.

Q. *What did* Tamar, *after having thus obtained her Deſire?*

A. “ And ſhe aroſe, and went away, and laid by
“ her Vail from her, and put on the Garments of
“ her Widowhood.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That her Conduct was irreproachable in every other Reſpect.

Q. *Did* Judah *ſend the Kid, according to his Promiſe?*

A. Yes; "And *Judah* ſent the Kid, by the Hand of his Friend the *Adullamite*, to receive his Pledge from the Woman's Hand: But he found her not. Then he aſked the Men of that Place, ſaying, Where is the Harlot that was openly by the Way-Side? And they ſaid, There was no Harlot in this Place. And he returned to *Judah*, and ſaid, I cannot find her; and alſo the Men of the Place ſaid, that there was no Harlot in this Place. And *Judah* ſaid, Let her take it to her, leſt we be ſhamed: Behold, I ſent this Kid, and thou haſt not found her.

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That it is ſomething remarkable, and even extraordinary, that a Woman, who ſat as a common Harlot, in an open Place, and that no large Place, by the Way-ſide, which was a Thing very unuſual in thoſe Days, and apt to draw the Eyes, ſhould not be obſerved by any of the Men of that Place; and yet it is evident ſhe ſtaid there long enough to make a punctual Bargain with *Judah*, and even to accompliſh the Purpoſe for which ſhe came thither. We are ſomewhat ſurprized Commentators ſhould have taken no Notice of this extraordinary Circumſtance; and yet ſhould ſpend Abundance of Time in cavilling about the Pledge *Judah* left her, particularly with the Word which we render *Bracelets*, what it ſignifies, as both Mr. *Hooker*, Mr. *Poole*, and other eminent Writers have done. Had it been ſaid the *Man*, and not the *Men* of *that* Place, it would not have ſeemed ſo ſtrange, that one Man ſhould overlook ſuch a Tranſaction; but that *many Men* ſhould, we think is very ſurprizing; how ſhall we account for it? If we ſay ſhe brought a Tent thither, and had it pitched, ſo as the Back of the Tent was to the Men of that Place, and the Door to the Way-ſide, which done, ſhe put off her Widows Garments, wherein ſhe came thither, and covered her with a Vail, and wrapped herſelf; ſhe muſt have brought Servants with her, who muſt have been privy to her Deſign, and muſt have ſtruck the Tent afterwards, which it is abſurd to believe: Beſides the Anſwer of the Men of that Place would then have been, here was no Harlot here, only *Tamar* the Daughter-in-law of *Judah* was here; and it is far from probable, that *Moſes* would have paſſed over that Circumſtance; as he is very exact in every Thing that related to the *Meſſiah*. Shall we ſay then, that the Men of the Place were her Accomplices, and Confederates with her in this Fraud? This, we are certain, will be deemed more abſurd than the other; and yet we can't ſee how it can be accounted for any other Way, but by a Third; which we are ſenſible will ſtartle thoſe, who cannot ſhake off Prepoſſeſſion and Prejudice. We muſt premiſe, therefore, that we think it is apparent from the Words of *Moſes*, that the whole of this Affair, *Tamar*'s ſitting by the Way-ſide, *Judah*'s accoſting her, and bargaining with her, and leaving his Pledge, even to the Accompliſhment of that Bargain, by his coming in unto her, was tranſacted in this open Place; only that we will ſuppoſe, the Bargain being ſtruck, they might retire, for common Decency, behind ſome Hedge, or into ſome Ditch for the latter Part of it. All this we think, muſt have drawn the Eyes of the Men, had not ſomething extraordinary interpoſed to prevent it; What then, If we ſhould ſay, their Eyes were holden, that ſhe ſhould not ſee it? We mean their Eyes were providentially directed to other Objects, that they ſhould not take Notice of *Tamar*, or any Thing ſhe did. This, as we obſerved before, will ſtartle a great many, but we beg them to ſuſpend their Judgment, till we give our Reaſons for ſo believing, as we ſhall do in its proper Place; and for the preſent, only to conſider the Importance of the Tranſaction before us; to which, we are afraid, few who have commented on this Head, have thoroughly attended. *Judah* is a Widower, and has but one Son, his two others having drawn down the divine Vengeance upon themſelves for their Sins; the third Son, who is *Tamar*'s due by Right, not only by a Law obſerved amongſt *God*'s People, antecedent to the Law of *Moſes*, but, we believe, by the Cuſtom of the Land, *Judah* is obſtinately bent not to give her, for Fear he ſhould meet with the ſame Fate as his Brothers; fondly imputing to ſome Contagion, or Fatality in her, what was owing to the Wickedneſs of himſelf and his Sons; and yet this Son, whilſt *Tamar* lived, and continued in a marriageable State, could not lawfully have been married to any other; *Judah* himſelf does not appear to have been diſpoſed to marry; neither do we read that he ever did marry afterwards; here, therefore, was a whole Tribe threatned with Extinction; and that the very Tribe from whence the *Meſſiah* was to ſpring: We know, indeed, that the *Almighty* might ſo have over-ruled *Judah*'s Mind, as to have diſpoſed him to marry; and we are as ſenſible that he might have made the *Meſſiah* ſpring from the Loins of *Judah*; but we are not to preſcribe to the *Almighty* how he ſhall act; let it ſuffice that he thought fit, the *Meſſiah* ſhould proceed, according to the Fleſh, from *Tamar*; and that no otherwiſe, than by an inceſtuous Conjunction with her Father-in-law; for otherwiſe ſhe might have had Children by *Er*; in this Caſe then, it can't be denied, but that *Tamar* was an eminent Inſtrument of the *Almighty*, of which he thought fit, in his unſearchable Wiſdom, to make uſe, for the Accompliſhment of his eternal, and immutable Decrees: For what Reaſon, we imagine, Providence might honour her ſo far, as to pitch upon her to be this Inſtrument, and at the ſame to puniſh *Judah*'s Injuſtice, and Hypocriſy, we ſhall mention hereafter, in its proper Place.

A. Of what next are we informed concerning Tamar?

A. "And it came to paſs about three Months after, that it was told *Judah*, ſaying, *Tamar* thy Daughter-in-law hath plaid the Harlot; and alſo, behold, ſhe is with Child by Whoredom: And *Judah* ſaid, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The inexcuſable, pharaſaical Hypocriſy, and Partiality of *Judah*; he inſtantly, with the utmoſt Severity, condemns her unheard, without making the leaſt Allowance for human Frailty; notwithſtanding he muſt know, by Experience, that he ſtood in great Need himſelf of ſuch Allowance. It was well for *Judah*, and ſuch as him, the Uſe of the *Lord's Prayer* was not then enjoined; ſince otherwiſe he muſt have drawn down a Curſe upon himſelf every Time he uſed it. In ſhort, one may ſee, in him, the true Picture of an arrant Hypocrite, who favours his own Follies, and conceals them under the Veil of an extraordinary Sanctity, but falls unmercifully upon thoſe of others.

Q. *How behaved* Tamar, *and how did ſhe eſcape, after having ſo rigid a Sentence paſſed upon her?*

A. " When ſhe was brought forth, ſhe ſent to " her Father-in-law, ſaying, By the Man whoſe theſe " are, am I with Child: And ſhe ſaid, Diſcern, I " pray thee, whoſe are theſe, the Signet, and Bracelets, and Staff."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That it is obſervable ſhe behaved with all the Fortitude of conſcious Innocence, without being in the leaſt daunted; which could not proceed from any Thing, but the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience. For whether we ſuppoſe *Judah* himſelf to have been her Judge, according to the Patriarchal ſyſtem, whereby every one was Judge, or Chief Magiſtrate in his own Family, or whether we ſuppoſe the *Canaanites* to have been her Judges, it is very plain, the Court was prepoſſeſſed againſt her, and ready to condemn her unheard; yet ſhe undauntedly ſays, *View theſe Tokens; by the Man whoſe theſe are are am I with Child.* Would ſhe have made ſuch an open Confeſſion, had ſhe imagined herſelf guilty of any Crime? it is plain ſhe would not.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of this open and undaunted Confeſſion?*

A. " And *Judah* acknowledged them, and ſaid " ſhe hath been more righteous then I; becauſe that " I gave her not to *Shelah* my Son: And he knew " her again no more.

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That Providence interpoſed viſibly in her Behalf; and forced that Phariſaical and unjuſt Hypocrite *Judah*, openly to take the Shame and Guilt upon himſelf, and acquit her; and indeed, ſhe ſeems to have ſhewn a firm Reliance upon the divine Providence, in her whole Conduct throughout this Affair; and ſhe proſpered accordingly, as all will who ſhew the ſame firm Dependance thereupon. Several Divines, and thoſe very learned ones have obſerved upon *Judah*'s ſaying, *She hath been more* righteous *than I*, that he does not ſay that ſhe was more *holy* or *chaſte*, but more *righteous* or *juſt*; for, continues one, Mr. *Howel*, by Name, *Tamar* had ſinned more grievouſly in this Fact; it being Adultery, as well as Inceſt in her, whereas it was but Fornication, and Inceſt in him: And the learned Mr. *Poole* ſays, ſhe was more *unchaſte*, becauſe ſhe committed both *Adultery* and *Inceſt*, when he deſigned neither; but he was more *unjuſt*, becauſe he was the Cauſe of her Sin, both by with-holding *Shelah* from her, (who was hers both by Right, and by *Judah*'s Promiſe, and by him her Chaſtity ought to have been preſerved) and by his Solicitation, and Encouragement of her, to the Sin. We muſt beg leave, however, to diſſent entirely from theſe learned Gentlemen; for *firſt*, it could not be Adultery in *Tamar*, becauſe a tacit Promiſe of his Son by *Judah*, which it was evident was never deſigned to have been fulfill'd, could never have the Force of a Contract; neither can we think it would have been actual Adultery, even had the Promiſe been deſigned to have been performed, unleſs Conſummation had paſſed between them, though this would have made the Act more criminal in *Tamar*, than as the Caſe now ſtood. But according to the Principles of thoſe Gentlemen who believe *Er*'s Sin to have been Self-pollution as well as *Onan*'s, it may very well be made a Queſtion whether it was even Inceſt; ſince it does not appear from Scripture, that *Er* had any carnal Knowledge of her; and it is evident *Onan* never had; if then *Er* was ſtruck dead on his Wedding-night, as well as *Onan*, and no Conſummation had paſs'd, a nominal Marriage, which had never been conſummated could never make it Inceſt; but this does not acquit *Judah* of the ſame Injuſtice as if both of his Sons had known her; ſince ſhe had equally a Right to *Shelah*, whether they had or not. We come now to the Charge laid againſt her by Mr. *Poole*; of her being more *unchaſte* than *Judah*; and we own, we are very much ſurprized, how ſo great a Man could fall into ſo groſs a Miſtake; ſince it is evident, that it was not out of any luſtful Motive that *Tamar* coveted *Judah*'s Embraces, if it had ſhe would have ſought a younger Man; but it was out of an ardent Deſign of having Children by his Family; and it is as evident, that *Judah* could have no other Motive for ſolliciting her but downright Luſt; whence it is plain that he was the moſt *unchaſte*. Come we now to conſider *Tamar*'s Conduct in this Affair, in the Light wherein we view it; diveſted of all Partiality and Prejudice, imbibed from the Notions of thoſe who have treated before upon this Head; and then we believe it will appear, that the Generality of Mankind have been greatly Miſtaken in the Judgment they have formed both of her, and of this whole Tranſaction: Which it is of the utmoſt Importance to ſet in a true Light, as both it has been a great Scandal, and Stumbling-block to weak Conſciences, and as it has given Occaſion, we fear, to no little Blaſphemy. It appears evident then to us, that *Tamar* having been married firſt to *Er*, and then to *Onan*, (between which two Marriages we muſt ſuppoſe ſome ſmall Diſtance of Time allowed for Decency,) and having been, by that Means, converſant in *Judah*'s Family, was inſtructed in the Worſhip of the true *God*; and that having been throughly informed of *Adam*'s Fall, with the fatal Conſequences thereof; and the miſerable ſtate of Mankind without a *Redeemer*; as alſo of the Promiſe of the *bleſſed Seed*; ſhe from thence conceived an ardent Deſire of becoming a Mother in *Iſrael*, that ſhe might ſtand a Chance for having that *bleſſed Seed* proceed from her; in which ſhe ſeems to have placed a firm Faith, and by whoſe Merits ſhe firmly hoped not only for her own Redemption, but that of all Believers in General: It is evident to us, that it is from this Principle alone, that we are to account for all *Tamar*'s Conduct in this Affair. Seeing herſelf diſappointed of her Hopes, by the Wickedneſs of *Er*, and *Onan*, ſhe patiently waited a proper Time, till *Shelah* ſhould be given unto her; but finding herſelf only impoſed upon, by *Judah*'s making falſe Pretences, to put off the Conſummation of her Nuptials, and that he was obſtinately bent upon never giving him to her, and had rejected her, by ſending her Home to her Father's Houſe; by which Means ſhe was likewiſe excluded the Church of *God*, and expoſed continually to the Snares of Idolaters; it is not at all unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that ſhe ardently implored that Juſtice, from the Judge of all the Earth, which was denied her by Man; it not being in her Power to compel *Judah* to give her his Son, by Reaſon of his great Eſtate and Authority, which ever did, and ever will, enable the Stronger to oppreſs the Weaker. It is evident to us that the *Almighty* heard her Prayer; and we ſee no Crime in in ſuppoſing that both to puniſh *Judah*'s Injuſtice, and his Hipocryſy, in imputing the Death of his two Sons to a Fatality in her, and not to any Wickedneſs in himſelf or his Family, which he could not ſee, being righteous in his own Eyes, like the *Phariſee*; the *all-ſeeing God*, who, when he pleaſes may diſpenſe with his own Laws, might permit her to have Recourſe to this Expedient; the only one whereby ſhe could obtain her deſire, which certainly was laudable in itſelf. In Effect, as the ſecond Couple, though Brother and Siſter, might lawfully Marry, becauſe there was an abſolute neceſſity for their ſo doing for the Peopling of the World, *Tamar* ſeems to have been pretty much in the ſame Caſe; ſince ſhe was abſolutely neceſſitated to loſe her Right of being a Mother in *Iſrael*, and ſee herſelf excluded from the Church of *God*, or to have Recourſe to this Stratagem, to maintain her Right of continuing therein. It was in *Judah*'s Breaſt, whether he would have given her that Right, by Marrying her to his Son; but after he had once done ſo, he could not without the greateſt Injuſtice deprive her thereof, upon any Pretence whatſoever; but ought to have given her his third Son, and to have reſigned up both himſelf and *Shelah* to the Determination of the divine Providence. What makes this Action of *Tamar*'s appear in a very fair Light; is that it is certain ſhe did not imagine it any Sin, which goes a great Way, towards making it no Sin in her, as is manifeſt from her open and undaunted Confeſſion; which could not proceed from any Thing but a *Mens conſcia Recti*, a Mind conſcious of its own Innocence, which no Terrors can affright: For it is certain, the heroic Courage ſhe ſhewed at that Juncture, when her Life was at Stake, and Death, in its moſt dreadful Form was ſtaring her in the Face, was far from natural in her Sex; and is very uncommon in the other. But unleſs we ſhould aſcribe it to an over-ruling Providence, which directed all her Actions, throughout the whole Courſe of this Affair, and had pre-aſſured her of Succeſs, to what ſhall we attribute that ſettled Confidence, which was viſible in *Tamar*, that her Stratagem would take Effect? *Judah* was not then in the Heyday of the Blood, as *Shakeſpear* calls it; he was the Father of three Sons, all marriageable, and therefore pretty well paſt all thoſe youthful Follies and Frolicks; from what therefore could ſhe promiſe herſelf Succeſs, had ſhe not been convinced, and had a firm Reliance, that Providence would favour the Juſtice of her Cauſe. Accordingly it is evident Providence did eminently favour her; and that ſo far, as to think her worthy of having the *Meſſiah* proceed from her: Now it is hard to think that *God* ſhould, in a Manner, ſanctify Sin, and that ſuch a Sin, as premeditated Inceſt and Adultery; of which the Generality of Divines will have *Tamar* to be guilty; wherefore, we think it much more reaſonable to imagine ſhe was not guilty of thoſe Crimes, by Reaſon neither her Marriage with *Er*, nor *Onan*, was conſummated; or that her Caſe being extraordinary, ſhe had the divine Permiſſion for what ſhe did, and then it was no Sin in her. When *David* was guilty of Murder and Adultery, in the Caſe of *Uriah*, though the *Almighty* was pleaſed to pardon his Sin upon his Confeſſion thereof, yet he did not give a Sanction to it, but ſhew'd his Abhorrence thereof, both by ſending the Prophet *Nathan* to reproach him, and to denounce a ſevere Sentence againſt him, and by the Death of the Child: But was any ſuch Thing done in the Caſe of *Tamar*? Nothing like it; we read of no Reproof either given to her; nor even any Cenſure paſſed upon it by *Moſes*; and as to the Children wherewith ſhe was Pregnant, they both lived and flouriſhed, and became the Heads of Families; and of the Eldeſt of them *Pharez*, our Saviour Proceeded according to the Fleſh. We ſhould not have been ſo prolix upon this Head, but that we think *Tamar*'s Proceedings in this Affair has been groſly miſconſtrued, by all who have hitherto treated of it; and we judge it of the greateſt Importance to ſet this Affair in as advantageous a Light as poſſible. If any Gentlemen ſhould happen to diſagree with us in our Sentiments; we beg them to remember, that we do not determine dogmatically on either ſide, but leave it to every one to believe as he pleaſes; and that if we err, it is on the Charitable ſide, which we think much more pardonable than being guilty of paſſing too ſevere a Cenſure, upon ſuch Occaſions.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Tamar, *after her being acquitted?*

A. “And it came to paſs, in the Time of her “Travail, that behold Twins were in her Womb. “And it came to paſs when ſhe travailed, that the “one put out his Hand; and the Midwife took and “bound upon his Hand a Scarlet Thread, ſaying, “This came out firſt. And it came to paſs, as he “drew back his Hand, that behold, his Brother “came out; and ſhe ſaid, how haſt thou broken “forth? this Breach be upon thee: Therefore his “Name was called *Pharez*, (that is a *Breach*.) And “afterwards came out his Brother, that had the “Scarlet Thread upon his Hand; and his name was “called *Zarah*.” (that is *he ariſeth*) Which needs no Explanation.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Potiphar *having bought* Joſeph, *and the* Lord *proſpering him, his Maſter makes him Comptroler of his Houſhold;* Joſeph *being a Man of a comely Perſon, his Miſtreſs falls in Love with him, and ſollicits him to lye with her; He abhorring ſuch Ingratitude to his Maſter, and ſuch a Sin againſt* God, *reſolutely refuſeth; being alone in the Houſe with her, ſhe ſeizes him by the Coat, and again urges him to lye with her; But he leaves his Coat in her Hands, and flies, and makes his Eſcape; She calls her Servants, and accuſes him to them of a Deſign to force her; She repeats the ſame to her Husband; who caſts him into Priſon; the* Lord *is with him there; He finds Favour with the Keeper; Has the Care of the other Priſoners committed to him; and all he does proſpers.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And *Joſeph* was brought down to *Egypt*: “And *Potiphar* an Officer of *Pharaoh*, Captain of “the Guard, an *Egyptian*, bought him of the *Iſhmaelites*, which had brought him down thither. And “the *Lord* was with *Joſeph*, and he was a proſperous Man: And he was in the Houſe of his Maſter the *Egyptian*.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That the Bleſſing of *God* will attend a good Man go where he will, and will make all States eaſy to him, by giving him that inward Peace in his Mind, which is preferable to all the Pleaſures of this World without it.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Joſeph *and his Maſter?*

A. “And his Maſter ſaw that the *Lord* was with “him, and that the *Lord*, made all that he did to “proſper in his Hand.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That even the *Heathens* acknowledged one ſupream *God*, and an over-ruling Providence, which directed all ſublunary Affairs, though they did not glorify him rightly as *God*, but worſhiped the Creature with, and more than the Creator.

Q. *What did his Maſter, upon obſerving how the* Lord *proſpered him?*

A. “And *Joſeph* found Grace in his Sight, and he “ſerved him: And he made him Overſeer over his “Houſe, and all that he had he put into his Hand.

“ And it came to paſs, from the Time that he made “ him Overſeer in his Houſe, and over all that he “ had, that the *Lord* bleſſed the *Egyptian*'s Houſe for “ *Joſeph*'s Sake: And the Bleſſing of the *Lord* was “ upon all that he had in the Houſe, and in the “ Field. And he left all that he had in *Joſeph*'s “ Hand; and he knew not ought he had ſave the “ Bread which he did eat: And *Joſeph* was a goodly “ Perſon, and well favoured.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That it is good to have one who truly fears the *Lord* in one's Family, and to truſt him who truſts in *God*; how much better muſt it be to truly ſerve the *Lord*, and truſt firmly in him ourſelves.

Q. *What next are we told concerning* Joſeph?

A. “ And it came to paſs, after theſe Things, “ that his Maſter's Wife caſt her Eyes upon *Joſeph*; “ and ſhe ſaid Lye with me, but he refuſed, and “ he ſaid unto his Maſter's Wife, Behold, my Maſter wotteth not what is with me in the Houſe, and “ he hath committed all that he hath to my Hand. “ There is none greater in this Houſe than I; neither hath he kept back any Thing from me, but “ thee, becauſe thou art his Wife: How then can I “ do this great Wickedneſs, and Sin againſt *God*.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. The great Honour, Gratitude, and Religion of *Joſeph*; he was ſtruck with the utmoſt Honour, at ſo impious a Propoſal; and not content with barely refuſing her, he endeavoured likewiſe to infuſe into her a juſt ſenſe of Modeſty, and her Duty, by a very pathetic and ſharp Remonſtrance; but all to very little Purpoſe, as we ſhall ſee by the Sequel.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of* Joſeph's *Refuſal; did ſhe perſiſt in her Sollicitations?*

A. Yes; “ And it came to paſs, as ſhe ſpake to “ *Joſeph* Day by Day, that he hearkened not unto “ her to lye by her, or to be with her.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That *Joſeph* finding ſhe continued her luſtful Solicitations, thought it not enough to deny her, but ſtudied how to avoid her; hoping by this Means to cure her of her infamous Paſſion: How laudable and uncommon was the Conduct of this young Man!

Q. *What next are we informed concerning this Matter?*

A. “ And it came to paſs, about this Time, that “ *Joſeph* went into the Houſe to do his Buſineſs; and “ there was none of the Men of the Houſe there within. And ſhe caught him by his Garment ſaying, “ lye with me: And he left his Garment in her “ Hand, and fled, and got him out.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That the Devil ſeldom fails to aſſiſt his Servants, in the Purſuit of their wicked Inclinations; accordingly he affords her ſuch an Opportunity, as the Virtue of few Men would have been Proof againſt; having a double Motive for ſo doing; to indulge her in the Commiſſion of that Sin for which ſhe luſted, and to lay in *Joſeph*'s Way ſuch a Temptation, as he ſhould with Difficulty be able to overcome. But the *Almighty* is ſtill ſuperior to the *Devil*, and never forſakes his Servants, unleſs they firſt forſake him; accordingly *Joſeph* eſcapes Victorious, in ſpite of all her Snares; but we muſt obſerve, he does not ſtand to parley with her, but fled for his Safety; ſenſual Temptations being of that Nature, that they are not to be overcome but by Flight: How few *Joſephs* are there now-a-days!

Q. *What did his Miſtreſs after this ſhameful Defeat?*

A. “ And it came to paſs, when ſhe ſaw that he “ had left his Garment in her Hand, and was fled “ forth, that ſhe called unto the Men of her Houſe, “ and ſpake unto them, ſaying, See, he hath brought “ in an *Hebrew* unto us to Mock us: He came in “ unto me to lye with me, and I cry'd with a loud “ Voice, and it came to paſs, when he heard that I “ lift up my Voice and cry'd, that he left his Garment with me and fled, and got him out.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. The infernal Policy of this Servant of the Devil's; finding herſelf defeated in her ſhameful Attempt; and judging of *Joſeph* by herſelf, that he would never favour her ſo far as to conceal it, but would certainly diſcover her Infamy, whereby ſhe ſhould incur her Husband's ſevereſt Reſentment; without any Remorſe for the horrid Falſhood of which ſhe was guilty therein, and the notorious Injuſtice ſhe did the innocent young Man, breathing nothing but Revenge, ſhe reſolves to be beforehand and to ſave herſelf by accuſing him: In order to this, ſhe begins by artfully prepoſſeſſing the Servants in her Favour; that they might be afterwards ready to ſecond her, when ſhe ſhould repeat the ſame Charge againſt him to her Husband.

Q. *Having thus done, what did ſhe next?*

A. “ And ſhe laid up his Garment by her, until “ her Lord came Home. And ſhe ſpake unto him “ according to theſe Words, ſaying, The *Hebrew* “ Servant which thou haſt brought unto us, came into unto me, to mock me. And it came to paſs, “ as I lift up my Voice and cry'd, that he left his “ Garment with me, and fled out.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. How naturally Luſt is the Parent of Murder; ſhe rightly judged, that her incenſed Husband, in the Heat of his Reſentment, at ſo great a ſuppoſed Outrage, would not be Maſter enough of his Temper cooly to weigh the Improbability of the Thing, but would immediately proceed to take a ſevere Revenge; and doubtleſs, ſhe imagined that nothing leſs than *Joſeph*'s Blood, would be thought ſufficient Satisfaction, for ſo groſs an Injury; but herein ſhe was diſappointed; no Thanks to her, who evidently verify'd that ſaying of the Poet's,

There is no Rage like Love to Hatred turn'd,
Nor Hell, nor Fury, like a Woman ſcorn'd.

Q. *What did* Joſeph's *Maſter, upon hearing this heinous Accuſation?*

A. “ And it came to paſs, when his Maſter heard “ the Words of his Wife, which ſhe ſpake unto him, “ ſaying, after this Manner did thy Servant to me; “ that his Wrath was kindled. And *Joſeph*'s Maſter “ took him, and put him into the Priſon, a Place “ where the King's Priſoners were bound: And he “ was there in the Priſon.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. How much we ought to be upon our Guard againſt our Paſſions, which are ſure to blind and miſlead us, if once they are ſuffered to get a Head! Had *Potiphar* conſidered how ill his Wife's Accuſation agreed with the whole Tenor of *Joſeph*'s Behaviour, and duly weighed how improbable it was a Man who would proceed ſo far, as to attempt the Chaſtity of his Miſtreſs by Violence, would leave his Garment in her Hand, which he muſt know might be made a Pretence againſt him, and not uſe the ſame Violence for the Recovery thereof, which he had uſed on a leſs juſtifiable Account, he had never thrown the innocent *Joſeph* into a Dungeon; and undoubtedly, he had proceeded farther, and taken away his Life, the Crime whereof *Joſeph* was accuſed being capital, and the Power altogether in his Maſter's Hands; but that the good Providence of *God*, which watches continually over his Servants, and watched in a peculiar Manner over *Joſeph*, ſet Bounds to his Paſſion, and reſtrained him from going any farther. We may alſo obſerve, that *God* loves to prove even the beſt of his Servants before he rewards them. How much, and how wrongfully did poor *Joſeph* ſuffer? *Firſt*, he was in danger of being murdered by his unnatural Brethren; then thrown into a Pit to periſh with Hunger; and releaſed from thence, but upon the hard Terms of being ſold into Slavery; and now caſt into a Dungeon, helpleſs and friendleſs in a ſtrange) and idolatrous Country! Yet all this ſhall, in *God*'s due Time, work for Good to *Joſeph*; and he ſhall ſee himſelf in a Condition to take a ſevere Revenge, if he pleaſes, on all his Oppreſſors.

Q. *How fared poor* Joſeph *in the Dungeon?*

A. The *Lord* did not leave him deſtitute of Comfort even there; "But the *Lord* was with *Joſeph*, and ſhewed him Mercy, and gave him Favour in the Sight of the Keeper of the Priſon. And the Keeper of the Priſon committed to *Joſeph*'s Hand all the Priſoners that were in the Priſon; and whatſoever they did there, he was the Doer of it. The Keeper of the Priſon looked not to any Thing under his Hand; becauſe the *Lord* was with him: and that which he did, the *Lord* made it to proſper."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That *God*, for the Benefit of his Servants, can change the Hearts of the moſt ſavage; Gaolers are ſeldom Men of great Humanity and Compaſſion, yet here the Gaoler ſhews particular Favour to *Joſeph*, notwithſtanding he was committed thither by his incenſed Maſter; who was the Gaoler's immediate Superior, and, no doubt, gave a ſtrict Charge with him, that he ſhould be uſed ſeverely; but Man propoſes, and *God* diſpoſes.

CHAP. XL.

Pharaoh's *chief Butler, and Baker having offended him, are thrown into Priſon; each of them dream a Dream, and are ſad;* Joſeph *obſerving it, asks the Reaſon; they tell him; he asks their Dreams; the chief Butler tells his, and* Joſeph *expounds it; he deſires him to be mindful of him when he is reſtored to Favour; the chief Baker tells his Dream;* Joſeph *interprets that alſo; his Interpretation exactly verified by the Event; nevertheleſs the chief Butler forgets* Joſeph.

Q. WHAT *are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. "And it came to paſs, after theſe Things, that the Butler of the King of *Egypt*, and his Baker, had offended their *Lord*, the King of *Egypt*. And *Pharaoh* was wroth againſt two of his Officers, againſt the chief of the Butlers, and againſt the chief of the Bakers. And he put them in Ward in the Houſe of the Captain of the Guard, into the Priſon, the Place where *Joſeph* was bound. And the Captain of the Guard charged *Joſeph* with them, and he ſerved them; and they continued a Seaſon in Ward."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That by the wonderful Providence of *God*, in whoſe Hand are the Hearts of all Mankind, the Captain of the Guard, *Potiphar*, the very Perſon who had wrongfully caſt poor *Joſeph* into Priſon, beginning now to have a more favourable Opinion of him, though for his Wife's Reputation, and his own Quiet, he ſtill kept him in Priſon, committed theſe two State Priſoners to his Cuſtody; as being well aſſured from former Experience, of his great Care and Faithfulneſs, in whatever was intruſted to his Charge.

Q. *What are we next informed of concerning theſe Priſoners?*

A. "And they dreamed a Dream both of them, each Man his Dream in one Night, each Man according to the Interpretation of his Dream; the Butler and the Baker of the King of *Egypt*, which were bound in the Priſon. And *Joſeph* came in unto them in the Morning, and looked upon them, and behold they were ſad. And he asked *Pharaoh*'s Officers, that were with him in the Ward of his *Lord*'s Houſe, ſaying, Wherefore look ye ſo ſadly to-day? And they ſaid unto him, we have dreamed a Dream, and there is no Interpreter of it. And *Joſeph* ſaid unto them, Do not Interpretations belong to *God*, tell me them, I pray you."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. *Joſeph* knowing the *Egyptians* to be a People, who were naturally very much addicted to Superſtition; and who, as all ſuperſtitious Perſons do, repoſed a vaſt Confidence in their Diviners, and Soothſayers, or Fortune-tellers, as ſome fooliſh People are ſtill apt to do amongſt us; he endeavoured to cure theſe two Officers of *Pharaoh*'s of that ridiculous, and indeed ſinful Folly; and in order thereto, he firſt tells them plainly, that all Interpretations belong to *God*, and then finding within himſelf, that *God* had given him the Power of interpreting, he deſires them to tell him each of them their Dreams, thereby inſinuating that he would explain them, as he did accordingly.

Q. *What did* Pharaoh's *two Officers thereupon?*

A. "And the chief Butler told his Dream to *Joſeph*, and ſaid unto him, In my Dream, behold, a Vine was before me. And in the Vine were three Branches, and it was as though it budded, and her Bloſſoms ſhot forth; and the Cluſters thereof brought forth ripe Grapes. And *Pharaoh*'s Cup was in my Hand: And I took the Grapes, and I preſſed them into *Pharaoh*'s Cup, and I gave the Cup into *Pharaoh*'s Hand. And *Joſeph* ſaid unto him, This is the Interpretation of it: The three Branches, are three Days. Yet within three Days ſhall *Pharaoh* lift up thine Head, and reſtore thee unto thy Place: And thou ſhalt deliver *Pharaoh*'s Cup into his Hand, after the former Manner, when thou waſt his Butler. But think on me, when it ſhall be well with thee, and ſhew Kindneſs, I pray thee, unto me, and make Mention of me unto *Pharaoh*, and bring me out of this Houſe. For indeed I was ſtolen away out of the Land of the *Hebrews*: And here alſo have I done nothing that they ſhould put me into the Dungeon."

Q. *What may one obſerve from thence?*

A. That notwithſtanding the Interpretation of this Dream was hidden, from the Butler himſelf, nothing could be more natural than the Explanation given to it by *Joſeph*; nor any Thing more ſignificant, or expreſſive of the future reſtoring of the Butler to his Place. It is obſervable alſo, that *Joſeph* when he comes to ſpeak of the Hardſhips and Wrongs he had ſuffered, does not offer to accuſe either his unnatural Brothers, or his ſalacious and remorſeleſs Miſtreſs; notwithſtanding he had received the higheſt Provocations from all of them, without hav-

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having done the leaſt Injury to any of them; they having barbarouſly and inhumanely attempted his Life, inſomuch that he eſcaped only by the immediate Protection of the Divine Providence; a remarkable Teſtimony of the prodigious Sweetneſs of *Joſeph*'s Temper, and his truly *Chriſtian* Diſpoſition in forgiving his Enemies many Ages before our Saviour made the Forgiveneſs of our Enemies, the Condition of our obtaining Forgiveneſs of the *Almighty*!

Q. *And what was the chief Baker's Dream, and the Intepretation?*

A. "When the chief Baker ſaw that the Interpretation was good; he ſaid unto *Joſeph*, I alſo was in my Dream, and behold, I had three white Baſkets on my Head. And in the uppermoſt Baſket, there was of all Manner of Bake-meats for *Pharaoh*; and the Birds did eat them out of the Baſket upon my Head. And *Joſeph* anſwered and ſaid, This is the Interpretation thereof. The three Baſkets are three Days. Yet within three Days ſhall *Pharaoh* lift up thy Head from off thee, and ſhall hang thee on a Tree; and the Birds ſhall eat thy Fleſh from off thee."

Q. *What is remarkable herein?*

A. That this Dream alſo, notwithſtanding its Interpretation was hidden from the Baker, was very ſignificant and expreſſive of his future Fate; there being a ſurprizing Conformity between the Dream, and the Event thereby foreſhewn; an evident Demonſtration, that when the *Almighty* was pleaſed to reveal his Mind to Mankind in Dreams, there was always ſomething in thoſe Dreams, by which the Perſons themſelves, who dreamed them, knew them to be ſupernatural, and not ſuch as proceeded from ordinary Cauſes. As the unfortunate Baker too ſoon found by woful Experience.

Q. *How were each of theſe Dreams verified?*

A. "And it came to paſs the third Day, which was *Pharaoh's* Birth Day, that he made a Feaſt unto all his Servants: And he lifted up the Head of the chief Butler, and of the chief Baker among his Servants. And he reſtored the chief Butler unto his Butlerſhip again; and he gave the Cup into *Pharaoh's* Hand: But he hanged the chief Baker, as *Joſeph* had interpreted to them."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. How exactly *Joſeph's* Interpretation was accompliſhed in every Point; as the Policy of the *Egyptians*, in thoſe Ages, was preciſely regular, it is to be preſumed, that there were ſtated Times appointed for their Sovereigns to enquire into the Demeanour of their Houſhold; to *lift up their Heads* being an *Hebrew* Phraſe, for to enquire into their Conduct; and accordingly the King's Birth-day ſeems to have been one of them. It is obſervable alſo, that there ſeems to have been a ſtrict Juſtice obſerved in theſe Enquiries; if the guilty were puniſhed, the innocent were cleared and rewarded; a Cuſtom very commendable; it were to be wiſhed it were put in Practice, in the Courts of many Princes who call themſelves *Chriſtians*.

Q. *Was the chief Butler, who reaped the Benefit of* Joſeph's *favourable Interpetation, mindful of him, when he was reſtored to his Office?*

A. No; juſt like all Courtiers, who forget thoſe who aſſiſted them in their Adverſity, he never thought any more of him; until it became his Intereſt ſo to do, in order to make his Court to his Sovereign: "Yet did not the chief Butler remember *Joſeph*, but forgat him."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That the *Almighty*, ever jealous of his Honour, would not ſuffer any one to ſhare, in the leaſt, with him, in the Glory of delivering and advancing his true, faithful, and upright Servant, from all the unjuſt Perſecutions he had undergone; wherefore he leaves the baſe *Egyptian* to his natural Ingratitude; and will not ſuffer him to be inſtrumental therein; 'till it was viſible, that it was not any Regard to Gratitude, Juſtice, or the Honour of *God*, that induced him to it.

CHAP. XLI.

Pharaoh*'s two remarkable Dreams; he is troubled at them, and ſends for the Magicians and wiſe Men to interpret them; they are unable to do it; the chief Butler, in this Emergency, calls* Joſeph *to Remembrance; he commends him to* Pharaoh, *who immediately cauſes him to be brought into his Preſence, expecting the Interpretation from him;* Joſeph *denies his being able of himſelf to interpret Dreams, and aſcribes all the Honour to* God; Pharaoh *relates his Dreams to him; he interprets them; the Reaſon of the Dreams being doubled; his Advice to* Pharaoh *after having interpreted them;* Pharaoh, *and all his Court approve thereof; whereupon he appoints him Governor, immediately under himſelf, over all the Land of* Egypt; *the Enſigns of his Dignity, and ſtately Preſents are conferred upon him;* Pharaoh *gives him a new Name, and provides him a Wife of a diſtinguiſhed Rank;* Joſeph *enters upon his Offices, take a Progreſs throughout the Land, and lays up great Quantities of Proviſion in Store-houſes in every City; Two Sons are born unto him,* Manaſſeh *and* Ephraim; *the Famine comes;* Joſeph *provides for all the Land, and alſo ſells Corn to other Countries.*

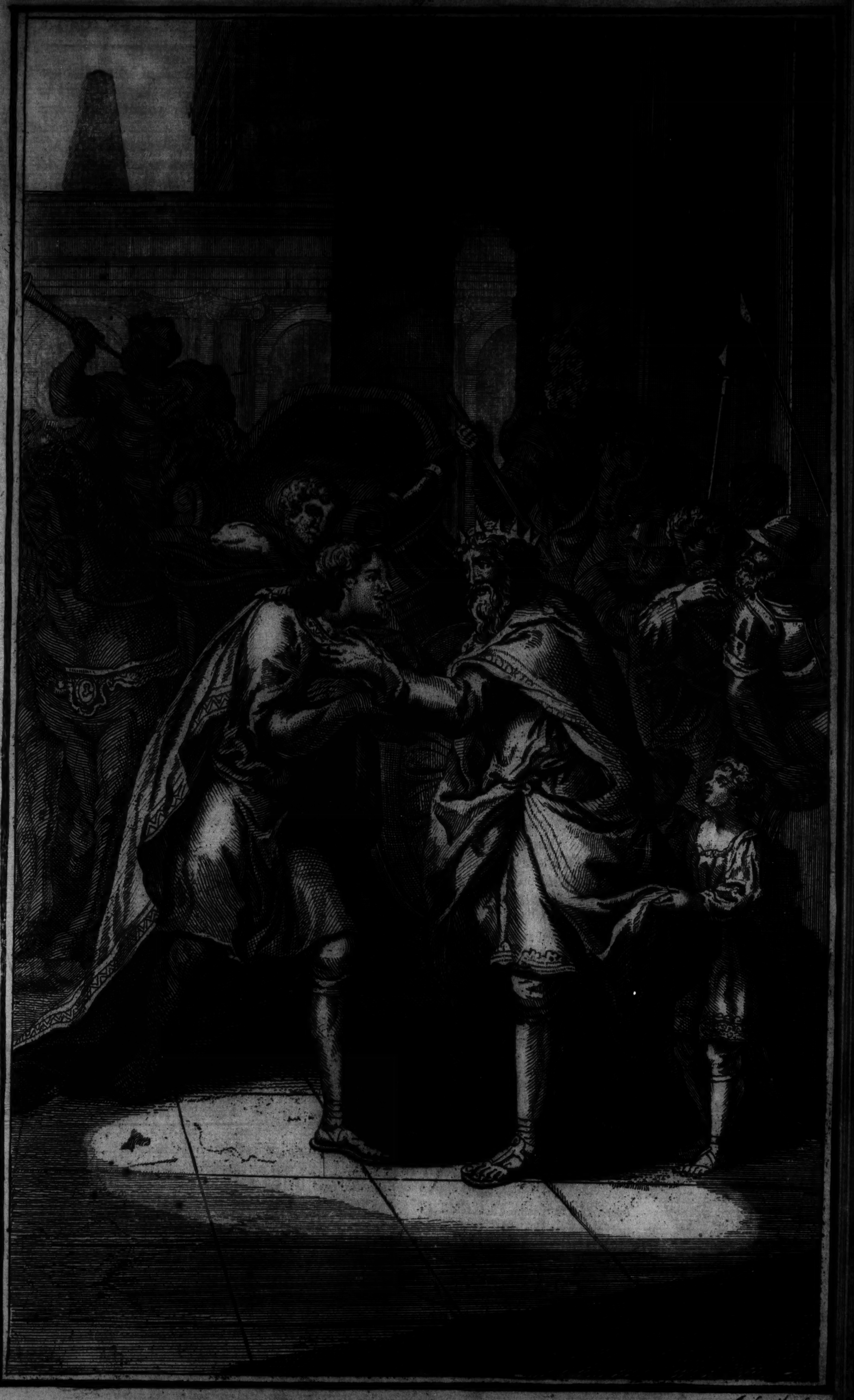
Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And it came to paſs, at the End of two full Years, that *Pharaoh* dreamed: And behold, he ſtood by the River; and behold there came up out of the River, ſeven well-favoured Kine, and fat fleſh'd; and they fed in a Meadow. And behold, ſeven other Kine, came up after them out of the River, ill-favoured and lean-fleſhed; and ſtood by the other Kine, upon the Brink of the River. And the ill-favoured and lean-fleſhed Kine did eat up the ſeven well-favoured and fat Kine. So *Pharaoh* awoke. And he ſlept, and dreamed the ſecond Time, and behold, ſeven Ears of Corn came up upon one Stalk, rank, and good. And behold, ſeven thin Ears, and blaſted with the *Eaſt* Wind, ſprung up after them. And the ſeven thin Ears devoured the ſeven rank and full Ears: And *Pharaoh* awoke, and behold, it was a Dream. And it came to paſs, in the Morning, that his Spirit was troubled; and he ſent and called for all the Magicians of *Egypt*, and all the wiſe Men thereof: And *Pharaoh* told them his Dreams; but there was none that could interpret them unto *Pharaoh*."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The unſearchable Ways, and unfathomable Wiſdom of the Divine Providence; as *God* had made Dreams inſtrumental in provoking and ſtirring up the Malice of *Joſeph's* Brethren, and of ſending him a Slave into *Egypt*, ſo now, having fully tried the Patience, Reſignation, Faithfulneſs, and Integrity of his Servant, he makes two other Dreams inſtrumental in delivering, and advancing him to the ſecond

GENESIS CHAP XLI.



J. Smith Sculp

JOSEPH [illegible] *EGYPT*

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and Dignity in *Egypt*; as alſo, to the Preſervation of that whole Nation, and of ſeveral other Countries; and even of his own Father, and his unnatural Brethren.

Q. *What was the firſt Means of* Joſeph's *Deliverance and Advancement?*

A. “Then ſpake the chief Butler to *Pharaoh*, “ſaying, I do remember my Faults this Day. *Pharaoh* was wroth with his Servants, and put me in “Ward in the Captain of the Guard's Houſe, both “me, and the chief Baker. And we dreamed a “Dream in one Night, I and he: We dreamed each “Man according to the Interpretation of his Dream: “And there was with us a young Man, an *Hebrew*, “Servant to the Captain of the Guard; and we told “him, and he interpreted to us our Dreams: To “each Man according to his Dream did he inter“pret. And it came to paſs, as he interpreted to “us, ſo it was: Me he reſtored unto mine Office, “and him he hanged.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. The ungrateful Courtier when it becomes his Intereſt, can call *Joſeph* to Remembrance; thinking thereby to recommend himſelf to *Pharaoh*: For notwithſtanding the Butler ſays, *I do remember my Faults this Day*, we muſt not miſtake this for any Remorſe of Conſcience, for his Ingratitude to *Joſeph*, ſince it was only an Acknowledgment of his Offence againſt the King; and of that Prince's Lenity and Clemency in pardoning him; in order to make his Court more effectually to his Maſter.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of the Baker's giving* Joſeph *this Character?*

A. “Then *Pharaoh* ſent and called *Joſeph*, and “they brought him haſtily out of the Dungeon: “And he ſhaved himſelf, and changed his Raiment, “and came in unto *Pharaoh*. And *Pharaoh* ſaid “unto *Joſeph*, I have dreamed a Dream, and there “is none that can interpret it: And I have heard “ſay of thee, that thou canſt underſtand a Dream to “interpret it. And *Joſeph* anſwered *Pharaoh*, ſay“ing, It is not in me: *God* ſhall give *Pharaoh* an “Anſwer of Peace.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That it was not thought decent to appear before the King, in a Habit of Sorrow, or in Mourning, for which Reaſon *Joſeph* changed his Raiment; as alſo, that he modeſtly diſclaims the Honour the King attributes to him of being able of himſelf to interpret Dreams, and with all Humility, aſcribes it to the *Almighty*; thereby leading *Pharaoh* to the Knowledge of the true *God*: It were well, if all who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, and who are puffed up with the Opinion of their own extraordinary Abilities, would imitate *Joſeph* in this his Modeſty, and Humility, and give the Honour to *God*, which they arrogantly aſſume to themſelves.

Q. *What ſaid* Pharaoh, *upon* Joſeph's *making him this Anſwer?*

A. “And *Pharaoh* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, In my Dream, “Behold, I ſtood upon the Bank of the River. And “behold, there came up out of the River, ſeven “Kine fat-fleſhed, and well-favoured; and they “fed in a Meadow. And behold, ſeven other Kine “came up after them, poor, and very ill-favoured, “and lean-fleſhed, ſuch as I never ſaw in all the “the Land of *Egypt*, for Badneſs; and the lean and “the ill-favoured Kine, did eat up the firſt ſeven “fat Kine. And when they had eaten them up, it “could not be known that they had eaten them; “but they were ſtill ill-favoured, as at the Begin“ning. So I awoke. And I ſaw in my Dream, “and behold, ſeven Ears came up in one Stalk, full “and good. And behold, ſeven Ears withered, thin, “and blaſted with the *Eaſt Wind*, ſprung up after “them. And the thin Ears devoured the ſeven “good Ears: And I told this unto the Magicians; “but there was none that could declare it unto “me.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That, notwithſtanding no human Wit could penetrate into the Meaning of *Pharaoh*'s Dream, yet it evident that the Things ſeen by the King therein, had an exact Analogy to what they were intended to repreſent, according to *Joſeph*'s Interpretation thereof. The Circumſtances of them, are coherent with one another, though they are not agreeable to the ordinary Courſe of Nature; and the Coherence, with the apparent Singularity of theſe two Dreams, naturally induced *Pharaoh* to conſider them attentively; whence proceeded that Perplexity and Diſquiet which he is ſaid, in the Text, to have felt, on that occaſion. The ſeven fat and well favoured Kind were very proper Emblems of ſo many Years of Plenty, ſince they feed on Graſs, which in that Country ſprings up abundantly, when the *Nile* roſe to a ſufficient Height: The ſeven good Ears of Corn were alſo very proper Repreſentations of ſeven plentiful Harveſts; as the lean Kine, and blaſted Ears, were perfect Emblems of the following Scarcity; and as to the lean Kine's eating up, or devouring the fat ones, without its being viſible that they had eaten them, either by their being fuller in their Fleſh, or fuller in their Bodies, what could more ſignificantly denote, that the Remembrance of the plenteous Years, ſhould be quite buried, and ſwallowed up in the exceſſive Barrenneſs of the ſcarce Years? It was alſo a Circumſtance that appeared ſo monſtrous in the Viſion, that it the more ſtrongly awakened *Pharaoh*'s Curioſity; which was the Reaſon for which it was ſent.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Joſeph *to* Pharaoh, *after his having thus told him his Dream?*

A. “And *Joſeph* ſaid unto *Pharaoh*, The Dream “of *Pharaoh* is one: God hath ſhewed *Pharaoh* what “he is about to do. The ſeven good Kine are ſeven “Years; and the ſeven good Ears are ſeven Years; “the Dream is one. And the ſeven thin and ill“favoured Kine, that came up after them, are ſeven “Years; and the ſeven empty Ears, blaſted with the “*Eaſt* Wind, ſhall be ſeven Years of Famine. This “is the Thing which I have ſpoken unto *Pharaoh*: “What *God* is about to do, he ſheweth unto “*Pharaoh*. Behold, there come ſeven Years of great “Plenty, throughout all the Land of *Egypt*. And “there ſhall ariſe after them ſeven Years of Famine; “and all the Plenty ſhall be forgotten in the Land of “*Egypt*: And the Famine ſhall conſume the Land. “And the Plenty ſhall not be known in the Land, “by Reaſon of that Famine following: For it ſhall “be very grievous. And for that the Dream was “doubled unto *Pharaoh* twice; it is becauſe the “Thing is eſtabliſhed by *God*, and *God* will ſhortly “bring it to paſs.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That this Interpretation of *Pharaoh*'s two Dreams by *Joſeph*, was ſo very rational, that it carried along with it the Force of Perſuaſion, and a Sort of ſelf-evident Demonſtration of its Truth; which could not fail of convincing almoſt every one, that he had given the true Solution of the Dreams, and that they would certainly come to paſs; accordingly, we find, notwithſtanding the *Egyptians* were at that

Time the moſt learned Nation upon Earth, none of the Wits of *Pharaoh*'s Court attempted to ridicule the Explanation given by *Joſeph*; but all of them, in general, ſeem to have been poſſeſſed with a firm Belief of the Certainty thereof; and accordingly they ſubmitted unanimouſly to the Advice preſcribed by *Joſeph*, for alleviating the Calamity thereby threatened.

Q. *What Advice did* Joſeph *give the King, after having thus expounded his Dreams?*

A. “ Now therefore let *Pharaoh* look out a Man “ diſcreet and wiſe, and ſet him over the Land of “ *Egypt*. Let *Pharaoh* do this, and let him appoint “ Officers over the Land, and take up the fifth Part “ of the Land of *Egypt* in the ſeven plenteous Years. “ And let them gather all the Food of thoſe good “ Years that come, and lay up Corn under the Hand “ of *Pharaoh*, and let them keep Food in the Cities. “ And that Food ſhall be for Store to the Land, “ againſt the ſeven Years of Famine, which ſhall “ be in the Land of *Egypt*; that the Land periſh not “ through the Famine.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. It is obſervable that by what *Joſeph* ſays, after having explained *Pharaoh*'s Dreams, the divine Inſpiration, by which he ſpoke, is rendered ſtill more Manifeſt than before; they who pretend to interpret Viſions, or any other way to foretel future Events, never venture any farther, but are modeſt enough to avoid reaſoning on Things, which they themſelves know to be very uncertain. On the contrary, *Joſeph* not only declares, in a few and plain Words, what it had pleaſed *God* to ſhew *Pharaoh* in his Sleep, but he alſo proceeds to offer Means, for rendering this Revelation uſeful; there is a Boldneſs, or rather a ſettled Confidence, as to the Truth of what he had been ſaying, which appears in the latter Part of *Joſeph*'s Speech; and which a Perſon of *Joſeph*'s Senſe, Virtue, and Piety, would never have ſhown, had he not been fully aſſured within his own Mind, that what he delivered was from *God*.

Q. *And how did Pharaoh approve of* Joſeph's *Advice?*

A. “ And the Thing was good in the Eyes of “ *Pharaoh*, and in the Eyes of all his Servants. And “ *Pharaoh* ſaid unto his Servants, Can we find ſuch “ a one as this is, a Man in whom the Spirit of *God* “ is? And *Pharaoh* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, Foraſmuch as “ *God* hath ſhewed thee all this, there is none ſo diſcreet and wiſe as thou art. Thou ſhalt be over my “ Houſe, and according unto thy Word ſhall all my “ People be ruled; only in the Throne will I be greater than thou. And *Pharaoh* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, See, “ I have ſet thee over all the Land of *Egypt*. And “ *Pharaoh* took off his Ring from his Hand, and put “ it upon *Joſeph*'s Hand, and arrayed him in veſtures “ of fine Linnen, and put a gold Chain about his “ Neck. And he made him to ride in the ſecond “ Chariot which he had, and they cried before him, “ Bow the Knee: And he made him Ruler over all “ the Land of *Egypt*. And *Pharaoh* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, I am *Pharaoh*, and without thee ſhall no “ Man lift up his Hand or Foot, in all the Land of “ *Egypt*.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That *God* ſo diſpoſed their Minds, that not only *Pharaoh* himſelf, but his whole Court approved of *Joſeph*'s; Counſel as indeed they could not do otherwiſe, unleſs they had been infatuated; and this their Approbation of his Advice, was followed with his immediate Advancement to the ſecond Dignity in the Kingdom. This was conferr'd upon him with no ſmall Solemnity; and *Moſes* is very particular in his Explanation of thoſe Ceremonies, whereby *Joſeph* was inveſted with the Dignity of chief Ruler, or prime Miniſter unto *Pharaoh*; and mentions five diſtinct Marks of Honour, which he received on that Occaſion. *Firſt*, *Pharaoh* delivered to him his Ring, or his Signet. *Secondly*, They cloathed *Joſeph* with fine Linnen: *Thirdly*, He had a gold Chain put about his Neck: *Fourthly*, *Pharaoh*'s ſecond Chariot was aſſigned him: And *Fifthly*, an Herald went before him, and proclaimed *Abreth*, which is rendered in our Verſion, *Bow the Knee*, but about the true Meaning whereof Commentators and Tranſlators are miſerably divided. Whatever it was, no Doubt it was a Mark of great Honour. Thus Providence, in a Moment, drew *Joſeph* out of Priſon, brought him into the Preſence of the King of *Egypt*, and exalted him unto the higheſt Office, under the King, in the *Egyptian* Government, giving thereby a glorious and comfortable Inſtance, of the divine Tenderneſs and Regard to thoſe, who ſuffer not their Confidence in their Creator to be ſhaken, by temporary Evils, and Afflictions.

Q. *What farther did* Pharaoh *for* Joſeph?

A. “ And *Pharaoh* called *Joſeph*'s Name *Zaphnath-paaneah*; and he gave him to Wife *Aſenath*, “ the Daughter of *Potipherah* Prieſt of *On*: And *Joſeph* went out over all the Land of *Egypt*. And “ *Joſeph* was thirty Years old, when he ſtood before “ *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*: And *Joſeph* went out “ from the Preſence of *Pharaoh*, and went throughout all the Land of *Egypt*. And in the ſeven plenteous Years, the Earth brought forth by Handfulls. And he gathered up all the Food of the ſeven Years, which were in the Land of *Egypt*, and “ laid up Food in the Cities. The Food of the Field, “ which was round about every City laid he up in the “ ſame. And *Joſeph* gathered Corn as the Sand of the “ Sea, very much, until he left numbring: For it was “ without Number.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. Various have been the Opinions, about the Meaning of this new Name, given by *Pharaoh* to *Joſeph*; amongſt the Reſt St. *Jerom* has been pleaſed to fancy that it ſignify'd in the *Egyptian* Tongue *Salvator Mundi*, or the *Saviour of the World*; but upon what Grounds he went in this extraordinary Suppoſition, is more than any one has as yet been able to diſcover: The beſt Commentators think its Meaning to be a *Revealer of Secrets*, or one to whom *Secrets are revealed*; and as this Interpretation is agreeable to the Tenor of the Story, we think it may reaſonably be allowed. As odd Opinions have been broach'd concerning this *Aſenath*, whom the King gave *Joſeph* to Wife. The *Jews* amongſt other idle Notions, will have her to have been the Daughter of *Dinah*, and to have been brought up and educated by *Potipherah*; whilſt others, and amongſt the Reſt, the learned Mr. *Howel*, and Mr. *Poole*, have taken Abundance of Pains to convince us, that ſhe was not the Daughter of that *Potiphar*, to whom *Joſeph* had been a Servant; as if there was no Difference between the Name of *Potipherah* and *Potiphar*; and indeed Mr. *Howel* ſeems to think there is not, ſince he calls the Name of this Prieſt of *On*, *Potiphar*, as well as that of the Captain of the Guard; whereas it is evident this was a Perſon of a more exalted Rank, being a Prince, as well as a Prieſt; and a late learned and ingenious Writer, has made an Obſervation upon this Head, that ſeems worthy of Notice; it is this :—That amongſt the *Egyptians*, there were three Words, or Endings of Words, nearly reſembling each other in Sound, but differing in Signification; and denoting the different Degree of Dignity and Authority, of thoſe Perſons, to whoſe Names thoſe Words were annexed. Theſe three Words were *Phar*, *Pherah*, and *Pharaoh*; the *Firſt* of theſe, *Phar*, according to this Gentleman, ſeems to have been a Title given to inferior Officers; the *Second Pherah*, was given to thoſe of greater Dignity and Power; and the Latter, *Pharaoh*, was appropriated to the Sovereign himſelf.

We muſt obſerve alſo, that *Joſeph* followed exactly the Advice he had preſcribed himſelf for others; and that he did not preach one Doctrine, and practiſe another, as too many do now-a-days; no, he took a Progreſs himſelf throughout the Land of *Egypt*; he did not truſt it to inferior Officers to take a Survey thereof; and he made as near a Computation as was poſſible, what the amount of the Produce of the whole would be; and accordingly had ſuitable Store-Houſes and Magazines built in every City and Town, wherein to lay up that Part of the Produce of the Corn, of the Diſtrict belonging thereunto, which was to fall to the King's Share; a Method ſo admirable, that a better could not have been contrived. For by this Means, there was Food ready at Hand, to provide for the Neceſſities of every Place; and *Joſeph* having taken an exact Account of what was contained in every ſeveral City or Town, could not be impoſed upon, by the inferior Officers, whom he intruſted with the Care of delivering it out to the People.

Q. *What next are we informed concerning* Joſeph?

A. The Bleſſing of *God* now viſibly attended him in every Reſpect, and ſcarce any Thing was wanting to compleat his Happineſs, even in this World, and to crown him with Proſperity; “ And unto *Joſeph* were “ from two Sons, before the Years of Famine came: “ Which *Aſenath*, the Daughter of *Potipherah*, “ Prieſt of *On*, bare unto him. And *Joſeph* called “ the Name of the firſt-born, *Manaſſeh* (that is, *forgetting*:) For *God*, ſaid he, hath made me forget “ all my Toil, and all my Father's Houſe. And “ the Name of the Second called he *Ephraim* (that “ is, Fruitful:) For *God* hath cauſed me to be fruit-“ ful in the Land of my Affliction.”

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And the ſeven Years of Plenteouſneſs, that “ was in the Land of *Egypt*, were ended. And the “ ſeven Years of Dearth began to come, according “ as *Joſeph* had ſaid: And the Dearth was in all “ Lands; but in all the Land of *Egypt* there was “ Bread. And when all the Land of *Egypt* was fa-“ miſhed, the People cried to *Pharaoh* for Bread: “ And *Pharaoh* ſaid unto all the *Egyptians*, Go unto “ *Jeſeph*; what he ſaith to you, do.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That *Pharaoh*, though a *Pagan*, was not like ſome Monarchs now-a-days; who either turn a deaf Ear to all their People's Complaints be they never ſo well-grounded, or reſent them as Seditious and Mutinous; but like a true Father of his Country, he immediately refers them to *Joſeph*, as the Perſon, who had it in his Power, and who, from his Humanity, and Integrity, he was aſſured would relieve them effectually.

Q. *What are we told next concerning the Severity of the Famine?*

A. “ And the Famine was over all the Face of the “ Earth: And *Joſeph* opened all the Store-Houſes, “ and ſold unto the *Egyptians*; and the Famine wax-“ ed ſore in all the Land of *Egypt*. And all Coun-“ tries came into *Egypt*, to *Joſeph*, to buy Corn; “ becauſe that the Famine was ſo ſore in all Lands.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this? And what is obſervable therein?*

A. The Famine's being over all the Face of the Earth, is an *Hebrew* Phraſe, and means no more, then that it affected all the Countries bordering upon *Egypt*, inſomuch that they were forced to ſend thither to buy Corn for Suſtenance; which is not at all ſurprizing, conſidering they had not the ſame Warning the *Egyptians* had, to provide for themſelves, and lay up againſt a Rainy Day; but as the *Egyptians* had ſuch ſufficient Warning, it is not a little amazing, that they ſhould fall ſo ſoon as the ſecond Year, into the ſame neceſſitous Circumſtances as their Neighbours. As it is not to be doubted, but that being ſo forewarned, ſuch as were in good Circumſtances laid up great Quantities of Corn, for the Uſe of themſelves, and their Families, in the ſame Manner, as they ſaw done in the Royal Granaries, by the Direction of *Joſeph*, there is no Way to account for their being reduced to ſuch Want, in ſo ſhort a Time, but by aſcribing it to their exceſſive Avarice, and Thirſt of Gain; which fondly induced them to part with that precious Commodity, from the deluſive Hope, that the Famine would either be leſt ſevere, or of ſhorter Duration, then *Joſeph* had foretold. And what was the Conſequence of this their Avarice and Folly? What ought to be the Conſequence of the Folly and Avarice of all thoſe, who, looking no farther then the preſent Day, bring themſelves and their Families to Ruin, for the Lucre of a little unrighteous Gain down in Hand. They were forced to part not only with that Gain, but with all their Eſtates, both Land, and Money beſides, and that not ſufficing, they were obliged alſo to ſell themſelves. Let thoſe *Wretches*, who ſell their *Votes* for a dirty Bribe, think of this and tremble: They may not happen to meet with ſuch an upright and generous Prime Miniſter as *Joſeph*, nor ſuch a merciful and gracious Prince as *Pharaoh*, who will be content, with the fifth Part of the Produce of their Lands, when he has a Right both to the Whole, and to their Perſons alſo: What would ſome modern Princes and Prime Miniſters, who call themſelves *Chriſtians*, have done, had they been in *Joſeph* and *Pharaoh*'s ſtead! The *Egyptians* would have been well off, if their Skins had been left them.

CHAP. XLII.

Jacob *hearing there was Corn in* Egypt, *reproves his Sons for their Diſobedience, Helpleſſneſs, and Want of Thought, and ſends Ten of them thither to buy Corn: They appear before* Joſeph, *and bow down to the Ground before him, not recollecting him, tho' he knows them; he treats them roughly; he calls his Dreams to Remembrance, and charges them with being Spies; they vindicate themſelves, by declaring they were all one Man's Sons, and had a younger Brother at home;* Joſeph *impriſons them at firſt, but afterwards releaſes all but* Simeon, *on Condition of their bringing their younger Brother with them, when they come again; their Conſciences are awakened by their preſent Sufferings, and they charge each other with their Sin againſt* Joſeph; Joſeph *hearing them, retires, and weeps, but returns, and binds* Simeon *before their Faces; he orders their Sacks to be filled with Corn, and their Money alſo to be put therein; one of them upon the Road, finds his Money in his Sack, which terrifies them the more; they tell* Jacob *what had* *happened to them; he can't be brought to conſent to let* Benjamin *go with them;* Reuben *offers his two Sons as Pledges for his ſafe Return; but all will not prevail upon the good old Man.*

Q. WHAT *are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. "Now when *Jacob*, ſaw that there was Corn "in *Egypt*, *Jacob* ſaid unto his Sons, Why do ye "look one upon another? And he ſaid, Behold, I "have heard that there is Corn in *Egypt*; Get you "down thither, and buy for us from thence; that "we may live, and not die."

Q. *What may one obſerve from hence?*

A. That *Jacob's* Sons, on this Occaſion, ſeems to have been like the Generality of Mankind, when under any great Diſtreſs; for inſtead of calling their Reaſon to their Aid, and exerting their Wits more than ordinary, to find out ſome Remedy, they ſeem to have abandoned themſelves entirely to Deſpair; and in all Probability would have ſunk under the Calamity, had not their good old Father propoſed the only Method that could have contributed to their Relief.

Q. *Did* Jacob's *Sons follow their Father's Advice?*

A. Yes; "And *Joſeph's* ten Brethren went down "to buy Corn in *Egypt*: But *Benjamin*, *Joſeph's* "Brother, *Jacob*, ſent not with his Brethren: For "he ſaid, Leſt, peradventure, Miſchief befal him. "And the Sons of *Iſrael* came to buy Corn, amongſt "thoſe that came: For the Famine was in the "Land of *Canaan*. And *Joſeph* was the Governor "over the Land, and he it was that ſold to all the "People of the Land: And *Joſeph's* Brethren came, "and bowed down themſelves before him, with their "Faces to the Earth."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. How vain it is for Man, to pretend to defeat and fruſtrate, what the *Almighty God* of Heaven and Earth has decreed! What exaſperated *Joſeph's* Brethren principally againſt him, was his two Dreams, which promiſed him Dominion over them: In order to prevent this, they firſt contrive to murder him, but *God* prevents that, *firſt*, by the Means of *Reuben*, who adviſes the throwing him into a Pit, and, *next*, by the Means of *Judah*, who adviſes the ſelling him to the *Iſhmaelites*, as thinking that would be as effectual a Means to prevent the Accompliſhment of his Dreams, as Death itſelf; and yet that is the very Thing that contributes to the Accompliſhment thereof. The *Iſhmaelites*, or *Midianites*, or *Medanites*, call them which you pleaſe, ſell him to *Potiphar*, with whom he finds Favour, and begins to live happily, but that is not to be the Way to his Advancement; and all the Time he lived comfortably in his Service, was, in a Manner, ſo much Time loſt; for it was by his Sufferings, he was to come to the Honour to which he afterwards attained. Well, his luſtful and falacious Miſtreſs is fired with his Beauty, falls deſperately in Love with him, and leaves no Means untried to prevail on him to grant her vicious Deſires; but in vain. Finding herſelf ſcorned and refuſed, her burning Luſt, for it deſerves not the Name of Love, turns to an implacable Hatred, and ſhe contrives his Death, by falſly accuſing him of an Attempt to raviſh her. This was Death by the Law, had he not been a Slave; but as he was ſo, and entirely at the Diſpoſal and Mercy of his incenſed Lord, who would not give him over for loſt! And yet this is the Means, to which *God* has Recourſe, to advance him to the ſecond Dignity in *Egypt*. He reſtrains, therefore, his incenſed Maſter from putting him to Death, and makes him content himſelf with caſting him into a Dungeon, where, at firſt, he is loaded with Irons; in a little Time, however, he makes him find Favour with the Gaoler, who intruſts all the other Priſoners to his Care; an under Gaoler, however, who was himſelf a Priſoner, at the ſame Time, and without any Hopes of obtaining his Liberty, one would think, was in no great Likelihood of ever being a Vice-Roy; but the Ways of *God* are unſearchable, and vaſtly different from the Ways of Men. Some Time after *Joſeph's* being intruſted with the Care of the Priſoners, two conſiderable Officers in *Pharaoh's* Houſhold the chief *Cup-bearer*, and head *Baker* fall into Diſgrace, and are ſent to the ſame Priſon; and conſigned to *Joſeph's* Care; in a little while afterwards, each of them dreams a Dream, which makes a deep Impreſſion upon his Mind, and neither of them being able to apply to their Diviners and Soothſayers, to get it interpreted, they were both very melancholy. *Joſeph* who was of a human and compaſſionate Temper, perceives it, and kindly enquires into the Reaſon thereof; which being told, he endeavours firſt to cure them of their Superſtition, and repoſing any Confidence in Diviners, by informing them that all Interpretations belong to *God*; and afterwards gives to each of them an exact Interpretation of his Dream: And as the *Cup-bearer's* prov'd favourable, he acquaints him with his Innocence, and begs him to be mindful of him, and mention his Caſe to *Pharaoh*, when he is reſtored to Favour. In three Days, *Joſeph's* Interpretation is punctually verified; but nevertheleſs the *Cup-bearer*, true Courtier like, forgets his Benefactor, and ſuffers him to lie two Years longer in the Dungeon; *God* ſo ordaining it, both for the greater Trial of *Joſeph's* Patience, and Reſignation to his Will; and that his Deliverance and Advancement might appear to be all his own doing, as alſo, that none elſe might pretend to ſhare in the Honour thereof. At the Expiration of two Years, *God's* appointed Time being come, *Pharaoh* dreams two remarkable Dreams, which none of his Magicians, or his Wiſe-men could interpret; and being, therefore, very much perplexed in Mind, the *Cup-bearer* ſeeing it was his Intereſt, in order to make his Court to his Prince, can vouchſafe, at laſt, to call poor *Joſeph* to Remembrance, and to inform *Pharaoh* of his having punctually interpreted his and the chief *Baker's* Dream. No ſooner had he thus ſaid, but *Joſeph* is ſent for in all Haſte, and hardly allowed him Time to ſhave and change his Cloaths, hurried before *Pharaoh*; who having told his Dream, *Joſeph*, after aſcribing all the Honour to *God*, plainly and exactly interprets it; and afterwards adviſes him how to provide and arm himſelf againſt the Calamity therein threatned. The King greatly pleaſed at the plain and eaſy Explanation of his Dream, of the Truth of which he was convinced within himſelf, as were alſo all the Court, and at the ſame Time, amazed and aſtoniſhed at ſuch profound Wiſdom and Diſcretion, in ſo young a Man, immediately pitches upon *Joſeph* himſelf, to be the Perſon, who ſhould put his own Advice in Execution; and accordingly forthwith creates him Vice-Roy, or Prime Miniſter, under him; thus, within the Compaſs of a few Hours, by the over-ruling Power of the divine Providence, is *Joſeph* drawn out of Priſon, and made Superintendant or Vice-Roy over the whole Kingdom of *Egypt*; and his unnatural Brothers, by the very Means, whereby they thought to prevent the Completion of his Dreams, contribute themſelves to his Advancement, and the Accompliſhment thereof; being forced now to apply to him for Corn for their Subſiſtence; and glad by the moſt humble Submiſſion, to remove his ſeeming Jealouſy, and prevail on him to grant their Deſire: A full, exact, literal, and amazing Accompliſhment of his firſt Dream, above twenty Years after his dreaming it!

Q. *How did* Joſeph *behave himſelf at firſt to his Brethren?*

A. "And *Joſeph* ſaw his Brethren, and he knew them, "but made himſelf ſtrange unto them, and ſpake "roughly unto them, and he ſaid unto them, whence "come ye? And they ſaid, From the Land of *Canaan*, to buy Food."

Q. *What is ſuppoſed to be* Joſeph's *Reaſon for uſing his Brethren ſo roughly?*

A. Partly, that he might thereby know the true State of his old Father, and his Family; and partly, that he might take an innocent Revenge of them for all his former Sufferings, and thereby bring their heinous Sins, in thirſting after their Brother's Blood, and ſelling him into Slavery, to their Remembrance, and thereby bring them to a true Repentance!

Q. *What are we told next of this Meeting of* Joſeph *with his Brothers?*

A. "And *Joſeph* knew his Brethren, but they "knew not him. And *Joſeph* remembered the "Dreams which he dreamed of them, and ſaid unto "them, Ye are Spies; to ſee the Nakedneſs of the "Land, you are come."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That this Accuſation of *Joſeph's* was a ſevere and terrifying Charge to his Brothers, ſince the Puniſhment thereof, had it been true, was no leſs than Death; beſides, though it is not to be ſuppoſed, that *Joſeph* himſelf ſold all the Corn that was ſold, but that it was done by his Order, and a Man may very properly be ſaid to do whatever is done by his Authority, it is not at all improbable, that *Joſeph* himſelf contracted with all *Foreigners*, who came to buy Corn; both to prevent their prying into the State of the Kingdom, and to enquire into the State of their reſpective Countries, that he might improve the Knowledge he gained thereby, to his Maſter's Advantage; neither is it improbable, that the Enemies of *Egypt*, might take Advantage of the Years of Famine, provided their own Country did not labour under the ſame Calamity, to ſend Spies into the Kingdom, to enquire into the State thereof; with Deſign to invade it, in caſe they found it unprovided for its Defence; this Charge, therefore, of their being Spies, had not *Joſeph* known them, was far from being unreaſonable; and as his Deſign was, not to make himſelf known immediately, and to terrify them, was the beſt that could have been imagined.

Q. *What Anſwer made his Brothers to this heavy Charge?*

A. "And they ſaid unto him, Nay, my Lord, "but to buy Food are thy Servants come. We are "true Men, thy Servants are no Spies.

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon.*

A. Their Anſwer was very much to the Purpoſe, and conſequently, they thought might in a great Meaſure, prove ſatisfactory; ſince it was not likely, either, that any Father would venture ſo many of his Sons upon ſo hazardous an Employment; or that an Enterprize of that Nature, would have been committed to the Care of one Family only.

Q. *And what ſaid* Joſeph *to this their Plea in their Defence?*

A. "And he ſaid unto them; Nay, but to ſee "the Nakedneſs of the Land you are come."

Q. *What may we ſuppoſe to be the Reaſon of his repeating this Charge, which he muſt himſelf know to be groundleſs?*

A. He had not as yet received a ſatisfactory Anſwer, about the State of his Father, and the Family; beſides, he was not willing to put them ſo ſoon out of their Pain; being deſirous of bringing them to a Sight of their Sin, and thereby to Repentance.

Q. *And what ſaid his Brothers, upon his perſiſting in charging them with being Spies?*

A. And they ſaid, Thy Servants are twelve Bre- "thren, the Sons of one Man in the Land of *Canaan*; "and behold the youngeſt is this Day with our Fa- "ther, and one is not."

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That hereby, *Joſeph* gained partly what he wanted, ſince he found his Father was yet alive, as alſo his Brother *Benjamin*; and likewiſe, that they concluded him dead, having never heard from him in twenty Years, which made it not at all ſtrange that they did not know him.

Q. *What ſaid* Joſeph *to them, after having gained this Knowledge?*

A. "And *Joſeph* ſaid unto them, That is that I "ſpake unto you, ſaying, Ye are Spies. Hereby "ye ſhall be proved; By the Life of *Pharaoh* ye "ſhall not go forth hence, except your youngeſt "Brother come hither. Send one of you, and let "him fetch your Brother, aud ye ſhall be kept in "Priſon, that your Words may be proved, whether "there be any Truth in you, or elſe by the Life of "*Pharaoh*, ſurely ye are Spies."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. *Joſeph* takes hold of their own Words, to juſtify his Accuſation; the Meaning of what he ſays being, that it was not probable one Man ſhould have ſo many Sons, all grown up, and living together in one Family, and that he ſhould expoſe them all to the Peril of ſuch a Journey; he, therefore, propoſes their ſending one of them to fetch their younger Brother, in order to juſtify themſelves from this Charge; which he did, partly to gratify his own Deſire of ſeeing *Benjamin*, and partly, to make the deeper Impreſſion upon them, and bring them to a true Senſe of their Wickedneſs.

Q. *But can* Joſeph *be excuſed from Guilt here himſelf, in ſwearing by* Pharaoh's *Life?*

A. Many have attempted, and amongſt the reſt Biſhop *Saunderſon*, but with little or no Succeſs, to defend *Joſeph*, as not guilty of ſwearing herein, and Mr. *Howel* ſays, by Way of Excuſe for him, that it looks more like a vehement Obteſtation than an Oath; but this ſeems to be a Diſtinction without a Difference; for by the ſame Rule, that common, but dreadful Aſſeveration, *as I hope to be ſaved*, which anſwers exactly to that terrible Imprecation, *may I be damned, if it is not true*, may be called only a vehement Obteſtation; in Effect, this Excuſe does not much mend the Matter, and we ſee no great Harm, if we give up *Joſeph* upon this Head, and allow that by living amongſt the *Egyptians*, he had learned ſome of their Corruptions; beſides, that ſwearing might not be then expreſly forbidden, there being no written Law; but why ſhould they endeavour ſo much to defend him from being guilty of Swearing, when it is evident they cannot defend him from being guilty of Lying, in ſaying, *Ye are Spies*, when he knew they were not ſo; in effect, they ſeem to have given themſelves Abundance of Trouble to little Purpoſe. The Scripture does not any where repreſent the *Patriarchs*, as Perſons of a Character altogether unblemiſhed; on the contrary, their Faults are publiſhed, in order to demonſtrate, that it was not owing entirely to their Holineſs, but only to the divine Goodneſs, that their Family had the Privilege and Bleſſing, of having the *Meſſiah* deſcend from them. We think, therefore, that *Joſeph*, in making uſe of this Expreſſion, complied with the *Egyptian* Cuſtom, of ſwearing by the Life of their Prince, to confirm the Truth of what they were ſaying.

Q. *What did* Joſeph *unto his Brethren, after having thus ſaid?*

A. “ And he put them altogether in Ward three
“ Days. And *Joſeph* ſaid unto them the third Day,
“ This do and live; for I fear *God*. If ye be true
“ Men, let one of your Brethren be bound in the
“ Houſe of your Priſon: Go ye, carry Corn for the
“ Famine of your Houſes. But bring your youngeſt
“ Brother unto me; ſo ſhall your Words be verified,
“ and ye ſhall not die. And they did ſo.” That is, they agreed ſo to do.

Q. *What ſaid* Joſeph's *Brothers, upon hearing this his ſecond Propoſal?*

A. “ And they ſaid one to another; we are verily
“ guilty concerning our Brother, in that we ſaw the
“ Anguiſh of his Soul, when he beſought us; and
“ we would not hear: Therefore is this Diſtreſs come
“ upon us, and *Reuben* anſwered them, ſaying,
“ Spake I not unto you, ſaying, Do not ſin againſt
“ the Child; and ye would not hear? Therefore,
“ behold, alſo, his Blood is required.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. How natural it is for People in Affliction to think upon their Sins, and reflect upon themſelves for having committed them: it is poſſible they had never before, in the whole Courſe of twenty Years, felt the leaſt Remorſe, for their barbarous and inhuman Uſage to their innocent Brother; but now the ſeeming Incredulity, and ſtern Behaviour of the *Egyptian* Governor, in being deaf to all their Excuſes, brings to their Remembrance their own inexorable and obdurate Temper in being deaf to all the Cries and Intreaties made by *Joſeph*, in the Anguiſh of his Soul. It is obſervable alſo, that this Paſſage of *Joſeph*'s beſeeching them ſo earneſtly, in the Anguiſh of his Soul, is not mentioned in *Chap.* xxxvii. wherein we have the Account of their ſelling him; from whence we may learn, that the Silence of the Scripture, is no good Argument, that any Thing was not ſaid or done, unleſs in ſome particular Caſes.

Q. *What are we told concerning this Tranſaction?*

A. “ And they knew not that *Joſeph* underſtood
“ them, for he ſpake unto them by an Interpreter.
“ And he turned himſelf about from them, and wept;
“ and returned to them again, and communed with
“ them, and took from them *Simeon*, and bound
“ him before their Eyes.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon? And why did* Joſeph *pitch upon* Simeon?

A. The great Difference between *Joſeph*, and his unnatural Brothers; he could hardly bear to ſee them in a momentary, and we may almoſt ſay, imaginary Diſtreſs; though intended for their Advantage, in bringing them to Repentance for their Sin, ſo human and compaſſionate was his Temper; they could bear unmoved to ſee him in the bittereſt Anguiſh of his Soul, and to ſell him into Slavery, ſo obdurate and implacable was theirs. As to *Joſeph*'s pitching upon *Simeon* to be bound, it might be, perhaps, both becauſe he was the eldeſt next to *Reuben*, who was not for ſuch inhuman Doings; and becauſe by his cruel and bloody Diſpoſition, in the Caſe of the *Shechemites*, it is reaſonable to believe, that he was one of the moſt forward for the murdering, or ſelling of *Joſeph* into Slavery: And the Reaſon of *Joſeph*'s having him bound before their Eyes, ſeems to have been, that it might make the deeper Impreſſion upon their hard Hearts, and thereby render their Repentance more effectual; as alſo, that it might induce them to make the more Haſte to return, with *Benjamin*, to releaſe him.

Q. *Having thus bound* Simeon, *what did* Joſeph *next?*

A. “ Then *Joſeph* commanded to fill their Sacks
“ with Corn, and to reſtore every Man's Money into
“ his Sack, and to give them Proviſion for the
“ Way: And thus did he unto them.

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. His great Kindneſs to his Brethren, even before he thought fit to diſcover himſelf to them; he was not ſatisfied with letting them barely have the Corn they paid for, but added to it Proviſion for the Way, and returned each Man his Money again: This laſt Circumſtance, however, was far from being pleaſing to them.

Q. *Having thus got their Corn, what did* Jacob's *Sons? And what befell them by the Way?*

A. “ And they laded their Aſſes with the Corn,
“ and departed thence. And as one of them opened
“ his Sack, to give his Aſs Provender in the Inn, he
“ eſpied his Money: For, behold, it was in his
“ Sack's Mouth. And he ſaid unto his Brethren,
“ my Money is reſtored; and, lo, it is even in my
“ Sack: And their Heart failed them, and they
“ were afraid, ſaying one to another, What is this
“ that *God* hath done unto us?”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That the leaſt Thing in the World terrifies a guilty Conſcience, when once it is throughly awakened; having their Sin againſt their Brother perpetually before their Eyes, and knowing how well they deſerved a ſevere Chaſtiſement for it, they are afraid this is ſome Artifice to bring them into freſh Trouble; and dreading yet a heavier Puniſhment than what they had before undergone, they cried out to one another, *What is this that* God *hath done unto us?* That is, what other Judgment will he bring upon us, to avenge the Blood of our murdered Brother? For ſo they thought him. However, they met with nothing, except theſe gloomy Apprehenſions to trouble them by the Way.

Q. *What next are we told concerning them?*

A. “ And they came to *Jacob* their Father, unto
“ the Land of *Canaan*, and told him all that befel
“ unto them, ſaying, The Man, who is the *Lord* of
“ the *Land*, ſpake roughly to us, and took us for
“ Spies of the Country. And we ſaid unto him,
“ we are true Men; we are no Spies. We be
“ twelve Brethren, Sons of our Father: One is not,
“ and the youngeſt is this Day with our Father in
“ the Land of *Canaan*. And the Man, the Lord of
“ the Country ſaid unto us, Hereby ſhall I know
“ that you are true Men; leave one of your Brethren
“ here with me, and take Food for the Famine
“ of your Houſholds, and begone. And bring
“ your youngeſt Brother unto me: Then ſhall I
“ I know that you are no Spies, but that you are
“ true Men: So will I deliver you your Brother,
“ and ye ſhall traffick in the Land. And it came

" to paſs, as they emptied their Sacks, that behold,
" every Man's Bundle of Money was in his Sack:
" And when both they and their Father ſaw the
" Bundles of Money, they were afraid."

Q. *And what ſaid* Jacob *hereupon?*

A. " And *Jacob* their Father ſaid unto them, Me
" have ye bereaved of my Children: *Joſeph* is not,
" and *Simeon* is not, and ye will take *Benjamin* away:
" All theſe Things are againſt me."

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That *Jacob*, though an excellent Man, was hardly able to bear up under all theſe afflicting and grievous Diſpenſations of Providence; little did he think with how great a Bleſſing they were ſoon to be followed. It is obſervable alſo, that his Prudence, in a great Meaſure forſook him in this Diſtreſs, ſince he gave *Simeon* up for loſt, as being in the Hands of a cruel Enemy; whereas he ought to have conſidered, that had the Governor of *Egypt* been of a cruel Temper, he would never have ſuffered any of them to have returned to him again; that is, provided he had really taken them for Spies.

Q. *And what ſaid* Reuben *to his Father, to perſuade him to let* Benjamin *go?*

A. " And *Reuben* ſpake unto his Father, ſaying,
" Slay my two Sons, if I bring him not to thee: Deli-
" ver him into my Hand, and I will bring him to
" thee again."

Q. *What may we obſerve upon this Propoſal of* Reuben's?

A. That it ſhows how far Misfortunes and Afflictions will blind Men's Reaſon; otherwiſe he could never have made ſo abſurd and raſh a Propoſal: For what Recompence could he imagine it would be, to his poor old Father, for the Loſs of his Son, to butcher two of his Grandſons? It was well meant, however, of *Reuben*, and deſigned only to ſatisfy *Jacob*, that he thought himſelf ſo well aſſured of bringing *Benjamin* back ſafe, that he durſt venture to ſtake the Lives of two of his Sons, as a Pledge for his Safety.

Q. *What Impreſſion made this Speech of* Reuben's *upon his Father?*

A. None at all, as may be well imagined; " And
" he ſaid, My Son ſhall not go down with you: for
" his Brother is dead, and he is left alone; if Miſ-
" chief befal him in the Way in which ye go, then
" ſhall ye bring down my gray Hairs with Sorrow
" to the Grave."

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That a Fondneſs for ſome of his Children, more than others, ſeems to have been a Failing innate in *Jacob*; and *Joſeph* being gone, he ſeems to have transferred the Affection he once had for him to *Benjamin*, as being the only remaining Child of his dearly beloved *Rachel*; accordingly, we ſee, Providence makes this partial Affection for one, preferably to all the reſt become his Puniſhment; for the more tenderly he loved *Benjamin*, the greater muſt be his Grief and Sorrow, at being now forced to part with him.

CHAP XLIII.

The Famine continuing, and their Proviſions being ſpent, Jacob *commands his Sons to go again to* Egypt, *to buy Corn;* Judah *expoſtulates with him upon that Head, and refuſes to go, unleſs he will alſo ſend* Benjamin; *he undertakes for his ſafe Return, on Pain of forfeiting his Father's Favour for ever;* Jacob *is at laſt prevailed upon, but adviſes them to take a Preſent, ſends double Money with them, and prays for a Bleſſing upon them. They go to* Egypt, *and make their Appearance before* Joſeph. *He ſeeing* Benjamin *with them, makes them dine with him; they are afraid upon being brought into his Houſe, that they ſhall be made Slaves; they tell the Steward about their finding the Money, and offer it him, making an Apology for themſelves; he comforts them, diſpels their Fears, and brings* Simeon *to them. They offer their Preſent to* Joſeph; *he enquires of his Father's Health, ſpeaks kindly to them, and eſpecially to* Benjamin, *with the Sight of whom he is ſo moved, that he is forced to retire to weep. He cauſes them all to be placed according to their Age, at which they wonder, and feaſts them all bountifully, but eſpecially* Benjamin; *they drink and are merry.*

Q. *OF what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. " And the Famine was ſore in the Land.
" And it came to paſs, when they had eaten up
" the Corn, which they had brought out of *Egypt*,
" their Father ſaid unto them, Go again, buy us a
" little Food."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That though *Jacob* was not willing to part with his Son *Benjamin*, he was deſirous of having Corn to ſubſiſt himſelf and his Family, notwithſtanding he had been told, there was no other Way to have it, but by letting his Darling go: This is juſt the Caſe with the Generality of Mankind; they are deſirous of having *God's* Bleſſing upon their Endeavours, but they are unwilling to uſe the Means by which that Bleſſing is to be obtained; as *Jacob* here had a darling Son, with whom he was loth to part, many others have their darling Sins, with which they are as loth to part; yet *Jacob* muſt have no Corn, nor others no Bleſſing, till the one parts with his favourite Son, and the others with their favourite Sins.

Q. *What ſaid* Jacob's *Sons to him, upon his ordering them to go again to* Egypt *for Corn?*

A. " And *Judah* ſpake unto him, ſaying, The
" Man did ſolemnly proteſt unto us, ſaying, Ye ſhall
" not ſee my Face, except your Brother be with you.
" If thou wilt ſend our Brother with us, we will go
" down, and buy thee Food. But if thou wilt not
" ſend him, we will not go down: For the Man
" ſaid unto us, Ye ſhall not ſee my Face except
" your Brother be with you."

Q. *What Impreſſion made this Remonſtrance upon* Jacob?

A. It made a little Impreſſion upon him, but when it came to the Teſt, not being able to bear the Thoughts of parting with *Benjamin*, which awakened his Sorrows afreſh, he breaks out into this paſſionate Exclamation; " And *Iſrael* ſaid, Wherefore dealt ye ſo ill
" with me, as to tell the Man whether ye had yet a
" Brother?"

Q. *What anſwered his Sons to this?*

A. " And they ſaid, the Man asked us ſtraitly of our
" State, and of our kindred, ſaying, Is your Father
" yet alive? Have ye another Brother? And we told
" him according to the Tenor of theſe Words: Could
" we certainly know that he would ſay, Bring your
" Brother down? And *Judah* ſaid unto *Iſrael* his Fa-
" ther, ſend the Lad with me, and we will ariſe and
" go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and
" thou, and alſo our little ones. I will be ſurety for
him,

“ him; of my Hand ſhalt thou require him: If I “ bring him not unto thee, and ſet him before thee, “ then let me bear the Blame for ever. For except “ we had lingred, ſurely now we had returned this “ ſecond Time.”

Q. *What could* Jacob *object to ſo reaſonable an Anſwer, and Propoſal?*

A. He had nothing farther to ſay, wherefore, at laſt, with great Difficulty and Regret, he forced himſelf to conſent; “ And their Father *Iſrael* ſaid unto “ them, If it muſt be ſo now, do this; take of the “ beſt Fruits of the Land in your Veſſels, and carry “ down the Man a Preſent, a little Balm, and a “ little Honey, Spices and Myrrh, Nut and Almonds. And take double Money in your Hand: “ And the Money that was brought again in the “ Mouth of your Sacks, carry it again in your Hand; “ peradventure it was an Overſight. Take alſo your “ Brother, and ariſe, go again unto the Man. And “ *God Almighty* give you Mercy before the Man, that “ he may ſend away your other Brother, and *Benjamin*.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. Three Things are obſervable herein; *Firſt*, the Prudence of *Jacob*, in getting the better of his Tenderneſs for *Benjamin*, when he found how prejudicial it was like to prove, to the reſt of his Sons, and their Families; and in thinking of a Preſent for the Governor of *Egypt* of the choiceſt Things in the Land wherein he dwelt; the Reaſon probably for his ſending this Preſent (and a very good Reaſon it was) might be to prove that his Sons really came from *Canaan*, by the Particulars of which it was compoſed; for the Production of ſome of which, that Land was particularly famous. *Secondly*, his Juſtice is obſervable, in commanding his Sons to carry back the Money found in their Sacks, as well as Money for the Corn they were now to buy. And *thirdly*, His Piety and Reſignation to the Divine Will is remarkably evident, in his Prayer for their Safety, and patiently ſubmitting it to *God* to determine as he pleaſed of the Fate of his Children.

Q. *Having thus obtained* Jacob's *Conſent for* Benjamin's *going, what did* Joſeph's *Brethren?*

A. “ And the Men took that Preſent, and they “ took double Money in their Hand, and *Benjamin*, “ and roſe up, and went down to *Egypt*, and ſtood before *Joſeph*. And when *Joſeph* ſaw *Benjamin* with “ them, he ſaid to the Ruler of his Houſe, Bring “ theſe Men Home, and ſlay, and make ready: “ For theſe Men ſhall dine with me at Noon. And “ the Man did as *Joſeph* bade him: And the Man “ brought the Men into *Joſeph*'s Houſe. And the “ Men were afraid, becauſe they were brought into “ *Joſeph*'s Houſe, and they ſaid, becauſe of the Money “ that was returned in our Sacks at the firſt Time, “ are we brought in; that he may ſeek Occaſion againſt “ us, and fall upon us, and take us for Bond-men, “ and our Aſſes.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That Fear is the inſeparable Companion of a guilty Conſcience; for, notwithſtanding they had not been guilty of any Offence againſt *Joſeph*, whom they did not know, in the Capacity he then was, as Governor of *Egypt*; the Dread of the Puniſhment they knew they well deſerved, for their Cruelty to their innocent Brother, made them perpetually apprehenſive of ſome Judgment's befalling them for it; and conſequently, kept them in a continual Terror.

Q. *What did they in order to prevent what they ſo much dreaded?*

A. Their Prudence did not altogether forſake them, in this Exigency, for we are told that “ They “ they drew near to the Steward of *Joſeph*'s Houſe, “ and they communed with him at the Door of “ the Houſe. And ſaid, O Sir, we came indeed “ down at the firſt Time to buy Food. And it came “ to paſs, when we came to the Inn, that we opened our Sacks, and behold, every Man's Money “ was in the Mouth of his Sack, our Money in full “ Weight: And we have brought it again in our “ Hand. And other Money have we brought down “ in our Hands to buy Food: We cannot tell who “ put our Money in our Sacks.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. Tha twhat they alledged was very well judged, to clear them from the Suſpicion, of having fraudulently kept back their Money, ſuppoſing the Steward in the Hurry of Buſineſs, had forgot to take it, or by Miſtake had returned it into their Sacks; which ſhews they ſtill retained ſome Preſence of Mind, notwithſtanding the Fears under which they laboured.

Q. *But did the Steward keep them long in this Suſpence?*

A. No, he ſoon diſpell'd their Fears very kindly; “ And he ſaid, Peace be to you, fear not: Your *God*, “ and the *God* of your Father; hath given you Treaſure in your Sacks: I had your Money. And he “ brought *Simeon* out unto them.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That the Steward, by living with *Joſeph*, ſeems to have been inſtructed by his Maſter in the true Religion, and very probably the reſt of his Servants might be ſo likewiſe; ſince it is not to be thought, that a Man of ſuch diſtinguiſhed Piety as *Joſeph*, would ſpare any Pains to convert his Houſhold, and keep Idolatry out of his Family. But perhaps, the Steward's ſaying, he had their Money, and that *God* had given them Treaſure in their Sacks, may ſeem inconſiſtent with the Belief of his being a Worſhipper of the true *God*, ſince he was therein guilty of a double Falſhood: To which we Anſwer, that he was not guilty of any Falſhood, ſince he actually had their Money, though he returned it again, by his Maſter's Order; and it was undoubtedly a great Providence, their meeting with *Joſeph* there, and in ſuch an exalted Station, whom they thought dead; Wherefore as the Money was replaced there by his Command, the Steward might very well, and very truly ſay, that *God* had given them Treaſure in their Sacks.

Q. *Having thus removed their Fears, and comforted them, what next did the Steward?*

A. “ And the Man brought the Men into *Joſeph*'s “ Houſe, and gave them Water, and they waſhed “ their Feet, and he gave their Aſſes Provender. “ And they made ready the Preſent, againſt *Joſeph* “ came at Noon: For they heard that they ſhould “ eat Bread there. And when *Joſeph* came Home, “ they brought him the Preſent which was in their “ Hand into the Houſe, and bowed themſelves to him “ to the Earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and ſaid, Is your Father well, the old Man “ of whom ye ſpake. Is he yet alive? And they “ anſwered, Thy Servant, our Father, is in good “ Health, he is yet alive: And they bowed down “ their Heads, and made Obeiſance.”

Q. *What paſſed after this, between* Joſeph *and his Brothers?*

A. “ And he lift up his Eyes, and ſaw his Brother *Benjamin*, his Mother's Son, and ſaid, Is this “ your younger Brother, of whom ye ſpake unto “ me? And he ſaid, *God* be gracious unto thee my

“ Son. And *Joſeph* made Haſte; for his Bowels did “ yern upon his Brother: And he ſought where to “ weep, and he entred into his Chamber, and wept “ there. And he waſhed his Face, and went out, “ and refrained himſelf, and ſaid, ſet on Bread. “ And they ſet on for him by himſelf, and for them “ by themſelves, and for the *Egyptians*, which did “ eat with him by themſelves: Becauſe the *Egyptians* “ might not eat Bread with the *Hebrews*; for that is “ an Abomination unto the *Egyptians*.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. The great Tenderneſs of Heart, and natural Affection of *Joſeph*, which worked ſo ſtrongly in him, that he could not ſmother, or ſuppreſs it, though he was before prepared for this Interview; an evident Sign of his being of a moſt amiable, and human Diſpoſition; would one believe that he could have ſprung from the ſame Father, as thoſe Murderers *Simeon* and *Levi*? The Scripture leaves us entirely in the Dark, as to the Reaſon why the *Egyptians* might not eat Bread with the *Hebrews*; ſome imagine it was owing to their Pride, which made them diſdain to have any Society with them; but it is more likely that it was owing to their Superſtition and Idolatry, which made them think it unlawful; partly becauſe they worſhipped the Creatures which the *Hebrews* and others did commonly eat; and partly becauſe of ſome particular Rites and Cuſtoms which they obſerved in the dreſſing and in the ordering of their Diet: And this latter ſeems to be the more likely, becauſe *Herodotus* affirms, that the *Egyptians* would not uſe the Pots or Knives of the *Grecians*, about their Food.

Q. *What next are we told concerning this Tranſaction?*

A. “ And they ſat before him, the Firſt-born ac- “ cording to his Birth-right, and the youngeſt ac- “ cording to his Youth: And the Men marvelled at “ one another.”

Q. *At what are they ſuppoſed to have wondered?*

A. The Scripture leaves us in the Dark as to what they marvelled at, wherefore Commentators are divided in their Opinions upon this Head; ſome imagine they wondered at the Manner and Order of their Entertainment; others, that it was at the great Honour done them by *Joſeph*; and others again, that it was at their being placed ſo regularly according to their Age and Seniority; which laſt Opinion we prefer, as their marvelling is mentioned immediately after the mentioning of that Circumſtance, though, poſſibly, it might all theſe Particulars jointly, which might excite their Wonder.

Q. *Being thus ſeated all of them, how were they entertained by* Joſeph?

A. “ And he took and ſent Meſſes unto them, from “ before him: But *Benjamin's* Meſs was five Times “ ſo much as any of theirs. And they drank, and “ were merry with him.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. It was the ancient Cuſtom in *Egypt*, and divers other Countries, to ſet the choiceſt Diſhes before the Maſter of the Houſe, which he uſed to diſtribute himſelf amongſt the ſeveral Gueſts, in different Portions, according either to his Reſpect and Affection for them, or according to their ſeveral Qualities. It has been generally believed, that it was *Joſeph*'s great Affection to his Brother *Benjamin*, (who was nearer related to him, as having both the ſame Mother, and as well as the ſame Father, and had never given him any Cauſe of Diſcontent) preferably to his other Brothers, who were not ſo nearly related to him, which induced *Joſeph* to make ſuch a Diſtinction between his Meſs and theirs; but Mr. *Poole*, has an odd Suppoſition upon this Head, and imagines it was partly to obſerve, whether this Preference would raiſe that Envy in them towards him, which was the principal Occaſion of their Malice againſt himſelf, that, in that Caſe, he might provide for his Safety. But we cannot help thinking, had *Joſeph* had any Suſpicions of that Nature, that it would have been much the ſafeſt Way, not to have given any Cauſe for ſuch Envy; beſides that it was not at all likely, had they envy'd *Benjamin*, that they would have ſhown their Envy before him: We cannot, therefore, ſee the leaſt Foundation for Mr. *Poole*'s Conjecture.

CHAP. XLIV.

Joſeph *commands his Steward to fill their Sacks, put in their Money as before, and convey his ſilver drinking Cup into the Sack of the Youngeſt; He does ſo, and ſends them away;* Joſeph *has them purſued, and charged with Theft; They are amazed at the Charge; but inſiſt upon their Innocence, and offer to ſubmit to the ſevereſt Puniſhment, in Caſe they are found guilty; The Cup is found in* Benjamin's *Sack; They are confounded, rent their Cloaths, return to* Joſeph *overwhelm'd with Sorrow, and ſubmit themſelves to his Mercy;* Joſeph *bids them depart in Peace, and claims only* Benjamin *as his Slave;* Judah, *pleads earneſtly, in a long and pathetick Harangue, in* Benjamin's *Behalf; repeating the whole Caſe between them and their Father, and concluding his Speech with conjuring him to let him ſtay, as a Slave in his ſtead.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And he commanded the Steward of his “ Houſe, ſaying, Fill the Men's Sacks with Food, “ as much as they can carry, and put every Man's “ Money in his Sack's Mouth. And put my Cup, “ the ſilver Cup, in the Sack's Mouth of the Young- “ eſt, and his Corn-money: And he did according “ to the Word that *Joſeph* had ſpoken. As ſoon as the “ Morning was Light, the Men were ſent a-way, “ they and their Aſſes. And when they were gone “ out of the City, and not yet far off, *Joſeph* ſaid “ unto his Steward, Up, follow after the Men, and, “ when thou doſt overtake them, ſay unto them, “ Wherefore have ye rewarded Evil for Good? Is “ not this it in which my Lord drinketh? And where- “ by indeed he divineth? Ye have done Evil in ſo “ doing.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this? Did ſo good a Man as* Joſeph *uſe Divination?*

A. There are not many Paſſages in the *Old-Teſtament*, more obſcure in their ſelves, or concerning the true Meaning of which Commentators have been more divided, than concerning this, and *verſe*. 15. Where *Joſeph* ſays, *Wot ye not, that ſuch a Man as I can certainly divine?* What has contributed to the rendering theſe Paſſages ſo obſcure is this; Amongſt the ſeveral Kinds of Divination, in Uſe amongſt the *Egyptians*, and other *Heathens*, one was, to fill a Cup, Baſon, or Glaſs with Water, and put in them plates of Silver, or precious Stones, on which certain Characters were engraven; whereby, and by ſome Words they uſed, they called upon their Deities, or in other Words, upon the Devil, who, on being thus invoked, would give them an Anſwer, ſometimes true, ſometimes falſe. Wherefore, ſome imagine that though *Joſeph* did not uſe this Courſe, the People might think he did, and the Steward might repreſent him as ſuch a one, for the better covering and carrying on of his Deſign. But this Senſe agrees not with *Verſe* 15. which ſhews, that he ſpeaks of ſomething which they might eaſily know; but his Brothers did not know that *Joſeph* was a Diviner, and much leſs that he divined by that Cup: And as the *Hebrew* Verb *Nachaſh* ſignifies ſometimes to *enquire diligently*, and ſometimes to *enquire* by *Augury*, moſt Tranſlators, from this Kind of Divination, have been miſled to take it here in the laſt Senſe; but the Ground of their Miſtake ariſes not only from this double Signification of the Verb *Nachaſh*, but alſo from that of the Particle *Bo*; which is not to be rendered here *by which*, but *concerning which*, as the Particle *Beth* is oft uſed; and it denotes not the Inſtrument, *whereby*, but the Object *about which* he did divine; or rather, as the Verb ſignifies to *inquire*, as well as to *divine*, about which he would inquire. And this agrees very well either Way, with *Verſe* 15. ſince then the Senſe will run; *Did you think you could deceive my Maſter? Did not you, and and all others konw, that he could divine and diſcover ſecret Things, ſince from thence he had both his Name and his Preferment?* Or, *Did not you know, that as he highly valued this Cup, he would make diligent Enquiry after it?* Either of theſe Ways the Senſe is very intelligible, and noways inconſiſtent with *Joſeph's* Character, as a pious and good Man, and a Worſhipper of the true *God*.

Q. *Did the Steward punctually obey his* Lord's *Command?*

A. Yes; “ And he overtook them, and he ſpake “ unto him theſe ſame Words.”

Q. *And what Anſwer did they make to ſo heinous and capital a Charge?*

A. “ And they ſaid unto him, Wherefore ſaith “ my Lord theſe Words? *God* forbid that thy Ser-“ vants ſhould do according to this Thing. Behold, “ the Money which we found in our Sacks Mouths, “ we brought again unto thee out of the Land of “ *Canaan*: How then ſhould we ſteal out of thy “ Lord's Houſe Silver or Gold? With whomſoever “ of thy Servants it be found, both let him die, and “ we alſo will be my Lord's Bondmen.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That the Defence they made for themſelves, to vindicate their Innocence as to the Fact, was very plauſible, and well judged; ſince it was not at all probable, that they who had reſtored what was in their own Power to keep, and to conceal without any apparent Danger, ſhould ſteal that which could hardly fail of being diſcovered, with ſo much Shame and Hazard to themſelves. Upon a Conſciouſneſs, therefore, of their Innocence in this Matter, they raſhly made this over-daring Offer; which ſubjected them all to worſe Penalties, than could have been juſtly inflicted upon them, even if one of them had been actually guilty.

Q. *What ſaid the Steward to this Propoſal?*

A. “ And he ſaid, now alſo let it be according to “ your Words: He with whom it is found ſhall be “ my Servant; and ye ſhall be blameleſs.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That the Steward makes a much more equitable Propoſal; well knowing that when the Cup came to be found in *Benjamin's* Sack, they would be ſufficiently confounded and dejected.

Q. *This being agreed on, what did* Joſeph's *Brethren next?*

A. “ Then they ſpeedily took down every Man his “ Sack to the Ground, and opened every Man his “ Sack. And he ſearched, and began at the eldeſt, “ and left at the youngeſt: And the Cup was found “ in *Benjamin*'s Sack.”

Q. *How did they behave themſelves upon this unexpected and ſhocking Diſcovery?*

A. “ Then they rent their Cloaths, and laded “ every Man his Aſs, and returned to the City.”

Q. *How came they to do this, ſince the Steward agreed to detain only the guilty Perſon?*

A. For two very good Reaſons; *Firſt*, Becauſe they were both aſhamed, and afraid to return Home without *Benjamin*; concerning whom they had received ſo ſevere a Charge, and for whoſe ſafe Return they had made ſuch ſolemn Promiſes, and Imprecations, for Fear they ſhould thereby be the Occaſion of their Father's untimely Death. *Secondly*, They turned back with Intent to endeavour to mollify *Joſeph*; by repreſenting to him the dreadful Anguiſh of their ancient Father, in caſe they did not bring back *Benjamin*, which would certainly coſt him his Life; and the Hardſhip of their own Fate, in being forced to be, in a Manner, acceſſary to his Death; hoping, at the leaſt, to prevail ſo far upon him, if they could do no more, as to induce him to accept one of them, as a Ranſom for their Brother.

Q. *Being come to the City, what did they then?*

A. “ And *Judah* and his Brethren came to *Joſeph's* “ Houſe (for he was yet there) and they fell before “ him on the Ground. And *Joſeph* ſaid unto them, “ What Deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye “ not that ſuch a Man as I can certainly divine? “ And *Judah* ſaid, What ſhall we ſay unto my “ Lord? What ſhall we ſpeak? Or how ſhall we “ clear ourſelves? *God* hath found out the Iniquity “ of thy Servants: Behold, we are my Lord's Ser-“ vants, both we, and he alſo, with whom the Cup “ is found.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. We have already obſerved upon *Verſe* 5. that this Queſtion of *Joſeph*'s means no more, than either, *Did you not know that I had the Gift of diſcovering Secrets*; or, *Did you not know that I would make ſtrict Search after this Thing?* Wherefore, we ſhall only obſerve here, that this Behaviour of *Judah*'s and his Brethren, was certainly the beſt judged that could be to move Compaſſion. Inſtead of offering to ſay any Thing in their Vindication, they humbly throw themſelves at his Feet; acknowledge their Guilt; do not ſo much as beg their Puniſhment to be remitted, or even mitigated, but confeſs themſelves all his Slaves, and at his Diſpoſal, to be dealt with as he pleaſes.

Q. *And what Effect had this their Submiſſion upon* Joſeph?

A. “ And he ſaid, *God* forbid that I ſhould do ſo: “ But the Man in whoſe Hand the Cup is found, he “ ſhall be my Servant; and as for you, get you up “ in Peace unto your Father.

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That *Joſeph* herein, ſuppoſing he had believed *Benjamin* guilty, and they knew nothing to the contrary, acted with great Humanity; and hereby incouraged them, (as it was his Deſign) to make farther Interceſſion to him; ſince had he ſpoke ſternly to them, they were ſo effectually humbled and diſheartned, that they would have ſunk under it; and he muſt, conſequently, have been forced to have diſcovered himſelf immediately, in order to have brought them to themſelves; which he did not yet intend, being willing to try them ſtill farther.

Q. *And what did* Joſeph's *Brothers, upon finding him ſeem a little to relent?*

A. *Judah*, as he was moſt concerned in this Affair; having engaged for his ſafe Return, upon Pain of incurring his Father's Diſpleaſure, and thereby forfeiting his Bleſſing (a Thing greatly valued in thoſe Days, though little eſteemed now) and as being one of the eldeſt; and probably, the readieſt and beſt Spokeſman; thought it then a proper Time to offer, what he had to ſay in order, to obtain Mercy. “Then “*Judah* came near unto him, and ſaid, O my Lord, “let thy Servant, I pray thee, ſpeak a Word in my “Lord's Ears, and let not thine Anger burn againſt “thy Servant: For thou art even as *Pharaoh*!

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That notwithſtanding this Speech of *Judah*'s is delivered in the moſt plain, and ſeemingly artleſs Manner, it is hardly poſſible for the beſt Orator to frame a more perſuaſive or artful Harangue. Here is, *firſt*, an humble *Exordium*, to deprecate *Joſeph*'s Anger, and conciliate his Favour; and an artful (but not fulſome) Piece of Flattery, to cajole his Pride, had that been *Joſeph*'s Blind-Side.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Joſeph?

A. “My Lord asked his Servants, ſaying, Have “ye a Father, or a Brother? And we ſaid unto my “Lord, we have a Father an old Man, and a Child “of his old Age, a little one: And his Brother is “dead, and he alone is left of his Mother, and his “Father loveth him.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. They who find Fault with the Style of the Scripture, as being deſtitute of every Ornament, which ſhould render it agreeable, would do well to conſider this 20th Verſe of *Geneſis* xliv. nothing can be more pathetic and moving than the Gradations obſerved therein, even ſuppoſing them to have been addreſſed to an indifferent Perſon. *We have a Father*; a tender Compellation, and likely to move Compaſſion; *an old Man*; a Circumſtance yet more likely to move Pity; and *a Child of his old Age, a little one*; each of them likewiſe Circumſtances, the one more moving than the other; *and his Brother is dead, and he alone is left of his Mother*; a Circumſtance which endeared the Survivor yet more to his Father; *and his Father loveth him*; a fine and moving Cloſure of the Period! We much queſtion, whether a more beautiful Period can be produced either out of *Demoſthenes*, or *Cicero*.

Q. *What was next urged by* Judah, *to mollify* Joſeph, *and deprecate his Anger?*

A. “And thou ſaidſt unto thy Servants, Bring “him down unto me, that I may ſet my Eyes upon “him. And he ſaid unto my Lord, The Lad can“not leave his Father: For if he ſhould leave his “Father, his Father would die. And thou ſaidſt “unto thy Servants, except your youngeſt Brother “come down with you, you ſhall ſee my Face no “more.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That *Judah*, herein, made *Joſeph* himſelf, in ſome Meaſure, acceſſary to what *Benjamin* had done; ſince had it not been for his poſitive Order, he had not come down; and had he not come down, he could not have been guilty of the Action; an Argument, which ſuppoſing him guilty, muſt have had no ſmall Weight, with any Man of common Humanity.

Q. *What farther urged* Judah *upon this Head?*

A. “And it came to paſs, when we came up un“to thy Servant my Father, we told him the Words “of my Lord. And our Father ſaid, Go again, and “buy us a little Food. And we ſaid, We cannot “go down: If our youngeſt Brother be with us, “then will we go down; for we may not ſee the “Man's Face, except our youngeſt Brother be “with us. And thy Servant, my Father, ſaid un“to us, Ye know that my Wife bare me two Sons. “And the one went out from me; and I ſaid, Sure“ly he is torn in Pieces; and I ſaw him not ſince. And “if ye take this alſo from me, and Miſchief befal “him, ye ſhall bring down my gray Hairs with Sor“row to the Grave. Now, therefore, when I come “to thy Servant, my Father, and the Lad be not “with us; (ſeeing that his Life is bound up in the “Lad's Life) it ſhall come to paſs, when he ſeeth “that the Lad is not with us, that he will die: “And thy Servants ſhall bring down the gray Hairs “of thy Servant, our Father, with Sorrow to “to the Grave. For thy Servant became Surety for “the Lad unto my Father, ſaying, If I bring him “not unto thee, then ſhall I bear the Blame to my “Father for ever.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That this Speech of *Judah*'s was ſo moving, and perſuaſive, that it could hardly have failed affecting an utter Stranger; we may eaſily imagine, therefore, what a powerful Effect it had on one ſo compaſſionate as *Joſeph*.

Q. *But did not* Judah *offer yet ſomething farther, in order to move him?*

A. Yes, and a very affecting one it was; “Now “therefore, I pray thee, let thy Servant abide, in“ſtead of the Lad, a Bondman to my Lord; and let “the Lad go up with his Brethren. For how ſhall “I go up to my Father, and the Lad be not with “me? Leſt peradventure I ſee the Evil that ſhall “come on my Father.”

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That *Judah*, very artfully, kept his moſt moving Argument till the laſt; and indeed the Force of it is ſo great, that it could hardly been withſtood by any one that had the leaſt Compaſſion or Humanity: For what could be more affecting, than to ſee one Brother offer to be himſelf a Slave, in order to ranſom another, and thereby ſave the Life of his aged Father?

CHAP. XLV.

Joſeph *being no longer able to refrain himſelf, commands all the* Egyptians *out, and being left alone with his Brethren, burſts into Tears, and makes himſelf known unto them; and enquires concerning his Father's Welfare. They are troubled at his Preſence, and cannot anſwer him; he bids them not grieve, comforts them, and aſcribes his being ſold into* Egypt *to* God's *gracious Providence; he haſtens them to return to their Father, and bring him with them into* Egypt; *His dutiful and affectionate Meſſage to his Father; His Kindneſs to his Brethren, but eſpecially to* Benjamin; *They take Heart;* Pharaoh *is pleaſed with the News of their Arrival; and commands* Joſeph *to invite both them and his Father down to* Egypt. Joſeph *diſmiſſes them with Gifts and Preſents to his Father, and cautions them not to have any Diſputes by the Way. They return home, and inform their Father of every Thing, who cannot credit them at firſt, but faints away; however,* *ſeeing the Waggons that were ſent for him, he revives, greatly rejoices, and reſolves on going.*

Q. W*HAT are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. "Then *Joſeph* could not refrain himſelf before all them that ſtood by him; and he cried, cauſe every Man to go out from me: And there ſtood no Man with him, while *Joſeph* made himſelf known unto his Brethren.

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That *Joſeph* acted very prudently in ſo doing; both that he might maintain the Honour of his high Poſt, and not make himſelf cheap and contemptible in the Eyes of the *Egyptians*, by his giving a free Vent to his Tears, and by a familiar and affectionate Converſation with his Brethren; and that he might preſerve their Reputation, by concealing their unnatural Crimes from the Knowledge of *Pharaoh*'s Court.

Q. *And what did* Joſeph *when he was left alone with his Brothers?*

A. "And he wept aloud: And the *Egyptians*, and the Houſe of *Pharaoh* heard. And *Joſeph* ſaid unto his Brethren, I am *Joſeph*; Doth my Father yet live? And his Brethren could not anſwer him; for they were troubled at his Preſence."

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon?*

A. *Joſeph*'s great Tenderneſs and natural Affection to his Brethren, which worked ſo ſtrongly in him, that he could not ſuppreſs the Violence of his Tears; but was forced to exalt his Voice ſo loud, as to be over-heard by thoſe who were at ſome Diſtance without; as alſo his dutiful and affectionate Enquiry after his Father's Welfare; and the natural Conſequence of their Sin and Guilt, which immediately ſtruck a Terror into them, and made them apprehend a Puniſhment adequate to their Barbarity, on ſeeing themſelves in the Power of one, whom they had uſed with ſo much Inhumanity and Cruelty.

Q. *And what ſaid* Joſeph *to them, on ſeeing them ſo much confounded?*

A. "And *Joſeph* ſaid unto his Brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near: And he ſaid, I am *Joſeph*, your Brother, whom ye ſold into *Egypt*. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with your ſelves, that ye ſold me thither: For *God* did ſend me before you to preſerve Life."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. His great Goodneſs to his unnatural Brothers, in not only diſpelling their Fears, and encouraging them; but alſo in making an Apology for them himſelf; and thereby, in ſome Meaſure, vindicating them, and ſaving them from the Confuſion of making an expreſs Acknowledgement of their Guilt, by imputing it wholly to the over-ruling Power of Providence.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Joſeph *to his Brethren?*

A. "For theſe two Years the Famine hath been in the Land: And yet there are five Years, in the which there ſhall neither be Earing nor Harveſt. And *God* ſent me before you, to preſerve you a Poſterity in the Earth, and to ſave your Lives by a great Deliverance. So now it was not you that ſent me hither, but *God*: And he hath made me a Father to *Pharaoh*, and Lord of all his Houſe, and a Ruler throughout all the Land of *Egypt*. Haſte you, and go unto my Father, and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith thy Son *Joſeph*, *God* hath made me Lord of all *Egypt*; come down unto me, tarry not: And thou ſhalt dwell in the Land of *Goſhen*, and thou ſhalt be near unto me, thou and thy Children, and thy Childrens Children, and thy Flocks and thy Herds, and all that thou haſt. And there I will nouriſh thee (for yet there are five Years of Famine;) leſt thou and thy Houſhold, and all that thou haſt, come to Poverty."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. *Joſeph*'s great Dutifulneſs, and Mindfulneſs of his aged Father; he deſires to have him under his immediate Care, and that with all Speed, that he may have it in his Power to relieve and provide for him effectually: But he does not ſtop here, his Generoſity and Goodneſs extends yet farther; he bids his unnatural Brothers bring likewiſe all their Families, that he may provide alſo for their Suſtenance; a noble Inſtance of Forgiveneſs of Enemies, and returning Good for Evil.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Joſeph *for the Encouragement of his Brethren?*

A. "And behold, your Eyes ſee, and the Eyes of my Brother *Benjamin*, that it is my Mouth that ſpeaketh unto you. And you ſhall tell my Father of all my Glory in *Egypt*, and of all that you have ſeen; and ye ſhall haſte, and bring down my Father hither. And he fell upon his Brother *Benjamin*'s Neck, and wept; and *Benjamin* wept upon his Neck. Moreover, he kiſſed all his Brethren, and wept upon them: And after that his Brethren talked with him."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. *Joſeph*, that he might entirely remove all his Brethren's Doubts, bids them obſerve that it was himſelf that ſpoke to them; ſince he did not now make uſe of an Interpreter, as he had done hitherto, but addreſſed them himſelf in the *Hebrew* Language: Then to diſpel likewiſe entirely all their Fears, he kindly embraces his Brother *Benjamin*, ſhedding Tears of Joy all the While, and then affectionately kiſſes and embraces them; weeping alſo over them, by which being encouraged, and heartened, they, at laſt pull up a Spirit, and talk freely and familiarly with him.

Q. *What are we told next concerning this Tranſaction?*

A. "And the Fame thereof was heard in *Pharaoh*'s Houſe, ſaying, *Joſeph*'s Brethren are come. And it pleaſed *Pharaoh* well, and his Servants. And *Pharaoh* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, ſay unto thy Brethren, This do ye; laid your Beaſts, and go, get ye unto the Land of *Canaan*, and take your Father, and your Houſholds, and come unto me: And I will give you the Good of the Land of *Egypt*, and ye ſhall eat the Fat of the Land. Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you Waggons out of the Land of *Egypt* for your little ones, and for your Wives, and bring your Father and come. Alſo regard not your Stuff: For the Good of all the Land of *Egypt* is yours."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That it is evident from hence that the Wiſdom and Gentleneſs of *Joſeph*'s Adminiſtration, had procured him both the Affection of *Pharaoh*, and his whole Court; ſo that, in meer Gratitude for the Benefits they enjoyed thereby, they rejoiced at any Thing which they imagined would be agreeable or grateful to him. Accordingly, we find *Pharaoh* and his Court, ſympathiz'd with him, in the Pleaſure he receiv'd from the Arrival of his Brethren; and that Prince to ſhew his Gratitude to him for his good Services, not only expreſly orders him to ſend for his

Father and all the whole Family, but generouſly gives him a Grant of the beſt of all the Land for them. Happy is that Miniſter who has a Sovereign ſo gracious, and ſo ready to reward Merit! But yet more happy that Prince, who has a Miniſter ſo well deſerving of Rewards!

Q. *And what did* Joſeph *upon receiving this Command?*

A. “And the Children of *Iſrael* did ſo: And *Joſeph* gave them Waggons, according to the Commandment of *Pharaoh*, and gave them Proviſion for the Way. To all of them he gave each Man Changes of Raiment: But to *Benjamin* he gave three hundred Pieces of ſilver, and five Changes of Raiment. And, to his Father he ſent after this Manner; ten Aſſes laden with the good Things of *Egypt*; and ten ſhe Aſſes laden with Corn, and Bread, and Meat, for his Father by the Way. So he ſent his Brethren away, and they departed: And he ſaid unto them, ſee that ye fall not out by the Way.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. Joſeph's great Affection and Tenderneſs for his aged Father, in ſending him Plenty of all Sorts of the choiceſt Things in *Egypt*, for his Accommodation by the Way; as alſo his Prudence in cautioning his Brothers, whom he knew to be of a contentious and quarrelſome Temper, not to enter into any Diſputes upon the Road, which might diſappoint and fruſtrate all his Deſigns for their Good. It is probable, he might be apprehenſive they would enter into Debates by the Way, which of them had been moſt to Blame in their Dealings with him; and that each of them vindicating himſelf, and laying the Fault upon the others, their Diſputes might grow warm, by Degrees, and be attended with fatal Conſequences, againſt which, therefore, he puts them upon their Guard.

Q. *What are we next informed of concerning them, after their Departure from* Joſeph?

A. “And they went up out of *Egypt*, and came into the Land of *Canaan*, unto *Jacob* their Father, And told him, ſaying, *Joſeph* is yet alive, and he is Governor over all the Land of *Egypt*. And *Jacob*'s Heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the Words of *Joſeph*, which he had ſaid unto them: And when he ſaw the Waggons which *Joſeph* had ſent to carry him, the Spirit of *Jacob* their Father revived.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That notwithſtanding this News was the moſt deſirable in the World to old *Jacob*, yet the Suddenneſs and Surprize of the Thing, with the Conflict of contrary and violent Paſſions raiſed thereby; Grief at the Remembrance of his former Loſs, exceſſive Joy for *Joſeph*'s Recovery, and Proſperity; Hope that it might be true, and Fear that it might be only a Fiction of theirs, had the ſame Effect upon the good old *Patriarch*; as if it had been the moſt unwelcome Tidings imaginable, and he fainted away, not being able to give any Credit to any Thing ſo ſtrange, and yet ſo deſirable: And what made him the more ſlow to believe them, was, becauſe by this very Story they were convicted of one Lie about *Joſeph*, in ſaying they had found his Coat bloody and torn, to induce their Father to imagine him devoured by ſome wild Beaſt: However, when he ſaw the Waggons ſent by his Son for him, he took Courage, and began to credit it.

Q. *And what ſaid* Jacob *when he came to himſelf?*

A. “And *Iſrael* ſaid, It is enough; *Joſeph* my Son is yet alive: I will go and ſee him before I die.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. Jacob's exceſſive Love to his Son *Joſeph*, (who indeed well deſerved it) which was ſo great, that he deſired no farther Happineſs in this World than to ſee him again; after which he was well contented to die.

Chap. XLVI.

Jacob *ſets out on his Way to* Egypt, *together with his whole Family and Subſtance. He arrives at* Beer-ſheba, *and there offers Sacrifices unto* God. *The* Lord *appears to him by Night in a Viſion, and encourages him to go down into* Egypt, *without Fear, by gracious Promiſes. He goes thither. The Names of* Jacob's *Poſterity which go with him.* Jacob *ſends* Judah *before him to* Joſeph. Joſeph *ſets out to meet his aged Father. Their mutual Joy at this Interview.* Joſeph *gives his Brothers a Precaution what to ſay, when they come to appear before* Pharaoh. *The Reaſon of his ſo doing.*

Q. O*F what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. And *Iſrael* took his Journey with all that he had, and came to *Beer-ſheba*, and offered Sacrifices unto the *God* of his Father *Iſaac*.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. The Reaſon of *Jacob*'s offering Sacrifices here, ſeems to have been, not only to return *God* ſincere Thanks for his former Favours, and eſpecially for his Goodneſs in the Preſervation, and Advancement of his beloved *Joſeph*, but, being now on the Borders of *Canaan*, to implore his Direction as to this important Point, whether he might leave the promiſed Land, and go into the idolatrous and impious Country of *Egypt*; as alſo, to implore his Bleſſing and Protection both upon the Road, and in *Egypt* when he ſhould be ſettled there.

Q. *Did the* Lord *give any Anſwer to* Jacob's *Sacrifice?*

A. Yes; “And *God* ſpake unto *Iſrael* in the Viſions of the Night, and ſaid *Jacob*, *Jacob*: And he ſaid, Here am I. And he ſaid, I am *God*, the *God* of thy Father: Fear not to go down into *Egypt*; for I will there make of thee a great Nation. I will go down with thee into *Egypt*; and I will alſo ſurely bring thee up again: And *Joſeph* ſhall put his Hand upon thine Eyes.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. God calls *Jacob* twice by his Name, both to excite his Attention, and to ſhew his Kindneſs unto him; then he diſpels his tears both by directing him to go, and promiſing to bleſs him there in his Poſterity; and to bring him again ſafely out from thence; that is, not in his own Perſon, for he died there, but in his Deſcendants; he likewiſe told him that *Joſeph* ſhould put his Hand upon his Eyes, that is, ſhould cloſe them; whereby he was not only aſſured that *Joſeph* lived, and ſhould ſurvive him, but alſo that he ſhould die in Peace.

Q. *What did* Jacob *upon receiving this gracious Encouragement?*

A. “And *Jacob* roſe up from *Beer-ſheba*; and the Sons of *Iſrael* carried *Jacob* their Father, and their little ones, and their Wives, in the Waggons which *Pharaoh* had ſent to carry him. And they took their Cattle, and their Goods which they had gotten in the Land of *Canaan*, and came into *Egypt*, *Jacob*, and all his Seed with him. His Sons, and

“ his Sons Sons with him, his Daughters, and his Sons “ Daughters, and all his Seed brought he with him “ into *Egypt*.”

Q. *Who are theſe Daughters of* Jacob's; *we read only of his having one, which was* Dinah?

A. Undoubtedly, either his Daughters-in-law are included, or the plural Number is here put for the Singular, which was a common Way of Speaking in *Hebrew*.

Q. *Of what are we next informed concerning* Iſrael's *Removal into* Egypt?

A. “ And theſe are the Names of the Children of “ *Iſrael*, which came into *Egypt*; *Jacob* and his Sons: “ *Reuben*, *Jacob*'s firſt-born. And the Sons of *Reuben*; *Hanoch* and *Phallu*, and *Hezron*, and *Carmi*. “ And the Sons of *Simeon*; *Jemuel*, and *Jamin*, and “ *Ohad*, and *Jachin*, and *Zohar*, and *Shaul* the Son of a *Canaanitiſh* Woman.”

Q. *How comes the laſt* Shaul, *to be mentioned with this Mark of Diſtinction?*

A. Probably to ſhew that all the Reſt of his Brothers, except *Judah*, whoſe Hiſtory we have before, married Perſons of a better Race, and did not intermingle with the Progeny of the accurſed *Canaan*.

Q. *Who were the Deſcendants of the other Sons of* Iſrael?

A. “ And the Sons of *Levi*, *Gerſhon*, *Kohath*, and “ *Merari*. And the Sons of *Judah*, *Er*, and *Oran*, “ and *Shelah*, and *Pharez*, and *Zerah*: But *Er* and “ *Onan* died in the Land of *Canaan*. And the Sons “ of *Pharez*, were *Hezron*, and *Hamul*.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from the mentioning of* Judah's *Grandſons here?*

A. That they were certainly born at this Time, which is the Reaſon of their being here mentioned; ſince otherwiſe no good Reaſon can be given for their being named here, any more than the Grandchildren of the other Sons. We know, indeed, that thoſe who contend for *Jacob*'s having ſerved his ſeven Years, before *Leah* was given him, will have theſe not to have been born then, and that they are only mentioned, though they were then in their Father's Loins, either to ſupply the Place of *Er*, and *Onan*, who died in the Land of *Canaan*, or for ſome ſpecial Excellency or Eminency in them above the Reſt; but we think this is evidently ſtraining, or rather contradicting the Words of Moſes; whereas according to our Expoſition, that *Jacob* did not ſerve his ſeven Years firſt, *Hezron* and *Hamul* might be ſeveral Months old, when *Jacob* went down into *Egypt*.

Q. *Who were the Deſcendants of the other Sons?*

A. And the Sons *Iſſachar*; *Tola*, and *Phuvah*, and *Job*, and *Shimron*. And the Sons of *Zebulun*, *Sered*, and *Elon*, and *Jableel*. Theſe be the Sons of *Leah*, which ſhe bare unto *Jacob* in *Padan-aram*, with his Daughter *Dinah*: All the Souls of his Sons and his Daughters were thirty and three.

Q. *How are we to underſtand this Computation; for if we reckou* Er, *and* Onan *they were more, and if we don't reckon them they were not ſo many?*

A. Er and *Oran*, are not to be reckoned, but *Jacob* himſelf is to be counted for one.

Q. *And who were the Offſpring of the other Sons?*

A. “ And the Sons of *Gad*; *Ziphion*, and *Haggai*, “ *Shuni*, and *Ezbon*, *Eri*, and *Arodi*, and *Areli*. “ And the Sons of *Aſher*; *Jimnah*, and *Iſhua*, and “ *Iſui*, and *Beriah*, and *Serah*, their Siſter: And “ the Sons of *Beriah*; *Heber*, and *Malchiel*. Theſe “ are the Sons of *Zilpah*, whom *Laban* gave to *Leah* “ his Daughter: And theſe ſhe bare unto *Jacob*, “ even ſixteen Souls.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That by the mentioning here of *Heber* and *Malchiel*, *Aſher*'s two Grandſons, and of no other Grandchildren, but *Hezron* and *Hamul*, the two Grandſons of *Judah*, it is very probable that *Moſes* mentioned all the Grandchildren which were then born unto *Jacob*'s Sons; ſince no other Reaſon can be given for the naming of *Heber*, and *Malchiel* here, preferably to the Grandchildren of any of the Reſt of *Jacob*'s Sons.

Q. *And what Children had the Reſt of* Jacob's *Sons?*

A. “ The Sons of *Rachel Jacob*'s Wife, *Joſeph* and “ *Benjamin*. And unto *Joſeph* in the Land of *Egypt* “ were born *Manaſſeh* and *Ephraim*, which *Aſenath* “ the Daughter of *Potipherah*, Prieſt of *On*, bare unto him. And the Sons of *Benjamin* were *Belah*, “ and *Bether*, and *Aſhbel*, *Gera*, and *Naaman*, *Ehi*, “ and *Roſh*, *Muppim*, and *Huppim*, and *Ard*. Theſe “ are the Sons of *Rachel*, which were born to *Jacob*: “ All the Sons were Fourteen. And the Sons of *Dan*. “ *Huſhim*. And the Sons of *Naphtali*, *Jahzeel*, and “ *Guni*, and *Jezer*, and *Shillem*. Theſe are the Sons “ of *Bilhah*, which *Laban* gave unto *Rachel* his “ Daughter, and ſhe bare theſe unto *Jacob*: All “ the Souls were Seven, beſides *Jacob*'s Son's Wives, “ all the Souls were threeſcore and ſix. And the “ Sons of *Joſeph*, which were born him in *Egypt*, “ were two Souls: All the Souls of the Houſe of *Jacob*, which came into *Egypt*, were threeſcore and “ ten.

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, ſince ſixty and ſix, the Number which came with* Jacob *into* Egypt, *being added to the two Souls born to* Joſeph *in* Egypt, *and including* Joſeph *himſelf, will make but ſixty nine?*

A. *Jacob*, the common Parent of all, muſt be likewiſe included here; which being done, it will make the Number exactly ſeventy.

Q. *And what did* Jacob *on his Arrival at the Frontiers of* Egypt?

A. “ And he ſent *Judah* before him unto *Joſeph*, “ to direct his Face unto *Goſhen*; and they came into “ the Land of *Goſhen*. And *Joſeph* made ready his “ Chariot, and went up to meet *Iſrael* his Father to “ *Goſhen*; and preſented himſelf unto him. And he “ fell on his Neck, and wept on his Neck a good “ while.”

Q. *What has been obſerved upon this Text?*

A. Some Difficulty has ariſen from hence; as to the right Conſtruction of the Words, whether the Pronoun *He*, is to be referred to *Joſeph*, or to *Jacob*. Many of the *Hebrew* Doctors think, that *Joſeph* fell on the Neck of his Father, which, it muſt be confeſſed, agrees as well with the Words as they lye; but *Junius*, and ſome others, maintain, that it is more reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that upon *Joſeph*'s making his Obeyſance unto *Iſrael*, aſſoon as he came near him, the old Man, in a Tranſport of Joy, threw himſelf on his Neck; and was ſo exceedingly diſordered, by the tumultuous Agitations of his Paſſions, that being unable to ſpeak, or recover himſelf, he continued a good while Weeping over this his beloved Son, whom he had ſo long given over for loſt: And to this latter Opinion we adhere.

Q. *And what ſaid* Jacob, *aſſoon as he could recover his Speech?*

A. “ And *Iſrael* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, now let me die, “ ſince I have ſeen thy Face, becauſe thou art yet “ alive.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That *Jacob*'s Tenderneſs for this well-deſerving

ing Son went ſo far, and the bare Sight of him rendered his Happineſs ſo compleat, that not thinking he could receive any Addition thereto, in this World, he was willing to ſubmit to immediate Death: And, no doubt, his Son's Joy and Affection did not fall much ſhort of his. We queſtion whether there ever was an Interview wherein higher Ecſtaſies of filial Duty and Affection, and parental Tenderneſs were expreſſed.

Q. *What Advice gave* Joſeph *now to his Brethren?*

A. “And *Joſeph* ſaid unto his Brethren, and unto his Father's Houſe, I will go up and ſhew *Pharaoh*, and ſay unto him, My Brethren, and my Father's Houſe, which were in the Land of *Canaan*, are come unto me: And the Men are Shepherds, for their Trade hath been to feed Cattle; and they have brought their Flocks, and their Herds, and all that they have. And it ſhall come to paſs, when *Pharaoh* ſhall call you, and ſhall ſay, What is your Occupation? That ye ſhall ſay, Thy Servants Trade hath been about Cattle, from our Youth even until now, both we, and alſo our Father's: That ye may dwell in the Land of *Goſhen*; for every Shepherd is an Abomination to the *Egyptians*.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. Joſeph's great Piety, Prudence, and Policy; he brings them not to Court, tho' conſidering the Favour he was then in, it would have been very eaſy for him to have provided for them handſomely there; but then they would have run a great Hazard either of uniting, and being incorporated with the *Egyptians*, and conſequently of being loſt and ſwallowed up in ſo numerous a People; or elſe of addicting themſelves to their idolatrous Cuſtoms and Ceremonies, to the Prejudice of the true Religion, which had been given and confirmed to them by *God* himſelf: This *Joſeph* wiſely prevented, by keeping them together. Beſides; had they engroſſed the moſt beneficial Places about the Court, this could not have failed of drawing upon them the Envy of the *Egyptians*; which muſt probably have proved fatal to them, after *Joſeph*'s Deceaſe; from this, therefore, *Joſeph* likewiſe prudently ſecured them, by the ſame Means. Again, nothing could be more politick, than the Expedient of which *Joſeph* bethought himſelf, for obtaining his Ends; ſince neither *Pharaoh* nor his Subjects could be offended thereat; but, on the contrary, they would be naturally led to grant them their Deſire of living ſeparately. But this is not all, the Land of *Goſhen* was likewiſe the beſt that could have been pitched upon for them, for divers Reaſons. *Firſt*, The Paſtures might be very rich there, notwithſtanding the Famine; for ſeveral Authors of Credit inform us, that there is Abundance of fine Graſs in *Egypt*, even in thoſe Years, when the *Nile* does not overflow ſufficiently, to render the Soil fit for Corn. *Secondly*, It lay on the Borders of *Canaan*; whither *Joſeph* knew their Poſterity were to return, according to the divine Promiſe, and to poſſeſs the Land. *Thirdly*, They lived ſo near him, that he could continually ſupply their Neceſſities, and be at Hand on any Emergency; as, we find he was, on the Sickneſs, Death, and Burial of his Father. And *Fourthly*, By placing them in ſo convenient a Country, he provided admirably for their multiplying exceedingly, before the *Egyptians* took much Notice thereof; even *Pharaoh*'s Herds ſeeming to have fed, and his Herdſmen to have dwelt therein, as being removed, and ſeparated, from the Reſt of the *Egyptians*, becauſe they looked upon them as an unclean People. As to the Reaſon of the *Egyptians* abhoring all *Shepherds*, the Scripture has left us entirely in the Dark about it; the moſt probable one ſeems, that it was owing to the horrid and unparallel'd Cruelties which had been committed there, not long before, by the *Phœnician* Shepherds; who as ſome very ancient Writers affirm, were once ſeated in *Egypt* in great Numbers, and had arrived to great Power, and waged a bloody War with the Natives of *Egypt*; wherein they laid waſte divers Cities, plunder'd and burned their Temples, and barbarouſly murdered vaſt Multitudes of People.

CHAP XLVII.

Joſeph *acquaints* Pharaoh *with his Father's Arrival in* Egypt, *and being with his Family in the Land of* Goſhen. *He preſents five of his Brethren to the King, who enquires after their Occupation; and on being anſwered they were Shepherds, and deſired to ſettle in* Goſhen, *conſents to it; and orders* Joſeph, *if he knew any of them more ſkilful than the Reſt, to make them Rulers over his Cattle.* Joſeph *brings his Father likewiſe before* Pharaoh, *who asks him his Age, and is bleſſed by* Jacob. Joſeph *provides for his Father, and all his Family in* Goſhen. *The Famine rages prodigiouſly in* Egypt; *ſo that the Inhabitants are forced to part, firſt, with all their Money, then with their Cattle, and laſtly with their Lands and Liberties to obtain Corn.* Joſeph *removes all the People from the Places where they were ſettled, to diſtant Parts of the Land. The Prieſts are exempted, who have a Portion aſſigned them by* Pharaoh. Joſeph *gives the People Seed, and encourages them to till and ſow the Land, reſerving only a fifth Part of the Produce unto* Pharaoh. *The* Iſraelites *multiply exceedingly.* Jacob's *Age and Death. He takes an Oath of* Joſeph *concerning his Burial.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And *Joſeph* came and told *Pharaoh*, and ſaid, My Father, and my Brethren, and their Flocks, and their Herds, and all that they have, are come out of the Land of *Canaan*; and behold, they are in the Land of *Goſhen*!”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That notwithſtanding *Joſeph* had, in a Manner, an unlimited Power, every Thing being thought well done, which was done by him; and notwithſtanding he had before received a general Permiſſion from *Pharaoh*, to give his Father, and his Family, the Good of the Land of *Egypt*, he would not go ſo far as to ſettle them in any Place whatſoever, without a ſecond, and more expreſs Permiſſion from the King. Few Prime Miniſters now-a-days, would be ſo ſcrupulous and modeſt; but indeed, it is probable, thoſe Gentlemen ſeldom trouble themſelves about reading the Bible; or, if they do, they deem *Joſeph* only a Fool for his Pains, and imagine themſelves much wiſer Men.

Q. *What farther did* Joſeph *at the ſame Time?*

A. “And he took ſome of his Brethren, even five Men, and preſented them unto *Pharaoh*. And *Pharaoh* ſaid unto his Brethren, What is your Occupation? And they ſaid unto *Pharaoh*, Thy Servants are Shepherds, both we, and alſo our Fathers. They ſaid, moreover, unto *Pharaoh*, For to ſojourn in the Land are we come: For thy

"Servants have no Paſture for their Flocks, for the "Famine is ſore in the Land of *Canaan.* Now "therefore, we pray thee, let thy Servants dwell in "the Land of *Goſhen.*"

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That *Joſeph* acted very prudently and reſpectfully, in bringing them to make their Acknowledgment to the King, for the Favour he had done them, in permitting them to come and ſettle in his Dominions, in ſuch a Time of Diſtreſs; and for ſending Accommodations for their Father, Wives, and little ones upon the Road. As alſo, that the Requeſt they made to *Pharaoh*, was as modeſt as poſſible; being only to have Leave to live there, as Strangers, in that Time of Diſtreſs, without acquiring any Property therein, whereby to injure his Subjects, the natural Inhabitants of the Country.

What ſaid Pharaoh *to* Joſeph, *on ſeeing his Brethren, and hearing this their modeſt Requeſt?*

A. "And *Pharaoh* ſpake unto *Joſeph*, ſaying, "Thy Father and thy Brethren are come unto thee: "The Land of *Egypt* is before thee; in the beſt of "the Land make thy Father and thy Brethren to "dwell, in the Land of *Goſhen* let them dwell: And "if thou knoweſt any Man of Activity amongſt "them, then make them Rulers over my Cattle."

Q. *What has been obſerved hereupon?*

A. We before obſerved, that whatever was done by *Joſeph* was thought well done; and we may obſerve by this very gracious Anſwer, and not only ratifying, but even adding to what he had ſaid before; (for whereas he ſaid before the *Good* of the Land was theirs, he now ſays, in the *beſt* of the Land let them dwell) that it was ſo: But we muſt not paſs by an odd Conjecture of the ingenious Mr. *Poole*'s upon this Anſwer of *Pharaoh*'s, for which, however, he does not want very plauſible Reaſons; it is this. The Generality of Commentators have been of Opinion, that the five of his Brethren, whom *Joſeph* preſented to *Pharaoh*, were the moſt comely and graceful amongſt them; and indeed, we cannot help thinking, that if he had done otherwiſe, he would have been guilty of a great Diſreſpect to that Prince: But the learned Gentlemen before mentioned, has conjectured upon the *Hebrew* Word, which is rendered *ſome* in the ſecond Verſe, being rendered the *meaneſt* or *loweſt*, 1 *Kings* xii. 31. and *Pharaoh*'s ſaying here, if thou knoweſt any Man of *Activity* amongſt them, that the *five* whom *Joſeph* brought before him, were of the *meaneſt* for Perſon and Preſence; and that *Joſeph*'s Reaſon for ſo doing was, for fear that, if he had preſented the comelieſt of them, *Pharaoh* might have required their Attendance upon him, either at Court, or in the Army: As nothing but Conjecture can be offered on either Side, we will not pretend to decide which is the moſt reaſonable Opinion, but leave our Readers to determine as they pleaſe.

Q. *What next did* Joſeph, *after having received this gracious Anſwer?*

A. "And *Joſeph* brought in *Jacob* his Father, and "ſet him before *Pharaoh*: And *Jacob* bleſſed *Pharaoh.*"

Q. *How are we to underſtand this Text, about* Jacob's *bleſſing* Pharaoh?

A. We don't think it neceſſary to underſtand any more thereby, than that *Jacob* ſaluted him with great Reſpect; accordingly, we find the ſame Verb which is tranſlated to *bleſs*, is rendered to *ſalute*, 1 *Sam.* xiii. 10. and in this Senſe Commentators take the Words above, wherein we think they are right.

Q. *What farther paſſed between* Jacob *and* Pharaoh *at this Interview?*

A. "And *Pharaoh* ſaid unto *Jacob*, How old art "thou? And *Jacob* ſaid unto *Pharaoh*, The Days "of the Years of my Pilgrimage are an hundred and "thirty Years: Few and evil have the Days of the "Years of my Life been, and have not attained unto "the Days of the Years of the Life of my Fathers, in the Days of their Pilgrimage. And *Jacob* bleſſed *Pharaoh*, and went out from before "*Pharaoh.*"

Q. *How could* Jacob *well ſay his Days were few and evil, when he had then lived an hundred and thirty Years, and he was in very opulent Circumſtances even at the Time of* Iſaac's *Deceaſe?*

A. Jacob ſeems to have ſpoken this, with Reference to the Age of his Father and Grand Father; of both of which he fell ſhort, both now, and at the Time of his Death: And as to his Days being evil, they who have read his Hiſtory with any Attention, cannot but perceive that he was continually exerciſed with Calamities and Croſſes. The Jars in his Father's Family with *Eſau*, who was beloved by *Iſaac*; with his Flight into *Meſopotamia*, and his hard Service there under *Laban*; the Trick put upon him in ſubſtituting *Leah* inſtead of *Rachel*, with his Flight from thence, *Laban*'s hoſtile Purſuit after him, and *Eſau*'s coming in as hoſtile a Manner to meet him; as alſo the Rape of *Dinah*, the Slaughter of the *Shechemites*, the Death of *Rachel*, with *Reuben* and *Judah*'s Inceſt, and the Loſs of *Joſeph*, are certain Demonſtrations, not only of the Truth of what *Jacob* ſaid to *Pharaoh*, but alſo of this general Obſervation; That *God*, by beſtowing the Bleſſing of his Choice upon them, did not free his Saints from the Miſfortunes incident to human Life, but only ſupplied them with Grace to enable them to ſuffer patiently; having a conſtant Faith in the divine Promiſes; and relying ſteadily on the Covenant made with their Fathers.

Q. *How did* Joſeph *diſpoſe of his Father and Brethren after this?*

A. "And *Joſeph* placed his Father and his Brethren, and gave them a Poſſeſſion in the Land of "*Egypt*, in the beſt of the Land, in the Land of "*Rameſes*, as *Pharaoh* had commanded. And *Joſeph* nouriſhed his Father and his Brethren, and "all his Father's Houſhold with Bread, according to their Families."

Q. *Where was the Land of* Rameſes?

A. It was Part of the Land of *Goſhen*; and in all Probability, that Part where the *Iſraelites* afterwards built the City of *Rameſes* for *Pharaoh*, wherefore it is now called ſo by Anticipation. The Reaſon why *Moſes* ſpecifies that it was in the Land of *Rameſes*, is, that the *Iſraelites* not being now numerous enough to poſſeſs the whole Land of *Goſhen*, which was given to them, contented themſelves with only a Part of it, and left the Reſt to be inhabited by the *Egyptians*; wherefore, when they multiplied exceedingly, as they did afterwards, they were forced to ſpread their Habitations amongſt the Natives of the Land.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And there was no Bread in all the Land: "For the Famine was very ſore, ſo that the Land "of *Egypt*, and all the Land of *Canaan*, fainted by "Reaſon of the Famine."

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. The extreme Folly, or Covetouſneſs, (for one of them it muſt be) of the *Egyptians*, which could reduce

reduce them in ſo ſhort a Time as two Years to as great Straits as their Neighbours. We ſay it muſt have been either their Folly, or their Covetouſneſs; for they were ſufficiently forewarned of the ſeven Years of Famine that were to come; and how ſevere that Famine was to be; inſomuch that the ſeven plentiful Years ſhould be quite forgotten; if, therefore, being thus forewarned, they, who were able, did not lay up ſufficient Stores for themſelves, during the ſeven plentiful Years, as they ſaw done in the Royal Granaries, they muſt be extreme ſtupid, and unthinking; and if, having ſo done, they were prevailed with to part with their Corn, through Avarice, becauſe it bore an exceſſive Price; flattering themſelves that the Famine would either be of ſhorter Duration, or not ſo ſevere, as had been foretold; they received the juſt Wages of their Covetouſneſs and Folly, (for it was a Complication of both,) in being reduced to Beggary and Slavery.

Q. *Did not* Joſeph, *having the ſole Diſtribution of the Corn, amaſs a vaſt Treaſure for the King's Uſe?*

A. Yes, prodigious Sums; for which the *Egyptians* had no one to blame but themſelves. "And *Joſeph* gathered up all the Money that was found in the Land of *Egypt*, and in the Land of *Canaan*, for the Corn which they bought: And *Joſeph* brought the Money into *Pharaoh*'s Houſe."

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. That *Joſeph* was not like moſt Treaſurers now-a-days; he did not amaſs great Riches for his own Family, but faithfully brought it into his Maſter's Coffers. No doubt, many Moderns have thought him a great Fool for his Pains.

Q. *And what did the* Egyptians *when their Money was all gone?*

A. "And when Money failed in the Land of *Egypt*, and in the Land of *Canaan*, all the *Egyptians* came unto *Joſeph*, and ſaid, Give us Bread: For why ſhould we die in thy Preſence? For the Money faileth. And *Joſeph* ſaid, Give your Cattle; and I will give you for your Cattle, if Money fail. And they brought their Cattle unto *Joſeph*: And *Joſeph* gave them Bread in Exchange for Horſes, and for the Flocks, and for the Cattle of the Herds, and for the Aſſes; and he fed them with Bread for all their Cattle, for that Year."

Q. *And what did the* Egyptians *when all their Money, and all their Cattle was gone?*

A. "When that Year was ended, they came unto him the ſecond Year, and ſaid unto him, We will not hide it from my Lord, how that our Money is ſpent, my Lord alſo hath our Herds of Cattle; there is not ought left in the Sight of my Lord, but our Bodies, and our Lands. Wherefore ſhall we die before thine Eyes, both we, and our Land? Buy us, and our Land for Bread, and we and our Land will be Servants unto *Pharaoh*: And give us Seed, that we may live and not die, that the Land be not deſolate. And *Joſeph* bought all the Land of *Egypt* for *Pharaoh*; for the *Egyptians* ſold every Man his Field, becauſe the Famine prevailed over them; ſo the Land became *Pharaoh*'s. And as for the People, he removed them to Cities, from one End of the Borders of *Egypt*, even to the other End thereof."

Q. *What has been obſerved hereupon?*

A. Many have cenſured *Joſeph* unmercifully, and taxed him with preying upon the Neceſſities of the *Egyptians*, by reducing them to a State of Slavery, and thereby making the King abſolute. But this was the natural Conſequence of their own Folly, and not owing to any Injuſtice in *Joſeph*; who, as being the King's Servant, and intruſted by him with the Care of the Diſtribution of the Corn, was bound by all the Ties of Juſtice, Honour, and Gratitude, to a Prince to whom he had the greateſt Obligations, to make as good a Bargain for his Maſter as he could. It was entirely owing to *Joſeph*'s Prudence, that even their Lives were ſaved; and even that State of Dependance upon the King, which ſome modern Patrons of Liberty and Property have termed Slavery, to which the *Egyptians* were reduced, was by *Joſeph*'s Prudence and Moderation, ſo mitigated, and their Compoſition for the Whole, made upon ſuch eaſy Terms, that it were well if, in ſome Countries, where People brag moſt of their *Liberty* and *Property*, their Subjection was made as eaſy to them.

Q. *Were none exempted from the Neceſſity of ſelling their Lands?*

A. Yes; "Only the Lands of the Prieſts bought he not: For the Prieſts had a Portion aſſigned them of *Pharaoh*, and did eat their Portion which *Pharaoh* gave them; wherefore, they ſold not their Lands."

Q. *How came* Joſeph, *who worſhipped the true* God, *to ſhew ſuch Favour to idolatrous Prieſts?*

A. Not through any Reſpect he had for them; but either becauſe he was over-ruled therein by *Pharaoh*'s expreſs Command; or becauſe it was the ſtanding Law or Cuſtom of the Land, contrary to which he durſt not act. Beſides, the Prieſts in thoſe Days, were the Nobility and Princes of the Kingdom, and enjoyed particular Rights and Immunities, with which *Joſeph* had nothing to do; conſequently, they owed this Exemption not to his Favour, but to the *Egyptian* Conſtitution.

Q. *What ſaid* Joſeph *to the People, after having purchaſed their Perſons and their Lands?*

A. "Then *Joſeph* ſaid unto the People, Behold, I have bought you this Day, and the Land, for *Pharaoh*: Lo, here is Seed for you, and ye ſhall ſow the Land. And it ſhall come to paſs, in the Increaſe, that you ſhall give the fifth Part unto *Pharaoh*; and four Parts ſhall be your own, for Seed of the Field, and for your Food, and for them of your Houſholds, and for Food for your little-ones. And they ſaid, Thou haſt ſaved our Lives: Let us find Grace in the Sight of my Lord, and we will be *Pharaoh*'s Servants."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. The great Prudence and Moderation of *Joſeph*; and his great Equity in making this Contract, as Umpire, between the King and the People. He made no bad Uſe of the Power intruſted with him; neither did the King make a bad Uſe of the Power he had acquired, by *Joſeph*'s Policy and Prudence. The Condition upon which the *Egyptians* held their Lands, of which they had made an abſolute Sale to *Pharaoh*, was no more than a four Shilling, in the Pound, Land-Tax; how eaſy Terms were theſe, upon which to have Eſtates conferred upon them! There are ſome People in the World who imagine themſelves a free People, who have paid very near as much, if not more, taking the Produce of all their Taxes together, in Time of Peace. What would ſome prime Miniſters have done, had they had a People ſo much at their Mercy! It would have been well if they had contented themſelves, with making them *Gibeonites*; that is, Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water! What would even ſome Princes have done, had they been inveſted with the abſolute and entire Property of all the Land in their Kingdom! Would they have contented themſelves with one fifth Part of the Produce! And would they generouſly have reſtored the Reſt to their Subjects upon ſuch eaſy Terms! We are afraid there are very few Princes ſo generous now-a-days. Wherefore, all theſe Things conſidered, *Pharaoh* appears in an amiable Light, as the true Father of his People! And *Joſeph* appears in a Light yet more amiable, as entirely diſintereſted, and publick ſpirited. For it does not appear, that he any Ways enriched either himſelf or his Family; ſince we don't find that the Tribes of *Manaſſeh*, or *Ephraim*, at their going out of *Egypt*, were any Ways richer than the other Tribes. It is no Wonder, therefore, that the *Egyptians* ſo readily complied with theſe Terms, and were ſo thankful to *Joſeph* for having procured them for them.

Q. *What are we told next concerning this Tranſaction?*

A. “ And *Joſeph* made it a Law over the Land “ of *Egypt*, unto this Day, that *Pharaoh* ſhould have “ the fifth Part; except the Land of the Prieſts only, which became not *Pharaoh*'s.”

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And *Iſrael* dwelt in the Land of *Egypt*, in “ the Country of *Goſhen*; and they had Poſſeſſions “ therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. “ And *Jacob* lived in the Land of *Egypt* ſeventeen “ Years: So the whole Age of *Jacob* was an hundred forty and ſeven Years. And the Time drew “ nigh, that *Iſrael* muſt die: And he called his Son “ *Joſeph*, and ſaid unto him, If now I have found “ Grace in thy Sight, put, I pray thee, thine Hand “ under my Thigh, and deal kindly and truly with “ me; bury me not, I pray thee, in *Egypt*. But I “ will lie with my Fathers, and thou ſhalt carry me “ out of *Egypt*, and bury me in their Burrying-place. And he ſaid, I will do as thou haſt ſaid. “ And he ſaid, Swear unto me: And he ſware unto “ him. And *Iſrael* bowed himſelf upon the Bed's “ Head.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That *God* began now, even during *Jacob*'s Life, to fulfil his Promiſe, of making a great Nation of him in *Egypt*, ſince we find that they multiplied exceedingly before his Death. It is obſervable, alſo that good *Jacob* was reſolved neither to be united in Life, or Death, to the idolatrous *Egyptians*, but inſiſted ſtrongly on being buried in his Father's Sepulchre in the Land of *Canaan*. This he did, both to manifeſt his Deteſtation of Idolatry; and to profeſs his Communion with his godly Anceſtors, by his Deſire to be joined with them in Burial. As alſo, to aſſert his Right to the Land of *Canaan*, and to ſhew his firm Faith in the divine Promiſe, that it ſhould be enjoyed by his Poſterity; and to declare his high Value for that Land, as it was a Type and Pledge of the heavenly Inheritance to which he was going. He did it, likewiſe, to keep his Poſterity from ſetting their Hearts upon *Egypt*; and to fix their Thoughts upon the *Promiſed Land*, that they might be the more ready and deſirous to go thither, when *God* ſhould require it, in his due and appointed Time. The Reaſon of his exacting an Oath from *Joſeph*, was not becauſe he had any Diſtruſt of his fulfilling his Promiſe, which he certainly had not; but ſeems to have been done deſignedly, both to ſhew his Poſterity of what Moment he thought it to declare his Abhorence of any Union whatever, alive or dead, with Idolaters; to profeſs his Faith in the true *God*, and his Promiſes; and, at the ſame Time, to give *Joſeph* a good Excuſe, for inſiſting ſtrongly on *Pharaoh*'s Permiſſion to go up to *Canaan*, to his Father's Burial: It not being improbable, that that idolatrous Prince, might, otherwiſe, have been unwilling to grant his Conſent; and might have repreſented it as a Thing of no Moment; as being unwilling to part with *Joſeph*, whoſe Preſence was continually neceſſary in his high Office, for ſo long a Time.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Joſeph *being told that his Father is ſick, viſits him*; Jacob *ſtrengthens himſelf*; *acquaints* Joſeph *with* God's *gracious Appearance and Promiſes to him*; *and adopts his two Sons* Ephraim *and* Manaſſeh. *He calls for them, to bleſs them, kiſſes and embraces them*; *and* Joſeph, *having placed them according to their Ages*, Iſrael *purpoſely croſſes his Hands, and lays his Right Hand on the youngeſt*. *He bleſſes* Joſeph *and his two Sons*. Joſeph *attempts to remove his Father's Hands, and place them otherwiſe*; Jacob *refuſes to alter them, and gives his Reaſon for it*; *but bleſſes them both. He foretells the Return of the* Iſraelites *to the Land of* Canaan, *and gives* Joſeph *a double Portion*.

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ And it came to paſs, after theſe Things, “ that one told *Joſeph*, Behold, thy Father is ſick: “ And he took with him his two Sons, *Ephraim* and “ *Manaſſeh*. And one told *Jacob*, and ſaid, Behold, thy Son *Joſeph* cometh unto thee; and *Iſrael* ſtrengthened himſelf, and ſat upon the Bed. “ And *Jacob* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, *God Almighty* appeared to me at *Luz*, in the Land of *Canaan*, and “ bleſſed me, and ſaid unto me, Behold I will make “ thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make “ of thee a Multitude of People, and will give this “ Land to thy Seed after thee, for an everlaſting “ Poſſeſſion. And now thy two Sons, *Ephraim* and “ *Manaſſeh*, which were born unto thee in the Land “ of *Egypt*, before I came unto thee into *Egypt*, “ are mine: As *Reuben* and *Simeon* they ſhall be “ mine. And thy Iſſue which thou begetteſt after “ them ſhall be thine, and ſhall be called after the “ Name of their Brethren, in their Inheritance. And “ as for me, when I came from *Padan*, *Rachel* died “ by me in the Land of *Canaan*, in the Way, when “ yet there was but a little Way to come unto *Ephrath*: And I buried her in the Way of *Ephrath*, “ the ſame is *Bethlehem*.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That the News of the Approach of this beloved Son, like a Cordial to his fainting Spirits, gave old *Jacob* new Strength; and he recounts to him the divine Promiſes which had been made to him, when *God* appeared to him; either becauſe that *Joſeph* not being born when this happened, and being very young when he was ſeparated from his Father's Family, might not know it; or becauſe his Memory might need refreſhing; or, which is more probable, that it might make the deeper Impreſſion upon the Mind of his Children *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, who were with him; as it came from the Mouth of a dying Parent, who had been himſelf favoured with the divine Appearance, and was the laſt of the Patriarchs who was ſo favoured. Having thus done, he adopts theſe two Sons of *Joſeph*, and allots them equal Privileges with the Reſt of his Sons; after which he mentions the Death of *Rachel*, as it were, to give his other Sons a Reaſon for his ſo doing, and for his transferring the double Portion, Part of the Right of Primogeniture from *Reuben* to *Joſeph*, as if he had ſaid, *Rachel* being my firſt rightful Wife, by my Deſign, and by Contract, (notwithſtanding *Leah* was fraudulently ſubſtituted in her Stead by *Laban*) I have a Right to transfer Part of the Right of Primogeniture to my eldeſt Son by her, and accordingly do confer it upon *Joſeph* and his Children.

Q. *What farther are we told of* Jacob *after this?*

A. “And *Iſrael* beheld *Joſeph*'s Sons, and ſaid, who are theſe? And *Joſeph* ſaid unto his Father, They are my Sons, whom *God* hath given me in this Place: And he ſaid, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bleſs them. (Now the Eyes of *Iſrael* were dim for Age, ſo that he could not ſee:) And he brought them near unto him; and he kiſſed them, and embraced them. And *Iſrael* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, I had not thought to ſee thy Face: And lo, *God* hath ſhewed me alſo thy Seed. And *Joſeph* brought them out from between his Knees, and he bowed himſelf with his Face to the Earth: And *Joſeph* took them both, *Ephraim* in his right Hand towards *Iſrael*'s left Hand, and *Mannaſſeh* in his left Hand, towards *Iſrael*'s right Hand, and brought them near unto him.”

Q. *What was the Meaning of all this Ceremony in placing the Lads?*

A. A very good one; becauſe as the Patriarchs were inveſted by *God* with a Power of conferring a Bleſſing upon their Children, to which the *Lord* always gave a Sanction, on whoever the right Hand was laid, that Perſon obtained the beſt Bleſſing; *Joſeph* was deſirous, therefore, of obtaining the beſt Bleſſing for his eldeſt Son.

Q. *But did he ſucceed in his Deſire?*

A. No, by no Means; “And *Iſrael* ſtretched out his right Hand, and laid it upon *Ephraim*'s Head, who was the Younger, and his left Hand upon *Manaſſeh*'s Head: Guiding his Hands willingly; for *Manaſſeh* was the Firſt-born. And he bleſſed *Joſeph*, and ſaid, *God*, before whom my Fathers *Abraham* and *Iſaac* did walk, the *God* which fed me all my Life long unto this Day. The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bleſs the Lads; and let my Name be named on them, and the Name of my Fathers *Abraham* and *Iſaac*. And let them grow into a Multitude in the Midſt of the Earth.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That *Jacob* humbly and thankfully aſcribes his being ſuſtain'd untill then, and all other Mercies and Deliverances to the Divine Providence; begging the ſame *God* who had ſupported and preſerved him, to ſupport, preſerve, and bleſs the Lads in the ſame Manner, as he had bleſſed him.

Q. *But how did* Joſeph *like* Jacob'*s giving the Preference to the youngeſt Son?*

A. Not at all; “And when *Joſeph* ſaw that his Father laid his right Hand upon the Head of *Ephraim*, it diſpleaſed him: And he held up his Father's Hand to remove it from *Ephraim*'s Head unto *Manaſſeh*'s Head. And *Joſeph* ſaid unto his Father, not ſo, my Father; For this is the Firſt-born: Put thy right Hand upon his Head. And his Father refuſed, and ſaid, I know it my Son, I know it; he alſo ſhall become a People, and he alſo ſhall be great: But truly his younger Brother ſhall be greater than he, and his Seed ſhall become a multitude of Nations. And he bleſſed them that Day, ſaying, In thee ſhall *Iſrael* bleſs, ſaying, *God* make thee as *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*: And he ſet *Ephraim* before *Manaſſeh*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That *God* will have the free Diſpoſal of his own Bleſſings, and will not diſpenſe them according to the Deſires of Men, however juſt and holy they may be. *Joſeph* could have wiſhed to have had the beſt Bleſſing beſtowed on *Manaſſeh*, and *Jacob* through his Affection to his Favourite Son, would, no doubt, have willingly gratify'd him, by complying therewith; but Providence interpoſes, and over-rules him, and *Joſeph* perceiving it was the divine Will it ſhould be otherwiſe, ſubmits patiently thereunto, without endeavouring to interfere therewith any farther.

A. What farther ſaid Jacob *to* Joſeph?

A. “And *Iſrael* ſaid unto *Joſeph*, Behold, I dye; but *God* ſhall be with you, and bring you again into the Land of your Father's. Moreover, I have given to thee one Portion above thy Brethren, which I took out of the Hand of the *Amorite*, with my Sword, and with my Bow.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, for we no where read of* Jacob's *having been ingaged in any War?*

A. Commentators are very much divided about the Meaning of this; and nothing can be offered upon this Head but mere Conjecture; the moſt Probable of which, we think, is; that the Sons of *Jacob* having ſubdued the City of *Shechem*, their Father, though he highly diſapproved of their inhuman Cruelty, might keep Poſſeſſion of that Country, and might defend it againſt the Attempts of the *Amorites*; who being the moſt powerful Nation in thoſe Parts, might endeavour to take it from him.

Chap. XLIX.

Jacob *calleth his Sons to him to bleſs them before his Death; He condemns* Reuben *for his Inceſt, and transfers the Birthright from him; He likewiſe inveighs againſt* Simeon *and* Levi *for their Cruelty; He praiſes and extols* Judah, *propheſies of* Chriſt, *and foretells the Calling of the* Gentiles. *He exactly foretells the Lot of* Zebulun; *And the indolent and ſupine Temper of the Tribe of* Iſſachar; *He prophecieth of* Dan, Aſher, *and* Naphtali; *He expatiates greatly upon* Joſeph, *and gives him a peculiar Bleſſing; He foretells the Fortune of* Benjamin; *Gives his Sons a ſtrict Charge concerning his Burial, and dies.*

Q. O*F what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And *Jacob* called unto his Sons, and ſaid, Gather yourſelves together, that I may tell you that which ſhall befall you in the laſt Days. Gather yourſelves together, and hear, ye Sons of *Jacob*, and hearken unto *Iſrael* your Father.”

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon.*

A. That what *Jacob* was to ſay to his Sons being of the utmoſt Importance, he hereby beſpeaks their Attention, that they might not let any of his Words eſcape them.

Q. *And what is the firſt Thing he ſays unto them?*

A. Beginning with *Reuben*, his eldeſt Son, he ſays to him, “*Reuben*, thou art my Firſt-born, my Might, and the Beginning of my Strength; the Excellence of Dignity, and the Excellency of Power. Unſtable as Water thou ſhalt not excel, becauſe thou wenteſt up to thy Father's Bed: Then defiledſt thou it, he went up to my Couch.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. Jacob in the Beginning of this Speech tells *Reuben* what his Lot was to have been, if he had not forfeited his Privileges by his Inceſt; but having ſo done, he foretels him that he ſhall not excel, or be eminent for any Thing; which accordingly, we find, was accompliſhed; nothing remarkable being recorded of that Tribe; and that his Privileges are vaniſhed like Smoke; for that ſeems to be the true Meaning of the Words, which, in our Verſion, are rendered; he went up to my Couch, but, we think, injudiciouſly.

Q. *What next ſaid* Jacob *to his Sons?*

A. He proceeds next to his two next eldeſt *Simeon*, and *Levi*; and becauſe they were both alike in their cruel Tempers, having been both of them the Ringleaders in the barbarous Maſſacre of the *Shechemites*, he couples them together, and expreſſes the ſtrongeſt Deteſtation of their Inhumanity: “*Simeon* and *Levi* are Brethen: Inſtruments of Cruelty are in their Habitations. O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret; unto their Aſſembly, mine Honour, be not thou united: For in their Anger they ſlew a Man, and in their ſelf-will they digged down a Wall. Curſed be their Anger, for it was fierce; and their Wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in *Jacob*, and ſcatter them in *Iſrael*.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That here ſeems to be likewiſe a Miſtake in the Tranſlation; inſtead of Inſtruments of Cruelty are in their *Habitations*, we ſhould read their *Contracts* are Inſtruments of Cruelty; which is more intelligible and agrees exactly with their Story; ſince it was under the Colour of a *nuptial Contract*, that they perſuaded the *Shechemites* to undergo Circumciſion; whereby they were enabled to butcher them in that horrible and treacherous Manner: Good old *Jacob*, therefore, expreſſes the ſtrongeſt Deteſtation of this their Savage and violent Temper, and accordingly pronounces the Sentence of Diſperſion upon them for it; which was accordingly exactly fulfilled in both. For the *Levite's*, it is well known, were diſperſed throughout the whole Land of *Canaan*; and the Portion aſſigned unto *Simeon*, was a narrow Diſtrict within the Tribe of *Judah*, which proving too ſmall for them to dwell in, they ſpread themſelves out, by Degrees, towards Mount *Seir* on the one Side, and amongſt the Settlements of their Brethren on the other, as is pretty plainly expreſſed in the fourth Chapter of the firſt Book of *Chronicles*: And the *Jewiſh* Traditions, if they may be allowed to be of any weight, go ſtill farther; and poſitively affirm, that the Deſcendants of *Simeon* apply'd themſelves particularly to Learning, and became thereby Schoolmaſters, and Inſtructors of Youth, throughout the other Tribes of *Iſrael*; which being admitted, they were as effectually ſcatter'd up and down *Judea*, as the Tribe of *Levi*.

Q. *Having thus declared what would be the Portion of the three eldeſt Sons, to whom does* Jacob *addreſs himſelf next?*

A. He comes next to *Judah*, who was next in Birth, and ſoftening his Style, which had been ſomewhat ſevere to the three others, he thus addreſſes him: “*Judah*, thou art he, whom thy Brethren ſhall praiſe; thy Hand ſhall be in the Neck of thine Enemies: Thy Father's Children ſhall bow down before thee. *Judah* is a Lyon's Whelp; from the Prey, my Son thou art gone up: He ſtooped down, he couched as a Lyon, and as an old Lyon, who ſhall rouze him up. The Sceptre ſhall not depart from *Judah*, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until *Shiloh* come; and unto him ſhall the Gathering of the People be. Binding his Foal unto the Vine, and his Aſſes Colt unto the choice Vine; he waſhed his Garments in Wine, and his Cloaths in the Blood of Grapes. His Eyes ſhall be red with Wine, and his Teeth white with Milk.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. The holy *Patriarch*, having thus reproved his three eldeſt Sons for their Iniquity goes on to *Judah*, his fourth Son, of whom he ſpeaks with manifeſt Delight; but we muſt obſerve, that both herein, and in his Rebukes to his three eldeſt Sons, *Jacob* was guided entirely by the Direction of the divine Spirit; for he was not angry at that Time with *Reuben*, who is believed to have repented of his Inceſt; nor with *Simeon* and *Levi*, for their Cruelty, which they had committed above forty Years before; ſince he was then dying; and Paſſion, and an unforgiving Temper, would ill have become ſo good a Man upon his Death-bed; neither was he guided by his own Inclinations and Affections, in beſtowing this Bleſſing upon *Judah*, preferably to his deſervedly beloved *Joſeph*; but he was over-ruled herein by the Direction of *God's* Spirit; it having been decreed before the Foundation of the World, by the *Almighty*, that the *Meſſiah* or *Shiloh*, ſhould deſcend from the Tribe of *Judah*, according to the Fleſh; for which Reaſon this Tribe was honoured with ſeveral other Privileges, that gave them Pre-eminence and Superiority over the Reſt. *Firſt*, the Tribe of *Judah* was the firſt that entered the *Red-Sea* after *Moſes*. *Secondly*, after the Death of *Joſhua*, the Tribe of *Judah* was pitched upon, to be the Commander in Chief of all the other Triebs, in their Wars. *Thirdly*, from this Tribe ſprung the mighty and powerful King *David*, his Son King *Solomon*, and ſeveral other Kings 'till the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. *Fourthly*, from this Tribe deſcended *Zorobabel*, who commanded the People in their Return from *Babylon*. In Effect, this Prediction of *Jacob's* was punctually fulfilled in every Point; the Tribe of *Judah* were always the moſt Warlike of all the Tribes, as is elegantly deſcribed by *Jacob* under the Allegory of a Lyon's Whelp, a Lyon grown up to more Maturity, and an old Lyon, or a Lyon in its confirmed State of Strength; a moſt proper Type of the State of this Tribe in its Infancy under *Joſhua*; in its more mature ſtate under *David*, and its confirmed State under *Solomon*. But this Tribe was not only the moſt Warlike, but they were alſo the moſt Powerful, and from the Time that the Scepter came into their Hand under *David*, they always retained the chief Authority in the State 'till the *Shiloh*, that is, the *Meſſiah*, and our bleſſed *Saviour* came; though this is a Point much diſputed by the obſtinate and unbelieving *Jews*, who being judicially condemned by *God* to Infidelity, 'till his own appointed Time, ſtill continue to ſhut their Eyes wilfully againſt the Light: For it is evident, that the Government and Common-wealth of the *Jews*, who are ſo named from this Tribe, was not quite ſubverted, till the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by *Titus*; which was not till after the *Shiloh* was both come and gone; and after the Gathering of the People unto him; which was the glorious and gracious Calling of the *Gentiles* unto *Chriſt*. All the Remainder of this Prophecy was literally fulfilled; ſince the Lot of the Tribe of *Judah*, fell in a Country abounding with the moſt excellent Wines; and, indeed, withe very Thing neceſſary, not only for the Support, but even for the Enjoyment of Life.

Q. *Having thus amply bleſſed* Judah, *to whom did* Jacob *addreſs himſelf next?*

A. He kept ſtill in *Leah*'s Line, but paſs'd by *Iſſachar*, notwithſtanding he was the Eldeſt of the Two, and went on to *Zebulun*, of whom he ſays; " *Zebulun* " ſhall dwell at the Haven of the Sea: And he ſhall " be for an Haven of Ships; and his Border ſhall be " unto *Zidon*."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That *Jacob* was enabled by the Divine Providence, to foretell exactly the Portion of *Zebulun*, though it did not fall unto them till two hundred Years after this; and then it was not by Choice, or by the Deſign of any Man whatever, but merely by Lot. His Portion was extended from the Sea of *Galilee*, which properly ſpeaking is but a Lake, to the *Mediterranean Sea*, and to ſuch Parts thereof where there were convenient Havens, till it reached to the Territories of *Zidon*; which was then the great Staple, and Mart of almoſt all Nations.

Q. *To whom did* Jacob *paſs on next?*

A. To *Iſſachar*, *Zebulun*'s own Brother, both by Father and Mother, to whom he ſays: " *Iſſachar* is " a ſtrong Aſs, couching down between two Bur- " thens, and he ſaw that Reſt was good, and the " Land, that it was Pleaſant; and bowed his ſhoul- " der to bear, and became a Servant unto Tribute."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, is it meant as any Reflection upon the Tribe of* Iſſachar?

A. Some have been apt to interpret it as a Mark of their Puſillanimity and Cowardice; but, we think, it may bear a much more favourable Conſtruction. In Effect, we ſee no Neceſſity for underſtanding it for any worſe Senſe, than that as the Deſcendants of *Iſſachar* would have their Lot in a very fruitful Land, the Excellency of their Soil would make them extreamly deſirous of Peace, and Reſt, which ſuited indeed beſt with their Employments; they applying themſelves much to Agriculture, and being the beſt Husbandmen amongſt the *Iſraelites*. This induced them to ſubmit rather to eaſy Taxes, and Impoſts, them to leave their Habitations, or engage themſelves in War: Beſides that, their Lot lying in the Midſt of the other Tribes, made them not very ſubject to the Invaſions and Incurſions of their Enemies. But we cannot ſee why this ſhould be any Reproach to the Poſterity of *Iſſachar*; unleſs we affirm Prudence to be inconſiſtent with Bravery; for, it is evident, that it muſt be utterly incompatible with their true Intereſt to engage in any War, which muſt neceſſarily demand their ſtrongeſt and ableſt Hands, who might be much more uſefully employed in tilling their Grounds.

Q. *Having thus gone through with* Leah's *Children, with whom did* Jacob *begin next?*

A. He began next with *Dan*, his eldeſt Son by *Bilhah*, *Rachel*'s Handmaid, of whom he thus propheſy'd; " *Dan* ſhall judge his People, as one of the " Tribes of *Iſrael*. *Dan* ſhall be a Serpent by the " Way, an Adder in the Path; that biteth the Horſe- " Heels, ſo that his Rider ſhall fall backward."

Q. *Why is* Jacob *ſuppoſed to have mentioned this particular Circumſtance that* Dan *ſhould judge his People; and how are we to underſtand the latter Part of* Jacob's *Prophecy concerning* Dan, *that he ſhould be like a Serpent, and an Adder?*

A. The Reaſon of his Specifying this concerning *Dan*, is ſuppoſed to be, to ſhew that, notwithſtanding *Dan* was the Son of a Bond-woman, both he, and his other Sons, by his Wives Handmaids, ſhould enjoy the ſame Privileges as his Sons by his Wives. As to the latter Part of this Prophecy, notwithſtanding it is generally underſtood to be meant of the Subtlety of that Tribe, who ſhould overcome their Enemies, more by their Cunning, than by Force of Arms; yet we are apt to think it refers more immediately to *Sampſon*, who took Advantage of his Intermarriage with the *Philiſtines*, and propoſing a Riddle to them, to pick a Quarrel with them, the Conſequence of which was, his doing them incredible Damage; particularly by his Stratagem of the Foxes and Firebrands, in Revenge for his Wife's having been given to another.

Q: *What next ſaid* Jacob, *after having ended his Speech concerning* Dan?

A: " I have waited for thy Salvation, O *Lord*."

Q. *What is ſuppoſed to have been the Meaning of this ſhort and ſudden Ejaculation?*

A. Interpreters have been miſerably divided about the Meaning thereof. Some think that it has a Retroſpect unto what the good old *Patriarch* had ſaid of *Dan*; and that as he therein propheſied of the Deliverance of his Deſcendants, from the Hands of their Enemies, by the Means of *Sampſon*, ſo in this conciſe Ejaculation he expreſſes his Faith in *God*, and in his *Redeemer*, and at the ſame Time prays that the *Lord*, in his Mercy, would continually raiſe up ſuch Deliverers for his People, whenever they ſhould be diſtreſſed, and under Oppreſſion: This Opinion, its Abettors think, is ſupported both by Grammatical Conſtruction, and the uneaſy Situation wherein the *Danites* were for a conſiderable Space of Time, as we read both in the Books of *Joſhua* and *Judges*. Others will have the Senſe of this Exclamation, refer to what follows; and conſidering the Difficulties under which the Tribe of *Gad* laboured, will have it that *Iſrael* therein offered up a Prayer for them. The *Chaldee* Paraphraſe aſſerts, that *Jacob* therein expreſſes his Truſting and Expectation of a more effectual Salvation from the *Lord*, than could be obtained or expected from the Hands of Men. And there is yet another Solution offered on this Head, which we muſt not paſs by, becauſe ſome wiſe and learned Men have judged it much more eaſy and natural than the Reſt; it is this: The good old Man, ſay they, being upon his Death-bed, and finding himſelf weary with his long and earneſt Speaking, breathed out this pious and recommendatory Ejaculation; after which having reſted himſelf a little, he went on with his Diſcourſe to his Sons. We muſt own, we think this Opinion as rational as any.

Q. *To which of his Sons did* Jacob *proceed next?*

A. To *Gad*, to whom he only ſaid, " *Gad*, a " Troop ſhall overcome him, but he ſhall overcome " at laſt."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this? And how was it fulfilled?*

A. The Tribe of *Gad* having their Inheritance on the farther Side of *Jordan*, together with the Tribe of *Reuben*, and the Half-Tribe of *Manaſſeh*, were perpetually expoſed to the Incurſions of their Enemies the *Arabs*, or *Hagarites*, their next Neighbours, and eſpecially the *Ammonites*, and *Moabites*, which two laſt were the inveterate Enemies of *Iſrael*. Accordingly *Jacob* here Propheſies, that the Fortune of War ſhould be various, as indeed it was, but that this Tribe ſhould overcome at laſt, which they did, as may be ſeen, 1 *Chron*. v. 18, 19, &c. until they fell into open Idolatry, when *God* ſuffered them to be carried into Captivity, together with the *Reubenites*, and half Tribe of *Manaſſeh*.

Q. *And what was the Bleſſing of* Aſher ?

A. “ Out of *Aſher* his Bread ſhall be fat ; and he “ ſhall yield royal Dainties.”

Q. *This Prophecy is very clear* ; *Was it exactly accompliſhed?*

A. Yes ; it was as exactly verified, as it was perſpicuouſly ſpoken : For the Territories of *Aſher* were the moſt fertile of all the Diſtricts within the Land of *Canaan* ; their Harveſts were wonderfully plenteous, and their Oil preferable to any in the Countries adjacent. *Onkelos* paraphraſes the Paſſage before us in theſe Words. “ The Land of *Aſher* ſhall be ex-“ cellent ; and it ſhall bring forth Delicacies fit for “ Kings.” The *Jeruſalem Targum*, to the ſame Purpoſe, but with greater Warmth ſpeaks thus : “ O “ the Bleſſings of *Aſher*, how fat is the Land? Its “ Soil ſhall ſupply with Delicacies the *Kings* of the “ People of *Iſrael*.”

Q. *And what was the Bleſſing of* Naphtali ?

A. “ *Naphtali* is a Hind let looſe ; he giveth “ goodly Words.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this ? Or what Analogy is there between a Hind let looſe, and giving good Words ?*

A. It is the Opinion of the moſt learned Commentators, and amongſt the Reſt, of the ingenious *Bochart*, that this Text is egregiouſly wrong tranſlated, and that the Words in the Original ought to have been rendered thus ; Naphtali *ſhall be like a Tree having Grafts, ſhooting out pleaſant Branches.* This ſeems to be moſt rational and natural, not only from the Words, but from the Senſe ; if we conſider that *Jacob* might very well compare this Tribe to a Tree, as he does the two Tribes of *Joſeph* in the following Verſe ; and as good Men are often compared to fine Trees in the Scripture, *Pſal.* i. 3. xcii. 12. And this *Jacob* might do, either becauſe of their Fruitfulneſs, *Naphtali* having brought but four Children into *Egypt*, as we have already ſeen, *Gen.* xlvi. 24. notwithſtanding which, in leſs than two hundred and fifteen Years, they amounted to more than fifty Thouſand, capable of bearing Arms, as may be ſeen, *Numb.* i. 43. or upon Account of the Fruitfulneſs of the Country which fell to their Lot, which *Moſes* and *Joſephus* repreſent as the richeſt in all *Judea*. And it is thus that the *Septuagint*, the *Chaldee Paraphraſe*, and the *Arabick* Verſion, (which the learned *Bochart* conſulted in *Sweden*) tranſlate theſe Words, without following the Pointing of the *Maſorets*, which has often corrupted the Meaning of the Text ; and given Occaſion to modern Interpreters to tranſlate this Verſe after a Manner, which makes the latter Part of this Prophecy have no Relation to the firſt.

Q. *We are now come to* Joſeph ; *What Bleſſing did* Jacob *beſtow on this his favourite Son ?*

A. We have already obſerved upon this Head, that *Jacob*, in giving this his laſt Bleſſing, was not left to the Dictates of his own Inclinations, but was over-ruled therein by the Divine Providence ; otherwiſe, no doubt, *Joſeph* would have had the Bleſſing that was conferred upon *Judah* ; nevertheleſs, he had ample Reaſon to be ſatisfied with that which fell to his Share ; it was as follows : “ *Joſeph* is a fruitful Bough, even a “ fruitful Bough by a Well ; whoſe Branches run “ over the Wall. The Archers have ſorely grieved “ him, and ſhot at him, and hated him. But his “ Bow abode in Strength, and the Arms of his Hands “ were made ſtrong, by the Hands of the mighty “ *God* of *Jacob* : From thence is the Shepherd, the “ Stone of *Iſrael*. Even by the *God* of thy Father “ who ſhall help thee, and by the *Almighty*, who “ ſhall bleſs thee with Bleſſings of Heaven above, “ Bleſſings of the Deep that lieth under, Bleſſings of “ the Breaſts, and of the Womb. The Bleſſings of “ thy Father have prevailed above the Bleſſings of “ my Progenitors, unto the utmoſt Bound of the “ everlaſting Hills ; they ſhall be on the Head of “ *Joſeph*, and on the Crown of the Head of him, “ that was ſeparate from his Brethren.”

Q. *What may we obſerve hereupon?*

A. By the firſt Part of *Joſeph's* Bleſſing, *Jacob* amply and plainly ſets forth the great Strength, and Fruitfulneſs of *Joſeph* ; Family, with the large Extent of his two-fold Tribe *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, which at the firſt numbering of the Tribes, produced from theſe two Stems, threeſcore and twelve Thouſand, and ſeven Hundred Men able to bear Arms ; and at the ſecond numbering amounted to eighty five Thouſand two Hundred, *Numb.* i. 32, *&c.* and xxvi. 34, *&c.* a Number far ſuperior to that of any other Tribe. Among the Archers named in the next Verſe, *Joſeph's* Brethren may undoubtedly claim the firſt Place ; for they are expreſly ſaid to have hated him, ſo that they could not ſpeak peaceably unto him, *Gen.* xxxvii. 4. to have hated him yet more, *ver.* 5, 8. to have conſpired his Death, *ver.* 18. and afterwards to have ſold him unto Slavery, *ver.* 28. Next to them his lewd Miſtreſs may very juſtly be ranked, and by her Means, her too eaſily jealous Husband *Potiphar*. As to his Bow abiding in Strength, that undoubtedly refers to his exemplary Virtue, for he was no military Man, whereby he got the better of all his Enemies ; and this may ſerve partly to explain, how *Jacob* got the Portion he gave *Joſeph* above his Brethren, by his Sword, and by his Bow. The good old Patriarch next informs us, how *Joſeph's* Bow came to abide in Strength, becauſe the Arms of his Hands were made ſtrong by the Hands of the mighty *God* of *Jacob* ; that is, *God* fought for him, or protected him by his Providence ; and as to the latter Part of this Verſe ; from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of *Iſrael*, this ſeems to refer to the Preſervation of *Jacob*, and his Family by *Joſeph*, and the Meaning thereof ſeems to be, either, that to that great Deliverance vouchſafed by *God* to *Joſeph*, it was owing, that *Jacob*, or *Iſrael*, had a Shepherd to feed him, and a Stone to lay his Head upon, as once he did, or a Rock of Refuge to fly to in his Diſtreſſes ; or a Foundation-Stone, or Corner-ſtone, or Pillar, to ſuſtain and preſerve the Houſe of *Iſrael* : Or elſe the Meaning may be, notwithſtanding *Joſeph* was an Inſtrument in this wonderful Work, yet the *God* of *Jacob* was the chief Author thereof ; who by his omniſcient and almighty Providence ſo ordered it, that *Joſeph* ſhould be firſt ſold, and afterwards advanced, to the End that his *Iſrael*, with whom he hath been pleaſed to make a gracious and everlaſting Covenant, ſhould have a Shepherd to feed him in a Time of Famine, and a Stone or Rock to ſupport him. The following Verſe contains all Manner of external and earthly Bleſſings, which were typical of ſpiritual and heavenly ones, proviſionally, on their Obedience to the Divine Commands ; and the laſt Verſe, wherein *Jacob* gives his Bleſſing the Preference to thoſe of his Father *Iſaac*, and his Grandfather *Abraham*, evidently refers to the Extenſiveneſs thereof : For whereas *Iſhmael* was excluded from *Abraham's* Bleſſing, and *Eſau* was excluded from

Iſaac's, not only all *Jacob's* immediate Children, but his two Grandchildren *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, were made Partakers of his Bleſſing. *Jacob's* Bleſſing was likewiſe, delivered in much more clear and expreſs Terms than thoſe of his Forefather's; for the Grant of the Land of *Canaan* was transferred to them only, in general, whereas it was now, in ſome Meaſure portioned out to *Joſeph* and the Reſt of his Brethren. The Time of the Accompliſhment of the Promiſe alſo drew nearer and nearer; as there was a more likely Proſpect of the Multiplication of their Seed, and conſequently of their growing ſufficiently numerous, to poſſeſs the *Promiſed Land*.

Q. *None now remains behind but* Benjamin; *What was his Bleſſing?*

A. "*Benjamin* ſhall raven as a Wolf: In the Morning he ſhall devour the Prey, and at Night he ſhall divide the Spoil."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. The fierce Temper of this Tribe is admirably deſcribed, by *Jacob's* comparing their Anceſtor to the moſt ravenous of all Beaſts. We have various Inſtances in the Hiſtory of *Iſrael*, which evidently demonſtrate the Conformity between this Prophecy and the Diſpoſition of *Benjamin's* Deſcendants; particularly, the War they maintained againſt all the other Tribes, though in a very bad and moſt ſhameful Cauſe; wherein they ſlew conſiderably more of their Enemies, than the Amount of their whole Army. As to the latter Part of the Bleſſing, wherein it is ſaid, "In the Morning he ſhall devour the Prey, and at Night he ſhall divide the Spoil," it certainly refers to their great Succeſs in warlike Expeditions; and, as the learned *Bochart* very well obſerves, ought to be literally underſtood thus: "*Benjamin* ſhall be as a Wolf, who dividing his Prey in the Evening, ſhall have enough to feed on all Night, ſo that he ſhall eat even until the Morning."

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. "All theſe are the twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*; and this is that their Father ſpake unto them, and bleſſed them; every one according to his Bleſſing, he bleſſed them."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. Having thus, as largely as the nature of our Work will give us Leave, explained the ſeveral Prophecies, pronounced by *Jacob*, concerning his Sons, it will be neceſſary to finiſh our Obſervations, with an Anſwer to that Objection, which has been often made to this Text of *Scripture*: It is this; "That their Father ſpake unto them, and bleſſed them; every one according to his Bleſſing, he bleſſed them;" Whereas, ſay the Objectors, what he ſaid to the three Firſt, *Reuben*, *Simeon*, and *Levi*, might be rather taken for Curſing, than Bleſſing; ſince he deprived his eldeſt Son of his Birthright, and ſpoke of *Simeon* and *Levi* with the ſtrongeſt Marks of Averſion, and Abhorrence. But without having Recourſe to the *Jewiſh* Fables, abundantly cited by Commentators on this Paſſage, we think that taking the Whole of what *Jacob* ſays together, and the general Purport thereof conſider'd, no farther Anſwer will be requiſite to any Man of Senſe and Reaſon. For the good *Patriarch*, afflicted by the divine Spirit, having firſt reproved *Reuben* for his *Inceſt*, and ſhown him how that Prerogative, which had otherwiſe belonged to him as being his *Firſt-born*, was forfeited for that Offence, allows him notwithſtanding a Part in the Land of *Canaan*; and did not exclude him from being the Head of a Tribe in *Iſrael*. Then as to *Simeon* and *Levi*, though he does indeed expreſs his utter Deteſtation of their Cruelty, and certainly not without juſt Reaſon, ſince it not only expoſed him, and all his Family to the utmoſt Danger, had not the Providence of *God* preſerved them, but was a direct and enormous Tranſgreſſion of the divine Laws, yet neither of them were deprived of their Share of their Inheritance, but the Poſterity of each became a diſtinct Tribe; wherefore, the good old Man might very properly be ſaid to bleſs them, though not in an equal Degree with the Reſt of their Brethren: Beſides he left them all an Intereſt in the divine Covenant, one Article whereof was the giving *Canaan* to his Poſterity; and this was an Earneſt of the other Branches, and Articles thereof, conditionally, or their performing their Part of it.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Jacob *to his Sons?*

A. "And he charged them, and ſaid unto them, I am to be gathered unto my People: Bury me with my Fathers, in the Cave that is in the Field of *Ephron* the *Hittite*; In the Cave that is in the Field of *Machpelah*, which is before *Mamre*, in the Land of *Canaan*, which *Abraham* bought with the Field of *Ephron* the *Hittite*, for a Poſſeſſion of a burying Place. (There they buried *Abraham* and *Sarah* his Wife, there they buried *Iſaac* and *Rebekah* his Wife, and there I buried *Leah*,) The Purchaſe of the Field, and of the Cave that is therein, was from the Children of *Heth*."

Q. *What is ſuppoſed to have been* Jacob's *Reaſon, for giving ſuch particular Directions concerning his Burial?*

A. Firſt, that he might, thereby, prevent their fixing their Minds upon *Egypt* and keep them in a proper Diſpoſition for removing to *Canaan*, whenever it ſhould pleaſe the *Almighty* to appoint. *Secondly*, He ſpecifies every particular Circumſtance, relating both to the Place, and the Purchaſe thereof, both for their Direction, becauſe they had been abſent ſome Time from thence, and to expreſs how much his Heart was ſet thereupon; as alſo thereby to engage them to the more careful Performances of this Command.

Q. *Of what are we farther informed concerning* Jacob?

A. "And when *Jacob* had made an End of commanding his Sons, he gathered up his Feet into the Bed, and yielded up the Ghoſt, and was gathered unto his People."

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That whilſt *Jacob* was employed in that moſt ſolemn and religious Work, of bleſſing his Children in the Name, and by the Spirit of *God*, he uſed as reverend a Poſture as his infirm Body would permit; and, therefore, is ſuppoſed to have ſat upon his Bedſide, with his Legs hanging downwards. And when he had finiſhed that great Work, and wearied himſelf with ſo long a Speech, delivered with a moſt raiſed, and affected Mind, he compoſed himſelf to Reſt, and waited, with Reſignation, for the comfortable Approach of his Death, which ſpeedily followed.

CHAP. L.

Joſeph *weeps over his deceaſed Father, and kiſſeth him, and cauſeth him to be embalmed; The* Egyptians *mourn for him ſeventy Days.* Joſeph *gets the Officers of* Pharaoh's *Houſhold, to ask leave for his going to bury his Father in* Canaan; Pharaoh *gives leave.* Joſeph *carries his Father's Body, with a ſtately Retinue into* Canaan, *and there mourns for him ſeven Days, and buries him, according to his Deſire.*

Deſire. Joſeph *and his Brethren, return into* Egypt; *where his Brethren being apprehenſive that he will then revenge himſelf on them for their former Cruelty, ſend him an humble Meſſage, in their Father's Name, and aſk his Pardon. He weeps, forgives, and encourages them. He lives a hundred and ten Years; ſees* Eprahim's *Children, of the third Generation, and the Grand-children of* Manaſſeh; *aſſures his Brethren of their Return out of* Egypt; *takes an Oath of them, that they would carry his Bones with him, dies, and is embalmed.*

Q. O*F what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And *Joſeph* fell upon his Father's Face, and wept upon him, and kiſſed him. And *Joſeph* commanded his Servants the Phyſicians to embalm his Father: And the Phyſicians embalmed *Iſrael.* And forty Days were fulfilled for him, (for ſo are fulfilled the Days of thoſe which are embalmed) and the *Egyptians* mourned for him threeſcore and ten Days."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That notwithſtanding the Loſs of ſo good a Father, muſt undoubtedly be very afflicting to ſo numerous a Family, whoſe chief Dependance for their Support was upon his Piety, yet we do not find that any of *Jacob's* Sons paid the leaſt Demonſtration of filial Affection and Duty, with ſo much Devotion and Tenderneſs as the pious *Joſeph.* He could not ſee his aged Parent's Face, though Dead, without kiſſing, and bathing it with his Tears; and undoubtedly he cloſed alſo his Eyes, as *God* had promiſed he ſhould; and having thus given Vent to his Tears, he took care for his embalming; for which ſome have cenſured *Joſeph,* as being guilty of too great a Compliance with the *Egyptian* Cuſtoms, but with very little Reaſon. For *Firſt,* it was abſolutely neceſſary, in ſo hot a Climate, to preſerve the Body, in order for its being carried ſo far as into *Canaan*; *Secondly,* as it was a Thing altogether indifferent in itſelf, it would not only have been highly diſobliging, but very impudent, in *Joſeph,* not to have complied ſo far with the *Egyptian* Cuſtoms in this Reſpect; *Thirdly,* by his complying with this Cuſtom, *Joſeph* ſhewed the greateſt Regard for the Remains of his deceaſed Father, by preſerving them many Years longer from Putrefication, than they could poſſibly have been kept otherwiſe; the *Egyptians* having arrived at ſuch Perfection in this Art, as to preſerve Bodies uncorrupt ſome Thouſands of Years. It is obſervable, alſo, that the Mourning of the *Egyptians* ſeventy Days, for *Jacob,* in Compliment to *Joſeph,* is the ſtrongeſt Teſtimony imaginable, of the Uprightneſs and Lenity of his Adminiſtration; as is alſo the Nobility and Courtiers attending his Corpſe into *Canaan.*

Q. *What did* Joſeph *when the Days of his mourning were paſt?*

A. "And when the Days of his mourning were paſt, *Joſeph* ſpake unto the Houſe of *Pharaoh,* ſaying, If now I have found Grace in your Eyes, ſpeak, I pray you, in the Ears of *Pharaoh,* ſaying,"

Q. *What was the Reaſon of* Joſeph's *applying to others to ſpeak to* Pharaoh? *Could not he have ſpoken to him himſelf, ſince he was Prime Miniſter?*

A. It was not lawful for any one to appear in the King's Preſence in a mourning Habit; either becauſe they ſhould not excite any Melancholy Thoughts in their Princes; or becauſe, according to their ſuperſtitious Notions, the Sight of ſuch Perſons was thought Ominous, and Unlucky.

Q. *And what were the Houſe of* Pharaoh *to ſay to him?*

A. "My Father made me ſwear, ſaying, Lo, I die; in my Grave which I have digged for me in the Land of *Canaan,* there ſhalt thou bury me. Now, therefore, let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my Father, and I will come again."

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon.*

A. That *Joſeph* lay under a triple Obligation to perform this; *Firſt,* his Duty to fulfil the Will of the Dead. *Secondly,* The Obedience which he owed to his Father's Command. And, *Thirdly,* the Tye of a ſolemn Oath. All of which had Weight even with the *Heathens,* and were ſo many Arguments in his Favour to *Pharaoh,* and his Courtiers, to induce the one to interceed in his Behalf, and the other to grant his Requeſt.

Q. *Did the King readily conſent to* Joſeph's *Going!*

A. Yes; "And *Pharaoh* ſaid, Go up and bury thy Father, according as he made thee Swear."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That even the *Heathens,* by the Light of Nature, were taught to look upon an Oath as ſacred and inviolable, and to regard Perjury as one of the moſt heinous of Crimes. What would they have ſaid, had they ſeen thoſe who call themſelves *Chriſtians,* frequently ſwearing away the Lives of their Fellow Subjects falſly, for the Sake of a Reward! Or wicked Stateſmen ſuborning falſe Evidences, to ſwear their Enemies into Deſigns againſt the Government, without the leaſt Colour of Truth! What an indelible Stain muſt ſuch falſe Profeſſors of *Chriſtianity* bring upon that holy Religion!

Q. *What did* Joſeph *having obtained this Permiſſion?*

A. "And *Joſeph* went up to bury his Father: And with him went all the Houſe of *Pharaoh,* the Elders of his Houſe, and the Elders of the Land of *Egypt.*"

Q. *Who were the Houſe of* Pharaoh, *the Elders of his Houſe, and the Elders of the Land?*

A. The Houſe of *Pharaoh* were the under Officers of the Houſhold; the Elders of his Houſe, the Head Officers of the Houſhold; and the Elders of the Land, the Chief Officers of State throughout the Kingdom, whether Civil, or Military, whoſe Poſts did not require their ſo immediate and conſtant Attendance at Court.

Q. *Who elſe went with* Joſeph *up to* Canaan?

A. "And all the Houſe of *Joſeph,* and his Brethren, and his Father's Houſe: Only their little Ones, and their Flocks, and their Herds, they left in the Land of *Goſhen.* And there went up with him both Chariots and Horſemen: And it was a very great Company."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That the Funeral of *Jacob's* muſt certainly be very pompous, ſince not only all his own numerous Family, now branched out into ſeveral Branches, and *Joſeph's* Guards and Attendants as Viceroy, and Superintendant of *Egypt,* but almoſt all the Court, and the Head Grandees of the Kingdom, with a conſiderable Retinue, and not improbably, ſome Troops for their Defence, in Caſe of Accidents, accompanied him in this ſolemn Proceſſion. An undeniable Proof how well *Joſeph* was beloved; which could not proceed from any Thing but the Lenity, and Impartiality of his Adminiſtration; which was univerſally applauded, by the unanimous Voice of the whole Kingdom. But,

Tempora mutantur, & nos mutamur in illis!

We queſtion very much, whether many Prime Miniſters now-a-days, would have ſuch a Compliment paid them, by any, but their own immediate Hirelings, and Dependants.

Q. *What next are we informed of concerning* Jacob's *Funeral?*

A. "And they came to the Threſhing-Floor of "*Atad*, which is beyond *Jordan*; and there they "mourned with a great and very ſore Lamentation: "And he made a Mourning for his Father ſeven "Days. And when the Inhabitants of the Land, "the *Canaanites*, ſaw the Mourning in the Floor of "*Atad*, they ſaid, this is a grievous Mourning to "the *Egyptians*: Wherefore the Name of it was called *Abel-mizraim*, which is beyond *Jordan*."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That *Jacob's* Funeral Proceſſion did not go the neareſt Way to his Burying-place, but fetch'd a great Compaſs round about, which, probably, was done for ſeveral Reaſons; *Firſt*, for the greater Solemnity of the Proceſſion: *Secondly*, for the greater Conveniency of Travelling, and chooſing the beſt Roads for their Chariots: And, *Thirdly*, that they might not give any Umbrage to the *Canaanites* by their being ſo numerous.

Q. *What farther are we informed of concerning this Funeral?*

A. "And his Sons did unto him as he commanded "them. For his Sons carried him into the Land of "*Canaan*, and buried him in the Cave of the Field "of *Machpelah*; which *Abraham* bought, with the "Field, for the Poſſeſſion of a Burying-place, of "*Ephron the Hittite*, before *Mamre*."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That it is very probable, from all *Jacob's* Sons being named here, whereas only *Joſeph* is named before, that, notwithſtanding their Faults in other Reſpects, they were not remiſs in fulfilling the laſt Will of their dead Father.

Q. *Having thus depoſited the Remains of their Father, according to his Order, and Deſire, what did* Joſeph, *and his Brethren, with all that accompanied them?*

A. "And *Joſeph* returned into *Egypt*, He, and "his Brethren, and all that went up with him to "bury his Father, after he had buried his Father."

Q. *What are we next told of* Joſeph's *Brethren?*

A. "And when *Joſeph's* Brethren ſaw that their "Father was dead, they ſaid, *Joſeph* will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the "Evil which we did unto him."

Q. *What is obſervable thereupon?*

A. That a guilty Conſcience needs no Accuſers; and that Fear is the inſeparable Companion of Sin, and Wickedneſs.

Q. *And what did* Joſeph's *Brethren to deprecate his Anger?*

A. "And they ſent Meſſengers unto *Joſeph*, ſaying, Thy Father did command before he died, "ſaying, So ſhall ye ſay unto *Joſeph*, forgive, I pray "ye now, the Treſpaſs of thy Brethren, and their "Sin; For they did unto thee Evil: And now, we "pray thee, forgive the Treſpaſs of the Servants of "the *God* of thy Father. And *Joſeph* wept, when "they ſpake unto him. And his Brethren alſo went "and fell down before his Face: And they ſaid, Behold, we be thy Servants."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That this looks like an Invention of their own, for it does not appear that their Father ever knew the Truth of the Fact; or if he did, he was ſo well aſſured of *Joſeph's* Clemency and Goodneſs, that he was not in the leaſt apprehenſive of his taking any Revenge on his Brothers: But, however that be, it was artfully contrived, to make their dead Father, whoſe Memory they knew was very dear to pious *Joſeph*, their Advocate; and their Meſſage was as artfully worded; for, leſt the ſuppoſed Requeſt, of their dying Father, ſhould not be prevalent enough, they therein make *God* himſelf alſo their Interceſſor; and deſire Forgiveneſs, as they joined in the ſame Worſhip with him. But there ſeems to have been no need of ſuch moving Arguments, to a Man of *Joſeph's* tender and compaſſionate Temper; for their Diffidence of his having forgiven them, is as afflicting to him now, as their Offence was formerly to him; and accordingly, he could not forbear weeping at the Delivery of the Meſſage, but, in all Probability, ſent immediately for them; and they, on coming into his Preſence, fall down, and ſubmit themſelves to any Puniſhment he ſhall think fit; which humble Behaviour could not fail of affecting him very ſenſibly, had he not been quite ſo tender-hearted as he was.

Q. *And what Anſwer made he to his Brethren?*

A. "And *Joſeph* ſaid unto them, Fear not: For "am I in the Place of *God?* But as for you, ye "thought evil againſt me; but *God* meant it unto "Good, to bring to paſs, as it is this Day, to ſave "much People alive. Now therefore, fear ye not. "I will nouriſh you, and your little ones. And he "comforted them, and ſpake kindly unto them."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That *Joſeph* endeavours to diſpel their Fears, by aſſuring them, that if he were inclinable to be revengful, he ſhould not dare to give Way to it, becauſe that would be uſurping *God's* Prerogative out of his Hands; and taking upon him that which *God* has expreſly reſerv'd to himſelf: Wherefore they might make themſelves eaſy, for they ſhould always find him an affectionate Brother, and a conſtant Friend,

Q. *What are we next told concerning* Joſeph?

A. "And *Joſeph* dwelt in *Egypt*, he and his Father's Houſe: And *Joſeph* lived an hundred and "ten Years: And *Joſeph* ſaw *Ephraim's* Children "of the third Generation: The Children alſo of *Machir*, the Son of *Manaſſeh*, were brought up upon "*Joſeph's* Knees."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That *Ephraim's* Privilege above *Manaſſeh*, and *Jacob's* Bleſſing took Place very early, even during the Time of *Joſeph's* being alive: So effectual were the Bleſſings of the Patriarchs, and ſo punctually fulfilled their Prophecies!

Q. *What farther are we informed concerning* Joſeph?

A. "And *Joſeph* ſaid unto his Brethren, I die: And "*God* will ſurely viſit you; and bring you out "of this Land, to the Land which he ſware "to *Abraham*, to *Iſaac*, and to *Jacob*. And *Joſeph* "took an Oath of the Children of *Iſrael*, ſaying, "*God* will ſurely viſit you, and ye ſhall carry up "my Bones from hence."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. It has been diſputed, whether by the Word *Brethren* here, we are to underſtand *Jacob's* immediate Sons, who were really *Joſeph's* Brothers, or the Heads of Families, their Deſcendants; and indeed it ſeems moſt probable that it ſhould be the latter; both becauſe all his Brothers except *Benjamin*, being older than himſelf, it is likely moſt of them died before him; and becauſe, it is ſaid immediately after, he took an Oath of the Children of *Iſrael*, who are probably the ſame Perſons before called his Brethren. The Reaſon of *Joſeph*'s exacting an Oath from them, that they would carry his Bones with them, ſeems to have been, to teſtify his firm Faith and Reliance on *God's* Promiſes, and to put them in Mind, that they were to be but Strangers and Sojourners in *Egypt*; and, therefore, were not to ſet their Hearts upon it, but upon the promis'd Land.

Q. *What farther are we informed concerning him?*

A. “ So *Joſeph* died, being an hundred and ten
“ Years old, and they embalmed him, and he was
“ put in a Coffin in *Egypt*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That for about thirteen Years Affliction, he enjoy'd fourſcore Years Honour, and as much Proſperity as can well be hoped for upon Earth; a very ample Retribution of *God* to his faithful Servant, even in this World; beſides eternal Happineſs in the next. Who would not willingly ſerve ſo bountiful a Maſter!

It may not be amiſs here, as no one has ſuffered more Cenſures than *Joſeph*, to give our Readers ſome curſory Obſervations as to his general Character, which to us, however ſeverely he has been dealt with by others, appears in the moſt amiable Light imaginable. Not to mention his eminent Piety and Chaſtity, how conſpicuous is he for the gentle Sweetneſs of his Temper! which, inſtead of revenging Injuries, induced him to conciliate the Favours of his Enemies, by conferring Benefits; for as to the Puniſhment of his Brothers, on their firſt coming into *Egypt*, it was rather to bring them to a Senſe of their Crimes, (and for which perhaps, he might have the divine Command) than with any intent to revenge himſelf for the Wrongs which he had ſuffered at their Hands: And the Tenderneſs he afterwards expreſſed for them and their Families, was a ſufficient Proof, that Hatred and Malice found no Place in his Heart. Their own Guilt indeed, made them afraid leſt he ſhould remember their Cruelty, and his Sufferings to their Diſadvantage; but that only gave this righteous Perſon a freſh Occaſion to ſhew the Mercifulneſs of this Temper: He not only confirmed the Promiſes he had before made them, of burying in Oblivion the inhuman Treatment he had received from them, but their very Suſpicions of his harbouring any Ill-will againſt them, drew Tears from his Eyes; and it grieved his compaſſionate Heart, that they ſo much as doubted the Sincerity of his former Reconcilement; and his brotherly Affection towards them. In ſhort, it appears, from the whole Tenour of his Conduct, throughout his Life, that as his Holineſs made him pleaſing in the Sight of *God*, ſo his Meekneſs could not but render him the Delight of Men; in a Word, among all the excellent Perſons mentioned in the five Books of *Moſes*, there is not one more venerable, or more amiable in his Character than *Joſeph*, of whom the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus* ſays, That he was a merciful Man, who found Favour in the Sight of all Fleſh.

The *Jewiſh* Writers mention many Circumſtances as to *Joſeph*'s Hiſtory, which are not to be found in Scripture, and even ſome which cannot be reconciled thereto. Thus they tell us of one *Tzepho*, who oppoſed him, and his Company in the Land of *Canaan*; claiming a Right unto the Field and Cave of *Machpelah*, and refuſing to let the Body of *Jacob* be buried therein: Over this *Tzepho*, and his Aſſociate, they pretend, that *Joſeph*, and his *Egyptian* Friends gained a great Victory, without the Loſs of one Man. From them alſo we learn, that the Magicians of *Egypt* giving out, after *Joſeph*'s Deceaſe, that the only Way to keep the *Iſraelites* from going out of the Land, was to hide his Body, where they ſhould never be able to find it. The *Egyptians* in order to effect this, turned the *Nile*, or rather one of its Branches, out of its proper Channel, and having ſunk *Joſeph's* Coffin in the Mud, they forced the Rivers again into its old Courſe. Others again affirm, that *Pharaoh* cauſed his Body to be placed in the *Royal Treaſury*; becauſe the Magicians had foretold, that if ever the *Hebrews* carried it away, the Land of *Egypt* ſhould be covered with a thick Darkneſs, and be expoſed to a Multitude of other Evils. Some have fancied that *Joſeph* learned from the *Egyptians*, thoſe ſecret Arts, for which that People were Famous; and others from a Paſſage in the *Pſalms*, think that the *Egyptians* were indebted to him, for a great Part of that Knowledge, which redounded ſo much to their Glory in ſucceeding Ages.

It is reaſonable to believe, that the *Egyptians* made a long and ſolemn Mourning for *Joſeph*, as they had before done for his Father, notwithſtanding there is no mention made thereof by *Moſes* in his Hiſtory; for as we read of his being embalmed, and put into a Coffin in *Egypt*, and as the *Egyptians* uſed to mourn, during all the Time the Body was preparing, this is a ſtrong Preſumption of what we have advanced on this Head. The Space allotted for the ſolemn Mourning at the Deceaſe of *Pharaoh*, was *ſeventy-two* Days, or the *fifth* Part of a Year; which bore, perhaps, ſome Analogy to the *fifth* Part of their yearly Revenue, which they paid him whilſt living. Now *Joſeph* being the Perſon next in Dignity to the King, there ſeems to be no Abſurdity in ſuppoſing, that the higheſt Honours, next to thoſe belonging unto the regal Dignity, were paid him after his Deceaſe; eſpecially if we conſider, that, purely to do him Honour, they mourned for his Father *ſeventy* Days. With this Event, *Moſes* cloſes his firſt Book, which we call *Geneſis*, comprehending therein the Hiſtory of the *Church*, and *People* of *God* during the Space of two thouſand, three hundred and ſixty-nine Years.

THE
SECOND BOOK
OF
MOSES,
CALLED
EXODUS.

As the firſt Book of Moſes *is called* Geneſis, *from the* Greek *Word* Geneſis, *which ſignifies* Generation, *becauſe it contains the Hiſtory of the Creation and Generation of Mankind, and eſpecially of the People of* God; *ſo the ſecond Book, which commences from the Death of* Joſeph, *and reaches down to the Rearing up of the Tabernacle, in the Wilderneſs, is called, likewiſe,* Exodus, *from the* Greek, *Ex hodos,* on the Way, *becauſe it gives an Account of the Tranſactions of the* Iſraelites, *whilſt on the Way from* Egypt *to the Land of* Canaan. *It includes the Space of about an hundred and forty Years; and informs us of the wonderful Preſervation and raiſing up of* Moſes, *who together with* Aaron, *was to be the Inſtrument under* God, *of the Deliverance of the* Iſraelites *from a moſt grievous and oppreſſive Bondage. In order to introduce this,* Moſes *gives us previouſly an Account of all the Hardſhips the* Iſraelites *endured under two of the* Egyptian *Monarchs, with the Manner of his being called by* God *to be their Deliverer; his demanding their Liberty;* Pharaoh's *haughty and inſolent Refuſal; the ten Plagues inflicted by* God *upon him and his People, for perſiſting in his Refuſal; the* Iſraelites *going out from thence with a high Hand;* Pharaoh's *repenting that he had let them go, and purſuing them; their paſſing through the* Red-ſea *dry-ſhod, and* Pharaoh's *being drowned with all his Hoſt in the* Red-ſea, *inſomuch that not one eſcaped;* Moſes's *Song thereupon:* Moſes *then gives us an exact Account of the Tranſactions of the* Iſraelites *by the Way; their frequent Murmurings, at* Marah *for Water; in the Wilderneſs for Bread; at* Rephidim *again for Water; their overcoming* Amalek; Jethro's *Counſel to* Moſes, *to which he hearkens; the Delivery of the Ten Commandments on* Mount Sinai, *with ſundry other Laws; the ſetting apart* Aaron *and his Sons for the Prieſthood; the making the Tabernacle; the Deſcription thereof; the People's cauſing* Aaron *to make a Calf, during the Abſence of* Moſes *on the Mount, and their worſhipping thereof; his breaking the Tables; the Idolaters being ſlain; the* Lord's *Refuſal to go with the People; the renewing the Tables;* God's *making a Covenant with the People; the Rearing of the Tabernacle; and the ſanctifying of* Aaron *and his Sons for the Service thereof.*

CHAP. I.

The Names and Numbers of the Children of Iſrael, *who came into* Egypt; Joſeph *and his Brethren, and all that Generation die; the* Iſraelites *multiply incredibly; a new King ariſes who knew not* Joſeph; *he contrives to prevent their Muliplication by exceſſive Oppreſſion; his Stratagem proves in vain, for they multiply the more; the King commands the* Hebrew *Midwives to kill all the Male Children; they fearing* God *more than the King, will not obey his inhuman Command; they excuſe themſelves to him for not doing it;* God *bleſſes them for their Honeſty and Humanity; the People continuing to multiply exceedingly, the King commands all the Male Children to be drowned.*

Queſt. W*HAT are we firſt informed of in this Chapter?*

A. "Now theſe are the "Names of the Children of *Iſrael*, which came into *Egypt*; "every Man and his Houſhold that came with *Jacob. Reuben, Simeon, Levi,* and *Judah, Iſſachar,* "*Zebulun,* and *Benjamin, Dan* and *Naphtali, Gad*

“ and *Aſher*. And all the Souls that came out of the
“ Loins of *Jacob*, were ſeventy Souls: For *Joſeph*
“ was in *Egypt* already. And *Joſeph* died, and all
“ his Brethren, and all that *Generation*.”

Q. *This does not require any Explanation; of what are we next informed concerning the Children of* Iſrael?

A. “ And the Children of *Iſrael* were fruitful,
“ and increaſed abundantly, and multiplied, and
“ waxed exceeding mighty; and the Land was filled with them.”

Q. *What has been obſerved upon this Text?*

A. That it is apparent from the Manner wherein *Moſes* expreſſes himſelf on this Head, that the Increaſe of the Children of *Iſrael* ſeemed ſurprizing to him, as well as to the *Egyptians*; for he makes uſe of *four* Verbs, the moſt expreſſive and emphatical in the *Hebrew* Language, to deſcribe their prodigious Multiplication, and convey a proper Idea thereof to his Readers. The firſt of theſe Verbs is *Pharou*, which, in our Bible, is rendered *were fruitful*, which Word is particularly applied to *Trees*; and it is excellently obſerved thereupon, by *Abarbanel*, that the Meaning of this Word here, is probably, that neither the Men were *impotent*, nor the Women *barren*, but that they as regularly and conſtantly produced Fruit as the *Trees*. The ſecond Verb is *Vajjiſchretſou*, which, in our Bible, is rendered, *increaſed abundantly*, but literally is *brought forth like Reptiles*; which imports, as *Abarbanel* likewiſe obſerves, that they had more than *one* at a Birth. The third Verb is *Vajjirbou*, which, in our Bible, is tranſlated *multiplied*; and the learned *Jew* beforementioned, is of Opinion, that the Signification of this Verb is, that their Children did not die in their Infancy, but lived alſo to *propagate* others. The laſt Verb uſed here, is *Vajjahatſoumou*, which, in our Bible, is rendered, *waxed exceeding mighty*; that is, *grew ſtrong and powerful*; accordingly, we find it added, that *the Land was filled with them.* But notwithſtanding that *Moſes* expreſſes himſelf with ſo much Energy, as if he had foreſeen what a Race of Infidels would ariſe in theſe latter Times, and had accordingly worded this, in the moſt emphatical Manner, on purpoſe to obviate and prevent all their Objections, ſeveral atheiſtical Wits have not ſcrupled to cavil at this Story; and have aſſerted that it is impoſſible, that above ſix hundred Thouſand Men, beſides Women and Children ſhould proceed from ſeventy Men, within the Compaſs of two hundred and fifteen Years. Herein, however, as uſual, they betray no leſs Ignorance than Impiety; for not to mention, the extraordinary Fruitfulneſs of the Women in *Egypt*, who frequently brought forth four or five Children at a Birth, as is affirmed by *Ariſtotle*, in his *Hiſt. Animal.* vii. 4. and other Authors of Reputation; nor the long Lives of the Men of that Age; nor the Plurality of Wives then much in Uſe; nor the ſingular Bleſſing of *God* upon the *Hebrews*, in giving them Conceptions and Births without Abortion; though theſe are all but very reaſonable Suppoſitions, the Poſſibility, and even Probability thereof, will appear from hence. Suppoſe 200 Perſons were reckoned, whereas there was 215; and only fifty perſons who begat Children; and theſe began not to procreate 'till they were twenty Years old each; and then each begat only three Children; and let us then divide the 200 Years into ten Times twenty Years; what will be the Produce thereof, according to this Calculation. In the firſt, of 50, come 150; in the ſecond, of 150, come 450; in the third, come 1350; in the fourth, come 4050; in the fifth, 12150; in the ſixth, 36450; in the ſeventh, 109,350, in the eight, 328,050, in the ninth, 984,150, in the the tenth, 2,952,450. We have been thus prolix upon this Article, becauſe we are willing, as much as in us lies, to prevent the Growth of Infidelity and Atheiſm, by anſwering all the Cavils that have been made againſt the Credibility of any Part of Scripture.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ Now there aroſe up a new King over *Egypt*,
“ which knew not *Joſeph*.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. Not only that he did not perſonally know him; but that he had no Regard to the vaſt Obligations, which not only the Kingdom of *Egypt*, and the King under whom *Joſeph* was made Prime Miniſter, had to that illuſtrious *Hebrew*, but alſo all his Succeſſors; on Account of thoſe vaſt Additions of Wealth and Power he had made to that Crown.

Q. *Of what are we informed concerning this new Monarch?*

A. “ And he ſaid unto his People, Behold, the People of the Children of *Iſrael* are more and mightier
“ than we.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That, to make uſe of a homely Proverb, it is eaſy to find a Staff to beat a Dog; that is, it is eaſy for one in Power to invent a Pretence, to uſe thoſe ill, whom he has in his Power. This was the very Caſe between *Pharaoh* and the *Iſraelites*; for they were ſo far from being mightier than the *Egyptians*, that accordingly to the Computation of *Moſes*, which makes them but ſix hundred thouſand Men, the *Egyptians* muſt be, at leaſt, ten Times as numerous. It is evident, therefore, that this was a falſe and invidious Repreſentation, and Aggravation of the Matter, in order to bring the *Egyptians* over to his Sentiments; and juſtify the unreaſonable Severities he deſigned to exerciſe over them.

Q. *And what did he propoſe to prevent their Multiplication?*

A. “ Come on, let us deal wiſely with them, leſt
“ they multiply, and it come to paſs, that when there
“ falleth out any War, they join alſo unto our Enemies, and fight againſt us, and ſo get them up out
“ of the Land.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That, according to human Policy, this was far from being an unreaſonable Suſpicion; and had juſtifiable Methods been uſed to prevent it, no doubt, *Pharaoh* had committed no Sin therein; but his Jealouſy of the *Iſraelites*, could not by any Means juſtify his oppreſſing them in that intolerable Manner he did, and making Slaves of them.

Q. *And what Methods did the* Egyptians *take, to prevent what* Pharaoh *feared?*

A. “ Therefore they did ſet over them Taſkmaſters, to afflict them with their Burthens. And
“ they built for *Pharaoh*, Treaſure Cities, *Pithom*
“ and *Raamſes*.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That there is great Reaſon to believe theſe *Taſkmaſters* were *Collectors* of *Taxes*, perhaps *Exciſemen*; and that the Treaſure Cities were ſtrong Garriſon Towns, deſigned not only to hold Magazines of Corn, wherein great Part of the Treaſure of *Egypt* conſiſted, but alſo to curb the *Iſraelites*, and prevent their Riſing on any Occaſion, how juſtifiable ſoever. There was, therefore, a particular Mortification,

cation, excluſive of their Toil and Labours, in obliging the *Iſraelites* to build theſe Cities, which, when built, were to ſerve as Bridles to themſelves.

Q. *Did theſe Meaſures of* Pharaoh's *ſucceed according to his Expectation?*

A. No; the Providence of *God*, ſo ordaining it, quite the contrary: “But the more they afflicted “them, the more they multiply'd and grew. And “they were grieved becauſe of the Children of *Iſ*“*rael*.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. That Man purpoſes, and *God* diſpoſes; and that iniquitous Meaſures will never proſper, but prove bitter to the Contriver, in the End. The Increaſe of the *Iſraelites* excited the Fears and Jealouſy of the *Egyptians*, even when under the moſt cruel Oppreſſion.

Q. *Of what are we next informed concerning the Oppreſſion of the* Iſraelites?

A. “And the *Egyptians* made the Children of *Iſrael* “to ſerve with Rigour.”

Q. *May not good Reaſons be alledged for* God's *ſuffering this?*

A. Notwithſtanding it is impoſſible, for poor ſhort-ſighted Man, to dive into the Reaſons upon which the *Almighty* proceeds, there are good Grounds to believe that *God* permitted this; *Firſt*, as a Puniſhment for the Idolatry, into which many of them fell, as is evident from *Ezek.* xx. 5. as alſo to wean them from the Land of *Egypt*, which was, otherwiſe, a plentiful and deſirable Country; and to ſpur them up to deſire more ardently the Land of *Canaan*.

Q. *How far did the* Egyptians *proceed in their Severities?*

A. “And they made their Lives bitter with hard “Bondage, in Mortar, and in Brick, and in all man“ner of Service in the Field: All their Service where“in they made them ſerve was with Rigour.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That it is probable from hence, that the *Egyptians* were not content with oppreſſing, and making Slaves of the *Iſraelites*; but that they added Cruelty thereunto, in ſcourging, and otherwiſe corporally puniſhing thoſe miſerable People.

Q. *But did* Pharaoh *ſtop there?*

A. No, he proceeded to Meaſures yet more inhuman, and unjuſtifiable: “And the King of *Egypt* “ſpake to the *Hebrew* Midwives (of which the Name “of one was *Shiphrah*, and the Name of the other “*Puah*:) And he ſaid when ye do the Office of “a Midwife to the *Hebrew* Women, and ſee them “upon the, Stools, if it be a Son, then ye ſhall kill “him, but if it be a Daughter then ſhe ſhall live.”

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That it is a Queſtion whether there was more Cruelty or Licentiouſneſs in this Injunction of *Pharaoh*'s; he would have the Males murthered becauſe he was apprehenſive they might be dangerous as they grew up; and he would have the Females ſpared, that ſuch as were handſome, might be ſubſervient to the Luſt of his Subjects; and ſuch, as were not, might be their Slaves, and do their Drudgery.

Q. *Did the Midwives obey the King's Command?*

A. No, far from it, *God* gave them more Grace; “But the Midwives feared *God*, and did not as the “King of *Egypt* commanded them, but ſaved the “Men-Children alive.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That Man purpoſes, and *God* diſpoſes, as we obſerved before; the Midwives hazarded their Lives, by diſobeying *Pharaoh*'s Command, and ſparing the Male-Children; nevertheleſs *God* ſo inclined their Hearts, and preſerved them alſo.

Q. *What did* Pharaoh, *upon hearing of their Diſobedience?*

A. “And the King of *Egypt* called for the Mid“wives, and ſaid unto them, why have ye done this “Thing, and have ſaved the Men-Children alive? “And the Midwives ſaid unto *Pharaoh*, becauſe the “*Hebrew* Women are not as the *Egyptian* Women: “For they are lively, and are delivered, ere the Mid“wives come in unto them.”

Q. *Was not this an Untruth of the Midwives, and if ſo, how far was it juſtifiable?*

A. As we ought always to judge Charitably, where there is any Room for it, we ſhould be very cautious of Cenſuring theſe Women; the *Hebrew* Verb which in our Bible is rendered *lively*, has a ſtronger Senſe in the *Original*, and ſignifies that they were as vigorous as wild Beaſts in promoting the Birth of their Young without any Help. This might be true, as to the Generality of them, and they don't affirm it of all; and for this good Reaſons may be aſſigned: *Firſt*, their daily and exceſſive Labours, joined with their Fears of the Execution of the King's Command, whereof they might probably have got Notice, might haſten the Birth of their Children; as Frights will do, even to this Day, with other Women. And *Secondly*, on being informed what would be the Fate of their infant Sons, they might chooſe not to ſend for the Midwives, and reſign themſelves up to the divine Providence, and the Care of their Neighbours about them. Suppoſing, however, that what the Midwives ſaid was not ſtrictly true, yet we cannot help believing, that, in ſuch Circumſtances, it was more eligible to tell a Lye, than to have obeyed the King's unjuſt Command; and as they could not tell the Truth, and plainly refuſe Obedience to the Royal Command, without expoſing themſelves to immediate Death, we think a great deal may be allowed to human Frailty, eſpecially in a Caſe where no Body was injured. We may draw this uſeful Obſervation, however, from hence; how highly criminal a Lye is, and how much to be abhorred and avoided; ſince we find it queſtioned, whether even the Preſervation of Life, is a Motive ſufficient to attone for it.

Q. *How did this Excuſe ſucceed with the Midwives?*

A. Very well; “Therefore *God* dealt well with “the Midwives: And the People multiply'd, and “waxed very mighty. And it came to paſs, becauſe “the Midwives feared *God*, that he made them Hou“ſes.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, that* God *made them Houſes?*

A. That *God* bleſſed them with a numerous Poſterity; and preſerved their Deſcendants, in Memory of their Parent's Piety on this remarkable Occaſion.

Q. *And what did* Pharaoh, *when he found this did not ſucceed?*

A. “And *Pharaoh* charged all his People, ſaying, “Every Son that is born ye ſhall caſt into the River, “and every Daughter ye ſhall ſave alive.”

Q. *What may be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That this cruel Tyrant, finding he could not prevent the prodigious Increaſe of the Children of *Iſrael*, by his infernal underhand Practices, and tampering with the Midwives, reſolves at laſt to throw off the Maſk, and have Recourſe to open Force and Violence: Accordingly he enjoins his own People, that is, the natural born *Egyptians*, to ſee this inhuman Edict put in Execution; and to take Care, that the

Hebrews ſhould not be able to evade it, by any Arts or ſecret Practices whatſoever. In Effect, had the *Egyptians* approved of this Command, and ſtrictly obey'd it, we don't ſee which way the *Iſraelites* could poſſibly have multiplied; but Commentators ſuppoſes, that the exceſſive Inhumanity thereof made it ſo much abhorred, even by the Natives themſelves, that they ſcarce ever put it in Execution; *God* ſo over-ruling them, by his Providence, though otherwiſe they had no Manner of Regard for the *Iſraelites*, but oppreſſed them all the Ways imaginable, that they did not ſuffer their Barbarity to proceed ſo far, as to murder the poor helpleſs Innocents. Thus we ſee, that even the moſt ſavage Tyrants can go no further, than the Bounds preſcribed them by the *Almighty*; and that it is in vain for Man to attempt to deſtroy thoſe, whom *God* has taken into his Protection.

CHAP. II.

The Parentage and Birth of Moſes; *his Mother hides him three Months; not being able to preſerve him any longer, ſhe makes an Ark for him, puts him therein, and lays him among the Flags by the River's Brink.* Pharaoh's *Daughter going to waſh herſelf, ſees it, is moved with Compaſſion, and takes the Child as her own, and gives him to his Mother to nurſe.* Moſes, *when grown, ſeeing an* Egyptian *ſmiting an* Iſraelite, *kills the proud Oppreſſor, and hides him in the Sand. He interpoſes between two* Iſraelites *who are quarrelling, and the Aggreſſor reproaches him with killing the* Egyptian. Pharaoh *hearing thereof, ſeeks to ſlay him, but he flies away to* Midian, *where he reſcues* Reuel's *Daughters from the Violence of the Shepherds. He agrees to live with* Reuel, *who gives him* Zipporah, *his Daughter in Marriage; ſhe bears him a Son; he names him* Gerſhom; *his Reaſon for ſo doing. The King of* Egypt *dies, and* God *hears the Cry of the* Iſraelites.

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And there went a Man of the Houſe of *Levi*, and took to Wife a Daughter of *Levi*. And the Woman conceived and bare a Son: And when ſhe ſaw him, that he was a goodly Child, ſhe hid him three Months. And when ſhe could not longer hide him, ſhe took for him an Ark of Bulruſhes, and daubed it with Slime and Pitch, and put the Child therein; and ſhe laid it in the Flags, by the River's Brink. And his Siſter ſtood afar off, to wit what would be done with him."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

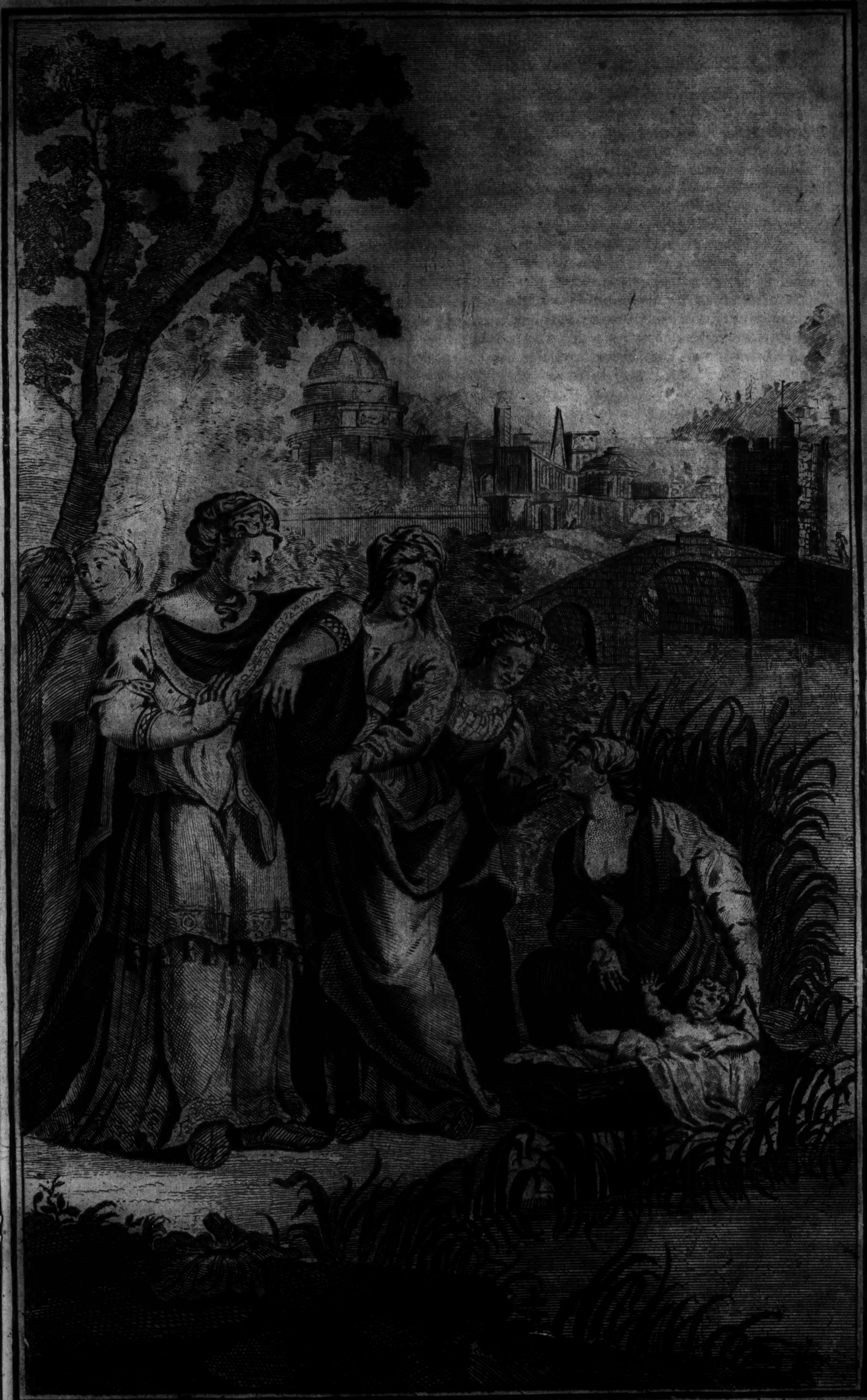
A. It has been objected by ſome, that it was a very wicked Action in the Mother of *Moſes* to yield Obedience to *Pharaoh*'s impious Decree; and that ſhe ought rather to have ſuffered Death; but they would do well to conſider, that in that Caſe, the Child would have been murdered, likewiſe; wherefore the Courſe *Jochebed* took was much more rational. But, beſides, this Objection will fall to the Ground, if it be conſidered, that his Mother did not put *Pharaoh*'s Decree in Execution. Far from it; finding it was impoſſible for her to preſerve it any longer, ſhe prudently provides the moſt probable Way ſhe could contrive for its Safety. She makes a little Ark, ſufficiently large, and yet light, to bear the Weight of the Infant, and ſecure it from drowning; which done, ſhe lays it carefully in the Flags, to prevent its being carried away by the Current of the River; and having, doubtleſs, recommended it with the moſt earneſt Prayers, to the *Almighty*, for his Favour and Protection, ſhe reſigns it into the Hands of the divine Providence; placing at the ſame Time, her Daughter at a proper Diſtance, to watch what became of her Brother: And we make no Doubt, had not *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, or ſome other Perſon, come in a proper Time, to the Relief of the expoſed Infant, but ſhe would herſelf returned to give it Suck, and aſſiſt it, though ſhe had thereby run the Hazard of immediate Death. How could any Woman, in ſuch a *Dilemma*, act a more prudent Part!

Q. *How did Providence interpoſe for the Safety of the poor Innocent?*

A. "And the Daughter of *Pharaoh* came down to waſh herſelf at the River, and her Maidens walked along by the Rivers Side; and when ſhe ſaw the Ark among the Flags, ſhe ſent her Maid to fetch it. And when ſhe had opened it, ſhe ſaw the Child: And, behold, the Babe wept. And ſhe had Compaſſion on him, and ſaid, This is one of the *Hebrews* Children."

Q. *What may be obſerved from thence?*

A. The wonderful over-ruling Power of the divine Providence, in directing the Steps of *Pharaoh*'s own Daughter that Way; and ordaining that ſhe ſhould firſt ſee the Ark, open it, and be moved with Compaſſion, at the deſtitute State of the Infant; and that ſo far, as to be induced to preſerve, bring up, and provide for it. That this Child, who was to be the great Deliverer of the *Jews*, ſhould be preſerved in the very Houſe of thoſe Perſons, whoſe Deſign it was, as much as in them lay, utterly to exterminate the whole Race of the *Hebrews*, is an aſtoniſhing Providence; but if what *Joſephus* ſays be true, that the Reaſon of *Pharaoh*'s iſſuing that inhuman Edict, that all the Male Children of the *Hebrews* ſhould be drowned, was, becauſe an *Egyptian* Scribe, who had rendered himſelf very famous for his exactly foretelling future Events, had prophecied wonderful Things of a *Hebrew* Child, who was to be born about that Time, and was to prove a dreadful Scourge to the *Egyptians*, this Providence will appear yet more aſtoniſhing. *Joſephus* however, goes yet farther, and tells us, that the Beauty and ſurprizing Capacity of the Child, having induced *Pharaoh*'s Daughter (whom he calls *Thermuthis*, and who had no Iſſue) to adopt him, She one Day carried him to her Father, and ſpoke to him of appointing the Boy his Succeſſor, in caſe he ſhould have no Sons, in the following Terms. "This Infant equally conſpicuous for the Elegancy of his Form, and the Generoſity of his Mind, have I brought up ever ſince he was wonderfully given me by the River, as my *own Son*, and as ſuch would have him your Succeſſor in the Kingdom." When ſhe had ſaid thus, ſhe put *Moſes* into the old *King*'s Arms. That Prince received him kindly, embraced him, preſſed him to his Breaſt, and thinking to gratify the Humour of the Boy, (Children being generally fond of any Thing fine) took off his *Diadem*, and put it on the Child's Head; but *Moſes* inſtantly threw it on the Ground, and whirling it about, after the Manner of Children, ſpurned it with his Feet; which Action was underſtood to portend Evil to the Kingdom of *Egypt*. On ſeeing this, the celebrated *Scribe*, who, as we obſerved, had foretold his Nativity, ran haſtily towards the Boy, with an Intent to have killed him, crying out in a furious Tone, *This, this, O King, is the Child, whom, if we ſlay, God hath declared, we ſhall be in the higheſt Degree of Safety; and he hath plainly ſhewn the Truth of his Prediction,* EXODUS CHAP. II.



Ja. Smith ſculpſit

MOSES in the Bulruſhes found by PHARAOH'S Daughter.

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tion, by thus rejecting *and* trampling *on your* Diadem; *by putting him to Death, therefore, will I free the* Egyptians *from all their* Apprehenſions; *and at the ſame Time* extinguiſh *in the* Hebrews, *whatever* Hopes *they may have conceived, or* Confidence *they may have placed in him.* But *Thermuthis* prevented him, by conveying away the Child; nor was the King forward to have him deſtroyed; for *God*, who took Care of the Preſervation of *Moſes* had ſo diſpoſed his Heart. The Child was, from that Time, very carefully educated, and the *Hebrews* began to hope mighty Things from him; but the *Egyptians* were not free from Jealouſy, on account of his being thus *brought up*. If this was really Fact, we think the over-ruling Providence of *God* was yet the more aſtoniſhing.

Q. *Of what are we next informed concerning this Tranſaction?*

A. “ Then ſaid his Siſter to *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, “ ſhall I go, and call to thee a Nurſe of the *Hebrew* “ Women, that ſhe may nurſe the Child for thee?”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That it is highly probable from hence, that what *Joſephus* ſays may be true; that *Thermuthis* ordered ſeveral Nurſes to be called to give him Suck, but upon their being brought and tried, one after another, the Child turned away with ſuch an Averſion, that it could not be made to take the Breaſt. Hereupon, his Siſter *Miriam* mixing with the Company, ſeemingly more out of Curioſity, and by mere Chance, than through any Manner of Concern or Buſineſs, ſhe told the Princeſs this would never do; for, ſays ſhe, if this Child be of one Nation, and the Nurſe of another, it is probable the Milk of a Stranger will not agree with it; but if there was ever a *Hebrew* Woman, the Child would perhaps allow her to ſuckle it. What *Miriam* had ſaid being ſeemingly very reaſonable, the Princeſs ordered her to try if ſhe could find out ſuch a Nurſe; upon which, ſhe immediately ran Home, and, in a ſhort Time, brought the Mother herſelf, whom no Body there knew, to make the Experiment. This ſhe had no ſooner done, but the Child took to the Breaſt with great Eagerneſs; whereupon the Princeſs ordered her to take Charge of the Infant, and ſuckle it, promiſing to pay her for it, which ſhe joyfully accepted. Thus ſhe recovered, as a Nurſe, the Child ſhe had loſt as a Mother; and we may reaſonably preſume, from her having been ſo graciouſly favoured by Providence, that ſhe was not guilty of any Crime, in expoſing her Son in the Manner ſhe did.

Q. *Did* Pharaoh'*s Daughter accept of this Propoſal of the Child's Siſter?*

A. “ And *Pharaoh*'s Daughter ſaid unto her, “ Go. And the Maid went and called the Child's “ Mother. And *Pharaoh*'s Daughter ſaid unto her, “ Take this Child away, and nurſe it for me, and I “ will give thee thy Wages. And the Woman took “ the Child and nurſed it. And the Child grew, and “ ſhe brought him unto *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, and he “ became her Son. And ſhe called his Name *Moſes*: “ And ſhe ſaid, Becauſe I drew him out of the Water.”

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That had not *Moſes* been endued with more Religion, and Integrity, than is common now-a-days, he would hardly have thrown himſelf out of ſo fine a Station, to partake with his Brethren the *Iſraelites* in their Afflictions; eſpecially if, as ſome write, he was deſigned to ſucceed *Pharaoh* in the Throne.

Q. *Of what are we firſt informed concerning* Moſes, *after he was grown up?*

A. “ And it came to paſs, in thoſe Days, when “ *Moſes* was grown, that he went out unto his Bre- “ thren, and looked on their Burdens: And he ſpied “ an *Egyptian* ſmitting an *Hebrew*, one of his Bre- “ thren. And he looked this Way and that Way; “ and when he ſaw that there was no Man, he ſlew “ the *Egyptian*, and hid him in the Sand.”

Q. *What has been obſerved hereupon?*

A. It has been very much diſputed by ſome, whether what *Moſes* did herein was juſtifiable or not; but we think St. *Stephen* ſufficiently juſtifies him on that Head, *Acts* vii. 25. “ For he ſuppoſed his Brethren “ would have underſtood, how that *God*, by his “ Hand, would deliver them; but they underſtood “ not.”

Q. *What are we next informed of concerning* Moſes?

A. “ And when he went out the ſecond Day, be- “ hold, two Men of the *Hebrews* ſtrove together; “ And he ſaid to him, that did the Wrong, where- “ fore ſmiteſt thou thy Fellow? And he ſaid, Who “ made thee a Prince and a Judge over us? Intend- “ eſt thou to kill me, as thou killedſt the *Egyptian* “ Yeſterday. And *Moſes* feared, and ſaid, Surely “ this Thing is known. Now when *Pharaoh* heard “ this Thing, he ſought to ſlay *Moſes*; but *Moſes* “ fled from the Face of *Pharaoh*, and dwelt in the “ Land of *Midian*: And he ſat down by a Well.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. How ungratefully his Brethren requited him, for his eſpouſing their Quarrel, and interpoſing to make Peace between them; he revenged their Cauſe, and they, by diſcovering it, endangered his Life, and forced him to fly the Country. We may obſerve alſo, that the Faith even of good Men is not at all Times alike; ſince *Moſes* now fled for Fear of the King's Wrath; and yet, we find, afterwards, that he did not fear to expoſe himſelf thereunto.

Q. *Being come to* Midian, *what befel* Moſes *there?*

A. “ Now the Prieſt of *Midian* had ſeven Daugh- “ ters: And they came and drew Water, and filled “ the Troughs to water their Father's Flock. And “ the Shepherds came and drove them away: But “ *Moſes* ſtood up, and helped them, and watered “ their Flocks. And when they came to *Reuel* their “ Father, he ſaid, How is it, that you are come ſo “ ſoon to Day? And they ſaid, An *Egyptian* deli- “ vered us out of the Hand of the Shepherds, and “ alſo drew Water enough for us, and watered the “ Flocks.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. Here was a great, ſudden, and melancholy Change in the Condition of *Moſes*; from being educated and provided for like the Son of *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, if not like the Heir apparent to the Crown, as ſome write, he is now forced to fly for his Life through a deſart Country; without any Proſpect even of Subſiſtence; much leſs of delivering his Brethren, or ever ſeeing them again. Being got through the Deſart, undoubtedly, not without Difficulty, and being, probably, weary and faint, he ſat himſelf down by a Well, both to reſt, and refreſh himſelf, with a Draught of Water; and he had not been long there, before he was again called upon to defend the diſtreſſed, and right the injured; Providence, probably, cauſing ſuch Adventures to befal him, that he might thence have a Foreſight what was to be his future Fortune. Seven young Maidens, the Daughters of one of the *Chiefs* of *Midian* (for the ſame Word which in our *Bible* is rendered *Prieſt*, may as well be tranſlated *Prince*) came to the Well to water their Flocks; and having drawn Water, and poured it into the Troughs for that End, certain booriſh Shepherds, who came likewiſe thither for the ſame Purpoſe, drove them away; which *Moſes* perceiving, the ſame Generoſity of Soul, which moved him to defend the diſtreſſed *Hebrew*, induced him alſo to aſſiſt the injured Damſels; wherefore, obliging the Shepherds to give Way, he drew Water for them himſelf (that which they had before drawn being probably ſpilt in the Diſpute,) and having given the Sheep Drink, the Siſters, unmindful of their kind Reliever, returned home. It ſeems it was ſo cuſtomary a Thing for theſe Shepherds to inſult the young Maidens, and make them wait, before they would ſuffer them to water their Flocks, that *Reuel*, who ſome think was their Grandfather, was ſurprized at their ſpeedy Return, and asked the Reaſon; whereof they informed him, taking *Moſes* by his Garb to be an *Egyptian*.

Q. *And what ſaid* Reuel, *when he heard of the Generoſity of* Moſes!

A. Being more conſiderate than them, he reproved them for not having invited him Home, and returned his Courteſy. "And he ſaid unto his Daughters, and where is he? Why is it that ye left the Man. Call him, that he may eat Bread!"

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That it appears from hence, that this *Midianitiſh Chief* was of a generous and hoſpitable Temper; and one who would not let a Courteſy go unrequited.

Q. *And what followed upon the calling* Moſes *in to eat Bread?*

A. "And *Moſes* was content to dwell with the Man: And he gave *Moſes Zipporah* his Daughter."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That it is very probable, upon *Moſes*'s going in to refreſh himſelf, *Reuel* might enquire, as far as he could with Decency, about his Circumſtances; and *Moſes* giving him a true Account, he might offer him a Retreat with him, which *Moſes* not knowing how to mend himſelf, willingly accepted; and after having lived there ſome Time, his amiable Qualities ſhone ſo conſpicuouſly in *Reuel's* Eyes, that he offered him one of his Daughters; whereby *Moſes* became one of the Family; and ſo his preſent and temporary Repoſe was turned to a ſettled Habitation.

Q. *What are we told concerning* Moſes, *after his Marriage with* Zipporah?

A. "And ſhe bore him a Son, and he called his Name *Gerſhom*: For he ſaid, I have been a Stranger in a ſtrange Land." Which requires not any Explanation.

Q. *Of what are we next informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And it came to paſs, in Proceſs of Time, that the King of *Egypt* died; and the Children of *Iſrael* ſighed by Reaſon of the Bondage; and they cried, and their Cry came up unto *God*, by Reaſon of the Bondage. And *God* heard their groaning, and *God* remembred his Covenant with *Abraham*, with *Iſaac*, and with *Jacob*. And *God* looked upon the Children of *Iſrael*, and *God* had Reſpect unto them."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That *God*'s appointed Time being now come, for the Deliverance of his People, and the Puniſhment of their Oppreſſors, their Cry is ſaid to have come up unto him; not but their Cries were as much preſent before him, before that Time, as now; and for the ſame Reaſon he is ſaid to have looked upon at them that time, though his Eye was continually upon them before; becauſe he now intended ſpeedily, to deliver them, and to execute Judgment upon their proud Oppreſſors.

CHAP. III.

Moſes, *in keeping the Flock of his Father-in-law, comes to* Mount Horeb, *where* God *appears to him in a burning Buſh. He is ſurprized that the Buſh is not conſumed, and turns aſide to behold it.* God *calls to him out of the Buſh, and commands him to pull off his Shoes, and not approach any nigher. He then reveals himſelf to him, informs him of his having ſeen the Afflictions of his People, and of his Intention to deliver them, and make him the Inſtrument of their Deliverance.* Moſes *excuſes himſelf as unworthy, and* God *promiſes to be with him.* Moſes *asks* God's *Name; the* Lord *makes it known to him; commands him to gather the Elders of* Iſrael, *and tells him what he is to ſay to them. He inſtructs him, likewiſe, what to ſay to* Pharaoh; *foretells* Pharaoh's *Obſtinacy, declares how he will puniſh the* Egyptians; *and foretels how the* Iſraelites *ſhall ſpoil them.*

Q. WHAT *is the next Paſſage we meet with concerning* Moſes?

A. "Now *Moſes* kept the Flock of *Jethro*, his Father-in-law; the Prieſt of *Midian*: And he led the Flock to the Backſide of the Deſert, and came to the Mountain of *God*, even to *Horeb*. And the Angel of the *Lord* appeared unto him in a Flame of Fire, out of the Midſt of a Buſh: And he looked, and behold, the Buſh burned with Fire, and the Buſh was not conſumed."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. It is diſputable whether this *Jethro* is the ſame Perſon, as was called *Reuel* in the former Chapter, or whether this was *Reuel*'s Son, and *Reuel* was Grandfather to *Zipporah* the Wife of *Moſes*: It is not, however, a Point of any great Importance; wherefore every one is at Liberty to determine for himſelf. *Horeb* is here called the Mountain of *God* by Anticipation; becauſe it afterwards obtained that Name from *God*'s having appeared ſo often thereon; and more eſpecially from the ſolemn Promulgation of the Law from thence; *Mount Sinai* being a Part of *Mount Horeb*. The Reaſon of *God*'s appearing at this Time to *Moſes*, in a burning Buſh, ſeems to have been; becauſe there could not poſſibly have been a more natural or lively Type of the Condition of the Children of *Iſrael* at that Time. They were continually burning in the Furnace of Affliction, and yet, through the Interpoſition of the *Divine* Providence, and Power, in their Behalf, they were not conſumed; but, on the contrary, multiplied prodigiouſly; there could not, therefore, have been a more proper Emblem of their Conditioon, under their proud Oppreſſors, than a burning Buſh.

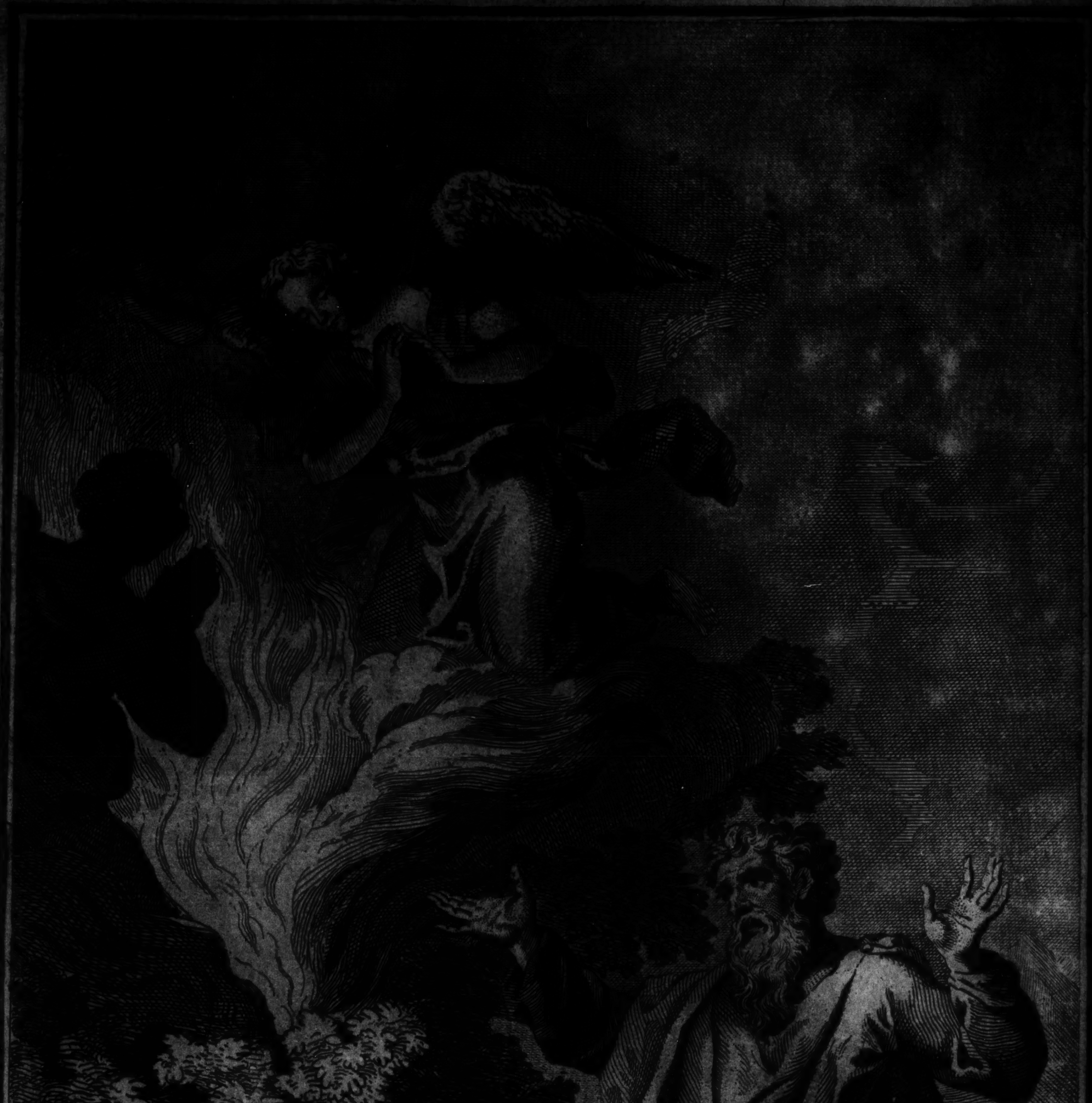
Q. *What ſaid* Moſes *upon ſeeing the Buſh on Fire?*

A. "And *Moſes* ſaid, I will now turn aſide, and ſee this great Sight, why the Buſh is not burnt."

Q. *What ſaid the* Lord *to him thereupon?*

A. "And when the *Lord* ſaw that he turned aſide to ſee, *God* called to him out of the Midſt of the

EXODUS CHAP. III.



GOD ſpeaks to MOSES out of a Burning Buſh.

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“ Buſh, and ſaid, *Moſes*, *Moſes*. And he ſaid, “ Here am I. Ahd he ſaid, Draw not nigh hither: “ put off thy Shoes off thy Feet, for the Place “ whereon thou ſtandeſt is holy Ground.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That *God* repeats the Name of *Moſes* twice, to make him the more attentive; and he cautions him not to draw any nigher, and to pull off his Shoes, to inſpire him with the greater Awe and Reverence to his *Almighty* Creator.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *unto him?*

A. “ Moreover, he ſaid, I am the *God* of thy Fa- “ ther, the *God* of *Abraham*, the *God* of *Iſaac*, and “ the *God* of *Jacob*. And *Moſes* hid his Face; for he “ was afraid to look upon *God*.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from thence?*

A. The great Humility of *Moſes*, which made him think himſelf not worthy to appear in the divine Preſence; ſo exalted a Senſe had he of *God*'s Majeſty, and Holineſs.

Q. *What next ſaid the* Lord *unto* Moſes?

A. “ And the *Lord* ſaid, I have ſurely ſeen the Af- “ fliction of my People, which are in *Egypt*; and “ have heard their Cry, by Reaſon of their Task- “ Maſters: For I know their Sorrows. And I am “ come down to deliver them out of the Hand of the “ *Egyptians*, and to bring them up out of that Land, “ unto a good Land, and a large, unto a Land flow- “ ing with Milk and Honey; Unto the Place of the “ *Canaanites*, and the *Hittites*, and the *Amorites*, “ and the *Perizzites*, and the *Hivites*, and the *Je-* “ *buſites*. Now, therefore, behold, the Cry of the “ Children of *Iſrael* is come unto me: And I have “ alſo ſeen the Oppreſſions, where with the *Egyptians* “ oppreſs them. Come now, therefore and I will ſend “ thee unto *Pharaoh*, that thou mayeſt bring forth “ my People, the Children of *Iſrael*, out of *Egypt*?”

Q. *What may be obſerved from this Speech of the* Lord'*s?*

A. It is obſervable how often he repeats his having obſerved the Affliction of the *Iſraelites*, and how graciouſly he honours them with the glorious Title of *his People*; I have *ſurely ſeen* their Affliction, ſays he, I have *heard* their Cry, and *I know* their Sorrows, to denote the great Notice he took thereof: And afterwards again, after having promiſed to bring them to a Land, *flowing with Milk and Honey*, that is, abounding with all Manner of Plenty, he ſays, Behold, the *Cry* of the Children of *Iſrael* is *come unto me*; And I have alſo *ſeen* the *Oppreſſion* wherewith the *Egyptians oppreſs* them, all which he ſays, to encourage *Moſes* to undertake the Commiſſion he intended him.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Moſes *unto the* Lord?

A. “ And *Moſes* ſaid unto *God*, who am I, that I “ ſhould go unto *Pharaoh*, and that I ſhould bring “ forth the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*?”

Q. *What is to be obſerved thereupon?*

A. That *Moſes* having hearkened to what *God* ſaid, with the utmoſt Attention excuſes himſelf as unworthy and unfit for ſo weighty an Employment; which conſidering how forward he was to engage in the ſame Work forty Years before, may appear ſtrange to many; and ſeems, in ſome Meaſure, to contradict what is ſaid by St. *Stephen*, that he knew, when in *Egypt*, and ſuppoſed his Brethren would have underſtood, that he was appointed to be their Deliverer. But we ſhall ſoon find that this does not any Ways contradict his having had a Revelation of the divine Will in *Egypt*, and ſhall eaſily account for his forwardneſs then, and his Backwardneſs now to undertake the ſame Commiſſion, if we conſider; That he was more forward then, being in his Prime having no great Experience in Affairs, and having the Advantage of great Power and Intereſt at Court, whereby he might think it probable, that he both could and ſhould be able to procure their Deliverance: But now, when Age had made him cool and conſiderate, the Remembrance of his Brethren's Rejection of him, and their baſe Ingratitude to him, when he was a great Man at Court, took away all Probability of prevailing with them to follow him, and much more of prevailing with *Pharah* to let them go; eſpecially, as he believed his Life in the utmoſt Danger, if he ſhould preſume to appear before *Pharaoh*, as he had been forced to fly from *Egypt*, for killing the *Egyptian*. If we conſider then, that even the Faith of the beſt of Men, is not at all Times equally ſtrong; it will not appear at all ſtrange, under ſo many Diſcouragements, that the Faith of *Moſes* began to waver; and that he began to ſuſpect, that he had miſunderſtood the divine Revelation heretofore, which in all Probability, was not in expreſs Terms, as it was now. The Fear then of being put to Death for killing the *Egyptian*, with the Ingratitude, and baſe Diſpoſition of the *Hebrews* themſelves, whereof they had given him ſo flagrant an Inſtance, ſeemed to *Moſes* ſuch unſurmountalbe Obſtacles to his ſucceeding in his Commiſſion; that he fell into that Error to which moſt Men are prone, of meaſuring *God* by himſelf, and by the Probability or Improbability of ſecond Cauſes. In ſhort, it is Evident from what follows, that *Moſes* had imbibed ſuch an ill Opinion of his Brethren the *Hebrews*, from their former ungrateful Uſage of him, and their baſe Requital of his Good-will, that nothing leſs than his Fear of *God*'s *Wrath*, could have induced him to undertake this Commiſſion.

Q. *What Anſwer made the* Lord *to theſe Queſtions of* Moſes?

A. “ And he ſaid, Certainly I will be with thee; “ and this ſhall be a Token unto thee, that I have “ ſent thee: When thou haſt brought forth the “ People out of *Egypt*, ye ſhall ſerve *God* upon this “ Mountain.”

Q. *How ſhould* Moſes *be confirmed that he was appointed to be the Deliverer of* Iſrael, *and that* God *would certainly be with him, by a Sign which was not to happen till after this Deliverance was accompliſhed?*

A. Were ſuch Signs to be the ſingle and only Evidences of a Man's Calling they might leave ſome Ground for Suſpicion; but when they are accompanied with other Signs, as the Caſe was here, they are of great Service for the Corroboration of a Man's Faith. *Moſes* was otherwiſe aſſured of the Preſence, Power, and Faithfulneſs, of that *God* who ſpoke to him; and had Reaſon to expect more Aſſurances that *God* would be with him to help him, and carry him through the Work. And as a farther Evidence that this Work of conducting *Iſrael* out of *Egypt* ſhould be compleated, *God* gives him a Promiſe that they ſhould ſerve him in that Place: Which Promiſe coming from *God*, *Moſes* knew it to be as infallibly certain, as if it were already come to paſs; and therefore, this was no improper Means to ſtrengthen his Faith, in his preſent Undertaking.

Q. *Did* Moſes *make any more Excuſes after this?*

A. Yes; “ And *Moſes* ſaid unto *God*, Behold, “ when I come unto the Children of *Iſrael*, and they “ ſhall ſay to me, what is his Name? What ſhall I “ ſay unto them?”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. In order to have a juſt Notion of the Scope and Occaſion of this Queſtion, we muſt conſider the Difference between this Revelation made to *Moſes*, and any other, which *God* had made of himſelf ſince the Time of *Noah*. In all thoſe Manifeſtations afforded to the *Patriarchs*, he had ſpoken to them only by way of Command, Advice, or Conſolation, in their own Affairs; but he ſent them not unto any others. He puniſhed indeed, *Pharaoh*, and *Abimelech*, (and revealed himſelf to the latter) for an Injury done to *Abraham*, in the Perſon of his Wife; from whence the King of *Gerar* took him to be a very excellent Man, highly favoured by the *Almighty*; but nevertheleſs *God* never inveſted that righteous Perſon with any *publick Character*; neither did he ever confer on him the Power of working *Miracles*, or ſend him unto Kings in his *Name*. The Commiſſion here given unto *Moſes* was, therefore, of an extraordinary Nature; *God* declaring himſelf thereby, in an open, and judicial Manner, the *King* and *Protector* of the Children of *Iſrael*; and claiming them for this Reaſon of the King of *Egypt*, as his immediate Subjects. Purſuant, alſo, to the Covenant made with their Fathers, he was now going to put them in poſſeſſion of the large and fruitful Territory of *Canaan*; and ſince *Moſes* was the Man by whom all theſe Things were to be executed, (excepting the putting them in immediate Poſſeſſion of the whole Land, which was reſerved for *Joſhua*, on Account of *Moſes* having ſinned at the Waters of *Meribah*) it cannot be thought very unreaſonable in him to inquire, by what particular *Name* or *Attribute* he would be called on this Occaſion, ſince he had ſpoken to the *Patriarchs*, under various Titles. To *Abraham* he called himſelf *Elſhaddai*; to *Iſaac* he ſaid, I am the *God* of thy *Fathers*; and to *Jacob*, from the firſt Revelation of his Will to him againſt that Place, he ſtyled himſelf the *God* of *Bethel*: Wherefore, the Demand of *Moſes* was to this purpoſe; As thy People have heard of thee by divers Names, be pleaſed to honour me with the Knowledge of ſome particular Title, which may demonſtrate to them that thou haſt ſent me.

Q. *What Anſwer made the* Lord *to this Demand of* Moſes?

A. “ And *God* ſaid unto *Moſes*, *I am, that I am*: “ And he ſaid; Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the Chil-“ dren of *Iſrael*, *I am* hath ſent me unto you;”

Q. *What is to be obſerved upon this Name which the* Almighty *here gave himſelf?*

A. That it is a moſt comprehenſive and ſignificant Name, and moſt proper for the preſent Occaſion. It denotes, *Firſt*, the Reality of his Being, whereas *Idols are nothing*, 1. *Cor.* viii. 4. All their Divinity is only in the Fancies and Opinions of Men. *Secondly*, The Neceſſarineſs, Eternity, and Unchangeableneſs of his Being, whereas all other Beings once were not, and if he pleaſes, they ſhall be no more; and all their Being was derived from him, and only depends upon him, whereas he only is by and from himſelf. *Thirdly*, the Conſtancy, and Certainty of his Nature, Will, and Word. The Senſe ſeems to be, I am the ſame that ever I was; the ſame who made the Promiſes to *Abraham*, &c. and am now about to perform them; as I can do as I pleaſe, ſo I will do what I have ſaid. The *Hebrew* is, *I ſhall be what I ſhall be*. He uſeth the Future Tenſe, either, *Firſt*, becauſe that Tenſe, in the Idiom of the *Hebrew* Tongue, comprehends all Times, paſt, preſent, and to come. To ſignify that all Times are alike to *God*, and all are preſent to him, and, therefore, what is here rendered *I ſhall be*, is rendered, *I am* by *Chriſt*, in *John* viii. 58. Or *Secondly*, to intimate, though darkly, according to that State and Age of the Church, the Myſtery of *Chriſt*'s Incarnation. *I ſhall be what I ſhall be*, that is, *God-man*; and I, who now come in an inviſible, though glorious Manner, to deliver you from this temporal Bondage, ſhall in due Time come viſibly, and by Incarnation, to ſave you and all my People from a worſe Slavery, and Miſery, even from their Sins, and from Wrath to come. See *Rev.* i. 4, 8, and xvi. 5. on this Name of the *Almighty*.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *unto* Moſes?

A. “ And *God* ſaid moreover unto *Moſes*, Thus “ ſhalt thou ſay unto the Children of *Iſrael*, the “ *Lord God* of your Fathers, the *God* of *Abraham*, “ the *God* of *Iſaac*, and the *God* of *Jacob*, hath ſent “ me unto you: This is my Name for ever, and “ this is my Memorial unto all Generations.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved upon this Text?*

A. That the Word which is tranſlated *Lord* therein, ought to have been rendered the *Eternal Being*; there being no Affinity between the *Hebrew Jehovah*, and the *Greek* Word *Kurios*, as it is in the *Septuagint*, and the *Engliſh Lord*, which anſwers to it, and was taken from thence. For the Meaning of this whole Paſſage ſeems to be, *Jehovah*, that is, the *Eternal Being*, who was the *God* of your *Fathers*, that is, *in whom they put their Truſt*, the *God* of *Abraham*, that is, *who made a Covenant with him*, the *God* of *Iſaac*, that is, *who confirmed it to him*, and the *God* of *Jacob*, that is, whoſe *Poſterity* are the *Heirs thereof*, hath ſent me to you, *&c.*

Q. *What farther Inſtructions gave the* Lord *unto* Moſes?

A. “ Go, and gather the Elders of *Iſrael* together, “ and ſay unto them the *Lord God* of your Fathers, “ the *God* of *Abraham*, the *God* of *Iſaac*, and the *God* “ of *Jacob*, appeared unto me, ſaying, I have ſure-“ ly viſited you, and ſeen that which is done to you “ in *Egypt*. And I have ſaid, I will bring you up “ out of the Affliction of *Egypt*, unto the Land of “ the *Canaanites*, and the *Hittites*, and the *Amo-*“ *rites*, and the *Perizzites*, and the *Hivites*, and the “ *Jebuſites*, unto a Land flowing with Milk and Ho-“ ney. And they ſhall hearken to thy Voice, and “ thou ſhalt come, thou, and the Elders of *Iſrael*, “ unto the King of *Egypt*, and you ſhall ſay unto “ him, the *Lord God* of the *Hebrews* hath met us; “ and now let us go we beſeech thee, three Days “ Journey into the Wilderneſs, that we may ſacrifice “ to the *Lord* our *God*.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That the Inſtructions given to *Moſes* were to gather together the Elders of *Iſrael*, (that is, the Heads of Tribes, and Families, unto whom the others would naturally be inclined to pay Reſpect,) and to acquaint them with the *Lord*'s gracious Declaration, that he had ſeen their Affliction, and would certainly conduct them into *Canaan*, and put them in Poſſeſſion of that plenteous Land: Then for the Encouragement of *Moſes*, he aſſures him, that they ſhould certainly believe him, and accompany him to the King. It is alſo worthy Obſervation, that notwithſtanding *God* is the ſovereign Arbiter and Diſpoſer of all Things, yet he at firſt, puts the moſt humble Terms into the Mouth of his Embaſſador, wherewith to addreſs *Pharaoh*, “ Let us go (we beſeech thee)” he does not order him to make his Demand in haughty Terms, neither does he ſend him a poſitive Command, as he might juſtly have done, to let his People go: This the *Lord* undoubtedly did, to teach the People of *Iſrael*, and in them all Mankind, that there is a Submiſſion,

miſſion, and Reſpect due to the higher Powers, under whoſe Government they live, of whatever Perſuaſion thoſe Powers may happen to be.

Q. *Having thus aſſured* Moſes *of the Elders Compliance, what farther ſaid the* Lord *unto him?*

A. “ And I am ſure, that the King of *Egypt* will
“ not let you go; no, not by a mighty Hand. And
“ I will ſtretch out my Hand, and ſmite *Egypt* with
“ all my Wonders which I will do in the midſt
“ thereof: And after that he will let you go. And
“ I will give this People Favour in the Sight of the
“ *Egyptians*: And it ſhall come to paſs, that when
“ ye go, ye ſhall not go empty: But every Woman
“ ſhall borrow of her Neighbour; and of every one
“ that ſojourneth in her Houſe, Jewels of Silver, and
“ Jewels of Gold, and Raiment: And ye ſhall put
“ them upon your Sons, and your Daughters; and
“ ye ſhall ſpoil the *Egyptians*.

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. With how much Accuracy and Infallibility, the omniſcient *God*, foretells even the moſt minute Circumſtance, that was to forerun and accompany the Children of *Iſrael's* Departure out of *Egypt*; notwithſtanding not only the King of *Egypt*, but the whole Body of the People, were concerned therein. It is not impoſſible but an evil Spirit, or even a Man of uncommon Sagacity, who has well ſtudied the Temper of any particular Perſon, might from thence be able to foretel what he would do on any particular Occaſion; but to foretel what the whole Body of a People, in a Manner, every Individual of a Nation would do, exceeds the Capacity of any one, but the omniſcient and omnipotent *Creator* of all Things, in whoſe Hand is the Heart and Will of every one.

CHAP. IV.

Moſes *objects that the* Iſraelites *will not believe he has a divine Commiſſion*; God *anſwers his Objection, by giving him the Power of turning his Rod into a Serpent. He adds thereto another Sign, and leſt they ſhould not believe theſe two, impowers him to change the Water of the River into Blood.* Moſes *again objects his Want of Eloquence; the* Lord *anſwers that Objection.* Moſes *declines accepting the Office on any Terms; the* Lord *is angry with him, but yet vouchſafes mercifully to anſwer him, and removes all his Scruples. He appoints his Brother* Aaron *his Aſſiſtant, and aſſigns each of them his proper Employment.* Moſes *being ſatisfied, returns to* Jethro, *and deſires his Leave to go and viſit his Brethren, which* Jethro *readily grants.* Moſes *taking the Rod of* God, *ſets out, with his Wife and Children, on his Return to* Egypt. *The* Lord *instructs him what to do, and ſay, when he comes into* Pharaoh's *Preſence.* Moſes *being arrived at an Inn, by the Way, the* Lord *ſeeks to kill him.* Zipporah *ſaves him by circumciſing his Son. What ſhe ſays thereupon.* God *commands* Aaron *to meet* Moſes, *who declares to his Brother what had happened to him. They gather the Elders of* Iſrael *together, and ſpeak the Words, and do the Signs which the* Lord *had commanded. The People believe, give Thanks, and worſhip* God.

Q. W*HAT Objection made* Moſes *to what the* Lord *had ſaid?*

A. “ And *Moſes* anſwered and ſaid, But, behold,
“ they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my
“ Voice: For they will ſay, The *Lord* hath not
“ appeared unto thee.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. As *Moſes* was now to aſſume the Character of the Deliverer of *God's* People, and of a Perſon inveſted with an extraordinary Divine Commiſſion, this was by no Means an unreaſonable Objection; ſince the *Iſraelites* were not obliged to believe him upon his bare Affirmation; and the Improbability of the Thing made it very unlikely that they ſhould give any Credit to it. He ought to have remember'd, however, that the *Lord* had before aſſured him, they ſhould hearken to him; and that the *God* of Truth cannot lye; this was, therefore, an Inſtance of human Frailty, and of the Weakneſs of his Faith; which, nevertheleſs, *God* was graciouſly pleaſed not only to overlook, but in order to extort a Belief from them, that *Moſes* was inveſted with the Character, which he was to aſſume, he vouchſafed to endue him with the Power of working Miracles before them; a Power never before conferred upon any Man.

Q. *How did the* Lord *remove this Objection made by* Moſes?

A. “ And the *Lord* ſaid unto him, What is it in
“ thine Hand? And he ſaid, A Rod? And he ſaid,
“ Caſt it on the Ground: And he caſt it on the
“ Ground, and it became a Serpent: And *Moſes*
“ fled from it.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved thereupon?*

A. Firſt, It is generally believed, that this Rod of *Moſes* was his Shepherd's Crook, *God* chuſing ſo mean an Inſtrument, the more to ſignalize his *almighty* Power; And, *Secondly*, That the Serpent into which it was changed, was of the largeſt Size, at leaſt, as long as the Crook, from which, therefore, it is no Wonder that *Moſes* fled, the Sting of the Serpents in thoſe hot Countries being immediate Death.

Q. *What ſaid the* Lord *to* Moſes, *on his flying from the Serpent?*

A. “ And the *Lord* ſaid unto *Moſes*, put forth
“ thine Hand and take it by the Tail. And he put
“ forth his Hand, and caught it, and it became a
“ Rod in his Hand.”

Q. *What may we obſerve from thence?*

A. That *God* hereby put both the Faith and Obedience of *Moſes* to a dangerous Teſt, in order to teach him not to ſcruple any of his Commands hereafter, nor to boggle at any Difficulties; it is obſervable alſo, that *Moſes*, in an Inſtant, bravely overcame his Fear, upon *God's* Command, and did as he was ordered; upon which the formidable Serpent again became a harmleſs Crook; to teach him, that whoever obeys the divine Commands, nothing ſhall be able to hurt him.

Q. *What ſaid the* Lord *thereupon to* Moſes?

A. “ That they may believe that the *Lord God*
“ of their Fathers, the *God* of *Abraham*, the *God* of
“ *Iſaac*, and the *God* of *Jacob* hath appeared unto
“ unto thee.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That here is ſomething to be underſtood, *viz.* that *Moſes* was to do this before them, in order to convince them, that he had a divine Commiſſion.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord, *to confirm the Faith, and remove the Scruples of* Moſes?

A. “ And the *Lord* ſaid furthermore unto him,
“ Put now thine Hand into thy Boſom: And he put
“ his Hand into his Boſom; and when he took it out,
“ behold, his Hand was as leprous as Snow. And
“ he ſaid, Put thine Hand into thy Boſom again:
“ And he put his Hand into his Boſom again, and

" plucked it out of his Boſom again, and, behold, it was turned again as his other Fleſh.

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. Almoſt innumerable have been the Obſervations that have been made upon this Text, but we ſhall only mention ſuch as are worthy of Notice. *Firſt*, As *Moſes* had branded the *Hebrews* with the Character of a Nation hard of Belief; ſo *God*, by enabling the Prophet to work a ſecond, and even a third Miracle, for their Conviction, in ſome Meaſure, juſtified this Charge; and the Evidence of this ſecond Miracle was ſo much the more convincing, becauſe the *White Leproſy*, which was held incurable, was both inflicted and healed, in an Inſtant, without any outward Application. And God might chuſe this Sign, preferably to any other, to ſuggeſt thereby how ſoon he could weaken and deſtroy that hard and ſtrong Hand, with which the *Egyptians* tyrannized over his People. He might likewiſe chuſe it, to keep *Moſes* humble and dependant upon him; and to teach both him and the *Iſraelites*, to aſcribe all the Miracles he deſigned to work, not to the Hand of *Moſes*, which was weak, and liable to many Diſtempers, but altogether to the divine Power and Goodneſs. Beſides, this Sign was typical both of the Power and Mercy of God; the *divine Power* was evidently manifeſted, by cauſing the ſound Hand to become leprous in an Inſtant; and the *divine Mercy* was as evidently manifeſted by the immediate Change of the leprous Hand into a ſound one again.

Q. *What farther Miracle did the* Lord *impower* Moſes *to work for the Conviction of the* Hebrews?

A. " And it ſhall come to paſs, if they will not " believe thee, neither hearken to the Voice of the " firſt Sign, that they will believe the Voice of the " latter Sign. And it ſhall come to paſs, if they " will not believe alſo theſe two Signs, neither hearken " unto thy Voice, that thou ſhalt take of the " Water of the River, and pour it upon the dry " Land: And the Water which thou takeſt out of " the River, ſhall become Blood upon the dry " Land."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That by the Voice of the firſt Sign, we are to underſtand, the Voice of God confirmed by the firſt Sign, and ſo alſo of the ſecond; and as to the third, it is to be obſerved, that *Moſes* himſelf ſaw the two former Signs, at the ſame Time that he had the Power given him of performing them; but this, in the Nature of the Thing could not be performed, till he came into the Land of *Egypt*, where the *Nile*, which was the River, whoſe Waters were to be changed, flows. This was the third, the greateſt, and the laſt Wonder, by the doing of which, the Prophet was to prove his *Miſſion*: And it is evident, that nothing could have been better calculated for compaſſing the End for which it was deſigned. For as the *Egyptians* had their chief Dependance upon the *Nile*, to whoſe Waters alone, under the Divine Providence, they were indebted for the extraordinary Fertility of their Country; and as the *Iſraelites* were perfectly acquainted therewith, they muſt neceſſarily entertain a great Opinion of his Power and Influence over *Pharaoh*, who was able in a Moment, to render that uſeleſs, and even noiſome, on which both the Fruitfulneſs of *Egypt*, and the very Being of its Inhabitants depended. Furniſhed with ſuch ample Teſtimonials, of the Truth of what he was appointed to deliver, *Moſes* was unable to find any more Objections of this Nature, to the undertaking the Charge of inſpiring the Children of *Iſrael* with a Confidence in him, and an ardent Deſire of taking Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*, which had been ſo often, and ſo ſolemnly promiſed to their Fathers.

Q. *What ſaid* Moſes *after having received ſuch a full Anſwer to all his Objections?*

A. " And *Moſes* ſaid unto the *Lord*, O my *Lord*, " I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor ſince " thou haſt ſpoken unto thy Servant: But I am ſlow " of Speech, and of a ſlow Tongue."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. It is generally believed, that *Moſes* had an Impediment, and Heſitation in his Speech, which made him look upon himſelf as an unfit Perſon, for ſo high an Employment, as *God's* Embaſſador to a powerful King; and that on a Meſſage of ſuch Importance, as demanding the Releaſement of Six hundred Thouſand Slaves; who were of immenſe Advantage to the Kingdom. The Purport, therefore, of what he ſays, is, " Thou uſeſt, O Lord, in thy profound " Wiſdom, to employ fit Inſtruments in thy Service, " and to make uſe of none, whom thou doſt not find, " or render fit for the Office, for which thou deſigneſt " them; But I am moſt unfit for this Employment, " ſince notwithſtanding thy glorious Appearance and " Favour to me, I ſtill am, as I was before, ſlow of " Utterance, and conſequently entirely unqualified " for an Ambaſſador."

Q. *And what Anſwer made the* Lord *to this new Objection made by* Moſes?

A. One that left him without any farther Excuſe, at leaſt, that he cared to diſcover. " And the *Lord* " ſaid unto him, Who hath made Man's Mouth? " Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the ſeeing " or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Now, therefore, " go, and I will be with thy Mouth, and " teach thee what thou ſhalt ſay."

Q. *What may we obſerve from hence?*

A. That *God*, who in that whole Proceeding dealt very graciouſly with his Servant, perſuading rather than threatning, and encouraging rather than poſitively commanding, ſhews him at once, by this Anſwer, to his laſt Excuſe, that no Impediment or Imperfection whatſoever, not even abſolute Deafneſs, Dumbneſs, or Blindneſs, can be a ſufficient Reaſon for him to heſitate at undertaking, what his *Almighty Creator* commanded to be done. We may obſerve alſo, that this very Difficulty was ſurmounted before it was mentioned by *Moſes*, ſince his Brother *Aaron*, had been commanded into the Wilderneſs to meet him, and to be his Spokeſman.

Q. *What farther could* Moſes *plead, after all his Objections were thus removed?*

A. " And he ſaid, O my *Lord*, ſend I pray thee, " by the Hand of him whom thou wilt ſend."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. The true Meaning of this Text is not very eaſily ſettled; ſome of the moſt learned Fathers of the Church, ſuch as *Juſtin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, and *St. Cyprian*, were of the Opinion, that *Moſes*, by theſe Words, *Him whom thou wilt ſend*, meant the *Meſſiah*, and ſome modern Divines, both of the *Roman* and *Reformed* Churches, have inclined to this Interpretation, on their Authority; and of the ſame Opinion are all the *Latin* Commentators, becauſe the *Jews*, in all their moſt weighty Caſes, and Affairs, had always Regard to the promiſed *Meſſiah*. Upon which the learned Mr. *Poole* likewiſe obſerves very well, that notwithſtanding *Moſes* and the Prophets knew, that *Chriſt* would certainly come, yet the particular Time of his Coming was unknown to them; wherefore the Meaning of *Moſes* might be, "Send by the Hands of the *Meſſiah*, whom thou wilt certainly ſend, and canſt not ſend at a fitter Time, nor for better Work." However, there does not ſeem to be any juſt Ground for this Notion; for the natural Import of the Words ſeems to be no more than this. That *Moſes* being diſguſted at his Nation, and foreſeeing great Difficulties, which he ſhould have to encounter, in the Courſe of this Undertaking, entreated *God*, therefore, to ſend by ſome other more proper Hand, in order to compleat that Deliverance, which he had promiſed to his People. Thus it was underſtood by the *Seventy*; to this Purpoſe it is explained in the *Jeruſalem Targum*, as alſo in that of *Onkelos*; and in this Senſe it is taken by the learned *Glaſſius*, than whom no Man has taken more Pains, to ſettle the true Meaning of *Scripture* Phraſes. It is the Opinion of other Commentators on this Place, and it is far from being improbable, that *Moſes* had another Reaſon, beſides his Inſufficiency, and his Fear of being rejected by his Brethren, which made him averſe to undertake their Deliverance, and which, notwithſtanding, he was not willing to diſcover. Juſt before *God* appeared to him in the Buſh, and had this Diſcourſe with him, we read, that the King of *Egypt*, in whoſe Reign he had ſlain the *Egyptian*, and who ſought to put him to Death for it, died. The Report of his Deceaſe, probably, might not yet have reached *Moſes*; and if it had, he might reaſonably think, that ſome of the Relations of the Man he had killed were ſtill living, who might proſecute him for the Murder; and for this Reaſon, he muſt naturally be unwilling to return to *Egypt*, leſt he ſhould be apprehended and executed for that Fact. However, it is very obſervable, that *God* would not free him from his Fear thereof, till he had abſolutely acquieſced and reſigned himſelf up to his Will in reſolving to go.

Q. *What ſaid the* Lord *on hearing* Moſes *decline going, without aſſigning any Reaſon for his Reluctance?*

A. "And the Anger of the *Lord* was kindled againſt *Moſes*, and he ſaid, Is not *Aaron* the *Levite* thy Brother? I know he can ſpeak well. And alſo, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he ſeeth thee, he will be glad in his Heart."

Q. *What may be obſerved hereupon.*

A. As long as *Moſes* had any Thing to plead, in Excuſe for his not accepting the divine Commiſſion, his gracious Creator bore with his Reluctance, heard him patiently, and, with wonderful Goodneſs, condeſcended to remove his Doubts, and anſwer all his Objections; but when his Modeſty in declining that high Office, and Honour, which *God* propoſed to him, was turned, in a Manner, into an abrupt Denial, without aſſigning any Reaſon for it, his Anger was kindled againſt him. Some very judicious Commentators, however, notwithſtanding the Energy of the *Hebrew* Expreſſion, have been of Opinion, that the Anger of *God*, was only like that of an indulgent Parent, and ceaſed aſſoon as *Moſes* appeared penitent for his Fault. This Sentiment of theirs, they think, is juſtified, and we cannot help being of the ſame Opinion, by *God*'s not puniſhing the Prophet for his Offence, which had occaſioned his Wrath againſt him; though *R. Solomon* imagines, that the Prieſthood was eſtabliſhed in *Aaron*'s Family, preferably to that of *Moſes*, on Account of the little Deference ſhewn by the latter to the Will of his Creator. However that be, the *Lord*, in the midſt of Wrath remembered Mercy, ſince *Moſes* had not preſumed ſo far as poſitively to refuſe going, but had only humbly intreated him to appoint another more proper Miniſter of his Pleaſure; and reſuming the laſt Objection made by *Moſes*, which he had already anſwered in general, ſhews him more particularly how to remedy the Defect whereof he complained: *God*'s Words, however, ſeem to carry a Reprimand with them; by reproaching *Moſes* with his Repugnance, when Care had been taken to remedy the only Defect he could plead, even before he could object it.

Q. *What further ſaid the* Lord *to* Moſes, *to remove all his Scruples?*

A. "And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto him, and put Words in his Mouth: And I will be with thy Mouth, and with his Mouth, and will teach you what ye ſhall do. And he ſhall be thy Spokeſman unto the People: And he ſhall be, even he, ſhall be unto thee inſtead of a Mouth, and thou ſhalt be unto him inſtead of *God*. And thou ſhalt take this Rod in thine Hand, wherewith thou ſhalt do Signs."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That it is evident from the Words, *He ſhall be to thee inſtead of a Mouth*, that the Defect whereof *Moſes* complained, was an Impediment, or Heſitation in his Speech; and indeed it is apparent from all his Writings, that he he did not want for Eloquence; the Words, therefore, *I am not eloquent*, muſt by no Means be underſtood literally, ſince that St. *Stephen* ſays, *Acts* vii. 22. He was mighty in *Words*, as well as *Deeds*: In Effect, he muſt have made a very ill Uſe of all his Learning had he been otherwiſe.

Q. *Did* Moſes *now prepare for obeying the* Lord's *Command?*

A. Yes; "And *Moſes* went, and returned to *Jethro* his Father-in-law, and ſaid unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return to my Brethren, which are in *Egypt*, and ſee whether they be yet alive. And *Jethro* ſaid to *Moſes*, Go, in Peace."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. Moſes ſhews us here, at once, an eminent Example, of Gratitude, Duty, Prudence, Diſcretion, Modeſty, and Humility. He ſhews his Gratitude, and Duty, in returning to his Father-in-law, and aſking his Permiſſion, for what, having the divine Command, he might have done without conſulting any one. He ſhews his Prudence and Diſcretion in concealing from him the Errand, upon which *God* had ſent him, leſt his Father, or, at leaſt, his Wife, ſhould attempt to hinder or diſcourage him, from undertaking ſo difficult and dangerous an Enterprize. And he ſhews his uncommon Modeſty and Humility, in not ſuffering ſuch a glorious and familiar Converſation with the divine Majeſty, nor yet the high Office to which *God* had advanced him, to make him forget either his Civility or Duty to his Father-in-law, or to break out into any publick or vain-glorious Boaſting of ſo exalted, and unexampled a Privilege; nay not even to give the leaſt Hint thereof. Few now-a-days, if admitted to ſuch a Converſation with an earthly Prince, could forbear boaſting thereof; and yet what infinite Diſtance is there, between the greateſt earthly Sovereign and the Majeſty of Heaven! Infinitely more than between the *Grand Signior*, or the *Emperor* of *China*, and the meaneſt and moſt abject of their Subjects!

Q. *And what ſaid the* Lord *to* Moſes, *to encourage him, when he was preparing for his Departure?*

A. "And the *Lord* ſaid unto *Moſes*, in *Midian*, Go return into *Egypt*: for all the Men are dead, which ſought thy Life."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. We have already obſerved, that *God* did not vouchſafe to give *Moſes* this Information, 'till he had reſolved upon going at all Events; notwithſtanding he well knew, that one great Reaſon of his being ſo unwilling to accept of the high Commiſſion, of being the Deliverer of his Brethren, was his carnal Fear, though he was aſhamed to confeſs it, but as ſoon as he had taken the Reſolution to go, *God* graciouſly condeſcends in a ſecond Viſion, to diſpel all his Fears; which he did probably, to ſpur him on to ſet out, and prevent his loitering in *Midian*.

Q. *And did* Moſes *ſet out immediately after having received this Encouragement?*

A. Yes; "And *Moſes* took his Wife, and his Sons, and ſet them upon an Aſs, and he returned to the Land of *Egypt*. And *Moſes* took the Rod of *God* in his Hand. And the *Lord* ſaid unto *Moſes*, when thou goeſt to return into *Egypt*, ſee that thou do all theſe Wonders before *Pharaoh*, which I have put in thine Hand: But I will harden his Heart, that he ſhall not let the People go. And thou ſhalt ſay unto *Pharaoh*, Thus ſaith the *Lord*, *Iſrael* is my Son, even my Firſt-born. And I ſay unto thee, Let my Son go, that he may ſerve me: And if thou refuſe to let him go, behold, I will ſlay thy Son, even thy Firſt-born."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That the Rod or Crook of *Moſes*, being now appointed by the *Almighty*, to be the Inſtrument wherewith he would perform all his wondrous Works, obtained now the glorious Title of the *Rod of God*; to ſhew that whatever was done by that Rod, was not done by any Virtue inherent in the Rod, or in *Moſes*, but by the immediate Power of the *Almighty*, who was pleaſed for the greater Confuſion of his Enemies, to make uſe of ſo mean an Inſtrument: As alſo, that the *Lord* is here graciouſly pleaſed, to honour the Children of *Iſrael*, with the glorious Title of his Firſt-born, and to make an abſolute Demand of them, as their only and rightful Sovereign, and that on Pain in Caſe of *Pharaoh*'s Refuſal, of his being himſelf puniſhed, with the Loſs of his Firſt-born. How welcome ſuch a Meſſage muſt be to a haughty Monarch, in his own Dominions, is obvious to every one; and, conſequently, they who would venture to deliver ſo harſh and diſagreeable a Commiſſion, muſt be Perſons of a very ſtrong Faith, and uncommon Courage, ſince, according to all Appearance, it was expoſing themſelves to immediate Death.

Q. *What befel* Moſes *by the Way?*

A. "And it came to paſs, by the Way, in the Inn, that the *Lord* met him, and ſought to kill him."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this? And for what Offence was it?*

A. Commentators are divided on this Head; ſome have underſtood it of an Angel's appearing to him in ſome threatening Poſture; poſſibly, as the Angel did to *Balaam*, and afterwards to *David*, with a Sword in his Hand, ready to give him the fatal Stroke. Others imagine it to have been ſome dangerous and ſudden Diſeaſe, with which *Moſes* was ſeized; and what makes this the more probable is, that *Zipporah* circumciſed the Child, which had *Moſes* been well, it would have been his Place to have performed; and to this Opinion we agree. As to the Offence for which this Puniſhment was inflicted, it is generally believed to have been his neglect, in not circumciſing his youngeſt Son. In effect, it is evident it was not his Diſtruſt of *God*, for he had no Diſtruſt of him, nor yet his carrying his Wife and Children with him; for it was very proper he ſhould take them with him, for the greater Encouragement of his Brethren; who muſt certainly repoſe the greater Confidence in him, when they ſaw him expoſe ſuch dear Relations to the ſame Hazards with them, though he altered his Mind afterwards, for what Reaſons is not mentioned in Scripture, but moſt probably at his Wife's Requeſt: It muſt, therefore, certainly be his Neglect in not circumciſing the Child, as is apparent by *Zipporah*'s immediately doing it, to ſave his Life; and from the *Lord*'s letting him go, that is, reſtoring him to Health, as ſoon as that was done. And this was a greater Sin in *Moſes*, than in an other Man; and at this Time than it had been at any Time before; becauſe he underſtood the Will and Law of God about it better than any one, and God had lately reminded him of his Covenant with *Abraham*, whereof Circumciſion was the Seal: And *Moſes* was now going to procure for himſelf and his People the Bleſſing and Benefit of that Covenant, whilſt he continued under the Guilt of groſly neglecting the Conditions thereof. Beſides, what could be more abſurd, than for him to pretend to be a Lawgiver, who lived in a manifeſt Violation of *God*'s Law? Or for him to be the Chief Ruler and Inſtructer of the *Iſraelites*, whoſe Duty it was to acquaint them with the Duty of circumciſing their Children, and, as much as in him lay, to puniſh the wilful neglect of it, and yet at the ſame time be guilty of the ſame Sin? Or that he ſhould undertake to govern the Church of *God*, who could not well rule his own Family? And this was not only a great Sin in itſelf, but a great Scandal to the *Iſraelites*, who might by the Example of ſo eminent a Man, be eaſily led into the ſame Miſcarriage: They might alſo have great Reaſon to queſtion the Call of ſuch a Perſon; and conclude that *God* would not honour that Man, who ſhould continue in ſuch a viſible Contempt of his Law: Wherefore, it is no Wonder that *God* was ſo highly incenſed at *Moſes* for this Sin. From hence a Queſtion will ariſe, how *Moſes* came to neglect this evident Duty? To which we anſwer, that, it is probable, it was owing to *Zipporah*'s Averſion to, and dread of that painful, and, as ſhe thought, dangerous Ordinance of *God*: And though we think her not, as ſome do, to have been a Woman of a paſſionate and turbulent Temper, yet as *Moſes* was eminently meek and mild, it is likely he was too indulgent to her; eſpecially as he was under his Father's Roof; and therefore deferred it to a more convenient Seaſon, when he might either perſuade, or over-rule her therein. Now, this was a heinous Fault; for *God* had not only obliged all the Children of *Abraham* to undergo this Rite, but had preſcribed the Time it ſhould be performed, which was upon the eighth Day; and *Moſes*, having let that Time elapſe conſiderably, ſeemed thereby to declare, that he preferred pleaſing his Wife, to the Obedience he owed to *God*.

Q. *How did* Moſes *eſcape this imminent Danger?*

A. "Then *Zipporah* took a ſharp Stone, and cut off the Foreskin of her Son, and caſt it at his Feet, and ſaid, ſurely a bloody Husband art thou to me."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That his Wife perceiving the imminent Danger her Husband was in, and being informed of the Cauſe thereof; and *Moſes* being diſabled from performing that Work, either by Sickneſs, which we think the moſt probable, or by the Terror of the dreadful Appearance of ſome Miniſter of the divine Wrath; and Delays being highly dangerous, ſhe thought it better to do it herſelf, as well as ſhe could, than to put it off a Moment longer: Either becauſe the Adminiſtration of that Sacrament, was not confined to any Kind or Order of Perſons, or becauſe, if it was, ſhe did not apprehend it to be ſo; or becauſe ſhe thought this was the leaſt of the two Evils; and that it was ſafer to commit a circumſtantial Error, than to continue in a ſubſtantial Offence. As to her uſing a ſharp Stone, ſhe might happen to take that, becauſe it was next at Hand; but, if not, this was no ſtrange Thing, for not only Circumſicion, but even the cutting off the Part itſelf, which was an Operation ſometimes uſed in thoſe Times, was performed with a Flint, or ſharp Stone; as is expreſly affirmed by *Herodotus* l. 2. and *Pliny* xxxv. 12. Beſides the Word may be as well rendered a *ſharp Knife.* As to *Zipporah*'s Speech after the Performance of this Operation, as it ſtands in our *Bible*, it ſeems a paſſionate and angry Exmlacation, on her being forced to let her Child undergo ſuch a painful Operation. But others repreſent this in a much fairer Light, and, as the *Hebrew* Word *Chathan* ſignifies rather a Bridegroom, than a Man who has been ſome Time married, will have the Senſe to be, "Now thou art become a joy-"ful *Bridegroom* to me, by the *Blood* of this Cir-"cumciſion." By which ſhe meant, that *Moſes* being delivered from imminent Death, by the Circumciſion of the Child, would become, as it were, again a *Bridegroom*, or a new Husband to her. And the immediate Recovery of *Moſes* from that Inſtant, ſeems to warrant this Interpretation, to which we agree.

Q. *What farther are we informed of this Transaction?*

A. "So he let him go; then ſhe ſaid, a bloody "Husband thou art, becauſe of the Circumciſion."

Q. *How are we to underſtand this? And what are we to obſerve from thence?*

A. By the Words *ſo he let him go*, ſome underſtand that the deſtroying Angel departed from him; but we rather think, with others, that it ſignifies, he was immediately reſtored to Health; and as to the Words, *a bloody Husband thou art*; we think them only a Repetition of what ſhe had ſaid before, that he would become, as it were, a new Husband to her, being reſtored to her, as it were, from the Grave, by Virtue of the Child's Blood. Others, however, underſtand this as a Repetition of her former Impatience, and Anger; and make her here cenſure and reproach, not only her Husband, but alſo *God*'s Ordinance: And to this they attribute her being ſent back with her Children, to her Father; *Moſes* not thinking it proper to take with him, one of ſo perverſe a Temper, into *Egypt*; as rightly judging, he ſhould have Difficulties enough to ſtruggle with, and encounter there, without being perplexed with domeſtick Jars and Troubles. As plauſible as this Opinion may ſeem, by Reaſon of the vulgar Tranſlation, yet as the Words will bear another more favourable Senſe, as well, and indeed, we think, better, and as it no where appears, that *Zipporah* was a Woman of ſuch a perverſe and turbulent Temper, we deem it better to judge more charitably. The only Grounds thoſe who thus ſtyle her, have for this harſh Cenſure, are from theſe two Verſes, which we think, wrong tranſlated, and his ſending her back to her Father's, as we find he did, *Exodus* xviii. 6. Her caſting with ſo much Bitterneſs, ſay they, the Foreskin at her Husband's Feet, and calling him a bloody Husband, are undeniable Signs of a paſſionate and perverſe Temper. But the Words in the Text are very ſhort and ambiguous; and it does not appear from them whether ſhe caſt the Foreskin at her Husband's Feet, or whether ſhe caſt herſelf at his Feet, that is, proſtrated herſelf before the *Lord*, to implore his Mercy upon her Husband. Then as to her being ſent back, ſhe might probably beg to return, or *Moſes* might think proper to ſend her to her Father, from whom ſhe was but a Days Journey, becauſe the Child might not be fit to undertake a long Journey, immediately after having undergone ſuch a painſul Operation. We are ſenſible it will be objected, that it was in Complaiſance to her, that *Moſes* had forborn to circumciſe his Child; we will allow it, but this does not prove her to have been an ill-temper'd Woman: She might have deſired ſuch a Favour of her Husband, in the ſofteſt Terms, as it was not cuſtomary amongſt the *Midianites* to circumciſe their Children ſo young; and he, being a Man of an indulgent Temper, might have humoured her therein; not imagining this criminal Complaiſance would have offended *God* ſo highly as it did; we can't think, therefore, that *Zipporah* deſerves ſo ſevere a Cenſure, as ſhe has met with from the generality of Commentators. Beſides, in all probability, *Moſes* did not marry *Zipporah*, till after his having lived ſome Years with her Father *Jethro*; for as he was forty Years in the Land of *Midian*, and his youngeſt Son was not circumciſed when he came out from thence, it is likely he did not marry till ſeveral Years after his going thither; and it is altogether improbable, that he, who was the meekeſt of Men, would have agreed to have taken her, had ſhe been a Woman of ſuch a turbulent Diſpoſition, as moſt repreſent her, which he muſt have known on living ſo many Years in the Houſe with her.

Q. *Of what are we next informed concerning* Moſes?

A. "And the *Lord* ſaid to *Aaron*, Go into the "Wilderneſs to meet *Moſes*. And he went and met "him in the Mount of *God*, and kiſſed him."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. This is mentioned, to ſhew how punctually what the *Lord* ſaid was fulfilled, "That *Aaron* ſhould "meet him, and when he ſaw him, ſhould be glad "in his Heart." By the Place alſo where he met him, which was not far from *Jethro*'s; it is probable he was ſet out when the *Lord* ſpoke it, and conſequently that a Remedy was found, for the Impediment *Moſes* had in his Speech, before he ſtarted it as an Objection, to his undertaking the Deliverance of his Brethren.

Q. *What farther paſſed at this Interview between the two Brothers?*

A. "And *Moſes* told *Aaron* all the Words of the "*Lord*, who had ſent him, and all the Signs which "he had commanded him."

Q. *After having thus informed* Aaron *of his Commiſſion, what did they?*

A. "And *Moſes* and *Aaron* went and gathered to-"gether all the Elders of the Children of *Iſrael*: And "*Aaron* ſpake all the Words which the *Lord* had "ſpoken unto *Moſes*, and did the Signs in the Sight "of the People."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. Thus, we ſee, he began to execute the Office to which *God* had appointed him, by being to *Moſes* inſtead of a Mouth, and performing all the Signs which *Moſes* enjoined him; as *Moſes* on the other Hand, was inſtead of *God* to him, by directing him what he ſhould do, on all Occaſions.

Q. *And what Effect had theſe Signs upon the People?*

A. “And the People believed: And when they “heard that the *Lord* had viſited the Children of *Iſrael*, and that he had looked upon their Affliction, “then they bowed their Heads and worſhipped.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That the People readily believed, and bowing down their Heads, adored and praiſed the merciful *God* of their Fathers, for his Kindneſs and Faithfulneſs in his Promiſes, whilſt they had nothing in View, but their Deliverance, from the moſt oppreſſive Toil, and Slavery; but, we ſhall ſoon ſee, that, when once they felt, though but for a very ſhort Time, an Increaſe of their Hardſhips, their Faith immediately forſook them, and they rejected, and reviled, as their greateſt Enemies, thoſe whom they now received as the *Embaſſadors* of *God*, and who, in his due Time, performed all that they had promiſed. So prone are Mankind to murmur, when under the leaſt Affliction! And ſo unreaſonable are they to deſire to receive Bleſſings at the Hand of *God*, when they are unwilling to endure the leaſt Hardſhips in his Service! But they who would triumph with their Redeemer in Heaven, muſt be willing to partake of his Sufferings whilſt here upon Earth; and muſt be able to ſay, with an entire Reſignation, like the righteous *Job* xi. 10. “What ſhall we receive Good at the “Hand of *God*, and ſhall we not receive Evil?”

CHAP. V.

Moſes *and* Aaron *intreat* Pharaoh *to let the People go, to ſacrifice to* God *in the Wilderneſs.* Pharaoh's *haughty and blaſphemous Refuſal. He reprimands* Moſes and Aaron, *for putting ſuch Things in their Heads, to make them idle. He commands the Taſkmaſters, to increaſe the Toil of the Children of* Iſrael. *They do as they are commanded; the People are ſcatter'd throughout the Land; and their Officers cruelly uſed. The Officers complain to* Pharaoh, *who upbraids them with Idleneſs, and gives them a harſh Anſwer. They meeting* Moſes *and* Aaron, *lay the whole Blame on them, reproach them, and appeal to* God *to judge between them and the People.* Moſes *expoſtulates the Caſe with the* Almighty.

Q. *OF what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “And afterwards *Moſes* and *Aaron* went in, “and told *Pharaoh*, Thus ſaith the *Lord*, God of “*Iſrael*, Let my People go, that they may hold a “Feaſt unto me in the Wilderneſs.”

Q. *What are we to underſtand by this holding a Feaſt unto the* Lord?

A. To offer a Sacrifice to him, and worſhip him, for the Sacrifices of the *Jews* were generally accompanied with Feaſting; a good Part of many Sacrifices being ſpent in feaſting and rejoicing before the *Lord*, and to the Honour of the *Lord*. *Deut.* xii. 6, 7, 11, 12.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Pharaoh *to this Demand of the two Prophets?*

A. A moſt haughty, impious, blaſphemous one; “And *Pharaoh* ſaid, Who is the *Lord*, that I ſhould “obey his Voice, to let *Iſrael* go? I know not the “*Lord*, neither will I let *Iſrael* go.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. Pharaoh's Meaning, in this proud, inſolent, and blaſphemous Queſtion, ſeems to be. What *God* is this you call the *Lord?* for indeed, as it is in the *Hebrew*, and ſhould have been rendered here, who is *Jehovah*, I acknowledge no ſuch *God*; he is none of my Deities; and as I have no ſuperiour in *Egypt*, I will not let the *Hebrews*, who are my Slaves, and from whoſe Labour I receive conſiderable Advantages, go upon any ſuch idle Errand.

Q. *What did* Moſes *and* Aaron *reply, to this inſolent Refuſal of the Tyrant?*

A. “And they ſaid, The *God* of the *Hebrews* hath “met with Us: Let us go, we pray thee, three Days “Journey into the Deſart, and ſacrifice unto the “*Lord*, our *God*; leſt he fall upon us with Peſtilence, or with the Sword.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That, notwithſtanding the Prophets make uſe here, of ſubmiſſive, and reſpectful Terms, as *God* had at firſt enjoined them, *Chap.* iii. 18. they riſe in their Demand; which is now, to go a three Days Journey into the Wilderneſs, which muſt, conſequently, require as much to return back, and allowing but a Day for their Sacrifice, muſt be a whole Week; during which Time, the Value of their Labour muſt amount to a conſiderable Sum, at leaſt, two hundred and ten Thouſand Pounds. For conſulting the Labour of ſix hundred Thouſand Men, at the Medium of one Shilling a Day, one with another, and ſome of them muſt deſerve twice as much, it will come to thirty Thouſand Pounds a Day; which multiply by ſeven it will produce juſt two hundred and ten Thouſand Pounds. If it be objected that the Value of Labour was infinitely leſs then than now, we anſwer, that the Value of one Penny then was equal to the Value, or (which is all one) would go as far as a Shilling now, then the Value of the twelfth Part of two hundred and ten Thouſand Pounds, was equal to the Value of the Whole now. If it be again objected, that the *Iſraelites* ſet apart the ſeventh Day for religious Worſhip, and that, conſequently, we muſt deduct the ſeventh Part of that Sum, we anſwer, that the *Iſraelites* being Slaves to the *Egyptians*, it is not to be ſuppoſed, that their lordly Oppreſſors, would allow them a Day's Reſt in ſeven, for a Worſhip, of which they were ſo far from approving, that they accounted it the greateſt of Follies, and Superſtition. But, were we even to grant, that they were allowed a Day's Reſpite in ſeven, from their Labours, it muſt be conſidered, that we reckon only the Labour of thoſe who were able bodied Men; to which, if we add the ſix Days Labours of the Women, who no doubt, were forced to work in their Sphere, and that of the Youth or Striplings from Fourteen to Twenty-one, it will amount to more than an Equivalent for the Reſpite of one Day in ſeven. This being conſidered, the Demand of the two Profits, of a whole Week's Reſpite from their Labours, for ſo numerous a Body of People, whereby the Kingdom muſt ſuffer ſo much Loſs, muſt ſound very extravagant in the Ears of a haughty Tyrant, who being a Heathen, and an Idolater, and not having the leaſt Notion of the *God* of *Iſrael*; might, not improbably, in his Heart, deſpiſe that Deity, who ſuffered his Worſhippers to groan under ſuch a ſevere and intolerable Bondage. But when we conſider again, that this Demand, might reaſonably give *Pharaoh* a Jealouſly, that the *Iſraelites* deſigned to withdraw themſelves from his Subjection,

jection, as they actually did; and that this was only a Pretence for that Purpoſe; and that the Loſs the Kingdom of *Egypt* would ſuffer thereby was above ten Millions *per Annum*; and that this Demand was made by two private Men, who were themſelves *Hebrews*, and conſequently Slaves, in the Name of a Power he had hardly heard of before, or if he had, did not acknowledge it; muſt not this Demand of theirs appear to him extravagantly audacious and inſolent? And muſt not the two Brothers be endued with more than human Courage, and with an uncommon Faith in their God, and Protector to make it? Undoubtedly *Pharaoh* either thought them mad Men, or inſolent Rebels; and it can only be aſcribed to the over-ruling Power of Providence, that he did not that Inſtant command them to be put to Death.

Q. *What Anſwer made* Pharaoh *to this their ſecond Demand?*

A. " And the King of *Egypt* ſaid unto them, Wherefore do ye, *Moſes*, and *Aaron*, let the People from their Works? Get you unto your Burthens."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That *Pharaoh* firſt directs his Speech to *Moſes* and *Aaron*, as being the Perſons who were the principal Authors of this Demand; after which, to ſhew how far he was, from being inclined to grant their Requeſt, he directs his Speech to all in General, and commands them to their Labours; including, as we think, *Moſes* and *Aaron*, as well as the Elders of the People who came with them, in the general Command; as a juſt Puniſhment to them, for their, (as he thought) inſolent Petition. In ſhort, *Pharaoh* ſeems to have looked upon *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and the Elders, as Slaves to his Will, and ought not to diſpute the leaſt of his Orders or Commands.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Pharaoh *upon this Head?*

A. " And *Pharaoh* ſaid, Behold, the People of the Land now are many, and you make them reſt from their Burthens." Which needs no Explanation.

Q. *And what did* Pharaoh *to puniſh the Children of* Iſrael, *for having made this Demand?*

A. " And *Pharaoh* commanded, the ſame Day, the Taſk-maſters of the People, and their Officers, ſaying, ye ſhall no more give the People Straw, to make Brick, as heretofore: Let them go and gather Straw for themſelves. And the Tale of the Bricks which they did make heretofore, you ſhall lay upon them; you ſhall not diminiſh ought thereof; for they be idle: Therefore they cry, ſaying, Let us go, and ſacrifice to our *God*. Let there be more Work laid upon the Men, that they may labour therein: And let them not regard vain Words."

Q. *What may be obſerved from hence?*

A. That here is a lively Picture of a haughty and cruel Tyrant; he not only grudges the poor *Iſraelites* the leaſt Reſpite from their Labour, but he even puniſhes their Deſire of the leaſt Eaſe and Intermiſſion, though worded in the moſt humble Manner, as criminal. For, notwithſtanding we have allowed, that *Pharaoh* muſt look upon the Demand of the two Brothers as extravagant, audacious, and inſolent, from a People whom he held under the moſt ſevere and oppreſſive Bondage; that does no make him ever the leſs a Tyrant; ſince he had no other Right to their Servitude, than that which it is too common for the Stronger to uſurp over the Weaker.

Q. *What was the Effect of this unreaſonable Command of* Pharaoh?

A. " And the Taſk-maſters of the People went out, and their Officers, and they ſpake to the People, ſaying, Thus ſaith *Pharaoh*, I will not give you Straw. Go ye, get you Straw where you can find it: Yet not ought of your Work ſhall be diminiſhed. So the People were ſcattered abroad, throughout all the Land of *Egypt*, to gather Stubble inſtead of Straw."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. The unparallel'd Inhumanity of both King and People; ſince *Pharaoh*'s Council ought, in common Humanity to have repreſented to him, that he required an abſolute Impoſſibility; as they did not, they made themſelves Partakers of their Maſter's Guilt, and therefore, were juſtly puniſhed by *God*, with him.

Q. *Of what next are we informed concerning this Tranſaction?*

A. " And the Taſk-maſters haſtened them, ſaying, fulfil your Works, your daily Taſks, as when there was Straw. And the Officers of the Children of *Iſrael*, which *Pharaoh*'s Taſk had ſet over them, were beaten, and demanded, wherefore have ye not fulfilled your Taſk in making Bricks, both Yeſterday and to Day as heretofore?

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. This only confirms our former Obſervation, by ſhewing, that not only the Council were culpable, in not repreſenting to the King, the Unreaſonableneſs, and Impoſſibility of his Command; but alſo the whole Body of the People were Accomplices with him in his Crime; and therefore were juſtly puniſhed with him.

Q. *And what did the Officers of the Children of* Iſrael, *on being ſo inhumanly treated?*

A. " Then the Officers of the Children of *Iſrael* came and cry'd unto *Pharaoh*, ſaying, why dealeſt thou thus with thy Servants? There is no Straw given unto thy Servants, and they ſay to us, make Brick: And, behold, thy Servants are beaten; but the Fault is in thine own People."

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That the *Iſraelitiſh* Officers prudently pretend either not to know, or not to believe, that the King has any Hand in their being ſo oppreſſed, and lay the Blame upon his Subjects, hoping thereby to move his Paſſion; but alas! they were mightily miſtaken; Tyrants are not ſo ſoon moved: Pity is a Stranger to them.

Q. *Why, what Anſwer made* Pharaoh *to this reaſonable Remonſtrance?*

A. He anſwered like what he was, an inhuman Tyrant: " But he ſaid, Ye are idle, ye are idle: Therefore ye ſay, let us go, and do ſacrifice to the *Lord*. Go, therefore now and work: For there ſhall no Straw be given you, yet ſhall ye deliver the Tale of Bricks."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That the King of *Egypt* exceeded *Nero*, *Caligula*, *Domitian*, and the moſt barbarous of the *Roman* Emperors, in Cruelty; his Predeceſſor had contrived, as much as in him lay, to exterminate the whole Race of the *Hebrews*, by ſentencing all the Male Children to be drowned; but that did not come up to the Inhumanity of this Edict: That killed them at once; this murthered them by ſlow Tortures, and made them (to uſe a common Expreſſion) die by Inches.

Q. *How behaved the Officers of the Children of* Iſrael, *on receiving this harſh Anſwer.*

A. " And the Officers of the Children of *Iſrael* did ſee that they were in evil Caſe, after it was

“ ſaid, ye ſhall not miniſh ought from your Bricks of your daily Taſk. And they met *Moſes* and *Aaron*, who ſtood in the Way, as they came forth from *Pharaoh*. And they ſaid unto them, the *Lord* look upon you, and judge; becauſe you have made our Savour to be abhorred in the Eyes of *Pharaoh*, and in the Eyes of his Servants, to put a Sword in their Hands to ſlay us.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That, notwithſtanding the Miracles the two Prophets had had wrought, to convince the *Iſraelites* of their divine Miſſion, which ought to have made them endure with Patience, the Tyranny of *Pharaoh*, in a reſigned Expectation of Deliverance, in God's due Time; theſe Officers are ſo far from ſubmitting to the divine Embaſſadors, that they fall but little ſhort of curſing them; the Words *the* Lord *look upon you and judge*, being no leſs than an Imprecation of the divine Vengeance upon them.

Q. *What did* Moſes *upon meeting with this ungrateful Uſage?*

“ And *Moſes* returned unto the *Lord*, and ſaid, *Lord*, wherefore haſt thou ſo evil intreated the People? Why is it that thou haſt ſent me? For ſince I came to *Pharaoh*, to ſpeak in thy Name, he hath done Evil to this People; neither haſt thou delivered thy People at all.

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That this is an Example which ought to keep all Mankind humble; ſince even the beſt of Men are liable to ſuch groſs Failings; for *Moſes*, in this Speech, ſeems not only to murmur againſt *God*, for giving him ſuch an ungrateful Commiſſion, but even to charge him with falſifying his Promiſe, and breaking his Word.

Chap VI.

God *gives* Moſes *freſh Encouragement*; *renews his Covenant, and confirms it by his Name* Jehovah. *He promiſes the* Iſraelites *Deliverance, but they will not believe it. He commands* Moſes *to demand of* Pharaoh *the Releaſement of* Iſrael. *The Genealogy of* Reuben, Simeon *and* Levi. Moſes *is again ordered to ſpeak to* Pharaoh, *for the Releaſement of the Children of* Iſrael; *he excuſeth himſelf on Account of his Impediment in his Speech.*

Q. Of *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. “ Then the Lord ſaid unto *Moſes*, now ſhalt thou ſee that I will do to *Pharaoh*: For with a ſtrong Hand ſhall he let them go, and with a ſtrong Hand ſhall he drive them out of his Land.”

Q. *What is obſervable herein?*

A. That the *Almighty*, to give the more remarkable Inſtance of his Omnipotence declares he will not only force *Pharaoh* to conſent to the Departure of the Children of *Iſrael*, notwithſtanding he would be thereby a Loſer of ten Millions *per Annum*, but would even make him drive them out of his Dominions.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *unto* Moſes?

A. “ And *God* ſpake unto *Moſes*, and ſaid unto unto him, I am the Lord: And I appeared unto *Abraham*, unto *Iſaac*, and unto *Jacob*, by the Name of *God Almighty*; but by my Name *Jehovah* was I not known to them.”

Q. *How are we to underſtand this, ſince it is evident he was known both by* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob *by that Name?*

A. Notwithſtanding *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, knew that *God* was *Almighty*, and therefore could perform all his Promiſes in his own due Time; and notwithſtanding he told them his Name was *Jehovah*, which denotes all his Perfections; wherefore they ſtedfaſtly believed he would keep his Covenant; yet the Eternity, Conſtancy, and Immutability of his Nature, and Will, which is all included in the Word *Jehovah*, was not experimentally known to them; which makes the *Almighty* ſay here, that he was not known to them by that Name, that is, they had not had any Experience of the Steddineſs of his Kindneſs, which was as fixed and certain as his perfect Exiſtence; and which he was now about to make known to the *Iſraelites*.

Q. *What farther ſaid the* Lord *unto* Moſes?

A. “ And I have alſo eſtabliſhed my Covenant with them, to give them the Land of *Cannaan*, the Land of their Pilgrimage, wherein they were Strangers. And I have alſo heard the Groaning of the Children of *Iſrael*, whom the *Egyptians* keep in Bondage: And I have remembered my Covenant. Wherefore ſay unto the Children of *Iſrael*, I am the *Lord*, and I will bring you out from under the Burthens of the *Egyptians*, and I will rid you out of their Bondage: And I will redeem you with a ſtretched out Arm, and with great Judgments. And I will take you to me for a People, and I will be to you a God: And ye ſhall know that I am the *Lord* your *God*, which bringeth you out from under the Burthen of the *Egyptians*. And I will bring you in unto the Land, concerning the which, I did ſwear to give it to *Abraham*, to *Iſaac*, and to *Jacob*; and I will give it you for an Heritage: I am the *Lord*.

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. How gracious the Lord is pleaſed to renew all his Promiſes, to encourage *Moſes* in the performing his Commiſſions, in a much more poſitive and particular Manner, than he had before ſpecified to the Patriarchs. Had not the *Iſraelites* been naturally an unbelieving Generation, what could be more ample, or more glorious than his Promiſe to take them for his People, and to be their *God!*

Q. *How did the Children of* Iſrael *receive this gracious Meſſage?*

A. Very ungratefully; “ And *Moſes* ſpake ſo unto the Children of *Iſrael*: But they hearkened not unto *Moſes*, for Anguiſh of Spirit, and for cruel Bondage.”

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That their Minds were ſo oppreſſed with their preſent Burthens, and future Expectations, that they could not believe nor hope for any Deliverance but deemed it impoſſible, and having been once deceived in their Hopes they now gave themſelves up entirely to deſpair.

Q. *What ſaid the Lerd hereupon to* Moſes?

A. “ And the *Lord* ſpake unto *Moſes*, ſaying, Go in, ſpeak unto *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, that he let the Children of *Iſrael* go out of his Land. And *Moſes* ſpake before the *Lord*, ſaying, Behold the Children of *Iſrael* have not hearkned unto me; how then ſhall *Pharaoh* hear me, who am of uncircumciſed Lips?”

Q. *What is to be obſered from hence?*

A. That *Moſes* might very reaſonably make this Objection, ſince it was very improbable that *Pharaoh* ſhould give more Credit to him, than his own Brethren.

Q. *What Anſwer made the* Lord *to this Objection made by* Moſes?

A. “ And

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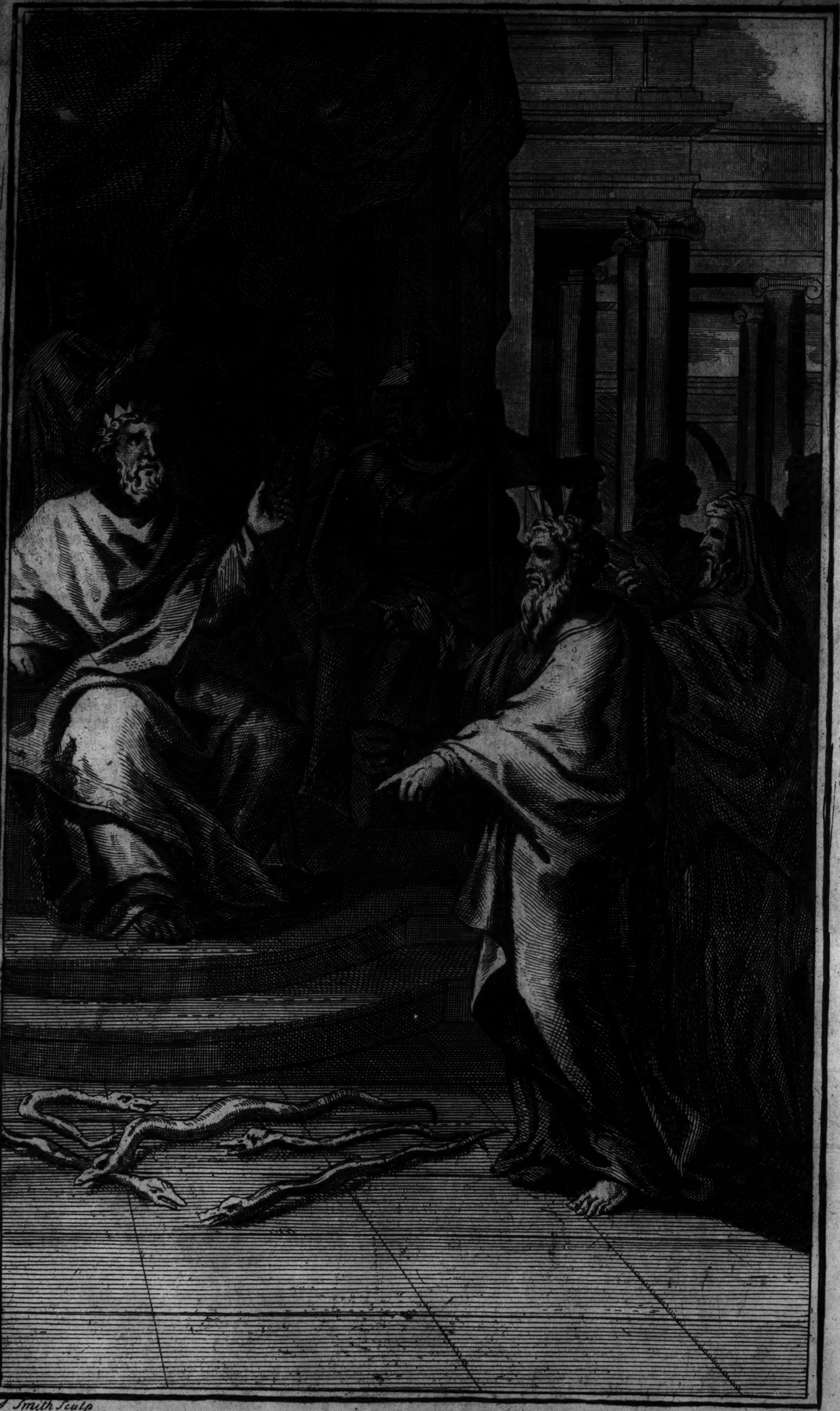


J. Smith Sculp

MOSES'S *Rod turned into a Serpent before* PHARAOH

A. "And the *Lord* ſpake unto *Moſes*, and unto *Aaron*, and gave a Charge unto the Children of *Iſrael*, and unto *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*; to bring the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*. Theſe be the Heads of their Father's Houſes: The Sons of *Reuben*, the Firſt-born of *Iſrael*; *Hanoch* and *Pallu*, *Hezron* and *Carmi*; theſe be the Families of *Reuben*. And the Sons of *Simeon*; *Jemuel*, and *Janim*, and *Obad*, and *Jachin*, and *Shaul* the Son of the *Canaanitiſh* Woman; theſe are the Families of *Simeon*. And theſe are the Names of the Sons of *Levi*, according to their Generations; *Gerſhon*, and *Kohath*, and *Merari*: And the Years of the Life of *Levi* were an hundred thirty and ſeven Years. The Son of *Gerſhon*; *Libni* and *Shimi*, according to their Families. And the Sons of *Kohath*; *Amram*; and *Izhar*, and *Hebron*, and *Uzziel*; And the Years of the Life of *Kohath* were an hundred thirty and three Years. And the Sons of *Merari*; *Mahali* and *Muſhi*: Theſe are the Families of *Levi*, according to their Generations?"

Q. *What is the Reaſon of inſerting this Genealogy?*

A. To ſpecify the Lineage of *Moſes* and *Aaron*, by whom the great Work of the Deliverance of the Children of *Iſrael* was to be accompliſhed.

Q. *What farther are we told concerning this Genealogy?*

A. "And *Amram* took him *Jochebed*, his Father's Siſter to Wife; and ſhe bare him *Aaron* and *Moſes*: and the Years of the Life of *Amram* were an hundred thirty and ſeven Years. And the Sons of *Izhar*; *Korah*, and *Nephey*, and *Zichri*. And the Son of *Uzziel*, *Miſhael*, and *Azaphan*, and *Zithri*. And *Aaron* took him *Eliſheba*, Daughter of *Amminadab*, Siſter of *Naaſhon* to Wife; and ſhe bare him *Nadab* and *Abihu*, *Eleazar* and *Ithamar*. And the Sons of *Korah*; *Aſſir*, and *Alkanah*, and *Abiaſaph*: Theſe are the Families of the *Korhites*. And *Eleazar*, *Aaron*'s Son took him one of the Daughter's of *Putiel* to Wife; and ſhe bare him *Phinehas*: Theſe are the Heads of the Fathers of the *Levites*, according to their Families."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That *Moſes* is entirely Silent as to his own Progeny, but gives a particular Account of his Brothers; which is not only owing to his great Humility and Modeſty, which is eminent in many other Paſſages, but becauſe it was of more Importance, and the Honour of the Prieſthood given to *Aaron* was hereditary, and peculiar to his Seed, and therefore it was neceſſary it ſhould be exactly known; whereas *Moſes* his Honour and Government was only perſonal, and did not deſcend to his Children.

Q. *What next are we informed of concerning* Moſes *and Aaron?*

A. "Theſe are that *Aaron* and *Moſes*, to whom the *Lord* ſaid, Bring out the Children of *Iſrael* from the Land of *Egypt*, according to their Armies. Theſe are they which ſpoke to *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, to bring out the Children of *Iſrael* from *Egypt*. Theſe are that *Moſes* and *Aaron*. And it came to paſs on the Day when the *Lord* ſpake unto *Moſes* in the Land of *Egypt*: That the *Lord* ſpake unto *Moſes*, ſaying, I am the *Lord*: Speak thou unto *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt* all that I ſay unto thee. And *Moſes* ſaid before the *Lord*, Behold I am of uncircumciſed Lips, and how ſhall *Pharaoh* hearken unto me?"

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. That *Moſes* again betrays a great Weakneſs of Faith, as if *God* could not effect his Purpoſe, becauſe the Inſtrument was unfit.

CHAP. VII.

Moſes *and* Aaron, *being encouraged by God, go to* Pharaoh, *whoſe Heart is hardened.* Aaron's *Rod turned into a Serpent; likewiſe thoſe of the Magicians. The Waters turned into Blood; the Magicians do the ſame.* Pharaoh *ſtill obſtinate.*

Q. *WHAT firſt deſerves our Atention in this Chapter?*

A. The Inſtructions which God gave to *Moſes* with Reſpect to his Behaviour before *Pharaoh*.

Q. *Be ſomewhat more particular.*

A. God, to ſilence the Objection, which *Moſes* had more than once made, of his Defectiveneſs in Speech, tells him, *I have made thee a God to* Pharaoh, *and* Aaron *ſhall be thy Prophet*, *v.* 1. by which he not only means, that he had inveſted him with an Authority to require of *Pharaoh* an Obedience to his Commands, and, upon his Refuſal, to inflict ſuch Puniſhment on him, as none but God could inflict; but that, in executing the Commiſſion he was putting upon him, there was no Occaſion for him to ſpeak to *Pharaoh* himſelf, ſince he had appointed *Aaron* to do that; and therefore he might keep himſelf upon the Reſerve, and *Pharaoh* at an awful Diſtance, juſt as God delivers his Oracles to the People, by the Mediation of his Prophet.

Q. *Is there no Objection to this Paſſage?*

A. Yes; ſome will not have it to be genuine, becauſe *Moſes* makes uſe of the Word *Nabi* for a *Prophet*, which in his Days muſt have been expreſſed by another: For ſo, *Sam.* ix. 9. it is ſaid, that he, *who was now called* Nabi, *a Prophet*, *was before Time called* Roeh, *a Seer*; which ſeems to imply that *Nabi* was not in uſe 'till *Samuel*'s Days. But this is very far from *Samuel*'s Meaning, whoſe plain Senſe is this, That he, who foretold Things to come, or diſcovered Secrets, was anciently called a *Seer*, not a *Prophet*, for a *Prophet* heretofore only ſignified an Interpreter of the divine Will; but that now (in *Samuel*'s Days) they began to apply the Word *Nabi*, or *Prophet*, to thoſe who could reveal any Secrets, or foreſee Things to come.

Q. *What was the firſt Miracle performed by* Moſes *and* Aaron, *in the Preſence of* Pharaoh?

A. The King demanding a Sign whereby he might be truly convinced that they were ſent by the God of *Iſrael*, *Moſes* directed *Aaron* to throw his Rod upon the Ground, which he had no ſooner done, but it became a large Serpent.

Q. *Was* Pharaoh *ſatisfied of their Divine Miſſion, by this wonderful Event?*

A. No; he was perſuaded that ſome of his own People were capable of doing as much; and to confront this Miracle, he ſent for his Magicians and Socerers, and ordered them to try, if, by Magical Art, they could cauſe the like Tranſmutation. They attempted, and ſucceeded; they changed their Rods into Serpents, as *Moſes* had done, but with this remarkable Difference, that *Aaron*'s Rod ſwallowed up all the Rods of the Magicians, which was enough to convince the proud Monarch of the ſuperior Power of the God of *Iſrael*, had not his Heart been ſo averſe to the Thoughts of parting with the *Hebrews*, that he did not let this Circumſtance make a due Impreſſion on his Mind.

Q. *Can you give any probable Account who theſe Magicians were?*

A. They are not here mentioned by Name; but ſeveral both *Jewiſh* and *Heathen* Authors (from whom St, *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* iii. 8. no doubt borrowed their Names) have informed us, that among the *Egyptians* they were called *Jannes* and *Jambres*; and a celebrated Writer has given us this remarkable Account of them, *viz.* That they were the Scribes in religious Matters among the *Egyptians*, that they flouriſhed in *Egypt*, at the Time when the *Jews* were driven from thence; that they did not yield to any Body in the Knowledge of magical Secrets, and for this Reaſon, were choſen by all *Egypt*, to oppoſe *Muſeus* (ſo they call *Moſes*) a Leader of the *Jews*, and whoſe Prayers were very prevalent with God.

Q. *Can you give any probable Account from Reaſon or Nature, in what Manner theſe Magicians were able ſo nearly to counterfeit the Miracles wrought by* Moſes?

A. There are two Ways, wherein we may imagine it in the Power of the *Devil*, to be aſſiſtant to ſuch Perſons as pretend to work Miracles. The firſt is, by raiſing *falſe Images* and Appearances of Things; which may be done, either by affecting the Brain, confuſing the optick Nerves, or altering the Medium between us and the Object. That he did ſome ſuch Thing as this to our Bleſſed Saviour, when from the Top of an high Mountain, he pretended (*Matth.* iv. 8.) to ſhew him *all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, in a Moment of Time*, is very plain, from the Convexity of the Earth which bounds the *Horizon*, and admits of no ſuch unlimited Proſpect; ſo that all he could be preſumed capable of doing in this Caſe, (as our Saviour was not inſenſible what he did do) was to make *fictitious Repreſentations*, of gay and magnificent Things in the Air. *Secondly*, The other Way wherein the Devil may be ſuppoſed to aſſiſt theſe Magicians, is, by making uſe of the *Law of Nature*, in producing Effects which are not above the natural Power of Things, tho' they certainly exceeded what Man can do. Thus, to tranſport a Body with inconceivable Rapidity, from one Place to another; to bring together different Productions of Nature, which ſeparately have no viſible Effect, but when united work Wonders; to make Images move, walk, ſpeak, and the like; theſe may come within the Compaſs of the Devil's Power, becauſe not tranſcending the *Laws of Nature*, tho' we cannot diſcern by what Means they are effected. 'Tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe therefore, that they deluded the Company with falſe Appearances of Serpents, Frogs, and Blood. And if what they did, was by the Agency of evil Spirits, it is plain that that Agency was under the divine Controul, and could go no farther than the *God of Iſrael* permitted, as appears plainly by the Diſability of his Magicians to perform all the Miracles done by *Moſes*.

Q. *You have ſaid enough of the Magicians, and their Art; now pleaſe to inform me what Impreſſion this Miracle, of changing a Rod into a Serpent, had upon* Pharaoh?

A. He looked on it only as a Trial of Skill between Artiſts: Therefore God reſolves to make uſe of more ſenſible Scourges, and afflict the *Egyptians* with ſuch a Succeſſion of Plagues, as ſhould compel them to diſmiſs the enſlaved *Iſraelites*; and thereupon commanded *Moſes, to take his Rod, and ſtretch out his Hand upon the Waters of* Egypt, *the Streams, the Rivers, and the Ponds, and upon all their Pools of Water, that they may become Blood.*

Q. *As the whole Land of* Egypt *is watered by the* Nile, *I think ſome Account of that famous River is neceſſary, in order to give us an Idea how ſo great a Kingdom as* Egypt *can be ſufficiently provided with Water from this one Source, without the Tribute of Rain?*

A. Some ingenious modern Authors give the following Account of it. The River *Nile* has its Fountain-head in the upper *Ethiopia*, and proceeds from two Springs, about twenty Paces diſtant from one another, and each of the Bigneſs of a Cart-wheel. About three Days Journey from the Fountain-head, the River grows wide, and deep enough to carry a Veſſel; and, having received another River into its Boſom, it purſues its Courſe Weſtward for above twenty-five Leagues from its Head, and then, winding about to the *Eaſt*, it falls in to a great Lake, which is probably that of *Zaire*. At its coming out of this Lake, it makes ſeveral Windings towards the *South*, waters the Country of *Alata*, and then precipitates itſelf between the Rocks of fourteen Fathom high, with a terrible Noiſe, and raiſes ſuch thick Vapours, that, at a Diſtance, they may be taken for real Clouds. After having water'd ſeveral Provinces of the *Eaſt*, it continues its Courſe ſo far into the Kingdom of *Gaiam*, that is comes within a Days Journey of its firſt Source, and thence takes a Tour round about, and runs towards *Phezelo* and *Ombezea*. Here it winds about again, and having, from *Eaſt* to *North*, croſſed ſeveral Kingdoms and Provinces, it comes into *Egypt* at the *Cataracts*, which are vaſt Falls of Water, that it makes from ſteep Rocks of an hundred foot high. From the Top of theſe Rocks the Water falls with ſuch Violence, that it makes a kind of Arch, under which, one may paſs without being wet, and with ſuch a hideous Noiſe, as may be heard full three Leagues off. At the Bottom of theſe Rocks is returns to its uſual gentle pace, with which it flows through the Plains of *Egypt*, in a Channel about a League broad, though modern Travellers ſay much leſs. When it comes below *Memphis*, about eighty Miles from *Grand Cairo*, it is divided into two Arms, which make a kind of Triangle, having the Mediterranean Sea for its Baſe, and, by reaſon of its Figure, is by the *Greeks* called *Delta*. Theſe two Arms were formerly divided into five ſmall ones; and from thence came the common Phraſe of *ſeven-headed Nile*; but they are now ſo choaked up with Sand, that they are ſcarce diſcernable. This is the only River in *Egypt*, and contains all the Water the Inhabitants have to drink, which made the *turning it into Blood* an heavy Judgment upon the People. The Overflowing of the River (which moſt impute to the great Rains, which fall, and melt the Snow in the Mountains of *Ethiopia*) is the Cauſe of all the Plenty and Fruitfulneſs of the whole Country; and therefore *Plutarch*, and ſeveral others, tell us, that nothing was had in ſo much Veneration among the *Egyptians*; that they ador'd and invocated it, as the greateſt of *Gods*, not only under the Name of *Oſiris*, but of *Orus*, and *Jupiter* likewiſe, and inſtituted in its Honour the moſt ſolemn of their Feaſts; and therefore their Conjecture, who think that *Pharaoh* went to pay his Morning Devotions to the River *Nile* is much more plauſible than that of the *Chaldee Paraphaſt*, *viz.* that he went to obſerve *Divination upon the Water, as a Magician*; when in all Probability, his Buſineſs was no more, than to bathe himſelf, as the Cuſtom among the *Egyptians* was to do almoſt every Day.

Q. *What Reflections have you to make upon this Change of the Water into Blood?*

A. I obſerve, *Firſt*, That it was perform'd in the Morning openly, before the King, his Courtiers, and perhaps a large Concourſe of *Egyptians*, ſo that the Fact might remain indiſputable. *Secondly*, This Change was not wrought on a ſmall Quantity of Water, which might have been objected to; but this Evil was univerſal, affecting all the Waters in the Land; their *Streams*, that is, the *Branches* into which the *Nile* divided itſelf before it flowed into the Sea; their *Rivers*, that is, the Cuts or Canals, whereby Water was carried from the *Nile* all over *Egypt*; their *Ponds*, which were dug, and probably filled by Springs; their Pools, or Receptacles of the *Nile*-water brought in to them by Pipes; and whatever was reſerved for domeſtick Uſes, in Veſſels of Wood or Stone, all underwent the ſame Alteration, and became *Blood*. *Thirdly*, This Change was not in Colour or Reſemblance only, but total, as appears from the Fiſh dying therein, and the River's being corupted; occaſioned, very probably, by the Sun-beams beating thereon, which muſt, of courſe, raiſe an intolerable Stench. *Fourthly*, It was wrought on what the *Egyptians* eſteemed a Deity, or at leaſt conceived to have ſomething ſacred and holy in it. *Fifthly*, It continued for the Space of ſeven Days; during which the Inhabitants were grievouſly diſtreſſed for Water; inſomuch that they dug Pits by the River's Side, in order to obtain ſome; which, it may be, *God* permitted to take Effect, that they might not be utterly deſtroyed. *Sixthly*, The *Magicians* employed by *Pharaoh*, doubtleſs examin'd ſtrictly into all the Circumſtances of this Miracle, and would certainly have relieved the People from its Effect, had it been in their Power. *Seventhly*, Many prophane Authors have given their Teſtimonies to the Truth and Validity of this Matter.

Q. *Have you any thing curious to obſerve in relation to the Fiſh of this famous River, which died on this Occaſion?*

A. *Diodorus Siculus*, in his Deſcription of *Egypt*, informs us, that the River *Nile* abounded with all manner of Fiſh, though late Travellers tell us; that there are not, at preſent, many in it; which may be attributed to the Muddineſs of the Water or to the Havock, which the Crocodile, and other Monſters of this River, may be ſuppoſed to make in it. However, it's certain that this Putrefaction of the Water, and ſlaying the Fiſh, was a very heavy Judgment upon the *Egyptians*; who abſtained from moſt Animals; whoſe Drink was generally Water; and the Fruit of the Earth, and the Fiſh of the River, their conſtant Food.

Q. *Have you any thing farther to obſerve upon the periſhing of the Fiſh?*

A. Only, that it was a Proof of its being a true Miracle; and that *God* plagued them in that which was moſt neceſſary for the Preſervation and Suſtenance of Life.

CHAP. VIII.

The Plagues of Frogs, Lice, and Flies; which, on Moſes's *Prayer, are removed.* Pharaoh *ſtill hardened.*

Q. WHAT *is the Hiſtory of this Chapter?*

A. There being now a Reſpite from the laſt Plague. *Moſes* and *Aaron* came again to *Pharaoh*, requiring a Diſmiſſion of the People; and withal aſſuring him, that, if he did not grant it, they would bring a Plague of Frogs upon the Land. Hereupon, the King ſetting them at Defiance, *Moſes* ordered *Aaron* to ſtretch his Rod again over the Waters; upon doing of which there came up Abundance of Frogs, ſo as to cover the whole Land of *Egypt*, and to ſwarm in their Houſes, their Chambers, their Beds, and the very Places, where their Victuals were dreſs'd; but here it alſo happened, that the *Magicians* likewiſe perform'd the ſame, ſo that *Pharaoh* was not much influenc'd by this *Miracle*; only, as his *Magicians* could not remove the Frogs, he was forc'd to apply to *Moſes* for Relief; who, upon his Addreſs to *God*, had them all deſtroy'd the next Day, according to the Time he had prefix'd; but when they were gathered into Heaps, their Numbers were ſo great, that before they could well be diſpos'd of, they infected the Air, and made the whole Land ſtink. The two other Plagues, ſaid here to be brought upon the *Egyptians*, were the *Lice*, and the *Flies*.

Q. *What have you to remark upon the Miracle of the Frogs?*

A. That there is nothing ſo weak, that *God* cannot cauſe to overcome the greateſt Power of Man.

Q. *Does not the River* Nile *naturally produce Frogs?*

A. It does ſo; but ſo great an Abundance appearing on a ſudden, filling the Country, and leaving the Rivers and Fields, to go into Cities and Houſes, was really Miraculous.

Q. *But as their Cities were walled round, and their Houſes ſecur'd with Doors, Walls, and other Fences, how was it poſſible the Frogs ſhould penetrate into them?*

A. This is no hard Matter to conceive, if we conſider, that expert Generals, according to both antient and modern Hiſtory, have ſometimes ſurpriz'd an Enemy, by entering into Cities through *Common-Sewers*; with much leſs Difficulty might the Frogs, theſe Armies of the divine Vengeance, find a Conveyance into the Cities, which ſtood all upon the Banks of the River, by Aqueducts, and Subterraneous Communications, and, being got into the Cities, they might find Apertures in the Walls of the Houſes, which the Inhabitants never perceived before.

Q. *It is ſaid,* That the Sorcerers did likewiſe with their Sorceries, and brought Frogs upon the Land of *Egypt*; *Now, where had they Room to do this, when the Land was filled with Frogs before?*

A. They exercis'd their Art, probably, in the Land of *Goſhen*, which was exempted from Plagues; or in ſome other Place, which was not preſently, and at the firſt Inſtant, cover'd with Frogs by *Moſes*'s Working.

Q. *Wherein conſiſted the Difference between the Miracle wrought by* Moſes, *and this Effect of the* Magician's *Skill?*

A. In this; that *God* ſuffered the Magicians to imitate the Miracle of the Plague; and at the ſame Time diſcovered the Falſhood and Weakneſs of the Devil, in not permitting them to imitate the Remedy, and the Deliverance; for though by their Inchantments they brought them on, yet it was not in the Power of all their Sorceries to ſend them away, or deſtroy them.

Q. *What is the true Import of thoſe Words of* Moſes *to* Pharaoh, Glory over me?

A. The Senſe of theſe Words is taken diverſely; ſome interpret them thus, ſince thou humbleſt thyſelf, and doſt acknowledge thy Subjection, and declareſt thy Obedience to *God*, thou haſt conquered me, and got the better of my Plagues, which thou wouldſt never have done, hadſt thou remained hardened and impenitent. The *French* Annotators Comment upon it is this: Since thou do'ſt humble and diſpoſe thy ſelf to obey *God's* Will, I alſo frame my ſelf to obey thy Will, and do thee this Service. Or, ſay others, he ſpeaks ironically; as if he had ſaid, Scorn me if thou wilt, and reject me according to thy uſual Cuſtom; yet muſt thou requeſt me to relieve, and be favourable to thee.

Q. *Have you any Remarks to make upon the Miracle of the* Lice?

A. Yes; The original *Hebrew* Word for *Lice*, as ſome will have it, ſignifies *Gnats*; but what kind of Creatures theſe were, is not certainly known. Others fancy they were a new Species of Animals, called analogically by an old Name; or, if they were *Lice*, that they were ſuch as had Wings, and cruelly ſtung and ulcerated the *Egyptians:* But upon the Suppoſition, that they were no worſe than common *Lice*, this was Plague enough to the *Egyptians*; who affected Neatneſs to ſuch a Degree, that they bathed themſelves every Day, and ſome of them frequently ſhaved their Bodies all over, for fear of ſuch Vermin. Thoſe, who pretend, that theſe *Lice* were a new Species, make this a Reaſon, why the *Magicians* could not counterfeit this Miracle, becauſe though they could eaſily provide the Serpents, the Blood, and the Frogs; yet this ſort of Animals was no where to be had; and therefore as the Organs of Sight are more liable to be impoſed upon, than thoſe of *Feeling*, the *Magicians* might impoſe on the King, and the other Spectators, with *fantaſtical Blood*, and *Frogs*, but *viſionary Lice* could not vex and torment the Body: So that now it was Time for the *Enchanters* to deſiſt, and to own their Inability to *mimick Moſes* any farther. But ſuppoſing, hat what the *Magicians* did, in the three former Miracles, were not an Illuſion and Impoſition upon the Senſes, but Reality, the true Reaſon why they could proceed no farther was, that *Almighty God* had laid his Reſtraint and Prohibition upon the evil Spirits, who had been hitherto ſubſervient to them, that they might not aſſiſt them any longer.

Q. *Can you alledge any other Reaſon for this Reſtraint upon the Power of theſe* Magicians?

A. Yes; It was, no doubt, to take away all Colour of Excuſe from *Pharaoh* to detain the *Iſraelites* any longer.

Q. *What do you underſtand by that Expreſſion of the Magicians,* This is the Finger of *God*?

A. It was a plain Acknowledgment, that this Miracle was an Effect of the divine Omnipotence; and a tacit Confeſſion, that their Miracles were done by Art.

Q. *Had this undeniable Evidence of omnipotent Power any Influence upon* Pharaoh?

A. No; he obſtinately perſiſted in his former Reſolution of keeping the People in Slavery.

Q. *What was the immediate Conſequence of his Obſtinacy?*

A. The ſending another Plague upon him and his People, namely, *the Swarms of Flies.*

Q. *Can you deſcribe theſe Flies?*

A. The *Hebrew* Word, which we render *Fly*, is, by the *Septuagint*, called *Dog-fly*, from its biting, for it faſtens its Teeth ſo deep in the Fleſh, and ſticks ſo very cloſe, that it often makes Cattle run mad: And the Congruity of this Plague ſeems the greater, becauſe one of the *Egyptian* Deities, which they called *Anubis*, bore the Head of a Dog. The *Pſalmiſt* indeed tells us, that *God ſent divers ſorts of Flies amongſt them, which devoured them, Pſ.* lxxviii. 45. So that, according to him, it was not one particular Kind, but *all Sorts* of Flies, mingled together in one prodigious Swarm or Conflux. Some tranſlate it a *Mixture of Beaſts*, which they ſuppoſe went into *Egypt* to infeſt and deſtroy the Country; but this is not ſo probable a Conſtruction, becauſe the Puniſhments, hitherto inflicted, were nauſeous and troubleſome, rather than mortal; though this Plague of infinite Numbers of ſmall Tormentors is ſo great a one, that *God* calls it his Army, *Joel* ii. 25. and that the *Greeks* thought fit, as *Pliny* tells us, to have a *God* to deliver them from it, under the Stile of *Myagros*, or *Myodes*, even as *Belzebub* ſignifies the *Lord* or *God* of Flies.

Q. *What is meant by the Abomination of the* Egyptians, *v.* 26?

A. The *Egyptians* worſhipped divers Sorts of Beaſts, ſuch as the Ox, Sheep, *&c.* which the *Iſraelites* offered in Sacrifice; and ſuch a Sacrifice would undoubtedly have been abominated by theſe Pagan Idolaters.

Q. *At* Pharaoh's *Requeſt, and Promiſe of releaſing the People, this Plague was alſo removed; yet, in the Cloſe of the Chapter, I find* Pharaoh *broke his Promiſe and would not let the People go: What Obſervation do you make upon this?*

A. That where *God* gives not Faith, no Miracles can prevail; and that the Impreſſion which the ſevereſt Afflictions make upon a harden'd and impenitent Heart, are of no longer Date than while thoſe Afflictions laſt.

CHAP. IX.

The Plagues of Murrain, Blotches and Boils, Hail, Thunder and Lightning; Goſhen *excepted.* Pharaoh *relents.* Moſes *prays for him. Is ſtill obſtinate.*

Q. GIVE *a Summary Account of what is contained in this Chapter?*

A. The foregoing Plagues not having had the deſired Effect upon *Pharaoh*, *God* was pleaſed, in order to bring him to a Senſe of his Duty, and to manifeſt his own Glory, to commiſſion ſeveral more of his Judgments to go forth againſt him, and his People: Namely, *Murrain* among their Cattle, Blotches and Sores upon their own Bodies, and a horrible Storm of Hail, Thunder, and Lightning to paſs over the Land; but diſtinguiſhing his own People by ſuffering none of theſe Plagues to hurt, or ſo much as touch them.

Q. *In the ſixth Verſe it is ſaid,* all the Cattle of Egypt died. *Yet in v.* 7, 19, *and* 25. *we read of more Cattle that were not yet deſtroy'd; pray reconcile this Difficulty.*

A. The Meaning is, that the Mortality took hold of all Kinds of Cattle, and deſtroyed great Numbers of them, ſome of every Sort.

Q. *How do you prove that this* Murrain *among the* Egyptian *Cattle, was really* miraculous, *and not proceeding from natural Cauſes?*

A. From two extraordinary Circumſtances that attended it; *Firſt*, that it happen'd exactly at the Time which *Moſes* had foretold it ſhould come; and, *Secondly*, in that the Cattle of the *Iſraelites* were not touch'd with it, though their Food and Water were the ſame as the *Egyptian* Beaſts ſubſiſted on.

Q. *Have you any Thing to remark on the Plague of Blotches and Boils.*

A. The *Hebrew* Word *Shechin* properly ſignifies an *Inflammation*, which firſt makes a Tumour or Boil (as we tranſlate it) and thence turns into a grievous Ulcer. Dr. *Lightfoot* indeed obſerves, that, in the

Book of *Job*, Ch. ii. 7, 8. *Job* could not ſcratch them off with his Nails, and was therefore forced to make uſe of a *Potſherd:* But then he confeſſes that this *Shechin*, here ſpoken of, was more rancorous than that, having Blains and Ulcers, that broke out with it, which *Job*'s had not. So that the *Egyptians*, according to this, muſt have been vexed with a treble Puniſhment at once (a Puniſhment fitly calculated for the Mortification of a delicate and voluptuous People) aching Boils, nauſeous Ulcers, and a burning Itch: And to this that Commination of *Moſes* to the People, in caſe they prov'd diſobedient, does undoubtedly allude; *The Lord will ſmite thee with the Botch of* Egypt, *and with the Emrods, and with the Scab, and with the Itch, whereof thou canſt not be healed*, Deut. xxxviii. 27.

Q. *Where had* Moſes *and* Aaron *the* Aſhes *of which they were commanded to take their Handsful?*

A. It is the Opinion of ſeveral learned Men, that they had them out of thoſe Furnaces where the *Iſraelites* wrought their Brick, *&c.*

Q. *What was the Deſign of their ſcattering the Aſhes towards Heaven?*

A. It was to make *Pharaoh* ſenſible, that the loathſome Diſeaſe which follow'd was miraculous, and not ariſing from many of thoſe natural Cauſes which occaſion Breakings out upon the Body.

Q. *What might be the Reaſon, that, after this Plague was brought upon the* Egyptians, *the* Magicians *would no more appear in the Preſence of* Moſes?

A. The miſerable Condition which they ſaw themſelves in, would have afforded Matter of Triumph to *Moſes* and *Aaron*; or perhaps they thought that their Inability to counterfeit any longer the Miracles wrought by theſe Prophets, would have expoſed them to the Deriſion of the People.

Q. *Explain that Expreſſion*; the *Lord* hardened the Heart of *Pharaoh*.

A. It ſignifies that God withdrew from him the Grace and Power of Repentance, as a juſt Puniſhment on him, for having himſelf hardened his Heart ſo long; which God, indeed had foreſeen he would, but did not, therefore withdraw his Grace, as appears by the Letter of the Text, till now.

Q. *Give me your Senſe of theſe Words*, For this Cauſe have I raiſed thee up.

A. The Words import no more, than that *Pharaoh* was delivered from the *Boils* that afflicted him and his People; and reſerved for thoſe future Chaſtiſements, which ſhould illuſtrate the Power and Majeſty of Almighty God.

There have been many wild Interpretations put on thoſe Texts, which ſpeak of the Hardneſs of *Pharaoh*'s Heart; but may all be eaſily obviated, by conſidering, that God hardens a Heart, only by depriving it of his Grace, and not by Infuſion of evil Thoughts; ſo, that as a Creator, he hath ſtill a Right of demanding what is due to him from his Creature; when *Pharaoh* had ſo often rejected the Motions of his Grace, we cannot reaſonably aſſert, that they ſhould ſtill be continued to him.

Q. *What have you to obſerve upon the Shower of Hail and Rain?*

A. This Tempeſt was the more terrible in *Egypt*, becauſe, according to the Account of *Herodotus*, it was a very rare Thing to ſee any Rain, much more any Hail in that Climate: And, accordingly, he mentions it is as a kind of Prodigy, that, in the Reign of *Pſammenitus*, there happened to be a Shower at *Thebes*, which was never known before in the Memory of Man; nor ever after, to the Age wherein this Author wrote. The *Pſalmiſt* has given us a very pathetick Deſcription of this Judgment, *He deſtroyed their Vines with Hail, and their Sycamore Trees with Froſt: He gave up their Cattle alſo to the Hail, and their Flocks to hot Thunder-bolts*, *Pſ.* lxxviii. 47, 48. And from the plain Account of *Moſes*, where he mixes Thunder, Hail, and Fire together, the Obſervation is obvious, that here were no leſs than three of the Elements in Confederacy againſt *Pharaoh*'s Obſtinacy; *the Air* in the Thunder; *the Water* in the Hail; and *the Fire* in the Lightening, jointly demonſtrating, and proclaiming, that the *God* of *Iſrael* was the *God* of Nature.

Q. *But in this terrible Judgement was there no Mixture of Mercy?*

A. Yes; *Moſes* kindly warns *Pharaoh*, and his People to houſe their Cattle before the Storm began; to ſhew, that tho' *God*'s Wrath be kindled, yet there is a certain Mercy ſhewed even to his Enemies.

Q. *What Effect did this dreadful Tempeſt produce in* Pharaoh?

A. He was ſo terribly frightned that he ſoon ſent for the two Prophets; to whom he confeſſed the Juſtice of the *Almighty* in bringing this Plague upon him, and that he and his People were ſo enormouſly wicked as to deſerve it: *Intreat the Lord*, ſays he, *for it is enough, that there may be no more mighty Thunderings and Hail; and I will let you go, and ye ſhall ſtay no longer.*

Q. *Did* Moſes *comply with his Requeſt?*

A. He did; and upon his earneſt Supplication to *Jehovah*, the Storm ceaſed; which one would have thought, was ſufficient to convince *Pharaoh*, and his *Egyptians*, of the extenſive Power and Authority of the *God* of *Iſrael*.

Q. *In what Manner did* Moſes *make his Supplication?*

A. The *Jewiſh* Writers ſay, That *Moſes* went out of the City to ſupplicate *God* for the Removal of this Plague, in Regard his Prayers would have been ineffectual within it, becauſe of the numerous Idols that were there worſhipped. Others, with more Reaſon, conjecture, that *Moſes* retired into a ſolitary Place, for the Conveniency of pouring out his Prayers undiſturb'd. However it was, God heard him, and immediately, the Thunder, Hail, and Fire ceaſed; on which *Pharaoh* returned to his old perverſe Diſpoſition, and juſtified all that God had ſpoken of him by *Moſes*.

Chap. X.

Pharaoh'*s Servants adviſe him to let* Iſrael *go. Graſhoppers ſent.* Pharaoh'*s Penitence. The Judgment of Darkneſs.* Moſes *forbidden* Pharaoh'*s Preſence.*

Q. WHAT *are the moſt remarkable Occurrences related in this Chapter?*

A. Here we have an Account of the Plague of *Locuſts* and *Graſhoppers*, which devoured what eſcaped from the Hail; and that of thick Darkneſs, which covered all *Egypt* for three Days, while the Land of *Goſhen*, where the *Iſraelites* lived, was enlightened as uſual. All theſe Miracles performed by the Word of *Moſes*, did not a little perplex the King; ſo that his Heart was ſeveral Times almoſt overcome. Upon the Remonſtrance of his Servants, that *Egypt* was almoſt deſtroyed already, the King offers, that the *Iſraelites* might go, provided they left their Children behind them, as Pledges for their Return; but this *Moſes* would by no Means grant, which ſo enraged *Pharaoh*, that with ſome ſevere Menaces, he bid him get out of his Preſence. However, afterwards, as he found the Plagues increaſe upon him, he agreed that the People ſhould go, but that their Flocks and Herds ſhould be ſtaid, rightly ſuppoſing, that this would haſten their Return. But this Propoſal *Moſes* abſolutely refuſed; which put the King in ſuch a Paſſion, that he charged him to leave his Preſence, and never attempt to ſee him more, on Pain of Death.

Q. *What have* [illegible] *in Hiſtory concerning the Graſhopper?*

A. Thevenot, in his Travels, tells us, "That in "that Part of *Scythia*, which the *Coſſacks* now in"habit, there are infinite Numbers of them (eſpe"cially in dry Seaſons) which a North-eaſt Wind "brings over from *Tartary*, *Circaſſia*, and *Mingrelia*, "which are ſeldom or never free from them; that "they fly in the Air all compact together, like a vaſt "Cloud, ſometimes 15 or 18 Miles long, and about "10 or 12 Miles broad, ſo that they quite darken "the Sky, and make the brighteſt Day obſcure; "and that where-ever they light, they devour all the "Corn in leſs than two Hours Time, and frequent"ly make a Famine in the Country. Theſe Inſects, "ſays he, live not above ſix Months; and when they "are dead, the Stench of them ſo corrupts and in"fects the Air, that it very often breeds dreadful "Peſtilences." God calls the *Locuſt, the Cankerworm, Catterpillar, and the Palmer-worm*, his great Army which he ſends among a wicked and rebellious People, *Joel* ii. 25. and how proper the Expreſſion is, in Relation to the Locuſt in Particular, will appear from the Account which *Aldrovandus* and *Fincellius* give us of theſe Animals; namely, "That in the Year of our Lord 852, an infinite "Number of them were ſeen to fly over twenty "Miles in *Germany*, in one Day, in the Manner of "a form'd Army, divided into ſeveral Squadrons, "and having their Quarters apart, when they reſt"ed; that the Captains marched a Day's Journey "before the Reſt, and choſe the moſt opportune Places "for their Camp: that they never removed till Sun"riſing, at which Time they went away in as much "Order, as an Army of Men could do; that, at laſt, "having done great Miſchief wherever they paſſed "(after Prayers made to God,) they were driven by "a violent Wind into the *Belgick* Ocean, and there "drowned; but that, being caſt aſhore by the Sea, "they covered 140 Acres of Land, and cauſed a "great Peſtilence in the Country. This is enough to ſhew how dreadful a Puniſhment this was, eſpecially conſidering, that theſe *Locuſts* were ſuch, *as were never known before*, and yet the ordinary *Locuſt*, (as *Ariſtotle* and *Pliny* have deſcribed it) was an Animal ſo fierce and formidable, that a ſingle one would kill a Serpent, by taking it faſt by the Jaws, and biting it to Death.

Q. *The 10th and 11th Verſes ſeem ſomewhat obſcure, pray give us the genuine Senſe of them?*

A. This Paſſage has been variouſly interpreted, but on the whole, the Senſe of *Pharaoh*'s Speech, is probably this, *Let Jehovah deliver you, if he can, againſt my Will; for to your preſent Demand, I will not conſent; look to the State ye are in, for Evil is before you, and remember, I am ready to let you, who are Men, go to worſhip Jehovah, and that is all I at firſt underſtood ye deſired.* As ſoon as the King had done ſpeaking, his Officers perceiving that he was angry with the Prophets, drove them haſtily out of the Preſence.

Q. *Upon this reſolute and atheiſtical Anſwer of* Pharaoh, *I find the Plague of* Locuſts, *was ſoon ſent upon the Land; pray how did he behave himſelf under this new Calamity?*

A. When he beheld the dreadful Devaſtations made by theſe Inſects, and that the Deſtruction of the Fruits of the Earth, muſt in Time prove the Deſtruction of Men and Beaſt, his obdurate Heart began to relent, and, in a Fit of Fear and Confuſion, ſends haſtily for *Moſes* and *Aaron*, who being arrived he accoſts them in this civil humble Manner, *I have ſinned againſt the Lord your God, and againſt you. Now therefore, forgive I pray you, my Sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this Death only*; that is, *this mortal Plague, which will bring on a general Famine.*

Q. *Did* Moſes *comply with this Requeſt?*

A. Yes; *Moſes* immediately ſupplicated the Lord on his Behalf, who cauſed a ſtrong Eaſt-wind to blow, which carried away all the *Locuſts* unto the *Red-ſea*. This was as miraculous a Deliverance, as the bringing of them was a Plague; for if *Jehovah* had ſlain them, or they had lain there till they had died of themſelves, their Stink would have been intolerable; and therefore there was an equal Inſtance both of Power and Mercy, in freeing *Egypt*, ſo that there remained not one in its Coaſts. However, the Heart of *Pharaoh* continued ſtill hardened, God having entirely withdrawn his Grace from him.

Q. *What Account do you give of the ninth Plague, namely,* the Darkneſs which might be felt?

A. That this Darkneſs conſiſted of black Vapours and Exhalations, ſo condenſed, that they might be perceived by the Organs of Touch; but ſome Commentators think, that this is carrying the Senſe too far; ſince, in ſuch a Medium as this, Mankind could not live an Hour, much leſs for the Space of three Days, as the *Egyptians* are here ſaid to have done: And therefore they imagine, that, inſtead of *Darkneſs that may be felt*, the *Hebrew* Phraſe may ſignify a Darkneſs, wherein Men went *groping* and *feeling* about for every Thing they wanted, in which Senſe the Author of the Life of *Moſes* certainly takes it: For, in this Darkneſs, ſays he, they who were in Bed, durſt not get up, and ſuch as their natural Occaſions compelled to get up, went feeling about by the Wall, or any other Thing they could lay hold of, as if they had been blind. What it was that occaſioned this Darkneſs, whether it was in the Air, or in their Eyes; whether it was a Suſpenſion of Light from the Sun in that Country, or a black and thick Vapour, which totally intercepted it, there is Reaſon to think, that the Deſcription given by the Author of the *Book of Wiſdom*, of their Terror and Conſternation, is not altogether conjectural; namely, *That they were not only Priſoners of Darkneſs, and fettered with the Bonds of a long Night, but were horribly aſtoniſhed likewiſe, and troubled with ſtrange Apparitions: For while over them was ſpread an heavy Night, they were to themſelaes more grievous than Darkneſs*, Ch. xvii. 2, 3, 21.

Q. *Did this Scene of Horror make any Impreſſion on the haughty Tyrant?*

A. He was ſo affected with it, that, perhaps, fearing that Nature was returning to her original Chaos, and that an univerſal Diſſolution would immediately enſue, he calls for *Moſes*, and ſays to him, *Go ye, ſerve the Lord; only let your Flocks and Herds be ſtayed; let your little ones alſo go with you.* This was a poor Advance more than he had before offered, and which *Moſes* peremptorily rejects; and aſſures him, that it was the expreſs Command of God to remove with all their Subſtance; and that they knew not in what Manner they were to offer Sacrifice to their God, till they came to the Wilderneſs.

Q. *This Boldneſs of* Moſes *muſt ſurely very much exaſperate the proud Monarch.*

A. It ſo highly provoked him, that in a great Rage he commands him to be gone, and aſſures him, that if ever he appears before him again, it ſhould coſt him his Life. *Moſes* obeyed, and promiſed, *he would ſee his Face again no more.*

Chap. XI.

Moſes *threatens* Pharaoh *with the Death of all the firſt-born, both of Man and Beaſt, but that among the* Iſraelites *ſhould be the moſt perfect Tranquillity.* Pharaoh *regards not the Threatning. The* Iſraelites *commanded to borrow of their Neighbours, Jewels, Gold, Silver,* &c.

Q. THE *laſt Chapter ended with* Moſes's *Promiſe to ſee the Face of* Pharaoh *no more; yet in this we have another Converſation betwixt them; pray explain this?*

A. Moſes had not yet left his Preſence; and as *Pharaoh* had forbad him, on Pain of Death ever to ſee his Face again, *Moſes* thought this the only Opportunity he ſhould ever have of denouncing this final Judgment, *the Death of their firſt-born,* which God had told him he would bring upon the *Egyptians.*

Q. *Was not* Moſes *a little terrified at* Pharaoh's *threatning his Life?*

A. Not in the leaſt; for, tho' the King ſtill bids him Defiance, and carries it with ſo high a Hand, *Moſes* boldly tells him, he will ſo humble his Subjects with the ſucceeding Plague, that even his Counſellors and prime Miniſters of State ſhould come, and moſt ſubmiſſively intreat him and his Countrymen the *Iſraelites* to be gone: And after that, ſays *Moſes, we will go out*; that is, in plain Terms, he defied *Pharaoh* and all his People to hinder him. He was certain the Plague would be; he knew the Conſequence of it; and the Terror it muſt ſpread over the whole Land, when ſo many Parents were bereaved of their Children; and when nothing would be heard every where, but dying Groans. Having thus delivered his Meſſage to the King of *Egypt,* with a more than uſual Warmth, he took his final Leave.

Q. *Have you any Thing particular to obſerve upon the Word* Firſt-born?

A. The original Word ſometimes ſignifies a Perſon of ſome Eminence or Excellence, as well as the *Firſt-born:* And therefore it may not be unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that where a Family had no Firſt-born, the Principal or moſt eminent Perſon was ſmitten with Death; which is certainly better than to imagine with ſome, both *Jew* and *Chriſtian* Interpreters, that the Words of *Moſes,* are only applicable to an Houſe, that had a Firſt-born, or with St. *Auſtin,* that Providence did ſo order it at this Time, that every Houſe had a Firſt-born.

Q. *What Order and Direction did* Moſes *give the* Iſraelites *preparatory to their leaving* Egypt?

A. He commanded them to borrow of their *Egyptian* Neighbours, Jewels, Gold, Silver, *&c.*

Q. *But was not this an Act of Injuſtice, ſince that which they were commanded to borrow, was never deſigned to be repaid?*

A. That this was not an unjuſt Proceeding, will appear from theſe Conſiderations, *viz.* That the Word which our Tranſlators render *borrow,* does more properly ſignify *to ask of one*; or what they render to *lend,* is as literally *to give:* For the Caſe ſtood thus between the two Nations. The *Egyptians* had been throughly terrified with what had happened, and eſpecially with the laſt terrible Plague upon their Firſt-born, and were now willing to give the *Hebrews* any Thing, or every Thing, to be rid of them. They therefore bribed them to be gone, and courted them with Preſents, ſo very profuſely, as even to impoveriſh themſelves: But for this, the *Iſraelites* were not at all culpable, becauſe they only accepted of what the others gave them, and what was freely given, they doubtleſs had a Right to detain. But ſuppoſe, that the ſtrict Senſe of the Words was, that they really did borrow many valuable Things of the *Egyptians*; yet it is a Truth allowed on all Hands, that God, who is the ſupreme Lord of all Things, may, when, and in what Manner he pleaſes, transfer the Rights of Men from one to another. Conſidering then, that God was now become the King of the *Iſraelites,* in a peculiar Manner; and conſidering, withal, what unſufferable Wrongs the King and People of *Egypt,* had done to this People of *God,* who were now become his peculiar Subjects, and *proprietary Leiges*; this Act of *ſpoiling the Egyptians* (even in the harſheſt Senſe of the Word) was, according to *the Law of Nations,* more juſtifiable, than Royal Grants of *Letters of Mart,* or other ſuch Remedies, as Kings are accuſtomed to make uſe of, againſt other Powers, that have wronged their Subjects, or ſuffered them to be wronged by thoſe under their Command, without making a proper Reſiſtance: In ſhort, whatever the *Hebrews* took from the *Egyptians,* they took, and poſſeſſed it, by the *Law of Reprizals,* that is, by a ſpecial Warrant from the Lord himſelf, who was become, not their God only, but their peculiar King.

Q. *Have you any other Argument to prove that the* Iſraelites *had a Right to keep this Loan which the* Egyptians *thus lent them?*

A. Strictly ſpeaking it was an Act of Juſtice, that the *Egyptians* ſhould make the *Hebrews* ſome Retaliation for the great Services they had done them: But ſuppoſing this *Borrowing* and *Lending* between them had been without any ſuch Regard, yet, if the *Iſraelites* acquired a Right to theſe Things afterwards, there was then no Obligation for their making any Reſtitution. Now, that they did acquire ſuch a Right, is manifeſt from the *Egyptians* purſuing them in an hoſtile Manner, and with a Purpoſe to deſtroy them, after they had given them free Liberty to depart; by which Hoſtility and Perfidiouſneſs they plainly forfeited their Right to what they had only lent before. For this hoſtile Attempt (which would have warranted the *Iſraelites* to have fallen upon the *Egyptians,* and ſpoiled them of their Goods) did certainly warrant them to keep them, when they had them; ſo that now they became the rightful Poſſeſſors of what they had only upon Loan, and could not have detained without Fraud and Injuſtice, before.

Q. *Can you quote any* Jewiſh *Authority in Support of theſe Arguments?*

A. In the *Gemarah* of the *Sanhedrim,* there is told this memorable Story, which in *Patrick's* Commentmentary, is thus related. In the Time of *Alexander* the Great, the *Egyptians* brought an Action againſt the Children of *Iſrael*, deſiring they might have the Land of *Canaan* in Satisfaction for all they had borrowed of them when they went out of *Egypt*. To this *Gibean Ben Koſam*, who was Advocate for the *Jews*, replied, that, before they made this Demand, they muſt prove what they alledged, *viz.* That the *Iſraelites* borrowed any Thing of their Anceſtors: To which the *Egyptians* thought it ſufficient to ſay, that they found it recorded in their own Books. Well then, ſays the Advocate, Look into the ſame Books, and ye will find, that the Children of *Iſrael* lived four hundred and thirty Years in *Egypt*, *Exod.* xii. 40. pay us then for all the Labours and Toils of ſo many Thouſand People, as you employed of all that Time, and we will reſtore what we borrowed; to which they had not a Word to anſwer.

CHAP. XII.

The Paſſover inſtituted. All the Firſt-born of Egypt *are ſlain. The* Iſraelites *driven out of the Land, but firſt ſpoil the* Egyptians. *Their firſt Journey. The Law of the Paſſover.*

Q. *In the firſt Part of this Chapter I find the Paſſover was inſtituted; pray give me ſome Account of this ſolemn Feſtival.*

A. It was on the fourteenth Day of the firſt Month that *Moſes* took his leave of *Pharaoh*: And *God* having predetermined his Peoples Deliverance at that Time, had inſtituted the *Paſſover* ſome Days before, and directed *Moſes* how it ſhould be obſerved. Every Family of *Iſrael* (or if the Family was too little, two neighbouring Families joining together) was on the tenth Day of this Month, to take a *Lamb*, or *Kid*, and keep it up till the fourteenth Day of this Month, when it was to be killed; and this *Lamb* or *Kid*, was to be a *Male* of the firſt Year, and without Blemiſh.

Q. *What did this keeping of the* Lamb *or* Kid *four Days before it was killed, typify or repreſent?*

A. It was ordained to teach the Preparation and Sanctification required to a due Participation of the Sacraments; and alſo to figure to us, that *Jeſus Chriſt*, the true myſtical Lamb, after his ſolemn Conſecration in Baptiſm, ſhould exerciſe his miniſterial Office for near four Years until his Death. Chriſt did alſo the tenth Day of this Month, make his ſolemn Entrance into *Jeruſalem*; and the fifteenth he was crucified. Now, as there is no Mention made elſewhere of this manner of keeping it, it's probable that it was one of the Singularities commanded only in this firſt Celebration, as alſo other Circumſtances, *v.* 11. which were not commanded for a Continuance.

Q. *Proceed in your Account of the Inſtitution.*

A. When the *Lamb* or *Kid* was killed, they were to take a Branch of Hyſſop, and dipping it in the Blood, preſerved for that Purpoſe, they were to wipe the *upper Door-poſt*, and the *Side-poſts* of the outer Door of every Houſe where they did eat it; and they were not to ſtir out of the Houſe till the next Morning.

Q. *Why ſo?*

A. Becauſe, when the Angel of the Lord ſhould go from Houſe to Houſe through all *Egypt* to ſlay the *Firſt-born* of Man and Beaſt of the *Egyptians*, on ſeeing the Blood ſmeared on the *Door-poſts*, he might paſs over thoſe Houſes, wherein the *Iſraelites* were eating the *Lamb* or *Kid*, wthout doing them any Hurt: And from the *Angel's* thus paſſing over their Houſes, this Inſtitution was called the *Paſs-over*.

Q. *Did this ſtriking the Blood on the two Side-poſts typify any thing?*

A. It was a Figure of the Application of *Chriſt's* Blood in Baptiſm, for the Redemption from everlaſting Death, which deſtroys the reſt of the World; and accordingly Baptiſm ought to precede the Acceſs to the Communion of his Body, which is the Lord's Supper.

Q. *Go on with your Account of inſtituting the Paſſover.*

A. The *Lamb* or *Kid* was to be eaten neither raw nor Sodden, but *roaſted*, and to be dreſſed whole; nor might a *Bone* of it be broken. It was to be eaten with *unleavened Bread*, and with *bitter Herbs*, in Memory of the ſevere Bondage they had undergone in *Egypt*. If more remained than could be eaten, it was to be burnt; and no *Stranger* might eat of it, unleſs he was *circumciſed*. As to the Manner of eating it, at this Time only, they were to eat it as in Haſte, with their *Cloaths* on, and their *Staves* in their Hands.

Q. *What general Reflections ariſe upon the whole?*

A. Some learned Men are of Opinion, that *God*, in the Inſtitution of the *Paſſover*, had Reſpect to thoſe impious Rites, which either then did prevail, or, in a ſhort Time, were to prevail among the *Egyptians*, and other Nations, where the *Iſraelites* were to dwell. Thus they tell us, That *God* appointed a Lamb to be ſlain, and eaten, and the Month *Niſan*, or *March*, to be the particular Time of eating it, in Contempt of the *Egyptians*, who, at that Time, when the Sun firſt entered into *Aries*, began their Solemn Worſhip and Adoration of this Creature, and that Celeſtial Sign; that he forbad the People to eat the Fleſh of the *Paſchal* Lamb *raw*, or *ſodden*, *to break its Bones*, or *leave* any Fragments of it, becauſe, in the prophane Feaſts of *Bacchus*, it was a Cuſtom to eat the raw Fleſh of the Victims, which they offered to that God, and to break all their Bones; and, in the Adoration of the *Hours*, whom the *Egyptians*, and, from them, the *Athenians*, reputed *Goddeſſes*, they boiled all their Sacrifices, and conſtantly carried ſome Part of them home, as a good Preſervative againſt Miſfortunes. But there is no need, one would think, for ſuch elaborate Explications, when, conſidering the Situation the *Iſraelites* were in, ſorely oppreſſed by the *Egyptians*, and ſhortly to be releaſed, and ſent away with all ſpeed, the Nature and Quality of the Paſchal Sacrifice, as well as the manner of dreſſing, and of eating it, may perfectly be accounted for. Thus it was to be Male, becauſe a more excellent Species than the Female; *without Blemiſh*, to render it acceptable to *God*; *under a Year old*, otherwiſe it could not properly be called a Lamb; and *ſet a part from the reſt of the Flock*, that it might be in Readineſs, when the People came in laſt to offer it. *Roaſted it was to be, and not boiled*, becauſe roaſting was the ſpeedier Way of dreſſing it; but *roaſted thoroughly*, becauſe the whole was to be eaten; and the *whole was to be eaten*, that none might be left for the *Egyptians* to profane. It was to be eaten *ſtanding*, *in haſte*, and with other Circumſtances of Men every Moment expecting to begin their Journey; *with bitter Herbs*, to put them in Mind of their cruel Servitude; and *unleavened Bread*, in Memory of their Deliverance from it, ſo ſuddenly, that they had not Time to leaven their Bread for their Journey; which is all that the *Iſraelites* underſtood, and all perhaps that *God*, at that Time, intended they ſhould underſtand, by the Directions, which he gave them concerning this remarkable Ordinance.

Q. *You have given me ſufficient Satisfaction with regard to the Inſtitution of the Paſſover; what have you to ſay upon the next remarkable Occurrence in this Chapter*, the Death of the Firſt-born?

A. All things being prepared for the *Iſraelites* Departure, at Midnight the *Lord* ſmote all the Firſt-born of the Land of *Egypt*, from the Firſt-born of *Pharaoh*, to the Firſt-born of the *Captive* that was in the Dungeon, and all the Firſt-born of Cattle were ſmitten, as the *Lord* had denounced to *Pharaoh*.

Q. *Had this dreadful Judgment any Influence in humbling the Pride and Inſolence of this haughty Tyrant?*

A. The Infidel King and his frighted Subjects now believe the God of *Iſrael* to be in earneſt with them; they awake each other with their diſmal Cries, and the Horror of the Night adds to their Confuſion; the expiring Groans of their beloved Firſt-born deeply affect them, and they expect a Succeſſion of Death upon themſelves. *Pharaoh* and his Servants alike involved in Horror and Confuſion, quickly bethought themſelves of ſending for *Moſes* and *Aaron*, notwithſtanding the King's former Declaration; and the *Iſraelites* were now not only permitted to be gone, but a poſitive Injunction was iſſued out, that they ſhould ſtay no longer. *Riſe up, and get you forth from among my People, both you and the Children of* Iſrael; *and go ſerve the Lord as ye have ſaid. Alſo take your Flocks, and your Herds, as ye have ſaid, and be gone, and bleſs me alſo.* It ſeems the King himſelf was apprehenſive of having new Judgments inflicted on him, in caſe he parted with the *Prophets* in Anger; and therefore, having yielded in every thing to their Requeſt, he, in the Cloſe, adds this of his own, that they *would bleſs him*, that is, *pray to* Jehovah *for him*, that he would avert any farther Calamities, and render him proſperous for the future.

Q. *What other Inſtances of a panic Terror do you find ſpread among the* Egyptians?

A. No ſooner were they informed of what *Pharaoh* had decreed, but they inſtantly urged the *Hebrews* to begin their March, and did all they could to quicken thoſe, who of themſelves were ready enough to depart. The Experience they had of the fickle Diſpoſition of their Monarch, might make them the more preſſing and impatient, leſt he ſhould retract the Mandate he had given; in which Caſe, it ſeems they expected to be all dead Men; that is, they dreaded the Wrath of *Jehovah*, of which they had already felt ſo many dreadful Tokens; and from which, in caſe ſuch a Thing had now happened, they might reaſonably fear their total Deſtruction. Nay, ſo urgent were they, that they forced them away, not ſuffering them to finiſh their Bread, but obliging them to tie up their Dough in Cloths, and carry it away at their Backs unbaked.

Q. *Have you any Thing more to remark upon what paſſed immediately before the Departure of the* Iſraelites?

A. All Things being adjuſted for the haſty March the *Hebrews* were to take, they, at the Inſtant of their Departure, executed the Command of *Moſes*, in deſiring the *Egyptians* to lend them Jewels of Gold, *&c.* The *Egyptians* agreed to the Propoſal, and without any Heſitation, decked out the *Iſraelitiſh* Women, according to their Deſire. This was a farther Demonſtration of that panic Fear which had ſeized the People of *Egypt*, who tamely ſuffered themſelves to be ſpoiled in this Manner; and gave up their Riches unforced to thoſe who for many Years had been their Slaves. Thus the *Almighty* ſignally fulfilled his Promiſe to *Abraham*, that at the End of four hundred and thirty Years, he would deliver them from their *Egyptian* Bondage; which, as *Moſes* tells us, happened the very Day of the Expiration of the ſaid Term.

Q. *What elſe have you to remark concerning the Departure of the* Iſraelites *out of* Egypt?

A. Moſes, having had ſufficient Notice given him, when the People ſhould move forward, had, to that End, ſummoned them together into the Territories of *Rameſes*, the chief City of *Goſhen*. Here they were drawn up in a convenient Order, to the Number of about ſix hundred Thouſand Perſons, beſides Children; theſe were followed by a mixed Multitude, not *Iſraelites*, but *Strangers* of ſeveral Nations, who having ſeen the Calamities which *Egypt* ſuffered for *Iſrael's* Sake, choſe rather to ſeek their Fortunes with them, than tarry in a Country almoſt deſolate. While the *Egyptians* were lamenting their Children, and performing their laſt Offices towards them, the *Iſraelites* taking with them the Bones of *Joſeph*, according to his Command on his Death-bed, marched away openly, and with a high Hand, from among a miſerable and dejected People, who, far from oppoſing, were glad of their Departure. Altho' *Moſes* omits, in his Hiſtory, the carrying with them the Remains of the other *Patriarchs*, yet it is evident, that they alſo were tranſported into *Canaan*, from thoſe Words of *St. Stephen*, *Acts*, vii. 14, 16. *So* Jacob *went down into* Egypt, *and died, he, and our Fathers, and were carried over into* Sychem, *and laid in the Sepulchre which* Abraham *bought for a Sum of Money of the Sons of* Emmor *the Father of* Sychem.

Q. *From the Time that* Jacob *and his Family came into* Egypt, *to their Departure from thence, was but little more than two hundred Years; How then comes it to be ſaid*, v. 40. *that their Continuance there was four hundered and thirty Years?*

A. In this Account is comprehended all the Time ſince *Abraham* came out of *Chaldea*, *Gen.* xii. 1. and while he and his Succeſſors remained as Strangers in divers Countries.

Q. *Be a little more explicit in your Computation.*

A. The learned Biſhop *Uſher* has divided theſe 430 Years into two Halves: The firſt Part of the Diviſion he begins from the Time of the Promiſe, when *Abraham* was in the 75th Year of his Age, to the Birth of *Iſaac*, which included 25 Years; from the Birth of *Iſaac*, to the Birth of *Jacob*, 60 Years; from the Birth of *Jacob*, to his Deſcent in *Egypt*, with his whole Family 130 Years; ſo that the whole of this Diviſion amounts to 215 Years. The other Part of the Diviſion is thus reckoned up. *Joſeph* the Son of *Jacob*, was 30 Years old, when he expounded *Pharaoh's* Dreams, the ſeven Years of Plenty were run out, and the third Year of Famine begun, when his Father came down into *Egypt*; ſo that, by this Time *Joſeph* was 39. Now 39 taken from the 110 which *Joſeph* lived, will make the Time which the *Iſraelites* had continued in *Egypt* before *Joſeph's* Death, to be 71: And, as from the Death of *Joſeph*, to the Birth of *Moſes*, are preciſely 64 Years; ſo from his Birth, to the Time of the *Iſraelites* Departure, are 80 Years. The ſeveral Articles of this Diviſion, therefore, being put together, amount, in like Manner, to 215 Years; and the two groſs Sums make exactly 430.

Q. *But in the Text it is expreſly ſaid*, that the ſojourning of the Children of *Iſrael*, who dwelt in *Egypt*, was four hundred and thirty Years; *Does it not therefore follow that they dwelt in* Egypt *all that Time?*

A. I have already ſhewn, that the Words muſt be taken in a more extenſive Senſe; and that this muſt be the Senſe of the ſacred Hiſtorian, is evident from the Authority of the *Samaritan* Text, which has the whole Verſe thus; *Now the inhabiting of the Children of* Iſrael, *and their Fathers, whereby they inhabited in the Land of* Canaan, *and in the Land of* Egypt, *were four hundred and thirty Years*; upon which Dr. *Prideaux* has this Obſervation, "That "the Additions herein do manifeſtly mend the Text; "they make it more clear and intelligible, and add "nothing to the *Hebrew* Copy, but what muſt be "underſtood by the Reader to make out its Senſe." And upon this Preſumption, it may very reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that the ancient *Hebrew* Text was, in this Verſe, the ſame with the preſent *Samaritan*, and that the Words which the *Samaritan* has, in this Place, more than the *Hebrew*, have been dropped by the Negligence of ſome Tranſcribers.

Q. *One Difficulty more occurs to me in Relation to this Paſſage; namely, that in the Promiſe which God makes to* Abraham, Gen. xv. 13. 16. *he tells him*, that his Seed ſhould be a Stranger in a ſtrange Land, which was not theirs; *that* there they ſhould ſerve the *Inhabitants*, and they afflict them for four hundred Years; *but that* in the fourth Generation, they ſhould return to *Canaan* again; *whereas four hundred Years are not the Number ſpecified in the Place juſt now examined, nor are* four Generations *equivalent to the Space of Time, wherein the* Hebrews *ſojourned in ſtrange Countries.*

A. In Anſwer to this, it is to be obſerved, that, both in ſacred and prophane Authors, it's common to mention only the large Sum, and drop the leſs, eſpecially when (to preſerve the Exactneſs of Chronology) the preciſe Number is, in other Places, inſerted; and that tho' a Generation uſually denotes a Term of one hundred Years; yet, taking the Words to relate to the whole ſojourning of the *Hebrews*, from their going into *Canaan*, to their going out of *Egypt*, the odd Number of thirty Years may here be ſuppoſed to be omitted, to make it a round Sum as well as in the former Senſe. But then, taking a Generation to mean no more than one Deſcent, the Matter of Fact is, that from the *Iſraelites* going down into *Egypt*, until the Time of their leaving it, in ſome of the Sons of *Jacob* (particularly in *Levi*, who begat *Cohath*, and *Cohath*, *Amram*, and *Amram*, *Moſes*, who conducted the People out of *Egypt*) there were no more than four Deſcents. Whether therefore we take the Word *Generation* to denote an *Age of Years*, or a *Succeſſion of Lives* there is plainly no Incongruity in the Expreſſion, becauſe (bating the odd Number of thirty) *Abraham* and his Poſterity, ſojourned in a ſtrange Land for the Space of four hundred Years; and yet (allowing it to be a Deſcent of Lives) at the *Iſraelites* Return towards *Canaan*, from the Time of their going into *Egypt*, ſeveral Perſons of the fourth Generation were not extinct.

Q. *As we have already been pretty long upon this Chapter, I ſhall trouble you with but a Queſtion or two more, and then have done with it: My firſt Queſtion is, What you have to obſerve upon the firſt Encampment of the* Iſraelites, *and why the Place was called* Succoth?

A. The Place received its Name, *Succoth*, from the *Booths* which the Children of *Iſrael* ſet up there, for their Conveniency; and in Memory whereof the *Feaſt of Tabernacles* was afterwards inſtituted. Here *Moſes* and *Aaron* received from God certain Rules, to be obſerved by the Children of *Iſrael* in keeping the *Paſſover*. As, 1. No Stranger or Foreigner was to eat thereof, even tho' he was the hired Servant of an *Iſraelite*. 2. A Man's Servant bought with his own Money, when he was circumciſed, might eat thereof. 3. The *Lamb* was to be eaten within the Houſe where it was dreſſed, and no Part of it was to be carried out, or eaten abroad. 4. Not a Bone of it was to be broken. 5. All the Congregation of *Iſrael* were to prepare themſelves, and keep this Feaſt, on Pain of being cut off from God's People, for their Neglect. 6. The circumciſed Stranger was to enjoy all the Benefits of an *Iſraelite*; one Law was to be to them both, and he was no longer to be kept from the Paſſover.

Q. *What do you infer from all this?*

A. I ſhall, in another Place, make more particular Applications of this Inſtitution of the Paſſover; and therefore ſhall here only obſerve, That, if the Paſſover, and the Ceremonies with which the Celebration thereof was burdened, had not been typical of ſome future and greater Deliverance, as well as commemorative of a Mercy paſt, it would be very hard to conceive, why God ſo exactly, and ſo ſtrictly commanded a Multitude of *Punctilios*; which, if we admit as typical, had a wiſe and reaſonable Meaning annexed unto each; but if not, have little or no Relation to the primary Intent and Inſtitution thereof, as may be particularly affirmed, of their being directed *not to break therein ſo much as one Bone*. This ſhould teach us to pay a due Reſpect to the *Moſaic* Law; which, as it was admirably contrived for the Benefit of the *Hebrew* Nation, ſo it was moſt wiſely and wonderfully ſettled to the Purpoſe of *God*, which was thereby to introduce the Goſpel, of which this Diſpenſation was a Shadow. *Chriſtians* therefore may reap this Benefit from the *Moſaic* Inſtitution, tho' now abrogated, that from hence they may learn, the Reaſons, Nature, and End of *Chriſt*'s Sufferings; who was the *Lamb* ſlain, not for the *Jewiſh* Nation only, but for Mankind in general.

CHAP. XIII.

God *commands all the Firſt-born to be ſanctified. The Day of the* Iſraelites *going forth out of* Egypt *to be had in Remembrance. The Feaſt of Unleavened Bread to be kept in the Land of* Canaan. *The Firſtlings of Beaſts to be ſet apart for the* Lord. *The Reaſon thereof. The Way God led them into the Wilderneſs.* Moſes *carries* Joſeph's *Bones out of* Egypt. *The* Iſraelites *encamp in* Etham. *The* Lord *conducteth them in a Pillar of a Cloud by Day, and in a Pillar of Fire by Night.*

Q. OF *what are we firſt informed in this Chapter?*

A. "And the *Lord* ſpake unto *Moſes*, ſaying, "Sanctify unto me all the Firſt-born; whatſoever "openeth the Womb among the Children of *Iſrael*, "both of Man and of Beaſt: It is mine."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That from hence it appears, that it was not only the eldeſt Son that was to be conſecrated unto the

Lord, but if a Man had ſeveral Wives, the eldeſt Son by each Wife was to be ſanctified to God. The Firſtlings likewiſe of all Beaſts, whether clean or unclean, except a Dog, were to be ſanctified to the Lord, with this Exception, that the Firſtlings of clean Beaſts were to be ſacrificed, but the Firſtlings of ſuch as were unclean were to be redeemed at a certain Price.

Q. *What ſaid* Moſes *thereupon to the People?*

A. "And *Moſes* ſaid unto the People, Remember this Day, in which ye came out from *Egypt*, out of the Houſe of Bondage; for by Strength of Hand the Lord brought you out from this Place: There ſhall no leavened Bread be eaten. This Day ye came out in the Month of *Abib*. And it ſhall be when the Lord ſhall bring thee into the Land of the *Canaanites*, and the *Hittites*, and the *Amorites*, and the *Hivites*, and the *Jebuſites*, which he ſware unto thy Fathers to give thee, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey; that thou ſhalt keep this Service in this Month. Seven Days ſhalt thou eat unleavened Bread, and in the ſeventh Day ſhall be a Feaſt unto the Lord. Unleavened Bread ſhall be eaten ſeven Days: And there ſhall no leavened Bread be ſeen with thee, neither ſhall there be Leaven ſeen with thee in all thy Quarters. And thou ſhalt ſhew thy Son in that Day, ſaying, this is done becauſe of that which the Lord did unto me, when I came forth out of *Egypt*. And it ſhall be for a Sign unto thee, upon thine Hand, and for a Memorial between thine Eyes; that the Lord's Law may be in thy Mouth: For with a ſtrong Hand hath the Lord brought thee out of *Egypt*.

Q. *How are we to underſtand this? And what is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That the People were ſtrictly enjoined to keep this their Signal Deliverance in Remembrance, for which Reaſon the Commemoration of the Paſſover is commanded, and the Feaſt of unleavened Bread inſtituted, as a proper Means to keep it in their Memory; the Meaning of its being for a Sign unto them upon their Hand, and for a Memorial between their Eyes, being only this, that this Practice ſhould keep their Deliverance as freſh and evident to them and their Children, as any Thing which they ſhould have always in their Hands, or ſhould ſee hung or written upon each others Foreheads. But the Superſtitious *Jews* underſtood the Text, and the ſixteenth Verſe, literally, and accordingly wore Scrolls of Parchment, upon which certain Portions of Scripture were written, and which they called *Phylacteries*, from the *Greek*, ſignifying a *Preſervative*, upon their Foreheads, Arms, and Garments, imagining they had a Virtue in them to keep them from all Evil. To which ſuperſtitious Cuſtom, our Saviour alluded, *Matth.* xxiii. 5. when he reproves the hypocritical *Phariſees* for making broad their *Phylacteries*, in order to draw the Eyes of Men upon them, and give them an extraordinary Opinionof their Devotion and Sanctity.

Q. *What farther ſaid* Moſes *unto the Children of* Iſrael *upon this Head?*

A. "Thou ſhalt therefore keep this Ordinance in in his Seaſon, from Year to Year. And it ſhall be when the Lord ſhall bring thee into the Land of the *Canaanites*, as he ſware unto thee, and to thy Fathers, and ſhall give it thee, that thou ſhalt ſet apart unto the Lord all that openeth the Matrix: And every Firſtling that cometh of a Beaſt, which thou haſt, the Males ſhall be the Lords."

Q. *What is to be obſerved from hence?*

A. It ſeems evident from hence, and from the fifth Verſe, that the *Iſraelites* were not obliged to do this Service in the Wilderneſs, unleſs they received a particular Command from God to that Purpoſe.

Q. *What farther were the* Iſraelites *enjoined?*

A. "And every Firſtling of an Aſs thou ſhalt redeem with a Lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou ſhalt break his Neck: And all the Firſt-born of Man amongſt thy Children, ſhalt thou redeem.

Q. *What is obſervable thereupon?*

A. That notwithſtanding the Aſs alone is here named, all other unclean Beaſts are here included; and the Aſs ſeems to be here mentioned, rather than any other, becauſe, it was one of the moſt common, and moſt uſeful, but nevertheleſs was not to be ſpared or excepted, it was eaſy to infer from thence, that the ſame Rule was to be obſerved with Reſpect to other Beaſts, which were of leſs Uſe. The Reaſon why the Neck of the Aſs was to be broken, in caſe the Owner did not care to redeem it, was, becauſe it being conſecrated to God, it was not lawful to apply it to any profane or common Uſe.

Q. *What is the next Precept given by* Moſes *to the* Iſraelites?

A. "And it ſhall be when thy Son asketh thee in Time to come, ſaying, What is this? That thou ſhalt ſay unto him, By Strength of Hand the Lord brought us out from *Egypt*, from the Houſe of Bondage. And it came to paſs when *Pharaoh* would hardly let us go, that the Lord ſlew all the Firſt-born in the Land of *Egypt*, both the Firſt-born of Man and the Firſt-born of Beaſt. Therefore I ſacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the Matrix, being Males; but all the Firſt-born of my Children I redeem. And it ſhall be for a Token upon thine Hand, and for Frontlets between thine Eyes: For by Strength of Hand the Lord brought us forth out of *Egypt*."

Q. *What is to be learned from hence?*

A. This is added to teach Parents in all ſucceeding Ages, that it is their Duty to inſtruct their Children, in the Word and Works of God, as alſo in the Nature and Reaſon of every particular Kind or Part of the divine Worſhip and Service.

Q. *Which Way did* God *lead the* Iſraelites, *when he brought them out of* Egypt?

A. "And it came to paſs, when *Pharaoh* had let the People go, that God led them not through the Way of the Land of the *Philiſtines*, although that was near: For God ſaid, Leſt, peradventure, the People when they ſee War, and they return to *Egypt*. But God led the People about, through the Way of the Wilderneſs of the *Red-ſea*: And the Children of *Iſrael* went up harneſſed out of the Land of *Egypt*."

Q. *What is to be obſerved hereupon?*

A. That we are not to underſtand this literally, ſince it is evident that the great God of *Egypt*, who had wrought ſo many Miracles for the Deliverance of his People, and in whoſe Hands are the Hearts and Wills of all Mankind, could as eaſily have prevented their returning, or even wiſhing to return. He could likewiſe have endued them with a Courage ſuperior to all Danger; or have enabled them, like *Sampſon*, to have encountered and defeated the *Philiſtines* with no better Weapon than the Jaw-bone of an Aſs, or even with no Weapon at all; or he could have fought for them, as he did againſt the *Egyptians*, and on ſeveral other Occaſions. Beſides, had this been the real Reaſon, Why were not the Children of *Iſrael* as much diſheartned, and why did they not attempt to return to *Egypt*, when the *Amalekites* came out to oppoſe them, which was but a very ſmall Time afterwards. It is evident, therefore, that *Moſes* makes God ſpeak here like a Man, for nothing was unknown or uncertain to him; and the Meaning ſeems to be, that the *Almighty* did not think fit, on this Occaſion, to exert his Omnipotence againſt the *Philiſtines*, as he did afterwards againſt the *Egyptians*; and he knew, that if he left them to themſelves, and they ſhould be oppoſed by the *Philiſtines*, their Fears would induce them to be for returning to *Egypt* again.

Q. *And what did* Moſes *when he went out of* Egypt?

A. "And *Moſes* took the Bones of *Joſeph* with "him: For he had ſtraitly ſworn the Children of "*Iſrael*, ſaying, *God* will ſurely vſit you; and ye "ſhall carry up my Bones away hence with you."

Q. *What Stories have been broached concerning this Removal of* Joſeph'*s Bones?*

A. We have already given our Readers an Account of ſome of the ſuperſtitious Stories invented by the *Rabbins*, and others about the Body of *Joſeph*; we ſhall now add thereunto, a Paſſage from the *Elleſhemoth-Rabbah*, which is as follows. *Moſes* having ſpent two or three Days to no Purpoſe, in ſearching for the Bones of that *Patriarch*, began, at laſt, to deſpair of finding them, when, that very Inſtant, an old Woman met him, as he was a walking on the Banks of the *Nile*, and told him that *Joſeph*'s Coffin lay at the Bottom of the River, juſt by the Place where they ſtood; but that, in ſo long a Time, it muſt neceſſarily be ſunk ſo deep in the Mud, as to render it impoſſible for him to get out. Hereupon, the *Prophet* having made a ſhort Prayer, *called aloud to Joſeph*, and put him in Mind of his *Prophecy*, and the *Oath* which he had exacted from his Brethren: Immediately upon this efficacious Call, the Coffin roſe from the Bottom, floated on the Surface of the Water, and came aſhore; upon which *Moſes* faſtened a Cord round it, twiſted his *Staff* therein, and thereby was enabled to carry it on his Back to *Rameſes*. Though we are far from giving Credit to this extravagant Romance, yet we cannot help obſerving, that what we believe, has given Riſe to the Invention of many of theſe Fables, and at the ſame Time has occaſioned their having obtained, is the great Conciſeneſs of *Moſes* in his Hiſtory of the *Jewiſh* Affairs, to their Coming into the Land of *Canaan*; which has made him paſs over in Silence many material Occurrences. For, notwithſtanding he omits in his Hiſtory, the carrying the other *Jewiſh Patriarchs* Remains with them, yet it is evident, that they were alſo removed into *Canaan*, from thoſe Words of St. *Stephen*, *Acts* vii. 15. And it's certain, it was a very ancient Tradition, of *Joſeph*'s Bones being ſunk in the *Nile*; ſince *Jonathan*, in his Gloſs on the Text above, ſays, "That *Moſes* took up the Cheſt, wherein the Bones "of *Joſeph* were depoſited, out of the *Nile*, and car-"ried it with him."

Q. *Where did the* Iſraelites *encamp upon their Removal from* Succoth?

A. "And they took their Journey from *Succoth*, "and encamped in *Etham*, in the Edge of the Wil-"derneſs. And the Lord went before them by Day "in a Pillar of a Cloud to lead them the Way; and "by Night in a Pillar of Fire, to give them Light, "to go by Day and Night. He took not away the "Pillar of the Cloud by Day, nor the Pillar of "Fire by Night, from before the People."

Q. *What has been obſerved hereupon?*

A. It is not very well agreed, whether the Pillar of the Cloud appeared firſt unto the *Iſraelites*, on their Removal from *Succoth*, or at their Departure from *Etham*. The Text indeed leaves it doubtful; but we think, it is more probable, that it appeared to them on their ſecond Day's Journey. The ingenious Mr. *Toland*, who was a *Freethinker* in the largeſt Extent of that Word, has taken Abundance of Pains to prove, that theſe Pillars of a Cloud, and of Fire, were not miraculous; but, what is yet ſtranger, even than this Opinion, is, that he attempts to demonſtrate it, from ſome Paſſages of Scripture: Whereas nothing can be more evident, than that *Moſes* looked upon it as a great Miracle, and was convinced, that God was in the Pillar, as is evident from one of the Verſes above. "And the *Lord* went be-"fore them by *Day*, in a *Pillar* of a *Cloud*, to lead "them the Way; and by *Night* in a *Pillar* of *Fire*, "to give them *Light*; to go by *Day* and *Night*." The Prophet would never have ſaid this, had the Pillar been no more than an artificial Contrivance, as Mr. *Toland* repreſents it; neither would St. *Paul* have ſpoken as he does, in the *two* firſt Verſes of his *tenth* Chapter of his *firſt Epiſtle* to the *Corinthians*. "Moreover, Brethren, I would not that you ſhould "be ignorant, how that all your Fathers were under "the *Cloud*, and all paſſed through the Sea, and "were all baptized unto *Moſes* in the *Cloud*, and in "the *Sea*." The famous *Servetus*, who was burnt at *Geneva*, aſſerted that this *Cloud* was *Chriſt*. From its double Appearance ſome have been induced to doubt, whether there were two Pillars, or only one; but if we attend cloſely to the Text, it will be manifeſt, that the ſame Pillar which appeared as a Cloud, in the Day, ſhined out and gave a *Light*, like Fire in the Night. The Uſe of this ſignal Monument of the divine Favour was four-fold. *Firſt*, to conduct the *Iſraelites* through a diſmal, gloomy, and barren Wilderneſs, wherein otherwiſe they might very well have been bewildered and loſt their Way. *Secondly*, to be a Protection and Defence to them againſt their Enemies, as appears in the following Inſtance of the *Egyptians* Purſuit after them. *Thirdly*, to keep them from being ſcorched by Day, and ſupply them with Light by Night. And, *Fourthly*, to direct them, when they were to march, and when to pitch their Tents and continue encamped, as will be ſhown hereafter more at large in its proper Place. See *Numbers* ix. 17, 18, *&c.*

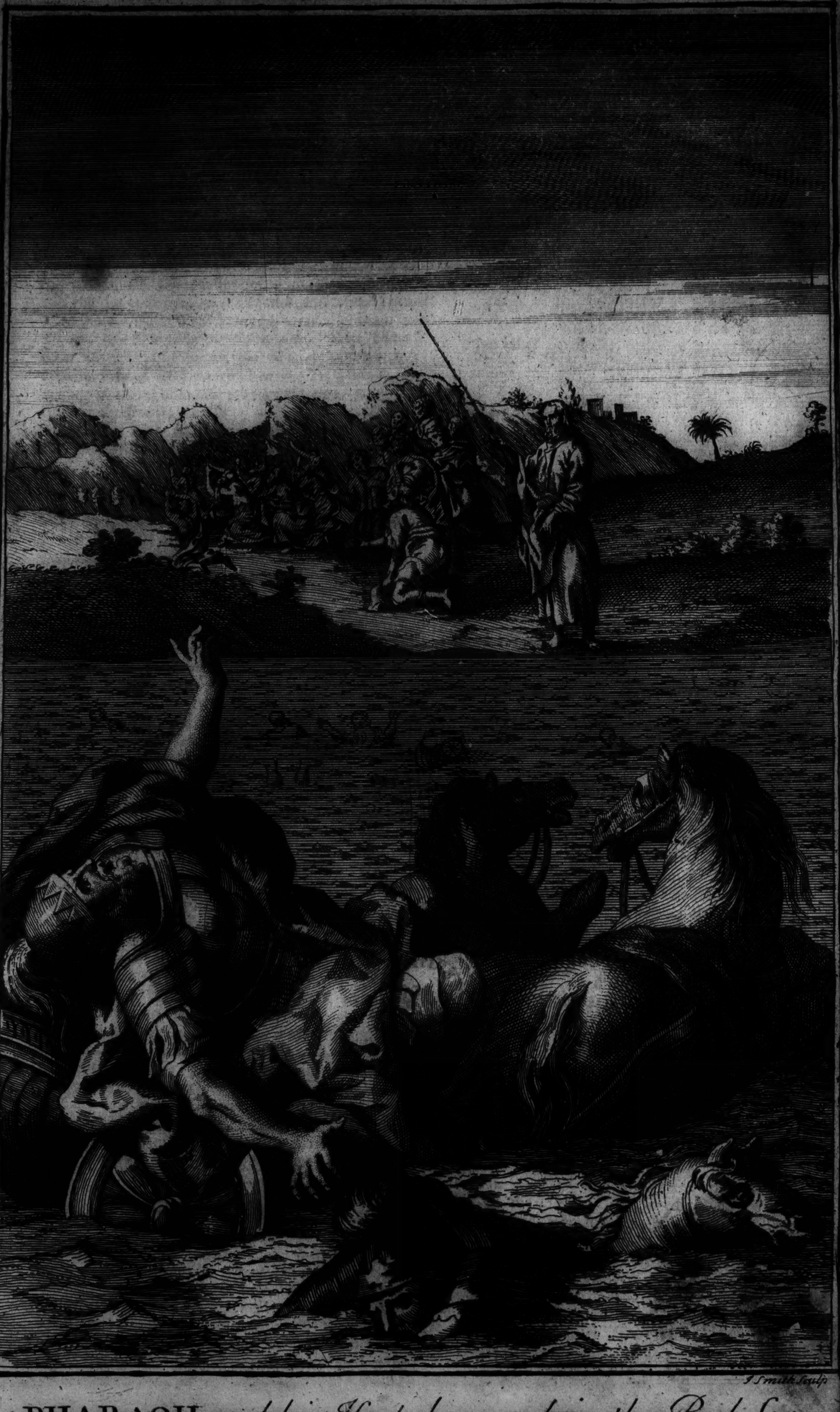
CHAP. XIV.

Moſes, *by divine Direction, ſhews the* Iſraelites *the way they are to go.* Pharaoh *purſues them; they are frightned and Murmur.* Moſes *comforts and encourages them. They have a* Pillar *of a* Cloud *to guide them.* Moſes *divides the* Red-Sea, *through which the* Iſraelites *paſs on* dry Land. Pharaoh *and his Hoſt following are all drowned. The* Iſraelites, *thus wonderfully delivered, fear* God, *and honour his Servant* Moſes.

Q. FROM Etham, *where the* Iſraelites *encamped the ſecond Night, whither did they next direct their Courſe?*

A. Etham lay directly in the Way to mount *Horeb*, and was ſituated *South-Eaſt* of it; and thither they were ſhaping their Courſe, but by the expreſs Command of God, marched to the *South-Weſt*, and encamped between *Migdol* and the *Sea*, over-againſt *Baal-Zephon*: So that now they were on the wrong

EXODUS Chap. XIV



I Smith Sculp

PHARAOH *and his Host drowned in the Red Sea.*

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Side of the *Red-Sea*, in the Territories of *Egypt*, out of which they might have paſſed immediately from *Etham*; but in the Road they were ordered to take, they had impaſſible Mountains on their Right, the *Red-Sea* in their Front, and the Dominions of *Egypt* on their *Left*, and at their Back.

Q. *But why were they led out of their ſtraight Courſe into this round-about dangerous Road?*

A. This was done to entice *Pharaoh* to purſue them, from the Proſpect he might have of the Advantage of the Place, where they were incloſed on all Sides, without any Poſſibility of an Eſcape. This was the divine Stratagem, that the Almighty might have the more glorious Triumph over this *Egyptian Tyrant*, who ſoon forgets the Almighty Power, which, by a Succeſſion of Plagues, had ſo lately afflicted him and his People, and regardleſs of the Danger of provoking it again, blindly purſues his own Fate, inſtead of the *Iſraelites*.

Q. *What Force had* Pharaoh *with him to execute his intended Revenge upon the* Iſraelites?

A. As the Exigence of Affairs admitted of no Delay, *Pharaoh* inſtantly got ready the greateſt Force he was able, and mounting his Chariot, put himſelf at the Head of his Army. But, notwithſtanding the Haſtineſs of this Expedition, we are not to ſuppoſe, that the *Egyptian* King expoſed himſelf at the Head of an inconſiderable Body of Men; on the contrary, we may be ſure that his Troops were very numerous and well armed, ſince he had with him ſix hundred choſen Chariots, and all the Chariots of *Egypt*, with a great Number of experienced Officers, under whoſe Commands they marched with ſuch Expedition, that they came up with the *Iſraelites* before they decamped from *Pi-hahiroth*. Theſe are the firſt Chariots we read of that were uſed in War. They were armed with Scythes, and being drawn by Horſes againſt the Enemy, and the Men in them throwing Darts and Spears and other offenſive Weapons, made terrible Havock. *Pharaoh*, according to *Joſephus*, took with him 50,000 Horſemen, and 200,000 Footmen. And farther, theſe Forces were not only well armed and diſciplin'd; but had to do with Perſons utterly unskill'd in War, and who were without Arms; ſo that if the Power of *God* had not intervened, a Slaughter, rather than a Fight, muſt have been the Conſequence.

Q. *You have now brought the* Iſraelites *from* Rameſes *to the* Red-Sea, *I ſhall be glad if you will deſcribe the* Geography *of their Journey thus far.*

A. Though this be ſomewhat difficult, yet I ſhall give you ſuch an Account as I have been able to collect from the beſt Authors, *viz.* That, though there are two Places named *Rameſes*, which are a little differently *pointed*, yet are they but one and the ſame; or, at the moſt, that they differ only in this, that the one was the *Province*, and the other the chief *City* of it: That *Succoth*, not far from *Rameſes*, in the Way to the *Red-Sea*, had its Name from the Tents (for ſo the Word ſignifies) which the *Iſraelites* pitched here, as we find, upon the like Occaſion, another Place, between *Jordan* and the Brook *Jabbock*, named: That *Etham* lay on the Confines of *Egypt* and *Arabia Petræa*, not far from the *Red-Sea*, and gave Denomination to the Wilderneſs adjacent: That *Pi-hahiroth*, which, in our *Engliſh*, and ſome other Tranſlations, is rendered as one proper Name, is, by the *Seventy*, made part of it an Apellative, ſo as to ſignify a *Mouth* (for ſo the Word *Pi* may mean) or narrow Paſſage, between two Mountains, laying not far from the Weſtern Coaſt of the *Red-Sea*: That *Migdol* was probably a Tower or Caſtle (for the Word carries that Signification in it) upon the Top of one of theſe Mountains which might give Denomination to the City, which, as *Herodotus* informs us, lay not far diſtant from it; and that *Baal-Zephon* was by ſome learned Men thought to be an *Idol* ſet up to keep the Borders of the Country, and to hinder Slaves from making their Eſcape. *Baal*, indeed, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, ſignifies *Lord*, and hence the Name is generally applied to the *Eaſtern Idols*; and the Word *Zephon* is thought to be derived from *Zapah*, to *Watch*, or *Spy*; and from thence it's conjectured, that this Idol had its Temple on the Top of ſome adjacent Mountains, and that the ſacred Hiſtorian takes particular notice of it, to ſhew how unable it was (whatever Opinion the *Egyptians* might have of it) to hinder the *Iſraelites* from going out of *Egypt*. There is but ſmall Certainty however to be gathered from the Etimology of Words; and therefore the Authority of *Euſebius* ſhould weigh with us, who makes it, not an Idol, but a Town, ſtanding upon the northern Point of the *Red-Sea*, where the Antients, eſpecially the *Jews*, think that the *Iſraelites* paſſed it, and where there ſtands, to this Day, a Chriſtian Monaſtery.

Q. *Was not* Pharaoh*'s haſty Purſuit of the* Iſraelites *with ſuch a formidable Army, very ſurprizing?*

A. Dr. *Jackſon* obſerves, that, "Of all the infatuated Reſolutions that either King or People adventured upon, the purſuing the *Iſraelites* with ſuch a mighty Army, after they had ſo intreated and urged them to leave their Country, may well ſeem, to every indifferent Reader, the moſt ſtupid that ever was taken." And ſo indeed the Author of the *Book of Wiſdom*, Ch. xix. 3. juſtly cenſures it: *For whilſt they were yet mourning and making Lamentation at the Graves of the Dead, they added another fooliſh Device and purſued them, as Fugitives, whom they had entreated to be gone.* But how much ſoever it was, that the *Egyptians* had ſuffered, for detaining the *Hebrews*; yet, now that they were gone, they might poſſibly be of the ſame Mind with the *Syrians*, 1 *Kings* xx. 23. who fancied that the God of *Iſrael* might not be alike powerful in all Places; or, if he was, they might nevertheleſs think, that *Moſes*'s Commiſſion extended no farther than the Meridian of *Egypt*; or that if it did, it might however have no Power over mighty Hoſts and Armies. They knew, at leaſt, as I before obſerved, that the *Iſraelites* had no Skill in military Affairs, no Captains of Infantry, no Cavalry at all, no Weapons or Engines of War, whereas they were well furniſhed and equipped with every thing of this Nature: And upon theſe, and the like Preſumptions, it was, that they became ſo fool-hardy, and deſperately reſolute, either to bring back the *Iſraelites* to their ſlavery, or to be revenged upon them for all the Loſſes they had ſuſtained, and the Penalties they had ſuffered.

Q. *Did not the near Approach of* Pharaoh *and his Army ſtrike Terror into the Children of* Iſrael.

A. The Sight of this Army, and their old Oppreſſor at the Head of it, exceedingly terrified the poor *Iſraelites*; who ſoon forgetting their new-gotten Liberty, betray a ſervile Mind, and envy the ſlaviſh Condition they ſo lately deplored. They reproach *Moſes* as the Author of all their imaginary Woes, and wiſh to reſume the Yoke they had but juſt ſhaken off. Long Cuſtom had inured them to Slavery, and continual Servitude of Body debaſed their Spirits.

Q. *Did not* Moſes *reſent their reproachful Taunts?*

A. So far from from it, that pitying their abject Fear, he chears them up with an Aſſurance of the divine Protection and Care: *The Lord*, ſays he, *will fight for you, and complete your Deliverance; and this numerous Army of the* Egyptians, *which you now ſee, you ſhall ſee again no more.* *Joſephus* has given us a good Comment on this Speech of *Moſes* to the deſponding *Iſraelites*. "Put the Caſe, ſays he, that you had depoſed ſome great Truſt in the Hands of a Perſon that had hitherto managed all well and wiſely for you, might not you reaſonably depend upon that Man for the ſame Care and Kindneſs, and the ſame Care too over again? What a Madneſs is it for you to deſpond then, where God himſelf has taken you under his Protection, and, of his own free Bounty, performed every Thing by me, that may contribute to your Freedom and Security? Nay, the very Difficulty of the Caſe you are in, is an Argument to raiſe your Hope, rather than diſcourage it. He hath brought you into Diſtreſs, on purpoſe to ſhew his Power and Kindneſs, in bringing you out again, even to the Surprize and Admiration of yourſelves, as well as your Enemies. It is not *God*'s Time to interpoſe with his almighty Power in ſmall Matters, but in great ond trying Calamities: When all Hopes of human Help fail us, that is the Seaſon for him to work out his Deliverance of thoſe who caſt themſelves upon him. And therefore fear nothing, ſo long as you have him for your Protector and Defender, who is able to raiſe the lowly and oppreſſed, and to lay the Honour of the Proſecutors in the Duſt. Be not afraid of the *Egyptian* armed Troops, neither deſpair of your Lives and Safeties; becauſe you are, at preſent locked up between the Sea and Mountains, and have no viſible Way in Nature to come off; for the God whom you ſerve, is able to level all theſe Mountains, and lay the Ocean dry. His Will, in fine, be done." With ſuch comfortable Words as theſe, he ordered them to march towards the Sea-ſide; and, as they were advancing, the miraculous Cloud removed from the Front to the Rear of the *Iſraelites* Camp, and ſo turning its dark Side towards the *Egyptians*, made them uncapable of knowing what they were about, while, by its bright and fiery Side, which it turned to the *Iſraelites*, it gave them a ſufficiency of Light, and kept the two Camps from joining that Night.

Q. *Being now come to the Sea-ſide; before you give an Account of the Paſſage of the* Iſraelites *through, pray inform me whence it derives its Name of the* Red-Sea; *and how it is ſituated?*

A. The *Red-Sea*, called by the Antients *Sinus Arabicus*, and now *Gulfo di Mecca*, is that Part, or Branch of the Southern Sea, which interpoſes itſelf between *Egypt* on the *Weſt*, *Arabia Felix*, and ſome Part of *Petræ* on the *Eaſt*, while the northern Bounds of it touched upon *Idumea*, or the Coaſt of *Edom*. *Edom* in the *Hebrew* Tongue, ſignifies *red*, and was the Nick-name given *Eſau* for ſelling his *Birth-right for a Meſs of Pottage*. The Country, which his Poſterity poſſeſſed, was called after his Name, and ſo was the Sea which adjoined to it; but the *Greeks*, not underſtanding the Reaſon of the Appellation, tranſlated it into their Tongue, and from thence the *Latins*, calling it the *Red-Sea*. The *Hebrews* call it the *Suph* or *Flags*, by reaſon of the great Abundance of that Kind of Weed which grows at the Bottom of it; and the *Arabs*, at this Day, name it *Buhr el Chalzim*, or, *The Sea of Clyſona*, from a Town ſituate on its weſtern Coaſt, much about the Place where the *Iſraelites* paſſed over from the *Egyptian* to the *Arabian* Shore. But, as the Word *Clyſona* may denote a *drowning or overflowing of Water*, it is not improbable that the Town, built in this Place, as well as this Part of the Sea, might have ſuch a Name given it, in Memory of the Fate of the *Egyptians*, who were drowned herein.

Q. *What may be the Breadth of the* Red-Sea *at the Place where the* Iſraelites *paſſed over?*

A. This is not very eaſy to determine, becauſe both *Geographets* and Travellers mightily differ in their Computations. But if, (according to ſome of the loweſt Accounts) we ſuppoſe it to be much about two Leagues, moſt Writers agree, that the Sea, in this Place, is very boiſterous and tempeſtuous, which is hardly conſiſtent with a Shallowneſs, much leſs a total Deſertion of Water, upon any haſty Reflux, as ſome Objectors to the Truth of this Miracle, vainly imagine. The Wind, it muſt be owned, if it blew from a right Quarter, might both forward the Ebb, and retard the Flux; but the Wind which blew at this Time, it is ſaid, was an Eaſt-Wind, whereas it muſt have been a Weſt or North-Weſt Wind, to have driven the Water from the Land's End into the main Body of the Sea, as may eaſily be perceived by a Map. But now the Eaſt-Wind blows croſs the Sea, and the Effect of it muſt be, to drive the Waters partly up to the Extremity of the Bay, and partly down to the Ocean, which probably is the Meaning (if we muſt allow an *Hyberbole* in the Expreſſion) of the Waters *being a Wall to the* Iſraelites, *on their Right-Hand, and on their Left*, becauſe they ſo defended them on both Sides, that the *Egyptians* could no way come at them, but by purſuing them in the ſame Path which they took.

Q. *Some have objected to the Reality of this Miracle, and there was no more in this Paſſage of the* Iſraelites, *than in that of* Alexander the Great *over the Sea of* Pamphylia, *as* Joſephus *himſelf ſeems to inſinuate.*

A. There is no manner of Reſemblance betwixt theſe two Occurrences. *Alexander*, as *Arrian* and others relate it, was to march from *Phaſelis*, a Sea-Port, to *Perga*, an inland City of *Pamphylia*. The Country near *Phaſelis*, upon the Shore of the *Pamphilian* Sea, was mountainous and rocky; ſo that he could not find a Paſſage for his Army, without either taking a great Compaſs round the Mountains, or attempting to go over the *Strand*, between the Rocks and the Sea. The Hiſtorian remarks, that there is no paſſing along this Place, unleſs when the Wind blows from the North; and therefore *Alexander*, when he came to *Phaſelis*, perceiving the Wind blew from this Quarter, laid hold of the Opportunity; and having ſent ſome of his Army over the Mountains, went himſelf with the reſt along the Shore. But now what Miracle was there in all this, unleſs we call the Wind's blowing opportunely for *Alexander*'s Purpoſe a Miracle? According to *Plutarch*, *Alexander* himſelf thought there was nothing extraordinary in it; and therefore we may juſtly wonder at *Joſephus*'s comparing this Paſſage with that of the *Iſraelites*, when there was ſo manifeſt a Diſparity between them. The *Iſraelites* croſſed over a Sea, where no Hiſtorian makes mention of any Perſons, but they, that ever found a Paſſage; whereas *Alexander* only marched upon the Shore of the Sea of *Pamphylia*, where all the Hiſtorians allow, any one may, at any Time, go, when the Tide retreats and the ſame Wind blows, that favoured him.

Q. *But is there not ſome Force in the Objection, that the* Iſraelites *might take the Opportunity of the* Reflux *of the Tide?*

A. Thoſe who have made the exacteſt Obſervation on the Ebbing and Flowing of the Tide in this Sea, ſay, that the greateſt Diſtance it falls from the place of High-water, is not above 300 Yards, which at Low-water cannot continue uncovered above half an Hour, becauſe during the firſt ſix Hours, the Sea only retires by Degrees, and, in leſs than half an Hour, it begins to flow again towards the Shore: So that, upon a moderate Computation, the moſt that can be allowed, both of Time and Space of paſſable Ground, is but about 200 Yards, during ſix Hours, and 150 during eight: But now it's plain, that a Multitude of above two Millions of Men, Women, and Children, encumbered with great Quantities of Cattle, and Houſhold-ſtuff, could never be able to croſs even the narroweſt Point of this Sea, though we allow them a double Portion of Time, and a double Space of Ground to perform it in; whereas the general Tradition is, that the Place of their Paſſage, from ſhore to ſhore, is about eight or nine Miles in Breadth.

Q. *Before you conclude your Remarks on this memorable Event, pray explain a ſeeming Ambiguity, in relation to the Place where the* Iſraelites *came on ſhore: For they were at* Etham *but two Days before, and now landed in a Wilderneſs of the ſame Name.*

A. If we will but ſuppoſe there were two *Ethams*, the one a Town, where they encamped on the *Egyptian* Side, and the other on the *Arabian* Side, a *Wilderneſs*; or, if we will needs have the Wilderneſs of *Etham* denominated from the Town, ſuppoſing that the Town was ſituated near the upper Part of the *Red-ſea*, and gave Denomination to a great Deſart, which ſurrounded the Head of the Bay, and reached down a conſiderable Way, on both Sides of it, we may eaſily perceive, that though the *Iſraelites*, in the Evening, marched from the Wilderneſs of *Etham* croſs the Gulph, yet, upon their Landing in the Morning, they would be but in another Part of the Wilderneſs of *Etham* ſtill.

Q. *What is the Meaning of that Expreſſion,* When the Lord looked on the Hoſt of the *Egyptians* through the Pillar of Fire?

A. That is, when he turned the bright ſide of the Cloud upon them, to let them ſee the Danger they were in, and, at the ſame ſame Time (as *Joſephus* adds) poured out a Storm of Thunder and Lightning, and Hail-ſtones upon them from the Cloud; *Let us flee*, cry they, *from the Face of* Iſrael, *for the Lord fighteth for them.*

Q. *The* Iſraelites *having now reached the oppoſite Shore, what was the firſt Thing* Moſes *did?*

A. He, at *God's* Command, again waved the ſacred Rod; whereupon the Sea returned to its uſual Strength and Force; the Waters at once uniting cover the thirſty Bottom, whilſt Horror and Confuſion invade the frightened *Egyptians*: They hear and ſee the roaring Waves break looſe from their inviſible Chain, and with helpleſs Speed, endeavour to avoid their relentleſs Fury; but the mighty God of *Jacob* will revenge himſelf on the obſtinate Infidels, and their Ruin ſhall be a laſting Monument of his Juſtice and Vengeance. A dreadful Inſtance of Almighty Wrath; which, by one Blow, defeated the Policy and Force of a mighty Prince; who, notwithſtanding the Plagues he had before ſuffered, for his obſtinate Impiety, perſiſted in his Oppoſition to the Will of God, till he drew on himſelf and his People, this famous and final Overthrow. And the dead Bodies of the *Egyptians* floating to the Shore, give the *Iſraelites* ſtill farther and ſtronger Aſſurances, that they now were out of all Danger from their late haughty and imperious Oppreſſors.

CHAP. XV.

Song of Moſes *aud the Children of* Iſrael *on their Deliverance.* Miriam *with the Women, anſwer thereunto. The People diſtreſſed for want of Water; the Waters of* Marah *bitter, whereat the People murmur; cured by throwing in a Tree. Laws and Promiſes given. At* Elim *they find twelve Wells and ſeventy Palm-trees.*

Q. *THE Almighty having ſo viſibly interpoſed in ſaving the* Iſraelites *from the Rage of their* Egyptian *Perſecutors, no doubt but they paid their moſt grateful Acknowledgments to the divine Goodneſs for their ſurprizing Deliverance.*

A. They were ſo wonderfully affected with the Greatneſs and Strangeneſs of their Deliverance, that they unanimouſly joined in a Solemn Thankſgiving to God for his Kindneſs and Protection. On this Occaſion *Moſes* compoſed a Song or Hymn, which, for ſublimity of Thought, and Dignity of Expreſſion, is not to be equalled by any poetical Compoſitions of the Antients.

Q. *In what Manner was this Song ſung?*

A. Moſes divided the Company into two great Choirs; and ſetting himſelf, and his Brother *Aaron* at the Head of the Men, and his Siſter *Miriam*, with a Timbrel in her Hand, at the Head of the Women, they ſung and play'd alternately, and, in the Height of their Joy intermixed Dances.

Q. *Do you find any peculiar Method obſerved in the Song?*

A. The firſt Verſe ſeems to have been the *Chorus* of the Song; and, accordingly, we find is exactly and methodically ſung at the Cloſe, by the *Propheteſs*, and her Choir of Women. To their Voices they joined the Sound of muſical Inſtruments, and accompanied theſe with proper Motions of the Body; by theſe outward Expreſſions diſcovering the inward Joy of their Hearts, and that ſincere Senſe they had of the divine Mercy and Goodneſs, ſo manifeſtly diſplayed, in their miraculous Paſſage through the *Red-Sea*.

Q. *Can you aſcertain the particular Day on which this remarkable Event fell out?*

A. It is generally thought to have happened on the *twenty-firſt* of the Month *Niſan*, that is, on the *ſeventh* Day of *unleavened Bread*, and *laſt* Day of the *Paſſover*, on which an *holy Convocation* was to be held. According to our Account, is fell out on *Saturday* the *Seventeenth* of *April*, in the Year of the World 2513.

Q. *The Song of Praiſe and Thankſgiving being finiſhed, what did* Moſes *do next?*

A. He cauſed the People to march to the *South-Eaſt*, through the Wilderneſs of *Shur*, or, as he calls it in another Place, the Wilderneſs of *Etham*. In this inhoſpitable and uninhabited Region, the *Iſraelites* journeyed three Days without finding any Water; which as it equally diſtreſſed both People and Cattle, ſo we need not wonder that they were exceedingly troubled thereat; and to add to their Grief and Diſappointment, when they had found ſome Water, it was ſo bitter, that neither they nor their Cattle could drink it.

Q. *How did they behave on this melancholy Occaſion?*

A. Inſtead of addreſſing themſelves in Prayer to *God*, their conſtant and powerful Protector, they, who but three Days before ſo joyfully and thankfully praiſed *God* for their Deliverance from the Oppreſſions of the *Egyptians*, and, *who believed in* Jehovah, *and* Moſes *his Servant*, now forgot the one, murmured againſt the other, and reproached both, as if they had brought them into that Diſtreſs on Purpoſe that they might periſh with Thirſt.

Q. *What Courſe did* Moſes *take on this emergent Occaſion?*

A. He earneſtly beſought God for his Direction; who was pleaſed graciouſly to hear him, and to order him to take a certain Tree, which was ſhewn him, and caſt it into the Waters, which thereupon became ſweet and palatable. From this Tranſlation, according to the oriental Cuſtom, the Place received the Name of *Marah*, which ſignifies *bitter*.

Q. *But I have read ſome-where, that there's a certain Tree in that Part of the World, that has this medicinal Virtue, of purifying and expelling any noxious and offenſive Qualities in Water; where then was the Miracle, if* Moſes *made uſe of ſuch a Tree?*

A. A learned Author, ſpeaking of this Paſſage, ſays, The Miracle here performed by *Moſes*, does not ſeem to conſiſt in this, that the Waters were made *ſweet*, by the caſting of Wood into them; for that proceeded from a natural Cauſe, and was frequently done, as appears from *Pliny*'s *Natural Hiſtory*; but that God himſelf ſhould direct the Prophet to the Tree, which was proper for that Purpoſe, is the eſſential Part of this Miracle.

Q. *What elſe happened remarkable at* Marah?

A. Here God gave a new Revelation of his Will to *Moſes*, and appointed certain Ordinances, by which the People were to conduct themſelves, until they received a compleat Body of *Laws*, which was afterwards given them at Mount *Sinai*. Theſe Ordinances are not here declared, probably, becauſe they were afterwards included in the Law given at *Sinai*.

Q. *From* Marah *the* Iſraelites *marched to* Elim; *Did they find any better Accommodations there?*

A. Yes; for here the found twelve Wells of Water, and ſeventy Palm or Date Trees. Here they pitched their Camp, for the Sake of the Water, and the Shade of the Trees; God Almighty permitting them to enjoy at leiſure, this Refreſhment; that they might be encouraged to bear ſuch Inconveniencies, as in the Proſecution of their Journey they might be expoſed to, and accordingly befel them in their forty Yeats Travel towards *Canaan*.

CHAP. XVI.

The Iſraelites *come to the Wilderneſs of* Sin. *Murmur for Want of Bread. God promiſes to give them Bread from Heaven.* Quails *and* Manna. Manna *deſcribed; an* Omer *of it laid up in the Tabernacle.*

Q. FROM Elim *the* Hebrews *journied on towards the Wilderneſs of* Sin; *Did any Thing memorable happen in this March?*

A. Imagining they ſhould find a Scarcity of Proviſions, they began to diſtruſt God, and to repent, from their very Hearts, that they had ſuffered themſelves to be decoyed from the Plenty which they enjoyed in *Egypt*, into a barren wild Waſte, where they could have no other Proſpect but to die with Hunger; upon which a general Mutiny is raiſed againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*.

Q. *But had they not Cattle with them, which might have ſupplied all their Wants of this Kind?*

A. They had, bnt were unwilling to kill them; or if they had ſlaughtered them, they ſuppoſed they ſhould want Bread to eat with their Fleſh.

Q. *Did not* Moſes *reſent this Diſſatisfaction and intemperate Humour of the People?*

A. So condeſcending was the Divine Goodneſs, that to convince theſe Murmurers of his Almighty Power, God was pleaſed to inform them by *Moſes*, that he would ſupply them with Food from Heaven.

Q. *Did God fulfil his Promiſe to them?*

A. He did; for that very Evening, he cauſed Quails to fall among them in ſuch great Quantities, as quite covered their Camp; and, the next Morning, as ſoon as the Dew was off, there lay upon the Ground a little white round Thing, much in the Shape of *Corriander-Seed*, which when the People ſaw, they were ſtruck with Admiration, and ſaid one to another, *What is this?* And from thence they gave it the Name of Manna.

Q. *Give me ſome Account of theſe Quails that fell in ſuch prodigious Multitudes about the* Iſraelitiſh *Camp?*

A. The Word, which we render *Quail*, ſays an ingenious learned Author, according to the Confeſſion of the *Jews* themſelves, is of uncertain Signification, and may denote a Locuſt, as well as a Quail: But what ſhould rather incline us to the latter Acceptation, is, that Paſſage of the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſ.* lxxvii. 28. where he tells us, that *God rained Fleſh upon them, as thick as Duſt, and feathered Fowls, like as the Sand of the Sea*; which cannot with any tolerable Propriety be applied to Inſects. But then we muſt remember, that this was done in the Middle of *April*, when theſe Birds were known to fly out of *Egypt* croſs the *Red-ſea* in vaſt Quantities; ſo that the Sum of this Miracle will conſiſt, not ſo much in the prodigious Number of them, that fell in the *Iſraelites* Camp, as in God's directing them thither, and in that Evening too, according to his Promiſe, and his Servant *Moſes*'s Prediction.

Q. *What have you to obſerve with Regard to the Miracle of the Manna?*

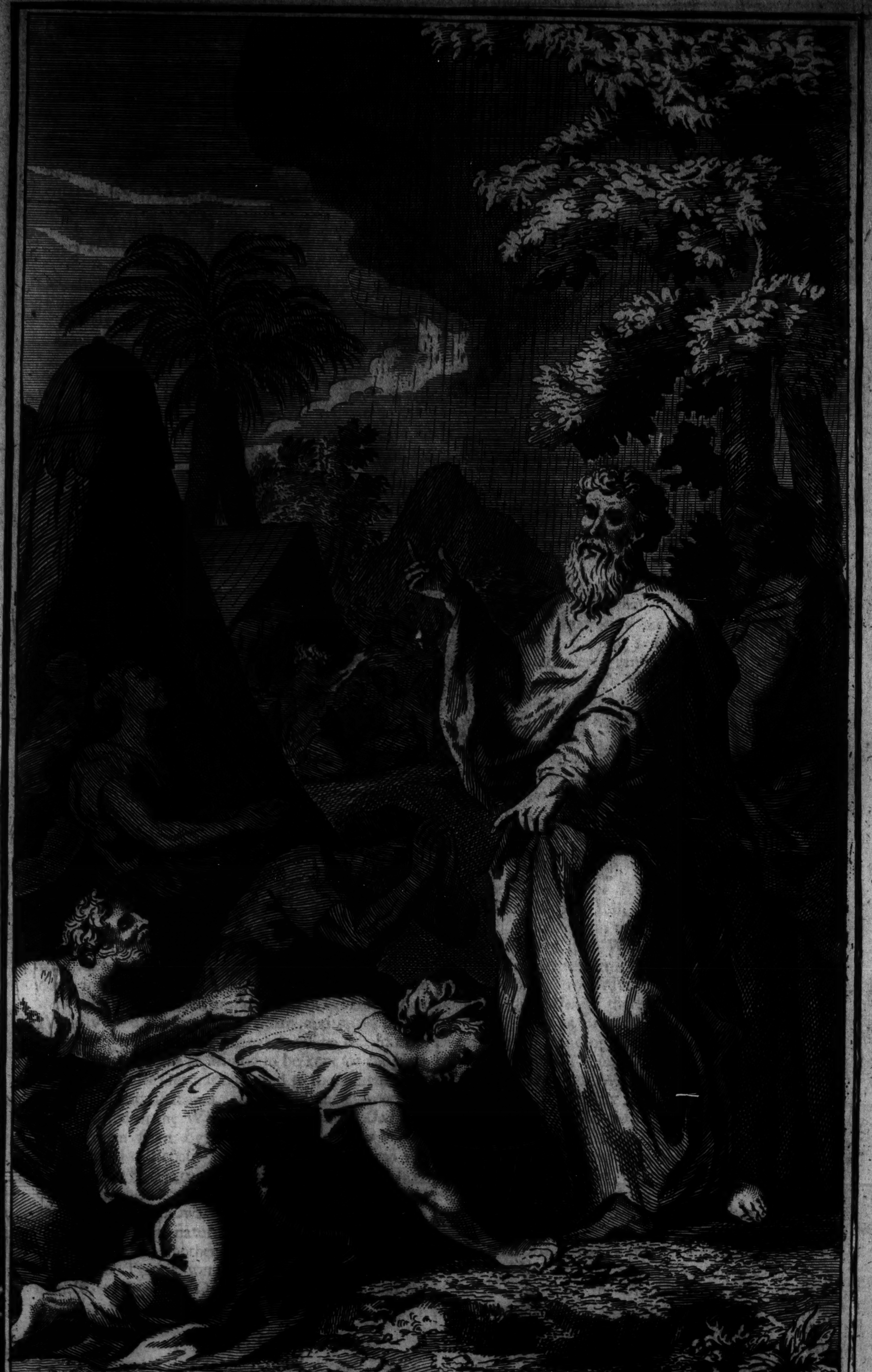
A. Our Tranſlation, and ſome others, make *Moſes* fall into a plain Contradiction, in relating the Account of it, which they thus render; *And when the Children of* Iſrael *ſaw it, they ſaid one to another, it is* Manna, *for they wiſt not what it was*, v. 15. whereas the *Seventy*, and ſeveral Authors both ancient and modern, have tranſlated the Text according to the Original,, *The* Iſraelites *ſeeing this, ſaid one to another, What is this? For they knew not what it was*: For we muſt obſerve, that the Word, by which they aſked, (*What is this*) was in their Language, *Man*, which ſignifies likewiſe *Meat ready prepared*; and therefore it was always afterwards called *Man*, or *Manna*, which was a very delicious and pleaſant Kind of Food, and is therefore by the *Pſalmiſt*, ſtiled the Bread of *Angels*, *Pſal.* lxxviii. 24.

Q. *But is not Manna found at this Day in the Deſarts of* Arabia?

A. Altho' this ſhould be admitted, yet the Miracle of feeding the Children of *Iſrael* therewith, will not be at all leſſened thereby; for, 1. It did not fall until ſuch Time as the *Hebrews* had been promiſed Bread by *Moſes*. It continued to fall ſix Days in ſeven, for forty Years together. 3. A double Quantity fell on the ſixth Day, and none on the ſeventh. 4. It fell in ſuch Quantities, as to ſuffice ſeveral hundred thou-

ſand

EXODUS Chap. XVI.



The **ISRAELITES** *gathering Manna sent from Heaven for Bread*

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ſand Perſons, at a very large Allowance every Day to each. 5. It putrified, when reſerved till the next Morning, from an impious Diſtruſt; and yet, it remained ſweet and freſh from *Friday* Morning to *Saturday* Night, when kept accordingly to *God*'s Commandment. 6. It ceaſed wholly, when the *Iſraelites* entered *Canaan*, and conſequenly ſtood no longer in need of it.

Q. *An* Omer *of* Manna, *I find was allowed to every Head; how much did an* Omer *contain?*

A. A ſmall Matter above five Pints of our *Engliſh* Meaſure; or, as Biſhop *Cumberland* ſays, Six wine Pints, and a very little over.

Q. *On the ſeventh Day, it ſeems, the People were commanded to reſt, and not to go out to gather* Manna; *what Obſervatioms do you make upon this new Injunction?*

A. This ſeems to be the firſt Time, that the *Reſt on the the ſeventh Day* was ſolemnly appointed. *God* indeed, from the very firſt, intended to preſerve the Memory of the Creation in ſix Days, by appointing the Seventh to be kept Holy; but when, before the Flood, Men grew ſo wicked, as to neglect the Thoughts of *God*, they little regarded the Diſtinction between this Day and others; and, after the Flood, the Diſperſion of Mankind very much blotted it out of their Minds, as it did many other good Things. In the Family of *Abraham*, we may preſume, the Remembrance of it was preſerved, though not with ſuch a ſtrict Abſtinence from all Labour, as was afterwards enjoined; and therefore we read nothing of their reſting from their Travels on that Day, before their coming into *Egypt*. The Truth is, they were kept under ſuch ſevere Servitude, and, Day and Night, ſo preſſed by their Task-maſters to hard Labour without Intermiſſion, that all Obſervation of the Sabbath was, very likely, laid aſide; but when *God* brought them out of that Slavery, he renewed his Commandment for it; with this Addition (in Memory of the *Egyptian* Bondage) that they ſhould reſt from all manner of Labour on that Day.

Q. *In the Account given in this Chapter of the* Manna, *I read, that a Pot of it was ordered to be filled and laid up before the* Ark of the Covenant, *which was not yet built; pray give me your Thoughts on this Paſſage.*

A. As *God* intended to feed his People continually with *Manna*, during the Time they travelled up and down in the Wilderneſs; and foreſeeing, that when they came to be ſettled in the Land of *Canaan*, their Poſterity would become lukewarm and faithleſs, he therefore gave *Moſes* in Charge, that he ſhould even now, cauſe an *Omer* of *Manna* to be kept for the Conviction of future Generations, and to ſhew them what Kind of Bread that was, wherewith their Anceſtors had been fed in the Wilderneſs, when their *God* delivered them from *Egyptian* Bondage. This Pot he was ordered to depoſit in the Ark, which was not built till the People came to Mount *Sinai*; *Moſes* here contracting his Account, to conclude the Hiſtory of the *Manna*, which was preſerved in this Pot from Corruption, though naturally it could not be kept ſweet from one Day to another. By laying up this in the Ark, two Things were likewiſe farther intended, namely, to ſhew the Quality of the *Manna*, and the Quantity which was allowed to each Perſon.

CHAP. XVII.

The People arrive at Rephidim, *and murmur for Water;* Moſes *ſtrikes the Rock at* Horeb, *and God ſends them Water in Abundance. The Battle between the* Amalekite *and* Iſrael; *the former beaten, and ordered to be utterly deſtroyed.* Moſes *builds an Altar to* God, *and calls it* Jehovah-Niſſi.

Q. FROM *the Deſart of* Sin, *the* Iſraelites *journeyed on towards* Horeb, *and pitched at* Rephidim; *relate what extraordinary Occurrences befel them there.*

A. On their coming to *Rephidim*, they could find no Water; which put them into their old Temper of diſtruſting God's Providence, and murmuring againſt *Moſes*; but on this Occaſion, they ſeem'd more mutinous and deſperate than ever. In vain did *Moſes* perſuade them to Patience, and wait *God*'s Leiſure; his Words did but inflame, and carry them to ſuch a Height of Rage, that they even threatened to ſtone him; ſo that he was forced to have Recourſe to *God*, who ſoon diſſipated his Fears.

Q. *In what manner did* God *magnify his Power on this critical Occaſion?*

A. God orders him to take the Elders of the People with him, and his Rod in his Hand, and go to Mount *Horeb*, and ſtrike the Rock, from whence Water in Abundance ſhould guſh forth. *Moſes* obeyed, and the Event was agreeable to the Prediction.

Q. *How long did this Water continue with the* Iſraelites?

A. It ſerved them, not only in this Encampment at *Rephidim*, and in that of Mount *Sinai*, but in their other Encampments likewiſe, perhaps as far as *Kadeſh-Barnea*: For the *Jews* have a Tradition, that as theſe Waters were granted for the Sake of the Merits of *Miriam*, *Moſes*'s Siſter; ſo they happen'd to fail, as ſoon as ſhe died; and hence it is, that, at the Encampment at *Kadeſh-Barnea*, which was ſoon after the Death of *Miriam*, we find the People falling into Murmurings again for want of Water. St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of this miraculous Rock, which he makes the Type of *Jeſus Chriſt*, tells us, that *it followed them*, 1 *Cor*. x. 4. And from hence ſome have inferred, either that the Streams, which guſhed out of the Rock, formed themſelves into a Kind of River, which followed them, through all their Encampments, or that they carried the Rock itſelf in a Cart, like a great Tun, always full, and always open to thoſe, that had an inclination to drink. But theſe are idle Fictions, drawn from Words, that are not to be underſtood in a literal Senſe; what we may learn of Certainty from modern Travellers, is, That, at the Foot of the Mount *Horeb*, there is ſtill to be ſeen a Brook of Water; but as for the Rock itſelf, which is a vaſt large Stone, ſtanding ſeparate by itſelf, no Water now runs from it, though there are at preſent to be ſeen twelve Holes, or Mouths, as it were, from whence the Water had formerly flow'd.

Q. *What elſe befel the* Iſraelites *while they remain at* Rephidim?

A. They were alarmed by the Approach of an Army of *Amalekites*, who were juſt upon their Heels, and ready to fall upon them.

Q. *Who were theſe* Amalekites; *and how came they, unprovoked, to attack the* Iſraelites?

A. The *Amalekites* were deſcended from *Amalek*, the Son of *Eliphaz*, the Son of *Eſau*, by a Concubine, *Gen*. 36. 12. And the Ground of their Enmity againſt the *Iſraelites* is generally ſuppoſed to have been an innate Hatred, from the Remembrance of *Jacob*'s depriving their Progenitor both of his Birth-right and Bleſſing. However, their falling upon them without any Provocation, when they ſaw them reduced to ſo low a Condition, by the Fatigue of their March, and the exceſſive Drought they laboured under, was very inhuman, and juſtly deſerved the Defeat which *Joſhua* gave them.

Q. *What might be the Reaſon of* God's *denouncing a perpetual War againſt them?*

A. The *Amalekites*, probably, knew that the *Iſraelites* were pre-ordained by *God* to be put in Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*; to prevent which, and to fruſtrate the Deſign of Providence, they put themſelves in Arms to deſtroy them. And this is the Reaſon which *Moſes* himſelf aſſigns for this Declaration of War; *becauſe his* (namely, *Amaleck's*) *Hand is againſt the Throne of* God, (that is, againſt *God* himſelf) *therefore the* Lord *will wage War againſt him, from one Generation to another*, Exod. xvii. 16. The Injury done the *Iſaaelites* was not ſo much, as the Affront offered to the divine Majeſty, and therefore he threatens utterly to extirpate the Deſigners of it.

Q. *What did* Moſes *to defend his People againſt this Outrage of the* Amalekites?

A. He ordered *Joſhua*, a valiant young Man, to draw out a Party of the choiceſt Men in the Camp, againſt next Morning, and to give the *Amalekites* Battle.

Q. *But with what Weapons did* Joſhua *furniſh his Army, ſince its highly probable they brought none with them out of* Egypt?

A. It is very likely they made uſe of the Weapons which they had taken from the dead *Egyptians* caſt on Shore by the *Red-ſea*.

Q. *How was the Battle between the* Iſraelites *and the* Amalekites *fought; and what was the Iſſue of it?*

A. The next Morning, *Moſes* attended by *Aaron* and *Hur*, went to the Top of an Eminence, from whence they might have a View of the Field of Battle; and as the two Armies were engaged, ſo it was, that while *Moſes* held up his Hands to God in Prayer, and in one of them his Wonder-working Rod, the *Iſraelites* prevailed; but when, thro' Wearineſs, his Hands began to drop, *Amaleck* had the better; which *Aaron* and *Hur* perceiving, ſet him down on a Stone, and ſupported his Hands on each Side, until the going down of the Sun; in which Time the *Amalekites* were quite routed, and put to the Sword. Thus *Iſrael* began to conquer, as ſoon as they were conſtrained to fight.

Q. *What do you remark on* Moſes's *Hands being ſupported by* Aaron *and* Hur?

A. Biſhop *Patrick* is of Opinion, that the lifting up of his Hands is peculiarly noted in Scripture, becauſe he elevated in them the Rod of God, which was to be a Standard to the Hoſt of *Iſrael*. As to the Manner in which *Moſes* was ſupported by *Aaron* and *Hur*, the ſame learned Author has ſuggeſted a very probable Conjecture, namely, That ſometimes *Moſes* held up his Rod in his Right-hand, and ſometimes in his Left (for in *v.* 11. he ſpeaks only of one Hand being lift up and down) and *Aaron* ſtood on one Side of him, (ſuppoſe the Right-hand) and *Hur* ſtood on the other; who, by that Means, helped by Turns to uphold his Hands in that Poſture; for, if they had done it both together, they might have been as weary as *Moſes* himſelf.

Q. *Who was this* Hur *here mentioned?*

A. Some think he was of the Tribe of *Judah*, the Son of *Caleb*, the Son of *Eſrom*; and that he was Grandfather to that celebrated Artiſt, *Bezaleel*; but of this there is no Certainty. *Joſephus* tells us, that he was the Huſband of *Miriam*, *Moſes's* Siſter; and ſome *Jews* affirm, that he was her Son, and tells us many ſtrange Stories about him. But as nothing certain can be gathered from Scripture relating to this Matter; I ſhall only obſerve; that he appears to have been a Perſon of great Prudence and Piety, and one highly eſteemed by, and in great Confidence with *Moſes*. Some of the *Rabbins* ſay, that *Aaron* and *Hur* were the Counſellors of *Moſes*, and *Joſhua* his Lieutenant.

Q. *Now you mention* Joſhua, (*and this, I think, is the firſt Time I read of him*) *Pray give me ſome Account of this famous General?*

A. This extraordinary Perſon, who was long the Aſſiſtant, or, as he is called, the Miniſter or Servant of *Moſes*, and at length his Succeſſor, was a Man greatly diſtinguiſhed by his Virtues, and eminent Qualifications; which rendered him no leſs able in Council, than in War. His original Name was *Oſhea*, and his Father's Name was *Nun*, of the Tribe of *Ephraim*; but *Moſes* changed his Name to *Jehoſhua*, or, as it is uſually written, *Joſhua*; in *Greek* he is called *Jeſus*. I conceive, that *Moſes* gave him the Name of *Jehoſhua*, on his defeating the *Amalekites*, becauſe therein he was a Saviour of his People. The firſt Time we read of his Name being *Oſhea*, is *Numb.* xiii. 16. *And* Moſes *called* Oſhea *the Son of* Nun, Jehoſhua. But tho' this proves the Change of the Name, it fixes not the Time when this Change was made; and, as in this Chapter of *Exodus*, we find him called by the latter Name, ſo it ſeems natural to ſuppoſe, that it was given him on this memorable Occaſion of his being the Champion of the *Iſraelites*. With regard to his Birth, Archbiſhop *Uſher* judges he might be about thirty two Years of Age, when he gained this Victory; for as *Moſes* was fourſcore when he led the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, it was neceſſary for him to have a Coadjutor in his Labours; and accordingly we find *Joſhua* afterwards, appointed to the moſt difficult and important Services.

Q. *Immodiately after the Battle*, Moſes *raiſed an Altar, which he called* Jehovah-Niſſi; *or*, the Lord is my Banner; *Pray for what Uſe and Intent was this Altar erected?*

A. Different are the Opinions concerning the Uſe of this Altar. Some ſay he offered *Burnt-Offerings* on it, which is not unlikely. Others again, imagine, that he erected it only as a Monument, to preſerve the Memory of the Defeat of the *Amalekites*. Commentators differ likewiſe, as to the Application of the Word *Jehovah-Niſſi*; namely, Whether it belongs to the Altar, by Way of Inſcription, or whether the Prophet ſacrificing thereon, called on Almighty God by that Name: Though theſe Difficulties are not eaſily reſolved, yet it is as certain, that the Knowledge of them is not very material.

CHAP. XVIII.

Jethro *having heard of the great Things God had done for* Iſrael, *comes to the Camp, and with him the Wife and two Sons of* Moſes. Jethro's *Advice, and Return to his own Country.*

Q. WHAT *firſt occurs in this Chapter worthy our Obſervation?*

A. The *Iſraelites* being come near the Place where God firſt appeared to *Moſes*, in the Burning-Buſh, *Jethro*, whoſe Habitation was not far from from thence, having heard how graciouſly God had dealt with his Son-in-law *Moſes*, and the Children of *Iſrael*, took his Daughter *Zipporah*, *Moſes's* Wife, with their two Sons, *Gerſhom* and *Eliezer*, and brought them to the Camp to him.

Q. *Aſſign the particular Time when* Jethro *made* Moſes *this Viſit.*

A. Whether this was immediately after the Fight with *Amaleck*, as it's here ſet down, or ſome Time after, when the *Iſraelites* were better ſettled, is a Matter much controverted among Interpreters. The *Jews* are generally agreed, and to them the learned *Uſher* and *Selden* aſſent, that this Viſit happened after the Promulgation of the Law, in the firſt Year of their coming from *Egypt*; and in the Month of *Tiſri* (ſay the *Jews*) above three Months after God gave *Moſes* the ſecond Tables; though others will have it to have been in the ſecond Year. It ſeems reaſonable to think, however, that *Jethro* would take the firſt Opportunity, to viſit *Moſes*, and to bring him and ſo near Relations together, when once he had heard the News of their Departure from *Egypt*, and paſſing the *Red-Sea*; to which he, as a Borderer upon the Wilderneſs, could not long be a Stranger. It's to be obſerved farther, that, had the Law been given before *Jethro*'s Arrival in the *Iſraelitiſh* Camp, *Moſes* could hardly have eſcaped ſaying ſomething of the moſt remarkable Paſſage of all others, *God*'s glorious Appearance upon Mount *Sinai*, and the *Decalogue* which he pronounced from thence: Whereas all that he relates at this Meeting, is, what *God* had done to *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*; in what Manner he had delivered his People; and *what Travel had come upon them by the Way*, which comprehend their Paſſage of the *Red-Sea*, their want of Water and Bread, their Engagement with the *Amalekites*, and, in ſhort, whatever we read in the foregoing Chapters: But of the moſt momentous Thing of all, he makes no mention; nor does *Jethro*, in the Congratulations, which he gives him, take any notice, which we can hardly ſuppoſe would, on either ſide, have been omitted, had they been prior to this Interview; nor can we conceive, for what Reaſon *Moſes* ſhould place the Account of this Interview in immediate Succeſſion, had it not followed the Fight with *Amaleck*.

Q. *After mutual Salutations had paſs'd between* Jethro *and* Moſes, *what afterwards was the Subject of their Converſation?*

A. *Moſes* informs his Father-in-law of all the wonderful Things *God* had wrought for his People *Iſrael*; at the hearing of which, *Jethro* teſtified his Joy by rendring ſolemn Praiſe to *God*, and acknowledging his Sovereignty; offering at the ſame Time a *Burnt-Offering*, and *Sacrifices* of *Thankſgiving* unto God: From whence it's evident that he worſhipped the true *God*; and therefore *Moſes* refuſed not to marry his Daughter. Nor is it to be wondered at that *Jethro* had right Notions of the true Religion, ſince he was of the Offspring of *Abraham* and *Keturah*, though not of the Seed of the Promiſe.

Q. *While* Jethro *ſtaid in the Camp, he took Notice of the vaſt weight of Buſineſs that lay upon* Moſes, *in hearing and determining all their Cauſes; he therefore adviſes him to refer ſmall Matters to proper Officers, and to reſerve the greater to himſelf; Now can you tell me, with any probable Certainty, what Cauſes he reſerved for his own Hearing?*

A. The Words of the Text are, *Every great Mat- they ſhall bring to thee, but every ſmall matter they ſhall judge.* From hence, ſays Biſhop *Patrick*, ſome have imagined, that there were ſeveral Sorts of Cauſes, that might not, at firſt, be brought before inferior Courts, and theſe they make to be four. 1. All ſacred Matters, or things relating to *God* and Religion. 2. All Matters of Equity, where the Rigour of the Law was to be mitigated. 3. All capital Caſes. And, laſtly, all ſuch Caſes, as the Rulers of Thouſands referred to *Moſes*. What the other Rulers referred to him was indeed properly under his Cogniſance, becauſe it ſuppoſed an Incapacity in them, either for the want of ſome Law, or a Non-agreement among themſelves, to determine it; but where nothing of this happened, they had a full Power to judge finally. Neither was it the People (when a Cauſe was thought intricate) that were to bring it primarily before *Moſes*; but, when any ſuch Difficulty aroſe, as they were not able to ſurmount, the *Judges* (as *Moſes* himſelf directs them, *Deut.* i. 17.) were the Perſons, that were to order the Appeals to him. *Bring it to me*, ſays he, *and I will hear it*; which ſhews, that the Cauſe had been before the Bar of inferior Courts before, only they were not ſkilful enough to dermine it. So that the Words in the Text do not intimate, that there were ſome Cauſes, which the other Judges might not try, if they were able; but only, where the *Cauſes were hard*, and they incompetent to decide them, theſe they were to refer to *Moſes*.

Q. *Did* Moſes *comply with* Jethro's *Advice?*

A. He did; and as ſoon as *Jethro* had ſeen it put in Execution, he took his Leave and returned to his own Country of *Midian*.

CHAP. XIX.

The Iſraelites *come into the Deſarts of* Sinai *in the third Month of their Departure from* Egypt. Moſes *called into the Mount, and ordered what to ſay to the People. The People promiſe Obedience, and prepare themſelves to appear before* God. *The dreadful Preſence of* God *on the Mount.* God *ſpeaks with* Moſes. *None muſt approach the Mount until they are hallowed.* Moſes *and* Aaron *only to appear in the Preſence of* God.

Q. IN *the firſt Verſe we are told, that in the third Month from the* Iſraelites *Departure from* Egypt, *they arrived in the Wilderneſs of* Sinai; *pray what was that Month called?*

A. This happened in the Beginning of the *Hebrew* Month *Sivan*; which anſwers to part of our *May* and part of *June*.

Q. *The* Iſraelites *being come into the Wilderneſs, and having pitch'd their Camp at ſome ſmall Diſtance from Mount* Sinai, *what happened there deſerving our Notice?*

A. They had not been long there, before *God* called *Moſes* to come up to him on the Mount, and there charged him to remind the *Iſraelites* of the many Wonders he had wrought in their Favour; and that, (notwithſtanding their frequent Murmurings, and Diſtruſt of his Providence) if, for the future, they would become obedient to his Laws, he would ſtill look upon them, as his peculiar People, a favourite Nation, and a *Royal Prieſthood*.

Q. *What did* Moſes *upon this?*

A. He deſcended from the Mount, and reported to the *Elders*, and they to the People, the gracious Meſſage which *God* had ſent them; which as ſoon as the People heard, they promiſed, in Return, all poſſible Obedience to the divine Commands. With this Anſwer of the People, *Moſes* aſcended the Mountain again, and received another Command from *God*, that all the People ſhould purify themſelves, and be in Readineſs againſt the *third Day*, for that, within three Days, he would come down upon the Mountain, and make a Covenant with them.

Q. *It's ſaid, that* God deſcended upon the Mountain; *but is he not* omnipreſent? *If ſo, with what propriety can he be ſaid to deſcend, which ſeems to imply his not being there before?*

A. We muſt obſerve, with the learned Mr. *Howel*, that the Scripture ſuiting itſelf to Man's common way of ſpeaking, and Thinking, aſſigns ſuch Things to *God*, as are only proper to the Effects. Thus it is ſaid, that *God deſcended on the Mountain*, becauſe he made his Preſence more viſible there by ſenſible and ſurprizing Effects: And whereas it is ſaid by the Protomartyr St. *Stephen*, *Acts* vii. 5, 3. *that the* Jews *received the Law by the Diſpoſition of Angels*, and by St. *Paul* to the *Galatians*, iii. 19. *that the Law was ordained by Angels in the Hand of a Mediator*, there is in theſe, and the like Paſſages, no Contradiction between the *New* and the *Old-Teſtament*, which aſſigns all this Diſpenſation to *God* himſelf. For, though it was *God*, who deſcended (in the Senſe we have explained it) upon the Mount, yet the Angels, thoſe Courtiers of Heaven, attended him, and made up his Train; and though he himſelf pronounced the Law, yet the Thunder, and Lightning, and Noiſe reſembling the ſounding of a Trumpet, which were preparatory to ſuch Pronuntiation, may not improperly be aſcribed to the Miniſtry of Angels: The Intent, however, of theſe Paſſages in the *New-Teſtament* is only to oppoſe the *Goſpel* to the *Law* in this Reſpect, namely, that, when *God* gave the *Law*, he was ſurrounded with an awful Hoſt of *Angels*, when our *Lord* delivered the *Goſpel*, he was cloathed in our Fleſh, and adapted himſelf to our Weakneſs.

Q. *Almighty God having graciouſly condeſcended to talk with* Moſes *on the Mount, what did he give him in Charge?*

A. He ſtrictly charged him to ſet Boundaries about the Foot of the Mountain, which none muſt paſs under the ſevereſt Penalties; and to command the People to purify and ſanctify themſelves, in order to be in ſome ſort of Fitneſs to meet the *Lord* at this ſolemn Appearance on the Mount.

Q. *The third Day being come, and all Things in Readineſs, I deſire you to give me a Deſcription of the Grand Solemnity it ſelf?*

A. The Signal for the People to approach the Mountain, was upon the firſt ſounding of the Trumpet; and therefore, as ſoon as it began, *Moſes* brought them out of the Camp, as near to the Mountain, as the Barrier would permit, and there they obſerved the whole Top of *Sinai* covered with Fire and Smoak, while the Foundations of it ſeem'd to tremble and ſhake under them. In the midſt of this dreadful Scene, the Trumpet was heard to ſound louder and louder, Claps of Thunder, and Flaſhes of Fire were more and more ingeminated; inſomuch that all the People quaked with Fear, at hearing ſo ſtrange and terrible a Noiſe, and the Prophet himſelf trembled at theſe amazing Tokens of the divine Preſence.

Q. *But might not* Moſes *deviſe this terrible Scene, in order to give the greater Sanction to the Laws he was about to promulgate? And might not the Thunderings and Lightenings be an Irruption of Fire, or a* Vulcano *on the Top of the Mountain, whereof* Moſes *knowing the Cauſe, took the Advantage, and palmed it upon the People for the tremendous Preſence of God, attended with his Hoſts of Angels?*

A. That there is no Ground to ſuſpect any Deceit in this wonderful Occurence, is manifeſt from *Moſes*'s dealing ſo openly with the People in this Matter, and ſuffering them to go up into the Mountain, after the Lord had departed from it. *When the Trumpet ſoundeth long, they ſhall come up to the Mount*; this is the Signal which God himſelf gives them, whereas, had there been any Fallacy in the *Phænomenon*, *Moſes* would have debarred them for ever. And therefore, as we need not doubt, but that ſeveral upon this Signal, went up; we cannot but think, the Cheat would ſoon have been diſcovered, had there been any Marks of a natural Irruption of Fire diſcernible upon the Top of the Mountain. As to *Vulcano's*, or burning Mountains, all agree in this, that, on their Tops, they have always an open Mouth, through which they belch out their Flames; and that, after the Fire is expended, it will appear in the Form of a monſtrous Gap, even unto the End of the World: And therefore, ſince all Travellers, both ancient and modern, who have taken a moſt accurate Survey of the Mount *Sinai*, could never diſcern the leaſt Appearance of any ſuch Gap, but on the contrary, a continued Surface, whereon there ſtands, at preſent, a little Chapel of *St. Catherine*: All this ſuppoſed Contrivance of *Moſes* to make a natural *Vulcano* paſs upon the People for the *majeſtick Preſence of God* upon the ſacred Mount, while he was receiving the Law from him, can be deemed no other, than a crude nonſenſical Fiction, wherein the Lovers of Infidelity diſcover their Ignorance, as well as their Malice, when they pretend to tax this Relation of *Moſes*, repreſenting God's Appearance in a Flame of Fire, in Thunder and Lightning, *&c.* with any Incongruity, or invent any groundleſs Stories to account for it; ſince nothing can be more agreeable both to the ancient Divinity, or common Notions of the *Heathen* World, than that the Apparition of their Gods, whenever they deſcended upon Earth, was uſually thus attended.

Q. *The Mountains of* Sinai *and* Horeb, *I find, are promiſcuouſly uſed by the ſacred Hiſtorian, as if they were but one and the ſame Mountain under two different Names; Pray explain this?*

A. It is true, they are promiſcuouſly uſed, yet it is certain they are two different Places, though contiguous to one another. *Sinai*, which the *Arabians*, at this Day, call *Tor*, or the *Mountain*, by Way of Eminence or otherwiſe; *Gibel Mouſa*, (the Mount of *Moſes*) ſtands in a kind of *Peninſula* formed by two Arms of the *Red-ſea*, one of which ſtretches out towards the North, and is called the *Gulph of Kolſum*; the other towards the Eaſt, and is called the *Gulph of Elan*, or the *Elanitiſh Sea*. *Sinai* is, at leaſt, one third Part higher than *Horeb*, and of a much more difficult Aſcent: Its Top terminates in an uneven and rugged Space, capable of containing about ſixty Perſons. Here is built the Chapel of *St. Catherine*, where 'tis thought that the Body of this Saint reſted for 330 Years, but was afterwards removed to the Church, which is at the Foot of the Mountain. Not far from this Chapel iſſues out a Fountain of good freſh Water, which is looked upon as miraculous, becauſe it's not conceivable, how Water can riſe from the Brow of ſo high a Mountain. *Horeb* is to the Weſt of *Sinai*, ſo that at Sun-riſing the Shadow of *Sinai*, entirely covers *Horeb*. At the Foot of this Mount there is a Fountain, which ſupplies Water to the Monaſtery of *St. Catharine*, and about five or ſix Paces from it, they ſhew a Stone, about four or five Foot high, and three broad, which, they ſay, is the very ſame from whence *Moſes* cauſed the Waters to guſh out.

Chap. XX.

The Ten Commandments *given on Mount* Sinai. *The People are terrified with the Thunders and Lightnings; are comforted by* Moſes. *Worſhip of Idols again forbidden. Directions for building an Altar.*

Q. WHAT *firſt deſerves our Attention in this Chapter?*

A. All Things being now properly regulated, the Almighty was graciouſly pleaſed to acquaint his People, with the Articles of that Covenant which was now to ſubſiſt between them. This he did, not by the Mouth of his Prophet, but by a direct Communication of his Will to them; that ſo they might have no Manner of Cauſe for Doubt or Scruple, whether the Laws given them proceeded immediately from God himſelf, or not; which might otherwiſe have been queſtioned among a People ſo fickle and faithleſs as they were: And this was a Circumſtance attending the Delivery of the *Decalogue*, or Ten Commandments, which was never pretended in Favour of any other Inſtitution, civil or religious.

Q. *In what Manner was this done?*

A. *Moſes* and *Aaron* being gone up to the Mount, at ſome Diſtance from the Children of *Iſrael*, the Lord cauſed the Thunders and Lightnings to ceaſe, or at leaſt to appear leſs terrible; and then with a very diſtinct and audible Voice reaching every one of the Spectators, the Law was proclaimed from the Top of *Mount Sinai*, with this ſhort Preface, *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the Land of* Egypt, *out of the Houſe of Bondage.*

Q. *What do theſe Words afford worthy of Obſervation?*

A. Here we may obſerve the Stile of him who enacted thoſe Laws; the Right he had to enact them; and the Reaſon why the *Hebrew* Nation were bound to obey them. As to the firſt, God informs them, that he is *Jehovah*, the ſame whom *Moſei* had preached to them from the Time of his Return into *Egypt* out of *Midian*; who had formerly ſpoken to their Fathers *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, to whoſe Poſterity he had promiſed the Land of *Canaan*. As to the ſecond, he tells them, it is he who delivered them out of *Egypt*, and had hitherto guided and conducted them, ſtrengthening them againſt all their Enemies, and relieving them in all their Diſtreſſes; wherefore as their King and Ruler, he gives them theſe Rules and Statutes, in Purſuance of that Submiſſion they had before made. With Reſpect to the third, he reminds them, that he had brought them out of Slavery, and from Subjection to hard and unjuſt Laws; ſo that nothing could be more juſt or equitable, than for them to receive from him, Conſtitutions equal and right.

Q. *What were theſe Conſtitutions which were given on Mount* Sinai?

A. They are contained in the Ten Commandments, which are divided into two Part or Tables; the firſt Parts contains the four firſt Commandments, which aſſert and inculcate the Sovereignty of the Deity, and his incluſive Title to our Service; that is, *Jehovah* the Creator and Preſerver of all Things, in Contradiction to all other pretended Gods, whoſe Service is prohibited and guarded againſt in the moſt expreſs Manner. The other ſix 'Commands are generally called the *Moral Law*, and ſeem to be chiefly calculated for the good Government of Society.

Q. *What do you mean by calling them the* Moral Law?

A. They contain an exact and conciſe Syſtem of *Natural Religion*, and *Moral Precepts*; ſuch as were profeſſed and and practiſed by the moſt wiſe and virtuous Heathens, to whom a Revelation of the divine Will was not known; and which will be eternally binding on the Conſciences of the Profeſſors of the Goſpel, as well as thoſe who were ſubject to the *Moſaic* Laws.

Q. *But have there no Exceptions been made to any of the Ten Commandments, particularly to the* ſecond, *where there is an Expreſſion of* God's viſiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, *which ſeems to derogate from his Mercy and Juſtice?*

A. It would be endleſs to anſwer all the trifling Objections raiſed by Infidels againſt that which they are reſolved not to believe a Tittle of; but as the Objection againſt this Clauſe in the Second Commandment ſeems to carry ſome Weight with it, I ſhall give it a particular Anſwer. It is granted, that if we take theſe Words, as they ſtand in our Tranſlation, in their natural Conſtruction, they ſeem to favour the Objection; but if they were tranſlated, as they ought to be, the Objection would entirely vaniſh. For, if the Prepoſition *Lamed* and *Hal*, which we render *upon*, may, according to the Senſe of ſome Criticks, be rendered *by*, or *in favour of*, then may the Words now under Conſideration, be properly tranſlated, *God's puniſhing the Wickedneſs of the Father, by, or in Favour of the Children*. In the former of theſe Senſes, *David*'s Murder and Adultery, was juſtly puniſhed *by* his Favourite, but wicked Son *Abſalom*; and, in the latter, the Meaning will be, that God frequently inflicts remarkable Judgments upon a wicked Father, in order to deter his Children even to the *third and fourth Generation* from the like Provocations.

Q. *The* Decalogue, *or* Ten Commandments *being delivered to the People in this awful and tremenduous Manner, what Impreſſion did it make on their Minds?*

A. They were ſo aſtoniſhed at what they ſaw and heard, that they removed farther off; and, as ſoon as the divine Voice had ceaſed ſpeaking, came to *Moſes*, and, in the Height of their Fear and Surprize, beſought him, that, for the future, he would ſpeak to them, in God's Stead (and whatever he enjoined them they would obey) becauſe they were conſcious, that ſhould they hear this dreadful Voice again, they ſhould certainly die with Horror and Aſtoniſhment.

Q. *Was this Motion of the People agreeable to* Moſes?

A. *Moſes* was not diſpleaſed with it, becauſe it beſpake their Reverence and Reſpect; and therefore he aſſured them, that all this wonderful Scene was not exhibited to them, to create any ſlaviſh Fear, but a filial Confidence and Submiſſion to ſuch Laws, as the divine Wiſdom ſhould hereafter think fit to enjoin them: And, with theſe Words, he went up to the Mount again, where (in Addition to the *Decalogue*) he received from God ſeveral other Laws, both *ceremonial* and *political*; which ſeem to have been calculated with a wiſe Deſign to preſerve the People in their Obedience to God, to prevent their Intermixture with other Nations, and to advance the Welfare of their *Commonwealth*, by ſecuring to the *Members* of it a quiet Poſſeſſion of their *Lives* and *Properties*.

Q. *Among other Injunctions given at this Time, I find one relating to the Form or Model of the Altar which God would have erected for his Worſhip; I would know why it was to be built of Earth?*

A. The Deſign of it, no doubt, was to obliterate thoſe groſs and carnal Conceptions of the Deity, and of the Worſhip which was to be paid to him, which, 'tis likely, the *Iſraelites* had contracted, from a Diſuſe of their religious Rites, and their Acquaintance with the People of *Egypt*. To the ſame Purpoſe they are cautioned againſt introducing Images of Gold and Silver, which, by their ſubſequent Error, in Relation to the *Golden Calf*, we find they were exceedingly prone to; and it ſeems alſo very rational to believe, that this Command was given them, that they might not be without an external Form of Worſhip, until the Tabernacle was erected; which left them void of Excuſe in their Crime of framing the Golden Image, againſt which they received ſuch expreſs Prohibitions from God himſelf, as well as from his Prophet. The whole Tenor of this Inſtruction plainly proves, that Sincerity, and not Magnificence, the Heart, and not the Hands, were required by *Jehovah*, in the publick Acts of Devotion paid to him.

Q. *In the Cloſe of the Chapter is a Direction, that the Aſcent to the Altar ſhould be without Steps, in order, as is hinted, that the Prieſts might not diſcover their Nakedneſs; What may this intimate?*

A. It intimates that Decency, which God expected in their publick Service, and which was directly oppoſite to the Behaviour of idolatrous Nations, in celebrating their religious Rites and which, at the ſame Time, that it put a Difference between the *Iſraelitiſh* Worſhip, and that of the People round them, might ſerve to rectify their Notions, as to the divine Nature.

CHAP XXI.

Various Laws, relating to Bondmen or Slaves; Servants; Bondwomen; Murderers; Men-ſtealers; Diſobedient Children; Strikers; or ſuch as hurt a Woman with Child; a Maſter of a Family who beat out his Servant's Eye or Tooth; a goring Ox; ſuch as hurt their Neighbour's Ox.

Q. *AS theſe Laws were calculated entirely for the* Jewiſh *Conſtitution, I ſhall only deſire Satisfaction with Reſpect to ſuch of them as have been objected to, as being abſurd, or ridiculous, contrary to common Juſtice, or were only* Egyptian *Rites revived. The ſetting up of* Aſylums *for every Rogue to flee to, ſome have reckoned unjuſt; What ſay you?*

A. I am of a very different Opinion; for what more juſt, as well as merciful Conſtitution could be deviſed, than to ordain *Cities of Refuge*, for the *innocent Manſlayer* to flie to, thereby to avoid the Rage and ungovernable Fury of the dead Man's Relations, (who, according to the Cuſtom of thoſe Times, were wont immediately to revenge their Kindred's Death) and thereby to gain Time to prepare a Plea in his own Vindication; which, if it were found inſufficient, and the Man adjudged guilty of *wilful Murder*, according to the Tenor of the ſame Law, could not protect him from being dragged even *from the Horns of the Altar*.

Q. *An Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, ſeems a very rigid and ſevere Decree.*

A. It may ſo, to us who live under a milder Diſpenſation; but it was no more than what was thought reaſonable in other Nations; and obtained a Place among the celebrated *Roman* Laws of the *Twelve Tables*. It was, in ſome Meaſure, neceſſary to reſtrain quarrelſome and unruly Tempers from Violence; and, in Caſe that Death did not enſue, the Law was always mitigated, and the ſpecifick Puniſhment commuted for a pecuniary Mulct.

CHAP. XXII.

Laws concerning Theft; Damage done by Beaſts in another Man's Ground; of Miſchief by Fire; Spoil done to Goods committed to one's Truſt, or borrowed; Sorcery or Witchcraft; Beſtiality, or Uncleanneſs with Beaſts; Idolatry; Strangers, Widows, and Orphans; Uſury; Pawning Clothes; honouring Magiſtrates; Firſt-fruits; eating Fleſh torn by Beaſts.

Q. THE *Puniſhment for ſtealing an Ox, I obſerve, is more ſevere than that for ſtealing a Sheep; What is the Reaſon of this Difference?*

A. Becauſe the Loſs of an Ox is a greater Damage to the Owner than the Loſs of a Sheep; for in loſing an Ox, a Man loſes his Service, together with his Carcaſe; but in a Sheep he loſes only the Body.

Q. *Why was not the killing of a Thief in the Night puniſhable with Death, as it was if committed in the Day-time?*

A. Becauſe the Darkneſs, which the Thief had choſen to do evil Deeds in, rendered the Uſe of the Judgment impracticable, and hindered a Man from containing himſelf within the Moderation of a barely neceſſary Defence; and becauſe the publick Safety requires this Liberty, as againſt ſuch whom the Law has already condemned, by declaring them Enemies to civil Society. And the Law of Nature and Reaſon ſuffers one to oppoſe Violence with Violence, when the Aſſiſtance of publick Authority cannot be procured in Time, as it may well be ſuppoſed it cannot in the Night. And finally, becauſe as the worſt Extremities may be feared from a Thief, ſo one may oppoſe him without Reſtraint or Reſpect.

Q. *In the 29th Verſe it is ſaid,* Thou ſhalt not delay to offer the firſt of thy ripe Fruits, and of thy Liquors; *What are we to underſtand by* Ripe Fruits, and Liquors?

A. The *Hebrew* Word, tranſlated *Ripe Fruits*, ſignifies *Fulneſs*; and it appears by *Numb.* xviii. 27. *Deut.* xxii. 9. that it here means the Vintage with which are filled the Veſſels, and the Liquor whereof runs plentifully out of the Wine-Preſſes, or Fats. Now this is here particularly mentioned becauſe the Offerings of the Firſt-Fruits of Corn had their aſſigned Day at *Pentecoſt*, *Exod.* xxiii. 16. and xxxiv. 22. *Numb.* xxviii. 26. but not thoſe of Liquors, which, therefore, God commands, ſhould not maliciouſly, or negligently be delayed.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of falſe Reports and falſe Witneſs. Of helping an Enemy's Beaſt in Diſtreſs. Of doing Juſtice to the poor. Bribery forbidden. The Stranger not to be oppreſſed. Of giving Reſt to the Land. Of the Sabbath. Other Gods not to be named. Three principal Feaſts to be kept in the Year. What Sacrifices are, and are not to be offered. An Angel promiſed to be their Guide. Worſhip of ſtrange Gods forbidden. Bleſſings promiſed. Hornets are to drive out the Enemies of Iſrael. *Forbidden to covenant with the Heathen, or their Gods, or to let them dwell among them.*

Q. I*N this Chapter the Laws are continued, concerning which I have nothing to object; and therefore my Queſtions here will turn upon other Points: My firſt is, that you explain to me the Uſe and Deſign of the three ſolemn Feaſts here enjoined?*

A. The firſt of theſe Feaſts, is that of unleavened Bread, which is the ſame with that of the *Paſſover,* on which the *Paſchal* Lamb was eaten; the other ſeven Days were called the Days of *unleavened Bread.* At the Feaſt of Harveſt they were enjoin'd to offer two Loaves, for the Firſt-Fruits of Harveſt, *Lev.* xxiii. 17. This Feaſt was afterwards called *Pentecoſt,* it falling fifty Days after the *Paſſover.* During the Time of this Feaſt, God gave the *Ten Commandments;* and afterwards he ſent the *Holy Ghoſt,* at the ſame Time of the Year upon the Apoſtles, *Acts* ii. The Feaſt of the Firſt-Fruits came in the ſeventh Month of the Year, beginning the fifteenth, and laſting ſeven Days. This Feaſt was likewiſe called the Feaſt of *Tabernacles,* or *Leaf-Huts, Lev.* xxxiii. 34. *Deut.* xvi. 13. On theſe three ſolemn Feſtivals, every Male was to appear before the Lord, unleſs hindered by ſome Impediment, Infirmity, or Inability. Theſe Feaſts were afterwards held at the Temple of *Jeruſalem.*

Q. *Whom are we to underſtand by the Angel here promiſed to conduct the Children of* Iſrael *to their Inheritance?*

A. The Senſe of the Text, generally agreed upon, is, That the Almighty did actually appoint an Angel, or celeſtial Miniſter to be their Conductor; and that the Angel is the ſame, who in the Book of *Joſhua* is ſtiled, *The Captain of the Lord's Hoſt.*

Q. *Give ſome Account of the Hornets which were to drive out the Enemies of* Iſrael *from their Inheritance.*

A. Some imagine they were a large and fierce Kind of Waſps, mentioned by *Pliny* in his natural Hiſtory; who ſays, they ſeldom ſting without infuſing ſuch a Venom as creates a Fever. Others are of Opinion, that theſe were too weak Auxiliaries, to aſſiſt the Children of *Iſrael* in expelling the *Canaanites,* and therefore have Recourſe to Allegories and uncouth Derivations of the *Hebrew* Word; but the learned *Bochart* has fully refuted this Notion; and has, by various Quotations from Authors of unqueſtionable Credit, ſhewn, that *Waſps* have really expelled People from their Habitations; and *Joſh.* xxiv. 12. we are told, that *Jehovah* did actually ſend this Aid to his choſen People, and that they forced the *Canaanites* to fly before them.

Q. *Deſcribe the Bounds, which are ſaid, ſhould be the Limits of their Poſſeſſions in* Canaan.

A. They were to extend from the *Red-Sea,* to the Sea of the *Philiſtines,* that is, the *Mediterranean;* and from the Deſart of *Arabia,* unto the River *Euphrates.* Now, though all this Tract of Country was never actually poſſeſſed, that is divided among the Deſcendants of *Jacob;* yet, the Inhabitants were ſubdued and made Tributaries to them. Thus, though *Moſes* lived not to aſſign the Children of *Iſrael* their Poſſeſſions in the promiſed Land, yet he informed them exactly, as to the general Boundaries of *Canaan,* that they might not engage in unneceſſary Wars, or injure Nations, againſt whom *God* had not ſent them.

CHAP. XXIV.

Moſes, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, *and the Elders ordered to go up into the Mount. The People promiſe Obedience.* Moſes *writes the Law; and builds an Altar and twelve Pillars. They ſee the Glory of the* Lord. Moſes *ordered to come up into the Mountain;* God *Promiſes to give him Tables of Stone and the Law;* Aaron *and* Hur *in the mean Time to judge the People.* God *appears like a conſuming Fire.* Moſes *forty Days in the Mount.*

Q. W*HAT firſt deſerves our Regard in this Chapter?*

A. The *Lord* commands *Moſes, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu,* and *Seventy Elders* of *Iſrael,* to go up into the holy Mountain, but to worſhip at a Diſtance, *Moſes* alone being permitted to go near the *Lord.* During his ſtay in the Mount, he received thoſe Laws which begin at the 20th Chapter, and are continued hitherto, and which now, on his Return from the Mount, he delivers to the People, and confirms the Covenant betwixt *God* and them.

Q. *In what Manner was this great Affair tranſacted?*

A. Moſes, early the next Morning, roſe up and erected an Altar, agreeable to the Plan given him by the Almighty, and built twelve Pillars, according to the Number of the Tribes of *Iſrael,* at the Foot of Mount *Sinai.* In the next Place, he ordered certain young Men, who were ſet apart for the Prieſthood, to offer thereon Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings of Bullocks unto *Jehovah.* This being performed, the Prophet took Half of the Blood of the Sacrifices, and ſprinkled it upon the Altar; and the remaining Half he reſerved in Baſons. After this he took up the Book of the Covenant, and read the Contents thereof in the Audience of the whole People, who, when he had done, cried out, *All that the* Lord *hath ſaid, will we do, and be obedient.* Then the *Prophet* took up the Baſons which held the Blood, and ſprinkled it on the People, pronouncing at the ſame Time theſe Words, *Behold the Blood of the Covenant which the* Lord *hath made with you concerning all theſe Words.* And to make this Engagement reciprocal, Blood was ſprinkled upon the Altar, as well as upon the People.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Ceremony of ſprinkling Blood on this ſolemn Occaſion?*

A. It was a very early and extenſive Cuſtom, as appears from the Hiſtory of all Nations, to ſacrifice upon the Concluſion and Ratification of a Covenant; and *the ſprinkling of the Blood* ſignified, that whoever of the contracting Parties was guilty of breaking that Covenant, ſhould have his Blood ſpilt in the ſame Manner.

Q. *How are we to underſtand that Paſſage,* And they ſaw the *God* of *Iſrael;* and there was under his Feet, as it were a paved Work of a ſapphire Stone, and as it were the Body of Heaven in its Clearneſs?

A. The beſt *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Commentators are agreed, That they beheld that Brightneſs which accompanied the Preſence of *God; For himſelf hath no Man ſeen.*

Q. *Have you any Thing to obſerve concerning the* Tables of Stone, *on which* Moſes *wrote the Law?*

A. To perpetuate the Memory of any Thing, the Cuſtom of writing on Stone or Brick was certainly very antient, and (as *Joſephus,* in the Caſe of *Seth's* Pillars, tells us) elder than the Time of the Flood. The Words of the *Decalogue,* ſpoken by *God* himſelf, were ſuch, as deſerved to be had in everlaſting Remembrance; and therefore *God* was willing to have them engraved on durable Matter: But then the Queſtion is, Whether it was *God* himſelf, with *his own Finger,* as we ſay, or ſome other Perſon from *God's* Mouth, who wrote them. In *Exodus* xxxiv. 27, 28. we are told, that *the Lord ſaid unto* Moſes, *write*

write thou theſe Words; for, after the Tenor of theſe Words, have I made a Covenant with thee, and with Iſrael; *and that, accordingly, he wrote upon the Tables, the Words of the Covenant,* even *the Ten Commandments.* Now ſince it is a common Form of Speech, that what a Superior commands to be done, that he does himſelf, the Meaning can be no more, than that the Words of the *Decalogue* were written by the Hand of *Moſes* by Divine Direction.

Q. *What elſe is there in this Chapter that deſerves our Notice?*

A. The Sacrifice and other Solemnities between God and *Iſrael*, being over, *Moſes* took *Nadab*, *Abihu*, and ſeventy of the Elders of *Iſrael* ſome Part of the Way towards the Mountain, where (without incurring any Hurt) they were vouchſafed a Proſpect of the divine Preſence, and where having committed the Care of the People to them, he took *Joſhua* along with him, and went up higher; where ordering him to wait for him, he alone went to the Summit of the Mountain, and entering into the Cloud that covered it, ſtaid their forty Days, and forty Nights.

CHAP. XXV.

Moſes *is commanded to collect from the People a free-will Offering for the ſetting up a Sanctuary. The Form and Materials of the Ark. The Mercy-ſeat with the Cherubims. The Table for the Shew-bread; the Candleſtick and other Furniture thereof.*

Q. MOSES *having by the divine Command given out the Moral and judicial Law, as we have it in the foregoing Chapters, what does he next proceed upon?*

A. He next, by God's Direction, inſtituted the Ceremonial Law. For the regular and orderly Obſervance of which, he is commanded to build a *Tabernacle*; which was a Sort of moveable Temple, and deſigned as a peculiar Place of Worſhip, during their Peregrinations in the Wilderneſs, till they ſhould be ſettled in their promiſed Poſſeſſions; where a more ſpacious Building ſhould afterwards be erected for publick Service.

Q. *What Methods did* Moſes *take to defray the Expence of building the Tabernacle?*

A. He propoſed to the People, that they ſhould make a voluntary Contribution of ſuch Things as were requiſite for carrying on the Work, and that their Offerings ſhould conſiſt of Gold, Silver, and Braſs; of blue, purple, and fine ſcarlet Linnen; of Oil, Spices, and ſweet Incenſe; of Onyx Stones, and Stones to be put in the Ephod, and Breaſtplate.

Q. *The Form and Dimenſions of the Ark are here particularly deſcribed, and therefore I ſhall trouble you with no Queſtions on that Head; but pray what was this* Shittim-wood, *of which it was to be built?*

A. It was a Kind of Wood very little ſubject to corrupt or decay; the Tree of it has Leaves like a White-thorn, but grows as high and thick as a Cedar.

Q. *It's generally agreed, that the ſeveral Materials, Utenſils, and other Things, of which this* Tabernacle *or* Sanctuary *conſiſted, were typical or repreſentative of ſomething or other under the Goſpel Diſpenſation; pray what was typified by the Mercy-ſeat?*

A. The *Mercy-Seat* covered the Ark, which repreſented Chriſt, who, with his Righteouſneſs, covereth all our Sins, and contains within himſelf all the Church's Righteouſneſs, as the Tables of the Law were incloſed under the Cover; and interpoſeth himſelf as Mediator, between the Law which accuſeth us, and God our Judge; as the Cover was between the ſaid Tables, and the Majeſty of God, which ſhewed itſelf preſent over the Cherubims of this Cover, as ſitting upon his Throne.

Q. *Can you deſcribe the particular Figure of theſe* Cherubims *which were placed on the Mercy-ſeat?*

A. This is certainly very difficult at this Diſtance. *Grotius* indeed, and ſome others, have ingeniouſly conjectured from the Creatures ſeen by *Ezekiel* in his Viſion, *Ch.* i. 5. and x. 15. which he calls *Cherubim*, that they had the Face of a Man, the Wings of an Eagle, the Mane of a Lyon, and the Feet of an Ox; and by this they will have the Diſpenſations of divine Providence, by the Miniſtry of Angels, ſymbolically repreſented, the *Lyon* exhibiting the Severity of his Juſtice; the *Eagle*, the Celerity of his Bounty; the *Man* his Goodneſs and Mercy; and the *Ox*, the Slowneſs of his Puniſhment, which comes (as the *Greek* Proverb ſays) with an Ox's Foot.

Q. *What might induce* Moſes *to place Figures of imaginary Beings on the* Mercy-ſeat, *rather than the Forms of ſome real Exiſtence in this viſible World?*

A. *Moſes*'s Deſign in this, ſeems to have been to ſet them in Oppoſition to the *Egyptian* Idolatry. For, whereas their Temples were generally filled with the Images of Monkeys, Calves, Serpents, &c. the Repreſentations of real Animals, which, according to the natural Deiſm of thoſe Times, they fancied to be Parts and Exhibitions of the Deity, *Moſes* here orders Figures to be made, which had little or no Reſemblance of any Thing in the World, and were expreſſive of the angelical Nature only, which every one knew was ſubordinate to God's.

Q. *Is there any Ground for the Objection, That a great Deal of the Ceremonial Law was borrowed from the* Egyptians?

A. If the *Moſaic* Laws and Ceremonies were given to the *Jews*, as Barriers againſt Idolatry, and formally repugnant to the Cuſtoms of the *Heathens*, as it is evident they were, from *Lev.* xviii. 3, 4. we may appeal to any ſober and conſiderate Man, whether it be conſiſtent with good Senſe, or congruous to Truth and Reaſon, that God ſhould make Laws exactly contrary to the *Egyptians*, and other *Pagan* Nations, ſhewing thereby, that he hated the very Semblance of their Rites; and yet, at the ſame Time, take the Model of his Inſtitutions, from the Cuſtoms and Practice of theſe Pagans: Nay, whether it gives us not ſuch an Idea of God, as Reverence to his tremendous Majeſty will not ſuffer me to name, to repreſent him raking up all the vain, ludicrous, ſuperſtitious, impious, impure, idolatrous, magical, diabolical Cuſtoms, which had been firſt invented, and afterwards practiſed by the moſt barbarous Nations, and out of thoſe patching up a great Part of the Religion which he appointed his own People.

Q. *Some pretend to trace out the* Jewiſh *High-prieſt in the* Egyptian *Chief-Juſtice, from a Reſemblance in the Badge of their reſpective Offices.*

A. In Matters of *Tradition*, which have equally deſcended among all Nations, perhaps from *Noah*, a Man of ſome Learning and Fancy may undoubtedly form a Similitude between the religious Rites and Uſages of one People with another; but it really would rack one's Invention to find out the great Agreement between the *Jewiſh* High-prieſt, and the *Egyptian* Chief-Juſtice, ſince the *Urim* and *Thummim* of the one, was a Piece of Cloth, about a Span ſquare, beſet with Jewels; but the *Alethea* (as they call it) of the other, was a Golden Medal, repreſenting the Figure of a Bird; ſince the Robe of the one was made of Scarlet, Blue, and Purple Woollen Cloth, only embroidered with Wreaths of fine Linnen; but the Garment of the other was made of Linnen only, becauſe it was unlawful, as *Herodotus* tells us, for the *Egyptian* Magiſtrates to wear any Thing elſe. It is likewiſe as improbable, that *Moſes* ſhould make the *Egyptian Ciſta* (wherein the Prieſts were wont to lock up their religious Trinkets from the Eyes of the vulgar) a Model for framing the Ark of the Covenant by.

Q. *Of what Weight was a Talent?*

A. A Talent was 3000 Shekels, and a Shekel half an Ounce, of twelve Ounces to the Pound; according to which a Talent weighed 125 Pound.

The myſtical and ſymbolical Meaning of many Things in this Chapter, is explained, and the Reference of them to Things ſpiritual, aptly applied, in the 11th Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews.*

CHAP. XXVI.

Moſes *commanded to make ten Curtains for the Tabernacle, and a Cover of eleven Curtains of Goats Hair, of Rams Skins, and Badgers Skins. The Tabernacle to be made of Shittim-wood. The Veil for the Ark. The Hanging for the Door.*

Q. MOSES *proceeds in this Chapter with his Account of the Tabernacle, its ſeveral Parts, Utenſils, &c. which as it was all deſigned wholly for the* Jewiſh *Service, can be of no uſe to us except in their figurative Meaning; tell me therefore what was typified by the Sanctuary or Temple?*

A. The Temple was partly a Figure of our Saviour Chriſt, and partly of his Church; for when the Son of God ſuffered the Temple of his Body to be deſtroyed, and was riſen again from the Dead, then he raiſed up to us the Chriſtian Church, which is the true ſpiritual Houſe and Temple wherein God dwels.

Q. *What was figured by the Gold and precious Stones, the Temple, the Shittim-wood,* &c.

A. The gold and precious Stones ſignified the Deity of Chriſt. The Shittim-wood and Cedar, was not Subject to Putrifaction, nor to be eaten by Worms; thus the human Nature of Chriſt was not ſubject to Corruption or Putrifaction.

Q. *What was typified by the two Cherubims placed on the Mercy-Seat?*

A. They repreſented the *Old* and *New-Teſtament*; for, as their Wings touch'd one another, ſo the *Old* and *New-Teſtament* are joined together; where the firſt ended, the Second began; and both had Relation to Chriſt, to whom the Miniſtry of God was committed.

Q. *What was ſhadowed forth by the Veil of the Temple?*

A. This ſignified the Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt, hanging upon the Altar of the Croſs, as the true Veil between God and us, ſhadowing with his Wounds and precious Blood the Multitude of our Offences, that ſo we might be made acceptable to the Father.

Q. *What was held out to us under the Figure of the* Ark *of the* Covenant?

A. Two Things; our Saviour Chriſt, and the Hearts of the Faithful. The Tables of the Law move us to mutual Love and Obedience. The Myſtery of the Golden Alter compaſſed about with a Crown of Gold, repreſents the Unity of the Humanity and Deity of Chriſt.

Q. *What was the Myſtery of the Golden Candleſtick?*

A. It ſignified Chriſt and the Miniſters of the Church. Chriſt is the Foundation, and the Teachers are the Branches by whom Chriſt enlightens his Church with the Sound and incorruptible Doctrine of the Goſpel. As all the Branches were united into the Body of the Candleſtick, ſo every Miniſter and faithful Servant of God ought to be united into the Body of Chriſt without Diſſenſion or Separation.

Q. *What was ſignified by the Lights and Lamps?*

A. They admoniſh all godly Miniſters to a diligent Care, that the Light of God's divine Word ſhould not be diminiſhed or aboliſhed, but be purged and preſerved.

Q. *What was prefigured by the* Golden Table *whereon was placed the* Shew-bread?

A. This intimated the Miniſtry of the Goſpel; and the Bread exhibited to us, is Chriſt, that Bread which deſcended from Heaven, and is myſtically offered to us in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Q. *What was the Myſtery contained in the* Jewiſh *Oblations and Sacrifices?*

A. They were Types and Figures of our Saviour; that as they were ſlain for the Performance of the Ceremonial Law, ſo Chriſt, for the Salvation of Man, was ſlain, and made a Free-will Offering; by whoſe moſt precious Blood and Mediation the Sins of Man are pardoned, and he made capable of eternal Life.

Q. *What general Reflection reſults upon the whole?*

A. All this demonſtrates to us, that the Temples of God, thoſe publick Places appointed for divine Worſhip, ſhould be decently kept with Dignity and Reſpect.

CHAP. XXVII.

The Appointment of the Brazen Altar, with the Veſſels and Furniture thereof. The Court of the Tabernacle incloſed with Hangings and Pillars. The Meaſure of the Court. The Oil for the Candleſtick, which the Prieſts were to take Care of.

Q. GIVE *a ſhort Account of the Contents of this Chapter.*

A. The Altar of Burnt-Offering with its Veſſels is here deſcribed; it was covered all over with Braſs both within and without; ſo that there was no Wood to be ſeen about it, that it might remain free and ſafe from the Fire upon it. The Horns of the Altar ſerved not only for Ornament, but likewiſe to keep Things lain on it from falling down. A Grate of Network of Braſs, with many ſmall Holes in it, was contrived for the Blood, and the Aſhes and ſmall Coals, or the like, to paſs through; and this was the Hearth of the Altar, whereon the Fire was laid to burn. An everlaſting Lamp was ordered to burn with pure Oil, that is, ſuch as comes from the Olive, when it is firſt preſs'd or beaten. And this the Lord commanded ſhould always remain as a Teſtimony before him.

Q. *Had this ever-burning Light any myſtical Signification?*

A. It was an Emblem of the Word of God, the Light whereof muſt always laſt in the Church during the Night of this Life.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Aaron *and his Sons ſet apart for the Prieſt's Office; the Ephod; the curious Girdle; the two Stones on which* *the Names of the Tribes of* Iſrael *were to be engraven; the Breaſt-plate with twelve precious Stones.* Urim *and* Thummim. *Robe of the Ephod. Plate of the Mitre. The embroidered Coat. The Garmens of* Aaron's *Sons.*

Q. WHAT *is firſt obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. The divine Direction to *Moſes*, to call *Aaron* and his Sons to him, and to confer on them the Office, Title, and Enſigns of the Prieſthood. The beſt Artiſts were order'd to be employed in making venerable and majeſtick Garments for *Aaron*, to diſtinguiſh him from the reſt of the People, as he was to be wholly dedicated to the Service of God.

Q. *Deſcribe the* Ephod.

A. It was a Kind of Garment girded or tied to the Body; a Sort of a Surtout of about a Cubit long, made of two ſquare Pieces, the one before, the other behind, laced on the Shoulders, and on the Sides, without any Seam, and girded about the Waiſt. There were two Sorts of them, one of ſeveral Colours and Stuffs, which was peculiar to the High-prieſt; the other, of pure fine Linnen, which was common for all Prieſts, or for other Perſons in any ſacred Solemnities; but to the High-prieſt's Ephod there was to be a curious Girdle, brought twice round his Middle, and then falling down to his Feet.

Q. *What myſtical Meaning might be in the divine Direction of inſcribing the Names of the twelve Tribes on two Onyx Stones to be placed on the Shoulders of the Ephod which the High-prieſt wore when he went into the Sanctuary?*

A. This was an emblematical Repreſentation of Chriſt, who, after he had offered himſelf, went up into Heaven, to carry and preſent his Church before the Face of God; which by God's Appointment is wholly comprehended in the two Jewels of his Prieſthood, which are his perfect Righteouſneſs and abſolute Satiſfaction.

Q. *What was the* Urim *and* Thummim *that was put on the Breaſt-plate?*

A. Theſe two *Hebrew* Words ſignify *Lights and Perfections.* It's not certainly known what it was; but it is manifeſt it was not made by any of the Workmen, but put in by *Moſes* himſelf: Whatever it was, it repreſented the two chief Virtues of every Servant of God, and eſpecially Chriſt's moſt perfect Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, who, by virtue of them, preſents himſelf to God the Father, in Behalf of his whole Church. 1 *Cor.* i. 30.

Q. *What was the* Mitre?

A. It was made of fine Flax, and covered the Head; and on the Forehead was a Plate of Gold, whereon were engraved theſe Words, *HOLINESS TO THE LORD*, which was tied behind the Head, with two Ribbons, faſtened to its two Ends.

Q. *What was the Number and Uſe of the Gold Bells that were fixed to the Bottom of the High Prieſt's Garment?*

A. What the Number was, the Scripture is ſilent, and Authors are not entirely agreed; but the ſacred Hiſtorian has let us into the Uſe and Intent of them in theſe Words, *And it ſhall be upon* Aaron *to miniſter: And his Sound ſhall be heard when he goeth into the* Holy Place *before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.* It was, therefore, in all Probability, with a Deſign of giving Notice, that he was going into the Sanctuary; for, as in the King of *Perſia's* Court, no one was ſuffered to enter the Apartments, without giving Notice thereof by the Sound of ſomething; ſo the High-prieſt, out of Reſpect to the divine Preſence, reſiding in the *Holy of Holies*, did by the Sound of little Bells, faſtened to the Bottom of his Robe, deſire, as it were, Permiſſion to enter; *that the Sound of the Bells might be heard, and he not puniſhed with Death* for an unmannerly Intruſion?

Q. *How was the Conſecration of* Aaron *and his Sons performed?*

A. This was done by anointing them with Holy Oil, conſecrated for that Purpoſe; and by giving them Things to offer unto the Lord, thereby admitting them to the Execution of their Office.

CHAP. XXIX.

Directions for conſecrating Aaron *and the Prieſts. The Bullock for the Sin-offering and the two Rams.* Aaron *and his Sons to eat of the Ram wherewith they were conſecrated. The Altar to be conſecrated for ſeven Days. Two Lambs were to be daily offered for Burnt-offerings. God promiſes to hallow the Tabernacles, and* Aaron *with his Sons, and likewiſe to dwell in the Midſt of* Iſrael.

Q. I*N the Ceremony of conſecrating* Aaron *and his Sons, I find, that a Bullock was to be brought before the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and he and they were to put their Hands on the Head of it; what did this repreſent?*

A. Firſt, That the Beaſt was wholly dedicated and appropriated to God. *Secondly*, That the Prieſt did transfer to it his, and the Offerer's Sins: A Figure of Chriſt whom the Father hath conſecrated to be the only expiatory Offering, and who hath burdened himſelf with our Iniquities. *Iſa.* liii. 4, 6.

Q. *One of the Rams that was to be offered on the ſame Occaſion, being killed, ſome of the Blood was to be put on the Tip of the Right Ear of* Aaron *and his Sons, on the Thumbs of their Right Hands, and on the great Toes of their Right Feet; what might this Ceremony intimate?*

A. It ſignified, that every Miniſter in ſacred Things ought to be ſanctified by God's Spirit, to *believe*, *work*, and *perſevere*; to the firſt the Ear hath Reference, to the ſecond the Hand, and to the third the Foot.

Q. *What was the Quantity of a* Tenth Deal, *mentioned* v. 40?

A. A *Tenth Deal* was an *Omer*, which contained about a *Pottle* of our Meaſure.

CHAP. XXX.

God commands the making of the Incenſe Altar, whereon the High-prieſt was to kindle Incenſe or Perfumings every Morning, and to make Expiation once a Year, on the Horns of the ſame. All the Children rf Iſrael *required to give Half a Shekel for the Expiation of their Souls. The Brazen Laver, and the holy anointing Oil appointed. The Preparation of Incenſe, how and by whom to be uſed.*

Q. I *Find an Inſtitution in this Chapter, that when at any Time the Number of the People ſhould be taken, every Perſon above Twenty Years old was to pay half a Shekel for the Ranſom of his Soul; What was the Reaſon and Meaning of this Order?*

A. This was a kind of Tribute paid to God, their Sovereign Lord, to ranſom them from the Puniſhment deſerved, for not performing their Duty; or becauſe the Tabernacle was built with that Money,

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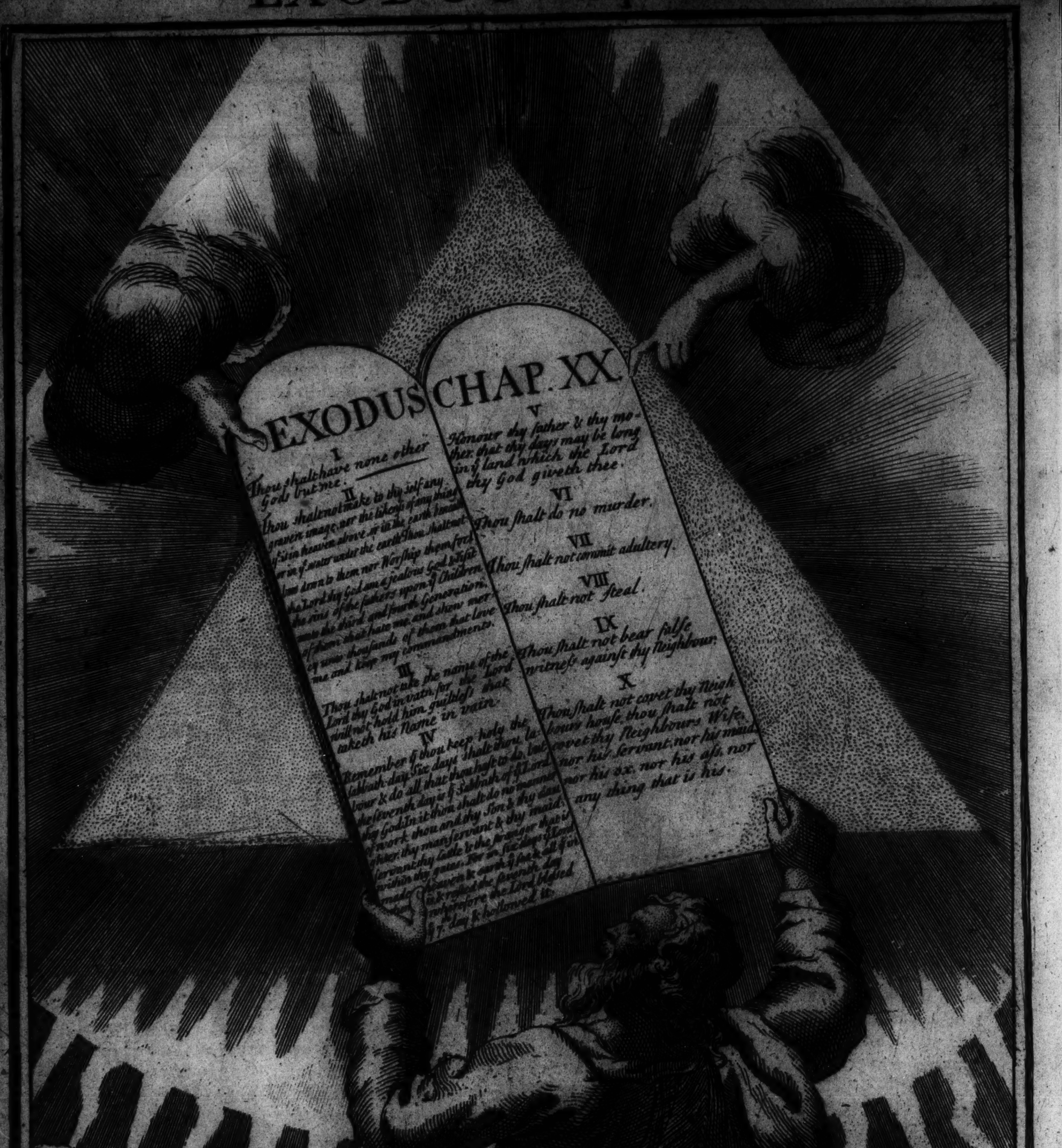
EXODUS CHAP. XX.
I
Thou ſhalt have none other
Gods but me.
II
Thou ſhalt not make to thy ſelf any
graven image, nor the likeneſs of any thing
y^t is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath
or in y^e water under the earth. Thou ſhalt not
bow down to them nor Worſhip them for I
the Lord thy God am a jealous God & viſit
the ſins of the fathers upon y^e Children
unto the third and fourth Generation,
of them that hate me, and ſhew mer-
cy unto thouſands of them that love
me and keep my commandments.
III
Thou ſhalt not take the name of the
Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord
will not hold him guiltleſs that
taketh his Name in vain.
IV
Remember y^e thou keep holy the
Sabbath day. Six days ſhalt thou la-
bour & do all that thou haſt to do, but
the ſeventh day is y^e Sabbath of y^e Lord
thy God. In it thou ſhalt do no manner
of work thou and thy Son & thy daugh-
ter, thy manſervant & thy maid
ſervant, thy Cattle & the ſtranger that is
within thy gates. For in ſix days y^e Lord
made heaven & earth, y^e ſea & all y^t in
them is, & reſted the ſeventh day
wherefore the Lord bleſſed
y^e 7. day & hallowed it.
V
Honour thy father & thy mo-
ther, that thy days may be long
in y^e land which the Lord
thy God giveth thee.
VI
Thou ſhalt do no murder.
VII
Thou ſhalt not commit adultery.
VIII
Thou ſhalt not ſteal.
IX
Thou ſhalt not bear falſe
witneſs againſt thy Neighbour.
X
Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neigh
bours houſe, thou ſhalt not
covet thy Neighbours Wife,
nor his Servant, nor his maid,
nor his ox, nor his aſs, nor
any thing that is his.

I. Smith Sculp.

Moſes Receives the two Tables.

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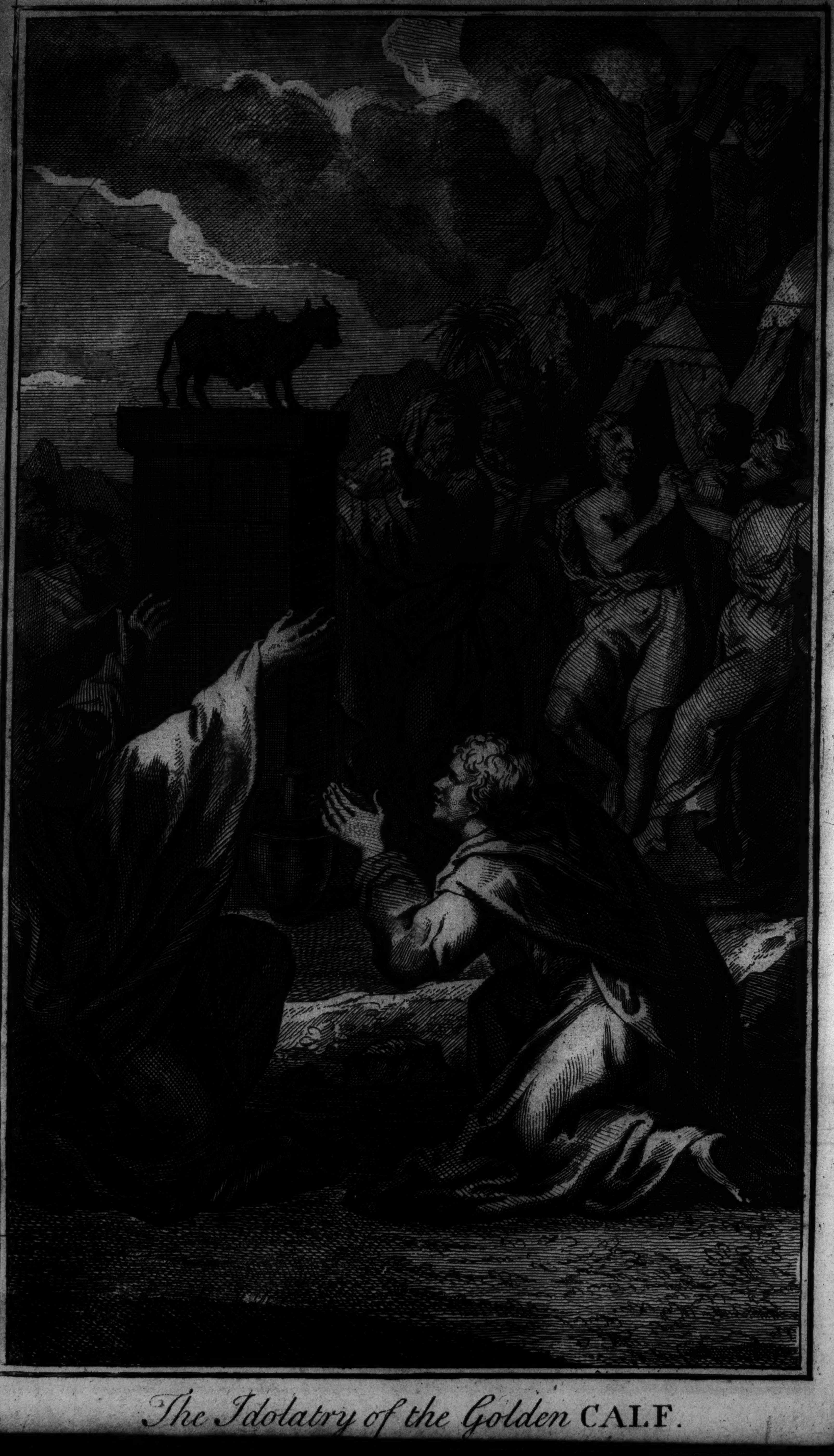


The Idolatry of the Golden CALF.

ney, *Exod.* xxxviii. 25. and afterwards the daily Offerings were bought therewith, and thoſe for holy Days, and the other Offerings for the Atonement of all the People in general, 2 *Chron.* xxxi. 3. which was a Figure of the Redemption of Souls by Chriſt.

Q. *What was the Value of the Half Shekel that each Perſon was required to contribute on this Occaſion?*

A. The Shekel of the Sanctuary was valued at two common Shekels; and the Gerah (20 of which made a Shekel) was worth about *Three Half-pence* at the rate of *Five-ſhillings* the Ounce of Silver; ſo that the Half Shekel, which was ten Gerahs, was *Two Shillings and Six-pence.*

Q. *The* Holy Oil *was to be put on no Man, except the Prieſt; What did this intimate?*

A. The Reverence due to ſacred Things; and to teach us, that it is not lawful for Man, according to his own Fancy, to frame to himſelf any other Means of Sanctification, than by the Spirit of God, nor any other Interceſſion with God but through our bleſſed Saviour Chriſt.

Chap. XXXI.

Bezaleel *and* Aholiab *are called by God for the making the Tabernacle and the Furniture of it. The Obſervation of the Sabbath Day again commanded.* Moſes *receives from God the two Tables of the Law.*

Q. THE Sabbath *is again here commanded to be kept holy; what is the Reaſon of the ſo frequent Repetition of this Command?*

A. The Lord declares the *Sabbath* to be a Sign between himſelf and the Children of *Iſrael*; namely, a ſacred Document, which he ſet down for his Church, to put her continually in Mind of the Benefits which ſhe received from him, regenerating of her through his Spirit, that reſting from fleſhly Works, ſhe may apply herſelf to thoſe of the Spirit, which is the true ſpiritual Sabbath; and this Ceremony being moſt religiouſly obſerved by the Church, ſhews that, ſhe, on her Part, conſents thereto, and religiouſly obſerves it.

Q. *What is the laſt Thing recorded of* Moſes *in this Chapter during his ſtay in the Mount?*

A. Immediately before his Departure, God delivered into his Hands the two Tables of Stone, whereon, by divine Command, or Direction, were written the Ten Great Commandments, which were the Sum and Subſtance of the Moral Law.

Chap. XXXII.

While Moſes *was abſent in the Mount, the People cauſe* Aaron *to make a* golden Calf, *unto which they offer Sacrifice. God tells* Moſes *of this, and threatens to deſtroy them.* Moſes *prays for them, and prevails on God to have Mercy on them.* Moſes *coming down from the Mount with the two ſtone Tables, on ſeeing the Idolatry of the People, breaks them in Pieces; reduces the Calf to Powder, and throwing it into Water, makes the People drink of it. Many of the Idolaters executed.* Moſes *then prays for them; and God, for the preſent, is appeaſed.*

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Thing obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. Whilſt *Moſes* was employed in Converſation with the Deity, about the Laws before recited, the People had imbibed new Notions of Divinity, or rather compacted the ſuperſtitious Follies they had learnt in *Egypt*, with the Rules revealed by the true God from Mount *Sinai*. Some wicked, perverſe, and unruly Perſons, taking the Advantage of the *Prophet*'s ſtay in the Mount, began to ſeduce their Neighbours, and at length they raiſed a Tumult in the Camp, on Occaſion of *Moſes*'s tarrying ſo long and their having no outward Signs of Worſhip among them.

Q. *What Methods did they take for that Purpoſe?*

A. Things being got to this Height, they ran to *Aaron*, and clamorouſly cried out to him, *Up, make us Gods which ſhall go before us: For as for this* Moſes, *the Man that brought us up out of the Land of* Egypt, *we wot not what is become of him.* They wanted Gods to be their Guide, as *Jehovah* had hitherto been in the Pillar, which having ſtood ſtill all the Time that *Moſes* had been in the Mount, it is likely that the People, wearied with this long Stay, thought to ſubſtitute ſome other Signs of the Godhead, which ſhould move at their Pleaſure.

Q. *But did not* Aaron *remonſtrate againſt this idolatrous Purpoſe, and wicked Demand of the People?*

A. This certainly was his Duty; but inſtead of reproving and expoſtulating with them the Unreaſonableneſs of their wild Deſire, he contributed to their Idolatry; and, as if he had a Mind to aſſiſt them in accompliſhing their wicked Intention, he bad them break off the gold Rings from the Ears of their Wives and Children, and bring them to him.

Q. *Has no Apology been made for this imprudent Action of* Aaron's?

A. Some Annotators, palliate and gloſs over this Action of the High Prieſt, by ſaying that it was not improbable but he might think, that they would not have been ſo fooliſh as to have purchaſed ſo vain a Thing at ſo dear a Rate, nor ſo ungrateful to God, through whoſe Favour he had gotten thoſe Jewels from the *Egyptians*. But however it was, *Aaron* yielded to their Importunity, melted down the Gold, faſhioned, and produced from it an *Idol* in the Shape of a *Calf*; at ſight whereof the People rejoiced exceedingly, and ſhouted throughout their Camp.

Q. *Did the People's Madneſs ſtop here?*

A. The ſame ſuperſtitious Folly which had excited the *Iſraelites* to the Commiſſion of ſo extravagant an Act, carried them ſtill farther; ſo that abſolutely forgetting the Laws given by *Jehovah* himſelf from Mount *Sinai*, and that Covenant to which they had ſo ſolemnly ſworn, they cried out, in Honour of their *Idol*, *Theſe be thy Gods,* O Iſrael, *who brought thee up out of the Land of* Egypt.

Q. *Did* Aaron *comply any farther with their impious Proceedings?*

A. At their Requeſt, he ordered a Feaſt to be proclaimed in Honour of their new Deity; however, in ſo doing, he retained the Name of the true God, and ordered his Proclamation to run thus; *To-morrow is a Feaſt to the Lord.*

Q. *But were the People really ſo ſtupid, as to imagine, that the true God could be made by any Man, or that an Image could be a Means of conducting them, either forward to* Canaan, *or back again into* Egypt?

A. I think not: It ſeems evident, that what they wanted was, ſome outward Object, to ſupply the Want of the *Cloud*, by being a Type or Symbol of the Deity, and where they might repoſe the Homage which they intended to pay to the ſupreme God; for ſo ſome of the *Jewiſh* Doctors have expounded the Text of *Moſes*. *Rabbi Jehudah* thus expreſſes himſelf. *They deſired a ſenſible Object of Divine Worſhip to be ſet before them, not with an Intention to deny*

God, who brought them out of Egypt, *but that ſomething in the Place of God, might ſtand before them, when they declared his wonderful Works.*

Q. *What have you to obſerve upon the Calf, which* Aaron *formed and produced at the People's Importunity?*

A. The Word, which we here render *Calf*, does, in other Places of Scripture, ſignify an *Ox*: And as an Ox's Head was, in ſome Countries, an Emblem of Strength, and the Horns a common Sign of Kingly Power, ſo a learned Prelate (Biſhop *Patrick*) out of a Deſire to apologize for *Aaron*, is willing to inſinuate, that his Deſign of making an Ox the Symbol of the Divine Preſence, was to remind the *Iſraelites* of the Power of God, and to expreſs the great Tokens, which they had ſeen of it, in their wonderful Deliverance: But how ingenious ſoever this *Hypotheſis* may be, it wants this Foundation for its Support, that this *Hieroglyphick* of the divine Power was in Uſe in the Time of *Moſes*; for if it was, we cannot imagine, why *Aaron*, when called to an Account by his Brother, ſhould forget to plead it in Excuſe for himſelf; or why God ſhould be incenſed againſt him, had his Deſign been only to exhibit a *Symbol* of the divine Power and Authority, to a People of too groſs Sentiments, without ſuch a viſible Repreſentation ever to comprehend it.

Q. *Can you quote the Sentiments of any other creditable Author on the Subject?*

A. Biſhop *Tenniſon*, equally inclined to excuſe this Action of *Aaron's*, ſuppoſes that he took his Pattern from Part of what he ſaw on the Holy Mount, when the *Schechinah* of God came down upon it, attended with Angels, ſome of which were Cherubims, or Angels appearing in the Form of Oxen; but this Opinion is inconſiſtent with the great Care which was taken on Mount *Sinai*, not to furniſh any Pretext for Idolatry, and the Caution which *Moſes* gives the People to that Purpoſe. *Take ye therefore good Heed to your ſelves (for ye ſaw no manner of Similitude, on the Day that the Lord ſpake unto you in* Horeb, *out of the midſt of the Fire) leſt ye corrupt your ſelves, and make you a graven Image, the Similitude of any Figure, the Likeneſs of any Male or Female, the Likneſs of any Beaſt, that is on the Earth; the Likeneſs of any winged Fowl, that fleeth in the Air; the Likeneſs of any Thing that creepeth on the Ground; the Likeneſs of any Fiſh*, &c. *Deut.* iv. 15, &c. where the Holy Spirit enumerates Animals of all Kinds, and poſitively aſſures, that none of their Forms or Figures appeared upon Mount *Sinai.*

Q. *Since you have, for good Reaſons, rejected theſe great Authorities, let me aſk you what you take to be the moſt probable Opinion concerning* Aaron's *Choice of the Figure of an* Ox *or* Calf?

A. It was, no doubt, in Compliance with the Prejudice of the People, and becauſe that Creature was worſhipped in *Egypt*. That the *Iſraelites* were ſorely infected with the Idolatry of the *Egyptians*, is demonſtrable from Scripture; that all Sorts of Animals were worſhipped by the *Egyptians*, and among the *Terreſtrial*, more eſpecially the Ox, is acknowledged by all Authors who have treated of the Affairs of *Egypt*; and that the Idolatry of Animals, and more eſpecially of the Ox, was eſtabliſhed in *Egypt*, during the Reſidence of the *Iſraelites* in that Land, is more than probable from theſe Words of *Moſes* to *Pharaoh*, *If we ſacrifice the Abomination of the* Egyptians *before their Eyes*; that is, if we ſacrifice to our God, Oxen, Sheep, and Goats, which the *Egyptians* worſhip, and conſequently make an Abomination to the Lord, *will they not ſtone us?* So that it ſeems moſt rational to ſuppoſe, that this Image was in Compliance with the giddy Humour of the People, who, upon the ſuppoſed Death of *Moſes*, were probably all for returning back again, and, in Imitation of the *Egyptians*, who worſhipped their Idol *Apis*, or *Serapis*, not only in a *living Ox*, but in an Image made after the Similitude of an Ox, bethought themſelves of the like Repreſentation of a Deity, to go before them: The only Queſtion is, Whether the Worſhip of the *Egyptian Apis*, was *prior* to the Formation of the *Golden Calf*, which happens to be a Point, wherein the Learned are not ſo well agreed.

Q. *In the Celebration of this idolatrous Feſtival, it's ſaid,* The People ſat down to eat, and to drink, and roſe up to play; *Was not this in Imitation of the* Pagan *Nations about them?*

A. Feaſting, Sports, and Dancing were the uſual Concomitants of idolatrous Devotion; to which were often added rude and ſhameleſs Proſtitutions; and it has been a prevailing Opinion, that the *Iſraelites* on this Occaſion, were guilty of the like Enormities. But as this is not mentioned in the Text; and as their Crime is ſufficiently aggravating without this Circumſtance, ſo it is better to take the Deſcription *Moſes* gives in a milder Senſe, and ſuppoſe, that they only teſtified their Joy and Gladneſs, by Leaping, Dancing, and Shouting, throughout the Camp, which it is certain they did with a very great Noiſe.

Q. *While the People was thus revelling in the Camp, what paſſed between* God *and* Moſes *in the Mount?*

A. Moſes was ſtill converſing there with the Almighty, and little ſuſpected ſo ſudden a Change in a People who had ſo lately and ſolemnly entered into a Covenant of Obedience to all that God ſhould command. But he, from whom no Secret is hid, inſtantly apprized of this ſudden Revolt; and acquainting *Moſes* with the Crime they were then committing, expreſſes his Indignation againſt their Rebellion and Ingratitude. Go, get thee down, (ſaid the Almighty) *for thy People* (by which Expreſſions God ſeems to diſown them for his People, and as if he was reſolved to caſt them off) *which thou broughteſt out of the Land of* Egypt *have corrupted themſelves, &c.* Having ſhewn the Nature, Suddenneſs, and other aggravating Circumſtances of their Guilt, the Lord thus proceeded; *I have ſeen this People, and behold it is a ſtiff-necked People. Now therefore let me alone, that my Wrath may wax hot againſt them, and that I may conſume them: And I will make of thee a great Nation.*

Q. *How did* Moſes *behave on this critical Occaſion?*

A. Moſes was ſo far from ſeeking his own Intereſt, or aggrandizing his Family, at the Expence of the Ruin of his People, that he moſt earneſtly interceeded for them, and with importunate Intreaties beſought the Lord on their Behalf, *v.* 11, 12, 13.

Q. *Did* Jehovah *regard the Prayers of his Servant* Moſes?

A. God graciouſly complied with his Requeſt and farther told him, he would not puniſh the *Iſraelites*, as their Crime deſerved, or, as *Moſes* himſelf expreſſes it, ſpeaking it after the manner of Men, *The Lord repented him of the Evil which he thought to do unto his People.*

Q. Moſes, *upon this, deſcended from the Mount, and being come into the Camp, ſaw the* golden Calf, *which was erected for the People's Worſhip; whereat* *he was ſo moved, that he immediately took down the Image, ground it to Powder, threw the Duſt into Water, and made the People drink of it; now this, according to the Notions of* Alchymiſts, *is contrary to our preſent Philoſophy.*

A. Nothing is more commonly received, than the Notion, that Gold cannot be deſtroyed; and yet the Royal Academy at *Paris* have a Burning Glaſs, that will vitrify it in an Inſtant, by evaporating all the Sulphur of it, which crackles, and flies up in a Smoak; whilſt the Glaſs that remains, can never be reduced into any other Form. That Gold can be reduced into a fine Powder, every Gold-beater can inform us; and who can tell, but that *Moſes* might have ſome particular Secret for doing this, which we know nothing of? By the Help of a File however he might grate it into a Duſt, as fine as Flour, that is ground in a Mill: But the Rabbinical Reaſon, for his giving the People this *Gold Powder* to drink, namely, that he might diſtinguiſh the Idolaters, from the reſt, (becauſe as ſoon as they had drank, the Beards of the former turned red) is a little too whimſical to be regarded. The Notion of a learned Author is probable, that *Moſes* made the People drink the *Gold Duſt*, into which the *Calf* was reduced, becauſe the *Egyptians* reckoned it the moſt abominable of all Crimes, to feed upon any of their *conſecrated Creatures*, much more on *Apis* or *Mineevis*.

Q. Moſes *having thus deſtroy'd the* Idol, *next examined his Brother as to the Hand he had in all this Miſchief; did* Aaron *confeſs or deny the Fact he was charged with?*

A. Aaron appeared in the utmoſt Confuſion, as is evident from his Anſwer. *Let not the Anger of my Lord wax hot; thou knoweſt the People that they are ſet on Miſchief: For they ſaid unto me, make us Gods,* &c. Thus it ſeems manifeſt, that *Aaron* acted wholly from Fear, and that he did no more than what he was commanded by his then Maſters the People: However, *Jehovah* was angry with him for his Puſillanimity; and had not *Moſes* interpoſed and intreated for him, would certainly have deſtroyed him for an Example to others, as appears from what *Moſes* himſelf, ſays, *Deut.* ix. 20. In ſhort, *Aaron*'s Reply plainly intimates a ſhamefaced Diſguiſing and Diſſimulation of his Fault, and is not unlike that frivolous one made by *Adam*, in the third Chapter of *Geneſis*.

Q. *What is the Meaning of the Expreſſion,* When *Moſes* ſaw that the People were naked, or *Aaron* had made them naked?

A. By being *naked*, is meant; either becauſe *Aaron* had ſtripped them of their Ornaments; or that by their Sin they had loſt the Preſence of God, expreſſed by a Cloud, wherewith they might be truly ſaid to be covered and protected; and this in a wild and deſolate Country, all around them Enemies, and ready on the firſt Opportunity to attack them, in the ſame Manner as the *Amalekites* had done.

Q. *In what Manner did* Moſes *puniſh the Idolaters?*

A. He ordered a Party of *Levites*, who were not concerned in the late Rebellion, to take their Swords, to go through the Camp, and, without any Reſpect to Age or Quality, Friendſhip or Conſanguinity, to kill all the Ringleaders of this idolatrous Defection, and their Adherents; which the *Levites* accordingly executed, ſo that, at this Time, there were about 3000 ſlain.

Q. *But was not this a very hazardous Undertaking, not to ſay, impracticable, for a few* Levites *to kill 3000 of the People?*

A. They had God's Warrant for what they did, and knowing at the ſame Time, how timorous Guilt is apt to make Men, they might be confident, that none would have Courage to oppoſe them. Before *Moſes* called any Avengers to his Aſſiſtance, the Text tells us, that *he ſaw that the People were naked, for* Aaron *had made them naked to their Shame*; where, if by *Nakedneſs* we are (with ſome Expoſitors) to underſtand their Want of Armour, which they had laid aſide, that they might be more light and nimble to dance about the *Idol*, it is plain, that the *Levites* might have leſs Trouble in ſlaying ſuch a number of People, laden with Liquor perhaps, and (as it uſually happens in the Concluſion of a Feſtival) weary with dancing and Sports, and without any Weapons about them to make Reſiſtance.

Q. *The Execution being over, and the wrath of God thereby partly appeaſed,* Moſes *endeavours to make the People ſenſible of the Heinouſneſs of their Crime, and promiſed that he would intercede with God for them; which he accordingly did; and with ſuch Earneſtneſs and Concern, that he prayed God* to blot him out of his Book, *rather than not to pardon them; how are we to underſtand this Expreſſion?*

A. This way of ſpeaking is evidently grounded upon the Numbering the Children of *Iſrael* at their coming out of *Egypt*, and the Regiſtering their Names in a Roll or Regiſter, as may be ſeen *Numbers* i. The ſame Method was likewiſe taken at their Return from the *Babyloniſh Captivity*, as may be ſeen in the Books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*; and thoſe who were inrolled in this Book, are ſaid to be written for *Life among the Living*, *Iſ.* iv. 3. for every Year they blotted out of this Catalogue the Names of thoſe who died. From hence we find in Scripture frequent Mention of the *Book of Life*; and from this ſeveral Affirm, that thoſe who are written in it are abſolutely predeſtinated to Salvation. But this way of ſpeaking can have no ſuch Signification in Scripture, elſe we ſhould make *Moſes* to deſire a Thing, which was impoſſible even to God (who cannot be unjuſt) namely, *that he would blot him out of the Book of Life.* If *Moſes* had deſired to be damned, Atheiſts and Deiſts might have Reaſon to ſay, that he had made a very extravagant Demand, which looked more like Madneſs, than Inſpiration. But Biſhop *Stillingfleet*, after ſeveral others, has proved, that *Moſes* had not the leaſt Thought of Damnation. No ſuch Thing goes before or after; and beſides, the whole Deſign of this Chapter is quite oppoſite to this Sentiment, and runs all on temporal Puniſhments. This may be gathered from a like Prayer of *Moſes* on another Occaſion, *If thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of Hand, Numb.* xi. 15. The *Hebrew* Word alſo, which is rendered to *blot out*, ſignifies to *kill* or *deſtroy*. It is therefore evident, that to be written in the *Book of Life*, ſignifies to be under the Favour and protection of God, and that, *to be blotted out of it*, ſignifies *to loſe Life* by a juſt Puniſhment, as moſt of the learned allow.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The Lord refuſeth to go with the People as he had formerly promiſed. The People mourn, and lay aſide their Ornaments. Moſes *orders the Tabernacle to be ſet without the Camp; he goes into it, and God ſpeaks with him. His Prayer that God would go along with the People; which is promiſed him. He deſires to ſee the Glory of God; and is indulged ſo far, as to be ſhewn his Back-parts.*

Q. *IN the Beginning of this Chapter, God bids* Moſes *and the People go up to the Land which he had promiſed them; but at the ſame Time tells him that he would not go up with them; what Impreſſion did this ſad News make on them?*

A. By this Meſſage they plainly ſaw, that God's withdrawing his immediate Preſence from them, was the Effect of their Rebellion; this ſo ſenſibly affected them, that they ſhewed all the Signs of the deepeſt Mourning and Humiliation, laying aſide their Ornaments, and teſtifying by outward Expreſſions, the immediate Anguiſh of their Souls.

Q. *What farther Tokens did* Moſes *ſhew the* Iſraelites *of the divine Diſpleaſure againſt them for their late Offence?*

A. Moſes pitched the *Tabernacle* without, and at a conſiderable Diſtance from the Camp; calling it the *Tabernacle of the Congregation*, intimating thereby that God retired from their Camp as a *polluted Place*.

Q. *Give ſome particular Reaſons why it was called the Tabernacle of the Congregation?*

A. Moſt Writers on the *Hebrew Republick* inform us, that *Moſes*, either in his own Tent, or in one contiguous thereto, adminiſtered Juſtice, gave Audience, and diſpatched other weighty Affairs incident to his Office; from whence it derived the Name of the *Tent of the Congregation*. This was the Tent which *Moſes* removed out of the Camp, after he perceived that the Almighty had withdrawn his Preſence from them. By which Means, every one who ſought the Lord, was obliged to go to this Tabernacle without the Camp; and when *Moſes* entered it, the *cloudy Pillar*, in which the Lord uſed to appear, deſcended and ſtood at the Door of the *Tabernacle*, while *Jehovah* converſed with his Servant; and all the People in the Camp beheld this marvelous Event, and were ſo ſtruck with the Sight thereof, that as often as they ſaw it deſcend, they bowed themſelves every Man as he ſtood in the Door of his Tent.

Q. *That God is a pure Spirit, eternal, omnipreſent without bodily Parts, or Affections, is a Truth univerſally allowed; in what Senſe are we to underſtand thoſe Expreſſions in this Chapter, which mention God's* Face; *his* Hand, *his* Back-parts?

A. Moſes borrows Expreſſions, when ſpeaking of the divine Nature and Attributes, from corporeal Beings, the better to accommodate the Loftineſs of the Subject to the Comprehenſion of human underſtanding: For, unleſs we could contrive a perfect Sett of *new* Words, there is no ſpeaking at all of the Deity without uſing our *old* ones in *a figurative* Senſe. *Providence* and *Mercy*, for Inſtance, are two known Attributes of God; but, if we reſpect their *original* uſe, and do not take them in a *Metaphorical* Meaning, they are altogether as abſurd, when applyed to God, as are his *Eye*, his *Hand*, his *Back-parts*, in their groſſeſt Senſe. For, how improper is it, literally ſpeaking, to ſay, that God *looks before him*, like Men, when they act cautiouſly; or, that he has that *relenting of Heart*, or *yearning of Bowels*, which merciful Men feel at the Sight of a miſerable Object. The Truth is, Languages were compoſed to maintain an Intercourſe with one another, and not to treat of the Nature of that Being, who dwelleth in *Light that is inacceſſible*. No Form of Words, be they never ſo exquiſite and well-choſen, can reach thoſe tranſcendant Perfections, that are unutterable; and therefore if we conſider the low Capacity of the People, to whom, the great Poverty of the Language, in which, and the vaſt Sublimity of the Subject, about which *Moſes* wrote, we ſhall have leſs Occaſion to blame his *metaphorical* Way of expreſſing the Divine Nature, which, upon Experiment, he certainly found beſt adapted, both to inform the Underſtanding, animate the Affections of the People; while a Number of dry, Scholaſtick, and abſtracted Terms would have lain flat upon their Minds, and ſerved only to amuſe and confound them.

Interpreters, indeed, are at ſome Variance what we are to underſtand by the *Hand*, *Face*, and *Hinder-parts* of God. "The *Face* of *God*, ſays an ingenious Gloſſary, ſignifies his Eſſence, before the "Beginning of the World, and his *Hinder-parts*, "his Creation and Providence, in the Government "of the Word." But *Maimonides* is of Opinion, that theſe Words may be interpreted according to the *Targums*; thus; That God made his Majeſty, that is, an exceedingly bright Repreſentation of himſelf (though not in its full Glory) paſs before *Moſes*, in ſo much Splendor, as human Nature could bear, which may be termed his *Back-parts*; but not in his unveiled Brightneſs, which may ſignify his *Face*, and, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, is *inacceſſible*; and the *Hand*, wherewith God covered him, while he *paſſed by*, may probably denote a *Cloud*, which God caſt about him, that he might not be ſtruck dead by the inconceivable Brightneſs and Force of thoſe Rays, which came from the *Face*, or full Luſtre of the divine Majeſty.

Q. *Did this Difference between ſeeing the* Face *and the* Back-parts *of the Divine Being prefigurate any Thing?*

A. It ſhewed, that in this World the Faithful can have but ſome Traces, ſome obſcure Notions of God's Eſſence, proper Being, and Glory in Perfection, as if one ſhould ſee a Man's Back; but in the *Life everlaſting*, they ſhall ſee him directly, and fully as he is, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. 1 *John* iii. 1. Hence aroſe the common Opinion among the *Iſraelites*, that they muſt die if they ſhould ſee the Lord, *who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath ſeen, nor can ſee; to whom be Honour and Power everlaſting*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 16.

As far as Mortality could endure the dazling Brightneſs of God's Glory, the *Hebrew* Leader was indulged in his Demand; and all was to be ſhewn him, that was either neceſſary to fill his Soul with Joy, or Admiration, to excite his Love, or to elevate his Reverence of the Deity, who is a pure Spirit, eternal and omnipreſent.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Moſes *ordered to hew two new Tables of Stone, and to come up again into the Mount. The Name of the Lord proclaimed. God, at* Moſes*'s Entreaty, promiſes to go with the People. God renews his Covenant with them. Several Commandments in Relation to the Sabbath, Paſſover, and other Feſtivals.* Moſes, *after forty Days ſtay in the Mount, comes down with the two Tables. His Face ſhines, and he covers it with a Veil.*

Q. *HOW are we to underſtand thoſe Words, ver.* 6. The Lord deſcended in a Cloud?

A. That is, He ſhewed himſelf preſent in the Cloud, in a Manner as if he had deſcended down into it from Heaven the Place of his more immediate Preſence and Glory, *Exod.* xix. 11, 18, 20. Or elſe the Meaning is, that the Cloud itſelf deſcended; for ordinarily the Cloud was raiſed up high in the Air, and came lower down when God was pleaſed audibly to ſpeak to *Moſes*, *Exod.* xxxiii. 9. *Numb.* xi. 17, 25.

Q. *When* Moſes *was in the Mount, and in the Situation which God had placed him in to give him a View of himſelf, a Proclamation was made in the divine Stile,* The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, &c. *How did* Moſes *behave on this awful Occaſion?*

A. When *Moſes* heard this Proclamation, he proſtrated himſelf before the divine Majeſty; and as the Care of his People was ever on his Heart, he laid hold of this Opportunity of beſeeching the Almighty, that he would graciouſly lay aſide his Anger, and entirely pardon the Tranſgreſſion of his People. The Lord favourably received his Interceſſion, and the holy Prophet, by his Zeal and Piety, obtained this glorious Token of God's Favour, *Behold I make a Covenant, before all thy People will I do Miracles, ſuch as have not been done in all the Earth, nor in any Nation: And all the People amongſt which thou art, ſhall ſee the Work of the Lord; for it is a terrible Thing that I will do with thee.* It's obſervable in this Place, that God calls the Children of *Iſrael*, *thy People*, that is, *Moſes's* People; for he would not yet call them his: For this Reconciliation of God's was but conditional, and in proportion to their Obedience.

Q. Moſes, *we read, continued in the Mount* forty Days and forty Nights, *without any Suſtenance; how is this reconcileable to Reaſon?*

A. In this State of our Infirmity indeed, we are obliged to repair the gradual Decay of our Bodies with a ſupply of daily Food; but in that of a greater Perfection, there will be no Occaſion for theſe weak ſupports of human Nature. In the mean Time we are aſſured, that *Man doth not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God, Matt.* iv. 4. by whoſe Command our natural Perſpiration may be ſo ſhut up, and the Inſtruments of our Digeſtion ſo retarded, as to make a ſmall Quantity of Meat ſubſiſt us for a conſiderable Time. *Elijah*, we read, had but *a Cake baked on the Coals*, and a *Cruſe of Water* for his whole Repaſt, even when he was going to undertake a long Journey; and yet we find, that, both under the Fatigue of Body, and Expence of Spirits, which Travelling muſt neceſſari-occaſion, he was enabled to *go in the Strength of that Meat forty Days and forty Nights.* And for the like Reaſons we may ſuppoſe, that *Moſes*, being now received within the Cloud on Mount *Sinai*, might find no uneaſy Craving of Appetite, during his Stay and long Converſation with God.

Q. *What Notions have the* Jews *of this long Faſting of their Prophet?*

A. The *Jews* have a Proverb, that *above*, where there is neither Eating nor Drinking, *Moſes* ſtaid eighty Days (namely, at two different Times) and became like the Angels; and *below*, where Men do eat and drink, miniſtring Angels came down, and eat and drink like them. Whereby they ſeem to impute this alteration of Appetite in both to a change of Climate, rather than a Miracle. But whether the Climate contributes or no, it is certain that God, by Influences and Emanations from himſelf, could ſupport him, as long as he thought fit, and keep up his Spirits in their juſt Height, without the common Recruits of any Kind of Aliment.

Another Notion of the *Jews* is, that, as Eating and Drinking are Actions, which prejudice the Underſtanding, God, who intended to prepare his Servant for the Reception of the Revelations, he was going to communicate, with-held all Meat and Drink from him, that, by depreſſing his bodily Faculties, he might exalt his intellectual. In the Caſe of *Daniel*, it is certain, that, in order to diſpoſe him for the heavenly Viſion, *he did eat no pleaſant Bread, neither came Fleſh or Wine in his Mouth, for three whole Weeks together, Deut.* x. 3. And therefore, conſidering the many wonderful Things, which God intended to impart to *Moſes*, there ſeems to be a Propriety at leaſt, if not an abſolute Neceſſity, of his being put under the like Regimen, to enable him, with more Facility, to comprehend them. Again; if St. *Paul*, in his extatick Viſion, when he thought himſelf tranſlated to the Regions above, in the Contemplation of the wonderful Things he ſaw and heard there, loſt all Senſe of his Body, and Perception of its Affections; why may we not ſuppoſe, that the Joy and Extacy, wherewith *Moſes* was tranſported, upon the like Occaſion, made him never once think of Eating and Drinking?

Had *Moſes* therefore been employed in no farther Capacity, than barely in contemplating the many amazing Wonders of God's infinite Being, which the Irradiations from his beatifick Preſence muſt have tranſfuſed upon his Mind; this had been enough to ſuſpend all other Operations, and engroſs, as it were, the whole Complex of his Faculties. But beſides this, the Scripture informs us, that he took a Review of the Model of the Tabernacle, and its Furniture, which God had ſhewn him, when he was with him before, and (as we may ſuppoſe) received freſh Inſtructions from God. This could not but take up ſome Proportion of his Time, as moſt of the Remainder of it ſeems to have been ſpent in Prayer and Interceſſion with God for the People, that he would reſtore him entirely to his Favour, and bring them, in his good appointed Time, to their Inheritance.

Q. *Give ſome Deſcription of that peculiar Luſtre, which ſhone on the Face of* Moſes *when he came down from the Mount.*

A. The *Hebrew* Word *Karan*, which our Tranſlations render *Shining*, is by the *Vulgate* tranſlated *cornutus*, or *horned*; and, from this Miſapplication of Ideas, Painters, very probably, have been induc'd to draw *Moſes* with a pair of Horns branching, as it were, out of his Forhead; whereas the proper Repreſentation of him ſhould be, with a *Glory*, covering his Head, in the Manner as the Saints are painted in the *Roman Church*. For it is not improbable that the Hair of his Head was interſperſed with Rays of Light, at the ſame Time, that a certain beauteous Luſtre proceeded from his Face, and dazled the Eyes of its Beholders.

Q. *Was not* Moſes, *in this Reſpect, a Type of Chriſt?*

A. This glorious Change of his Countenance was a ſhining Emblem of our Lord's Transfiguration in the Mount, when *his Face ſhone as the Sun, and his Rayment was white as the Light.* In both Caſes, it was the glorious Being within the Cloud, that tranſfuſed this radiant Splendor around his Son and Servant.

Q *But why did not* Moſes, *at the firſt Time of his converſing with God in the Mount, contract this wonderful Brightneſs, as well as at the Second?*

A. He had not then ſeen the Divine Majeſty in ſo great a Splendor, as he did now. He was then obliged to keep at a more awful Diſtance from the tremendous Throne of God, and not come within the Circle of its Refulgency; but now, upon his humble Petition, God was pleaſed to vouchſafe him ſuch a Sight of his Glory, as his human Nature could bear: So that, by being permitted to come within the Circumference of it, he carried off, (tho' unknown to himſelf) ſuch a *beamy Luſtre* from the divine Refulgency, as, like the *lambent Fire*, wherewith the Poets circle the Brows of their Gods and Heroes) played about his Head and Face, and there continued for ſome conſiderable Time. For, *Moſes* being now to bring down the Tables of the Covenant from the Mount, that the People might not ſuſpect him of any Fallacy or Colluſion, or think that his Pretence to a Correſpondence with the Deity (as that of ſome ſubſequent Lawgivers proved) was vain and fictitious, God was pleaſed to ſend along with him this Teſtimony, as it were of his having held Communion with God; for the miraculous Radiancy, with which he was adorned, ſhewing in what Company he had been, during his Abſence, confirmed his Meſſage to the People, and in every Reſpect carried new Credentials with it.

Q. *What was* Moſes's *Intent by putting a Veil over his Face?*

A. To ſhew that it was ſufficient that this Splendor added ſome Credit and Authority to his Miniſtry; being not willing, however, that the People ſhould thereby be induced to any exceſſive or idolatrous Veneration. The Allegory which St. *Paul* draws from hence, ſee 2 *Cor.* iii. 13.

CHAP. XXXV.

The Sabbath again commanded to be be obſerved; Fire not to be lighted on it. The Free-will Offering for the Tabernacle, and the Furniture thereof. Men and Women bring in their Jewels, &c. for the ſame. Bezaleel *and* Aholiab *to make the Work.*

Q. THIS *Chapter conſiſts wholly in Directions to keep the Sabbath, and in what Manner, with what Materials, and with what Workmen to build the Tabernacle; What general Obſervation do you make upon the whole?*

A. The Directions now given, with reſpect to the Tabernacle, were the ſame with thoſe which *Moſes* gave when he firſt went up into the Mount; but by Reaſon of the People's Tranſgreſſion in idolizing the golden Calf, were ſuſpended, and not delivered to them till now.

Q. *The People having contributed very liberally of the moſt valuable Part of their Subſtance, towards the Furniture of the Tabernacle, two Perſons,* Bezaleel *and* Aholiab, *are to direct the Workmanſhip; Give ſome Account of thoſe two famous Artiſts.*

A. To theſe two Perſons, God gave an extraordinary Portion of Wiſdom and Skill in their reſpective Arts; ſo that they deviſed the moſt curious and exquiſite Patterns, for all the rich, flowered, embroidered, wrought, and covered Work, in all the various Materials employed in this holy Structure; as likewiſe the Garments for *Aaron* and his Sons. *Bezaleel* the Son of *Uri*, was a famous Artificer, and doubtleſs in high Eſteem, for his Knowledge in curious Works before he was appointed by God to ſuperintend the Tabernale.

Q. *What do you underſtand by his being divinely inſpired for the more ſkilful Performance of this Work?*

A. By this we are only to conceive, that the Almighty gave him a perfect Comprehenſion of all the Particulars committed to his Care, and enabled him thereby to make them to an exact Reſemblance with what the Prophet had ſeen in the Mount.

Q. *Do you find any Thing recorded of* Bezaleel's *Family, or any Thing elſe remarkable of him, beſides what is here mentioned?*

A. Some of the *Jewiſh* Doctors make him the Son *Hur*, by *Miriam* the Siſter of *Moſes*; but this is mere Conjecture. The Inhabitants of *Sidon* preſerve an high Eſteem for his Memory; and, without the Walls of their Town, ſhew a Tomb, under which they affirm him to be interred.

Q. *Have you any Thing to ſay of* Aholiab, *his Partner in the Work?*

A. As to *Aholiab*, who was joined in Commiſſion with *Bezaleel*, in the Province of overlooking the Materials for the Tabernacle, nothing more is ſaid of him (that we find any where related) than what is here recorded.

CHAP. XXXVI.

The Stuff and Materials offered by the People, for making the Tabernacle, are committed to the Care of Bezaleel *and* Aholiab; *the People's Liberality reſtrained. The Artificers make all ready belonging to the Tabernacle, as the Curtains, Covers, Planks, Veil,* &c.

Q. WHAT *have you to obſerve about the Free-will Offerings brought by the People for the building of the Tabernacle?*

A. Every Morning the Free-will Offerings were preſented, and given by *Moſes* to the Workmen; and ſo zealous were the People in general on this Occaſion, that *Moſes*, when he found there was ſufficient, was obliged to iſſue a Proclamation to reſtrain them from bringing any more.

Q. *What farther Inſtructions were there given relating to the Work in Hand?*

A. Whatever Perſons throughout the Camp that were Artiſts in any Manner of Work, whether Men or Women, repaired with the greateſt Willingneſs to the Chief Artificers, from whom they received Inſtructions as to the Quantity, Quality, and Fabrick of the Things they were to make; ſo that in a very ſhort Space, from the Command iſſued by their inſpired Leader, all Things were in the greateſt Forwardneſs; and the Preparations for ſetting up this Place for Publick Worſhip, were carried on with all imaginable Diligence.

Q. *What Remark do you make on the wonderful Zeal of the People?*

A. This was a very ſtrong Inſtance of the Affection of the People, in general, for the exterior Rites of Religion, though without any juſt Senſe of its moral and eſſential Precepts; ſince we behold them, in a few Weeks, breaking through thoſe Laws which had been given by God himſelf, in the moſt conſpicuous, as well as the moſt tremendous Manner, and that in a Point which brought them no temporal Advantage whatever, and, in a very inconſiderable Space after this, haſtening with eager Obedience, to give up their moſt valuable Effects, to adorn the Tabernacle of that infinite Being, whoſe Commands they had deſpiſed.

Q. *Deſcribe the* Tabernacle.

A. It was a Tent covered with Curtains and Skins, but much larger than the other Tents. It was divided into two Parts; the one was covered, and properly called the *Tabernacle*, and the other open like the Court. The covered Part was again divided into two Parts; the one called the *Holy of Holies*, the Curtains of which were made of embroidered Linnen of ſeveral Colours. There were ten

Curtains, twenty eight Cubits long, and four in Breadth. Five Curtains together made two Coverings, which being faſtened together, covered all the Tabernacle. Over the reſt were two other Coverings, the one of Goat's-hair, the other of Sheep-ſkins. Theſe Veils or Coverings were laid on a ſquare Frame of Planks reſting on Baſes. There were forty eight large Planks, each a Cubit and a half wide, and ten Cubits high, twenty of them on each Side, and ſix at one End to the weſtward, and one at each Corner. Each Plank was borne on two Silver Baſes, they were let into one another, and held by Bars running the Length of the Planks. The Eaſt-end was open, and only covered with a Curtain. The *Holy of Holies* was parted from the reſt of the Tabernacle by a Curtain made faſt to four Pillars, ſtanding ten Cubits from the End. The whole Length of the Tabernacle was thirty two Cubits, and the Breadth twelve; it was alſo thirty Cubits high. The upper Curtain hung on the North and South Sides, eight Cubits, and on the Eaſt and Weſt, four Cubits. The Court was a Spot of Ground one hundred Cubits long, and fifty in Breadth, incloſed by twenty Columns, each of them twenty Cubits high, and ten in Breadth, covered with Silver, and ſtanding on brazen Baſes, five Cubits diſtant from each other; between which there were Curtains drawn, and faſtened with Hooks. At the Eaſt-end was an Entrance twenty Cubits wide, covered with a Curtain hanging looſe.

Q. *That I may form ſome Judgment of the Dimenſions of this ſacred Edifice, every Part of which was meaſured by the Cubit; Pray ſatisfy me what was the Meaſure of Cubit?*

A. A Cubit was about twenty two Inches of *Engliſh* Meaſure.

Chap. XXXVII.

The Ark deſcribed. The Mercy-ſeat. The Table of Shew-bread. The golden Candleſtick. The Altar of Incenſe. The anointing Oil, Incenſe, or Perfume.

Q. *EVERY Thing mentioned in the above Contents, are ſo perfectly deſcribed in this Chapter, that I ſhall aſk but one Queſtion in relation thereto; namely, why the Bread ſet on the Table made of* Shittim-wood, *was called* Shew-bread?

A. On this Table were twelve Cakes or Loaves to ſtand continually, from whence they were called *Shew-bread*, that is, *ſhewn*, or *ſet to view* before the Lord; theſe Loaves were new every Week, being ſet in two Rows, ſix in each Row, with Frankincenſe over them. The old Bread was taken away every Sabbath-Day, and new Bread laid in the room of it; and it was not lawful for any but the Prieſts to eat of that Bread.

Chap. XXXVIII.

The Altar for the Burnt-Offering. The Furniture thereof. The Brazen Laver with the Foot. The People numbered and taxed.

Q. *THERE is but one Difficulty in this Chapter that I want reſolved; namely, the Male* Iſraelites, *from Twenty Years old and upwards, being numbered, are found 603,550 Perſons, each of whom according to the late Law was to pay half a Shekel; What was the whole Sum paid in upon this Tax in* Engliſh Sterling *Money?*

A. The Total of this Tax, in *Hebrew* Money, amounted to 31,775 Shekels, which was equal to an hundred Talents, and 1775 Shekels over; from whence it appears, that a Talent contained 3000 Shekels, and the Produce of this Tax, in our Money, came to 34,421 *l.* 4 *s.* 6 *d.*

Chap. XXXIX.

The officiating and holy Garments of the Prieſts. The Ephod, the Breaſt-plate, and twelve Stones therein. The Cloak of the Ephod with Pomegranates and Bells. The Mitre and Girdle. The Plate and Inſcription on the Mitre. All the Work being finiſhed, is brought to Moſes, *who approves it, and bleſſes the People.*

EVERY Thing here mentioned, has been treated of in the foregoing Chapters; wherefore let us proceed to the next.

Chap. XL.

Moſes *commanded to ſet up the Tabernacle; to conſecrate* Aaron *and his Sons.* Moſes *brings the Ark into the Tabernacle, and ſets up the Table, Candleſtick, Golden Altar, Brazen Altar, and Laver. All Things being placed in Order, the Glory of God fills the Place; the Cloud remains upon it by Day, and Fire by Night.*

Q. *THE ſetting up of the Tabernacle, of which this Chapter gives an Account, was a very remarkable Occurrence; and therefore, I ſhould be glad to be informed of the preciſe Time when this great Affair was tranſacted.*

A. Within the Compaſs of leſs than ſix Months, the Tabernacle, and all its rich Furniture, were finiſhed, and on the firſt Day of the firſt Month, in the ſecond Year after the *Iſraelites* Departure out of *Egypt*, it was ſet up; when, no ſooner was this done, but the Pillar of the Cloud, which is called the *Glory of the Lord*, covered, and quite filled it, ſo that *Moſes*, for ſome Time, was not able to enter in.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by the* Glory of the Lord?

A. The Glory of the Lord, or, what the *Jews* call *Schechinah*, was a particular Manifeſtation of the divine Preſence, appearing uſually in the Shape of a Cloud, but ſometimes breaking out into a bright and refulgent Fire: For we muſt not ſuppoſe that the Cloud, and the Glory of God were two different Things, but one and the ſame; even as the Pillar of Cloud and Fire were; for outwardly it was a Cloud, and inwardly a Fire: And, in like Manner here, the external Part of it covered the Tabernacle without, while the inward Part of it ſhone in full Glory within the Houſe: In which Senſe the Account of this Appearance, *Exod.* xvi. 10. is to be underſtood: The *Glory of the Lord abode upon Mount* Sinai, *and the Cloud covered it*, (that is, covered the *Glory of the Lord*, not the *Mount*) *ſix Days*; for on the *ſeventh* Day, the Glory broke through the Cloud, and appeared like a *devouring Fire* in the Sight of all the People, *v.* 17. This wonderful Appearance, whether occaſioned by the Preſence of Angels, or, as others imagine, by the Reſidence of the *ſecond Perſon* of the ever bleſſed Trinity, took Poſſeſſion of the Tabernacle, on the Day of its Conſecration, and (as the *Jews* believe) paſſed into the Sanctuary of *Solomon*'s Temple, on the Day of its Dedication, where it continued to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the Temple by the *Chaldeans*; after which Time it was never more ſeen.

Q. *Moſes, I obſerve, has been very particular in his Deſcription of the* Tabernacle *with its ſeveral Veſſels and Utenſils; was nothing of this Kind ever erected for the publick Worſhip of God before the* Moſaic *Inſtitution?*

A. From the very firſt Beginning of Time, God had always ſome Place, appropriated to the ſolemn Duties of religious Worſhip. Even during the ſmall Space of his Continuance in Paradiſe, *Adam* had where to *Preſent* himſelf before the Lord; and after his Expulſion from thence, *his Sons,* in like Manner, had whither to *bring* their Oblations and Sacrifices. The *Patriarchs,* both before and after the Flood, uſed Altars and Mountains, and Groves, for the ſelf-ſame Purpoſe. Here they had their *Proſeuchæ,* or Places for Prayer, which were certain Plats of Ground, encompaſſed with a Wall, or ſome other Encloſure, and opened above: But the firſt Place of this Kind, that made any conſiderable Figure, was the *Tabernacle,* which God ordered *Moſes* to erect in the Wilderneſs, as an Habitation for his majeſtick Preſence to reſide in, of which *Moſes* has given us a very particular Deſcription.

Q. *As the* High-prieſt *was an Officer of the higheſt Prieſt and Authority under the* Levitical Law; *and as we have already had, and in the Courſe of this Work, ſhall have Occaſion frequently to mention him, I deſire you to give me ſome Account of his peculiar Privileges and Authority.*

A. The *High-prieſt* was at the Head of all religious Affairs, and the ordinary Judge of all the Difficulties, which related to them. He only had the Privilege of entering into the *Sanctuary* once a Year, which was on the Day of ſolemn *Expiation,* to make Atonement for the Sins of the whole People.

Q. *What was the chief Buſineſs of the* ordinary *Prieſts?*

A. They attended the Service of the Tabernacle: They kept up a perpetual *Fire* upon the Altar of *Burnt-offering*; lighted, and extinguiſhed the Lamps of the Golden Candleſtick; made the Loaves of Shew-bread; offered them on the Golden-Altar in the Sanctuary; changed them every Sabbath-day; and every Day at Night and Morning, carried in a ſmoaking Cenſer of Incenſe, and placed it on the golden Table, which, upon this Account, was likewiſe called the *Altar of Incenſe.*

Q. *But, if I rightly apprehend the Nature of their Office, their chief Buſineſs was to offer Sacrifices; now a true Information with reſpect to the ſeveral Sorts of Sacrifices by them offered, will give us a full View of the whole Extent of the Prieſts Employment.*

A. The *Jewiſh* Sacrifices were of four Kinds. *Firſt,* The *Burnt-offering,* which was totally conſumed by Fire upon the Altar, after that the Feet, and Entrails had been waſhed.

Secondly, The *Peace-offering,* whereof the inward Fat, or Tallow, made up with the Liver and Kidneys, was all burnt upon the Altar. The Breaſt and right Shoulder were the *Perquiſite* of the Prieſts, who were obliged to eat them in the *Holy Place,* and the Remainder belonged to the Perſon, who offered the Sacrifice.

Thirdly, The *Sacrifice for Sin,* committed either *wilfully,* or *ignorantly*; and in this the Prieſt took ſome of the Blood of the Victim, dipped his Finger in it, and ſprinkled it ſeven Times towards the Veil of the *Sanctuary.* The ſame Parts of the Victim were burnt on the Altar, in *this,* as in the former Sacrifice. The reſt (if the Sacrifice was offered for the Sin of the *High-prieſt,* or for the People) was carried without the Camp, and there burnt; but, if it was for a *private* Perſon, the Victim was divided (as was ſaid before) between the Prieſt, and the *Offerer.*

Fourthly, The *Sacrifice of Oblation,* which was either fine Flour, or Incenſe, Cakes of fine Flour and Oil baked, or the firſt Fruits of new Corn. Oil, Salt, Wine, and Frankincenſe went always along with every Thing that was offered. All the Frankincenſe was caſt into the Fire; but of the other Things, the Prieſt only burnt a Part, and the reſt he reſerved to himſelf.

Q. *Having taken a curſory View of the* Jewiſh *Tabernacle, and Prieſthood, I deſire to know for what Ends and Uſes theſe Things were inſtituted?*

A. St. *Paul* informs us, that the *Jewiſh* Law was an imperfect Diſpenſation from the firſt, and *added only becauſe of Tranſgreſſion, until the Seed ſhould come, to whom the Promiſe was made. Gal.* iii. 13. that in great Condeſcenſion, it was adapted to the weakneſs of that People, whom he compares to an Heir under a Tutor, or Governor, *Gall.* vi. 1. *&c.* So that *the Law was our School-maſter to bring us unto Chriſt, Gal.* iii. 24. &c. *having only a Shadow of good Things to come, and not the very Image of the Things, it could never, with thoſe Sacrifices, which were offered, Year by Year continually, make the Comers thereunto perfect.*

Q. *This undoubtedly is a true State of the Caſe; and therefore I ſhould be glad if you would inſtance in ſome Particulars, wherein the* Jewiſh *Religion was, in a great Meaſure, intended to typify and prefigure the more perfect Diſpenſation of the Goſpel.*

A. Thus; the *Tabernacle* itſelf was a Type of our Redeemer dwelling in our Nature; for ſo St. *John* tells us, that *the Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt among us,* (*John* i. 14.) as in a Tabernacle. The *Altar of Burnt-offerings* in the *Court* pointed out the Death and Sacrifice of our Lord (*Heb.* x. 13.) by the ſhedding of whoſe Blood our Sins are pardoned, and we received into Mercy and Favour. The *Altar of Incenſe* within the *Holy Place* denoted our Lord's powerful Interceſſion for us, in his exalted State of Glory; and the *Ark of the Covenant* in the *Holy of Holies* was an eminent Emblem of him, from whoſe Mouth we received a Law, *founded upon better Promiſes*; by whoſe Interceſſion we have Acceſs to the *Throne of Grace, with all Boldneſs*; and whoſe *Satisfaction* to the divine Juſtice is our *Propitiatory,* or *Mercy-ſeat.*

Q. *Wherein was the High Prieſt a Type of Chriſt?*

A. The Author to the *Hebrews* has declared that he was ſo in more Inſtances than one. The *Jewiſh* High-prieſt, was the only Man permitted to enter the *Holy of Holies*; *and we have ſuch an High-prieſt,* ſays the Apoſtle, *who is ſet on the Right Hand of the Throne of the Majeſty in the Heavens, a Miniſter of the Sanctuary, and of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not Man.* The *Jewiſh* High-prieſt offered a ſolemn expiatory Sacrifice once a Year; our Lord *appeared once in the End of the World to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf.* After the expiatory Sacrifice, the *Jewiſh* High-prieſt, went into the *Holy Place,* there to offer Incenſe on the golden Altar; our Lord, *when he had purged our Sins, ſat down on the Right Hand of the Majeſty on high,* there to *appear in the Preſence of God,* and, by the Incenſe of his Merits, to make continual *Interceſſion for us.*

Q. *In what Manner were the Sacrifices under the Law, Types and Prefigurations of Chriſt?*

A. They were ſo in ſeveral Reſpects. The Conditions of a *Jewiſh* Sacrifice were, that it ſhould be without Blemiſh, publickly preſented before the Congregation, ſubſtituted in the Sinner's Room, and the Iniquities of the Sinner laid upon it. With Relation to theſe Properties our Saviour is ſaid to be *holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparated from Sinners.* That he might *Sanctify his People,* he is ſaid to *have ſuffered without the Gate, bearing our Reproach*; and that *he, who knew no Sins, became Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.*

If we conſider the ſeveral *Sorts* of Sacrifices under the Law, we ſhall ſoon perceive that theſe equally lead us to Chriſt. For he was the *Treſpaſs-offering,* in that *he was made Sin for us*; the *Peace-offering, becauſe he made Peace by the Blood of his Croſs*; the *Meat and Drink-offering,* for *his Fleſh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed*; the *Scape-goat,* for he hath carried away our Sins, never to be more remembered againſt us; the *Paſchal Lamb,* for *Chriſt, our Paſſover, is ſacrificed for us*; the *great Sacrifice of Attonement,* for *Jeſus Chriſt the righteous is both our Advocate with the Father, and a Propitiation for our Sins:* And, in fine, *his Blood, who, through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf to God without Spot,* is more effectual, *than the Blood of Bulls, and Goats, to purge our Conſciences from dead Works, to ſerve the living God.*

Q. *Why did the Ceremonial Law ceaſe at the Coming of Chriſt?*

A. From what has been ſaid, it appears, that the chief End of the ſeveral Inſtitutions, relating to the ceremonial Part of the *Jewiſh* Worſhip, was to prefigure the Perſon, and Tranſactions of our bleſſed Saviour, *when the Fulneſs of Time was come, that God ſhould ſend forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem thoſe that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons.* And therefore, ſince the Ceremonies of the *Jewiſh* Law could never be of any Eſteem in the Sight of God, any otherwiſe than as they promoted this End, and prepared Men's Minds for the Reception of a more perfect Inſtitution of Religion; it is manifeſt, that when this more perfect Inſtitution was once ſettled, the former, and more imperfect was to ceaſe, of Courſe; *there being* neceſſarily *a Diſannullity of the Commandment going before, for the Weakneſs or Unprofitableneſs thereof.*

Q. *What Inference do you draw from the Whole?*

A. From hence we may infer, that, tho' the Eſſence of Religion be eternally and immutably the ſame, yet the Form and Inſtitution of it may be, and often has been, changed. The Eſſence of all Religion is Obedience to that moral and eternal Law, which obliges us to imitate the Life of God in Juſtice, Mercy and Holineſs; that is, *to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent World.* This is the Sum of all natural Religion, as appears from the Diſcourſes of thoſe wiſer Heathens, who were freeſt from Prejudice and Superſtition. This was the Sum of the *Jewiſh* Religion, as appears from the earneſt and frequent Proteſtations of God to that People by his Servants the Prophets: And this likewiſe is the Sum of the Chriſtian Religion, as the Apoſtles every where inculcate. But tho' Religion it ſelf is thus immutably the ſame, yet the Form and Inſtitution of it may be different.

Q. *What Reaſon may be aſſigned why the Almighty gave ſuch different Inſtitutions of that Religion, which, in it ſelf, is eſſentially the ſame?*

A. When natural Religion, by Reaſon of its Obſcurity, in this corrupt Eſtate of human Nature, proved ineffectual to make Men truly religious, God left them no longer to the Guidance of their Reaſon only, but gave them firſt the *Patriarchal,* and afterwards the *Moſaical* Diſpenſation; and, when (through the Incumberance of ſo many ritual Obſervances) it proved ineffectual to the ſame great End, God aboliſhed the Form of Religion likewiſe, and inſtituted the Chriſtian. In all which Proceeding there is no Reflection at all upon the immutable Nature of God. For, as the Divine Nature is, in the trueſt and higheſt Senſe, unchangeable; ſo Religion it ſelf, in its Nature and Eſſence, is likewiſe unchangeable. But as the Capacities, the Prejudices, and the Circumſtances of Men are different; ſo the Inſtitution and outward Form of that Religion (which in its Eſſence is always the ſame) may with the good Pleaſure of God, be changed; even as a careful Nurſe (to uſe a Scripture Compariſon upon this Occaſion) adapts the Diet to the Strength and Conſtitution of the Perſon ſhe attends: *For every one that uſeth Milk* (as the Elements of the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation were) *is unſkilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs, for he is a Babe*; *but ſtrong Meat* (or a Religion of greater Perfection, as the Chriſtian) *belongeth to them that are of full Age*; *even thoſe who by Reaſon of Uſe have their Senſes exerciſed to diſcern both Good and Evil.*

THE
THIRD BOOK
OF
MOSES,
CALLED
LEVITICUS.

The Name of Leviticus, *given by the* Greek *Interpreters to this Book, intimates the Subject matter treated of therein; namely, the various Rules and Forms of ceremonial Worſhip, which God preſcribed to the People in the Deſart, after the Tabernacle was framed and erected; eſpecially about the Offerings and Sacrifices, to be adminiſtered by the Family of* Levi. *Offerings and Sacrifices had been eſtabliſhed by God from the Beginning after Man's Sin; and the Promiſe that he ſhould be reſtored to Grace by the* Meſſias; *and had been continually uſed in the Church; and were of two Sorts, and for two Ends. The one Sort was expiatory or propitiatory; the other were Euchariſtical, or of Thankſgiving, to make a publick Acknowledgment of God's Benefits, as well general, as particular. But after the* Iſraelits *were came out of* Egypt, *the Almighty, willing to give a firm and perpetual Form to his Service, and to baniſh all arbitrary Licence, and to ſhew that he is pleaſed with nothing but Obedience, by which alone he can and ought to be lawfully ſerved; both Kinds of Sacrifices were regulated by certain Laws and Circumſtances, of Rites, Times, and Places. And eſpecially by appointing certain Perſons conſecrated and pleaſing to God, according to his free Choice, by which he took the Tribe of* Levi *in general for his Service; and out of that Tribe* Aaron, *and his Deſcendants, particularly, to offer Sacrifices, whereof the Elders, from Father to Son, ſhould ſucceſſively hold the Place of High-prieſt.*

Beſides this firſt and principal Part, this Book contains alſo the ceremonial Laws concerning the Diſtinctions of Meats, clean and unclean, lawful and unlawful; which were given as well for an Exerciſe and abſolute Proof of ſincere Obedience to God, as for a Document of holy Diſcretion which Believers ought to uſe in abſtaining from every Thing with which God is diſpleaſed, or which may ſtain the Conſcience.

Farther; Moſes, *in this Book, deſcribes all ceremonial Uncleanneſſes, by Meats, corporal Infirmities, and Accidents; and the Purification required in every one of them particularly; together with the Appointment of a general Purgation or Atonement to be made once a Year, of all the Peoples Uncleanneſſes.*

In this Book are alſo eſtabliſhed the Laws of Affinity and Conſanguinity, forbidden in Marriages, and divers other Precepts of Juſtice; Charity and Piety; the Purity required in Prieſts; of Feaſts; of the Reſting of the Earth after ſeven Years; of the Jubilee; Vows; Things conſecrated to God, and the Ranſom of them; Things which were uſed in antient Times for an Order of Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline, and have likewiſe ſome reaſonable Correſpondency with the Myſteries of the Goſpel; of which things the Levites *were the ordinary Teachers, ſacred Miniſters, and publick Expounders. Finally, all theſe Commandments were ſealed by God with excellent Promiſes to them that ſhould keep them, and rigorous Threatnings to the Breakers of them.*

CHAP. I.

Laws concerning ſlaughtering the Burnt-offering in the Tabernacle. The Offering to conſiſt of great Cattle, ſuch as Bullocks; or of ſmall, ſuch as Sheep and Goats; or of Fowls, as of Turtle Doves and young Pigeons.

Q. W*HY does the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, and Book, begin with the Word* And, *which ſeems to connect it with ſomething foregoing?*

A. The *Jewiſh* Commentators, who are great Obſervers of Words, Letters, Phraſes, and ſuch like, ſay, that by the Word *And* beginning the Book, Boo is intimated, that it is immediately connected with and joined to the latter End of *Exodus*; in which, as we apprehend, they are not miſtaken; for the Thread of the Narration does, indeed, paſs on directly from one Book, to the other, as the Reader may eaſily perceive, by comparing the *fortieth* Chapter of *Exodus* with the *firſt* of *Leviticus*.

Q. *What is chiefly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. The Tabernacle being ſet up, and all Things prepared, God proceeded to give Directions to *Moſes*, and by him to the People, in what Manner his publick Worſhip, under that Diſpenſation, ſhould be performed, namely, by Sacrifice, of which three Sorts are mentioned in this Chapter; of great, and ſmall Cattle, and Fowls, as the Circumſtances of the Offerer could afford to bring one or the other.

CHAP. II.

Laws concerning the Meat-offerings, *which were of Meal-flour, either raw, or baked, cooked in the Pan, or boiled in the Kettle. Leaven and Honey forbidden to be mixed with it; all Offerings to be ſalted. Of offering the Firſt Fruits.*

Q. *IN this Chapter I obſerve, that* Leaven *was forbidden in all Free-will Offerings; what was the Reaſon of this Prohibition?*

A. To ſignify, that all Leaven of Malice, Hypocryſy and Pride in all the Spiritual Offerings, or good Works, of the Faithful, *Luke* xii. 1. ſhould be laid aſide.

Q. *Why is Honey likewiſe forbidden?*

A. Becauſe, notwithſtanding the Sweetneſs of it, it hath that Quality, that it will make the Dough or Paſte it is mixed with ſour, to riſe, and become puffy. Or, it may be, God would intimate, that the Sweets and Pleaſures of the Fleſh ſpoil the ſtudy of good Works.

Q. *Why was the Meat-offering to be ſeaſoned with* Salt?

A. Salt is a Sign of Confirmation of the *Covenant* with God; a Phraſe taken from the common ſaying, *that familiar Friends uſe the ſame Salt*, that is, feed at one Table. Salt was likewiſe antiently a Sign or Token of Friendſhip; alſo of an *Inferior's* Duty whereby he was bound to his *Superior*, whence comes the Word *Salary*, or Wages. *Ezra* iv. 14. *Salt* was likewiſe to remind us to lead an untainted and uncorrupt Life. *Mark* iv. 19.

CHAP. III.

Laws to regulate the Manner of offering the Peace-Offerings of Bullocks, Sheep, and Goats. Eating of Fat and Blood expreſly forbidden, and the Statute made perpetual.

Q. *WHAT was ſignified by the Peace-Offering?*

A. The Word in the *Hebrew* ſignifies *Welfare, Proſperity*, or *Requital*; implying ſuch a Sacrifice whereby Men requite God with Thankſgiving for all the Welfare and Proſperity, Peace, and Bleſſings he beſtows upon them; in which Regard it might likewiſe be termed a *Requite-Offering*.

Q. *Wherein did the* Peace-Offering *differ from the* Burnt-Offering?

A. The *Burnt-Offering* might conſiſt of *Doves*, or *Pigeons*, where the Circumſtances of the Offerer were narrow; but *Peace-Offerings* were only to be made of Bullocks, Sheep or Goats; the *Burnt-offering* was to be a Male, the Peace-offering either Male or Female, ſo it was without Blemiſh; of the *Burnt-Offering* the Prieſt had nothing but the Skins, whereas *Peace-Offerings* were divided into three Parts, namely, *one*, which was burnt on the Altar, conſiſting of the Fat covering the Inwards, and the Rumps of Sheep or Lambs; *another* belonged to the Prieſt, namely, the Shoulder and Breaſt; of the Remainder, the Offerer and his Friends made a Feaſt, and rejoiced together.

Q. *Why are the Sacrifices that were burnt, called Food, v. 11.?*

A. To ſhew that God took Delight therein, and required them as his Part of the Sacrifices.

Q. *Why was the Fat and Blood of Beaſts forbid to be eaten?*

A. By the firſt was intimated, that Men ought to put a Reſtraint on their carnal Appetites; and by the laſt, that they ſhould abhor Cruelty.

CHAP. IV.

Of Sacrifices for the Sins of Ignorance, committed either by the High-prieſt, the whole Congregation, by a Prince or Ruler, or by a private and ordinary Man.

Q. *WHAT was the Intent of a Sin-Offering?*

A. To make Atonement for ſome particular Sin, inadvertently committed, or ignorantly ſuppoſed to be no Sin, or falling into any Sin through Unadviſedneſs, unwarily, in Haſte, Heat, or Paſſion, not being ſenſible of the Sinfulneſs of it, till after the Treſpaſs committed; ſuch a Tranſgreſſor was to offer the Sacrifices here preſcribed.

Q. *What was ſignified by the Sinner's laying his Hand on the Head of the Sacrifice?*

A. This was a very proper Ceremony, to put him in Mind, that he deſerved the Death that the Creature was going to ſuffer; and, at the ſame Time to ſupport the Spirits of true Penitents, God, who had commanded ſuch a Service, promiſed he would moſt certainly accept of it, for the Pardon of their Sins, until a more perfect Satisfaction ſhould be made.

Q. *What Inference do you draw from the manner of Attonement made by theſe Sacrifices?*

A. That the Mercy and Goodneſs of God is exceeding great. Man by Sin had merited Death; God promiſed him, in his own Time, a *Redeemer* to ſatisfy his Juſtice, till that *Redeemer* ſhould come, he was pleaſed to accept of the Life of an Animal.

CHAP. V.

Concerning the Offering for the Sin of concealing of Swearing, &c. For touching unwarily any unclean Thing; of vain Swearing; the Treſpaſs-Offering; the Kind of Offering to be made for every one of theſe.

Q. *WHAT is firſt offered to our Conſideration in this Chapter?*

A. Here every Perſon is enjoined to bear Witneſs to Truth, and diſcloſe the Iniquity of the Ungodly. If a Man had heard Blaſphemy or Curſing uttered againſt God or his Neighbour, he was not, for Affections ſake to conceal it; if he did, he was to ſuffer Puniſhment for the Treſpaſs of Concealment.

Q. *What is the Difference between the* Treſpaſs-Offerings, *and* Sin-Offerings?

A. The *Treſpaſs-Offerings* were made to attone for ſuch Offences as injured a Man's Neighbour; Sin-Offerings for ſuch as were committed againſt God.

Q. *Why was not the Sin-offering to be mixed with Oil or Frankincenſe?*

A. The Reaſon of this Prohibition is declared *Numb.* v. 15. becauſe this Offering cauſed a Remembrance of Iniquity before the Lord; and not the Sweetneſs and Pleaſantneſs of voluntary Service.

CHAP. VI.

Laws concerning thoſe who purloined any Thing from their Neighbours. The Law of the Burnt-offering. *The Offering at the Conſecration of a Prieſt. Of ſeveral other Offerings.*

Q. H*AS not ſome particular Obſervations been made on the Beginning of this Chapter?*

A. The ſeven firſt Verſes are, by ſome, made to cohere with the preceeding Chapter, accortding o the Partition in the *Hebrew* Text, and that not without Reaſon, ſince they treat of the Treſ-paſs-offering.

Q. *What general Obſervation do you make, in relation to theſe Injunctions, about ſinning againſt our Neighbour?*

A. The Majeſty of God is violated by our treſpaſſing againſt our Neighbour, not only becauſe Man is his Creature, and belongs to him; but alſo, that God hath commanded us to love our Neighbour, and not to do him any Hurt; beſides the Name of the Lord is often abuſed in and about the Treſpaſſes which are committed againſt our Neighbour. In theſe Caſes the Offender was obliged to offer a Sacrifice for his Guilt, for his Expiation, and to make an Atonement with God, and alſo to make Satisfaction to his Neighbour.

Q. *In what Manner were the Laws concerning theſe Sacrifices enjoined to be performed?*

A. The Fire on the Altar of Burnt-offerings, was to be kept continually burning, the Prieſt attending, clad in Linnen Garments, and ſcraping together the Aſhes which fell from the Altar, was to lay them up by the Side thereof; and afterwards he was to change his Garments, and to carry the Aſhes forth into a clean Place without the Camp.

Q. *Why was the* Meat-offering *and* Sin-offering *for* Aaron *and his Sons, to be eaten within the Court of the Sanctuary?*

A. This Law was grounded on three Reaſons. *Firſt*, That the Things once hallowed might not be ſlighted through common Uſe. *Secondly*, That the ſame might not be abuſed afterwards by or among the People, for Shew, Pride, Gluttony, or any otherwiſe. *Thirdly*, That the Prieſts who miniſtred at the Altar, might live by the Altar, 1 *Cor.* ix. 13.

CHAP. VII.

The Law of the Treſpaſs-Offering; Thank-Offering; Praiſe-Offering; and Free-will Offering. The Fat and Blood forbid to be eaten. The Prieſt's Portion in the Peace-Offering.

Q. W*HY was Leaven only permitted in Thank-Offerings?*

A. Becauſe, that in thoſe Offerings, the Offerer was not queſtioned about the Purity and Sincerity required in him; but was only to acknowledge God's Benefits, among which that of convenient feeding of Man's Body with *Leavened Bread* was to be numbered.

Q. *How many Kinds were there of ſuch Sacrifices as were not for Expiation?*

A. Of theſe Sacrifices which were not for Expiation of Sin, but for a Kind of Homage to God, and an Acknowledgment for Benefits received at his Hands, there were three Kinds. *Firſt*, Voluntary, for God's Benefits in general. *2dly*, Of Praiſe, for ſome remarkable peculiar Favour. *3dly*, Upon a Vow, when the Benefit was obtained after, and by Means of ſome ſingular Vow made.

Q. *Why were the Breaſt and Shoulder given to the Prieſt?*

A. To intimate the two principal Parts of a ſacred Miniſters Office; namely, Labour, ſignified by the Shoulder; and Diligence, Zeal, and Affection figured by the Breaſt: And therefore the High-Prieſt did, to the ſame End, wear the Names of the Tribes of *Iſrael* upon his *Shoulders*, and upon his Breaſt.

Q. *Why was the Breaſt called a* Wave-offering?

A. Becauſe it was waved or moved by the Prieſt towards the four Quarters of the World, at the Time of its being offered.

Q. *Why was the Shoulder called an* Heave-Offering?

A. Becauſe the Prieſt in the offering it, heaved or lifted it up on high.

CHAP. VIII.

Moſes, *by God's Command, aſſembles the People, and conſecrates* Aaron *and his Sons, cloathes them with the ſacred Garments, anoints the Tabernacle and its Furniture, and the Holy Garments. Sacrifices offered for them; other Ceremonies and Injunctions relating to them.*

Q. E*VERY Thing in this Chapter, relating to the Conſecration of* Aaron *and his Sons, is ſo plain and intelligible, that any farther Information ſeems needleſs; I ſhall therefore only deſire a little Explanation of the three laſt Verſes of the Chapter.*

A. The Offering being ended, and all the Ceremonies relating to them, *Moſes* commanded *Aaron* and his Sons to boil and eat their Part of the Sacrifice, at the Door of the Tabernacle, and to remain there ſeven Days and Nights, to keep the Charge of the Lord on Pain of Death; for thus, *Moſes* told them, he was commanded. As if he had ſaid, I have faithfully performed what belonged to mine office in your Conſecration, it remains now that you fulfil yours by ſtanding in the Holy Place, in continual Exerciſes of Piety; which denotes, that the ſpiritual Sanctification of the Faithful, is accompliſhed with Time and Perſeverance.

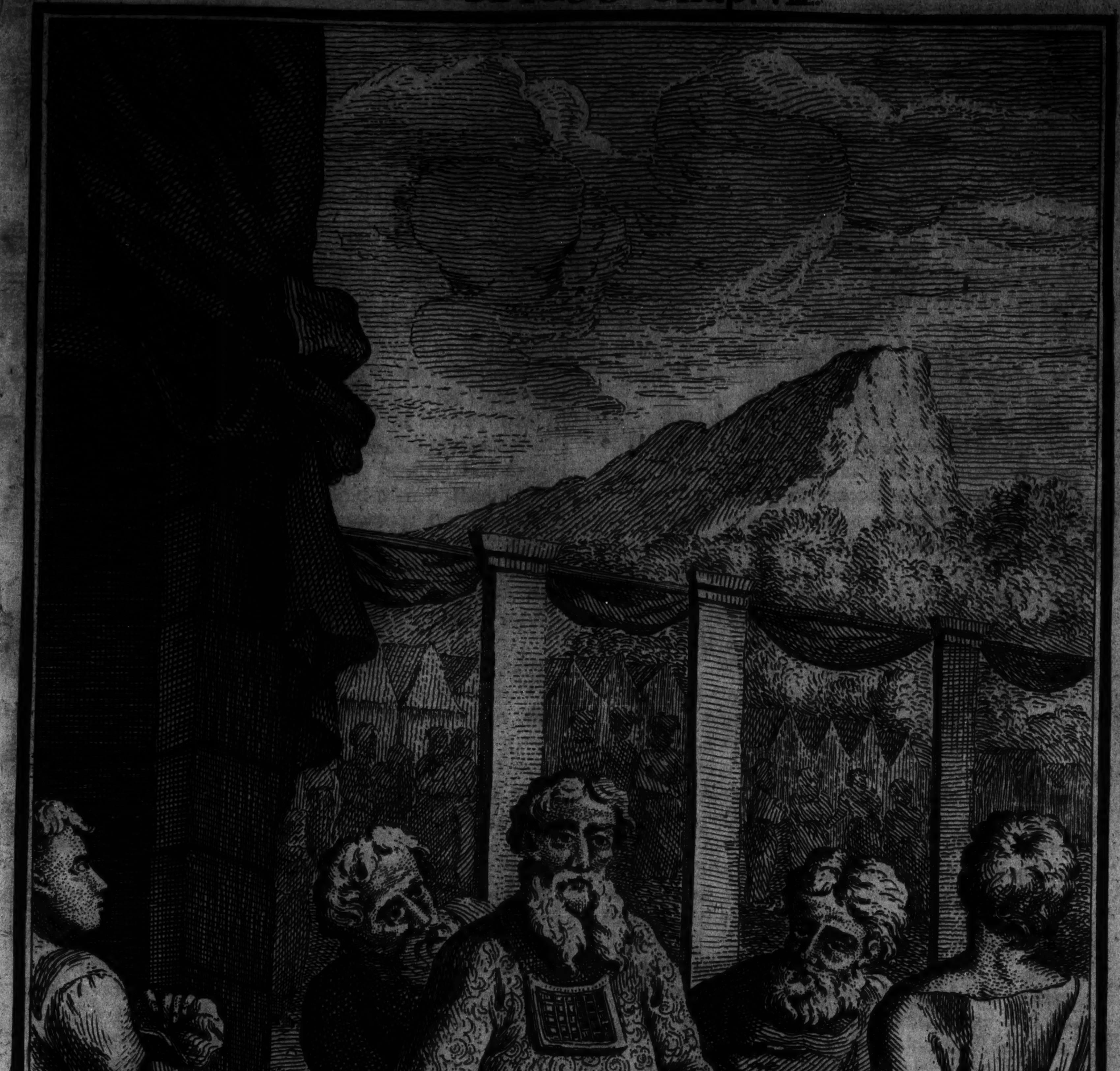
CHAP. IX.

Aaron *is charged to begin the Functions of his Prieſtly Office; accordingly he offers firſt for himſelf; and then for the People; he bleſſes the People; the Glory of the Lord appears; and a miraculous Fire deſcends upon the Altar, and conſumes the Burnt-Offering,* &c.

Q. W*HAT firſt deſerves Obſervation in this Chapter?*

A. *Aaron* and his Sons having abode in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, ſeven Days and Nights, on the eight Day, *Moſes* ſummoned together *Aaron* and his Sons, and the Elders of *Iſrael*, that is, all the Heads and Chief of the People, repreſenting the whole Commonwealth of *Iſrael*; who being aſſembled, *Moſes*, addreſſing himſelf firſt to *Aaron*, commanded

LEVITICUS Chap: VIII



Moſes conſecrateth Aaron & his Sons,

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ed him to take poſſeſſion of the Prieſthood, by offering the four principal Sacrifices, aſſuring him and the People, that God would appear among them. In Compliance with theſe Inſtructions, the People took the Offerings they were commanded to make, and brought them before the Tent of the Congregation, waiting there in a Body, to ſee the Manifeſtation, which *Moſes* had told them, God would make of his Power and Glory.

Q. *What was next done on this ſolemn Occaſion*;

A. Every Thing being in the Order as *Moſes* had directed, he requires his Brother to offer up the *Sin-Offering*, the *Burnt-Offering*, and the *Meat Offering*, to make Attonement for himſelf and the People, which *Aaron*, aſſiſted by his Sons, accordingly performed; and when he had ſo done, he ſtretched forth his Hands towards the People and bleſſed them, as a *Prieſt*, whoſe Office it was to impart the Spiritual Things unto the People of God, by teaching, offering, and praying. The publick Bleſſing was a Kind of Prayer, the Form of which we read, *Numb.* vi. 24.

Q. *This ſolemn Benediction being given to the People, what followed thereupon?*

A. The Glory of the Lord appeared to the People, and ſuddenly a miraculous *Fire* came forth from *Jehovah*, and conſumed the *Burnt-Offerings* upon the Altar with the Fat, which was the Cauſe of great Rejoicing to the People, whoſe Minds were elated with Joy and Admiration; they firſt ſhouted aloud, and then fell proſtrate on their Faces, worſhipping the great God of their Fathers.

Q. *This Fire, thus miraculouſly kindled, was, by the divine Command, to be kept perpetually burning*, Lev. vi. 12, 13. *how could this be done, when both the* Tabernacle *and the* Altar, *whereon it burnt, were in Motion, as they evidently were when the* Iſraelites *journeyed in the Wilderneſs?*

A. I ſee no Reaſon, why we may not ſuppoſe, that, upon theſe Occaſions there might be a certain portable Conſervatory of this *ſacred Fire*, diſtinct from the *Altar*. And that there was ſome ſuch Veſſel made uſe of, ſeems manifeſt from the Injunction, that, at ſuch Times, *the Aſhes ſhould be removed from off the Altar, and a purple Cloth ſpread over it*, *Numb.* iv. 14.

CHAP X.

Nadab *and* Abihu, *for offering ſtrange Fire are burnt by Fire.* Moſes *orders their dead Bodies to be carried without the Camp, and forbids* Aaron *and his Sons to mourn for them, as alſo to drink Wine, or any other ſtrong Drink when they went into the* Tabernacle *of the Congregation. The Law about eating the holy Things*; Aaron's *Excuſe for tranſgreſſing it.*

Q. *I don't find that God had any where commanded, that no* ſtrange Fire *ſhould be offered in the* holy Place; *how happened it then, that* Nadab *and* Abihu *were ſo ſeverely puniſhed for doing a Thing which was not prohibited?*

A. What the Sin of *offering ſtrange Fire before the Lord* was, and, upon what Account it raiſed the divine Indignation againſt *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the two Sons of *Aaron*, will beſt appear, by attending a little to the probable Occaſion of it. After the Conſecration of *Aaron* and his Sons to the Prieſtly Office, we are told, that a miraculous *Fire from the Lord*, that is, a Fire which came immediately down from Heaven, or out of the Cloud, which covered the *Tabernacle*, conſumed the firſt Victims which *Aaron* offered for a *Burnt-Offering*; that God had expreſly commanded, that *the Fire which was upon the Altar*, ſhould not be ſuffered to *go out*, which (according to the Opinion of moſt Interpreters) ſignifies, that the ſaid miraculous Fire, which had confirmed the Inſtallation of *Aaron* and his Sons, after ſo ſurprizing a Manner, ſhould be kept *alive*, and burning, with the utmoſt Care; and that, (as it was required by another Law) at this very Fire, *Aaron* was to light the Incenſe, which he offered to God, *in the moſt holy Place*, on the great *Day of Expiation*; ſo may take it for granted, that the like Law was impoſed on the *inferior* Prieſts, with relation to the Incenſe, which they were to offer every Day before God, in the *holy Place*. We have indeed no Mention of ſuch a Law, but the Hiſtory, we are commenting upon, gives us ſtrong Preſumption, that the Uſe of this Fire *only* was permitted, and therefore the Words in the Text, *which he commanded them not*, is thought to imply an expreſs Prohibition of any other.

The Crime then of *Nadab* and *Abihu* conſiſted in their Kindling with Fire, different from that, which was continually on the Altar of Burnt-offerings, and, conſequently, different from what God had ordered them to uſe in burning, the Incenſe, which their Office of Prieſt obliged them to offer up to God, every Morning and Evening, in the *holy Place*. Some pretend, that they endeavoured to intrude into the moſt *holy Place*, which was not permitted them to enter; becauſe, immediately after the Recital of the Manner of their Death, in another Place *Moſes* relates, how God commanded him to ſpeak unto *Aaron that he come not, at all Times, into the Holy Place, within the Veil, before the Mercy Seat, that he died not*: While others inſinuate, that they were guilty of Intemperance, at the Entertainment made at their *Inſtallation*, becauſe that, after the Account of their fatal End, *Moſes* by divine Direction, gives this Injunction to *Aaron*, and the Remainder of his Sons; *Do not drink Wine, nor ſtrong Drink, thou, nor thy Sons with thee, when ye go into the Tabernacle of the Congregation, leſt ye die. It ſhall be a Statute forever through your Generations, that ye put Difference between Holy and Unholy, between Unclean and Clean.* But theſe are no more than bare Surmiſes, that have no proper Foundation in the foregoing Texts; nor is there any Occaſion to hunt out for Paſſages, to augment theſe Offenders Crimes.

Q. *Were there any farther Aggravations of their Offence?*

A. *Nadab* and *Abihu* had not only been admitted, in common with the reſt of their Brethren, to the Honour of the *Prieſthood*, which among the *Jews*, was a Dignity of no ſmall Eſteem; but had particular Motives, which the Others had not, to the Obſervance of all God's Commandments, as having had the Privilege of ſeeing the *Symbols* of the Divine Preſence, on the *formidable* Mount, from whence his Laws were promulged, without being *conſumed*. The higher therefore their Station was, and the more diſtinguiſhing the Favours, they had received, the more provoking was their Affront, in attempting to adulterate an Ordinance of God's Inſtitution. *Common Fire*, they thought, might ſerve the Purpoſe of burning Incenſe, as well as that, which was held more *ſacred*: At leaſt, in the *Gaiety*, or rather Naughtineſs of their Hearts, they were minded to make the Experiment, even in Oppoſition to the Divine Command; and therefore it was juſt, and requiſite in God (eſpecially in the Beginning of the Prieſthood, and when one

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Alteration of a divine Precept might, in Proceſs of Time, be productive of many more) to inflict an exemplary Puniſhment, that others might *hear and fear, and not commit the like Abomination.*

Q. *But is it not ſtrange, not to ſay abhorrent to Nature, that* Aaron *ſhould be forbid to mourn, and his Friends to make any Funeral Solemnities for their untimely Deaths?*

A. This exemplary Puniſhment was inflicted by way of Terror to others; and for that Reaſon *Moſes* is commanded to require *Aaron* to make no Lamentation, or Funeral Pomp for them; which among the *Jews*, who, of all other Nations, were ſo very ſumptuous in the *Obſequies* of their deceaſed Friends, was accounted a ſore Judgment. In the Caſe of *Jehoiakim*, the King of *Judah*, the Commination of God is very terrible. *They ſhall not lament for him,* ſaying, *Ah my Brother! or, ah Siſter! they ſhall not lament for him,* ſaying, *Ah Lord! or, ah his Glory! He ſhall be buried with the Burial of an Aſs, drawn, and caſt forth beyond the Gates of* Jeruſalem. Temporal Judgments, however, are not always ſure Indications of the final Condemnations of the Perſons, on whom they fall, and therefore *Aaron* had no Occaſion utterly to deſpond; on the contrary, he might preſume that the Juſtice of God, being well ſatisfied, with the preſent exemplary Puniſhment of his Sons, might be appeaſed, with relation to their eternal State; and that, *tho' their Fleſh was deſtroyed, yet their Spirits might be ſaved in the Day of the Lord.* He knew too, how much himſelf had offended in the Matter of the *Golden Calf*; and might juſtly think, that God had called his Sin to Remembrance in the Deſtruction of his two Sons. He acknowledged therefore the Righteouſneſs of God, in all that he had brought upon him, and, in the Phraſe of Scripture, *was dumb, and opened not his Mouth, becauſe it was the Lord's Doing.* *Pſ.* xxxix. 9.

CHAP. XI.

What Beaſts might, and might not be eaten. Fiſh, Fowl, and creeping Creatures that were unclean. An Exhortation to Purity and Holineſs.

Q. WHY *did God make a Diſtinction of Meats amongſt the* Jews?

A. God Almighty, from this firſt Choice of the *Iſraelites* to be his People, intended to diſtinguiſh them from other Nations, and more eſpecially from the *Egyptians*, among whom they had long lived, had contracted their Manners, and were too tenacious of their Cuſtoms: And therefore, in Oppoſition to theſe, God enjoined them to eat ſuch Creatures as were worſhipped in *Egypt*, which would be an effectual Means to render the Pretences of theſe ſham Deities contemptible; as, on the contrary, he ordered them to abſtain from ſuch as were held in the greateſt Delicacy among them: And, becauſe the *Egyptians* would have nothing to do with ſuch Animals, as had *Hoofs* and *Horns*, the *Jews* were allowed to eat none, but what *parted the Hoof*, as well as *chewed the Cud.*

Q. *But were there not ſome Reaſons in Nature for the prohibiting them ſome Sorts of Creatures?*

A. It's obſervable, that, in the very Make and Nature of ſome Animals, there are certain Qualities, which prejudice Mankind againſt them, and ſeem, as it were to *deſecrate* their Uſe; that ſome, for Inſtance, are monſtrouſly big, others very ugly and deformed, ſome come from *heterogeneous* Mixtures, others feed upon dead Bodies, and to others moſt Men have an inbred Antipathy; ſo that, in the main, what the Law forbad the *Jews* in this Regard, was Nature's Averſion before.

Q. *But if they would naturally have refrained from ſuch Things, what Occaſion was there for the divine Interdiction of them?*

A. In Anſwer to this, it may be obſerved, that if we attend to the Hiſtory of this People, we ſhall find, that they had their Seaſons of Affliction and Scarcity, as well as of Proſperity and Plenty. At the very Time, when theſe Prohibitions were given them, they were travelling, and were to continue travelling for many Years, in a waſte and barren Deſart, which, being deſtitute of the Conveniencies and Neceſſaries of Life, might tempt them to make Experiment upon the Fleſh of ſome of thoſe Animals, that they naturally abhored, but, upon ſuch an Occaſion, they thought, might innocently make uſe of: And therefore, to ſet a ſtronger Guard upon human Nature, God thought proper to confirm this their innate Averſion, by the Sanction and Eſtabliſhment of Laws, which were to laſt beyond the Term of their Continuance in the Wilderneſs.

A. Can you alledge any Reaſons why God enacted a Diſcrimination of Meats, from the Quality of Animals?

A. Yes; namely, to give his People a *myſtical Syſtem of Morality.* Thus the Birds, which were allowed to be eaten, (the Pigeon, the Dove, the Partridge, for Inſtance) were either tame, or of gentle Nature, feeding on Grain or Pulſe; whereas all the Species that lived on Prey, and ſuch as gorge themſelves with Fleſh and Blood, were utterly forbidden; thereby to bring into Reputation Juſtice, Mercy, and Moderation, and, at the ſame Time, to diſcountenance the contrary Diſpoſition to Rapine, Oppreſſion and Cruelty. It is a noted Allegory, that in *Homer*, of *Circe*'s changing *Ulyſſes*'s Friends into Hogs. By *Circe*, the Poet intends that we ſhould underſtand *ſenſual Pleaſures*; by *Ulyſſes, Reaſon and Diſcretion*; and his *Retinue*, the inferior *Faculties and Powers*: And, in like Manner, the Prohibition of Swine's Fleſh was to reſtrain them from ſuch Luſts as *were againſt the Spirit*; as pollute and debaſe human Nature, like another Creature's wallowing in the Mire: For, as a learned Author obſerves, the *Jewiſh* Law was moſt remarkably ſtrict in its Prohibitions of Things that were ſordid and ſlovenly; wherein it ſeems to have had an eſpecial Aim to the framing and forming of a People, that had lived uncultivated, by Reaſon of their long Slavery in *Egypt*, and their dirty Work in Clay and Bricks, to an Elegancy and Politeneſs of Manners, as well as a Deteſtation of all filthy and brutal *Luſts*; that being *ſet free from Sin* (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it) *they might glorify God in Purity and Holineſs, both in their Bodies, and in their Spirits, which were his.*

Q. *What Reaſon does the Almighty give for his Injunctions of ceremonial Cleanneſs?*

A. His Reaſon is given in the 44th and 45th Verſes, and is taken, *1ſt*, From his own Nature, which is ſpiritual, and perfectly holy. *2dly.* From the End whereunto he choſe and called the *Iſraelites*, namely, the *hallowing* and *ſanctifying* them in Body and Spirit. *3dly*, From the Mercies and Benefits he ſhewed them, having led them forth out of *Egypt*, to bring them into the Land of Promiſe; intimating thereby, that he was likewiſe ready to deliver them out of the *ſpiritual Egypt*; that they might learn to know, and ſerve him here, and live with him forever in the *heavenly Canaan* hereafter.

Chap. XII.

Of the Uncleanneſs and Purification of a Woman after Child-birth; her Offerings thereupon, whether ſhe was Rich or Poor.

Q. WHAT *did the* Burnt-Offering *and the* Sin-Offering, *which were offered as an Attonement for a Woman, after Child-birth, intimate?*

A. The *Burnt-Offering* was a Sacrifice for the Party's Sins in general; as the *Sin-Offering* was for particular Sins of Ignorance or Error; and theſe are the two Sins of the Fathers, which may be imputed to the Children; and for which the *Expiation* of *Chriſt* by his *Blood* is required, to cleanſe Poſterity by the Gift of *Juſtification* and *Regeneration*; for the *Sin-Offering* had a ſpecial Regard to *original Sin*, wherein as well the *Mother*, as the Fruit of her Womb, was conceived and born, none excepted, but only our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Chap. XIII.

The Laws and Tokens which the Prieſt was to obſerve in diſcerning Leproſy, either in human Bodies, or in Garments, &c.

Q. WHAT *Account do you give of the* Leproſy *in* Garments *and* Houſes, *mentioned in this Chapter?*

A. This Kind of *Leproſy* was not like the Infection of the *Plague* in Cloaths, Utenſils, or Houſes infected by ſome Exhalation of the Air, Breath, Sweat, or other Excrements, lying upon the Superficies of thoſe Things, which make an Impreſſion in the common Air, and may be purified and cleanſed divers Ways; but was a Corruption peculiar to thoſe Places and Times, grafted into the very Subſtance of thoſe Things, rotting and gnawing them, and ſpreading abroad, as it were, in a living Body.

Q. *What have you to obſerve, in general, upon theſe Laws concerning* Leproſy?

A. That the Prieſt, whom God made the Judge in this Caſe, was by a conſtant Miracle, preſerved from Infection, when it was extremely dangerous for others, to converſe with thoſe who were infected with it.

Chap. XIV.

Rites and Sacrifices in cleanſing a Leper. Of Leproſy in Houſes, and the cleanſing of them.

Q. WAS *any Thing ſignified by the cleanſing of the Leper?*

A. The ceremonial Expiations and Cleanſings, to be done after the Diſeaſe was cured in order to receive him that had been leprous into the Fellowſhip of the People; were Types and Figures of the Obſervations of the Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline, in reſtoring ſuch as are Penitent into the Peace of the Church, after they had been ſequeſtered from it for ſome Sin.

Q. *In the 12th Verſe, a* Treſpaſs-Offering *is commanded to be offered by the Leper after he was cured; pray was there any thing ſinful in the Diſeaſe?*

A. There was certainly no Treſpaſs in the Diſeaſe itſelf, but rather a Miſery; but Sin being the Cauſe of all theſe Diſeaſes, God would have together with the Cleanſing of the Body, the Purification of the Soul to be alſo ſought for by means of this Sacrifice. Farther, theſe Diſeaſes being Figures of the Infections of the Soul, theſe ceremonial Sacrifices repreſented to the internal Expiation.

Q. *What is the Meaning of that Injunction, v. 36.* to empty the Houſe, before the Prieſt go into it to ſee the Plague; that all that is in the Houſe be not made unclean?

A. Before the Prieſt had judged of it, the Houſe could not pollute the Stuff, nor the Perſons; and therefore the Sore being yet uncertain, it was proper to empty the Houſe, for fear leaſt the Houſhold-ſtuff ſhould alſo be comprehended within the Contamination of it, when the Prieſt ſhould pronounce the Sentence. A Law of Equity, and likewiſe a figurative Inſtruction, to teach us to prevent God's laſt Judgment, ſequeſtring our ſelves betimes from the Contagion of Sinners; and alſo to inſtruct us, that God will paſs over, and forgive the Sins and Faults of his Children, which they commit through mere Ignorance; but not thoſe Treſpaſſes which they commit rebelliouſly againſt their Conſcience, and the expreſs Manifeſtation of his Will.

Chap. XV.

The Uncleanneſs of Men in their Iſſues; the Method of their Cleanſings. The Uncleanneſs of Women in their Iſſues; the Manner of their Cleanſings.

Q. HAVE *you any Thing, in particular, to obſerve of this Chapter?*

A. It is an Exhortation to Cleanlineſs, which is highly commendable in both Sexes; eſpecially as God requires of his People Purity and Cleanneſs; and as we cannot be his, except the Filth of Sin be purged with the Blood of that immaculate Lamb, Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe Doctrine teaches us to deteſt all Sin and Uncleanneſs.

Chap. XVI.

Directions to Aaron *in what Manner he muſt enter the holy Place; the Sin-offering for himſelf, and for the People. The Scape-goat. The yearly Feaſt of Expiations.*

Q. ON *the tenth Day of the ſeventh Month, was held the ſolemn* Feſtival of Expiation; *pray give me ſome Account of the Nature and Deſign of this grand Solemnity?*

A. It was called the *Feaſt* of *Expiation*, becauſe on that Day the Prieſt went into the *Sanctuary* to make a general *Expiation* for the Sins of himſelf and the People. On this Occaſion, *Aaron* was ordered to offer a *Bullock* as a *Sin-offering* for himſelf and Family. Two Goats were ordered to be brought to the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and to be preſented to the Lord. Two Lots were ordered to be caſt for the Goats, one of which was to be burnt, and the other to be the *Scape-goat*, that is, was preſented alive before the Lord, was not offered, but let go to the Deſart, after *Aaron* had laid his Hands on the *Goat's Head*, confeſſing the Iniquities, Tranſgreſſions and Sins of the People, and putting them upon the Head of the Goat.

Q. *Was not the Scape-goat a Figure of* Jeſus Chriſt?

A. Undoubtedly he was, in that he bears the Sins of the People. *Surely he hath borne our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows, yet we did eſteem him ſtricken of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our Iniquities; the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone aſtray;*

aſtray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. Iſ. liii. 4, 5, 6. And many other Places, both in the Old and New Teſtament, might be quoted to the ſame Purpoſe.

Q. *Have you any particular Remarks to make on the Day upon which this grand Feſtival was held?*

A. It is obſervable, that this great Day of Attonement, was the tenth Day of the ſeventh Month; the very Day, as learned Men have computed, on which *Adam* ſinned, and was turned out of Paradiſe.

CHAP. XVII.

The Blood of ſlain Beaſts to be offered no where, but at the Door of the Tabernacle. Sacrifices to Devils forbidden, as is likewiſe the eating of Blood. That which dieth alone, or is torn, not to be eaten.

Q. *WHY were Sacrifices forbidden to be offered any where, but in the Tabernacle?*

A. That the *Iſraelites* might have no Opportunity to practice that *Idolatry*, which they had learnt of the *Egyptians*.

Q. *What is the Meaning of that Prohibition, that* they ſhall no more ſacrifice to Devils, after whom they have gone a Whoring?

A. By *Devils* are to be underſtood *Idols*; in which Kind of Worſhip, whether the Idolater had ſuch an Intent or no, the Devil was ſerved under divers Names and Reſemblances, he ſeconding and confirming them in their Error. Of this falſe Service by Apparitions, Oracles, and deluſive Miracles, ſee *Deut.* xxxii. 17. 2 *Chron.* xi. 15. *Pſ.* cvi. 37. 1 *Cor.* x. 20. *Rev.* ix. 20. The *Hebrew* Word ſignifies hairy, or briſtly, becauſe the Devil, as it was thought, ordinarily appeared in ſuch ugly Shapes to them that ſerved him.

Q. *Why is* Idolatry *called* Whoredom?

A. It is ſo in a ſpiritual Senſe; becauſe thereby Faith towards God is broken.

Q. *What is the Meaning of that Expreſſion, v.* 10. I will even ſet my Face againſt that Soul?

A. I will declare my ſelf to be his Adverſary, and will perſecute him in my Wrath, by the Hands of Men, by the Way of Juſtice, or by my own Judgments.

CHAP. XVIII.

Laws relating to Matrimony. Of unlawful Luſts, with which the Egyptians *and* Canaanites *profaned themſelves.*

IN the 21ſt Verſe, I obſerve this Injunction, Thou ſhalt not let any of thy Seed paſs through the Fire to *Molech*; *Pray give ſome Deſcription of this Idol, and its Worſhip.*

A. The *Rabbins* aſſure us, that the Idol *Molech* was made of Braſs, ſitting upon a Throne of the ſame Metal, having the Head of a Calf, adorned with a Royal Crown, and his Arms extended as it were to embrace any Thing: But what the Childrens *paſſing through the Fire* means, they are not ſo well agreed. Some of them are of Opinion, that Parents, in the worſhip of this Idol, did not actually burn their Children, but only cauſed them to leap through Fire, that was lighted before it, or paſs between two Fires, placed oppoſite to each other, by Way of Luſtration; but the Expreſſions of *David* are a little too ſtrong to admit of this Interpretation. For, when he tells us, that they ſacrificed their Sons and Daughters unto Devils, and that *that they ſhed innocent Blood, even the Blood of their Sons and Daughters, whom they ſacrificed to the Idols of* Canaan, *Pſ.* cvi. 37, 38. We cannot but infer, but they did actually murther their Children in this execrable Way. When any Infants were to be ſacrificed, the Idol was to be made hot, by kindling a great Fire in the Inſide of it; and when it was heated to a moſt intenſe Degree, the miſerable Victim was put into its Arms, and ſoon conſumed by the Violence of the Heat: But, that the Cries of the Children might not be heard in their Extremities, the People were wont to make a great Noiſe with Drums, and other Inſtruments, about the Idol.

CHAP. XIX.

A Repetition of ſundry Laws.

BY the 18th Verſe, it ſeems as if the Iſraelites were confined in their Acts of Love and Kindneſs to the People of that Nation only; is therefore Charity to be limited?

A. No; but this Injunction was given to direct them in their Behaviour to the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, who were to be accurſed, and to be deſtroyed without Mercy, *Deut.* vii 16. and alſo to ſhew that private Revenges are the Overthrow of civil Society, which is preſerved by publick Authority and Juſtice, and by private Good-will one towards another.

Q. *In the 19th Verſe 'tis ſaid,* Thou ſhalt not ſow thy Field with mingled Seed, neither ſhall a Garment of Linnen and Woollen come upon thee; *Were not theſe Laws very whimſical?*

A. As ſowing the Ground with mixed *Seeds*, in ſome Men's Opinion, is an effectual Way to wear it out, it was therefore a Practice prohibited, in Commiſeration, (if I may ſo ſay,) to our Mother *Earth*, as well as to ſet Bounds to the Huſbandman's Covetouſneſs. With Reſpect to the wearing of *Linſey-Woolſey*, it was probably a proud fantaſtical Humour of the *Heathens* at that Time, which the *Hebrews* were forbid to imitate.

Q. *Pray explain that Injunction, v.* 20. *concerning the violating of a Bond-maid?*

A. To violate a free Maid was capital Puniſhment, *Deut.* xxii. 25. Now the Difference is grounded upon this, that theſe Conjunctions with Bond-maids that were not made free, were not held for true and perfect Marriages; in which the Condition of Freedom is required, as well to contract them, as to participate of the Huſband's Eſtate and Condition, according to God's firſt and fundamental Inſtitution; and they were really like Concubines with ſome ſlight Kind of Tie, *Exod.* xxi. 4, 7, 8.

CHAP. XX.

Puniſhments of ſuch as give their Seed to Molech; *of Wizards; of Curſers of Parents; Adultery; Inceſt; Sodomy; Beſtiality; Uncleanneſs.*

Q. *EXPLAIN theſe Words,* I am the Lord which ſanctifieth you.

A. Thus; I, who by my Covenant with you, have conſecrated you to my ſelf, and made you a holy People; whereby reciprocally all Manner of Obedience is due to me from you, wherein conſiſts the true Duty and Effect of your Sanctification.

Q. *In the 20th Verſe 'tis ſaid,* If a Man ſhall lie with his Uncle's Wife, they ſhall die childleſs; *how do you interpret theſe Words,* they ſhall die childleſs?

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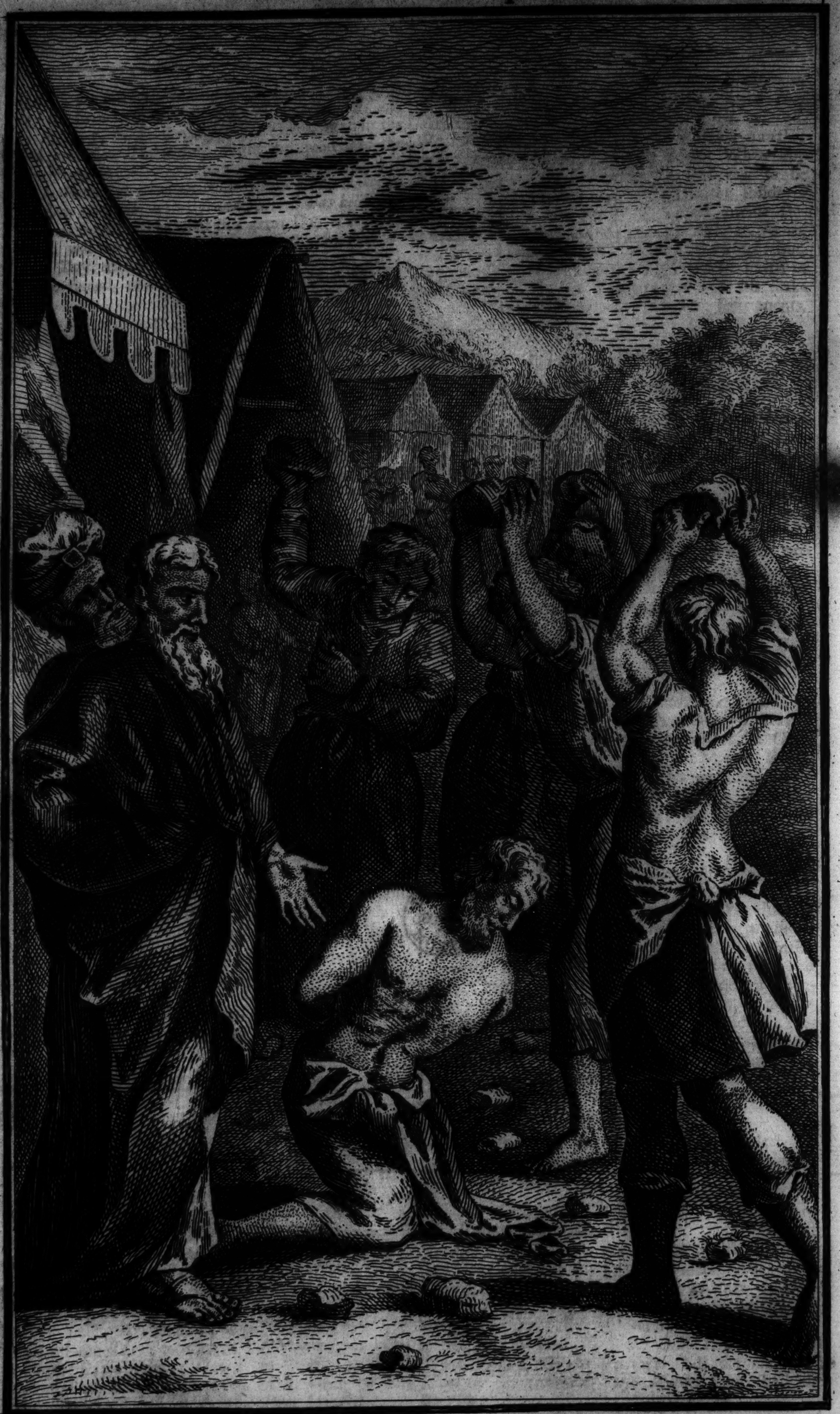


The Blaſphemer Stoned,

A. That is, let them be put to Death ſpeedily, that there be no execrable Iſſue of ſuch damnable Conjunctions; it being unfitting that the Fruit of holy Matrimony ſhould be common to ſuch abominable Mixtures.

Q. *What Reflection do you make upon the horrible Crimes forbidden in this Chapter?*

A. From hence we may ſee how wicked the World was (notwithſtanding their natural Reaſon, which ſome boaſt of as a ſufficient Guide) and would have continued ſo, had not God reſtrained them by his Law, and by his Puniſhments.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the Prieſts mourning; their Holineſs; their Sanctification; their Marriages; a Prieſt, with Blemiſhes, not to miniſter in the Sanctuary.

Q. HOW *do you interpret that Expreſſion*, v. 8. Thou ſhalt ſanctify him?

A. This is ſpoken to *Moſes* in this Senſe; Teach and command them to obſerve all Purity and Holineſs. Or to the People in this Senſe; Reverence the ſacred Office of my Miniſters, bear an inviolable Honour to their Perſons, which repreſent my ſacred Majeſty towards you, in labouring for your Satisfaction by my Word and Sacraments, which they adminiſter unto you.

Q. *I find here a Law, that ſuch Perſons as had any Defect or Blemiſhes in their Bodies, were forbid the Exerciſe of the Prieſthood; were they alſo excluded from all the Benefits of it?*

A. No; they were allowed to eat of the holy Things, though not permitted to ſerve in the Tabernacle.

CHAP. XXII.

Prieſts in their Uncleanneſs muſt abſtain from the holy Things; of eating ſuch through Error. Laws of Free-will Offerings. No Beaſt to be offered with its Dam. Sacrifices muſt be without Blemiſh. The Age of the Sacrifice. The Law of eating the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving.

Q. EXPLAIN *that Injunction to* Aaron *and his Sons*, v. 2. that they ſeparate themſelves.

A. That is, when they ſhall be unclean, by ſome ceremonial Pollution, they ſhall forbear officiating in holy Things, till that Uncleanneſs be removed.

Q. *In what Senſe is to be taken that Expreſſion*, v. 9. I the Lord do ſanctify them?

A. I have choſen, and called them unto an Office, the Holineſs of which depends upon my ſelf; and therefore the Profanation of it is both againſt my Command, and againſt my Honour, and conſequently deſerves the greater Puniſhment.

Q. *I wiſh you would make a ſhort Commant on the 32d Verſe*, Neither ſhall ye profane my holy Name, but I will be hallowed among the Children of *Iſrael*, I am the Lord which hallow you.

A. Neither ſhall ye profane, that is, contemn my Majeſty, by violating my Commandments. *I will be hallowed*; that is, I will be made venerable, and cauſe my ſelf to be acknowledged holy and inviolable in my Majeſty, through my Judgments, *Lev.* x. 3. *Iſ.* xxvi. 15. *Which hallow you*; who have given you a Rule in my Law, of all Purity and Innocence, and the Form of inward Holineſs, by my Spirit, and will alſo revenge, as a moſt juſt and holy God, the Tranſgreſſion of the one, and the rejecting of the other.

CHAP. XXIII.

The Jewiſh *Feaſts and Feſtivals; the Sabbath; the Paſſover; the Sheaf of firſt Fruits; the Feaſt of Pentecoſt. Gleanings of the Harveſt to be left for the Poor. The Feaſt of Trumpets; Day of Attonement; Feaſt of Tabernacles.*

I*N what Senſe is the* Sabbath, v. 11. *to be underſtood?*

A. It was the Feaſt of the Paſſover, or *Eaſter*, as appears from *v.* 5. For by the Name of *Sabbath* were called all the Feaſts that were made holy.

Q. *What is meant by* Habitations? *v.* 17.

A. By *Habitations*, moſt think, are not to be underſtood private Houſes; but Cities, Caſtles, Towns, *&c.*

Q. *What is meant by that Expreſſion*, v. 20. They ſhall be holy to the Lord for the Prieſts?

A Let all theſe Things that are offered for Firſtfruits, be held as Food ſacred to the Lord; and the Parts thereof muſt be thus diſtributed; the Fat and Kidneys, *&c.* be burnt upon the Altar, and the reſt before the High-prieſt and his Family, *Numb* xviii. 12. no Part thereof belonging to the private Offerers, as there did in other Sacrifices of Thankſgiving.

Q. *You have, I think, in ſome of the foregoing Chapters, explained moſt of the Grand Feſtivals of the* Jews, *except that called the* Feaſt of Trumpets; *the particular Deſign of which, I ſhould be glad to be informed of.*

A. In the ſeventh Month (which with us is *September*) the *Feaſt of Trumpets* was ordered to be kept; the Blowing or Sound of which, was to put them in Remembrance of the manifold Feaſts, which were in that Month, and to exhort all the People to give Thanks and Praiſes to the Almighty for all his Benefits which they had enjoyed the Year paſt; and to prepare themſelves by acknowledging and confeſſing their Sins, and Sorrow for them, againſt the Day of *Expiation*, which was appointed on the tenth Day of the Month.

Q. *What Inference do you draw from the Whole?*

A. It deſerves Obſervation, that as the Contempt of the *Sabbath* and *Paſſover*, introduced *Idolatry*, and all Manner of Impiety among the *Jews*; ſo it has been obſerved, that the Contempt of the *Lord's Day*, and the *Lord's Supper*, has been the Forerunner of all Wickedneſs, Infidelity, and Judgments among *Chriſtians*.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Oil for the Lamps. The Shew-bread. Shelomith's *Son blaſphemeth. The Law concerning Blaſphemy. Of Murder. The Law of Retaliation. The Blaſphemer ſtoned.*

Q. THE *moſt conſiderable Occurrence in this Chapter, is the Story of the Blaſphemer, his Crime, and Puniſhment; concerning which, pray favour me with your Sentiments.*

A. The Criminal, and his Offence, are only thus recorded by *Moſes*. *The Son of an* Iſraelitiſh *Woman, whoſe Father was an* Egyptian, *and a Man of* Iſrael, *ſtrove together in the Camp, and the* Iſraelitiſh *Woman's Son blaſphemed the Name of the Lord, and curſed*, Lev. xxiv. 11. But the *Jews*, in explaining theſe Words, have followed that ſuperſtititious Reſpect, which they pay to the Name *Jehovah*, or their wonted Humour of ſupplying the Silence of the ſacred Hiſtory with Circumſtances, no where to be found but in their own Imaginations. In Purſuance of this their Superſtition, they fancy that the Crime of this Blaſphemer, conſiſted ſimply in pronouncing the Name *Jehovah*; foraſmuch as they ſuppoſe, that there can be no Blaſphemy without ſuch Pronunciation; and in Purſuance to their Humour of ſupplying the Silence of Scripture, they have invented a Genealogy for this Blaſphemer: For, they tell us, that he was the Son of one of thoſe Task-maſters, who were ſet over the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt*; and of that very Task-maſter, who, by perſonating her Huſband, violated the Chaſtity of the *Jewiſh* Matron *Shelometh*, and was afterwards ſlain by *Moſes*, for uſing the ſame Huſband with great Barbarity; that the Son, who is here mentioned quarrelling with a Man of the Tribe of *Dan*, becauſe he would not let him encamp in the ſame Diſtrict, brought his Cauſe before *Moſes*; but that, being condemned at his Tribunal, he began out of mere Rage and Madneſs to blaſpheme. Of all this *Moſes*, however, ſays nothing, out of a Scruple, (as we may well ſuppoſe) to relate the Circumſtances of a Crime, which his very Thoughts deteſted.

Q. *The Blaſphemer being convicted, and Sentence of Death paſt upon him, is led to Execution, when the Witneſſes were ordered* to lay their Hands on his Head; *what was the Meaning of that Ceremony?*

A. To intimate, that they threby confirmed the Evidence they had before given againſt him, and that the Puniſhment due to his Sin might be inflicted on him; but if they accuſed him unjuſtly, that then the ſame Puniſhment might fall on their own Heads.

Q. *What was the Manner of the Execution?*

A. It was done in the Manner afterwards practiſed by the *Hebrews*; that is, the Witneſſes laid their Hands on his Head, and averred what they teſtified was true; then they gave the Criminal the firſt Stroke on the Loins, and, if he died not thereby, then the reſt of the People threw Stones on him, till he expired.

CHAP. XXV.

Laws concerning the Sabbatical Year. The Jubilee in the fiftieth Year. Of Oppreſſion. A Bleſſing on Obedience. The Redemption of Land. Of Houſes. Compaſſion of the poor. The Uſage of Bondmen. Redemption of Servants.

Q. THE *Sabbatical Year, we are here informed, was to commence when the People were come into* Canaan; *Can you from hence aſcertain the preciſe Time when this was firſt obſerved?*

A. The firſt Sabbatical Year was held the ſixth Year after the People's coming into the Land of *Canaan*, and when the Land was divided, as appears from *Joſh.* xiv. 7, 10. and from the forty ſixth Year of their leaving *Egypt*.

Q. *How do you interpret that Expreſſion, v.* 2. Then ſhall the Land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord?

A. This is not to be underſtood in a natural or oeconomical Reſpect, to let the tired Land get Strength, as is commonly practiſed among Huſbandmen; but of a holy and religious Reſt dedicated to the Service of God, for Inſtruction, and more expreſs Remembrance (beſides the Sabbath of Days) of the eternal Reſt from all Employments of this Life, peculiar to every Believer at his Death; which was figured by this Reſt at every ſeventh Year's End; and then general to all at the happy Reſurrection; at which Time ſhall be the univerſal Releaſement and Infranchiſement of all the Children of God, and their Re-inſtalment in their heavenly Inheritance; which was repreſented by the Jubilee, at every fifty Year's End.

Q. *Why was the Sabbatical Year to be proclaimed in the ſeventh Month?*

A. The ſeventh Month was the firſt of the civil Year, *Exod.* xii. 2. *Levit.* xxiii. 24. according to whoſe Months they counted the Times of publick Affairs, to the Order of which the Jubilee was for the moſt Part referred; though not without ſome Uſe of Inſtruction for divine and eternal Things; and therefore the ſeventh Month is here taken for the Beginning of the civil Year, *Exod.* xxiii. 16. and xxxiv. 22.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Injunction,* Ye ſhall hallow the fiftieth Year?

A. That is, ye ſhall diſtinguiſh it from all other common Years, to execute in it thoſe Commandments which I enjoin you; and it ſhall be a ſacred Sign unto you of the acceptable Year of the Lord, under the *Meſſias*, *Iſ.* lxi. 2. 1 *Cor.* vi. 2.

Q. *If every ſeventh was a Sabbatical Year, the 49th muſt be one, and the 50th, or Year of Jubilee immediately ſucceeding, it follows, that there were then two Years of Reſt to the Land; which ſeems ſomewhat improbable.*

A. It is true, the *Jews* always reckoned by the ſeventh Sabbattical Year; that is, the fiftieth incluſively, comprehending the Year of the precedent Jubilee, as is uſually obſerved in ſuch Kind of Accounts; for otherwiſe indeed, from one Jubilee to another, there were but forty nine Years.

Q: *What is the true Signification of the Word Jubilee?*

A. This Word is by many interpreted to ſignify a Ram's-horn, to ſound with. But it ſeems rather to ſignify a Concert of many ſuch Horns, Trumpets, Cornets, Hautboys, and ſuch like ſounding Inſtruments, called *Jubal*, *Gen.* iv 21. *Exod.* xix 13. *Joſh.* vi. 4.

Q. *There ſeems a Difficulty in v.* 23. *where it is ſaid,* The Land ſhall not be ſold for ever; for the Land is mine.

A. By For-ever, is meant abſolutely, without leaving any Hope to the Seller ever to redeem it. *For the Land is mine*; or, I reſerve to my ſelf the Right of Propriety in it, and grant you nothing but the bare Uſe of it; therefore I would not have you alienate it at Pleaſure, neither will I ſuffer you to bargain for any Thing abſolutely, but only for the Fruits; for as for the Land itſelf, it muſt always remain to be perpetually improved unto thoſe Perſons and Families to whom I have given it; and not to be ſold, without reſerving a Power in the Seller to redeem it.

Q. *Why were the* Levites *particularly reſtrained from ſelling their Fields in the Suburbs of their Cities, as in v.* 34.

A. Theſe Fields were certain Parcels of Land, of about a Thouſand Cubits in Circumference, in the Suburbs or Places adjoining to their Cities, for the *Levites* to retire themſelves to, and keep and feed their Cattle in, *Numb.* xxxv. 4. which being all undivided, and lying in common, no particular Perſon had any Right to make any Bargain for it, as he might for his Houſe which was his own. Yet it ſeems, by *Jer.* xxxii. 7, 8. that this Law was alter'd in enſuing Ages.

Q. *Who was the Stranger, mentioned,* v. 35.

A. He was either ſome *Iſraelite* who had travelled from ſome diſtant Part of the Land; or ſome Stranger, a Proſelite who was converted to Judaiſm: For otherwiſe, God ſuffered them to take uſe for Money lent to Strangers either of Nation, or Religion, *Deut.* xxiii. 20.

Q. *What Obſervation do you make upon this Inſtitution of the Sabbatical Year?*

A. The Sabbath of the ſeventh Year, in which all the Land was to reſt, and the Obedience paid to it, is an evident Proof that *this Inſtitution* was from God: For he alone could command Obedience to ſuch a *Law*, and his Providence alone could ſupply their neceſſities at ſuch a Juncture, and ſave them from Famine.

CHAP. XXVI.

Idolatry forbidden. The Sabbaths and publick Worſhip to be piouſly obſerved. Bleſſings promiſed to thoſe who keep the Commandments; and a Curſe threatned to thoſe that break them; great Indulgencies to Penitents.

Q. WHY *is* Idolatry *here again forbidden to the* Iſraelites?

A. As *Idolatry* is the moſt heinous of all Sins, that to which the *Iſraelits* were, of all others the moſt prone, and that which alone could deprive them of the divine Aſſiſtance; ſo God in his great Mercy, gave them repeated Cautions, againſt any Practices, which were likely to draw them into that Crime; particularly at the Cloſe of theſe *Conſtitutions*, given from the *Mercy-Seat* to their holy Leader, a ſtrict Charge is added, that they ſhould not ſet up Idols, Images, or Pillars within their Land; but that they ſhould remember *Jehovah* was their God, obſerve his Statutes ſtrictly, and reverence his Sanctuary.

Q. *In this Chapter are various Bleſſings promiſed to, and Threatnings denounced againſt the* Iſraelites *in Caſe of their Obedience to, or Neglect or Non-performance of the Laws and Ordinances before enjoined; what was the Divine Intention in all this?*

A. That the Deſcendants of *Jacob* might cheerfully perſevere in their Duty, and willingly perform their Part of the Covenant, between them and the God of their Fathers, *Jehovah* ſets before them the mighty Advantages, the glorious Bleſſings, the diſtinguiſhing Rewards, which he would beſtow on them; and that Fear might have an Awe on thoſe on whoſe Hearts, Love, Gratitude, or Hope, could not prevail, he denounces the Woes, the Judgments, and fearful Calamities, which their Neglect of his Laws would bring upon them. In this divine Oration, the Sublimity of the Sentiments, the Dignity of the Expreſſions, and the marvelous Energy of the Arguments uſed therein, conſpire to fill the Mind with ſo rational a Reverence, and ſo profound an Admiration, of that tremendous Being, by whom it was pronounced, as that it may very juſtly be conſidered as the very Baſis of the Religion of the *Hebrews*.

Q. *Why do the Bleſſings here promiſed run ſo much upon temporal Benefits?*

A. The Bleſſings here promiſed are ſuch as were proper to be given to the *Iſraelites*, a People that deſired nothing ſo much as carnal Enjoyments, and therefore were moſt likely to be encouraged in their Duty by ſuch; which, as they were extenſive in their Nature, ſo alſo were they various in their Kind, exactly ſuited to the Nation to whom they were given, and to the Soil and Climate wherein they were to be beſtowed. Thus, *Rains* were neceſſary to render *Canaan* fruitful, which had no ſuch Rivers as the *Nile*, to enrich it with the Slime coming along with the Torrent; and hence in another Place, we find, that the former and the latter Rains are promiſed, from whence the Fruitfulneſs of this happy Land was to be derived.

Next to the Happineſs of a plentiful Proviſion, and pleaſant Habitations, nothing could be more deſirable than Peace and Security, without which the former good Gifts could not be truly taſted or enjoyed.

That *War*, in Caſe they were engaged in it, might not affright them too much, they are aſſured of conſtant and eaſy *Victories* over their Enemies, whoſe *largeſt Armies* ſhould fly before the ſmalleſt of their *Parties*.

They are told, that God would continually look upon them, and make them fruitful, ſo that they ſhould multiply into a very numerous People; and they are promiſed ſuch a copious ſupply of good Things, that they ſhould lay them up in Store-houſes, for a long Time, and not be able to conſume them, before they wanted Room for the New.

Jehovah ſet up his *Tabernacle* or *Tent* among them, whither they might continually repair for Councils and Directions, and receive ſenſible Demonſtration of his Preſence, who delivered them from the Tyranny of the *Egyptians*, broke the Yoke off from their Shoulders, and made them walk upright and free. That under theſe temporal good Things, ſpiritual Enjoyments were typified, and that the World to come, was to be underſtood by the promiſed Land, without Diminution of the literal Senſe, is highly probable, and is ſo admitted by the moſt learned and candid among the *Jewiſh* Writers.

Q. *What do you ſay to the Variety of Evils denounced againſt this People in Caſe of their Diſobedience?*

A. As, by extraordinary Promiſes, the Lord drew his People to the Love of their Duty, ſo, by Threatnings as extraordinary, he gave them juſt Cauſe to be afraid of offending. As to the Nature of the Evils threatened, they are ſo clear, that they need no Explanation, except as to the Names of the *Diſeaſes*, which are ſomewhat differently rendered; but it would be miſpending Time to repeat *Conjectures*. It is evident, that the Maladies, whatſoever they were, would weaken and bring them low, which was the eſſential Part of the Judgment. They were alſo to flie before their Enemies, and to be conquered and ſubdued by thoſe that hated them.

It's evident, that *Moſes* both truly and faithfully recorded this Speech of the Almighty, ſince the ſubſequent Story of the *Hebrews* plainly proves, that, on their declining from the Path which the Law had pointed out, they were puniſhed according to the *Threatnings* here denounced.

Q. *How do you interpret that Expreſſion,* v. 26. *Ten Women ſhall bake their Bread in one Oven?*

A. A certain Number, namely, *ten Women*, is put for an uncertain, or rather for many or a Multitude. This is very common in the Oriental Languages, and is more than once uſed in this Speech; *ſeven Plagues* or *Puniſhments* ſignifying *many Plagues* or *Puniſhments*; as *Heavens* of *Iron*, and *Earth* of *Braſs*, are intended to expreſs the Inclemency of the one, and Sterility of the other.

Q. *Does not the latter Part of this Chapter relate to the Diſperſion and Recalling of the* Jews?

A. Undoubtedly it does. This Prophecy of the Diſperſion of the *Jews*, was written above three thouſand Years ago: They ſubſiſt to this Day, in the Land of their Enemies, and in all Places of the World. This is a convincing Proof of the Inſpiration of the ſacred Writ; and affords a ſtrong Argument, that the Prophecies in the *New-Teſtament*, concerning their *Call* and *Converſion*, will one Day be fulfilled; which God in his infinite Mercy ſoon grant. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXVII.

Laws concerning ſingular Vows; Eſtimation of Perſons; of Beaſts; Houſes; Fields or Grounds. What Things were not to be vowed, and being vowed, might, or might not be redeemed. Of the redeeming the Tenths both of Fruits and Cattle.

Q. WHAT *was a ſingular Vow, mentioned* v. 1.

A. It ſeems to ſignify an expreſs Vow of an eſpecial Conſecration to God, and not a bare Promiſe of ſome general Sanctification or Devotion, which every Believer may and ought to make of himſelf and Family.

Q. *What do you underſtand by the Eſtimation of Perſons, and Things in the ſeveral Caſes mentioned in this Chapter?*

A. The Baſis of all the Precepts reſpecting *Vows* and *Things devoted*, was this; that Men would be deſirous of purchaſing a *Redemption* from Things, which in the Height of Zeal they might have promiſed. For this Reaſon the *High Prieſt* had power given him, to ſet a Value on the Things *vowed*, and to allot a Sum of Money in the Lieu thereof. From the Variety of Caſes happening on this Account, theſe Regulations came to be varied, that they might leave nothing doubtful, diſputable, or uncertain.

Firſt; as to Perſons, the Value of Men, Women, Youths and Children was expreſly ſettled, and the Prieſt was to accept the Sum mentioned in the Law, inſtead of the Perſonal Service of ſuch as vowed to devote themſelves or their Children to attend continually about the *Tabernacle*; and in reſpect to the Poor this ſettled Rate might be leſſened.

Secondly, as to *Beaſts* devoted to God, if they were *clean* they were not to be changed; if they were *unclean*, the Prieſt was to ſet a Value on them, and he who redeemed was to add a *fifth* Part, over and above that Price.

Thirdly, Houſes might be redeemed in the ſame Manner; but if the *Redemption* was not made before the Year of *Jubilee*, the Prieſts were to have them for ever.

Fourthly, The People were cautioned not to dedicate or devote the *Firſt-born* of *clean Beaſts*, becauſe that they, by a former Law belonged to *Jehovah*, and conſequently they had no Right over it.

Fifthly, A Diſtinction is made of Things abſolutely devoted unto God; for they were neither to be ſold nor redeemed, but were to be eſteemed in a high Degree ſacred; and as to the Nations devoted to Deſtruction, they were, without Mercy, to be put to Death.

Laſtly, they were commanded to regard the *Tythe* of their Lands, as *a holy Portion*, which if they would redeem, they were to add a *fifth* Part of its Value; and, if they attempted in numbering their Cattle, to commit any Fraud, by changing the *tythed Beaſt*, then were they to loſe both it, and that which was put in its Place.

Q. *What might give Occaſion to the making ſo many Laws concerning Vows in this Chapter?*

A. Whether the prevailing Piety, which at this Time reigned in the Camp of *Iſrael*, put the People on *vowing*, or devoting Things to the Service of *Jehovah*, cannot be abſolutely aſcertain'd; but it makes for the Probability of this Opinion, that this laſt Chapter of *Leviticus* is wholly taken up with Regulations on this Subject; eſpecially becauſe they are ſeparated from other *Laws*, and placed in a Manner diſtinct, and by themſelves; though various Occaſions might have offered Room for them among other *Statutes* given to the People; and if this be not admitted, there can be no viſible *Reaſon* found, why they ſhould have been recorded here, rather than among the following Precepts, in the remaining Books.

Q. *In how many Views may the divine written Law be conſidered?*

A. It may be reduced into theſe Parts, and be conſidered, 1. With reſpect to the Dignity and Worth of the Law. 2. The Majeſty of the Law-giver. 3. The Property and Peculiarity of the People receiving it. 4. The Efficacy and Power thereof. 5. The Differences and Agreement of the *Old* and *New-Teſtament*. 6. The End and Uſe of the Law. 7. The Underſtanding of the Law. 8. The Durance and Continuance thereof.

Q. *What difference was there between the* Moſaic *and* Chriſtian *Inſtitution?*

A. The Author of the *Law* was *Moſes*, mere Man; but the Author of the *Goſpel* was *Jeſus Chriſt*, both *God* and *Man*. The Law indeed was ordained by the Miniſtry of *Angels*, in the Hand of a *Mediator*, who was *Moſes*, the *Mediator* between *God* and the *Iſraelites*; but *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Son of God, firſt promulged the Goſpel with his own Mouth.

THE

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED NUMBERS.

This Book continues the Hiſtory of the Children of Iſrael *during their Forty Years Travels in the Wilderneſs. In the firſt Chapter we have a general Muſter of the People, of ſuch as were fit to bear Arms; namely, from Twenty Years old and upwards; but out of this Muſter was excluded the Tribe of* Levi, *which was to attend the Service of the Tabernacle, and to guard it from the Approaches and Profanations of Strangers. In the next Place is ſet down the new Form of Government eſtabliſhed, by adding* Seventy Elders *to aſſiſt* Moſes *in judging and ruling the People. The Authority of theſe Elders, God maintained and confirmed, as he did likewiſe that of* Moſes, *notwithſtanding the Oppoſition of* Aaron *ana* Miriam. Aaron's *prieſtly Dignity is likewiſe aſſerted againſt the violent Faction of* Korah, Dathan *and* Abiram. *Afterwards is related, that the People being come upon the Confines of* Canaan, Moſes *ſent out twelve Men to diſcover the Country; Ten of whom, at their Return, terrified the People with the Report they gave of the vaſt Hazards they run in the propoſed Eterprize of attacking the* Canaanites; *and tho'* Caleb *and* Joſhua *endeavoured to convince them of the little Reaſon they had to be afraid, and that God was able to ſubdue all Difficulties and Dangers for them; yet they reſolved to return to* Egypt: *For which rebellious Inſurrection, both the People and the ten Spies are ſeverely puniſhed, and thoſe of them who came out of* Egypt, *are ſentenced to die in the Wilderneſs; and for that Purpoſe are ordered to turn back into the Deſart, where they wandered for the Space of thirty eight Years. At the Expiration of forty Years from their leaving* Egypt, *they came again to the Borders of* Canaan, *where God gave them many Victories over the Inhabitants of the Country; however, they are perverted to Idolatry by intermixing with the* Moabitiſh *Women. The Country which they ſubdued, was divided between two Tribes and a half; who, yet, muſt go with their Brethren over* Jordan. *The People are again numbered, and none are left alive, of thoſe upon the laſt Muſter, but* Moſes, Joſhua, *and* Caleb.

CHAP. I.

Moſes *is commanded to number the People. The Number of them according to their reſpective Tribes. The* Levites *being dedicated to the Service of the Tabernacle, are not numbered with the reſt.*

Q. WHY *is this Book called* Numbers?

A. Becauſe, ſay the *Greeks*, it begins with the firſt muſtering of the People, and ends with the laſt. Others ſay, it receives its Name from the Diverſity and Multitude of Numberings therein contained, both of Mens Names and Places.

Q. *What might give Occaſion to the firſt Muſter here recorded?*

A. Whilſt the *Iſraelites* lay encamped in the Wilderneſs of *Sinai*, as it was neceſſary for them to do, in Order to receive thoſe Conſtitutions, which God had promiſed to give them, in that Place, when he firſt ſpoke unto *Moſes*, and appointed him Leader of the People; theſe Laws being now given, the Almighty was pleaſed to give his Orders concerning their Departure. To which End *Moſes* is commanded to take *Aaron*, and with him a principal Man of every Tribe, by Name, to make a general Muſter of ſuch as were fit to bear Arms; which being done, the whole Number appeared to be 603,550, excluſive of the Tribe of *Levi*.

Q. *Were the People increaſed ſince their Departure from* Egypt?

A. This Muſter was made in the ſecond Year from their leaving *Egypt*; and notwithſtanding they had been ever ſince in a travelling Condition, had been engaged in Battle with the *Amalekites*, and had loſt above 3000 Men on Account of their golden Calf; yet, upon comparing the two Muſters, they were conſiderably increaſed. For when they came out of *Egypt*, they were computed to be about 600,000 Men, including the Tribe of *Levi*, *Exod.* xii. 37. and now they are 603,550 Men, excluſive of the *Levites*, who being numbered by themſelves, were 22,000 Males of a Month old and upwards, *Numb.* iii. 39.

Q. *Why was the Tribe of* Levi *expreſly exempted out of this Muſter?*

A. It was becauſe God had deſigned them to the peculiar Service of the Tabernacle; not only to take the Charge thereof, and of all the Veſſels belonging to it, but to take it down upon every Remove, and to carry the whole, till their next Encampment. They were therefore ordered to pitch their Tents round the Tabernacle in ſuch a Manner, as to hinder the People from licentiouſly or profanely coming near, or touching it; whereby they might be grievouſly puniſhed by God for their impious Preſumption.

CHAP. II.

The Order to be obſerved by the Twelve Tribes in their Encampment round the Tabernacle; and the Manner in which they were to regulate their Marches.

A*FTER this general Muſter was made, what was the next Thing tranſacted?*

A. Moſes and *Aaron*, by Divine Command, next ordered an Encampment of this great Body of People. As this Encampment was plann'd out by the Direction of the Almighty, ſo the Commodiouſneſs and Strength of it is viſible and comprehenſible even by us; the Diſpoſition of the Tribes was continually the ſame whenever they pitched their Tents; and conſequently, when once the *Tabernacle* was ſet up, each of the Tribes knew where to fix their Tents; and doubtleſs the Families in every Tribe had their reſpective Stations marked out, though *Moſes* has not left us any Thing on that Head, nor was it neceſſary he ſhould: But however, we may form ſome Idea of the Beauty and Order of the *Iſraelitiſh* Encampment, from the Encomiums of *Balaam*, who, from an Eminence, beholding the *Hebrew* Camp, could not forbear expreſſing his Admiration in theſe Words, *How goodly are thy Tents,* O Jacob! *Thy Tabernacle,* O Iſrael! *As the Valleys are they ſpread forth, as Gardens on the Banks of the River, as Lign-Aloes planted by* Jehovah, *as Cedars among the Waters of the Brook*, Ch. 24.

Q. *The Tribes, in their Encampment, were marſhall'd in four Grand Diviſions, each of which had its particular Standard; how were theſe Standards diſtinguiſhed?*

A. Each Standard is ſuppoſed by ſome to have been of the Colour of the Stone in *Aaron*'s *Pectoral*, upon which the Name of the Tribe to which it belonged was written. But farther; the Figures on the Standards of the four principal Tribes, are theſe, In that of *Judah* was borne a Lion; in that of *Ephraim*, an Ox; in that of *Reuben*, the Head of a Man; and in that of *Dan*, an Eagle with a Serpent in his Talons, which are indeed the four moſt perfect Animals; the Lion is the moſt noble among wild Beaſts; the Ox among Beaſts of Labour; the Eagle among Birds; and the Man among all Creatures.

Q. *What elſe was figured by theſe four Creatures?*

A. The ſame four Creatures, as I have in another Place obſerved, are uſed by *Ezek.* i. 10. to deſcribe the Nature of *Angels.* Every *Cherubim* is ſaid to have four Faces; the Face of a Man, to ſhew his Underſtanding; of a Lion, to ſhew his Power; of an Ox, to ſet forth his miniſterial Office; of an Eagle, to declare his Swiftneſs in the Execution of God's Will. See alſo the ſame Deſcription, *Revel.* iv. 6.

Q. *Do they figure any Sort of Perſons in the New Teſtament?*

A. By the ſame four, in the Opinion of many of the ancient Fathers, are ſhadowed the four *Evangeliſts.* The Man typifies St. *Matthew*, becauſe he begins his Goſpel with the Generation of *Chriſt*, according to his Humanity; the Lion, St. *Mark*, becauſe he begins his Goſpel from the Voice of a Lion roaring in the Wilderneſs; the Ox, St. *Luke*, becauſe he begins with *Zecharias* the Prieſt; and the Eagle, St. *John*, who, ſoaring aloft, begins with the Divinity of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer *Jeſus Chriſt.*

CHAP. III.

The Levites *are given to the Prieſts for the Service of the Tabernacle, inſtead of the Firſt-born. The* Levites *are numbered by their Families, and the Places of their Habitation aſſigned. The Families, Numbers, and Charge of the* Gerſhonites, *and of the* Merarites. *The Place and Charge of* Moſes *and* Aaron. *The Firſt-born of the Children of* Iſrael, *being more numerous than the* Levites, *the reſt are redeemed, and the Money given to* Aaron.

Q. I *Don't here find any Mention made of* Moſes's *Children, and yet it is ſaid,* v. 1. Theſe are the Generations of *Moſes* and *Aaron.*

A. It's very probable, that by the Generations of *Moſes* and *Aaron*, might be underſtood and meant their Succeſſors in the Office of Prieſthood, which having been jointly executed by *Moſes* and *Aaron*, was afterwards exerciſed by the Sons of *Aaron* only, *Pſ.* xcix. 6.

Q. *What is meant by that Expreſſion,* v. 7. They ſhall keep his Charge?

A. In the *Hebrew* it is, *obſerve his obſerving*; that is, they ſhall be as the Hands and Helpers of *Aaron*, in the inferior Places of God's Houſe; and ſhall repreſent the whole People in the Miniſtry, performed by them in his Name; which before was performed by all the Firſt-born indifferently, *Exod.* xix. 22. and xxiv. 5. *Numb.* viii. 16. but now the the *Levites* are inſtalled therein inſtead of them.

Q. *Who is meant by the* Stranger, *v.* 10?

A. Every Perſon who was not of *Aaron*'s Stock and Lineage, which alone was conſecrated by the divine Anointing and Calling: whereby is ſignified, that God has in Abomination, all other Satisfaction and Interceſſion beſides Chriſt's, who only hath the Unction of God's Calling to the Prieſthood, and who alone hath from him received the Fulneſs of Gifts requiſite to his Office.

Q. *Pray give an Account of the ſeveral Numberings of the* Levites, *and for what Purpoſe intended?*

A. The *Numbering* of the *Levites* was three fold. *Firſt*, from one Month old and upwards, at which Time they were hallowed to the Lord; theſe are mentioned in the 15th and 40th Verſes of this Chapter. *Secondly*, from twenty-five Years old and upwards, when they were admitted as *Novices*, to adminiſter in the common Service of this Temple, *Numb.* xxxviii. 24. *Thirdly*, from thirty Years old and upwards, who were the Principal, not only in the Adminiſtration of the Tabernacle, but likewiſe in the Carriage of it and its Furniture, *Numb.* iv. 3. When they attained to their fiftieth Year, they were exempted from farther Attendance in this Kind, and only obliged to aſſiſt the reſt, with their Authority, Inſpection, Direction, and Advice. *Numb.* viii. 25, 26.

Q. *The Firſt-born Son of* Iſrael, *from the Time of their leaving* Egypt, *amounted to* 20273, *which exceeding the Number of* Levites, *who were to be accepted in the Room of the Firſt-born of the other Tribes, God directed, that five Shekels a Head ſhould be taken for the* 273 *Males, over and above the Number of* Levites; *what did the whole Sum amount to, and to what Uſe was it put?*

A. The Sum amounted to 155*l.* 14*s.* of our Money, which, by divine Command, *Moſes* ordered to be paid into the Hands of *Aaron.*

CHAP. IV.

The Age and Time of the Levites *Service. The Charges of Prieſts touching the Removal of the Tabernacle, and of the* Kohathites, Gerſhonites, *and* Merarites.

Q. HOW *do you underſtand thoſe Words, v.* 3. All that enter into the Hoſt?

A. That is, all that are not hindered by any natural and bodily Impediments, or Defects, *Lev.* xii. 17. or, unable for theſe laborious Services. The ſame Rule was alſo obſerved in the muſtering of the other Tribes, when called out to War, *Numb.* i. 3. The Words, *into the Hoſt*, in the *Hebrew* ſignify War or military Profeſſion: For this great Number of miniſtring Officers, were diſtributed into ſeveral Troops or Squadrons, to do Service by Turns, in Order, under their particular Heads, as in War.

Q. *Did the* Kohathites *always carry the ſacred Utenſils of the Tabernacle, as they are commanded,* ver. 16.

A. This they did only during their Journeys in the Wilderneſs; for after the Number of Prieſts was increaſed, when the Ark was to be carried, the Prieſts bore it themſelves, *Deut.* xxxvi. 9. *Joſ.* iii. 6. and vi. 6. 1 *Kings* ii. 26. and viii. 3. though perhaps this was not continually, as appears from 1 *Chron.* xv. 2, 15.

CHAP. V.

All unclean Perſons to be removed out of the Camp. Of reſtoring Things purloined or hallowed. The Trial of Jealouſy.

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Subject deſerving our Attention in this Chapter?*

A. The removing Uncleanneſs from the Congregation.

Q. *Did this prefigurate any Thing in the Goſpel State?*

A. We have here a clear and excellent Type of Goſpel Purity, and Chriſtian Church Diſcipline, expreſſed in commanding the Children of *Iſrael* to put out of this Camp every Leper, and every one that had a running Iſſue; and whoever was defiled with the Dead, both Male and Female, that they might not defile tneir Camps, in the midſt of which the Lord dwelt.

Q. *Give ſome Account of the Trial of Jealouſy, ſo particularly deſcribed in this Chapter.*

A. If a Man was jealous of his Wife, he was to bring her with an Offering to the Prieſt, who was to uncover her Head. *Firſt,* To declare that the Woman was free, and at her own Liberty and Diſpoſal, and had Power to take an Oath; as, on the contrary, the *Covering* her *Head* was a Token, that ſhe ſtood under the *Power* of her *Husband. Secondly,* That ſhe might be the better ſeen and known, and her Words and Behaviour the better obſerved by the whole Congregation. *Thirdly,* That ſhe might be ſo much the more aſhamed and afraid to utter any Thing but the very Truth, as ſtanding bare and uncovered there, before the Preſence of God and all the Aſſembly.

Q. *How was this Law confirmed?*

A. Firſt, by an *Oath* or *Imprecation,* to be made by the Woman accuſed. *Secondly,* by writing down of the *Act,* which was to be done by the *Prieſt,* yet ſo, as that the Note or Parchment was to be dipped and waſhed in Water. *Thirdly,* By drinking of the bitter Water, which was likewiſe to be performed by the Woman.

Q. *What Effect did the* bitter Water *produce in the Woman?*

A. If the Woman had been guilty, the Water within her became bitter, cauſing her Belly to ſwell, and her Thigh to rot; but if ſhe was innocent, then ſhe was to be rewarded with Fruitfulneſs.

Q. *Was this peculiar Operation of the Water naturally produced?*

A. No; but by the ſpecial Providence of God, who, according to the Effect of this Water, either executed his juſt Judgment upon the guilty Perſon, or mercifully cleared the ſuſpected Innocence of the Guiltleſs.

Q. *What Remark do you make upon the whole?*

A. Thus the Faith and Peace of *Matrimony* was preſerved, either, by the Manifeſtation of the Woman's Lewdneſs, or by freeing her from the violent Paſſion of her Husband's Jealouſy, which are two Evils that break the Harmony of conjugal Society.

Q. *Before we leave this Chapter, let me aſk you one Queſtion more, namely, why the Water, which the Woman was to drink, is called bitter?*

A. Either becauſe it was really ſo in Taſte, thro' the Mixture of the Duſt, and other Ingredients, as the *Jewiſh* Opinion is; or that it is only termed ſo becauſe of its bitter and doleful Effects upon the Woman, if ſhe proved guilty.

CHAP. VI.

The Law concerning Nazarites. *The Form of bleſſing the People?*

Q. WHAT *is the Signification of the Word* Nazarite?

A. The Word *Nazarite* ſignifies *ſevered* or *abſtinent.* Now under the *Law* were divers religious *Abſtinences,* either by Vow or otherwiſe; as from the Pleaſures of eating and drinking; from the Company of Women; from common Converſation with other Men; and from many Things indifferent of themſelves, for a Help to Meditation, Prayer, Mortification and internal Sanctification.

Q. *What was the Difference between* Nazarites *and other Votaries?*

A. Nazarites Abſtinence had a certain Kind of ſolemn publick Profeſſion, and a longer Laſtingneſs and ſtricter Rules of noble Purity, than common Votaries were obliged to. The Vows of the *Nazarites* were of two Sorts, the one was for Life, the other only for a certain Time, the laſt of which is mentioned in this Chapter.

Q. *What were the particular Obligations of a* Nazarite?

A. A *Nazarite* was to abſtain from Wine, as well for the greater Mortification of his Fleſh, as to avoid all Accidents from having his Senſes troubled by Wine, whereby ſome unadviſed Accident might happen, in Obſervance of the Rules he had vowed to follow.

Q. *What were the particular Rules to be obſerved by a* Nazarite?

A. A *Nazarite* ſuffered his Hair to grow long, which was a ſign of his being dedicated to God, and no Razor was to come near his Head. He was not to approach a dead Corpſe, becauſe he was holy and conſecrated to the Lord. But if, through Inadvertency or Accident he was defiled, his Head was to be ſhaved, and he was to offer a Sacrifice for an Atonement, for his Pollution was incompatible with his Conſecration. He was to renew his Vow, and his Profeſſion of a *Nazarite*, for ſo long a Time as he had vowed at firſt, without reckoning the Time before his caſual Pollution. Several other Ceremonies relating to a *Nazarite* are recited in this Chapter.

Q. *Explain that Expreſſion*, v. 6. He ſhall be holy.

A. That is, inviolable, untouched, upon whom no Man ought to lay his Hands, to take any Thing from him; as thoſe Things were which were conſecrated to God, *Lev.* xxv. 5. A Figure of Chriſt's perfect Holineſs, who was a true *Nazarite* of the Lord, *Matt.* ii. 23. and alſo of the Vow of entire Sanctification in the Faithful, in whom there is no Part ſo baſe or feeble, which they may not, or muſt not conſecrate to God's Service. And alſo, as the cutting, and ſhaving off the Hair, was a Sign of Mourning and Ignominy, *Lev.* xxi. 5. *Ezra* ix. 3. *Job.* i. 20. *Ezek.* vii. 18. and contrariwiſe, the nouriſhing of the Locks a ſign of Glory and Joy: So the Holineſs of the Faithful, is the Crown of their Joy and Glory, which fills them with Comfort inwardly, and Reſpect outwardly.

Q. *Why was the* Nazarite, *when the Days of his Separation were fulfilled, to offer ſeveral Sorts of Offerings?*

A. This was a Kind of expiatory Sacrifice for all the Sins of the whole Perſon, as the Sin-offering was for the Defect of Action. By this was ſignified, that in every Exerciſe, there are always two Defects, the one in the Perſon, the other in the Action, which have need of Chriſt's Interceſſion and Expiation, *Exo.* xxviii. 38. as for the third Offering of Thankſgiving, the *Nazarite* thereby made an Acknowledgment to God for all the Good, Strength, and Grace, in enabling him to keep the Vow he had made to Holineſs. Thus ought every faithful Man to give Thanks to God for his ſpiritual Gifts of Sanctification.

Q. *In the four laſt Verſes of the Chapter we have the Form of a ſolemn Benediction which* Aaron *was to pronounce on the People; is not this worthy Imitation under the Goſpel?*

A. It would be profane to imagine, that the Goſpel Miniſtry is not attended with the ſame and greater Power and Bleſſing than was the *Moſaic* Diſpenſation. Let us therefore highly value, and with Reverence receive the Bleſſing pronounced by the Miniſters of God, who has promiſed that he will bleſs us.

Q. *Did the* Nazarite's *Separation of himſelf to the Service of God, for a certain Time, repreſent any Uſage under the Goſpel Diſpenſation?*

A. Yes; for the Chriſtian Church orders her Members to ſet a Part *forty Days* at a peculiar Seaſon, in which to ſerve the Lord.

CHAP. VII.

The Offerings of the Princes at the Dedication of the Tabernacle. Their ſeveral Offerings at the Dedication of the Altar. What was given to the Gerſhonites, *and* Merarites. *The Sum of what was offered. God ſpeaks to* Moſes *from the* Mercy-ſeat.

Q. WHAT *firſt occurs to our Obſervation in this Chapter?*

A. The *Tabernacle* being now ſet up and ſanctified, and all its Utenſils placed therein, and in a Word, the exterior Form of the *Hebrew Church* being thoroughly ſettled, the Princes of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, came to offer unto *Jehovah*, in Token of Thankfulneſs for his Favour, and his having eſtabliſhed, as it were, his Court among them.

Q. *From the Profuſion of Offerings here mentioned, one would think the* Iſraelites *were not of a niggardly parſimonious Diſpoſition.*

A. No; they always contributed readily and freely in their Offerings to God. A publick and magnificent Worſhip, was what the *Jews* had been uſed to in *Egypt*; it was what they attempted to ſet up, even without *Jehovah*'s Command; and now when they ſaw the Tabernacle finiſhed and erected, with the Prieſts and inferior Officers conſecrated, they were fully ſatisfied, and ſhew'd more than uſual Joy.

Q. *Why is this ſolemn Offering of the Princes called the* Dedication of the Altar?

A. It's evident from what has been before related, that a conſiderable Space of Time was ſpent, after the Tabernacle was erected, in putting all Things in order for the due Celebration of divine Service therein; in order to which the *Tabernacle* itſelf, and its *Utenſils* were ſanctified, the *Prieſts* conſecrated, and many Sacrifices offered on that Occaſion; as alſo, on the Reception of the *Levites* into their Office. Hitherto the *Tribes* had not offered, as indeed they could not, till theſe Preliminaries were fully ſettled and adjuſted; and then the *Princes* of *Iſrael* both preſented to the Lord, and offered *Sacrifices* of all Kinds; and therefore *Moſes* calls this the *Dedication of the Altar.*

Q. *What was the Value of each Prince's Offering?*

A. Each *Oblation* conſiſted of the Particulars and Value following; namely, One Silver Diſh, of the Value of 14 *l.* 16 *s.* 6 *d.* one Silver Baſon, its Value 7 *l.* 19*s.* 8 *d. Farthing*; each of theſe was filled with fine Flour mingled with Oil for a Meat-offering. A Gold Spoon of the Value of 18 *l.* 5 *s.* this Spoon was full of Incenſe. Theſe Preſents ſeem to have been deſigned for the following Purpoſes, namely, the two firſt, for the Altar of Burnt-offering; and the latter for the Altar of Incenſe. The Value of the whole Preſent from the twelve Princes, in Gold and Silver, amounted to 492 *l.* 14 *s*, 3 *d.* of our Money. Beſides which, each of the Princes brought a young *Bullock*, a *Ram*, and a *Lamb* of the *firſt Year*, for a *Burnt-Offering*, a *He Goat* for a *Sin-Offering.* and *two Oxen*, *five Rams*, *five He-Goats* of the *firſt Year*, for a *Peace-Offering.*

Q. *Did theſe Princes offer for themſelves, or for the Tribes, over which they preſided?*

A. This is not very clear. The Words of *Moſes* may be underſtood, literally, of each Prince making his own *Oblation*; but, if the Value of the *Gifts*, and of the Offerings, be conſidered, they ſeem too large for a ſingle Perſon to beſtow; the Certainty of which, as it is difficult to determine, ſo it is not very material to know.

Q. *The Dedication being over, what followed?*

A. *Moſes* went into the Tent of the Congregation, to converſe with *Jehovah*, where God talked with him in a diſtinct audible Voice, which did not proceed from, nor was framed by the Organs of any created Body, nor aſſumed for a Time, nor in divers Places, as he did before, but always from above the Ark, by a Voice divinely framed, according to Promiſe, *Exod.* xxv. 22, *&c.*

Chap. VIII.

Aaron *directed in what Manner to light the Lamps. The Conſecration of the* Levites. *The Age and Time of their Service.*

Q. WHAT *was the Meaning of that Ceremony, in the Conſecration of the* Levites, *of the Children of* Iſrael's *putting their Hands on their Heads?*

A. The Words, *they ſhall put*, ſignifies, *they ſhall lift up*, and ſtretch forth their Hands towards them; wherein the People imitated that which was done in Sacrifices, where the Perſon that offered, laid his Hand upon the Offering, as well to dedicate it to God, as to transfer the Puniſhment of Death upon it, to which the Perſon himſelf was ſubject; ſo the People conſenting to the Conſecration of the *Levites*, did diſburthen themſelves from doing the Service of God, which otherwiſe every one was bound to yield unto him in their own proper Perſons.

Q. *To what Purpoſe did theſe* Waſhings, Cleanſings, *and* Sprinklings *of the* Levites *ſerve?*

A. They ſerved to fill them with a religious Awe of the God of *Jacob*, and taught them to conceive very high Thoughts of his Purity, ſince ſuch Lavations were required to render Men fit for his Service.

Q. *In the 24th Verſe, it is ſaid, that the* Levites, *who were to wait upon the Service of the Tabernacle, were to be* from twenty five Years old and upwards; *but in* Numb. iv. 3, 47. *they were to be of the Age of* thirty, *when they entered upon that Service; pray reconcile this ſeeming Difference?*

A. This Difference may be thus reconciled: *Firſt*, In that all Sorts of Service are ſpoken of in this Place; but in the other, only the bearing of the Ornaments; and here the *Levites* only enter into the Service. From the whole, it may be inferred, that for the Space of five Years they ſhould be, as it were Probationers; and that at the Age of thirty, they were admitted to the compleat Function of their Miniſtry.

Q. *What Obſervation do you make upon the Whole?*

A. If we attentively conſider the Perpetuity and other Conſequences of this Separation, as relating to the *Levites*, or other Tribes of *Iſrael*, we ſhall not find it difficult to diſcover Reaſons ſufficiently evincing the Wiſdom of this Solemnity in every Part thereof; after the Performance of which, the *Levites* entered upon their Functions, and attended *Aaron* and his Sons, according to the Rules preſcribed them.

Chap. IX.

The Paſſover again commanded. A ſecond Paſſover allowed to them who were unclean, or abſent from the firſt. The Cloud guides the Removes and Encampments of the Iſraelites.

Q. I *Find here a particular Caſe related of ſome certain Perſons that were forbid to partake of the Paſſover; I ſhall be glad to hear your Sentiments upon this Caſe.*

A. The Paſſover, by *Moſes*'s Order, being again ſolemnized, and certain Perſons being withheld from it by their Uncleanneſs in touching a dead Body, he indulges them to keep it by them themſelves: But however *Moſes* did not, on this Occaſion, act from his own Judgment, but according to *divine Command*; for, when this, which was the *ſecond Paſſover*, was celebrated, between the Evenings of the fourteenth Day of the firſt Month, in the ſecond Year after their coming out of *Egypt*, unclean Perſons were forbid to partake thereof, or to aſſiſt at the Celebration of it with the reſt of their Brethren: Of this they complained, and deſired to be informed by their *Leader*, wherefore they were kept back from offering their Oblation to the Lord in his appointed Seaſon. *Moſes* mildly entreated them to be peaceable and quiet, till he had received *Jehovah*'s Inſtructions in reſpect to their Caſe. *Moſes* applied himſelf to God, and the Anſwer he received we read in the 10th and following Verſes, where the Caſe of the unclean is particularly ſettled; a Regulation which ſeems clearly to imply, that this Feſtival was a Type of a Deliverance yet to come, as well as a Commemoration of God's Mercy, in releaſing them from the *Egyptian* Slavery.

Q. *I think this was the only Time we read of, that the* Iſraelites *celebrated the Paſſover during their Travels in the Wilderneſs; what Reaſon may be given for the Diſuſe of this ſo ſolemn an Ordinance?*

A. During the ſojourning of the Children of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, they ſeem to have had a divine Diſpenſation from obſerving the Ordinances both of Circumciſion and the Paſſover. Circumciſion did not conſiſt with their itinerant Courſe of Life, and for the Celebration of the Paſſover they had not, in every Encampment, all the Materials, that were neceſſary: But, having now reſted in the Confines of the holy Mount for almoſt the Space of a whole Year, after the Tabernacle was ſet up, the High-prieſt conſecrated, and his firſt Oblation honoured with a gracious Acceptance, God thought it not an improper Time to re-ordain the Celebration of the Paſſover, that ſo remarkable a Deliverance, as their Eſcape out of *Egypt* (which, by their Deſires of returning thither, ſeemed in a great Meaſure to have been forgotten) might not altogether be obliterated.

Q. *But whence could they have a Sufficiency of Lambs and Kids for ſo vaſt a Multitude to feaſt on?*

A. There is no Reaſon to deny (even ſuppoſing they had not a Supply of their own) but that they might traffick with the *Iſhmaelites*, and ancient *Arabs*, inhabiting theſe Parts, for ſuch a Number of ſmall Cattle, and being not far diſtant from *Midian*, *Exod.* iii. 1. by the Intereſt of *Jethro*, might from thence be furniſhed with ſuch a Quantity of Meal for unleavened Bread, as this one Paſſover (as this was the only one, they kept in the Wilderneſs) may be preſumed to require.

Chap. X.

Silver Trumpets commanded to be made; when, how, by whom, and for what to be uſed. The Iſraelites *remove from* Sinai *to* Paran, *and the Order of their March.* Moſes *endeavours to perſuade* Hobab *his Father-in-law, to accompany him. The Prayer and Bleſſing of* Moſes, *when the Ark was removed and ſet down again.*

Q. FOR *what Uſe were thoſe Trumpets intended, which* Moſes *was ordered to make?*

A. Occaſions often happening, for ſummoning the ces of the Tribes to Council, and for calling the People into general Aſſemblies, *Jehovah* directed his Prophet, to cauſe two *Silver Trumpets* to be made for *Aaron*'s two Sons, by the Sounding of which the People might be gathered, and alſo directed when, and in what Order they ſhould march; for this Purpoſe expreſs Rules were given about the Sounding of theſe Trumpets.

Q. *All Things being in Readineſs for a March,* Moſes *entreats his Father-in-law (who is here called* Hobab) *to bear them Company; and among other Arguments which he uſes to prevail on him, one is,* that thou mayeſt be to us inſtead of Eyes; *how is this Expreſſion to be underſtood?*

A. That is, to direct and guide us. For though the Cloud determined them to a general Place, yet many Particulars might be uncertain and unknown to *Moſes*, wherein *Hobab*, having long lived in thoſe Parts, might be able to adviſe him; as concerning the Conveniency of Water for their Cattle; the Safety or Danger of the ſeveral Parts by Reaſon of Serpents, or wild Beaſts, or Enemies, in the Parts adjoining to them, that alſo they might the better guard themſelves againſt them: Or this is to be underſtood, not ſo much of his directing them in the Way, as about great and difficult Matters, wherein the Counſel *Moſes* had from *God* did not exclude the Advice of Men. *Hobab*, however, could not be prevailed on to go any farther with them.

Q. *What other Opinions have you read concerning this* Hobab?

A. This ſame Name is found *Judg*. iv. 11. and ſome imagine that he was *Jethro*, who, after he had returned into his own Country, *Exod*. xviii. 27. might pay another Viſit to *Moſes* during his Encampment in the Wilderneſs, which was near to the Country of *Midian*; and farther that he ſhould alſo ſuffer himſelf to be perſuaded to ſtay with the People, together with his Family; the Progeny of which was afterwards propagated amongſt the People of *Iſrael*, *Judg*. i. 16. and iv. 11. 1. *Sam*. xv. 6. Others believe that this *Hobab* was the Son of *Jethro*, and Brother to *Zipporah*, and that here, and *Judg*. iv. 11. the *Hebrew* Word tranſlated *Father-in-law*, may be alſo underſtood for *Brother-in-law*; and that *Reuel* was a ſecond Name of *Jethro*, as *Exod*. ii. 18.

CHAP XI.

The Murmuring of the People, for which many of them are conſumed by Fire, which is quenched by the Interceſſion of Moſes; *The Place called* Taborah. Moſes's *Complaint and Prayer. The People luſt; Fleſh promiſed. God deſcends in a Cloud, and inſpires the Elders with the Gift of Prophecy.* Eldad *and* Medad *prophecy in the Camp. Quails ſent in abundance; a Plague enſues.*

Q. THE *firſt Thing we meet with in this Chapter, is another Murmuring of the People; what was the Occaſion of it?*

A. The Remembrance of their long Abode in the Wilderneſs, and the Proſpect and Fear of making other fruitleſs and dangerous Journeys, whereby they might be long delay'd from coming to that Reſt, the Land of Milk and Honey, which God had promiſed them, and which they thirſted after, made the People grow uneaſy; notwithſtanding all the Evidence they had, that God was in the midſt of them.

Q. *For this Murmuring of the People, a Fire ſuddenly conſumes many of them; whence did this Fire proceed?*

A. The Fire which God ſent upon the *Iſraelites*, came either immediately from *Heaven*, or iſſued from the Pillar of the Cloud, which went before the Tabernacle, or (according to the Conjecture of a learned Commentator) that, which is here called Fire, might be an hot burning Wind, in theſe deſart Places not unuſual, and many Times very Peſtilential, and, on this Occaſion, preternaturally raiſed in the Rear of the Army, to puniſh the Stragglers, and ſuch, as out of a Pretence of Wearineſs, lagged behind.

Q. *The Tents were ſcarce pitched, before a new Sedition broke out; the* mixed Multitude *luſted after Fleſh; whom are we to underſtand by the* mixed Multitude?

A. Theſe conſiſted of *Egyptians* and other *Strangers*, who being affected with God's miraculous Works in *Egypt*, and thereupon believing the Promiſe of God to carry the *Iſraelites* to a plentiful Land, for their own Advantage joined themſelves to them, and finding that yet their Hopes and Expectations were not anſwered, they diſcovered their evil Minds.

Q. *Did this Humour ſtop here?*

A. No; it quickly grew contagious throughout the *Iſraelitiſh* Camp, where nothing was to be heard but Complaints and Repinings, which was an Aggravation of their Sin; for having juſt before ſinned in the ſame Kind, and ſorely ſmarted for it, and being but newly delivered from their Fears and Dangers occaſioned thereby, they forthwith murmur again, and that more paſſionately than before, expreſſing themſelves in Tears and bitter Words, Murmuring at their being forced to live on Manna, and demanding *Moſes* to give them *Fleſh*; for though they brought Cattle out of *Egypt*, they reſerved them for Breed, neither were they all ſufficient to maintain them a Month.

Q. *How did* Moſes *behave on this Occaſion?*

A. Moſes, ſeeing the People ſtanding in the Doors of their Tents, to ſhew they were not aſhamed of their Sin, was vexed to the Soul at their great Unthankfulneſs; partly foreſeeing the dreadful Judgments coming upon them, and partly for his own Burden, gave Vent to his Anguiſh in the following elegant and pathetick Expoſtulation; "Wherefore haſt thou afflicted thy Servant? and wherefore have I not found Favour in thy Sight, that thou layeſt the Burden of all this People upon me? Have I begotten them, that thou ſhouldſt ſay unto me, carry them in thy Boſom (as a nurſing Father bearing the ſucking Child) unto the Land which thou ſweareſt unto their Fathers? Whence ſhould I have Fleſh to give unto all this People? For they weep unto me, ſaying, give us Fleſh, that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this People alone, becauſe it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of Hand, if I have found Favour in thy Sight; and let me not ſee my Wretchedneſs."

Q. *Does not* Moſes's *Anſwer* (v. 21, 22, 23.) *to God's Promiſe of ſending Fleſh ſufficient to ſupply all the People, carry ſomething of Diffidence and Diſtruſt with it?*

A. Moſes's Reply was, *Shall the Flocks and the Herds be ſlain, or all the Fiſh of the Sea be gathered to ſuffice ſix hundred thouſand Footmen?* That *Moſes* ſpeaks this as doubting or diſtruſting God's Word, is evident enough; and that he was not remarkably puniſhed for this, as he was afterwards in the ſame Sin (*Numb*. xx.) next to God's Pleaſure, may be imputed to the different Circumſtances of *this* and *that*

Sin. *This* was the firſt great Offence of that Kind, and therefore more eaſily paſſed by; *That* was after Warning and Experience of God's Mercy. *This* ſeems to have been ſpoken ſeriouſly in the Breaſt of *Moſes*, that openly and publickly before the People, and to their Scandal; and therefore it was fit to be openly and ſeverely puniſhed to prevent the Contagion of that Example.

Q. *Upon* Moſes's *Complaint of the great Burden he ſuſtained in governing ſo unruly a People, God was pleaſed to direct him to chuſe ſeventy of the Elders of* Iſrael *to aſſiſt him in the Adminiſtration; pray what Branches of the Government were they appointed to, ſince Magiſtrates had been before conſtituted to divide with him the Work of judging Cauſes, by the Advice of* Jethro?

A. It may be ſuppoſed indeed that *Moſes* had no Occaſion for any more *aſſiſting* Magiſtrates, after what had been conſtituted by the Advice of *Jethro*, his Father-in-law; but it is highly probable, that thoſe, of *Jethro's* adviſing to, were appointed to hear and judge only in ſmaller Cauſes, whereas all weighty and difficult Points, as well as laſt Appeals in ſmaller Matters, ſtill were left upon *Moſes*; and that it was to eaſe himſelf of this Burthen, that he made choice of theſe *Seventy*, as Men of ſuperior Capacity and Underſtanding, and who were to be aſſiſted by the Spirit of God in their Judgments, and Determinations. This Aſſembly of the *Seventy* Elders, not only the *Jews*, but even *Grotius*, and ſome other *Chriſtians*, will needs have to be the ſame with that famous *Council*, which afterwards obtained the Name of *Sanhedrim*. The *Rabbins* have left no Stone unturned to prove, that the *Sanhedrim* did conſtantly ſubſiſt, ever ſince its firſt Inſtitution by *Moſes*, and that the Members of it always aſſembled themſelves before the Tabernacle, where-ever that was ſet up, either in the Wilderneſs, or in the promiſed Land, 'till the Erecting of the Temple by *Solomon*, who, at the ſame Time, built them a ſtately Room or Hall to convene in. They add farther, that this *ſupreme* Court was continued in *Babylon*, during their Captivity there, and that, at their Return, it had the ſame Place rebuilt in the ſecond Temple, and ſo continued 'till its total Extinction under the *Romans*. But as they bring no Authority for theſe, and many other Particulars relating to this Aſſembly, but merely their own *Traditions*, they are juſtly rejected by the major Part of *Chriſtians*, who can find no Foot-ſteps of any ſuch high Court, either in the Times of *Joſhua*, of the *Judges*, or of the *Kings*, nor indeed even after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, 'till the Time of the *Maccabees*.

Q. *The Almighty, according to his Promiſe of ſatiſfying this rebellious People with Fleſh, ſent them an innumerable Quantity of Quails; which is the ſecond Time of their being fed with the ſame Food: But would not the Miracle have appeared more extraordinary, had it been varied to ſome other Kinds of Fleſh?*

A. God did not repeat to them the ſame Kind of Food, becauſe he was deſtitute of other Proviſion, (*for all the Beaſts of the Foreſt are his, and ſo are the Cattle upon a thouſand Hills; he knows all the Fowls upon the Mountains, and the wild Beaſts of the Field are in his Sight*) but for this ſpecial Reaſon, That how willing ſoever he might be to ſupply his People's Neceſſities, he had no Deſign to pamper their Appetites with a needleſs Variety, or to multiply Miracles without any unjuſt Occaſion. And therefore, as both theſe Events happened in the *Spring*, when Quails (which are found in great Quantities upon the Coaſt of the *Red-ſea*) are accuſtomed to paſs from *Aſia* to *Europe*; God cauſed a Wind to ariſe, which in their Flight, drove them towards the Camp of the *Iſraelites*, and (as the *Eaſtern* Tradition has it) was ſo very violent, that it broke their Wings, and made them fall at a convenient Diſtance, and in a proper Condition to be taken up. That *Quails* are excellent Food, is by all allowed; but the ſame Tradition informs us, that theſe Birds, in *Arabia Fœlix*, do vaſtly exceed all others, and, as our Author expreſſes it, have *neither Bones, Veins, nor Sinews*; that is, are very Fat and Tender, ſomething like our *Fig-peckers* and *Ortolans*. And therefore, though God refuſed to gratify their Palates with a profuſe variety of Dainties, yet is there no Fault to be found with his Proviſion, ſince the Food he ſent them, was delicious in its Kind, and a whole Year had now intervened, between the former and latter Flight of *Quails*, to whet their Appetites, and prevent any Danger of being cloyed with the ſame Diſh.

Q. *What was it in the Behaviour of the* Iſraelits, *which provoked God to puniſh them ſo ſeverely in this their* latter, *more than their* former *Complaint?*

A. The Deſire of Fleſh for Flood is, in itſelf, but natural, and, abſolutely ſpeaking, far from being criminal, or provoking to the Author of Nature, who created every Appetite of Man, as well as his Underſtanding: But when this breaks out into Murmuring, Mutiny, and Diſorder, the Caſe is then entirely altered. In the *former* of theſe Caſes, the People were in want of Bread, and really pinched with Hunger; but in the *latter*, they had *Bread from Heaven* in Abundance, and may therefore be ſaid to complain, not out of *Need*, but *Wantonneſs*. Their Diſcontent in the former Caſe was expreſſed, comparatively, in modeſt Terms, but here their Tone is, *Who ſhall give us Fleſh to eat? We remember the Fiſh, which we eat in* Egypt *freely, the Cucumbers, and the Melons, and the Leeks, and the Onions, and the Garlick; but now our Soul is dried away; there is nothing at all, beſides this Manna, before our Eyes.* This ſame Contempt of the *Manna*, which God ſo miraculouſly ſent from Heaven, eſpecially in Perſons ſo well inſtructed in the divine Will, was ſuch an Inſtance of Baſeneſs and Ingratitude, as juſtly deſerved the Puniſhment it met with.

Farther; in the former Time of their Complaining, God winked at their Ignorance, and pitied their Diſtreſs: He had not then given them his Laws, for the Rule of their Actions and Appetites, and therefore, never looking *to reap, where he had not ſowed*, he was not ſo *extreme as to mark what they had done amiſs*; but, after he had publiſhed his Precepts from the *Holy Mount*, and many more Inſtructions from the *Tabernacle*, he then expected, that their Obedience ſhould keep Pace with their Knowledge, and was more provoked at their Backſlidings, than before, becauſe they proceeded not from the Ignorance of their *Minds*, but the perverſeneſs of their *Wills*: For, this was the true and the juſt Cauſe of their *Condemnation, that*, even when *Light was come into the World, they loved Darkneſs, rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds were evil.* See an elegant Deſcription both of their Crime and Puniſhment, *Pſ.* lxxviii. 17. to 44.

Q. *What Uſe ſhould* Chriſtians *make of this terrible Example?*

A. From hence to take Warning, never to pray for temporal good Things, but with entire Submiſſion

ſion to the Choice and Pleaſure of God; leſt in granting our Petitions, he ſends Judgments along with them; as he did in the Inſtance before us.

CHAP. XII.

Miriam *and* Aaron *murmur againſt* Moſes. *They are commanded to come to the Tabernacle; they are rebuked, and* Miriam *becomes a Leper, but is healed by* Moſes's *Interceſſion for her.* Miriam *is ſhut out of the Camp ſeven Days.*

Q. *WHAT might be the Ground or Occaſion of this Difference between* Moſes *and his Brother and Siſter?*

A. The Occaſion of this Difference is not ſo very evident. The Hiſtory indeed tells us, that *they ſpake againſt* Moſes *becauſe of the* Ethiopian, *or rather* Arabian *Woman, whom he had married.* The Generality of Interpreters ſuppoſe this Woman to be *Zipporah*, the Daughter of *Jethro*, whom he married in *Midian*; for thoſe, who imagine her to have been another, can hardly get over this Difficulty,----Why *Moſes* ſhould ſet ſo bad an Example, as to marry, at two ſeveral Times, a Foreigner, rather than one of the Daughters of his People. The firſt Time indeed, that he did ſo, was, when he lived in a State of Exile; but was nevertheleſs received in a Family of the beſt Diſtinction in the Place, which might be Inducement enough for his matching himſelf with one of the Daughters, ſince no expreſs Precept againſt Matches of this Kind was then in Force. But now, that he was ſet at the Head of a People, who were to be ſeparated from the reſt of Mankind, and was conducting them into a Country, with whoſe Inhabitants they were to have no matrimonial Intercourſe, for fear of introducing Idolatry; it would have been highly indecent, and unpopular, an Affront to his own Country-women, as well as a dangerous Inlet to Impiety, for him to have married into an idolatrous Nation; nor would his Brother and Siſter have been the only Perſons, to clamour againſt him, but the whole Congreation would have riſen up in Arms, upon ſo notorious a Provocation. Since therefore we hear of no ſuch Commotion, we may reaſonably conclude, that this *Cuſhite*, or *Arabian* Woman, was the ſame *Zipporah*, whom he had married ſome forty Years before; but then why they ſhould quarrel with him upon her Account, at this Time, and no ſooner, is the Difficulty.

Now to reſolve this, we muſt obſerve, that when *Jethro* his Father-in-law, was in the Camp, it was by his Advice that *Moſes* inſtituted Judges to determine leſſer Cauſes; and that he found his Son *Hobab* ſo very ſerviceable to him in the Capacity of a Camp Maſter-General, that he earneſtly entreated him to continue with him, and received him, no doubt, into great Confidence. It is to be obſerved farther, that, in the foregoing Chapter, we have an Account of the Creation of the ſeventy Elders, to aſſiſt in the Adminiſtration; and that theſe Elders were nominated by *Moſes*, without ever conſulting *Aaron* or *Miriam*: As therefore this Story of their quarrelling with him, is immediately ſubjoined, it ſeems very likely, that, taking themſelves to be neglected, in ſo great an Alteration, made in the Government without their Advice, they were very angry; but, not daring to charge *Moſes* directly, they fell foul upon his Wife, giving her opprobrious Names, and complaining to the People, very probably, that ſhe, and her Brother had too much Power and Influence over *Moſes*.

Q. *But does not* Moſes *ſeem to aim at aggrandizing his Family, when he makes God the Arbitrator of this Difference?*

A. Joſephus, in his *Jewiſh* Hiſtory, makes no mention of this Family Difference, as thinking that it might reflect Diſcredit upon his Nation; but *Moſes* was an Author of more Veracity, than to conceal any Action, which was proper for Mankind to know, even though it tended to the laſting Diſgrace of his own Family. For he does not affect to aggrandize the Thing, or to make his Family appear more conſiderable, when he introduces God, as arbitrating the Difference between them, but purely to acquaint us, that, as the *Iſraelites* lived then under a *Theocracy*, God himſelf, being their immediate King, undertook to decide the Controverſies depending between ſuch his chief Miniſters, as were not accountable to any other Judge: Nor was the divine Majeſty any more debaſed in condeſcending to make this Deciſion, than any earthly Prince would be, by interpoſing his Authority, to determine a Controverſy between two of his great and powerful Subjects.

Q. *How could* Moſes *commend himſelf without endangering the Authentickneſs of his Writings?*

A. Moſes indeed inſerts a Paſſage, to ſhew, that the Occaſion of this Family Quarrel was not from him; that he was a Man of a meek and peaceable Diſpoſition, and therefore not addicted to Strife and Contention, eſpecially with thoſe of his own Kindred; and why might he not inſert this, when it was no more than what was due to his Character, and perhaps, at that Time, neceſſary for his own Vindication? St. *Paul*, to clear himſelf from ſome Aſperſions, which the Malice of his Enemies had caſt upon him, enters upon his own Commendation, though it be with ſome Reluctancy, and, to give it a better Gloſs, tries all the Powers of Eloquence in working it up. *Whereinſoever any is bold*, ſays he, *I ſpeak fooliſhly, I am bold alſo. Are they* Hebrews? *So am I. Are they* Iſraelites? *So am I. Are they the Seed of* Abraham? *So am I. Are they Miniſters of Chriſt? I ſpeak as a Fool, I am more: In Labours more abundant; in Stripes above Meaſure: In Priſons more frequent: In Deaths often.----In Perils of Waters, in Perils of Robbers, in Perils by my own Countrymen, in Perils by the Heathen, in Perils in the City, in Perils in the Wilderneſs, in Perils in the Sea, in Perils among falſe Brethren: In Wearineſs and Painfulneſs, in Watchings often; in Hunger and Thirſt, in Faſtings often; in Cold and Nakedneſs; beſides thoſe Things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the Care of all the Churches.* Theſe are the Words of our Apoſtle, ſetting off the faithful Diſcharge of his Miniſtry; and yet no one ever ſuſpected the Genuineneſs of this his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, upon that Account; as little Reaſon have we therefore, to call in Queſtion the Authentickneſs of this Book of *Moſes*, becauſe we find a Paſſage or two that ſpeaks favourably of him.

That all Hiſtorians, both ancient and modern, when they come to ſpeak of the Part, and Concern, they had in ſuch and ſuch Actions, are commonly accuſtomed to ſpeak in the third Perſon; and that the modeſteſt Man upon Earth may ſometimes ſee Occaſion to magnify his Office, or vindicate himſelf, without deſerving the Imputation of Vanity or Arrogance, cannot be denied. Now conſidering what Share it was, that *Moſes* himſelf bore in the Facts, which he relates, and that the Narrations, Laws, and Admonitions, which he recorded, were not deſigned for that Age only, but directed to all ſucceeding Generations of the World; and withal conſidering, that the ſeditious and turbulent Behaviour of his Brother and Siſter at that Time, obliged him to juſtify and clear himſelf; there was no imaginable Way more proper for him to expreſs himſelf in, than that, which he made uſe of, even had it been a Matter of his own Study and Contrivance; but then, if we ſuppoſe, that he wrote by divine Inſpiration, the Commendation, that is given of his natural Lenity and good Nature, muſt be looked upon, rather as the Holy Ghoſt's Teſtimony concerning *Moſes*, than *Moſes*'s Teſtimony concerning himſelf.

Q. *Why was* Miriam *only, and not* Aaron, *ſmitten with a Leproſy, ſince they were both in the Tranſgreſſion?*

A. *Miriam* was ſmitten, becauſe ſhe was firſt and chief in the Offence; or becauſe God would not have his Worſhip either interrupted or diſhonoured, which it muſt have been if *Aaron* had been leprous.

Q. *I deſire to know the true Meaning of the Anſwer which God gave to* Moſes *on his interceeding to reſtore* Miriam *to her former Health. The Words are,* If her Father had but ſpit in her Face, ſhould ſhe not be aſhamed for ſeven Days? Let her be ſhut out from the Camp ſeven Days, and after that let her be received in again.

A. The Senſe of the Words is this, If *Miriam* had offended againſt an earthly Parent, in as groſs a Manner, as ſhe has done againſt the God of *Iſrael*, ſhe would not have been immediately pardoned, and received to Favour; therefore ſome Marks of Penitence and Humiliation ſhould be ſhewn, and then the Lord would deal mercifully with her. On this Account, ſhe was, by the Prophet's Command, put out of the Camp for ſeven Days, the Time preſcribed by God, as an unclean and defiled Perſon, unfit to be converſed with by the Congregation of the Choſen. So, though God healed her at *Moſes*'s Requeſt, yet he would have her publickly bear the Blame of her Sin, and be a Warning to others to keep them from the ſame Tranſgreſſion.

Q. *We do not read of any Sacrifices offered on* Miriam*'s Re-admiſſion, as in Caſes of Leproſy, had been before commanded; What might be the Reaſon of this Omiſſion?*

A. The Reaſon of this was, either that the Hurry of their March afforded them not Leiſure to do it; or, that this being an extraordinary Caſe, they were diſpenſed with by him who gave Laws, and inflicted Puniſhments.

Q. *Not being willing to break the Connection of the Story, I have reſerved one Queſtion to the laſt, which otherwiſe I ſhould have asked before; namely, that you give the true Interpretation of the 6th Verſe, which runs thus,* If there be a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make my ſelf known unto him in a Viſion, and will ſpeak unto him in a Dream.

A. The Words, *If there be*, may be thus interpreted; although ye be all Prophets, yet there is a a Difference of Degrees in this Gift; and *Moſes* hath it moſt eminently; and therefore it becomes not you to pretend to an Equality with him.

In a Viſion. Viſions and Dreams were the two ordinary Ways of divine Revelation, and common to Prophets; in both of them the Senſes were bound up and laid aſleep, the Prophet's Soul being, as it were, withdrawn within itſelf, ſequeſtred from its corporeal Senſes, and raviſhed by the divine Objects which were preſented unto it. But there was this Difference, that in Viſions it was done by a ſupernatural Power of God, who by Virtue of his Illumination (ſurpaſſing all human Capacity) imprinted on the Prophet's Spirit, the Knowledge of thoſe hidden Myſteries which he intended to reveal unto him, either by Infuſion of a mere divine Light, or by Impreſſion of mental Repreſentations, or by framing of ſome inward Speech, whereby likewiſe the Body, and all its Powers and Faculties, were extremely diſturbed and abated, *Dan.* viii. 27. and x. 8, 16, 17. But in Dreams the Suſpenſion of the Senſes was natural by the Means of Sleep; during which, God framed ſome Imaginations, or cauſed thoſe in the Fancy to meet in ſome Concurrency with ſuch Things as he meant to reveal; or without them, he faſhioned ſome inward Speech in the Prophet; and all this without any Labour or Sufferance of the Body. The third Manner was *Face to Face*, which was ordinary with *Moſes*, and very rare in other Prophets; this was by an articulate and ſenſible Voice and Apparition, all the Senſes remaining intire and free in *Moſes*; for in other Prophets this never happened, without extreme Terror and Abatement of all natural Power, *Joſh.* v. 13, 14. *Judg.* vi. 22.

CHAP. XIII.

Moſes, *by divine Command, ſends Spies to ſearch the Land of* Canaan. *Their Inſtructions. Their Return with the Fruits of the Land; their Report; the People are encouraged by* Caleb, *but diſheartenby the other Ten.*

Q. WHAT *might be the probable Occaſion of* Moſes *ſending Spies to ſearch out the Land of* Canaan?

A. It may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, being now at the very Entrance into the promiſed Land, that the *Iſraelites* were deſirous of receiving a full and perfect Account thereof, both of its Product, and the Strength of its Inhabitants; for, as through the whole Courſe of their Journeyings they had behaved frowardly and untractably, and as now they approached the Country which they were to poſſeſs, doubtleſs they enquired very particularly about it; and therefore *Jehovah*, in Compliance with their Diſpoſition, directed *Moſes* to ſelect twelve Perſons, one out of each Tribe, to go up to ſee the Territories he had given them, and, on their Return, to make a faithful Report thereof to their Brethren, that they might be thoroughly ſatisfied of its Goodneſs and Fertility.

Q. *Pray explain a little the Account which* Moſes *gives of the Journey of theſe Spies.*

A. That they might the more ſecurely and expeditiouſly execute their Buſineſs, it's probable, that they divided themſelves into ſeveral ſmall Parties, and informed themſelves not only by their Eye, but alſo by their Ear, and by the Information of Perſons of whom they enquired, about the Nature and Condition of their Land. Here *Moſes*, having generally deſcribed their Progreſs and Courſe from South to North, returns now to mention ſome memorable Places and Paſſages; as, that having entered the Land on the South Part, they travelled till they came to *Hebron*; for, as it was juſt now intimated, that the Spies diſtributed their Work among them, and went either ſeverally, or by Pairs; and it ſeems, the Survey of this Part was left to *Caleb*, as alſo the Region where the Giants inhabited. This Circumſtance is mentioned as an Evidence of the Goodneſs of that Land and Soil, becauſe the Giants choſe it for their Habitation; and *Moſes* alſo farther acquaints us, that *Hebron* was built ſeven Years before *Zoan* in *Egypt*. This ſeems to be noted to confront the *Egyptians*, who vainly boaſted of the Antiquity of their City *Zoan* above all Places. Having ſurveyed the Country, and returning home, they paſſed thro' a fruitful Valley, abounding in Vines, where they cut down a Branch but with one Cluſter of Grapes on it; but that of ſo vaſt a Weight and Bigneſs, that they were forced to carry it on a Staff between two, to preſerve it whole and entire.

Q. *The Spies being returned to the Camp, what Account did they give of the Buſineſs they were ſent upon?*

A. An extraordinary Aſſembly was immediately ſummoned, wherein *Moſes* and *Aaron* preſided; the twelve Deputies were then called before them, and produced the Grapes and other Fruits they had brought out of the Land, through which they had paſſed; and having depoſited theſe in a proper Place, where all who were preſent might ſee them, they proceeded to their Report, which they delivered in theſe Terms; *We came unto the Land whither thou ſenteſt us, and ſurely it floweth with Milk and Honey, and this is the Fruit of it. Nevertheleſs the People be ſtrong that dwell in the Land, and the Cities are walled and very great, and moreover we ſaw the Children of* Anak *there. The* Amalekites *dwell in the Land of the South; and the* Hittites, *and the* Jebuſites, *dwell in the Mountains; and the* Canaanites *dwell by the Sea, and by the Coaſt of* Jordan. This Relation was made in the Audience of the People, and was craftily begun with Commendations, that their following Slanders might find the more Credit.

This ſhort Narration containing a direct Anſwer to the ſeveral Heads of Enquiry given them by the Prophet, and as appears by the Stile, particularly addreſſed to him, made a great Impreſſion upon the Minds of the People, who, according to Cuſtom, ſet up a confuſed Clamour.

Q. *But were all the Spies unanimous in this Report?*

A. No; *Caleb* and *Joſhua*, two of them, were of a different Mind; and *Caleb* (who might be thought to be more impartial than *Joſhua*) endeavoured all he could to quiet the People; and when the Aſſembly had abated their Noiſe, and given him an Opportunity of ſpeaking, he addreſſed them in few Words, ſaying, *Let us go up at once, and poſſeſs it, for we are able to overcome it.* The Probability of this Succeſs *Caleb* grounded upon the *Iſraelites* being a People united under one Head; whereas their Enemies were divided into ſeveral Nations and Governments, of different Councils, Intereſts, and Inclinations: and alſo his principal Dependance was, upon the Aſſiſtance of Almighty God.

Q. *Was there any Oppoſition made to this brave Anſwer of* Caleb?

A. Notwithſtanding all that *Caleb* could, ſay to encourage the People to proceed in their intended Enterprize, his Colleagues oppoſed him, and told the Aſſembly the moſt frightful Stories they could imagine, concerning the vaſt Strength and Power, and prodigious Stature of the *Canaanites*. They could not, indeed, retract what they had ſaid as to the Fruitfulneſs of the Country; but to countervail that, they pretended that the People conſumed the whole Product thereof; that as the Inhabitants were in general of a larger Size than ordinary Men, ſo they had among them a Race of Giants, of yet more exceſſive Height, and in whoſe Eyes themſelves appeared but as Graſhoppers; an hyperbolical Expreſſion, intended to ſignify the mighty Difference there was between them and thoſe gigantic People, to whom they appeared little and contemptible.

Q. *As an Evidence of the Fruitfulneſs of* Canaan, *the Spies brought a ſingle Bunch of Grapes, which was ſo large and heavy, that it was carried on a Staff between two; does not this ſeem improbable?*

A. That there are Vines and Grapes of a prodigious Bigneſs, in thoſe Eaſtern and Southern Parts of the World, is a Matter recorded by ſeveral Writers. *Strabo* tells us, that in *Margiana*, and other neighbouring Countries, there were Vines ſo very thick about, that two Men could ſcarce fathom them, and that they produced Bunches of Grapes of two Cubits long. *Pliny* informs us, that in the inland Parts of *Africa*, there were Bunches of Grapes bigger than young Children. *Olearius*, in his Travels into *Perſia*, acquaints us, that not far from *Aſtracan*, he ſaw Vines which a Man could hardly graſp with both his Arms; and the learned *Huetius* affirms, that in *Crete*, *Chios*, and other Iſlands in the *Archipelago*, there are Bunches of Grapes, from Ten to Forty Pounds Weight.

CHAP. XIV.

The People murmur at the News brought by the Spies. Moſes, Aaron, Caleb, *and* Joſhua, *endeavour to appeaſe the People, for which they are threatened to be ſtoned. God threatens the People, but at* Moſes*'s Interceſſion, is appeaſed; yet declares that the Murmurers ſhould not inherit the Promiſed Land. They who brought an evil Report of the Land, die of the Plague. The People attempting to invade the Land, without God's Permiſſion, are ſmitten.*

Q. WHAT *have you to obſerve upon the lamentable Outcry of the People againſt* Moſes *and* Aaron, *upon the evil Report which the Spies had brought them of the Promiſed Land?*

A. The bitter Reproaches and Invectives of the *Iſraelites* on their ſuppoſed Diſappointment, though ſpoken to the Prophets, were directly pointed againſt the divine Majeſty; they ſaid, the Lord had brought them into the Wilderneſs, to have them fall by the Sword, and their Wives and Children enſlaved; in ſhort their Murmurs and Diſcontents grew to ſuch a Height, that a Return to *Egypt* was thought more adviſeable, than to face the Enemy.

Q. *Were not the People ſtrangely infatuated to think of returning to* Egypt?

A. Though they might, in their raging Fits, ſpeak of returning into *Egypt*, yet it is an amazing Thing, that they ſhould continue in their Madneſs, and deliberate about it, nay actually appoint them a Leader, as *Nehemiah*, *Ch.* ix. 17. ſays they did. For how could they get thither without Food, which they could not expect that God would ſend from Heaven, when they had ſhamefully forſaken him? How could they hope to find their Way, when the Cloud, which directed them, was withdrawn from them, or think of coping with ſuch Nations, as would oppoſe their Paſſage, in caſe they ſhould hit upon the right Way? And, after all, if they came into *Egypt*, what Reception could they expect from a People, whoſe King, and Princes, and firſt-born had lately been deſtroyed upon their Accounts? Nothing can be ſaid in Anſwer to theſe Queſtions, but that outrageous Diſcontent infatuates Men's Minds, and will not ſuffer them to conſider any Thing, but that which grieves them.

Q. *Did not* Caleb *and* Joſhua *endeavour to quell this Tumult?*

A. Joſephus introduces *Joſhua* and *Caleb*, (in order to pacify the tumultuous People) delivering themſelves in Words to this Effect. ‘How is it poſſible ‘for you, good People, to diſtruſt the Veracity and ‘Goodneſs of God, and, at the ſame Time, to give ‘Credit to Stories and Amuſements about the Land ‘of *Canaan*, that are propagated on Purpoſe to abuſe you? Why ſhould not you rather believe and ‘follow thoſe, who have taken ſo much Pains to put ‘you into the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of the Bleſſing you deſire? What's the Height of Mountains, or ‘Depth of Rivers, to Men of undaunted Spirits, and ‘of honourable Reſolutions; eſpecially, when God is ‘both their Protector and Defender? Wherefore let ‘us advance, and attack the Enemy, without ever ‘queſtioning the Event: Only truſt God for your ‘Guide, and follow us, where we ſhall lead you.

Q. *The People, for their Diſobedience, are made to wander in the Wilderneſs forty Years; but ſome Interpreters have obſerved, that they entered* Canaan *before the Expiration of that Term.*

A. Moſes here makes uſe of a round Number, in Alluſion to the Forty Days of the Spies ſearching the Land, though it is plain, that the *Iſraelites* did enter into the Land of *Canaan* in leſs than thirty-nine Years, after this Sentence pronounced againſt their Fathers. The Truth is, *Moſes* reckons the Time paſt, ſince they came firſt into the Wilderneſs, which was a Year and a Half; ſo that the Meaning of the Sentence is, That they ſhould wander for forty Years in all, before that they went out of the Wilderneſs: Which, however, is not to be underſtood ſo preciſely, as to want nothing at all of it: For ſince they came out of *Egypt* on the 15th Day of the *firſt Month*, and arrived in *Canaan*, and pitched their Tents in *Gilgal*, on the *tenth* Day of the *firſt Month*, of the one and fortieth Year after their Departure out of *Egypt*, Joſh. iv. 19. it is plain that there wanted five Days of full forty Years.

Q. *What think you of the ſudden Reſolution of the* Iſraelites, (*after the mournful Meſſage which* Moſes *brought them from God*) *of making an immediate Attack upon their Enemies?*

A. They ſuppoſed, no doubt, that their Forwardneſs now, would in ſome Meaſure, attone for their former Cowardice. *Moſes*, however, diſſuaded them from ſo raſh an Enterprize, telling them, that it was contrary to God's expreſs Command, and therefore could not proſper; that by their late undutiful Behaviour, they had forfeited his Aſſiſtance and Protection, without which it was impoſſible for them to ſucceed; and that as the *Amalekites* and *Canaanites* had gained the Paſſes of the Mountains, it would be Madneſs to fight with them. All this Admonition, however, had no Effect upon them; for they ran from one Extreme to another, and ſo were guilty of Raſhneſs and Rebellion. Notwithſtanding the Ark of the Covenant went not with them, notwithſtanding *Moſes*, their General, was not at their Head, yet out they marched to the Top of the Mountain, where their Enemies ſurprized, defeated, and, having ſlain many of them, purſued the Reſt as far as *Hormah*.

Q. *What Reflection do you make upon this melancholly Story?*

A. Here we ſee the dreadful Judgment thoſe Men met with, who brought an evil Report upon the Land of *Canaan*; as alſo thoſe that were ſeduced by them. This Example ſhould inſtruct us to avoid, as we would the moſt infectious Plague, the Converſation of People who ſpeak contemptuouſly of Religion, its Promiſes and Threatnings.

Chap. XV.

Of ſeveral Kinds of Offerings. The Stranger under the ſame Law. Of Sins of Ignorance, and Preſumption. The Man that violated the Sabbath ſtoned. The Iſraelites *commanded to wear Fringes on their Garments, and for what Uſe.*

Q. THE Iſraelites, *by their late Murmurings and and Rebellions, had, one would think, ſufficiently provoked God, not to give them any more Laws, ſince they ſo ill obeyed his ſovereign Will in any Thing; yet, in this Chapter, we find ſome new Injunctions commanded for their Obſervance.*

A. In this we have a ſhining Inſtance of the Goodneſs and Mercy of God, who, notwithſtanding the great Provocation he had ſo lately received, was pleaſed to chear the Hearts of his afflicted People, to ſpeak again unto *Moſes*, and by a Promulgation of certain new Laws which were to be obſerved by their Poſterity, in the Land of *Canaan*, gave them freſh Aſſurances, that notwithſtanding all their miſdeeds, he would ſtill remember the Promiſe he made to their Anceſtors, and would certainly bring their Children to that excellent Country, which the Spies had ſeen, and acknowledged to flow with Milk and Honey.

Q. *In the 24th Verſe is a Law concerning the Sin of Ignorance, and the Offerings to be made for the ſame; and in* Lev. iv. 13. *&c. the Ceremonial of Attonement for the ſame Sin, is different; pray explain this Difficulty?*

A. By this Diverſity in the divine Command, it ſeems, that either God had expounded and aggravated his Law, to make the People more circumſpect; or that it is not ſpoken in both Places of the ſame Faults committed by Ignorance. That in *Leviticus* is ſpoken of Errors, and Faults, in common Courſe of Life; and hereof thoſe only which are committed in Actions, which belong to God's Service.

Q. *In the 32d and four following Verſes, is related the Story of the Crime and Puniſhment of the Sabbath-breaker; pray give the Particulars, with your Remarks thereupon.*

A. While the *Hebrew* Nation was wandring in the Wilderneſs, (but the preciſe Time, we cannot, at this Diſtance, poſitively aſcertain) a Perſon was apprehended for gathering of *Sticks* on a *Sabbath-day*, in contempt of the eſtabliſhed Law, whereby the doing any Kind of Labour, on that Day, was to be puniſhed with *Death*; he ſeems by the Letter of the *Moſaic Hiſtory*, to have been impriſoned till the next Day; and then he was brought before *Moſes*, *Aaron*, and the *Rulers* of the *Congregation*: By them he was remanded to his former Confinement, where he was to remain till the Almighty ſhould be pleaſed to declare, after what Manner he ſhould be puniſhed; that is, *put to Death*; for that this was a *capital Crime*, it was impoſſible they ſhould doubt, though they might not, perhaps be ſatisfied, as to the way in which the Law was to be put in Execution; or, it may be, *Moſes* did not care to proceed in this Caſe, but by God's expreſs Command and Direction.

Moſes, very ſoon, received Directions from the divine Oracle, concerning this Affair; whereby it was directed that the Offender ſhould be ſtoned to *Death* by the People of *Iſrael*, without their Camp;

this Sentence being communicated to the *Hebrew* Nation, the Criminal was accordingly led without the Camp, and there ſtoned in the Manner beforementioned.

Q. *Soon after this Execution, the* Iſraelites *received an Ordinance, enjoining them to wear a* Fringe *on the* Skirts *of their* Garments, *with* a blue Lace *or* Border thereon; *what was the Uſe and Deſign of theſe* Fringes?

A. Theſe Fringes were compoſed of a great Number of ſcattered and waving Threads, repreſenting the Changes and Fluctuations of Mens Thoughts and Actions, which ought to be reſtrained under the Obedience of God's heavenly Law, figured by that sky-coloured Ribbon, by which theſe Fringes were bound. *Pſ.* cxix. 113.

Q. *Explain thoſe Words v.* 39. Seek not after your own Hearts.

A. Have your Thoughts and Will ſet upon my Commandments, and not ſuffer them to be drawn away by the evil Suggeſtions of the Heart, and Incitements of the Senſes.

Fringes were worn by the *Phariſees* in *Chriſt*'s Time, who are noted for making their Borders larger than ordinary, to make them more obvious to the ſight. *Matt.* xxiii. 5.

Q. *What does the Prophet mean by thoſe Words, in the ſame verſe,* 39. and your own Eyes?

A. That is, you ſhall not ſeek after the Devices and Inventions of your own Minds and Hearts, at *Nadab* and *Abihu* did when they offered ſtrange Fire, as you juſt now did, when you pretended to pleaſe and ſerve God by going up the Hill and towards *Canaan* without and againſt his Order; nor after the Example and Invention of others which your Eyes ſee, as you did when you were ſet upon worſhipping a Calf after the Manner of *Egypt*.

Q. *Explain the laſt Words in the ſame Verſe, namely,* after which you uſe to go a whoring.

A. That is, to depart from me, and to prefer your own Fancies before my Commands, and to live only by preſent Sight or Senſe, and not at all by Faith in my Promiſes.

CHAP. XVI.

The Sedition of Korah, Dathan, *and* Abiram. Moſes *reproves them, and ſends for* Dathan *and* Abiram; *their Refuſal; their Puniſhment; their Cenſers kept for a Memorial. The People murmur againſt* Moſes *and* Aaron; *the Plague begins, and is ſtopt by* Aaron.

Q. THE *Sedition of* Korah *and his Companions, and their Puniſhment, are the chief Subjects of this Chapter; it's neceſſary therefore that you give ſome Account of his Family, and the Rank he held among the People.*

A. Korah, the firſt and chief Author of this Rebellion, was the Son of *Izhar,* who was the Brother of *Amram,* the Son of *Kohath,* the Son of *Levi*; ſo that he was *Couſin-German* to *Moſes* and *Aaron.*

Q. *What was it that gave Riſe to this ſeditious Inſurrection?*

A. The Scripture does not inform us of any particular Occaſion, whence *Korah* took Diſtaſte at the Prophets, his near Relations; but the *Jewiſh* writers have ſuggeſted one very probable; namely, becauſe *Elizaphan* was, by *Moſes* and *Aaron,* preferred to be *Prime or Chief* of the *Kohathites,* though he was the Son of *Uzziel,* who was the younger Brother of *Izhar*; which, to a Perſon of *Korah*'s high Spirit, it's very likely might have given Offence: But however it was, he drew in *Dathan, Abiram,* and *On,* all of the Tribe of *Reuben,* together with *two hundred and fifty* of the *Nobles,* or principal Perſons in *Iſrael*; their Deſign was to depoſe *Moſes* from his *civil* Authority, and to eject *Aaron* out of the *Prieſthood*; the Latter, it is probable, *Korah* had ſome Hopes of transferring to his own Family; and in the Former, it is likely ſome of the *Reubemites* thought to intrude themſelves. Such a Conſpiracy as this, we may rationally ſuppoſe, was abetted by a conſiderable Party among the common People, ſince the Dependants on theſe great Men muſt have been numerous; what renders this ſtill more probable, is, that they went in a Body openly, in the Sight of the People, to the Brethren, *Moſes* and *Aaron,* and charged them with thruſting themſelves into Offices, to which they had no manner of Right; "Ye aſſume, ſay they, too much to yourſelves, ſeeing all the Congregation, even all of them are holy, and *Jehovah* is among them. Wherefore then do you lift yourſelves up, above the choſen Church of *Jehovah.*" *Joſephus* introduces *Korah* addreſſing himſelf to his *Accomplices,* in Words to this Effect. "A Scandal it is, and a Thing not to be indured, for *Moſes* to take upon him at this Rate; to carry on his Ambition thus, under the Mask of Holineſs and Religion, and by that Means to raiſe himſelf a Reputation to the wrong of other Men. He gave lately the Prieſthood and other Dignities to his Brother *Aaron,* without any Right or for it. No Conſent of the People was was asked, nor any Pretence of Authority produced, ſave only his own arbitrary Will and Pleaſure: What has he to ſay for himſelf for ſo doing? If God has annexed the Honour to the Tribe of *Levi,* I myſelf may pretend a Right to the Preference, being of the ſame Stock with *Moſes,* and his Superior both in Riches and Years: Or if it be to paſs by Seniority, it belongs to the Tribe of *Reuben.*"

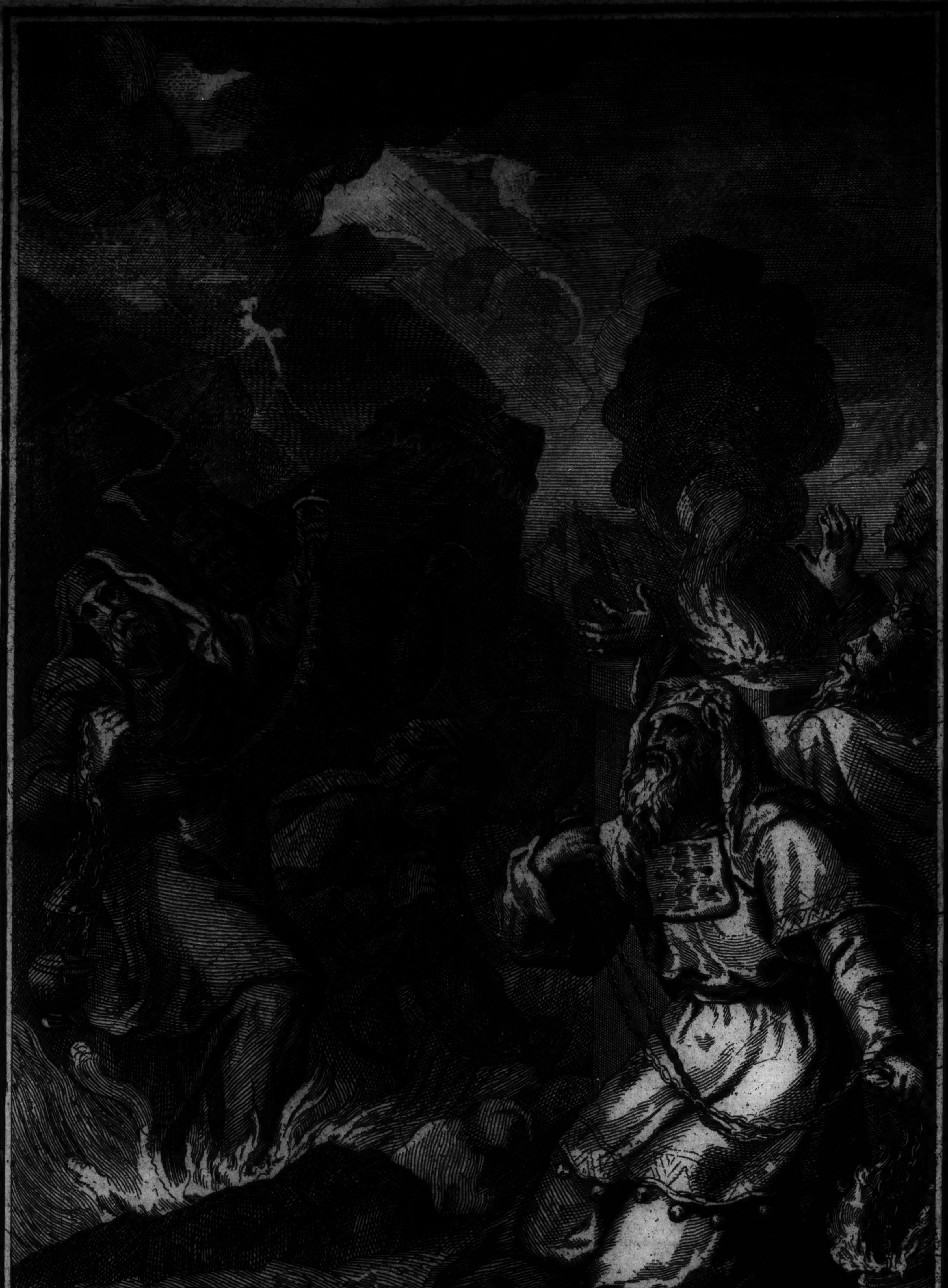
Q. *How did* Moſes *reſent this audacious Inſult?*

A. He eaſily perceiving that they were again about to provoke God, before he return'd them any Anſwer, proſtrated himſelf on the Ground, in Token of his Appeal to the Supreme Being, and, it may be, made Interceſſion for the People; then riſing up he made a Reply to *Korah* and his Aſſociates, as in *v.* 5 to 12. the Import of which is, that on the Morrow *Jehovah* would decide the Controverſy and ſhew whom he had choſen for his peculiar Service. *Moſes* deferred the Trial till next Day, partly, that *Korah* and his Company might prepare themſelves and their Cenſers; and partly to give them ſpace for Conſideration and Repentance.

Q. *In what Senſe are we to underſtand thoſe Words,* v. 14. Wilt thou put out the Eyes of theſe Men?

A. The *Hebrew* Word, here rendered, *put out,* ſignifies, *bore out*; Wilt thou *bore out* the Eyes of thoſe who are confederate with us, and of all the People who are of our Mind? Wilt thou make them blind, or perſuade them that they are blind, and that they do not ſee what is viſible to all that have Eyes, namely, that thou haſt deceived them and broken thy Faith and Promiſe given to them? Or wilt thou lead them about like blind Men whether thou pleaſeſt, one Time towards *Canaan,* and another Time towards *Egypt* again?

Q. *In Verſe* 15. *it is ſaid, Moſes* was very wroth, and ſaid unto the Lord, Reſpect not thou their Offering;



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The Punishment of Korah Dathan *and* Abiram

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fering; *Don't theſe paſſionate Expreſſions ſeem inconſiſtent with the Character of* Moſes, *who was remarkable for his* Meekneſs?

A. Moſes was wroth, not ſo much for his own Sake, for he had learnt to bear Indignities, *Numb.* i. 2. as for God's Sake, who was highly diſhonoured, blaſphemed, and provoked, by theſe Speeches and Behaviours, in which Caſe he ought to be angry, as Chriſt was, *Mark* iii. 5.--*Reſpect not thou their Offering*; that is, Accept not their Incenſe which they are now going to offer, but ſhew ſome manifeſt Diſlike of it. He calls it *their Offering*, though it was offered by *Korah* and his Companions, becauſe it was offered in the Name and by the Conſent of all the Conſpirators, for the Deciſion of the preſent Controverſy between them and *Moſes*.

Q. Korah *and his* Company *are ordered to appear* before the Lord *on the Morrow*; *what are we to underſtand by* before the Lord?

A. Not in the *Tabernacle*, which was not capable of containing ſo many Perſons ſeverally offering Incenſe, but at the Door of the Tabernacle, *v.* 18. which Place is often ſaid to be before the Lord, *Exod.* xxix. 42, *Levit.* i. 10, *&c.* where they might now lawfully offer it by *Moſes*'s Direction on this extraordinary Occaſion and Neceſſity, becauſe this Work could not be one in that Place, which alone was allowed for offering up of Incenſe, not only for its Smalneſs, but alſo becauſe none but Prieſts might enter to do this Work. Here alſo the People, who were to be inſtructed by this Trial, might ſee the Proof and Succeſs of it.

Q. *Who were the* Elders of Iſrael, *who followed* Moſes, *when he went to the Tents of* Dathan *and* Abiran, *v.* 25?

A. They were the ſeventy Rulers, who were appointed to aſſiſt *Moſes* in the Adminiſtratinn of the Government; they went with *Moſes* on this Occaſion for the greater Solemnity of the Action, and for his own better Vindication from the Calumnies with which he had been aſperſed, and to encourage them in their Work notwithſtanding the obſtinate and untractable Temper of the People they were to govern.

Q. *V.* 30. *it is ſaid*, and they go down quick into the Pit; *what was this Pit?*

A. The Grave which God was now about to open for them. The *Hebrew* Word *Scheol* ſometimes ſignifies *Hell*, and ſometimes the *Grave*, as *Geneſis* xxxvii. 35. *Pſ.* lv. 15.

Q. *Son Difficulties occur to me in* v. 32. *where it is ſaid, The Earth ſwallowed them up and all the Men that appertained unto* Korah. *Now we read* Numb. vi. 22, 37. *that his Sons were ſpared: Who then were the Men pertaining to* Korah, *as mentioned in the Text?*

A. That is, his Company who were his Confederate, in the Sedition; as alſo all his Family then preſent, Women, Children, and Servants. His Sons indeed were ſpared, being then abſent upon ſome Service of the *Tabernacle*, or on ſome other Occaſion, it being ſo ordered by Providence, either becauſe they diſliked their Father's Act, or on the Interceſſion of *Moſes* for them, or for ſome other Reaſon. Theſe Words may likewiſe intimate, that *Korah* himſelf was not here, but that he continued with his 250 Men before the Lord, *v.* 18, 19. where they were waiting for God's Deciſion of the Controverſy; nor is it probable that their chief Captain would deſert them, and leave them ſtanding there without an Head, eſpecially, when *Aaron*, his great Adverſary abode there ſtill, and did not go with *Moſes* to *Dathan*, &c. *v.* 25. And *Korah* may ſeem to have been conſumed with thoſe 250, *v.* 35. though he is not there mentioned, but is eaſily underſtood by comparing that Verſe with *v.* 16, 17, 18. and from the Nature of the Thing itſelf; for no Doubt the Deſtruction which befel the Acceſſaries did likewiſe involve the Principal. And ſo much is intimated, *v.* 40. *that no Stranger come near to offer Incenſe beforr the Lord, that he be not as* Korah *and as his Company*; that is, deſtroyed as they were, by Fire from the Lord. And when the *Pſalmoſt* relates this Hiſtory, *Pſ.* 106. the Earth's ſwallowing them up is confined to *Dathan* and *Abiram*, *v.* 17. and for all the reſt of that Conſpiracy it is added. *v.* 18. *And a Fire was kindled in their Company, the Flame burnt up the wicked.*

Q. *Why was* Eleazar, *and not* Aaron, *ordered to take up the* Cenſers *out of the* Burning, *v.* 37?

A. Partly becauſe the troubleſome Part of the Work was more proper for him; and partly, leſt *Aaron* ſhould be polluted by going amongſt the dead Bodies; for it's probable that this Fire conſumed them, as Lightning ſometimes does others, by taking away their Lives, and leaving their Bodies dead upon the Place.

Q. *How do you interpret the laſt Clauſe of the ſame Verſe,* for they (the *Cenſers*) are hallowed?

A. They were ſo, either, 1. By God's Appointment, becauſe they were preſented before the Lord by his expreſs order, *v.* 16, 17. or 2. By God's juſt Judgment, becauſe they together with the Perſons that uſed the Cenſers, were accurſed and devoted by God, and therefore were the Lord's, and not to be employed in any common or prophane uſe, *Levit.* xxvii. 28. But the firſt Reaſon ſeems the beſt, and is rendered by God himſelf, *v* 38.

Q. *Did not this terrible Puniſhment keep the* Iſraelites *within the Bounds of their Obedience for a conſiderable Time afterwards?*

A. No; for the very next Day, (ſuch was the prodigious Wickedneſs and Madneſs of this People) they imputed that dreadful Deſtruction, whereby the late impious Conſpirators were cut off, to the revengeful Diſpoſitions of the *Leader* and his *Brother*, and from thence took Occaſion to murmur againſt them, and proceeded ſo far as even to threaten their Lives.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of this new Inſurrection?*

A The Glory of *Jehovah* deſcended conſpicuouſly in the Column of the *Cloud*; whereupon the People, in ſome Meaſure aſtoniſhed, receded a little, and thereby gave the *Brethren* an opportunity of retiring to the *Tent* of the *Congregation*. The *Brethren* fell flat on their Faces, to beg Pardon and Mercy for the People, whoſe utter Deſtruction they now, more than ever, apprehended. They had not lain long in this Poſture, before *Moſes* (who was beſt acquainted with the Tokens of divine Favour or Diſpleaſure) ſuddenly roſe up, and cried out to Aaron, *Take a Cenſer, and put Fire thereon from off the Altar, and put on Incenſe, and go quickly unto the Congregation, to make an Attonement for them; for there is Wrath gone out from the Lord, the Plague is begun. Aaron* did as directed, and ſtanding between the *Dead* and the *Living*, as a Mediator with God, he prayed for the People, and the *Plague* ceaſed. Yet in this ſhort ſpace there died 14,700 Men, without reckoning thoſe who died in the Sedition of *Korah*.

Chap. XVII.

God confirms his calling of Aaron *to the Prieſthood, by the Budding and Bloſſoming of his Rod, which is ordered to be laid up for a Memorial and Terror to Rebels. The People terrified thereby, apply to* Moſes *for Succour and Direction.*

Q. *IN this Chapter we have an Account of the Budding and Bloſſoming of* Aaron's *Rod, as the Expedient by which the Almighty was pleaſed to put an End to to all Diſputes and Controverſies in Relation to the Prieſthood, and to aſcertain and confirm* Aaron's *perpetual Right thereto: But what need was there of any farther Teſtimony of* Aaron's *Right to the Prieſthood, after ſuch aſtoniſhing Marks of the divine Anger, ſhewn againſt thoſe who would have ſupplanted him?*

A. It is evident, that notwithſtanding the terrible Puniſhment inflicted on *Korah*, and his ſeditious Adherents, the *Iſraelites* ſtill ſhewed their Inclinations to mutiny; and therefore, tho' the Havock made by the Plague, kept them quiet for the preſent, yet it is highly conſonant to human Reaſon, that by a more gentle Inſtance of divine Appointment, this Matter ſhould be ſolemnly determined; nor could there be a more ſatisfactory Method laid down for this Purpoſe, than that which God was pleaſed to make Choice of.

Q. *What Kind of* Staves, *or* Rods, *were thoſe which were collected from the Princes of* Iſrael *on this Occaſion?*

A. Two Solutions may be given to this Queſtion; 1. That they were the ordinary Sticks, which were made uſe of in walking. 2. That they were the *Badges of Diſtinction*, or *Enſigns of Authority*. The latter of theſe ſeems the more probable; but either fully ſatisfies the Queſtion.

Q. *Of what Wood were thoſe Staves made?*

A. It is very probable they were of the *Almond Tree*; and this ſeems confirmed by the current of Hiſtory: But to this, and many other Queſtions of the like Nature, which have exerciſed the Inventions of *Jewiſh* Commentators, no particular Reply need be made; ſince *Fables* and *Conjectures*, rather weaken than confirm what is delivered in the ſacred Writings, where all that is in any Degree neceſſary, is very plainly ſet down, although theſe trivial Niceties which could noways conduce to Edification, are omitted. Wherefore the ſerious and Chriſtian Reader, will rather meditate on what he finds clearly related, concerning the Workings of Providence, than perplex hi Mind with needleſs unimportant Enquiries, about Circumſtances, not directly recorded in Scripture.

Q. *This I grant; however, as this miraculous Event has occaſioned various Diſputes and Speculations among the Learned, I don't think it impertinent to enquire, whether* Aaron's *Rod was of the ſame Kind with the reſt; and what other Conjectures there have been concerning theſe* Rods *or* Staves?

A. Some will needs have this Rod of *Aaron*'s to have been the ſame with that of *Moſes*'s, wherewith he wrought ſo many Miracles in *Egypt*, and at the *Red-ſea*; but there is one Argument againſt them, that the Miracle of its Bloſſoming had not been a ſufficient Conviction to the *Iſraelites*, if ſo be that *Aaron*'s Rod had not been of the ſame Kind with the reſt. For whatever had come to paſs, they might have aſcribed it to the ſingular Quality and Virtue of the Rod, (eſpecially had it been *Moſes*'s *wonder-working* Rod) and not to the ſpecial Hand of God, interpoſing to eſtabliſh the Authority of *Aaron*; whereas, on the contrary, we find the Miracle had its intended Effect, and ſilenced for ever the Pretences to the Prieſthood. It is preſumed therefore, by ſome learned Men, that the Rods, which the ſeveral Princes brought *Moſes*, were neither their common *Walking-ſtaffs*, nor any ſuch Wands, as were a Badge of their Power and Authority in their reſpective Tribes, but rather certain Twigs, that were cut off from ſome *Almond-Tree*, and not improbably from one and the ſame Tree, that there might be no Difference between them. The Difference, however, next Morning, appeared in this----That on the Twig which bore *Aaron*'s Name, there was, in ſome Places, an Appearance of Buds coming forth; in others, the Buds were opened, and ſhot forth into Bloſſoms; and in others the Bloſſoms were knotted, and grown into Almonds.

Q. *Was this Rod of* Aaron, *after the Trial was made, put within the Ark, or only by it?*

A. God commanded *Moſes* to put it only in the Tabernacle, *Numb.* xvii. 20. to be preſerved there; but St. *Paul*, in *Heb.* ix. 4. ſays that it was placed within the Ark, with the Pot of Manna, and Tables of the Law. Others affirm, that it was not put within, but only by the Side of the Ark, and for their Opinion, they alledge a Paſſage, in 1 *Kings* viii. 9. which ſeems to intimate, that there was nothing in the Ark, but the Tables of the Law: But then their Adverſaries contend, that St. *Paul* in that Paſſage to the *Hebrews*, is to be underſtood literally; that there could be no Hindrance for its being put in the Ark, ſince the Ark was five Foot long, and could not but be of Capacity enough to hold it: And therefore, when the Scripture ſays, that there was nothing in the Ark but the Tables of the Law, they conceive it may be underſtood with this Limitation----That nothing elſe was originally in it, becauſe the Ark was primarily intended for that Uſe; but this need not hinder but that, afterwards, other Things might be put in it. How long this wonderful Rod continued in this Repoſitory, is no where mentioned in Scripture. When the Ark was brought into *Solomon*'s Temple, 1 *Kings* xviii. 9. there is no Notice taken of it; and yet it ſeems reaſonable to think, that it ſhould have been preſerved for ſome conſiderable Time, and preſerved in that very Verdure, wherein it now appeared, with its Buds, Bloſſoms, and Fruit, for the Conviction of Poſterity.

Q. *But was it not poſſible for* Moſes *to impoſe upon the People, by a falſe Appearance of thoſe Things painted on* Aaron's *Rod?*

A. Moſes well knew he had the Heads of each Tribe to deal with, Men of Sagacity and Obſervation, and who were too nearly concerned in the Experiment, to let any Pretence to a Miracle go unexamined; and therefore we may very well imagine, that when he brought forth all the Rods the next Morning, they ſurveyed every one very carefully, and made diligent Search into the Alteration, which had paſſed upon that, which belonged to *Aaron*; and had they found any Trick or Deception in it, would have expoſed the two Brothers to Contempt and Ridicule, or rather depoſed them from all Rule and Power for the future, as a Couple of vile and impious Impoſtors: But inſtead of that, we find that this Miracle ſilenced all Cavils, for ever after, againſt *Aaron* and his Family; confirmed the Authority of

Moſes; and made the People (when he told them, that by God's Appointment, he had laid up *Aaron*'s Rod, to be a Witneſs againſt them, that if they murmured any more, they ſhould moſt certainly be deſtroyed) break out into this doleful Complaint; *Behold we die, we periſh, we all periſh, and ſhall be conſumed with dying*, v. 12, 13. For they now began to believe God's Threatnings, and to fear, that at one Time or other, they ſhould experience ſome heavy and ſevere Puniſhment, as by this new Sign he had convinced them, that they juſtly deſerved; they were afraid, leſt they ſhould relapſe into the ſame Miſcarriages, and thereby bring the Vengeance of God upon themſelves.

CHAP. XVIII.

God ſhews to Aaron, *his Sons, and the* Levites, *their reſpective Offices; alſo the Maintenance for each of them. The* Levites *commanded to give Tenths of their Tenths to the High-prieſt.*

Q. WHAT *is the chief Deſign and Import of this Chapter?*

A. That the *Iſraelites* might have no Cauſe to murmur or be uneaſy, in regard to their religious Duties, *Moſes*, by divine Direction, promulgated certain Conſtitutions, in Relation to Prieſthood, whereby the People are forbidden to interfere with the Prieſts or *Levites* in any Thing belonging to their reſpective Offices; and in Conſequence thereof, the Prieſts alone were made anſwerable for any Iniquity which ſhould happen about the Sanctuary, of which only they had the Charge; and the *Levites* had the outer committed to them, and the Nature of their Duty was more fully explained. Thus every Thing was now ſettled, ſo that all underſtood what God required of them.

Q. *Give me your Senſe of thoſe Words in the firſt Verſe,* Thou (*Aaron*) and thy Sons, and thy Father's Houſe with thee, ſhall bear the Iniquity of the Sanctuary.

A. That is, you ſhall ſuffer the Puniſhment of all the Uſurpations, or Pollutions of the Sanctuary, or the Holy Things by the *Levites*, or any of the People, becauſe you have Authority and Power from me to keep them all within their Bounds, and I expect you uſe it to that End. Thus the People are in a good Meaſure ſecured againſt their Fears, expreſſed *Ch.* xvii. 12, 13. Alſo they are informed that *Aaron*'s high Dignity was attended with great Burdens, having not only his own, but the Peoples Sins to anſwer for; and therefore they had no ſuch Reaſon to envy him as they might think, if the Benefits, Incumbrances, and Dangers were equally conſidered.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Clauſe of* v. 10. In the moſt holy Place ſhalt thou eat it?

A. By the *moſt holy Place* here, is meant the *Court of the Prieſts*, where there were Places for this Uſe, *Lev.* vi. 16, 17, 26. and is called the *moſt holy Place*, not ſimply and abſolutely, as the Place within the Veil was, but in reſpect of the Thing ſpoken of, becauſe this was the moſt holy Place of all the Places appointed for eating of holy Things, whereof ſome might be eaten in any clean Place in the Camp, *Lev.* x. 14. or in their own Houſes. And as the moſt holy Place is ſometimes called ſimply *holy*, ſo it is not ſtrange if any holy Place be called *moſt holy*, eſpecially this Place, which was ſo near the Altar of Burnt-offerings, which is called called *moſt holy*, and made all that touched it holy, *Exod.* xxix. 37. And God would have theſe Things eaten by them in an holy Place, as in God's Preſence, that they might be obliged to the greater Caution, and not to abuſe God's good Creatures, eſpecially holy Things to Intemperance, and that they might eat this, as their other Food, with Thankfulneſs to God the Giver of it, and with reſpect to his Service and Glory; which was afterwards preſcribed to Chriſtians, 1 *Cor.* x. 31. 1 *Tim.* iv. 3.

Q. *What Equity was there in that Injunction, that the* Levites *ſhould have the* Tenth *of the Subſtance of their Brethren?*

A. Jehovah aſſigned them the Tithes of their Brethren, as a Recompence for their Service; and becauſe they were not to have any Inheritance in the Land of *Canaan*: Out of theſe Tithes, however, they were ſtrictly appointed to pay Tithes of the beſt unto the Prieſts.

CHAP. XIX.

The Water of Separation, how and of what made; the Uſe of it, wherewith the unclean are to be purified. Laws concerning Deſpiſers of Cleanſing.

Q. DID *the Water of Separation and Cleanſing, treated of in this Chapter, typify any Thing future?*

A. This Water, and the Sprinkling of it, was a Token of the Cleanſing and Purification from Sin, made, or to be made, only by the *Blood* of the *Meſſiah* our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, the ſame being ſprinkled upon, that is, imputed and appropriated to the Souls of all true Believers, whereof all this Ceremony was but a Type and Figure. *For if the Blood of Bulls and Goats, and the Aſhes of an Heifer, ſprinkling the unclean, ſanctifieth to the purifying of the Fleſh; how much more ſhall the Blood of Chriſt, who through the eternal Spirit offered himſelf without Spot to God, purge your Conſcience from dead Works to ſerve the living God?*

Q. *Is it not ſtrange, that the ſame Water ſhould cleanſe one Perſon, and defile another?*

A. It was the mere good Pleaſure of God that it ſhould be ſo; to teach us that it did not cleanſe by any Virtue in itſelf, or in the Work done, but only by God's Appointment. It likewiſe reminded the *Jews* of the Imperfections of their Prieſthood, their ritual Purifications, and Expiations, and conſequently of the neceſſity of a better *Prieſt* and *Sacrifice*, and way of purifying, pointed at by theſe outward Rites. It ſhewed that the Efficacy of God's Ordinances depends not upon the Perſon or Quality of his *Miniſters*, becauſe the ſame Perſon who was polluted himſelf, could, and did cleanſe others.

CHAP. XX.

The People's Journey in the Wilderneſs of Sin; *they murmur againſt* Moſes *for want of Water.* Moſes *commanded to ſpeak to the Rock, to yield Water.* Moſes *ſtriking the Rock twice, diſpleaſeth God.* Iſrael *denied Paſſage through* Edom. Aaron, *by God's Command, delivering up his Office to his Son* Eleazar, *dieth. The Congregation mourn for him.*

Q. IN *the firſt Verſe it is ſaid, that the Children of* Iſrael *came into the Wilderneſs of* Zin in the firſt Month; *but of what Year from their coming out of* Egypt?

A. In the fortieth Year, as is evident; becauſe the next Station to this, was in Mount *Hor*, where *Aaron* died, *v.* 22, &c. which happened in the fifth Month of the 40th Year, Ch. xxxiii. 38. So that here is manifeſtly a Vacancy in the *Moſaic* Account of 37 Years, during which, the *Iſraelites* moved about from Place to Place, in the Deſart; as we may ſee in *Numb.* xxxiii. where their Journeys and Encampments are particularly related. *Moſes* does not give us an exact Journal of all their Occurrences, but only of thoſe which were moſt remarkable, eſpecially of thoſe which happened in the *firſt* and *ſecond*, and in the *fortieth Year*.

Q. *The next Thing that falls under Obſervation, is the Death of* Miriam; *what Account do you give of her?*

A. Miriam, or *Mary*, was elder than *Aaron* or *Moſes*. *Moſes* was the youngeſt; and, when he was born, ſhe might probably be about twelve Years of Age; becauſe, when he was expoſed upon the Banks of the River *Nile*, ſhe had Addreſs enough to offer her Service to *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, to go and fetch her a Nurſe, which can hardly be ſuppoſed of one younger. Some of the antient Fathers are of Opinion, that ſhe died a *Virgin*, and was the *Legiſlatrix*, or Governeſs of the *Jewiſh* Women, as *Moſes* was of the Men; but the more probable Opinion is, that ſhe was married to *Hur*, a Man of chief Note in the Tribe of *Judah*, and, on ſeveral Occaſions, a Perſon of great Confidence with *Moſes*; but it does not appear ſhe had any Children by him, ſhe was buried, as *Joſephus* tells us, with great Solemnity, and her Sepulcher (as *Euſebius* reports) was extant in his Time, at *Kadiſh*, not far diſtant from the City *Petra*, the Metropolis of *Arabia Petræa*. Some ſuppoſe ſhe was 126 Years old, though others think ſhe was 130.

Q. *It is ſaid, v.* 2. there was no Water for the Congregation; *Pray did not a Current of Water follow them in all their Journeys?*

A. Yes; but now it began to fail them; becauſe they were come near *Canaan*, and other Countries, where Water might be had by ordinary Means, and therefore God would not uſe extraordinary, leſt he ſhould ſeem to proſtitute the Honour of Miracles. This Story, though like that related, *Exod.* xvii. is different from it, as appears by divers Circumſtances.

Q. *It is ſaid, v.* 7. Take the Rod; *and v.* 9. *Moſes* took the Rod from before the Lord: *What was the Rod that* Moſes *took?*

A. Commentators are by no Means agreed. Mr. *Le Clerc*, from the literal Senſe of the Words in the Original, ſuppoſes this to have been the *Rod* of *Aaron*, which, after its miraculouſly bringing forth *Almonds*, was laid up before the Lord, in the holy Place. But Biſhop *Patrick* thinks this was *Moſes*'s *Rod*, wherewith he did his former Miracles, and that it was laid up as well as *Aaron*'s, before the Lord; but in this Scripture is ſilent. It is alledged againſt the firſt Suppoſition, that the *green Rod* of *Aaron*, full of Bloſſoms, Buds, and Almonds, was a very unfit Thing to ſtrike the Rock with; but to this it may be anſwered, that he was not commanded to ſtrike at all; But then it may be aſked, To what Purpoſe was the Rod taken? To this, indeed, it is not eaſy to reply, unleſs the Remembrance of the Wonders, heretofore done thereby, might be ſuppoſed to make ſome Impreſſion on the Minds of the *Iſraelites*, to diſpoſe them to expect quietly the *Gift of Water* from him who had ſo often relieved them.

Q. *But ſpeak to the Point; was this the Rod of* Moſes *or of* Aaron?

A. However dubious this Thing may be; yet it ſeems highly probable, that the Prophet uſually carried his Rod in his Hand (as from many Places of Scripture ſeems likely) and that he had it now, while the Lord was ſpeaking to him; and then the Mandate of God amounted to this, Go, take the Rod, that is, *as thou waſ't wont to do*; and the *Phraſe, He took the Rod from before the Lord*, will mean no more, than that he went out from the Preſence of *Jehovah*, with his Rod in his Hand, in order to do what he was directed, which is very agreeable to the Manner of his being commiſſioned to do Miracles in *Egypt*.

Q. *There is a great Diverſity of Opinions among Expoſitors, what the Sin of* Moſes *was, for which he was condemned to die in the Wilderneſs?*

A. Several *Chriſtian*, as well as *Jewiſh* Expoſitors think, that the Tranſgreſſion of *Moſes* lay in ſmiting the Rock, when his Inſtructions only were to ſpeak to it; and for the Support of this they alledge, that God is an abſolute Sovereign, expecting an abſolute Obedience, and exacting Puniſhment even of his greateſt Favourites, when they pretend to vary from his Commands, or to mix their own Conceptions with his Directions. But though there ſeems to be ſomething in this, yet it is not eaſy to conceive, for what Purpoſe God ordered him to take his Rod with him, if he was not to ſmite the Rock with it, as he had done before.

It is certain that the divine Writers, who have touched upon this Hiſtory, had made Mention of two Faults in *Moſes*, viz. his Impatience and *Infidelity*. And therefore we may ſuppoſe, that (the Water now ceaſing at the Time, when his Siſter *Miriam* died) he was exceedingly troubled on both thoſe Accounts; that unexpectedly aſſaulted by the People, who ought to have paid him more Reverence, eſpecially in a Time of *Mourning*, he fell into a greater Commotion of Anger and Indignation, than was uſual in him; and that his Anger gave ſuch a Diſturbance to his Mind, and ſo diſordered his Thoughts, that when God bad him *take his Rod, and go, and ſpeak to the Rock*, he fell into ſome Doubt, whether the divine Goodneſs would grant the People the ſame Favour, he had done before; that therefore he ſtruck the Rock with Diffidence, believing it improbable that ſuch worthleſs and rebellious Wretches ſhould deſerve a Miracle; and that, the Water not iſſuing out at the firſt Stroke, his Diffidence encreaſed into Unbelief and a ſettled Perſuaſion, that they ſhould have none at all.

There is one Conjecture more of a very learned Man, *viz.* that *Moſes* began to diſtruſt God's Promiſe of entering into the Land of *Canaan* at the End of forty Years, and to imagine, that, if he brought Water again out of the Rock, it muſt follow them, and engage them again in the like Wanderings; and therefore the Comment which he makes upon the Words of *Moſes* is this, *what ye Rebels, muſt we bring Water out of the Rock, as we did at* Horeb? *Are all our Hopes and Expectations of getting out of the Wilderneſs come to this? We never fetched Water out of the Rock but once, and that was, becauſe we were to ſtay a long Time in the Wilderneſs; and muſt we begin our Abode here again, when we thought we had attained to the End of our Travels?* And, with that, he ſmote the Rock in a Paſſion twice, whereas God had commanded him only to ſpeak to it.

Whichſoever of theſe Conjectures we are inclined to think moſt plauſible, there are few Writers, who are not diſpoſed to extenuate the Fault of *Moſes*, as not deſerving ſo ſevere a Puniſhment, had not God, in paſſing the Sentence of Excluſion upon him conſidered the Eminence and Dignity of a Perſon, in whom a Tranſgreſſion of any Kind could not but be far more grievous, and inexcuſable, than in an ordinary Man.

Q. *In the 28th verſe, it's ſaid,* Aaron *died on Mount* Hor; *in what Country was this Mountain ſituated?*

A. The Mount *Hor* was on the Coaſt of the Land of *Edom* towards the *Eaſt*, in ſome Part of that Tract, which was after denoted by the Mount *Seir*. In *Deuteronomy* ii. 12. we are told expreſly, *that the* Horims *dwelt in* Seir *before-time*, and, accordingly, we read *Gen.* xiv. 6. that *Chedorlaomer*, King of *Edom*, with his Confederates, ſmote the *Horites in their Mount* Seir. Now it ſeems very probable, that, as Places, at firſt, were wont to take their Names from their *Inhabitants*, both this Place, and the People, might derive their Names from one *Hor*, whom they deſcended from, and who, in the early Ages of the World, inhabited this Country; and that though, in Proceſs of Time, the Name of Mount *Seir* came to be uſed to denote the ſame Tract, yet the old Name of Mount *Hor* was preſerved, in that Part of it, where ſtood the Mountain, here ſo called by *Moſes*, and on which *Aaron* died. There ſeems to be however no ſmall Difficulty in reconciling this Paſſage in *Numbers* xx. 23--28. with what we read in *Deut.* x. 6. That *the Children of* Iſrael *took their Journey from* Beeroth, *of the Children of* Jaakan, *to* Moſera, *there* Aaron *died*, and *there he was buried:* So that *Moſes* ſeems to have forgot himſelf, when, in one Place, he tells us, that his Brother *Aaron* was buried on Mount *Hor*, and in another in *Moſera*. To reconcile this, ſome have ſuppoſed, that Mount *Hor* was ſo near to *Moſera*, where the *Iſraelites* had their Encampment, when *Aaron* died, that either Place might, with Propriety enough, be called the Place of his Death, and his Interment. It ſeems however, from the Account, which we have of their Encampments in *Numb.* Ch. xxxiii. very plain, that Mount *Hor* and *Moſera* were two diſtinct Places; and therefore others have maintained, that the 6 and 7 Ver. in the tenth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, in the *common Hebrew* Text, have been extremely corrupted by the Ignorance of ſome Tranſcribers, becauſe the *Hebrew Samaritan*, or old *Hebrew* Text, makes the Account, in *Deuteronomy* the Tenth, Ver. 6, 7. exactly agree with the order of Encampment, mentioned in *Numb.* xxxiii. 32, 38. and there it is ſaid, that *Aaron* died, and was buried in Mount *Hor*.

Q. *What is the general Character of* Aaron?

A. As Slowneſs of Speech and a cool Underſtanding were the peculiar Qualities of *Moſes*; ſo a Vivacity of Temper, and ready Elocution were what chiefly diſtinguiſhed the Character of his *Brother*; God therefore made Choice of *Moſes* to be his *Miniſter*, and in Regard to his Difficulty of Utterance, he appointed *Aaron* for his Aſſiſtant.

The Author of *Eccleſiaſticus*, having given us a long Commendation of *Aaron*, and his Veſtments, comes, at laſt, to tell us, that "God choſe him out of all Men living, to offer Sacrifices to the Lord, Incenſe, and ſweet Savour, for a Memorial, and to make Reconciliation for his People; that he gave unto him the Commandments, and Authority in the Statutes of Judgments, and he ſhould teach *Jacob* the Teſtimonies, and inform *Iſrael* in the Laws, that Strangers conſpired together againſt him, and maligned him in the Wilderneſs---this the Lord ſaw, and it diſpleaſed him, and, in his wrathful Indignation, they were conſumed---but he made *Aaron* more honourable, and gave him an Heritage, and divided unto him the *firſt Fruits* of the Increaſe; ſo that he did eat the Sacrifices of the Lord, which he gave unto him, and to his Seed, *&c.*" He died in the Arms of *Moſes* his Brother, and *Eleazer*, his Son, and Succeſſor in the High-prieſthood. They buried him in ſome Cave belonging to Mount *Hor*, and kept the Place of his Interment from the Knowledge of the *Iſraelites*, perhaps from an Apprehenſion, that, in after Ages, they might pay ſome ſuperſtitious Worſhip to him; or, rather, that the *Arabians*, among whom they then dwelt, might not, at any Time, take it in their Heads to violate the Sanctity of his Grave, *Eccluſ.* xlv. 13, *&c.*

CHAP. XXI.

The Canaanites *fight againſt* Iſrael *and take ſome of them Priſoners, but are themſelves at length overcome, and their Cities deſtroyed. The People murmur; and are plagued with fiery Serpents. They repent, and are healed by looking to the brazen Serpent. Their Hymn for Water given at* Beer. *They ſue to the* Amorites *for a Paſſage; are denied; fight, and overcome them, and dwell in their Cities. Proverbial Sayings concerning it.* Og, *King of* Baſhan, *his Sons, and his People are deſtroyed, and their Land poſſeſſed by the* Iſraelites.

Q. WHO *was King* Arad *the* Canaanite, *v.* 1.?

A. It ſhould rather be, ſays Mr. *Poole*, *the Canaanite King of Arad:* For *Arad* is not the Name of a Man, but of a City or Territory; as ſeems evident from *Joſh.* xii. 14. *Judg.* i. 16. if at leaſt this was the ſame Place with that.

Q. *In the ſame Verſe it is ſaid, that he heard tell that* Iſrael *came by* the way of the Spies; *who were theſe* Spies?

A. Not thoſe whom *Moſes* ſent to ſpy out the Land, *Numb.* xiii. 17. for that was done 38 Years before this; and they went ſo privately, that the *Canaanites* took no Notice of them, nor knew which way they came or went; but of the Spies which he himſelf ſent out to obſerve the Marches and Motions of the *Iſraelites*. But the Words may be otherwiſe rendered, either thus, *in the Manner of Spies*, and ſo the Senſe is, when he heard that divers of the *Iſraelites* came into, or towards his Country in the Nature of Spies, to prepare the Way for the reſt: Or thus, *by the way of Atharim*, a Place ſo called, as the *Seventy Interpreters* here take it; and this ſeems not improbable.

Q. *The* Canaanites *having gained ſome ſmall Advantage againſt the* Iſraelites, Iſrael *vowed utterly to deſtroy them and their Cities; which they accordingly did, v.* 3. *but when?*

A. Either, 1. Some Time after this, under *Joſhua*, who ſubdued, among others, the King of *Arad*, *Joſh.* xii. 14. and ſo this is mentioned here by way of Anticipation, that the Vow being now made and mentioned, the Effect or Performance of it might be recorded, though out of its Place; and ſo this Verſe muſt be ſuppoſed to be added by ſome of the Prophets, and inſerted into *Moſes*'s Hiſtory as ſome other Paſſages ſeem to be. Or, 2. At this Time; and ſo this is not the ſame *Arad*, with that *Joſh.* xii. 14. nor this the ſame *Hormah* with that there mentioned, but another of the ſame Name, which is very frequent both in Perſons and Places in Scripture. And this is the more probable, becauſe that *Arad* and *Hormah*, *Joſh.* xii. 14. are two diſtinct Places, and had divers Kings; whereas here the ſame Place is called both *Arad* and *Hormah*; and becauſe that *Arad* ſeems to be at ſome Diſtance from this, and more within the Country, and more Northward, as may be gathered from the other Places joined with it, *Joſ.* xii. whereas this *Arad* was near *Edom*, *v.* 4. and *in the South*, v. 1.

Q. *But how could this be done in the Land of* Canaan, *when* Moſes *neither entered himſelf, nor led the People into that Land?*

A. Neither *Moſes*, nor the whole Body of the People did this Exploit, but a ſelect Number ſent out for this Purpoſe to puniſh that King and People, who were ſo fierce and malicious, that they came out of their own Country to fight with the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs.

Q. *But why did not the whole Body of* Iſrael *now go into* Canaan, *ſince by this Victory, an Entrance was opened for them?*

A. Becauſe God would not permit it, there being ſeveral Works yet to be done: Other People muſt be conquered, the *Iſraelites* muſt be farther humbled, tried, and purged, *Moſes* muſt die, and then they ſhall enter, and that in a more glorious Manner, even over *Jordan*, which ſhall be miraculouſly dried up to give them Paſſage.

Q. *The* Iſraelites *being ordered to turn back into the Wilderneſs, in order to compaſs the Land of* Edom, *murmur for want of Bread and Water; for which they are plagued with* fiery Serpents: *Pray give ſome Deſcription of theſe* Serpents.

A. Some Authors are of Opinion, that theſe Serpents were only little Worms, which bred in the Skin, and were of ſo venemous a Nature, that they immediately poiſoned thoſe, who were infected with them. But it is very evident, that not only the original Words, *Nechaſhim Seraphim*, ſignify a *burning* or *winged* Serpent, but that theſe Creatures are very common both in *Egypt* and *Arabia*, inſomuch that there would be no living in thoſe Countries, if theſe Serpents had not, by Providence, been debarred from multiplying, as other Serpents do. For the *Arabians* tell us, that, after they have coupled together, the Female never fails to kill the Male, and that her young Ones kill her, as ſoon as they are hatched. *Herodotus*, who had ſeen ſeveral of theſe Serpents, tells us, that they very much reſemble thoſe, which the *Greeks* and *Latins* called *Hydræ*; and *Bochart* has quoted a great Number both of ancient and modern Authors, to prove, that they really are the *Hydræ*. They are but ſhort, are ſpotted with diverſe Colours, and have Wings like thoſe of a *Bat*. The *Ibis* is their mortal Enemy: And *Herodotus* tells us, that, at *Butos* in *Egypt*, he had ſeen a vaſt Quantity of their Skeletons, whoſe Fleſh theſe Birds had devoured. They love ſweet Smells, frequent ſuch Trees, as bear Spices, and the Marſhes, where the *aromatick* Reed (or *Caſia*) grows, and therefore, when the *Arabians* go to gather the *Caſia*, they cloath themſelves with Skins, and cover all their Heads over, except their Eyes, becauſe their Biting is very dangerous.

Q. *On the* Iſraelites *Repentance,* Moſes *ſets up a* Brazen Serpent, *at the Sight whereof, thoſe that were bitten were immediately healed; what are your Sentiments concerning this* Brazen Serpent?

A. It is the Opinion of a learned Man of our own Nation, that this *brazen Serpent* was a Kind of *Taliſman*, i. e. one of thoſe Pieces of Metal, which are caſt, or engraven under certain Conſtellations, from which they derive an extraordinary Virtue, to procure Love, or cure Diſtempers, and the like, which Virtue ſome impute to the Devil, others to the Nature of the Metal, and others again to the Influence of the *Conſtellation*. This Author would therefore make us believe, that the *brazen Serpent*, ſet up by *Moſes*, cured the *Hebrews*, when bit by Serpents, juſt as the *Taliſmans* cure certain Diſtempers, by the Sympathy, there is between the Metals, of which they are made, or the Influence of the Stars, under which they are made, and the Diſeaſe, they are to cure. But this is a vain and chimerical Notion; The The Author of the *Book of Wiſdom*, addreſſing himſelf to God, and ſpeaking of the *Iſraelites*, has imputed the Virtue of this Serpent to its true Cauſe, *he, that turned himſelf towards it, was not healed by the Thing, which he ſaw, but by thee, who art the Saviour of all:* And therefore he calls it, in the foregoing Verſe, *a Sign, or Symbol of Salvation, to put them in Remembrance of the Commandment of the Law,* Wiſd. xvi. 7. This *brazen Serpent* continued among the *Jews* above ſeven hundred Years, even to the Time of *Hezekiah*, King of *Judah*; but, when it came to be made an Object of *Idolatry*, and the People, for ſome Time, had paid their Incenſe and Adoration to it, that pious Prince cauſed it to be broken in Pieces, and, by way of Contempt, called it *Nehuſhtan*, that is to ſay, *a brazen Bauble or Trifle*. At *Milan* however, in the Church of *St. Ambroſe*, they pretend to ſhew you a Serpent made of Braſs, which they tell you is the ſame with that of *Moſes*.

Q. *The* Iſraelites *in their Journeys, came to the Borders of the* Amorites, *to whom they offered Terms of Peace; but were not the* Iſraelites *commanded to deſtroy them, and take Poſſeſſion of their Country?*

A. To this it has been anſwered by ſome learned Men, that, notwithſtanding God had expreſly doomed this People to an Extermination, yet *Moſes* thought himſelf at liberty to indulge his uſual Meekneſs, and to begin with gentle and amicable Meaſures, though he might, at the ſame Time, be perſuaded, that they would avail nothing; and this probably at the Suggeſtion of God himſelf, to cut off all Occaſions or Pretence of Complaint, from the *Amorites* as if they had not been honourably and fairly dealt with; and that the Equity and Righteouſneſs of God's Proceeding with a Prince of ſo ſavage and obſtinate a Temper, might appear in a ſtronger Light, when the Conſequence of his refuſing a free Paſſage to the *Iſraelites*, and bringing his Army into the Field againſt them, ſhould happen to be his own Defeat and Deſtruction.

Q. *Was the Refuſal of* Sihon *and* Og *to ſuffer* Iſrael *to paſs through their Land, a ſufficient Ground for diſpoſſeſſing them of their Dominions?*

A. Grotius is of Opinion, that, according to the *Law of Nations*, the Highways, Seas, and Rivers of every Country ought to be free to all Paſſengers, upon juſt Occaſions. He produces ſeveral Examples from *Heathen* Hiſtory of ſuch Permiſſion being granted to Armies, and thence he infers, that *Sihon* and *Og*, denying the *Iſraelites* this Privilege, gave a juſt Ground of War; nor does he think, that the Fear, which theſe Princes might conceive, is any Excuſe at all for not granting the Thing, becauſe no *Man's Fear can take away another Man's Right*, eſpecially when ſeveral Ways might be found out, to have made their Paſſage ſafe on both Sides. But, when all is ſaid, it ſeems not clear, that all Men have ſuch a *Right*, as this great Man thinks they may claim. No Man, we know, can challenge a Paſſage through a *private* Man's Ground, without his Leave; and every Prince has the ſame Dominion in all his Territories, that a private Man has in his Land. As for the Examples therefore of thoſe, who have permitted Armies to paſs through their Kingdoms, they are Examples of *Fact*, rather than of *Right*, and of ſuch, as were not in a Condition to refuſe what was demanded of them: For the Thing is notorious, that ſeveral Countries have ſuffered very grievouſly by granting this Liberty, and therefore no Prince, who conſults his Subjects Safety, is to be blamed for not granting it; nor was the War with the *Amorites* founded upon this Reaſon, as we ſhall ſee hereafter.

Q. *In the latter Part of this Chapter, we have an Account of the Conqueſt of* Baſhan; *Can you give any Deſcription of this Kingdom?*

A. The Land of *Baſhan* was one of the moſt fertile Cantons of *Canaan*, which reached on the *Eaſt* to the River *Jordan*, on the *Weſt* to the Mountain of *Gilead*, on the *South* to the Brook *Jabbock*, and on the *North* to the Land of *Geſhur*. The whole Kingdom took its Name from the Hill of *Baſhan*, which is ſituate in it, and has been ſince called *Batanæa*. It had no leſs than ſixty walled Towns in it, beſides Villages. It afforded an excellent Breed of Cattle, and ſtately Oaks, and was in ſhort a plentiful and populous Country.

Q. *What Account do you give of* Og *King of* Baſhan?

A. The Diſcription of this *gigantick* King, who was the laſt of the Race of the *Rephaims*, or vaſt, prodigious Men, we have in *Deuteronomy* iii. 11. and from the Size of his Bed (which was preſerved a long Time in the City of *Rabbal*, the Capital of the *Amonites*) we may gueſs at his Stature. It was nine Cubits long, and four Cubits broad, *i. e.* fifteen Feet four Inches and an half long, and ſix Feet ten Inches broad. But the *Jewiſh* Doctors, not content with ſuch *Pigmy* Wonders, have improved the Story to their own Liking. For they tell us, that this Bed of nine Cubits could be no more than his Cradle, ſince himſelf was ſix Score Cubits high when full grown; that he lived before the Flood, and that the Waters of it, when at the higheſt, reached only up to his Knees; that however, he thought proper to get upon the Top of the Roof of the Ark, where *Noah* ſupplied him with Proviſion, not out of any Compaſſion to him, but that the Men who came after the Deluge, might ſee, how great the Power of God was, who had deſtroyed ſuch Monſters from the Face of the Earth.

Chap. XXII.

The Iſraelites *encamp in the Plains of* Moab. Balak *ſends for* Balaam *to curſe* Iſrael. *He is forbidden to go, but on a ſecond Meſſage from* Balak, *is permitted. An Angel meets him, and is ſeen by the Aſs; the Aſs ſpeaks;* Balaam's *Eyes are opened; is rebuked, but ordered to proceed in his Journey, and what to ſpeak.* Balak *meets, receives, and expoſtulates with him.* Balaam *declares he cannot ſpeak contrary to the Will of* God.

Q. THE Iſraelites *being now come into the Borders of* Moab, *ſends for* Balaam *to aſſiſt him with his Curſes and Imprecations againſt* Iſrael; *How came* Balak *to fancy that it was in the Power of* Balaam *to ruin a whole People by the Force of his Inchantments?*

A. In order to have a right Underſtanding in this Matter, we are to obſerve, that it was a received Opinion in thoſe Days, that the *guardian titulary Gods* of any People, muſt be overcome or drawn over, before the Nation under their Protection could be deſtroyed; and, that there were Methods of effecting ſuch Things, known to certain wiſe and inquiſitive Perſons, who conſequently were eſteemed to have a Power of *bleſſing* or *curſing*, and alſo of rendering *fortunate* or *unfortuate*, by the Force of their *Prayers* and *Imprecations*; of this there are many Proofs in Scripture. This was the Opinion of *Eſau*, and this made him ſo earneſt with his Father, after he had been circumvented by *Jacob*; *Bleſs me, even me alſo, O my Father! Rachel*, that ſhe might hinder her Father *Laban* from bringing them back, carried away his *Teraphim*. *Joſhua*, exhorting his Nation to go up courageouſly againſt the *Canaanites*, tells them, *their Shadow was departed from them*; that is, they had loſt the divine Protection; and the *Amorite* Poet, in the Fragment quoted in the laſt Chapter, upbraids the *Moabites* with the Inability of their God *Chemoſh* to protect them.

Q. *What was the Religion profeſſed in* Meſopotamia, *where* Balaam *dwelt?*

A. The Inhabitants of *Meſopotamia* appear from various Paſſages in holy Writ, to have held the true Faith longer than any other Nation, and to have retained ſome Notion of the true God, even after they had fallen into idolatrous Practices, thereby mixing and blending together *the Worſhip of Idols*, and the *Worſhip* of the *Almighty*; though they might (at leaſt the wiſer Sort) adore the former, only as mediating *inferior Deities*, and the latter as the *ſupreme Lord* and *Creator* of all Things. Thus *Abraham* was choſen by God from among his Countrymen, tainted with theſe Superſtitions, and inſtructed in the Truth. Thus *Laban* ſeems to be acquainted with the God of *Abraham*, though he kept a *Teraphim* in his Houſe, and called them alſo his *Gods*; and thus the Family of *Jacob*, notwithſtanding the Piety of that Patriarch, had long among them the Relicts of this mixed abſurd Worſhip, till by divine Command, he took them away, and buried them.

Q. *What Notions have you of the divine Revelations communicated to particular Perſons in thoſe early Times?*

A. It's certain, that there really were, in thoſe early Times, many wiſe and juſt Perſons, to whom God afforded Revelations of his Will; and he alſo informed others, of different Characters, concerning future Events, for reaſons agreeable to his infinite Wiſdom; in Support of which, various Paſſages from the Book of *Job* might be cited; as alſo the Inſtances of *Abimelech* King of *Gerar*, and *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, who were both favoured with divine Admonitions, for the Sake of *Abraham* and *Joſeph*. Theſe Points conſidered and remembered, what is here related concerning *Balak*, and the *Diviner* from *Meſopotamia*, will, without any great Difficulty, be underſtood.

Q. *If* Balaam *was really an Inchanter, or one who conſulted infernal Spirits, as is commonly ſuppoſed, why does he make uſe of the Name of* Jehovah?

A. He mentions the true God, either for his own greater Reputation, as if he conſulted not with inferior Spirits, as other Soothſayers did, but with the ſupreme God, or rather becauſe this was *Iſrael*'s God, and the only poſſible Way of ruining them was, by engaging their God againſt them: Thus the *Romans*, and other *Heathens*, when they went to beſiege a

City, uſed Inchantments to call forth that God under whoſe peculiar Protection they were.

Q. *Why did God reveal his Mind to this Soothſayer?*

A. Not for any Love to him, but for the Sake of his People concerned in it; as he did to *Pharaoh*, *Gen.* xli. 25. and to *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Dan.* ii. 45.

Q. *In the 20th Verſe,* Balaam *is bid to go with the Meſſengers of* Balak; *and in the 22d Verſe it is ſaid,* God's Anger was kindled becauſe he went; *Is not this a Contradiction in Terms?*

A. God was angry with him, either, 1. Becauſe he went of his own Accord, with the Princes of *Moab*, and did not wait till they *came to call him*; that is, urged him to go; which was the Sign and Condition of God's Permiſſion, *v.* 20. but rather he himſelf roſe and called them, as it may ſeem from *v.* 21. Or, 2. Becauſe thoſe Words, *v.* 20. did not contain any Approbation or Licence, but a bare Permiſſion, and that in Anger, as *Balaam* might eaſily have underſtood, if he had conſidered his own Heart, or the Circumſtances of this Conceſſion. This was no more an Approbation, than that ſaying of Chriſt to *Judas*, *John* xiii. 27. *That thou doeſt, do quickly.* Or, 3. Becauſe he went with an ill Deſign, and Deſire to do contrary to what God had charged him, namely, to curſe the People, as plainly appears from the following Story, and from *Deut.* xxiii. 5. For God hath been often and juſtly angry with thoſe who have done what he bid them, when they did it in evil Manner, or for bad Ends, as appears from *Iſ.* x. 6, 7. and many other Places.

Q. *How was it that* Balaam's *Aſs ſaw the Angel, when he himſelf could not?*

A. It is a Truth, which mere Philoſophers own, that when God withdraws his Concourſe or Help from any of his Creatures, they cannot perform their natural Acts and Offices; the Eye cannot ſee, as *Gen.* xix. nor the Ear hear, nor the Fire burn, as *Dan.* 3. Beſides, *Balaam*'s Mind was ſo wholly taken up with the Honours and Riches he expected from this Expedition, that he could attend to nothing elſe.

Q. *Does not the Account of* Balaam's *Aſs ſpeaking to her Maſter, ſeem a little too romantick to deſerve Credit?*

A. This is ſo wonderful an Inſtance, that ſeveral of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, who, upon other Occaſions, are fond enough of Miracles, ſeem as if they would hardly be induced to aſſent to this. *Philo*, in his Life of *Moſes*, paſſes it over in Silence; and *Maimonides* pretends, that it only happened to *Balaam* in a *prophetick Viſion:* The ſevereſt Philoſophy however, cannot deny, but that God is as able to make Creatures deſtitute of Underſtanding, pronounce articulate and rational Words, as it is for a Muſician, by the different Touches he gives his Inſtrument, to make it expreſs a Variety of Notes. Nor is the Scripture, for this, and ſome ſuch Relations contain'd in it, in the leaſt liable to Cenſure, ſince *Plutarch*, *Pliny*, *Polybius*, *Livy*, and others, give Inſtances of the ſame Kind of Prodigies; namely, of Oxen and other Brute Creatures ſpeaking ſome few Words.

Q. *But does it not ſeem a little ſtrange that* Balaam *ſhould ſhew no Kind of Surprize when he heard his Aſs ſpeak like a human Creature?*

A. To this ſome reply, That *Balaam* might probably have imbib'd the Doctrine of *Tranſmigration of Souls*, which was certainly very common in the *Eaſt*, and from thence might be leſs aſtoniſhed to hear any Brute ſpeak; whereas others ſuppoſe, that he was in ſuch a Rage and Fury, at the ſuppoſed Perverſeneſs of the Beaſt, *cruſhing his Foot*, and *falling down under him*, that, for the Preſent, he could think of nothing elſe; tho' the Conciſeneſs of *Moſes*'s Narration, which muſt be preſumed to have omitted many Circumſtances, which, if rightly known, would diſpel this, and many more Difficulties, that may be imagined in this Tranſaction, does certainly furniſh us with a better and more ſatisfactory Anſwer. For, though we could not aſſign a ſufficient Reaſon, why God thought fit to work this Miracle, yet who ſhall therefore dare to infer that it was never wrought? The Account which we have here, even of the moſt ancient Times, is very ſhort; nor can we rightly form a Judgment what the prevailing Sentiments of the World might be, in the Age, when *Balaam* lived. The Counſels of God are like a great *Deep*, nor can any Man penetrate ſo far into them, as to pronounce what is proper or improper for him to do. Upon this Occaſion, however, there ſeems to be ſome Reaſon for his giving the Aſs the Faculty of Speech, *viz.* that thereby he might convince the Princes of *Moab*, who are ſuppoſed to be in Company with *Balaam*, how eaſy a Thing it was for him, who had *opened the Mouth* of this dumb Creature, to ſtop *that* of its Owner, or to direct his Words to what Purpoſes he pleaſed; and how weak and impotent the Man, in whom they confided, was, when, with all his Curſes and Imprecations, he could not get the better of a poor Brute, and much leſs then of the People, ſo immediately under the divine Protection; and who, in the Event of the War, put both him and the five Princes of *Midian* to the Sword.

CHAP. XXIII.

Balak *and* Balaam *ſacrifice. God meets* Balaam, *and bleſſes* Iſrael. Balak *is troubled. They go to another Place, but the Event is the ſame. They ſacrifice a third Time.*

Q. BALAAM *being come to* Balak, *orders ſeven Altars to be erected, and ſeven Bullocks, and ſeven Rams to be offered thereon; but why juſt ſeven?*

A. The Number *ſeven* was eſteemed ſacred among the *Iſraelites* (from whom probably *Balaam* might have learnt it) as appears in *Lev.* iv. 6. where the Prieſt is ſaid to ſprinkle the Blood of the Bullock *ſeven* Times before the Veil of the Sanctuary.

Q. *Why did* Balaam *order* Balak *to ſtand by the Burnt-offering, while he went to conſult God?*

A. The Cuſtom in thoſe Days was, that the Perſon offering the Sacrifice preſented himſelf before the *Deity* to whom he offered it, in hopes of being favoured by that *Divinity*, and of receiving certain Tokens of Acceptance, by obſerving the Sacrifices while conſuming; *Balaam* therefore directed *Balak* and his Nobles to perform the *Rite*, while he, retiring to a more ſolitary Place in the Mountain, ſought by his Inchantments to procure a happy Iſſue for their Supplications, though he promiſes to deal with them ſincerely, by relating in plain and preciſe Terms, what *Jehovah*, to whom theſe Sacrifices were offered, ſhould reveal.

Q. Balak *being three Times diſappointed in his Expectations, no Doubt he was in a very great Rage.*

A. *Joſephus* brings in *Balaam* making this Apology for himſelf, in order to pacify *Balak*'s Rage, for his having bleſſed the *Iſraelites*, inſtead of curſing them. "And does King *Balak* think, that, where Prophets are upon the Subject of *Fatalities*, or Things to come, they are left to their own Liberty, what to ſay, and what not, or to make their own Speeches? We are only the paſſive Inſtruments of the Oracle: The Words are put in our Mouths; and we neither think, nor know what we ſay. I remember well, *ſays he*, that I was invited hither with great Earneſtneſs, both by yourſelf, and by the *Midianites*; and that it was at your Requeſt I came, and with a Deſire to do all, that in me lay, for your Service. But what am I able to do againſt the Will and Power of God? I had not the leaſt Thought of ſpeaking one good Word of the *Iſraelites* Army, or of the Bleſſings, which God hath in Store for them; but, ſince God has decreed to make them great and happy, I have been forced to ſpeak, as you have heard, inſtead of what I had otherwiſe deſigned to ſay.'

Q. *How are we to conceive of the different Places on which* Balak *offered his Sacrifices; and of the ſeveral Reſponſes made by* Balaam *on this Occaſion?*

A. From various Paſſages in this Hiſtory of *Balak* and *Balaam*, it appears how very ancient thoſe odd Notions are which *Idolaters* have entertained, concerning the Unluckineſs of Places and Omens, and the Poſſibility of eluding thoſe evil Preſages, by perſevering in Devotions and reiterating Victims. Certainly the King of *Moab* had his Mind ſtrongly tinctured with theſe ſuperſtitious Errors, or he had not ſent for *Balaam* at all; nor would he, unleſs he was of a weak and credulous Diſpoſition, have treated the *Soothſayer* as he did, after he had ſent for him.

On the other Side, *Balaam* ſeem'd to have a ſtrong Deſire of laying his Hands on the Wages of Iniquity, as the Apoſtle elegantly ſtiles them, otherwiſe he would never have run ſo many Riſques to come unto *Moab*, or have ſo ſervily complied with all *Balak*'s Suggeſtions, while he remained there.

It is indeed true, that he attempted not to curſe *Iſrael*, but on the contrary, delivered exactly all that *Jehovah* commanded. He ſeems to have been ſo far agitated and overpowered by the *Holy Spirit*, from whence he ſpoke, that it was not within the Compaſs of his Ability, at that Time, to avoid uttering the Prophecies he had delivered; yet as ſoon as he had declared the Will of *Jehovah*, we find him conſtantly making Conceſſions to *Balak*, and readily acquieſcing in whatſoever he propoſed.

CHAP. XXIV.

Balaam *lays aſide his Sorceries, and the Spirit of God comes upon him; his Eyes are open; he hears the Word of God, and ſees the Viſion of the Almighty; he propheſies of* Iſrael's *Proſperity.* Balak *is angry; commands him to fly;* Balaam's *Anſwer. He propheſies of the* Meſſiah, *and the Deſtruction of Nations. He returns to his Place, and* Balak *goes his Way.*

Q. *AMONG the ſeveral Prophecies, which God, at this third Time, delivered from the Mouth of* Balaam, *there is none of a more eminent and peculiar Nature than this;* I ſhall ſee him, but not now, I ſhall behold him, but not nigh; there ſhall come a Star out of *Jacob*, and a Sceptre ſhall riſe out of *Iſrael*, and ſhall ſmite the Corners of *Moab*, and deſtroy all the Children of *Seth*: *To whom does this Prophecy relate?*

A. All Opinions agree in this, that *Balaam* here ſpeaks of a King and Conqueror; and perhaps, in calling him a *Star*, he accommodates himſelf to the long-eſtabliſhed Notion, that the Appearance of *Comets* denoted, either the Exaltation, or Deſtruction of Kingdoms: But the great Queſtion is, of what King or Conqueror he ſpeaks?

Some have applied the Prophecy entirely to *David*, the moſt illuſtrious of the *Jewiſh* Monarchs, who extended his Conqueſts far and wide. Others have applied it as entirely to the *Meſſiah*, ſuppoſing that the Metaphor of a *Star* comports better with him, and his celeſtial Origin, than with *David*, and that the main Strokes of the Prophecy reſemble an *heavenly* more than an *earthly* Conqueror. The Matter however may be compromiſed, if we will but allow of a learned Man's Obſervation, *viz.* that the moſt remarkable Prophecies in the old Teſtament bear uſually a twofold Senſe; one relating to the Times before the *Meſſiah*, and the other, either fulfilled in the Perſon of the *Meſſiah*, or in the Members of his Body, the Church, of which Kind we may juſtly eſteem the preceeding Prophecy. For tho' its primary Aſpect may be towards *David*, yet whoever conſiders it attentively, ſhall perceive, that its Ideas are too full to extend no farther, and muſt therefore in a ſecondary, and more exalted Senſe, refer us to Chriſt, *whoſe Kingdom ruleth over all, and to whom all Things are put in Subjection under his Feet.*

In this Senſe the generality of *Jews*, as well as *Chriſtians*, have all along underſtood it; and 'tis no improbable Conjecture (whatever ſome may think of it) that by the Strength of this Prophecy, kept upon Record among the *Oriental Archives*, the *Magi* of that Country, at our Saviour's Nativity, were directed to *Jeruſalem*, and enquired, *where is the King of the* Jews, *for we have ſeen his Star in the Eaſt?* And, upon a further Suppoſition, that theſe very *Magi* were deſcended from *Balaam* in a direct Line, he might then, with Propriety enough, pronounce of the *Meſſiah*, *I ſhall ſee him*, i. e. *ſee him* in my Poſterity, *but not now*, I ſhall *behold him, but not near.* For though that other Prediction of God's *raiſing up* among the *Hebrews another Prophet like unto* Moſes, be ſuppoſed by ſome to relate to a Succeſſion of Prophets, after the Death of *Moſes*; yet there are very good Reaſons, why we ſhould refer it to Chriſt only: For, beſides that the Text ſpeaks of one Prophet only in the ſingular Number, 'tis plain, that the Prophets, which ſuccceeded *Moſes* were not all *like unto him.*

CHAP. XXV.

Some of the Iſraelites *guilty of Whoredom and Idolatry. God commands the guilty to be put to Death. A Plague ſent. The Zeal of* Phinehas *rewarded with an everlaſting Prieſthood. The* Midianites *are commanded to be ſlain for their Treachery, in drawing the People to Sin.*

Q. *WHAT do you imagine might be the Occaſion of the* Iſraelites *entering into this wicked Commerce and Correſpondence with the* Midianites, *of which we have an Account in this Chapter?*

A. It is generally ſuppoſed, that *Balaam*, vexed at his own Diſappointment, in miſſing the Reward he expected, and with a Purpoſe to revenge himſelf on the *Iſraelites*, inſtructed the *Moabites* and *Midianites* in a wicked Device; which was to ſend their Daughters into the Camp of the *Iſraelites*, in order to draw them firſt into Lewdneſs, and then into Idolatry, the ſame Method to deprive them of the Aſſiſtance of that God who protected them. The *Jewiſh* Doctors tell us, that, on a great Feſtival, which the *Moabites* made in Honour of their God, *Baalpeor*, ſome *Iſraelites*, who happened to be there, caſting their Eyes upon their young Women, were ſmitten with their Beauty, and courted their Enjoyment; but, that the Women would not yield to their Motion, upon any other Condition, than, that they would worſhip their Gods. Whereupon pulling a little Image of *Peor* out of their Boſom, they preſented it to the *Iſraelites* to kiſs, and then deſired them to eat of the Sacrifices, which had been offered to him. But *Joſephus* tells the Story otherwiſe, *viz*. That the Women, upon ſome Pretence or other, came into the *Iſraelitiſh* Camp, and, when they had enamoured the young *Hebrews*, according to their Inſtructions, they made a Pretence, as though they muſt be gone; but, upon paſſionate Entreaties, accompanied with Vows and Oaths on the other Side, the ſubtle *Enchantreſſes* conſented to ſtay with them, and grant them every Thing, that they deſired, upon Condition that they would embrace their Religion.

Q. *What Account can you give of the Idol* Baal-peor, *whom the* Iſraelites *are here ſaid to worſhip?*

A. The *Jewiſh* Doctors are generally of Opinion, that this *Baal-peor* was the ſame with *Priapus*, the Idol of *Turpitude*; and that the Worſhip of him conſiſted in ſuch obſcene Practices, or Poſtures at leaſt, as were not fit to be named. Others have aſſerted, that this God was the ſame with *Saturn*, a Deity adored in *Arabia*; nor is it unlikely, that the Adventure related of *Saturn*, and his Caſtration of his own Son, may have introduced the Obſcenities, that are practiſed in the Worſhip of this Idol. But others, with great Aſſurance, maintain, that *Peor* was the ſame with *Adonis*, whoſe Feaſts were celebrated in the Manner of Funerals; but the People, who obſerved them, at that Time committed a thouſand diſſolute Actions, particularly when they were told, that *Adonis*, whom they had mourned for as dead, was returned to Life again. However this be, it is very probable, that as *Peor* was the Name of a Mountain, in the Country of *Moab*, the Temple of *Baal* ſtood upon it; and thence he was called *Baal-peor*.

Q. *St.* Paul, *in his Obſervations upon the Judgments, which befel the* Iſraelites *in the Wilderneſs, tells us expreſly, that the Number of thoſe, who were cut off in this Plague, was no more than* three and twenty Thouſand, 1 Cor. x. 8. *whereas* Moſes *makes them no leſs than* four and twenty Thouſand?

A. This Difference is eaſily reconciled, if we do but conſider, that in the *four and twenty Thouſand*, which *Moſes* computes, the Thouſand, who were convicted of Idolatry, and thereupon were ſlain with the Sword, *in the Day of the Plague*, *Numb*. xxi. 5, 18. are comprehended; whereas the Apoſtle ſpeaks of none, but thoſe, that died of the Peſtilence.

Q. *According to our Tranſlation, the Command, which God gave* Moſes *runs thus*—Take all the Heads of the People, and hang them up before the Lord, againſt the Sun, that the fierce Anger of the Lord may be turned away from *Iſrael*, *Numb* xxv. 4. *But unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that the Heads of each Tribe were guilty of this Lewdneſs and Idolatry, the Sentence here denounced would have been highly unjuſt. And, what others alledge, that they were guilty of a ſhameful Neglect, in not oppoſing the growing Miſchief, and puniſhing the Offenders; this might be very probably out of their Power, ſince even* Moſes *himſelf, very frequently, found them too headſtrong for him.*

A. It is ſomewhat ſtrange therefore, that our Tranſlators ſhould take the Paſſage in this Senſe, when the *Samaritan* Copy, the *Jeruſalem Targum*, moſt of the ancient Tranſlations, and ſeveral later *Commentators* of great Note, have made the Word *Otham*, i. e. *them*, not to refer to the Heads of the People, but to ſuch, as had joyned themſelves to *Baal-peor*; And ſo the Meaning of the Command will be, that the Heads of the People ſhould divide themſelves into ſeveral Courts of Judgment, and examine who had committed Idolatry, and, after Conviction, cauſe them to hanged, *i. e.* hanged after they were ſtoned; for among the *Hebrews* none were hanged alive, but, in the Caſes of Idolatry, or Blaſphemy, were firſt ſtoned, and then hanged up againſt the Sun, *i. e.* publickly and openly, that all the People might ſee, and fear to ſin.

Q. Zimri *ſeems the moſt audacious of theſe Criminals, and was puniſhed accordingly; I ſhould be glad therefore of a more particular Account of this Tranſaction from ſome of the* Jewiſh *Writers.*

A. When the *Iſraelites*, at the Inſtigation of the ſtrange Women, they had received into the Camp, were fallen from Luſt into Idolatry, *Moſes* (according to *Joſephus*) perceiving that the Infection began to ſpread, called the People together, and, in a general Diſcourſe, reminded them, how unworthy a Thing it was, and how great a Scandal to the Memory of their Anceſtors, for them to value the gratifying their Luſts and Appetites, above the Reverence, they owed to their God, and their Religion; how incongurous a Thing, for Men, that had been virtuous and modeſt in the Deſart, to lead ſuch profligate Lives in a good Country, and ſquander away that in Luxury, which they had honeſtly acquired in the Time of their Diſtreſs, and thereupon he admoniſhed them to repent in Time, and ſhew themſelves brave Men, not in the Violation of the Laws, but in the Maſtery of their unruly Affections. This he ſpoke without naming any one: But *Zimri*, who took himſelf to be pointed at, roſe up, and made the following Speech. "You are at Liberty, *Moſes*, ſays he, to uſe your own Laws; they have been a long Time in Exerciſe, and Cuſtom is all that can be ſaid for their Strength or Credit. Were it not for this, you would, to your Coſt, have found, long ſince, that the *Hebrews* are not to be impoſed upon: and I myſelf am one of the Number, that will never truckle to your tyrannical Oppreſſion. For what's your Buſineſs all this while, but under a bare Pretext, and Talk of Laws, and God, to bar us, not only from the Exerciſe, but the very Deſire of Liberty? What are we the better for coming out of *Egypt*, if it be only in Exchange for a more grievous Bondage under *Moſes*? You are to make here what Laws you pleaſe, and we to abide the Penalties of them, when at the ſame Time, 'tis you only, that deſerve to be puniſhed, for aboliſhing ſuch Cuſtoms, as are authorized by the common Conſent of Nations, and ſetting up your own Will and Fancy, againſt general Practice and Reaſon. For my own Part, what I have done, I take to be well done, and ſhall make no Difficulty to confeſs and juſtify it. I have as you ſay, married a ſtrange Woman. I ſpeak this with the Liberty of an honeſt Man; and I care not who knows it. I never meant to make a Secret of it, and you need look no farther for an Informer. I do acknowledge too, that I have changed my Way of Worſhip, and reckon it very

“ reaſonable for a Man to examine all Things, that would find out the Truth, without being tied up (*as* if it were in a deſpotick Government) to the Opinion and Humour of one ſingle Man.”

Q. *Does not this Act of* Phineas *in killing* Zimri *and* Coſbi, *juſtify the puniſhing notorious Offenders without the Licenſe of a Magiſtrate?*

A. Upon this Fact the *Jews* found what they call *the Judgment of Zeal*, which authorized ſuch, as were full of this holy *Fervour*, to puniſh any violent Offenders, thoſe, to wit, who blaſphemed God, or profaned the Temple, *&c.* in the Preſence of ten Men of *Iſrael*, without any formal Proceſs. But this Example of *Phineas* countenances no ſuch Practice; nor can this Action, done upon any extraordinary Occaſion, by a Perſon in a publick Authority, moved thereunto by a ſtrong divine Impulſe, and (what is a Circumſtance, that ſome People add) in a Commonwealth, not perfectly ſettled, be made a Precedent for private Men under a different Situation, to invade the Office of the Magiſtrate, without manifeſt Danger of *Enthuſiaſtick* Violence and Outrage, even againſt thoſe, that are moſt Innocent: As we plainly find it happened among the *Jews*, when, in the latter Times of their Government, they put this Precedent in Execution; of which St. *Stephen*, whom they inhumanly ſtoned, and St. *Paul*, whom they vowed to aſſaſſinate, without any Form of Juſtice, are notorious Inſtances.

Q. Phineas *was promiſed an everlaſting Prieſthood; but was there no Interruption of the Succeſſion in his Line to that high Office?*

A. This muſt be underſtood with a certain Limitation; becauſe it is manifeſt, that, after ſome Succeſſions in the Line of *Phineas*, the Prieſthood came, for a while, into the Family of *Eli*, who was deſcended from *Ithamar*, the youngeſt Son of *Aaron*. The Reaſon of this Interruption is not mentioned in Scripture; but ſome great Sin, 'tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe, provoked God to ſet aſide the Line of *Eleazar* for ſome Years, 'till *Eli*'s Sons likewiſe became ſo wicked, that the Prieſthood was taken from them and reſtored, in the Days of *Solomon*, to the Poſterity of *Phineas*, with whom it continued as long as the Prieſthood laſted: And this is enough to verify the Promiſe of an everlaſting Prieſthood, ſince the Words, Everlaſting, Perpetual, and the like, in a general and indefinite Senſe, denote no more than a long Duration.

Q. *What Advantage had* Phineas *by this Promiſe, ſince the Thing here promiſed was due to him by Birth?*

A. The ſame Bleſſing may be often promiſed, as the Kingdom was to *David*; and the renewing of this Promiſe might ſeem convenient here, to ſignify, that bloodſhed was ſo far from polluting him, and thereby caſting him out of the Prieſthood, that it was a Means to confirm him in it. Again; this Promiſe ſecured him and his againſt divers Contingencies, which otherwiſe might have befallen either him or them, as that he ſhould live longer than his Father, elſe he could not have been the High-prieſt; that he ſhould be preſerved from thoſe Blemiſhes which might have rendered him uncapable of the Prieſthood, which were many, and that he ſhould have a Seed, and ſuch as ſhould be fit and qualified for that Office.

Q. *In the 17th Verſe* Moſes *is commanded to* vex the *Midianites* and ſmite them; *but why not the* Moabites, *who ſeem to be equally guilty?*

A. Becauſe God will reſerve to himſelf a Liberty of puniſhing or ſparing, according to his own good Pleaſure. Or, becauſe God had a Kindneſs for the *Moabites* for *Lot*'s Sake, *Deut.* ii. 3. Or, becauſe God puniſhed the *Moabites* in another Manner, partly by his own immediate Hand, whereby it is probable, he cut off thoſe *Moabitiſh* Women that were guilty of this Fact, partly by a particular and dreadful Excommunication, *Deut.* xxiii. 3. and partly by Impunity, which in its Conſequence is commonly worſe and more pernicious than any or all temporal Puniſhments, which none that believes the Bible can deny. Beſides, it's probable that the *Midianites* were moſt guilty, particularly, in perſuading *Balak* to ſend for *Balaam*, as is plain from Ch. xxii. 4, 7. ſo likewiſe in the Reception of *Balaam* after *Balak* had diſmiſſed him, *Numb.* xxxi. 8. and in further conſulting with him, and contriving, by his Advice, the Means of executing this wicked Plot.

CHAP. XXVI.

Iſrael *numbered from twenty Years old and upwards. The* Levites *numbered by themſelves, why. All who came out of* Egypt, *died in the Wilderneſs, except* Caleb *and* Joſhua.

Q. WHAT *gave Occaſion to the numbering of the People at this Time?*

A. All thoſe wicked and preſumptuous Perſons, who had ſo offended God in the Deſart, being now cut off and deſtroyed, it was reaſonable and neceſſary, that the exact Number of the People ſhould be known; and alſo the Strength of their reſpective Tribes, that, in future martial Expeditions, proper Regard might he had to the Forces drawn out of each; and that, in the approaching Diviſion of the promiſed Land, the Territories aſſigned to the *Tribes*, might be ſuited to their reſpective Numbers and Power.

Q. *This, I think, is the third Time of numbering the People, ſince they left* Egypt; *pray aſſign the Cauſe of each Numeration?*

A. The *Firſt* was, in order to their being aſſeſſed for the Building of the *Tabernacle*. The *Second*, on the firſt Day of the ſecond Month, in the ſecond Year after their quitting *Egypt*, when they lay encamped before Mount *Sinai*; and the *Third*, was the preſent numbering on account of dividing the Lands.

It may be farther remarked, that, as when the People came out of *Egypt*, they were delivered to *Moſes* by *Tale*, *Exod.* xxxviii. 26. So now when *Moſes* was ready to die, he delivered to his *Succeſſor* his *Flock* again by *Tale*.

Q. *Were the People increaſed or diminiſhed ſince they were laſt numbered?*

A. The Tribe of *Reuben* was leſſened 2770; the Tribe of *Simeon*, 13,200; of *Gad*, 5000; *Judah* increaſed 2000; *Iſſachar* 9900; *Zebulun* 3100; *Manaſſeh* 20,500; *Ephraim* decreaſed 8000; *Benjamin* increaſed 10,200; *Dan* 1700; *Aſher* 11,900; *Naphtali* decreaſed 8000: Upon the whole the Number of the People was leſs now by 1820, than it was at their laſt Numbering. Compare v. 51. with *Chap.* i. 46. The *Levites* were increaſed 1000; but are numbered diſtinct from the reſt of their Brethren.

CHAP. XXVII.

The Law of Inheritance for Daughters, on Defect of Sons, and on Defect of them to the Brother; and ſo to the next Kinſman. God commands Moſes *to go up into a Mountain, and view the Land of* Canaan, *and die there.* Moſes *prays for an able Succeſſor.* Joſhua *appointed, and confirmed in that Office.*

Q. W*HAT Leſſon of Inſtruction does the Caſe of* Zelophehad's *five Daughters convey to us?*

A. This is a clear Inſtance of the Manner of Proceedings in extraordinary Caſes, while the People of *Iſrael* continued in the Deſart; and from hence it appears, how very cautious not only the *inferior Judges* were, in deciding Points intricate in their Nature, and not reducible to any Law yet given; but alſo, how ſcrupulous their higheſt Court was; nay, and the *holy Prophet* himſelf, in ſuch a Caſe; for inſtead of pronouncing Sentence from their own Opinion of the Matter, *Moſes* carries the Cauſe to the Judgment of *Jehovah*, that the *Divine Decree* might not only ſettle the preſent Diſpute, but alſo remain a perpetual *Statute* in the *Law* of *Iſrael*, whereby the Right of Inheritance, in caſe of the Failure of Heirs Male, might he adjuſted in a Manner as to leave no Room for future Controverſies.

Q. *What is the Meaning of that Expreſſion*, v. 20. And thou ſhalt put ſome of thine Honour upon him?

A. Thou ſhalt not now uſe him as a Servant, as thou haſt done, but as a Brother, and thy Partner in the Government, ſhewing him Reſpect, and cauſing others to do ſo too, and thou ſhall impart to him the Enſigns and Evidences of thy own Authority, whatſoever they are. Some underſtand this Honour to be thoſe ſpiritual Endowments which adorned *Moſes*, and which *Moſes* was now to confer upon him. But this *Joſhua* had before, for *in him was the Spirit*, *v.* 18. and he received a further Meaſure of the Spirit by *Moſes*'s laying on of Hands, from both which this *Honour* is diſtinguiſhed; and, had he meant this, he would not have expreſſed it in ſo doubtful a Phraſe, but have called it *a putting*, not of Honour, but *of the Spirit*, upon him, as it is called, *Numb.* xi. 17. and ſeeing the Word *Honour*, in its natural Signification, may very properly be underſtood, why ſhould we run to figurative Meanings.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Offerings for ſet Times. The daily Burnt-offering; the Sabbath-offering; the Burnt-offering for the new Moon; the Paſſover; Pentecoſt, and Sacrifices thereof.

Q. I*N this and the two following Chapters, are repeated ſeveral Laws before made; but what Occaſion was there for ſuch a Repetition?*

A. Some former Laws are here repeated, partly, becauſe they had been diſcontinued for thirty eight Years ſucceſſively; partly, becauſe the Generation, to which the former Laws had been given about thoſe Things, was wholly dead, and it was fit the new Generation ſhould be inſtructed about them, as their Parents were; partly, to renew the Teſtimony of God's Grace and Mercy, notwithſtanding their frequent Forfeitures thereof, by their horrid Apoſtacies and Rebellions; and principally, becauſe they were now ready to enter into that Land, in which they ſhould be obliged to put theſe Things in Practice, *Deut.* xii. 8.

CHAP. XXIX.

The Feaſt of Trumpets; its Burnt-offering and Sin-offering. The Feaſt of Atonement; its Offerings. The Feaſt of Tabernacles, during ſeven Days, the eighth Day a great Hoiiday.

Q. E*IGHT Days were kept in celebrating the Feaſt of Tabernacles; but the eighth was held a grand Holiday, in which* no ſervile Work was to be done, *v.* 35. *What do you remark thereupon?*

A. This was the laſt and great Day of the Feaſt, as it is called, *John* vii. 37. and yet the Sacrifices were fewer than on any other Day; to teach them not to truſt to the Multitude of their Sacrifices, nor to expect Remiſſion of Sins from them, but from the one and only Sacrifice of Chriſt. For, it is written, this was the great Day of the Feaſt, on which our bleſſed Saviour ſtood up in the Temple, and called the thirſty Souls unto him, promiſing them Refreſhment.

CHAP. XXX.

Of Vows. If a Man vow, he muſt perform. If a Father diſapproves his Daughter's Vows, ſhe is free; as likewiſe is a married Woman, if her Husband diſapproves her Vows. The Vow of a Widow, or divorced Woman, is binding; but not of a married Woman, without her Husband's Conſent.

Q. I*T is ſaid*, v. 3. If a Woman alſo vow a Vow unto the Lord, and bind herſelf by a Bond, being in her Father's Houſe in her Youth; *Did this Law reſpect the Woman only?*

A. No; for it's evident that it reached a Son or a Servant in the ſame Circumſtances; becauſe the Reaſon of the Law is perfectly the ſame in both Sexes, which is, that ſuch Perſons have given away what was not their own, but another's, even their Superior's Right, which is againſt the Rule and Law of natural Reaſon, as well as the Word of God, which binds all Perſons to give every one their Due. He inſtances only in the Woman, becauſe that Sex is, both by Creation and Sin, put into a State of Subjection; but under the chief and moſt unqueſtionable Kind, are comprehended all other Subjects in the like Circumſtances, as is very uſual.

Q. *The Father's Authority to void his Daughter's Vow, is mentioned,* v. 4. *but is this Law limited to the Father's Authority only?*

A. Under the Father's Title ſeem to be comprehended, as in other Places of Scripture, Maſters, Magiſtrates, and all other Superiors, in ſuch Caſes, wherein their Right is given away by the Inferior's Vow; as for Inſtance, when a Servant vows to go a long Journey for his Friend, and his Maſter will not give him Leave; but not in other Caſes; as if a Servant vows to do ſomething for another in that Time in which his Maker allows to his own Uſe and Diſpoſal, in this Caſe his Vow binds him, though not in the former.

CHAP. XXXI.

Moſes *is commanded, before he dies, to avenge the* Iſraelites *of the* Midianites; *for which Purpoſe twelve Thouſand Men are choſen, whom* Phineas *accompanies. The King of* Midian *and* Balaam *are ſlain. The* Iſraelites *bring the Spoil to* Moſes *and* Eleazar. Moſes *is angry with the Officers for ſaving the Women alive; every Male Child, and Woman that had known Man, to be killed; the reſt to be ſaved alive. The Law for dividing the Booty, executed; the Sum of the Booty. The Tribute-offering of the Lord given to the Prieſts and* Levites. *The Captains Offering.*

Q. *IN this Chapter we have an Account of the War with the* Midianites*; can you give any probable Conjecture concerning the Order of Battle obſerved by the two oppoſite Armies?*

A. The Scripture gives us no Account of the Order of Battle between theſe two Armies; but, in all Probability, they were diſpoſed according to the Method of the ancient People of *Aſia*, and, therefore, we may range the *Iſraelites* upon one Line, form'd of twelve *Corps*, conſiſting of a thouſand Men each, at the Head of which was the *Ark of the Covenant*, ſurrounded by the Prieſts and Levites, whoſe Buſineſs it was to ſound the Charge, as well as defend the Ark. The *Midianites*, we may ſuppoſe, were, in like Manner, ranged in a *Phalanx*, upon one Line, and, as the *Iſraelites* were doubtleſs much inferior in Number to their Enemies, they made much larger Intervals between the Corps of a thouſand Men each, in order to penetrate the Enemies Front in different Places: For this was the conſtant Practice of the *Jews*, whenever they were inferior to their Enemies.

Q. Phineas *was ordered to accompany the Army; but in what Poſt or Station?*

A. Whether this *Phineas* was ſent to command the Troops, which were appointed by God to take Vengeance of the *Midianites*, or whether he went along with the Army, only to perform ſuch ſacred Offices, as ſhould be required by the General (who with more Probability, perhaps, is thought to be *Joſhua*) are Queſtions ariſing from the Silence of Scripture concerning the chief Commander. *Phineas* indeed was a Man of great Courage, and had lately performed a ſingular Piece of Service, which had gained him great Reputation, and from hence ſome have imagined, that he was the fitter Perſon to be ſent with an Army to *avenge the Lord of* Midian, as it is certain, that in after Ages, the *Maccabees*, who were of the Family of the Prieſts, were appointed chief Commanders. But then it muſt be conſidered, that theſe *Maccabees* were the ſupreme Governors of the People, and, as ſuch, had a Right to the military Command; that in the War with the *Amorites*, *Moſes* had ſent the Forces under *Joſhua*'s Conduct; and that *Phineas*, in ſhort, had another Province appointed him, which was to take care of the *holy Inſtruments*: But what theſe Inſtruments were, is another Queſtion. Several Interpreters are of Opinion, that they were the *Urim* and *Thummim*, which *Phineas* might take along with him, in order to conſult God, in caſe of any Difficulty, that might ariſe in the Management of the War: and, to countenance this, they ſuppoſe that *Eleazar* was ſuperannuated, and his Son ſubſtituted in his Room. But it may juſtly be doubted, whether *Phineas*, being only the Son of the High-prieſt, and not yet capable of that Office, could be ſubſtituted to perform this great Charge, which belonged to the High-prieſt alone: Nor do we find any Warrant for *conſulting the Lord by* Urim *and* Thummim, but only before the Tabernacle. It ſeems therefore much more likely, that, by the *holy Inſtruments*, *Moſes* means the *Ark of the Covenant*, and what was included in it, which, in following Ages, was wont to be carried into the Field, when the People went to fight againſt their Enemies. Nay, *Joſhua* himſelf, not long after this, ordered the Ark to be carried, with Prieſts blowing the Trumpets before it, when he ſurrounded *Jericho*, (Joſh. vi. 4. &c.) And therefore, ſince the *holy Inſtruments* are here mentioned with the Trumpets, it looks very probable, that they ſhould ſignify the *Ark*. Nor can we apprehend that *Moſes* ran any Riſque in venturing the Ark upon this Occaſion, becauſe God had aſſured his People, that they ſhould obtain a complete Victory over the *Midianites*. It muſt be confeſſed, however, that the Ark is never thus expreſſed in any other Part of Scripture, and, therefore, perhaps they give as true a Senſe of the Words as any, who make the *holy Inſtruments* and *Trumpets* to be one and the ſame Thing, and the latter no more than an Explication of the former; which Trumpets the Prieſts were commanded to take with them, that they might ſound a Charge, when the Engagement begun, according to their Direction, *Numb.* x. 8, 9. and as the Practice was in future Ages, 2 *Chron.* xiii. 12.

Q. *Was it not a Piece of Cruelty in* Moſes, *after the Battle was over, to order the Male Children and Women to be ſlain?*

A. Moſes ordered the Male Children to be ſlain, that thereby he might extirpate the whole Nation, as far as lay in his Power, and prevent their avenging the Death of their Parents, in caſe they were ſuffered to live to Man's Eſtate: For it is no hard Matter to conceive, how dangerous ſuch a Number of Slaves, conſcious that they were born free, and had loſt their Liberty with the Maſſacre of their Parents, might have proved to a Common-wealth, every-where ſurrounded with Enemies. Why he was ſo ſevere againſt the Women we need not wonder, if we do but conſider, that, either by proſtituting themſelves, or their Daughters, they had been the chief Inſtruments of drawing the *Iſraelites* unto Idolatry.

Q. *But it ſeems, ſuch Women as had not known Man, were to be ſaved alive; had they any certain Rule to go by in this Caſe?*

A. The *Jews* have a Tradition, that, in order to find out who were real Virgins, the young Women were plac'd, at a proper Diſtance, with other Women, and all commanded to fix their Eyes on the High-prieſt's *Mitre*; whereupon thoſe, who had *known Man*, turned inſtantly as pale as Aſhes, and thoſe, that had not, became as red as Fire. But there ſeems to be no great Occaſion for this Miracle, when either the Appearance of an unqualified Age, or the Examination of ſome ſelect Matrons might determine the Matter as well.

Q. *Upon a Muſter of the* Iſraelites *after the War, it is ſaid,* there lacked not one; *does not this ſeem ſtrange?*

A. In the 5th Chapter of the firſt Book of the *Maccabees*, we have an Account of another Victory of the like Nature, when *Judas*, after having, ſeveral Times, defeated *Timotheus* the Heathen General, aſſaulted the City of *Ephron*, a whole Day and a Night, and all without the Loſs of a Man. For *they went up to Mount* Sion *with Joy and Gladneſs, where they offered Burnt-offerings, becauſe not one of them was ſlain, until they had returned in Peace.* And (if other Hiſtorians may be credited) the like has happened among other Nations. After the famous and bloody Battle of *Leuctra*, the *Lacedæmonians* and *Arcadians* had a very ſharp Engagement, in which the latter loſt many Thouſands of Men, and the former not one; and, in a Sea-Engagement, between the *Portugueſe* and the *Indians*, *Oſorius Luſitanus* tells us, that the *Portugueſe* Admiral, *Pacheco*, ſucceeded ſo well, that he killed above 1500 of the Infidels, without the Loſs of one Man. But whether this had any Thing miraculous in it, or was only the Effect of God's ſpecial Providence, we ſhall not pretend to determine.

Q. *Have you any Thing to obſerve upon the Oblation made by the Officers, of the Jewels, &c. they had got in the War?*

A. The *Jeruſalem Targum* ſuppoſes that, when theſe Officers made their Offerings, they addreſſed themſelves to *Moſes* in the following Manner. "Foraſmuch as the Lord has delivered the *Midianites* into our Hands, and we have ſubdued their Country, entered into their Chambers, and ſeen their fair and charming Daughters, took their Crowns of Gold from off their Heads, their Rings from their Ears, and Fingers, their Bracelets from their Arms, and their Jewels from their Necks, and Boſoms; therefore far be it from us to have turned our Eyes towards them. We have had no Manner of Concern or Converſation with them, leſt we ſhould thereby die the Death of the wicked in *Gehenna.* And let this be had in Remembrance, on our Behalf, in the Day of the great Judgment, to make a Reconciliation for our Souls before the Lord."

Q. *It is ſaid, v.* 8. *that among the ſeveral Princes that were ſlain, was* Balaam *the Son of* Beor; *how could this be, ſince he was returned to his own Place, Chap.* xxiv. 25. *which was* Aram *or* Meſopotamia.

A. Either he went part of the way thither, but in his Journey made ſome ſtay in *Midian,* where he was overtaken by divine Vengeance; or underſtanding the Succeſs of his wicked Counſel left with *Balak,* in the Sin and Slaughter of the *Iſraelites,* he returned, partly to enjoy the Reputation and Reward of his Counſel, which he had loſt before; and partly to employ his helliſh Arts againſt *Iſrael,* now they were, as he thought, forſaken by their God, and expoſed to his Malice. Here *Balaam* dies the Death of the wicked, and not of the righteous, as he deſired *Chap.* xxiii. 10.

Q. *Was* Balaam *a true, or a* falſe *Prophet?*

A. Of the Number of *thoſe, who ſerved not God,* Balaam was certainly one; and yet we have Reaſon to preſume, that he nevertheleſs was a real Prophet. The *Jews* indeed are generally of Opinion, that he was a buſy and pretending Aſtrologer, who, obſerving when Men were under a bad Aſpect of the Stars, pronounced a Curſe upon them; which, ſome times coming to paſs, gained him, in ſome neighbouring Nations, a Reputation in his Way. Several of the ancient Fathers ſuppoſe him to be no more, than a common Southſayer, (for ſo he is called) who undertook to foretel future Events, and diſcover Secrets, *&c.* but by no good and juſtifiable Arts. *Origen* will needs have it, that he was no Prophet, but only one of the Devil's Sorcerers; and that of him he went to enquire, but God was pleaſed to prevent him, and to put what Anſwers he pleaſed into his Mouth. It cannot be denied however, but that the Scripture expreſly calls him a Prophet; and therefore ſome later Writers have imagined, that he had been once a good Man, and a true Prophet, till, *loving the Wages of Iniquity,* and proſtituting the Honour of his Office to Covetouſneſs, he apoſtatized from God, and, betaking himſelf to Idolatrous Practices, fell under the Deluſion of the Devil, of whom he learnt all his magical Enchantments; though, at this Juncture, when the Preſervation of his People was concerned, it might conſiſt with God's Wiſdom to appear to him, and vouchſafe him Revelations.

Balaam indeed was a Man of no great Probity, and might by Profeſſion be a Diviner; but, by the free Acceſs he had to God, it ſeems to be apparent, that he was no common *Sorcerer,* or Prophet of the Devil: For did ever any Sorcerer addreſs his Prayers to the ſupreme God, and receive Anſwers and Inſtructions from him? Did ever any Sorcerer preſcribe a Law to himſelf, *to ſay nothing, leſs or more,* than what the Spirit of God ſhould dictate? The Spirit of God when did it ever come upon an Enchanter? Or was it ever known, that an Oracle, upon a remote Event, and what God alone was capable of revealing, ſhould be declared by a mere Magician? Bad therefore though he was, a Slave to his Paſſions, and an Enemy to the People of God, yet it muſt be acknowledged that this *Balam* was a Prophet, and therefore, (to account in ſome Meaſure for the Oddneſs, and Singularity of his Character) we may obſerve, *Firſt,* That before the Giving of the Law, and the Conqueſt of the promiſed Land, there were other true Worſhippers of God, beſides the Deſcendants of *Abraham,* diſperſed over the Face of the Earth. *Secondly,* That this Worſhip of God was frequently mixed with Superſtition and Idolatry, even among them, who profeſſed to adore the only God of Heaven and Earth. *Thirdly,* That this odious Mixture did not hinder God from revealing himſelf to thoſe, who practiſed ſuch a monſtrous and motly Religion. *Fourthly,* That ſupernatural Gifts in general, and thoſe of Prophecy in particular, though they enlightned the Minds of the Prophets, yet, many Times, did not ſanctify their Hearts and Affections. And *Fifthly,* That the greateſt Weakneſs or Wickedneſs of Prophets never went ſo far, as to make them pronounce Oracles, contrary to what was dictated to them by the Spirit of God. *If* Balak *would give me his Houſe full of Silver and Gold, I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own Mind, but what the Lord ſaith, that muſt I ſpeak.*

CHAP XXXII.

The Reubenites *and* Gadites *ſue for their Inheritance on that ſide* Jordan, *as being fitteſt for Cattle.* Moſes *reproves them as diſcouraging the People, and imitating the perverſeneſs of their Fathers. They promiſe to leave their Wives, Children and Cattle there, and go armed before their Brethren into* Canaan, *and to aſſiſt them in ſubduing it: On which Condition, they, with the Half Tribe of* Manaſſeh, *obtain their Requeſt.*

Q. IN *this Chapter we have the Petition of the* Reubenites *and* Gadites *to have their Inheritance aſſigned them on that ſide of* Jordan, *where they then were; which Requeſt was granted them; pray give a Geographical Deſcription of this Country which they ſo earneſtly deſired for their future Poſſeſſion?*

A. In the Diviſion of the Country, which the *Iſraelites* took from *Sihon* and *Og,* two vanquiſhed Kings, that lived on the Eaſt Side of *Jordan,* and whoſe Dominions extended from the River *Arnon,* even as far as Mount *Hermon, Deut.* iii. 8. *Moſes* gave to the Tribe of *Reuben* the Southern, or rather the South-weſt Part of the Country, ſo that they were bounded to the South with the River *Arnon*; to the Weſt, with *Jordan*; and to the North and Eaſt, with the Tribe of *Gad.* In this Tribe ſtood *Heſhbon,* the capital City of the Kingdom of *Sihon,* ſituate on the Hills over againſt *Jericho,* about twenty Miles diſtant from the River *Jordan.* The Tribe of *Gad* was bounded with the River *Jordan,* to the Weſt; with the half Tribe of *Manaſſeh,* to the North; with the *Ammonites,* to the Eaſt; and with the Tribe of *Reuben,* to the South. In this Tribe ſtood *Aſtaroth,* the capital City of the Kingdom of *Og,* which very likely obtained its Name from an Idol, which was much worſhipped in thoſe Times and Parts. How the half Tribe of *Manaſſeh* came to chuſe to ſtay on the Eaſt Side of *Jordan*, the ſacred Hiſtory makes no mention; but it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that, after they found that the Tribes of *Reuben* and *Gad* had ſucceeded in their Petition, they likewiſe might repreſent to *Moſes* the great Stock of Cattle which they had; that the Country would be equally commodious for them, and was over-large for two Tribes alone to occupy; nor is it to be doubted, but that *Moſes* was inclinable to liſten to their Allegations, becauſe the Sons of *Machir*, the Son of *Manaſſeh*, had, by their Valour, ſubdued a great Part of the Country, where they ſettled; which was bounded by the Tribe of *Gad*, to the South, with the Sea of *Cinnereth* (afterwards called the Lake of *Geneſareth*, or the Sea of *Galilee*) together with the Courſe of the River *Jordan*, from its Head to the ſaid Sea, to the Weſt, with Mount *Lebanon*, or more peculiarly Mount *Hermon*, to the North, and North-eaſt, and with the Mountains of *Gilead* to the Eaſt.

CHAP. XXXIII.

A Relation of the Marches and Encampments from Egypt *to* Canaan. *They are commanded to drive out the* Canaanites, *and deſtroy their Pictures, Molten Images, and high Places, and to divide the Land by Lot. The* Canaanites, *if not diſpoſſeſſed, ſhould trouble and vex them, and uſe them as God thought to uſe their Enemies.*

I CAN ſee nothing in this Chapter that wants Explanation, and therefore let us proceed to the next.

CHAP. XXXIV.

The Borders and Boundaries of Canaan *deſcribed.* Joſhua *and* Eleazar, *and a Commiſſioner for every Tribe, appointed to divide the promiſed Land.*

Q. WHAT *is your Opinion of dividing the Land of* Canaan *among the* Iſraelites *by* Lot?

A. Nothing could more prudently be contrived, than this Partition of the Country by *Lot*, and making *Joſhua*, and the *High-prieſt* Superintendants of it; ſince it was the only one, that could effectually prevent all Murmurings and Quarrels among ſuch an obſtinate People, as the *Jews* were. However as the Lots were to bear a Proportion to the bigneſs of each Tribe and Family, it is ſuppoſed, from what followed, that every Tribe firſt drew its Lot, for its own Canton, and that, after that, there were proper Perſons appointed to meaſure out a Quantity of Land for each Family, according to their Bigneſs: But whether this laſt was done by this, or any other Method; whether the Sub-diviſions between the Families were likewiſe carried on by Lot, or otherwiſe, ſure it is, that we read of no Broils or Jealouſies, that it ever occaſioned among them.

Q. *The North Border, I find v. 7. was to be Mount* Hor; *was this the ſame Mount* Hor *on which* Aaron *died?*

A. No; for that was Southward, and bordering upon *Edom*, Chap. xxxiii. 37, 38. and therefore it muſt be another Mountain, and, as it is conceived, the Mountain of *Libanus*, which is elſewhere mentioned as the Northern Border of the Land, and which, in regard of divers Parts, or by divers People, is called by divers Names, as *Sirion* and *Senir*, *Deut.* iii. 9. and *Sion*, *Deut.* iv. 48. and *Hermon*, *Joſ.* xiii. 5. and here *Hor*, which ſignifies a *Mountain*, and this may be called ſo by way of Eminency. Certain it is, that as *Hor* here, ſo *Hermon*, *Joſ.* xiii. 5. is joined with the Entrance of *Hamath*, which makes it probable that they are one and the ſame Place.

CHAP. XXXV.

Forty-eight Cities, with their Suburbs, given to the Levites; *ſix Cities of Refuge are aſſigned, for an* Iſraelite, *or Stranger to fly to who had accidentally killed a Man. The wilful Murderer to ſuffer Death. The Man-ſlayer muſt ſtay in the City of Refuge till the Death of the High-prieſt. Two Witneſſes required in capital Puniſhments.*

Q. IN *the fourth Verſe it is ſaid, that the Suburbs of the Cities of the* Levites, ſhall reach from the Wall of the City and outward, a thouſand Cubits round about; *but in the next Verſe it its* two thouſand: *How do you reconcile this Difference?*

A. The *ſeventy Interpreters* read in both Places *two thouſand Cubits*; whence ſome ſuppoſe this to be an Error in the *Hebrew* Text, which, being in a Matter neither concerning Faith nor good Morals, is not prejudicial to the Authority of the holy Scripture.

But farther; the *one thouſand Cubits* may be in Length from the City, and the *two thouſand Cubits* in Breadth on each ſide of the City, and ſo they well agree; for a Line of a thouſand Cubits being drawn in Length Eaſtward, and another Weſtward, another Northward, and another Southward, a Line, drawn at a thouſand Cubits diſtance from the City, from Eaſt to Weſt, muſt needs contain two thouſand Cubits, and ſo muſt the other Line from North to South, and ſo on every ſide of the City there muſt be two thouſand Cubits.

Again; this Verſe and the next do not ſpeak to the ſame Thing: This ſpeaks of the Space or Place from whence the Suburbs ſhall be meaſured, the next Verſe ſpeaks of the Space unto which that Meaſure ſhall be extended; and the Words may be very well read thus, *And the Suburbs*— ſhall be (ſo it is only an *Ellipſis* of the Verb Subſtantive, which is moſt frequent, and the Meaning is, ſhall be taken or accounted) *from the Wall of the City*, and from (that Particle being ſupplied or underſtood from the foregoing Words, which is very uſual) *without it*, or, from *the outward Part of it*, (which being a general and indefinite Expreſſion is limited and explained by the following Words) even from *a thouſand Cubits round about*. Which are mentioned not as the Thing meaſured, for as yet there is not a Word of *meaſuring*, but as the Term or Space from which the meaſuring Line ſhould begin. And then it follows, *v.* 5. *And ye ſhall meaſure from without the City*, (not *from the Wall of the City*, as was ſaid, *v.* 4. but *from without it*, that is, from the ſaid outward Part or Space of a thouſand Cubits without the Wall of the City round about) *on the Eaſt ſide two thouſand Cubits*, &c. So that, really, there were three thouſand Cubits from the Wall of the City, whereof one thouſand were probably for Out-houſes, Stalls for Cattle, Gardens, Vine-yards, and Olive-yards, and the like, and the other two thouſand for Paſture, which are therefore called the *Field of the Suburbs*, *Lev.* xxv. 34. by way of Diſtinction from the Suburbs themſelves, which conſiſted of the firſt thouſand Cubits from the Wall of the City.

Q. *Have you any Thing particular to remark concerning the Cities of Refuge?*

A. The Perſon, who, without any premeditated Malice, killed his Neighbour accidentally, had the beſt Proviſion imaginable made for his ſafe Eſcape. For the Ways, that led to the Cities of *Refuge*, were to be very plain and broad, and kept in good Repair. Two *Students of the Law* were to accompany him, that, if the Avenger of Blood ſhould overtake him, before he got to the City, they might endeavour to pacify him by wiſe Perſuaſions; and that he might not miſs his Way to the Place, whither he intended to flie, there were Poſts erected, where two or three Ways met, with the Word *Miklal*, i. e. *the City of Refuge*, inſcribed on it, to direct him into the right Road that led to it.

Q. *Had the People of* Iſrael *no* Sanctuaries, *or Places of* Refuge, *before their Entrance into the Land of* Canaan?

A. It is with great Aſſurance of Truth ſuppoſed, that the *Altar* was the only Sanctuary, whither he, who had unfortunately killed a Perſon, might fly for Shelter, which, as it ſtood in the Middle of the Camp, was equally near to any of the Tribes; and ſo it was appointed, that the *Cities of Refuge* ſhould be ſo ſituated, that he, who was driven to make uſe of them, might not have far to travel, leſt before he reached the City, the *Avenger of Blood* ſhould overtake him, and put him to Death; for this Reaſon, three were appointed on one Side of the River *Jordan*, and three on the other; for though the River did, by no means, equally divide the Dominions of *Iſrael*, the Poſſeſſions of the Tribes of *Reuben*, *Gad*, and the *Half Tribe of Manaſſeh*, were equal in Length to thoſe of the *Nine Tribes*, and an *Half*; and conſequently as many Cities were neceſſary.

Q. *But why were theſe* Cities of Refuge *aſſigned among the* Levites?

A. Becauſe they might be preſumed to be the moſt proper and impartial Judges between *Man-ſlayers* and *Wilful Murderers*; their Preſence, Counſel and Authority, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, might more effectually bridle the Paſſions of the *Avenger* of *Blood*, who might purſue him thither; and might alſo ſignify, that it is only in *Chriſt* (whom the *Levitical Prieſts* repreſented) that Sinners find Refuge and Safety from the avenging Wrath of God.

Chap. XXXVI.

The Princes of Manaſſeh *diſcovering an Inconvenience from the Decree paſſed in Favour of the Daughters of* Zelophehad, *that Law is explained, and the Inheritance of Daughters ſettled. The Daughters of* Zelophehad *are ordered to marry in the Tribe of their Fathers, to whom they think fit; they obey. Theſe Commands God gave to* Moſes *in the Plains of* Moab.

Q. THE *Law lately made in Favour of the Daughters of* Zelophehad, *we find here, was thought ſo inconvenient, that a Clauſe was judg'd neceſſary to be added to prevent thoſe ill Effects, which would neceſſarily follow from a ſtrict Obedience to it; And yet that Law was given by divine Direction: How are we to conceive of God's giving an imperfect Law?*

A. God did not take particular Care about every Occurrence that happened, or might happen, but left divers Things to be found out by human Prudence, which being his own Gift, it was proper that Opportunities ſhould be left for the Exerciſe of it; and God thought fit to approve and ratify the prudent and profitable Inventions of Men by his own Law or Sanction; as in the Caſe of *Jethro*, *Exod.* xviii. of *Zelophehad*'s Daughters, *Numb.* xxvii. and here of their Brethren. But it is obſervable, that God allowed this only in civil Affairs, but never in the Matters of his Worſhip, where he utterly forbids it.

Q. *Was every Woman, by this Law, abſolutely forbidden to marry into any other Tribe than that ſhe belong'd to?*

A. No; for the contrary may be reaſonably concluded from the Practice of ſo many Patriarchs, Kings, Prieſts, and other holy Men, who have married Women of other Tribes, yea, ſometimes of other Nations, which it is not likely they would have done, if this had been a Tranſgreſſion of God's Law. But by the firſt Clauſe of Verſe 8. *And every Daughter that poſſeſſes an Inheritance*, it ſeems reſtrained to Heireſſes, or ſuch as were likely to be ſo. See 1 *Chron.* xxii. 23. But if they had Brethren, it's probable they were at Liberty to marry into any Tribe; yet ſo that, if their Brethren died, their Puniſhment was, the Inheritance went from them to the next a-kin to their Father's Tribe and Family. And the principal Reaſon why God was ſo ſolicitous to preſerve Tribes and Families unmixed, was, that the Tribe and Family too, out of which the *Meſſiah* was to come, and by which he ſhould be known, might be evident and unqueſtionable.

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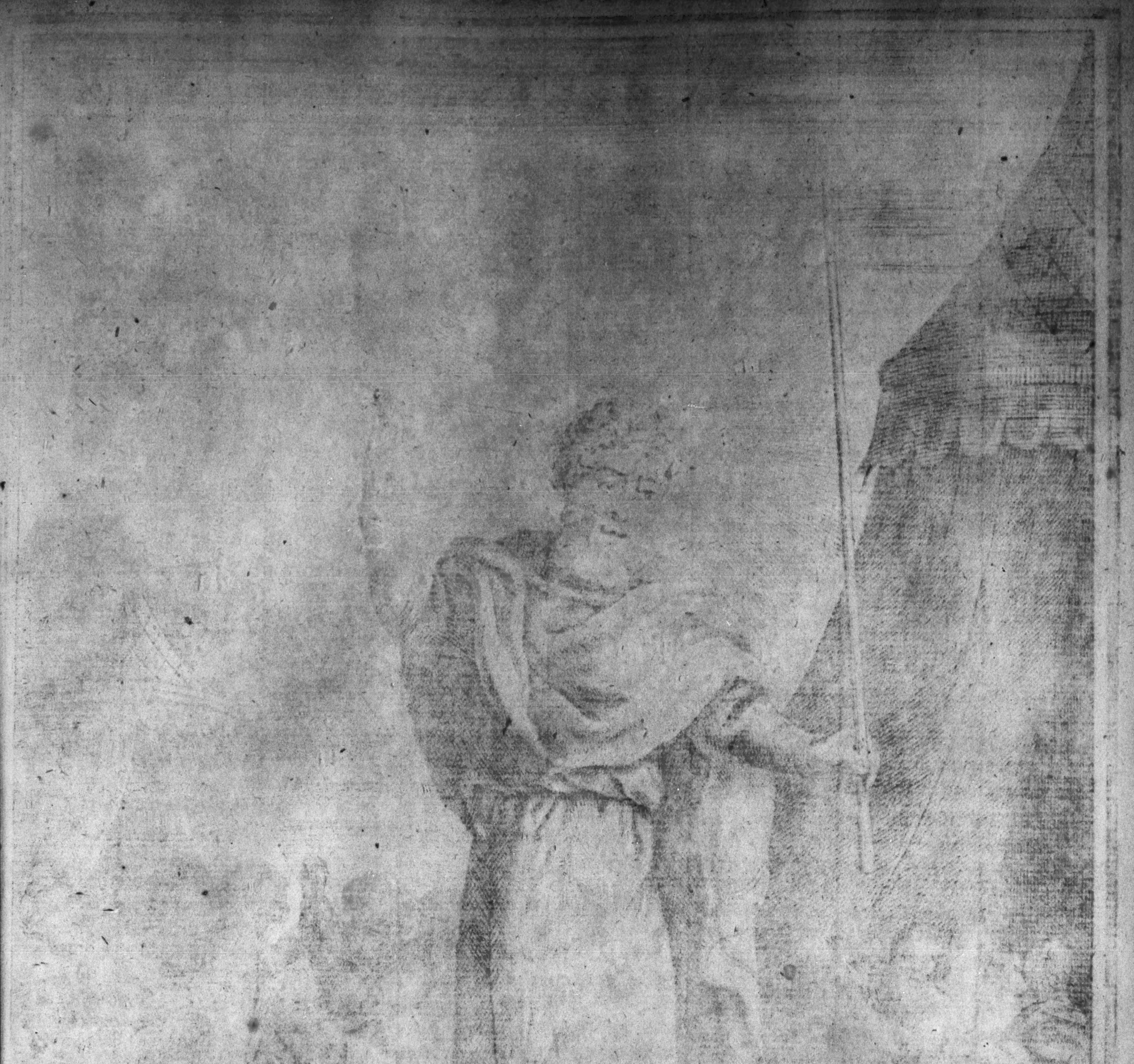

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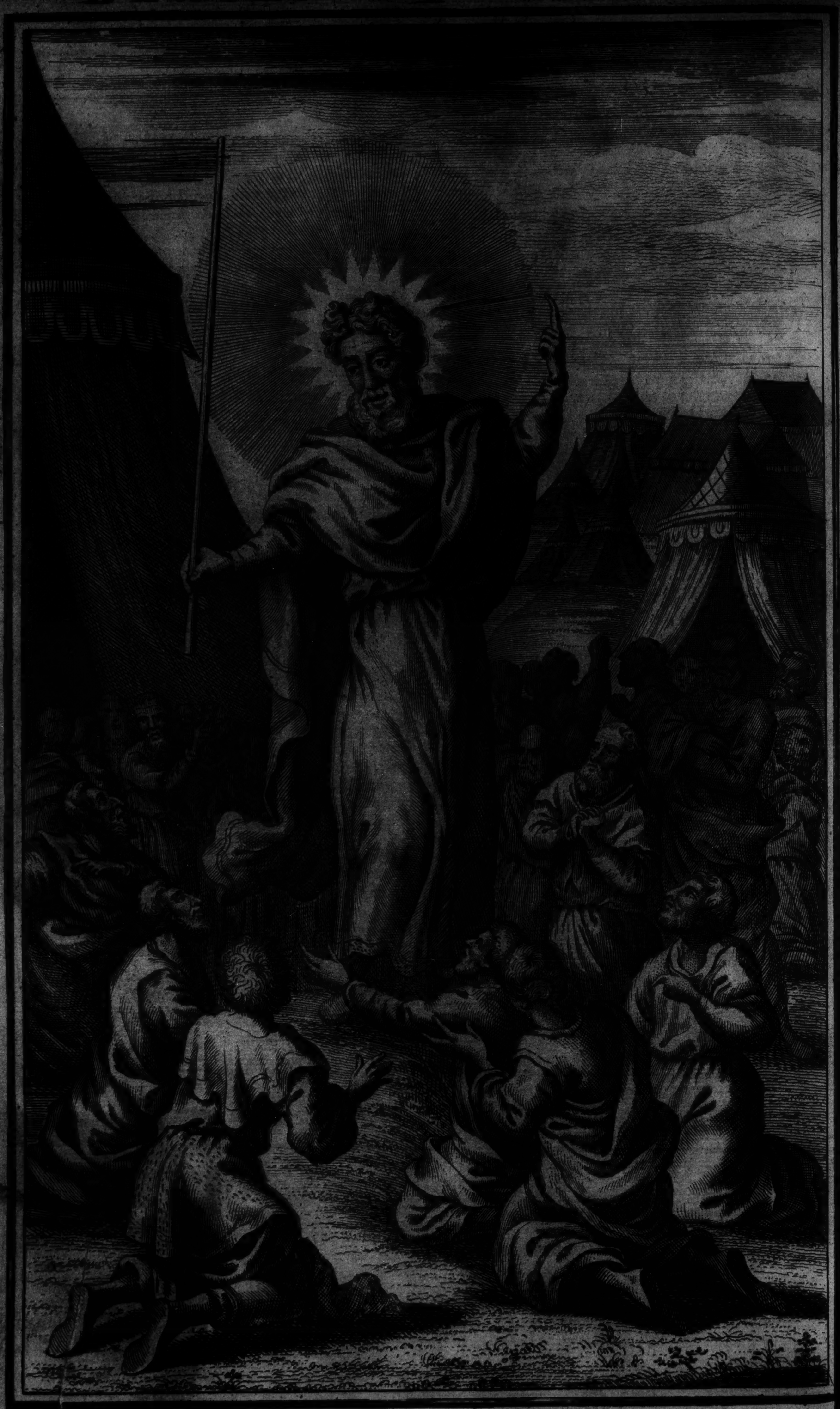


Moſes's Speech to the Iſraelites

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED DEUTERONOMY.

This Book is by the Greek Interpreters *called* Deuteronomy, *that is,* the Repetition of the Law; *becauſe in it* Moſes, *after he has related in what Manner he had conducted the People of* Iſrael *unto the Confines of* Canaan, *through a long Pilgrimage in the Wilderneſs, for the Space of forty Years, knowing that the Time of his Death drew near, he employed the laſt two Months of his Life in rehearſing to the People, in publick Diſcourſes, what Things had happened to them in the Wilderneſs, that they might remember them for their own Inſtruction and Amendment, to prevent the like Caſualties in Time to come; and at the ſame Time to put them in Mind of God's ſingular and ineſtimable Benefits towards them: And on the other Hand, to remind them of their Rebellions, Hardneſs of Heart, Diffidence, Murmurings, and perpetual Ingratitude, whereby God was moved to puniſh them with his ſevereſt Judgments; even ſo far, as to cauſe that great Number of their Forefathers who came out of* Egypt, *to die all in the Wilderneſs. And therefore with a paſtoral Providence and Care, and a paternal Tenderneſs, he again ſets God's Laws before them, with moſt parts of the Ordinances thereof, confirming, expounding, and laying them open to their Underſtandings, and preſſing the Obſervation thereof by many weighty Arguments, lively* Exhortations, *and dreadful Denunciations, thus finally diſcharging his Conſcience; to which he adds a ſolemn Proteſtation to all the People, who being now ready to enter into the Fruition of the Promiſed Land, that by keeping this his Covenant, they might have the Bleſſings of God always reſting upon them; but if they acted contrary thereto, his Curſes would continually follow them. He then gives them a Charge for laying up, and reading the Law at certain Times, and every ſeven Years to be ſolemnly read before all the People. He compoſes a Song for common uſe, comprizing the wonderful Things here mentioned. He prophecies of Chriſt's coming, and the calling of the* Gentiles; *ſees the Land, and dies, leaving* Joſhua, *after he had conſecrated him, to be his Succeſſor.*

Chap. I.

A Rebearſal of what had befallen Iſrael *in their forty Years March.* Moſes's *Inability to judge them alone. Other Judges and Officers appointed. Their Paſſage to* Kadeſh-barnea; *Spies ſent to ſearch the Land of the* Amorites; *their Return, and Report. The People's Diſobedience, and God's Wrath thereupon; they are ſmitten by the* Amorites. *The People complain to God, but are not regarded.*

Q. *WHAT do you imagine was the Motive that induced* Moſes *to recapitulate the ſeveral Tranſactions in the Wilderneſs, and to repeat thoſe Statutes which he had before ordained?*

A. The whole Army of *Iſrael,* which lay now encamped in the Plains, on the Eaſtſide of the River *Jordan,* conſiſted wholly of Perſons, who (except the *Levites*) were not twenty Years old, at the Time of the Sedition, which happened at *Kadeſh-barnea*; and, of Conſequence, were many of them ignorant of the Laws given to their Fathers; hence they ſtood in great need of having thoſe Statutes re-capitulated to them, that they might know perfectly how to conduct themſelves, on their coming into the Land of *Canaan*; and eſpecially how to avoid falling into thoſe Errors, which had ſubjected their Anceſtors to ſo ſevere a Judgment, and had even involved themſelves in many Years Fatigue and Dangers; it was therefore a Thing highly reaſonable and commendable, for *Moſes* to repeat to the People what he had before given, as Inſtructions to their Parents; and it was the more neceſſary, becauſe that, after his Death, the Laws promulgated by him were to remain unalterable, as a ſacred Code, which ſucceeding Judges might neither add to nor diminiſh.

It muſt be alſo obſerved, that the Prophet through the whole Courſe of his Adminiſtration, truſted neither to ſpeaking nor writing alone. The ſettling the Conſtitution, given by *Jehovah,* to his choſen People, was a Point of ſuch Importance, that he choſe to promulgate his Laws, firſt in a general Aſſembly, that all might know them, and be acquainted with their Tenour; and next, to reduce them into Writing, and put them into that Volume which was to be delivered to his Succeſſor; and to remain the Rule and

Standard, as well of his Actions, as of the Behaviour of the Nation in general. Thus, were the Inconveniencies, conſequent from an *oral* or *unwritten Law*, perfectly guarded againſt and prevented, and, at the ſame Time, all Pretences were taken away from this mutinous People, of complaining, that they neither heard nor conſented to thoſe Laws by which they were governed; an Excuſe, it is highly probable, they would have pleaded, had not this excellent Method been all along purſued, whereby it was put out of their Power.

On the firſt Day of the eleventh Month, *Moſes* cauſed a general Aſſembly to be convened, in order to re-deliver to them the Ordinances of *Jehovah*; knowing well, that the Time of his Death drew very nigh, and that he had but juſt Time for the Diſcharge of this important Buſineſs. We are not indeed particular, as to the Manner in which he delivered himſelf, in this his laſt Exhortation; but the *Jews* are of Opinion, and the Opinion is probable enough, that, from Day to Day, as other neceſſary Duties of his Office gave him Time and Opportunity, he returned to the Aſſembly, and continued his Recital.

Q. *What is your Opinion of the Stile and Language in which this Speech was delivered to the People?*

A. As to the Oration itſelf, it is recorded with all the Simplicity natural to the moſt ancient Writers, eſpecially the *Orientals*; its Contents, inaſmuch as they are of a mixed Nature, partly Narrative, partly Exhortative, are ſet down, in the Manner they were declared to the People; and yet, notwithſtanding this Want of Method, they fail not, at this Day, to ſtrike the Mind moſt affectingly; wherefore we need make no Queſtion, that the *Iſraelites* were very ſtrongly moved, at the Time when the Prophet pronounced this full and final Confirmation of the Statutes and Judgments, revealed to him for their Government, by their King and God, *Jehovah*.

CHAP. II.

The March of the Iſraelites *from* Kadeſh-barnea; *They are charged not to meddle with the* Edomites, Moabites, *or* Ammonites; *but are encouraged to fight the* Amorites, *who are put to Flight, and their Lands taken from them.*

Q. THE Iſraelites *are commanded not to meddle with their Brethren the* Edomites; *but to buy their Bread and Water of them for Money*: *But why, ſo ſince they had a daily Supply of* Manna *from Heaven?*

A. Although *Manna* did yet rain upon them, they are not forbidden to buy other Meats when Opportunity offered, but were forbidden to hunger greedily after them, when there was no human Poſſibility of obtaining them. As to Water, it was very ſcarce in thoſe Parts, and therefore private Perſons dug Wells for their own Uſe.

Q. *In the 12th Verſe,* Iſrael *is ſpoken of as if already in the Land of their Poſſeſſion; which could not then be literally true.*

A. The paſt Tenſe is here put for the future, *will give*, after the Manner of the Prophets. Again; Things are often ſaid to be done, when they are only reſolved, or agreed, or attempted to be done; in which Senſe *Reuben* is ſaid to deliver *Joſeph*, *Gen.* xxxvii. 21. *Balak* to fight againſt *Iſrael*, *Joſh.* xxiv. 9. *Abraham* to have offered his Son, *Heb.* xi. 17. But farther, God may well be ſaid to have given it, not only becauſe he had purpoſed and promiſed to give it, but had already given them ſome Part of it, and that as an Earneſt of the whole. And laſtly, This may be particularly underſtood of that Part of *Iſrael's* Poſſeſſion which was beyond *Jordan*, which God had actually given to them, that is, to ſome of them, for even the Land of *Canaan*, on this Side *Jordan*, was not given to all of them, but only to ſome of the Tribes.

Q. *The King of* Edom, *or the Children of* Eſau, *did not grant the* Iſraelites *a Paſſage through their Land, as appears from* Numb. xx. *and yet* v. 29. *of this Chapter, it is intimated, that they did grant them this Favour.*

A. They did permit them to paſs quietly by their Borders, though not through the Heart of their Country; and in their Paſſage the People ſold them Meat and Drink, being, it ſeems, more kind to them than their King would have had them; and therefore they here aſcribe this Favour, not to the King, but to the People, the Children of *Eſau*.

CHAP. III.

The Iſraelites *march to* Baſhan, Og *and his People routed, and his Land diſtributed between two Tribes and a half, who are commanded to aſſiſt their Brethren in conquering* Canaan. Moſes *encourages* Joſhua; *his Prayer to go into the promiſed Land, which is refuſed; but is allowed a Proſpect of it.*

Q. THE *Inheritance of the* Reubenite *and* Gadite, *was to reach from* Gilead *to the River* Arnon, half the Valley,; *have not theſe laſt Words a different Meaning in the* Hebrew *Tongue?*

A. The Words, *half the Valley*, ſhould be read, *to the Middle of the River*; for the Word *half* ſignifies commonly *middle*, and the ſame *Hebrew* Word ſignifying both a Valley, and a Brook or River, it ſeems more reaſonable to underſtand it of a River, as the ſame Word is rendered in the next foregoing Clauſe of this Verſe, than of a *Valley*, which was not mentioned before; eſpecially ſeeing there is here an Article added, which ſeems to be emphatical, and to note *that River*, namely, juſt mentioned. Add to this, that there was no ſuch *Valley*, much leſs any *half Valley*, belonging both to the *Reubenites* and *Gadites*. But according to the other Tranſlation, the Senſe is plain and agreeable to the Truth, that their Land extended from *Gilead* unto *Arnon*, and, to ſpeak exactly, to the middle of that River; for as that River was the Border between them and others, ſo one half of it belonged to them, as the other half did to the others. And that this is the very Truth of the Matter, and the real Meaning of the Place, will appear by comparing this Text with two others. The firſt is that of *Joſh.* xii. 2. where the ſame Thing is expreſſed in the ſame Words in the *Hebrew* which are here, though our Tranſlators render the ſelf ſame Words there, *from the Middle of the River*, which here they render, *half of the Valley*; and where the Bounds of *Sihon's* Kingdom, which was the ſame Portion here mentioned, as given to *Reuben* and *Gad*, are thus deſcribed from *Aroer*, *which is upon the Bank of the River* Arnon, *and from the Middle of the River*, *and from Half* Gilead, *even unto the River* Jabbock, *which is* *the Border of the Children of* Canaan. The other Text referred to is, *Deut.* ii. 36. *From* Aroer, *which is by the Brink of the River of* Arnon, *and from the City that is by the River*, or rather, as the *Hebrew* has it, *in the River*, that is, from *Ar*, which was the chief City of the *Moabites*, and therefore denied to the *Iſraelites*, as is here implied, and more fully expreſſed, *Deut.* ii. 9. which City was ſeated in an Iſland in the Middle of the River. So that here we have a juſt and full Reaſon why the Border of this Land given to *Reuben* and *Gad*, is ſo exactly and critically deſcribed here, even to the Middle of a River, which although in Truth and Strictneſs it be the Bound of thoſe Lands which are divided by a River, yet is not uſually expreſſed in the Deſcription of Borders, either in Scripture or other Authors, becauſe here was an eminent City of the *Moabites* in the Middle of this River, which by this curious and exact Deſcription, is excepted from their Poſſeſſion, as God would have it to be.

Q. *Among other Arguments which* Moſes *uſes in his Prayer that God would permit him to go into* Canaan, *one is, that he might ſee the* goodly Mountain, *and* Lebanon; *what* Mountain; *and why* Lebanon *in particular?*

A. That *goodly Mountain* may, by an Analogy of the Number, be put for thoſe goodly Mountains in *Canaan*, which were many. Thus *Moſes* proceeds gradually, in this Deſire and Deſcription, and prays that he may ſee in general the good Land, that is beyond *Jordan*, and then particularly the goodly Mountains of it, and eſpecially that famous Mount of *Lebanon*, which was ſo celebrated for it's tall large *Cedars*, and other Trees and excellent Plants. See *Pſal.* xxix. 5. and ſo iv. 16. *Iſaiah* ii. 13. and xiv. 8.

Notwithſtanding the Petition and Prayer of *Moſes*, the Lord receded not from his Decree, which was unalterable, ſo, that the utmoſt Favour, the Prophet could obtain, was to ſurvey it, from the Top of *Mount-Piſgah*.

CHAP. IV.

An Exhortation to obey the Law, and a Warning againſt Idolatry. Judgments denounced againſt the Diſobedient, and Bleſſings promiſed to the Obedient. A Relation of the giving of the Law, and the Terrors that accompanied it. No Similitude of any Thing ſeen on that ſolemn Occaſion. The Experience of former Mercies, an Incitemen to future Obedience. Three Cities of Refuge appointed on this ſide Jordan.

Q. WHAT *is chiefly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. This preliminary Diſcourſe, of what had fallen out to the *Iſraelitiſh* Nation, from their removing from before *Horeb* to that Time, the Record of which takes up the three firſt Chapters of *Deuteronomy*, being ended, *Moſes*, in this Chapter, applies what he had hitherto been ſaying; and from the various Inſtances which he had mentioned, of the Kindneſs and peculiar Providence of *Jehovah*, he takes Occaſion to preſs the Obligation the Deſcendants of *Jacob* were under, from Gratitude as well as Duty, to yield a ſtrict Obedience to the Commands, which it pleaſed God to give them; and as the Baſis of this ſtrict Obedience, he tells them, that they ſhould not preſume to add or diminiſh from that Law, which in the Name, and by Revelation from the ſupreme Power, he himſelf delivered them; but theſe and theſe only, they were to regard, as the ſacred Statutes of *Jehovah*; and, as ſuch, were to pay them implicit Submiſſion.

In the next Place he proceeds to ſhew them, how wiſe and juſt a Thing it was for them, to act in this Manner, and that their ſteady Adherence to ſuch a Conduct would procure Reverence and Reſpect, even from the neighbouring Nations, who would be conſtrained to acknowledge the Almighty Power of the God of *Iſrael*. For tho' the Generality of *Heathen* People, in the latter and degenerate Ages of the World, did through inveterate Prejudice, and for their own Luſts and Intereſts, condemn the Laws of the *Hebrews*, as fooliſh and abſurd, yet it is moſt certain, that many of the wiſeſt Heathens did highly approve of them, ſo far, that they made uſe of divers of them, and tranſlated them into their own Laws and Conſtitutions; and *Moſes*, the Giver of thoſe Laws, hath been mentioned, with great Honour, for his Wiſdom and Learning, by many of them; particularly, the old *Athenian Oracle* expreſly ſaid, *that the* Chaldeans *or* Hebrews, *who worſhipped the* uncreated God, *were* the only wiſe Men.

Q. *Have you any thing particular to remark concerning the three* Cities of Refuge, *here appointed for the two Tribes and a Half?*

A. The Nature of *Cities* of *Refuge*, and of thoſe Miſfortunes which ſhould conſtrain a Man to take ſhelter in them, having been by him, before, fully explained, and their Number ſettled; ſo now he cauſed the Law to be carried into Execution, by an actual Appointment of thoſe three Cities, which ſhould ſerve for this Purpoſe, on this ſide of the River *Jordan*, viz. *Bezer* in the plain Country of the Wilderneſs, in the Territory of the *Reubenites*, that is, in the Southern Part of the Kingdom, which had been *Sihon*'s; *Ramoth*, in *Gilead*, belonging to the *Gadites*, ſituated in the Middle of the new conquered Provinces; and *Golan*, which was in the Land of the *Half-Tribe* of *Manaſſeh*, lying in the northern Part of this Diſtrict, that is, in *Baſhan*, the Kingdom of *Og*.

Theſe Cities as the *Reader* may perceive, were very exactly adjuſted, ſo that the Perſon who might be obliged to fly to one of them for Safety, could not have very far to go, wherever he dwelt, and conſequently, the *Avenger* of *Blood* was in leſs Likelihood of overtaking him.

CHAP. V.

Of the Ten Commandments given by God on Mount Horeb, *in two Tables. The* Iſraelites *requeſt, that* Moſes, *and not God, might ſpeak to them, which God approves of.* Moſes *exhorts the People to Obedience, with a Promiſe of long Life.*

Q. WHAT *occurs to your Obſervation, in general upon, the different Methods of delivering Statutes and Ordinances to the People of* Iſrael.

A. It is to be obſerved, that the Almighty God of *Iſrael* delivered the *Decalogue*, or *Ten Commandments* himſelf, but the reſt of the Laws were communicated to the People by his Servant *Moſes*. This God did ſhew to the Preheminency of that Law above the reſt, and its everlaſting Obligation.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words, v.* 3. The Lord made not the Covenant with our Fathers?

A. Either, *Firſt*, Not only with them, the Word *only* being here underſtood, as it is *Gen.* xxxiii. 28. and xxxv. 10. 1. *Sam.* viii. 7. Or, *Secondly*, Not at all with them: But then the Word *Covenant* is not here to be taken for the Covenant of Grace in general, for ſo it was made with their Fathers, *Exod.* ii. 24. but for this particular and mixed Diſpenſation of the Covenant of *Sinai*, as appears both from the foregoing and following Words.

Q. *The 21ſt Verſe is a Repetition of the tenth Commandment, but varies in the Order of the Words from* Exod. xx. *How do you account for this?*

A. It's true, in *Exod.* xx. the order is contrary, and *thy Neighbour's Houſe* is put before *his Wife*, whereby it is evident, that *Moſes* intended this but for one Commandment, wherein the Order of the Words was an inconſiderable Circumſtance; for if this were two Commandments, as ſome would have it, it would be altogether uncertain which is the Ninth, and which the Tenth Commandment, ſeeing the one is firſt, *Exod.* 22. and the other here.

CHAP. VI.

The People exhorted to Obedience to the Commandments. The Unity of the divine Eſſence aſſerted. The Duty required of the Iſraelites, *to love God, and teach their Children; to uſe Signs, as Memorials of it; not to forget God in Proſperity; not to worſhip other Gods; not to tempt God; but keep his Commandments; and to tranſmit the Knowledge of God's Works to Poſterity.*

Q. EXPLAIN *the firſt Clauſe of the 25th Verſe,* and it ſhall be our Righteouſneſs.

A. In the *Hebrew* it is, *Righteouſneſs ſhall be to us*; that is, we ſhall be owned and pronounced by God to be truly righteous and holy Perſons, if we ſincerely obey him, otherwiſe we ſhall be declared to be unrighteous and ungodly Perſons, and all our Profeſſion of Religion will appear to be Hypocriſy. In the *Greek* it is, *Mercy ſhall be to us,* or *with us.* For as the *Hebrew* Word rendered *Righteouſneſs* is very often put for Mercy, as *Pſ.* xxiv. 5. and xxxvi. 10. and li. 14. *Prov.* x. 2. and xi. 4. *Dan.* ix. 16, *&c.* ſo this Senſe ſeems beſt to agree both with the Scripture Uſe of this Phraſe, in which *Righteouſneſs*, ſeldom or never, but *Grace* or *Mercy* frequently, is ſaid to be *to us* or *with us*, as 2 *Sam.* xv. 20. *Pſ.* lxxxix. 24. *Prov.* xiv. 22. *Gal.* vi. 16. and with the foregoing Verſe and Argument, God, ſaith he, *v.* 24. commanded theſe Things *for our Good, that he might preſerve us alive, as it is this Day. And,* ſaith he in this Verſe, this is not all, for as he hath done us Good, ſo he will go on to do us more and more Good, and God's *Mercy ſhall be to us* or *with us*, in the Remainder of our Lives, and forever, *if we obſerve to do all theſe Commandments, before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.*

CHAP. VII.

Iſrael *commanded to deſtroy the ſeven Nations of* Canaan; *to have no Intercourſe or Correſpondence with them; to ruin their Places of Idolatry. Their Holineſs and Relation to God, and his Faithfulneſs to the Obedient. Vengeance threatened on them that hate him. The Advantages of Obedience. They are commanded to keep themſelves clean from the accurſed Thing.*

Q. WHY *were the* Iſraelites *ſo ſtrongly exhorted, not only to refrain from idolatrous Worſhip, but to exterminate every Mark thereof in the Land of their Poſſeſſion?*

A. The Reaſon of this was, leſt any Remains of their Idolatry ſhould prove Snares to ſeduce the Sons of *Jacob*, whoſe Minds were very tractable on this Head, from the Service of *Jehovah*, or tempt them to mingle their Adorations of the true God, with the Service of thoſe *Pſeudo-Deities* (which afterwards they actually did) and, the more ſtrongly to preſs this important and ſo often repeated Point upon them, he tells them, that they were a choſen and peculiar Nation Holy to the Lord; not ſelected for any Merit of their own, but taken purely through the Mercy and Loving Kindneſs of God, who was graciouſly pleaſed to make certain Promiſes to their Fathers, which in a wonderful Manner, he had, and would continue to perform to them; but ſtill on Condition that they kept his Covenant, and did thoſe Things which he commanded them; for that ſuch a Protection only was conſiſtent with the divine Nature, *Jehovah* being infinitely juſt, as well as infinitely merciful and powerful; pouring forth Bleſſings, continually, on ſuch as religiouſly obeyed him, and puniſhing, with the utmoſt Severity, thoſe who wickedly cotemned, deſpiſed or neglected his Inſtructions ſo graciouſly given,

CHAP. VIII.

Iſrael *is exhorted to Obedience, and to remember God's Judgments and Mercies. The Excellency of the Land they were going into. Not to forget the Lord in their Fulneſs and Proſperity, nor aſcribe their Wealth to their own Power, but to God, who threatens to deſtroy Idolaters.*

Q. ONE *would think it was impoſſible that the* Iſraelites *ſhould ever forget the wonderful Things God had done for them; does not therefore a Repetition of theſe Things ſeem needleſs?*

A. The *Prophet* knew very well the Pride of Heart, Wilfulneſs, and Stubbornneſs of the *Iſraelites* and had Recourſe to various Arguments and a multitude of Incitements, to engage them to a ſteady Perſeverance in well doing. We find him therefore in this *Chapter* earneſtly exhorting them to remember, when they ſhould come into, and poſſeſs that good Land, which according to his Promiſe, God was about to give them, how, for *forty* Years together, they had been led up and down in the *Wilderneſs*, to humble them and debaſe their Spirits, to try, and prove them, by the miraculous Protections, Deliverances, Proviſions and Inſtructions which God gave them, and withal the frequent and ſevere Puniſhments of their Diſobedience, that they might diſcover to themſelves and others, that Infidelity, Hypocriſy, Inconſtancy, Apoſtaſy, Rebellion and Perverſeneſs, which lay hid in their Hearts; the Diſcovery whereof was of ſingular Uſe both to them, and the Church of God in all ſucceeding Ages.

Q. *What other Arguments does* Moſes *urge to perſuade them to a ſtrict Watchfulneſs over their future Conduct?*

A. *Moſes* proceeded to ſhow, that notwithſtanding their many and frequent Crimes, the Lord had not deſerted them, but afforded them many, even innumerable Mercies, as he alſo ſhewed to their Fathers, though they were a ſtubborn and rebellious Race of Men; whence they were to learn, that as a Parent chaſtiſeth his Son, even ſo dealt *Jehovah* with *Iſrael*.

By a very natural Tranſition from this Strain of Reaſoning, he paſſes on to adviſe them, as to the Tenour of their Conduct, when they ſhould be fully ſettled in *Canaan*; he enumerates the good Things, the Fruitfulneſs of the Soil, and the Increaſe of

Wealth of all Sorts, which they there ſhould, by the Bleſſing of God, attain; and expreſſes his Fear, leſt this vaſt Abundance ſhould corrupt their Minds, and make them regardleſs of the *Almighty Power*, by whoſe Favour they obtained it; which in Caſe they did, he teſtifies to them, they ſhould certainly periſh as they had ſeen the other *idolatrous* Nations periſh before them.

It was juſt and good in *Moſes*, to exhort the *Iſraelites*, to praiſe the *Almighty* for their Food, which is a Debt both of Gratitude and Juſtice, becauſe it is from his Providence and Favour, we receive Food, Refreſhment and Strength.

CHAP. IX.

Iſrael *forewarned, that having ſubdued their Enemies, and in full Poſſeſſion of the promiſed Land, they ſhould in nowiſe conceive that by their own Righteouſneſs they had merited ſo much Goodneſs at the Hand of God, but that it was the Effect of his gracious Promiſes, made to* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob. *A Rehearſal of ſome of the Provocations of the* Iſraelites; Moſes's *Trouble and Affliction occaſioned thereby, and his Interceſſions with God on their Behalf.*

Q. WHAT *is the main Drift and Purport of* Moſes's *Speech in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter ſeems to be the Beginning of a new Speech, that is, the Beginning of another Day's Oration. *Moſes* obſerves to them, that now the Time they had ſo long wiſhed for, was indeed come, or at leaſt at Hand, when they ſhould finiſh their long and wearisome Journeyings through the *Deſart*, and ſhould go over into the *Land of Promiſe*; where, however, they were to fight againſt various, numerous and warlike Nations, who were not only uſed to give Battle in the Field, but alſo to defend themſelves in their Cities and Places of *Strength*, which were well fortified and capable of making a long and ſtout Reſiſtance. This the *Prophet* adds, partly that they might not be ſurprized, when they found them to be ſuch; partly, that they might not truſt to their own Strength, but wholly rely on God's Help, for the deſtroying of them, and after the Work was done, might aſcribe the Praiſe and Glory of it to God alone, and not to themſelves.

Jehovah having promiſed the Children of *Iſrael* Conqueſt and Dominion, the *Prophet* warns them, that when they had obtained it, they ſhould take no Praiſe or Glory to themſelves, as if either their own Prowess had won it, or that God had choſen them, and afforded them Aſſiſtance, for their Juſtice and Merit; whereas, continues the Prophet, ye are a ſtubborn and rebellious People, and ſo deſtitute of all Pretence to Righteouſneſs: Such were the People, but there were divers particular Perſons among them truly righteous and holy, and yet even their Righteouſneſs is denied to be the procuring Cauſe of their inheriting this Land.

CHAP. X.

Moſes *repeats God's Mercy in reſtoring the two Tables of the Law.* Aaron's *Death.* Eleazar *his Son officiates in his Room. The Tribe of* Levi *ſeparated for the Prieſthood. God hearkens to the Interceſſion of* Moſes *for them, and commands him to lead them towards* Canaan. *God requires their Obedience; to circumciſe their Hearts; to help the Fatherleſs and Widow; to love Strangers; to fear and ſerve the Lord for his Mercies towards them. God no Reſpecter of Perſons.*

Q. IN *this Chapter* Moſes *repeats ſeveral Inſtances of God's peculiar Favour towards them; which he cloſes with a very pathetick Exhortation, which I ſhould be glad to ſee dreſſed in a modern Phraſe and Language.*

A. In Return for all theſe Benefits, ſays he, what is it that the Lord requires? Or on what Terms does he offer you the Continuance of his Protection? Why, only that you ſhould fear him, ſerve him with all your Heart, love him with all your Soul, and walk carefully in thoſe Ways which he has appointed for your Good. Theſe are the Things required of you, to render you acceptable to God, who knows the Secrets of the Mind, and judges Men by the Sincerity of their Actions; therefore let your Thoughts, as well as your Deeds, be holy: *Circumciſe* therefore the ſuperfluous *Foreskin* of your Hearts, and be no more ſtiff-necked; that is, reſt not in your *bodily Circumciſion*, but ſeriouſly ſet upon that ſubſtantial Work which is ſignified and deſigned thereby: Cleanſe your Hearts from all Filthineſs and Superfluity of Naughtineſs, which may be fitly compared to the Foreskin, which if not cut off, made Perſons profane, unclean and odious in the Sight of God.

CHAP. XI.

Moſes *exhorts the People to Obedience, from the Conſideration of the great Things God had done for them, and for the Excellency of the Inheritance which he had promiſed them. They are warned againſt Idolatry; to teach their Children the Law, and to make Memorials of it for their own Benefit. Mount* Gerizzim *appointed a Place for Bleſſing, and* Ebal *for Curſing.*

Q. MOSES, *in deſcribing the ſuperior Excellence of* Canaan *to* Egypt, *tells the People, that in the latter*, they ſowed their Seed, and watered it with their Feet as a Garden of Herbs; *what does he mean by* watering it with their Feet?

A. In *Egypt* they took great Pains to water the Ground, by going up and down to fetch Water, and diſperſe it, with digging Furrows with their Feet, and uſing Engines for diſperſing the Water, which Engines they thruſt with their Feet. For though the River *Nile* did once in a Year overflow the Grounds, and made them fruitful, yet it often failed or ſcanted them, and then they were put to great Pains about their Ground; and when it did overflow ſufficiently, and left its Mud upon the Earth, yet that Mud was in a little Time hardned, and wanted another Watering, and much Digging and Labour both of the Hands and Feet, eſpecially in Places ſomewhat higher, or more remote from that River, which Inconvenience *Canaan* was free from.

Q. *The Land of* Canaan *is here deſcribed as an exceeding fruitful Country; but modern Travellers give a very different Account of it.*

A. The Land of *Canaan* was, undoubtedly, at that Time, productive of all Kinds of Bleſſings that were neceſſary for the Pleaſure or Support of human Life; but its Fruitfulneſs was ſuſpended upon the Diſobedience of the People; and therefore 'tis no Wonder that the Land of *Canaan* is now, in a great Part of it, a barren Soil; which is ſo far from being an Objection to the Authority of the holy Scriptures, in which it's Fruitfulneſs is declared, that it is a great Confirmation of it; its preſent Barrenneſs being but an Effect of that Threatning, that God would *turn a fruitful Land into Barrenneſs for the Wickedneſs of thoſe that dwell in it*, Pſ. cvii. 34. and elſewhere;

and the Wickedneſs of the *Iſraelites* in ſucceeding Ages being notorious, it is but juſt and fit that the Barrenneſs of their Land ſhould be as evident as they were infamous.

Q. Moſes, *in cautioning the People againſt Idolatry, bids them take heed*, that their Heart be not deceived; *how are we to underſtand this Expreſſion?*

A. The People are commanded to beware of themſelves, and not to be deceived by the ſpecious Pretences of Idolaters, who would plead the general Conſent of all Nations, except the *Hebrews*, for the Worſhip of Creatures, and that they worſhip the Creatures only for God's Sake, and as they are glorious Works of God, whom they worſhip in and by them: This, and the like Arguments, being commonly alledged by the *Heathens* for their *Idolatries*, as their own Writers declare, might poſſibly ſeduce an unwary *Iſraelite*; and therefore they are here cautioned againſt ſuch Deceit, and withal it is implied, that if a Man's Mind be corrupted and deceived, ſo as he believes *Idolatry* to be lawful, this will not excuſe him in the Sight of God.

CHAP. XII.

The Iſraelites *are commanded to deſtroy all the Places of Idolatry, and to worſhip God in the Place of his own Appointment. Eating Blood prohibited. Where and how they ſhould eat the Tythe. The* Levite *not to be forſaken. What Sort of Fleſh might be eaten.*

Q. MOSES *directs the* Iſraelites, *that in the Land of their Inheritance, they ſhould have but one certain Place for publick Worſhip; What was the Reaſon of this Injunction?*

A. In fixing the Sacrifices to one Place, and ſo frequently ſhewing a Diſpleaſure againſt ſacrificing in high Places, we may contemplate the wonderful Contrivance of Providence. *Jeſus Chriſt* was to ſuffer and give his Life a Ranſom for them and all Mankind in *Jeruſalem*; ſo that when that City and their Temple ſhould, for their Sin be deſtroyed, there was an End of all legal Sacrifices; *there could then be no more Sacrifices for Sin*, as the Apoſtle obſerves; which Conſideration induced all well diſpoſed People among the *Jews*, to embrace the Goſpel.

Q. *What Inference do you draw from the frequent Mention of the peculiar Care which God took of the* Levites?

A. That this ſhould convince *Chriſtians* of the Neceſſity and Bleſſing of a *ſtanding Miniſtry*; unleſs they profanely imagine, that ſuch a Miniſtry is not as neceſſary, and as dear to God under the Goſpel, as it was under the Law.

CHAP. XIII.

Directions how to behave to a falſe Prophet, who ſhould endeavour to turn away the People from the true God. Enticers to Idolatry to be ſtoned to Death, though ever ſo nearly related. A City, guilty of Idolatry, to be burnt. The curſed Thing to be forborn.

Q. THE *firſt Part of this Chapter, I obſerve, conſiſts of ſeveral Admonitions and Directions in what Manner they were to conduct themſelves, whenever a* falſe Prophet *ſhould ariſe among them: But was there any Danger of their being deceived this Way, when the Law was always open for their Inſtruction?*

A. As the *Iſraelites* were very inclinable to run after Novelties, and as the Prophet foreſaw, that they would become ſtill more credulous, after his Deceaſe, by the Command of *Jehovah* he told them, that the Laws now given them, were irrevocable, that is, ſuch as regarded the Worſhip of God; wherefore, if there ſhould, at any Time, riſe up among them a Prophet, or one, who really ſaw Viſions, and ſhould actually foretel ſomething, or do certain Wonders, and, in Conſequence of thoſe Deeds, ſhould exhort them to go and ſerve other Gods, then were they not to liſten to this Prophet, or Seer of Viſions, or regard the Things which he did; but were to conclude that *Jehovah* ſuffered them to be tempted, in order to prove whether they held faſt their Love and Belief in him or no. Their Religion was not to ſtand upon ſo precarious a Foundation; but they were to fear, to love, and cleave to *Jehovah* with immovable Steadineſs, and a Faith incapable of Alteration.

Q. *But why were the People to give no Credit to a Prophet, although he ſhould prove his Miſſion by evident Signs and Wonders?*

A. The People were not to receive the Doctrine of the Prophet, or Dreamer of Dreams, though the Sign came to paſs. For, although when ſuch a Sign or Wonder foretold, did not follow or come to paſs, it was a Sign of a falſe Prophet, as is ſaid, *Deut.* xviii. 22. Yet when it did come to paſs, it was no ſufficient or infallible Sign of a true one, eſpecially in ſuch a Caſe, when he brings in new Gods. The Reaſon of this Difference is, becauſe many Cauſes muſt concur to make a Thing good and true, but any one Failure is ſufficient to make a Thing bad or falſe. Particularly, there are many Signs, ſuch as Men may think to be Wonders, which may be wrought by Evil Spirits, God ſo permitting it, for divers wiſe and juſt Reaſons, not only for the Trial of the Good, as it here follows, but alſo for the Puniſhment of ungodly Men, who would not receive Divine Truths, though atteſted by many evident and unqueſtionable Miracles, and therefore are moſt juſtly expoſed to thoſe Temptations to believe Lies.

Q. *Was not God's permitting of evil Men, and evil Spirits to do Signs and Wonders, a hard Trial upon the People?*

A. Not in the leaſt; becauſe they had had numerous Miracles to convince them, that the God they worſhipped was the true God; and therefore they would be without Excuſe, if they ſhould be led into Idolatry by any Signs which God might permit for the Trial of their Sincerity.

CHAP. XIV.

Heatheniſh Rites of Mourning prohibited, and the eating of any abominable Thing. All unclean Beaſts, Fiſh, and Birds prohibited. True Tything commanded, and where it was to be eaten. A Command about the third Years Tything, and who ſhould eat it.

Q. HOW *are we to underſtand that Paſſage, v.* 22. Thou ſhalt truly tithe all the Increaſe of thy Seed?

A. This is to be underſtood of the ſecond Tithes, which ſeem to be the ſame with the Tithes of the third Year, mentioned *v.* 28. and *Deut.* xxvi. 12.

and to confirm this Opinion (tho' I would not lay too great a Streſs on Criticiſms) yet I cannot but obſerve, that this Tything is ſpoken of only as the Peoples Act here, and *Deut.* xxvi. 12. and the *Levites* are not at all mentioned in either Place as Receivers or Takers of them, but only as Partakers of them, together with the Owners, and therefore they are ſo ſeverely charged here upon their Conſciences, *thou ſhalt truly tithe all thine Increaſe*, becauſe the Execution of this was left wholly to themſelves; whereas the firſt Tithes were received by the *Levites*, who therefore are ſaid to take or receive thoſe Tithes, *Numb.* xviii. 26. *Neh.* x. 38. *Heb.* vii. 5.

CHAP. XV.

The ſeventh Year a Year of Releaſe to their Brethren only. God promiſes to bleſs them in the Land of Canaan; *and commands them to lend freely to the Poor. The Firſtlings to be ſanctified, and eaten before the Lord.*

Q. *AT the End of every ſeventh Year it is ſaid*, v. 2. Every Creditor that lendeth ought unto his Neighbour, ſhall releaſe it: *Pray was he to give him an abſolute Diſcharge?*

A. The Creditor was not abſolutely and finally to forgive the Debtor, but forbear it that Year, as may appear, *Firſt*, Becauſe the Word doth not ſignify a total Diſmiſſion or acquitting, but an Intermiſſion for a Time, as *Exod.* xxiii. 11. *He ſhall not exact it*; that is, he ſhall not force it from him by Courſe of Law or otherwiſe, *viz.* that Year, which is eaſily underſtood from the whole Context. *Secondly*, Becauſe the Perſon *releaſing* is called a *Creditor*, and his communicating to him what he deſires and needs, is called here *lending*; whereas it would be *giving*, and the *Perſon giving* could be no *Creditor*, but a *Donor*, if it were to be wholly forgiven. *Thirdly*, Becauſe the Reaſon of this Law is temporary and peculiar to that Year, wherein there being no Sowing or Reaping, they were not in a Capacity to pay their Debts. *Fourthly*, Becauſe it ſeems unjuſt and unreaſonable, and contrary to other Parts of Scripture which require Men to pay what they borrow, as *Pſ.* xxxvii. 21. In caſe of Poverty, indeed the Debt was to be wholly forgiven, but then it was not by Virtue of this Law, but of other Commands of God, for his Honour, and as an Acknowledgment of his Right in their Eſtates, and of his Kindneſs in giving and continuing them. If they were unwilling to releaſe their Debts for their Brother's Sake, they were to do it for the Sake of God, their Lord and chief *Creditor*.

Of a *Stranger* they might exact their Money with Rigour, and at the Expiration or End of ſeven Years; but of their Brethren they were to be tender, even as they expected that *Jehovah* ſhould bleſs and protect themſelves; and who, to encourage an univerſal Spirit of Kindneſs and Compaſſion among them, graciouſly promiſed, that in this he would diſtinguiſh them from the other Inhabitants of the Earth, *viz. That they ſhould lend unto many Nations, but ſhould not borrow, and ſhould rule over many Nations, without being ſubject to any*, provided they punctually ſerved him, and obeyed his Commandments.

Q. *Pray help me to underſtand the firſt Clauſe of the 4th Verſe*, Save when there ſhall be no poor among you?

A. Theſe Words ſeem an Exception to the laſt Clauſe of the foregoing Verſe, *viz. That which is thine with thy Brother, thy Hand ſhall releaſe*, and ſo are reſtrained to the Poor, and imply, that if his Brother was rich, he might exact his Debt of him in that Year. And indeed this Law ſeems chiefly, if not wholly, deſigned and given in Favour to the Poor and to the Borrower, as is manifeſt from *v.* 6. to 11. But the Words are and may be rendered thus, as in the Margin of our Bibles, *To the End that there be no Poor among you.* And ſo they contain a Reaſon of this Law; namely, that none be impoveriſhed and ruined by a rigid and unſeaſonable Exaction of Debts. They may alſo be tranſlated thus, *Nevertheleſs of a Truth*, or *aſſuredly*, (as the Particle *Chi* is often uſed) *there ſhall be no Poor among you*; and the Senſe may be this, Though I impoſe this Law upon you, which may ſeem hard and grievous, yet the Truth is, ſuppoſing your Performance of the Conditions of God's Covenant, you ſhall not have any great Occaſion to exerciſe your Charity and Kindneſs in this Matter, for God will greatly bleſs you, *&c.* ſo as you ſhall be in a Capacity of lending, and few or none of you will have Need to borrow, and thereby to expoſe his Brethren to the Inconvenience of this Law. Thus the Connexion is plain and eaſy, both with the foregoing and following Words.

Q. *But it is ſaid*, v. 11. The Poor ſhall never ceaſe.

A. That is alſo true, and affirmed by God; becauſe he foreſaw they would not perform their Duty, and therefore would bereave themſelves of the promiſed Bleſſings.

CHAP. XVI.

The Feaſt of the Paſſover to be kept. The ſeven Weeks and their Feaſts. The Feaſt of the Tabernacles to be obſerved ſeven Days. All the Males to appear before the Lord three Times a Year, at the three Feaſts. Judges and Officers are appointed. Of idolatrous Groves and Pillars.

Q. *IN order to inforce the Duty of keeping the Paſſover,* Moſes *tells them*, v. 1. God brought them forth out of *Egypt* by *Night*; *whereas they came out of* Egypt *by* Day, *and in the* Morning, *as appears from* Exod. xii. 22. and xiii. 3. *Numb.* xxxiii. 3.

A. They are ſaid to be brought out by Night, becauſe in the Night *Pharaoh* was forced to give them Leave to depart, and accordingly they made Preparation for their Departure, and in the Morning they perfected the Work.

Q. *Judges and inferior Magiſtrates are here appointed for the Adminiſtration of Juſtice between Man and Man; what were the general Rules they were to obſerve in the Execution of their reſpective Offices?*

A. The Adminiſtration of Juſtice, being a Point of the utmoſt Conſequence, *Moſes* directs, that in each of their Cities, they ſhould have chief Magiſtrates to examine and determine Cauſes and Differences, and Officers inferior and ſubordinate to the other, to bring Cauſes and Perſons before them, to acquaint the People with the Mind and Sentence of the Judges, and to execute their Sentence. Theſe the *Prophet* ſtrictly enjoins to take juſt Care of themſelves, and not to fail in the ſtrict Performance of all that their Offices required; particularly, that they ſhould not, by any Means, take Gifts, becauſe a Gift will blind the Eyes of the Wiſe, and pervert the Words of the Juſt; but, in their Judgment, avoiding all Prejudices and Partiality, they were to decide equitably between ſuch as preſented Suits before them; not to give Sentence according to the Quality of the Perſon before them, his Riches or Poverty, Friendſhip or Enmity, but according to the Juſtice of the Cauſe; for ſuch Deciſions were not ſimply good Deeds and pleaſing to God, but alſo Inſtruments of publick Bleſſings, and the beſt Means for conciliating the Favour of the Lord to their whole Nation; by which, as they obtained, ſo now, by it, as a Tenure, they were to hold the *promiſed Land*; that is, the Land of *Canaan*; of which here and elſewhere, he gives his Audience frequent Notice.

Chap. XVII.

Their Sacrifices to be without Blemiſh. The Puniſhment of idolatrous Worſhippers. Dubious Points to be reſolved by the Judges. A King to be a Native Iſraelite, *and not a Stranger. The Duty of their Kings.*

Q. *In Matters that were ſo difficult and perplexed, as to ſurpaſs the Skill of the inferior Magiſtrate to reſolve, where were the* Iſraelites *to apply for Satisfaction?*

A. On ſuch an Emergency they were to repair to the Place which *Jehovah* had choſen, and there they were to ſtate to the *Prieſts*, the *Levites* and the *Judge*, that is, the *chief Governor*, the Difficulty which they deſired to diſcuſs; the Matter was laid before thoſe Perſons, *viz.* the *Prieſts*, *Levites*, and the *Judge*, who afterwards declared, to the inquiring Parties, the Word of *Judgment*; that is, the Decree which they thought fit to make, in the Caſe propoſed, which thoſe who inquired (uſually the *Judges* of the lower Rank) were inſtantly to comply with, in every Particular; for the Perſon who proudly and obſtinately oppoſed the Sentence given againſt him, was to be adjudged an evil, refractory, pernicious Perſon, whoſe Practice herein tended to the Diſſolution of all Government, and the Ruin of the *Commonwealth of Iſrael*; ſo that ſuch an obſtinate Offender was to ſuffer Death.

Q. *Of what Rank or Degree among the Prieſts and* Levites *were thoſe who were to decide the Controverſies of a difficult Nature?*

A. They were, no doubt, the great Council, or *Sanhedrim*, which conſiſted chiefly of Prieſts and *Levites*, and were therefore the beſt Expoſitors of the Laws of God, by whom all thoſe Controverſies, *v.* 8. were to be decided. The High-prieſt was commonly one of that Number, and may ſeem to be underſtood here under the Word Prieſts, of whom he chief.

Q. *The other Party appealed to in controverſial Points, was the Judge; Pray who was he?*

A. He was either, 1. The Supreme civil Magiſtrate, who was appointed by God the Keeper of both Tables, and by his Office was to take Care of the right Adminiſtration both of Juſtice and Religion, and to determine Cauſes and Suits by his own Skill and Authority in civil Matters, and by the Prieſt's Direction in ſpiritual or ſacred Cauſes. But, it's objected, that this Judge was obliged to dwell in the Place of God's Worſhip, which the civil Magiſtrate was not, and frequently did not. Therefore others ſuppoſe, 2. That this Judge was one whoſe Office it was to expound and teach others the Law of God, as *v.* 11. and therefore not the civil Magiſtrate. Or, 3. The High-prieſt, who was obliged to live in this Place, to whom it belonged to determine ſome, at leaſt, of thoſe Controverſies mentioned, *v.* 8. and to teach and expound the Law of God. And he may be diſtinctly named, though he be one of the Prieſts, partly becauſe of his Eminency and Superiority over the reſt of them; and partly to ſhew, that amongſt the Prieſts he eſpecially was to be conſulted. But to this it is objected, that the High Prieſt is never, in Scripture, ſimply called the *Judge*, but is generally ſtiled the Prieſt, the High-prieſt, or the chief Prieſt, or the like; beſides, divers Controverſies were not to be decided by the High-prieſt, but by other Perſons, as appears, *Exod.* xviii. 22. *Deut.* i. 16, 17. Or, 4. The *Sanhedrim*, or the Supreme Council, which conſiſted partly of Prieſts, and partly of wiſe and learned Men of other Tribes, as is confeſſed by all the *Jewiſh* and moſt other Writers. And ſo this is added by way of Explication, partly to ſhew that the *Prieſts* and *Levites* here mentioned as the Perſons to whom all hard Controverſies are referred, are not all the Prieſts and Levites who ſhould reſide in *Jeruſalem*, but only ſuch of them as were, or ſhould be Members of that great Council, by whom, together with their Fellow Members of other Tribes, theſe Cauſes were to be decided; partly to intimate, that that great Council, which had the chief and final Determination of all the aboveſaid Controverſies, was a mixed Aſſembly, conſiſting of wiſe and good Men, ſome Eccleſiaſtical, and ſome Secular; as it was highly reaſonable it ſhould be, becauſe many of the Cauſes brought before them were of a mixed Nature. And though the Word *Judge* be in the ſingular Number, and may ſeem to denote one Perſon, yet it is only an Enallage, or Change of the ſingular Number for the plural, *Judges*, which is moſt frequent, as *Gen.* iii. 27, and xliii. 6. 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 1. *&c.* And this Senſe ſeems the more probable, becauſe for the *Judge* here, is put the *Judges*, Deut. xix. 17. where we have the ſame Phraſe uſed upon the ſame or a like Occaſion, *the Men between whom the Controverſy is, ſhall ſtand before the Lord, before the Prieſts and the Judges, which ſhall be in thoſe Days.* And it's very reaſonable, that ſo many Perſons, united all in one Body, to give Judgment or Sentence by the Conſent of all, or the major Part, ſhould be here called by the Name of one *Judge*, as indeed they were; and for that Reaſon the Prieſts are ſpoken of in the plural Number, becauſe they were many, as alſo the other Members of that Aſſembly were, and the *Judge* in the ſingular Number, becauſe they all conſtituted but one Judge.

Q. *Were not the Laws and Conſtitutions of other Nations as agreeable to Reaſon and natural Equity, as thoſe promulged by* Moſes?

A. There is this eſſential Difference, between the Laws delivered by *Moſes*, and thoſe which have been compiled by other *Legiſlators*; that the former were not only adapted to the Condition of the People to whom they were given, in a Country, to the Poſſeſſion of which they were to come after the *Death* of the *Prophet*, but alſo to the various Alterations, which happened to that Nation, and their Affairs in the Courſe of ſucceeding Ages; whereas *Conſtitutions* the beſt contrived by human Wit, in the Space of far leſs Time, betray many Imperfections, and make Room for various Accidents, to diſorder and at laſt to overturn them. This, if duly conſidered, will be thought no inconſiderable Proof of the *divine Inſpira-*

Inſpiration of their *Divulger*, ſince it belongs to him alone, who formed the Minds of *Men*, and governs the Univerſe, to know and provide for the Diſpoſitions of a People, at ſuch a Diſtance of Time.

Q. *Among the Qualifications of a King, one is, that he is forbid* greatly to multiply to himſelf Silver and Gold; *what was the Reaſon of this Prohibition?*

A. The King was forbidden to amaſs great Sums of Money and vaſt Riches; leſt this ſhould lift up his Heart in Confidence and Pride, which God abhors, and beget in him a Contempt of his People; and leſt it ſhould induce or engage him him to burden his People with immoderate Exactions. They are not ſimply forbidden to be rich, if God made them ſo, either by the *voluntary Gifts* of their *Subjects*, or by the *Spoils* of their Enemies, which was the Caſe of *David*, *Solomon*, *Jehoſhaphat*, &c. But they are forbidden either inordinately to deſire, or irregularly to procure great Riches, by grinding the Faces of their poor People, or by other wicked Arts and Courſes, as the Manner of their neighbouring Kings was.

Q. *Why was the King commanded to copy out with his own Hand, the Book of the Law?*

A. This intimates, that the Scriptures diligently read and ſtudied, are a powerful and probable Means to keep him humble, becauſe they ſhew him that, though a King, he is ſubject to an *higher Monarch*, to whom he muſt give an Account of all his Adminiſtrations, and Actions, and receive from him his Sentence and Doom agreeable to their Quality, which is ſufficient to abate the Pride of the haughtieſt Perſon in the World, if he duly conſiders it.

Chap. XVIII.

God is the Inheritance of the Prieſts and Levites. *Their Due from the People. The* Levites *Portion who ſerved voluntarily.* Chriſt *promiſed. Falſe Prophets threatened; their Puniſhment and diſtinguiſhing Character.*

Q. WHEN *the People offered a Sacrifice, they were commanded*, v. 3. to give unto the Prieſt the Shoulder, and the two Cheeks, and the Maw: *But how does this agree with other Texts, in which the* Shoulder *and the* Breaſt, *and thoſe Parts only, are the Prieſts Due, not the* Cheeks *and* Maw?

A. To this it might be ſufficient to anſwer, Who ſhall tie God's Hands? What if he makes an Addition, and enlarges the Prieſts Commons? Nothing more uſual than for one Scripture to ſupply what is lacking in another, and for a latter Law of God to add to a former. But farther; the *Breaſt* may be here ommitted, becauſe it is comprehended under the Shoulder, to which it is commonly joined, and with which it was waved before the Lord. Again; the *Hebrew* Word, here rendered *Maw* or *Stomach*, which the Ancients reckoned among their Dainties, is not, to my Remembrance, uſed elſewhere; and therefore it may have another Signification; and ſome render it the *Breaſt*; others take it for the uppermoſt Part of the Stomach, which lies under the Breaſt.

Q. *How do you interpret the 15th Verſe*, The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet from the Midſt of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him ſhall ye hearken?

A. Theſe Words may be underſtood ſecondarily concerning the Succeſſion of Prophets, which God would raiſe for the Inſtruction of his Church, both becauſe is this alledged as an Argument why they need not conſult with *Diviners*, &c. becauſe they ſhould have *Prophets* at Hand, whenſoever it was needful, to adviſe them, and becauſe this *Prophet* is oppoſed to the *falſe Prophet*, and a general Rule is given, for the Diſcovery of all ſucceeding *Prophets*, whether true or falſe, as in Verſe 20, 21, 22. But they are chiefly to be underſtood of *Chriſt*, as the following Words ſhew, which do not fully agree to any other; particularly, where he is ſaid *to be like unto* Moſes, which ſimply is denied concerning all other *Prophets*, *Deut.* xxxiv. 10. And therefore it is not probable that it ſhould be affirmed concerning all true *Prophets* ſucceeding him. But *Chriſt* was truly and in all commendable Parts like him, in being both a *Prophet*, *King* and *Prieſt*, and a *Mediator* as *Moſes* was, in the Excellency of his *Miniſtry* and Work, in the Glory of his Miracles, in his familiar and intimate Converſe with God, *&c.* And this Place is expounded of *Chriſt* alone by God himſelf in the *New-Teſtament*. *Acts* iii. 22. and vii. 37. *Joh.* i. 45. and vi. 14.

Chap. XIX.

The Iſraelites *had three Cities of Refuge appointed them in the Land of* Canaan, *for him that killed his Neighbour ignorantly; but he that ſholdu hate and kill his Neighbour, though fled into one of theſe Cities, muſt die. No old Land-marks to be removed. The Number of Witneſſes upon a Trial; the Puniſhment of falſe Witneſſes.*

I Find nothing in this Chapter, but what is plain and eaſy to be underſtood; and as I ſhall trouble you with no Queſtions about any Thing but what I apprehend has either ſome Difficulty as to its true Meaning, the Senſe dubious, or what I think may be farther illuſtrated by the Sentiments of learned Men; and as nothing of this Kind occurs here, let us proceed to the next Chapter.

Chap. XX.

The Prieſt directed to encourage the People when they go forth to Battle. The Officers Proclamation with Reſpect to ſuch as were to be diſmiſſed from the War. Peace to be offered to a City before it be attack'd. What Trees might, and might not be cut down in a Siege.

Q. AMONG *thoſe who were excuſed from going to War, were ſuch as had built a new Houſe, and had not* dedicated *it; how was a Houſe* dedicated?

A. A Houſe was dedicated by Feaſting and Thankſgiving to God; therefore if any Man had failed to do it, he was to return, leſt his Heart ſhould be ſet upon it, and he thereby be negligent or timorous in the Battle, to the Scandal and Prejudice of others; and ſo he ſhould loſe, and another get the Fruits of his Labours, which might ſeem unjuſt or hard; thus God provides even for Mens Infirmities. But this and the following Exception, of planting a Vineyard, are underſtood only of a War allowed by God, not in a War commanded by God, not in the approaching War with the *Canaanites*, from which even the Bridegroom was not exempted, as the *Jewiſh Writers* note.

Q. *When the* Iſraelites *approached a City to beſiege it, they are ordered to proclaim Peace to it; but in other Places they are commanded to make no Terms with their Enemies.*

A. This ſeems to be underſtood not of the Cities of the *Canaanites*, as is manifeſt from the 16th, 17th and 18th Verſes of this Chapter, who were under an abſolute Sentence of utter Deſtruction. When a City was taken the Women and Children were to be ſpared on Account of their Sex and Age, as not involved in the Guilt, or being unlikely to revenge the Quarrel.

Q. *If the Inhabitants of the City beſieged by the* Iſraelites, *accepted not the Offers of Peace, what was next to be done?*

A. Theſe Precepts obeyed, the Prophet aſſures them that *Jehovah* would not fail of delivering the City into their Power; after which they were to put all the Males to Death; but the Women, Children, and Cattle, together with all the Spoil of the Place, they were to take to themſelves, and enjoy it as the free Gift of *Jehovah*; but they were not to treat the People of any City in this Manner, till after they were poſſeſſed of the Land of *Canaan*, and made War, for ſome reaſonable Cauſe, on the Cities bordering thereupon; for as to the Cities of thoſe *devoted Nations*, whoſe Territories had been, by the Almighty, beſtowed as an Inheritance on *Iſrael*; in them they they were not to ſpare ſo much as a Soul, as heretofore they had been commanded. A Sentence dreadfully ſevere in itſelf, but in ſome Meaſure accounted for, by the Reaſon joined with it; *To the End that they teach not you to do after all their Abominations, which they have done unto their Gods, and ye ſin againſt the Lord your God.* For by this Time the *Canaanites* were ſunk not only into the groſſeſt Idolatry, but alſo into the fouleſt Corruption of Manners.

CHAP XXI.

How to expiate an uncertain Murder. The Uſage of a Captive taken to Wife. The Firſt-born, though the Son of the hated, is not to be diſinherited. A ſtubborn Son to be puniſhed with Death. He that is hanged, is accurſed of God.

Q. WHEN *a Man was found ſlain in the Field, and the Murderer unknown, an Expiation was to be made by the Inhabitants of the next City; and for that Purpoſe were to bring a young Heifer into a Valley, that was neither eared nor ſown, and there ſtrike off her Head; what Leſſons of Inſtruction could the People learn from all this Ceremony?*

A. The Heifer was a fit *Repreſentative* of the *Murderer*, in whoſe ſtead it was killed, who by this Act hath ſhewn himſelf to have been a Son of *Belial*, who would not bear the Yoke of God's Law. The Heifer was to be conducted to a rough Valley, neither eared nor ſown, to repreſent the hard, unprofitable, untutored *Heart* of the *Murderer*; and that ſuch a Deſart and horrid Place might beget an Horror of *Murder* and of the *Murderer*. The Heifer's Head was ſtruck off, to ſhew what the *Murderer* deſerved, and what the People would have done to him, if they had found him.

Q. *In the 5th Verſe we read, that by their (the Prieſts Word)* ſhall every Controverſy, and every Stroke be tried; *Is this to be underſtood abſolutely and without Reſtriction?*

A. Not of all Manner of Controverſies that could ariſe, as if their Word were to determine whether there were a God or Providence or no; whether God ſhould be worſhipped, and his Commands obſerved; whether *Moſes* was a true Prophet, or an Impoſtor; whether apoſtate and idolatrous *Iſraelites* were to be puniſhed or no; which is apparently abſurd and ridiculous; but every ſuch Controverſy as might ariſe about the Matter here ſpoken of; nothing being more uſual than to underſtand univerſal Expreſſions in a limited Senſe; and indeed this is limited and explained by the following Words, *and every Stroke*, the particle *and* being put expoſitively; of which Inſtances have been formerly given; that is, every Controverſy which ſhall ariſe about any Stroke, ſuch a mortal Stroke as is here ſpoken of; a Murder, which may well be called a *Stroke*, as to *Smite* is often uſed for to *kill*, as *Gen.* iv. 15. *&c.*

Q. *There ſeems ſomething ſingular in the Permiſſion granted to an* Iſraelite *of marrying a* Captive Woman; *pray rehearſe this Law, and the Reaſons upon which it was grounded.*

A. If in the Number of his *Captives*, after a Victory, an *Iſraelite* ſaw a Woman, whoſe Beauty ſo far attracted his Heart, as to incline him to make her his Wife; then he was to take her home to his Houſe, where ſhe was to have her Head ſhaven, and to ſuffer her Nails to be pared, in Token that ſhe was to cut or caſt off all heathen Corruptions, Vices, and Superſtitions, to become, as it were, a new Creature, and in this Manner be engrafted into the Body of the choſen People, by Means whereof the Marriage was ſanctified.

That the Woman might ſatisfy the Duties of Nature, forget her Affections, beſtow all her Love upon her Huſband, and heartily paſs over into the Communion of the Church, ſhe was to mourn a Month for her Father and Mother; and when this Time was expired, then the *Iſraelite* her Maſter might take her to be his Wife, but then he was not to turn off this Woman at his Pleaſure, and to make her a Slave, as ſhe was before; but in Caſe, after ſome Time, he grew tired of her, he was to give her her Liberty, and not pretend to ſell her for Money, after he had once taken her to him for a Wife. A Law perfectly juſt and merciful, ſerving to reſtrain the violent and unruly Paſſions of Men, and providing againſt that Coldneſs and Cruelty which otherwiſe many, doubtleſs, would have uſed towards thoſe *unfortunate Women* without *Friends*.

Q. *I find here a very ſevere Law againſt a rebellious and incorrigible Son; namely, that being convicted by his own Parents, before the Elders of the City, he was to be ſtoned to Death; Does it not ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange that* Diſobedience *to Parents ſhould be puniſhed in the ſame Manner as* Blaſphemy *againſt God? And was it not cruel and unnatural, that a Son ſhould be puniſhed with Death on the Evidence of his own Father and Mother?*

A. Here is a ſufficient Caution to preſerve Children from the Malice of any hard-hearted Parents, becauſe theſe Elders were firſt to examine the Cauſe with all Exactneſs, and then to pronounce the Sentence. The Conſent of both Father and Mother is required, to prevent the Abuſe of this Law to Cruelty; and it cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed that both would agree without manifeſt Neceſſity, and the Son's abominable and incorrigible Wickedneſs, in which Caſe it ſeems a fit and righteous Law, becauſe the Crime of Rebellion againſt his own Parents, was ſo high in itſelf, and did ſo fully ſignify, what a pernicious Member and Son of *Belial* he would be in the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, who had diſſolved all his natural Obligations.

The Puniſhment allotted to the Offender, was to be ſtoned, which was the Puniſhment appointed for Blaſphemers and Idolaters; which if it ſeems ſevere, it is to be conſidered that Parents are in God's ſtead, and entruſted in a great Meaſure with his Authority over their Children, and that Families are the Matter and Foundation of the Church and Commonwealth, and they who are bad Members and rebellious Children in them, do commonly prove the Bane and Plague of the Publick, and therefore they ought to be nipped in the Bud.

Q. *If ſome notorious Offender was condemned to be hanged, his Body was* not to remain all Night on the Tree; *what might be the Reaſon of this Injunction?*

A. This Puniſhment was not inflicted but only for great and publick Offences, which provoked the Wrath of God upon all the People, and were to be purged by the Puniſhment of the Guilty, or of thoſe Perſons whom God himſelf had pointed out. (*Numb.* xxv. 4. *Joſhua* x. 26. 2 *Sam.* xxi. 6.) and the Bodies of ſuch ought to be taken away out of the Sight of Men, as execrable and blaſted by God's Judgment. Now all this was a Figure of *Chriſt*, made a Curſe for us, that we might be freed from that of the Law, (*Gal.* iii. 13.) who therefore made Choice of this Kind of expiatory Death, and was alſo buried the ſame Day (*Mat.* xxvii. 57.) after he had yielded the Satisfaction due to God's Juſtice. *John* xix. 30.

CHAP. XXII.

Laws about ſtray Cattle. If a Man ſaw his Neighbour's Beaſt fallen down on the Road, he was to help him to get it up. Man or Woman not to wear each others Apparel. Of Birds and Birds Neſts. Battlements for Houſes. Divers Seeds not to be mixed. An Ox and an Aſs not to be joined in Ploughing. Garments of divers Sorts not to be worn. Of Fringes for the Garments. The Puniſhment of him who ſlanders his Wife, and hers if the Scandal be true. The Puniſhment of Whoredom and Adultery; of a Rape; of Fornication. Laws againſt Inceſt.

Q. WHY *was the promiſcuous Uſe of Apparel forbidden the two Sexes?*

A. This is forbidden for Decency Sake, that Men might not confound, nor ſeem to confound thoſe Sexes which God hath diſtinguiſhed, and that all Appearance of Evil might be avoided; ſuch Change of Garments carrying a manifeſt Umbrage or Sign of Softneſs and Effeminacy in the Man, of Arrogance and Impudence in the Woman, of Lightneſs and Petulancy in both; beſides this Practice opens a wide Door to the Commiſſion of many heinous and abominable Crimes.

Q. *What Inſtruction was there in that Law, that in taking a Bird's Neſt,* the Dam was to be let go?

A. This is a Document of Humanity, not to deprive the poor Dam of her young ones, and of her Life at one Time; and of Equity, Moderation and Goodneſs, leaving the Dam alive (whoſe little ones thou haſt taken away) to bring forth young ones for others.

Q. *What was the Reaſon of that Order, of making Battlements on a new Houſe?*

A. When a Man built a new Houſe, he was to ſurround it with a Battlement on the Roof, that there might be no Danger of any one's falling from thence, and ſtaining the Houſe with his Blood. The Roofs of Houſes in thoſe Days were open *Terraſſes* ſerving for Meetings. See 1 *Sam.* ix. 25. *Neh.* viii. 16. *Jer.* xix. 13. *Mat.* x. 17. *Luke* xvii. 31. Therefore the *Fence* or *Breaſt-work* was to be ſet up, to prevent any Man's falling over, and to hinder any dreadful Miſhap in the Houſe, whereby the Owner, through Careleſſneſs might bring a Judgment upon himſelf and Houſe.

Q. *Another Injunction makes it unlawful to* ſow the Vineyard with divers Seeds; *but for what Reaſons?*

A. A Vineyard was not to be ſown with divers Seeds. Either, *firſt*, with divers Kinds of Seeds mixed and ſowed together between the Rows of Vines in the Vineyard, which was forbidden to be done in the Field, (*Lev.* xix. 19.) and here in the Vineyard; or *ſecondly*, with any Kind of Seed differing from that of the Vine, which would produce either Herbs, Corn, or Fruit-bearing Trees, whoſe Fruit might be mingled with the Fruits of the Vines. This and the two following *Precepts*, though in themſelves ſmall and trivial, are given according to the Time and State of the Church, for Documents and Inſtructions in greater Matters: and particularly to commend to them Simplicity and Sincerity in all their Carriage towards God and Men, and to forbid all Mixture of their Inventions with God's Inſtitutions in Doctrine or Worſhip.

Q. Fringes *are ordered to be worn on the* four Quarters of the Garment; *why?*

A. To bring the Commands of God to their Re-Remembrance, as it is expreſſed *Num.* xv. 38. and as a publick Profeſſion of their Nation and Religion, whereby they might be diſcerned and diſtinguiſhed from Strangers, that ſo they might be the more circumſpect to behave themſelves as became the People of God, and that they ſhould not be eſhamed to own their God and Religion before all the World.

Q. *I find here one Law which ſeems very extraordinary; namely; that which conſtitutes the Proof of a Woman's Virginity, on the Huſband's Accuſation, that ſhe was not a Maid when he married her; are the Rules here laid down for that purpoſe certain and infallible? If not, is there not Room given to object to the Scripture itſelf?*

A. Becauſe this is not now evident, the Enemies of Scripture take Occaſion to quarrel with this Law, as unreaſonable and unjuſt, and ſuch as might oppreſs the innocent, and hence take Occaſion to reject the Holy Scriptures. It were much more reaſonable for thoſe Men either to expound this Place Metaphorically of producing thoſe Proofs and Teſtimonies of her Virginity, which ſhould be as ſatisfactory as if that Cloth was produced, as ſome of the *Jews* underſtand it, or modeſtly to acknowledge their own Ignorance in this, as they are forced to do in many other Things, and not impudently conclude it is inſoluble, becauſe they cannot reſolve it.

But there is no need of ſuch general Anſwers, many Things may be particularly ſaid for the Vindication of this Law, *Firſt*, that it was neceſſary for that People, becauſe of their hard heartedneſs towards their Wives, *Secondly*, that either this Trial, or at leaſt the Proof of her Virginity, was to be taken preſently after the Day of Marriage, and that Proof was to be admitted afterwards upon Occaſion. *Thirdly*, that this Law, was ſeldom or never put in Execution, as the *Jews* remark, and ſeems to be made for Terrour and Caution to Huſbands and Wives, as many other Laws have been in like Caſes. *Fourthly*, that the God who gave this Law, did by his Providence govern all Affairs, and rule the Tongues and Hearts of Men, and doubtleſs would therefore take Care ſo to order Matters, that the innocent ſhould not ſuffer by this Means, which he could prevent many Ways. *Fifthly*, that there is a great Difference in Times and Climates, who knows not that there are many Things now by our Moderns thought uncertain or falſe, which by the antient Phyſicians were thought and affirmed to be true and certain in their Times and Countries, and that many Signs of Diſeaſes, and other Things, do generally hold true in thoſe more Southernly and warmer Parts of the World, which are many Times deceitful in our Northern and colder Climates. *Sixthly*, that this very Way of Trial of Virginity hath been uſed not only by the *Jews*, but alſo by the *Arabians* and *Egyptians*, as is affirmed by divers learned Writers, among whom yet it was more doubtful and hazardous than among the *Jews*, who might promiſe to themſelves that God would guide the Execution of his own Law, to a good and juſt Iſſue. *Seventhly*, that this Sign, if it was uncertain in Perſons of riper Years, yet it may be reaſonably thought certain and conſtant in Virgins of young and tender Age, and that the *Jews* did ordinarily marry their Daughters, when they were about twelve or thirteen Years old, as is confeſſed, as making haſte to take away that Reproach which they thought there was an unmarried State.

Q. *But why ſhould ſhe die, when her Crime was only* Fornication, *which was not puniſhed in a Woman with Death, as appears from* Exod. xxii. 16, 17?

A. Becauſe there was not only *Fornication* in this Caſe, but it was accompanied with deep Diſſimulation and Injury to her Huſband, in the falſe Profeſſion of her Virginity, and it might be preſumed that ſhe committed this Folly after ſhe was betrothed to him, and therefore ſo obſtinately denied it, as knowing the Danger of it in that Caſe. Or God ſo ordered it for the Honour and Safeguard of the Matrimonial Bed from all Defilement, that ſhe, who being defiled before ſhe was married or betrothed, and therefore not puniſhable by Death, yet preſuming to carry her Defilement into the married State, with a pretence of Virginity, ſhould then be put to Death.

CHAP. XXIII.

Who to be excluded from the Congregation. An Edomite *and an* Egyptian *not to be abhorred, why. No uncleanneſs to be in the Camp. No Filthineſs, no abominable Sacrifice to be allowed; no Uſury, but to Strangers. Whoredom and Sodomy forbid. Vows to be kept. The Liberty that was lawful in their Neighbour's Field, or Vineyard.*

Q. WHY *was not an* Eunuch *ſuffered to enter into the Congregation of the Lord?*

A. Becauſe thereby God would brand, and bring into Diſgrace, the Practice of making *Eunuchs*, ſo common among the Heathens.

Q. *Why was a* Baſtard *excluded from the Congregation, even to the* tenth Generation.

A. This law will not ſeem ſo harſh and ſevere, as at firſt Sight, if we conſider, 1. That it was an Excluſion from Government, which was a tolerable Burden. Or, 2. That it was a neceſſary Caution to prevent and brand the Sin of Uncleanneſs, to which the *Jews* were exceſſively prone.

Q. *But* Pharez *and* Jephtha, *both Baſtards, were advanced to great Honour and Authority.*

A. To this I anſwer, that God gives Laws to us, and not to himſelf; and therefore he might, when he ſaw fit, confer what Favour or Power he pleaſed upon any ſuch Perſon, as he did to theſe. But ſome add, that the *Hebrew* Word *mamzer* ſignifies not every Baſtard, but one born of a ſtrange Woman, as the Word may ſeem to intimate; and as ſuch Perſons generally ſeem to have been, becauſe of that general Proviſion, that there ſhould be *no whore of the Daughters of* Iſrael, as it is here below, *Ver.* 17.

Q. *The* Iſraelites *are forbid to have any Commerce or Correſpondence with the* Ammonite *and* Moabite, *or to do them any Office of Kindneſs or Humanity; but might be Friends to the* Edomite *and* Egyptian: *What was the Reaſon of this Difference of Behaviour to profeſſed Enemies?*

A. An *Ammonite* or *Moabite* was to be ſhut out from the Congregation of the Lord, in Regard to their cruel Treatment of the *Iſraelites*, on their March through their Coaſts, on their, that is, the Deſcendants of *Jacob* coming out of *Egypt*, as alſo on Account of the Buſineſs of *Peor*, the ſeducing God's People, both to carnal and ſpiritual *Whoredom*, as that wicked Prophet *Balaam* contrived; but their Puniſhment ended not here, for the *Choſen Nation* were alſo forbid to ſeek the Good of thoſe People; whereas they were commanded not to hate the *Edomites*, nor the *Egyptians*, becauſe the former was their *Brother*, and they had been a *Stranger* in the *Land* of the *latter*; wherefore the *Deſcendants* of either were to be admitted into the Church, in the *third Generation*. It is common with great Men and others, that one Injury or Offence blots out the Remembrance of twenty Courteſies; but God doth not deal ſo with us, nor will he have us to deal ſo with others, but commands us to overlook and forget Injuries, and to remember Kindneſſes.

Q. *What are we underſtand by the* Congregation of the Lord, *from which the* Eunuch, Baſtard, Ammonite, *&c. were to be excluded?*

A. Either, 1. That they ſhould not be incorporated into the Body of *Iſrael*, by Marriage; for ſo this Phraſe may ſeem to have been underſtood by the whole Congregation of *Iſrael*, *Nehem.* xiii. 1, 2, 3, &c. altho' at that Time the Government was partly in the Hands of ſuch Perſons as are here mentioned, *Ver.* 3. or of their Children, ſince it is apparent from *Ezra* x. that many *Prieſts* and *Levites*, and other Officers and Rulers of *Iſrael* were married to ſtrange Women, whoſe Iſſue are, by this Law excluded from all Share in the Government, and that among other Reaſons, *Nehemiah* ſeparated them from *Iſrael*, by virtue of the Law here following. Or, 2. That they ſhould not be admitted to Honour and Offices, either in the Church, or Commonwealth of *Iſrael*; and ſo *the Congregation of the Lord* does not here ſignify, as it uſually does, the Body of the People, but the Society of the Elders, or Rulers of the People, who, as they repreſent the whole Congregation, and act in their Name, and for their Service, ſo are they ſometimes called by the Name of *the Congregation*, as *Numb.* xxxv. 12, 24, 25, &c. and of *the Congregation of God*, as it is in the *Hebrew* of *Pſalm* lxxxii. 1. But as they are often called *the Congregation*, they may very well, in a ſpecial Manner, be called *the Congregation of the Lord*, becauſe they were appointed by God, and acted in his Name and ſtead, and for his Work and Service, and did often aſſemble near the Tabernacle, where God was eminently preſent. Add to this, that the *Hebrew* Word *Kahal*, generally ſignifies a *Congregation*, or *Company met together*, and therefore this cannot ſo conveniently be meant of all the Body of the People, which could never meet in one Place, but of the chief Rulers, which frequently did ſo. Nor is it ſtrange, that Eunuchs are excluded from Government, partly becauſe ſuch Perſons are commonly obſerved to want that Courage which is neceſſary for a Governor, *Exod.* xviii. 12. and partly, becauſe as ſuch Perſons were ordinarily deſpicable, ſo the Office and Authority in their Hands was likely to be expoſed to the ſame Contempt.

Q. *The next Law I deſire an Explanation of, is, that which forbad the* Iſraelites *to deliver up a Servant who had fled from his Maſter, which ſeems to claſh with common Juſtice, and natural Equity.*

A. This is not to be underſtood univerſally, as if all Servants that fly from their *Maſters*, though without any ſufficient Cauſe, or Colour of Juſtice, might be detained from them by any Perſon to whom they fled for Refuge, for this is apparently contrary to all the Laws of Religion, Juſtice, and Charity, and would open a Door to infinite Diſorders and Miſchiefs; but it is to be underſtood, *Firſt*, Of the *Servants* of *Strangers*, becauſe it follows *he ſhall dwell with you, even among you*, which ſhews he had dwelt with and belonged to another People. *Secondly*, Of ſuch as belonged to the *Canaanites* or other Neighbouring Nations, becauſe if he had lived in remote Countries, it is not probable he would fly ſo far to avoid his Maſter, or that his Maſter would follow ſo far to recover him. For the *Canaanites* this Sentence was moſt juſt, becauſe they and theirs were all forfeited to God and *Iſrael*, and whatſoever they enjoyed was by ſpecial Indulgence. For the other Neighbours it may ſeem juſt likewiſe, becauſe ſome of them were within the larger Limits of the Land, belonging to *Iſrael*, by God's *Grant* or *Deed of Gift*. Gen. xv. 18. Joſh. i. 4. Beſides, by their hoſtile Carriage, they had given *Iſrael* a Right to much more of theirs, than a few Servants who might poſſibly run away from their Maſters; and eſpecially becauſe both Servants and Maſters of theſe and other Nations are unqueſtionably at the Diſpoſal of the Lord their *Maker*, and ſovereign Ruler. *Thirdly*, Of ſuch as upon Enquiry appear to have been unjuſtly oppreſſed by their Maſters, as is implied by that Phraſe of his, making an *Eſcape*, which ſuppoſes a Deliverance from Danger or Vexation. Now it is not ſtrange or unjuſt, if the great God, who hates all *Tyrants*, and ſtiles himſelf the *Refuge* of the oppreſſed, does interpoſe his Authority, and help to reſcue ſuch Perſons from their cruel Maſters, who otherwiſe would be ſtrong for them. *Fourthly*, Of ſuch as came to them out of a Deſire to embrace the *true Religion*, which poſſibly his Maſter perceiving, endeavoured by Force to reſtrain him from, as it may be probably thought by his chuſing and liking to live among the *Iſraelites*. Now if this *great* and *ſupreme Maſter*, to whom all other *Maſters* are but *Servants*, and they and theirs are abſolutely in his Power, ſhall receive and protect one who gives himſelf up to his Service, againſt the Will of the *Under-Maſter*, who in this Caſe rebels againſt his ſovereign Lord, what Shadow is there of Injuſtice in the Caſe?

Q. *Why was Uſury permitted to a* Stranger, *and not to an* Iſraelite?

A. Becauſe the *Iſraelites* generally employed themſelves in the Management of Land and Cattle, and therefore could not make any Advantage of borrowed Money, to ballance the Uſe they ſhould pay for it, and conſequently it might be preſumed that they would not borrow Money upon Uſe, but for Want and for Poverty, and in that Caſe, and principally for that Reaſon, *Uſury* ſeems to be forbidden to them, as may be thought from *Lev.* xxv. 35, 36. But the *Strangers* made Uſe of their Money in way of Trade and Traffick with the *Iſraelites*, which was more gainful, and could much better bear the Burden of Uſury, and reap Advantage from Money ſo borrowed; and thoſe *Strangers* here ſpoken of, are ſuppoſed to be competently *rich*, and not *poor*, as may appear by comparing this Place with *Lev.* xxv. 35, 36. where they are no leſs forbidden to take *Uſury* of a *Stranger*, than of a *Brother*, in caſe of *Poverty*.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Woman that was diſmiſſed by her Husband with a Bill of Divorce. The Liberty of the new married Man. Pawns and Pledges; Man-ſtealers; Leproſy; Day-wages. None to be puniſhed for another's Offence. Of Juſtice and Love towards Widows, Fatherleſs, and Strangers.

Q. THE *firſt Verſe of this Chapter contains the Law concerning Divorces, which runs thus*, Then let him write a Bill of Divorcement, and give it in her Hand, and ſend her out of his Houſe; *this ſeems to be a poſitive Command; but in other Places of Scripture it's reckoned a cruel Practice.*

A. This is not an abſolute Command to divorce them, as ſome of the *Jews* underſtood it, nor an Allowance and Approbation, as plainly appears, not only from the *New Teſtament*, *Matth.* v. 31, 32. and xix. 8, 9. but alſo from the *Old Teſtament*, Gen. ii. 24. Mal. ii. 16. but merely a Permiſſion or Toleration of that Practice, for Prevention of greater Miſchiefs and Cruelties of that hard-hearted People towards their Wives, and this only for a Seaſon, even until the *Time of Reformation*, as it is called, *Heb.* ix. 10. that is, till the Coming of the *Meſſias*, when Things were to return to their firſt Inſtitution, and pureſt Condition. The Husband is not here commanded to put her away, but he is commanded to *write and give her a Bill of Divorcement*, before *he ſend her out of his Houſe*. And though it be true, as our Saviour obſerves, that *Moſes* did ſuffer theſe Divorces, that is, without puniſhing them, which alſo is here implied, yet it muſt be acknowledged, that if we conſult the *Hebrew* Words, thoſe three Verſes may only ſeem to be a Suppoſition, and the Words rendered, *then let him write her*, in the *Hebrew* runs thus, *and hath written her*, and ſo it follows, *v.* 2. *And ſhe be departed out of his Houſe, and be gone, and become another Man's Wife*; then follows, *v.* 3. which, even according to our Tranſlation, carries on the Suppoſition, *And if the latter Husband hate her*, &c. Then follows the Poſition or Prohibition, *v.* 4.

Q. *Here are various other wholeſome Laws, which ſeem extremely well calculated to keep this untowardly People within the Bounds of their Duty; all which are eaſy to be underſtood; and therefore I ſhall only take Notice of one Thing here, namely, that* Moſes *takes every convenient Opportunity of putting the People in Mind of their Bondage in* Egypt; *what might be his Reaſon for ſo doing?*

A. It was, that by their Hoſpitality and Charity they might comfort and relieve thoſe in the like Condition; That (in the Words of the Prophet) *they might draw out their Soul to the Hungry, and ſatisfy the afflicted Soul*; *that they might bring the Poor, that were caſt out, to their Houſes*; *cover the cold and naked, and not hide themſelves from their own Fleſh*, *Iſ.* lviii. 7, 10. For this Cauſe are they ſo frequently called upon (in the Words of the ſame Prophet) *to look unto the Rock whence they were* *hewen, and the Hole of the Pit whence they were digged, to look unto* Abraham *their Father, and to* Sarah *that bare them,* Iſ. li. 1, 2. that the happy Change of their Circumſtances might beget in them a perpetual Gratitude to their great Benefactor, and the Obſcurity of their Origin teach them to be humble.

CHAP. XXV.

Judges muſt act uprightly. Stripes not to exceed forty. The Ox that treads out the Corn not to be muzzled. The Duty of raiſing Seed to a Brother. The Puniſhment of an immodeſt Woman. Juſt Weights and Meaſures enjoined. The Memory of Amalek *to be blotted out.*

Q. I*N the Puniſhment of a Criminal,* forty Stripes, *and not more, might be given, and which muſt be done in the Preſence of the Judge: But why juſt* forty; *and why to be inflicted in the Judge's Preſence?*

A. The Equity of the *Hebrew* Laws, and the Mercy of God who gave them, is in nothing more conſpicuous, than the Orders which the *Judges* were to obſerve in Puniſhments; for, after a very ſtrict Injunction to decide in all Things without Partiality, the Magiſtrates are directed to puniſh thoſe, whom they find, on a ſtrict Examination of the Fact brought before them, worthy of Stripes, but with forty Strokes at the moſt; though it muſt be left to them to adjudge the Number within this, which every Criminal ſhould receive; and that the Judges themſelves might be the better acquainted with the Nature of theſe Sufferings, and ſo be the better able to proportion the Sentence to the Fault, theſe Stripes were to be given by the Executioner, in their Preſence. An admirable Method ſurely, both for preventing unreaſonable Severity, and any Evaſion of ſtrict Juſtice.

It ſeems not a ſuperſtitious, but a prudent Caution, that the *Jews* ſhould not exceed *thirty nine Stripes*, 2 *Cor.* ii. 24. leſt through Miſtake, Forgetfulneſs or Eagerneſs, they ſhould go beyond their Bounds, which they were commanded to keep, but they were not obliged to go to the utmoſt Extent of them. Beſides, exceſſive beating would render an *Iſraelite* contemptible to his Brethren, as if he were a *Slave* or *brute Beaſt*, as alſo the Danger of Deformity, or Infirmity of the Body, which cruel Uſage might effect.

Q. *In what Manner did the* Ox *tread, or threſh out the* Corn; *and why was he not to be muzzled?*

A. The *Ox* which trod out the Corn was not to be muzzled, ſo as not to be able to eat his Food, while under hard Labour. The Ox is ſaid to threſh, when he was made to tread out the Corn with his Feet, or (as the *Jews* ſay) to draw the *Harrow* which below, at the Bottom of it was full of hard Knobs, Branches or Notches, about over it, to ſeparate the Corn from the Straw, and to make the Straw to be Food for the Beaſts. Hereby God taught them Humanity and Kindneſs, even to their Beaſts that ſerved them, and much more to their Servants or other Men who laboured for them, and eſpeicially to their Miniſters, 1 *Cor.* ix. 9.

Q. *The next Law is, that of raiſing up Seed to his Brother, by marrying his Widow; what was the Reaſon of this Injunction?*

A. The Law concerning the Brother's taking to Wife, the Widow of his Brother dying without Iſſue, is alſo delivered in the ſame Place, and was, in ſhort thus: In the *Eaſt* dying *childleſs*, and conſequently having one's Name left out in the Genealogies, was looked upon, as the higheſt Misfortune that could befal a Man; and therefore it was ordained, that the Brother of him who died childleſs, ſhould take his Widow for a Wife, and that the Firſtborn of this Marriage ſhould be accounted the Child of the Deceaſed, that his Name might not be blotted out of *Iſrael*; but if it ſo happened, that the ſurviving Brother abſolutely refuſed to take the Widow, as the Law directed, then ſhe was to make her Complaint to the Magiſtrates of the City, who were thereupon to ſummon the Man before them, and exhort him to perform the Duty incumbent on a Husband's Brother; if notwithſtanding this, the Man abſolutely refuſed to take her who complained, then in the Preſence of the Magiſtrates, ſhe was to *pull off* his *Shoe*, and *ſpit* in his *Face*, adding theſe Words: *So ſhall it be done to the Man who will not build up his* Brother's *Houſe*. And this very Thing was to remain as a Blemiſh on the *Family* of him who had thus his *Shoe* pulled off.

Q. *Had not the Ceremony of* looſing the Shoe *ſome ſymbolical Signification?*

A. The *looſing* of the *Shoe* was a Sign of the Man's Reſignation of all his Right to the Woman, and to her Husband's Inheritance; for as the *Shoe* was a Sign of one's Power and Right, ſo the parting with the Shoe was a Token of the *Alienation* of ſuch Right, and that he would not, nor might not henceforth enter upon his Brother's Land; and partly as a Note of Infamy, to ſignify that by this unnatural and diſingenuous Action, he was unworthy to be among Freemen, and fit to be reduced to the Condition of the meaneſt Captives, who uſed to go bare-foot. The Woman *ſpit* in the *Face* of the Man, in token, that as he ſcorned to take her to Wife, ſhe deſpiſed him, and renounced him for ever, by that publick Indignity.

Q. *Why was a Woman, who ſeized the obſcene Parts of a Man, to have her Hand cut off?*

A. This Puniſhment was allotted, becauſe of the great Miſchief the Woman did to the Man, and alſo to deter all other Women from all immodeſt and impudent Carriage, and to ſecure that Modeſty which is indeed the Guardian of all the Virtues, as Immodeſty is an Inlet to all Vices, as the ſad Experience of this degenerate Age ſhows; and therefore it is not ſtrange that it is ſo ſeverely reſtrained and puniſhed.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Ordinance concerning* juſt Weights *and* Meaſures?

A. In Regard to Juſtice in *Weights* and *Meaſures*, the *Iſraelites* were ſtrictly commanded to beware of any Error on this Head, becauſe in the Sight of *Jehovah* ſuch Things were abominable; and as an Encouragement to lay aſide the Fraud of having full and ſhort Weights, to be uſed as Occaſion ſerved, in the Sale of Commodities, he was graciouſly pleaſed to promiſe, that he would lengthen their Days; that is, grant long Life to ſuch as liſtened to this *Commandment*, and diligently endeavoured to live honeſtly and uprightly; ſo early, it ſeems, were Men tainted with thoſe wicked and covetous Inclinations to cheat or defraud thoſe who dealt with them, by Exchange or otherwiſe.

CHAP.

Chap. XXVI.

Firſt-Fruits to be offered on their entring the promiſed Land, and the Confeſſion, Thankſgiving, and rejoicing of the Offerer. The third Year's Tithes, how to be beſtowed. The Covenant between God and his People ratified.

Q. WERE *any of the antient Patriarchs of the* Iſraelites Syrians, *becauſe they are here taught in their Confeſſion,* v. 5. *to ſay,* A *Syrian* ready to periſh was my Father.

A. Jacob was a *Syrian* partly by Original, as being born of *Syrian* Parents, for ſuch were *Abraham* and *Rebecca*, both of *Chaldea* or *Meſopotamia*, which was part of *Syria* largely ſo called, as is confeſſed by *Strabo* and *Pliny*; partly by his Education and Converſation, for the ſame Reaſon as Chriſt is called a *Nazarite*, and a *Capernaite*; and partly by his Relations, his Wives being ſuch, and his Children too by their Mothers.

Q. *But was* Jacob *ever in the Condition here ſpoken of*, ready to periſh?

A. Jacob was undoubtedly, more than once, reduced to very great Streights; See *Gen.* xxviii. 11, 20. and xxxii. 10. alſo when he was under terrible Apprehenſions of his Brother *Eſau*, and likewiſe from the Treachery and Cruelty of *Laban* his Father-in-law.

Q. *Pray explain that Expreſſion, v.* 14. Nor given ought thereof for the dead.

A. The *Jews* had a Cuſtom, that when any one was newly dead, the Kinſmen, Acquaintance, and Neighbours, went to be partakers of the Mourning, and carried Food ready dreſſed to the dead Man's Family, to comfort and refreſh them, exhorting them to take Food, and not give themſelves over to Grief ſo far as to neglect the Care of their own Perſons; now all theſe Meats, and whoſoever did participate thereof, were unclean for ſeven Days, by Reaſon of that dead Body. *Num.* xix. 11, 14. and therefore the Uſe of theſe Tithes in ſuch Caſes had been a double Fault, both for the defiling of ſacred Food, and the employing thoſe proviſions upon ſorrowful Occaſions, which by God's expreſs Command were to be eaten with rejoycing. *Deut.* xiv. 26.

Chap. XXVII.

When the Iſraelites *were paſſed over* Jordan, *they were to ſet up Stones in Remembrance, and to write the Law upon them; alſo to build an Altar with whole Stones. The Bleſſing to be pronounced on* Gerizzim, *and the Curſe on* Ebal.

Q. ON *the Pile of Stones, which the* Iſraelites *were to ſet up after they had paſſed* Jordan, Moſes *commanded them to write* all the Words of the Law; *what* Law *does he mean?*

A. Either, 1. All the Words of this Book of *Deuteronomy*; but that ſeems too large for this Place. Or, 2. The Bleſſings and Curſes here following. But they are mentioned as a different Thing. Or, 3. The *Law* properly ſo called; that is, the Sum and Subſtance of the Precepts or Laws of *Moſes*, eſpecially ſuch as were moral and general, as may be conjectured from the following Part of the Chapter, where the *Curſes* pronounced againſt *all that confirm not all the Words of this Law to do them* are particularly applied unto the Tranſgreſſions of moral Laws only *v.* 15, 16, *&c.* and eſpecially the *Decalogue*, which often goes under that Name.

Q. *When the* Bleſſings *and* Curſes *were to be pronounced, all the Tribes of* Iſrael, *being divided into two equal Parts, were to ſtand the one on Mount* Gerizzim, *the other on Mount* Ebal; *on the firſt were to be placed the Tribes of* Simeon, Levi, Judah, Iſſachar, Joſeph, *and* Benjamin; *and on the latter, the other Six Tribes: But why were they not divided according to the Seniority of their Fathers?*

A. The Tribes that were to ſtand on Mount *Gerizzim*, were the Deſcendants of the free Women, *Leah* and *Rachel*, to ſhew both the Dignity of the Bleſſings above the Curſes, and that the Bleſſings belong only to thoſe who are evangelically ſuch, as this is expounded and applied, *Gal.* iv. 22, *&c.* even to thoſe that receive the Spirit of Adoption and Liberty. *Joſeph* is here put for both his Sons and Tribes *Manaſſeh* and *Ephraim*, which here are reckoned as one Tribe, becauſe *Levi* is here numbered; but when *Levi* is omitted, as it is where the Diviſion of the Land is made, there *Manaſſeh* and *Ephraim* paſs for two Tribes.

Q. *Of the other Six Tribes, that were to ſtand on Mount* Ebal *to curſe, four of them were the Children of the Bond-women, and the other Two, of the Free: Can you aſſign any Reaſon for this Diviſion?*

A. Four of theſe Tribes were the Deſcendants of the Bond-women, to ſhew, that the Curſe belongs to thoſe of ſervile and diſingenuous Spirits and Behaviour towards God. With theſe are joined *Reuben*, who by his ſhameful Sin fell from his Dignity, *Gen.* lxix. 9. and *Zebulun*, as the youngeſt of *Leah*'s Children, who was neceſſary to be joined with thoſe, that the Numbers might be equal.

Q. *The* Levites *are here commanded to pronounce a Set of Curſes for ſeveral Sorts of Tranſgreſſions: Pray is not the ſame Practice continued in the Chriſtian Church on* Aſh-wedneſday; *and for what Reaſon?*

A. Becauſe *Chriſtians* are as liable to the *Curſes* of the Law as the *Jews* were; and therefore they ought to acknowledge this Solemnity, as they hope to eſcape the divine Vengeance.

Q. *But is not ſaying* Amen *to theſe Sentences of God's Law, a Curſing of our ſelves, and is it not a* wicked *as well as a* fooliſh *thing?*

A. This pious Office hath indeed been ſo traduced; but I believe it hath not been conſidered, that God himſelf commanded this manner of anſwering. And though ſome Circumſtances in reciting theſe Curſes among the *Jews* might be ceremonial; yet the Main of the Duty, and the End for which it was preſcribed was truly moral, tending to the Honour of God and his Laws, and the promoting of true Piety. And the ſaying *Amen* does not here ſignify wiſhing, but affirming and declaring the Truth of what God hath revealed; and thus *Amen* is often in the Goſpel tranſlated *verily*; and *Jeſus*, who is the Truth, is called *Amen*; ſo that *Amen* is no more than a Declaration, that he whom God bleſſeth is bleſſed, and he whom God curſeth is curſed: And theſe Curſes are like our Saviour's Woes in the *Goſpel*, not Procurers of Evil, but compaſſionate Predictions of it, in order to prevent it.

Q. *But hath not* Chriſt *taken away the* Curſe *of the* Law, *being made a Curſe for us?*

A. It is true that our Saviour by virtue of his Sacrifice made Satisfaction for Sin, and bore that Curſe which belonged to us; and thereby acquitted and cleared all thoſe that believe in him from the Guilt of thoſe Sins, for which there was no Way of Expiation provided by the Law of *Moſes*, that is, of preſumptuous Sins for which there was no Sacrifice, but the Man was to be cut off. But ſtill this Redemption that was purchaſed for us, was upon the Conditon of Repentance; ſo that impenitent Sinners are ſtill the Objects of God's Wrath; and though Pardon and Forgiveneſs of Sins was procured for us by the Death of *Chriſt*, yet Repentance is neceſſary to qualify us to receive the Benefit of it. It being certain ſtill, that Sinners, while they remain ſuch, are really accurſed; and to convince them of this, and make them own it, is the trueſt Bleſſing the Church can procure for them.

Q. *What uſe does the* Church *make of ſetting the* Curſes *of* God's Law *before us?*

A. To preſs all Chriſtians to a true and ſincere Repentance from the Conſideration of God's dreadful Wrath againſt all impenitent Sinners; which as it is ſevere in it ſelf, and altogether intolerable, ſo it is juſt in its Proceedings, and abſolutely unavoidable when it doth come; and when Sinners are awakened by this Conſideration from their dreadful Security, they are encouraged to Repentance from God's readineſs to receive true Penitents to Mercy, and from the great Benefits of it, Pardon and Peace in this Life, and eternal Happineſs in the next.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The Bleſſings of Obedience promiſed; and Curſes of Diſobedience threatened and foretold.

Q. WHAT *Occaſion had Moſes to repeat to the People the long Roll of Curſes which we find in this Chapter, ſince he had on ſeveral Occaſions given them many Cautions and Warnings much to the ſame Purpoſe?*

A. This he did for the following Reaſons. *Firſt*, If the headſtrong, ſtubborn, and rebellious Nature of the People, to whom Moſes ſpoke, be conſidered, we cannot wonder at his taking frequent Occaſions of applying the only Remedy, which ſeems to have worked any good upon them; for, as they were inſenſible of the Mercies afforded, by the gracious Providence of God, ſo they were never recovered to a juſt Senſe of their Sin, but by feeling the Weight of his Vengeance; whence it follows, that the Threatenings of dreadful Plagues and devouring Peſtilences were the only means, which in all Probability, could be expected to reſtrain them from falling into the ſame Courſes, in future Times.

Secondly, If we reflect on the Command given, as to the ſolemn Benedictions and Execrations, which were to be pronounced by the Prieſts, and aſſented to by the People, we ſhall eaſily perceive, that it has nothing to do with the Time preſent; but was, in the Nature of a Covenant, whereby as, on the one Hand, *Iſrael* laid claim to the Bleſſings which were promiſed by the Lord, ſo on the other Hand, they ſubmitted to his Curſes, in Caſe they walked contrary to his Commandments: Wherefore, *Moſes* being now near his End, and every thing he ſaid being more regarded than at another Time, he with great Propriety, lays before his Nation, the dreadful Evils, which the Almighty would ſhower down, if on the Performance of his Promiſes, they relapſed into Tranſgreſſion.

Thirdly, Theſe Threatenings were to remain, as the ſtrongeſt Arguments of the divine Inſpiration of him, by whom they were delivered, ſeeing, at a vaſt diſtance of Time, they have been fully and exactly fulfilled, in the *Babyloniſh Captivity*, the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*; and now in their laſt and long Diſperſion.

CHAP. XXIX.

The manifold Works and Mercies of God, and a Motive to Obedience. Moſes *ſolemnly engages them to keep Covenant with God. Unbelief, careſeleſs Contempt, and Breach of Covenant, to be ſeverely puniſhed. The End and Uſe of the revealed Will of God.*

Q. GIVE *me leave to repeat the 3d. and 4th Verſes, that I may the more properly form a Queſtion or two thereon: The Text runs thus;* The great Temptations which thine Eyes have ſeen, the Signs, and thoſe great Miracles: Yet the Lord hath not given you a Heart to perceive, and Ears to hear, unto this Day: *In the firſt of theſe two Verſes it is ſaid,* thine Eyes have ſeen; *and yet in the next it is ſaid,* the Lord hath not given you a Heart to perceive, and Eyes to ſee; *Is not here a manifeſt Contradiction?*

A. The laſt Verſe comes in by way of Correction or Exception to the foregoing Clauſe, in this manner, I ſaid indeed, *Ye have ſeen, &c.* but I muſt recal my Words, for in truth ye have not ſeen them; in ſeeing you have not ſeen, and perceiving you have not perceived them: You have perceived and ſeen them with the Eyes of your Body, but not with your Minds and Hearts; you have not ſeen them to any Purpoſe; you have not yet rightly learned to underſtand the Words and Works of God, ſo as to know them for your good, and to make a right Uſe of them, and to comply with them.

Q. *But if the Lord had not given them* a Heart to perceive, *&c. wherein were they culpable?*

A. This did not excuſe their Wickedneſs, but was partly a Direction to them what Courſe to take, and to whom they muſt have Recourſe for the amending of their former Errors, and for a good Underſtanding and Improvement of God's Works; and partly to aggravate their Sin, and to intimate, that although the hearing Ear, the ſeeing Eye, and the underſtanding Heart, be the workmanſhip of God, *Prov.* xx. 12. and the Effects of his ſpecial Grace, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *Jer.* xxxi. 33. and xxxii. 39, *&c.* yet their want of this Grace was their own Fault, and the juſt Puniſhment of their former Sins; their preſent Caſe being like theirs in *Iſaiah*'s Time, who firſt ſhut their Eyes and Ears that they might not ſee and hear, and would not underſtand, and then by the tremendous, but righteous Judgment of God, had their Hearts made fat, and their Eyes and Ears cloſed that they ſhould not be able to ſee and hear, and underſtand, as is manifeſt from the Hiſtory of their Behaviour in the Wilderneſs.

Q. *During the* Iſraelites *forty Years Travel in the Wilderneſs, it is ſaid, v.* 5. *that neither* their Cloaths, nor Shoes were waxen old; *or as it is, Chap.* viii. 4. neither did thy Foot ſwell: *How was this poſſible?*

A. The *Jews*, who love to magnify Miracles ſometimes beyond their proper Bounds, have a current Tradition, that the Children's Cloaths grew bigger, according as the Children themſelves increaſed in Bulk and Stature; but there is no Occaſion for any ſuch Suppoſition as this, ſince the Younger, in their proper Degrees, might ſucceed to the Veſtments of the Elder, and the Miracle ſtill remain wonderful enough, that God ſhould preſerve theſe Veſtments from decaying, or their Feet, by ſo long travelling in hot and ſtony Places, from ſwelling, or being callous (as ſome tranſlate it) for the ſpace of forty Years. Some indeed will have the Phraſe to denote, that their Feet were not ſenſible of any Uneaſineſs, or Fatigue thro' the whole vaſt length of their Journey; but this Conſtruction is plainly repugnant to the Scripture Account, we have of their Travels: And therefore the eaſier Interpretation will be, if, by way of *Metonymy*, we take the Shoe for the Foot, and ſo make the latter agree with the former Part of the Verſe, and bring the Whole to this Meaning, *viz.* that, as their Cloaths, which covered the whole Body, did not become uſeleſs through Age; ſo neither did their Shoes decay, or burſt, or grow out of Shape, (for in all theſe Senſes may the original Word be taken) though they were engaged in ſo tedious a March.

It is to be obſerved however, that the *Hebrews* wanted neither Flocks nor Herds, in the Wilderneſs; and the Hangings and other Works belonging to the *Tabernacle*, ſufficiently ſhew, that they were no Strangers to the Art of Weaving. But, ſuppoſing they did not manufacture their own Cloaths, they might however purchaſe them from the *Arabians*, and other neighbouring Nations, and could therefore be under no Want of a ſufficient Supply of this Kind of Neceſſaries: And from theſe Conſiderations a learned Commentator concludes, that the Senſe of the Words *thy Raiment waxed not old upon thee*, muſt be —That, in the Deſarts of *Arabia*, the *Iſraelites* had ſo great a Plenty of Cloaths, and ſo many Changes of Raiment, that they were under no more Neceſſity to wear them tattered, or thread-bare, than if they had lived in one of the moſt plentiful, rich, and cloath-working Countries, *And thy Feet did not ſwell*, or grow *callous*, as poor People's Feet are wont to do, when the Soles of their Shoes are worn out, and they forced to tread upon the hard Ground; for ſo it is explained here, *thy Shoe did not wax old upon thy Feet*, i. e. thy Poverty did not oblige thee to wear thy Shoes (as poor People do) 'till they were old and grown ſo very thin, that, in hard and ſtony Ways, they hurt thy Feet, and made them ſwell. Poverty, we know, neceſſarily occaſions a Meanneſs of Apparel, but Men of large Fortunes have a Variety of Suits, and commonly caſt their Cloaths off, before they are too far worn: And, in like Manner, the *Hiſtorian's* Deſign is (in this Inſtance of Raiment) to ſignify to us, that the *Iſraelites*, while they abode in a barren Wilderneſs, lived like Men of Affluence *for the Lord their God was with them* (as he tells us elſewhere) *and they lacked nothing*.

Q. *Expound the laſt Verſe of this Chapter, viz.* The ſecret Things belong to the Lord our God; but thoſe Things that are revealed, belong unto us, and to our Children for ever, that we may do all the Words of this Law.

A. Having juſt mentioned the dreadful and amazing Judgments of God upon the whole Land and People of *Iſrael*, and foreſeeing by the Spirit of Prophecy their utter Extirpation and Deſtruction for their wickedneſs, he breaks out into this pathetical Exclamation, either to bridle their Curioſity, who hearing this, would be apt to enquire into the Time and Manner of ſo great an Event; or to quiet his own Mind, and to ſatisfy the Scruples of others, who perceiving God to deal ſo ſeverely with his own People, when in the mean Time he ſuffered thoſe Nations which were guilty of groſſer Atheiſm and Idolatry, and Impiety than the Generality of the *Jewiſh* People were, to live and proſper in the World, might thence take occaſion to deny or reproach his Providence, or queſtion the Equity of his Proceedings. To this he anſwers, that the Ways and Judgments of God, though never ſo ſeemingly unjuſt, are often ſecret and hidden from us, unſearchable by our ſhallow Capacities, and are the Objects of Admiration, rather than of our curious Enquiry. But the Things that are revealed by God and his Word, theſe are the proper Subjects of our Enquiry and Studies, that thereby we may come to the Knowledge of our Duty, by the Practice whereof we may be kept from ſuch terrible Puniſhments and Calamities as theſe now mentioned.

CHAP XXX.

A gracious promiſe of Deliverance to the Jews *upon their Repentance. The Law of God manifeſt and juſt. Life and Death ſet before them.*

Q. WHAT *does* Moſes *mean by* this Commandment which I command thee this Day *v.* 11?

A. He either ſpeaks of the Law in general, or of that particular Command of loving or obeying God, mentioned here, *v.* 2, 6, 10, 16. which is the Sum of the Law, of which yet he does not here ſpeak ſimply, or as it is in itſelf, but as it is mollified and accompanied with the Grace of the Goſpel, whereby God circumciſes Mens Hearts to do this, as is expreſſed, *v.* 6. The meaning is, that although the Practice of God's Law ſtrictly and ſeverely be now far from us, and above our Strength, yet, conſidering the Advantage of Goſpel Grace, whereby God, in ſome Meaſure, enables us to do our Duty, and accepts of our ſincere Endeavours inſtead of Perfection, and imputes Chriſt's perfect Righteouſneſs unto us that believe, now it is near and eaſy to us. And ſo this Place well agrees, with *Rom.* v. 6, *&c.* where St. *Paul* expounds or applies this Place to the Righteouſneſs of Faith; by which alone the Law is ſuch as it is here deſcribed.

Q. *Explain the next Clauſe of the ſame Verſe,* it is not hidden from thee.

A. In the *Hebrew* it is, *is not too wonderful for thee*, as *Deut.* xvii. 8. *Prov.* xxx. 18. *Jer.* xxxii. 17. that is, not too hard for thee to know and do; the will of God, which is but darkly manifeſted, *Acts.* xvii. 27. is clearly and fully revealed unto thee; thou can't not pretend Ignorance or invincible Difficulty; *it is not far off*, that is, out of thy Reach.

CHAP. XXXI.

Moſes *declares his approaching Death, and encourages the People and* Joſhua. *He delivers the Law to the Prieſts, and charges them to read it every ſeventh Year in the Audience of the People.* Joſhua *inveſted in his Office. The future Diſobedience and Miſery of the People foretold.* Moſes *charges the* Levites *to lay up the Book of the Law beſide the Ark of the Covenant; and aſſembles the People to hear his Song.*

Q. ABOUT *what Time do you imagine that* Moſes's *Speech, in this Chapter, was delivered to the People, and on what Occaſion?*

A. It appears to have been delivered, within a few Days of his Deceaſe, at a ſolemn Aſſembly, convened, as it is likely, in order to devolve the ſupreme Authority upon *Joſhua*; previous to which *Moſes* repreſents, very affectingly, his not being able any longer to command or direct them, becauſe he foreſaw the Time of his Death approaching. He recommended *Joſhua* to the People, and bad him be valiant to repreſs Vice, and conſtant to maintain Virtue.

Q. *At the End of every ſeventh Year, the Prieſts are ordered to read this Law to the People; but why then more than at other Times?*

A. Nothing could be more wiſe and prudent, in the Eyes of human Underſtanding, than this Statute concerning the rehearſing of the Law; for, as the *Seventh* Day was a Day of Reſt unto the Lord, that is, a Day wherein they abſtained from Labour, and dedicated themſelves to his Service, ſo the *Seventh* Year was a Sabbath of Years, wherein the Land was to lie untilled, and the People had, thereby, Leiſure given them to aſſemble in the Place choſen by *Jehovah*, there to hear this Law read from the very *Original*, written by the Hand of *Moſes*, who received it from the Mouth of God. The People were at this Time freed from Debts and Troubles, and the Cares of the World, and therefore fitter to attend upon God and his Service.

CHAP. XXXII.

Moſes's *divine Song, in which God's Power, Mercy to his People, and Vengeance to his Enemies are exalted, and their Ingratitude rebuked. God's Wrath and future Judgments.* Moſes *exhorts the People to ſet their Hearts on theſe Words. God ſends him up to Mount* Nebo, *and from thence to take a View of the promiſed Land.*

Q. WHAT *is the main Drift and Import of this Song?*

A. In this divine Song of *Moſes*, God himſelf, and his exceeding great Mercies to the *Iſraelites* are exalted, and on the contrary, their abominable Unthankfulneſs and ſtubborn Temper are moſt vehemently rebuked. God's Wrath and future Judgments are propounded, yet without ſparing the Abominations of the Enemies of his People. The Almighty again comforts his People, promiſing to be revenged on his and their Idolatrous Enemies, to reconcile his Church unto himſelf, to chear, to enlarge and extend it wide among the *Heathens*. *Moſes* concludes with calling upon the Nations to rejoice and bleſs God for his Favours, and eſpecially for the laſt wonderful Deliverance, which ſhall be given to the *Jews*, when they ſhall be converted unto the Goſpel, in the laſt Days; which they have all Reaſon to do, not only from that Sympathy which they owe to all People, and eſpecially to God's ancient People, whereby they are to *rejoice with them that rejoice*, but becauſe of that ſingular Advantage and Happineſs which all Nations will have at that Time, and upon that Occaſion.

Q. *But did not* Moſes *inſtruct the People in the Uſe they and their Poſterity were to make of this Song?*

A. The *Prophet* having, in the moſt ſolemn Manner aſſiſted by *Joſhua*, delivered this pathetic, this divine Song to the People of *Iſrael*, reſted a little to refreſh and recover his Spirits, and then proceeded to apply this Piece of Inſtruction, and to teach them the Uſe of it, in few, but thoſe the moſt proper and endearing Words: *Set your ſelves with your utmoſt Force to acquire all that I have taught you this Day, and to perform it; yea, this Law ſhall ye ſtudy and teach your Children, for it is not a vain Word for you, becauſe it is your Life; and through this Word ye ſhall prolong your Days in the Land, on that Side of* Jordan, *into which ye are immediately to go over and take Poſſeſſion.* With this Exhortation it is probable he diſmiſſed the Aſſembly at that Time.

Q. *What have you farther to obſerve concerning this Song?*

A. This Song of Moſes, is a remarkable Inſtance of God's Wiſdom and Goodneſs to his People. Here is ſet in a fine Light, God's peculiar Concern for them; their great Ingratitude; their Sin, the Cauſe of all their Calamities; and God's Mercy upon their Repentance, *&c.* This Song was to be got by Heart, and often repeated, that it might be a Witneſs againſt them, when they ſhould fall into Sin, that God had done all that was proper for keeping rational Creatures from ruining themſelves.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The Majeſty of God. Moſes *bleſſeth the Tribes, and declares they are happy under the Protection of the Lord. The Excellency of* Iſrael.

Q. IN *what Senſe is* Moſes *ſaid to bleſs the Children of* Iſrael?

A. He is ſaid to *bleſs* them miniſterially, partly by praying to God with Faith for his Bleſſing upon them; partly by foretelling the Bleſſing which God would confer upon them: For the Prophets are often ſaid to do what they foretel ſhall be done, as *Gen.* lxix. 7. *Jer.* i. 10. *Ezek.* lxiii. 3. *Hos.* vi. 5.

Q. *Why does* Moſes *here call himſelf the* Man of God?

A. By this he means the Servant, or Prophet, or Miniſter of God, as this Phraſe ſignifies 1 *Sam.* ix. 6, 7. 1. *Tim.* vi. 11. to acquaint them that the following Prophecies were not his own Invention, but divine Inſtitutions.

Q. *Why does* Moſes, *in bleſſing the Tribes, omit that of* Simeon?

A. Either, 1. In Deteſtation of their Anceſtor *Simeon's* bloody and wicked Behaviour, for which *Jacob* alſo gives that Tribe, a Curſe rather than a Bleſſing, *Gen.* lxix. But as for *Levi*, who was joined with him in that Curſe and Cenſure, he is ſeparated from him, and exempted from that Curſe, and particularly bleſſed for a ſingular and valuable Reaſon, expreſſed, *v.* 8, 9. Whereas *Simeon's* Tribe had been ſo far from expiating their Father's Crime, that they added new ones, their Prince being guilty of another notorious Offence, *Numb.* xxv. 6, 14. and his Tribe concurring too much with him in ſuch Actions, as Interpreters gather from the great Diminution of the Numbers of that Tribe, which were 59,300 in *Numb.* i. 23. and but 22,200 in *Numb.* xxvi. 14. which was near forty Years after. Or, 2. Becauſe that Tribe had no diſtinct Inheritance, but was to have his Portion in the Tribe of *Judah*, as he had *Joſh.* xix. 1. and therefore he muſt needs partake with them in their Bleſſings.

Q. *Explain that Expreſſion,* v. 2. The Lord roſe up from *Seir*.

A. He appeared, or ſhewed himſelf, as the Sun does at his Riſing— *Seir*; that is, from the Mountain or Land of *Edom*, which is called *Seir*, *Gen.* xxxii. 3. and xxxvi. 8. *Deut.* ii. 4. to which Place the *Iſraelites* came, *Numb.* xx. 14, *&c.* and from thence God led them on towards the Land of Promiſe, and then glorioſly appeared for them in ſubduing *Sihon* and *Og* before them, and giving their Countries unto them. Which glorious Work of God is particularly celebrated, *Judg.* v. 4. But becauſe the Land of *Seir* or *Edom* is ſometimes taken more largely, and ſo reaches even to the *Red-Sea*, as appears from 1 *King* ix. 26. and therefore Mount *Seir* was near to it, and becauſe *Paran*, which here follows, was alſo near *Sinai*, as being the next Station to which they came from the Wilderneſs of *Sinai*, where that glorious Light which ſhone upon Mount *Sinai*, *Numb.* x. 12. all this Verſe may belong to the Appearance on Mount *Sinai*, where that glorious Light which ſhone upon Mount *Sinai* did, very probably, directly ſcatter its Beams into adjacent Parts, ſuch as *Seir* and *Paran* were; and ſo is this only a poetical and prophetical Variation of the Phraſe and Expreſſion of the ſame Thing in divers Words; and God *coming*, or *riſing*, or *ſhining from*, or *to*, or in *Sina* and *Seir* and *Paran*, note one and the ſame illuſtrious Action of God appearing there with *ten thouſand of his Saints* or holy Angels, and there giving a fiery *Law to them*, as it here follows. And this Interpretation may receive ſome ſtrength from *Hab.* iii. 4. where this glorious March of God before his People is remembered, only *Teman*, which ſignifies the *South*, is put for *Seir*, which is here poſſibly to ſignify, that the *Seir* which is here mentioned was to be underſtood of the Southern Part of the Country of *Seir* or *Edom*, which was that part adjoining to the *Red-Sea*. Others refer this Appearance of God at *Seir* to the Brazen Serpent, that eminent Type of Chriſt, which was erected in this Place.

Q. *What is the true Senſe of Verſe* 9. Who ſaid to his Father, and to his Mother, I have not ſeen him, neither did he acknowledge his Brethren, nor knew his own Children; for they have obſerved my Word, and kept my Covenant?

A. I have not ſeen him; that is, I have no Reſpect unto them; for ſo *Knowledge* is often uſed, as *Job* ix. 21. *Prov.* xii. 10, 11. 1 *Theſſ.* v. 12. The Senſe is, who (namely *Levi*) followed God and his Command fully, without any Reſpect of Perſons, *Exod.* xxxii. 26, 27. This ſeems better than to refer it, either to their not mourning for their next Kindred, for that was allowed to all but the High-prieſt in Caſe of the Death of Father or Mother, and that was only a ceremonial Rite, and no Matter of great Commendation; or to their Impartiality in executing the Judgments committed to them, *Deut.* xvii. 9. of which they had as yet given no conſiderable Proof. *For they have obſerved thy Word, and kept thy Covenant*; that is, when the reſt broke their Covenant with God by that foul Sin of Idolatry with the Calf, that Tribe kept themſelves more pure from that Infection, and adhered to God and his Worſhip and Service, as appears from *Exod.* xxxii. 26, 28.

Q. *Part of* Aſher's *Bleſſing is, that his* Shoes ſhould be Iron and Braſs: *In what Senſe is this ſaid?*

A. This may note, either, 1. Their great Strength, by which they ſhould be able to tread down, and cruſh their Enemies, as *Chriſt*'s Feet for this very Reaſon, are ſaid to be of *Braſs*, *Rev.* i. 15. Or, 2. The Mines of Iron and Copper, which were in their Portion, whence *Sidon* their Neighbour was famous among the Heathens for its Plenty of Braſs, and *Sarepta* is thought to have its Name from the Braſs and Iron, which were melted there in great Quantity. See *Deut.* viii. 9. Or, 3. The Strength of its Situation, and ſo ſome Ancients and Moderns render the Words *thy Habitation*, or *thy Encloſure*, ſhall be *Iron* and *Braſs*, that is, fortified as it were with Gates of Iron and Braſs, being defended by the Sea on one Side, by their Brethren on other Sides, as alſo by Mountains and Rivers.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Moſes *from Mount* Nebo *views the promiſed Land*; *his Death and Burial*; *his Age*; *thirty Days Mourning for him*; *his Character.*

Q. THIS *Chapter brings us to the Concluſion of the* five Books *of* Moſes; *and therefore you will excuſe me if I am particularly inquiſitive into ſeveral Things here mentioned. The firſt that offers itſelf to our Conſideration is* Moſes's *View of the Land of* Canaan *from the Top of* Piſgah, *on the Mountain* Nebo; *do theſe two Names ſtand for the ſame Mountain?*

A. The Mountains of *Abarim* were a Ridge of Hills, between the two Rivers *Arnon* and *Jordan*. One Part of theſe Mountains was diſtinguiſhed by the Name of *Nebo*, as it appears from *Deut.* x. 32, 49. and comparing this with *Deut.* xxxiv. 1. we ſhall find that *Nebo* and *Piſgah* were one and the ſame Mountain, and, that if there was any Diſtinction between the Names, it was probably this, that the Top of the Mountain was more peculiarly called *Piſgah*, becauſe it comes from a Root, which ſignifies *to elevate*, or *raiſe up*, and ſo may very properly denote the *Top*, or *Summit* of any Mountain. Not far from *Nebo*, was *Bethpeor*, which very probably was ſo called from ſome Deity of the ſame Name, that was worſhipped there: But, of all theſe Mountains it muſt be obſerved, that, tho' they are ſaid to be in the Land of *Moab*, yet they really ſtood in the Territories of *Sihon*, King of the *Amorites*, however they retained their old Names, becauſe once they belonged to the *Moabites*. *Numb.* xxi. 26.

Q. *It is ſaid, that when* Moſes *took his View of the Land of* Canaan, he was one hundred and twenty Years old: his Eyes were not dim, nor his natural Force abated; *Does not this ſeem impoſſible, conſidering his great Age, and the vaſt Extent of Land that muſt be brought within the Compaſs of his Eye?*

A. It cannot well be accounted an impoſſible Thing, for God to ſhew *Moſes* the Compaſs of the Land of *Canaan*, from the Top of Mount *Nebo*. The *Jews* indeed have a Notion, that God laid before him a Map of the whole Country, and ſhewed him therein how every Part of it was ſituate; where each *Valley* lay, each *Mountain* ſtood, each *River* ran, and for what remarkable *Product* each Place was renowned: But if this had been all, we cannot ſee, for what Reaſon *Moſes* was ordered to go upon the higheſt Part of the Mount, ſince in the loweſt Plains of *Moab*, he might have given him a Demonſtration of this Kind, every whit as well.

It was for ſome Purpoſe therefore, that the *ſacred* Hiſtorian has informed us, that, though *Moſes* was an hundred and twenty Years old, *yet his Eyes were not dim*: And if we ſuppoſe, that, upon this Occaſion, God ſtrengthened them with a greater Vigour than ordinary, to enable him to take a larger Proſpect of the Country, ſo that, from this Eminence, he might ſee *Dan* and Mount *Lebanon*, to the *North*; the Lake of *Sodom*, and the City of *Zoar*, to the *South*; the *Mediterranean* Sea to the *Weſt*; and (as the Town and Country of *Jericho* was juſt at Hand) he might eaſily diſcern the Land of *Gilead* to the *North-eaſt*. This indeed may be a Compaſs, above the Stretch of human Sight; but if God was pleaſed to aſſiſt his *viſive* Faculties a little, the Matter might eaſily have been done: And accordingly, ſome of the *Jewiſh* Doctors have been wiſe enough in putting together both the natural *Clearneſs* of *Moſes*'s Eyes, and the additional *Strength* which God, at this Time, vouchſafed to give them; " for God ſhewed him, *ſay* " *they*,

“ *they*, the whole Land, as in a *Garden-plat*; and gave his Eyes ſuch Power of contemplating it, from the Beginning to the End, that he ſaw Hills and Dales, what was open, and what was encloſed, remote or nigh, at one ſingle View, or Intuition.”

Q. *But why did God bury him ſo ſecretly, that* no Man ſhould know of his Sepulchre?

A. It was to prevent the People's idolizing him after his Death; and this very Reaſon we have in R. *Levi Ben Gerſhom.* “ Future Generations, *ſays he*, might perhaps have made a God of him, becauſe of the Fame of his Miracles: For do we not ſee how ſome of the *Iſraelites* erred in the *brazen Serpent*, which *Moſes* made? And what then would they not have done, had they but known where his Remains were laid?” For this Reaſon, very likely, it was, that, how much ſoever *Moſes* was in Love with *Canaan*, he did not deſire to be carried thither, to be buried with his Anceſtors, as *Joſeph* did; becauſe his Interment in that Country might have proved of dangerous Conſequence, if in their Diſtreſs, (eſpecially in the Captivity of the Land) the Children of *Iſrael* ſhould have run to his *Sepulchre*, and begged of him to pray for them, whoſe Prayers and Interceſſion, in their Behalf, they had found in his Life-time ſo very prevalent!

Q. *Was his Sepulchre never found out by ſucceeding Generations?*

A. Notwithſtanding all this Precaution of God, the *Chriſtians* boaſt that they have diſcovered the Sepulchre, which has been kept ſecret for ſo many Ages. For in the Year 1655, ſome Goats, that were ſeparated from the reſt of the Flock, went to feed in a certain Place, in the Mountain *Nebo*, and returned from thence ſo odoriferous, and perfumed, that the Shepherds, aſtoniſhed at ſo wonderful a Prodigy, ran preſently to conſult with the Patriarch of the *Maronites*, who ſent thither two Monks from Mount *Lebanon*, and they diſcovered a Monument, on which was this Inſcription, *Moſes the Servant of the Lord*. But there is too much Reaſon to think, that this is all a Fiction, on Purpoſe to raiſe the Reputation of the *Maronites*, as *Baſnage*, in his Hiſtory and Religion of the *Jews*, has ſufficiently proved.

Q. *Has it not been the Opinion of ſome, that* Moſes *did not actually die, but was tranſlated into Heaven?*

A. Nothing can be plainer from the Text, than that *Moſes* did die, and was really buried; nay, *Joſephus* tells us, that the Scripture affirms, that he died, leſt People ſhould think, becauſe of the Excellency of his Perſon, that he was ſtill alive and with God. And yet notwithſtanding this, ſome of the *Jewiſh* Doctors do poſitively affirm, that he was tranſlated into Heaven, where he ſtands, and miniſters before God. And, of thoſe, who admit of his Death, and that his Soul and Body were really ſeparated, the *major* Part will not allow, that he died a common Death; for their Notion is, that *his Soul departed with a Kiſs*, becauſe he is ſaid to die, *al pi, at the Mouth* (as it is literally in the Hebrew, *i. e. according to the Word*) *of God*. But if there be any Senſe in the Expreſſion, it muſt be, that he parted with his Soul with great Chearfulneſs and Serenity of Mind.

Q. *Who wrote the Concluſion of this Chapter; for that* Moſes *did not, ſeems evident?*

A. Both *Philo* and *Joſephus* are of Opinion, that the Account of *Moſes*'s Death, and Burial, of the Mourning, which the *Iſraelites* made for him, and of the Character, which, in the Concluſion of *Deuteronomy*, we find recorded of him, was penned by *Moſes* himſelf, in Conſequence of the Preſcience, which God was pleaſed to communicate to him; and the Reaſon which *Joſephus* gives for his thus relating the Circumſtances of his Death beforehand, is, that the People, out of the great Veneration they had for his Perſon, might not imagine that he was tranſlated.

But ſuppoſe this Account to have been written after the Death of *Moſes*, by *Joſhua*, *Eleazar*, or the *ſeventy Elders*, or, (as ſome imagine) much later, by *Samuel*, or even by *Eſdras* himſelf, who, after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, made a Reviſal of the ſacred Books; ſuppoſe it, I ſay, to have been written by any other Hand whatever, yet this can no ways affect the Authority of the reſt of the *Pentateuch*, or imply that *Moſes* was not the Writer of it, unleſs we will be ſo perverſe, as to ſay, that the Addition of ſome few Lines, or even of a whole Page, as an Appendix to another Man's Book, makes the Book no longer his.

There is another Opinion, which ſeems very conſonant both to Reaſon, and Matter of Fact; and that is, that the laſt of the Books of *Moſes*, *viz.* the Book of *Deuteronomy*, ended with his prophetick Bleſſing upon the twelve Tribes *happy art thou*, O Iſrael, *who is like unto thee, O People, ſaved by the Lord*, &c. and that what makes now the firſt Chapter of *Joſhua*, was thence removed, and adjoined to it by Way of *Supplement*.

Before the Invention of Sections, and other Diviſions, or ſo much as of Pauſes and Points of Diſtinction, and, when ſometimes ſeveral Books were connected together, and followed each other upon the ſame Roll (as the ancient Method of Writing was) it is no hard Matter to conceive, how eaſy the Beginning of one Book might be transferred to the End of another, and, in Proceſs of Time, make that be reputed the Concluſion of *Deuteronomy*, which was originally intended for the Introduction, and which was in reality wrote by a later Hand, than *Moſes*: But then, by whomſoever, or at what Time ſoever, theſe Paſſages were wrote, whether before or after the Deſtruction of the firſt Temple, they can no ways invalidate the Authority of the other Parts of the Book of *Deuteronomy*, to which imprudently, and by Way of Miſtake perhaps, they came to be annexed; nor can the Canonicalneſs of theſe very Paſſages be called in queſtion, ſince it is agreed on all Hands, that they were written by a Perſon of a *prophetick* Spirit, and had, in all Ages, the Sanction of the great Synagogue.

Q. *What is the general Character of* Moſes?

A. The Commendation, which the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus* gives *Moſes*, is conceived in theſe Words. —“ *Moſes* was beloved of God and Men, and his Memorial is bleſſed. The Lord made him like to the glorious Saints, and magnified him ſo, that his Enemies ſtood in fear of him, and by his Word he cauſed the Wonders to ceaſe, and he made him glorious in the Sight of Kings, gave him Ordinances for his People, and ſhewed him part of his Glory. He ſanctified him in his Faithfulneſs, and Meekneſs, and choſe him out of all Men. He made him to hear his Voice, and brought him into the dark Cloud, and gave him Commandments before his Face, even the Law of Life and Knowledge, that he might teach *Jacob* his Covenant, and *Iſrael* his Judgment,” Ch. xlv. Ver. 1, *&c.* The Character which *Joſephus* gives him, is to this Effect —“ He was a Man of admirable Wiſdom, and one, that made the beſt Uſe he of what underſtood; an ex-

“excellent Speaker, and no Man better skilled in moving the Affections of the People than himſelf; ſo great a Maſter of his Paſſions, that he lived as though he had none, or as if he only knew them, by their Names, or by obſerving them in others. Never a greater Captain, nor a Prophet equal to him; for all his Words were Oracles. Nor was he leſs famous to Poſterity for his Writings, than he was to the Age, he lived in, for his Actions.” For, beſides the *Pentateuch*, (which is all of his Compoſition, except the concluſive Chapter) the Ancients generally thought, that he was the Author of the Book of *Job*, and of eleven Pſalms, which begin at the 90th, and end with the 100th, as there were once other Books, ſuch as his *Leſſer Geneſis*, the *Revelation of* Moſes, the *Aſcenſion of* Moſes, and the *myſterious Books of* Moſes, cited by ſome ancient Writers, which were likewiſe aſcribed to him. And tho' they have long ſince loſt their Authority, and been exploded as *ſpurious*; yet are they ſtill an Argument of the Greatneſs of his Name, when ſo many Authors, to recommend their own Performances, were ſo ambitious to aſſume it.

Q. *What Space of Time is comprehended in the five Books of* Moſes?

A. The Hiſtory, contained in the *Pentateuch*, takes in the Space of two thouſand five hundred and fifty two Years.

Q. *What general Reflections do you make on theſe Writings of* Moſes?

A. They comprehend a Series of Events, the moſt wonderful and important; Events delivered to us, by the Direction of God, and dictated by his *Holy Spirit*; Events which are no where elſe to be found; becauſe thoſe Nations, among whom in latter Ages Hiſtory, when it became an Art, was moſt improved, were now themſelves rude and unpoliſhed; a Hiſtory wherein Things are traced from their very Beginning, in which the Wiſdom of Providence is diſplayed in reſcuing Man from the Evil he had brought upon himſelf, by promiſing, and, in the Fulneſs of Time ſending, the *Meſſias*; from whence we learn the Cauſe of the Depravity in our Nature, which the Heathens obſerved, but could no way account for; from whence we are informed of that dreadful Deſtruction by Water, which the wickedneſs of the Anti-Diluvian World provoked the divine Juſtice to pour down upon them; from whence we are inſtructed, how this Globe was peopled, and how from the Loins of *Noah*, the preſent Race of Men are ſprung; from whence we perceive, how the epidemic corruption of Morals, in a ſhort Time after the Flood, cauſed the electing *Abraham* to become the Father of the Faithful; and from whence we are taught, how the Law, through *Moſes*, was given to *Iſrael*, and, at length, revealed to the *Gentiles*, that it might bring us unto Chriſt; Paſſages not lightly to be run over, but to be weighed and conſidered, as things which nearly concern our Salvation; and, in the reading of which, we ought moſt earneſtly to intreat the divine Aſſiſtance.

Jeſus the Author of the Chriſtian Faith, diſcourſing with the *Jews* concerning their Infidelity, and obſerving how many different, and all of them concluſive Proofs he had given them of his Miſſion, at length took notice of that Opinion which ſwayed them moſt, *viz.* Their adherence to the Law, by which they doubted not to be excuſed for their Unbelief in him: But this *Chriſt* informs them was a grievous Miſtake, and inſtead of a Mediator, *Moſes* would become their Accuſer; and then he renders them the Reaſon why in theſe Words: (John v. 46, 47.) *If ye had believed* Moſes, *ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me: But if ye believe not his Writings, how ſhall ye believe my Words?* This is ſo full to the Purpoſe, that all who are true Chriſtians muſt aſſent to this Point, if not on other Authority, yet on the expreſs Declaration of God himſelf. *Jeſus* after his Reſurrection appearing to two of his Diſciples who were going to *Emmaus*, and entring into a Converſation with them about the Evidence of his own *Meſſiaſhip*, explained to them the Scriptures which proved it, beginning at *Moſes*, and going through all the Prophets. *Luke* xxiv, 27. From whence it is clear, that our Saviour admitted not only the Writings which the *Jews* then aſcribed to *Moſes* were his, but alſo owned the ſame Thing of the Writings aſcribed to the *Prophets*. Indeed he often made his Appeal thither, and though he ſometimes ſpoke of the mighty Works which he did, yet he always deſired ſuch as were inclined to believe on him to ſearch the Scriptures. *John* v. 39. This was, and is the true Baſis of the Chriſtian Faith, and therefore thoſe who would ſubvert it have very cunningly endeavoured to ſap this Foundation, knowing well that the Fall of the Superſtructure would follow of Courſe. On this the Diſciples firſt grounded their Belief, and from this Topic we find them perſuading others. *Philip*, when he would bring *Nathaniel* to *Chriſt*, tells him, *We have found him of whom* Moſes *in the Law and the* Prophets *did write.* In fine, as the *Son* of *God* taught that *Moſes* compoſed the Law, and that by the Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit, ſo the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors have all born Teſtimony to the ſame; it is a Point which was never doubted of among Chriſtians, till of late Days, when the Champions of Superſtition, to raiſe the Credit of their Traditions, and the Enemies of Divine Revelation have raked together various Objections againſt a Point, without the Deſtruction of which their Schemes cannot take Place. In this reſpect, theſe Men have outgone *Mahomet* the Founder of the *Turkiſh* Religion, who never offered to deny the Miſſion, or the Writings of the *Hebrew Prophet*, but, on the contrary, mentions him in the *Alcoran* with great reſpect; pretending, in his romantic Account of his Journey to the Throne of God, that he found *Moſes* in the fifth Heaven, which he ſays was made of *Adamant*; as in the Sixth, he found *John* the *Baptiſt*, and in the ſeventh *Chriſt* our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer.

The Obligation of the Law was to determine when another Prophet like to *Moſes* aroſe, of whom all the following Prophets ſpoke; and accordingly, the whole frame of the *Jewiſh* Government Civil and Eccleſiaſtical, ſo wonderfully protected by divine Providence, is now utterly diſſolved; and thoſe plain and direct Propheſies of *Moſes*, as to the latter State of the *Hebrews*, fully accompliſhed.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

This Book, whether written by Joſhua, *as is moſt probable, or by ſome other inſpired Penman, is joined by Way of Appendix or Cloſure, to the Five Books of* Moſes, *and is a Continuation of the ſame Hiſtory till the Settlement of the* Hebrews *in* Canaan. *In it is related the wonderful Paſſage of the* Iſraelites *through* Jordan *on dry Ground; that as ſoon as they came on the other Side, they renewed the Uſe of Circumciſion, which had been intermitted during their Pilgrimage in the Wilderneſs. After which, the People having celebrated the Paſſover, and beginning to eat of the Fruits of the Land, Manna ceaſed. This Period of Hiſtory contains the Space of ſomewhat more than ſeventeen Years, and bears the Name of* Joſhua, *becauſe it gives an Account of his Actions and Exploits. This Book may be divided into three Parts; the firſt contains the twelve firſt Chapters, being a Narrative of the ſurprizing Victories, which* Joſhua, *through the Aſſiſtance of Almighty God, obtained over the* Canaanites. *In the ſecond Part, from the thirteenth Chapter to the twenty ſecond, is treated of the Diviſion of the Land among the Tribes. In the third Part is recited in what Manner the two Tribes and a Half were diſmiſſed; as alſo the ſtrict and ſolemn Charge of* Joſhua *to the* Iſraelites, *with an Account of his and* Eleazar's *Deaths.*

CHAP. I.

Joſhua *commanded to lead the People into the Land of* Canaan, *to which he is encouraged by God. The People ordered to be in Readineſs for their Journey and Paſſage over* Jordan. *He reminds the two Tribes and a half of their Promiſe to* Moſes; *they declare themſelves ready to perform their Promiſe; and all the Tribes ſhew their Willingneſs to obey him.*

Q. *IN the preceding Books we frequently meet with this Expreſſion,* God ſpake unto Moſes; *and in the firſt Chapter, it is ſaid,* God ſpake unto *Joſhua, In what Senſe are we to underſtand this Phraſe,* God ſpake?

A. It is the Opinion of moſt Interpreters, that, when God is ſaid to ſpeak to *Moſes*, to *Joſhua*, or any other pious Man, in the Old Teſtament, he does not do it by himſelf, but by an Angel only. This perhaps might be his moſt common Way of communicating himſelf; but there want not ſeveral Inſtances in Scripture, where God himſelf, or (as others will have it) the eternal *Word* converſes with his Servants: And this he may do, either by a *mental Locution*, wherein he objects to their Minds the expreſs Idea of what ſuch a Number of Words would convey; or by a *corporal Locution*, when he aſſumes an apparent Body, and Speech, in the ſame Manner that Men ſpeak. But in the Place before us, whether it were an Angel, or God himſelf, he ſeems to have ſpoken to *Joſhua* out of the *Sanctuary*, from whence he had ſpoken to him, a little before *Moſes*'s Death, and gave him Encouragement to perform ſtrenuouſly what he is now putting upon him. *Deut.* xxxi. 14, 23.

Q. *In the 4th Verſe is deſcribed a vaſt Tract of Land, given for the Poſſeſſion of the People of* Iſrael; *but I think 'tis generally agreed they never poſſeſſed it all; how then was God's Promiſe perfectly fulfilled?*

A. It's anſwered, 1. That this happened from their own Sloth and Cowardice, Diſobedience to God, and Breach of thoſe Conditions upon which this Promiſe was founded, and therefore now ſuſpended. *Judges* ii. 20. 2. This Land was not all to be poſſeſſed by them at once, but by Degrees, as their Numbers and Neceſſities increaſed; but *Canaan* being fully ſufficient for them, and many of the *Iſraelites* being from Time to Time cut off, or carried into Captivity for their Sins, there never was any Need of enlarging their Poſſeſſions. 3. Though their Poſſeſſions extended not to *Euphrates*, yet their Dominion did, and all thoſe Lands were tributary to them in *David*'s and *Solomon*'s Time.

Q. *It is ſaid,* v. 3. Within three Days ye ſhall paſs over this *Jordan: But how can this be, when the Spies, who were not yet ſent away, continued three Days hid in the Mountains,* Chap. ii. 22. *and the*

the People paſſed not over till three Days after the Spies were returned?

A. Theſe Words, though placed here, ſeem not to have been delivered by *Joſhua* till after the Return of the Spies; ſuch Tranſpoſitions being ſo frequent in Scripture, that Interpeters have formed this general Rule, That *there is no certain Order, no former nor latter in the Hiſtories of the Scripture.* And hence it is, that theſe three Days mentioned here below, after the Hiſtory of the Spies, are again repeated, *Chap.* iii. 2. Or, theſe three Days may be the ſame with thoſe, *Chap* ii. 22. and the Matter may be conceived thus; *Joſhua* gives the People Notice of their Paſſage over *Jordan within three Days,* here, and at the ſame Time ſends away the Spies, who return e'er thoſe three Days are ended. As to the *three Days, Chap.* ii. 22. they may be underſtood of one whole Day, and Part of two other Days, as it is in that famous Inſtance, *Matth.* xxvii. 63. and xii. 40. The Spies came to *Jericho* in the Evening of the firſt Day, and intended to lie there, *Chap.* ii. 8. but being diſturbed and affrighted by the Search made after them, they go away that Night into the Mountains, and there abode the Time mentioned. *Joſhua* having delivered this Meſſage from God to the *Iſraelites,* and ſent away the Spies, removes from *Shittim* to *Jordan, Chap.* iii. 1. being ſufficiently aſſured of his ſafe Paſſage over it, whatever became of the Spies; and after thoſe three Days here mentioned were paſt, *Chap.* iii. 2. he ſends the Officers to the People with a ſecond Meſſage about the Manner of their actual paſſing over.

CHAP. II.

Joſhua *ſends two Spies to* Jericho; *the King endeavours to ſecure them;* Rahab *hides them; ſhe acknowledges God had given them the Land; her Reaſons; the Contract between her and them; their Return and Report.*

Q. WHAT *Account can you give of the City* Jericho?

A. Jericho was a City of *Canaan,* which afterwards fell to the Lot of the Tribe of *Benjamin,* about ſeven Leagues from *Jeruſalem,* and two from *Jordan. Moſes* calls it likewiſe the *City of Palm-Trees, Deut.* xxxiv. 3. becauſe there were great Numbers of them in the Plains of *Jericho,* and not only of Palm-trees, but, as *Joſephus* tells us, Balſam-trees likewiſe, which produced that precious Liquor, in ſuch high Eſteem among the Ancients. The Plain of *Jericho* was watered with a Rivulet, which was then ſalt and bitter, but was afterwards ſweetned by the Prophet *Eliſha,* 2 *Kings* ix. 9. whereupon the adjacent Country, which was watered by it, became not only one of the moſt agreeable, but moſt fertile Spots in all that Country. As to the City itſelf, after it was deſtroyed by *Joſhua,* it it was, in the Days of *Ahab,* King of *Iſrael,* rebuilt by *Hiel* the *Bethelite,* 1 *Kings* xvi. 34. and, in the Times of the laſt Kings of *Judea,* yielded to none, except *Jeruſalem.* For it was adorned with a royal Palace, wherein *Herod the Great* died; with an *Hippodromus,* or Place, where the *Jewiſh* Nobility learned to ride the great Horſe, and other Arts of *Chivalry*; with an *Amphitheatre,* and other magnificent Buildings; but, during the Siege of *Jeruſalem,* the Treachery of its Inhabitants provoked the *Romans* to deſtroy it. After the Siege was over, there was another City built, but not upon the ſame Place, where the two former ſtood; for the Ruins of them are ſeen to this Day. Of what Account and Bigneſs it was, we have no certain Information; but ſome later Travellers inform us, that, at preſent, it is no more, than a poor naſty Village of the *Arabs.*

Q. *Can you tell who thoſe Spies were; and in what Manner they managed their Buſineſs, ſo as to deceive the Vigilance and Jealouſy of their Enemies?*

A. The *Eaſtern* Writers tell us, that theſe *Spies* (whom they make to be *Caleb* and *Phineas*) were valiant and religious Men, and in the Prime of their Youth; that, to paſs unobſerved, they changed their Habits, as if they had come from a diſtant Country, and, if any one asked them any Queſtions, their Reply was to this Effect. “We are People from the *Eaſt,* and our Companions have heard of this powerful People, who were forty Years in the Wilderneſs, without either Guide or Proviſion; and it was reported to us, that they had a God, whom they called *the King of Heaven and Earth,* and who (as they ſay) hath given them both your, and our Country. Our Principals have therefore ſent us to find out the Truth hereof, and to report it to them.—We have likewiſe heard of their *Captain,* whom they call *Joſhua,* the Son of *Nun,* who put the *Amalekites* to flight, and who deſtroyed *Sihon* and *Og,* the Kings of *Midian* and *Moab.* Wo therefore be to us, and you, and all that fly to us for Shelter! They are a People who pity none, leave none alive, drive all out of their Country, and make Peace with none. We are all accounted by them Infidels, profane, proud and rebellious. Whoever of us, or you therefore, that intend to take Care of themſelves, let them take their Families, and begone, leſt they repent of their Stay, when it is too late.” By this Means they impoſed upon the People; and (as *Joſephus* informs us) went whither they would, and ſaw whatever they had a Mind to, without any Stop or Queſtion. They took a View of the Walls, the Gates, the Ramparts, and paſſed the whole Day, for Men of Curioſity only, without any Deſign. So that if any Credit may be given to this Account, it was but juſt, that they, who thus impoſed upon the *Canaanites,* ſhould, in the ſame Manner, be impoſed upon by the *Gibeonites.*

Q. *Some have queſtioned whether* Rahab *was an Harlot; what is your Opinion?*

A. It cannot be denied indeed, but that, in ancient Times, there was a great Affinity between the Buſineſs of an Hoſteſs, and an Harlot. Thoſe who kept *Inns,* or publick Houſes for the Entertainment of Strangers, made no Scruple of proſtituting their Bodies; and for this Reaſon perhaps it is, that, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, there is but one Word, *viz. Zonah,* to denote Perſons of both Profeſſions. For this Reaſon very likely it was, that the *Septuagint,* ſpeaking of *Rahab,* gave her the Appellation of an *Harlot,* and (as the *Septuagint* was, at this Time, the common Tranſlation of the *Jews*) for this very Reaſon, the two Apoſtles, St. *Paul,* and St. *James,* as they found it in the Tranſlation, might make uſe of the ſame Expreſſion. It is to be obſerved however, that as the Expreſſion is capable of another Senſe, the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt calls her by a Word, which comes from the *Greek* Word which ſignifies a

Woman that kept a publick Houſe, without any Mark of Infamy; and therefore Charity ſhould incline us to think the beſt of a Perſon, whom both theſe Apoſtles have ranked with *Abraham,* the Father of the Faithful, and propounded as an Example of Faith and good Works; who was admitted into the Society of God's People; married into a noble Family of the Tribe of *Judah,* and of whoſe Poſterity *Chriſt* the Saviour of the World, was born. *Rahab* married *Salmon,* a Prince of *Judah,* by whom ſhe had *Boaz, Boaz* was Father of *Obed, Obed* of *Jeſſe,* and *Jeſſe* of King *David:* So that *Jeſus Chriſt* did not diſdain to reckon this *Canaanitiſh* Woman among his Anceſtors.

Q. *Was not* Rahab *blameable in impoſing upon the King's Officers, and in telling a manifeſt Lie?*

A. To ſave the Lives of the innocent, is certainly a very commendable Thing; but whether it may be done by the Help of Diſſimulation and Falſhood, or whether *Rahab,* in concealing the Spies, and pretending to the King's Meſſengers, that they were juſt gone, did not incur the Sin of wilful Lying, is a Queſtion not ſo very eaſy to be reſolved. Men, as they are Members of a civil Society, have certainly a Right to Truth, and the very Deſign of Speech is to be the Conveyance of our real Sentiments to one another; but ſome *Caſuiſts* are of Opinion, that Circumſtances may ſo happen, as to make it both lawful and neceſſary, not only to diſguiſe the Truth, but to impoſe upon others by a falſe Information. Suppoſe a *Madman,* for Inſtance, with a drawn Sword in his Hand, ſhould purſue a Friend of mine, with a full Intent to kill him; and my Friend, by the Benefit of ſome ſhort Turning, gives him the *Drop,* ſo that, having loſt Sight of him, he comes, and demands of me, which Way he took; but I, inſtead of ſetting him right, point the Aſſaſſin another Way: In this Caſe, I preſume, I commit no Crime, becauſe the Man, in theſe Circumſtances, has forfeited all Right to Truth, nor could I indeed impart it to him, without making my ſelf inſtrumental to my Friend's Murther. This, in a great meaſure, was *Rahab's* Caſe. Her Deſign was, to ſave the Spies from the Hands of thoſe, that were ſent to apprehend them; but in vain had ſhe formed ſuch a Deſign, unleſs ſhe was reſolved to put it in Execution; and yet, what other Way had ſhe of executing it, but by telling a Lie? It had been to no Purpoſe for her, to have hid them on the Roof of her Houſe, if, for the Sake of Truth, ſhe had thought herſelf obliged to diſcover the Place of their Concealment; if her Silence had given any Umbrage of Suſpicion to their Purſuers; if ſhe had not, in ſhort, by a bold Aſſertion, diverted their Enquiry ſome other Way. In this Caſe the Deſign and the Means of executing it were inſeparable: And yet, ſince a Deſign, which could no ways be executed, without the Help of a Lie, is both praiſed, and propoſed in Scripture, as a Pattern for the Church to imitate, what Right have we to condemn it? Or upon what Preſumption can we imagine, that *Rahab* would have acted more agreeably to the Mind of God, in diſcovering the Spies, out of Reſpect to Truth, than ſhe did, in preſerving them by Virtue of a feigned Story?

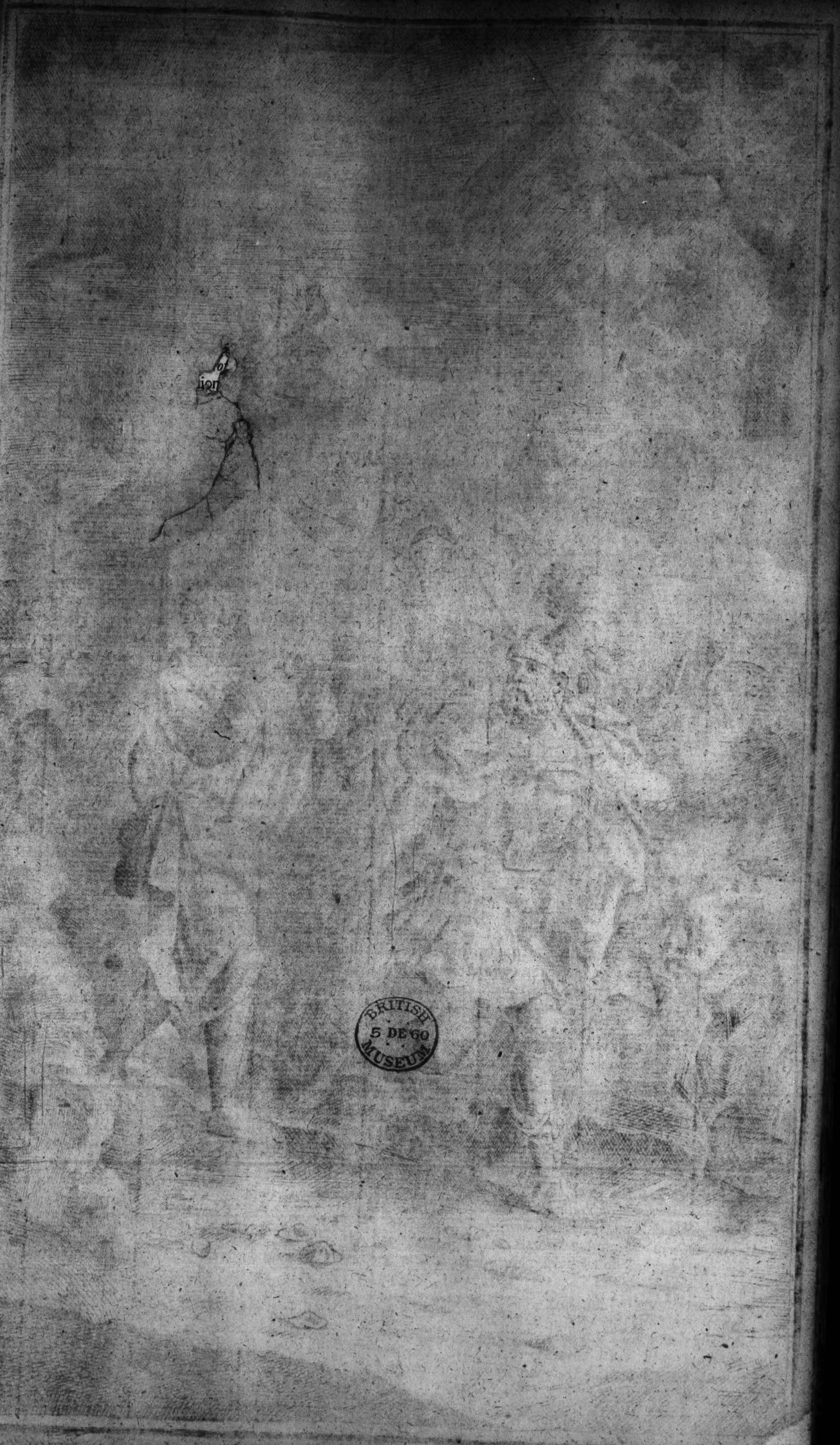
Q. *But was ſhe not guilty of Treachery in taking Part againſt her own Country?*

A. The Declaration, which their kind Protectreſs makes to them, *I know that the Lord hath given you the Land, and that your Terror has fallen upon us, and that all the Inhabitants of the Land faint becauſe of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in Heaven above, and in Earth beneath,* beſpeaks the full Perſuaſion of her Mind; and therefore, not doubting, but that the Ruler of the Univerſe had an uncontroulable Right to diſpoſe of all Kingdoms and Countries, according to his good Pleaſure, ſhe judged it reaſonable *to obey God rather than Man,* and thereupon endeavoured, as much as in her lay, to deliver up the Land to the *true Owners,* that is, to thoſe, whom God, by his Donation, had made its rightful Proprietors.

An Order from Heaven moſt certainly releaſes the *Subject* from his Allegiance to his *Prince,* and the *Citizen,* from the Engagement he lies under to thoſe that are of the ſame Society: And therefore *Rahab,* having ſuch an Order (or, at leaſt, what was equivalent to it) was at full Liberty to eſpouſe what Party ſhe pleaſed, and muſt have been perfidious to God, and forgetful of her own Preſervation, if ſhe had acted otherwiſe than ſhe did. For even ſetting aſide her Faith (for which ſhe is ſo juſtly commended in the *Goſpel*) if ſhe had heard of the Deſtruction of *Pharaoh* in *Egypt,* and of the other two Kings on the *Eaſt* Side of *Jordan,* the King of *Jericho* can hardly be ſuppoſed to be ignorant of their Fate: And therefore it was as natural for her, to be terrified at it, and to provide for her Safety, as it was for him, to make a brave Reſiſtance, or periſh in the Attempt. If therefore what the Scripture ſeems to intimate, be true, *viz.* that *Joſhua* was obliged to offer Peace, before he made uſe of the Sword againſt any of the *Canaanitiſh* Nations; it was as lawful for her, or any other Subject, to accept this Peace, as it was glorious perhaps, for a Monarch to refuſe it: At leaſt we cannot but think, that the Refuſal of ſuch advantageous Terms, from an irreſiſtable Conqueror, at the Riſque of being all infallibly *maſſacred* by him, for the Sake of a King, who (for ought that appears to the contrary) might be a *petty Tyrant*; or for the Sake of a People, whom Fear had rendered incapable of making any tolerable Reſiſtance; when perhaps the Difference of being under the *natural Monarch* (if he was really ſuch) or the *Conqueror* was inconſiderable, or (it may be) on the Side of the *latter:* We cannot but think, I ſay, that ſuch a Refuſal would have been an Inſtance of *Patriotiſm,* not to be expected from a *Canaanite,* and much leſs, from ſuch a young *Hoſteſs,* as *Rahab* muſt have been, ſince we read of her being the Mother of *Boaz,* above thirty Years after this. So that, upon the whole, ſhe acted a Part, that might naturally be expected from her, no ways inglorious in itſelf, and highly agreeable to the Will of God, when ſhe adjoined herſelf to thoſe, who, by his Almighty Arm, were ſo viſibly ſupported; and abandoned the Intereſt of thoſe, who, upon ſo many Accounts were juſtly devoted to Deſtruction.

CHAP. III.

Joſhua *comes with the* Iſraelites *to* Jordan. *The Officers inſtruct the People and Prieſts for their Paſſage. God encourages* Joſhua, *and he the* People; *gives them a Sign; the Waters of* Jordan *divided, till the Ark and* People *paſs over; they paſs; the Prieſts ſtanding all the Time in the midſt of* Jordan.



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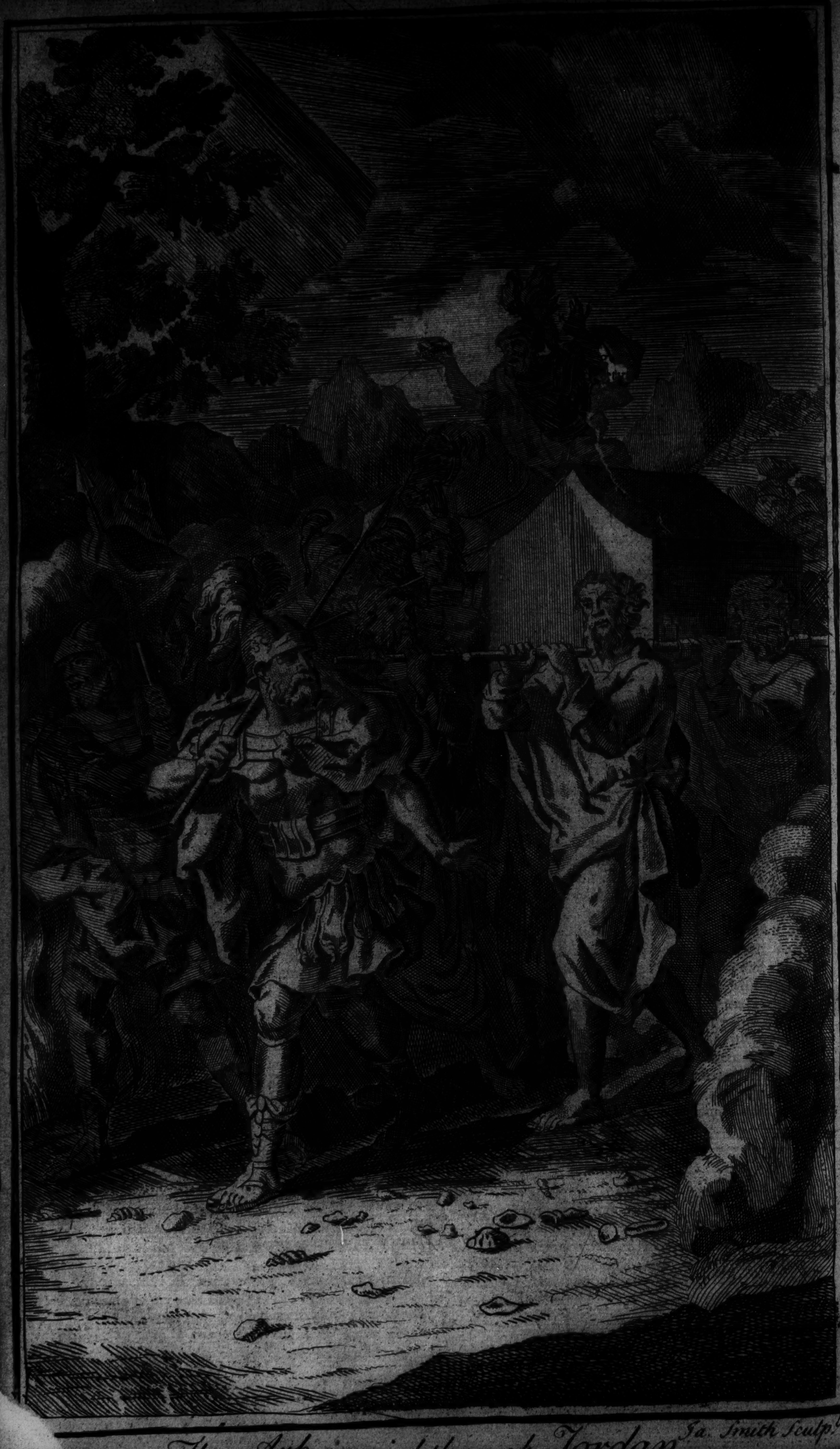

Ja. Smith Sculp^t.

The Ark carried through Jordan.

Q. *WE are now come to the Banks of* Jordan, *but before we paſs over, I ſhall be glad to have ſome hiſtorical Account of this famous River.*

A. Jordan is ſuppoſed to have its Name from the *Hebrew* Word *Jor*, which ſignifies a *Spring*, and *Dan*, which is a ſmall Town, not far from the Fountain-head of this River. It is certainly a River of very great Note in Holy Writ, and of it the the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian gives us the following Account. *The Head of this River is thought to be* Panion; *but, in Truth, it paſſes hither under Ground, and the Source of it is* Phiala, *an hundred and twenty Furlongs from* Caeſarea Philippi, *a little on the Right-hand, and not much out of the Way to* Trachonis. *From the Cave of* Panion, *it croſſes the Bogs and Fens of the Lake of* Semechon, *and, after a Courſe of an hundred and twenty Furlongs farther, paſſes under the City* Julias (*or* Bethſaida) *and ſo over the Lake of* Genezareth, *or* Tiberias, *and then, running a long Way through a Wilderneſs or Deſart, it empties it ſelf into the Lake* Aſphaltites, *or the* Dead-ſea. Now, ſince the Cave *Panion* lies at the Foot of Mount *Lebanos*, and the Lake *Aſphaltites* reaches to the very Extremity of the *South* of *Judea*, the River *Jordan* muſt extend its Courſe quite from the the *northern* to the *ſouthern* Boundary of the *Holy Land*. But the Largeneſs of this River is far from being equal to its Extent. It may be ſaid indeed, to have two Banks, whereof the *firſt* and *outermoſt* is that, to which the River does, or, at leaſt, anciently did, overflow at ſome Seaſons of the Year; but at preſent, whether the Rapidity of the Current has worn its Channel deeper, or its Waters are directed ſome other Way, ſo it is, that it ſeems to have forgot its ancient Greatneſs: For, *we, ſays* Mr. Maundrell, *could diſcern no Sign, or Probability of ſuch Overflowing, though we were there on the* 30th *of* March, *which is the proper Time for its Inundations. Nay, ſo far was the River from overflowing, that it ran at leaſt two Yards below the Brink of its Channel. After you have deſcended the outermoſt Bank,* continues he, *you go about a Furlong upon the level Strand, before you come to the* immediate *Bank of the River, which is ſo beſet with Buſhes and Trees, ſuch as* Tamariſks, Willows, Oleanders, *&c. that you can ſee no Water, until you have made your Way through them. The River ſeems to be about* 20 *Yards in Breadth, but very deep and muddy, and a little too rapid to ſwim over; and, in this Covert on the Banks, Lions, and other wild Creatures, are ſaid to hide themſelves in Summer, but upon the Inundation of the River, they are forced to diſlodge.* To which the Prophet ſeems to allude in theſe Words, *He ſhall come up like a Lion from the Swelling of* Jordan, *Jer.* xlix. 19.

Q. *What Reaſon can be given why the Almighty gave the* Iſraelites *this miraculous Paſſage over* Jordan, *and why he did not direct them to the Fords, or uſual Places for paſſing over?*

A. That thereby he might inject a Terror into the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, and ſo facilitate the Conqueſt of their Country. On that Side of *Jordan*, the Kings of the Neigbourhood feared no Invaſion. The Depth of the River, eſpecially at the Time of its overflowing, was Barrier ſufficient, they thought, againſt all that the *Iſraelites* could do: For, in thoſe Days, Pontoons were Things never heard of in military Expeditions; and the Stream is (even at this Day) allowed to be too fierce and rapid, for any one to ſwim over: And therefore, as they expected no Danger from that Quarter, and might for that Reaſon draw out no Forces to defend that Side of their Frontier; ſo the ſacred Hiſtorian has taken Care to inform us, that *when all the Kings of the* Amorites, *which were on the Side of* Jordan *weſtward, and all the Kings of the* Canaanites, *which were by the* Sea, *heard, that the Lord had dried up the Waters of* Jordan *from before the Children of* Iſrael, *until they were paſſed over, their Heart melted, neither was there Spirit in them any more.*

Q. *But had not this River ſome ſhallow Places, where the People might paſs over without the Interpoſition of a Miracle?*

A. In all Rivers whatever, there, queſtionleſs, are ſome ſhallower Places than ordinary, or ſome Paſſages, either by Boats or Bridges, that may be called *Fords*; but that the River *Jordan*, at this Time, was either ſo vaſtly overflown, as to render theſe *Fords* impaſſible, or that the *Iſraelites* croſſed it at Places, which the Enemy never thought of, and where none of theſe *Paſſes* were ſtated, is pretty evident from the *Canaanites* making no Preparation to defend the Coaſt on the *River-ſide*, and from the great Conſternation, we find them in, when once they underſtood that the *Jewiſh* Army had got over. For (whatever Opinion we, at this Diſtance of Time, may have of the Matter) they juſtly inferred, that the Suſpenſion of a River could be effected no other Way, than by a divine Power, either *immediately* acting itſelf, or by the *Inſtrumentality* of its Angels: And though there poſſibly may be ſome Inſtances in Hiſtory, wherein, by the Violence of adverſe Winds, the Courſe of Rivers has either been retarded, or driven back; yet, as we read of no ſuch Wind concerning this Miracle; the Time in which he choſe to work it, and the Analogy it bears with what before was wrought at the *Red-ſea*; theſe, and ſeveral other Circumſtances, make this Tranſaction beyond *Compare*, and rank it, not only among thoſe Prodigies, which very rarely come to paſs, but among thoſe ſtupendous Works, which, contrary to the Laws of Nature, the great Author and Ruler of the *Univerſe*, for the Preſervation of his People, and the Manifeſtation of his own Glory, is ſometimes obſerved to do.

Q. Joſhua *tells ths People, that as a certain Sign that God was among them, he would drive out the* Canaanite, *the* Hittite, *and the reſt of the Inhabitants: But what had theſe People done to forfeit their Poſſeſſions?*

A. What the Spirit ſays unto the Church at *Thyatira, I gave her Space to repent of her Fornication, but ſhe repented not; behold, I will caſt her into a Bed, and them that commit Adultery with her into great Tribulation, and I will kill her Children with Death, and give unto every one according to his Works*, is very applicable to the ſeveral Nations in the Land of *Canaan*. Four hundred Years were to intervene, between the Commencement of the Promiſe to *Abraham*, and this Completion of it; and the Reaſon, which God gives for this long Delay, is, that *the Iniquity of the* Amorites (and by the *Amorites*, he means all the other Nations of *Canaan*) *was not yet full: And even though (as the Author of the Book of Wiſdom argues) he could have deſtroyed them all with one rough Word, yet, executing his Judgments by little and little, he gave them Place of Repentance, not being ignorant that they were an haughty Generation, and their Cogitation would never* *be changed:* For inſtead of reforming, the only Effect, which this Delay had, was to make them more confirmed in Wickedneſs, and, becauſe *this Sentence againſt their evil Works was not ſpeedily executed,* therefore were *their Hearts the fuller ſet in them to do Evil.*

What the Nature and Heniouſneſs of their Iniquities were, we may beſt learn from the many Precautions, which God gives his People againſt them; *for he hated them* (as the ſame Author has drawn up the Articles of Accuſation againſt them) *for doing moſt odious Works, of Witchcraft, and wicked Sacrifices; for their merciless murthering of Children, devouring of Man's Fleſh, and feaſting upon Blood;* and if we may ſuppoſe, that God, ſome way or other, had given theſe Nations ſufficient Notice of his intended Severity againſt them, if they did not repent; had abundant of Reaſon to preſerve his own People from the Infection of their *Abominations;* and, before their Extirpation was executed, did, by his Servant *Joſhua,* offer them Conditions of Peace: Though the divine Counſels are a Secret to us, yet, (even upon this Face of Things,) we cannot find any Fault with his Treatment of them, ſince, when he had given them *Space to repent, and they repented not,* his Juſtice was certainly then at Liberty to take what Vengeance, his divine Wiſdom ſhould think fit.

CHAP. IV.

God commands them to carry twelve Stones for a Memorial, out of Jordan; *which is done accordingly. Twelve other Stones ſet up in the midſt of* Jordan. *The People paſs over in Order. God magnifies* Joſhua. *The Prieſts with the Ark commanded to come out of* Jordan. *The Waters return. The Time of this Paſſage. Twelve Stones ſet up at* Gilgal; *and for what purpoſe.*

Q. WHEN *the* Iſraelites *paſſed through* Jordan, *they ſet up twelve Stones for a Memorial: But how could this anſwer the Purpoſe of a Monument, ſince they muſt for the moſt part be covered with Water?*

A. Theſe Stones were not the ſame as a Man could carry upon his Shoulders, *v.* 5. and therefore might be very much larger; and being ſet up in two Rows one above another, they might poſſibly be ſeen, at leaſt ſome times when the Water was low, eſpecially in the ſhallow Parts of it, as it might be ordinarily in this Place, though not at this Time, when *Jordan* overflowed all its Banks. Add to this, that the Waters of *Jordan* are ſaid to be very pure and clear; and therefore, though theſe Stones did not appear above it, yet might they be ſeen in it, either by thoſe who ſtood upon the Shore, becauſe that River was not broad; or at leaſt by thoſe that paſſed in Boats upon the River, who could eaſily diſcern them by the peculiar Noiſe and Motion of the Water occaſioned by the Obſtruction of that Heap of Stones. And this was ſufficient, eſpecially as there was another more diſtinct and viſible Monument of this Miracle ſet up in *Gilgal.*

Q. *What is the Meaning of the laſt Clauſe of the 10th Verſe,* And the People haſted and paſſed over?

A. That is, they paſſed over with Haſte; which is noted as an Argument of their Fear, or Weakneſs of their Faith; as on the contrary, the Prieſts are commended that they ſtood firm, and fixed, and compoſed in their Minds, as well as in the Poſture of their Bodies.

Q. *What Time of the Year was it when the* Iſraelites *paſſed through* Jordan?

A. It was on the 10th Day of the Month *Niſan,* or *March,* and forty Years, wanting five Days, from their coming out of *Egypt,* which was on the 15th Day of this Month. And this was very ſeaſonable for the taking up of the Lambs which were to be uſed four Days after, according to the Law, *Exod.* xii. 3, 6.

Q. *This Paſſage, it ſeems, was in the Time of Harveſt, and yet the Banks of* Jordan *overflowed at that Time: Pray what Time of the Year did the Harveſt, in thoſe Countries, uſually fall?*

A. This is not meant of the Harveſt for Wheat, but for Barley, (which fell ſooner, *Ruth* i. 21. 2. *Sam.* xxi. 9.) as is manifeſt from their keeping of the Paſſover at their firſt Entrance, *Joſh.* v. 10. which Feaſt was kept on the 14th Day of their firſt Month, when they were to bring a Sheaf of their Firſt-Fruits, *Lev.* xxiii. 10. *Deut.* xvi. 9, 10. which were of Barley, as *Joſephus* affirms, and is evident from the Thing itſelf. So that this Harveſt, in thoſe hot Countries, fell very early in the Spring, when Rivers uſed to ſwell moſt; partly, becauſe of the Rains that had fallen in the Winter, and partly becauſe of the Snows which then melt into Water and come into the Rivers; for which Reaſon the ſame overflowing of Water, which is here aſcribed to *Jordan,* is by other Authors aſcribed to *Euphrates, Tygris,* the *Rhine,* and *Maine,* &c. And this was the particular Time God choſe for this Work, partly that the Miracle might be more glorious in itſelf, make the deeper Impreſſion on the *Iſraelites,* and be the more amazing and terrible to the *Canaanites;* and partly that the *Iſraelites* might be entertained at their Entrance with more plentiful and comfortable Proviſions.

CHAP. V.

The Amorites *and* Canaanites *terrified at the News of the* Iſraelites *Paſſage over* Jordan. *The Males born in the Wilderneſs are circumciſed. The Paſſover is celebrated. They eat of the Corn of the Land, and Manna ceaſes. A Viſion of a Man completely armed appears to* Joſhua.

Q. JOSHUA *is commanded, v.* 2. *to circumciſe the Children of* Iſrael a ſecond Time; *Pray why is this called* the ſecond Time *of performing that Rite?*

A. The Command which God gives *Joſhua,* concerning the Rite of Circumciſion, is thus,—— *Make thee ſharp Knives, and circumciſe again the Children of* Iſrael, *the ſecond Time, v.* 2. and after the Rite was performed, God ſaid, *This Day have I rolled away the Reproach of* Egypt *from off you,* Ver. 9. Both of which Paſſages have given no ſmall Trouble to Commentators. The *ſharp Knives* are allowed to be (what our *marginal* Note calls them) *Knives of Flint,* which Stones could not but be plentiful in the Mountains of *Arabia,* and, when made very ſharp, were the Knives commonly made uſe of in the *Eaſtern* Countries: But St. *Jerom* himſelf (as great an *Hebraiſt* as he was) could not find out, what was this Circumciſion, which was to paſs upon the *Iſraelites* the *ſecond Time.* Some of the *Jews,* from theſe Words of *Jeremiah, I will puniſh the circumciſed, that has a Foreſkin,* Ch. ix. 25. have undertaken to prove, that it was poſſible to bring the *Foreſkin* again by Art, which the *Iſraelites* had done, during their Abode in the Wilderneſs, and, for this Reaſon, were ordered to be circumciſed afreſh, and thoſe *Chriſtians*, who have embraced this Notion, pretend to ſupport it by the Words of St. *Paul*, *If any Man is called, being circumciſed, let him not get a Foreskin again*, as it is in the *Greek*, or, as we render it, *let him not become uncircumciſed*. But whether the Recovery of a *Prepuce* be a Thing probable or not, 'tis certain, that all the Difficulty of the Words ariſes from miſunderſtanding the Idiom of the *Original*, and may eaſily be remov'd, if they were tranſlated, or paraphras'd thus,— *Let the Ceremony of Circumciſion, which has been ſo long diſcontinued, be renewed, as it was once heretofore.* While the *Iſraelites* lived in *Egypt*, we do not read of any Neglect of this Rite of Circumciſion among them; but, while they abode in the Wilderneſs, there are ſeveral Reaſons, that might oblige them to omit it, until they arrived in the promiſed Land, when they were to renew the Ordinance of the Paſſover, and, previous to that, were all to be circumciſed; becauſe no uncircumciſed Perſon, nor any one who had a Son, or a Man-ſervant in his Houſe uncircumciſed, was capable of being admitted to it, *Exod.* xii. 43.

The rolling away the Reproach of Egypt, is ſuppoſed, by ſome, to relate to the *Reproaches*, which the *Egyptians* uſed to caſt upon the *Iſraelites*, viz. that the *Egyptians*, ſeeing the *Iſraelites* wander ſo long in the Wilderneſs, reproached and flouted them, as if they were brought to be deſtroyed there, and not conducted into the promiſed Land, from which Reproaches God now delivered them, when, by enjoining the *Circumciſion*, he gave them Aſſurance, that they ſhould ſhortly enjoy *the Country*, which no uncircumciſed Perſon might inherit. Our learned *Spencer* thinks *the Reproach of* Egypt to be the *Slavery*, to which they had long been there ſubject, but were now fully declared a free People, by receiving the Mark of the Seed of *Abraham*, and being made Heirs of the promiſed Land. But the moſt common Opinion is, that, by the *Reproach of Egypt* is meant, nothing elſe but *Uncircumciſion*, with which the *Iſraelites* always upbraided other People, and particularly the *Egyptians*, with whom they had lived ſo long, and were beſt acquainted; and, admitting this to be the true (as it is moſt unconſtrained) Senſe, this Paſſage is a plain Proof, that the *Iſraelites* cou'd not learn the Rite of Circumciſion from the *Egyptians* (as ſome pretend) but that the *Egyptians*, contrarywiſe, muſt have had it from them.

Q. *How came it that the* Iſraelites *ſo long omitted the Rite of Circumciſion, ſo ſolemnly and ſtrictly enjoined*, Gen. xvii. 13, 14.

A. He, that is born in thy Houſe, or he, that is bought with thy Money, muſt needs be circumcis'd, and my Covenant ſhall be in your Fleſh for an everlaſting Covenant; and the uncircumciſed Man-child, whoſe Fleſh of his Fore-skin is not circumcis'd, that Soul ſhall be cut off from his People; he hath broken my Covenant: Theſe are the Words of the Precept, and they ſeem to be ſo very urgent and expreſs, that one would really think the Ordinance was intended, not only for a Diſtinction between *Jew* and *Gentile*, but for an Inſtitution likewiſe, to take away the Guilt of *Original* Sin: And yet, even upon this Suppoſition, the People's frequent Moving from Place to Place, the Uncertainty of their Decampments, and the Inconvenience of their Travelling, which would make it dangerous for Children to be circumcis'd before a March, might be ſome Apology for their omitting the Obſervation of this Rite, eveu though they had no divine Diſpenſation for it.

It is one of the general Rules among the *Jews*, that *no Precept* (always meaning no *ceremonial* Precept, for ſome Precepts there are, that were to be obſerved, even at the Expence of their Lives) *whoſe Obſervation occaſions Death, is to be attended to*, becauſe the Scriptures ſay, that *he, who obſerveth theſe Laws, ſhall live*, not die, *by them*. But how frivolons ſoever this Reaſon may be, 'tis certain, that, in Caſe they apprehended any Danger from the Operation, they carried this Diſpenſation ſo far, as to exempt the next Child from having this Ordinance paſs upon him, if ſo be that his Brother before him died of the Wound, which he received in Circumciſion: And, for a farther Excuſe, they add, that, during their Sojourning in the Wilderneſs, for one Crime or other, their Forefathers were generally under the divine Diſpleaſure, in which Condition it would have been a Profanation of the *Sacrament* to have adminiſter'd it.

But then, if the other Notion of this Ordinance be admitted, *viz.* that it was no more than a *Note* of Diſtinction between the *Iſraelites* and other Nations, as the *Iſraelites* were now alone in the Wilderneſs, there was no Danger of their Mixing with others, and conſequently, leſs Reaſon for their Obſervation of this *diſtinguiſhing* Rite, until they ſhould enter upon the Poſſeſſion of a Country, where every Kind of of Idolatry ſurrounded them on all Hands.

Thus, whether we look upon the Rite of Circumciſion, as a Sacrament of *Initiation* into the *Jewiſh* Church, or a Character of Diſtinction only between them and other People, the *Iſraelites* might without the Imputation of much Guilt, omit the outward Obſervance of it, if ſo be that they did but attend to what was the true Intent and Meaning of it, *viz. the Circumciſing the Foreskin of their Hearts; for he is not a* Jew, *as St.* Paul excellently argues, *who is one outwardly, neither is that Circumciſion, which is outward in the Fleſh; but he is a* Jew *who is one inwardly, and Circumciſion is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whoſe Praiſe is not of Men, but of God.*

Q. *Juſt as* Joſhua *was going to beſiege the City, a Perſon appears to him cloathed in Armour, and his Sword drawn in his Hand: Can you tell me who this Perſon was?*

A. This is not ſo well agreed among Commentators. Some are of Opinion, that it was an Angel, who, becauſe the *Hebrew* calls him *Gebir*, is ſuppoſed to be *Gabriel*; but there are ſeveral Reaſons, in this very Account of his Apparition, which denote him to be a divine, and not a created Being. For in the firſt Place, beſides his aſſuming the Title of *the Captain of the Hoſt of the Lord*, (an Image, under which God himſelf is frequently repreſented in Scripture) *Joſhua*'s calling him *Jehovah*, or the *Lord*, a Name, which neither *Joſhua* ſhould have given, nor he accepted of, had he been no more than an Angel; his falling down and worſhipping him, which he durſt not have done, (ſince God alone is to be adored) nor would the other have permitted, but rather have reproved him, as we find one of them did St. *John*, *Rev.* xxii. 10. are the ſureſt Evidence of the Divinity of his Perſon. For, when inſtead of reproving him for doing him too much Honour, we find him commanding him to do him more, by commanding him to looſe *his Shoes from his Foot*, inſiſting upon the higheſt Acknowledgment of a divine Preſence, that was uſed among the *Eaſtern* Nations, we cannot

not but think ourſelves obliged, with a learned *Rabbin*, freely to confeſs, that *this Angel, who ſuffered himſelf to be worſhipped, and by whoſe Preſence the Place, where he appeared, was ſanctified, ſo that* Joſhua *was commanded to* put off his Shoes, *no doubt was the very ſame, whom all the Angels of Heaven do worſhip.*

Q. *The People of* Iſrael, *went round the Walls of* Jericho *every Day, for ſeven Days ſucceſſively, one of which Days muſt neceſſarily be the* Sabbath: *Was not this a Breach of the* fourth Commandment?

A. The Obſervation of the *Sabbath-day* was a Precept of ſevere Injunction; but, whether the Deſtruction of *Jericho* happened on that Day, or any other of the Week, (as the *Iſraelites* were ordered to compaſs the City for ſeven Days ſucceſſively,) 'tis certain, that one of theſe Days muſt neceſſarily have been the Sabbath, and yet we muſt not ſuppoſe that they committed any great Offence, in what they did, becauſe the ſame Authority which made the Law for the Obſervation of it, gave now a full Licenſe for the Profanation of it: The Perſon, who met *Joſhua*, and preſcribed the Form of the Siege of *Jericho*, by his Aſſumption of divine Honours and Appellations, was doubtleſs the ſame, who delivered the Law from *Sinai*: And therefore we need not queſtion, but that now he acted in as full Power, in ſuſpending (ſince his Orders could not be executed without ſuch Suſpenſion) as he then did, in enjoining the Obſervation of the Sabbath; and 'tis in Alluſion (as ſome imagine) to this very Paſſage, that our bleſſed Saviour pronounces that Maxim in the Goſpel, *the Sabbath was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath.*

However this be, 'tis certain, that, before our Saviour's Days, the *Jews* carried the Obſervation of the Sabbath, to a great Degree of Rigour. In the Time of the *Maccabees* they would not defend themſelves, againſt the Aſſault of their Enemies on that Day, but yielded their Throats to be cut, rather than ſtir an Hand in their own Defence: But having found the Folly and Miſchief of this idle Superſtition, they made a Decree, that a neceſſary Defence of a Man's Life was not within the Prohibition of the *fourth Commandment*; but however, what was more than this, though it tended to the Prevention of the worſt Deſigns againſt them, was accounted illegal; whereas this Example of their Forefathers, inveſting, if not ſacking *Jericho* on the Sabbath-day, might have taught them, one would think, that in Caſes of this Nature, it was allowable, not only to defend themſelves but to prevent their Enemies annoying them; nay, even to fall upon, and deſtroy them, whenever a favourable Opportunity preſented itſelf on that Day.

CHAP. VI.

Jericho *ſhut up. The Prieſts carry the Ark round it ſeven Days, and on the ſeventh ſeven Times; the Prieſts blow the Trumpets; the People ſhout; the City accurſed; nothing to be taken as plunder, but all conſecrated; the Walls fall down; Men, Women, and Cattle deſtroyed;* Rahab *and her Kindred ſaved.* Joſhua *curſes the Man who ſhould rebuild* Jericho.

Q. WERE *not* Rams-horns *very improper to make Trumpets of?*

A. Some have thought ſo, becauſe they are not ſo eaſily perforated, nor can they ever be brought to make a Sound, ſhrill and extenſive enough for their particular Purpoſes; and therefore they conceive, that Braſs, or Silver, or any other Metal had been more convenient for this Uſe; whereupon they derive the Word *Jobel*, in the ſingular (which we render a *Ram's Horn*,) not from the *Arabick*, which ſignifies a *Ram*, but from *Jubal*, the Name of him who was tht firſt Inventor of muſical Inſtruments; and, according to this Senſe, the Trumpets, which the Prieſts upon this Occaſion, uſed, may be ſaid to have been faſhioned, *according to thoſe, which* Jubal *firſt invented.*

This Interpratation of the Words (which is no bad one) removes all the Incongruity, that may ſeem to ariſe from the Matter, whereof theſe Trumpets were compoſed; but then it is to be conſidered, that, as the firſt Inſtruments of this Kind were probably made of Horn, ſo has the Notion of the Impoſſiblity of boring a Ram's Horn, been ſufficiently confuted by our learned *Spencer*. The Truth is, every one knows, that, in in the Inſide of it, there is a ſofter Part, which may be drawn out by Art; after which it is hollow all the Way up, except four or five Inches towards the Top, Part of which is ſawed off, to make it broad enough for the Mouth, and then the reſt is eaſily bored: But whether there is any Foundation for that Fancy of the *Jews* that theſe Horns were retained, in the Proclamation of ſome of their greateſt Feſtivals, in Memory of *Iſaac*'s being reſcued from his Father *Abraham*'s Knife, by the Subſtitution of a Ram in his Stead, is a Point, that we leave to the Speculations of the curious.

Q. *But is it poſſible to conceive that there ſhould be Force enough in the Sound of theſe Trumpets to throw down the Walls of* Jericho?

A. Whatever Materials theſe Trumpets were made of, it is impoſſible to conceive, that there ſhould be any Power in their Sound to demoliſh Cities; and though the Noiſe of a great Number of People might be very loud, yet ſtill it would require a Miracle in *Joſhua*, to know what was the juſt Proportion between their Noiſe, and the Strength of the Walls of *Jericho*, ſince the leaſt Deviation in this reſpect would have defeated the whole Experiment.

What the Effect of Gun-powder, or of other ſulphureous Matter, fired under Ground, or in the Bowels of the Earth, is, no one, that has ſeen either the Springing of a Mine, or felt the Convulſions of an Earthquake, needs be told; but that no Stratagem of this Kind could be employed in the Siege of *Jericho*, is manifeſt, becauſe the Invention of Gun-powder is a novel Thing, nor had the *Iſraelites* been long enough on the *weſtern Side of Jordan*, to have undermined its Walls, even tho' they had had the Secret of ſome *inflammatory Stratum*, to have lodged under them. On the contrary, the whole Proceſs of this Siege (if we may ſo call it) was managed at ſuch a Rate, as plainly diſcovered an Expectance of a Miracle to be wrought; for had not this been the Caſe, inſtead of ſauntring about the Walls for ſeven Days, they ſhould have been working in their *Trenches*, and *carrying on their Approaches*, as we now call it.

The Art of War was then but in its Infancy; and, as the Manner of undermining and blowing up the moſt ponderous Bodies was what the Ancients were unacquainted with, ſo was the *Battering-Ram* an Invention of a later Date, than ſome imagine.

Pliny indeed ſeems to ſay, that *Epeus* firſt made uſe of it at the Siege of *Troy*; but in all Probability, *Ezekiel* is the earlieſt Author, that mentions this Machine, and perhaps the firſt Time, that it was employed, was, under *Nebuchadnezzar*, at the Siege of *Jeruſalem*.

But there is no Need to ranſack Hiſtory, for the Confutation of this Syſtem, when they who propoſe it, do nevertheleſs acknowledge, that, though the Walls of *Jericho* might have fallen, without any extraordinary Act of the divine Power, yet by the Circumſtances of the whole Account, it appears, that this *Event* was altogether miraculous.

Q. *Why did* Joſhua *pronounce a Curſe or Execration upon the Perſon who ſhould rebuild this City?*

A. The Words of *Joſhua*'s Execration are. *Curſed be the Man before the Lord, that raiſeth up, and buildeth this City* Jericho; *he ſhall lay the Foundation thereof in his Firſt-born, and in his youngeſt Son ſhall he ſet up the Gates of it*, Joſh. vi. 26. "This Anathema (ſays *Maimonides*) was pronounced, that the Miracle of the Subverſion of *Jericho* might be kept in perpetual Memory; for whoſoever ſaw the Walls ſunk deep in the Earth (*as he underſtands it*) would clearly diſcern, that this was not the Form of a Building, deſtroyed by Men, but miraculouſly thrown down by God." *Hiel* however in the Reign of *Ahab*, either not remembering, or not believing this Denunciation, was ſo taken with the Beauty of its Situation, that he rebuilt *Jericho*, and (as the Sacred Hiſtory informs us) *laid the Foundation thereof in* Abiram, *his Firſt-born, and ſet up the Gates thereof in his youngeſt Son* Segub, *according to the Word of the Lord, which he ſpoke by* Joſhua, *the Son of* Nun, 1 Kin. xvi. 34. However, after that *Hiel* had ventured to rebuild it, no Scruple was made of inhabiting it; for it afterwards became famous upon many Accouuts. Here the *Prophet* ſweetened the Waters of the Spring, that ſupplied it, and the neighbouring Countries: Here *Herod* built a a ſumptuous Palace: It was the Dwelling-place of *Zacheus*; and was honoured with the Preſence of *Chriſt*, who vouchſafed likewiſe to work ſome Miracles here.

Q. *Was not* Joſhua's *denouncing an Anathema over the vanquiſhed City a Thing unprecedented, or a Token of a furious and implacable Spirit?*

A. No; for it has been practiſed by the greateſt Generals of other Nations; thus *Agamemnon*, after he had taken *Troy*, denounced a Curſe upon thoſe who ſhould attempt to rebuild it; the *Romans* publiſhed a Decree of Execration againſt them, who ſhould do the like to *Carthage*; and when *Craſſus* had demoliſhed *Sidon* (which had been a lurking Place to the Tyrant *Glaucias*) he wiſhed the greateſt Evils imaginable upon the Head of that Man, who ſhould but ſo much as build a Wall about the Place, where it once ſtood.

CHAP. VII.

Achan *takes of the accurſed Thing. God is angry with* Iſrael. Joſhua *ſends three Thouſand Men againſt* Ai, *they are diſcomfited.* Joſhua *and the Elders are aſtoniſhed. God tells him the Cauſe of their Defeat, and enjoins a Lot*; Achan *taken, his Confeſſion and Execution.*

Q. *In the firſt Verſe we are acquainted with* Achan's *Sin, on Account of which the Anger of the Lord was kindled againſt the Children of* Iſrael: *But why againſt the whole People for the Sin of one Man?*

A. All of them were puniſhed for their own Sins, whereof each had a ſufficient Proportion; but God took this Occaſion to inflict the Puniſhment upon the whole Society; partly becauſe divers of them might be guilty of this Sin, either by coveting what he actually did, or by concealing of his Fault, which, it is probable, could not be unknown to others; or by not ſorrowing for it, and endeavouring to purge themſelves from it; partly to make Sin the more hateful, as being the Cauſe of ſuch dreadful and publick Judgments; and partly to oblige all the Members of every Society to be more circumſpect in the ordering of their own actions, and more diligent to watch over one another, and prevent the Miſcarriages of their Brethren; which is a great Bleſſing to them, and to the whole Society, and worthy to be purchaſed by a ſharp Affliction upon the whole Body.

Q. *The Divine Diſpleaſure againſt* Iſrael *was ſhewn by ſuffering them to be defeated before* Ai: *Was this a City of any Note?*

A. We have this Place mentioned in the Hiſtory of *Abraham*, who, both before, and after his going into *Egypt*, pitched his Tent between *Bethel* and *Ai*, or *Hai*, as it was then called; and from both *Gen.* xii. 8. and *Joſh.* vii. 2. it appears, that this City lay to the *Eaſt* of *Bethel*, about three Leagues from *Jericho*, and one from *Bethel*, as *Maſius* informs us: And the Reaſon, why *Joſhua* ſent ſo ſmall a Detachment againſt it, was, becauſe the Place, in itſelf, was neither ſtrong nor large. For, when it was taken, the Number of the ſlain both in it and *Bethel*, which (as ſome think) was confederate with it, were but *twelve Thouſand, both of Men and Women*, Joſh. viii. 25. The Providence of God however was very viſible in ſending ſo ſmall a Party againſt *Ai*: For, if the Flight of three Thouſand Men put the *Iſraelites* into ſuch a Conſternation, as we read, *Joſh.* vii. 5, 6. what a Condition would they have been in, if all the People had been diſcomfited, as doubtleſs it would have happened, while the Guilt of *Achan*'s Sacrilege remained unpuniſhed.

Q. *How did* Joſhua *and the People behave themſelves after this Defeat before* Ai?

A. The Spirits of the Army, (as *Joſephus* tells us) were ſunk upon this Diſorder, and caſt down into ſuch a Deſperation of better Things to come, that, after they had ſpent the whole Day in faſting, weeping and mourning, *Joſhua* addreſſed himſelf, with more than ordinary Importunity to Almighty God, in Words to this Effect. *It is not any Temerity, O Lord, or Ambition of our own, that has brought us hither, to make War upon this People, but a pure Deference and Reſpect to the Perſuaſion of thy Servant* Moſes, *that has incited us to this Undertaking, and not without a Warrant of many Signs and Miracles, to convince us that he had Reaſon and Authority of his Side, when he told us, that thou thy ſelf hadſt promiſed us the Poſſeſſion of this Country, and to give us Victory over all our Enemies. But what a Change is here, all on a ſudden, in the Diſappointment of our Hopes, and in the Loſs of our Friends! As if either* Moſes's *Prediction had not been of divine Inſpiration, or, otherwiſe, thy Promiſes and Purpoſes variable. If this be the Beginning of a War, we cannot but dread the farther Progreſs of it, for Fear that this Miſcarriage, upon the firſt Experiment, ſhould prove only the Earneſt of greater Evils to come. But, Lord, thou alone, that art able to give us Relief, help*

help us, and ſave us. Vouchſafe unto us Comfort, and Victory; and be graciouſly pleaſed to preſerve us from the Snare of deſpairing for the future.

Q. *But why were* Joſhua *and the People ſo miſerably dejected at ſo trifling a Defeat of a ſmall Detachment of their Army?*

A. It may be doubted, perhaps, whether the *Iſraelites* were a People of the greateſt Bravery in the World; but it may truly be ſaid, that there was no neceſſity for their being ſo; becauſe, upon all Occaſions, they had the Lord of *Hoſts* to protect them, and to fight their Battles for them. Supported by his Aid, *how did one of them chaſe a Thouſand, and two put ten Thouſand to flight, except their Rock had ſold them, and the Lord had ſhut them up!* But when this was the Caſe, no Wonder at all, that *the Hearts of the People melted away, and became like Water.*

The ſhort of their Story was this,---They had all along hitherto been victorious; had ſubdued a Country beyond *Jordan*, paſſed that River, and conquered the Capitol of the adjacent Province by Miracles: And now, having ſent out a Party, to ſummons a ſmall Place to ſurrender, upon the firſt Sally, that the Inhabitants make, they are, all on a ſudden ſeized with a Panick, forget their Courage, and flee, without ſo much as ſtriking a Stroke. This, they could not but perceive, was the Effect of God's Diſpleaſure, and therefore conſidering themſelves in an Enemy's Country, they had juſt Reaſon to dread that, if God ſhould deſert them, in this Situation of their Affairs, *the People of the Land*, hearing the Report of their Defeat, would come, and, as *Joſhua* expreſſes it, *environ them round, and cut off their Name from the Earth.*

Good Reaſon therefore had the *Iſraelites* to be diſconſolate, when they found that God, to whom they owed all their Valour and Victories, had forſaken them. But, in the mean Time, how did they behave upon this Occaſion? Why, *they fell to the Earth upon their Knees*, in humble Supplication to God for Mercy; they continued all the Day long in faſting and praying, and expreſſed their Sorrow, and the Senſe of their Unworthineſs, with the uſual Tokens of Grief; and was not this better, than to become obdurate under God's afflicting Hand, as were the *Egyptians?* Nay, was not this the very Behaviour, by which the *Ninevites* moved the divine Mercy to reverſe the Sentence of Exciſion, that had gone out againſt them? So that, all Things conſidered, the *Iſraelites*, in this Regard, are not to be blamed; ſince they, who had loſt the *Rock of their Might*, and had *the Terrors the Lord ſet in Array againſt them*, were far *from fearing where no Fear was.*

Q. *In diſcovering the guilty Perſon,* Joſhua *made Uſe of Lots; pray in what Manner was this done?*

A. Some *Jewiſh* Doctors are of Opinion, that, in the Diſcovery of the guilty Perſon, there was no uſe made of Lots at all, but that all *Iſrael*, being ordered to paſs by the High-prieſt, who, on this Occaſion, had his *Pectoral* on, in which were the twelve Stones, with the Names of the twelve Tribes engraven on them, when the Tribe, to which the guilty Perſon belonged, was called, the Stone, in which was the Name of that Tribe, changed Colour, and turned black; and ſo it did, when the Family, the Houſhold, and the Perſon was called; but this is a mere Fiction. There is much more Probability in the Opinion of thoſe, who ſuppoſe, that, at firſt, twelve *Lots* or *Tickets* were put into one *Urn*, on each of which was written the Name of one of theſe twelve Tribes: That, when one of the twelve Tribes was found guilty, then were there as many Lots put in, as there was Families in that Tribe; after that, as many, as there were Houſholders in that Family; and, at laſt, as many, as were Heads in that Houſhold, until the Criminal was detected: But others will have it, that this was done by the High-prieſt alone, who, by a Divine Inſpiration, at that Time, was enabled, without any more to do, to declare who the culpable Perſon was.

Q. Achan, *at Length, is found to be the Criminal, and upon* Joſhua's *Admonition, confeſſes, that, among other Things he had ſecreted a goodly* Babyloniſh *Garment; wherein conſiſted its Goodlineſs or Richneſs?*

A. In the Original, this Robe is called, *a Garment of Shinar*, i. e. of *Babylon*; and the general Opinion is, that the Richneſs and Excellency of it conſiſted, not ſo much in the Stuff, whereof it was made, as in the Colour, whereof it was died, which moſt ſuppoſed to have been *Scarlet*, a Colour in high Eſteem among the Ancients, and for which the *Babylonians* were juſtly famous. *Bochart* however maintains, that the Colour of this Robe was various, and not all of one Sort; that the ſcarlet Colour the *Babylonians* firſt received from *Tyre*, but the Party-colour, whether ſo woven, or wrought with the Needle, was of their own Invention, for which he produces many Paſſages out of *Heathen* Authors. However this be, 'tis certain, that the Robe could not fail of being a very rich and ſplendid one, and therefore captivated either *Achan*'s Pride, or rather Covetouſneſs, ſince his Purpoſe ſeems to have been, not ſo much to wear it, as to ſell it for a large Price.

Q. *Was* Achan *burnt with his Family; ſince it is ſaid,* v. 25. All *Iſrael* ſtoned him with Stones, and burned them, (his Family and Goods) with Fire, after they had ſtoned them with Stones?

A. Since the Law againſt Sacrilege condemns Tranſgreſſors to the Flames, and God commanded the Perſon, here guilty, to be burnt accordingly, *Joſh.* vii. 18. the *Jews* affirm, that *Achan* was actually burnt; and, whereas it is ſaid in the Text, that he *was ſtoned*, they think that this was done, not judicially, but accidentally by the People, who were ſo highly provoked, that they could not forbear caſting Stones at him, as he was led to Execution.

Q. *But was it not both cruel and unjuſt, to involve* Achan's *Children in their Father's Puniſhment?*

A. It is a Law of God's own enacting, that the *Fathers ſhall not be put to Death for the Children, neither ſhall the Children be put to Death for the Fathers, but every Man ſhall be put to Death for their own Sin:* But then we are to conſider, that this Law was given to Man, and not to God, who has certainly a more abſolute Right and Sovereignty over Men, than one Man has over another. Upon the Suppoſition then that *Achan*'s Family were not acceſſary to their Father's Crime, yet God, who gave them Life, had undoubtedly a full Power to take it away, at what Time, or in what Manner he thought fit; and if, in Caſes of High-treaſon among Men, it is thought reaſonable to devolve ſome Part of the Parent's Penalty upon the Children, there is this farther Argument why *Achan*'s Family ſhould be made to ſuffer with him, becauſe God could not expreſs his

Severity

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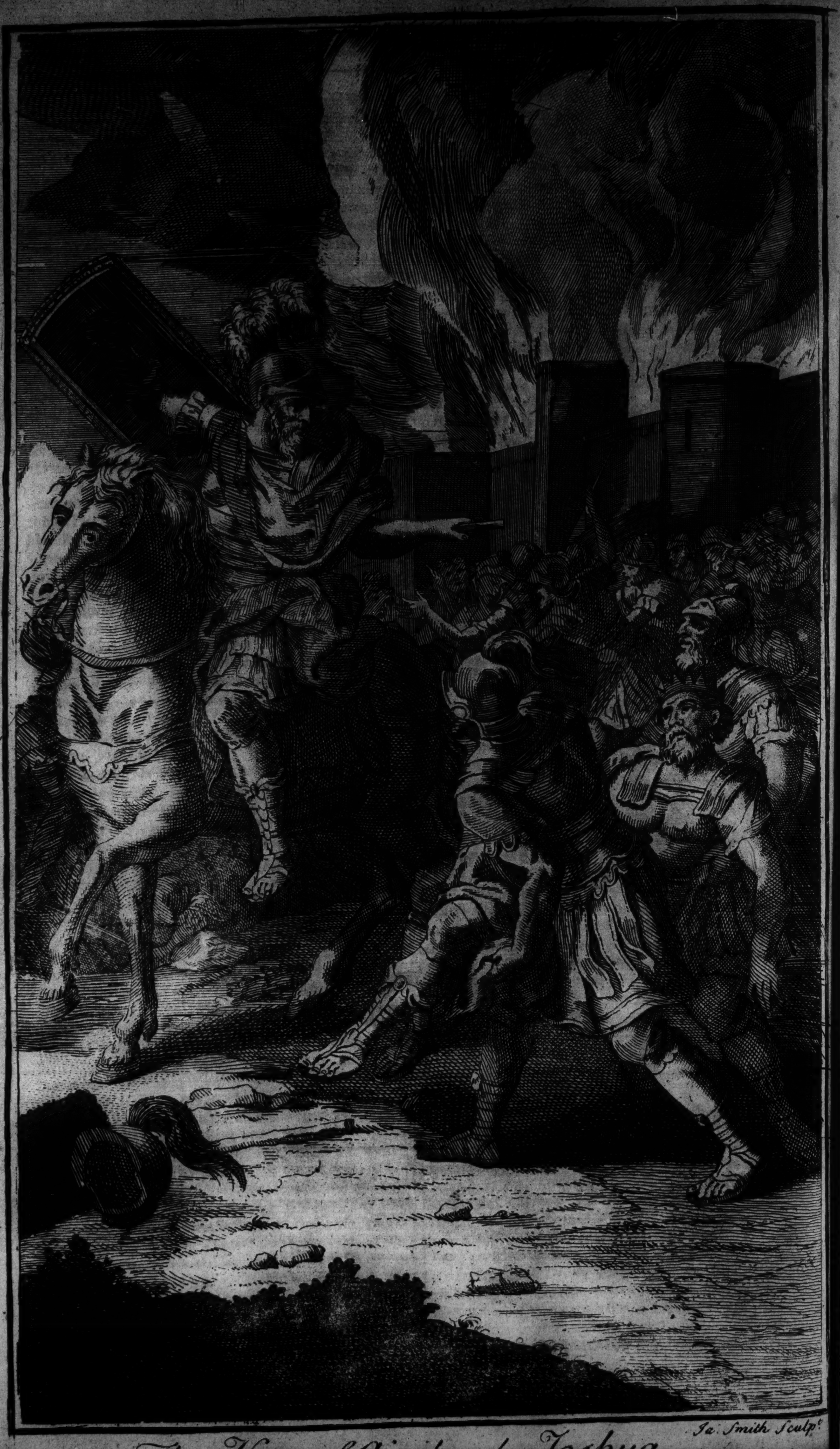
JOSHUA CHAP. VIII.



Ja. Smith Sculp.

The King of Ai taken by Joshua.

Severity againſt Sin, nor take their Lives away, at a more convenient Opportunity, than in the Beginning of a new Empire, and when each Man's Right and Property was going to be ſettled; that ſuch a dreadful Example of his Indignation againſt *Stealth*, might deter others, if not for their own, at leaſt for their dear Children's Sake, to abſtain from ſuch dangerous and pernicious Practices: The *Jews* have a Maxim, *that he, who is an Ascomplice in any Crime, is as culpable as the Perſon, who commits it*; and therefore, if we ſuppoſe that *Achan*'s Family was privy to what their Father had done, and did conceal it, there could be no Injuſtice in including them in the Puniſhment. It may be pretended perhaps, that ſome of them were Infants, and ſo muſt be deemed innocent; but the Text ſays nothing of this; it only calls them Sons and Daughters, and, conſidering that *Achan*, in all Probability, was an old Man, as being the fifth Deſcendant from *Judah*, it ſeems moſt likely, that his Children were grown up, and ſo capable of knowing, and of either concealing or diſcovering the Fact.

But, after all, there is no Occaſion for our running ourſelves into any Difficulty. The Text does not ſay, neither is it any ways implied, that *Achan*'s Sons and Daughters were executed with him. In the Sentence denounced againſt him, we find no Mention made of them, and why then ſhould we ſuppoſe, that they were Partakers in his Puniſhment, any other ways, than as they were brought out to be Spectators of it? and a piercing Sight, no doubt, it was, for Perſons, ſo nearly related, to behold the ſad Fate of their Chief, firſt ſtoned to Death, and then with all his Goods and Chattels, as well the accurſed Things, for which he was condemned, committed to the Flames. *His Oxen, and Aſſes, and Sheep*, are here taken Notice of, to let us ſee, that *Achan* was a *wealthy* Man, and therefore inexcuſable in committing this Fact: And, tho' they were not capable of Sin, nor conſequently of Puniſhment, properly ſo called; yet, as they were made for Man's Uſe, they might fairly die for his Inſtruction; *viz.* to convince him of the ſad and contageous Nature of Sin, which even involves innocent Creatures in its Plagues; and *emblematically* to ſhew him, how much ſorer puniſhments are reſerved for Man, who, having a Law given for the Conduct of his Life, and the Gifts of *Reaſon* and *Will* to reſtrain him from the Tranſgreſſion of it, will adventure upon Things forbidden, and thereby contract greater Guilt, and draw upon himſelf ſeverer Expreſſions of the divine Wrath.

CHAP. VIII.

Joſhua, *again encouraged, renews his Attempt againſt* Ai, *which he takes by a Stratagem; the King made Priſoner; the Inhabitants put to the Sword; the Cattle and Goods given to the Soldiers for Plunder; the King hanged.* Joſhua *builds an Altar, offers thereon, and writes the Law upon Stones. The Bleſſings and Curſes read upon the Mountains* Gerizzim *and* Ebal.

Q. *In the Account of this ſecond Attack upon* Ai, *the Narration ſeems ſomewhat obſcure; and to make three ſeveral Parties, one of* 30000, verſe 3. *one of* 5000, verſe 12. *which may ſeem to be two ſeveral Ambuſhes; and a third of all the People,* v. 5, 11. *Pray explain this Matter.*

A. Some are of Opinion, that this Detachment of thirty Thouſand made up the whole Force, that was employed in this Expedition againſt *Ai*; and that, out of *theſe, five Thouſand* were ſent to lie in Ambuſh, that, at a convenient Time, they might ſet Fire to the City: But this is ſo directly contrary to God's Command of *Joſhua's taking all the People of War with him*, which accordingly, in Chap. viii. 3, 11. we are told he did, that there is no foundation for it: And therefore it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the whole Body, deſign'd for the Ambuſcade, conſiſted of thirty Thouſand Men, and that the five Thouſand, mention'd in the 12th Verſe, was a ſmall Party, detach'd from theſe, in order to creep cloſer to the City, while the five and twenty Thouſand kept themſelves abſcond behind the Mountains, until a proper Signal was given, both from the City, when this ſmall Party had taken it, and from the grand Army, when they had repuls'd the Enemy, that then they might come out from their Ambuſh, and intercept them, as they were making their Flight.

Q. *It is ſaid,* v. 32. *That he wrote upon the Stones a Copy of the Law of* Moſes, *which he wrote in the Preſence of the Children of* Iſrael: What is meant here by the Law of *Moſes*?

A. Some fancy all the five Books of *Moſes*, others only the Book of *Deuteronomy*, which is more likely than the other, but both too long, for theſe Stones to contain, or for *Joſhua* to write *in the Preſence of all* Iſrael. Others therefore think, that only the Ten Commandments, or ſome other *Compendium* of the *Moſaick* Law, or not unlikely a Copy of the Covenant, by which the Children of *Iſrael* acknowledged that they held the Land of *Canaan* of God, upon Condition, that they obſerv'd his Laws, to which they and their Poſterity had obliged themſelves; for this was the third Time, that the Covenant between God and his People was renewed; and therefore the Contents of that Covenant might be very proper, at this Time, to be thus *monumentally* recorded. *Patrick* on Deut. xxvii. 3. and Joſh. viii. 32.

CHAP. IX.

THE Kings of Canaan, *hearing of* Joſhua's *Exploits, confederate againſt him. The* Gibeonites, *feigning themſelves to be of a far Country, obtain a league; the Deceit diſcover'd, but the Articles are confirmed on the part of* Iſrael; *but for a Puniſhment are condemned to eternal Slavery.*

Q. IT *has been a Matter of Diſpute among the Learned, whether the* Gibeonites *could, with a good Conſcience, pretend that they were Foreigners, and tell a Lie to ſave their Lives: What ſay you?*

A. To this *Puffendorf* thus replies. *The Artifice of the* Gibeonites, *ſays he, had nothing blameable in it, nor does it properly deſerve the Name of a Lie: For what Crime is there in any one's making uſe of an innocent Fiction, in order to elude the Fury of an Enemy, that would deſtroy all before them? Nor did the* Iſraelites *indeed properly receive any Damage from this Impoſture; for what does any looſe, in not ſhedding the Blood of another, when he has it in his Power, to take from him all his Subſtance, after having ſo weaken'd and diſarm'd him, that he is no more able to rebel againſt him?* But the Opinion of this great Man ſeems to be a little erroneous in this caſe. Had the *Iſraelites* indeed been a Pack of common Murtherers, who, without any Commiſſion from Heaven, were carrying Blood and Deſolation into Countries, where they had no Right; or had the *Gibeonites* been ignorant, that a miraculous Providence conducted theſe Conquerors, the Fraud, which they here put upon them, might then be deem'd innocent: For there is no Law that obliges us, under the Pretence of Sincerity, to ſubmit to ſuch Incendiaries, and mercileſs Uſurpers, as are for ſetting Fire to our Cities, and putting us and our Families to the Edge of the Sword. But the Caſe of the *Gibeonites* was particular; and if, in other Things, they went contrary to Truth, in this they certainly adher'd to it, when they told *Joſhua*, *We are come, becauſe of the Name of the Lord thy God, for we have heard of the Fame of him, and all that he did in* Egypt, *and all that he did to the two Kings of the* Amorites, *that were beyond* Jordan, *&c.* Joſh. ix. 9, 10. The Idea, which they had conceiv'd of the God of *Iſrael*, ſhould have put them upon ſome other Expedient, than that of Lying and Deceit: They ſhould have enquir'd (as far as the obſcure Diſpenſation, they were under, would have permitted them) into the Cauſe of God's Severity againſt them; they ſhould have acknowledg'd, that it was their grievous Sins, which drew down this heavy Judgment upon their Nation; and, after that they had repented thereof in Sackcloth and Aſhes, they ſhould have committed the reſt to *Providence*, never doubting, but that he, who chang'd the very courſe of Nature, to puniſh the Guilty, would always find out ſome Means or other, to ſave the Penitent; but this they did not do; and therefore they were culpable.

Q. *But had not the* Iſraelites *a ſtanding and infallible Oracle, namely, the* Urim *and* Thummim, *to conſult on all Occaſions? How came they then to be over-reach'd in this Affair of the* Gibeonites?

A. It is very true, they had ſuch an *Oracle*; and if, in their League with the *Gibeonites*, they were too haſty and precipitate, their Unadviſedneſs is only to be blamed, and not the Inſufficiency of that Means, which God had appointed for their better Information. The ſhort of the Matter is, the pretended foreign Ambaſſadors drew them in by a Wile and Artifice. The Story of their *old* Shoes, and *mouldy* Bread, was ſo well contrived, and ſeemed ſo very plauſible, that they took the Thing for granted, as we ſay: *They took of their Victuals*, (as the Text expreſſes it) or received them, without any farther Enquiry, upon the Account of the Staleneſs of their Proviſion, and *asked not Counſel of the Mouth of the Lord*; and therefore no Wonder, that God ſhould ſuffer them to be outwitted, when they had an infallible Director ſo near at hand, and yet, in a Matter of ſuch Moment, as that of entring into a *national Treaty*, never once bethought themſelves to conſult him.

Q. *This, I think, is a very proper Occaſion offer'd, to enquire what this* Urim *and* Thummim *was, about which the Learned differ ſo much in their Opinions?*

A. Chriſtophorus a *Caſtro*, and, from him, Dr. *Spencer*, will needs have it, that this *Urim* and *Thummim* were two little *Images*, (much of the ſame Make with the *Gentile Teraphim*) which, being folded in the Doubling of the *Breaſt-plate*, did from thence give *oracular* Anſwers by an audible Voice; and that this Device was taken from the *Egyptians*. But beſides that the Word *Teraphim* (to which theſe others were compared) is ſeldom or never taken in a *good* Senſe, it ſeems a little improbable, that, in a Matter ſo ſolemn and ſacred, the *Jews* ſhould be left to follow the Examples of the idolatrous *Egyptians*. The ſacred Records indeed inform us, that the *Jews* borrowed of the *Egyptians Jewels of Silver, and Gold, and Raiment*; but they no where intimate that the *Jewiſh* High-prieſt borrowed his *pontifical*, and particularly his *oracular Habit*, from them: And therefore to think, that God, who declares himſelf ſo poſitively againſt the idolatrous Practice of the *Gentiles*, ſhould, by theſe Images of *Pagan* Invention, take the ready Way to give them Countenance and Encouragement; or to think, that the *Jews*, who were expreſly commanded not to *learn the Way of the Heathen*; and *after the Doings of the Land of* Egypt, *where they had dwelt, not to do*, were permitted, nay, commanded to make Uſe of this *magical* and *ſuperſtitious* Rite, is ſuch an Heap of odd and and wild Conceits, as no unprejudiced Mind can ever entertain.

Others therefore are of Opinion, that it was the *Tetragrammaton*, or ineffable Name of God; and others, that it was no more than the two plain Words of *Urim* and *Thummim*, written, or engraven on ſome Plate of Gold, or precious Stone, which, when placed upon the *Pectoral*, would give it an *oracular* Power: But the moſt probable Opinion is, that is was no corporeal Thing at all, but only a certain Virtue, (which God was pleaſed to give to the *Breaſt-plate* at its conſecration) of obtaining an *oracular* Anſwer from him, whenever the High-prieſt ſhould put it on, in order to ask Counſel of him, in the Manner that he had appointed; and that the Names of *Urim* and *Thummim* were given it, only to denote the *Clearneſs* and *Perſpicuity*, which thoſe Anſwers of God had, *viz.* that they were not like the *Heathen* Oracles, *enigmatical* and *ambiguous*, but plain and manifeſt, and ſuch as never fell ſhort of *Perfection*, either in the Fulneſs of the Anſwer, or the Certainty of the Truth of it.

Q. *Upon what Occaſions was it conſulted?*

A. Whether this Oracle was only conſulted in the great and important Affairs of the State, or might be adviſ'd with in Queſtions of a lower Nature, is not entirely determin'd by the *Learned*; but the moſt prevailing Opinion is, that the *High-prieſt*, (who was the only officiating Miniſter in this Ceremony) was not allow'd to addreſs it for any private Perſon, but only for the King, the Preſident of the *Sanhedrim*, the General of the *Army*, or ſome other publick Governour in *Iſrael*, and *that*, not upon any private Affairs, but ſuch only, as related to the publick Intereſt of the Nation, whether in *Church*, or *State*.

Q. *What was the Manner of doing it?*

A. When therefore any ſuch Matter happened, wherein it was neceſſary to conſult God, the Cuſtom was, for the *High-prieſt* to put on his Robes, and Breaſt-plate, and ſo preſent himſelf, not within the Veil of the *Holy of Holies*, (for thither he never enter'd, but once a Year on the great Day of *Expiation*) but without the Veil in the *holy Place*, and there ſtanding, with his Face directly towards the Ark or Mercy-ſeat, whereon the divine Preſence reſted, he propounded the Matter; and, at ſome diſtance behind him, but without the *Holy-place*, ſtood the Perſon, for whom the Oracle was conſulted, in devout Expectation of the Anſwer, which (as it ſeems moſt congruous to the Thing) was given him in an *audible* Voice from the *Mercy-ſeat*, which was within, behind the *Veil*.

Here it was that *Moſes* went to ask Counſel of God in all Caſes; and from hence he was anſwered in an *audible* Voice: And, in like manner, whenever the High-prieſt preſented himſelf before God, according to the Preſcription of the divine Law, 'tis reaſonable to believe, that God gave him an Anſwer in the ſame Way, that he did *Moſes*, *i. e.* by an audible Voice, from the Mercy-ſeat: And for this Reaſon it is, that ſuch Addreſs for Counſel is called *enquiring at the Mouth of God*, and the *Holy of Holies* (the Place, where the Mercy-ſeat ſtood, and from which the Anſwer was given (is ſo often in Scripture ſtiled *the Oracle*, becauſe from thence were the Oracles of God delivered to ſuch as came to aſk *Counſel* of him.

Q. *Enough of* Urim *and* Thummim; *let us return to the Affair of the* Gibeonites, *who, it ſeems, by a Stratagem, procur'd a Peace with the* Iſraelites. *But were the Latter oblig'd to ſtand to a Treaty which was obtained of them by Fraud and Deceit, and contrary to God's expreſs Command of making no Alliance with any of the Inhabitants of the Land?*

A. After the Fraud of the *Gibeonites* was diſcover'd, 'tis reaſonable to imagine, that the Princes of *Iſrael* might reflect upon their Neglect, in not conſulting the divine Oracle before, and, as the Peace, which they had entered into, was plainly repugnant to God's Command of exterminating all the *Canaanites*, the Queſtion was, what they ſhould do in this Caſe; whether abide by the Treaty, and ſo poſt-pone the Command, or execute the Command, and ſo diſanul the Treaty? And, as this was a Queſtion of ſome Nicety, we can hardly ſuppoſe, but that the Remembrance of their former Omiſſion, and, of their Inſecurity in acting upon their own Bottoms, might make them have Recourſe to God for Advice, and that this Anſwer might be, *that the League ſhould be ratified.* Of this indeed we have no expreſs Mention in Scripture, but in ſo ſhort an Hiſtory of ſuch a Variety of Tranſactions, as that of *Joſhua* is, we may well imagine, that ſeveral Circumſtances may be omitted: For that ſome ſuch Ratification of this Treaty was determin'd by God, we have great Preſumption to believe, from the ſevere Puniſhment, which he afterwards inflicted upon the *Iſralites*, and the Poſterity of *Saul*, for his having ſlain ſome of the Deſcendants of theſe *Gibeonites*, (not improbably at the ſacking of the Town of *Nob.*) For, tho' this Action of *Saul's* was cruel and inhumane, becauſe the Decree for the Extirpation of the *Canaanites* was now extinct, yet, what made it more heinous and provoking to God, was, the Infraction of the Treaty, which had ſubſiſted about four Ages, and which coſt the Lives of ſeven of that bloody Prince's Sons, and Grand-ſons, to attone.

The *Heathens*, it muſt be owned, had no ſmall Reſpect and Veneration for Oaths: Whenever they took one, it was in the moſt ſolemn and religious Manner. They looked upon the Gods as Inſpectors, and Witneſſes of what they ſaid, more eſpecially at ſuch a Time as this: They believed, that the *Furies* were appointed to be Avengers of all Perjury; and that, as Diſgrace attended it in this World, ſo Deſtruction would purſue it in the next. And, as this was the general Notion of moſt heathen Nations, ſo the *Gibeonites*, who had hitherto conceived a good Opinion of the God of *Iſrael*, would have been ſtrangely *ſcandalized*, had they found his People prevaricating with their Oaths, even tho' they were made upon a falſe Suppoſition. For fear therefore, leſt any Diſhonour ſhould fall ultimately upon that divine Majeſty, whoſe Servants they were, *the Princes of the Congregation* unanimouſly agree (and there ſeems to be ſomething of a divine Inſpiration in this their Unanimity) and declare it as their joint Opinion, *We have ſworn unto them by the Lord God of* Iſrael, and therefore, without breaking our Oath, or forfeiting his Favour, *we may not touch them.*

The ſame commendable Zeal for the Honour of God, (Chap. xxii.) made the *Iſraelites*, on one Side of *Jordan*, conceive ſuch angry Reſentments againſt their Brethren, on the other, upon Suſpicion, that they had *apoſtatized* from his Worſhip into the Idolatry of the Nations, that were round about them. The two Tribes, and an half, upon their Return from the Wars, erected an Altar, in Memory of their Relation to the Tribes, and Tabernacle, which they had left behind them. This Altar, it ſeems, was of an Height, ſomewhat extraordinary, and, as it was the Cuſtom for *Heathens* to worſhip their Gods, (which were generally *celeſtial* Bodies) upon High-places, as preſuming that thereby they made nearer Approaches to them; their Brethren, on the *Weſt Side* of the River, conjectured from thence, that this was an Altar raiſed for the Worſhip of the *Sun*, or ſome othe, *planetary* God: But, if even they were miſtaken in that Conjecture, ſufficient Reaſon they had to ſuſpect, that it was intended for no good Purpoſe, ſince God has expreſly forbidden them to offer their Sacrifices at any other Place, but the *Tabernacle*, or upon any other Altar, but that, which was built by his Appointment: For theſe are the Directions which *Moſes* gives them; *Ye are not yet come to the Reſt, and to the Inheritance, which the Lord your God giveth you*: But, when ye ſhall be put in Poſſeſſion of it, *ye ſhall not do after all theſe Things, that we do here this Day, every Man whatſoever is right in his own eyes; but in the Place, that the Lord ſhall chuſe; in one of thy Tribes, there ſhalt thou offer thy Burnt-offerings; thither ſhalt thou come; and there ſhalt thou do all that I command thee.*

Now when they had ſufficient Reaſon, as they thought, to ſuſpect their Brethren of a Defection into Idolatry, what ſhould they do? Why, herein they punctually follow the Rules, which God himſelf had preſcribed them in ſuch a Caſe. *If thou ſhalt hear ſay, in one of thy Cities, which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, ſaying, certain Men, the Children of* Belial, *are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the Inhabitants of their City, ſaying, let us go, and ſerve other Gods (which ye have not known) then ſhalt thou enquire, and make Search, and aſk diligently, and, behold, if it be Truth, and the Thing certain, that ſuch Abomination is wrought among you, thou ſhalt ſurely ſmite the Inhabitants of that City with the Edge of the Sword, deſtroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the Cattle thereof, with the Edge of the Sword; and thou ſhalt gather all the Spoil of it into the midſt of the Street thereof; and ſhalt burn with Fire the City, and all the Spoil thereof every whit, for the Lord thy God; and it ſhall be an Heap for ever, it ſhall not be built again.* And if the *Iſraelites* on the *Weſt* of *Jordan*, having this Cauſe of Suſpicion, purſued theſe Orders to a Title, who ſhall ſay, that they did amiſs, or that their Zeal for God's Glory was raſh and precipitate? They took the propereſt Method (which was ſending an Embaſſy) for the Diſcovery of the Truth; and if, upon Enquiry, their Fears were found to be groundleſs; yet it ſeems to be an Error on the better Side (as we commonly ſay) and an Inſtance of no contemptible Prudence, in Matters of ſo dangerous a Conſequence, always to ſuſpect the worſt.

CHAP. X.

FIVE of the Canaanitiſh *Kings, hearing that the* Gibeonites *had concluded a League with* Iſrael, *make War upon them; they ſend to* Joſhua *for ſuccours; he reſcues them. The Enemy deſtroy'd by Hail-ſtones. At* Joſhua*'s Command the Sun ſtands ſtill. The five Kings hide themſelves in a Cave, and are brought out and hanged. Several Places taken, after which* Joſhua *and the Army return to* Gilgal.

Q. *THIS Chapter is full of great Events; but the moſt amazing of all are, the Shower of Stones, and the Sun's ſtanding ſtill at the Command of a mortal Man. Pray give me the Sentiments and Obſervations that you have met with in the Writings of the Learned, in relation to theſe two great Occurrences; and firſt of the Shower of Stones.*

A. This Event the ſacred Hiſtory repreſents in this Manner——*And it came to paſs that as they* (viz. the Army of the *Amorites*) *fled from before* Iſrael, *and were in the going down to* Beth-horon, *the Lord caſt down great Stones from Heaven upon them unto* Azekah, *and they died: They were more, which died of the Hail-ſtones, than they, which the Children of* Iſrael *ſlew with the Sword.* But the Difference among *Commentators* is, whether we are to underſtand this Miracle of a Shower of Stones, properly ſo called, or of a Shower of Hail.

The learned *Calmet*, in a Diſſertation prefixed to his Commentary upon *Joſhua*, has taken a great deal of Pains to ſhew, that the Stones, which the Lord is ſaid to have *caſt upon the* Amorites, were not ordinary Hail-ſtones, (ſince it would be incongruous, as he thinks, to intereſt God in ſo common an Occurrence) but *real ſolid Stones*, which he ſuppoſes might have been engendered in the Air by a Whirlwind carrying up Sand or Gravel into a Cloud, and there mixing it with ſome ſuch *oily*, or *nitro-Sulphureous* Matter, as might conſolidate, and form it into a combuſtible Body; and ſo, when by frequent Agitation, it came to be fired, it may burſt through the Cloud, and, ſcattering itſelf upon the *Exploſion*, might fall down upon the Earth, in the Nature of a perfect Shower of Stones.

That great Quantities of Stones have, in this Manner, been diſcharged from the Clouds, is evident from ſeveral Hiſtories. *Diodorus Siculus* informs us, that, as the *Perſian* Army was on their March, to plunder the Temple at *Delphos*, Thunder and Lightning, and a violent Storm of Stones fell in their Camp, and deſtroyed a great Number of Men. In the Reign of *Tullus Hoſtilius*, when News was brought to the Government, that it had rained Stones upon Mount *Alba*, thoſe, who were ſent to enquire into the Matter, brought Word, not only that the Fact was true, but that theſe Stones had fallen from the Skies with an Impetuoſity, equal to the moſt violent Storm of Hail. Not long after the Battle of *Cannæ*, the ſame Author aſſures us, that a Storm of the ſame Kind fell on the ſame Mountain, which laſted for two whole Days; and Events of this Nature, atteſted by the beſt Authors, have been ſo frequent at *Rome*, at *Capua*, at *Lavinium*, and ſeveral other Places in *Italy*, that a Man muſt be deſtitute of all Modeſty, who pretends to deny them abſolutely.

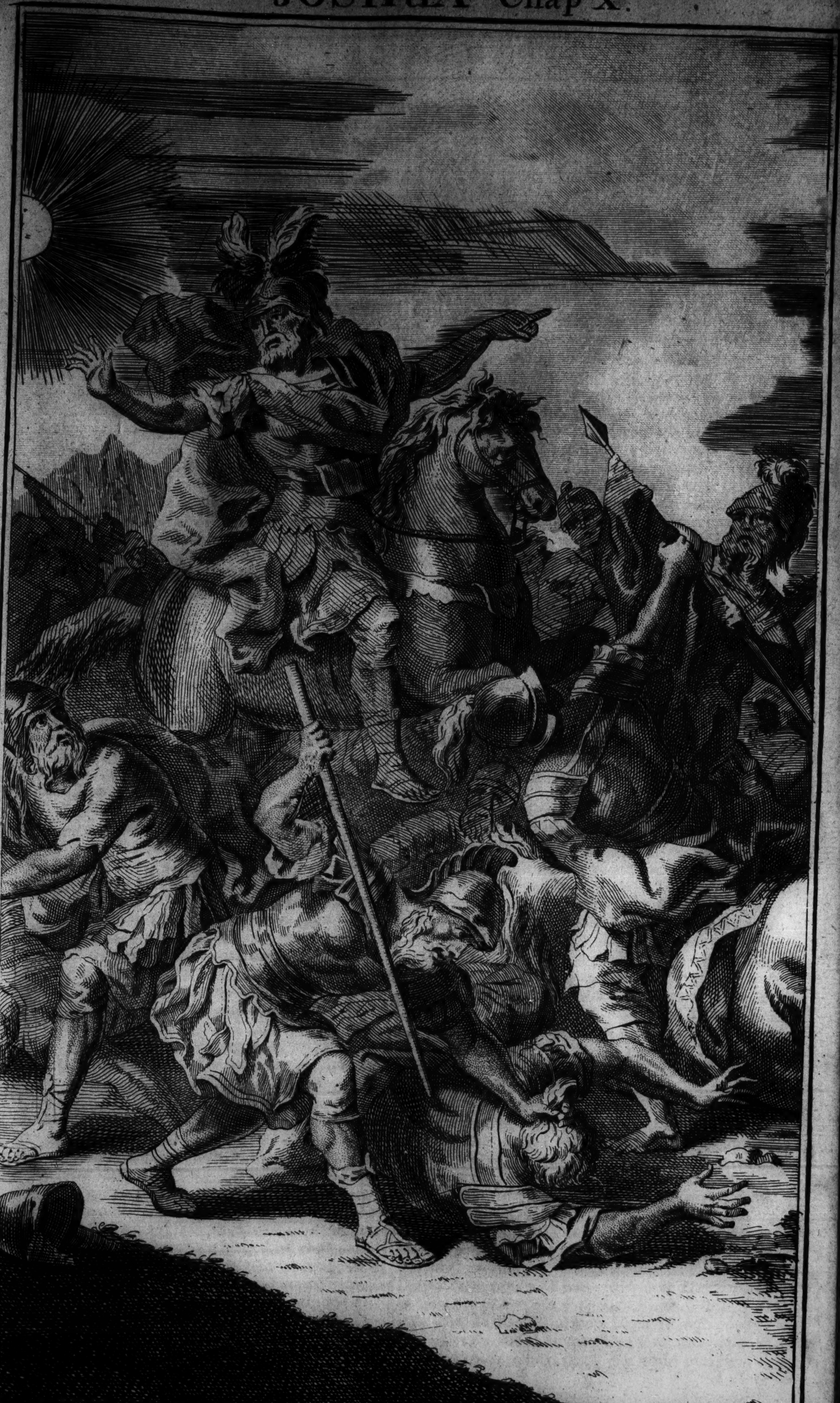
Nay not only great Quantitſes of *ſmaller* Stones, but ſometimes Stones of a *prodigious* Size, have been known to fall from the Clouds, whereof this learned Author, among many others, gives us ſeveral Inſtances, both of *antient* and *modern* Date. But then it is juſtly to be queſtioned, whether theſe Authors have not ſuffered themſelves to be impoſed on by the too confident Narrations of others; ſince, however we may ſuppoſe, that *Whirlwinds*, or *Hurricanes* may raiſe the Sand or Gravel, and carry it on high, or ſome ſudden Irruptions of ſubterraneous Fire may diſcharge great Quantities of Cinders, or Aſhes into the Air, where, meeting with ſome *Exhalations* of a *ſulphurous*, *oily*, or *nitrioline* Quality, they may, by the Preſſure of the Clouds, be condens'd, and hardened into a ſtony Subſtance; yet, how any Cloud ſhould be able to ſupport ſuch a Quantity of *ſmaller* Stones, much more of *maſſy* ones, as would be neceſſary to deſtroy the Army of the five confederate Kings, and to continue falling down upon them from *Beth-horon* to *Azekah*, Places, which lay in different Tribes, and can hardly be ſuppoſed leſs, than twelve, or fourteen Miles diſtant (to ſay nothing of the many *Apertures* in the Earth, which muſt have been ſeen afterwards, in theſe Parts, upon Suppoſition, that the Thing was effected by *Vulcanos*) is a Matter not altogether ſo credible.

The Truth is, there is no Reaſon for carrying this Miracle ſo high, ſince a Shower of *Hail-ſtones* will not only do the Work every whit as well, but ſeems to be the genuine Import of *Joſhua*'s Words; who, having acquainted us, that *the Lord caſt down great Stones* upon the *Amorites*, adds, by way of Explication, *that they were more, that died by the Hail-ſtones, than by the Sword*; where it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that had there been *great* Stones, as well as Hail, the Death of the greater Number of thoſe, that periſhed, would not have been attributed to the *Hail* only.

It is ſome Confirmation of this Expoſition, that we find the *Septuagint*, in both Places of the Text, tranſlating it *Hail-ſtones*, which *Joſephus* calls *a violent Tempeſt of Hail-ſtones of a prodigious Size*, and the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus* thus recounting the whole Matter; *with Hail-ſtones of a mighty Power, he made the Battle to fall violently upon the Nations, and, in the Deſcent of* Beth-horon, *he deſtroyed them, that reſiſted.*

The Prophet *Ezekiel*, in his Predictions againſt *Gog*, introduces God, as threatning, that *he would plead againſt him with Peſtilence, and with Blood, with an overflowing Rain, and great Hail-ſtones, Fire, and Brimſtone*: And, in another Place, ſpeaking of falſe Prophets, who ſeduced his People into an Opinion of their Security, as if they had been fortified within a Wall, he purſues the *Metaphor*, and tells thoſe, who *daubed it* with *untempered Mortar*, *that it ſhould fall*; *for there ſhall be an overflowing Shower*, ſays he, *and ye, O great Hail-ſtones, ſhall fall, and a ſtormy Wind ſhall rent it.* So that from theſe, and ſeveral other Paſſages of the like Nature, we may learn, that, in executing his Judgments upon the Face of the Earth, *Hail-ſtones* are very frequently *Arrows* in the Hands of the Almighty; and of what Force they are to do Execution, we are advertiſed in what befell the *Egyptians*, when (as the ſacred Hiſtory has related it) *the Lord ſent Thunder and Hail, and the Fire ran upon the Ground; and the Lord rained Hail upon the Land of* Egypt, *ſo there was Hail, and Fire mingled with Hail, very grievous, ſuch as there was none like it in all* Egypt, *ſince it became a Nation. And the Hail ſmote, throughout all the Land of* Egypt, *all that was in the Field, both Man and Beaſt: It ſmote*

every



Joshua commands the Sun to stand still

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every Herb of the Field, and brake every Tree of the Field. Nor are there Examples of a later Date wanting (eſpecially in our *Philoſophical* Tranſactions) of the vaſt Havock and Deſtruction, that Hail-ſtones, (from *one*, to *five* Pounds Weight,) have done, in ſeveral Places; killing both Man and Beaſt, and lay the whole Country waſte, for ſome ſixty, or ſeventy Miles round. And therefore, ſince it is agreed on all Hands, that Hail-ſtones have frequently fallen, large enough to deſtroy never ſo great a Number of People, when naked and defenceleſs againſt their Blows, what need is there for having Recourſe to any other Solution?

Q. *But* Hail-ſtones *proceed from a natural Cauſe; and therefore the Miracle may not be ſo great as imagined.*

A. A Shower of Hail indeed may be ſuppos'd to proceed from a more *natural* Cauſe; but, when the Event happen'd at the very Inſtant, wherein God promiſed to aſſiſt his People againſt their Enemies; when, though it might have annoy'd either Army, it fell only on *that*, which God had before determin'd to ruin, and fell ſo heavily upon it, as to *deſtroy, more than the Sword of the Conquerors had done*; ſuch an Event as this, I ſay, cannot but be look'd upon as a *miraculous* Interpoſition of Providence, how *fortuitous* ſoever the Concourſe of *ſecond Cauſes* may be. In working of Miracles, God uſually employs natural Cauſes and Productions: He does not create any *new Thing* for the Purpoſe; but makes uſe of what is already created, in a new and extraordinary Manner: And therefore, though the Shower of Hail, and probably the Wind too, which made it fall with ſuch Impetuoſity, were both of them *natural*; yet the ſending them at the very Nick of Time, and directing them to fall upon the Enemy only, in this there was manifeſtly the *Hand of God*, and ſomething ſupernatural.

The other Miracle is thus related in Holy Writ. Joſhua *ſaid, in the Sight of all* Iſrael, *Sun, ſtand thou ſtill upon* Gibeon, *and thou Moon in the Valley of* Ajalon: *And the Sun ſtood ſtill, and the Moon ſtayed, until the People had avenged themſelves of their Enemies. Is not this written in the Book of* Jaſher? *So the Sun ſtood ſtill in the midſt of Heaven, and haſted not to go down about a whole Day; and there was no Day like that, before or after it, that the Lord hearken'd unto the Voice of a Man, for the Lord fought for* Iſrael.

Q. *With reſpect to this Illuſtrious Miracle, the ſtopping the Courſe of the Sun, ſeveral Objections have been raiſed againſt it. The firſt is, that the Motion of the Sun, which is here ſuppoſed to ſtand ſtill, is contrary to the Modern Syſtems of Aſtronomy.*

A. Nothing is more common in Scripture, than to expreſs Things, not according to the ſtrict Rules of *Philoſophy*, but according to their *Appearances*, and the vulgar Apprehenſion concerning them. The Sun and Moon, for Inſtance, are called *two great Lights*; but, however that Title may agree with the Sun, 'tis plain, that the Moon is but a *ſmall* Body, the leaſt that has yet been diſcovered in the *Planetary Syſtem*, and that it has no *Light* at all, but what it borrows, and reflects from the Rays of the *Sun*; and yet, becauſe it is placed near us, it appears to us larger, than other heavenly *Luminaries*, and from that Appearance, the holy Scriptures give it ſuch an Appellation: And, in like Manner, becauſe the Sun ſeems to us to move, and the Earth to be at the reſt, the Scriptures ſpeak a great deal of the *Pillars*, and *Baſis*, and *Foundations* of the Earth, and of the Sun's *rejoicing, like a Giant, to run its Race,* and of *his ariſing, and going down, and haſtening to the Place, where it aroſe,* &c. Whereas it is certain, that, if the Sun were made to revolve about the Earth, the univerſal Law of Nature would thereby be violated; the Harmony and Proportion of the heavenly Bodies deſtroyed; and no ſmall Confuſion and Diſorder brought into the Frame of the Univerſe: But, on the contrary, if the Earth, turning upon its *Axis* every Day, be made to go round the Sun in the Space of a Year, it will then perform its Circulation, according to the ſame *Law*, which the other Planets obſerve; and (without the leaſt Exception) there will be a moſt beautiful Order and Harmony of Motions, every where preſerved through the whole Frame of Nature. As therefore the Scriptures were deſigned to teach us the Art of *holy Living*, and not to inſtruct us in the Rudiments of *natural Knowledge*, it can be deemed no Diminution, either to their Perfection, or divine Authority, that they generally ſpeak according to the common Appearance of Things, and not according to their Reality, or *philoſophick* Truth: And yet it muſt be owned, that it looks, as if *Joſhua* had had the *ſolar Syſtem* in his Mind, when he ordered the *Moon*, as well as the *Sun* to ſtop its Courſe, becauſe he had no Occaſion for the Preſence of the Moon, ſo long as he was favoured with the Light of the Sun. But now, upon Suppoſitiou, that the Purport of his Prayer was, that *the Light ſhould continue in the ſame State, wherein it then was* (which is certainly all he meant) he could not but know, that, upon the Earth's ſtanding ſtill, the Sun, and Moon, and all the other Planets would ſeem to do the ſame; though to have expreſſed himſelf in a Manner, ſo incongruous to the popular Conception, would have been improper, if not dangerous at that Time.

Q. *Another Objection to this Miracle is, the Inconſiſtency of the Thing, that the Sun ſhould ſtand ſtill over* Gibeon, *and the Moon in the Valley of* Ajalon.

A. In Relation to the Places, over which the two heavenly Bodies were to ſtand, the Sun *over Gibeon*, and the Moon *over the Valley of Ajalon*, we muſt obſerve, that (even upon the Suppoſition of the Sun's Motion) the *Jewiſh General* cannot be thought to ſpeak in a proper and *philoſophick* Senſe: For, ſince the Sun is almoſt a Million Times bigger than the Earth, and ſome Millions of Miles diſtant from it, to juſtify the ſtrict Senſe of the Words, a Line, drawn from the *Centre* of the Sun, to that of the Earth, muſt exactly paſs by *Gibeon*, which we know it cannot do, becauſe no part of the *Holy-land* lies within the *Tropicks*; and therefore we muſt conclude, that *Joſhua* here ſpeaks according to the outward *Appearance* of Things, which makes the Senſe of his Words plain and intelligible.

Wherever we are, (if ſo be we are not hindered by Objects immediately ſurrounding us) we can caſt our Eye upon Part of the *Surface* of the Earth, and at the ſame Time, take into our Proſpect ſome ſmall *Extent* of the *Firmament* of Heaven, which ſeems, as it were, to cover the other; and each *celeſtial* Body, which we perceive in the Extent above, appears to us to be directly over ſuch and ſuch Part of the Earth, as we *alternately* turn our Eyes to: And 'twas thus that *the Sun*, when *Joſhua* ſpake, ſeemed to him, and to thoſe that were with him, to *be over* Gibeon, *and the Moon to be over the Valley of* Ajalon. This Valley, in all likelihood, took its Name from ſome adjacent Town; but then, as there are three *Ajalons* mentioned in Scripture, one in the Tribe of *Ephraim*, another in *Zebulon*, and another in *Dan*, it is reaſonable to think, that the Place, here ſpoken of, was in *Dan*, the moſt remote Province from *Gibeon*; for we muſt ſuppoſe that theſe two Places were at ſome conſiderable Diſtance, otherwiſe *Joſhua* could not ſee the Sun and Moon both appear at the ſame Time, as it is probable they were both in his Eye, when he uttered theſe Words.

Q. *The Beginning and Length of this Suſpenſion of the Sun in the Heavens, has likewiſe afforded Matter of much Diſpute.*

A. In Relation to the Time, when this Miracle began, and how long it laſted, the Scripture's Expreſſion is, that the *Sun ſtood ſtill in the midſt of Heaven, and haſted not to go down, about a whole Day:* Which Words can import no leſs, than that the Sun ſtood ſtill in the *Meridian*, or much about Noon, and that in this Poſition, it continued for the Space of a *civil* or *artificial* Day, *i. e.* for twelve Hours. But *Maimonides*, is of Opinion (and in this he is followed by ſome Chriſtian Writers) that there was no ſuch Ceſſation of the Sun and Moon's Motion, but that the whole Purport was this------" That God, at *Joſhua's* Requeſt, granted him, and his Soldiers, ſuch a Degree of Spirits, Activity, and Diſpatch, as enabled them to gain a compleat Victory, and do as much Execution in one Day, as might otherwiſe have taken up two": But this is a Conſtruction, ſo repugnant to the genuine Senſe of the Words, as to need no formal Confutation.

There is ſomething more, howevet, to be ſaid to the Notion of other learned Men, who, with Regard to the *Time*, when *Joſhua* might ſend up his Requeſt, and the Miracle begin, think it more probable, that he ſhould pray for a longer Day, when he perceived the Sun juſt going to leave him, than when it was in its Height. But *Joſhua*, no doubt, had Reaſons for what he did: He was an old experienced *General*, eager for a compleat Victory, and able to compute what Time it would take to atchieve it; ſo that his Fear of loſing any Part of the preſent Advantage, might make him pray that the Day might be thus prolonged, until he had obtained the *whole*. If the Sun, in its Declenſion, had ſtopped its Courſe, it might have anſwered his Purpoſe perhaps; but then it had given a juſter Handle to the Suggeſtions of thoſe, who would deny the whole Merit of the Miracle. For, if the Retardation of the Sun had not happened, until it was going to ſet, *Spinoſa* might, with a much better Grace, have attributed the extraordinary Length of this Day to the *Refraction* of its Rays of the Clouds, which, at that Time, were loaded with Hail; or *Peirerius*, to ſome *Aurora Borealis*, or *Parelium*, which, after the ſetting of the Sun, might appear about the Territories of *Gibeon*, and ſo be miſtaken for the Sun's ſtanding ſtill: But now, by fixing it in its *meridian* Point, all theſe Cavils are effectually ſilenced; and God, no doubt, who heard him ſo readily, inſpired the *Hebrew General* with that Wiſh or Prayer, which otherwiſe perhaps would never have come into his Head.

Q. *But, pray, what was this Book of* Jaſhar, *which* Joſhua *quotes on this Occaſion?*

A. In Relation to the Book of *Jaſhar*, (or of *juſt* and *upright* Men) which *Joſhua* quotes, as a Voucher of the Truth of this Miracle, the Opinions of learned Men are mucn divided. Some think, that it was the Book of *Geneſis*, which is here ſo called, becauſe it treats of the Lives of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, three of the moſt righteous Men, that the World then knew. The Targum of *Jonathan* calls it *the Book of the Law*, as containing, not only the chief *Precepts*, which God gave his People, but ſeveral *Promiſes* likewiſe of the Wonders, which he intended to work for them. *Joſephus*, and ſome Interpreters after him, will have it to be certain *Annals* of the Lives, and particular Adventures, of ſome *Jewiſh Worthies*, and of other Things remarkable, that happened to that Nation; though others again ſuppoſe, that this was only a *Collection* of ſome *Verſes*, which the *Iſraelites* thought themſelves concerned to learn by heart, the better to remember the Miracles, which God had been pleaſed to vouchſafe them. But whatever the Subject of this Book was, or whether it was compoſed in *Proſe* or *Verſe*, 'tis a groundleſs Conjecture to ſay, that it was wrote in a figurative and hyperbolical Stile, or that the *Quotation*, which *Joſhua* takes from it, is ſo to be underſtood. The Deſign of the Quotation is only to confirm what *Joſhua* had ſaid, concerning the Retardation of the Sun; and therefore, if the Book of *Joſhua* affirms, that the Sun did ſtand ſtill, that of *Jaſhar* (in what Stile ſoever it was written) muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed to do the ſame, otherwiſe, it would have been to no Purpoſe to have cited it.

Q. *But after all, this commanding the Sun to ſtand ſtill, may be no more than a figurative or poetical Expreſſion, uſed to denote the wonderful Things performed by* Joſhua *and his Army on that memorable Day.*

A. It cannot be denied, indeed, but that, upon ſome Occaſions, the ſacred *Penmen* do uſe Figures, and *poetical* Expreſſions; but then the Senſe, and Chain of the Diſcourſe do eaſily diſcover it, when they do ſo. Whenever they intend to expreſs themſelves in a figurative Manner, there is uſually ſomething going before, which prepares the Reader for it; and, beſides that *figurative* Expreſſions cannot be long continued, there is always ſomething apparently in them, that can by no means be reduced to a *literal* Senſe. But now, in the Scripture Account of this Tranſaction, where do we perceive any Thing like this? *Joſhua*, ſeeing the Enemy put to the Rout, begs of God to give him a compleat Victory, and, at the ſame Time, out of the Zeal and Fervour of his Mind, commands the Sun and Moon not to advance any farther, until he had effected his Deſire. The ſacred Hiſtorian tells us, that, at his Command, theſe heavenly *Luminaries* actually did ſtand ſtill; and, to evince the Credibility of a Thing ſo marvelous, having produced the Teſtimony of another Author, that makes mention of the ſame Event, he thereupon concludes, that *there was no Day like that, before it, or after it, that God hearkened to the Voice of a Man*. Here, we ſee, are all the Tokens imaginable of a ſimple, literal and hiſtorical Narration: And the Reader muſt therefore be ſtrangely prejudiced againſt the Belief of all Miracles whatever, who can poſſibly diſtort ſuch plain and uniform Expreſſions into any figurative or metaphorical Senſe, in order to evade the Force of this.

Q. *But, if there really was ſuch a Miracle wrought, 'tis ſomething ſtrange that the Author of the* Hebrews, *when he certainly mentions Things of leſs Moment, ſhould entirely omit it?*

A. The Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, in the Chapter now under Debate, meant no more, than to give his Reader ſome notable Inſtances of the wonderful Power of Faith. To have been too curious in the Choice of theſe Inſtances, eſpecially when he wrote to Perſons of the ſame Nation, and who were as well acquainted with theſe Things, as himſelf, would have ſavoured too much of Art and *human* Wiſdom, which inſpired Authors always profeſſedly avoid; and to have been too prolix in the Commemoration of them, would have ſpoiled the Form of this *Epiſtle*, by ſwelling that Part of it beyound its due Proportion.

The Apoſtle himſelf ſeems to be ſenſible of this; and therefore we find him cutting himſelf ſhort, omitting ſome, and reckoning up ſeveral other Inſtances in the Groſs; and *what ſhall I more ſay? for the Time would fail me, to tell of* Gideon, *and of* Barak, *and of* Sampſon, *and of* Jeptha; *of* David *alſo, and* Samuel, *and all the Prophets.* You ſee, that, in the Catalogue of his *Worthies*, he obſerves no great Method in ennumerating them, nor does he ſo much as mention *Joſhua*, though his Character be vaſtly ſuperior to that of *Gideon*, and others, that he takes Notice of; and therefore, if his omitting this Particular of the *Sun's ſtanding ſtill*, may be deemed a ſufficient Argument againſt its Reality; by Parity of Reaſon, all the other miraculous Tranſactions, which he has not thought fit to mention, ſuch as the Plagues of *Egypt*, the Wonders in the Wilderneſs, the Paſſage of *Jordan*, and ſeveral others of the like Nature, muſt be reputed deſtitute of Truth, how frequently ſoever they may be recited in other Parts of Holy Writ.

Q. *However, it's reaſonable to ſuppoſe that ſo wonderful an Event, ſhould not have eſcaped the Notice of Heathen Authors; but I believe you don't find the leaſt mention of it in any Writings but thoſe of the Bible.*

A. Though we find no mention made of this wonderful Event, in heathen Writers, yet this is no valid Objection againſt it, becauſe it happened many Ages, before there were any *Hiſtorians*, or *Chronologers*, that we know of, extant to record it: Or, if we think, that a Fact, ſo very remarkable, could have hardly eſcaped a general Obſervation, why may may we not ſuppoſe, that the publick *Archives*, or Monuments, wherein it was recorded, in the long and obſcure Time, that interven'd, before any of our preſent Hiſtorians aroſe, have been loſt; and that nothing has been tranſmitted to us, (except what we have in *Sacred Writ*) but an uncertain Tradition, clouded with Fable, and poetical Fictions?

It can hardly be thought indeed, but that the Humour, which the Poets had, of imputing to Magick the Power of ſtopping the Stars in their Courſes, and what they relate of their Heroes and Demi-gods, being able to lengthen Days or Nights, as it beſt ſerved their military or amorous Purpoſes, proceeded from ſomething; and to what can we aſcribe it more properly, than to a glimmering Knowledge, which they might, from Tradition, have of this marvelous Event? But, however this be, 'tis certain, that the Argument, drawn from the Silence of *heathen* Authors, can be of no Validity againſt the Truth of this Miracle, ſince it did not happen in any Age, when the earlieſt of them lived, and might therefore be what they knew nothing of; ſince all their Works have not deſcended to us; in what is loſt, they perhaps might have related it, and in what is extant, we are ſure they ſay nothing to contradict it.

It muſt be reckoned a Point of Juſtice then, and a Kind of Right, belonging to all Nations, to be determined, in what concerns the Hiſtory of any People, by the Writers of that Country, who are preſumed to be better acquainted with their own Affairs, than any Strangers can: And therefore we cannot, without apparent Prejudice, deny this Privilege to the *Hebrew* Writers, even though we found ſome heathen Teſtimonies not entirely agreeing with them: But when nothing of this is pretended; on the contrary, when (as far as theſe dark Times would permit) there is a Concurrence and Harmony between them, there can be no Shadow of Reaſon for calling in Queſtion their Veracity, unleſs the Things, which they relate, be either *impoſſible* or *contradictory*, which, in the Caſe before us, can never be affirmed; becauſe it is ſure and ſelf-evident, that the Author of Nature, who gave *Being* and Motion to the Sun and Stars, may ſtop that Motion, and make them ſtand ſtill, when, and as long as he pleaſes; eſpecially when their Reſt will contribute to his Glory (as it certainly did in this Inſtance) as much, as their continued Motion does.

Q. *But what particular Reaſons might induce the Almighty to work this Miracle?*

A. God indeed never works any Miracle but upon a juſt and proper Occaſion; but then, we ought to remember, that this Battle, againſt the confederate Kings, was fought not offenſively, but defenſively, on the Side of *Iſrael*, in order to ſave a People, whom they had ſolemnly taken under their Protection. The *Gibeonites*, as is generally ſuppoſed, were a *Commonwealth*, for which Reaſon they might not enter into a League with the five Kings; and, as a free People, they had a Right, no doubt, to take all proper Meaſures for their Safety. *Joſhua* therefore could not but look upon the Confederacy, formed againſt them, as cruel and unjuſt, and himſelf obliged in Honour, not to refuſe the Oppreſſed the Succours, they requeſted of him, on any Pretence whatever; ſince God's Honour was likewiſe concerned in the Preſervation of a People, who had entered into Alliance with his own Inheritance, and had their Alliance ratified by the Mouth of his High-prieſt, and under the Sanction of his moſt bleſſed Name. Upon theſe conſiderations, *Joſhua* loſes no Time, but marches all Night to their Aſſiſtance, and, on the next Day, God is pleaſed to reward his Faithfulneſs and Zeal with a moſt miraculous Victory, whereby he not only reſcued his Allies, but made all the Land of *Canaan* ſenſible likewiſe, that a greater and more powerful God was on *Iſrael's* Side, than any, whom they worſhipped, by ſtopping the Sun and Moon (which were two of the principal Deities, whom theſe idolatrous People adored) in the midſt of their Courſe.

God might, no doubt, in the Compaſs of two Days, have enabled the *Iſrealites* to have gained a compleat Conqueſt over their Enemies, without the *Expence of a Miracle* (as theſe Men call it.) But then, had this been obtained by the Dint of the Sword only, it would have been imputed to their ſuperior Valour and Strength, and deemed no more than the common Fate of War; or had there nothing more remarkable happened in it, than a Shower of large Hail-ſtones, this might have been thought owing to Chance or natural Cauſes, or at moſt been only known in that Neighbourhood; whereas, the ſtopping of the two great *Luminaries* in the Height of their *Career*, (which could not but be univerſally ſeen and felt,) was enough to convince theſe poor deluded People, that the Gods, whom they they truſted in, were ſubject to the God of *Iſrael*, and, at the ſame Time, deter the *Iſraelites* from falling into the like Idolatry, from *kiſſing their Hand* (as *Job* expreſſes that Form of Worſhip) *when they beheld the Sun, as it ſhined,* *or the Moon walking in its Brightneſs.* Job xxxii. 26.

Q. *But did not this extraordinary Inſtance of God's hearkening to the Voice of* Joſhua, *give him a Preheminence far above* Moſes, *even though the Scriptures expreſsly ſay, that* there aroſe not a Prophet, in all *Iſrael*, like unto *Moſes? Deut.* xxxiv. 10.

A. It cannot be queſtioned, but that the Fame of this Miracle raiſed *Joſhua's* Reputation to an high Degree, nor can we ſee any Inconvenience in admitting, that this was a more remarkable Miracle, than any, which *Moſes* ever did; becauſe it does not therefore follow, that *Joſhua*, in other Reſpects, was a Perſon of greater Eminence, than *Moſes*. Our bleſſed Saviour tells his Diſciples, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, he that believeth on me, the Works that I do, ſhall he do alſo, and greater Works than theſe ſhall he do, becauſe I go unto the Father:* And yet he gives us to underſtand in another Place, that *the Diſciple is not above his Maſter, nor the Servant above his Lord.*

Eliſha was the Servant and Attendant on the Prophet *Elijah*, and yet it is certain, that, according to our Eſtimate, he did more and greater Miracles, than his Maſter did, for even *after his Death his Body propheſied* (as the Son of *Sirach* expreſſes it) *he did Wonders in his Life, and at his Death were his Works marvelous.* And therefore we need not account it a ſtrange Thing, that we find *Joſhua* here doing a Miracle, which, in our Opinion, ſurpaſſes all, that ever *Moſes* did, becauſe God's making uſe of the Miniſtry of one Man, rather than another, in his ſurpaſſing Works of Wonder, is no certain Proof of the Man's ſuperior Merit, ſince, in this, as well as any other Diſpenſation, he is at perfect Liberty, *to chuſe* (if he pleaſes) *the weak Things of the World, to confound the Things that are mighty; yea, and baſe Things, and Things that are not, to bring to nought Things that are, that no Fleſh ſhould glory in his Preſence.*

But, after all, we talk of *greater* and *leſs* Miracles, when, in Reality, there are no ſuch Degrees of Compariſon between them. For what is it that makes us account one Work of this Kind greater than another? If it be, becauſe we conceive more Difficulty in the Doing it; this, with regard to God (the ſole Author of all Miracles) is a great Miſtake, foraſmuch as all Things are equally eaſy to his Almighty Power. The Motion and other Properties of every created Being, were, at firſt, impreſſed by him; *he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt;* and, with the ſame Facility, he can retard, or ſuſpend their Operations, for they have no Power of reſiſting the very firſt Beck of his Will. Since every Thing therefore, that is contrary to the ordinary Courſe of Nature, requires the Interpoſition of an Almighty Power, and whatever is not impoſſible in itſelf, is equally poſſible to God; with him there can be no Difference between paſſing the *Jordan*, and paſſing the *Red-Sea*, between drawing Water out of the *ſtony Rock*, and arreſting the Sun in the Firmament of Heaven; for *whatever he pleaſed, that did he, in Heaven and in the Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep Places,* Pſal. cxxxv. 6.

CHAP. XI.

The other Kings and Cities of Canaan *aſſemble themſelves to fight againſt* Iſrael. *God encourages* Joſhua, *and promiſes him Victory. The* Canaanites *deſtroyed, and their Cities, ſome excepted, taken and burnt.*

Q. WHEN *the Kings of the* Canaanites *had joined their Forces, they pitched their Camp at the Waters of* Merom; *in what Part of the Country was this?*

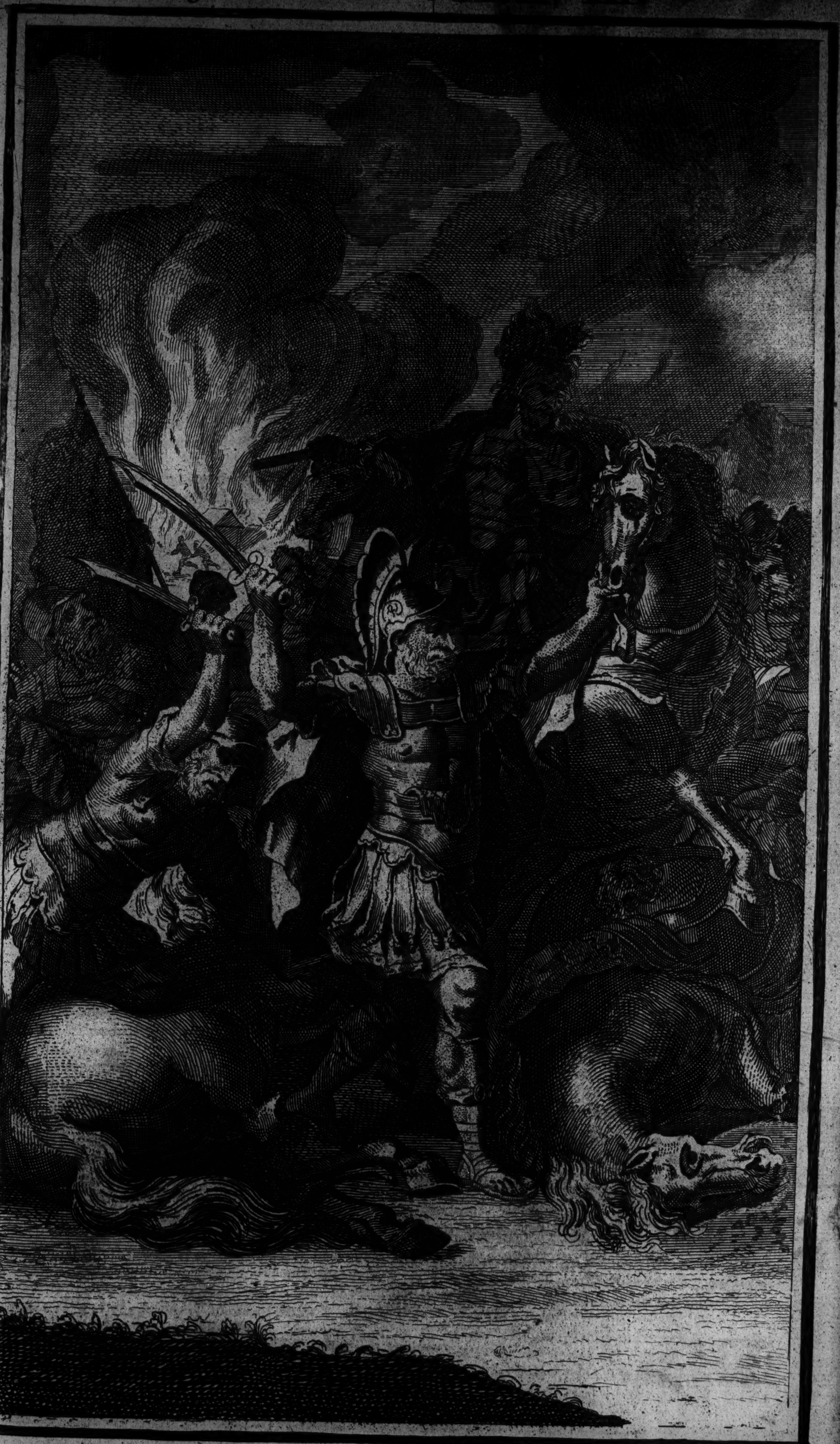
A. Theſe Waters are generally ſuppos'd, by learned Men, to be the Lake *Semechon*, which lies between the Head of the River *Jordan*, and the Lake of *Geneſareth*, ſince it is agreed on all Hands, that the City *Hazor*, were *Jabin* reigned, was ſituate upon this Lake. But others think, that the Waters of *Merom*, or *Merome*, were ſomewhere about the Brook *Kiſhon*, ſince there is a Place of that Name mention'd in the Account of the Battle againſt *Siſera*, (Judg. v. 18.) and 'tis more rational to think, that the *confederate* Kings advanc'd as far as the Brook *Kiſhon*, and to a *Paſs*, which led into their Country, to hinder *Joſhua* from penetrating it, or even to attack him in the Country, where he himſelf lay encamp'd, than to imagine, that they waited for him, in the midſt of their own Country, leaving all *Galilee* at his Mercy, and the whole Tract, from the Brook *Kiſhon*, to the Lake *Semechon*.

Q. *The Hoſts of theſe* Canaanites, *it's ſaid, were even as the Sand that is upon the Sea-ſhore in Multitude, with Horſes and Chariots very many; was their Number ever computed by any Author?*

A. Their whole Army, according to *Joſephus*, was computed to amount to three hundred Thouſand Foot, ten Thouſand Horſe, and two Thuſand Chariots: And to oppoſe againſt theſe the *Iſraelites* had no Horſe in their Armies, becauſe God had interdicted them (*Deut.* xvii. 16.) leſt a Traffick into *Egypt* for that Sort of Cattle ſhould be a Snare, to entangle them in Idolatry; or leſt, having Numbers thereof, they ſhould put their Confidence rather in them, than in the divine Aſſiſtance, for which Reaſon the Prophet denounces a *Wo upon them, that go down to* Egypt *for Help, and ſtay on Horſes, and truſt in Chariots, becauſe they are many, and in Horſemen, becauſe they are ſtrong, but they look not to the Holy One of* Iſrael, *neither ſeek they the Lord,* Iſai. xxxi. 1.

Q. *Pray deſcribe theſe Chariots in which theſe antient Warriors fought.*

A. The Chariots, which the antient Hiſtorians uſually call *Currus Falciferi, Covini Falciferi, Quadrigæ Falcatæ, &c.* are deſcribed after the following Manner. "The Beam, to which the Horſes were faſten'd, was arm'd with Spikes with Iron-points, which projected forward: The Yokes of the Horſes had two cutting Falchions of three Cubits length; the Axle-trees had fix'd to them two Iron Spits, with Scythes at their Extremities; the Spokes of the Wheels were armed with *Javelins*, and the very *Fellows* with Scythes, which tore every Thing, they met with, to pieces. The Axle-tree was longer, and the Wheels ſtronger, than uſual, that they might be the better able to bear a Shock, and the Chariot leſs liable to be overturn'd." The *Charioteer*, who was cover'd all over with Armour, ſat in a kind of little Tower, made of very ſolid Wood, about Breaſt-high, and ſometimes Men well armed were put into the Chariot, and fought from thence with Darts and Arrows: So that, a dreadful Slaughter theſe Machines muſt, at firſt, have made, when they met with the Enemies Troops; but, in Time,



Joshua hough's their horſes & burns their Chariots

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Time, when Men came to find out the Way of declining them, they did not do ſo much Execution, and were conſequently diſuſed.

Q. *Is it not ſtrange, that none of the Cities of Canaan, notwithſtanding the Deſolation and Deſtruction that every where followed the* Iſraelitiſh *Arms, ſhould deſire a Ceſſation of Hoſtilities, or aſk for Peace?*

A. Some *Jewiſh* Authors will needs have it, that, when *Joſhua* went into the Land of *Canaan*, he propos'd three Things to the Inhabitants thereof, either that they ſhould leave the Country, or come and make their Submiſſion, or take up Arms and fight him. But this is ſaid, in ſome meaſure, to excuſe the *Jewiſh* General, and to mollify the Rigour of his Proceedings. His expreſs Command from God was, to extirpate the ſeven Nations, without making any Treaty, or giving Quarter: And though the *Gibeonites* by Guile had obtained a kind of League with him, yet the Conditions, which he thereupon impoſed, were ſo very hard, that they could not but deter others from making the like Attempt. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that the *Canaanites*, who ſaw themſelves drove to the neceſſity either of Death or Slavery, (after they had tried the Fate of their Arms ſo often to no Purpoſe) ſhould endeavour to make their Eſcape from a People, every where victorious, and who were enjoined to be cruel and remorſeleſs by their very God, who had given them this Succeſs. Nor can we ſuppoſe, but that God (who was minded to make Room for his own People,) did (according to his Promiſe, *Exod.* xxiii. 27.) inject, upon this Occaſion, a Terror extraordinary into the Natives of the Country, and make them deſire to be gone: And when they were deſirous to be gone, they had the *Ports*, lying upon the *Mediterranean* Sea, very commodious for their Purpoſe. For, whether the Towns of *Tyre* and *Sidon* were, at this Time built, or no, 'tis certain, that the Places, where theſe Towns ſtood, could not but be proper Harbours for Shipping; and, as the *Phœnicians* were ſtill Maſters of the Sea-coaſts, by their Aſſiſtance, the *Canaanites* might make their Eſcape into what Parts they pleaſed. The *Phœnicians*, much about this Time, did certainly ſend out a vaſt many Colonies; but, as it cannot be ſuppoſed, that ſo ſmall a Country ſhould produce ſuch Swarms, the greateſt Part of them are preſumed to be the Refugees of *Canaan*, who made their Eſcape, by Shipping, to all the Coaſts, which lay round the *Mediterranean*, and *Ægean* Seas, and even to other Parts of *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*, as the learned *Bochart* has given us a large Account in his *Canaan*, from Page 345, to p. 699.

Q. *How long was* Joſhua *in conquering theſe* Canaanitiſh *Nations?*

A. Theſe great Atchievements may be allowed to have taken up ſome Years. The Hiſtory indeed informs us, that Joſhua *made War a long Time with all theſe Kings*, Joſh. xi. 18. And, from the Words of *Caleb*, wherein he gives *Joſhua* an Account of his Age, and that it was *five and forty Years*, ſince he was ſent a Spy to *Kadeſh-barnea*, there cannot be well leſs, than between ſix and ſeven Years ſpent in this War; and, why the War was ſo long continued, God himſelf aſſigns this Reaſon,—*I will not drive them out before thee in one Year, leſt the Land become deſolate, and the Beaſts of the Field multiply againſt thee: By little and little will I drive them out from before thee, until thou be increaſed, and inherit the Land*, Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.

Q. Ver. 21. *it is ſaid, that Joſhua* cut off the *Anakims* from the Mountain, from *Hebron*, from *Debir*, from *Anab*, and from all the Mountain of *Judah*, and from all the Mountains of *Iſrael*; *Joſhua* deſtroyed them utterly with their Cities; *how could this be, when* Caleb *and* Othniel *deſtroyed ſome of them after* Joſhua's *Death?* Chap. xiv. 12. *Judg.* i. 10, 11, 12.

A. This might be, either 1. Becauſe theſe Places being in part deſtroyed and neglected by the *Iſraelites*, might be re-poſſeſſed by the Giants, either in *Joſhua*'s Time, or after his Death, and by them kept till *Caleb* diſpoſſeſſed and deſtroyed them. Or 2. Becauſe this Work, though done by the particular Valour and Induſtry of *Caleb*, is aſcribed to *Joſhua* as the General of the Army, according to the Manner of all Hiſtorians; and therefore it is here attributed to *Joſhua*, though afterwards, that *Caleb* might not loſe his deſerved Honour, the Hiſtory is more particularly deſcribed, and *Caleb* owned as the great Inſtrument in the Atchievement of it, *Joſ.* xiv. and *Judg.* i.

CHAP. XII.

A Catalogue of the Kings, and their Poſſeſſions, out of which they were driven by the Iſraelites; *firſt in the Time of* Moſes *on the other Side, and afterwards by* Joſhua *on this ſide* Jordan; *in all thirty-one Kings.*

Q. SIHON *it is ſaid, v.* 2. ruled from the middle of the River *Arnon*; *is it not ſomething odd, that the Bounds of a Kingdom ſhould be in the Middle of a River?*

A. It's not unuſual, even amongſt us, for a River to be divided between two Lords, and for their Territories or Juriſdictions to meet in the Middle of a River. But farther, here is a very particular Reaſon for this Expreſſion, becauſe the City *Ar*, which was no Part of *Sihon*'s Dominions, but belonged to the *Moabites*, *Deut.* ii. 9, 18. was in the Middle of the River *Arnon*, *Deut.* ii. 36. and iii. 16. and therefore the Middle of the River is moſt fitly and properly here mentioned as the Bound of *Sihon*'s Dominion on that ſide.

Q. *We have here a long Liſt of Kings, conſidering the ſmall Compaſs of Land conquered.*

A. Each of them was confined to narrow Limits, being King only of one City, or ſmall Province belonging to it, which was by the wiſe and ſingular Providence of God, that they might the more eaſily and ſucceſſively be conquered by the *Iſraelites* one after another, as they were.

CHAP. XIII.

God acquaints Joſhua *with the Bounds of the Land not yet conquered, and how it is to be divided. The Inheritance of the two Tribes and an Half on the other ſide* Jordan. *The Lord and his Sacrifices the Inheritance of* Levi. *The Portion of the* Reubenites, Gadites, *and half Tribe of* Manaſſeh.

Q. IN *this and the ſix following Chapters we have an Account of the Diviſion of the Land of* Canaan *among the twelve Tribes of* Iſrael; *what do you obſerve upon the whole?*

A. Thoſe, who are minded to know what particular Towns and Territories fell to each Tribe, had beſt conſult what *Jerom*, de Locis Hebraicis; *Reland*, de Urbis & Vicis Paleſtinæ; *Maſius*, in Joſhuam; *Fuller*, in his *Piſga*-Sight; *Rawleigh*, in his Hiſtory, Pt. 1. l. 2. *Wells*, in his Geography of the Old Teſt. Voll. 2. *Patrick*, *Pool*, *Le Clerc*, and ſeveral others, in their Commentaries, have ſaid upon this Subject. We ſhall make this one Remark, which *Maſius*, in his rich Commentary upon *Joſhua*, furniſhes us with, *viz.* that as *Jacob* and *Moſes*, at the Approach of their Deaths, foretold the very Soil and Situation of every particular Country, that ſhould fall to each Tribe; ſo, upon this Diviſion by Lots, it accordingly came to paſs. To the Tribe of *Judah*, there fell a Country abounding with *Vines*, and Paſture-grounds, *Gen.* xlix. 11. To that of *Aſher*, one plenteous in *Oil*, *Iron*, and *Braſs*, *Deut.* xxxiii. 24, 25. To that of *Naphtali*, one extending from the *Weſt* to the *South* of *Judea*, *Deut.* xxxiii. 23. To that of *Benjamin*, one, in which the Temple was afterwards built, *Deut.* xxxiii. 12. To thoſe of *Zebulun* and *Iſſachar*, ſuch, as had plenty of Sea-ports, *Gen.* xlix. 13. To thoſe of *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, ſuch, as were renowned for their *precious Fruits*, *Deut.* xxxiii. 13. And to thoſe of *Simeon* and *Levi*, no particular Countries at all, for as much as the former had a Portion with *Judah*, and the other was interſpers'd among ſeveral Tribes. Since therefore (as our Commentator reaſons) each particular Lot anſwered ſo exactly to each Prediction, it muſt needs be the Height of Inſolence or Stupidity, not to acknowledge the divine Inſpiration in theſe Predictions, and the divine Direction in theſe Lots.

Q. *In the 21ſt Verſe five* Princes of Midian, *are called* Dukes of Sihon; *how could they be both?*

A. There were divers petty Kings in thoſe Parts, who were ſubject to greater Kings; and ſuch theſe were, but are here called Dukes or Princes of *Sihon*, becauſe they were Subjects and Tributaries to him, and therefore did one way or other aſſiſt *Sihon* in this War, though they were not killed at this Time. It's probable, that when *Sihon* deſtroyed thoſe *Moabites* who dwelt in theſe Parts, he frighted the reſt of them, and with them their Neighbours and Confederates, the *Midianites*, into ſome kind of Homage or Tribute, which they were willing to pay him.

CHAP. XIV.

The Land divided by Lot. Caleb *recites the Promiſe which* Moſes *made him, and claims the Performance of it by* Joſhua, *who grants his Requeſt.*

Q. W*HY did God divide the Land to* Iſrael *by Lot?*

A. Partly to prevent Diſcontents, Enmities, Animoſities and Quarrels among the Tribes, about the Quality of their ſeveral Portions; and partly to demonſtrate the Truth and Wiſdom of his Providence, by which alone thoſe Parts fell to each of them, which *Jacob* long ſince, and *Moſes* lately, foretold; ſo that, as a learned Man ſays, he muſt be more ſtupid than Stupidity, and more impudent than Impudence itſelf, that does not acknowledge and confeſs a divine Hand and Providence in this Matter. The Lot did only determine the ſeveral Parts or Provinces to the ſeveral Tribes, but did not preciſely fix all the Bounds of it, which might be either enlarged or diminiſhed according to the greater or leſs Number of the Tribes *Numb.* xxvi. 53, 56. and xxxiii. 54. and that by the Direction of thoſe Perſons mentioned, *v.* i. and *Joſh.* xvii. 14—18.

CHAP. XV.

The Borders of Judah's *Lot.* Caleb's *Inheritance; he drives out the* Anakims; *promiſes to marry his Daughter to him that ſhould ſmite* Kirjath-ſepher; *which* Othniel *performs, and obtains her; ſhe requeſts a Dowry, which her Father gives her. The* Jebuſites *not conquer'd.*

Q. T*HE firſt Lot that came up was for the Tribe of* Judah; *pray in what Manner was this Lottery managed?*

A. It's probably conceived, that there were two Urns or Pots, into one of which were put the Names of all the Tribes, each in a diſtinct Paper, and into the other the Names of each Portion deſcribed; then *Eleazar*, or ſome other Perſon, drew the Name firſt of one of the Tribes out of one Pot, and then the Name of one Portion out of the other, and that Portion was appropriated to that Tribe; and ſo of the reſt.

Q. *Did* Jeruſalem *belong to* Judah *or* Benjamin?

A. Some think, that being in the Borders of both, it was common to both, and promiſcuouſly inhabited by both; and it's certain, that after the Captivity it was poſſeſſed by both, *Neh.* xi. 4. But for the preſent, though it did belong to *Benjamin*, yet the Children of *Judah* being poſſibly very active in the firſt taking of it by *Joſhua*, as they certainly were after his Death, *Judg.* x. 8. they might get ſome ſlight Share with the *Benjamites* in the Poſſeſſion of it. It ſeems moſt probable, that Part of it, and indeed the greateſt Part and main Body of it, ſtood in the Tribe of *Benjamin*; and hence this is mentioned in the Liſt of their Cities, and not in *Judah*'s Liſt; and Part of it ſtood in *Judah*'s Share, even Mount *Moriah*, on which the Temple was built; and Mount *Sion* when it was taken from the *Jebuſites*.

HHAP. XVI.

The Boundaries of Joſeph's *Inheritance, alſo of* Ephraim's *deſcribed. Some of the* Canaanites *not expelled, but made tributary.*

Q. I *Obſerve, that notwithſtanding the large Conqueſts* Joſhua *made in* Canaan, *yet ſeveral Parts of it remained unſubdued: But why did not God give them entire Poſſeſſion of that Country at once?*

A. *Joſephus* indeed ſeems not to have conſulted the Honour of *Joſhua* much, when he aſcribes the Delay of the Conqueſt of *Canaan* to the *Weakneſs* of his Army, and impregnable Strength of the Places, he was to attack: But ſome other *Jews* make the Matter much worſe, when they tell us, that he deſir'd to prolong the War, not only to retain the Office and Dignity of being Captain General, but becauſe he was informed by the Oracle, that, as ſoon as the Conqueſt was finiſhed, he himſelf was to die. God however ſeems to have given us much better Reaſons for this Retardation, when he acquaints *Moſes* with his Intention; *I will not drive the* Canaanites *out from before thee in one Year, leſt the Land become deſolate, and the Beaſts of the Field multiply againſt thee*; and, when he complains of their ſad Defection, after the Death of *Joſhua*, *I will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the Nations, which* Joſhua *left when he died, that through them I may prove* Iſrael, *whether they will keep the Way of the Lord, to walk therein, as their Fathers did keep it, or no:* Whereupon

upon the Hiſtorian tells us, that God accordingly *did leave theſe Nations, without driving them out*; and adds another Reaſon for their Continuance in the Country, *viz.* that the *Iſraelites*, by having an Enemy to contend with, might be trained up in the Art and Myſtery of War: For *theſe are the Nations*, ſays he, *which the Lord left to prove* Iſrael, *that by them they might teach thoſe War, who before knew nothing of it.* So that here are three Reaſons given us, why God delayed the entire Subjection of *Canaan*, viz. becauſe the Children of *Iſrael* were, as yet, too few in Number to repleniſh the whole Country; becauſe God, by keeping the *Canaanites* in Being, was willing both to make Trial of his People's Obedience, and to train them, and their Poſterity, for ſome Ages, up in military Diſcipline and Exerciſe.

But there is another Reaſon which *Joſhua*, in his dying Speech, aſſigns for their not enlarging their Conqueſts to the utmoſt Bounds, which God had given them: *Take good Heed therefore*, ſays he, *unto your ſelves, that ye love the Lord your God; elſe, if you do in any wiſe go back, and cleave unto the Remnant of theſe Nations, even theſe, that remain among you, and ſhall make Marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a Certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of theſe Nations from before you.*

So that the Promiſe, which God made to the *Iſraelites*, was *conditional*; and, as they manifeſtly falſified their Part of the Obligation, by engaging firſt in Affinity, and then in Idolatry with the Nations, which they were bound to deſtroy; ſo God might very well think himſelf releaſed from his, and under no farther Concern for their Succeſs, or the Enlargement of their Conqueſts; but, as they had been the *Miniſters* of his Vengeance in puniſhing the Diſorders of the *Canaanites*, they, in their Turn, were now now made the *Inſtruments* of his chaſtiſing the Diſobedience of his own People: *They ſhall be Snares and Traps to you, and Scourges in your Sides, and Thorns iu your Eyes, until ye periſh from the good Land, which the Lord your God hath given you.*

And indeed, if we conſider, how violently, in After-ages, the *Iſraelites* were oppreſſed by their Enemies, and, by many Battles, and Captivities, harraſſed, and diminiſhed in their Numbers, we ſhall find no Neceſſity of enlarging their Poſſeſſions; becauſe the Country, which they conquered, in the firſt ſix Years, was ſpacious enough to contain them: The Promiſe however, which God made, was ſufficiently accompliſhed, in the Reigns of *David* and *Solomon*, when the Kingdom of *Iſrael* was in its *Zenith*; and though its *Territories* did not extend to the *Euphrates*, yet its *Dominion* did, ſince all that Tract of Land between *Jeruſalem*, and that great River, was either ſubdued, or made tributary to them.

CHAP. XVII.

Manaſſeh's *Inheritance. The* Canaanites *not driven out. The Children of* Joſeph *complain of the Narrowneſs of their Border;* Joſhua *encourages them to enlarge it.*

Q. THE *Children of* Joſeph *complaining that their Inheritance was too narrow for them,* Joſhua *exhorts them to go and make Room for themſelves in the Wood-Country; to which they reply,* The Hill is not enough for us; and all the *Canaanites* that dwell in the Land of the Valley have Chariots of Iron; *pray give the genuine Senſe of theſe Words?*

A. Thus; if we ſhould invade and conquer it, and cut down both Wood and Men, yet it would not be ſufficient for us. In the *Hebrew* it is, *The Hill will not be found*, that is, *obtained by us*; thoſe fierce and ſtrong People the *Perizzites*, and the Giants, will eaſily defend themſelves, and fruſtrate our Attempts, having the Advantage of the Woods and Mountains. And if thou ſayeſt, as we know thou wilt reply, That if the Hill either cannot be conquered, or be not ſufficient for us, we may go down and take more Land out of the pleaſant and fruitful Valleys, we ſhall meet with no leſs Difficulty there than in the Mountains. Or thus, in going to the Hills to which thou directeſt us, we muſt paſs through Valleys, where we ſhall be waylaid by powerful and armed Enemies.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Tabernacle ſet up at Shiloh. *The Remainder of the Land deſcribed and divided into ſeven Parts, for the ſeven Tribes which as yet had no Inheritance.* Joſhua *caſts the Lot at* Shiloh; *the firſt comes out for* Benjamin; *whoſe Borders and Cities are deſcribed.*

Q. IN *the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, it is ſaid,* that the Tabernacle was ſet up at *Shiloh*; *but in Chap.* xxiv, 25, 26. *we told are that the* Sanctary of the Lord was at *Shechem*; *is not this a Contradiction?*

A. In Anſwer to this, ſome have imagined, that, as *Joſhua* was now grown old and infirm, the *Ark* upon this Occaſion, was removed from *Shiloh*, the ſettled Place of the divine Reſidence, to *Shechem*, the Place of *Joſhua*'s Habitation; that he might, with greater Solemnity, and in the Preſence of God (whereof the Ark was the proper Emblem,) deliver his Charge to the People: But other learned Men have obſerved, that, *by the Sanctuary of the Lord*, we are to underſtand, not the *Ark of the Covenant*, but only ſome certain Place of religious Worſhip, ſuch, very probably, as the *Jewiſh Oratories* were. That the holy Ark was not, on this Occaſion, ſet up here at *Shechem*, is evident, they ſay, from that Prohibition given by God, *Thou ſhalt not plant a Grove of any Trees, near unto the Altar of the Lord thy God, which thou ſhalt make thee, neither ſhalt thou ſet up a Pillar, which the Lord thy God hateth*: Whereas, in this *Sanctuary*, we read both of an *Oak* planted, and a *Pillar*, or Statue erected under it; which is certainly ſuch a Violation of the Command, as *Joſhua*, upon no Occaſion, can be ſuppoſed capable of incurring. 'Tis a very probable Opinion, therefore, that the Place, where *Joſhua* ſet up this *monumental* Pillar, was one of thoſe, which the Tribe of *Ephraim* (to whom *Shechem* belong'd) had conſecrated, and ſet apart, for a *Proſeucha*, or a Place to aſſemble in for publick Prayer; and that they made choice of this, rather than any other, to perform their Devotions in, becauſe it was that particular Spot, where God appeared to *Abraham*, and promiſed his Poſterity the Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*.

That there were ſuch Oratories, or Places of publick Prayer, among the *Jews*, and that they were generally beſet, or ſhaded with Trees, is evident, from ſuch a Variety of Teſtimonies, that it can hardly be conteſted; but, whether they were of ſo early a Date, as *Joſhua*'s Time, or not rather introduced after after the Captivity of *Babylon*, is a Queſtion not eaſy to determine. In the main, however, we may conclude, that when the *Ark of the Covenant* was *occaſionally* brought to *Shechem* there happened to be ſuch an Oratory, as, in after Ages, became frequent in *Judea*, there can be no Incongruity in the ſacred Penman's ſaying, that the *Sanctuary of the Lord* (ſince either the *Ark*, or the *Oratory*, might merit that Name) which was at *Shechem*; which being a Place ſo famous for the Reſidence of the *Patriarchs*, might therefore be deemed the properer, both for the Erection of an *Houſe of Prayer*, and the Convention of the People, upon this ſolemn Occaſion.

CHAP. XIX.

The ſecond Lot falls to Simeon *within the Inheritance of the Tribe of* Judah; *the Lots of* Zebulun, Iſſachar, Aſher, Naphtali. *An Inheritance given to* Joſhua. *The Diviſion of the Land finiſhed.*

Q. THE *Lot of* Simeon *fell within the Inheritance of* Judah; *was there any Thing ſingular or remarkable in this?*

A. This was ſo ordered by God's Providence, partly to fulfil that Threatning, that he would *divide and ſcatter this Tribe in* Iſrael, *Gen.* xlix. 7. which was hereby done. 1. Becauſe they had no diſtinct Part of their own, but were as Inmates to *Judah*. Or, 2. Becauſe now upon a more exact Survey of the Land, it appeared to *Joſhua* and *Eleazar*, and all the Princes and People, even to the Tribe of *Judah* themſelves, that the Part given to *Judah*, far exceeded the Proportion which either they needed, or could occupy, or which the other Tribes could expect. And, 3. Becauſe this was the leaſt of the Tribes, as is evident from *Numb.* xxvi. 14. and therefore fitteſt to be put within another Tribe.

Q. *I find*, v. 34. *that the Eaſtern Border of* Naphtali, *reached to* Judah *upon* Jordan; *how can this be, when there were divers Tribes between this and* Judah, *all which reach'd to* Jordan?

A. He does not ſay of *Judah*, as he does of *Zebulun* and *Aſher*, that it reacheth to it; but as it ſeems, purpoſely leaves out that Word which he had uſed in both the former Branches, leſt it ſhould be underſtood of a local Reaching to it, or being contiguous with it, which was not true; and that he might ſignify that he meant this Clauſe in another Senſe, namely that it did in ſome Sort go or reach *to*, or converſe *with* Judah *upon* Jordan. And ſo this may be here added, to ſhew the Accompliſhment of that famous and obſcure Prophecy, that *Naphtali*, though it ſhould be planted in the utmoſt Border of the Land, on the *North-eaſt*, yet he ſhould poſſeſs the Riches of the *Weſt* and *South*, Deut. xxxiii. 23. that is, of thoſe Tribes which were at great Diſtance from him weſtward and ſouthward; and this he ſhould do by way of Commerce with them, by their famous River *Jordan*, which he did not only touch in a ſmall Part, as ſome of the other Tribes did, but lay a long-ſide of it for a good Way together, even from the Fountain-head of that River to the Sea of *Geneſareth*. Some think, that this is verified by that Royalty of this River, which they ſuppoſe God gave to the Tribe of *Judah*, which extended as far as *Naphtali*.

Q. *It is ſaid*, v. 47, that the Chidren of *Dan* went up to fight againſt *Leſhem*; *was this done in* Joſhua's *Time or afterwards?*

A. Afterwards, as appeared from *Judges* xviii. and ſeems to be here inſerted, partly, that all the chief Places where the *Danites* dwelt, though far diſtant, might be mentioned together; and partly, to give an Account of this ſtrange Accident, why they removed from their appointed Portion to ſo remote a Place; which may be this, that being much moleſted and terrified by their bad Neighbours, they thought fit to go to ſome Place remote from them, which alſo they were in a manner conſtrained to do, becauſe they muſt otherwiſe have taken ſome Part of the Portions of other Tribes; whereas now going to the very utmoſt *Northern* Part of the Land, they took that which did not belong to, or at leaſt was not in the Poſſeſſion of any other Tribe.

CHAP. XX.

Six Cities of Refuge for the Manſlayer to fly to; who entitled to the Benefit of them. Three of thoſe Cities on one Side of Jordan, *and three on the other.*

Q. HAVE *you any Thing particular to obſerve of the three Cities of Refuge on the weſt-ſide of* Jordan?

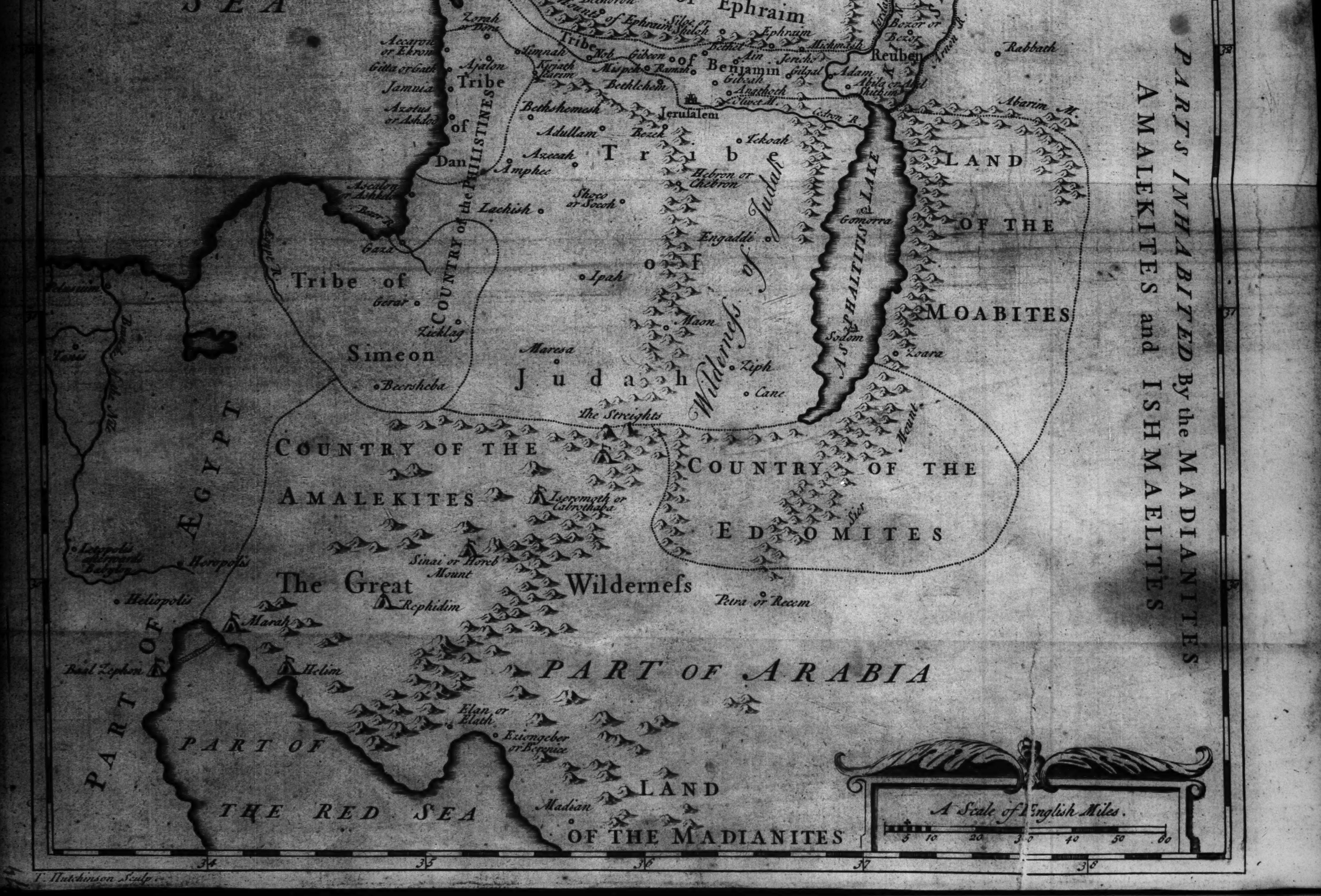
A. Concerning theſe Cities, note 1. That they were all upon Mountains, that they might be ſeen at a great Diſtance, and ſo direct thoſe who fled thither. 2. That they were ſeated at a convenient Diſtance the one from the other, for the Benefit of the ſeveral Tribes; for *Kadeſh* was in the North, *Hebron* in the South, and *Shechem* between them. 3. That they all belonged to the *Levites*; partly that theſe Cauſes might be more impartially examined, and juſtly determined by them, who were preſumed beſt to underſtand the Law of God, and moſt obliged and likely to follow it in their Judgment, and not to be biaſs'd by any Affection or corrupt Intereſt, and partly, that their juſt Reputation with the People, and their good Counſels, might lay ſome Reſtraint upon revengeful Perſons, who might be inclined or tempted to follow the Manſlayer thither, and endeavour to kill him there.

CHAP. XXI.

Forty eight Cities given to the Levites *out of the Inheritance of the other Tribes. The People poſſeſs the Land in Peace.*

Q. THE *City* Arbah *or* Hebron, *is one of thoſe given to the* Levites; *but the Fields and Villages of it were given to* Caleb: *Was the ſame Method obſerved with reſpect to all the other* Levitical *Cities?*

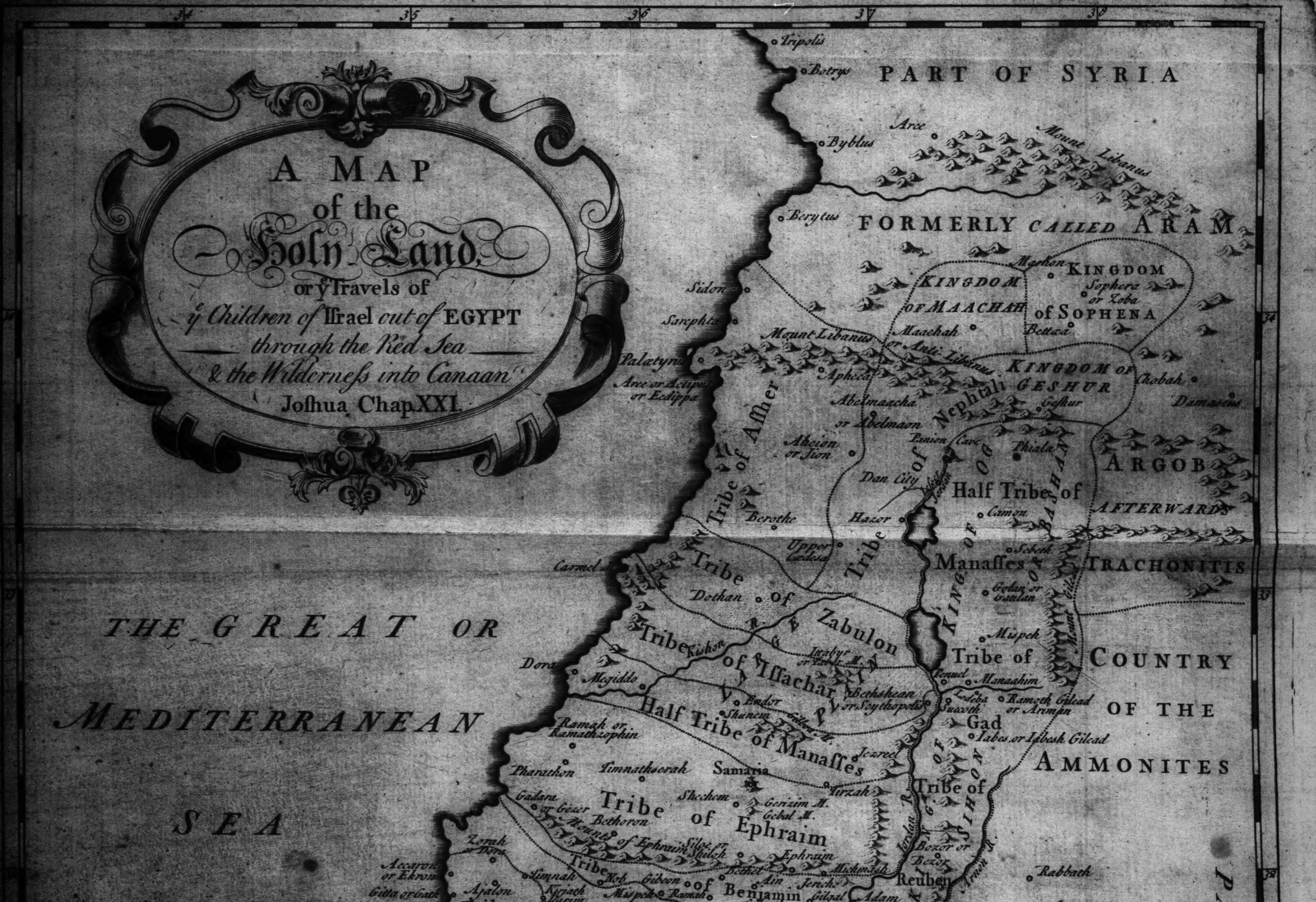
A. The Fields and Vallages here meant, were ſuch as lay beyond the 2000 Cubits expreſſed, *Numb.* xxxv. 5. This is here mentioned, not as a Caſe peculiar to *Caleb*, but as one eminent Inſtance, to ſhew, that it was ſo in all the reſt of the Cities here named; that the Fields and Villages thereof ſtill belonged to the ſeveral Tribes from whom the Cities and their Suburbs were taken; and to make the reſt of the *Iſraelites* more contentedly and chearfully reſign ſo great a Part of their Poſſeſſions to the *Levites*, becauſe even *Caleb* did ſo, though his Poſſeſſion had been long before promiſed, and now actually given to him by God's ſpecial Command, as a Mark of Honour


SEA
Ephraim
Tribe of Ephraim
Shiloh
Siloe or Shiloh
Bethel
Michmash
Zorah or Dora
Accaron or Ekron
Gitta or Gath
Jamnia
Azotus or Ashdod
Ajalon
Tribe of Dan
Simnah
Kirjath Jearim
Nob
Gibeon
Mispeh
Ramah
Tribe of Benjamin
Gibeah
Anathoth
Olivet M.
Ain
Jericho
Gilgal
Adam
Abila or Abel Shittim
Reuben
Bezor or Bozra
Arnon R.
Rabbath
Bethlehem
Bethshemesh
Jerusalem
Cedron R.
Adullam
Bezek
Azecah
Amphec
Tribe of Judah
Tekoah
Hebron or Chebron
Shoco or Socoh
Lachish
Ascalon or Ashkelon
Bezor R.
Gaza
Egypt R.
COUNTRY of the PHILISTINES
Tribe of Simeon
Gerar
Ziklag
Beersheba
Ipah
Engaddi
Maon
Maresa
Ziph
Cane
Wilderneſs of Judah
ASPHALTITIS LAKE
Gomorra
Sodom
Zoara
Abarim M.
LAND OF THE MOABITES
The Streights
COUNTRY OF THE AMALEKITES
Isoremoth or Cabrothaba
COUNTRY OF THE EDOMITES
Seir Mount
Pelusium
Tanis
Branch of the Nile
PART OF ÆGYPT
Letopolis afterwards Babylon
Heroopolis
Heliopolis
Sinai or Horeb Mount
The Great Wilderneſs
Rephidim
Petra or Recem
Marah
Baal Zephon
Helim
PART OF ARABIA
Elan or Elath
Eziongeber or Berenice
PART OF THE RED SEA
Madian
LAND OF THE MADIANITES
A Scale of English Miles.
5
10
20
30
40
50
60
34
35
36
37
38

PARTS INHABITED By the MADIANITES AMALEKITES and ISHMAELITES

T. Hutchinson Sculp.

Page 19.


A MAP
of the
Holy Land,
or ye Travels of
ye Children of Israel out of EGYPT
through the Red Sea
& the Wilderness into Canaan
Joshua Chap. XXI.
34
35
36
37
38
Tripolis
Botrys
PART OF SYRIA
Arce
Mount Libanus
Byblus
Berytus
FORMERLY CALLED ARAM
Maehon
KINGDOM
Sophena or Zoba
KINGDOM
OF MAACHAH
of SOPHENA
Betaca
Maachah
Sidon
Sarephta
Mount Libanus
or Anti Libanus
KINGDOM OF GESHUR
Chobah
Damascus
Palatyrus
Arce or Actipus or Ecdippa
Aphecah
Abelmaacha
or Abelmaim
Geshur
Tribe of Asher
Tribe of Nephtali
Ahcion or Sion
Panion Cave
Phiala
ARGOB
Dan City
OG
BASHAN
Half Tribe of
AFTERWARDS
Berothe
Hazor
Camon
Upper Cadesa
Tribe
Manasses
Sebeek
TRACHONITIS
Carmel
Tribe
KING OF
Dothan
of
Zabulon
Golan or Gaulan
Mount Gilead
Mispeh
THE GREAT OR
Tribe
Kishon
of Issachar
Itabyr or Tabor M.
Tribe of
COUNTRY
Dora
Megiddo
Penuel
Manahim
OF THE
V.
Endor
Shunem
Gilboa M.
Bethshean or Scythopolis
Succoth
Ramoth Gilead or Arimun
MEDITERRANEAN
Half Tribe of Manasses
Gad
Jabes or Jabesh Gilead
Ramah or Ramathzophin
Jezreel
AMMONITES
Pharathon
Timnathsorah
Samaria
Tirzah
Tribe of
Gadara
or Gezer
Bethoron
Tribe
Shechem
Gerizim M.
Gebal M.
of Ephraim
SIHON
SEA
Mount of Ephraim
Siloe or Shiloh
Jordan R.
Zorah
or Dora
Ephraim
Accaron or Ekron
Timnah
Tribe
Nob
Gibeon
Bethel
Michmash
Bozor or Bezer
Arnon R.
Rabbath
Gitta or Gath
Ajalon
Kiriath
Mispeh
Ramah
of Benjamin
Ain
Jericho
Gilgal
Adam
Reuben

5 DE 60

nour and Compenſation for his long and faithful Services.

Q. *But why were more Cities allotted to the Tribe of* Levi, *which was the leaſt of them, than to any of the other Tribes?*

A. To this it's anſwered that, 1. It does not appear that they had more; for though all the Cities of the *Levites* be expreſſed, it is not ſo with the other Tribes, divers of whoſe Cities, it's very plain are omitted. 2. The *Levites* were confined to their Cities and Suburbs; the reſt had large Territories belonging to their Cities, which alſo they were in a Capacity of improving, which the *Levites* were not; ſo that one of their Cities might be more conſiderable than divers of the *Levites.* 3. God was pleaſed to deal liberally with his Miniſters, partly to put Honour upon thoſe whom he foreſaw many would be prone to deſpiſe; and partly, that being free from all outward Diſtractions, they might more entirely and fervently devote themſelves to the Service of God, and the Inſtruction of Souls.

CHAP. XXII.

The two Tribes and a half ſent home with a Bleſſing, and a ſtrict Charge to fear God. They build an Altar of Teſtimony on the Banks of Jordan; *the* Iſraelites *are offended at it; but the Affair is cleared up to their Satisfaction.*

Q. THE *Altar which the two Tribes and a half erected on the Banks of* Jordan; *on which ſide of the River was it ſet?*

A. In the 10th Verſe it's ſaid, *And when they came unto the Borders of* Jordan, *that are in the Land of* Canaan, *the Children of* Reuben, &c. *built* there *an Altar by* Jordan. The Particle *there* is elſewhere rendered *then*; and ſo learned Interpreters underſtand it, *Pſ.* xiv. 5. and xxxvi. 12. *Eccles.* iii. 17. *Hos.* ii. 15. And in the Latin Tongue Adverbs of Place are ſometimes put for Adverbs of Time; as it ſeems here; 1. Becauſe this beſt anſwers to the *when* in the Beginning of the Verſe. 2. This ſeems to clear a great Difficulty as to the Place where the Altar was built, which, though according to our Tranſlation, it ſeems, and is generally thought by the Interpreters to be in the Land of *Canaan,* yet if Things be more ſtrictly examined, it will appear probable to have been on the other ſide *Jordan* in *Gilead*; 1. From *v.* 11. where it's ſaid to have been built *over-againſt*, or, *in the Sight of the Land of* Canaan, therefore not in it. And, 2. From the Reaſon they give of the building this Altar, *for fear* leſt the *Iſraelites* within *Jordan,* and in *Canaan, ſhould ſay unto their Children* dwelling beyond *Jordan, The Lord hath made* Jordan *a Border betwixt* us and you, &c. which Jealouſy would have been much confirmed by building the Altar in *Canaan,* but would be ſatisfied and confuted by having on the other ſide *Jordan,* and in their own Land, a Pattern of that Altar at which God was ſerved in the Land of *Canaan,* as a Witneſs that they owned the ſame God, and the ſame way of Worſhip with their Brethren that lived in *Canaan.* But whether the *Hebrew* Particle be rendered *then* or *there,* it is not to be taken too ſtrictly; if then, the Meaning is not, that *they did this as ſoon as ever they came to the Borders of* Jordan, *that* are *in the Land of* Canaan; but about that Time when they came thither, that they thought and deſigned it, and as ſoon as ever they got over *Jordan,* which was in a very little Time, they ſet about and perfected it. If it be rendered *there,* it is not to be limited to the very ſame ſpot of Ground mentioned before, as if it was built on that *Border of* Jordan *that was in the Land of* Canaan; but to be a little more largely underſtood; to be built on one or the other Borders of *Jordan*; or in general, *by Jordan*; which is here purpoſely added, for the Explication of the Word *there,* and to prevent reſtraining it to the Border of *Jordan* within *Canaan.*

Q. *Does* Joſephus *the* Jewiſh *Hiſtorian, ſay any Thing particular on the Departure of the two Tribes and a half from their Brethren to go to their own Land?*

A. Joſephus, in the Speech, which he introduces *Joſhua* making to the *Reubenites,* &c. at their Parting, concludes with theſe Words,—— “ But, I pray “ ye, let no Diſtance of Place ſet Limits to our “ Friendſhip; the Interpoſition of Rivers muſt never “ divide our Affections; for, on which Bank ſoever, “ we are all *Hebrews* ſtill. *Abraham* was the com- “ mon Father of us all, let our Abode be where it “ will; and it was from one and the ſame God, that “ all our Forefathers received their Being; and that “ God we are all to worſhip, according to Ordinan- “ ces and Inſtitutions left us by *Moſes*; ſo long as “ we ſtand firm to that Way of Religion, we may “ be ſure of the Favour and Protection of that God, “ for our Comfort: But, whenever you apoſtatize “ into an Hankering after *ſtrange Gods,* the God of “ your Fathers will caſt you off..”

Q. *Do you read any where that* Joſhua *appointed any chief Governor, as his Deputy, to preſide over the two Tribes and a half when they went to their Poſſeſſions on the other ſide* Jordan?

A. The *Chronicon Samaritanum* tells us, that when *Joſhua* ſent the *Reubenites* away, he appointed *Nephiet* to be his *Deputy* on t'other Side of *Jordan*; that he cloathed him with a royal Robe; put a Crown on his Head; and made him ride on an Horſe of State, whilſt a Cryer went before him, proclaiming *This is the King of the two Tribes and an Half, the Preſident of Juſtice, the Director of Affairs, and the General in the Field and Camp. Let his Determinations be concluſive. In all difficult Caſes let him deſire an Anſwer from* Eleazar, *the High-Prieſt*; *and, if any one ſhall contradict his Sentence, or withdraw from his Allegiance, it ſhall be lawful for any to kill that Man, and the whole Congregation ſhall be blameleſs.*

Q. *Was* Gilead *the Name of a City or Country?*

A. Gilead, which took its Name from *Gilead,* the Son of *Machir,* and Grandſon of *Manaſſeh,* is often put for the whole Country, that lies on the Eaſt Side of *Jordan,* which the Children of *Iſrael* took from the *Moabites* and *Midianites,* &c.

Q. *When the Princes, deputed by the* Iſraelites *to examine into the Affair of the Altar, were come into the Land of* Gilead, *and had ſummoned an Aſſembly of the People, which of theſe Deputies do you apprehend opened their Commiſſion, or was Spokeſman on the Occaſion?*

A. Joſephus makes *Phineas* the Speaker upon this Occaſion, who delivers his Commiſſion in Words to this Effect: —— “ We are very ſenſible, that the “ Crime; charged upon you at preſent, is too hei- “ nous to be puniſhed by Words only; but we have “ not taken up Arms, hand over head, to execute a “ Vengeance, according to the Degree of the Ini- “ quity: For it is out of Reſpect to our Allies, and “ in hopes that ſecond and ſounder Thoughts may bring you to better Reaſon, that we are engaged upon this Embaſſy, and ſpeak in this Aſſembly. We do but deſire to be ſincerely informed, upon what Motives, and with what Deſign, you have now raiſed this *Altar*. If you have done it out of any pious End, we have no Quarrel with you; but if you are gone over to a falſe Worſhip, it is for our God, and our Religion, that we muſt draw our Swords againſt you. We ſpeak our Fears; for, we cannot think it credible yet, that a People, ſo well inſtructed in the Will, and in the Laws of God; our Friends and Allies, that we have but juſt now parted with; a People, newly eſtabliſhed in the Lot of a plentiful Poſſeſſion by God's ſpecial Grace and Providence; we cannot, I ſay, believe you to be ſo inſenſible and ungrateful, as to abandon the holy Tabernacle, the Ark, the Altar, and the Worſhip of your Forefathers, to join with the *Canaanites* in the Worſhip of falſe Gods; or if unhappily you ſhould have been ſo miſled, do but repent, and diſclaim your Error, and return to that Reverence, you owe to the Laws of God, and of your Country, and you ſhall be ſtill received, &c.”

Q. *Who delivered the Reply to this Speech in the Name of the two Tribes and a Half?*

A. If we can ſuppoſe any Truth in the *Samaritan* Tradition, *Nephiet*, who is ſaid to have been *Joſhua's Lieutenant* over the two Tribes and an Half, may very properly be thought the Perſon, who anſwered *Phineas*, in the Words, which *Joſephus* thus puts in his Mouth:—“We are not conſcious of having ever departed from your Alliance, neither are we, in any ſort, guilty of that Affectation of Novelty, in erecting this *Altar*, which is now charged upon us. We know but *one God*, and that God is the God of all the *Hebrews*; and but *one Altar*, which is the Brazen Altar before the Tabernacle. As for this *Altar* here, which we are ſuſpected for, it was never intended for any religious Uſe, but only for a Civil Memorial, to future Times, of our Friendſhip and Alliance, and rather to keep us ſteady in our ancient Religion, than to be, any ways, introductive to the Violation of it. We can ſafely appeal to God, that we had no ſuch Thought in ſetting up this *Altar*, as is imputed to us: And therefore, let us intreat you to have a better Opinion of your Brethren for the future, than to think us guilty of ſo mortal an Apoſtaſy, from the Rites and Cuſtoms of our Progenitors, a Sin, not to be expiated, in any of the Sons of *Abraham*, but with the Loſs of his Life.”

CHAP. XXIII.

Joſhua *being old, aſſembles the People, and diſcourſes with them concerning the wonderful Works which God had wrought among them; he exhorts them by various Arguments to ſerve God.*

Q. HOW *long after the Departure of the two Tribes and a half to their Inheritance, was it that* Joſhua *made this Speech to the People; becauſe it is ſaid in the firſt Verſe, it* was a long Time after?

A. The learned have computed it at about fourteen Years.

Q. *I ſee nothing very difficult in this Chapter, and therefore ſhall only deſire you to give me a ſummary Account of the Occaſion of* Joſhua's *aſſembling the People, and of what he ſaid to them at this ſolemn Meeting?*

A. *Joſhua*, being grown old, aſſembleth all *Iſrael*, and declareth how wonderfully God had fought for his People, and driven out the Nations before them, giving them their Lands for an Inheritance; therefore he earneſtly exhorted them to be diligent, in keeping the Law written by *Moſes*, and to beware of going into, and mixing themſelves with the Idolatry of the *Heathens*. He ſets before them the Mercies which they had received from God, and yet were to receive; threatening them with heavy Judgments, if they forſook the Lord, and ſheweth that no Evil can come unto Man, except he offended God by Diſobedience. *Joſhua* called for all *Iſrael*, and for their Elders, and for their Heads, and for their Judges, and for their Officers, and ſaid unto them, I am Old and ſtricken in Age: And ye have ſeen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all theſe Nations, becauſe of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you. Behold, I have divided unto you by Lot theſe Nations that remain, to be an Inheritance for your Tribes, from *Jordan*, with all the Nations that I have cut off, even unto the great Sea Weſtward. And the Lord your God, he ſhall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your ſight, and ye ſhall poſſeſs their Land, as the Lord your God hath promiſed unto you. Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of *Moſes*, that ye turn not aſide therefrom, to the right Hand, or to the left; that ye come not among theſe Nations, theſe that remain amongſt you, neither make mention of the Name of their Gods, nor cauſe to ſwear by them, neither ſerve them, nor bow your ſelves unto them. But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this Day. For the Lord hath driven out from before you, great Nations and ſtrong: But as for you, no Man hath been able to ſtand before you unto this Day. One Man of you ſhall chaſe a Thouſand; for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promiſed you. Take good heed therefore unto your ſelves, that ye love the Lord your God. Elſe if ye do in any wiſe go back, and cleave unto the Remnant of theſe Nations, even theſe that remain among you, and ſhall make Marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of theſe Nations from before you; but they ſhall be Snares and Traps unto you, and Scourges in your Sides, and Thorns in your Eyes, until ye periſh from off this good Land which the Lord your God hath given you. And behold, this Day I am going the Way of all the Earth, and ye know in all your Souls, that not one Thing hath failed of all the good Things things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you; all are come to paſs unto you, and not one Thing hath failed of all the good Things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you; all are come to paſs unto you, and not one Thing hath failed thereof.

Therefore it ſhall come to paſs, that as all good Things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promiſed you; ſo ſhall the Lord bring upon you all evil Things, until he hath deſtroyed you from off this good Land which the Lord your God hath given unto you. When ye have tranſgreſſed the Covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and ſerved other Gods, and bowed yourſelves to them; then ſhall the Anger of the Lord be kindled againſt you, and ye ſhall periſh quickly from off the good Land which he hath given unto you.

CHAP. XXIV.

Joſhua *ſummons all the Tribes to* Shechem, *and gives them a brief Hiſtory of God's Benefits from* Terah *till that Time; renews the Covenant betwixt God and them; promiſes for himſelf and his Houſe, as do likewiſe the People for themſelves. He writes this in the Book of the Law; ſets up a Stone for a Witneſs. His Age, Death, and Burial.* Joſeph's *Bones are buried.* Eleazar *dies.*

Q. W*E come now to the Concluſion of* Joſhua's *Life and Hiſtory; pray what was the general Character of this great Man?*

A. Jeſus, the Son of *Sirach*, gives us a long Commendation of *Joſhua* Eccluſ. xlvi. 1, *&c.* but *Joſephus* is more conciſe in his Character, where he tells us, "That he was a Man of political Prudence, "endued alſo with a ſingular Felicity of popular Eloquence, in expreſſing his Thoughts; brave and indefatigable in War; and no leſs juſt, and dextrous in Peace: And, in ſhort, that he was a Perſon qualified for all great Purpoſes." He is generally reputed to be the Author of the Book, that goes under his Name. In the 26th Verſe of the laſt Chapter, it is expreſly ſaid, that he wrote *theſe Things*; and both the Church and Synagogue have all along looked upon the Book as *Canonical*: But there is not the like Certainty of another Book of *Joſhua's*, which the *Samaritans* preſerve with much more Reſpect, and make great uſe of, in the Support of their Pretenſions againſt the *Jews*; neither can we tell, whether *Joſhua* was the Author of that Prayer, which the *Jews* repeat as oft as they go into the Synagogues, and begins thus——*It is our Duty to praiſe the Lord of the Univerſe, and to celebrate the Creation of the World; for he hath not made us like unto the Nations of the Earth, but hath provided for us an Inheritance infinitely richer and greater,* &c.

Q. *Not long after the Death of* Joſhua, Eleazar *likewiſe finiſhed his Life, and was buried in one of the Hills of* Ephraim; *where was this Hill ſituated?*

A. This Place is, in the *Hebrew*, called the *Hill of Phineas*, it being cuſtomary, in thoſe Days, for Men to call Places by the Names of their eldeſt Sons. But then the Queſtion is, To whom did the *Iſraelites* give this Hill? The moſt probable Anſwer is, that they gave it to *Eleazar*; for, being the High-prieſt, at the Time of the Diviſion of the Land, they thought proper to give him a peculiar Portion, diſtinct from other Cities of the Prieſts, which were all in the Tribes of *Judah*, *Benjamin*, and *Simeon*, and none in the Tribe of *Ephraim*, Joſh. xxi. 9, 17, 19. And they made choice of this Country, the rather, that he might be near the Tabernacle, which was at *Shiloh*, and near to *Joſhua*, who lived at *Shechem*, to be ready, on all Occaſions, to adviſe him, and conſult the Oracle for him. But then againſt this, there lies an Objection, *viz.* that no *Levite*, or *Prieſt*, was to have any Portion in the Diviſion of the Land; and therefore it's a received Opinion among the *Jews*, that either *Eleazar*, or *Phineas*, had this Inheritance in Right of his Wife; though we cannot ſee, why the High-Prieſt eſpecially, who was certainly the ſecond Perſon in the Government, might not have a Manſion-houſe, and ſome Domains, allotted him, for the greater State and Dignity of his Living, without any great Infringement of the general Laws.

Q. *The Bones of* Joſeph *were likewiſe interred about the ſame Time; but did they not bring the Bodies of the reſt of their Anceſtors with them out of* Egypt?

A. It may reaſonably be thought, that the Bodies of the reſt of the Sons of *Jacob*, from whom the twelve Tribes deſcended, were brought into *Canaan*, to be there interred, as *Joſephus* relates from ancient Tradition, and St. *Stephen* confirms it, *Acts* vii. 16. For though *Joſeph* excelled them all in Dignity, and gave this ſpecial Charge about his Body, yet every Tribe, no doubt, had as great a Regard for their Progenitor, and would be inclined to do the ſame for their Fathers, that *Joſeph*'s Deſcendants did for him: But whether they buried them in the Sepulchre at *Machpelah*, or in ſome eminent Place of their own Tribe, as *Joſeph* was, there is none that can give us any Account.

Q. *In the 9th Verſe it is ſaid,* Then *Balak* the Son of *Zippor*, King of *Moab*, aroſe and fought againſt *Iſrael*: *How is this true, when* Balak *did never fight againſt* Iſrael, *Judg.* xi. 25?

A. One Prince may commence a War againſt another, though he never come to a Battle, nor ſtrike one Stroke; ſo *Balak* warred, though not by open Force, yet by crafty Counſel and warlike Stratagems, by magical Arts, by wicked Devices, and by throwing Temptations in their Way, in order to break the Covenant and Alliance between God their Confederate and Protector; or by warlike Preparations, in Caſe *Balaam*'s Charms had ſucceeded, as may be gathered from *Numb.* xxii. 11. or at leaſt by Deſign or Intention; Things being often ſaid to be done both in Scripture and other Authors, which were only deſigned or intended, as here *v.* 11. *Gen.* xxxvii. 21. *Ezek.* xxiv. 13. *Matth.* v. 28. *John* x. 32, 33. And the old Lawyers note, *That he is rightly called a Thief or an Adulterer,* &c. *who wanted nothing but Occaſion or Opportunity of being ſo.*

Q. Joſhua, *in recapitulating the great Things God had done for* Iſrael, *in the Conqueſt and Deſtruction of their Enemies, tells them, that this* was not owing to their Sword, nor to their Bow, *v.* 12. *But does not this contradict the whole Tenor of their Hiſtory, which informs us of many bloody Battles fought, and Victories won by the Dint of their Arms?*

A. The Words referred to, may be thus paraphraſed: Though thou didſt fight with them, and prevail againſt them in Battle, yet this was not becauſe thou hadſt more Force or Courage than they had; but becauſe by my Hornet, which I ſent like an Harbinger before thee, I had both broken their Spirits, greatly diminiſhed their Numbers, and particularly cut off thoſe Giants, or others who were like to give the moſt Trouble and Difficulty; whence it comes to paſs, that we read of ſo few Giants in the Land, which was called the *Land of Giants*, *Deut.* iii. 13.

Q. *In the 15th Verſe,* Joſhua *ſeems to give the People the Choice of Worſhip they liked beſt, either that of the true God, or Idols: Could he ſafely do this; or was it in his Power to grant ſuch a Liberty at all?*

A. He does not abſolutely leave them to their Liberty, whether they would ſerve God or Idols; for *Joſhua* had no ſuch Power or Liberty himſelf, nor could give it to another; and both he and they are obliged by the Law of *Moſes*, to give their Worſhip to God only, and to forbear all Idolatry in themſelves, and ſeverely puniſh it in others; but it is a rhetorical and powerful Inſinuation, whereby he both implies, that the Worſhip of God is ſo highly reaſonable, ſo neceſſary and beneficial; and the Service of Idols ſo abſurd, vain, and pernicious, that that if it were left free to all Men to make their Choice, every Man in his right Wits muſt needs chuſe the Service of God, before that of Idols; and provokes them to bind themſelves faſter to God by their own Choice. See ſuch Manner of Speeches in *Ruth* i. 8, 15. 1 *Kings* xviii. 21.

Q. Joſhua *in his Diſcourſe to the People*, tells them, *v.* 19, Ye cannot ſerve the Lord: *Now if this was out of their Power, why does he require it of them?*

A. Joſhua does not here ſpeak of an abſolute Impoſſibility; (for then both his Reſolution to ſerve God himſelf, and his Exhortation to them to do the ſame, had undoubtedly been vain and ridiculous) but of a moral Impoſſibility, or a very great Difficulty, which he alledges, not to diſcourage them from God's Service, which it is his great Deſign to engage them in; but only to make them more conſiderate and cautious in obliging themſelves to it; and more circumſpect and reſolute in anſwering their Obligations. The Meaning therefore is, God's Service is not, as you ſeem to imagine, a ſlight and eaſy Thing, as ſoon done as ſaid; but it is a Work of great Difficulty, and requires great Care, Courage and Reſolution; and when I conſider the infinite Purity of God, that he will not be mocked or abuſed; and withal your great and manifeſt Proneneſs to Superſtition and Idolatry, even during the Life of *Moſes*, and in ſome of you whilſt I live, and whilſt the Obligations which God hath laid upon you in this Land, are freſh in your Memory; I cannot but fear that after my Deceaſe you will think the Service of God too hard and burthenſome for you, and therefore will caſt it off and revolt from him, if you do not double your Watch, and carefully avoid all Occaſions of Idolatry, which I fear you will not do, but I do hereby exhort you to do.

Q. *Why does* Joſhua *add, in the laſt Clauſe of the ſame Verſe*, He will not forgive your Tranſgreſſions, nor your Sins? *Does he mean this abſolutely, or with ſome Limitation?*

A. The Meaning is this; If you, who own yourſelves for his People and Servants, ſhall wickedly and wilfully tranſgreſs his Laws, by Idolatry, or other Crimes, he will not let this go unpuniſhed in you, as he does in other Nations; therefore conſider what you do when you take the Lord for your God; weigh your Advantages and Inconveniencies together; for if you be ſincere and faithful in God's Service, you will have admirable Benefits by it; ſo if you be falſe to your Profeſſions, and forſake him whom you have ſo ſolemnly avouched to be your God, he will deal more ſeverely with you, than with any People in the World.

Q. *Pray explain the firſt Clauſe of Verſe* 26. And *Joſhua* wrote theſe Words in the Book of the Law of the Lord.

A. That is, he wrote this Covenant or Agreement of the People with the Lord, in that Volume which was kept in the Ark, *Deut.* xxxi. 9, 26. whence it was taken and put into the Book of *Joſhua*: This he did partly for the perpetual Remembrance of this great and ſolemn Action; partly, to lay the greater Obligation upon the People to be true to their Engagement; and partly as a Witneſs for God, and againſt the People, if afterwards he ſeverely puniſhed them for their Defection from him, to whom they had ſo ſolemnly and freely obliged themſelves.

Q. *What was the Meaning of* Joſhua's *ſetting up a great Stone in the Place, where he talked with the People?*

A. This Stone was to be as a Witneſs and Monument of this great Tranſaction, according to the Cuſtom of thoſe ancient Times, as *Gen.* xxviii. 18. and xxxi. 45. *Exod.* xxiv. 4. *Deut.* xxvii. 2. *Joſh.* iv. 3. and viii. 32. Poſſibly this Agreement might be written upon this Stone, as was uſual in thoſe Times.

Q. *If you look into* Deut. xv. 21. *you will find that the* Iſraelites *were ſtrictly charged not to plant a Grove of Trees near the Altar; yet we find here an Oak ſtanding near the Sanctuary, v.* 26.

A. That is, near to the Place where the Ark and Tabernacle then were; for though they were forbidden *to plant a Grove near the Altar*, as the *Gentiles* did, yet they might for a Time ſet up an Altar, or the Ark, near a great Tree which had been planted there before.

Q. Joſhua, *bidding the People look to the Stone he had ſet up, tells them*, it had heard all the Words of the Lord; *in what Senſe is this to be taken?*

A. It ſhall be as ſure a Witneſs againſt you, as if it had really heard what had been ſaid. This is a common Figure, called *Proſopopeia*, whereby the Senſe of Hearing is frequently aſcribed to the Heavens and the Earth, and other ſenſeleſs Creatures, as *Deut.* xxxii. 1. *Jer.* ii. 12. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye Heavens at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very deſolate, ſaith the Lord.*

THE

THE BOOK
OF
JUDGES.

Who the Author of this Book was, whether Samuel *or* Ezra, *or ſome other Prophet, is not certainly known, nor is it very material to know. It imports not much who was the King's Secretary, or with what Pen it was written, if it be once known that it was the King who made the Order or Decree: It is ſufficient, that unto the* Jews were committed the Oracles of God, *Rom.* iii. 2. *that is, the Holy Scriptures of the* Old Teſtament, *one Part of which this was, as is generally allowed.*

This Book, which hath been evidently compiled by ſome Prophet out of publick Regiſters and Records, and the Treaſures where they were kept, contains the Series of the Hiſtory of the principal Things which happened to the People of God, from the Death of Joſhua *till the Days of* Eli *the High-Prieſt: The Sum of which is, that God, after* Joſhua's *Death, having left many of the accurſed* Canaanites *remaining for a continual Proof, and Exerciſe of his People; they, by their unlawful Practices, Contracts, and Marriages with them, were thereby led into many notorious Corruptions in the Service of God, and into a boundleſs Idolatry, accompanied with an extreme Depravation of Life and Manners. Whereupon God afflicted them with the Scourge of theſe and other Nations, and puniſhed them ſeverely by foreign Tyrannies, Violences, Oppreſſions, and the Deſolations of War.*

But however the Almighty did not abandon them entirely to the Mercy of their Enemies, but often raiſed up ſome heroic Perſons, whom he endowed with the Power and Gift of his Spirit, and inſpired them with a Reſolution to take upon them the Government, under a benign, fatherly, and reaſonable Form, to adminiſter Juſtice, to defend and deliver the People from their Oppreſſors to re-eſtabliſh the publick Peace and Tranquillity by their Armies, miraculouſly conducted and bleſſed by God, and all under the plain Name and Title of Judges; *who were a Sort of Magiſtrates inferior to Kings, and could neither make new* Laws, *nor impoſe any Tribute or Taxes, but were the ſupreme Executors of the* Laws *and* Commands *of God, and the Generals of the Armies of* Iſrael. *This laid open the Way for God's Providence to confirm the State of* Iſrael, *by eſtabliſhing a Monarchy in* David *and his Poſterity, which was to ſerve for a perpetual Aſſurance and Direction to expect the ſpiritual and everlaſting Kingdom of Chriſt.*

CHAP. I.

The Tribe of Judah, *by divine Direction, renews the War againſt the* Canaanites. Adonibezek *ſubdued.* Jeruſalem *and* Hebron *taken.* Othniel *ſubdues* Debir, *and ſo obtains* Caleb's *Daughter for his Wiſe. The* Kenites *dwell in* Judah. Simeon *and* Judah *join Forces, and conquer divers Places. The Houſe of* Joſeph *ſubdue* Bethel. *The Remiſſneſs of the Tribes in driving out the* Canaanites, *for which they are vexed by them, and ſuffered to remain among them.*

Q. DID Joſhua *appoint any Succeſſors in the Government?*

A. The *Samaritan Chronicle* tells us indeed, that, in the laſt Aſſembly, which *Joſhua* held, he nominated twelve *Chiefs*, of every Tribe one, and put it to the Lot, who ſhould ſucceed him in the Government; that the Lot fell upon his Nephew *Abel*, whom he accordingly crown'd, and inveſted with other Enſigns of Honour, *&c.* But this is thought to be no more than a *fabulous* Account, invented to fill up this void Space of Time.

Q. Bezek *was the firſt Place attacked in the Renewal of this War; where was this Place ſituated?*

A. There is another Place in Scripture, *viz.* 1 *Sam.* xi. 8. where *Bezek* is mentioned; and ſince *Euſebius* and *Jerome* tell us, that there were, in their Days, two Towns about ſeventeen Miles from *Shechem*, of the ſame Name, and not far diſtant from each other, we ſee nothing of Moment to hinder them from being both but one City, in former Times.

Q. Adonibezek *being taken Priſoner, the* Iſraelites *cut off his Thumbs and his Great Toes; but for what particular Reaſon?*

A. The Reaſon of their mutilating him in this Manner was, to make him uncapable of War any more, being unable to *handle Arms*, by Reaſon of the Loſs of his *Thumbs*, or to *run ſwiftly*, (which was a notable Quality in a Warrior in thoſe Days) by the Loſs of his *great Toes.*

Q. Threeſcore and ten Kings, *ſays* Adonibezek, having their Thumbs, and their great Toes cut off, gathered their Meat under my Table, *v.* 7. *Is not this almoſt incredible?*

A. If we conſider thoſe Times and Places, this will not ſeem ſtrange; 1. Becauſe theſe might be Kings ſucceſſively, and ſo there might be divers of thoſe Kings in one Place, and ſo in others. Or, 2. Theſe poſſibly were co-temporary Kings. For it is well known, that antiently, each Ruler of a City, or great Town, was called a *King*, and had Kingly Power in that Place; and many ſuch Kings we meet with in *Canaan*; and it's probable, that ſome Years before, Kings were more numerous there, till the greater devoured many of the leſs.

Q. *It is ſaid, v.* 8. *that* the Children of *Judah* had ſought againſt *Jeruſalem*, and had taken it; *when was this done?*

A. We do not read, that *Jeruſalem* was ever taken by *Joſhua*, though it ſeems highly probable, that, when he took the King of *Jeruſalem*, he did to it, as he did to the reſt of the Cities belonging to thoſe Kings, *Joſh.* x. 23. But when he was gone to conquer other Parts of the Country, it is likely that the old Inhabitants returned again, and took Poſſeſſion of it, for the Land was not then divided among the *Iſraelites*: But as *Joſhua*, a little before his Death, divided the Land, and this City fell, in Part, to the Share of the Tribe of *Judah*, they diſpoſſed the *Jebuſites*, that dwelt there, of all, but the ſtrong Fortreſs on the Top of Mount *Sion*, which held out till the Days of *David*.

Q. *Who was their General in theſe Wars?*

A. Their General is not expreſly named, either in Scripture, *Joſephus*, or other ancient Hiſtorian; and yet it is hardly to be queſtioned, but that *Caleb* was the Perſon. He was of the Tribe of *Judah*; older, than any other, by twenty Years; and yet, like *Moſes*, he continued in his full Strength and Vigour. He, and *Joſhua*, were the only two Spies, who, having ſearched out the Land, gave a true Report of it, and therefore, as *Joſhua* was the firſt *General*, he had the greateſt Right to ſucceed him, and this might be the Reaſon, why *Joſhua*, at his Death, named no other. He, and *Joſhua* were the two only Perſons, to whom the *Iſraelites* gave Inheritances, for their ſignal Services; and, as his Inheritance lay unconquered in this Tribe, he had the greateſt Reaſon to be active in reducing it. His Name alone is mentioned in all theſe Wars, and, as his Son-in-law, *Othniel*, was the firſt Deliverer of the *Iſraelites* from their Oppreſſions, he ſeems to have ſucceeded *Caleb* in this Dignity, as his neareſt and moſt valiant Relation.

Q. *In the 18th Verſe we are told that* Judah *took* Gaza, Askelon, *and* Ekron: *But how could this be, when among the People left to try* Iſrael, *are the five Lords of the* Philiſtines, *Judg.* iii. 3?

A. It is only ſaid, that they *took* the Cities, and, probably contented themſelves with making them tributary; but it is not ſaid that they ſlew the People, as they ought to have done; and as it is ſaid of the other Cities here, *v.* 5, 8, 17, 25. And the People being thus ſpared, did by God's juſt Judgment, recover their Strength, and expel the *Jews* out of their Cities, as we find afterwards. It's farther obſervable, that *Ekron* here taken, was one of *Dan*'s Cities, *Joſ.* xix. 43. and it was attacked and taken here by *Judah* and *Simeon*; partly out of Love to their Brother *Dan*, and partly to ſecure their new Conqueſts, and other adjoining Territories, from ſuch potent Neighbours.

CHAP. II.

An Angel reproves Iſrael *at* Bochim. *They bewail their Sins. The Wickedneſs of the new Generation after* Joſhua; *their frequent Idolatry; for which God puniſhes them by their Enemies; and being delivered by the* Judges, *grew worſe. God therefore leaves the* Canaanites *to prove and try them, whether they would continue faithful to him, or revolt to Idolatry.*

Q. WHO *was this Angel that was ſent to reprove the* Iſraelites?

A. The *Jews* are generally of Opinion, that, by this Angel, we are to underſtand a *Prophet*, who was ſent by God, as a *Meſſenger*, which the Word very often imports; and this Meſſenger they commonly take to have been *Phineas*, who was employ'd upon this Errand. We can ſee no Reaſon however for their departing from the uſual Signification of the Word, eſpecially when there is no Abſurdity in it, and the Senſe of the Context ſeems to require our retaining it. Nay, there is Reaſon to ſay, that the Perſon, who here reproves the *Iſraelites* was ſomething more than a *created* Angel; for who, but God, can ſpeak in this Stile, *I made you to* go out of *Egypt*? No Prophet, nor any created Angel, durſt have been ſo bold; and therefore the Opinion of moſt *Chriſtian* Interpreters is, that it was the *Son of God*, who is frequently in Scripture called the *Angel of the Covenant*: And fit it was for him, to appear now, as coming from *Gilgal*, to put them in mind of his illuſtrious Appearance near that Place once before, of the Aſſurance he then gave them, of his Preſence with them in the Conqueſt of the Land, and of the ſolemn *Covenant*, he made with them, by the renewing of *Circumciſion*. The Angel's *coming up from Gilgal* is therefore mentioned, as a very pertinent Circumſtance, to upbraid the *Iſraelites* with their baſe Ingratitude to God, and with their Sloth in not endeavouring to expel the *Canaanites*.

Q. *What does* Baalim *properly ſignify in v.* 11?

A. Falſe Gods. The plural Number is here uſed, becauſe the Gods of the *Canaanites*, and adjoining Nations, which *Iſrael* worſhipped, were divers, and moſt of them called by the Name of *Baal*.

Q. *What heathen Deity was repreſented by the Idol* Aſhtaroth?

A. The Sun and Moon, which many Heathens worſhipped though under divers Names; and ſo the *Iſraelites*, who, *v.* 13. are charged with worſhipping this Idol, ran into that Error which God had ſo expreſly warned them againſt, *Deut.* iv. 19.

Q. Iſrael *having fallen from the true Worſhip into Idolatry, God ſuffered their Enemies to harraſs and oppreſs them,* Nevertheleſs, *v.* 16. the Lord raiſed up *Judges*, who delivered them out of the Hands of thoſe that ſpoiled them: *Pray what were theſe* Judges?

A. Judges, which, in *Hebrew*, are *Shephettim*, were a Kind of Magiſtrates, not much unlike the *Archontes*, among the *Athenians*, and the *Dictators*, among the *Romans*. The *Carthagenians*, a Colony among the *Tyrians*, had a Sort of Rulers, whom they called *Suffetes*, or *Sophetim*, much of the ſame Extent of Power; and *Grotius*, in the beginning of his Commentary on this Book of *Judges*, compares them to thoſe *Chiefs*, that were in *Gaul*, in *Germany*, and *Britain*, before the *Romans* introduced another Form of Government. Their Power conſiſted in a *Medium*, as it were, between that of a King, and an ordinary Magiſtrate, ſuperior to the latter, but not ſo abſolute, as the former. They were indeed no more than God's *Vicegerents*, and every Attempt to raiſe themſelves to regal Dignity was looked on, as an Uſurpation upon his Right, who alone was to be conſidered as the *Sovereign* of the *Hebrews*, and therefore we find *Gideon* refuſing this ſupreme Authority, when it was offered him; *Judges* viii. 23. *I will not rule over you, neither ſhall my Son rule over you; the Lord ſhall rule over you.*

Q. *How long did theſe Judges continue in their Office, and how were they appointed?*

A. The Honour of theſe Judges laſted for Life; but their Succeſſion was not always continued, for there were frequent Interruptions in it, and the People lived often under the Dominion of Strangers, without any Goverment of their own. According to common Cuſtom, they were generally appointed by God; the Gifts which he inveſted them with, and the Exploits he enabled them to do, were a Call ſufficient to that Office: But, in Caſes of extreme Exigence, the People made ſometimes Choice of ſuch, as they thought beſt qualified to reſcue them out of their Oppreſſion, without waiting for divine Deſignation.

Q. *What was the proper Buſineſs of their high Office?*

A. Their Right extended ſo far, as to arbitrate in all Affairs of War and Peace, and to determine all Cauſes; but then they had none at all to make any new Laws, or lay new Taxes upon the People. Their *Dominion* did ſeldom reach over all the Land; but, as it often happened, that the Oppreſſions, which occaſioned a Recourſe to their Aſſiſtance, were felt in particular Tribes, or Provinces only; ſo the Judges, which were either raiſed, or choſen, to procure a Deliverance from theſe Grievances, did not extend their Command over all the Land, in general, but over that Diſtrict only, which they were appointed to deliver.

In ſhort, theſe Judges were by their Office the Protectors of the Laws, the Defenders of Religion, and the Avengers of all Crimes, eſpecially of that of *Idolatry*; and yet it muſt be owned, that theſe were Men of the like *Paſſions and Infirmities* with others, and that the great Advantages, which, under God, they procured for the *Iſraelites*, did not exempt them from that Frailty, which is is incident to all human Things.

To mention one for all. *Sampſon*, a Perſon born for the Caſtigation of the *Philiſtines*, and to be a Pattern of Valour to all ſucceeding *Heroes*, forgot himſelf in the Arms of *Delilah*, and to the Paſſion he had for a baſe perfidious Woman, ſacrificed thoſe Gifts, which God had beſtowed upon him for Deliverance of his Church, and ſo, to all Ages, he became a ſad Example of the Corruption and Infirmities of human Nature. The like perhaps, in other Reſpects, may be ſaid of the reſt of the *Judges*; but then we are to remember, that they were Perſons under a particular *Oeconomy* of Providence, that their Conduct therefore is no Direction to us, though our Paſſions the Almighty might make uſe of (and therefore tolerate) for the Accompliſhment of his wiſe Ends, *Howbeit they meaned not ſo, neither did their Heart think ſo*, as the Prophet himſelf on the like Occaſion expreſſes himſelf.

Q. *Theſe Judges, we are told, were powerfully aſſiſted to work Miracles for the Deliverance of the People; and yet ſome of their Actions cannot be reduced to the ſtricteſt Rules of Sanctity: How is this conſiſtent?*

A. The ſacred Story indeed tells us, that *the Lord raiſed up Judges, which delivered the* Iſraelites out of the Hands of thoſe, that ſpoiled them, *and that when he raiſed them up he was with them*, i. e. he communicated to them Gifts, both *natural* and *ſupernatural*, according to the Exigencies of his People, and, in all their Encounters with their Enemies, attended them with a peculiar Providence; but as well may we infer, that every General, who fights the King of *England*'s Battles with Succeſs, ſhould be a a Man of ſingular Sanctity, as that thoſe, who were employed under God in that Capacity, ſhould lead Lives anſwerable to their high Character. The Power of working Miracles is not always accompanied with an holy Life. Many, that ſhall ſay unto Chriſt, *Have not we propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name caſt out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Things*, by Reaſon of the Iniquity of their Lives, ſhall find no Acceptance with him; what Wonder is it then, to behold ſome, both Kings and Conquerors, even while they ride in Triumph over the vanquiſhed Foes, tamely led captive by their Paſſions? So that while we cannot but admire them for their military Exploits, we are forced to blame, and cenſure them for their private Conduct.

CHAP. III.

The Nations left to prove Iſrael *mentioned. The* Iſraelites *marrying their Daughters, and ſerving their Gods, are delivered up to the King of* Meſopotamia; *are reſcued by* Othniel; *but continuing to do Evil, are again oppreſſed by the King of the* Moabites; *are reſcued by* Ehud; *Ten Thouſand* Moabites *ſlain.* Shamgar, *delivers them from the* Philiſtines.

Q. IT *is ſaid, v.* 7, *that the Children of* Iſrael ſerved *Baalim* and the Groves: *In what Senſe did they* ſerve the Groves?

A. That is, in the Groves, in which the Heathens uſually worſhipped their *Baalims*, or Idols. Or *the Groves* are here put metonymically for the Idols of the Groves, which are here diſtinguiſhed from the *Baalim*, which ſeems to have been worſhipped in other Places, as the *Prophets of Baal* are diſtinguiſhed from *the Prophets of the Groves*, 1 *Kings* xviii. 19.

Q. *In the 11th Verſe, it is ſaid*, the Land had Reſt forty Years; *although, v.* 8. *it is manifeſt that they were in Servitude eight of thoſe Years.*

A. The Senſe of this Paſſage is, either, 1. That the Land reſted about forty Years; it being uſual in Scripture to uſe Numbers in ſuch a Latitude. Thus the *Iſraelites* are ſaid to *bear their Iniquities forty Years in the Wilderneſs*, Numb. xiv. 43. when there wanted near two Years of that Number, and *to dwell in* Egypt *four hundred and thirty Years*, when there wanted many Years of that Number. Thus *Joſeph*'s Kindred, that were ſent for, and called by him into *Egypt*, are numbered ſeventy five Souls, *Acts* vii. 14. although there were but ſeventy, as is affirmed, *Gen.* xlvi. 27. *Exod.* i. 5. *So here the Land* is ſaid *to reſt forty Years*, although they were in Servitude eight of thoſe Years, *v.* 8. And in like Manner the Land is ſaid to *have Reſt eighty Years,* though eighteen of them they ſerved the King of *Moab, v.* 18. And ſo in ſome other Inſtances. Nor is it ſtrange or unuſual either in Scripture, or in other Authors, for Things to be denominated from the greater Part, as here it was; eſpecially when they enjoyed ſome Degrees of Reſt and Peace even in theſe Times of Slavery, as here they did. Or, 2. *It reſted,* that is, began to reſt, or recovered its interrupted Reſt in the *fortieth Year,* either after *Joſhua's* Death, or after the firſt and famous Reſt procured for them by *Joſhua,* as is noted *Heb.* iv. 9. when he deſtroyed and ſubdued the *Canaanites,* and gave them quiet Poſſeſſion of the Land; and *the Land had Reſt from War,* as is ſaid *Joſh.* xi. 23. and xiv. 15. So there is this Difference between the Years of Servitude and Oppreſſion, and thoſe of Reſt, that in the former he tells us how long it laſted; in the latter, when it began; by which, compared with the other Years, it was eaſy alſo to know how long the Reſt laſted. To ſtrengthen this Interpretation, two Things muſt be noted. 1. That *reſting* is here put for beginning to reſt, as *to beget* is put for *beginning to beget,* Gen. v. 32. and xi. 26. and *to reign* for *to begin to reign,* 2 *Sam.* ii. 10. and *to build,* 1 *Kings* vi. 15, 36. for *to begin to build,* 2 *Chron.* iii. 1. That *forty Years* is put for the *fortieth Year*; the Cardinal Number for the Ordinal, which is common both in the holy Scripture, as *Gen.* i. 5. and ii. 11. *Exod.* xii. 2. *Hag.* i. 1. *Mark.* xvi. 1. and in other Authors.

Q. *What were thoſe* Quarries *by* Gilgal, *from which* Ehud *turned back when he went to execute his Deſign upon* Eglon, *v.* 19?

A. Theſe Quarries were either, 1. Such Places where they hewed Stones. Or, 2. The Twelve Stones which *Joſhua* ſet up there; by the Sight whereof he was animated to his Work. Or 3, The Idols, as the Word alſo ſignifies, which that Heathen King might place there, either in Spite and Contempt of the *Iſraelites* who had that Place in great Veneration; or, that he might aſcribe the Conqueſt of the Land to his Idols, as the *Iſraelites* did to the true God, by ſetting up this Monument in the Entrance or Beginning of it. But more of this preſently.

Q. *Was this a lawful Action in* Ehud *to kill* Eglon?

A. Whether it be lawful, according to the Right of Nature and Nations, for *Subjects* to reſcue themſelves from *Tyranny,* by taking away the Life of the *Tyrant,* and to recover their Country, which has been unjuſtly taken from them, by deſtroying the *Uſurper,* is a Queſtion, that has been much debated, and what, at preſent, we need not enter into, for the Vindication of *Ehud's* Fact: It is the Obſervation of the learned *Grotius,* that the Authority of the King of *Moab* was never legitimated by any Convention of the *Iſraelites,* and, conſequently, that they were at Liberty to ſhake of his Yoke whenever they found a convenient Opportunity. The only Difficulty is, whether a private Man might make himſelf an Inſtrument in effecting this, in the Manner that *Ehud* did? But to this it is replied, that *Ehud* was no private Man, but acted by a Warrant and Authority from God: And to this Purpoſe, the Hiſtory acquaints us, that *when* Ehud *had made an End of offering the Preſent,* which the *Iſraelites* ſent to *Eglon,* he was upon his Return home, and *had gone as far as the Quarries, which were by* Gilgal. The Word *Peſil,* which is here rendered *Quarries,* moſt commonly ſignifies (as indeed it is in the Marginal Note, as well as the *Septuagint* and *Vulgate*) *graven Images,* which, it is not improbable, the *Moabites* had ſet up in this Place, rather than any other, in pure Contempt of the God of *Iſrael,* who had, for ſo long a Time, made *Gilgal* famous by his Preſence in the Tabernacle, while it ſtood there.

Theſe *Images* when *Ehud* beheld, his Spirit was ſtirred with a juſt Indignation within him; and therefore, proceeding no farther in his Journey Home, he diſmiſſed his Attendants, and went himſelf back with a Reſolution to revenge this Affront to God, as well as the Oppreſſion of his People.

That this his Return was directed by a divine Impulſe, and Inſtigation, is evident, I think, from the Hazard of the Enterprize, he was going upon, and the many favourable Occaſions, that accompanied the Execution of it. For, how could any Man in his Senſes think, that a ſingle Perſon, as he was, ſhould ever be able to compaſs the Death of a King, amidſt the Circle of his Guards and Attendants? How could he expect that an Enemy, as he was, ſhould be admitted to a private Audience? Or that, if he ſhould prove ſo lucky, the King ſhould be ſo far infatuated, as to order all the Company to quit the Room? The killing the King muſt have been a great Difficulty under theſe Circumſtances; but then his making his Eſcape had all the Signs of an Impoſſibility in it; and yet, without his Eſcaping, the Deſign of delivering his Country muſt have been abortive. Upon the whole therefore it appears, that nothing, but a divine Inſtinct, could have given him Courage to ſet about the Thing; and therefore it was not a Fallacy, when he told *Eglon,* that *he had a Meſſage from God unto him,* becauſe God had ſent, and commiſſioned him to kill him; ſo that, what he did in this Caſe, he did not of himſelf, or from his own mere Motion, but by virtue of an Order, which he had received from God, who had deſtinated this *Oppreſſor* of his People to this untimely Kind of Death.

This ſeems to be the only Way, whereby we can apologize for *Ehud,* in a Fact, which by no Means is to be made a Precedent, and, without a divine Warrant, is, in no Caſe, to be juſtified: But, as for the Holy Scriptures, wherein this Action is related ſimply, and without either Diſlike or Approbation, why ſhould they ſuffer in our Eſteem upon that Account, any more than *Livy, Thucydides,* or any other *Heathen* Author, for recording the various Tranſactions (and ſome of them full as baſe, and barbarous as this) that happened in the Ages, whereof they treat?

It is a Miſtake to think, that every Perſon, whom the Scripture mentions, nay, whom the Scripture commends in ſome Reſpects, ſhould, in all others, be faultleſs and unblameable; and it would be a much greater Imputation upon the Truth and Authority of theſe ſacred Records, if the *People of God* were all made *Saints,* and no black Actions recorded of them, ſince it is the received Character of a good Hiſtorian, *that, as he ſhould not dare to relate any Thing that is falſe, ſo neither ſhould he conceal any Thing that is true.*

Q. *Pray explain the laſt Clauſe of the* 24*th Verſe.* Surely he covereth his Feet in his Summer-chamber?

A. This Phraſe is uſed only here, and 1 *Sam.*

xxiv. 3. It is commonly underſtood in both Places, of eaſing Nature; becauſe the Men not then wearing Breeches as we do, but long Coats, they did in that Act cover their Feet, as Women do: But a late judicious Interpreter expounds it, of compoſing himſelf to take a little Sleep or Reſt, as was very uſual to do in the Day-time in thoſe hot Countries, 2 *Sam.* iv. 5. and xi. 12. And when they did ſo in cool Places, ſuch as this Summer-parlour unqueſtionably was, they uſed to cover their Feet, as appears from *Ruth* iii. 7. And this may ſeem the more probable, both becauſe the Summer-parlour was more proper for this than the former; and becauſe this was a more likely Reaſon of their long waiting at his Door, leſt they ſhould diſturb his Repoſe. And this Senſe beſt agrees with *Saul*'s Caſe in the Cave, when being a ſleep, *David* could more ſecurely cut off the Lap of his Garment, 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 3.

Q. *Who was this* Shamgar, *mentioned in the laſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. Of what Tribe this valiant Perſon was, we are no where informed; but it is not unlikely, that he was of one of thoſe Tribes, which bordered upon the *Philiſtines, Judah, Dan,* or *Ephraim,* becauſe what he did, was againſt them. It is diſputed by ſome, whether he is to be reckoned among the Number of the *Judges*; but for this, I think, there is no Foundation. The ſhort Account, which the Scripture gives us of him, is this:—— *And after him,* i. e. after *Ehud, was* Shamgar, *the Son of* Anah, *which ſlew of the* Philiſtines *ſix hundred Men with an Ox-goad, and alſo delivered* Iſrael, Judg. iii. 31. After *Ehud* was *Shamgar,* i. e. he ſucceeded him in the Office of a *Judge* for this is the natural Senſe of the Place; and *he alſo delivered* Iſrael, which is the very Phraſe, whereby the *Judges* are deſcribed. It is not ſaid indeed from what Oppreſſions he delivered them; but he is a Deliverer, who preſerves a Nation from being oppreſſed, as well as he, who reſcues them from an Oppreſſion, when they groan under it. This, in all Probability, was *Shamgar*'s Caſe, who, when the *Philiſtines* invaded his Country, gave them a Repulſe, with the Loſs of ſix hundred of their Men, which was enough to diſcourage them from all future Attempts; and indeed the great Slaughter, which he made among them, with a Weapon, in all Appearance, ſo incompetent for the Work, argues him to have been a *Judge,* and poſſeſſed of a divine Power, as much as *Sampſon* was, who ſlew a thouſand of his Enemies *with the Jaw-bone of an Aſs.*

CHAP IV.

Jabin, *by his General* Siſera, *oppreſſes* Iſrael. Deborah *commands* Barak *to go out againſt him, and promiſes him Victory; ſhe marches with him.* Siſera's *Hoſt routed, and himſelf killed by* Jael. Jabin *deſtroyed.*

Q. WHY *is* Jabin *called* King of Canaan, *ſince the* Iſraelites *were poſſeſſed of the greateſt Part of that Country?*

A. He was King of that Part of the Land where moſt of the *Canaanites,* ſtrictly ſo called, now dwelt, which ſeems to have been in the Northern Part of *Canaan.* He was probably of the Poſterity of that *Jabin,* whom *Joſhua* ſlew, *Joſh.* xi. 11. who watched all Opportunities to recover his antient Poſſeſſions, and to revenge his own and his Father's Quarrel upon the *Iſraelites.*

Q. *In the 11th Chapter of* Joſhua, *v.* 11. *we read, that* Hazor *was taken and burnt; yet here, v.* 2. *it's ſaid, that* Jabin *reigned in* Hazor.

A. It might be retaken and rebuilt by the *Canaanites*; or it may denote the whole Territories or Kingdom of *Hazor,* which now he reſtored to its former Largeneſs and Power, *Joſh.* xi. 10. the Names of Cities being frequently put for their Territories, as *Zorah, Joſh.* xv. 33. is put for the Fields belonging to it, *Judg.* xiii. 2. in which *Sampſon*'s Parents lived, *Judg.* xiii. 25. and xvi. 31. and xviii 2.

Q. Siſera's *City is called* Haroſheth of the Gentiles; *but for what Reaſon?*

A. It was ſo called, becauſe it was much frequented and inhabited by the *Gentiles*; either by the *Canaanites,* who being beaten out of their former Poſſeſſions, ſeated themſelves in thoſe Northern Parts; or by other Nations coming there for *Traffick,* or upon other Occaſions, as *Strabo* notes of theſe Parts; whence *Galilee,* where this was, is called *Galilee* of the *Gentiles.*

Q. *Who was this* Siſera, Jabin's *General?*

A. This *Siſera* (as *Joſephus* informs us) was a very great Favourite of the King's, for the Services he had done, in reducing the *Iſraelites,* whom he had worſted upon ſeveral Encounters, Time after Time, and would never give over the Purſuit, till he brought them at laſt to be abſolute Slaves, and Tributaries to his Maſter.

Q. Iſrael *being in great Diſtreſs at the Approach of ſo numerous and ſtrong an Army, God raiſes up* Deborah, *a Propheteſs, to deliver them; why is ſhe called a* Propheteſs?

A. The Words *Prophet,* and *Propheteſs* are of very ambiguous Signification in both *Teſtaments*; ſometimes they denote Perſons, extraordinarily inſpired by God, and endued with the Power of working Miracles, and foretelling Things to come; and ſometimes they are uſed for Perſons, endued with ſpecial, though not miraculous Gifts, or *Graces,* for the better underſtanding, and explaining the Word of God; and of this Sort were the Sons of the Prophets, or ſuch, as were brought up in the Schools of the Prophets. As therefore we read nothing of any miraculous Action, that *Deborah* did, ſhe perhaps was only a Woman eminent for Holineſs, and Prudence, and Knowledge of the holy Scripture, by which ſhe was ſingularly qualified to *judge the People,* i. e. to determine Cauſes and Controverſies among them, according to the Word of God. For, though *Jabin* oppreſſed them ſorely, yet it was rather by rigorous Taxations, than infringing their Laws, which he ſtill ſuffered to be adminiſtered by their own Officers: And of this he might take the leſs Notice, becauſe the ſupreme Judicature was exerciſed by a Woman, from whoſe Power and Authority he thought there was no Reaſon to apprehend any Danger; though this certainly gave her an Opportunity of endearing herſelf to the People, and made her, by this Means, the fitter Inſtrument to reſcue them from Oppreſſion.

Q. Deborah *commands* Barak *to aſſemble his Forces on Mount* Tabor; *where was* Tabor *ſituated?*

A. Tabor is a very remarkable Mountain in *Galilee,* not far from *Kadeſh,* in the Tribe of *Zebulun,* and in the Confines of *Iſſachar* and *Naphtali.* It has its Name from its *Eminence,* becauſe it riſes up in the midſt of a wide champion Country, called the Valley of *Jezreel,* or the great Plain. *Joſephus* tells us, that the *Height* of this Mountain is thirty *Stadia,* and that, on the Top of it, there is a beautiful Plain of twenty Stadia in Circumference: By all which it appears how commodious a Place this Mountain was, to be the Rendezvous of *Barak*'s Forces, ſince it ſtood upon the Confines of ſo many different Tribes, was not acceſſible by the Enemies Horſes and Chariots, and had, on the Top of it, a ſpacious Plain, where he might conveniently marſhal and diſcipline his Army. What modern Travellers tell us of this Mountain, is much to the ſame Purpoſe.— “After a very laborious Aſcent, (ſays Mr. *Maundrell*) we reached the higheſt Part of the Mountain, which has a plain *Area* a Top, fertile, and delicious, and of an oval Figure, about one Furlong in Breadth, and two in Length. This *Area* is incloſed with Trees on all Parts, except towards the *South*, and from hence you have a Proſpect, which, if nothing elſe, rewards the Labour of aſcending it, for it is impoſſible for the Eyes of Man to behold any greater Gratification of this Nature. The Top of this Mountain was anciently environed with Walls, and Trenches, and other Fortifications, of which ſome Remains are ſtill viſible: And, for many Ages, it has been believed, that here it was, that our bleſſed Saviour was *transfigured*, in the Preſence of his three Apoſtles, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, though ſome later Writers have made a Doubt of it.”

Q. *Where lies the River* Kiſhon, *over which* Siſera *paſſed his Army to encounter* Barak?

A. This River riſes out of Mount *Tabor*, and, paſſing along the Valley of *Jezreel*, (now the Plain of *Eſdraelon*) empties itſelf into the *Mediterranean-ſea*. Some Geographers will needs have it, that this River runs two Ways, partly *weſtward*, into the *Mediterranean*, and partly *eaſtward*, into the *Sea of Galilee*; but this is a Thing incredible, and what is known of no other River in the World; and therefore, if there be any thing in it, the Matter muſt be this:— That from Mount *Tabor*, (as it happens from many other Hills) there flow Waters out of two of its Sides, ſome ſhaping their Courſe *weſtward*, to the *Mediterranean*, and others *eaſtward*, into the *Sea of Galilee*: So that there are two Spring-heads, and two diſtinct Rivers, both ariſing from the ſame Mountain, and perhaps both called by the ſame Name: But whatever becomes of the River, that runs *eaſtward*, 'tis plain, from another Paſſage, that the *Kiſhon*, which is mentioned in Scripture, ran *weſtward* into the *Mediterranean-ſea*. For when *Elijah* had convinced the People, aſſembled together at Mount *Carmel*, that *Baal* was not the true God, he injoined them to ſeize all his Prieſts, and to bring them down to the Brook *Kiſhon*, there to be ſlain, 1 *Kings* xviii. So that the Brook *Kiſhon*, which riſes out of Mount *Tabor*, muſt run by Mount *Carmel*, which ſtands on the *Sea-ſhore*; and, as *Carmel* ſtands *Weſt* of Mount *Tabor*, the Courſe of the River, which extends from the one to the other, muſt be ſo likewiſe.

Mr. *Maundrell* tells us, that, in the Condition, wherein he ſaw this River, its Waters were low and inconſiderable; but, in paſſing along the Side of the Plain, he diſcerned the Tracts of many leſſer Torrents falling down into it from the Mountains, which muſt needs make it ſwell exceedingly, upon ſudden Rains.

Q. *When the two Armies were engaged, it's ſaid,* The Lord diſcomfited *Siſera* and all his Chariots; *in what Manner may we ſuppoſe this was done, ſince it's not mentioned in the Text?*

A. *Joſephus* relates the Manner of God's Interpoſition in this Action, in the following Words. “The Armies were no ſooner engaged, but there aroſe a violent Wind, with a moſt impetuous Tempeſt of Rain and Hail along with it. The Storm, driving juſt in the Face of the *Canaanites*, made not only their Bows and their Slings uſeleſs, but their Weapons likewiſe deſigned for cloſe Fight. For they could not ſo much as open their Eyes againſt the Weather, and their Fingers were ſo benumb'd with Cold too, that they could not handle their Arms.——In the Concluſion, it came to paſs, that the *Canaanites* Army was broken, diſperſed, and cut to pieces: So that betwixt thoſe, that fell by the Sword, thoſe, that were trampled to Death under the Horſes Feet, thoſe, that were torn to pieces by the Chariots, and thoſe, that fled away, and fell into the Hands of the *Iſraelites* in their Flight, this prodigious Army, which (according to our Author) conſiſted of thirty Thouſand Foot, ten Thouſand Horſe, and three Thouſand armed Chariots, was in effect totally deſtroyed.”

Q. *Why was* Heber, *the Huſband of* Jael, *called a* Kenite?

A. He was of the Poſterity of *Hobab*, the Son of *Jethro*, Father-in-law of *Moſes*; and is here called a *Kenite*, becauſe originally he deſcended from thoſe People, who dwelt *weſtward* of the *Dead-ſea*, and extended themſelves pretty far into *Arabia Petræa*. The Word *Ken*, (from whence they took their Name,) ſignifies a *Neſt*, an *Hole*, or a *Cave*, and to this the Prophet *Balaam* might allude, when he addreſſes himſelf to them in theſe Words: — *Strong is thy dwelling Place, and thou putteſt thy* Neſt *on a Rock: Nevertheleſs the* Kenite *ſhall be waſted, until* Aſher *ſhall carry thee* away *captive*, Num. xxiv. 21. Theſe *Kenites* indeed were ſome of the People, whoſe Lands God had promiſed to the Deſcendants of *Abraham*; nevertheleſs, in Conſideration of *Jethro*, all, that ſubmitted to the *Iſraelites*, were permitted to live in their own Country. In *Numb.* Ch. x. Ver. 29. we find, that *Hobab* was invited by *Moſes* to accompany him into the Land of *Canaan*, and, in all Probability, he accepted the Invitation. At their firſt Coming, they ſettled themſelves in the Territories of *Jericho*; but, having contracted a particular Friendſhip with the Tribe of *Judah*, they removed with them into the Country, that fell to their Lot; *Judg.* i. 16. though every Family of them did not ſo, for this *Heber*, we find, for ſome Reaſons, that are not mentioned, had ſettled his Habitation in the Tribe of *Naphtali*, *Judg.* i. 11. The *Kenites* indeed, tho' they were *Proſelytes*, and worſhipped the true God, according to the *Moſaick* Law, yet, being Strangers by Birth, and ſo not pretending to any Right or Title to the Land of *Canaan*, they held it beſt Policy, in thoſe troubleſome Times, to obſerve a *Neutrality*, and maintain Peace, as well as they could, both with the *Iſraelites*, and *Canaanites*; and upon this Foot it was, that there was a Peace between King *Jabin*, and the Houſe of *Heber*, and that *Siſera*, in his Diſtreſs, fled to *Heber*'s Tent for Protection, and put Confidence in the feigned Civilities of his Wife.

Q. Siſera *being routed, fled to the Tent of* Jael *for ſafety*; Jael, *in a friendly Manner, invited him in, but afterwards ſlew him; was this a juſtifiable Action?*

A. There is ſomething peculiar in relation to the Fact of *Jael*, and that is the Words of the *Propheteſs*, in her triumphant Song, *Bleſſed above Women ſhall* Jael, *the Wife of* Heber, *the* Kenite, *be, bleſſed ſhall ſhe be above Women in the Tent*; which ſome look upon as a Commendation of *Jael*, and conſequently an Approbation of the Murther of *Siſera*: But *Deborah* herein might only propheſy, how, and in what

Manner, the *Iſraelites* would be affected towards that Woman, by whoſe Means (though perhaps not in the moſt *commendable* Way) they had been delivered from a very dangerous Enemy.

'Tis natural for us, when at any Time we are reſcued from an Adverſary, by whom we have ſuffered much, and have Reaſon to dread more; 'tis natural, I ſay, for us to wiſh well to the Perſon, by whoſe Means he was taken off; nor are we apt to conſider the Action according to the Meaſure of ſtrict Virtue, by reaſon of the Benefit, which accrues to us thereby. *Deborah* might therefore mean no more, than what were the common Notions of Mankind in a Caſe of this Nature: But, even admitting her Words to be a Commendation of the Fact, we might, very likely, perceive ſeveral Reaſons for it, if we had but a Knowledge of ſome Circumſtances, which we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, though the Scripture has not related them to us.

Mr. *Poole* has another Way of accounting for the Commendation, which is given to *Jael* in *Deborah*'s Song, and that is by giving up the divine Inſpiration of it. "It is not to be denied, *ſays he*, but that there are ſome Words, Paſſages, and Diſcourſes, recorded in Scripture, which are not *divinely* inſpired, becauſe ſome of them were uttered by the *Devil*, and others by the holy Men of God, but miſtaken: Such is the Diſcourſe of *Nathan* to *David* (2 *Sam.* ii. 3.) which God preſently contradicted (Ver. 45, *&c.*) and ſeveral Diſcourſes in *Job*, which God himſelf declares to be unſound; *ye have not ſpoken of me the Thing, that is right, as my Servant* Job *hath*, (Job xlii. 27) This being ſo, *continues he*, the worſt, that any malicious Mind can infer from this Place, is ——— That this Song, though indited by a good Man, or Woman, was not *divinely* inſpired, but only compoſed by a Perſon, piouſly minded, and tranſported with Joy, for the Deliverance of God's People, but ſubject to miſtake; who therefore, out of Zeal, to commend the happy Inſtrument of ſo great a Deliverance, might eaſily overlook the *Indirectneſs* of the Means, by which it was accompliſhed, and commended that, which ſhould have been diſliked. If it be urged, that the Song was compoſed by *Deborah*, a *Propheteſs*, and muſt, conſequently, be divinely inſpired, the Anſwer is, 1ſt, That it is not certain what Kind of Propheteſs *Deborah* was, whether *extraordinary*, and infallible, or *ordinary*, and ſo liable to Miſtakes. But, 2dly, that every Expreſſion even of a true and extraordinary Prophet, was not divinely inſpired, as is evident from *Nathan*'s Miſtake abovementioned, and from *Samuel*'s Error concerning *Eliab*, whom, for his outward Stature and Comelineſs, he took *to be the Lord*'s Anointed." 1 *Sam.* xvi. 6.

Q. *But we are told*, v. 17. *that there was then Peace between the Houſe of* Heber *and* Jabin: *Was not the killing of* Jabin's *General, a notorious Breach of that Alliance?*

A. It is a received *Maxim* among all *Civilians*, that, where two Compacts ſtand in Competition, and cannot be both obſerved, the *ſtronger* ſhould always have Preference: An Agreement, for Inſtance ſays *Puffendorf*, that is made with an Oath, ſhould always ſuperſede that, which is made without one. 'Tis but ſuppoſing then, that the two depending Treaties were of theſe different Kinds; and this will be a Circumſtance in Favour of *Jael*, but then, if we may ſuppoſe farther, that *Jabin* was a grievous Tyrant, and *Siſera* the chief Inſtrument of his Tyranny; this (according to the Opinions of ſome) will ſupply us with a full Apology for what ſhe did. "For there are certain Monſters in Nature, *ſay they*, in whoſe Deſtruction all Civil *Society* is concerned. To do any thing to preſerve them, nay, to ſlip a proper Opportunity of ridding the World of them, (whatever Terms we happen to be under with them) is to be falſe to what we owe to the whole *Community*, under the Pretence of *Fidelity* to a baſe *Ally*. When Matters are come to ſuch an Extremity, that we muſt fight with Men, as we do with wild Beaſts, Fallacy of any Kind (which at other Times is juſtly deteſted) may, in ſome Meaſure, be then excuſed; nor have they, who in their Dealings with others, are regardleſs of all Laws, both humane and divine, any Reaſon to complain, if, upon ſome Occaſions, they meet with a Retaliation."

Jael, when ſhe took the *Hammer* and *Nail* in her Hand, might have this perhaps, and much more to ſay in her own Vindication: But what abſolves her moſt effectually with us, is the Declaration, which God had made in Favour of the *Iſraelites*, by the wonderful Defeat of *Jabin*'s Army, and the Direction and Impulſe, wherewith he excited her to diſpatch his vanquiſhed *General*. Had ſhe been left to herſelf, ſhe would have been contented, (one would think) to have let him laid ſtill, until *Barak*, who was in Purſuit of him, had come up, and ſurprized him. To fall upon him herſelf, was an Enterpriſe exceedingly bold, and hazardous, and above the Courage of her Sex; and therefore we may conclude, that if it was God, who inſpired her with this extraordinary Reſolution, ſhe was not to be blamed (notwithſtanding the Peace between *Jabin*, and her Family) for being *obedient to the heavenly* Impulſe, becauſe all Obligations to Man muſt neceſſarily ceaſe, when brought in Competition with our higher Obligations towards God.

Q. *In the* Epiſtle to the Hebrews, Barak *is reckoned among thoſe Worthies who were eminent for their Faith; and yet we find him here refuſing to obey the divine Summons, unleſs* Deborah *would go along with him.*

A. Whoever looks into the Catalogue of the Worthis, whom the Author to the *Hebrews* enumerates, will ſoon perceive, that, as he is far from being exact in the Order, wherein he places them, ſo, by the *Faith*, for which he commends them, he means no more, than a Belief of what God told them, and ready Obedience to his Commands, whenever they were ſignified to them by a proper Authority. *Deborah* was, at this Time, a very remarkable Woman, famous for the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, and Determination of Controverſies among the People; but, notwithſtanding this, it would have been Raſhneſs in *Barak*, to have gone upon ſo hazardous an Undertaking, without any farther Aſſurance, than this. He did not abſolutely refuſe to go, nay, he offered to go upon the firſt Notice, and for this his Faith is commended in Scripture; but then he was minded to have ſome farther Conviction, that this Notice was from God; and of which he could not have a better Proof, than if the *Propheteſs* herſelf would go, and ſhare with him the Fate of the Battle.

The Enemy was as formidable an one, as ever the *Iſraelites* had to encounter. *Nine hundred Chariots of Iron*, when, in Times of greater military Preparation, *Mithridates* had but *one*, and *Darius* no more than *two* hundred, in their Armies, was enough to inject Terror into any *Commander,* whoſe Forces conſiſted all of Foot, and had no proper Defence againſt theſe deſtructive Engines. Good Reaſon had he therefore to apprehend, that the People would not ſo readily have inliſted themſelves into the publick Service, had there not been a Perſon of her Character, to appear at the Head of it. She was a *Propheteſs,* and had received frequent Revelations from God; and therefore, when the People ſaw her perſonally engaged in it, they would be the apter to be perſuaded, that the Expedition was by God's Appointment, and therefore, without all Peradventure, would be attended with Succeſs. And as *Deborah*'s joining with *Barak* in the Expedition, might be thought a good Expedient to raiſe a ſufficient Number of Forces; ſo might it equally be thought a Means effectual, both to prevent their Deſertion, and to animate them to the Fight; and accordingly *Joſephus* tells us, "That, when the two Armies lay encamped, one within the Sight of the other, the *Iſraelites* were ſtruck with ſuch a Terror, at the infinite Odds of the Enemy in Numbers, that both *General* and Soldiers were once upon the very Point of ſhifting for themſelves, without ſo much as ſtriking a Blow; but upon *Deborah*'s Aſſurance, that it was the Cauſe of God, and that he himſelf would aſſiſt, and bring them off, they were prevailed upon to ſtand the Shock of the Battle."

But there is one Advantage more, which *Barak* might more eſpecially promiſe to himſelf, in having *Deborah*'s Company in this Expedition, and that is, that he might not want an Oracle to reſort to upon upon any Emergency, that might happen; becauſe he was perſuaded, that God, who by her *Means* had put his People upon this Enterprize, would not fail by her *Mouth,* to direct him in the Management of it: And accordingly, in the grand Point of all, *viz. when it was the propereſt Time to engage the Enemy,* we find the Benefit which he received from her Company and Converſation; *Up,* ſays ſhe, *for this is the Day, in which the Lord has delivered* Siſera *into thy Hand: Is not the Lord gone out before thee? So* Barak *went down from Mount* Tabor, *and ten Thouſand Men after him, and the Lord diſcomfited* Siſera, *and all his Chariots, and all his Hoſt, with the Edge of the Sword.*

CHAP. V.

Deborah's *Song, in which ſhe exhorts to Praiſe, recounts the former Wonders and Mercies of God to his People; glories in their preſent happy State; excites the Governors,* &c. *to praiſe the Lord; commends the chief of the Tribes who went forth willingly to this Battle, and checks the unwilling who tarried at Home; deſcribes the Victory in all its Circumſtances; curſes* Meroz; *extols* Jael *and her Act; derides* Siſera's *Court Ladies; prays for the like Judgment on their Enemies, and Proſperity to God's People.*

Q. IN *what Senſe were the Mountains ſaid to melt,* v. 5?

A. The Mountains *melted,* that is, *flowed* with Floods of Water poured out of the Clouds upon them, and from them flowing down in a mighty Stream upon the lower Lands, and carrying down ſome Part of the Mountain with it, as is uſual in exceſſive Showers.

Q. *How happened it that in the Days of* Jael, *the High-ways were unoccupied, and that* Travellers walked through By-Ways, *v.* 6?

A. Partly becauſe of the *Canaanites,* who, beſides the publick Burdens and Tributes which they laid upon them, waited for all Opportunities to do them Miſchief ſecretly; their Soldiers watching for Travellers in the common Roads, as is uſual in Time of War; and partly, becauſe of the *Robbers* even of their own People, who having caſt off the Fear and Worſhip of God, and there being no King or Ruler in *Iſrael* to reſtrain or puniſh them, and being alſo many of them reduced to great Want, through the Oppreſſion of the *Canaanites,* it is not ſtrange, if in thoſe Times of publick Diſorder, divers of the *Iſraelites* themſelves did break forth into Acts of Injuſtice and Violence, even againſt their own Brethren, if they met them in convenient Places, which made Travellers ſeek for By-paths.

Q. *From* Deborah's *Queſtion, was* there a Shield or Spear ſeen among forty Thouſand in *Iſrael, one would be apt to conclude, that the* Iſraelites *were wholly unarmed, which is ſcarce probable, conſidering their late Wars.*

A. The Meaning is not, that all the *Iſraelites* had no Arms, for here is mention made of *Shields* or *Spears,* that they might have Swords, and Bows and Arrows, to offend their Enemies; but, either that they had but few Arms among them, being many Thouſands of them diſarmed by the *Canaanites;* or, that they generally neglected the Uſe of Arms, as being utterly diſpirited, and without all Hope of recovering their loſt Liberty, and being neceſſitated to other Employments for a Subſiſtence.

Q. *Explain the laſt Clauſe of the 11th Verſe,* Then ſhall the People of the Lord go down to the Gates.

A. That is, to the Gates of their Cities, which were the chief Places to which both City and Country reſorted for publick Buſineſs and Matters of Juſtice, from which they had been debarred by their Oppreſſors; but now they had free Acceſs and Paſſage, either in or out of the Gates, as their Occaſions required; and they who had been driven from their Cities, now returned to them in Peace and Triumph; ſo the Citizens Deliverance is celebrated here, as the Countrymens is in the Words preceding in the ſame Verſe.

Q. *How could* Deborah *properly ſay to* Barak, *v.* 12. Lead thy Captivity captive, *when there was none of them left, as appears from Chapter* iv. 16?

A. None were left to make Head againſt them. Or *none* is put for *few,* and thoſe few might be taken after the Battle, and carried captive, led in Triumph, and afterwards ſlain.

Q. *What is the genuine Senſe of the firſt Clauſe of* v. 14. Out of *Ephraim* was there a Root of them?

A. Deborah here begins to relate the Carriage and Miſbehaviour of the ſeveral Tribes in this Expedition; and ſhe begins with *Ephraim.* The Words relate either, 1. To the *Ephraimites;* or, 2. To them that came forth to this Expedition. By *Root* ſhe ſeems to mean a *Branch,* as that Word is ſometimes uſed, as *Iſa.* xi. 10. and liii. 2. By which alſo ſhe may note the Fewneſs of thoſe that came out of *Ephraim,* that *fruitful Bough* conſiſting of many Branches, *Gen.* xlix. 2. yielding but one Branch, or Handful of Men to this Service.

Q. *Explain the Meaning of thoſe Words,* v. 15. For the Diviſions of *Reuben,* there were great Thoughts of Heart.

A. By *Diviſions* underſtand *Separations*, whereby they were divided or ſeparated, not ſo much one from another in their Thoughts, Counſels, and Conduct in this War, (for they ſeem to have been too well agreed in abiding at home with their Sheep, as it follows), as they were divided and ſeparated from their Brethren no leſs in their Deſigns and Affections, than in their Situation by the River *Jordan*; they would not join Intereſts and Forces with them in the common Cauſe. For this ſtrange and unfriendly Behaviour there were *great Thoughts of Heart*, or *Searchings*, as it is in the next Verſe; great and ſad Thoughts, Debates, and Perplexities of Mind among the *Iſraelites*, to ſee themſelves deſerted by ſo great and potent a Tribe as *Reuben* was. *Reuben* being rich in Cattle, was unwilling to run the Hazard of ſo great a Loſs, by taking up Arms againſt ſo potent an Enemy as *Jabin* was; and the Bleatings of their Sheep were ſo loud in their Ears, that they could not hear the Call of *Deborah* and *Barak* to this Expedition.

Q. *In the 19th Verſe it is ſaid, They* (the Kings of *Canaan* that came againſt *Iſrael*) took no Gain of Money; *of whom did they take none?*

A. Either, 1. From *Siſera*. They fought without Pay, whether from mere Hatred of the *Iſraelites*, and a Deſire to be revenged upon them; or, from a full Hope and Confidence of paying themſelves abundantly out of *Iſrael's* Spoils. Or, 2. From the *Iſraelites*; ſo the Senſe is, they fell, loſt all their Hopes of Money, and rich Spoils and Booty, which they aſſured themſelves of; inſtead of gaining a Prey, they loſt themſelves.

Q. *What was* Meroz, *which* Deborah *curſes ſo bitterly?*

A. It was a Place then, no doubt, eminent and conſiderable, though now there be no Traces of it left, to preſerve its Remembrance, which poſſibly might be the Effect of this bitter Curſe; as in the ſame Manner God curſes *Amalek*, that he would utterly *blot out their Remembrance*, &c. *Exod.* xvii. 14. *Deut.* xxv. 19. And this Place, above all others, may be ſo ſeverely curſed; either becauſe it was near the Place of Battle, and therefore had the greateſt Opportunity and Obligation to engage with and aſſiſt their Brethren; and their denying their Help was a great Diſcouragement to all their Brethren, whoſe Hearts undoubtedly were greatly afflicted, and might have utterly fainted at this great Miſcarriage, and ſcandalous Example; or for ſome other great Aggravation of their Cowardice and Treachery, which may be eaſily imagined, tho' not here expreſſed.

Q. *In what Senſe are we to take the Reaſon which* Deborah *gives for her curſing the Inhabitants of* Meroz; *namely,* becauſe they came not to the Help of the Lord?

A. By the Words, *To the Help of the Lord*, underſtand either, 1. To the Help of the Lord's People, (for God takes what is done for or againſt his People, as if it was done to himſelf, *Iſa.* lxiii. 9. *Zech.* ii. 8. *Matth.* xxv. 45. Or, 2. Of the Lord himſelf, who though he did not need, yet did require and expect their Help and Concurrence. And it is thus expreſſed, to ſhew the Sinfulneſs and Unreaſonableneſs of their cowardly Deſertion of this Cauſe, becauſe it was the Cauſe of God, and they had the Call of God to it, whom they knew to be able eaſily to cruſh the Enemy whom they dreaded, and who had promiſed to do it.

CHAP. VI.

The Midianites *oppreſs* Iſrael. *A Prophet rebukes them. An Angel calls* Gideon *to* Iſrael's *Deliverance, and confirms him by a Miracle. He builds an Altar, names it, and offers thereon; breaks down the Altar of* Baal; *he is named* Jerub-Baal. *The* Midianites *aſſemble their Forces;* Gideon *prepares to meet them; God ſtrengthens and confirms him by a Miracle.*

Q. HOW *came it to paſs, that the* Midianites *were now grown ſo powerful as to be able to oppreſs* Iſrael, *ſince we read* Numb. xxxi. *of the utter Deſtruction of that Nation?*

A. Although the Generality of the *Midianites* had been cut off by *Moſes* about two hundred Years before, yet many of them, doubtleſs, fled into the neighbouring Countries, whence afterwards they returned into their own Land, and in that Time, might eaſily grow to a very great Number; eſpecially, when God furthered their Increaſe, that they might be a fit Scourge for his People *Iſrael* when they tranſgreſſed.

Q. *Were the* Midianites *the only Enemies that afflicted* Iſrael *at this Time?*

A. Though the *Midianites* were the principal People concerned in theſe Invaſions and Inroads, yet, beſides the *Amalekites*, they had other confederate Nations, who are called the *Children of the Eaſt*, Judg. vi. 3, 33. by whom we may underſtand the *Ammonites*, and *Moabites*, as lying *Eaſt* of the *Land of Iſrael*, if not the *Iſmaelites*, and others, that inhabited the Parts of *Arabia*. The *Children* or People *of the Eaſt*, in *Gen.* xxix. 1. denote the Inhabitants of *Meſopotamia*; but theſe ſeem to be too far diſtant, to have any Part in theſe Excurſions; and therefore, ſince we read, *Gen.* xxv. 6. that *Abraham* ſent away the Sons of his Concubines, particularly the Sons of *Keturah*, (one whereof was *Midian* the Father of the *Midianites*) *eaſtward into the Eaſt-Country*, it may not improbably be inferred, that, by the *Children of the Eaſt*, in this Hiſtory of *Gideon*, are denoted the Deſcendants of the other Sons of *Keturah*, and of the other Brothers of *Midian*, who had ſettled themſelves in the *eaſtern* Parts, adjoining to *Midian*.

Q. *Who was the Prophet whom God ſent to rebuke* Iſrael, *v.* 8?

A. Who this Prophet was, we have no manner of Intimation given us. The *Jews* generally fancy, that he was *Phineas*; but *Phineas* muſt, by this Time, have been above two hundred Years old, which far exceeded the *ſtated* Period of human Life then. St. *Auſtin* is of Opinion, that he was the ſame with the *Angel*, which, ſoon after, appeared to *Gideon*; but it is far more likely, that God ſtill continued other Prophets among the *Iſraelites*, beſides the High-prieſt, to put them in Mind of their Duty, and to call them to Repentance, when they forſook him; for, from the Caſe of *Deborah*, who is ſaid to have had the Spirit of Prophecy, it appears, that, at leaſt in extraordinary Caſes, God failed not to raiſe up ſuch Perſons among them. It is remarked, however, of this Prophet, (be he who he will) that he gave the *Iſraelites* no Hopes of the Divine Aſſiſtance, but only upbraided them with their Sins: However, when he tells them, that their Calamities were occaſioned by their Idolatry, he plainly intimates, that, if they would return to the true Worſhip of

God, he would again look graciouſly upon them, and deliver them; and accordingly we find, that the Hiſtory of their Deliverance immediately follows.

Q. *What is your Opinion of the Angel that appeared to* Gideon?

A. That he was not a mere created Angel, is plain from the incommunicable Name *Jehovah*, which he aſſumes, and whereby he ſuffers himſelf to be ſo frequently to be called, Ver. 14, 16, 23, 24, 25, 27. And therefore the *Jews*, according to their *Targum*, which ſtiles him the *Word of the Lord*, look upon this Angel, not merely as an heavenly Meſſenger ſent from God, but as the Son of God himſelf appearing in the Form of an Angel.

Q. *Of what Family was* Gideon, *and where did he live?*

A. *Gideon* was of the Family of *Abi-ezer*, of the Tribe of *Manaſſeh*, and ſo the *Ophrah*, where he dwelt, muſt be underſtood to be ſituated in the half Tribe of *Manaſſeh*, on the *weſt* Side of *Jordan*, and for this Reaſon it is ſtiled *Ophrah* of the *Abi-ezrites*, *Ch.* viii. *v.* 32. to diſtinguiſh it from another *Ophrah*, that lay in the Tribe of *Benjamin*.

Q. *Pray explain that Part of the Angel's Direction to* Gideon, Take thy Father's young Bullock, even the ſecond Bullock, of ſeven Years old.

A. It is not unlikely that *Gideon*'s Father, who was probably one of the Prieſts of *Baal*, kept divers of theſe Cattle, of different Ages, and Bulks, for the Purpoſe of ſacrificing to that Idol, either at his own or the People's Charge; and therefore it is added in the Text, *Judg.* vi. 25. by Way of Limitation, that he ſhould not take the oldeſt, or the greateſt, but the *ſecond*, viz. in Age, or Stature, and which is therefore ſingled out, becauſe it being *ſeven Years old*, did begin with the *Midianitiſh* Oppreſſion, and, being now to be ſacrificed, did very properly ſignify, that the Period of that Calamity was come.

Q. *If* Joaſh *was a Prieſt of* Baal, *how came he to return ſuch a rough Anſwer to thoſe who enquired who had demoliſhed his Altar and Grove?*

A. 'Tis generally ſuppoſed, that *Joaſh* had been a Worſhipper of *Baal*; and therefore it is not unlikely, that he had, at this Time, been convinced by his Son, that God had given him a Commiſſion to reclaim his People, and to begin with this Reformation; and this made him appear ſo boldly in his Son's Cauſe, becauſe he knew it was the Cauſe of God.

Q. *Where lay the Valley of* Jezreel, *where the* Midianites, *&c. pitched their Camp?*

A. The City of *Jezreel*, which gave Name to the Valley, belonged to the half Tribe of *Manaſſeh*, on the *Weſt* of *Jordan*, and lay in the Confines of that *half* Tribe, and the Tribe of *Iſſachar*, as appears from *Joſh.* xix. 18. In the Hiſtory of the Kings of *Iſrael*, this City is frequently made Mention of, where, by Reaſon of the Pleaſantneſs of its Situation, ſome of them had a Royal Palace, though their Capital was *Samaria*. The *Vale of Jezreel*, (which is now called the Plain of *Eſdraelon*) is, according to Mr. *Maundrell*, of a vaſt Extent, very fertile, but uncultivated, and only ſerving the *Arabs* for Paſturage: But ſome have ſuppoſed, that the *Valley of Jezreel*, here mentioned, denotes ſome other leſſer Valley, lying between Mount *Hermon* and Mount *Gilboa*.

Q. *Why did* Gideon *pitch upon a Fleece of Wool to make Proof of the divine Favour; and why did he deſire God to vary the Miracle?*

A. He ſuppoſed that the Dew, which diſtilled from Heaven, was a divine Gift, as the Scripture after teſtifies, and therefore he deſired, that it might be governed by God, that, though it commonly falls every where, it might now, by his extraordinary Providence, water only his Fleece. Some are apt to think, that he choſe a Fleece for his Purpoſe, not only becauſe it was ready at Hand, but the better to expreſs, how the Land was *ſhorn* by the *Midianites* even as the Sheep had been by him; and that when he begg'd the Dew (as a Sign of the divine Favour) might fall upon the *Fleece*, it was to repreſent the Kindneſs of God to him; and when he begg'd it might fall upon the whole Ground, it repreſented his Favour to all the People. But there is a farther Reaſon, why he might deſire to have the Miracle inverted: For, as it is in the very Nature of the Wool to draw Moiſture to it, ſome might be apt to think, that there was no great Matter in this; and therefore he requeſted of God a ſecond Miracle, which was contrary to the former.

Q. Gideon, *in the* Epiſtle to the Hebrews, *is celebrated for his ſtrong Faith; but is not the Multiplication of ſo many Miracles to encourage him to go upon the Enterprize which God required him to undertake, a manifeſt Diminution of that Character?*

A. The Faith of thoſe Perſons, whoſe Actions are recorded in the *Old Teſtament*, and *Fame* commemorated in the *New*, conſiſted, as we ſaid, in a firm Belief of God's Declarations, and a ready Obedience to his Commands; and how can we account *Gideon* culpable in either of theſe Reſpects? When the Angel of the Lord (or a Perſon much ſuperior, as ſome ſuppoſe) appeared to him, and brought him the News of God's having appointed him to deliver his People from the Oppreſſion of the *Midianites*, he ſeems indeed, at firſt, to be willing to decline the Office, as conſcious of his own Incapacity; but deſires withal to have ſome Conviction given him, (as who, upon the like Occaſion, would not have deſired ſome?) that the Meſſenger came from Heaven, and was in Reality no Impoſtor; but when once he was ſatisfied in this, he never pretended to diſpute the divine Command.

He knew very well, that, when he pulled down the Altar and Grove of *Baal*, he muſt neceſſarily incenſe the whole Country againſt him, and run the Hazard of his own Life; and yet, to do it more effectually, he took to his Aid ten of his Father's Servants, and, that he might meet with no Moleſtation, did it in the Night. He knew very well, that when he *ſounded a Trumpet*, in order to form an Inſurrection in the Country, and to raiſe ſome Forces to aſſert his Nation's Liberty, the *Midianites* would interpret this, as an open Declaration of War, and come againſt him with an Army, as numerous as the *Sand on the Sea-ſhore* for Multitude, but this he mattered not. He knew, that two and thirty Thouſand Men, when he had raiſed them, were but a Handful, in Compariſon of the Enemy; and yet, to ſee two and twenty Thouſand of theſe deſert him all at *once*, and of the ten Thouſand that remained, no more left at laſt, than bare three hundred, this was enough to ſtagger any one's Mind, that had not a firm Reliance on the Word, and Promiſes of God. He knew that three hundred Men, had they been all *Giants*, and armed *cap-a-pie* with Coats of *Mail*, would not be able to do any great Execution againſt ſo numerous a Foe; but when he found, that, inſtead of being armed, he was to attack the Enemy *naked*, and inſtead of Swords and Spears, as uſual, his Soldiers were to march in ſuch a Plight, as was never ſeen before, with every one a Light, a Pitcher, and a Trumpet in his Hand; and, when they came up with their Enemy, were to break their Pitchers, flouriſh their Lights, ſound their Trumpets, and inſtead of regular fighting, were only to ſhout and roar, like ſo many Men, either *mad* or *drunk*; who but a *Gideon*, that had his Faith confirmed by ſo many Viſions and Miracles before, would have obeyed and put in Execution ſuch Orders as muſt have been thought wild, and frantick, and abſurd, had they proceeded from any other Mouth but God's.

Well therefore might he be allowed to requeſt a Repetition, nay, a Multiplication of Miracles, who was to have the Trial of his Faith and Obedience carried to ſuch an Extremity: But the Truth of the Matter is, that it was not for his own Sake, he made this Requeſt. He had been ſufficiently convinced by the Fire's breaking out of the Rock, at the Touch of the Rod in the Angel's Hand, that nothing was impoſſible to God, and that the Means, which he directed (how incongruous ſoever they might appear to Men) would certainly not fail of their Effect: But it was for the Sake of his *Allies*, that had juſt now joined him in this Expedition, that he ſent up his Petition to God, to have them likewiſe ſatisfied; and therefore we may obſerve, that when all the *Quota's* were come up, and encamp'd together, then (very likely in the Audience of the whole Army) he requeſted of God, *and ſaid, if thou wilt ſave* Iſrael *by my Hand, as thou haſt ſaid, behold I will put a Fleece of Wool on the Floor*, &c. It was for their Sakes, I ſay, that the Miracles were wrought, that they, who were to ſhare in ſo hazardous a War, and *to deſtroy the Armies of the Aliens* with ſo ſmall a Force, nay, with no Force at all, ſhould have ſome Aſſurance given them, that the God of *Iſrael*, who had ſo often promiſed their Forefathers, that if they would continue his Favour, *one of them ſhould chaſe a Thouſand, and two of them put ten Thouſand to Flight*, was determined to aſſiſt them in this Enterprize.

CHAP. VII.

Gideon, *with thirty two Thouſand Men, encamps againſt the* Midianites; *God commands him to leſſen their Number to three hundred. A Dream and Interpretation of it. He divides his Army into three Companies; who all blow their Trumpets, break their Pitchers, and diſcover their Lamps. The* Midianites *being terrified, fly and deſtroy one another; are purſued to their Paſſage over* Jordan. *Two* Midianitiſh *Princes taken.*

Q. MOUNT GILEAD, *if I miſtake not, was on the other Side* Jordan, *yet I find*, v. 3. Gideon *was with his Army on a Mount called by the ſame Name on this Side that River.*

A. It's very true; and therefore the *Mount Gilead* here mentioned muſt be another in the Tribe of *Manaſſeh*; and might be ſo called, either from ſome Reſemblance it had with the other *Mount Gilead*, or in Remembrance of their Father *Gilead*; or, that this might be a Memorial of their near Relation to their Brethren, notwithſtanding their being divided from them by *Jordan*; or, for ſome other Reaſon not now known at this Diſtance of Time. Or the Words may be rendered *towards Mount Gilead*; for the *Hebrew* Particle *Min*, or *Mem*, is ſometimes rendered *towards*, of which ſee *Gen.* xi. 2. and xiii. 11. *Deut.* xxxii. 2. 2 *Sam.* vi. 2. and ſo it may be underſtood of the famous *Mount Gilead* beyond *Jordan*, which he may mention here, either, 1. Becauſe many of his Soldiers were of that half Tribe of *Manaſſeh* which dwelt there; and ſo it was moſt proper for them to return thither. Or, 2 Becauſe that was their ſafeſt Courſe, to get fartheſt from the Danger, which they feared. Or, 3. Becauſe though he would remove them from Danger, yet he would not have them diſperſed, but kept together in a Body about *Mount Gilead*; knowing that they who had not Courage enough to fight their Enemies, might have Valour enough to purſue them, when they were beaten by others; and ſuſpecting that the *Midianites* if beaten would probably fly that Way.

Q. *What Reaſon or Foundation in Nature was there for that Experiment which* Gideon *was ordered to prove his Soldiers by; namely, their different Way of quenching their Thirſt, by* lapping *the Water, or ſtooping down* to drink it on their Knees?

A. Interpreters are at a ſad Puzzle to conceive, for what poſſible Reaſon God made a Diſtinction between the Soldiers, who lapped Water in their Hands, and thoſe that laid themſelves down to drink. Some of the *Jewiſh* Doctors are of Opinion, that all, except the three hundred, who lapped, had been accuſtomed to the Worſhip of *Baal*, which they unwarily diſcovered by their kneeling to drink; but this is a groundleſs, and far-fetched Conceit. The Notion of thoſe, who impute thoſe three hundred Men's Lapping, *ſome* to their *Sloath* and *Lazineſs*, and *others* to their *Timorouſneſs*, and the great Fear they were in, of being ſurprized by the Enemy, is of no more Validity: For though God, if he thought fit, might have employed the moſt daſtardly among them upon this Expedition, that the Glory of the Victory might entirely redound to himſelf; yet ſince, as we are told, all the fearful Perſons were diſmiſſed before, and ſince it but badly befits the Character of the *Courageous* to be *lazy*; this Action of *Lapping* is rather to be accounted a Token of their Temperance, and of the Nobleneſs of their Spirit, which made them ſo deſirous to engage the Enemy, that they would not ſtay to drink, but (though they were very thirſty) contented themſelves to *moiſten their Mouths*, as we ſay, with a little Water; whereas the reſt indulged themſelves ſo far, as to drink their Belly-full. But, after all, the true Reaſon and Deſign of this Method ſeems to be only this,—That God was minded to reduce *Gideon*'s Army to a very ſmall Number, which might very likely be done by this Means: For, as the Seaſon of the Year was hot, and the Generality of the Soldiers weary, thirſty, and faint, it was moſt probable, that they would lie down (as indeed they did) and refreſh themſelves plentifully, and ſcarce to be expected, that any great Number would deny themſelves in this Manner.

Q. Gideon *and his Men came to the Outſide of the* Midianitiſh *Camp*, in the Beginning of the middle Watch; *what Time of the Night was that?*

A. The Expreſſion in the Text is, *in the Beginning of the middle Watch*: For, though the *Romans*, in after Ages, divided the Night into four Watches, *Matth.* xiv. 25. yet in the *Eaſtern* Parts, and in more ancient Times, it conſiſted but of *three*, whereof the firſt began at *ſix*, and continued four Hours.

The *ſecond* therefore is called the *middle Watch*, and began at *eleven*; ſo that, we may ſuppoſe, that it was ſome Time after this, that *Gideon* alarmed the *Midianitiſh* Camp; and the Reaſons, why he choſe this Part of the Night to do it in, are obvious, becauſe the Trumpets would then ſeem to ſound louder, and the Lights to ſhine brighter, and ſo both increaſe the Conſternation of the Enemy, and conceal the Smallneſs of his own Army.

Q. *When* Gideon *and his three Companies ſounded their Trumpets, and brake their Pitchers, the* Midianites *fell upon one another; but for what Reaſons?*

A. There might be ſeveral Reaſons for their doing this:—Either becauſe the Night was ſo dark, that they could not diſtinguiſh Friends from Foes; or becauſe the Thing was ſo ſudden, that it ſtruck them with Horror and Amazement; or becauſe they ſuſpected Treachery, (as they might eaſily do, ſince the Army conſiſted of ſeveral Nations, *Judg.* vi. 3.) or becauſe God had infatuated them, as he had many others, on the like Occaſions.

Q. *Did the Names of the two* Midianitiſh *Princes,* Oreb *and* Zeeb, *import any thing in their Signification?*

A. As the Language of the *Iſhmaelites*, the *Midianites*, and the *Amalekites*, who dwelt in *Arabia*, was originally the ſame, becauſe they all deſcended from *Abraham*, their common Father; ſo we may infer, that there was little or no Difference in them at this Time. *Oreb*, in the *Hebrew*, ſignifies a *Crow*, and *Zeeb*, a *Wolf*; and theſe are no improper Words, to repreſent the *Sagaciouſneſs*, and *Fierceneſs*, which ſhould be in two ſuch great Commanders: Nor was it an uncommon Thing, for great Families, in ancient Times, to derive their Names from ſuch like Creatures, (hence the *Corvini*, *Gracchi*, *Aquilini*, &c. among the *Romans*) either as *Omens* or *Monuments* of their undaunted Courage, and Dexterity in *military* Atchievements. But, after all, it ſeems every whit as probable, that theſe were only *Nick-names*, which the *Iſraelites* gave theſe two Princes of *Midian*, to denote their Fierceneſs, and Rapaciouſneſs after Prey.

CHAP. VIII.

The Ephraimites *are diſpleaſed with* Gideon; *he ſatisfies them; purſues two of the Kings of* Midian, *and kills them.* Succoth *and* Penuel *refuſes him Relief, for which he puniſhes them. He refuſes the Government; makes an Ephod out of the Spoils, places it in* Ophrah, *which is the Occaſion of Idolatry. His Wives, Children, Death, and Burial.* Iſrael *revolts to Idolatry, and is ungrateful to* Gideon's *Family.*

Q. HAD *the* Ephraimites *any real Ground for their Quarrel with* Gideon?

A. Though *Gideon* had called the *Ephraimites* to aſſiſt in the Purſuit of the *Midianites*, and had given them the Advantage of Plunder, and the Honour of taking of *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, two Princes of *Midian*, Priſoners; yet, becauſe they were not called at firſt to the Battle, they took upon them to reprehend him very ſharply, which he, like a prudent Man, took patiently, and pacified them with good Words. They were a proud ſort of People, *Iſ.* xi. 13, puffed up with a Conceit of their Number and Strength, and the Preference which *Jacob*, by divine Direction gave them above *Manaſſeh*; *Gen.* xlviii. 19, 20. of which Tribe *Gideon* was, who, by this Act, had ſeemed to advance his own Tribe, and to depreſs theirs.

Q. *How do you underſtand theſe Words, v. 6.* I will tear your Fleſh with the Thorns of the Wilderneſs?

A. I will chaſtiſe or beat your naked Bodies with thorny Rods, even unto Death; or, I will lay you down upon Thorns, on the Ground, and bring the Cart-wheel upon you, which will both tear your Fleſh, and bruiſe you to Death.

Q. *Was this Action of* Gideon *in inflicting ſo ſevere a Puniſhment on his Brethren the* Gadites, *to be vindicated from Reaſon or Juſtice?*

A. This was a Puniſhment, not much unlike what *David* inflicted on the *Ammonites*, after he had taken their City *Rabbah*; but the *Ammonites*, in my Opinion, did not ſo much deſerve it, as theſe: For thus ſtands the Caſe. *Gideon* was now in Purſuit of two Kings, who, after the general *Rout* of their Army, were making their Eſcape, with a Party of five Thouſand Men. Coming to two Places in the Tribe of *Gad*, who were *Iſraelites*, as well as he, and equally concerned to have been venturing their Lives for the publick Liberty, he is denied a ſmall Refreſhment for his Men, fatigued all the Night with fighting for them, and, without ſome Recruit, in no Condition to continue their Purſuit; ſo that, as far as in them lay, inſtead of aſſiſting their gallant Countrymen, who had merited every Thing from their Hands, theſe *Gadites* took part with the Enemy, and did what they could to facilitate their Eſcape, by denying ſome Relief to their weary Purſuers. By the Right of War *Gideon* might have demanded this Help from any Nation, but much more from a People, who were embarked in the ſame Cauſe, and whoſe Refuſal of ſo ſmall a Boon had the Aggravation of Perfidy, and Ingratitude, as well as Hard-heartedneſs, to inflame its Guilt.

Nor was this all. His Brethren, the *Gadites*, not only refuſed him this common Courteſy, but were very witty likewiſe, in making their Jeſts and *Sarcaſms* upon *Gideon*. They upbraided him with the Smallneſs of his Army, and magnified the Strength of his Enemies, and thereby, not only did all they could to diſcourage his Men in their Purſuit, but endeavoured likewiſe to have it believed, that there was no Interpoſition of God in gaining this Victory, and that *Gideon* would never be able to accompliſh it; and ſo, to their other vile Qualities, they added Inſult, and Irreligion, a Contempt of God, and a Diſparagement of the Man, whom *the Lord had made ſo ſtrong for himſelf*: And therefore it is not at all to be wondered at, that *Gideon*, under all this Exaſperation, ſhould chuſe to bring the two captive Kings (with whom they had upbraided him) in Triumph to theſe two Places, and then reſent the Affront, which was done to God, as well as himſelf, by making a ſevere Example of ſome of the chief Offenders.

Q. *After* Gideon *had obtained a complete Victory over the* Midianites, *he made an* Ephod *out of the Spoil; but in ſo doing was he not guilty of Idolatry?*

A. It is ſuggeſted indeed by ſome, that *Gideon* was as great an Offender as any, in his making an *Ephod* for the Purpoſe of *Idolatry*; but, before we admit of ſo raſh a Cenſure, we ſhould enquire a little into the Nature of this *Ephod*, and for what poſſible Purpoſe it was at firſt made.

An *Ephod*, we know, is a common Veſtment belonging to Prieſts in general, but that of the High-prieſt was of very great Value. This Veſtment however was not ſo peculiar to the Prieſts, but that ſometimes we find the Laity (as in the Caſe of *David* bringing Home the Ark of God) allowed to wear it; and therefore ſome have imagined, that the *Ephod*, which *Gideon* made, was only a rich and coſtly *Robe of State*, which, on certain Occaſions, he might wear, to denote the Station he held in the *Jewiſh* Republick. But if his only Intent was to diſtinguiſh himſelf from others, by ſuch a particular Veſtment, how this could give Occaſion to the People's falling into Idolatry, or any Way *become a Snare to* Gideon, *and his Houſe*, we cannot conceive.

Others therefore ſuppoſe, that the Word *Ephod* is a ſhort Expreſſion, to denote the High-prieſt's Breaſt-plate, together with the *Urim* and *Thummim*; and hence by an eaſy Figure, they are led to think, that *to make an Ephod* is to eſtabliſh a Prieſthood; and thereupon conclude, that *Gideon*'s Crime, in *making this Ephod* was not to eſtabliſh Idolatry, but only to inſtitute another Prieſthood, beſides that, which God appointed in *Aaron* and his Poſterity: And, to this Purpoſe, they ſuppoſe, that he erected a private Tabernacle, an Altar, a Mercy-Seat, with Cherubims, *&c.* that, being now made the ſupreme Governour, he might conſult God, at his own Houſe, in ſuch difficult Points, as occurred in his Adminiſtration.

But beſides, that it is not eaſy to imagine, that a Man, familiar with God, and choſen by him, as *Gideon* was, ſhould, after ſo ſignal a Victory, as he had obtained, immediately *apoſtatize*, as he muſt have done, had he ſet up an Oracle in his own Houſe; there ſeems to have been no manner of Neceſſity for it, becauſe *Shiloh*, where the Tabernacle ſtood, was in the Tribe of *Ephriam*, which adjoined to that of *Manaſſeh*, whereunto *Gideon* belonged; nor ſhould it be forgotten, that this *Ephod* was *ſet up in Ophrah*, which Place *Gideon* quitted, as ſoon as he had reſigned his publick Employ, and retiring to a Country-houſe of his own, in Probability, left this *Ephod* behind him: And thefore there is Reaſon to believe, that the Deſign of ſetting it up, was merely to be a Monument of his remarkable Victory over the *Midianites*, in like Manner as other Conquerors had done before him; only, as the common Cuſtom was to erect a Pillar, or hang up Trophies upon the like Occaſion, he choſe rather to make an *Ephod*, or Prieſt's Habit, (perhaps all of ſolid Gold) as a Token, that he aſcribed this Victory only to God, and triumphed in nothing ſo much, as in the Reformation of the true Religion by that Means. This was an Action of no bad Intent in *Gideon*, though in after Times, when the People began to return to *Idolatry*, and had this Fancy among others, that God would anſwer them at *Ophrah*, where this *Ephod* was, as well as at his Tabernacle in *Shiloh*, it was perverted to a bad Purpoſe. But, as this Abuſe aroſe from the mad *Caprice* of the People, and not from any ill Intent in *Gideon*, he is no more chargeable therewith, than *Moſes* was with the idolatrous Worſhip, which the *Iſraelites*, in future Ages, paid to the *brazen Serpent*, which he, for very beneficial Purpoſes, at firſt ſet up.

Q. *What is the Signification of* Baal-berith, *one of the* Canaanitiſh *Idols, mentioned,* v. 33?

A. It ſignifies *The Lord of the Covenant*, either from the Covenant wherewith the Worſhippers of this God bound themſelves to maintain his worſhip, or to defend one another therein; or rather, becauſe he was reputed the God and Judge of all Covenants, Promiſes, and Contracts, to whom it belonged to maintain them, and to puniſh the Violaters of them; and ſuch a God both the *Græcians* and *Romans* had.

The learned *Bochart* is of Opinion, that the *Baal*, here mentioned, was the ſame with *Beroe*, the Daughter of *Venus* and *Adonis*, deſired in Marriage by *Neptune*, but given to *Bacchus*, and that ſhe gave her Name to *Berith* in *Phœnicia*, where ſhe was much worſhipped, and thence tranſlated a Goddeſs into other Parts. But, though the Word *Baal* (as he maintains) be frequently uſed in a *feminine* Senſe, yet it can hardly be imagined, but that the ſacred Hiſtorian, if he had been minded to expreſs a *Goddeſs*, might have found out ſome Way of diſtinguiſhing her; He might have called her (for Inſtance) *Babalahberith*, the *Lady*, or *Goddeſs* of *Berith*, without making both the Words of a *maſculine* Termination: And therefore the moſt *ſimple* and natural Manner of explaining the Name, is, to take it in general for the God, that preſides over Covenants, and Contracts, to whom it belongs to maintain them, and to puniſh all thoſe, that violate them. For it is to be obſerved, that the moſt *barbarous*, as well as the moſt *knowing*, the moſt *religious*, as well as the moſt *ſuperſtitious* Nations have always looked upon God, as the Witneſs, as well as the Vindicator of Oaths and Covenants; that the *Greeks* had their *Zeus Harkios*, as well as the *Latins*, their *Jupiter Piſtius*, or *Deus Fidius*, whom they looked upon, as a God of Honeſty and Plainneſs, always ſuperintending in Treaties and Alliances.

Q. *What might be the Reaſon why* Gideon *commanded his Son, and not an Executioner, or ſome other Perſon of inferior Rank, to kill* Zeba *and* Zalmunnah?

A. In antient Times it was as much a Cuſtom for great Men to do Execution upon Offenders, as it is now an uſual Thing for them to paſs Sentence. They had not then, as we have now, public Executioners; and therefore *Saul* bad ſuch as waited on him kill the Prieſts, and *Doeg*, one of his chief Officers did it. 1 *Sam.* xxii. 17, 18. But the Reaſon why *Gideon* would have his Son do the Execution, was, that he might be early animated againſt the Enemies of *Iſrael*, even as *Hannibal* is reported, when he was a Boy, to have been incenſed againſt the *Romans*.

CHAP. IX.

Abimelech, Gideon's *Son, conſpires with the* Shechemites *to make him King; he murders all his Brethren, except* Jotham, *who, by a Parable, rebukes them, and foretels their Ruin. The* Shechemites *and* Abimelech *quarrel; he conquers and deſtroys their City; he attacks* Thebez, *and is ſlain by a Woman.*

Q. ABIMELECH, *it's ſaid,* v. 5. *ſlew his ſeventy Brethren, except one, upon* one Stone; *what was this Stone, where, and for what Purpoſe erected?*

A. This Stone ſome will have to be an *Altar*, which *Abimelech* dedicated to the Idol *Baal*, and erected in the ſame Place, where his Father *Gideon* had deſtroyed his Altar before; and ſo they account, that this Slaughter of his Sons was deſigned for an *expiatory* Sacrifice of their Father's Crime, in demoliſhing the Altar and Grove, dedicated to that *Idol*. But this is a little too far-fetch'd, though there is hardly any other Reaſon to be given, why they ſhould all be murthered upon one and the ſame *Stone*.

Q. *What do you underſtand by the* Houſe of Millo, *where the* Shechemites *were aſſembled to make* Abimelech *King?*

A. Underſtand it of a Place or Perſon ſo called; ſome eminent and potent Family being in *Shechem*, or near to it, either the Family of *Abimelech*'s Mother, or ſome other; or, *and all Beth-millo*; ſo *Beth* is not an Houſe, but a Part of the Name of the Place.

Q. *But could the* Shechemites, *who were but the Inhabitants of one ſingle City, undertake to make* Abimelech *King over all* Iſrael?

A. This, it muſt be allowed, was an extravagant Preſumption; but they had many Advantages and Encouragements for their undertaking it; ſuch as the eager, general, and conſtant Inclination of the *Iſraelites* to kingly Government; *Abimelech*'s being the Son of *Gideon*, to whom, and to his Sons, they offered the Kingdom, *Ch.* viii. 22. And though the Father could, and did refuſe it for himſelf; yet they might imagine, that they could now give away his Sons Right, conveyed to them by the *Iſraelites*, in their Offer; the univerſal Defection of the *Iſraelites* from God to *Baal*, whoſe great Patron and Champion *Abimelech* pretended to be; the Power and Prevalency of the Tribe of *Ephraim*, in which *Shechem* was, whoſe proud and ambitious Spirit would make them readily cloſe with a King of their own Brethren; and *Abimelech*'s getting the Start of all others, having the Crown actually put upon his Head, and an Army ready to maintain his Tyrany.

Q. Jotham *having eſcaped from the Slaughter of his Brethren, goes to the Top of Mount* Gerizzim, *from whence he harangues the People with the* Fable of the Trees; *upon which I deſire your Obſervations?*

A. This is the firſt *Fable* we find any where upon Record; and from hence it appears, that ſuch Fictions as theſe, wherein the moſt ſerious Truths are repreſented, were in uſe among the *Jews* (as they are ſtill in the *Eaſtern* Countries) long before the Time of *Æſop*, or any other Author, that we know of. Various are the Reaſons, that may be aſſigned for the firſt Invention of them; but theſe two ſeem to be the principal; 1. Becauſe Men would ſuffer themſelves to be reprehended in this Guiſe, when they would not endure plain Words: And, 2*dly*, Becauſe they heard them with Delight and Pleaſure, and remembered them better, than any grave or rational Diſcourſes.

The Trees went forth on a Time, to anoint a King over them, (So that Anointing was in uſe two hundred Years before the firſt Kings of *Iſrael*,) *and they ſaid unto the Olive-tree, reign over us. But the Olive-tree ſaid unto them, ſhould I leave my Fatneſs, wherewith by me they honour God and Man,* (Becauſe Oil was offered in Sacrifice to God, and fed the Lamps of his Houſe, beſides all the other Uſes wherein it was ſerviceable to Man.) *and go to be promoted over the Trees? And the Trees ſaid to the Fig-tree, come thou, and reign over us. But the Fig-tree ſaid unto them, ſhould I forſake my Sweetneſs, and my good Fruit,* (An apt Repreſentation of that Content, and Fulneſs of Pleaſure, which may be enjoyed in a private Life, and cannot, without Folly, be exchanged for the Troubles and Cares, that Men meet with in the Managery of publick Affairs.) *and go to be promoted over the Trees? Then ſaid the Trees unto the Vine, come thou and reign over us. And the Vine ſaid unto them, ſhould I leave my Wine, which cheereth God and Man,* (A Form of Speech, imitated by *Heathen* Authors, eſpecially by *Virgil*, Georg. l. 2. where, ſpeaking of ſome generous Wine, he terms it—*Menſis, & Diis accepta ſecundis,* ſince Wine, as well as Oil, was uſed both in *Jewiſh* and *Heathen* Sacrifices.) *and go to be promoted over the Trees? Then ſaid all the Trees unto the Bramble,* (The meaneſt of all Trees, good for nothing but to be burnt, and therefore fitly repreſenting *Abimelech*, from whom the *Shechemites* could expect no Manner of Benefit, but a great deal of Trouble and Vexation.) *come thou, and reign over us. And the Bramble ſaid unto the Trees, If, in truth, ye anoint me King, then come and put your Truſt in my Shadow;* (An apt Emblem of *Abimelech*'s ridiculous Vanity, to imagine, that he ſhould be able to maintain the Authority of a King, any more than the Bramble could afford a Shadow or Shelter.) *and if not, let Fire come out of the Bramble, and devour the Cedars of Lebanon.* (Words that carry a lively Image of *Abimelech*'s oſtentatious Spirit, and Menaces, to take ſevere Vengeance on the Nobles of *Shechem*, ſuch as the Houſe of *Millo*, who had been chiefly inſtrumental in his Promotion, in caſe they ſhould deſert him.) This is the Parable; and, in ſome Meaſure, its Interpretation: The only Difficulty is, to know, whom theſe three Trees are ſet to ſignify. And here, ſome have thought, that, by the *Olive-tree*, we are to underſtand *Othniel*; by the *Fig-tree*, *Deborah*; and by the *Vine*, *Gideon*; for to the two former, they ſuppoſe, that the Offer of the Kingdom was made for the Services done their Country, and by them rejected, as well as by the laſt. But for this there is no Authority; neither is there any Neceſſity, in the Explication of ſuch *Fables*, to aſſign a particular Reaſon for every Image, that is drawn in them. It is ſufficient, if we can but hit off their main Intendment, which, in this of *Jotham*, was to convince the *Shechemites* of their Folly, in chuſing a Man for their King, who was no more able to protect them, than a Bramble was to cover other Trees, that ſhould reſort to it, under the Shadow of its Branches.

Q. *Explain the firſt Clauſe of v.* 23.

A. In the Text the Expreſſion is, *Then God ſent an Evil Spirit, or Spirit of Diſcord, between* Abimelech *and the Men of* Shechem, *Judg.* ix. 23. which, in Scripture, is an uſual Form of Speech, and denotes not any *poſitive* Action, but a Permiſſion only, or, at moſt, a Direction from God. It is obſerved however, that this Manner of Expreſſion may poſſibly have given Riſe to ſome Notions in the Theology of the *Heathens*, when they ſuppoſe, that the *Furies* are appointed by the Gods to ſow the Seeds of Diſcord among Men.

Q. *What have you to obſerve upon the Manner of* Abimelech's *Death, which was by a Stone thrown by a Woman from a Tower?*

A. Thus *Plutarch* relates, that *Pyrrhus* at the Siege of *Thebes*, was killed by a Woman's throwing a Tile upon his Head; but there is ſomething more remarkable in *Abimelech*'s Death by a Stone, becauſe, as he ſlew all his Brethren upon *one Stone*, for him to die by no other Inſtrument, carried ſome Stamp of his Sin upon it.

CHAP. X.

Tolah, *and then* Jair *judge* Iſrael. Jair *had thirty Sons, who had thirty Cities. The People's Idolatry. Are oppreſſed, and cry to God, who, upon their ſincere*

Sincere Repentance, pities them. The Ammonites *and* Iſraelites *encamp one againſt another.*

Q. THE *next Perſon that took upon him the Government, was* Tola, *of whom very little is ſaid; in what Manner therefore, may we ſuppoſe that he judged* Iſrael?

A. He ſeems to have been a prudent and peaceable Man, raiſed up to reform Abuſes, to put down Idolatry, to appeaſe Tumults, and heal the Wounds that were given to Church and State, during *Abimelech*'s Uſurpation.

Q. *The next Governor was* Jair, *a* Gileadite; *but he ſeems, if I miſtake not, to have been more intent upon aggrandizing his own Family, than to mind the Affairs of Government or Religion.*

A. The Reaſons, which the Scripture gives us to think, that he really did aggrandize his own Family, are, 1ſt, Becauſe he is ſaid to have had thirty Sons, that rode on *thirty Aſſes Colts*: For as in thoſe Days, the *Iſraelites* had but few Chariots, and were not allowed to keep many Horſes, the moſt honourable of them were uſed to be mounted on theſe Creatures, which, in the *Eaſtern* Countries, were much higher, and more beautiful, than they are with us. 2*dly*, *They had thirty Cities, or Villages, called after their own Name, in the Land of* Gilead: For as we read that *Jair*, the Son of *Manaſſeh*, went, and took the ſmall Towns of *Gilead*, and called them *Havoth-jair*, Numb. xxxii. 41. and Deut. iii. 14. ſo we may preſume, that this *Jair*, who was afterwards Judge of *Iſrael*, recovered the Places, which his Anceſtor conquered, and perhaps added ſome more to them, that each Son of his might have one.

Q. Iſrael *being oppreſſed by their Enemies on all Sides, betake themſelves, in good Earneſt to Prayer and Supplication, that God would avert the Ruin that threatned them: Do you think that the impending Danger, or the Senſe of their own Sins, had the greateſt Share in their Devotions?*

A. This is the moſt remarkable Repentance and Reformation, that we meet with in this Hiſtory of the *Judges*; and it ſeems to be ſo ſerious, that, in the Times of thoſe three Governors, who ſucceeded *Jephthah*, we read nothing of their relapſing into Idolatry. And, as their Repentance was ſincere, ſo the Expreſſion of the divine Compaſſion towards them, *viz. that his Soul was grieved for the Miſery of* Iſrael, *Judg*. x. 16. is the ſtrongeſt, that we meet with, though every one knows, that the divine Nature is not capable of Grief, properly ſo called, but the Meaning is, that he quite altered his former Intention, and, in much Mercy, reſolved, upon their Repentance, to deliver them.

Q. *Before we take Leave of this Chapter, I deſire your Expoſition of the firſt Clauſe of* v. 8. And that Year they vexed and oppreſſed the Children of *Iſrael* eighteen Years.

A. It may be rendered, *That Year they had vexed and oppreſſed the Children of* Iſrael *eighteen Years.* Or, *They vexed them in that Year*, that was *the eighteenth Year*, namely of that Vexation. This was the eighteenth Year of that Oppreſſion. And theſe eighteen Years are not to be reckoned from *Jair*'s Death, becauſe that would enlarge the Time of the Judges beyond juſt Bounds; as may appear from 1 *Kings* vi. 1. Nor from *Jephthah*'s beginning to reign, becauſe he reigned but ſix Years, and in the Beginning thereof put an End to this Perſecution, but from the fourth Year of *Jair*'s Reign, the greateſt Part of which, it ſeems, was cotemporary with this Affliction. And although this Oppreſſion of the *Ammonites*, and *Philiſtines*, and the Cauſe of it, the Idolatry of the *Iſraelites*, be not mentioned till after *Jair*'s Death, becauſe the ſacred Penman would deliver the whole Hiſtory of this Calamity entire, and together; yet they both happened before it; and *Jair*'s Death is mentioned before that, only by a *Prolepſis* or *Anticipation*, than which, nothing is more frequent in Scripture. The Caſe of *Jair* and *Sampſon* ſeem to be much alike. For as it's ſaid of *Sampſon*, that *he judged* Iſrael *in the Days of* the Tyranny *of the* Philiſtines, *twenty Years*, Judg. xv. 20. by which it is evident, that his Judicature, and their Dominion, were contemporary. The like is to be conceived of *Jair*, that he began to judge *Iſrael*, and endeavoured to reform Religion, and purge out all Abuſes; but being unable to effect this through the Backwardneſs or Baſeneſs of the People, God would not enable him to deliver them, but gave them up to this ſad Oppreſſion; ſo that *Jair* could only perform one half of his Office, which was to determine Differences among the *Iſraelites*, but could not deliver them from their Enemies.

Chap. XI.

Jephthah's *Family; he is thruſt out by his Brethren, and dwells in the Land of* Tob; *is recalled, and made General of the* Iſraelitiſh *Army; he ſends an Embaſſy to the King of the* Ammonites, *but to no Purpoſe; he marches againſt them; makes a Vow; overthrows the* Ammonites, *and performs his Vow.*

Q. JEPHTHAH *is called the Son of a* ſtrange Woman; *pray what does that Expreſſion import; and why did God make Choice of ſuch a Perſon for ſo great an Inſtrument of his Glory?*

A. Several *Jewiſh* Doctors are of Opinion, that the Word *Zonah* may ſignify, either one of another Tribe, or one of another Nation, and ſo, *Joſephus* calls *Jephthah, a Stranger by the Mother's Side.* It is to be obſerved, however, that, among the *Jews*, if ſuch Perſons, as were deemed Strangers, embraced the *Law*, their Children were capable to inherit, among the reſt of their Brethren. *Jephthah* indeed complains of the hard Uſage he met with, but it was, upon this Occaſion, when his Country he found, ſtood in need of him; for had he been unjuſtly diſpoſſeſſed of his Right of Inheritance before, we can hardly ſuppoſe, that a Man of his Courage and martial Spirit would have ſat down contented with his Excluſion. It is not to be doubted therefore, but that he was *the Son of an Harlot*, properly ſo called: But then the Queſtion is, Why God ſhould make Choice of a Perſon of his Character for ſo great an Inſtrument of his Glory? To which it may be replied, 1*ſt*, That God has preſcribed Laws to Men, but none to himſelf; and can therefore alter his Diſpenſations, as he pleaſes, according to the Circumſtances and Exigencies of Things. 2*dly*, That That, as he chuſes to act by *ſecond* Cauſes, he always makes uſe of ſuch Inſtruments, as, all Things conſidered, are propereſt for his Purpoſe, without Regard to any Blemiſhes, for which they themſelves are not accountable: And, 3*dly*, That he might purpoſely diſpenſe with the Law in this Caſe, to ſhew, that thoſe, who are *baſely born*, ought not to deſpair, but, by a virtuous and good Life, expect a Share of God's Bleſſings.

Q. *Where was the Land of* Tob, *to which* Jephthah *retired?*

A. We read no where elſe of this Country, which, very probably, was not far from *Gilead*, upon the Borders of the *Ammonites* in the Entrance of *Arabia Deſerta*; or perhaps it is the ſame with what is called *Iſh-tob*, 2 *Sam.* viii. 6, 8. which was in *Syria*, and ſo near the *Ammonites*, that they hired Forces from thence, as well as from other Nations to fight againſt *David*.

Q. Jephthah *having raiſed an Army to fight the* Ammonites, *before he ſets out on the Expedition, he makes a Vow; was he not to blame in making any Vow at all?*

A. To make a Vow was an Act of religious Worſhip, and in itſelf no way culpable; nay, not only the *Jews*, but other Nations looked upon it in this View: And therefore we find *Livy* ſo frequently telling us, that the *Roman* Generals were wont to vow to *Jupiter*, or *Apollo*, or ſome other God, that if, by their Help, they ſhould prove ſucceſsful, they would devote ſome Part of the Spoil they ſhould take in the War, to their Uſe, or build Temples, and dedicate them to their Honour.

Q. *It has been a Subject of great Diſpute among the learned, whether* Jephthah *did really perform his Vow, and ſacrifice his Daughter according to the plain and literal Meaning of the Words in which the Vow is conceived; and as this is a very intricate Queſtion, I deſire a particular and copious Anſwer to it.*

A. This Vow of *Jephthah*'s, which has employed the Thoughts and Pens of ſo many learned Men, is conceived in theſe Words——*And* Jephthah *vowed a Vow unto the Lord, and ſaid, if thou ſhalt, without fail, deliver the Children of* Ammon *into my Hands, then it ſhall be, that whatſoever cometh forth out of the Door of my Houſe to meet me, when I return in Peace from the Children of* Ammon, *ſhall ſurely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a Burnt-Offering.* And the Reſult of this Vow was, —*That* Jephthah *paſſed over unto the Children of* Ammon, *to fight againſt them, and the Lord delivered them into his Hands*; whereupon *he came to* Mizpeh *unto his Houſe, and behold, his Daughter came out to meet him, with Timbrels, and Dances, and ſhe was his only Child; beſides her he had neither Son nor Daughter. And it came to paſs when he ſaw her, that he rent his Cloaths, and ſaid, Alas, thou haſt brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me, for I have opened my Mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back. And ſhe ſaid unto him, My Father, if thou haſt opened thy Mouth unto the Lord, do to me, according to that which proceeded out of thy Mouth, foraſmuch as the Lord has taken Vengeance for thee of thine Enemies, even of the Children of* Ammon; *only let me alone two Months, that I may go up and down upon the Mountains, and bewail my Virginity, I, and my Fellows. And he ſaid, Go, and he ſent her away for two Months, and ſhe went with her Companions, and bewailed her Virginity upon the Mountains. And it came to paſs, at the End of two Months, that ſhe returned to her Father who did with her according to his Vow, which he had vowed, and ſhe knew no Man: And it was a Cuſtom in* Iſrael, *that the Daughters of* Iſrael *went yearly to lament the Daughter of* Jephthah *four Days in a Year.* I have tranſcribed the whole Paſſage, that you may the better judge of the depending Controverſy; for a great Controverſy there is among Commentators, whether this Daughter of *Jephthah*'s was really ſacrificed or no; and, for your farther Satiſfaction in this Point, I ſhall fairly ſtate the Arguments on both Sides, conſider a little on which Side they preponderate; and then enquire, in caſe he did ſacrifice his Daughter, (or as others will have it,) devote her only to God's Service in a ſingle Life, whether the Thing was lawful for him to do; and what might poſſibly be the Motive of his doing it.

Thoſe who maintain the Negative, or more merciful Side of the Queſtion, argue in this Manner, That *Jephthah* was certainly a very good Man, becauſe we find him ranked among the *Worthies* of old, that are commemorated, with Honour, by the Author of the *Hebrews*; That he was an *Iſraelite*, and, as ſuch, lived under a Law, which prohibited human Sacrifices by the ſevereſt Penalties; That had the Vow been intended in this Senſe, God would never have vouchſafed *Jephthah* ſo ſignal a Victory as he did, which muſt have terminated in the Violation of his own Laws; and therefore they conclude, that ſo kind and tender a Father, as *Jephthah* is repreſented, would never have ſacrificed an innocent, dutiful, and obedient Child, as her whole Carriage ſeems to denote her, in Diſcharge of a raſh and inconſiderate Vow; eſpecially, when, according to the Preſcription of the Law, he might have redeemed his Daughter at a Price ſo inconſiderable *as ten Shekels of Silver*.

It muſt be ſomething elſe therefore, ſay they, that *Jephthah* did unto his Daughter, and that (according to the Import of the Text) was to devote her to a State of Celibacy, or that ſhe might live in the State of a religious Nun, all the Days of her Life: For the Particle *Vah*, which we render *and*, (*it ſhall ſurely be the Lords*, and *I will offer it up*) is a *Disjunctive* in this Place, as it is elſewhere, and ſignifies *or*; ſo that the true Verſion of the Paſſage ſhould be, *whatever cometh forth to meet me ſhall ſurely be the Lords*, or *I will offer it up for a Burnt-Offering*, i. e. if it be an human Creature, I will dedicate it to the Service of God, if a Beaſt, of any Kind proper for Sacrifice, I will inſtantly offer it up: For that in this Senſe the Vow is to be underſtood, is evident; from her going into the Mountains *to bewail her Virginity*, which, had ſhe been doomed to be ſacrificed, had not been near ſo proper, as to bewail her *untimely End*: Nor can we think that *Jephthah* would have ever ſuffered her to have made a Circuit of two Months among her Companions, for fear of making her Eſcape, or procuring ſome of her Friends and Acquaintance either to reſcue her, or interceed for her, had ſhe been deſtined to ſuffer Death upon her Return.

On the contrary, when ſhe returned to her Father, and *he had done to her according to his Vow*, it immediately follows, that *ſhe knew not Man*, which ſhews that the Purpoſe of his Vow was anſwered by obliging her to a State of perpetual Virginity in ſome retired Place, where ſhe was ſecluded from all Society, except that the *Daughters of Iſrael*, thoſe eſpecially of her Acquaintance, went up, either to talk and converſe with her, or to celebrate her Praiſe, or to comfort her concerning her ſolitary Condition (for to all theſe Senſes may the Word *Letanoth* be applied,) *four Days in the Year*, i. e. one Day every Quarter.

Upon the whole therefore they infer, that *Jephthah*'s Daughter did not fall a Sacrifice, but was conſecrated to God, and his Service, devoted to a ſingle Life, and to remain a Recluſe all her Days; which could not but occaſion *Jephthah* no ſmall Grief and Trouble, becauſe by this Means his Family became extinct, and himſelf deſtitute of Iſſue, to inherit his Eſtate, and perpetuate his Name.

Theſe are ſome of the moſt plauſible Arguments, that are generally employed to prove, not the Sacrifice of *Jephthah's* Daughter, but only her Obligation to a perpetual Virginity, in the Worſhip and Service of God.

Thoſe, that maintain the Affirmative, or harſher Side of the Queſtion, *viz.* that *Jephthah*, in Purſuance to his Vow, did actually ſacrifice his Daughter, form their Arguments in this Manner,---That the Times, wherein *Jephthah* lived, were ſo ſadly addicted to Idolatry, that *to burn their Sons and their Daughters in the Fire to their Gods*, was a common Practice among the *Iſraelites*, as well as other Nations, and that the Manner, in which he lived (before he was called to the Aſſiſtance of his Brethren) which was chiefly by Plunder and Rapine, and Bloodſhed, might make him not incapable of vowing to ſacrifice the firſt of his *Domeſticks*, that ſhould meet him upon his victorious Return; That this Vow is delivered in *general* and *indefinite* Terms, that *whatſoever*, viz. *ſhould come forth of the Doors of his Houſe to meet him*, that ſhould *ſurely be the Lord's*, and it ſhould be the Lord's *by being offered up for a Burnt-Offering*; That though the Particle *Vah* be ſometimes uſed in a *disjunctive* Senſe, yet it can only be ſo, where Things are really diſtinct from each other, but cannot be admitted, where the one manifeſtly includes the other, as it is in the Paſſage before us; That therefore it is much more congruous to all the Rules of good Senſe, to underſtand the Words of *Jephthah* ſo, as that, by promiſing *whatſoever he met ſhould be the Lord's*, he obliged himſelf in general to conſecrate it to God, and that by promiſing farther, that *he would offer it up for a Burnt-Offering*, he ſpecified the Manner in which he intended to make that his Conſecration.

Vows of perpetual Virginity, *ſay they*, are Inſtitutions of a modern Date; the Word of God knows nothing of them, nor has this pretended Celibacy of *Jephthah's* Daughter, any Manner of Foundation in Scripture; and therefore, when this Circumſtance is inſerted, that *ſhe knew no Man*, it is not to ſignify, that ſhe lived a perpetual Virgin, but only, that ſhe was ſo unhappy, as to leave the World in her Youth, and before ſhe had the Knowledge of a Man.

Had *Jephthah* meant no more, *ſay they*, by performing his Vow, than conſecrating his Daughter, as a perpetual Virgin, to the Service of God, what Cauſe was there for *rending his Cloaths*, and bemoaning himſelf, as we find he did? Had *Jephthah* made only a Vow of Celibacy for his Daughter, whereby ſhe was bound to nothing more painful, than to lead a ſingle Life, what Reaſon was there for bewailing this, as a grievous Calamity, which ſome Men account a Thing ſo eminently glorious and honourable? Is the being ſhut up as a *Recluſe*, and entered into the Liſt of perpetual Virgins, a Matter of ſuch bitter Complaint and Lamentation? Was this ſo ſore an Evil, an Affliction ſo extraordinary, that, not only, before ſhe underwent it, ſhe, and her Companions, ſhould, for two Months together, be allowed to bewail it; but that, after ſhe had undergone it, the *Daughters of Iſrael* ſhould be required to *lament it four Times a Year?* If ſhe was actually put to Death, in Execution of her Father's Vow, it is eaſy then to underſtand, why the particular Circumſtance of her dying without Iſſue, when *ſhe was the only Daughter of her Father*, and he had no other Proſpect of Poſterity to keep up his Family, ſhould be repreſented as a ſore Aggravation of her violent and untimely Death: But it ſeems very difficult to account for that bitter Lamentation, made by her Father, by herſelf, by her Companions, and by all the Daughters of *Iſrael*, in ſucceeding Times, if ſhe ſuffered no other, no ſeverer Puniſhment, than that of being devoted to a *ſingle Life*.

Theſe are ſome of the moſt prevailing Arguments on the affirmative Side; and, for the Confirmation of them, it is farther alledged, that both *Joſephus*, and the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt, teſtify the ſame Thing; that the Ancient Doctors, both of the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Church, were of the ſame Opinion; and that, as to the Subſtance of the Fact, the Compilers of the *Homilies* of our Church do perfectly agree with theſe ancient Writers; ſo that, how deſirous ſoever we may be to clear *Jephthah* from the Imputation of ſo cruel, ſo impious, ſo unnatural an Act, as that of murdering his own Daughter, yet if we will adhere to the more eaſy and obvious Conſtruction of the Words, and as they appear to us at firſt View; or if we retain any juſt Eſteem and Veneration for the Senſe of Antiquity, we muſt neceſſarily conclude, that, when it is ſaid of him, that *he did with his Daughter according to his Vow, which he had vowed*, the Meaning can be no leſs, than that he did really put her to Death.

Q. *You ſeem then to be of Opinion, that* Jephthah *did actually ſacrifice his Daughter; but I am apt to think you will find it a difficult Matter to clear him from the moſt barbarous Cruelty in ſo doing.*

A. The Law of *Cherem* (as the *Hebrews* call it) which is a Law of a peculiar Nature, is delivered in theſe Words; *No devoted Thing, which a Man ſhall devote to the Lord, of all that he hath, both of Man and Beaſt, and of the Field of his Poſſeſſion, ſhall be ſold, or redeemed; every devoted Thing is moſt holy to the Lord: None devoted, which ſhall be devoted by Men, ſhall be redeemed, but ſhall ſurely be put to Death.* Of this Sort a very learned *Commentator* ſuppoſes this Vow of *Jephthah's* to have been, and that therefore he could not *redeem* his Daughter, but was neceſſitated to put her to Death. It is to be obſerved however, that *Cherem* (which is the Term here made uſe of) ſignifies either Perſons devoted to Slaughter for their execrable Impieties, (as were the *Amalekites*, and other Nations, whom God commanded the *Iſraelites* to extirpate) or Things deſtined to Deſtruction, (as were *Jericho*, and *Ai*) for the Wickedneſs of thoſe, to whom they appertained: So that the Law of *Cherem* related only to ſuch Perſons, or Things, as, by an irrevokable Vow, were deſtined to utter Deſtruction for their horrid Crimes, and becauſe indeed there was a particular Command from God, both for the making, or putting ſuch a Vow in Execution: But it can by no means be pretended, either that *Jephthah's* Daughter merited ſuch a Puniſhment, or that her Father had any Order or Commiſſion from God to inflict it. On the contrary, all human Sacrifices are expreſly forbidden, as odious and deteſtable to God: *Thou ſhalt not do ſo to the Lord thy God; thou ſhalt not burn thy Sons, and thy Daughters in the Fire*, as the Heathens uſed to do their Gods, *for every Abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done.*

There is one Law indeed, which ſeems to be of ſome Moment in the Caſe before us, and that is this —— *If a Man vow a Vow unto the Lord, or ſwear an Oath, to bind his Soul with a Bond, he ſhall not break his Word, he ſhall do, according to all that proceedeth out of his Mouth:* But then all ſober *Caſuiſts* are agreed, that a Vow has only a *conſtructive*, not a *deſtructive* Force, *i. e.* that it can only lay a *new* Obligation, where there is none, or where there is one, *ſtrengthen* it, but that it cannot cancel a former Obligation, or ſuperinduce one, that is repugnant to it. Now all our Obligations to Obedience proceed from God: He has an uncontroulable Right to give Laws to his Creatures; but if Men, by entering into Vows, could free themſelves from the Obligation of his Laws, they might then, whenever they pleaſed, by their own Act, defeat his Authority. Whatever therefore is in itſelf forbidden by God, and for that Reaſon unlawful; whatever is againſt any Precept of *natural* or *revealed* Religion; whatever is inconſiſtent with thoſe *relative* Duties, which Men owe to one another; whatever, in ſhort, is, in any reſpect, ſinful, cannot, by being made the Matter of a Vow, become juſtifiable. So that he, who hath vowed to do, what cannot be done without Sin, is ſo far from being obliged to perform his Vow, that he is, notwithſtanding his Vow, obliged not to perform it, becauſe there is not only great Obliquity in making ſuch an unlawful Vow, but his Obliquity is ſo far from being leſſened, that it is aggravated by keeping it.

Since therefore the Thing, vowed by *Jephthah*, ſeems to have been in itſelf unlawful, ſince his Daughter was innocent, and had done nothing to deſerve Death; ſince the running out to meet her Father, with Joy and Congratulation, was an Act of Piety, which ſeemed to entitle her to his Love and Favour; ſince the natural Affection of a Father towards his Child muſt be ſtifled, before he could give Way to the Execution of the Sentence of Death upon her; ſince the ſacrificing of Children to their Gods was a Crime, for which the *heathen* Nations were deteſted, and puniſhed by God; ſince *Jephthah*'s offering his Daughter, as a Victim to the Lord, might reflect a Diſhonour upon the true God, as if he alſo delighted in ſuch Sacrifices; ſince theſe, I ſay, and ſeveral other Things might be urged in Aggravation of this Action, we may ſafely and confidently aver with the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian, *that the Sacrifice which* Jephthah *offered, was neither lawful, nor acceptable to God,* but, on the contrary, a very impious Act, and abominable Crime, though it might poſſibly proceed from a miſtaken Principle of Religion.

The religious Obſervation of Oaths and Vows has, at all Times, been eſteemed a Duty, incumbent on thoſe, that made them, inſomuch that, even when they have been procured by *Guile*, they have not been thought deſtitute of their Obligation. The *Gibeonites* certainly impoſed upon the Children of *Iſrael*, when they obtained from them a League of Amity and Friendſhip; and yet we may obſerve what Notions the *Iſraelites* had of this kind of Obligation, when, in their publick Conſultations, they ſay, *We have ſworn unto them by the Lord God of* Iſrael, *now therefore we may not touch them.* This was a remarkable Inſtance before *Jephthah*'s Days, and 'tis not improbable, that he might have it in his Remembrance, and imprudently make uſe of it, as a *Precedent* of the Irreverſibleneſs of Oaths, and of the inviolable Tye he was under, by reaſon of his Vow: But in ſucceeding Times, there is a Paſſage in Scripture, which comes nearer to the Caſe now before us. *Saul*, in the Day of Battle, perceiving his Enemies to give Ground, out of the Abundance of his *Zeal*, made a Vow to God, that whoever ſhould taſte any Food, before the Purſuit was over, ſhould certainly die, and, upon this Occaſion, his own Son *Jonathan* had like to have been made a Sacrifice, merely becauſe the Father, would have been thought religious and auſtere, in the Obſervation of his Oath, notwithſtanding he was plainly excuſed from the Obligation of it, as to his Son, who was both in another Place, and ignorant of his Father's Will, and under a Neceſſity of taking ſome ſmall Refreſhment, when he was ſo faint and hungry. What Wonder then if *Jephthah*, who, we have Reaſon to believe, was a Perſon much more religiouſly inclined, than *Saul*, ſhould think himſelf under an Obligation to obſerve his Vow, even though it was to the Deſtruction of his own, and only Daughter.

What the Acceptableneſs of *Abraham*'s offering his Son *Iſaac* was, he had read in the Book of *Moſes*; and this might poſſibly leſſen the Horror of the Fact, he was going to commit: For, though *Abraham* had the poſitive Command of God for what he did, which *Jephthah* could not pretend to, ſo that there was a great Diſparity between their two Caſes, yet it was plain, from the Acceptableneſs of *Abraham*'s Offering, and the great Reward beſtowed on him for his intended Oblation, that the ſacrificing a beloved Child was not, in all Caſes, and under all Circumſtances, ſinful, but might be ſo *circumſtantiated*, as to be an Act, of Piety, and approved in the Sight of God: And, when this Example proved ſuch an Action, as to the Matter and Subſtance of it, not only lawful, but commendable, *Jephthah* might from hence be led into an Opinion, that the Difference between his Caſe, and that of *Abraham*, was not ſo great, as what was laudable and almoſt *meritorious* in the one, ſhould be imputed as an unpardonable Crime to the other.

He had read likewiſe in the Law, that *when thou ſhalt vow a Vow unto the Lord, thou ſhalt not be ſlack to pay it*, and was ſenſible, that a wilful Neglect of this was an heinous Crime, a mocking of God, a diſſembling with Heaven, and an Act of Injuſtice and Unfaithfulneſs towards him, who is a ſevere *Exactor* of Vows, and is wont to avenge the Breach of them, by the Infliction of the ſoreſt Puniſhments; and upon theſe *Premiſes* he might poſſibly argue with himſelf in this Manner; “ Though I know that the Performance of my Vow will be accompanied with “ Murther, yet I conſider likewiſe, that my not performing it will be attended with downright *Perjury.* Seeing then there is a Neceſſity of Sinning, “ one Way or other, I am reſolved to chooſe the former; for though that be an Injury to my Daughter, yet the other is an Affront to God. My Child “ is dear to me indeed; but my God, my Father, is “ much more ſo. 'Tis better therefore to be cruel, “ than *impious*; to be guilty of Bloodſhed, than to “ be perjured, and falſe to the Lord of Heaven and “ Earth. *I have opened my Mouth unto the Lord,* “ *and I cannot go back.* I muſt not reverſe, I dare “ not revoke the ſacred Promiſe, which I have made “ to the Almighty: But my firm and unſhaken Purpoſe is to perform it.” Thus the miſtaken Senſe of the indiſſoluble Obligation, which his Vow had laid upon him, blinded his Eyes, and ran him upon this fatal Rock.

He could not but know that no Vow is *obligatory*, where the Matter of it is unlawful in itſelf, or, that which was lawful in itſelf, can poſſibly be made otherwiſe by the Interpoſition of a Vow: Nay, he could not but know, that to act unlawfully, in Virtue of a Vow, was a double Sin, ſince not only the Vow itſelf was ſinful, but the Act, conſequent thereupon, was ſinful likewiſe; and yet ſo blind ſometimes is the Zeal of an *erroneous* Conſcience, that it will not ſuffer Men to perceive, at leaſt to be governed by, the moſt rational and ſelf-evident Principles.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that, how great ſoever this Sin of *Jephthah*'s was, yet, (properly ſpeaking) it was the Sin of Ignorance, and the Effect of a miſguided Conſcience. By the bitter Complaint, which he uttered upon the firſt Sight of his Daughter coming out to meet him, it is evident, that he was under great Trouble and Perplexity; and, as ſhe had done nothing to alienate his Affections from her, but in this very Act of meeting him, had done ſomething to engage his Affections more ſtrongly towards her, the Bowels of a Father muſt neceſſarily yearn to ſave the Life of a loving and a beloved Child. The generous Offer, which ſhe made him, that he might do to her whatever he pleaſed, *according to his Vow*, though it made the doing of it leſs *unjuſt*, could not but add a freſh Sting to his Grief, and, if he had any Generoſity in his Breaſt, make him do it with the more Reluctancy. No one, who is a Parent; no one, who hath felt the Workings of Nature towards his own Iſſue; no one, who hath ſuffered, or who hath feared the Loſs of an only Child, but muſt be ſenſible, what Pangs of Sorrow, what Meltings of Compaſſion, what Agonies of Grief muſt pierce the Soul of *Jephthah*, when he imagined himſelf under the ſad Neceſſity of ſacrificing his own, his only, his Virgin-daughter, whom he could not offer up for a Burnt-offering, without ſacrificing, at the ſame Time, all the Propenſions of Nature, all the Eaſe and Pleaſure of his Life, all the Proſpect of keeping up his Family. Nothing leſs, than a miſtaken Opinion of the indiſpenſible Obligation of his Vow, could prevail with him, thus to over-rule the ſtrong; Motives of Intereſt and Inclination, and a Miſtake, which took its Riſe from ſo good a Principle, muſt, without Queſtion, at leaſt extenuate the Guilt, in the Judgment, both of good-natured Men, and of an all merciful God.

CHAP. XII.

The Ephraimites *wage War againſt* Jephthah; *are ſmitten by the* Gileadites; *being diſcovered by the Word* Shibboleth, *are ſlain to the Number of* 42,000. Jephthah'*s Death.* Ibzon, Elon, Abdon, *Judges after him.*

Q. WHAT *Ground was there for that Reproach which the* Ephraimites *caſt upon their Brethren,* Ye *Gileadites* are Fugitives of *Ephraim*, among the *Ephraimites*, and among the *Manaſſites*, v. 4?

A. According to this Tranſlation, theſe Words are a ſcoffing and contemptuous Expreſſion of the *Ephraimites* concerning the *Gileadites*, whom they call Fugitives of *Ephraim*; the Word *Ephraim* being here taken largely, as it is elſewhere, *Iſ.* vii. 2, 5. ſo as it comprehends the other neighbouring Tribes, of which *Ephraim* was in ſome Sort the chief or Head; and eſpecially their Brethren of *Manaſſeh*, who lived next to them, and were deſcended from the ſame Father *Joſeph*; by Reaſon whereof, both theſe Tribes are reckoned for one, and called by the Name of *the Tribe of Joſeph*. And this large Signification of *Ephraim* may ſeem probable from the following Words, where, inſtead of *Ephraim* is put the *Ephraimites*, and the *Manaſſites*. By *Gileadites* here they ſeem principally to mean the *Manaſſites* beyond *Jordan*, who dwelt in *Gilead*, as appears from *Deut.* iii. 13. *Joſh.* xvii. 1, 5, 6. And although other *Gileadites* were joined with them, yet they vent their Paſſion againſt theſe; principally becauſe they envied them moſt; partly, becauſe they ſeemed to have a chief Hand in the Victory, *Judg.* xi. 29. and partly, becauſe they were more nearly related to them, and therefore more obliged to deſire their Conjunction with them in the War. Theſe they here opprobriouſly call Fugitives, that is, ſuch as had deſerted their Brethren of *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, and for ſome worldly Advantage planted themſelves beyond *Jordan*, at a Diſtance from their Brethren, and were alienated in Affection from them, and carried on a diſtinct and ſeparate Intereſt of their own; as appears by their monopolizing the Glory of this Succeſs to themſelves, and excluding their Brethren from it. According to the *Hebrew*, the Words lie, and may be rendered thus, *Therefore they ſaid, Fugitives of* Ephraim *are ye*, that is, ye *Ephraimites* are mere Runaways; for the Words next foregoing are, *the Men of* Gilead *ſmote* Ephraim. And having told you what they ſaid, becauſe the Pronoun *they* was ambiguous, he adds by way of Explication, who ſaid it, even the *Gileadites* (and they ſaid it when they had got the Advantage over them, and were got between them and home, as the next Verſe ſhews) being between *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*; that is, having taken the Paſſages of *Jordan*, as it follows, which lay between *Ephraim* and that Part of *Manaſſeh* which was beyond *Jordan*. Or theſe latter Words may be rendered thus, And *the Gileadites* were *between Ephraim and Manaſſeh*. So there is only an *Ellipſis* of two ſmall Words, which are often defective, and to be underſtood in Scripture. Or thus, And *the* Gileadites *were in the midſt of the* Ephraimites, *and in the Midſt of the* Manaſſites, namely, thoſe *Manaſſites* who ordinarily lived within *Jordan*, who poſſibly were confederates in this Quarrel. And ſo the Meaning is, they followed cloſe after them, overtook them, fell upon the midſt of them, and ſmote them; and then ſent a Party to intercept them at the Paſſages of *Jordan*, as it here follows.

Q. *The* Gileadites *and* Ephraimites *were both of one Nation; how happened it then that the latter could not pronounce the Teſt-word,* Shibboleth?

A. Nothing is more notorious, than that People of the ſame Nation, who ſpeak the ſame *Language*, differ very much in their *Pronounciation* of it, in ſeveral Parts of the Country. In *Paleſtine*, the People in *Galilee*, and thoſe, that lived at *Jeruſalem* ſpake the ſame Tongue, and yet, in the Time of *Chriſt*, the latter could tell St. *Peter*, that his *Speech bewrayed him*, Matt. xxvi, 73. In *Greece* all ſpake *Greek*, and yet the *Ionians*, *Atticks*, *Dorians*, and *Æolians* pronounced very differently. And here, though the *Gileadites* and *Ephraimites* were all of one Nation, yet the latter, we find, could not pronounce the Letter *Schin*. There were doubtleſs therefore many other Words, which they could not frame their Mouths to ſpeak, as the *Gileadites* did, but this *one* was choſen, becauſe it was fit for their Purpoſe. For, as *Shibboleth* ſignifies *Floods of Water*, the *Gileadites*, when they ſaw any *Ephraimite* appear, might put this Teſt to him, and bid him ſay, *Let me paſs over the Water.*

Q. *In this Expedition the* Ephraimites *loſt* 42,000 *Men; was not this Puniſhment too ſevere, conſidering the Cauſe of the Quarrel?*

A. This was a terrible Slaughter, for one Tribe to make on another; but the *Ephraimites* ſeem to have deſerved it, as a juſt Puniſhment of their Pride and Inſolence, in deſpiſing ſo great a Man as *Jephthah*, who had ſaved all the People of *Iſrael*, and threatning to deſtroy his Houſe, after ſo glorious a Victory; in reviling their Brethren likewiſe, invading them without a Cauſe, and attempting to drive them out of their Country.

Q. *The next three Judges, who ſucceeded* Jephthah, *were* Ibzan, Elon, *and* Abdon; *have they left any memorable Actions upon Record?*

A. Of theſe three *Judges* the ſacred Hiſtory ſays nothing remarkable, only that two of them had a numerous Iſſue, which is mentioned to ſhew, that the Government, at that Time, was not *Hereditary.*

CHAP. XIII.

The Philiſtines *oppreſs* Iſrael. *An Angel appears to* Manoah's *Wiſe, and afterwards to him.* Manoah's *Sacrifice and the Angel's Aſcent in the Flame.* Sampſon *born.*

Q. I*N the firſt Verſe we read, that the Lord delivered* Iſrael *into the Hands of the* Philiſtines forty Years; *pray from what Time are theſe forty Years to be computed?*

A. They are not to be computed from the Death of *Abdon*, the laſt Judge, but before, as is evident from *v.* 5. where it's declared, that *Iſrael* was under the Power of the *Philiſtines*; and from *Ch.* xv. 20. where only twenty of theſe Years are ſaid to have been in *Sampſon*'s Days. And it's probably conceived, that the great Slaughter of the *Ephraimites* made by *Jephthah*, greatly encouraged the *Philiſtines* to riſe againſt *Iſrael*, when one of their chief Bulwarks was ſo much weakened; and therefore that the *Philiſtines* began to domineer over them not long after *Jephthah*'s Death.

Q. *Was there any peculiar Reaſon that might induce the Almighty to raiſe* Sampſon *out of the Tribe of* Dan?

A. As the Tribe of *Dan* lay bordering upon the *Philiſtines*, it was moſt expoſed to their Incurſions and Invaſions; and therefore God, out of that Tribe, choſe *Sampſon*, to be a Scourge to them, and a Revenger of his People, which is very agreeable to the Prophecy of *Jacob*, when he bleſſed his Sons, a little before his Death. Dan *ſhall be a Serpent by the Way, an Adder by the Path, biting the Heels of the Horſe, ſo that his Rider ſhall fall backwards*, Gen. xlix. 17.

Q. *The Angel having acquainted* Manoah's *Wiſe that ſhe ſhould have a Son, tells her*, that the Child ſhall be a *Nazarite* unto God from the Womb; *pray what were the particular Properties of a* Nazarite?

A. A *Nazarite* was one, who under the *Levitical* Law, either to attain the Favour, or avert the Judgments, or acknowledge the Mercies of Almighty God, vowed a Vow of particular Purity, and *ſeparated* himſelf (for ſo the Word ſignifies) in an extraordinary Manner, to the Service of God. The Time of this Vow laſted uſually for eight Days ſometimes for a Month, and, in ſome Caſes, for the Perſon's whole Life. During this Time, the Perſons (for Women, as well as Men, might enter into this Engagement) bound themſelves to abſtain from Wine, and all ſtrong Liquors, not to cut the Hair of their Heads, not to come near a dead Corpſe, nor aſſiſt at a Funeral; nay, the Matter was carried ſo high, that if any happened to die ſuddenly in their Preſence, the whole Ceremony of this *Separation* was to begin a-new. After the Time that their Separation was expired, they were to offer ſuch Sacrifices, as the Law appointed, and then, being abſolved from their Vow by the Prieſt, they might drink Wine, and uſe the ſame Freedom, that other People did. *Sampſon's Nazaritiſm* (to which he was conſecrated by his Parents) was to laſt the whole Trme of hisLife; but his frequent Intercourſe with the *Philiſtines*, and the great Havock and Slaughter, that he ſo often made among them, would induce one to think, that he had a particular Diſpenſation, exempting him from the Obſervation of ſome of the foregoing Rules.

Q. *Was any thing particularly obſervable in the Angel's Direction, that* no Razor ſhould come on his Head?

A. Long Hair was eſteemed very much among the *Jews*, and ſuch Perſons, as were made *Nazarites* by their Parents, and conſecrated to God from the Womb, were required to wear their Hair long and uncut, becauſe it was a Token not only of Beauty, but of Majeſty and Veneration.

Q. *It is ſaid*, v. 20. that the Angel of the Lord aſcended in the Flame of the Altar: *Does not this give us ſome Idea of the Nature of Angelick Bodies?*

A. This ſhews that Angels Bodies, which the *Platoniſts* called *Vehicles*, are not ſubject to the Laws of *Gravity*, as ours are. After our Saviour's Reſurrection, the Hiſtory of the Goſpel informs us, how immediately, and in an Inſtant, his Body could move from Place to Place, and therefore it is no Wonder, that *Manoah* and his Wife ſhould diſcover the Perſon, that appeared to them, to be an Angel by the Manner of his Aſcenſion.

Q. *What particular Place are we to underſtand by* the Camp of Dan, *where the Spirit of the Lord firſt began to move* Sampſon?

A. This Camp of *Dan* was probably that Place where the *Danites* pitched their Camp, in their Expedition and Enterpriſe aganiſt *Laiſh*, Judg. xviii. 11. for it is not at all likely, that the *Philiſtines*, who had the *Iſraelites*, at that Time, entirely under their Subjection, ſhould ſuffer them to have any ſtanding Camp. And this, by the bye, is a good Argument, that the Story of *Micah*, and of the *Danites* Expedition, was tranſacted before *Sampſon's* Time, though the Compilers of the *Bible* have placed it after.

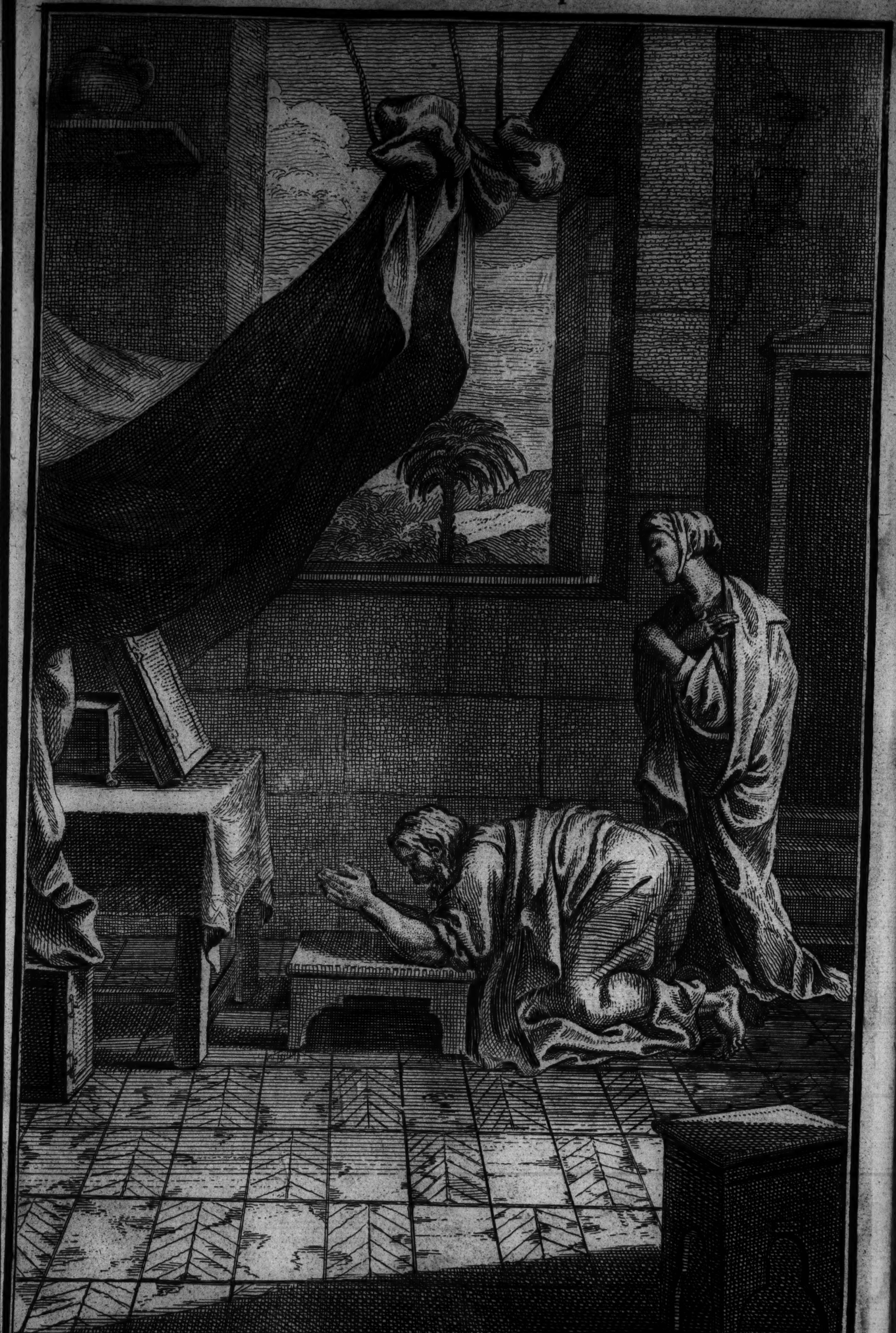
Q. *Whereabouts were ſituated the Towns of* Zorah *and* Eſhtaol, *between which lay the Camp of* Dan?

A. Both theſe were Towns in the Tribe of *Dan*, whereof *Zorah* lay on the Frontiers of *Judah*, and for this Reaſon *Rehoboam*, upon the Revolt of the Ten Tribes, ſeems to have kept this Place, tho' lying in one of theſe Tribes, and to have fortified it, for a Barrier-town, on that Side of the Kingdom of *Judah*; as he did alſo *Aijulon*, another Town belonging to the ſame Tribe.

CHAP. XIV.

Sampſon *deſires a Wiſe of the* Philiſtines; *his Parents go with him; he kills a Lion, in the Carcaſs of which he afterwards found Honey.* Sampſon's *Marriage Feaſt; his Riddle, which his Wife extorts from him, and diſcovers. He kills thirty*

Philiſtine's



Bickham delin sc

Manaoh & his Wife praying to ye Lord

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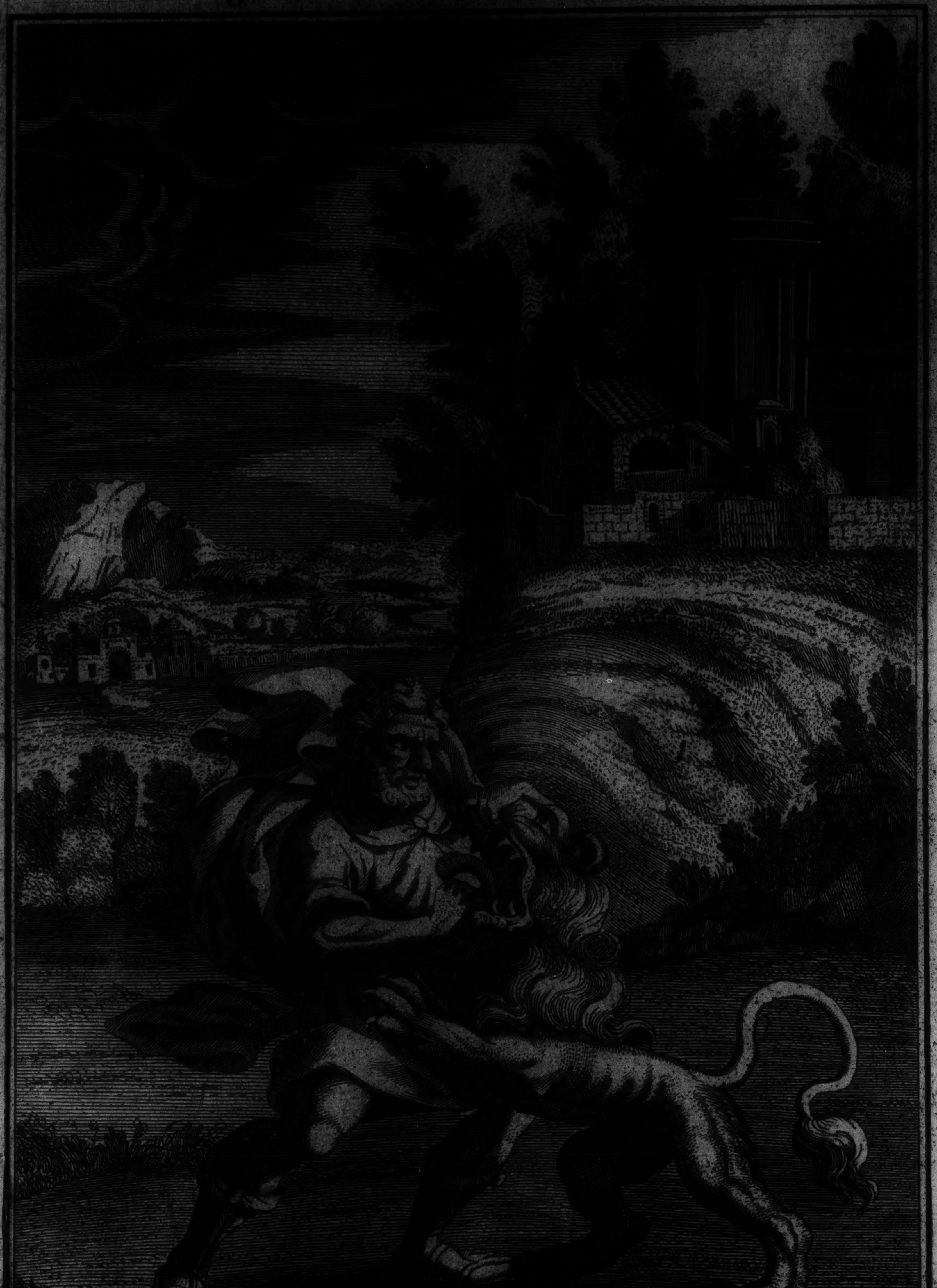


Samſon killeth a Lion.

Philiſtines, takes their Raiment, and therewith performs his Contract. His Wife given to another.

Q. SAMPSON *having killed a Lion, coming that Way again, finds a Swarm of Bees in the Carcaſs; does not this ſeem ſtrange?*

A. Bees are obſerved by *Ariſtotle*, and others, to abhor ſtinking Smells, and to abſtain from Fleſh; which has made ſome think it ſtrange, that a Swarm of Bees ſhould be found in the Carcaſs of a Lion; but it is no hard Matter to ſuppoſe, that either Time had conſumed, or Birds and Beaſts devoured all the Fleſh, ſo that nothing was left of the Lion, but the *Skeleton*, in which the Bees did not breed (for the Notion of Inſects breeding in that Manner is now quite exploded) but only ſettled themſelves, when they ſwarmed, as they have ſometimes done in dead Mens Skulls, and in their Tombs.

Q. *During the nuptial Solemnity,* Sampſon *had thirty young Men aſſigned him for his Companions: Does this allude to any particular Cuſtom in thoſe Times?*

A. During the Time of the Marriage Feaſt, which, for a Virgin, laſted ſeven, but for a Widow, only three Days, it was cuſtomary, among the *Jews*, to have a choſen Set of young Men, whom the *Greeks* call *Paranymphs*, and the *Hebrew*, *Schebiachim*, to keep the *Bridegroom* Company, as alſo a certain Number of young Women were about the *Bride*, all this Time. Theſe young Men were generally of the *Bridegroom*'s Relations and Acquaintance; but, at *Sampſon*'s Marriage, they belonged to his Wife's Family, and were ſent (as ſome of the *Jews* think) not ſo much to do him Honour at the Time of his Nuptials, as to be a Guard over him, leſt he ſhould make any Diſturbance, of which the *Philiſtines* were afraid, when they underſtood that he was a Man of ſo much Strength and Might.

Q. *Have you any Remarks to make upon* Sampſon's *Riddle?*

A. This Riddle, which *Sampſon* propoſed to his Companions at his Nuptials, is ſomewhat ſingular. As the Men and the Women were not to be together in theſe *Eaſtern* Countries, they could not amuſe each other with their Converſation; and its abſurd to ſuppoſe they ſhould ſpend their Time merely in dull Eating and Drinking; it is preſumed from hence, that their Cuſtom was, in their Compotations and Feaſts, (as we find it afterwards among the *Greeks*) to propoſe Queſtions, and hard Problems, to be reſolved, in order to exerciſe the Wit and Sagacity of the Company. But as to this Riddle of *Sampſon*'s ſome People are apt to make Exceptions. The Oppoſition, they ſay, is manifeſt in the former Part of it, but not in the latter; for *Weakneſs* is oppoſed to *Strength*, not *Sweetneſs*, whoſe Oppoſite is *Bitterneſs*, or *Sharpneſs*. But *Bochart* has ingeniouſly obſerved, that theſe two Words, *ſtrong* and *ſharp*, are oftentimes uſed promiſcuouſly. For, in the *Arabick* Language, the Word *Mirra*, which ſignifies *Strength*, comes from *Marra*, which ſignifies to be *ſharp* or *bitter*; and ſo it is in the *Latin*, where *Acer*, a *ſharp Man*, is as much as a valiant Man, one who eagerly (as we ſpeak) engages his Enemies, and what is more, we find in ſome of the beſt Authors, this particular Epithet applied to Lions——*Genus acre Leonum*, Ovid. Faſt. And therefore the *Antitheſis* of the Words is this,—*Food came from the Devourer, and Sweetneſs from what is eager or ſharp*, i. e. violent and fierce.

Q. *In what Part of the Country was* Askalon *ſituated?*

A. It is a City in the Land of the *Philiſtines*, ſituated between *Azoth* and *Gaza*, upon the Coaſt of the *Mediterranean-ſea*, about five hundred and twenty Furlongs diſtant from *Jeruſalem*. The Place ſubſiſts to this Day, but is now very inconſiderable. Some Mention there is made of the Wine of *Askalon*, and the Cypreſs-tree, a Shrub, that was anciently high in Eſteem, and very common in this Place; but modern Travellers ſay no ſuch Thing of it now.

Q. *But does it not ſeem ſomewhat extraordinary that* Sampſon *ſhould meet with a Company of* Philiſtines *with all new Cloaths upon their Backs; for ſuch only ſuited his Purpoſe of making good his Contract with the thirty young Men his Companions?*

A. It may well be queſtioned, upon what Occaſion *Sampſon* could meet with thirty *Philiſtines*, all cloathed in their new and beſt Attire, even though we allow that he went with a Diſpoſition to pick a Quarrel with them, and ſlay them; but then it is but ſuppoſing, that, at this Time there was a Merry-making, either in the Fields, or in the City, at ſome publick Solemnity, when great Companies uſed to be gathered together, and appear in their beſt Apparel, and the Thing is done.

CHAP. XV.

Sampſon, *intending to viſit his Wife, is denied her. He burns the* Philiſtines *Corn with Foxes and Firebrands; for which they burn his Wife and her Father; he, in Return, ſmites them Hip and Thigh. The* Philiſtines *pitch in* Judah, *and* Sampſon *is bound and delivered to them; he breaks his Bonds, and kills a Thouſand of them with the Jaw-Bone of an Aſs. He is thirſty, prays, and obtains Water.*

Q. THE *firſt remarkable Occurrence in this Chapter, is the Story of* Sampſon's *Foxes and Firebrands; a Story ſo ſtrange and unaccountable, that were it not left upon ſacred Record, and therefore not to be diſputed, I ſhould look upon it as entirely fabulous.*

A. A certain anonymous Author, in a Diſſertation upon *Sampſon*'s Foxes, has ſolved the whole Difficulty of that Piece of Hiſtory, if we will but admit of his Suppoſitions. He ſuppoſes, that the Word *Schualim*, which we render *Foxes*, ſhould, with a little Variation, be written *Schoalim*, which denotes *Sheaves*, or rather *Shocks of Corn*, and that the Word *Zanab*, which, in our Tranſlation, is a *Tail*, equally ſignifies the *extream*, or *outermoſt Part* of any Thing. Thus, in an Orchard planted in the Form of a *Quincunx*, the farthermoſt Tree is called *Zanab*; and, in like Manner, the *extream* or *outſide* Shocks in a Field may be ſo called here; and then the Senſe of the Words will be, "That *Sampſon*, at different Places, ſet "Fire to three hundred Shocks of Corn, which "ſtood in the out Parts of the Fields, belonging "to the *Philiſtines*, and ſo by the Fire's ſpreading "from Shock to Shock, deſtroyed, in a Manner, "all their Crop."

But without entertaining any novel Interpretation, and which, upon Examination, perhaps will hardly bear the Teſt, we may adventure to ſay, that theſe three hundred Foxes, which *Sampſon* is ſaid to have caught, are not, even in a *literal* Senſe, ſo incredible a Thing, nor ſo liable to Ridicule, as ſome may imagine. For we are to conſider, (as the learned *Bochart*, from the Account of ſeveral Travellers, evinces,) that the whole Country, eſpecially that Part of it, which belonged to the Tribe of *Gad*, ſo abounded with Foxes, that from them ſeveral Places took their Names: That, under the Name of Foxes, may not improperly be comprehended a Creature, very much like them, called *Thoes*, which go in Herds, ſo that two hundred of them have been ſeen together at once; that the Manner of catching them was not (as we may imagine) by hunting only, but by Snares and Nets, as the abovementioned Author plainly demonſtrates; and that *Sampſon* did not do this alone by himſelf, in a Day and Night's Time, but that, being aſſiſted by his Servants and Neighbours (as he was a Man of conſiderable Eminence in his Country) he might poſſibly be ſome Weeks in accompliſhing his Deſign. His Deſign however will not appear ſo *romantick*, if we conſider what *Collections* have been made of Creatures, much wilder, and rarer, than Foxes; that *Lucius Sylla*, when he was *Prætor*, ordered to be ſhewn on the Amphitheatre, an hundred Lions; *Julius Cæſar*, when he was *Dictator*, four hundred; and that the Emperor *Probus*, at one Spectacle, exhibited a Thouſand Oſtritches, a Thouſand Stags, an hundred *Lybian*, an hundred *Syrian* Leopards, and an infinite Number of other ſtrange Creatures: And why then ſhould it be thought to be a Thing ſo incredible, as to need the Intervention of a Miracle (as ſome contend) for *Sampſon*, with the Aſſiſtance of his Friends, who might be let into his Deſign, to get together, in ſome Time, three hundred *Foxes*, in a Country, that every where abounded with them?

Foxes, (we are none of us ignorant,) are very apt to do a great deal of Miſchief, wherever they *abound*, and therefore *Sampſon* might have this farther Aim in collecting ſo many, *viz.* that thereby he might clear his own Country of ſuch noxious Animals, and at the ſame Time, that he very well knew, that no Creature could be more convenient for his Purpoſe of annoying, and detrimenting his Enemies. For, as theſe Creatures are very ſwift of Foot, and have a natural Dread of Fire, they could not well fail (when once they were turned into it) of ſetting the ſtanding Corn in a Blaze, and then, as they were tied, in Couples, Tail to Tail, this would make them draw one againſt the other, and ſo being retarded in their Flight, and ſtaying longer in a Place, they would give the Fire more Time to ſpread itſelf, and make the Conflagration univerſal.

Upon the whole therefore we may conclude, that the muſtering up ſuch a Number of Foxes, in order to burn up the *Philiſtines* Corn, was neither a fooliſh nor impracticable Thing, ſuppoſing *Sampſon* was at Liberty to proſecute his Revenge in this Manner: But for his Righteouſneſs in this, and many of his other Proceedings, we are (as we ſaid before) no ways accountable, unleſs, his being conſidered, as a *Chief* among the *Iſraelites*, (whom God had raiſed up to annoy the *Philiſtines*, and in ſuch Methods as this, rather than *open War*, to weaken them by his perſonal Valour and Strength,) may be admitted in Juſtification of what he did.

Q. *But does not* Sampſon's *killing a thouſand* Philiſtines *with* the Jaw-bone of an Aſs, *carry a great deal of Improbability in it?*

A. We muſt here have Recourſe to the ſupernatural Aid of God. For, though Aſſes in *Syria* (as the Learned affirm) are both ſtronger, and larger, than what we have with us, and their Bones, conſequently, better fitted for ſuch hard Service, as this; yet it muſt be owned, that it was by the wonderful Strength, that God infuſed into him, and not any Aptitude of the Inſtrument, he made uſe of, that he was enabled to do all this Execution, which is only incredible to thoſe, who do not conſider the Power of God, who can raiſe our natural Strength to what Degree he pleaſes, and, at the ſame Time, infeeble the Spirit of thoſe, who oppoſe his Deſigns, in ſuch a Manner, that they ſhall have no Power to help themſelves.

It muſt be owned however, that there are ſome Circumſtances in this Tranſaction, that might poſſibly intimidate the *Philiſtines*, and thereby contribute to facilitate the Slaughter, which *Sampſon* made among them. The People of *Judah* had now prevailed with him to ſuffer himſelf to be bound, and conducted to the *Philiſtines* Camp: The *Philiſtines*, as ſoon as they ſaw him coming, ran out with Joy to receive him, and very likely forgot to take their Arms with them, as knowing for certainty, that he was ſafe enough now, and bound, as we ſay, to his good Behaviour. But when, contrary to their Expectation, they ſaw him firſt break the Cords ſo eaſily and ſuddenly, and then coming upon them with ſuch Fury and Vengeance, 'tis not unlikely, that this might put them in no ſmall Confuſion, and as they ſtraggled about in their Flight, give him the Opportunity of ſlaying them, one by one, as he came up with them.

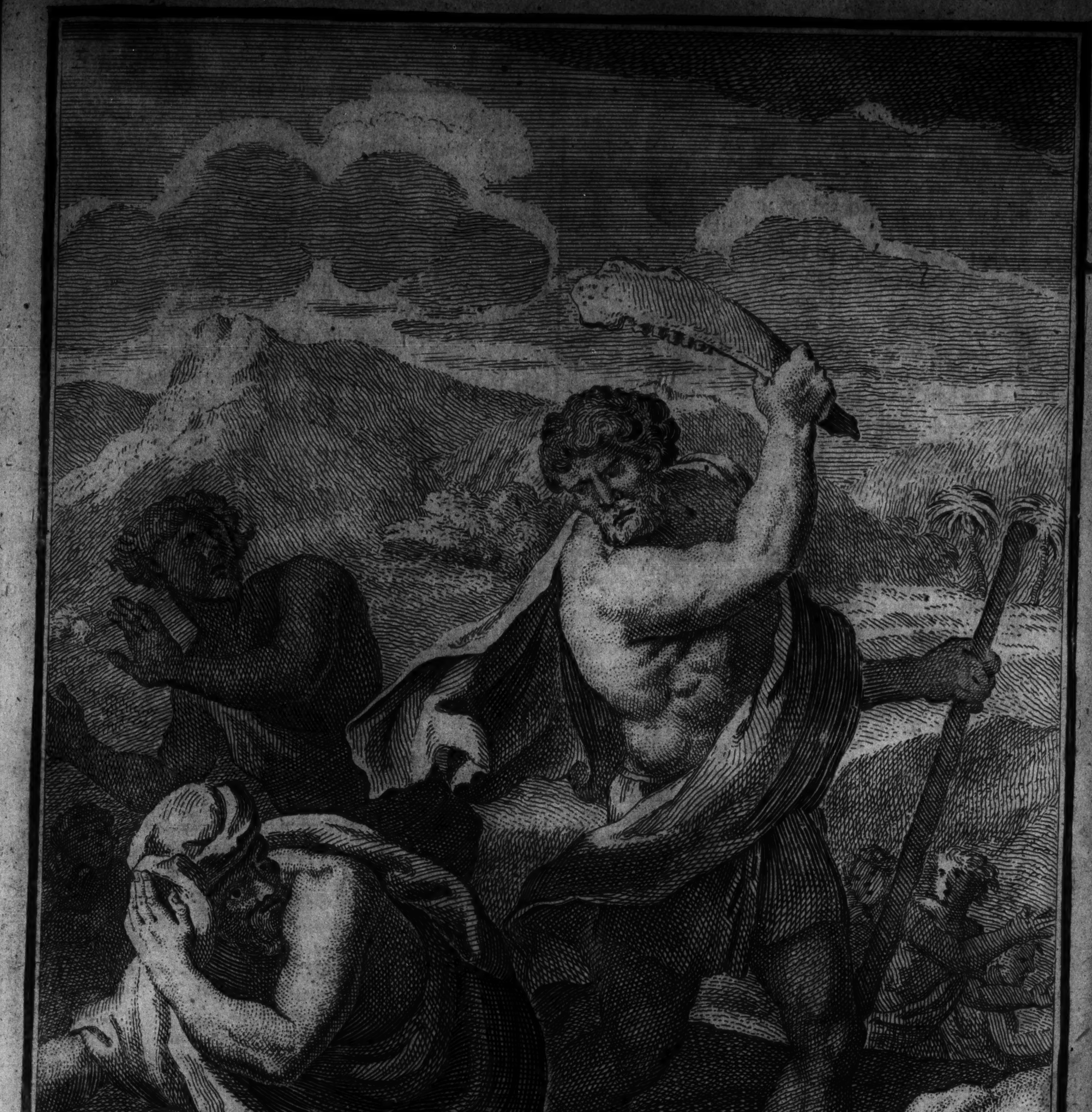
This, we muſt allow, is the higheſt Inſtance of perſonal *Proweſs*, that we any where read of; and yet *profane Hiſtorians* inform us of other Men, who, by their mere natural Courage, unaſſiſted by any divine Power (as the Scripture informs us *Sampſon* was) have made great Havock among their Enemies; for *Flavius Vopiſcus* reports, that, in the *Sarmatick* War, *Aurelian* ſlew forty-eight Men in one Day, and in ſeveral Days 950, which diminiſhes the Wonder of this Atchievement of *Sampſon's* not a little, eſpecially conſidering, that the *Philiſtines*, in their Surprize, might think that this was all a Trick and Management of his *Conductors*, to get ſo many unarmed Men into their Power, and that they too were ready to fall upon them, and aſſiſt him, in caſe they ſhould make any Oppoſition againſt their *Champion*.

Q. *How do you interpret thoſe Words*, v. 8. And he ſmote them Hip and Thigh?

A. The Words in the Original will admit of this Signification, *He ſmote them with his Leg on their Thigh, and gave them great Hurts or Wounds*; and, to juſtify this Senſe, a learned Commentator ſuppoſes, that there was at this Time, ſomewhere among the *Philiſtines*, Wreſtling-matches, and other rural Exerciſes, to which every one was invited; and that *Sampſon*, among the reſt, might go thither; that there he threw great Numbers of the *Philiſtines*, who perhaps might value themſelves upon their Activity that Way, and, in the midſt of the Grapple with them, broke their Thighs with a Kick or Twiſt of his Leg: For, though this Kind of Exerciſe grew into high Eſteem among the *Grecians*, who were ſo famous for their *Gymnick* Sports; yet, that Wreſtling was an Exerciſe not unknown among the People of the *Eaſt*, is manifeſt from *Gen.* xxv. 26. xxx. 8. and xxxii. 24. This our Commentator offers but as a Conjecture indeed; but it ſeems much more feaſable, than the Interpretation either of the *Vulgat* or *Chaldee* Paraphraſt.

Q. *But*

JUDGES Chap: XV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Samson killeth ye Philistines wth a Jaw Bone.

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Q. *But what is your Opinion of God's opening a Fountain in the* Jaw-bone *to quench* Sampſon's *Thirſt?*

A. That *Sampſon*, after ſo long a Fatigue, ſhould be almoſt ready to die with Thirſt, is no ſtrange Thing at all, but the Queſtion is, how, in a Place, where no Water was, he came to have his Thirſt allayed? The *Hebrew* Word, *Mactes*, does properly ſignify the *Socket*, in which the great Teeth in the Jaw are faſtened; and, from hence *Bochart*, among many others, endeavours to maintain, by Arguments, that God made one of theſe Teeth drop out of the Jaw, wherewith *Sampſon* had done all this Execution, and immediately a Stream of Water guſhed out from thence: But, with all due Deference to the Learning of ſo great a Man, 'tis ſomewhat ſtrange, that he ſhould not obſerve, (when he had this Paſſage under Conſideration) that ſuch a Miracle, as this, would be inconſiſtent with the Words, which follow, *wherefore he called the Name thereof*, i. e. of the Fountain of Water, which guſhed out, *En-hakkor*, or *the Well of him, that cried to God, which is in Lehi, even unto this Day. Lehi* is here therefore the proper Name of a Place. This Place had doubtleſs its Appellation from this Adventure of *Sampſon*'s with the Jaw-bone, and from this Place God cauſed a Spring to ariſe, that he might allay his Hero's Thirſt: For it is incongruous to think, that the Jaw of an Aſs, or any other Creature, could have ſubſiſted to the Time, when the Author of this Book of *Judges* lived; or, (if, all this while, none ſhould have had the Curioſity to take away this wonderful Bone) that God ſhould, out of the Socket of one of its Teeth, cauſe a Stream of Water to flow, by one continued, uſeleſs, Miracle.

It muſt be a Miſtake then in our Verſion, to render the Words, *God clave an hollow Place*, which was in the Jaw, when, (according to the Senſe of the Ancients upon this Place) they ſhould be tranſlated, *which was in* Lehi. For the Truth of the Matter is, that though this Jaw be long extinct, and gone, yet thoſe, who have travelled through this Part of *Paleſtine*, do inform us, that, in the Suburbs of *Eleutheropolis*, where *Lehi* very likely ſtood, the Fountain, which aroſe upon this Occaſion, is ſtill remaining, and called *the Fountain of the Jaw*, to this Day.

But be that as it will, whether the Water, which refreſhed *Sampſon* in this his Diſtreſs, came from the Jaw-bone, or (as others think) from a Cliff in a Rock, or an Hollow in the Earth, the Miracle is the ſame, though it may not be improper (whenever we can by an eaſier Interpretation) to take away Occaſion from thoſe, that ſeek Occaſion, to diſparage the Oracles of God.

Q. *What might be the Reaſon of* Sampſon's *extraordinary Thirſt?*

A. *Joſephus* gives us a ſtrange Account of the Reaſon of *Sampſon*'s Thirſt, and what there is no manner of Foundation for in the Scripture. "*Sampſon* (*ſays he*) was ſo tranſported with the Thoughts of this Victory, that he had the Vanity to aſſume the Honour of the Action to himſelf, without aſcribing the Glory of it to God's Power and Providence, as he ought to have done. But while this arrogant and over-weening Humour was yet upon him, he found himſelf ſeized with a violent parching Thirſt, which gave him to underſtand, that, after all his Succeſſes, he was but Fleſh and Blood ſtill, and liable to human Infirmities. The Senſe of this Diſorder brought him to the Knowledge of himſelf, and to a penitent Confeſſion, that the Victory was God's, and that he was able to do nothing of himſelf, without the Divine Aſſiſtance. He begged Pardon for his paſt Vanity and Preſumption. His Prayers were not in vain; for immediately there guſhed out of a Rock, that was hard by, a Stream of delicious Water to relieve him in his raging Drought."

Q. Sampſon *having made ſuch a terrible Slaughter among the* Philiſtines, *took up his Reſidence on the Top of the Rock* Etam; *where ſtood that Rock?*

A. This was a ſtrong Place in the Tribe of *Judah* (as *Joſephus* relates) to the Top of which no more than one Man could come a-breaſt, and therefore eaſily defenſible: By all this, however, and what follows in this Hiſtory of *Sampſon*, it is plain, that he had no Commiſſion from God, nor was moved by any extraordinary Impulſe, to make open War (as did *Gideon*, *Jephthah*, and others) for the Deliverance of *Iſrael*, from the Yoke of the *Philiſtines*; but only to weaken them, and keep them in Awe, that, out of Dread of him, they might be leſs cruel in their Oppreſſion; and that this was all, that God intended to do by him, is pretty plain from the Words of the Angel, Ch. xiii. Ver. 5. *He ſhall begin to deliver* Iſrael.

CAAP. XVI.

Sampſon *goes to an Harlot at* Gaza; *is hemm'd in; carries away the City Gates upon his Shoulders.* Delilah, *corrupted by the* Philiſtines, *entices* Sampſon *to tell her wherein lay his great Strength; ſhe is thrice deceived; but at laſt prevails. He is taken, and his Eyes put out. The* Philiſtines *aſſembling to make Sport with him, he pulls down the Houſe upon them; his Death and Burial.*

Q. IN *what Part of the Land was* Gaza *ſituated?*

A. This City was, by *Joſhua*, made Part of the Tribe of *Judah*, but, after him, it fell into the Hands of the *Philiſtines*, and was one of their five *Principalities*, ſituated between *Raphia* and *Aſkelon*, towards the ſouthern Extremity of the promiſed Land. The advantageous Situation of this Place, was the Cauſe of the many Revolutions, to which it became ſubject. At firſt of all it belonged to the *Philiſtines*, but, in *Joſhua*'s Time, was conquered by the *Hebrews*. In the Reigns of *Jotham* and *Ahaz*, it recovered its Liberty, but was conquered by *Hezekiah*. It was made ſubject to the *Chaldeans*, when they reduced *Syria* and *Phœnicia*, and afterwards fell into the Hands of the *Perſians*. They were Maſters of it, when *Alexander* beſieged, took, and demoliſhed it. It afterwards roſe again (but not near of the ſame Magnitude) under the Name of *Majuma*, which underwent as many Viciſſitudes as the former. The Kings of *Egypt* had it for ſome Time in Poſſeſſion; *Alexander Jannæus*, King of the *Hebrews*, deſtroyed it; *Gabinius* repaired it; *Auguſtus* gave it to *Herod the Great*; *Conſtantine* gave it the Name of *Conſtantia*, with many independent Privileges, in Honour of his Son; but the Emperor *Julian* deſtroyed and deprived it of all.

Q. Sampſon *being beſet in* Gaza, *riſes at Midnight, and takes the City Gates on his Shoulders, and carries them to the Top of a Hill near* Hebron; *what Diſtance might it be from* Gaza *to that Hill?*

A. The Words in the Text are, that *he carried them up to the Top of an Hill, that is before* Hebron, Chap. xvi. Ver. 3. but the Word, which we render *before*, does equally ſignify *in the Sight of* Hebron; and therefore ſince the Diſtance between *Gaza* and *Hebron* is no leſs than twenty Miles, it is more probable, that the Hill, where *Sampſon* left theſe Gates, lay between the two Cities, and in the View of both, that the Inhabitants of one City might behold them to their Confuſion, and they of the other to their Encouragement to hope for a future Deliverance.

Q. Delilah, *it is ſaid, lived in the Valley of* Sorek; *where lay that Valley, and what was it remarkable for? and who was this* Delilah?

A. It is certain, that *Sarek* was a Place in the Land of *Judea*, famous for choice Wines, as may be gathered from *Gen.* xlvi. 11. *Iſai.* v. 12. and *Jer.* ii. 21. and lay not above a Mile and a half from *Eſcol*, from whence the Spies brought a Bunch of Grapes, for a Sample of the Fruitfulneſs of the Country; but whether *Delilah*, who is ſaid to live here, was a Woman of *Iſrael*, or one of the Daughters of the *Philiſtines*, who at this Time were Rulers in the Country of *Judah*, or whether ſhe was his Wife, or an Harlot only, is not expreſſed in her Story. St. *Chryſoſtom* and others are of Opinion, that he was married to her; but if ſo, ſome Mention, one would think, there ſhould have been of the Marriage Ceremonies in this, as well as in his former Wife's Caſe; nor can we think, that the *Philiſtines* would have been ſo bold, as to attempt to draw her into their Party, and to bribe her, to betray him into their Hands, had ſhe been his lawful Wife. It appears indeed, by her whole Behaviour, that ſhe was a mercenary Woman, that would do any Thing to get Money, and accordingly *Joſephus* calls her a common Proſtitute of the *Philiſtines*.

Q. *The Reward which the Lords of the* Philiſtines *promiſed* Delilah *for her Treachery to* Sampſon, *was, from each of them* eleven hundred Pieces of Silver; *How much in* Sterling *Coin did the whole Sum amount to?*

A. The Princes of the *Philiſtines*, from their five chief Cities, *Accaron*, *Aſcalon*, *Gaza*, *Azoth*, and *Gath*, 1 *Sam.* vi. 17. are ſuppoſed to be five in Number, ſo that, if they made her a common Purſe, (as we ſay) of five times eleven hundred Pieces, or five thouſand five hundred Shekels of Silver, it would amount to about three hundred and forty three Pounds fifteen Shillings.

Q. *What Methods may we ſuppoſe did* Delilah *uſe to get out of* Sampſon *his grand Secret?*

A. There is a good deal of Probability in *Joſephus's* Manner of telling this Story, *viz.* That while they were eating and drinking together, and he was careſſing her, ſhe fell into an Admiration of his wonderful Deeds; and, having highly extolled them, deſired him to tell her, how he came ſo much to excell all other Men in Strength: For we cannot ſuppoſe, that ſhe came bluntly upon him all at once, and deſired to know, (as it is in the Text) *wherewith he might be bound and afflicted.* This had been diſcovering her wicked Deſign againſt him at once, and defeating herſelf of an Opportunity of betraying him, and therefore muſt conclude, that the ſacred Hiſtory in this Place (as it frequently does elſewhere) gives us only the Sum and Subſtance of what *Delilah* ſaid to her *Paramour*, without taking Notice of all the cunning and artful Speeches, wherewith ſhe dreſſed it up.

Q. *Pray explain that Paſſage of the* weaving *Sampſon's* Hair with a Web, and faſtening it with a Pin.

A. I imagine ſhe wove his Hair into Treſſes, and filleted them up, agreeable to the Notion of the learned *Spencer*, concerning the Hair of the *Nazarites*; but a learned Commentator is of another Opinion, *viz.* that *Sampſon's* Hair, being very long, was interwoven with the Threads and Warp of a Web of Cloth: And to this Purpoſe he ſuppoſes, that in the Room, where he ſometimes ſlept upon a Couch, there might ſtand, very near, a Loom, wherewith *Delilah* (as the Cuſtom then was) at her leiſure Hours, might work and divert herſelf, and that now, by his Permiſſion and Connivance, ſhe might take the Locks of his Hair, work it into the Web, and, to hinder it from being pulled out, ſecure it with an Iron Pin, thruſt into the Beam, but that *Sampſon*, when he awoke, took the whole Loom along with him at his Hair. And indeed, without ſome ſuch Suppoſition as this, we cannot very well tell what to make of his going away with *the Pin of the Beam, and with the Web.* Chap. xvi. Ver. 14.

Q. *What Sort of a* Mill *was that in which the* Philiſtines *made* Sampſon *grind?*

A. Before the Invention of *Wind* and *Water-mills*, Men made uſe of *Hand-mills*, wherewith to grind their Corn; and, as this was a very laborious Work, it was *that*, wherewith we find Maſters (eſpecially in moſt Comick Authors) threatned their Servants, in caſe of any Delinquency. It was the Work indeed of Malefactors as well as Slaves; and therefore it ſeems very probable, that, in this Priſon, where *Sampſon* was put, there was a publick Mill, as *Socrates* tells us, there were afterwards in *Rome*, in the Time of *Theodoſius*: So that from this, and ſome other Circumſtances, we may learn, that the *Philiſtines* Purpoſe was, not to put *Sampſon* to Death (even as they had promiſed *Delilah* they would not) but to puniſh him in a Manner (*viz.* with Blindneſs, hard Labour, and Inſults) much worſe, and more intolerable, than Death itſelf.

Q. *Pray what Sort of an Idol was* Dagon?

A. The Word *Dagon* is taken from the Root *Dag*, which ſignifies a *Fiſh*. This Idol was peculiar to the *Philiſtines*, for in no other Nation do we find any Thing of it, and repreſented uſually, as the *Heathens* do *Tritons* and *Syrens*, in the Shape of a Woman, with the lower Parts of a Fiſh----*deſinit in Piſcem Mulier formoſa ſuperne.*----For this Reaſon ſome learned Men have imagined, that *Dagon* was the ſame with *Derceto*, which the People of *Askelon* worſhipped, and near which Place, there was a very great Pond, full of Fiſh, conſecrated to this *Goddeſs*, from which the People ſuperſtitiouſly abſtained, out of a Belief that *Venus*, having heretofore caſt herſelf into this Pond, was there metamorphoſed into a Fiſh.

Q. *The laſt Action of* Sampſon's *Life, was his pulling down the Houſe upon the* Philiſtines, *in the Ruins of which he likewiſe periſhed; but was he not in this guilty of* Suicide, *or* Self-murder?

A. It is made a Queſtion among Caſuiſts and Divines, whether *Sampſon* ought to have died in this Manner, in a Spirit of Revenge, and Self-murther? St. *Auſtin* excuſes him indeed, but it is upon the Suppoſition, that he was urged thereunto by the inward Motions of him, who is the great Arbiter of our Life and Death; and St. *Bernard* affirms, that if he had not a peculiar Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, to move him to this, he could not, without Sin, have been the Author of his own Death; but others maintain, that, without having Recourſe to this ſupernatural Motive, this Action of his might be vindicated from his Office, as being the Judge and Defender of *Iſrael*, and that he might therefore devote his Life to the Publick Good, (as ſome Heathens have merited the Commendation of Poſterity by ſo doing) without having any Thing in View, but the Death of his Enemies, and the Deliverance of his own People.

Q. *Was* Sampſon's *Hair the natural Cauſe of his Strength?*

A. Whether *Sampſon*'s Hair was the phyſical, or only moral Cauſe, of his Strength, needs not, I think, be made any Queſtion. For, though Plenty of Hair may be ſome Indication of bodily Strength, yet ſince he that is naturally ſtrong, becomes not leſs ſo, by having his Hair cut off, (though this was certainly the Caſe of *Sampſon*) it muſt neceſſarily follow, that his Hair was no natural Cauſe of his Strength, but that it was a ſupernatural and miraculous Gift, not perhaps always inherent in him, but only diſpenſed at certain Times, when the *Spirit of God came upon him*. It depended indeed on the Covenant made between God and him, the Sign of which Covenant was his *Hair*; and therefore, when in Compliance to his Harlot, he ſuffered his Hair to be cut off, he broke the Covenant with God, and forfeiting the *Spirit* of Strength and Courage, was left to his own natural Weakneſs, and ſo became an eaſy Prey to his Enemies. But having been now a conſiderable Time in Priſon, wherein he was cruelly uſed, he began to repent, no doubt, of his Folly; and therefore making fervent Supplications to God, for Pardon of the Violation of his *Nazaritiſm*, he renewed his Vow, and ſo, being reſtored to the Condition he was in, before he loſt the Favour of God, his Strength began to grow and increaſe, in Proportion as his Hair did.

Q. *What was the Houſe which* Sampſon *pulled down?*

A. When his Hair was thus grown, and his Strength returned, it is made a Queſtion, whether the *Houſe*, as it is called in Scripture, which he pulled down, was the Temple of *Dagon*, for whoſe Honour this *Feſtival* was appointed, or ſome other Edifice.

That it was not a common Houſe, is evident from the Multitude of the People, which it contained; and though the Temples of the *Philiſtines* are ſuppoſed by ſome to have been of the ſame Figure and Make, with thoſe in *Egypt*, i. e. a kind of a *Rotunda*, flat-roofed, with a large Portico without, and Pillars within to ſuſtain the Building, yet this ſeems to be no more than a Fiction, devoid of all Authority, and accommodated to the Purpoſe of ſolving this Difficulty. 'Tis not certain, that the *Egyptian* Temples were built in this Manner, and much more probable it is, that *this Houſe* of their famous God *Dagon* was made of Stone; and though it wanted no proper Supports, yet it is ſcarce ſuppoſeable, that, in a Structure of this Kind, its whole Weight ſhould be ſupported by two Pillars only, and theſe ſo very contiguous, that *Sampſon* could lay hold on them both at one Time.

Q. *What was the Form of this Houſe?*

A. The moſt general Opinion is, that this was a Structure, which the *Philiſtines* made uſe of, upon ſuch Occaſions as this, built all of Wood, and ſupported by wooden Pillars, in the Form of the *Theatres*, which, in after Times, were in great Requeſt among the *Romans*. Towards the middle of this Building, we may ſuppoſe that there were two large Beams, upon which the Weight of the whole Structure lay; and that theſe Beams were ſupported by two Pillars, which ſtood in a Manner contiguous to each other. So that, as ſoon as *Sampſon* had moved and unſettled theſe, down muſt the Principals, and, with them, the whole Building come. The only remaining Difficulty is, how a Building, made of Wood, and ſupported by two Pillars only, ſhould be able to contain ſuch a Multitude of Men and Women; but whoever reads *Pliny's Natural Hiſtory*, will therein find a Deſcription of a *Theatre* built by *Curio*, capable of containing a much greater Number of People, than the *Philiſtines* are here ſaid to be, and yet, what was a Wonder much greater than the two Pillars here, they each of them depended upon, and were turned round, by one Hinge only, which, had it happened to ſlip, muſt have occaſioned, as our Author tells us, a much greater Slaughter, than what was at the Battle of *Cannæ*; as, by the actual Fall of an Amphitheatre, built by *Atilius*, no fewer, than fifty Thouſand Perſons, as *Tacitus* relates the Story, were killed, wounded, and maimed: Which is enough, one would think, to ſilence the Cavils of thoſe, who are apt to fancy, that a Building of ſuch a Capacity could not be ſo contrived, as to rely only on two Supporters.

Q. *Was* Sampſon *juſtifiable in all Points?*

A. We are not concerned to vindicate *Sampſon* in all his extravagant and outrageous Actions, ſuch as his marrying an Idolatreſs, and then leaving her; his loving leud Women, and diſcovering the great Secret, whereon his *All* depended, to a common *Proſtitute*; his killing ſome, and maiming others, who perhaps had never done him any perſonal Injury; and ſetting the whole Country on Fire, to burn their Corn-fields and Vineyards; with many other Things, that might be alledged againſt him: All that we have to ſay is, that God raiſed him up to be a *Scourge* to the *Philiſtines*, and that, had there not been ſome Particularities in his Temper, he had not been ſo proper an Inſtrument in his Hand; or that had he not run himſelf ſo often into *Premunires*, he would not have had ſo frequent Occaſion, to employ the Strength, which God had given him, in extricating himſelf from thence, by the Death and Deſtruction of his Enemies. Tho' therefore there was no *Fatality* in making him of this unruly Diſpoſition, (for that he contracted himſelf) yet there was a wiſe Direction of God's Providence, in making his rugged Temper ſubſervient to his Purpoſes, and even out of his Faults and Enormities, extracting the Plagues and Puniſhment of his Foes; for *ſurely the Wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, *and the Remainder of his Wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain*. This we may lay down as a general Reaſon, for God's making uſe of ſo furious an Inſtrument as *Sampſon* was, in the Execution of his Will.

Q. *Are there not ſome other Exceptions to the Character of this Hero?*

A. With regard to all the other Exceptions, which are uſually made to *Sampſon*'s Character and Conduct, they are, in Effect, no more than mere *Cavils*, which ariſe, in a great Meaſure, from an Unacquaintedneſs with the *Idiom* of the *Hebrew* Tongue: For as, when in *Jotham*'s Parable, *Wine* is ſaid *to cheer both God and Man*, the Words *Elohim*, and *Anaſhim* may ſignify as well *high* and *low*, *Princes* and *Peaſants*, i. e. all Conditions of Men, do find themſelves cheered, and refreſhed with Wine; ſo, when it is ſaid, that *the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Sampſon*, we are not to underſtand thereby that he had any *Grace* extraordinary, or ſanctifying Influences of the bleſſed Spirit, communicated to him, but only that he was endued with wonderful Courage and Fortitude, an undaunted Mind, and a *ſupernatural* Strength of the Body, at ſuch and ſuch Times, which enabled him to do *great Acts*, but made no Alteration in his *Manners*; and, in like manner, when he is ſaid to have *judged Iſrael twenty Years*, we need not infer, that he was the ſupreme *Magiſtrate* in the *Republick*, (for that very probably was *Eli*) but only that he was the chief Man of War, whoſe Valour was renowned, and who did many great and ſignal Exploits, in order to reſcue his Countrymen from the Oppreſſion of their Enemies, and to reſtore them to their former Liberty. I ſay *in order to* this, for he did not *perfect* their Deliverance; only, by the ſeveral Defeats, which he gave them, and the great Damages, he did them, he infuſed into the *Iſraelites* ſuch a Spirit and Reſolution, that, not many Years after, they took up Arms; and appearing in the Field againſt them, defeated, and ſubdued them; ſo that, in all the Days of *Samuel*, we hear of no farther Moleſtation from that *Quarter*.

Q. *How came the People of* Gaza *to permit* Sampſon*'s Relations to come and take away his Body?*

A. In all Nations there was formerly ſo much Humanity, as not to prohibit Enemies from interring their Dead; nor did any of the *Iſraelites* join with *Sampſon* in his Enterprizes; he ſtood alone in what he did: But this laſt Slaughter, which he had made among them, might have provoked them, one would think, to ſome Acts of Outrage even upon his dead Body. It is to be obſerved however, that inſtead of any Acts of Violence, they might perhaps be much humbled and mollified by this late Diſaſter; and might fear, that, if they denied him Burial, the God of *Iſrael*, who had given him ſuch extraordinary Strength in his Life-time, would not fail to take Vengeance of them; and therefore, dreading his very Corpſe, they were deſirous to get quit of it (even as they were of the *Ark* afterwards) and glad, that any came to take ſuch a formidable Object out of their Sight.

CHAP. XVII.

Micah *ſteals Money of his Mother; confeſſes and reſtores it. He makes Images, and ſets them up in the Houſe of his Gods, and conſecrates one of his Sons for his Prieſt. No Magiſtrates in* Iſrael. *A* Levite *travelling that way* Micah *hires him for his Prieſt; for which he is perſuaded God would bleſs him.*

Q. WHAT *is your Opinion of the* Ephod *and* Teraphim *which* Micah *made?*

A. That the divine Service might be performed with a greater Reſemblance of what was done at the Tabernacle in *Shiloh*, he made *prieſtly Ornaments*, for ſo ſome learned Men take the *Ephod* to comprehend, not only the Breaſt-plate adjoyning to it, but all the reſt of the Veſtments uſed by the High-prieſt; for his Intention was to ſet up an Oracle in his own Houſe, for theſe Teraphims were certain Images, whereby the *Eaſtern* People conſulted God, and hoped to receive Anſwers from him. Mr. *Selden* (in his Syntagma 1. de Dis Syris, Cap. 2.) well obſerves, that the Worſhip of the true God, and of Idols, was here blended together; for the *Ephod* and the *Levite*, which *Micah* afterwards provided, were intended, no doubt, for the Service of the true God; but the graven *Image* and *Teraphim*, by which the Children of *Dan* deſired the *Levite* to enquire of God, belonged unto *Dæmons*; for they neither truſted to the Ephod alone, which related to God; nor to their Teraphim alone, which was their own Invention; but thought it neceſſary to joyn both together in divine Worſhip: And thus began Idolatry in *Iſrael* by the Superſtition of an old Woman, who put this in her Son's Head. This Woman many of the *Jews* ſuppoſe to be the ſame with *Delilah*, who having got ſo much Money of every one of the Lords of the *Philiſtines*, thought it expedient to employ ſome of it in expreſſing her Devotion; but this is an idle Conceit, that has no other Foundation, than *Delilah*'s being mentioned in the foregoing Chapter; whereas *Micah* was ſome hundred Years prior to her.

Q. *What do you apprehend was* Micah*'s Deſign in ſetting up a* Teraphim?

A. What *Micah*'s Intention might be, in ſetting up a *Teraphim*, and other Kind of Images in *his Houſe*, *Commentators* are not ſo well agreed: Thoſe, that are willing to apologize for the Thing, are ready to ſay, that, as he lived in a Time of great Trouble and Confuſion, wherein the *publick* Worſhip of God was much neglected, if not totally diſuſed, his Deſign was, to erect a Kind of *domeſtick Tabernacle*, wherein he might ſerve God in *private*, ſince he could not, without much Difficulty, do it in *publick*; and that the ſacred Habiliments he made, his Ephod, his Teraphim, *&c.* were no more than what he had ſeen at *Shiloh*: But ſince the Laws of God condemn the making Images of any Kind, as Objects of Adoration; the ſetting up any religious Worſhip, different from what he had eſtabliſhed; the offering Sacrifices, or performing any publick Service, any where, but in the Tabernacle; and the employing any Prieſts in his Worſhip, but ſuch, as were of the Race of *Aaron*; 'tis certain that *Micah* was guilty of a Violation of all theſe Prohibitions, and, in the Matter of theſe *graven* and *molten* Images, cannot be excuſed from the Crime of Idolatry.

And indeed, unleſs he intended to patronize that, what Reaſon could he have to make any Innovations in Religion, ſince (according as we Date this Action) either *Phineas*, or *Eli*, were then in the High-prieſt's Office, at *Shiloh*, where the publick Worſhip was preſerved in all its *Formality*, and from whence *Micah*, who lived in the Mountains of *Ephraim*, was not ſo very diſtant, but that he might have gone thither, upon ſolemn Occaſions?

CHAP. XVIII.

The Danites, *being ſtraitned in their Inheritance, ſend five Men to ſpy out a Place for them. They come to the Houſe of* Micah, *and deſire the* Levite *to aſk Counſel of God; he encourages them; they ſpy out* Laiſh, *of which they make their Report to their Brethren. 600 of them march on the Expedition; ſeize* Micah*'s Prieſts and Idols; they deſtroy* Laiſh, *and rebuild it; conſecrate their Prieſt, and ſet up* Micah*'s Images.*

Q. IN *the firſt Verſe, and likewiſe* v. 1. Ch. xix. *it's ſaid*, there was then no King in *Iſrael*; *what does that intimate?*

A. This furniſhes us with a Reaſon why *Idolatry* was not aboliſhed, and a thorough *Reformation* of Religion eſtabliſhed, during this Period: For it tells us, that *in thoſe Days,* viz. between the Death of *Joſhua,* and the firſt Inſtitution of the *Judges, there was no King,* i. e. no chief Ruler or Magiſtrate (for the *regal* Authority did not as yet begin in *Iſrael,* *but every one did that which was right in his own Eyes*; ſo that conſidering the natural Propenſity of the People to Idolatry, and the Want of a ſupreme *Power,* lodged in ſome one's Hand, to controul them, we need not wonder, that, before the Inſtitution of *Judges,* they fell into the like Practices, with the Nations, among whom they lived.

The *Judges* indeed were inveſted with Authority to ſuppreſs theſe Practices; but then we are to conſider, that few, or none of them had a Juriſdiction over the whole Land of *Iſrael,* but were only Rulers of ſome particular *Cantons,* which they undertook to deliver from imminent Danger; and therefore how zealous ſoever they might be for a Reformation, yet ſince their Authoroty was not of ſufficient Extenſion, the Wonder is not great, that Idolatry ſhould ſtill be practiſed in ſome dark Corners of the Land, and that in the Tribe of *Dan,* (which were ſo far diſtant,) *there ſhould be ſet up* Micah's *graven Images, which he made, all the Time, that the Ark of the Lord was at* Shiloh.

Q. *Do you ſuppoſe that* Micah's *Images were ſet up for the purpoſe of* Idolatry?

A. Shiloh indeed was ſo far diſtant from ſeveral Parts of the Land of *Canaan,* that People began to account it too much Trouble to go up thither, to pay their Vows and Oblations, and therefore bethought themſelves of ſetting up private *Chappels,* wherein, (as they ſuppoſed,) they might ſerve God as well; and, in the Inſtitution of theſe, being left to their own Fancies, they generally intermixed ſome idolatrous Practices, and, partly in Imitation of the *Cherubims* at *Shiloh,* and the *Teraphims* among their heathen Neighbours, choſe to worſhip God through ſome viſible Repreſentation, which, by one Means or other, was carried on, in Time, to direct Idolatry.

The *Moabites,* we know, even when the *Iſraelites* were in a State of Independency, and had Reaſon ſufficient to have a jealous Eye over them, by their Arts and Contrivances drew them into the Worſhip of their God *Baal-peor*; and much more might the Nations, to whom they were now in Subjection, ſucceed in their Attempts, either of recommending, or (if Need required it) of forcing their Religion upon them; ſo that it is not to be wondered at, if Things ran into ſuch Diſorder, when there was (if not a total Diſſolution) at leaſt a grievous Relaxation of Government; when ſome of the Governours themſelves were far from being the beſt of Men; and, through Inclination, Intreaty, or Compulſion, the People were ſo liable, upon many Occaſions, to relapſe into *Idolatry.*

Q. *The Spies of the* Danites *in their Journey came to* Micah's *Houſe, and deſire the* Levite *to aſk Counſel of God; which he does; and for Anſwer, bids them go in Peace: Did God really return this Anſwer; or was it a Fiction of the* Levites?

A. The Spirit of God, in repeating the Admonition, that, *in thoſe Days, there was no King in* Iſrael, *&c.* before it begins to relate this Story of *Micah,* ſeems to inſinuate, that this was a wicked and enormous Practice of his; that the Worſhip he inſtituted, was *Idolatrous,* and the Prieſt, he had procured to officiate, a *Renegado*: And if ſo, the Anſwer, this Prieſt received in behalf of the *Gadites,* and wherein he promiſed them the Succeſs, they met with, muſt have proceeded from no good *Principle,* unleſs we ſuppoſe, (what ſeems indeed moſt reaſonable) that the *Levite* promiſed them Succeſs, (becauſe he was minded to pleaſe them) merely out of his own Head, though, to give it a better Sanction, he might pretend to receive it from this fictitious Oracle: For, in this Caſe, there was no Occaſion of having recourſe to any Oracle whatever, becauſe any Man, of a moderate Foreſight, conſidering the undaunted Courage and Valour of the *Danites,* and the ſupine Negligence and Cowardice of the People of *Laiſh,* (if once they came to Action) might, without the *Spirit of Prophecy,* foretel the Event.

The Directions, which God gave *Moſes,* concerning *Joſhua*'s conſulting the divine Oracle, are conceived in theſe Words,——— *He ſhall ſtand before* Eleazar, *the Prieſt, who ſhall aſk Counſel for him, after the Judgment of* Urim, *before the Lord; at his Word ſhall they go out, and at his Word ſhall they come in, both he and all the Children of* Iſrael *with him, even all the Congregation.* In all the Book of *Joſhua,* indeed we do not find, that he had this conſtant Recourſe to the Oracle, and the *Jewiſh* Doctors aſſign this for a Reaſon, *viz.* that he had the Spirit of Prophecy reſiding in him, ſo that he knew how to conduct all publick Affairs, without having Occaſion for this oracular Advice. *Moſes,* we know, made no uſe of the *Urim* and *Thummim,* to conſult God, by the Aſſiſtance of the High-prieſt; he went immediately and directly to God himſelf; but we do not read that *Joſhua* was admitted to ſuch Familiarity, nor had he ſuch frequent Revelations from God, as his Predeceſſor had: And therefore, as God was pleaſed, in Supply of that Defect, to remit him to this Method of conſulting him, we cannot but think, that upon every momentous Occaſion, eſpecially in the weighty Affairs of War, he was always careful to purſue: And therefore the Words, in the Beginning of *Judges, Now, after the Death of* Joſhua, *the Children of* Iſrael *aſked of the Lord, ſaying, who ſhall go up for us againſt the* Canaanits? do not import, that they never conſulted God by way of *Urim* and *Thummim,* during the Life of *Joſhua,* but rather, that, after the Death of ſo great a Commander, they were at a Stand what to do, nor would they adventure to proceed in the War of *Canaan,* without following the ſame Directions, which were given to *Joſhua,* and which he had ſo long purſued with ſo good Succeſs.

Nay, the conſulting of the divine Oracle, eſpecially in Matters of War, was accounted ſo very neceſſary, in order to obtain Succeſs, that ſome Commentators have eſteemed this the only Reaſon, why the *Iſraelites,* in ſo juſt a Cauſe, as puniſhing the *Benjamites,* for their *unheard of* Wickedneſſes, were, in two ſeveral Battles, defeated; even becauſe they did not previouſly apply to God, as they ſhould have done. *They ſent up* indeed *to the Houſe of the Lord, and aſked Counſel of him, and ſaid, which of us ſhall go up firſt to the Battle againſt the Children of* Benjamin? *i. e.* which of their Tribes ſhould have the Honour, or Hazard, of making the firſt Attack: But it is obſervable, that they had come to a full Reſolution of making War againſt the *Benjamites,* and, to that Purpoſe, had made *Draughts* of the Men that were to be employed in it, without ever conſulting God, whether an Enterpriſe of this Nature, wherein there was likely to be ſuch an Effuſion of the Blood

Numb. XXVI

of their Brethren, would be pleaſing to him, or no. The Truth is, they never queſtioned his Approbation, of what they accounted ſo laudable; they preſumed upon his Protection and Aſſiſtance, and the vaſt Superiority of their Forces made them confident of Succeſs: But now, in a Matter of ſuch Moment as this, to overlook the divine Oracle, and be determined by their own Counſels only, and to march againſt one of their own Tribes, with a full Purpoſe of deſtroying them utterly, before they knew any Thing whether God had decreed their Deſtruction, or no, was not only an Inſtance of their Raſhneſs and Preſumption, but an Act likewiſe of *Rebellion* againſt the Majeſty of God, who was the King of *Iſrael*, and, upon that Account, alone had Right to declare, whether they were to wage War againſt their Brethren the *Benjamites*, or no.

Q. *How do you interpret the* 30*th Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. The Words of the Text are—*And the Children of* Dan *ſet up the graven Image, and* Jonathan *and his Sons were Prieſts to the Tribe of* Dan, *until the Day of the Captivity of the Land*, Judg. xviii. 30. But then the Queſtion is, what we are to underſtand by *the Captivity of the Land?* Now there are two times mentioned in Scripture, when the Children of *Iſrael* were carried away Captive; by *Tiglath-pileſer*, when he *took* Hazor, *and* Gilead, *and* Galilee, *with all the Land of* Naphtali, *and carried them into* Aſſyria, 2 *Kings* xv. 29. And, 2*dly*, by *Salmanaſſer*, who *carried* Iſrael *away, and placed them in* Halah, *and in* Habor, *by the River* Gozam, *and in the Cities of the* Medes, 2 *Kings* xviii. 6. And to one of theſe, the Words of the Text are ſuppoſed, by ſome learned Men, to refer; but, then it muſt neceſſarily follow, that this Book was written in later Times, even after the former of theſe Captivities at leaſt. It can hardly be ſuppoſed however, that theſe Images ſhould be ſuffered to continue in the Days of *David*, who was a Man after God's own Heart, and ſtudied to advance true Religion to the utmoſt of his Power, all the Country over, from *Dan* to *Beer-ſheba*; and therefore others, with good Reaſon, conclude, that by the *Captivity of the Land* is meant the taking of the Ark by the *Philiſtines*, and carrying it captive into the Temple of *Dagon*; for ſo the *Pſalmiſt* expreſly calls that unlucky Event, *he forſook the Tabernacle in* Shiloh, *even the Tent that he had pitched among them; he delivered their Power into Captivity, and their Beauty into the Enemies Hand.* Pſal. lxxviii. 61, 62.

Chap. XIX.

A Levite's *Concubine runs from him to her Father's Houſe at* Bethlehem; *he goes back to fetch her; is kindly entertained by her Father. He goes with his Concubine to* Gibeah; *their Entertainment; the Inhabitants compaſs the Houſe; the* Levite *delivers up his Concubine, whom they abuſe to Death. He divides her Body into twelve Parts, and ſends them into all the Coaſts of* Iſrael.

Q. P*RAY explain the laſt Clauſe of* v. 22. Bring forth the Man that we may know him.

A. This is an ambiguous Expreſſion, whereby they pretended only a Deſire to know and ſee what Perſon he had brought among them, and yet carry on their Deſign of knowing him carnally. See *Gen.* xix. 5. where the ſame Phraſe is uſed in that Senſe upon a like Occaſion. But though they name only the Man, yet it's plain from the following Relation, that their Deſign was principally upon the Woman, and therefore under the Name of the Man, they comprehend thoſe that belong to him.

Q. *Could the Maſter of the Houſe lawfully offer his own Daughter, and the* Levite's *Concubine, to be abuſed by theſe brutiſh* Benjamites, *though it was to ſave his Gueſt?*

A. He offers this to avoid a greater and more unnatural Sin, which he thought they deſigned. But this Offer was ſinful, becauſe he offered that which was not in his, or the Man's Power to diſpoſe of, even the Chaſtity of his Daughter, and the Man's Wife; and becauſe no Man muſt do any Evil, tho' never ſo ſmall, for the Prevention of any Evil of Sin or Miſchief, or for the procuring the greateſt Good, *Rom.* iii. 8. though his Sin was much mitigated by his Ignorance, by his honeſt and generous Intention of protecting a Stranger; by the Force which was in ſome Sort put upon him, and by the Suddenneſs and Violence of the Temptation.

Chap. XX.

The Iſraelites *aſſemble at* Mizpeh; *the* Levite *declares his Wrong; their Reſolution. They require the* Benjamites *to deliver up the guilty; but are denied. A War enſues, and* Iſrael *is beaten twice; but at the third Battle, they deſtroy the whole Tribe,* 600 *excepted.*

Q. W*HY did God ſuffer the* Iſeaelites *to be twice defeated, though their Deſign was to puniſh an enormous Crime? And why did the* Iſraelites *carry their Reſentment ſo far, as almoſt to deſtroy a whole Tribe?*

A. Suppoſing, that the Grounds of the War were juſtifiable, and God conſenting to it, yet, Why might not he take the Opportunity of puniſhing the *Iſraelites*, by means of the *Benjamites*, for their tame Permiſſion of Crimes more enormous, than what they had now taken into their Heads to chaſtize; for ſuffering *ſpiritual* Adultery among them, even while they were ſo hot upon puniſhing *carnal?*

The Laws which God gave the *Iſraelites* againſt the Sin of Idolatry, were ſo very ſevere, that, whoever did but ſo much as entice another to the Commiſſion of it, was to loſe all Title to Pity and Compaſſion, though he was never ſo dear a Friend, never ſo near a Relation: *Thine Eye ſhall not pity him, neither ſhalt thou ſpare, neither ſhalt thou conceal him, but thou ſhalt ſurely kill him, thy Hand ſhall be firſt upon him to put him to Death, and afterwards the Hands of all the People.* But now, in the Caſe of *Micah*, and the whole Tribe of *Dan*, who had notoriouſly fallen into Idolatry, the Rulers of *Iſrael* were ſo far from putting this Law in Execution, that they connived at their Apoſtacy; and therefore God took Occaſion from this Quarrel between the other Tribes, and that of *Benjamin*, to make uſe of the latter, as Scourges to puniſh this baſe Connivance of the former; and, after he had twice employed them to this Purpoſe, he inverted the Fate of the War, and, in ſo doing, made the Confederate Army of *Iſrael* the Inſtruments of that terrible Vengeance, which he took upon the *Benjamites*, in the Puniſhment of their execrable Lewdneſs. For this is the wonderful Wiſdom of God's Providence, to employ the Paſſions of Men to his Purpoſes, and to make one wicked Set of Men the Inſtruments of his puniſhing another, even as he expreſſes himſelf in another Caſe, that, in ſome Meaſure, is not incongruous to this——— *Woe unto the* Aſſyrian, *the Rod of mine Anger, and the Staff in their Hand, is mine Indignation———Againſt the People of my Wrath will I give him Charge to take the Spoil, and to take the Prey, and to tread them down like the Mire in the Streets———Howbeit he meaneth not ſo, neither doth his Heart think ſo, but it is in his Heart to deſtroy, and to cut off Nations not a few——— Wherefore it ſhall come to paſs, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole Work upon Mount* Sion, *and on* Jeruſalem, *I will puniſh the Fruit of the ſtout Heart of the King of* Aſſyria, *and the Glory of his high Looks*; and, in like Manner here, when, by the Hand of the *Benjamites*, he had chaſtized the reſt of the *Iſraelites*, by the Hand of the *Iſraelites* he puniſhed the *Benjamites* for their groſs Impieties, making uſe of their reſpective Paſſions, and furious Reſentments, to accompliſh his Will; albeit *they meant it not ſo, neither did their Heart think ſo, but it was only in their Hearts to deſtroy, and cut off one another.*

When the Heat of their Fury, however, was abated, and the *Iſraelites* began to look back with a little Coolneſs upon what they had done; how they had almoſt totally deſtroyed the Tribe of their Brethren, and bound themſelves by an Oath never to marry their Daughters to any of the poor Remains of it (which could not but prove the Extirpation of the whole Tribe) the Joy and Triumph of their late Victory was turned into Mourning and bitter Lamentation.

Chap. XXI.

Iſrael's *Oath to deſtroy* Benjamin. *They bewail the Deſolation of that Tribe. The Inhabitants of* Jabeſh Gilead *deſtroyed, except* 400 *Maidens, who are given for Wives to the remaining* Benjamites; *the reſt, that were yet unprovided, ſeize the Maidens as they were dancing at the Feaſt of* Shiloh.

Q. W*AS the Oath of the* Iſraelites, *that they would not give any of their Daughters to the* Benjamites *for Wives, lawful?*

A. Whether this Oath, againſt contracting any Affinity with the *Benjamites*, was in itſelf lawful, and obligatory, or no, ſome Interpreters, without any manner of Reaſon, as I think, have diſputed: For, whatever was attended with ſuch pernicious Conſequences, as to oblige the Brethren, either to live unmarried, which would prove the Extinction of their Tribe, or to marry the Daughters of *Heathens*, which was contrary to their divine Law, or to take to themſelves Wives wherever they could find them, by Force and Violence, which was contrary to the univerſal Law of Nations: Whatever, I ſay, was attended with ſuch evil Conſequences, as theſe, could not be lawful in itſelf, nor of any Obligation to the Conſciences of thoſe, that made it; and therefore it is ſomewhat wonderful, how the *Iſraelites*, when they found themſelves involved in ſuch Difficulties, (as they themſelves teſtify) that, for the Preſervation of this their Oath, they were forced to have recourſe to Acts of the utmoſt Cruelty and Violence, did not perceive the Illegalneſs of it, and themſelves, conſequently, abſolved from its Obſervation.

Q. *Was there not a great deal of Cruelty in that Action of the* Iſraelites *in maſſacring the Inhabitants of* Jabeſh Gilead?

A. It is not the Intent of the ſacred Hiſtorian to relate Matters otherwiſe, than they happened; nor is it any Part of our Buſineſs, to apologize for Actions, that in themſelves are abominable, and will admit of no Excuſe. The Maſſacre of the People of *Jabeſh-gilead*, without ever ſending to know the Reaſon of their abſenting themſelves from the War, was a cruel Expedient to extricate the *Iſraelites* from a Difficulty, in which their ſuperſtitious Obſervance of an unlawful Oath had involved them; and a ſad Inſtance it is of the Iniquity and Barbarity of theſe Times. For, how ſevere ſoever the Laws of military Diſcipline may be, or with what Juſtice ſoever *Recuſants* as well as *Deſerters* in War, may be deemed guilty, and the *Jabeſhites* be called publick Enemies, becauſe they did not obey the Order of the *whole Congregation*, and, by refuſing to join with them againſt the *Benjamites*, made themſelves Partakers of their Crimes; yet, certainly, to ſlay the Innocent with the Guilty, and to put Women and Children to death, who were never made to bear Arms, was the very Height of Injuſtice and Barbarity. If it be ſaid, that the *Cherem*, or the Sentence of utter Extirpation, was paſſed upon them, I do not ſee, with what Juſtice the Virgins could be ſpared (as we find they were by a publick Decree) unleſs we ſuppoſe, that God, from the Tabernacle at *Shiloh*, (before which the *Iſraelites* were now aſſembled) ſignified his Intentions of *diſpenſing* with the full Execution of the Sentence, by reaſon of the publick Neceſſity.

Q. *Was the Rape of the Virgins at* Shiloh, *juſtifiable?*

A. The publick Neceſſity is the only good Reaſon, that can be given, for that other Act of Violence, the Rape of the Virgins at *Shiloh*. For, whatever may be ſaid in Vindication of the *Benjamites*, viz. that what they put in Execution, was, by Order and Advice of their Superiors, and that their Intent in doing it was juſt and honeſt, and devoid of that brutal Luſt, which is incident to common *Raviſhers*; whatever may be ſaid in Excuſe of theſe, the Elders of *Iſrael*, who gave them this Counſel and Authority, had certainly no Right to diſpoſe of other People's Children, without their Parents Conſent and Approbation.

The Rape of the *Sabine Virgins* is uſually produced, as a Piece of Hiſtory parallel to this; but *Romulus*, in whoſe Reign it happened, was one of thoſe Princes, who accounted every Point, that contributed to the Eſtabliſhment of his Dominion, not only lawful, but glorious, and that every thing ceaſed to be a Crime, when once it became neceſſary for *Reaſons of State:* But the Rulers of *Iſrael* either had, or ſhould have had, different Notions. They were governed by God, *whoſe Throne is eſtabliſhed in Righteouſneſs*, and ſhould therefore, one would think, have contrived ſome other Means of re-eſtabliſhing a diminiſhed Tribe, than theſe violent Ways of Rapes and forced Marriages: But the ſacred Hiſtorian has aſſigned a Reaſon for theſe unrighteous Proceedings, when, (in four different Places in this Book of *Judges*) he tells us, that, *in thoſe Days there was no King in Iſrael*; and, for want of ſuch a ſupreme Authority, every Tribe, and every City, nay, which is more, every private Man committed many horrid Things, which were not publickly allowed. This was the Cauſe of *Micah*'s Idolatry, as we noted before; of the *Benjamites* Filthineſs and abominable Luſts; and of all the enormous Things done by the main Body of the *Iſraelites*; their killing of the *Benjamites* without

out Diſtinction; their binding themſelves by raſh and unlawful Oaths; their killing all the Women of *Jabeſh-gilead*, who were not Virgins; and here, their permitting, nay, their ordering this Rape, for the Preſervation of a raſh and unjuſtifiable Oath: And this ſhould teach us, to be very thankful for the Authority, that is ſet over us, in order to preſerve us from the Commiſſions of ſuch like Enormities; for which End, the Cuſtom was, among the ancient *Perſians* (as our learned *Uſher* obſerves) to let the People looſe, to do even what they liſted, for five Days after their King died, that, by the Diſorders, which were then committed, they might ſee the Neceſſity of having a King to govern them, and, when one was ſettled in the Throne, the great Reaſon of their being obedient to him.

Q. *What was this great Feaſt that was held at* Shiloh?

A. All the three Feſtivals were to be obſerved in the Place, where God ſettled his Habitation, which was now at *Shiloh*, and therefore ſome are of Opinion, that the Feaſt, here mentioned, was one of theſe; particularly, they think it was the *Feaſt of Tabernacles*, becauſe this was a Seaſon of great Joy, for having newly gathered their Vintage, and the only Seaſon, wherein the *Jewiſh* Virgins were allowed to dance. At this Time they dwelt in Booths too, behind which the *Benjamites* (as they fancy) might very conveniently conceal themſelves, and ſo watch an Opportunity of carrying away the Virgins: But what ſeems to make againſt this Opinion is, that, at any of theſe publick Feſtivals, the Concourſe of People would have been too great, for a Deſign of this Nature to be put in Execution, ſince the Violence, which muſt, of Courſe, have been offered to the young Women, would hardly have met with a general Connivance. 'Tis much more probable therefore, that this was ſome Feſtival peculiar to the People of *Shiloh*, which the *Benjamites* perhaps might know nothing of, and were therefore put in mind of it by *the Elders of the Congregation*. *Joſephus* tells us, that it was celebrated thrice every Year; and on this Feſtival it might be a Cuſtom for the young Women to go out into the Fields, and there dance by themſelves, which might give their Raviſhers the very Opportunity, they wanted.

Q. *Have you read any Stories in profane Hiſtory parallel to, or reſembling any of the remarkable Actions related in this Book of* Judges?

A. If any *Heathen* Teſtimonies may be thought a Sanction of the Truth, of many of the Paſſages contained in this Book of *Judges*, we may ſay, that the ſeeming Incongruity of *Shamgar*'s ſlaying ſo many *Philiſtines* with an Ox-goad, is mightily abated, by what is told of *Lycurgus*, viz. that he overthrew the Forces of *Bacchus* with the ſelf-ſame Weapon; that, from *Deborah*'s being a Propheteſs, a Governeſs, and dwelling upon a Mount, the Story of the *Thebean Sphinx* (as ſome learned Men imagine) was invented by the *Greeks*; that their *Hercules* was certainly the *Sampſon* of ſacred Writ, his *Omphale* and *Dalilah* the ſame, and that his Pillars at *Cales* were of near Affinity with thoſe of *Gaza*; that his fatal Lock gave Riſe to the Fable of *Niſus* King of *Megara*, upon whoſe Hair the Fortune of his Kingdom depended; that his Foxes were commemorated at *Rome*, every Return of their Harveſt, by a ſimular Ceremony of tying them Tail to Tail, and ſo letting them go; and, (to name no more,) that *Jephthah*'s ſacrificing his Daughter to God is partly adumbrated by *Agamemnon*'s offering his *Iphigenia* to *Diana*, and partly by *Idomeneus*'s promiſing to make a Victim to *Neptune* of the firſt Thing he ſhould meet on Shore (if he eſcaped the preſent Storm) which happened to be his own Son. So happily do many Fictions of the Poets concur to confirm the Truth and Authority of Holy Writ.

Q. *Does* Joſephus's *Hiſtory agree with the ſeveral Narrations in this Book of* Judges?

A. Notwithſtanding the Conciſeneſs of this Book of *Judges*, it is far more exact and inſtructive, than the Hiſtory of *Joſephus*, to which *Scaliger* ſeems to give a Preference above all others. The Fault of *Joſephus* (as any one may perceive it) is this——That he omits the Account of ſeveral Miracles, which the holy Scripture relates, for fear, that other Nations, to whom he writes, ſhould think, he gives too much into the *Marvellous*, though at the ſame Time, he makes no Scruple of ſacrificing the Glory of God to his own private Character.

For this Reaſon it is, that he ſays nothing of the Angel's touching, with the End of his Rod, the Sacrifice, which *Gideon* had prepared, and ſo cauſing Fire to flame out of the Rock, and conſume it; nothing of the two *Signs*, which God was pleaſed to grant him, for the Confirmation of his, and his Confederates Faith, exhibited in the Fleece's being, at one Time wet, and, at another, dry; nothing, of his Zeal in demoliſhing the Altar and Grove of *Baal*, for which he drew upon himſelf the Indignation of all the Abetters of Idolatry; and here, in the Matter of *Shamgar*, he ſuppreſſes the Circumſtances of his ſlaying an hundred *Philiſtines* with an *Ox-goad*, tho' this be the only remarkable Action recorded of him, and what may, not improbably, be thus accounted for.

In not many Ages after this, we read, that theſe very *Philiſtines*, with whom he had *here* to do, had diſarmed the *Iſraelites* to that Degree, that (*d*) none in their whole Army, when they came to Action, had either Sword or Spear, but only *Saul*, and *Jonathan* his Son; nay, that they would not ſo much as ſuffer a Smith to live among them, for fear of their providing themſelves with military Weapons, but obliged them to repair to them, whenever they wanted to ſharpen, or repair their Inſtruments of Huſbandry; and why may we not ſuppoſe that the *Philiſtines* uſed the ſame Policy in the Days of *Shamgar*? and that he and his Servants, in the Space of 20 Years, might kill 600 of them with this Inſtrument?

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

The Book of Ruth, *which takes its Title from the Perſon, whoſe Story is therein principally recorded, is properly an Appendix to the Book of* Judges, *and an Introduction to that of* Samuel, *and is therefore not only placed between them, but ſuppoſed to be wrote by one and the ſame Hand. Its Subject is very different from the reſt, and is therefore made a diſtinct Treatiſe. It is indeed of ſo private a Nature, that, at the Time of its being wrote, the Generality of People might have thought it not worth recording; but we* Chriſtians *may plainly ſee the Wiſdom of God in having it done. It had been foretold to the* Jews, *that the* Meſſiah *ſhould be of the Tribe of* Judah, *and it was afterwards revealed farther, that he ſhould be of the Family of* David: *And therefore it was neceſſary, for the full Underſtanding theſe Prophecies, that the Hiſtory of the Family of* David, *in that Tribe, ſhould be written before theſe Prophecies were revealed, that ſo there might not be the leaſt of any Fraud or Deſign: And thus this Book, theſe Prophecies, and the Accompliſhment of them, ſerve to illuſtrate and explain each other.*

Chap. I.

A Famine in Canaan. Elimelech *removes to* Moab, *with his Wiſe* Naomi, *and his two Sons, who marry* Orpah *and* Ruth *there. The two Sons die.* Naomi *returns to her own Country;* Orpah *goes back, but* Ruth *is conſtant to her Mother.* Naomi *and* Ruth *come to* Bethlehem.

Q. *IN what Period of Time was this Story of* Ruth *tranſacted?*

A. This is aſcertained in the firſt Clauſe of the firſt Verſe, *Now it came to paſs when the Judges ruled*; which is noted as the Cauſe of the following Famine, becauſe in much of that Time, the *Iſraelites* were guilty of great Defection from God. But under which of the Judges this happened, Scripture being ſilent, it ſeems preſumptuous to determine; nor is it neceſſary to know.

Q. *Why does* Naomi *diſſuade her two Daughters from going along with her, and not rather perſuade them to bear her Company, and to embrace the* Jewiſh *Religion?*

A. Her Reaſons for this were, 1. That poſſibly ſhe might think that ſuch Diſſuaſion was the beſt Argument ſhe could uſe to prevail on them to go with her; as it often happens, eſpecially in that Sex. 2. She would not raſhly and inconſiderately adviſe them to embrace the *Jewiſh* Religion, in hopes of ſome Advantage from it, which ſhe juſtly thought they would be diſappointed of; and withal expoſed to many Troubles and Difficulties, and on that Occaſion, revolt from the true Religion, which would be far worſe than never to have embraced it. And therefore ſhe juſtly, wiſely, and piouſly repreſents to them the naked Truth, and the outward Inconveniencies which would accompany the Change of their Place, and Religion; as alſo our bleſſed Saviour did, *Matth.* viii. 20.

Q. Orpah *being gone back to her People, and to her Gods,* Naomi *bids* Ruth *do ſo too: But did* Naomi *do well in bidding* Ruth *return to her Idolworſhip?*

A. Naomi bids *Ruth* return, partly to try her Sincerity and Conſtancy; and partly, that by upbraiding *Orpah* with her Idolatry, ſhe might conſequently turn *Ruth* from it; and partly, that ſhe might intimate to her, that if ſhe went with her, ſhe muſt embrace the true God, and the *Jewiſh* Religion.

Chap. II.

Boaz, *who was* Ruth's *late Husband's near Kinſman, takes Notice of her, as ſhe is gleaning in his Fields, and bleſſes her. She carries her Gleanings to her Mother, and tells her what had befallen her; ſhe returns God Thanks, and exhorts* Ruth *to continue in that Field.*

Q. PRAY *explain that Expreſſion*, v. 14. And dip thy Morſel in the Vinegar.

A. That is, either ſimple Vinegar, in which the poorer Sort uſed to dip their Bread, and ſo eat it in hot Countries, as they did not only in *Canaan*, but afterwards in *Italy*; it being very proper, eſpecially in thoſe Parts, for cooling them in thoſe hot Seaſons, for ſtrengthening their Sinews, *&c.* or Vinegar mixed with other Things to make ſome kind of Sauce of.

Q. Boaz *bid his Reapers to let* Ruth *glean among the Sheaves; but would it not have been a more generous Action, if he had given her as much Corn as ſhe could carry?*

A. His Reaſon for acting thus, no doubt, was, becauſe he would not have her eat the Bread of Idleneſs, but honeſtly to get it with the Sweat of her Brows, according to her Duty, and preſent Condition.

CHAP. III.

Ruth, *by* Naomi's *Advice, lieth at the Feet of* Boaz; *he commends her Action in ſo doing, and acknowledges the Right of a Kinſman; tells her there was a nearer Kinſman, to whom he would offer her, who refuſing, he would redeem her; he ſends her away with ſix Meaſures of Barley.*

Q. NAOMI, *in order to recommend* Ruth *to the Love and Affections of her Kinſman* Boaz, *bids her* anoint herſelf, and put on her Raiment, *that is, her beſt Cloaths: But what Occaſion was there for this, when the whole Buſineſs ſhe went upon, was to be tranſacted in the Night, and at an Hour when* Boaz *could not ſee her?*

A. This Buſineſs was, firſt begun in the Beginning of the Night, as ſoon as *Boaz* had ſupped and compoſed himſelf to Reſt; as appears from *v.* 4, 7. when there was ſo much Light left, as might diſcover her to him. *Secondly*, There being a ſolemn Feaſt this Evening, as is very probably thought, and the Maſter of the Feaſt having invited his labouring People to it, and *Ruth* among the reſt, it's likely, that both ſhe and the others put on their beſt Apparel on that Occaſion, as its cuſtomary even at this Day; and ſo he had Opportunity enough to ſee her.

Q. *But was* Naomi's *Direction, and* Ruth's *Compliance therewith, to* uncover the Feet of *Boaz*, and to lie down by him, *conſiſtent with the Rules of Modeſty?*

A. Though *Naomi* and *Ruth* ſeem to be virtuous and modeſt Women, and their Intent was lawful and honeſt, yet their ſeems to be a manifold Irregularity in the Manner of it. 1. It ſeems to be againſt that Modeſty which ſhould be eminent in that Sex, and in unmarried Perſons. 2. Againſt Honeſty, both becauſe it was an Injury to another Perſon, who was nearer a-kin, whoſe Right this was; which *Naomi* could not be ignorant of; and becauſe it was a prepoſterous and precipitant Method, not agreeable either to the Rules of Scripture, or the Uſage of well-manner'd Nations, or that Decency which even Nature requires. 3. Againſt Prudence; for it might have proved the Occaſion, as of many Sins, ſo of great Shame to all of them; and a Means to alienate his Affections from her, which ſhe ſought to engage. And though there be ſome Circumſtances which alleviate the Fact, as the Experience which *Naomi* had of the Wiſdom and Sobriety both of *Boaz* and *Ruth*, yet ſhe knew not what the Event would be; and that there was ſomething of Shamefulneſs in the Thing, may be gathered both from *Naomi*'s Choice of the Night for it, as if it were a Work of Darkneſs; and from *Boaz* his Fear leſt it ſhould be known, *v.* 14. And it is an Aggravation of it, that this Courſe was unneceſſary, and ſhe had a plain and likely Way, which was, directly to apply herſelf to *Boaz*, or the next Kinſman, and to require the Duty which by God's Law he was bound to perform, and this before Witneſſes, as *Boaz* did. And her clandeſtine Proceeding ſeems to have ariſen from a Diſtruſt of God's Providence, to bring about what ſhe deſired in the ordinary Way.

Q. Ruth *requeſts* Boaz, *v.* 9. *to* ſpread his Skirt over her; *how is this to be underſtood?*

A. That is, take me to be thy Wife, and perform the Duty of an Husband to me; in which Senſe this Phraſe is uſed, *Deut.* xxii. 30. and xxvii. 20. *Ezek.* xvi. 8. Either, 1. Becauſe the Wife is admitted into the ſame Bed with her Husband, and both are covered with one and the ſame Covering. Or, 2. From an ancient Ceremony of the Husband's throwing the Skirt of his Garment over her Head, in Token both of her Subjection, 1 *Cor.* xi. 5, 6, 10. and Appropriation to him, being hereby, as it were hid from the Eyes of others: See *Gen.* xx 16. and alſo of that Protection which he owes her.

CHAP. IV.

Boaz *goes to the Gate, calls his Kinſman, and asks him whether he would redeem and marry* Ruth. *His Denial.* Boaz, *in the Preſence of the People, buys the Inheritance, and marries* Ruth. *She bears* Obed, *the Grand-father of* David. *The Genealogy from* Pharez *to* David.

Q. WHY *does not* Boaz, *when he ſpeaks to his Kinſman, call him by his Name?*

A. No doubt but *Boaz* both knew his Name, called him by it, but it is omitted by the Holy Writer; partly, becauſe it was unneceſſary to know it, and principally in the way of Contempt, as is uſual, and as a juſt Puniſhment upon him, that he who would not preſerve his Brother's Name, might loſe his own, and lie buried in the Grave of perpetual Oblivion.

Q. *Why did* Boaz *take* ten *Men to be Witneſſes of what he was about to do, when three, one would think, were ſufficient?*

A. Although two or three Witneſſes, in ordinary Matters, were ſufficient, yet in weighty Concerns they uſed more. And ten was the uſual Number among the *Jews*, in Cauſes of Matrimony and Divorce, and Tranſlation of Inheritances; who were both Judges of the Cauſes, and Witneſſes of the Fact. 1 *Kings* i. 28.

Q. *What does the Kinſman mean by that Expreſſion in his Anſwer to* Boaz, leſt I mar mine own Inheritance?

A. Either, 1. Becauſe having no Children of his own, he might have one, and but one Son by *Ruth*, who, though he ſhould carry away his Inheritance, yet ſhould not bear his Name, but the Name of *Ruth*'s former Husband; and ſo by preſerving another Man's Name, he ſhould loſe his own. Or, 2. Becauſe as his Inheritance would be but very little increaſed by this Marriage, ſo it might be much diminiſhed by being divided amongſt his many Children

dren, which he poſſibly had already, and might probably have more by *Ruth*.

Q. *One Part of the Ceremony uſed in the Alienation of Inheritances, was,* A Man plucked off his Shoe, and gave it to his Neighbour: *Was there any peculiar Signification in this Ceremony?*

A. This was ſymbolical, and a ſignificant and convenient Ceremony; as if he ſaid, Take this Shoe, wherewith I uſed to go, and tread upon my Land, and in that Shoe do thou go and enter upon it, and take Poſſeſſion of it.

Q. *The Women congratulating* Naomi, *on the Birth of a Son, to her Daughter* Ruth, *ſay,* Bleſſed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this Day without a Kinſman; *whom are we to underſtand by Kinſman?*

A. Either, 1. The new-born Son. Or, rather, 2. *Boaz* himſelf. For the Name of *Goel*, which is tranſlated *Kinſman* or *Redeemer*, is never, that I know of, given to the Children born, but always to the Perſon begetting him of his Brother's or near Kinſman's Wife. And whereas it is objected, that there was no Cauſe for this Congratulation at this Time, in Reference to *Boaz*, becauſe that was done divers Months before. It may be replied, That the Memory of that generous Action was revived upon this Occaſion, and therefore is properly mentioned as the Foundation of the Child's Birth; and this happy Effect juſtly leads them to the Cauſe and Original of it, which was this, That *Boaz* had ſhewed himſelf to be a Kinſman or Redeemer, not only in Name and Title, as the other Kinſman was, *v. 6.* but in Truth and Reality. The Words may be rendered, *Which hath not made,* or *ſuffered thy Kinſman to fail thee*; that is, to neglect or refuſe the Performance of his Duty to thee and thine, as the other Kinſman did.

Q. *In the five laſt Verſes of this Chapter and Book, we have the Genealogy of* Pharez: *But how can this Genealogy be exact, ſince it ſhews, that four Perſons take up three hundred and eighty Years, which were between* Salmon *and* David, *and conſequently every one of them muſt beget a Son when he was very old?*

A. It's anſwered, 1. That it's not certain, that each of theſe was the immediate Parent of him who is ſaid to beget: For ſometimes Grandfathers are ſaid in Scripture to beget their Grandchildren, namely, by the Intervention of their immediate Sons; whereof there are ſeveral Inſtances. And ſometimes in Genealogies, whole Generations are omitted, as may appear by *Ezra* vii. 2. compared with 1 *Ch*[illegible] vi. 3. and by *Matth.* i. 8. which might be do[illegible]re for divers Reaſons now unknown. 2. There [illegible] many Examples, even in prophane Writers, both ancient and modern, of Perſons that have not only lived 120, and 130 Years and upwards, but have been vigorous, and have begotten Children at above 100 Years; and of Women that have conceived and borne Children at the Age of 50, 60, yea, 70 Years. And therefore if it were ſo in theſe more ancient Times, when Men were longer lived, and under the Law, when long Life was expreſly promiſed to the obedient, and in Perſons of ſtrong Conſtitutions, and ſober Converſations, ſuch as ſome of theſe moſt certainly were, and the others may juſtly be preſumed to be, it is not ſtrange, nor the leaſt incredible.

Q. *Does not* Joſephus, *in relating this Paſſage, vary in ſome Particulars from the ſacred Story?*

A. Joſephus relates the Matter as follows: When *Ruth* had acquainted her Mother-in-law with what had paſſed between *Boaz* and her, they both began to take Heart, not doubting now, but that *Boaz* would extend his Care over them. And indeed *Boaz*, about the middle of the Day went into the City, and aſſembled the Elders; when ſending for *Ruth* and the Kinſman, he ſaid unto this laſt; Art not thou in Poſſeſſion of the Inheritance which appertained to *Elimelech* and his Sons? To which he anſwered, Yes, I am. Adding that what he did was according to the Direction of the Laws. *Boaz* replied, that it was incumbent upon him to obſerve the Law, not by Halves, but in every Thing thereby enjoined. A Woman, ſaid he, the Relict of *Mahlon*, is come hither, whom, according to the laws, thou oughteſt to marry, if thou deſigneſt to retain that which was his. But the Man reſigned the Eſtate together with the Woman to *Boaz*, as being a near Relation of the deceaſed, he having a Wife and Children of his own. *Boaz* hereupon having made the Elders bear Witneſs of what had paſſed, commanded *Ruth* to go to the Man, and unlooſe his Shoe, and then ſpit in his Face. When this was done, *Boaz* took *Ruth* to Wife, and after the Expiration of one Year a Son was born to him, whom *Naomi* nurſed, being by her called by the Name of *Obed*, thereby ſignifying her Expectation of his becoming a Nouriſher of her old Age, the Word *Obed* in the *Hebrew* Language implying a *Servant*. Of *Obed* was begotten *Jeſſe*, and of him *David*, who was afterwards King: In his Line the Government deſcending to the one and twentieth Generation.

THE

THE FIRST BOOK
OF
SAMUEL,
Otherwiſe called the
FIRST BOOK
OF
THE KINGS.

In theſe two Books of Samuel *is continued the Series of the Hiſtory of God's People, and why and in what Manner the Government of the* Judges *was changed into that of Monarchy. The Sum of this Hiſtory is, that* Eli, *both Judge and High-prieſt, after he had long ruled the People, towards the latter End of his Life, yielded himſelf up to a blameable Indulgency towards his Children, who, abuſing their Father's Authority, gave themſelves a Looſe to divers Exceſſes, Impieties, and Violences, to the Scandal and Offence of the People, and the great Detriment of divine Worſhip. For the puniſhing of which Offences, God ſuffered the* Philiſtines *to prevail againſt* Iſrael, *the Children of* Eli *to be ſlain, the Ark taken, and* Eli *himſelf to die an untimely Death. Notwithſtanding which, God defended his Glory, and ſeverely puniſhed the* Philiſtines *for their Contempt of him, raiſing up a new Deliverer to his People in the Perſon of* Samuel, *who being miraculouſly born, and conſecrated to God for a perpetual* Nazarite, *was from a Child, by frequent Revelations from God, prepared for the Office of a publick Prophet; which was at length openly conferred upon him, by Virtue of which he reformed the People's Morals, and purged the publick Worſhip from all Idolatries and Corruptions, humbled the* Philiſtines, *and ſettled the People in Peace and Liberty. But in his old Age, having appointed his Sons to be his Succeſſors, and they degenerating from their Fathers Righteouſneſs, the People took Occaſion to aſk for a King, preventing by their raſh and importunate Demand, the Time preſcribed by God for eſtabliſhing the ſacred Kingdom, which he had promiſed them before. By God's Conſent* Saul *was choſen, who at firſt did many worthy Actions, and obtained many great Victories. But on a certain Occaſion, his Obedience being put to the Proof, he diſcovered his rebellious Temper. Upon this,* Saul *was rejected, and* David *conſecrated King, and was called to* Saul's *Court, to relieve him in his frantick Ravings by the Means of his Muſick.* David *by his Bravery and faultleſs Conduct, incurred* Saul's *Diſpleaſure and the People's Love, and was a long Time perſecuted by the implacable Malice of that cruel Prince.*

It's not certainly known who was the Penman of this Book, or whether written by one or more Hands; the Knowledge of which, in theſe hiſtorical Books, is the leſs material, ſince they contain but little that concerns the Foundation of Faith and good Morals. It may ſuffice, that in thoſe Times there were divers Prophets and Holy Men of God, as Samuel, Nathan, Gad, *and* David, *who might each of them write ſome Part of this and the following Book. The Generality of the* Jews *do with great Probability aſſert, that the twenty four firſt Chapters were written by* Samuel *himſelf, and the reſt by the Prophets* Nathan *and* Gad; *which Aſſertion they found on this Paſſage in* 1 Chron. xxix. 29. Now the Acts of *David* the King, firſt and laſt, behold they are written in the Book of *Samuel* the Seer, and in the Book of *Nathan* the Prophet, and in the Book of *Gad* the Seer.

CHAP. I.

Elkanah, *a* Levite, *having two Wives, goes yearly with them to* Shiloh, *to worſhip.* Hannah, *tho' barren, is beſt beloved, and is upbraided by* Peninnah. Hannah *prays for a Child.* Eli, *thinking her drunk, rebukes her; but on her Anſwer, bleſſes her.* Hannah *returns home, and bears* Samuel, *whom ſhe carries to* Shiloh, *and devotes to the Lord.*

Q. Elkanah *is ſaid to be a Man of* Ramathaim-Zophim, *or* Ramah; *were there not ſeveral Places of this Name, and what does the Word import?*

A. Ramah ſignifies an Eminence, or high Situation, and is therefore an Appellation given to ſeveral Places, that are built in this Manner. This is ſaid to have ſtood upon Mount *Ephraim*, thereby to diſtinguiſh it from other Towns, in different Tribes, of the ſame Denomination; and the Reaſon why it is here called *Ramathaim*, in the *Dual* Number, is, as ſome imagine, becauſe it was built upon two Hills, which made it appear as a double City; and the Title of *Zophim* is added to it, becauſe it, being ſituate on a high Place, had a Watch-Tower built in it. It ſtood upon the Road that went from *Samaria* to *Jeruſalem*; and, for this Reaſon, as well as its advantageous Situation, *Baaſha*, King of *Iſrael*, cauſed it to be fortified, that there might be no Paſſage out of the Land of *Judah* into that of *Iſrael*, (2 *Chr.* vi. 1.) but in St. *Jerom*'s Days it was no more than a ſmall Village. Here it was that *Samuel* paſſed a great Part of his Time; for his Mother's Dedication of him to the Service of God did not confine him to *Shiloh*, after that God had called him out to a publick Employ, and appointed him his Reſidence in a Place more convenient for the Execution of it.

Q. *When* Elkanah *went to* Shiloh *to worſhip, he uſually took his two Wives with him; did the Law require the Womens Attendance there?*

A. The Precept is exactly thus, *Three Times in the Year all thy Males ſhall appear before the Lord thy God*, Exod. xxiii. 17. which were at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, the Pentecoſt, and that of the Tabernacles, but Women were exempted from this Attendance, and therefore it was an extraordinary Act of Piety for *Elkanah* to take his two Wives with him.

Q. *When* Elkanah *had offered his Sacrifice, he diſtributed Portions thereof among his Wives and Children; pray what was the Law in this Reſpect?*

A. The Blood of this Peace-Offering was ſhed at the Foot of the Altar, the Fat was burnt, the Breaſt and right Shoulder was the Prieſt's *Perquiſite*, and all the reſt belonged to the Perſon who brought the Victim. With this he made a *Feaſt of Charity*, to which he called his Friends and Relations; and, in ſeveral Places of Scripture, God reminds him to invite the *Levite*, the Poor, the Fatherleſs, and the Widow.

Q. *Why was* Hannah *ſo exceedingly grieved at her being upbraided with Barrenneſs?*

A. Sterility was looked upon among the *Jews* as one of the greateſt Misfortunes that could befal any Woman; inſomuch that to have a Child, tho' the Mother immediately died thereupon, was accounted a leſs Affliction, than to have none at all. And to this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that the Midwife comforts *Rachel* in her Labour, even tho' ſhe knew her to lie at the Point of Death, in theſe Terms, *Fear not, for thou ſhalt have this Son alſo*, Gen. xxxv. 17.

Q. Hannah *would not carry her Son to* Shiloh *till he was* weaned; *how long might that be from his Birth?*

A. By *weaning* underſtand, not only from the Breaſt and the Milk, which was done within two or three Years at moſt; but alſo from the Mother's Knee and Care, and from childiſh Food; till the Child was a little grown up, and fit to do ſome Buſineſs in the Tabernacle: For, it ſeems, as ſoon as he was brought thither, he worſhipp'd God, v. 28. and preſently after miniſter'd to *Eli*. Chap. ii. 11. And this may farther appear from the very Nature of the Vow, which muſt deſign a Service, and an Advantage to the Tabernacle, and not a Burden and Incumbrance, as it would have been if a young Child had been brought up to it, and left upon it.

CHAP. II.

Hannah's *Song.* Samuel *miniſters before the Lord.* Eli's *Sons wicked.* Hannah *bears more Children.* Eli *too mildly reproves his Sons. A Prophet foretels the Deſtruction of* Eli's *Houſe.*

Q. HOW *came* Samuel *to be girded with a* Linnen Ephod, *which, I apprehend, was a Habit peculiar to the High Prieſt?*

A. The *Ephod*, which the High Prieſt wore, (as we have deſcribed it elſewhere) was a very rich Habit indeed, *Exod* xxviii. 6. but there were other Kinds of Ephods, which not only Prieſts and *Levites*, but even Laymen, upon ſome Occaſions, wore, as we find in the Inſtance of *David*, 2 Sam. vi. 24. which was not a *ſacred*, but an *honburary* Garment, (as we call it) and ſuch as the High Prieſt might order *Samuel* to wear, to diſtinguiſh him from ſome other inferior Officers belonging to the Tabernacle.

Q. *Who was that* Man of God, *who foretold ſuch heavy Misfortunes to befal the Family of* Eli?

A. Who this Prophet was, Commentators are at a Loſs to know. Some imagine, that it was *Phineas*, the Son of *Eleazor*; but *Phineas* very probably was dead long before this Time. Others therefore will needs have it to have been *Elkanah*, *Samuel*'s Father; and ſome *Samuel* himſelf: But we no where read, that the Father was endued with the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Son was certainly then too young, and unacquainted with the Voice of God. The ſafeſt way therefore is, to own our Ignorance of what the ſacred Hiſtorian hath not thought proper to diſcover to us.

Q. *God, by this Prophet, threatens* Eli *to remove the Prieſthood from his Family to another: Of what Family was he, and to what other was it afterwards removed?*

A. The High Prieſthood was originally ſettled upon *Eleazor*, the Son of *Aaron*, by a divine Decree; but that Decree being conditional only, 'tis reaſonable to preſume, that there was ſome great Offence or other in *Eleazar*'s Family, (tho' not recorded in Scripture) which provoked God to remove it into the Family of *Ithamar*, who was *Aaron*'s youngeſt Son, and from whom *Eli* deſcended; and, here, for the abominable Practices of his Sons, which he was too negligent to reſtrain, God threatens to tranſlate the Prieſthood back again, from the Family of *Ithamar*, to that of *Eleazar*; which accordingly happened in the Reign of King *Solomon*, who depoſed *Abiather*, the laſt of *Eli*'s Line, from the Pontificate, and ſet up *Zadock* in his Stead.

Q. *We read*, v. 30. Wherefore the Lord God of *Iſrael* ſaith, I ſaid indeed, that thy Houſe, and the Houſe of thy Father ſhould walk before me for ever; *where, or when did God ſay this?*

A. God might ſay this, when he made that Promiſe for the Perpetuation of the Prieſthood in *Aaron*'s Family, *Exod*. xxviii. xl, and 29, 9.

Q. *But if* Eli *and all his Family had been cut off, yet that Promiſe had been made good in* Eleazor's *Family: How then was that Promiſe recall'd by this Sentence againſt* Eli?

A. It was recalled and made void, tho' not abſolutely and univerſally to all *Aaron*'s Family; yet reſpectively to *Eli* and his Family, which were wholly excluded from the Benefit of it, wherein otherwiſe they ſhould have ſhared. Even as God's keeping of the *Iſraelites* out of *Canaan*, and in the Wilderneſs for forty Years, and deſtroying them there, is call'd his *Breach of Promiſe*, *Numb.* xv. 34. altho' the Promiſe of *Canaan* was not ſimply made void to all the *Iſraelites*, but only to that evil Generation of them: Or, as God's *Covenant* with *David*, and with his Seed, of which God ſaith, that it ſhould *ſtand faſt*, *Pſ.* lxxxix. 28. and that he would *not break* nor *alter it*, v. 34. yet is ſaid to be *made void*, v. 39. namely, in regard of ſome particular Branches, or Members of that Family.

But farther, God might have ſaid this to *Eli* himſelf, or to his Father, when the Prieſthood was tranſlated from *Eleazar*'s to *Ithamar's* Family, for ſome Cauſe not mentioned in Scripture; but, probably for ſome great Miſcarriage of ſome of them.

If it be ſaid, there is no ſuch Promiſe recorded in Scripture; it's anſwered, that there are many Sayings and Doings noted in Holy Scripture, which were not ſpoken of in their proper Times and Places, as *Gen.* xxiv. 51. and 42. 21. *Hoſ.* xii. 4. *Luke* xi. 49. *Acts* xx. 24. So the Senſe of the Place may be this, that Promiſe and Privilege of the Perpetuation of the Prieſthood in *Phinehas* and his Family, made to them *Numb.* xxv. 12. namely, upon Condition of his and their Faithfulneſs in their Office, which is plainly underſtood, I now take away from that Family for their Wickedneſs, and I transfer it to thee and thine, and will fix it there upon the ſame Condition.

Q. *In the laſt Verſe of this Chapter is repreſented the diſtreſſed Condition that the Poſterity of* Eli *ſhould be reduced to: But how could they be reduced to ſo great Streights, ſince, tho' they loſt the High Prieſthood, they ſtill were inferior Prieſts, and had a Right to thoſe plentiful Proviſions which belonged to that Order?*

A. To this it's anſwer'd, 1. They might be degraded not only from the Office of High Prieſt, but alſo from that of inferior Prieſts; and conſequently might forfeit and loſe all the Privileges belonging to their Office. 2. This might be from the Tyranny and Violence of ſome of the ſucceeding Prieſts of *Eleazar*'s Line, towards that other Line which had long ſtood in Competition with them, and had for a Seaſon got away the Prieſthood from them; for this Text relates only to the Matter of Fact.

CHAP. III.

The Lord calls Samuel *three Times, who thinks it's* Eli's *Voice; but being inſtructed by* Eli, *at the fourth Call he anſwers, and God acquaints him with the Deſtruction of* Eli's *Houſe.* Samuel, *in the Morning, informs* Eli *of what had paſſed;* Eli's *Submiſſion.* Samuel *generally acknowledged for a Prophet.*

Q. IN *the firſt Verſe, it's ſaid, that* the Word of the Lord was precious in thoſe Days; there was no open Viſion: *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. Whatever Revelations God might impart to ſome pious Perſons privately, there was at this Time none publickly acknowledged for a Prophet, unto whom the People might reſort to know the Mind of God; nay, ſo little acquainted were theſe Ages with the prophetick Spirit, that we read of no more than two Prophets, *Ch.* vi. 4. and vi. 8. in all the Days of the Judges.

Q. *Why was* Samuel *afraid to tell* Eli *his Viſion,* v. 15?

A. Partly from the Reverence and Reſpect he had to his Perſon, to whom he was loth to be a Meſſenger of ſuch ſad Tidings; partly, leſt if he had been haſty to utter it, *Eli* might think him guilty of Arrogance, or taking ſecret a Pleaſure in his Calamity, which was likely to tend to *Samuel's* Advancement. And not being commanded by God to acquaint *Eli* with it, he prudently ſuſpended the Publication of it till a fit Occaſion offered, which he might reaſonably expect in a very little Time, knowing that *Eli* would be eager to know the Matter of that Revelation, the Preface whereof he was already acquainted with; and that it would be leſs offenſive, and therefore more uſeful to *Eli*, when he ſaw that *Samuel* was not puffed up with it, nor forward to vent it, until *Eli* forced it from him.

CHAP. IV.

Iſrael *ſmitten by the* Philiſtines *at* Eben-ezer. *They carry the Ark into the Camp; at the News whereof the* Philiſtines *are terrified; but take Courage, and beat the* Iſraelites *a ſecond Time.* Eli's *two Sons are ſlain, and the Ark taken; which* Eli *bearing, falls backward and breaks his Neck; his Daughter-in-law falls in Labour; names her Son* Ichabod, *and dies.*

Q. WHERE *was* Eben-ezer, *and why was it ſo called?*

A. This Place is here mentioned prophetically, for it had not this Name till about twenty Years after, 1 *Sam.* i. 12. when *Samuel* fought with the *Philiſtines*, and gave them a total Overthrow, and ſet up a Monument of his Victory (for the proper Name ſignifies *the Stone of Help*) in the Field of Battle, which lay on the North Border of *Judah*, not far from *Mizpeh*; and *Aphek*, where the *Philiſtines* encamped, muſt not be far diſtant from it.

Q. *Were not the* Iſraelites *highly to blame in ſending for the* Ark *into the Camp?*

A. We read here, that upon a Defeat which the *Iſraelites* had received from the *Philiſtines*, the Elders of *Iſrael* adviſed together in Council, what might be the Occaſion of their ill Succeſs; *Wherefore*, ſay they, *hath God ſmitten us to Day before the* Philiſtines? The Juſtneſs of their Cauſe, they thought, was enough to entitle them to God's Favour, how wicked ſoever they were in their Lives; and therefore, without any Thoughts of amending theſe, they thought of another Expedient, that would not fail of ſecuring them Victory; *Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord*, ſay they, *out of* Shiloh, *that, when it comes among us, it may ſave us out of the Hand of our Enemies.* They had good Reaſon to look upon the Ark of the Covenant as a certain Token of the Preſence of God among them, and of his Protection over them. They had had frequent Experience of Battles won by Virtue of its Preſence, and loſt in the Abſence of it; and, whenever they had this Token of the divine Aſſiſtance along with them, they always eſteemed themſelves invincible. They remembered the Story of the Walls of *Jericho* falling down by the Power of this Ark's ſeven Times ſurrounding them. They had heard of the Defeat which their Fore-fathers had ſuffered, when they preſumed to march againſt the *Canaanites* without their Leader, and without this Ark; and were fond enough to imagine, that God himſelf might be look'd upon as overcome, if the *Philiſtines* ſhould have the Advantage, when the Ark of his Preſence was with them. By this Means, therefore, they thought to intereſt his Honour in the War, and make him reſponſible (as it were) for any Diſaſter that ſhould befal them, and upon theſe Motives it was, that they ſent for the Ark.

Q. *But why did God ſuffer the Ark to be taken by the* Philiſtines?

A. Becauſe they preſumed to ſend for it, without ever conſulting God, as they uſed to do upon all momentous Affairs; becauſe the Iniquities of the People were become ſo enormous, as not to deſerve any longer the divine Preſence among them; and becauſe the Flagitiouſneſs of the Prieſts (who were kill'd in defending the Ark) had, for a long Time, called for ſome Judgment upon them; that therefore his Predictions, concerning the Sons of *Eli*, might be fulfilled, he permitted the Ark to be taken, as thinking it more inconſiſtent with his Honour, to afford Aſſiſtance to the Wicked and Preſumptuous, than to admit of the Profanation even of the moſt ſacred Things. What an Affliction the Loſs of this Ark was to the People of *Iſrael*, we may learn from the ſad Fate of *Eli*, and his Daughter-in-law, who both died for Grief at the bare Hearing of it; and therefore we may ſuppoſe, that a farther Reaſon for God's permitting it might be, to bring his own People to a Senſe of their Apoſtacy and Ingratitude to him, when they came to conſider, what a Damage they ſuffered in the *Departure* of this Symbol of his Preſence, which was deſervedly eſteemed *the Glory of* Iſrael.

What Afflictions the taking or with-holding the Ark, brought upon the *Philiſtines*, the Fall of their God *Dagon*, the Mice, the Emerods, the Peſtilence, and other ſore Judgments, do abundantly teſtify; and therefore we may ſuppoſe yet farther, that God's Deſign in permitting this *Capture* of the Ark, was to demonſtrate his Power among the *Heathens*, and to let the *Philiſtines* know that his Dominion reached every where; that he was equally the Lord both of the Conquerors, and Conquer'd; and that the pretended Deities, whom they adored, in Compariſon of him, were of no Avail.

'Twas from an Intent, therefore, to illuſtrate his Almighty Power, and not from any Inability to preſerve it, that God ſuffered this Ark of the Convenant to be taken; and tho' what the *Jews* call the *Schechinah*, or viſible Token of God's Preſence, which abode under the two Cherubims, upon the *Propitiatory*, or Covering of the Ark, in the Shape of the Cloud, might not be ſo apparent, after it fell into the Hands of the *Philiſtines*; yet, that it had a divine and miraculous Power attending it, is evident by their own Confeſſion; who, upon ſeeing the Deſtruction that its Preſence had occaſioned, do frankly declare, that *the Ark of the God of* Iſrael *ſhould not abide with them, becauſe his Hand was ſore upon them, and upon* Dagon *their God.*

Q. *Who was that* Benjamite *who brought* Eli *the ſad News of* Iſrael's *Overthrow; and what is there remarkable in the Account he gives of the fatal Iſſue of the Battle?*

A. Who this *Benjamite* was, that brought the ill News to *Shiloh* of the Loſs of the Battle, the Hiſtory is ſilent, and the Conjecture of ſome *Jews*, that it probably was *Saul*, is very uncertain and precarious: But there is ſomething very remarkable in the Account, which he gives of the Action. The Words are theſe,—— *And* Eli *ſaid to the* Benjamite, *What is there done in the Battle, my Son? And the Meſſenger anſwered and ſaid,* Iſrael *is fled before the* Philiſtines, *and there hath been alſo a great Slaughter among the People, and thy two Sons,* Hophni *and* Phineas, *are dead; and the Ark of God is taken,* Chap. iv. 16, 17. Madam *Dacier* highly commends the Manner, wherein the ſacred Hiſtorian makes this Meſſenger ſpeak, and compares theſe Words, Hophni *and* Phineas *are dead, and the Ark of the Lord is taken,* with thoſe of *Antilochus* to *Achilles*, when he tells him the ſad News of the Death of *Patroclus*, and what happen'd thereupon. She quotes the Gloſſary which *Euſtathius* has upon this Paſſage in *Homer*; *This Speech of* Antilochus (ſays that excellent Critick) *affords us a Pattern, with what Brevity ſuch melancholy News ſhould be related: for, in two Verſes, it compriſes every thing that happened, the death of* Patroclus, *the Perſon who ſlew him, the Encounter about his Body, and his Arms in the Poſſeſſion of his Enemy. Nothing is more ridiculous, than to hear a Meſſenger, when he is to report ſome very bad News, running into tedious Circumſtances, and pathetick Expreſſions. All he talks is not minded; for he, to whom he addreſſes himſelf, cannot attend to what he ſays; the firſt word, that acquaints him with his Misfortune, makes him deaf to every Thing elſe.*

Q. *It is ſaid,* Verſe 18. *that* Eli *had judged* Iſrael *forty Years: Has not this been diſputed?*

A. The *Septuagint*, and ſome ancient Manuſcripts, make the Term of *Eli*'s Magiſtracy to be no more than twenty Years, and, to reconcile this with the *Hebrew* Text, ſome ſuppoſe, either that he had *Sampſon* joined in the Government with him, for the firſt twenty Years of his Adminiſtration, or his Sons, for the laſt; but there is no Reaſon for the Solution of a Difficulty, which ariſes from nothing elſe, but a Fault in the Text of the *Septuagint*.

CHAP. V.

The Philiſtines *place the Ark in the Houſe of* Dagon; *that Idol falls down. The People of* Aſhdod *ſmitten with Emerods; they ſend the Ark to* Gath; *which is puniſhed in the ſame Manner; the Ark being carried to* Ekron, *it is from thence ſent into the Land of* Iſrael.

Q. WHY *where not the* Philiſtines, *who touched the Ark, immediately killed, as* Uzzah *was afterwards?* 2 Sam. vi. 7.

A. Firſt, becauſe the Sin of the *Philiſtines* was not ſo great, becauſe the Law, forbidding this, was not given, or at leaſt was not known to them; whereas *Uzzah*'s Fact was a Tranſgreſſion, and that of a known Law. Secondly, becauſe God deſigned to reſerve the *Philiſtines* for a more publick and ſhameful Puniſhment, which had been prevented by this.

Q. *The* Philiſtines, *having got Poſſeſſion of the Ark, carried it in Triumph to* Aſhdod: *Did they do this in Compliance with any particular Cuſtom?*

A. It was a Cuſtom among the *Heathens*, to carry in Triumph the Images of the Gods of ſuch Nations, as they had vanquiſhed. *Iſaiah* propheſies of *Cyrus*, that, in this Manner, he would treat the Gods of *Babylon*:——Bel *boweth down,* Nebo *ſtoopeth; their Idols were upon the Beaſts, and upon the Cattel,—— and themſelves are gone into Captivity,* Iſa. xlvi. 1, 2. *Daniel* foretels of *Ptolomy Evergetes*, that he would *carry captive into* Egypt *the Gods of the* Syrians *with their Princes,* Dan. xi. 1. And the like Predictions are to be met with in *Jeremiah*, Ch. xlviii. 7. and in *Amos* i. 15. We need leſs wonder therefore, that we find *Plutarch*, in the Life of *Marcellus*, telling us, that he took away, out of the Tempels of *Syracuſe*, the moſt beautiful Pictures and Statues of their

Gods, and that, afterwards, it became a Reproach to *Marcellus*, and raiſed the Indignation of other Nations againſt *Rome*, "That he carried along with "him, not *Men* only, but the very *Gods*, captive, "and in Triumph."

Q. *Pray, give me ſome Account of the Original of the* Philiſtines, *the Extent of their Country, and how ſituated?*

A. The *Philiſtines* were Deſcendants from *Mizraim*, the Father of the *Egyptians*, and ſo, in all Probability, having their firſt Settlement in *Egypt*, or the Parts adjoining, lay to the South-weſt of the Land of *Canaan*. In Proceſs of Time however, they made Inroads upon *Canaan*, and, in *Abraham's* Days, had got Poſſeſſion of a good Part of the Territories which lay along the *weſtern Coaſts* of the *Mediterranean-ſea*. This Tract of Ground was divided into five Principalities, or little Kingdoms, *viz.* *Gaza*, *Askelon*, *Aſhdod*, *Gath*, and *Ekron*; which, for the better Underſtanding of ſome Particulars related to the Ark, during its Stay in this Country, it will not be improper to deſcribe all together. The City of *Gaza*, (from which the Territory took its Name) ſtood, as it were, on the very *South-weſt* Angle, or Corner of the Land of *Canaan*, but of this Place we have ſpoken before. To the *North* of *Gaza* lay next the City *Askelon*, called by the *Greeks*, *Aſcalon*, and of great Note among the *Gentiles*, for a Temple dedicated to *Dirceto*, the Mother of *Semiramis*, who was here worſhipped in the Form of a *Mermaid*. To the *North* of *Aſcalon* lay *Aſhdod*, called by the *Greeks*, *Azotus*, and famous for the Temple of the God *Dagon*, whereof we have taken Notice before. Still more to the *North* lay *Gath*, memorable for being the Birth-place of the Giant *Goliath*, whom *David* ſlew, and of ſeveral others of the ſame gigantick Race. It was diſmantled by *David*, but afterwards rebuilt by *Rehoboam*, his Grandſon; was again diſmantled by *Ozias*, King of *Judah*, and finally laid waſte by *Hazael*, King of *Syria*: However, it recovered itſelf, and retained its old Name, in the Days of *Euſebius*, and St. *Jerom*, who place it about four Miles from *Eleutheropolis*, in the way to *Lidda*. The moſt *Northern* of theſe Cities, ſtill upon the Coaſt of the *Mediterranean-ſea*, was *Ekron*, called by the *Greeks*, *Accaron*, a Place of great Wealth and Power, and famous for the idolatrous Worſhip of *Beelzebub*, i. e. *the Lord of Flies*, who had here a celebrated Temple and Oracle, unto which *Ahaſiah*, King of *Iſrael*, having contracted much Hurt, by a Fall from the *Terras* of his Houſe, ſent Meſſengers to enquire, whether he ſhould recover of his Wounds or no?

Q. *When the* Philiſtines *ſaw* Dagon *fallen down before the Ark, they muſt ſurely have an ill Opinion of their* Idol?

A. It is indeed ſomewhat ſtrange, that when the *Philiſtines* ſaw their *Dagon* caſt down before the Ark of God, with his Head and Hands broken off, they ſhould not thence infer, that he was no more than a vain Idol: But inſtead of that, we find them honouring the very Threſhold, whereby he received theſe *Maims*, as if they had been conſecrated, or ſome Divinity infuſed into them, from the mere Touch of this Idol. This is a ſore Inſtance of Blindneſs and Infatuation; but it is no more than what other heathen Nations fell into. For, whether the Cuſtom took its firſt Riſe from this Practice of the *Philiſtines*, or no, 'tis certain, that among the *Romans* the Threſhold was conſecrated to the Goddeſs *Veſta*, and thoſe which belonged to Temples, were always held in the higheſt Veneration, as appears from *Juveual*. Nay, at this very Day, there are ſome *Moſques* in *Perſia*, whoſe Threſholds are covered over with Plates of Silver, and which the People are not allowed to tread on; for that is a Crime, which cannot be expiated without undergoing very ſevere Pains and Penalties.

Q. *What do you conceive was the Nature of the Diſtemper here called* Emerods?

A. The Word *Apholim*, which only occurs here, and in the 28th Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, is, by different Interpreters, ſuppoſed to ſignify different Things. Some take it for a *Diſſentery*; others, for what they call *Procidentia Ani*; ſome for a *Cancer*, and others for ſomething *Venereal* in that Part. The Scripture tells us expreſly, that *God ſmote his Enemies in the hinder Parts*, Pſal. lxxviii. 67. And therefore our Tranſlation is not amiſs, which ſuppoſes their Malady to have been ſuch painful tumours in the Fundament, as very frequently turn into *Ulcers*.

CHAP. VI.

The Philiſtines *conſult their Prieſt, in what Manner to return the Ark. They ſend it away on a new Cart, and with a Treſpaſs Offering; the Kine that draw it, make directly for* Bethſhemeſh. *The* Bethſhemites *rejoice; the* Levites *offer Sacrifice; the People are ſmitten.*

Q. W*AS not the Notion of the* Philiſtines *a little whimſical, in thinking to appeaſe the Almighty, by putting into the Ark the Images of the Parts which had been afflicted?*

A. It was a prevailing Opinion among the *Heathens*, that the only way to appeaſe their Gods, when offended at them, was to offer them Preſents; and therefore, no Wonder that the *Philiſtine* Prieſts hit upon this Thought: And why they ſent, along with the Ark, the Images of the Parts, which were afflicted with this ſore Diſeaſe, might proceed from a common Cuſtom likewiſe among the *Heathens*, of conſecrating to their Gods ſuch Monuments of their Deliverance as repreſented the Evils, from whence they had eſcaped, or the Members which had been diſordered. Thus the People of *Athens*, having been afflicted with a ſhameful Diſeaſe, for not receiving the Myſteries of *Bacchus* with a proper Reverence, and conſulting the Oracle, what they were to do, in order to have it removed, were directed to make Figures of the Part affected, and preſent them to the God which gave them the Counſel: And, accordingly, the *Philiſtines*, hoping ſhortly to be delivered from theſe *Emerods* and *Mice*, wherewith they were ſorely infeſted, took the ſame Method to get quit of them: Nor is the Practice ceaſed among the *Indians*, when any Pilgrim goes to a Pagod, for the Cure of any Diſeaſe, for him to bring the Figure of the Member afflicted, either in Gold, Silver, or Copper, according to his Quality, and to offer it to the Idol in a moſt ſubmiſſive Manner.

Q. *But what think you of their Policy, in ſending away the* Ark *drawn by two* Milch Kine?

A. It was no bad Policy in the *Philiſtines* to take milch Kine, that had never been yoked before, to draw the Cart, in order to know, whether there was the Hand of God in what had befallen them. As theſe Creatures were unacquainted with the Yoke, it would be a Wonder if they ſhould go jointly together, and not thwart, or draw counter to each other; it would be a Wonder if their natural Affection would not incline them to return to their Calves, which were

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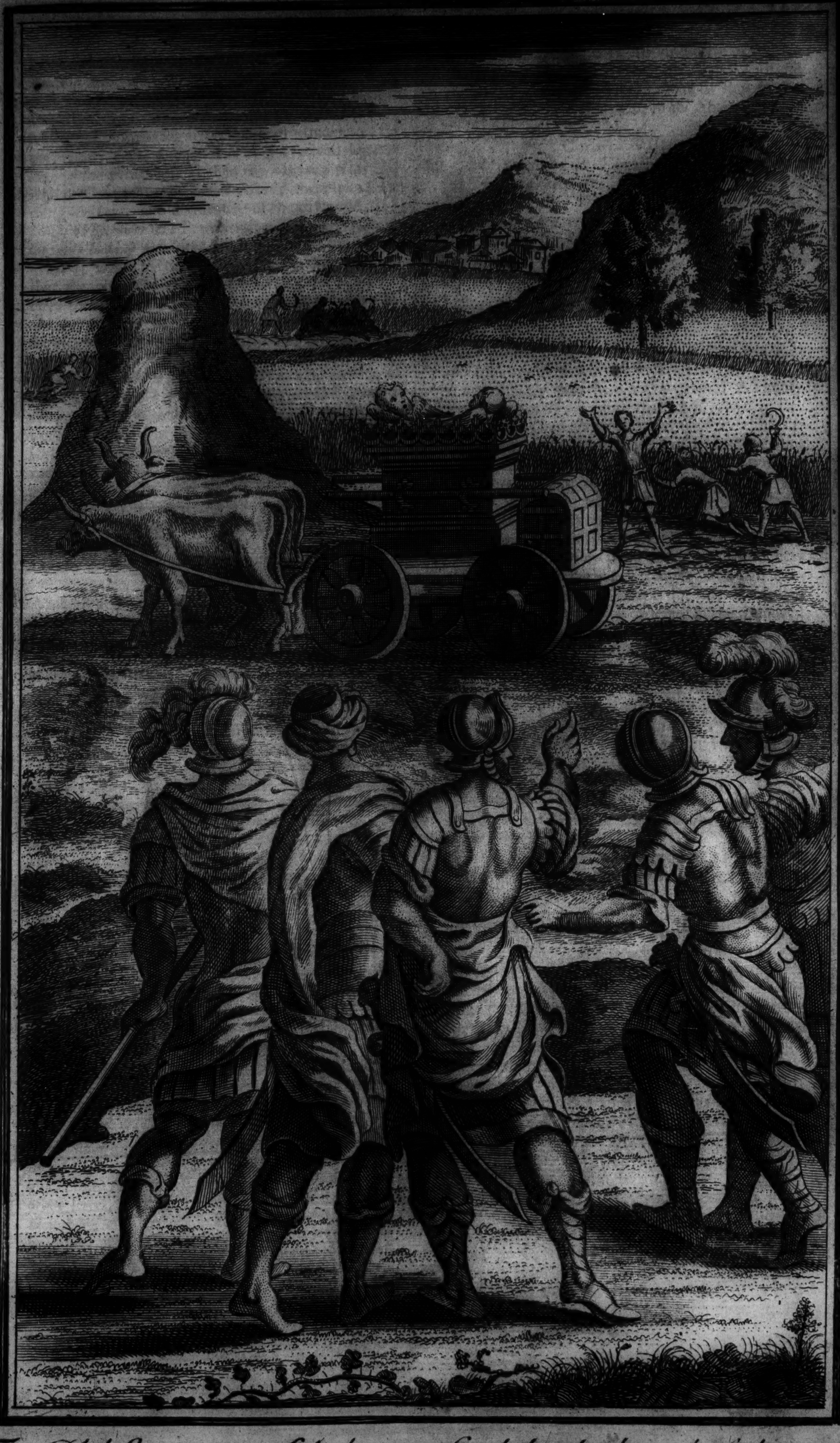
I. SAMUEL CHAP. VI.



The Philiſtines counſel how to ſend back the ark of the LOR

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left behind; and it would be ſtill a greater Wonder, if when there were ſo many different Ways to take, they ſhould go directly forward to *Judea*, without any Manner of Deviation. And therefore it was a Matter of no ſmall Sagacity, for them to make this Experiment; beſides, that it was a received Opinion among the Heathens, that in the Motions of an Heifer, or Cow that was never yoked, there was ſomething *ominous*, and declarative of the divine Will.

Q. *Why were the* Bethſhemites *ſo ſeverely puniſhed for only looking into the Ark?*

A. It was a particular Prohibition, *Num.* iv. 20. that not only the common People, but even the *Levites* themſelves ſhould not dare to look into the Ark, or any other of the holy Utenſils belonging to the Service of God, upon Pain of Death; and the Severity of this Law will not ſeem ſo unreaſonable, when it is conſidered, that, in every Nation, it was always accounted a great Profaneneſs, and frequently attended with exemplary Puniſhments, for ſuch as were not initiated, to obtrude into the Myſteries of Religion; and that, if the *Philiſtines*, for their Irreverence to the Ark, were treated with leſs Rigour, than the *Bethſhemites*, it was, becauſe the former were not inſtructed in the Laws of God, nor ſo much obliged to obſerve them.

Q. *I don't read any where that* Bethſhemeſh *was a Place of very conſiderable Note; it ſeems therefore very improbable, that ſuch a Number as* fifty thouſand and ſeventy *of the Inhabitants, ſhould be ſlain at once.*

A. It muſt be acknowledged, that there is a Miſtake in our Tranſlation, as well as in ſeveral others. *Bethſhemeth* is a Place of no great Note in ſacred Hiſtory, and by *Joſephus* it is called no more, than a Village; and therefore it is hardly conceivable, how it could contain ſuch a Number as *fifty Thouſand and Threeſcore and ten* Inhabitants, or why God, who is Goodneſs itſelf, ſhould make ſuch a Slaughter among thoſe, who received his Ark with ſo much Joy, and teſtified their Gladneſs by their Oblation of Sacrifices. To ſolve this Difficulty therefore, ſome have obſerved, that the Words in the Original, and, according to their natural Conſtruction, ſtand thus:—He ſmote of the People *threeſcore and ten Men, fifty Thouſand Men,* where there is plainly wanting ſome Particle or other, to make the Senſe compleat. They obſerve farther, that, if this is to be taken for a total Sum, the Order of the Words is plainly inverted, and that the *Thouſands* ſhould go before the inferior Numbers, as is uſual in all Languages; and therefore, ſince there is a manifeſt Defect in the Copy, they think it not amiſs to ſupply it with the Particle *Mem, out of,* which, in many other Inſtances, is known to be omitted, and here makes the Senſe compleat; *viz.* that, of the People of *Bethſhemeſh*, for their Irreverence to the Ark, he ſmote *ſeventy Men out of Fifty Thouſand.* For, though fifty Thouſand can hardly be ſuppoſed in ſo ſmall a Place, yet, upon hearing of the Arrival of the Ark, the Country might flock in from other Parts, and, in a few Days, make up that Number; and though, poſſibly, moſt of them might be guilty of the ſame Rudeneſs, yet God in his great Clemency, might puniſh no more than *ſeventy of them*, and that, on Purpoſe to deter others from the like Irreverence: For, it is not unlikely that theſe People might hold the Ark in more Contempt, ſince the Time that it had been conquered (as it were) and led captive by their Enemies; and for this Reaſon, God might the rather exert his vindictive Arm, on purpoſe to teach them, that this Symbol of his Preſence had loſt none of its miraculous Power, by the ill Uſage it had met with in its Abſence.

CHAP. VII.

The Ark is placed in Kirjath-jearim; Eleazar *is ſanctified to keep it.* Samuel's *Exhortation. A Faſt at* Mizpeh. *The* Philiſtines *intending to attack* Iſrael, *are terrified with Thunder, and ſmitten, and the Cities they had taken recovered.* Samuel *goes his Circuit, returns to* Ramah, *and builds an Altar.*

Q. THE *Ark was carried from* Bethſhemeſh *to* Kirjath-jearim; *but why not to* Shiloh *its proper Reſidence?*

A. Upon the Removal of the Ark from *Bethſhemeſh* it is not unlikely that there was a general Aſſembly of the Elders of *Iſrael*, and that to prevent the like Offence, the Ceremony was performed with the greateſt Order and Solemnity; but why it was not carried to *Shiloh*, and repoſited in the Tabernacle, the moſt probable Opinion is, that, after the Death of *Eli*, the *Philiſtines* had deſtroyed the Place, and the Tabernacle was removed from thence to *Nob*, where it continued until the Death of *Samuel*. As *Kirjath-jearim* therefore ſtood at no great Diſtance, was a Place of conſiderable Strength, and had a remarkable Eminence in it, proper for the Reception of the Ark, thither it was ordered to be removed for the preſent; with a Deſign no doubt, to have it reſtored to its ancient Seat, at a convenient Seaſon; but, through the Neglect of Religion, as well as the Diſturbance of the Times, its Removal was deferred from Day to Day; ſo that, though *David* firſt brought it to the Houſe of *Obed-edom*, and then to his Palace at *Sion*, yet we no where read of its being replaced in the Tabernacle any more.

Q. Samuel, *in an Aſſembly of the People, exhorts them to return to God, and to put away their Heathen Idols,* v. 3. *But what does* Joſephus *make him ſpeak on this Occaſion?*

A. The Speech, which according to *Joſephus*, *Samuel* makes to the People, upon this Occaſion, is to this Effect——"Ye Men of *Iſrael*, ſince ye find by "Experience, that the Malice of your Enemies is "implacable, and that your earneſt Supplications to "God for Relief, are graciouſly received; you "ſhould do well to conſider, that your wiſhing for "the Freedom, you want, will never do the Buſineſs, without exerting your Power to the uttermoſt, upon the proper Means of procuring it; "for to do otherwiſe, is but praying one Way, and "acting another. Wherefore, in the firſt Place, be "careful not to bring Scandal upon your Profeſſion "by ill Manners, but turn yourſelves to the Love "and Practice of Juſtice, without Partiality or Corruption. Purge your Minds of all groſs Affections: Turn to God, call upon him, and adore "him; and honour him in your Lives and Converſations, as well as with your Lips. Do good "Things, and good will come of it, *i. e.* Liberty "and Victory, for theſe are Bleſſings not to be obtained by Force of Men, Strength of Body, or "Bands of Soldiers, but God, who is Truth itſelf, "has promiſed them, as the Reward of Probity and "Righteouſneſs, and you may depend upon it, he "will never diſappoint you.

Q. Mizpeh *was the Place where the People aſſembled on this Occaſion, and where* Samuel *judged them: In what Tribe was this City ſituated?*

A. The *Mizpeh*, here mentioned (as appears from the Circumſtances of the Story) muſt be different from that which is remarked in the Hiſtory of *Jephthah.* There is indeed another *Mizpeh* mentioned among the Cities of *Judah*, Joſh. xv. 38. and a third among thoſe of *Benjamin*, Joſh. xviii. 26. Some are of Opinion, that theſe two Cities are one and the ſame, and are only ſuppoſed to be two, becauſe they lie in the Confines of each Tribe; but if they are not the ſame, it ſeems moſt probable, that the *Mizpeh* in the Tribe of *Benjamin*, was the City, which is here ſpoken of. And we may obſerve farther, that, as *Mizpeh* is ſaid to be ſituated not far from *Ebenezer*, and probably on the *Eaſt* or *Northſide*; ſo *Shen* (if it be the Name of a Place, and not rather of ſome *ſharp Rock* thereabouts) was ſituated not far from it, on the oppoſite, *i. e.* on the *Weſt* or *Southweſt* Side, to which *Bethcar* muſt needs be contiguous.

Q. *At this Place the People held a Faſt, wept, prayed, confeſſed their Sins, offered Sacrifices, and made Libations, or, as it is expreſſed*, v. 6. Drew Water, and poured it out; *pray explain this Paſſage?*

A. What we are to underſtand by this Water, the Conjectures of Commentators have been very various. Some take theſe Words in a *metaphorical* Senſe, to denote thoſe *Tears of Contrition*, which were drawn as it were, from the Bottom of their Hearts, and fell from their Eyes before the *Lord*. Others think, that with this Water they waſhed their Bodies, (as they are ſuppoſed to have done upon another Occaſion, *Exod.* xix. 10.) to ſignify the Purification of their Souls from the Pollution of Sin: Others, that they made uſe of it, to cleanſe the Ground, where *Samuel* was to erect an Altar, that it might not ſtand upon an impure Place. Some ſuppoſe that it was employed as an Emblem of Humiliation, of Prayer, of Expiation, of Execration, and I know not what beſides; but the moſt probable Opinion is, that this Water was, upon this Occaſion *poured out*, by way of *Libation, before God*; and, for the Support of this, it is commonly alledged, that Libations of this Kind were very cuſtomary in ancient Times; that *Theophraſtus*, as he is cited by *Porphyry*, tells us, that the earlieſt Libations were of Water, tho' afterwards Honey and Wine came into Requeſt; that *Virgil* mentions the Practice of ſprinkling the Water of the Lake *Avernus*; and that *Homer* remarks, that for Want of Wine, the Companions of *Ulyſſes* poured out Water, in a Sacrifice, which they offered to the Gods. 'Tis certain, that *David poured out unto the Lord* the Water, which the three gallant Men in his Army brought him *from the Well of* Bethlehem, at the Hazard of their Lives, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 16. and therefore, though the Law doth not enjoin any ſuch Libations of Water, yet, ſince there is no poſitive Prohibition of them, why may we not ſuppoſe, that upon this extraordinary Occaſion, ſomething ſingular and extraordinary might have been done?

Q. *The* Philiſtines *being juſt ready to attack the* Iſraelites, *it is ſaid*, v. 10. The Lord thundered with a great Thunder on that Day upon the *Philiſtines*: *Pray what Account does* Joſephus *give of this miraculous Event?*

A. Joſephus gives us this Account of the whole Tranſaction:—"In ſome Places God ſhook the Foundations of the Earth under the Feet of the *Philiſtines*, ſo that they could not ſtand without ſtaggering: In others, it opened, and ſwallowed them up alive, before they knew where they were; while the Claps of Thunder, and Flaſhes of Fire, were ſo very violent, that their very Eyes and Limbs were ſcorch'd to ſuch a Degree, that they could neither ſee their Way before them, nor handle their Arms."

Q. *It's ſaid*, v. 15. *that* Samuel judged *Iſrael* all the Days of his Life; *but how is this conſiſtent with* Hannah's *Vow, whereby ſhe devoted him to a perpetual Attendance upon the Lord's Service?*

A. This was not inconſiſtent with her Vow, which was partly in general, that he ſhould be given, or lent to the Lord all his Days, 1 *Sam.* xi. 28. which ſhe faithfully executed, leaving him wholly to the Service and Diſpoſal of the Lord, who thought fit to employ him in this Way; and who, if any Thing therein was contrary to that Vow, could undoubtedly diſpence with it, as being properly his own Right. The other Part of her Vow was more particular, that *no Razor ſhould come upon his Head*; nor does it appear that this Part was violated; or if it was, it was done by divine Diſpenſation.

Q. *In the laſt Verſe it's ſaid*, that at *Ramah* he built an Altar unto the Lord: *But was it lawful to build another Altar for Sacrifice beſides that before the Tabernacle?*

A. This was in Part excuſed by the Confuſion of thoſe Times, wherein the Tabernacle and its Altar were deſtroyed, as is highly probable; but moſt fully, becauſe this was done by prophetical Inſpiration, and divine Diſpenſation, as appears by God's Approbation and Acceptance of the Sacrifices offered upon it.

CHAP. VIII.

Samuel *makes his Sons Judges; their ill Government. The People aſk a King; at which* Samuel *is grieved. God is diſpleaſed with the People; but commands* Samuel *to hearken to them, and to repreſent to them the Tyranny of Kings. The People repeat their Requeſt. God commands* Samuel *to yield to them.*

Q. SAMUEL's *Sons being made Judges, took Bribes, and perverted Judgment*, v. 3. *Why did not God puniſh them, as he did* Eli's *two Sons?*

A. It may alſo poſſibly be made a Queſtion, why God did not puniſh *Samuel*, as he did *Eli*, for the Wickedneſs of his Sons? But to this it may be anſwered, That *Samuel*'s Sons were not ſo bad, as thoſe of *Eli*, ſince taking Bribes privately was not like openly profaning the *Tabernacle*, and making the Worſhip of God contemptible. And, beſides this, it is poſſible, that *Samuel* might be ignorant of the Corruption of his Sons, ſince he lived at *Ramah*, and they at *Beerſheba*.

Q. *What was the Offence of the* Iſraelites *in aſking a King?*

A. When *Samuel* was highly diſpleaſed with the Elders of *Iſrael* for deſiring a King, and thereupon applied himſelf for Advice, the Anſwer which God returned him was this, *Hearken unto the Voice of the People in all that they ſay unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I ſhould not reign over them.* Theſe are, no doubt, the Words of an angry *Sovereign*, reſenting the Slight put upon his Government, and the Indignity done to his Perſon; and therefore, to give a full Anſwer to the Objection, we ſhall firſt conſider the Nature of the Government they were under, and of that which they deſired, and from thence deduce the ſeveral Aggravations of their Guilt, in being ſo importunate for a Change.

Joſephus, in his Book againſt *Apion*, has theſe remarkable Words, "Several Nations have their ſeveral Forms of Government, and their Diverſities of Cuſtoms. Some Governments are committed to a ſingle Perſon, others to a certain Number of ſelect Men, and others again to all the People in general; but our Lawgiver, ſays he, has declared, that ours ſhall be a *Theocracy*, and has aſcribed all Rule, and ſovereign Power to God alone." For, though it was neceſſary, for the due Execution of his Commands, that there ſhould be ſome viſible Miniſter between him and his People, ſuch as *Moſes* and *Joſhua* were, in the Time of their Adminiſtration; yet it is certain, that they never ordained any thing of Moment without a ſpecial Command from him. The ſame Direction which was given *Joſhua*, that *he ſhould ſtand before* Eleazar *the Prieſt, who ſhould ask Counſel for him, after the Judgment of* Urim *before the Lord*, was required of all other Perſons, that preſided in publick Affairs. In all Caſes of Concern, they were to have Recourſe to him, who always reſerved to himſelf the ſole Power of eſtabliſhing Laws, and appointing Magiſtrates, and making War: Nay ſo very deſirous was God, to ſhew himſelf to be King of the *Hebrews*, that there was no Enſign of Royalty belonging to earthly Princes, that, by his own Appointment, was not provided for him, on purpoſe to engage the People's Attention (as the Commentator on *Maimonides* ſpeaks) and to make them perceive that their King who was the *Lord of Hoſts*, was in the midſt of them.

What Deſign God Almighty had in conſtituting himſelf the King of this People, is evident from the Inſtructions which he gives *Moſes*: *Thus ſhalt thou ſay to the Houſe of* Jacob, *and tell the Children of* Iſrael, *ye have ſeen what I have done unto the* Egyptians, *and how I bore you on Eagle's Wings, and brought you unto myſelf: Now therefore, if you will obey my Voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then ye ſhall be a peculiar Treaſure unto me above all People, for all the Earth is mine, and ye ſhall be to me a Kingdom of Prieſts, and an holy Nation.*

No Goverment can certainly be imagined more happy, more ſafe, more free, more honourable, than that, wherein the Fountain of all Wiſdom and Power, of all Juſtice, and Goodneſs preſides; and therefore the leaſt that we can ſay of the *Iſraelites*, in deſiring to change this Form, for ſuch a one, as was in uſe in the Nations round about them, *i. e.* for an abſolute and deſpotick Government, where the Princes were Tyrants, and the Subjects all Slaves, argues, at leaſt, a great Pitch of Folly, and Indiſcretion, a Baſeneſs of Mind, an Ingratitude of Temper, a Spirit of Rebellion, and a ſecret Attachment to the idolatrous Practices of thoſe People, whoſe Kings they were ſo eager to imitate; for, *Make us a King to judge us*, was equivalent in their Mouths, (as one expreſſes it) to what their Forefathers demanded of *Aaron*, *Make us Gods, that they may go before us*; becauſe, in this Manner, he who beſt knew the Secrets of their Hearts, in his Anſwer to *Samuel*, has expounded their Meaning: *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I ſhould not reign over them; according to all the Works which they have done, ſince the Day that I brought them up out of* Egypt, *even unto this Day, they have forſaken me, and ſerved other Gods.*

CHAP. IX.

The Genealogy of Kiſh. Saul's *Perſon deſcribed. He ſeeks his Father's Aſſes; and not finding them, he goes to* Samuel, *who entertains him at a Feaſt; tells him of his Aſſes, and of the Honour deſigned him.* Saul's *Amazement*; Samuel *gives the Preference to the other Gueſts, and afterwards communicates with him concerning the Kingdom.*

Q. WHY *did God chuſe ſo mean a Perſon as* Saul *to be King over* Iſrael?

A. The Manner in which they demanded a King, was no leſs culpable, than the Ends they propoſed by it; for, inſtead of conſulting God upon an Affair of this Conſequence, they went haſtily to *Samuel*, and when, by fair Remonſtrances, he is attempting to diſſuade them from ſo dangerous an Enterprize, they turn *impetuouſly* upon him, and ſay, *nay, but we will have a King*, and this may be the Reaſon perhaps, why *God gave them one in his Anger*, deſcended of the meaneſt Tribe in *Iſrael*, and of the meaneſt Family in that Tribe, to ſhew them, that he himſelf was not ſatisfied with their Proceedings, nor could be pleaſed with any Thing that was extorted from him by undutiful Importunities.

Q. *What was the* High-Place *where* Samuel *ſacrificed, and invited* Saul *to eat with him?*

A. In ſeveral Places of Scripture, the *Canaanites* are ſaid to have had their High-Places, whereon they worſhipped their *Idols*, but this is the firſt Inſtance of any belonging to the People of God. 'Tis certain, that *Samuel*, upon the Captivity, and uncertain Abode of the Ark (if not before) built an Altar for his own private Devotions, and it is not to be doubted, but that he fitted up a Place convenient for that Purpoſe. Whether he did well or ill in this, is a Matter, that we ſhall have Occaſion to examine hereafter: 'Tis the Opinion of ſome learned Men, that this Appointment of a *private* or *inferior* Place of Worſhip (even while the Ark and Tabernacle were in being) by ſo great an Authority, as that of *Samuel*, gave Riſe to the Inſtitution of *Synagogues* and *Proſeucha's*, in ſo many Places of the Kingdom afterwards.

Q. Samuel *and* Saul *having had a long Conference together, the next Morning* Samuel *waited on him out of Town; but at the ſame Time ordered him to ſend his Servant before; what was his Reaſon for ſo doing?*

A. This was with Deſign to let *Saul* underſtand, that what he was going to do was by the divine Order and Appointment; and that, when it ſhould come to the caſting of Lots (as it did afterwards, 1 *Sam.* x. 20.) *Saul* might perceive, that he was not choſen King by Chance of a Lot. There might be likewiſe this farther Reaſon for *Samuel*'s bidding *Saul* to ſend his Servant, *viz.* leſt the People, ſuſpecting *Samuel* to do this by his own Will, more than by God's Appointment, might be inclinable to mutiny. Since this royal Unction then was only deſigned for *Saul*'s private Satisfaction, it was neceſſary not to have it publiſhed, before the People had proceeded to a publick Election of their King.

Q. *What might be the particular Reaſon of the People's ſo ſtrenuouſly urging* Samel *for a King at this Time?*

A. It is generally ſuppoſed, that what made the *Iſrealites* ſo urgent, at this Time, for a King, was a preſent Streight, they thought themſelves in, for Want of an able Leader: For *Nahaſh*, the King of the *Ammonites*, coming up to *Jabeſh-Gilead*, and encamping before it, had put the Inhabitants into ſuch a Fright, that, without more to do, they offered to ſurrender upon Terms, telling him, that *they would become Subjects to him, if he would make a League with them*, 1 Sam. xi. 1. But the haughty *Ammonite*, in Contempt of *Iſrael*, let them know, that, if he made a League with them, the Condition thereof ſhould be, *that they ſhould come out to him, and let him thruſt out all their right Eyes, and lay it for a Reproach upon all* Iſrael. The Elders of *Jabeſh*, in this ſad Circumſtance, demanded ſeven Days Reſpite, that they might ſend Meſſengers into all the Coaſts of *Iſrael*, and if in that Time, no Succours arrived, they would ſubmit. This, it is thought, was their Reaſon for their preſſing ſo hard upon *Samuel*, at this Time, for a King; whereas their Duty was, to have enquired of the Lord (as they had done at other times) who it was, that he would be pleaſed to conſtitute their *General*, in this Exigence, to lead out their Forces againſt their Enemies.

CHAP. X.

Saul *anointed King*; *prophecies*; *comes to his Uncle, and tells him what* Samuel *had ſaid concerning the Aſſes, but conceals the Matter of the Kingdom.* Samuel *aſſembles the People at* Mizpeh; Saul *choſen King by Lot*; *he hides himſelf, but is diſcovered. His Stature*; Samuel *preſents him to the People, who receive him with ſhouting.* Samuel *writes the Manner of the Kingdom.* Saul *is deſpiſed by ſome.*

Q. HOW *antient is the Cuſtom of* anointing *in the Solemnity of making a King*;

A. We read of no expreſs Command for the anointing of Kings, and yet it is plain, from the Parable of *Jotham*, Judg. ix. 8. that this was a Cuſtom two hundred Years before this Time. Why Oil rather than any other Liquid was the Symbol of conveying a regal Authority, we are no where informed. 'Tis true, that God directed *Moſes* to conſecrate *Aaron* to the High-Prieſt's Office, by anointing his Head with Oil, *Exod.* xxix. 7. But the anointing of Kings, we may preſume was of a prior Date. Unction indeed, in the Days of *Jacob*, was the common Method of ſetting apart from common Uſe even Things inanimate, *Gen.* xxviii. 18. and therefore it may very well be ſuppoſed, that Perſons of ſuch Deſignation, as Kings were, were all along admitted by the ſame Ceremony, which, at firſt, might be of divine Appointment, perhaps at the firſt Inſtitution of Government, in the *antidiluvian* World, and thence handed down, by a long Tradition, to future Generations. This Rite of Unction, in ſhort, was ſo much the divine Care, that we find God giving *Moſes* a Preſcription how to make the conſecrating Oil, *Exod.* xxx. 23. But though *Solomon* was anointed with Oil taken from the Tabernacle, yet ſince *Samuel* was no Prieſt, and could not therefore have Acceſs to the Tabernacle, which at this Time was ſome diſtance from him, it is more reaſonable to think (tho' ſome *Jewiſh* Doctors will have it otherwiſe) that what he made uſe of, upon this Occaſion, was no more, than common Oil.

Q. *It is ſaid*, ver. 27. that the Children of *Belial* deſpiſed him, and brought him no Preſents; *was it cuſtomary in thoſe Times for the People to make Preſents to their new made King?*

A. It was a conſtant Cuſtom among the *eaſtern* Nations, and is even to this Day, whenever they approach their Prince, to preſent him with ſomething: But here, in the Caſe of *Saul*, at his firſt Acceſſion to the Throne, it was the proper Method of recognizing him. The *Chaldee* Paraphraſe ſays, that *they did not come to ſalute him, or wiſh him an happy Reign*: But this is the ſame Thing, becauſe the firſt Salutation offered to a King, was always attended with Preſents, which carried with them a Sign of Peace and Friendſhip, of Congratulation and Joy, and of Subjection and Obedience.

Q. *Why did not* Saul *reſent this Affront of his Enemies?*

A. In this *Saul* acted a very wiſe and politick Part, as being unwilling to begin his Reign with any Diſorder or Tumult, which his juſt Reſentment of ſuch an Affront might perhaps have occaſioned. Theſe *Sons of Belial* (as they are termed) were, very likely, Perſons of ſome Rank and Quality, and therefore they deſpiſed *Saul* for his having been related to a ſmall Tribe, and ſprung from an obſcure Family. If then he had taken Notice of this Affront, and not revenged it, he had ſhewn himſelf *mean-ſpirited*; and if he had reſented it as it deſerved, he might both have provoked a Party againſt him, and, at his firſt ſetting out, incurred the Cenſure of Raſhneſs and Cruelty, a Prejudice, which, in the future Courſe of his Reign, would have been far from doing him any good.

Q. Saul's *perſonable and manly Appearance is here mentioned as one of his particular Excellencies: But was that a neceſſary Qualification of a King?*

A. It muſt be acknowledged, that *Saul*'s external Qualifications, *viz.* the Stature, and Comelineſs of his Perſon, were no ſmall Recommendation to a People, who deſired a King, ſuch as their Neighbours had. For whatever, we may think of the Matter, the People of the *Eaſt* had always a Regard to theſe, in the Choice of their Kings; and, accordingly, *Herodotus*, having taken a Review of *Xerxes*'s whole Army, after a ſhort Pauſe, declares himſelf thus, ——That, *among ſuch a Multitude of People, there was not one, who, for Tallneſs and Goodlineſs of Perſon, did deſerve the Throne*, ſo much *as he*; and, in another Place, aſſures us, that *the* Ethiopians *always eſteemed him, who was of the moſt advantageous Stature, the fitteſt to be choſen King*; which cannot but remind us, of what *Samuel* ſays to the People, when he preſents *Saul* to them: *See ye him, whom the Lord hath choſen, that there is none like unto him among all the People*; for the Hiſtorian had told us before, that, *from his Shoulders and upward, he was higher than any of the People.*

Nay, had I leiſure to gratify the Curious, I might ſhew, that, not only in the *Eaſt*, but in the *Weſtern*, and moſt polite Countries, this Tallneſs of Stature, and Graceſulneſs of Appearance, were always deemed becoming Qualifications for the regal Dignity; and therefore we find *Pliny*, who certainly was a fine Speaker, and knew how to ſingle out the proper Qualities in any great Man, telling his Audience, in his Panegyrick on *Trajan*, that *the Strength and Tallneſs of his Body, the Nobleneſs of his Aſpect; the Dignity of his Countenance, and the Graceſulneſs of his Speech, did every where denote and proclaim the Prince*: As, on the contrary, what Notions the Ancients had of a Prince of a low Stature, and mean

Appearance, we may gather from the *Fine*, which, *Plutarch* tells us, the *Lacedæmonians* ſet upon their King, for marrying a little Woman, who was likely to bring, *not Kings, but Kinglings* to reign over them.

Q. *But I preſume the Tallneſs of his Stature was not the only Qualification that recommended him to the Kingdom.*

A. No: His Father is ſaid to have been *a mighty Man of Power*; which, though it may not ſignify his great Wealth, and Intereſt in his Country, (becauſe *Saul* himſelf declares the contrary) yet it doubtleſs denotes his Strength, and Courage, and Fortitude of Mind, which, in a great meaſure, he tranſmitted to his Son. For, who in War was more brave and undaunted than he, had he but known how to uſe his Victories, as well as acquire them? But here was his great Miſfortune, that, when he was ſucceſsful, he was too apt to be unmindful of what God had enjoined him. Who in Peace was more prudent, and politick, than he, till his Fears and Jealouſies of *David*, mixed with an unhappy Temper of Blood, made him malicious and implacable? Nothing can be ſuppoſed more wiſe and diſcreet, than his *holding his Peace*, and taking no Notice of the Slights, which were put upon him at his firſt Election; nothing more great and generous, than his Anſwer to ſome, who would have prompted him to Revenge, after he had eſtabliſhed his Throne by a glorious Conqueſt: *There ſhall not a Man be put to Death this Day, for the Lord hath wrought Salvation to* Iſrael.

Nothing certainly was more different, than *Saul*'s modeſtly declining the Offer of a Kingdom; when elected, paſſing by Indignities, and returning to a private Life; when called out to Action, muſtering his Forces, leading out his Armies, vanquiſhing his Enemies, relieving his Friends; and, when ſettled in Peace, forgiving Injuries, and conferring Benefits: And the ſame *Saul*, ſullen and diſcontented with himſelf, falſe to his Promiſes, jealous of his Friends, liſtening to Sycophants, quarrelling with his Relations, attempting the Life of his own Son, murthering a whole City of God's Prieſts, and, inſtead of conſulting the divine Oracle, flying to the Devil for Advice in his Diſtreſs: And therefore we need leſs wonder, that we find the Beginning of his Reign ſo proſperous, and the latter Part of it ending in ſo ſad a *Cataſtoophe*.

CHAP. XI.

Nahaſh *beſieges* Jabeſh-Gilead; *offers them a reproachful Condition*; *ſeven Days granted them to ſeek Relief*; *they ſend to* Saul; *who is provoked, and ſends a Summons through all* Iſrael. Nahaſh, *with his Army, ſlain.* Saul *inveſted in the Kingdom at* Gilgal.

Q. AFTER Saul *had been anointed King, he returned to a private Life; but why did he do ſo, and not rather immediately enter upon the Government?*

A. The Meanneſs of *Saul*'s Family, indeed, was the Reaſon, that ſome, who were preſent at his Election, openly deſpiſed him, and ſaid, *How can this Man ſave us?* And therefore it is not unlikely, that, as theſe ſeditious Men refuſed to ſubmit to his Government, he might leave the publick Affairs in *Samuel*'s Hands, and return to his Father's Houſe, and there live privately, until ſome Opportunity of better eſtabliſhing his Authority ſhould happen to preſent itſelf. But, even in this Interval, ſuppoſing he did betake himſelf to ſome *rural* Employment, yet where is the great Diſparagement of this; when we find the ſame done in other Nations, by Perſons of the like Rank and Quality? When we find your *Curii*, your *Attilii*, your *Cincinnati*, and ſeveral other illuſtrious *Romans*, leaving the Plow to aſſume the Reins of Government, and, afterwards, leaving the Government to return to the Plow.

Q. *Whereabouts was ſituated the Town of* Jabeſh-Gilead?

A. This Town lay on the eaſt Side of *Jordan*, and not far diſtant from the *Ammonites*, who beſieged it. It was in Being in the Times of *Euſebius* and St. *Jerom*, and was ſituate upon an Hill about ſix Miles diſtant from *Pella*, as one goes to *Geraſa*. It is ſometimes in Scripture ſimply called *Jabeſh*, and what the Inhabitants thereof are farther remarkable for, is ——their grateful Remembrance of the Benefits, they had received from *Saul*, when, after his Death, having heard, that the *Philiſtines had faſtened his Body to the Wall of* Bethſhem, *they went all Night, and took the Body of* Saul, *and the Bodies of his Sons from the Wall, and came to* Jabeſh, *and burnt them there, and took their Bones and buried them, under a Tree at* Jabeſh, *and faſted ſeven Days*; for which they were highly commended by *David*, 2 Sam. ii. 5.

Q. *What was* Nahaſh's *Reaſon for having the* Right Eyes *of the Inhabitants put out?*

A. His Deſign in this was not only to bring a *Reproach upon* Iſrael, as himſelf declares, but to diſable them likewiſe from ſerving in War; for, as the Manner of fighting in thoſe Days was chiefly with Bow and Arrow, Sword and Shield, the Loſs of the right Eye made them incapable of either, becauſe, in Combat, the left Eye is covered with the Shield, and in ſhooting with the Bow, 'tis uſual to wink with it, ſo ſo that depriving them of their right Eye made them uſeleſs in War; and yet this barbarous King thought it not proper to put out both their Eyes, for then he would have made them utterly incapable of doing him the Service, or acquiring the Tribute for him, which he expected from them.

Q. *How came* Nahaſh *to allow the* Jabeſhites *ſeven Days to conſult their Friends about their Deliverance?*

A. It may ſeem a little ſtrange, that this barbarous Prince ſhould be willing to allow the *Jabeſhites* the Reſpite of ſeven Days, but *Joſephus* aſſigns this Reaſon for it, *viz.* that he had ſo mean an Opinion of the People, that he made no Difficulty to comply with their Requeſt. *Saul* indeed had been appointed King, but had not as yet taken upon him the Government, but lived, juſt as he did before, in a private Condition, *Ch.* xi. 5. So that had he, upon this Notice, endeavoured to levy an Army, he could ſcarce think it poſſible to be done, in ſo ſhort a Space, as ſeven Days; and therefore he thought he might grant them theſe Conditions without any Danger, and as being loath perhaps, on the other Hand, to drive them to Deſparation, as he might have done, had he denied them.

CHAP. XII.

Samuel *having appointed a King, teſtifies his own Integrity, to which the People witneſs. He remonſtrates to them the Sins of their Fathers, and their own in asking for a King. He comforts the Obedient,*

dient, threatens the Diſobedient; terrifies them with Thunder in Harveſt; they confeſs their Sin, and deſire Samuel *to pray for them. He comforts and exhorts them to fear God.*

Q. SAMUEL *having aſſembled the People together, acquaints them, in a ſet Speech, of the Nature of their Sin in asking a King; What does* Joſephus *make him ſay on this Occaſion?*

A. That Part of the Speech, which *Joſephus* introduces *Samuel,* as making to the People, and complaining of their Importunity for a Change of Govornment, is conceived in theſe Terms——“What ſhould you chuſe another King for, after the Experience of ſuch ſignal Mercies, and miraculous Deliverances, while you were under God's Protection, and own'd him for your Governor? You have forgotten the Story of your Fore-father *Jacob's* coming into *Egypt* with only ſeventy Men in his Train, and purely for Want of Bread; how God provided for them, and, by his Bleſſing, how they encreaſed and multiplied. You have forgotten the Slavery and Oppreſſion, they groaned under, till, upon their Cries and Supplications for Relief, God reſcued them himſelf, without the Help of Kings, by the Hands of *Moſes* and *Aaron*; who brought them out of *Egypt* into the Land, you are now poſſeſſed of. How can you then be ſo ungrateful now, after ſo many Bleſſings and Benefits received, as to depart from the Reverence and Allegiance, you owe to ſo powerful, and ſo merciful a Protector? How often have you been delivered up into the Hands of your Enemies, for your Apoſtacy and Diſobedience, and as often afterwards reſtored to God's Favour, and your Liberty, upon your Humiliation and Repentance? Who was it but God, that gave you Victory firſt over the *Aſſyrians,* then over the *Ammonites,* and then over the *Moabites,* and laſt of all over the *Philiſtines,* not by the Influence and Direction of Kings, but under the Conduct of *Jephthah* and *Gideon?* What Madneſs has poſſeſſed you then, to abandon an *heavenly* Governor for an *earthly,* &c.”

Q. *Who was* Bedan, *whom* Samuel *reckons among thoſe who had delivered* Iſrael?

A. He was certainly one of the Judges; and as there is no Judge called by that Name in the Book of *Judges,* it is reaſonably concluded, that this was one of the Judges there mentioned, having two Names. And this was either, 1. *Sampſon,* as moſt Interpreters believe, who is called *Bedan,* that is, *in* or *of Dan,* or the Son of *Dan,* one of that Tribe, to ſignify that they had no Reaſon to diſtruſt that God, who could and did raiſe ſo eminent a Saviour out of ſo obſcure a Tribe. Or, 2. *Jair* the *Gileadite,* of whom *Judges* x. 3. which may ſeem beſt to agree, 1. with the Time and Order of the Judges; for *Jair* was before *Jephthah,* but *Sampſon* after him. 2. with other Scriptures; for among the Sons of a more ancient and famous *Jair,* of whom ſee *Numb.* xxxii. 41. we meet with one called *Bedan,* 1 *Chron.* vii. 17. which Name ſeems here given to *Jair* the Judge, to diſtinguiſh him from that firſt *Jair.* 3. With the following Words, which ſhew that this *Bedan* was one of thoſe Judges who *delivered them out of the Hands of their Enemies on every Side, and made them to dwell ſafely*; which ſeems not ſo properly to agree to *Sampſon,* who only *began to deliver* Iſrael *out of the Hands of the* Philiſtines; as was foretold of him, *Judg.* xiii. 5. as to *Jair,* who kept them in Peace and Safety, in the midſt of all their Enemies, as may be gathered from *Judg.* x. 3, 4, 5, 6. and ſo ſo did all the reſt of the Judges here mentioned.

Q. Samuel, *as a Proof of the Truth of what he had ſaid, confirms all by a Miracle, namely, by calling for* Thunder and Rain, *in the midſt of* Wheat-Harveſt: *Pray what Time of the Year was their Harveſt?*

A. It is an Obſervation of St. *Jerom,* that this Harveſt in *Judea* began about the End of *June,* or the Beginning of *July,* in which Seaſon Thunder and Rain were never known, but only in the Spring and Autumn, the one called *the former,* and the other *the latter* Rain; and therefore *Samuel* by this Preamble, *Is it not Wheat-Harveſt to day,* c. xii. 17. meant to ſignify the Greatneſs of the Miracle, God was going to work; that he could in an Inſtant, and in a Time, when they leaſt of all expected it, deprive them of all the Comforts of Life, as they juſtly deſerved, for their rejecting him and his Prophet, who was ſo powerful with him, as, by his Prayers, to produce ſuch Wonders.

CHAP. XIII.

Saul *chuſes a ſelect Band for his own and his Son's Guard.* Jonathan *ſmites the* Philiſtines *Garriſon at* Gibeah. *The People are called together. The* Philiſtines *numerous Hoſt. The* Iſraelites *are terrified.* Saul *offers before* Samuel *comes to him; is reproved; the Shortneſs of his Kingdom foretold. The* Philiſtines *invade the Land. The* Iſraelites, *except* Saul *and* Jonathan, *without Arms.*

Q. WHERE *was* Geba, *the Garriſon of which* Jonathan *ſmote?*

A. Among the Cities of *Benjamin,* mentioned in *Joſhua,* c. xviii. we read of *Gaba, Gibeath,* and *Gibeon*; and in *Joſhua,* c. xxi. 17. we read, that the two Cities, given to the Children of *Aaron,* out of the Tribe *Benjamin,* were *Gibeon* and *Geba*; whence it is not to be doubted, but that *Gaba,* mentioned in the xviii. Chapter was the ſame with *Geba,* that we read of in the xxxiſt: But then it will no ways follow, that this *Geba* or *Gaba,* is the ſame with *Gibeah,* becauſe this *Gibeah* was the royal City, where *Saul* dwelt, and is therefore expreſly called *Gibeah* of *Saul*; and for that Reaſon it cannot be ſuppoſed, that the *Philiſtines,* at this Time, had a Garriſon there.

Q. *The* Philiſtines *being highly provoked at* Jonathan's *ſmiting their Garriſon, aſſembled a vaſt Army, amongſt which it is ſaid there were thirty Thouſand Chariots; which ſeems almoſt incredible.*

A. The Words in the Original, and in our Tranſlation, are, *thirty Thouſand*; but the *Syriack* and *Arabick* Verſions (which we have thought proper to follow) make them no more than *three Thouſand*: And indeed whoever conſiders, that *Pharaoh,* King of *Egypt,* when he had muſtered all his Forces together, could bring no more than ſix hundred of theſe Chariots into the Field, and all the other Princes, whoſe Equipages are related in Scripture, much fewer, muſt needs think it a Thing incredible, that the *Philiſtines* out of their ſmall Territories, which extended no farther, than the two Tribes of *Simeon* and *Dan,* along the Coaſts of the *Mediteranean-ſea,* could ever be able to raiſe ſo vaſt an Armament; no, nor all the Nations, that they could poſſibly call in to their Aſſiſtance. For beſides, that in the Account of all Armies, the Cavalry is always more numerous than the Chariots of War, (which is different here.) The largeſt Armies that we read of, were able to compaſs a very few of theſe Chariots, in Compariſon of the Number here ſpecified. *Mithridates*, in his vaſt Army, had but an *hundred*; *Darius* but *two*; and *Antiochus Epiphanes*, 2 *Mac*. xiii. 2. but *three*. So that we muſt either ſay, that the Tranſcribers made a Miſtake in the *Hebrew* Copy, or (with ſome other Commentators) ſuppoſe that this *thirty Thouſand* Chariots, were not Chariots of War, but moſt of them Carriages only, for the Conveyance of the Baggage belonging to ſuch a vaſt Multitude of Men.

Q. *The Army of the* Philiſtines *encamped at* Michmaſh; *where lay this Place?*

A. Euſebius and St. *Jerom* inform us, that in their Time, there was a large Town of this Name, lying about nine Miles from *Jeruſalem*, near *Ramah*; and the Text tells us, that it was *eaſtward from* Beth-aven. Now *Beth-aven*, which ſignifies the *Houſe of Iniquity*, is ſuppoſed to be the ſame with *Bethel*, and was ſo called after that *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Nebat*, had ſet up his golden Calves to be worſhipped here; but as *Bethel* lay to the Eaſt of *Michmaſh*, and not *Michmaſh* to the Eaſt of *Bethel*, as the Text ſeems to ſay, the Tranſlation ſhould be, that they encamped at *Michmaſh*, *having Beth-aven on the Eaſt*, i. e. they ſeized on that Poſt, which *Saul* had before in *Michmaſh on Mount Bethel*, Ver. 2.

Q. *Wherein conſiſted the Aggravation of* Saul's *Offence, which ſeems to have been no more than offering Sacrifice a few Hours before* Samuel's *coming, and to which he was in a Manner compelled by the near Approach of the* Philiſtines?

A. Whether *Saul* deſerved this Fate, or no, we may beſt perceive by a Review of ſome Inſtances, wherein he is ſaid to have offended God. In the Beginning of the third Year of his Reign, the *Philiſtines* raiſed ſo powerful an Army againſt him, that his own Forces, for Fear of them, deſerted in great Numbers. *Gilgal* was the Place of their Rendezvous, and *Samuel*, who had hitherto tranſacted Matters between God and *Saul*, had given him Aſſurance, that, in ſeven Days time, he would come thither, *to offer Sacrifices and Peace-offerings, and to ſhew him what he was to do*: But as *Abarbinel* has obſerved) every one of theſe Articles he tranſgreſſed; for (beſides that he diſtruſted *Samuel's* Word, or thought it Scorn perhaps, that the *King* ſhould ſtay for a *Prophet*,) inſtead of waiting till the appointed Days were expired, he called for the Sacrifices on the *ſeventh Morning*; inſtead of ordering a proper Perſon to officiate, himſelf adventured to offer up the Sacrifice; and, inſtead of enquiring of God in a regular Way, he was determined to begin the War without any previous Conſultation: So that, in this Behaviour of his, there were all the Signs of Pride and Ingratitude, Impatience and Diſtruſt, Neglect of God, Contempt of his Prophet, and an apparent Invaſion of the prieſtly Office; upon which Accounts *Samuel* declares, that God would reject him, *and not continue the Kingdom* in his Family.

God, no doubt, by his divine Omniſcience, foreſaw what other Sins *Saul* would commit, and might therefore, without any Breach of his Mercy, have pronounced a peremptory Sentence againſt him; but the Paſſage before us implies no ſuch Thing: It is no more than a Threat, or a ſimple Denunciation of what God would do, if he were not more obſervant for the future, and might have been revoked, had he not perſiſted in his Diſobedience, and committed a much greater Offence againſt the divine Majeſty, in the War againſt *Amalek*.

Q. *Does it not ſeem ſtrange, that notwithſtanding the many Wars in which the* Iſraelites *were almoſt continually engaged, that none of them, except* Saul *and* Jonathan, *ſhould have ſo much as a Sword, or any other Arms to defend themſelves with?*

A. The *Philiſtines* had before diſarmed them to prevent their rebelling againſt them; and this Precaution which the *Philiſtines* took to hinder the *Iſraelites* from providing themſelves with Weapons, is no more than what other Conquerors have done to the Nations they have vanquiſhed. *Porſenna*, when he made Peace with the *Romans*, reſtrained them from the Uſe of all Iron, but what was neceſſary in the Tillage of their Ground. *Cyrus*, when he ſubdued the *Lydians*, for fear of a Revolt, took from them the Uſe of Arms, and, inſtead of a laborious Life ſpent in War, ſuffered them to ſink into Softneſs and Luxury, ſo that they ſoon loſt their ancient Valour: And (to inſtance in one Prince more) *Nebuchadnezzar*, when he had made himſelf Maſter of *Judea*, took along with him into *Babylon*, *all the Craftſmen and Smiths*, that *the pooreſt of the People which he left behind*, might be in no Condition to rebel, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 14. The only Wonder is, why the *Iſraelites*, after they had regained their Liberty, under the Government of *Samuel*, and given the *Philiſtines* ſo total an Overthrow at *Eben-ezer*, did not reſtore theſe Artificers, and ſo provide themſelves with proper Arms againſt the next Occaſion? But, beſides the extreme Sloth and Negligence, which appears in the *Iſraelites* whole Conduct, during this Period, it was not ſo eaſy a Matter, in ſo ſhort a Time, to recover a Trade that was laſt; eſpecially among a People, that had no Iron-mines, and were ſo wholly addicted to the feeding of Cattle, that they made no Account of any mechanical Arts. In the famous Victory which they gained over *Siſera*, we are told, that *there was not a Shield or Spear ſeen among fifty Thouſand Men of* Iſrael, *Judg*. v. 8. but, notwithſtanding this, they had Bows and Arrows, and Slings, which the Men of *Gibeah* could manage to a a wonderful Advantage, *Judg*. xx. 16. And beſides theſe, the *Iſraelites*, upon this Occaſion, might convert their Inſtruments of Huſbandry, their Hatchets, their Spades, their Forks, their Mattocks, *&c.* into Inſtruments of War; a much better Shift than what what we read of ſome, who, in ancient Time, had no other Arms than Clubs, and ſharpened Stakes hardened in the Fire.

CHAP. XIV.

Jonathan *and his Armour-bearer's Exploit againſt the* Philiſtines; Saul *purſues them, and adjures the People to forbear eating till Evening.* Jonathan *eats Honey. The* Philiſtines *beaten. The People tranſgreſs in eating Fleſh with the Blood.* Saul *conſults God, and is not anſwered; he caſts Lots to find out the Cauſe;* Jonathan *is taken, and doomed to die, but reſcued by the People.* Saul's *Wars, Children,* &c.

Q. IN *the Beginning of this Chapter we have an Account of a very heroic Exploit of* Jonathan *againſt the* Philiſtines; *but it ſeems to me attended with as much Raſhneſs as Courage.*

A. This Action of *Jonathan's*, conſidered in itſelf, was doubtleſs a very raſh Attempt, and contrary to the Laws of War, which prohibit all under Command (as he was) from engaging the Enemy, or entering upon any Enterprize, without the General's Order; but what may very juſtly be ſaid in Excuſe of it is,——that he had a divine Incitation to it, which he might probably feel, upon the Sight of the *Philiſtines* appearing as if they intended to aſſault *Gibeah*, and upon the Information which he might receive, of the great Spoil, which the *three Parties* made of the poor People in the Country.

Q. *It ſeems yet more incredible, that two Men ſhould ſtrike Terror into a whole Army?*

A. How two Men could put the whole Army into ſuch a Conſternation may ſeem ſomewhat extraordinary; but it ſhould be conſidered, that *Jonathan* and his Armour-bearer, climbing up a Way that was never attempted before, might come upon them unawares, and ſurprize them; that this Action might happen (as *Joſephus* thinks) early in the Morning, and when a great Part of the *Philiſtines* Army was aſleep; that even, had they been all awake, *Jonathan* might have ſo poſted himſelf (as *Horatius Cochlites* did on the Bridge) as to be able to maintain his Paſs againſt all the Force of the Enemy; that thoſe, who made at him, (as only one perhaps could come at a Time) he with one Stroke might lay flat on the Ground, and his Armour-bearer immediately diſpatch them; that the reſt, ſeeing them act thus intrepidly, might take for two Scouts, or *Vancunniers* only of a great Army, that was coming up, and ready to fall upon them; that the Army of the *Philiſtines* being made up of different Nations, might be in the greater Confuſion, as either not underſtanding, or elſe ſuſpecting one another; and (what might compleat their Conſternation) that God at this Time, might ſend a panick Fear, upon them, which, whenever he does it, (even in the Opinion of *Heathens* themſelves) is enough to make the ſtouteſt tremble, and the moſt heroic Spirits betake themſelves to Flight.

Q. Jonathan *having unwittingly offended againſt his Father's Vow, is condemned to die, but is reſcued by the People: Pray what Account does* Joſephus *give of* Jonathan's *Behaviour upon this Occaſion?*

A. When *Saul* told his Son *Jonathan*, that for eating this Honey, contrary to his Interdict, he ſhould ſurely die, *becauſe the Reverence, which he had for his Vow, was more to him, than all the Kindred and Tenderneſs of Nature, Joſephus* introduces the Son making his Father an Anſwer, not unlike that which *Jepthah's* Daughter, upon a like Occaſion, returned to him, "That Death, ſays he, ſhall "be welcome to me, which acquits my Father of "the Obligation of a religious Vow, and only be"falls me, in Conſequence of ſo glorious a Victory "to him, that gave me Being. I have lived long "enough, ſince I have lived to ſee the Pride and "Inſolence of the *Philiſtines* brought down by the "*Hebrews*, which will ſerve me for a Conſolation "in all my other Sufferings." And the Hiſtorian tells us farther, that the whole Multitude was ſo charmed with the Piety and Bravery of the young Man, that in Extacy of Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, they took him away out of the Hand of his incenſed Father, with an Oath, *that they would not ſuffer an Hair of that Perſon's Head to be touched, who had been ſo inſtrumental in a Victory, that tended to the Preſervation of them all.*

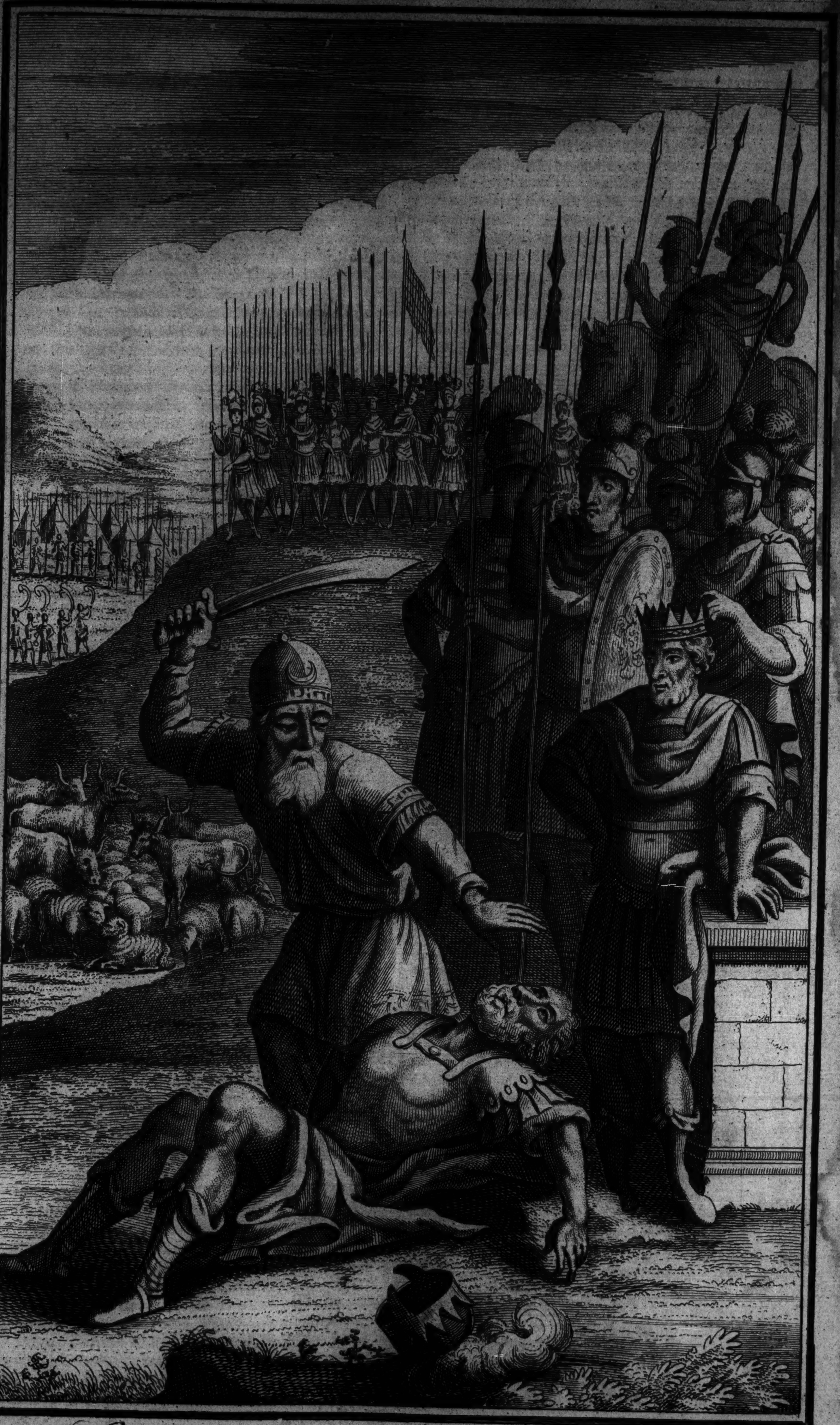
CHAP. XV.

Samuel *ſends* Saul *to deſtroy the* Amalekites; *his Army; favours the* Kenites; *ſpares* Agag, *and the beſt of the Spoil; God rejects* Saul *from being King; which being declared to him, he commends, excuſes, and at laſt humbles himſelf; but* Samuel *is unmoved therewith.* Samuel *kills* Agag; *and mourns for* Saul.

Q. G*IVE ſome Account of theſe* Amalekites, *upon whom* Saul *is ordered to make War.*

A. The Oppoſition, which theſe People gave the *Iſraelites*, while they were on their Journey to the Land of *Canaan*, provoked God to ſuch a Degree, that, as the Hiſtorian relates the Matter, he ſwore that *he would have War with* Amalek *from Generation to Generation*; and therefore commanded *Moſes, to write it, for a Memorial, in a Book, and to rehearſe it in the Ears of* Joſhua, *that he would utterly put out the Remembrance of* Amalek *from under Heaven:* And, when they were upon the Point of entering upon the promiſed Land, they were reminded of the ſame Divine Decree againſt that wicked People: *Remember what* Amalek *did unto thee by the Way, when ye were come forth out of* Egypt, *how he met thee by the Way, and ſmote the hindmoſt of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou waſt faint and weary, and he feared not God; therefore it ſhall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee Reſt from all thine Enemies round about in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an Inheritance to poſſeſs it, that thou ſhalt blot out the Remembrance of* Amalek *from under Heaven, thou ſhalt not forget it.* In this Paſſage we have ſome Reaſons aſſigned, why God was ſo highly incenſed againſt the *Amalekites.* They were Deſcendants of *Eſau*, and therefore, by Pedigree, were allied to the *Iſraelites*, and of the Stock of *Abraham*. They ſeem to have broke off with the *Edomites* very early, and to have joined themſelves with the old *Horites*, a Neſt of Idolaters, that lived on Mount *Seir*; and ſo turned *Apoſtates* from the Religion of *Abraham*. Theſe Apoſtates were the firſt that drew the Sword againſt the *Iſraelites*, who were their Brethren in Blood, and without any Manner of Provocation, took the Advantage, and came upon their Rear, while they were feeble, faint, and weary, which was not only a great Inhumanity, but done with an Intent to defeat God's Deſign, in bringing up the People of *Iſrael*, and to hinder, if poſſible, their Entrance into *Canaan*; for which Reaſon the Impiety of theſe People is particularly taken Notice of, *viz. that they feared not God*, but that *their Hand was lift up againſt the Throne of the Lord, againſt* the Throne of the *God of* Abraham, their Father, which was no ſmall Aggravation of their Crime. 'Twas for theſe Reaſons then, that God had determined to deſtroy the whole Race of *Amalek*, and had made Choice of *Saul* to put his Decree in Execution; and if, to indulge his own Covetouſneſs, he thought proper to prevaricate in the Matter, he became guilty of the like Sin (to uſe the Words of the learned Dr. *Jackſon*) "As if a Judge, or inferior Magiſtrate, be"ing intruſted to do Juſtice in a Matter, unto which "his Sovereign had peremptorily and determinate"ly ſworn, ſhould, upon a Bribe, or other ſiniſter "Reſpect, neglect his Duty, and, as much as in "him lay, make his Maſter forſworn. And, as a "Judge, that would dare to do this, deſerves more

"Deaths



Samuel killeth Agag.

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"Deaths than one:" So; conſidering, the infinite Diſtance between God and Man, and the long Train of Wickedneſs, which *Saul* afterwards ran into, the Severity can hardly be thought exceſſive, in God's puniſhing his Contempt of this great Command, by the Alienation of the Crown from his Family.

Q. *But how could the* Amalekites *be juſtly puniſhed for Offences committed by their Fore-fathers* 400 *Years before? Or ſuppoſe they were, how could young Children and Infants ſuffer as guilty, for the Crimes of their Parents?*

A. Our bleſſed Saviour, in a Caſe ſomewhat like this, has helped us to a Solution of the former Part of this Queſtion, when he tells the *Jews* of his Time, that *they built the Sepulchres of the Prophets, which their Fathers had killed; that, in ſo doing, they allowed, or approved, of their Deeds*; and that therefore *the Blood of all the Prophets, which had been ſhed from the Foundation of the World, ſhould be required of that Generation.* From whence we may draw this Inference,———That, when any particular People commit the ſame Crimes, that their Anceſtors did, when they approve of them, when they imitate them, and, by the like Actions, declare, that, if they were in their Circumſtances, they would purſue the ſame Steps, they are juſtly puniſhable, even in Virtue of the Sentence, which paſſed upon their Anceſtors; and that the divine Suſpenſion of that Sentence, in order to try whether they would reform and amend, is ſo far from being an *Hardſhip*, that the longer it is continued, the more it is an Inſtance of God's Mercy, and Patience, and Long-ſuffering.

Now, whoever looks into the Conduct of the Deſcendants of theſe old *Amalekites*, and conſiders the ſeveral Oppreſſions, which occaſioned the Exploits of *Ehud*, *Gideon*, *Jephthah*, and *Saul*, will ſoon perceive, that theſe later Generations were every Moment renewing the Rancour and Hoſtilities of their Fore-fathers, againſt the Children of *Iſrael*, and conſequently very juſtly compriſed under the Sentence, which had originally paſt upon them.

Children indeed ſhall not be put to Death for their Fathers: But this Prohibition, we muſt obſerve, relates to *Men*, and not to *God*. Men, when they put a Child to Death for the Sin of his Father, aſſume an Authority, that they have no Right to. The Law, which authorizes them to puniſh the Father, gives them no power over the Life of the Child; but God is Sovereign Lord and Maſter of the Lives of both. Men, who kill the Child to aggravate the Puniſhment of the Father, can give the Child no Equivalent of the Loſs of his Life; but God, in the future Diſpenſation of Things, can render him an ample Compenſation for it; and therefore, ſince in a geneneral Devaſtation, whether of War, Famine, or Peſtilence, without a divine Interpoſition for every particular Perſon, the Innocent muſt neceſſarily ſuffer with the Guilty, 'tis Satisfaction enough to think, that theſe innocent Perſons do not finally periſh when they die, but are thenceforward taken under God's immediate Care, and, in the World to come, will find their Retribution. Thoſe of all othors, who die in their Infancy (in what Manner ſoever it be) have Reaſon to bleſs God, what Grief ſoever it may give their Parents, for being delivered out of the Miſeries of this Life, in order to be made happy in another.

Q. *What do you think was* Saul's *particular Reaſon for ſaving* Agag *alive?*

A. Joſephus ſeems to hint, that *Saul* ſaved this *Amalekite* King alive, becauſe he was taken with the Comelineſs and Majeſty of his Perſon; but others rather think, that he intended him to decorate his Triumph; for when it is ſaid of *Saul*, that he came to *Carmel* after this Victory, and *ſet him up a Place*, Ch. xv. 12. The Word *Jah*, they ſay, will ſignify an *Arch*, as well as any thing elſe; and thence they conclude, that *Saul*'s Purpoſe was to erect a triumphal Arch, in Memory of his Defeat of the *Amalekites*; and that he kept their King alive, to be led Captive in that magnificent Proceſſion, wherein he was to make a Diſplay of his Victory.

CHAP. XVI.

God ſends Samuel, *under Pretence of a Sacrifice, to* Bethlehem; Samuel *ſanctifies* Jeſſe *and his Sons; anoints* David *King in* Saul's *ſtead. The Spirit of God comes upon* David, *but departs from* Saul, *and an evil Spirit poſſeſſes him; he ſends for* David; *loves him and makes him his Armour-Bearer*; David *plays before* Saul, *and the evil Spirit departs.*

Q. DID *not* Samuel *encroach upon the Prieſt's Office in offering Sacrifices?*

A. Several of the *Jewiſh* Doctors are of Opinion, that, after the Death of *Eli*, and his Sons, *Samuel*, by God's particular Election, ſucceeded to the High-Prieſt's Office; and this they are the rather induced to believe, becauſe they read of his offering Sacrifices in Places diſtinct from the Tabernacle; of his wearing an *Ephod*, which was a Veſtment peculiar to the Prieſt; of his conſecrating two Kings, *Saul* and *David*; and find the *Pſalmiſt* placing him among Perſons of that Order and Diſtinction. But the more probable Opinion is, that he was no more than a *Levite*, and, by Birth, incapable of the Prieſthood, which was only annexed to *Aaron's* Family; that there is no mention made in Scripture of his having any particular Deſignation to that Office; that there is no Reaſon to think, that God would break thro' his own Laws, and Ordinances, in Favour of him, when there was no Occaſion for it, ſince *Hophni* and *Phineas*, when they died, might have Sons of ſufficient Age to ſucceed them; that his putting on an *Ephod*, was no more than what *David* did; his ſacrificing from the Tabernacle, what *Gideon* and *Saul* did; and his anointing Kings, what both *Elias* and *Eliſha* did; ſo that theſe little Incidents of his Life could never give him that Character. And though it be granted, that the *Pſalmiſt* has thought proper to place him in Company with *Moſes* and *Aaron*, yet, at the ſame Time, he has taken Care to point us out the Difference between them; *Moſes* and *Aaron* among the Prieſts, and *Samuel among ſuch, as call upon his Name*, that is, who ſing God's Praiſe; which was the common Employment of the *Levites*. Put the Caſe then, that *Samuel* was no Prieſt, yet it ſeems to be a Privilege indulged to ſome great Men, upon ſome extraordinary Occaſions, to offer Sacrifices, where there was neither the Tabernacle, nor any Altar, but what they themſelves erected. Thus *Gideon* and *Manoah* both, by the Direction of an Angel, made their Burnt-Offerings juſt by their own Habitations, and upon no other Altar than a Rock; and yet, that they were accepted by God is evident from the miraculous Fire, that did conſume them.

In moſt Countries, indeed, the Prieſthood was a Privilege annexed to the regal Dignity, and even in the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy, where the ſacerdotal Office was diſtinct. Thus *David*, upon the Reduction of the Ark, ſacrificed Oxen and Fatlings, and *Solomon*, in the Beginning of his Reign, and before the Temple was built, ſacrificed on high Places. But there is much more to be ſaid for *Samuel*, he lived in a Place that was an Academy of the Prophets, and whither much People reſorted to be inſtructed in the Law. *Shiloh* was now laid deſolate, and the Ark, which was the Tabernacle's chief Furniture, was ſeparated from it; ſo that, till God had declared his Choice of ſome other Place, the People were, in a great meaſure, at Liberty, where to offer their Devotions; and *Samuel* more eſpecially, in a City of ſo great Concourſe, and where he himſelf preſided, was obliged in Conſcience to provide the People, in the beſt Manner he could, with a publick Place of Worſhip, and though himſelf did but rarely, and upon extraordinary Occaſions, officiate in the Sacrifice, yet that, whenever he did it, he did it with the Acceptance and Approbation of God, is plain from the Teſtimony of Scripture, and the Succeſs, which God gave him againſt his Enemies, after he had performed ſuch an Act of Dovotion: For thus the Account is, *And* Samuel *took a ſucking Lamb, and offered it for a Burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord, and* Samuel *cried unto the Lord for* Iſrael, *and the Lord heard him, and the Lord thundered with a great Thunder on that Day upon the* Philiſtines, *and diſcomfited them, and they were ſmitten before* Iſrael.

Q. Samuel *being commanded by God to go* Bethlehem, *tells the Inhabitants* he is come to ſacrifice, *when in Truth his real Buſineſs was of another Kind: Was not* Samuel *herein guilty of Prevarication and Falſhood?*

A. The *Jews* themſelves acknowledge, that a Prophet is not ſubject to the ceremonial Law, but may, at any Time, himſelf ſacrifice in what Place he pleaſes; and therefore, when *Samuel* went to *Bethlehem* to anoint *David*, it cannot be queſtioned, but that he had a Right to ſacrifice there, though there was neither Ark nor Tabernacle in the Place; nor can it be denied, but that one Part of his Errand was to offer the Sacrifice, which he carried along with him. He had indeed an Affair of greater Conſequence to tranſact at the ſame Time; but I cannot ſee, under what Obligation he was to diſcover that. *Secrecy* is of great Uſe in all important Negotiations, and the concealing of one Deſign under the Umbrage of another, is as juſt and laudable a Practice, as the drawing of a Curtain to keep out Spies. Acts of Religion, indeed, are ſometimes made Cloaks for Iniquity, 'tis hard to conceive what poſſible Prevarication there could be in performing one Act of Obedience towards God, in order to facilitate the Performance of another. The ſhort of the Matter is, when there are two Ends of any Action (as there were in the Caſe now before us) a Man may, without any Injury to Truth, declare the one, and conceal the other; nor can any Imputation juſtly fall upon God, ſuggeſting an Expedient to his Servant, in the Execution of which there confeſſedly was no Sin: And for the ſame Reaſon, becauſe it was by God's Direction, or the Inſtigation of his holy Spirit, that *Samuel* cut *Agag* to Pieces, we cannot ſay, that his Reſentment carried him beyond the Bounds of Reſpect, that was now cut off, not for the Sins of his Anceſtors only, but for his own mercileſs Cruelty. His Death had been predicted above 400 Years before, by the Prophet *Balaam*; but *Saul* out of a mis-tim'd Compaſſion, and in Oppoſition to the expreſs Commands of God, had thought proper to ſpare him. Here therefore was a fit Occaſion for *Samuel* to exert himſelf, and, notwithſtanding the Preſence of his Prince, to vindicate the Honour of his God, by expreſſing a Zeal ſuitable to that of *Phineas*, in ſlaying *Zimri*, or of that noble Band of *Levites*, who deſtroyed the Worſhippers of the *Golden-calf*; though it does not neceſſarily follow, that he ſlew him himſelf, becauſe what he commanded might be called his own Act, though it was nevertheleſs done by the publick Executioner of Juſtice.

Q. *Who were preſent when* Samuel *anointed* David *King?*

A. Our Tranſlation ſays, that *Samuel anointed him in the midſt of his Brethren*, and for this it is pretended, that as this Unction was a ſolemn Act, and the only Title, which *David* had to the Kingdom, it was neceſſary to have it done in the Preſence of ſome Witneſſes, for which Purpoſe none were more proper, than thoſe of his own Family. But it is plain, from his Brother *Eliab*'s treating him after this, (Ch. xvii. 28.) that he was not privy to his being anointed King *elect* over God's People; and therefore, ſince the Words will equally bear the Senſe of *from* the midſt, as well as *in* the midſt of his Brethren, it is more reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that, as this was the *Ceremony* of his Deſignation to the Kingdom only, few or none (except his Father perhaps) were admitted to it: And there was leſs Reaſon for Witneſſes upon this Occaſion, becauſe *David* never laid Claim to the Crown, till after *Saul*' Deceaſe, and was then, at two ſeveral Times, 1ſt, When he was made King over the Tribe of *Judah*; and 2d, When made King over all the Tribes of *Iſrael*, anointed publickly.

Q. *What was* Saul's *Diſtemper?*

A. Some Commentators have been ſo far carried away with the Manner of the Scripture Expreſſion, *viz.* that *an evil Spirit from the Lord troubled* Saul, as to think, that he was really poſſeſſed with a Devil, which, at certain Times, came ſtongly upon him, and threw him, frequently, into all the mad Fits, whereof we read: But it ſhould be conſidered, that the Word *Spirit*, in the ſacred Language, is of a very extenſive Signification, and denotes frequently, not only the Diſpoſitions of the Mind, but thoſe of the Body likewiſe; that the Cuſtom of the *Jews* was to imagine, that every Affliction, whoſe Cauſe they were ignorant of, proceeded immediately from God; and that it is a very common Thing, to find Scripture Phraſe accommodating itſelf to this vulgar Prejudice. Now in our Interpretation of Scripture, this, I think, ſhould be a Rule, ———That, when a Paſſage is capable of two Senſes, whereof the one ſuppoſes a *Miracle*, and the other a *natural Event* only, the latter ſhould take Place, eſpecially when there are no Circumſtances to determine us to the contrary. But now, in the Caſe before us, the frequent Acceſs of *Saul*'s Malady, the Symptoms that attended it, and the Remedy made uſe of to aſſuage it, do ſufficiently denote, that it proceeded from a deep Melancholy, or black Bile inflamed; and that the Man was hypocondriack, rather than poſſeſſed. Agreeable to this bad Complexion of Body, was the natural Temper of his Mind, which, through his whole Conduct, was ſuſpicious, diffident, cruel, paſſionate, and vindictive: Add to this, that the Remorſes of his Conſcience, the Menaces of *Samuel*, God's Rejection of him, and continual Apprehenſions of being either dethroned, or put to Death by his Competitor, confirmed ſtill more and more the evil Diſpoſitions, which his Diſtemper ingendered, and carried them by Fits into downright Madneſs; and, and as Madneſs is occaſioned by an atrobilous Humour highly inflamed, and diffuſed through the Blood, and from melancholick Vapours, which aſcend to the Brain, and make an Alteration in its Temperature, 'tis no hard Matter to conceive, that the agreeable Sound of a *muſical* Inſtrument, which occaſions Joy and Self-complacency, ſhould diſſipate theſe bad Humours, and make the Blood and Spirits return to their equal and natural Motion.

Q. *Has Muſick, naturally, a power to cure a diſtempered Mind?*

A. What the Power of Muſick is, to ſweeten the Temper, and allay, and compoſe the Paſſions of the Mind, we have ſome Examples from *ſacred* Hiſtory, but many more from the *profane*. As this ſame *Saul* was returning from *Samuel*, he met, at the Place which is called *the Hill of God*, a Company of Prophets, playing on ſeveral Inſtruments; and ſuch was the Effect of their Melody, *that the Spirit* (as the Scripture expreſſes it) *came upon him, and he was turned into another Man.* When *Eliſha* was deſired by *Jehoſaphat*, to tell him what his Succeſs againſt the King of *Moab* would be, the Prophet required a Minſtrel to be brought unto him, *and when the Minſtrel played*, 'tis ſaid, *that the Hand of the Lord came upon him*: Not that we are to ſuppoſe, that the Gift of Prophecy was the natural Effect of Muſick, but the Meaning is, that Muſick diſpoſed the Organs, the Humours, the Blood, and, in ſhort, the whole Mind and Spirit of the Prophet, to receive the ſupernatural Impreſſion. The Truth is, common Experience, as well as the Teſtimony of the graveſt Authors, does prove, that there is in Muſick a certain Charm, to revive the Spirits, mellow the Humours, allay the Paſſions; and conſequently to diſſipate that Rage, or Melancholy, which either fumes up into the Brain in Vapours, or overſpreads the Heart with Grief, and Dejection. We need leſs wonder therefore, that we find the *Pythagorians*, whenever they perceived, either in themſelves, or others, any violent Paſſion beginning to ariſe, immediately betaking themſelves either to their Flute, or their Gittar; that we find *Theophraſtus* declaring, that Muſick is an excellent Remedy againſt ſeveral Diſtempers, both of the Mind and Body; others, that *Aſclepiades*, a renowned Phyſician amongſt the Antients, was uſed to cure Madneſs by the Power of Symphony; and others again, that the moſt violent Poiſon, that of the Sting of the *Tarantula*, has been expelled very frequently by this means. The only remaining Difficulty is, how *David*, with his ſingle Harp, and unaſſiſted with any other Inſtruments, could effect ſuch a Cure upon *Saul?* And, to ſatisfy this, I muſt be obliged to enquire a little into the Nature of the *Jewiſh* Muſick, which was poſſibly in Vogue ac this Time.

Q. *Give ſome Account of the* Jewiſh *Muſick.*

A. Muſick, though an Art of no Neceſſity to human Life, was certainly of a very early Invention. Before the Deluge, *Jubal* is called the Father, or Maſter of thoſe, who played upon the Harp, and ancient Organ, as the two *Hebrew* Words, in that Place, are generally tranſlated. This Inſtrument in *Hebrew* is named *Hugab*, and was a kind of Flute compoſed of ſeveral Pipes, of a different Bigneſs, joined to one another. In the Time of *Jacob*, we find his Father-in-law complaining of him, that he had ſtolen away from him, and not given him an Opportunity of diſmiſſing him honourably *with Mirth, and with Song, with Tabret, and with Harp.*

Moſes, upon his Paſſage over the *Red-ſea*, compoſed a Song, which was ſung in Parts by himſelf, at the Head of the Men, and his Siſter, with *Timbrels* and *Dancing*, leading up the Women. *Samuel*, upon his Inſtitution of the Schools of the Prophets, introduced ſeveral Kinds of *Muſick*; ſo that, before *Saul's* Election to to the Kingdom, we read of the *Pſaltery* and *Tabret*, the *Pipe* and the *Harp*, in uſe among them. The Kings of the *Eaſt* made it a Point of their Grandeur, and Magnificence, to have a great Number of *Muſicians*, to play to them upon ſeveral Occaſions; and therefore we may ſuppoſe, that *Saul* when he came to the Throne, in ſome reaſonable Time, conformed to the Mode. *David*, who was himſelf a great Maſter of Muſick, kept in his Houſe ſome Companies of *ſinging Men*, and *ſinging Women*, as the Words of *Barzillai* ſeem to imply; and *Solomon* who denied his Heart no Pleaſure, came not behind his Father in this Reſpect, for he had his *Men-ſingers*, and *Women-ſingers* likewiſe, and muſical Inſtruments of all Sorts. *Joſephus* tells us, that he made four hundred thouſand, merely for the Uſe of the Temple, and therefore we may well ſuppoſe, that he had no ſmall Variety of them, for the Uſe of the Muſicians, that attended his Perſon.

M. *le Clerc* ſeems to be of Opinion, that the Muſick of the ancient *Hebrews* was not very regular: "They were a Nation, *ſays he*, entirely given to Agriculture, and had neither Theatres, nor any publick Diverſions of this Kind; all the Uſe, which they made of their Muſick, conſiſted in ſinging of ſome ſacred Hymns, which *David* inſtituted; but we have no Reaſon to think, that their Performances of this kind were either harmonious, or methodical:" But now, the learned *Kircher* has confuted all this. For, *it is not probable*, ſays he, *that ſuch innumerable Quantity of muſical Inſtruments, made by the moſt skilful Hands, ſhould ſerve only to produce ſome rude and inartificial Sounds. Among the* Hebrews *there was certainly a wonderful Order of Songs and Chanters, a wonderful Diſtribution of the Singers, and a wonderful Agreement of Words fitted to harmonious Notes; neither is it likely, that all the Inſtruments of one Choir did perform their Parts in Uniſon, but that they made a various Harmony, with an admirable and accurate Contexture, of the upper Parts with their reſpective* Baſſes.

But ſuppoſe we, as ſome imagine, that they wanted the Harmony of a Conſort, or ſeveral Parts of Muſick going on at the ſame Time; yet it is much to be queſtioned, whether that Simplicity of Compoſition, which reſembles Nature moſt, is not a greater Beauty and Perfection, than that Combination of ſeveral Voices and Tunes, which conſtitute our *Concerts*. For (to uſe the Words of another Author in a Science, wherein I profeſs to be no Adept) "The Ancients, ſays he, had as great a Number of Inſtruments as we, they had their Symphonies and Voices of all Sorts, as well as we; but then they had this Advantage above us, that their ſinging Voices and Inſtruments neither drowned the Words, nor deſtroyed the Senſe of what they ſung. While their Ears were charmed with the

“ Melody, and their Hearts touched with the Delicacy of the Song, their Minds were tranſported “ with the Beauty of the Words, with the Liveli- “ neſs, Grandeur, or Tenderneſs of the Sentiments. “ So that, at one and the ſame Time, they had all “ the pleaſurable Impreſſions and Senſations, that “ the moſt exact Imagery of Thoughts and Senti- “ ments, joined with Symphony, or a true Har- “ mony, could produce in their Breaſts;” and, for this Reaſon, it is rightly ſuppoſed, by *Joſephus*, that while *David* play’d upon his Harp, he ſung Pſalms and Hymns to King *Saul*, whoſe Words very probably were adapted to the Occaſion, and that both theſe put together were conducive to his Cure; God, without doubt, who gave a Bleſſing to his Endeavours, was the principal Cauſe of it.

CHAP. XVII.

The two Armies ready for Battle. Goliah *challenges the* Iſraelites. David, *viſiting his Brethren, hears and accepts the Challenge.* Eliab *chides him; he is brought to* Saul, *and gives the Reaſon of his Confidence. He refuſes* Saul’s *Armour; takes his Sling and Stones, and goes out to meet* Goliah, *who curſes him; he kills him; the* Philiſtines *fly; are ſmitten and plundered.* Saul *takes Notice of* David.

Q. WHEREABOUTS *lay* Shocho *and* Azekah, *between which the* Philiſtines *pitched their Camp?*

A. Shocoh and *Azekah* lay to the *South* of *Jeruſalem*, and the *Eaſt* of *Bethlehem*, about four Leagues from the former, and five from the latter; and the ancient Valley of *Elah* muſt, conſequently, lie, not far diſtant from them, though later Travellers place it at no more, than a League’s Diſtance from *Jeruſalem*.

Q. *What was* Goliah’s *Height in* Engliſh *Meaſure?*

A. The Words in the Text are——*Whoſe Height was ſix Cubits and a Span*; ſo that, taking a *Cubit*, to be twenty Inches and an half, and a Span to be three Inches, and a little more, the whole will amount to about twelve Feet and an half: A Stature above as tall again as uſual! The loweſt Computation of the Cubit however brings it to near ten Feet, which is the Standard, that we have ſet it at; tho’ it muſt not be diſſembled, that both the *Septuagint* and *Joſephus* have reduced it to little more, than eight Feet, which but badly comports with the Weight and Vaſtneſs of his Armour, though it might ſuit their Deſign perhaps, in accommodating their Account to the Credibility of their *Heathen* Readers. But be that as it will, ſeveral Authors (to ſhew this vaſt Size of the Man not to be beyond the Bounds of Probability) have written *ex profeſſo*, *de Gigantibus*; among whom *Harmanus Conringius*, in his Book *de antiquo Statu Holmſtadii*, and in another, *de Habitu Corporum Germanorum*, has demonſtrated, that the ancient *Germans* were of a vaſt Size, even as *Cæſar de Bello Gall.* teſtifies of them, by calling them, *immani Corporum Magnitudine Homines*, Men of a huge Greatneſs of Body.

Q. *We read in prophane Hiſtory of ſeveral Challenges to ſingle Combat, to end a Controverſy between two contending Nations: Might not therefore* Goliah’s *Challenge be founded on Reaſon and good Policy?*

A. The Words in which *Goliah*’s Challenge is expreſſed, are theſe,——*Why are you come out to ſet your Battle in Array? Am not I a* Philiſtine, *and you Servants to* Saul? *Chuſe you a Man for you, and let him come down to me: If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your Servants: But if I prevail againſt him, and kill him, then ſhall ye be our Servants, and ſerve us*, v. 8. Antiquity furniſhes us with Examples of ſeveral ſuch like Combats, as *Goliah* here propoſes, but with none more remarkable, than that between the *Horatii* and *Curatii* related by *Livy*, “ In which Caſe, as *Grotius* ex- “ preſſes himſelf, though the Champions perhaps “ cannot, with all the Innocence imaginable, en- “ gage in the Combat, yet their reſpective States “ may, at leaſt, allow of it, as a leſs Evil; as an “ Expedient, whereby a Deciſion is made, with- “ out the Effuſion of much Blood, or any conſider- “ able Loſs on either Side, which of the two Na- “ tions ſhall have the Dominion over the other. “ *Strabo*, ſays he, makes mention of this, as an an- “ cient Cuſtom among the *Greeks*; and *Æneas* ap- “ appeals to the *Latins*, whether it is not highly “ juſt and equitable, that he and *Turnus* ſhould de- “ termine the Controverſy between them in this “ Manner?” But whether ever there was any Combat ſtipulated to be deciſive of the Quarrel between two contending Nations, ’tis certain, that this Speech of *Goliah’s* was a mere *Bravado*, proceeding from an high Opinion he had of his own matchleſs Strength, as if he had been the whole Support of the Nation, which was to ſtand or fall together with him: For, that he had no Authority from the Princes of the *Philiſtines*, to make any ſuch Declaration, is evident from the Event; ſince, ſo far were the *Philiſtines* from yielding themſelves Slaves to the *Hebrews*, upon the Death of this Champion, that they made the beſt of their Way into their own Country, and there defended themſelves, and fought many Battles with them afterwards.

Q. *What was the Meaning of* David’s *carrying Proviſion to his Brethren in the Army?*

A. In thoſe Days it was cuſtomary for Men to ſerve their King and Country in the Wars at their own Expence; and therefore *Jeſſe* ſent a Supply of Proviſion to ſuch of his Sons, as were in the Service: But, ſince he had other Sons at Home, while *David* was chiefly in the Field, it ſeems to be a divine Direction, that he ſent him from the Sheep upon this Errand.

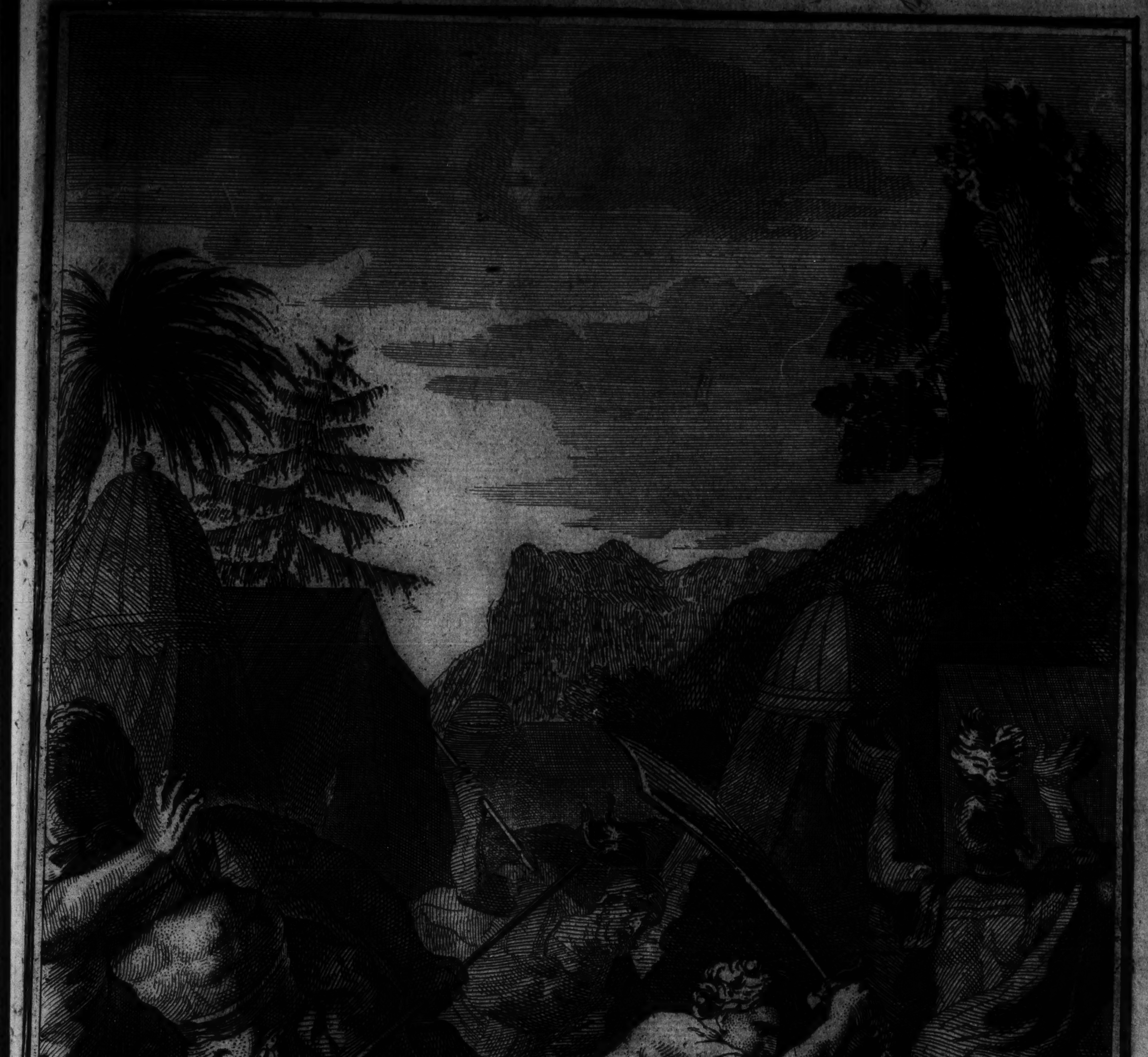
Q. *Did not* Saul *promiſe very extravagantly, when he offered his Daughter in Marriage to the Perſon who ſhould kill* Goliah?

A. This was no bad Policy in *Saul*, to promiſe largely upon ſo important an Occaſion, foraſmuch as *Caleb* won *Kirjath-ſepher*, by offering his Daughter in Marriage to the Perſon who ſhould take it; and *David* himſelf, when he came to the Crown, encouraged his Soldiers to aſſault the ſtrong Fort of *Sion*, by promiſing to make him Commander in chief of all his Forces, who ſhould firſt enter it.

Q. *What Account does* Joſephus *give of the Interview between* David *and* Saul?

A. Joſephus introduces *David*, as reaſoning with the King in this Manner, — *David* perceiving, ſays he, that *Saul* took his Meaſures from the common Reaſon of other Encounters, gave the King to underſtand, that this *was not ſo much a Challenge to the Army, as a Defiance to Heaven itſelf; neither was the Combat to be taken, in Truth, for a Trial of Skill between* Goliah *and* David, *but between* Goliah *and the* Lord of Hoſts: *For it is not in*

I. SAM. Chap. XVII.



DAVID *Cuts of* **GOLIAH'** *Head.*

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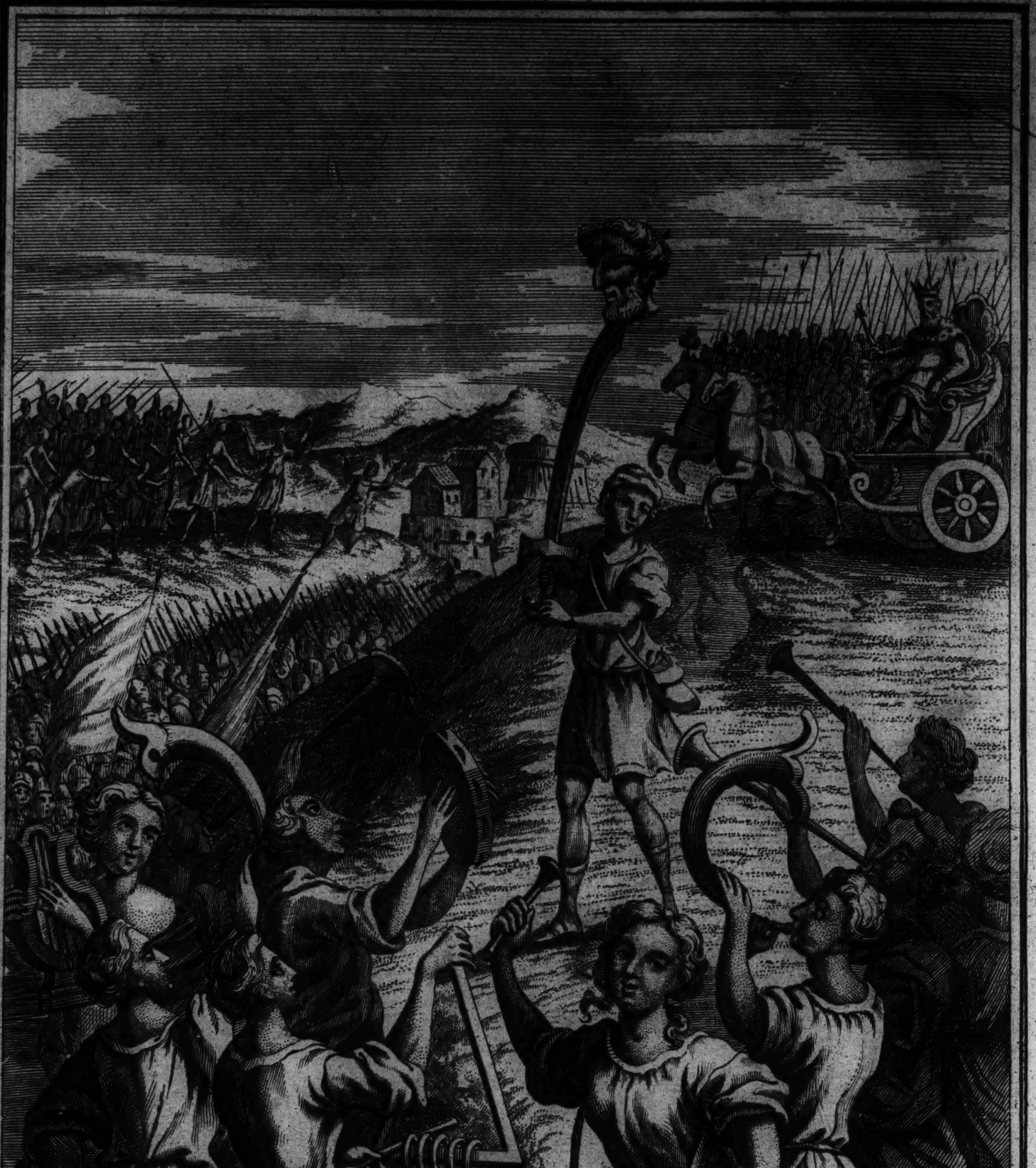
I. SAMUEL CHAP. XVIII.



And the women anſwared one another as they played, and ſaid, Saul *hath ſlain his thouſands, and* David *his ten thouſands.*

my Arm, ſays he, *that fights the Battle, but the Power of a gracious and invincible God, that many times brings to paſs, even by the weakeſt Inſtruments, the nobleſt of his divine Purpoſes, for his greater Glory.*

Q. *Why were ſmooth Stones, rather than rugged, fitteſt for* David's *Purpoſe?*

A. Smooth Stones, one would think, part beſt from the Sling, and, as they meet with the leaſt Obſtruction from the Air, fly with the greateſt Rapidity, and in the moſt direct Line; and yet *Ludovicus de Dieu* is of a quite contrary Opinion, *viz.* that rough and ſharp Stones were properer for *David*'s Purpoſe; whereupon he tranſlates the Words *five Pieces of Stone*, as the *Hebrew* indeed, without its Punctuation, will bear. But 'tis in vain to be nice and elaborate about Trifles, ſince of what Form ſoever the Stone, which penetrated *Goliah*'s Forehead, was, 'tis plain, that it had both the Direction, and Rapidity of its Motion from the Hand of God.

Q. *Since* Goliah *was ſo compleatly armed, and, in particular, had a Helmet of* Braſs on his Head, *how was it poſſibly for a ſmall Stone to pierce through all, and to ſink into his Brain?*

A. 'Tis but ſuppoſing, that this arrogant Champion, in Diſdain of his inferior Combatant, might come negligently towards him, with his Helmet turned back, and his Forehead bare. 'Tis highly probable, that, when he made his menacing Speech to *David*, he might turn back his Helmet, both to ſpeak, and be heard more diſtinctly: And there was no ſuch Terror in *David*'s Appearance, as might induce him to cover his Forehead again. But, admitted he did, 'tis but ſuppoſing, that *David* might level his Stone ſo right, as to hit the Place, which was left open for his Adverſary's Eyes, or throw it with ſuch a violent Force, as would penetrate both Helmet and Head together: And, to make theſe Suppoſitions more probable, we need only remember what we read in *Judges*, Chap. xx. 16. of no leſs, than *ſeven hundred Men* in one Place, who were ſo expert with their left Hands, that every one could ſling Stones to an Hair's Breadth, and not miſs; or what we read in *Diodorus Siculus*, l. 5. of ſome Slingers, who threw Stones with ſuch a Violence, that nothing could reſiſt their Impreſſion; and that, when they made uſe of Lead inſtead of Stone, the very Lead would melt in the Air, as it flew, by reaſon of the Rapidity of the Motion, which they gave it.

CHAP. XVIII.

Jonathan's *Love to* David; *their Covenant.* Saul *envies* David's *Praiſe, and ſeeks to kill him; is afraid of him, and removes him.* David *becomes the People's Favourite.* Saul's *eldeſt Daughter given to* Adriel. Michal *loves* David; *the Dowry required by* Saul *is one hundred Foreskins of the* Philiſtines; David *delivers double the Number, and obtains* Michal. Saul's *Fear and Hatred;* David's *Glory increaſes.*

Q. *IT is ſaid, v. 1. that Jonathan* loved *David* as his own Soul: *Have we no Parallels of the like Friendſhip in prophane Hiſtory?*

A. Plutarch makes mention of ſeveral great Men, ſuch as *Theſeus* and *Pirithous*, *Achilles* and *Patroclus*; *Oreſtes* and *Pylades*; *Pythias* and *Damon*, *&c.* who were joined together *in the Yoke of Friendſhip*, as he calls it: But none of theſe were comparable to what we read of *Jonathan* and *David*, who entered into the moſt ſacred Bonds of mutual Aſſiſtance and Defence, to their very Death, and of Kindneſs to their Poſterity, even after either of them ſhould be dead. *Jonathan*, in particular, through the whole Story, ſhews towards *David* ſuch a Greatneſs of Soul, ſuch a Conſtancy of Mind, and Diſintereſtedneſs of Heart, as few Romances can produce Examples of.

Q. *How could the Women, in their Songs, juſtly aſcribe the killing of ten thouſands to* David; *whereas he had only killed* Goliah?

A. Becauſe, all the Conqueſt, gained afterwards, was no more, than the Conſequence of his Death.

Q. *Was this Song ſung before, or after* David's *Advancement; ſince* Saul, *upon hearing it, was very wroth?*

A. It was certainly ſung before his Advancement; and that it did not hinder his Preferment, muſt be aſcribed, partly, to *Saul*'s Policy, who, though he had an Eye upon *David*, and deſigned to cruſh him upon a fit Occaſion, yet ſaw it neceſſary for his own Reputation, and the Encouragement of other Mens Valour, and for the Satisfaction of *Jonathan*'s paſſionate Deſire, and the juſt and general Expectation of the whole Army and People, to give him ſome conſiderable Preferment for the preſent; and principally, to God's Providence over-ruling *Saul*, againſt his own Inclination, and his miſtaken Intereſt.

Q. Saul *had promiſed to give* David *his eldeſt Daughter in Marriage, but afterwards gave her to another; but I don't find that* David *reſented this injurious Treatment.*

A. This was an high Affront to *David*, and one of the greateſt Injuries, that could be done him, however, for the preſent, he thought proper to diſſemble it. How *Jonathan* reſented this Uſage, we are no where told. It is likely, that his Duty to his Father made him prevail with *David* to take it patiently, as coming from a Man who was ſometimes beſides himſelf, and knew not well what he did; and that *David* might be the more inclinable to do this, as having ſome Intimations given him of the good Eſteem, which the ſecond Daughter began to entertain of him.

Q. Saul, *to make* David *ſome Recompence for this ill Uſage of him, offers him his ſecond Daughter, on Condition he would bring him one hundred Foreskins of the* Philiſtines: *But why their Foreskins rather than their Heads?*

A. The Reaſon, why *Saul* exacted the Foreskins of *David*, was to prevent all Cheat or Colluſions in the Matter, and that he might be ſure they were *Philiſtines* only, whom he killed. Had he demanded the Heads only of ſo many Men, *David* (he might think) might perhaps cut off thoſe of his own Subjects, and bring them inſtead of the *Philiſtines*: But now, the *Philiſtines* being the only neighbouring People who were uncircumciſed, (for the *Arabians*, as deſcended from *Iſhmael*, and all the other Nations, which ſprung from *Eſau*, were circumciſed, as well as the *Hebrews*, in producing their Foreskins, there could be no Deception. Beſides that, this would be a groſs Inſult upon the *Philiſtines* in general, to whom *Saul* was deſirous to make *David* as odious, as poſſible, that, at one Time or other, he might fall into their Hands.

CHAP. XIX.

Saul*'s Purpoſe to kill* David, *is diſcloſed to him by* Jonathan, *who defends him to his Father.* Saul *ſwears not to kill him.* David *returns to Court.* Saul *again ſeeks to kill him; he flies.* Michal *deceives her Father.* David *comes to* Samuel *at* Ramah. Saul *ſends Meſſengers after him, who propheſy. He goes himſelf, and propheſies likewiſe.*

Q. W*AS it Policy in* Saul *to deſire* Jonathan *to kill* David, *ſince he muſt know the Friendſhip that ſubſiſted between them?*

A. It is ſtrange that *Saul* ſhould ſpeak to *Jonathan* to murder *David*, if he knew the Friendſhip he had for him; and he could not well be ignorant of it, ſince in *Chap.* xviii. *v.* 3, 4. he had made ſo publick a Declaration of it. But he imagined perhaps, that his Love to a Father would overcome his Love to a Friend; and, taking an Eſtimate from himſelf, might think it no mean Incitement to his Son, that *David* was going to deprive, not only the Father of the preſent Poſſeſſion, but the Son likewiſe of his Right of Succeſſion to the Throne of *Iſrael.* But whatever *Saul's* Reaſons might be, for deſiring *Jonathan's* Aſſiſtance in ſo vile a Fact, 'tis plain, that there was a peculiar Providence of God in his diſcloſing himſelf ſo freely on this Head, ſince thereby *David* came to a right Information of his Danger.

Q. Jonathan, *on this Occaſion, gave a noble Inſtance of his Friendſhip, though at the Hazard of his Father's Diſpleaſure, to whom he remonſtrated, in the moſt lively Terms, the Injuſtice of ſuch a Proceeding: In what Manner does* Joſephus *make him plead his Friend's Cauſe with his Father?*

A. The Speech which *Joſephus* puts in *Jonathan's* Mouth upon this Occaſion, is expreſſed in theſe Terms——*You have conceived, Sir, a terrible Diſpleaſure againſt this young Man, and given Orders for his Death; but upon what Provocation, or for what Fault, great or little, I cannot comprehend. He is a Perſon, to whom we ſtand indebted for our Safety, and the Deſtruction of the* Philiſtines; *for vindicating the Honour of our Nation, from the Scandal of a forty Days Affront, in the Challenge of a Giant, whom not a Creature, but this innocent Youth, had a Heart to encounter; a Perſon, who purchaſed my Siſter for his Wife at your own Price; and, in fine, a Perſon entituled to your Eſteem and Tenderneſs, both as a brave Man, and a Member of your own Family. Be pleaſed to conſider then, what Injury you do your own Daughter, in making her feel the Mortification of being a Widow, before ſhe enjoys the Bleſſing of being a Mother. Be pleaſed to remember, who it was, that cured you of your dark melancholy Fits, and, by that Means, laid an Obligation upon the whole Family; and who it was, that, next under God, delivered us from our implacable Enemies. Theſe, Sir, are Benefits never to be forgotten, without the Infamy of the blackeſt Ingratitude.*

Q. Samuel *is repreſented,* v. 20. *as preſiding over a* Company of Prophets at *Najoth: Was here no Academy or College for them? If ſo, when was it inſtituted?*

A. That here was a College or Nurſery of young Prophets, I think no doubt can be made; but when theſe Schools were at firſt inſtituted, is no where indicated in Scripture: But as the firſt Mention we find of them, is in *Samuel's* Time, we can hardly ſuppoſe, that they were much ſuperior to it; and that therefore the Occaſion of their Inſtitution was the ſad Degeneracy of the *Prieſthood*, that ſuch publick Places ſhould be appointed, for the better Education of thoſe, that were to ſucceed in the ſacred Miniſtry, whether as Prophets, or Prieſts. According to the Places, that are ſpecified in Scripture, 1 *Sam.* x. 5, 10. and xix. 20. 2 *Kings* ii. 5. iv. 38. and xxii. 14. they were firſt erected in the Cities of the *Levites*, which for the more convenient Inſtruction of the People, were diſperſed up and down, in the ſeveral Tribes of *Iſrael.* In theſe Places the Prophets had convenient Colleges built, whereof *Najoth* ſeems to be one, for their Abode; and, living in Communities, had ſome one of diſtinguiſhed Note (very probably by divine Election) ſet over them, to be their Head or Preſident. Here it was, that they ſtudied the Law, and learned to expound the ſeveral Precepts of it: Here it was, that, by previous Exerciſe, they qualified themſelves for the Reception of the Spirit of *Prophecy*, whenever it ſhould pleaſe God to ſend it upon them: Here it was, that they were inſtructed in the ſacred Art of *Pſalmody*, or (as the Scripture calls it, 1 *Chron.* xxv. 1. 7.) in *propheſying with Harps, with Pſalteries, and Cymbals:* And hence it was, that when any Bleſſings were to be promiſed, Judgments denounced, or extraordinary Events predicted, the Meſſengers were generally choſen: So that theſe *Colleges* were Seminaries of divine Knowledge, and Nurſeries of that Race of Prophets, which ſucceeded from *Samuel* to the Time of *Malachi.*

Q. *But is it not ſtrange that* Saul *ſhould ſhew no Reſpect to ſo venerable a Society?*

A. Such was *Saul's* implacable Hatred to *David*, that it had aboliſhed not only all Reſpect and Reverence to *Samuel*, (under whoſe Protection *David* then was) but all Regard likewiſe to the College of the Prophets, which, in thoſe Days, had obtained the Privilege of a Sanctuary.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by* Saul's *propheſying, when he came near the Company of Prophets?*

A. This is a Word of an extenſive Signification, and may denote ſometimes ſuch Actions, Motions, and Diſtortions, as Prophets, in their Inſpirations, were wont to expreſs. But the Generality of Interpreters, on this Place, take *propheſying* to ſignify *Saul's* ſinging of Pſalms, or Hymns of Thankſgiving and Praiſe, which, even againſt his Will, he was compelled to do, to teach him the Vanity of his Deſigns againſt *David*, and that, in them, he fought againſt God himſelf.

Q. *But why did* Saul *ſtrip himſelf when he came to the Prophets?*

A. The Words in our Tranſlation are—*And he ſtript off his Cloaths alſo, and lay down naked all that Day, and all that Night,* Chap. xix. *ver.* 24. In which Words, and ſome other Portions of the like Import, we are not to imagine, that the Perſons there ſpoken of, were entirely naked, but only that they were diveſted of ſome external Habit or other, which, upon certain Occaſions, they might lay aſide. For, whereas it is ſaid of ſome Prophets, *Iſai.* xx. 2. and *Micah* i. 8. that they went about naked, we can hardly think, that they could he guilty of ſo much Indecency, and eſpecially by the expreſs Order of God, who had always teſtified his Abhorrence of *Nudity*, and enjoined his Prieſts the Uſe of ſeveral Garments to cover the Body, that thus they might be diſtinguiſhed from the *Pagan* Prieſts, who were not aſhamed to appear naked. The Words in the Original, therefore, which we render *naked*, or *to be naked*, ſignify no more, than either to have Part of the Body uncovered, or to be without a Gown, or upper Garment, which the *Romans* called *Toga*, and, according to the Cuſtom of the *Eaſtern* People, was wont to be put on, when they went abroad, or made any publick Appearance: And, therefore, it was ſome ſuch Veſtment as this, or perhaps his military Accoutrements, which *Saul*, upon this Occaſion, put off; and that this was enough to denominate him *naked*, is manifeſt from what *Aurelius Victor*, ſpeaking of thoſe who were ſent to *Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus*, to bring him to the Senate, to be made Dictator, ſays, That they found him *naked*, plowing on the other ſide of the *Tyber*; whereas *Livy*, who relates the ſame Story, obſerves, that he called to his *Rucca*, for his Gown, or *Toga*, that he might appear fit to keep them company.

CHAP. XX.

David *affirms to* Jonathan *his Father's Deſign of killing him*; Jonathan *promiſes to inform him how Matters ſtood*; *they renew their Covenant of Friendſhip*. *At the Feaſt of the New Moon* Saul *asks for* David; Jonathan *excuſes him*; Saul, *incenſed hereat*, *ſeeks to kill him*. Jonathan *acquaints* David; *their parting*.

Q. THE *Interview here mentioned, between* David *and* Jonathan, *was, no doubt, very tender and endearing: Pray what Account does* Joſephus *give of it?*

A. The Speech, which *Joſephus* puts in *Jonathan's* Mouth upon this Occaſion, is very tender, and pathetick——"That God, who fills, and governs the Univerſe, and knows the Thoughts of of my Heart, in the very Conception of them; that God, *ſays he*, be witneſs to the Faith, that is vowed and promiſed betwixt us; and that I will never give over ſearching into, and ſifting the private Deliberations, and Purpoſes of my Father, till I ſhall have diſcovered the bottom of his Heart, and whether there be any ſecret Rançor in his Thoughts, or not, that may work to your Prejudice: And if I ſhall be able to make any thing out at laſt, whether it be for, or againſt you, it ſhall be the firſt Thing I do, to give you Information of it. The Searcher of Hearts will bear me Witneſs, that it is true, and that I have ever made it my earneſt Prayer to Almighty God, to bleſs, and proſper you in your Perſon, and Deſigns; and you may aſſure yourſelf, that he will be gracious to you for the future as he has been hitherto, and lay all your Enemies at your Feet. In the mean while, pray be ſure to keep theſe Things in Memory, and when I am gone, to take Care of my poor Children."

Q. *We read of* Saul *and his great Officers* ſitting *at* Meat; *in other Places of Scripture, we find that* leaning *or* lying *was the moſt antient Cuſtom?*

A. That ſitting at Table was an antienter Cuſtom, than lying or leaning at Meat, is obvious from this Paſſage. The *Egyptians*, when they eat at *Joſeph's* Entertainment, ſat at Table, and ſo did the *Hebrews*. *Homer* always introduces his Heroes in this Poſture, and that this was the known Cuſtom among the antient People of *Italy*, *Virgil* teſtifies. It is not to be diſſembled however, that very early, and even in the Times of *Saul*, the Uſe of Table-beds, or Beds to lie, or lean upon, at Meals, had obtained among the *Jews*; for when the Witch of *Endor*, with much Entreaty, prevailed with *Saul* to take a little Refreſhment, 'tis ſaid, that *he aroſe from the Earth, and ſat upon the Bed*, 1 Sam. xxviii. 23.

Q. *What was the* Jewiſh *Manner of celebrating the* New Moon?

A. The *Jewiſh* Months were *Lunar*, and never began before the Moon appeared above the Horizon; for which Purpoſe, there were certain Perſons placed upon Mountains, ſome Time before the new Moon was expected, to give Notice, by the Sound of an Horn, when it firſt appeared, that ſo the News thereof might immediately be carried to *Jeruſalem*. But leſt there ſhould be any Miſtake in this Method of making their Obſervation, from this Example of *Saul's*, it is ſuppoſed, that they celebrated this Feſtival for two Days together. Whether the *Heathens* had this Rite from the *Jews*, or no, 'tis certain, that other Nations had Feaſts at the Beginning of every Month, and that, with the *Romans*, the *Calends*, in particular, were feſtival Days, conſecrated to *Juno*, to whom Sacrifices, at this time, were offered.

Q. *How could* Saul *reaſonably expect to ſee* David *at his Table, after his attempting ſo often to kill him?*

A. This may ſeem, indeed, a little ſtrange; but he might think, perhaps, that *David* was inclinable to overlook all that had paſſed, as the Effect of his Frenzy and Melancholy; that now he had been propheſying at *Najoh*, he was returned to a ſound Mind, and become a new Man; and that, becauſe, after the firſt Javelin darted at him, *David* had ventured into his Preſence again, he might, for the future, be guilty of the like Indiſcretion.

CHAP. XXI.

David *comes to* Nob; *pretends Buſineſs from* Saul; Abimilech *gives him the Shew-bread*; *which* Doeg *obſerves*. Abimilech *gives him* Goliah's *Sword*. David *comes to* Achiſh, *being known*, *is afraid, and counterfeits Madneſs*; Achiſh *is angry with his Servants for bringing him before him*.

Q. I*N what Part of the Country ſtood the City of* Nob?

A. There is mention made of two Cities of this Name, one on the *Eaſt*, or farther Side, and the other on the *Weſt*, or hither Side of *Jordan*. The Generality of Interpreters will have this City, here ſpecified, to be that, which ſtood in the *Weſt* Side, and in the Tribe of *Benjamin*. Though it is not reckoned among the Number of the Cities, that were at firſt aſſigned to the Prieſts, yet, that it afterwards became one of the ſacerdotal Towns, and eſpecially (as we may imagine) when the Tabernacle came to be moved thither, is evident from 1 *Sam.* xxii. 19. and *Nehem.* xi. 32. and, ſome ſuppoſe, it ſtood about four Leagues from *Gibeah*.

Q. *Does not the Account here given of* David's *addreſſing* Abimilech, *differ, in ſome Particulars, from*

from the Account which our Saviour gives of the ſame Tranſaction, Mark ii. 25?

A. The Words of our bleſſed Saviour, in *Mark* ii. 25. are theſe,——*Have ye never read what* David *did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him, how he went into the Houſe of God, in the Days of* Abiathar, *the High-prieſt, and did eat the Shew-bread, and gave alſo to them that were with him?* Now there are two Things, which the Author of this Book of *Samuel* aſſerts, quite contary to what our Saviour declares, *viz.* 1ſt, That *David was alone, and no Man with him,* Ch. xxi. Ver. 1. And 2dly, That *Abimelech* was, at that Time, High-prieſt; whereas our Saviour affirms, both that *David* had Company along with him, and that *Abiathar* was then in the Pontificate. Now, 1ſt, That *David*, had Company with him, and that *Abimelech* knew it, is evident from his Words in the fourth Verſe; *There is no common Bread in my Hand, but there is hallowed Bread,* if the young Men *have kept themſelves at leaſt from Women*; and therefore *Abimelech*'s Meaning muſt be, that *Dabid* had no Guards to attend him, as it was uſual for Perſons of his Quality to have; or, at leaſt thoſe, that were with him, might be ordered to keep at a Diſtance, and ſo *Abimelech* (when he uttered theſe Words) might not ſee them, though, when he came into a cloſer Conference with *David, David* might inform him, what Retinue he had brought, and, conſequently, that all the Shew-bread was no more, than what they wanted for their preſent Support. 2dly, Though it be granted, that the Name of *High-prieſt*, in its ſtricteſt Senſe, did not, at this Time, belong to *Abiathar*, yet, yet ſince it is generally agreed, that he was the *Sagan*, (as the *Jews* of latter Days call him, who is the High-Prieſt's Vicar) he might well enough (in a qualified Senſe) be called the *High-prieſt*, eſpecially conſidering his immediate Succeſſion to his Father, and how ſhort his Father's Continuance in the Office was, after this Interview with *David*. Nor can we ſee any great Impropriety in ſaying that ſuch a Thing, was done in *the Days of* Abiathar *the High-prieſt*, though done ſomewhat before he was inveſted with that Dignity; any more, than in ſaying, that ſuch a Thing happened in the Days of *Henry* VIII. which ſtrictly came to paſs ſome Days before he began to reign.

Q. *Did not* David *tell a manifeſt Lie, when he pretended to* Abimelech, *that he was ſent upon the King's Buſineſs?*

A. It muſt be owned, that *David*, in this Pretence, did not ſpeak direct Truth; nor are we, from hence, to take an Example for ſpeaking Lies; but one Thing may be ſaid in his Excuſe, that as he ſaw *Doeg* there, who, he knew, would inform *Saul* of what paſſed between him and *Abimelech*, his Pretence of Buſineſs was on purpoſe to furniſh the High-prieſt (if he were called to an Account) with a better Apology for his Reception of *David*, ſince he knew no other, but that he came Expreſs from the King: And accordingly we may obſerve, that *Abimelech* inſiſts on that chiefly. 'Tis a melancholy Conſideration, however, that the Wicked of the World be ſuch, as to put even excellent Men ſometimes upon the Neceſſity of Lying, to preſerve their Lives, which cannot be ſafe without it.

Q. *How came* Goliah's *Sword to be repoſited in the Tabernacle?*

A. It was an ancient Cuſtom, not only among the *Jews*, but the *Heathens* likewiſe, to hang up the Arms, that were taken from their Enemies, in their Temples; and, in Conformity hereunto, the Sword, wherewith he cut off *Goliah*'s Head, *David* dedicated to the Lord, and delivered to the Prieſt, to be kept as a Monument of his Victory, and of the *Iſraelites* Deliverance. And, as it was cuſtomary to hang up Arms in the Temples, ſo, when the Occaſions of the State required it, it was no unuſual Thing to take them down, and employ them in the publick Service; from whence came that Saying of *Seneca*, *Pro Republica plerumque Templa nudant.*

Q. *What Reaſons might induce* David *to fly to* Achiſh *for Shelter, the profeſſed Enemy of* Iſrael?

A. The *Jews* give a very romantick Reaſon for *David*'s going to *Achiſh*, the King of the *Philiſtines*, *viz.* that it was to demand an Execution of the Treaty, (whereby the Conqueror was to have a ſovereign Power, and Dominion over the Conquered) which *Goliah* propoſed, when he challenged the *Iſraelites*; and that, upon this Account, the chief Miniſters about that King were ſo alarmed at his Arrival, *Is not this* David, *the King of this our Land?* as ſome take the Words. It is apparent, however, from the Context, that the Land, to which theſe Words relate, is *Judea*, and that *David*, at this Time, was in no Condition to make any high Demands.

Saul's Rancour, and Rage againſt him was ſo implacable, and now, that ſo many were turned Informers againſt him, his Power to apprehend him was become ſo great, that there was no ſtaying any longer in his Dominions; and, therefore, *David*'s Buſineſs was to find out ſome ſafe Retreat. All the other neighbouring Princes were at Peace with *Saul*, and muſt have delivered him up, had *Saul* demanded him. *Achiſh* was the only one in Hoſtilities with him, and therefore his Kingdom the moſt proper Place for *David*'s Refuge, where, though he might not hope to lay long concealed, yet, he might nevertheleſs promiſe himſelf kind Quarter, from the Advantages, that would accrue to *Achiſh*, from attaching to his Intereſt a Perſon, that was evidently the Strength of the *Jewiſh*, and the Terror of the *Philiſtine* Army. Hard was the Fate of *David*, it muſt be owned, when he was forced to flie for Protection to thoſe, whom he had Reaſon to believe were his bittereſt Enemies; but many great Men have been compelled to the ſame Thing; *Themiſtocles* to go over to the *Perſians*, and *Alcibiades* to the *Lacedemonians*, without turning Apoſtates to the Intereſt of their Country.

Q. *Was it lawful for* David *to act the Fool, as he did, before* Achiſh?

A. Self-preſervation is one of the firſt Laws of Nature; and therefore, if *David*, when he came to the Court of *Achiſh*, found his Life in manifeſt Danger, I cannot ſee why he might not make Uſe of any Means, conſiſtent with a good Conſcience, for the Preſervation of it. He choſe to perſonate the Fool, becauſe he preſumed, that *Achiſh* would readily conclude, that the Troubles, he had ſuffered, under *Saul*'s Perſecution of him, had ſtupified his Senſes, and turned his Head. But he was not the laſt wiſe Man, who put on that Diſguiſe: For, did not *Solon*, when he found that the *Athenians* were going to ſurrender *Salamine*, his native Country, into the Hands of the People of

Megara, counterfeit the Madman, that he might, with more Impunity, take the Freedom to divert them from it? And *Lucius Brutus*, that wiſe Imitator of the Fool, as he is called, made uſe of the ſame Artifice, to eſcape the Suſpicion of *Tarquin*, who had already murthered his Father, and eldeſt Brother, in order to ſeize on their great Riches?

But ſuppoſing, that there were no Examples of other wiſe Men, to countenance this Practice of *David*'s; yet, wherever did we read, in the Word of God, that Stratagems were not allowable againſt an Enemy? When the *Iſraelites* beſieged *Ai*, God himſelf gave them Orders to make a Feint, as tho' they fled, that they might thereby draw the People out of the City; and can the Difference be ſo great, in pretending to a Want of Courage, and in counterfeiting a Deprivation of Reaſon? A divine Direction indeed was in the one, and we do not read that it was in the other Caſe; but why might not God, who had *David* always under his immediate Care and Protection, put him upon this Expedient, as the only Eſcape he had for his Life? Or, if the Expedient was Matter of his own Invention, ſince the Circumſtances he was in, did abſolutely require it, it cannot deſerve our Blame, according to that common Diſtich, that goes under no leſs a Name, than *Cato*'s.

Inſipiens eſto, cum Tempus poſtulat, aut Res,
Stultitiam ſimulare Loco, Prudentia ſumma eſt.

Q. *Was* David'*s mad Behaviour, before* Achiſh, *real or counterfeit?*

A. If we look into the Scripture Account of this Tranſaction a little more attentively, we may poſſibly perceive, that *David* did not diſſemble, or act a Part upon this Occaſion, but that he was really ſeized with a Diſtemper, and that Diſtemper, in all Probability, was an *Epilepſy*, or *Falling-ſickneſs*.

For, whereas it is ſaid of *David*, that *he was ſtruck to the Heart* (for ſo it ſhould be rendered) *at the Words*, which the Officers of *Achiſh* ſaid to their Maſter, and thereupon *was ſore afraid of the King*, leſt, at their Inſtigation, he ſhould put him to Death; nothing is known to cauſe an *Epilepſy* ſooner, than a ſudden and violent Fright. Whereas it is ſaid in our Tranſlation, that *he changed his Behaviour before them*; the Words in the *Hebrew* are, *his Taſte* (whereby ſome underſtand his Reaſon) *was changed*; but the *Septuagint* ſeem to have hit upon the right Senſe, *his Viſage, or Countenance was changed*; for every one knows what a ſudden Alteration a Fit of this Diſtemper occaſions in any ones Look's: Whereas it is ſaid in our Tranſlation, that he *feigned himſelf mad* in their Hands, the *Septuagint* rendered it, *he trembled*, and was convulſed in his Hands, as having no Power to direct their Motions, which is another known Effect of an Epilepſy: Whereas, again, our Tranſlation ſays, that *he ſcrabled*, or (according to the marginal Note) made Marks *upon the Doors of the Gate*, the *Septuagint* render the Words, *he fell down againſt the Doors of the Gate*, and the *Hebrew* Word *Tava* implies, *with ſuch Force and Violence*, as even to leave Marks or Prints upon them; ſo that he could not but bruiſe and hurt himſelf very much by theſe Falls. But there is ſomething in the Words of *Achiſh*, if we will but adhere to the Verſion of the *Septuagint*, that ſhews *David*'s Diſtemper to have been the *Falling-ſickneſs* beyond all Controverſy: For, whereas our Tranſlation is, *Lo, you ſee the Man is mad, wherefore then have you brought him to me? I have no need of Madmen*; the Words in the *Septuagint* are, *Why did ye bring this Man before me? ye ſee, that he is in an* Epilepſy, *and epileptick Men I do not want*; *why then did you bring him, to be taken with a Fit in my Preſence?* Had *David*, all this while, been only *playing the Fool*, as our Tranſlation makes him, he might poſſibly have given *Achiſh* ſome Diverſion, (as Fools in great Houſes were often kept for Diverſion) by his aukward, or frantick Tricks; but the Horror, wherewith the King was ſtruck at the firſt Sight of him, and his Indignation againſt his Officers, for bringing him into his Preſence, is enough to make one believe, that his Diſtemper made him a *frightful* Object; and therefore the King commanded, immediately to have him removed out of his Preſence, and out of the Place.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that, as *David* had the true Symptoms of an *Epilepſy* upon him, which, in all Probability, was occaſioned by a violent Fright; God, in his good Providence, might permit this Diſtemper to befal him at this Juncture, in order to facilitate his Eſcape out of the Hands of *Achiſh*, and as ſoon as the Danger was over, reſtore him to his former Health again: And therefore we find him, in thoſe Pſalms, which he is thought to have compoſed upon this Occaſion, alluding both to the Nature of his Diſtemper, and to God's Goodneſs, in preſerving him from it, *Great are the Troubles of the Righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of all: He keepeth all his Bones, ſo that not one of them is broken*; and therefore *unto thee, O God, will I pay my Vows; unto thee will I give Thanks? for thou haſt delivered my Soul from Death, and my Feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the Land of the Living.*

CHAP. XXII.

David *hides himſelf in the Cave of* Adullam; *his Brethren and others reſort to him. He goes to* Mizpeh *and commends his Parents to the King of* Moab; *returns to* Judah; Saul *purſues him.* Doeg *accuſes* Ahimelech, *and by* Saul'*s Order, kills him, and* 85 *Prieſts, and the City* Nob *laid waſte*; Abiathar *only eſcapes and flies to* David, *who acknowledges himſelf to be the Cauſe of all this Miſchief.*

Q. *How could* David *receive and countenance ſuch ſort of Perſons as are here ſaid to reſort to him?*

A. David, upon his Eſcape from the Court of *Achiſh*, not knowing of any other Place of Retreat, betook himſelf to the Cave of *Adullam*, where he found it neceſſary to provide for his Security, by putting himſelf upon ſome Foot of Defence. *Jonathan*, from full Conviction, had told him, (as himſelf, from frequent Experience, had found) that his Father, at all Adventures, would endeavour to take away his Life. His Family, by this Time, were fallen under the Diſpleaſure of *Saul*, and were in Danger of being all cut off (as lately were the Prieſts of *Nob*) under Pretence of a *Conſpiracy* againſt him; and therefore it is no Wonder, that his Brethren, having this Apprehenſion of Danger before their Eyes, reſorted to him for their own Security; no Wonder, that, in Times of national

Diſcord, Refugees of all Kinds, either through their private Wants, or the Oppreſſion of their Enemies, a Diſaffection to the Government, or a Zeal for the next Succeſſor, ſhould flock to *David*: Nor was *David* any ways blameable for receiving them, ſince we have abundant Reaſon to preſume, that he took none under his Protection, but ſuch as were forced to fly from *Saul's* Injuſtice and Oppreſſion; nor ſcreened any Debtors, but ſuch, as were under a real Inability to ſatisfy their Creditors, and were therefore neceſſitated, either to leave their Country, or loſe their Liberty. The Submiſſion and Diſcipline, wherein he kept his People, and the high Notions of Reſpect and Reverence, which he always infuſed into them, for the Government, and Perſon of the King, are an ample Teſtimony, that he meditated no Defection or Revolt; and the Debtors, whom he ſecured from cruel Perſecutions, or Slavery, he put in a Condition to pay their Creditors, by leading them againſt the Enemies of *Iſrael*, from whom, in ſeveral Expeditions, they returned laden with rich Spoils.

Q. *In what Part of the Country was the Cave of* Adullam?

A. Adullam was a Town in the Tribe of *Judah*, ten Miles from *Eleutheropolis eaſtward*, where there was a Rock of the ſame Name, in which was a Cave naturally ſtrong, and well fortified, to which *David* retreated; as indeed moſt of the Mountains of *Paleſtine* were full of Caverns, whither the Country People generally betook themſelves for Safety, in Time of War.

Q. *Where lay the Foreſt of* Hareth?

A. Both St. *Jerom*, and *Euſebius*, make Mention of a Place of this Name in the Tribe of *Judah*, lying *weſtward* of *Jeruſalem*; and, not far from hence, muſt be the City of *Keilah*, which *David* relieved, when it was inveſted by the *Philiſtines*.

Q. Abimelech *and the reſt of the Prieſts, being charged with a Conſpiracy againſt the King,* Abimelech *makes his Defence; how does* Joſephus *relate this Matter?*

A. The Speech which *Joſephus* draws up for the High-prieſt, upon this Occaſion, is directed to *Saul*, and conceived in theſe Words: "I did not receive *David* as your Majeſty's Enemy, but as the faithfulleſt of your Friends and Officers, and what is more, in the Quality of your Son too, and a Relation in ſo tender a Degree of Affinity and Alliance. For how ſhould any body imagine, that Man to be your Enemy, upon whom you have conferred ſo many Honours? Or why ſhould not I rather preſume ſuch a Perſon, without any farther Enquiry, to be your ſingular Friend?——He told me, that he was ſent, in haſte, by yourſelf, upon earneſt Buſineſs; and if I had not ſupplied him with what he wanted, it would have reflected an Indignity upon yourſelf, rather than upon him. Wherefore, I hope, that the Blame will not fall upon me, even though *David* ſhould be found as culpable, as you ſuſpect him, unleſs an Act of pure Compaſſion and Humanity, abſtracted from the leaſt Thought, Knowledge or Imagination, of any evil Intention, ſhall be underſtood to make me privy to a Conſpiracy: For, the Service I did him, was Matter of Reſpect to the King's Son-in-law, and the King's military Officer, not to the Perſon, or Intereſt, of *David*."

Q. *Was not the Refuſal of the Soldiers to murder the Prieſts of the Lord, though in ſo doing they diſobeyed the King's poſitive Order, highly commendable?*

A. In this they were to be commended; but much more Praiſe they would have deſerved, if they had offered up their Petitions for theſe innocent People; if they had remonſtrated to the King, that he was going to commit a Thing, that was contrary to all Laws, both divine and human; and if (when they ſaw, that neither their Reaſons nor Petitions availed) they had looked upon this Order, as the Effect of one of the King's diſtracted Fits, and, accordingly, ſeized, and ſecured him until the Prieſts had made their Eſcape, and he returned to a better Mind. For to ſtand wringing their Hands, while they ſaw ſo many innocent Creatures murdered, and foreign Soldiers made the Inſtruments of the King's Cruelty, was much the ſame Thing, as to betray all divine and human Rights, merely to pleaſe a Tyrant. *Le Clerc's* Comment. Vide *Joſephus's Jewiſh* Antiq. l. 6. c. 14. who has upon this Occaſion, a curious Deſcant about the Abuſe of Power in Kings, when once, from a low, they come to be exalted to an high Station of Life.

Q. Saul, *not content with maſſacring ſuch a Number of Prieſts, orders a Party to go and deſtroy their City, and every living Creature therein: Who was at the Head of this Party?*

A. This Party, as *Joſephus* informs us, was commanded by *Doeg*, the vile Informer, and Murderer, who, *taking ſome Men, as wicked as himſelf, to his Aſſiſtance*, ſlew, in all, *three hundred and eighty five Perſons*, and, in Addition to theſe, 'tis thought by ſome, that the *Gibeonites* (upon whoſe Account there was ſo ſore a Famine in the Days of *David*) were, at this Time, ſlain. 'Tis certain *Saul* was now become a mere Tyrant, and againſt thoſe poor People acted more cruelly, than he did againſt the *Amalekites*, ſome of whom he ſpared, even contrary to God's Command; but in this Caſe he let none eſcape, on Purpoſe to deter others from giving the leaſt Shelter or Aſſiſtance to *David*, and to incite them the rather to come, and give him Information of his Haunts, or Lurking-places.

CHAP. XXIII.

David *reſcues* Keilah; *flies thence to the Wilderneſs of* Ziph; *where* Jonathan *comes to him, and renews the Covenant of Friendſhip between them. The* Ziphites *diſcover him to* Saul, *who purſues him into the Wilderneſs of* Maon, *but is called away to oppoſe the* Philiſtines. David *dwells at* Engedi.

Q. WHAT *induced* David *to attempt the Relief of* Keilah?

A. We read of no Embaſſy, that the People of *Keilah* ſent to *David*, to deſire his Aſſiſtance, nor of any particular Affection they had for him; and therefore we may ſuppoſe, that *David* undertook this Expedition, out of pure Love to his Countrymen, to let the World ſee how ſerviceable he could be to them, in caſe he was reſtored to his Dignity again; and that, (what ill Treatment ſoever, he ſhould meet with from the Hand of *Saul*,) nothing ſhould provoke him to abandon his Love for his Country.

Q. *From* Keilah David *retired into the Deſarts of* Ziph: *Where lay this Place?*

A. In *Joſhua* xv. 55. we read of a Town of this Name, where Mention is likewiſe made of *Carmel* and *Maon*, and therefore it probably was adjacent to them: And here, in the Story of *David* we find *Carmel* and *Maon* mentioned as adjoining to *Ziph*; ſo that it is not to be doubted, but that, by the *Ziph*, in the Wilderneſs of which *David* now concealed himſelf, we are to underſtand the *Ziph*, which was in the Neighbourhood of *Carmel* and *Maon*, in the *ſouthern* Part of the Tribe of *Judah*, and, according to St. *Jerom*, about eight Miles *eaſtward* from *Hebron*.

Q. David *having with great Difficulty got clear of* Saul, *went and dwelt in ſtrong Holds at* Engedi; *Where was this Place?*

A. En-gedi, in the Days of St. *Jerom*, was a large Village, ſituate in the Deſerts, which lay upon the *weſtern* Coaſts of the *Salt* or *Dead-ſea*, not very far from the Plains of *Jericho*; and, as the Country thereabout abounded with Mountains, and theſe Mountains had plenty of vaſt Caves in them, it was a commodious Place for *David* to retire to, and conceal himſelf in.

CHAP. XXIV.

Saul *purſues* David *to* En-gedi; *comes to a Cave in which were* David *and his Men*; David *cuts off* Saul's *Skirt, but will not kill him; he talks to* Saul, *and vindicates his own Innocence.* Saul *acknowledges his Fault, takes an Oath of* David, *and departs.*

Q. HOW *did* David *cut off* Saul's *Skirt without his perceiving it?*

A. This poſſibly might be ſome upper looſe Garment, which *Saul* might put off, and lay aſide at ſome Diſtance from him, upon this Occaſion; and that, as there were ſeveral Rooms, or particular Cells in theſe large Caverns, which might have ſecret Paſſages from one another, *Saul*, at the Mouth of one of theſe Cells, might lay down his upper Garment, which *David* perceiving, and knowing all the Paſſages of the Place, might go ſome ſecret Way, and cut off ſome ſmall Part of it: Nor could the Noiſe, which *David*'s Motion might make, be well heard by *Saul*, becauſe it muſt have been drowned by the much greater Noiſe, which *Saul*'s Army, waiting for him at the Mouth of the Cave, may be ſuppoſed to make.

Q. *As* Saul *was* David's *profeſſed Enemy, and in daily Purſuit of his Life, did* David *act a prudent Part in ſparing his Life, when it was in his Power to have taken it away?*

A. It cannot, with Juſtice, be ſaid, that *David* was any ways culpable, in ſparing the Life of *Saul*, even when Providence ſeems to have put it in his Hand. This Trial God made of his Virtue, and Clemency, and a glorious Conqueſt it was, not only to overcome his own Reſentments, which were juſtly enough founded againſt *Saul*, but the Arguments and Inſtigations likewiſe of thoſe about him; *Behold the Day, of which the Lord ſaid unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine Enemy into thine Hand, that thou mayſt do to him, as it ſhall ſeem good unto thee.* God had delivered him into his Hand indeed, but had given him no Order, or Permiſſion, to ſlay *Saul*. He had promiſed him the Kingdom likewiſe, but would, by no Means, allow him to aſcend the Throne. His Title to the Succeſſion was real, and inconteſtable, but not allowed to be put in Force, or himſelf to attempt, by Ways of Violence, the Poſſeſſion of the Crown, as long as *Saul* was permitted by God to reign, and recognized, as *Sovereign*, by the People. *David*, as yet, being only a private Man, had no Authority to wage War againſt *Saul*; and, though it be allowable for any one to defend himſelf againſt an unjuſt Aggreſſor, and to repel Force by Force, yet this muſt be done only in order to ſecure his own Life, and not to take away that of his Adverſary; for what the Apoſtles ſay of *judging*, or cenſuring, is much more forcible in the Matter of *killing*: *Who art thou that judgeſt another Man's Servant? To his own Maſter he ſtandeth or falleth; for there is one Lawgiver who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy: Who art thou then that judgeſt another?* And theſe Rules, which ought to be preſerved by private Perſons, are much more extenſive, when they relate to a Prince and his Subject. The Subject is obliged in Duty, even though he be innocent, to bear patiently the ill Treatment of his Prince. *David*, no doubt, was conſcious of his own Integrity, but, were it not for the preceding Promiſes of God in his Favour, and the Orders, which, from Time to Time, he received from the High-prieſt's Oracle, it would not be ſo eaſy a Matter to juſtify his Conduct. His flying from his Country, inliſting Men, and putting himſelf in a Condition of Defence, would, even under our mild Government, be looked upon as *ſeditious* and *rebellious* Proceedings: And therefore we may ſuppoſe, that *David* himſelf might not have ſo favourable an Opinion of the Courſe of Life, he was compelled, at that Time, to follow; might think that he gave ſome Umbrage to *Saul's* Jealouſy, and Suſpicion of him; and might thereupon be the more inclinable to excuſe the Violence of his Perſecution, and to make no other Uſe of the Advantages, he had againſt him, than to demonſtrate his own Innocence, and the Groundleſſneſs of the other's Suſpicions; for ſuch ſeems to be the Senſe of his own Words. *Wherefore doth my Lord thus purſue after his Servant? For, what have I done, or what Evil is in my Hand? Wherefore heareſt thou Men's Words, ſaying,* David *ſeeketh thy Hurt? Behold this Day thine Eyes have ſeen, how the Lord had delivered thee into mine Hand in the Cave, but mine Eye ſpared thee,* therefore *curſed be they before the Lord*, who make this Difference betwixt us, *for they have driven me out this Day, from abiding in the Inheritance of the Lord*; for herein he not only pleads his own Innocence, and good Intentions towards the King, but, in ſome meaſure, excuſes the King's Conduct towards him, as being under the Influence of *evil Counſellors*, which both impoſed upon the King's Credulity, and compelled him to ſuch a Method of Life, as was far from being agreeable to his Intereſt, or Inclination.

Q. David *having demonſtrated his own Innocence, by ſparing* Saul, *when he was in his Power,* Saul *conjures him, and* David *ſolemnly promiſes, not to deſtroy his Family: But how did he keep his Word, when he ſlew ſo many of his Sons,* 2 Sam. xxi. 8.

A. That this Promiſe of *David*'s could never be *abſolute* or *unconditional*, becauſe, upon Suppoſition that any of *Saul*'s Family had become *rebellious*, they had nevertheleſs been obnoxious to the Sword of Juſtice; that, though *David* could bind himſelf with his Oath, yet he could not bind God, to whoſe Will and Pleaſure all private Obligations muſt be ſubmitted, and, what is more, that this Execution was not done by *David*'s Order, but at the Deſire of the *Gibeonites*, to whom God had promiſed that Satisfaction ſhould be made, for *Saul*'s bloody Endeavours to deſtroy them.

CHAP. XXV.

Samuel *dies.* David *goes to the Wilderneſs of* Paran. Nabal's *Riches; his ſurly Anſwer to* David's *Meſſengers.* Abigail *pacifies* David's *Anger.* Nabal's *Death.* David *marries* Abigail *and* Ahinoam; *his Wiſe* Michal *being given to* Phalti.

Q. WHEN *did* Samuel *die, and what was his Character?*

A. The *Jews* are of Opinion, that *Samuel* died only four Months before *Saul*, but, by the Generality of Chriſtian Chronologers, he is ſuppoſed to have died about two Years before the Death of that Prince, and in the ninety-eighth Year of his Age; twenty of which had been ſpent in the Government of *Iſrael* (though Sir *J. Marſham* will have it no more than ſixteen) before *Saul*'s Inauguration, after which he lived about eighteen. He was at firſt interred at *Ramah*, but, in the Time of the Emperor *Arcadius*, his Body was tranſported from *Paleſtine* to *Conſtantinople*; and, as St. *Jerom* informs us, received both by the Clergy and Laity with a Joy unſpeakable, and Honours almoſt infinite. He was indeed, while he lived, an excellent Governor, and, through his whole Adminiſtration, above Vanity, Corruption or any private Views. Thoſe that attend to his Life, may obſerve, that he was modeſt without Meanneſs, mild without Weakneſs, firm without Obſtinacy, and ſevere without Harſhneſs; or, as the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus* has recorded his Actions, and conſecrated this *Eulogy* to his Memory——Samuel, *the Prophet of the Lord, ſays he, beloved of the Lord, eſtabliſhed a Kingdom, and anointed Princes over his People. By the Law of the Lord he judged the Congregation, and the Lord had Reſpect unto* Jacob. *By his Faithfulneſs he was found a true Prophet, and by his Word he was known to be faithful in Viſion. He called upon the mighty God, when his Enemies preſſed upon him on every Side, when he offered the ſucking Lamb; and the Lord thundered from Heaven, and with a great Noiſe made his Voice to be heard. He deſtroyed the Rulers of the* Syrians, *and all the Princes of the* Philiſtines. *Before his long Sleep, he made Proteſtations in the Sight of the Lord, and his Anointed, and after his Death he propheſied, and ſhewed the King his End,* Ecclus. xlvi. 13. *&c.* But, beſides the Things that are recorded of this Prophet in the firſt Book of *Samuel*, there are ſome other Paſſages concerning him in the firſt Book of *Chronicles*, as that he enriched the Tabernacle with rich Spoils, which he took from the Enemies of *Iſrael* during his Adminiſtration, *Ch.* xxvi. 28. That he aſſiſted in regulating the Diſtribution of the *Levites*, which *David* afterwards preſcribed for the Service of the Temple, Chap ix. 22. And laſtly, that he wrote the Hiſtory of *David*, in Conjunction with the Prophet *Nathan* and *Gad*, which can be meant only of the Beginning of that Hiſtory, ſince he was dead before *David* came to the Throne, which, by the other two Prophets, might be continued, and concluded. There is great Probability indeed, that he compoſed the twenty four firſt Chapters of the firſt Book of *Samuel*, which contains the Beginning of *David*'s Life, and ſeveral hiſtorical Facts wherein he himſelf had a large Share; but as for the latter Part of it, it was impoſſible for him to write it, becauſe in the Beginning of this Chapter there is Mention made of his Death.

Q. *Among other Things which* Abigail *prepared as a Preſent for* David, *were* two Bottles of Wine, *which ſeem very diſproportioned to the other Parts of the Preſent, and but a Trifle among an Army of Men.*

A. It muſt be obvious to every Reader, that *two Bottles of Wine* would bear no Proportion to the other Parts of the Preſent, nor anſwer the Exigencies, which *David*'s Army might be in, if they be underſtood of ſuch Bottles as are now commonly in uſe with us: But in theſe *Eaſtern* Countries, they uſed to carry and keep their Wine and Water in Leathern Bags, which were made on Purpoſe to hold liquid Things, which Veſſels they called, or, at leaſt, we tranſlate them Bottles. Such were the Bottles which the *Gibeonites* brought to *Joſhua*'s Camp, which they ſaid were worn out, in their pretended long Journey, *Joſh.* ix. 15. And of ſuch as thoſe it is not unlikely, that our Saviour ſpeaks, *Matth.* ix. 17. where in the marginal Note of our old Bible, Bottles are explained by Bags of Leather, or Skins, wherein Wine was carried on Aſſes or Camels: And that two ſuch Veſſels as theſe might hold a Quantity of Wine proportionate to the reſt of the Preſent, which *Abigail* carried with her, needs not to be diſputed.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Abigail's *Speech to* David.

A. The Speech, which the ſacred Hiſtorian puts in *Abigail*'s Mouth, upon this Occaſion, is certainly an artful Piece of Eloquence, full of fine Turns and Inſinuations; nor is that of *Joſephus*, eſpecially in the Concluſion, much amiſs:——Be pleaſed, "Sir, I beſeech you, to accept of the good Will "of your poor Servant in theſe ſmall Preſents, and "upon my humble Requeſt, to paſs over the Offence of my Husband, who has ſo juſtly incurred your Diſpleaſure; for there is nothing ſo "well becoming the Character of a Perſon, whom "Providence deſigns for a Crown, as Clemency "and Compaſſion."

Q. *When* Abigail *had told* Nabal, *of the Danger with which he had been threatned, it's ſaid, that* he became as a Stone; *pray explain this Expreſſion?*

A. The Words in the Original are, *He became a Stone*, but our Tranſlation has wiſely ſupplied the Particle *as*, which ſhould always be done, when the Scripture affirms ſomething of another, that is not abſolutely of the ſame Nature. We may obſerve however, that this Manner of Expreſſion is very common among profane Authors. Thus *Ovid* brings in *Ariadne* expreſſing her Grief, and Aſtoniſhment, at the Loſs of *Theſeus*, who had left her in the Iſland *Dia*. The like Expreſſion is uſed of *Niobe*, who is ſaid to be turned into a Statue of Stone, *Cicero*, in his *Tuſculan* Queſtions, obſerves, that this Fable only repreſents her perpetual Silence in Mourning: And accordingly *Joſephus* tell us of *Nabal*, that, when his Wife told him of the Danger he had eſcaped, he was ſtruck with ſuch an Aſtoniſhment, that he fell into dead Numbneſs all his Body over, of which he ſoon died.

Q. *But, after all, was* David *excuſable in carrying his Reſentment to ſuch a dreadful Extremity?*

A. Upon many Accounts, it was an Act of a great and generous Soul, for *David* to ſpare the Life of his ſevereſt Enemy: But though we cannot, in like manner, juſtify his Indignation againſt *Nabal*, and the Oath, which he ſwore to deſtroy his whole Family; yet ſomething may be offered in Excuſe of it, if we attend a little to what occaſioned it, and the too common Effects, which ſuch Treatment, as *Nabal*'s was, is apt to have upon ſuch Spirits, as we may ſuppoſe *David*'s to have been. *David*, while he continued in the Wilderneſs of *Paran*, had given his Men Charge, not only to do no Injury to *Nabal*'s Shepherds and Herdſmen, but even to protect and aſſiſt them, in Caſe they were invaded by any of the neighbouring *Arabians*; and now, that their Maſter was ſhearing his Sheep (which was always a feſtival Seaſon) not far from that Place, where *David* was encamped; to ſhew him the greater Reſpect, he ſent no leſs, than *ten young Men* of his Company, to make his Compliments to him, and, in the moſt civil Manner, to requeſt ſomething of him, (as it was the Cuſtom to be generous and liberal at ſuch a Time as that) for the Relief of himſelf, and his Followers, in this Form: *Peace be to thee*, (as the young Men's Inſtructions were) *and Peace be to thine Houſe, and Peace be to all that thou haſt. Peace*, in the ſacred Language, comprehends all Manner of Bleſſings, both ſpiritual and temporal, therefore an higher Compliment, (as we ſay) or a more affectionate Salutation, could not have been deviſed. *And now I have heard, that thou haſt Shearers; and thy Shepherds, which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought miſſing unto them, all the while that they were in* Carmel: A ſufficient Argument, one would think, to engage *Nabal*'s grateful Acknowledgement; becauſe it certainly was a Matter of no ſmall Courteſy, for a Body of Men, in Arms, and in want of the common Neceſſaries of Life, not to take by Violence what they could not be hindred from. Such Men claim a kind of Licence to do Injuries with Impunity, and therefore it ought to be deemed a great Favour, when they do them not. *David*, and his Men however are ſo far from magnifying their Services to *Nabal*, that they only ſay, *they did them no hurt*; whereas his own Servants acknowledge, *that they were* a Defence, *and a Wall to them, both by Night and by Day, all the while, that they were with them keeping Sheep.* Upon this Preſumption, the Matter of their Requeſt was, *Let the young Men find Favour in thine Eyes (for we come in a good Day) give, I pray thee, whatſoever cometh unto thine Hand unto thy Servants, and thy Son* David. Words can hardly be invented more full of Reſpect and Humility; for he pays a Deference to *Nabal*, either upon the Account of his Seniority, or Deſcent from the ſame Tribe, and deſires no Rarities, no Delicates, but any Thing that firſt came to hand, and what he could moſt conveniently ſpare.

Nabal (as I juſt now hinted) was of the ſame Tribe with *David*, and could not therefore be ſuppoſed ignorant, or in the leaſt unacquainted neither of his Exploits, in Defence of his Country, nor of the true Cauſe of *Saul*'s Indignation againſt him; and yet, obſerve the Rudeneſs and Inſolence of his Anſwer, to ſuch a civil Meſſage, and humble Requeſt, *Who is* David, *and who is the Son of* Jeſſe? *There are many Servants, now-a-days, that break every Man from his Maſter. Shall I* take the Proviſions I have made *for my Shearers*, and *give them unto Men, whom I know not whence they are?* Nothing certainly could be more provoking, than ſuch an Anſwer as this. The charging *David* with being a *Vagabond*, and Rebel to his Prince, was a Reproach inſufferable to a Man of a liberal Spirit, who knew himſelf innocent: And therefore no Wonder that *David*, upon the Report of the Meſſengers, who were themſelves brought under the ſame *Predicament*, and therefore had no Reaſon to alleviate Matters, was reſolved, in his Paſſion, to be revenged upon *Nabal*. For, there were four Things, in the Matter before us, that ſeem to have inflamed his Reſentment, and put him upon this ſanguinary Deſign. 1ſt, The Want, which both he, and his Companions, at preſent, laboured under, but hoped to be relieved, out of the Abundance of a wealthy Man, who might eaſily have done it without hurting himſelf. 2dly, The Deception he was under, in finding no Compenſation made him, for the Care, which he, and his People, had taken of *Nabal*'s Cattle, tho' perhaps he had given them his Word and Aſſurance, that ſomething of this Kind would be done. 3dly, The Reſentment, which eaſily riſes in the Breaſt of any generous Man, when, inſtead of Thanks, and a grateful Acknowledgement, he meets with Contumely and opprobrious Language. And 4thly, The Vexation, which an innocent Man, conſcious of his own Merits, and the Services he had done his King and Country, muſt neceſſarily feel, when he perceives himſelf vilified, and treated as a Scoundrel.

Any one of theſe Things ſingly was enough to irritate a Man of a lofty Spirit; but put together could hardly fail of inflaming the Mind to ſuch a Degree, as to make him loſe the Government of his Paſſion, and fall into the moſt vindictive Rage, which is generally more obſervable in military Men, whoſe Courage and Spirits run high, and, being too much accuſtomed to Blood and Slaughter, even in lawful Wars, have not that Dread and Abhorrence of cruel and outrageous Executions, as the reſt of Mankind have, who live more retired and peaceable Lives.

'Twas to the ſudden Tranſport of *David*'s Paſſion then, and perhaps that exaſperated by the Inſtigations of his own Men, that we are to impute his Vow, and Deſign of deſtroying *Nabal*'s Family: And, though in this we cannot commend him, yet certainly there is ſomething Praiſe-worthy in his ſpeedy Reconciliation, upon *Abigail*'s firſt Addreſs, and Application to him, in the room of her Huſband: *Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael, *which ſent thee this Day, to meet me, and bleſſed be thy Advice, and bleſſed be thou, which has kept me, this Day from coming to ſhed Blood, and from avenging myſelf with my own Hand.*

Q. *What was* Saul's *Reaſon for giving his Daughter,* David's *Wife, to another?*

A. The Reaſon of *Saul's* putting this Indignity upon *David*, was to extinguiſh, as far as he could, all Relation and Kindred, and to cut off his Hopes and Pretences to the Crown upon that Account: But, as the *Jewiſh* Doctors are of Opinion, that this *Phalti*, to whom ſhe was given, was a very pious Man, and would never approach her, becauſe ſhe was another Man's Wife, and as *David* had never been divorced from her, he received her again, when he came to the Throne.

Chap. XXVI.

Saul, *by the Information of the* Ziphites, *ſeeks* David *in the Hill of* Hachilah. David *and* Abiſhai *come to* Saul's *Camp, and take his Spear and Cruſe*; *upbraids* Abner; *expoſtulates with* Saul, *who acknowledges his Sin.*

Q. WHAT *are we to think of* Saul's *renewing his Purſuit of* David, *after ſuch convincing Proofs as had been given of his Innocence?*

A. The Inconſtancy, Falſeneſs, and implacable Rage of this Prince is really inconceiveable. Not long ago he was obliged to *David* for his Life, and acknowledged his Error, and made *Daaid* ſwear, that he would be kind and merciful to his Poſterity; and yet now he openly declares himſelf again his Enemy, and goes in Purſuit of him to kill him.

Q. *Was it not a raſh Action in* David *and* Abiſhai *to go into* Saul's *Army?*

A. This may ſeem a bold and ſtrange Attempt, for two Perſons to go into the midſt of an Army of three thouſand choſen Men; but, in Anſwer to this, many Things may be conſidered, as that, according to the Accounts of many credible Hiſtorians, ſeveral gallant Men have attempted Things of no leſs Danger and Difficulty, than this was; that *David* had all along Aſſurance given him, that God would preſerve him, in all Dangers, to ſucceed in the Kingdom; and that, at this Time, he might have a particular Impulſe and Incitement from God, to go upon this Enterpriſe, and poſſibly be informed by him, that he had caſt them into a deep Sleep, that he might give him this ſecond Opportunity of manifeſting his Innocence, and the Juſtneſs of his Cauſe, to *Saul.*

Q. *When* David *was got back to a convenient Diſtance from* Saul's *Camp, he ironically upbraids* Abner *for want of Care over his Royal Maſter: What does* Joſephus *make* David *ſay on this Occaſion?*

A. The Speech, which *David* makes to *Abner*, according to *Joſephus*, is to this Effect:——"Are not you a fit Man to be a Prince's Favourite, a General of his Army, to take upon you the Guard of his royal Perſon, and, under all theſe honourable Obligations, to lie dozing, and ſtretching yourſelf at eaſe, when your Maſter's Life is in Danger? Can you tell me what is become of the King's Launce, and the Pitcher of Water, that were this Night taken by the Enemy out of his Tent, and from his very Bed-ſide, and you, in the mean Time, all ſnoring about him, without knowing any Thing of the Matter? Whether this was Neglect or Treachery, 'tis the ſame Thing, you certainly ought to loſe your Head for it."

Chap. XXVII.

David *with his Men, and all his Family, go over to* Achiſh. Saul *ceaſes his Purſuit after him.* David *obtains* Ziklag *to dwell in*; *he invades ſome adjacent Nations, which he utterly deſtroys*; *and perſuades* Achiſh *he had fought againſt* Judah.

Q. DAVID, *to avoid* Saul's *Perſecution, goes over, with his Followers to* Achiſh: *Was this the ſame* Achiſh *with whom, once before,* David *took Shelter?*

A. This is a Matter of ſome Conjecture: But whoever it was, 'tis highly probable, that he either had invited *David* to come thither for his Security, or that *David* had ſent before-hand Embaſſadors to treat with him, and to obtain his royal Promiſe of Protection; and this we are the rather induced to believe, becauſe both found their Advantage by this Alliance: *David* ſecured himſelf againſt the Perſecutions of *Saul*, and *Achiſh*, knowing *David's* Valour, and the Number of Troops, which came along with him, thought he ſhould give a powerful Diverſion to the Forces of *Iſrael*, if he could at this Time attach *David* to his Intereſt. But whether *David* did well or ill, in either ſueing for, or accepting of the Protection of this foreign King, is a Point that we ſhall have Occaſion to diſcuſs hereafter.

Q. *In what Part of the Country was* Ziklag *ſituated?*

A. Ziklag was ſituate in the extreme Parts of the Tribe of *Judah* ſouthwards, not far from *Hormah*, where the *Iſraelites* received a Defeat, while they ſojourned in the Wilderneſs. In the Diviſion of the Land of *Canaan*, it was firſt given to the Tribe of *Judah*, Joſh. xv. 31. and afterwards to that of *Simeon*, Joſh. xix. 5. but the *Philiſtines* ſeem all along to have kept Poſſeſſion, ſo that it never came into the Hands of either Tribe, until, by the Gift of *Achiſh*, it became the peculiar Inheritance of *David*, and his Succeſſors. Why *David* deſired of *Achiſh* the Liberty, to retire to this Place, was, to avoid the Envy, which the Number of his Attendants might poſſibly occaſion; to ſecure his People from the Infection of Idolatry; to enjoy the free Exerciſe of his own Religion; and to gain an Opportunity of enterpriſing ſomething againſt the Enemies of God, without the Knowledge or Obſervation of the *Philiſtines*.

Q. *Where were theſe* Amalekites, (*whoſe Country* David *here inveſted*) *when* Saul *utterly deſtroyed that People?*

A. In Chap. xv. Ver. 7. we read, that *Saul ſmote the* Amalekites, *and utterly deſtroyed all the People with the Edge of the Sword*; and yet we find here *David* making frequent Incurſions upon *Amalekites*; and therefore the Meaning of the former Paſſage muſt be, that *Saul* deſtroyed as many of them, as fell into his Hands, for ſeveral of them might make their Eſcape from *Saul* into the Deſarts, that lay towards *Arabia-fœlix*, and, upon his Retreat, return and repoſſeſs their old Habitation.

Q. *Was not* David's *Anſwer to* Achiſh, *when he aſk'd him what Expedition he had been upon, equivocal?*

A. The Words, wherein *David* anſwered this Queſtion of *Achiſh*, *Whither have ye made a Road to day?* are theſe, *againſt the South of* Judah, *and againſt the South of the* Jerahmeelites, *and againſt the South of the* Kenites? Ver. 10. By which Nations *David*, in reality, meant the *Geſhurites*, and the *Gezerites*, who were both of them Relicts

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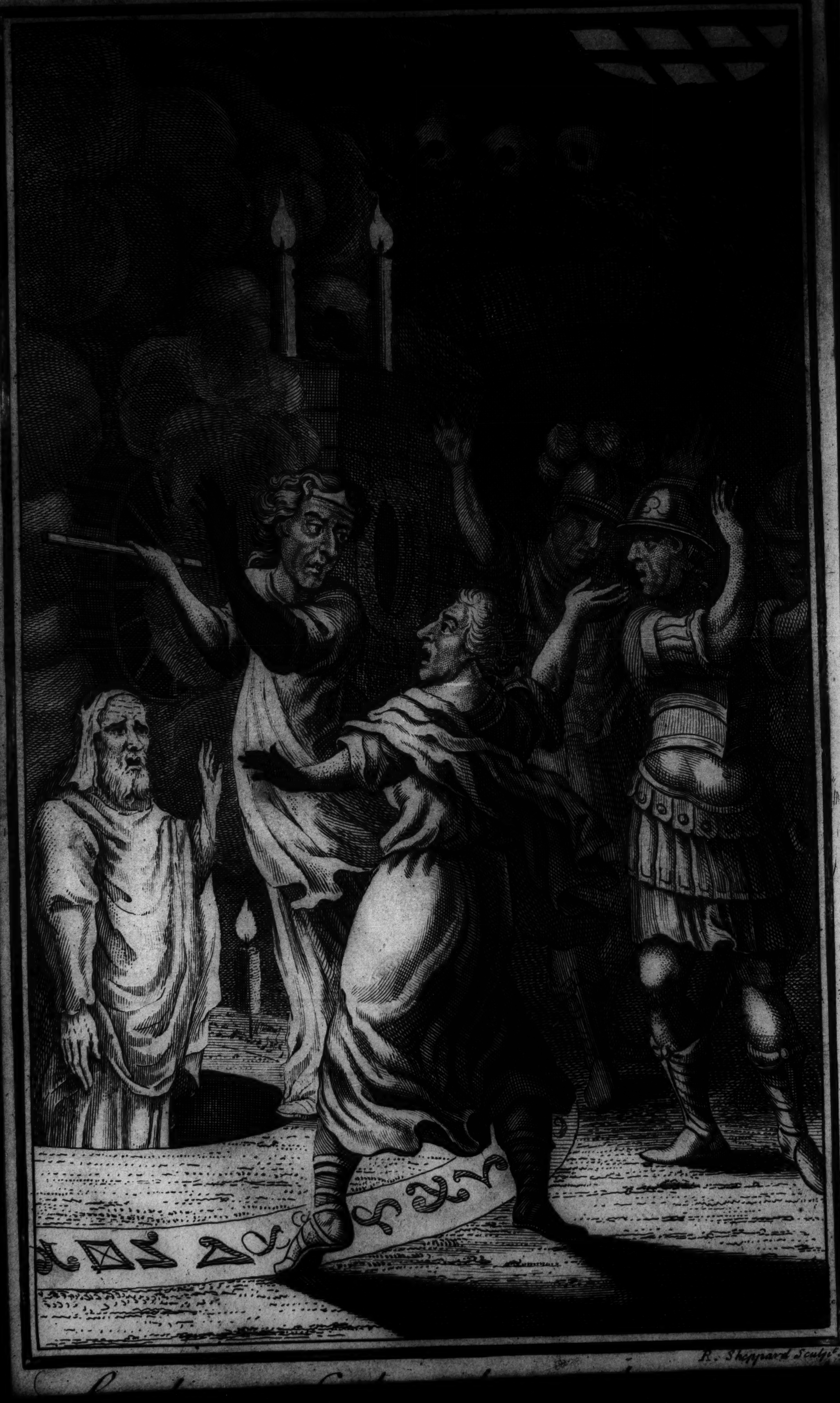
I. SAMUEL CHAP. XXVIII.



R. Sheppard Sculp.

of the *Canaanites* whom God ordered to be extirpated, and who did, in truth, live to the *South* of *Judah*; but *Achiſh* underſtood him in a quite contrary Senſe, *viz.* that he had fallen upon his own Countrymen. So that, ſince the Formality of a Lye conſiſts in our impoſing upon thoſe, with whom we converſe, we cannot but allow, that though *David*'s Anſwer may not be called a downright Lye, yet it is an Equivocation, with an Intent to deceive, badly comporting with that Honeſty, and Simplicity, which became *David*, both as a Prince, and Profeſſor of the true Religion, wherein he is no way to be excuſed, and much leſs to be imitated.

Chap. XXVIII.

Achiſh *relies on* David *for his Aſſiſtance in the War intended againſt* Iſrael. Saul, *being forſaken of God, conſults a Witch, who raiſes* Samuel, *by whom he is inform'd of his approaching Fate; he faints, but is refreſhed by the Woman and his Servants.*

Q. WAS David *juſtifiable in conſenting to aſſiſt* Achiſh *againſt* Iſrael?

A. How well ſoever we wiſh to *David*'s Character, there is no vindicating his Conduct in this Particular. Which Party ſoever he had taken, he muſt have been culpable; and one Party he muſt have taken, had not Providence ſo timely interpoſed, to preſerve his Honour without injuring his Conſcience. However, if we ſhould ſuppoſe any thing in Extenuation of his Fault, we muſt repreſent to ourſelves a Fugitive, purſued by a formidable Enemy, and, every Moment, in Danger of falling into his Hands; this Fugitive kindly received at a foreign Court, and protected by a Prince, that was in Hoſtility with his Perſecutor; this Prince expecting Refuge, in Conſideration of the Favours, he had conferred on him, that he ſhould attend him to the War, and eſpouſe his Cauſe againſt their common Enemy; and, all this while, the other, bound in Gratitude not to be uncivil, and conſidering the dangerous Situation of his own Affairs, not daring to diſcover his real Purpoſes: If we imagine, this, I ſay, we muſt allow, that if in any Caſe, what they call *Fineſſe* in Policy to be allowable, it was in this of *David*'s, when he had unhappily brought himſelf into ſuch intricate Circumſtances.

Q. *How came* Saul *to be ſo mightily afraid of the* Philiſtines, *whom he had often vanquiſhed?*

A. The *Philiſtines* muſt have had in this War, ſeveral hired Forces, otherwiſe *Saul* had no Reaſon to have been afraid of them, becauſe the ſmall Tract which the *Philiſtines* inhabited, could not poſſibly ſupply them with an Army any Thing equal to the *Hebrews*, who, in ſome of their Wars, have carried to the Field ſome hundred Thouſands of Men.

Q. *Many are the Conjectures and Diſputes among the Learned, in Relation to* Saul's *conſulting the Witch of* Endor; *I deſire therefore a particular and copious Explanation of this intricate Affair. In order to which, pray inform me of the Antiquity of* Necromancy, *and when it had its Beginning?*

A. How long the Profeſſion of *Necromancy*, or the Art of raiſing up the Dead, in order to pry into future Events, or to be informed of the Fate of the Living, has obtained in the World, we have no Indications from Hiſtory. We perceive no Footſteps of it in the Ages before the Flood, and yet it is ſtrange, that a People, abandoned to all Kind of Wickedneſs, in a Manner, could keep themſelves clear of this; but our Account of theſe Times is very ſhort. The firſt expreſs Mention that we meet with, of Magicians and Sorcerers is almoſt in the Beginning of the Book of *Exodus*, where *Moſes* is ſolliciting the Deliverance of the Children of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*; and therefore *Egypt*, which affected to be the Mother of moſt occult Sciences, is ſuppoſed to have been the Inventreſs of this. From *Egypt* it ſpread itſelf into the neighbouring Countries, and ſoon infected all the *Eaſt*; for, as it undertook to gratify Man's Inquiſitiveneſs, and ſuperſtitious Curioſity, it could not long want Abetters. From *Egypt*, it is certain, that the *Iſraelites* brought it along with them, notwithſtanding all the Care that the State had taken to ſuppreſs them, and the Proviſion which God made, by eſtabliſhing a Method of conſulting him, to prevent their hankering after them.

Q. *How ſtood the* Jewiſh *Laws with reſpect to this diabolical Art?*

A. The Injunction of the Law is very expreſs, Deut. xviii. 9, *&c.* *When thou art come into the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou ſhalt not learn to do after the Abominations of thoſe Nations. There ſhall not be found among you any that uſeth Divination, or a Witch, or a Charmer, or a Conſulter with familiar Spirits, or a Wizard, or a Necromancer; for all, that do theſe Things, are an Abomination to the Lord: And* therefore their Puniſhment was this, Levit. xx. 27. *A Man or a Woman, that hath a familiar Spirit, or that is a Wizard, ſhall ſurely be put to Death: They ſhall ſtone them with Stones, their Blood ſhall be upon them.* Nor was it only the Practicers of ſuch vile Arts, but thoſe likewiſe that reſorted to them upon any Occaſion, that were liable to the ſame Puniſhment; for, Verſe 6. *The Soul, that turneth after ſuch, as have familiar Spirits, and after Wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even ſet my Face againſt that Soul, and will cut him off from among his People,* ſaith the Lord.

Such was the Severity of the *Jewiſh* Laws againſt thoſe, who either practiſed, or encouraged any Manner of magical Arts; and it muſt be ſaid, in *Saul*'s Commendation, that he had put the Laws in Execution againſt ſuch vile People; he had deſtroyed and drove away *thoſe that had familiar Spirits, and the Wizards out of the Land*; and yet, (obſerve the Weakneſs, as well as the Wickedneſs of the Man!) when himſelf fell into Diſtreſs, and had abundant Reaſon to believe that God had forſaken him, he flees to one of theſe Creatures for Relief, and requeſts of her to raiſe up his old Friend *Samuel*, as expecting, very probably, ſome Advice from him: But, whether this was really done, or no, or if done, in what Manner it was effected, are Points that have ſo much exerciſed the Heads and Pens, both of antient and modern *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Writers, that little or nothing new can be ſaid upon them; and therefore all that I ſhall endeavour to do, will be to reduce their ſeveral Sentiments into as narrow a Compaſs, and to ſtate them in as fair a Light as I can, by enquiring into theſe three Particulars.

1. Whether there was a real Apparition.
2. What this Apparition (if real) was; and,

3. By what Means, and for what Purpoſes, it was effected.

1. It cannot be denied, indeed, but that thoſe, who explode the Reality of the Apparition, and make it to be nothing but a Cheat and Juggle of the Sorcereſs, have found out ſome Arguments, that at firſt Sight make a tolerable Appearance. They tell us, that the ſacred Hiſtory never once makes mention of *Saul's* ſeeing *Samuel* with his own Eyes. It informs us, indeed, that *Saul* knew him by the Deſcription which the Woman gave, and that he held, for ſome conſiderable Time, a Converſation with him; but, ſince it is no where ſaid that he really ſaw him, *Why might not the Woman counterfeit a Voice*, ſay they, *and pretend it was* Samuel's? *When* Saul *asked her to raiſe up* Samuel, i. e. *to diſturb the Ghoſt of ſo great a Prophet, ſhe might think he was no common Man; and when* he ſware unto her by the Lord, *that he would defend her from all Danger, he gave her Intimation enough that he was the King. The crafty woman therefore having picked up the Knowledge of this, might retire into her Cloſet, and there, having her Familiar,* i. e. *ſome cunning artful Man, to make proper Reſponſes, in a different Voice, might eaſily impoſe upon one, who was diſtracted with anxious Thoughts, and had already ſhewn ſufficient Credulity, in thinking there was any Efficacy in magical Operations to evocate the Dead.*

The Controverſy between Saul *and* David, *every one knew, nor was it now become a Secret, that the Crown was to devolve upon the latter; and therefore that Part of the Diſcourſe which paſſed between* Saul *and* Samuel, *any man of a common Genius might have hit off, without much Difficulty.* Endor *was not ſo far diſtant from* Gilboa *or* Shunem, *but that the Condition of the two Armies might eaſily be known, and that the* Philiſtines *were ſuperior both in Courage and Numbers; and therefore his Reſpondent, without all Peradventure, might prognoſticate* Saul's *Defeat; and though there was ſome Hazard in the laſt Conjecture,* viz. *that he and his Sons ſhould die in Battle; yet there was this Advantage on the Side of the Gueſs, that they were Men of known and experienced Valour, who would rather ſacrifice their Lives, than turn their Backs upon their Enemies.* Upon the whole, therefore, the Maintainers of this Syſtem conclude, that, as there is no Reaſon, ſo there was no Neceſſity, for any miraculous Interpoſition in this Affair, ſince this is no more than any common *Gypſy*, with another in Confederacy to aſſiſt her, might do to any credulous Perſon, who came to conſult her.

They who undertake to oppoſe this Opinion, lay it down for a good Rule, in the Interpretation of Scripture,——That we ſhould, as far as we can, adhere to the *primary* Senſe of the Words, and never have Recourſe to any *foreign*, or *ſingular Explications*, but where the *literal* is inconſiſtent, either with the *Dictates* of right Reaſon, or the *Analogy* of Faith. Let any indifferent Perſon then, *ſay they*, take into his Hand the Account of *Saul's* conſulting this *Sorcereſs*, and, upon the firſt reading it, he muſt confeſs, that the Notion, which it conveys to his Mind, is that of a real *Apparition*; and ſince the Paſſages, that both precede, and follow it, are *confeſſedly* to be taken in their moſt obvious Meaning, why ſhould a ſtrange and forced Conſtruction be put upon this? Apparitions indeed are not very common Things; but both *ſacred and profane* Hiſtory informs us, that they are *Realites*, as the Examples of *Moſes* and *Elias*, converſing with our Saviour on the *Mount*, and the ſeveral *Bodies of Saints, which ſlept, coming out of their Graves after his Reſurrection, and appearing unto many*, do abundantly teſtify.

'Tis owned indeed, that according to the Series of the Narration, *Saul* did not ſee the *Spectre*, be it what it will ſo ſoon as the Woman did, becauſe, probably, the Woman's Body, or ſome other Object, might interpoſe between him, and the firſt Appearance; or perhaps, becauſe the *Vehicle*, which *Samuel* aſſumed upon this Occaſion, was not, as yet, *condenſed* enough, to be viſible to *Saul*, though it was to the Woman: But, that he did actually ſee him, is manifeſt, becauſe, when he *perceived* (which Word in the Original ſignifies *ſeeing ſo*, as to be aſſured of our *Object*) *that it was* Samuel, *he ſtooped with his Face to the Ground, and bowed himſelf*, which a Man is not apt to do to bare *Ideas or Imaginations*.

Perſons of this Woman's Character, who are under the Diſpleaſure of the Government, generally affect Obſcurity, live privately, and are little acquainted with Affairs of *State*; but ſuppoſe her to have been never ſo great a *Politician*, and never ſo intimate with what had paſſed between *Saul* and *Samuel* heretofore, never ſo well aſſured that God had rejected him, and elected *David* in his Stead; yet how could ſhe come to the Knowledge of this, *viz.* That the Battle ſhould be fought the next Day, the *Iſraelites* be routed, *Saul* and his Sons ſlain, and their Spoils fall into the Enemy's Hands; ſince each of theſe Events, (even in the preſent Situation of *Saul's* Affairs) were highly caſual and uncertain. For might not this Prince loſe a Battle, without loſing his Life? Or, if he himſelf fell in the Action, why muſt his three Sons be all cut off in the ſame Day? Whatever Demonſtrations of *innate* Bravery he had given in Times paſt, after ſuch ſevere Menaces, as he now received from the *Apparition*, Prudence, one would think, would have put him upon providing for his Safety, either by *chicaning* with the Enemy, or retiring from the Field of Battle, without going to expoſe himſelf, his Sons, and his whole Army, to certain, and inevitable Death. Theſe are Things, which no human *Penetration* could reach, and which only he, who is the abſolute and almighty Ruler of all Cauſes and Events, could either foreſee, or predict.

But the Truth is, thoſe menacing Predictions, how proper ſoever for a Meſſenger ſent from God to utter, were highly imprudent either in this *Witch's*, or her *Accomplice's* Mouth: For, ſince they knew nothing of *Futurity*, and were, at the beſt, but put to Conjecture, it is much more reaſonable to believe, that, at ſuch a Juncture as this, they would have bethought themſelves of flatt'ring the King, and giving him Comfort, and promiſing Succeſs, and not of thundring out ſuch *Comminations* againſt him, as might probably incenſe him, but could do them no Good. They could not but know, that the Temper of moſt Kings is, to hate to hear *ſhocking* Truths, and to receive with the utmoſt Deſpite thoſe that bring them ill News: And therefore 'tis natural to ſuppoſe, that had theſe threatning Replies been of the Woman's, or her Confederate's forming, they would have given them quite another Turn, and not run the

Hazard of diſobliging the King, to no Purpoſe, by laying an additional Load of Trouble upon him.

The Truth is, the Woman, by her courteous Entertainment of *Saul*, ſeems to be a Perſon of no bad Nature; and therefore, if ſhe had an *Accomplice*, who underſtood to make the moſt of his Profeſſion, his Buſineſs, at this Time, muſt have been to *ſooth* and *cajole* the King, which would have both put Money in his Pocket, and ſaved the Credit of his Predictions. For, had he foretold him of Succeſs, and Victory, and a happy Iſſue out of all his Troubles, he, and the Woman had been ſure of Reputation, as well as farther Rewards, in caſe it had happened to prove ſo; and if it had not (ſince no one was privy to their Communion) the Falſhod of the Prediction, upon Saul's Defeat and Death, muſt, in Courſe, have been buried with him.

From theſe Reaſons then we may infer, that the Woman, in this Tranſaction did not impoſe upon *Saul*, ſince he had a plain Sight of the Apparition; what the Apparition foretold him was above human Penetration; and, upon the Suppoſition of a *Juggle*, the *Witch* and her Confederate would have certainly acted clean contrary to what they did. And ſo the next,

2. *Enquiry* meets us, namely, *What this Apparition was?* Some of the ancient *Doctors*, both of the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Church, have made an *Evil Angel* the Subject of this Apparition, in pure Regard to the Honour of God. "God, *ſay they*, had ſufficiently declared his Hatred againſt *Necromancy*, and all kinds of *Witchcraft*, in the ſevere Laws, which he enacted againſt them; but 'tis certainly denying himſelf, and cancelling his own Work, to ſeem, in the leaſt, to to countenance, or abet them, as he neceſſarily muſt do, if, upon the Evocation of an old *Hag*, any Meſſenger is permitted to go from him. Far be it from us therefore to have ſuch Conceptions of God. He is holy, and juſt, and uniform in all his Ways; and therefore this *coming at a Call*, and doing the *Witch*'s Drudgery, muſt only appertain to ſome infernal Spirit, who might poſſibly find his Account in it at laſt. 'Twas one of this wicked Crew, that either aſſumed a *Phantom*, or a real Body, appeared in a Mantle like *Samuel*, ſpake articulately, and held this Converſation with *Saul*; which, conſidering his Knowledge and Foreſight of Things, he was well enough qualified to do, notwithſtanding the ſundry Predictions, relating to future *Contingencies* which are contained in it."

How far the Honour of God is concerned in this Tranſaction, will more properly fall under our next Enquiry: In the mean Time, I cannot but obſerve, that, whatever *Incongruity* may be ſuppoſed in the real Appearance of *Samuel*, it is not near ſo much, as to find one of the *apoſtate* Spirits of *Hell*, expreſſing ſo much Zeal for the Service of the God of *Heaven*, and upbraiding *Saul* with thoſe very Crimes, which he himſelf tempted him to commit; as to find this wicked and impure Spirit making uſe of the Name of God (that ſacred and tremendous Name, whoſe very Pronunciation was enough to make him quake and ſhiver) no leſs than ſix Times, in this Intercourſe with *Saul*, without any Manner of Uneaſineſs or Heſitation; as to find this Angel of Darkneſs, and *Father of Lies*, prying into the Womb of *Futurity*, and caſual *Events* poſitively and preciſely. We do not indeed deny but that the Devil's Knowledge is vaſtly ſuperior to that of the moſt accompliſhed human Underſtanding; that his natural Penetration, joined with his long Experience, is ſuch, that the greateſt *Philoſophers*, the ſubtleſt *Criticks*, and the moſt refined *Politicians*, are mere Novices in Compariſon to him; yet what *Genius* (however exalted and improved) without a divine Revelation, could, as we ſaid before, be able to foretel Things, that were lodged in God's own Breaſt, *viz.* the preciſe Time of the two Armies engaging, the Succeſs and Conſequence of the Victory, and the very Names of the Perſons, that were to fall in Battle? This is what the Apparition plainly revealed to *Saul*: And yet this, we dare maintain, is more than any *finite* Underſtanding, by its own mere Capacity, could ever have been able to find out.

But (without this Multitude of Arguments) if we are to take the Scripture in its plain and literal Senſe, read we over the Story of *Saul*, and the Witch of *Endor* never ſo often, we ſhall not ſo much as once find the Devil mentioned in it. And therefore 'tis ſomewhat wonderful, that he ſhould be brought upon the Stage by ſo many learned Men, merely to ſolve a Difficulty, which upon Examination, appears to be none at all. But now, on the other Hand, it appears, that, through the whole Narration, *Samuel* is the only Thing that is mentioned. 'Tis *Samuel*, whom *Saul* deſires to be called up; *Samuel*, who appeared to the Woman; *Samuel* whom the Woman deſcribes; *Samuel* whom *Saul* perceives, and bows himſelf to, with whom he converſes ſo long, and, *becauſe of whoſe Words he was* afterwards ſo ſore afraid.

The Scripture indeed ſpeaks ſometimes according to the Appearance of Things, and may call that by the Name of *Samuel*, which was the only *Semblance* or *Phantom* of him: But, that this cannot be the Senſe of the Matter here, we have the Teſtimony of the wiſe Son of *Sirach*, an excellent Interpreter of canonical Scriptures, who tells us expreſly, that *Samuel after his Death propheſied, and ſhewed the King his End*; purſuant to what we read in the Verſion of the *Septuagint*, viz. Saul *asked Counſel of one that had a familiar Spirit, and* Samuel *anſwered him*. So that, upon the whole, we may be allowed to conclude, that it was the real Soul of *Samuel*, cloathed in ſome viſible Form, which, at this Time, appeared to the King of *Iſrael*: But by what Means, or for what Purpoſes, it appeared, is the other Queſtion we are now to determine.

Several of the Fathers of the *Chriſtian* Church were of Opinion, that the Devil had a certain *limited Power* over the Saints, before *Jeſus Chriſt deſcended into Hell*, and reſcued from the Tyranny of that Prince of Darkneſs. St. *Auſtin*, in particular, thinks, that there is no Abſurdity in ſaying, that the Devil was as able to call up *Samuel*'s Soul, as he was to preſent himſelf *among the Sons of God*, or ſet our Saviour *on one of the Pinacles of the Temple*; and a learned *Jewiſh* Doctor ſuppoſes, that Devils have ſuch a Power over human Souls, for the Space of a Year after their Departure, as to make them aſſume what Bodies they pleaſe; and thereupon he concludes, but very erroneouſly,

roneouſly, that it was not a Year from the Time of *Samuel*'s Death to his Appearance. But theſe are ſuch wild and extravagant Notions, as deſerve no ſerious Confutation. 'Tis abſurd to ſay, that the Souls of Saints, ſuch as we are now ſpeaking of, were ever in *Hell*, and more abſurd to ſay, that if they are in *Heaven*, it is in the Power of any *magical*, nay, of any *Diabolical* Incantations, to call them down from thence. Great, without all doubt, is the Power of *apoſtate* Angels; but miſerable we may ſay, would the State of the bleſſed be, if the other had any Licence to diſturb their Happineſs, when, and as long as they pleaſed: For, *God forbid*, ſays *Tertullian, that we ſhould believe the Soul of any holy Man, much leſs a Prophet, ſhould be ſo far under* his Diſpoſal, *as to be brought up at Pleaſure by the Power of the Devil.*

Since the Devil then has no Power to diſturb the Happineſs of Souls departed, this Apparition of *Samuel* could not proceed from any magical Enchantments of the Sorcereſs, but muſt have been effected by the ſole Power and Appointment of God, who is the ſovereign Lord, both of the Living and of the Dead? And, accordingly, we may obſerve from the Surprize, which the Woman diſcovered, upon *Samuel*'s ſudden appearing, that the Power of her *Magick* was not concerned therein, but that it was the Effect of ſome ſuperior Hand. The Scripture relates the Matter thus: *When the Woman ſaw* Samuel, *ſhe cried with a loud Voice, and the Woman ſpake unto* Saul, *ſaying, why haſt thou deceived me, for thou art* Saul? *And the King ſaid unto her, be not afraid, what ſaweſt thou? And the Woman ſaid unto* Saul, *I ſaw Gods aſcending out of the Earth.* Now it is plain from this Narration, that the Woman ſaw ſomething, ſhe was not accuſtomed to ſee. Her *Necromancy* had *ordinarily* Power over *Dæmons* only, or ſuch wretched Spirits, as were ſubmitted to the Devil's Tyranny; but, on this Occaſion, ſhe ſaw an Object ſo auguſt, ſo terrible, ſo majeſtick, ſo contrary indeed to any Thing ſhe had ever raiſed before, and that coming upon her, before ſhe had begun her Enchantments, that ſhe could not forbear being frightened, *and, crying out with a loud Voice*, as being fully ſatisfied, that the Apparition came from God.

Q. *But, ſince the Scripture aſſures us, that God had wholly withdrawn himſelf from* Saul, *and would anſwer him, neither by* Prophets, *nor by* Dreams; *how can we imagine, that he ſhould, all on a ſudden, become ſo kind as to ſend* Samuel *to him, or that* Samuel *ſhould be in any Diſpoſition to come, when it was impoſſible for him to do any Good by his coming?*

A. Now there ſeems to be ſome *Analogy* between God's dealing with *Saul* in this Particular, and his former Treatment of the Prophet *Balaam*. *Balaam* was for diſobeying the Orders, which God had given him to bleſs the *Iſraelites*; and was ſearching into *magical* Secrets, for what he could not obtain of God, *viz.* a Power to change into Curſes the Bleſſings, which God pronounced by his Mouth. In this Caſe there was but ſmall Likelihood, that God would continue to communicate himſelf to a Perſon, ſo unworthy of any extraordinary Revelation; and yet he did it: But then, it was with a Deſign to reveal to him thoſe very Miſeries, from which his mercenary Mind was ſo deſirous to reſcue the *Midianites*. The Application is eaſy: And it farther ſuggeſts this Reaſon, why God appointed *Samuel* at this Time to appear unto *Saul*, *viz.* that, thro' him, he might give him a Meeting, where he leaſt of all expected one; and might ſhew him, that the Fate, which his own Diſobedience had brought upon him, was determined; that there was no reverſing the Decrees of Heaven, no procuring Aid againſt the *Almighty*'s Power, no *flying*, though it were to *Hell*, from his Preſence, no hiding himſelf in *Darkneſs* from his Inſpection, *with whom Darkneſs is no Darkneſs at all, but the Night is as clear as the Day, and the Darkneſs and Light are both alike.*

That the Souls of departed Men have a Capacity, and, no doubt, an Inclination, to be employed in the Service of Men alive, as having the ſame Nature and Affections, and being more ſenſible of our Infirmities, than any *pure* or *abſtracted* Spirits are, can hardly be conteſted; that in their abſent State, they are embodied with *aerial*, or *atherial* Vehicles, which they can condenſe, or rarify at Pleaſure, and ſo appear, or not appear to human Sight, is what ſome of the greateſt Men both of the *Heathen* and *Chriſtian* Religion, have maintained; and that frequent Apparitions of this Kind have happened, ſince the World began, cannot be denied by any one, that is converſant in its Hiſtory: If therefore the Wiſdom of God (for Reaſons already aſſigned) thought proper to diſpatch a Meſſenger to *Saul*, upon this Occaſion; there may be ſome Account given, why the Soul of *Samuel* (upon the Suppoſition it was left to its own Option) ſhould rather be deſirous to be ſent upon that Errand. For, whatever may be ſaid in Diminution of *Saul*'s religious Character, 'tis certain, that he was a brave Prince and Commander; had lived in ſtrict Intimacy with *Samuel*; profeſſed a great Eſteem for him in all Things; and was, by *Samuel*, not a little lamented, when he had fallen from his Obedience to God. Upon theſe Conſiderations we may imagine, that the Soul of *Samuel* might have ſuch a Kindneſs for him, as to be ready to appear to him in the Depth of his Diſtreſs, in order to ſettle his Mind, by telling him the Upſhot of the whole Matter, *viz.* that he ſhould loſe the Battle, and he, and his Sons be ſlain; that ſo he might give a Specimen (as the *Jews* love to ſpeak in Commendation of him) of the braveſt Valour, that was ever atchieved by any Commander; fight boldly when he was ſure to die; and ſell his Life at as dear a Price, as poſſible; that ſo, in his Death, he might be commemorated with Honour, and deſerve the *Threnodia* which his Son-in-law made on him; *The Beauty of* Iſrael *is ſlain upon his high Places; how are the Mighty fallen! From the Blood of the Slain, from the Fat of the Mighty, the Bow of* Jonathan *turned not back, and the Sword of* Saul *turned not empty. How are the Mighty fallen in the midſt of the Battle!*

CHAP. XXIX.

David, *marching with the* Philiſtines, *is excepted againſt by their Prince;* Achiſh *pleads for him, and unwillingly diſmiſſes him.* David *departs.*

Q. EXPLAIN *that Expreſſion of* Achiſh, *in his Anſwer to the* Philiſtine *Lords, ſpeaking of* David, *v.* 3. Who hath been with me theſe Days, or theſe Years.

A. 'Tis

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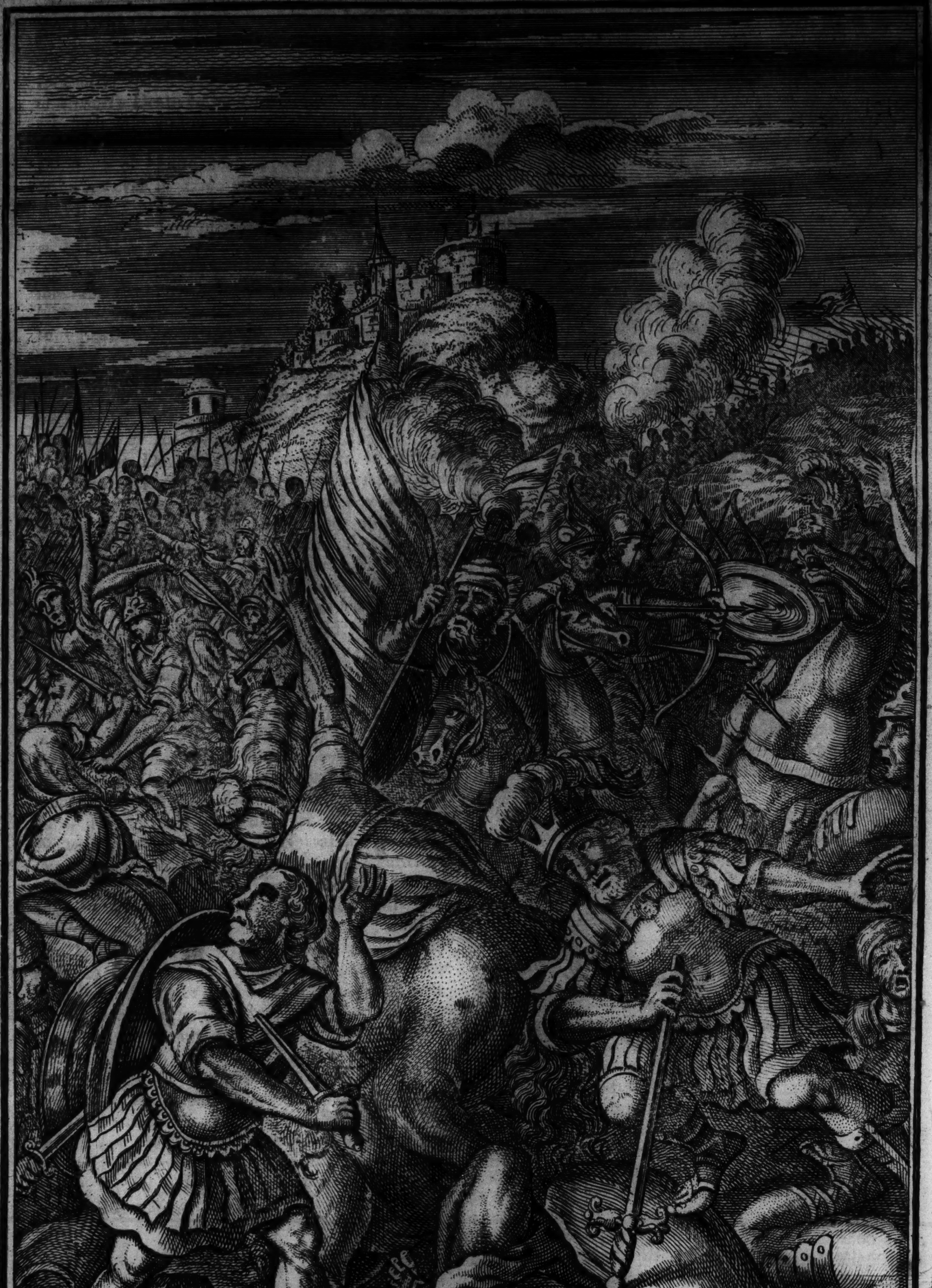
I. SAMUEL. CHAP. XXXI.



Saul and his Armour-bearer kill themſelves

A. 'Tis as if he had ſaid, Did I ſay *Days?* I might have ſaid *Years*; either becauſe he hath now been with me *a full Year and four Months*, Chap. xxvii. 7. or becauſe he was with me ſome Years ago, Ch. xxi. 10. and ſince that Time hath been known to me. And it is not improbable, but *David*, after his Eſcape from thence, might hold ſome Correſpondence with *Achiſh*, as finding him to be a Man of a more generous Temper than the reſt of the *Philiſtines*, and ſuppoſing that he might have need of him for a Refuge in Caſe *Saul* continued to ſeek his Life.

Q. *Why does* Achiſh, *in proteſting his Reſpect and Goodwill for* David, *ſwear by* Jehovah, *rather than by his own Gods?*

A. This he does, either, becauſe he acknowledged *Jehovah* to be a *God*, being it may be, convinced and inſtructed therein by *David*, though he join'd *Him* and *Dagon* in his Worſhip; or becauſe this was *David's* God, and therefore he ſwore by him; partly, out of Complaiſance to *David*, that he might receive his unwelcome Meſſage to him with leſs Offence; and partly, that this Oath might gain more Credit to his Words with *David*.

Q. David *here again ſhews his Readineſs to accompany* Achiſh *to the Battle: Was this notorious Diſſimulation conſiſtent with that Integrity and Uprightneſs of Heart, for which he is celebrated in other Places of Scripture?*

A. It may ſeem a little ſtrange perhaps, that *David*, who, in theſe, and ſeveral other groſſer Inſtances, could not but be culpable in the Eyes of God, ſhould, nevertheleſs, be ſtiled in Scripture *the Man after his own Heart*: But, whoever obſerves the Occaſion of that Expreſſion, will find, that it ought to be taken in a comparative Senſe only, and in Derogation indeed to *Saul*, whoſe Tranſgreſſion, in ſparing *Amalek*, the Prophet *Samuel* was then reproving; that, in executing his Decrees upon the idolatrous Nations found about him, *David* would be more punctual, and not ſo remiſs as *Saul* had been; and, in reſpect, would conform to the divine Will, or be *the Man after God's own Heart*. This ſeems to be the primary Senſe of the Words, though the common Solution, *viz.* that, though *David* was a great and grievous Sinner, yet the Severity of his Repentance cleared him in the Sight of God, and made an Amends for the Enormity of his Tranſgreſſions, be not much amiſs.

Chap. XXX.

The Amalekites *ſpoil* Ziklag, *and carry away the People and* David's *two Wives*; *he is encouraged to purſue them*; *he overtakes them, and recovers all the Spoil*; *makes an Order for dividing the Prey*; *and ſends Preſents to his Friends.*

Q. DOES *it not ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange, that the* Amalekites, *who had ſo often been ſeverely handled by* David, *did not rather kill, than carry away, the People, they found in* Ziklag?

A. This may be imputed either to their Covetouſneſs, who might keep them for Sale, and to make Money of them as Captives; or to their Cruelty, who might reſerve them for more lingering and repeated Torments; or perhaps for the Gratification of their brutal Luſts; though principally it is to be aſcribed to God's over-ruling Providence, who reſtrained, and ſet Bounds to their Rage.

Q. *Wherein had* David's *Soldiers Reaſon to mutiny for a Misfortune which fell as heavy upon him, as upon them?*

A. In relinquiſhing his own Country, and coming to *Ziklag*; in provoking the *Amalekites*, by the Slaughter of all, that came in his Way; and in going with *Achiſh* to War, while he left the Place, where their Wives and Children were, unguarded.

Q. *Who were thoſe Friends to whom* David *made Preſents of the Spoils taken from the* Amalekites?

A. His Friends were chiefly thoſe of his own Tribe; but, beſides theſe, we find he ſent to others, *viz.* to the Inhabitants of the City of *Bethel*, which belonged to the Tribe of *Ephraim*; and this he did, not only in Acknowledgement of the Shelter, and Support, which he had received from them, in his Baniſhment, but in Proſpect of their future Favour, and Intereſt, in Caſe there ſhould happen a Vacancy in the Throne.

Chap. XXXI.

Iſrael *and the* Philiſtines *join Battle*; *the former ſmitten.* Saul's *Sons ſlain*; *he and his Armour-bearer fall on their Swords. The* Philiſtines *cut off his Head, and triumph over the Dead. The Inhabitants of* Jabeſh-Gilead *take down the Bodies of* Saul *and his Sons and burn them, and ſolemnize their Funeral.*

Q. DOES *there not ſeem ſomething providential in the Death of* Jonathan, *with Reſpect to the Affairs of* David?

A. It was certainly no ſmall Grief to *David* to hear of *Jonathan's* Death, and a Trial it might be of his Patience, and Reſignation to the divine Will; but ſtill, there ſeems to be a Direction of Providence in ſuffering him to be ſlain, that *David* might more eaſily come to the Throne. For though *Jonathan*, no doubt, would have made a voluntary Dedition of it, yet, as he was the People's great Favourite, ſome there might poſſibly be, who would not allow of the Dedition, and ſo a civil War might have aroſe concerning the Succeſſor, which, by his dying in this Manner, was prevented.

Q. *We read*, ver. 23. *that* Saul *was ſore wounded by the Archers*; *which ſuppoſes that the Uſe of the Bow was then much practiſed by the* Philiſtines.

A. Bows and Arrows were the principal Weapons, that the *Philiſtines* uſed, in which they were very expert, and did terrible Execution: And for this Reaſon ſome think, that, when *David* came to the Throne, he taught the *Iſraelites* the Uſe of the Bow (as we read 2 *Sam.* i. 18.) that they might not be inferior to the *Philiſtines*, nor fall into the like Diſaſter, that, when he had made a Peace with the *Philiſtines*, he took ſome of their Archers (which, in the following Books, are frequently mentioned under the Name of *Gerethies*) to be his Body-guard.

Q. *Was not* Saul's *killing himſelf rather an Act of Cowardice than Bravery?*

A. The *Jews* indeed give us an high Commendation of *Saul*, and ſeem to prefer him before *David* himſelf, in regard to the Magnanimity of his Death. But it is much to be queſtioned, whether Self-murther (which was certainly *Saul's* Caſe) be an Act of Magnanimity, or not. For, beſides that the Laws of all Nations have condemned it, as abhorrent to the Dictates of Nature and Reaſon,

ſon, of Self-love and Self-preſervation; the Wiſeſt of the heathen World ever look upon it, as an Inſtance of Madneſs and Brutality, and, with great Wiſdom have concluded, that ſuch an Action is ſo far from ſavouring of true Courage and Generoſity, that it is the ſure Effect of a weak and puſillanimous Temper of Mind, ſince true *Greatneſs of Soul* (as they juſtly argue) conſiſts in ſupporting the Evils of Adverſity, and not in ſhifting them off, which is a Mark of a poor impatient Spirit, ſinking under the common Calamities of Life, and not knowing how to bear the Blows of bad Fortune. *Draw thy Sword, and thruſt me through therewith, leſt the Uncircumciſed come, and mock, or abuſe me,* was the Requeſt, which *Saul* made to his Armourbearer, and ſhews that it was not Bravery and Courage, but the Fear of Inſults, and a conſcious Inability to bear them, with the becoming Superiority of Mind, that made him ſhun the Storm, when he ſaw it approaching, by withdrawing from the Stage of Life.

Q. *But farther; was not* Saul's *deſtroying himſelf, a Violation of God's Law?*

A. *Saul's* Caſe indeed was very dolorous, but he had not therefore any Authority to deſtroy himſelf. His Life was a ſacred Depoſition of God's, and not to be taken away without invading his Right, and violating his Laws at the ſame Time. For, whatever ſome may think of the Silence of the Scripture concerning Self-murther, there is no Queſtion to be made, but that it is included in the *ſixth Commandment*, under which *Saul* then lived. The Commandment forbids Murther in general; and 'tis certainly as much Murther, to kill ourſelves, as to kill another Man; and the Reaſon, which the Scripture gives, why we are not allowed to do it, in both Caſes, is the ſame, becauſe *in the Image of God made he Man*: For I muſt not ſhed the Blood of another, becauſe *he is made in the Image of God*; I muſt not ſhed the Blood of mine ownſelf, becauſe I alſo am a Man, and *made in the Image of God*, as well as he. The Reaſon therefore why we have not more frequent Prohibitions againſt this Sin, is plainly this,———That whatever Sins or Offences God, as a Lawgiver, prohibits, he prohibits with a Penalty, that is, he affixes ſuch a Puniſhment in this World, whether it be Reſtitution, Loſs of Limbs, or Loſs of Life itſelf. But now this can never happen in a Caſe of Self-murther, becauſe Self-murther prevents all Puniſhment, (the Man being dead, before any Cognizance can be taken of his Offence) and therefore prevents all Laws concerning it; and can, conſequently, only be included under general Commands, and forbidden as a Sin, whereof God alone can take Cognizance in the World to come.

Q. *What is your Opinion with Reſpect to* Saul's *future State?*

A. Since upon the whole then, *Saul* may be ſaid to have died in an Act of Cowardice, and in the Violation of God's Law, whereof he had no Space to repent; it has been a Matter of ſome Enquiry what we are to think of his Salvation. The Scripture indeed tells us, that *Saul died for his Tranſgreſſion, which he committed againſt the Lord, and alſo for asking Counſel of one, who had a familiar Spirit, to enquire of it, and enquired not of the Lord, and therefore the Lord ſlew him*: But it is doing a manifeſt Violence to the Senſe of theſe Words, to apply them (as ſome have done) to his final Perdition, when they plainly relate to no more than his temporal Death. The dangerous and deſtructive Nature of Self-murther is, that it makes Repentance (the only revealed Condition of Man's Salvation) impoſſible; but then we are to know, that, in that inexhauſtible Fountain of Goodneſs, there may be ſome covenanted Mercy, ſome ſovereign and prerogative Grace, that may be favourable Allowances for the Diſtraction of Mens Thoughts or Paſſions, the Violence of their Fears or Troubles, or the over-bearing Weight of any other Temptaion.

But (to determine this Queſtion more peremptorily) though it certainly be conſonant to the Mercy and Goodneſs of God, to think, that no Man ſhall anſwer for any Miſcarriage, which is wholly occaſioned by the Power of a Diſeaſe, or the Diſtraction of the Brain, becauſe a Caſe, is not the Man's free Act, and conſequently cannot be his Guilt; yet we have no reaſon to preſume, that the Caſe is ſo with thoſe, who, out of Pride, or Haughtineſs, Fear of Miſeries to come, or Impatience under preſent Sufferings, Diſtruſt of God's Providence, or Deſpair of his Mercy, lay violent Hands upon themſelves; becauſe the Act was both voluntary and vicious, and not to be amended by Repentance: But without limiting thy Goodneſs, *O Lord*, unto thy Mercy we commit their Souls!

THE
SECOND BOOK
OF
SAMUEL,
Otherwiſe called the
SECOND BOOK
OF
THE KINGS.

This and the foregoing Book bear the Title of Samuel, *becauſe they contain the Narrative of the Conception, Nativity, and the ſeveral Incidents and Occurrences of his Life, and alſo the Lives and remarkable Tranſactions of thoſe two Kings,* Saul *and* David, *both which he anointed and conſecrated Kings by the immediate Direction and Ordinance of God. And as the firſt Book gives an Account of thoſe Things which God brought to paſs among his People under the Government of* Samuel *and* Saul; *ſo this ſecond declares the brave Exploits, and noble Atchievements of* David, *after the Death of* Saul, *from the Beginning to the End of his Reign; and by what Means his Kingdom was wonderfully augmented; his great Troubles and Dangers ariſing from within as from without his Houſe; the unnatural and dangerous Inſurrections, Uproars, Treaſons, plotted and ſet on Foot againſt him, by falſe Counſellors, feigned Friends, and Flatterers, and even by his own Children and People; and by what Means God enabled him to overcome all Difficulties, and to enjoy his Kingdom in Reſt and Peace. In the Perſon of* David *the Scripture ſets forth* Jeſus Chriſt *the chief King, who came of* David *according to the Fleſh, and was perſecuted on every Side with open and ſecret Enemies, as well in his Perſon, as in his Members; but at length, he triumphs over all, and gives his Catholick Church Victory againſt all Powers, ſpiritual and temporal; and ſo reigns with them King for evermore.*

CHAP. I.

David *being returned to* Ziklag, *is informed by an* Amalekite *of the Death of* Saul *and* Jonathan; *the Meſſenger pretending he had killed* Saul, David *orders him to be put to Death. He laments* Saul *and* Jonathan, *in an elegiac Song.*

Q. THE Amalekite, *who brought* David *the News of the Death of* Saul *and his Sons, affirms that he ſlew* Saul; *whereas, in the laſt Chapter of the laſt Book, we are told that* Saul *fell upon his own Sword; how is this conſiſtent?*

A. 'Tis highly probable, that this was a Lie, deviſed by the *Amalekite* to gain *David's* Favour. For, 1. *Saul* was not killed by a Spear, as is here affirmed, but by a Sword, 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 5. 2. It is expreſly ſaid, in the laſt quoted Text, That *Saul's* Armour-bearer being yet living, *ſaw that* Saul *was dead*; which doubtleſs he would thoroughly examine and know, before he would kill himſelf on that Account, as he did. 3. *Saul's* Death is manifeſtly aſcribed to his own Action, even to his falling upon his Sword, *v.* 4, 5.

Q. *Was it not an improper and vain Imprecation of* David, *which he denounced againſt the harmleſs Mountains of* Gilboa, Let there be no Dew, neither let there be Rain upon you?

A. This was not ſo much an Imprecation, as a paſſionate Repreſentation of the Horror which he conceived at this publick Loſs; which was ſuch, as if he thought every Perſon or Thing which contributed to it, were fit to bear the Tokens of divine Diſpleaſure, ſuch as this is, when the Earth wants the bleſſed and neceſſary Influences of Dew and Rain.

CHAP. II.

David, *by divine Direction, goes with his Company to* Hebron, *where he is made King of* Judah. *He commends the Inhabitants of* Jabeſh-Gilead, *for burying* Saul. Abner *makes* Iſhboſheth *King of* Iſrael. *A mortal Fight between the Soldiers of* Abner *and* Joab. Aſahel *purſuing* Abner *is ſlain by him. At* Abner's *Motion* Joab *ſounds a Retreat.* Aſahel's *Burial.*

Q. W*HY did not* David, *immediately on the Death of* Saul, *cauſe himſelf to be proclaimed King?*

A. Though *David*, after *Saul*'s Demiſe, had a Right to the Kingdom, by Virtue of God's Deſignation, yet, as God had no where declared, at what Time he was to make uſe of this *Right*, he would not enter into Poſſeſſion, nor take the Adminiſtration of publick Affairs upon him, without having firſt conſulted him.

Q. Abner *having proclaimed* Iſhboſheth *Succeſſor to the Throne, took up his Reſidence at* Mahanaim; *in what Tribe was this City; and why did* Abner *retreat thither?*

A. This was a Place, in the Tribe of *Gad*, which had its Name from the Appearance of an Hoſt of an Angels to *Jacob*, as he came, with his Family and all his Subſtance, to *Padan-aram*, Gen. xxii. 1. and the Reaſons for *Abner*'s retreating hither, in the Beginning of the new King's Reign, were, that he might ſecure the People on that Side of the *Jordan*, and eſpecially the gallant Inhabitants of *Jabeſh-Gilead*, who were great Lovers of *Saul*, and attached to his Family; that he might prevent the *Philiſtines* from falling on the King, whom he had under his Protection in the Infancy of his Reign, and chiefly that he might be at a great Diſtance from *David*, have the new King more abſolutely under his Command, and a better Opportunity of raiſing Recruits among a People, not only brave and courageous, but very well affected to the Cauſe which he had eſpouſed.

Q. *When* Abner *and* Joab *were on the Point of joining Battle,* Abner *deſired him to* let the young Men ariſe and play before them, *v.* 14. *How do you underſtand this?*

A. The Expreſſion in the Text is, *Let the young Men now ariſe, and play before us*; by which *Abner* ſeems to have meant, not that they ſhould fall upon and deſtroy one another, but merely that they ſhould practiſe a little their military Exerciſes, or *play at Sharps*, as *Gladiators* anciently at *Rome*, and now among us, are wont to do, not with any Purpoſe to kill one another, but only to divert the Spectators.

CHAP. III.

The War between the Houſes of David *and* Saul. David's *Children born in* Hebron. Abner *quarrels with* Iſhboſheth; *revolts to* David, *who requires him to bring with him* Michal, *which he does; is feaſted by* David, *and diſmiſſed.* Joab *returning from Battle, expoſtulates with the King, and treacherouſly murders* Abner. David *curſes* Joab, *and mourns for* Abner.

Q. W*AS* Abner's *debauching* Saul's *Concubine, a ſufficient Provocation for* Iſhboſheth *to quarrel with* Abner, *who was his beſt Friend, and chief Support?*

A. What Notion the World, at this Time, had of marrying any *Royal* Relict, is evident from the Caſe of *Adonijah*, whom *Solomon* put to Death for deſiring but to aſk for *Abiſhag*, one of *David*'s Concubines, though he had employed *Bath-ſheba* the King's Mother, to be his Interceſſor, and was himſelf his Brother, 1 *Kings* ii. 17. It may be ſaid, perhaps, that *Adonijah* was, at this Time, aſpiring at the Throne, which *Solomon* perceiving, took Occaſion, from this his Requeſt, to fall out with him, and prevent. But, however this be, a general Rule it was, not among the *Jews* only, but among other Nations, that no private Perſon ſhould preſume to marry the King's Widow, for this made him appear as a *Rival* and Competitor for the Crown.

Q. *Well, but can you juſtify* Abner *in withdrawing his Allegiance from his Sovereign, merely for the Sake of a private Quarrel?*

A. Abner is an Inſtance of what a ſtrange Alteration the Study of Revenge will work in a Man. It was but juſt lately, that we found him going about the Country to confirm the *Iſraelites* in their Attachment to the Houſe of *Saul*, and Oppoſition to *David*; but now, upon a ſlight Diſguſt, he is not only for deſerting himſelf, but for carrying all the Strength of his Intereſt over to the oppoſite Party: For *ſuch is the Genius of many great Miniſters*, ſays one, *that, upon ſlight Occaſions, they are irritated, and do rather rule over Kings, than are ruled by them.*

Q. *What induced* Joab *to commit ſuch a barbarous Murder on* Abner?

A. Abner was a Man longer verſed in military Affairs than himſelf, who, in the Time of *Saul*'s Diſtraction, had been Regent of the Nation, and ſince the Time, that he had ſet up *Iſhboſheth* to be King, prime Miniſter: And therefore *Joab* had Reaſon to ſuſpect, that in caſe he got into *David*'s Favour, (as the Service, he was able to do him, gave him a Title to it) it would not be long, before he would gain a ſuperiour Aſcendant; and therefore he took this wicked Method to prevent him. For (to uſe the Reflection *Joſephus* makes upon this Occaſion) *What will not Men dare to do, who are covetous, ambitious, and will be inferior to none?* They preſs forward to the *End*, without ever conſidering the *Means*, and *will commit a Thouſand Crimes, in Purſuit of what they deſire. Nor are they leſs bold in maintaining, than they were in acquiring, their Places and Preferments by evil Practices; inſomuch that, rather than ſuffer the Diſgrace of loſing what they have unjuſtly gotten, they will plunge themſelves ſtill deeper and deeper in Wickedneſs, to retain it.*

Q. *Had not* David *ſome politick Reaſons for making ſuch a publick Lamentation for the untimely Death of* Abner?

A. No doubt he had. For, beſides that *Abner* was himſelf a Man of great Power and Authority, and, at this Time, the Head of the contrary Party, it carried an Air of Suſpicion, that *David* might have ſome Concern in the Murder, eſpecially ſince *Joab*, his firſt Miniſter, and General of his Forces, was the wicked Inſtrument of it. *Abner* had been reconciled to *David* indeed, but this made the Matter ſtill worſe, and added the Breach of Faith and Hoſpitality to the Sin of Murder, which was enough to alienate the Minds of the *Iſraelites* from him for ever: And therefore *Joſephus* gives us this Account of *David*'s Behaviour upon ſo critical an Occaſion, not only to teſtify his Abhorence of ſo baſe a Practice, but to purge himſelf likewiſe, upon the ſtricteſt Niceties of Faith and Honour, that he had been true to *Abner*. "The Moment he heard of *Abner*'s Death, he ſtretched out his Right Hand towards Heaven, in an Appeal and Proteſtation that *he was neither privy, nor conſenting to the Fact*, and curſed moſt bitterly the *Aſſaſſin* (whoever he was) his Family and Accomplices. He appointed, by *Proclamation*, a publick Mourning for him, with all the *Solemnities* of tearing Garments, and putting on Sackcloth, *&c.* Himſelf, with his great Miniſters, and Officers, aſſiſted at the Funeral, and gave ſufficient Demonſtration, by wringing their Hands, beating their Breaſts, and other Expreſſions of Sorrow, both of the Veneration they had for *Abner*'s Memory, and the Senſe they had of ſo ineſtimable a Loſs; ſo that, in the Concluſion, all the People were perfectly ſatisfied, that *David* was far, either from approving, or conſenting to, ſo execrable a Deed."

Chap. IV.

Iſhboſheth, *and his Party, aſtoniſhed at* Abner's *Death; he is murdered by two of his Captains, who carry his Head to* David; *for which they are executed*; and Iſhboſheth's *Head buried.*

Q. C*AN any particular Reaſon be given why the Tribe, to which the two Regicides,* Baanah *and* Rechab *belonged, are here mentioned?*

A. This is added, to ſhew us, that theſe two *Regicides* were not only Officers in the King's Army, but of the ſame Tribe with *Saul*, and therefore had more Ties than one, upon them, to be honeſt and faithful to his Family. For there is Reaſon to believe, that *Saul*, who lived in the Borders of *Benjamin*, conferred more Favours upon that Tribe, than any other, and might therefore juſtly expect, both to him, and his, a greater Eſteem and Fidelity from thoſe of his own Tribe, than from others. This *Patronymick* is therefore very properly prefixed to the Names of *Rechab* and *Baanah*, to ſhew what vile, ungrateful Villains they were, and how juſtly they deſerved the ſevere and exemplary Puniſhment, which *David* inflicted on them.

Q. *What Reaſon had theſe two Captains to imagine they ſhould fare better, than the* Amalekite, *who brought Tidings of the Death of* Saul?

A. It may ſeem a little ſtrange, that theſe two *Ruffians* were not diſcouraged, by *David*'s puniſhing the *Amalekite* for killing of *Saul*, and by the Deteſtation, he had publickly ſhewn, of *Joab*'s Baſeneſs in murthering *Abner*: But the *former* of theſe Caſes, they might think, was not parallel to theirs, becauſe *Saul* was anointed King by God's immediate Direction, whereas *Iſhboſheth*, having never had ſuch ſacred Unction, was no more than an *Uſurper*: And, as for the latter, they might think, that *David*'s Conduct, in Relation to *Abner*'s Death, proceeded from Art and Policy, rather than any ſerious Diſlike of the Thing itſelf; and in this Opinion, they might the rather be confirmed, when they ſaw *Joab*, inſtead of being puniſhed, continuing in the very ſame Poſt and Power, that he had before.

Q. *Inſtead of the Reward, which theſe Ruffians expected, they meet with a ſevere Rebuke, and Puniſhment: How does* Joſephus *make* David *expreſs himſelf on this Occaſion?*

A. Wicked Wretches that you are! ſays he; *prepare yourſelves immediately to receive the juſt Reward of your Villainy. Do not you know, that I requited the Murder of* Saul, *when he, who had taken away that ſacred Life, had the Confidence to bring me his golden Crown, for an Oſtentation of the Service he had done me in it? And yet it was at the Inſtance of* Saul, *that he did it, and to prevent the Indignity of being taken alive by his Enemies; and am not I the ſame now, that I was then? Or do you think, that I am turned ſo abandoned a Wretch ſince, as to countenance the moſt profligate of Men and Actions, or to account myſelf under any Obligation to you, for dipping your Hands (upon my Account, as you would have it thought) in the Blood of your Lord? For cutting the Throat of a Perſon, (and in his Bed too) ſo juſt, that he never did any Man wrong, and ſo generous a Patron and Benefactor to your ungrateful ſelves, that all the Advantages you can pretend to, in this World, are but what you ſtand indebted for to his Bounty and Goodneſs. You ſhall therefore now be ſure to pay, both for your Breach of Faith to your Maſter, and the Scandal you have caſt upon me. For what greater Wound can any Man give me in my Reputation, than to expoſe me for a Perſon, that can take Pleaſure in the Tidings, or give Countenance to the Committing of ſo barbarous an Aſſaſſinate?* Which Speech of *David*'s had a good deal of the Spirit of *Alexander the Great* in it, whoſe exacting of Puniſhment of *Beſſus* for his Murder of *Darius*, drew from the Hiſtorian this Reflection, Reputabat enim, *non tam hoſtem ſuum fuiſſe Darium, quam Amicum ejus, a quo eſſet occiſus.*

Chap. V.

The Tribes repair to Hebron *to anoint* David *King over* Iſrael. *The Years of his Reign at* Hebron *and* Jeruſalem; *his Age. He takes the ſtrong Hold of* Sion *from the* Jebuſites, *and dwells therein.* Hiram *makes a League with* David, *and ſends him Timber and Workmen to build an Houſe. He takes more Wives, and has more Children. He ſmites the* Philiſtines *once and again.*

Q. T*HE Tribes aſſembling themſelves at* Hebron, *in order to make* David *their King, remind him of the divine Injunction that was formerly given him, namely,* Thou ſhalt feed my People *Iſrael: What does this import?*

A. This was *David*'s Part of the Covenant, which the Elders of *Iſrael* ſuggeſted to him in a very elegant *Metaphor*, which here occurs the firſt Time, though afterwards it is frequently uſed in ſacred Writ, eſpecially in the Prophets, as well as in ſome prophane Authors. The Expreſſion is,—

Thou ſhalt feed my People Iſrael, which was the rather made uſe of, to put *David* in Mind, that he was created a King, not ſo much for the Advancement of his own Honour and Intereſt, as for the Good and Benefit of the Community, which he was to rule with all Tenderneſs, and watch over with all Diligence: For the very Manner of the Expreſſion implies, that Kings ought to have the ſame Care of their People, as the Shepherd has over his Flock; and that, as the Shepherd is not the Owner of the Sheep he keeps, ſo ſhould no King look upon his Subjects as his own *Peculium*, but as a Flock committed to him, by the only true Lord of all Mankind, and to whom he muſt give an Account of his Adminiſtration. For *this is the greateſt Grace of a King, that he certainly believes himſelf to be made a King by God for the Sake of the People; and let him often call to Mind, that the People were not created, or ordained by God for the King*, ſays *Conradus Pelicanus* upon theſe Words.

Q. *What, or who were the Blind and Lame, whom the* Jebuſites *oppoſed to* David, *when he attacked the ſtrong Hold of* Sion?

A. The Blind and the Lame, ſays *Luther* upon this Place, *were the Idols of the* Jebuſites, *which to irritate* David, *they ſet upon their Walls, as their Patrons and Protectors*; and theſe they call *blind* and *lame ſarcaſtically*, and with Reſpect to *David*'s Opinion: As if they had ſaid, "Theſe Gods of ours, whom the *Iſraelites* reproach, as *blind* and *lame*, and ſo unable to direct or defend us, will ſecure us againſt you, and, to your Coſt, make you find, that they are neither *blind* nor *lame*, but have Eyes to watch for us, and Hands to fight againſt you, ſo that you muſt conquer and ſubdue them, before you take this Place." But this Interpretation ſeems to be a little to metaphorical and forced, for which Reaſon we have rather choſen the Conſtruction which *Joſephus* (*l.* vii. c. 2.) puts upon this Paſſage, *viz.* that they imagined their Fortreſs to be ſo impregnable, that, by Way of Contempt, they told *David*, that their very Blind and Lame would be able to defend it againſt him, and all his Forces: And this is a Senſe ſo extremely plain and obvious, that the renowned *Bochart* wonders, why any Men of Learning ſhould ſeek for any other. The only Exception to it is, that theſe Blind and Lame (which were rather Objects of Compaſſion) are ſaid to have been *extremely hated by* David. But we may obſerve, that *David* here retorts the *Sarcaſm* upon them; *The Lame and Blind*, that is, thoſe, who are ſet to defend the Place, and who, as they pretend, were to be only the Lame and the Blind. And theſe were hateful to *David*, becauſe they had wickedly and inſolently defied the Armies of the living God.

Q. *Who was this* Hiram, *mentioned for his Friendſhip to* David, *and what does his Name ſignify?*

A. Abibalus was his primitive Name, but before he entered into a League of Amity with *David*, he changed it to *Hiram*, that ſo it might be the ſtanding Name of him, and his *Succeſſors*, as *Pharaoh*, and after that, *Ptolomy* in *Egypt*, *Abimelech* among the *Philiſtines*, and *Cæſar* among the *Roman* Emperors. The Name, in their Language, ſignifies, *he lives that is exalted*; or *let him live that is exalted*, that is, *let the King live for ever*; and his ſending to *David* only under this Name, is the true Reaſon, why no other Name is mentioned in Scripture.

Q. *Where had the* Philiſtines *ſuch numerous Forces, as they muſt neceſſarily bring into the Field to make Head againſt the* Iſraelites, *as here they did twice in a very ſhort time?*

A. It cannot well be ſuppoſed, that the *Philiſtines*, out of their ſmall Territories, could produce ſuch vaſt Numbers of Men, as they brought againſt the *Iſraelites*; and therefore the Remark, which *Joſephus* makes, helps to explain this Matter, *viz. that* Syria *and* Phœnicia, *as well as ſeveral other warlike Nations, were engaged in this Confederacy*: But this cannot be meant of *Hiram*, who was in a League of the ſtricteſt Amity with *David*, but of ſuch *Phœnicians* only, as would not ſubmit to him, and therefore joined with the *Philiſtines*, firſt to ſubdue his Ally, and then to ſubdue him, before his Government could be ſettled.

Q. *In the* Philiſtines *ſecond Expedition againſt the* Iſraelites, David *is ordered by divine Direction to attack them* when he ſhould hear the Sound of a going on the Tops of the Mulberry Trees: *Pray explain this Paſſage.*

A. God indeed is left to his own Pleaſure, what Signs he ſhall think fit to give to his People upon any Occaſion, for their Good; but the more arbitrary and uncommon any Sign is, the more it ſeems to have proceeded from God: Though therefore *the Sound of People's going upon Trees*, be a Thing not ſo congruous to our Conceptions, yet it will not therefore follow, that it was not the real Sign which God gave *David*, becauſe the ſtranger the Phænomenon was, the greater Aſſurance it conveyed of the divine Interpoſition in his Favour; nor can the Practicableneſs of the Thing be diſputed, ſince it was confeſſedly an Hoſt of Angels (who could move on the Tops of Trees, as well as plain Ground) that made this Noiſe of an Army's marching.

There is no Reaſon, however, to acquieſce in this Conſtruction only. The Word *Beroche*, which we render *Tops*, in ſeveral Places of Scripture, ſignifies the Beginning of Things likewiſe; and in this Acceptation, the Senſe of the Sign which God gave *David*, will be this, "When thou heareſt a Sound, as it were of many Men marching at the Entrance of the Place, where the Mulberry-Trees are planted, then do thou make ready to fall upon the Enemy; For this Noiſe (which is occaſioned by the Miniſtry of my Angels) goes before thee, both to conduct thee in thy Way and to inject Terror into thine Adverſaries."

But how plauſible ſoever this Interpretation may ſeem, there is ſome Reaſon to ſuſpect, that the other Word *Bochin*, which our Tranſlation calls *Mulberry-Trees*, is in Reality the proper Name of a Place, *Iſaiah* xxviii. 21. The Prophet *Iſaiah* has a plain Alluſion to this Piece of Hiſtory, and ſeems to confirm what we here ſuggeſt. *The Lord*, ſays he, *ſhall riſe up, as in Mount* Perazim; *he ſhall be wroth, as in the Valley of* Gibeon, that is, he ſhall deſtroy his Enemies, as he did the *Philiſtines* at *Baal-perazim*, under *David*, and the *Canaanites* at *Gibeon*, under *Joſhua*: What hinders then, but that *Beroche Bochin* may ſignify the Mountains of *Bochim*? And ſo the Senſe of the Words will be, "When thou heareſt a Noiſe, as of many People marching upon the Hills or High-Places of *Bochim*, then thon haſt nothing to do, but to fall im-

“ immediately upon the Enemy.” Either of theſe Interpretations clears the Text from any ſeeming Abſurdity.

CHAP. VI.

David *fetches the Ark, with great Rejoicing, out of the Houſe of* Abinadab. Uzzah, *laying hold of of the Ark, is ſlain of God; for which* David *is grieved; and carries the Ark into the Houſe of* Obed-Edom. David *brings the Ark to* Zion; *dances before it; for which* Michal *deſpiſes him; they place it in the Tabernacle. He offers Sacrifices; bleſſes the People, gives them Preſents.* Michal *reproves* David; *he anſwers her; ſhe is childleſs to her Death.*

Q. AT *what Time, and for what Reaſons did* David *remove the Ark?*

A. It is ſuppoſed by ſome, that this bringing back of the Ark was appointed to be at one of the three great Feſtivals; and the Reaſon why *David* might ſummon ſo many of his principal Miniſters, and Officers, to accompany him in the Expedition, might be to poſſeſs the young People, who perhaps had heard little or nothing of the Ark, by Reaſon of its having been abſent ſo long, with a mighty Veneration for it, when they ſaw the King, and ſo many of the chief Nobility waiting on it, with ſuch a Variety of Muſick, and ſuch publick Declarations of Joy.

Q. *What tolerable Cauſe can we aſſign for the ſudden and untimely End of* Uzzah, *whom God ſtruck dead for only laying his Hand on the Ark, when it had like to have been overturned?*

A. It was now near ſeventy Years, ſince the *Iſraelites* had carried the Ark from Place to Place, and ſo long a Diſuſe had made them forget the ſolemn Manner of doing it. In Conformity to what they had heard of the *Philiſtines*, they put it into a new Cart or Waggon, but this was againſt the expreſs Direction of the Law, which ordered it to be borne upon Mens Shoulders. It is commonly ſuppoſed, that *Uzzah* was a *Levite*, though there is no Proof of it from Scripture; but ſuppoſing he was, he had no Right to attend upon the Ark; that Province by the ſame Law was reſtrained to thoſe *Levites* only, who were of the Houſe of *Kohath*: Nay, put the Caſe he had been a *Kohathite* by Birth, yet he had violated another Command, which prohibited even theſe *Levites* (though they carried it by Staves upon their Shoulders) upon Pain of Death to touch it with their Hands: So that here was a threefold Tranſgreſſion of the divine Will in this Method of proceeding. The Ark (as ſome ſay) by *Uzzah*'s Direction, was placed in a Cart; *Uzzah*, without any proper Deſignation, adventures to attend it, when he thought it in Danger of falling, officiouſly he put forth his Hand, and laid hold on it, (all violating of the divine Commands!) and this, as is ſuppoſed, not ſo much out of Reverence to the ſacred Symbol of God's Preſence, as out of Diffidence of his Providence, as unable to preſerve it from overturning.

The Truth is, this Ark had continued ſo long in Obſcurity, that the People, in a Manner, had almoſt loſt all Senſe of a divine Power reſiding in it, and therefore approached it with Irreverence. This is implied in *David*'s Exhortation to *Zadock* and *Abiathar*, after this Misfortune upon *Uzzah*, 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13. *Ye are the chief of the Fathers of the* Levites, *ſanctify yourſelves therefore, both ye and your Brethren, that you may bring up the Ark of the Lord God of* Iſrael, *unto the Place that I have prepared for it; for, becauſe ye did it not at the firſt, the Lord our God made a Breach upon us, for that we ſought him not after the due Order.* What Wonder then, if God, being minded to teſtify his immediate Preſence with the Ark, to retrieve the ancient Honour of that ſacred Veſſel, and to curb all licentious Profanations of it for the future, ſhould ſingle out one, that was the moſt culpable of many, one, who in three Inſtances was then violating his Commands, to be a Monument of his Diſpleaſure againſt either a wilful Ignorance, or a rude Contempt of his Precepts, be they never ſo ſeemingly ſmall; that by ſuch an Example of Terror, he might inſpire both Prieſt and People with a ſacred Dread of his Majeſty, and a profound Veneration for his Myſteries.

Q. *The Ark having remained three Months in the Houſe of* Obed-edom, David *adventured to remove it from thence to* Jeruſalem; *and to teſtify his Joy, and add to the Solemnity,* he danced before it with all his Might: *Does prophane Hiſtory afford us any Inſtances reſembling this?*

A. Strabo tells us, that it was cuſtomary among the *Greeks*, as well as other Nations, to uſe Muſick and Dancing in the Proceſſion before their Gods. *Callimachus* mentions the *Chori*, and Dancings of the Youth at the Altar of *Apollo*; and *Plato* obſerves, that, among the *Egyptians*, all Kinds of Muſick, Songs, and Dances were conſecrated to their Gods. So that *David* was not ſingular in his Behaviour upon this Occaſion, only it is preſumable, that other Nations might take this Cuſtom from the *Jews*, rather than the *Jews* from them.

Q. *If* David, *as the Text affirms,* ſacrificed every ſix Paces; *muſt not this occaſion a great deal of Trouble and Confuſion, conſidering the Diſtance between the Houſe of* Obed-edom, *and the Place where the Ark was to be depoſited?*

A. The Words in the Text are,——*And it was ſo, that, when they that bare the Ark of the Lord, had gone ſix Paces, he ſacrificed Oxen and Fatlings*, 2 Sam. vi. 13. From which Words, ſome would infer, that *David*, having meaſured the Ground between *Obed-edom*'s Houſe, and the Place he had built for the Reception of the Ark, had Altars raiſed, at the Diſtance of every *ſix Paces*, whereon he cauſed Sacrifices to be offered, as the Ark paſſed by. But it is eaſy to imagine, what a World of Confuſion this would create in the Proceſſion, and therefore the more rational Conſtruction is, that, after thoſe, who carried the Ark, had advanced ſix Paces, without any ſuch Token of divine Wrath, as *Uzzah* had undergone, then did they offer a Sacrifice of Thankſgiving to God, which might conſiſt of ſeveral living Creatures, all ſacrificed and offered up at once. But, even ſuppoſing, that, at ſet Diſtances, there were Sacrifices all along the Way that they went; yet we are to know, that it was no unuſual Thing for *Heathens* to confer on their Gods, nay, even upon their Emperor, the ſame Honours, that we find *David* here beſtowing upon the Ark of the God of *Iſrael*. For in this Manner (as *Suetonius* tells) was *Otho* received, *cum per omne Iter, dextra ſiniſtraque, oppidatim Victimæ cederentur*: And the like he relates of *Caligula*; *Ut a Miſeno movit, inter*

Altaria, & Victimas, ardenteſque tædas, denſiſſimo ac lætiſſimo obviorum Agmine inceſſit.

Q. Michal, *it is ſaid, deſpiſed* David *in her Heart, when ſhe ſaw him dancing before the Ark; yet when ſhe was firſt married to him, ſhe gave Inſtances of an extraordinary Love for him.*

A. After that *David* was by *Saul* baniſhed from Court, and forced to ſeek for Shelter in foreign Countries, *Saul*, to caſt the more Contempt upon him, gave his Wife away to one *Phalti*, or *Phaltiel*, Son of *Laiſh* of *Gallim*; but *David*, when he came to the Crown of *Judah*, had her reſtored to him again; for which Purpoſe, he ſent Meſſengers to *Iſhboſheth*, who reigned then over the eleven Tribes at *Mahanaim*, to demand her, and who, according to that Demand, took her from *Phaltiel*, and ſent her back to *David*. The *Hebrews* pretend, that *Phaltiel* never came near *Michal*, who, in Strictneſs, could not be his Wife, becauſe ſhe had never been divorced by *David*; but others believe that ſhe had five Sons by *Phaltiel*, which were given up to the *Gibeonites* to be executed, as is related 2 *Sam.* xxi. 8, 9. But, in this Place, there ſeems to be an Error crept into the Text, which ſhould be read *Merab*, inſtead of *Michal*.

Q. *Do you imagine that* David *was guilty of any Indecency in his Dancing, ſo as to give* Michal *any real Grounds for thoſe ſarcaſtical Expreſſions in which ſhe upbraids him?*

A. The Words of *Michal*, wherein ſhe upbraids *David*, are theſe,——*How glorious was the King of* Iſrael *to day, who uncovered himſelf to day, in the Eyes of the Handmaids of his Servants, as one of the vain Fellows ſhamefully uncovereth himſelf!* At firſt reading they ſeem to intimate, that *David* in his Dancing, had expoſed his naked Body, and acted, ſome Way or other, immodeſtly. But theſe Words, we are to conſider, were ſpoken in a Fit of Paſſion, and when *Michal* was minded to aggravate Matters; for it is not to be doubted, but that *David* kept himſelf within Bounds of Modeſty, how joyous ſoever he might be. It was a Command, which God gave the *Iſraelites*, that they ſhould rejoice in their Feaſts, *Deut.* xii. 7. but then, their Joy was not to be laſcivious or petulant, but pious and moderate. In the Caſe before us, *David* was in the immediate Preſence of God, and about a very ſacred Buſineſs; and therefore it is incongruous to think, that he would commit any Thing immodeſt: And, that he could not expoſe his Nakedneſs, (as his Wife would inſinuate) is evident from his having not only an *Ephod* on, but *being clothed with a Robe of fine Linnen*, beſides his uſual Under-garments, 1 *Chron.* xv. 27. and therefore theſe Words were only the Expreſſion of the Spleen of a proud paſſionate Woman.

CHAP. VII.

David, *being at reſt, thinks of building a Houſe to God*; Nathan *approves the Deſign*; *God accepts his Obedience, but forbids the Undertaking*; *but promiſes him Bleſſings in his Seed*, Solomon *and* Meſſiah, *who ſhould build the Houſe of God.* David's *Prayer and Thankſgiving.*

Q. DAVID *having conceived in his Mind a Deſign of building a Houſe to God, communicates his Thoughts to* Nathan: *What was the Character of this* Nathan?

A. At what Time this Prophet began to appear in *Iſrael*, we are no where informed. This is the firſt Time, the Scripture makes mention of him. He was a Man of great Temper, Prudence, and fine Addreſs, who knew how to mitigate the Rigour of his Reproofs, with a great deal of Sweetneſs and Wiſdom, which qualified him ſo well for the Converſation of Kings, and other great Perſons. He was always equally eſteemed and beloved by *David*, and in his Conduct towards him, maintained a juſt Medium, between an inflexible Auſterity, and a ſervile Flattery.

Q. Nathan *being inſtructed by God, tells* David, *that his Kingdom ſhould be eſtabliſhed for ever: Was this literally verified in the Event?*

A. The Words in the Text are,——*I will eſtabliſh the Throne of his Kingdom for ever*, which, in their primary Senſe, do relate to the terreſtrial Kingdom of *David*'s Family, and the long Duration of it, enough to juſtify the Exprection *for ever* taken in a leſs ſtrict Signification; but if we take it in a more ſublime, and abſolute Senſe, it can belong to none, but that Son of *David*, to whom God the Father gave an eternal Kingdom (properly ſo called) over all Things both in Heaven and Earth: Which, though it was not ſo well known in the Times, when this Prophecy was uttered, was, by the Event afterwards, made plain and evident.

CAAP. VIII.

David *ſubdues the* Philiſtines *and* Moabites; *ſmites the King of* Zoba; *and the* Syrians; *places a Garriſon in* Damaſcus. Toi *ſends* Joram *with Preſents to* David, *which, with the Spoil, he dedicates to God; he ſmites the* Edomites; *his Government and Officers.*

Q. PRay *explain that Paſſage, where it is ſaid,* David *meaſured the* Moabites *in two Lines, one of which he put to Death.*

A. There is no ſmall Obſcurity in the Words of the Text, which are theſe,——*He ſmote* Moab, *and meaſured them with a Line, caſting them down to the Ground; even in two Lines meaſured he to put to Death, and with one Line to keep alive:* Which Words ſeem to allude to a Cuſtom among the Kings of the *Eaſt*, when they were thoroughly incenſed againſt any Nation; which was, to make the Captives all come together in one Place, and proſtrate themſelves upon the Ground; that, being divided into two Parts, as it were with a Line, their Conqueror might appoint which Part he pleaſed, either for Death or Life, which was ſometimes determined by caſting of Lots. Some are of Opinion that *David* made three Lots, or Parts of theſe *Moabites*, two of which he ordered to be ſlain, and one Part only to be kept alive. The Reaſon of this his Severity againſt theſe miſerable People, the *Rabbins* aſſure us, was, becauſe they had ſlain his Parents and Brethren, whom he had committed to the Cuſtody of the King of *Moab*, during his Exile. But of the Reality of this Motive there is no Manner of Appearance; and ſince this Execution, which *David* inflicted, may relate, either to the whole Nation, or the Army only, to clear *David* from the Imputation of too much Cruelty, we ſhould rather conceive it of the third, or half Part at moſt, of the Army.

Q. *Who was this* Hadadezer, *who oppoſed himſelf againſt* David *in Battle?*

A. In the Fragment of *Nicholaus Damaſcenus*, which *Joſephus* has preſerved, this Prince is ſimply called *Adad*, which was the common Name of the Kings of *Syria*, who according to the Manner of other *eaſtern* Princes, took their Titles from the celeſtial Bodies, and, in their Language, *Adad* ſignifies the *Sun*. The Fragment, recorded by *Joſephus*, is to this Effect,——*A long Time after, one* Adad, *a valiant Man, and a Native of the Place, had the Command of* Damaſcus *and* Syria, Phœnicia *only excepted. There happened to be a War between the ſame* Adad, *and* David, *the King of the* Jews, *and ſeveral Encounters between them; but, in the End,* Adad *was overcome at* Euphrates, *behaving himſelf* with the Reſolution of a brave Prince, *and a great Captain.* The ſame Author, ſpeaking farther of his Poſterity, ſays,——*That the Government was handed down, from Father to Son, to the tenth Generation, and that the Succeſſor ſtill received the Father's Name with the Empire, as the* Ptolomies *did among the* Egyptians.

Q. *Where lay* Syria of Damaſcus, *the Inhabitants of which ſubmitted to* David?

A. Aram Damaſek, which we tranſlate *Syria of Damaſcus*, was that Part of *Syria*, which lay between *Libanus* and *Antilibanus*, whoſe chief City was *Damaſcus*, ſituate in a Valley, called by ſeveral Names in Scripture, and watered by five Rivers, the two principal of which, *Abana* and *Pharphat* (mentioned in 2 *Kings* v. 12.) deſcended from Mount *Hermon*; whereof the latter waſhed the Walls of *Damaſcus*, and the other ran through it, and divided the City into Parts.

Q. *Give ſome Account of the* Valley of Salt, *mentioned*, v. 13.

A. The Valley of Salt is here thought by many to be the Places adjoining to the *Dead-ſea*: But, as the Country of the *Edomites*, whom *David* ſubdued in his Return from his Expedition into *Syria*, muſt neceſſarily lie towards the *Eaſt* of *Canaan*, we muſt look for ſome other *Valley of Salt* in the Confines of that Country. Now, about a League ſouthward from the City of *Palmyra*, or *Thadmor*, in the Road to *Edom*, we find a large Plain, abounding with Salt-pits, whence a great Part of *Syria* is furniſhed with that Commodity; and therfore it is very probable, that the Battle, between *David*'s Generals, and the *Edomites*, was fought in this Plain; which is about two Days Journey from *Bozrah*, the capital City of the *eaſtern Edom*, and whence theſe People might march out to meet *David's* Forces, and oppoſe them in their Return home.

Q. *Who were the* Cherethites *and* Pelethites, *and what were their Offices?*

A. That they were Soldiers, is evident, from their being mentioned as preſent at the Proclamation of King *Solomon* againſt *Adonijah*, which could not conveniently have been done, without ſome armed Force, to protect the Perſons, that proclaimed him: And that they were not common Soldiers, but the conſtant Guards of *David*'s Perſon, is manifeſt from the Title of *Keepers of the Body*, which *Joſephus* gives them. Some are of Opinion, that they were Men of a gigantick Stature; but we find no Ground for that, though they were doubtleſs proper and robuſt Men, (as we ſpeak) and of known Fidelity to their Prince, 2 *Sam.* xv. 18. and xx. 7. Others again think, that they were *Philiſtines*; but it is hardly ſuppoſeable, that *David* would have any of theſe hated, uncircumciſed People to be his Body-guard; neither can we believe, that *Iſraelitiſh* Soldiers would have took it patiently, to ſee Foreigners of that Nation put in ſuch Places of Honour and Truſt. It is much more likely then, that they were ſome ſelect Men, of the Tribe of *Judah*, who had their Names from the Families, they ſprung from, one of which is mentioned 1 *Sam.* xxx. 14. and the other, 1 *Chron.* ii. 33. unleſs we will come into the Notion of others, who, as they find that there were Men of this Denomination among the *Philiſtines*, think, that theſe Guards of *David*'s, which were originally of his own Tribe, had theſe exotick Names given them from ſome notable Exploit, or ſignal Victory, gained over the *Philiſtines* of this Name, as (in 1 *Sam.* xxx. 14.) we have expreſs Mention of one Action againſt them.

Chap. IX.

David, *for* Jonathan's *Sake, ſends for* Mephiboſheth; *entertains him at his Table; reſtores him all that was* Saul's; *and appoints* Ziba *his Steward.*

Q. WHY *does* David, v. 1. *enquire after the Houſe of* Saul, *rather than after that of* Jonathan?

A. Becauſe he knew not of any Son that *Jonathan* had left, and therefore thought his Kindneſs and Obligation was to paſs to the next of Kindred. As for *Mephiboſheth*, he was very young and obſcure, and probably concealed by his Friends, leſt *David* cut him off for Reaſons of State, as is uſual among Princes in like Caſe, and therefore was unknown to *David*, as well he might be, eſpecially when *David*'s Head and Hands were full of War with divers and potent Enemies, as hitherto they had been.

Chap. X.

David *ſends Meſſengers to comfort the King of the* Ammonites; *he abuſes them. The* Ammonites *and* Syrians *prepare for a War againſt* Iſrael; *are overcome by* Joab *and* Abiſhai. *They renewing their Forces, are again conquered by* David.

Q. WHAT *was the Kindneſs which* Nahaſh *had ſhewn to* David, *which he now would gratefully retaliate to his Son?*

A. What the particular Benefits were, which *David* had received from *Nahaſh*, I am no where told in Scripture; but ſome of the *Jews* ſay, that he fled to him, when he durſt ſtay no longer with *Achiſh*, King of the *Philiſtines*, and that he received him very kindly; others, that he entertained his Relations, when the King of *Moab*, to whom he had committed them, ſlew ſome of them: But the moſt likely Opinion is, that, as he was a bitter Enemy to *Saul*, who had given him a great Overthrow, he, for that very Reaſon, became a Friend to *David*, when he perceived how *Saul* perſecuted him, and thereupon might ſend him Relief and Aſſiſtance, and perhaps offer him Protection in his Kingdom.

Q. *Did not* David *carry his Reſentment too far, in declaring War againſt the* Ammonites, *merely becauſe his Ambaſſadors had been a little disfigured in their Beards and Cloaths?*

A. This was one of the greateſt Indignities, that the Malice of Man could invent, in thoſe Countries, where all thought their Hair ſo great an Ornament, that ſome would rather ſubmit to die, than part with it. What a foul Diſgrace, and heavy Puniſhment this was accounted in antient Times, we may learn from *Nicholaus Damaſcenus*, as mentioned by *Stobæus* (Tit. 42.) who ſays, that among the *Indians* the King commanded the greateſt Offenders to be ſhaven, as the heavieſt Puniſhment, that he could inflict upon them; and, to the like Purpoſe, *Plutarch (in Egeſil.)* tells us, that, whenever a Soldier, among the *Lacedæmonians* was convicted of Cowardice, he was obliged to go with one Part of his upper Lip ſhaved, and the other not. Nay, even at this Day, no greater Indignity can be offered to a Man of *Perſia*, than to cauſe his Beard to be ſhaved; and therefore, *Tavernier*, in his Travels, relates the Story, that when the *Sophi* cauſed an Ambaſſador of *Aureng-zeb's* to be uſed in this Manner, telling him, that he was not worthy to wear a Beard, the Emperor (even in the Manner as *David* here did) moſt highly reſented the Affront, that was done to him in the Perſon of his Ambaſſador. And, as ſhaving *David*'s Ambaſſadors was deſervedly accounted a grievous Affront, ſo the cuting off half the Beard (which made them look ſtill more ridiculous) was a great Addition to it, where Beards were held in great Veneration; and, where long Habits down to the Heels were worn; eſpecially by Perſons of Diſtinction, without any Breeches or Drawers, the cutting their Garments, even to the Middle, thereby to expoſe their Nakedneſs, was ſuch a brutal and ſhameleſs Inſult, as would badly become a Man of *David*'s martial Spirit, and juſt Sentiments of Honour, to have tamely paſſed by.

CHAP. XI.

Whilſt Joab *is beſieging* Rabbah, David *commits Adultery with* Bathſheba; *and hearing ſhe was with Child, ſends for* Uriah *her Husband, to cover her Shame.* Uriah *refuſes to go home.* David *ſends him back with a Letter to* Joab, *with an order to expoſe him to certain Death; the News of which* Joab *ſends to* David, *who thereupon marries* Bathſheba.

Q. WHAT *was the Manner of Building in* David's *Time; becauſe it's ſaid,* He walked upon the Roof of the King's Houſe?

A. The Manner of building, in all *Eaſtern* Countries, was to have their Houſes flat-roofed, with a Terraſs, and a Parapet Wall, for the Convenience of walk in the cool Air; and as *David's* Palace was built on one of the higheſt Places on Mount *Sion*, he might eaſily look down upon the lower Parts of the Town, and take a View of the Gardens, that were within a due Diſtance.

Q. *Why is* Uriah *called the* Hittite?

A. Uriah, tho' an *Hittite* by Nation, was proſelyted to the *Jewiſh* Religion, and ſo marrying with a *Jewiſh* Woman, lived in *Jeruſalem*; or, as he was one of the King's Life-guard, which, for Reaſons above-mentioned, ſeem to have been all Natives, and of the Tribe of *Judah*, this additional Name might perhaps be given him, for ſome gallant Action atchieved againſt the *Hittites*, in the ſame Manner, as a *Roman*, in after Ages, came to be called *Africanus*, *Germanicus*, *Parthicus*, &c. upon Account of Victories obtained over the *Africans*, *Germans*, or *Parthians*.

Q. *Why does* David *bid Uriah* go home and waſh his feet?

A. The Words in the Text are, ——*Go down to thy Houſe, and waſh thy Feet*, Ver. 8. for, in theſe Countries, where it was not the Cuſtom to wear Shoes, but Sandals only, and, in ſome Places, to go bare-foot, waſhing the Feet was a great Refreſhment after a Journey, and a common Complement, that the Maſter of the Houſe uſually made to any Stranger, at his Entrance. But this Cuſtom of waſhing the Feet was not only after a Journey, to cleanſe them from Dirt and Duſt, but very much uſed likewiſe, before People ſet down to Meat; and therefore *David's* Meaning, in the Expreſſion is, that *Uriah* ſhould go down and feaſt with his Wife, (for which Reaſon he ſent a Collation to his Houſe) and, after ſo long an Abſence, indulge himſelf in her Company. For *David*'s Intention, hitherto, was neither to murther *Uriah*, nor marry his Wife, but only to ſcreen her Honour, and his own Crime.

Q. *Don't you think* Uriah *had ſome Suſpicion of his Wife's Adultery, ſince he ſo peremptorily refuſed to be with her?*

A. It may be thought, perhaps, that *Uriah* ſuſpected ſomething of his Wife's Adultery, and therefore reſolving that it ſhould be diſcovered, would not be perſuaded to go down to his Houſe; but if he did, he certainly acted the Part of a truſty Servant, when he would not open the King's Letter, to know what was in it, tho', upon Suppoſition, that he ſuſpected his criminal Commerce with his Wife, he had Reaſon to expect no good. This puts one naturally in Mind of the Story of *Bellerophon*'s carrying Letters from *Pœtus* to his Father-in-law *Jobates*, King of *Lycia*, with an Order to kill him; from whom it came into a Proverb, *To carry* Bellerophon's *Letters*, or *a Death-warrant againſt one's ſelf*; for the Fate of *Uriah* and *Bellerophon* ſeem to be much alike, and the Similitude of *Jobates* and *Joab*'s Name is very remarkable.

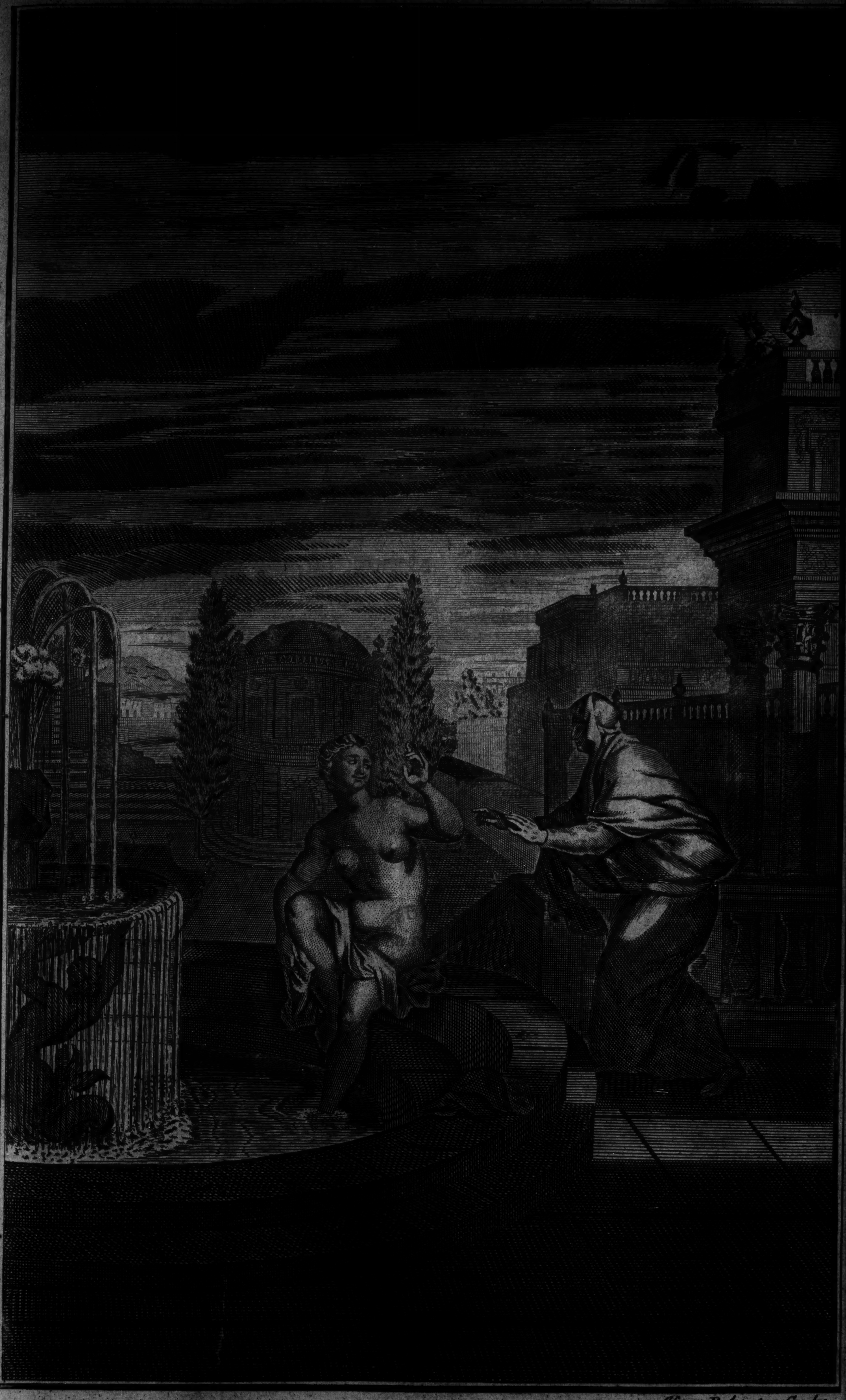
Q. *How does* Joſephus *relate the Fate and Fall of the gallant* Uriah?

A. Thus: Joab *put* Uriah *upon a deſperate Forlorn, and to cover his Deſign, gave him ſeveral brave Men to back him, with a Promiſe to ſupport him with the whole Army, in Caſe there was any Poſſibility of entering the Town; and, at the ſame Time, recommended it earneſtly to him, to maintain the Reputation he had already acquired with the King, and the Army, by acquitting himſelf gallantly upon this Occaſion.* Uriah, *with great Chearfulneſs, undertook the Poſt, while* Joab *gave his Companions private Orders to withdraw and leave him, as ſoon as they found themſelves in Danger. The* Hebrews *preſt hard upon the Wall, and put the* Ammonites *under a dreadful Apprehenſion, that they would force the Town; whereupon the Beſieged threw open their Gates, and made a deſperate Sally, which was as a Signal, to thoſe that were with* Uriah, *to abandon him; which accordingly they did, and left him to be cut to Pieces. He did all the Execution that was poſſible to be done by one ſingle Man againſt Numbers, and after ſeveral Wounds received, fell, like a Man of Honour, with his Face to the Enemy.*

CHAP. XII.

Nathan, *by a Parable, reproves and threatens* David, *who confeſſes his Sin, is pardoned, but the Child muſt die;* David *prays for its Life, but in vain. He betakes him to* Bathſheba. Solomon *born, and*

II SAMUEL CHAP. XI.



Hen. Roberts Sculp.

DAVID and BATH-SHEBA

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and called Jedidiah. David *taketh* Rabbah, *and puts the Inhabitants to Torture.*

Q. WHY *did* Nathan *chuſe to convince* David *of his Sin by a Parable?*

A. Parables, like Hiſtories, wherein we have no Concern, are heard with more Attention, and are contrived ſo, as to give no Offence, even tho' they provoke the Man, to whom they are addreſſed, to condemn himſelf. *There were two Men in one City, the one rich, and the other poor. And the rich Man had exceeding many Flocks and Herds,* as *David* had many Wives and Concubines, with whom he might have well been ſatisfied, without violating another Man's Bed; *but the poor Man had nothing, ſave one little ewe Lamb, which he had bought and nouriſhed up. Bathſheba,* very likely was the only Wife that *Uriah* had, with whom he was highly pleaſed and delighted, and ſhe, very probably with him, until *David*'s Temptations had perverted her Mind. *And it grew up together with him, and with his Children; it did eat of his own Meat, and drank of his own Cup, and lay in his Boſom, and was unto him as a Daughter. Nathan,* in his Reſemblance, cannot be ſaid to have ſurpaſſed the Truth, conſidering how fond many Perſons were, antiently, not only of Lambs, but of ſeveral other Creatures, which they ſuffered to eat with them at their Tables, and lie with them in their Beds; and that even at this Day it is a Cuſtom in *Arabia,* (which is contiguous to *Judea*) to have one of the fineſt Lambs in the Flock brought up in the Houſe, and fed with the Children. And *there came a Traveller to the rich Man:* This denotes *David*'s ſtraggling Appetite, which he ſuffered to wander from his own home, and to covet another Man's Wife: And of this Appetite the *Jewiſh* Doctors have this Obſervation, that "in the Beginning it is "but a Traveller, but in Time it becomes a Gueſt, and in Concluſion is the Maſter of the Houſe." *And he ſpared his* to take of his own Flock, *and his own Herds,* wherewith he might have ſatisfied his Appetite, *but took the poor Man's Lamb, and dreſſed it for the way-faring Man, that was come to him.* Moſt Commentators here take Notice, that *Nathan* did not go ſo far in the Parable, as to ſay any thing of the rich Man's killing the poor Man. This certainly would have made the Reſemblance more compleat, but is therefore omitted, that *David* might not ſo readily apprehend *Nathan*'s Meaning, and ſo be induced, unawares, to pronounce a Sentence of Condemnation upon himſelf; whereupon the Prophet had a fair Opportunity to ſhew him, that, if the rich Man, who took away the poor Man's Lamb, deſerved Death, according to his own Judgment, how much more did he deſerve it, who had not only taken another Man's Wife, but cauſed him to be ſlain likewiſe by the Enemies of *Iſrael.*

Q. *What Reaſon can you give why God ſo readily pardoned* David *ſuch an enormous Offence?*

A. It may very well be asked how God ſo readily came to forgive *David,* when he acknowledged his Tranſgreſſion, and yet did not *Saul,* though he made the like Confeſſion, *I have ſinned?* But the Anſwer is obvious, that, be the Form of Expreſſion what it will, unleſs it proceeds from the Sincerity of the Heart, the great Searcher of Hearts will not regard. The true Reaſon therefore why *Saul* could not obtain a Revocation of his Sentence of Rejection, was, becauſe his Repentance was not ſincere; it did not proceed from an humble and contrite Spirit: At the ſame Time that he acknowledged his Sin, he deſired *Samuel to honour him before the People,* and perſiſted in his Diſobedience ever after: Whereas *David,* on the contrary, humbled himſelf, wept, and lamented for his Sin, and of his Penitence has left us a perpetual and eternal Monument in the 51ſt Pſalm, *Have Mercy upon me, O God, after thy great Goodneſs, according to the Multitude of thy Mercies; do away mine Offences, waſh me throughly from my Wickedneſs, and cleanſe me from my Sin,* &c.

Q. *Might* David, *according to the* Jewiſh *Law, legally marry the Widow of* Uriah, *of whoſe Death he had been the Cauſe?*

A. According to the *Jewiſh* Doctors, it was utterly unlawful for any to marry another Man's Wife, in Caſe he had *defiled* her before: The canonical Law declares ſuch Marriages null and void, as are contracted between an adulterous Man, and a Woman, that was Partner with him in the Crime; and, though the Law of *Moſes* does not expreſly forbid them, yet we may not thence infer, that they were permitted among the *Jews.* For theſe Reaſons, ſome have thought, that this Marriage of *David* and *Bathſheba* was null and invalid; but others, upon better Grounds, think, that, tho' there were many criminal Circumſtances attending it, yet theſe did not vacate its Effect, and, in ſhort, though it ought not to have been done, yet being done, the Marriage was good, and the Children, which were afterwards born, were legitimate.

Q. *Among the Judgments with which God, by* Nathan, *threatens* David, *he ſays,* I will raiſe up Evil againſt thee out of thy own Houſe, &c. *Is not this to make God the Author of Evil?*

A. Nathan's Expreſſions are——*I will raiſe up Evil againſt thee out thine own Houſe, and I will take thy Wives before thine Eyes, and give them unto thy Neighbour, and he ſhall lie with thy Wives, in the Sight of the Sun; for thou didſt it ſecretly, but I will do this Thing before all* Iſrael, *and before the Sun,* Chap. xii. 11, 12. Where the Words, *I will raiſe up, I will take, I will do,* do not denote any poſitive Actions of God, as if he prompted wicked Men to do the ſame Things, wherewith he threatens *David,* inſomuch that, without ſuch prompting, they would not have done them, but by it were neceſſitated to do them; ſuch a Conſtruction as this is injurious to the Attributes, and makes God the Author of Evil: But the true Meaning is,——That God, at that Time, ſaw the perverſe Diſpoſition of one of his Sons, and the crafty Wilineſs of one of his Counſellors, which, without his reſtraining them, would not fail to create *David* no ſmall Uneaſineſs; and therefore, becauſe *David* had violated his Law, and, to gratify his Luſt, had committed both Adultery and Murther, God would not interpoſe, but ſuffered the Tempers of theſe two wicked Perſons to follow their own Courſe, and have their natural Swing; whereupon the one, being ambitious of a Crown, endeavours to depoſe his Father, and the other, willing to make the Breach irreparable, adviſed the moſt deteſted Thing he could think of. This indeed was the very Thing, that God had foretold, but, without any Imputation upon this Attributes, we may ſay, that God can ſo diſpoſe and guide a Train of Circumſtances, that the Wickedneſs of any Action ſhall happen in this Manner, rather than another, though he do not infuſe into any Man the Will to do wickedly. So that from ſuch Scripture Phraſes, as theſe, we may not infer, that God either does, or can do Evil, but only that he permits that Evil to be done, which he foreknew would be done, but might have prevented, had he pleaſed, or, in other Terms, that he ſuffers Men, naturally wicked, to follow the Bent of their Tempers, without any Interpoſition of his Providence to reſtrain them.

Q. *Ennumerate the Aggravations of* David's *Crime, and the Reaſons of their being recorded in Scripture.*

A. Some have obſerved, *1ſt*, That as *David tarried at* Jeruſalem *at the Time when Kings went forth to Battle*, he there indulged himſelf in Eaſe and Luxury (which are the Bane and Ruſt of the Mind) and ſo inſenſibly fell into thoſe looſe Deſires, which drew him into ſuch vile Perpetrations; ſo that the firſt Cauſe of his Sin was Idleneſs. *2d*, They obſerve it, as an Aggravation of his Crime, that he certainly knew that *Bathſheba* was another Man's Wife, and yet deliberately and adviſedly committed the Sin; nay, that ſhe was a Wife of one, who was a Proſelyte to the *Jewiſh* Religion, and therefore added Scandal to his Wickedneſs, or (as the Text expreſſes it) Chap. xii. 14. *gave great Occaſion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme.* *3d*, They obſerve, that there was Perfidy added to this Guilt, and a ſinful Contrivance, xii. 6. in cauſing *Uriah* to be ſent for home, in receiving him with great Tokens of his Favour, and in entertaining him with good Cheer, that he might be the more deſirous to enjoy the Company of his Wife, and ſo have the Child, which was got in Adultery, reputed his own. *4th*, They obſerve, xii. 11. from *Uriah*'s Anſwer, that, had not *David*'s Heart been ſeared, he could not but have felt a ſtrong Remorſe, upon thinking how he had abuſed ſo brave a Man, and the reſt of his Army, gloriouſly enduring all Manner of Hardſhips, for the Service of their Country. *5th*, They obſerve, xii. 15. from his Deſign upon *Uriah*'s Life, when he could not otherwiſe conceal his Lewdneſs, how naturally one ſin paves the Way to another, and how, in a ſmall Compaſs of Time, the Faſcination of ſenſual Appetites is enough to change the very Nature of Mankind, ſince even he, who formerly ſpared *Saul*, unjuſtly ſeeking his Life, is now put upon contriving the Death of a very faithful Servant, in a very baſe and unworthy Manner. *6th*, They obſerve it, as a farther Aggravation of his Crime of Murder, that he not only expoſed an innocent and faithful Servant to be killed, but that, together with him, xii. 17. ſeveral more brave Men, *ſet in the Front of the Battle*, where the Service was hotteſt, muſt neceſſarily have fallen in the Attack; ſo blind was he to the publick Good, and ſo prodigal of his Subjects Lives, if he might but cover his Guilt, and gratify his Luſt. *7th*, They obſerve, *ver.* 25. from the Anſwer to his Meſſenger, ſent by *Joab* to acquaint him with *Uriah*'s Death, *viz. the Sword devoureth one, as well as another*, the vile Hypocriſy and Obdurateneſs of his Heart, imputing that to the Chance of War, or rather to the Direction of divine Providence, which, his Conſcience could not but tell him, was of his own Contrivance. *8th*, and *laſtly*, They obſerve, *ver.* 27. from his Marriage with *Bathſheba*, even before her Husband was cold in his Grave, how the Eagerneſs of his indulged Appetite now extinguiſhed (what in ſome Sinners is laſt of all parted with, and for which he himſelf had lately embrued his Hands in Blood) all Senſe of Shame, and Regard to Reputation or Decency.

Theſe are ſome of the Aggravations obſervable in *David*'s Crime, which (beſides its Luſt and Cruelty) is loaded with too juſt an Imputation of Perfidy, of Ingratitude, of Hypocriſy, of Deliberation, of Obſtinacy, of Shameleſſneſs in Sin; and for theſe Purpoſes were they recorded in Scripture, that they might teach us the Frailty of human Nature, and how liable the beſt of Men are, in ſome Inſtances of their Lives, to be overtaken with very groſs Faults; that they might ſhew us the natural Gradation of one Sin to another; and that, when once we have ſuffered our Appetites to get the Maſtery, in a ſhort time, it will not be in our Power to ſet Bounds to them, would we never ſo fain; that they might caution us againſt Sloth and Idleneſs, againſt indulging any inordinate Paſſion, or gazing upon any Objects, that may endanger our Innocence; that they might remind us all how much we ſtand in need continually of the divine Aſſiſtance, and therefore how much we are concerned to *pray with all Prayer and Supplication*, and to *watch*, as well as *pray*, that we *fall not into Temptation*; and laſtly, that they might inculcate that excellent Precept, which the Apoſtle has laid down in theſe Words, *Gal.* vi. 1. *Brethren, if any Man be overtaken in a Fault, ye, that are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one, in the Spirit of Meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.*

Q. *Who were thoſe* Enemies of the Lord, *who might take Occaſion from* David's *Crime, to blaſpheme?*

A. David's Crime, which at firſt was ſecret, was in Time diſcovered, and the Report of it carried to the neighbouring Nations. The *Syrians*, the *Ammonites*, the *Moabites*, the *Edomites*, the *Philiſtines*, People whom he had ſubdued, and who, out of pure Malice, had always a jealous Eye upon his Conduct, would not fail, upon this Occaſion, to murmur, and ſay, “How could God thus favour “an Adulterer and Murtherer? Where is his Juſtice, and his Providence? Is this the God, who “is ſaid to be ſo equitable in his Dealings with “Men, and ſo ſevere an Avenger of Iniquity, and “yet makes Choice of ſuch a Monſter as this, to “govern his People? This is the *David, the* “*Man after God's own Heart*, whom he preferred “before *Saul*, on whom he hath poured innumerable Bleſſings, and for whom he hath many rich “Promiſes in Reſerve; and yet did *Saul* ever commit ſuch horrid Enormities, as this Man has done, “and ſtill continues to be Favourite of God?” Such Reflections, (we may reaſonably imagine,) would *David*'s Tranſgreſſions have occaſioned among Strangers, and Enemies, who might thence he induced to deſpiſe a Religion, they were not acquainted with, and which he, who ſhould have been its main Support, ſo little regarded.

Q. *What were the particular Acts of* David's *Humiliation on this Occaſion; and why did he mourn ſo vehemently for the Death of the Child?*

A. David's Acts of Humiliation for his Sins are thus deſcribed by *Salvian* (*de Gubern. Dei.*) “He “put off his Purple, threw away his royal Ornaments, laid down his Diadem, wholly ſtripped “himſelf of his Kingſhip, and appeared as a Penitent in ſqualid, rueful Garb, faſting, lying on “the Ground, confeſſing, mourning, repenting, “de-

“ depreciating, &c. and yet, with all his Humiliation and Compunction, he could not obtain a Revocation of this Puniſhment.” But why ſhould the Death of this Child, who, had he lived, would have been a perpetual Monument of his Sin, be accounted by *David* ſo great a Puniſhment! To which it is replied, That this exceſſive Mourning did not proceed ſimply from the Fear of the Loſs of the Child, but from a deep Senſe of his Sin, and of the divine Diſpleaſure manifeſt in the Child's Sickneſs, and particularly from a juſt Apprehenſion of the Injury, which he had done the Infant by his Sin, and which he thought himſelf bound in Juſtice, by Prayer and Interceſſion, as much as he was able, to repair.

Q. *But in the whole Story, I don't find the leaſt mention of* Bathſheba's *Guilt or Puniſhment.*

A. This might be, becauſe, as to the Matter of her Husband's Death, ſhe was innocent; to the Adultery, which ſhe committed, ſhe was incited by the Offers of a powerful King; and, in the Calamities, which befel him, ſhe, no doubt, had her Share, and felt her Puniſhment.

Q. *What does the Word* Solomon *import?*

A. The Word *Solomon* is properly derived from *Schalom*, which ſignifies *Peace*, intimating, that his Reign ſhould be peaceable: But, by God's Appointment, *Nathan* gave him another Name, *viz. Jedidiah*, that is, *the beloved of God:* The Scripture however never calls him by this Name, but only by that of *Solomon*; for what Reaſon we cannot well tell, unleſs we may ſuppoſe, that the People, being long harraſſed in War, during his Father's Reign, might be pleaſed with this Name, and uſe it, rather than the other, to intimate their Hopes and longing Deſire of Peace: And, for this Reaſon (among others) it may be inferred, that *Solomon* was born after the Concluſion of the *Ammonitiſh* War, though the ſacred Hiſtory takes Occaſion, from the Death of *Bathſheba*'s Firſt-born, to relate this firſt. Not long after this, *David* had another Son by *Bathſheba* (2 Sam. v. 14. and 1 Chron. iii. 5.) whom he called *Nathan*, after the Name of the Prophet; and of theſe two Chriſt was born, though in different Lines; for *Joſeph*, his ſuppoſed Father, came from *Solomon*, as *Matthew* (Chap. i. 6, 7.) relates it; and *Mary*, his real Mother, came from *Nathan*, as it is in St. *Luke*, Chap. iii. ver. 31.

Q. *What was that* City of Waters, *mentioned* ver. 27?

A. Some learned Men are of Opinion, that the royal City of *Rabbah* was likewiſe called *the City of Waters*, either becauſe it ſtood upon a River, or was encompaſſed with Water, both for its Defence, and Delight. But *Junius* renders it, that *he cut off the Waters, which ſupplied the Town*; which Tranſlation not only *Joſephus* ſeems to favour, by telling us that *Joab* ſeized on all the *Aqueducts*, which led into the City; but *Polybius* (*l.* 5.) likewiſe, ſpeaking of the Siege of this ſame Place by *Antiochus*, relates the Story, how a certain *Deſerter*, diſcovered to that Prince a ſubterraneous Paſſage, through which the Beſieged came to draw Water which *Antiochus* ſtopped up, and, by reaſon of their Thirſt, compelled them to ſurrender.

Q. David *having conquered* Rabbah, *took their King's Crown from off his Head*, the Weight whereof, *it's ſaid*, was a Talent of Gold; *was not this too heavy for the Neck of any one Man to ſupport?*

A. The Weight of a Talent, which, upon the loweſt Computation, amounts to no leſs than an hundred and twenty three Pounds, is allowed to be too much for one Neck to ſuſtain; but then we ſhould conſider that beſides the Crown that was uſually worn, it was cuſtomary, in ſome Nations, for Kings to have vaſt large ones; (even to a Size equal to this,) either hung or ſupported over the Throne, where, at their Coronations, or upon other ſolemn Occaſions they were wont to ſit.

The *Jewiſh* Doctors, indeed, have a very odd Conceit, *viz.* that *David*, when he took this Crown from the King of *Ammon*, hung it up on high by a certain Loadſtone that he had, as if the Power of the Magnet were to attract Gold, as well as Iron. But let that be as it will, 'tis but to ſuppoſe, that the Crown, here under Debate, was of this larger Kind, and that by ſome Means or other, it was ſupported over the King's Head, while he was ſitting on his Throne, and then there will be an apparent Reaſon, *for taking the Crown from off*, or (as the *Hebrew* Words will bear) *from over the King's Head*, and placing it, in like manner, over *David*'s Head, even to indicate the Tranſlation of his Kingdom to *David*.

'Tis a common thing, however, in *Hebrew*, as well as other learned Languages, to have the ſame Word ſignify both the Weight and Value of any Thing. And that the Price or Worth of the Crown is here the Meaning of the Phraſe, we have the more Reaſon to think, becauſe Mention is made of an Addition of precious Stones, which are never eſtimated by the Weight of Gold. *Joſephus* tells us of one Stone of great Value in the Middle of the Crown, which he calls a Sardonyx; and as we may ſuppoſe that there were other Jewels of ſeveral Kinds, placed at their proper Diſtances, theſe, in Proportion as they heightened the Value, muſt leſſen the Weight of the Crown, and verify what the ſame Hiſtorian tells us of it, *viz. that* David *wore it conſtantly on his Head afterward for an Ornament.*

Q. *But how will you clear* David *of Cruelty in treating the* Ammonites *in ſuch an inhuman Manner, as we read* ver. 31?

A. Had *David* indeed been the Inventer of ſuch frightful Puniſhments, we might have juſtly reckoned him a Man of the ſame cruel and brutal Spirit as was *Caligula*, who, in after Ages (as *Suetonius* tells us) was wont to take a great Delight in inflicting them: But the Truth is, that theſe were the Puniſhments which the *Ammonites* inflicted upon the *Jews*, whenever they took them Priſoners, and therefore *David*, when he conquered their capital City, uſed them with the like Cruelty; not every one of them with the like Cruelty; not every one of them indiſcriminately, but ſuch only as appeared in Arms againſt him, and had either adviſed approved the Advice of putting ſuch a Diſgrace upon his Meſſengers.

The Siege of *Rabbah* began before *David* had any Commerce with *Bathſheba*, and if the Town was not taken 'till after *Solomon*'s Birth (as the Sequel of the Hiſtory ſeems to imply) the Siege muſt laſt out for about two Years; in which Time *David* continued in an obdurate State of Sin and Impenitence, and was therefore deprived of that mild and gentle Spirit, for which he had formerly been ſo remarkable. What Wonder then, if being now become cruel and hard-hearted, as well as exaſperated with the Length of the Siege, he treated the *Ammonites* in the ſame outrageous Manner, that they were accuſtomed to treat his Subjects, not only to retaliate the Thing upon them, but to deter all future Ages likewiſe from violating the Rights of Nations, by treating the Perſons of publick Embaſſadors with Contempt.

CHAP. XIII.

Amnon *loves his Siſter* Tamar; *raviſhes her*; *then hates and drives her away*; *ſhe is revenged by* Abſalom, *in the Death of* Amnon. David *is grieved.* Abſalom *flies to* Geſhur.

Q. *WHY did not* Abſalom *make his perſonal Addreſſes to* Tamar, *inſtead of uſing a Stratagem to get her into his Power?*

A. Virgins of the *Blood royal* were kept ſecluſe, in Aparments ſeparate from the Commerce of Men, into which not only Strangers, but even their own Fathers were not permitted to enter. *Amnon* however, at ſome time or other, had ſeen the beautiful *Tamar*, or otherwiſe he could not have conceived ſo ſtrong a Paſſion for her; for upon ſome certain *ceremonial* Occaſions, it was cuſtomary for the young Women to walk out, and ſhew themſelves; but conſidering their cloſe Confinement at other Times, it was hardly poſſible for *Amnon* to find an Opportunity of declaring his Paſſion, much more of gratifying it; and therefore, out of pure Deſpair, he pined himſelf into a *Conſumption*.

Q. *What Obſervations do you make upon the Arguments* Tamar *made uſe of to diſſuade* Amnon *from his lewd Attempt?*

A. There is ſomething ſo moving, and the Arguments are ſo ſtrong, in *Tamar*'s Speech to *Amnon*, that one would almoſt wonder, why it did not prevail with him to deſiſt. *Nay, my Brother, do not force me.* Here ſhe reminds him of her *Relation* to her, for which he hoped ſhe would have ſuch a Reverence, as not to meddle with her, though ſhe herſelf were willing, much leſs to offer Violence to her, which it was abominable to do, even to a Stranger, much more to one of the ſame Blood. *For no ſuch Thing ought to be done in* Iſrael. Whatever other Nations did, who had not the Knowledge of God's Laws, ſhe begs of him to conſider, that they both belonged to a Nation, which was God's *peculiar People*, had been inſtructed better, and therefore ſhould act otherwiſe. *Do not thou this Folly.* She prays him (beſides the Scandal it would give) to recollect with himſelf on the Heinouſneſs of the Crime, and how highly offenſive it would be to the Divine Majeſty. *And I, whither ſhall I cauſe my Shame to go?* She beſeeches him (beſides the Sin againſt God) to conſider the Diſgrace it would be to her, who after ſuch a foul Act, muſt be aſhamed to look any one in the Face. *And as for thee thou ſhalt be as one of the Fools in* Iſrael. Laſtly, She puts him in Mind of his own Reputation, which ſo vile an Action would tarniſh for ever, and make him be looked upon as a Man void of all Senſe of Religion, Honour, and Humanity. *Now therefore, I pray thee, ſpeak to the King, for he will not withhold me from thee.* It is a common Opinion among the *Jewiſh* Doctors, that, in the War, which King *David* had with the King of *Geſhur*, he took *Maacah*, his Daughter, captive, and (as they fancy their Law allows,) *Deut.* xxi. 11. lay with her for once only, and then begat this Daughter; but that, upon her becoming a *Proſelyte* to the *Jewiſh* Religion, he married her, and afterwards had *Abſalom*: *Tamar* therefore, being born, while her Mother was a *Gentile*, they ſuppoſe that ſhe was not *David*'s *legal* Child, and that *Amnon*, conſequently, might marry her: But all this is mere Talk, without any Shadow of Proof. The moſt probable Opinion is, that ſhe was neither ignorant of the Law, *Lev.* xviii. 11. which prohibited ſuch inceſtuous Marriages, nor thought her Father's Power ſo great, as that he might diſpence with the Law upon this Occaſion, but merely that ſhe ſaid any Thing, which ſhe thought would pleaſe him, to ſtop his Sollicitations, and rude Attempts, and to eſcape, for the preſent, out of his Hands.

Q. *What Reaſon can you aſſign, why* Amnon's *Love was ſo ſoon converted into ſuch an inveterate Hatred, as to make him act ſo brutally towards his Siſter, when he had had his Will of her?*

A. It is no uncommon Thing for Men of violent and irregular Paſſions to paſs from one *Extreme* to another. The Shame, which accompanies every baſe Action, the Remorſe, and Repentance, and many bad Conſequences, that immediately purſue it, make a Recoil in every Man's Temper; and therefore it is no Wonder, that a *libidinous* young Man, who would not ſpare ſo much as his own Siſter, ſhould, after Fruition, and when the Ardour of his Luſt was ſatisfied, be ſeized with a contrary Paſſion, and hate the Object he loved ſo much before, when he came coolly to compare the *Pleaſure* and the *Sin* together, the *Shortneſs* of the one, and the *Heinouſneſs* of the other.

Q. *What Remarks do you make on the Manner of* Tamar's *expreſſing her Vexation for the Injury and Diſgrace done her by her Brother?*

A. This is expreſſed by her putting *Aſhes upon her Head*, v. 19. and that this was an ancient Cuſtom, whereby to denote one's Grief and Concern for any great Loſs, or Calamity, is evident from that Paſſage in the Prophet, concerning the People of *Tyre*: *They ſhall cry bitterly, caſt Duſt upon their Heads, and wallow themſelves in the Aſhes*, Ezek. xxvii. 30. and from *Achilles*'s Behaviour upon the Death of *Patroclus*.

Q. Abſalom *ſeems to have been a Perſon of an high Spirit; how happened it then that he did not immediately revenge the Injury done his Siſter?*

A. By thus concealing his Reſentment, *Amnon* was lull'd aſleep into a Belief, that *Abſalom* would not trouble him for what he had done, becauſe he did not threaten, nor ſo much as expoſtulate with him, or take any Notice of what had paſſed; tho', in Reaſon, he ought to have been more afraid, that he was meditating a terrible Revenge; according the Leſſon which the Mouſe gave her young one, when ſhe perceived her affrighted at the Noiſe of the crowing Cock, but regardleſs of the ſly Approaches of the Cat, *viz.* “That there was no “Danger to be feared from the *fluttering Cock*, “but from the *ſilent Cat* preſent Death.”

Q. *When* Abſalom *had murthered his Brother* Amnon, *why did he not fly to one of the Cities of Refuge, rather than to a foreign Country?*

A. In the Caſe of *wilful* Murther, the Law is, *that the Avenger of Blood ſhall ſlay the Murtherer; when he meeteth him, he ſhall ſlay him*, Numb. xxv. 19. From whence it ſeems to follow, that it was not in any Man's Power to protect the *wilful*

ful Murtherer, becauſe the *Avenger of Blood*, i. e. the neareſt Relation of the Perſon murthered might, with Impunity, wherever he met him, kill him. As *Abſalom* therefore had committed a deſigned Murder, his own Life was, every Moment, in Danger; and, as there were no Cities of Refuge in his Country, that, in this Caſe, would yield him Protection, he was forced to flee out of the Kingdom, to his Mother's Father.

Q. *Why did not* David *himſelf puniſh* Amnon *for ſo flagrant an Offence?*

A. The Reaſon, which *Joſephus* aſſigns for his not chaſtiſing *Amnon*, for his *inceſtuous* Rape, was *becauſe he was his eldeſt Son, and he loved him, and would not diſpleaſe him*, is a groundleſs Calumny, and mere Fiction; for ſince the ſacred Hiſtory has thought fit to be ſilent in this Matter, no one can tell, what his Father either ſaid or did to him: The true Reaſon therefore, as we ſuppoſe, why his Father did not proceed with Severity againſt him, was, becauſe the Caſe (as it then ſtood) was intricate and perplex'd, and ſuch as the Law had made no Proviſion for. The Law concerning *Rapes* is worded thus,—*If a Damſel, that is a Virgin, be betrothed unto a Husband, and a Man find her in the City, and lie with her; then ye ſhall bring them both out unto the Gate of the City, and ye ſhall ſtone them with Stones that they die: The* Damſel, *becauſe ſhe cried not, being in the City; and the Man, becauſe he humbled his Neighbour's Wife*: And again, *If a Man find a Damſel, that is a Virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the Man that lay with her, ſhall give unto the Damſel's Father fifty Shekels of Silver, and ſhe ſhall be his Wife, becauſe he hath humbled her; he may not put her away all his Days.* Theſe are the two principal Laws concerning this Matter, but neither come up to the Caſe now before us. For, had *David* puniſhed *Amnon*'s Crime with Death, as the former Law requires, *Tamar*, in like Manner muſt have ſuffered too, (even though ſhe was innocent) becauſe *ſhe cried not out*; and though ſhe was not a *betrothed Damſel* (as the Caſe is put in the latter Law) yet *David* could not compel *Amnon* to marry her, becauſe ſuch a Marriage would have been *inceſtuous*; and therefore we may ſuppoſe, that though *David* might reprimand his Son very ſeverely for having *wrought Folly in* Iſrael, yet he could not bring him before a publick Judicature, becauſe the Law did not extend, properly, to his Caſe, or if he had made it extend, the Innocent muſt have ſuffered with the Guilty.

Q. *But was not* David *to blame in ſuffering* Abſalom *to go unpuniſhed for ſo great a Crime as the Murder of his Brother?*

A. The ſacred Hiſtorian has taken Care to clear *David* from any baſe Connivance at *Abſalom*'s Wickedneſs, in murdering his Brother *Amnon*, by telling us, that, as ſoon as he had done it, *he fled and went to* Talmai, his Grandfather by his Mother's Side, who was then King of *Geſhur*. *Geſhur* was a City in *Syria*, which lay on the other Side of *Jordan*; and *Abſalom*, who meditated the Murder of his Brother, and could not but foreſee that it would be an Act of high Diſpleaſure to his Father, invited the *Princes of the Blood* to his Country-ſeat, which was near the City *Ephraim*, not far from the River *Jordan*, that he might have a better Opportunity, not only of putting in Execution his wicked Deſign, but of making his Eſcape likewiſe: So that *David* (had he been ever ſo much minded) could not poſſibly have apprehended him, before he had got to a ſafe Retreat; and where, it is eaſy to imagine, he would tell his Tale ſo well, as to gain his Grandfather's Protection, if not Approbation of the Fact; which, with a ſmall Share of Eloquence, might be ſet off, as to appear a neceſſary Vindication of the Honour of their Family, which had been ſo groſly violated.

CHAP. XIV.

Joab *inſtructs a Widow of* Tekoah, *by a Parable, to induce the King to fetch home* Abſalom; *ſhe prevails.* Abſalom *comes to* Jeruſalem, *but is forbidden to ſee the King; his Beauty, Hair, and Children. After two Years* Joab *brings him into the King's Preſence.*

Q. WHERE *was* Tekoah *ſituated; and why did* Joab *employ this Widow, rather than a Man, in managing this great Affair?*

A. *Tekoah* was a City in the Tribe of *Judah*, which lay *South* of *Jeruſalem*, and about twelve Miles diſtant from it. And herein does *Joab*'s Cunning appear not a little, that he made Choice of a *Woman*, rather than a *Man*, becauſe Women can more eaſily expreſs their Paſſions, and ſooner gain Pity in their Miſeries; a *Widow*, which was a Condition of Life proper to move Compaſſion; a *grave Woman* (as *Joſephus* calls her) which made her better fitted for addreſſing the King; and a Woman *not known at* Jeruſalem, but living at ſome Diſtance in the Country, that the Caſe which ſhe was to repreſent, might not too readily be enquired into.

Q. *What does the Addreſs of this Woman to* David *afford worthy of Remark?*

A. The Art and Contrivance of this Widow of *Tekoah*'s Speech is very remarkable. *When the Woman of* Tekoah *ſpake to the King, ſhe fell on her Face to the Ground, and did Obeyſance, and ſaid, help, O King: And the King ſaid to her, What aileth thee? And ſhe ſaid, I am indeed a Widow Woman, and my Husband is dead, and thy Handmaid had two Sons, and they two ſtrove together in the Field, and there was none to part them, but the one ſmote the other and ſlew him; and behold the Family is riſen againſt thine Handmaid, and they ſay, deliver him that ſmote his Brother, that we may kill him, for the Life of his Brother whom he ſlew, and we will deſtroy the Heir alſo: And ſo they ſhall quench my Coal that is left*, i. e. deprive me of the little Comfort of my Life, which remains, (and is as it were a *Coal* buried in the *Aſhes*) *and leave to my Husband neither Name nor Remainder upon the Earth*, &c. Now the Scope of all this Speech was, to frame a Caſe, as like to *David*'s, as ſhe could deviſe, that, by prevailing with him to determine it in her Favour, he might be convinced, how much more reaſonable it was to preſerve *Abſalom*: But, how plauſible ſoever the *Likeneſs* might be, there was a wide Difference between her Caſe and his. For her Son (as ſhe pretended) was ſlain in a *Scuffle* with his Brother; whereas *Amnon* was taken off by a premeditated Murder: He was ſlain in the Field, where there were no Witneſſes; whether the Fact was wilfully done or no; whereas all the King's Sons ſaw *Amnon* barbarouſly murdered by his Brother; and laſtly, he was her only Son, by whom alone ſhe could hope to have her Huſband's Name perpetuated; whereas *David*'s Family was in no Danger of being extinct, even though he had given up *Abſalom* to Juſtice. But there was a great deal of Policy in not making the Similitude too cloſe and viſible, leſt the King ſhould perceive the Drift of the Woman's *Petition*, before ſhe had obtained a *Grant* of Pardon for her Son, and came to make Application to the King: And though, upon her making the Application, the King might have argued the *Diſparity* of the two Caſes, yet he thought proper to wave this, and admit her Reaſoning to be good, becauſe he was as deſirous to have *Abſalom* recalled, as were any of his Subjects.

Q. *Why did* David *refuſe to ſee his Son* Abſalom *on his Return to* Jeruſalem?

A. This ſmall Severity to *Abſalom*, ſmall in Compariſon to the Heinouſneſs of his Crime, *David* might think neceſſary, not only to put him upon a ſincere Humiliation and Repentance for what he had done, when he found, that the King (indulgent as he was) had not fully pardoned him; but to convince the People likewiſe, how deteſtable his Crime was in the King's Eſteem, and how averſe *he* would be to paſs by the like in another Perſon, who could not endure the Sight of a Son, whoſe Hand was defiled with a Brother's Blood.

Q. *Conſidering the Heinouſneſs of* Abſalom's *Offence, and* David's *ſtrict Regard to Juſtice, it ſeems a little ſtrange that he ſhould be ſo eaſily prevailed on to recal him.*

A. The Law of God indeed is very expreſs,— *Whoſoever ſheddeth Man's Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed*; neither *ſhall ye take any Satisfaction for the Life of a Murderer, which is guilty of Death, but he ſhall ſurely be put to Death.* Whereby it appears, that the ſupreme Magiſtrate was obliged to execute Juſtice upon all wilful Murderers, without any Reſervation; nor had *David* any Power to diſpence with God's Laws, or to ſpare thoſe, whom he had commanded him to deſtroy: But then it muſt be conſidered, that the Affront which *Amnon* put upon *Abſalom*, was very great and heinous; that *Abſalom*, at this Time, was out of the Reach of *David*'s Juſtice, and ſo would have continued, had he not obtained a Promiſe of Impunity; that by living an Exile in an *heatheniſh* Country, *David* had Reaſon to apprehend, that his Son was in Danger of being infected with their wicked and idolatrous Practices, and was therefore the rather inclined to recall him; and that the Clamours, and Importunities of the People, which *Joab* procured this Woman of *Tekoah* to repreſent to the King in a very free and artful Manner, did almoſt compel him to do it: For what he ſaid, in the Caſe of *Joab*'s Murder of *Abner*, viz. that he could not revenge it, becauſe *the Sons of* Zeruiah *were too hard for him*; the like, very probably, might have been ſaid in this Caſe, where the People's Hearts were ſo ſtrongly, and ſo univerſally ſet upon *Abſalom*; and that the rather, becauſe his long Baniſhment moved their Pity, and his Abſence made them more impatient for his Return. The Eyes of all, in ſhort, were upon him, as the next Heir, as a wiſe, and gallant, and amiable Prince, unhappy only in this Inſtance of killing *Amnon*, for which he had a ſufficient Provocation; and therefore, to ſatiſfy the Cries of the People, as well as to provide for the Security of his Kingdom, which ſeemed to depend on the Eſtabliſhment of the Succeſſion in *Abſalom*, *David* was obliged to forgive him, and recal him: And when he was recalled, and reinſtated in the King's Favour, 'tis no wonder, that a young Prince of his gay Temper, ſhould multiply his Attendants, and ſet up a rich Equipage, to attract the Eyes and Admiration of Mankind; or that his Father, whoſe Eſtate ſo well enabled him to bear the Expence of this Magnificence, and whoſe Heart rejoiced perhaps to ſee his Son the Favourite of the People, did not reſtrain him in it; becauſe a Man of an open Spirit himſelf, loves to ſee his Children make a Figure in Life, which, in all *Eaſtern* Countries, was a Thing cuſtomary, and might here more eſpecially be expected in the eldeſt, and Heir preſumptive to the Crown.

Q. *Does not the weight of* Abſalom's *Hair, ſeem altogether improbable?*

A. The Weight of *Abſalom*'s Hair, in the Words of the Text, is thus expreſſed,——*And when he polled his Head, (for it was at every Year's End that he polled it; and becauſe the Hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it) he weighed the Hair of his Head at two hundred Shekels after the King's Weight.* In the Explication of which Words, the Sentiments of the Learned have been ſo many, and various, that we ſhall content ourſelves with commenting upon ſome of the chief of them.

Thoſe who are of Opinion, that the Words related only to the Cuttings of *Abſalom*'s Hair, make the two hundred Shekels the Price, and not the Weight of them; and, to this Purpoſe, they ſuppoſe, that though *Abſalom* himſelf might not ſell his Hair, yet ſome Perſons about him might do it, in Complaiſance to the Ladies of *Jeruſalem*, who might not think themſelves in the Faſhion, unleſs they wore a Lock of the favourite Prince's. But, beſides the Abſurdity of the King's Son ſuffering any of his Domeſticks to ſell his Hair, the very Words of the Text are a Confutation of this Notion, where they tell us, that *he weighed the Hair of his Head*, whereas, had it been ſold, the Buyer muſt have weighed the Money, even as *Abraham* did, when he purchaſed the Field of *Ephron*. Others again pretend, that there is a manifeſt Miſtake crept into the Text, which has been occaſioned by an ignorant Tranſcriber's inſerting one *numerical* Letter for another, the *Reſch* inſtead of the *Daleth*, that is, two hundred inſtead of four: But, beſides the Uncertainty, whether the former *Hebrews* made uſe of their Letters inſtead of Figures (whereof there is not the leaſt Sign or Token in any ancient Copies) wherein, I pray, would the great Wonder be, if what was cut off from *Abſalom*'s Head, to thin and ſhorten his Hair, when it grew too weighty and troubleſome to him, amounted to no more, than four *Shekels*, which is much about two Ounces; and yet, the whole Deſign of this Narration ſeems to portend ſomething, more than uſual, in this prodigious Increaſe of *Abſalom*'s Hair.

The Text, however, does not ſpeak of the Cuttings of the Hair, but of the Head of Hair itſelf, when it talks of the Weight of *two hundred Shekels*; and therefore thoſe, who take it in this larger Senſe, are not forgetful to remind us, that, in thoſe Days, Hair was accounted a very great Ornament, and the longer it was, the more it was eſteemed; that *Abſalom*, to be ſure, would not fail to nouriſh his with the utmoſt Care, and to let it grow long enough, becauſe it contributed ſo much to the Gracefulneſs of his Perſon; that, in After-ages (as perhaps they did then) Men were wont to uſe much Art with their Hair, and dreſs it every Day with fragrant Ointments, in order to make it grow thick and ſtrong; that the noble Guards, which attended *Solomon* (as *Joſephus* informs us) had their long Hair flowing about their Shoulders, which they powdered with ſmall Particles of Gold, to make it ſparkle, and gliſten againſt the Sun; and that, therefore, it is not improbable, that *Abſalom*, who himſelf was a gay young Man, and wanted none of theſe Helps or Improvements, might, in Proceſs of Time, bring his Hair up to the Weight, that the Scripture records; which, according to the *Gold Shekel* (that is but half as much as the *Silver*) came to no more (as the learned *Bochart* endeavours to prove) than three Pound, and two Ounces.

But ſince the Scripture ſays nothing of any ſuch Additions, as Ointments, or Gold-duſt, to inhance the Weight of the Hair; others, who, think this too much for a Man, that polled his Hair once every Year, if not oftener, have obſerved from the Words which we render at *every Year's End*, that, in the Original, they imply no particular Deſignation of Time, and thence infer, that *Abſalom* did not weigh his Hair ſo often, as once every Year, but at this particular Time only, when he returned to *Jeruſalem*. He, in his Exile, *ſay they*, which laſted about three Years, pretending great Sorrow for his Sin, ſeems to have take upon him the Vow of a *Nazarite*, until his Return, one Part of which was, that he ſhould not ſuffer his Hair to be cut for ſuch a determinate Time: But upon his Recall home, being now diſcharged from his Vow, he ordered his Hair to be cut all clean off, becauſe it was grown very cumberſome to him; which, being of ſo long a Growth, amounted to the Weight that the ſacred Hiſtory relates of it: But this Notion of *Abſalom*'s Nazaritiſm has no Foundation in Scripture, except that lying Pretence to his Father, when, under the Cloak of Religion, he was minded to conceal his intended Rebellion; and therefore all the Superſtructure built upon it muſt neceſſarily fall.

Others, perceiving that none of the Inventions would anſwer the Purpoſe, have endeavoured to ſolve the Difficulty, by attending to the latter Words in the Text, *two hundred Shekels, after the King's Weight*; and, to this Purpoſe they lay it down as a Principle, that during the Reigns of the Kings of *Judah*, there was no Variation in the *Hebrews Weights*, nor were there any, that were called the *King*'s; that the Difference, between the King's, and the common Weight, did not commence till after ſome Continuance of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; that, towards the End of this Captivity, whoever he was, that reviſed theſe Books of *Samuel*, made mention of ſuch Weights, as were not properly *Hebrew*, but ſuch as (after ſixty or ſeventy Years Captivity) the *Jews* only knew, and theſe were the *Babyloniſh*; and that therefore, when he comes to mention the Weight of *Abſalom*'s Hair, and tells us, that it was *two Hundred Shekels*, he adds (by Way of Explanation) that it was *after the Kings Weight*, that is, after the Weight of the King of *Babylon*, whoſe Shekel was but the third Part of an *Hebrew Shekel*, as the beſt Writers upon Weights and Meaſures are generally agreed. So that, according to this Hypotheſis, *Abſalom*'s Hair, which weighed two Hundred *Babyloniſh* Shekels, came but, in our Weight, to about thirty three Ounces; a Quantity, which thoſe, who deal in that Commodity, have not unfrequently met with upon ſeveral Women's Heads, and therefore what brings this long conteſted Story, at leaſt, within the Bounds of a fair Probability.

CHAP. XV.

Abſalom's *inſinuating Behaviour; he obtains Leave to go to* Hebron, *where, by* Ahithophel's *Aſſiſtance, he forms a Conſpiracy againſt the King.* David *flies from* Jeruſalem *with his Men; leaves ten of his Concubines.*

Q. HOW *came* Abſalom, *who, by his former Actions, ſeems to have been of a haughty Spirit, to be of a ſudden ſo very humble and obſequious as to offer every Man his Service?*

A. It is an Obſervation of *Plato*, that when any one intends to make himſelf a Tyrant in a popular State, he no ſooner enters on the Government, but *he ſmiles upon, and kindly ſalutes all ſorts of People, whereever he meets them*; avowing, that he hates Tyranny, promiſing great Things, both in private and publick, and making, as if he would be mild, and gentle, and fatherly, to all; even as *Tacitus* relates of *Otho*, that *protendens manum, adorare vulgum jacere oſcula, & omnia ſerviliter pro dominatione*; that he uſed to kiſs, and ſhake Hands with any one, court and adore the Mob, and do every little ſervile Thing, to get Poſſeſſion of the Government.

Q. *But is it not ſtrange that the People ſhould ſo readily liſten to the flattering Inſinuations of* Abſalom?

A. It is an Obſervation of *Ariſtotle* in Politicks, (l. 5. c. 4.) that all Changes and Revolutions in Government are made by one of theſe two Ways, *either by Force and Violence, or elſe by Deceit and Craft:* Nor ever was there a Man better formed by Nature to manage Matters in this latter Way, than was *Abſalom*, who was a Perſon of Courage and Gallantry, of Civility and Courteſy, young, and wonderfully beautiful, deſcended from Kings, both by Father's and Mother's Side, and prodigal enough of large and magnificent Promiſes, if ever he came to be King, a Character not unlike that of *Turnus* in *Virgil:*

Hunc Decus egregium Formæ movet, atque juventæ,
Hunc Atavi Reges, hunc claris dextera factis.

Q. *It is ſaid in the ſeventh Verſe,* And it came to paſs, after forty Years, that *Abſalom* ſaid unto the King, *&c. Whence are theſe forty Years to be computed?*

A. Some compute them from the Time, that the *Iſraelites* demanded a King of *Samuel*; others, from the firſt Time that *David* was anointed King; others from the firſt Commencement of his Reign over *Judah*; and others again, from the Time, that he took Poſſeſſion of the whole Kingdom. The two latter of theſe Opinions are inſupportable, becauſe *David* reigned but forty Years in all, and was now ſo hail and hearty, as to be able to walk on Foot;

whereas, in the latter End of his Life, he was very infirm and Bed-rid. The learned *Uſher* indeed makes theſe forty Years to commence from the Time of *David*'s firſt Unction; that therefore he was threeſcoure Years old, when this Rebellion broke out, and lived ten Years after it: But (with all due Deference to ſo great Authority) both this, and the other Opinion, that computes from the Time, that the Demand of a King was made, are forced, and unnatural; have no Affinity to the Text, nor do they ſuggeſt any Reaſon, why the ſacred Hiſtorian ſhould begin his Account of this unnatural Rebellion, with an *And it came to paſs, that after forty Years:* Whereas if we conſider the Account of what went before; how *Abſalom*, by all the Arts of Popularity, a ſplendid Equipage, condeſcenſive Behaviour, large Promiſes, and flattering Speeches, had alienated the Hearts of the People from his Father, we cannot but be tempted to think, that there is an Error crept into the Text; that inſtead of *Abraim, forty,* as our Copies have it, the Word ſhould be *Arba, four,* only, that is, four Years, after that *Abſalom* was re-eſtabliſhed in *Jeruſalem,* and had uſed all his alluring Arts to gain the Nation's Affections, the firſt Step that he took, was to go to *Hebron.* This makes the Senſe eaſy and entire, and is confirmed by the Authority of the *Syriack* and *Arabick* Verſions, the Judgment of ſeveral able Criticks, and the Teſtimony of *Joſephus* himſelf, whoſe Words are, that *four Years after his Father was reconciled to him,* this Conſpiracy broke out.

Q. Abſalom *being got to* Hebron, *and meditating a general Inſurrection, makes the Signal of it to be the* Sound *of the* Trumpet: *How could this be heard in every Part of the Land at the ſame Time?*

A. The Expreſſion, in the Text, is, *as ſoon as ye hear the Sound of the Trumpet,* Chap. xv. 10. which looks, as if *Abſalom* had planted Trumpeters, at proper Diſtances, to take the Sound from one another, and diſperſe it over all the Kingdom, that ſo they, who were Lovers of his Cauſe, might inſtantly reſort to his Aſſiſtance and Support; to which they were encouraged, no doubt, by the Suggeſtions of his *Emiſſaries,* who might perſuade the People, that all this was done by the King's Conſent and Approbation, who, being aged and infirm himſelf, was willing to reſign his Kingdom to his eldeſt, and moſt noble Son, who was deſcended from a King, by both Parents.

Q. *How is it conceivable that there ſhould be ſo ſudden and general a Revolt of the People from* David, *their lawful Sovereign?*

A. It would really make one wonder, how any People could ſo eaſily abandon a Prince, ſo brave, ſo happy, and ſucceſsful, as *David* had been; how they could forget his excellent Qualities, or be unmindful of the Services he had done the Nation; but for this there may be ſome Reaſons aſſigned. In every Nation there are always ſome turbulent and diſcontented Spirits, who are uneaſy with the preſent State of Things, and promiſe themſelves ſome Benefit from a Change: *Saul*'s Party was not as yet entirely extinct, and *Joab,* who was *David*'s prime Miniſter, behaved with an inſufferable Pride and Inſolence: His Crimes, which were very black, and which the King durſt not puniſh, redounded upon him; and the King himſelf had given his Enemies Umbrage enough againſt him, in living with *Bathſheba,* after he had murdered her Huſband: But, what gave the faireſt Pretence of all, was the Obſtruction of Juſtice in the Civil Adminiſtration: For had there not been ſomething of this, *Abſalom* could have had no Grounds for making ſo loud Complaints. Theſe were ſome of the Cauſes of ſo general a Revolt in the People: And yet, after all, there might be ſomething in what *Abarbinel* imagines, *viz.* that neither *Abſalom,* nor the Elders of *Iſrael,* nor the reſt of the People, who were miſled by them, had any Intention to diveſt *David* of his Crown and Dignity, much leſs to take away his Life; but only to ſubſtitute *Abſalom* as *Coadjutor* to him, for the Execution of the Royal Authority, during his Life-time, and to be his *Succeſſor* after his Death. For, as it would have been monſtrouſly wicked in *Abſalom* to have deſigned the Deſtruction of ſo kind a Father, ſo it is hard to conceive, how he could have gained to his Party ſuch a Multitude of *Abettors* in ſo villainous an Enterprize. This however we may obſerve, that *David* looked upon their Proceedings, *Chap.* xv. v. 14. and xvi. 11. as an Attempt upon his Life, and that (whatever their firſt Intentions were) they came at laſt to a Reſolution to have him killed, to make way for their own better Security; Which may be a ſufficient Warning to all Men, never to begin any thing that is wrong, for fear that it ſhould lead them to the Commiſſion of that which, at firſt, they abhorr'd, when they find they cannot be ſafe in one Wickedneſs, without perpetrating greater.

Q. *How came* David *ſo eaſily to quit* Jeruſalem, *which, beſides its own Strength and Fortifications, had the ſtrong Fort of* Sion, *which doubtleſs would have ſuſtained, a good while, the Shocks of the moſt violent Siege?*

A. Tho' the Fort of *Sion* was very ſtrong and impregnable, yet there are ſeveral Reaſons which might induce *David* to quit *Jeruſalem.* He had not laid in Proviſions for a long Siege, nor was *Jeruſalem,* in every Part of it, *defenſible;* and if *Abſalom* had once took it, as it was the Capital, he would ſoon have been Maſter of the whole Kingdom. There was ſome Reaſon to ſuſpect likewiſe, that the Inhabitants were faulty, and ſo much addicted to the contrary Party, that had he ſtood a Siege, and been reduced to Straits, they might poſſibly have delivered him up to *Abſalom:* Nor was the Preſervation of the City itſelf, which *David* had beautified, and adorned with a fine and ſtately Palace, and where *God* had appointed to put his Name and Worſhip, the leaſt Part of his Concern; and therefore he thought it more conducive to his Intereſt in all Reſpects, rather than be *cooped* up in a Place, which he deſired to preſerve from being the Seat of War, to march abroad into the Country, where he might probably raiſe a conſiderable Army, both for his own Defence, and the Suppreſſion of the Rebels.

Q. *Why would not* David *ſuffer the Ark to be carried about with him, on his leaving* Jeruſalem?

A. This he might do for ſeveral Reaſons; for either he might think it not decent to have the *Ark* wander about with him, he knew not whither, and to expoſe it to all the Hazards and Inconveniencies which he himſelf was like to undergo; or he might ſuppoſe, that this would be a Means to expoſe the Prieſts to the Violence of *Abſalom*'s Rage, (as he had before expoſed them to *Saul*'s Fury upon another,

ther Occaſion) if God, in his Judgment, ſhould permit him to prevail; or this might look as a Diſtruſt of the divine Goodneſs, and that he placed more Confidence in the Token of *God*'s Preſence, than he did in *God* himſelf, who had preſerved him in the long Perſecution of *Saul*, when he had no Ark with him. But what ſeems the chief Reaſon, at that Time, for his ſending back the Ark was,—that the *Prieſts* and *Levites* (of whoſe Fidelity he was ſufficiently ſatisfied) by giving him Intelligence of the Enemy's Motions, might do him more Service in *Jeruſalem*, than they could do in his Camp.

Q. *Why is* Huſhai *called the* Archite?

A. This Man might be of the antient Race of the *Archites*, Deſcendants from *Canaan*, of whom *Moſes* ſpeaks, *Gen*. x. 17. but ſince the Name of theſe antient People is differently written, I ſhould rather think, that this additional Name was given him from the Place of his Nativity, *viz. Archi*, a Town ſituated on the Frontiers of *Benjamin* and *Ephraim*, to the *Weſt* of *Bethel*, *Joſh*. xvi. 2.

Q. *But was not* David *guilty of Perfidy in putting his Friend* Huſhai *upon offering his Service to* Abſalom, *on purpoſe to betray him?*

A. The Words of *David* are theſe; *If thou return to the City, and ſay unto* Abſalom, *I will be thy Servant, O King, as I have been thy Father's Servant hitherto, ſo will I now alſo be thy Servant, then mayeſt thou for me defeat the Counſels of* Ahitophel. But *David*, by theſe Words (ſay ſome Interpreters) did not adviſe *Huſhai* to betray *Abſalom*, or for his Sake to violate the Laws of Friendſhip, but purely to go and adjoin himſelf to *Abſalom*, (who, by this Time, had aſſumed the Title of King, and could not properly be addreſſed to without calling him ſo) in order to deſtroy the Counſels of *Ahitophel*, juſt as a General ſends his Spies into the Enemies Camp, to know what paſſes there; or as a King keeps in foreign Courts his Envoys to gain Intelligence of the Deſigns that may be formed againſt him, and to defeat the Reſolutions that may be taken to his Prejudice. But whether theſe Compariſons may come to the Caſe before us, or no, 'twas certainly at this Juncture *Abſalom*'s Buſineſs to be upon his Guard. The unjuſt War which he had declared againſt his Father, gave his Father a Right to treat him as an open Enemy, and to employ either Force or Artifice againſt him; nor can this Conduct of his be blamed, unleſs we ſhould ſay, that when Kings are engaged in War, they are forbidden to diſguiſe their true Deſigns, even tho' it be a thing notorious, that upon this Diſguiſe the Practice of Stratagems in War (which were never yet accounted unlawful) is intirely founded.

Q. *What may we ſuppoſe was the Reaſon of* Ahitophel'*s ſiding with* Abſalom, *againſt his Maſter* David?

A. The *Jews* are of Opinion, that *Ahitophel* was incenſed againſt *David*, and therefore ready to go over to the adverſe Party, becauſe he had abuſed *Bathſheba*, whom they take to have been his *Grand-daughter*, becauſe ſhe was the Daughter of *Eliam*, Chap. xi. 3. and *Ahitophel* had a Son of that Name, Chap. xxiii. 34. for this Reaſon they imagine, that he adviſed *Abſalom* to lie with his Father's *Concubines*, that he might be repaid in Kind, though the Scripture aſſigns another, *viz.* that he and his Father might become irreconcileable Enemies.

CHAP. XVI.

Ziba, *by Treachery, obtains of* David *his Maſter's Inheritance.* Shimei *curſes* David, *who reſtrains* Abiſhai *from killing him.* Abſalom *comes with* Ahitophel *to* Jeruſalem; *lies with his Father's Concubines publickly, by* Ahitophel'*s Counſel.*

Q. WAS *not* David *guilty of a manifeſt Injuſtice, in allotting the Eſtate of* Mephiboſheth *to an unjuſt and a perfidious Servant without ever giving the Maſter a fair and equitable Hearing?*

A. But how could *David* have Leiſure to ſend for *Mephiboſheth* from Mount *Olivet* to *Jeruſalem*, and enquire into the Merits of the Cauſe depending between him and his Servant, when he was in ſo great an Hurry, and under Flight from the Arms of his rebel Son? Or how could he have ſuppoſed, that *Ziba* could have dared to have told him ſo notorious a Lie, when it might in a ſhort Time be diſproved? Every Circumſtance, in ſhort, on *Ziba*'s Side looked well, but none on his Maſter's. To his Maſter *David* had been extremely kind, in reſtoring to him the forfeited Eſtate of his Grandfather *Saul*, and in allowing him to *eat at his own Table, as one of the King's Sons*; and now, at the general Rendezvous of his Friends, *David* might well have expected, that the Perſon to whom he had extended ſo many Favours, ſhould not have been ſo negligent of his Duty, as to abſent himſelf, unleſs it had been upon ſome extraordinary Buſineſs; and therefore, when *Ziba* acquaints him with the Occaſion of his Abſence, though it was a mere Fiction, yet with *David* it might find a readier Credence, becauſe at this Time he had Reaſon to miſtruſt every Body; and ſeeing his own Family diſconcerted and broken, might think the Crown liable to any new Claimant that could pretend to the ſame Right of Succeſſion that *Mephiboſheth* might.

All that *David* can therefore be blamed for in this whole Tranſaction, is an Error in Judgment, even when he was impoſed upon by the plauſible Tale of a Sycophant, and had no Opportunity of coming at the Truth; but upon his Return to *Jeruſalem*, when *Mephiboſheth* appears before him, and pleads his own Cauſe, we find this the Deciſion of it, 2 *Sam*. xix. 29. *Why ſpeakeſt thou any more of thy Matters? I have ſaid, thou and* Ziba *divide the Land*: Which Words muſt not be ſo underſtood, as if he appointed an equal Diviſion of the Eſtate, between *Mephiboſheth* and his Servant, (for where would the Juſtice of ſuch a Sentence be?) but rather that he revoked the Order he had given to *Ziba*, upon the ſuppoſed Forfeiture of his Maſter, and put Things now upon the ſame Eſtabliſhment they were at firſt. *I have ſaid*, i. e. *My firſt Grant ſhall ſtand, when I decreed, that* Mephiboſheth *ſhould be Lord of the whole Eſtate, and* Ziba *his Steward to manage it for him.*

Q. Ziba *meets* David *with a Couple of Aſſes loaded, and, among other Things, brought him a* Bottle of Wine, *which he deſired might be diſtributed to the young Men: But what was that amongſt an Army?*

A. What we render a *Bottle*, was, in thoſe

Times, a *Bag*, or Veſſel made of Leather, which might contain a great deal of Wine; becauſe we cannot ſuppoſe, but that the Liquor was proportionate to the reſt of the Preſent.

Q. *What Reaſon had* Shimei *to curſe* David *ſo bitterly?*

A. Whether this Man had been a perſonal Sufferer in the Fall of *Saul*'s Family, or what elſe had exaſperated him againſt *David*, it no where appears; but it ſeems, as if he had conceived ſome very heinous Offence againſt him, when neither the Preſence of a King, nor the *Terror* of his Guards, could reſtrain him from throwing Stones, and bitter Speeches at him: And it looks, as if the King were fallen into the utmoſt Contempt, when one private Man could think of venting his Malice at him in ſo groſs a Manner, with Impunity.

Q. *How are we to underſtand that Expreſſion of* David, *v.* 10. The Lord hath ſaid unto him, Curſe *David?*

A. The Words of *David* upon this Occaſion, are, *So let him curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, curſe* David. *Let him alone, let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him*; not that God commanded it by his Word, for that ſeverely forbids curſing, *Exod.* xxii. 28 nor moved him to it by his Spirit, for neither was that poſſible, becauſe God *tempteth no Man*, James i. 13. But the Meaning is, that the ſecret Providence of God did over-rule, and determine him ſo to do, *i. e.* God did not put any Wickedneſs into *Shimei*'s Heart, for he had of himſelf, an Heart, full of Malignity, and Venom againſt *David*; but only left him to his own Wickedneſs; took away that common Prudence, which would have reſtrained him from ſo dangerous an Action; directed his Malice, that it ſhould be exerciſed againſt *David* rather than any other Man; and brought him in ſo diſtreſſed a Condition, that he might ſeem a proper Object of his Scorn, and Contempt, which is enough to juſtify the Expreſſion, *The Lord hath bidden him*; in the ſame Manner, that we read of his commanding *the Ravens*, 2 Kings xvii. 4. and ſometimes inanimate Creatures, *Pſal.* cxlvii. 15, 18. The ſhort is, *David* looked upon *Shimei* as an Inſtrument in God's Hands, and therefore took all his Abuſes patiently, out of a Conſciouſneſs of his Sinfulneſs, and a Reverence to that Deity, who had brought him ſo low, as to deſerve the Inſults of this vile *Benjamite*.

Q. Huſhai *being come to* Jeruſalem, Abſalom *queſtions him, why he had deſerted his old Maſter: In what Terms does* Joſephus *ſay he excuſed himſelf on this Occaſion?*

A. The Manner, in which *Joſephus* makes *Huſhai* anſwer *Abſalom*, is artful enough, though hardly becoming an honeſt Man. *There is no contending*, ſays he, *with the Will of God, and the Conſent of the People; and ſo long as you have them on your Side, you may be ſecure of my Fidelity. It is from God that you have received your Kingdom; and if you can think me worthy of a Place in the Number of thoſe you will vouchſafe to own, you ſhall find me as true to yourſelf, as I ever was to your Father. No Man is to account the preſent State of Things uneaſy, ſo long as the Government continues in the ſame Line, and a Son of the ſame Family ſucceeds to the Throne.*

CHAP. XVII.

Huſhai, *by* David's *Order, being gone over to* Abſalom, *overthrows the Counſel of* Ahitophel; *he certifies* David *thereof, and adviſes him to march on.* David *paſſes over* Jordan. Ahitophel *hangs himſelf.* David *comes to* Mahanaim, *where he is furniſhed with Proviſions.* Abſalom *makes* Amaſa *his General, and purſues* David.

Q. AHitophel *being called upon to give his Advice, counſels* Abſalom *to make an immediate Purſuit after his Father: But was this Advice ſuitable to the Occaſion?*

A. Ahitophel thought it highly neceſſary to make Diſpatch upon this Occaſion, becauſe he knew, that if he ſhould give the People that had revolted from their Allegiance, Time to think of what they were doing againſt their lawful Prince, that Prince would have Time to raiſe Troops, and thoſe, that were about him, Space to recover from their firſt Fright; *Abſalom*'s Party would dwindle into nothing, and *David* grow ſtronger: And therefore he adviſed marching immediately againſt him, without giving him a Moment's Time to recover himſelf.

Q. *What is there in* Huſhai's *Advice remarkable?*

A. There is ſomething very plauſible, and elegant too, in the Advice, which *Huſhai* gives *Abſalom*, not immediately to purſue and fall upon *David*; *Thou knoweſt thy Father, and his Men, that they be chaffed in their Minds, as a Bear robbed of her Whelps in the Field.* Every one knows, that a Bear is a very fierce Creature; but She-bears (as *Ariſtotle* tells us) are more fierce than the male, particularly when they have young ones, but moſt of all, when theſe young ones are taken from them: For this Reaſon the Scripture makes frequent Uſe of this Similitude: *I will be unto them as a Lion*, ſays God in Relation to the People of *Iſrael*, *and as a Leopard by the Way; I will meet them as a Bear that is bereaved of her Whelps, and will rent the Caul of their Hearts*, Hoſea xiii. 7, 8. &c. So that the Purport of *Huſhai*'s Advice is founded on this Maxim, "That we ſhould not drive an Enemy to Deſpair, nor attack thoſe, who are reſolved to ſell their Lives at as dear a Rate, as poſſible."

Q. *Was not ſome Part of* Huſhai's *Advice too extravagant to gain Credit, as being impoſſible to be put in Execution?*

A. The Benefits which *Huſhai* ſuggeſts from *Abſalom*'s having a large Army, are thus expreſſed in an *hyperbolical* Way, ſuitable to the *Genius* of that inſolent young Man, to whom he gave his Advice, and therefore more likely to prevail with him: *Moreover if he be gotten into a City, then ſhall all* Iſrael *bring Ropes to that City, and we will draw it into the River, until there be not one ſmall Stone found there*, where his Meaning is, that if *David* ſhould quit the open Field, and betake himſelf to the ſtrongeſt of their Cities, encompaſſed with high Walls, and deep Ditches, ſuch a numerous Army (as he propoſed) would be ſufficient to begirt it round, and, by Ropes put about the Walls, draw them down, and all the Houſes of the City into the Ditch, that run about it; not that ever any ſuch Practice was ever uſed in War, and therefore the Words muſt be looked upon

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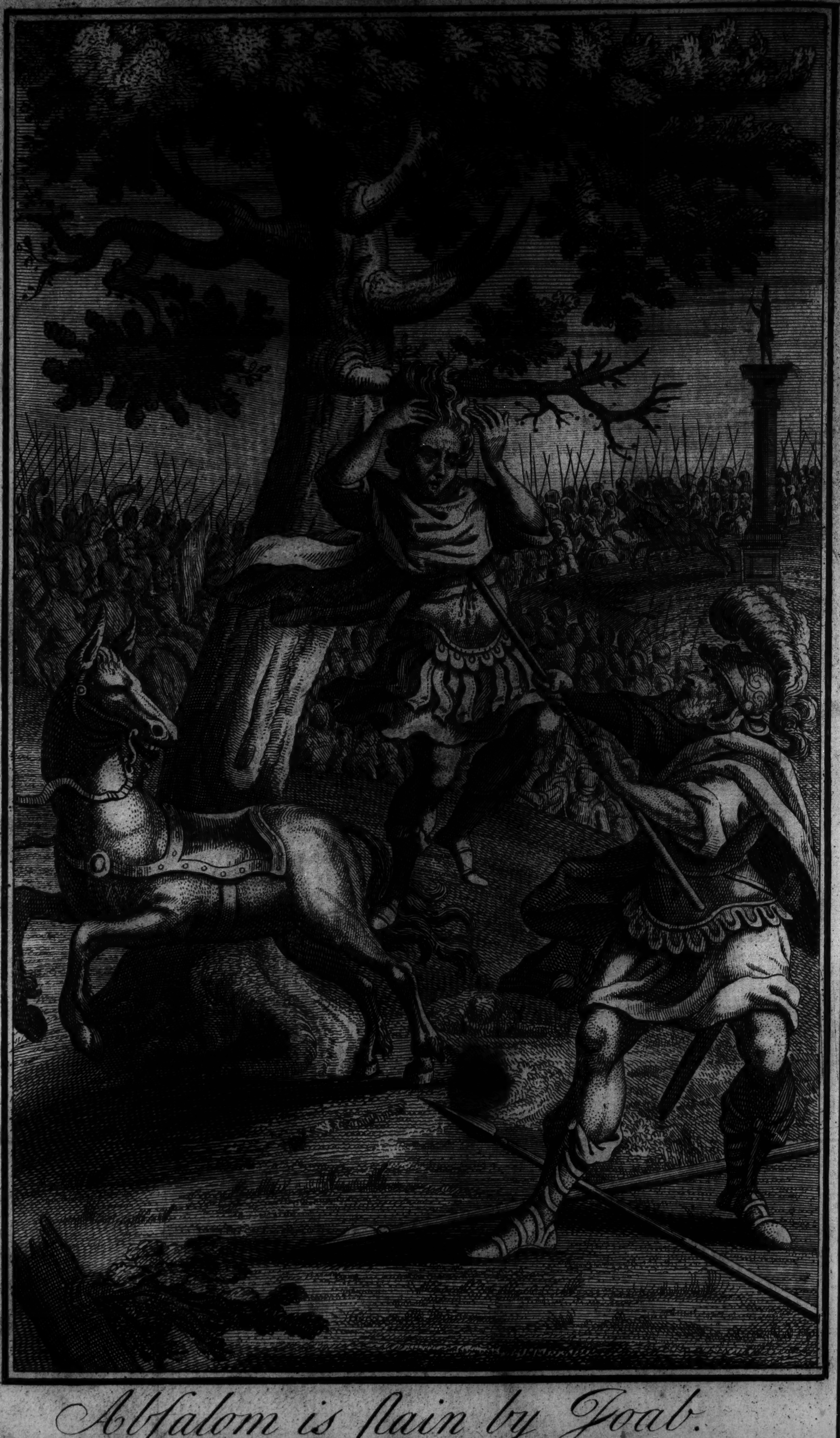
II. SAMUEL, CHAP. XVIII.



Abſalom is ſlain by Joab.

upon as merely *Thraſonical*, and calculated to pleaſe *Abſalom*, unleſs we ſhall ſay with ſome, that the Word in the Original may denote ſuch *Machines*, as are worked by Ropes, and were, at that Time, in uſe to batter down Walls.

Q. *How does* Joſephus *deſcribe* Ahitophel's *Behaviour, after his Counſel had been defeated by* Huſhai?

A. Thus: "When *Ahitophel* was come home to "*Galmon*, he called his Family together, and told "them the Advice, which he had given *Abſalom*, but that he would not follow it, and that, "in a ſhort Time, that Refuſal would be his "Ruin; for *David* would certainly baffle him, "and ſoon recover his Kingdom. Now it is "more honourable for me, *ſays he*, to die, aſſerting my Liberty like a Man, than to wait ſneaking till *David* comes in again, and to be flayed at laſt for the Services I have done the Son "againſt the Father"

Q. *Where lay* Mahanaim?

A. This was a City in the Tribe of *Gad*, built in the Place, where *Jacob* was met by the Angels of God, in his Return from *Padan-aram*, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. from which Event it had its Name.

Q. Ittai, *one of* David's *Generals, is called a* Gittite; *who were theſe* Gittites?

A. In 2 *Sam.* xv. 18. we read, that *all the* Gittites, *ſix hundred Men which came after* him (*viz.* *David*) *from* Gath, *paſſed on before the King*; but who thoſe *Gittites* were, 'tis hard to determine, becauſe we have no Mention made of them, in any other Part of Scripture. Some imagine, that they were Natives of *Gath*, who being taken with the Fame of *David*'s Piety, and happy Succeſſes, came along with *Ittai* (whom the *Jews* ſuppoſe to have been the Son of *Achiſh*, King of *Gath*) and, being *proſelyted* to the *Jewiſh* Religion, became Part of *David*'s Guard, and attended him in his Wars. But others rather think, that they were Men of *Jewiſh* Extract, but had this *additional* Name from their fleeing unto *David* (probably under the Conduct of *Ittai*) *while he was at* Gath, and accompanying him ever after, not only in the Time of *Saul*'s Perſecution of him, but even after his Acceſſion to the united Kingdom of *Judah* and *Iſrael*.

CHAP. XVIII.

David *viewing his Armies in their March, gives the Generals Charge concerning* Abſalom, *whoſe Party is routed*; Abſalom *hangs in an Oak, is ſlain by* Joab, *and thrown into a Pit; his Pillar and Monument.* David's *Lam*[illegible]*n for* Abſalom.

Q. WHERE *was the Wood* [illegible]*im, where this Battle was foug*[illegible]

A. This Wood was ſo called (as ſome imagine) becauſe the *Ephraimites* were wont to drive their Cattle over *Jordan* to feed them in it; but others (with more Probability) ſuppoſe, that it had its Name from the great Slaughter related in *Judg.* xii. which *Jephthah* had formerly made of the *Ephraimites* in that Place.

Q. *In what Senſe did* the Wood devour more People than the Sword?

A. The Expreſſion in the Text is, *The Wood devoured more People that Day, than the Sword devoured*, Verſe 8. which ſome think was occaſioned by their falling into Pits, preſſing one another to Death in ſtrait Places, creeping into lurking Holes, and there being ſtarved to Death, or otherwiſe devoured by wild Beaſts, which met them in their Flight: But the moſt eaſy and ſimple Meaning of the Paſſage is, that there were more ſlain in the Wood, than the Field of Battle. The Field of Battle (as *Joſephus* tells us, *Jewiſh* Antiq. l. 7. c. 9.) was a Plain, with a Wood contiguous to it; and therefore when *Abſalom*'s Army was put to the Rout, and betook themſelves to the Wood for Refuge, their Purſuers made greater Slaughter of them there, than they otherwiſe would have done, becauſe they could not run away ſo faſt in the Wood, as they might have done in the open Field.

Q. *Pray explain the Manner of* Abſalom's *hanging in an Oak.*

A. The Words in the Text, indeed, make no Mention of *Abſalom*'s Hair in this Place: They only inform us, that *Abſalom rode upon a Mule, and the Mule went under the thick Boughs of a great Oak, and his Head caught hold of the Oak, and he was taken up between the Heaven and the Earth, and the Mule that was under him went away*, Verſe 9. From whence ſome infer, that the Meaning of the Hiſtorian is, not that *Abſalom* hung by his Hair, but that his Neck was ſo wedged between the Boughs, by the ſwift Motion of the Mule, that he was not able to diſengage himſelf. For it is hardly to be queſtioned, *ſay they*, but that when he went to battle, he had an Helmet on; and an Helmet, which covered his Head, would have hindered his Hair from being intangled in the Boughs: But it is only ſuppoſing, either that his Helmet was ſuch, as left a great deal of his Hair viſible and uncovered, or that, if it was large enough to encloſe the whole, he might, upon this Occaſion, throw it off, (as well as his other heavy Armour) to make himſelf lighter, and expedite his Flight; and then there will be no Incongruity in the common and received Opinion, to which the Authority of *Joſephus* adds ſome Confirmation, *viz.* "That, as *Abſalom* was making his Eſcape, upon "the whiffing of the Air, a ſnagged Bough of a "Tree took hold of his Hair, and the Mule, running forward from under him, left him dangling "in the Air."

Q. *What do you obſerve on the Manner of* Abſalom's *Death?*

A. Commentators have obſerved the Juſtice of God, in bringing *Abſalom* to a condign Puniſhment, and ſuch a kind of Death, as was ordained by the Law for Offences like unto his. For whereas, in the firſt Place, he was hanged, as it were, this was declared by the Law to be an accurſed Death, *Deut.* xxi. 23. and was afterwards, in ſome Meaſure ſtoned; this was the particular Kind of Death, that the Law preſcribed for a ſtubborn and rebellious Son, *Deut.* xxi. 21.

Q. *What have Writers obſerved concerning the Heap of Stones that was raiſed over* Abſalom's *Body?*

A. In the Deſcription of the *Holy Land*, ſome Geographers tell us, that this Heap of Stones remained even to their Days, and that all Travellers, as they paſſed by it, were wont to throw a Stone, to add to the Heap, in deteſtation of his Rebellion againſt his Father. For though it became a Cuſtom among the *Greeks* to raiſe an Heap of Stones in the Place where any great Perſon was interred, as a Monument of Honour and Reſpect; yet it is plain, that none of *David*'s Army intended any Honour to *Abſalom*'s Memory in accumulating Stones upon him; nor can we think that *David* himſelf (though too fond of this rebel Son) made any Alteration afterwards in the Form of his Burial, for fear of enraging the People againſt him. Some, however, are of a quite contrary Opinion, *viz.* that *David*, who lamented him with ſuch Exceſs, removed him from this Pit, in order to have him laid in the Sepulchre belonging to the Kings, or perhaps ſomewhere about the Place, where the Monument, which goes under his Name, and even to this Day, is ſhewn to Travellers, was dug in a Rock. It is a little Chamber wrought with a Chiſel out of one Piece of Rock, which ſtands at ſome Diſtance from the reſt of the Mountain, and is a Square of eight Paces, from Out to Out. The Inſide of this Chamber is all plain, but the Outſide is adorned with ſome Pillaſters of the ſame kind of Stone. The upper Part or Covering is made in the Form of a conic Pyramid, pretty high and large, with a kind of Flower-pot on its Top. The Pyramid is compoſed of ſeveral Stones, but the Mounment itſelf is ſquare, and all cut out of one Block. In the Time of *Joſephus* the Monument, which was ſaid to be *Abſalom*'s, was nothing more, than one Marble Pillar, widely different from what at preſent goes under his Name, and which therefore muſt be accounted a more modern Building.

Q. *What Chamber was that to which* David *retired to weep for his Son?*

The Place to which *David* withdrew, in order to vent his Grief, was, (as *Joſephus* tells us) *to the Top of one of the higheſt Towers in the City*; but the ſacred Hiſtory calls it *the Chamber over the Gate*, Verſe 33. for the Gate was a ſpacious Place, and much of the ſame Form with the *Forum* among the *Romans*, not only the Market for all Commodities, but the Place where all great Aſſemblies of the People were likewiſe held. There were ſeveral Buildings where the chief Magiſtrates ſat, to adminiſter Juſtice, *Ruth* iv. 1, 2. and where the other Affairs of State were tranſacted; ſo that it is not impoſſible that this Chamber over the Gate, where *David* went to weep, might be ſome withdrawing Room in the Place, where the Privy-Council were wont to meet.

Q. *What is your Opinion of* David's *wiſhing that he had* died for, *or inſtead of*, his Son?

A. Nothing certainly can be more moving and pathetick than theſe Words; but whether it was *David*'s deliberating Wiſh, that he had died in in *Abſalom*'s Stead, or only the Effect of his exceſſive Love and Grief for him, is not ſo eaſy a Matter to determine. St. *Auſtin* ſeems to be on the affirmative Side, and gives this Reaſon for it, — that *Abſalom* died impenitent, but might have lived to become a better Man; whereas, if *David* had died, he had Reaſon to hope well of his Salvation: But this Suppoſition (as I take it) is not ſo well founded, ſince there is much more Probability, that if *Abſalom* had ſurvived his Father, he would have grown more profligate than ever; triumphed in his good Succeſs; inſulted and perſecuted all his Father's Friends, and proved a wicked and abominable Tyrant. But whether *David*'s Wiſh was deliberate or no, it is certain that his Grief might be increaſed from this Reflection, that himſelf, by his own Sin, in the Caſe of *Uriah*, had been the unhappy Inſtrument and Occaſion of his Son's Death; tho' ſome learned Men have obſerved, that the *Oriental* People were accuſtomed to expreſs their Paſſions with more Vehemence, than we, in theſe Parts of the World are wont to do, and that the Repetition of the ſame Word, (*My Son* Abſalom, *O* Abſalom *my Son, my Son,*) is a ſtile proper for mournful Lamentations.

Chap. XIX.

Joab, *by hard Words, prevails on the King to ceaſe Mourning, and ſhew himſelf to the People. The King is brought back by the Men of* Judah; *and* Amaſa *put in* Joab's *Place.* Shimei *ſues for and obtains Mercy.* Mephiboſheth *meets the King, and recovers half his Eſtate.* Barzillai *is diſmiſſed, and his Son* Chimham *taken into the King's Family. The* Iſraelites *expoſtulate with* Judah *for bringing home the King without them.*

Q. JOAB *being informed of* David's *withdrawing himſelf to mourn alone, goes to him, and expoſtulates with him in very rough Language; what Words does* Joſephus *put into* Joab's *Mouth on this Occaſion?*

A. Joſephus concludes *Joab*'s Speech thus,——“Pray, Sir, does not your Conſcience, as well as your Honour reprove you for this intemperate Tenderneſs, for the Memory of ſo implacable an Enemy? He was your Son 'tis true, but a moſt ungracious one; and you cannot be juſt to God's Providence, without acknowledging the Bleſſing of his being taken away. Le me intreat you therefore, to ſhew yourſelf chearful to your People, and let them know, that it is to their Loyalty and Bravery that you are indebted for the Honour of the Day, for if you go on, as you have begun, your Kingdom, and your Army will moſt infallibly be put in other Hands, and and you will then find ſomething elſe to cry for.

Q. *What Inducement had* David *to diſplace* Joab?

A. He had ſufficient Reaſon to think of depreſſing a Man, who was grown ſo unſufferably inſolent and imperious. He had ſlain *Abner* moſt perfidiouſly in cool Blood; had killed *Abſalom* againſt the King's expreſs Command; in his late bold Reproof had inſulted over his Sorrow, and (if we may believe *Joſephus*) threatned to depoſe him, and give his Kingdom to another. To ſuch a Height of Arrogance will Miniſters ſometimes arrive, when they find that their Service is become neceſſ[illegible] to their Prince!

Q. [illegible] *particular Favours did* David *confer on* [illegible]?

[illegible] *David* did for *Chimham* is uncertain; but, [illegible] had a Patrimony in *Bethlehem*, which was the Place of his Nativity, it is not improbable, that he gave a great Part of it to *Chimham*, and his Heirs for ever; and that this was afterwards called *the Habitation of Chimham*, in the Days of *Jeremiah*, Jer. lxi. 17.

Q. *Among others who came to congratulate* David *on his return to his Kingdom, was* Shimei, *attended with a thouſand Men, though a little before he had loaded him his Curſes and Imprecations: What was* Shimei's *Reaſon in bringing with him ſo large a Retinue?*

A. It was to let *David* ſee that he was a Man of ſome conſiderable Rank, and capable of doing him

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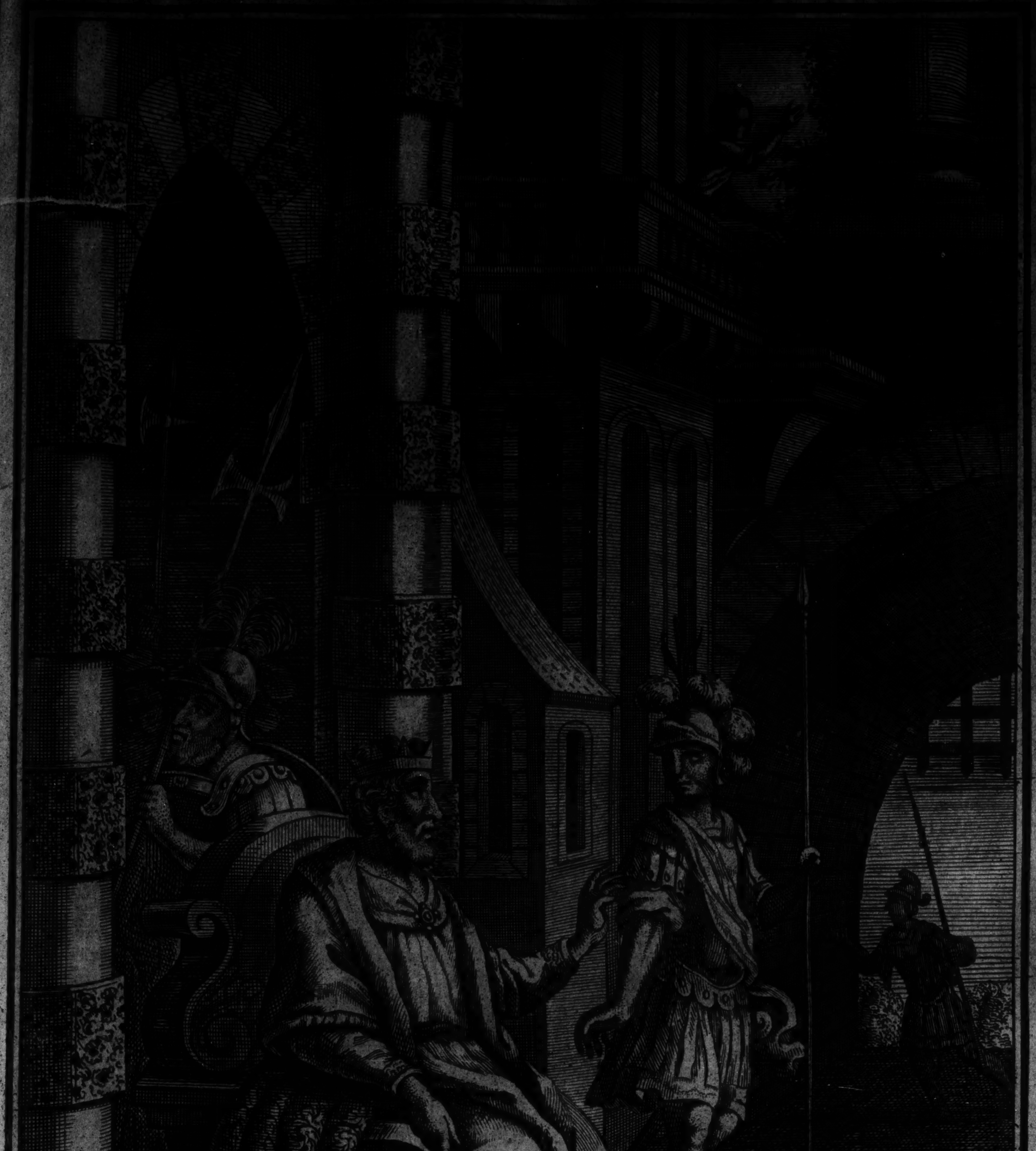

Tidings of Abſaloms death.

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great Service among the People, which might be ſome Inducement to the King to grant him his Pardon; or, very likely, he was one of the *Captains of a Thouſand in his own Tribe*, and might carry them along with him, to make the ſtronger Interceſſion for his Pardon.

Q. *In ver.* 24. *We have an Account of ſome particular Acts of Mourning which* Mephiboſheth *practiced in and for the Abſence of the King; which I deſire you to explain.*

A. The Words in the Text are, that *he had neither dreſſed his Feet, nor trimmed his Beard, nor waſhed his Cloaths, from the Day, that the King departed*, Chap. xix. 24. Theſe were ſome of the Inſtances, wherein the *Jews* were wont to expreſs their Mourning; and they are here mentioned by the Hiſtorian, as Evidences of the Falſhood of *Ziba*'s Information againſt his Maſter, ſince no one, who neglected himſelf to this Degree, could be ſuppoſed ambitious of a Crown. *Not dreſſing his Feet* may ſignify, either not cutting his *Toe-nails*, or his *not waſhing his Feet*, which the *Jews* were accuſtomed very frequently to do, becauſe of the bad Smell, which was natural to them, as well as the *Arabians*, and ſome other Nations; and therefore his Omiſſion of this could not but make him offenſive to himſelf. *Not trimming his Beard* was letting its Hair grow *negligently*, and without any Order: For the Manner of the *Jews* was, to cut the Hair from the Lip upwards, and what grew likewiſe on the Cheek, but what was on the Chin, and ſo backwards to the Ear, that they ſuffered to grow; and *not waſhing his Cloaths* muſt denote his putting on no *clean Linnen*, but wearing the ſame Shirt all the while.

Q. *How does* Joſephus *relate the Manner of* Mephiboſheth's *pleading his Excuſe to* David *for not attending him, and expreſſing his grateful Senſe of former Favours?*

A. Thus——"Nor has he only diſappointed me in the Exerciſe of my Duty, but has been doing me ſpiteful Offices to your Majeſty likewiſe: But you, Sir, are ſo juſt, and ſo great a Lover of God, and Truth, that I am ſure your Generoſity and Wiſdom will never entertain a Calumny to my Prejudice. Our Family has had the Experience of your Piety, Modeſty, and Goodneſs to a Degree, never to be forgotten, in paſſing over, and pardoning the innumerable Hazards and Perſecutions, that you were expoſed to, in the Days, and by the Contrivance, of my Grandfather, when all our Lives were forfeited, in your Power, and at your Mercy. But then, after all this gracious Tenderneſs, your ſuperadding the Honour of taking me to your Table, (a Perſon ſo obnoxious in regard of my Relations) as a Friend, and as a Gueſt, nothing could be either greater, or more obliging than this."

CHAP. XX.

Sheba *takes Occaſion from the Quarrel between* Judah *and* Iſrael, *to raiſe a Sedition.* David's *ten Concubines impriſoned for Life.* Joab *kills* Amaſa; *he and* Abiſhai *purſue* Sheba *to* Abel, *the Inhabitants of which, by the Advice of a wiſe Woman, cut off his Head, and throw it over the Wall to* Joab. David's *Officers.*

Q. DAVID *apprehending great Diſturbances from* Sheba's *Sedition, orders his new General* Amaſa, *to ſummon together a ſufficient Body of Forces to purſue after him; but* Amaſa *found great Difficulty in executing the King's Orders; but whence aroſe that Difficulty?*

A. The People having been harraſſed in the late civil War, were not perhaps ſo forward to engage in another; ſome of them might not like to ſerve under a Man, who had lately headed a rebellious Army againſt the King; and others might have conceived ſo high an Opinion of *Joab*, as not eaſily to be brought to ſerve under any other General. Any of theſe Things might very well retard *Amaſa*'s Recruits, and yet he might be loath to make ſuch a Report to the King, for fear that it might diminiſh his Authority, and make him appear not ſo well qualified for the Office, wherein he had placed him.

Q. Joab *pretending a friendly Enquiry after* Amaſa's *Health, takes him by the Beard to kiſs him: Was this the antient Manner of Salutation?*

A. It was an antient Cuſtom among the *Grecians* to take the Perſon, to whom they had any Addreſs to make, by the Chin, or Beard, *antiquis Græciæ in ſupplicando mentum attingere mos erat*, ſays *Pliny*, l. 11. c. 45. and even to this Day, the *Turks*, in their Salutations, do very frequently take one another by the Beard. [Vid. *Thevenot's* Travels, c. 22.] The *Arabians* have a great Regard to the Beard: The Wives kiſs their Huſbands, and the Children their Father's Beards, when they come to ſalute them; and, when two Friends meet together, their Cuſtom is, in the Courſe of their Complements, to interchange Kiſſes in this Manner; [Vid. *Darvieux* couſtume des *Arabes*, c. 7.] as the like Cuſtom is ſtill preſerved among the *Eaſtern* People, the *Indians*, take one another by the Chin, when they would give an hearty Salute, and ſay *Bobba*, that is, Father, or *Bii*, Brother, as the Author, of the Voyage to the *Eaſt-Indies* relates.

Q. *We don't read that the People were much incenſed at this bloody Fact of* Joab *in killing* Amaſa.

A. So inſolent was *Joab* become, upon the Preſumption that *David* durſt not puniſh him, that as he ventured upon this bloody Fact, ſo he imagined that, though the Sight of *Amaſa*'s dead Body might ſtop the March of thoſe, that came by it, yet, upon its being given out that he was again become their General, their Love for him was ſuch, that they would not ſcruple to follow him.

Q. Joab *having laid ſiege to* Abel, *a* wiſe Woman *appears on the Wall to intercede for its Preſervation: Who was this wiſe Woman?*

A. It ſeems not unlikely, that this Woman was a Governeſs in this City, for though that Office was moſt commonly occupied by Men, yet there wants not inſtances of Women, (as in the Caſe of *Deborah*, Judg. iv. 4. and Queen *Athalia*, 2 Kings xi.) who have been employed in the Adminiſtration of civil Affairs. If ſhe was inveſted with any ſuch Authority, ſhe was the propereſt Perſon to deſire a Parley with the General; and Reaſon good ſhe had to deſire it, becauſe ſhe knew the preſent Temper and Fears of the Citizens, and Solders both, *viz.* that, conſidering the imminent Danger they were in, they were generally deſirous of Peace, and reſtrained from it only by *Sheba*'s Power and Authority.

Q. *Pray explain that* old Saying *with which the Woman introduces her Speech to* Joab.

A. In the Beginning of this Woman's Speech to *Joab*, there is ſomething, that ſeems both abrupt and obſcure. *They were wont to ſpeak in old Times, ſaying, they ſhall ſurely aſk Counſel at* Abel, *and ſo they ended the Matter*, Chap. xviii. according to this Tranſlation the Senſe of the Words is,——"This City, which thou art about to deſtroy, is no mean and contemptible one, but ſo honourable, and conſiderable for its Wiſdom, and the wiſe People in it, that when any Difference did ariſe among any of the neighbouring Places, they ſed proverbially to ſay, *We will aſk the Opinion of the Men of* Abel *about it, and we will ſtand to their Arbitration, and ſo all Parties were ſatisfied, and the Diſpute ended*:" So that her Words, according to this Senſe, are an high Commendation of the City of *Abel*, for its being a Place, Time out of Mind, very eminent for the Wiſdom and Prudence of its Inhabitants. But there is another Tranſlation in the Margin of our Bibles, which ſeems to be more natural, and makes the Woman ſpeak in this Manner,——"When the People ſaw thee lay Siege to the City, they ſaid, *Surely he will aſk, if he will have Peace; for the Law preſcribes, that he ſhould offer Peace to Strangers, much more then to* Iſraelitiſh *Cities*; and if he would once do this, we ſhould ſoon bring Things to an amicable Agreement; for we are peaceable People, and faithful to our Prince." So that, according to this Interpretation, the Woman, both modeſtly reproved *Joab*, for the Neglect of his Duty, and artfully engaged him in the Performance of it.

Chap. XXI.

A three Years Famine; Saul's *Cruelty to the* Gibeonites; *the Cauſe of it; it ceaſes upon hanging up ſeven of* Saul's *Sons.* David *buries the Bones of* Saul *and* Jonathan. *Four Battles with the* Philiſtines, *wherein four Giants are killed by* David *and his Servants.*

Q. T*HIS Chapter begins with an Account of a long Famine, occaſioned, as 'tis ſaid, by* Saul's *Cruelty to the* Gibeonites: *What think you was the probable Reaſon of* Saul's *Severity towards them?*

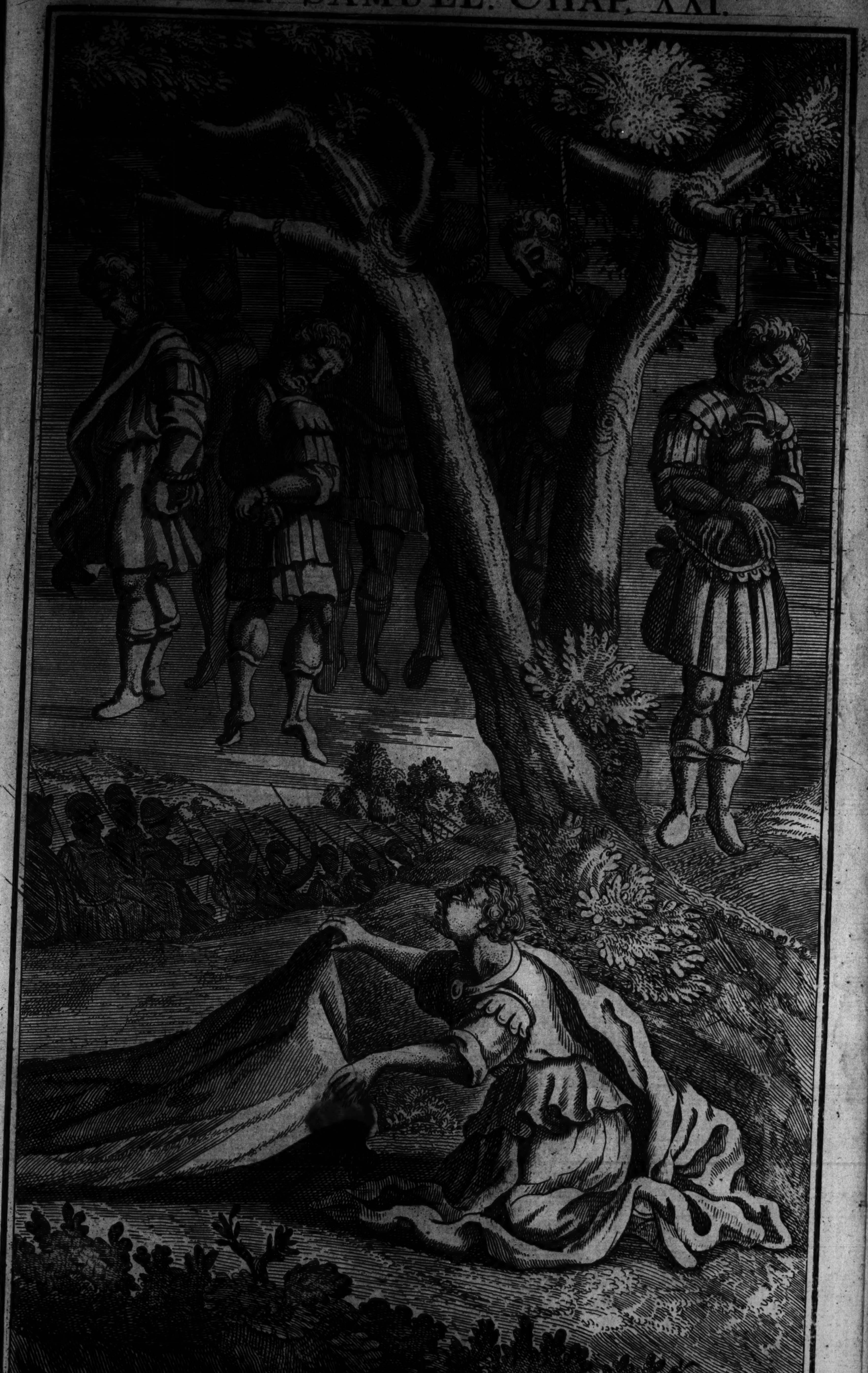
A. The *Gibeonites* were not of the Children of *Iſrael*, but the Remains of the *Amorites*, who, upon *Joſhua*'s taking Poſſeſſion of the promiſed Land, impoſed upon him and his Counſellors, and cunningly drew the *Iſraelites* into a League with them, which was inſtantly confirmed by an Oath; and, becauſe it was confirmed, for above three hundred Years was reputed inviolable. But tho' the *Gibeonites*, by their Craft and Fallacy, ſaved their Lives, yet it was upon this Condition, that they ſhould *become Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water, for the Service of the Tabernacle.* Now while the Tabernacle was at *Nob*, which was a City of the Prieſts, and where the *Gibeonites*, their Attendants, may be ſuppoſed to reſide, the ſacred Hiſtory informs us, that *Saul*, in Revenge to the Prieſts, whom he took to be Favourers of *David's* Cauſe, deſtroy'd the City, and maſſacred all the Inhabitants thereof; ſo that ſeveral of the *Gibeonites* muſt have been ſlain upon this Occaſion, and for the ſhedding of their Blood this Famine was ſent. This is the Account which ſome learned Men give us of the Matter; but they never conſidered, that as *Saul*'s Sin, in murthering the Prieſts, was greater than in ſlaying the *Gibeonites*, God ſhould have inflicted this ſevere Puniſhment upon the Land, for the greater Sin, rather than the leſs; and, tho' it has been ſaid, that, for the Slaughter of the Prieſts, God had avenged himſelf on *Saul* before, by ſuffering him, and his Sons to be ſlain in Battle by the *Philiſtines*, but that the Slaughter of the *Gibeonites* was not as yet expiated; yet it will be difficult to conceive, why there ſhould be two different and diſtinct Puniſhments for one and the ſame Sin, committed at the ſelf-ſame Time.

When, or by whom, or on what Occaſion the Tabernacle and Altar of Burnt-offerings, which were made by *Moſes* in the *Wilderneſs*, were removed from *Nob* to *Gibeon*, we cannot tell, becauſe the Scripture is ſilent: But it's the Conjecture of ſome learned men, that it was not long after the Murther of the Prieſts at *Nob*, and that *Saul*, very probably, to regain the Favour of the People, which he found he had loſt by being ſo barbarous to Men of their ſacred Character, fell foul upon the *Gibeonites*, and baniſhed them out of their City, in order to make room for the Tabernacle of the Lord.

The Scripture, indeed, acquaints us, that *he ſought to ſlay the* Gibeonites, *in his Zeal to the Children of* Iſrael *and* Judah; where the Expreſſion ſeems to denote, that the Children of *Iſrael* envied theſe miſerable People, inſomuch that *Saul* thought he could not do a more popular Act, than to cut them off. 'Tis but ſuppoſing then, that ſome of the chief of theſe *Gibeonites* had, in ſome Inſtance or other, offended *Saul*, for which he was minded to deſtroy the whole Race; or that he had caſt a greedy Eye upon their Lands and Poſſeſſions, which, in caſe of their Exciſion, would be forfeited to the Crown; and then he had Allegations, plauſible enough againſt them, pretending, "That it was not for the Honour or Intereſt of God's People, to nouriſh any of that viperous Brood in their Boſoms; that, however, *Joſhua* and the Princes that were then, had by their Fraud, been drawn into an Oath to preſerve them, yet in Truth, that Oath was contrary to God's Command, which required them *to ſmite them, and utterly deſtroy them*, and therefore ought not, as as he thought, to be obſerved."

Q. *But how could the People become Partners in* Saul's *Guilt?*

A. Thus: *Saul* ſet up for a Reſtorer of the divine Laws to their antient Rigour and Strictneſs of Execution, and a Supplier of the Default of *Joſhua*, and the Princes of *Iſrael*, in ſparing the *Gibeonites*, even though they were comprized in the general Ordinance of Extirpation; and, under this Character he might eaſily draw in his own Subjects to abet and aſſiſt his Cruelty againſt a poor People, for whom they had never any good Liking. *Regis ad exemplum* is the known Maxim; and therefore we may eaſily ſuppoſe, that a wicked and hard-hearted People, who had aſſiſted *Saul* in the Perſecution of *David*; had adhered to *Abſalom* in his Rebellion againſt his own Father; and who, at the Beck of ſo many impious Princes, left the true Worſhip of God, and fell into Idolatry; would not be backward to aſſiſt *Saul* in putting in Execution any of his Contrivances againſt the poor *Gibeonites*, And if ſo, we cannot but admire the Wiſdom and



Sauls Sons hanged.

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Juſtice of God, in making the Puniſhment national, when the whole Nation (for ought we know) was confederate with *Saul* in murthering the *Gibeonites*, or guilty, at leaſt in not hindering it; when the next Generation was involved in the Guilt, by not repairing the Injury, as much as poſſible, or not expreſſing their Horror and Deteſtation of it by ſome publick Act; when an Act of Diſcipline might, at this Time, be neceſſary to preſerve the remaining *Gibeonites* from Inſults; to beget in the *Iſraelites* a proper Reſpect for them; to prevent the like Murthers for the future, and the like Breaches of national Compacts.

Q. *But ſuppoſing the People were drawn in by* Saul *to partake of his Crime, yet, when the Famine was ſent, which was a conſiderable Time afterwards, the People were then innocent of the Blood of the* Gibeonites, *and therefore to puniſh them ſeems unjuſt.*

A. Suppoſing this; yet it cannot be denied, but that God, who is the Author and Giver of Life, has an abſolute Right over the Lives of all, and can recal that Gift when he pleaſes: And therefore, if, in the Caſe before us, he made a Demand (as certainly he had a Right to do it) of ſo many Lives at ſuch a Time, and in ſuch a Manner, as might beſt anſwer the Ends of Diſcipline; then, that which was juſt in other Views, and without any ſuch ſpecial Reaſon, could not become unjuſt, by having that additional Reaſon to recommend it. In a Word, if the Thing was righteous and kind, by being made, at the ſame Time, an Act of Diſcipline for the Puniſhment of Sin and Perfidy, and the Promotion of Juſtice and Godlineſs among Men.

Q. *But wherein were* Saul's *Sons and Grandſon's culpable?*

A. We muſt all allow, that God, as he is a moſt juſt and righteous Being, can never require that the Innocent ſhould die for the Guilty; and therefore we have Reaſon to believe, that when *Saul* (for Reaſons above-mentioned) was ſo outrageous againſt the *Gibeonites*, his Sons and Grandſons, might be the Inſtruments of his Cruelty, and very probably bear ſome Part in the military Execution. For it frequently ſo happens, that whatever a King commands, be it never ſo abominable, is generally approved and executed by his Family, and for this Reaſon it is, that *Saul*'s Family is called *a bloody Houſe*; which it would not have been, had it diſſuaded or oppoſed, nay, had it not been acceſſary and aiding to *Saul*'s bloody Deſigns againſt this poor defenceleſs People.

Without calling then, to our Aſſiſtance, God's great Prerogative, *of viſiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third or fourth Generation*, we may fairly ſay, that if theſe Deſcendents of *Saul* did either concur in this Murther of the *Gibeonites*, when doing, or avow and defend it, when done, they became culpable upon their own, as well as their Anceſtor's Account, and thereupon juſtly deſerved to be delivered up to the Reſentments of a People that had ſuffered ſo much by their Inhumanity.

Q. *Why did God ſo long delay puniſhing them?*

A. Upon the Suppoſition, (for it is by Suppoſitions that we muſt go in this Hiſtory) that both the People, and the Princes of the Blood, were acceſſary or inſtrumental to *Saul*'s Cruelty, the Reaſon why God delay'd their Puniſhment ſo long, is obvious; even becauſe his infinite Goodneſs waited for their Repentance, which Goodneſs we badly requite, if we pervert it as an Argument againſt his Providence. For may not God be gracious and merciful, as long as he pleaſes? Or have we any Right to ſet Bounds to Patience and Long-ſuffering? 'Tis but ſuppoſing then, that while God continued in this State of Expectance, upon ſome ſpecial Occaſion or other, to us unknown, both the People of *Iſrael*, and *Saul*'s Poſterity might diſcover, that they were ſo far from repenting, that they gloried in the Murther of the *Gibeonites*, and this would determine God, who had hitherto waited for their Penitence in vain, to pour out his Indignation upon them, and exact a ſevere Puniſhment both for Cruelty and Obſtinacy.

Q. *Why did the* Gibeonites *inſiſt upon this Kind of Satisfaction, rather than any other, namely, of hanging up ſeven of* Saul's *Sons?*

A. Whether the *Gibeonites* did right or wrong in exacting ſo ſevere a Retaliation, as that of hanging up ſeven of *Saul*'s Progeny, for the Injury that he and his Family had done them, the ſacred Hiſtory is no way concerned. It relates the Tranſaction juſt as it happened; but to ſhew us from whence this barbarous Cuſtom of hanging up Men to appeaſe the Anger of the Gods proceeded, it prefaces the Account of the Matter, with this Obſervation, —— *Theſe* Gibeonites *were not of the Children of* Iſrael (for among them they learnt no ſuch Practice) *but a Remnant of the* Amorites who were addicted to this horrid Superſtition, of which the *Gibeonites*, notwithſtanding their Abode (among People of better Sentiments,) ſtill retained the ſame Tincture, and propounded it to *David*, as an Expedient to make the Earth become fruitful again, *Let ſeven of* Saul's *Sons be given unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord.*

Q. *May it not be inferred from hence, that God delights in human Sacrifices?*

A. The Scripture ſpeaks in the Dialect of theſe People; but from thence we make a wrong Concluſion, if we think that God can be delighted with human Sacrifices, which ſo frequently, and ſo vehemently we find him declaming againſt, and profeſſing his utter Deteſtation of. He deſires the Death or Puniſhment of no Man, except it be in Purſuance of the Ends of his wiſe Providence, or when the Criminal, by his bad Conduct has forfeited his Life to the Government he lives under; nor would he have required the Execution of any of *Saul*'s Poſterity, had it not been, to procure the poor diſtreſſed *Gibeonites* (who were true Drudges to their *Hebrew* Maſters) a kinder Treatment, and beter Quarter for the future; had it not been to teſtify his Abhorrence of all Oppreſſion and Violence, to ſhew that the Cries of the meaneſt Slave, as well as of the mightieſt Monarch, enter the Ears of the Moſt High, that with him there is no Reſpect of Perſons, but the Rich and the Poor to him are both alike; had it not been to repair the Injury done to his moſt holy Name, in Violation of the Compact which both *Joſhua* and the Princes of *Iſrael* made with this People, and confirmed with the Solemnity of an Oath; had it not been, by this exemplary Puniſhment, to give Mankind a Leſſon of Inſtruction, concerning the Sacredneſs of Oaths and Treaties, and how religiouſly they ought to be obſerved, even towards thoſe that are in the loweſt State and Circumſtances of Life.

Q. *May we not ſuppoſe that* David *was glad of this Occaſion of cutting off* Saul's *Family?*

A. Both the *Septuagint* and *vulgar Latin* Tranſlations make the Demand of the *Gibeonites*, when *David* ſent to offer them Satisfaction, run in this Strain, —— *The Man who conſumed us, and oppreſſed us unjuſtly, we ought utterly to deſtroy, ſo as not to leave one of his Race remaining in any of the Coaſts of* Iſrael; and in this Demand we may preſume, that they perſiſted, until *David*, partly by his Authority, and partly by kind Intreaties, prevailed with them to be content with ſeven only. Here then was a fair Opportunity for *David* (had he been ſo minded) to have cut off the whole Race of *Saul*, as it were, at one Blow, and to have avoided all the Odium of the Action, by but barely ſaying, "That the *Gibeonites* demanded all, and his Inſtructions from God were, to grant whatever they demanded." But, inſtead of that, we find him, before this happened, making Enquiry for ſuch *as were left of* Saul's *Family, that he might ſhew Kindneſs to them for* Jonathan's *Sake*; interpoſing his good Offices here with the *Gibeonites*, to have them abate the Keenneſs of their Reſentment, and make the Slaughter of *Saul*'s devoted Houſe as moderate as poſſible; and, after that Slaughter was over, giving them a publick and ſolemn Interment, with the Bones of *Saul* and *Jonathan* his Son, in the Sepulchre of their Anceſtors.

Had this Affair of the *Gibeonites* happened, indeed, about the Beginning of *David*'s Reign over all *Iſrael*, ſoon after the Death of *Iſhboſheth*, and when he had Reaſon to apprehend that ſome other Rival might perchance ſpring up in his Stead; there might then be ſome Umbrage to think that theſe Branches of *Saul*'s Family were to be cut off for Reaſons of State, and to make his Poſſeſſion of the Crown more ſafe: But, ſince theſe Things came to paſs very near the Concluſion of his Reign, when (as he himſelf acknowledges in the very next Chapter) God had not only *covered him with the Shield of his Salvation, and ſo enlarged his Steps under him, that his Feet could not ſlip, but given him likewiſe the Necks of his Enemies, and made him the Head over many ſtrange Nations*, Chap. xxii. Ver. 36. he could have no juſt Conception of Danger, from any Quarter, and conſequently no Neceſſity to eſtabliſh his Throne by Blood.

Q. *Do you think then that* David *was under a Neceſſity of ſuffering* Saul's *Children to be executed in this Manner?*

A. It could not be for any private End, that *David* delivered theſe Children of *Saul* into the Hands of the *Gibeonites*, but purely in Obedience to the Will of God, who had both directed and warranted him ſo to do. For we cannot but ſuppoſe (as *Joſephus* does) that when *David* conſulted the Oracle concerning the Famine, God informed him, not only for what Crime it was inflicted, but by what Means likewiſe it was to be removed: And therefore *David*, being let into all this, was not at Liberty to do what he pleaſed, but compelled rather to give up the Children as ſo many Victims, notwithſtanding his Promiſe and Oath to their Father; becauſe a ſuperior Power interpoſed, and, in ſo doing, cancell'd the prior Obligation.

Q. *We read*, Chap. ii. 23. *that* Michal *had no Children; and yet here*, Ver. 8. *ſhe is ſaid to have five Sons.*

A. Michal is put in the Text, indeed, but not by Miſtake, as ſome will have it; for though *Michal* was not the Wife of *Adriel*, but *Merab*; yet thoſe Children which *Merab* had by *Adriel*, *Michal* brought up; and the *Jews* obſerve, upon this Occaſion, that whoever brings up a Pupil in his Houſe, is in Scripture ſaid to have begotten him. Nor is it in Scripture only, that this Form of Expreſſion takes place, but in Heathen Authors likewiſe. For *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus* are called Sons of *Atreus*, becauſe *Pliſthenes* (who was their Father) being dead, he took care to bring them up.

Chap. XXII.

A Pſalm of Thankſgiving for God's powerful Deliverance and manifold Bleſſings.

THIS Chapter is, in a Manner, wholly the ſame with *Pſalm* xviii. and therefore we ſhall defer propoſing any Queſtions upon it till it comes in Courſe.

Chap. XXIII.

David's *laſt Words. A Character of himſelf. His Faith in God's Covenant. Deſtruction to the Wicked. His Worthies, and their great Exploits.*

Q. THREE *of* David's *chief Captains broke through the* Philiſtine *Camp, and having drawn Water out of the Well at* Bethlehem, *returned the ſame Way, and preſented it to* David: *What is there particularly remarkable in this Exploit?*

A. It is commonly obſerved, by the *Jewiſh* Commentators, that, though *David* expreſſed a Deſire for ſome of the Water of *Bethlehem*, becauſe it was the Place of his Nativity, and the Water, not improbably, very excellent in its Kind, yet he did not do this with any Intent that any ſhould venture their Lives to fetch him it. In this Action, however, they have remarked three wonderful Things, *viz.* that three Men could break through the whole Hoſt of the *Philiſtines*; and, when they had ſo done, durſt ſtay to draw Water out of the Well; and then carry it away, with an high Hand, through the ſame Hoſt to *David*: But they might have added a fourth Remark, *viz.* that they attempted this at the Gate of *Bethlehem*, where a Garriſon of the *Philiſtines* kept a ſtrong Guard.

Q. *The Chapter concludes with the Account of* David's *Worthies, who, it's ſaid,* were thirty and ſeven in all, *whereas but ſix and thirty are named.*

A. Either therefore one muſt be ſupplied, whoſe Name is not expreſſed among the three ſecond Worthies; or *Joab* is comprehended in the Number, as being Lord General of all.

Chap. XXIV.

David, *tempted by Satan, forces* Joab *to number the People; acknowledges his Sin; God gives him the Choice of three Judgments, of which he chuſes Peſtilence, it rages, but* Jeruſalem, *on* David's *Humiliation, is ſpared. He purchaſes* Araunah's *Threſhing-floor to build an Altar there, on which ſacrificing, the Plague ceaſes.*

Q. HOW *are we to underſtand the firſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. The Words are, —— *And again the Anger of the Lord was moved againſt* Iſrael, *and he moved*

David *againſt him to ſay, Go number* Iſrael *and* Judah. But in the Original there is no Nominative Caſe at all. We find it, however, ſupplied in 1 *Chron.* xxi. 1. where it is ſaid, that *Satan ſtood up againſt* Iſrael, *and provoked* David *to number* Iſrael: But then, by the Word *Satan*, there is no Neceſſity why we ſhould underſtand the Devil properly ſo called, becauſe any evil Miniſter, or Counſellor, that adviſed *David* to number the People, will anſwer the Signification of the Word as well; and that there was ſome ſuch Counſellor, who prompted *David* to this Action, ſeems to be implied in theſe Words to *Joab*:——*Now the Lord thy God add unto the People (how many ſoever they be) an hundredfold, and that the Eyes of my Lord the King may ſee it, but why doth my Lord the King delight in this Thing?* ver. 3. Whereby it ſeems plain, that the Matter had been debated in the King's Council before, and that, though *Joab* was one, who oppoſed it, *David* was more influenced by the Perſuaſion of ſome other.

Q. *Wherein did* David *ſin in numbering the People?*

A. This has been a Subject of much Debate among Interpreters. *When thou takeſt the Number of the Children of* Iſrael, ſays God to *Moſes*, *after their Number, then ſhall they give every Man a Ranſom for his Soul unto the Lord, that there be no Plague among them, when thou numbereſt them:* Upon which Paſſage *Joſephus*, and ſome others, have founded this Conjecture;——That *David* had quite forgot to demand of every Man, that muſtered, an half Shekel, which was appointed by the Law, and is here called a *Ranſom for his Soul*, and therefore God ſent among the People a Peſtilence; becauſe, amidſt the great Plenty and Abundance, which they now enjoyed, it was a very impious, and provoking Thing, not to pay him his Dues. But where do we find, that, upon every Numbering of the People, an half Shekel was ordered to be paid? 'Twas in this Caſe only, when the People were to contribute towards the Building of the Tabernacle, and God threatens thoſe, that ſhould refuſe to do it; but this has no Manner of Relation to what *David* did, who no where ſtands charged with ſuch Omiſſion, any more, than with a Deſign of raiſing a Capitation Tax (as others conceive) upon every Poll through the Kingdom.

Others are of Opinion, that this Numbering of the People was a Thing contrary to the fundamental Promiſe, which God made to *Abraham*, viz. that his Seed ſhould ſo encreaſe, as even to *exceed the Stars* in Multitude; and therefore, ſince God had promiſed to encreaſe them beyond Number, it ſavoured of Infidelity, and Diſtruſt in God, for any one to go about to number them: But quite contrary to this, the Scripture, in another Place, tells us, that *David* (out of a religious Regard to the Promiſe of God) never intended to take an exact Number of all, but of ſuch only, as were fit to bear Arms; for ſo the Words are, *He took not the Number of them, from twenty Years old and under, becauſe the Lord had ſaid, he would encreaſe* Iſrael, *like to the Stars of the Heavens.*

The moſt common therefore, and indeed the only probable Opinion is, that this Act of *David's* proceeded from Pride, and Ambition, and a fooliſh Curioſity to know the Number of his Subjects, the Strength of his Forces, and the Extent of his Empire, as if all theſe had greatly contributed to his Glory and Renown; as if they had been of his own acquiring, and more proper to place his Confidence in, than the Power and Aſſiſtance of him, whoſe Protection he had ſo long experienced; whom, upon other Occaſions, he was wont to call *his Rock, his Shield, and Caſtle of Defennce*; and who was able, at all Times, to ſave with an Handful of Men, as well as a Multitude.

Pride then, and an arrogant Conceit of himſelf, (which is always attended with a Forgetfulneſs of God) was at the Bottom of *David's* numbering the People; and indeed ſo viſible to others, as well as to the All-ſeeing Eye of God, that we find *Joab* (who was then of his Privy-council) thus remonſtrating againſt it; *Now the Lord thy God add unto thy People (how many ſoever they be) an hundred Fold, and that the Eyes of my Lord the King may ſee it; but why doth my Lord the King delight in this Thing?*

Q. *But, if* David *only was culpable in this Affair, why did not God immediately puniſh him for it, inſtead of falling upon the People, who were confeſſedly innocent?*

A. The Generality perhaps were innocent, as to the Affair of numbering the People: That might be chiefly *David's* Sin; but, in other Reſpects, they were not. They had many great and grievous Sins, which juſtly deſerved Puniſhment, and for which, probably, they would have been puniſhed before, had it not been for God's Tenderneſs to *David*, who muſt have been a Sufferer in the common Calamity: But now, when both King and People had deſerved Correction, God was pleaſed to let looſe his Anger upon both. *David*, indeed, was not ſmitten in Perſon, but a King is never more ſenſibly puniſhed, than when the Judgment of God falls upon his People, and diminiſhes their Number, and their Strength: For the Body politic is not unlike the Body natural; no ſooner does the Head ſuffer, but all the Members ſuffer with it; nor can the leaſt Part of the Body be in Pain, but the Head is immediately affected: And therefore we need not doubt, but that *David*, when he ſaw the *Angel ſtretch out his Hand upon* Jeruſalem, *to deſtroy it*, and thereupon broke out into this Exclamation, *Let thy Hand, I pray thee, be againſt me, and againſt my Father's Houſe*, had his Heart as full of Grief and Anxiety, as any one that lay languiſhing in the Plague.

Q. *In the Account of this Affair,* 1 Chron. xxi. 5. *the Number of the People given in, is much larger than it is here: How do you reconcile this Difference?*

A. It muſt be owned, indeed, that there is a very large Difference, in the Scripture Accounts, of the Number of Men fit to bear Arms, that were found in *David's* Dominions: In *Samuel* it is ſaid, that there were in *Iſrael eight hundred Thouſand*, and in *Judah five hundred thouſand*; but in *Chronicles, they of* Iſrael *were a thouſand Thouſand, and an hundred Thouſand, and they of* Judah *four hundred threeſcore and ten Thouſand*: And various have been the Attempts to adjuſt and ſettle this Diſagreement. Some ſuppoſe, that as *Joab* undertook this Office with no ſmall Reluctancy, and *David*, very probably, might repent of the Thing, before it was fully executed; though the Commiſſioners might make an exact Review, yet they thought proper to lay before the King no more than what the Sum in *Samuel* amounts to; but that the Author of the Book of *Chronicles* might, from ſome of theſe Commiſſioners, receive the compleat Sum, which occaſioned the Difference.

Others imagine, that this Difference ariſes from the Legionary Soldiers (as they are called) or thoſe Companies of Militia, which attended the King's Perſon by turns, and might make the Number either greater or leſs, according as they were numbered, or not numbered in the Account: But this Solution is purely arbitrary, and ſuch, as has no Foundation in Scripture. It ſuppoſes, withal, that the real Number was what is recorded in *Chronicles*, which, taking in ſeveral Articles that are ſaid to he omitted, ſurpaſſes all Faith.

Since there is then no Poſſibility of reconciling theſe different Computations, the Queſtion is, Which of the two we are to receive; and this, without all Controverſy, muſt be that in *Samuel*; not only becauſe the *Arabic* Tranſlators, in their Verſion of the *Chronicles*, have inſerted it, but becauſe there is nothing exceſſive or extravagant in the Suppoſition, that in a fertile and well-cultivated Country, of ſixty Leagues in Length, and thirty in Breadth, a Multitude of People, to the Number of ſix or ſeven Millions (which, taking in the other Articles, will be the Sum total) might very comfortably be maintained. Rather then, than have Recourſe to ſuch Solutions, as do but more embarraſs the Matter, we may adventure to ſay, without any Diminution to the Scripture's Authority, that the exceſſive Number in the *Chronicles* was a Miſtake of the Perſon, who after the Captivity, tranſcribed this Part of the ſacred Writ.

Q. *But there is another Difference between this Account, and that in* Chronicles, *with reſpect to the Continuance of the Famine, one of the Judgments of which* David *was to make his Choice,* Verſe 13.

A. In *Chronicles* the Famine is ſaid to be for three Years only, but here it is ſaid to be for ſeven. The *Sptuagint* indeed make it no more than three; and, for this Reaſon, ſome have imagined, that the ſeven is an Error crept into the Text, eſpecially conſidering that three Years of Famine agree better with three Days Peſtilence, and three Months Flight before an Enemy. But there is no Reaſon to ſuppoſe ony Error in the Text; it is but ſaying, that in *Chronicles* the Author ſpeaks of thoſe Years of Famine which were to come for *David*'s Sin only, but in *Samuel* of thoſe three Years of Famine likewiſe, which was ſent for *Saul*'s Sin, Chap. xxi. Now within one Year after the Famine, that was ſent for *Saul*'s Sin, was *David*'s Sin in numbering the People; the intermediate Year then was either the ſabbatical Year, wherein the People were not allowed to ſow nor reap, or a Year of ſuch exceſſive Draught, that the Crop came to little or nothing. Upon either of theſe Accounts, we may properly enough ſay, that there were four Years of Famine before, and three more being now added to them, make up the ſeven that are here mentioned.

Q. *How long did the Peſtilence continue?*

A. The Words in the Text are, ——*So the Lord ſent a Peſtilence upon* Iſrael, *from the Morning even to the Time appointed.* The Time appointed was the Space of three Days; and therefore ſome are of Opinion, that the Plague laſted ſo long; but then others urge, that this does not agree with what follows, *viz.* that *God repented him of the Evil*, and commanded the Angel, that ſmote the People, to ſtay his Hand. They therefore conclude, that as the Word *Moed* properly ſignifies an Aſſembly, the *Time Moed* muſt be, when People met together at the Time of Evening Sacrifice, that is, about the ninth Hour of the Day, and conſequently that the Plague continued from the Morning to this Time, which was about nine Hours, or the eighth Part of three Days; God in his Mercy having been pleaſed to mitigate the Rigour of his Judgment, upon the ſincere Repentance of his People.

Q. *Another difference between this Account and that in* Chronicles *is, with relation to the Price paid for the* Threſhing-Floor, *&c.*

A. In the *Chronicles* it is ſaid, that *David* bought the Threſhing-Floor, *&c.* for ſix hundred Shekels of Gold, but in *Samuel* it is ſaid, for fifty Shekels of Silver. Now a Shekel of Gold being of twelve Times more Value than a Shekel of Silver, it makes the Diſparity very large; and therefore, to account for this, it is generally ſuppoſed, that in the whole *David* made two Purchaſes; firſt he bought the Threſhing-Floor and Oxen, for which he gave fifty Shekels of Silver; but that afterward, all the Ground about it (out of which the Courts of the Temple were made) coſt him ſix hundred Shekels of Gold.

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS,

Commonly called the

THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THIS and the following Book are entitled, Of the Kings, *because they treat of the Kings of* Judah *and* Iſrael, *and were written by the Prophets and holy Men of God, living in, or near the Times of thoſe Kings, in whoſe Reigns theſe Tranſactions are related to be done, and by one of thoſe holy Men digeſted into this Order. But whoever was the Penman, that theſe are a Part of thoſe holy Scriptures which were divinely inſpired, is ſufficiently evident,* 1. *From the concurring Teſtimony of the whole* Jewiſh *Church in all Ages, to whom* were committed the Oracles of God, *Rom.* iii. 2. *who alſo faithfully diſcharged their Duty, in preſerving and delivering them entirely and truly to their Poſterity, from Time to Time, as plainly appears, becauſe* Chriſt *and his Apoſtles, who freely reproved them for their ſeveral Sins, never taxed them with this Fault, of depraving the Holy Scriptures of the* Old Teſtament. 2. *Becauſe this is manifeſt concerning divers Parts of them, which were tranſcribed from the Records of the Prophets* Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo, 2 *Chron.* ix. 29. *and out of the Prophecies of* Iſaiah *and* Jeremiah; *and the reſt were doubtleſs of the ſame Nature.* 3. *From the Approbation that is given of theſe Books in the* New Teſtament, *both generally, as* 2 Tim. iii. 16. All Scripture is given by Inſpiration from God, *&c. which is affirmed concerning all theſe* Holy Scriptures, *which* Timothy *had* known from a Child, *and therefore muſt neceſſarily be meant of the* Old Teſtament, *which the* Jews *owned for canonical Scripture; and particularly,* Rom. xi. 2, 3, *&c. where a Paſſage out of theſe Books is quoted and owned as Part of the Holy Scripture, called* the Scripture *by Way way of Eminency.*

Chap. I.

David *being grown very old, is cheriſhed by* Abiſhag. Adonijah *uſurps the Kingdom, of which* David *being informed by* Nathan *and* Bathſheba, *he renews his Oath of making* Solomon *King after him, and orders him to be anointed accordingly; upon which* Adonijah *and his Company fled every one his Way; he is pardoned by* Solomon, *and ſent to his own Houſe.*

Q. D*AVID, in his extreme old Age, is adviſed by his Phyſicians, in order to ſupply the natural* Heat *that was decay'd in his Body, to take a Virgin into his Bed; did they ground their Advice upon phyſical Reaſons?*

A. It is the Obſervation of *Galen,* in his fifth Book of *the Power of ſimple Medicines,* that nothing ſo effectually procures Heat and Health, as the Application of any Thing young to the Stomach: The Advice of *David*'s Phyſicians therefore was not amiſs, but it had been ſinful Advice, and ſuch as he could not have followed, had not this young Woman, whom he took to bed to him, been his concubinary Wife. In thoſe Days ſuch Wives were allowable; and that ſhe ſerved him in this Capacity, is very manifeſt from the Account that we have of her in Scripture; for, whereas it is ſaid, that *the King knew her not*; this certainly implies, that he might have had carnal Knowledge of her without Sin or Scandal; whereas it is ſaid, that *ſhe lay in his Boſom*; this Phraſe every where in Scripture

ture denotes what was the ſole Privilege of a Wife or Concubine, *Gen.* xvi. 5. *Deut.* xiii. 6. Nor can we imagine why *Adonijah*'s deſiring her in Marriage, had been ſuch a Crime in *Solomon*'s Acoount, had ſhe not been the King's Wife, and he, by this Means, had deſigned to revive his Pretenſions to the Crown.

Q. *Had* David *any Right or Power to nominate a Succeſſor?*

A. It muſt be acknowledged, that in moſt Nations, where the regal Power was at this Time eſtabliſhed, the Right of Succeſſion was generally hereditary, and the eldeſt Son ſeldom (except in Caſes of Incapacity) poſtponed. This is what *Adonijah* urges to *Bathſheba*; *Thou knoweſt that the Kingdom was mine*, by Right of Primogeniture, *and that all* Iſrael *ſet their Faces on me, that I ſhould reign:* But then there was this peculiar to the *Jewiſh* Conſtitution, that as God had been their only King, from the Time that they firſt became a Nation; ſo when they thought fit to have that Form of Government altered, he ſtill reſerved to himſelf the Right of nominating their King. *When thou art come into Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and ſhalt ſay, I will ſet a King over me, like all Nations that are about me, thou ſhalt by all Means make him King over thee, whom the Lord thy God ſhall chooſe.* So that, when God had declared his Pleaſure concerning his Succeſſor (as he did by the Prophet *Nathan*) *David* was not at Liberty to make Choice of any other.

We do not diſpute at all, but that *Bathſheba*, who was his favourite Wife, had a great Aſcendancy over her Husband; but *Solomon*'s Title was not founded upon her Intereſt and Management with the King, but upon the Ordination and Appointment of God. *Of all my Sons,* ſays David, *(for the Lord hath given me many Sons) he hath choſen* Solomon *my Son to ſit upon the Throne of the Kingdom of the Lord over* Iſrael; and therefore *Adonijah* himſelf acknowledges, *that it was of the Lord that the Kingdom was turned about and become his Brother's.*

Nathan, indeed, puts *Bathſheba* upon another Argument, *viz.* the Sacredneſs of the King's Oath, in order to prevail with him in behalf of her Son: *Didſt not thou ſware unto thy Handmaid, ſaying, aſſuredly* Solomon *thy Son ſhall reign after me, and he ſhall ſit upon my Throne?* But at what Time this Promiſe was made, is a Matter of ſome Diſpute. The Generality of Interpreters are of Opinion, that after the Death of the firſt Child, which *David* had by *Bathſheba*, he comforted her for her Loſs, and gave her Aſſurance, that if God ſhould give him another Son by her, he would not fail to make him his Succeſſor: But it is much more probable, that *David* did not make any Declaration or Promiſe to *Bathſheba*, until God had revealed it to him, that he ſhould have a Son, diſtinct from what he had already, who ſhould ſuceed him in the Kingdom, and have the Honour of building him a Temple; and no ſooner was *Solomon* born, but *David* was convinced that this was the Child, to whom the Promiſes belonged, by *Nathan*'s being ſent to give him a Name, denoting his being beloved of the Lord; and it was at this Time, moſt probably, that *David* gave his Mother a Promiſe, confirmed upon Oath, that ſince God had ſo manifeſtly declared in Favour of the Child, he, for his Part, would do his utmoſt to facilitate his Succeſſion. But upon the whole, he did not chooſe for himſelf, neither was it his Declaration, but rather the Effect and Conſequence of it.

But even ſuppoſe there had been no divine Interpoſition in Favour of *Solomon*, why might not *David*, who had done ſuch ſignal Services in his Reign, nominate his Succeſſor? Several great Princes, in moſt Nations, have claimed this Privilege. Among the *Romans*, *Aurelius* named *Nerva*, and *Nerva* choſe *Trajan*; and ſo did *Auguſtus* appoint his Succeſſor. And that this was a Prerogative belonging to the Crown of *Iſrael*, and what continued with it for ſome Time after *David*, is evident from the Story of his Grandſon *Rehoboam*, who, though a Prince of no great Merit, took upon him the Authority of nominating his Succeſſor, and, to the Prejudice of his eldeſt Son, made one of his youngeſt King.

Q. *Was there any Thing peculiarly remarkable in* David's *ordering his Son* Solomon *to be mounted on his* own Mule?

A. All the reſt of *David's* Sons were wont to ride upon Mules, when they went abroad, 2 *Sam.* xiii. 29. but *David* had a Mule peculiar to himſelf, and the mounting *Solomon* upon it, was a ſufficient Declaration in his Favour: For as it was Capital (according to *Maimonides*) to ride upon the King's Mule, or ſit on his Throne, or handle his Scepter, without his Order; ſo on the contrary, to have the Honour to ride upon the King's Horſe, by his Appointment, was accounted the higheſt Dignity among the *Perſians*, as appears by the Story of *Mordecai*, in the Book of *Eſther*.

Q. *Where was* Gihon, *the Place to which* David *commanded his Servants to conduct* Solomon?

A. Some Commentators are of Opinion, that *Gihon* was the ſame with the Fountain of *Siloam*; but this is a groſs Miſtake, ſince *Gihon* was manifeſtly to the *Weſt*, and *Siloam* to the *Eaſt* of *Jeruſalem*. There is little or no Certainty likewiſe in the Notions of ſome *Rabbins*, who pretend, that in antient Times Kings were always anointed by the Side of a Fountain, by way of good Omen, or that the perpetual Running of the Stream might be an Emblem of the Perpetuity of their King's Reign. In the Hiſtory of *Saul*, who was their firſt King, and of *David*, who was three Times anointed, we find no Mention made of any Spring or Fountain. As theſe Fountains, however, were Places of great Concourſe, (for there were many in *ruſalem*) the chief Reaſon, we may imagine, why *David* ordered *Solomon* to be anointed at one of theſe was, that the Thing might be done as publickly, and in the Preſence of as many Spectators as poſſible.

Q. *Was the Altar a privileged Place, that* Adonijah *ſhould fly to it for a Sanctuary of Protection?*

A. There is no Precept in the Law to make the Altar a privileged Place; but, in conformity to the Cuſtoms of other Nations, the *Jews* ſeem to have done it. Other Nations had certainly this Cuſtom, as appears from that Paſſage in *Virgil*;

Talibus orabat Dictis, araſque tenebat.
Ænead. 6.

And it ſeems likely, that as the People, when they came into the Land of *Canaan*, had Cities appointed by God, whereunto the Manſlayer might flee; ſo, while they continued in the Wilderneſs, the Camp of the *Levites* might ſerve for the ſame

Purpoſe. Nay, from the Words in *Exodus* xxi. 14. God Orders the wilful Murtherer *to be taken from his Altar, that he may die*, it ſeems unqueſtionably true, that even in the Land of *Canaan*, the Altar continued a Sanctuary for thoſe who fled unto it; but then the Queſtion is, to what Altar *Adonijah* fled, whether to the brazen one, which *Moſes* made, and which was now at *Gibeon*, or that which his Father had lately erected in the Threſhing-floor of *Araunah*? 'Tis ſaid, Ver. 50. that *he caught hold of the Horns of the Altar*; but we can hardly ſuppoſe, ſay ſome, that the Altar in the Threſhing-floor, which was run up in ſuch haſte with Stones and Turf, was made in that Figure. But what ſhould hinder us from ſuppoſing, that as *David* had built a Place for the Reception of the Ark of the Covenant on Mount *Sion*, he had likewiſe built there an Altar, for the Oblation of the daily Sacrifices, in the exact Form of the original one, that was then at *Gibeon*, and it was to this Altar, and neither of the others, that *Adonijah* betook himſelf for Refuge.

Chap. II.

David, *being on his Death-Bed, gives Charge to* Solomon, *concerning a religious Life; his Charge in Relation to* Joab, Barzillai *and* Shimei; *he dies;* Solomon *ſucceeds.* Adonijah, *ſuing for* Abiſhag, *is put to Death.* Abiathar *deprived of the Prieſthood.* Joab, *at his own Requeſt, ſlain by the Altar;* Benaiah *put in his Place, and* Zadok *in* Abiathar*'s.* Shimei*'s Death, and the Occaſion of it.*

Q. DAVID *perceiving his End approach, calls for* Solomon, *and gives him a ſolemn Exhortation: How does* Joſephus *repreſent him ſpeaking on this Occaſion?*

A. Thus: "And now, Son, I am going to my Fathers, and you, that I leave behind me, are in due Time to follow, which is no more than paying a common Debt to Nature. There is no returning from the Grave, and when we are once gone, we have done with this World for ever: Therefore, while I am yet among the Living, and before it be too late, pray let me remind you of the ſame Thing once more:—Govern your Subjects according to Juſtice; worſhip that God from whom you have received your Dignity, as well as your Being, as you are bound to do; obſerve his Precepts, and keep his Laws, as they have been handed down to you from *Moſes*; and have a Care that you never forſake them, either for Fear, Flattery, or any Paſſion or Intereſt whatſoever, for otherwiſe you can never hope for the Bleſſings of God's Favour and Providence; but if you behave yourſelf with Reverence and Submiſſion towards God, as you ought to do, and as I wiſh you may do, your Kingdom will be eſtabliſhed to yourſelf, and the Succeſſion of it continued to your Family, from Generation to Generation."

Q. *Among other Exorthations which* David *gives* Solomon, *he enjoins him to keep God's* Statutes, *his* Commandments, *his* Judgments, *and his* Teſtimonies: *What do you obſerve upon this?*

A. Under theſe four Words are comprehended all the Laws of *Moſes*. *Statutes* were ſuch Conſtitutions as had their Foundation, not in Reaſon, but in the Will and Pleaſure of God; ſuch was the Prohibition of ſowing Seeds of different Kinds together, *&c.* *Commandments* were moral Duties, that were founded in the Nature of Things, and carried their Reaſon along with them; as not to ſteal, not to murther, *&c.* *Judgments* were the Laws belonging to civil Government, and the Dealings of one Man with another; ſuch are all thoſe Laws that are recorded in the 21ſt and following Chapters of *Exodus*; and *Teſtimonies* were ſuch Laws as preſerved the Remembrance of ſome great Events, and teſtified to Men the loving Kindneſs of the Lord; ſuch as the Sabbath, the Paſſover, and the reſt of the Feaſts.

Q. *The next Part of* David*'s Charge to his Son is, to do Juſtice on* Joab *and* Shimei, *for their former Crimes: But was it conſiſtent with* David*'s Piety to go out of World with a Spirit of Revenge?*

A. That which leads many into a Miſ-conception of *David*, as if he left the World in a vindictive and unforgiving Temper, becauſe we find him giving his Son ſome Inſtructions concerning two Perſons that had groſly miſbehaved towards him, has been nothing elſe but the Want of diſtinguiſhing between the ſame Perſon, when acting or adviſing in a publick, and when in a private Capacity. *Shimei* curſes *David*, in the Time of his Troubles; and yet *David* forgives him, and promiſes he ſhall not die. *Joab* does many valourous and brave Acts for the Honour of his King, and the Enlargement of his Dominions, but then he ſullies all with his inſolent Behaviour, and barbarous Murthers: They both had committed Crimes enough to forfeit their Lives; *David*, however, for Reaſons of State, thought it not adviſeable to ſeize either of them for the preſent, but directed his Son, if ever they ſhould give him a ſufficient Provocation, not to ſpare them. "Thou haſt *Shimei* with thee, and ſome Share, perhaps, he may have in thy Favour; but truſt him not, he is no Friend to Kings, or kingly Power. Remember what he did to me in my Diſtreſs; how bitterly, how virulently he curſed me to my Face; and I make no Doubt, but that he would do the ſame to thee, in the like Circumſtances. I forgave him in my Exile, becauſe I looked upon him as an Inſtrument in God's Hands, to humble me for my great Offence: I forgave him in my Return home, becauſe he came to me, when my Heart was open, and unwilling to damp the Joy of my Reſtoration with the Effuſion of any Blood. I promiſed him his Life, and let not that promiſe be violated in my Days: But what I did is no Rule or Obligation to thee. Let him not die, however, for his Offence againſt me, but rather watch his Conduct, and if he chance to give thee a freſh Occaſion, be ſure to lay hold of it, becauſe it is not in his Nature to be a good Subject.

"Thou remembereſt likewiſe what *Joab* did unto me; with what Inſolence he treated me in the Time of the War againſt *Abſalom*; how, contrary to my Orders, he ſlew him, and afterwards talked to me in a menacing and imperious Manner. Thou remembereſt what he did to *Amaſa*, whom I intended to have put in his Place, and made the General of all my Forces; and what to *Abner*, who was then endeavouring to gain over, to my Party, all that adhered to the Houſe of *Saul*. The Injury done to theſe two brave Men, redounds upon me,

“ ſince they were both under *my* Protection, and “ both murdered, baſely murdered, becauſe I had “ an Eſteem for them; and till Juſtice is done to “ their Murderer, (which I, in my Life-time, had “ not Power to do) *their innocent Blood will not* “ *depart from my Houſe.* Do thou therefore take “ Care to aſſoil it, and, whenever he commits any “ Traſgreſſion againſt thee, let the Blood of theſe “ two valuable Men be charged to his Account, “ and let him, as he has long deſerved, be put “ to death.”

This is the Senſe of *David*'s Words to his Son, concerning theſe two Men; and it is eaſy to obſerve, that in theſe dying Inſtructions of his, he is not to be conſidered as a private Man, acting upon Principles of Reſentment, but as a King and Governor, giving Advice to his Son and Succeſſor in Affairs of State. It was for the publick Good that ſuch Offenders, as *Shimei* and *Joab*, ſhould ſuffer at a proper Time, and as Prudence ſhould direct; and therefore, ſince his Promiſe and Oath to one of them, and the formidable Power and Intereſt which the other had uſurped, reſtrained him, in his Life-time, from puniſhing them as they deſerved; and ſince it would have been an unjuſt Thing in itſelf, and a Derogation to the Glory of his Reign, to ſuffer ſuch publick and crying Sins to go unpuniſhed, he recommended the Conſideration of theſe Things to his Son; and, like a wiſe Magiſtrate, laid a Scheme for the Puniſhment of Wickedneſs, without Regard to any private Revenge.

Q. *But why did* David *chuſe to puniſh* Joab *by the Hand of* Solomon, *rather than his own?*

A. David, as I ſaid, durſt not call *Joab* to an Account, becauſe his Power and Intereſt was too great in the Army (and 'twas the Army that *David*, in a great Meaſure, depended on) that it might have occaſioned an Alteration in the Government, had he pretended to do it: But, when *Solomon* came to the Throne, *Joab* was not that mighty Man, he had formerly been. He was at leaſt of an equal Age with *David*; had commanded the Armies of *Iſrael* for twenty Years, and as he was only formidable at the Head of his Troops, and in the Times of the War and publick Diſorder; ſo the profound Peace, which had ſubſiſted for ſome Time, both before, and after the Beginning of *Solomon*'s Reign, had impaired his Power, and made him in a manner uſeleſs: So that *Solomon* had not the like Reaſon to fear him, that his Father had, nor did he lie under the like Obligations to ſpare him. He had done *David* great Services indeed, and a ſufficient Recompence it was, that he had been indulged, for ſo many Years, with an Impunity for his Crimes; but, whatever the Father might be, the Son was under no Ties or Obligations, eſpecially when he found him conſpiring to take away his Kingdom, and tranſlate it to another.

Q. David *died after he had reigned, it's ſaid,* ſeven Years in *Hebron, and* thirty and three Years in *Jeruſalem, which differs a little from the Account given of his Reign* 2 Sam. v. 5.

A. In 2 *Sam.* v. 5. it is ſaid, that he reigned ſeven Years and ſix Months in *Hebron*, which, together with the three and thirty in *Jeruſalem*, will make this Reign to be, in all, forty Years and a half. To ſolve this Difficulty, (as ſome of the *Jews* eſteem it) they have deviſed a Conceit, that, to puniſh *David* for his Adultery with *Bathſheba*, God ſent upon him a *Leproſy*, which continued for ſix Months, in all which Time he was looked upon as dead, and not accounted to reign; But they never conſidered, that theſe ſix Months were Part of his Reign at *Hebron*, before he committed that Adultery in *Jeruſalem*. The true Account of the Matter therefore is, that it is very uſual, in Scripture Computation, to omit ſmaller Sums, and only reckon, by a round Number; for which Reaſon thoſe ſix Months which were but Part of a Year, are not taken Notice of in the Account both of *Kings* and *Chronicles*.

Q. *What have you to remark concerning* David's *Burial, Sepulcher, and Character?*

A. Joſephus informs us, “The he was buried at “ *Jeruſalem* with a Solemnity of royal Pomp and “ Magnificence, that was glorious to the higheſt “ Degree, and that, over and above the Splendor “ of the Ceremony, his Son *Solomon* depoſited in his “ Monument, an ineſtimable Treaſure, from which, “ when *Antiochus*, ſurnamed the *Pious*, beſieged “ *Jeruſalem, Hircanus*, the High-prieſt, took, “ to the Sum *of three Thouſand Talents*, and there- “ with bribed them to raiſe the Siege; and that, “ many Years after this, *Herod*, ſurnamed the “ *Great*, took another immenſe Sum from thence, “ which enabled him to rebuild the Temple.” Among ſeveral Nations indeed it was cuſtomary to bury, along with Princes, and other great Men, various Things of Value, that they took Delight in, while they lived. The *Egytians* were uſed to this; and about their Mummies are frequently found very precious Ornaments. When *Alexander* the *Great* had *Cyrus*'s Tomb opened, there were found therein a Bed of Gold, a very rich Table, drinking Cups, and many fine Veſtments; but, notwithſtanding all this, ſeveral learned Men look upon this whole Account of *Joſephus* as a mere Fable. For, to what Purpoſe, *ſay they*, did *Solomon* bury all this Treaſure under Ground, when he had ſo much Occaſion for it; when he was forced to borrow Money of the King of *Tyre*, and burthen his People with ſo many heavy Taxes, to ſupply his exceſſive Expences? How came it, that the other Kings of *Judah*, who were frequently put to the Neceſſity of ſtripping the Temple of its precious Furniture, to ſatisfy their greedy Enemies, never once adventured to lay hold on this Treaſure? How came it to eſcape the Hands of the *Chaldeans*, and other Nations, that ſo often had the plundering of *Jeruſalem*? Or why ſhould *Hircanus* violate the *Depoſitum*, which his Predeceſſors eſteem'd more ſacred, than the holy Veſſels of the Lord? Theſe are Queſtions, that cannot eaſily be reſolved; and, (what is a farther Confutation of this Story,) in that very Book, from whence *Joſephus* is ſuppoſed to have taken it, it is never once ſaid, that *Hircanus* broke open *David*'s Tomb. The Words of that ſpurious Author are, that *Hircanus, while he was beſieged by* Antiochus, *opened a Treaſure-chamber, which belonged to ſome of* David's *Deſcendants, and that, after he had taken a large Sum of Money out of it, he ſtill left a great deal in it, and ſealed it up again:* But this is quite a different Thing, and has no manner of Relation to the Sepulchre of *David*. As to the real Sepulchre of *David*, 'tis certain, that it was always held in great Veneration among the *Jews*. It was in Being in St. *Peter*'s Time, for ſo he tells the People, *Acts* ii. 29. *Dio* (*in Adriani Vita*) informs us, that Part of it was fallen down in the Emperor *Adrian*'s Reign. St. *Jerom* relates, that he himſelf uſed frequently to go, and pray at it; and modern *Travellers* (as we took notice before) deſcribe ſome magnificent Monuments, hewn in a Rock, not far from *Jeruſalem*, which are doubtleſs very ancient, but they themſelves do not agree, that they were the Sepulchres of the Kings of *Judah*. 'Tis ſomewhat unaccountable, however, that the Place of this Prince's Sepulture, which both the *Chaldeans*, and the *Romans*, when they took *Jeruſalem*, thought proper to ſpare, ſhould be now ſo intirely loſt, that we cannot find the leaſt Remains of it. But though Providence has ſo ordered it, that the Place of *David*'s Sepulture ſhould not at preſent be known, yet there does not want an eternal *Monument* of his moſt excellent Genius. The Book of *Pſalms*, which, for the moſt part, was compoſed by him, does publiſh the Glory of its Author, more than the moſt pompous Elogies, and the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus* (Chap. xlvii. Ver. 1, *&c.*) has conſecrated this Epitaph to his Memory, which is more durable than either Marble, or Braſs:——*As the Fat is taken away from the Peace-offering, ſo was* David *choſen out of the People of* Iſrael. *He played with Lions as with Kids, and with Bears, as with Lambs; he ſlew a Giant, when he was young, and took away the Reproach from the People; for he called upon the Moſt High Lord, and gave Strength to his right Hand, to ſlay this mighty Warrior, and to ſet up the Horn of his People. So the People honoured him with ten Thouſands, and praiſed him in Bleſſings of the Lord; for he deſtroyed the Enemies on every Side, and brought to nought the* Philiſtines, *his Adverſaries:——In all his Works he praiſed the holy One moſt high, and bleſſed the Lord with Words of Glory:——He ſet Singers alſo before the Altar, that, by their Voices, they might make ſweet Melody, and daily ſing Praiſes in their Songs. He beautified their Feaſts, and ſet their ſolemn Times in perfect Order:——The Lord took away his Sins, and exalted his Horn for ever; he gave him a Covenant of Kings, and a Throne of Glory in* Iſrael.

Q. *Wherein conſiſted* Adonijah's *Offence in asking* Abiſhag *for his Wife?*

A. Far are we from vindicating *Solomon* in all his Actions, any more than *David* in the Matter of *Uriah*: His Severity to his Brother, for a ſeemingly ſmall Offence, looked like Revenge, and as if he had taken the firſt Opportunity to cut him off, for his former Attempt upon the Kingdom? and yet we cannout but imagine, from *Solomon's* Words to his Mother, that there was ſome farther Conſpiracy againſt him, though not mentioned in holy Writ, whereof, he had got Intelligence, and wherein *Joab*, and *Abiathar*, were engaged; and that he looked upon this asking *Abiſhag* in Marriage, as the Prelude to it, and the firſt Overt-act, as it were, of their Treaſon. It is certain, that they thought to impoſe upon the King, as they had done upon his Mother, and carry their Point, without ever diſcovering the malevolent Intent of it.

The Wives of the late King (according to the Cuſtoms of the Eaſt) belonged to his Succeſſor, and were never married to any under a crowned Head. *Abiſhag* was doubtleſs, a beautiful Woman, and, by her near Relation to *David*, might have a powerful Intereſt at Court. *Adonijah* might therefore hope, by this Marriage, to ſtrengthen his Pretenſions to the Crown, or, at leaſt, to lay the Foundation for ſome future Attempt, upon a proper Opportunity, either if *Solomon* ſhould die, and leave a young Son, not able to conteſt the Point with him; or if, at any Time, he ſhould happen to fall under the People's Diſpleaſure, as his Father had none before him.

This might be *Adonijah*'s Deſign, and *Solomon*, accordingly, might have Information of it: But, ſuppoſing that his Brother's Deſign was entirely innocent, yet ſince his Requeſt (according to the Cuſtoms then prevailing) was confeſſedly bold and preſumptuous, and had in it all the Appearance of Treaſon, it was none of *Solomon*'s Buſineſs to make any farther Enquiry about it, or to interpret the Thing in his Brother's Favour. It was ſufficient for him that the Action was in itſelf criminal, and of dangerous Conſequence to the State, for 'tis by their Actions, and not Intentions, that all Offenders muſt be tried.

Adonijah indeed, had he lived under our Conſtitution, would have had a fair Hearing before Conviction: But we ought to remember, that in the Kingdoms of the *Eaſt*, the Government was abſolute, and the Power of Life or Death entirely in the Prince: So that *Solomon*, without the Formality of any Proceſs, could pronounce his Brother dead: And, becauſe he conceived, that in Caſes of this Nature, Delays were dangerous, might ſend immediately, and have him diſpatched, tho' we cannot but ſay, that it had been much more to his Commendation, had he ſhewed more Clemency, and ſpared his Life.

Q. *Why did* Solomon *employ one of his chief Officers, rather than a common Man, to execute* Adonijah, Joab *and* Shimei?

A. It was formerly very cuſtomary among Princes to employ their Officers or greateſt Confidants in ſuch like Executions. Among the *Romans* the Soldiers were always the Perſons who carried to Priſon, to Torture, or to Execution, ſuch as were found guilty of any Offence; and this *Tertullian* makes an Argument to diſſuade *Chriſtians* from engaging in the Wars, leſt thereby they ſhould be obliged to impriſon, puniſh or execute Malefactors. In *Dan.* ii. 24. we read that *Nebuchadnezzar* ſent *Arioch*, who was chief Commander of his Troops, to deſtroy the Wiſemen of *Babylon*, becauſe they could not interpret his Dream; and therefore we need leſs wonder, that we find *Solomon* employing *Benaiah*, the Captain of his Guard, on the like Office: But whether he did not firſt drag him from the Altar, before he ſlew him, for fear of polluting the holy Place with Blood, or whether *Solomon* did not rather think fit to have him killed, even at the very Altar, to let all Men ſee, that no Place, tho' never ſo ſacred, ſhould ſecure any Man from the Hand of Juſtice, Commentators have not agreed.

Q. *What might be* Solomon's *Reaſon for confining* Shimei *to* Jeruſalem?

A. Shimei, as we read, was a very powerful Man. When he came to meet King *David*, and to beg Pardon for his Offence, he had a thouſand of his own Tribe to accompany him, 2 *Sam.* xix. 17. and therefore *Solomon* might think proper to confine him to the City of *Jeruſalem*, that being removed from the Place where his Family and Intereſt lay, to one where he was but a Stranger, and ſufficiently odious for his former ill Treatment of the late King, he might be incapable of raiſing any Tumults or Seditions; and that, being in this publick Theater, all his Words and Actions might be narrowly obſerved; which, conſidering his buſy and wicked Temper, might give *Solomon* a fair Advantage againſt him; and (as the Manner of ſome is) the very Prohibition it ſelf might probably inflame his Deſire to tranſgreſs it.

Q. *Was not* Shimei *guilty of a great Folly and Over-ſight, to go from* Jeruſalem, *though ſo ſtrictly enjoined the contrary, on ſo ſlight an Occaſion, as purſuing ſome runagate Servants, who were fled to* Achiſh *King of* Gath?

A. Achiſh had been ſo great a Friend to *David*, that though *David* had conquered the *Philiſtines*, he ſuffered him ſtill to retain the Title of King, and only to be tributary to him; ſo that there was a friendly Correſpondence between his City and *Jeruſalem*, inſomuch that *Shimei* might eaſily hear, by ſomebody or other that had been at *Gath*, that his Servants were there. Theſe Servants, in all Probability, were ſuch as he had purchaſed with a conſiderable Sum of Money, and their running away was not only a Loſs, but a great Affront likewiſe to their Maſter; and therefore, partly out of Rage, and partly through Covetouſneſs, he undertook this dangerous Journey, preſuming that a Thing which might be done ſecretly and ſpeedily, would never come to *Solomon*'s Ears; that in the Space of three Years Time, *Solomon* might have forgot his Injunction; or that, if he remembered it, he would not be ſo rigid, as to put it in Execution; eſpecially ſince he went out of *Jeruſalem*, not through Wantonneſs, or any Contempt of Authority, but merely to recover what he had loſt, which he might think was a Thing excuſable.

Q. *Wherein had* Abiathar *offended to provoke* Solomon *to degrade him from the Prieſthood?*

A. How far the High-prieſt, *Abiathar*, was concerned in the Plot againſt *Solomon*, the ſacred Hiſtory does not particularly inform us; but ſuch was the Reverence paid to the ſacerdotal Character, that *Solomon* would have hardly dared to have depoſed ſuch an one from his Office, had not the Conſtitution of the Nation authorized him ſo to do. The Kings of the *Eaſt*, indeed, ſoon found out Ways to make themſelves abſolute; but it looks, as if, at the firſt Eſtabliſhment, the King was at the Head of the *Hebrew* Republick, and the High-prieſt his Subject, and, in all civil Affairs, ſubmitted to his Correction; inſomuch, that when any one abuſed the Power of his Office, to the Prejudice of the Commonweal, or endangering the King's Perſon, the King might juſtly deprive him of his Honours and Titles, of his Temporalities and Emoluments, and even of Life itſelf. And therefore when *Abiathar*, by his Conſpiracy, had merited all this, whatever was dependent on the Crown (as all the Revenues of this Place, as well as the Liberty of officiating in it, were dependent) *Solomon* might lawfully take from him; but the ſacerdotal Character, which he received from God, and to which he was anointed, this he could not alienate: And therefore we may obſerve, that after his Deprivation, and even when *Zadok* was in Poſſeſſion of his Place, he is nevertheleſs ſtill mentioned under the Stile and Title of the Prieſt.

The Truth is, there is a great deal of Difference between depriving a Man of the Dignity and of the Exerciſe of his Function in ſuch a determinate Place; between taking from him an Authority that was given him by God, and the Profits and Emoluments ariſing from it, which were originally the Gift of the Crown. The former of theſe *Solomon* could not do, and the latter it is probable he was the rather incited to do, out of Regard to the Prophecy of *Samuel*, wherein he foretold *Eli* (from whom *Abiathar* was deſcended) that he would tranſlate the Prieſthood from his to another Family, as he did in the Perſon of *Zadok*, who was of the Houſe of *Eleazar*, even as *Eli* was of that of *Ithamar*; ſo that, by this Means, the Prieſthood reverted to its antient Channel.

CHAP. III.

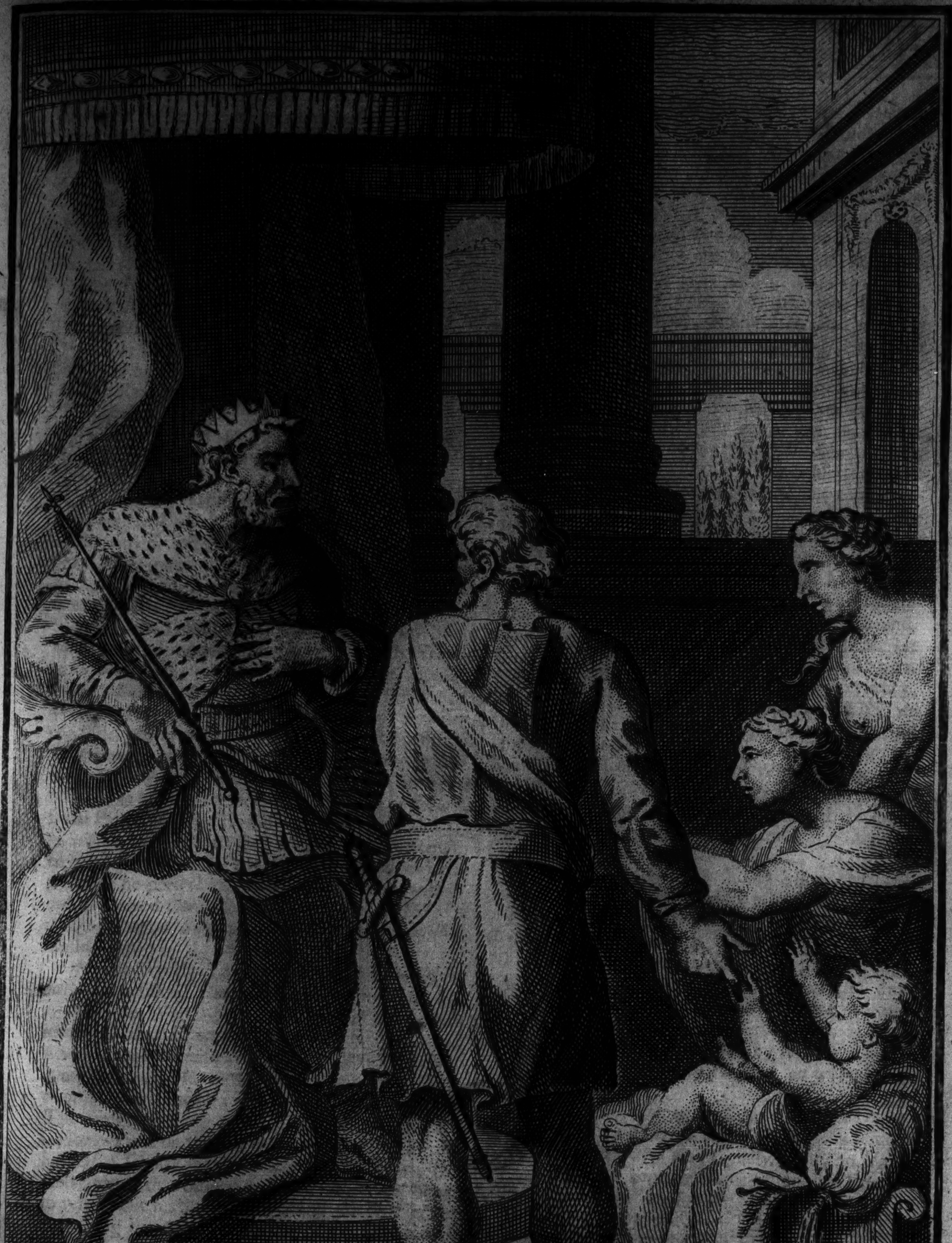
Solomon *marries* Pharaoh's *Daughter*; *he goes to* Gibeon *to ſacrifice*; *God appears to him there, and gives him a Choice*; *he prefers Wiſdom, obtains it, and alſo Riches and Honour. His Judgment between two Harlots.*

Q. SOLOMON *having cut off the Heads of the Faction at Home, bethought himſelf of ſtrengthening his Intereſt abroad; to which Purpoſe he enters into an Alliance with* Pharaoh *King of* Egypt; *but how happens it, that in the Hiſtory of ſome hundred Years paſt, we have no mention of any Intercourſe between* Egypt *and* Canaan?

A. It may ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange, that in all the Hiſtory of the *Jews*, from the Time of *Moſes* to this of *Solomon*, no Mention ſhould be made of the Kings of *Egypt*, as if they had no Concern in the Affairs of *Canaan*, but were wholly diverted ſome other Way: But for this their own Hiſtorians account, when they tell us, that during this Space of Time, the *Egyptian* Kings did nothing worth recording. All theſe Kings of *Egypt* were called *Pharaohs*; but *Pharaoh* was not a proper Name, but a Title of Dignity only, which imported the ſame as *Sultan* or *Emperor*: They had, by this, other Names; and *Clemens Alexandrinus*, in a Paſſage taken from *Alexander Polyhiſtor*, tells us, that the proper Name of this *Egyptian* King, whoſe Daughter *Solomon* married, was *Vaphres*.

Q. *Was not* Solomon *blameable in marrying* Pharaoh's *Daughter?*

A. Whatever Augmentation of Power he might promiſe himſelf from that Alliance, he certainly ran the Hazard of having his Religion corrupted into vile Idolatry, by this unlawful Mixture: But others have obſerved, that, as the ſacred Scriptures commend the Beginning of *Solomon*'s Reign in all other Reſpects except the *People's ſacrificing in high Places*, which might be the rather tolerated, *becauſe there was no Houſe built unto the Name of the Lord, in thoſe Days*; and, as they give him this Character, that *he loved the Lord, and walked in all the Statutes of* David *his Father*, he would never have done an Act ſo directly contrary to the Laws of God, as marrying an idolatrous Princeſs, had ſhe not been firſt proſelyted to the *Jewiſh* Faith. The Scripture indeed takes Notice of the Gods of the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, and *Zidonians*, for whom *Solomon*, in Compliance to his *ſtrange Wives*, built Places of Worſhip; but as there is no Mention made of any Gods of the *Egyptians*, it ſeems very likely, this Princeſs, when ſhe was eſpouſed to *Solomon*, quitted the Religion of her Anceſtors, to which theſe Words in the *Pſalm*, ſuppoſed to be written upon this Occaſion, *Hearken, O my Daughter, forget thine own People, and thy Father's Houſe, ſo ſhall the King have*



Bickham sculp

Solomons Judgment between y^e two Harlots

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have pleaſure in thy Beauty, for he is thy Lord, are thought by ſome to be no diſtant *Alluſion.* However this be, 'tis certain, that we find *Solomon* no where reproved in Scripture for this Match; nor can we think, that this Book of *Canticles* (which is ſuppoſed to be his *Epithalamium*) would have found a Place in the ſacred Canon, had the Spouſe, whom it all along celebrates, been at that Time an Idolatreſs; though there is Reaſon to believe, that ſhe, afterwards, relapſed into her antient Religion, and contributed, as much as any, to the King's Seduction, and the many great Diſorders, that were in the latter Part of his Reign.

Q. *What was the Nature and Extent of* Solomon*'s Requeſt, when he deſired God to give him* Wiſdom?

A. Some *Jewiſh* Annotators have obſerved, that, though *Solomon*, in his great Modeſty, might requeſt of God no more, than the Gift of Government, or (as he expreſſes it) an *underſtanding Heart to judge the People, and to diſcern between Good and Evil,* ver. 8. yet God, out of his abundant Grace, gave him a general Knowledge of all other Things, as the following Hiſtory informs us; and that, whereas other Men gather their Knowledge from Study, and Obſervation, *Solomon* had his by an immediate inſpiration from God, inſomuch, that *he who went to bed as ignorant, as other Men, awaked, in the Morning, like an Angel of God.* But though his Knowledge of Things was, in a great meaſure, infuſed, yet he did not therefore neglect his Study. *He gave his Heart to ſeek, and ſearch out, by Wiſdom, concerning all Things under the Sun*; in which Search (as himſelf teſtifies, *Eccleſ.* i. 13.) he took no ſmall Pains: So that his Gifts extraordinary did not ſuperſede the Uſe of other Means, in the Acquiſition of Knowledge, but by Application and Experience he perfected, what he had ſo advantageouſly received from the Hands of God.

Q. *In what Senſe does* Solomon *call himſelf a* Child, ver. 7?

A. The Words of *Solomon* himſelf are,——*I am but a little Child, I know not how to go out, or how to come in,* Verſe 7. From whence ſome have inferred, that he was not above twelve Years old, when he ſpake them; but this muſt be a groſs Miſcomputation. His Father, when he left the Kingdom to him, calls him *a wiſe Man,* Chap. ii. 6, 9. The foregoing Story ſhews, that he had already ſat ſome Time on the Throne; and therefore he calls himſelf a Child, not in reſpect of his Years, (for moſt agree, that he was twenty, when he began to reign) but his Skill in governing the People, and managing the Affairs of State. This was a modeſt Expreſſion in *Solomon*; but it is an Obſervation of *Ariſtotle*, in his Book of Politicks, that young Men are unfit for Government, becauſe their conſultive power is imperfect; which, though it may not be a general Rule, was delivered by *Solomon* himſelf, in his more mature Years, for a Maxim; for *woe to the Land* (ſays he, *Eccleſ.* x. 16.) *whoſe King is a Child.*

Q. *But as all this happened to* Solomon *in a Dream, why might he not judge it rather an Illuſion of the Fancy, than a Divine Viſion?*

A. Sleep, indeed, is like a State of Death to the Soul, wherein the Senſes are locked up, and the Underſtanding and Will deprived of the free Exerciſe of their Functions; and this is no Impediment to God in communicating himſelf to Minkind: For *God ſpeaketh once, yea, twice* (ſays the Author of the Book of *Job*) *in a Dream, in a Viſion of the Night, when deep Sleep falleth upon Men; in Slumberings upon the Bed, then he openeth the Ears of Men, and ſealeth their Inſtruction*; for God, no doubt, has Power, not only to awaken our intellectual Faculties, but to advance them above their ordinary Meaſure of Perception, even while the Body is aſleep.

A very eminent Father of the *Greek* Church, ſpeaking of the different Kinds of Dreams has juſtly obſerved, that the Organs of our Body, and our Brain, are not unlike the Strings of a muſical Inſtrument: While the Strings are ſcrewed up to a proper Pitch, they give an harmonious Sound, if touched by a ſkilful Hand, but as ſoon as they are relaxed, they give none at all. In like manner, while we are awake (*ſays he*) our Senſes, touched and directed by our Underſtanding, make an agreeable Concert; but when once we are aſleep, the Inſtrument has done ſounding, unleſs it be, that the Remembrance of what paſſed when we were awake, comes, and preſents itſelf to the Mind, and ſo forms a Dream, juſt as the Strings of an Inſtrument will, for ſome Time, continue their Sound, even after the Hand of the Artiſt has left them. It is no hard Matter to apply this to *Solomon*'s Dream. He had the Day before with great Fervency, deſired of God the Gift of Wiſdom. In the Night-time God appeared to him in a Dream, and bid him aſk whatever he would. *Solomon* having his Mind ſtill full of the Deſire of Wiſdom, aſked it, and obtained it: So that the Prayer, or Deſire, which he uttered in his Dream, was but the Conſequence of the Option, he had made the Day before when he was awake.

In a Word, though we ſhould allow that the Soul of Man, when the Body is aſleep, is in a State of Reſt and Inactivity; yet we cannot but think, that God can approach it many different Ways; can move and actuate it, juſt as he pleaſes; and, when he is minded to make a Diſcovery of any thing, can ſet ſuch a lively Repreſentation of it before the Eyes of the Man's Underſtanding, as ſhall make him not doubt of the Reality of his Viſion.

Q. *What were theſe* two Harlots, *on whom* Solomon *ſat in Judgment?*

A. Theſe two Women are ſaid in the Text to be Harlots, but the *Hebrew* Word (as we took notice in the Caſe of *Rahab*) may equally ſignify an *Hoſteſs*, or one, who kept an Houſe of publick Entertainment; and that it is ſo to be taken here, we have theſe Reaſons to preſume,——That, as all publick *Proſtitution* was ſeverely forbidden by the Law, *Deut.* xxiii. 17. Women of this infamous Character durſt not have preſented themſelves before ſo juſt and ſo wiſe a King; that Women of this infamous Character ſeldom do become Mothers of Children, and when they chance to have any, are not ſollicitous for their Preſervation, but rather rejoice, when they chance to have got rid of them. There is no Reaſon to ſuppoſe then, that theſe Women were common Harlots; and yet it is generally thought, that they were both unmarried Perſons, and guilty of Fornication, becauſe no Mention is made of their Huſbands, whoſe Office it was (if they had any) to conteſt the Matter for their Wives.

Q. *What is your Opinion of the Deciſion which* Solomon *made in this remakable Cauſe?*

A. Solomon knew at once, that the only Sign that would diſcover the true Mother, would be by her Affection, Compaſſion and Tenderneſs for her Child; and therefore, in order to diſtinguiſh between the two, his Buſineſs was to make trial of this: And if we ſuppoſe, that when he commanded the Child to be divided, he ſpake with a ſedate Countenance, and ſeeming Earneſtneſs, (as the true Mother's Petition to the King makes it apparent that he did) then we may ſuppoſe farther, not only the two Women, but all the People preſent, with Horror and Admiration, expecting the Execution of the Thing; which, when it ended in ſo juſt a Deciſion, quite contrary to what they looked for, raiſed Joy in every Breaſt, and gave a more advantageous Commendation to the Judge: And yet, *Abarbinel*, the *Jewiſh* Commentator, thinks, that all this was no Proof of *Solomon*'s extraordinary Wiſdom, nor could it beget that Fear or Reverence which the Text ſays it procured to his Perſon; and therefore he thinks that *Solomon* made a Diſcovery of the Truth, antecedent to this Experiment; that by obſerving the Countenance, the Manner, Speech, and all the Motions of the Women, he diſcerned the Secret of their Hearts, and penetrated to the Bottom of the Buſineſs; and that, his commanding the Child to be divided afterwards, was only to notify to the Company what he had diſcovered. However this be, it may not be improper, upon this Occaſion, to mention an Inſtance or two out of profane Hiſtory, of a ſingular Addreſs, (though much inferior to this) in diſcovering ſuch Secrets, as ſeemed to be paſt finding out.

To this Purpoſe, *Suetonius* (in his *Life of Claudian*) tells us, how that Emperor diſcovered a Woman to be the Mother of a young Man, whom ſhe would not own for her Son, by commanding her to be married to him; for the Horror of committing Inceſt obliged her to declare the Truth; and, in like Manner, *Diodorus Siculus* relates how *Ariopharnes*, King of the *Thracians*, being appointed to arbitrate between three Men, who all pretended to be Sons of the King of the *Cimmerians*, and claimed the Succeſſion, found out the true Son and Heir, by ordering them to ſhoot, each Man his Arrow, into the dead King's Body, which one of them refuſing todo, was deemed the true Claimant.

CHAP. IV.

Solomon's *chief Princes; his Officers for Proviſions; the Extent of his Kingdom; the daily Proviſion for his Court; the Stables for his Horſes; his Wiſdom.*

Q. I*N the fourth Verſe it is ſaid,* Zadoc and Abiathar *were the Prieſts: But why is* Abiathar *named, ſince he was depoſed?*

A. 1. Becauſe it is ordinary for Perſons to retain the Names and Titles of thoſe Places, which, in Reality they have loſt. 2. Becauſe though he was depoſed from the High-prieſthood, yet he was a Prieſt, and the Chief of one of the prieſtly Families; and as *Zadok* was jointly named with *Abiathar*, when *Abiathar* was alſo the High-prieſt, 2 *Sam.* viii. and xx. 25. So now *Zadok* and *Abiathar* are joined, although the High-prieſthood was reſted in *Zadok* alone. 3. Poſſibly *Abiathar*, tho' he was depoſed from the ſupreme Prieſthood, yet, upon his ſerious Repentance, and by Interceſſion of Friends, was reſtored to the Execution of his prieſtly Office, and put into that Place which *Zadok* enjoyed when *Abiathar* was High-prieſt. 4. Some ſay that Mention is here made of all *Solomon*'s chief Officers, both as now were, and ſuch as had been, and ſuch as were afterwards, as they gather from Ver. 11, 15. where two Perſons are named, who married two of *Solomon*'s Daughters, which could not be till many Years after this Time.

Q. *What was the Extent of* Solomon's *Dominions?*

A. It is ſaid, Ver. 21. *And* Solomon *reigned over all Kingdoms from the River unto the Land of the* Philiſtines, *and unto the Border of* Egypt, Ver. 21. for the Bounds of his Kingdom were, to the *Eaſt*, the *Euphrates*, which is here, and in other Places of Scripture, called the *River*, without any Addition; to the *Weſt*, the Country of the *Philiſtines*, which bordered upon the *Mediterranean* Sea; and to the *South*, *Egypt*. So that *Solomon* had tributary to him the Kingdoms of *Syria*, *Damaſcus*, *Moab* and *Ammon*, which lay between *Euphrates* and the *Mediterranean*; as indeed, without ſuch a Number of tributary Kingdoms, we cannot conceive how the Country of *Iſrael* could have furniſhed ſuch a conſtant Supply of Proviſions, and other Things neceſſary for the Support of this Prince's Grandeur.

Q. *In the 26th Verſe it is ſaid,* Solomon *had forty thouſand Stalls of Horſes; but in* 2 Chron. ix. 25. *it is but four thouſand: How do you reconcile this Difference?*

A. In the Account which we have of *Solomon*'s ſumptuous Manner of living, we read in the Book of *Kings*, that he had *forty thouſand Stalls of Horſes for his Chariots*, but in that of *Chronicles* it is ſaid, that he had no more than four; and yet in this ſome will acknowledge no Diſagreement at all. The Author of *Samuel*, ſay they, ſpeaks of the Horſes, the Author of the *Chronicles* of Stalls or Stables, which, ſuppoſing every one to contain ten Horſes, anſwers the Number exactly. It is obſervable, however, that the Hiſtory makes Mention of Chariot-Cities, *i. e.* Cities wherein *Solomon* kept Chariots and Horſemen, in ſeveral Parts of his Kingdom, for the Security of his Government, and the Suppreſſion of any Diſorder that might happen to ariſe; and therefore others have thought, that in the *Chronicles* the Author ſpeaks of thoſe Stalls which *Solomon* had at *Jeruſalem*, for his conſtant Life-guard, and were no more than four thouſand; but in *Samuel* of all thoſe Stalls which were diſperſed up and down, in the ſeveral Parts of his Kingdom, which might be forty thouſand: Becauſe, upon the Account of the Conqueſts, which his Father had made on the *Eaſt* Side of *Jordan*, it was neceſſary for *Solomon* to have a ſtronger Armament of this Kind, than other Kings before him had, in order to keep the People, that would otherwiſe be apt to rebel, in due Subjection.

But without any Prejudice to the Authority of the Scriptures, why may we not own, that an Error has poſſibly crept into the Text, through the Negligence of ſome Tranſcriber, who has inſerted *Arbahim*, i. e. *forty*, inſtead of *Arbah*, *four*, and ſo made this large Diſparity in the Number? Four thouſand Stalls (ſuppoſing each Stall for a ſingle Horſe) are moderate enough, but forty thouſand is incredible; and therefore (to proportion the Horſes to the Chariots, which were a thouſand and four hundred) we may ſuppoſe, with the learned Author, from whom we have borrowed this Conjecture

ture, that of theſe Chariots, ſome were drawn with two, ſome with three, and ſome with four Horſes. Now, if the Chariots were each drawn with a pair only, the Number of *Solomon*'s Chariot-horſes muſt be two thouſand eight hundred; if by two pair, then muſt it be five thouſand ſix hundred; but the Medium between theſe two Numbers is very near four thouſand; and therefore it ſeems moſt likely, that the Horſes, which the King kept for this Uſe only, might be much about this Number; too many for the Law to tolerate; but the King, perhaps, might have as little Regard to this Clauſe in the Law, as he had to the following one, which forbad him *to multiply Wives* and Concubines *to himſelf, or greatly to multiply Silver and Gold.*

Q. Solomon's Wiſdom, *it's ſaid, Ver.* 30. excelled the Wiſdom of all the Children of the Eaſt Country: *Pray what Countries in the Eaſt were the moſt famous for Wiſdom?*

A. There were three Nations in the *Eaſt* of *Canaan*, that were very famous for their Wiſdom and Erudition; the *Chaldeans* beyond the *Euphrates*, the *Perſians* beyond the *Tigris*; and the *Arabians* on the nearer Side of the *Euphrates*, a little towards the *South*: But whether the *Perſians* and *Chaldeans* were remarkable for their Learning in *Solomon*'s Days, is much doubted among Commentators. The Book of *Job* ſufficiently ſhews, that the *Arabians* (for of that Nation was *Job* and his Friends) were famous for their Learning in antient Times; and as to the *Chaldeans* and other oriental People, ſince the Sons of *Noah* took up their Habitation about *Babylon*, and the neighbouring Countries, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that where Mankind firſt began to ſettle themſelves into regular Societies, there Arts and Sciences firſt began to appear. The *Egyptians*, however, pretend to a Precedency in this and ſeveral other Accompliſhments. They ſay that the *Chaldeans* received the Principles of Philoſophy, at firſt, from a Colony that came from *Egypt*; as *Diodorus*, indeed, makes mention of ſuch a Colony, conducted by *Belus*: But the *Chaldeans*, on the other Hand maintain, that from them it was that the *Egyptians* received their firſt Inſtructions; and (according to ſome) that *Abraham* was the Perſon who communicated to the *Chaldeans* the Knowledge of Aſtronomy and other Sciences. However this be, *Solomon* received from God a perfect Knowledge of all that uſeful and ſolid Learning, for which the eaſtern People, and the *Egyptians* were juſtly famed; for (as it follows) he was a great moral Philoſopher, a great natural Philoſopher, and an excellent Poet.

Q. *What Account do you give of* Solomon's Proverbs *and* Songs?

A. Joſephus, who loved to magnify every Thing, that concerned *Solomon*, inſtead of *three thouſand Proverbs*, tells us, that *Solomon* compoſed *three thouſand Books of Proverbs*: The greater certainly is our Loſs, (if the Thing were credible) becauſe all the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*, that we have now, are compriſed in the Book, that goes under that Name, and in his *Eccleſiaſtes*: And yet ſome learned Criticks are of Opinion, that the nine firſt Chapters of the *Book of Proverbs*, which properly belong to him, is no more, than *ſix hundred and fifty*.

Q. *What were thoſe Songs of which, it's ſaid*, Solomon *compoſed* 1005?

A. Theſe, one would think, were Poems enough, for a Perſon, that had ſo much more other Buſineſs, as King *Solomon* had; but *Joſephus* who is never content, makes him the Author of *ſo many Volumes of poetical Compoſitions*; and the *Septuagint* indeed, as well as other Interpreters, make the Number of them to be no leſs, than *five thouſand Songs*, or *Odes*: But, of all this Number, we have none remaining, but *the Song of Songs*, as it is called, except the hundred and twenty ſixth *Pſalm*, which, in its *Hebrew* Title, is aſcribed to *Solomon*, may be aſcribed to be one of theſe. The *Pſalter of Solomon*, which contains eighteen *Pſalms*, (a Work, that was found in *Greek* in the Library of *Ausburg*, and has been tranſlated into *Latin* by *John Lewis de la Cerda*) is ſuppoſed by the learned to be none of *Solomon*'s, but of ſome *Helleniſtical Jew*, much converſant in reading the ſacred Authors, and who had compoſed them in Imitation of the *Pſalms* of *David*, whoſe Stile he cloſely purſued, and had inſerted ſeveral Paſſages of the Prophets, (eſpecially of *Iſaiah* and *Ezekiel*,) which he accommodated well to his Purpoſe. However this be, theſe eighteen *Pſalms* were not unknown to the Ancients; for they were formerly in the famous *Alexandrian* Manuſcript, which is with us, as may be ſeen by the Index, which is ſtill to be found at the End of the New Teſtament, though the *Pſalms* themſelves have either been torn out of the Book, or loſt by ſome Accident.

Q. *What became of* Solomon's *Books which he wrote concerning the Nature of Trees, Plants*, &c.

A. The ſeveral Books, which treated of the Nature and Virtue of Animals, as well as Plants, are ſuppoſed to have been loſt in the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; but *Euſebius* (as he is quoted by *Anaſtaſius*) informs us, that King *Hezekiah*, ſeeing the Abuſe, which his Subjects made of *Solomon*'s Works, by placing too much Confidence in the Remedies, which he preſcribed, and the natural Secrets, which he diſcovered, thought proper to ſuppreſs them all. Notwithſtanding this, ſince his Time, many Books, concerning the *Secrets of Magick, Medicine*, and *Inchantments*, have appeared under the Name of this Prince; and ſeveral Pieces have been quoted, ſuch as *the Inſtruction of* Solomon *to his Son* Rehoboam; Solomon's *Hygromancy to the ſame*; *The Teſtament of* Solomon; *The Book of the Throne of* Solomon; *The* Clavicula, *or Key of* Solomon; *The Ring of* Solomon; *The Contradiction of* Solomon, *&c.* which were moſt of them very wicked and pernicious Tracts, to which their Authors prefixed this great Name, to give them more Credit and Sanction. 'Tis ſomewhat ſtrange however, that *Joſephus* ſhould inform us, that *Solomon* compoſed Books of Inchantments, and ſeveral Manners of Exorciſms, or of driving away Devils, ſo that they could return no more; and that he ſhould further aſſure us, that himſelf had ſeen Experiments of it by one *Eleazar*, a *Jew*, who, in the Preſence of *Veſpaſian*, his Sons, and the Officers of his Army, cured ſeveral, that were poſſeſſed.

Q. *Do you think that foriegn Princes came in their own proper Perſons to hear the Wiſdom of* Solomon; *or that they ſent their Ambaſſadors for that Purpoſe?*

A. It is a Conceit of the *Jewiſh* Interpreters, that all the Kings of the neighbouring Countries went to hear the Wiſdom of *Solomon*, and that, upon their Return, their Subjects came to them, to hear what he had ſaid; but as we hear of none, but the Queen of *Sheba*, who came to viſit *Solomon*, we cannot but think, that, if any other *crowned Heads* had reſorted to him, the Hiſtory would have recorded them, as well as her. They denote no more, than that the Kings of all the neighbouring Nations ſent their Ambaſſadors, and People of every Land, that had heard of *Solomon*'s Fame, came to ſee him; for “ no Spectacle (ſays an ingenious Author) is more “ lovely and grateful, than a wiſe and good King; “ all Men flock to ſee him, and to partake of his “ pious and prudent Mind. They that ſee him “ are loth to leave him, and they that hear of him “ are as deſirous to ſee him, as Children are to find “ their unknown Father.”

CHAP. V.

Hiram *ſends Ambaſſadors to congratulate* Solomon, *who deſires of* Hiram *Timber to build the Temple.* Hiram *bleſſes God for* Solomon; *ſends him Proviſions and Trees. The Number of Workmen employed in building the Temple.*

Q. W*AS this the ſame* Hiram *who was* David's *Friend? And what does* Joſephus *ſay, was the Subject of this mutual Embaſſy between* Hiram *and* Solomon?

A. This *Hiram* was doubtleſs the Son of that other *Hiram*, who ſent *David* Timber and Artificers, wherewith to build his Palace: For if, (according to *Joſephus*) the Temple was built in the twelfth Year of *Hiram*'s Reign, and the fourth of *Solomon's*, this *Hiram* could not be the ſame with him who ſent *David* Men and Materials, becauſe that *Hiram* was upon the Throne, when *David* took *Jeruſalem*, which happened to be three and thirty Years before *Solomon* began his Reign. There are two Letters which paſſed between this *Hiram* and King *Solomon*, recorded by *Joſephus*; and for the Authenticneſs of which, he appeals both to the *Jewiſh* and *Tyrian* Records, that are to this Effect:

King *Solomon*, to King *Hiram*, greeting.

B*E it known unto thee, O King, that my Father* David *had it a long Time in his Mind and Purpoſe to erect a Temple to the Lord, but being perpetually in War, in his Days, and under a Neceſſity of clearing his Hands of his Enemies, and making them all his Tributaries, before he could attend this great and holy Work, he hath left it to me, in a Time of Peace, both to begin and finiſh it, according to the Direction as well as Prediction of the Almighty. Bleſſed be his great Name for the preſent Tranquillity of my Dominions! And, by his gracious Aſſiſtance, I ſhall now dedicate the beſt Improvements of this Liberty and Leiſure to his Honour and Worſhip. Wherefore I make it my Requeſt, that you will let ſome of your People go along with ſome Servants of mine, to Mount* Libanus, *to aſſiſt them in cutting down Materials towards this Building (for the* Sydonians *underſtand it much better than we do) and as for the Workmen's Reward or Wages, whatever you think Reaſonable ſhall be punctually paid them.*

King *Hiram* to King *Solomon.*

N*OTHING could have been more welcome to me, than to underſtand, that the Government of your bleſſed Father is, by God's Providence, devolved into the Hands of ſo excellent, ſo wiſe, and ſo virtuous a Succeſſor. His holy Name be praiſed for it! That which you write for ſhall be done with all Care and good Will: For I will give Orders to cut down and export ſuch Quantities of the faireſt Cedars and Cypreſs-trees, as you ſhall have Occaſion for. My People ſhall bring them to the Sea-ſide for you, and from thence ſhip them away to what Port you pleaſe, where they may lie ready for your own Men to tranſport them to* Jeruſalem. *It would be a great Obligation, after all this, to allow us ſuch a Proviſion of Corn in exchange, as may ſtand with your Convenience, for that is the Commodity we Iſlanders want moſt.*”

But notwithſtanding all his Appeal to the *Tyrian* Records, ſome have ſuſpected *Joſephus*, as to the Genuineneſs of theſe two Letters, eſpecially where they find him bringing in *Hiram*, ſpeaking of *Tyre*, as if it had been an Iſland; whereas, it is plain that the *Old Tyre*, which was then ſtanding, and muſt be the Place here ſpoken of, was ſituate on the Continent.

Q. *Were there no ſkilful Artiſts among the* Hebrews, *that he ſhould be forced to employ one of* Hiram's *ſending?*

A. In former Times, among the *Hebrews*, there had been very excellent Workmen, who knew how to cut and engrave precious Stones, to caſt and work upon Metals, *&c.* but this was before they came into the Land of *Canaan*, in the Time of *Moſes*, when *Bezaleel* and *Aholiah* were excellent in many different Arts, which were neceſſary for the Work of the Temple; but as the Scripture acquaints us, that they had their Skill by Inſpiration from God; it does not appear that they had any Succeſſors; and after the People had got Poſſeſſion of *Canaan*, they neglected all Manufactures, and applied themſelves wholly to Agriculture, and feeding of Cattle; ſo that, in the Time of *Solomon*, there were no profeſſed Artiſts, that could undertake the Work of the Temple, but in *Tyre* and *Sidon* there were many; for, both in his *Iliads*, and his *Odyſſey*, *Homer* gives the People of theſe two Places this Character, whom, upon every Turn he calls, *excellent Artiſts in ſeveral Kinds of Works.*

CHAP. VI.

The Foundation of the Temple laid, and when; its Dimenſions and Form, Windows, Chambers, and Materials; God's Promiſe concerning it; its Cieling and Ornaments; the Oracle; Cherubims and other Embelliſhment; its Doors; Inner-Court; the Time in building it.

Q. H*OW happened it that* Solomon *did not begin building the Temple ſooner than the fourth Year of his Reign, ſince his Father had left him a Plan, and all Things neceſſary for the Undertaking?*

A. Abarbinel's Anſwer is, —— That *Solomon* would not make uſe of what his Father had prepared, but was reſolved to build this Temple all at his own proper Coſt and Charge: He therefore put into the Treaſure of the Lord's Houſe, all that *Daivd* had dedicated to the Work; and to gather together as much Gold and Silver as was neceſſary to defray ſo vaſt an Expence, four Years can be accounted no unreaſonable Time. Nay, even ſuppoſing that he made uſe of the Treaſure which his Father had amaſſed, yet if the Materials, that his

Father had provided, lay at a conſiderable Diſtance, and were left rude and unfaſhionable, it would coſt all this Time to form them into the exact Symmetry wherein the Scripture repreſents them) before they were brought together, eſpecially conſidering that the very Stones which made the Foundation, were, very probably, vaſt Blocks of Marble or Porphiry, Chap. v. 17. and all poliſhed in the moſt exquiſite Manner.

Q. Solomon, *it is ſaid, was ſeven Years in building the Temple: But was not that a great while, conſidering the Smallneſs of the Edifice?*

A. The Temple, itſelf, indeed, was but a ſmall Edifice, but the many Courts and Offices that were about it, made the whole a vaſt Pile, and the Exquiſiteneſs of the Art, and Fewneſs of the Artiſts that could be employ'd about it, made a longer Time requiſite. It muſt be owned, therefore, that conſidering all Things, *Solomon* made an extraordinary Diſpatch: For, if the building of *Diana*'s Temple at *Epheſus*, employ'd all *Aſia* for the Space of two hundred Years, and no leſs than three hundred and ſixty thouſand Men, for twenty Years together were taken up in erecting one Pyramid, (as *Pliny* affirms) no reaſonable Man can wonder that this Temple was ſeven Years and an half in Building.

Q. *It is ſaid*, Ver. 7. *that there* was neither Hammer, nor Ax, nor any Tool of Iron heard in the Houſe, *while it was building: How could this be?*

A. The *Jewiſh* Doctors have entertained a very odd Conceit, upon the Occaſion of this Paſſage in the ſacred Hiſtory, wherein the Temple is ſaid to be built without Noiſe. They tell us, that the Demon *Aſmodeus* drove *Solomon* once from his Throne, and reigned in his Place, while that Prince was forced to travel over the ſeveral Kingdoms and Provinces of the World; but that, at his Return to *Jeruſalem*, he defeated *Aſmodeus*, and having chained him ſo, that he could do no Hurt, he compelled him to teach him the Art of cutting Stones for the Temple, without making any Noiſe; which was done, as they ſay, not with any Tool or Inſtrument, but by the Help of a Worm called *Samir*, which cuts and polliſhes Stones with a marvellous Facility. But the Foundation of all this Fiction (as *Bochart* has obſerved) is laid in ſomebody's miſtaking the Senſe of the Word *Samir*, which ſignifies a very hard Stone, called *Smiris*, that is of uſe to cut and poliſh other Stones, and which *Solomon*'s workmen might poſſibly have Recourſe to upon this Occaſion. But the true Reaſon why no Noiſe was heard in the building of the Temple was, that the ſtones and all other Materials were hewn, and ſquared, and fitted at a Diſtance; ſo that when they were brought to the Place where the Temple was to ſtand, there was nothing to do, but to join them together. And this might be done, not only for the Eaſe and Convenience of the Carriage, but for the Magnificence of the Work, and the Commendation of the Workmen's Skill and Ingenuity.

Q. *The Temple of* Solomon *was, no doubt, a moſt magnificent Structure: Pray deſcribe ſome Particu- wherein its chiefeſt Glory and Grandeur conſiſted?*

A. Of all the Buildings, that ancient *Jeruſalem* had to boaſt of, the *Temple*, which *David* deſigned, and *Solomon* perfected, was the moſt magnificent: We are not, however, to imagine, that this Temple was built like one of our Churches; for it did not conſiſt of one ſingle Edifice, but of ſeveral Courts, and Buildings, which took up a great deal of Ground. The Place whereon it was erected, was the Top of Mount *Moriah*, and the Building, all together, made an exact Square of eight hundred Cubits, or one thouſand four hundred and ſixty Feet long on each Side, exactly fronting the *Eaſt*, *Weſt*, *North*, and *South*.

To make this Building more firm and ſecure, it was found neceſſary to begin the Foundation at the bottom of the Mount; ſo that the Sides were three hundred and thirty three Cubits, or about ſix hundred and eight Feet high, before they were raiſed to the Level of the Temple; and this afforded a moſt noble Proſpect towards the chief Part of the City, which lay *Weſtward*. It is impoſſible to compute the Labour of laying this Foundation, becauſe it is impoſſible to tell how much of the Mountain muſt, in ſome Places, be removed, and in others filled up, to an exact Square for ſo great a Height; but when we conſider, that there were one hundred and eighty thouſand Workmen for ſeven Years and an half, conſtantly employed, it would make one wonder, what Buſineſs they could find for ſo many Hands to do; and yet, when we reflect on the Vaſtneſs of this Fabrick, it would make us no leſs wonder, how, in ſo ſhort a Time, it could poſſibly be compleated. "For the Foundation (as *Joſephus* tells us) was laid prodigiouſly deep, and the Stones were not only of the largeſt Size, but hard and firm enough to endure all Weathers, and Proof againſt the Worm. Beſides this, they were ſo mortifed into one another, and ſo wedged into the Rock, that the Strength and Curioſity of the Baſis was not leſs admirable, than the intended Superſtructure, and the one was every way anſwerable to the other."

The Ground-plot, upon which the Temple was built, was a Square of ſix hundred Cubits every Way. It was encompaſſed with a Wall of ſix Cubits high, and the ſame in Breadth, and contained ſeveral Buildings, for different Uſes, ſurrounded with Cloyſters ſupported by Marble Pillars. Within this Space was the *Court of the Gentiles* fifty Cubits wide, and adorned, in like Manner, with Cloyſters and Pillars. To ſeparate this Court from the *Court of the Iſraelites*, there was a Wall of five hundred Cubits ſquare. The Court of the *Iſraelites* was an hundred Cubits. It was paved with Marble of different Colours, and had four Gates, to every Quarter one, and each riſing with an Aſcent of ſeven Steps. To ſeparate this Court, from the *Court of the Prieſts*, there was a Wall of two hundred Cubits ſquare; and the Prieſts Court was an hundred Cubits, encompaſſed with Cloyſters, and Apartments, where the Prieſts, that attended the Service of the Temple were uſed to live. This Court had but three Gates, to the *Eaſt*, to the *North*, and to the *South*, and were approached by an Aſcent of eight Steps. Theſe Courts were all open, and without any Covering, but in caſe of Rain, or other bad Weather, the People could retire under the Cloyſters, that were ſupported with Rows of Pillars, and went round every Court. In the *Iſraelites* Courts, over againſt the Gate of the Prieſts Court, was erected a Throne for the King (which was a magnificent Alcove) where he ſeated himſelf when he came to the Temple. In the Prieſts Court was the Altar of Burnt-offerings, a great deal larger than that of the Tabernacle, having ten brazen Lavers, whereas the Tabernacle's had but one, and a *Sea of Braſs* (which the Tabernacle had not) ſupported by twelve Oxen.

On the *Weſt* Side of the Altar of Burnt-offerings, there was an Aſcent of Steps to what we may properly call the Temple; and this conſiſted of three Parts, the *Porch*, the *Sanctuary*, and the *Holy of Holies*. The Porch was about twelve Cubits long, and twenty broad, wherein ſtood the two famous Pillars *Jachim* and *Boaz*, whoſe Names import, that *God alone was the Support of the Temple*, and its Gate was fourteen Cubits wide. The Sanctuary, or Nave of the Temple, was forty Cubits long, and twenty broad, wherein were the *Altar of Incenſe*, and the *Table of Shewbread*, but becauſe the Temple was larger, and wanted more Light, than the Tabernacle, inſtead of *one*, it had *ten golden Candleſticks*. The Holy of Holies was a Square of twenty Cubits, wherein was placed the *Ark of the Covenant*, containing the *two Tables of Stone*, wherein God had engraven his ten Commandments, but inſtead of two Cherubims (as were in the Tabernacle) in the Temple there were four.

Round about the Temple, and againſt the Walls thereof (as *Joſephus* tells us) were built thirty Cells, or little Houſes, which ſerved in the way of ſo many Buttreſſes, and were, at the ſame Time, no ſmall Ornament to it; for there were Stories of theſe Cells one above another, whereof, the ſecond was narrower than the firſt, and the third than the ſecond; ſo that their Roofs, and Baluſtrades, being within each other, made three different Terraſſes, as it were, upon which one might walk round the Temple. Within, theſe little Houſes, were ceiled with Cedar, their Walls were wainſcotted with the ſame, and embelliſhed with Carving, and Fretwork, and Works of Gold, that, with their dazling Splendor, made every thing about them look glorious.

Upon the whole then, we may obſerve, that the Glory of this Temple did not conſiſt in the Bulk or Largeneſs of it, (for in itſelf it was but a ſmall Pile of Building, no more than an hundred and fifty Feet in Length, and an hundred and five in Breadth, taking the whole of it together, from out to out, and is exceeded by many of our Pariſh-Churches) but its chief Grandeur and Excellency lay in its Out-buildings and Ornaments, in its Workmanſhip, which was every where very curious, and its Overlayings, which were vaſt and prodigious; for the Overlaying of the Holy of Holies only (which was a Room but thirty Feet ſquare, and twenty high, amounted to ſix hundred Talents of Gold, which comes to four Million three hundred and twenty Thouſand Pounds of our ſterling Money.

To conclude this Deſcription then, in the Words of the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian, *The Whole Frame, in fine*, ſays he, *was raiſed upon Stones, poliſhed to the higheſt Degree of Perfection, and ſo artificially put together, that there was no Joint to be diſcerned, no Sign of any working Tools being upon them, but the whole looked liker the Work of Providence, and Nature, than the Product of Art, and human Invention. And as for the Inſide, whatever Carving, Guilding, Embroidery, rich Silks, and fine Linnen could do, of theſe there was the greateſt Profuſion. The very Floor of the Temple was overlaid with beaten Gold; the Doors were large, and proportioned to the Height of the Walls, twenty Cubits broad, and ſtill Gold upon Gold.* "In a Word it "was Gold all over, and nothing was wanting, "either within or without, that might contribute "to the Glory, and Magnificence of the Work."

CHAP. VII.

The building of Solomon's *Houſe; the Houſe of Lebanon; the Porch of Pillars, and of Judgment. The Houſe of* Pharaoh's *Daughter.* Hiram's *Work of the two Pillars of Braſs. The Molten Sea. Ten Baſes of Braſs. Brazen Lavers. All the Veſſels of Braſs and Gold. The dedicated Things brought into the Temple.*

Q. WHAT *Houſe was that which is called*, ver. 2. the Houſe of the Foreſt of *Lebanon?*

A. It was ſo called, either, 1. Becauſe it was built in the Mountain or Foreſt of *Lebanon* for *Solomon's* Recreation in Summer-time. But it is generally and more probably held, that it was in or near *Jeruſalem*, both becauſe there was *the Throne of Judgment*, ver. 7. which was fitteſt to be in the Place of his conſtant and uſual Reſidence; and becauſe there was the chief Magazine of Arms, *Iſa.* xxii. 8. and *Solomon's* golden Shields were put there, 1 *Kings* x. 17. and xiv. 25, 26, 28. and which no wiſe Prince would do in a Place ſo remote from his royal City and in the utmoſt Borders of his Kingdom as this was. Or, rather, 2. From ſome Reſemblance it might have with that Place from the pleaſant Shades and Groves that were about it; nothing being more frequent both in ſacred and other Writers, than to tranſfer the Names of *Carmel*, or *Tempe*, or the like, to other Places of the ſame Nature and Quality with them.

Q. *The Molten Sea, it is ſaid*, Ver. 26. *contained* 2000 Baths: *How much was that in* Engliſh *Meaſure?*

A. It amounted to 500 Barrels, each containing about eight Gallions; the *Bath* being a Meaſure of the ſame Bigneſs with an Ephah, *Ezek* xlv. 11.

Q. *But this Sea is ſaid*, 2 Chron. iv. 5. *to contain 3000 Baths.*

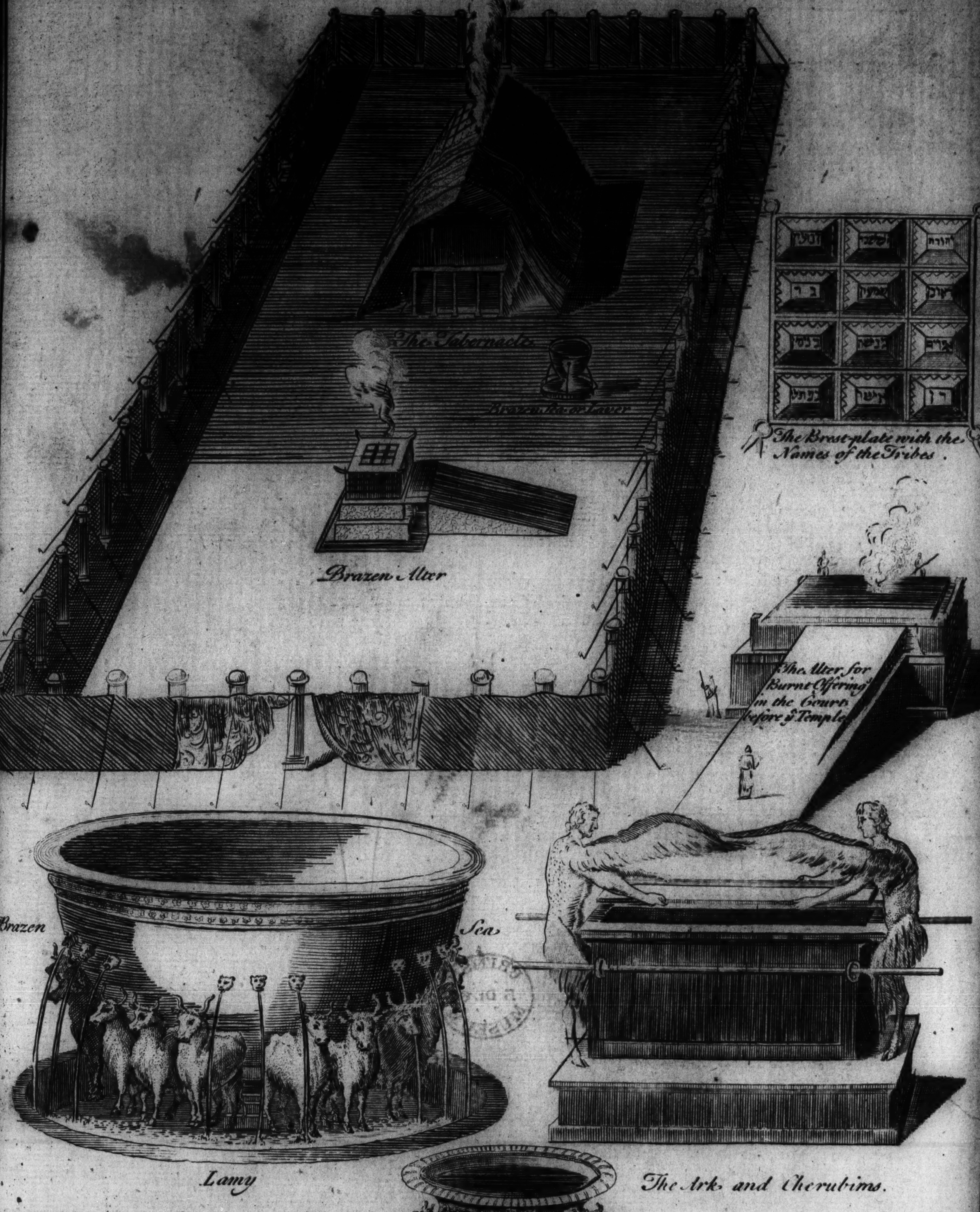
A. There were either two ſeveral Sorts of Baths, as of Cubits, the one common, the other ſacred, and the ſacred held as much more as the common; or rather, he here ſpeaks of what it did actually contain, namely, 2000 Baths, which was ſufficient for Uſe, and 2 *Chron.* iv. 5. he ſpeaks of what it could contain, if filled to the Brim, as it is implied in the *Hebrew* Words, which differ from theſe, and properly ſound thus, *ſtrengthening itſelf* (*to wit*, to receive and hold as much as it could, or being filled to its utmoſt Capacity) *it contained*, or *could contain 3000 Baths.*

CHAP. VIII.

The Feaſt of the Dedication of the Temple; the Ark and holy Inſtruments brought into it. The Lord gives a Token of his Preſence. Solomon's *Bleſſing and Thankſgiving; his Prayer and Sacrifice of Peace-Offering.*

Q. WE *are told*, Ver. 9. *that* in this Ark there was nothing, ſave the two Tables of Stone, which *Moſes* put there at *Horeb*; *and yet the Author of the* Hebrews, *Chap.* ix. 4. *affirms*, that in this

I. KINGS Chap. VII.



The Tabernacle and other Ornaments of the Temple

The Tabernacle
Brazen Sea or Laver
Brazen Alter
The Brest-plate with the Names of the Tribes
The Alter for Burnt Offerings in the Courts before ye Temple
Brazen Sea
Lamy
The Ark and Cherubims
Brazen Laver
Calmet
J. Basire Sculp.

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I. KINGS Chap. VIII

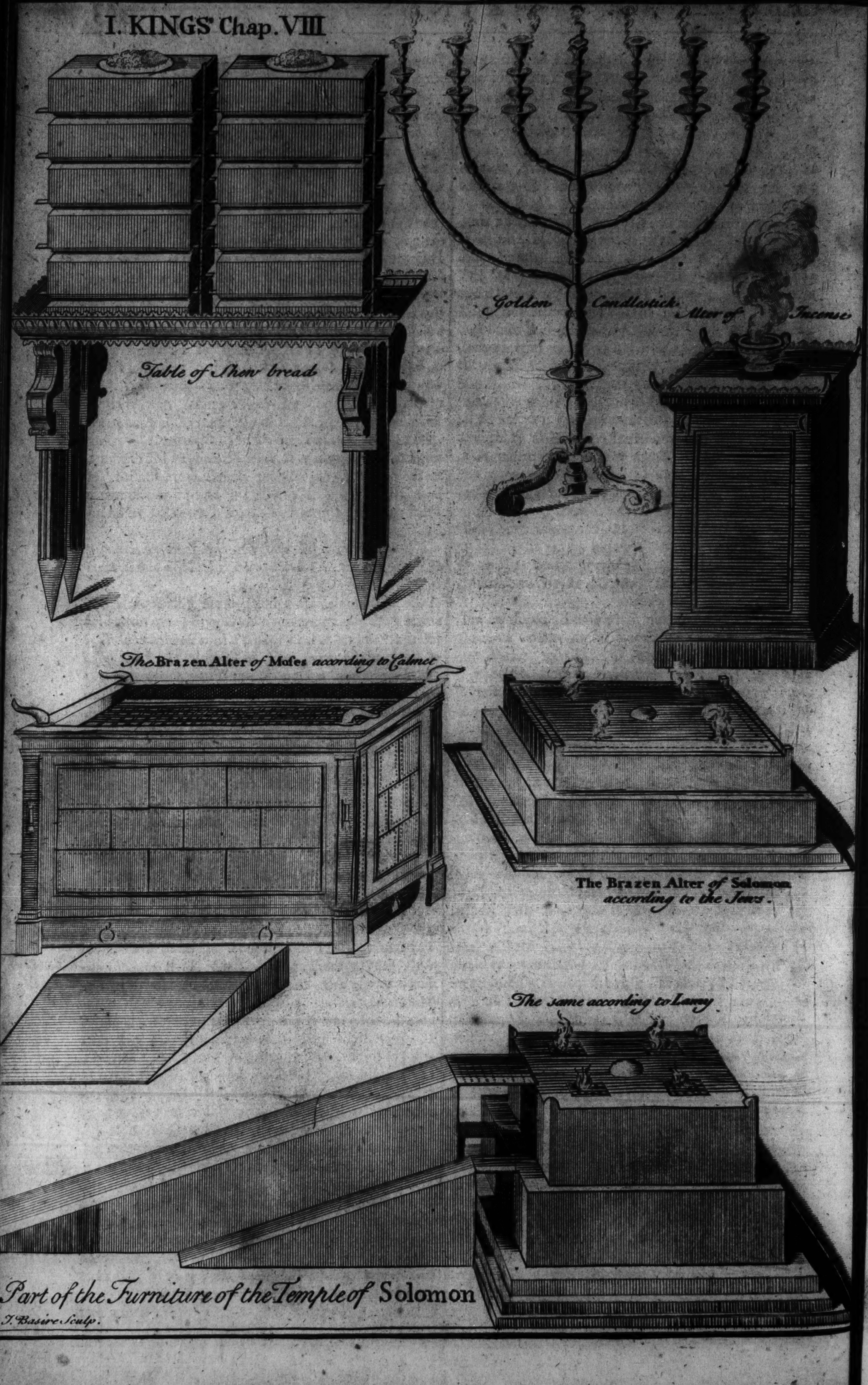


Table of Shew bread
Golden Candlestick
Alter of Incense
The Brazen Alter of Moſes according to Calmet
The Brazen Alter of Solomon according to the Jews.
The same according to Lamy

Part of the Furniture of the Temple of Solomon

J. Basire Sculp.

this Ark was the golden Pot that had Manna, and *Aaron*'s Rod that budded, and the Tables of the Covenant: *How do you reconcile this Difference?*

A. The ſacred Hiſtory tells us, that *in this Ark there was nothing, ſave the two Tables of Stone which* Moſes *put there at* Horeb, 1 Kings viii. 9. and yet the Author to the *Hebrews* affirms, *that in this Ark was the golden Pot that had Manna, and* Aaron's *Rod that budded, as well as the Tables of the Covenant*, Heb. ix. 4. Now, to reconcile this, ſome imagine, that before the Ark had any fixed and ſettled Place (which is the Time the Apoſtle refers to) all theſe Things were included in it, tho' it was chiefly intended for nothing but the Tables of the Covenant; but that when it was placed in the Temple, nothing was left in it but theſe two Tables; all the other Things were depoſited in the Treaſury of the Temple, where the Book of the Law (as we read, 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 14.) was found in the Days of King *Joſias*: But others pretend, that in the Time of the Apoſtle, towards the End of the *Jewiſh* Commonwealth, *Aaron*'s Rod, and the Pot of Manna were really kept in the Ark, though, in the Days of *Solomon*, they were not. But this Anſwer would be more ſolid and ſatisfactory, if we knew for certain, that in the Times of the Apoſtle the Ark of the Covenant was really in the Sanctuary of the Temple which *Herod* built; whereas *Joſephus* tells us expreſly, that when the *Romans* deſtroy'd the Temple, there was nothing found in the *Holy of Holies*.

Q. *Was the Tabernacle, which* Solomon *brought into the Temple, that which* Moſes *made, and was then at* Gibeon, 2 Chron. i. 3. *or that which was made by* David, *and was then at* Jeraſalem?

A. Some have imagined, that both theſe Tabernacles were, at this Time, carried into the Temple, and laid up there, that all Manner of Superſtition and Idolary might thereby be avoided, and that no Worſhip might be performed any where, but only at the Houſe, which was dedicated to God's Service: But it is obſerved by others, that the Convenience, which *David* made for the Reception of the Ark, was never called the *Tabernacle of the Covenant*; it was no more than a plain Tent, ſet up in ſome large Room of the royal Palace, until a more proper Receptacle could be provided for it: But the Tabernacle that was at *Gibeon* was the ſame that ſojourned ſo long in the Wilderneſs. The Tent was the ſame, the Curtains were the ſame, and the Altar the ſame that was made by *Moſes*; or at leaſt, if there was any Alteration (as Things of this Nature could hardly ſubſiſt ſo very long, without ſome Repair) the Reparation was always made according to the original Model, and with as little Deviation as poſſible. It is not to be doubted then, but that the *Moſaick* Tabernacle is here intended, which for the Prevention of Schiſm, and to make the Temple the Center of Devotion, was now taken down, and repoſited in the Treaſury or Store-houſe, where it continued until the Time that *Jeruſalem* was taken by the *Chaldeans*, when *Jeremiah*, as *Joſephus* informs us, was admoniſhed by God, to take it, and the Ark, and the Altar of Incenſe, and hide them in ſome ſecret Places, (from whence, it is doubted, whether they have yet been removed) for fear of Profanation.

Q. *Were the prodigious Number of Sacrifices, which* Solomon *offered at this Dedication of the Temple, offer'd in one Day, and upon the ſame Altar?*

A The Number of Sacrifices, which, upon this Occaſion, are ſaid to be offered, was *two and twenty thouſand Oxen, and an hundred and twenty thouſand Sheep*, 1 Kings viii. 63. but we muſt not ſuppoſe that theſe were offered all on one Day, much leſs on one Altar. The Continuance of this Meeting was for fourteen Days, ſeven in the Feaſt of the Tabernacles, and ſeven in that of the Dedication; and becauſe the Brazen Altar, before the Door of the Temple, was not ſufficient to receive all theſe Sacrifices, *Solomon*, by a ſpecial Licence from God, ordered other Altars to be erected in the Court of the Prieſts, and perhaps in other Places, which were to ſerve only during this preſent Solemnity, when ſuch a vaſt Number of Sacrifices were to be offered; for, at other Times, no other Altar was allowed but this Brazen one, which *Moſes* had made. It is no bad Obſervation, however, of *Joſephus*, that during the Oblation of ſo many Sacrifices, the *Levites* took Care to perfume the Air with the Fragrancy of Incenſe and ſweet Odours, to ſuch a Degree, that the People were ſenſible of it at a Diſtance; otherwiſe the Burning of ſo many Beaſts at one Time, muſt have occaſioned an offenſive Smell.

Q. *When the Ark and Tabernacle were brought into the Temple, a* Cloud filled it; *but to what Purpoſe?*

A. When *Moſes* had finiſhed the Tabernacle, according to the Pattern which God ſhewed him, and ſet it all up, it is ſaid that *a Cloud covered the Tent of the Congregation, and the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle, ſo that* Moſes *was not able to enter into the Tent of the Congregation, becauſe the Cloud abode thereon, and the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle*, Exod. xl. 34, 35. And therefore, when the Temple was finiſhed, and the Ark brought into the Sanctuary, God gave the like Indication of his Preſence and Reſidence there. Hereby he teſtified his Acceptance of the Building, and furniſhing of the Temple, as a Service done to his Name; and hereby he declared, that as the Glory of the Ark (that ſacred Symbol of his Preſence) had been long eclipſed by its frequent Removes, and mean Habitations; ſo now his Pleaſure was, that it ſhould be looked upon with the ſame Eſteem and Veneration, as when *Moſes* conducted it into the Tabernacle: For this Cloud, we muſt know, was not a heavy, thick, opaque Body, ſuch as is ingendered in the Air, and ariſes from Vapours and Exhalations, but a Cloud, that was dark and luminous at the ſame Time, whoſe Darkneſs was awful and majeſtick, and whoſe internal Part was bright and refulgent, darting its Rays, upon Occaſion, and exhibiting its Light through its Obſcurity; ſo that, according to its different *Phaſis* or Poſition, it became to the *Iſraelites* a Pillar of a Cloud by Day, to ſcreen them from the Heat, and at Night a Pillar of Fire, to give them Light, *Exod.* xiii. 21. Whatever it was that conſtituted this ſtrange Appearance, 'tis certain this Mixture of Light and Darkneſs was looked upon as a Symbol of the divine Preſence; for ſo the Scripture has informed us, that *He*, who dwelleth in Light, that is inacceſſible, *made Darkneſs his ſecret Place, his Pavilion round about him, with dark Water and thick Clouds to cover him*, Pſalm xviii. 11.

Q. Solomon, *at this wonderful Manifeſtation of the divine Preſence, falls proſtrate on the Ground; and then raiſing himſelf up, makes a ſolemn Prayer and Addreſs to God: What Words does* Joſephus *put into his Mouth on this Occaſion?*

A. To this Effect: ——*O Lord, thou that inhabiteſt Eternity, and haſt raiſed out of nothing the mighty Fabrick of this Univerſe, the Heavens, the Air, the Earth and the Sea; thou that filleſt the whole, and every Thing that is in it, and art thyſelf unbounded and incomprehenſible, look down graciouſly upon thy Servants, that have preſumed to erect a Temple here to the Honour of thy great Name. Lord, hear our Prayers, and receive our Sacrifices: Thou art every where, vouchſafe alſo to be with us: Thou that ſeeſt and heareſt all Things, look down from thy Throne in Heaven, and give ear to our Supplications in this Place. Thou that never faileſt to aſſiſt thoſe that call upon thee Day and Night, and love and ſerve thee as they ought to do, have Mercy upon us.* There is another Prayer, in the ſame Hiſtorian, addreſſed to God on this ſame Occaſion, wherein *Solomon* bleſſes him for the Exaltation of his Family, and implores the Continuance of his Goodneſs and peculiar Preſence in the Temple, well worth the Reader's Peruſal, though too long to be inſerted here.

Q. *Why does* Solomon, *in his Supplication, beſeech God to have a more than ordinary Regard to ſuch Prayers as were put up in the Temple?*

A. It is the ſame Thing, no doubt, to God, wherever we pray, ſo long as we pray with a pious Mind, and a devout Heart, and make the Subject of our Prayers ſuch good Things as he has permitted us to aſk; but it was not conſiſtent with the Preſervation of the *Jewiſh* State and Religion, that he ſhould be publickly worſhipped in every Place: For, ſince the *Jews* were on every Side ſurrounded with Idolaters, led away with divers Superſtitions, but ignorant all of the true God, it was highly neceſſary, that in all divine Matters, there ſhould be a ſtrict Union between them all, both in Heart and Voice, and conſequently, that they ſhould all meet together in one Place, to worſhip God, leaſt they ſhould run into Parties, and fall into Idolatry, as it happened when the Kingdom became divided into two. And therefore, though *Solomon* knew very well, that in every Place God was ready to hear the Prayers of every devout Supplicant, yet, for the Preſervation of Peace and Unity, he was minded to give the People a Notion, that God would be found more exorable to the Prayers which were offered in the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, and thereby excite them to a Frequentation of that, rather than any any other Place.

CHAP. IX.

God's ſecond Appearance to Solomon. *Mutual Preſents between* Solomon *and* Hiram. Solomon *builds ſtrong Holds.* Pharaoh's *Daughter removes to her Houſe.* Solomon's *yearly Sacrifices; his Navy fetches Gold from* Ophir.

Q. HOW *long after the firſt, was this ſecond Appearance of God to* Solomon?

A. It ſeems very probable, that this ſecond Appearance was the Night following the firſt; but ſome are of Opinion, that it did not happen till two and twenty Years after God's firſt Appearance, and after that *Solomon* had accompliſhed all his Buildings, to which the Connection of the Diſcourſe ſeems to give ſome Countenance; *and it came to paſs, when* Solomon *had finiſhed the Building of the Houſe of the Lord, and the King's Houſe, and all that he was pleaſed to do, that the Lord appeared to him a ſecond Time,* Verſe 1, 2. It ſeems a little ſtrange, however, that God ſhould delay anſwering this Prince's Prayer for thirteen Years together, and then, when he appeared to him, tell him, *I have heard thy Prayer, and the Supplication that thou haſt made before, and I have hallowed this Houſe, which thou haſt built,* Ver. 3. And therefore to ſolve this Difficulty, it's reaſonable to think, that the Diviſion of this ninth Chapter is wrong, that the firſt Verſe of it ſhould be annexed to the Concluſion of the preceeding Chapter, and ſo terminate the Account of what *Solomon* had done; and that the next Chapter ſhould begin with the ſecond Verſe, where the Hiſtorian enters upon a freſh Subject, *viz.* the Anſwer that God returned to *Solomon*'s Prayer, which he continues to the tenth Verſe, and preſents us with it all at once, that he might not break the Thread of his Narration.

Q. *Do any of the* Jewiſh *Writers comment upon the Anſwer which God made* Solomon *in his Dream.*

A. *Joſephus* thus writes upon it: The Voice told him farther, ſays he, "That in Caſe of ſuch an Apoſtaſy (as he had before-mentioned) his new-erected Fabrick ſhould, by divine Permiſſion, come to be ſack'd and burnt by the Hands of Barbarians, and *Jeruſalem* itſelf laid in Aſhes by a mercileſs Enemy; inſomuch, that People ſhould ſtand amazed at the very Report of ſo incredible a Miſery and Diſtreſs, and be wondering one at another, how it could come to paſs, that a Nation, which was but Yeſterday the Envy of Mankind for Riches, external Glory and Renown, ſhould now, all on a ſudden, be ſunk and loſt to the laſt Degree of Wretchedneſs and Contempt, and reduced to this deſpicable State too, by the ſame Hand that raiſed them. To which Queſtions their own guilty Conſciences ſhall make this Anſwer: *We have forſaken our God; we have abandon'd the Religion of our Forefathers, and of our Country, and all this is juſtly befallen us for our Sins.*"

Q. Solomon *having finiſhed the Temple, built a magnificent Palace for himſelf; which pray deſcribe.*

A. The Deſcription of this Palace, which we may gather from *Joſephus*, *Lamy*, and others, that have treated of *Solomon*'s Buildings, is in this Manner related: "Upon ſeveral Rows of Pillars, there was erected a ſpacious Pile of Building, in the Nature of a common Hall for the hearing of Cauſes. It was an hundred Cubits in Length, fifty in Breath, and in Depth thirty, ſupported by fifteen ſquare Columns, covered with *Corinthian* Work in Cedar, and fortified with double Doors, curiouſly wrought, that ſerved both for the Security and Ornament of the Place. In the Middle of this Hall was another Edifice of thirty Cubits ſquare, and underſet with ſtrong Pillars, wherein was placed a Throne of State, on which the King himſelf uſed to ſit perſonally in Judgment. On the Right-Hand of this Court of Juſtice ſtood the King's own Palace, and on the Left that which he built for *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, both fitted up with Cedar, and built with huge Stones of ten Cubits ſquare, which were partly plain, and partly overlaid with the “moſt precious Marble. The Rooms were hung with rich Hangings, and beautified with Images, and Sculptures of all Kinds, ſo exquiſitely finiſhed, that they ſeemed to be alive, and in Motion. It would be an endleſs Work (ſays *Joſephus*) to give a particular Survey of this mighty Maſs of Building: So many Courts and other Contrivances, ſuch a Variety of Chambers and Offices, great and little, long and large Galleries, vaſt Rooms of State, and others for Feaſting and Entertainment, ſet out at richly as could be, with coſtly Furniture and Guildings; beſides that, all the Services for the King's Table were of pure Gold. In a Word, the Whole Houſe was, in manner, made up from Top to Bottom, of white Marble, Cedar, Gold and Silver, with precious Stones here and there intermingled upon the Walls, and Ceilings, after the Manner of the adorning of the Temple.”

Q. *How could* Solomon, *conſiſtent with that Law,* Lev. xxv. 23. *which forbids that the Land ſhould be ſold or alienated, pretend to give* Hiram twenty Cities in the Land of *Galilee?*

A. To this ſome have replied, that *Solomon* did not give *Hiram* a Property, and perpetual Right to thoſe Cities, but only aſſigned him the Poſſeſſion of them for a Time, until the Debt, which he had contracted for the ſeveral Supplies he had from him, while he was building the Temple, was ſatisfied. Others think, that upon Suppoſition, that theſe Cities were inhabited by *Iſraelites, Solomon* did not give *Hiram* (as indeed he cuuld not) their particular Poſſeſſions, but only his own Royalties over them, (which he might juſtly do) and all the Profits he received from thom; which, according to the Taxes then impoſed, were not inconſiderable. But there is no Reaſon for theſe far-fetch'd Solutions, when the Scripture expreſly tells us, that theſe Cities were not in the Territories of *Iſrael, Joſh.* ix. 25, nor inhabited, at that Time, by the *Iſraelites, 2 Chron.* viii. 2. They were, indeed, ſome of them conquered by the King of *Egypt,* who gave them to *Solomon,* as a Portion with his Daughter, and others by *Solomon* himſelf, who, as *Selden* obſerves, had a Right to diſpoſe of thoſe Lands which he had conquered in voluntary War, without the Conſent of the Senate: And this may be one Reaſon why he gave theſe rather than other Cities, becauſe theſe were certainly in his Power to give, when others, perhaps, were not. A learned Author, upon this Subject, has given a quite different Turn to the Senſe of this Paſſage: For his Opinion is, that *Hiram* returned theſe Cities, not becauſe he thought them not good enough, but becauſe he was unwilling to receive ſo large a Remuneration for the few good Offices he had done *Solomon,* and was minded rather, that Favours of this Kind ſhould be all gratuitous. He therefore makes the Word *Cabul* (which is the Name that *Hiram* gave to the Country where the Cities ſtood) a Title of Reſpect, and not Contempt; for he derives it from the *Hebrew* Word *Chebel,* which ſignifies a *Bond* or *Chain,* intimating that theſe two neighbouring Kings had mutually bound themſelves in a Bond of Friendſhip, *Solomon* by giving, and *Hiram* by returning the Cities, now under Conſideration. This is very pretty; but 'tis carrying the Point of Generoſity, in the King of *Tyre,* a little too high, in my Opinion, conſidering his Acceptance of, if not expreſs Stipulation for ſuch a Quantity of Corn and Oil, in lieu of the Timber which he ſent *Solomon.*

Q. *But why did* Hiram *refuſe to accept the Cities which* Solomon *offered him?*

A. The Reaſon was, becauſe the *Tyrians,* being very commodiouſly ſituated for that Purpoſe, were, in a Manner, wholly addicted to Merchandize, and therefore would not remove from the Sea-Coaſts, to live in a Soil which was fat and deep, and conſequently required a great deal of Labour to cultivate it, which was a Buſineſs that they were very little accuſtomed to.

Q. *What was the Wilderneſs in which* Tadmor *was ſituated; and how came he to build a City in ſuch a deſolate Place?*

A. *Tadmor,* which by the *Greeks* is called *Palmyra,* is ſituated in the Wilderneſs of *Syria,* upon the Borders of *Arabia Deſerta,* inclining towards the *Euphrates. Joſephus* places it two Days Journey from the *Upper Syria,* one Day's Journey from the *Euphrates,* and ſix Days Journey from *Babylon:* And the Reaſon he gives why *Solomon* was inclined to build a City in this Place was, becauſe in all the Country round about, there was no ſuch Thing as a Well or Fountain, but in this Spot only to be found. If we may gueſs by the Ruins, which later Travellers give us Deſcription of, this City was certainly one of the fineſt and moſt magnificent in the *Eaſt*; and it is ſomewhat ſurprizing, that Hiſtory ſhould give us no Account, either when or by whom it was reduced to the ſad Condition wherein it lies at this Day. But the true Reaſon for his building this Town in ſo deſolate a Place, was the Commodiouſneſs of its Situation to cut off all Commerce between the *Syrians* and *Meſopotamians,* and to prevent their caballing and conſpiring together againſt him, as they had done againſt his Father *David.* If the Reader is deſirous to know the preſent State of this ruinated City, he may find it in the *Philoſophical Tranſactions* for *October,* 1695, in a Letter from Dr. *Hallifax* to Dr. *Bernard.*

Q. *Do you read of any Prince that ever exempted his Subjects from Labour in his publick Buildings, as we find* Solomon *did his?*

A. Hiſtory takes Notice of the ſame Temper in *Seſoſtris* King of *Egypt,* who, upon his Return home from his ſeveral Expeditions, took it in his Head to build Temples in all the Cities of *Egypt,* but would ſuffer no *Egyptians* to do any ſervile Work therein. All the Work of this Nature was performed by the Captives that he brought with him from the Wars; and therefore, to perpetuate the Remembrance of his Kindneſs to his Subjects, as well as remove ſome poſſible Odium from himſelf, upon every Temple he ordered this Inſcription to be ſet up, *No Native was ever a Labourer here.*

Q. *Where lay the Port of* Ezion-Geber, *where* Solomon *built his Fleet?*

A. *Joſephus* will needs have it, that *Ezion-Geber* is the ſame with *Berenice,* which lies, indeed, upon the *Red-Sea,* but then it is upon the Weſtern or *African* Shore thereof; whereas the Scripture is poſitive that it was a Port of *Idumæa* or *Arabia Deſerta,* ſituate upon the Gulf of *Elam,* which is on the oppoſite Shore. *Elam,* or *Eloth,* or *Elath,* (for it was called by all theſe Names) was ſituate upon the ſame, and might poſſibly have its Name from thence. When *David* conquered *Edom* or *Idumæa,* he made himſelf Maſter of this Port, 2 *Sam.* viii. 14. His Son, we ſee, built Ships here, ſent them from thence to *Ophir* for Gold, 2 *Chron.* viii. 17. It continued in the Poſſeſſion of the *Iſraelites* about a hundred and fifty Years, till in the Time of *Joram*, the *Edomites* recovered it, 2 *Kings* viii. 20. but it was again taken from them by *Azariah*, and by him left to his Son, 2 *Kings* xiv. 22. His Grandſon *Ahaz*, however, loſt it again to the King of *Syria*, 2 *Kings* xvi. 6. and the *Syrians* had it in their Hands a long while, till, after many Changes under the *Ptolomies* and the *Seleucida*, it came at came at length into the Poſſeſſion of the *Romans*. It was formerly a ſmall Town, with fruitful Fields about it, but now there is nothing left but a Tower, which ſerves as an Habitation for the Governor, who is ſubject to the Governor of *Grand Cairo*, and no Signs of Fruitfulneſs are to be ſeen in any Parts adjoining to it.

Q. Solomon, *we find, traded to* Ophir *for Gold; but was this conſiſtent with the Dignity of a King?*

A. As great a King as *Solomon* was, we find he turned Merchant; and yet the imperial Laws forbid Noblemen to exerciſe Trade and Commerce, as a Thing below them, and much leſs then does it become a King; but we muſt not meaſure Antiquity by our own Times; what might be then commendable may now have a different Appearance. But the ſame Author is very right in one Conceſſion that he makes, *viz.* that tho' he would not have Kings now to be Merchants, yet, if he might have his Choice, *I had rather a Prince ſhould be a Merchant*, ſays he, *than a Tyrant, and that Noblemen ſhould rather trade, than oppreſs, and make a Prey of their Tenants.*

Q. *The Number of Talents here ſaid to be brought home to* Solomon, *are* four hundred and twenty; *but in* 2 Chron. viii. 18. four hundred and fifty.

A. This is a Matter that is eaſily reſolved, if we will but ſuppoſe that the Charges of the Voyage to and fro coſt thirty Talents; or that *Solomon* gave *Hiram*'s Servants, for conducting his Fleet, thirty Talents; or that in refining the whole Maſs of Gold, the Waſte might be thirty Talents: So that, tho' *Solomon*'s Fleet brought him home four hundred and fifty Talents, yet by one or more of theſe Deductions, there came clear to his Coffers no more than four hundred and thirty.

Q. *What Reaſon can you aſſign for* Pharaoh's *taking* Gezer, *and his making a Preſent of it to his Daughter?*

A. Gezer, we own, lay at a conſiderable Diſtance from *Egypt*, which, ſince the Time of *Seſoſtris*, had ſeldom extended its Conqueſts into foreign Lands; and therefore to account for its Conduct here, we muſt obſerve, that *Gezer* was ſo antient a Town in *Canaan*, that there was a King thereof, when *Joſhua* conquered it; that in the Diviſion of the Land, it fell to the Tribe of *Ephraim*, was bordering upon the northern Part of the Country of the *Philiſtines*, and not far from the *Mediterranean* Sea; that it was one of the eight and forty Cities which, together with their Suburbs, were given to the *Levites*; an inland Town, but at no great Matter of Diſtance from the *Ephraimites*, who took Poſſeſſion of it, but ſuffered the *Canaanites* to cohabit with them, who gave them no ſmall Diſturbance, and, towards the latter End of *David*'s Reign, expelled from thence; that when *Solomon* came to the Throne, he applied himſelf chiefly to the Building of the Temple, nor thought it worth while to diſturb the Peace of his Reign, for the Recovery of a few revolted Cities; that when a Match was propoſed between *Solomon* and *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, *Pharaoh* thought he could not do a more acceptable Service, nor ſhew the Benefit of his Alliance better, than in taking *Gezer*, and ſome adjacent Places; that for this Purpoſe he ſet out with a large Fleet of Ships, landed at *Joppa*, beſieged the Place, and becauſe it made an obſtinate Defence, burnt it to the Ground, and ſlew all the *Canaanites* that were in it; but that, after this, he began to rebuild it; and when his Daughter was eſpouſed to *Solomon*, gave him this, and ſome other Places he had taken along with it, as Part of her Portion; for it is a miſtaken Notion that Princes Daughters had no Portion in thoſe Days.

Among the *Jews*, indeed, the Cuſtom was for the Men to give the Dower, or to make ſome Preſent to the Parents, for the Favour of having their Daughter in Marriage: But this Cuſtom prevailed only among the inferior Sort: Ladies of the firſt Diſtinction were, in all Nations, wont to bring their Husbands Fortunes, proportionate to their Quality: For *Saul*, we read, declared that the Man who ſhould ſlay *Goliah*, ſhould not only have his Daughter in Marriage, but, together with her, Plenty of Riches, and other valuable Emoluments; *Antiochus the Great* promiſed to ſettle upon his Daughter the Kingdoms of *Judea* and *Samaria*, as a Dower to *Ptolomy* King of *Egypt*; to name no more) *Agamemnon*, in Times of elder Date, tho' leſs Affluence, offered no leſs than ſeven good Towns with his Daughter, without any Rent of Acknowledgment, or other Deduction from her Husband. So that *Pharaoh* did no more than conform to the Practice of other great Princes, in endowing his Daughter with the Places he had taken from the *Philiſtines*, in all Probability, for that very Purpoſe.

CHAP. X.

The Queen of Sheba *pays a Viſit to* Solomon; *admires his Wiſdom, and makes him Preſents.* Solomon's *Riches; Targets; Ivory Throne; Veſſels; Preſents; Chariots and Horſes; Tribute; &c.*

Q. WHERE *was the Kingdom of* Sheba *ſituated?*

A. Joſephus, and from his Authority, many more are of Opinion, that *Sheba* was the antient Name of *Meroe*, an Iſland, or rather *Peninſula* in *Egypt*, before *Cambyſes*, in Complement to his Siſter (other Hiſtorians call her his *Mother*) gave it her Name. He tells us likewiſe, that ſhe was Queen, both of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*; and the *Ethiopians* indeed have a Tradition, that, upon her Return, ſhe had a Son by *Solomon*, whoſe Poſterity reigned there many Years; and, to this very Day, they have preſerved a continual Liſt of their Names, and Succeſſors.

There are theſe Exceptions however to be made to the Opinion of the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian; *viz.* that, whereas he cites *Herodotus*, as ſpeaking of his Queen *Nicaule*, *Herodotus* makes mention of none, but only *Niconis*, Queen of *Egypt*; nor does he ſay one Syllable of her pretended Journey to *Jeruſalem*. Whereas he ſays of this *Nicaule*, that ſhe was Queen of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia* both, the ſacred Hiſtory is plain, that, in the Time of *Solomon*, there reigned in *Egypt* that *Pharaoh*, whoſe Daughter he married, and, in his Son's Time, *Shiſhak*. Whereas he tells us, that the antient Name of *Me-*

roe, before the Time of *Cambyſes*, was *Sheba*; for this he ſeems to want Authority, ſince *Diodorus*, and other Hiſtorians, repreſent this City, as built new from the Ground, and not repaired by *Cambyſes*.

The more probable Opinion therefore is, that this Queen of *Sheba* came from a Country ſo named, which lay, not in *Ethiopia*, nor *Africa*, but in the Southern Part of *Arabia Fœlix*; becauſe it is generally allowed, that their Country was uſually called by the *Orientaliſts*, *the Kingdom of the South*; in Alluſion to which, our Saviour ſtiles this Princeſs *the Queen of the South*: Becauſe their Country borders upon the Southern Ocean, beyond which, the Ancients knew no farther Land; and therefore our Saviour, (according to the common Mode of Speaking) ſays of this Princeſs, that *ſhe came from the utmoſt Parts of the Earth*: Becauſe in this Country Women were known to govern as well as Men; becauſe the common Produce of it was Gold, Silver, Spices, and precious Stones, the very Preſents, which this Princeſs made *Solomon*; and (if any popular Traditions may be credited) becauſe the *Arabians* talk of their Queen *Balkis*, who went to viſit *Solomon*, and ſhew Travellers the the Place of her Nativity to this very Day.

Q. *Who was this Queen; and why did ſhe come to viſit* Solomon?

A. Now if this Princeſs came from *Arabia*, there is Reaſon to believe, that ſhe was originally deſcended from *Abraham*, by his Wife *Keturah*, one of whoſe Sons begat *Sheba*, who was the firſt Planter of this Country; and, conſequently, that ſhe might have ſome Knowledge of revealed Religion, by Tradition at leaſt from her pious Anceſtors. To this Purpoſe the Scripture ſeems to intimate, that the Deſign of her Viſit to *Solomon* was, not ſo much to gratify her Curioſity, as to inform her Underſtanding, in Matters relating to Piety, and divine Worſhip. It was *Solomon*'s Fame, *concerning the Name of the Lord*, that is, concerning his Knowledge of the Supreme Being, and the proper Manner of worſhipping him, that excited her to take ſo long a Journey; and therefore our Saviour ſays, that, as ſhe came ſo far to *hear his Wiſdom*, (his Wiſdom concerning what? Concerning the Nature and Worſhip of Almighty God,) ſhe would, at the Day of Judgment, *riſe up againſt that Generation*, which refuſed to liſten to him.

Now, if this was the End of this Queen's Viſit to *Solomon*, who can ſay, but that ſhe left her Country to good Purpoſe, ſince it was to *find Wiſdom, to get Underſtanding, the Merchandize of which is better than the Merchandize of Silver, and the Gain thereof than fine Gold*; *the Price of which is above Rubies, and all that can be deſired, and is not to be compared to it?* But, even upon the Suppoſition, that her Errand was to acquire Knowledge of an inferior Kind, or, even to make Trial of *Solomon*'s Sagacity, by propoſing ſome enigmatical Queſtions to him; yet, who knows not, that it was the Practice in thoſe Days, for Perſons of the firſt Rank and Figure in Life, to exerciſe their Wits in this Manner? *Joſephus*, from ſome Writers of the *Phœnician* Hiſtory, tells us, that *Solomon* uſed frequently to ſend to his Friend *Hiram* Problems, and Riddles, upon the Forfeiture of a great Sum of Money, if he could not expound them; and that one *Abdemonus*, a *Tyrian*, not only unriddled *Solomon*'s Difficulties, but ſent back ſome new Propoſitions of his own, which, if *Solomon* could not reſolve, he was to incur the like Forfeiture.

Now the Scripture remarks of *Solomon*, that *his Wiſdom excelled the Wiſdom of the Eaſt-country*, and by the Eaſt-country ſome do underſtand, the Seat of the antient *Arabians*, who, in the Days of *Pythagoras*, were ſo renowned for their Wiſdom, that that Philoſopher thought it worth his while, to go, and reſide among them for ſome Time. They were great Maſters of Wit and Ingenuity; and valued themſelves upon their Sagaciouſneſs and Dexterity, both in propounding, and ſolving Problems; and therefore no wonder that this Queen of *Sheba*, who (as *Joſephus* informs us) was a Woman of exquiſite Underſtanding herſelf, ſhould fall in with the Humour of the Times, and carry with her ſome Problems of *Arabian* Sages, on Purpoſe to make a Trial of *Solomon*'s Parts: Nor can we imagine, but that, in Complaiſance to ſo royal a Viſitor, as well as Regard to his own Reputation, *Solomon* would take care to anſwer her Queſtions, (and as the Scripture expreſſes it) ſatisfy *all her Deſire, whatſoever ſhe asked*.

Q. Solomon, *we read, made him a* Throne of Ivory: *Was not* Ivory *a very ſcarce Commodity in thoſe Days?*

A. We never read of *Ivory*, till about *Solomon*'s Days, who perhaps brought Elephants out of *India*, or at leaſt took Care to have a great deal of Ivory imported from thence; for, in after Ages, we read of Ivory Beds, and Ivory Palaces, *&c.* At this Time however it was every whit as precious as Gold; and therefore we muſt not ſuppoſe, that this Throne of *Solomon*'s was entirely overlaid with Gold, (for then it might as well have been made of Wood) but only in particular Places, that ſo the Mixture of Gold and Ivory, which gave a Luſtre to each other, might make the Throne look more beautiful. The like to this, the Text ſays, *there was not made in any Kingdom*, Ver. 20. and perhaps it was ſo in thoſe Days; but, in after Ages, we read, that the Throne of the *Parthian* Kings was of Gold, encompaſſed with four golden Pillars, beſet with precious Stones; and that the *Perſian* Kings ſat in Judgment under a golden Vine (and other Trees of Gold) the Bunches of whoſe Grapes were made of ſeveral Sorts of precions Stones.

Q. *One Part of* Solomon's *Grandeur, which ſtruck the Queen of* Sheba *with Admiration, was the Sumptuouſneſs of his Table and Attendants: Pray what was the uſual Proviſion of his Table?*

A. The Proviſions of *Solomon*'s Table, for one Day, were *thirty Meaſures* (which, according to the *Hebrew* Word *Cor*, as *Goodwin* has compared it, are ſix Gallons above an hundred and ſixty eight Buſhels) *of fine Flour, and ſixty of Meal*, (or courſer Flour for inferior Servants) *ten Stall-fed Oxen, twenty out of the Paſtures, and an hundred Sheep, beſides Harts, and Roebucks, and fallow Deer, and fatted Fowl*, or (as *Bochart* tranſlates the Word) *the choiceſt of all fatted Things*, Chap. iv. 22, 23. and this, according to the Calculation, which ſome have made from the Quantity of Bread, that was every Day conſumed, muſt make *Solomon*'s Family conſiſt, at leaſt, of forty, or fifty thouſand Souls.

Q. *But how was the Magnificence of* Solomon's *Table and Attendants, an Indication of his Wiſdom?*

A. Our excellent Commentator, Biſhop *Patrick*, tells us, that a very great Man of our own (but is ſilent as to his Name) has obſerved, that ſuch Things, as the Difference of Apparel, the Order of ſitting at Table, and the Attendance of *Solomon's* Servants, and Miniſters, were juſtly admired by the Queen of *Sheba*, as an Indication of his Wiſdom; *for they are the Outworks* (as he calls them) *which preſerve Majeſty itſelf from Approaches and Surprizals; and whatſoever Prince departs from theſe Forms, and Trappings, and Ornaments, of his Dignity and Pre-eminence, will hardly be able, at ſome Time, to preſerve the Body itſelf of Majeſty from Intruſion, Invaſion, and Violation.*

Q. *What does* Joſephus *ſay of the Preſents which the Queen of* Sheba *made to* Solomon?

A. After a very complementive Speech, in which *Joſephus* makes this Queen addreſs King *Solomon*, among other valuable Preſents recorded in Scripture, *they ſpeak alſo*, ſays he, *of a Root of Balſam, which ſhe brought with her, which* (according to a Tradition we have) *was the firſt Plant, of the Kind, that ever came into* Judea, *where it hath propagated ſo wonderfully ever ſince.*

CHAP. XI.

Solomon's *Wives and Concubines, who, in his old Age, ſeduce him to Idolatry. God threatens him. His Adverſaries* Hadad, Rezon, *and* Jeroboam; Ahijah *foretells the latter he ſhall be King*; Solomon *ſeeks his Life: His Acts, Reign, and Death.* Rehoboam *ſucceeds to the Crown.*

Q. WAS not Solomon *culpable in marrying* Pharaoh's *Daughter?*

A. Pharaoh's Daughter is generally ſuppoſed to have been a Proſelyte to the *Jewiſh* Religion, and therefore *Solomon*, in marrying her incurred no Fault, but in marrying ſo many Women, beſides, and thoſe of a different Religion, he committed two Sins againſt the Law; one in multiplying Wives, and another in marrying thoſe of ſtrange Nations, who ſtill retained their Idolatry: And therefore the wiſe Son of *Sirach*, amidſt all the Encomiums that he heaps upon *Solomon*, could not forget this heinous Iniquity, and terrible Flaw in his Character; *Thou didſt bow thy Loins to Women, and, by thy Body thou waſt brought into Subjection: Thou didſt ſtain thy Honour, and pollute thy Seed, ſo that thou broughteſt Wrath upon thy Children, and waſt grieved for thy Folly*, Eccluſ. lxvii. 19, 20.

Q. *What Reaſon can you aſſign for* Solomon's *having ſuch a prodigious Number of Wives and Concubines?*

A. Without knowing the Cuſtom of the Princes of the *Eaſt*, their Pomp, and Sumptuouſneſs of Living, one might be tempted to wonder, what poſſible Uſe *Solomon* might make of this *Milliad* of Wives, and Concubines, that he had: But, as he was between forty and fifty Years old, before he ran into this Exceſs, we cannot but think, that he kept this Multitude of Women, more for State, than any other Service. *Darius Codomannus* was wont to carry along with him in his Camp, no leſs than three hundred and fifty Concubines, in Time of War; nor was his Queen at all offended at it, becauſe theſe Women uſed to reverence and adore her, as if ſhe had been a Goddeſs. *F. Le Compte*, in his Hiſtory of *China*, tells us, that the Emperor there has a vaſt Number of Wives, choſen out of the prime Beauties of the Country, many of which he never ſo much as ſaw in his whole Life: And therefore it is not improbable, that *Solomon* (as he found his Riches increaſe) might enlarge his Expences, and endeavour to ſurpaſs all the Princes of his Time in this, as well as all other Kinds of Pomp and Magnificence.

Q. Solomon, *notwithſtanding his great Wiſdom, ſuffered himſelf to be perverted from the true Worſhip: How far did his Perverſion proceed?*

A. A Man of *Solomon's* great Wiſdom, one would think, ſhould have converted theſe Women, that were about him, to the true Religion, rather than have ſuffered himſelf to be perverted by them to a falſe one. The Scripture tells us, indeed, that *he went after* Aſhtoreth *the Goddeſs of the* Zidonians, *and* Milcom *the Abomination of the* Ammonites, *and* Chemoſh *the Abomination of* Moab; but ſurely he could never be ſo far infatuated, as to prefer theſe *Idols*, before the God of *Iſrael*. Theſe Women, no doubt, as they had got an Aſcendant over him, might abate his Zeal againſt Idolatry, and prevail with him for a publick Toleration of their Religion: They might obtain Money of him for the making of their Idols, the Support of the Prieſts, and the Expence of their Sacrifices; nay, and perhaps might ſometimes perſuade him, in Complaiſance, to go with them to their Worſhip, or to partake of their lewd and riotous Feaſts; but that they ſhould ever be able to alter his Notions concerning the true God, or prevail with him to believe, that the Images they worſhipped were informed with any kind of Divinity, is a Thing incredible.

Q. *The latter Part of* Solomon's *Life was as remarkably vicious, as the former Part of it was virtuous and glorious: From the Whole, what Judgment can you form of his future State?*

A. In this Courſe of Prevarication, however, he continued ſo long, that it is now become a famous Queſtion, whether he be in a State of Salvation, or no. Thoſe that maintain the Negative, are apt to ſuggeſt, that though the Scripture gives us no particular Account of his Recovery; that without the Grace of God he could not repent, and yet his Actions were ſuch, as juſtly deſerved a Forfeiture of that Grace; that if he repented, he would have pulled down the idolatrous Temples which he had erected, whereas we find them ſtanding many Years after him; and therefore they conclude, that he did not ſorrow after a godly Sort for his Impieties, becauſe in his whole Behaviour, to the very laſt, they can diſcern no Carefulneſs wrought in him, no clearing of himſelf, no Indignation, no Fear, no vehement Deſire, no Zeal, no Revenge, which the Apoſtle has made the proper Characteriſticks of a true Repentance. The Promiſe, however, which God make to *David*, concerning his Son *Solomon*, may incline us to think favourably of his Salvation, 2 *Sam.* vii. 14. *I will be his Father, and he ſhall be my Son. If he commit Iniquity, I will chaſten him with the Rod of Men, and with the Stripes of the Children of Men, but my Mercy ſhall not depart away from him.* And therefore we may preſume, that towards the Concluſion of his Life he grew ſenſible of his Tranſgreſſions, tho' the ſacred Writer takes no Notice of it, on purpoſe to leave a Blot upon his Memory, and a frightful Example of human Weakneſs to all Poſterity; that the Temples which he had built to Heathen Idols, he pulled down and demoliſhed, tho' they were afterwards raiſed again, upon the ſame Places, by other impious Princes; and that, after his Fall, he wrote his Book of *Eccleſiaſtes*, as a Monument of his Repentance, an Acknowledgment of his own Apoſtaſy, and a Warning and Admonition to all others, that, however they may think of *doing whatever their Eyes deſired*, *of keeping nothing from them*, and of *withholding their Heart from no Joy*, Eccleſ. ii. 10, 11. yet in the Event they would find (what his Experience had taught him ſo late) that all *was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*; that there *was no Profit* in any kind of Wickedneſs *under the Sun*, but *that to fear God, and keep his Commandments, was the whole Duty of Man*.

Q. *Who was this* Hadad, *whom God ſtirred up to chaſtiſe* Solomon?

A. Hadad was a young Prince of the Royal Family of *Idumæa*, who fled into *Egypt*, when *David* conquered that Country: For *David* having obtained a ſignal Victory, under the Conduct of *Abiſhai*, who, at that Time, commanded in chief, ſent *Joab* afterwards with an Order to kill all the *Males* that ſhould be found in the Land. But *Hadad* had eſcaped into *Egypt*, where, finding Favour in the Eyes of the King, he married his Wife's Siſter, and there ſettled. But, after the Death of *David* he returned into *Idumæa*, and gave *Solomon* no ſmall Moleſtation. For entering into a League with *Rezon*, a Fugitive from his Maſter *Hadadezer*, King of *Zobah*, but who had now made himſelf King of ſome Part of *Syria*, he, by his Aſſiſtance, made ſo many Inroads upon the Land of *Iſrael*, that all Things were in the utmoſt Confuſion, even before *Solomon* died.

Q. Rezon *was another Adverſary that gave* Solomon *a great deal of Trouble: Pray who was he?*

A. When *David* made War againſt *Hadadezer*, *Rezon*, one of his Generals, eſcaped from the Field of Battle, with the Troops under his Command; and, having lived a little while by Plunder and Robbery, at length he ſeized on *Damaſcus*, and reigned there: But his Reign was not long; for *David* took *Damaſcus*, as well as the other Parts of *Syria*, and left it in Subjection to his Son *Solomon*; till God was pleaſed to ſuffer this *Rezon* to recover *Damaſcus*, and there re-eſtabliſh himſelf to the great Diſtrubance of the latter Part of *Solomon*'s Reign.

Q. *Another of* Solomon's *Enemies, and who ſeems to be the moſt dangerous of them all, was* Jeroboam *one of the Surveyors of his Works: But what Pretence had this Man for his Treachery?*

A. As *Solomon* was engaged in ſeveral great Buildings, he took care to ſet proper Perſons over the Works, among whom *Jeroboam* was one, and the Workmen under his Command ſeem to be chiefly of the Tribe of *Ephraim*. How he acquitted himſelf in this Capacity, we are not told; but the Pretence of his being angry with *Solomon*, and fomenting Jealouſies among the People, was the building of *Millo*. *Millo* was a deep Valley between the old *Jeruſalem* and the City of *David*, Part of which *David* filled up, and thereon made both a Fortreſs and a Place for the People to aſſemble. Another Part of it *Solomon* filled up, to build a Palace for his Queen, the Daughter of *Pharaoh*. The prodigious Expence which this Work coſt, gave *Jeroboam* an Opportunity to infuſe a Spirit of Sedition into his Brethren of the Tribe of *Ephraim*; to complain heavily of the hard Labour they were forced to ſubmit to, and the Taxes they were obliged to pay; and to repreſent the whole Thing as a Work of Vanity, merely to gratify a proud foreign Woman, and a ſilly doting King; and by theſe Inſinuations he wrought in the People a Diſaffection to *Solomon* and his Government.

Q. *Can you give any Account of* Ahijah; *whence he was; and what his Employment?*

A. Ahijah was a Native of *Shiloh*, and one of thoſe who wrote the Annals of King *Solomon*'s Reign, and is thought to have been the Perſon who ſpake twice to *Solomon* from God; once while he was building the Temple, at which Time he promiſed his Protection, 1 *Kings* vi. 10. and at another Time, when he had fallen into all his Irregularities, and God expreſſed his Indignation againſt him in bitter threats and Reproaches, 1 *Kings* xii. 6. His Prediction to *Solomon*, that he would one Day be perverted by Women; and that to *Jeroboam*, that Heifers (meaning the golden Calves which he ſet up) would alienate him from the Service of God, are both taken notice of by *Epiphanius*.

Q. *Did not* Ahijah *act the Part of a Madman in tearing his Garment in Pieces?*

A. It is making a wrong Judgment of Things, to think, that the Cuſtoms of antient Times, and of different Countries, ſhould agree with thoſe of our own Age and Climate. We, indeed, when we have any Thing to relate, do it, for the moſt Part, in expreſs Words; but the People of the *Eaſt*, eſpecially thoſe who took upon them the Character of Prophets, were fond of diſcovering their Minds in Signs and emblematical Actions, becauſe they looked upon ſuch Repreſentations more lively affecting, than any that proceeded from the Mouth only, could be.

This is the firſt ſymbolical Action that we meet with in any Prophet; but, in after Ages, Inſtances of this Kind became more frequent. Thus *Jeremiah made himſelf Bonds and Yokes, and put them upon his Neck*, to ſignify the near Approaching Captivity of *Jeruſalem*, *Jer.* xxvii. 2. *Iſaiah*, to denote the Captivity of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, walked naked, *i. e.* without his upper Garments on, *and bare-foot for three Years, in the Streets*, Iſa. xx. 2, 3. *Ezekiel*, (to make the People ſenſible that they were to be carried away into a ſtrange Land) was ordered to make a Breach in the Wall of his Houſe, and through that to remove his Houſhold-goods, in the Day-time, and in their Sight, *Ezek.* xii. 2. The falſe Prophet *Zedekiah* made himſelf a Pair of Iron Horns, and ſaid to *Ahab*, *with theſe ſhalt thou puſh the* Aſſyrians, 1 Kings xxii. 11. And the like Practice continued under the New Teſtament; for *Agabus* having bound his Hand and Feet with St. *Paul*'s Girdle, told the Company, that *ſo ſhould the* Jews *at* Jeruſalem *bind the Man unto whom it belonged*, Acts xxi. 11.

When the Prophet was ſent to anoint *Jehu* to be King of *Iſrael*, the Queſtion, which the reſt of the Captains put to him, *Wherefore came this mad Fellow to thee?* ſufficiently indicates their Scorn and Contempt of him: And, in like manner, *Abijah* might have addreſſed himſelf to a Man of *Jeroboam*'s haughty Spirit to ſmall Purpoſe, had he not, by ſome previous Action, drawn his Obſervation, and made him attentive to the Meſſage he was going to deliver. And, if any ſuch ſymbolical Act was neceſſary at this Time, the tearing his Garment was more proper than any, becauſe, in the

Caſe of *Saul*, *Samuel* had applied it to denote the Alienation of his Kingdom, *The Lord hath rent the Kingdom of* Iſrael *from thee this Day, and hath given it to a Neighbour of thine, that is better than thou*, 1 Samuel xv. 28. And if renting the Garment was no inſignificant Symbol upon this Occaſion, the newer the Garment was, the more it would declare, that what the Prophet did, was by a divine Command, and upon mature Deliberation.

Q. *How came* Solomon *to know what was tranſacted between* Ahijah *and* Jeroboam *alone?*

A. Perhaps *Jeroboam* himſelf, being puffed up with this Aſſurance, could not contain, but told it to ſome of his Confidants, who ſpread it abroad; or perhaps his Servants, though they heard not the Words that the Prophet ſpake, yet ſeeing him rent the Garment into twelve Parts, and give ten to him, might ſpeak of this ſtrange and unaccountable Action, which *Solomon*, as ſoon as he came to hear, might eaſily underſtand it, becauſe the ſame Prophet, very likely, had told him juſt before, that the *Kingdom ſhould be rent from him*, and given to his Servant, Verſe 11.

Q. *Why did* Pharaoh *entertain* Jeroboam, Solomon*'s Enemy, notwithſtanding the Alliance between them?*

A. The *Pharaoh*, who received *Jeroboam* in his Exile, in all Probability was not the King, whoſe Daughter *Solomon* had married, but a Prince of another Line, and of different Views. The Woman, whom *Solomon* married, was one of the *Dynaſty* of the *Dioſpolites*, whoſe Anceſtors had lived at *Thebes*; but in the Year that *Solomon* finiſhed the Temple, there happened a Revolution in *Egypt*, wherein this Dynaſty or Race of Kings, loſt the Throne, and was ſucceeded by that of the *Taanites*, of whom *Semendis*, the Father of *Shiſhak*, was the firſt King. Theſe kept their Court at *Zoan*, an antient Town not far from the Borders of *Canaan*, and therefore very convenient for the Reception of any Refugee, that ſhould come from thence. For, as it was the Intereſt of the former Kings of *Egypt*, to keep up a good Uuderſtanding with the Houſe of *David*; ſo now it became equally the Intereſt of the preſent Race, to make uſe of all Inſtruments to embarraſs them, leſt by joining with the depoſed Family, they might, at any Time, occaſion another Revolution in *Egypt*. And this, by the bye, ſuggeſts the Reaſon (whereof the Scripture is ſilent) why *Shiſhak* invaded the Kingdom of *Judah* with a vaſt Army, and never pretended to annoy *Iſrael*; namely, becauſe he thought it adviſeable to diſable *Rehoboam* from aſſiſting the depoſed Family in *Egypt*, but to encourage *Jeroboam*, who, being an Uſurper himſelf, was, queſtionleſs, a Friend and Ally to thoſe Princes that were in the like Circumſtances.

Q. *How old was* Solomon *when he died? And what was his general Character?*

A. Joſephus, indeed, tells us, that *Solomon* lived to a great Age, that he reigned eighty Years, and died at ninety four; but this is a manifeſt Error in that Hiſtorian, which, our ſaying, that the Scriptures give us only an Account of *Solomon*, while he continued in a State of Piety, but that *Joſephus*'s Computation takes in the whole of his Life, is a poor and forced Way of Reconcilement. The Authority of *Joſephus* muſt never be put in Balance with that of the holy Scriptures; from whence may be learned, that *Solomon* lived to the Age of fifty eight, or thereabout; becauſe we may very well preſume, that his immoderate Purſuit of ſenſual Pleaſures both ſhortened his Life, and left an eternal Stain upon his Memory: Otherwiſe the Character which the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus* gives of this Prince, is very beautiful: ——Solomon *reigned in a peaceable Time, and was honoured; for God made all quiet round about him, that he might build an Houſe in his Name, and prepare his Sanctuary for ever. How wiſe waſt thou in thy Youth, and as a Flood filled with Underſtanding! Thy Soul covered the whole Earth, and thou filledſt it with dark Parables. Thy Name went far unto the Iſlands, and for thy Peace thou waſt beloved. The Countries marvelled at thee for thy Songs and Proverbs, and Parables and Interpretations. By the Name of the Lord, which is called the Lord God of* Iſrael, *thou didſt gather Gold as Tin, and didſt multiply Silver as Lead: But thou didſt bow thy Loins unto Women, &c. Eccluſ.* xlvii. 22, *&c.*

Q. *How many Children had* Solomon?

A. Notwithſtanding the vaſt Multitude of Wives that *Solomon* had, the Scripture makes mention of no more than three Children, this Son and two Daughters, that are ſpoken of, Chap. iv. 11, 15. and (what is ſtrange) in the Beginning of his Story, it takes no Notice (as uſually it does) of his Mother's Nation or Family, though in the Concluſion of it, (Chap. xiv. 21, ——11.) it twice reminds us, that ſhe was an *Ammoniteſs* by Birth, and that her Name was *Naamah*. *Rehoboam* was born in the firſt Year of his Father's Reign, and was therefore much about forty one when he entered upon the Government; but he was an unſkilful and imprudent Man, and therefore made a very falſe Step at his firſt Acceſſion to the Throne. The Author of *Eccleſiaſticus* gives us no advantageous Character of him, when he terms him *A Man void of Underſtanding, who turned the People away with his Counſel*, Eccleſ. xlvii. 23. nay, his own Father makes but a faint Apology for him, when he ſaid, in his *Preacher*, *I hated all my Labour, which I had taken under the Sun, becauſe I was to leave it to a Man, that ſhould come after me; and who knoweth whether he ſhall be a wiſe Man or a Fool, yet ſhall he have Rule over all my Labour, wherein I have laboured: This alſo is Vanity*, Chap. ii. 13, 19.

Q. *Being now come to the Period of* Solomon's *Life and Reign; and having paſſed through numerous Inſtances of his extraordinary Grandeur and Magnificence, I ſhould be glad to have ſome Eſtimate of his Revenues, which enabled him to perform ſuch wonderful Things.*

A. The Scripture informs us, that, out of the Revenues of the Crown, *David* left *Solomon*, merelo for the Purpoſe of building the Temple, *an hundred Thouſand Talents of Gold, and a thouſand thouſand Talents of Silver*; out of his privy Purſe, *three thouſand Talents of Gold, and ſeven thouſand Talents of Silver*; and of the Benevolence of the Princes, *five thouſand Talents, and ten thouſand Drams of Gold, and ten thouſand Talents of Silver.* Now, ſince it is generally agreed, that a *Talent of Silver* was equivalent to three hundred forty two Pounds, three Shillings, and nine Pence, and a *Talent of Gold* amounted to no leſs, than five thouſand four hundred and twenty five Pounds *Sterling*; all theſe Talents of Gold and Silver will amount to upwards of nine hundred thirty three million ſeven hundred and fourteen thouſand Pounds. Some of the beſt Authors of Weights and Meaſures have computed, that, if all the Walls, Pavement, Lining, and Covering of the Temple had been made of maſſy Gold, (even with the Wages of the Workmen and Veſſels belonging to it) they would not have come up to the Value here ſpecified; and therefore, upon this Suppoſition, they have advanced a Notion, that the *Hebrews* had two Kinds of Talents, a larger, which was called the Talent of the Sanctuary, and a ſmaller, which was the common Talent, and one half leſs than the other, by which all ſuch exorbitant Sums (as they ſay) ought to be reckoned. But what Grounds they have for this Diſtinction, we cannot perceive, ſince it no where appears, either in the Scriptures, or any other Hiſtory, that the *Jews* (eſpecially before the Captivity of *Babylon*) had any more Talents, than one; and that their Talent, whether of Silver or Gold, aroſe to a Sum, tantamount to what we have ſtated it at, there are ſeveral Inſtances in the Old Teſtament, that may convince us.

To this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that when *Amaziah*, King of *Judah*, hired *an hundred thouſand Men*, out of *Iſrael*, to fight againſt the *Edomites*, he gave no more, than *an hundred Talents of Silver* for them, which would have been but a very trifling Price, indeed, had the Talent here been of leſs Value than *three thouſand Shekels*: That, when *Omri*, King of *Iſrael*, bought the Mountain, whereon was built the City of *Samaria*, he paid for it no more, than *two Talents of Gold*; and yet theſe two Talents were ten thouſand nine hundred and fifty Pounds, a proper Sum for ſuch a Purchaſe: That, when *Sennacherib*, King of *Aſſyria*, had obliged *Hezekiah* to pay him *an hundred Talents of Silver*, and thirty *Talents of Gold*, that good King exhauſted, not only his own Treaſure, and the Treaſure of the Houſe of the Lord, but was forced likewiſe to cut the Gold off from the Doors and Pillars of the Temple; and (to name no more) that, when *Pharaoh Nechoh put the Land to a Tribute of an hundred Talents of Silver, and a Talent of Gold*, *Jehoiakim* was neceſſitated to levy a Tax extraordinary upon all his Subjects, that every one might contribute according to his Power: But neither of theſe Remarks (*viz.* that theſe two Kings were thus ſtraitned about the Payment) would the ſacred Hiſtorian have made, had the Talent, in his Days, been of conſiderably leſs Value, than *Moſes* is known to rate it at. So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the *Hebrew* Talent continued always the ſame, and amounted to a much greater Sum, than thoſe, who are for debaſing its Value, are willing to allow.

Q. But if the Talent muſt be reckoned at ſo high a Rate, how can we imagine, that David, *who had had no Eſtate from his Family, and whoſe Dominions were far from being extenſive, could ever be able to amaſs ſuch an immenſe Quantity of Wealth?*

A. In Anſwer to this, we ſhould do well to conſider, that even before the Death of *Saul*, *David* was at the Head of ſome brave Troops, with whom he uſed to make Inroads into the Enemies Country, and frequently bring from thence large Booty; that, after *Saul*'s Death, he reigned forty Years in all, and, in that Space, made it his Buſineſs to heap up Riches, eſpecially when he came to underſtand, that God had appointed his Son and Succeſſor to build him a Temple; that, in the Time of his Reign, he had Wars with the *Syrians*, the *Philiſtines*, the *Ammonites*, the *Moabites*, and ſeveral other Nations, from whom he returned always victorious, and always laden with their Treaſures, and rich Spoils; that, by this Means, he enlarged his Dominions, as far as the Promiſe made to *Abraham* extends, even from the River *Euphrates*, to the *Mediterranean* Sea, on this Side, and to the *Nile* on the other; that the Countries, which he ſubdued, and made Tributary to him, ſuch as *Arabia*, *Phœnicia*, *Meſopotamia*, *Idumæa*, &c. were exceedingly rich, and productive of ſeveral Mines of Gold, and other Metals; and that the Tributes, which were wont to be exacted upon ſuch Occaſions, were either annual Impoſts, or vaſt Sums of Money at once: If we conſider, I ſay, the Spoils, which he took from conquered Nations, and the Tribute, which he raiſed from ſuch, as were ſubmitted to his Empire, we ſhall have no Cauſe to wonder at his leaving ſuch immenſe Treaſures to his Son.

But, beſides theſe Revenues from Abroad, he had a large Income from the Taxes, which his own Subjects annually paid him, and the Improvements, which he made of his own Eſtate; which, in thoſe Days, were accounted, not only lawful and allowable, but even honourable and commendable in Princes, as well as others. The ſacred Hiſtory has preſerved the Names of Officers, whom he employed in this Capacity; and, from the different Provinces, wherein they acted, we may, in ſome meaſure, form a Judgment of the Largeneſs of this Branch of his prodigious Income. He had Officers ſet over the Labourers, who were to till his Ground; Officers, to take care of the Dreſſing of his Vines, Olive, and Fig-trees; Officers, to inſpect the Gathering of his Fruits, and the Managerment of his Wine and Oil-cellars; Officers, to look to the Feeding of his Camels and Aſſes, his Herds of Cattle, and Flocks of Sheep; and Officers, who were to attend to the Selling, and Exportation of all theſe: For *David*, we muſt know, had the Command of the *Mediterranean* Sea, and had eſtabliſhed a Commerce with the *Phenicians*, *Egyptians*, *Syrians*, *Philiſtines*, and other Nations, who took off his Camels, Aſſes, Oxen, Sheep, Wine, Corn, Oil, Fruits, and other Commodities, in large Quantities, and at very advantageous Prices: All which, being put together, will make the Amount, of what *David* left his Son, no leſs, than what the ſacred Writer has recorded.

And indeed, conſidering the vaſt Expences *Solomomon* was at, in his Chariots, in his Horſes, in his Camels, in his Armies, in his Shipping, in his Furniture, in his Servants, for his Table, and for his Women, which came at length to no leſs, than a thouſand, and all to be maintained in the Port of Queens, we can harldly think, that a ſmall Revenue would ever have been ſufficient to anſwer all theſe Demands.

The Scripture indeed informs us, that *Solomon*'s annual Income was *ſix hundred threeſcore and ſix Talents of Gold*, *beſides what he had of the Merchant-men, and of the Traffick of Spice-merchants, and of all the Kings of* Arabia, *and of all the Governors of the Country*: But theſe ſix hundred threeſcore and ſix Talents of Gold are thought, by moſt Interpreters, to be no more, than what aroſe from the Tribute, which he impoſed upon conquered Nations; over and above which, he had a yearly Tax, paid by his own Subjects; Duties upon the Import or Export of all Merchandize; Mines of Gold, and Silver, and other Metals; the voluntary Preſents of other Princes; and a Trade to *Ophir* and *Tarſhiſh*, which brought him in Riches ineſtimable.

Theſe were two Branches of Profit, which his Father had not, at leaſt not in the ſame Extent. Of the former it is ſaid, that *every Man, that came to hear* Solomon's *Wiſdom, brought his Preſent, Veſſels of Silver, and Veſſels of Gold, and Garments, and Armour, and Spices, and Horſes, and Mules,* and continued to do the ſame every Year; and of the latter, that he ſent *Veſſels to* Ophir, which, in one Voyage, *brought him four hundred and fifty Talents of Gold, together with Almug-trees and precious Stones*; and to *Tarſhiſh* likewiſe, *which brought Gold, and Silver, and Ivory, and Apes, and Peacocks*; and as, by this Means, he came *to ſurpaſs all the Kings of the Earth for Riches,* it may be worth our while to enquire a little, where the Places, which produced ſuch Plenty of Wealth, were, in ancient Times ſituated, and both how, and by whom, a Trade ſo very advantageous might probably be carried on.

Q. *In what Part of the World was the Land of* Ophir *ſituated?*

A. Amidſt the vaſt Variety of Opinions, concerning the Situation of theſe two famous Places, *Ophir* and *Tarſhiſh*, the learned *Grotius* has ſuggeſted a good Expedient, one would think, how to find them out; namely, by conſidering what Commodities were brought from thence, and then enquiring of Merchants, who have been in the remoter Parts of the World, where not only Gold and precious Stones, but Ivory likewiſe, and Almug Trees, and whatever elſe we read of, was brought from thence, is now to be found: But this Expedient will not do; not only becauſe the Seats of Traffick are frequently changing, and any Country may, in Time, be exhauſted of the Commodities it once abounded with; but becauſe it is no eaſy Matter to tell (by the imperfect Deſcription we have of them) of what diſtinct Species ſome of theſe Commodities were. The Almug Tree, for Inſtance, has been a Puzzle to moſt Interpreters; nor are they as yet agreed, whether it was the Coral, Ebony, Brazil, Pine, or Citron Wood; nay, ſome will have it to have been no particular Tree at all, but only a general Name for any Wood whatever, that was excellent in its Kind: And how then can thoſe Commodities, that are of ſo indefinite a Signification, be any Characteriſtick to the Situation of any Country?

Nor is there much more Certainty to be gather'd from the Names of the Places we are in queſt of; for, tho' it be allowed, that *Ophir* was the Country which at firſt was peopled by *Ophir*, one of *Joktan*'s Sons, who are ſaid to have inhabited the *Country from* Meſha *to* Sephar, *a Mountain in the* Eaſt; yet, where *Meſha* and *Sephar* are to be placed, we know no more than we do where *Ophir* lies. And, in like manner, tho' *Tarſhiſh* may be ſuppoſed, by ſome, to be a Town or Country not far diſtant from *Ophir*, yet others will have it to be no proper Name at all; but, by *Ships of Tarſhiſh*, or *from* Tarſhiſh, underſtand no more, than *Veſſels able to bear a long Voyage*, i. e. large Merchant Ships, in Oppoſition to ſmall Craft, intended for Home-trade in navigable Rivers. So incompetent are the Marks whereby we may deſcry the true Situation of theſe unknown Places! And therefore we can expect no other, but that the Conjectures of learned Men about them ſhould be widely diſtant.

Q. *Recite the Opinions of ſome learned Writers concerning the Country of* Ophir.

A. In Relation to the Land of *Ophir*, which is more particularly under our Enquiry, *Joſephus* (and from him many others) places it in the *Indies*, in a Country which he calls the *Golden Coaſt*, not unlikely the *Cherſoneſus Aurea*, known now by the Name of *Malacca*, and is a Peninſula oppoſite to *Sumatra*. The learned *Bochart* contends hard for the Iſle *Taphrobane*, ſo famous among the Antients, which is called *Ceilon*, and lies in the Kingdom of *Malabar*, becauſe this Place (as he tells us) abounds with Gold, Ivory and precious Stones. *Arius Montanus* will needs remove it into *America*; and when *Chriſtopher Columbus* at firſt diſcovered the Iſland *Hiſpaniola*, in 1492, he uſed to make his Boaſts that he had found the *Ophir* of *Solomon*, becauſe he perceived deep Caverns in the Earth, from whence he ſuppoſed that Prince might have dug his Gold. *F. Calmet* is no leſs ſingular in his Opinion: He places *Ophir* ſomewhere in *Armenia*, not far from the Sources of the *Tygris* and *Euphrates*; and to obviate the Objection of the Country's not bordering on the Sea, and not being at Diſtance enough for a three Years Voyage, he ſuppoſes that *Solomon's* Fleet made a trading Voyage of it; that in one Place it met with all the Commodities it brought home; but on the Coaſt of *Ethiopia* took in Apes, Ebony and Parrots; in *Arabia* Ivory and Spices, and at *Ophir* (or the Place of Traffick, where the People of *Ophir* reſorted) Gold: And though this *Ophir* might be no maritime Country, yet this hinders not, ſays he, why the Gold, which it produced, might not be brought by Land-carriage to ſome Part of the *Tygris* or *Euphrates*, which, at that Time, were a great Way navigable. *Grotius*, as well as *Calmet*, is of Opinion, that *Solomon* did not ſend his Fleet to any Part, either of the *Eaſt* or *Weſt-Indies*, but only to a Part of *Arabia* (by *Arrian* called *Aphar*, by *Pliny Saphar*, and by *Ptolomy Sapphera*) ſituate on the main Ocean; and that the *Indians* brought down their Merchandizes thither, to be bought by *Solomon*'s Factors, and ſhipped on board his Fleet. And (to name no more) *Huetius*, in his Diſſertation upon the Subject, endeavours to perſuade us, that *Ophir* lay upon the *Eaſt* Coaſt of *Africa*, and more particularly was that ſmall Country which is called *Sophala*; that *Solomon*'s Fleet went out of the *Red-Sea*, and from the Harbour of *Ezion-geber*, entered into the *Mediterranean*, by a Canal of Communication which joined the two Seas; and that having doubled the Cape of *Guadarfay*, and coaſted along the *African* ſhore, it came at length to *Sophala*, and there met with Plenty of all the Merchandize and Curioſities that the ſacred Hiſtory ſpecifies.

Which of theſe Conjectures (for Conjectures they are all) make the neareſt Approaches to Truth, it is hard to determine; only we may adventure to ſay, that if any Part of *Arabia* did furniſh the World, in thoſe Days, with the beſt Gold, and in the greateſt Quantity (as ſome good Authors ſeem to ſay) they who would have the *Ophir* of the Holy Scriptures there ſituated, ſeem, of all others, to have the beſt Foundation for their

Conjecture; eſpecially conſidering that the Uſe of the Compaſs not being then known, the Way of Navigation was, in thoſe Days, by coaſting, which would carry a Ship into *Africk* much better than either into the *Eaſt* or *Weſt-Indies*.

CHAP. XII.

The Iſraelites *demand of* Rehoboam *a Relaxation of Taxes; he, by the Advice of the young Men, anſwers them roughly; for which Ten Tribes revolt.* Adoram *killed, and* Rehoboam *flies, and, raiſing an Army, is forbidden to proceed in his intended Hoſtilities.* Jeroboam *made King of* Iſrael, *and ſtrengthens himſelf by Cities, and by the Idolatry of the two Calves.*

Q. WHAT *were the particular Grievances which the People deſired* Rehoboam *to redreſs?*

A. What theſe were we may gather from 1 *Kings* iv. 7, *&c. viz.* the Tribute *Solomon* exacted for his Buildings, the Expence of his Family, and the Maintenance of his Chariots and Horſes, which being for the Honour of the Nation, ought to have been born more contentedly by a People enjoying ſuch a large Share of Peace and Plenty, and from a Prince, who had brought in ſuch vaſt Riches to his Subjects, as made Silver to be of no value at all, in his Days, Chap. x. 21. But People are more ſenſible of their Preſſures, than of their Enjoyments, and feel the leaſt Burthens, when they are moſt at eaſe. It is obſervable, however, that among all their Complaints they take no Notice of *Solomon*'s Idolatry, of the ſtrange Worſhip which he had introduced, though this, one would think, ſhould have been reckoned among the greateſt of their Grievances.

Q. *How young do you imagine theſe Politicians were, who gave* Rehoboam *his ill Advice?*

A. They were not ſo young, but they might have known better; for, as *Rehoboam* was one and forty Years old, when he entered upon his Kingdom; ſo theſe Gentlemen having been brought up with him, muſt have been much about the ſame Age, but they were raw and unexperienced, and unacquainted with the Humours of the People, and therefore they gave the King ſuch unſeaſonable advice.

Q. *Was it uſual for Kings to bring up their Children among the Sons of Noblemen?*

A. It was a common Cuſtom among the Kings of the *Eaſt*, to have their Sons educated among the young Lords that were of the ſame Age; which, as it created a generous Spirit of Emulation, and both indeared the Prince to the Nobles, and the Nobles to the Prince, could not but tend greatly to the Benefit of the Publick. *Seſoſtris*, the moſt famous Prince that ever *Egypt* produced, is ſaid to have been educated this way; and, by the gallant Youths, that were his Cotemporaries and Fellow-pupils, it was that he afterwards did ſo many ſurprizing Actions. The ſame Cuſtom was in uſe among the *Perſians*, as we may learn from the Life of *Cyrus*; and of *Alexander the Great* we are told, that his Father *Philip* had him trained up in his Youth, among thoſe young Noblemen, who became his great Captains in the Conqueſt of all *Aſia*. So that *Solomon*'s Method and Deſign, in the Education of his Son, was wiſe and well concerted, though it failed of Succeſs.

Q. *Did* Rehoboam *act poltickly, when he ſent* Adoram *to pacify the People?*

A. It was certtinly a Piece of great Imprudence to ſend any one to treat with them, when they were ſo highly exaſperated; but to ſend him that was an obnoxious Man, as having the principal Care of the very Tributes they complained of, was downright Infatuation; becauſe nothing is ſo natural, as to hate thoſe that are the Inſtruments of our Oppreſſion, or any ways employed in it.

Q. Rehoboam *being terrified at the Death of his Collector, betook himſelf to his Chariot: Was it uſual in thoſe Times for Kings to ride in Chariots?*

A. This is the firſt Time that we read of a King's riding in a Chariot. *Saul* and *David*, and *Solomon* rode in none; but after the Diviſion of the Kingdom, mention is frequently made of the Uſe of them, both by the Kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael*.

Q. *How came* Jeroboam *to ſet up Idolatry?*

A. The *Jewiſh* Doctors have a Tradition, that after *Rehoboam*, the Son of *Solomon*, had left *Shechem* in haſte, and made the beſt of his Way to *Jeruſalem*, *Jeroboam* called a Council, conſiſting partly of pious, and partly of wicked Men; that, in this Council, he propoſed whether they would agree, and ſubſcribe to all that he ſhould appoint; that to this they declared their Aſſent; and he thereupon conſtituted himſelf King; that when he propoſed farther, whether, if he ſhould eſtabliſh Idolatry, they would agree and conſent to it, the pious Party were ſhocked, and began to expreſs their Indignation; but that their wicked Neighbours in the Council pacified them, by whiſpering in their Ears, "That *Jeroboam* had no Intention to "ſet up Idolatry, but only mentioned it in a comparative Senſe, and with Deſign to try the Ex"tent of their Obedience": So that by this Fraud, the pious People in the Council were drawn in, and even *Abijah* himſelf prevailed on to ſubſcribe implicitly to whatever *Jeroboam* ſhould think fit to enact; by which Means he took an Occaſion (as the Iniquity of the Times favoured him not a little) to eſtabliſh Idolatry by Law.

Solomon, we all agree, was a Man of great Fame for his Knowledge, and yet, in the very Maturity of his Age, he diſcovered a ſtrong Inclination to Idolatry, which could not but make a bad Impreſſion upon the Minds of his Subjects, when they ſaw the Preference that was given to it, by ſo wiſe a Prince. His Son *Rehoboam* was the Iſſue of a Woman, that ſprung from an infamous Nation, an *Ammoniteſs* by Birth, who (as far as it appears) was never a Proſelite; and, having a great hand in her Son's Education, might give him a deep Tincture of her own Sentiments: For, in his Reign, we read, that *the People built them High-places, on every high Hill, and under every green Tree, and did according to all the Abominations of the Nations, which the Lord caſt out before the Children of* Iſrael, which they durſt not have done, had the King diſcountenanced them by his own Example.

After a Succeſſion of ſuch idolatrous Princes, in the Reign of King *Joſiah*, *the Book of the Law was found in the Houſe of the Lord*, at which *Hilkiah, the High-prieſt*, ſeemed to expreſs an uncommon Joy and Wonder; and though this might poſſibly be the authentick Copy, which, by God's Command, was laid up in the Sanctuary, yet how much the reading of it in any Copy was, at that Time, diſuſed, we may gather from what the Hiſtorian tells us of the King, *viz.* that *when he had read the Words of the Book of the Law, he rent his Cloaths*; and by Parity of Reaſon, we may infer, that, what through the bad Example of their Kings, who gave Life and Encouragement to idolatrous Practices, and what through the Negligence of the People, in not peruſiing the Books, wherein the Tranſactions of former Times were recorded, the Generation, we are now ſpeaking of, might have forgot the Hiſtory of *Aaron*'s *molten Calf*, and the Puniſhment purſuant thereupon, and might therefore be induced to worſhip another, without any Dread, or Apprehenſions of Danger.

Q. *But why did he chuſe* Calves *for the Objects of the People's Worſhip?*

A. How the Figure of a *Calf*, or any other Animal, can be a Symbol of a Deity, 'tis difficult to conceive. But a certain learned Author, who ſeems a little ſingular in his Opinion, will needs have it, that the golden Calves, which *Jeroboam* made, were in Imitation of the Cherubims (in his Account theſe were *winged Oxen*) *Moſes* had placed upon the Ark of the Covenant, whereon the *Glory of the Lord* ſat inthroned. Theſe Cherubims in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, and afterwards in *Solomon*'s Temple, were placed in the Sanctuary, and ſecreted from vulgar Sight; *Jeroboam*, to make his Religion more condeſcenſive, placed his Calves in open View, ſo that every one, who looked on them, might, through them, worſhip the *God of Iſrael*, without repairing to the Temple of *Jeruſalem*.

This Notion (if it were true) would make the Tranſition eaſy from the Worſhip at *Jeruſalem*, to the Worſhip at *Dan* or *Bethel*; but we can hardly imagine, that *Jeroboam* had either ſo harmleſs, or ſo conformable a Deſign, in ſetting up theſe golden Images. Whatever his Deſign was, 'tis certain, that the Scripture all along repreſents him, as, of all others, the principal Perſon, that *made* Iſrael *to ſin, that drew* Iſrael *from ſerving the Lord, and made them ſin a great Sin:* And therefore we may, obſerve, that, whenever it deſcribes a bad Prince, one Part of his Character is, that he imitated the Sin of *Jeroboam, the Son of* Nebat, *who* (as the Prophet upbraids his Wife) *went, and made him other Gods, and molten Images, to provoke me to Anger, and to caſt me behind thy Back*, ſaith the Lord.

The Truth is, *Jeroboam* had lived a conſiderable Time in the Land of *Egypt*, had contracted an Acquaintance with the King thereof, and formed an Intereſt among the People; and therefore finding himſelf under a Neceſſity of making an Alteration in the eſtabliſhed Religion of his Country, he thought it the wiſeſt Method to do it upon the *Ægyptian* Model, that thereby he might indear himſelf to that Nation, and, in caſe he met with Oppoſition from his Rival, *Rehoboam*, might hope for Aſſiſtance from that Quarter. For, as the *Egyptians* had two Oxen, which they worſhipped, one called *Apis*, at *Memphis*, the Metropolis of the upper *Egypt*; and another called *Mnevis*, at *Hierapolis*, a principal City of the lower; ſo he made two Calves of Gold, and placed one of them in *Bethel*, which was in the South Part of the Country of *Iſrael*, and the other in *Dan*, another conſiderable Town in the North.

Q. *But how came* Jeroboam *to ſet up his* Calves *at* Bethel *and* Dan, *rather than any other Place?*

A. Dan was a Town, famous for the *Teraphim* of *Micah* unto which there had been a great Reſort for many Ages; and *Bethel* was in every one's Opinion, a holy Place, that which *Jacob* had conſecrated after he had been vouchſafed the Viſion of the *Ladder*, and where God had ſo frequently appeared to him, that he thought he had Reaſon to call it *the Gate of Heaven*.

Jeroboam, could not be inſenſible of the Advantage, his Rival enjoyed, in poſſeſſing the Temple; and might, many Times, wiſh, he had been able to have built one that might have ſtood in Competition with it; but this was impoſſible. *Seven Years and an half* had *Solomon* been, in compleating the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, notwithſtanding the Multitude of the Hands that he employed, and the vaſt Preparations of the Money and Materials that his Father had left him. To build one leſs magnificent, had been inglorious to *Jeroboam*; and to build one any ways adequate, was more than he could hope to ſee finiſhed in his Days. The People were grown weary of ſuch publick expenſive Works: The Tax had been heavy and burthenſome to them. *Thy Father made our Yoke grievious*, was the Complaint, they brought againſt *Rehoboam*: Upon this the whole Revolt was founded; and therefore, in the preſent State of *Jeroboam*'s Affars, a new Temple was, of all Projects, the moſt unpopular, and the likelieſt to create a total Defect; ſince it was running directly into his Rival's Error, and, in Effect, declaring, that his *Little-finger* ſhould be found heavier than *Soloman's Loins* had ever been.

In the mean Time his Subjects deſerted apace; and, for want of a Place of religious Worſhip to reſort to, were returning to *Jeruſalem*, and to their Allegiance to the Houſe of *David* at once. Something therefore was neceſſary to remedy this growing Evil; and becauſe *Jeroboam* readily foreſaw, that, to ſupport himſelf in his Uſurpation, he might poſſibly want the Aſſiſtance of the *Egyptians*; the beſt Policy, that, at preſent, occurred to his Thoughts, was, to do a Courteſy to them, in ſetting up a *Form of Worſhip* much like theirs, and, at the ſame Time, to gratify his own Subjects, in the Choice of ſuch Places of Worſhip, as had been famous in Days of old, and whoſe reputed Sacredneſs, as well as Proximity, might commute for the want of a Temple.

The Speech, which *Joſephus* makes for *Jeroboam*, upon this Occaſion, is to this Purpoſe. *I need not tell you, my Countrymen, that God is every where, and not confined to any certain Place, but wherever we are, he hears our Prayers and accepts our Worſhip, in one Place as well as another; and therefore I am not at all for your going up to* Jeruſalem *at this Time, to a People, that hate you. 'Tis a long tedious Journey, and all this only, for the Sake of Religion. He who built that Temple, was but a Man, as every one here is, and the golden Calves, I have provided for you, the one in* Bethel, *and the other in* Dan, *are conſecrated, as well as the Temple, and brought ſo much nearer to you, on Purpoſe for the Convenience of your Worſhip, where you may pay your Duty to God, in ſuch a Manner, as beſt pleaſes you, &c.*

Q. *Was it Policy in* Jereboam *to permit* the meaneſt of the People *to officiate about theſe new-erected Idols?*

A. The *Hebrew* Words *Mikezoth Haam*, do properly ſignify *out of all the People*, and not *the loweſt of* *of the People.* This Expoſition *Bochart* has juſtified by a great many Examples of the Uſes of theſe Words in other Places: So that their Meaning muſt be, not that *Jeroboam* employed the Refuſe of the People only, but that he employed any, though they were not of the Tribe of *Levi*, though they had no previous Qualifications to recommend them, to officiate as Prieſts about his Idols. To employ the meaneſt of the People only in this Office, had been bad Policy, and expoſing his new Inſtitution to Contempt; but to admit any that offered themſelves, of what Rank or Quality ſoever; to lay open the Prieſthood, and deſtroy the needleſs Diſtinction of Men and Things (as the modern Phraſe is) this had in it the Air of Free-thinking, and muſt therefore be a very grateful Thing, and ingratiate himſelf, no doubt, with the People.

Q. *Was the grand Feſtival which* Jeroboam *celebrated on this Occaſion, inſtituted by himſelf, or was it one of their old Feaſts?*

A. As the *Jews* had their Feaſts of Tabernacles on the fifteenth Day of the ſeventh Month, ſo *Jeroboam* had a Feaſt on the fifteenth Day of the eighth Month, which he inſtituted of his own accord. Some ſuppoſe, indeed, that as this Feaſt was appointed by God to be obſerved after the gathering of the Fruits, which might be ſooner ripe in *Jeruſalem*, than in the Northern Parts of the Country, ſo *Jeroboam* might pretend that the eighth Month would be a better Time for it, than the tenth, becauſe then they would every where be gathered. Others imagine, that he might have this farther Deſign in the Alteration of this Month, *viz.* that the People of *Judah*, when their own Feaſt was over, a Month before at *Jeruſalem*, might have Opportunity to come to his, if Curioſity led them. But the plain Caſe is, that he did every Thing he could in Oppoſition to the eſtabliſhed Religion, and his chief Intention was to alienate the People from *Jeruſalem*.

CHAP. XIII.

A Prophet of Judah *prophecies;* Jeroboam *offering him Violence, his Hand withers, and at the Prayer of the Prophet is reſtored; he refuſing the King's Entertainment, departs from* Bethel. *By the Perſuaſion of an old Prophet he returns back; for which he is reproved of God, and ſlain by a Lion; he is buried by the old Prophet, who confirms his Prophecy.* Jereboam's *Obſtinancy.*

Q. WHO *was this Prophet who denounced Deſtruction to the Altar at* Bethel?

A. Who this Prophet was, Commentators are not agreed. The *Jews* would generally have it to have been *Iddo*; but unleſs we may ſuppoſe that what is here related fell out in the latter End of *Jeroboam*'s Reign, *Iddo* could not be the Perſon, becauſe *Iddo* was alive in the Days of *Abijah*, the ſame who had foretold him his Exaltation to the Crown of *Iſrael*; but beſides that, *Abijah* was alive after the Time that this Prophet was ſlain. *Abijah* was certainly a Native of *Shiloh*, and lived in *Shiloh*, which is in the Tribe of *Ephraim*, and Part of *Jeroboam*'s Dominions; whereas it is expreſly ſaid of this Prophet, that he came from *Judah*: So that there is no Foundation, ſo much as for a Conjecture, what the Name of this Man of God was.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon this Prophecy?*

A. This is one of the moſt remarkable Prophecies that we have in ſacred Writ. It foretels an Action that exactly came to paſs above three hundred and forty Years afterwards. It deſcribes the Circumſtances of the Action, and ſpecifies the very Name of the Perſon that was to do it; and therefore every *Jew* who lived in the Time of its Accompliſhment, muſt have been convinced of the divine Authority of a Religion founded upon ſuch Prophecies as this, ſince none but God could foretel Events at ſuch a Diſtrance.

Q. *Why did this Prophet refuſe* Jeroboam's *Offer; and why was he forbid to return by the ſame Way he came?*

A. Why this Prophet was forbid to eat or drink with the People of *Bethel*, the Reaſon is obvious, becauſe he was to have no Familiarity with Idolaters; but why that he ſhould not return by the ſame Way that he went, is not ſo very evident. There is a Paſſage in *Iſaiah* concerning *Sennacherib*, which helps, as ſome think, to elucidate this Matter, where God tells him, that *he would turn him back by the ſame Way that he came*, Chap. xxxvii. 29, 34. *i. e.* he ſhould return home without doing any Thing; all his Threats, and all his great Projects ſhould have no Effect againſt *Jeruſalem*: And, in like Manner, when God commanded the Prophet not *to return by the ſame Way*, it was as much as if he had ſaid, "See that thou be conſtant "and ſtedfaſt in executing the Charge committed "to thee; let nothing hinder or divert thee, but "take abundant Care that thou do thy Buſineſs ef"fectually." But this Conſtruction is a little too much ſtrained; nor can I ſee, why we may not ſay, that God injoined his Prophet *not to return by the ſame Way*, leſt *Jeroboam*, or any other of the Inhabitants of *Bethel*, either to ſatisfy their Curioſity upon an Occaſion ſo uncommon, might ſend Men after him to bring him back, or to do him ſome Miſchief, for his ſevere Denunciations againſt their Altar and way of Worſhip.

Q. *What was this Prophet's Offence, that God ſhould think proper to puniſh him ſo ſeverely for it?*

A. We may think, indeed, that his Offence was but ſmall, and that he hardly deſerved ſo ſevere a Fate; but then we ſhould do well to conſider, that whenever God, in an extraordinary Manner diſcovers his Will to a Prophet, he always makes ſuch a ſenſible Impreſſion upon his Mind, that he cannot but perceive himſelf actuated by a divine Spirit, and conſequently cannot but be aſſured of the Evidence of his own Revelation. This Evidence the Prophet that was ſent to *Bethel* had; for as he was able, by the Power that was given him, to work Miracles, he could not but be ſenſible of his divine Miſſion, and that the particular Injunction of *his not eating or drinking in the Town of* Bethel, was as much the Will of God, as any other Part of his Commiſſion.

Now the Deſign of God, in this Prohibition, was to expreſs his Abhorrence of that idolatrous Place; and therefore the other pretended Revelation of the old Prophet, who lived therein, was juſtly ſuſpected, not only becauſe it was repugnant to God's main Deſign, but becauſe it came from a Perſon who had given no great Teſtimony of his Sincerity, in chuſing to live in a Place notoriouſly infected with Idolatry, and yet making no publick Remonſtrance againſt it. The Conſideration of this one Circumſtance ſhould have made the young Prophet diffident of what the other told him, at leaſt, till he had ſhewn him ſome divine Teſtimony to convince him; for it argued a great deal of Levity, if not Infidelity of his own Revelation, to liſten to that of another Man, in Contradiction to what he had abundant Reaſon to believe was true.

The ſhort of the Matter is: The Prophet from *Judah* had ſufficient Evidence of the Truth of his own Revelation; had ſufficient Cauſe to ſuſpect ſome corrupt Ends in the Prophet that came to recall him, and had Reaſon to expect an Interpoſition of the ſame Power that gave him the Injunction to repeal it: And therefore his Crime was an eaſy Credulity, or complying with an offer meerly to gratify a petulant Appetite that he knew was repugnant to a divine Command; and the Leſſon we are to learn from God's Severity in this Inſtance, is, not to ſuffer our Faith to be perverted by any Suggeſtions that are made againſt a Revelation that is of unconteſted divine Authority, but *if an Angel from Heaven* (as the Apoſtle puts the Caſe) *ſhould preach any other Goſpel than what we have received, to deteſt and denounce him accurſed*, Gal. i. 8, 9.

Q. *But why was the lying Prophet ſuffered to go unpuniſhed?*

A. Here we may take Occaſion to admire the unſearchable Secrets of the divine Juſtice. *Jeroboam* revolts from his lawful Sovereign; forſakes the Worſhip of the true God; engages the People in groſs Idolatry, and is himſelf hardened with the Menaces and Miracles of the Prophet that was ſent to him. A falſe Prophet deceives an innocent Man with a Lye, and draws him into an Act of Diſobedience, contrary to his Inclination; and yet this wicked *Jeroboam*, and this ſeducing Prophet go unpuniſhed, while the other, who might mean no ill, perhaps, in turning back, is ſlain by a Lion, and his Body *deprived of the Sepulchre of his Fathers*. We muſt acknowledge, indeed, that the Depths of the Judgments of God are an Abyſs that our Underſtandings cannot fathom: But nothing certainly can be a more ſenſible Proof of the Truth of another Life, and of the eternal Recompences or Puniſhments that attend it, than to ſee the Righteous ſo rigorouſly treated here for very ſlight Offences; *Moſes* excluded the Land of Promiſe for a diffident Thought; *Lot's* Wife changed into a Statue of Salt for her looking back; and *David*, for a vain Curoſity, puniſhed with the Death of no leſs than ſeventy thouſand of his Subjects: And if God be thus ſevere to his own Servants; *if Judgment thus begins at the Houſe of God, where ſhall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear?* 1 Pet, iv. 17, 18. As Sentence againſt every evil Man therefore is not ſpeedily executed, this is our Proof, this our Aſſurance, that *God will bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil*, Eccleſ. xii. 14.

Q. *Who was this old Prophet; and what might be his Reaſon for ſeducing an innocent Man into an Act of Diſobedience?*

A. The Learned are divided in their Sentiments concerning this Prophet at *Bethel*. Some will needs have him to have been a falſe Prophet, highly in eſteem with King *Jeroboam*, becauſe he propheſied to him good Things, and ſuch as would humour him in his Wickedneſs. To this Purpoſe they tell us, that going to viſit the King one Day, and finding him in a deep Concern, upon account of the Menaces and Reproaches which the Man of God from *Judah* had denounced againſt him, he undertook to perſuade him, that that Prophet was an Impoſtor; and to elude the Force of the Miracle he had wrought, by telling him, that there was nothing extraordinary in his Altar's falling down, conſidering that it was new-built, not thoroughly ſettled, loaded with Sacrifices, and heated with Fire: And as for the Matter of his Arm, that was occaſioned only by his having over-wrought himſelf in pulling the Sacrifices along, and lifting them up on the Altar, which might make his Hand numb for a while, but upon a little reſt, it came to itſelf again; and ſo, with plauſible Diſtinctions, and looſe Inſinuations, he ſhuffled off the Miracle, and made the King more obdurate in Wickedneſs, than ever. Others think more favourably of the old Prophet, *viz.* that he was a true Prophet of God, tho' ſome ſay, a wicked one not unlike the famous *Balaam*, who ſacrificed every Thing to his Profit; whilſt others ſay, he was a weak one, who thought he might innocently employ an officious Lie to bring the Prophet of *Judah* back, who was under a Prohibition, indeed, but ſuch a one, as (in his Opinion) related only to the Houſe of *Jeroboam*, and ſuch others as were of idolatrous Religion.

Q. *What do you obſerve from the Lion's not tearing the Body of the Prophet, after he had killed him?*

A. This is a Demonſtration that the Prophet's Death was not caſual, or the Effect of a Lion's Hunger and ravenous Diſpoſition, but of God's ſingular and juſt Judgment; and conſequently that his Prediction was *divine*, and ſhould, in its proper Time, infallibly be accompliſhed.

Q. *How could the Prophet denounce Judgments againſt the Cities of* Samaria, *when* Samaria, *at that Time, had not ſo much as a Name?*

A. This only ſhews, that the Author or Compiler of theſe Books of *Kings* (whether it was *Eſdras* or *Jeremiah*) lived long after the Time of *Jeroboam*, and writes of Things and Places, as they were in his own Days. He knew full well that *Samaria* was built by *Omri*, fifty Years after *Jeroboam*, ſince himſelf had given the Account of its Foundation: But he was minded to ſpeak to the Phraſe then current, and to make himſelf intelligible to thoſe that read him; and for this Reaſon, no doubt, it is, that in 2 *Kings* xxiii. 18. the falſe Prophet of *Bethel* is ſaid to have *come from* Samaria, though, at that Time, there was no City of that Name.

CHAP. XIV.

Jeroboam *ſends his Wife diſguiſed, with Preſents to the Prophet* Ahijah *at* Shiloh, *to enquire concerning his Son, who was ſick; the Prophet, being forewarned of God, denounces his Ruin, the Death of the Child, and the Deſtruction of* Iſrael. Jeroboam's *Son dies and is buried; and he likewiſe; is ſucceeded by his Son* Nadab. Rehoboam *and* Judah *ſin.* Shiſhak *ſpoils* Jeruſalem. Rehoboam *dies, and is ſucceeded by his Son* Abijam.

Q. WHAT *was the Character of* Jeroboam's *Son* Abijah?

A. In *Ver.* 13. it is ſaid, that *in him there was found ſome good Thing towards the Lord God of* Iſrael; from whence the *Jewiſh* Doctors have deviſed the Story, that he broke down an Hedge (it had better been a *Wall*, I ſhould think) which his Father had made, to keep People from going up to *Jeruſalem* at the three great Feaſts. But, however this be, we may be permitted fairly to infer thus much from the Words:——That he was the only Perſon in his Family, who had expreſſed a Diſlike of the Worſhipping of Calves, an Inclination and Intention to aboliſh it, whenever he ſhould come into Power, and to permit, if not oblige, his Subjects to go up to *Jeruſalem*, to worſhip according as the Law preſcribed.

Q. *Why did* Jeroboam *chuſe his Wife, rather than any other Perſon, to go to the Prophet?*

A. Jeroboam might be for his Wife go to conſult the Prophet at *Shiloh*, becauſe this was a Secret not to be entruſted with any Body elſe; a Secret, which, had it been divulged, might have endangered his whole Government; becauſe, if once his Subjects came to underſtand, that he himſelf had no Confidence in the Calves, which he had ſet up, but, in any Matter of Importance, had Recourſe to the true Worſhip of God, 'tis not to be imagined, what an Inducement this would have been for them to forſake theſe ſenſeleſs Idols, and to return to the Worſhip of the God of *Iſrael*, whom they imprudently had forſaken. The Queen then was the only Perſon, he could have Confidence in. As a Mother, he knew, that ſhe would be diligent in her Enquiry; and, as a Wife, faithful in her Report; but there were ſundry Reaſons, why he might deſire her to diſguiſe herſelf. For, though *Shiloh* lay within the Confines of *Ephraim*, yet there is ſufficient Ground to think, that it was ſubject to the Houſe of *David*, and belonged to the Kingdom of *Judah*. It was certainly nearer *Jeruſalem*, than *Shechem*, which *Rehoboam* had lately fortified, and made his Place of *Reſidence*: And therefore *Jeroboam* thought it not ſafe to venture his Queen in a Place, that was under his Rival's Government, without her putting on ſome Diſguiſe. He knew too, that the Prophet *Abijah* was greatly offended at him for the groſs Idolatry he had introduced, and therefore he thought (as he juſtly might) that, if the Prophet perceived her to be his Wife, he would either tell her nothing, or make Things much worſe than they were. The only Way therefore to come at the Truth, was (as he thought) to do what he did; but herein appears his *Infatuation*, that he ſhould not think the Perſon, whom, in other Reſpects, he held capable of reſolving him in the Fact of his Son, able to ſee through his Guile.

Q. *Can any Reaſon be given why* Sodomy *was one of the reigning Sins at this Time?*

A. There are ſeveral Paſſages in Scripture, ſuch as 1 Kings xv. 12. 2 Kings xxiii. 7. Rom. i. 21, 28, &c. from whence it appears, that this Kind of Wickedneſs did frequently attend Idolatry. Among the Heathen, the moſt filthy Things were committed in their Groves, thoſe Places of Darkneſs and Obſcurity, by the Worſhippers of *Venus*, *Bacchus*, and *Priapus*, becauſe whatever they did of this Kind, was done in Devotion and Honour to their Gods, who, as they imagined, were highly delighted with Obſcenities.

Q. *As* Shiſhak *was ſo nearly allied to* Rehoboam, *does it not ſeem ſtrange thot he ſhould come againſt him and deſtroy his Royal City?*

A. Rehoboam, we muſt remember, was not the Son of *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, and therefore no Relation to *Shiſhak*. But even, had he been never ſo nearly related, as Kingdoms, we know, never marry, ſo *Jeroboam*, 'tis likely, who had lived long in *Egypt*, ſtirred him up to invade his Rival, that thereby he might eſtabliſh himſelf in his new Kingdom: And, for this Reaſon it was, that, when the Armies of *Egypt* had taken the fenced Cities of *Judah*, they returned without giving *Jeroboam* or his Dominions, any, the leaſt Diſturbance.

Q. *Did not* Rehoboam's *making* Brazen Shields *in the Room of the* Golden ones *which* Shiſhak *took away, diſcover the low Condition of his Kingdom?*

A. Theſe Shields were a Matter of State and Grandeur; and therefore it concerned them, if they were able to have them as grand as before: And, as they were carried before the King to the Houſe of the Lord, it ſeemed likewiſe to be a Matter of Religion, that their Value ſhould not be diminiſhed. Now, in making theſe three hundred Shields we are told, that three Pounds of Gold went to one Shield, 1 Kings x. 17. This, at four Pounds an Ounce, or forty eight Pounds Sterling to the Pound, amounts to no more than 43,200 Pounds; and therefore it was a miſerable Caſe, that they were reduced, from ſo much Wealth, to ſo much Poverty, that neither Reaſons of State, nor Religion could raiſe ſo ſmall a Sum on ſo great an Occoſion.

Q. *It is ſaid*, verſe 30. *that there was War between* Rehoboam *and* Jeroboam *all their Days: How does this agree with* Chap. xii. 22. *where* God *commands* Rehoboam *and his People, not to fight againſt the* Iſraelites, *and they obeyed?*

A. Very well, if we will but obſerve, that, tho' the *Jews* were commanded not to make War upon the *Iſraelites*, yet they were not commanded not to *defend* themſelves, in caſe the *Iſraelites* ſhould make War upon them; and, conſidering that they were now become rival Nations, they might, upon the Borders, be continually endeavouring to gain Ground upon each other, and ſo run into frequent Acts of *Hoſtility*, without ever once engaging in a *pitched* Battle.

CHAP. XV.

ABIJAM follows his Father's Sins; God, *however, keeps his Promiſe*; *he dies, and is ſucceeded by his Son* Aſa. Aſa's *good Reign.* Baaſha *wars againſt him. He makes a League with* Benhadad; *he dies, and* Jehoſaphat *ſucceeds him.* Nadab's *wicked Reign*; Baaſha *kills him, deſtroys his Father's Houſe, and ſucceeds him*; *his wicked Reign.*

Q. I*N what Senſe is that true, which is ſaid of* David, verſe 5. *that* he turned not aſide from any Thing that the Lord commanded him, all the Days of his Life, ſave only in the Matter of *Uriah* the *Hittite?*

A. This and the like Phraſes are not to be underſtood as excluſive of every ſinful Action, but only of a ſinful Courſe or State, or of an habitual or continued Apoſtacy from *God*, or from his Ways, as the very Phraſe of *turning aſide* from *God*, or from his Commands, does conſtantly imply, as appears from *Exod.* xxxii. 8. *Deut.* ix. 12, 16. &c. And thus it is moſt true. For *David*'s other Sins were either ſudden and tranſient Acts, proceeding from human Infirmity, and extraordinary Temptations, and ſoon repented of, and blotted out, as in the Caſes of *Nabal* and *Achiſh*; or, Miſtakes of his

Judgment, which was not fully convinced of the Sinfulneſs of ſuch Actions, as in other Caſes that might be alledged; whereas that which concerned *Uriah*'s Wife, was a deſigned and ſtudied Sin, long continued in, defended with a Succeſſion of other Sins, preſumptuous, and ſcandalous to his Government, and to the true Religion, which he ſo eminently profeſſed.

Q. *In reciting the Tranſactions of* Aſa, *it is ſaid,* Ver. 14. *that* the high Places were not removed; *yet,* 2 *Chron.* xiv. 3. *it's ſaid,* he did take them away: *How is this conſiſtent?*

A. He took away thoſe that were devoted to the Worſhip of Idols, as is there ſaid, *he took away the Altars of the ſtrange Gods, and the High Places,* namely, where they were worſhipp'd: But as for thoſe High Places where the true God was worſhipp'd, he did not take them away; partly, becauſe he thought there was no great Evil in them, becauſe they had been uſed by *David* and *Solomon,* and other good and wiſe Men; and becauſe the true God was there worſhipp'd, and that in the Manner, tho' not in the Place, which God had appointed; and partly, becauſe he thought the Removal of them might do much more Hurt than their Continuance, namely, by occaſioning the total Neglect of God's Worſhip by many of the People, who either could not, or through want of competent Faith and Zeal, would not go up to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, now eſpecially, when the *Iſraelites,* their near Neighbours, formerly their Friends, were become their Enemies, and watch'd all Opportunities to invade or moleſt them, which they would do when all their Males were gone up to *Jeruſalem*; and partly, becauſe the People were ſo obſtinately bent towards them, that it was, or at leaſt ſeemed to him, impoſſible to remove them without great Offence, or ſuch Commotions as were highly dangerous to that Church and State.

CHAP. XVI.

Jehu *prophecies againſt* Baaſha. Elah *ſucceeds him*; Zimri *kills and ſucceeds him*; *he, being beſieged by* Omri, *burns himſelf.* Omri *prevails againſt* Tibni, *and is King*; *builds* Samaria; *follows the Sins of* Jeroboam, *and dies*; *is ſucceeded by his Son* Ahab, *who is more wicked than his Predeceſſors.* Hiel *builds* Jericho; *and* Joſhua's *Curſe is fulfilled in him.*

Q. HOW *is* Baaſha's *Exaltation to the Kingdom aſcribed to God,* Ver. 2. *when he got it by Treachery and Cruelty?*

A. Tho' the Way or Manner of invading the Kingdom was from himſelf, and his own wicked Heart; yet the Tranſlation of the Kingdom from *Nadab* to *Baaſha,* ſimply conſidered, was from God; who by his Decree and Providence ordered it, and diſpoſed of all Occaſions, and of the Hearts of all the Soldiers and People, ſo that *Baaſha* ſhould have an Opportunity of executing God's Judgment upon *Nadab*; and ſuch Succeſs thereupon, that he ſhould get a preſent and quiet Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom. Nay, the very Act of *Baaſha,* namely, the killing of his Maſter *Nadab,* was an Act of divine Juſtice, foretold and appointed by God, Chap. xiv. 10. And if *Baaſha* had done this in Obedience to God's Command, and with a ſingle Deſign, to execute God's Vengeance threaten'd againſt him, it had been no more a Sin, than *Jehu*'s Act in killing his Maſter King *Jehoram,* on the ſame Account, 2 *Kings* ix.

Q. *Was it not very preſumptuous in* Hiel *to rebuild* Jericho, *in Defiance of the Curſe denounced by* Joſhua *againſt ſuch as ſhould attempt it?*

A. Jericho was one of the firſt Places that *Joſhua* took in the Land of *Canaan*; and when he took it, he laid it under a *Cherem,* that it ſhould never be rebuilt: But it is preſumeable, that as the Sacred Hiſtory was then very little read, *Hiel* might be ignorant of this Interdict, or, being a profeſſed Idolater himſelf, might, probably, at the Inſtigation of *Jezebel,* or to gain the Favour of the Court, do it in Defiance of God, and to let the World ſee, that, whatever was denounced in his Name, was of no Significance at all, and for this Reaſon met with his condign Puniſhment.

Q. *But why did not God rather puniſh* Hiel *himſelf, than his Children?*

A. This, in itſelf, was a terrible Judgment, to ſee his Children cut off by divine Vengeance before their Time, one after another; and all this for his own Folly and Raſhneſs. See *Jer.* lii. 10. And as for *Hiel* himſelf, poſſibly after he had been ſpared ſo long, that he might be an Eye-witneſs of his untimely Death, he might alſo be cut off, tho' it be not recorded, as not belonging to the Prophecy here mentioned; or, if not, his preſent Impunity was his greateſt Miſery; either, as it continued his Torment in the ſad and laſting Remembrance of his Loſs and Miſery; or as it was a Means to harden his Heart for future Judgments, to which he was reſerved.

CHAP. XVII.

Elijah *foretels* Ahab *of a great Drought*; *is ſent to* Cheriſh, *where the Ravens feed him. He is ſent to* Zarephath *to a Widow, who feeds him with Meal and Oil which waſted not. He raiſes her Son from Death: She acknowledges him to be a Prophet.*

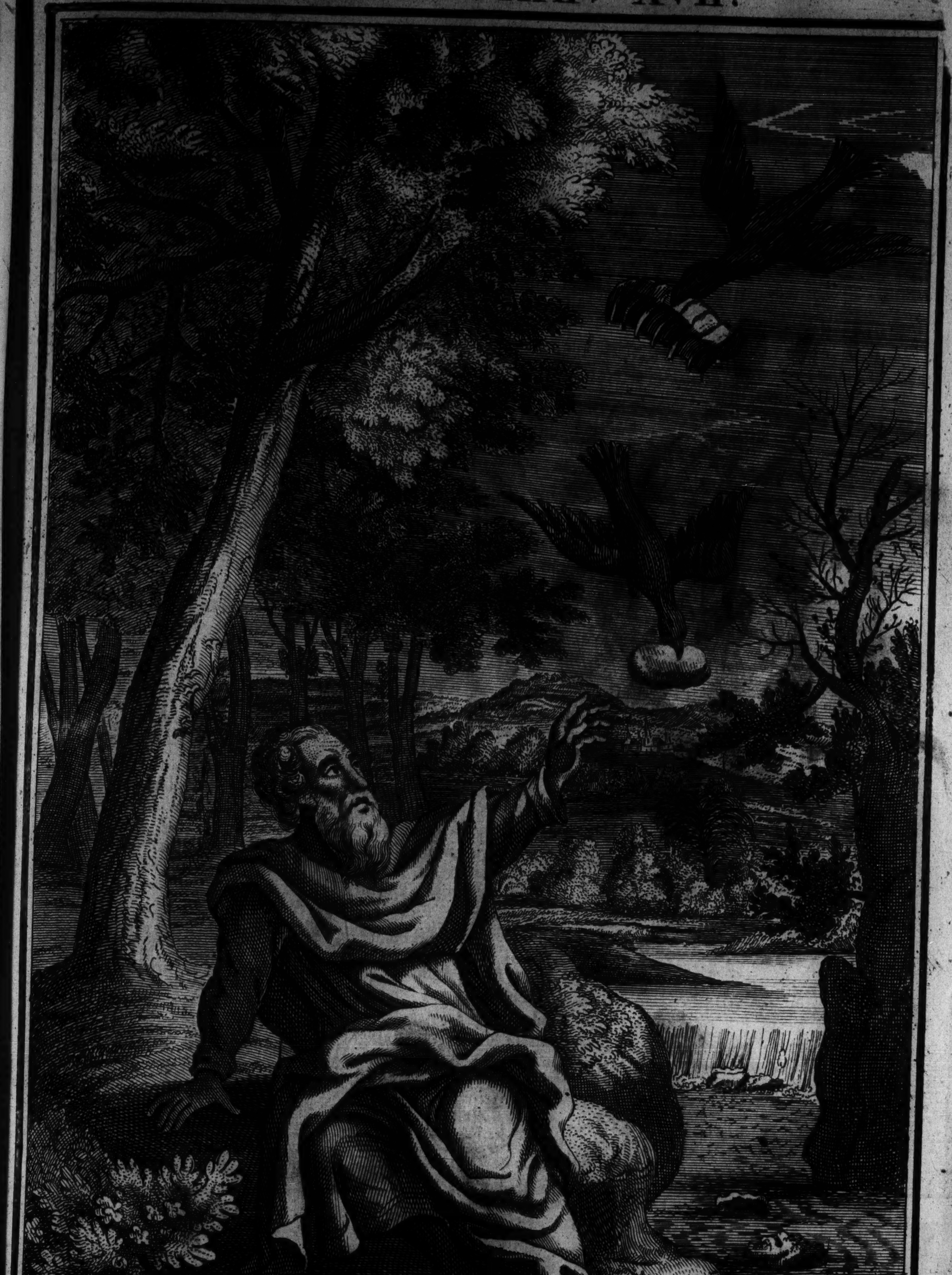
Q. WHO *and of what Place was* Elijah, *who is called the* Tiſhbite?

A. He was of *Theſbe,* a Town on the other Side of *Jordan,* in the Tribe of *Gad,* and in the Land of *Gilead,* where this Prophet was born, or, at leaſt, inhabited for ſome Time. Since the Scripture makes no Mention, either of the Quality of his Parents, the Manner of his Education, or his Call to the *prophetick* Office, ſome *Jewiſh* Doctors have been of Opinion, that he was an Angel, ſent from Heaven, in the Midſt of the general Corruption of the World, to preſerve the true Worſhip of God. Others pretend, that he was a Prieſt, deſcended from the Tribe of *Aaron*; that his Father's Name was *Sabaca,* and his Birth altogether miraculous; whilſt others again will needs have it, that he was *Phineas,* the Son of *Aaron,* who, after having lived a long while concealed, appeared again in the World under the Name of *Elijah.* But where the Scripture is ſilent, all Particulars of this Kind are of ſmall Authority. This however may be ſaid with Safety of him, that he was one of the chief, if not the Prince of the Prophets of his Age; a Man of a great and elevated Soul, of a generous and undaunted Spirit, a zealous Defender of the Laws of God, and a juſt Avenger of the Violations of his Honour.

Q. Elijah *denounces, from God, a Drought of* three Years: *From what Time was this Drought to be computed?*

A. St.

I. KINGS CHAP. XVII.



Elijah fed by ravens.

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MUSEUM

A. St. *James*'s Words are theſe,—Elias *was a Man ſubject to the like Paſſions as we are, and he prayed earneſtly, that it might not rain, and it rained not on the Earth for the Space of three Years and ſix Months.* Our bleſſed Saviour makes mention of the like Compaſs of Time, *Luke* iv. 25, and yet neither of theſe are contradictory to what the ſacred Hiſtory tells us, *viz. That the Word of the Lord came to* Elijah *in the third Year*, 1 Kings xviii. 1. For we muſt remember, that, as *Egypt* had uſually no Rain, but was watered by the River *Nile*; ſo the Land of *Canaan* had generally none, except twice a Year, which they called *the early, and the latter Rain:* The former of theſe was in the Month *Niſan*, which anſwers to our *March*; and the other in the Month *Marheſhvan*, which anſwers to our *October*. Now, at the Beginning of the Drought, *Ahab* might very probably impute the Want of Rain to *natural* Cauſes; but when, after ſix Months, neither *the former*, nor *the latter Rain* fell in their Seaſon, he then began to be enraged at *Elijah*, as the Cauſe of the national Judgment, and forced him, at God's Command, to ſave his Life by Flight: And from that Time the three Years in the Hiſtorian are to be computed, tho' from the firſt Notice, which *Elijah* gave *Ahab* of this approaching Calamity, to the Expiration of it, were certainly three Years and an half. This Calamity is ſaid to have been procured by *Elijah*'s Prayers; but we muſt not therefore imagine, that his Prayers were *ſpiteful* and *malicious*, but *neceſſary* rather, and *charitable* to the Offenders; that, by the ſharp and long Affliction, which they produced, God's Honour, and the Truth of his Word and Threatenings, (which were now univerſally contemned) might be vindicated; and that the *Iſraelites* (whoſe preſent Impunity had harden'd them in their Idolatry) might hereby be awakened to ſee their Wickedneſs, their Dependance upon God, and the Neceſſity of their returning to his Religion and Worſhip.

Q. *Where lay the Brook* Cherith, *where* Elijah *is ordered to hide himſelf?*

A. The Brook *Cherith*, and the Valley, through which it runs, are both very near the River *Jordan*; but whether on the Eaſt or Weſt Side of the River, it is not ſo well agreed. *Euſebius*, or, at leaſt, St. *Jerom*, places it beyond *Jordan*, and ſo on the Eaſt Side of it; but others generally agree in placing it on the Weſt Side, becauſe God, in ſending away *Elijah*, ſays to him, *Get thee hence and turn thee Eaſtward, and hide thyſelf by the Brook* Cherith, *that is before* Jordan, 1 *Kings* xvii. 3. where the Expreſſion, *turn thee Eaſtward*, ſeems to imply, that *Elijah* was on the Weſt Side of *Jordan*; for, had he been on the Eaſt Side, then to have gone to the Brook which ran, on that Side, into *Jordan*, would have been to have turned Weſtward.

Q. *In what Senſe did* Elijah *hinder it from raining?*

A. O, Elijah, ſays the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus*, *how waſt thou honoured in thy wondrous Deeds, and who may glory like thee?* Like thee, who was vouchſafed the Sight of God's glorious and majeſtick Preſence, who hadſt Angels ſent to comfort and refreſh thee when thou waſt weary; who hadſt Fire ſent thee from Heaven, to avenge thee of thine Enemies, when they came to inſult thee; who hadſt thy Body, in a bright Chariot tranſlated into Heaven, without undergoing the common Fate of Mortals; and (what was not the leaſt of thy Prerogatives) who hadſt, whilſt thou liv'd, the Power of locking or unlocking the Storehouſes of Heaven, at thy Pleaſure, and by thy Prayers. It was, doubtleſs, to magnify his Office, which now began to be depretiated not a little, that God authorized his Prophet to accoſt *Ahab* with ſuch marvellous Aſſurance, as if the Diſpenſation of the Rain, and Dew of Heaven, for ſuch a determinate Time, had been intirely at his Diſpoſal; but we miſtake the Matter widely, if we ſuppoſe, that the Prophet had any Part, farther than that he was God's Miniſter and Meſſenger to declare the Thing, in bringing this Famine upon the Land. All Judgments of this Kind are the immediate Work of God; and, *as he does not afflict willingly*, nor *grieve the Children of Men*; ſo, if we will but turn to the preceding Chapter, we ſhall find an Account of ſuch open and avowed Idolatry, and ſuch bold Contempt of the divine Authority, both in the Prince and People, as will ſufficiently juſtify the Severity of God in bringing this national Judgment upon them: For well may the People be ſuppoſed to be generally depraved, when we find it recorded of their Prince, that *he did more to provoke the Lord God of* Iſrael *to Anger, than all the Kings of* Iſrael *that were before him.*

Q. *Ravens are Birds of Prey, and therefore, one would think, very improper Creatures to feed* Elijah.

A. Tho' we ſhould allow, that they were Creatures voracious, and unnatural to their young ones, yet, the more unfit Inſtruments they ſeemed to be, the more they magnified the Almighty Power of him, who controuled their natural Appetites, while he employed them: And, if there was a moral Inſtruction in it, as St. *Chryſoſtom* fancies, the more they might mollify the Prophet's Heart toward the deluded *Iſraelites*, by ſeeing thoſe very Creatures that were cruel to their Young, kind to him. Tho' we ſhould allow, that they were Creatures legally unclean, yet (as it was for the Meat, and not for the Touch, that they were accounted ſo) this we muſt grant was a Caſe extraordinary, wherein the Ceremonial Law was over-ruled by Neceſſity, and by the Law-giver's Diſpenſation. There is this to be ſaid however, in the Defence of God's Choice of Ravens for this Purpoſe, *viz.* that as they are ſolitary Birds, and delight to live about Brooks of Water; ſo they are accuſtomed to ſeek out for Proviſions, and to carry them to the Places of their Abode: Upon which Account they were no improper Creatures for God to employ upon this Service; eſpecially, if what St. *Jerom* tells us may be credited, *viz.* that one of theſe Birds brought *Paul*, the firſt Hermit, half a Loaf every Day, and, when St. *Anthony* came to viſit him, it brought him a whole one, to anſwer the Wants *of theſe two Soldiers of Jeſus Chriſt*, as he words it, but whence it had this, as well as whence *Elijah*'s Ravens had their Supply, we pretend not to tell; and had rather acknowledge our Ignorance in ſuch like Speculations, than take up with uncertain, and ſometimes abſurd Conjectures.

Q. *Where was the Town* Zarephath *ſituated?*

A. *Zarephath*, or as it is called in the *New Teſtament*, *Sarepta*, was a Town which lay between *Tyre* and *Sidon*, but ſomewhat nearer to the latter. Mr. *Maundrel* (in his Journey from *Aleppo*) obſerves that it is the ſame with what now is called *Sarphan*, diſtant about three Hours Travel from *Sidon*, in the Way to *Tyre*. Whatever it was formerly, the ſame Author tells us, that at preſent it conſiſts of no more than a few Houſes, on the Tops of the Mountains, about Half a Mile from the Sea; tho' there is reaſon to believe, that the Part of the City ſtood below, in a Space between the Hills and the Sea, becauſe there are ſtill Ruins of a conſiderable Extent.

Q. *What have the learned noted concerning the Widow's Son?*

A. Some of the *Hebrew* Doctors (and herein they are followed by ſome *Chriſtians*) are of Opinion, that this Widow's Son was the Prophet *Jonas*; that after his Reſurrection, his Mother gave him to *Elijah*; that ever after, he attended on the Prophet, as long as he lived; and, on a certain Occaſion, was diſpatched by him to *Neneveh*, as every one knows. But, beſides that theſe Traditions are deſtitute of any real Proof, *Jonah* was an *Hebrew*, as he himſelf declares, Chap. i. 8. and a Native of *Gath-hepher*, as we read 2 *Kings* xiv. 25. whereas this Widow's Son was a Native of *Zareptha*, a Town belonging to the King of *Sidon*, and by Birth a Stranger to the Race of *Iſrael*.

Q. *Why was the Widow more convinced that* Elijah *was a Prophet from his raiſing her Son, then by the Increaſe of her Oil and Meal?*

A. The Woman had ſufficient Reaſon to believe that *Elijah* was a Prophet ſent from God, when ſhe ſaw the miraculous Increaſe of the Meal and Oil; but upon his not curing her Son, when he lay ſick, but rather ſuffered him to die, her Faith began to droop; where upon ſeeing him revive, her Faith revived with him; and, through the Joy of having him reſtored to her again, ſhe accounted this latter Miracle much greater than the former.

CHAP. XVIII.

Elijah, *in the Extremity of the Famine is ſent to* Ahab; *meets good* Obadiah; *charges him to certify the King of his coming*; *he brings* Ahab *to him*; *he reproves* Ahab *and the Congregation*; *convinces* Baal's *Prophet's by Fire from Heaven*; *they are ſlain.* Elijah, *by Prayer, obtains Rain*; *runs before* Ahab *to* Jezreel.

Q. WHO *was this good* Obadiah, *whom* Ahab *ſent out to ſearch the Land for Water?*

A. There are ſome *Jewiſh* Doctors, who think that *Obadiah* was the ſame with him, whoſe Writings we have among the twelve minor Prophets. They pretend that he was married to that Woman of *Shunen*, where *Eliſha* uſed to lodge; that he was a Diſciple of the Prophet *Elijah*, and the laſt of the three Captains whom King *Ahaziah* ſent to apprehend him; and that, for this Reaſon, he had Compaſſion on him, tho' he deſtroyed the other that came before him, with Fire from Heaven, 2 *Kings* i. 9, *&c.* but all theſe are pure *Apocrypha*. *Obadiah* himſelf, in his Diſcourſe with *Elijah*, ſufficiently tells us, who he was, *viz.* a Perſon truly religious, who worſhipped God alone, and had a ſingular Affection for his Servants; enough, one would think, to have made *Ahab* diſcard, if not perſecute him, had he not found him ſo highly uſeful in the Management of his domeſtick Affairs, as to connive at his not worſhipping *Baal* or the *Calves*, eſpecially ſince we do not read of his going up to *Jeruſalem*, which which was a Defect that God, perhaps, might think proper to diſpence with.

Q. *Does it not ſeem very ſtrange, that* Ahab *ſhould ſearch in every Kingdom for* Elijah, *when, at the ſame Time, he was no farther off than in the Widow's Houſe at* Zarephtha?

A. What Induſtry, that wicked King uſed, to find out the Prophet, wherever he abſconded, we may learn, from the Information of good *Obadiah*, viz. that he ranſacked every Nation, where he could reaſonably think that he was concealed, and, when he found him not, *took an Oath* of the People, that he was not among them. For tho' *Ahab* could not compel other Nations to take an Oath to that Purpoſe, yet conſidering the great Intereſt he had among the neighbouring Princes, he might eaſily prevail with the great Men of each Kingdom to give him that Satisfacton. If we look into his Alliances, we find, that the King of *Tyre* was Father-in-Law, and the King of *Moab* Tributary to him; that *Jehoſophat* was his Friend and Relation, and that the King of *Edom* was dependant on him; that as the Kings of *Arabia* and *Syria* correſponded with *Solomon*, ſo, very likely, they were confederate with *Ahab*; that one of their Articles might be, to deliver up to each other all their their fugitive, or baniſhed Subjects upon Demand; and that this was the Foundation of his Deſire and Expence of this Oath: And yet, notwithſtanding all this ſtrict and diligent Enquiry, *Elijah* might live concealed in the Widow of *Zerephthah*'s Houſe, becauſe he laid ſufficient Obligations upon her, both in preſerving her from the Danger of the Famine, and in reſtoring her dead Son to Life again, to uſe all poſſible Care to conceal him.

Q. *How came* Baal's *Prieſts to accept of* Elijah's *Challenge?*

A. What Notions the Worſhippers of *Baal* might have of the Power of their God, we cannot tell; but as ſending down Fire from Heaven was not above the Reach of Evil Spirits; and ſome lying Traditions might, perhaps, have deſcended to them, concerning the Exploits of their *Baal* in particular, who, as he was thought to be the *Sun*, and to exceed all heavenly Bodies in Heat, might, upon this grand Occaſion, as they thought, exert his Power, and burn up their Sacrifice; they held it the wiſeſt Way to accept of the Prophet's Challenge. The Prophet's Challenge, indeed, was upon ſuch fair Terms, that (whatever Notions they might have of their God) they muſt have forfeited all their Credit with the People, had they pretended to decline it; and therefore, rather than do this, they choſe to venture all upon the Hazard of an After-game, hoping that either they might have an Opportunity of conveying Fire among the Wook clandeſtinely, or that *Elijah* would fail in his Attempt, as well as they, and ſo both ſtand upou equal Ground; or that, if he ſucceeded, the Thing would not be done ſo cleverly, but their might be room for ſome Cavils and Exceptions to be raiſed againſt it.

Q. *But why ſhould he order theſe Prophets to be ſlain?*

A. Upon theſe Preſumptions they might enter the Liſts; and when they were ſo ſhamefully defeated, the Prophet, as an extraordinary Miniſter of God's Vengeance upon Sinners, (eſpecially when the Magiſtrate ſo groſly neglected his Duty) had ſufficient Authority to execute the Sentence of

Death paſſed upon them by the Lord of Life and Death, as Perverters of the Law, and Teachers of Idolatry; as Authors of Cruelty and Inciters of *Jezebel* to murther the Prophets of the Lord; and as Cheats and Impoſtors, to whoſe Execution the People concurred, their Princes gave their Conſent, and their King (as aſtoniſhed at the late ſtupendous Miracle) could make no Oppoſition.

Q. *In what Senſe could* Elijah *affirm, that he was the only Prophet then living, when at the ſame time one hundred Prophets lay concealed by* Obadiah *in a Cave?*

A. Elijah, in his Appeal to the People, tells them, *I, even I only remain a Prophet of the Lord*, Verſe 22. and therefore we can hardly imagine, that all theſe hundred, whom *Obadiah* preſerved, were Men actually inſpired, and inveſted with a prophetick Character, but ſuch only as were the Diſciples of the Prophets, and Candidates for that Office. For it is not unlikely, that even to *Jezebel*'s Time, there were remaining in *Iſrael* Schools of the Prophets, which ſhe endeavoured to deſtroy, as well as thoſe that were bred up in them, that there might none be left to inſtruct the People in the true Religion. Theſe ſhe certainly looked upon as Enemies to her Idolatry, and might poſſibly perſuade her Husband that they were diſaffected to his Government, and Favourers of the Kings of *Judah*, becauſe they worſhipped the ſame God, and thought that the proper Place of his Worſhip was at *Jeruſalem*: And therefore the greater was the Piety and Courage of *Obadiah*, in reſcuing ſo many Victims from the Hands of this furious and enraged Woman.

Q. *What do you think of* Baal's *Prophets cutting themſelves with Knives and Launcets, when they called upon their God to hear them?*

A. A ſtrange Method, one would think, to obtain the Favour of their Gods! and yet, if we look into Antiquity, we ſhall find that nothing was more common in the religious Rites of ſeveral Nations, than this barbarous Cuſtom. To this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that the Prieſts of *Bellona*, when they ſacrificed to that Goddeſs, were wont to beſmear the Victim with their own Blood; that the *Perſian Magi* (according to *Herodotus*) uſed to appeaſe Tempeſts, and allay the Winds, by making Inciſions in their Fleſh; that they, who carried about the *Aſſyrian* Goddeſs, among other mad Pranks, were every now and then cutting with their Knives, and ſlaſhing themſelves, till the Blood guſhed out; and that, even to this Day, ſome modern Travellers tell us, that in *Turky*, *Perſia*, and ſeveral Parts of the *Indies*, there are a Kind of Fanaticks, who think they do a very meritorious Thing, and what is highly acceptable to the Deity, in cutting and mangling their own Fleſh.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Elijah's *bantering* Baal's *Prophets?*

A. The words of the Prophet are very cutting and ſarcaſtical. *Cry aloud; for he is a God* no doubt, tho' he may be ſomewhat deaf, or a great Way off, ſo that he cannot hear, unleſs ye cry aloud; or either he is talking about Buſineſs, or purſuing his Pleaſures; or perhaps he is *on a Journey*, and not at home; or *peradventure he ſleepeth, and muſt be awaked*. The two laſt Notions, *of being aſleep*, and *not at home*, how abſurd ſoever they may be, when applied to the Deity, were certainly ſuch, as ſeveral Idolaters conceived of their Gods, as appears from ſome Paſſages in *Homer*.

Q. *Have you any Thing in particular to obſerve concerning the Altar which* Elijah *repaired?*

A. The Altar, which the ſacred Author here calls *the Altar of the Lord*, was certainly one of thoſe which were built in the Time of the *Judges*, and firſt Kings of *Iſrael*; when, for want of a fixt Place of Worſhip, ſuch Structures were permitted. Both *Tacitus* and *Suetonius* ſpeak of the God of *Carmel*, whom *Veſpaſian* went to conſult, when he was at *Judea*. His Prieſt *Baſilides* promiſed him Succeſs in his Undertakings, but there was neither Temple nor Statue upon the Mountain, but one altar, plain, but very venerable for its Antiquity. Some are of Opinion, that this *Baſilides* was a *Jew*, and Prieſt of the moſt High God; but it ſeems more reaſonable that he was a Pagan Prieſt, and probably the ſame who met *Veſpaſian* in the Temple of *Serapis* in *Egypt*. However this be, the Altar of *Carmel* ſeems to have had its Original from this Altar of the true God, which the antient *Hebrews* firſt erected, and *Elijah* afterwards repaired; which even the *Heathens* held in ſuch Veneration, that when they came to be Maſters of Country, they would not place ſo much as an Image by it.

Q. *To what Purpoſe did* Elijah *pour water round the Altar?*

A. This the Prophet did to make the Miracle more conſpicuous and convincing, to ſhew, that there was no Fallacy in it, no Fire concealed in, or about the Altar, but that the Lightening, which was to conſume the Sacrifice, came from Heaven, and came at his Invocation; for ſo *Joſephus* tells us, that *Elijah* invited the People to draw near, even that they might ſearch and ſpy every where, if they could find any Fire that was ſecretly conveyed under the Altar.

Q. *The Prophet ſeems more than ordinary urgent in his Supplication to God on this Occaſion; but why?*

A. He was the more earneſt and fervent in Prayer, (as *Abarbinel* thinks) becauſe he had undertaken ta make the experiment of God's Power, without any particular Command from him, on his own Accord; nothing doubting, but that he would appear to vindicate his own Honour, even tho' he offered Sacrifice on an High-place, which was not agreeable to the Law.

Q. *Did not* Elijah *ſtoop a little beneath his Office, in girding up his Garments, and running before* Ahab *like a Footman?*

A. In that Country looſe and long Garments were in Uſe; and therefore, when People were minded to run, or to make any great Expedition, their Cuſtom was, to gird them round their Waſte: But why the Prophet condeſcended to become, as it were, the King's Running-footman upon this Occaſion, was to ſhew the World, that his extraordinary Power in working Miracles, and the Conqueſt he had thereby gained over his Enemies, had not made him proud; and to ſatisfy the King of his Readineſs to do him all the Honour imaginable; that he was far from being his Enemy, and only deſired that he would become the true Worſhipper of God, who was (as he could not but ſee) the Lord God of *Iſrael*.

Chap. XIX.

Elijah, *threatened by* Jezebel, *retires to* Beerſheba; *is comforted by an Angel. Being at* Horeb, *he utters his Complaint, and is ſtrengthened by a ſpecial Revelation from God. Is ſent to anoint*

Elijah

Hazael, Jehu, *and* ~~Eliſha~~. Eliſha *caſts his Mantle upon* Eliſha; *upon which the latter leaves his Oxen and follows him.*

Q. DID *not* Elijah *betray a great deal of human Weakneſs in flying from* Jezebel?

A. We own, indeed, that *Elijah* did not, in every Thing, act a conſiſtent Part: He, who but lately was ſo bold and intrepid, as to preſent himſelf before *Ahab*, who had been long in queſt of him, in order to make him ſuffer, as the Diſturber of the publick Peace, is now frightened at the Menaces of a ſilly Woman; and thereupon quits his Country, and flies for his Life, notwithſtanding the late ſignal Interpoſition of Providence in his Favour. But what ſhall we ſay to this? *Elias* was a Man ſubject to the like Paſſions as we are; and it was, probably, in reſpect to this his Infirmity, that the Apoſtle made this Reflection upon him. He knew *Jezebel*, and that ſhe had all the Faults incident to her Sex, in a ſuperlative Degree; that ſhe was fierce, cruel, vindictive and implacable; that in ſlaying the Prieſts of *Baal*, he did her a Diſpleaſure; and that, to revenge herſelf, ſhe had all the Power of the Kingdom under her Command. Theſe Notions ran in his Head, and made ſuch an Impreſſion upon his Spirits, as deprived him of that Reſolution and manly Courage, for which he was heretofore ſo remarkable; nor was there wanting a wiſe Deſign of Providence, in ſuffering this Timidity to fall upon his Servant.

St. *Paul* tells us of himſelf, that, *leſt he ſhould be exalted above Meaſure, through the Abundance of Revelations, there was given unto him a Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan, to buffet him*, (as he repeats it again) *leſt he ſhould be exalted above Meaſure*, 2 Cor. xii. 7. And, in like manner, we have Reaſon to believe, that God, upon this Occaſion, might withdraw that Spirit of Intrepidity, and the Neceſſity he had at all Times, of the divine Aſſiſtance; and on purpoſe to ſuppreſs all the little Sentiments of Pride and Arrogance that might poſſibly ariſe in his Breaſt, upon the Contemplation of the Gifts and Graces, which he had beſtowed on him, and the many great Miracles that he had wrought by his Hands; and that, thereupon, if he did *glory, he might glory in the Lord*, and not dare to take any Part of the Honour to himſelf.

Q. *What was the Repaſt which the Angel gave to* Elijah; *and how do you account for his ſubſiſting upon that alone for the Space of* forty Days and forty Nights?

A. The *Jews* have made a Compariſon between *Elijah* and *Moſes*, in ſeveral Particulars, and given *Moſes* the Preference, eſpecially in the Mat- of his forty Days Faſt: For *Elijah*, they ſuppoſe, did every Day eat and drink, when he happened to find any Suſtenance in the Wilderneſs; whereas, *Moſes* had nothing to ſupport him, but only the miraculous Power of God. The Text, however, is far from intimating that *Elijah* eat any Thing but what the Angel at firſt brought him: For *he went, in the Strength of that Meat, forty Days and forty Nights, unto* Horeb *the Mount of God*; whereas, had he taken any Nouriſhment by the Way, it had not been by the Strength of that Food, that he performed his Journey.

What that Food was, the Scripture has taken Care to inform us, *viz.* that it was ſimple Bread and Water, (to make the Miracle more remarkable) but ſuch as was of far greater, and more durable Virtue than ordinary; and ſuch as gave a Life and Vigour, far ſurpaſſing the Effects of any other Nouriſhment. Whether Angels in the celeſtial State, are purely ſpiritual, or cloathed with ſome material Form, but much more ſubtile and refined, than any we know here below, is a Queſtion much agitated among the Schools: But if, for the preſent, we ſhould allow the Affimative, *the Food of Angels*, and what may be called the Suſtenance of their glorious, but finite Beings, need not be accounted altogether an Allegory. It is certain, that upon their Appearance, in human Shape, they did frequently eat the common Food of Men; that our bleſſed Saviour, after the Aſſumption of his glorious Body, *eat Part of a broiled Fiſh, and of an Honey-comb*, Luke xxiv. 42. nor may we forget, upon this Occaſion, his Words at the Paſchal Supper, *I will not henceforth drink of the Vine, until that Day, that I drink it new with you, in my Father's Kingdom*, Matt. xxvi. 29. All which will be enough to countenance the Opinion, that the Food, which was brought to *Elijah* at this Time, was of celeſtial Growth and Virtue, whereby Creatures of a ſuperior Excellency, may poſſibly, at certain Periods, have their Natures renewed, (as the Tree of Life, in the State of Paradiſe, is ſuppoſed to have been been intended for that Purpoſe) and to live on to eternal Ages. No wonder then, that Food of ſuch rare Quality, as to deſerve the Delegation of an Angel from Heaven to bring it, ſhould have all the Virtue, and all the Efficacy, that we read of.

But, waving this Speculation, we may ſuppoſe the Repaſt to have been nothing more, than common Bread and Water; yet, who can doubt, but that God, either by retarding the Faculties of Concoction and Perſpiration, or by preſerving the Spirits and Juices from Diſſipation, might make its Strength and Nouriſhment ſubſiſt for the Time ſpecified? It is but God's ſpeaking the Word in this Caſe, and the Thing is done, the leaſt Beck of his Will can make the ſame Meal, that uſually ſerves us for four and twenty Hours, ſupport us for forty Days, and much longer, if he pleaſes. That Meat of any kind ſhould ſuſtain us for four and twenty Hours (if rightly conſidered) is a Miracle; and that the like Proportion ſhould do it for the Space of forty Days is ſtill but a Miracle, and with the ſame Facility that God does the one, he can do the other. So true is that Obſervation, which our bleſſed Saviour borrows from *Moſes*, *Man doth not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God*, Deut. viii. 3. and Mat. iv. 4.

And, indeed, no Perſon ever had ſo large Experience of the Truth of this Obſervation, as had the Prophet, now before us, who was ſo long ſuſtained, not only by the wonderful Increaſe of the Widow's Oil and Meal, but by the daily Miniſtry likewiſe, and Attendance of Ravens. For, whatever ſome may dream of Merchants or *Arabians*, who might take Pity of *Elijah* in his Retirement, and ſend him Proviſions every Day; beſides that, the original Word (as *Bochart* has ſufficiently evinced) never ſignifies *Merchants*, and that there were no *Arabians* inhabiting the Coaſts where *Elijah* lay concealed, it can hardly be imagined, but that the Place of his Retreat would have ſoon been diſcovered to *Ahab*, had either Merchants, or other Inhabitants of the Country, been, at any Time, acquainted with it.

Q. *Why did not* Elijah *anoint* Jehu *and* Hazael, *as he was ordered by God?*

A. There are two Exceptions more, which are generally made to *Elijah*'s Conduct, *viz.* his Omiſſion, in not anointing *Hazael* to be King of *Syria*, and *Jehu* King of *Iſrael*; and his Cruelty, in deſtroying the Prieſts of *Baal* without a proper Authority. Now, in Anſwer to the former of theſe, it ſhould be obſerved, that the Words, *Go, and anoint*, may not be a poſitive Command, but only a diſcretionary Permiſſion ſo to do. The Prophet had been ſorely complaining to God of the Wickedneſs and Idolatry of the *Iſraelites*, and of the bloody Perſecutions of their Rulers. *I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Hoſts*, ſays he, *for the Children of* Iſrael *have forſaken thy Covenant, and thrown down thine Altars, and ſlain thy Prophets with the Sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they ſeek my Life to take it away:* Whereupon God (after having ſhewn him, by ſome ſymbolical Repreſentations, how able he was to avenge him of his Adverſaries) bids him go, and anoint ſuch and ſuch Perſons, to be Kings; as if he had ſaid, "Thou deſireſt of me, that I ſhould deſtroy the "Idolaters in *Iſrael*, and ſuch as have a Deſign "upon thy Life; but, in order to that, thou haſt "nothing to do, but to go and appoint two others "to be Kings over *Iſrael*, and *Syria*, and they "will avenge both thy Quarrel, and mine.

But, allowing the Words to be a poſitive Command, we may ſuppoſe, that when *Elijah*, by his prophetick Spirit, perceived what a grievous Deſtruction, the Exaltation of theſe two Perſons, to the Thrones of *Iſrael* and *Syria*, would bring upon his native Country, he petitioned God to delay the Execution of this his Order, at leaſt for ſome Time, and obtained his Requeſt. This indeed is a Circumſtance, that we do not meet with in Scripture, but in ſo ſhort an Hiſtory, as this of the *Jews* is, we may well be allowed to ſupply ſome Things, that ſeem to be omitted, when this may be done without offering any Violence to the Words of the Text, and eſpecially, when there is an Analogy, in other Parts of the Hiſtory, to bear us out.

Now, in Relation to one of theſe, *viz.* *Hazael*, who was afterwards King of *Syria*, it is ſaid, that when he came to enquire of *Eliſha* concerning his Maſter *Benhadad's* Sickneſs, the Prophet *ſettled his Countenance upon him ſtedfaſtly, and wept*; whereupon *Hazael ſaid, why weepeth my Lord? and he anſwered, becauſe I know the Evil, that thou wilt do unto the Children of* Iſrael: *Their ſtrong Holds wilt thou ſet on Fire, and their young Men wilt thou ſlay with the Sword, and wilt daſh their Children, and rip up their Women with Child*, 2 Kings viii. 11, 12. And from this Paſſage we have ſome Grounds to think, that *Elijah*, upon the like Proſpect of his Nation's Calamity, might deſire of God, if not a Revocation of his Command, at leaſt a Delay in the Execution of it; and that this was the Reaſon, why neither of the Kings were anointed by him.

Q. *How far diſtant was* Beerſheba *from* Horeb? *and could it poſſibly take up* Elijah *forty Days in travelling from one to the other?*

A. From *Beerſheba* to Mount *Horeb* is, at the moſt, not above one hundred and fifty Miles, and the Prophet, it ſeems, had advanced one Day's Journey into the Wilderneſs; ſo that he had not now more to finiſh, than an active Man might have done in four or five Days at moſt; how came the Prophet then to make *forty* of it? To this ſome reply, that he (as the *Iſraelites* of old) was kept, wandering up and down this pathleſs Wilderneſs, forty Days, as they were forty Years, till, at length, he hit upon this ſacred Mountain. Others ſuppoſe, that he went about by private Ways, and perhaps ſometimes reſted, and lay hid, in order to prevent Diſcovery. But, when he was got into the Wilderneſs, one would think, he might have been ſafe, and proceeded ſtrait-way (if he knew the ſtrait Way) to the Place, intended. I was thinking therefore, that there would be no *Solæciſm*, if we ſhould ſay, that the Time of going to, ſtaying at, and coming from, the Mount of *Horeb*, is to be included in theſe forty Days, though, in a ſhort Narration, Words may be ſo expreſſed, as if the Journey only had taken up all that Time.

Q. *What is your Opinion of the ſeveral Emblems of Almighty Power and Preſence with which God was pleaſed to favour* Elijah?

A. Elijah, being now come to the ſame Place, where God had delivered the Law to his Servant *Moſes*, God was minded to communicate the like Favour to his Servant the Prophet, *viz.* to unveil his Majeſty to him, and give him the Signal of his immediate Preſence; but there is ſomething very remarkable in the Words of the Text,——*And behold, the Lord paſſed by, and a ſtrong Wind rent the Mountains, and brake in pieces the Rocks, but the Lord was not in the Wind; and, after the Wind, an Earthquake, but the Lord was not in the Earthquake; and, after the Earthquake, a Fire, but the Lord was not in the Fire; and, after the Fire, a ſmall Voice*, Ver. 11, &c. And various are the Meditations, which this Appearance of the divine Majeſty have ſuggeſted to Interpreters. The Generality of them have looked upon this as a Figure of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, which came, not in ſuch a terrible Manner, as the Law did, with Storms, Thunders, Lightenings, and Earthquakes, (*Exod.* xix. 16.) but with great Lenity and Sweetneſs, wherein God ſpeaks to us by his Son, who makes uſe of no other, but gentle Arguments, and ſoft Perſuaſions. But, if we take this to be a ſymbolical Admonition to *Elijah*, according to the Circumſtances he was then in, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that herein God intended to ſhew him, that, though he had all the Elements, ready armed at his Command to deſtroy Idolaters, if he pleaſed to make uſe of them, yet he had rather attain his End by Patience, and Tenderneſs, and Long-ſuffering, (ſignified by that *ſmall ſtill Voice*, wherein the Deity exhibited himſelf,) and, conſequently, that the Prophet ſhould hereby be incited to imitate him, by bridling that paſſionate Zeal, to which his natural Complexion did but too much incline him.

Q. *In the Inſtructions which* Elijah *receives from God concerning* Hazael, Jehu, *and* Eliſha, *there ſeems to want a Connection in Point of Time; which pray explain.*

A. The Words in the Text are,——*And it ſhall come to paſs, that him, that eſcapeth the Sword of* Hazael, *ſhall* Jehu *ſlay; and him, that eſcapeth the Sword of* Jehu, *ſhall* Eliſha *ſlay*, Ver. 17. Where it is eaſy to obſerve, that theſe Things are not mentioned according to Order of Time, wherein they fell out, (for *Eliſha* was Prophet before *Hazael* was King, and *Hazael* was King before *Jehu*) but they are ſpoken of according to the Decree of God, who as (*Abarbinel* obſerves) appointed every one to execute that, which was proper for him to do: “Thus he intended (*continues that learned Commentator*) that *Hazael* ſhould deſtroy the Idolaters of *Iſrael* in Battle, and therefore he mentions that firſt, becauſe it is a general Calamity; but, as *Jezebel*, the Children of *Ahab*, and the Prieſts of *Baal*, went not to fight, and, conſequently, could not fall in Battle; he ordained *Jehu* to cut off them, and all the Worſhippers of *Baal*, in the Manner that we find he did: But, as he did not know the Diſpoſition of little Children, he left them to be puniſhed by *Eliſha*, who, by the Spirit of Prophecy, foreſaw they would become Idolaters.” But there ſeems to be more Subtilty than needs, ſince the plain Senſe of the Words is no more than this:——“That God, in his Providence, had appointed three Perſons to puniſh the *Iſraelites* according to their Deſerts; and that one or other of theſe ſhould infallibly execute his Judgments upon them.” The only Difficulty is, how the Prophet *Eliſha* can be ſaid to ſlay, when, by Profeſſion, he was a pacifick Man, and never engaged in War. But when we conſi- the two and forty Children, which he deſtroyed, beſides others, whom, upon the like Occaſion, he might deſtroy; the ſore Famine, which, by God's Appointment, he ſent upon the *Iſraelites*, 2 Kings vi. 31. and the many cutting Prophecies and Comminations (called in Scripture the *Sword of the Mouth*, Iſaiah xlix. 2. and Rev. i. 16.) which he denounced againſt them, and were fulfilled, we ſhall find Reaſon enough to juſtify the Expreſſion.

Q. Elijah *in his Return from* Horeb, *finds* Eliſha *at Plough*; *did not this rural Employment betoken* Eliſha's *Poverty and mean Circumſtances?*

A. So far was this from being any Argument of his Poverty, that it was, in Reality, a Token of his Wealth and great Riches; for he, who could keep twelve Yoke of Oxen at Plow, was in this reſpect, no inconſiderable Man; and yet, (according to the Manner of theſe early Times) he looked after his own Buſineſs himſelf; for nothing was of greater Eſteem, not only among the *Hebrews*, but among the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans* likewiſe, than Agriculture; and ſuch Perſons, as were of the beſt Quality, were called *Men who did their Work themſelves*, and left not the Care of it to others. *Eliſha* therefore was taken from the Plow to be a Prophet, in like Manner, as among the *Romans* afterwards, ſome were taken from thence to be Conſuls and Dictators.

Q. *Was there any Thing peculiarly ſignificant in* Elijah's *caſting his* Mantle *over* Eliſha?

A. The *Mantle* was the proper Habit of the Prophets, 2 *Kings* i. 8. and therefore *Elijah*'s caſting it upon him, was the Ceremony here uſed for his Inauguration: Though, as it was cuſtomary for Servants to carry their Maſters Garments after them, others underſtand it only as a Token, that *Eliſha* was to be his Servant, to attend upon him, and ſucceed him in his Office. However this be, 'tis probable, that, when he *caſt his Mantle upon* him, he ſaid ſomething to *Eliſha*, whereby he acquainted him with his Deſign, though the particular Words, in ſo ſhort an Hiſtory, are not expreſſed.

CHAP. XX.

Benhadad, *not content with* Ahab's *Homage, beſieges* Samaria. *The* Syrians, *by the Direction of a Prophet, are twice beaten; and* Benhadad *hides himſelf. The Prophet, by a Parable, reproves* Ahab, *for the Covenant he had made with the* Syrians; *and denounces Judgment againſt him.*

Q. WHO *was the Prophet that foretold* Ahab *of the Victory he ſhould obtain over* Benhadad?

A. Who the Prophet was, that, upon this, and another Meſſage afterwards, was ſent to *Ahab*, the Scripture no where informs us. 'Tis ſomewhat odd, that, during this whole War with *Benhadad*, neither *Elijah*, nor *Eliſha*, the two principal Prophets of *Iſrael*, ſhould appear, though other Prophets (whereof there ſeems to be a conſiderable Number) make no Scruple of executing their Office; whether it was, that this War commenced before *Jezebel*'s Perſecution of the Prophets, or that this impious Queen abated her Perſecution, and let them have ſome Reſpite, when ſhe had exterminated *Elijah*, as ſhe thought, is uncertain.

Q. *Who were the young Men of the Princes of the Provinces, who were to be Inſtruments of this Victory?*

A. The Inſtruments in attaining this Victory, were to be *the young Men of the Princes of the Provinces*, with *Ahab* at the Head of them, *Ver.* 14. The *Hebrew* Word has ſome Ambiguity in it, and may ſignify either the *Sons* or Pages of the *Princes of the Provinces*, either young Noblemen themſelves, or their Fathers Pages, who were equally brought up delicately, and quite unaccuſtomed to War. It was by theſe young Men, and not by old experienced Officers, that this Battle was to be won, that thereby it might appear, that Victory was wholly owing to God's gracious and powerful Providence, and not to the Valour, or Fitneſs of the Inſtruments.

Q. *What Ground had the* Syrian *Generals for their idle Fancy in imagining* the Gods of the *Iſraelites were* Gods of the Hills.

A. That there were many Gods, who had each their particular Charge and Juriſdiction; that ſome preſided over whole Countries, whilſt others had but particular Places under their Tuition and Government, and were ſome of them Gods of the Woods, others of the Rivers, and others of the Mountains, was plainly the Doctrine of all heathen Nations. *Pan* was reckoned the God of the Mountains; and, in like manner, the *Syrians* might have a Conceit, that the God of *Iſrael* was a God of the Mountains, becauſe *Canaan*, they ſaw, was a mountainous Land; the *Iſraelites* delighted to ſacrifice on High-places; their Law, they might have heard, was given on the Top of a Mountain? their Temple ſtood upon a famous Eminence, and alſo *Samaria*, where they had ſo lately received a ſignal Defeat: For their farther Notion was, that the Gods of the Mountains had a Power to inject a panick Fear into any Army, whenever they pleaſed. Nay, that they did not only aſſiſt with their Influence, but actually engage themſelves in Battle for their Favourites, is a Sentiment as old as *Homer*.

Q. *The* Syrians *being vanquiſhed, betook themſelves to* Aphek; *where was this City ſituated?*

A. Aphek, or *Aphaca*, (as it is called by profane Authors) was ſituated in *Libanus*, upon the River *Adonis*, between *Heliopolis* and *Biblos*; and, in all Probability, is the ſame, that *Paul Lucas*, in his Voyage *du Levant*, Vol. I. Ch. 90. ſpeaks of, as ſwallowed up in a Lake of Mount *Libanus*, about nine Miles in Circumference, wherein there are ſeveral Houſes, all entire, to be ſeen under Water. The Soil about this Place (as the Ancients tell us) was very bituminous, which ſeems to confirm their Opinion, who think that ſubterraneous Fire conſumed the ſolid Subſtance of the Earth, whereon the City ſtood, ſo that it ſubſided and ſunk at once, and a Lake was ſoon formed in its Place.

Q. *Was not* Benhadad's *ſending his Ambaſſadors to* Ahab *to ſue for a Peace, with Halters about their Necks; a Piece of Humiliation unbecoming his regal Dignity?*

A. This was the Poſture, in thoſe Times, wherein Supplicants preſented themſelves when they petitioned for Mercy. The *Sackcloth* upon their Loins was a Token of great Sorrow for what they had done; and the *Halters* about their Necks a Token of their Subjection to whatever Puniſhment *Ahab* ſhould think fit to inflict upon them: For which Reaſon *Beſſus* (according to *Curtius*, l. 7.) was brought to *Alexander* with a Chain about his Neck.

Q. *What were thoſe* Streets *which* Benhadad *allow'd* Ahab *to build in* Damaſcus?

A. The Privilege, which *Benhadad* gave to *Ahad*, is thus expreſſed:——*Thou ſhalt make Streets for thee in* Damaſcus, *as my Father made in* Samaria; but then the Learned are not agreed, what we are to underſtand by *Streets*. Some ſuppoſe, that they were *Courts of Judicature*, where *Ahab* was to maintain a Juriſdiction over *Benhadad*'s Subjects; others think, that they were *publick Market Places*, where Commodities were ſold, and the Toll of them paid to *Ahab*: But the moſt general Opinion is, that they were Citadels, or Fortifications, to a be Bridle and Reſtraint upon this chief City of the *Syrians*, that they might make no new Irruptions into the Land of *Iſrael*: A great Privilege this! But what *Benhadad*, when he found himſelf ſet at Liberty, refuſed to comply with.

Q. *Wherein lay* Ahab's *great Offence, for which God threatens to puniſh him ſo ſeverely?*

A. It undoubtedly conſiſted in ſuffering ſo horrid a Blaſphemer, as *Benhadad* was, *Ver.* 23. to go unpuniſhed, which was contrary to an expreſs Law, *Lev.* xxiv. 16. If it ſhould be urged, that this was nothing to *Benhadad*, ſince the Law concerned the *Iſraelites* only, the Reply is,——That this Law extended not to thoſe only, that *were born in the Land*, but (as it is there expreſſed) to *Strangers* likewiſe, that were among them, and in their Power, as *Benhadad* certainly was: For God had delivered him into *Ahab*'s Hands for his Blaſphemy, as he had promiſed, *Ver.* 28. and therefore this Act of Providence, compared with the Law, did plainly intimate, that he was appointed by God for Deſtruction: But ſo far was *Ahab* from puniſhing him, as he deſerved, that he treats him like a Friend and a Brother, diſmiſſes him upon eaſy Terms, and takes his bare Word for the Performance, without the leaſt Care for the Reparation of God's Honour.

Q. *Why was the Prophet ſlain, for refuſing to ſmite his Brother Prophet?*

A. The Prophets, indeed, both in their parabolical Speeches, and ſymbolical Actions, are to be conſidered as Perſons of ſingular Character. For, as we find one of them tearing his own Garment to Pieces, to ſignify to *Jeroboam* the Alienation of the major Part of the Kingdom from the Houſe of *Solomon*; ſo here we have another deſiring his Companion (for ſo what we render Neighbour ſignifies) to give him a Wound, that thereby he might have the better Opportunity of reproving *Ahab* for his ill-timed Clemency to *Benhadad*.

The Princes of the *Eaſt* were difficult of Acceſs; and in the Court of *Ahab*, in particular, the Character of a Prophet was held in ſo great Deteſtation, that ſome Expedient was to be found out to gain him Admittance to the King's Preſence; and an Opportunity to ſpeak to him in the Manner he deſigned. After ſo great a Victory, as *Ahab* had lately won by the Valour of his Men, it may be preſumed, that the Name of a Soldier was become in high Eſteem, and therefore to perſonate a Soldier, and a wounded Soldier likewiſe, who might more engage the King's Pity and Attention, the Prophet intreats his Fellow-collegiate (having firſt told him his Intent) to give him a ſlight cut with a Sword, or ſome other Inſtrument, that thereby he might be enabled to act his Part better.

To deſire to have his own Fleſh ſlaſhed and cut, was, in Appearance, a Requeſt ſo frantick, that juſtly might his Brother Prophet have denied him that Courteſy, had he not been ſatisfied that the Requeſt came from God: But herein lay the great Fault of the Recuſant, though he knew the Authority of God's Commands, and that this was the very Thing which he injoined, yet out of an indiſcreet Pity and Compaſſion to his Brother, he refuſed to comply. Had he been a Stranger, indeed, to the ſeveral Methods of divine Prophecy, he might have excuſed himſelf with a better Grace; but, as he was equally a Prophet bred up in the ſame School with the other, had been informed by the other of his whole Deſign, and well underſtood the Weight of theſe Words, *I command thee in the Name of Lord*; he was utterly inexcuſable, becauſe Diſobedience to a divine Command, and eſpecially when delivered by a Prophet, was, by the Conſtruction of the Law, held capital.

Now there were two Ways (according to the *Jewiſh* Doctors) wherein the Prophets of old were puniſhed for their Offences in their Office. Thoſe who propheſied in the Name of Idols, or propheſied Falſhoods in God's Name, were put to death by the Judges; but thoſe who either concealed, or rejected a true Prophecy, were to die by the Hand of God: And, in the Caſe now before us, the Divine Juſtice might be more diſpoſed, to mark what was done amiſs, for this Reaſon, (among others to us unknown) that by the Severity of this Puniſhment of a Prophet's Diſobedience, proceeding from Pity to his Brother Prophet, he might teach *Ahab* the Greatneſs of his Sin, in ſparing him, through a fooliſh Generoſity or Compaſſion, whom, by the Laws of Religion and Juſtice, and Prudence, and Self-preſervation, he ſhould have cut off; and, conſequently he might reaſonably expect to be puniſhed for his Diſobedience.

Q. *How could the Fall of the Walls of* Aphek *kill* 27000 *Men?*

A. In Anſwer to this, we are not to ſuppoſe, that this Wall, or Caſtle, or Fort (as it may be rendered) fell upon every individual one, much leſs that it had killed every Man it fell on: It is ſufficient to juſtify the Expreſſion, that it fell upon the main Body of theſe ſeven and twenty thouſand, and that it killed ſome, and maimed others, (for the Scripture does not ſay that it killed all) as is uſual in ſuch Caſes. Let us ſuppoſe then, that theſe *Syrians*, after the Defeat on the Plains of *Aphek*, betook themſelves to this fenced City, and deſpairing of any Quarter, mounted the Walls, or retired into ſome Caſtle, with a Reſolution to defend themſelves to the laſt; and that the *Iſraelitiſh* Army, coming upon them, plied the Walls, or the Caſtle, on every Side, ſo warmly with their Batteries, that down they came at once, and killing ſome, wounding others, and making the reſt diſperſe for fear, did all the Execution that the Text intends.

Thus we may account for this Event in a natural Way; but it is more reaſonable to think, that God, upon this Occaſion, wrought a Miracle; and either, by ſome ſudden Earthquake or violent Storm of Wind, overturned theſe Walls, or this Fortreſs, upon the *Syrians*. And, indeed, if any Time was proper for his Almighty Arm to interpoſe, it was at ſuch a Time as this, when theſe blaſphemous People had denied his ſovereign Power and Authority in the Government of the World, and thereby, in ſome Meaſure obliged him, in Vindication of his own Honour, to give them a full Demonſtration of it, and to ſhew, that he was the God of the Plains, as well as of the Mountains; that he could as effectually deſtroy them in Strong-holds, as in the open Field, and make the very Walls, wherein they truſted for Defence, the Inſtruments of their Ruin.

CHAP. XXI.

Ahab *covets* Naboth*'s Vineyard, which being denied him, he is grieved.* Naboth, *by* Jezebel*'s Contrivance, is condemned for Blaſphemy, and ſtoned.* Ahab *poſſeſſes the Vineyard.* Elijah *denounces Judgment againſt* Ahab *and* Jezebel; *he repenting, God defers his Judgment.*

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve in general upon* Ahab's *Tranſaction with* Naboth?

A. The Account of *Ahab*'s coveting *Naboth*'s Vineyard (as *Abarbinel* obſerves) is immediately ſet after his Treatment of *Benhadad*, to ſhew his extream great Weakneſs in ſparing him (as *Saul* did *Agag*, King of the *Amalekites*) and killing *Naboth*, that he might get Poſſeſſion of his Vineyard: For this was an high Aggrevation of his Crime, that he baſely murthered a juſt *Iſraelite*, and let an impious Enemy eſcape.

Q. *Why did not* Ahab *ſeize on* Naboth*'s Vineyard at once, without offering him any Equivalent for it?*

A. By this it appears, that though the Kings of *Iſrael* did rule their Subjects in a very arbitrary and deſpotick Manner, yet they did not, as yet, take the Liberty to ſeize on their Lands and Hereditaments; and therefore what *Samuel* propheſies of the Kings of *Iſrael*, that *they would take their Fields, the Vineyards, and their Oliveyards*, 1 Sam. viii. 14. does not extend to any true, and lawful, but a preſumed, and uſurped Right only in their Kings.

Q. *Why did* Naboth *refuſe to part with his Vineyard, notwithſtanding* Ahab *offered him a handſome Equivalent for it?*

A. As it is natural to all Men to love and value the ancient Poſſeſſions, that have been in their Family; ſo the Law of *Moſes* prohibited the Alienation of Lands, from one Tribe to another, unleſs a Man was reduced to Poverty, in which Caſe he might ſell it to the *Jubilee*, but then is was to revert to him again, *Lev.* xxv. 15, 25, 28. Now, as *Naboth* was in no Need to ſell his Vineyard, ſo he conſidered with himſelf, that, if merely to do the King a Pleaſure, he parted with it out of his Hands, eſpecially to be made a Garden, and ſo annexed to the Palace, neither he, nor his Poſterity, ſhould be ever able to recover it again; ſo that, in this Act, he ſhould both offend God, and injure his Poſterity, which he, being a pious and religious Man, durſt not adventure to do.

Q. *What was* Jezebel*'s Deſign in ordering a Faſt to be proclaimed, immediately before her bringing* Naboth *into Judgment?*

A. It was always a cuſtomary Thing, upon the Approach of any great Calamity, or the Apprehenſion of any national Judgment, to *proclaim a Faſt*; and *Jezebel* ordered ſuch a Faſt to be obſerved in *Jezreel*, the better to conceal her Deſign againſt *Naboth*. For, by this Means, ſhe intimated to the *Jezreelites*, that they had ſome *accurſed* Thing among them, which was ready to draw down the Vengeance of God upon their City; and that therefore it was their Buſineſs to enquire into all thoſe Sins, which provoked God to Anger againſt them, and to purge them out effectually. This gave the Elders of the City an Occaſion to convene an Aſſembly, and the falſe Witneſſes a fair Opportunity to accuſe *Naboth* before them.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Part of* Jezebel*'s Order,* Verſe 9. Set *Naboth* on high among the People?

A. *Joſephus* is of Opinion, that as *Naboth* was of an illuſtrious Houſe, he was ordered to be ſet in an honourable Place among the Elders and chief Rulers of the City; that ſo it might be thought, that they did not condemn him out of Hatred or Ill-will, but merely as they were conſtrained to it, by the Evidence that was given againſt him. But others will have it, that the Reaſon why he was ſet in an eminent Place, was only becauſe Perſons accuſed and arraigned, were wont to ſtand conſpicuous before their Judges, that all the People might ſee them, and hear both the Accuſations againſt them, and their Defence.

Q. *What was* Jezebel*'s Reaſon for charging* Naboth *with a double Crime,* i. e. *of* blaſpheming God and the King; *when one was ſufficient to take away his Life?*

A. By the Law of *Moſes* it was Death to blaſpheme God, *Levit.* xxiv. 16. and by Cuſtom it was Death to revile the King, *Exod.* xxii. 28. Now, in order to make ſafe Work, the Evidences (as they were inſtructed) accuſed *Naboth* of both theſe Crimes, that the People might be the better ſatisfied to ſee him ſtoned. There is this Difference, however, to be obſerved between theſe two Crimes, that if a Man had only blaſphemed God, he was to be tried by the great Court at *Jeruſalem* (as the *Hebrew* Doctors tell us) and his Goods came to his Heirs; whereas, when a Man was executed for Treaſon againſt the King, his Eſtate went to the

Exchequer, and was forfeited to him, againſt whom the Offence was committed: And for this Reaſon it was, that they accuſed *Naboth* of this Crime likewiſe, that his Eſtate might be confiſcated, and *Ahab*, by that Means, get Poſſeſſion of his Vineyard.

Q. *Is it not ſtrange that none of the Magiſtrates and Judges, that were aſſembled on this Occaſion, ſhould have Courage enough to vindicate* Naboth's *Innocence?*

A. Princes never want Inſtruments to execute their Pleaſure; and yet it is ſtrange, that among all theſe Judges and great Men, there ſhould be none that abhorred ſuch a Villany. It muſt be conſidered, however, that for a long while they had caſt off all Fear and Senſe of God, and proſtituted their Conſciences to pleaſe their King: Nor durſt they diſobey *Jezebel's* Commands, who had the full Power and Government of the King, (as they well knew) and could eaſily have taken away their Lives had they refuſed to condemn *Naboth*.

Q. *How was the Prophecy againſt* Ahab *fulfilled, that* where the Dogs licked the Blood of *Naboth*, they ſhould lick the Blood of *Ahab*; *whereas this happened at the Pool of Samaria*, Chap. xxii. 38?

A. There is a great Diſpute among the Learned, as to the Accompliſhment of this Prophecy. At firſt it was no doubt, intended to be litterally fulfilled, but upon *Ahab's* Repentance, (as we find below) the Puniſhment was transferred from him to his Son *Jehoram*, in whom it was actually accompliſhed; *for his dead Body was caſt into the Portion of the Field of* Naboth *the* Jezreelite, for the Dogs to devour, 2 Kings ix. 25. Since *Ahab's* Blood therefore was licked by Dogs, not at *Jezreel*, but at *Samaria*, it ſeems neceſſary that we ſhould underſtand the *Hebrew* Word, which our Tranſlation renders *in the Place where*, not as denoting the *Place*, but the *Manner*, in which the Thing was done; and ſo the Senſe of the Paſſage will be, —— That *as Dogs licked*, or *in like Manner* as Dogs licked *Naboth's* Blood, even ſo ſhall they *lick thine*, obſerve what I ſay, *even thine*.

CHAP. XXII.

Ahab, *intending War againſt the* Syrians, *is adviſed by* Jehoſhaphat *to ask Counſel of God.* Ahab's *Prophets adviſe him to it, and* Micaiah *diſſuades him from it, and is therefore impriſon'd.* Ahab *goes to the Battle, is ſlain, and the Dogs lick his Blood; is ſucceeded by* Ahaziah. Jehoſhaphat's *good Reign; his Acts and Death;* Jehoram *ſucceeds him;* Ahaziah's *evil Reign.*

Q. HOW *came* Micaiah *to give the ſame Anſwer with* Ahab's *Prophets, when, at the ſame Time, he knew that what both he and they ſaid was falſe?*

A. Micaiah's Anſwer to *Ahab*, enquiring of him the Succeſs of his intended Expedition is, *Go and proſper, for the Lord ſhall deliver the City into the Hand of the King*, Verſe 15. which does not at all contradict the other Prophets, had it been ſpoken in earneſt; but we have good Reaſon to believe, that the Words were ſpoken ironically, and in mockery to the Promiſes which the other Prophets made *Ahab*. Accordingly we may obſerve, by *Ahab's* Reply, that he ſuſpected *Micaiah's* Sincerity; and either by his Geſture or Manner of ſpeaking, gathered that his Meaning was, to traduce theſe falſe Prophets for their Anſwers: So that *Micaiah's* Anſwer is, in Effect, as if he had ſaid, —— "Since thou doſt not ſeek to know the Truth, "but only to pleaſe thyſelf, go to the Battle, as "all thy prophets adviſe thee, expect the Succeſs "which they promiſe thee, and try the Truth of "their Predictions, by thy dear-bought Experience."

Q. *What was* Benhadad's *Policy in ordering his Officers to ſingle out* Ahab *in the Battle, and to kill him only?*

A. This *Benhadad* might order, either in Policy, as ſuppoſing this to be the beſt and readieſt Way to put an End to the War, or with a Deſign to take him Priſoner, that thereby he might wipe out the Stain of his own Capativity, and recover the Honour and Advantages which he then loſt.

THE
SECOND BOOK
OF
KINGS,
Commonly called the
FOURTH BOOK
OF
THE KINGS.

This Second Book contains the Acts of the Kings of Judah *and* Iſrael; *of the latter from the Death of* Ahab *unto the laſt King* Hoſhea, *who was impriſoned by the King of* Aſſyria, *and his City* Samaria *taken, and the Ten Tribes, by the juſt Judgment of God, for their Idolatry and rebellious Behaviour, led into Captivity. Alſo of* Judah, *from the Reign of* Jehoram, *Son of* Jehoſhaphat, *unto* Zedekiah, *who, for contemning the Lord's Commandments by his Prophets, and neglecting many Admonitions, by Famine and other Means, was taken by his Enemies, ſaw his Sons cruelly ſlain before his Face, and his own Eyes put out as the Lord had before declared to him by the Prophet* Jeremiah: *And alſo by the juſt Vengeance of God for Contempt of his Word,* Jeruſalem *was deſtroyed, the Temple burnt, and he and all his People were led captive to* Babylon.

In this Book we have divers remarkable Examples of God's Favour towards thoſe Rulers and People which obey his Propets, embrace his Word; as alſo of his Plagues on ſuch Kingdoms as neglect his Miniſters, and do not obey his Laws.

CHAP. I.

Moab *rebels againſt* Iſrael. Ahaziah *being ſick, ſends to* Baalzebub; Elijah *foretels his Death; which* Ahaziah *hearing, ſends twice Captains of 50, to bring* Elijah *to him, upon whom he brings Fire from Heaven. The third Captain entreats* Elijah, *who, who being encouraged by an Angel, goes and tells the King of his Death.* Jehoram *ſucceeds him.*

Q. D*ID not* Elijah *betray a Spirit of Revenge, when he deſtroyed, by Fire from Heaven, the Captains and the Companies that were ſent to fetch him to the King?*

A. The Officers, that were ſent to him, call him indeed *a Man of God*; but, by the Anſwer, which the Prophet returned, we may learn, that they called him ſo, only by way of Contempt and Deriſion. As they could not be ignorant, however, that *Ahaziah* was highly offended at *Elijah*, and had ſent them, for no other Purpoſe, but to bring him to Puniſhment, for having denounced his Death, if they thought proper to obey the King in ſuch unrighteous Proceedings, rather than the Laws of Nature and Religion, which forbid us to be Inſtruments in Cruelty and Wrong, they deſerved the Fate, they met with; and our bleſſed Saviour does not blame *Elijah*'s Conduct in this Reſpect; but his Diſciples only, for their perverſe Imitation of it, from a Spirit of Reſentment and Revenge, and under a trivial Provocation, in compariſon of what was offered to the Prophet. The Truth is, God, in this Inſtance of Severity, hath taught us, that he will have his Prophets reverenced, becauſe they are allied to him, and every Affront put upon them he reſents, as an Indignity to himſelf; and therefore the ſad End of the two Captains, and their Companies, who came to apprehend the Prophet of the Lord, was monumentally to deter future Ages from the like Provocations; and to remind us of the Precept which God himſelf hath given us, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.*

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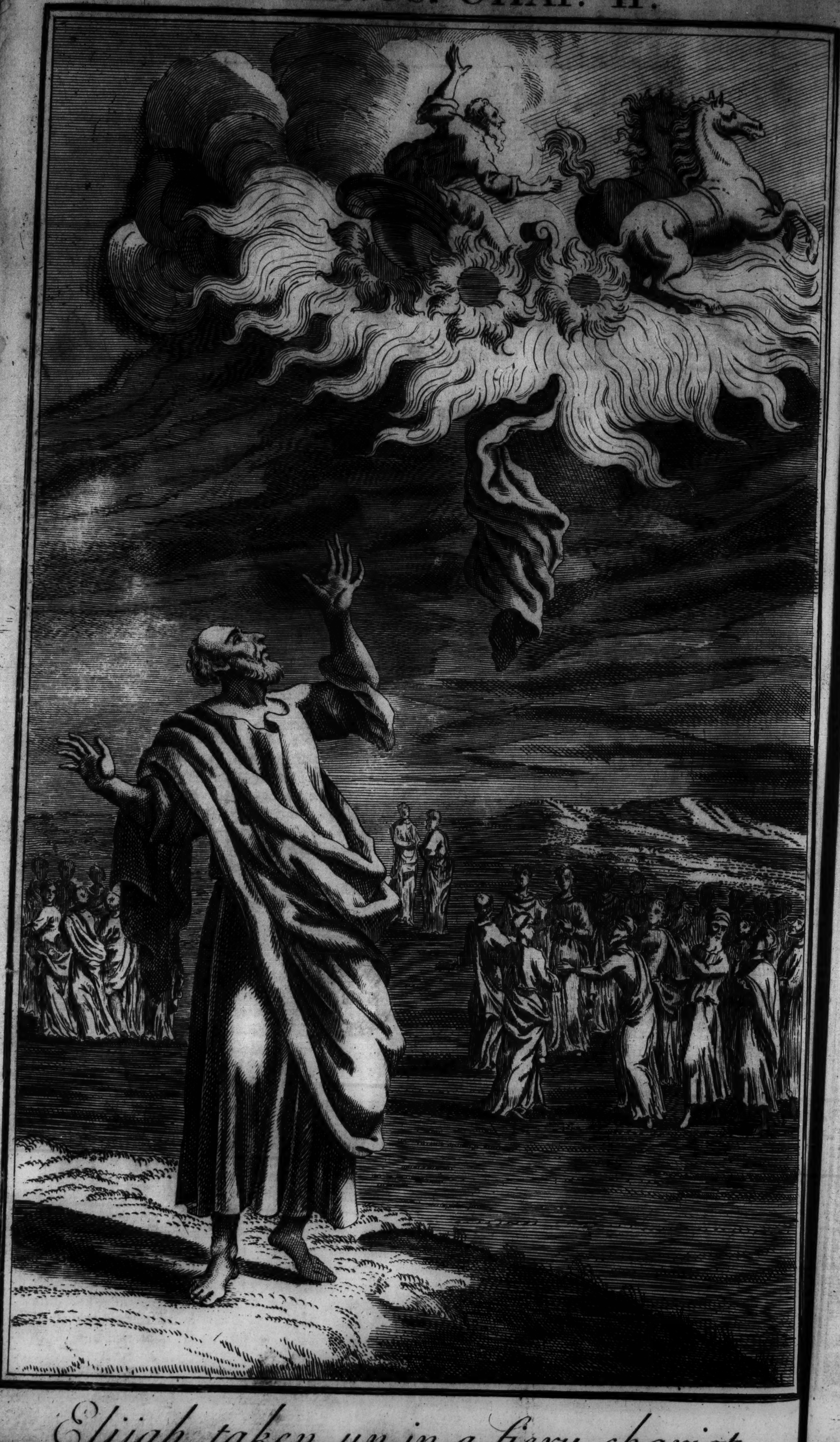
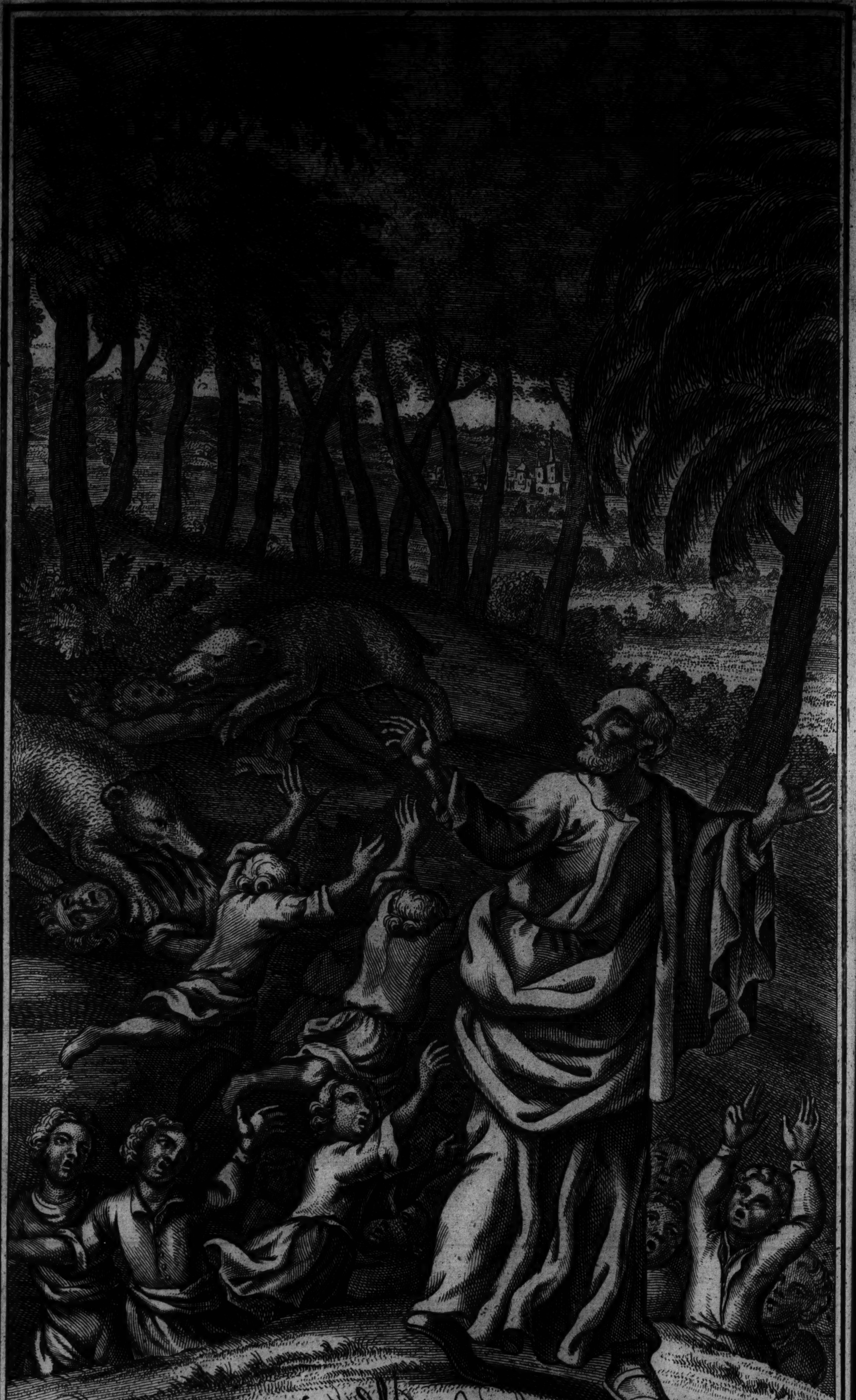


Elijah taken up in a fiery chariot.

BRITISH 5 DE 60 MUSEUM

II. KINGS CHAP. II.



Fourty and two children deſtroyed by two ſhe-beares

CHAP. II.

Eliſha's *Reſolution to bear his Maſter Company.* Elijah *divides the Waters of* Jordan *with his Mantle; he grants* Eliſha's *Requeſt conditionally, and is taken up into Heaven.* Eliſha, *dividing* Jordan *with* Elijah's *Mantle, is acknowledged his Succeſſor. Children mocking him, he curſes them, and they are devoured by two Bears.*

Q. ENOCH *and* Elijah *being the only two mere Men that were ever exempted from Death, the common Lot of Mankind, I ſhall deſire to be ſatisfied in ſeveral Particulars relating to their being taken directly and bodily from Earth to Heaven; and firſt I would know your Opinion concerning the Facts as they are related in Scripture?*

A. Of all the Events recorded in Scripture, we meet with none that requires our Attention more than the Tranſlation of the Patriarch *Enoch*, in the Times before the Flood, and the Aſſumption of the Prophet *Elijah*, under the Diſpenſation of the Law: For, whether *Moſes*, the great Miniſter of that Diſpenſation, was, in like Manner, exempted from the common Fate of Mortals, is a Matter wherein Commentators are not ſo well agreed. The Account of *Elijah*'s Tranſlation is ſo expreſs, and circumſtantiated, that no Queſtion can be made of its Reality: But the Ambiguity of the Words, wherein the ſacred Hiſtorian has related the Aſſumption of *Enoch*, has induced ſeveral to think, that though this antidiluvian Patriarch was highly in Favour with God, and, for that Reaſon, removed from the contagious Wickedneſs, which then overſpread the Earth, yet that this Removal was effected, not by any miraculous Work of God, but merely by his dying a natural Death.

The Words wherein *Moſes* has recorded this Tranſaction, are very few, and theſe of uncertain Signification. Enoch *walked with God, and he was not, for God took him*, Gen. v. 24. Now it is plain, from ſeveral Paſſages in Scripture, not only that the Word, which we render *God took him*, is ſet to ſignify our common Death, as in the Caſe of *Elijah* himſelf, when under the *Juniper-tree*, that he prays that God would take away his Life becauſe he was not better than his Fathers; and in that of holy *Job*, when he tells us, that he did not know how ſoon *his Maker might take him away*; but that the other Expreſſion, *he was not*, is frequently uſed in the ſame Senſe, as is evident from the Lamentation which both *Jacob* and his Son *Reuben* made, for the ſuppoſed Loſs of *Joſeph*; Joſeph *is not, and* Simeon *is not* (ſays the old Man) *Gen.* xlii. 36. and *the Child is not, and I, whither ſhall I go?* Gen. xxxvii. 30. ſays his Son. So that no Argument can be drawn from the Terms in the Text, to countenance a miraculous Aſſumption, any more than a natural Death in the Prophet *Enoch*. But this is not all. The Author of the Book, intitled *The Wiſdom of* Solomon, is ſuppoſed to carry the Matter farther, and to declare poſitively for the Death of this Patriarch, when he tells us, *that he pleaſed God, and was beloved of him, ſo that living among Sinners, he was tranſlated; yea, ſpeedily was he taken away, leſt Wickedneſs ſhould alter his Underſtanding, and Deceit beguile his Soul. Being made perfect in a ſhort Time, he fulfilled a long Time; for his Soul pleaſed the Lord, therefore haſted he to take him away from among the Wicked*, Wiſdom iv. 10, &c. Where every Line in the Deſcription (as ſome imagine) ſuits exactly with *Enoch*, and yet the Author all along ſuppoſes, that the Perſon he is ſpeaking of, died in the ſame Manner as other Men do.

We acknowledge, indeed, that the Author of the Book of *Wiſdom*, ſpeaking of the haſty and premature Death of the Righteous, might properly allude to what *Moſes* related concerning the Tranſlation of *Enoch*, who, in Compariſon of his cotemporary Patriarchs lived but a ſhort Time: But we have no Reaſon at all to ſuppoſe that he is here directly treating of the Death of *Enoch*: On the contrary, that he is here diſcourſing of the Righteous in general, and vindicating the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of Providence, in taking them ſometimes ſooner than ordinary, out of this wicked World, is evident from the Inference wherewith he concludes his Diſcourſe: *Thus the Righteous that is dead, ſhall condemn the Ungodly that is living, and Youth that is ſoon perfected, the old Age of the Unrighteous: For they ſhall ſee the Age of the Wiſe; and ſhall not underſtand, what God, in his Council, hath decreed of him, and to what End the Lord hath ſet him in Safety.*

We acknowledge again, that the Words of *Moſes* does do not neceſſarily imply any miraculous Aſſumption of a living Man into Heaven, or any other Place unknown, and unacceſſible to Mortals; but ſtill, if we will but compare what he ſays of *Enoch*, with what he relates of the other Patriarchs, we ſhall ſoon perceive, that his Purpoſe was to diſtinguiſh between their Manner of leaving the World, and his. For whereas it is ſaid of all the preceding Patriarchs, that they lived to ſuch and ſuch a Number of Years, and begat Sons and Daughters, and ſo died; of *Enoch* it is ſaid, that he lived ſixty and five Years, and begat *Methuſelah*; that after he begat *Methuſelah*, he lived three hundred Years, and begat Sons and Daughters; but then, inſtead of *he died*, the Author's Words are, *he walked with God, and was not, for God took him*: Where he firſt takes Notice of his good and pious Life, which made him ſo acceptable to God, and then of his Tranſlation, God took him; but leſt there ſhould be any Ambiguity in that Expreſſion, he adds, and *he was not*, or appeared no more in the World; whereby he intimates, that he ſtill lives, and ſubſiſts in ſome other Place.

The Truth is, theſe Expreſſions in the Text (when rightly underſtood) do confirm rather than invalidate the Doctrine of *Enoch*'s Tranſlation: But to put the Matter beyond all Diſpute, we have the Authority of an Apoſtle, enumerating the Actions of the Worthies of old, and telling us of this Patriarch in particular, that *by Faith he was tranſlated, that he ſhould not ſee Death, and was not found, becauſe God had tranſlated him: For, before this Tranſlation, he had this Teſtimony, that he pleaſed God*: Where the Author to the *Hebrews* takes Care, by repeating the Word three Times, to prevent our miſtaking his Meaning; and by telling us, that the Patriarch was not found, plainly alludes to what the Sons of the Prophets did, when *Elijah* was taken away, *i. e.* ſent fifty Men in queſt of him, but *found him not*; and conſequently, not obſcurely intimates, that this Tranſport of of the Patriarch was of the ſame Nature, with what happened to the Prophet ſo many Years after, that they were both the Effect of the divine Favour to them; both the Reward of their Services upon Earth, and both a Remove to ſome certain Place, that is beyond the Reach of the Knowledge of Man.

Q. *But to what Place were* Enoch *and* Elijah *tranſlated?*

A. In what Part of the World this Place is, we ſhould not be too inquiſitive, much leſs too poſitive, becauſe we have no Foundation, but Conjecture, to go upon. St. *Auſtin*, who ſeems to be more reſerved in other abſtruſe Queſtions, is very peremptory in this, —— That *Enoch* and *Elijah* were tranſlated into that terreſtrial Paradiſe, where *Adam* and *Eve* lived, in their State of Innocence; that there they are nouriſhed by the Fruit of the Tree of Life, which gives them a Power of ſubſiſting for ever, without ſubmitting to the Neceſſity of Death; that there they enjoy all the Bleſſings and Immunities, that our firſt Parents had before their Tranſgreſſion; and, among other Things, an Exemption from ſinning, by the ſupernatural Grace of God: But then the the Queſtion is, where we are to place this terreſtrial Paradiſe, ſince there is ſcarce one Region in the World, that one Author or other has not made choice of for its Situation; and ſince, by the violent Concuſſions, which happened at *Noah*'s Flood, the Face of Nature has been ſo changed, that thoſe very Places, which, according to their Deſcription ſeem to bid faireſt for it, are now debaſed to ſuch a Degree, as little to deſerve the Appellation *of Gardens of Pleaſure*, much leſs the *Abodes of the Bleſſed*.

The Word *Schamajih*, which we render *Heaven*, is ſuppoſed by ſeveral, both *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Doctors, to be the upper Part of the Air, where the Spirits of juſt Men departed, together with theſe two tranſlated Perſons, live in a State of endleſs, but imperfect Bliſs, until the general Reſurrection. But this, in our Opinion, is placing the Seats of the Bleſſed too near the Confines of *the Prince of the Power* of that *Element*, and in Danger of being diſturbed by ſome Incurſions from his Quarters: And therefore (if we might be indulged a farther Conjecture) we ſhould rather chuſe to place them beyond the Circumference of the *Solar Syſtem*, where there are immenſe Spaces, neither obſtructed by the Motion of any Planets, nor obnoxious to the Changes of their Atmoſpheres, becauſe nothing is there but pure Æther. But how our corporeal Part ſhall be enabled to live there, and to live to all Eternity, we ſhall then come to underſtand, when by Experience we ſhall know what that Change is, which the Body undergoes, when it puts on Immortality. In the mean Time, as God is omnipotent, nothing can hinder him from making what Changes he pleaſes, in our Bodies, and from preſerving them eternally in that State.

This we may call the celeſtial Paradiſe, into which our bleſſed Saviour promiſed the penitent Thief, upon the Croſs, a joyful Admittance; and having taken him with him, and depoſited his Soul, in this Manſion of Reſt and Happineſs, proceeded in his Aſcent, beyond the Orbits of the moſt diſtant Stars, and made his Entrance into the higheſt Heavens, which are the Reſidence of God himſelf; and into which (as others imagine) this Patirarch and Prophet were, upon their Tranſlation, carried.

I knew a Man in Chriſt *above fourteen Years ago*, ſays St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of himſelf, though his Modeſty made him conceal it, (*whether in the Body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth*) *ſuch an one caught up to the third Heaven, and I knew ſuch a Man* (*whether in the Body, or out of the Body, God knoweth*) *how that he was caught up into Paradiſe, and heard Things unſpeakable, which it is not poſſible for Man to utter*, 2 Cor. xii. 2, &c. And, if St. *Paul* was caught up into the third Heaven, even while he continued in this mortal State, why may we not ſuppoſe, that *Enoch* and *Elijah* were at once tranſlated into the ſame Place? The probable Deſign of God's vouchſafing the Apoſtle the Viſion of Heaven, was to ſhew him what his final Reward would be, and conſequently for the Crown of *Joy*, that was ſet before him, to make him *glory in the Croſs of* Chriſt, *in Tribulation, in Diſtreſs, in Perſecution*; and how reaſonable is it to believe, that theſe two Worthies, who in their ſeveral Generations, had *fought the good Fight, and finiſhed their Courſe, and kept the Faith*, 2 Tim. iv. 7. ſhould, upon the peculiar Favour of their Aſſumption into Heaven, be admitted to a near Participation of the beatifick Viſion, as an ample Reward for the Fatigues of their Warfare?

At our Saviour's Tranſfiguration upon the Mount, we find one of theſe ſent to him (as we may preſume) upon ſome important Meſſage, appearing in a bright and glorious Form, and (as if he were admitted to the Counſels of Heaven) *talking with him of his Deceaſe, which he was to accompliſh at* Jeruſalem: And therefore we can hardly think, that his Abode could be at any wide Diſtance from the Throne of God's Preſence, who, in Conjunction with his faithful Servant and Law-giver, *Moſes*, was deputed to go on an Embaſſy to his beloved Son. But in this Point, we ought to repreſs Curioſity, and, in the Senſe of *Theodoret*, content ourſelves with what God has been pleaſed to reveal in Scripture, without enquiring too curiouſly into what he hath thought fit to conceal.

Q. *In what Manner were they tranſlated?*

A. In what Manner *Enoch* was tranſlated into Heaven, we have not the leaſt Intimation, nor is the Account of *Elijah*'s Aſcenſion to be taken in a literal Senſe, ſince a *fiery Chariot and Horſes* would not have been a Vehicle ſo proper for a Nature as yet not impregnated with Immortality. The Notion of thoſe, who, upon this Occaſion, make Angels aſſume the Form of the *Chariots and Horſes*, is not ſo incongruous, becauſe we need not doubt, but that, by the Divine Permiſſion, they can tranſform themſelves into any Shape. They are ſuppoſed to have frequently appeared in the Figure of *flying Oxen*, for which Reaſon they have obtained the Name of *Cherub*, or *Cherubim*: And, with the ſame Facility, they might, at this Time, have put on the Appearance of Horſes: But, in Points, not ſo clearly expreſſed, we are to reſolve God's Method of acting by thoſe, that are analogous, and yet more plain.

Now the only *Aſcenſion*, that we read of, beſides theſe, is that of our bleſſed Saviour; and the Manner, in which he is ſaid to have been carried up, was by the Subvention of a Cloud, which raiſed him from the Ground, and, mounting with him gradually, *carried him out of his Apoſtles Sight*; and, in like Manner, we may ſuppoſe, that the

Tranſlation of theſe two was performed: *Viz.* that a bright and radiant Cloud (which, as it aſcended, might appear like a Chariot and Horſes) raiſed them from the Earth, and, leaving this little Globe behind, wafted them into the *Seats of the Bleſſed:* Only we muſt obſerve, that Chriſt's Body was at this Time inveſted with the Powers of Spirituality, and therefore capable of aſcending with any Vehicle, whereas, theirs were retarded with a Load of Matter: And therefore it is reaſonable to think, that, by the Miniſtry of Angels, or rather by the Power of God, the Cloud, which carried them up, was condenſed to a more than ordinary Conſiſtency, and that the Whirlwind, which might be raiſed for this Purpoſe, helped to accelerate its Motion, and expedite their Aſcent.

Q. *What Kind of Change did they undergo?*

A. Since *Fleſh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth Corruption inherit Incorruption*; the Queſtion is, how theſe Perſons were, all on a ſudden, *made meet to be Partakers with the Saints in Lights? Behold, I ſhew you a Myſtery,* ſays St. *Paul,* ſpeaking of thoſe, who ſhall be alive at our Saviour's ſecond *Advent, we ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed, in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, at the laſt Trump*; and therefore the ſame Almighty Power, which, at the Sounding of the laſt Trump, will make *our corruptible* Natures *put on Incorruption, and our Mortal put on Immortality,* did, no doubt, in their Paſſage, change their terreſtial into celeſtial Bodies, and thereby convey into them ſuch Faculties, as were requiſite for the Enjoyment of the Place, whereunto it was conducting them.

Q. *For what Ends were they tranſlated?*

A. What particular Services *Enoch* had done God, for which he vouchſafed him this Favour extraordinary, and an Exemption from Mortality, the Scripture has no where ſpecified. It tells us only, that *he walked with God*; but then, conſidering, that (if not then, at leaſt in a ſhort Time) *all Fleſh had corrupted their Ways,* and that, *when God ſaw the Wickedneſs of the Earth, it repented him, that he had made Man*; we may ſuppoſe, that this good and pious Patriarch took care, not only of his Conduct, but ſet himſelf in Oppoſition likewiſe to the Violence, and other Kinds of Iniquity, which began then to prevail in moſt Places, and that, in ſhort, he was (as the Tradition goes) a *Preacher of Rhighteouſneſs,* in which Office *Noah* is ſaid to ſucceed him.

However this be, 'tis certain, that *Elijah* was a zealous Advocate for God, and a ſtrenuous Oppoſer of Idolatry, an implacable Enemy to *Baal's* Prieſts, an undaunted Reprover of the Wickedneſs of Princes, a ſevere Inflicter of the Divine Vengeance upon all the Children of Diſobedience; and therefore, we may preſume, that God deſigned his Exaltation, not only a Recompence for his paſt Services, which were great, but as an Encouragement likewiſe to other remaining Prophets, *to be ſtrong in the Lord*; to bear witneſs boldly againſt the Corruption of the Age, wherein they lived; and, in the Execution of their Office, to fear the Face of no Man.

The Corruption of the Age indeed, both in the Times of *Enoch* and *Elijah,* was become ſo great and general, that the Belief of a future State (we may well ſuppoſe) was, in a manner, quite extinct among them; and therefore God might think it expedient, at theſe two Periods of Time, to give the World a ſenſible Proof of it, if not to convince the unbelieving Part, at leaſt, to excite in the Hearts of the Faithful, under all their Afflictions and Perſecutions *for Righteouſneſs Sake,* refreſhing Hopes and Expectations of a *Recompence, to be made them in due Time.* Nor can we think, but that, in theſe Inſtances, God might have a Proſpect to a greater Event, and, by the Aſſumption of his two faithful Servants, intend to typify the Aſcenſion of his Son, who was to *deſtroy Death, and open the Kingdom of God to all Believers*; that thereby he might make the Teſtimony of his Apoſtles, concerning this Fact, a Thing more credible; and give all good Chriſtians a more ſolid Comfort and Conſolation in thoſe Words of St. *Paul, who ſhall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? it is God that juſtifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is Chriſt that died; yea, rather, that is riſen again, who is even at the right Hand of God, who alſo maketh Interceſſion for us.*

Q. *Will* Enoch *and* Elijah *come again before the End of the World?*

A. The Teſtimony of the Angels concerning our bleſſed Saviour is——*This ſame Jeſus, who is taken up from you into Heaven, ſhall come in like Manner, as ye have ſeen him go into Heaven:* But, before this his ſecond Comming, 'tis an Opinion, that has prevail'd much among the antient Fathers; that God, in his great Mercy, will ſend *Enoch* and *Elijah,* to oppoſe the Proceedings of Antichriſt, to refute his Doctrines, and to fortify the Righteous againſt his Threats and Cruelties; but that, by the Management of this their Adverſary, they ſhall be put to Death, though in a ſhort Time, raiſed again to everlaſting Life and Glory. This whole Notion is founded upon a very abſtruſe Paſſage, in St. *John's Revelation,* concerning the *two Witneſſes,* which are variouſly interpreted. For, beſides *Enoch* and *Elijah* (as we ſaid before) ſome apply them to the Law and the Prophets, others to the Old and New Teſtament, and others again (eſpecially thoſe, who favour the millenary Scheme) to our Saviour Chriſt, and his Forerunner *John the Baptiſt.* But as every one is left to his Liberty to chooſe what Part he pleaſes in ſuch Problems, as theſe, we ſhall, (without pretending to determine any thing ourſelves) leave the Paſſage (which, in a great Meaſure, we account inexplicable) to the Examination of the more Learned and Sagacious.—*I will give Power unto my two Witneſſes, and they ſhall propheſy a thouſand two hundred and threeſcore Days, cloathed in Sackcloth. Theſe are the two Olive-trees, and the two Candleſticks, ſtanding before the God of the Earth; and if a Man will hurt them, Fire proceedeth out of their Mouth, and devoureth their Enemies.——They have Power to ſhut Heaven, that it rain not, in the Days of their Prophecy, aud have Power over Waters, to turn them to Blood, and to ſmite the Earth with all Plagues, as often as they will: And when they ſhall have finiſhed their Teſtimony, the Beaſt, that aſcendeth out of the bottomleſs Pit, ſhall make war againſt them, and overcome them, and kill them, and their dead Bodies ſhall lie in the Street of the great City, which is ſpiritually called* Sodom *and* Egypt, *where alſo our Lord was crucified.————Their Bodies ſhall lie three Days and an half without being buried, and the People ſhall rejoice, and make merry, becauſe of their Death; but, after three Days and an half, the Spirit of Life from God ſhall enter into them, and they ſhall ſtand on their*

their Feet; and great Fear ſhall fall upon them, that ſee them.

Q. *Why ſhould the Prophets of* Jericho *imagine that the Spirit of God had tranſported* Elijah *to ſome other Place?*

A. The Spirit of the Lord (whereby we may underſtand, either the Power of God, or ſome one of his Angels) frequently uſed to carry the Prophets through the Air, and, with vaſt Celerity, remove them to diſtant Places: And therefore *Obadiah* ſpeaks of it as a common Thing: *And it ſhall come to paſs, as ſoon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry thee, where I know not, ſo that, when the King cannot find thee, he will ſlay me*, 1 Kings xviii. 12. And accordingly, in the New Teſtament, we are told of *Philip*, that *when they were come up out of the Water, the Spirit of the Lord caught him away, that the Eunuch ſaw him no more, and* Philip *was found at* Azotus, Acts viii. 39, 40.

Q. *In what Manner did* Eliſha *ſweeten the Fountain at* Jericho?

A. The Manner, in which the Prophet *Eliſha* ſweeten'd the Fountain, and made the Soil fruitful, was by caſting Salt into the Water, to make the Miracle more conſpicuous; for Salt is a Thing that, of all others, makes Water leſs potable, and Ground more barren. *Joſephus*, however, willing to improve upon this Hiſtory, adds (as his uſual Manner is) ſeveral Circumſtances of his own. For he tells us,—“ That this Fountain did not only corrupt the Fruits of the Earth (whether Grain or Plants) but likewiſe cauſed Abortions in Women, and tainted, with a blaſting Infection, whatever it touched, that was capable of ſuch Impreſſion, that *Eliſha*, having been treated with great Hoſpitality and Reſpect by the People of *Jericho*, bethought himſelf of ſuch an Acknowledgment, as they themſelves, their Country, and their Poſterity, to the End of the World, might be the better for; that, hereupon, he went out to the Fountain, and, cauſing a Pitcher of Salt to be let down to the Bottom of it, he advanced his Right Hand towards Heaven, and, preſenting his Oblations at the Side of it, he beſought God, in his Goodneſs, to correct the Water, and to ſweeten the Veins through which it paſſed, to ſoften the Air, and make it more temperate and fructifying; to beſtow Children, as well as Fruits, upon the Inhabitants in abundance; and never to withdraw theſe Bleſſings, ſo long as they continued in their Duty; and that, upon offering up this Prayer, with all due Ceremonies, and according to Form, the ill Quality of the Fountain was changed, and (inſtead of Sterility) became now an efficacious Means of Plenty and Increaſe.” This Author, we may obſerve (to gratify *Pagans*) repreſents *Eliſha* in the Form of a Magician, who, by Invocations, Oblations, and other ſecret and myſterious Operations, changed the bad Quality of the Waters, and thereby made the Valley of *Jericho* fruitful; whereas this was done in a Manner altogether ſupernatural and miraculous; and, to this very Day, there is a Fountain towards the *Weſt* of *Jericho*, which riſes about three Quarters of a League above the Town, in the way to *Jeruſalem*, which, yielding a great deal of Water (and that very good in its Kind) runs along, and fructifies the Plain.

Q. *Is not* Eliſha *chargeable with a very revengeful Spirit, in curſing and deſtroying a Company of thoughtleſs Children for only a little Mockery?*

A. Bethel, we all know, was one of the Cities, where *Jeroboam* had ſet up a *golden Calf*, a Place ſtrangely addicted to Idolatry, and whoſe Inhabitants had no ſmall Averſion to *Eliſha*, as being the Servant and Succeſſor of one, who had been a profeſſed Enemy to their wicked Worſhip, and himſelf no leſs an Oppoſer of it: 'Tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe therefore, that the Children (if they were Children, for the Word *Naarim* may ſignify *grown Youths* as well) who mocked *Eliſha*, were excited and encouraged thereunto by their Parents; and therefore the Judgment was juſt, in God's puniſhing the Wickedneſs of theſe Parents, by the Death of their Children, who, tho' they ſuffered in this Life, had the Happineſs to be reſcued from the Danger of an idolatrous Education, which might have been of fatal Tendency both to their preſent and future State.

In the mean Time, it muſt be acknowledged, that the Inſolence of theſe Mockers (whether we ſuppoſe them *Children* or *Youths*) was very provoking, for as much as they ridiculed not only a Man whoſe very Age commanded Reverence, but a Prophet likewiſe, whoſe Character, in all Ages, was accounted ſacred; nay, and even God himſelf, whoſe Honour was ſtruck at, in the Reproaches caſt upon his Servant, and that too in one of his moſt glorious and wonderful Works, his Aſſumption of *Elijah* into Heaven: For *go up, thou Bald-head, go up, thou Bald-head*, (beſides the Bitterneſs of the Contempt, expreſſed in the Repetition of the Words) ſhews, that they made a mere Jeſt of any ſuch *Tranſlation*; and therefore, in Banter, they bid *Elijah go up*, whither, as he pretended, his Friend and Maſter was gone before.

Theſe Provocations, one would think were enough to draw an Imprecation from the Prophet; but this Imprecation did not proceed from any Paſſion, or private Reſentment of his own, but merely from the Command and Commiſſion of his God; who, for the Terror and Caution of other profane Perſons, and Idolaters, as well as for the Maintenance of the Honour and Authority of his Prophet, *confirmed the Word*, which had *gone out of his Servant's Mouth*.

CHAP. III.

Jehoram *follows the Sins of* Jeroboam. *He, with* Jehoſhaphat *and the King of* Edom, *go to Battle againſt* Moab. *Being diſtreſſed for Water, they obtain it of* Eliſha, *and a Promiſe of Victory. The* Moabites *being deceived by the Colour of the Water, coming as to Spoil, are overcome. The King of* Moab, *by ſacrificing his eldeſt Son, raiſes the Siege.*

Q. HOW *could* Jehoram *begin his Reign over* Iſrael, *in the 18th Year of* Jehoſhaphat, *when* Ahaziah, Jehoram's *Predeceſſor, who reigned two Years, began his Reign in* Jehoſhaphat's *17th Year*, 1 Kings xvii. 51. *and in another Place, that* Jehoram, *the Son of* Jehoſhaphat, *began to reign over* Judah *in the 5th Year of* Jehoram, *King of* Iſrael, 2 Kings viii. 16?

A. It is but ſuppoſing, that *Jehoſaphat* declared his Son *Jehoram* King, while himſelf was alive, and reigned, in Conjunction with him, for the Space of ſeven Years, and all the Difficulty is removed; for then *Jehoram*, the Son of *Ahab*, might begin his Reign in the ſecond Year of *Jehoram* Son of *Jehoſhaphat*, viz. in the ſecond Year that he reigned with his Father, who was then alive; and *Jehoram*, Son of *Jehoſhaphat* may be ſaid to have begun his Reign in the fifth of *Jehoram*, the Son of *Ahab*, meaning the Time, when after his Father's Death, he reigned alone. That the Kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael* (as well as other oriental Princes) were accuſtomed to appoint their Succeſſors, and even, during their Life-time, to give them ſome Share in the Adminiſtration, is plain from ſeveral Inſtances; and that *Jehoſhaphat* found it expedient to ſettle his Son in the Kingdom with himſelf, ſeems to be intimated in 2 *Chron.* xx. 3. where it is ſaid, that *he gave the Kingdom to* Jehoram, *becauſe he was his Firſt-born, and gave Gifts to the reſt of his Sons*, who, being many, might perhaps be forming Parties, and entering into Cabals about the Succeſſion to the Kingdom; and therefore, to put an end to all ſuch Conteſts, *Jehoſhaphat* declared *Jehoram* King, together with himſelf, becauſe he was his Firſt-born.

Q. *How came* Jehoram, *who is repreſented as an idolatrous Prince, to remove the Idols of* Baal?

A. It is a little ſtrange, that his Mother *Jezebel*, who brought this Worſhip with her from the *Sidonians*, ſhould ſuffer him to remove the Images of her favourite God: But ſhe perhaps might be a little daunted with the many Diſaſters that had befallen her Family, and was content with the Privilege of having her idolatrous Worſhip in private; nor is it unlikely, that *Jehoſhaphat* might refuſe to aſſiſt him in his Wars againſt the King of *Moab*, unleſs he would conſent to renounce his Idolatry.

Q. *Why did* Jehoſhaphat *join Forces with* Jehoram, *who was an idolatrous and wicked Prince?*

A. The Anſwer which he gives *Jehoram*, is the very ſame that he returned to his Father *Ahab*, in his War againſt the *Syrians*; *I am, as thou art, my People, as thy People, and my Horſes as thy Horſes*, 1 Kings xxii. 4. and 2 Kings iii. 7. And, conſidering the ill Succeſs he had, one would wonder why he ſhould be ſo forward to join with his Son; but as *Jehoram* had reformed ſome Things, he might have a better Opinion of him, and by ſhewing him Kindneſs, hope, perhaps, to prevail with him to proceed farther; and as the *Moabites* had of late invaded his Country, 2 *Chron.* xxi. 1. he might embrace this Opportunity to chaſtiſe them for it. But, without theſe Conſiderations, the War was right and juſtifiable, and fit it was, that Rebels and Revolters ſhould be chaſtized, leſt the Example ſhould paſs into his own Dominions, and encourage the *Edomites* to revolt from him, as we find they afterwards did from his Son.

Q. *The Tribute which* Meſha, *the King of* Moab, *had been aſſeſſed at, and now refuſed to pay, was* an hundred thouſand Lambs, and an hundred thouſand Rams, with the Wool: *Is not this almoſt incredible?*

A. This was a prodigious Number indeed; but then we are to conſider, that theſe Countries abound with Sheep, inſomuch, that *Solomon* offered an hundred and twenty thouſand, at the Dedication of the Temple; 2 *Chron.* vii. 5. and the *Reubenites* prove from the *Hagarens* an hundred and fifty thouſand, 1 *Chron.* v. 7. For *Bochart* obſerves, their Sheep frequently brought forth two at a Time, and ſometimes twice a Year. The ſame learned Man remarks, that in antient Times, when People's Riches conſiſted in Cattle, this was the only Way of paying Tribute. It is obſerved by others likewiſe, that this great Number of Cattle was not a Tribute which the *Moabites* were obliged to pay the *Iſraelites* every Year; but on ſome ſpecial Occaſions only, upon the Acceſſion of a new King, for Inſtance, when they were obliged to expreſs their Homage in this Manner, to make Satiſfaction for ſome Damages that the *Iſraelites* ſhould at any Time ſuffer from their Invaſions, or Revolts.

Q. *What could induce the King of* Moab *to ſacrifice his own Son upon the Walls, and in Sight of the* Iſraelitiſh *Army?*

A. Not only the holy Scriptures, but ſeveral Heathen Writers likewiſe do aſſure us of this, that in Caſes of great Extremity, it was cuſtomary among People to ſacrifice to their Gods whatever was dear to them. *Cæſar*, in his War with the *Gauls*, tells us, that when they were afflicted with grievous Diſeaſes, or in Time of War or great Danger, they either offered Men for Sacrifices, or vowed that they would offer them; becauſe they imagined that *their Gods could never be appeaſed, unleſs one Man's Life was given for another's.* No leſs a Man than *Grotius*, is of Opinion, that this *Moabitiſh* King, in Imitation of *Abraham*, ſacrificed his Son to the God of *Iſral*, hoping thereby to appeaſe his Wrath, and to move the Compaſſion of the Kings, that were beſieging him: But the moſt general Opinion is, that he offered this coſtly Sacrifice to ſome falſe Deity, and very likely to *Chemoſh*, which was his national God, and generally thought to be the Sun.

CHHP. IV.

Eliſha *multiplies the Widow's Oil. He is lodged by a* Shunamite *Woman, who is barren; he promiſeth her a Son; who is born, dies, and is raiſed again. At* Gilgal *he heals the deadly Pottage, and feeds a hundred Men with twenty Loaves and Ears of Corn.*

Q. WHAT *Law or Cuſtom does the Woman allude to,* Verſe 1. *where ſhe ſays,* The Creditor is come to take unto him my Sons?

A. The *Jewiſh* Law looked upon Children, as the proper Goods of their Parents, who had Power to ſell them for ſeven Years, as their Creditors had to compel them to do it, in order to pay their Debts; and from the *Jews* this Cuſtom was propagated to the *Athenians*, and from them to the *Romans*. The *Romans*, indeed, had the moſt abſolute Controul over their Children. By the Decree of *Romulus* they could impriſon, beat, kill, or ſell them for Slaves; but *Numa Pompilius* firſt moderated this, and the Emperor *Diocleſian* made a Law, that no free Perſons ſhould be ſold upon Account of Debt. The antient *Athenians* had the like Juriſdiction over their Children, but *Solon* reformed this cruel Cuſtom; as, indeed, it ſeemed a little hard, that the Children of a poor Man, who have no manner of Inheritance left them, ſhould be compelled into Slavery, in order to pay their deceaſed Father's Debts; and yet this was the Cuſtom, as appears from this Paſſage, wherein the Prophet does not pretend to reprove the Creditor, but only puts the Woman in a Method to pay him.

Chap. V.

Naaman, *by the captive Maid's Report, goes to* Eliſha *to be cured of his Leproſy, who ſends him an order to waſh in* Jordan; *he at firſt diſdains it, but by his Servant's Advice complies and is healed. He returns with Gifts to* Eliſha, *who refuſes them. He departs;* Gehazi *falſly making Uſe of his Maſter's Name, takes Gifts from him, and is ſmitten with Leproſy.*

Q. D*ID not* Eliſha *give* Naaman *a Toleration to continue in Idolatry, when he bid him* go in Peace?

A. The moſt material Part of the Diſcourſe, which paſſed between *Naaman* and *Eliſha*, is delivered in theſe Words, *Thy Servant* (*ſays* Naaman) *will henceforth offer, neither Burnt-offering, nor Sacrifice unto other Gods, but unto the Lord: In this Thing the Lord pardon thy Servant, that when my Maſter goeth into the Houſe of* Rimmon, *and he leaneth on my Hand, and I bow myſelf in the Houſe of* Rimmon, *the Lord pardon thy Servant in this Thing: And* Eliſha *ſaid unto him, go in Peace.* Go in Peace was a common Form of Valediction among the *Jews*, wherewith *Eliſha* might diſmiſs *Naaman*, without any further Anſwer to his Requeſt, or Reſolution to his Doubt; for the Prophet, we muſt ſuppoſe, in this whole Tranſaction, was under the immediate Influence and Direction of the Spirit of God; and therefore, if the Spirit of God thought proper to withhold any further Inſtruction from the *Syrian* General, it was not in the Prophet's Power, though he had *given him his Houſe full of Silver and Gold*, (as *Balaam* put the Caſe) *to go beyond the Word of the Lord, to do more or leſs.* Conſidering then, that *Naaman* was now in the Infancy of his Converſion, and as yet not able to receive the higher Precepts of Perfection; that himſelf was conſcious of his own Offence, and wanted not therefore ſo much to be inſtructed, as encouraged and ſtrengthened in the Lord; and that the Matters, wherein he ſeemed to doubt, were not of ſuch mighty Importance, as to concern the Eſſence and Foundation of Religion; conſidering theſe Things, I ſay, we may ſoon perceive the Reaſon why *Elijah* accepted of his Renunciation of a falſe, and Profeſſion of a true Religion, his declared Averſion to the Worſhip of Idols, and fixed Reſolution to ſerve the Lord only, as a ſufficient Advance in his preſent Circumſtances.

The *Iſraelites*, indeed, and ſuch as were deſcended from the Stock of *Jacob*, were obliged to the Obſervation of the whole *Moſaic* Law; but Strangers and Aliens, when they they came to be admitted *Proſelites of the Gate*, were confined only to the Worſhip of the true God, and the Practice of ſuch Duties as were moral and ſocial; and therefore, when *Naaman* profeſſed himſelf a Worſhipper of the moſt High God only, and declared withal, that his attending his Maſter into the Temple of *Rimmon* was not with any religious Purpoſe, but purely in Performance of the Duty of his Office, the Prophet had Reaſon good to bid him *go in Peace*, or (as the Words may import) to give himſelf no Uneaſineſs about the Matter.

Q. *But could* Naaman, *who now profeſſes himſelf a Worſhipper of the true God, innocently attend his Maſter in his idolatrous Worſhip?*

A. Though we pretend not to ſay with ſome *Rabbinical* Doctors, that as *Naaman* was no *Jew*, but a Foreigner and Proſelyte only, he was not obliged to abſtain from all external Worſhip of Idols, (as the *Jews* confeſſedly were) ſo long as he continued in another Country; yet it is generally agreed, that we are bound to ſhew the ſame Reſpect to our Superiors, and thoſe that are ſet in Authority over us, (ſo long as we do not injure our Conſcience thereby) in one Place as well as another; and that therefore *Naaman* might very innocently retain his Dignity, and high Office at Court, even as *Joſeph* did in *Egypt*, and *Daniel* in *Babylon*, might accompany his Maſter into *Rimmon's* Temple, nay, and bow together with him, in Compliance to his Infirmity or Convenience, (who could not ſo well bow, if he ſtood upright) ſo long as this was a Service done to the Man, (as *Tertullian* reaſons upon the like Occaſion) and not to the Idol; ſo long as this was an Act purely external, without any of thoſe inward Sentiments of Reſpect, which conſtitute the Eſſence of Adoration.

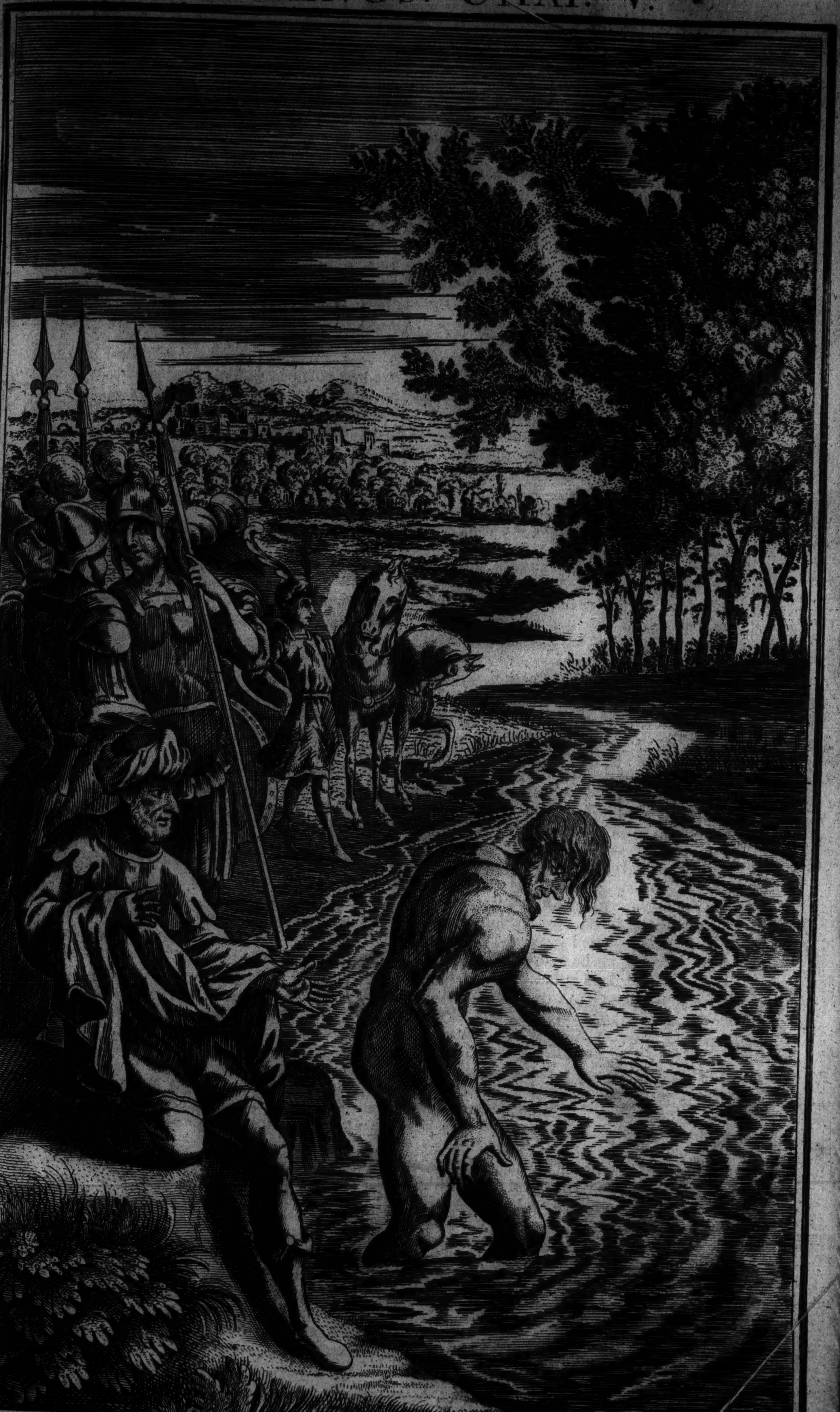
Q. *This, I own, is the common Solution; but it does not entirely pleaſe me. It juſtifies an Action, which* Naaman *himſelf was not well ſatisfied in. It leaves upon the Prophet an Imputation of too much Lenity and Indulgence, and, upon the General, that of too much Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation. Had* Naaman's *Example, in this Senſe, been made a Precedent;* Daniel *in the Court of* Nebuchadnezzar, *and old* Eleazar, *amidſt* Antiochus's *Officers, might have eſcaped Perſecution.* Daniel, *at the Sound of the Inſtruments, might have fallen down before the Image, not out of any Principle of Adoration, but in pure Obedience to the King's Orders; and* Eleazar *might have evaded the eating of Swine's Fleſh, if he would but have let it been reported that he did it, but we find no ſuch Prevarication in either of theſe, and therefore we can hardly think that this is the right Conſtruction.*

A. Now, ſince Repentance has regard to what is paſt, and to aſk pardon for an Offence already committed, is much more natural, than to aſk Pardon, for what we purpoſe, for the future, to commit (which, in Matters of Morality, is a kind of Contradiction) it ſeems not improbable, that the Words ſhould be rendered (as the Original will fairly bear it) in the Preter Tenſe. *Lord, pardon thy Servant, that when my Maſter went into the Houſe of* Rimmon, *to worſhip, and he leaned on my Hand, and I bowed myſelf there, the Lord pardon thy Servant in this Thing.* For how great would the Incongruity be, if *Naaman*, who had juſt before declared his Renunciation of Idolatry, ſhould now confeſs his Readineſs to relapſe into the ſame Crime, and deſire God's Pardon for it beforehand? Whereas, to aſk Pardon for what he had done amiſs, and to deſire the Prophet's Interceſſion with God in that Behalf, argued a Mind truly ſenſible of his former Tranſgreſſion, and very much reſolved to avoid it for the future: And accordingly it is preſumed, that upon his Return home, he refuſed to worſhip *Rimmon* any more, and was thereupon diſmiſſed from being General of the King's Forces.

Q. *Was not* Eliſha *guilty of a little Indecorum in refuſing to ſpeak to the* Syrian *General, when he came to his Houſe attended with a grand Retinue?*

A. Eliſha's not appearing to receive the *Syrian* General is aſcribed by ſome to the retired Courſe of Life,

II. KINGS. CHAP. V.



Naaman is cured of his leproſie.

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Life, which the Prophets led; but then, why did he ſee him, and enter into Converſation with him, when he returned from his Cure? I ſhould rather think, that it was not miſbecoming the Prophet, upon this Occaſion, to take ſome State upon him, and to ſupport the Character and Dignity of a Prophet of the Moſt High God; eſpecially, ſince this might be a Means to raiſe the Honour of his Religion and Miniſtry, and to give *Naaman* a righter Idea of his miraculous Cure, when he found that it was neither by the Prayer nor Preſence of the Prophet, but by the divine Power and Goodneſs, that it was effected.

Q. *Why did the Prophet order* Naaman *to dip himſelf in* Jordan ſeven times?

A. In Conformity to the Law, which requires that Lepers, in order to their cleanſing, ſhould be ſprinkled *ſeven times*, Lev. xiv. 7, *&c.* the Prophet ordered *Naaman* to dip himſelf as often; but *Jordan* (as the *Syrian* argued) had no more Virtue in it, than other Rivers; nor could cold Water (of any Kind) be a proper Means for curing this Diſtemper, whoſe Root is a white wateriſh Humour, that would increaſe, rather than be dimiſhed, by any ſuch Application.

Q. *For what Purpoſe did* Naaman *deſire two Mules Loads of the Earth of the Country?*

A. He deſired the Earth of the Land, becauſe he thought it more holy and acceptable to God, and proper for his Service; or becauſe he would, by this Token, declare his Conjunction with the People of *Iſrael*, in the true Worſhip, and conſtantly put himſelf in mind of his great Obligation to that God, from whoſe Land this Earth was taken. He might have indeed enough of this Earth without aſking any one for it, but he deſired the Prophet to give it him, as believing perhaps, that he, who put ſuch Virtue into the Waters of *Iſrael*, could put as much in the Earth thereof, and make it as uſeful and beneficial to him in another Way. Theſe Thoughts indeed were groundleſs and extragant, but yet were excuſable in an Heathen and a Novice, that was not as yet ſufficiently inſtructed in the Religion.

Q. *Can you deſcribe under what Form the Idol* Rimmon *was worſhipped?*

A. It is thought by the Generality of Interpreters, that, as the *Syrians* were great Worſhippers of the *Sun*, this God is the ſame; and that the Name *Rimmon*, or *high*, is given him, by Reaſon of his Elevation. *Grotius* takes it for *Saturn*, becauſe that Planet is the higheſt of all; and *Selden* will have it to be the ſame with *Elion*, or the moſt high God of the *Phœnicians*. 'Tis certain, that the Word *Rimmon* is the Name, that the *Syrians* give to Pomegranates, and therefore, as their Country was full of Pomegranate-Trees, whoſe Fruit is not only of a delicious Taſte, but of great Uſe likewiſe, on Account of the excellent Liquor, which it produces, they gave, perhaps, the Name of Pomegranate to their God, in the ſame Manner, that the *Greeks* and *Latins* gave that of *Ceres* to the Goddeſs of Corn.

Q. *Why did* Eliſha *refuſe* Naaman's *Preſents?*

A. Eliſha did not think it a Thing ſimply unlawful, to receive Gifts, or Preſents, for we find him receiving them on another Occaſion, *Ch.* iv. *V.* 41. but he did not hold it expedient, in his preſent Circumſtances, to do it, becauſe he thought it would make for the Honour of the true God and Religion, to let the *Syrians* ſee the generous Piety, Charity, and Kindneſs of his Miniſters and Servants, and how much they deſpiſed all that worldly Wealth and Glory, which the Prieſts, or Prophets of the *Gentiles* ſo greedily ſought after; that thereby *Naaman* might be confirmed in the Religion he had embraced, and others, in like Manner, incited to a Love and Liking of it.

Q. *Did* Gehazi's *Crime, in taking* Naaman's *Money, deſerve ſo ſevere a Puniſhment as was inflicted on him for it?*

A. Very juſtly, ſince his Crime had in it all theſe Aggravations, —— a greedy Covetouſneſs, which is Idolatry; a Profaniation of God's Name; a downright Theft, in keeping that to himſelf, which was given for others; deliberate and impudent Lying; a deſperate Contempt of God's Omniſcience, Juſtice, and Holineſs; an horrible Reproach caſt upon the Prophet, and his Religion; and a pernicious Scandal given to *Naaman*, and every other *Syrian*, that ſhould chance to hear it.

CHAP. VI.

Eliſha *gives the young Prophets Leave to enlarge their Dwellings; cauſes Iron to ſwim; diſcloſes the King of* Syria's *Counſels, who thereupon ſends Detachments to take him; he is preſerved by Angels, and the* Syrians *ſmitten with Blindneſs, brought into* Samaria, *and diſmiſſed in Peace.* Samaria *is beſieged, and ſo diſtreſſed, that Women eat their own Children. The King ſends to ſlay* Eliſhu.

Q. WHAT *Grounds had the King of* Syria's *Servants to imagine, that* Eliſha *diſcloſed his Counſels to the King of* Iſrael?

A. It is not to be doubted, that *Naaman*, upon his Return from *Samaria*, ſpread the Fame of *Eliſha* ſo much in the Court of *Syria*, that ſome of the great Men there might have the Curioſity to make a farther Enquiry concerning him; and, being informed by ſeveral of his miraculous Works, they might thence conclude, that he could tell the greateſt Secrets, as well as perform ſuch Works, as were related of him; and that therefore, in all Probability, he was the Perſon, who gave the King of *Iſrael* Intelligence of all the *Schemes*, that had been attempted to entrap him.

Q. *How came* Eliſha's *Servant to be ſo terrified at the* Syrian *Hoſt, ſince he muſt know that his Maſter was always under the ſpecial Care of Divine Providence?*

A. This young Man, it is ſuppoſeable, had been but a little while with his Maſter, no longer than ſince *Gehazi's* Diſmiſſion, and therefore perhaps had not yet ſeen any great Experiments of his Power to work Miracles; or, if he had, the great and imminent Danger he thought his Maſter in (for in all Probability, he had learned from the People of the Town, that this vaſt Body of Men were come to apprehend him only) might well be allowed to raiſe his Fear, and ſhake his Faith.

Q. *As Angels are immaterial Beings, in what Manner did they become viſible, for the Conviction of* Eliſha's *Servant?*

A. It muſt be allowed, that Angels, whether they be purely *ſpiritual*, or (as others think) cloathed with ſome *material* Form, cannot be ſeen by mortal Eyes; and therefore as *Eliſha* himſelf, without a peculiar Vouchſafement of God, could not diſcern the heavenly Hoſt, which, at that Time, encamped about him, ſo he requeſts of God, that for the Removal of his Fears, and the Confirmation of his Faith, his Servant might be indulged the ſame Privilege: Nor does it ſeem unlikely, that, from ſome ſuch Accounts as theſe, that have deſcended by Tradition, that Notion among the *Greeks*, of a certain *Miſt*, which intercepts the Sight of their Gods from the Ken of human Eyes, might at firſt borrow its Original.

Q. *Was not* Eliſha *guilty of a* Lie, *when he told the* Syrian *Forces*, This is not the Way, neither is this the City?

A. That Stratagems in War, and other Artifices to delude and enſnare an Enemy, are not prohibited by the Law of God, the Generality of Caſuiſts are agreed; and therefore, upon the Suppoſition that *Eliſha's* Speech to *Benhadad's* Men was framed on purpoſe to deceive, he did no more than make uſe of the common Privilege which every Nation, engaged in War with another, is permitted to employ: But upon a nearer Examination, we cannot charge his Words with a direct Falſhood, tho' we muſt allow that there is ſome Ambiguity in them.

When the Prophet perceived that the *Syrian* Army had encompaſſed the Place where he abode, he went out of the City, and told them, *This is not the Way, neither is this the City*, viz. where they would find the Man for whom they were ſent, becauſe, at that Time, he was come out of the City, and therefore, if they proceeded in their March, they would be ſure to miſs of him. But *follow me, and I will bring ye to the Man whom ye ſeek*; and ſo he did, but in the Manner, it muſt be owned, that they neither expected or deſired. The whole Conduct of the Prophet therefore, in this Reſpect, was no more than what the Practice of War always allows, *viz.* a Feign to cover his real Deſigns, and by counterfeit Motions, and falſe Alarms, to draw the Enemy into ſuch Intricacies, that he might come upon them, and ſurprize them, when they leaſt of all thought of it.

The Formality of a Lie (as ſome will have it) does not conſiſt ſo much in ſaying what is untrue, as in making a falſe Repreſentation of Things with a Purpoſe to do hurt: But the Prophet's generous Treatment of the Enemy, ſhews that he had no Malignity in his Intention, no Deſign to make an Advantage of their Deception, but, on the contrary, took the moſt effectual Means, both to cure their inveterate Hatred againſt the *Iſraelites*, and to reconcile them to the Worſhip and Service of the true God, who had wrought ſuch a Miracle for their Conviction, as well as the Preſervation of his Prophet.

Q. *What was the Nature of the* Syrians *Blindneſs; and why did they accept of a Guide?*

A. He ſmote them with Blindneſs, according to the Word of Eliſha, Ver. 18. But then we are not to imagine, that this Blindneſs was ſo total, that they quite loſt the Uſe of their Eyes, but only, that it was ſuch a Dimneſs, and Confuſion in their Sight, as hindered them from diſtinguiſhing one Object from another; the City of *Dothan*, for inſtance, from the City of *Samaria*: Even, in like Manner as we read of the People of *Sodom*, that when the Angels ſmote them with Blindneſs (which they might eaſily do, by ſome ſmall Alteration either in their Sight, or in the Air) *they wearied themſelves to find out* Lot's *Door*. They ſaw the Houſe, it ſeems, but did not diſcern the Door, becauſe this ſudden Diſorder, in their Imagination, might either make the Door to them like the ſoild Wall, or the ſolid Wall like ſo many Doors.

This is no more than what happens to ſeveral Men in their Liquor, that though their Eyes be open, and can perceive the ſeveral Objects that ſurround them, yet they cannot diſcern wherein they differ. And, if we may ſuppoſe that the *Syrian* Army was under the like Caſe, we need no longer wonder, that they readily accepted of a Guide, who offered his Service, and beſpoke them fair (whom they might, indeed, take for ſome Deputy of the Town, with Authority to deliver up the Prophet to them) than that a Drunkard, who, after a long while having loſt his Way, and found himſelf bewildered, ſhould be thankful to any Hand that would promiſe to conduct him ſafe home.

Q. *Did* Eliſha *act wiſely in diſſuading* Jehoram *from deſtroying ſo great a Number of his Enemy, whom he had brought into his Power?*

A. Though, according to the Rigour of the Laws of Arms, a Conqueror is at Liberty to put whatever Enemies fall into his Hands, if he pleaſes, to the Sword; yet the Laws of Humanity and Compaſſion, of Honour and good Nature, ſhould always reſtrain us from treating, with the utmoſt Severity, ſuch as ſurrender themſelves, and implore our Mercy. But, beſides the Humanity and Charity of the Thing, there was this Prudence and Policy in the kind Treatment of the *Syrians*, that, by this Means, their Hearts might be mollified towards the *Iſraelites*, that, upon their Return, they might become, as it were, ſo many Preachers of the Power and Greatneſs of the God of *Iſrael*, and not only be afraid themſelves, but diſſuade others likewiſe from oppoſing a People, that had ſo invincible a Protector.

Q. *One would have thought, that this Act of Generoſity might have obliged the King of* Syria *to deſiſt from any further Enterprizes againſt the* Iſraelites; *and yet, a little after, we find him laying cloſe Siege to* Samaria.

A. Several Heathens have obſerved, that *Injuries are more gloriouſly overcome by Benefits, than requited by pernicious and mutual Hatred:* But the Senſe of Benefits in bad Natures does not laſt long: For no ſooner do we read of the kind Treatment, which the *Syrians* received, Verſe 23. but it immediately follows, that the King of *Syria gathered all his Hoſt, and went up and beſieged* Samaria; which does not ſo well agree with what is ſaid in the preceding Verſe, *viz.* that *the Bands of the* Syrians *came no more into the Land of* Iſrael. But now, as we can hardly think, that any Author whatever would contradict himſelf in the ſame Breath, ſo we muſt ſuppoſe, either that the *Syrians* quite retreated for this Time, and laid aſide all thoughts of War, though afterwards they altered their Minds, and broke out again into Hoſtilities; or (what ſeems more plain) that their Bands made no ſmall Incurſions and Inroads, but that they were reſolved to fall upon the *Iſraelites* at once, with a regular and formed Army, and to beſiege *Samaria*. For in this Senſe *Joſephus* takes it, when he tells us, that after this Time, *Adad* (for ſo he calls him) *never entered into any underhand Practice againſt the King of* Iſrael, *but reſolved to make open War upon him, in Confidence of his greater Strength and Numbers.*

Q. *During the Siege of* Samaria, *it is ſaid,* Ver. 25. *that an Aſs's Head was ſold for* fourſcore Pieces of Silver: *How much was this in* Engliſh *Money?*

A. If we reckon theſe Pieces of Silver, or Shekels, at fifteen Pence a-piece, they come to five Pounds Sterling, a vaſt Price for that which had on it ſo little Meat, and that unclean according to the Law, *Lev.* xi. 13. In Times of Famine, however, and extream Neceſſity, the *Jews* themſelves were abſolved from the Obſervation of the Law; nor do there want Inſtances in Hiſtory, where other People, upon the ſame Occaſion, have been reduced to the like Diſtreſs, if what *Plutarch,* in the Life of *Artaxerxes,* tells us be true, *viz.* that in that Prince's War with the *Caducii,* an Aſs's could ſcarce have been purchaſed at the Price of ſixty *Drachms, i. e.* two Pounds and five Shillings of our Money.

Q. *What was the* Dove's Dung, *mentioned* Ver. 25. *and what wat the Meaſure called a* Kab?

A. Interpreters have been at a great Loſs to deviſe, upon what Account the Inhabitants of *Samaria* ſhould be obliged to buy ſo ſmall a Quantity of it (for a *Cab* was the leaſt Meaſure the *Jews* had for dry Things) at ſo dear a Rate. For Food, for Salt, for Firing, for dunging their Lands within the Walls, ſeveral Interpreters have ſeverally applied it: But, upon a ſmall Examination it would appear, that none of theſe Uſes could ſuit with the Circumſtances of a City ſo cloſely beſieged, as *Samaria* was. The *Talmudiſts* ſuppoſe that they have found out the true Solution, by tranſlating the Term of the Original, by *Crop of Doves*; for they affirm that ſeveral People in *Samaria* kept many Doves, to bring them Proviſions from the Country, which were wont to diſgorge what they picked up, ſo that their owners might ſell it at a dear Rate; but who can imagine, that ſo great a Number of Doves, as were neceſſary for this Purpoſe, ſhould be ſuffered to live in a City ſo pinched with Famine; that Doves ſhould be ſo docile and well trained up, as to bring to their Maſters whatever they had ranged for; or, that in a Country, in a Manner covered with the Enemy, who had altogether foraged and laid it waſte, there ſhould be found any Nouriſhment at all? The learned *Bochart,* therefore, has not only ſolidly confuted theſe wild Opinions, but has likewiſe farther obſerved, that the *Arabians* gave the Name of *Dove's Dung,* or *Sparrow's Dung,* or two ſeveral Things; firſt, to a Kind of Moſs that grows on Trees or ſtony Ground; and ſecondly, to a ſort of Peaſe or Pulſe, which was very common in *Judea,* as may be ſeen in 2 *Sam.* xvii. 28. and therefore he concludes that the Word *Cherſonim* may well denote *Fitches* or *Pulſe*; and, for the Confirmation of this, ſome Travellers have told us, that at *Grand Cairo* and *Damaſcus,* there are Magazines, where they conſtantly fry this Kind of Grain, which thoſe, who go in Pilgrimage, buy and take with them, as Part of the Proviſion for their Journey.

Q. *So great was the Diſtreſs of the Inhabitants, that Mothers eat their own Children; what do you obſerve upon this terrible Calamity?*

A. The Story, as it is repreſented in Scripture, is very affecting. *And, as the King of* Iſrael *was paſſing by upon the Wall, there cried a Woman unto him, ſaying, Help, my Lord, O King. And he ſaid, if the Lord do not help thee, whence ſhall I help thee? Out of the Barn-floor, or out of the Wine-preſs? and the King ſaid unto her, what aileth thee? And ſhe anſwered, this Woman ſaid unto me, give thy Son, that we may eat him to Day, and we will eat my Son to morrow; ſo we boiled my Son, and eat him; and I ſaid unto her, the next Day, give thy Son, that we may eat him, and ſhe hath hid her Son,* Verſe 26, &c. A ſtrange Cruelty this, and a terrible Effect of the divine Vengeance which *Moſes* had long before told the *Iſraelites* would fall upon them, *Deut.* xxviii. 53. if they rebelled againſt God; which, at two other times, beſides this, *viz.* at the Siege of *Jeruſalem,* under *Nebuchadnezzar, Ezek.* v. 10. and at that under *Titus* the *Roman* General, came likewiſe to paſs; for therein *Joſephus* gives us a very dolorous Account of a Lady of Diſtinction, who, out of Extremity of Hunger, was forced to eat the very Child that ſucked at her Breaſt.

Q. Jehoram, *in a Paſſion, ſends to take off* Eliſha's *Head; when the Meſſenger came,* Eliſha *was* ſitting in his Houſe, with the Elders about him: *What do you underſtand by* his Houſe, *and who were the* Elders *that ſat with him?*

A. The Words in the Text are, *And* Eliſha *ſat in his Houſe, and the Elders ſat along with him,* Verſe 32. where, by *his Houſe,* ſome Interpreters underſtand the School where the Sons of the Prophets met to be inſtructed, and applied themſelves to the Study of divine Things. But, as we read in *Ezekiel,* of the Elders of *Iſrael* ſitting before the Prophet to hear him, *Chron.* viii. 1. and xxii. 24. we cannot ſee why the *Elders,* in this Place likewiſe, may not denote ſome good and godly Men, who bore Office either in the Court, Camp or City, as it ſeems probable, by the Prophet's deſiring their Help and Protection. For, tho' *Jehoram* himſelf was a wicked Man, and moſt of his Officers might be forward enough to imitate him, yet we are not to doubt, but that there were ſome of them, whom *Eliſha's* holy Life, and glorious Miracles, together with the ſundry Benefits which the Publick reaped from his Miniſtry, had won over to God, and to the true Religion; and theſe were here ſitting with him, either to receive Comfort and Council from him, in this diſtreſſed Time, or to ſollicit him to uſe his Power with God for their Relief: Which accordingly he did, and in Compliance to their Requeſt, not out of any Fear of the King's Threats (from which he was well aſſured, that God would not fail to deliver him) he pronounced the joyful News, which follows in the Beginning of the next Chapter.

Q. *Why was* Jehoram *ſo incenſed againſt* Eliſha?

A. Tho' we are no ways concerned (eſpecially when the ſacred Hiſtory is ſilent) to aſſign any Reaſons for ſuch furious Paſſions, as are frequently obſerved in great and wicked Men; yet it may be no hard Matter to imagine ſomething more probable, than what *Joſephus* makes the Cauſe of *Jehoram's* Indignation againſt *Eliſha,* and his vowing to take off his Head, even becauſe he refuſed to intercede with God for the Removal of the Famine, that had, at this Time, ſo ſorely waſted the City of *Samaria.* From the many Miracles which *Eliſha* did, the King, very likely might be convinced, that the ſame Spirit which once reſided in *Elijah,* was now deſcended upon him; and therefore, as *Elijah* had Power, by his Prayers, either to ſhut or open the Windows of Heaven, either to cauſe or remove a Famine, as he pleaſed, he might poſſibly imagine, that God had conferred the ſame

Privilege upon *Eliſha*, and might therefore be highly incenſed againſt him, becauſe he would not make uſe of it in the utmoſt Diſtreſs. But we can hardly imagine that a wicked and idolatrous Prince (as *Jehoram* certainly was) would ever entertain ſo high a Conception of any of the Lord's Prophets; and therefore we muſt endeavour to find out ſome other Reaſon for the Violence of his Rage and Indignation againſt him.

When the Prophet *Eliſha* carried the Detachment of the *Syrian* Army, which was ſent to apprehend him at *Dothan*, hood-winked, as it were, into the City of *Samaria*, *Jehoram*, we find, would have gladly taken this Advantage, and fallen upon them with the Sword; *My Father, ſhall I ſmite, ſhall I ſmite?* So eager was he to have them deſtroyed, as we may learn from the Repetition of his Words! But by no means would the Prophet permit him; on the contrary, he ordered them to be treated with much Civility, and diſmiſſed in Peace. An Uſage this, which deſerved a better Return than what they made the *Iſraelites* the Year following, when they came and beſieged *Samaria*, and ſorely diſtreſſed it. The King of *Iſrael* therefore, reflecting on the Opportunity, which, had he employed, as he deſired, would have diſabled the Army from making any freſh Invaſions, but was unhappily loſt, by liſtening to an old doting Prophet, as he calls him, was grieved beyond meaſure, and hereupon vowed to make his Life pay for the Lives of thoſe, who, by his Counſel, had eſcaped, and were now returned to repeat their Hoſtilities. It may be ſuppoſed likewiſe, that upon the Return of the *Syrian* Army, the King of *Iſrael*, knowing himſelf in no Condition to oppoſe them, might poſſibly be for purchaſing a Peace at any Rate; which *Eliſha* might endeavour to diſſuade him from, by giving him all along Aſſurance, that the Enemy ſhould at length be defeated. Finding however, no Effect in the Prophet's Promiſes, and on the contrary, ſeeing his Capital cloſely beſieged, and the People reduced to great Extremity of Want, he began to repent him of following his Advice; and being ſhocked at hearing the horrid Story, and that from the Mother's own Mouth, of her being forced to eat her own Child for Hunger, he fell into a Rage, and vowed to be revenged of *Eliſha*, as one, who by bad Counſel had occaſioned all that Miſery. *God do ſo to me, and more alſo, if the Head of* Eliſha, *the Son of* Shaphat, *ſhall ſtand on him to Day*; never conſidering that his own manifold and crying Sins, eſpecially his obſtinate adhering to the Idolatry of the Calves, and the Whoredoms and Witchcrafts of his Mother *Jezebel*, were the true and proper Cauſes of all his Calamities.

CHAP. VII.

Eliſha *prophecieth incredible Plenty in* Samaria, *and the Death of a great Lord, who would not believe the Prophecy. Four Lepers, viſiting the* Syrian *Camp, bring News of their Flight, being haſten'd away by God. The Report is confirmed; the King goes out, ſeizes their Tents, and gets great Plenty. The incredulous Lord is trodden under Foot and dies.*

Q. ELISHA *foretels that* a Meaſure of Flour ſhall be ſold for a Shekel: *How much did this* Meaſure *contain?*

A. The Word *Seah*, which we render a *Meaſure*, was equal to ſix Cabs, and contained, as ſome think, ſix Quarts, as others, a Peck, and others a Peck and two Quarts of our Meaſure. The Shekel was much about our three Shillings; and to have a Peck of fine Flour for three Shillings at other Times, would not have been ſo cheap, but conſidering the preſent Situation of Things, it was wonderfully ſo.

Q. *Who were theſe* four Lepers; *and why were they ſhut out of the City?*

A. The *Jews* are of Opinion, that theſe four Lepers were *Gehazi*, and three of his Sons. Perſons that were leprous, indeed, were not permitted to converſe with other Men, and by the Law of *Moſes*, while the *Iſraelites* lived in Tents, they were to be turned out of the Camp, *Numb.* v. 2, 3. but after that they came to inhabit Cities, it may be queſtioned whether they treated them with that Rigour, ſince, in the ſubſequent Chapter, Ver. 4. we find *Gehazi* holding Diſcourſe with the King, (which makes againſt his being one of the four excluded Lepers) and giving him a Detail of all *Eliſha's* Miracles; but this he might do by talking to him at a proper Diſtance. Lepers, indeed, were carefully avoided, becauſe their Diſtemper, in theſe hot Countries, was thought contagious; but, in the Caſe before us, theſe four ſeem to be excluded, not ſo much upon the Account of their Diſtemper, as becauſe they were uſeleſs Hands: They could neither fight nor work in Communion with others; they were only *Fruges conſumare nati*, and were therefore no proper Perſons in a Siege.

Q. *Who were thoſe* Hittites, *whom the* Syrians *ſuppoſed the King of* Iſrael *had hired againſt them?*

A. The *Hittites* in particular lived in *Arabia Petræa*, to the *South* of *Paleſtine*, and, in *Solomon's* Time (who had ſome Wives out of this Country) held a great Commerce with him for Horſes, 1 *Kings* x. 22. and xi. 1. But under the Name of *Hittites* (as elſewhere under the Name of *Amorites*) the ſacred Penman ſeems to comprehend all, or any of the People of *Canaan*. For tho' the greateſt Number of that People were deſtroyed, yet ſome of them were ſpared, and many of them, upon *Joſhua's* coming, fled away, ſome to remote Parts, (as that famous and antient *Pillar*, in the Coaſts of *Afric* teſtifies) and others to the Countries bordering upon *Canaan*; where, by reaſon of the Scarcity of Inhabitants in thoſe Days, finding room enough, they ſeated themſelves, and in Proceſs of Time, growing numerous and powerful, appointed (according to their antient Manner of Government) Kings to rule over them.

CHAP. VIII.

The Shunamite *having, by* Eliſha's *Advice, left the Land becauſe of the Famine, returns Home, and her whole Eſtate is reſtored to her.* Eliſha *comes to* Damaſcus; Benhadad, *being ſick, ſends* Hazael *to him with Preſents;* Eliſha *foretels* Benhadad's *violent Death, and* Hazael's *cruel Reign, with Tears.* Hazael's *Anſwer; he kills his Maſter, and ſucceeds him.* Jehoram's *wicked Reign.* Edom *and* Libna *revolt.* Jehoram *dies, and his Son ſucceeds him.* Ahaziah's *wicked Reign; he joins Forces with* Joram *againſt* Hazael.

Q. ELISHA's *Meſſage to* Benhadad, *ſeems perfectly equivocal, and therefore very unbecoming the Prophetical Dignity.*

A. It may poſſibly be thought indeed, that *Eliſha*'s fortelling his Advancement to the Throne, might be a Spur, and Incitement to his Ambition; but the Means, whereby he accompliſhed his Deſign, were intirely from his own wicked and corrupt Mind, which would not ſtay for the ordinary Methods of divine Providence to bring it innocently about, but choſe rather to carve for himſelf, and by murthering his Maſter, to cut him out a more compendious Way of coming into immediate Poſſeſſion. And this ſolves the ſeeming Difficulty of the Prophet's ſending one Anſwer to *Benhadad*, and telling *Hazael* quite another Story: For when *Hazael* underſtood that his Maſter's Diſeaſe was not mortal, but that, if no Violence intervened, he he might eaſily get over that Indiſpoſition, (for that is the Senſe of *he may certainly recover)* and, at the ſame Time, was told by the Prophet, that he would not, however, recover, becauſe he foreſaw, that Violence would be uſed to take away his Life, (as this is the Senſe of *he ſhall ſurely die) Hazael* went his Way, and, not willing to truſt Providence with his Maſter's Recovery, took care, the next Morning, to have him diſpatched.

There is, however, another, and (as ſome think) a much plainer Interpretation of the Prophet's Words: For, ſince this is a Paſſage, which admits of a various Lection, the Adverb *lo*, as it is in the Textual Reading, ſignifies *not*, in our Tranſlation (which in this Place follows the Marginal) is rendered *to him:* So that, if the *Hebrew* Text be right, (as ſome learned Men, upon Examination, have given it the Preference) the plain Reading of the Words will be, *Go ſay, thou ſhalt ſurely not live; for the Lord hath ſhewed me, that thou ſhalt ſurely die.* This was the Senſe of the Prophet's Anſwer to *Benhadad*; but *Hazael*, who was a wicked Man, went, and told him a quite contrary Thing, on Purpoſe to lull him into a State of Security, that thereby he might have a fairer Opportunity of accompliſhing his Deſign upon him.

Thus, whether the Marginal or Textual Reading, be right, and conſequently, whether the Prophet's Meſſage to *Benhadad* be taken in an affirmative, or negative Senſe, he cannot juſtly be charged with Baſeneſs and Ingratitude, ſince, whether he accepted of his Preſent, or no, 'tis manifeſt, that he could not return him any falſe and deluſive Anſwer: And yet the more probable Opinion is, that, in Conformity to this Practice, in the Caſe of *Naaman* the Leper, he did, upon this Occaſion, *reject the good Things of* Damaſcus, which *Benhadad* ſent, becauſe the ſame Reaſons, which induced him to refuſe them from the Hand of *Naaman*, were ſtill in Force, and might equally prevail with him not to accept them from the Hand of *Hazael*.

Q. *What was* Benhadad's *Diſtemper?*

A. What *Benhadad*'s Diſtemper was, we are not told in Scripture; but it is very evident, that it was not of ſo deſperate a Nature, but that he might have recovered of it, had he not had foul Play for his Life. According to the Account of *Joſephus*, it was no more than a Fit of *Melancholy*; for "when he came to underſtand (as he tells us) that "all theſe Alarms of Chariots and Horſemen, that "had given ſuch an irreparable Rout to him, and his "Army, were, in Truth, only judicial Impreſſions of Affright and Terror, without any Foundation, he looked upon it as a Declaration from "Heaven againſt him; and this Anxiety of "Thought made him as ſick in the Body too, as "he was in his Mind.

Q. *Among other Cruelties which* Eliſha *foretels that* Hazael *would practice againſt* Iſrael, *were* the daſhing their young Children, and ripping up their Women with Child; *were ſuch Barbarities uſual in thoſe Days?*

A. The Particulars are thus ennumerated——*I know the Evil, that thou wilt do to the Children of* Iſrael; *their Strong-holds wilt thou ſet on Fire; their young Men wilt thou ſlay with the Sword; and wilt daſh their Children, and rip up their Women with Child*, Ver. 12. That daſhing young Children againſt the Stones was one Piece of barbarous Cruelty, which the People of the *Eaſt* were apt to run into, in the Proſecution of their Wars, is plainly intimated in that Paſſage of the *Pſalmiſt*'s, alluding to the Calamities, which preceded the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; *O Daughter of* Babylon, *waſted with Miſery! yea, happy ſhall he be, that rewardeth thee, as thou haſt ſerved us. Bleſſed ſhall he be, that taketh thy Children, and throweth them againſt the Stones*, Pſal. cxxxvii. 8, 9. Nor was this inhuman Practice quite out of Uſe among Nations, that pretended to more Politeneſs: For, according to the Remains of antient Fame, the *Grecians*, when they became Maſters of *Troy*, were ſo cruel as to throw *Aſtyanax*, *Hector*'s Son, a Child in his Mother's Arms, (as *Homer* repreſents him) head-long from one of the Towers of the City. *The Ripping up Women with Child*, is the higheſt Degree of brutal Cruelty, and a Cruelty, for which there is no Occaſion, becauſe, kill but the Mother, and the Child dies of courſe; yet is has been often known, that, in the Heat of Execution, this Barbarity has been committed. Nay, there is Reaſon to believe, that *Hazael*, in his War with the *Gileadites*, *Chap.* x. 32, 33. verified this Part of the Prophet's Prediction concerning him; for, what *Amos*, complaining of his Cruelty to theſe People, calls *threſhing* Gilead *with threſhing Inſtruments of Iron*, both the *Septuagint* and *Arabick* Verſions read, *he ſawed the big bellied Women of* Gilead *with Iron-ſaws.*

Q. *What was* Hazael's *Deſign in ſtifling his Maſter with a Cloth, rather than murthering of him with the Sword, or other rougher Means?*

A. This he did, that no Signs of Violence mgiht appear upon him; for had the People, in the leaſt, ſuſpected his being murthered, *Hazael* would not ſo eaſily have acceded to the Throne; becauſe (according to the Account of *Joſephus*) Benhadad *was a Man of ſuch Reputation among the People of* Syria *and* Damaſcus, *that, as his Memory was celebrated among them with divine Honours*, his Death, no doubt, had it been known to have been violent, would have been fully revenged upon the Murtherer. We may obſerve, however, that Hiſtory makes mention of ſome other Princes, who have died in the ſame Manner, that *Benhadad* did; That the Emperor *Tiberius* (according to *Suetonius*) was, in his laſt Sickneſs, choaked in his Bed by a Pillow, crammed into his Mouth, or (as *Tacitus* has it) was ſmothered to Death under a vaſt Load of Bed-cloaths; and that King *Demetrius*, the Son of *Philip*, (as well as the Emperor *Frederick the Second*) was hurried out of the World the ſame Way.

Q. *At what Time was* Ramoth-gilead *taken?*

A. It is ſuppoſed, by ſome Interpreters, that the City of *Ramoth-gilead* was taken by *Jehoram*, before

fore he departed from it to be cured of his Wounds. This they gather from the Mention made of the *inner Chamber*, *Chap.* ix. 2. the *Top of the Stairs*, Ver. 13. and from that Caution, which *Jehu* thinks adviſeable, *Let none go forth, or eſcape out of the City*, Ver. 15. But theſe Arguments will not do. What we render *out of the City* does ſignify, every whit as properly, *from before the City*, that is, out of the Camp or Army, that is beſieging the City. But, even if this be not ſo, the *Iſraelites* might, at this Time, have Suburbs, or Out-buildings, belonging to the City, in their Poſſeſſion, where the General might have his *Head-quarters*, and from whence he might give Orders to the Piquet-guard, (as we call it) that none ſhould be permitted to move. For, had the Town been already in their Hands, we cannot ſee, why *Jehoram* ſhould have kept *all Iſrael* there, *Ver.* 14. that is, all the military Force of *Iſrael*, when a ſtrong Garriſon would have been ſufficient.

CHAP. IX.

Eliſha *ſends a young Prophet to anoint* Jehu *King over* Iſrael, *whom he charges to deſtroy the Houſe of* Ahab, *and flies.* Jehu *is made King by the Soldiers*; *he kills* Joram *in the Field of* Naboth; *he alſo kills* Ahaziah, *King of* Judah; *and cauſes* Jezebel *to be thrown out of a Window, who is devour'd by Dogs.*

Q. WHO *was the young Prophet whom* Eliſha *ſent to anoint* Jehu?

A. The *Jewiſh* Doctors are of Opinion, that the Prophet, whom *Eliſha* ſent upon this Meſſage, was *Jonah*; but, upon this Suppoſition, he muſt, at this Time, have been a very young Man, becauſe *Jeroboam the Second*, in whoſe Reign *Jonah* propheſied, did not aſcend the Throne, till about fifty Years after the Unction of *Jehu*, King of *Iſrael*. However this be, it is reaſonable to think, that *Eliſha* himſelf did not go to perform this Office, either becauſe he was now grown old, and unfit for ſuch a Journey, or becauſe he was a Perſon too well known, and not ſo proper to be employ'd in an Affair, that required Secrecy.

Q. *We read*, 1 Kings xix. 16. *that* Elijah *was ordered by God to anoint* Jehu *King*; *why then ſhould* Eliſha *ſend one of the minor Prophets to anoint him again?*

A. The *Jews* are of Opinion, that none of the Kings of *Iſrael* were anointed, but thoſe, that were of the Houſe of *David*, and theſe only when there was a Queſtion about their Succeſſion, as *Solomon*, they ſay, needed not to have been anointed, had it not been for the Faction of *Adonijah*. But, in the Caſe of *Jehu*, in whom the Succeſſion of the Kingdom of *Iſrael* was to be tranſlated out of the right Line of the Family of *Ahab*, into another Family, which had no Right to the Kingdom, but merely by this Appointment of God, there was a Neceſſity for his Unction, in order both to convey to him a Title, and to inveſt him in the actual Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom; for if that (which ſome imagine from 1 *Kings* xix. 16.) be true, *viz.* that the Prophet *Elijah* did, before this Time, anoint *Jehu*, that Unction did only confer on him a remote Right to the Kingdom, in the ſame Manner, as *Samuel*'s Unction did to *David*, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 13.

Q. *What induced* Jehu's *Officers to think, that the young Prophet whom* Eliſha *ſent, was a Madman?*

A. The Officers, who were in Company with *Jehu*, might eaſily perceive, by the Habit, and Air, and Manner of Speech of the Perſon, who accoſted *Jehu* ſo boldly, and when he had done his Buſineſs, vaniſhed away ſo ſuddenly, that he was a Prophet; but then, there might be ſeveral Reaſons, which might induce Men of their Profeſſion to have a contemptible Opinion of Men of that Order. The rigid and obſcure Courſe of Life, which the Prophets led, their Neglect of themſelves, and of the Things of this World, might paſs with them for a kind of Infatuation: and the holy Exerciſes, to which they devoted themſelves, for no more than a religious Frenzy. Beſides this, the falſe Prophets, which they had ſeen in the Court of *Ahab*, had given juſt Offence; and, by their affected Geſtures, and ſtudied Contorſions (whereby they thought to recommend their crude Enthuſiaſms) made themſelves juſtly ridiculous and contemptible; and therefore it is no Wonder that theſe Officers, at firſt Sight, ſhould cenſure a true, as they thought they had Reaſon to judge of the falſe Prophets, with whom they had been acquainted; eſpecially, when we find ſome leading Men in the Tribe of *Judah*, treating the Prophets of the Lord (as in the Caſe of *Ezekiel*, xxiii. 30, 31. and of *Jeremiah* xxix. 26.) as Fools and Madmen; and ſome great Names in the Heathen World, looking upon all Pretenders to Inſpiration, in no better Light; according to that noted Paſſage in *Cicero*, *Quid habet auctoritatis furor iſte, quem divinum vocatis, ut, quæ ſapiens non videt, ea videat inſanus, & is, qui humanos Senſus amiſerit, divinos aſſecutus ſit.*

Q. *Was it uſual in thoſe Times for a Watchman to be placed on the Top of ſome Tower where the King reſided?*

A. In Time of Peace, as well as War, it was cuſtomary to have Watchmen ſet on high and eminent Places, wherever the King was, to prevent his being ſurpriſed. Thus *David*, at *Jeruſalem*, was informed by the Watchman, that his Sons were eſcaped from the Slaughter of *Abſalom*, when he thought them all loſt, 1 *Sam.* xiii. 34. and therefore *Jehoram*, who had an Army lying before *Ramoth-Gilead*, had good Reaſon to keep a watchful Eye upon every Motion, that came, eſpecially, from that Quarter.

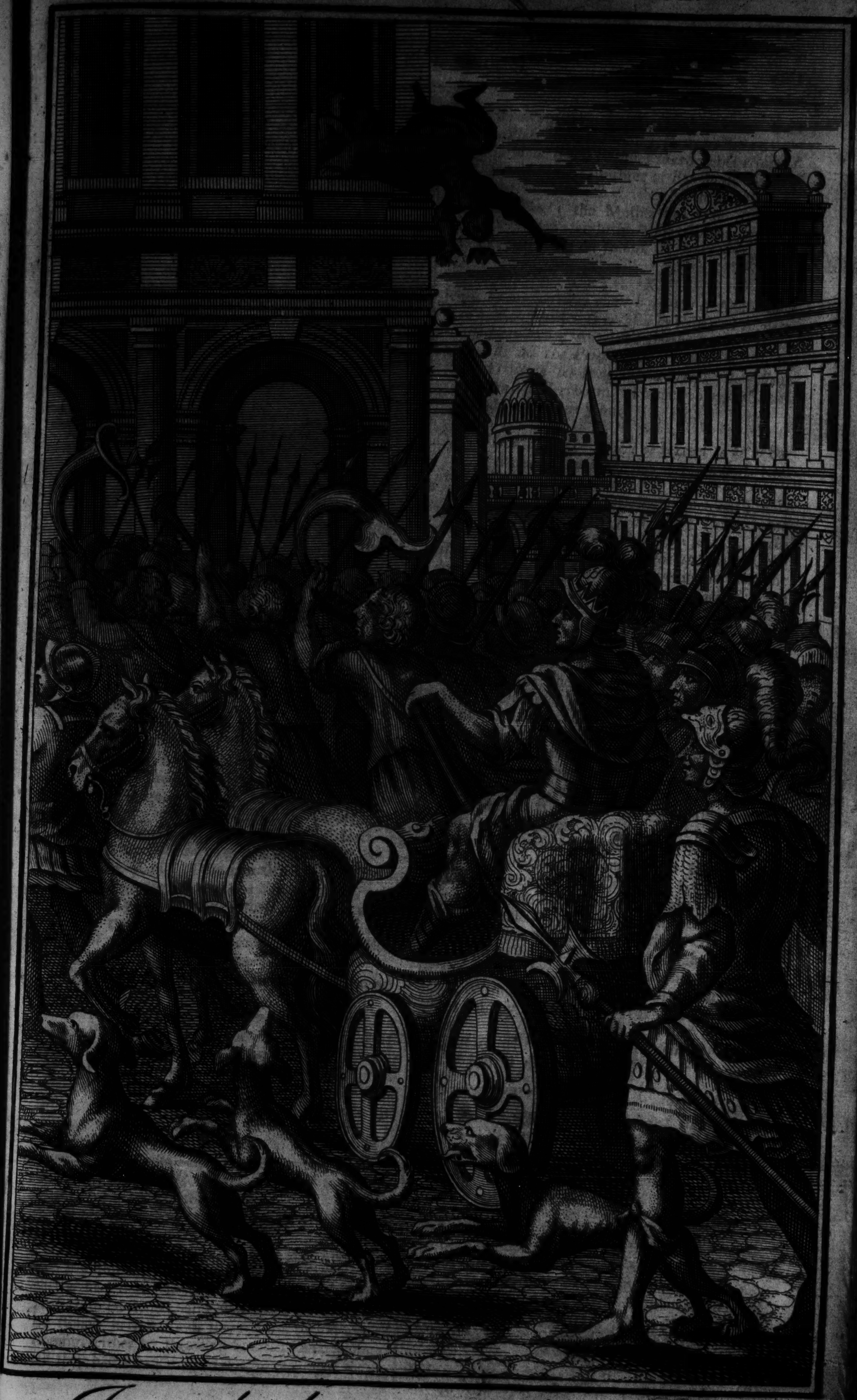
Q. *Why does* Jehu *upbraid* Jehoram *with his Mother's Sins, rather than his own?*

A. The Anſwer, which *Jehu* returns to *Jehoram* is,——— *What Peace, ſo long as the Whoredoms of thy Mother* Jezebel, *and her Witchcrafts are ſo many?* Ver. 22. *i. e.* Whilſt her Idolatries, wherewith ſhe bewitches the People, are ſtill continued and multiplied. And he upbraids *Jehoram* with his Mother's Sins, and not with his own, becauſe hers were more notorious and infamous, and what, by his Connivance, he had made his own; becauſe they were the principal Reaſon, why God did inflict, and he was come to execute, theſe Judgments; and becauſe he could find no odious Accuſations againſt him, except about the golden Calves, which he purpoſely declined mentioning, becauſe he himſelf intended to keep them up.

Q. *I don't find in the Hiſtory of* Naboth *any Mention of his Sons being murder'd with their Father; yet here we read, that God would revenge the Blood of his Sons: How is this conſiſtent?*

A. The Words which *Jehu* ſeems to quote, are

theſe,



Jezebel eaten by dogs.

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theſe, ——— *Surely I have ſeen yeſterday the Blood of* Naboth, *and the Blood of his Sons, ſaith the Lord, and I will requite him in this Place*, Ver. 26. It is to be obſerv'd however, that in all the Hiſtory of *Naboth* (which is recorded in 1 *Kings* xxi.) we find no Mention made of the Death of his Sons; but it is no unuſual Thing for the Scripture to ſupply, in one Place, that which has been omitted in another. 'Tis not improbable therefore, that as *Naboth* was accuſed of High-Treaſon, all his Family was involv'd in his Ruin, and all his Eſtate confiſcated to the King's Exchequer: And what ſeems to confirm this Opinion is,——That we find *Elijah* never once putting the King in Mind to reſtore the Vineyard to *Naboth*'s Children, nor the King, in the Time of his Repentance, ever once thinking to do it, becauſe, in all human Appearance, there were no Heirs left. Notwithſtanding this, *Grotius*, and other learned Men, have obſerv'd, that theſe Words may ſignify no more, than the extream poverty, to which *Naboth*'s Family was reduced by the Death of their Father, and the Confiſcation of his Goods: For, among the *Hebrews*, *ſay they*, all Puniſhments, and Miſeries, are called Blood, *Levit.* xvii. 4. and to take away their Eſtate, upon which they ſhould have liv'd, was, in Effect, to take away their Blood, in which is the Life of every Creature. But this is a little forced: And therefore we ſhould rather think, that *Jehu* is here aggravating *Ahab*'s Crime, and reckoning the Sons, as ſlain with the Father, becauſe, by their being deprived of him, and of his Eſtate, they were, in a Manner, in as bad a Condition, as tho' they were dead.

Q. *In what Manner was* Jezebel *painted?*

A. The Words in the Original import, *ſhe put her Eyes in paint*, i. e. ſhe uſed *Stibium* or Antimony pulveriz'd, to make her Eyes and Eye-Brows look black and large, which, in ſeveral Countries, was accounted a great Beauty. The Uſe of Paint, has been of ancient Date, and the Art of blackning the Hair, and beautifying the Face, may be indulged the Vanity of the Female Sex; but it raiſes one's Indignation, to read of a *Sardanapalus*, painting his Eyes and Eye-Brows; of the antient *Greeks*, running into the ſame Cuſtom; and much more of the martial *Romans*: But there were Fops, in all Nations then, as well as now.

Q. *What Buſineſs had Eunuchs in* Jezebel's *Chamber?*

A. According to the Cuſtom of the *Eaſtern* Nations, the Buſineſs of this Sort of People was to attend upon Queens in their Chambers, who, by their great Fidelity, and Obſequiouſneſs, gained generally the Eſteem, and were admitted to the Confidence of thoſe they ſerved, and from thence into Places, very often, of great Truſt and Profit. It is remarked however of *Jezebel*'s Eunuchs, that they were far from being faithful to her, to let us ſee, how ſuddenly Courtiers are wont to change with the Fortune of their Maſters.

Q. *Did* Jezebel's *Puniſhment bear any Reſemblance of her Cruelty to* Naboth?

A. Some of the *Jewiſh* Doctors look upon this, as a Puniſhment according to the *Lex Talionis*; for as ſhe had done, ſo ſhe ſuffer'd: She had cauſed *Naboth* to be ſtoned, and now ſhe is condemn'd to be ſtoned herſelf. For there were two Ways of ſtoning, either by throwing Stones at Malefactors, till they had knock'd them down, and kill'd them; or by throwing them down upon the Stones from an high Place, and ſo daſhing them to Pieces.

Q. *To what Royal Families was* Jezebel *related?*

A. She was the Daughter of *Eth-baal*, King of *Tyre*; the Wife of *Ahab*, the Mother of *Joram*, King of *Iſrael*; the Mother-in-law of *Jehoram*, King of *Judah*; and the Aunt of *Ahaziah*, who was likewiſe King of *Judah*.

CHAP. X.

Jehu, *by his Letters, cauſeth ſeventy of* Ahab's *Sons to be ſlain; which is excuſed by* Elijah's *Prophecy; alſo forty-two of* Ahaziah's *Brethren; by Subtilty he kills all the Prieſts and Prophets of* Ahab; *breaks down his Images and Temple; he follows the Sins of* Jeroboam. Hazael *oppreſſes* Iſrael. Jehoahaz *ſucceeds* Jehu.

Q. HOW *came the Rulers of* Jezreel *to be at* Samaria, *as no doubt they were, becauſe* Jehu *ſent his Letters to them there?*

A. The Words, in the Original, which our Tranſlation has follow'd, are; *Jehu wrote Letters, and ſent to* Samaria, *unto the Rulers of* Jezreel, *to the Elders, and to them, that brought up* Ahab's *Children*, Ver. 1. But then the Queſtion is, how the Rulers of *Jezreel* came to be at *Samaria*? Some have imagined indeed a Miſtake in the Tranſcriber, and that, inſtead of *Jezreel*, the Word ſhould be *Iſrael*, which is no great Variation: But why may we not ſuppoſe, that, upon hearing how *Jehu* had ſlain *Joram*, the great Men of his Court might take the Children, and, for fear that they ſhould fall into his Hands, flee with them to *Samaria*, as the Capital, and ſtrongeſt Place in the Kingdom; where they might think of defending themſelves againſt his Uſurpation, and (as his Letter ſeems to import) of filling, with one of *Ahab*'s Family, the vacant Throne. It was cuſtomary for Princes of the Blood, in theſe Days, to be brought up in the Families of the prime Nobility of the Nation; and therefore, whatever Perſons of this Quality had theſe Princes under their Care, and ſaw the Revolution, that was like to happen, might think it the moſt adviſeable Way to haſten with them to *Samaria*, as a Place of the moſt Security: Or, for this very Reaſon, *Joram*, when he went againſt *Ramoth-Gilead*, might have ſent them thither, that they might be under Cover, from any ill Accident, that might poſſibly happen in his War with the King of *Syria*.

Q. *What was* Jehu's *Policy in requiring the great Men of* Jezreel *to ſend him the Heads of* Ahab's *Family?*

A. Beſides the Accompliſhment of the Divine Decree, *Jehu* had this farther Deſign, in requiring this cruel Service of the Rulers and Elders, and great Men of the Nation, *viz.* thereby to engage them in the ſame Crime, and Conſpiracy with himſelf. For, by prevailing with them to murther *Ahab*'s Kinſmen in this Manner, he ty'd them to his Intereſt ſo cloſely, that if any of the inferior People had been minded to oppoſe his Deſigns, they were, by this Means, depriv'd of any Man of Figure and Diſtinction to head them; and not only ſo, but, by this Expedient, *Jehu* thought likewiſe that he might, in a great Meaſure, juſtify, at leaſt leſſen, the Odium of his own cruel and perfidious Conduct; for this is the Senſe of his Appeal to the People, *Ye be righteous: Behold, I have conſpired againſt* *my Maſter, and ſlew him, but who ſlew all theſe?* Ver. 2. As if he had ſaid, "I own indeed, that I "was a great Inſtrument in taking off the late "King; but am I more culpable, than are the "Friends, the Counſellors, the Officers of *Ahab*? "I pretend not to conceal my Fault; but the Approbation, which the principal Men of the Nation have given it, in taking up Arms againſt "the Houſe of *Ahab*, and the wonderful Succeſs, "that has attended this Enterprize of mine, are "not theſe a certain Proof, that God has raiſed "me up to execute his Decree in this Reſpect, and "and ought you not to acknowledge, in this Caſe, "the Interpoſition of his Hand.

Q. *Did* Jehu's *Order juſtify the Governors of* Samaria *in killing* Ahab's *Children?*

A. The ſacred Hiſtorian takes care to repeat the Number of theſe Princes of the Blood in two ſeparate Places, Ver. 1, 6. on Purpoſe to ſhew the vile Spirit of theſe great Men, who could deſtroy ſo many royal Perſons, to whom they were Governors, and to whom they owed a juſt Protection and Defence: And therefore it was no more, than they deſerv'd, if, when *Jehu ſlew all that remained of the Houſe of* Ahab, *and all his great Men, until he left none,* he included in that Number (as ſome imagine) theſe baſe, perfidious Time-ſervers.

Q. *Does it not ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange, that the Brethren of* Ahaziah *ſhould have no Notice of his Death; ſince, if they had, they would never have ventured to go to* Samaria, *as they intended,* Ver. 13?

A. Jehu muſt certainly have made wonderful Expedition in what he did, to have prevented the Report (which generally ſpreads very faſt) of what had paſſed at *Jezreel.* Two Kings and a Queen kill'd, the whole Family of *Ahab* extinct, and a general Change and Revolution in the State; and yet not a Word of this known at *Jeruſalem*, (which was not quite fourſcore Miles diſtant from *Jezreel*) even tho' *Ahaziah*, the King of *Judah*, was one of the Princes, that was ſlain.

Q. *Who was* Jehonadab, *whom* Jehu *took up into his Chariot?*

A. Several learned Men are of Opinion, that this *Jonadab* was not the Perſon, who gave the Precepts, mention'd in *Jeremiah* xxxv. to his Children, but another of that Name, who liv'd in the Days of *Jeremiah*: For it is not likely, *they think*, that a Man, addicted to ſuch a quiet and retired Life, as he inſtituted, would have come to meet *Jehu*; and therefore they rather imagine, that it was ſome military Perſon, of great Note and Eſteem among the Populace, whoſe Intereſt might do *Jehu* great Service, and whoſe Advice, in many Things, he afterwards follow'd. But why might not *Jonadab* (how well ſoever he might love Retirement) come, upon this Occaſion, to congratulate *Jehu*'s Zeal againſt Idolatry, and to adviſe, and encourage him to proceed in fulfilling the Will God revealed to him? And the Reaſon is obvious, why *Jehu* might be glad of the Countenance and Company of ſuch a Man, whoſe known Piety would gain him more Reverence and Reſpect, than the Attendance of any great Captain could procure him. But, though *Jonadab*, the Son of *Rechab*, is allowed to be a good Man, yet it does not therefore follow, that he revived the ancient Rules of the *Rechabites* (as ſome are apt to think) upon a religious Account, but purely as a Matter of Policy. The Story is this. The *Rechabites* were of the Race of *Hobab*, or *Jethro*, the *Kenite*, a Prieſt of *Midian*, and Father-in-law to *Moſes*, 1 Chron. ii. 55. ſo that the *Kenites*, who were *Midianites*, the *Midianites* were *Dwellers in Tents* from the Beginning: For, in this Manner *Abraham* lived, while he ſojourned in the Land of *Canaan*, and, in Imitation of him, the *Midianites*, who were of his Poſterity, might do the ſame. Now when the Children of *Hobab*, who were all *Kenites*, were invited by *Moſes* to go along with the People of God into *Canaan*, they might retain this Paſtoral Manner of Life, not only as a Badge of the Nation, from whence they were deſcended, but as a Means likewiſe to make their Habitation more quiet and ſecure (in a Land where they were Strangers) both from the Envy of the *Jews* at home, and the Danger of Enemies abroad. For, having neither Houſes nor Lands, but Tents, and Cattle only, which they could move, upon Occaſion, from Place to Place, they could not be ſubject to hoſtile Invaſions. But, as, in Length of Time, theſe *Kenites* were tempted, by the more pleaſant Living of the *Iſraelites*, to think of changing this Cuſtom of their Anceſtors; this *Jonadab*, the Son of *Rechab*, a famous *Kenite*, and of much Eſteem and Authority among them, took Occaſion to renew it again, and to bind his Poſterity to obſerve it. For this End he forbad the drinking of Wine, leſt the Deſire thereof might tempt them to plant Vineyards, and build Houſes, as the *Jews* did; and ſo forſake the Cuſtom of their Nation, as perhaps a Licentiouſneſs in Wine had cauſed many of them to do. Upon the whole therefore it appears, that *Jonadab* only renewed, what their Anceſtors had obſerved, long before he was born; and that his Authority prevailed among them to continue this Form of Abſtinence, for two hundred Years, after he was dead, not as a Matter of Religion, but as a mere civil Cuſtom.

Q. *What Sort of Veſtments were the Prieſts of* Baal *cloathed with?*

A. It was the Cuſtom of almoſt all Idolaters to be very curious aoout about the external Pomp of Ceremonies; wherein indeed the chief Part of their Worſhip does conſiſt. All the Prieſts of *Baal* were cloathed in *fine Linnen*, and their *Chief-prieſts*, no doubt, had ſome peculiar Ornaments to diſtinguiſh them. *Baal* and *Aſtarte* were *Pœnician* Deities: And therefore, as *Silius Italicus*, in his Deſcription of the Prieſts of *Hercules*, has given us an Account, in what Manner the *Phœnician* Prieſts (when in their Office) were habited, we have Reaſon from thence to ſuppoſe, that the Dreſs of the Prieſts of *Baal* were much of the ſame Kind.

Q. *What were the Gods whom theſe Idolaters worſhipped under the Name of* Baal?

A. Theſe Idolaters, beſides the ſupreme God, whom they took *Baal* to be, worſhipped ſeveral other leſſer Gods, whom they called *Baalim*, and whoſe Images were placed in this Temple: For it was an antient Cuſtom, (as *Servius* notes) after the Prieſt had invoked the particular God, for whom the Sacrifice was intended, to addreſs himſelf to all the other Gods, leſt any of them ſhould think themſelves neglected.

Q. *Have we any Inſtances of Princes reducing a Temple to a common Jakes for the Crimes of the Prieſts, as* Jehu *ſerved that of* Baal?

A. The Hiſtories of the *Eaſt* furniſh us with ſeveral Examples of Princes inflicting this Kind of

Pudiſhment

Puniſhment upon ſuch, as were found guilty of high Treaſon, or of contravening the King's Commands, to which the Decree, which *Darius* made in favour of the *Jews*, plainly alludes; *Whoſoever ſhall alter this Word, let Timber be pulled down from his Houſe, and being ſet up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his Houſe be made a Dung-hill*, Ezra vi. 11. And to the ſame Purpoſe is that Threat of *Nebuchadnezzar* to the *Magicians*, &c. *If ye will make known unto me the Dream, with the Interpretation thereof, ye ſhall be cut in Pieces, and your Houſes ſhall be made a Dunghill*, Dan. ii. 5.

Q. Jehu's *Drift and Deſigns being by this Time known, how came it that* Baal's *Prieſts ſo unanimouſly met together on his Summons?*

A. *Jehu* was a wicked and ambitious Man, and, it is much to be queſtioned, whether he would have executed the divine Will ſo punctually, had it not fallen in with his own Intereſt and Deſigns. He had now extirpated the Houſe of *Ahab*; and, as *Ahab* had been the firſt Introducer of the Idolatry of *Baal*, into the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, he could not but think, that the Prieſts and Prophets, and ſuch, as adhered to the Worſhip of that falſe God, were of *Jezebel*'s Faction, and might, at one Time or other, take Occaſion to revenge her Death. Something or other was therefore neceſſary to be done, in order to get rid of this dangerous Set of Men, and, that the Buſineſs might be done effectually, to get rid of them all at once. He was a Perſon of a known Indifference in Matters of Religion, who, in this Regard, always conformed to the Humours of the Court, and, in the Reign of King *Ahab*, had been as ſtrenuous a Worſhipper of *Baal*, as any; and therefore how could the People tell, when they read his Proclamation for a great Feaſt, and a ſolemn Sacrifice, to be offered unto *Baal*, but that, in good earneſt, he had returned to his *former Love* of the Religion, which he had formerly embraced, and only deſerted, for a while, in Complacency to others. He had gone on a little oddly indeed at his Entrance upon the Government, and murthered their chief Patroneſs, and made free with ſome of their Prieſts likewiſe; but theſe Prieſts, perhaps, were Domeſticks to *Jezebel*, or too near related to *Ahab*'s Family, not to go off in the common Slaughter: Some Inſtances of this Kind could hardly be helped, in the Heat of Execution, when the Man was reſolved to ſecure himſelf, and remove all Competitors. But now, that he has nothing to fear, why ſhould we think, but that a Prince, who has no Senſe of Religion at all, ſhould be a Worſhipper of our God *Baal*, that glorious Luminary which ſhines ſo bright in the Firmament of Heaven, as he is of the golden Calves?

Thus, we may ſuppoſe, the *Baalites* reaſoned, upon reading the King's Proclamation, ſo apparently in favour of their Idolatry; and God, in his Judgment, ſuffered their *fooliſh Hearts to be thus darkened*; and *becauſe they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be ſaved*; *for this Cauſe he ſent upon them a ſtrong Deluſion, that they might believe a Lie*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 11.

But, whether they deluded themſelves into this Perſuaſion, or not, this they knew by Experience, that *Jehu* was a Man of a fierce and bloody Temper, who would not fail to put his Threats in Execution, and therefore reading in the ſame Proclamation, that *whoſoever ſhould be wanting, he ſhall not live*, they found themſelves reduced to this ſad *Dilemma*, either to go or die: And therefore they thought it the wiſeſt Way, to run the Hazard, and throw themſelves upon his Mercy, having this at laſt to plead for themſelves, that they were not diſobedient to his Command.

Q. *How could the Temple of* Baal *be capable of receiving them all?*

A. The Words of *Jehu*'s Summons are theſe, *Call unto me all the Prophets of* Baal, *all his Servants, and all his Prieſts, let none be wanting, for I have a great Sacrifice to offer unto* Baal. — *And* Jehu *did it in Subtilty, to the Intent that he might deſtroy the Worſhippers of* Baal; in which Words we may obſerve, that two particular Orders of Men are diſtinctly mentioned, the Prophets and Prieſts, and therefore we may preſume that the Servants and Worſhippers, who are joined with them, were ſome of an inferior Kind (ſuch as *Levites* in the *Jewiſh*, or *Deacons* in the *Chriſtian* Church) who attended upon the other in their ſacred Miniſtrations; becauſe in the 22d Verſe, we find *Jehu ordering him, who was over the Veſtry, to bring forth Veſtments for all the Worſhippers of* Baal, which cannot be meant of the People in general, becauſe they wore diſtinct Garments in their Worſhip, either of God or *Baal*, but of the Prieſts and Miniſters only. Theſe were the great Supports of the preſent Idolatry, and therefore *Jehu* concluded very juſtly, that if he did but once deſtroy them, all the common Worſhippers would fall of Courſe.

But, even if we take the Words *Servants* and *Worſhippers* in their utmoſt Latitude, we need not doubt but that the Temple of *Baal*, which was built in the capital City, and near the royal Palace, and, as being the chief in its Kind, was deſigned for the Uſe of the King and Queen, and particularly, perhaps, for ſuch great and high Solemnities, was large and capacious enough to hold them all. For, beſides this principal Building, there might be ſeveral outward Courts (as there were in the Temple of *Jeruſalem*) where the People ſtood, while they worſhipped (as they did in the Temple Service) and theſe, together with the Temple itſelf, would afford Space ſufficient for all the Idolaters of that Kind, both Miniſters and People, that were then in the whole Kingdom. For, ſince the Days of *Ahab*, by the Miniſtry of *Elijah*, *Eliſha*, and the reſt of the Prophets, as well as by the Slaughter, which *Hazael*, in his Wars againſt *Iſrael*, had made among many of them, the Number of *Baal*'s Worſhippers had greatly diminiſhed, *Jehoram* himſelf, as we read, *put away the Image of* Baal, *that his Father had made*, 2 Kings iii. 2. and, when the King withdrew his Preſence and Encouragement, his Subjects, without doubt, followed his Example, except a few ſilly and beſotted, Bigots, who were gathered together to their own Deſtruction; for it cannot be ſuppoſed that the Worſhip of ſuch ſenſeleſs Idols could ever be kept up (eſpecially among a People that had the Oracles of God in their Cuſtody) without the Influence of ſome great Authority, or the Conſideration of ſome wicked and worldly Ends.

Q. *What was* Jehu's *general Character?*

A. What God ſays of the King of *Aſſyria*, whom he calls *the Rod of his Anger*, and *Staff of his Indignation*, is not unapplicable to *Jehu*, after he was advanced to the Throne of *Iſrael*: *I ſent him againſt the People of my Wrath, to tread them down, like Mire of the Streets; howbeit he meant not ſo, neither did his Heart think ſo, but it was in his Heart to deſtroy and cut off Nations not a few.* *Jehu*, indeed, made great Oſtentation of his Zeal for the Lord, and that, during his Adminiſtration, *there ſhould fall to the Earth nothing of what he ſaid concerning the Houſe of* Ahab; and it muſt be acknowledged, that for his Performance of the divine Commands in this Regard, he received Commendations from God, and a Settlement of his Family in the Throne of *Iſrael*, for four Succeſſions; and yet we may ſay of him, *that he meaned not ſo, neither did his Heart think ſo*: Still he was a bad Man, tho' *he did well in executing that which was right in God's Eyes*, as to the Aboliſhment of the Worſhip of *Baal*; but his obſtinate Perſiſtence in the Sin of *Jeroboam*, may be juſtly alledged againſt him, as an Argument of his Falſheartedneſs in all his other Actions.

Q. *If* Jehu *was ſo bad a Man, why did God make uſe of him to execute his Purpoſes?*

A. *Jehu*, it is true, was a very wicked, bold, furious, and implacable Man; but a Man of this Complexion (conſidering the Work he was to be ſet about) was a proper Inſtrument to be employed; and ſo far is it from tending to the Reproach, that it is infinitely to the Glory of God, that he can make uſe of ſuch boiſterous and unruly Paſſions of Mankind for the Accompliſhment of his Deſigns: For this is the Obſervation of the *Pſalmiſt*, *Surely the Wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee, and the Remainder of his Wrath, ſhalt thou reſtrain.* As he plainly did in the Caſe *Jehu*; for after he had ſettled him in the Poſſeſſion of a Kingdom, and ſtill found that he perſiſted in his political Idolatry, he brought down the King of *Syria* upon him, *who ſmote the Coaſts of* Iſrael, and quite waſted all that Part of his Kingdom, which lay beyond the River *Jordan*.

Q. *Did* Jehu *purſue the divine Direction in cutting off* Ahaziah?

A. There is this to be ſaid, concerning *Jehu*'s cutting off *Ahaziah*, and the other Branches of his Family, that, tho' his primary Intent in doing it was to ſecure himſelf in the Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom, againſt all Claims, that might come from the Houſe of *Ahab*; yet did he not act intirely contrary to his Commiſſion, becauſe he was the Son of *Athaliah*, the Daughter of *Ahab*, and the Order of God was, *that the whole Houſe of* Ahab *ſhould periſh*: But then the Queſtion is, where it was that *Ahaziah* was ſlain, becauſe in the two Accounts, that we have of his Death, there ſeems to be ſome Repugnancy. The Account which we have in this Book runs thus, ——— *When* Ahaziah *ſaw the Death of* Jehoram *King of* Iſrael, *he fled by the Way of the Garden-Houſe, and* Jehu *followed after him, and ſaid, ſmite him alſo in his Chariot: And they did ſo at the going up to* Gur, *which is by* Ibleam, *and he fled to* Megiddo, *and there died*: But in the Book of *Chronicles* it is ſaid, that *when* Jehu *was executing Judgment upon the Houſe of* Ahab, *and found the Princes of* Judah, *even the Sons of the Brethren of* Ahaziah *that miniſtred to* Ahaziah, *he ſlew them. And he ſought* Ahaziah, *and they caught him (for he was hid in* Samaria) *and brought him to* Jehu, *and when they had ſlain him, they buried him.*

Q. *How do you reconcile the different Accounts in* Kings *and* Chronicles, *concerning* Ahaziah's *Death?*

A. In Order to reconcile the different Accounts of the ſame Event, we muſt obſerve, that, as one great End of writing the Book of *Chronicles*, was, to ſupply ſuch Matters, as had been omitted in the Book of *Kings*; ſo this Account of the Death of *Ahaziah*, in the latter, is very ſhort, and included in the Story of *Jehoram*, that the Reader, at one and the ſame View, as it were, might perceive, in what Manner it was, that both theſe Princes fell; but in the former it is told more at large, and therefore, to compleat the Hiſtory, we muſt take in both Accounts, and from thence we may gather, ——— That, upon ſeeing *Jehoram* mortally wounded, *Ahaziah* turn'd his Chariot, and made the beſt of his Way to *Samaria*, in order to eſcape into his own Kingdom; but, finding the Paſſes too narrowly guarded, he thought proper to conceal himſelf in the Town, in hopes of a better Opportunity; that *Jehu*, in the mean Time, coming to *Samaria*, and, having Intelligence that *Ahaziah* was lurking there, order'd, that diligent Search ſhould be made for him, and, when he was found, that he ſhould be carried to *Gur* (the Place, in all Probability where his Father *Joram* had ſlain all his Brethren) and there be killed in his Chariot, that ſo his Servants might immediately carry off his Corpſe, and bury it. But, as *Jehu*'s Order to the Officers, that were intruſted with the Execution, was only, that they ſhould ſmite him, they thought it enough to give him a mortal Wound, ſo that his Servants carried him from thence to *Megiddo*, the next Town in the Tribe of *Iſſachar*, where he died.

CHAP. XI.

Athaliah *deſtroys all the Royal Family, except* Joaſh, *who eſcapes, and is hid ſix Years in the Houſe of God. In the ſeventh Year* Jehoiada *orders the Captains to proclaim him King.* Athaliah *is ſlain. The Covenant is renewed between God, the King, and the People.* Baal's *Worſhip is deſtroyed. The King is ſet on the Throne.*

Q. IN *the laſt Chapter we have an Account of of the dreadful Havock made by* Jehu *in the Family of* Ahab; *in this we read of a Maſſacre in the Royal Family of* Judah: *What Obſervations do you make upon theſe fatal Cataſtrophes in theſe ſeveral Royal Lines?*

A. The Conſideration of the Fate, that attended theſe Royal Families, is enough to make any one bleſs Providence, for having been born of a meaner Parentage. The whole Offspring of *Jeroboam*, *Baaſha*, and *Ahab*, Kings of *Iſrael*, were cut off for their Idolatry, ſo that there was not one left; and the Kings of *Judah*, having contracted an Affinity with the Houſe of *Ahab*, and being by them ſeduced into the ſame Crime, were deſtroyed by three ſucceſſive Maſſacres, that there was but one left. For, firſt, *Jehoram* ſlew his Brethren; then, *Jehu* ſlew all his Brother's Children; and now, *Athaliah* deſtroys all the reſt, that her Executioners could meet with. Enraged ſhe was to ſee *Ahab*'s Family cut off, ſhe had Reaſon to apprehend, that *Jehu*, who, had a Commiſſion to extirpate all, would not be long, before he called upon her; her only Way therefore, to ſecure herſelf againſt him, was to uſurp the Throne; but this, ſhe knew, ſhe could not do, without deſtroying all the royal Progeny, who were no Well-wiſhers to the Worſhip of *Baal*, which ſhe had abetted, and was reſolved to eſtabliſh.

Q. *Whoſe Son was* Joaſh?

A. Some Interpreters are of Opinion, that *Joaſh* was not the real Son of *Ahaziah*, in whom the Race of *Solomon*, in a direct Line was extinct, but properly the Son of *Nathan*, and only called *Ahaziah*'s, becauſe he ſucceeded him in the Throne; for, had he been *Ahaziah*'s true Son, and *Athaliah*'s Grandſon, why might ſhe not have declared him King, and, during his Minority at leaſt, taken the Adminiſtration into her own Hands? But therefore ſhe exerciſed her Cruelty, as they ſay, in deſtroying the Princes related to *Ahaziah*, becauſe ſhe was unwilling to have the Kingdom go into anothhr Branch of *David*'s Family. But, notwithſtanding theſe Reaſons, and the Authority of thoſe, who produce them, in the ſecond Books, both of *Kings* and *Chronicles*, we find this *Joaſh* ſo frequently called the *Son of Ahaziah*, the *King's Son*, *&c.* without any Manner of Reſtriction, that we cannot be perſuaded to look out any other Father, for this Prince.

Q. *How does* Joſephus *relate the Manner of* Joaſh's *Eſcape and Concealment?*

A. Thus: —— "*Jehoſabaoth*, the Siſter of *Ahazia*, and Wife to *Jehoiada* the High-Prieſt, "coming into the Palace, found a Male Child, of "about a Year old, whoſe Name was *Joaſh*, among "the dead Bodies of the Sons of *Ahaziah*, whom "the Nurſe, it ſeems, had there laid, on purpoſe "to ſave its Life: She therefore convey'd it away "to her own Lodgings, and thence to the Temple, "where ſhe took care of it, through the whole ſix "Years of *Athaliah*'s Reign, without making any "one privy to the Secret, except her own Huſ"band;" who, upon this extraordinary Occaſion, might diſpenſe with the Law, or rather Cuſtom, which allowed none, but the Prieſts, that officiated, to lodge in the Apartments of the Temple.

Q. *Do you think* Athaliah *had no Suſpicion or Intimation that* Joaſh *was living, all the Time of his ſix Years Concealment in the Temple?*

A. 'Tis very likely, that *Athaliah* might imagine that ſhe had ſlain all, and ſo think herſelf ſecure; or if ſhe ſuſpected, that this one was preſerved, and was ſtill alive, ſhe might not think it adviſeable to make any ſtrict Search, leſt thereby ſhe ſhould alarm the People with a Notion, that there was ſtill a Son of *David*'s Family left, which might be a means to make them uneaſy under her Government, and deſirous of a Change: Beſides that ſhe might have the Vanity to think of being able, in a ſhort Time, to ſecure the Crown to herſelf, in ſuch a Manner, as that ſhe ſhould not need to fear ſuch a weak *Competitor*.

Q. *How happened it, that* Jehoidah *did not arm his Officers and Soldiers till the Moment he had Occaſion for them to put his Deſign in Execution?*

A. This was for fear of giving Suſpicion: But, as *David* had erected a Kind of ſacred Armory in one of the Apartments of the Temples wherein the Weapons, and other Trophies which he, and ſeveral other Generals, had gained from their Enemies, and, as Monuments of their Victories, had dedicated them to the Lord, were depoſited, *Jehoiada* took care, upon this Occaſion, to have this Magazine of military Proviſions opened, ſo that there was no want of any Sort of Arms.

Q. *What do you underſtand by the* Teſtimony *which he put into the King's Hand at his Coronation?*

A. Thoſe, who think, that the Word *Eduth*, which we tranſlate *Teſtimony*, comes from the *Hebrew* Root, *Adah*, which ſignifies to *cloath*, *put on*, or *adorn*, ſuppoſe, that it was ſome royal Ornament, which the High-prieſt put upon the King, as a Mark of regal Dignity, at the ſame Time, that he placed the Crown upon his Head; and this Ornament they conceive to have been a *Bracelet*, becauſe, in the Story of the *Amalekite*, we read, that he brought to *David* the Bracelet, that was upon *Saul*'s Arm, as well as the Crown, that was upon his Head. But ſince, in the 17th Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, which treats expreſly of the Election, and Duty of a King, there is this Injunction given, ——*That he ſhould write him a Copy of the Law in a Book, out of that, which is before the Prieſts, the Levites*, Ver. 18. Others, with more Probability, have thought, that, at his Coronation, a Roll, containing a Copy of the Law, (which is frequently called a Teſtimony, as being a Witneſs of God's Will and Men's Duty) was put in his Hand, which he held, for that Time, in the Way of a Sceptre or Truncheon; though others will have it, that when *Jehoiada* crowned *Joaſh*, he laid the Book of the Law *upon his Head*, to which Cuſtom holy *Job* (Chap. xxxi. Ver. 35, 36.) as they think, ſeems to allude, when he wiſhes, *O that mine Adverſary had written a Book; ſurely I would take it upon my Shoulder, and bind it as a Crown to me:* For the Manner among the *Orientals*, when they had received a Letter from any Perſon, they highly reſpected, was to hold it up to their Heads, before they opened it.

CHAP. XII.

Jehoaſh (*or* Joaſh) *reigns well all the Days of* Jehoiada; *he gives Order for the Repair of the Temple. He diverts* Hazael *from* Jeruſalem, *by a Preſent of the hallowed Treaſures. He is ſlain by his Servants; and is ſucceeded by* Amaziah.

I Find no Difficulty in this Chapter that wants Explanation; therefore let us proceed to the next.

CHAP. XIII.

Jehoahaz, *King of* Iſrael, *follows the Sins of* Jeroboam, *is oppreſſed by* Hazael, *and relieved by Prayer.* Joaſh *ſucceeds him in the Kingdom, and in his Idolatry.* Eliſha *prophecies three Victories over the* Syrians, *and dies.* Joaſh's *Lamentation. A Year after the* Moabites *invade the Land; a dead Man being caſt into* Eliſha's *Sepulcher, is reſtored to Life.* Hazael *dies and* Joaſh *recovers the Cities that had been taken from his Father.*

Q. WHAT *is obſervable in* Joaſh's *Lamentation over* Eliſha?

A. His Words are, —*My Father, my Father, the Chariots of* Iſrael, *and the Horſemen thereof*, Verſe 14. which are the very ſame that *Eliſha* uſed concerning his Maſter *Elijah*, when he was taken up into Heaven, ſignifying the great Authority he had maintained among them, included in the Word Father, and the many glorious Victories which he had obtained for them, by the Efficacy of his Counſels and Prayers.

Q. *What was* Jehoaſh's *Fault, as to occaſion the*

Prophet to be angry with him for not ſtriking the Ground oftener than thrice, Ver. 19?

A. Whether King *Joaſh*, before this Interview with *Eliſha*, was acquainted, or not, with the Nature of parabolical Actions, whereby Prophets more eſpecially were accuſtomed to repreſent future Events; by the Comment which *Eliſha* made upon the firſt Arrow that he ſhot (which he calls *the Arrow of Deliverance from* Syria) he could not but perceive that this was a ſymbolical Action, and intended to prefigure his Victories over that Nation; and therefore, as the firſt Action of ſhooting was a Kind of Prelude to the War, he could not but underſtand farther, (even though the Prophet had ſaid nothing to him) that this ſecond Action of ſtriking the Ground with the Arrow, was to portend the Number of the Victories he was to obtain. But then, if we may ſuppoſe, with the Generality of Interpreters, that the Prophet had apprized him before-hand, that ſuch was the ſymbolical Intent of what he now put him upon, that the oftner he ſmote upon the Ground, the more would the Victories be, which his Arms ſhould obtain; that this was the Decree of Heaven, and that thus, in ſome Meaſure, his Succeſs in War was put in his own Power; the King's Conduct was utterly inexcuſable, if diffident of the Prophet's Promiſe, and conſidering the vaſt Strength of the King's of *Syria*, more than the Power of God, that was engaged on his Side, he ſtopped his Hand, after he had ſmote thrice; ſuppoſing, indeed, that the Prediction would never have been fulfilled, had he gone on, and ſmote upon the Earth oftner. Upon the whole therefore, the Prophet had juſt Reaſon to be offended at the King, for not believing God, who had done ſo many ſignal Miracles in favour of the *Iſraelites*; for not believing him, who (according to his own Acknowledgment) had been a conſtant Defender of the State, *the Chariot of* Iſrael, *and the Horſemen thereof*, and now, in his dying Hours, was full of good Wiſhes and Intentions for his Country; and, by this Unbelief of his, for eclipſing the Glory of his own Arms, and curtailing the Number of his Victories: For *thou ſhouldſt have ſmitten five or ſix Times*, (ſays the Prophet to the King) *then ſhouldſt thou have ſmitten* Syria, *till thou hadſt conſumed it, whereas now thou ſhalt ſmite* Syria *but thrice.*

Q. *Were the* Moabites *that infeſted the Land, regular Troops, or a Gang of* Banditti?

A. Theſe *Moabites* were not ſuch a Gang of Robbers, as ſometimes infeſt our Roads, but a regular Body of Men, well appointed, and under proper Officers, to the Number of a ſmall Army, who made Incurſions into the Territories of *Judah* and *Iſrael*, generally at the Beginning of the Year, which is the Seaſon proper for Armies to take the Field; and therefore ſome have obſerved, that the Month *Niſan*, which, with the *Jews*, is the firſt in their Year, had its Name from *Niſim*, which ſignifies the *Engines of War*, which were uſually ſet up in that Month, in like Manner as the Month which we call *March* (and in Part anſwers to the *Jewiſh Niſan*) had its Name among the *Romans* from *Mars*, their God of War, becauſe moſt Nations, at that Time, began their military Expeditions.

Q. *In what Manner did the antient* Hebrews *build their Tombs; and where was* Eliſha's *Burying-place?*

A. The common Places of burying, among the *Hebrews*, were in Fields, in Caverns dug in a Rock, with Niches for the Corps to be placed in, and, at the Entrance of the Sepulcher, there was an hewn Stone, which might be removed or replaced without any Damage to the Tomb. The *Jews* (as *Joſephus* informs us) gave *Eliſha* a pompous and honourable Interment, anſwerable to the Dignity and Merit of ſo great a Prophet; but he does not tell us where the Place of his Sepulchre was. Hereupon ſome have imagined, that he was carried to *Abel-meholah*, the Place of his Nativity, to be there interred among his Anceſtors: Others think that he was buried at *Nineveh*, and, to this very Day, the Inhabitants ſhew his Monument at *Moſul*, which was built, as they ſay, upon the very Spot where old *Nineveh* ſtood. But the moſt prevailing Opinion, founded upon a conſtant Tradition is, that he was buried ſomewhere in the Neighbourhood of *Samaria*, becauſe there, in all Appearance, he died. The Tomb, however that is uſually ſhewn for his, in that City, can be nothing more that the Repoſitory of his *Remains*, ſince his original Burying-place was certainly at ſome Diſtance from it.

Q. *On putting a dead Corps into* Eliſha's *Tomb, the Man revived: What account does* Joſephus *and the* Jewiſh *Doctors give upon this remarkable Occurrence?*

A. Joſephus, in his Account of this Tranſaction, varies from the ſacred Hiſtory: For "it happened, after *Eliſha*'s Burial, ſays he, that a Traveller was killed upon the Way by ſome Thieves, and his Body thrown into *Eliſha*'s Monument, which, upon the bare Touch of the Prophet's Corps, inſtantly revived." And the *Jewiſh* Doctors, who love to improve upon every Miracle, tell us, that this Perſon, whom they pretend to call *Sellum*, after he was revived, did preſently die again, becauſe he was a wicked Man, and did not deſerve to live long; never conſidering that his haſty Death afterwards was the ready Way to impair the Credit of the Miracle, and make it, indeed, of no Effect. However this be, it is certain, that by this Miracle (as we find it related in Scripture) God did the higheſt Honour to his Prophet, and confirmed the Truth of what he had promiſed to the King of *Iſrael*, as well as the Certainty of a future Life; in which Senſe ſome Part of the Character, which the Author of *Eccleſiaſticus*, xlviii. 12, *&c.* gives him, may not improperly be underſtood. Eliſha *was filled with* Elijah's *Spirit; whilſt he was not moved with the Preſence of any Prince, neither could any bring him into Subjection: No Word could overcome him; and, after his Death, his Body propheſied; he did Wonders in his Life, and at his Death were his Works marvellous.*

CHAP. XIV.

Amaziah's *good Reign; his Juſtice on the Murtherers of his Father; his Victory over* Edom; *he wars againſt* Jehoaſh *King of* Iſreal; *is overcome by him, and ſlain by his own People; he is ſucceeded by* Ahaziah. Jehoaſh *dies, and* Jeroboam *his Son is made King; his Acts and Death.* Zachariah *his Son ſucceeds him.*

Q. HAVE *you any Thing to obſerve particularly concerning the Prophet* Jonah, *who is mentioned* Ver. 25. *as encouraging* Jeroboam *to proclaim War againſt the* Syrians?

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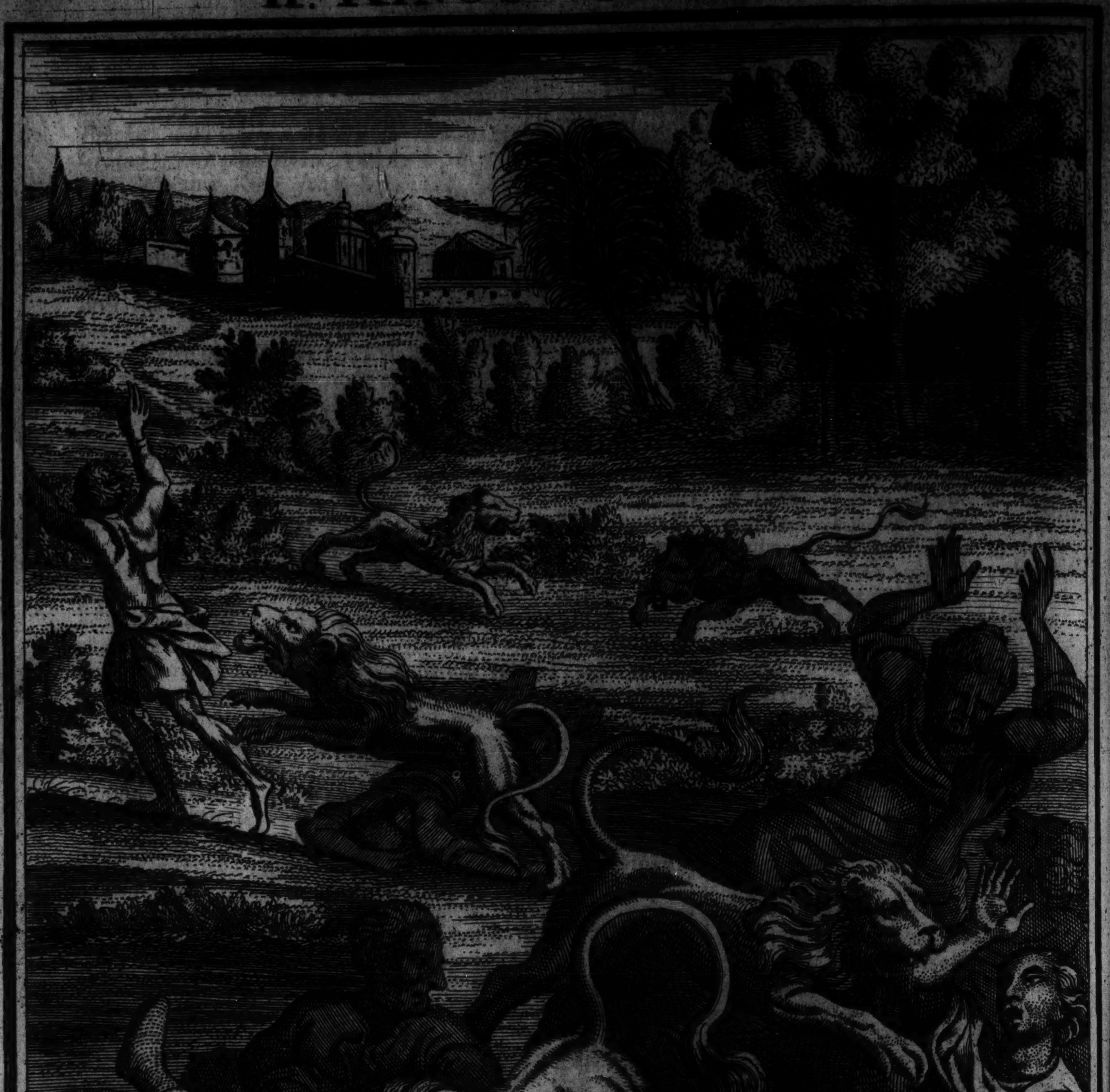
II. KINGS CHAP XVII.



The ſtrange nations plagued with Lion

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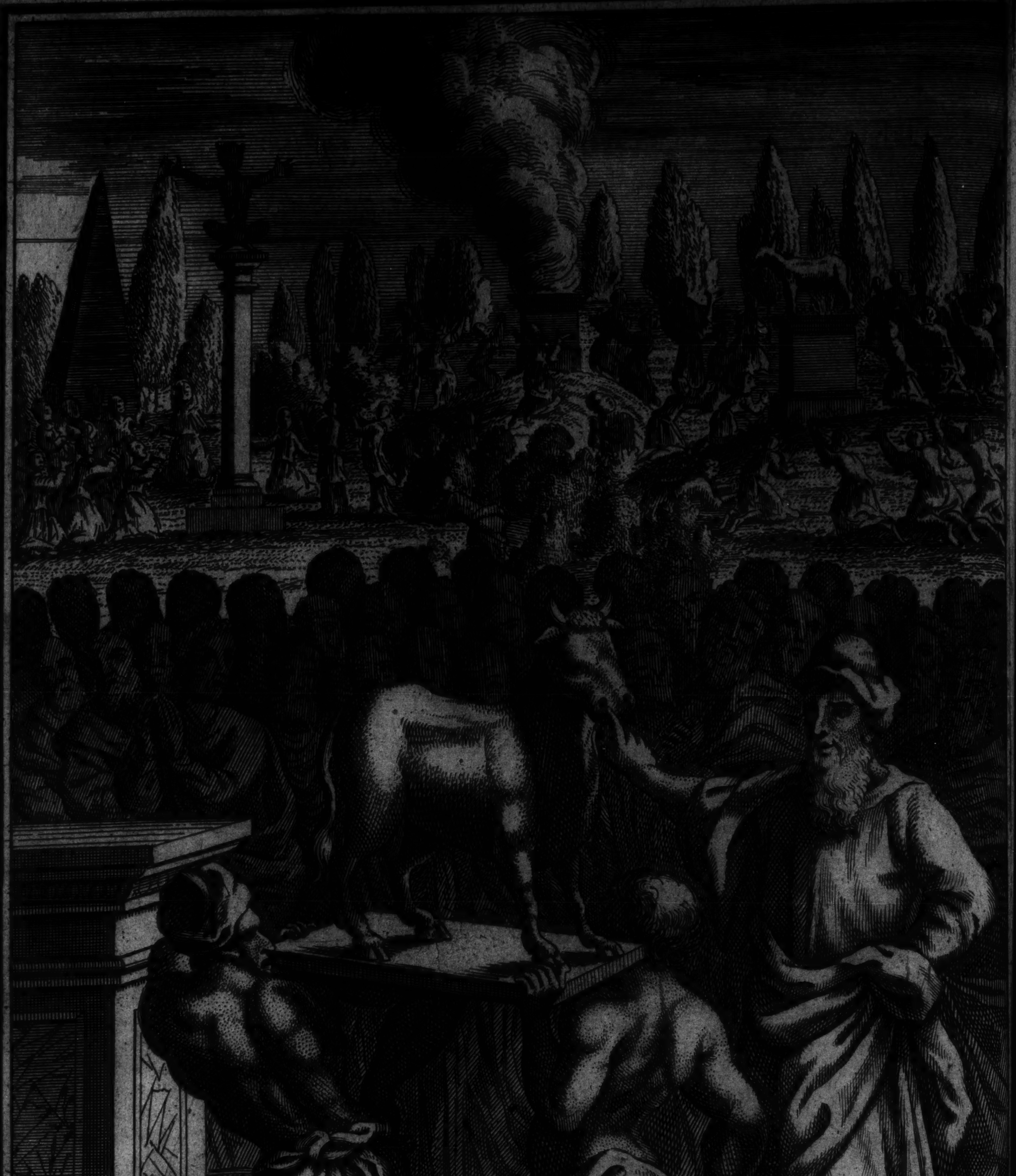
II. KINGS CHAP. XVII.



Iſraels idolatry.

A. The only Mention we have of this Prophet (whom the *Jews* will have to be the Son of the Widow of *Zarephthah*, whom *Elijah* raiſed from the Dead, but without any Foundation of Reaſon) is in this Paſſage, and the Account of his famous Miſſion to *Nineveh.* What the Prophecies were whereby he encouraged *Joaſh* to proclaim War againſt the King of *Syria*, we have no where recorded; but, as we have not every Thing, which the Prophets did write, ſo ſeveral Prophets we muſt know, did not commit their Predictions to Writing. From this Place, however, we may obſerve, that God was very merciful to the *Iſraelites*, though they were certainly a very wicked People, in continuing a Race of Prophets among them, even after *Eliſha* was dead.

Q. *When* Jeroboam *had recovered* Hamath *and* Damaſcus, *did he keep them himſelf, or reſtore them to the Kingdom of* Judah?

A. Some are of Opinion, that when *Jeroboam* reconquered theſe two chief Cities of *Syria*, he reſtored them to the Kingdom of *Judah*, becauſe they belonged to it of *Right*, and reſerved to himſelf only a ſmall Tribute to be paid him by Way of Acknowledgment. This is what the original *Hebrew*, as well as the *Chaldee* and *Septuagint* Verſions ſeems to favour: But the *Syriac* and *Arabic* Tranſlators have omitted the Word *Judah*, and may therefore be ſuppoſed to think, (as ſeveral others do) that *Jeroboam* kept to himſelf all thoſe Places, which he had recovered at his own Hazard and Expence.

Q. *Of what Family was* Jonah?

A. It is a very common Opinion among the *Jews* (as we ſaid) that *Jonah* was the Widow of *Zarephthah*'s Son, whom *Elijah* reſtored to Life, after he was dead; and this Opinion they found upon the Words of the Mother, when ſhe received her Son alive from the Prophet's own Hands: *By this I know that the Word of the Lord in thy Mouth is Truth*, 1 Kings xvii. 24. for therefore, ſay they, was the Child called the Son of *Amittai*, becauſe *Amittai* ſignifies *Truth*; a weak Reaſon, God wot, and ſuch as is plainly repugnant to the Teſtimony of Scripture. For this we know for certain, that *Jonah* lived in the Reigns of *Joaſh*, and *Jeroboam* the Second, Kings of *Iſrael*, and therefore could not be the Widow of *Zarephthah*'s Son, ſince the former of theſe two Princes did not begin to reign, till ſixty Years after the Tranſlation of *Elijah*. Others pretend, that he was Son to the *Shunamite* Woman, whom the Prophet *Eliſha* raiſed from the dead; but *Shunam* and *Gath-heper* (where we are certain *Jonah* was born) were two quite different Places, the former in the Tribe of *Iſſachar*, the other in that of *Zebulun*, called *Hepher*, or *Hopher*, wherein was the Town of *Gath*, which is generally believed to be the ſame with *Jotapata*, ſo famous for the Siege which *Joſephus*, the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian, there maintained againſt the *Roman* Army, a little before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*.

CHAP. XV.

Azariah's *good Reign*; *is puniſhed with Leproſy, and dies.* Zachariah *reigns ill*; *is ſlain by* Shallum; *who reigns a Month, and is ſlain by* Menahem, [illegible] *is ſtrengthened by* Pul. Pekahiah *his Son ſucceeds him. He is ſlain by* Pekah. *Part of the* Iſraelites *carried away captive by* Tiglath Pileſer. Hoſhea *kills* Pekah, *and ſucceeds him.* Jotham's *good Reign over* Judah. Ahaz *ſucceeds him.*

Q. IT *is ſaid*, Ver. 30. *that* Hoſhea *conſpired againſt and ſmote* Pekah, *and reigned in his ſtead*, in the twentieth Year of *Jotham* the Son of Uzziah: *How could this be, when* Jotham *reigned only ſixteen Years*, Ver. 35?

A. The Meaning is, that he began his Reign in the twentieth Year after the Beginning of *Jotham*'s Reign; or, which is the ſame Thing, in the fourth Year of *Ahaz*, Son of *Jotham*, as appears from *Chap.* xvi. 1. But the ſacred Writer, having not yet made mention of *Ahaz*, thought it more proper to number *Hoſhea*'s Years by *Jotham*, of whom he had ſpoken, than by *Ahaz*. Beſides, as *Jotham* reigned divers Years in his Father's Life, ſo might *Ahaz* in *Jotham*'s Life, and *Jotham* might for divers Reaſons reſign up the Adminiſtration of the Kingdom wholly to *Ahaz* ſome Years before his Death; and therefore might be ſaid to reign but ſixteen Years, though he lived longer.

CHAP. XVI.

Ahaz's *Idolatry.* Rezin *King of* Syria, *and* Pekah *King of* Iſrael, *war againſt him*; *he hires* Tiglath Pileſer *againſt them.* Ahaz *goes to* Damaſcus *to meet the King of* Aſſyria, *ſees an Altar, the Pattern whereof he ſends to* Urijah, *who makes one like it at* Jeruſalem. Ahaz *ſacrifices on it. He ſpoils the Temple.* Hezekiah *ſucceeds him.*

THE Contents of this, and ſeveral other Chapters in this Book, being related more at large in the *Chronicles*, we ſhall defer to make our Remarks till we can do it more to Advantage.

CHAP. XVII.

Hoſhea's *wicked Reign*; *being ſubdued by* Shalmanezer *King of* Aſſyria, *he conſpires againſt him with* So *King of* Egypt; *he is beſieged*; *taken Priſoner*; *and, with all the People, carried Captive into* Aſſyria. *The ſtrange Nations tranſplanted into* Samaria, *are plagued with Lions*; *an* Iſraeliſh *Prieſt is ſent to them*; *whence follows a Mixture of Religions.*

Q. IN *the firſt Verſe it's ſaid*, In the twelfth Year of *Ahaz* King of *Judah*, began *Hoſhea* the Son of *Elah* to reign in *Samaria*: *How can this be true, ſeeing it is ſaid, that he* reigned, *or* began to reign in *Iſrael* in the twentieth Year of *Jotham*, Chap. xv. 30. which was the fourth Year of *Ahaz*?

A. He uſurped the Kingdom in the fourth Year of *Ahaz*; but either was not owned as King, by the Generality of the People; or was not accepted and eſtabliſhed in his Kingdom by the *Aſſyrian*, till *Ahaz* his twelfth Year: Or, in his eight firſt Years, he was only a tributary Prince, and the King of *Aſſyria*'s Viceroy; and after that Time he ſet up for himſelf, which drew the *Aſſyrian* upon him.

CHAP. XVIII.

Hezekiah's *good Reign. He is not afraid of the* King *of* Aſſyria; *overcomes the* Philiſtines. Samaria *carried captive by* Salmanezer *King of* Aſſyria. Sennacherib *invades* Judah; *and* Hezekiah *pays him Tribute*; *blaſphemes God*; *and incites the People to mutiny*; *which is told the King*.

Q. HEZEKIAH, *it's ſaid*, Ver. 4. brake in Pieces the brazen Serpent that *Moſes* had made; for unto thoſe the Children of *Iſrael* did burn Incenſe to it: *Pray does it from hence follow that the* brazen Serpent *had been all along worſhipped from the Days of* Moſes, *till this time?*

A. The Reaſon, which the Scripture aſſigns, for *Hezekiah*'s deſtroying this brazen Serpent, is, *Becauſe, unto this Day, the Children of* Iſrael *had burnt Incenſe to it.* We are not, however, to ſuppoſe, that, all along from the Days of *Moſes*, this brazen Serpent was made an Object of religious Worſhip: This is what neither *David*, nor *Solomon* in the Beginning of his Reign, would have allowed of; nor can we think, but that either *Aſa*, or *Jehoſhaphat*, when they rooted out Idolatry, would have made an End of this, had they perceived that the People, at that Time, either paid Worſhip, or burnt Incenſe to it. The Commencement of this Superſtition therefore muſt be of a later Date, and ſince the Time that *Ahab*'s Family, by being allied to the Crown of *Judah* by Marriage, had introduced all Kinds of Idolatry. Now one falſe Inducement to the Worſhip of this Image, might be a Miſtake of the Words of *Moſes*: For, whereas it is ſaid, that *whoſoever look upon it, ſhall live*, Numb. xxi. 8. ſome might thence fancy, that, by its Mediation, they might obtain a Bleſſing, and ſo make it the Object of their Superſtition at firſt. However, we may imagine, that their burning Incenſe, or any other Perfumes before it, was deſigned only in Honour to the true God, by whoſe Direction *Moſes* made it; but then, in Proceſs of their Superſtition, they either worſhipped the God of *Iſrael* under the Image, or, what is worſe, ſubſtituted an Heathen God in his Room, and worſhipped the brazen Serpent, as his Image; which they might more eaſily be induced to do, becauſe the Practice of ſome neighbouring Nations was, to worſhip their Gods under the Form of a Serpent. Upon this Account *Hezekiah* wiſely choſe, rather to loſe this Memorial of God's wonderful Mercy to his People in the Wilderneſs, than to ſuffer it any longer to be abuſed to Idolatry, and therefore he brake it in Pieces, that is, (as the *Talmudiſts* explain it) he ground it to Powder, and then ſcattered it in the Air, that there might not be the leaſt Remains of it: And yet, notwithſtanding all the Care which he took to deſtroy it, *Sigonius*, in his Hiſtory of *Italy*, tells us, that in the Church of St. *Ambroſe*, in *Milan*, thay ſhew a brazen Serpent entire, which they pretend to be the very ſame that *Moſes* erected in the Wilderneſs, though, it muſt be owned, that, among their learned Men, there are ſome that acknowledge the Cheat, and diſclaim it.

Q. Tartan, Rabſaris, *and* Rab-ſhakeh, *were the Perſons whom the King of* Aſſyria *ſent to treat with* Hezekiah: *Pray what were their ſeveral Offices under the* Aſſyrian *King?*

A. Tartan, *Rabſaris*, and *Rab-ſhakeh* are not proper Names of theſe Men, but rather denote their Employments and Offices. *Tartan* ſignifies the Preſident of the Cuſtoms; *Rabſaris*, the chief Eunuch; and *Rab-ſhakeh*, the principal Cup-bearer; and, becauſe of *Rab-ſhakeh*'s ſpeaking *Hebrew* with ſome Fluency, the Rabbies are generally, of Opinion, that he was either an Apoſtate *Jew*, or one of the Captivity of *Iſrael*. 'Tis certain that he was a very eloquent Man, and his Speech very excellently well calculated to raiſe Sedition, or Defection among the Beſieged; but that a Perſon of his Education ſhould be verſed in the *Phœnician*, which is, in a Manner, the ſame with the *Hebrew* Language, is no Wonder at all. Moreover, had he been a *Jew* (tho' an Apoſtate) he ſhould have known better, one would think, than to have upbraided *Hezekiah* with acting according to the Law, under which he lived, in deſtroying the Groves and Altars of Idols, and in requiring his Subjects to worſhip God in *Jeruſalem* only.

CHAP. XIX.

Hezekiah *mourning*, *ſends to* Iſaiah *to pray for him, who comforts him.* Sennacherib *is forced to march againſt the* Ethiopians; *ſends blaſphemous Letters to* Hezekiah. Hezekiah's *Prayer.* Iſaiah *prophecies the Deſtruction of* Sennacherib, *and the Good of* Zion. *An Angel ſlays the* Aſſyrians. Sennacherib *is murdered at* Nineveh *by his own Sons.*

Q. W*HAT Obſervations do you make upon* Iſaiah's *Anſwer to* Hezekiak, *V.* 23. &c.

A. The Prophet, in his Anſwer to *Hezekiah*, has given us an admirable Deſrription of the ridiculous Vanity and Oſtentation of a King puffed up with great Succeſs. *By thy Meſſengers thou haſt reproached the Lord, and haſt ſaid, With the Multitude of my Chariots I am come up to the Height of the Mountains, and to the Sides of* Lebanon, *and I will enter into the Lodgings of his Borders, and enter into the Foreſt of his* Carmel. *I have digged, and drank ſtrange Waters, and with the Soles of my Feet, have I dried up all the Rivers of beſieged Places*, Ver. 23. *&c.* as if he had ſaid, 'What can reſiſt the Force of my victorious Arms? Or where is the Place that is unacceſſible to the Strength and Activity of theſe Troops? I have ſcaled the Top of the higheſt Mountains with my heavy Chariots of War. I have aſcended even *Lebanon* itſelf, and through the moſt difficult Paſſages, have opened and plained my ſelf a Way. Who then ſhall hinder me from taking up my Quarters in what Part of *Judea* I pleaſe, from either climbing up to the Top of *Carmel*, or from coming down into the fruitful Vales, by making an entire Conqueſt of the Country? At my Call, Fountains, even in the drieſt Place, ariſe; at my Beck the Hills ſubſide, the Rocks divide and make me a Way; and at my Approach the deepeſt Rivers and Ditches run dry; ſo that Reſiſtance is unavailable, and Victory muſt attend my Standard, wherever I go, or whatever Enterprize I take in hand.'

Q. *In what Manner, and by what Means did the* Angel *deſtroy the* Aſſyrian *Army?*

A. The antient *Jews* (as well as *Perſians* and *Arabians*) were of Opinion, that there is an Angel of Death, or an exterminating Angel, to whom God has given Commiſſion to take away the Lives, either of ſingle Perſons, or of Multitudes of People at once; wherein the Almighty gives the Order, but leaves the Method of doing it to the Diſcretion of the Angel; ſo that, in which way ſoever the Infliction is made, it is always ſaid to be done by the Angel of God. The modern *Jews* are of the ſame Opinion; for they maintain, that this Angel of Death ſtands at every dying Man's Bed's-Head, with a naked Sword in his Hand, at the Extremity of which there hang three Drops of Gall, and that the ſick Perſon ſeeing this Angel, in a great Fright opens his Mouth, whereupon he immediately drops into it theſe three fatal Drops; the firſt of which occaſions his Death, the ſecond makes him pale and livid; and the third reduces him to Duſt in the Grave; with ſome other Notions of the like Nature. Now ſince the Scripture has no where ſaid expreſsly, in what Manner this *Aſſyrian* Army was deſtroyed, ſome have thought that it was by a Plague, others by Thunder and Lightning, others by Fire from Heaven, others by a ſcorching Wind, and others by their falling foul upon one another, in the Obſcurity of the Night; but which Way ſoever it was effected, according to the *Hebrew* Idiom, there is no Impropriety in ſaying, that it was done by a deſtroying Angel, which is a comprehenſive Phraſe that reconciles all the Scripture Paſſages, wherein this terrible Defeat is mentioned, and all the Sentiments of Commentators concerning it.

Q. *Can any probable Reaſon be given why* Sennacherib*'s two Sons conſpired to aſſaſſinate him?*

A. When *Sennacherib* was got Home, after the Loſs of ſo great an Army, he demanded of ſome about him, what the Reaſon might be, that the irreſiſtible God of Heaven ſo favoured the *Jewiſh* Nation? To which he was anſwered, that *Abraham*, from whom they were deſcended, by ſacrificing his only Son to him, had purchaſed his Protection to his Progeny; whereupon the King replied, *If that will win him, I'll ſpare him two of mine to gain him to my Side*; which when his two Sons, *Sharezer* and *Adramelech* heard, they reſolved to prevent their own Death, by ſacrificing him. But for all this Fiction, there is no other Foundation, but that ſcarce any Thing elſe can be thought of, that can afford any Excuſe for ſo wicked a Parricide.

CHAP. XX.

Hezekiah*'s receiving a Meſſage of Death, by Prayer, has his Life prolonged; for a Sign the Sun goes backward. The King of* Babylon *ſends Ambaſſadors to* Hezekiah *with Letters and Preſents; he ſhews them all his Treaſures; whereupon* Iſaiah *foretels him the* Babyloniſh *Captivity; he dies; and* Maneſſeh *ſucceeds him.*

Q. WHY *was* Hezekiah *ſo exceedingly troubled at his approaching Death, ſince he muſt know it was the common Lot of all Mankind?*

A. The Meſſage which God ſent him by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, was that he ſhould die, that is, that his Diſtemper according to the natural Courſe of Things, was mortal, and above the Power of human Art to cure. But this Denunciation was not abſolute and irreverſible. It implied a tacit Condition of the Deſtruction of *Nineveh*, which the Repentance of its Inhabitants prevented, as *Hezekiah*'s Humiliation retarded the Time of his Death. At this Time, however, he was no more than nine and thirty Years old, nor had he as yet any Son, for *Manaſſeh* was not born, till three Years after his Illneſs. The *Aſſyrians* too, were now making great Preparations to invade his Kingdom, for his Sickneſs was prior to their Invaſion, though in the Courſe of the Hiſtory, it is placed immediately after it. Putting all theſe Conſiderations together then, the King had ſundry Reaſons, beſides the natural Averſion which all Men have to Death, to be concerned at its Approach, and to deſire a Prolongation of his Life.

Q. *What was his Diſtemper?*

A. What his Diſtemper was, the Scripture has no where expreſsly told us: The original Word denotes an *Inflamation*; but what Kind of Inflamation it was, or what Part of the Body it affected, we have no Intimation given us; and therefore, being thus left to Conjecture, ſome have thought it an Impoſthume, others a Plague-ſore, and others a Squinancy, being all led in their Opinions, by what the *Naturaliſts* have told us of the Virtue of the Medicine, that was here applied for Cure, *viz.* that Figs, in a Decoction, are good to diſperſe any Inflamation about the Glands, by gargleing the Throat, and that, in a *Cataplaſm*, they wonderfully ſoften, and ripen any hard Tumour. But, whatever the Quality of the Medicine might be, that there was a divine Interpoſition in the whole Affair, is evident, both from the Speedineſs of the Cure, and the Nature of the Sign, which God gave *Hezekiah*, in order to convince him of it.

Q. *Whence had the* Jews *the Art of Sun-Dialling?*

A. Some very conſiderable Writers would endeavour to perſuade us, that, before the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, the *Jews* had no Inſtrument, whereby to meaſure Time, nor any Terms in their Language, whereby to denote the diſtinct Gradations of it; which, were it true, would effectually deſtroy all that the Scripture relates, both concerning the Sun-dial which *Ahaz* ſet up, and the famous Miracle which was wrought upon it; but who the firſt Inventors of ſuch horological Inſtruments were, 'tis not ſo eaſy a Matter to determine.

The *Babylonians* were a People well verſed in all Parts of Aſtronomy, and it was from them (as *Herodotus* obſerves) that the *Greeks* had the *Pole, and the Gnomon, and the twelve Parts of the Day.* For *Anaximander* (whom *Pliny*, by Miſtake, calls *Anaximenes*) who firſt taught them to diſtinguiſh Time, travelled into *Chaldea* for the Improvement of Knowledge, and from thence brought away this uſeful Invention; and, as the Scripture informs us, that there was a good deal of Intimacy between *Tiglath-pilezer* King of *Aſſyria*, and *Ahaz* King of *Judah*, 'tis not improbable, that, as he was taken with the Figure of a ſtrange Altar, when he went to viſit that Prince at *Damaſcus*, he might then likewiſe ſee ſome of the Sun-dials, which *Tiglath-pilezer* was accuſtomed to carry along with him, for the Menſuration of Time, wherever he went; and being highly delighted with ſo curious and uſeful an Invention might either have one made on the Spot, or take the Model of one, to be made at *Jeruſalem*, and ſet up in his royal Palace.

Q. *Of what Form was this Sun-dial of* Ahaz?

A. It is no eaſy Matter to determine of what Form this Sun-dial was, but, if we may be allowed to gather any Thing from the Signification of the Word *Maalot*, which is always uſed in this Narration, we may, with the learned *Grotius*, ſuppoſe, that it was not horizontal, as Sun-dials are commonly made, but of a concave hemiſpherical Figure; and that therein was a *Gnomon* of ſome kind or other, which caſt its Shadow upon the Lines, engraven in its Concavity.

Q. *How do you account for the* Shadow's going back ten Degrees upon the Dial?

A. The Account which we have of this Event in the ſecond Book of *Kings*, makes no Mention indeed of the Sun's *going back*, but only of the Shadow upon the Dial; but, in the Book of *Iſaiah*'s Prophecy, wherein we have this Miracle more minutely related, we are told expreſly, *Iſaiah* xxxviii. 8. that *the Sun returned ten Degrees*, and from hence the Opinion of the Ancients, both *Jews* and Chriſtians, has been, that the Miracle was wrought, not upon the Shadow, but upon the Body of the Sun; or, *that the Sun* (as our excellent Archbiſhop *Uſher* expreſſes it) *and all the heavenly Bodies went back, and as much was detracted from the next Night, as was added to this Day.*

This Retrogation, however, was not of ſo long a Continuance, as to cauſe any conſiderable Alteration in the heavenly Bodies; as ſoon as the Miracle was exhibited, they all returned to their proper Stations, as the ſame Author obſerves from the Lunar Eclipſes recorded by *Ptolomy*, as antecedent to *Hezekiah*'s Reign, which, upon running the Calculation backwards from the preſent, will bring us to the ſame Point of Time, wherein the *Chaldeans* have placed them, in the very ſame Manner, as if no retrograde Motion of the Sun had ever intervened.

Thoſe who embrace the new Philoſophy, which places the Sun in the Centre, and ſuppoſes the Earth to move round it, have, from their Hypotheſis, no Difficulty in admitting of this Miracle, whether it be ſaid to conſiſt in the different Determination of the Rays, or in the Retrogradation of the Body of the Sun, becauſe it is the ſame Thing, as to all outward Effects, whether the Earth turn round the Sun, or the Sun round the Earth: But, in both Caſes, there is the Difficulty, That the ſudden and violent Motion, either of the Sun or Earth, to make that Day and Night of no greater length than the reſt, would be in Danger of ſhocking, or unhinging the whole Frame of Nature, as it certainly would have done, had it not been guided and directed by the ſteady and unerring Hand of the great Creator of the Univerſe, whoſe Motion he can either retard or accelerate, as he pleaſes, without occaſioning any human Artificer can cauſe a Machine of his own making to go ſwifter or ſlower, by the ſole Suſpenſion of an heavier or lighter Weight.

Since the Scripture therefore, in this Caſe, tells us plainly, that the Sun did recede, as in the Caſe of *Joſhua*, that it did ſtand ſtill in the Firmament of Heaven, we have no other Warrant, but to take the Words in their literal Senſe, even though it be attended with ſome Difficulties. Theſe Difficulties are chiefly from the Oppoſition of ſome modern Syſtems of Philoſophy; but whether it be juſt and reaſonable, that Revelation ſhould conform to Philoſophy, or Philoſophy to Revelation, eſpecially when the Expreſſions of Scripture are clear, and Sentiments of Philoſophers but mere Conjectures; ſince heavenly Bodies, by Reaſon of their vaſt Diſtance, are inacceſſible to our utmoſt Sagacity, and the greater Part of the Secrets of Nature are not diſcoverable by our moſt indefatigable Search after Truth.

CHAP. XXI.

Manaſſeh's *Idolatry. Judgments prophecied againſt* Judah. *He ſhed innocent Blood; dies, and is ſucceeded by his Son* Ammon; *who is ſlain by his Servants; who are ſlain by the People.* Joſiah *his Son is made King.*

Q. MANASSEH, *no doubt, was a very wicked and tyrannical Prince; can you give any particular Inſtances of his Cruelty?*

A. Manaſſeth, though but twelve Years old, ſucceeded his Father, and was a wicked Prince; he adored Idols, reſtored the High-places, erected Altars to *Baal*, and ſet up an Idol in the Temple, forced his Sons to paſs through the Fire, and made uſe of Diviners, Inchanters, and thoſe who ſaid they had familiar Spirits. He was naturally very cruel; for, to add to the reſt of his Crimes, he is ſaid to have ſhed ſo much innocent Blood that *Jeruſalem* was filled with it. Among the reſt who made up this purple Stream, it is more than probable the innocent Blood of the Prophet *Iſaiah* was ſpilt. For though the holy Text gives no Account of his Death, yet eccleſiaſtic Writers tell us, that under this King *Manaſſeh* (who is reported to have been his Son-in-law) he was, in his extreme Age, after he had lived more than an hundred Years, and propheſied above ſixty of them, moſt barbarouſly put to death, by being ſawed in two with a wooden Saw. To which, very probably, the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* might refer, when he ſaid, *They were ſawed aſunder*, Heb. xi. 37.

CHAP. XXII.

Joſiah's *good Reign; his Care for the Repair of the Temple.* Hilkiah *finds a Book of the Law, by which the King underſtands God's Threatnings againſt Backſliders, and by* Huldah *the Propheteſs, enquires of the Lord. She prophecies the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem; *but not in* Joſiah's *Time.*

Q. WAS *the Book which* Hilkiah *found, an authentick Copy of the Law of* Moſes?

A. Whether the Book of the Law, which *Hilkiah*, the High-prieſt, found in the Houſe of the Lord, conſiſted of the whole *Pentateuch*, or only of that Part of it, which is called *Deuteronomy*; and whether it was the authentick Copy which *Moſes* committed to the Prieſt's Cuſtody, or only ſome antient Manuſcript, kept in the Temple for the publick Uſe, *viz.* for the King to read to the People once every ſeven Years, or for the Prieſts to conſult upon any emergent Difficulty, is a Matter of ſome Debate among the Learned. The Teſtimony of the Author of the Book of *Chronicles* ſeems, however, to determine the Matter, when he aſſures us, that the Book of the Law, which *Hilkiah* found, was that *which was given by the Hand of* Moſes, and conſequently the whole *Pentateuch*, which, by his Command, was repoſited *in the Side of the Ark of the Covenant.*

Q. *Had not* Joſiah *ſeen the Law before this Time?*

A. It is preſumed, indeed, that his three Predeceſſors, *Ahaz, Manaſſeth*, and *Ammon*, as not content to be impious themſelves, and to inſtigate their Subjects to Idolatry, had made it their Buſineſs to burn and deſtroy all the Copies of the Law, that they could any where meet with; ſo that there was not ſo much as one left for the King's Uſe, and that this was the Reaſon of his diſcovering ſo great a Surprize, at his hearing the Comminations read, becauſe he had never, perhaps, ſeen any ſuch Volume before. It muſt be acknowledged, indeed, that Diſuſe often cancels the moſt excellent Laws, and, from *Joſiah*'s Surprize, we have room to ſuſpect, that he had not as yet tranſcribed a Copy of the Law with his own Hand; and had probably, for ſome Time, neglected the Reading it publickly, every ſeventh Year, according to the Command. But that he had never ſeen ſuch a Tranſcript of it before this Time, we can hardly believe, becauſe it is not conceivable, now he could ſo early apply himſelf to the Service of God, even in Oppoſition to the Corruptions of the Times; how he could begin the Reformation of Religion, the Superſtition, and the Eſtabliſhment of ſo many wholſome Ordinances for the divine Worſhip, without the Aſſiſtance and Direction of this Book.

In this very Year, we are told, that ſuch a Paſſover was ſolemnized, *as had not been kept from the Days of* Samuel *the Prophet, nor among all the Kings of* Iſrael; but how the Prieſts could have obſerved all the Rites and Ceremonies belonging to it, (which are not a few) if every preſcribed Form of it had been loſt, we cannot conceive, ſince Copies of the Book, which was now found in the Temple, could not be made and tranſcribed Time enough, for their Inſtruction in theſe Particulars.

Q. *Why was the High-prieſt ſo mightily rejoiced at finding this Copy of the Law?*

A. In the Reigns of *Jehoſhaphat* and *Hezekiah*, Copies of the Law were common enough, and the ſacred Hiſtory makes no Mention of their being deſtroyed. The *Jewiſh* Doctors, tell us, that *Manaſſeh* blotted the ſacred Name of *Jehovah* out of all the Books, that he could find; but they no where report, that he utterly aboliſhed them: And therefore we may conclude, that the People, at this Time, had ſeveral Copies of the Law among them, though ſome of them imperfect and corrupt, and that the High-prieſt might rejoice, when he had found the Original, becauſe by it all the other Copies might be corrected; and rejoice the more that he had found it at a Time when the King was going to make a Reformation, which he could not but look upon as a very remarkable Providence.

Q. *But was there any Thing extraordinary in this Event, that the King ſhould be ſurprized at it?*

A. The four *Evangeliſts*, who have recorded the Subſtance of the Chriſtian Religion, we have by us, and may read therein every Day; yet, who can ſay, but that ſome remarkable Paſſage may, perchance, eſcape his Obſervation. But now, if by ſome lucky Accident, we ſhould chance to find the Original of St. *Matthew*, or St. *John*, who can doubt but that we ſhould both read and liſten to it with more Seriouſneſs and Attention, than we now do to the ſame Books that are every Day in our Hands? And, in like Manner, we may ſay, that it was the great Reverence which *Joſiah* bore to the original Book of *Moſes*, as well as the ſeaſonable and remarkable finding it at this Time, that awakened and quickened him to a more attentive Conſideration of all the Paſſages contained in it, than ever he had known before, either in his reading, or hearing the ordinary Copies of the Law.

Q. *Why were the Kings and People of* Iſrael *ſo ſtrangely prone to Idolatry?*

A. *Manaſſeh* was certainly, in the former Part of his Reign, a very impious Prince. The Scripture ſeems to imply, that till his Miſeries had rectified his Notions, he did not believe at all in the God of *Iſrael*, nor in the Hiſtory of his Fore-fathers; but he is not the only Son that has degenerated from the good Example of a pious Father, neither were his Subjects the only People, that, even in the groſſeſt Irreligion and Profaneneſs, have imitated the Example of their Prince. The Wonder is, how both Prince and People became, upon every Occaſion, ſo prone to fall from the Religion of their Anceſtors into Idolatry. Now, to this Purpoſe it may be obſerved, that, in the whole Compaſs of the Law, there is no expreſs Revelation made of a future Life; that the Hints which are given of it, are too obſcure for every common Reader rightly to interpret; and that this Obſcurity might be a Means of throwing the antient *Iſraelites* into idolatrous Practices. For, as they had no certain Hope of another Life to rely on, they could not ſee neighbouring Nations in a more flouriſhing Condition, without ſome Uneaſineſs and Perturbation of Mind; and from hence, by Degrees, they might fall into this Opinion, — That the Gods of theſe Nations muſt needs be more mighty and powerful than the God of *Iſrael*, ſince their Worſhippers were manifeſtly more proſperous; and from hence they were induced to forſake the God of their Anceſtors, and to worſhip theſe Gods of the Heathens.

It may be obſerved farther, that the Difficulty of keeping the *Moſaic* Law, eſpecially in what related to its Rites and Ceremonies, was very great, and the Profit, which reſulted from thence, no ways comparable to the Trouble which it occaſioned; and from thence they might be tempted to ſhake off *a Yoke, which neither they, nor their Fore-Fathers were able to bear*, and betake themſelves to the Obſervance of other Laws, more eaſy and commodious in themſelves, and ſuch as were productive of much more Benefit and Proſperity to the Obſervers of them. Nor ſhould it be forgotten, that as a great Part of the Revenues of *Paleſtine*, according to the Conſtitution of the *Moſaic* Law, fell to the Lot of the *Prieſts* and *Levites*, the Laity, upon every Occaſion, might grow weary of paying ſo much; and hereupon be inclined to any Innovation in Religion, that ſhould offer itſelf, if it could but be ſupported at an eaſier Expence. And accordingly, we may obſerve, that in the wicked Reigns of *Ahaz* and *Manaſſeh*, when the Temple was either quite ſhut up, or converted to idolatrous Purpoſes, the Payment of Tithes and Oblations was ſuſpended (which might be a great Gratification to the People) until, in the Reigns of *Hezekiah* and *Joſiah*, they were again reſtored to the Miniſters of God. Theſe, and ſuch Reaſons as theſe, might make the antient *Hebrews* ſo unſettled in their Obedience to the Law of *Moſes*, until the Time that a clearer and more perfect Revelation of a future Life extended their Views and Hopes above the Things of this World, and make them more conſtant and immovable (as the Author to the *Hebrews* bears them Teſtimony) in the Worſhip of the true God.

CHAP. XXIII.

Joſiah *cauſeth the Law to be read in a ſolemn Aſſembly; renews the Covenant of the Lord; deſtroys Idolatry; breaks down the Altar at* Bethel, *and burns thereon dead Mens Bones; keeps the Paſſover;*

Paſſover; other Evidences of his Piety. God's final Wrath againſt Judah. Joſiah *warring againſt* Pharaoh-Nechoh, *is ſlain.* Jehoahaz *his Son is King. He is impriſoned by* Pharaoh-Nechoh; *who puts* Jehoiakim *in his Place; who reigns ill.*

Q. WHY *was the Name of* Tophet *given to the Valley where human Sacrifices were offered*, Ver. 10?

A. It is the general Opinion of the *Jews*, that the Word *Tophet* comes from *Thop*, which in their Language ſignifies a Drum, becauſe Drums, in this Place were uſed to be beat, in order to deaden the Cries of thoſe Children which were burnt alive to the Idol *Moloch*: But there is one Objection to this Etymology, *viz.* that it does not appear that the larger Kind of Drums, ſuch as are in uſe now, were at all known to the Antients. There was a leſſer Sort, indeed, or what we call a Tabor, wherewith they made Muſick in their dancing; but theſe were not loud enough for the preſent Purpoſe, and the larger Kind we owe to the *Arabians*, who firſt brought them into *Spain*, from whence they were diſperſed all *Europe over*.

Q. *Pray explain the firſt Clauſe of* Ver. 11. And he took away the Horſes that the King of *Judah* had given to the Sun.

A. 'Tis certain, that all the People of the *Eaſt* worſhipped the Sun, and conſecrated Horſes to it; becauſe they were nimble and ſwift in their Courſe, even as they ſuppoſed it to be. But then the Queſtion is, whether the People of *Judah* ſacrificed theſe Horſes to the Sun, (as it is certain the *Armenians*, *Perſians*, and other Nations did) or only led them out in State every Morning, to meet and ſalute the Sun at his riſing. The Antients had a Notion likewiſe, that the Sun itſelf was carried about in a Chariot; and therefore Chariots as well as Horſes were dedicated to it. Since then we find theſe Horſes and Chariots ſtanding ſo near together, the Horſes, we may ſuppoſe, were deſigned to draw the Chariots, and the Chariots to carry the King, and his other great Officers (who were Idolaters of this Kind) out at the Eaſt-Gate of the City, every Morning to ſalute and adore the Sun, at its coming above the Horizon.

Q. Joſiah, *no doubt, might reform his own Kingdom, in what Manner he pleaſed; but what Right had he to carry his Reformation into the Kingdom of* Iſrael?

A. Joſiah may be thought, by ſome, to have followed the Dictates of his Zeal a little too far, in deſtroying the Images and Altars, and other Monuments of Idolatry, in the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, where he had neither any regal nor judicial Authority: But it ſhould be remembered, that his Authority, in this Regard, was founded upon an antient Prediction, where he is particularly named, appointed to this Work of Reformation, by God himſelf, and that conſequently, he could not be guilty of an Infringement upon another's Right, even though he had no farther Commiſſion. But the ten Tribes, we are to conſider, being now gone into Captivity, the antient Right which *David* and his Poſterity had to the whole Kingdom of *Iſrael* (before it was diſmembered by *Jeroboam*, and his Succeſſors) devolv'd upon *Joſiah*: The People, who eſcaped the Captivity, were united with his Subjects, and put themſelves under his Protection: They came to the Worſhip of God at *Jeruſalem*, and did, doubtleſs, gladly comply with his Extirpation of Idolatry, at which the *Cuthites*, the new Inhabitants of the Country, who worſhipped their Gods in another Manner, were not at all offended.

The Kings of *Aſſyria*, it is true, were the Lords and Conquerors of the Country; but, from the Time of *Manaſſeh*'s Reſtoration, they ſeem to have conferred upon the Kings of *Judah* (who might thereupon become their Homagers) a Sovereignty in all the Land of *Canaan*, to the ſame Extent wherein it was held by *David* and *Solomon*; before it was divided into two Kingdoms. So that *Joſiah*, upon ſundry Pretenſions, had ſufficient Power and Authority to viſit the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, and to purge it from Idolatry, as well as his own.

And this, by the by, ſuggeſts the Reaſon, why that good King was ſo very ſtrenuous in oppoſing the King of *Egypt*, when he demanded a Paſſage through his Country. He was now, as we ſaid, an Homager and Ally to the King of *Babylon*, and under a ſtrict Oath to adhere to him againſt all his Enemies, eſpecially againſt the *Egyptians*, and to defend the Land of *Canaan* (which was one Barrier of the Empire) againſt their Invaſions; and, being under ſuch an Obligation to his ſovereign Paramount, he could not permit his Enemy to paſs thro' his Country, in order to make War upon him, and not oppoſe him, without incurring a Breach of his Oath, and a Violation of that Fidelity, which, in the Name of God, he had ſworn to the King of *Babylon*; and this was a Thing which ſo good and juſt a Man, as *Joſiah* was, could not but deteſt.

Q. *Did* Joſiah *act agreeable to the divine Will, in engaging in a War with* Pharaoh-Nechoh?

A. It was the Senſe of his Duty therefore, and not any Raſhneſs of Temper or Oppoſition to the divine Will, that engaged *Joſiah* in this War with the King of *Egypt*. The King of *Egypt*, indeed, ſent to him, to acquaint him, that *God was with him*, 2 Chron. xxxv. 21. and that therefore oppoſing him, would be *fighting againſt God*: But *Joſiah* knew very well, that he was an *Heathen* Prince, who had no knowledge of the Lord *Jehovah*, nor had ever conſulted his Oracles or Prophets, and had therefore ſufficient Reaſon to believe, that by the God, who, as he pretended, had ſent him upon this Expedition, he intended no other, than the falſe *Egyptian* Gods, whom he ſerved, but whom the King of *Judah* had no Reaſon to regard.

Q. *What was it excited the King's Curioſity to enquire to whom that Sepulcher belonged, wherein the Prophet of* Judah *was intombed?*

A. The *Jews* will tell us, that on one Side of the Grave (where the Prophet of *Judah*, and the Prophet of *Bethel* lay together) there grew Nettles and Thiſtles, on the other Mirtles and other odoriferous Plants, ſignifying that a true and falſe Prophet lay there, and that this raiſed the King's Curioſity to enquire whoſe that Sepulchre was; but there is no ground for this fabulous Fancy. The King, we may ſuppoſe, eſpied a Stone or Pillar more eminent than the reſt, with the Name of the Perſon that was buried under it; and this made him aſk the Queſtion of the Men of the City, *i. e.* ſome of the old Inhabitants that had eſcaped the Captivity, and not any of theſe new Comers, whom the King of *Aſſyria* had ſent thither, for theſe could give no Account of the antient Hiſtories of the *Iſraelites*; neither can we ſuppoſe that the Sepulchre itſelf, after ſo many Years ſtanding, could have been diſtinguiſhable, had not ſome pious Perſon or other, with an Intent to perpetuate the Memory of the Thing, in each ſucceſſive Age, taken care to preſerve and repair it, *Matthew* xxiii. 29.

Q. *Is it credible that the* Paſſover *which* Joſiah *celebrated, ſhould be more magnificent than any that was ever held under the moſt flouriſhing Princes?*

A. The Words of the Text are, *Surely there was not held ſuch a Paſſover from the Days of the Judges, nor in all the Days of the Kings of* Iſrael *and of* Judah; which, taken in a literal Senſe, muſt denote that this Paſſover, which was celebrated by two Tribes only, was more numerous, and more magnificent, than all thoſe that were obſerved in the Days of *David* and *Solomon*, in the moſt happy and flouriſhing State of the *Jewiſh* Monarchy, and when the whole twelve Tribes were met together, to ſolemnize that Feaſt. It may not be amiſs therefore to allow, that in theſe Expreſſions there is a Kind of Anxeſis or Exaggeration, not unuſual in ſacred as well as in profane Authors. For nothing is more common, than to ſay, *Never was ſo much Splendor and Magnificence ſeen,* when we mean no more, than that the Thing we ſpeak of was very ſplendid and magnificent; unleſs we ſuppoſe, with ſome, that a Preference is given to this Paſſover, above all the reſt, in reſpect of the exact Obſervation of the Rites and Ceremonies belonging to it, which, at other Times were performed according to Cuſtom, and ſo ſeveral Things either altered or omitted; but at this, every Thing was performed according to the preſcribed Form of the Law, from which, ſince the finding of this authentic Copy of it, *Joſiah* enjoined them not to vary one Tittle.

Q. *Why is* Nechoh *added to the Name of* Pharaoh; *and what Account do Hiſtorians give of this Prince?*

A. Pharaoh ſignifies no more, in the *Egyptian* Language, than King, and was therefore given to every one that ſat upon that Throne: But *Nechoh* (according to *Herodotus*) was his proper Name, tho' ſome will have it to be an Appellative, which ſignifies lame, becauſe this *Pharaoh* (as they ſuppoſe) had a Lameneſs, which proceeded from ſome Wound he had received in the Wars. The ſame Hiſtorian tells us, that he was the Son and Succeſſor of *Pſametichus* King of *Egypt*, and a Man of a bold enterpriſing Spirit; that he made an Attempt to join the *Nile* and the *Red-Sea*, by drawing a Canal from the one to the other; that tho' he failed in this Deſign, yet by ſending a Fleet from the *Red-Sea* through the Streights of *Babel-mandel*, he diſcovered the Coaſts of *Africa*, and in this his Expedition to the *Euphrates*, reſolved to bid fair, by deſtroying the united Forces of the *Babylonians* and *Medes*, for the whole Monarchy of *Aſia*.

Q. Joſiah *received his Death's Wound at* Megiddo; *in what Tribe was this City ſituated?*

A. Megiddo was a City in the Half-Tribe of *Manaſſeh*, not far from the *Mediterranean-Sea*, which Way *Nechoh* was to paſs with his Army, in order to go into *Syria*, and thence to the *Euphrates*. In the Valley adjoining to this Place *Joſiah* was ſlain, while he was at the Head of his Army, (as *Joſephus* tells us,) and riding up and down to give Orders from one Wing to the other. This Action *Herodotus* makes mention of, when he tells us, that *Nechoh* King of *Egypt*, *having fallen upon the* Syrians *near the City of* Magdol, *obtained a great Victory, and made himſelf Maſter of* Cadytis: Where the Author plainly miſtakes the *Syrians* for the *Jews*; *Magdolum*, a City in the *Lower Egypt*, for *Megiddo*; and *Cadytis* for *Kadeſh*, in the *Upper Galilee*, by which he was to paſs in his Way to *Carchemiſh*; or rather for the City of *Jeruſalem*, which, in *Herodotus*'s Time, might be called by the neighbouring Nations, *Cadyta* or *Cadyſcha*, i. e. *the holy City*, ſince, even to this Day is called, by the eaſtern People, *Al-huds*, which is plainly both of the ſame Signification and Original.

Q. *How can* Joſiah *be ſaid to die in Peace, when he loſt his Life in Battle?*

A. His Death, indeed, was ſudden and immature, he fell in Battle againſt the *Egyptians*; and yet he may be ſaid to have *gone to his Grave in Peace*, becauſe he was recalled from Life, whilſt his Kingdom was in a proſperous Condition, before the Calamities, wherewith it was threatened, were come upon it, and whilſt himſelf was in Peace and Reconciliation with God. Thus, when *the Righteous are taken away from the Evil to come*, Wiſd. iii. 2. tho' *in the Sight of the Unwiſe they ſeemed to die, and their Departure is taken for Miſery*, Wiſd. v. 5. yet, in what Manner ſoever their Exit be, they may well be ſaid to die in Peace, who, after their Diſſolution here, *are numbered among the Children of God, and their Lot is among the Saints*.

Q. *Which of the Sons of* Joſiah *was* Jehoahaz?

A. Jehoahaz was not the eldeſt Son of *Joſiah*, as appears from this,——That he was but three and twenty Years old, when he began to reign, and reigned but three Months, after which his Brother *Jehoiakim*, when he was made King, was five and twenty Years old, *Ver.* 31, 32. For this Reaſon, 'tis ſaid, that the People anointed him, becauſe, as he did not come to the Crown by Right of Succeſſion, his Title might have otherwiſe been diſputed; for, in all diſputed Caſes, and where the Kingdom came to be conteſted, Anointing was ever thought to give a Preference. At this Time, however, the *Jews* might have ſome Reaſon to prefer the younger Brother, becauſe, very probably, he was of a more martial Spirit, and better qualified to defend their Liberties againſt the King of *Egypt*. His proper Name, 'tis thought, was *Shallum*; but our learned *Uſher* ſuppoſes, that the People, looking upon this as ominous, (becauſe *Shallum*, King of *Iſrael*, reigned but one Month) changed it to *Jehoahaz*, which proved not much more fortunate to him, for he reigned but three.

Q. *What Provocation had* Jehoahaz *given* Pharaoh Nechoh, *to deal with him ſo ſeverely?*

A. The Scripture no where tells us, upon what Occaſion it was, that *Jehoahaz* fell into the King of *Egypt*'s Hands, or for what Reaſon it was, that he uſed him ſo ſeverely; but it is preſumable, that, to revenge his Father's Death, he might raiſe an Army, and engage him in a pitched Battle, tho' he failed in the Attempt. For why ſhould he *put him in Bands*, if he voluntarily went, and ſurrendered himſelf at *Riblah*? Or why be ſo highly offended at him, for accepting of a Crown, which the People conferred on him? The general Opinion therefore is, that he was a Man of a bold, and daring Spirit, and therefore thoſe Words, in the Prophet *Ezekiel*, are applied to him; *Thy Mother is a Lioneſs,——ſhe brought up one of her Whelps; it became a young Lion;——but he was taken in the Pit, and he was brought with Chains unto the Land of* Egypt: for which Reaſon *Pharaoh Necho* treated him in this Manner, that he might put it out of his Power to give him any Diſturbance.

Q. *Was this Calamity of* Jehoahaz *foretold by any of the Prophets?*

A. This the Prophet *Jeremiah* foretold, where he bids the King, and the People of *Judah, not to weep for the Dead,* (meaning *Joſiah*) *but for him, that goeth away, for he ſhall return no more, nor ſee his native Country.* Becauſe, *thus ſays* the Lord concerning *Shallum,* (which was the original and right Name of *Jehoahaz*) *the Son of* Joſiah, *King of* Judah, *who reigned inſtead of* Joſiah, *his Father, and who went forth out of this Place, he ſhall not return hither any more,* Jer. xxii.

Q. *How came* Pharaoh Necho *to change the Name of* Eliakim *to that of* Jehoiakim?

A. It was an uſual Thing for Conquerors to change the Names of the Perſons, they vanquiſhed in War, in Teſtimony of their abſolute Power over them. Thus we find the King of *Babylon* changing the Name of *Mattaniah* into *Zedekiah,* when he conſtituted him King of *Judah,* Chap. xxiv. But our learned *Uſher* has farther remarked, that the King of *Egypt* gave *Eliakim,* the Name of *Jehoiakim,* thereby to teſtify, that he aſcribed his Victory over the *Babylonians* to *Jehovah,* the God of *Iſrael,* by whoſe Excitation, as he pretended, (2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22.) he undertook the Expedition.

Chap. XXIV.

Jehoiakim, *firſt reduced by* Nebuchadnezzer, *rebels againſt him, to his own Ruin.* Jehoiachin *his Son is King in his Stead. His evil Reign.* Jeruſalem *is ſpoiled, and made captive by the King of* Babylon. *He makes* Zedekiah *King; he reigns ill unto the utter Deſtruction of* Judah.

Q. HOW *does* Jehoiachin's *ſucceeding his Father in the Throne of* Judah, *agree with that Threat of the Prophet,* Jer. xxxvi. 30. He ſhall have none to ſit upon the Throne of *David?*

A. As *Jehoiachin*'s Reign laſted little more, than three Months, during which Time, he was abſolutely ſubject to the *Chaldeans,* a Reign of ſo ſhort a Continuance, and ſo ſmall Authority, may very juſtly be looked upon as Nothing.

Q. *About what Time did* Jehoiachin *come to the Crown?*

A. As to the Time, when *Jehoiachin* came to the Throne, the Difference is very remarkable: For in 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 9. it is ſaid, that he was but *eight Years old,* but in 2 *Kings* xxiv. 8. that he was *eighteen, when he began to reign;* and yet, conſidering how common a Thing it was for Kings to make their Sons their Aſſociates in the Kingdom, thereby to ſecure the Poſſeſſion of it in their Family, and prevent all Contention among the other Brothers, the Difference is eaſily reconciled, by ſuppoſing, that, when his Father had reigned one Year, he took him to reign in Conjunction with him, when he was no more than eight Years old. With his Father he reigned ten Years, ſo that, when his Father died, he was eighteen Years old, and then he began to reign alone, which was no more than three Months. The Author of the Book of *Kings* makes mention therefore only of the Years that he reigned alone; but the Author of the *Chronicles* ſpeaks of all that he reigned, both with his Father, and alone. This is a fair Solution; though I cannot ſee, what Injury it can do to the Authority of the ſacred Text, if we ſhould acknowledge, that there is an Error in the Tranſcriber of the Book of *Chronicles,* becauſe two of the moſt antient and venerable Verſions, the *Syriack* and *Arabick,* have rendered it, in that Place, not eight, but eighteen, which they were doubtleſs induced to do, by thoſe antient *Hebrew* Copies, from whence they formed their Tranſlation.

Q. *What induced* Nebuchadnezzar *to make War againſt* Jehoiachin *ſo ſoon after his Advancement to the Throne?*

A. It is very probable, that *Nebuchadnezzar* heard, that he had entered into a Confederacy with the King of *Egypt,* as his Succeſſor did; and therefore ſent an Army againſt him, in the very Beginning of his Reign, to lay Siege to *Jeruſalem,* againſt which he intended to come himſelf. But the *Jews* have a Conceit, that *Nebuchadnezzar's* Counſellors repreſented to him, how unadviſedly he had acted, in making him King, whoſe Father had been in Rebellion againſt him, and that, upon their Repreſentation, he reſolved to depoſe him. *From an ill Dog there never comes a good Whelp,* was the Proverb, *they ſay,* which the Counſellors made uſe of on this Occaſion; and, to make it more feiſible to the Father and Son, they generally apply that Paſſage in *Ezekiel,——She took another of her Whelps, and him a young Lion, and he went up and down among the Lions; he became a young Lion, and learned to catch the Prey, and devour Men.——Then the Nations ſet againſt him on every Side, from the Provinces; they ſpread their Net over him. and he was taken in their Pit,* Chap. xix. 6, &c.

Q. *Was it not very impolitick in* Jehoiakim *to ſurrender himſelf and his whole Family into the Hands of his Enemy?*

A. 'Tis very probable, that he made this Surrender, at the Advice of the Prophet *Jeremiah,* who gave the ſame Counſel, more than once, to his Succeſſor, *Zedekiah,* Jer. xxi. 9. xxvii. 17. xxxviii. 2.

Q. *What Sort of People were included in the ten thouſand which* Nebuchadnezzar *carried away captive?*

A. This muſt be underſtood of the whole Number of the People, that were, at this Time, carried captive, which (according to *Abarbinel*) was thus made up;——*Jehoiakim,* with all his Court, and great Men were ſeven Thouſand, the Craftſmen a Thouſand, and other conſiderable Men in the Country two Thouſand, which compleated the Number. *Jeremiah,* indeed, computes them to be little above *three Thouſand,* that were now carried away, but he reckons only thoſe, that were carried from other Cities, and out of the Tribe of *Benjamin,* which were ſeven Thouſand, and this reconciles the Difference.

Q. *Did not* Nebuchadnezzar *carry away the Treaſures, and rich Furniture of the Temple at different Times?*

A. Nebuchadnezzar carried away the Veſſels, and rich Furniture of the Temple, at three different Times. 1ſt, In the third Year of the Reign of *Jehoiakim*, when he carried *Part of the Veſſels of the Houſe of God, into the Land of* Shinaar, *and put them into the Houſe of his God*, Dan. i. 1. Theſe were the Veſſels, which his Son *Belſhazzar* profaned, *Dan.* v. 2. and which *Cyrus* reſtored to *Eſdras*, (Ch. i. 7.) to be ſet up again in the Temple, when rebuilt. 2dly, In the Reign of *Jehoiachin*, he took the City again, and cut in Pieces a great Part of the Veſſels of Gold, which *Solomon* had made, *Ver.* 13. and, by ſome Chance or other, had eſcaped his former Plunder. 3dly, In the eleventh Year of *Zedekiah*, he pillaged the Temple once more, when he brake in Pieces the Pillars of Braſs, and the Braſen Sea, and took along with them, all the Veſſels of Silver and Gold, that he could find, and carried them to *Babylon*, Chap. xxv. 13, *&c.* 'Tis ſomewhat ſtrange, that, among all this Inventory, we hear no Mention made of the *Ark of the Covenant*, which, of all other Things, was held moſt ſacred; but 'tis very probable that it was burnt, together with the Temple, in this laſt Deſolation. For, what ſome ſay of its being hidden, by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, in a certain Cave, in Mount *Nebo*, is a mere Fable, as we ſhall have Occaſion hereafter to ſhew.

CHAP. XXV.

Jeruſalem *is beſieged.* Zedekiah, *attempting to eſcape, is taken; his Sons ſlain; and his Eyes put out.* Nebuzar-Adan *burns the City and Temple; breaks down the Wall; carries the Remnant except a few poor Labourers, into Captivity; and much Treaſure; ſlays the Nobles at* Riblah. Gedaliah *made Governor of* Judah; *he is ſlain; the reſt fly into* Egypt. Evilmerodach *advances* Jehoiachin *in his Court.*

Q. HOW *was it poſſible for the Beſieged to eſcape, ſince the* Chaldeans *had begirt the City round about?*

A. Joſephus gives us this Account,——"That, as the City was taken about Midnight, the Captains, with the reſt of the Soldiers, went directly, into the Temple; which King *Zedekiah* perceiving, he took his Wives, Children, Commanders, and Friends, and they ſlipt all away together, by a narrow Paſſage towards the Wilderneſs." But then what this narrow Paſſage was, is ſtill the Queſtion. The *Jews* indeed think, that there was a ſubterraneous Paſſage from the Palace to the Plains of *Jericho*, and that the King, and his Courtiers might endeavour to make their Eſcape that Way. *Dion*, 'tis true, tells us, *l.* 66. that, in the laſt Siege of *Jeruſalem*, the *Jews* had covert Ways, which went under the Walls of the City, to a conſiderable Diſtance into the Country, out of which they were wont to ſally, and fall upon the *Romans*, that were ſtraggling from their Camp: But, ſince neither *Joſephus*, nor the *ſacred Hiſtorian* takes notice of any ſuch ſubterraneous Paſſage at this Siege, we may ſuppoſe, that, the *Chaldeans* having made a Breach in the Wall, the Beſieged got away privately between the Wall, and the Out-works, in a Paſſage, which the Enemy did not ſuſpect. The Words in the ſecond Book of *Kings* are,——*They went by the Way of the Gate, between the two Walls, which is by the King's Garden*, Ver. 4. which, in *Jeremiah*, are thus expreſſed,——*They went by the Way of the King's Garden, by the Gate between the two Walls*: So that, as the King's Garden faced the Country, very likely there was ſome very private and imperceptible Gate, through which they might attempt to eſcape, the Beſiegers perhaps might not keep ſo ſtrict Watch at that Part of the Town, (eſpecially in the Hurry of ſtorming it) becauſe it led to the Plain, and made their eſcape in a Manner practicable.

Q. Zedekiah *was carried to* Nebuchadnezzar *at* Riblah; *where was that City ſituated?*

A. Riblah was a City of *Syria*, in the Country of *Hamah*, which Country is the neareſt to *Judea*, and which according to St. *Jerom*, was the ſame with that afterwards called *Antioch*; and, as it was the moſt pleaſant Place in all *Syria*, here *Nebuchadnezzar* lay, to attend the Succeſs of the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, to ſend his Army proper Supplies, and to intercept any Relief, that might come to the Beſieged.

Q. *What was the Greeting of* Nebuchadnezzar *to* Zedekiah *at their firſt Meeting?*

A. Nebuchadnezzar no ſooner caſt his Eye upon him, ſays *Joſephus*, but he called him all the faithleſs and perfidious Names that he could think of. *Did you not promiſe me to manage the Power and Authority, that I put you in Poſſeſſion of, for my Advantage and Behoof? And am not I well requited, do you think, for making you a King, in your Brother* Jehoakim's *Place, by your employing of the Credit and Intereſt, that I gave you, to the Ruin of your Patron and Benefactor? But that God is great and juſt, who, for the Puniſhment of your Treachery, and Ingratitude, hath now made you my Priſoner.* But there is a Miſtake in this Speech of *Nebuchadnezzar's*, viz. his making *Zedekiah* ſucceed his Brother *Jehoiakim*, whereas he was put in the Place of his Nephew *Jehoiachin*; but the Nephew's Reign was ſo very ſhort, (little more than three Months) that this imperious Monarch might look upon it as nothing at all.

Q. Zedekiah *was puniſhed with the Loſs of his Eyes; but is there not a ſeeming Contradiction in the Prophecies of* Ezekiel *and* Jeremiah, *concerning this Matter?* Ezek. xii. 13. Jerem. xxxii. 4.

A. Joſephus takes Notice, that the ſeeming Contradiction, in the Prophecies of *Ezekiel* and *Jeremiah*, concerning the Fate of *Zedekiah*, made that Prince give no heed to what was foretold. *Ezekiel's* Prophecy is delivered in theſe Words,——*I will bring him to* Babylon, *to the Land of* Chaldeans, *yet he ſhall he not ſee it, tho' he die there.* And *Jeremiah's* in theſe Words—*He ſhall be delivered into the Hands of the King of* Babylon, *and ſhall ſpeak with him Mouth to Mouth, and his Eyes ſhall behold his Eyes*; both of which were literally accompliſhed: For *Zedekiah* was carried to *Riblah*, where he ſaw the King of *Babylon*, and ſpake to him, and beheld his Children executed; but had afterward his Eyes put out, and was then carried to *Babylon*, where he was incapable of ſeeing the City, becauſe he had loſt his Eye-ſight.

Q. *What Remark does* Joſephus *make upon* Zedekiah's *Impriſonment?*

A. The Reflection which *Joſephus* makes upon this Occaſion, is very good and moral:——"This may ſerve to convince even the ignorant, ſays he, of the Power and Wiſdom of God, and of

“ the Conſtancy of his Counſels, through all the various Ways of his Operations. It may likewiſe ſhew us, that God's Fore-knowledge of Things is certain, and his Providence regular, in the ordering of Events; beſides that, it holds forth a moſt exemplary Inſtance of the Danger of our giving way to the Motions of Sin and Infidelity, which deprive us of the Means of diſcerning God's Judgments, which are ready to fall upon us.”

Q. *In the fifteenth and ſeventeenth Chapters of this Book, we have an Account of the Captivity of* Iſrael *by the King of* Aſſyria, *and of their being diſpoſed into ſeveral Places of his Dominions: But it being a Matter of great Diſpute at this Day among the Learned, to what Places the* Ten Tribes *were then carried, and where they now are, I ſhall be glad if you can give me Satiſfaction in theſe Particulars.*

A. Nothing in Hiſtory is more common, than to ſee whole Nations ſo changed in their Manners, their Religion, their Language, and the very Places of their Abode, as that it becomes Matter of ſome Difficulty, to find out their firſt Original. Large Empires ſwallow up leſſer States; and in the Courſe of their Conqueſts, ſweeping every Thing before them, like a Torrent, they compel the vanquiſhed to follow the Fate of their Conquerors, and, to inhabit ſuch Countries, as were unknown to them before.

Never was there a People, that had a more ample Experience of theſe unhappy Revolutions, than the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, which, upon the Revolt of *Rehoboam*, came to be called the Kingdom of the *Ten Tribes*. God, by the Mouth of his Servant *Moſes*, had denounced this Judgment upon them, in caſe of their obſtinate Diſobedience to his Law: *The Lord ſhall ſcatter thee among all People, from the one End of the Earth to the other, and, among all theſe Nations, thou ſhalt find no Eaſe, neither ſhall the Sole of thy Foot have reſt.* And accordingly, when, by their Idolatry, and other grievous Impieties, they had *provoked God to Wrath*, and *filled up the Meaſure of their Iniquity*, in the Reign of *Pekah*, King of *Iſrael*, he ſent *Tiglath-pileſer*, King of *Aſſyria*, who invaded his Country, and, having over-run great Part of it, carried away captive the Tribes of *Naptali*, *Reuben*, *Gad*, and the half Tribe of *Manaſſeth*, from the Eaſt-ſide of the River *Jordan*; and, about twenty Years after this, in the Reign of *Hoſhea*, ſent his Son *Salmaneſer* againſt *Samaria*, who, after a Siege of three Years, took it, and carried away all the Remainder of that miſerable People, according to what the Prophet *Hoſea* had foretold, Ephraim *is ſmitten, their Root is dried up, they ſhall bear no Fruit.*—— *My God ſhall caſt them away, becauſe they did not hearken unto him, and they ſhall be Wanderers among the Nations.*

This (with very ſmall exception) has been the Caſe of this unhappy People, ever ſince the Time of the *Aſſyrian* Captivity, and yet, ſuch is their Pride and Arrogance, that inſtead of owning the Truth, they have deviſed Fables of their Living all along, in great Proſperity and Grandeur, in ſome unknown Land, as a national and united Body, in an independent State, and under Monarchies or Republicks of their own. So that, before we begin to enquire into the real Places of their Tranſportation, and ſome other Circumſtances thereunto belonging, it may not be amiſs to examine a little the Merit of theſe Pretenſions, and what Foundations they have for ſuch mighty Boaſts.

The Author of the ſecond Book of *Eſdras* informs us, *That the Ten Tribes being taken Priſoners by* Salmaneſer, *and carried beyond the River* Euphrates, *entered into a Reſolution of quitting the* Gentiles, *and retiring into a Country that was never inhabited before, that they might there religiouſly obſerve the Law, which they had too much neglected in their own Country: That to this Purpoſe they croſſed the* Euphrates, *where God wrought a Miracle for their Sakes, by ſtopping the Sources of that great River, and drying up its Channel for them to paſs over; that having thus wonderfully paſſed this River, they proceeded in their Journey for a Year and a Half, till they arrived at laſt, at a Country called* Arſareth, *where they ſettled themſelves, and were to continue until the latter Days, when God would appoint their Return, and work the ſame Miracle in paſſing the* Euphrates, *that he had done for them before.*

This is the Subſtance of our Author's Account: But now, who can believe that a People, ſo fond of Idolatry in their own Country, ſhould, in their State of Captivity, be ſo zealous for the Obſervation of the Law? *Arſareth*, we are told, is a City in *Media*, ſituate beyond the River *Araxes*; but if this was the Place, they betook themſelves to, for the freer Exerciſe of their Religion, what Need was there for ſo very long a Peregrination? Or, who can ſuppoſe, that their imperious Maſters would ſuffer Captives upon any Pretence whatever, to retreat in a Body, out of their Country, and ſet up a diſtinct Kingdom in another Place? In ſhort, this counterfeit *Eſdras*, who ſeems to have been a *Chriſtian*, and to have lived about the End of the firſt, or the Beginning of the ſecond Century, is not only ſo inconſiſtent in his Account of this and ſeveral other Tranſactions, but ſo fond of uncertain Traditions, and ſo romantick and fabulous about the divine Inſpiration, which he boaſts of, that there is no Credit to be given to what he ſays, concerning the Retreat of the Ten Tribes into an unknown Land.

Q. *What other Authors mention this great Event?*

A. A famous *Jewiſh* Traveller of the twelfth Century, who ſeems to have undertaken his Travels, only to diſcover the State of his diſperſed Brethren, aſſigns them a large and ſpacious Country, wherein reign'd two Brothers, Deſcendants of the Houſe of *David*. The elder of theſe (as he tells us) was *Annas*, who beſides his Capital, *Thema*, had many other Cities, Caſtles, and Fortreſſes, and an Extent of Ground, which could not be travelled over under ſixteen Days. The other, whoſe Name was *Salmon*, had in his Dominions, forty Cities, two hundred Boroughs, and an hundred Caſtles. His Subjects (who were all *Jews*) were three hundred Thouſand; *Tanai*, which was the Capital, contained an hundred Thouſand; and *Tilimoſa*, a ſtrong City, ſituate between two Mountains, where he uſually reſided, as many Inhabitants.

Here we have a ſpacious Country of nothing but *Jews*: But the Author, who pretends to have been there, has ſo miſtaken the Situation of ſeveral Places, that he mentions, and gives us ſuch fabulous Accounts of the Manner of the *Perſians* fiſhing for

Pearls; of the Virtue of the Prophet *Daniel's* Tomb; and of ſome *Turks*, who had two Holes in the midſt of their Face, inſtead of a Noſe; that a Man muſt be very fond of Romances, who can give Credit to what ſeems to be calculated on purpoſe to flatter the Pride of a People, that are ſtill fooliſhly vain, though under the Rejection of Almighty God.

Q. *Can you quote any Authors to this Purpoſe?*

A. *Peritſol*, another *Jewiſh* Author, in his Deſcription of the World, has found out very commodious Habitations for the Ten Tribes, and, in many Places, has given them a glorious Eſtabliſhment. In a Country, which he calls *Perricha*, encloſed by unknown Mountains, and bounded by *Aſſyria*, he has ſettled ſome, and made them a flouriſhing and populous Kingdom. Others he places in the Deſert of *Chabor*, which (according to him) lies upon the *India*, where they live, in the Manner of the antient *Rachabites*, without Houſes, Sowing, or the Uſe of Wine: Nay, he enters the *Indies* likewiſe, and peoples the Banks of the *Ganges*, the Iſles of *Bengala*, the *Philippins*, and ſeveral other Places, with the *Jews*, to whom he aſſigns a powerful King, called *Daniel*, who had three other Kings, tributary, and dependent on him. But this is all of the ſame Piece, a forged Account to aggrandize their Nation, and to make it be believed, that *the Sceptre* is not *departed from* Judah, nor a *Lawgiver from between his Feet*, and that *Shiloh*, conſequently, is not yet come.

Q. *What other* Jewiſh *Writer has mentioned this Affair?*

A. *Manaſſeh*, one of the moſt famous *Rabbins* of the laſt Age, has aſſerted the Tranſmigration of the Ten Tribes into *Tartary*, where he aſſigns them a great Province, called *Thabor*, which, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, ſignifies, a *Navel*, becauſe this *Thabor* (as he ſays) is one of the middle Provinces of *Tartary*. *Ortelius*, in his Geography, is not only of the ſame Opinion, but, in Confirmation of it, adds, that the Ten Tribes ſucceeded the *Scythians*, its antient Inhabitants, and took upon them the Name of *Gauthei*, becauſe they were *zealous for the Glory of God*; that *Totaces* the true Name of the *Tartars*) is *Hebrew*, and ſignifies *Remains*, as the Tribes, diſperſed in the North, were the Remains of ancient *Iſrael*; that among theſe People, there are ſeveral plain Footſteps of the *Jewiſh* Religion, beſides Circumciſion, and from them, in all Probability, have deſcended the *Jews*, that in *Poland* and *Muſcovy* are found ſo numerous.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that ſeveral of the *Iſraelites* might paſs into *Tartary*, becauſe *Armenia* is the only Country that parts it from *Aſſyria*, whereunto they were primarily carried; but this is no Reaſon for their penetrating *Scythia*, and thence diſperſing themſelves into the Kingdoms of *Poland* and *Muſcovy*, becauſe the Tranquillity and Privileges, which the Princes of theſe Countries have granted the *Jews*, are the true Cauſe and Motive of their reſorting thither in ſuch Numbers, and therefore, in Confutation of what has been ſaid above, the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian has well obſerved, that the antient *Scythians* were a People too fierce by Nature, and too expert in War, for an Handful of Fugitives (ſuch as the *Iſraelites* were) ever to conquer or expel; that the People of this Country were all along Idolaters, until they were converted to the Religion of *Mahomet*, from whence they received the *Rite of Circumciſion*, and ſome other Ceremonies conformable to the Law of *Moſes*; that the Etymology of Names is of all others the weakeſt and moſt precarious Argument; and that it is ridiculous to *ſeek for the Glory of God* among the *Tartars*, before the Introduction of *Mahometaniſm*, ſince, (according to the Account of their Hiſtorian) 'Some of them lived like Beaſts, without any Senſe of God; others worſhipped the Sun, Moon, and Stars; and others, again, made Gods of the Oxen, that plowed their Land, or proſtrated themſelves before every great Tree.'

Manaſſeh, the famous *Rabbin*, we lately mentioned, publiſhed a Book, intitled, *The Hopes of* Iſrael, founded upon the Number and Power of the *Jews* in *America*; but in this he was impoſed upon by the fabulous Relation of *Monteſini*, who reported, 'That he found a great Number of *Jews*, concealed behind the Mountains of *Cordilleras*, which run along *Chily* in *America*; that continuing his Journey in that Country, he came, at length, to the Banks of a River, where, upon his giving a Signal, there appeared a People, who pronounced in *Hebrew* theſe Words out of *Deuteronomy*, *Hear*, O Iſrael, *the Lord our God is one Lord*; that they looked upon *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, as their great Progenitors, and had been conducted into that Country by incredible Miracles; that the *Indians* had treated them with great Cruelty, and thrice declared War againſt them; but that, by God's protecting his People againſt Idolaters, they had been as oft defeated; that ſome of their *Magi*, who, by their Inchantments, had openly declared, that the God of *Iſrael* was the only true God, and that, at the Conſummation of Ages, that Nation ſhould become the Miſtreſs of the whole Univerſe.'

Deluded with this Account, *Manaſſeh* endeavoured to find out the Road, which might poſſibly lead the *Iſraelites* into the *Weſt-Indies*; and, to this Purpoſe, ſuppoſing that *Aſia* and *America* were formerly one Continent, before they were divided by the Streights of *Anian*, he aſſerted, that the *Iſraelites* might travel to *America* by Land, before this Separation happened.

Q. *What* Engliſh *Author has wrote upon this Subject?*

A. Sir *William Penn*, in his preſent State of *the Lands of the* Engliſh *in* America, tells us, 'That the Faces of the Inhabitants, eſpecially of their Children, are ſo very like the *Jews*, that, when you look upon them, you would think yourſelf in the *Jews* Quarter in *London*; that their Eyes are little and black, like the *Jews*; that they reckoned by Moons; offer their firſt Fruits; have a Kind of Feaſt of Tabernacles; and that their Language is maſculine, ſhort, conciſe, and full of Energy, in which it much reſembles the *Hebrew*.'

Q. *Recite the Opinions of ſome other Writers.*

A. Other Hiſtorians have obſerved, that ſome of the *Americans* have a Notion of the Deluge, though they relate it in a different Manner; that they celebrate a *Jubilee* every fifth Year, and a *Sabbath* every ſeventh Day; that others obſerve Circumciſion, abſtain from Swine's Fleſh, and purify themſelves by bathing, whenever they have touched a dead Carcaſe; that Marriages, among others, are performed in a Manner not unlike to what *Moſes* preſcribes; and that they generally believe a Reſurrection; for which Reaſon they cauſe their Wives, and Slaves to be buried with them, that when they ariſe from their Graves, they may appear with an Attendance ſuitable to their Quality.

This Conformity of Cuſtoms, and Looks, and Sentiments has induced ſeveral to think, that the captive *Iſraelites*, we are here in queſt of, went into *America*, either by Way of *China* or *Tartary*, and there ſettled themſelves. But, how ſpecious ſoever theſe Arguments may appear, there is no Manner of Solidity in them. To prove a Point of of this Kind, we ſhould produce a whole Nation or Province in *America*, diſtinct from all others, in their Ceremonies and Way of worſhipping God, in a Manner exactly agreeing with the *Hebrews*; but to ſay that becauſe, in one Place, the People abſtain from Swines Fleſh, and in another they obſerve the ſeventh Day; in one they offer Sacrifices, and in another uſed Baths, when they think themſelves polluted; the *Americans* were originally *Iſraelites*, is carrying the Conſequence a great deal too far, and what, indeed, we may prove in any other Nation under Heaven, if we may be allowed to argue in this Manner, from Particulars to Generals.

The Truth is, the Devil, in all his idolatrous Countries, has made it his Buſineſs to mimick God in the Rites of his religious Worſhip; or if this were not ſo, there is naturally ſo great a Conformity in Men's Sentiments concerning theſe Matters, that the *Americans* might agree with the *Jews* in the Oblation of their firſt Fruits, their Computations by *Moons*, &c. without having any Commerce or Affinity with them; and tho' there be ſomething more characteriſtick in Circumciſion, yet, as ſeveral other Nations, uſed it, the *Americans*, upon this Account, cannot be *Jews*, becauſe, if we may believe *Acoſta*, (who had made their Cuſtoms a good part of his Study) they never did circumciſe their Children, and therefore are thus far excluded from being Deſcendants of that Race.

Thus have we endeavoured to find out the Situation of the Ten Tribes of *Iſrael*, and yet can meet with nothing but either the fabulous Accounts of the *Talmudiſts*, or the uncertain Conjectures of modern Criticks; let us now have Recourſe to the Scriptures, and know what the Information is, that they can ſupply us with in this our Enquiry. The ſacred Hiſtory thus expreſſes it, —— *The King of* Aſſyria *took* Samaria, *and carried* Iſrael *away into* Aſſyria, *and placed them in* Halah *and in* Habor, *by the River* Gozan, *and in the Cities of the* Medes; only we muſt note, that there is ſome Ambiguity in the Tranſlation; for, whereas it looks as if *Gozan* were the River, and not *Habor*, there is plainly no River to be found of the Name of *Gozan* and therefore the Emendation ſhould be — *He placed them in* Halah, *and by the River* Habor, *in* Gozan, *and in the Cities of the* Medes.

The holy Penman, obſerve, diſtinguiſhes two Places, into which the *Iſraelites* were carried (as indeed they were numerous enough to make two different Colonies) *Aſſyria* and *Media*. In *Aſſyria* we ſee the River *Habor*, or *Chaboras*, which riſes from Mount *Maſius*, and running through *Meſopotamia*, falls into the *Euphrates*. *Halah*, which in *Ptolomy* is called *Chalcitis*, is a City and Province ſituate on one Side of its Banks, and *Gozan*, which is likewiſe a City and Province, is found on the other: So that the Ten Tribes were ſeated in two Provinces, which ſtretched along both Sides of this River. An happy Situation for them, ſince they were only ſeparated by a River, which watered all the Cities that were were aſſigned for their Habitation!

As to the Cities of the *Medes*, we are more in the Dark, becauſe the Scripture does not ſpecify any; but we may preſume, that this Colony was placed in the mountainous Part of *Media*, becauſe it was leſs peopled than the lower Country. It wanted, indeed, Inhabitants, and if we will believe *Strabo*, was ſupplied by Strangers and Colonies from abroad.

The Truth is, the Antients have extolled *Media*, as a very happy Country. *Ecbatana*, where the King kept his Reſidence in Summer, was one of the fineſt and largeſt Cities in the World. *Suſa*, where he ſpent the Winter, was a very conſiderable Place likewiſe. But, on the North-ſide, there were high Mountains, where, nevertheleſs, there was good Paſturage; ſo that what the Country wanted, was good Huſbandmen, and ſuch as were uſed to Tillage; for which Purpoſe the *Iſraelites*, who had made that their principal Buſineſs in the *Holy Land*, were, of all other People, the fitteſt Inhabitants.

In theſe two Provinces were the Ten Tribes ſeated at firſt; and it is not improbable, that in a ſhort Time, thoſe of *Aſſyria* might extend themſelves into ſeveral other Parts of the Empire, for in *Alexander*'s Time, we meet with a great Body of them in *Babylon*; and that thoſe of *Media* might ſtretch upon the Right, into the Provinces bordering upon the *Caſpian Sea*, or (as ſome imagine) even beyond that Sea, as far as the River *Araxes*; but that they ever became ſo powerful, as to change the antient Names of Places into thoſe of their own Language, we can hardly believe, becauſe they fell under ſo many bitter Perſecutions, were ſubject to ſo many Revolutions of the Kingdoms, where they lived, and from different Princes, underwent ſuch Variety of Traſportations, that before they could gain any ſuch Weight and Authority in the Word, we find them here and there ſcattered, in leſſer Bodies, as it were, over the whole Face of it.

Q. *But is it not probable that the Ten Tribes might return with* Judah *and* Benjamin?

A. Not only ſome of the *Greek Fathers*, but ſome of our modern Criticks likewiſe, have maintained, that the Ten Tribes were reſtored with thoſe of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, under the Conduct of *Zerobabel* and *Nehemiah*, when *Cyrus* and his Succeſſors were ſo kind as to give the *Jews* in general a full Permiſſion to return into their native Land. To this Purpoſe they have obſerved that ſeveral of the Prophets, who foretold their Captivity, with the ſame Breath, as it were, have predicted their Return. That, in Token of ſuch their Return, *twelve Goats* (for every Tribe one) *were offered at the Dedication of the new Temple*, which would ſcarce have been done, had ten of theſe Tribes been left beyond the *Euphrates*; that, under *Nehemiah*, the *Levites* confeſſed the Sins of the Ten Tribes; that, in the Time of the *Maccabees*, all *Paleſtine* was full of *Iſraelites*, as well as *Jews*, that St. *Matthew* makes mention of the

Land of *Napthali*; and that St. *Paul*, in his Deſence before *Agrippa*, declares, *That for the Promiſe to which the Twelve Tribes hope to come, he was called in Queſtion.*

It cannot be thought, indeed, but that the Love which the *Jews*, above all other Nations, bore to their native Country, and the great Encouragement, which the Princes of the *Eaſt* were pleaſed to grant, to forward their Re-eſtabliſhment, might tempt ſome of each Tribe to take this Opportunity of returning with the two Tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin*; nor can we doubt, but that, upon their Return, they would be apt to aſſume their former Names, and, as far as in them lay, to ſettle themſelves in their antient Poſſeſſions; ſo that, what with thoſe that eſcaped their Conqueror's Fury, and remained untranſported; thoſe who returned with *Eſdras*, purſuant to the Commiſſion which *Artaxerxes* gave him; and thoſe who took the Advantage of the Revolutions of the Empire, and of the frequent Journeys they made to *Jeruſalem*, great Numbers of the antient Inhabitants might be found in the Days of the *Maccabees*, and ſome of every Tribe in our Saviour's Time; but that all theſe Returns did never amount to a full Reſtoration of the People, we have abundant Teſtimony to convince us.

Joſephus, indeed tells us, that *Eſdras*, upon the Receipt of his Commiſſion from *Artaxerxes*, communicated the Contents of it to all the *Iſraelites* that were in Exile, ſome of which reſorted to *Babylon*, in order to return with him; *but there was then another Sort of* Iſraelites (as the Words are) *who, being wonted to the Place, and ſettled in their Habitations, choſe rather to continue where they were.* Upon the whole, he computes that few or none, but thoſe of the Tribe of *Benjamin* and *Judah*, came along with *Eſdas*, and "This is the "Reaſon (as he tells us) that, in his Time, there "were only two Tribes to be found in *Aſia* and "*Europe* under the *Roman* Empire; for, as for "the Ten Tribes, they are all planted beyond "the *Euphrates*, ſays he, and ſo prodigiouſly in"creaſed in Number, that they are hardly to be "computed." Nay, even thoſe that followed *Eſdras*, (according to the Sentiment of ſome of the *Talmudiſts*) were but the Dregs of the People, becauſe the Nobility, and principal Men of the Houſe of *David*, ſtill continued in *Chaldea*.

However this be, it is certain, *Philo*, in his Repreſentation to *Caligula*, tells him, that *Jeruſalem* ought to be looked upon, not only as the Metropolis of *Judea*, but as the Center of a Nation, diſperſed in infinite Places; among which he reckons the Iſles of *Cyprus* and *Candia*, *Egypt*, *Macedonia*, and *Bithynia*; the Empire of the *Perſians*, and all the Cities of the *Eaſt*, except *Babylon*, from whence they were then expelled. Nay, prior to this, we read, that a great Number of theſe Orientals appeared at *Jeruſalem*, at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, when after our Saviour's Aſcenſion, his Apoſtles began to preach the Goſpel, during that Feſtival. It cannot be thought that they were only Proſelytes, whom the *Jews* of the Diſperſion had converted: They muſt have been *Jews*, who came to ſacrifice at *Jeruſalem*, according to the Law. For, by St. *Luke's* Enumeration of them, it appears that they were the Deſcendants of the Tribes, that had been long before ſettled among the *Medes*, among the *Parthians*, in *Meſopotamia*, in *Cappadocia*, in *Pontus* and *Aſia Minor*, &c. and therefore we find St. *Peter*, the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, directing his Epiſtle *to the Strangers, ſcattered throughout* Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia *and* Bithynia, 1 *Pet.* i. 1.

Upon the Strength of theſe Authorities, we may then conclude, that, tho' *Artaxerxes*, in his Commiſſion to *Eſdras*, gave free Liberty to all *Jews*, whatever, that were under his Dominions, to return to *Jeruſalem*, if they were ſo minded, which ſome, without doubt, moſt gladly embraced; yet the main Bulk of the Ten Tribes being loath to remove, continued in the Land of their Captivity, where they are ſtill to be found in great Numbers: And therefore all thoſe glorious Prophecies, which ſome, by Miſtake, have applied to their thin Returns, under the *Jewiſh* Governors ſent from *Babylon*, do certainly relate to a greater Event, even their Converſion and final Reſtoration under the Kingdom of the *Meſſias*.

Q. *But is it your Opinion, as it is of many learned Men, that the* Jews *ſhall return and be converted?*

A. The Prophet *Hoſea*, ſpeaking of the preſent State of the *Jews*, gives us this Character, whereby to diſtinguiſh them; *They ſhall abide many Days without a King, and without a Prince, and without a Sacrifice, and without an Image, and without an Ephod, and without a Teraphim,* Hoſea iii. 4. In vain do they boaſt of that Power and Authority which they never had, but in their own Country. The Kings and the Princes, that they talk ſo much of, are all fictitious and imaginary. From the firſt Time of their Tranſmigration, to this very Day, they have been a People without any Governor, or Form of Government; and if, in the midſt of ſo many different Nations, and under ſo ſevere Perſecutions, they nevertheleſs have hitherto been preſerved, it muſt be imputed to the ſecret and wonderful Providence of God, who hath ſtill Deſigns of Pity and gracious loving Kindneſs towards them: For ſo the ſame Prophet aſſures us; *The Number of the Children of* Iſrael *ſhall be as the Sands of the Sea, which cannot be meaſured or numbered; and in the Place, where it was ſaid unto them, ye are not my People, there it ſhall be ſaid unto them, ye are the Sons of the living God:* Hoſea, i. 10 *For he ſhall recover the Remnant of his People* (ſays another Prophet) *that ſhall be left,* — *He ſhall ſet up an Enſign for the Nations, and aſſemble the Outcaſts of* Iſrael, *and gather together the Diſperſed of* Judah; *from the four Corners of the Earth,* Iſa. xi. 11, 12. for *behold the Days come, ſaith the Lord,* by another of his Prophets, *that it ſhall no more be ſaid, the Lord liveth, that brought the Children out of the Land of* Egypt, *but the Lord liveth, who brought up the Children of* Iſrael *from the Land of the North, and from all the Lands whether he hath driven them. And I will bring them again into the Land that I gave unto their Fathers,* Jeremiah xvi. 14, 15. and when I have done ſo, *I will no more hide my Face from them,* Ezek. xxxix. 29. but *will rejoice in* Jeruſalem, *and joy in my People,* Iſa. lxv. 19. *They ſhall be no more a Prey to the Heathen*; Ezek. xxxiv. 28. Violence *ſhall be no more heard in their Land, Waſting nor Deſtruction within their Borders; but they ſhall call their Walls Salvation, and their Gates Praiſe,* Iſa. lx. 18. *Their Land ſhall no more be termed deſolate,* Iſa. lxii. 4. *but they ſhall* *dwell in the Land that I have given to* Jacob *my Servant, even they and their Children's Children, for ever, and my Servant* David (not the Son of *Jeſſe*, who was dead long before *Ezekiel* propheſied, but the *Meſſiah*, who was to be of the Lineage of *David*, (as *Kimchi* explains it) *ſhall be their Prince for ever. Moreover I will make a Covenant of Peace, which ſhall be an everlaſting Covenant with them; yea, and I will ſet my Sanctuary among them for evermore. My Tabernacle ſhall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they ſhall be my People*, Ezek. xxxvii. 25, *&c.*

Now, tho' it cannot be denied, that theſe and ſeveral other Propheſies to the like Purpoſe, do denote a great and glorious Reſtoration to God's People; yet it ſeems very evident, that ſcarce any of them can be applied to the Return of the *Jews* from their Captivity in *Babylon*. Long ſince that Time, and almoſt ſeventeen hundred Years ago, his Covenant of Peace has been departed from them; *Violence has been in the Land*, which has been conſumed; they have been a Prey to the *Heathen*; and have long ceaſed to be God's People, and he to be their God; and therefore theſe Propheſies muſt be underſtood of other Events, which can only be the general Converſion of the *Jews* to *Chriſtianity*, and their Re-eſtabliſhment in the Holy Land. For this Myſtery the Apoſtle has revealed, *That Blindneſs, in Part hath happened to* Iſrael, *until the Fulneſs of the* Gentiles *be come in, and ſo all* Iſrael *ſhall be ſaved, as it is written, there ſhall come out of* Zion *the Deliverer, and ſhall turn Ungodlineſs from* Jacob; for *when the Times of the Age ſhall be accompliſhed*, and *Antichriſt* deſtroyed, *the Lord ſhall ſet his Hand, a ſecond Time, to recover the Remnant of the People, and to aſſemble the Outcaſts of* Iſrael, *from every Kindred and Tongue, and Nation, and People, that at the blowing of the great Trumpet, they may come from the Land of* Aſſyria *and* Egypt, *and may worſhip the Lord in the holy Mount at* Jeruſalem. When this great Event ſhall happen, it is impoſſible for us to determine; but our Buſineſs is to pray, that *the Salvation of* Iſrael *may come out of* Zion, *that* Jacob *may rejoice, and* Iſrael *may be glad.*

Q. *What is obſervable of* Tiglath-pilezer, *whom* Ahaz *invited to his Aſſiſtance againſt the* Aſſyrians?

A. The learned *Prideaux* looks upon it as a Miſtake, in our great Arbiſhop *Uſher*'s accounting *Tiglath-pilezer* and *Arbaces* two diſtinct Kings, whereof the one reigned in *Media*, and the other in *Aſſyria*. He thinks they were one and the ſame Perſon, under different Names, who having *Media* as well as *Aſſyria*, under his Dominion, might ſend the *Syrian* Colonies into the Cities of the *Medes*, as well as to any other Parts of his large Tettitories: So that this Objection is founded upon a Miſtake; as that other of *Rezin*'s taking *Elah* for the *Aſſyrians*, when it is owned they never dwelt there, depends upon one ſingular Letter being put in the Text for another. For as *Aram*, which denotes *Syria* and *Edom*, which ſignifies *Idumea*, are, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, written with Letters almoſt entirely the ſame, therefore, to avoid all Appearance of Contradiction, the Tranſlation of the Words ſhould be, *At that Time* Rezin *King of* Syria, *recovered* Elah *for* Edom, *and drove the* Jews *from* Elah, *ſo that the* Edomites *came to* Elah, *and dwelt there unto this Day.*

Thus we have endeavoured to ſatiſfy moſt of the Objections that may be alleged againſt the Truth of the ſacred Hiſtory, during this Period; and as to the principal Event of it, *viz. the Retrogradation of the Sun*, though it muſt be owned, that among profane Authors, we meet with no Mention of it, becauſe, indeed, all the antient Monuments of the *Chaldean* and *Egyptian* Learning (from whence we might moſt reaſonably expect it) have been loſt; yet *Herodotus* ſeems to inſinuate, that there was a Tradition of this kind among the *Egyptians*, by his telling us, that from them he learnt, that in the Space of ten thouſand three hundred and fifty Years, *the Sun had twice riſen where it was to ſet, and twice ſet where it uſually riſes*; which, though it magnifies the Miracle above Meaſure, is thought, nevertheleſs to refer to what happened to the Son in the Days of *Joſhua*, the Conqueror of *Canaan*, and of *Hezekiah* the King of *Judah*.

THE

THE FISRT BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES.

The Jews *comprehend this and the following Book in one, which the* Grecians, *becauſe of the Length, divide into two: And they are called* Chronicles, *becauſe they note briefly the Hiſtory from* Adam *to the Return of the* Hebrews *from their Captivity in* Babylon. *But theſe are not thoſe Books of* Chronicles, *mentioned in the Books of the Kings of* Judah *and* Iſrael, *wherein at large is related the Story of both the Kingdoms, and which afterwards periſhed in the Captivity; but an Abridgment of thoſe Books, and collected by* Ezra, *as the* Jews *affirm, after their Return from* Babylon.

This firſt Book *contains a brief Genealogy of the Progeny of* Adam *down to the* Jewiſh *Patriarchs; and particularly of principal Families of* Judah, *and of the Line of* David, *becauſe Chriſt, according to the Fleſh, deſcended from him. And therefore it enlarges very much upon the Acts of this Prince, both in Relation to Civil Government, and alſo his Adminiſtration, and his Care of Things concerning Religion, for the good Succeſs whereof he rejoices and pays his grateful Acknowledgments to God.*

But as many Things, in theſe Genealogies, may, to us, ſeem doubtful and obſcure, it ſhould be conſidered that they were not ſo to the Hebrews; *and that all the Perſons here named, were known to them by thoſe very particular and exact Genealogies, which they kept in their ſeveral Families, and in publick Regiſters, from whence this ſacred Penman, by divine Direction, took thoſe Things that were of the greateſt Importance.*

Chap. I.

Adam's *Line to* Noah. Noah's *Poſterity by* Japheth; *by* Ham; *by* Shem *to* Abraham: *His Poſterity by* Iſhmael; *by* Keturah; *by* Iſaac. *His Poſterity by* Eſau; *the Kings and Dukes of* Edom.

THIS Chapter, conſiſting wholly of Genealogies, affords nothing very remarkable; we ſhall therefore proceed to the next.

Chap. II.

The Sons of Iſrael; *of* Judah *by* Tamar. *The Children of* Jeſſe; *of* Caleb *the Son of* Hezron; *of him by the Daughter of* Machir *and* Jerahmeel; *of* Sheſham *another Branch of* Caleb's *Poſterity; of* Caleb *the Son of* Hur.

Q. *THERE ſeems to be ſome Difference between the Deſcendants of a Wife and of a Concubine: How were they diſtinguiſhed?*

A. This Difference between the Wife and the Concubine was, that the Wife was taken with certain Solemnities in Marriage, and her Children did inherit; the Concubine had no Solemnities in Marriage, neither did her Children inherit, but had a Portion of Goods or Money given them.

Q. *Of what Family were the* Scribes, *mentioned* Ver. 55?

A. Theſe came of *Jethro Moſes*'s Father-in-law, and dwelt as Strangers among the People of God: That they might be ſome way ſerviceable to the People of God, they were appointed to be Scribes, that is, ſuch as were publick Notaries, who made Contracts, and ſuch like Deeds and Inſtruments, and kept Books of them. They are here mentioned, becauſe they dwelt among the Tribe of *Judah.* See *Judges* i. 16.

Chap. III.

The Sons of David; *his Line to* Zedekiah. *The Succeſſors of* Jeconiah.

Q. *WHAT is chiefly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. We have here the Genealogy returned to, to ſhew that *Chriſt* came of this Stock; the Kings of *Judah* from *Solomon* unto *Zedekiah*, who was taken Priſoner by *Nebuchadnezzar*, had his Eyes put out, his City of *Jeruſalem* deſtroyed, and was the laſt King of *Judah* for many Years. Here alſo Mention is made of the Poſterity of *Jeconiah*, to the ſeven Sons of *Elioenai*, which were *Hodaiah*, and *Eliaſhib*, and *Pelaiah*, and *Akkub*, and *Johanan*, and *Dalaiah*, and *Anani*.

Chap. IV.

The Poſterity of Judah *by* Caleb *the Son of* Hur; *by* Aſhur; *by* Jabez: *His Prayer. The Poſterity and Cities of* Simeon; *their Conqueſt of* Gedor; *and of the* Amalekites *to Mount* Seir.

Q. W*HAT does this Chapter afford worthy Obſervation?*

A. In this Chapter are mentioned the Sons and Poſterity of *Judah*, by *Caleb* the Son of *Hur*. Although *Hezron*, &c. are mentioned as Sons of *Judah*, yet they are only Nephews and Kinſmen; for *Pharez* was the only real Son. The Genealogy of *Aſhur*, the poſthumous Son of *Hezron*, by his two Wives *Helah* and *Naarah*. *Jabez* is ſaid to be more honourable than his Brethren, and called on the God of *Iſrael*, and to ſo good an Effect, that God graciouſly granted what he requeſted. The Sons of *Shelah*, the Son of *Judah*, were famous for working of fine Linnen, and ſome of their Poſterity were Gardiners to King *David*, and ſerved in his Works. The Poſterity, Cities and Villages of *Simeon*, and how they took Poſſeſſion of *Gedor*, and of the Paſture Grounds thereabouts. For the Tribe of *Simeon* was ſo great in Number, that in the Time of *Hezekiah* they ſought new Dwellings unto *Gedor*, which is in the Tribe of *Dan*. The Sons of *Simeon* ſmote the reſt of the *Amalekites*, whom *Saul* had not deſtroyed, and took Poſſeſſion of all their Country.

Chap. V.

The Line of Reuben *unto the Captivity; their War againſt the* Hagarites. *The chief Families of* Gad. *The Number of* Reubenites, Gadites, *and Half Tribe of* Manaſſeh, *that marched againſt the* Hagarites, *and overcame them; they are all carried captive into* Aſſyria.

Q. W*HOM does the ſacred Hiſtorian mean by the* chief-Ruler, *who was to come in the Line of* Judah, Ver. 2?

A. The Government was, by God's Promiſe and Appointment, to be ſeated chiefly and moſt durably in that Tribe, firſt in *David* and his Succeſſors, and then in the *Meſſiah*, who ſprang out of *Judah*, *Heb.* vii. 4. which was a far greater Privilege than the Birth-right. Or, *as the chief Ruler*, (*i. e.* as to the Point of Dominion) he was *more than he*, or *preferred before him*, i. e. before *Joſeph*, who is named in the next Clauſe, the Pronoun being referred to the following Noun, which is frequent among the *Hebrews*.

Chap. VI.

The Sons of Levi; *the Line of the High-Prieſts from* Aaron *to the Captivity. The Families of* Gerſhom, Merari *and* Kohath. *The Office of* Aaron, *and his Line unto* Ahimaaz. *The Cities of the Prieſts and* Levites.

Q. W*HAT do you find remarkable in this Chapter?*

A. The Genealogies are continued in this Chapter, among whom is that of the Sons of *Levi*, and the Poſterity of the High-prieſts from *Aaron* unto the whole Nation's being carried away to *Babylon*. The Poſterities of *Gerſhom*, *Merari*, and *Kohath*, as likewiſe an Account of the Singers whom *David* appointed after the Ark was brought to the Place where the Temple ſhould be built, and was no more carried to and fro. The *Levites* are called the Singers Brethren, becauſe they came of the ſame Stock. The Function and Office of *Aaron* and his Poſterity, to do the Service of the God of *Iſrael*, is mentioned from *Aaron* to *Ahimaaz*. Cities were at firſt appointed and prepared for the *Levites*; which are here mentioned; and the *Iſraelites* gave a Portion to the *Kohathites* which were the Remnant of the Tribe of *Levi*; out of the Half Tribe of *Manaſſeh*; and out of *Ephraim*. The *Merarites* had their Portion of twelve Cities, out of the Tribes of *Reuben*, *Gad*, and *Zebulun*, &c. The *Gerſhonites* had likewiſe ſeveral Cities aſſigned them.

Chap. VII.

The Sons of Iſſachar; *of* Benjamin; *of* Naphthali; *of* Manaſſeh; *of* Ephraim: *Their Calamity and Habitation. Of* Aſher.

Q. I*S there any Thing particularly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. The Genealogy of *Iſſachar* is here mentioned, and in King *David*'s Time when all the People were numbered, there were two and twenty thouſand, and ſix hundred valiant Men of this Tribe. The Number of the valiant Men in the Tribe of *Benjamin*, after their Genealogy by their Generations, was twenty thouſand and two hundred. The Genealogy of *Naphthali* is likewiſe here recited, as is that of *Ephraim* and *Aſher*, which Tribes had among them twenty and ſix thouſand Men fit for battle.

Chap. VIII.

The Sons and chief Men of Benjamin. *The Stock of* Saul *and* Jonathan.

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve particularly upon this Chapter?*

A. Here is rehearſed the Genealogy of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, and in particular the Anceſtors of *Saul* and *Jonathan* his Son, who were afterwards ſlain by the *Philiſtines* on Mount *Gilboa*. The Sons of *Ulam* are here ſaid to be Men of very great Valour, and very expert in all Sorts of Archery or ſhooting with a Bow.

Chvp. IX.

The Chief of the Tribe of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim and Manaſſeh, *who returned from Captivity, and dwelt at* Jeruſalem. *As alſo the Prieſts and* Levites, *and how they executed their Office in the Temple at* Jeruſalem. *The Family of* Saul.

I Don't obſerve any Thing in this Chapter that wants Explanation; let us therefore ſee what the next affords.

Chhp. X.

Saul's *Overthrow and Death; the* Philiſtines *triumph. The Kindneſs of the Inhabitants of* Jabeſh-Gilead *towards* Saul *and his Sons; his Sin.*

THE Hiſtory of this Chapter is related 1 *Sam.* xxxi. to which we refer the Reader.

Chap. XI.

David *made King at* Hebron; *by* Joab's *valour wins the*

the Caſtle of Zion *from the* Jebuſites; *repairs the City of* Jeruſalem. *A Catalogue of his Worthies.*

THE Contents of this Chapter you will find related 2 *Sam* v. 1, *&c.* and xxiii. 8, *&c.* together with the Obſervations we then made upon this Part of the Sacred Hiſtory.

Chap. XII.

The Companies that came to David *at* Ziglag, *when purſued by* Saul; *ſome of* Saul's *own Family*; *ſome of the Tribe of* Gad; *of* Benjamin, Judah *and* Manaſſeh. *The Armies that came to him at* Hebron. *Their Feaſt.*

NOthing material is offered to our Conſideration in this Chapter; we will therefore go on to the next.

Chap. XIII.

David *fetches the Ark from* Kirjathjearim *with great Solemnity.* Uzza *being ſmitten, the Ark is left at the Houſe of* Obed-Edom.

THE Hiſtory of this Chapter the Reader will find explained, 2 *Sam.* v. and vi.

Chap. XIV.

Hiram's *Kindneſs to* David. *His Felicity in People, Wives and Children. His two Victories againſt the* Philiſtines

SEE the Contents of this Chapter, 2 *Sam.* viii. 12, *&c.*

Chap. XV.

David *having prepared a Place for the Ark, orders the Prieſts and Levites to bring it from* Obed-Edom. *He performs the Solemnity thereof with great Joy.*

Q. *WHY did he not firſt fetch the Tabernacle of* Moſes *from* Gibeon, *where it now was, that he might put the Ark into its proper Place?*

A. Partly, becauſe he had no Motion or Direction from God concerning the Tabernacle, as he had concerning the Ark; and partly, becauſe he thought the Tabernacle was not ſo neceſſary for that End, as formerly, ſince he intended to ſet about the building of the Temple out of Hand, as appears from *Chap.* xvii.

Chap. XVI.

David's *feſtival Sacrifice. A Pſalm of Thankſgiving to be ſung by a Choir. Miniſters, Porters, Prieſts, and Muſicians appointed to attend the Ark continually.*

THE firſt Part of this Chapter is contained in 2 *Sam.* vi. 17, *&c.* and the Pſalm of Thankſgiving, which follows, is repeated *Pſal.* xcvi. and cv.

Chap. XVII.

David's *Deſign to build God an Houſe is at firſt approved by* Nathan, *but is afterwards forbidden by God, who promiſes him Bleſſings and Benefit in his Seed.* David's *Prayer and Thankſgiving.*

THE Contents of this Chapter are recorded, with very little Variation, in 2 *Sam.* 7.

Chap. XVIII.

David *ſubdues the* Philiſtines *and the* Moabites; *ſmites* Hadarezer *and the* Syrians. Tou *ſends* Hadoram *with Preſents to bleſs* David; *the Preſents and Spoil* David *dedicates to God; he puts Garriſons in* Edom; David's *Officers.*

THIS whole Chapter the Reader will find explained 2 *Sam.* viii.

Chap. XIX.

David's *Meſſengers to* Hanun *ignominiouſly treated. The* Ammonites *and* Syrians *are overcome by* Joab *and* Abiſhai; *and by* David.

THIS Chapter is a Repetition of what is contained in 2 *Sam.* x.

Chap. XX.

Rabbah *beſieged, ſpoiled, and tortured by* David. *Three Giants ſlain.*

THE Contents of this Chapter may be ſeen 2 *Sam.* xi. 1, 2, 3. and xii. 30, 31. and xxi. 15, *&c.*

Chap. XXI.

David *numbers the People; and repents; of three Judgments propounded, he chuſes Peſtilence; and why.* David, *by God's Direction, builds an Altar, and ſacrifices; the Plague is ſtayed.*

THE Variations and ſeeming Contradictions between the Narrative contained in this Chapter, and that in *Samuel*, Chap. xxiv. are there explained and reconciled.

Chap. XXII.

David *prepares for the building of the Temple; inſtructs* Solomon *in God's promiſes and his Duty; he charges the Princes to aſſiſt his Son.*

SEE the Contents of this Chapter, and our Remarks thereon, ſee 1 *Kings* v. and viii.

Chap. XXIII.

David *makes* Solomon *King. The Number and Diſtribution of the* Levites, *according to their Families; their Office.*

COncerning the Offices and ſeveral Employments of the *Levites*, which are here treated of, ſee *Numb.* iv.

Chap. XXIV.

The Prieſts are divided by Lots into four Orders. Miniſters allotted them out of the Levites, *and of the Families of the* Kohabites *and* Merarites.

Q. *WHAT do you obſerve concerning* David's *Diviſion of the* Levites?

A. David divides the Prieſts into twenty-four Companies or Claſſes, for the Execution of their Offices; the Diviſion was made by Lot, to take away all Occaſion of Envy or Grudging one againſt another. The ninth Lot fell to *Abijah*, of whom came *Zechary* the Father of *John Baptiſt.* As there were four and twenty Orders of Prieſts, there were juſt ſo many *Levites*, who miniſtred unto them, whoſe Heads are here ſet down. Every one had that Dignity which fell unto him by Lot, without obſerving, in their Order of relieving one another, any Precedency, either by reaſon of Elderſhip, or Greatneſs of Number or Power.

Chap. XXV.

The Number and Offices of the Singers out of the Sons of Aſaph, Heman, *and* Jeduthun. *Their Diviſion by Lot into twenty four Orders.*

WE have here an Account of the ſeveral Claſſes and Orders of Singers, appointed by *David* for the Service of God; of which we have had frequent Occaſion to treat. See 1 *Sam.* x. 2 *Kings* iii, *&c.*

CHAP. XXVI.

The Diviſion of the Porters. The Gates aſſigned by Lot. The Levites *have Charge of the Treaſures of the Temple. Officers and Judges.*

Q. *WHAT occurs to your Obſervation in this Chapter?*

A. Here the Order and Diviſion of the Doorkeepers of the Temple are mentioned, who were alſo divided into four and twenty Courſes, as the other Levites were, each in their Function or Adminiſtration; and that they likewiſe ſo came on, and went off in their Wards by turns, as the others did, changing their Courſes every Sabbath-Day.

The *Hebrews* made both the Books of *Chronicles* but one, and of the twenty fourth Verſe of this Chapter make the midſt of the Book, as touching the Number of Verſes.

The reſt of this Chapter gives us an Account of the Treaſurers that were over the Treaſure of the Temple, as likewiſe of the Levitical Officers and Judges; for though the *Levites* were continued the ordinary Church-Miniſters, yet ſome of them were likewiſe employed and made uſe of in civil Affairs and Adminiſtrations, not only in their own Cities, that they were given them of the Tribes, by the Order and Appointment of God, but alſo being called thereunto from other Places.

CHAP. XXVII.

The twelve Captains for every ſeveral Month. The Princes of the twelve Tribes. The chief Keepers of David*'s Treaſures. His Counſellors and Friends.*

Q. *HAVE you any Remark upon any Part of this Chapter?*

A. According to the Diviſion made by *David*, the twelve Chieftains with their Men, were to keep their Guards, and their Marchings forth for a Month together, changing their Courſes every Month. Whatever Buſineſs or Difficulty occurred, whereto military Strength was required, thoſe were to be in Readineſs whoſe Month and Turn it was; ſo that they were like Legions or Bands of Militia, always ready to ſerve their King and Country. The Remainder of this Chapter conſiſts of a Liſt of the chief Keepers of *David*'s Treaſures and Revenues, his chiefeſt Counſellors and Friends.

CHAP. XXVIII.

David, *in a ſolemn Aſſembly, declares God's Favour to him, and Promiſe to his Son* Solomon; *exhorts them to fear God; encourages* Solomon *to build the Temple; gives him a Pattern for the Form, and Gold and Silver for the Materials.*

Q. *HAD* David *ſufficient Authority to make Alterations in the Service of God, as he ſeems to have done in ordering the Courſes of the Prieſts and Levites?*

A. David did not act here out of an abſolute royal Power, ordaining the Service of God according to his own Fancy and Good-liking, but he did it as a Prophet of God, by the Inſtinct and Suggeſtion of the Holy Ghoſt, and alſo by the Inſtigation and Perſuaſion of *Gad* and *Nathan*. Thus God ſhewed a Pattern unto *Moſes* of all he ſhould make. *Exodus* xxv. 40. and xxvi. 32. and *Heb.* viii. 5.

David exhorts *Solomon* to be couragious, and to rely wholly on the Almighty's Protection, telling him, that as long as he feared the Lord God of *Iſrael*, every one would be ready to help and aſſiſt him, in his building of the Temple.

CHAP. XXIX.

David, *by his Example and Entreaty, cauſes the Prince and People to offer willingly.* David*'s Thankſgiving and Prayer. The People having bleſſed God and ſacrificed, make* Solomon *King.* David*'s Reign and Death.*

Q. *IN what Senſe is* Solomon *ſaid to* fit on the Throne of the Lord?

A. That is, on the Throne of *Iſrael*, which is called *the Throne of the Lord*, either more generally as all Thrones are the Lord's, *by whom Kings reign*, Prov. viii. 15. and *Magiſtrates are ordained*, Rom. xiii. 1, 2. or more eſpecially and peculiarly; either, 1. Becauſe the Lord himſelf was in a peculiar Matter, the King and Governor of *Iſrael*, not only in the Time of the Judges, but afterwards; or 2. Becauſe it was the Throne of *Chriſt*, the Lord whoſe Vicegerents *David* and *Solomon*, and their Succeſſors were, for whom this Throne was reſerved, and by whom it was to be eſtabliſhed and enjoyed for ever. Or, 3. Becauſe it was the Throne which fell to *Solomon*, not by Right of Inheritance, for he had elder Brethren, but by the ſpecial Appointment and Gift of the Lord. And for this, *of the Lord*, is the Genitive Caſe of the Efficient, as the Learned calls it, and ſignifies, *which the Lord gave him.*

3

THE

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES.

IN this ſecond Book of Chronicles *is briefly comprehended what is contained in the two Books of* Kings; *that is, from the Reign of* Solomon, *to the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *and the carrying away of the People captive into* Babylon. *In this Story are certain Things more copiouſly related than in the Book of the* Kings, *and therefore ſerve greatly to the underſtanding of the Prophets. But three Things are here chiefly to be conſider'd.* 1. *That the godly Kings, when they ſaw the divine Vengeance prepared againſt their Country for Sin, had Recourſe to the Lord; and by earneſt Prayer were heard, and the Plagues were removed.* 2. *That it greatly offends God, that ſuch as fear him, and profeſs his Religion, ſhould be joined in Amity with the Wicked. And,* 3. *How the good Rulers ever love the Prophets of God, and were very zealous in promoting his Religion throughout all their Dominions; and on the contrary, that the wicked hate his Miniſters, depoſe them, and for the true Religion and Word of God, ſet up Idolatry and ſerved God according to the Humour of Men. Thus have we, in an orderly hiſtorical Manner, related the principal Tranſactions and Occurrences from the Beginning of the World, to the Rebuilding of* Jeruſalem, *containing, in the whole, three thouſand five hundred threeſcore and eighteen Years and ſix Months.*

CHAP. I.

Solomon'*s ſolemn Offering at* Gibeon. *His Choice of Wiſdom, is bleſſed of God. His Strength and Wealth.*

Q. THE 5th *Verſe ſeems to want a little Explanation; pray tell me to what Perſon the Word* He, *in the Middle of that Verſe, refers?*

A. Either *Moſes*, mentioned, Verſe 3. or *Bezaleel* here laſt named, by the Command and Direction of *Moſes*; or *David*, who may be ſaid to put it (the *Brazen-Altar*) there, becauſe he continued it there, and did not remove it, as he did the Ark from the Tabernacle.

The other Contents of this Chapter the Reader will find, 1 *Kings* v.

CHAP. II.

Solomon *appoints Workmen to build the Temple. His Embaſſy to King* Hiram, *for Workmen and Materials; promiſing to furniſh him with Proviſions.* Hiram'*s Kindneſs.* Solomon *numbers and divides the Workmen.*

CONCERNING *Solomon*'s Workmen, their Number, and their Appointments to ſeveral Parts of the Work; as alſo his Embaſſy to *Hiram*. See 1 *Kings* 5.

CHAP. III.

The Place and Time of building the Temple. The Meaſure and Ornaments thereof. The Cherubims. The Veil and the Pillars.

THE Subſtance of this Chapter is contained in 1 *Kings* vi. as is likewiſe, CHAP. IV. the Contents of which we therefore forbear to repeat.

CHAP. V, VI, VII.

The dedicated Treaſures. The ſolemn Induction of the Ark into the Oracle. Glory and Praiſe ſung to God, who appears in a Cloud, which fills the Houſe. Solomon *bleſſes the People and praiſes God. His excellent Prayer, wherein he ſhews the right Uſe of the Temple. Fire from Heaven and Glory in the Temple, witneſs the divine Preſence and Acceptance. The People worſhip.* Solomon'*s ſolemn Sacrifice, who having kept the Feaſt of Tabernacles, and the Feaſt of ths Dedication of the Altar; he diſmiſſes the People. God appears to* Solomon; *promiſes his Favour on Obedience; elſe threatens grievous Judgments.*

THE Things contained in theſe three Chapters, are to be found in 1 *Kings* vii, viii, ix.

CHAP. VIII.

Solomon'*s Buildings. The Heathen, who remained in the Land, he makes tributary; but the* Iſraelites

Rulers. His yearly ſolemn Sacrifices. He appoints the Prieſts and Levites their proper places. His Navy fetches Gold from Ophir.

Q. WHAT *induc'd* Solomon *to build an Houſe on Purpoſe for* Pharaoh's *Daughter; and why did he remove her out of tht City of* David?

A. The Reaſon was, firſt, Becauſe ſhe was a Woman, and attended by many other Women; who, beſides the common Pollutions of all, are ſubject to many and frequent ceremonial Pollutions peculiar peculiar to their Sex; and either ſhe, or, at leaſt, many of her Followers, might be Heathens at this Time; and therefore he thought it indecent, that ſuch Perſons ſhould come, as it were, in God's ſtead, and ſucceed him in the Place where he had dwelt. Or, ſecondly, He ſpeaks not of the Time when the Ark was gone, but while it was there; and theſe Words contain a Reaſon, not of the more remote Words, why he now *brought her up thither*, but of the Words immediately preceding, *why he built* this Houſe *for her*; becauſe the Ark was now in the Houſe of *David*, which therefore ought to be kept pure and from the very Danger and Appearance of Pollution.

CHAP. IX.

The Queen of Sheba *viſits* Solomon, *and admires his Wiſdom; gives and receives Preſents.* Solomon's *Gold; Targets; Throne of Ivory; Veſſels; Preſents; Chariots and Horſes; his Tributes; his Reign and Death.*

THE Hiſtory of this Chapter is recorded in 1 *Kings* x.

CHAP. X, XI, XII.

Rehoboam *made King. The* Iſraelites, *by* Jeroboam, *require a relaxation of their Taxes.* Rehoboam, *refuſing the old Mens Counſel, by the Advice of young Men, anſwers them roughly. Ten Tribes revolting, kill* Hadoram, *and make* Rehoboam *fly.* Rehoboam, *raiſing an Army to ſubdue* Iſrael, *is forbidden by* Shemaiah. *He ſtrengthens his Kingdom with Forts and Proviſions. The Prieſts and Levites, and ſuch as feared God, forſaken by* Jeroboam, *who turns Idolater, ſtrengthens the Kingdom of* Judah. *The Wives and Children of* Rehoboam; *he forſaking the Lord, is puniſhed by* Shiſhak. Shemaiah *reproves him; he with the Princes repent; is preſerved in his Kingdom; but is ſpoiled of the Treaſures of the Temple, and of his royal Palace. His Reign and Death;* Abijah *his Son is made King.*

SEE the Contents of theſe three Chapters in 1 *Kings* xii. xiv, *&c.*

CHAP. XIII.

Abijah *wars againſt* Jeroboam, *King of* Iſrael; *declares the Right of his Cauſe; truſts in God; overcomes* Jeroboam; *his Wives and Children.*

Q. IT *is ſaid*, Ver. 4. *That* Abijah *ſtood upon Mount* Zemarim; *where was this Place?*

A. It was ſome commodious Place, whence his Voice might he heard by *Jeroboam*, and ſome of his Hoſt, who poſſibly were encamped in the Valley. Or, the two Armies beihg pitched near to one another, *Abijah* might deſire a Parley before they fought; whereupon *Jeroboam*, and ſome of his Commanders and Soldiers might draw near to him, and ſtand below him at the Bottom of the Hill, where they might hear his Speech; which *Jeroboam* was the more willing to do, that in the mean time he might cauſe an *Ambuſhment to come behind Abijah* and his Army, as he did, *Ver.* 13. whilſt he was quietly ſtanding before them, and ſeemed to hearken to any Forms of Accommodation which might be offered.

Q. *What is obſervable in this Speech of* Abijah?

A. None of the great Captains, and Commanders, whoſe Speeches are recorded in heathen Authors, ever expreſſed themſelves more movingly, than this King of *Judah* did. But, ſome have found fault with him, for ſpeaking not ſo honourably of his Father's *military* Skill and Courage, which he might as well have omitted, becauſe, allowing it to be true, he ſeems to have ſerved no Purpoſe in mentioning it: But this, notwithſtanding, the Speech is very lively, and excellently well calculated to cauſe a Revolt in *Jeroboam*'s Army. *Joſephus*, who was no mean Orator, and, who in ſome Speeches has improv'd upon the Sacred Hiſtorian, is quite out-done and ſurpaſſed in this, inſomuch, that there is no room to introduce him, unleſs it be by way of Foil to the Original.

Q. *It is ſaid*, Ver. 17. *that* there fell down ſlain of *Iſrael*, five hundred thouſand choſen Men: *Is it not almoſt incredible that ſo many Men ſhould be ſlain in one Battle?*

A. This is indeed a vaſt Number; but it has been often obſerved and recorded by ſacred and prophane Hiſtorians, that in thoſe antient Times were very numerous Armies, and frequently very great Slaughters; and as this Slaughter was more than ordinary, there is nothing in it ſtrange or incredible, becauſe Almighty God fought againſt *Iſrael*.

CHAP. XIV.

Aſa *is made King; he deſtroys Idolatry. Having Peace, he ſtrengthens his Kingdom with Forts and Armies. Being in a Strait, he calls on God, and overthrows* Zerah, *and ſpoils the* Ethiopians.

Q. IN 1 Kings xv. 14. *it is ſaid, That* the High-Places were not removed; *yet here*, Ver. 5. That he took away the Altars of the ſtrange Gods, and the High-places: *How is this reconcilable?*

A. For the right underſtanding and reconciling of this, we may obſerve, that there were two kinds of *High-places*, the one tolerated for religious Purpoſes, the other abominable from their firſt Inſtitution; the one frequented by devout Worſhippers, the other made the Receptacle of the wicked and idolatrous only. Now theſe were the Altars and High-places which *Aſa* took away, even where the People ſacrificed to ſtrange Gods; but thoſe, where God alone was worſhipped, had obtained ſo long, and were looked upon with ſo ſacred a Veneration, that for fear of giving a general Offence, (though he knew they were contrary to a divine Injunction) he durſt not adventure to aboliſh them. The Truth is, theſe High-places were famous either for the Apparition of Angels, or ſome other miraculous Event; had either been Places of Abode for the *Ark of the Lord*, or ſuch as ſome Prophets, or Patriarchs of old, had been accuſtomed to pray and ſacrifice in; and therefore they were looked upon as conſecrated to the Service of God, nor was there Strength enough in the Government to overcome this inveterate Prejudice, till *Hezekiah* aroſe, who (to prevent the Calamities that were coming upon the Nation) had the Courage to effect a thorough Reformation.

Q. *What gave Riſe to the War between* Zerah *and* Aſa; *and from what Country did this* Zerah *come?*

A. The Scripture takes no Notice of what was the Cauſe of this War between *Zerah* and *Aſa*, nor are Interpreters well agreed what the Country was from whence this Enemy came. The Country, in the Original, is called *Cuſh*, though we tranſlate it *Ethiopia*. Now there are three Countries, different from one another, all called by the Name of *Cuſh*; 1. the Land of *Cuſh* upon the River *Gihon*; 2. *Cuſh* upon the eaſtern Shore of the *Red-Sea*; and 3. *Cuſh*, ſituate about *Thebais*, and in the upper *Egypt*. It is very probable then, that the Country here ſpoken of, muſt not be *Ethiopia*, properly ſo called, becauſe we can hardly imagine, how an Army of a Million of Men ſhould be permitted to march through *Egypt* (as they muſt have done) without ſome Oppoſition: And therefore the the Country muſt be that Land of *Cuſh*, which lay in *Arabia Petræa*, upon the *Eaſt* Shore of the *Rea-Sea*, and, at its Extremity to the Point of that Sea, inclined towards *Egypt* and *Judea*: Though ſome have made it a Doubt, how ſo ſmall a Country could have produced ſo large an Army, without conſidering that a great Part of the Army might perhaps be *Mercenaries*.

CHAP. XV.

Aſa, *with* Judah *and many of* Iſrael, *moved by* Azariah *the Prophet, renew a ſolemn Crvenant with God. He removes* Maachah, *his Mother, for her Idolatry; brings the hallowed Things again into the Temple; enjoys a long Peace.*

See 1 *Kings* xv.

CHAP. XVI.

Aſa *makes a League with the* Syrians, *againſt the King of* Iſrael; *for which the Prophet reproves him, and is put into Priſon. He is ſick and applies to the Phyſicians, and not to God. His Death and Burial.*

Q. IT *is ſaid*, 1 Kings xvi. 8. *that in the* twenty Sixth Year of *Aſa*, *Baaſha* died; *and yet* Baaſha's *Expedition againſt* Aſa, *in order to build* Ramah, *is ſaid to be in the ſix and thirtieth Year of the Reign of* Aſa, Ver. 1. *of this Chapter*; *which ſeems a Contradiction.*

A. To reconcile this, ſome would have that *ſix and thirtieth Year* to relate, not to *Aſa*'s Reign, but to the Date of the Kingdom of *Judah*, from the Diviſion of the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, at *Rehoboam*'s coming to the Crown, and to be, in Fact, no more than the fourteenth Year of the Reign of *Aſa*. But that can not be, ſince this Expedition of *Baaſha* was ſome Time after *Aſa* had defeated the King of *Ethiopia* or *Arabia*, and yet this Defeat happened in the fifteenth Year of King *Aſa*'s Reign: So that *that ſix and thirtieth Year* of *Baaſha's* going up to build *Ramah*, can, by no good Computation, be the fourteenth Year of King *Aſa*'s Reign: And therefore, without any more to do, we may, with *Joſephus* and others, adventure to ſay, that the Occaſion of this Difference proceeds from the Miſtake of ſome Tranſcriber.

Q. *Was it lawful for* Aſa *to make Uſe of the Treaſures depoſited in the Houſe of the Lord, to bribe* Benhadad *to make War with* Baaſha *his Enemy?*

A. In Caſes of extreme Danger, it was always held lawful to employ ſacred Things in Defence of one's Country: But there was no ſuch Neceſſity in this Caſe: God had appeared wonderfully in *Aſa*'s Defence, againſt an Enemy, much more powerful, than *Baaſha* was; nay, he had promiſed him his Protection, at all Times, and Succeſs in all his Undertakings, if he would but adhere to his Service; and yet, forgetting all this, he ſtrips the Temple of its Treaſure, and bribes a heathen Prince to come to his Aſſiſtance, even at the Expence of his Fidelity to another, to whom he ſtood engaged: So that, here were three Offences in this one Act of *Aſa's*. For, 1ſt, he alienated Things conſecrated to God without Neceſſity. 2dly, He did this out of a carnal Fear and Diſtruſt of that God, whoſe Power and Goodneſs he had lately experienced: And, 3dly, He did it with an ill Intent, even to hire *Benhadad* to a Breach of his League and Covenant with *Baaſha*.

Q. *In the laſt Verſe we have an Account of* Aſa's *Funeral; for which it is ſaid,* a great Burning was made; *but whether this* Burning *was of his* Body, *or of the vaſt Quantity of* Spices *there mentioned, is to me doubtful.*

A. The Words in the Text are theſe, *They laid him on the Bed, which was filled with ſweet Odours, and diverſe Kinds of Spices, prepared by the Apothecaries Art; and they made a great Burning for him,* Verſe 14. But then the Queſtion is, whether the Body itſelf was burnt, or only ſome Spices and odoriferous Drugs, to prevent any bad Smell that might attend the Corps. The *Greeks* and *Romans*, indeed, when they burnt any dead Bodies, threw Frankincenſe, Myrrh, Caſſia, and other fragrant Things into the Fire, and this in ſuch Abundance, that *Pliny* repreſents it as a Piece of Profaneneſs, to beſtow ſuch Heaps of Frankincenſe upon a dead Body, when they offered it ſo ſparingly to their Gods. The *Jews*, however, (ſay the Maintainers of this Side of the Queſtion) were accuſtomed to inter, and not burn their Dead, tho' they might poſſibly learn, from the *Egyptians*, the Uſage of burning many Spices at their Funerals, as we find they did at the Funeral of *Zedekiah* King of *Judah*, Jerem, xxxiv. 5. but, notwithſtanding this, ſome very able Commentators are of Opinion, that all theſe Spices and Perfumes were burnt along with *Aſa*'s Body; and they remark, that among the Offences the ſacred Hiſtory takes notice of this Vanity of his, in ordering his Body to be diſpoſed of, according to the Manner of the *Gentiles*, and not of his own People. Tho' therefore they ſuppoſe that *Aſa* was the firſt who introduced this Cuſtom; yet, in after Ages, it became very frequent, and was thought the more honourable Ceremony of the two.

CHAP. XVII.

Jehoſhaphat *is made King, reigns well and proſpers. He ſends* Levites *with the Princes, to teach* Judah. *He is feared by the Nations round about, who bring him Preſents and Tribute. His Greatneſs, Captains and Armies.*

Q. W*HAT were* Jehoſhaphat's *Motives in ſending itinerant Preachers round the Kingdom; and for what Purpoſe did he ſend the Princes with them?*

A. In the Account which the Scripture gives us of *Jehoſhaphat*'s Reformation, it is ſaid, that he not only *took away the High-places and Groves, but ſent to his Princes to teach the Cities of* Judah, *and with them ſent* Levites, *who had the Book of the Law with them, and went through all the Cities of* Judah, *teaching the People*: But what the proper Buſineſs of theſe Princes, in their Circuit round the Kingdom was, is a Matter of ſome Diſpute among the Learned. *Grotius* is of Opinion, that their Commiſſion extended to the Inſtruction of the People, which, in Caſes extraordinary, is every one's Buſineſs, and could never be done with more Probability of Succeſs, than by Perſons who were of the King's Council, and inveſted with his Authority. There is Reaſon to think, however, that they did not act in the very ſame Capacity with the Prieſts and *Levites*, that did attend them; but that as Judges and Juſtices of Peace, among us, teach and inſtruct the People in the Laws of the Land, when they deliver their Charges from the Bench; ſo theſe great Men, in the King's Name, did only admoniſh, and require the People to obſerve the Laws of God, which were the municipal Laws of the Land, and left the particular Explication and Inforcement of them, to thoſe of the ſacred Order, who went along with them; ſupporting them in the mean Time, in the Execution of their Office, and obliging the People to receive them with Reſpect, to hear them with Attention, and to practiſe what they taught them.

However this be, it is obvious, from the Senſe of the Words, that in thoſe Days there was a great *Famine in the Land*, (as the Prophet expreſſes it) *not a Famine of Bread, or a Thirſt of Water, but of hearing the Words of the Lord*, Amos viii. 11. There were then no ſuch publick *Synagogues* and publick Teachers, as were afterwards inſtituted in the Kingdom, for the Inſtruction of the People in the Senſe of the Law; for then there would have been no Occaſion for theſe Commiſſioners and *Levites*, to have gone about throughout all the Cities of *Judah*; and in ſuch a wretched State of Ignorance was the Generality of the People fallen, that there was ſcarce one Copy of the Law to be found in the whole Country, for which Reaſon it was though adviſeable, and neceſſary indeed, to carry one with them.

The Truth is, the *Synagogues*, whereof we read ſo much in the *Acts* of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, as Places appointed for the publick Inſtruction of the People, were not ſo early an Inſtitution, as the Times we are now ſpeaking of. They did not obtain univerſally, till after the Time of the *Maccabees*; and it is to no later Date than this, that the Words of St. *James* allude: *Moſes, of old Time, hath in every City that preach him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day*, Acts xv. 1. Upon the whole, therefore, we may infer, that if proper Places for religious Inſtruction were not as yet inſtituted; if the *Levites* and others, whoſe ſtated Buſineſs it was to inſtruct the People, were become groſly negligent in their Duty; and the People, withal, were grown ſo obſtinate in their Ignorance, as to want a proper Authority to compel them to liſten to their Inſtructors; then was this Commiſſion, which *Jehoſhaphat* gave to Perſons duly qualified to execute it, far from being needleſs, or ſuper-errogant, but ſuch only, as became a pious Prince, whoſe chief Ambition was, that *the Earth ſhould be filled with the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters do cover the Sea*, Iſaiah xi. 9.

Q. *What Reaſon can be aſſigned why* Jehoſhaphat's *Subjects were more numerous, and his Army larger, than any of his Predeceſſors?*

A. The whole Amount of the Particulars, indeed, is ſo very great, (Ver. 14. to the End) that ſome have ſuſpected a Miſtake in their Tranſcribers; but when it is conſidered, that the Dominions of the Kingdom of *Judah*, under *Jehoſhaphat*, were not confined to the narrow Limits of *Judah*, and *Benjamin* only, but reached into the Tribes of *Dan*, *Ephraim* and *Simeon*, into *Arabia*, and the Country of the *Philiſtines*; in a Word, from *Beerſheba* to the Mountains of *Ephraim* one Way, and from *Jordan* to the *Mediterranean-Sea* the other; when it is conſidered, that this Kingdom received a vaſt Acceſſion, when *Jeroboam* thruſt out the Prieſts and *Levites*, from officiating in the Service of the Lord, and Multitudes of other piouſly diſpoſed Perſons followed them from all Parts of *Iſrael*, when they found that they might be encouraged in worſhipping God at *Jeruſalem*; when it is conſidered that this Country was exceedingly well cultivated, flouriſhing in Commerce, abounding with Foreigners, and what a vaſt Increaſe of Inhabitants, in any Nation, may be produced in the Space of an hundred Years, (which was the Period from *David*) we ſhall not find the Number of twelve hundred thouſand fighting Men (even though they may include ſix Millions of Perſons of all Ages and Conditions) to be ſo very extravagant; eſpecially, when it be conſidered farther, that the City of *Thebes* alone (as it is reported by *Tacitus*) furniſhed no leſs than ſeven hundred Thouſand Soldiers; that in antient *Rome* there were once between three and four Millions of Souls; and that, in *Grand Cairo*, (as ſome Travellers report) there is now almoſt twice that Number.

CHAP. XVIII.

Jehoſhaphat *joins in Affinity with* Ahab; *is perſuaded to go with him againſt* Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab, *ſeduced by falſe Prophets, according to the Word of* Micaijah, *is ſlain there.*

THIS Chapter is for Subſtance the ſame with 1 *Kings* xxii. where it is explained.

CHAP. XIX.

Jehoſhaphat *reproved by the Prophet* Jehu, *viſits his Kingdom; his Inſtructions to the Judges; to the Prieſts and* Levites.

Q. W*HAT is obſervable in* Jehoſhaphat's *Charge to the Judges?*

A. The Charge or ſolemn Admonition which *Jehoſhaphat* gave the Judges, which he appointed in each City, runs in theſe Words, ——*Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for Man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the Judgment; wherefore now let the Fear of the Lord be upon you: Take heed and do it, for there is no Iniquity with the Lord our God, no Reſpect of Perſons, nor taking of Gifts*, Ver. 6, 7. It is a remarkable Saying of *Cicero*, That

Judges, being ſworn to do Juſtice, ſhould remember when they come to paſs Sentence, *Deum habere Teſtem; id eſt, ut ego arbitror, mentem ſuam, qua nihil homini dedit ipſe Deus divinius.* Where he has left us this excellent Inſtruction likewiſe, that *a Man muſt lay aſide the Perſon of a Friend, when he puts on the Perſon of a Judge.* In like Manner there are ſeveral Paſſages in *Heſiod*, admoniſhing thoſe who have the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, to retain, in their Minds, the Conſideration of their God's Inſpection.

CHAP. XX.

Several Armies come againſt Judah; Jehoſhaphat, *in his Fear, proclaims a Faſt. His Prayer.* Jehazeil's *Prophecy. The Enemies are overthrown. The People return in Triumph, bleſſing God. His Reign; his Navy miſcarries.*

Q. PRAY *give us your Remarks upon* Jehoſhaphat's *Prayer?*

A. This Prayer of *Jehoſhaphat's* is deſervedly accounted one of the moſt excellent that we meet with in ſacred Hiſtory. He begins it with an Acknowledgment of God's ſupreme and irreſiſtable Power, which extends itſelf every where, over all Creatures in Heaven and Earth, that are every one ſubject to his Authority.—— *O Lord, God of our Fathers, art thou not God in Heaven? And ruleſt not thou over all the Kingdoms of the* Heathen? *And in thine Hand is there not Power and Might, ſo that none is able to withſtand thee?* Then he remembers the peculiar Relation, which the People of *Iſrael* had to him; the Promiſe he made to *Abraham*, as a Reward of his Fidelity; and the Deed of Gift, which he conveyed to him, and his Poſterity, of this Country for ever: *Art thou not our God, who didſt drive out the Inhabitants of the Land before thy People* Iſrael, *and gaveſt it to the Seed of* Abraham, *thy Friend for ever?* Then he reminds him of the long Poſſeſſion, they had had of the Country, and of the Temple, which *Solomon* had built for his Worſhip, to whom, at the Conſecration, (and therefore he refers to *Solomon's* Words at the Conſecration, 1 *Kings* viii.) he promiſed a gracious Regard of all the Prayers that ſhould be offered there. *And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a Sanctuary therein for thy Name, ſaying, If, when Evil cometh upon us, as the Sword, Judgment, or Peſtilence or Famine, we ſtand before this Houſe, and in thy Preſence, (for thy Name is in this Houſe) and cry unto thee in our Affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.* In the next Place he repreſents the foul Ingratitude of their Enemies, in invading a Country, to which they had no Manner of Title, even though the *Iſraelites* did them not the leaſt Harm when they came to take Poſſeſſion of it, but took the Pains to march a long Way about, to get to it, rather than give them any Moleſtation; and, in Aggravation of their Wickedneſs, in this reſpect, he ſuggeſts, that by this Invaſion they made an Attempt, not only upon upon the Rights of the *Iſraelites*, but of God himſelf, who was the great Lord and Proprietor, from whom they held the Land: *And now, behold the Children of* Ammon, *and* Moab, *and Mount* Seir, *whom thou wouldſt not let* Iſrael *invade, when they came out of the Land of* Egypt, *but they turned from them, and deſtroyed them not; behold, I ſay, how they reward us, to come to caſt us out of thy Poſſeſſion, which thou gaveſt us to inherit.* Then he appeals to the Juſtice of God, the righteous Judge, who helps thoſe that ſuffer Wrong, eſpecially when they have no other Helper: For this is the laſt Argument, he makes uſe of, to conciliate the divine Aſſiſtance, even the weak Condition, wherein he and his People were, made them the Objects of the divine Pity, eſpecially ſince, they placed their Hope and Confidence in him alone. *O Lord our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no Might againſt this great Company, that cometh againſt us, neither know we what to do, but our Eyes are upon thee.*

Q. *Explain thoſe Words,* Verſe 22. The Lord ſet Ambuſhments againſt the Children of *Ammon, Moab,* and Mount *Seir,* which were come againſt *Judah,* and *they were ſmitten.*

A. There are two Ways wherein this Slaughter may be ſuppoſed to have happened, either 1ſt, By the Miniſtry of God's Angels, who might appear in the Shape of Men, and putting on poſſibly the Appearance of *Moabites* or *Ammonites,* might ſmite ſome other Part of the Army privately; and they, ſuppoſing this to be done by their Neighbours, might turn about, and fall upon them like Enemies, and ſo break forth into mutual Slaughters: Or, 2dly, By ſome Jealouſies and Animoſities among themſelves, which, by Degrees broke forth, firſt into ſecret Ambuſhments, which one Party laid for another, and then into open Hoſtilities and Outrages, to their total Deſtruction. So eaſy a Thing it is for God to defeat his Enemies, who can, when he pleaſes, infatuate their Deſigns, or arm their own Paſſions and Deſigns againſt them.

Q. *Why is* Jehoſhaphat *blamed for joining himſelf to* Ahaziah, *in making Ships only for Trade?*

A. This certainly was a great Weakneſs in him to make Friendſhip with the Son, when he had been ſo ſharply reproved for joining with his Father *Ahab,* eſpecially ſince the Son was as great an Idolater as his Father; but into this he was betrayed by the Affinity that was between them; and though he did not join with him in War, but only in Trade, yet God was nevertheleſs diſpleaſed with him, which ſhews how dangerous a Thing it is to have too near a Familiarity or Commerce with Idolaters, or any other wicked men.

CHAP. XXI.

Jehoram *is made King, and kills his Brethren. His wicked Reign.* Edom *and* Libnah *revolt. The Prophecy of* Elijah *againſt him in writing. The* Philiſtines *and* Arabians *oppreſs him; his incurable Diſeaſe, Death and Burial.*

Q. '*TIS plain that* Elijah *was taken up into Heaven in the Time of* Jehoſhaphat; *could he then write his Son a Letter, as in Verſe* 8. *of this Chapter?*

A. For a Reſolution to this, *Joſephus* and others imagine, that this Writing was indicted in Heaven, where *Elijah* now is, and ſent to *Jehoram* by the Minirſty of Angels. But there is no Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that ſo ſingular a Miracle was wrought in Favour of an idolatrous Prince, *who had* Moſes *and the Prophets,* which, in our Saviour's Opinion, were ſufficient to inſtruct him in all Points neceſſary to Salvation, and needed not any additional Writing to be ſent him from the other World. Others, therefore, are of Opinion, that this Letter was written before *Elijah*'s Aſcenſion into Heaven; that foreſeeing, by the Spirit of Prophecy, the great Wickedneſs *Jehoram* would fall into, he dictated the Contents hereof to one of the Prophets, charging him to put them down in Writing, to ſend them in a Letter to *Jehoram*, when he grew as impious as is here related, and to let him know withal, that *Elijah* commanded this Writing to be delivered to him, upon Preſumption that it would affect him the more, as it came from a Perſon that was tranſlated into Heaven. But this Notion has no better Foundation than the other: For Prophets were ſent to thoſe, who lived in their own Age, to declare unto them the Will of God, and not to write Letters, fit to be delivered only when they had departed out of this Life. God never left himſelf without a Witneſs: And, at this Time more eſpecially, there were Prophets in abundance; and therefore others have ſuppoſed, that there has been a Miſtake in the Tranſcriber, and the Name of *Elijah* put for that of *Eliſha*; or that the *Elijah*, by whom this Letter was ſent, was not the Prophet who was ſent up into Heaven, but another of that Name, who lived in the ſubſequent Age, and was contemporary with *Jehoram*. Which of theſe Conjectures (for Conjectures they are all) ſeem moſt probable, we are at Liberty to chuſe, ſince any of them is ſufficient to ſolve the above-mentioned Difficulty.

Q. *What were the ſeveral Calamities with which* Jehoram *was perſecuted?*

A. There was no Calamity, that could be thought of (as ſeveral have obſerved) which did not befal this wicked Prince. His Kingdom was deſtroyed, and depopulated by the fierceſt Nations; his Treaſures ranſacked; his Wives carried into Captivity; his Children ſlain; himſelf afflicted with a ſore Diſeaſe for two Years; and when he was dead, denied the Honour of a royal Sepulchre, ſuch as his Fathers had. All which Calamities were threatened in this Writing ſent him in the Name of *Elijah*, that he might not think that they came by Chance, but by the ſpecial Direction of Almighty God, as a Puniſhment for his Impiety.

Q. *In this Hiſtory we read of two* Jehorams: *how ſhall we diſtinguiſh them?*

A. To prevent Confuſion, the Reader is deſired to take notice, that in the Courſe of this Hiſtory, there is Mention made of two *Jehorams*, who reigned much about the ſame Time; one the ſecond Son of *Ahab*, who ſucceeded his Brother *Ahaziah*, and was King of *Iſrael*; and the other, who was Son and Heir to *Jehoſhaphat*, and reigned in *Judah*; both very wicked Princes; and therefore the greater Care ſhould be taken, that their Actions be not blended together.

CHAP. XXII.

Ahaziah *made King, and reigns wickedly. In his Confederacy with* Joram *the Son of* Ahab, *he is ſlain by* Jehu. Athaliah *deſtroys all the Seed Royal, except* Joaſh, *who was hid, and uſurps the Kingdom.*

Q. IT *is ſaid*, Ver. 2. *that* Ahaziah *was* forty two years old *when he began to reign; whereas it is affirmed*, 2 Kings viii. 26. *that he was then only twenty two years old. Beſides* Jeroboam *his Father died in his 40th Year, as is twice noted*, Ch. xxi. 5, 20.

A. In the *Hebrew* it is, *A Son of forty two Years*, &c. which is an ambiguous Phraſe, and though it does for the moſt Part, yet it does not always ſignify the Age of the Perſon, as is evident from 1 *Sam.* xiii. 1. and therefore it is not neceſſary that this ſhould note his Age (as it is generally preſumed to do, and that is the only ground of the Difficulty) but it may note, either, 1. The Age of his Mother *Athaliah*, who being ſo great and infamous, and miſchievous a Perſon to the Kingdom and Royal Family of *Judah*, it is not ſtrange if her Age be here deſcribed, eſpecially ſince ſhe herſelf did for a time ſway the Sceptre. Or, rather, 2. Of the Reign of that Royal Race and Family, from which by his Mother he was deſcended, namely, of the Houſe of *Omri*, who reigned ſix Years, 1 *Kings* xvi. 23. *Ahab* his Son reigned twenty two Years, 1 *Kings* xvi. 29. *Ahaziah* his Son two Years, 1 *Kings* xxii. 51. *Joram* his Son twelve Years, 2 *Kings* iii. 1. all which put together, make up exactly theſe forty two Years. For *Ahaziah* began his Reign in *Joram*'s 12th Year, 2 *Kings* viii. 25. And ſuch a Computation of the Years, not of the King's Perſon, but of his Reign or Kingdom, we had before, *Chap.* xvi. 1. And ſo we have an Account of the Perſon's Age in 2 *Kings* viii. 26. and here of the Kingdom to which he belonged.

But farther, ſome acknowledge an Error in the Tranſcribers of the preſent *Hebrew* Copies, they gather from hence, that it is at this Day ſo read in divers antient *Greek* Copies, as alſo in thoſe two antient Tranſlations, the *Syriac* and the *Arabic*, and particularly in that famous and moſt antient Copy of the *Syriac*, which was uſed by the Church of *Antioch* in the primitive Times, from whence the learned *Uſher* did, at his own Expence, get another Copy tranſcribed, in which he hath publiſhed to the whole World, that he found it here written, *Twenty and two Years old*, &c. Nor does this overthrow the Authority of the ſacred Text, as Infidels would have it, partly becauſe it is only an hiſtorical Paſſage of no Importance to the ſubſtantial Doctrines of Faith and a good Life; and partly becauſe the Queſtion here is not, whether this Text be true, but which is the true Reading of the Text; whether that of the Generality of the preſent Copies, or that which was uſed in the antient Copies, which the antient and venerable Tranſlator abovementioned did follow: For it ſeems unreaſonable and uncharitable to think that all of them would have conſpired to have changed the Text, and put in *Twenty and two* for *Forty and two*, if they had ſo read it in their *Hebrew* Copies. Nor can this open any great Door to thoſe innumerable Changes which ſome have boldly and raſhly made in the *Hebrew* Text, without any ſuch Pretence of Authority, as there is for this, which as they are affirmed without Reaſon, Authority, or Neceſſity, ſo they may as eaſily be rejected. If all this will not ſatisfy our modern Infidels, let them only conſider what has been before hinted on ſuch Occaſions, that many Difficulties, which once ſeemed unanſwerable, being now fully cleared up by later Writers, it's but reaſonable to think that this may be ſo in after-times, either by finding ſome *Hebrew* Copies, in which it may be *Twenty and two Years*, &c. or by ſome other way.

CHAP. XXIII.

Jehoiada *makes* Joaſh *King.* Athaliah *is ſlain. The pure Worſhip of God is reſtored.*

See 2 Kings xi. 4, *&c.*

Chap. XXIV.

Joaſh *reigns well all the Days of* Jehoiada; *who dies, and is honourably buried.* Joaſh *falls into Idolatry*; *kills* Zechariah *the Son of* Jehoiada. Amaziah *ſucceeds him.*

Q. Jehoiada *died at the Age of* 130 *Years. This indeed was a great Age; but have we not Inſtances in prophane Authors, of Lives as long or longer than this?*

A. This the Hiſtorian takes Notice of, as a Life remarkably long in thoſe Days; yet our learned *Uſher* has obſerved, that in an Age, not far remote from our Times, ſeveral Men outlived this Period. The Words of *Joſeph Scaliger*, which he quotes, are to this Effect. "Several Perſons we could mention, that have lived 120, 125, and 130 Years, whom we knew, have ſeen, and well remember: But, in the Year 1514, there was at *Paris* a Miracle of an old Man, who bore Arms under *Lewis* XI, and at the Age of 140 Years and upwards, had the Uſe of all his Limbs and Faculties intire:" But not a greater Miracle was he, than our *Thomas Parr*, the Son of *John Parr*, of *Winnington*, in the County of *Salop*, who continued with his Father as long as he lived, but, after his Deceaſe, married his firſt Wife, at the Age of 80. With her he lived for the Space of two and thirty Years, in which Time, being convicted of Adultery with another Woman, he did publick Penance in the Church of *Alberbury*, when he was 105. In his 122d Year he married his ſecond Wife, who abode with him, as long as he lived: But at length he was brought up to *London* by the Earl and *Surrey*, in the Year 1635, and ſhewn to the King of *Great-Britain*, when he was ſome Months more than 152 Years old. Two Years after this he died in *Arundel-houſe*, and might probably have lived ſome Years longer, had he continued in his native Air.

Q. *How came* Joaſh *to deviate into Idolatry ſo ſoon after the Death of his good Tutor?*

A. The *Jews* have a Fancy, that the Courtiers, who, after the Death of *Jehoiada*, got Poſſeſſion of *Joaſh*, flattered him with a Conceit, that he himſelf was worthy of divine Honours, who had been brought up in the Houſe of God, a Favour that was never granted to a mere Man; and that the King being pleaſed with this kind of Flattery, provoked God to ſend upon him the Calamities we afterwards read of; even as the Angel of God ſmote *Herod*, for aſſuming the Glory to himſelf, when the People, in Commendation of his Oration, ſaid, *that it was the Voice of a God, and not of a Man*, Acts xii. 22. But this is a mere Fancy. If the Princes of *Judah* wanted to obtain a Toleration from the King for their Idol-worſhip, it would have been highly abſurd to go about to perſuade him, that himſelf was a God, ſince they, that have the Folly to eſtabliſh their own Adoration, are always very jealous of the Worſhip of any other. Their making Obeiſance therefore to the King denotes the humble Poſture, wherein they preſented their Petition, that they might not be confined to unneceſſary and troubleſome Journeys, in coming to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, but be indulged the Liberty (which their Forefathers had) of worſhipping God in High-places, which when they had once obtained, they knew they might then worſhip Idols, without Obſervation or Diſturbance.

Q. *About what Year of his Reign do you ſuppoſe* Joaſh *was ſeduced to Idolatry?*

A. *Jehojadah*, the High-prieſt, is ſuppoſed to have died, in, or near, the three and twentieth Year of King *Joaſh*'s Reign, ſo that *Joaſh* might be about thirty Years old, when the Princes of *Judah* ſeduced him to *Idolatry*: And this makes it the more wonderful, what poſſibly could give Occaſion to ſuch a ſhameful Change in ſuch an advanced Age, unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that the Conduct of the Prieſts, in imbezzling the Money, collected for the Reparation of the Temple, whereof he complains to *Jehoiada*, 2 Kings xii. 7. might ſour his Temper, and give him ſome diſguſt.

Q. *Was not* Joaſh's *Sin in murdering* Zechariah, *the Son of his good Friend* Jehoiada, *greatly aggravated?*

A. This Sin, beſides the Contempt of God's Prophet, and of the ſacred Place, where he was murthered, had an horrid Ingratitude in it, ſince *Zechariah* was the Son of him to whom the King owed his Life and Kingdom, and who himſelf aſſiſted his Father in the Unction, as ſome think; becauſe it is ſaid, that *Jehoiada and his Sons anointed him*, 2 Chron. xxiii. 11. But if *Jehoiada* was High-prieſt, this Son is not reckoned among the Succeſſors of *Aaron*, 1 Chron. vi. and therefore it is likely, that he was a younger Son of that Family; for had he been the eldeſt, he would have had ſufficient Authority, without the Spirit of Prophecy, to have reproved *Joaſh* for his Idolatry. *Ludovicus Capellus* therefore thinks it probable, that his Brother, the High-prieſt, connived at the King's Apoſtacy, and that this younger Brother was inſpired by God to reprove it; which Boldneſs *Joaſh* and his Courtiers thought they might puniſh with ſome Colour, by alledging, that he was not moved to it by the Spirit of God, but by a raſh pragmatical Temper of his own, which they incited the People to chaſtiſe.

Q. *In* 2 Kings xii. 18. *it's ſaid* Joaſh *took all the Gold and Treaſures that were found in the Temple, and in the King's Houſe, and ſent it as a Preſent to* Hazael, *who, thereupon, went from* Jeruſalem; *yet here* Ver. 23. *we read, that he came again at the End of the Year, killing the Princes, and deſtroying all before him. What do you think gave occaſion to this ſecond Invaſion of the* Syrians?

A. It is highly probable, that beſides the Preſent of Gold which *Joaſh* had ſent to *Hazael*, in order to bribe him to withdraw his Army, he made him a Promiſe of an annual Tribute; that upon his Refuſal to pay it, the *Syrian* Army took the Field the next Year, and, as the Expreſſion in the Text is, *executed Judgment upon* Joaſh, Ver. 24. For, according to the Author of the *Jewiſh* Traditions upon the ſecond Book of *Chronicles*, while they killed his Children before his Eyes, they upbraided him with the cruel and unjuſt Death of *Zechariah*.

Q. *Were the two Murderers of* Joaſh *in any Office or Employment under him?*

A. Theſe two Murderers (mongrel Fellows, whoſe Fathers were *Jews*, but their Mothers *Aliens*) perhaps were of his Bed-chamber; and, having conſtant Acceſs to the King, might more eaſily accompliſh their Deſign: However he was ſo weak and feeble, that he could make no Reſiſtance; and had fallen into that Contempt and Diſeſteem, that his Guards minded not what became of him.

CHAP. XXV.

Amaziah *begins his Reign well; executes his Father's Murderers; hires an Army of* Iſraelites; *but at the Word of a Prophet diſmiſſes them, and with his own People overthrows the* Edomites. *The* Iſraelites, *in returning home ſpoil ſeveral Cities.* Amaziah *ſerves the Gods of* Edom, *and deſpiſes the Prophet's Admonition. He provokes* Joaſh *to his own Overthrow. His Reign; he is ſlain by Conſpirators.*

Q. *WHY did not* Amaziah, *immediately on his Acceſſion to the Throne, execute the Murderers, but deferred it till he was eſtabliſhed in the Kingdom.*

A. It ſeems that theſe two Aſſaſſins continued to be Men of Weight and Intereſt at Court, even after they had murdered their King; for his Son, we may obſerve from *Kings* xiv. 8. retained them in his Service, nor durſt he venture to execute Juſtice upon them, until he was ſettled in Authority, and had diveſted thoſe of all Power, who were their Friends and Abettors.

Q. *How came* Amaziah *to ſpare the Children of theſe Aſſaſſins of his Father?*

A. In this he acted like a good Man, and contrary to the wicked Cuſtoms of many Kingdoms, where if any one be guilty of High-treaſon, not only he, but his Children likewiſe, who are neither conſcious nor Partakers of any of his traiterous Practices, are equally devoted to Deſtruction, leſt they, forſooth, ſhould form any Faction againſt the Prince, or ſeek Revenge for their Father's Death.

Q. *Does it not ſeem ſtrange that* Amaziah *could not muſter near the Number of Forces that were a-foot in* Jehoſhaphat's *Reign, which was but a little before?*

A. Hence ſome have made an Obſervation, how much the Iniquities of the People of *Judah* had diminiſhed their Numbers, ſince the Days of *Jehoſhaphat*, which was a Space of eighty two Years: For this King could bring no more than three hundred thouſand Men into the Field, whereas *Jehoſhaphat* brought almoſt four times as many.

Q. Amaziah *hired of the King of* Iſrael, an hundred thouſand Men for an hundred Talents; *how much did this amount to in Sterling Money; and how was it to be applied?*

A. If theſe be reckoned for Talents of Silver (as they generally are) each Talent, at an hundred and twenty five Pound Weight at four Pounds in Value, the whole will amount to fifty thouſand Pounds Sterling, which will be but ten Shillings to each Man, Officers included. Very low Pay! Unleſs we ſuppoſe that this whole Sum was given to the King of *Iſrael* for the Loan of ſo many Men, and that the Men were to have their Pay beſides; or rather, that they were to have no other Pay, but the Booty, which they took from the Enemy, and that this was the true Reaſon why they were ſo exaſperated at their Diſmiſſion, as to *fall upon the Cities of* Judah, *from* Samaria *even unto* Bethhoron, Ver. 13. They went very probably firſt to *Samaria*, where they complained to their own King of the bad Treatment they had received from *Amaziah*, and deſired ſome Reparation to be made them for the Affront put upon them, and the Loſs of the Profit, which they might have made in the War; but finding him not inclinable to make them Satisfaction, they immediately fell foul upon the Territories of *Judah*, and, from *Samaria* (for that is the Place of their ſetting out) even unto *Beth-horon*, a Town not far diſtant from *Jeruſalem*, ravaged the Country, and did the Miſchief here mentioned; which they might more eaſily do, becauſe the War with *Edom* had drained the Country of all the Forces, that ſhould have oppoſed them.

Q. *Who was the Prophet that diſſuaded* Amaziah *from employing theſe Auxiliaries?*

A. The *Jews* will needs have it that this Prophet was *Amos*, the Father of *Iſaiah*, but their Tradition is but upon a Miſtake, *viz.* that *Amos* the Prophet was *Iſaiah*'s Father.

Q. *Where lay the* Valley of Salt?

A. This Valley lay towards the Land of *Edom*, and was ſo called, either from the Saltſprings which were therein, or from the Salt that was dug up there.

Q. *What Rock was it from whence* Amaziah's *Army threw the ten thouſand Men they had taken captive?*

A. This Rock is called, 2 *Kings* xiv. 87. *Selah*, which in the *Hebrew* Tongue, ſignifies a *Rock*, and ſo exactly anſwers to the *Greek* Word *Petra*, that moſt Commentators, with very good Reaſon, have agreed, that this *Selah* is the ſame with *Petra*, the Metropolis of *Arabia Petræa*, and from whence, as ſome imagine, the whole Country took its Name; tho' others rather think, that, as this City had its Name from its Situation on a Rock, ſo the adjacent Tract was called *Arabia Petræa* from its being overſpread with ſuch Rocks, or rocky Hills.

Q. *Was it not an Act of unprecedented Barbarity in* Amaziah *to deſtroy ſuch a Number of his captive Enemies?*

A. That this was an ancient Puniſhment among the *Romans*, we may learn from *Livy*, *Plutarch*, and ſeveral others; as Mr. *Selden* (*de Synedriis*, l. 1.) obſerves, that it was in uſe among other Nations; but we do not find it commonly practiſed among the *Jews*. It is not in the Catalogue of Puniſhments which *Moſes* enacts; neither was it ever inflicted by any regular Judicature: And therefore one would think that the *Edomites*, either by ſome ſuch like Cruelty to the People of *Judah*, had provoked them to make a Retaliation in this Manner, or that they were, in their very Diſpoſition, ſo apt to revolt, that there could be no keeping them in Subjection, without ſome ſuch ſad exemplary Puniſhment as this.

Q. *Can any poſſible Reaſon be aſſigned for* Amaziah's *worſhipping the Idols he had taken from his Enemies?*

A. Idolatry, at the beſt, can be no ways apologized for; but no Reaſon can be invented, why any Perſon ſhould make the Objects of his Adoration, ſuch Gods as could *not deliver their own People out of the Enemies Hands*, as the Prophet very juſtly reproves *Amaziah*, Ver. 15. unleſs we ſuppoſe the Images of theſe Gods were ſo very beautiful, that he perfectly fell in love with them, or that he worſhipped them for fear they ſhould owe him a Spite, and do him ſome Miſchief, in Revenge for what he had done againſt the *Edomites*. How much more wiſe were the Sentiments of *Fabricius*

Maximus, upon the like Occaſion, who, having conquered *Tarentum*, and being aſked, what ſhould be done with their Gods? bid them leave them with the *Tarentines*; for what Madneſs is it, adds he, to hope from Safety from thoſe, who cannot preſerve themſelves?

Q. *What think you of the Challenge which* Amaziah *ſent to* Joaſh.

A. *Joſephus*, in his Account of this Tranſaction, tells us, that *Amaziah* wrote an imperious Letter to the King of *Iſrael*, "Commanding him, and his People, to pay the ſame Allegiance to him, that they had formerly paid to his Anceſtors, *David*, and *Solomon*, or, in caſe of their Refuſal, to expect a Deciſion of the Matter by the Sword." Others think that he intended no War by this Meſſage, but only a Trial of military Skill and Proweſs, or a civil kind of Inverview between his Men, and thoſe of *Iſrael*; for, had he purpoſed to act in a hoſtile Manner, he would have aſſaulted them on a ſudden, and not given them this Warning, to ſtand upon their Defence. The Words of the Meſſage are, *Come, let us look one another in the Face*, 2 *Kings* xiv. 8. Much of the ſame kind with what *Abner* ſaid to *Joab*, *Let the young Men now ariſe, and play before us*, 2 Sam. ii. 14. But how polite ſoever the Expreſſions may be, in both Caſes they had in them the Formality of a *Challenge*, as both the King and General (who were not unacquainted with military Language) did certainly underſtand them. So that the Truth of the Matter ſeems to be this, —— *Ahaziah*, being encouraged by his late Victory, determined to be revenged for the Slaughter of his Anceſtors by *Jehu*, 2 *Kings* ix. and for the late Spoil which the *Iſraelites* had made in his Country; and thereupon reſolving to have Satisfaction, (but in a fair and honourable War) he ſent them this open Declaration of War, but conceived it in as mild Terms as any Thing of that harſh Nature could be.

Q. *What is your Opinion of the Parable which* Joaſh *makes uſe of in his Anſwer to* Amaziah's *Challenge?*

A. It was a Cuſtom among the *Oriental* People to deliver their Sentiments in Parables, in which they made a great Part of their Wiſdom to conſiſt; and, conſidering the Circumſtances of the Perſon he addreſſed to, who was a petty Prince, fluſhed with a little good Succeſs, and thereupon impatient to enlarge his Kingdom, no Similitude could be better adapted, than that of the Thiſtle, a low contemptible Shrub (upon its having drawn Blood of ſome Traveller) growing proud, and affecting an Equality with the *Cedar*, a tall ſtately Tree, that is the Pride and Ornament of the Wood; but, in the midſt of all its Arrogance and Preſumption, unhappily trodden down by the Beaſts of the Foreſts; 2 *Kings* xiv. 9. which *Joaſh* intimates would be *Amaziah*'s Fate, if he continued to provoke a Prince of his ſuperior Power and Strength.

Q. *After what Manner does* Joſephus *relate the Defeat and Captivity of* Amaziah?

A. *Joſephus* relates the Defeat and Captivity of *Amaziah*, after this Manner, — "No ſooner were his Men advanced within Sight of the Enemy, but they were inſtantly ſtruck with ſuch a Panick Terror and Conſternation, that they turned their Backs, without ſtriking a Blow; and flying ſeveral Ways, left *Amaziah* Priſoner in the Hands of his Enemies, who refuſed to give him Quarter upon any other Terms, than that the Citizens of *Jeruſalem* ſhould ſet open their Gates and receive them and his victorious Army into the Town; which, between the Pinch of Neceſſity, and the Love of Life, they were prevailed upon to do: So that *Joaſh* entered the Town in his triumphal Chariot, through a Breach of three hundred Cubits of the Wall (that he had cauſed to be made) with his Priſoner *Amaziah* marching before him."

Q. *Who were the Hoſtages that* Joaſh *took with him?*

A. Theſe Hoſtages were, in all Probability, the great Mens Sons of the City, whom *Joaſh* took with him, as a Security that the Kingdom of *Judah* ſhould give him no farther Moleſtation.

Q. *After* Joaſh *had taken* Jeruſalem, *why did he not purſue his Conqueſt over the reſt of the Kingdom?*

A. He never intended to make a thorough Conqueſt of the Kingdom of *Judea*, nor did he leave a Garriſon in *Jeruſalem*; but contenting himſelf with what Spoil he could get, he made all convenient haſte home, becauſe he had Work enough, at this Time upon his Hands, to defend his Territories againſt the daily Invaſions of the *Syrians*.

Q. *How came the People of* Jeruſalem *to conſpire the Death of their King?*

A. What provoked them, more than any other Part of the Nation, againſt their King, was their ſeeing their City ſpoiled of its Ornaments, expoſed to Reproach, upon account of the great Breach that was made in their Wall, and ſeveral of their Children carried away as Hoſtages, for their good Behaviour, all which they imputed to their King's Male-adminiſtration. Whereupon they entered into a Conſpiracy againſt him, which makes ſome Commentators ſay, that he lived in a State of Exile during the Space of twelve Years, not daring to continue in *Jeruſalem*, after the Defeat which *Joaſh* had given him. But our learned *Uſher* has placed this Conſpiracy in the laſt Year of *Amaziah*'s Reign, and *Jacobus Capellus* (in his *Hiſtoria Sacra & Exotica*) ſuppoſes, that it was ſet on foot by the great Men of *Jeruſalem*, upon the ſpecious Pretence of being Guardians to the young Prince, and taking more Care of him, than his Father was likely to do.

Q. *Is not the Chronology of theſe Times a little confuſed?*

A. The *Synarchies*, or joint Reigns of Father and Son, in theſe Times, have rendered the Chronology a little difficult, as it is in this Caſe: For in 2 *Kings* xiii. 1. it is ſaid, that *Jehoahaz*, King of *Iſrael*, began to reign in the *twenty third Year of* Joaſh, King of *Judah*, and reigned ſeventeen Years: From whence it follows, that *Jehoaſh* began to reign, not in the thirty ſeventh, but in the thirty ninth or fortieth Year of *Joaſh* King of *Judah*. But by this it only appears, that he reigned three of theſe Years in Conjunction with his Father.

Chap. XXVI.

Uzziah *made King, he reigns well in the Days of* Zechariah. *He invades the Prieſt's Office, is ſmitten with a Leproſy; he dies, and* Jotham *ſucceeds him.*

Q. SOME *Difficulties have been raiſed, concerning the exact Time when* Uzziah *began his Reign; which pray explain.*

A. Commentators have been at a good deal of Trouble to reconcile a ſeeming Contradiction in this Computation. For if *Amaziah*, the Father of *Azariah*, lived but fifteen Years after the Beginning of *Jeroboam*'s Reign (as appears from 2 *Kings* xiv. 17.) then *Azariah* muſt begin his Reign, not in the twenty ſeventh, but (if he ſucceeded his Father immediately) in the ſixteenth, or fifteenth rather of *Jeroboam*: But our learned Dr. *Lightfoot* ſolves this at once, by ſuppoſing, that there was an *Interregnum*, wherein the Throne was vacant eleven or rather twelve Years, between the Death of *Amaziah*, and the Inauguration of his Son *Azariah*, who being left an Infant of four Years old, when his Father died, was committed to the Guardianſhip of the Grandees of the Nation, who, during his Minority, took the Adminiſtration of publick Affairs upon themſelves; and when he was become ſixteen, devolved it upon him; ſo that, when he came into the full Poſſeſſion of the Throne, it was the ſeven and twentieth Year of *Jeroboam*.

Q. *Was* Uzziah *the firſt Inventer of Engines to fling Darts and Stones in Sieges?*

A, This is the firſt Time we read of any Machines, either for beſieging or defending Towns; which is plainly the Reaſon why Sieges were of ſo long a Continuance, before the Invention of theſe. *Homer*, who is the moſt antient *Greek* Writer we know of, that treats of Sieges, deſcribes a Kind of Intrenchment (tho' a poor one) ſome Lines of Circumvallation, and a Ditch with Paliſſadocs; but we hear not one Word of any *Machines*, ſuch as the *Balliſtæ* and the *Catapultæ*, which were uſed for hurling Stones, and throwing Darts; and therefore we need leſs wonder, that the famous Siege of *Troy* continued ſo long. *Sardanapalus* King of *Aſſytia*, maintained himſelf in *Nineveh* for ſeven Years, becauſe the Beſiegers wanted ſuch Engines as were fit for demoliſhing and taking of Cities, they being not then invented. *Salmanezer* lay three Years before *Samaria*, and, as ſome ſay, twenty before *Azoth*. Now, of *Uzziah* it is is ſaid, *that he made in* Jeruſalem *Engines, invented by cunning Men, to be on the Towers, and upon the Bulwarks, to ſhoot Arrows and great Stones*, Verſe 15. So that it muſt needs being be a Miſtake, to attribute the Invention of the *Balliſtæ*, the *Scipio*, or the *Onager*, whereof *Ammianus Marcellinus* has given us the Deſcriptions, to the *Greeks* or *Romans*, becauſe we find them made uſe of in the *Eaſt*, before ever the *Grecians* had brought the military Art to any great Perfection. *Uzziah* was certainly the firſt Inventor of them; and therefore it is ſaid, that for theſe, and other warlike Preparations *his Name was ſpread abroad*. And, from his Time, they began to be employed both in attacking and defending Towns; for thus we find the Prophet *Ezekiel* deſcribing the future Sieges of *Jeruſalem* and *Tyre*, where he makes Mention of Battering-rams and engines of War, or as (as it ſhould be rendered) Machines of Cords, which, in all Probability, were what later Ages called their *Balliſtæ* and *Catapultæ*.

Q. *Who was this* Zechariah *who had ſo great an Influence over* Uzziah?

A. Some are of Opinion, that the Perſon, here mentioned was a Prophet, and the ſame with that *Zechariah* whoſe Book of Prophecies is extant in the Bible: But as he wrote in the Reign of *Darius*, it is plain he lived almoſt three hundred Years after this: It is not unlikely, hower, that he was the Son of that *Zechariah*, the Son of *Jehoida*, who, by the Command of King *Joaſh*, was ſlain in the Temple; that he was called after his Father's Name; was *Præceptor* to *Uzziah*; and though not a Prophet, was a Man very ſkilful in expounding the antient Prophecies, and giving Inſtructions out of them, as *Grotius* underſtands it.

Q. *Can you conceive what induced* Uzziah *to invade the Prieſt's Office?*

A. What is was that tempted the King to this extravagant Folly, it is hard to imagine; but the moſt likely Conjecture is, that he had a vain Ambition to imitate Heathen Princes, who, in ſeveral Countries, joined both moral and ſacerdotal Offices together. But, however it may be in all other Countries, the Prieſthood, in *Judea*, was confined to the Houſe of *Aaron* only, and every one that pretended to uſurp that Office, was, by the Law of the Land, to be put to Death: *For thou, and thy Sons with thee* (ſays God to *Aaron*) *ſhall keep your Prieſt's Office, for every Thing of the Altar, and within the Veil, and ye ſhall ſerve. I have given your Prieſt's Office unto you as a Service of Gift, and the Stranger that cometh nigh ſhall be put to death*, Numb. xviii. 7.

Q. *Did* Uzziah*'s Offence deſerve to be ſo ſeverely puniſhed?*

A. The Puniſhment for ſuch as would intrude into divine Miniſtrations, was capital we ſee, and therefore God ſmote *Uzziah* with ſuch a Diſeaſe, as was a kind of Death, becauſe it ſeparated the Perſon that was afflicted with it, from the Commerce and Society of Men, even as if he were departed this World, and (as the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſes it) become *free among the Dead*. But beſides the Infliction of this Diſeaſe, *Joſephus* tells us, "That the very Moment that *Uzziah* was going to burn Incenſe, there happened a terrible Earthquake, and, as the Roof of the Temple opened with the Shock of it, their paſſed a Beam of the Sun through the Cleft, which ſtruck directly upon the Face of this ſacralegious Prince, whereupon he immediately be came a Leper: Nay, that this Earthquake was ſo very violent, that it tore a ſunder a great Mountain, towards the *Weſt* of *Jeruſalem*, and rolled one Half of it over and over, a matter of four Furlongs, till at length it was ſtopped by another Mountain which ſtood over againſt it, but choaked up the Highway and covered the King's Garden with Duſt." But all this may be juſtly ſuſpected. That there was a great Earthquake in the Reign of *Uxziah*, is evident from the Teſtimony of two Prophets, *Amos* i. 1. and *Zechariah* xiv. 8. but that it happened exactly when *Uzziah* attempted this Invaſion of the Prieſthood, is far from being clear: On the contrary, if we will abide by Biſhop *Uſhers*' Computation, the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian muſt be ſadly miſtaken. For, ſince the Prophet *Amos* tells us, that he began to propheſy two Years before this Earthquake happened, in the Reigns of *Uzziah* King of *Judah*, and *Jeroboam* II. King of *Iſrael*; and ſince we may gather from the ſacred Hiſtory, that *Jeroboam* died two Years before the Birth of *Jotham*, the Son of *Uzziah*, that *Jeroboam* died in the ſix and twentieth Year thereof, yet was of Age ſufficient to be made Regent of the Kingdom, when his Father was thus ſtruck with a Leproſy (which muſt have been ſeveral Years after *Jeroboam*'s *boam*'s Death) it muſt needs follow, that this Earthquake could not happen at the Time which *Joſephus* aſſigns, but muſt have been much later.

Q. *Is* Joſephus *right in his Conjectures concerning the Place of* Uzziah's *Burial?*

A. *Joſephus* will needs have it, that his Body was buried in his Garden, in a Monument by itſelf, forgetting, very probably, what he told us before, that theſe Gardens, at this Time, were covered all over with Rubbiſh.

Chap. XXVII.

Jotham *reigns well and proſpers; makes the* Ammonites *Tributaries; his Reign and Death;* Ahaz *ſucceeds him.*

Q. WHAT *is moſt remarkable in the Hiſtory of* Jotham?

A. *Solomon Jarchi* here obſerves, that all the Kings of *Judah* had ſome Crime or other laid to their Charge, except this *Jotham:* That *David* himſelf ſinned grieviouſly in the Matter of *Uriah:* That *Solomon*, by his Wives, was drawn into Idolatry: That *Rehoboam* forſook the Law of the Lord, and *Abijah* walked in his Steps: That *Aſa* ſent the Treaſures of the Temple to the King of *Syria*, and put the Prophet in the Stocks: That *Jehoſhaphat* entered into Society with the Idolatrous; and ſo he goes on with all the reſt; but in *Jotham*, ſays he, there is no Fault found, (which, in an Age of general Corruption, is pretty wonderful) unleſs we may ſuppoſe, that *the People's ſacrificing and burning Incenſe ſtill on High-places*, 2 Kings xv. 35. (which he, by his Authority, might have removed) be imputable to him as a Fault.

Chap. XXV.

Ahaz, *reigning ill, is ſmitten by the* Syrians, *and by the* Iſraelites, *who carry away captive the People of* Judah; *but, by the Advice of a Prophet, they return.* Ahaz *ſends to the King of* Aſſyria *for Help againſt the* Philiſtines *and* Edomites, *but obtains none. He dies, and* Hezekiah *is King.*

Q. IT *is ſaid* Ver. 3. *that Ahaz* burnt his Children in the Fire; *and* 2 Kings xvi. 3. *that* he made his Son to paſs through the Fire: *Pray deſcribe in what manner this horrid Piece of Idolatry was performed.*

A. Interpreters are agreed, this *this paſſing thro' the Fire* was performed, either by cauſing the Child to paſs between two Fires, made near one another, by way of its Conſecration to the Service of *Moloch*, or by putting it in the Body of the Idol, made of Braſs, and heated extreamly hot, ſo that it was immediately burned to Death: But then, to abate the Horror of the Crime, ſome are of Opinion that *Ahaz* made his Sons paſs through the Fire, in the former Senſe only, and that becauſe we find *Hezekiah* ſurvive, and ſucceed him in the Throne, and another of his Sons, *viz. Maaſeiah*, ſlain by *Zichri*, at his taking of *Jeruſalem:* But this does not hinder *Ahaz* from having other Sons, not mentioned in the Hiſtory, whom he might make Sacrifices to *Moloch*. The Scripture ſays expreſly, that *he made his Son to paſs through the Fire, according to the Abominations of the Heathen, whom the Lord caſt out before the Children of* Iſrael, 2 Kings xvi. 3. Now, it is inconteſtibly true, that the antient Inhabitants of the Land of *Canaan* did burn their Children in the Fire, as Sacrifices to their Gods. *Deut.* xii. 31. and that the Children of *Iſrael* did frequently imitate them in theſe Barbarities: *They offered their Sons and Daughters unto Devils, and defiled the Land with innocent Blood, which they offered unto the Idols of* Canaan, Pſal. cvi. 36. and therefore it is reaſonable to think, that he did the ſame, and that this is recorded againſt him, as an Aggravation of his other Crimes.

Q. *Who was* Hinnom; *and where lay the Valley that went under his Name?*

A. *Hinnom*, in all probability, was ſome eminent Perſon, in antient Times, to whom this Valley belong'd, and to whoſe Poſterity it deſcended; and is therefore ſometimes called the *Valley of the Children of* Hinnom. It was a famous Plat of Ground on the Eaſt-ſide of *Jeruſalem*, and ſo delightfully ſhaded, that it invited the People to make it a Place of idolatrous Worſhip, whereby it became infamous, and was, at laſt, turn'd into a publick Dunghill, where all Filth and Excrements of the City were brought and burnt; for which Purpoſe, there was a perpetual Fire kept, which made it a Kind of Image, or Repreſentation of Hell.

Q. Damaſcus, *I think, belonged to* Iſrael; *when, and by what Means, did it come into the Hands of the* Syrians?

A. In the Time of *Abraham*, *Damaſcus* was in Being; and ſome of the Antients inform us, that this *Patriarch* reigned there immediately after *Damaſcus*, its Founder. Thus much is certain, that one, whom he had made, and appointed Steward of his Houſe, was of *Damaſcus*, Gen. xv. 2. at the Time that he purſued *Chedorlaomer*, and the five confederated Kings as far as *Hoba*, which lies Northward of *Damaſcus*, Gen. xiv. 15. The Scripture ſays nothing more of this City until the Time of *David*, when *Hadad*, who, according to *Joſephus* (Jewiſh Antiq. l. 7. c. 6.) was the firſt who took upon him the Title of the King of *Damaſcus*. ſending Troops to the Aſſiſtance of *Hadadezer*, King of *Zabah*, was himſelf defeated by *David*, and his Country ſubdued. Towards the End of *Solomon*'s Reign, *Rezin* recovered the Kingdom of *Damaſcus*, and ſhook off the *Jewiſh* Yoke. 1 Kings xi. 23, *&c.* Some time after this, *Aſa*, King of *Judah*, implored that Help of *Benhadad*, King of *Damaſcus*, againſt *Baaſha*, King of *Iſrael*, 1 Kings xv. 18. and from his Time the Kings of *Damaſcus* were generally called *Benhadad*, till in this laſt Controverſy with them, *Ahaz* called in the Aſſiſtance of the King of *Aſſyria*, who killed their King, and carried his Subjects into Captivity, according to the Predictions of *Iſaiah*, Ch. vii. 8. and *Amos*, Ch. i. 7.

Q. *We read*, Ver. 20. *that Tiglath-pileſer* came unto *Ahaz*, and diſtreſſed, but ſtrengthened him not; *and yet, in* 2 Kings xvi. 9. *it is ſaid, that* he did help him; *how then can he be ſaid to have diſtreſſed him?*

A. Very well: For, as he came to his Aſſiſtance againſt the King of *Syria*, ſo he took *Damaſcus*, carried the People captive, and delivered *Ahaz* from the Power of the *Syrians*; but this did *Ahaz* little good, for he helped him not to recover the Cities which the *Philiſtines* had taken from him: He lent him no Forces, nor enabled him to recruit his own; on the contrary, he rather weakned him, by exhauſting his Treaſures, and deſtroying *Samaria*, which opened a Way for the Invaſion of his

Country with more Facility, as it happened in the next Reign. For it is no uncommon thing, even in later Ages, to hear of Kingdoms, that have called in the Help of ſome foreign Prince againſt their Enemies, over-run and conquer'd by thoſe, who came to their Aſſiſtance.

Q. Ahaz, *we read,* Ver. 21. *disfurniſhed the Houſe of the Lord, as well as his own, to make up a Preſent to the King of* Aſſyria; *and* 2 Kings xvi. 16, *&c. we have a more particular Account of this Tranſaction: Upon the whole, I ſhould be glad to be informed, what Views* Ahaz *might have in this notorious Profanation of the Temple; as likewiſe an Explanation of ſome obſcure Phraſes in the Text.*

A. The Words in the Text, according to our Tranſlation, are, Ahaz *cut off the Borders of the Baſes, and removed the Laver from off them, and took down the Sea from off the brazen Oxen that were under it, and put it upon a Pavement of Stones, and the Covert for the Sabbath, that they had built in the Houſe, and the King's Entry without, turned he from the Houſe of the Lord, for the King of* Aſſyria, 2 Kings xvi. 16, 17, *&c.* His removing the Baſes, the Laver, and the Brazen Sea, was palpably with a Deſign to deface the Service of God in the Temple, and thence to bring it into publick Contempt; but then Commentators are much at a Loſs to know what we are to underſtand by the *Covert for the Sabbath within,* and *the King's Entry without the Temple.* Now the Prophet *Ezekiel* tells us expreſsly, that the Gate of the *inner Court, which looked towards the Eaſt,* was open'd only on *the Sabbath, and on the Day of the New Moon,* and that, on theſe Days, the King was to enter into the Temple at this Gate, and to continue at the Entrance of the Prieſts Court (where was the Brazen Scaffold, which *Solomon* erected, 2 *Chron.* vi. 13. a Place for the King to pay his Devotions in) until his Sacrifices were offer'd; and, if ſo, the *Muſack,* which we tranſlate *Covert,* might be a Kind of Canopy, or other cover'd Place, under which the King ſat, when he came to the Service of the Temple, on the *Sabbath,* or other great Solemnities, which was therefore called the *Covert of the Sabbath:* And the Reaſon why the King ordered this to be taken away was, becauſe he intended to trouble himſelf no more with coming to the Temple, and by this Action to expreſs his Hatred likewiſe, and Contempt of the Sabbath.

Q. *Was not* Ahaz *ſtrangely infatuated to worſhip the Gods of his Enemies?*

A. This was a monſtrous Stupidity, to think that theſe Gods had any Power over him, who could not defend themſelves from the Arms of *Tiglath-pileſer!* Thinking however, that they had diſtreſſed him, he ſacrificed to them, in order to appeaſe their Wrath, and that they might do him no farther Hurt; in the ſame manner as the antient *Romans* were wont to bribe the Gods of their Enemies with larger Sacrifices than ordinary, in hopes of bringing them over to their Party, and making them their Friends.

Q. *Some Diſputes have been rais'd concerning the Age of* Ahaz *when he began to reign; how long he reigned; and the Age of* Hezekiah *when he aſcended the Throne; which pray explain.*

A. Of *Ahaz* it is recorded, that he was but *twenty Years old, when he began to reign,* and that he *reigned ſixteen,* before he died, ſo that in the whole he lived ſix and thirty Years, 2 *Kings* vi. 2. Now his Son *Hezekiah* is ſaid to have been *five and twenty Years old, when he began to reign,* 2 Kings xviii. 2. and conſequently, his Father muſt have begot him, when he was eleven Years old, which ſeems a little incredible: And, to ſolve this Difficulty, Commentators have taken ſeveral Ways. Some have imagined, that *Hezekiah* was not the real, but adopted Son only of *Ahaz,* and might therefore ſucceed his *Foſter Father,* at this, or any other Age: But this Hypotheſis, as *Bochart* obſerves, ſpoils the Deſcent of our Saviour from *David.* Others ſuppoſe, that there was an *Interregnum* for ſome Years, occaſioned by a Sedition, that happened in *Jeruſalem:* But there is no Foundation for this *Hypotheſis* in Hiſtory; on the contrary, it is much more likely, that, as *Hezekiah* was a Man grown, and greatly beloved by the People, he ſhould immediately ſucceed upon his Father's Demiſe. Others again imagine, that in Deteſtation of *Ahaz*'s Wickedneſs, his Reign is omitted in the Account, and that therefore the Paſſage ſhould be thus rendered, *Ahaz was twenty Years old, when his Father began to reign:* But this is reverſing the Order of the Words in the Text, and turning them into a Senſe that is far from being natural. Others, not ſatisfied with any of theſe Solutions, will needs have it, that there is an Error crept into the Text itſelf, by the Negligence of ſome Tranſcriber, who, inſtead of *twenty,* made *Hezekiah* five and twenty Years old, when his Reign commenced, merely by miſtaking the *numerical Letters:* But it is not ſo well, even in numerical Matters (which are moſt liable to Variation) to find any Fault with the Text, except where there is no other tolerable Solution, which is not the Caſe here. In theſe Days, and long before, it was no unuſual thing (upon ſeveral Conſiderations) for Kings to take the Son, who was to ſucceed them, into Partnerſhip with them, before they died. Now *Ahaz,* by his Miſmanagement, had brought himſelf into ſo many Intanglements, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 16, *&c.* and xxix. 7, *&c.* as to want an Aſſiſtant in his Government; and, accordingly, it appears, that he admitted his Son in that Capacity: For, whereas it is ſaid of *Hezekiah,* that he began to reign in the third Year of *Hoſhea,* Son of *Elah,* 2 Kings xviii. 1. and of *Hoſhea,* that he began to reign in the twelfth Year of *Ahaz,* 2 Kings, xvii. 1. it is evident, that *Hezekiah* began to reign in the fourteenth Year of *Ahaz,* his Father, and ſo reigned two or three Years before his Father's Death. So that, at the firſt Date of his Reign (which was in Conjunction with his Father) he might be but two or three and twenty, and his Father, conſequently when he begot him, two or three Years older than the common Computation. But there is another Way of ſolving this Difficulty. It is a common Thing, both in ſacred and profane Authors, in the Computation of Time, to take no Notice, whether the Year they mention be perfect or imperfect, whether finiſhed, or but newly begun. Upon this Account *Ahaz* might be near one and twenty Years old, when he began to reign, and near ſeventeen Years older, when he died; and on the other Hand, *Hezekiah,* when he began to reign, might be juſt entering into his five and twentieth Year, and, by this Means, *Ahaz* might be near fourteen Years old, when he begat *Hezekiah,* which is no extraordinary thing at all. Nay, even upon the loweſt Snppoſition, that he was but eleven or twelve Years old, yet Inſtances there are innumerable (ſuch as *Bochart* and others have given) of Perſons, that have procreated Children at that Age: For it is not ſo much the Number of Years, as the Nature of the Climate, the Conſtitution of the Body, the Stature of the Perſon, the Quality of the Diet, &c. that ought to be conſidered in this Affair.

CHAP. XXIX.

Hezekiah, *his good Reign; he reſtores Religion; exhorts the* Levites. *They ſanctify themſelves and cleanſe the Houſe of God. He offers ſolemn Sacrifices, with Songs of Praiſe, and the Congregation add their Offerings.*

Q. IS *it not ſtrange that* Hezekiah, *the Son of a very wicked Prince, ſhould ſo early as the firſt Month of his Reign begin a Reformation in Religion?*

A. A great Demonſtration this of his ſincere Piety and Zeal towards God, that he began ſo ſoon to reform the Corruptions of Religion, and did not ſtay, until he had eſtabliſhed himſelf in his Throne! He might think however, that the ſureſt Way to eſtabliſh himſelf in the Throne, was to eſtabliſh the true Worſhip of God; tho' he could not but foreſee, that he ran a great Hazard in attempting the aboliſhing of Idolatry, which had been confirmed by ſome Years Preſcription.

Q. *Was* Hezekiah's *Offering for the Sin of the People the ſame which was preſcribed by the* Moſaic *Law?*

A. The Words in the Text are, —— *For a Sin Offering for the Kingdom*, i. e. for the King's Sins, and thoſe of his Predeceſſors, *for the Sanctuary*, for the Profanations of the Temple; *and for* Judah, *i. e.* for all the People, who had followed the bad Examples of their impious Kings. Now the Offering which the Law preſcribed for the Tranſgreſſions of the People, was a young Bullock; and for the Offences of the Prince, was a Goat, *Levit.* iv. 13, &c. but good *Hezekiah*, we find, was willing to do more than the Law commanded. He was ſenſible, that both Prince and People had been guilty, not only of Sins of Ignorance (for which theſe Sacrifices were inſtituted) but of wilful and preſumptuous Crimes, of groſs Idolatry, a Profanation of the Temple, and an utter Extinction of the Worſhip of God; and therefore he appointed ſeven Bullocks for a Burnt-offering, and as many Goats for a Sin-offering, upon a Preſumption, that theſe numerous Sacrifices were, if not neceſſary, at leaſt highly fit and becoming, upon Account of the great and long Neglect of Divine Service, and the Multitude, and long Continuance of their other Offences againſt God, for which they now beg Forgiveneſs.

Q. *When were muſical Inſtruments firſt uſed in the Service of the Temple?*

A. *Moſes*, in the Service of the Tabernacle, did not appoint the Uſe of any muſical Inſtruments, only he cauſed ſome Trumpets to be made, which, upon ſolemn Occaſions, were to be ſounded, at the Time, when the Burnt-offering and Peace-offering were upon the Altar, *Numb.* x. 10. But *David*, by the Advice of the Prophets, *Gad* and *Nathan*, introduced ſeveral Kinds of Muſick into the Service of the Temple, as a Thing highly conducive to inſpire People with Reſpect, with Joy, and with Affection for the Solemnities, and Aſſemblies, of Religion, 1 *Chron.* xxiii. 5. and xxv. 1. and 'tis farfarther obſervable, that the Inſtitution of Muſick, in religious Aſſemblies is not a Matter of human Invention, but what was ordained by God, and has the Sanction and Authority of his Prophets to confirm it, *for ſo was the Commandment of the Lord by his Prophets*, Ver. 25.

Q. Hezekiah *commanded the* Levites *to ſing the Words of* David *and* Aſaph: *Were theſe two the only Maſters of Muſick and Poetry, that the* Levites *were ordered to make uſe of them only?*

A. *David* was both a great Poet, and Maſter of Muſick, and therefore might modulate and compoſe his own Hymns; but whether the Muſick of them might not be altered, or improved in after Ages (becauſe the Words only are here taken Notice of) is a Matter of ſome Uncertainty. The *Aſaph*, here mentioned, was the Perſon, who lived in *David*'s Days, ſo famous for his Skill in Muſick; and the ſeveral devout Pieces he compoſed, are thoſe which we meet with in the Collection of the Pſalms; tho' others will needs have it (but for what Reaſon I cannot tell) that the Author of the Pſalms aſcribed to *Aſaph*, was another Perſon, who lived in after Times, tho' perhaps of the ſame Family, as well as Name, with this famous *Aſaph*, who lived in *David*'s.

CHAP. XXX.

Hezekiah *proclaims a ſolemn Paſſover for* Judah *and* Iſrael. *They, having deſtroyed the Altars of Idolatry, keep the Feaſt fourteen Days. The Prieſts and* Levites *bleſs the People.*

Q. DID Hezekiah *keep the Paſſover according to the exact Preſcription of the Law?*

A. The Direction which the Law gives, is, —— That the Paſſover ſhould be *celebrated on the fourteenth Day of the firſt Month*, which the *Jews* call *Niſan*; but, becauſe it was found impoſſible to get all things in Readineſs againſt that Time, it was judged more adviſeable, to adjourn it to the fourteenth of the next Month (which the *Jews* call *Jair*) rather than ſtay to the next Year: And for this they had ſome Encouragement; becauſe the Law allows, that, *in caſe any Man ſhall be unclean, by Reaſon of a dead Body, or be on a Journey afar off, he may eat the Paſſover on the fourteenth Day of the ſecond Month*, Numb. ix. 10, 11. and what was an Indulgence to particular Perſons, they thought might be well allowed to the whole Congregation of *Iſrael*.

Q. *Had* Hezekiah *a Right to ſummon the Subjects of another Prince, as* Iſrael *were, to celebrate the Paſſover at* Jeruſalem?

A. *Hezekiah* had no Right, 'tis certain, to invite *Hoſhea*'s Subjects to repair to *Jeruſalem* to the Celebration of his Paſſover; yet, for the doing of this, we may well preſume, that he had Encouragement from *Hoſhea* himſelf, who, as to the Matter of Religion, as we ſaid before, has a better Character in Scripture than any of his Predeceſſors from the Diviſion of the two Kingdoms. But the Truth of the Matter was, that both the Golden Calves (which had made this political Separation) were now taken away, that of *Dan* by *Tiglath-pileſer*, and the other of *Bethel*, by his Son *Salmaneſer*; and therefore the Apoſtate *Jews* being thus deprived of their Idols, began to return to the

Lord, and to go up to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, for ſome Time, before *Hezekiah* made them this Invitation to his Paſſover.

Chap. XXXI.

The People forward in deſtroying Idolatry. Hezekiah *orders the Courſes of the Prieſts and* Levites, *and provides for their Work and Maintenance. The People very willingly give Offerings and Tithes.* Hezekiah *appoints Officers to diſpoſe of the Tithes. His Sincerity.*

Q. *WAS* Hezekiah *juſtified by any Law in deſtroying Idolatry in* Hoſhea's *Kingdom?*

A. This, as the Text tells us, was done, not only in the Tribes of *Judah and Benjamin, but in thoſe of* Ephraim *alſo, and* Manaſſeth, Ver. 1. which, tho' they were a Part of *Hoſhea*'s Dominion, yet *Hezekiah* might direct the Abolition of Idolatry in them, in Virtue of a Law, which bound *Iſrael* as well as *Judah*, and required the Extirpation of theſe Things, in the whole Land of *Canaan*; by the ſpecial Impulſe, and Direction of God's Spirit, which puts Men upon heroick Actions, tho' not to be drawn into Imitation; or out of a firm Perſuaſion, that his Neighbour *Hoſhea*, who had permited his Subjects to repair to the Paſſover, would approve, and conſent to what he did in this Reſpect.

Q. *What Reaſon had* Hezekiah *for deſtroying the brazen Serpent?*

A. The Reaſon, which the Scripture aſſigns, for *Hezekiah*'s deſtroying this brazen Serpent, is, —— *becauſe, unto this Day the Children of* Iſrael *had burnt Incenſe to it*, 2 Kings xviii. 4. We are not, however, to ſuppoſe, that, all along, from the Days of *Moſes*, this brazen Serpent was made an Object of religious Worſhip: This is what neither *David*, nor *Solomon*, in the Beginning of his Reign, would have allowed of; nor can we think, but that either *Aſa*, or *Jehoſhaphat*, when they rooted out Idolatry, would have made an End of this, had they perceived, that the People, at that Time, either paid Worſhip, or burnt Incenſe to it. The Commencement of this Superſtition muſt be of a later Date, and ſince the Time, that *Ahab*'s Family, by being allied to the Crown of *Judah* by Marriage, introduced all Kinds of Idolatry. Now one falſe Inducement to the Worſhip of this Image might be a Miſtake of the Words of *Moſes*. For, whereas it is ſaid, that *whoſoever looketh upon it, ſhall live*, Numb. xxi. 8. ſome might thence fancy, that, by its Mediation, they might obtain a Bleſſing, and ſo make it the Object of their Superſtition at firſt. However, we may imagine, that their burning Incenſe, or any other Perfumes before it, was deſigned only in Honour to the true God, by whoſe Direction *Moſes* made it; but then, in Proceſs of their Superſtition, they either worſhipped the God of *Iſrael* under that Image, or, what is worſe, ſubſtituted an Heathen God in his Room, and worſhipped the brazen Serpent as his Image; which they might the more eaſily be induced to do, becauſe the Practice of ſome neighbouring Nations was, to worſhip their Gods under the Form of a Serpent. Upon this Account *Hezekiah* wiſely choſe, rather to loſe this Memorial of God's wonderful Mercy to his People in the Wilderneſs, than to ſuffer it any longer to be abuſed to Idolatry, and therefore he *brake it in Pieces*, i. e. (as the *Talmudiſts* explain it) he ground it to Powder, and then ſcattered it in the Air, that there might not be the the leaſt Remains of it: And yet, notwithſtanding all the Care, which he took to deſtroy it, *Sigonius*, in his Hiſtory of *Italy*, tells us, that, in the Church of St. *Ambroſe*, in *Milan*, they ſhew a brazen Serpent entire, which they pretend to be the very ſame that *Moſes* erected in the Wilderneſs, tho' it muſt be owned, that, among their learned Men, there are ſome that acknowledge the Cheat, and diſclaim it.

Q. *Was there any Fund particularly appropriated for the Payment of the Prieſts and* Levites, *who at ended the Service of the Temple?*

A. After that *David* had brought the Ark of the Lord into the Tent which he had pitched for it, near his own Palace, the Scripture ſeems to intimate, 1 *Chron.* xi. 3. that he divided the Prieſts and *Levites* into two Bodies, one of which he left at *Gibeah*, to attend in the Tabernacle which *Moſes* made; and the other he took with him to *Jeruſalem*: And, from this Time, it is highly probable, that, out of his own Eſtate he ſupplied whatever was neceſſary for the ſacred Miniſtry of this his domeſtick Tabernacle, on Mount *Sion*. When *Solomon* had built the Temple, he obliged himſelf to defray all the Expences, both ordinary, and extraordinary, of the Altar, 2 *Chron.* viii. 13. And, in like Manner, upon the Rebuilding of the Temple, at the Return from the Captivity, *Ezekiel* aſſigns a proper Revenue to the King, to anſwer all Sacrifices, both *ſtated* and *occaſional*, Ch. xlvi. 28. ſo that *Hezekiah*, in this, did properly no more, that what was incumbent on him; tho' ſeveral of his idolatrous Predeceſſors had, doubtleſs, withdrawn the *Fund* appropriated to that Purpoſe, which made it ſo commendable in him to reſtore it to its proper Channel.

Q. *It is ſaid of* Hezekiah *that none among ehe Kings of* Judah *were like unto him; and much the ſame Character is given of* Joſiah: *Pray explain this ſeeming Inconſiſtency.*

A. The Words in the Text are, —— *So that, after him, was none like him, among all the Kings of* Judah, *nor any that were before him*, 2 Kings xviii. 15. Now it is plain, that the ſame Commendation is given of *Joſiah*, viz. that *like unto him was there no King before him, which turned to the Lord with all his Heart*, &c. *neither after him aroſe there any like him*, 2 Kings xxiii. 25. So that this Character of *Hezekiah* muſt relate to ſome particular Virtue, wherein he ſtood diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the Kings of *Judah*, and that was *his truſting in the Lord God of* Iſrael (as it is in the Beginning of the Verſe) and not in the Help of any foreign Forces, as all the other Kings (even the moſt renowned for their Piety) in ſome Meaſure are known to have done.

Chap. XXXII.

Sennacherib *invading* Judah, Hezekiah *fortifies himſelf, and ſends Letters to* Iſaiah, *concerning the Blaſphemies of* Sennacherib. *An Angel deſtroys the Hoſt of* Aſſyrians. Hezekiah's *Sickneſs and Sign of Recovery; growing proud he is humbled by God. His Wealth and Error; his Death and Succeſſor.*

Q. *ABOUT what Time of* Hezekiah's *Life and Reign had he his Illneſs?*

A. In the Courſe of this ſacred Hiſtory, this Sickneſs of *Hezekiah*'s is placed immediately after the

Defeat and Death of *Sennacherib*; whereas, it plainly happened before that Time; becauſe in the Meſſage, which God ſent him upon his Bed of Sickneſs, by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, he promiſes *to deliver* Jeruſalem *out of the Hands of the King of* Aſſyria, 2 *Kings* xx. 6. The Truth of the Matter is, *Hezekiah* reigned, in all, nine and twenty Years, 2 *Kings* xvii. 2. he had already reigned fourteen Years, when *Sennacherib* invaded him, 2 *Kings* xviii. 13. And, after his Sickneſs, he continued to reign fifteen Years, 2 *Kings* vi. ſo that his Sickneſs muſt have happened in the very ſame Year that the King of *Aſſyria* invaded his Kingdom; but the ſacred Penman deferred the Account he was to give of that, until he had finiſhed the Hiſtory of *Sennacherib*, which he was willing to give the Reader at one View; and this is the true Reaſon of the Miſlocation.

Q. *What was the principal Buſineſs of the Ambaſſadors from* Babylon *at* Hezekiah's *Court?*

A. The Conqueſts which the *Aſſyrians* were every where making, could not fail of giving Umbrage to the neighbouring Powers to confederate againſt them; and therefore we may well ſuppoſe, that beſides the Buſineſs of congratulating *Hezekiah*'s Recovery, the Purpoſe of this Embaſſy was, to enter into an Alliance with him againſt *Sennacherib*, whoſe growing Power the *Babylonians* had Reaſon to fear, as well as the *Jews*; and (as the Author of the Chronicles expreſſes it) *to enquire into the Wonder, that was done in the Land*, Verſe 31. *i. e.* to enquire about the Miracle of the Sun's Retrogradation, which could not fail of being a Matter of great Curioſity to the *Chaldeans*, who, above all other Nations, were at that Time given to the Study of Aſtronomy.

Q. *What was the Offence* Hezekiah *committed in the Buſineſs of the* Babyloniſh *Ambaſſadors?*

A. The Things which *Hezekiah* ſhewed to the *Babylonian* Ambaſſadors, were the Riches of his Houſe, his Treaſures, his Armory, and all his Stores, and Strength for War; and the Reaſon for his doing this, was doubtleſs to make the *Babylonians* put the greater Value upon his Friendſhip; but herein he offended God, that he not only laid a Bait before theſe Foreigners, to encourage them to invade his Country, but ſeemed to place more Confidence in this new Alliance with them, than in the Power of the Almighty, whoſe Favour and Protection he had ſo long experienced. The Author of the *Chronicles* tell us, that *in the Buſineſs of the Embaſſadors of the Princes of* Babylon, *who who ſent unto him to enquire of the Wonder that was done in the Land, God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart*, Ver. 31. And from hence ſome have inferred, that *Hezekiah*'s great Offence lay not ſo much in the Oſtentation of his military Stores and Treaſures, as in his not repreſenting this Matter to theſe idolatrous Ambaſſadors, in ſuch powerful and convincing Terms, as might have drawn them over to the Knowledge of the true God, which was the proper Improvement he ſhould have made of this divine Vouchſafement to him.

Q. Hezekiah *was buried in the* chiefeſt of the Sepulchres *of the Sons of* David: *What do you underſtand by the* chiefeſt of the Sepulchres?

A. In the innermoſt and chiefeſt of the Rooms of the royal Sepulchres of the Houſe of *David*, was the Body of *Hezekiah* placed in a Nich, which, in the upper End of the Room, was very likely, at that Time, cut on purpoſe for it, to do him the greater Honour.

Chap. XXXIII.

Manaſſeh's *wicked Reign. His Prayer and Reformation. His Acts and Death.* Amon's *wicked Reign; he is ſlain by his Servants; they being ſlain,* Joſiah *ſucceeds him.*

Q. *WHAT do the* Jewiſh *Writers report of* Manaſſeh's *Behaviour while a Priſoner in* Babylon?

A. The *Jewiſh* Doctors have a Tradition, that while *Manaſſeh* was at *Babylon*, by the Direction of his Conqueror, he was put in a large brazen Veſſel, full of Holes, and ſet near to a great Fire; that, in this Extremity, he had Recourſe to all his falſe Deities, to whom he had offered ſo many Sacrifices, but received no Relief from them; that remembering what he had heard his good Father *Hezekiah* ſay, viz. *When thou art in Tribulation, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, he will not forſake thee, neither deſtroy thee*, Deut. iv. 30, 31. he was thereupon immediately delivered, and in a Moment tranſlated to his Kingdom: But this is no leſs a Fiction, than that miraculous Flame, which the Author of the imperfect Comment upon St. *Matthew* ſpeaks of, that encompaſſed him on a ſudden, as he was praying to God, and having melted his Chains aſunder, ſet him at Liberty. In all Probability it was *Saosduchinus*, the Succeſſor of *Eſarhaddon*, who, ſome Years after his Captivity, releaſed *Manaſſeh* out of Priſon.

Q. *Is the Prayer, which* Manaſſeh *made in his Affliction, now extant?*

A. We have a Prayer, which it is pretended he made in Priſon. The Church does not receive it for canonical, but it has a Place among the *apocryphal* Pieces, and, in our Collections, ſtands before the Books of the *Maccabees*. The *Greek* Church, however, has received it into their *Euchologium*, or Book of Prayers, and they uſe it ſometimes as a kind of devout Form, and what contains nothing in it deſerving Cenſure.

Q. Manaſſeh, *it is ſaid, was buried in his own Houſe; or, as it is* 2 Kings xxi. 18. *in the Garden of* Uzzah; *pray where lay this Spot of Ground?*

A. This Garden, as ſome think, was made in that very Spot of Ground where *Uzzah* was ſtruck dead, for touching the Ark of the Lord, but others imagine, that this was the Place where *Uzziah*, who died a Leper, was buried, and that *Manaſſeh* choſe to be buried there, as unworthy, becauſe of his manifold Sins, (whereof he nevertheleſs repented) to be laid in any of the royal Sepulchres of the Kings of *Judah*.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Amon's *ſhort Reign?*

A. This (as ſome *Jewiſh* Authors obſerve) is the uſual Number of Years, to which the Sons of thoſe Kings did arrive, who, by their Abominations, provoked God to Anger, as they inſtance in the Son of *Jeroboam*, 1 *Kings* xv. 25. the Son of *Baaſha*, Chap. xvi. 8. the Son of *Ahab*, Chap. xxii. 51.

Chap. XXXIV.

Joſiah's *good Reign. He deſtroys Idolatry, and repairs the Temple.* Huldah *propheſies the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem. Joſiah's *Covenant with God.*

Q. WHO *was this* Huldah *the Propheteſs, here mentioned?*

A. This is the only Mention we have of this Propheteſs, and certainly it makes much to her Renown, that ſhe was conſulted upon this Occaſion, when both *Jeremiah* and *Zephaniah* were at that Time Prophets in *Judah*: But *Zephaniah*, perhaps, at that Time, might not have commenced a Prophet, becauſe, tho' we are told, that he prophecied in the Days of *Joſiah*, yet we are no where informed, in what Part of his Reign he entered upon the prophetick Office. *Jeremiah* too, might at that Time be abſent from *Jeruſalem*, at his Houſe at *Anathoth*, or ſome more remote Part of the Kingdom, ; ſo that, conſidering *Joſiah*'s Haſte and Impatience, there might be no other Remedy at hand, to apply to, but this Woman. *Great is the Wrath of the Lord that is kindled againſt us*, ſays the King to his Miniſters, 2 *Kings* xxii. 13. and therefore his Intent, in ſending them might be, to enquire whether there were any Hopes of appeaſing his Wrath, and in what Manner it was to be done? Being therefore well aſſured of this Woman's Fidelity, in delivering the Mind and Counſel of God, the Miniſter who went to enquire, concluded rightly, that it was much more conſiderable, what Meſſage God ſent, than by whoſe Hands it was that he convey'd it.

The other Parts of this Chapter are explained 2 *Kings* xxii. and xxiii.

Chap. XXXV.

Joſiah *keeps a ſolemn Paſſover ; provokes* Pharaoh Nechoh, *and is ſlain at* Megiddo. *Lamentations for* Joſiah.

Q. WHERE *was ſituated the City* Megiddo?

A. Geographers make no mention of this City under this Name, but it is, very probably, the ſame with what the *Greeks* and *Latins* call *Cercuſium* or *Cerceſium*, which was ſituated on the Angle, formed by the Conjunction of the *Chaboras* or *Chebar*, and the *Euphrates*, *Iſa*. x. 9. ſpeaks of it as if *Tiglath-Pileſer* had made a Conqueſt of it, and *Nechoh*, perhaps, now was going to retake it, as we find he did; but *Jeremiah* informs us, that in the fourth Year of *Jehoiachim* King of *Judah*, it was taken and quite deſtroyed by *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*.

Q. *What is the general Character of* Joſiah?

A. The Author of the Book of *Eccleſiaſticus* has given us his Encomium in theſe Words, —— *All, except* David, *and* Hezekias, *and* Joſias *were defective. They forſook the Law of the Moſt High; even the Kings of* Judah *failed.* But *the Remembrance of* Joſias *is like the Compoſition of the Perfume that is made by the Art of the Apothecary: It is ſweet as Honey in all Mouths, and as Muſick at a Banquet of Wine. He behaved himſelf uprightly in the Converſion of the People, and took away the Abomination of Iniquity. He directed his Heart unto the Lord, and, in the Time of the Ungodly, he eſtabliſhed the Worſhip of God*, Eccleſ. xlix. 1, *&c.*

Q. *Are the* Lamentations *which* Jeremiah *made for the Death of* Joſiaſh, *left upon Record?*

A. The *Jews* were uſed to make *Lamentations*, or mournful Songs upon the Death of great Men, Princes and Heroes, who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves in Arms, or by any civil Arts had merited well of their Country. By an Expreſſion in Verſe 25. *Behold they are written in the Lamentations*, one may infer that they had certain Collections of this kind of Compoſition. The Auther of the Book of *Samuel* has preſerved thoſe which *David* made upon the Death of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, of *Abner* and *Abſalom*, But this mournful Poem, which the diſconſolate Prophet made upon the immature Death of good *Joſiah*, we no where have; which is a Loſs the more to be deplored, becauſe, in all Probability, it was a Maſter-piece in its Kind, ſince never was there an Author more deeply affected with his Subject, or more capable of carrying it through all the tender Sentiments of Sorrow and Compaſſion.

Chap. XXXVI.

Jehoahaz *ſucceeding*, Joſiah, *is depoſed by* Pharaoh, *and is carried to* Egypt. Jehoiakim'*s wicked Reign; carried captive to* Babylon; Jehojachin *likewiſe.* Zedekiah'*s wicked Reign; his Contempt of the Prophet, and Rebellion againſt* Nebuchadnezzar. Jeruſalem'*s Deſtruction. The Proclamation of* Cyrus.

THE Contents of this Chapter, for Subſtance, are explained in our Remarks upon 2 *Kings* xxiii. 31, *&c.* and xxiv. and xxv.

THE BOOK OF EZRA.

That the Book of Ezra *is Part of the Canonical Scripture, is evident; partly from the Teſtimony of the* Jewiſh *Church, to which were committed the Oracles of God,* Rom. iii. 2. *who alſo carefully kept them, and faithfully tranſmitted them to us, and are not once charged by Chriſt or his Apoſtles with Breach of that Truſt; and partly, by the unanimous Conſent of both* Jews *and* Chriſtians, *at this Day. And, that* Ezra *was the Writer of this Book, is, and ever was, the Opinion of the* Jews, *who had the beſt Means of knowing this, and is moſt agreeable to his Quality; for he was* Son, *or* Grandſon *(as the Word is elſewhere uſed) of* Seraiah, Ezra vii. 1. *who was the High-prieſt,* 2 Kings xxv. 18. 1 Chron. vi. 14. *and he was* a ready Scribe *in the Law of* Moſes, Ezra, vii. 6. *and endowed with a more than ordinary Meaſure of God's Spirit, as it is evident from this Book; and was himſelf an Eye-witneſs of theſe Tranſactions. In his Time alſo there lived divers other holy Men of God, as* Daniel, Nehemiah, Mordecai, Zorobabel, *and* Joſhua: *Which makes that probable which the* Jews *report, That theſe Prophets, and other holy and learned Men, did review the Canonical Books of the old Teſtament, and added here and there ſome few Paſſages in the hiſtorical Books, and digeſted them into that Order in which we now have them in our* Hebrew *Bibles: This being a Work moſt ſuitable to the Prudence and Piety, and ſacred Functions of theſe Perſons, and to the Eſtate of the* Jewiſh *Nation at that time, which had been long in Captivity in* Babylon, *where it was to be feared that many of them were ignorant or corrupt in the Principles of Religion, and who were yet in a broken Condition, and likely to be expoſed to farther Diſtreſſes, Calamities, and Diſperſions; which alſo might be ſignified to ſome of them: And it was ſuitable alſo to that Care which the wiſe and ſagacious God hath ever uſed for the Guidance of his Church, according to their ſeveral Neceſſities and Occaſions.*

Ezra *returned to* Jeruſalem *the ſixth Year of* Darius, *who ſucceeded* Cyrus; *that is, about fifty Years after the Return of the firſt* Jews *under* Zorobabel, *when the Temple was built. He brought with him a great Company, and much Treaſure, with Letters to the King's Officers for all ſuch Things as ſhould be neceſſary for the Temple; and, at his Coming, redreſſed what was amiſs, and ſet Things in good order that wanted to be reformed.*

Chap. I.

Cyrus's *Proclamation for* Iſrael *to return and build the Temple at* Jeruſalem. *The chief of the People prepare for their Return.* Cyrus *reſtores the Veſſels of the Temple to* Sheſhbazzar *Prince of* Judah.

Q. WHAT *do you think might be the Reaſon that induced* Cyrus *to make a Decree in Favour of the* Jews?

A. It is a good deal more than probable, that this Decree in favour of the *Jews*, was, in a great Meaſure, owing to *Daniel*'s good Offices. *Cyrus*, at his firſt coming to *Babylon*, after he had taken the City, found him there an old Miniſter of State, famed for his great Wiſdom over all the Eaſt, and, in many things, for a Knowledge ſuperior to the reſt of Mankind; and, accordingly, we find, that he not only employed him as ſuch, but, upon the ſettling of the Government of the whole Empire, made him firſt Superintendant, or prime Miniſter of State, over all the Provinces of it. In this Station of Life, *Daniel* muſt have been a Perſon of great Authority at Court, and highly in the Eſteem of his Prince, and therefore, as we find him earneſt in his Prayer to God for the Reſtoration of his People, *Dan.* ix. we cannot but think, that he would be equally warm in his Interceſſions for it with the King. To which Purpoſe, it is not improbable that he might ſhew him thoſe Paſſages in *Iſaiah*, which ſpeak of him by Name, an hundred and fifty Years before he was born, as a great Prince, and Conqueror, the Ruler of many Nations, and the Reſtorer of his People, by cauſing his Temple, and the City of *Jeruſalem* to be re-inhabited. For, that *Cyrus* had ſeen thoſe Prophecies, the Thing is plain, not only from the Teſtimony of *Joſephus*, *Antiq.* l. 11. cap. 1. but from the Recital, that is made of them in the Decree itſelf, *Ver.* 2. and, if ſo, who ſhould be ſo proper to ſhew them to him, and to recommend the Accompliſhment of them to his princely Care, as *Daniel*, who had ſo great Credit with him, and ſo paſſionate a Concern for the Reſtoration of *Sion?*

Q. *Among the ſacred Things which* Cyrus *reſtored, is it not probable that the* Ark of the Covenant *was one?*

A. It no where appears, that this Ark was carried from *Jeruſalem* to *Babylon*. They tell us, indeed, that, in the ſecond Temple, Sacrifices were offered, as in the firſt, and all ſolemn Days obſerv'd, eſpecially the great Day of Expiation, when the Law ordain'd, that the Blood ſhould be ſprinkled before the Mercy-ſeat; and the Mercy-ſeat, ſay they, was a Part of the Ark: But, beſides that the Ark, without the *Shekinah*, or *Divine Glory*, which was then withdrawn, would have been of no great Significance, the *Jews* univerſally acknowledge that the *Ark* was one of the five Things, that were wanting in the ſecond Temple.

Q. *It is ſaid in the laſt Verſe, that the Veſſels, which* Cyrus *returned, were* 5400; *and yet in the two preceding Verſes, where the Particulars are enumerated, they don't amount to half that Number.*

A. Some have therefore thought, that there muſt be a numerical Error, either in one Place, or the other; whilſt others ſuppoſe, that as in 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 18. *Nebuchadnezzar* is ſaid to have carried away all the Veſſels, both great and ſmall, in this Detail the larger Veſſels only, and ſuch as were of great Value, are mentioned, but that the groſs Sum comprehends all, and amounts to the Number ſpecified.

CHAP. II.

The Number of the People that returned; and of the Prieſts; of the Levites; *Singers; Porters;* Nethinims; *and of* Solomon's *Servants. Concerning the Prieſts that could not ſhew their Pedigree. The whole Number of them, and their Subſtance. Their Oblations.*

Q. AMONG *the Chief of thoſe that returned from their Captivity, was* Zerubbabel; *whence had he this Name?*

A. In the Time of the Captivity, it was a common thing for the great Men of *Judah* to have two Names; one of their own Country, which was domeſtick, and another of the *Chaldeans*, which was uſed at Court. *Zerubbabel* was born in *Babylon*; and his Name, which ſignifies an *Exile*, or *Stranger in Babylon*, imports the Miſery of the People of *Iſrael* at that Time; but *Sheſhbazzar*, which is a Compound of two Words, ſignifying *fine Linen and Gold*, ſeems to be a Name of a better Omen, and to denote their future more flouriſhing Condition.

Q. *It is ſaid,* Ver. 5. *that of thoſe that returned, the Children of* Arah *were* 775; *but in* Nehem. vii. 10. *only* 652. *Pray reconcile this Difference?*

A. It ſeems 775 marched out of *Babylon*, or gave in their Names that they would go; but ſome of them died, others changed their Minds, others were hindered by Sickneſs, or other Caſualties, happening to themſelves or near Relations; and ſo there came only 652 to *Jeruſalem*. And the like may be ſaid in the like Differences; which it ſuffices to hint once for all.

CHAP. III.

The Altar ſet up. The Feaſt of the Tabernacles kept. Their continual Offerings. Workmen hired. Prieſts and Levites appointed to ſet forward the Work. The Foundation of the Temple laid, with Joy and Mourning.

Q. MOST *of the Paſſages in this Chapter we have already explained in the Courſe of this Work, and ſhall hereafter have Occaſion to mention; I ſhall therefore only aſk you two Queſtions, the firſt to deſcribe the* Feaſt of Tabernacles, *which the* Jews *held on their Return to* Jeruſalem?

A. This was one of the Solemnities of the *Jews*, wherein all the Males were obliged to preſent themſelves before the Lord. In *Hebrew* it is called *Chaghaſſuchoth*, the *Feaſts of Tents*, becauſe it was kept under green Tents, and Arbours, in memory of their dwelling in Tents, in their Paſſage through the Wilderneſs; and immediately after the Harveſt, in grateful Acknowledgment to God for the Fruits of the Earth, which they had lately gather'd in. It was obſerved for ſeven Days; and of the ſeveral Sacrifices which were appointed for each Day, we have a punctual Account in the Book of *Numbers*, Chap. xxix. 12, &c. The modern *Jews*, not having now an Opportunity of going to the Temple, and performing all the Ceremonies preſcribed by *Moſes*, make (each for himſelf) in ſome open Place, a Bower or Arbour of the Branches of Trees, of ſuch a determinate Height, hung round about and adorned, as much as they can; where they eat and drink, and paſs, at leaſt, as much Time as they do in their Houſes, for all the Days of the Feſtival; but ſuch as are old or ſick are excuſed; and when it rains very hard, they are permitted to retire to their Houſes. On the firſt Day of the Feaſt, they take one Branch of *Palm*, three of *Myrtle*, and one of *Willow*, bound together, which they carry in their Right-Hand, and having a Branch of Citron, with its Fruit, in their Left, they thus make four Turns about the Reading-deſk, in their Synagogues. On the ſeventh Day, (which is accounted more holy than the reſt) they riſe with the Sun, and going to their Synagogue, ſing abundance of Prayers, which they repeat, all the Feaſt, with a prodigious Rapidity, as ſuppoſing, that, during their Journey, they were obliged to make haſte, even in the Service of God. On the eighth (for they have added two Days to what *Moſes* at firſt preſcribed) they get their Friends together, and give them an Entertainment; and on the ninth, which they call *the Joy of the Law*, they compleat the Reading of the *Pentateuch*, according to the Order of its Sections.

Q. *What was the Reaſon that the Prieſts,* Levites, *Elders and Fathers, who had ſeen the firſt Temple, wept, when the Foundation of the ſecond was laid, tho' it is manifeſt that the latter Temple was forty Cubits larger than the former?*

A. It muſt be remembered, that the Reaſon of their Weeping was, not ſo much becauſe it was like to prove far inferior to that of *Solomon*, as to its outward Structure, but becauſe it was to want thoſe extraordinary Marks of the divine Favour, wherewith the other Temple was honoured. The ſecond Temple was built upon the ſame Foundation with the firſt; and therefore the different Meaſures that we find of them in the Books of *Kings* and *Ezra*, are to be underſtood in reſpect of the different Diſtances, between which the ſaid Meaſures were taken. The twenty Cubits Breadth, which is ſaid of *Solomon*'s Temple, was from the Inſide of the Wall on the one Side, to the Inſide of the Wall on the other; but the ſixty Cubits Breadth of that to be built by *Zerubbabel*, was the Breadth of the whole Building, from the Inſide of the outer Wall to the other. For beſides the Temple itſelf, which contain'd the *Holy Place*, and the *Holy of Holies*, each twenty Cubits broad, there were thick Walls encloſing it on each Side; and without them, Chambers on each Side; then another Wall; then a Gallery; and then the outer Walls of all, encloſing the whole Building, which in the Decree of *Darius*, is all called the Temple, and might in the whole (even without the outer Walls of all) amount to threeſcore Cubits: So that the Difference of the ſaid twenty Cubits Breadth, and of the ſaid ſixty Cubits Breadth, is no more than this, —— That the one is meant of the Temple ſtrictly ſo called, the other of the Temple and its appertaining Buildings. Both the Temples then, without all Doubt, were of the ſame Dimenſions: But then here was the Difference, which drew Tears from the Eyes of the Elders, that not only the Materials and Ornaments of the ſecond Temple were even as nothing, *in Compariſon of the firſt*; but that the *Ark* of the Covenant, and the *Mercy-Seat* which was upon it, the *Holy Fire* upon the Altar, the *Urim* and *Thummim*, the Spirit of *Prophecy*, and the *Shekinah*, or divine Preſence, the five great Things for which the former Temple was ſo renowned, were loſt and gone, and never to be recovered to this other.

This was a juſt Matter of Lamentation to thoſe that had ſeen theſe ſingular Tokens of the divine Favour in the former Temple, and a Diſcouragement for their proceeding with the Building of the preſent; and therefore the Prophet *Haggai* was ſent to inform them, that all theſe Wants and Defects ſhould be abundantly repaired by the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, the true *Shekinah* of the divine Majeſty, in the Time of the ſecond Temple; *I will ſhake all Nations, and the deſire of all Nations ſhall come, and I will fill this Houſe with Glory, the Glory of this latter Houſe, ſhall be greater than of the former, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

Chap. IV.

The Adverſaries being not accepted in the Building of the Temple with the Jews, *endeavour to hinder it; their falſe and malicious Letter to* Artaxerxes, *upon whoſe Decree the Building is hindered.*

Q. OF *what Religion were the People of the Land, who wanted to have a Hand in building the Temple?*

A. Although, from the Time that they had been infeſted with Lions, in the Days of *Eſarhaddon*, they had worſhipped the God of *Iſrael*, yet it was only in Conjunction with their other Gods, whom they worſhipped before; and therefore, notwithſtanding their Worſhip of the true God, ſince they worſhipped falſe Gods too at the ſame Time, they were, in this Reſpect, Idolaters, which was Reaſon enough for the true Worſhippers of God to have no Communion with them.

Q. *Who was this* Ahaſuerus *that is mentioned* Verſe 6?

A. He was, as the Learned think, the firſt Prince of that Name, and that divers of the ſucceeding Kings of *Perſia* took the Name from him; which makes it ſomewhat doubtful who this Prince was. He was either, 1. *Xerxes*, the fourth and rich King of *Perſia*, as he is called, *Dan.* xi. 2. Or rather, 2. *Cambyſes*, the Son and Succeſſor of *Cyrus*; as may appear, 1. Becauſe none but he and *Smerdis* were between *Cyrus* and this *Darius*. 2. Becauſe *Cambyſes* was known to be no Friend to the *Jewiſh* Nation or Religion; and therefore it is very improbable that theſe crafty, malicious and induſtrious Enemies of the *Jews*, would omit ſo great an Opportunity when it was put into their Hands.

Q. *Who was* Artaxerxes, *the King of* Perſia, *named,* Verſe 7?

A. He was either, 1. *Artaxerxes* the Son of *Xerxes*; or, 2. *Smerdis* the Magician. Or 3. The ſame *Cambyſes*, called, by his *Chaldee* Name, *Ahaſuerus*, Ver. 6. and here by his *Perſian* Name *Artaxerxes*: By which Name he is here called in the Inſcription of this Letter, becauſe ſo he was called by himſelf and others, in the Letters written either by him, or to him.

Q. *Who was* Arſnappar, *who,* Ver. 10. *is called the* great and noble?

A. He was either *Eſarhaddon*, or ſome other Perſon then of great Eminency, and eſpecially with his Subjects and Followers, who was Captain of this Colony, and conducted them hither.

Q. *When were the People of* Iſrael *firſt called* Jews?

A. After the Return from the Captivity, the People in general came to be called *Jews*, becauſe though there were many *Iſraelites* among them, yet they chiefly conſiſted of the Tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin*; and tho' the Edict of *Cyrus* gave them Permiſſion to return when they pleaſed, yet the ſacred Writing takes Notice only of thoſe who returned in a Body.

Q. *What Kind of Tribute did the* Jews *pay to the* Babylonians?

A. For this there are three Expreſſions in the Text, *Toll*, *Tribute*, and *Cuſtom*. By the firſt of theſe *Grotius* underſtands that which every Head paid to the King, which we call *Poll-money*: By the ſecond the *Exciſe* (as we now call it) that was upon Commodities and Merchandize; and by the laſt the *Land-tax*. But *Watſius* is of Opinion, that the firſt Word rather ſignifies that Part which every Man paid out of his Eſtate, according as it was valued; the ſecond, that which was paid for every Head; and the third, that which was paid upon the Highways, by every Traveller that went about the Country with any Kind of Merchandize.

Q. *Who was the* Darius, *King of* Perſia, *who is mentioned in the laſt Verſe?*

A. There are ſome who take the *Darius* here mentioned, not to be *Darius* II. who was the Son of *Hyſtaſpes*, but the *Darius* who is commonly called *Nothus*; but then they are preſſed with this Difficulty, which may well be called inſurmountable. For, from the firſt Year of *Cyrus*, who gave Orders for building of the Temple, to the ſixth Year of *Darius Nothus*, in which they ſuppoſe that it was finiſhed, there were, at leaſt, an hundred and thirteen Years; according to ſome, an hundred and ſeventeen, and according to others an hundred and forty two. But now, if all this Time *Zerubbabel* was in the Government of *Judea*, and *Joſhua* in the High-prieſthood, ſo long an Authority in Church or State was never heard of in any Age before. Nor muſt it forgotten, what the Prophet *Haggai* ſuppoſes, *viz.* That ſome, then alive, remembered the Glory of the *firſt Temple*, and compared it with the Glory of the ſecond; which, upon the Suppoſition, that this was in the ſixth Year of *Darius Nothus*, will make them, at leaſt, an hundred and fourſcore Years old, a Thing almoſt incredible. And therefore the moſt probable Opinion is, that the *Darius* here meant, was *Darius Hyſtaſpes*, whoſe ſecond Year was the eighteenth, after the firſt of *Cyrus*.

Q. *In what Manner did this* Darius *come to the Throne of* Perſia?

A. The ſeven Princes, who had ſlain the Uſurper *Smerdis*, and his Brother, conſulting together about the Settling of Government, came at length to this Reſolution, that the Monarchy ſhould continue in the ſame Manner that it had been eſtabliſhed by *Cyrus*; and that, to determine which of them ſhould aſcend the Throne, they ſhould all meet at a certain Place the next Morning, againſt the Riſing of the Sun, and that he, whoſe Horſe firſt neighed, ſhould be appointed King. For, as the Sun was the great Deity of all the *Perſians*, they ſeemed, by this Metod, to refer their Election to it: But *Darius*'s Groom being informed of this, tied a Mare, on the Night before the Election, to the Place where the next Morning they were to meet, and brought his Maſter's Horſe to cover her. As ſoon therefore as the Princes met together, at the Time appointed, *Darius*'s Horſe, remembering the Place, ran immediately thither, and neighing and prancing all along; whereupon the reſt diſmounting, ſaluted him their King, and accordingly, placed him on the Throne.

CHAP. V.

Zerubbabel *being encouraged by* Haggai *and* Zechariah *the Prophets, ſets forward the Work. The Adverſaries oppoſe them again. Their Letter to* Darius, *concerning this Matter.*

Q. WHO *was the Prophet* Zechariah, *mentioned* Ver. 1. *and when did he begin to prophecy?*

A. Zechariah was the Son of *Barachiah*, and Grandſon of *Iddo*, but the Time and Place of his Birth are unknown. Some will have him to be born at *Babylon*, during the Captivity; but others think that he was born at *Jeruſalem*, before the Tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin* were carried away. It is certain, however, that he returned from *Babylon* with *Zerubbabel*, and very probable, that he began to prophecy in the ſecond Year of *Darius*, the Son of *Hyſtaſpes*. His Prophecies are deſervedly accounted the moſt obſcure of all the twelve leſſer Prophets; but thoſe which relate to the *Meſſiah*, are more particular and expreſs, than any of the others. His Stile is thought to be interrupted, and without Connection; and ſome modern Criticks have been of Opinion, that the 9th, 10th, and 11th Chapter of this Prophet were written by *Jeremiah*, becauſe in *Matthew*, (Chap. xxvii. 9, 10.) under the Name of *Jeremiah*, we find *Zechariah* xi. 12. quoted; and as the aforeſaid Chapters make but one continued Diſcourſe, they conclude from thence, that all three belonged to *Jeremiah*. But it is more natural to ſuppoſe, that the Name of *Jeremiah*, by ſome unlucky Miſtake, has ſlipt into the Text of St. *Matthew*, inſtead of that of *Zechariah*. Contemporary with him was the Prophet *Haggai*, who, in all Probability, was born at *Babylon*, and returned with *Zerubbabel* to *Jeruſalem*. They both, with united Zeal, encouraged the People to go on with the Work of the Temple, which, by the Envy of the *Samaritans*, who were their Enemies, and the ill Offices of ſome at the Court of *Cyrus*, and *Cambyſes*, whom they influenced, was diſcontinued for ſome Time. But, upon the Acceſſion of *Darius*, the Son of *Hyſtaſpes*, to the Throne, *Haggai*, in particular, by reproaching the People with their Indolence and Inſenſibility, by telling them, that they were careful enough to lodge themſelves very commodiouſly, while the Houſe of the Lord lay buried in its own Ruins, and by putting them in mind, that the Calamities of Drought and Famine, wherewith God had afflicted them ſince their Return, were owing to their Neglect in repairing rhe Temple, prevailed with them to ſet about the Work in good earneſt; ſo that, by Virtue of theſe Reproofs, as well as ſome Encouragements, which God occaſionally authorized him to give them, they brought the whole to a Concluſion in a ſhort Time.

Q. *What is the Plea that* Joſephus *makes* Zerubbabel (*the Governor*) *and* Joſhua (*the High-prieſt*) *make upon* Tatnai's *enquiring into the Reaſon of their rebuilding the Temple?*

A. The Plea, which *Joſephus* makes *Zerubbabel* (the Governor) and *Joſhua* (the High-prieſt) make upon this Occaſion is to this Effect, —— “ That
“ they were the Servants of the Great God, to
“ whoſe Honour this Temple was built, and to his
“ Service dedicated by the greateſt, the happieſt,
“ and the wiſeſt Prince that ever ſat on that
“ Throne; that it ſtood for many Ages, till, by
“ Reaſon of the Wickedneſs of their Forefathers,
“ the City, by God's Permiſſion, was taken by
“ *Nebuchadnezzar*, the King of *Chaldæa*, the
“ Temple pillaged, and laid in Aſhes, and the
“ People carried away Captives into *Babylon*;
“ that, when *Cyrus* came to be poſſeſſed of the
“ Throne of *Perſia* and *Babylon*, he ordered, by
“ his Royal Proclamation, the Rebuilding of the
“ Temple; and the Reſtoration of all the ſacred
“ Veſſels that had been taken away by *Nebuchad-*
“ *nezzar*, which accordingly were tranſported to
“ *Jeruſalem*, and laid up again in the Temple;
“ that, by the Command of the ſame King, *Abaſ-*
“ *ſar* was ſent to ſee the Work expedited, and, ac-
“ cordingly was preſent at the laying of the Foun-
“ dation, but that, ever ſince that Time, by one
“ Artifice or other, their Enemies had found means
“ to obſtruct and retard it; and that, for the
“ Truth of theſe Allegations, they deſired that
“ *Darius* might be wrote to, that, by conſulting
“ publick Records, it might be known, whether
“ or no theſe Facts were according to this their
“ Repreſentation.

CHAP. VI.

Darius *anſwers the former Letter, and makes a new Decree. By the Help of the Adverſaries, and the Directions of the Prophets, the Temple is finiſhed; the Feaſts of Dedication, and of the Paſſover, are kept.*

Q. BY *the Decree of* Cyrus, Ver. 3. *the Foundations of the Temple were to be as broad as they were high, namely,* threeſcore Cubits; *was not this very diſproportionate?*

A. He did not command the *Jews* to make the Building ſo large; for he left the ordering the Proportions thereof to their Skill and Choice; but he reſtrained them from making it any larger; leſt they ſhould hereafter make uſe of it to other Purpoſes againſt himſelf: But thoſe Proportions differ much from *Solomon*'s Temple, which was but 30 Cubits high, only the Porch was 120 Cubits high, and but 20 Cubits in Breadth. Either therefore *Solomon*'s were ſacred Cubits, which were larger than the other, and theſe were but common Cubits; or the 60 Cubits of Height are meant only of the Porch, which he would not have to be ſo high and magnificent as that of *Solomon*'s was, leſt they ſhould be puffed up with it, and by Degrees arrive at their former Height and Inſolence. And the Word, render'd *Breadth*, may be, and is by ſome rendered more generally *Extenſion*, or *Amplitude*, or *the Length* of it; it being improbable that the King ſhould give Orders about the Breadth, and none about the Length of it.

Q. *In what Manner has* Joſephus *recorded this Decree of* Cyrus?

A. Thus, —— “Cyrus *the King, to* Syſina *and* Sarabaſan, *ſendeth greeting.* Be it known unto you, that I have given Leave to all the *Jews*, that are in my Dominions, to return into their own Country, and there to rebuild their Capital City, with the holy Temple at *Jeruſalem*, in the ſame Place where it ſtood before. I have likewiſe ſent my Treaſurer *Mithridates*, and *Zerubbabel*, the Governor of *Judea*, to ſuperintend the Building, and to ſee it raiſed ſixty Cubits upwards from the Ground, and as many over; the Walls to be three Rows of poliſhed Stone, and one of the Wood of the Country, together with an Altar for the Sacrifices, and all this to be done at my Charge. It is my further Pleaſure, that they receive, entire to themſelves, all the Profits and Revenues that were formerly enjoyed by their Predeceſſors, and that they have an Allowance paid them of 205,500 Drachma's, in Conſideration of Beaſts for Sacrifices, Wine and Oil, and 2500 Meaſures of Wheat, in lieu of fine Flour; and all this to be raiſed upon the Tribute of *Samaria*; that the Prieſts may offer Sacrifice, according to the Laws and Ceremonies of *Moſes*, and pray daily for the King, and the royal Family, and for the Welfare and Happineſs of the *Perſian* Empire, and let no Man preſume to do any Thing contrary to the Tenor of this my royal Will and Proclamation, upon Pain of forfeiting Life and Eſtate.”

Q. *Who is that* Artaxerxes, *mentioned in the laſt Clauſe of* Verſe 14?

A. He is thought to be either, 1. *Xerxes*, the Son and Succeſſor of *Darius*, who was alſo called *Artaxerxes*, who is here joined with his Father *Darius*; poſſibly, becauſe he favoured the *Jews*, and promoted their Cauſe with his Father, and took Care to ſee his Father's Decree executed, and was his Father's Viceroy, if not made Co-Emperor with him in his Life-time, which was not unuſual. Or, 2. *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, the Son of *Xerxes*, who was beſt known by the Name of *Artaxerxes*; who is here joined with *Cyrus* and *Darius*, becauſe, tho' the Temple was finiſhed, as to the Subſtance of the Work, in *Darius*'s Reign, Ver. 15. yet it was afterwards more fully completed and adorned by *Artaxerxes*, as is evident from Chap. vii. 20, 27. by whom *Nehemiah* was ſent to *Jeruſalem*, with a large Commiſſion, and full Power to take Care about the Building of the City, and all other Things concerning the *Jewiſh* Nation and Religion.

Q. *Was it uſual for Heathen Princes to requeſt the* Jews *to offer Sacrifices and Prayers for their Welfare?*

A. Though the *Jews* were not allowed to deſire the *Heathens* to pray to their Deities for their Proſperity, becauſe they were forbidden to acknowledge any other God, but one; yet the *Heathens*, if they thought fit, might worſhip God, nor did the *Jews* deny them that Privilege, or refuſe the Offerings which they brought for that Purpoſe, until, in the Time of their Wars with the *Romans*, the Faction of the *Zealots* grew to be predominant: For then (as *Joſephus* tells us) “One *Eleazar*, the Son of *Ananias* the High-prieſt, a deſperate daring young Man, and a military Officer then in Command, preſſed ſome of his Friends among the Prieſts, to receive no Offering, or Sacrifice, but from the *Jews* only; by which Means it came to paſs, that the very Offerings of *Cæſar*, which were uſed conſtantly to be made for the Welfare of the *Roman* People, came to be rejected; and this proved the very Ground and Foundation of the War with that Nation. The High-prieſt, however, and the Men of the beſt Quality, declared themſelves extremely diſſatisfied with the Novelty of this Prohibition, and, with great Importunities, deſired the Continuance of ſo pious a Cuſtom, as offering up Prayers for Princes and Governors.” But all in vain; tho' this Place in *Ezra*, Chap. vi. Ver. 10. one would think, ſets this Duty in a clear Light.

Q. *I deſire your Explanation of* Verſe 11. *where it is ſaid,* Let Timber be pulled down from his Houſe, and being ſet up, let him be hanged thereon?

A. Lud de Dieu obſerves, that in the Words which we there render *being ſet up*, there is no proper Conſtruction, and therefore he would rather have them tranſlated according to the *Septuagint*; *And ſtanding let him be beat upon it*, i. e. *whipped*, as we ſay, *at a Poſt*, for that was a Puniſhment among the *Perſians* and other Nations. But if a greater Puniſhment than this, ſhould here be intended, then he makes the firſt Words refer to the Timber, and the latter to the Man, in this Manner, *And from above let it fall upon him*, i. e. the Stake being lifted up, ſhall be ſtruck into his Body, and ſhall come at his Fundament, which was a cruel Puniſhment among the *Eaſtern* People, and continues ſtill in uſe to this Day.

CHAP. VII.

Ezra's *Genealogy. The Prieſts,* Levites, *and* Ezra *go up to* Jeruſalem. *The gracious Commiſſion of* Artaxerxes *to* Ezra, *who bleſſes God for his Favour to his People.*

Q. WHAT *is your Opinion of the Commiſſion which* Artaxexes *gave to* Ezra?

A. If we reflect a little on the Eaſe and Indolence, and, in a manner, total Sequeſtration from all Buſineſs, wherein theſe great Monarchs of the

the *Eaſt* were uſed to indulge themſelves, we ſhall find Reaſon to believe, that *Artaxerxes* knew nothing of the Matter. If he be the ſame who goes under the Name of *Ahaſuerus*, in the Book of *Eſther*, he had been impoſed on by *Haman*, to conſent to a bloody Decree againſt the *Jews*, with ſo little Thought and Conſideration of what he was about, that he did not ſo much as remember the Perſon, at whoſe Inſtigation it was done: And yet, notwithſtanding the great Miſchief which this Negligence of his might have brought upon him, we find him inſtantly ſinking into the like ſleepy and careleſs Temper. Eſther viii. 8. *Write ye for the* Jews (ſays he to *Mordecai* and *Eſther*) *as it liketh you, in the King's Name, and ſeal it with the King's Ring*, and whatſoever is thus wrote and ſealed, *no Man may reverſe*: And, by Parity of Reaſon, why may not we ſuppoſe, that when *Ezra* applied to Court for his Commiſſion, the whole Form of drawing it up, was referred to him and ſuch other *Jews*, as he thought proper to take into his Counſel: For *write ye, as it liketh you, in the King's Name*, might, in one Caſe, as well as the other, be all the King had to ſay to the Matter. And, indeed, if we look into the Contents of the Commiſſion itſelf, we ſhall ſoon perceive that it muſt have been drawn by ſomething more than a *Heathen* Hand. For, if *Ezra* himſelf had been to dictate the Words, how could he have expreſſed the Tenor of his Commiſſion more fully than in theſe: *For as much as thou art ſent by the King, and his ſeven Counſellors, to enquire concerning* Judah *and* Jeruſalem, *according to the Law of thy God, which is in thine Hand?* What *Jewiſh* King could have given more pious Inſtructions than theſe, *And thou* Ezra, *after the Wiſdom of thy God, ſet Magiſtrates and Judges, ſuch as know the Laws of thy God, and teach ye them, that know them not?* And where can we find a lively Senſe of God's ſupreme Authority, and of that Regard which is due from the greateſt Kings and Potentates to his Commands, more emphatically expreſſed than here, *Whatſoever is commanded by the God of Heaven?* *O verba* (as *Jacobus Capellus*, in a Kind of a Rapture, cries out) *literis aureis Regum Palatiis inſcribenda, atque ideo Stylo adamantino Fidelium omnium Animis inſculpanda!* Words fit to be written upon the Palaces of Kings in Letters of Gold, and engraven on the Minds of all the Faithful with a Graver of Adamant!

CHAP. VIII.

Ezra's *Companions who returned with him. He ſends to* Iddo *for* Levites, *to be Miniſters in the Temple. He keeps a Faſt at* Ahava. *He commits the Treaſures to the Cuſtody of the Prieſts. From* Ahava *they come to* Jeruſalem. *The Treaſure is weighed in the Temple. The Commiſſion is delivered to the Adverſaries, and they help forward the Houſe of God.*

Q. *WHere-abouts was ſituated the Place called* Ahava, Ver. 15?

A. It may be rendered *the River Ahava*, as it is called, Ver. 21, 31. By comparing theſe Places, it ſeems that *Ahava* was the Name both of the River, and of the Town or Place by which it ran. Either this is that River which others call *Adiava*, that runs to *Aſſyria*, which thence is called *Adiabene*; or ſome other River running into the *Euphrates*.

Q. *Where lay the Place called* Caſiphia?

A. This Place did not ſtand on the *Caſpian-Lake*, as ſome imagine, from the Similitude of the Names; for that was at too great a Diſtance for *Ezra*'s preſent Purpoſe; but ſome others place it not far from *Ahava*; where he knew that there was a College, or a conſiderable company of *Levites* got together.

CHAP. IX.

Ezra *and others, hearing of the unlawful Marriages of the People with Strangers, mourn for it. He prays unto God, and confeſſes their Sins, and particularly his.*

THE Contents of this Chapter are ſo plain and eaſy to be underſtood, that we ſhall not take up the Reader's Time in uſeleſs Remarks; but proceed to the next, which will afford us ſome Obſervations that will deſerve our Attention.

CHAP. X.

Schecaniah *encourages* Ezra *to reform the ſtrange Marriages. All* Iſrael *ſwear to do accordingly.* Ezra *mourns; aſſembles the People, who, at the Exhortation of* Ezra, *repent, and promiſe Amendment; their Care to perform it. The Names of them that married ſtrange Wives.*

Q. EZRA *found the People under a great Tranſgreſſion, namely, of marrying foreign Women: Pray, wherein conſiſted the Illegality of marrying with* Heathens?

A. The *Jewiſh* Law againſt marrying with *Heathens* runs thus, *Deut.* vii. 1, 2, 3. *When the Lord thy God ſhall bring thee into the Land, whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs it, and hath caſt out any Nations before thee,* —— *Thou ſhalt not make Marriages with them; thy Daughter thou ſhalt not give unto his Son, nor his Daughter ſhalt thou take to thy Son.* And the Reaſon of the Law is aſſigned in the following Verſe, *For they will turn away thy Sons from following me, that they may ſerve other Gods: For did not* Solomon *King of* Iſrael (as *Nehemiah* argues with the People) *ſin by theſe Things?* And if ſo great a one as he, who excelled all Mankind in Wiſdom, was not ſafe from the Seducements of theſe outlandiſh Women, how ſhall ye be able to preſerve yourſelves from their Enticements? And yet (as *Moſes* goes on in his Reaſoning) *Deut.* vii. 6. *Thou art an holy People unto the Lord thy God; the Lord hath choſen thee to be a ſpecial People unto himſelf, above all the People that are upon the Face of the Earth.*

Here then is an expreſs Law, enforced with weighty Reaſons, againſt theſe Pagan Marriages; and therefore, ſince whatever is done contrary to Law, is, *ipſo facto*, null and void, theſe Marriages with idolatrous Women, which were ſtrictly forbidden by God, were, properly ſpeaking, no Marriages at all; and the Children which proceeded from them, were in no better Condition than thoſe, whom we call Baſtards. No Interpoſition of Civil Authority was therefore needful to diſſolve theſe Marriages: The Infidelity of the Party eſpouſed was as much an Interdiction, as any, the moſt proximate Degree of Conſanguinity, which, by the Laws of all civilized Nations, is known to vacate the Marriage.

But even ſuppoſe that the Civil Authority thought proper to interpoſe in this Matter, yet wherein had the *Jews* any Reaſon to complain, if, in juſt Puniſhment for their wilful Breach of a known and poſitive Law, they were excluded from cohabiting with theſe illegal Wives: The *Jews*, I ſay, eſpecially, who, for every light and trivial Cauſe, made no Scruple to give, even their lawful Wives, a Bill of Divorcement, and might therefore, with much leſs Difficulty, be ſuppoſed willingly to repudiate thoſe, whom the Laws of their God (for fear of their catching the Infection of Idolatry) had forbidden them to live with?

St. *Paul* indeed is not for turning away an unbelieving Wife, in caſe ſhe is willing to dwell with her Husband; but then he ſuppoſes, that this Couple were married when they were both Heathens, and in a State of Infidelity, in which Caſe there was no Law, either divine or human, forbidding them to marry; whereas in theſe *Jewiſh* Marriages with Pagans, the Prohibition is ſtrict, and therefore, as there was no Sin in their coming together at firſt, and the Chriſtian Religion (whether it was the Man or the Woman that embraced it) made no Alteration in the Caſe, his Advice is, that they continue to dwell together, even tho' they be of different Perſuaſions in Matters of Religion, becauſe (as he farther adds this Reaſon) 1 *Cor.* vii. 16. *The unbelieving Husband is ſanctified by the Wife*, and how knoweſt thou, O Man, but that, by thy peaceable Cohabitation with her, thou may'ſt convert, and ſave thy Wife?

Though therefore the Apoſtle is not for encouraging any Separation between Husband and Wife, upon Account of their Difference in Religion, when their Marriage was previous to either of their Converſions to Chriſtianity; yet (if we will make him conſiſtent with himſelf) we muſt allow, that he is utterly averſe to all mixed Marriages with Infidels, when, in his following Epiſtle, 2 *Cor.* vi. 14. he adviſes all Chriſtians *not to be unequally yoked together with Unbelievers, for what Communion*, ſays he, *has Light with Darkneſs, or what Concord hath* Chriſt *with* Belial? *&c.* Whereby he gives us Reaſon to think, that he eſteemed all Marriages with Heathens illegal, and that, had the Apoſtle at this Time, been either of *Ezra*'s or *Nehemiah*'s Counſel, he would have given his Vote, for their Diſſolution among the *Jews*.

Q. *But by the Divorce which* Ezra *and the Elders required the People to make, the Children of thoſe unlawful Marriages muſt ſuffer with their Mothers; was this juſt or reaſonable?*

A. We own, indeed, that it is a very gracious Declaration of God, *Behold all Souls are mine, as the Soul of the Father, ſo alſo the Soul of the Son is mine, that Soul that ſinneth, it ſhall die*; but then we are to conſider, that as Life ſignifies, in general, all that Happineſs, which attends God's Favour, ſo Death denotes all thoſe Puniſhments, which are the Effects of divine Diſpleaſure, and, among theſe, the Miſeries of the next World are chiefly intended. Theſe, indeed, ſhall be allotted to Men, according to their own Demerits, without any Regard to the Faults of their Forefathers, which ſhall not be laid to their Charge, nor made any Aggravation of their Guilt; but as to temporal Evils and Calamities, it cannot well otherwiſe be, but that, in the very Courſe of Things, Children ſhould ſuffer for the Iniquities of their Parents.

Though, therefore, it may ſeem a little hard that the Children ſhould be included in their Mother's Divorce, yet the Laws of moſt Nations have determined this Point, that Children are to follow the Condition of their Mothers, be it what it will, and, conſequently, as they are unlawfully born, they muſt of Courſe be alienated from the Family, at the ſame Time that the Mother is repudiated, and, in Virtue of that very Law, which declares her Marriage to be null. So that it was no arbitrary act in *Ezra* to abdicate the Children as well as the Mothers, though to prevent the Danger of their corrupting the other Children of the Family (if they were allowed to ſtay) and of inſinuating themſelves ſo far into their Fathers Affections, as to prevail with them in Time to recal their ejected Wives, might be Motive enough to a prudent Ruler (conſidering the then Situation of Affairs) to put the Law rigidly in Execution. As this however was an Act of the Government, wherein *Ezra* and other good Men, who feared the Lord, were concerned, we may reaſonably preſume that ſome Proviſion was made for the Maintenance, and perhaps the Education of theſe poor Children, in the Principles of the *Jewiſh* Religion, at the publick Charge.

Q. *Who was the Author of the ſix firſt Chapters of* Ezra?

A. This is a Matter of ſome Uncertainty, tho' it is generally agreed, that the ſame Hand, which compoſed the two Books of *Chronicles*, was concerned in writing that Part of *Ezra*, becauſe the *Chronicle* concludes with the very ſame Words, wherewith the Hiſtory begins, which in antient Authors, to connect the Thread of the Diſcourſe, as *Grotius* obſerves, is no unuſual Thing. The *Jewiſh* Doctors, indeed, are chiefly of Opinion, that theſe *Chronicles* were written by *Ezra*: But this can hardly be, becauſe the Author (whoever he was) continues the (1 *Chron.* iii. 19.) Genealogy of *Zerubbabel* to the twelfth Generation, which is lower than *Ezra* lived. Nor can *Ezra* be the Author of the ſix firſt Chapters of the Book that bears his Name, becauſe the Perſon, who wrote it, *Ezra* v. and vi. is ſaid to have been at *Jeruſalem* in the Time of *Darius Hyſtaſpes*, whereas *Ezra*, Ch. vii. did not go thither until the Reign of *Artaxerxes*. It is moſt likely, therefore, that *Ezra*, upon his Coming to *Jeruſalem*, might meet with certain Annals or Memoirs kept of the ſeveral Tranſactions that happened ſince the Time of the Peoples Return from Captivity, and that, to theſe, after he had made an Extract of ſuch as were true and authentick, he added a farther Continuation of the Hiſtory of his own Government. For, that the four laſt Chapters of the Book were of his own compoſing, is evident from his Teſtimony, Chap. ix. 5. *And at Evening-ſacrifice, I aroſe up from my Heavineſs, and having rent my Garment, and my Mantle, I fell upon my Knees, and ſpread out my Hands unto the Lord.* Then follows the Prayer which he made, and immediately it is ſubjoined, *Ezra* x. 1. *Now when* Ezra *had prayed, and when he had confeſſed, and caſt himſelf down before the Houſe of God:* Which plainly ſhews, that *Ezra* was the Author of that Part of the Book, which ſpeaks of himſelf in the *firſt Perſon*.

And, in like manner, that *Nehemiah* was the Writer of what is reputed his, ſeems to be evident, not only from his own Declaration in the

Front of it (which was the Practice of *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, and other antient Hiſtorians in thoſe Days) but from the Teſtimony of the *Jewiſh* Church likewiſe, which all along received it into their Canon, and from the Obſervation of the *Seventy Interpreters*, who, from the very firſt, gave it a Place in their Tranſlation under that Name.

Ezra, no doubt, when he went to *Jeruſalem*, did as he was directed, *Ezra*, vii. 25. *He appointed Magiſtrates and Judges well ſkilled in the Law of God*, and theſe (as ſome will have it) conſtituted the great Synagogue, which conſiſted of an hundred and twenty principal Elders, that were to aſſiſt him in the Compilation of the Scriptures; but as the Books of *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Eſther*, *Malachi*, and the two *Chronicles* could not be admitted into the Canon in *Ezra*'s Days, this Synagogue was continued until the Days of *Simon the Juſt* (who was the laſt of that Convention) and by their Direction, no doubt, it was, that (to make the Senſe more conſpicuous) ſome little Additions or Interpolations, were now and then made; but then they were made by ſuch as had proper Authority, and in whom the Spirit of God (which never left the Church until the Canon of the Scripture was fully compleated) is acknowledged to have reſided.

Q. Ezra *was certainly a very eminent Man, eſpecially for his great Skill in the Scriptures: What Character do the Learned give of him?*

A. The ſacred Scriptures give him this Character, that *he was a ready Scribe in the Law of* Moſes, *which the Lord God of* Iſrael *had given.* The *Jewiſh* Doctors look upon him as the ſecond Founder of it; and are generally of Opinion, that he was the Prophet *Malachi*, and had that Title given him, becauſe he was ſent, as *God's Meſſenger*, to revive their Religion, after it had been, in a Manner quite extinguiſhed. Nay, many antient Fathers of the Chriſtian Church attribute more to him, in this Particular, than even the *Jews* themſelves; for they ſuppoſe, that, in the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, all the Scriptures were intirely loſt and deſtroyed, but that *Ezra*, by divine Revelation, renewed, and recovered them again. This, however, is carrying the Compliment too far, and leaving the Authority of the Holy Scriptures upon a very precarious Bottom; ſince ſome may be apt to infer, *that he, who is ſaid thus wonderfully to have reſtored them, might much more likely have forged the whole.*

Q. *Did* Ezra *recover the Holy Scriptures by divine Revelation?*

A. We readily acknowledge, indeed, that in the Time of *Joſiah*, through the two preceding Reigns of *Manaſſeth*, and *Ammon*, Copies of the Law might be very ſcarce: But by the pious Care of that good Prince, we are informed, that this Defect was ſoon remedied; that Copies were taken of the original Law, that was then found in the Temple; that *Search* was made in the *Schools of the Prophets*, and in all other Places, where they could be found, for the other Parts of Holy Writ, and Tranſcripts formed out of theſe likewiſe; ſo that in a ſhort Time, all, that were deſirous to know the Law of their God, either by writing them out themſelves, or procuring others to do it for them, were furniſhed with Copies, both of the Law and the Prophets. Within a few Years, indeed, the City and Temple were deſtroyed, and with them was the authentick Copy of the Laws, which was repoſited in the Temple, burnt and conſumed; but before this Calamity befel the *Jews*, all the ſacred Writings, then extant, were got into private Hands, and carried away with them into Captivity.

That *Daniel* had a Copy of the Holy Scriptures with him in *Babylon*, is certain, becauſe he not only quotes the Law, but makes mention likewiſe of the Prophecies of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, which he could not have done had he not had them by him. That, at the finiſhing of the Temple (which was in the ſixth of *Darius*, and above fifty Years before *Ezra* came to *Jeruſalem*) Copies of the Law were in common Uſe none can doubt, who reads, how the *Prieſts* and *Levites* were ſettled in their reſpective Functions, *as it is written in the Books of* Moſes: And that, when the People called for the Scripture, to have it read to them, they did not requeſt of *Ezra* to get it anew dictated to him, but that he *would bring forth the Book of the Law of* Moſes, *which the Lord had commanded* Iſrael, which plainly implies that all the People well knew, that this Book was then extant, and needed not ſuch a miraculous Expedient, as that of a divine Revelation for its Recovery.

Q. *If* Ezra *did not reſtore the Scripture in this Manner, what then did he do towards it?*

A. To this it may be anſwered, that, upon his coming to *Jeruſalem*, he got together as many Copies as he could meet with, either in private Hands, or publick Repoſitories; that, by comparing theſe Copies one with another, he found out the true Reading, and ſo corrected all the Miſtakes that had crept into them, either thro' the Negligence or Ignorance of Tranſcribers; that having thus made the Copies perfect, he collected from them all the Books, of which the Holy Scriptures did then conſiſt (for ſome Books that appeared later were admitted after his Time) diſpoſed them in their proper Order, and ſo far ſettled the Canon of Scripture; that for the Illuſtration, Connection, and Completion of theſe Books (eſpecially ſuch as were hiſtorical) he added ſome Paſſages that were not in them before, and changed ſome Names that were then grown obſolete, for ſuch as were more modern, and better undeſtood, which as he was a Prophet, he was authorized to do; that, having thus made the Books, in all their Parts, perfect and intelligible, for the ſtill greater Eaſe, and Convenience of the Vulgar, he cauſed the whole to be wrote out in the *Chaldee* Character, which, after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, was in general Uſe among the People; ſo that the old *Hebrew* Letters were, from that Time laid aſide among the *Jews*, and only retained by the *Samaritans*; and, laſtly, that to aſcertain the Reading of this introduced Character, he added the Vowel Points, that are now found in our *Hebrew Bibles*: But whether this was of his doing, or the Work of a later Hand, is a Matter of much Debate among the Learned.

Q. *Did he make any, and what Alterations in the* Vowel Points?

A. Thoſe, who maintain, that *Ezra* (whom all held to be a Prophet) was the Author of theſe *Points*, and that they conſequently, are of the ſame Authority with the *Text* itſelf, argue in this Manner, —— That, when the *Hebrew* Language ceaſed to be the Mother-tongue of the *Jews* (as all agree it did after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity) it thence became in a manner impoſſible to teach it, without the Aſſiſtance of the *Vowel Points*, and therefore, at leaſt, they muſt have begun in the Time of *Ezra*, and continued in Uſe ever after. That two antient Books, called *Babir*, and *Zohar*, which are ſaid to have been written, the one a little *before*, and the other, a little *after* the Time of our Saviour, make expreſs Mention of theſe Points in more Places than one: That, whereas it is ſaid, on the other Side, that the *Maſorites* of *Tiberias* (above five hundred Years after Chriſt) were the Inventors of theſe Points; the Schools, which the *Jews* once had in *Judea*, were at this Time all ſuppreſſed, nor was there any Number of learned Men left in the Nation, of ſufficient Ability for ſuch a Work: And, laſtly, that if it be allowed, that the preſent Points are not of the ſame Authority with the Letters themſelves, but only of a late and human Invention, this will weaken the Authority of the Scriptures, and leave the ſacred Text to an *arbitrary* and uncertain Reading and Interpretation.

Thoſe, who maintain the contrary Opinion, *viz.* that theſe Vowel Points are of a later Date than *Ezra*, fortify themſelves with ſuch Arguments as theſe — That the ſacred Books, which the *Jews* make uſe of in their Synagogues, neither have, nor ever had any of theſe Points in them, which can only be imputed to this, —— That, when the Holy Scriptures began firſt to be publickly read in the Synagogues (which was preſently after this Edition, that *Ezra* made of them) there were no ſuch Vowel Points then in being: That if we compare the Tranſlation of the *Septuagint*, or the *Latin* Verſion of St. *Jerom*, with the preſent Punctuation; which is an Argument that theſe Points were, either not in Being, or not in any great Authority, in thoſe Times: And laſtly, that if we conſult *Philo Judæus*, or *Joſephus*, who are two of the oldeſt Authors of the *Jews*, or any of the antient Chriſtian Writers, for ſeveral Ages after Chriſt, we ſhall not find one Word mentioned of theſe Points, tho' they could not but have ſundry Occaſions to take Notice of them, if either they had been in Uſe, or of ſuch great Credit and Authority with the *Jews*, as is pretended. And therefore (to anſwer the Arguments on the other Side) they alledge, that the Books of *Babir* and *Zibar* are not near ſo antient as they are reputed; that, for above a thouſand Years after their pretended Compoſure, the *Jews* themſelves knew nothing of them, nor were they once mentioned by any Author whatever, during that Interval; and therefore there is Reaſon to think, that a falſe Date of Antiquity was fraudulently put to them, to give ſome Sanction, and to recommend them to the World with a better Credit.

That the *Maſorites* of *Tiberias* were certainly in Being a long Time in *Judæa*, and, in their Way of Learning, were not a little eminent, for St. *Jerom* himſelf informs us, that he made uſe of them: That, tho' there may be ſome Difficulty in reading without Points, and ſome Ambiguity in the Senſe for want of them; yet ſince we find that the *Samaritans*, who underſtand *Hebrew* no better than the *Jews*, have no Points to this Day, yet can read the *Hebrew* Text in the *Samaritan* Character, we need not doubt but that Cuſtom, good Senſe, and the Coherence of the Diſcourſe will ſupply Rules for the remedying theſe Inconveniences: And, laſtly, ſince there is no Language in the World, wherein there are not ſeveral equivocal Expreſſions, in which Caſe Points may be of ſome Uſe, yet they cannot totally ſecure us from Error, becauſe Faults in tranſcribing or printing, and Variations in pointing are unavoidable.

Q. *What is your Opinion upon the whole?*

A. To accommodate the Matter then as well as we can, between theſe contending Parties, tho' theſe Vowel Points were never antiently eſteemed any Part of the ſacred Scripture of the *Old Teſtament*, but only Additions of *human* Invention, for the more eaſy reading of the Text, becauſe they were never received by the *Jews* (to whom were committed the *Oracles of God*) into the Books which were read in their Synagogues; yet we have good Reaſon to conclude, that upon the *Hebrew*'s ceaſing to be a vulgar Language, as it certainly did in the Time of *Ezra*, they muſt of Neceſſity have been introduced.

When every Child learnt the *Hebrew* Tongue from his Cradle, it was no hard Matter for thoſe who thus underſtood it by rote, to learn to read it by the Letters only, without the Vowels: But, when it became a *dead* Language, the Caſe was altered: For then, inſtead of underſtanding it firſt, in order to read it, they were firſt to read it, in order to underſtand it; and therefore, having not the previous Knowledge of the Language to direct them herein, they muſt neceſſarily have had ſome other Helps, in order to know, with what Vowel each Syllable was to be pronounced; and, to give them them this Help, the Vowel Points ſeem certainly to have been invented; and therefore the Time of this Invention cannot be placed later than the Time when they became neceſſary, *i. e.* when the *Hebrew* became a *dead* Language, and ſo was acquireable no other Way, but by Study and Inſtruction.

From this Neceſſity of Inſtruction, and, probably, not long after *Ezra*'s Edition of the Holy Scripture, there ſprung up a Set of Men among the *Jews*, whoſe Profeſſion it was, to write out Copies of the *Hebrew* Text, and to preſerve, and teach the true Reading of it. What they did of this Kind, is called by the *Jews* the *Maſorah*, i. e. the *Tradition*, becauſe they pretend to have the true Reading (as the *Talmudiſts* pretend to have the true Interpretation) of the Scriptures handed down to them from Generation to Generation. However, as their whole Buſineſs was to ſtudy the true Reading of the *Hebrew* Text, to preſerve it from being corrupted, and to teach it to others, it is highly probable, that they were the firſt Inventors of Vowel Points, becauſe the whole Uſe of theſe Points was to be ſubſervient to this Purpoſe.

But tho' theſe Points might be invented by the *Hebrew* Grammarians, whom we call *Maſorites* much earlier, than ſome will allow; yet, from their late Appearance in the World, it ſeems very probable, that, as at the firſt, they might invent them only for their private Uſe, ſo, for ſome Time, they might reſerve them to themſelves, and teach them only to their Scholars. For the *Jews*, we muſt know, had antiently two Sorts of Schools, thoſe of the *Maſorites*, and thoſe of the *Rabbi's*: The former taught only the *Hebrew* Language, and to read the Scriptures in it; but the other taught their Pupils to underſtand the Word of God, and all the Interpretations of it. Theſe were the Doctors of Divinity among them, to whom the *Maſorites* were as much inferior as the Teachers of Grammar-ſchools among us are to the Profeſſors of Divinity in our Univerſities. As long therefore as theſe Vowel

Points went no higher, than the Schools of the *Maſorites*, they were not much regarded among their learned Men; and this is the Reaſon, why we find no mention made of them, either in the *Talmud*, or in the Writings of ſome antient Fathers, from whom it might have been expected. But after the Publication of the *Talmud*, the *Jewiſh* Doctors thought it adviſeable, in order to preſerve the right Reading of the Text (as the *Miſhna* and *Gemara* were ſuppoſed to preſerve its right Interpretation) to take this Punctuation of the *Maſorites* into their Divinity Schools, and, having reviewed, and corrected it with great Care, they added it to the Text, and ſo gave it all the venerable Aſpect, that it now bears.

But tho' theſe Vowel Points were added to the Text by ſuch Perſons, as underſtood the Language perfectly, and, having ſince undergone the Review and Correction of many Ages, may be juſtly accounted a Work, as compleat in its Kind, as can be done by human Art; yet, ſince it was only done by human Art, it is no authentick Part of the Scriptures; and therefore theſe Points are not ſo unalterably fixed to the Text, but that a Change may be made in them, when the Nature of the Context, the Analogy of Grammar, or the Style of the Language ſhall give a ſufficient Reaſon for it; eſpecially conſidering, that, notwithſtanding their exact Fixation at firſt, they are ſtill liable to the Miſtakes of Tranſcribers and Printers, and by Reaſon of their Number, the Smallneſs of their Figures, and their Poſition under the Letters, are more likely to ſuffer by them, than any other Sort of Writing whatever.

So that, upon the whole, it appears, that theſe Vowel Points were not affixed to the *Hebrew* Text by *Ezra* himſelf; yet they were of early Date after his Edition of the Holy Scriptures; that tho' they did not immediately appear in the World, nor are taken Notice of by any Writer of Repute for many Ages after, yet this was occaſioned by their being confined to the State of *Maſorites*, who, in all Probability, were the firſt Inventors of them; and tho', being of human Invention only, they cannot be ſuppoſed of equal Authority with the Text itſelf, yet they are of excellent Uſe for the Preſervation of its right Reading, and for the Prevention of innumerable Perplexities, and Ambiguities, that would otherwiſe be incident to it.

Q. *Was not* Ezra *the firſt Inſtitutor of* Synagogues.

A. After *Ezra* had ſet forth a correct Edition of the Law, the Prophets, and other ſacred Writings, that were extant in his Time, his next Care was to appoint proper Perſons, *viz.* the learnedeſt of the *Levites*, and other *Scribes* that were well ſkilled in theſe Writings, to read and expound them to his People; which, at firſt, no doubt, they did in the ſame Manner that himſelf had done, *i. e.* by gathering the People together in ſome wide Street, or open Place of the City, that was of the fitteſt Capacity to receive them. But, in the wet and Winter Seaſons of the Year, the Inconvenience of this came to be felt, ſo that, in Proceſs of Time, they erected Houſes and Tabernacles, wherein to meet for this Purpoſe; and this was the true Original of their Synagogues.

Q. *Pray give me a Deſcription of a* Synagogue.

A. Synagogues were publick Edifices, ſituate, either within, or without their City, and generally in an elevated Place. They were uſually raiſed above any private Houſe (except when there was an Interdiction from the Civil Power) becauſe the *Jews* have a Notion, that it is a Diſhonour to God to have his Houſe inferior, nay, ſo much as equal to thoſe of Men; and in whatever City this happened, they threaten it with a ſpeedy Deſolation. They are always roofed and covered over, and by this are diſtinguiſhed from the *Proſeuchæ*, which were commonly in the Fields, and open to the Heavens. In the midſt of them there is a Deſk or Pulpit, made, very probably, in Imitation of that which, as we read, *Ezra* made uſe of, from whence the Book or Roll of the Law is read very ſolemnly, and from whence both he that expounds it, or he that preaches to the Congregation, at any Time, always delivers himſelf. At the upper End of the *Synagogue*, and over-againſt the Door, which ever ſtands to the *Weſt*, there is a Cheſt or Preſs, wherein the Book of the Law is kept, wrapt in a fine embroidered Cloath) and (what is uncommon in our Churches, during the Time of divine Service, the Women are there ſeparate from the Men, and ſeated in a Gallery encloſed with Lattices.

Q. *What Cities or Towns were allowed the Privilege of a* Synagogue?

A. Every Town, wherein there were ten *Batelnim*, i. e. ten Perſons of full Age and free Condition, always at Leiſure on Week-days, as well as Sabbaths, to attend on divine Service, was thought large enough to have a *Synagogue* built in it; otherwiſe it was not, becauſe the *Jewiſh* Notion is, that leſs than ſuch a Number could not make a Congregation, and without a Congregation, no Part of the *Synagogue* Service, which conſiſted in Prayers, reading the Scriptures, in preaching or expounding upon them, could be performed.

Q. *What was the Service performed in the* Synagogues?

A. Their Prayers, at firſt, were but very few, but have ſince increaſed to a very large Bulk, which makes the *Synagogue* Service very long and tedious. What they reckon the moſt ſolemn Part of their Prayers are thoſe which they call *Shemoneh Eſhreth*, i. e. the *eighteen Prayers*, which, according to them, were compoſed and inſtituted by *Ezra*, and the great *Synagogue*, and therefore they injoin all, that are at Age, of what Sex or Condition ſoever, either in private or publick, to repeat them three Times a Day, and on every *Synagogue* Day, they offer them up, with the greateſt Solemnity, in their publick Service, are but of the ſame Nature, that the Lord's Prayer is in ours, *i. e.* the fundamental and principal Part; beſides theſe, they have ſome Prayers going before, ſome following after, and others interſperſed between them, which make their Liturgies very tedious, and juſtifies our Saviour's finding Fault with their long Prayers.

Q. *Rehearſe the* eighteen Prayers, *which the* Jews *ſay were compoſed by* Ezra?

A. I. *Bleſſed be thou, O Lord, our God, the God of our Fathers, the God of* Abraham, *the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob, *the great God, powerful and tremendous; the High God, bountifully diſpenſing Benefits; the Creator and Poſſeſſor of the the Univerſe, who remembereſt the good Deeds of our Fathers, and, in thy Love, ſendeſt a Redeemer to thoſe who are deſcended from them, for thy Names Sake,*

Sake, O King, our Helper, our Saviour, and our Shield of Abraham.

II. *Thou, O Lord, art powerful for ever. Thou raiſeſt the Dead to Life, and art Mighty to ſave. Thou ſendeſt down the Dew, ſtilleſt the Winds; and maketh the Rain to come down upon the Earth, and ſuſtaineſt, with thy Benificence, all that live therein; and, of thy abundant Mercy, maketh the Dead again to live. Thou helpeſt up thoſe that fall; thou cureſt the Sick; thou looſeſt them that are bound; and makeſt good thy Word of Truth to thoſe that ſleep in the Duſt. Who is to be compared to thee, O thou Lord of Might? And who is like unto thee, O our King, who killeſt, and makeſt alive, and makeſt Salvation to ſpring up, as the Herb out of the Field! Thou art faithful, to make the Dead riſe again to Life. Bleſſed art thou, O God, who raiſeth the Dead to Life.*

III. *Thou art Holy, and thy Name is Holy, and thy Saints do praiſe thee every Day.* Selah. *For a great King and an holy art thou, O God. Bleſſed art thou, O Lord God moſt holy.*

IV. *Thou, of thy Mercy, giveſt Knowledge to Men, and teacheſt them Underſtanding; give graciouſly unto us Knowledge, Wiſdom and Underſtanding. Bleſſed art thou, O Lord, who graciouſly giveſt Knowledge unto Men.*

V. *Bring us back, O our Father, to the Obſervance of thy Law, and make us to adhere to thy Precepts; and do thou, O our King, draw us near to thy Worſhip, and convert us unto thee by perfect Repentance in thy Preſence. Bleſſed art thou, O Lord, who vouchſafeſt to receive us by Repentance.*

VI. *Be thou merciful to us, O our Father, for we have ſinned; pardon us, O our King, for we have tranſgreſſed againſt thee, for thou art a God, good, and ready to pardon. Bleſſed art thou, O Lord, moſt gracious, who multiplieſt thy Mercies in the Forgiveneſs of Sins.*

VII. *Look, we beſeech thee, upon our Afflictions: Be thou on our Side, in all our Contention; and plead thou our Cauſe in all our Litigations; and make haſte to redeem us with a perfect Redemption, for thy Name's Sake: For thou art our God, our King and a ſtrong Redeemer. Bleſſed art thou, O Lord, the Redeemer of* Iſrael.

VIII. *Heal us, O Lord our God, and we ſhall be healed; ſave us, and we ſhall be ſaved; for thou art our Praiſe. Bring unto us ſound Health, and a perfect Remedy for all our Infirmities, for all our Griefs, and for all our Wounds; for thou art a God, who healeth, and art merciful. Bleſſed art thou, O Lord our God, who cureſt the Diſeaſes of thy People* Iſrael.

IX. *Bleſs us, O Lord our God, in every Work of our Hands, and bleſs unto us the Seaſon of the Year, and give us the Dew and the Rain, to be a Bleſſing unto us upon the Face of all our Land, and ſatiate the World with thy Bleſſings, and ſend down Moiſture upon every Part of the Earth, that is habitable. Bleſſed are thou, O Lord, who giveſt thy Bleſſing to the Years.*

X. *Convocate us together, by the Sound of the great Trumpet, to the Enjoyment of our Liberty; and lift up thy Enſigns to call together all of the Captivity, from the four Quarters of the Earth, to our own Land. Bleſſed art thou, O Lord, who gathereſt together the Exiles of* Iſrael.

But this is enough for a Specimen. The reſt are much in the ſame Strain; but the Reader that is deſirous to ſee them, will find them in *Dr. Prideaux's Connection of the Old and New Teſtament,* Part I. Lib. vi.

Q. *What other Service was performed in the* Synagogues?

A. In the Synagogue Service there are three Things that are read, the *Shema,* the *Law,* and the *Prophets.* The *Shema* conſiſts of three Portions of Scripture; the firſt is, from the Beginning of the fourth Verſe of the ſixth Chapter of *Deuteronomy,* to the End of the ninth Verſe: The ſecond, from the Beginning of the thirteenth Verſe of the eleventh Chapter of *Deuteronomy,* to the End of the twenty-firſt Verſe: And the third from the Beginning of the thirty-ſeventh Verſe of the fifteenth Chapter of *Numbers,* to the End of the Chapter: And becauſe the firſt of theſe Portions, in the *Hebrew* Bible, begins with the Word *Shema,* i. e. *Hear,* therefore the Reading of the whole is called *the Reading of the Shema,* which, next to their ſaying of the *Shemoneh Eſhreth,* or the famous *Eighteen Prayers,* is reckoned the ſolemneſt Part of their religious Service.

Q. *The* Jews, *I think, have the* Moſaic *Law divided into Sections; By whom, in what Manner, and for what Uſe was this done?*

A. The five Books of the Law were divided, as ſome ſay, by *Moſes* himſelf, but, not improbably, by *Ezra,* into fifty-four Sections, becauſe, in their intercalated Years (when a Month was added to the Year) there were fifty-four Sabbaths, and ſo a Section being read every Sabbath-day, compleated the Whole in the Space of a Year; but, when the Year was not thus intercalated, thoſe, who had the Direction of the Synagogue-worſhip, reduced the Sections to the Number of Sabbaths, by joining two ſhort ones ſeveral Times into one, becauſe they held themſelves obliged to have the whole Law, from the Beginning of *Geneſis* to the End of *Deuteronomy* read over, in this manner, every Year.

Q. *Have there been no Alterations ſince made to this Diviſion of the Law?*

A. In the Perſecution of *Antiochus Epiphanes,* when the Reading of the Law was prohibited, in the room the fifty-four Sections of it, the *Jews* ſubſtituted fifty-four Sections of the Prophets, which were ever after continued; inſomuch, that when the Reading of the Law was again reſtored by the *Maccabees,* the Section which was read every Sabbath out of the Law, ſerved for the firſt Leſſon, and the Section out of the Prophets for the ſecond; for that is the Meaning (*Acts* xiii. 15.) of St. *Paul's ſtanding up to preach, after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, i. e.* after the Reading of the firſt Leſſon out of the Law, and the ſecond Leſſon out of the Prophets.

Q. *In what Manner were the Law and the Prophets expounded in the* Jewiſh *Synagogus?*

A. The Expoſition of the Law and the Prophets went along with the Reading them: For, after the *Hebrew* Language had ceaſed to be the

Mother-tongue of the *Jews*, and the *Chaldee* grew up into Uſe inſtead of it, the Cuſtom of the Synagogue was, that one ſhould firſt read a Paragraph of the Scriptures to the People, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, and then another interpreted it in the *Chaldee*, which they better underſtood. And this ſeems to ſuggeſt the Reaſon why theſe Sections of Scripture came to be divided into Verſes, *viz.* that by this Means the Reader might certainly know, how much he was to read, and the Interpreter how much he was to interpret, at every Interval.

Q. *How was the Service of the* Synagogues *concluded?*

A. After that the Reading and Expounding were over, any Perſon, of Learning and Knowledge in the Scriptures, might addreſs himſelf to the People, upon what moral or divine Subject he thought proper; only we may obſerve, that this was a Compliment uſually paid to Strangers, and therefore, when St. *Paul* and his Company came to *Antioch* in *Piſidia*, and went into the Place of divine Worſhip, on the Sabbath-day, *after the Reading of the Law and the Prophets, the Rulers of the Synagogue ſent unto them, ſaying, Ye Men and Brethren, if ye have any Word of Exhortation for the People, ſay on.*

Q. *What ſort of Perſons officiated in this Service?*

A. From what has been ſaid, it appears that the Miniſtration of the Synagogue-ſervice was not confined to the ſacerdotal Order; for the Prieſts were conſecrated only to the Service of the Temple, which was widely different from this, as conſiſting chiefly in the Offering up of Sacrifices and Oblations; but to this in the Synagogue, any one that by Learning was qualified for it, was admitted. Only, for the Preſervation of Order, there were, in every Synagoue ſome fixed Officers, whoſe Buſineſs it was to take care that all religious Duties were therein decently performed.

The firſt of this Kind are thoſe whom the *New Teſtament* call *Rulers of the Synagogue*; but how many of theſe belonged to each *Synagogue*, we cannot tell, only we may preſume there were more than one, becauſe they are mentioned in the Plural Number, in Reſpect of the ſame *Synagogue*. Next to them (and perhaps one of them) was the Miniſter of the *Synagogue*, whoſe Buſineſs it was to offer up to God the publick Prayers of the Congregation; and being, for this Purpoſe delegated (as it were) by them to God, is therefore, in the *Hebrew* Language, called *Sheliach Zibber*, i. e. *The Angel of the Church* or Congregation; from whence the Name of the Biſhops of the ſeven Churches, mentioned in the *Revelations*, are manifeſtly borrowed. Next to this Angel of the Church, were the Deacons, and inferior Miniſters of the *Synagogue*, called in *Hebrew Chazanim*, or *Overſeers*, who, under the Rulers of the *Synagogue*, had the Charge and Overſight of all Things in it, and kept the Books of the holy Scriptures, the Liturgies and Utenſils, which they brought forth, and carried away again, as there was Occaſion: And next to theſe Overſeers was the Interpreter, whoſe Office it was to recite in *Chaldee* the Leſſons as they were read in *Hebrew* to the Congregation; and, becauſe a good deal of Skill in both Languages was requiſite for ſuch an Undertaking, whenever the Rulers of the *Synagogue* found a Perſon fit for this Purpoſe, they retained him by a Salary, and ſo made him a ſtanding Miniſter among them.

Q. *What particular Day was appointed for the* Synagogue *Worſhip?*

A. The Times appointed for it, were three Days a Week, beſides their Holydays, whether Faſts or Feſtivals, and thrice on every one of thoſe Days, *i. e.* in the Morning, in the Afternoon, and at Night: And when at any of theſe Times, the Bleſſing was to be given, if there was a Prieſt preſent in the Congregation, he always did the Office; but if there was none there, the *Sheliach Zibber*, who read the Prayers in Form of a Benediction, made proper for him, diſmiſſed the People.

Q. *What Reaſon can you aſſign, why the* Jews *were ſo prone to Idolatry, before the* Babyloniſh *Captivity, and ſo ſtrongly bent againſt it afterwards?*

A. Becauſe they had the Law and the Prophets every Week read unto them, after that Captivity, which they had not before. Before the Captivity they had no Synagogues for publick Worſhip or Inſtruction, nor any Place to reſort to for theſe Purpoſes, but either the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, or the Cities of the *Levites*; and from hence great Ignorance grew among the People. God was little known among them, and his Laws in a Manner wholly forgotten; and therefore, as Occaſions offered, they were eaſily drawn into all the Superſtitions and idolatrous Practices of the *Heathen* Nations that lived about them: But now, after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and their Return from it, when *Synagogues* were erected in every City, to which they conſtantly reſorted for publick Worſhip, and where, every Week, they had the Law at firſt, and afterwards both the Law and the Prophets read to them; and where, by Sermons and Exhortations, they were, at leaſt, every Sabbath-day inſtructed in their Duty, and excited to the Performance of it; this kept them in a thorough Knowledge of God and his Laws; and the Comminations in the Prophets (when once they came to be read among them) deterred them from tranſgreſſing againſt them; for 2 *Tim.* iii. 15, 16, 17. *all Scripture* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *is given by Inſpiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the Man of God*, or every Man that reſolves to be godly, *may be perfect, wiſe unto Salvation, and thoroughly furniſhed unto all good Works.*

Q. *What Inferences do you draw from the whole?*

A. That ſince there was a publick Liturgy eſtabliſhed in the *Jewiſh* Church, and Forms of Prayer, tho' very empty and jejune in Compariſon of thoſe that are in Uſe among us; and yet our bleſſed Saviour, when upon Earth, was contented to join with the Publick in their Forms, (rather than ſeparate) *Luke* iv. 16. by frequenting the Synagogue every Sabbath-day; this may teach us, that to break the Union of a Church, upon the Account of a better Edification, is a Refinement that great Teacher of all Righteouſneſs knew nothing of. In the Courſe of Preaching, he ſpared not to tell the *Jews* freely of all the Corruptions, that in his Time they had run into; and therefore, had it been contrary to the Will of God, to uſe ſet Forms of Prayer in his publick Service, or had it been diſpleaſing to him, to be addreſſed to in ſuch mean Forms, when better might have been made, we may be ſure he would have told them both, and joined with them in neither; but ſince he never found fault with them for uſing a ſet Form to pray by; ſince he no where expreſſed a Diſlike of the Forms then in Uſe, upon Account of their Meanneſs, but, on the contrary, teſtified his Approbation of them, by joining with them in their *Synagogues*; this ſhould convince our Separatiſts, one would think, that neither our uſing ſet Forms of Prayer, in publick Worſhip, nor the uſing of ſuch as they think not ſufficiently edifying, can be Objections ſufficient to juſtify them in their Refuſal to join with us in them, becauſe, in both theſe Caſes, they have the Example of *Chriſt* himſelf againſt them.

The Truth is, whether there be a Form, or no Form, or whether the Form be elegantly or meanly compoſed; nothing of this availeth to the recommending of our Prayers unto God. It is the true and ſincere Devotion of the Heart alone, that can make them acceptable unto him: For it is this only that gives Life and Vigour, and a true Acceptance to all our religious Addreſſes. Without this, how elegantly, how movingly ſoever it may ſeem to be poured out, yet all this is dead Matter, and of no Validity in the Preſence of our God. But on the contrary, if we bring the Heart along with us to the Worſhip, the very *Heathens* can tell us, that be our Prayers or Oblations never ſo mean, they will be a Sacrifice of a ſweet-ſmelling Savour unto him.

Q. *Before we conclude this Book of* Ezra, *I ſhould be glad of ſome Account of* Darius, *who was ſo great a Friend to the* Jews?

A. The Character which our celebrated Connector of the *Old* and *New Teſtament* has given us of this *Darius* is, —— That he was a Prince of great Wiſdom, Clemency and Juſtice, and has the Honour to be recorded in holy Writ, for a Favourer of God's People, a Reſtorer of his Temple at *Jeruſalem*, and a Promoter of his Worſhip therein. For all this God was pleaſed to make him his Inſtrument; and, with reſpect to this, I doubt not it was, that he bleſſed him with a numerous Iſſue, a long Reign, and great Proſperity. For though he was not ſo very fortunate in his Wars againſt the *Scythians* and *Grecians*, yet, every where elſe, he had full Succeſs in all his Undertakings, and not only reſtored, and fully ſettled the Empire of *Cyrus*, after it had been much ſhaken by *Cambyſes* and by the Magicians, but alſo added many large and rich Provinces to it, eſpecially thoſe of *India*, *Thrace*, *Macedon*, and the Iſles of the *Ionian* Sea.

Q. *What was his Family; and by what Means did he come to the Crown?*

A. Darius had three Sons by his firſt Wife, the Daughter of *Gobrias*, all born before his Advancement to the Throne, and four others by *Atoſſa*, the Daughter of *Cyrus*, who were all born after it. Of the former, *Artabaſanes* was the eldeſt, of the latter *Xerxes*: And, as *Darius* advanced in Years, between theſe two was the Competition of the Succeſſion. *Artabaſanes* urged, that as he was the eldeſt Son, according to the Cuſtom and Uſage of all Nations, he ought to be preferred before any that was younger. But *Xerxes* replied to this, that he was the Son of *Darius*, by *Atoſſa* the Daughter of *Cyrus*, who was the firſt Founder of the *Perſian* Empire, for which Reaſon he held it juſt and reaſonable that the Crown of *Cyrus* ſhould rather come to a Deſcendant of *Cyrus*, than to one that was not; and to this he added, that though *Artabaſanes* was the eldeſt Son of *Darius*, yet he was not the Son of a King; that he was born when he was only a private Perſon, and could therefore claim no more than to be Heir of his private Fortunes; but that, as to himſelf, he was the *Firſtborn*, after his Father was King, and had therefore the beſt Right to ſucceed him in the Kingdom. Whereupon he was nominated to the Succeſſion, but not ſo much for the Strength of his Plea, as for the Influence which his Mother *Atoſſa* had over the Inclinations of her Huſband.

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

THIS Book ſeems not to have been written by Ezra, *becauſe the Stile of it is very different, more plain and eaſy, and without that Mixture of* Chaldee *or* Syriac *Words, which we find in the Book of* Ezra; *but probably by* Nehemiah *himſelf, who wrote an Account of his own Tranſactions, as* Ezra *did of his. But whether this be the ſame* Nehemiah, *who came up with* Zerubbabel, Ezra ii. 2. *and* Nehemiah vii. 7. *may be queſtioned, the ſame Name being frequently given to divers Perſons. And forthe Name of* Tirſhatha, *which is uſed both in* Ezra ii. 63, *and* Nehem. vii. 65, 70. *that ſeems to be the Title of his Office, and ſo belongs to any Governor, whether it was* Zerubbabel *or* Nehemiah, *or any other.*

It appears, from this and the following Hiſtories, that within the Compaſs of ſeventy Years God raiſed up divers excellent Men for the Preſervation of his People, after their Return from Babylon, *as* Zerubbabel, Ezra, *and* Nehemiah; *whereof the firſt was their Captain to bring them home, and provided that the Temple was builded. The ſecond reformed their Manners, and planted Religion; and the third built up the Walls, delivered the People from Oppreſſion, and provided that the Law of God was put in Execution among among them. He was a godly Man, and in great Authority with the King, ſo that the King favoured him greatly, and gave him moſt ample Letters for the Accompliſhment of all Things which he could deſire.*

Chap. I.

Nehemiah *underſtanding, by* Hanani, *the Afflictions of the* Jews, *and the Miſery of* Jeruſalem, *mourns, faſts and prays. His Prayer for them, and for Succeſs in his Petition to the King.*

Q. W*AS the* Nehemiah *mentioned* Ezra ii. 2. *the ſame who returned from the* Babyloniſh *Captivity, under* Zerubbabel?

A. Since from the firſt Year of *Cyrus*, to the twentieth of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, there are no leſs than ninety two Years intervening; ſo that *Nehemiah* muſt, at this Time, have been a very old Man, upon the loweſt Computation, above an hundred, and conſequently utterly incapable of being the King's Cup-bearer, of taking a Journey from *Shuſhan* to *Jeruſalem*, and of behaving there with all that Courage and Activity that is recorded of him; ſo that, upon this Preſumption, we may conclude, that this was a different Perſon, though of the ſame ſame Name; and that *Tirſhatha* (the other Name by which he is called, *Ezra* ii. 36. and *Nehemiah* vii. 65.) denotes the Title of his Office, and both in the *Perſian* and *Chaldean* Tongues, was the general Name given to all the King's Deputies and Governors.

Q. *The Jews had been returned to* Jeruſalem *a good while before* Nehemiah *came there, and yet the Walls were not repaired?*

A. The Commiſſions, which had hitherto been granted to the *Jews*, were ſuppoſed to extend no farther than to the Rebuilding of the Temple, and their own private Houſes; and therefore the Walls and Gates of their City lay in the ſame ruinous Condition in which the *Chaldeans* left them, after that Devaſtation.

Q. *Pray what was the Nature of the* Cup-bearer's *Office?*

A. This was a Place of great Honour and Advantage in the *Perſian* Court, becauſe of the Privilege, which it gave him, that was in it, of being daily in the King's Preſence, and the Opportunity he had thereby, of gaining his Favour for the obtaining of any Petition that he ſhould make to him. And that it was a Place of great Advantages, ſeems evident by *Nehemiah*'s gaining thoſe immenſe Riches, which enabled him, for ſo many Years out of his own private Purſe only, to live in his Government, with all that Splendor and Expence (that will hereafter be related) without burthening the People at all with it.

Chap. II.

Artaxerxes *underſtanding the Cauſe of* Nehemiah's *Sadneſs, ſends him with Letters to* Jeruſalem; *whither he comes to the Grief of the Enemy; he ſecretly, by Night, views the Ruins of the City. He encourages the* Jews *to build. The Enemies deriding*

deriding, charge them with Rebellion againſt the King. Nehemiah's *Anſwer.*

Q. H*OW long was it from the Time that* Nehemiah *heard of the deſolate State of* Jeruſalem) *till the Time he ſpoke to the King about it?*

A. Commentators have generally obſerved, that it was almoſt four Months between his hearing of the diſconſolate Condition, wherein *Jeruſalem* lay, and his requeſting Leave of the King to go thither. But (beſides that, it might not come to his Turn of waiting ſooner) there might be theſe farther Reaſons aſſigned for his long Silence and Delay. As that he could not take ſo long and dangerous a Journey in the Winter; that he could no ſooner meet with a ſeaſonable Opportunity of ſpeaking to the King upon ſo critical an Affair, or (as others will have it) that he retired all this intermediate while, and ſpent it in Faſting and Prayer.

Q. *What Time did the King allow* Nehemiah *for his Journey to* Judæa?

A. How long it was, it is not certain. 'Tis ſaid indeed, that he was *Governor in the Land of* Judah for *twelve Years*, Chap. v. 14. and xiii. 6. But, conſidering what Haſte he made in diſpatching the Building of the Walls, which he finiſhed in two and fifty Days, the Leave which he asked, might be but for a Year, or perhaps half ſo much, after which Time, 'tis likely that he returned to *Shuſhan*, according to his Promiſe, but ſome Time after was ſent back again by the King (who found his Preſence there ſerviceable, or perhaps neceſſary for the better Regulation of that Province) to be his Governor for *twelve Years.*

Q. *After* Nehemiah *had taken a View of the deſolate and ruinous Condition of the Walls of the City, he exhorts the People to repair them: What did he, according to* Joſephus, *ſay to them upon this Occaſion?*

A. The Speech which *Joſephus* puts in the Mouth of the Governor, upon this Occaſion, is to this Effect —— "You cannot but ſee, and underſtand, you Men of *Judæa*, that we ourſelves are, at this Day, under the Power and Providence of the ſame Almighty and merciful God, that did ſo many Things for our Forefathers, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, out of a gracious Regard to their Piety and Juſtice: And it is by the Favour of that God, that I have now obtained Leave from the King to enter upon the Rebuilding of your Wall, and the putting of an end to the Work of the Temple, that is yet unfiniſh'd. But taking this for granted, that you live among a Sort of malicious and ſpiteful Neighbours, who will do all, that is to be done in Nature, for the croſſing of your Deſign, when they once come to ſee you heartily intent upon the Undertaking, I ſhall therefore recommend it to you, in the firſt Place, reſolutely and fearleſsly to caſt yourſelves upon God, who will moſt certainly defeat all the Practices of your Enemies; and, in the next Place, to ply your Buſineſs Day and Night, without any Intermiſſion either of Care, or of Labour, this being the proper Seaſon for it."

CHAP. III.

The Names of the ſeveral Families that builded; the Order wherein, and the Proportion, how much they builded.

Q. W*HOSE Son was this* Eliaſhib *the High-prieſt?*

A. He was the Son of *Jehoiakim*, and the Grandſon of *Joſhua*, the firſt High-prieſt after their Return from *Babylon*.

Q. *When* Eliaſhib *and his Brethren had built the* Sheep-gate, they ſanctified it: *Pray, in what Manner?*

A. That is, they *prepared*, or *repaired it*; for ſo the Word ſometimes ſignifies: But our Tranſlation ſeems beſt, both becauſe the Uſe of that Word is moſt common, and becauſe this is ſpoke only of this Gate, which being built by the Prieſts, and neareſt the Temple, and with a ſpecial Eye to the Service thereof, for which both Men and Things were moſt commonly brought in this Way; and being alſo the firſt Part of the Building, might be, in a peculiar Manner *ſanctified* by ſolemn Prayer and Sacrifice, whereby it was dedicated to God's Service; and this either, 1. As it was conſidered in itſelf, or with reſpect to the reſt of the Building, of which this was the Beginning, and therefore in the Manner of the Firſt-fruits, for that Reaſon, bythe Sanctification of it, the whole Lump or Building was ſanctified. And, 2. ſince the whole City is often called the *holy City*, it is not ſtrange if the Walls and Gates of it be alſo holy, and ſaid to be *ſanctified*, eſpecially this Gate. See *Deut*. xx. v.

CHAP. IV.

The Enemies ſcoff and are angry. Nehemiah *prays againſt them, and continues the Work; ſets a Watch to prevent their ill Deſigns; arms and encourages the Labourers; and gives them military Orders.*

THIS Chapter contains a plain Narrative of of the contemptuous Behaviour of the Enemies to *Nehemiah*, and of his wary and prudent Conduct thereupon; and therefore wants no Explanation.

CHAP. V.

The People complain of their Brethren, by Reaſon of their Debts, Mortgages, and Bondage. Nehemiah *rebukes the Uſurers, and cauſes them to make a Covenant of Reſtitution. He forbears his own Allowance, and maintains Hoſpitality. The Quantity of his daily Proviſions. His Prayer.*

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve upon the Extortion with which the pooreſt Sort of* Jews *complained they were oppreſſed by their rich Brethren?*

A. This Uſury was the more grievous, becauſe it was not only contrary to their Law, and demanded at a Time when they were hard at Work, and their Enemies threatening to deſtroy them all; but, as ſome have obſerved, becauſe the twentieth of *Ahaſuerus* (wherein this was done) began about the End of a Sabbatical Year, after the Law, which forbad every Creditor to exact any Debt of his Neighbour or his Brother, *Deut*. xv. 2. had been ſo frequently read. This raiſed the Cry of the Poor to a greater Heighth, having been forced to ſell their Children, and deprived now of all Power of redeeming them, becauſe their Lands were mortgaged to theſe Oppreſſors.

Q. *In what Manner were the poor* Jews *oppreſſed?*

A. Not long before this there had been a great Scarcity, for Want of Rain, which God thought proper to withold, in Puniſhment for the People's taking more Care to build their own Houſes than his, as we read, *Haggai* i. 9, *&c.* In which time the Rich had no Compaſſion on their poor Brethren, but forced them to part with all they had for Bread; and now (which made them ſtill more miſerable) another *Dearth* was come upon them, which might eaſily happen, from the Multitude of People that were employed in the Repair of the Walls, from their Building-work, which hindered them from providing for their Families ſome other Way, and from the daily Dread they had of their Enemies, which might keep them from going abroad to fetch in Proviſion, and the Country People from bringing it in.

Q. *Surely* Nehemiah *muſt have had a very large Eſtate to keep open Table every Day for ſuch a Number of People at his own Expence.*

A. From this great and daily Expence, it ſeems moſt probable, either that *Nehemiah* had large Remittances from the *Perſian* Court (even beſides his own Eſtate) to anſwer it; or that he did not continue at *Jeruſalem* for the whole twelve Years together; or that, if he did, he did not continue this expenſive Way of Houſe-keeping all the Time, but only during the great and preſent Exigences and Diſtreſſes of the *Jews*, which ceaſed, in a good meaſure, after that the Walls were built, the Act againſt Uſury paſſed, and the People diſcharged to follow their ordinary Courſe of maintaining themſelves and Families.

CHAP. VI.

Sanballat *and* Tobiah *invite* Nehemiah *to a Conference, intending to do him a Miſchief*; Nehemiah's *Anſwer*; Shemajah's *falſe Prophecies to diſcourage* Nehemiah; *his Reply. The Work is finiſhed, to the Terror of his Enemies. Secret Correſpondence between the Nobles of* Judah *and the Friends of* Tobiah.

Q. WHO *was this* Sanballat *mentioned*, Ver. 1.

A. There is ſome Difficulty in reconciling the Account of *Joſephus* concerning *Sanballat*, and what is recorded of him in *Nehemiah*. *Joſephus* tells us, “That he, being made Governor of *Samaria*, under the laſt *Darius*, married his Daughter to one whoſe Father had been High-prieſt of the *Jews*, and that, when his Son-in-law was thereupon driven out of *Jeruſalem*, he obtained leave of *Alexander* to build a Temple on Mount *Gerizzim*, like that at *Jeruſalem*, and to make him the Prieſt thereof.” Now, to make this accord with what we read in *Nehemiah*, the general Opinion is, that there were two *Sanballats*, the firſt the *Sanballat* of the holy Scriptures, and the other the *Sanballat* of *Joſephus*[a]; and that there were two Marriages contracted by two different Perſons, Sons of two different High-prieſts of the *Jews*, with two different Women, who were each Daughters of two different *Sanballats*; the firſt, the Daughter of the *Sanballat* of the Scriptures, and the other the Daughter of the *Sanballat* of *Joſephus*, and that he, who married the firſt of them, was the Son of *Joiada*, but he who married the ſecond of them, was the Son of *Johanan*, Brother of *Jaddua*. But there is no Reaſon to have Recourſe to this perplexed Solution, ſeeing that *Joſephus* has incurred a palpable Miſtake in Point of Chronology. For, ſince this Marriage was concluded while *Joiada*, the Son of *Eliaſhib*, was the High-prieſt of the *Jews*, even in the fifth Year of his Pontificat; and ſince he entered upon that Office, in the eleventh Year of *Darius Nothus*, who reigned in all nineteen Years, it muſt follow, that the Licence, which *Sanballat* obtained, for the building of a Temple at *Samaria*, was not from *Alexander*, but from this *Darius*, in the fifteenth Year of his Reign, and above eighty Years before the *Darius Codomannus*, whom *Alexander* vanquiſhed, was known, conſequently, that there is no Occaſion to ſuppoſe any more *Sanballats* than one, or to extend his Life to an immoderate Length; only we may ſuppoſe that *Joſephus* was under a Miſtake, in placing this *Sanballat* under the Reign of *Codomannus*, who ſhould have been placed under a former *Darius*, firnamed *Nothus*, and, conſequently, that all he tells us of this *Sanballat*'s attending *Alexander* in his Wars, and of obtaining of him a Licence to build a Temple, is a mere Fiction founded on that Miſtake; becauſe in *Alexander*'s Time, the *Samaritans*, by murthering *Andromachus*, his Governor of *Syria*, had ſo incenſed that great Conqueror againſt them, that, inſtead of granting them any Favours, we find him making all the Havock of them that he could.

Q. *What do you underſtand by* the Houſe of God within the Temple?

A. By *the Houſe of God, within the Temple* (as it is in the Text, Ver. 10.) *Shemajah* certainly meant the Sanctuary; and to adviſe *Nehemiah* to retreat thither, he had a good Pretence; becauſe it was both a ſtrong and a ſacred Place, being defended by a Guard of *Levites*, and, by its Holineſs, priviledged from all rude Approaches: But his real Deſign herein might be, not only to diſgrace *Nehemiah*, and diſhearten the People, when they ſaw their Governor's Cowardice, but to prepare the Way likewiſe for the Enemies aſſaulting, and taking the City, when there was no Leader to oppoſe them; to give Countenance to the Calumny that had been ſpread abroad, of his affecting to be made King, becauſe he fled upon the Report of it; and perhaps, by the Aſſiſtance of ſome other Prieſts, that were his Confederates, either to deſtroy him, or to ſecure his Perſon, until the City was betray'd into the Enemies Hands.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Nehemiah's *Anſwer to* Shemajah?

A. The Words of *Nehemiah*, upon this Occaſion, are very ſignificant, as well as magnanimous. *Should ſuch a Man, as I, flee.* “I, the chief Governor, upon whoſe Preſence, and Counſel, and Conduct, the very Life and Being of the whole City and Nation does, in a great Meaſure, depend: I, who have profeſſed ſuch a Reſolution, and Courage, and Confidence in God: I, who have had ſuch eminent Experience of God's moſt gracious and powerful Aſſiſtances, of his calling me to this Employment, and carrying me thro' it, when the Danger was greater than now; ſhall I diſhonour God, and Religion, and betray the People, and the City of God by my Cowardice? God forbid!

Q. *It is ſaid*, That the Wall of (*of* Jeruſalem) was finiſhed in fifty two Days: *How was it poſſible that ſuch a prodigious Work ſhould be compleated in ſo ſhort a Time?*

A. How long *Nehemiah* was in finiſhing the Walls of *Jeruſalem*, Interpreters are not agreed, becauſe ſome of them, ſuppoſing the Space of two and fifty Days mentioned in Scripture, to be too ſhort for the perfecting of the whole, have begun the Computation of them from the Time that *Nehemiah* returned his Anſwer to *Sanballat*'s firſt Meſſage, and others from the Time that the Stone-wall was finiſhed, and ſo allowing the whole two and fifty Days for the perfecting of the reſt. But, if we look into the Compaſs of Time, from *Nehemiah*'s being at *Shuſhan*, to the Day of the Month when theſe Walls are ſaid to have been finiſhed, we ſhall find, that no more than fifty two Days could well be allowed for perfecting the whole.

It was in the firſt Month, called, by the *Jews*, *Niſan*, that *Nehemiah* was at *Shuſhan*, and obtained of the King Leave to go to *Jeruſalem*; and, tho' we have no expreſs Account, what Time he ſpent in his Journey, and when he came to *Jeruſalem*; yet if we make a Conjecture from the Time that *Ezra* expended in the ſame Journey, we can ſcarce ſuppoſe, that he arrived at *Jeruſalem* before the End of the fourth Month. *Ezra* ſet out the firſt Day of the firſt Month; he made a ſhort Stay, indeed, at the River *Ahava*, but it was the firſt Day of the fifth Month, before he reached *Jeruſalem*. *Nehemiah* could not poſſibly ſet out ſo ſoon in the Year, becauſe his *Commiſſion* from the King, and *Inſtructions* to the neighbouring Governours muſt have taken ſome Time in paſſing thro' the ſeveral Offices: And therefore we can ſcarce ſuppoſe, that he reached *Jeruſalem*, ſooner than the Time ſpecified; and from thence to the twenty fifth Day of the ſixth Month, (including the three Days Reſt, that he gave himſelf before he began) the Space will be much about fifty two Days, wherein we ſuppoſe that the whole Work was finiſhed. For, if *Alexander the Great* (as *Arrianus* and *Curtius* relate) built the Walls of *Alexandria*, which was ſeven Miles in Compaſs, in the Space of twenty Days; why ſhould it be thought a Thing incredible, that a vaſt Number, not of hired, but voluntary Men, full of Zeal for the Work themſelves, animated by the Example of their Rulers, and ranged and diſtributed in a proper Manner for Diſpatch, ſhould, in almoſt thrice that Space of Time, be able to finiſh a Work of leſs Compaſs; when they had long Summer-days for it, Plenty of Stones, and other Materials hard at hand, the Foundation of the Wall unrazed, ſome Parts of it ſtanding intire, only ſome Breaches here and there to be amended; and when their Deſign in the whole was not to ſtudy Curioſity but Strength, and to provide themſelves with ſuch a Fortification for the preſent, as would ſecure them from any ſudden Invaſion of their Enemies?

CHAP. VII.

Nehemiah *commits the Charge of the City to* Hanani *and* Hananiah. *His Advice to them. He finds out a Regiſter of the Genealogy of thoſe who returned firſt from* Babylon. *The whole Number of them. Their Subſtance. Their Offerings.*

Q. *WHAT was* Nehemiah's *principal Inducement to appoint* Hanani *and* Hananiah *Governors of* Jeruſalem?

A. Nehemiah, very likely, was now returning to *Shuſhan*, to give the King an Account of the State of Affairs in *Judæa*; and therefore he took Care to place ſuch Men in the City, as he knew would faithfully ſecure it in his Abſence. *Hanani* is ſaid to be his Brother; but he choſe his Officers, not out of partial Views to his own Kindred, but becauſe he knew they would acquit themſelves in their Employment with a ſtrict Fidelity. *Hanani* had given Proof of his Zeal for God and his Country, in his taking a tedious Journey from *Jeruſalem* to *Shuſhan*, to inform *Nehemiah* of the ſad Eſtate of *Jeruſalem*, and to implore his helping Hand to relieve it, *Ch.* i. And the Reaſon why *Nehemiah* put ſuch Confidence in *Hananiah*, was, becauſe he was a Man of Conſcience, and acted upon religious Principles, which would keep him from thoſe Temptations to Perfidiouſneſs, which he might probably meet with in his Abſence, and againſt which a Man, deſtitute of the Fear of God, has no Fence.

Q. *What do you underſtand by the* Palace, *over which* Hananiah *was Marſhal or Ruler?*

A. So the Houſe, which was built for *Nehemiah*'s Reſidence, might be juſtly called, becauſe he lived there in great Splendor, tho' wholly at his own Charge, and, as the King's Vice-roy, there gave Audience to the People, as a King is wont to do in his Palace.

Q. *It is ſaid*, that the City was large, but the People therein were few; *from whence we may ſuppoſe that great Numbers lived in the Country: But why they choſe a rural Life I ſhould be glad to know?*

A. One Reaſon, why the Bulk of the *Jews* (who were originally Paſtors, and Lovers of Agriculture) might rather chuſe to live in the Country, than at *Jeruſalem*, was, becauſe it was more ſuited to their Genius, and Manner of Life; but at this Time, their Enemies were ſo enraged to ſee the Walls built again, and ſo reſtleſs in their Deſigns to keep the City from riſing to its former Splendor, that it terrified many from coming to dwell there, thinking themſelves more ſafe in the Country, where their Enemies had no Pretence to diſturb them.

CHAP. VIII.

Ezra *brings forth, and expounds the Law of* Moſes, *and bleſſes God with the People.* Nehemiah *and* Ezra *comfort them; their Readineſs to hear, and to be inſtructed in the Law. They make themſelves Booths; and keep a Faſt ſeven Days.*

Q. *WHO was this* Ezra *the Scribe, who expounded the Law to the People?*

A. This *Ezra*, without all Controverſy, was the ſame *Ezra* that came from *Babylon*, in the ſeventh of *Artaxerxes*, with a full Commiſſion to *Jeruſalem*, to aſſiſt *Zerubbabel* in the Reformation of the whole State of the *Jewiſh* Church. After the Death of *Zerubbabel*, the whole Adminiſtration devolved upon him; but as his Commiſſion laſted but for twelve Years, upon its Expiration, *Nehemiah* ſucceeded to the Government, and we hear no more of *Ezra*, until he is here called upon to read and expound the Law to the People; whether (as ſome think) he returned to *Babylon* to give the King an Account of the Affairs in the Province of *Judæa*, or whether, in this intermediate Time, he employed himſelf, in ſome Retirement, in the great Work of preparing a *new and current Edition* of the Holy Scriptures.

Q. *What was the Form and Uſe of the* wooden Pulpit, *from which* Ezra *read and expounded the Law?*

A. This *Pulpit* was to raiſe him up higher than the People, the better to be ſeen and heard by them; but we are not to think that it was made in the Faſhion of ours, which will hold no more than one Perſon, for (as we may obſerve by the very next Words) it was made large and long enough to contain fourteen People at once.

Q. *In what Senſe was it true, that the Children of* Iſrael *had not kept ſuch a Feſtival ſince the Days of* Joſhua?

A. The Words in the Text are, *Since the Days of* Joſhua, *the Son of* Nun, *unto that Day, had not the Children of* Iſrael *done ſo, and there was very great Gladneſs*, Ver. 17. But it can hardly be thought, that this Feſtival had never been obſerved ſince *Joſhua*'s Time, becauſe we read in the foregoing Book of *Ezra*, that it was kept at their Return from *Babylon*; but the Meaning is, that the Joy ſince that Time had never been ſo great as it was upon this Occaſion; for which the *Jews* themſelves aſſign this Reaſon, *viz.* that, in the Days of *Joſhua*, they rejoiced, becauſe they had got Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*, and now they equally rejoiced, becauſe they were reſtored, and quietly ſettled in it, after they had been long caſt out of it.

CHAP. IX.

The ſolemn Faſt aud Repentance of the People, and the Manner of it. The Levites *confeſs and bleſs God for his Goodneſs to them and their Fathers in* Egypt, *in their Journey out of it, upon Mount* Sinai, *in their Journey towards* Canaan *in the Wilderneſs, in driving out the Nations before them, and in hearing their Prayer when in Trouble. They confeſs their Sins, and ſeal a Covenant.*

Q. *I ſhould be glad to know the Terms and Conditions of the Covenant which the People entered into.*

A. The Obſervances which they chiefly obliged themſelves to in this Covenant, were 1ſt, Not to make Intermarriages with the Gentiles. 2dly, To obſerve the Sabbath and Sabbatical Years. 3dly, To pay their annual Tribute for the Reparation and Service of the Temple. And 4thly, to pay the Tithes and Firſt-fruits, for the Maintainance of the Prieſts and *Levites*: From which Particulars, thus named in this Covenant, we may learn, what were the Laws of God, which hitherto they had been moſt neglectful of, ſince their Return from their Captivity.

Q. *Was ſuch a Covenant as this ſtrong enough to bind a People ſo prone to change as the* Jews *were?*

A. It ſignified little indeed, what ſuch untoward People promiſed: For, what Regard would they have to their own Hand-writing, who regarded not the ten Commandments, written on Tables of Stone by the Finger of God? It was very uſeful however, that there ſhould be a publick Inſtrument to convince them of their Impiety, and that they might be publickly confounded, when they proved perfidious Deſerters, by ſhewing them, under their own Hands, their Engagements to future Fidelity.

CHAP. X.

The Names of thoſe that ſealed the Covenant. The reſt of the People cleave to them. The Covenant.

Q. DOES *it not ſeem ſtrange, that* Ezra's *Name does not appear among thoſe who ſigned the Covenant?*

A. He might be prevented by Death or Sickneſs, or other extraordinary Impediment; for which we have this Preſumption, That, whereas *Ezra* appears, preaches, and prays with *Joſhua*, *Bani*, &c. before the Feaſt of Tabernacles, *Ch.* viii. 4. *&c.* and we have mention of him, *Ch.* ix. but the whole Work of that ſolemn Faſt-day was managed by them alone, without any Mention of *Ezra*, whoſe Name would not have been omitted, if he had been then preſent. Indeed, after this, we meet with *Ezra*, at the Dedication of the Wall of *Jeruſalem*, *Ch.* xiii. 36. and therefore he was then freed from his Impediment, whatever it was; and conſequently he was not dead.

CHAP. XI.

The Rulers and the tenth Man choſen by Lot; dwell at Jeruſalem. *A Catalogue of their Names, Numbers, and Families. The Reſidue of the People dwell in other Cities.*

Q. I*N the firſt Verſe we find the Rulers and People* caſting Lots: *Is not this ſufficient to warrant the ſame Practice?*

A. Tho' the Caſting of Lots be certainly unlawful, where the Thing is done out of Superſtition, or with a Deſign to tempt God; yet, on ſome Occaſions, it is enjoined by God himſelf, and the moſt holy Perſons, both in the Old and New Teſtament in particular Caſes, have practiſed it. The wiſe Man acknowledges the Uſefulneſs of this Cuſtom, when he tells us, *that the Lot cauſeth Contention to ceaſe, and parteth between the Mighty.* Prov. xviii. 18. and therefore it was no bad Policy (as Things now ſtood) to take this Method of Deciſion, ſince the Lot (which all allowed was under the divine Direction) falling upon ſuch a Perſon, rather than another, would be a great Means, no doubt, to make him remove contentedly from the City.

Q. *Why were the Children of* Judah *and* Benjamin *particularly called to inhabit* Jeruſalem?

A. Theſe were the two Tribes, that antiently poſſeſſed *Jeruſalem*, which ſtood, partly in one Tribe, and partly in the other; for which Reaſon, in ſome Places of Scripture, *Jeruſalem* is reckoned as belonging to the Children of *Judah*, Joſh. xvi. 63. and Judg. xviii. and in others, to the Children of *Benjamin*, Judg. xviii. 20. and xxi. 28. but what Part of the City belonged to one, and what to the other, is not ſo well agreed among learned Men. Since theſe two Tribes, however, were the antient Inhabitants of the City, there was all the Reaſon in the World, why, in this Scarcity of Inhabitants, they, above all others, ſhould be oblig'd to come and dwell there.

Q. *Why is a particular Note ſet on thoſe who offered themſelves willingly?*

A. They were certainly worthy to be reſpected, like Men, who ſought the Welfare of their Country, the Glory of God, the Defence of their City, and the Reſtoring of their Nation to its antient Splendor.

CHAP. XII.

The Prieſts and Levites *which came up with* Zerubbabel. *The Succeſſion of High-prieſts. Certain of* *of the chief* Levites. *The Manner of dedicating the Wall. The Offices of Prieſts and* Levites; *of Singers and Porters.*

Q. IN *what Manner was the* Dedication *of the* Walls *celebrated?*

A. Dedication is a religious Ceremony, whereby any Temple, Altar, and Veſſel, thereunto belonging, is, by the Pronuntiation of a certain Form of Bleſſing, conſecrated to the Service of God; and this Dedication, we may obſerve, extends, not only to Things ſacred, but to Cities and their Walls, and ſometimes to private Houſes, *Deut.* xx. 5. As therefore *Moſes*, in the Wilderneſs, dedicated the Tabernacle, and *Solomon* the Temple, when he had finiſhed it; ſo *Nehemiah*, having put things in good Order, built the Walls, and ſet up the Gates, thought proper to dedicate the City, as a Place, which God himſelf had choſen, and ſanctified by his Temple, and gracious Preſence; and, by this Dedication, to reſtore it to him again, after it had been laid waſte, and profaned by the Devaſtation of the Heathens.

Q. *The* Jaddua *mentioned*, Ver. 11. *is generally ſuppoſed to be the High-prieſt in the Days of* Alexander the Great, *as* Joſephus *ſays, which was many Years after* Nehemiah; *how then could he mention him?*

A. Without any Suppoſition of Interpolations in the Text, we cannot ſee, why *Nehemiah* might not live, to mention in his Hiſtory, both *Jaddua* the High-prieſt, and *Darius Codomannus*. For, if we ſuppoſe, that he was but a Youth (as Youths were generally made Cup-bearers to Eaſtern Princes) when he went to *Jeruſalem*, which might be about the 20th Year of *Artaxerxes*, i. e. in the Year of the World 3559; between this Time, and the Death of *Cordomannus*, there were an hundred and fifteen Years; and therefore, if in the twentieth of *Artaxerxes*, *Nehemiah* was ſixteen, he might be about an hundred and thirty Years old when *Darius* died, which is a Thing neither new nor wonderful; though the Mention of *Darius* in *Nehemiah* might refer to his firſt Acceſſion to the *Perſian* Throne, which makes an Abatement of three or four Years.

CHAP. XIII.

Upon the reading of the Law, Separation is made between Iſrael *and the mixed Multitude.* Nehemiah, *at his Return to* Jeruſalem, *cauſes the Chambers to be cleanſed. He reſtores and reforms the Offices of the Prieſts and* Levites *in the Houſe of God; and ſeeing the Profanation of the Sabbath, he contends with the Nobles of* Judah. *He ſhuts the Gates, and ſets a Watch over them. The Puniſhment of marrying with ſtrange Wives.* Nehemiah's *Prayer.*

Q. WHO *was this* Eliaſhib *that is mentioned* Ver. 4?

A. Some are apt to imagine that this *Eliaſhib* was no more than a common Prieſt, becauſe he is ſaid to have had *the Overſight of the Chambers of the Houſe of God*, Ver. 4. which was an Office too mean (as they think) for the *High-prieſt*. But we cannot ſee, why the Overſight of the *Chambers of the Houſe of God* may not import the whole Government of the Temple, which certainly belonged to the High-prieſt only; nor can we conceive, how any one, that was leſs than abſolute Governor of the whole Temple, could make ſo great an Innovation in it. He was Aſſiſtant indeed in the Reparation of the Walls of the City; but excepting this one Act, where do we read of his doing any thing worthy of Memory, towards the reforming what was amiſs, either in Church or State, in the Times either of *Ezra* or *Nehemiah?* And yet we cannot but preſume, that had he join'd with them in ſo good a Work, ſome Mention would be made of it in the Books written by them. Since therefore, inſtead of this, we find it recorded by *Ezra*, Chap. x. 18. that the pontifical Houſe was, in his Time, grown very corrupt, and, very probably, by his Connivance, began to marry into heathen Families, *Ver.* 28. it ſeems moſt likely, that it was *Eliaſhib* the High-prieſt, who was the Author of this Profanation of the Houſe of God, but might probably die, before *Nehemiah* returned from *Babylon*, and, for this Reaſon, we hear nothing of the Governor's reprehending him for it.

Q. *How came* Tobiah *to have ſo great an Intereſt among the chief Families of the* Jews?

A. By his making two Alliance with Families of great Note among the *Jews:* For, *Jonathan* his Son had married the Daughter of *Meſhullam*, the Son of *Berechiah*, Neh. vi. 18. and iii. 4. who was one of the chief Managers of the Building of the Wall of *Jeruſalem*, under the Direction of the Governor; and he himſelf had married the Daughter of *Shecaniah*, the Son of *Arah*, another great Man among the *Jews*; by which Means he had formed an Intereſt and was look'd upon as a very worthy Man, tho' (being an *Ammonite*) he could not but bear a national Hatred to all that were of the Race of *Iſrael.*

Q. *In what Manner were the* Ammonite *and* Moabite *excluded from the* Congregation of God?

A. They, who, by *the Congregation of God*, in this Place, do underſtand *the publick Aſſemblies for divine Worſhip*, lie under a great Miſtake: For no Man of any Nation was forbidden to come and pray unto God in the Temple. Men of all Nations, indeed, that were willing to become Proſelytes, were admitted into the *Jewiſh* Communion; and, if they ſubmitted to be circumciſed, were allowed to eat the Paſſover, and enjoy all the Privileges that true *Iſraelites* did, except only in the caſe of Marriage; and therefore this Phraſe, of not *entering into the Congregation of the Lord*, muſt be underſtood to mean no more, than a Prohibition of Marriage: For this (according to their Rabbins) was the Caſe of ſuch Prohibitions. None of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, of either Sex, were to enter into Marriage with any *Gentiles*, of what Nation ſoever, unleſs they were firſt converted to their Religion, and became intire Proſelytes to it; and, even in that Caſe, ſome were debarred from it for ever; others, only in Part; and others again, only for a limited Time. Of the firſt Sort were all the ſeven Nations of the *Canaanites*, mention'd in *Deut.* vii. of the ſecond Sort were the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, whoſe Males were excluded for ever, but not their Females; and of the third Sort were the *Edomites* and *Egyptians*, with whom the *Jews* might not marry until the third Generation: But with all others who were not of theſe three excepted Sorts, they might freely make Intermarriages, whenever they became thorough Proſelytes to their Religion.

Q. *In what Manner did the* Jews *cleanſe ſuch Things as had contracted any Impurity?*

A. The Method of purifying any Thing or Perſon, that was legally unclean, is thus deſcribed, *For an unclean Perſon, they ſhall take of the Aſhes of the burnt Heifer of Purification for Sin,* (i. e. of the *Heifer* that was ſacrificed on the great Day of Expiation) *and running Water ſhall be put thereto in a Veſſel,* which being ſtrained off, and kept for this Purpoſe, *a clean Perſon, i. e.* the Prieſt (for to him this Work of purifying is appropriated, *Lev.* xiii.) *ſhall ſprinkle upon the unclean Perſon,* and *the ſeventh Day Even,* after having *bathed himſelf,* and *waſhed his Cloathes,* he ſhall be deemed clean; but it is very likely that Things inanimate were immediately, upon their being ſprinkled with this Water of Separation, as it is called (*Numb.* xix. 9.) reputed clean.

Q. *Why did* Nehemiah *rather chuſe to ſet his own Servants to watch the Gates, than thoſe who were uſually appointed for that Service?*

A. It ſeems as if Matters were come that paſs, that he could not truſt the common Porters of the Gates, and therefore appointed ſome of his Domeſticks (who he knew would neither be careleſs nor corrupted) to ſee that the Gates were kept ſhut, and all Traffick prohibited.

Q. *What was* Nehemiah's *Reaſon for appointing the* Levites *to the ſervile Office of keeping the Gates on the Sabbath-day?*

A. Becauſe he not only thought, that by Virtue of their Character, they would meet with more Deference and Reſpect than his domeſtick Servants; but that, when he and his Servants were gone from *Jeruſalem,* he was reſolved to have this Watch continued, until this evil Cuſtom of admitting Dealers into the City on the Sabbath-day was quite broken.

Q. *What was the natural Language of the* Jews, *at this Time, the* Hebrew *or* Chaldee?

A. This is a Matter of ſome Enquiry among the Learned. Thoſe, who ſuppoſe that it was *Hebrew,* produce the Books of *Ezra, Nehemiah* and *Eſther,* beſides the Prophecies of *Daniel,* which, for the moſt Part, were written in *Hebrew,* and which, they ſuppoſe, the Author of them would not have done, if *Hebrew,* at that Time, had not been the vulgar Language. But to this it is replied, that theſe *Jewiſh* Authors might make uſe of the *Hebrew* Language, in what they wrote; not only becauſe the Things which they recorded, concerned the *Jewiſh* Nation only, among whom there were learned Men enough to explain them, but chiefly, becauſe they were minded to conceal what they wrote from the *Chaldeans,* who, at that Time, were their Lords, and, conſidering all Circumſtances, might not, perhaps, have been ſo well pleaſed with them, had they underſtood the Contents of their Writings. Since it appears then, ſay they, by ſeveral Words occurring in the Books of the *Maccabees,* the *New Teſtament,* and *Joſephus,* that the Language, which the *Jews* then ſpoke, was *Chaldee;* that this Language they learned in their Captivity, and after their Return from it, never reaſſumed their antient *Hebrew* Tongue, ſo as to ſpeak it vulgarly, it hence muſt follow, that what is here called the *Language of the Jews,* and their native Tongue, was at that Time no other than the *Chaldee,* for the antient *Hebrew* was only preſerved among the Learned.

Q. *In what Senſe do you explain* Verſe 25, *where* Nehemiah *ſays,* I contended with them, and curſed them, and ſmote certain of them, and plucked off *their Hair?*

A. The Senſe of the Words is no more than this, —— *I contended with them,* i. e. I expoſtulated the Matter with them. *I curſed them,* i. e. ordered the Officers to beat ſome of the moſt notorious Offenders, either with Rods, or with Rods or with Scourges, according to Deut. xxv. 2. *And I plucked off their Hair,* i. e. *I commanded them to be ſhaved,* thereby to put them to Shame, and make them look live Slaves: For as Hair was eſteemed a great Ornament among *Eaſtern* Nations, ſo Baldneſs was accounted a great Diſgrace; and to inflict theſe ſeveral Puniſhments upon them, *Nehemiah* had a ſufficient Provocation, becauſe in their marrying with *Heathen* Nations, they had acted contrary, not only to the expreſs Law of God, but to their own late ſolemn Covenant and Promiſe.

Q. *Was the Son of* Joiada *baniſhed his Country upon the ſingle Authority of* Nehemiah?

A. *Joſephus* relates the Matter, as if this Expulſion had been effected by the Power of the great *Sanhedrim:* But whether the *Sanhedrim* was, at this Time in Being or no (as we have no clear Footſteps of it, untill the the Time of *Judas Maccabæus*) there was no Occaſion for their interpoſing, ſince *Nehemiah,* no doubt, as Governor of the Province, had Authority enough to baniſh him out of *Judea.*

Q. *How long did* Nehemiah *continue in his Government?*

A. Upon the Death of *Artaxerxes,* (in Scripture called *Ahaſuerus*) *Xerxes,* his only Son by his Queen (for he had ſeveral by his Concubines, and among theſe the moſt famous were *Sogdianus, Ochus* and *Arſites*) ſucceded in the *Perſian* Throne; but by the Treachery of one of his Eunuchs, *Sogdianus* came upon him, while he was drunk, and, after he had reigned no more than five and forty days, ſlew him and ſeized on the Kingdom. But his unjuſt Poſſeſſion did not hold long; for his Brother *Ochus* being then Governor of *Hyrcania,* raiſed a conſiderable Army, and having gained many of the Nobility, and Governors of Provinces to his Intereſt, marched againſt him, and under a Pretence of a Treaty, having got him into his Power, threw him headlong into *Aſhes,* (a Puniſhment uſed among the *Perſians* for very enormous Criminals) ſo that, after he had reigned only ſix Months and fifteen Days, he died a very miſerable Death, and was ſuceeded by *Ochus;* who as ſoon as he was ſettled in the Kingdom, took the Name of *Darius,* (and therefore by Hiſtorians called *Darius Nothus*) and, after he had ſlain his Brother *Arſites* (who thought to have ſupplanted him, as he had done *Sogdianus,* and *Sogdianus Xerxes*) and ſuppreſſed ſeveral other Inſurrections againſt him, continued to ſway the *Perſian* Scepter for nineteen Years; but whether he or *Nehemiah,* his Governor of *Judea,* died firſt, we have no certain Account: All that we know is, that the laſt Act of the Governor's Reformation, *viz.* his Diſſolution of ſtrange Marriages, was in the fifteenth Year of this Prince's Reign, and conſequently but four before his Death.

THE

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

This Book was conſtantly received for a Part of the Canon of Scripture by the People of the Jews; *whoſe Authority herein is the more conſiderable, becauſe,* to them were committed the Oracles of God, *Rom.* iii. 2. *to keep them ſafely, and tranſmit them carefully to Poſterity. And it is a very ſtrong Preſumption, that they were true to their Truſt, that our bleſſed Lord and his holy Apoſtles, who taxed the* Jews *with many Faults, both greater and leſs, never charged them with Unfaithfulneſs herein; which, if the* Jews *had been guilty, they would certainly have done, and by their Office were obliged to do, for the Inſtruction and Caution of the Chriſtian Church, whoſe Faith was built, no leſs upon the Writings of the Prophets, than upon the Doctrines of the Apoſtles. The Pen-man of it, is, both by* Jewiſh *and* Chriſtian *Interpreters, antient and modern, thought to be* Mordecai; *who was both an holy Man of God, and a principal Actor in this Hiſtory.*

CHAP. I.

Ahaſuerus *and* Vaſhti *make a Royal Banquet. He ſends for* Vaſhti, *who refuſes to come. He conſults his wiſe Men about it. Their Judgment and Advice to put her away. He makes the Decree of Mens Sovereignty in their own Houſes.*

Q. WHO *was this King* Ahaſuerus, *who is the chief Actor in the following Hiſtory?*

A. This Prince, to diſtinguiſh him from others of the ſame Name, was called *Longimanus*, upon the ſuppoſed Length of his Hands, with which, it is ſaid, he could have touched his Knees, even when he ſtood upright; but, this notwithſtanding, it is reported of him, that he was both the handſomeſt Perſon of the Age in which he lived, and a Prince likewiſe of a very mild and generous Diſpoſition.

Q. *What other Opinions are there concerning him?*

A. Our learned *Uſher* is of Opinion, that *Darius Hyſtaſpes* was the King *Ahaſuerus* who married *Eſther*, viz. that *Atoſſa* was *Vaſhti*, and *Artyſtona* the *Eſther* of the holy Scriptures. But *Herodotus* tells us poſitively, that *Artyſtona* was the Daughter of *Cyrus*, and therefore could not be *Eſther*, and that *Atoſſa* had four Sons by *Darius*, beſides Daughters, all born unto him after he was King, and therefore ſhe could not be that Queen *Vaſhti* who was divorced from the King her Huſband in the third Year of his Reign, *Eſther* i. 3. nor he that *Ahaſuerus* that divorced her. *Joſeph Scaliger* is likewiſe of Opinion, that *Xerxes* was the *Ahaſuerus*, and *Hameſtris* his Queen, the *Eſther* of the holy Scriptures; but whatever ſeeming Similitude there may be in their Names (and this is the whole Foundation of his Conjecture) 'tis plain from *Herodotus*, that *Xerxes* had a Son by *Hameſtris*, who was marriageable in the ſeventh Year of his Reign, and therefore it is impoſſible ſhe ſhould be *Eſther*, becauſe *Eſther* was not married to *Ahaſuerus* until the ſeventh Year of his Reign, *Eſther* ii. 16. and, conſidering that the Choice of Virgins was made for him in the fourth of his Reign, and a whole Year employed in their Purifications, the ſooneſt that ſhe could have a Son by him, muſt be in the ſixth, and therefore we may conclude (with *Joſephus*, the *Septuagint*, and the *apocryphal* Additions to the Book of *Eſther*) that the *Ahaſuerus* in Scripture was *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, and *Eſther* an *Hebrew* Virgin.

Q. *What was the Occaſion of the Royal Feaſt, with which* Ahaſuerus *entertained the Princes and Great Men of the Realm.*

A. The Occaſion of this great Feſtival is, very likely, intimated to us in the Phraſe, *when the King* Ahaſuerus *ſat upon the Throne of his Kingdom*, Ch. i. 2. *i. e.* enjoying Peace and Tranquillity through his large Dominions; for the Hiſtory of his Succeſſion to the Throne is this, —— *Xerxes*, his Father, was privately murdered by *Artabanus*, the Captain of his Guard, who coming to him (who was then but the third Son) made him believe that *Darius* his eldeſt Brother had done it, to make his Way to the Throne, and had a Deſign to cut him off likewiſe, to ſecure himſelf in it. This *Ahaſuerus* believing, went immediately to his Brother's Apartment, and, by the Aſſiſtance of the wicked *Artabanus*, and his Guards, ſlew him, thinking all the while that he acted but in his own Defence. *Artabanus*

banus's Drift was to ſeize on the Throne himſelf; but, for the preſent, he took *Ahaſuerus* and placed him thereon, with a Deſign to pull him down, as ſoon as Matters were ripe for his own Aſcent: But when *Ahaſuerus* underſtood this from *Megabyzus*, who had married one of his Siſters, he took care to counterplot *Artabanus*, and to cut him and his whole Party off, before his Treaſon was come to Maturity; and for this, and ſome other Succeſſes againſt his Brother *Hyſtaſpes*, which ſettled him in a peaceable Poſſeſſion of the whole *Perſian* Empire, very probably it was, that a feſtival Seaſon, of above an hundred and fourſcore Days Continuance was appointed, which, even to this Day (according to the Report of ſome Travellers) is no uncommon Thing in theſe Parts of the World.

Q. *Can you give any probable Account who this* Vaſhti *was?*

A. This has been a Subject of great Enquiry among the Learned. Thoſe who make the *Ahaſuerus* in Scripture, to be *Darius* the Son of *Hyſtaſpes*, ſuppoſe that ſhe was *Atoſſa*, the Daughter of *Cyrus*, who was firſt married to *Cambyſes*, her own Brother, then to the *Magician*, who would have paſſed for *Smerdis*, and laſt of all to *Darius*. Others ſuppoſe that ſhe was the own Siſter of *Ahaſuerus*, becauſe the *Perſians*, in thoſe Days, made no Scruple of this Kind of Marriages; tho' there is much more Reaſon to think, that before her Marriage, there had been ſuch a Collection of Virgins made for the Uſe of the King, as was before *Eſther*'s. (This is implied in Chap. ii. 19.) and the having the good Fortune then of obtaining the Preferrence in the King's Eſteem, ſhe was created Queen; but being, perhaps, a Woman of no high Deſcent, her Family and Extraction, for that Reaſon, might be concealed.

Q. *Who were the* Wiſemen *with whom the King adviſed on this Occaſion?*

A. The Words, in our Tranſlation are, *the wiſe Men who knew the Times*, Ver. 13. And from hence ſome have obſerved, that as the *Perſian* Kings did nothing without their *Magi*, who were great Pretenders to Aſtrology. Men of this Sort were called, to know whether it was a proper Time to ſet about the Thing which the King might have then in his Mind. The Explication, however, which *Vitringa* gives us of of the original Words *Jodehe habittim*, is far from being improper, *viz.* that they were Men well verſed in antient Hiſtory, and were therefore able to give the King Counſel in all extrarordinary and perplexed Caſes, as this certainly was.

CHAP II.

The Virgins of the Kingdom being called together, a Queen is to be choſen. Eſther, *educated under* Mordecai, *is choſen to be one of the Virgins, and preferred before the reſt. The Manner of her Purification. She pleaſes the King, and is made Queen. The King makes a Feaſt for his Princes and Servants.* Mordecai *diſcovers a Treaſon againſt the King, which is recorded in the Chronicles.*

Q. P*RAY give ſome Account of* Eſther; *and why ſhe was ſo called?*

A. This Woman was born in *Babylon*, and therefore, in Analogy to that Language, they gave her the Name of *Hadaſſah*, which in *Chaldee* ſignifies a *Myrtle*; but her *Perſian* Name was *Eſther*, which ſome (a little incongruouſly) derive from *Aſter*, a *Star*, and others from *Satar*, which ſignifies *hidden*, becauſe ſhe was concealed in *Mordecai*'s Houſe, or rather, becauſe her Nation was concealed, and ſhe not known, until *Mordecai*'s Merit and Services to the Crown came to be rewarded.

Q. *What was the Reaſon that Virgins, deſigned for the King's Uſe, were to go through a Courſe of Purification?*

A. The Reaſon is aſſigned in the following Verſe for their being kept ſo long in this Courſe, *viz.* that for ſix Months they might be anointed with *the Oil of Myrrh*, which, beſides the Fragrancy of its Smell, was good to make the Skin ſoft and ſmooth, and clear it from all Manner of Scurf; and for ſix more with ſweet Odours, which, in thoſe hot Countries, were neceſſary to take away all ill Scents, and (as ſome think) to make the Body more vigorous. But, beſides this, there might be ſomething of State in making thoſe Vaſſals (for ſuch they were accounted) wait, before they were admitted to the Honour of the King's Bed; and ſomething of Policy too, in keeping them ſecluſe for ſo long a Time, that the King might be ſatisfied that he was not impoſed upon by a Child begotten by another Man.

Q. *Were not the* Perſian *Monarchs allowed a Multiplicity of Wives? And what Diſtinction had their Wives above their Concubines?*

A. According to this Account of Things, this *Perſian* Monarch ſeems to have had but one Wife, at leaſt but one in chief Favour and Eſteem with him, tho' it is certain he could not fail of having an infinite Number of ſecondary Wives or Concubines; for this was the Name of every one that was taken from among the Virgins, (who had a ſeparate Houſe for themſelves) and conducted to the King's Bed; where having paſſed a Night, ſhe returned no more to the Virgin's Apartments, but was, the next Morning, received into the Houſe of the Concubines, and there treated in the State and Port of one of the King's Wives, for ſuch they were accounted. No Man was permitted to marry them, as long as the King lived, and upon his Demiſe, they generally fell to his Succeſſor. Of theſe *Darius Nothus* is reckoned to have had no leſs than three hundred and ſixty.

Q. *What Kind of Preſents did the* Perſian *Kings uſually make to their bridal Queens?*

A. The Manner of the *Perſian* King was, to give his Queens, at his Marriage, ſuch a City to buy them Cloaths; another for their Hair; another for their Necklaces; and ſo on for the reſt of their Expences: And, as it was cuſtomary for him (according to the Teſtimony of *Herodotus*) to remit the Tribute that was due to him from all the Cities, upon his Acceſſion to the Throne; ſo he might, upon this Occaſion, out of his abundant Joy, make a Releaſe to the Provinces, and forgive them ſome of the Duties and Impoſts that they were bound to pay him.

Q. *Can you give any reaſonable Conjecture what was the Provocation that incenſed the two Chamberlains to conſpire the Death of the King?*

A. Theſe were two great Men, who, perhaps, kept the Door of the King's Bed-chamber, and being either incenſed at the Divorce of *Vaſhti* (whoſe Creatures they were) or at the Advancement of *Eſther*, who, in all Probability, would raiſe her Kinſman *Mordecai* to a Superiority over them, took

Diſguſt thereat, and ſo reſolved to revenge themſelves on the King for it.

Q. *Was* Ahaſuerus *juſtifiable in divorcing* Vaſhti; *or* Eſther *to be vindicated in ſupplying her Place?*

A. Though we are far from pretending to apologize, either for the Injuſtice of *Ahaſuerus*, in abdicating his Queen, or for the Conduct of *Eſther* in going to his Bed, yet a good deal of this might be reſolved into the Cuſtom of a Nation, where the King was abſolute, and his Subjects mere Vaſſals; where the Will of the Prince, I ſay, was a perfect Law, and a Plurality of Wives and Concubines reputed honourable. This, however, may be ſaid in Behalf of *Ahaſuerus*, that he did not divorce his Wife, without firſt conſulting his Counſellors, and ſuch as were beſt acquainted with the Laws of their Country; and therefore, if there was any Iniquity in it, they were the Perſons chiefly to be puniſhed. And this may be ſaid in Excuſe for *Eſther*, that the Words which we render, *ſhe was brought*, may equally ſignify *ſhe was taken away*, viz. by Violence, for (as the *Targum* upon this Paſſage relates the Matter) "*Mordecai* hearing of the King Edict for the Collection of all the beautiful Virgins in his Dominions, hid his Couſin in a private Place, where the Officers could not find her, but when *Eſther* (whom all the Neighbourhood knew to be a great Beauty) was miſſing, an Order from the King to *Mordecai* was procured, which, upon Pain of Death, obliged him to produce her. However this be, it is certain, that the Perſons whom the King took to his Bed in this Manner, were not reputed Harlots, but became his lawful Wives, though Wives of an inferior Degree; and therefore it is no great Wonder, that *Eſther*, in theſe Circumſtances (tho' a very virtuous Woman) ſhould conſent; nor can we tell, but that *Mordecai* and ſhe might have a Diſpenſation from God, (as God, no doubt, can diſpenſe with his own Law) ſuppoſing there were any Contrariety to the divine Laws in this Tranſaction.

Chap. III.

Haman *is advanced by the King; being deſpiſed by* Mordecai, *he ſeeks to deſtroy all the* Jews. *He caſteth Lots, and accuſing the* Jews *to the King, obtains a Decree to put them to death. Letters iſſued for that Purpoſe.*

Q. OF *what Country was* Haman, *who is here called the Son of* Hammedatha *the* Agagite?

A. In the apocryphal Additions to this Book, he is called a *Macedonian*, and ſo he might be by his Birth and Habitation in that Place, though, by his Original, he was of another People.

Q. *What was the true Ground of* Haman's *Diſguſt to* Mordecai?

A. Joſephus tells us, than *Haman*, taking Notice of the Singularity of *Mordecai*, asked him, What Countryman he was? And finding him to be a *Jew*, broke out into a violent Exclamation at the Inſolence of ſuch a Scoundrel, that when all the Natives of the freeborn *Perſians* made no Difficulty of doing him that Honour, this Slave of a *Jew* ſhould preſume to affront him; and in this Rage he took up a deſperate Reſolution, not only to be revenged of *Mordecai*, but to deſtroy the whole Race of *Jews* likewiſe, well remembering that his Anceſtors, the *Amalekites*, had been formerly beaten out of their Land, and utterly exterminated by the *Jews*.

Q. *We find*, Verſe 7. *that* Haman *ſpent a whole Year in* caſting Lots: *Why was he ſo long about it?*

A. It was in the firſt Month in the Year, when *Haman* began to caſt Lots, and the Time for the Execution of the *Jews*, was, by theſe Lots, delayed until the laſt Month in the Year, which plained ſhews, *That though the Lot be caſt into the Lap, yet the whole diſpoſing thereof is from the Lord*, Prov. xvi. 33. For hereby almoſt a whole Year intervened between the Deſign and its Execution, which gave Time for *Mordecai* to acquaint Queen *Eſther* with it, and for her to intercede with the King for the revoking or ſuſpending the Decree, and thereby diſappointing the Conſpiracy: For we can hardly think (what *Le Clerc* ſuggeſts) that *Haman* gave the *Jews* all this Time, that they might make their Eſcape out of the Kingdom, and not ſtay to be ſlain, which poſſibly might bring an Odium upon himſelf, when it came to be known, by whoſe Inſtigation the Maſſacre was committed.

Q. *At* Haman's *Requeſt the King paſſes a Decree to deſtroy the* Jews: *In what Manner and Form was this Decree drawn up?*

A. The Decree (according to *Joſephus*) was to this Effect. —— "*The great King* Artaxerxes, *to the hundred and ſeven and twenty Governors of the Provinces between* India *and* Ethiopia *greeting.* Whereas it has pleaſed God to give me the Command of many Nations, and Dominion over the reſt of the World, as large as I myſelf deſire, I being reſolved to do nothing that may be tyrannical or grievous towards my People, and to bear a gentle and eaſy Hand over them, with an Eye more eſpecially to the Preſervation of their Peace and Liberties, and to ſettle them in a State of Tranquillity and Happineſs, not to be ſhaken. All this I have taken into mature Deliberation; and being given to underſtand by my truſty and well-beloved Friend and Counſellor *Haman*, a Perſon of a tried Faith, Prudence and Juſtice, and whom I eſteem above all others, that there is a Mixture of a Sort of inhuman People among my Subjects, that take upon them to govern by their own Laws, and to preſcribe Ways to themſelves, in contempt of publick Order and Government, Men depraved both in their Cuſtoms, and in their Manners, and Enemies not only to *Monarchy*, but to the Methods of our royal Adminiſtration: This is therefore to will and require, that upon Notice given to you by *Haman* who is to me as a Father) of the Perſons intended by this my Proclamation, you put all the ſaid Perſons, Men, Women and Children to to the Sword, without any Commiſeration or Favour, in a ſtrict Purſuance of my Decree: And it is my farther Command, that you put this in Execution upon the thirteenth Day of the twelfth Month of the preſent Year, to make but one Day's Work of the Deſtruction of all mine and Enemies, in order to a future Peace and Security, all our Lives after."

Q. *This Decree, when ſigned and ſeal'd, was ſent away in Letters by* the Poſts: *Were* Poſts *the only Means of conveying Intelligence through the Kingdom?*

A. The firſt Inſtitutions of *Poſts* is generally aſcribed to the *Perſians*, for the Kings of *Perſia* (as *Diodorus Siculus*, l. 19. obſerves) that they might have Intelligence of what paſſed in all the Provinces of their vaſt Dominions, placed Centinels on Eminences, at convenient Diſtances, where Towers were built, and theſe Centinels gave Notice of publick Occurrences to one another with a loud and ſhrill Voice, by which Means News was tranſmitted from one Extremity of the Kingdom to the other, with great Expedition. But as this could be practiſed, only in Caſe of general News, which might be communicated to the whole Nation; *Cyrus*, as *Xenophon* relates, *Cyropæd.* l. 8. ſet up *Couriers*, Places for Poſt-horſes on all high Roads, and *Offices* where they might deliver their Pacquets to one another. This, ſays our Author, they did Night and Day; ſo that no Rain or hard Weather being to ſtop them. In the Judgment of many, they went faſter than Cranes could fly. The like is ſaid by *Herodotus*, l. 1. and he acquaints us farther, that *Xerxes*, in his famous Expedition againſt *Greece*, planted Poſts from the *Ægean* Sea to *Shuſhan*, at certain Diſtances, as far as a Horſe could ride with Speed, that thereby he might ſend Notice to his Capital City, of whatever might happen in his Army. The *Greeks* borrowed the Uſe of Poſts from the *Perſians*, and, in Imitation of them, called them *Angaroi*. Among the *Romans*, *Auguſtus* was the Perſon who ſet up publick Poſts, that, at the firſt, were running Footmen, but were afterwards changed into Poſt-Chariots and Horſes for the greater Expedition. *Adrian* improved upon this; and, having reduced the Poſts to greater Regularity, diſcharged the People of the Obligation they were under before, of furniſhing Horſes and Chariots. With the Empire the Uſe of Poſts declined. About the Year 807, *Charlemaign* endeavoured to reſtore them, but his Deſign was not proſecuted by his Succeſſors. In *France*, *Lewis* XI. ſet up Poſts, at two Leagues Diſtance, through the Kingdom. In *Germany*, Count *Taxis* ſet them up, and had, for his Recompence, in 1616, a Grant of the Office of Poſtmaſter-general, to himſelf and his Heirs for ever. About eight hundred Years ago, Couriers were ſet up in the *Ottoman* Empire; and at this Time there are Poſts among the *Chineſe*; but their Appointment is only to carry Orders from the King, and the Governors of Provinces, and, in a Word, for publick Affairs, and thoſe of the greateſt Conſequence.

Q. *What was the Reaſon that* Mordecai *ſhould refuſe to pay* Haman *the uſual Reſpects of the Court?*

A. Haman, we read, was an *Amalakite*, one of a Nation, againſt which God pronounced a Curſe, and therefore, upon this Conſideration, *Mordecai* might think himſelf not obliged to pay him the Reverence which he expected, and if the reſt of the *Jews* had the like Notion of him, this might be Reaſon ſufficient for his extending his Reſentment againſt the whole Nation. But there ſeems to be ſomething more in the Reverence which the People were commanded to pay him, than what is the Effect of civil Reſpect. The King of *Perſia*, we know, expected a kind of divine Adoration from all that approached his Preſence; and, as we read of one *Timagoras*, upon whom the People of *Athens* paſſed Sentence of Death, for his worſhipping of *Darius*, accounting the Honour of their whole City debaſed by this mean Submiſſion of one of their Citizens, tho' at that Time, *Darius* was one of the greateſt Monarchs upon Earth. And as the Kings of *Perſia* did arrogate this to themſelves, ſo they ſometimes imparted it to their chief Friends and Favourites, as it ſeem, at this Time, to have been the Caſe with *Haman*. For we can hardly conceive why the King ſhould give a particular Command, that all his Servants ſhould reverence him, if, by this Reverence, no more is meant, than that they ſhould ſhew him a Reſpect ſuitable to his Station: But now, if we ſuppoſe, that the Homage expected from them, was ſuch, as came near to Idolatry, we need not wonder that a *Jew* ſhould deny that Honour, or the outwards Expreſſion of it, to any Man, ſince the wiſe and ſober *Grecians* did poſitively refuſe to give it, to the very Kings themſelves. And, accordingly, the Author of the *apocryphal* Book of *Eſther* introduces *Mordecai*, as praying in theſe Words, *Thou knoweſt, O Lord, that it is not Contumacy, nor Pride, nor Deſire of vain Glory, that make me not worſhip* Haman; *for I would willingly kiſs his Feet for the Safety of* Iſrael. *But I do it, that I may not prefer the Glory of Man, above the Glory of God, nor adore any one, but thee, my Lord alone.*

CHAP. IV.

The great Mourning of Mordecai *and the* Jews. *He ſhews* Eſther *the Cauſe of it, and adviſes her to petition the King for her People. She, excuſing herſelf, is threatened by* Mordecai. *She appoints a general Faſt, and reſolves to preſent herſelf before the King.*

Q. WHY *was the City of* Shuſhan *in ſuch a Conſternation for the Fate that threaten'd the* Jews?

A. Either becauſe they were related to them, or engaged with them in wordly Concerns, or perhaps out of mere Humanity and Compaſſion to ſo vaſt a Number of innocent People, now appointed as Sheep for the Slaughter. They might apprehend likewiſe, that upon the Execution of the Decree, ſome Sedition or Tumult might enſue; that, in ſo great a Slaughter, 'twas hard to tell, who ſhould eſcape, without being killed or plundered, becauſe thoſe, who were employed in this bloody Work, would be more mindful to enrich themſelves, than to obſerve their Orders.

Q. *In what Manner did* Mordecai *behave himſelf on this melancholly Occaſion?*

A. The latter *Targum* upon the Book of *Eſther*, gives us this Account of *Mordecai*'s Behaviour upon this ſad Occaſion, *viz.* in the Midſt of the Streets he made his Complaint, ſaying, *What an heavy Decree is this, which the King and* Haman *have paſſed, not againſt a Part of us, but againſt us all, to root us out of the Earth!* Whereupon all the *Jews* flocked about him, and having cauſed the *Book of the Law* to be brought to the Gate of *Shuſhan*, he, being covered with Sackcloth, read therein theſe Words out of *Deut.* iv. 30, 31. *When thou art in Tribulation, and all theſe Things are come upon thee, in the latter Days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and ſhalt be obedient to his Voice (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God) he will not forſake thee, nor deſtroy thee, nor forget the Covenant of thy Fathers, which he ſware unto them:* After which he exhorted them to Faſting, Humiliation and Repentance, according to the Example of the *Ninevites*.

Q. *What was the original Cauſe of that* Perſian *Law,*

Law, that none ſhould approach the King's Preſence uncalled.

A. Ever ſince the Reign of *Dejoces* King of *Media, Herodotus* informs us, that for the Preſervation of royal Majeſty, it was enacted. "That no one ſhould be admitted into the King's Preſence, but that, if he had any Buſineſs with him, he ſhould tranſact it by the Intercourſe of his Miniſters." The Cuſtom paſſed from the *Medes* to the *Perſians*, and therefore we find it in the ſame Hiſtorian, that after the ſeven *Perſian* Princes had killed the *Magian*, who had uſurped the Throne, they came to this Agreement, that whoever ſhould be elected King, ſhould allow the others to have, at all Times, a ready Acceſs to his Preſence (which is an Implication that they had it not before) whenever they ſhould deſire it, except only when he was accompanying any of his Wives. This therefore was the antient Law of the Country, and not procured by *Haman*, as ſome imagine; tho' it cannot be denied, but that the Reaſon of the Law, at firſt might be, not only the Preſervation of the Majeſty, and Safety of the King's Perſon, but a Contrivance likewiſe of the the great Officers of State, that they might ingroſs the King to themſelves, by allowing Admittance to none, but whom they ſhould think proper to introduce.

Q. Eſther, *in Reply to* Mordecai's *Meſſage, orders him to aſſemble the* Jews, *and to faſt*, and neither eat nor drink three Days, night or Day: *Is this to be underſtood litterally?*

A. This is not to be underſtood, as if the People were to take no manner of Suſtenance for three Days, becauſe few or none could undergo that, but only, either that they they ſhould abſtain from all Delicacies, and content themſelves with courſe Fare, as *Joſephus* expound it, or that they ſhould make no ſet Meals of Dinner or Supper in their Families, but eat and drink no more than would ſuffice to ſuſtain Nature, and ſupport them in Prayer to God, for a Bleſſing upon her Undertaking.

CHAP. V.

Eſther, *venturing on the King's Favour, has the Golden Sceptre held out to her. She invites the King and* Haman *to a Banquet; and being encouraged, deſires the ſame Favour a ſecond Time.* Haman *is joyful, but angry with* Mordecai; *and, by the Advice of his Wife, builds a Gallows for him.*

Q. DID *not* Eſther, *before ſhe ventured into the King's Preſence, put up a Prayer or private Ejaculation for her Succeſs?*

A. The *latter Targum* ſays ſhe made a ſolemn Prayer to God, with many Tears, as ſoon as ſhe was dreſſed, ſaying, *Thou art the great God, the God of* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob, *the God of my Father* Benjamin; *as thou didſt deliver* Hananiah, Miſhael, *and* Azariah *out of the fiery Furnace, and* Daniel *from the Lions Den, ſo deliver me now out of the Hand of the King, and give me Grace and Favour in his Eyes*, &c.

Q. *In what Manner did* Eſther *behave in the royal Preſence?*

A. A Scepter was the Enſign of the higheſt and moſt abſolute Authory; and therefore ſome have obſerved, that when *Mordecai* was advanced to the greateſt Dignity next the King, having the royal Robes on, and other Enſigns of royal Dignity, no mention is made of any Scepter, for that was proper and peculiar to the King; and the Queen's touching, or (as ſome ſay) kiſſing it, was a Token of her Subjection, and Thankfulneſs for his Favour. But *Joſephus* has mightily improved upon the Story, for he tells us, "That as the Queen, with her two Handmaids, approached the Room where the King was, leaning gently upon one, and the other bearing up her Train, her Face being covered with ſuch a Bluſh, as expreſſed a graceful Majeſty, but, at the ſame Time, ſome doubtful Apprehenſions; upon her approaching of the King, mounted on his Throne, and the ſparkling Glory of his Robes, that were all over embroidered with Gold, Pearl, and precious Stones, ſhe was taken all on a ſudden, with a Trembling, at ſo ſurprizing a Sight; and, upon fancying that the King looked upon her, as if he were uneaſy, and out of Humour, ſhe fell into the Arms of one of her Maids in a direct Swoon. This Accident, ſays he, by the Intervention of God's holy Will and Providence, put the King into a Fright, for fear ſhe might not come to herſelf again, ſo that making what haſte he could from his Throne, he took her up in his Arms, and with the kindeſt Words that could be, gave her this Comfort,—That no Advantage ſhould be made of the Law to her Prejudice, tho' ſhe came *without calling*, becauſe the Decree extended only to Subjects, whereas he looked upon her as his Companion and Partner in the Empire."

Q. *What was* Eſther's *Reaſon for delaying to make her Petition at the firſt Banquet?*

A. Her Intention, in deſiring thus to entertain the King twice at a Banquet, before ſhe made known her Petition, was, that ſhe might more endear herſelf to him, and diſpoſe him the better to grant her requeſt; for which Reaſon, ſhe thought it a Piece of no bad Policy to invite his firſt Favourite to come along with him. But, in the whole Matter, the ſingular Providence of God is not a little conſpicuous, which ſo diſpoſed her Mind, that the high Honour which the King beſtowed upon *Mordecai* the next day, might fall out in the mean Time, and ſo make Way for her Petition, which would come in very ſeaſonably at the Banquet of Wine, when, as it was moſt likely for the King to be in a pleaſant Humour; ſo it was moſt uſual, for the *Perſians* to enter upon Buſineſs of State, when they began to drink.

Q. Haman, *we find, was not a little proud of the peculiar Honour that was done him in being invited to the Queen's Banquet; pray was it not uſual for the* Perſian *Monarchs to permit ſome of their Subjects, or particular Favourites, to eat at their Tables?*

A. Athenaus mentions it as a peculiar Honour, which no *Grecian* ever had before or after, that *Artaxerxes* vouchſafed to invite *Timagoras*, the *Cretan*, to dine even at the Table where his Relations eat, and to ſend him ſometimes a Part of what was ſerved up at his own, which ſome *Perſians* looked upon as a Diminution of his Majeſty, and a Proſtitution of their Nation's Honour. In the Life of *Artaxerxes, Plutarch* tells us, that none but the King's Mother, and his real Wife, were admitted to ſit at his Table; and therefore he mentions

tions it, as a Condeſcenſion in that Prince, that he ſometimes invited his Brothers: So that this particular Favour was a Matter that *Haman* had ſome Reaſon to value himſelf upon.

Q. *If* Haman *was ſo highly incenſed againſt* Mordecai, *why did he not exert his Power, and puniſh him immediately?*

A. It may, indeed, ſeem a little ſtrange, that ſo proud a Man, as *Haman* was, ſhould not be prompted immediately to avenge himſelf on *Mordecai* for his contemptuous Uſage of him, ſince he had enough about him, no doubt, who, upon the leaſt Intimation of his Pleaſure, would have done it; and ſince he, who had Intereſt enough with his Prince to procure a Decree for the Deſtruction of a whole Nation, might have eaſily obtained a Pardon for having killed one obſcure and mean Member of it; but herein did the wiſe and powerful Providence of God appear, that it diſpoſed *Haman*'s Heart (contrary to his own Inclination and Intereſt) inſtead of imploying his Power againſt his Enemy, to put Fetters, as it were, upon his own Hands.

Q. *Why did* Haman *raiſe the Gallows, which he prepared for* Mordecai, *to ſuch a vaſt Height?*

A. That Men might, at a great Diſtance, ſee him, to the Increaſe of his Diſgrace (as *Haman* might think) and that, being ſtruck with the greater Terror by that Spectacle, they might not dare, for the future, to deſpiſe or offend him.

CHAP. VI.

Ahaſuerus's *Sleep being taken from him, commands the Chronicles to be read, and obſerving* Mordecai's *Diſcovery of the Plot againſt his Life, asks what Honour had been done to him:* Haman *coming to requeſt the King to hang* Mordecai, *unawares gives Counſel to have him honoured; of which* Haman *informing his Friends, they foretel his final Downfal. He is called to* Eſther's *Banquet.*

Q. WHAT *have Writers obſerved concerning the* Perſians *Method of keeping their Chronicles; and particularly of this Affair of* Mordecai?

A. In theſe Diaries (which we now call *Journals*) wherein was ſet down what paſſed every Day, the Manner of the *Perſians* was, to record the Names of thoſe that had done the King any ſignal Service. Accordingly *Joſephus* informs us, “That upon the Secretary's reading theſe Journals, he took Notice of the Name of ſuch a Perſon, who had great Honours and Poſſeſſions given him, as a Reward for a glorious and remarkable Action, and of ſuch another, who made his Fortune by the Bounties of his Prince, for his Fidelity; but that when he came to the particular Story of the Conſpiracy of the two Eunuchs againſt the Perſon of the King, and of the Diſcovery of this Treaſon by *Mordecai*, the Secretary read it over, and was paſſing forward to the next; when the King ſtopped him, and asked if that Perſon had any Reward given for his Service, *&c.*” which ſhews, indeed, a ſingular Providence of God, that the Secretary ſhould read in that very Part of the Book, wherein the Service of *Mordecai* was recorded; but the *latter Targum* (to make a thorough Miracle of it) tells us, that when the Reader opened the Book at this Place, where Mention was made of *Mordecai*, he turned over the Leaves, and would have read in another, but that the Leaves flew back again to the ſame Place where it opened at firſt, ſo that he was forced to read that Story to the King.

Q. *How happened it that* Mordecai *was not rewarded when he firſt made the Diſcovery?*

A. To Account for the Humour of Princes, and their Management of publick Affairs, is next to a Thing impoſſible. We ſee, among us, that great Men are ſometimes unmindful of the higheſt Services that are done them, and take no Care to reward them; eſpecially if the Perſon be, in himſelf, obſcure, and not ſupported by a proper Recommendation: And therefore we are not at all to wonder, if a Prince, that buried himſelf in Indolence, and made it a Part of his Grandeur to live unacquainted and unconcerned with what paſſed in his Dominions, (as this was the Cuſtom of moſt *Eaſtern* Kings) ſhould overlook the great Service which *Mordecai* had done him; or if he ordered him a Reward, that by the Artifice of thoſe at Court, who were no Well-wiſhers to the *Jews*, he might be diſappointed of it.

There ſeems, however, to have been a particular Direction of Providence, in having his Reward delayed till this Time, when he, and all his Nation were appointed to Deſtruction, when the Remembrance of his Services might be a Means to recommend them to the King's Mercy, and the Honours conferred on him a deep Mortification to his Adverſary. Theſe Honours, indeed, were very remarkable; but by *Haman*'s Manner of propoſing them, they ſeem to have been the uſual Marks of Diſtinction and Eſteem, that the Kings of *Perſia* conferred on thoſe whom they were minded to honour; and ſo far was *Mordecai* from being elated with them, that as ſoon as the Solemnity was over, we read that he returned to his Duty and Attendance at the King's Gate.

Q. *What think you of* Haman's *Requeſt in Behalf of the Perſon whom he imagined the King deſigned to honour with ſome peculiar Marks of his Eſteem?*

A. To form a Notion of that Pride and Arrogance, to which *Haman* (who thought all the Honours, he ſpecified, deſigned for himſelf) was arrived, we may obſerve, that for any one to put on the royal Robe, without the Privity and Conſent of the King, was, among the *Perſians*, accounted a capital Crime. To which Purpoſe *Plutarch*, in his Life of *Artaxerxes*, has related this Story, “That one Day, when in hunting, the King happened to tear his Garment, and *Tiribazus* was telling him of it, the King asked him what he ſhould do? Why put on another, ſays *Tiribazus*, and give that to me: That I will, ſays the King, but then I enjoin you not to wear it.” *Tiribazus*, however, (who was a good kind of a Man enough, but a little weak and ſilly) adventured to put it on, with all its fine Ornaments; and, when ſome of the Nobles began to reſent it, as a Thing not lawful for any Subject to do, *I allow him*, ſays the King, laughing at the Figure he made, *to wear the fine Trinkets, as a Woman, and the Robe as a Madman.*

Q. *Another Piece of Honour which* Haman *thought of, was to mount the Perſon on the Horſe which the King himſelf rode on: Wherein conſiſted the Peculiarity of this Honour?*

A. There was a Cuſtom, not unlike this, among the *Hebrews* (as appears from the Hiſtory of *Solo-*

mon, 1 *Kings* i. 35.) for the Perſon who was to be declared Succeſſor to the Crown, on the Day of his Inauguration, to be mounted on the King's Horſe; and to the like Cuſtom among the *Perſians*, it is highly probable, that the Poet *Statius*, in his Deſcription of a young King ſucceeding to his Father's Throne, may allude.

Q. *Was the Crown, which* Haman *farther deſires, that which was placed on the King's, or the Horſe's Head?*

A. In this Commentators are not agreed, whether this Crown was placed upon the King's Head, or the Horſe's. Thoſe who refer it to the King, will have it to be, what we call a Turbant, made of fine white and purple Linnen, which it was Death for any one to put on his Head, without the King's expreſs Order; to which Purpoſe *Adrian* tells us this Story, —— “That as *Alexander* was ſailing on the *Euphrates*, and his Turbant happened to fall off among ſome Reeds, one of the Watermen immediately jumped in, and ſwam to it; but as he could not bring it back in his Hand, without wetting it, he put it upon his Head, and ſo returned with it. Whereupon moſt Hiſtorians, that have wrote of *Alexander* (ſays he) tell us, that he gave him a Talent of Silver for this Expreſſion of his Zeal to ſerve him, but, at the ſame Time ordered his Head to be ſtruck off, for preſuming to put on the royal Diadem.” Other Commentators are of Opinion, that this *Keter*, which we render *Crown*, being a Word of a larger Signification, will equally denote that Ornament which the Horſe, that the King rode, wore upon his Head, and it muſt be acknowledged that this Application of the Thing agrees better with the Signification and Order of the *Hebrew* Words; with the following Verſes, wherein no Mention is made of the *Keter*, but only of the Robe, and of the Horſe to which this Crown belonged; and with the Cuſtom of the *Perſians*, who uſed to put a certain Ornament (in *Italian* called *Fiocco*) upon the Head of that Horſe whereon the King was mounted.

Q. *How could* Haman's *Wiſe-men predict his Ruin from* Mordecai's *being a* Jew?

A. He had declared himſelf a *Jew*, to ſatisfy the People at Court, that he could not, with a good Conſcience, comply with the King's Commands relating to the Reverence that was to be paid to *Haman*: And the Interpoſition of Providence in behalf of the *Jewiſh* Nation, even during their Captivity, had been ſo viſible, that the Wiſemen about *Haman* might, from Experience, form a Conjecture, that if their God was become their Friend (as by this ſtrange Turn of Affairs in Favour of *Mordecai* it looked as if he was) *no Weapon forged againſt them would proſper*; becauſe they had ſeen ſo many Plots, which would have cruſhed any other Nation, turn to their Advancement, as well as the Enemies Deſtruction: For the Advice which *Achior* gave to *Holofernes*, is founded upon the known Experience of thoſe Times, and beſpeaks a Man well acquainted with the State of the *Jews*. *Now therefore my Lord and Governor, if there be any Error in this People, and they ſin againſt their God, let us conſider that this will be their Ruin.——But if there be no Iniquityin their Nation, let my Lord now paſs by, leſt their Lord defend them, and their God be for them, and we become a Reproach before all the World.* Conſidering then, that *Mordecai* (whom they knew to be a Man of great Courage and Wiſdom) was now got into the King's Favour, it would not be long before he would find an Opportunity of applying to him (who was a Perſon of a mild Diſpoſition) for a Revocation of the bloody Decree which *Haman*, by impoſing upon his Credulity, had procured, and conſequently of ruining *Haman* in the King's good Graces. For the known Inſtability of Court-favours, and the little Quarter that is there given to Rivals or Enemies, make it no hard Matter, from *Mordecai*'s Advancement, to read *Haman*'s Deſtiny.

CHAP. VII.

Eſther *petitions for her own and her People's Lives. She accuſes* Haman, *who is afraid; the King being informed of the Gallows* Haman *had built for* Mordecai, *commands him to be hanged thereon.*

Q. THE *King upon bearing* Haman's *Plot againſt the* Jews, *riſing from the Banquet in a Rage, goes into the Garden; but for what Reaſon?*

A. Partly, as diſdaining the Company of ſo audacious and ungrateful a Perſon; partly to cool and allay his Spirit, boiling and ſtruggling with ſuch Variety of Paſſions; and partly to conſider within himſelf the Heinouſneſs of *Haman's* Crime, the Miſchief which himſelf had like to have done by his own Raſhneſs; and what Puniſhment was fit to be inflicted on ſo wickedand vile a Miſcreant.

Q. *How could the King interpret* Haman's *falling on the Bed, which was only to ſupplicate for his Life, into a Deſign of* violating *Eſther*'s Chaſtity?

A. It was a Cuſtom among the *Perſians*, as well as other Nations, to ſit, or rather to lie upon Beds, when they eat or drank; and therefore when *Haman* fell down as a Suppliant at the Feet of *Eſther*, and (as the Manner was among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and not improbably among the *Perſians*) embraced her Knees, the King might pretend that he was offering Violence to the Queen's Chaſtity. Not that he believed that this was his Intention, but, in his furious Paſſion, he turned every Thing to the worſt Senſe, and made uſe of it to aggravate his Crime.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Haman's *being executed on the Gallows he had prepared for* Mordecai?

A. Joſephus, indeed, tells us, that he died on a Croſs, but others have obſerved, that Crucifixion was not a *Perſian* Puniſhment; and *Salmaſius* (in his Book *de Cruce*) ſhews, that it was the Manner of the *Perſians*, firſt to cut off the Heads of Malefactors, and then to hang them on a Gibbet. However this be, “I cannot paſs over this wonderful Harmony of Providence (ſays *Joſephus*) without any Remark upon the Almighty Power, and the admirable Juſtice and Wiſdom of God, not only in bringing *Haman* to his deſerved Puniſhment, but entrapping him in the very ſame Snare, that he had laid for another, and turning a malicious Invention upon the Head of the Inventor.

Q. *Upon the ſecond Repreſentation of* Eſther, *the King grants to her and* Mordecai, *the Liberty of Writing another Decree to render ineffectual the Purpoſes of that granted by* Haman: *In what Terms was this ſecond Decree drawn up?*

A. Joſephus has given us a true Copy, as he ſays, of this Decree, or (as he calls it) of the Letters which *Artaxerxes* ſent to the Magiſtrates of all Nations that lie between *India* and *Æthiopia, under the Command of an hundred and ſeven and twenty Provinces,* —— "Wherein he repreſents the Abuſe which Favourites are wont to make of their Power and Credit with their Prince, by inſulting their Inferiors, by flying in the Face of thoſe that raiſed them, and, to gratify their Reſentments, calumniating the Innocent, and putting honeſt Men in Danger of their Lives: Wherein he makes Mention of the Favours and Honours which he had beſtowed upon *Haman*, the *Amalekite*, who had, notwithſtanding, taken Meaſures to ſupplant him of his Kingdom, to deſtroy *Mordecai*, the Preſerver of his Life, together with his deareſt Wife, the Queen; and to extirpate the whole Nation of *Jews*, who were good and peaceable Subjects and Worſhippers of that God to whom he was indebted for the Poſſeſſion and Preſervation of his Empire: Wherein he acquaints them, that for theſe wicked and treaſonable Practices, having cauſed him, and his whole Family, to be executed before the Gates of *Suſa*, his royal Pleaſure, by theſe Preſents was, that they ſhould not only diſcharge the *Jews* from all Pains and Penalties, to which they were made liable by his Letters, which *Haman* had ſent them; but that they did likewiſe aid and aſſiſt them, in vindicating themſelves upon all that ſpitefully and injuriouſly oppreſſed them: And wherein he tells them, that, whereas the Time for the utter Deſtruction of theſe People, was to have been on the thirteenth Day of the Month *Adar*, his further Pleaſure was, that the ſame Month and Day ſhould be employed in their reſcue and Deliverance; and that, if any Perſon, either by Diſobedience or neglect, ſhould act in any Thing contrary to the Tenour of this his imperial Command, he ſhould be liable to military Execution by Fire and Sword."

Q. *Since* Haman *was executed, can we ſuppoſe that any would be ſo preſumptuous as to proſecute his wicked Deſigns?*

A. It might be preſumed, that ſome, out of Hatred to the *Jews*, might be inclinable to obey *Haman*'s Decree: For tho' he himſelf was gone, yet it cannot be imagined, that all the Friends and Creatures that he had made, periſhed with him. He might have a great Party every where, and ſome of them ſo furiouſly enraged at his Fall, as (even at the Hazard of their own Lives) would not fail to ſhew their Indignation at thoſe who were the Occaſion of it: And therefore this ſecond Decree, procured by *Mordecai*, gave them Authority, if any Attempt was made upon them, either in great Bodies, or ſmall Parties, not only to defend themſelves, and repel them, but to make as great a Slaughter of them as they were able, and even to take Poſſeſſion of their Goods, as *Haman* had procured them Licence (Chap. iii. Ver. 13.) to ſeize the Goods of the *Jews*.

Chap. VIII.

Mordecai *is advanced over the Houſe of* Haman. Eſther *makes a Petition to reverſe* Haman's *Letter.* Ahaſuerus *gives Leave to* Eſther *and* Mordecai *to write to the* Jews *to defend themſelves;* Mordecai's *Letters in the King's Name, for that Purpoſe.* Mordecai's *Honour, and the* Jews *Joy.*

Q. AHaſuerus *orders* Eſther *and* Mordecai *to write in the royal Stile to reverſe the Decree which* Haman *had procured againſt the* Jews, *and to ſeal the Writing with the King's Ring,* which, *it is added,* may no Man reverſe: *Are theſe Words added as a Reaſon for confirming the preſent Writing, or do they relate to the former procured by* Haman.

A. This Reaſon may belong either, 1. To the writing of theſe preſent Letters; and ſo the Senſe is, Theſe Letters will be moſt effectual, being no leſs irrevocable than the former, and coming laſt will repeal the former. Or, 2. To the former Letters, as a Reaſon why he could not grant their Deſires in recalling them, becauſe they were irrevocable by the Laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians*. And this Senſe, rejected by many, ſeems to be the trueſt, becauſe here is no Mention of reverſing *Haman*'s Letters, which *Eſther* had deſired, Verſe 5. and the King denied for the Reaſon here alledged; and becauſe the following Letter doth not contain one Word about the reverſing of the former, nor does it take away that Power which was given to all Rulers to deſtroy all the *Jews*, Chap. iii. 12, 13, but only gives the *Jews* Power and Authority to ſtand up in their own Defence, Ver. 11. which, all Circumſtances conſidered, was ſufficient for their Preſervation.

Chap. IX.

The Jews *ſlay their Enemies, with the ten Sons of* Haman. Ahaſuerus, *at* Eſther's *Requeſt, grants another Day of Slaughter. The Days of* Purim *made a Feſtival.*

Q. D*ID it not ſhew a Spirit of Revenge in* Eſther *and* Mordecai, *to order the Bodies of* Haman's *ten Sons to be hanged on a Gallows, after they were dead?*

A. 'Tis not unlikely that many might be enraged at his Death, and his Sons, in particular, might ſet themſelves at the Head of thoſe who were bold enough to attempt the Deſtruction of the *Jews* in *Shuſhan*, being reſolved to revenge their Father's Death, though, in ſo doing they were ſure to meet their own. And this ſeems to ſuggeſt one Reaſon why *Eſther* was ſo ſollicitous to have their dead Bodies (for they were ſlain already) hung upon the Gallows, even becauſe they had ſhewn more Malice and Indignation againſt the *Jews*, and on the Day when the cruel Edict came to take Place, had made more deſperate Attacks upon them, than any; tho' the Reaſon of State, in this Severity, might be, to expoſe the Family to the greater Infamy, and to deter other Counſellors from abuſing the King, at any Time, with falſe Prepreſentations. For though the *Jews* ſuffered none to hang on *the Tree* (as they call the *Gallows*) longer than till the Evening of the Day, whereon they were executed, yet other Nations let them hang until they were conſumed (as appears from the Story of the *Gibeonites*, 2 *Sam.* xxii. 9, 10.) or devoured by Crows, Vultures, or other ravenous Creature,; from whence that vulgar Saying among the *Romans, paſcere in Cruce corvos*, had its Riſe.

Q. *The* Jews *are here ſaid to have ſlain* ſeventy-five thouſand of their Enemies: *How came they to kill ſuch a vaſt Number?*

A. The great Sum which *Haman* would have given to gratify his Revenge againſt the *Jewiſh* Nation, was an additional Provocation to them, no doubt, to ſlay every one, who came to annoy them; but then it muſt be conſidered, that in this they acted by Virtue of an Edict which authorized them to ſtand upon their own Defence; that they were not the firſt Aggreſſors, but only oppoſed thoſe that openly aſſaulted them, and were for putting any unjuſt Decree in execution againſt them; and as the *Amalekites*, who might be diſperſed throughout the *Perſian* Dominions, were the known and inveterate Enemies of the *Jews*, and following now the Fortune of *Haman*, might be forward enough to execute the Decree which he had procured againſt them, it is therefore reaſonably preſumed, that moſt of thoſe, whom the the *Jews*, in their neceſſary Defence, both in *Shuſhan*, and in the Provinces, did deſtroy, were of that devoted Nation. And by this their Slaughter, the Prophecies againſt *Amalek* were accompliſhed.

Q. *How do the* Jews *celebrate the Feſtival of* Pur, *which was inſtituted by* Mordecai, *on this extraordinary Occaſion?*

A. Pur, in the *Perſian* Language, ſignifies a *Lot*, and the Feaſt of *Purim* or *Lots* (which had its Name from *Haman*'s caſting *Lots*, in order to divine which Day would be moſt lucky to prefix for the Murder of all the *Jews* in the whole *Perſian* Dominions) is, to this very Day, celebrated by the *Jews*, with ſome peculiar Ceremonies, but moſt of them reduceable to theſe three Things, *Reading*, *Reſting*, and *Feaſting*. Before the *Reading*, which is performed in the *Synagogue*, and being in the Evening, as ſoon as the Stars appear, they make uſe of three Forms of Prayer; in the firſt of which they praiſe God, for counting them worthy to attend this divine Service; in the ſecond, they thank him for the miraculous Preſervation of their Anceſtors; and in the third, they bleſs his holy Name, for having continued their Lives to the Celebration of another Feſtival in Commemoration of it. Then they read over the whole Hiſtory of *Haman*, from the Beginning to the End, but not out of any printed Book, (for that is not lawful) but out of an *Hebrew* Manuſcript, written on Parchment. There are five Places in the Text, wherein the Reader raiſes his Voice with all his might: When he comes to the Place that mentions the Names of the ten Sons of *Haman*, he repeats them very quick, to ſhew that they were all deſtroy'd in a Moment; and every Time that the Name of *Haman* is pronounced, the Children, with great Fury, ſtrike againſt the Benches of the *Synagogues*, with Mallets that they bring for that Purpoſe. After that the Reading is finiſhed, they return home, and have a Supper, not of Fleſh, but of Spoon-meat; and early next Morning, they ariſe and return to the *Synagogue*, where, after they have read that Paſſage in *Exodus*, wherein is mentioned the War of *Amalek*, they begin again to read the Book of *Eſther*, with the ſame Ceremonies as before; and ſo conclude the Service of the Day, with Curſes againſt *Haman* and his Wife *Zereth*, with Bleſſings to *Mordecai* and *Eſther*, and with Praiſes to God, for having preſerved his People. Their Reſting on this Day is obſerved ſo religiouſly, that they will not ſo much as ſet or ſow any Thing in their Gardens, with full Perſuaſion, that it would not come up if they did, and therefore they either play at Cheſs, and ſuch like Games, or ſpend the Time in Muſick and Dancing, until it be proper to begin their Feaſt, wherein they indulge themſelves to ſuch an immoderate Decree, that their Feaſt of *Purim* has, with great Juſtice, been called *the Bachinals of the Jews*. They allow themſelves to drink Wine to Exceſs, nay even to ſuch a Pitch, as not to be able to diſtinguiſh between the Bleſſing of *Mordecai*, and the Curſe of *Haman*, as themſelves ſpeak; and amidſt the other Sports and Diverſions of the Day, they uſed formerly to erect a Gibbet, and and burnt on it a Man made of Straw, whom they called *Haman*; but herein it was thought, that that might have a Deſign to inſult *Chriſtians* upon the Death of their crucified Saviour, and therefore *Theodoſius* II. (*Ann. Dom.* 408.) forbad them to uſe this Ceremony, under the Penalty of forfeiting all their Privileges. We have only farther to remark concerning this Feſtival, that it is always kept for two Days together, and the Reaſon thereof is this, ——The *Jews* at *Shuſhan* had two Days allowed them to revenge themſelves of their Enemies, *Eſther* ix. 13. but the reſt of the *Jews* in other Nations, had but one. This cauſed, at firſt, ſome Difference in the Time of Feaſting; for the *Jews*, in all other Parts of the Kingdom, having done Execution on their Enemies on the thirteenth Day, kept their Rejoicing-feaſt on the fourteenth; but the *Jews* at *Shuſhan*, being engaged in this Work, both on the thirteenth and fourteenth Day, kept the Feſtival for their Deliverance on the fifteenth. When *Mordecai*, however, had made a Record of this great Deliverance, he ſent Letters to all the *Jews*, throughout the Dominions of *Ahaſuerus*, to eſtabliſh it as a ſtanding Ordinance among them, that they ſhould keep both the fourteenth and fifteenth of the Month *Adar* every Year, as the Days, whereon the *Jews* reſted from their Enemies: And this is the Reaſon why the Feſtival continues for two Days, tho' the former of them only is kept with great Solemnity.

CHAP. X.

Ahaſuerus *his Greatneſs.* Mordecai'*s Advancement.*

AS this Chapter contains only a ſhort Account of *Mordecai*'s Greatneſs and Power in the *Perſian* Court, upon which we have already been very particular, we ſhall cloſe this Chapter and Book without any farther Remarks.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

IN this Hiſtory is ſhewn the Example of a ſingular Patience and Piety; for this Man Job *was not only extremely afflicted in outward Things, and in his Body, but alſo in his Mind and Conſcience, by the ſharp Temptations of his Wife and pretended Friends; who, by their vehement Words and ſubtil Diſputations, brought him almoſt to Deſpair; for they ſet forth God as a ſevere Judge and mortal Enemy to him, and as having caſt him off; therefore in vain would he ſeek unto him for Succour. Theſe Friends came to him under a Pretence of condoling with him, and comforting and ſupporting him under his grievous Miſfortunes; and yet they tormented him more than all his Affliction. But notwithſtanding all their importunate and vexing Speeches, he maintains his Ground againſt them, and at length proves ſucceſsful.*

In this Story we may obſerve, that Job *maintains a good Cauſe but handles it ill. Again, his Adverſaries have a bad Cauſe, but defend it craftily; for* Job *held that God did always puniſh Men according to their Sins, but that he has ſecret Judgments, whereof Men know not the Cauſe, and therefore Man could not reaſon againſt God, but he ſhould be convicted. Moreover, he was aſſured that God had not rejected him, yet through his great Torments and Affliction he burſts forth into ſeveral inconvenient Words and Expreſſions, and in many Things diſcovers himſelf to be a deſperate Man, and as one who would reſiſt God himſelf; and this is his good Cauſe which he does not handle well. Again, his Adverſaries maintain, with many plauſible Arguments, that God puniſhes continually, according to the Treſpaſs, grounding their Reaſons upon God's Providence, his Juſtice, and Man's Sins, yet their Intention is evil; for they laboured to bring* Job *into Deſpair; and ſo they maintain an evil Cauſe.* Ezekiel *commends* Job *as a juſt Man*, Ezek. xiv. 14. *And St.* James *propoſes his Patience for an Example*, James v. 11.

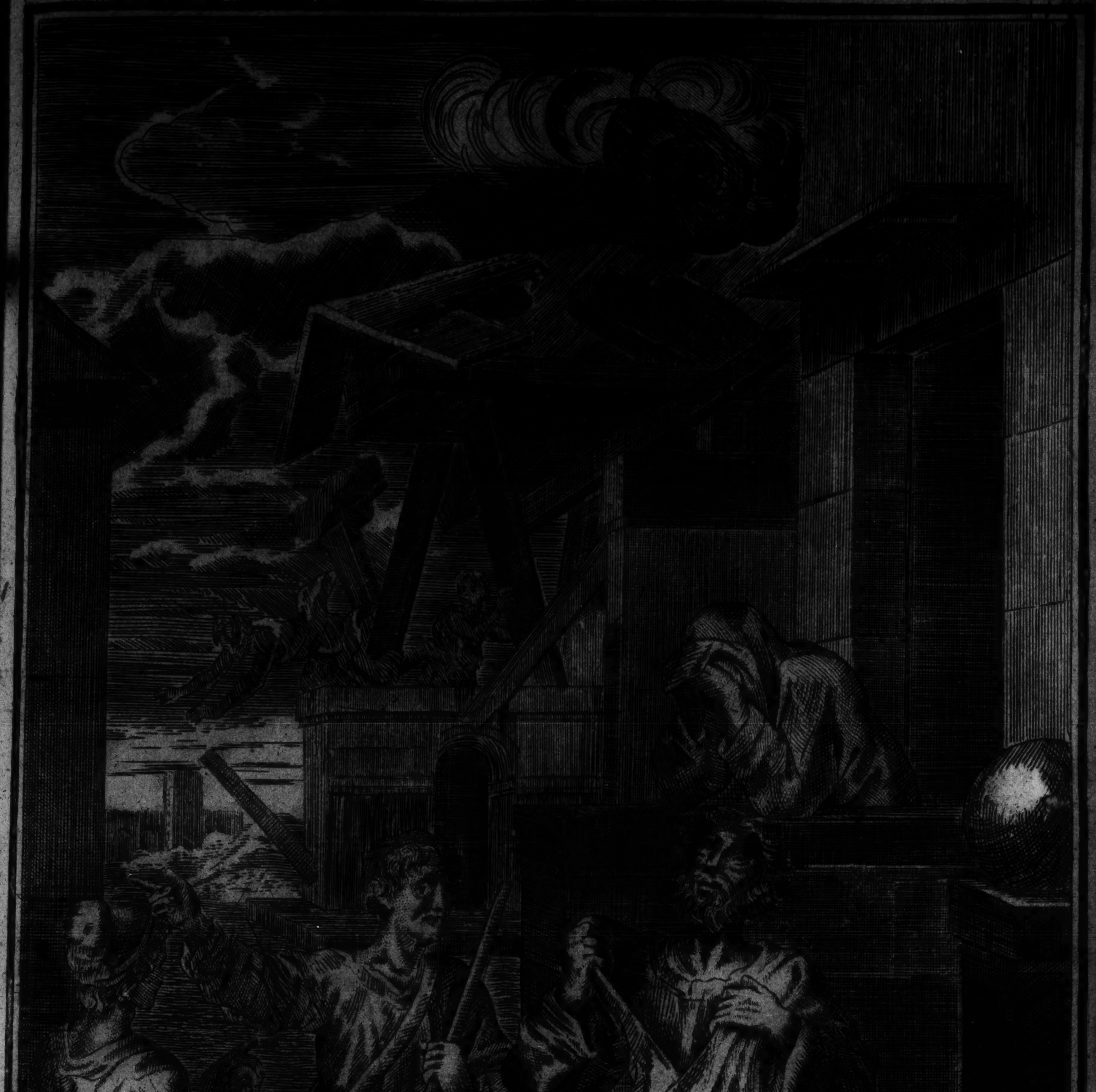
CHAP. I.

Job's *Country and ſincere Holineſs; his Children; their Feaſts; and his religious Care for them.* Satan's *Appearance before God. God's Character of* Job. Satan *imputes* Job's *Goodneſs to his Proſperity; and obtains Leave to afflict him in his Goods.* Job's *Oxen, Sheep and Camels, and Servants deſtroyed. His Sons and Daughters periſh.* Job *in the deepeſt Tokens of Humility, worſhips, bleſſes God, and ſins not.*

Q. *IN this Chapter the Sons, or Angels, of God are repreſented as preſenting themſelves before him, to render an Account of their Miniſtry, and in the Midſt of them* Satan *ſtanding and holding a Conference with the Almighty: In what Senſe is all This to be taken?*

A. We are under no Neceſſity of taking this Relation in a ſtrict and literal Senſe. The Kingdom of Heaven, and all Things which relate thereto, are ſo far removed from our Apprehenſion, that it is impoſſible for us to have any other than analogical Ideas concerning them; from whence it comes to paſs, that the Scripture in a Multitude of other Places, as well as here, makes Uſe of ſuch Expreſſions as are ſuited to our Capacities. Thus the Prophet ſpeaking to *Ahab*, delivers himſelf after a Method nearly allied to this, when he tells him, That a lying Spirit went forth from before the Lord, to perſwade him unto an Undertaking fatal in the Event. The Deſign in both Places ſeems to be the giving us a ſtrong and lively Impreſſion of the wonderful Power of God, and of the extraordinary Means, by which his Providence acts in the Direction of human Affairs. In the preſent Caſe, it is clearly implied, that as the Angels are incapable of doing us Good, but as they are guided by his Commands, ſo the Powers of Darkneſs are unable to do us Hurt, but, by Permiſſion from him; which the inſpired Writer at the ſame Time intimates, is afforded only for the Trial of righteous Perſons, ſuch as *Job* is repreſented to have been; and ſurely, there cannot be any Thing more ſublime, than the Deſcription here given, or better ſuited to the Dignity of human Nature, than that Satisfaction which the Lord

JOB. CHAP. I.



Jaˢ Devoto Sculp.

JOB receives bad Tydings.

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is ſaid to have expreſſed in the unfeigned Zeal, and untainted Integrity of his Servant; agreeing exactly with the Expreſſion of our Saviour, as to the Joy in Heaven over a Sinner that repenteth.

Q. *When* Job *perceiv'd that he was abſolutely ruin'd, as to this World, he expreſſes himſelf thus:* Naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked ſhall I return thither: *How could this be true with reſpect to both Parts of the Sentence?*

A. This Expreſſion is to be taken in a litteral Senſe in the firſt Part of the Verſe; but the Reference in the latter Part is certainly to the Earth. If we conſider the Miſeries under which *Job* groaned, we need not be ſurprized at the Obſcurity of this Expreſſion, the Purport of which ſeems to be this: Indigent of all Things came I from my Mother's Womb, and from a State in which I was inſenſible of my Being; now, in a like State of Indigence ſhall I return to the Grave, and be ſnatched away from the Land of the Living: In the mean time, I have poſſeſſed all the good Things of this World; for theſe, therefore, though I poſſeſs them no longer, let me praiſe Him who lent them to me ſo long, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.*

Chap. II.

Satan's *ſecond Appearance before God*; Job's *Character continuing the ſame, condemns* Satan, *who requeſts another Trial of him; which is granted on Condition that he touch not his Life.* Job *is ſmote with Bails, ſcrapes himſelf, and ſits down in Aſhes. His Wife's Folly; he reproves her; acknowledges God's Sovereignty and former Mercies. His three Friends, and their Sorrow.*

Q. SKIN for Skin, *ſays* Satan *in his ſecond Adreſs to the Almighty*, yea, all that a Man hath, will he give for his Life: *How do you underſtand theſe Words?*

A. It is plain that this was a proverbial Speech then in uſe; and, if at this Diſtance of Time, we don't rightly underſtand its true Meaning, it is no more than the common Lot of many other Proverbs; the Senſe, and eſpecially the Grounds whereof are frequently unknown to Perſons of other Nations, and after-times. It is known, that in thoſe antient Times, tho' they had ſome Money, yet the main of their Eſtate lay in Cattle, of which the Skin were a conſiderable Part, and their chief Traffick lay in the Exchange of one Commodity for another, and it is certain that they did exchange one Sort of Skins for another. So that the Meaning may be this, As Men willingly and commonly give one *Skin* in exchange for another *Skin*, and one Commodity for another, *ſo all that a Man hath*, his Houſe, Cattle, and Children *will he give*, and that moſt willingly for his *Life*, that is, to redeem or ſave his own Life. Or rather, thus, *Skin for Skin*, might then be a Proverb like that of ours, *Body for Body*, when one Man is ſo far obliged for another. And we have ſome ſuch Sort of Expreſſions amongſt us; as when we ſay of a Man, who has done ſome dangerous Action, *his Skin*, that is, *his Body will pay for it*, that is, *it may coſt him his Life*. And this Proverb might be taken, 1. From Sacrifices, in which there was *Skin for Skin*, that is, the Skin of a Beaſt for, or inſtead of the Skin of a Man, who deſerved to be uſed as the Beaſt was, and who was ſaved or preſerved by the ſuffering of the Beaſt, which was accepted by God inſtead of the Man, and by which the Man's Sins were expiated. Or, 2. From Hoſtages or Ranſoms, wherein one Man was given for, or inſtead of another. And the Senſe may be this, any Man will give *Skin for Skin*, that is, the Skin or Body, or Life of another, whether Man or Beaſt, to ſave his own; *yea all that a Man hath*, whether Goods or Perſons, ſuch as *Job* has loſt, *will he give for his Life*. *Job* is not much hurt or concerned, ſo long as his own Skin is ſafe. Others render the Words thus, *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath* (ſo that all theſe Words belong to the Price which a Man pays, then follows that which he expects for it) *will he give for his Life*; that is, in Exchange for his Life. In ſhort, the plain Meaning of the Words is this; That it is ſo far from being an Evidence of *Job's* ſincere and generous Piety, that it is only an Act of deeper Hypocriſy, and meer Self-love; he is well enough contented with Loſs of his Eſtate and Children too, ſo long as he ſleeps in a whole Skin; and he is well pleaſed, that thou wilt accept of theſe as a Sacrifice or Ranſom in his ſtead; it is not true Patience and Humility which makes him ſeem to bear his Croſſes ſo ſubmiſſively, as deep Policy, that by his feigned Carriage he may appeaſe thy Wrath againſt him, and prevent thoſe farther Plagues, which, for his Hypocriſy and other Sins, of which he is conſcious, he fears thou wilt otherwiſe bring upon his Carcaſs; as will plainly appear upon farther Trial.

Q. Job's *Wife ſeeing him in ſuch a deplorable Condition, adviſes him to rid himſelf at once of his Miſery, and to* curſe God and die: *What is the true and genuine Meaning of theſe Words?*

A. It is agreed, that the *Hebrew* Verb ſignifies both to *Curſe* and to *Bleſs*; but the latter is the Senſe in which it is generally uſed, and, in the preſent Caſe, we think, it may with the greateſt Propriety be ſo taken; for it is evident, that in the former Part of the Woman's Speech, ſhe ſarcaſtically reproaches her Husband, for maintaining his Integrity, that is, his religious Reverence of God's Providence: And, therefore, we may reaſonably make the latter Part of her Reproof agree with the firſt, by tranſlating the Words, *Bleſs God and die*, taking them, at the ſame Time, as ſpoken ironically; however, taken either Way, it ſhewed her Contempt both for her Husband and for the Object of his Faith: *Job*, therefore, reproved her after this Manner; " *Thou ſpeakeſt*, ſaid he, *as one of the fooliſh Women ſpeaketh; What, ſhall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and ſhall we not not receive Evil?* This Anſwer, as we apprehend, farther ſupports that Senſe, in which we take his Wife's Expreſſion; for, if he had underſtood her Meaning to be that he ſhould defy God, and thereby provoke him by Death to put an End to his Sufferings, it will be hard to conceive how he comes to make uſe of ſo mild an Expreſſion as *fooliſh Woman*; or why he had not rather called her *impious*; whereas, admitting our Tranſlation, his Meaning will be plainly this. Thy Notions of the Deity, and his Manner of ruling over Mortals, are weak and fooliſh; we are his Creatures, and ought not to murmur at his Will, but as we receive Good without Merit, ſo we ſhould ſuffer Chaſtiſement without repining; a proper Return certainly to her profane Inſinuation, and from whence the inſpired Writer very juſtly obſerves, that *Job* did not in all this ſin with his Lips, *i. e.* ſuffer any raſh Expreſſion to eſcape him.

Q. *Can you give any probable Account of the Families and Relations of* Job's *three Friends?*

A. As we know that *Eſau*, the Son of *Jacob*, was the Father of the *Idumeans*, a numerous and powerful People, who ſpread themſelves under the Conduct of his Sons, at a conſiderable Diſtance from their firſt Settlements; ſo we may reaſonably believe, this *Eliphaz*, the *Temanite*, to be the Son of *Teman*, the Son of *Eliphaz*, the Son of *Eſau*; and conſequently the ſixth from *Abraham*; according to this Suppoſition, he was allied in Blood to *Job*, both of them ſtanding perhaps in the ſame Degree from *Terah*, the Father of *Nachor* and *Abraham*. Thoſe who incline to think he is ſtiled the *Temanite*, from the City of *Teman*, on the Borders of *Arabia, the Deſart*, do not at all contradict what we have been ſaying; for *Teman* might, very probably, receive its Name from the Grandſon of *Eſau*; and as to its Situation, it was certainly at no very great Diſtance from the Land of *Uz*; and, if we reflect on the Manner in which theſe People lived, and their frequent Removes for the Sake of conveniently feeding their Cattle, we may very eaſily account for the Intimacy between *Elphaz* and *Job*, even tho' *Teman* had ſtood at a greater Diſtance than it did.

The Patriarch *Abraham*, had by *Keturah*, whom he took for his Wife, after the Deceaſe of *Sarah*, five Sons, and all of theſe, he in his Life-time, ſent into the *Eaſt* Country, that they might be at a ſufficient Diſtance from *Iſaac*, the Heir both of his temporal Eſtate, and of the Promiſe which God had made him. Now the laſt of theſe Sons, in that Order in which they are ſet down in the twenty-fifth Chapter of *Geneſis*, is *Shuah*, from whom we believe *Bildad* the *Shubite*, to have ſprung. We have elſewhere ſpoken of the Settlements of the Sons of *Keturah*, aſſigning *Shuah*, a Place very near the Land of *Uz*, as we have deſcribed it, which is alſo conformable to what the beſt Authors have wrote on the ſame Subject; ſo that, as we take it, the Place of his Dwelling lay between *Teman* and *Uz*, *Bildad* being thereby the Neighbour both of *Eliphaz* and *Job*, nearly related to each other, as deſcending alſo from their great Anceſtor *Terah*; and we may affirm this with greater Aſſurance, ſeeing there is no very conſiderable Writer who denies it.

As to *Zophar*, the *Naamathite*, the third Friend of *Job*, we ingenuouſly confeſs, that nothing, with any Degree of Certainty can be ſaid about him; ſome have confounded *Naamath* and *Thimnah*, but inſtead of having Recourſe to obſcure and ill foundeded Conjectures, we chuſe to ſay no more of him, than that it is likely he lived at pretty near an equal Diſtance from *Eliphaz* and *Bildad*, and was a Deſcendant from the ſame Family, ſeeing the Sons of *Keturah*, and the Deſcendants from *Eſau*, ſeem to have fixed their Habitations about this Place.

Q. *What was* Job's *Diſtemper?*

A. This has been a Point much diſputed among Commentators, and is a Point, about which, in all Probability, they never will be agreed. Some have been of Opinion that it was a Leproſy, or univerſal Scab. Others imagine it a total Covering of the Body with inflammatory Puſtules, which itched moſt exceſſively, and tormented every Limb and Joint of him. A third Opinion is, that it was the Hyp-gout, or Sciatica. St. *Auguſtin* thought his Fleſh was every where corrupted, which ſeems, indeed, in ſome Meaſure, countenanced by the Text, which ſpeaks alſo as if his Fleſh had been eaten by Worms: However, this we may with Certainty ayer, that as the Devil had a Power of afflicting him, the Diſtemper was none of the lighteſt; but that which, in the Opinion of a ſubtil Spirit, was beſt adapted to ſtir up Impatience, and engage the dejected Sufferer to forget the Reverence due to the Lord of the Univerſe, his Creator and Preſerver. But tho' we have only this general Meaſure of the Malignity of his Diſeaſe, and are not copiouſly informed as to the peculiar Sort of Blains and Eruptions; yet we are very well acquainted with the moſt painful and loathſome Part of *Job*'s Infirmity: He was, from Head to Foot, covered with thoſe Boils, whatever Kind they were of, which broke out upon him; he was ſo foul, thar he retired to a Dunghill, and there he ſcraped and cleanſed him a little from the Filth that was upon him; his Neighbours, ſtruck with the ſqualid Figure of his ſcabby Body, ſhunned him: Nay, the Sight and Smell of him drove away his own Family, as he moſt heavily complains; and he could ſcarce call any one to ſpeak to him. Theſe Circumſtances are plain and expreſs enough, tho' they do not ſatisfy us as to the very Species his Illneſs might be referred to; but as to the End, *viz.* the making him feel the moſt horrid Anguiſh in his Body, nothing can be accounted more full and explicite to ſatisfy any Chriſtian, as to the Truth of his Condition in that Reſpect.

Q. *Who was* Job's *Wife?*

A. According to the Traditions of the *Hebrews*, ſhe was *Dinah*, the Daughter of *Jacob*. In the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe, printed at *Venice*, and in the *London Polyglot*, we find her ſo call'd; but, in that of *Antwerp*, her Name is left out; and certain it is, that as no Notice is taken in the original *Hebrew*, ſo neither is there a Word about her in the *Greek*, *Syriac*, or *Arabic* Verſion. Others aſſert, That *Dinah* was not the firſt Wife of *Job*, ſhe who griev'd him in his Sorrows, and deſpiſed him for praying to God in his Afflictions; but a ſecond Wife, whom he married after his Calamities were over. But *Philo* ſays expreſsly, that it was ſhe by whom *Job* had all his Children, *viz.* fourteen Sons and ſix Daughters; ſeven Sons and three Daughters before his Misfortnnes, and ſeven Sons and three Daughters afterwards. But this, like other Notions of the ſame Sort, how well ſoever they might ſatisfy a Nation ſo prone to flatter themſelves as the *Jews* were, or whatſoever Credit they might meet with from Men ſo ready to take up Traditions, as the ancient Fathers of the Chriſtian Church appear to have been; yet it cannot be received by any Man of tolerable Senſe, who will give himſelf Time to conſider, and compute the Hiſtory of *Jacob* and his Deſcendants, with that of this righteous Perſon and his Family; for we know well enough the Age of *Dinah*, at the Time of her going with her Father and Brethren into *Egypt*; and her Marriage with *Job* muſt have happened after that, which does not at all accord with the Chronology of that Book which is called by that holy Man's Name. Whoever his Wife was, there are ſtill preſerved nine Verſes in the *Greek* Tongue of her ſatyrical Expoſtulations with her Husband, which do not deſerve to be repeated, eſpecially conſidering the Pains taken, in the Hiſtory itſelf, to ſet that Paſſage in a clear Light. St. *Auſtin* compares *Job's* Wife tempting *Job*, with *Eve's* tempting *Adam*; and takes Occaſion to magnify the Wiſdom, Virtue, and Piety of *Job*, for his Conduct on that Occaſion; concluding his Panegyrick with this Expreſſion: *Thus* Job, *when full of Sores, and cover'd with Dirt, was a better Man than* Adam, *in the Midſt of that Felicity which he enjoy'd in* Paradiſe.

Q. *The Book of* Job *is generally allow'd to be the moſt difficult in the Canon of Holy Scripture: What Method then do you preſcribe to underſtand it rightly?*

A. If, as in the Caſe of common Peruſers, nothing more is deſign'd than to come at the general Deſign and Scope of the Book, whereby, indeed, much good may be receiv'd, and ſome very precarious Fragments of Wiſdom pick'd up, I do not know that this can be eaſier done, than by turning over the Pages relating to this eminent Perſon in this famous Hiſtory, and reading the Book itſelf attentively as you go along. But if a more critical Knowledge of this eminent Poem be intended, it will then be neceſſary to go to the Original, and to compare the Annotations of the Expoſitors of greateſt Note, which will coſt too much Labour and Application; and, after all, will ſcarce be ſufficient, if you do not make uſe of your own Judgment, and carefully obſerve the Stile and Manner of arguing, peculiar to each of the Diſputants. On this Occaſion, I think modern Authors ſhould be read, and ſtudied eſpecially, becauſe they make the literal Senſe their principal Care, whereas the ancient Commentators, I mean the Chriſtian Fathers, treated this Piece in quite another Light; ſo that their Expoſitions may be peruſed with Advantage, when once we are thoroughly acquainted with the literal Meaning of *Job's* Diſcourſes, and thoſe of his Opponents. For tho' it be true, that many of the Fathers were not Men addicted to cloſe Reaſoning, but rather inclined to a florid Way of paraphraſing on the Sacred Writings; yet, if we conſider the State of the Church in their Days, and the Nature of their Diſcourſes, we ſhall not find ſo much Reaſon to cenſure as ſome may imagine; but, on the contrary, ſhall be convinced, that, with proper Precautions, their Harangues may furniſh very uſeful Reflections, and improve our Morals at leaſt, if they do not increaſe our Learning. By Way of Example, I will conclude with a few Lines from St. *Chryſoſtom*: "Let us ſee (ſays that eminent Father) "why the Devil fled from holy *Job*; Was it becauſe he could not do what he would to him? No; he had cauſed all all his Children to be cut off; he had inflicted on himſelf the moſt ſharp and throbbing Pains. What then could be the Reaſon why the Demon betook himſelf to Flight? Aſk him; he will inform you. It was becauſe, when he had done all he would unto *Job*, he could not force him on that which he aim'd at, and for which he had tried ſo many different Means; this was the urging him, by heaping Calamities, to ſome raſh blaſphemous Expreſſion. The very contrary of which, in ſpite of his infernal Cunning, enſued; for, inſtead of ſubduing and vanquiſhing that holy Man, his Arts ſerved only to render him more glorious, and to ſet off and adorn his noble and ſhining Virtues." To the Audience which heard this pious and elegant Preacher, no Queſtion this way of handling the Subject was edifying and inſtructive: Nay, even to us I ſee nothing which hinders it proving equally advantageous. The entring into the *true* Senſe of the Scriptures, is, undoubtedly, a Work worthy of a Chriſtian, and no Pains taken therein can be too great; but, at the ſame time, it behoves us to apply them; and, as they inſtruct our Heads, ſo they ſhould improve our Hearts, and direct our Actions.

Chap. III.

Job *curſes the Day of his Birth. The Eaſe and Honours of Death. Life in Anguiſh, Matter of Complaint. What he feared is now come upon him.*

Q. WHAT *is your Opinion of the paſſionate Exclamations which* Job *breaks out into in this Chapter?*

A. In this, and in the ſubſequent Speeches of *Job*, we are carefully to diſtinguiſh between thoſe paſſionate Bewailings which flow from the Anguiſh of a Perſon under the moſt painful Senſation; and thoſe argumentative Diſcourſes, which he delivered in his Intervals from his exceſſive Torment, and which, from their Method and Stile, are eaſily diſcerned from the other. For as in *Fevers*, which deprive Men of their Senſes, none reſent the injurious Expreſſions of the Sick; ſo while intolerable Pain prevents the due Exerciſe of Reaſon, we may juſtly eſteem the Patient not in his Senſes; and therefore ought to paſs by whatever vehement Complaints the Senſe of his immediate Miſery may extort. The Language of this pious Man indeed, tho' filled with the bittereſt Invectives againſt the Miſeries incident to human Nature, needed not to have drawn from us this Caution; but that the inſpired Writer informs us, the Almighty approved of what *Job* ſpoke concerning his Power and Providence, at the ſame time that he declared his three Friends had expreſſed themſelves on the ſame Head in Terms which were not right; and hence aroſe a Neceſſity of pointing out to our Readers which thoſe Paſſages were, wherein we ought to expect ſuch a juſt Deſcription of the Divine Nature; leſt any ſhould miſtake in a Matter of ſo great Importance, by miſapprehending the Words of the divinely inſpired Author of this Book.

Chap. IV.

Eliphaz *ſpeaks, tho' it ſhould grieve* Job. Job *had ſtrengthened and inſtructed others in their Sorrow, but now faints himſelf.* Eliphaz *reproaches him with his Confidence in his Uprightneſs, which he now ſuſpects; ſince God's Judgments were not againſt the Righteous, but the Wicked. His fearful Viſions. The Righteouſneſs of God; the Angels charged with Folly; the Vanity of Man.*

Q. I*N this Chapter* Eliphaz *replies to* Job's *heavy Complaints and bitter Imprecations; but inſtead of comforting him under the afflicting Hand of God, his Anſwer is full of Reproof and Cenſure: Now as* Job's *Friends ſeem to be Men of Probity, and zealous for Religion, what do you ſuppoſe were the*

Motives that induced them to maintain ſuch unfriendly Diſputes with Job, *eſpecially at this Time?*

A. In anſwer to this we muſt remark, that of all the Eaſtern People, the *Arabs* have leaſt altered their Cuſtoms and Manner of Living; and the moſt authentick Relations concerning them, ſpeak of their Chiefs, as Perſons addicted to a ſedentary Courſe of Life, and much given to Contemplation: Hence we have the greateſt Reaſon to believe, that the moſt early Inhabitants of that Country were Men of a like Genius, which they had all Opportunity to indulge, notwithſtanding their frequent Migrations; ſeeing when once their Tents were pitched the Heads of Families were at liberty to live after their accuſtomed Manner; that is, to ſpend the greateſt Part of the Day in diſcourſing with their Friends and Relations, as is the preſent Practice. There is nothing then which can obſtruct our giving Credit to the following Hypotheſis concerning theſe Altercations. *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, and *Zophar*, being intimate with *Job* in his Proſperity, and having often converſed with him on religious Topics, thought it a Duty incumbent on them to viſit and comfort him in his Diſtreſs; accordingly, they for ſeven Days bare him Company in his exceſſive Sorrow for his Misfortunes, all which time he continued ſilent. But when to give Vent to his Afflictions, he ſpoke to the Purpoſe we have before mentioned, they were all troubled, as ſuppoſing that he charged God with Injuſtice; for which, therefore, they reprove him, and endeavour to ſet him right by arguing with him in reſpect to that Point, which they thought of ſo great Conſequence, as that his falling into ſo many Errors about it, might prevent God's reſtoring him to his former happy Station; and, hereby we think the Rectitude of their Intentions may be fully vindicated, ſeeing all they ſaid can be thus referred to a charitable Deſire of doing Good to their Neighbour, and a fervent Zeal for the Honour of God: Nor is this Explication incongruous with what is ſaid by the Almighty, in relation to the Speeches of theſe three Men; for the Wrath of the Lord is not ſaid to be kindled againſt them for having ſpoken, but for not having ſpoken right concerning him and his Attributes.

Q. *In the 12th and following Verſes,* Eliphaz *deſcribes a Viſion which he had: Was this Viſion real, or only conceived for the preſent Purpoſe?*

A. That this Viſion was real, is apparent from the punctual Deſcription of all its Circumſtances. To think, as ſome do, that this was but a Fiction and Artifice of *Eliphaz*, that his Words might have more Authority with *Job*; or that this was but a diabolical Deluſion, ſeems to be both uncharitable and unreaſonable; partly, becauſe *Eliphaz*, tho' under a Miſtake concerning *Job*'s Caſe, was doubtleſs a wiſe and good Man, and therefore would not needleſly make himſelf a Liar for *Job*'s Conviction; and partly from the Matter of this Viſion, which is no way ſuitable to the Nature or Deſigns of the Devil, but holy and agreeable to the divine Majeſty and Purity, and uſeful to Mens Inſtruction, Humiliation, and Reformation. It was therefore a divine Viſion, which, in that Age and State of the Church, before the holy Scriptures were written, was the uſual Way of God's Diſcovery of his Mind to thoſe that ſought him.

CHAP. V.

Wrath fooliſh; the Wicked miſerable. Evil comes not by Chance, but is natural to our Condition; which is a good Motive to Prayer. Truſt in God, whoſe unſearcheable Power and Wiſdom are againſt the high and crafty, for the Relief of the Poor. Their Happineſs whom God corrects, and his gracious Care of ſuch.

Q. ELiphaz, *in the latter Part of the foregoing Chapter, having elegantly paraphraſed on his own Viſion, in this calls on* Job *to cite any Authorities from the Saints, contrary to his Opinion with Reſpect to the Juſtice and Purity of God: Pray what is the general Drift and Purport of his Diſcourſe?*

A. Here he again expatiates on the ſame Subject, and from the Whole draws this Concluſion, That tho' Affliction cometh not forth out of the Duſt, *i. e.* Is not neceſſarily annexed to Human Nature, yet Man by his own Wickedneſs incurreth frequent Puniſhments, and is in this Senſe born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upward; wherefore he exhorteth *Job* to commit his Cauſe to God, who doth great Things, and unſearchable, marvellous Things without Number, whoſe Providence beſtows continual Bleſſings throughout the whole Earth, raiſing the Low to exalted Stations, and depreſſing the Crafty by their own Devices, ordering all Things with perfect Juſtice, and correcting in Mercy thoſe in whom he delighteth; reſtoring and protecting thoſe who rely on his Goodneſs, giving them Peace in their Habitations, plentiful Poſſeſſions, and leading them by an eaſy and ſlow Deſcent to the Grave. “This (ſays *Eliphaz*) we have “ſearched, ſo it is, hear it, and know thou it for “thy Good.”

CHAP. VI.

Job's *Anſwer. He wiſhes his Troubles were duly weighed, for then would his Complaints appear juſt; his Hope in it; he is unable to bear up under his Burthen. He vindicates himſelf againſt his Friends, and reproves them.*

Q. WHAT *Effect had the foregoing Lecture of* Eliphaz *upon* Job?

A. Little or none; for he immediately replied thereto, in the ſame paſſionate Strain, wherein he before bewailed his Misfortunes, ſetting forth the many and great Cauſes, which he had for Mourning; and then, renewing his Prayers unto God for a ſpeedy Diſſolution, he declared, that the Aſſurance thereof would be the greateſt Comfort, and that he ſhould ſubmit to it with Joy, ſince his Sufferings were beyond his Strength, and the Pains he felt greater than he could bear. This leads him to take notice of the Unkindneſs of his Friends, which he exquiſitely deſcribes in the following Terms: “My Brethren have dealt deceitfully “with me, as a Brook, and as the Stream of “Brooks they paſs away, which are blackiſh by “Reaſon of the Ice, and wherein the Snow is “hid; as the Weather waxeth warm they vaniſh, “when it is hot they are conſumed out of their “Place; the Paths of their Way are turned aſide, “they go to nothing and periſh. The Troops of “*Tema* looked, the Companies of *Sheba* waited “for them; they were confounded becauſe they “had hoped, they came thither and were aſhamed, “for now ye are nothing, ye ſee me caſting down, “and are afraid; did I ſay, Bring unto me, or “give a Reward for me of your Subſtance, or de-

“ liver me from the Enemy's Hand, or redeem me “ from the Hand of the Mighty?” He tells them notwithſtanding, that he is yet ready to hear, and will hold his Peace if they are able to inſtruct him; but he cautions them, that they ſhould not too ſeverely mark his Words, nor reprove the Speeches of one that is deſperate, which are as Wind; he tells them, therefore, that they had better return than farther afflict him.

Chap. VII.

Our Times are like thoſe of Hirelings, reſtleſs and hopeleſs; Death deſirable. Our Days are as a Weaver's Shuttle; our Life as Wind; therefore Job *will ſpeak to God. He is weary of Life. Man is unworthy of God's Notice.* Job *confeſſes his Sins, and prays for Forgiveneſs.*

Q. JOB *here gives a further Deſcription of his deplorable Condition, which is ſuch that he loaths Life, and beſeeches the Lord to deprive him of it; and as an Argument to prevail with God to grant him his Requeſt, he ſets forth Man's Littleneſs and inſignificancy,* What is Man that thou ſhould'ſt magnify him? *What is the natural Import of theſe Words?*

A. It is as if he would have ſaid, What is there in that poor, mean, contemptible Creature, Man! *miſerable Man!* as this Word ſignifies, which can induce thee to take any Notice of him, or to have any Regard for him? Man is not worthy of thy Favour, and is below thine Anger. It is too great an Honour to Man, that thou wilt contend with him, and draw forth all thy Forces againſt him, as if he were a fit Match for thee; whereas Men uſually deſpiſe and diſregard mean Adverſaries, and will not honour them ſo much as to fight with them; therefore do not, O Lord, thus diſhonour thy ſelf, or magnify me. I acknowledge that even thy Corrections are Mercies and Honours, but, Lord, let me be no more ſo honoured.

Chap. VIII.

Bildad's *Reproof.* Job's *Words ſaid to be as Wind. God juſt in all his Ways, and his Dealings towards* Job's *Children. If he would pray to God, and was indeed pure and upright, God would ariſe for him. For this he appeals to the Hiſtory of antient Times, which declare the bad End of the Hypocrite.*

Q. I *Deſire to know the proper and genuine Senſe of the firſt Clauſe of* Ver. 6. If thou wert pure and upright.

A. If thou wert in Truth what thou pretendeſt, and haſt been thought to be by others, *pure and upright*, that is, of a ſincere Heart and blameleſs Life towards God and Man. But God's ſevere Dealing with thee is an evident Token, that notwithſtanding all thy fair Shews, thou art but a Hypocrite and ſecret Sinner. And this Senſe may ſeem to agree both with the Charge brought againſt *Job* by *Eliphaz*, Chap. iv. 6, 7. and with the following Diſcourſe, particularly with *Ver.* 13. 20. Or thus, *If thou* wouldeſt be *pure and upright*; that is, if thou wouldeſt join Reformation to thy Supplication. And this Senſe may ſeem to ſuit with the foregoing Verſe, according to the common Tranſlation.

Chap. IX.

Job's *Anſwer. Man cannot ſtand in Judgment with God, becauſe of his Juſtice, Wiſdom and Power, which is unſearchable. All Help, or Reaſon againſt God, is vain; nor can we anſwer him; but muſt ſupplicate to our Judge. God's Sovereignty, and our Vileneſs before him. The godly are puniſhed as well as the wicked, by general Calamities, and tyrannical Oppreſſion. His Time ſwift; his Sorrows bitter; if wicked he could not clear himſelf; nor would God hold him innocent; yet wiſhes for a Day's-Man, and a Removal of the divine Terror; then would he maintain his Innocency.*

Q. THIS *Chapter contains a moſt beautiful and ſublime Deſcription of God's Omnipotence; and among other Inſtances thereof, mentions the* making *or diſpoſing, or ordering, as the Word is ſometimes uſed in Scripture,* Arcturus, Orion, *and* Pleiades, *and* the Chambers of the South: *Which ſeveral Things I deſire you to explain.*

A. Theſe he names as Stars or Conſtellations of greateſt Note and Eminence; for ſo they are both in Scripture and other Authors, and ſuch as have, or thought to have, a ſpecial Influence in raiſing Storms and Tempeſts; but under them he ſeems to comprehend all the Stars, which as they were created by God, ſo they are under his Government. *Arcturus* is a Northern Conſtellation, near to that call'd the *Bear*, which riſes to us about the Begining of *September*, and by its Riſing (as *Pliny* affirms) produces horrible Storms and Tempeſts. *Orion* is a Southern Conſtellation that riſes to us in *December*, and is noted by Aſtronomers for raiſing fearful Winds and Tempeſts both by Sea and Land. The *Pleiades* is a Conſtellation not far from *Orion*, and near that called the *Bull*, which we call the *Seven Stars:* To us it riſes at the Beginning of the Spring, and by its Riſing cauſeth Rains and Tempeſts, and therefore is unwelcome to Mariners at Sea. By *the Chambers* (or *inmoſt and ſecret Chambers*, as the Word ſignifies) *of the South*, he ſeems to mean thoſe Stars and Conſtellations which are towards the Southern Pole, which are fitly termed *inward Chambers*, becauſe they are for the moſt hid and ſhut up (as Chambers commonly are) from theſe Parts of the World, and do not riſe or appear to us till the Beginning of Summer, when they alſo raiſe Southerly Winds and Tempeſts, as Aſtronomers obſerve.

Chap. X.

Job's *Life a Burthen to him. His Complaint that he could not ſee the End or Cauſe of God's Puniſhment. God delights not to oppreſs; nor was his Innocence, tho' ſuſpected by Men, hid from God. He urges, that being God's Work, in his Hands, and receiving all from him, God would not deſtroy him. His Sins expoſe him to God's Wrath, which was terrible upon him. He curſes his Birth; Death deſirable to him.*

Q. HOW *do you underſtand the firſt Clauſe of* Ver. 13. And theſe Things haſt thou hid in thine Heart?

A. This may be underſtood, either, 1. Of *Job's* preſent Affliction: So the Senſe is this; yet in the midſt of all thoſe Manifeſtations of thy Grace and Kindneſs to me, thou did'ſt retain a ſecret Purpoſe of changing thy Courſe and Carriage towards me, and of bringing theſe dreadful Calamities upon me. Or rather, 2. Of his former Mercies, *theſe* Things, to wit, laſt mentioned; *thou haſt hid them in thy Heart*; that is, thou do'ſt exactly remember them, as this Phraſe is uſed, *Pſal.* cxix. 11. *Luke* ii. 51. So the Argument is this; let the Remembrance of thy former great Favours vouchſafed to me, move thee to give me farther Bleſſings, and a ſpeedy Deliverance. For this is uſual both with God and Men, to chuſe and delight to do more Good to thoſe to whom they have done much Good already, which is the Ground of that known Paſſage, *Matt.* xiii. 12. *To him that hath ſhall be given.*

Chap. XI.

Zophar's *Reproof.* Job's *Words too many and falſe, even to Mockery, in juſtifying himſelf. Should God ſpeak, his Wiſdom and Juſtice, and all his Perfections would appear infinitely greater than what* Job *conceived of them. God knows man; ſees Wickedneſs and conſiders it; but Man is ignorant and fooliſh, and in vain pretends to Wiſdom. If* Job *would prepare his Heart, pray, and put away his Sin, he ſhould again lift up his Head, and forget his Miſery, and his laſt Days be brighteſt; but the Wicked ſhall periſh.*

Q. ZOPHAR, *in his reproving* Job, *wiſhes* that God would ſhew him the Secrets of Wiſdom, that they are double to that which is: *How do you underſtand theſe Words?*

A. By the *Secrets of Wiſdom* we underſtand the unknown and unſearchable Depths of God's Wiſdom and Counſels, in dealing with his Creatures. Theſe divine Secrets are far more and greater (the Word *double* being uſed indefinitely for manifold, or plentiful, as *Iſ.* xl. 2. and lxi. 7. *Jer.* xvii. 18. *Zech.* ix. 12.) then that which hath a Being or Exiſtence, that is, the ſecret Wiſdom of God is infinitely greater than that which is revealed to us by his Word or Works: The greateſt Part of what is known of God, are the leaſt Part of thoſe Perfections that are in him. And therefore thou doeſt raſhly and fooliſhly in paſſing ſuch a bold Cenſure upon God's Ways, and judging ſo harſhly of his Proceedings with thee, becauſe thou do'ſt not comprehend the Reaſons of them, and judging thyſelf innocent, becauſe thou do'ſt not ſee they Sins; whereas the all-knowing God ſees innumerable Sins in thee, for which he may utterly deſtroy thee, though thou diſcerneſt them not. But the Words are and muſt be rendered, either thus, *that* he hath *double*, that is, abundant *Wiſdom*; for this the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies, Chap. vi. 13. and xii. 16. *Prov.* ii. 7. and iii. 21. or *that they are double to*, or *in* that *Being* or *Eſſence*, namely, to God, who calls himſelf by the Name, *I am*, *Ex.* iii. 14. which ſignifies *Being*, and who appropriates Being to himſelf, *Iſ.* xlv. 18. *I am, and* there is *none elſe beſides me*; as elſewhere he is ſaid to be the *only wiſe, and only Potentate*, and *only immortal* Being, 1 *Tim.* i. 17. and vi. 15, 16.

Chap. XII.

Job's *Anſwer. His Friends Self-conceit. The Miſerable deſpiſed, tho' Upright. The Wicked proſper. God's Power and Providence ſeen in his Works, With the Antient is Wiſdom. Judges are Fools; Princes weak and mean; Darkneſs, Light before him; and whole Nations are over-ruled by him.*

Q. PRAY *explain the firſt Clauſe of* Verſe 7. Aſk now the Beaſts, and they ſhall teach thee: *How were the Beaſts to teach him?*

A. That is, objectively, thus; if thou obſerveſt their Properties, Actions and Events; from them thou mayeſt learn this Leſſon.

Q. *What Leſſon?*

A. Either 1. That which was laſt mentioned, Ver. 5. God's Providence orders Things in the like Manner among the very Beaſts, Fowls and Fiſhes; of which the moſt ravenous and miſchievous fare the beſt, whilſt thoſe which are moſt harmleſs and ſerviceable and beneficial to Men, meet with the hardeſt Uſage. Or, 2. That which *Zophar* had uttered with ſo much Pomp and Gravity, Chap. xi. 7, 8, 9. concerning God's infinite Wiſdom, which, ſays *Job*, thou needeſt not go into Heaven or Hell to know, but thou may'ſt learn it even from the Beaſts, *&c.*

Q. *What is the* Girdle *wherewith* Job *ſays*, God girdeth the Loins of Kings, *Verſe* 18?

A. Either, 1. A Girdle of Dignity and Glory, which was put upon the Loins of Men in Power and Authority, as *Iſ.* xi. 5. and xxii. 21. *Jer.* i. 2. So this Member of the Verſe is oppoſite to the former, and the Senſe of the whole is, he either caſts down Kings, or raiſes them up, as he pleaſes. But the Scripture no where mentions this *Girdle* as the Ornament of Kings. Or rather, 2. A Servile Girdle: For ſince all, both the foregoing and ſucceeding Paſſages do evidently denote Acts of Judgment or Puniſhments, inflicted upon them, it ſeems improper to underſtand this alone, of an Act of God's Favour to them. So the Senſe is, he reduces them into a mean and ſervile Condition, which is thus expreſſed, becauſe Servants uſed to gird up their Garments (which, according to thoſe Parts and Times, were looſe and long) that they might be fitter for Attendance on their Maſters; of which ſee *Luke* xii. 37. and xvii. 8. and ſo this is an Amplification of the former Sentence. He not only depoſeth them from their Thrones, but brings them into Bondage and Slavery.

Chap. XIII.

Job's *Friends not wiſer than he; he would reaſon with God; but they were Liars, and talked deceitfully for God, who would ſearch and reprove them for accepting Perſons. God's Excellency, and they Aſhes and Clay.* Job *is reſolute, his Confidence in God, before whom he would ſpeak, and by whom he ſhould be ſaved; not ſo the Hypocrite. He orders his Cauſe to plead with God; only deſires God to remove his Hand from him.*

Q. PRAY *explain* Ver. 14. Wherefore do I take my Fleſh in my Teeth, and put my Life in my Hand.

A. According to this Tranſlation, the Senſe ſeems to be this, If, as you ſay, God puniſhes none but wicked Men, why does he bring me (whom he knows to be no Hypocrite, as you ſlander me) to that Extremity of Pain and Miſery, that I am almoſt conſtrained to tear and eat my own Fleſh (which is mentioned as the Character of Men in great Anguiſh, *Iſ.* ix. 20. and xlix. 26.) and am ready to lay violent Hands upon myſelf? Is the

Crime ſo great to complain in this Caſe, or at leaſt to enquire into the Cauſe of this unuſual Severity? But this Senſe ſeems not to ſuit well either with the foregoing or following Verſes, but to come abruptly. Others therefore render the Words thus, *Why ſhould I take my Fleſh in my Teeth*, &c. And ſo this may be either, 1. A Reaſon of his ardent Deſire of Liberty of Speech, becauſe he could hold his Tongue no longer, but muſt needs tear himſelf to pieces, if he had not ſome Vent for his Grief. So this agrees well with Verſe 13. where he deſired this Freedom, and with Verſe 19. where the ſame Senſe is expreſſed in plainer Words. Or, 2. An Antidote againſt Deſpair. I perceive, my Friends, by your Diſcourſes, that you intend to drive me to utter Deſpair, if I do not turn to God in another Manner than yet I have done: Which, if you could do I ſhould certainly tare my Fleſh, and violently take away my own Life: But I ſee no Reaſon why I ſhould give way to any ſuch Deſpair or deſperate Actions. And this alſo hath a good Dependance upon the foregoing Words, *Let come on me what will*; as if he had ſaid, I have no Reaſon to fear ſuch Conſequences as ye ſuggeſt, nor to deſpair of a merciful Audience and Relief from God, and it is a good Connection with thoſe which follow, Ver. 15. where he declares his Hope and Confidence in God. The Phraſe of having one's *Life in his Hand*, notes a Condition extremely dangerous, and almoſt deſperate, as *Judg.* xii. 3. 1 *Sam.* xix. 5. and xxviii. 21. *Pſalm* cxix. 109.

CHAP. XIV.

Man's natural Miſery, Sin, and ſhort Life; our Plea with God not to diſturb us with his Power, but ſuffer us to accompliſh our appointed Time. The other Creatures decay and revive, but Man, once dead, returns not till the End of all Things. He wiſhes to be hid in the Grave, in hopes of the Reſurrection, ſince here God was ſtrict in marking his Iniquity, and prevailed againſt him. Man's Miſery with reſpect to his Children.

Q. THE *Senſe of the 11th Verſe ſeems ſomewhat obſcure; which therefore pray explain?*

A. The Words are, *As the Waters fail from the Sea, and the Flood decayeth or drieth up*; *ſo*, &c. Now this may be underſtood, either, 1. By way of Oppoſition, *The Waters go*, or *flow out of the Sea*, and return thither again, *Eccleſ.* i. 7. and a Lake or River ſometimes *decays and drieth up*; but afterwards is recruited and repleniſhed: *But Man lieth*, &c. as it follows. Or, 2. By way of Reſemblance, *as Waters*, *i. e.* ſome Portion of Waters, *fail from the Sea*, being either exhaled or drawn up by the Sun, or received and ſunk into the dry and thirſty Earth, or overflow its Banks; and as the Flood, or a River, or a Pond (for the Word ſignifies any conſiderable Confluence of Waters) in a great Drought *decayeth and is dried up*; in both which Caſes the ſelf ſame Waters never return to their former Places; ſo it is with Man. Or thus, *As when the Waters fail from the Sea*, *i. e.* As when the Sea forſakes the Place unto which it uſed to flow, the River, which was fed by it, *Eccleſ.* i. 7. *decayeth and drieth up* without all Hopes of Recovery; ſo Man, when once the Fountain of his radical Moiſture is dried up, dies, *riſeth not till the Heavens will be no more*, *or ſhall be awakened out of his Sleep.* That is, to this Life; for he ſpeaks not here of the Life to come, nor of the Reſurrection of the Body after Death, by the divine Power; of the Belief whereof he gives ſufficient Evidences in divers Places. *'Till the Heavens be no more*, i. e. Either, 1. Never; becauſe the Heavens, tho' they ſhall be changed in their Qualities, yet ſhall never ceaſe to be, as to the Subſtance of them. And therefore everlaſting and unchangeable Things are expreſſed by the Duration of the Heavens, *Pſal.* lxxii, 5, 7, 17. *Matth.* v. 18, &c. Or, 2. Not until the Time of the general Reſurrection, and the Reſtitution of Things, when theſe viſible Heavens ſhall paſs away, and be no more, at leaſt in the ſame Form and Manner as now they are, *Pſal.* cii. 26. *Luke* xxii. 33. 2 *Pet.* iii. 7, 10. *Rev.* xxi. 1.

CHAP. XV.

Eliphaz's *Reproof.* Job's *Knowledge and Talk vain; he fears not God, nor prays to him; but his own Mouth utters Iniquity, and ſhould condemn him;* Job *not the wiſeſt of Men, nor wiſer than they, who were elder than he. He deſpiſed the Conſolations of God, and turns his Spirit againſt him. The Angels not clean in God's Sight; much leſs Man. A Deſcription of the Antients; their Wiſdom and Reports concerning Deſtruction, and Terrors on the Wicked, and the Cauſes of it.*

Q. PRAY *help me to underſtand the firſt Clauſe of* Ver. 19. Unto whom alone (*wiſe Men*) the Earth was given.

A. The Earth is given to them, either, 1. By the ſpecial and gracious Gift of God; whereas wicked Men invaded their Parts of the Earth. Or, 2. By the Choice and Conſent of the People, who for their great and known Wiſdom and Virtue, conferred this Power and Truſt upon them. This he alledges partly to make their Teſtimony more conſiderable, becauſe theſe were not obſcure, mean, or fooliſh Men, whoſe Words are commonly deſpiſed, but the moſt virtuous and famous Men of their Age and Country; and partly to contradict and confute what *Job* had ſaid, Chap. ix. 24. That *the Earth was given into the Hand of Wicked.* By the *Earth* he means either the Dominion of the Earth, namely, of that Part of the Earth near to which *Job* and his Friends lived. Or rather, the Poſſeſſion of the Earth, that is, a great Portion of wordly Goods: Or particularly, *the Land*, or *that Land* (as the Word properly ſignifies) namely, the Land of *Canaan*, which, by ſpecial Gift, was given to *Abraham* (from whom it ſeems highly probable that both *Job* and his Friends were deſcended) *Iſaac* and *Jacob*; who, tho' they met with ſome common and ordinary Afflictions, yet enjoyed a great Comfort and Meaſure of Wealth, Honour and Power in the World, as the Fruits of God's Bleſſing, and of his Covenant made with good Men, whilſt wicked Men were expoſed to manifold Diſtreſſes and grievous Calamities. All which thoſe holy Patriarchs diligently obſerved, and induſtriouſly imparted to their Children, to encourage them to continue and proceed in the Ways of Piety.

Q. *But how was the Earth or Land given to them* alone, *as is here ſaid?*

A. Either, 1. Becauſe *Noah* and his Sons (of whom ſome underſtand theſe Words) had the ſole Poſſeſſion and Dominion of the Earth. Or, 2. Becauſe *Canaan* was given to *Abraham*, and to his Seed alone: And ſome of *Abraham's* Children had the Dominion of, or an ample Poſſeſſion in thoſe Parts, where *Job* and his Friends lived, who alſo ſeem to be in the Number of them. Or 3. Becauſe they only had it either by God's ſpecial and gracious Providence, or by the Choice and Approbation of the People; whereas wicked Men took it by Rapine and Violence, without asking Leave either of God or Man.

CHAP. XVI.

Job's *Anſwer. His Friends increaſe his Miſery. His inſulting Enemies. God's Power againſt him. His Innocence ſhould cry to Heaven, where it was known. He wiſhes to plead with God; and pleaſes himſelf with the Proſpect of Death.*

Q. PRAY *explain the 21ſt Verſe*, O that one might plead for a Man with God, as a Man pleadeth for his Neighbour?

A. It is, as if he had ſaid, O that either I or ſome faithful Advocate, might be admitted to plead my Cauſe, either with God, or rather with you, before God's Tribunal, God being Witneſs and Judge between us. But this Verſe is, and that very agreeably to the *Hebrew* Text, otherwiſe tranſlated and interpreted, either 1. With reſpect to *Chriſt*, *And he* (that is, God laſt mentioned, namely, God the Son, *Chriſt Jeſus*) *will plead for a Man*, that is, for me againſt whom you plead. He modeſtly ſpeaks of himſelf in the third Perſon, (as is uſual) *with God* (namely with God the Father) *and the Son of Man* (as *Chriſt* is often called) *will plead for his Friend*, or *Companion*, or *Neighbour*, that is, for a Man whom he has taken into that Relation to himſelf. It is plain that the Myſtery of Man's Redemption by *Chriſt* was known to the antient Patriarchs, and to *Job* among others, Chap. xix. 25. Or, 2. As the Matter for which he prayed, and cried to God, *That he* (God) *would plead*, or *judge*, or *give Sentence for a Man* (that is, for me, or in my Cauſe) *with God* (namely, with himſelf, the Noun being put for the Pronoun, as *Gen.* ii. 20. and iv. 15, 16. and elſewhere, or at his own Tribunal, to which I have appealed) *as a Man* pleadeth *for his Friend or Neighbour*, with or before an earthly Judge or Tribunal. This ſeems moſt agreeable to the Scope of the Place, which was to maintain his own Integrity, againſt his Friends, before God.

CHAP. XVII.

Job *deſcribes the Miſery of his Life. Falſe Friends; their Puniſhment. His Contempt; and Sorrow. The Righteous ſhall be eſtabliſhed. His Hope is not in Life, but in Death.*

Q. I *Deſire your Explanation of* Ver. 3. *which ſeems to me ſomewhat obſcure?*

A. There are ſeveral Paſſages in Scripture that relate to ſome particular Cuſtoms that were in Uſe only at that Time, of which we can have but a little Idea at this Diſtance, and the true Meaning whereof, can therefore be only gueſſed at. Of this Kind, perhaps, is the third Verſe of this Chapter, which mentions a Method of becoming a Surety, *Lay down now, put me in a Surety with thee, who is he that will ſtrike Hands with me? Job* here ſeems to turn his Speech to *Eliphaz*, who ſpoke laſt; or rather to God, as is evident from the next Verſe. Theſe Words contain, either 1. an humble Deſire to God, that he would appoint him a Surety who ſhould undertake for his Friends, that they ſhould refer the Cauſe, in Difference between them, to God, or to ſome other Perſon, who ſhould determine the Matter in God's Name, and according to God's Will; or that God would be his Surety, or appoint him a Surety, who ſhould maintain his righteous Cauſe againſt his Oppoſers; for ſo this Phraſe is often uſed, as *Pſal.* cxix. 121, 122. *Iſa.* xxxviii. 14. and ſome expound this, as they do the twenty-firſt Verſe of Chap. xvi. of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who was called our *Surety*, Heb. vii. 22. *Appoint, I pray thee, my Surety*, (i. e. Chriſt, who is now) *with thee*, to plead my Cauſe. Or rather, 2. An Appeal from Man unto God, or a kind of Challenge or Deſire of debating his Cauſe with God. Which, tho' it ſavoureth too much of Boldneſs and Irreverence to God, yet as *Job* expreſſes the ſame Deſire, almoſt in the ſame Manner, Chap. ix. 33, 34. and is ſharply reproved by God for contending with him, Chap. xl. 2. I ſee no Inconveniency in aſcribing the ſame Thing to him here. So the Senſe is, Becauſe I am not able to deal with thee immediately, conſidering the Dread of thy Majeſty, my only Deſire is, that thou would'ſt deal with me upon fair and equal Terms, as if thou wert a Man like myſelf, or appoint ſome Man, who ſhall, in thy Name and Stead determine the Time and Place for the Trial of my Cauſe with thee. And this agrees well with the two following Verſes becauſe his Friends were without Underſtanding, Verſe 4. and partial, Verſe 5. therefore he deſires to ceaſe diſcourſing with them, and to debate his Cauſe with God, who was juſt and impartial, and would judge favourably. *Who is he that will ſtrike Hands with me?* That is, agree and promiſe, or be Surety to me; whereof that was the uſual Geſture, *Prov.* vi. 1, 2. and xvii. 18. and xxii. 26.

CHAP XVIII.

Bildad's *Reproof.* Job *too full of Words. He deſpiſes his Friends; vexes himſelf, but in vain. The Calamities of the Wicked.*

Q. THE *15th Verſe, I think, needs ſome Explanation; it runs thus,* It ſhall dwell in the Tabernacle, becauſe it is none of his: Brimſtone ſhall be ſcattered upon his Habitation.

A. It, i. e. Deſtruction, expreſſed Verſe 12. and deſigned by this Particle *it*, Verſe 13. ſhall not come upon him and his, for a Seaſon, for then there might be ſome Hopes of a Recovery; but it ſhall fix its Abode with him, —— *becauſe it is none of his.* This may be added, either, 1. By way of Correction; did I ſay, *his Tabernacle*? I muſt retract the Expreſſion; for in Truth *it is none of his*, it is become another Man's. Or, 2. As a Reaſon of the Ruin of his Tabernacle, becauſe it is none of his own, but got from others by Deceit or Violence. But theſe Words are, and may be joined with the former, and both thus rendered; *A Stranger* (*Heb.* one *that is not his*, that is not deſcended from him, and hath no Relation to him) *ſhall dwell in his Tabernacle*, i. e. ſhall poſſeſs his Houſe and Goods. —— *Brimſtone ſhall be ſcattered on his Habitation*, i. e. it ſhall be utterly and prodigiouſly deſtroyed, as it were, by Fire and Brimſtone.

ſtone. He ſeems to allude both to the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, upon which God did ſcatter Fire and Brimſtone, which happened not long before theſe Times, and could not be unkown to them who lived near that Place, and were diligent Obſervers of God's Works; and to the Judgment which befel *Job*, Chap. i. 16. When the Stranger hath taken and rifled his Dwelling, he ſhall forſake it as an accurſed Place, and ſhall burn it with Brimſtone and Fire; that there may be no Monument of ſo vile a Perſon left upon the Earth.

Chap. XIX.

Job's *Anſwer. The Strangeneſs and Reproaches of his Friends vex him. He diſcourſes on the Greatneſs of his Miſery to move their Pity; wiſhes his Words might be recorded; hopes in his Redeemer and Reſurrection. His Friends ſhould not cenſure his Integrity, for Fear of the like Judgment.*

Q. THE *25th, 26th, and 27th Verſes of this Chapter have occaſioned no ſmall Conteſt among the Learned: The Words run thus*, For I know, that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter Day upon the Earth; and tho' after my Skin, Worms deſtroy this Body; yet in my Fleſh I ſhall ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for my ſelf, and mine Eyes ſhall behold, and not another; though my Reins be conſumed within me. *The firſt Queſtion ariſing from theſe Words is, Who was* Job's *Redeemer?*

A. That the Redeemer here meant is no other than *Chriſt*, is plain, if we conſider the Introduction to theſe Words in the four preceding Verſes, *Have Pity upon me, have Pity upon me, O ye my Friends, for the Hand of God hath touched me. Why do you perſecute me as God, and are not ſatisfied with my Fleſh? O that my Words were now written! O that they were written in a Book! That they were graven with an iron Pen and Lead in the Rock for ever!* Now, if *Job* had really intended no more than to aſſure his Friends he did not deſpair; but hoped yet to ſee good Days upon Earth, I think he would never have made uſe of theſe Words. What Occaſion could there be for writing this? Of what Conſequence was it, that he ſhould deſire its being inſcrib'd on a Rock? Common Writings were not, even in thoſe Days, written in ſuch a Manner as *Job* wiſhed his Words to be writ. There is an Emphaſis in his Expreſſion, which plainly points at his wiſhing a Record might be made for the Uſe of Ages to come. The Words in our Bible, *Printed in a Book*, ſignify, *Put in a Roll*, i. e. ſuch a Roll as their Genealogies were written in, which we know were the Writings moſt eſteemed among them. The Graving with an Iron Pen and Lead, was yet a ſtronger and more laſting Method of preſerving the Memory of Things deſcrib'd in this Manner; and altogether proves plainly, that what *Job* was about to declare, was a Point of very high Importance. Then follow immediately the Words which I propoſe to examine: *For I know that my* Redeemer *liveth*. The Word *Goel*, which we tranſlate *Redeemer*, is a Word very often uſed in the Old Teſtament, and conſequently the Senſe of it is very well fixed; it ſignifieth the next of Kin; he to whom the Right of Redemption from Captivity or Bondage belonged, or the Power of retrieving from Mortgage or Pawn. Thus, in *Leviticus*, we read this Injunction: *If thy Brother be waxed poor, and have ſold away ſome of his Poſſeſſion, and if any of his Kin come to redeem it, then ſhall he redeem that which his Brother ſold.* Now it is impoſſible that *Job* ſhould have made uſe of any Word more expreſſive of the Office of the *Meſſiah* than this. Thus, in the Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, we are told how his Sufferings ſhould profit us. *He was wounded* (ſays the Prophet) *for our Tranſgreſſions; he was bruiſed for our Iniquities; the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed.* The Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* explains this Matter yet more fully, and more to our Purpoſe; *And for this Cauſe* (ſays he) *he*, i. e. Chriſt *is the Mediator of the New Teſtament, that, by Means of Death, for the Redemption of the Tranſgreſſions that were under the firſt Covenant, they which are called might receive the Inheritance.* But as this Appellation very fitly pointed out the Office of *Chriſt* our Saviour, ſo we find it among the Names or Titles, by which the Meſſiah is expreſſly called in the Old Teſtament. When *Jacob* bleſſed *Joſeph* and his Sons, he ſaith: *The Angel which redeemed me from all Evil, bleſs the Lads.* And in the Prophet *Iſaiah* we find, *The* Redeemer *ſhall come to* Zion, *and unto them that turn from Tranſgreſſion in* Jacob, *ſaith the Lord.* Both which Paſſages the *Jews*, as well as we, interpret of the *Meſſiah*. The Time when he expected this Redeemer, is another ſtrong Proof that it was indeed the *Meſſiah* of whom he ſpeaks; for tho' he declares that he knew his Redeemer was then living, yet it was not till the laſt Day that he expected he ſhould ſtand upon the Earth; and in this Day plainly he expected his Deliverance. I know that ſome Men have endeavour'd to give other Senſes to this Expreſſion; but then it is with great Violence done to the natural Conſtruction of the Words, and with ſuch an apparent Prejudice againſt that Senſe in which we take them, as I think no impartial Perſon can digeſt; for they would have us believe, that the meaning of this Aſſertion is no more than that *Job* believed God would deliver him from all the Evils which oppreſſed him, and be, as it were, laſt in the Field, when all his Enemies were trod down and ſubdued. But *Job* does not ſpeak here ſimply of God, but of his *Goel*, his *Redeemer*; and the Word he makes uſe of, does not ſignify after a Time, but in the very laſt Time; ſo the Word *Haphar* does not ſignify a Field or Place of Battle, but the Earth, or Duſt of the Earth. Beſides, *Job* does not ſpeak of a Victory gained by his Redeemer, but of a Victory to be gained by himſelf, when he ſhould behold this Redeemer. The Manner in which he declares he ſhould behold him, confirms what has been ſaid: *Tho', after my Skin, Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God, whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and my Eyes ſhall behold, and not another.* To ſay, that by this, no more is meant than a confident Hope, that God would, ſome Time or other, relieve him, is ſuch a manifeſt Departure from the literal Senſe, and is introducing ſuch a ſtrange Method of interpreting Scripture, as would enable Men to give any Senſe they pleaſe to any Text which is produced; nor is it poſſible to aſſign any Reaſon, either for underſtanding the Words in the Senſe laſt mentioned, or to doubt of *Job's* meaning the Beatific Viſion of his Saviour in another Life. But the obſtinate Opinion which ſome

Men have, that the Reſurrection of the Dead was a Point neither known nor believed by the Patriarchs; but ſure this Prejudice of theirs ought not to deſtroy the Profeſſion of an inſpired Writer, deliver'd in the moſt expreſs Terms. The Exclamation with which *Job* concludes this Proteſtation, is very maſculine and noble, altho', in our Tranſlation, it is ſo rendered as not to be eaſily underſtood; for having given this conciſe, and yet apparent Teſtimony of his Faith, the holy Man adds, *The Zeal with which I hope conſumes me*; thereby expreſſing the Livelineſs of his Truſt in God, and the burning Deſire he had to behold his Redeemer. This, I ſay, is the true Meaning of the Text, which, in our Bible ſtands; *Tho' my Reins be conſum'd within me.* The vulgar *Latin* has it as it ought to be: *Repoſita hæc Spes mea in Sinu meo*, *This is the Hope laid up in my Boſom*; conformable to a multitude of Paſſages in Scripture to the ſame Purpoſe; neither are theſe Starts or Apoſtrophes, however uncommon in *European* Authors, at all infrequent in oriental Writers, or even in the Books of Scripture. In the *Teſtament*, or rather in the Death-bed Prophecy of *Jacob*, we have an Inſtance of this Kind; for the Patriarch having deſcribed the Condition of *Dan*, cries out of a Sudden, before he proceeds to ſpeak of *Gad*, *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord.* The Truth of our Comment on the Words of *Job*, and of our Aſſertion that he believed in the *Meſſiah* and in the Reſurrection of the Dead, might be ſafely reſted here; for the Evidence already produced is as convincing as, in this Caſe can be deſired. But the following Verſe, where the good Man ſums up the Effect of all that he had ſaid, and applies it directly to his Friends, who had charged him with Want of Faith, and with Diffidence as to his Creator, is ſo very much to my Purpoſe, that I cannot perſuade myſelf to paſs it by: *But ye ſhould ſay, Why perſecute we him? Seeing the* Root *of the Matter is found in me.* It is clear that *Job* looked upon his Declaration as a full Evidence of his being faithful, and holding the true Faith of his Fathers, and therefore he calls his Faith a *Root*, which implies its Fixedneſs, and urges it as a Cauſe why his Friends ſhould lay aſide their Reproaches; becauſe, however they might differ about leſs material Points, yet, as to the main Articles of Religion, they were agreed. Thoſe who would have all this mean no more than a firm Hope of being reſtored to temporal Proſperity, make *Job* give up his Argument, and go over, in a great Meaſure, to the Sentiments of his Opponents; at leaſt they make him contradict himſelf, by making him ſay the very Reverſe of what he had before ſaid, that he had no Hopes but in Death. Whereas the contrary of all this appears beyond Contradiction; for the Controverſy is not ended by this Speech of *Job's*, but his Friends purſue the Arguments they had offered, with as much Vigour, though not with as much Acrimony as before; for now they were ſatisfied that *Job* believed and truſted in God; whereas, before, they imagined that thro' Deſpair he had caſt off all Reverence of the divine Being. Thoſe who maintain the Sentiments we reject, are forc'd to have Recourſe to myſtical Senſes, and to allegorical Expreſſions; Things they would not care to admit on another Occaſion, and which there is no Colour for allowing, in the Caſe before us, becauſe there is not a Word which has an Air of *Metaphor* in the Text; whereas, in admitting the Senſe which here, and in the Hiſtory I have endeavoured to ſupport, there is no ſtraining at all of the Words, or of the Matter; but the Whole of *Job's* Speeches, and of his Viſitants, are uniform and conſiſtent, which ſurely is the ſtrongeſt Proof that this is the genuine Meaning of the inſpired Writer. For though *Job*, worn out with Grief, and with a cruel Diſeaſe, deſired to be at Eaſe from his Affliction, and to reſt in the Grave from the excruciating Torments of Temporal Calamities, as his Words ſo often mention'd imply; yet why is this to be taken for an utter Deſpair of God's Favour, a relinquiſhing all Hope in him? Even in the midſt of his Sorrows and Complaints, this good and righteous Perſon profeſſed quite the Contrary; *Tho' he ſhould ſlay me, yet would I truſt in him.* But tho' he knew that the Grave was the End of worldly Things, and that the Joys of this Life were buried therein; yet he knew too, that his Innocence would receive a Reward, and therefore he thirſted for a better State. Had his Expectation been in this Life, would he have ſaid, that in the laſt Days he ſhould have Deliverance? Would he have declar'd, that this ſhould not come till his Body was corrupted throughout, even as his Skin then was by his Malady? Would he have profeſſed, after all this, an Aſſurance of ſeeing God his Redeemer, in the Fleſh? And would he have called this Declaration a Root of the Matter, which when thus underſtood, it is neither more nor leſs than what his Opponents had advanced? Certainly he would not. His Redemption was quite of another Nature, and he grounded his Hopes on very ſolid Foundations, *viz.* on God's Juſtice, and on his own Innocence. He maintains the firſt always, tho' he inſiſts that it is inſcrutable by human Underſtanding; and inſiſts on the latter, as the Source of all his Hope. He believes that his Creator is abſolute Lord of his Creatures, therefore he ſubmits. He knows, from his own Caſe, and from reflecting on that he has ſeen, that the Unhappy are not always wicked; therefore he aſſerts the Unſearchableneſs of God's Ways. He is ſenſible in *Death* there is Reſt; for this Reaſon he paſſionately longs for it. He is ſatisfied God is righteous and merciful; therefore, in the World to come, he doubts not of Salvation. This is the real Meaning of *Job's* Speeches.

Q. *When did* Job *expect this Redemption or Deliverance, intimated in theſe Words,* and though after my Skin, Worms deſtroy this Body; yet in my Fleſh I ſhall ſee God?

A. Before we proceed to examine the Purport of theſe Words, it will be neceſſary to give a more literal Interpretation than that which we have copied from our Bible; though it be not exactly agreeable to our *Idiom*, and conſequently could not ſo well be uſed there: *I know my Redeemer lives, and ſhall ſtand at laſt on the Earth; and after my Skin, this too being deſtroyed, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God.*

The Fathers of the Chriſtian Church, and after them many learned Expoſitors of the Holy Scripture, underſtand this Paſſage as referring to the Reſurrection of the Dead; and the principal Reaſons which they aſſign for ſo explaining it, may be reduced to the following Heads: Firſt, they alledge that the plain and literal Senſe of what *Job* ſays is wholly in their favour; ſince he affirms, that *his Redeemer lives*, that *at the Laſt he ſhall* *ſtand on the Earth*; that *after his Body ſhould be as much corrupted as his Skin was at the Time of his Speaking, yet in his Fleſh he ſhould ſee God*; Phraſes which they aſſert can ſignify nothing but his Confidence of God's coming at the Laſt-Day, and of his beholding *him* then in the Fleſh, himſelf being raiſed from the Dead. *Secondly*, they urge the earneſt Deſire which *Job* had hitherto ſhewn for Death, and eſpecially that Paſſage before-mentioned, *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him*, which they ſay, would have no Meaning at all, unleſs he hoped, in another Life, to receive that Reward of his Piety, that denied him in this. *Thirdly*, That conſidering the many haſty and impatient Sayings which the virulent Reproaches of his Friends had extorted from *Job*, it is difficult to conceive why God, in ſo expreſs Terms, ſhould declare his Approbation of what this holy Man had delivered concerning *him*, unleſs we admit that *Job*, in the midſt of his Sufferings, ſtedfaſtly believed that God would hereafter raiſe him up from the Dead, and reward him with eternal Felicity.

Some modern Commentators have, however, embraced a contrary Opinion; denying that *Job* had any Idea of a Future State, or Reſurrection from the Dead, and alledging, that the Paſſage of which we are now ſpeaking, refers only to the Hopes he had of being reſtored to a proſperous Condition in this Life: Wherefore, according to their Sentiments, the Aſſertion of this devout Perſon is thus to be underſtood: "I know that my God lives, and that hereafter he ſhall manifeſt his Power in my favour, by laying mine Enemy in the Duſt; and notwithſtanding the miſerable Condition I am now in, yet my Body, however corrupted, ſhall be reſtored, and in my *Fleſh*, i. e. *in this Life ſhall I ſee God*; i. e. his *Power* in *delivering me from all theſe Evils*." To ſupport this Manner of interpreting *Job*'s Teſtimony of his Faith, they alledge, that in the Scriptures there are many Inſtances of great and heavy Sufferings being ſpoken of as of Death; as in the *Pſalms*, where we read, *My Strength is dried like a Potſherd, and my Tongue cleaveth to my Jaws; and thou haſt brought me into the Duſt of Death.* Conformable to which, Reſurrection and Quickening are made uſe of to denote God's returning and delivering the Spirits of the Righteous from thoſe deep and deadly Calamities; to which Purpoſe, we read alſo in the *Pſalms, God, who hath ſhewed me great and ſore Troubles, ſhall quicken me again, and ſhall bring me up again from the Depths of the Earth.* They argue farther, That *Job* himſelf, in other Parts of his Lamentations, expreſſes no other Hopes in Death than being abſolutely free from all Senſation; and, conſequently, would thereby be rid of thoſe excruciating Torments under which he, at that Time, groaned. And this, according to them, is exactly conformable to the Divinity of thoſe antient Times; wherein, as *Job's* Friends plainly ſet it forth, they conceived, from the Obſervation and Advice of their Fathers, that God conſtantly rewarded the Pious with good Things, and plagued the Wicked for their Offences: Which was directly oppoſite to the Notion of a Future State, wherein it is conceived that exact Retribution is made; and ſuch good Men as have been unhappy in this World, are there amply recompenced. They alſo obſerve, That in the Senſe they take this Expreſſion, it did actually come to paſs; the Lord removing thoſe Ills which were intended for his Trial, and raiſing him to a more exalted State than that from which he had fallen. Which being the Concluſion of the Book, they argue from thence, that we are to draw no other Moral from it, but what hath reſpect to the Mercy of God in delivering, temporally, all ſuch as truſt in *him*; and being ſo taken, ſay they, it could not but incite the *Iſraelites* to Patience, who would hardly have been induced to liſten to any other Conſideration.

The Aſſertors of this latter Opinion urge farther, in its Support, That there are various Objections to the contrary Interpretation, which cannot be anſwered: As for Inſtance; If this Place, ſay they, had been antiently underſtood as relating to the *Reſurrection of the Dead*, how could it be poſſible that the *Jews* ſhould never take notice of it: Or why did they not urge it againſt the *Sadduces*, who abſolutely denied the Reſurrection, though, in other reſpects, very religious Perſons, and zealous Aſſerters of the Law. *Secondly*, From whom did *Job* derive this Knowledge? ſince, at the time in which he lived, the Immortality of the Soul was a Doctrine hardly known in the World, as far as we can, with any Certainty, trace it. *Thirdly*, Why did *Job* ſo bitterly complain of what had befallen him? Or, Why did he arraign the Juſtice of God's Proceedure towards him, and wiſh that he was ſatisfied in his own Mind, that after this Life paſſed, he ſhould be judged and accepted by a living Redeemer, received to Mercy, and crowned with Glory. Many pious and moderate Divines have, from the Weight of theſe Reaſons, been led to join in theſe Sentiments, and to ſuppoſe that *Job* intended a temporal Reſtitution only, and not a future Reſurrection from the Dead; at leaſt, that his Words have only a ſecondary Meaning, if taken in this Senſe, the natural Deſign of them being fulfilled by the attaining a ſecond time to worldly Happineſs; under which might figuratively be ſet forth that eternal Felicity to which the Bleſſed are exalted in the next World, after having ſuffered ſuch Troubles and Afflictions as holy *Job* underwent in this.

Q. *From whence had* Job *theſe Notions of Religion?*

A. However common the Notion may be, yet there are no Arguments which can be drawn either from Scripture or Reaſon, to prove that ſuch holy Perſons as retained the *True Faith* after the *Flood*, had *but dark and obſcure Conceptions as to the Attributes of God, his Promiſe of a Saviour, and his raiſing up the Righteous to* Life eternal: For we ſay, and ſay it with the Authority of the Scripture, both of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, That *Noah* and the *Patriarchs* deſcending from him had clear and certain Revelations, for a conſiderable Tract of Time after the Flood: And tho' it be true that the Corruption of human Nature diſcovered itſelf ſoon after, and that Vice, Idolatry, and Superſtition made a ſwift and amazing Progreſs among Mankind in the ſucceeding Ages, yet there were ſtill ſome Perſons untainted both in Faith and Morals; ſuch as *Melchiſedeck* King of *Salem*; nor is there any Reaſon to doubt, that while ſuch religious and virtuous Perſons remained, God vouchſafed them ſuch Manifeſtations as were requiſite to ſupport their Belief, as may be collected from various Paſſages in this very Book of which we are ſpeaking. As to the Revelation afforded to *Abraham*, it is evident that it not only convinced him, but ſerved alſo to withdraw his Father *Terah* and his Family from the Adoration of falſe Gods, to the Worſhip of the true. What the Faith was which *Terah* received, we can only conjecture from what we know of that of *Abraham*, and concerning it we are told by *Chriſt* that he ſaw *his* Day, and was glad; that is, he ſaw it by Faith, and was aſſured of the *Coming* of the *Meſſiah*, and doubtleſs, of the Conſequence of his Coming, viz. The *Saving thoſe who believed in* him. In aſſerting this Doctrine, the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, and the Apoſtle *Peter*, in his *General Epiſtle*, as clearly and fully concur as it is in the Power of Words to teſtify. Now, this being conſidered, what Abſurdity, what Incongruity, what Straining can there be in applying the Words of *Job* to the Reſurrection of the Dead? Or rather, what Probability, what Propriety, what Connection, does there appear in giving them another Senſe? Which, indeed, his Friends had hinted to him, he himſelf had more than once diſclaimed; aſſerting, that he had no Pleaſure, no Deſire, no Hope in this Life, but that he earneſtly ſighed for a Deliverance by Death; not impiouſly ſeeking thereby to be out of the reach of God's Arm, but becauſe he ſhould then have ſeen *him* for himſelf, and behold *him* with his Eyes; to which very Profeſſion he appeals, as ſoon as he had made it, as a plain Teſtimony of his Piety, and urges it as a Reaſon why his Friends ſhould retract their ill Opinion of him: *Ye ſhould ſay*, (ſays *Job*,) *Why perſecute we him, ſeeing the Root of the Matter is found in me*, i. e. Why ſhould ye longer treat as an Hypocrite, or an Infidel, one who from this public Confeſſion ye know to have received the true Faith; and who, notwithſtanding the Complaints forced from him by Pain, believes and truſts in Gods? Theſe Arguments, we hope, without deſcending to farther Particulars, are weighty enough of themſelves to convince unprejudiced Perſons that this is the genuine Senſe of what the righteous *Job* advances concerning the Confidence he had of *Beholding his Redeemer in the Fleſh, after his Body was conſumed.* But it is now time to return to the Current of the Hiſtory, and the ſubſequent Diſcourſes between *Job* and his Friends.

Chap. XX.

Zophar's *Anſwer. The State and Portion of the Wicked, notwithſtanding for a Time he may flouriſh and proſper.*

Q. PRAY *give me the right Senſe of* Ver. 29. This is the Portion of a wicked Man from God, and the Heritage appointed him by God.

A. God, like a wiſe Maſter of a Feaſt, gives to every Man his proper Portion, and as a juſt Judge, diſtributes to him, according to his Deſerts, *Ver.* 29. *The Heritage appointed to him by God:* In the *Hebrew* the *Heritage of his Word*, i. e. the Portion as before, called here *an Heritage*, thereby to note the Stability and Aſſurance of it, that it is as firm as an Inheritance, which he had gotten by Fraud and Violence. *Of his Word*; either, 1. Of God's Word, *i. e.* which is allotted to him by the Word or Sentence of God. Or, 2. Of the wicked Man's Word, the Reward of his Speeches; which, like his Actions, are, and may well be preſumed to be wicked and blaſphemous, and many Ways offenſive to God: And he inſtances in his Speeches, rather than his Actions, to meet with *Job*, who, tho' he had made ſome colourable Excuſes for his Actions, yet was manifeſtly guilty of great Exceſſes againſt God, which he would hereby inſinuate, were not ſo harmleſs and excuſable as *Job* pretended, as appeared by theſe ſevere Judgments, which they brought on wicked Men.

Chap. XXI.

Job' *Reply. He complains not to Man, in whoſe Judgment he has moſt Reaſon to grieve; but excites their Attention to convincing and amazing Truths. The wicked proſper till in their Pride they fear not God; he purges himſelf from their Counſel, and acknowledges that their Deſtruction from God is often manifeſt, at leaſt in their Children. God is righteous in both Caſes; and both are alike in their Death. The wicked are indeed reſerved for Deſtruction.*

Q. IN *what Senſe do you take* Ver. 29. Have ye not asked them that go by the Way? And do ye not know their Tokens?

A. The firſt Clauſe contains the Words of *Job*'s Friends, who thus continue their former Diſcourſe by a ſecond Enquiry: Or, rather ſecondly of *Job* himſelf, who anſwers one Queſtion with another. You may learn this, which is the Subject of our Debate, namely, that good Men are often afflicted, and that wicked Men as commonly live and die in Proſperity, and are not puniſhed in this World, even *from them that go by the Way*, i. e. either from Travellers, who, from their univerſal Knowledge of the World, are more capable Judges in this Affair, or from any one that paſſeth along the Highway, every Man you meet with. It is ſo common and trivial a Thing, that no Man of common Senſe can be ignorant of it. *And do ye not know their Tokens?* The Examples or Evidences, or Signs of this Truth, which they that go by the Way can produce. They will ſhew you in divers Places the magnificent Houſes and Structures, and other Monuments of Power and Dignity, which wicked great Men have erected, which they now poſſeſs, and in which they live and die. He alludes here to thoſe Tokens which are ſet up in the Highways for the Direction of Travellers. The Thing which they were to learn of Paſſengers, follows in the next Verſe; that is, *That the Wicked is reſerved to the Day of Deſtruction*; i. e. either to ſome terrible and deſolating Judgments, which God ſometimes ſends upon wicked Princes or People, or to the laſt and general Day of Judgment, which is called in Scripture *the Day of Wrath:* For the Day of the general Reſurrection and Judgment was not unknown to *Job* and his Friends.

Chap. XXII.

Eliphaz's *Anſwer. Man's Righteouſneſs profits not God; nor can God fear Man. He charges* Job's *Miſery on his Sins, which God beheld and knew, nor could they be hid from him. The wicked and their Miſery. If they proſpered he would not hold with them; but their Deſtruction the Righteous ſhould laugh at. He exhorts* Job *to know God and and his Law, and return to him; he ſhould grow rich;*

rich; God ſhall be his Defence, his Joy and Confidence. If he would pray, God would hear him; and his Deſire and Purpoſe ſhould ſtand.

Q. AMONG *other Miſdemeanours which* Eliphaz *charges upon* Job, *one is, that he* had ſtripped the Naked of their Cloathing, *Ver. 6. How could he ſtrip the Naked?*

A. He calls them *Naked*, either, 1. Becauſe they had but very few and mean Cloaths, ſuch being often called Naked, as *Deut.* xxviii. 48. 1 *Cor.* iv. 11. *James* ii. 15. Or, 2. From the Effect; becauſe, tho' he did not find them Naked, yet he made them ſo. The like Phraſes we have *Iſaiah* xlvii. 2. *grind Meal*, that is, by grinding Corn make it Meal, *Amos* viii. 5. *falſifying the deceitful Ballances*, that is, by falſifying making true Ballances deceitful: And ſo here, *to ſtrip the naked*, is, by ſtripping them, to make them naked.

Q. *I deſire to know the true Senſe of* Ver. 30. He ſhall deliver the Iſland of the innocent; and it is delivered by the Pureneſs of their Hands.

A. God, whoſe Prerogative it is, upon thy Requeſt, when thou ſhalt become innocent, will for thy ſake deliver the whole Iſland, (or Country, as the Word is often uſed in Scripture to ſignify, *Gen.* x. 5, *&c*, *Pſ.* lxxii. 10. and xcvii. 1. *Iſa.* xli. 5.) in which thou dwelleſt: Or the *guilty*, or *him that is not innocent*. For the Word here rendered *Iſland*, is ſometimes uſed for *not*, in Scripture, as 1 *Sam.* iv. 21. *Prov.* xxxi. 3. So the Senſe is, God will have ſo great a Reſpect to thy Innocence and Purity, that for thy ſake he will deliver thoſe that belong to thee, or will live with or near thee, tho' in themſelves they are Sinners and ripe for Deſtruction. Thus, as he aſſerts the Prevalency of the righteous Man's Prayers with God, and by the ſame Argument perſuades *Job* to Repentance; ſo he alledgeth this as an Evidence, that *Job* did not ſtretch out pure Hands to God in Prayer, as he pretended, becauſe his Prayers could not prevail for the Preſervation of himſelf or his Children, and much leſs for others at a greater Diſtance.

CHAP. XXIII.

Job*'s Reply; his Deſire to plead with God, who would not confound, but ſtrengthen him. He cannot behold God's Way; but he walked in the Way of his Law. God, by his Providence brings about what he had decreed.* Job*'s Trouble herein.*

Q. PRAY *give me your Comment upon the 8th and 9th Verſes*, Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the Left Hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himſelf on the Right Hand, that I cannot ſee him.

A. I go forwards, i. e. toward the Eaſt, which in Scripture is accounted the Fore-part of the World, as the *Hebrew* Name of it ſignifies, becauſe of the Light of the Sun which ariſeth there, and draws our Eyes towards it. *But he is not there*; that is, ſo as I would have him, as a Judge to hear and determine my Cauſe, of which he is here ſpeaking; for otherwiſe he knew and believed that God was eſſentially preſent in all Places. *And backwards*; that is, toward the Weſt. So alſo the North is called the Left Hand, and the South the Right Hand, becauſe they are all ſo towards the Eaſt. He names the four Quarters of the World, to ſhew his eager Deſire and reſtleſs Endeavours to find out God, and to preſent himſelf before him. *On the Left Hand, where he doth work*; that is, in a ſpecial Manner, more than in other Parts of the World; for ſo indeed God did work in thoſe Parts which were Northward from *Job*, becauſe there Mankind (among whom God delights to be, and to work) were moſt numerous, and moſt ingenuous to diſcern God's Works. There alſo was the Seat of the *Syrian* Empire, and afterwards of the other ſucceſſive Empires; where God did many eminent and glorious Works: But this *Hebrew* Word, is by others improperly rendered *when*, or *whilſt he worketh*, namely in a ſignal Manner. So this is added to aggravate *Job*'s Unhappineſs. We may certainly find any Man when and where he is working: But I, ſays *Job*, ſearch for God when and where he is working, and yet cannot find him out. *He hideth himſelf*, that is, from me. He withdraweth his Favour, and will not afford me his Preſence and Audience. *I cannot ſee him:* Either, 1. I cannot diſcern his Counſels and Ways, and the Reaſons of his ſevere Dealings with me. Or rather 2. He doth not appear to me as a Judge to examine my Cauſe and Arguments, but condemns me unheard.

CHAP. XXIV.

The Practice and Proſperity of the Wicked. Their Puniſhment and Curſe in the End.

Q. PRAY *interpret the Meaning of the firſt Verſe*, Why, ſeeing Times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not ſee his Days?

A. The Senſe of the Words, according to this Tranſlation, is this, *Why* (how comes it to paſs) *ſeeing Times*, namely, the ſeveral Times of every Man's Life, how long he ſhall live, as the fitteſt Seaſons and Opportunities (which are often called Times and Opportunities, as *Gen.* xxiv. 11. *Pſal.* xxxi. 15. and cxix. 126. *Acts* i. 6, 7.) for every Action, and particularly for the Puniſhment of wicked Men, about which the preſent Controverſy was, *are not hidden from*, or *unknown to the Almighty God*, (that is, ſeeing all Times, and Men that live, and Things that are done, or to be done in their Times and Seaſons, are exactly known to God) *do they that know him* (that is, who love and obey him, as that Word is often uſed, as *Pſal.* ix. 10. and xxxvi. 10. and xci. 14. or they who obſerve and regard his Ways and Works done in the World) *not ſee* (whence is it they cannot diſcern) *his* (God's) *Days?* that is, his Times and Seaſons which he takes for the Puniſhment of ungodly Men; which if they were conſtant and fixed in this Life, as you pretend they are, they would not be unknown to good Men, to whom God uſeth to reveal his Secrets, and they could not be unobſerved by ſo many good Men, who make it their Buſineſs to mind and ſtudy the Works of God, and eſpecially the Courſe and Method of his Providence towards good and bad Men. The Times or Days of God's executing Judgments upon Sinners, are frequently called *the Days of the Lord*, as *Iſ.* ii. 12. and xiii. 6. *Jer.* xlvi. 10. Compare *Job* xx. 28. *Prov.* vi. 3S. *Acts* ii. 20. as the Time of Man's judging is call'd *Man's Day*, 1 *Cor.* iv. 3. But this Verſe is in part, and may, very agreeably to the *Hebrew* Text, be rendered and interpreted thus, *Why*, or *how are not Times* (that is, the Times and Seaſons appointed for the Puniſhment of evil Doers, about which the Diſpute was) *hidden*, or *reſervedly*, or *with God*; that is, kept as a Secret in his own Breaſt, and concealed from the Knowledge of Mankind: How can you ſay or think with any Colour, that theſe Times are fixed and manifeſt to all Men, and that Sinners are conſtantly puniſhed in this Life, and that ſo notoriouſly that all good Men ſee it, as *Chap.* xxii. 15, 19. *ſeeing they that know him* (that give themſelves to underſtand and conſider his Doings in the World, who of all Men are moſt likely to know this, if it were true and certain) *do not ſee his Days*, namely of puniſhing the wicked in this Life; and this he mentions as a fit Preface to uſher in the following Diſcourſe concerning the manifold Wickedneſs of Men, and withal their preſent Impunity.

Q. *Pray explain* Ver. 8. He is as ſwift as the Waters; their Portion is curſed in the Earth; he beholdeth not the Way of the Vineyard.

A. In the firſt Clauſe is deſcribed either, 1. The wicked Man's Diſpoſition and Deportment, that ſuch Perſons are light and frothy in their Spirits, or *ſwift* or *haſty* to do evil, or *unſtable in their* Ways *as the Waters, or upon the Face of the Waters*; *i. e.* like the Foam or Froth, or any other light thing which ſwims upon the Surface of the Waters. Or rather 2. His miſerable Condition, of which he evidently ſpeaks in the next Words, and in the two next Verſes. For tho' *Job* conſtantly affirms and maintains it againſt his Friends, that God will, ſooner or later puniſh them, and ſometimes here, cutting them off by remarkable and untimely Deaths, or otherwiſe inflicting on them ſome ſignal Judgment. So the Senſe is, *He is ſwift, i. e.* he quickly paſſeth away with all his Glory, *as the Waters* which never ſtay in one Place, but are always running away; or like a Ship or any other Thing which ſwimmeth *upon the Face of the Waters*: Tho' he ſeems to ſtand as firm and immoveable as a Rock, and to have taken deep Rooting in the Earth, yet he is ſuddenly and unexpectedly removed and plucked up by the Roots. *Their Portion*, or *his*; for he ſtill ſpeaks of the ſame Perſon, tho' with a Change of the Number, which is frequent in this Book, and elſewhere in Scripture, *Their Portion*, or *Part*, *i. e.* his Habitation and Eſtate which he left behind him: *Is curſed in the Earth*; is really accurſed by God, and ſo pronounced by all Men who live near or obſerve it, becauſe of the remarkable Judgments of God upon it, and upon his Poſterity or Family to which he left it, and from whom it is ſuddenly and ſtrangely alienated. *He beholdeth not the Way of the Vineyard*; *i. e.* He ſhall never more ſee or enjoy his Vineyards, or other pleaſant Places and Things, which ſeem to be comprehended under that Particular.

CHAP. XXV.

Bildad's *Anſwer. The Divine Majeſty and Purity ſuch, that Man cannot be juſtified before God, in whoſe Sight the heavenly Lights loſe their Luſtre and Purity.*

Q. LET *me have your Interpretation of Ver.* 2. Dominion and Fear are with him; he maketh Peace in his high Places?

A. That is, He hath abſolute and ſovereign Power over all Perſons and Things, with whom to contend, is both Rebellion and Madneſs. *And Fear*; actively underſtood, or *Terror*, *i. e.* that which juſtly makes him dreadful to all Men, eſpecially to all that undertake to diſpute with him: Awful Majeſty, infinite Knowledge, whereby he knows Mens Hearts far better than they know themſelves, and ſees much Sin in them which themſelves do not diſcover, and exact Purity and Juſtice, which render him formidable to Sinners. *Are with him*: Emphatically ſpoken; with him whom thou challengeſt; with him who is not lightly or irreverently to be named, much leſs to be contended with. And therefore it is thy Duty to humble thyſelf for thy preſumptuous Words and Carriage towards him, and quietly and modeſtly to ſubmit thyſelf and thy Cauſe to his Pleaſure. *He maketh Peace in his High-places.* This Clauſe, as well as the following Verſe, ſeems to be added to prove what he laſt ſaid of his Dominion and Dreadfulneſs: He keepeth and ruleth all Perſons and Things in Heaven, in Peace and Harmony, and the Order which he hath eſtabliſhed among them. The Angels, tho' very numerous, and differing in Orders and Miniſteries, all acknowledge his Sovereignty, and acquieſce in his Pleaſure, without diſputing or murmuring. The Stars and heavenly Bodies, tho' vaſt in their Bulk, and various in their Motions, yet exactly keep their Courſes, and the Order appointed them by God: And therefore it is great Folly and Impudence in thee to exempt thyſelf from his Juriſdiction, or to quarrel with the Methods of his Dealings with thee.

CHAP. XXVI.

Job's *Reply to, and Reproof of* Bildad's *uncharitable Suggeſtions. He acknowledges God's Power and Providence to be infinite and unſearchable; of which our Knowledge is but ſmall.*

Q. WHAT *Obſervations do you make upon this Speech of* Job?

A. It is evident, from the foregoing Words of *Bildad*, that *Job*'s Arguments had made great Impreſſion on his Friends, ſeeing there does not appear that Rancour of Spirit in this laſt which ſhewed itſelf in his former Reply: It is true, there are no Conceſſions made by *Bildad*; yet, if we conſider, that *Zophar* when he had done, attempted not to carry on the Diſpute; it may be reaſonably believed, that, finding themſelves unable to confute what in his ſeveral Speeches *Job* had advanced, as to the Inſcrutability of God's Providence, and the Injuſtice they were guilty of, in ſuppoſing him a Hypocrite, and grievous Sinner, merely becauſe they ſaw him covered with Sores, and every way in deep Affliction; they diſcovered ſuch an Alteration in their Countenances, as encouraged the holy *Job* to enter upon a copious Declaration of his Thoughts, concerning Providence; and a full Defence both of his Behaviour ſince his Trouble, and of his Courſe of Life before theſe Evils came upon him. This Speech of his is in the *Hebrew* called *Maſhal*, which we tranſlate a *Parable*, but the literal Senſe thereof is an *excellent Diſcourſe*; and, indeed, whether we conſider the Matter contained therein, or the Manner in which it is expreſſed: There is not, perhaps, in any Author, an Oration which could have better deſerved that Title; and, we make no Queſtion, had it been found in any profane Writer, but that Volumes would have been written by way of Comment thereon; and the ſame high Strains of Panegyric been diſcernible in ſuch Writings, as are at this Day to be found in the Labours of thoſe who have explained *Homer*, or *Virgil*; ſeeing it is impoſſible to deny, that in Grandeur of Stile, and Sublimity of Thought, this ſingle Harangue of *Job* is preferable to any Thing which can be produced from the Works either of the Philoſophers or Poets.

How poetical and grand are his Ideas of the Divine Majeſty! *Hell is naked before him, and Deſtruction hath no Covering. He ſtretcheth out the North over the empty Place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back the Face of his Throne, and ſpreadeth his Cloud upon it. He hath compaſſ'd the Waters with Bounds, until the Day and Night come to an End. The Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are aſtoniſhed at his Reproof. He divideth the Sea with his Power, and by his Underſtanding he ſmiteth through the Proud. By his Spirit he hath garniſhed the Heavens; his Hand hath formed the crooked Serpent. Lo, theſe are Parts of his Ways, but how little a Portion is heard of him? But the Thunder of his Power who can underſtand?*

Q. *I would know the true Senſe of Ver.* 5. Dead Things are formed under the Waters, and the Inhabitants thereof?

A. Job having cenſur'd *Bildad*'s Diſcourſe concerning God's Dominion and Power, as inſignificant and impertinent to the Queſtion, here proceeds to ſhew how little he needed his Information in that Point, and that he was able to inſtruct him in that Doctrine, and accordingly gives divers Inſtances. Here he ſhews, that the Power and Providence of God reach not only Things that we ſee, but alſo to the inviſible Parts of the World, not only to the Heavens above and their Inhabitants, and to Men upon Earth, of which *Bildad* diſcourſed in the laſt Chapter, but alſo to ſuch Perſons or Things as are under the Earth, or under the Waters; ſuch as might be thought out of the View and Care of Providence. The *Hebrew* Word ſometimes ſignifies *Giants*, as *Deut.* ii. 11, 20. and iii. 13. 1 *Chron.* xx. 8. Whence it may be tranſlated to other great, and as it were gigantick Creatures, and more commonly *dead Men*, as *Pſal.* lxxxviii. 11. *Prov.* ii. 18, *&c.* Whence it is ſuppoſed to ſignify alſo *dead* or *lifeleſs Things*; tho' it may ſeem improper to call thoſe Things *dead*, which never had, nor were capable of Life. The next *Hebrew* Word, or Verb, *formed*, is primarily uſed of Women with Child, and ſignifies their *bringing forth* their young ones *with Travel* and *grievous Pains*, as *Job* xxxix. 3. *Pſ.* xxix. 9. and thence it ſignifies either to *form* or *bring forth*, as below, Ver. 13, or to *grieve*, or *mourn*, or *to be in pain*. Accordingly theſe Words are diverſly underſtood; either, 1. Of *dead* or *lifeleſs Things*, ſuch as Amber, Pearl, Coral, Metals, or other Minerals, which are *formed* or *brought forth*; namely, by the Almighty Power of God, *from under the Waters*; *i. e.* either in the Bottom of the Sea, or within the Earth, which is the loweſt Element, and in the Scripture, and other Authors, ſpoken of as under the Waters; this being obſerved as a remarkable Work of God's Providence, that the Waters of the Sea, which are higher than the Earth, do not overwhelm it, *and* from under (which may be repeated out of the former Clauſe of the Verſe, after the Manner of the *Hebrew*) *the Inhabitants thereof*; that is, either of the Waters, which are the Fiſhes, or of the Earth, which are Men. Or rather, 2. Of the *Giants* of the old World, which were Men of great Renown whilſt they lived, *Gen.* vi. 3. and the Remembrance of them, and of their great Deſtruction, was now in ſome Sort freſh and famous; who once carried themſelves inſolently towards God and Men, but were quickly ſubdued by the divine Power, and drowned with a Deluge, and now *mourn*, or *groan from under the Waters* where they were buried, *and* from under *the* preſent *Inhabitants* thereof. Or 3. Of vaſt and *gigantick Fiſhes* or *Monſters* of the Sea, which by God's infinite Power were *formed* or *brought forth under the Waters*, with the other Inhabitants thereof, that is, of the Waters, the leſſer Fiſh. Or 4. Of *dead* Men, and of the worſt Sort of them, ſuch as died in their Sins, and after Death were condemned to farther Miſeries; for of ſuch this very Word ſeems to be uſed, *Prov.* ii. 18. and ix. 18. who are here ſaid to *mourn* or *groan from under the Waters*; that is, from the lower Parts of the Earth, or from under thoſe ſubterranean Seas of Waters, which are by the Scriptures and Philoſophers ſuppoſed to be within and under the Earth; of which ſee *Deut.* viii. 7. *Job* xxviii. 4, 10. *Pſ.* xxxiii. 7. *and* from under *the Inhabitants thereof*; that is, either of the Waters or of the Earth, under which theſe Waters are, or *with the* other *Inhabitants thereof*; that is, of that Place under the Waters; namely, the apoſtate Spirits. So the Senſe is, that God's Dominion is over all Men, yea, even the Dead, and the worſt of them, who, tho' they would not own God, nor his Providence, while they lived, yet now are forced to acknowledge and feel that Power which they deſpiſed, and bitterly mourn under the ſad Effects of it in their ſubterraneous and infernal Habitations, of which the next Verſe more plainly ſpeaks. And this Senſe ſeems to be favoured by the Context and Scope of the Place, wherein *Job* begins his Diſcourſe of God's Power and Providence at the lowermoſt and hidden Parts of the World, and thence proceeds to thoſe Parts which are higher and viſible. Nor is it ſtrange that *Job* ſpeaks of theſe Matters, ſince it is evident, that He, and others of the holy Patriarchs and Prophets of old, did know and believe the Doctrine of a future Life, and of its ſeveral Recompences to good and bad Men. Others underſtand this of the Reſurrection of the Dead; *The Dead ſhall be born* (as this Word is uſed, *Pſal.* ii. 7. *Prov.* viii. 24, 25. that is, ſhall be raiſed, which is a Kind of Regeneration or ſecond Birth, and is ſo called, *Matt.* xix. 28. *Acts* xiii. 33.) *from under the Waters* (that is, of thoſe that lie in the Waters, *Rev.* xx. 13. that were drowned or buried in the Sea, and devoured by Fiſhes, *&c.* whoſe Caſe may ſeem to be moſt deſperate, and therefore they only are here mentioned) *and* (or *even*, this particle being often uſed expoſitively) *the Inhabitants thereof*, that is, thoſe dead Corps which lie, or have lain long there.

Chap. XXVII.

Job *will not renounce his Integrity. The Character of an Hypocrite, and his Miſery. The Portion and Heritage of the Wicked.*

Q. H*OW do you underſtand Ver.* 15. Thoſe that remain of him ſhall be buried in Death; and his Widows ſhall not weep?

A. Thoſe that eſcape the Sword and Famine juſt before mentioned——*ſhall be buried in Death.* Either 1. They ſhall die, and ſo be buried. Or 2. Shall be buried as ſoon as ever they are dead, either becauſe their Relations or Dependants feared leſt they ſhould revive again, and give them more Trouble; or becauſe they were not able to beſtow any Funeral Pomp upon them, or thought them unworthy of it. Or 3. Shall be in a Manner utterly extinct in or by Death; all their Hope, Glory, Name, and Memory (which they deſigned to perpetuate to all Ages) ſhall be buried with them, and they ſhall never riſe again to a bleſſed Life; whereas a good Man hath Hope in his Death, and leaves his good Name alive and flouriſhing in the World, and reſts in his Grave in Aſſurance of Redemption from it, and a glorious Reſurrection to a happy and eternal Life.——*And his Widows* (for they had many Wives, either to gratify their Luſt, or to increaſe and ſtrengthen their Family and Intereſt) *ſhall not weep.* Either becauſe they durſt not lament their Death, which was entertained with publick Joy; or becauſe they were overwhelmed and aſtoniſhed with the Greatneſs and Strangeneſs of the Calamity, and therefore could not weep; or becauſe they alſo, as well as others, groaned under their Tyranny and Cruelty, and rejoyced in their Deliverance from it.

CHAP. XXVIII.

God's Power and Wiſdom in his Works of Nature. A Knowledge and Wiſdom anſwering this is not found in Man, nor to be bought or acquired. Death and Deſtruction make their Report of it. It is only in God. Man's Wiſdom is to fear God.

Q. IN *what Senſe do you underſtand the laſt Verſe of this Chapter,* And (*or rather,* But) unto Man he ſaid, Behold the Fear of the Lord, that is Wiſdom, and to depart from Evil is Underſtanding?

A. He ſaid to *Adam* at firſt, and in, and with him, to all his Poſterity——*He ſaid, i. e.* God ſpoke it, partly and at firſt inwardly to the Mind of Man, in which God wrote this with his own Finger, and engraved it as a firſt Principle for his Direction; and partly afterwards by the Inſtructions of the holy Patriarchs and Prophets, who declared the Will of God, and taught the People their Duty both to God and Man, making it their chief Buſineſs to make Man wiſe unto Salvation. *Behold*; which denotes the great Importance of this Doctrine, and likewiſe Man's Dulneſs and Reluctance to apprehend and conſider it, and his Proneneſs to place his Wiſdom in vain and curious Speculations——*The Fear of the Lord,* i. e. True Religion, and the right Worſhip of God, both internal and external, all which comes under this Appellation——*that is Wiſdom.* In that only conſiſts Man's true Wiſdom, becauſe that, and only that, is his Duty, his Safety, and his Happineſs, both for this Life and the next; this is actually attainable, but the Depths of God's Ways are unknown and inſcrutable by the utmoſt Reach of human Ability.——*And to depart from Evil,* i. e. From Sin, which is called *Evil* eminently, as being the chief, if not the only Evil, and the Cauſe of all other Evils, is conſtantly and immutably evil, whereas Afflictions may be rendered good and highly beneficial. Religion conſiſts of two Branches, doing Good, and forſaking Evil; the firſt is expreſſed in the former Clauſe of this Verſe, and the latter in theſe Words——*is Underſtanding.* It is the beſt Kind of Knowledge or Wiſdom to which Man can attain in this Life. The ſame Thing is here repeated twice in different Phraſes. And the Deſign of *Job* in this Cloſe of his Diſcourſe, is not only to ſhew the Miſtake, and reprove the Arrogance and Boldneſs of his Friends, in prying into God's Secrets, and paſſing ſuch a raſh Cenſure upon him, and upon God's Ways and Conduct towards him; but alſo to vindicate himſelf from the Imputation of Hypocriſy and Profaneneſs, which they had faſtened upon him, by ſhewing that he had ever eſteem'd it his beſt Wiſdom, and trueſt Intereſt to fear God, and to depart from Evil.

CHAP. XXIX.

Job's former Happineſs in God's favour; his Honour and Character for Charity, and puniſhing the wicked; his Hope herein; his Glory and Honour repeated.

I Obſerve no Difficulty in this Chapter that needs Explanation; we will therefore proceed to the next.

CHAP. XXX.

His Honour is turn'd into Contempt; his Proſperity into Calamity; Fears, Pains, Deſpicableneſs, notwithſtanding his Prayer now, and his former Charity and Hope; his great Sorrow.

Q. PRAY *explain the 24th Verſe,* Howbeit he will not ſtretch out his Hand to the Grave, though they cry in his Deſtruction.

A. There is great Variety and Difficulty in the Senſe and Connection of theſe Words: They may be joined either, 1. With the following Verſe, as deſcribing *Job's* Compaſſion to others in Affliction, which, by the Principles of Reaſon and Religion, ſhould have procured him ſome Pity from God and Man in his Affliction. And to that Purpoſe the Words are, or may be, tranſlated thus; *But were not my Prayers for them* (which Words may be underſtood out of the following Clauſe) *when he ſtretched out his Hand,* (namely, againſt them to deſtroy them) *in his Deſtruction* or *Oppreſſion* (underſtand it actively, *i. e.* When God was about to deſtroy any other Man or *Men*) *was not* (the Negation being deduced from the former part of the Verſe, as is uſual) *my Cry for them?* for thoſe things; thoſe deſtructive Calamities that were upon them? Or, 2. With the foregoing Verſe. And ſo theſe Words contain either, 1. A Conſolation againſt the Evil laſt mentioned: So the Senſe is, Though God will undoubtedly bring me to the Grave by theſe Torments, yet this comforts me, that *ſurely he will not ſtretch out his Hand* (namely, to afflict or puniſh me farther, as this Phraſe is uſed, *Exod.* iii. 20. *Iſa.* ix. 12, 13.) *in the Grave, tho' they,* i. e. the periſhing Perſons *cry,* or *roar,* i. e. be ſorely pained or tormented *in his Deſtruction,* i. e. whilſt God is deſtroying them. Or, this laſt Clauſe may be read interrogatively, *Is there any Cry in his Deſtruction?* When a Man is cut off or deſtroyed by Death, doth he then cry or complain? No, there is an End of all theſe Miſeries. Or, rather, 2. It is a Confirmation of what he ſaid laſt. For the whole Context ſhews that *Job* is not taking any Comfort to himſelf, but rather aggravating his Sufferings. I know, ſaith he, I am a dead Man, and my Condition is deſperate; for *ſurely he*, i. e. God, *will not ſtretch out his Hand* (namely, to ſave, or reſcue me, as this Phraſe is uſed, *Pſal.* xviii. 17. and cxliv. 7. compared with *Acts* iv. 30.) *to* or *in the Grave* (i. e. to a dead Man, ſuch as I am in Effect) *tho' they cry in his Deſtruction*, i. e. tho' there be a general Cry and Lamentation for him among his Friends, and an earneſt Deſire of him, if poſſible to be reſtored to Life again, when he is deſtroyed or dead; yet all theſe Cries would be in vain.

Chap. XXXI.

He proteſts his Continence and Chaſtity; acknowledges God's Providence, Preſence and Judgments were his Motives. His juſt Dealings; he is free from Adultery, which ought to be puniſhed by the Magiſtrate. His juſt Carriage to his Servants, and the Reaſon of it; his Bounty to the Poor, for Fear of God, and his Highneſs; not covetous nor idolatrous, which ought to be puniſhed by the Magiſtrate; not revengeful; hoſpitable to Strangers. His Imprecation againſt himſelf if he ſpoke not the Truth.

Q. I *Don't rightly underſtand the Meaning of* Ver. 26, 27. If I beheld the Sun when it ſhined, or the Moon walking in Brightneſs; and my Heart hath been ſecretly enticed, or my Mouth hath kiſſed my Hand.

A. If I beheld the Sun —— not ſimply, nor only with Admiration, for that we are required to do, as it is a glorious Work of God; but ſo as to aſcribe to it the Honour only due to the ſupreme Being—— *The Sun, Heb.* the *Light*, namely, of the Sun, which is the Fountain of Light to this viſible World. The Hoſt of Heaven, particularly the Sun and the Moon were the moſt antient Objects of Idolatry, and moſt frequent in the Eaſtern Countries, in one of which *Job* reſided. *When it ſhined*, i. e. in its full Strength and Glory; for then it commands our Admiration at its Beauty, and affects us with its Benefits; and Men, in thoſe Times of Darkneſs and Ignorance, might make an eaſy Tranſition from Admiration to Adoration. —— *And my Heart hath been ſecretly enticed*, i. e. If, while I openly profeſſed the true Religion, my inward Thoughts or Affections were *ſeduced* or *deceived* by the glorious Appearance of thoſe bright Luminaries, which might eaſily ſeduce a credulous and inconſiderate Perſon to believe there was a Divinity in them, and ſo be perſuaded to worſhip it. This emphatical Expreſſion, *enticed*, ſeems to intimate to us this neceſſary and uſeful Truth, That no Miſtake or Error of the Mind would excuſe the Practice of Idolatry. —— *My Mouth hath kiſſed my Hand*; i. e. in Token of Worſhip, whereof this was a Sign, whether given to Men, as *Gen.* xli. 40. *Pſal.* ii. 12. or to Idols, *1 Kings* xix. 18. *Hoſ.* xiii. 2. And when the Idols were out of the Reach of Idolaters, that they could not kiſs them, they uſed to kiſs their Hands, and, as it were, to throw Kiſſes at them; of which we have many Examples in Heathen Writers.

Chap. XXXII.

Elihu, Job's *fourth Friend ſpeaks; he is angry with* Job *for juſtifying himſelf, and with his three Friends, for not ſatisfying, and yet condemning him. He excuſes his Youth; but Wiſdom is from God, and not from Age; therefore he ſpeaks, being full of Matter, and his Spirit conſtraining him, without excepting any Man's Perſon.*

Q. WHO *was this* Elihu *that ſpeaks in this Chapter?*

A. Beſides the three Friends of *Job*, already ſo often mentioned, there was, it ſeems, a fourth Perſon, who hitherto had been only an Auditor to their Debates; his Name was *Elihu*, which ſignifies, *My God himſelf*; his Father's Name *Barachel*, i. e. *God bleſſeth*, a Deſcendant from *Buz*, the Son of *Nachor*, Brother to *Uz* the Anceſtor of *Job*: He is yet farther in Scripture ſaid to be of the Kindred of *Ram*; about the Meaning of which Commentators have differed, ſome taking *Ram* for a Contraction of *Abram*, or *Abraham*; others, for the Abbreviation of *Aram*, which is indeed more probable, ſince on the whole, it has been by the beſt Interpreters allowed that *Elihu* was the neareſt Relation of the righteous Perſon in Diſtreſs, dwelling but a ſmall Diſtance from him, and called, as *Laban* was, an *Aramean* or *Syrian*. Some have, from pretended Similiarity of Names, and the Authority of Rabbinical Writers, fancied *Elihu* to be the ſame Perſon with *Balaam*; an Error, againſt which ſome *Hebrew* Writings may be alledged; wherein the Prophets among the Gentiles being reckoned up, *Elihu* and *Baalam* are both named.

Chap, XXXIII.

Elihu *offers himſelf in God's ſtead to reaſon with* Job, *who entertained too hard Thoughts of God. He excuſes God from giving an Account of his Ways. God calls Man to Repentance by Viſions, by Afflictions, and by his Miniſtry. He invites* Job *to Attention.*

Q. I *Deſire you to give me the right Conſtruction of* Ver. 23. If there be a Meſſenger with him, an Interpreter, one among a thouſand, to ſhew unto Man his Uprightneſs.

A. A Meſſenger: Either, 1. An Angel ſent to him from Heaven; for Angels are miniſtring Spirits, *Pſal.* ciii. 20. *Heb*, i. 4. and eſpecially in that Time and State of the Church, were frequently employ'd by God on Meſſages to Men. But why then ſhould he ſay, *one of a thouſand* Angels, ſince one of the meaneſt Angels was ſufficient for this Work? Or rather, 2. A Prophet or Teacher, for ſuch are often called *Meſſengers, Mal.* ii. 7. and iii. 20. and ſuch Perſons are appointed by God for, and are moſt uſually employ'd in ſuch Work —— *with him.* Either, 1. with God, to plead Man's Cauſe. Or rather, 2. with Man, who is mentioned in the laſt Clauſe of this Verſe, and of whom this Pronoun *him* is twice uſed in the next Verſe. Nor is it ſtrange that the Pronoun Relative is put before the Noun to which it belongs, ſince it is uſual in the *Hebrew* Language, as *Exod.* ii. 6. *Prov.* v. 22. and xiv. 33, *&c*, —— *An Interpreter*; i. e. One whoſe Office it is to declare the Mind of God to a ſick Man, to explain the Reaſon of God's contending with him, and to ſhew what he would have him to do —— *one among a thouſand*; a Perſon rightly qualified for this great and hard Work, ſuch as there are but few, ſcarce *one of a thouſand*; which Expreſſion is uſed to denote the Scarcity and Fewneſs of Perſons, *Eccleſ.* vii. 28. By which Words he covertly reflects on *Job*'s three Friends, and implies that they were not ſuch Perſons, tho' they had undertaken this Office to *Job*; and alſo modeſtly intimates, that tho' he was in himſelf inferior to all of them, yet he was ſelected by God for this Work; this he ſays, not as boaſting of his own ſuperior Abilities, but to diſpoſe *Job* to a more ſerious Attention to, and ready Entertainment of his preſent Diſcourſes.——*To ſhew unto Man his Uprightneſs.* —*His*, i. e. Either, 1. God's: To convince a Man that God is juſt and right in all his Dealings with him; of which *Job* was not yet convinced. Or, rather, 2. Man's: To teach Man his Duty, or to direct him to the right Way and Method to pleaſe God, and procure that Mercy and Deliverance he longs for; which is not by quarrelling with God, as *Job* did, but by an humble Confeſſion, a hearty Deteſtation and Repentance of his Sins, and Supplication to God for Mercy through *Chriſt* the Redeemer, of whom *Job* ſpoke before, and who is hinted at in the next Verſe. Or thus, To diſcover to Man, that altho' he be afflicted, yet he is an upright and righteous Perſon, and conſequently in God's Favour; about which good Men are often in Doubt, and need the Help of a ſkilful Miniſter to ſatisfy them therein. But this ſeems not ſo well to ſuit *Job*'s Caſe, who was more than ſufficiently perſuaded of his own Integrity, and needed no Miniſter to preach that Doctrine to him.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Elihu *accuſes* Job *of charging God with Injuſtice. God the Almighty Diſpoſer, Governor and Judge of the World, cannot be unjuſt. It it not fit to ſay of Kings and Princes, they are unjuſt, much leſs of God*; *his Power over and Obſervance of Man. Man's Duty under Afflictions. He reproves* Job's *Words againſt God.*

Q. I *AM at a Loſs as to the true Meaning of the firſt Clauſe of* Ver. 17. *which therefore I deſire may be explained*; *the Words run thus*; Shall even he that hateth Right govern?

A. By the Words, *He that hateth Right*, underſtand *unrighteous*. But this he expreſſes in a moſt emphatical Manner, the Reaſon and Weight whereof ſeem to be this; If God be unjuſt, he is not ſo for fear of any ſuperior (as inferior Magiſtrates do many unrighteous Things againſt their Conſciences to pleaſe their Prince or chief Ruler, or to avoid his Diſpleaſure) but merely from an intrinſical Hatred of Juſtice, or Love of Unrighteouſneſs; which being moſt abſurd to imagine concerning God, therefore he cannot poſſibly be unjuſt, or do any unjuſt Action. As to the word *govern*, which properly ſignifies *to bind*, it is fitly ſo rendered by moſt Interpreters, and ſo it is uſed *Iſa.* iii. 7. becauſe Governors have a Power to bind their Subjects by Laws and Penalties, and they are, as it were, the Ligaments by which Societies are bound and kept together, which, without them, would be diſſolved and broken to Pieces. *Elihu*'s Argument here is the ſame with that of *Abraham*'s, *Gen.* xviii. 25. and that of St. *Paul*'s, *Rom.* iii. 5, 6. *If God be unrighteous, how ſhall he judge or govern the World?* And the Argument is undeniable: If God were unjuſt, there would be nothing but Injuſtice and Confuſion, and Miſchief in the World, whereas we ſee there is a great deal of Juſtice adminiſter'd by Rulers, which muſt all proceed from him who is the Fountain and Author of all Juſtice, Rule and Authority. And as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſ.* xix. 4. 9. *He that formed the Eye, ſhall not he ſee?* So ſay I; he that makes juſt, ſhall he be unjuſt?

CHAP. XXXV.

Our Good or Evil extends not to God, but to Men, who are oppreſſed and cry out, but not unto God, nor are delivered. He exhorts Job *to hope in God, tho', for the preſent, he be angry.*

Q. H*OW do you underſtand* Verſe 15. But now, becauſe it is not ſo, he hath viſited in his Anger, yet he knoweth it not in great Extremity?

A. Becauſe *Job* doth not acknowledge God's Juſtice, and his own Sins, and wait upon God in his Ways for Mercy, according to the Advice given him in the preceding Verſe, God, to whom this great Work of viſiting is aſcribed every where in Scripture, hath laid theſe Afflictions upon him; all which is too little to bring *Job* to a Compliance with God, nor is he ſo ſenſibly affected therewith as to be humbled under God's Hand. This Verſe may be likewiſe rendered thus; *And now* know that *his* (*i. e.* God's) *Anger hath viſited thee little or nothing*, (*i. e.* in compariſon of what thou haſt deſerved, and mighteſt reaſonably expect) *neither hath he known* (*i. e.* judged or puniſhed, as this Word is uſed, *Prov.* x. 9.) thee *in* or *according to* (as the prefixt *Beth* is ſometimes uſed) *the great Abundance*; namely, of thy Sins. And therefore thy Complaints againſt God are highly injurious and abſolutely cauſeleſs.

CHAP. XXXVI.

God is juſt in all his Ways; *towards the wicked, the Godly, the Hypocrite, the Poor.* Job's *Sins hindered God's Salvation to him.* Elihu *admoniſhes him. God's Power and Sovereignty, and all his Perfections to be magnified.*

Q. W*HAT is the general Purport of this Chapter?*

A. *Elihu* deſires *Job*'s patient Attention a little longer, and he had done. *Hear attentively the Noiſe of his Voice*, Verſe 2. It is not improbable that whilſt *Elihu* was ſpeaking it thundered greatly, and that Tempeſt was begun wherewith God uſhered in his Speech, as it follows in the next Chapter, and that this occaſioned his Return to that Subject of which he had been before diſcourſing, and his Exhortation to them to mind it with greater Attention.

He demonſtrates the Righteouſneſs of God, that he is juſt in all his Ways to the Wicked, and never ceaſes to care for and watch over the Righteous, no, not when they were afflicted or perſecuted, when he may ſeem to neglect them. He repreſents the ſad State of the Hypocrite, and tells *Job* his Sins hindered the Salvation of his God. He exhorteth *Job* to Repentance, by affirming God's Works are incomprehenſibly great and glorious, and proves it from the moſt viſible Works of Nature and Providence, which if throughly conſidered, are full of Wonder, and paſt the Reach of the greateſt Philoſophers, who, indeed, ſpeak of them only by Gueſs, and, by their innumerable

Diſputations about them, diſcover their Ignorance in them.

Behold God is great, and we know him not, neither can the Number of his Years be ſearched out. For he maketh ſmall the Drops of Water; they pour down Rain according to the vapour thereof. Which the Clouds do drop, and diſtil upon many abundantly. Alſo can any underſtand the Spreadings of the Clouds, or the Noiſe of the Tabernacle? Behold, he ſpreadeth his Light upon it, and covereth the Bottom of the Sea. For by them judgeth he the People, he giveth Meat in abundance. With Clouds he covereth the Light; and commandeth it not to ſhine, by the Cloud that cometh betwixt. The Noiſe thereof ſheweth concerning it, the Cattle alſo concerning the Vapour.

CHAT. XXXVII.

God's great Works, Lightning, Thunder, Snow, Rain, Winds, Froſt, Clouds, and his Providence towards Nations, whether for Correction or Mercy, call for Reverence or Fear; as alſo his unſearchable Wiſdom in them. We are ignorant, and cannot ſpeak to God, but muſt fear him who reſpects none.

Q. W*HAT have you to remark on this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter is the Concluſion of *Elihu*'s Speech, who ſpeaks of other Works of God, as of Thunder which makes the Atheiſt ſhake, of Lightning, Snow, Rain, Wind, Froſt, Clouds, and God's Providence towards Nations, whether for Correction or Mercy, call for Reverence and Fear. Man is repreſented as ignorant, and not able to ſpeak to God, but muſt fear him who reſpecteth none. This is a tacit Advice and Exhortation to *Job*, to be humble and little in his own Eyes, if ever he expected or deſired any Favour from God.

Hearken unto this, O Job; *ſtand ſtill, and conſider the wondrous Works of God. Doſt thou know when God diſpoſed them, and cauſed the Light of his Cloud to ſhine? Doſt thou know the Balancings of the Clouds, the wonderous Works of him which is perfect in Knowledge? How thy Garments warm, when he quieteth the Earth by the South-wind? Haſt thou with him ſpread out the Sky, which is ſtrong, and as a molten Looking-Glaſs? Teach us what we ſhall ſay unto him; for we cannot order our Speech, by Reaſon of Darkneſs. Shall it be told him that I ſpeak? If a man ſpeak, ſurely he ſhall be ſwallowed up. And now Men ſee not the bright Light which is in the Clouds; but the Wind paſſeth and cleanſeth them. Fair Weather cometh out of the North; with God is terrible Majeſty. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in Power and in Judgment, and in Plenty of Juſtice he will not afflict. Men do therefore fear him; he reſpecteth not any that are wiſe of Heart.*

CHAP. XXXVIII.

The Lord anſwers Job; *declares his Works of Creation; the Foundation and Meaſures of the Earth; the Stars, the Sea and its Bounds; the Morning and its Light; the Depth of the Sea; the Gates and Shadow of Death; the Breadth of the Earth, the Place of Light vnd Darkneſs; the Treaſures of Snow and Hail; the Eaſt-wind, Springs and Rain for the Earth; the Planets, Ordinances of Heaven, and their Dominion on Earth; Clouds and Lightning. Wiſdom and Underſtanding in the Heart of Man; and in his Works more than we can underſtand. He feeds the Lion and the Raven.*

Q. I*N the 31ſt Verſe the Deity is repreſented, ſaying to* Job, Can'ſt thou bind the ſweet Influences of *Pleiades? How do you underſtand theſe Words?*

A. The Senſe of the Words is this, *Can'ſt thou at the Spring reſtrain?* I have here, inſtead of the literal Verſion of the Words, retained in our *Bible*, given you the certain and undeniable Meaning of them, as being moſt intelligible; a Liberty which I have frequently taken in this Book, becauſe I chiefly intend the Inſtruction of common Readers, who are deſirous to comprehend the Drift and Purport of the *Holy Writings*, a Deſire which ought to be encouraged, and, as far as may, gratify'd; and in order to which, by ſome ſmall Alterations, as this, I have frequently rendered the Current of my Hiſtory clear and eaſy, where too ſtrictly adhering to the Letter, would have made it lame and obſcure. The Senſe, therefore, of this Part of the Speech, which the *Deity* is here recorded to have made upon *Job*, in the Preſence of his Friends, amounts to much the ſame thing, as if we ſhould urge againſt a Perſon, diſputing the Will of a wiſe and virtuous Prince: You ſee in a Multitude of Inſtances, how far he tranſcends thee, not only in his Power to do, but in his Prudence alſo in doing; wherefore then ſhouldeſt thou pretend to enter into a Controverſy with one ſo much too mighty for thee? Let the Things which thou ſeeſt him daily do reſtrain thy Preſumption; and, ſince thou art incapable of ſo doing the like, or even of judging on what Motives, or in what Manner they are brought to paſs, think more coolly, and ſubmiſſively of thoſe Matters, which regard yourſelf, and do not raſhly decide in Points as difficult as they are important. I know very well, that ſomewhat might be ſaid concerning the antient *Arabian* Aſtronomy in this Note; but as it would conſtrain me to give a brief and ſuperficial Account of a very curious and inſtructive Point, I chuſe rather to refer to refer it to the End of this Book, where, if it pleaſe God, I ſhall at large illuſtrate and explain it, as well as other Paſſages in this Book, relating to that Science; from whence it appears, that *Job* and his Aſſociates were conſiderable Proficients therein, even in thoſe early Times, in which they lived, agreeable to what we read in the beſt Authors, concerning the Antiquity and Extent of the Oriental Learning; and conformable to our modern Relations of the great Wiſdom, and long Courſe of Experiments among the *Chineſe*, of whoſe Proficiency in *Aſtronomy*, I ſhall give an exact Detail.

CHAP XXXIX.

Of the wild Goats and Hinds. The wild Aſs. The Unicorn. The Peacock, Stork and Oſtrich. The Horſe, Hawk, and Eagle. Theſe Creatures not fully known to Job, *nor governed by him, are ſufficient to convince him, that he is no fit Judge of the Counſels of God.*

Q. W*ILL* the *Unicorn*, or *Reem, as it is in the Original,* be willing to ſerve thee? Ver. 9. *What Kind of Creature was this?*

A. As this is a curious Article in itſelf, and as little has appeared in *Engliſh* on this Subject; we ſhall lay before the Readers the various Sentiments of learned Men, concerning the Animal herein mentioned. The LXX tranſlate the Word *Reem* by *Monoceros*, an *Unicorn*, in which they have been followed by *Junius* and *Tremellius*, our preſent *Bible*, and the Tranſlation that preceded it. In which the following Gloſs thereupon, is put in the Margin: “ Is it poſſible to make the *Unicorn* tame? “ ſignifying, that if a Man cannot rule a Creature, “ that it is much more impoſſible, that he ſhould “ confine the Wiſdom of God, whereby he governeth all the World.” That we may better judge of the Credit due to this Tranſlation, it will be proper to examine the Sentiments of ſuch as have written about the *Unicorn*; from whence we may diſcern, whether it reſemble the Deſcription here given of the *Reem*.

The Authors, who have ſpoken of this Animal, are chiefly *Pliny* and *Solinus*, who take a great Part of what they ſay from *Cteſias*, a Writer much ſuſpected of Falſhood. In regard, however, to this Creature, thoſe who have copied him, ſeem to enlarge conſiderably. “ They have Horns (ſays “ he) in the middle of their Foreheads, of about “ a Cubit long. The Unicorn (ſays *Pliny*) is a “ Creature of a fierce Aſpect, having a Horn “ growing from the Middle of his Forehead, about “ two Cubits in Length. There ſhoots (ſays *Solinus*) from their Foreheads a Horn of a wonder- “ ful Luſtre, to the Length of four Feet.” Not to tire our Readers with prolix Quotations, we ſhall only obſerve, that they agree pretty nearly in the follow Deſcription: “ The Unicorn hath the “ the Head of a Stag, the Body of an Horſe, and “ and the Feet of an Elephant; it is however, “ ſo exceſſively ſwift, that nothing can overtake “ it; ſo fierce that it is an Enemy unto all other “ Animals; its Horns ſo ſtrong as to pierce, break “ through, or rip open whatſoever it puſhes a- “ gainſt; and the Courage and Boldneſs of the “ Creature ſo great, that none of them were ever “ taken alive.” A Circumſtance which is very juſtly urged as an Argument agrinſt their Exiſtence. *Philoſtratus* and ſome other antient Authors have recorded certain Circumſtances of the ſame Kind; but the *Arabian* Writers, to whom ſuch Subjects as this properly belong, as far exceed theſe in Fables, as they exceed Truth. “ The “ Female (ſay they) like the Elephant, carries her “ young ſeven Years, and when the Time of “ their bringing forth draws nigh, the young “ one puts its Head out to eat the green Branches “ of Trees, and then retires back into the Belly of “ Dam; it feeds, when grown up, like the Ox “ and the Camel, upon Graſs, and chews the “ Cud; it lives to a prodigious Age, and bears a “ particular Spleen againſt Elephants and Men. “ Againſt the back Part of the firſt-mentioned “ Animal, it runs its Horn with inconceivable Vio- “ lence; and, having drove it as high as his Fore- “ head will let it go, the *Elephant* falls, and the “ *Unicorn* with him, being unable to get out his “ Weapon, ſo that both periſh there together. “ Its Swiftneſs and Courage preſerve it ſo well “ from all Danger, that there is but one Way of “ taking it, which, according to theſe Authors, is “ this. A young Maid muſt ſit down in the Place “ where the Unicorn is known to haunt; and he “ ſo ſoon as he ſees her, will gently approach, and “ ſuffer her to ſtroke him, till at length leaning “ his Head on her Breaſt, or in her Lap, he falls “ faſt aſleep, when the Hunters break in and “ ſeize him. From the Inconſiſtency of theſe abſurd Relations, Men of Senſe have abſolutely denied the Exiſtence of ſuch an Animal; and *Bochart* in his *Hierozoicon* has drawn together ſo many Arguments to this Purpoſe, that I think no Man, who read him, can fail of being convinced. As to the wreathed Horns, which are frequently expoſed as the Horns of *Unicorns*, and which were formerly ſold at at an extravagant Price, they are counterfeit, *i. e.* made of an Elephant's Tooth, wrought into that Shape, or elſe they are Horns of the Sea-Unicorn, which is largely and exactly deſcribed by *Periere*, in his Account of *Greenland*, on the Coaſt of which they are taken.

Aquila renders *Reem* by *Rhinoceros*, and has been followed therein by the vulgar *Latin*; but there does not appear any juſt Reaſon for admitting that, more than the former Tranſlation, as we ſhall by-and-by prove. In the mean Time, it will be proper to ſay ſomething of this Beaſt, that our Readers may be able to compare it alſo with the Deſcription of the *Reem* in the Text.

The *Rhinoceros* is an Animal larger than an Ox, and leſs than an Elephant, having a ſtrong Horn riſing from his Snout, wherewith he defends himſelf, and annoys other wild Beaſts. Father *Le Compte* ſays, that they are rare even in the Countries where they are found, and that their Horns are very much valued; their Hide is covered with hard Scales, and this Beaſt has, on his Belly, ſuch a Bunch as the Camel on his Back; it runs very ſwiftly, and does much Miſcief in the Woods where it haunts; but the moſt extraordinary Thing about the *Rhinoceros* is the Tongue, which is long and rough as a File, where it licks off the tender Bark of Trees, or whatever elſe it meets with. The Fierceneſs of the *Rhinoceros*, probably, engaged thoſe who adhere to this Verſion, to imagine it muſt be the *Reem*; but it is not a little hard to account both for their Notion, and for that entertained by thoſe who follow the LXX, in fancying this Animal had but one Horn; ſince there is nothing here, and elſewhere in Scripture, which can any where juſtify it, tho' it appears plainly they took it for a Property eſſentially belonging to the *Reem*.

From theſe arbitrary Tranſlations, which ſeem to have little Recourſe to the Scriptures, let us ſee if by comparing the Paſſages wherein this Animal is ſpoken of, we ſhall not be able to form a more rational Idea of its Nature, and conſequently of its Species. When *Balak* enquired of *Balaam*, What it was the Lord had revealed unto him, concerning the Houſe of *Iſrael*? *Balaam*, in his Anſwer, ſetting forth the Strength and Power of the Nation, ſays, *Numb.* xxiii. 22. *God brought them out of* Egypt; *he hath, as it were, the Strength of the* Reem. The Prophet *Iſaiah*, declaring at large the Miſeries which ſhould fall upon a Land, againſt which he denounced Judgments, ſays Chap. xxxiv. 7. *And the* Reemim *ſhall come down with them, and the* Bullocks *with the* Bulls, *and their Lands ſhall be ſoaked with Blood.* The *Pſalmiſt* complaining of the cruel Malice of his Enemies, in the twenty-ſecond *Pſalm*, Verſes 12 and 13, expreſſeth himſelf thus, *Many* Bulls *have compaſſed me; ſtrong* Bulls *of* Baſhan *have beſet me round. They opened their*

Mouths wide againſt me, as a ravening and roaring Lion. Lower in the ſame *Pſalm*, putting up Prayers to God for his Deliverance, *viz.* Verſe 20. he ſays, *Deliver my Soul from the Sword, my only one from the Power of the Dogs. Save me from the Lion's Mouth, for thou haſt heard me from the* Horns *of the* Reemim. In the *Ninety-ſecond* Pſalm, the Author having obſerved the Vengeance of God overthrew the Wicked, acknowledges, that as to himſelf, he had great Hopes from the Lord, *Ver.* 10. *But my* Horn *ſhall thou exalt like the* Horn *of a* Reem. From theſe Paſſages, and that in *Job*, which occaſioned theſe Reflections, we think it evident: 1. That the *Reem* is an Animal of great Strength. 2. That it is common in the Countries of *Judæa*, *Syria*, and *Arabia*. 3. That its Food is the ſame with that of *Oxen*. The learned *Boetius*, after a laborious Search into this Matter, thought it muſt be the *Urus*, a kind of wild Bullock deſcribed firſt by *Cæſar*, in the Sixth Book of his Commentaries: But this Interpretation claſhing with our ſecond Obſervation, we chuſe rather to follow the learned *Bochart* in his Opinion, that the *Reem* is a wild untractable *Goat* deſcribed by ſeveral *Arabian* Authors under the Name of *Rim*, which has a great Affinity with the *Hebrew* Appellation. However we do not preſume to decide farther of this Matter, than by ſaying, the *Reem*, in all Likelihood, is neither a *Unicorn*, *Rhinoceros*, or *wild Bull*, but ſome Animal far more common in the *Oriental* Regions.

Q. *Was the* Peacock *mentioned*, Ver. 13. *the ſame ſort of Fowl that is now among us?*

A. It is certain, that in the whole Old Teſtament there is not any Verſe more crabbed and perplex'd than this. The firſt Word *Renanim*, which we render *Peacocks*, is liable to much Diſpute, and perhaps it is not poſſible to defend this Verſion; ſome great Criticks are of Opinion, that it ſhould have been rendered *Oſtriches*; and, indeed the only Argument in favour of our Verſion is, that the Finery of this Bird's Feathers are here celebrated, which ſeems beſt to agree with the *Peacock*. The Names of Animals, Trees, Fruits, and Flowers, are ſo much altered, that it is not eaſy to diſtinguiſh them; but we do not apprehend, that this will furniſh any reaſonable Man with an Excuſe for not believing the Holy Scriptures, which ſome evil diſpoſed Perſons have endeavoured to depreciate on this Account. For, admitting all they aſſert, that at this Day we are not able to aſcertain the very Species mentioned in various Paſſages of Scripture, as for Inſtance in this Verſe of the Book of *Job*, what Conſequence will follow from thence? The plain indubitable Aſſertion in the Text is, that the *Renanim*, let them be what kind of Birds they will, did not derive the Beauty of their Plumage from *Job*: Now, ſhould one aſſert the true Meaning of the Word to be *Peacocks*, another *Oſtriches*, a third *Hawks*, the ſeveral Arguments produced by each in Defence of his Opinion, and in Oppoſition to what the others advanced, will no way prejudice the Truth of the original Propoſition; ſeeing whatever Kind of Birds they were, nothing can be more ſure than that they received the exquiſite Variegations of their Feathers from the Almighty only. It is evident, that the ſame Anſwer will be as full to any other Objection ariſing from Words as hard to be underſtood as to this; and therefore we have choſen to clear that Matter here, to prevent any Doubts our Readers might conceive from the ſubſequent Alterations on the like Subject.

Q. *Pray what Kind of Bird was the* Oſtrich *mentioned in the ſame Verſe?*

A. Without confounding my Readers with a long Detail of Grammatical Difficulties, which occur in ſettling the Conſtruction of this Deſcription; I ſhall follow the Judgment of the moſt learned Commentators on the Scriptures, who agree, that it belongs to the Bird mentioned in the Text. *Ludovicus Capellus*, in his *Critical Notes* on the *thirty ninth* Chapter of *Job*, quotes the following Hiſtory of this Animal from a celebrated Author: " The " *Oſtrich* reſembles, in ſome Meaſure, a *Gooſe*; but " its Neck and Legs are of extraordinrry Length, " ſome of them exceeding two Cubits. Its Body " is very ſhort, and Truſs in its Wings; it " has very large ſtrong Feathers, ſome white, " which, tho' they are of no uſe in raiſing their " Flight. yet ſerves, together with the Motion of " their Tails, to give a prodigious Swiftneſs to " them in running. They are found in large dry " ſandy Deſarts, where they lay ſometimes ten, " ſometimes twelve Eggs, exactly round as a Ball, " and weighing about fifteen Pounds a-piece, and " quickly loſe all Senſe of the Place where they " have thus depoſited their Young. The *Hen Oſtriches* therefore, when they find any Eggs, ſit " upon them, and hatch them, whether they are " their own or no. The Young are ſo hardy as to " run up and down, in thoſe vaſt ſandy Plains, in " ſearch of Food, as ſoon as they break forth from " the Shell; and when once their Feathers are a " little grown, they run with ſuch Swiftneſs, as " not to be overtaken. There is one extraordinary Experiment which the Natives make, on ſuch " of their Horſes as promiſe beſt, they ride with " them after the Oſtrich, at full Speed, and if they " once overtake that ſwift-footed Bird, then the " Owner values the Barb at the Price of a thouſand " Pieces of Gold, or an hundred Camels.

The truly learned and excellent Dr. *Derham* has given a very full and judicious Interpretation of this very Paſſage, in the Book of *Job*, p. 355. of his *Phyſico-Theology*; where having cited the three Verſes in the Text, he goes on thus: *In theſe Words I ſhall take notice of three things.* 1. *Of this anomalous Way of Generation. It is not very ſtrange, that no other Incubation but that of the Sun ſhould produce the Young; but 'tis very odd and wonderful, that one Species ſhould vary from all the reſt of the Tribe. But above all,* 2. *The ſingular Care of the Creator is, in this Caſe, very remarkable, in ſupplying, ſome other Way, the Want of the Parent-Animal's Care, and the innate Tenderneſs which they have for their Offſpring, ſo that the Young ſhould notwithſtanding be bred up, in thoſe large and barren Deſarts of* Arabia *and* Africa, *and in ſuch like places, where thoſe Birds dwell, the moſt unlikely and unfitting, in human Opinion, to afford Suſtenance to young helpleſs Creatures, but the fitteſt, therefore, to give Demonſtration of the Wiſdom, Care, and ſpecial Providence of the infinite Creator and Conſervator of the World.* 3. *The laſt Thing I ſhall remark is, that the Inſtincts of irrational Animals, at leaſt of this ſpecify'd in the Text, is attributed to God. For the Reaſon the Text gives, why the* Oſtrich *is hardened againſt her young ones, as tho' they were not hers, is, becauſe God hath deprived her of Wiſdom,* *and not imparted Underſtanding to her,* i. e. *He hath denied her that Wiſdom, he hath not imparted to her that Underſtanding, that natural Inſtinct, to provide for and nurſe up her Young) that moſt other Creatures of the ſame and other Tribes, are endowed with.*

Chap. XL.

God's Reproof of Job, *who humbles himſelf. God again declares his Righteouſneſs, Majeſty, and the Power of his Wrath to abaſe the Proud.*

Q. WHAT *Sort of Creature do you imagine the* Behemoth *was, of which we have ſo magnificent a Deſcription?*

A. There has been much Diſpute, whether we are hereby to underſtand the *Elephant*, or *Hippopotamus*, or *River-horſe*. The antient Commentators generally declare for the former: But the very learned and judicious *Bochart*, as we ſhall hereafter obſerve, alledges many things which render it probable that the Latter ſhould be meant thereby. Without entring too far into this Controverſy, we ſhall lay before our Readers a Deſcription of both Animals, from whence it will appear, that either comes very near the Deſcription in the Text, and which the neareſt, we muſt leave them to judge.

Firſt then of an *Elephant*, which as Authors are pretty well agreed, is the largeſt of all the four-footed Creatures. *Pliny*, in the Beginning of the eighth Book of his *Natural Hiſtory*, gives us a large, and, for the moſt part, a pretty exact Account of this famous Animal, and, in entring thereupon, remarks, that, of all Beaſts, he approaches neareſt to Man in Sagacity, and the Exerciſe of a Faculty not much removed from Reaſon, which ſome have thought agrees very well with what is ſaid in *Job* xl. 15. *Behold now* Behemoth, *whom I have made with thee*, i. e. nearly allied to thee, by Superiority in Knowledge, over the reſt of the Brutes. Conſidering the vaſt Bulk, and mighty Strength of this huge Creature, we cannot but admire the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God, in making it of a gentle Nature, feeding like the tamer Cattle, on Graſs and Herbs, injuring and diſturbing nothing, unleſs firſt injured and diſturbed by it. The prodigious Strength of this large Animal we may gather from what we read, concerning it, in antient and modern Authors, and eſpecially from the Accounts we have of the Uſes made of it in War, and the Turrets, Combatants, and Ammunition it carried on its Back: But the Member moſt conſiderable about the *Elephant* is his *Proboſcis*, or *Trunk*, whereby, notwithſtanding his Size, he performs whatever he pleaſes, with wondrous Facility and Quickneſs. Some have thought, that the Words in *Job* xl. 17. *He moveth his* Tail *like a* Cedar, allude to his *Trunk*, or *Snout*, which is, indeed ſupported, in ſome Meaſure, by the Examples drawn from the Holy Writings, wherein the Tail is put only for the Extremity, as *Deut.* xxv. 18. xxviii. 13, 44. *Pliny* obſerves of the Legs of this Creature, that in Shape and Bulk they reſemble Pillars, and the reſt of the Bones are, doubtleſs, proportionably ſtrong, large, and firm: So that reflecting on the Boldneſs of the *Arabian* Similitudes, we may eaſily admit their being compared to Iron and Braſs. What is next aſſerted of the *Behemoth*, *viz.* that *He is the* chief *of the* Ways *of God*, may be very well applied to this Animal, as the Commentators favouring this Tranſlation prove, by theſe Inſtances. 1. From his ſtupendous Bulk, being commonly ten or twelve Feet high. 2. From his amazing Strength, whereby he is able to overturn Trees, and even Huts built by Men. 3. From his wonderful Sagacity, of which all Authors ſpeak copiouſly, who mention him at all. 4. From the ſurpriſing Agility which he ſhews, notwithſtanding the unweildy Appearance of his Body. 5. From the great Uſe made of him in War, concerning which we have the unanimous Teſtimonies of antient and modern Hiſtorians. 6. From the great Extent of Years unto which they live, *Ariſtotle* and *Strabo* affirming, that they reach *two hundred*. 7. Their Practice of various Virtues, *viz.* Chaſtity, Temperance, Fidelity, Gratitude, and Compaſſion. Nor are thoſe Qualities lightly aſcribed to them by fabulous Authors, but are acknowledged and recorded by Writers very worthy of Credit. As the Elephant is of a placid, gentle Nature, ſo the Beaſts feed near him without Fear, to which theſe Words of Scripture poſſibly refer, *Surely the Mountains bring him forth Food, where all the wild Beaſts of the Field play.* This Animal, being very hot in its Nature, and living in Countries where the Climate is very ſultry, the *Elephant*, therefore, as various authentick Authors aſſure us, of all Things rejoices in marſhy Places, where he lays himſelf down among the Reeds and Water, in order to cool his Body, and quench his Thirſt; for that ridiculous Fable of his having no Joints in his Legs, and conſequently of his Inability to raiſe himſelf, if once thrown upon the Ground, has been long ago exploded. Thus we have ſhewn, that the Deſcription in *Job* is far from being incompatible with what Naturaliſts relate concerning this wonderful Creature, ſo truly wonderful in its Formation, and ſo ſtrong a Proof of the Wiſdom and Power of the Almighty Maker of all Things.

The great Aſſertor of the oppoſite Opinion, *viz.* that the *Behemoth* is not the *Elephant*, but the *Hippopotamus*, or *River-horſe*, is the great *Bochart*, whoſe unwearied Pains, accurate Judgment, and profound Erudition, give a ſtrong Biaſs in Favour of whatever he advances: That we may do Juſtice therefore to his Thoughts on this Head, we ſhall tranſcribe what he ſays, in his *Hierozoicon*, p. 49.
“ It will be ſufficient to prove, that the *Behemoth*
“ is an amphibious Animal, and that which we
“ have aſſerted it to be, if we paraphraſe the
“ Verſes wherein this Creature is deſcribed. *Ver.*
“ . Behold, ſays the Lord, the *Hippopotamus*
“ which I have made near thee, *i. e.* in *Egypt*, not
“ far diſtant from *Job*'s Country: Who admires
“ him not? He is an Inhabitant of the Deep, and
“ yet eateth Hay as an Ox. *Ver.* 16. Neither is
“ his Strength only in his *Loins*, but in the Bot-
“ tom of his Belly, even in his *Navel*, where other
“ Creatures are *weak*. *Ver.* 17. His Tail, tho' it
“ be firm and ſtrong as a Cedar, yet he doth move
“ with great Agility; the Nerves and Sinews alſo
“ of his Thighs are wrapped ſtrongly together,
“ and thereby ſhew the prodigious Strength he
“ hath in his Limbs. *Ver.* 18. Neither hath he,
“ as *Fiſhes*, pliable and cartilaginous Bones; but,
“ on the contrary, they are firm as *Iron*, and ſolid
“ as *Braſs*. *Ver.* 19. And that the Wiſdom of
“ God might be rendered more eminently conſpi-
“ ſpicuous in this Animal, his Teeth are formed ſo as
“ to cut and mow down Corn as a Scythe or Sickle.

“ *Ver.* 20. Thus provideth he for himſelf even on the Mountains where the Beaſts play. *Ver.* 21. As an Aquatick, he delighteth to lie in Marſhes, and among the tender Reeds. *Ver.* 22. Or reſteth under the Shades of the Willows which grow on the Banks of the *Nile*. *Ver.* 23. Yet diveth he to the Bottom without Hurt; he beholds the Streams ruſhing over him without Fear. *Ver.* 24. Who dares approach ſuch a Creature with open Force? Who can hope to thruſt a Hook into his Noſe?”. Submitting the Deciſion of this Controverſy to the Reader's Judgment, we ſhall end here, notwithſtanding there are many things that might very properly be added thereto, but that we ſhould protract this Work too much.

CHAP. XLI.

God's Sovereignty over all the Children of Pride, ſeen in the Leviathan.

Q. THIS *whole Chapter is taken up in deſcribing the* Leviathan; *and yet I am at a Loſs what particular Animal is intended by it.*

A. As the true Signification of *Behemoth* hath been much controverted, ſo alſo great Diſputes have ariſen concerning the Import of this Word *Leviathan*; ſome conceiving it as intended of the *Whale*, others of the *Crocodile*. Both thoſe Creatures are ſo well known, that a Deſcription of them would be ſuperfluous and tedious. The learned Mr. *Pool*, in his *Annotations* and in his *Synopſis*, has laid before his Readers Variety of Proofs, tending to ſhew, that the Words of God in the Book of *Job* are fulfilled, in caſe the *Leviathan* ſhould be taken for either, tho' we are inclined, from various Reaſons to believe it is rather to be underſtood of the *Crocodile*. 1. Becauſe it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the *Almighty* would chuſe no Animal for this Demonſtration of his Power and Wiſdom, but what was ſufficiently known to *Job* and his Friends; otherwiſe the Argument raiſed therefrom would evidently have leſs Weight. Now, the *Whale* could not be a Creature ſo known; whereas the *Crocodile*, being common in *Egypt*, they could not but be acquainted therewith, and with all its Properties. 2. The *Leviathan* is here ſaid to have had large and ſtrong-knit Scales, as if they had been ſealed together, whereas the *Whale* has no Scales at all; but the *Crocodile* correſponds exactly with that Deſcription. 3. His Breath is ſet forth as very hot, and that by a ſtrong Metaphor; which has been obſerved of the laſt mentioned Animal, but never in Whales, or in any other Fiſh. Our Readers will however judge in this Caſe for themſelves, ſeeing we pretend not to force our Judgment upon them, but only to lay before them the Reaſons which have weighed with us. We ſhall only add, that, in other Places of Scripture, *Leviathan* is ſometimes to be underſtood of a *Whale*, ſometimes of a *Crocodile*; ſo that we could not draw any Argument from thence of Conſequence enough to determine the Diſpute.

CHAP. XLII.

Job's *Humiliation and Repentance. God profering* Job's *Cauſe, reproves his Friends; for whom* Job *muſt intercede, and God will accept him. God magnifies and bleſſes* Job.

Q. IN *this Chapter we have an Account of the Return of God's Favour to* Job, *and the Multiplication of his Riches and Honour: What general Obſervations do you make upon the whole?*

A. It pleaſed God ſo to proſper the little Stock which *Job* had acquired from the Kindneſs of his Viſitants, that in proceſs of Time, he not only arrived at that excellent Eſtate from whence he had fallen, in the Beginning of his Troubles, but alſo attained double the Wealth which he had loſt, having fourteen thouſand Sheep, ſix thouſand Camels, a thouſand Yoke of Oxen, and a thouſand She-Aſſes; he received alſo from the Hands of God, as many Children as he had loſt, *viz.* ſeven Sons, and three Daughters. Some have been inquiſitive into the Reaſon, Why his Children were not doubled to him, as well as his Subſtance? But, as we think, the Decrees of God ought not to be ſearched into, merely to ſatiſfy an idle Curioſity, we ſhall not preſume to offer our Conjectures in a Matter utterly uſeleſs to our Readers, and which yet carries a Degree of Impiety in its Nature. The Names of his Sons are concealed, probably, becauſe an Account of them, and their Families, would have drawn the Hiſtory into too great a Length; but we have a particular Relation, both of the extraordinary Beauty of *Job*'s Daughters, and of their Names; for which the following Cauſes have been aſſigned: 1. Becauſe their Names are emphatical, and, in their Significations, allude unto certain Paſſages in their Father's Hiſtory. 2. Becauſe their Names, being preſerved in Poems, and other Tracts of *Arabian* Literature, are ſo many diſtinct Proofs of the Veracity of his Relation; and, therefore, this may be added, to the Arguments heretofore advanced, to ſhew, that this Poem is founded on real Facts, and not the Offspring of an Enthuſiaſtick Brain.

Q. *What were the Significations and Alluſions of the Names of* Job's *Daughters?*

A. The Appellations beſtowed on his Daughters ſeem to have a double Alluſion; Firſt to the Beauty of thoſe to whom they were given, and Secondly, to certain Circumſtances of his own Affairs. The eldeſt he called *Jemima*, i. e. *Light*, or *Day*, nothing being more common among the Orientals, than to compare the *Brightneſs* of their Maidens Charms to the *Light*; but, beſides this, *Job*, in all Likelihood, referred to that bright and happy State, to which the Mercy of God had reſtored him from the dark and comfortleſs Condition under which he had labour'd. The Second was named *Kezia*, from a certain odoriferous Drug highly eſteemed in the Eaſt, and which, by ſome learned Perſons, is thought to be what we call *Caſſia*, alluding, as the Eaſtern Cuſtom to this Day is, to the Fragrancy of the Virgin's Charms; and to the ſweet and agreeable Senſations he then enjoy'd, after his being delivered from the inſupportable Pains of his filthy Diſeaſe. The Third was called *Keren-Happuch*, i. e. *Horn* of *Plenty*, from a Phraſe ordinarily met with in the Scripture, where *Horn* is put for *Honour*, *Strength*, &c. Perhaps, ſhe was the laſt of his Children, born when his Affairs were again in a good Condition; and her Name was intended as an Intimation of that *good Fortune* which ſhould attend her, and of the *Felicity* enjoyed by her Parents at the Time of her *Birth*.

Q. *What do you farther obſerve upon this ſurprizing Turn in* Job's *Affairs?*

A. One hundred and forty Years did this holy Man paſs a quiet and eaſy Life, ſurrounded with a numerous Offſpring, deducing their Lineage from his Loins; for a divinely inſpired Writer informs us, he ſaw his Deſcendants to the fourth Generation. His temporal Proſperity muſt, undoubtedly, procure a Multitude of Friends, and a very high Regard to be paid him, which he would be in the leſs Danger of being deluded by, from the Experience he had had in his Adverſity, of the little Value which ought to be ſet on ſuch fleeting Advantages. The Comfort, which he muſt neceſſarily receive from theſe manifeſt and continued Demonſtrations of the divine Favour, to a Man of his pious Diſpoſition, afforded, queſtionleſs, an inexpreſſible Delight, and infinitely exceeded all wordly Pleaſures which were within his Power. Theſe extraordinary Events, in an Age, when, as it's clear from the Book itſelf, Men were extremely addicted to diſcourſe on, and meditate in their Minds, the wondrous Acts of God, may very rationally be ſuppoſed to be collected and written pretty near the Form in which we now ſee them: For tho' I cannot affirm, that the ſeveral Speeches contained therein are, *verbatim*, what were ſpoken by *Job*, *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, *&c.* yet I think they would not have been inſerted in the Sacred Canon, if they had departed any conſiderable Diſtance from the Senſe of what was ſpoken by the ſeveral Interlocutors.

Q. *Being now come to the Concluſion of this Book, I muſt beg leave to intreat your Information in ſome Particulars which I could not ſo properly aſk of you before, without too much interrupting the Thread of the Story. The firſt Thing I deſire Satisfaction in, is, Whether this Hiſtory is not, as many Authors have aſſerted, an elegant Parable, or, rather, a Dramatic Poem, compoſed in order to recommend Fortitude, and a ſincere Confidence in God?*

A. If we conſider the Structure of the Scripture Narration, we ſhall find no greater reaſon to ſuppoſe the Book of *Job* a Fiction than the Book of *Judges*, the Book of *Samuel*, or any other Hiſtorical Book of the *Old Teſtament*: For Example, at the Entrance of *Sampſon*'s Hiſtory we are told, *There was a certain Man of* Zorah, *of the Family of the* Danites, *whoſe Name was* Manoah." And in the Beginning of the Life of *Samuel* we read, *There was a certain Man of* Ramatham-Zophim, *of Mount* Ephraim, *and his Name was* Elkanah." If the Truth of theſe Relations thus introduced is not queſtioned, why ſhould the following Words, which begin the Hiſtory of which we are ſpeaking, be thought the Entrance of a Fable, *There was a Man in the Land of* Uz, *whoſe Name was* Job? This plain Beginning is followed by a large and diſtinct Account of his Habitation, his Integrity, Riches, Dignity, Misfortunes, and the Manner in which they happened; the Number of his Family, the Diſpoſition of his Wife, the Names of his Friends, the Places of their Habitation, and a Multitude of leſſer Circumſtances, are ſo punctually ſet down, and every other Mark of a true Hiſtory ſo carefully inſerted, that it is impoſſible to conceive this long Relation as flowing wholly from the Invention of the Writer, without doing manifeſt Injury to the ſacred Canon, by aſſerting, that Truth and Falſhood are therein ſo mixed, as not to be diſtinguiſhed. It is indeed on all hands acknowledged, that the Book of *Job* is a Poetical Compoſition, at leaſt, the far greater Part of it; and from thence we may eaſily account for all thoſe Expreſſions which are thought inconſiſtent with a true Hiſtory. All who have the leaſt Acquaintance with the Oriental Writers know very well, that there is an Elevation in their Style unknown to the Genius of any *European* Language; nor can it be diſowned, that much of this kind of Enthuſiaſm is diſcernible in the Speeches of *Job* and his Friends; but it may at the ſame time be affirmed, that this is neither prejudicial to the Truth, nor to the Intent of the Work in general; the Sublimity of the Expreſſion ſerving both to delight our Imagination, and to make the ſtronger Impreſſion on our Minds, as the Sentiments are in themſelves continually noble and inſtructive. But there are other Arguments which put the Truth of this Narration out of queſtion: The Prophet *Ezekiel* tells us, that God himſelf declared, the Righteouſneſs of *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*, had they been found in the Place againſt which he prophecies, ſhould have delivered none but their own Souls: Can we conceive that the Almighty ſhould on ſuch an important Occaſion mention a fictitious Perſon? Or can any thing be more elegant than this Declaration taken in its literal Senſe? Again, the Apoſtle *James*, encouraging the Chriſtians to whom he directs his *Epiſtle*, to bear with Patience certain Misfortunes which they endured, makes uſe of the following Arguments; *Take, my Brethren, the Prophets which have ſpoken in the Name of the Lord, for an Example of Suffering, Affliction, and of Patience: Behold, we count them happy that endure. Ye have heard of the Patience of* Job, *and have ſeen the End of the Lord, that the Lord is pitiful, and of tender Mercy.* Can any one imagine, that a Writer, directed by the Holy Spirit, would ſet us for an Example one who never had a Being? Add to theſe divine Teſtimonies of the Reality of *Job*'s Life and Sufferings, the frequent Alluſions made by the Apoſtles in their reſpective Epiſtles, to the very Words of that Book which we receive as Holy Scripture: Thus, in the Epiſtle to *Timothy* we read, *For we brought nothing into this World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*; plainly referring to the Words which holy *Job* is recorded to have ſpoken on the firſt News of thoſe many and great Calamities which had befallen him: The ſame might be ſaid of ſeveral Paſſages in the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, and *Hebrews*. The Oriental Traditions, and even Pagan Hiſtorians, confirm the Story of this pious and patient Perſon: Wherefore we think there cannot be ſtronger Proofs of any thing, than thoſe which we have offered on this Occaſion.

Q. *Is it not an Objection to the Truth of this Hiſtory, that there is neither Time nor Place aſcertain'd?*

A. In the firſt Place then, it has been argued againſt the Veracity of this Narration, that neither Time nor Place are with any Certainty laid down, when, or where, we may conceive this *Job*, of whom the Hiſtory ſpeaks, to have paſt his Days: But this will not appear any great Difficulty, if we conſider, that both of theſe may be tolerably accounted for, as we ſhall ſhew hereafter. Nay, if theſe Points were to be given up, the Objection ought, nevertheleſs, to have no great Weight, ſeeing the ſame thing may be urged to the Prejudice of ſacred and profane Hiſtory; ſince it is obvious to every common Reader, that Chronology is very little, if at all obſerved by any of the ſacred Writers; and indeed, the Elder profane Hiſtorians have as little to boaſt of in that way. If the not fixing the exact Dates of *Job*'s Birth, Sufferings, *&c.*

were to be admitted as Arguments againſt his Exiſtence, then *Jonah*, *Nahum*, and *Habakkuk* with like Reaſon *muſt be ſtruck*, not only out of the of Prophets, but of Mortals, ſeeing we can pronounce nothing with greater Certainty of them, than we can of *Job*; and *Ninus*, *Semiramis*, *Zoroaſter*, with many other famous Perſons, by this Rule, would loſe their Title both to Fame and Being. As to the Land of *Uz*, tho' its exact Situation ſhould not be known, yet that ought not in Juſtice to be taken as any Argument, in reference to the Point of which we are ſpeaking, ſince the Names of Places are ſo much changed from what they were, and that an equal Uncertainty occurs in reſpect to Things of far greater Importance. *Babylon*, which was ſo long the Seat of one of the moſt powerful Empires in the World, is now ſo totally ruined, that it is impoſſible to determine the Place exactly whereon it ſtood; ſhall we therefore ſay that *Babylon* was never in being? The *Arabian*, *Perſian*, and other Oriental Writers, make frequent Mention of the City *Rey*, and tell us wonderful things concerning its Extent and Magnificence; yet, as there is no Appearance of them at this Day, would it be fair to conclude againſt theſe Authorities, that there never was ſuch a City? Or, in a Word, ſhall we aſſert there never was ſuch a Perſon as *Homer*, becauſe it is impoſſible to prove, beyond Contradiction, when, and where, he was born? If it be replied, that theſe things may be pretty nearly ſettled from Hiſtory, and comparing one Paſſage with another, the ſame Argument will ſerve us: For the Time in which *Job* lived, and the Place wherein he dwelt, may be full as well eſtabliſhed by the ſame Authority. Secondly it has been alledged, That there are certain Abſurdities in the firſt Part of this Narration, which are of ſufficient Authority to overturn the whole: Of theſe we ſhall preſently have Occaſion to ſpeak more diffuſely, and doubt not being able to prove that they are perfectly reconcileable to human Reaſon; however, it may not be amiſs to obſerve here, That nothing can be more raſh and irrational than to charge a Treatiſe with manifeſt Falſhood, which hath been ſo long and ſo univerſally received as a Piece divinely inſpired, both by the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Churches. As to the Omiſſion of Dates, and other ſmaller Circumſtances, tho' they have been cavilled at by ſome, yet, if the Nature of the Work be conſidered, a reaſonable Man cannot be diſſatisfy'd on Account of ſuch trifling Omiſſions: It was the Calamities of this righteous Man, his and his Friends Sentiments concerning the Divine Providence, and the happy Iſſue of his Afflictions, which were the Points material for us to know; and the little Niceties of the Time, and Manner in which the Things ſpoken of were tranſacted, were immaterial to the Deſign of the inſpired Writer, and are therefore properly enough omitted. One Objection more, on which ſome modern Infidels have laid great Streſs, deſerves to be mentioned, and it is this: They fancy that there is a great Similitude between the Book of *Job* and profane Tragedy; with them *Job* himſelf, *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, *Zophar*, and *Elihu*, are the *Interlocutors*; their ſeveral Speeches, and his Replies, are ſo many Scenes; the glorious Appearance of God is called the *Machinery*; and the Story of *Job*'s ſecond Felicity, the *Cataſtrophe* of this *Dramatick* Work. Admitting all this as they have ſtated it, nothing advantageous to their Purpoſe can ariſe from thence; no Man can have the Front to affirm, that it of later Date than the *Dramatick* Poetry of the *Pagans*; and if it be granted that it is older, this Similitude will prove nothing more than that the Story of *Job* is not told in a plain *proſaic* Manner, which every body allows; but this has nothing at all to do with the Matter of Fact. The Eſcape of the *Iſraelites* from the *Egyptian* Army, and the Victory obtained by *Barak* over *Siſera*, were celebrated in the Songs of *Miriam* and *Deborah*; and there are modern *Tragedies* founded on *Jephtha*'s Vow; yet ſure none of theſe detract from the Credit due to the Hiſtories themſelves.

Q. *The next Thing I would know is, the exact Situation of the Place of* Job's *Birth and Reſidence?*

A. In Scripture it is called the Land of *Uz*, or rather of *Utz*, according to the *Hebrew* Orthography; but Commentators are exceedingly divided in their Opinions, where this Land of *Uz* is to be placed: There are three eminent Perſons of this Name, mentioned in Scripture, each eſteemed to have been the Father of the People amongſt whom *Job* lived, by ſome or other of the learned Authors who have treated on this Point: The firſt is *Uz* the Son of *Aram*, the Son of *Shem*, who is generally taken for the Founder of *Damaſcus*, but I think this is not very well proved; however, it is highly probable that he ſettled ſomewhere between Mount *Libanus* and the River *Euphrates*, and that he communicated his Name to the Region which he planted; and if ſo, it might well enough be the Place of *Job*'s Dwelling. The ſecond *Uz* ſpoken of in *Scripture*, was the Son of *Nachor*, the Brother of *Abraham*, and from him, agreeing with the moſt learned Writers on this difficult Point, I ſuppoſe *Job* to have deſcended; and thoſe who are acquainted with the Situation of theſe Eaſtern Countries will eaſily perceive that the Diſtrict, which I have before mentioned, is at no exceſſive Diſtance from *Haran*, where we know *Nachor* ſpent his Days. Without tiring my Readers by an unneceſſary Accumulation of Criticiſms and Authorities, I will lay down ſome few plain Reaſons which have induced me to join in this Sentiment: It is evident, from the Current of the *Moſaic* Hiſtory, that there was a continual Intercourſe, as well as a near Relation between *Abraham* and *Nachor*; and thence it might eaſily happen, that the Hiſtory of *Job*, if he was a Deſcendant of the latter, might come into the Hands of *Moſes*, who, in all Probability, methodized his Story, written, perhaps, originally in *Arabian* Verſe; and by admitting *Job* to have ſprung from this Family, we have an eaſy and natural Account of his Friends, and the Families from which they were derived, as ſhall be more fully ſhewn when we come hereafter to ſpeak of them. Laſtly, the Religion and Piety of *Job* is more conſiſtent with his Deſcent from *Nachor*, than it would be if we ſhould derive him from any other Perſon. As to the third *Uz*, ſpoken of in Holy Writings, he was a Deſcendant of *Eſau*; and from him the far greater Number of Interpreters believe *Job* to have ſprung. The great Support of this Opinion is a very antient Note found in a *Greek* Verſion of this Book; but the Reaſon which has prevailed with me to reject both this and many other Authorities to the ſame Purpoſe is, that it would ſet *Job* much lower in reſpect of Time, than we can reaſonably ſuppoſe he lived.

The Note referred to is this: Mr. *Du Pin* aſſerts that this Note is to be met with in all the antient *Greek* Copies, and runs thus: “ *Job* lived “ in the Land of *Auſitis*, on the Confines of *Idumea* and *Arabia*; he was named *Jobab*, and “ took to Wife an *Arabian*,] of whom he had a “ a Son named *Ennon*, who was the Father of “ *Zerab*, one of the Sons of the Poſterity of *Eſau* “ and his Mother *Roſerra*, and he was the fifth “ from *Abraham*.” After which follows a Genealogy of the Kings of *Idumea*, taken out of the thirty-ſixth Chapter of *Geneſis*.

Q. *The next Thing I would enquire into, is the exact Time in which* Job *lived?*

A. This has been a Diſpute much agitated by the Learned, ſome making him Cotemporary with *Abraham*, and others placing him as low as the Reign of King *Ahaſuerus*. It would take up too much Time to examine the ſeveral Opinions ſtarted on this Head; we ſhall therefore propoſe that, which to us ſeems not only probable, but certain, and lay before our Readers, ſuch Reaſons as appear capable of ſupporting it. We believe therefore that his Sufferings happened ſome Time after the Death of *Joſeph*; and the principal Motives on which we believe it, are theſe:

Firſt, The Riches of *Job*, which conſiſted chiefly in Cattle, ſeem to point out thoſe Times in which we are ſure that People lived unſhut up in Cities, ſubſiſting on their Cattle, and removing from Place, according as the Feeding of them required; ſuch as we read in the Book of *Geneſis*, were the Lives led by *Abraham*, *Lot*, *Iſaac*, *Eſau* and *Jacob*; and we may eaſily conceive, that in the Courſe of a few Ages this would become a Thing impracticable; for as Mankind increaſed, Countries were not only more fully, but more regularly inhabited; Cities and great Towns were by Degrees erected; Property became more ſtrictly looked after; ſo that it grew impoſſible for Perſons to keep up ſuch large Herds, when Paſturage declined, and Men applied themſelves to other Methods of ſubſiſting.

Secondly, The Sacrifices offered by *Job* are perfectly agreeable to thoſe made by the Patriarchs, and ſeem plainly to have been derived from the Precepts given to, and obſerved by *Noah*; but, as theſe were, in a few Ages, totally ſwallowed up in ſuperſtitious Idolatry, ſo a new Argument might be derived from hence, to prove that *Job* deſcended from the Family of *Nachor*, and that his Friends ſprung from the ſame Stock; otherwiſe it would be difficult to apprehend how true Religion came to be ſo long preſerved amongſt them.

Thirdly, The profound Silence in the Book of *Job*, as to any Thing relating to the *Hebrew* Na-Nation, very clearly proves, that it was originally compoſed by a Perſon unacquainted with their Affairs; nor is it poſſible to account with any Degree of Probability, for its being received into the *Jewiſh* Canon, after the Promulgation of the Law, ſeeing the *Iſraelites*, thence forward, looked on themſelves as God's peculiar People, and treated all the World beſides with Contempt and Averſion.

Fourthly, Thoſe Paſſages in the Book of which we are ſpeaking, wherein this holy Perſon purges himſelf from the Stain of Idolatry, agree very well with the Time in which we ſuppoſe him to have flouriſhed.

Fifthly, What he and his Friends ſay concerning the Methods whereby God, in their Days, was pleaſed to reveal his Will unto Mankind, are probable Teſtimonies to the ſame Purpoſe.

Sixthly, the Length of *Job*'s Life, which appears to have been about two hundred Years, and which was extended, by God's Favour, beyond the Term uſual in that Age, correſponds very well with what we have advanced; for *Abraham* lived an hundred and ſeventy-five Years, *Iſaac* one hundred and eighty, *Jacob* one hundred and ſeven, and *Levi*, the longeſt Liver of his Sons, one hundred and thirty ſeven.

Seventhly. That he was neither Co-temporary with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, is, in ſome Meaſure, proved by his not being mentioned in the Book of *Geneſis*; wherein the Righteouſneſs of *Melchiſedec* and other Servants of God are recorded. So that on the whole, their Opinion carries the greateſt Appearance of Truth, who aſſert, that *Moſes*, during his Retreat into the Land of *Midian*, peruſed this Book in the Houſe of *Jethro*, his Father-in-Law, written in the Language natural to *Elihu*, who penned it in a poetical Stile, perhaps, in a ſhort Time after *Job*'s Reſtoration; and the nature of the Work recommending it to the *Hebrew* Tranſlator, who, we know, was a Perſon of great Learning, he reduced it into the Form in which we now have it, and by the Command of God publiſhed it among the People, when he led them through the *Wilderneſs* out of *Egypt*, that they might be encouraged to bear patiently thoſe Evils to which they were expoſed, be excited unto a chearful Confidence in God's Mercy, and to entertain high Ideas of the divine Wiſdom.

Q. *What is the particular Point purſued in the ſeveral Speeches in the Book of* Job?

A. The Anſwer to this, will be the Solution of that Queſtion, *What* Rule *does the* Almighty *obſerve in beſtowing Bleſſings, or in ſending Calamities upon Mortals?* That righteous Perſon, under the Weight of his Afflictions, paſſionately aſſerts, Mankind are Creatures ſo vile in the Eyes of their Creator, that Piety or Unrighteouſneſs, makes no great Difference in the Diſpenſations of Providence to them: So that, when Evil overtakes, and Miſery oppreſſes, a wiſe Man can have no Hope, but in Death, which is the certain Period of human Sorrows, and opens the Door to a better State. *Eliphaz* declares this to be an impious Opinion, and affirms, That God puniſhes none but the Guilty; wherefore he concludes, from *Job*'s Afflictions, That he had been a grievous Sinner; and from his Words on this Occaſion, that he was impenitent. *Bildad* propoſes a milder Doctrine, and ſuppoſes, That if Things were as *Job* ſaid, then he ſhould meet with a future Recompence for thoſe Woes he went through at preſent. *Zophar*, more harſhly than the other two, inveighs againſt the Behaviour of their ſuffering Friend, and ſays, That the Deity acts abſolutely, in reſpect to us his Creatures, without Law, or without obſerving any Maxims, which it is in our Power to diſcern: From whence he argues, that it is our Duty to ſubmit unto whatſoever he inflicts upon us; that we ought not to murmur at his Diſpenſations, who, as he created us, diſpoſes of us alſo as he pleaſes.

Each of the Diſputants was very tenacious of the Opinion which he had advanced: But *Job*, however, by many Inſtances, and by ſtrong Arguments founded on them, ſo well maintained his Poſition, that the three Opponents at length left off to anſwer. *Elihu* then undertakes to ſet the Point in a clear Light; who begins with proving the Providence of God, from various Facts, the Truth of which they all knew. He proceeds to ſhew, how abſurd a Thing it is to doubt of the Juſtice of his Government, who hath ordered all Things in the Univerſe ſo wiſely; and, at the Cloſe of his Speech, God reveals himſelf from the Whirlwind; and, having, by a Recital of his own Power, brought *Job* to a right State of Mind, he graciouſly declares his Approbation of his Servant's Faith, reproves his Friends for having raſhly upbraided him, and rewards *Job's* Truſt in him, by giving double thoſe good Things which he had taken away.

To this ſhort Recapitulation of the Diſcourſes of *Job*, and his Friends, we ſhall adjoin the Sentiments of *Maimonides*, one of the moſt learned of the *Jewiſh* Commentators. “The Scope of this Book is to eſtabliſh the great Article of Providence, and thereby to preſerve us from Error in thinking, that God's Knowledge is like our Knowledge, or his Intention, Providence and Government, like our Intention, Providence and Government: Which Foundation being made, nothing will ſeem hard to a Man, whatſoever happens, nor will he fall into dubious Thoughts concerning God, whether he knows what is befallen us, or no, and whether he takes any Care of us; but rather he will be inflamed the more vehemently in the Love of God, as it is ſaid in the End of this Prophecy: *wherefore I abhor myſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes*. So ſay our Wiſemen, *They that act out of Love, will rejoice in Chaſtiſement*.

Q. *Have no Additions been made to this Hiſtory by prophane Writers?*

A. The Hiſtory of *Job* is, in itſelf, ſo extraordinary, that we may very eaſily conceive the *Jews Arabs*, and other Eaſtern Nations, would not fail to adorn it with fabulous Circumſtances, according to their ſettled Cuſtoms on ſuch Occaſions. As to the Additions made by the *Arabian* Writers, we think it will not be improper to dwell a little on them here. They ſtrenuouſly inſiſt upon his being a Deſcendant from *Iſhmael*, affirming, that he was the firſt of the three Prophets of his Race, the other two being *Jethro* and *Mahommed*. They aſſert, that his Wife's Name was *Raſima*, and that ſhe was derived from the Family of *Lot*; that is, ſhe was either a *Moabiteſs* or *Ammoniteſs*. They are divided in their Accounts of the Time in which he laboured under his Troubles and loathſome Malady, ſome fixing it to three, others enlarging it to ſeven Years. Many more Particulars are found in theſe Writers, but few of them ſo probable as theſe. The Relation they give us of the Cauſe and Manner of his Sufferings is plainly taken from that in the Book of *Job*, only it is ſwelled conſiderably in their Hands, eſpecially in the followiug Inſtance. “The Demon (ſay they) having in vain attempted to ſhake the Faith and Conſtancy of that holy Man, appeared to his Wife in the Form of an old Woman, and told her, If ſhe would cut off the two long Treſſes of Hair which hung down the Side of her Face to her Neck, and ſell them to her for an Ornament, ſhe would furniſh her with what might ſupply her Huſband. *Raſima*, who was reduced unto the loweſt Ebb of Poverty, readily conſented, and cut off the Locks as ſhe deſired. The Demon immediately appearing unto *Job*, produced the two Handfuls of Hair, and told him, That, ſurprizing his Wife in an Act of Wickedneſs, he had cut them off, and brought them to him, to convince him of the Truth of what he advanced. *Job*, in the Inſtant of his Surprize, ſwore thereupon, That, if he recovered his Health, he would ſeverely chaſtiſe her. The *Demon*, tranſforming himſelf into an Angel of Light, inſtantly accuſes *Job* before God, of having fallen into a Fit of Impatience. *Job* thereupon anſwered confidently, *Preſſed on every Side with Pain, I might offend; but thou, who art the the moſt merciful of all Beings, wilt, I truſt, have Mercy*: whereupon God immediately cauſed the Calamities of *Job* to ceaſe. The Angel *Gabriel*, deſcending from Heaven, took him by the Hand, and raiſed him up from the Place whereon he was ſitting; then ſtriking the Ground with his Foot, the Water began to flow, wherein *Job* having waſhed himſelf, and drank a Draught thereof, he, in a Moment, perceived his Body clean and ſound, and his Health perfectly reſtored; and his Goods alſo were multiplied in ſuch a Manner, as that Riches ſeemed to have been ſhowered down upon him.

At *Rome* they pretended to ſhew the Reliques of St. *Job*, which they gave out to have been brought thither by *Rhobarb*, King of the *Lombards*, in the ſeventh Century: But in the laſt Age they were irrecoverably loſt. However, his Name is ſtill in the holy Catalogue, with the Titles of *Prophet*, *Saint* and *Martyr*; and he is addreſſed to both by the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches. The former have appointed the ſixth of *May* for his Day of Commemoration, and are therein followed by the *Egyptian* and *Ethiopian* Churches; but the Church of *Rome* has ſet apart the tenth of *May* to his Honour, and he is zealouſly prayed to by thoſe of that Communion.

We may the leſs wonder at ſuch Uncertainties as are met with in the Traditions of Churches, at ſuch a Diſtance, of Time, from this holy Perſon whom they honour: If we conſider, that in the Eaſtern Countries, even in thoſe neareſt his Habitation, there are ſtill wider Differences, about every Circumſtance relating to him; though, in general, his Memory be high in Eſteem among all the various Nations, and thoſe too of various Faiths, which now inhabit the Eaſt; for *Arabs*, *Jews*, *Chriſtians*, and *Mahommedans*, all retain a high Veneration for one ſo eminently favoured by the Deity. The firſt glory in *Job's* being their Countryman (tho' that is improbable, unleſs *Arabia* be taken in a very extenſive Senſe) and pretend, that there are ſtill Herds, or Tribes of *Arabs*, who are able to prove their Deſcent from him. The *Second*, that they may have ſome Claim to a Perſon of ſuch Eminence, have forged a Story, that *Dinah*, the Daughter of *Jacob*, was his Wife; but of this, as there is no Proof, ſo there is no Probability; for we read of her going down into *Egypt*, together with her Brethren, and of conſequence, ſhe muſt have been much older than *Job*, eſpecially if the *Hebrew* Computation could be depended on, whereby his Birth is placed in the ſame Year with *Jacob*'s Deſcent from *Canaan.* The *Chriſtians* eſteem him a Prophet of God, and apply, what he ſays, of his Hopes in a living Redeemer, to the *Meſſiah.* The *Mahommedans* venerate him as a Prophet of the ſame Race with *Mahommed*; and thus, tho' with ſome Confuſion, as to Particulars, the general Story of *Job* appears to have met with univerſal Belief, in Places where, if (as the *Spinoſiſts* affirm) he never had exiſted, it can ſcarce be accounted for at all. But it is now Time, that from ſpeaking of him, and his Memory, we ſhould ſay ſomething more than hitherto we have done, of the Treatiſe concerning him, as it ſtands in our Bible.

Q. *What was the Faith and Religion of this eminent and excellent Perſon?*

A. It is, indeed, ſurprizing, that ſome have look'd upon *Job* as a mere *Gentile*, that is, as one who had no other Senſe of God, than what flowed from Natural Religion; I ſay this Notion is amazing, in ſuch as admit the divine Authority of the ſacred *Code*, becauſe it is directly contrary to what is delivered therein; but it is not at all ſurprizing to find this Sentiment adopted by *Spinoſa*, who gleaned up from all the Authors he knew, whatever might diſparage revealed Religion. But that that there is no Foundation for his bold Aſſertion, that *Job* was a *Gentile*, and a Man only of great Spirit, will appear, if we conſider, 1. The Manner in which the Prophet *Ezekiel* ſpeaks of holy *Job*, whom he compares with *Noah* and *Daniel*, Men not only of exemplary Righteouſneſs, but wonderfully eminent alſo for their Faith in God, and for the Revelations alſo which he was pleaſed to afford them. 2. However Conciſe the Hiſtory of *Moſes* may be, in reſpect to thoſe Things that concern not the Deſcendants of *Abraham*; yet it is clear, from his Writings, that among thoſe who believed in the true God, before the Law, Revelations were not unfrequent. 3. From the Account given in the Hiſtory of *Job*'s Family, it is manifeſt that he received, by Tradition, the true Faith of the Patriarchs. 4. It is indiſputable, that the Religion of the Patriarchs was not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, natural, but revealed; in a Word, before the Law given from *Sinai*, the Faithful were acquainted with their Duty, and the Will of God, three ſeveral Ways, *viz.* by Revelations communicated by Angels, *i. e.* Miniſters ſent by the Almighty; by internal Notices; and by Tradition from their Fathers.

Q. *What Syſtem of Religion did* Job's *Friends profeſs?*

A. The Friends of *Job* appear to have been as well verſed as himſelf in true Divinity; their Diſcourſes are conceived in Terms perfectly ſublime, and exactly ſuited to the Excellency of their Subject, inſomuch, that from this Book alone, *M. Jurieu* has collected a full and yet conciſe Siſtem of Divinity, as it was received under the patriarchal Diſpenſation. I preſume the Reader will not be diſpleaſed at my tranſcribing that Account, eſpecially as it will fall under a very narrow Compaſs.

“The Theology of the Antients, I conceive, contained all Things eſſential to Religion, which will appear by conſidering the following Heads of their Belief. 1. That God alone is worthy of Adoration; that he is infinite, and that he knows all Things both in Heaven and in Earth. 2. That he is the Creator and Preſerver of the Univerſe. 3. That the Effect of Evil happen not but by his Permiſſion. 4. That the Juſtice of God is ever obſervant, whether they do good, or whether they do evil, in order to reward or puniſh them accordingly. 5. That this World is not the Place wherein God makes ſuch Retributions; but that, in this Life, he diſtributes indifferently both Bleſſings and Calamities on the Juſt and on the Unjuſt. 6. That, beſides the general Beneficence which God is pleaſed to exerciſe towards all his Creatures, he hath a Reſerve of Loving-kindneſs for thoſe who confide in, and attend on him; that he hath prepared for the laſt Days, a *Deliverer*, a *Redeemer*, a *Shiloh*, a *bleſſed Seed*, a *Saviour*, who ſhall free his Church from Captivity, and ſhall deſtroy the Empire of the *Devil.* That a hearty Confidence in God, a ſincere Belief in his Promiſes, and true Repentance, are the only Means whereby to attain or preſerve his Favour. 8. That Death, as well as the other Enemies of the Church, ſhall in the End, be vanquiſhed; and that, at the Reſurrection, the *Almighty* will deliver out of his Hands all thoſe whom he had ſubdued.”

Q. *Pray make it appear, that theſe ſeveral Articles are conſiſtent with the Doctrines delivered in this Book.*

A. The firſt Articles are ſo plain, and ſo conformable to human Reaſon, that I know not any Objection which can be urged againſt them. As to the fourth, it may, indeed, be urged, that the great Diſputes between *Job* and his Friends, took Riſe from their various Opinions on this Head; and that conſequently it ought not to be ſet down as a Point of Faith, in which all were agreed. Now to place this in its true Light, let us obſerve, that it was admitted by all the Diſputants, That God *is infinitely perfect, and conſequently infinitely juſt.* I ſay, it is admitted by all of them, though, as is frequent enough, in ſuch Diſputes, ſome of them imputed to *Job* himſelf the denying this Poſition, of which he, however, with great Zeal purges himſelf. It was admitted too, by them all, that God governed the World, and that no Events came to paſs among the Children of Men, but by his Permiſſion; ſo that every Thing ſuffered here, flowed immediately from the Will of God, and was to be conſidered as the Effect of his Wiſdom and Juſtice. The Friends of *Job*, putting all this together, would needs infer, that Proſperity was the Reward of Righteouſneſs, and that no Man was loaded with temporal Calamities, but as the Puniſhment of his Offences, wherefore they delivered their Sentiments roundly to *Job*, that his own Actions muſt have drawn on him theſe heavy Tokens of divine Diſpleaſure, and that therefore he ought to glorify God by a Confeſſion of his Sins, and ſue to him for Pardon with ſincere Repentance. This was the Opinion of *Job*'s Friends; and they, as moſt Men are apt to do, believed that they were in the Right. *Job*, on the contrary, inſiſts on his Innocence; and though he denies not that his Creator was juſt, wiſe, and merciful, yet he declares that his Ways, that is, his Maxims or Rules of Government are beyond the Reach of humanUnderſtanding. He ſupports this Doctrine of his by Abundance of Arguments; he complains heavily not only of the Miſeries he ſuffers, but of the Reproaches, which pierced his Soul, from the Lips of his Friends; he perſiſts in his Appeal to God, and avers his believing and doing all that God required of him. The more *Job* aſſerted and defended his Righteouſneſs, the more his Friends were offended; they imagined that his Mouth ſhould have been ſtopped by their Reaſonings, and that he ſhould have followed their Directions; but finding quite the contrary, that he confeſſed nothing, that he juſtified his own Proceedings, and refuſed to allow his preſent Afflictions the juſt Judgments of an angry God; provoked by his Sentiments, and angry that all their Speeches had been fruitleſs, they very roundly charge the unhappy *Job* with Want of Religion, and with having no juſt Senſe of the Perfections of the Almighty.

Stung with this heavy Accuſation, the holy afflicted Man cries out, That their Aſperſions were cruel and unjuſt; that he was as far as could be imagin'd from being ſuch a one as they would have him; that he appeal'd to God, becauſe, in his Sight, he knew he ſhould find Mercy; that he deſir'd Death, as the ſole Cure of his Misfortunes; for he believ'd firmly another Life, truſted ſincerely in his Creator, and hoped, at the laſt Day, to ſee his Redeemer in the Fleſh. This is a clear Repreſentation of the laſt Propoſitions ſet down by the Author I have quoted; and it ſhews that theſe Points were the univerſally receiv'd Tenets among good Men at this Time, otherwiſe *Job* would never have had Recourſe to them, to anſwer the Imputation of Want of Faith and Confidence in God. But I am ſenſible that ſome Objections have been made to the underſtanding *Job's* Expreſſions in the Senſe the learned Writer and myſelf underſtand them; and therefore it is incumbent on me, both for the Sake of Perſpicuity here, and of vindicating what I have ſaid in the Hiſtory itſelf, to enter into the Proof of this laſt mention'd Point, which I ſhall do immediately, and with all the Candor that may be.

Q. *What then is your Opinion of the ſeveral Speeches delivered in this ſacred Dialogue?*

A. It is, as I apprehend, as much allow'd as any thing of this Kind is like to be, that the Speeches preſerv'd in the Book of *Job* are magnificent Deſcriptions, and noble Diſcourſes in their Way, full of admirable Sayings and deep Wiſdom. This, if the Sentiments of the Chriſtian Fathers be not ſufficient to vouch for, Men of Learning and free Thoughts have declared; nay, Men of Wit, who employ'd their Time expreſsly in the Study of ſuch Things, have own'd the ſame; and have preferred *Job* to *Virgil* and *Homer*. I would not be underſtood to mention theſe Particulars as if I thought the Book of *Job* ſtood in need of ſuch Countenance, or, indeed, receiv'd any Credit from theſe Conceſſions; but I produce them to juſtify my Manner of treating the Point in Queſtion, which I ſhall endeavour to clear by the ſame Means which Critics make uſe of in explaining Profane Authors. For Firſt, I ſhall ſhew what *Job*'s Thoughts were of his own Condition, and what his Hopes. Secondly, I ſhall conſider what his Friends Sentiments were, and with what they reproach'd him. Thirdly, I ſhall ſhew that he made a ſolemn Appeal from them; and I ſhall explain the Nature and End of that Appeal, which is the very Thing in Debate. As to *Job*'s Thoughts of his Condition, he look'd upon himſelf as a Creature in the Hands and at the Diſpoſal of his Maker, whoſe Decrees he was bound to ſubmit to and chearfully to obey. *Naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked ſhall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.* This was his Soliloquy on the Loſs of his Children and his Wealth; and when theſe terrible Evils were encreaſed, by his being covered with painful and loathſome Boils, he anſwer'd the impertinent Ravings of his Wife thus: *What? Shall we receive Good at the Hands of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil?* Yet this hindred not his feeling, as a Man, the Calamities which were upon him; he was reſigned, but not inſenſible; he therefore deſired to die, and ſo to be out of his Afflictions: *The Small and the Great* (ſays he) *are there*, i. e. in the Grave, *and the Servant is free from his Maſter: Wherefore is Light given unto him who is in Miſery, and Life unto the bitter in Soul? Which long for Death, and it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid Treaſures, which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the Grave, to a Man whoſe Way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in.* When the Diſcourſes of his Friends had ſharpen'd him farther, he repeats this Deſire of his in yet ſtronger Words: *O that God would grant me the Thing that I long for! Even that it would pleaſe God to deſtroy me; that he would let looſe his Hand to cut me off; then would I yet have Comfort; yea, I would harden myſelf in Sorrow.* If this do not prove that *Job* hoped for nothing in this World, and expected no Eaſe but in Death, then I am certain Words can prove nothing; and that 'tis Labour in vain to attempt the fixing the Senſe of any Author from his Expreſſions. As to the *ſecond* Point, *Eliphaz* ſays to him: *Thy Words have upholden him that was falling, and thou haſt ſtrengthened the feeble Knees; but now it is come upon thee, and thou fainteſt; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. Is not this thy Fear, thy Confidence, thy Hope, and the Uprightneſs of thy Ways? Remember, I pray thee, whoever periſhed, being innocent? Or where were the Righteous cut off?* *Bildad* treats him in ſtill worſe Terms: *How long*, ſays he, *wilt thou ſpeak theſe things? And how long ſhall the Words of thy Mouth be like a ſtrong Wind? Doth God pervert Judgment? Or doth the Almighty pervert Juſtice? If thy Children have ſinned againſt him, and he hath caſt them away for their Trangreſſions.* *Zophar*, with more Harſhneſs than either, ſays, *Should not the Multitude of Words be anſwered? And ſhould a Man full of Talk be juſtified? Should thy Lies make Men hold their Peace? And, when thou mockeſt, ſhall no Man make thee aſhamed?* On theſe Reproaches, holy *Job* took Heart, and, in order to ſtop them, firſt repreſented the Cruelty of them, and then appeals to another Tribunal for his own Juſtification. *How long* (ſays he, in his general Reply) *will ye vex my Soul, and break me in Pieces with Words? Theſe ten Times have ye reproached me; you are not aſhamed that you make yourſelves ſtrange to me. And be it, indeed, that I have erred, my Error remaineth with myſelf.* He expatiates then on the Heavineſs of his Miſeries; and having tendred theſe his Comforts, in an humble and moving Recital of them, thus he goes on.

Have Pity upon me, have Pity upon me, O my Friends; for the Hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye perſecute me, as God, and are not ſatisfied with my Fleſh! Oh that my Words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a Book! That they were graven with an Iron Pen and Lead in the Rocks forever! For I know that my Redeemer *liveth; and that he ſhall ſtand, at the laſt Day, upon the Earth.*

Q. *In ſeveral Parts of the Book of* Job *we meet with various Deſcriptions of the* Phœnomena *of Nature: Pray does the Philoſophy of* Job *and his Friends agree with that profeſſed and taught by the Moderns?*

A. As I have neither Time to treat of this Matter largely, nor is it ſtrictly neceſſary that I ſhould, I will content myſelf with giving the Reader ſuch a View of this Subject, as ſhall convince him that what is ſaid in the Book of *Job*, concerning the Nature of the ſeveral Parts of the Univerſe, hath not only Sublimity of Stile to recommend it, but is alſo perfectly juſt rational, even according to the Notions of modern Philoſophers. To begin then with what is ſaid of the *Air*, and Things relating thereto, I will firſt cite ſome Paſſages from *Job* relating to them; and then the Account given us by a late eminent Compiler of modern Philoſophy: *Hell is naked before him, and Deſtruction hath no Covering. He ſtretcheth out the North over the empty Place, and hangeth the Earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them. Behold, God is great, and we know him not; neither can the Number of his Years be ſearched out: For he maketh ſmall the Drops of Water; they pour down Rain according to the Vapour thereof, which the Clouds do drop and diſtil upon Man abundantly. To cauſe it to rain on the Earth where no Man is, on the Wilderneſs, wherein there is no Man; to ſatiſfy the deſolate and waſte Ground, and to cauſe the Bud of the tender Herb to ſpring fourth. Hath the Rain a Father? Or who hath begotten the Drops of Dew? Out of whoſe Womb came the Ice? And the hoary Froſt of Heaven, who hath gendered it? The Waters are hid as with a Stone, and the Face of the Deep is frozen.* Let us now proceed to the modern Philoſophy, in Relation to theſe Things: ‘So long (ſays Mr. *Rohault*) as the Vapours and Exhalations which accompany them are in great Motion as to produce Winds, and to hinder their Particles from uniting together, it is impoſſible that they ſhould ſo much darken the Air as to be perceived, becauſe the Action of Light, which paſſes through it, is not at all interrupted, nor any Way reflected; but when theſe ſame Vapours loſe the Agitation, they were in, by Degrees, and to ſtop in any particular Place in a large Quantity, and the Particles of them to unite together, they muſt then neceſſarily hinder the Action of the Rays of Light from paſſing on beyond them, becauſe there being great Number of Drops of Water one above another, their ſeveral Superficies will reflect them all; and thus they become dark, and a Miſt or Cloud begins to appear in the Place where this Collection of Particles of Water is, and of ſuch a Bigneſs as the Space which it poſſeſſes. If the Particles of Water, which ſtop in this Manner, and are ſuſpended in the Air, retain ſo much Motion as to ſlip by each other, they muſt compoſe a great Number of very ſmall imperceptible Drops of Water, but if their Motion be intirely ceaſed, it is evident that, becauſe they ſtop by each other without any Order, they muſt compoſe a very thin and very light Body, which not being liquid, ought rather to be called Ice, or very fine Snow, than Water. But whether a Miſt or a Cloud be made up of imperceptible Drops of Water, or Parcels of Ice, it is certain that neither the one nor the other can fall to the Ground but very ſlowly, becauſe theſe Drops of Water, or Parcels of Ice, have a very large Superficies, compared with the Quantity of Matter they contain, and conſequently have but little Weight to overcome the Reſiſtance which the Air they meet with makes, before it divides itſelf. To which we may add, that the Vapours which riſe out of the Earth, and aſcend to a great Height, not only to hinder the Matter of which Miſts are are compoſed, from falling, but may make it aſcend ſtill higher; ſo that that which was a Miſt may, in a ſhort time, become a Cloud. It is to be obſerved alſo, that if the Particles of Water, which aſcend in the Manner mentioned in order to form Clouds, do not go very far before they loſe all their Motion, then they do not give the Exhalations, which ariſe along with them, Time to ſeparate themſelves. In this Caſe, therefore, they muſt neceſſarily be blended together; but if the Vapours have Force enough to raiſe themſelves to a ſufficient Height, and meet with no Obſtacle to hinder them from continuing on their Courſe for ſome Time, then, becauſe they can eaſily move themſelves, and fly off, they will get uppermoſt, ſo that there will be two Clouds, as it were, the higheſt of which is made up of Particles of Water and Ice; and the lower one, of the Exhalations only. And if, after this, there ariſe other Vapours, and other Exhalations, which aſcend in the ſame Manner, they will form a great many different Beds, or Banks of Clouds, compoſed of Vapours and Exhalations, by Turns.

‘As two contrary Winds may cauſe a Miſt or a Cloud to be formed, by bringing together a great Quantity of Vapours into one Place; ſo it may happen, that a very ſtrong Wind, blowing upon a Miſt or Cloud, may carry off its Parts one after another, and make it take the Form of Vapours again; and ſo, in Time, all the Clouds may be diſſipated: However, this is not the uſual Way in which they are diſſipated; the common Method is, that the Cloud diſſolves, and falls all down in Rain. The only Difficulty in this Matter is, What ſhould cauſe the Parts of a Body, which is ſo thin as a Cloud is, to thicken and become ſo denſe, as to acquire a Force ſufficient to overcome the Reſiſtance of the Air, which oppoſes its Fall? Firſt, It is evident, that when the Wind blows againſt a Cloud, and does not carry it intirely along with it, it muſt make the Parts of the Cloud approach nearer each other, and cauſe a great many Drops of Water, which were inſenſible while at ſome Diſtance from one another, to join together, and thereby compoſe very large Drops, whoſe Weight makes them deſcend. It is alſo evident, that after any Cloud is formed, there may ſtill riſe other Parts of Water in the Form of Vapours, which may continue to be a little agitated, after they meet with thoſe which were ſtopped before, ſo that by joining with them, they may become heavier, and and acquire a ſufficient Force to overcome the Reſiſtance of the Air, which can no longer hinder them from falling. But that which is the moſt common and the moſt effectual Cauſe of the Clouds being converted into Rain, is the Heat of the Air which is near the Surface of the Earth, and which is carried up to a conſiderable Height by ſome Wind; for this hot Air arriving at the Clouds, diſpoſes that very fine Snow, of which they are compoſed, to melt, and to condenſe into a great many ſmall Flakes, which overcome the Reſiſtance of the Air, and fall down; and at laſt, being intirely diſſolved by the Heat which they meet with in thoſe Places thro' which they fall, they are converted into Drops of Rain, and theſe Drops will be very large if the Cloud be denſe, and the hot Air gets to the upper Part; for then every Thing conſpires to makes the ſmall Drops of Water, or Pieces of Ice to join a great many of them together, and to compoſe very ſenſible Drops at firſt, which deſcend by their own Weight, but which afterwards increaſe very much by joining themſelves with thoſe that they meet with, as they fall through the whole Thickneſs of the Cloud: But if this hot Air reaches to the Bottom of a thin Cloud, the Drops muſt neceſſarily then be ſo very ſmall, as not to compoſe Rain at all, but only Drizzle. As to Dew, there is no great Difficulty in comprehending how that is formed, if we conſider, that when it is moſt clear and calm, which is the Time when the Dew falls, there is always a great Quantity of very ſmall Parts of Water, which fly about in the Form of Vapours; theſe gradually loſing the Agitation they were in, gather a great many of them together, and fall down in inſenſible Drops, which generally ſtick to the Leaves of Plants, and then uniting with each other, they are converted into Water, and the Dew becomes viſible. As the Vapours loſe their Motion when they meet with Hail, ſo it is eaſy to apprehend that they may ſometimes loſe their Motion when they meet with other cold Bodies; and thus it is that frozen Miſts and *hoar Froſts* are formed, which cover the Earth, and ſtick to Branches of Trees, and to the Hair of Travellers, eſpecially on that Side where the Wind blows.’

It would be no difficult Matter to ſhew an equal Conformity between the Sentiments of theſe antient Philoſophers and the moderns, in Reſpect to the other Elements; but I will content myſelf with comparing what is ſaid by *Job* of the Earth and its Contents, with what is delivered by the Author cited before on this Subject: *Surely there is a Vein for the Silver, and a Place for the Gold where they fine it; Iron is taken out of the Earth, and Braſs is molten out of the Stone. He ſetteth an End to Darkneſs, and ſearches out all Perfections, the Stones of Darkneſs and the Shadow of Death. The Flood breaketh out from the Inhabitant; even the forgotten of the Foot, they are dried up, they are gone away from Men. As for the Earth, out of it cometh Bread; and, under it, is turned up as it were Fire.*

‘All Bodies which are taken out of Mines, are called Minerals in general, and they are commonly diſtinguiſhed into two Sorts: The firſt Sort are thoſe that melt in the Fire, and can be forged upon an Anvil; and theſe are called Metals. Theſe Metals are Gold, Silver, Lead, Copper, Iron and Tin; to which we may alſo add Quickſilver, notwithſtanding it be generally Liquid, and not capable of being forged; for we place it in the Rank of theſe, becauſe there are ſeveral Ways of making it ceaſe to be Liquid: As for Example; by expoſing it only to the Smoke of melted Lead. It is containing theſe Bodies only, that I intend to ſpeak in this Chapter. And firſt it is to be obſerved, that tho' Salt be, in its own Nature, very fixed; yet this does not at all hinder but that it may be moved with a great Velocity, not only whilſt it remains in the Pores of the Earth, where it is formed, and where it muſt have as much Rapidneſs as the firſt Element of which it is compoſed, but alſo when it paſſes out of the Pores of the Earth, into other Pores which are a little bigger, if no other Matter but that of the firſt Element be ſuffered to ſurround it; for then, when it hath loſt a great deal of its Motion, it will acquire it again; for the ſame Reaſon that we ſee Water does, when it is mixed with Lime, and enters into the Pores of it. What I have now ſaid of the Parts of Salt ſingly, is to be underſtood alſo of the Parts of Salt-Water and oily Subſtances mixed together; we apprehend therefore, that all theſe may be moved together, and go along thro' ſuch very ſtrait Paſſages, that they have no Room to turn either to the Right Hand, or to the Left, but only to move directly forward altogether; whence it follows, that being at Reſt, with Reſpect to each other, they will form thoſe little hard Bodies, which we imagine to be the component Parts of Metal.

‘It is to be obſerv'd farther, that theſe Sort of little hard Bodies muſt generally be formed very deep in the Earth, where the Earth itſelf is very ſolid, and where ſuch Sort of Bodies as are neceſſary to form them muſt conſequently be found; rather than towards its Superficies, where its Parts are diſunited, and that at ſuch a Diſtance from each other, that the Air, and a great many other Bodies, differently agitated, can get in betwixt them, and hinder them from generating any thing that is fixed, as the component Parts of Metals muſt be. Now it is eaſy to apprehend, that the Vapours and Exhalations which aſcend out of the Bowels of the Earth with ſome Rapidity, may ſometimes paſs thro' particular Places, which tho' they be, indeed, very ſtrait, yet may be wide enough, compared with the ſmall Parts of Metals which are brought thither out of thoſe Pores, on which, as in ſo many Moulds they were lodged; by this Means theſe ſmall Parts are brought up very near to us, and ſtopp'd in the Sand and other Parts of the external Earth which is within our Reach, and which Mens Curioſity have led them to ſearch into; and being lodg'd there, they compoſe thoſe Veins of Metals which are afterwards refin'd by Art.’ It is obſerv'd by the ſame Author, ‘That Verdegreaſe, which is made of Braſs, ſhould afterwards be converted into Copper, and not into Braſs, is no ways inconſiſtent with what has been ſaid; for Braſs is ‘not a real Metal, but only a Compoſition of Copper, and a certain fuſile Stone call'd *Lapis Calaminaris*, mix'd together in the Fire.’ As to the Nature of Stones he proceeds thus:

‘Now if the Matter of which a ſingle Grain of Sand is made, meets together in ſo great a Quantity as to compoſe a Maſs of any conſiderable Bigneſs, this Maſs will be tranſparent, and, according to the Degree of Hardneſs which it has, and the particular Rangements of its Parts, it will either form ſome Flint-ſtone, or Cryſtal, or Diamond. Tho' all theſe Bodies are very hard, yet they muſt, notwitſtanding that, have been originally liquid; and that they were ſo appears from hence: That they are all of them of that Figure which Drops or Liquor of the ſame Bigneſs ought to be; and alſo from hence, that when a great many Pieces of Cryſtal are found together, as they very often are in the Mountains of *Swiſſerland*, and in thoſe of the *Milaneſe*, they are all of the ſame Figure that little Balls of Paſte laid upon one another, and preſſed together by their own Weight, would be; for as every Piece of Cryſtal is ſurrounded and compreſſed between ſix others, ſo it is ſqueezed into a Body, with ſix ſides very nearly equal. It may alſo happen, that ſome Metalic Parts may mix themſelves with the Matter of which all theſe are compoſed; and, if ſo, this will cauſe the Light to have particular Modifications given to it, as it falls upon or paſſes thro' them, and then the Rays may excite the Senſation of different Colours in us; wherefore, inſtead of Cryſtal, Flints, and Diamonds, we may have Emralds, Agats, Topazes, Rubies, Sapphires, and ſuch like Jewels.’

I readily acknowledge, that there is a great Difference between the ſhort glittering Paſſages in the Book of *Job*, and the copious Syſtem which I have compar'd with it; but, for all that, there is a very viſible Likeneſs in the Sentiments, and ſuch a Conformity throughout, as to make the *Philoſophy* of this *ancient Servant* of God appear perfectly rational and juſt in the Eye even of a modern Proficient in that Science. It was, nay, it is ſtill the Cuſtom of *Job*'s Nation, to put the Rudiments of all Kind of Knowledge into Verſe, for their greater Eaſe, as well as greater Security, in preſerving and tranſmitting them to Poſterity; nor was this Method confin'd to the Eaſt, but, as if dictated by the Reaſon of the Thing, in the Infancy of Letters, our *Druids* took the ſame Way, with this Variation only, that they did not commit their Songs to Writing, as the *Arabians* did, and ſo the Flood of Time has waſhed them totally away. In reading and meditating, therefore, on the noble Sentences of this ſublime Author, we ought always to carry in our Mind this Obſervation, and to make ſuch Allowances, on Account thereof, as Reaſon requires: We are to conſider him as an *Arabian*, and to reflect on the Cuſtoms and Genius of that People, the Copiouſneſs of their Language, their frequent Uſe of Metaphors, their Love for Hyperboles; and, above all, their Delight in converſing on ſuch Metaphyſical and exalted Subjects, as thoſe which employed the Diſcourſes of *Job* and his Friends, and then we ſhall find far leſs Difficulty in coming at the true Senſe of the ſeveral Speakers, and ſhall not be offended at ſome Strokes which are not ſo agreeable to our Ways of Thinking and Speaking. Thus when we find theſe Words in the Divine Poem, *Canſt thou bind the ſweet Influences of the* Pleiades? *Or looſe the Bands of* Orion? *Canſt thou bring forth* Mazaroth *in his Seaſon? Knoweſt thou the Ordinances of Heaven? Canſt thou ſet the Dominion thereof in the Earth?* From hence, I ſay we are not to draw Conſequences of the Power of the Stars in human Affairs, as ſome without Reaſon have done; neither is there a Neceſſity that we ſhould run into long and perplexed Inquiries as to the Senſe of theſe Words, which, it may be, are not here exactly tranſlated: Nay, 'tis poſſible they never can be ſo; for we may, without it, perfectly apprehend the Meaning and Intent of this Expreſſion; and, if ſo, the literal Senſe of the Words tranſlated *Pleiades*, *Orion*, and *Arcturus*, are not material. Doubtleſs the *Arabian* Aſtronomy was, in thoſe Days, ſo far advanced, that they reckoned, with tolerable Exactneſs, the Progreſs of the Seaſons by celeſtial Obſervations. Now this is all that is intended in the Text, that the Changes of Weather were indeed diſcernable by Men; but that they were ignorant why, or in what Manner Providence produced them. This is the Nature, not only of this Interrogatory, but in Truth, of all the Reſt in this Chapter; and the Sum of them amounts to this: The Structure and the Government of the Univerſe are wonderous, and yet uſeful; wherefore Man comprehends as much concerning them as is neceſſary for him to know, and yet is ſo far ignorant on the ſame Heads, that he muſt be ſenſible of the infinite and tranſcending Wiſdom of the Almighty Power by whom the Univerſe was form'd, and is preſerv'd and ordered. On this laſt Point, God preſſes *Job*, in order to convince him how poorly Man was qualify'd to judge of the Proceedings, Juſtice, or Equity of his Maker; and how humbly, from a due Senſe of his Inability, a wiſe and pious Man would think on ſuch Heads; nor are the Arguments produced here at all chang'd by the Increaſe of human Knowledge, but on a ſtrict Inquiry they will appear as ſtrong and cogent as they then were.

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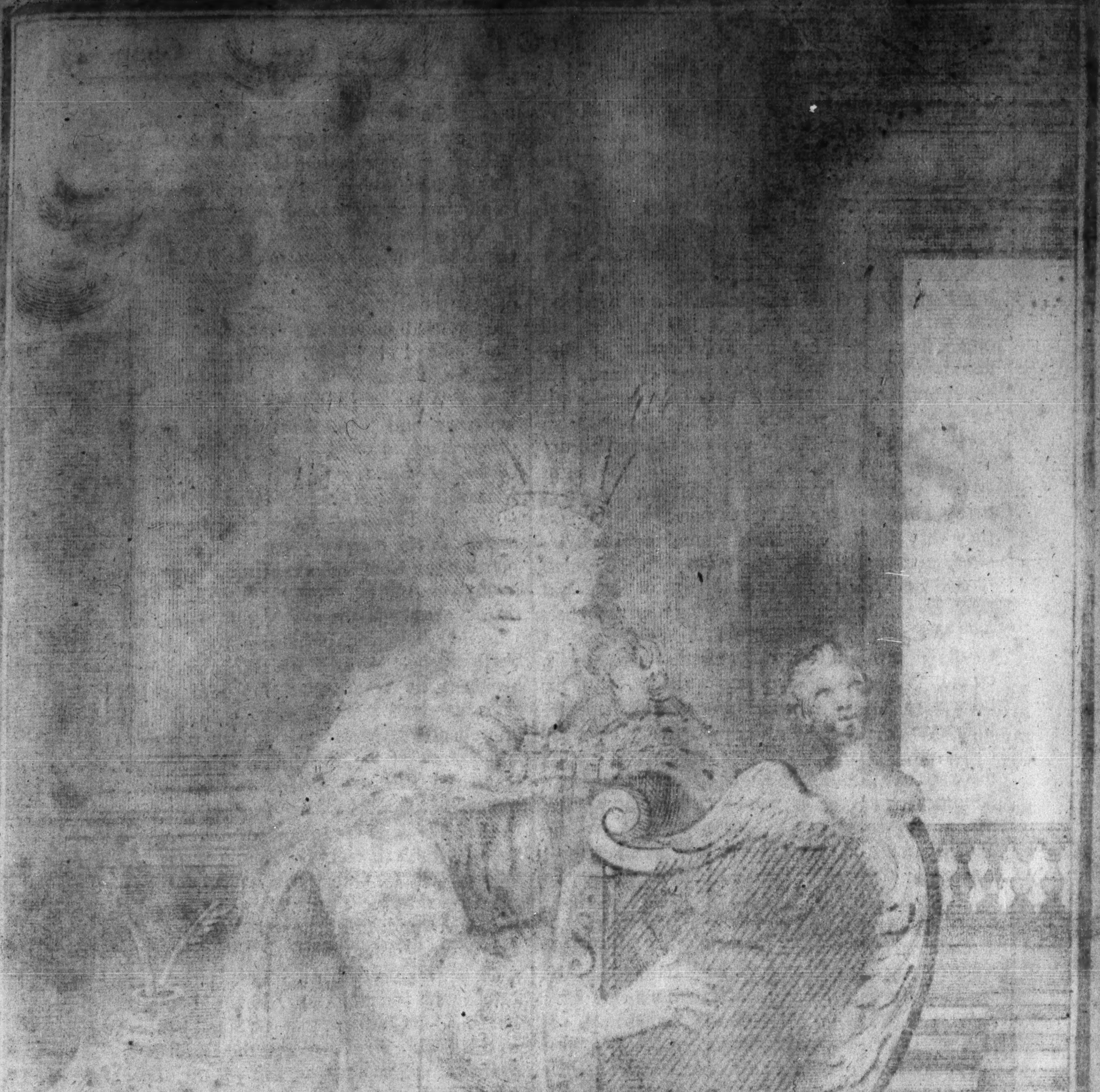

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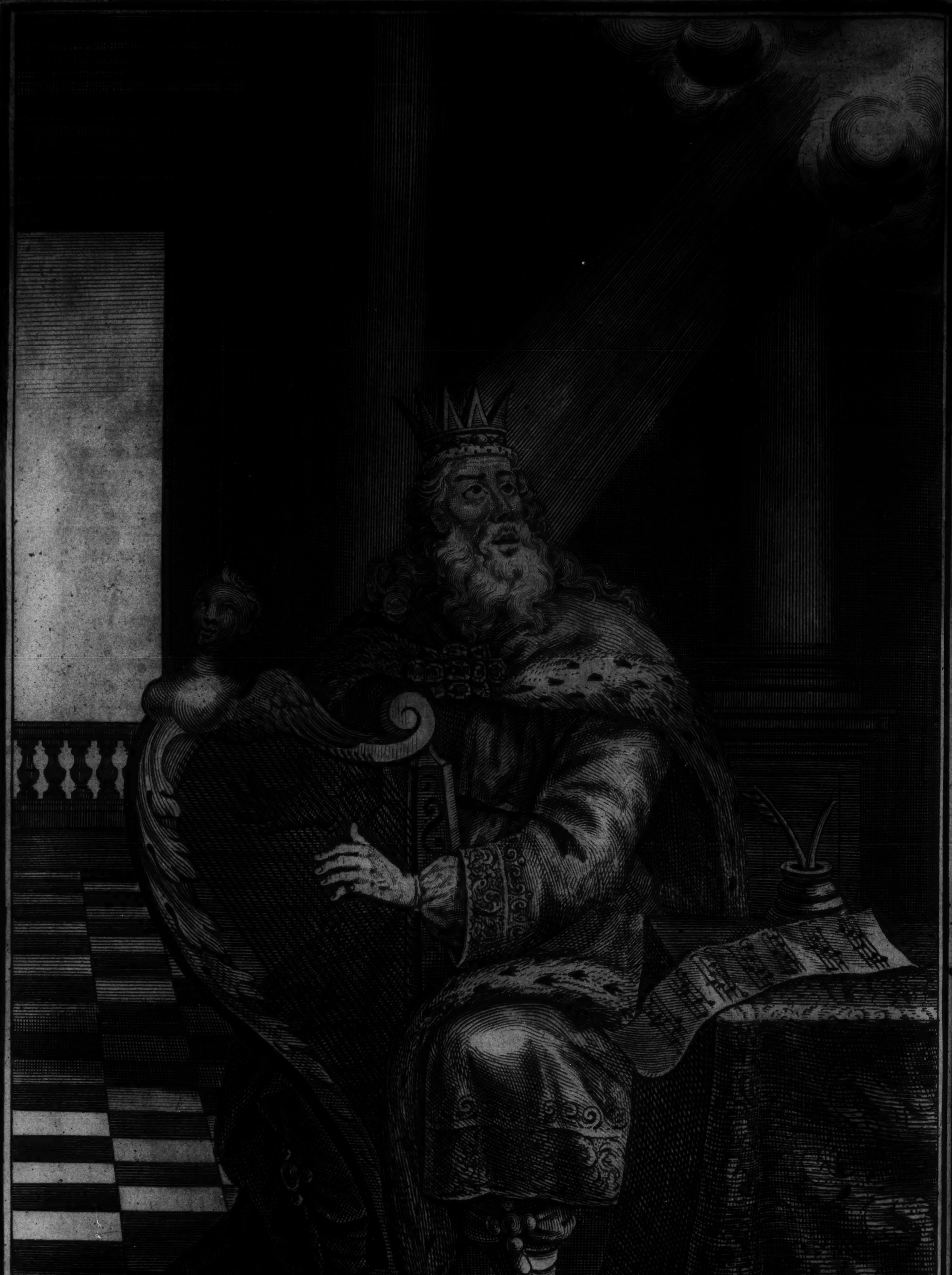
PSALM. CL.


R. Sheppard Sculp.

Praiſe him upon the lute and harpe

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

The Book of Pſalms *cannot, as other Books of Scripture, be affixed to any one Time or Age, nor to any one Prophet or Author. It is a Collection of the holy ſpiritual Songs compiled by ſeveral Men in ſeveral Ages. Some, or at leaſt one, drawn up, (if the Titles of the* Pſalms *in* Hebrew *and the* Vulgate *be authentic) by* Moſes *himſelf; many by* David; *ſome by* Solomon; *ſome during the Captivity; and ſome after the Reſtauroion of the* Jews. *The Placing them is the moſt proper as they are in the common Editions, next after* Job, *before the Books of* Solomon, *and of the Prophets; the earlieſt of whom lived in the Times of* Uzziah, *King of* Judah, *about the Year of the World* 3954. *The Uſe of them is not (in the hiſtorical Books) to be read along in Order; but in Times of publick or private Devotion, to be read or ſung ſome of them for exalting Zeal in the Soul, or of Comfort in Times of Diſtreſs,* &c.

The divine Authority of the Book of Pſalms *is ſo certain and evident, that it was never queſtioned in the Church; and this Point being ſettled, it is of ſmall Moment that the Penmen of ſome of them are not now known: Nor does this any more leſſen its Authority, than it invalidates the Decree of a Prince, or an Act of Parliament, that it is not certain by whoſe Pen it was drawn up. Moſt of them were drawn up by* David, *as is evident, both from the Title of them, and from the expreſs Teſtimony of the* New Teſtament *concerning ſome of them, and that by the Inſpiration of God's Spirit; as appears both from the divine Matter and the Frame of them, and from* 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. Matt. xxii. 43. *&c.* Acts i. 16. *and* ii. 25. *But ſome of them were compoſed by other Perſons; by* Moſes, Pſalm xc. *by* Heman, Eſhan, *and* Aſaph *as the Titles of the* Pſalms *ſhew; and by others after their Times, whoſe Names are not mentioned, as is manifeſt from* Pſalm cxxvi. *and* cxxxvii. *The* Pſalms *were reduced into the Order in which they now appear, either by* Ezra, *as the* Hebrew *Doctors affirm; or by ſome other holy Prophet or Prophets. It is ſufficient for us, that the whole Book is owned as canonical by our bleſſed Saviour,* Luke xxiv. 24.

PSALM I.

The Happineſs of the upright Man. The Unhappineſs of the Ungodly.

Q. C*AN you give any Reaſon why this* Pſalm *was placed firſt in the Book?*

A. This *Pſalm* was put firſt as a Preface to all the reſt, as a powerful Perſuative to the diligent reading, and ſerious ſtudy of the whole Book; and of the reſt of the holy Scriptures; containing a Deſcription of the godly Man's happy Life and Converſation, in Oppoſition to the perverſe and wretched Courſe and Condition of the Wicked and Ungodly.

PSALM II.

The Kingdom of Chriſt. Kings are exhorted to ſubmit to it.

Q. W*HAT is the Subject of this* Pſalm; *and to whom does it principally relate?*

A. The Penman of this *Pſalm* was *David.* As for the Matter or Subject of it, it may ſeem to have ſome reſpect unto *David*, and to his Advancement to, and Settlement on the Throne of *Judah* and *Iſrael*; but the chief Deſign and Scope of it, and the primary Intention of the Holy Ghoſt in it, was to deſcribe the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, our bleſſed Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*; as is manifeſt, 1. From expreſs Teſtimonies of the *New Teſtament* to that Purpoſe, as *Acts* iv. 25, and xiii. 33. *Heb.* i. 5. and v. 5. And 2. From the Conſent of the antient *Hebrew* Writers, who unanimouſly expound it in this Manner, as is confeſſed by their Brethren, particularly by *Rabbi Solomon Jarchi*, who hath this memorable Paſſage, *viz*, “Our Doctors expounded this *Pſalm* of the King *Meſſiah*, but “that we may anſwer the *Hereticks*, (meaning “the *Chriſtians*,) 'tis expedient to interpret it of “*David*'s Perſon, as the Words ſound.” Which Words, although they are left out of the latter Editions of that Book, either by the Fraud of the *Jews*, or Careleſſneſs or Miſtake of others, yet are extant in the antient Editions of it. 3. From divers Paſſages of the *Pſalm*, which can agree with none but *Chriſt*, as the Title of *Son*, of which ſee

Heb. i. 4, 5. the Extent of his Kingdom, Ver. 8. and the divine Worſhip, Ver. 11, 12.

PSALM III.

The Security of thoſe who make God their Protection.

A *Pſalm* of *David* when he fled from *Abſalom* his Son.

Q. PRAY *give me the Signification of the Word* Selah?

A. The Word *Selah*, is no where uſed but in this poetical Book of the *Pſalms*, and in the Song of *Habakkuk*, Chap. iii. 2, 9, 13. which makes that Opinion probable, that it was a muſical Note, directing the Singer either to lift up his Voice, or to make a ſhort Stop or Pauſe, or to lengthen out the Tune, but withal, it is generally placed at ſome remarkable Paſſage; which gives Occaſion to think, that it ſerved alſo to quicken the Attention and Obſervation of the Singer and Hearer; or that the laſt Words ſhould be repeated over again by the Chorus.

PSALM IV.

David *prays for Audience; he reproves the Wicked. The Privilege of the Righteous, and his Faith in God. An Exhortation to Duty. The Ungodly ſatiſfied with earthly Bleſſings; the Happineſs of ſuch as enjoy God's Favour.*

To the chief Muſician on *Neginoth*, A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. PRAY *give me the true Meaning of the Title of this* Pſalm?

A. By the *Chief Muſician* underſtand the Maſter or Director of the ſacred Muſicians, or Muſick of the Temple; of whom ſee 1 *Chron.* vi. 31. and xv. 16, 17. and xxv. 1, 2. 2 *Chron.* xx. 21. and xxxiv. 12, 13. Heb. *To him that overcometh* or *excelleth*, or *triumpheth*, namely, in his Profeſſion of Muſick. —— On *Neginoth*, or *ſtringed Inſtruments*, as this Word is tranſlated, *Hab.* iii. 9. for the *Hebrew* Word *Niggen*, whence this is derived, ſignifies to *play with the Hand* upon an Inſtrument, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 23. and xviii. 10. The Meaning may be, that this *Pſalm*, was ſung to ſuch Kind of Inſtruments, or that it was ſent to the chief of the Muſicians who played upon ſuch Inſtruments; for every general Sort of Inſtruments had its ſeveral Band or Company of Muſicians.

PSALM V.

David *earneſtly beſeeches God to hear his Prayer; and aſſures himſelf of God's Juſtice againſt his Enemies; profeſſes his Faith in God; prays him to guide his Goings; exclaims againſt the Cruelty of his Enemies, and prays God to deſtroy them, but to preſerve the Godly.*

To the chief Muſician upon *Nehiloth*, A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. WHAT *is the Signification of the Word* Nehiloth?

A. The Word *Nehiloth* is no where elſe uſed in Scripture. It is generally and probably thought to be a Term belonging to Muſick, and to ſignify ſome kind of Tune, or rather an Inſtrument, or particularly a Wind-Inſtrument, as *Neginoth* in the Title of the laſt *Pſalm*, ſignified ſtringed Inſtruments.

Q. *Inform me what is the Subject of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* ſuppoſeth *David* to be in ſome Diſtreſs or Trouble, from *Saul*, *Abſalom*, or ſome of his Courtiers. He prayeth and beſeeches God earneſtly for the hearing of his devout and fervent Prayers, aſſuring himſelf of God's Juſtice againſt his Enemies, and Graciouſneſs to him; praying farther, with Confidence, for himſelf againſt his wicked Enemies, and for the whole Church.

PSALM VI.

David *being very weak and feeble, preſents his Miſery before God; he prays for Mercy and Recovery; and being aſſured of a gracious Hearing, triumphs over all his Enemies.*

To the chief Muſician on *Neginoth* upon *Sheminith*, A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. PRAY *explain the Word* Sheminith?

A. The Word *Sheminith*, in the Title, ſignifies the *Eighth*. It is thought to be the ſhrilleſt or loftieſt Note, as *Alomoth* is the loweſt; of which ſee 1 *Chron.* xv. 20, 21. and, as ſome add, *Muthlabben*, *Pſal.* ix. the Middle or Mean. But all this is only Conjecture; and the *Jews* themſelves have no certain Knowledge of their own antient Muſick, and of the Signification of the Terms belonging to it.

Q. *On what Occaſion did* David *write this* Pſalm?

A. The Occaſion of this *Pſalm* ſeems plainly to have been ſome grievous Diſtreſs, or Diſeaſe of the Body, then upon *David*, accompanied alſo with great Trouble of Conſcience for Sins, whereby he had brought it upon himſelf. He preſents his Miſery before God, and fervently prays for Mercy and Recovery, and being aſſured of a gracious Hearing, he triumphs over all the vain Hopes and Confidence of his wicked Enemies. For when the Wicked think the Godly ſhall periſh, God delivers them ſuddenly, and deſtroyeth their Enemies.

PSALM VII.

The Pſalmiſt *prays for Deliverance from his perſecuting Enemies, and makes a ſolemn Profeſſion of Innocence; by Faith he ſees his Defence, and the Deſtruction of his Enemies.*

Shiggaion of *David*, which he ſung unto the Lord, concerning the Words of *Cuſh* the *Benjamite*.

Q. PRAY *explain the Title of this* Pſalm?

A. Shiggaion, in the Title, ſeems to be the Name of a certain Kind of Song, or Tune, or Inſtrument, which was then well known, but now can only be gueſſed at. The Occaſion of this *Pſalm* was the falſe and ſlanderous Reports raiſed and fomented by one *Cuſh* a *Benjamite*; by whom is meant either, 1. *Saul*, whom he thought it indecent, for ſeveral Reaſons, to mention by his proper Name, and therefore deciphers him enigmatically, which is not unuſual in Scripture; where *Babylon* is called *Sheſhach*, *Jer.* xxv. 26. and li. 41. and *Rome* is called *Egypt*, and *Sodom*, and *Babylon*, in the *Revelation*; and *John the Baptiſt* is called *Elias*. And the *Pſalmiſt* might call him *Cuſh*, partly, by a tacit Alluſion to his Father's Name *Kiſh*; and partly with Reſpect to his black and wicked Diſpoſition, planted and firmly rooted in him. Compare *Jerem.* xiii. 23. *Amos* ix. 7. Or,

2. Some eminent Perſon in high Authority under *Saul*, called *Cuſh*, tho' he is no where elſe named; as ſeveral other Perſons are but once mentioned in Scripture. And he is called the *Benjamite*, becauſe he was one of that Tribe, in which *Saul* put moſt Confidence, 1 *Sam.* xxii. 7.

PSALM VIII.

David *extols the Majeſty, Power and Providence of God in the World, and his Love and Kindneſs to Mankind, in giving him Power over the Earth, the Air, and Sea.*

To the chief Muſician upon *Gittith*, A Pſalm of *David.*

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve upon the Title of this* Pſalm?

A. The ſame Title is prefixed to *Pſalm* lxxxi. and lxxxiv. *Gittith* is alſo ſuppoſed to be the Name of a Tune, or Song, or Inſtrument ſo called becauſe it was either invented or much uſe in *Gath.* Some render it, *For the Wine-Preſſes*, and imagine it was to be ſung at the Time of Vintage.

Q. *What is the general Scope and Purport of this* Pſalm?

A. It is a great Queſtion among Interpreters, whether this *Pſalm* ſpeaks of Man in general, and of the Honour which *Jehovah* put upon him in his Creation; or only of the Man *Chriſt Jeſus.* Poſſibly both might be reconciled and put together, and the Controverſy, if rightly ſtated, may be ended. For the Scope and Buſineſs of this *Pſalm*, ſeems plainly to be this, to diſplay and celebrate the great Kindneſs of God to Mankind, not only in his Creation, but alſo, and more eſpecially in his Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt*; whom, as he was a Man, he advanced to the Honour and Dominion here mentioned, that he might carry on that great and glorious Work. So *Chriſt* is the principal Subject of this *Pſalm*, of whom it is interpreted both by *Chriſt* himſelf, *Matth.* xxi. 16. and by his Apoſtle St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 27. *Heb.* ii. 6, 7. Let the Reader conſider the following Deſcription, and ſay, if he thinks any other Perſon can be intended?

Out of the Mouth of babes and ſucklings haſt thou ordained Strength, becauſe of thine Enemies, that thou mighteſt ſtill the Enemy and the Avenger. When I conſider the Heavens, the Work of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which thou haſt ordained; what is Man, that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man, that thou viſiteſt him? For thou haſt made him a little lower than the Angels, and haſt crowned him with Glory and Honour. Thou madeſt him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands; thou haſt put all Things under his feet: All ſheep and oxen, yea, and the Beaſt of the Field; the Fowl of the Air, and the Fiſh of the Sea, and whatſoever paſſeth through the paths of the ſeas. O Lord our God, how excellent is thy Name in all the earth!

PSALM. IX.

David *reſolves to praiſe God for executing Judgment upon his Enemies. God is a Refuge to the Oppreſſed.* David *calls on the People of* Iſrael *to praiſe God, and prays him to conſider his Trouble, that he might have Cauſe to praiſe him. The Heathen, by God's Judgment, fall into the Snare they made for others. The Portion of the Wicked who forget God. A Promiſe of Mercy to the Poor and Needy; and a Prayer for the Judgment on the Ungodly.*

To the chief Muſician upon *Muth-labben*, A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. W*HAT is the Signification of the Word* Muth-labben?

A. Muth-labben ſeems to be another Title of ſome Song, or Tune, or Inſtrument; of which we muſt continue ignorant, ſince the *Jewiſh* Doctors are ſo. Some render it, *Upon the Death of his Son*, namely, *Abſalom*, or of one called *Labben*, or of the *Middle-Man*, or *the Man* that ſtood *between* the two Armies, namely, *Goliah*, who is ſo called in the *Hebrew* Text, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 4. But none of theſe ſuit with the Deſign and Matter of this *Pſalm*, which is more general, and relates to his former manifold Dangers, and the Deliverance which God had graciouſly given him out of them. That of *Goliah* agrees not with Verſe 14. where there is Mention of praiſing God in *Zion*, which then, and long after, was in the Hands of the *Jebuſites.*

PSALM X.

The Pſalmiſt *complains of God's hiding himſelf, and of the Pride and Outrage of the Wicked. The Language and malicious Practice of the Wicked, and their denying God's Omniſcience.* David *prays for Remedy againſt, and Puniſhment upon the Wicked, and acknowledges God's Mercy in hearing the Oppreſſed.*

Q. W*HAT is chiefly to be obſerved in this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* contains *David*'s complaint unto God, againſt the Perſecution and Oppreſſion of his Enemies, eſpecially thoſe of his own People; very lively deſcribing their Inſolence, Wickedneſs, and bloody Practices; he commits his Cauſe to God, ſolicits his righteous Vengeance upon his Enemies, and begs his Help againſt them, which, by Faith, he aſſureth himſelf, God will perform.

Lord, ſays he, *thou haſt heard the Deſire of the Humble*; and therefore thou wilt ſtill do ſo, as thou art unchangeable and the ſame for ever. —— *Thou wilt prepare their Heart, i. e.* Thou wilt *direct*, or *fit*, by thy Grace and good Spirit, either that they may ſo pray as to gain thy Attention; or, that they may be fit to receive the Mercies they deſire; or *Thou wilt conform*, or *eſtabliſh* (as this Verb is often uſed) *their Heart*, to bear their preſent Preſſures, and to wait upon, hope and truſt in thee for Deliverance, until thou ſeeſt fit to hear and help them. ——*Thou wilt cauſe thine Ear to hear. i. e.* In due Time, though, for a Seaſon, thou ſeemeſt to turn a deaf Ear to them. But this and the foregoing Verb may be taken as a Prayer, future Verbs being often uſed imperatively. *Prepare* or *eſtabliſh their Hearts* (by giving them Support and Aſſurance of Help in Time of Need, and then) *cauſe thine Ear to hear.*

PSALM XI.

David *encourages himſelf in God againſt the wicked Deſigns of his Enemies. The Providence and Juſtice of God to the Righteous and Wicked.*

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. W*HAT is the Purport of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have been

compoſed by *David*, when he was perſecuted by *Saul*, and forced to flie from Place to Place for Safety. He takes Notice of the Mocking of his Perſecutors, who made his flying and wandering Condition their Paſtime; he relies entirely on the Almighty, declaring his Faith in God's Providence, who both ſees and tries, and gives a Reaſon why God hates wicked Men, *viz.* becauſe he loves Righteouſneſs, and therefore he muſt puniſh thoſe who do Evil in his ſight.

Q. *Pray give the true Senſe of Verſe* 6. Upon the Wicked he ſhall rain Snares, Fire and Brimſtone, and an horrible Tempeſt; this ſhall be the Portion of their Cup?

A. He ſhall rain, which notes their Original to be extraordinary, and immediately from God, and withal that they ſhould come plentifully and ſuddenly, violently and unavoidably, as Rain commonly falls from Heaven.——*Snares, i. e.* grievous Plagues or Judgments, which are called *Snares* here, as alſo *Job* xviii. 9, 10. and xxii. 10. *Iſa.* viii. 14. and xxiv. 17, 18. partly becauſe they cannot eſcape them, nor diſintangle themſelves from them, but are held faſt and deſtroyed by them.——*And an horrible Tempeſt, i. e.* dreadful Judgments, ſo called metaphorically, and by Alluſion to the Deſtruction of *Sodom* and other Places, by theſe Means. But he ſeems rather to intend by it, not ſo much preſent and temporal Calamities, as their future and eternal Puniſhment; becauſe he evidently ſpeaks of thoſe Miſeries which are peculiar to wicked Men; whereas, *David* knew very well, both by his own Experience, and by the Hiſtory of *Job* and of *Iſrael's* Bondage in *Egypt*, that *all Things* here *come alike to all Men*, good or bad, *Eccleſ.* ix. 2. and that good Men had frequently a greater Share of worldly Troubles than God's own People.——*This ſhall be the Portion of their Cup.* This is their Portion, and as it were the Meat and Drink appointed to them by God. This ſhall certainly and unavoidably be their State and Condition, which is often called a Man's *Part* or *Portion*, as *Pſ.* xvi. 5. and lxiii. 10. and lxxv. 8. *Mat.* xxiv. 51. He alludes to the antient Cuſtom of Maſters of Families, or of Feaſts, who uſed to diſtribute their ſeveral Portions of Meat to their Domeſticks or Gueſts.

PSALM XII.

David, *being deſtitute of human Comfort, craves Help of God; he exclaims againſt flattering and deceitful Tongues, and comforts himſelf in his tried Mercies to the needy.*

To the chief Muſician upon *Sheminith*, A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. PRAY *give the genuine Meaning of the laſt Verſe of this* Pſalm, The Wicked walk on every Side, when the vileſt Men art exalted.

A. On every Side, which notes, 1. Their great Numbers, they fill all Places. 2. Their Freedom and Safety, they are not reſtrained nor puniſhed, but go about boldly and ſecurely whither they pleaſe. 3. Their Progreſs and Succeſs, which is ſometimes ſignified by this Verb, as *Gen.* xxvi. 13. 1 *Sam.* ii. 21. *Iſa.* lx. 31. They grow worſe and worſe, and proſper in their Wickedneſs. 4. Their inceſſant and unwearied Induſtry in doing Miſchief to good Men, 1 *Pet.* v. 8. And this is here very fitly added as another Argument to prevail with God to ariſe to help his poor People who are oppreſſed by wicked Men.——*The vileſt Men are exalted*; in the *Hebrew*, *Vileneſſes*, *i. e.* all Manner of Wickedneſs, Lying and Slandering, Profaneneſs, Oppreſſion, *&c.* or vile Perſons, the Abſtract being put for the Concrete, which is frequent, as Pride, *Pſalm* xxxvi. 11. for a proud Man, and many ſuch like; both come to one, vile Perſons and vile Practices were both advanced and encouraged under *Saul's* Miſgovernment, whereby all the Foundations were deſtroyed, as he complained, *Pſ.* xi. 3. The *Hebrew* Word *Zolel* (whence this *Zuloth* cometh) ſignifies firſt a *Glutton* or *Drunkard*, as *Deut.* xxi. 20. *Prov.* xxiii. 21. and thence any *vile Perſon*, as *Jer.* xv. 19. *Lam.* i. 11.

PSLAM XIII.

David *complains of God's Delay to help. He prays for preventing Grace; profeſſes his Truſt in God, and boaſts of divine Mercy.*

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. WHAT *was the Occaſion of* David's *penning this* Pſalm?

A. The Occaſion of this *Pſalm* was *David's* deep and long continued Diſtreſſes; he complaineth of the Delay of God's Help, prayeth that for his Honour's Sake he would be graciouſly pleaſed to prevent his approaching Ruin; he triumphs through Faith, and ſaith, *the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me.* Either, 1. In giving that Support and Aſſurance which at that preſent Juncture he enjoy'd: Or, 2. In giving him that Mercy which he had freely promiſed him; it being an uſual Thing for *David* and other Prophets to ſpeak of future Deliverances, as if they were already come, that ſo they may ſignify both the infallible Certainty of the Thing, and their firm Aſſurance thereof. But the Words may be rendered, *When he ſhall have dealt bountifully with me.* This Verb properly ſignifies to *requite*, or *reward* (as it may be taken here, for there is *a Reward of Grace*, as well as *of Debt*, *Rom.* iv. 4.) but here it ſignifies *a free and bountiful Giving*, as alſo *Pſ.* cxix. 17. and cxlii. 7.

PSALM XIV.

David *ſhews the Atheiſm and Corruption of Men. He convinces the Wicked by the Light of Conſcience, and longs for the Salvation God.*

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. PRAY *give us the genuine Senſe of* Ver. 7. O that the Salvation of *Iſrael* were come out of *Sion!* When the Lord bringeth back the Captivity of his People, *Jacob* ſhall rejoice, and *Iſrael* ſhall be glad.

A. The firſt Clauſe of this Verſe directly and immediately concerns the Deliverance of *Iſrael* out of their ſinful and deplorable Eſtate, in which they then were; which having deſcribed in the Body of the *Pſalm*, he concludes with a Prayer to God to hear and help them *out of Zion*, where the Ark then was, whence God uſed to hear and anſwer his People's Prayers. But principally they deſign a farther, even the ſpiritual Redemption and Salvation of all God's People by the *Meſſias*; as is evident, 1. Becauſe the antient *Jews* did thus underſtand it, and among others, *Jonathan's* Targum or Paraphraſe on the Bible, expounds it thus;

I do not expect Gideon's *Salvation, which was but corporeal, nor that of* Sampſon, ——*but the Salvation of the* Meſſias. With whom agrees the *Targum of Jeruſalem.* 2. That the Doctrine of *Iſrael's* Redemption or Salvation by *Chriſt* was very well known as to other antient Patriarchs, *John* viii. 56. *Pet.* i. 10, *&c.* ſo particularly to *David*; and other Prophets in the Midſt of their ſad Thoughts, Fear, and Troubles, did uſually comfort themſelves with the Promiſe and Expectation of the *Meſſiah*, by whom alone they ſhould receive that plenary Salvation which they ſo earneſtly deſired; of which it is thought we have one Inſtance, *Gen.* xlix. 18. But we have many unqueſtionable Inſtances in the Prophecy of *Iſaiah*. And this Courſe might be the more ſeaſonable for *David*, becauſe he here ſpeaks of his Troubles after he was ſettled in his Kingdom, (as may be gathered from his Mention of *Zion*, where the Ark was not till that Time) and poſſibly of the ſad and ſinful State of his Kingdom during *Abſalom's* Rebellion; and therefore finding himſelf ſo ſtrangely diſappointed of that Peace and Happineſs which he confidently expected when once he came to the Kingdom, and wiſely and juſtly preſaging that his Children, and the following Generations of *Iſrael*, for the ſame Cauſes, were likely to meet with the ſame or greater Calamities than this, he wearieth himſelf with the Expreſſion of his Belief and Deſire of the coming of the *Meſſias* to ſave his People. 4. To this alſo ſuits the Mention of *Zion*, becauſe the Prophets foretold and knew that the *Meſſias* or Deliverer ſhould firſt come to *Zion*, and ſet up his Throne there, and from thence ſend forth his Laws and Edicts to the *Gentile* World, as is poſitively affirmed, *Pſ.* ii. 6. and cx. 2. *Iſa.* ii. 3. and lix. 20. compared with *Rom.* xi. 26, *&c.* 5. The following Words agree only to this Time, wherein he ſpeaks of bringing back the Captivity of his People, with the univerſal Joy of all *Jacob* and *Iſrael*; which cannot agree to *David's* Time, wherein there was no ſuch Captivity of the People, but only a Civil-War; nor to the Time of *Iſrael's* Return from *Babylon*, when there was no ſuch Return of all *Iſrael*, but only of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, and ſome few of the other Tribes, and the Joy which the returning *Iſraelites* then had, was but low, and mixed with many Fears, Dangers and Reproaches: See *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. And therefore they can be applicable to no other Time than thoſe of the *Meſſiah*, by whom this Promiſe was fulfilled to the true *Iſrael* of God, who were brought back from that moſt real and dreadful, though ſpiritual, Captivity of Sin and Satan, as *Luke* iv. 18. *Epheſ.* iv. 8. and ſhall be literally accompliſhed to the natural Seed of *Jacob* and *Iſrael*, according to the Expectation and Belief of all the *Jews* in their ſeveral Ages, and of moſt *Chriſtian* Writers.

PSALM XV.

David *deſcribes a Citizen of* Zion; *that is, he is pure in Heart; governs his Tongue; contemns a vile Perſon, but honours him who fears God; he is no Uſurer.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. PRAY *what is chiefly to be obſerved in this* Pſalm?

A. The Occaſion and Time of compoſing this *Pſalm* is uncertain; but the Scope, Intent, and Meaning of it is plain, which is to give the Character of an holy and happy Man, and to deſcribe the Way to true Happineſs. Firſt, God requires Uprightneſs of Life, next, doing well to others; and thirdly, Truth and Simplicity in our Words. He that doth thus, ſhall not be caſt forth of the Church as a Hypocrite.

It is obſervable that the *Pſalmiſt* is here wholly ſilent as to the ceremonial or ritual Obſervations of the Law; not that he diſowns them, or allows the Neglect of them, as is manifeſt from *David's* conſtant Practice, and from many other Paſſages; but that he might undeceive the hypocritical *Iſraelites*, who laid too great a Streſs upon thoſe Things, as if the diligent Performance thereof would excuſe their wicked Lives; which Error almoſt all the Prophets obſerve and condemn in them; and that he might inform the Church of that, and all ſucceeding Ages, that the Subſtance of Religion conſiſts in the Practice of true Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.

PSALM XVI.

David *diſtruſting his own Merit, and hating Idolatry, flies to God for Preſervation. He ſhews the Hope of his Calling; of the Reſurrection, and of Life everlaſting.*

Michtam of *David.*

Q. EXPLAIN *the Word* Michtam *in the Title, and who is the Perſon ſpeaking in this* Pſalm.

A. Divers render this Word *Michtam*, a *Golden Pſalm*, becauſe of the Precioùſneſs and Excellence of its Matter; for it treats of *Chriſt's* Death and Reſurrection. But as this Title is prefixed to *Pſalm* lvi, lvii, lviii, lvix, lx. wherein there is no ſuch peculiar Excellence, it may ſeem rather a Title belonging to the Muſick of the Song, which, with the reſt, is now loſt and unknown. It is a great Queſtion among Expoſitors, in whoſe Name and Perſon he ſpeaketh this *Pſalm*, whether his own or *Chriſt's*. It ſeems hard to exclude *David's* Perſon, to whom almoſt the whole *Pſalm* properly and litterally belongs, and to whom ſome Parts of it are more applicable than to *Chriſt*, of whom it is expounded by the two great Apoſtles, *Peter* and *Paul*, *Acts* ii. 25, and xiii. 35. And yet it ſeems probable by the Contexture of the *Pſalm*, and the Coherence of the ſeveral Verſes together, that the whole *Pſalm* ſpeaks of one and the ſame Perſon; *David* both being a Member, and an eminent Type of *Chriſt*, he may, without any Inconvenience, be thought to ſpeak of himſelf ſometimes in the one, and ſometimes in the other Capacity, to paſs from the one to the other. And therefore having ſpoken of himſelf as a Believer or Member of *Chriſt*, in the former Part of the *Pſalm*, he proceeds to conſider himſelf as a Type of *Chriſt*, and having *Chriſt* in his Eye, and being inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, with the Knowledge and Contemplation of *Chriſt's* Paſſion and Reſurrection, towards the Cloſe of the *Pſalm* he ſpeaks ſuch Things, which though they might be accommodated to himſelf, in a very imperfect, obſcure, and improper Senſe, yet could not truly, literally, properly, fully and compleatly belong to any but to *Chriſt*, to which they are therefore appropriated in the *New Teſtament*. Hear his Words.

I have ſet the Lord always before me; becauſe he is at my Right-Hand, I ſhall not be moved. Therefore my Heart is glad, and my glory rejoyceth; my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope. For thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell; neither wilt thou ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee Corruption. Thou wilt ſhew me the Path of Life; in thy Preſence is Fulneſs of Joy, at thy Right-Hand there are Pleaſures for evermore.

PSALM XVII.

David, *in Confidence of his Integrity, prays to God for Defence againſt his Enemies. He ſhews their Pride, Craft, and Eagerneſs to make a Prey of the Innocent, and prays againſt them in Confidence of his Hope.*

A Prayer of *David.*

Q. O*N what Occaſion did* David's *make this Prayer?*

A. David being now grievouſly perſecuted and oppreſſed by *Saul*, and other Enemies, and having many Calmunities caſt upon him, appeals to the omniſcient Deity, makes a ſolemn Proteſtation of his Integrity, and earneſtly begs of God Protection and Deliverance, being weary of his Life, by his preſſing and manifold Calamities, yet comforts himſelf with the Contemplation and Hope of a happier Life.

Q. *Pray give me the Interpretation of* Ver. 15. As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteouſneſs; I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy Likeneſs.

A. As if he had ſaid, I do not envy their Felicity, (of the Wicked, whoſe Portion is in this Life) I do not place my Hope and Happineſs in earthly and temporal Treaſures, as they do, but in *beholding God's Face, i. e.* in the Enjoyment of God's Preſence and Favour, and that with the Comfort of a good Conſcience, bearing me Witneſs, that, notwithſtanding all the Calumnies and Cenſures of mine Enemies, I have been, and am upright and righteous in the Courſe of my Life, both towards thee, and towards all Men. Which Teſtimony will enable me to look God in the Face with Boldneſs, when mine Enemies, being conſcious to themſelves of groſs and manifold Unrighteouſneſs towards thee and me, and others, will be afraid to appear in thy Preſence. I am now greatly diſtreſſed and diſſatisfied, and mine Enemies are filled and ſatisfied with good Things; but the Time is coming wherein I ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied, namely, with beholding thy Face, which, to me, is more comfortable and ſatisfactory than all the Poſſeſſions of the World. ——*When I awake.* Either, 1. When I ſhall be delivered from my preſent Diſtreſſes and Calamities. But theſe are never in Scripture, nor indeed can fitly be called by the Name of *Sleep*; and conſequently Deliverance from them, cannot be compared to *waking*. Or rather, 2. When I ſhall ariſe from the Dead: For Death is frequently called *Sleep* in Scripture, and likewiſe in other Authors; and conſequently Reſurrection from the Dead, is properly *awaking*, as *Job* xiv. 12. *Dan.* xii. 2. *John* xi. 11. And ſince the Doctrine of the Reſurrection was not unknown to the holy Men of God in the *Old Teſtament*, nor to *David* in particular, *Pſ.* xvi. 10, 11. it cannot be imagined, but he would comfort and ſupport himſelf in his greateſt Agonies, with the Conſideration thereof, this being incomparably the moſt effectual and weighty Argument and Ground of Comfort he could poſſibly uſe; and this beſt ſuits with the Context; for *David* is here oppoſing his Hopes and Portion to that of his Enemies, and having noted, not without a ſecret Reflection and Reproach upon them for it, that their Portion was in this Life, it is very proper he ſhould ſeek for, and have his Happineſs in a future. *Thy Likeneſs* or *Image.* By which may be underſtood either, 1 *Chriſt*, the Son of God, who was known to *David* and other Prophets, as is evident, and that under the Name of *the Son of God, Pſ.* ii. 7, 12. *Prov.* xxx. 4. *Hoſ.* xi. 1. compared with *Matt.* ii. 15. who being exactly like his Father, might moſt fitly be called his *Likeneſs* or *Image*, as he is, *Heb.* i. 3. Or 2. The Image of God ſtamped upon his glorified Soul; which muſt afford him infinite Delight and Satisfaction. Or 3. God himſelf, or the Face of God mentioned in the former Clauſe, and explained here by another Phraſe, as is uſual in theſe Writings. And this Interpretation may receive Strength from *Numb.* xii. 8. where *beholding the Similitude of the Lord* is evidently the ſame Thing, which is elſewhere called, *ſeeing his Face*, and from *Heb.* x. 1. where the *Image* doth not note the Likeneſs or Repreſentation, but the Truth and Exiſtence of the Thing.

PSALM XVIII.

David *profeſſes his Love to God, and his Confidence in the divine Attributes. He praiſes God for Deliverance out of Trouble. His Experience of God's hearing him in an awful Manner. He acknowledges his Help againſt his Enemies.*

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* of *David*, the Servant of the Lord, who ſpake unto the Lord the Words of this Song in the Day that the Lord delivered him from the Hand of all his Enemies, and from the Hand of *Saul.*

Q. P*LEASE to tell me what you remark of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm*, with few and ſmall Variations, is written 2 *Sam.* xxii. It was compoſed by *David* towards the End of his Reign and Life; after the Death of *Saul*, the Conqueſt of all his ſucceeding Enemies, and his own firm Eſtabliſhment in his Kingdom. He declares he loves the Lord moſt affectionately with his whole Soul, that he could return no better Thing for all God's Favours than his Love and Heart, and places his Confidence in the Attributes of the Omnipotent. He praiſes God for Deliverance out of Trouble, and acknowledgeth the divine Aſſiſtance, by which alone he overcame his Enemies. But his own Words will beſt expreſs the Warmth of his Affections, and the Fervour of his Zeal.

In my Diſtreſs I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God; he heard my Voice out of the Temple, and my cry came before him, even into his Ears. Then the Earth ſhook and trembled; the Foundations alſo of the Hills moved and were ſhaken, becauſe he was wroth. There went up a Smoke out of his noſtrils, and Fire out of his Mouth devoured; Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the Heavens alſo and came down; and Darkneſs was under his Feet. And he rode upon a Cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the Wings of the Wind. He made Darkneſs his ſecret Place; his Pavilion round about him, were dark Waters, and thick Clouds of the Skies. At the Bright-

Brightneſs that was before him, his thick Clouds paſſed, Hailſtones and Coals of Fire. The Lord alſo thundred in the Heavens, and the Higheſt gave his Voice; Hail-ſtones and Coals of Fire. Yea, he ſent out his Arrows, and ſcattered them; and he ſhot out Lightnings, and diſcomfited them. Then the Channels of Waters were ſeen, and the Foundations of the World were diſcovered; at thy Rebuke, O Lord, at the Blaſt of the breath of thy Noſtrils. He ſent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many Waters. He delivered me from my ſtrong Enemy, and from them which hated me; for they were too ſtrong for me. They prevented me in the Day of my Calamity; but the Lord was my Stay. He brought me forth alſo into a large Place; he delivered me becauſe he delighted in me. The Lord rewarded me according to my Righteouſneſs, according to the Cleanneſs of my Hands hath he recompenſed me. For I have kept the Ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his Judgments were before me, and I did not put away his Statutes from me. I was alſo upright before him; and I kept my ſelf from mine Iniquity. Therefore hath the Lord recompenſed me according to my Righteouſneſs, according to the Cleanneſs of my Hands, in his Eye-ſight. With the merciful thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf merciful, with an upright Man thou wilt ſhew thyſelf upright; with the pure thou wilt ſhew thy pure, and with the froward thou wilt ſhew thyſelf froward. For thou wilt ſave the afflicted People; but wilt bring down high Looks. For thou wilt light my Candle; the Lord my God will enlighten my Darkneſs. For by thee I have run through a Troop; and by my God have I leaped over a Wall. As for God, his Way is perfect; the Word of the Lord is tried; he is a Buckler to all thoſe that truſt in him. For who is God ſave the Lord? Or who is a rock ſave our God? It is God that girdeth me with Strength, and maketh my Way perfect. He maketh my Feet like Hinds Feet, and ſetteth me upon my High-Place. He teaches my Hands to war, ſo that a Bow of Steel is broken by mine arms. Thou haſt alſo given me the Shield of thy Salvation; and thy Right-Hand hath holden me up, and thy Gentleneſs hath made me great. Thou haſt enlarged my Steps under me; that my Feet did not ſlip. I have purſued mine Enemies, and overtaken them; neither did I turn again till they were conſumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to riſe; they are fallen under my Feet. For thou haſt girded me with Strength unto Battle; thou haſt ſubdued under me thoſe that roſe up againſt me. Thou haſt alſo given me the Necks of mine Enemies; that I may deſtroy them that hate me. They cried, but there was none to ſave them; even unto the Lord, but he anſwered them not. Then did I beat them ſmall as the Duſt before the Wind; I did caſt them out as the Dirt in the Street. Thou haſt delivered me from the Strivings of the People; and thou haſt made me the Head of the Heathen; a People whom I have not known ſhall ſerve me. As ſoon as they hear of me, they ſhall obey me; the Strangers ſhall ſubmit themſelves unto me. The Strangers ſhall fade away, and be afraid out of their cloſe Places. The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my Rock; and let the God of my Salvation be exalted. It is God that avengeth me, and ſubdueth the People under me. He delivereth me from mine Enemies; yea, thou lifteſt me up above thoſe that riſe up againſt me; thou haſt delivered me from the violent Man. Therefore will I give Thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen; and ſing praiſes unto thy name. Great Deliverance giveth he to his King; and ſheweth Mercy to his anointed, to David, *and to his ſeed for evermore.*

PSALM XIX.

The Heavens declare the Glory of God; ſo do Night and Day. The Perfection, Purity and Extent of God's Law; its Effects. He prays againſt preſumptuous Sins.

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. W*HAT had* David *principally in View, when he wrote this* Pſalm?

A. The Deſign of this *Pſalm*, is to adore and magnify the Name of God, for the Diſcovery of his Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, both by his great and glorious Works of Creation and Providence, and more eſpecially by his Word and holy Scripture.

David teaches that the Creatures of God, eſpecially the Heavens and the Courſe of the Sun, do abundantly teſtify his Power, Wiſdom, and univerſal Goodneſs; but he magnifieth above all, the ſingular Mercy which he ſheweth unto his People, by the Revelation of his Law, by the Perfection, Purity, Extent and Effects of it; and having prayed againſt preſumptuous Sin, he deſires God to govern and ſanctify his Thoughts and Words. How elegantly does he ſet forth the Glory of God, as well from the Works of his Hands, as the Excellency of his Law?

The Heavens declare the Glory of God; and the Firmament ſheweth his handy Work. Day unto Day uttereth Speech, and Night unto Night ſheweth Knowledge. There is no ſuch Speech nor Language, where their Voice is not heard. Their Line is gone throughout all the Earth, and their Words to the End of the World; in them hath he ſet a Tabernacle for the Sun, which is as a Bridegroom coming out of his Chamber, and rejoiceth as a ſtrong Man to run a Race. His going forth is from the End of the Heaven, and his Circuit unto the Ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the Heat thereof. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul; the Teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the Simple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoycing the Heart; the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes. The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be deſired are they than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; ſweeter alſo than honey, and the Honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy ſervant warned; and in keeping of them is great Reward.

PSALM XX.

The Church prays to God to hear and defend the King, and for a Bleſſing on all his Deſigns; and ſhews wherein the Confidence of ſome is, but hers is in God.

To the chief Muſician. A Pſalm of *David.*

Q. P*RAY give the Senſe of* Ver. 9. Save, Lord, let the King hear us *when we call?*

A. By *the King* underſtand, either 1. *David.* So the Senſe is, O Lord, preſerve and aſſiſt the King, that when we are diſtreſſed and cry to him for Help, he may be able and ready to help us. Or 2. God, the ſupreme Monarch, the King of

Kings, and in a peculiar Manner the King of *Iſrael*, hear and anſwer us, when we pray for our King and People. And for the Change of Perſons in this Verſe, nothing is more common. Or 3. *Chriſt*, called *the King* both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*. But this Verſe is by divers learned Men render'd thus, *Lord, ſave the King. He* (*i. e.* the Lord) *will hear us* (or, *Let him hear us*; for the future Tenſe is often put imperatively) when we *cry*, or *call* upon him. And this Verſion is very agreeable to the *Hebrew* Text. For, whereas the only Ground of the old Tranſlation is, that the *Hebrew* Accent called *Athnach*, is put under the Word *ſave*, which is ſuppos'd to ſtop the Senſe there, it is ſufficiently evident, that *Athnach* doth not always make ſuch a Diſtinction in theſe poetical Books, as appears from *Pſal.* xi. 5. and xvii. 10. and xix. 4. and xxii. 31. and therefore this may ſeem to be the better Verſion.

PSALM XXI.

David, *out of a Senſe of* God's *anſwering his Prayers for all he asks, profeſſes his Joy and Gladneſs in him. His Confidence for farther Succeſs, that* God *will find out and conſume his Enemies; and that* God *would exalt his Strength, that he might praiſe his Power.*

To the chief Muſician. A Pſalm of *David.*

Q. I*S there any thing in this Pſalm that needs a Remark?*

A. The Subject of this Pſalm is the ſame with the former, both being made for the People's Uſe, concerning the King. Only the Prayers there uſed, are here turned into Praiſe, for the Bleſſings received in Anſwer to their Prayers. *David* gives God Thanks, both in his own and the Church's Behalf, for the Victories he had obtained, and the happy State of his Kingdom, (being a Type of *Jeſus Chriſt*) and propheſieth of the Durableneſs of both, together with the Downfal and Deſtruction of all the Enemies of the ſame, to the Manifeſtation of the infinite Power of God.

PSALM XXII.

The Prophet, as a Type of Chriſt, complains, that God had forſaken him, and heard not his Prayers. He ſhews, that God heard his Fathers, and delivered them; but owns himſelf a Worm, and the Reproach of Men. He ſhews the Language of the Enemy againſt him; the Happineſs of the Meek, and of all the Gentiles.

To the chief Muſician *Ajeleth Shahar*, a Pſalm of *David.*

Q. H*OW do you underſtand the Words* Ajeleth Shahar *in the Title?*

A. The Words ſignify *the Hind of the Morning*; to note, that the Perſon here deſigned was like an *Hind*, comely, meek, and every Way lovely, but withal perſecuted by wicked Men, and that is frequently *in the Morning*, when ſhe comes out of her Lurking or Lodging-Place, and when the Hunters uſe to go abroad to the Chace. Or this was the Title of ſome muſical Inſtrument, Tune, or Song, which was uſually ſung in the Morning.

Q. *Of whom does the Prophet ſpeak in this Chapter, of himſelf, or ſome other Perſon?*

A. It is confeſſed that *David* was a Type of *Chriſt*, and that many *Pſalms*, or Paſſages of the *Pſalms*, though properly and literally underſtood of *David*, yet had a farther and myſtical Reference unto *Chriſt*, in whom they were accompliſh'd. But there are ſome other *Pſalms*, or Paſſages in the *Pſalms*, as alſo ſome Chapters or Paſſages in other Prophets, eſpecially in *Iſaiah*, who lived not long after *David*, which either by thoſe ſacred Penmen, or at leaſt, by the Holy Ghoſt inſpiring them, which is the ſame Thing, were directly, primarily, and immediately intended for, and are properly and literally to be underſtood of the *Meſſiah*; though therewithal there may be ſome Reſpect or Alluſion to the State of the Penman himſelf, who being a Type of *Chriſt*, it is not ſtrange if there be many Reſemblances between them. This ſeems to be the State of this *Pſalm*, which is underſtood of the *Meſſiah* by the *Hebrew* Doctors themſelves, by *Chriſt* himſelf, and his Apoſtles: And there are many Paſſages in it, which were moſt literally accompliſhed in him, and cannot in any tolerable Senſe be underſtood of any other, as may be ſeen in the particular Verſes. And therefore, no Doubt, though *David* had an Eye to his own Condition in divers Paſſages, yet was he carried forth by the Spirit of Prophecy beyond himſelf and unto *Chriſt*, to whom alone it truly and fully agrees.

David complaineth that God had forſaken him, and not heard his Prayers, although he had graciouſly condeſcended to hear the Petitions of his Forefathers. He owns himſelf *a Worm, and the Reproach of Men*, ſheweth the Language of the Enemy againſt him, yet puts his ſole Truſt and Confidence in the Almighty: He calleth on all *Iſrael* to praiſe him, ſheweth the Happineſs of the Meek, and of the *Gentiles*, in having the Goſpel among them, in After-Ages, by Means of the *New Teſtament*; which would happen by the ſole Power of God, againſt all the Wit and Contrivance of Men.

PSALM XXIII.

David *deſcribes his own Happineſs, both in temporal and ſpiritual Things; his Confidence in* God's *Mercy, and Vows to dwell in his Houſe for ever.*

A Pſalm of *David.*

Q. E*Xplain the Deſign and Drift of this* Pſalm.

A. The Matter of this *Pſalm* gives us ſome general Diſcovery of the Time of its writing; which was when *David* was deliver'd out of his Anxieties and Troubles, and quietly ſettled in his Kingdom; for he repreſents in his own Perſon, as in a Mirrour, the Happineſs, or bleſſed Condition, of a true Servant of God, under the temporal and ſpiritual Guidance, paſtoral Care, and Providence of his gracious God; ſaying, That, as he had formerly been driven from God's Houſe, he remain'd aſſured that he ſhould now conſtantly enjoy the bleſſed Privilege of ſerving God in his Sanctuary, which he priz'd more than his Dominions; as well knowing the bleſſed and comfortable Effects of God's Favour and Protection, whoſe admirable Readineſs to do Good to his People, and his preventing them with Bleſſings, *David* ſets forth, by ſhewing how the Lord furniſh'd him with Plenty and Variety of Proviſions and Comforts, in a Place he little could expect it, and when he was ſurrounded by his Enemies, who ſaw, envy'd, and fretted at it, but were not able to hinder it.

PSALM XXIV.

David *acknowledges God's Sovereignity over the World. A Deſcription of the Perſons who ſhall be of his Spiritual Kingdom. Their Bleſſing; an Exhortation to receive it. Who the King of Glory is.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. ON *what particular Occaſion was this* Pſalm *directed to be ſung?*

A. This *Pſalm* is, generally and probably, thought to have been compoſed by *David*, on that ſolemn Occaſion of bringing the Ark of God from the Houſe of *Obed-edom* into the Tabernacle which *David* had built for it, 2 *Sam.* vi. wherein he hath a further Proſpect even to the Temple, which he earneſtly deſired, and intended to build, and which he knew would be built by his Son *Solomon*; when this Work was done, and the Ark brought into it, this *Pſalm* was to be ſung, and indeed to this Time it ſeems chiefly directed. For *David's Pſalms* were not only uſed by himſelf, upon the firſt Occaſion for which he made them; but they were committed to the Maſters of Sacred Muſick, for the Uſe of the Church in all ſucceeding Times. Being a Prophet, he ſpeaks as Prophets uſed, of Things to come, as if they were already preſent, and turns his Speech to the Temple, and its Gates, as if they were now built. And farther, as the Tabernacle, Temple, Ark, were manifeſt Types of Chriſt, and of his Church, aad of the Place and State of heavenly Glory, *David* extendeth his Thoughts to them alſo, or at leaſt the Holy Ghoſt deſigned to comprehend them under theſe typical Expreſſions. What elſe can mean theſe Words?

'Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and be lift 'up, ye everlaſting Doors, and the King of Glory 'ſhall come in. Who is this King of Glory? the 'Lord ſtrong and mighty, the Lord mighty in 'Battle. Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, even 'lift them up, ye everlaſting Doors, and the 'King of Glory ſhall come in. Who is this King 'of Glory? the Lord of Hoſts, he is the King of 'Glory.' Selah.

PSALM XXV.

David *being diſtreſſed by his Enemies, takes his Refuge in God; prays for the Remiſſion of the Sins of his Youth; ſhews the Goodneſs of the Lord to the Meek, to ſuch as keep his Covenant, to ſuch as fear him. He prays for Help in Affliction, and againſt his Enemies, and to redeem his Church from Trouble.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. ON *what Occaſion did* David *compoſe this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have been compoſed, when *David* was under ſome Streights and Preſſures, when his outward Afflictions were accompanied with inward Horrors of Conſcience for his Sins, by which he had forfeited God's Favour, and procured theſe Calamities to himſelf.

PSALM XXVI.

David *declares his Integrity and Innocence. His Hatred to the Congregation of the Wicked. He juſtifies God's Works; loves to dwell in his Houſe; prays for Deliverance from his Enemies, and returns Thanks to God.*

A *Pſalm* of David.

Q. PRAY *when, and on what Occaſion did* David *write this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* was certainly made by *David*, when he was in Diſtreſs, and particularly when he was falſly accuſed and defamed by his Adverſaries, as he frequently was by *Saul* and his Courtiers; and therefore, for his Vindication, he makes a ſolemn Appeal to God, and a Proteſtation of his own Innocence, to which he was forced by their Clamours and Reproaches. He declare, that as he was preſerved from his Enemies, by the Power of God, he would not only acknowledge, but, in the Aſſemblies of the People, celebrate his Praiſe, for that well-grounded Aſſurance he had given him of his Favour. *My Foot ſtandeth in an even Place; in the Congregations will I bleſs the Lord.*--- ------*In an even Place*; Heb. *in Rectitude*, or in a *right*, or *ſtreight*, or *plain*, or *even Place.* Which may be underſtood, either, 1. Civilly, or in regard of his outward Condition. So this is oppoſed to the *ſlippery Places*, in which wicked Men are ſaid to be, *Pſal.* xxxv. 6. and lxxiii. 18. *Jer.* xxiii. 12. and the Senſe is, I ſtand upon a ſure and ſolid Foundation, where I fear no Fall, nor to be overthrown by the Aſſaults of mine Enemies, being under the Protection of God's Promiſe, and his almighty and watchful Providence. Or, 2. Morally, or in reſpect of his Converſation. So the Senſe is, I do and will perſiſt or continue (which is often ſignified by *ſtanding*, *Pſalm* 1. 1.) in my plain, righteous, and ſtreight Courſe of Life, not uſing thoſe Frauds and wicked Arts, and perverſe and crooked Paths which mine Enemies chuſe and walk in, or whereof they do falſly accuſe me. And ſo this is the ſame Thing for Subſtance, with his *walking* in his *Integrity*, expreſſed in the foregoing Verſe, as alſo Ver. 1.-------*In the Congregation will I bleſs the Lord.* I will not only privately acknowledge, but publickly, and in the Aſſemblies of thy People celebrate thy Praiſes, both for thy Grace, enabling and incinling me to chuſe and love, and perſevere in the Ways of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs; and for thy Protection hitherto afforded me, in the midſt of all my Dangers and Troubles, and for that well-grounded Aſſurance which thou has given me, of thy Favour, and of my future Deliverance.

PSALM XXVII.

David *declares that God is his only Comfort and Confidence in all Danger. His hearty Deſire is to be in the Houſe of God; the Advantage of it. He prays for the Light of God's Face, and his Salvation; and from Experience exhorts others to wait upon him.*

A *Pſalm* of David.

Q. PRAY *what is* David's *main Drift and Purpoſe in this* Pſalm?

A. David was not yet fully delivered from the Trouble which his Enemies gave him, both by their Slanders, and otherwiſe. But whether it belong to that Hiſtory which is recorded 2 *Sam.* xxi. 16, 17, 18. as the *Jews* conceive, whom ſome others follow, is wholly uncertain, and not neceſſary for us to know.

David relates, that God is his only Comfort and Confidence in all Dangers; and what a hearty Deſire he had to be always in God's Houſe, which made him likewiſe pray for it continually; upholding and ſtrengthning himſelf in the mean Time by Faith, and patient waiting in his Wanderings, upon the fulfilling of God's Promiſes, whereunto he likewiſe exhorteth others, from his own Experience of the wonderful Goodneſs of God towards him, through the whole Courſe of his numerous Troubles and Afflictions.

PSALM XXVIII.

David *prays earneſtly for himſelf, that he might not not be led away by the Wicked. The Reaſon of his Prayer. He bleſſes God for hearing him, and prays for the People.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. IS *there any thing in this* Pſalm *particularly remarkable?*

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have been made on the ſame Occaſion with the former, and is mixed, as many others of his *Pſalms* are, with Hopes and Fears, with Prayers and Praiſes. He prays very fervently for himſelf, and againſt his Enemies, whoſe Wickedneſs he deſcribes; he counteth himſelf as a dead Man, till God ſhew his Favour towards him, and grant his Petition. Feeling the Fruit and Effects of his Prayer, he praiſeth God for hearing him, and prayeth for the People.

Q. David, *in the 4th Verſe, utters grievous Curſes againſt his Enemies; but is this conſiſtent with a Spirit of Meekneſs and Charity?*

A. David uſeth theſe Imprecations, partly to vindicate himſelf from the Slander of his Enemies, who reported him to be as wicked as they were, only more cloſe and cunning therein; which if he had been, he had bitterly curſed himſelf; which cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed he would do. Partly from his great and long Experience of their implacable and incorrigible Malignity, not only againſt him, but againſt God and his declared Will, and againſt all truly good Men, and that covered with Pretences of Piety to God, and of Peaceableneſs towards their Neighbours, Ver. 3. which made their Wickedneſs more inexcuſeable and deteſtable; partly by the Inſtinct and Direction of God's Spirit, by whoſe Inſpiration he uttered this, as well as the reſt of the *Pſalms*; and partly, that he might thereby provoke them to Repentance; for this Curſe only belongs to thoſe who ſhall obſtinately perſiſt in their wicked Courſes. Add to all this, that as Verbs of the Imperative Mood, are often uſed by the *Hebrews* for Futures, ſo theſe may not be properly Imprecations, but Predictions of their Deſtruction.

PSALM XXIX.

David *exhorts the Mighty of this World, to give Glory to God, who manifeſts his Power by Thunder, Lightning, and by other Creatures.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. GIVE *us the Purport of this* Pſalm?

A. It is ſuppoſed that this *Pſalm* was made upon the Occaſion of ſome terrible Tempeſt of Thunder and Rain, which God might poſſibly ſend in the Time of Battle, to aſſiſt *David*, and diſcomfit the Enemies, as he had formerly done on the like Occaſion. It contains an Admonition to the haughty Tyrants of the Earth, to humble themſelves under God's Hand, which he preſſes from the great Majeſty and Power of *Iſrael's* God, above all other Gods, and particularly from that great and glorious Inſtance thereof in Thunder, which hath ſtruck the proudeſt Monarchs with the Dread of that God, whom at other Times they deſpiſed. See what elevated Ideas he had of the divine Majeſty!

The Voice of the Lord is upon the Waters; the God of Glory thundreth, the Lord is upon many Waters. The Voice of the Lord is powerful; the Voice of the Lord breaketh the Cedars of Lebanon. *He maketh them alſo to ſkip like a calf:* Lebanon *and* Sirion *like a young Unicorn. The Voice of the Lord divideth the Flames of Fire: The Voice of the Lord ſhaketh the Wilderneſs: The Lord ſhaketh the Wilderneſs of* Kadeſh. *The Voice of the Lord maketh the Hinds to calve, and diſcovereth the Foreſts: and in his Temple doth every one ſpeak of his Glory. The Lord ſitteth upon the Flood; yea, the Lord ſitteth King for ever. The Lord will give Strength unto his People, and the Lord will bleſs his People with Peace.*

PSALM XXX.

The Pſalmiſt praiſes God for Deliverance out of great Danger, and exhorts others to do the ſame. He acknowledges to God, that his Prayer was heard, and himſelf girded with Gladneſs. He will give Thanks to God for ever.

A *Pſalm* and Song, at the Dedication of the Houſe of *David.*

Q. PRAY *explain the Title to this* Pſalm.

A. A Pſalm and Song; or, *a Pſalm or Song*; *i. e.* either 1. A *Pſalm* to be ſung with the Voice to an Inſtrument. Or 2. A *Pſalm* of Joy and Praiſe; for ſo this is. And this *Hebrew* Word, *Schir*, may be here taken not ſimply for a Song, but for a joyful Song, as it is, *Gen.* xxxi. 27. *Ex.* xv. 1. *Pſ.* xxxiii. 3. and xlii. 8. *Prov.* xxv. 20. *Iſa.* xxx. 29. *Amos* viii. 3, 10.——*At the Dedication of the Houſe of* David. Either 1. At the Dedication of the Temple, called *the Houſe*, or *that Houſe*, eminently and emphatically. So the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt, and the *Hebrew* Doctors underſtand it. And then the laſt Words of *David* are to be joined with the firſt, *a Pſalm and Song*. But this ſeems not probable; becauſe the Temple was not built by *David*, nor in his Days, although he might preſcribe a *Pſalm* to be uſed afterwards upon that Occaſion. Or 2. At the Dedication of *David's* Houſe, which was built, 2 *Sam.* v. 11. and doubtleſs, was dedicated, as God had commanded, *Deut.* xx. 5. *Nehem.* xii. 27. Or 3. At the ſecond Dedication of *David's* Houſe, after it had been polluted by *Abſalom* and his Concubines. But there is no Law of God for any Re-dedication of Houſes in ſuch Caſes; nor any Evidence that *David* did ſo.

And indeed it ſeems ſtrange, if this *Pſalm* was made upon this Occaſion; or upon any of the Dedications here mentioned, there ſhould not be one Line ſuitable to ſuch Occaſion. Others therefore make theſe Words, *the Dedication of the Houſe*, not to note the Matter of this *Pſalm* or Song; but either, 1. The Name of the Tune to which this Song was ſung, which was the ſame that *David* uſed at the Dedication of his Houſe: And ſo this gives us a Reaſon why the Word *Song* is added to that of *Pſalm*, and why this *Pſalm* was called *The Song of the Dedication*. Or, 2. The Time when it was ſung, which was at the Dedication of *David*'s Houſe. For ſuch Dedications were performed in a ſolemn Manner, with divers Rites and Prayers, and Praiſes to God, as the Nature of that Buſineſs required. And it ſeems probable from the Matter of this *Pſalm*, compared with the Title, that *David*, had about this Time, been delivered from ſome dangerous Sickneſs; for which he returns Thanks to God, taking Advantage of this publick and ſolemn Occaſion.

Psalm XXXI.

David *prays for Preſervation, according to his Confidence which he puts in God, that he might rejoice in his Mercy. He declares what he ſuffer'd from his Enemies and Friends; but magnifies the Care and Tenderneſs of God, and praiſes him for his Goodneſs to himſelf, and to the Faithful.*

To the chief Muſician. A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. PRAY *interpret the 20th Verſe*, Thou ſhalt hide them in the Secret of thy Preſence from the Pride of Man: Thou ſhalt keep them ſecretly in a Pavilion from the Strife of Tongues.

A. Either 1. As if they were in thy Preſence-Chamber, where thine own Eye and Hand guard them from all the Aſſaults of their Enemies; called his *Secret*, partly, becauſe the greateſt Part of the World are Strangers to God and his Preſence; and partly, becauſe it is a ſafe and ſecure Place. Or, 2. As if they were *in the Secret* of God's *Tabernacle*, as it is call'd, *Pſ.* xxvii. 5. the Place of God's ſpecial Preſence, where none might enter but the High-prieſt. Or 3. With thy ſecret Favour and Providence, which works mightily, yet ſecretly for them, and ſaves them by hidden and unknown Methods. This is oppos'd to thoſe Caves, or other obſcure and unſafe Places, where *David* was forc'd to hide himſelf.

Psalm XXXII.

They are bleſſed whoſe Sins are forgiven. Confeſſion of Sins gives Eaſe to the Conſcience. God's Promiſe to them who truſt in him.

A *Pſalm of David, Maſchil.*

Q. WHAT *is ſignified by the Word* Maſchil?

A. It ſignifies, *an Inſtructor*, and this *Pſalm* is moſt aptly call'd *an Inſtructor*, becauſe it was compoſed for the Information of the Church, in that moſt important Doctrine, concerning the Way to true Happineſs; *David* declaring they are bleſſed, whoſe Sins the Almighty forgives, and who confeſs, and are ſorry for the ſame with Sincerity; and he exhorts the Righteous to rely upon the Providence and Promiſe of God for Preſervation and Deliverance, committing himſelf to God's Care and Conduct.

Q. *Give the true Senſe of Ver.* 8, 9.

A. The Words are, *I will inſtruct thee, and teach thee in the Way which thou ſhalt go: I will guide thee with mine Eye. Be ye not as the Horſe, or as the Mule, which have no Underſtanding; whoſe Mouth muſt be held in with Bit and Bridle, leſt they come near unto thee.* Theſe two Verſes are either the Words, 1. Of God, whom *David* brings in as returning this Anſwer to his Prayers, and the Profeſſion of his Truſt in God. Or rather 2. Of *David* himſelf; who having receiv'd ſingular Favours from God, and having declar'd what the Godly would ſay upon that Occaſion, Ver. 6. he now undertakes to inſtruct the Wicked what they ſhould do. Which he doth, partly to expreſs his Thankfulneſs to God for delivering him, and his Zeal to advance the Honour and Service of God in the World; partly, as an Act of Juſtice, that he might make ſome Amends to thoſe he had injur'd, and provoke them to Repentance, whom by his Sins he had ſcandaliz'd, or had drawn to, or encouraged or harden'd in Sin, which he thought himſelf obliged to do, and promis'd he would on this, or the like Occaſion, *Pſ.* li. 13. and partly for the Diſcharge of his Office and Duty, as he was a King, a Prophet, and a good Man; in all which Capacities he was obliged to endeavour the Converſion and Salvation of Sinners.

Psalm XXXIII.

God is to be praiſed for his Goodneſs, Power, and Providence; and they that fear him, ſhall find Mercy and rejoice in him.

Q. DOES *this* Pſalm *contain any Thing peculiarly remarkable?*

A. This *Pſalm* contains a Celebration of God, for his great and glorious Works, both of Creation and Providence. This is an Exhortation to the Praiſe of God, by Reaſon of his divine Attributes, Counſel, Word, and Works; bringing to nought the Devices of the Wicked, and his Preſervation and Protection of the Faithful, who rejoice in his holy Name, and offer up Prayers and Praiſes to the ſacred Throne of divine Grace. Hear in what an elevated Strain of Piety he celebrates the Works of the Almighty!

By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made; and all the Hoſt of them, by the Breath of his Mouth. He gathereth the Waters of the Sea together, as an Heap; he layeth up the Depth in Store-houſes. Let all the Inhabitants of the World ſtand in awe of him. For he ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt. The Lord bringeth the Counſel of the Heathen to nought; he maketh the Devices of the People of none Effect. The Counſel of the Lord ſtandeth for ever, the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations. Bleſſed is the Nation whoſe God is the Lord; and the People whom he hath choſen for his own Inheritance. The Lord looketh from Heaven; he beholdeth all the Sons of Men. From the Place of his Habitation he looketh upon all the Inhabitants of the Earth. He faſhioneth their Hearts alike, he conſidereth all their Works. There is no King ſaved by the Multitude of an Hoſt; a mighty Man is not delivered by much Strength. An Horſe is a vain Thing for Safety; neither ſhall he deliver any by his great Strength. Behold the Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his Mercy. To deliver their Soul from Death, and to keep them alive in Famine. Our Soul waiteth for the Lord; he is our Help and our Shield. For our Heart ſhall rejoice in him; becauſe we have truſted in his holy Name. Let thy Mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

Psalm XXXIV.

David *praiſes God, and exhorts others to do the ſame, from his own Experience of the divine Goodneſs. He ſhews that they are bleſſed, who truſt in God. He exhorteth others to learn to fear him, and* *ſhews the Way to Happineſs. The Privileges of the Righteous, and the Puniſhment of the Wicked.*

A *Pſalm* of *David*, when he changed his Behaviour before *Abimilech*; who drove him away, and he departed.

Q. DO *you obſerve any Thing remarkable in the Title of this* Pſalm?

A. The Title ſhews the Deſign and Occaſion of this *Pſalm*. He *changed his Behaviour*, or *his Habit*, or *Poſture*, or *his Reaſon*, as this Word is taken, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 33. *Pſ.* cxix. 66. *Prov.* xi. 22. when he counterfeited Madneſs. Wherein, whether he ſinned or not, is Matter of Diſpute; but this is certain, that God's Favour in delivering him at that Time, was very remarkable, and deſerved his ſolemn Acknowledgment.——*Abimelech*, called *Achiſh*, 1 *Sam.* xxi. 10. But *Abimelech* ſeems to have been the common Name of the Kings of the *Philiſtines*, *Gen.* xx. 2. and xxvi. 1. As *Pharaoh* was of the *Egyptians*, and *Cæſar* of the *Romans*.

David being wonderfully and miraculouſly delivered out of a great Danger, exhorteth all true Believers to conſider and praiſe together with him, the Goodneſs and Mercy of God to himſelf, and all his People, and to call and rely upon him in all Troubles and Adverſities; farther teaching that the true Way to Happineſs is to fear the Lord, who governs all Things, and roots out the Wicked, but preſerves the Lives and Perſons of the godly, from all the malicious Deſigns of their open or ſecret Enemies.

PSLAM XXXV.

David *prays for his own Safety, and his Enemies Deſtruction; ſhews their Falſhood, Unthankfulneſs and Malice; he prays for their Confuſion; but for the Joy and Preſervation of the Godly.*

A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. PLEASE *to inform me, who was the Penman of this* Pſalm; *and what is the Purport of it?*

A. This *Pſalm* was penned by *David*, when he was ſlandered and perſecuted by *Saul* and his Servants, as is manifeſt from the whole Body of it.

David prayeth to the Almighty to take his Cauſe in Hand, and to fight for him againſt his Enemies, that he may have Cauſe to praiſe and thank him for it. He gives a Deſcription of his Enemies Plottings, Falſhoods, Unthankfulneſs, and deſperate Malice, deſiring a juſt Vindication of the Honour of God, his own Preſervation, and the Joy of all the Godly, by which the Almighty would be magnified.

Q. *Explain* Ver. 4. Let them be confounded and put to ſhame, that ſeek after my Soul; let them be turned back and brought to Confuſion, that deviſe my Hurt.

A. That is, let them be fruſtrated in their wicked Deſigns of Hopes againſt me. Concerning this and the like, and the following Imprecations, which may ſeem ſtrange and ſevere, it muſt be conſidered, 1. That they did not proceed from any paſſionate and revengeful Spirit in *David* towards his Enemies (from which, how free he was, appears not only from his own Words here, Verſes 12, 13, 14. but from the whole Tenor of his Life, and the frequent Inſtances mentioned in Hiſtory, of his meek and merciful Carriage towards his Enemies, when they were in his Power) but from his Zeal for God, and for Piety and Juſtice, to which they ſhewed themſelves conſtant and implacable Adverſaries, and by the Direction of the prophetical Spirit of God, wherewith he was indued, by which Spirit he exactly knew the Condition and Temper of his Enemies, and that thoſe againſt whom they are levellel, were hardened and incurable. 2. That they contain nothing but a Prayer to God, that he would accompliſh his own Threatnings, and execute his own Law of Retaliation, of *Eye for Eye*, and *Tooth for Tooth*, and ſo bring upon them the Evils which they deſigned againſt him, which was alſo of great and good Uſe, both to glorify God's Juſtice, and to warn and reform other Sinners by the Terror of their Example. 3. That they may be taken only for Predictions, as hath been obſerved before upon the like Occaſion.

PSALM XXXVI.

David *ſhews the grievous State of the Wicked; the Excellency of God's Mercy; and prays for Favour to the Children of God.*

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* of *David*, the Servant of the Lord.

Q. WHAT *is chiefly obſervable in the Title?*

A. The Title intimates one wholly and reſolutely devoted to the Service of God, both in a private and publick Capacity. The Title is, I think, but twice uſed in this Book, *Pſ.* xviii. and in this, where it ſeems to be prefixed as a publick Declaration of his Reſolution to cleave unto the Lord in this Time of general Corruption, of which he is now going to ſpeak.

Q. *Pray who was the Penman of it?*

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have been compoſed by *David*, when he was perſecuted by *Saul* and his Courtiers. Upon which Occaſion he enlargeth his Thoughts farther, and contemplates the ſad State and Condition of the World, and of the Church at that Time, in which Wickedneſs of all Sorts greatly abounded, and ſeemed to proſper; and withal he declares the great Felicity and Safety of the People of God, and gives an Account of their Supports and Comforts, under the Senſe of theſe publick Diſorders and Miſchiefs. How pathetic are the Expreſſions of his Senſe of God's Goodneſs!

Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens; and thy Faithfulneſs reacheth unto the Clouds. Thy Righteouſneſs is like the great Mountains; thy Judgments are a great deep; O Lord thou preſerveſt Man and Beaſt, How excellent is thy loving Kindneſs, O God! therefore the Children of Men put their Truſt under the Shadow of thy Wings. They ſhall be abundantly ſatisfied with the Fatneſs of thy Houſe; and thou ſhalt make them drink of the River of thy Pleaſures. For with thee is the Fountain of Life; in thy Light ſhall we ſee Light. O continue thy loving Kindneſs unto them that know thee; and thy Righteouſneſs to the upright in Heart. Let not the Foot of Pride come againſt me, and let not the Hand of the Wicked remove me. There are the Worker of Iniquity fallen; they are caſt down, and ſhall not be able to riſe.

PSALM XXXVII.

The Pſalmiſt *perſuades to Patience and Confidence in God; and ſhews the different State of the Godly and Wicked in all their Dealings.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. **P**RAY *what was* David'*s principal View in this Pſalm?*

A. The Deſign, Intent and Scope of this *Pſalm*, is to defend the Providence of God, and to ſatisfy the Minds of Men, in that great Queſtion concerning the ſeeming Inequality of God's Diſpenſations, in afflicting good Men, and giving Proſperity to the Wicked. *David* inſtructeth and encourageth the Faithful againſt the temporal Proſperity of the Wicked, and exhorteth them not to follow their Wickedneſs, but to live in Holineſs, and truſt in God, inaſmuch as the Proſperity of the Wicked is but momentary, and their End unhappy and accurſed; whereas, on the contrary, the fatherly Goodneſs of God accompanies his Children, in whatſoever doth or may befal them; for though they may meet with Troubles in their Way, yet all ſhall end well with them, they ſhall be happy at laſt.

PSALM XXXVIII.

David *being viſited with Sickneſs, rehearſes his woful Condition by Reaſon of his Sins; prays for Forgiveneſs, Help and Favour. He lays before God the Unfaithfulneſs of his Friends, and the Cruelty of his Enemies.*

A *Pſalm* of *David* to bring to Remembrance.

Q. **T**O *What are to be applied theſe Words in the Title,* To bring to Remembrance?

A. Either, 1. To God, that by this humble and mournful Prayer he might prevail with God to remember and pity him; for now he ſeemed to have quite forgotten him. Or, 2. To himſelf, that by reviewing this *Pſalm* afterwards, he might call to Mind his former Danger and Miſery, and God's wonderful Mercy in delivering him from them, which we are too apt to forget. And that others alſo might remember and conſider what God had done to him, firſt in chaſtening, and then in reſtoring him; and might make uſe of his Example for their Benefit.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon this* Pſalm?

A. This is one of *David*'s penitential *Pſalms.* It was compoſed upon Occaſion of ſome ſore Diſeaſe, or grievous Calamity, which he rightly judged to be inflicted upon him for his Sins. He prays with great Anguiſh unto God for Forgiveneſs, Favour, and Help, laying before him the Unfaithfulneſs of his Friends, and the Cruelty of his Enemies, who hated and perſecuted him, not only without any Injury or Provocation on his Part, but as it were in Requital of the Good done them.

But if we would ſee the true State of *David*'s Soul at the Time of his compoſing this *Pſalm*, we can't have a better Deſcription of it than in his own Words.

O Lord rebuke me not in thy Wrath; neither chaſten me in thine hot Diſpleaſure. For thine Arrows ſtick faſt in me, and thy Hand preſſeth me ſore. There is no Soundneſs in my Fleſh, becauſe of thine Anger; neither is there any Reſt in my Bones, becauſe of my Sin. For mine Iniquities are gone over mine Head, as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My Wounds ſtink and are corrupted, becauſe of my Fooliſhneſs. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the Day long. For my Loins are filled with a loathſome Diſeaſe; and there is no Soundneſs in my Fleſh. I am feeble and ſore broken; I have roared by Reaſon of the Diſquietneſs of my Heart. Lord, all my Deſire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee. My Heart panteth, my Strength faileth me; as for the Light of mine Eyes, it alſo is gone from me. My Lovers and my Friends ſtand aloof from my Sore; and my Kinſmen ſtand afar off. They alſo that ſeek after my Life, lay Snares for me; and they that ſeek my Hurt, ſpeak miſchievous Things, and imagine Deceits all the Day long. But I, as a deaf Man, heard not; and I was as a dumb Man that openeth not his Mouth. Thus I was as a Man that heareth not, and in whoſe Mouth are no Reproofs. For in thee, O Lord, do I hope; thou wilt hear, O Lord my God. For I ſaid, Hear me, leſt otherwiſe they ſhould rejoice over me; when my Foot ſlippeth, they magnify themſelves againſt me. For I am ready to halt, and my Sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare my Iniquity; I will be ſorry for my Sin. But mine Enemies are lively, and they are ſtrong; and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied. They alſo that render Evil for Good, are mine Adverſaries; becauſe I follow the Thing that good is. Forſake me not, O Lord, O my God be not far from me. Make haſte to help me, O Lord my Salvation.

PSALM XXXIX.

David *takes Care of his Thoughts, Words and Works. He conſiders the Brevity and Vanity of Man's Life, puts his Hope in God; prays for the Forgiveneſs of Sins, and for Favour in his Pilgrimage.*

To the chief Muſician, even to *Jeduthun*, A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. **P**RAY *explain the Meaning of the Word* Jeduthun?

A. Jeduthan ſignifies one of the three chief Maſters of the ſacred Muſick: Of whom ſee 1 *Chron.* xvi. 41, 42. 2 *Chron.* v. 12.

Q. *On what Occaſion was this Pſalm written?*

A. This *Pſalm* was written by *David*, when his Mind was much diſcompoſed and diſquieted, with the Contemplation of the Proſperity of Sinners, and the Afflictions of the Godly, which being exemplified in himſelf and his Enemies, he ſpeaks of the Caſe not in general, but as in his own Perſon. He takes Care of his Thoughts, Words and Works; he confeſſeth the Brevity and Vanity of human Life, and puts his entire Confidence in God; humbly intreating him, not to afflict or deſtroy him, acknowledging his Life at beſt to be both ſhort and miſerable, ſufficient for it is the Evil thereof. His Sorrow cauſed him to think that God would deſtroy him utterly; whereby we may ſee how hard it is for the very Saints to keep a Meaſure in their Words, when Death and Deſpair aſſail them.

PSALM XL.

The Benefit of Confidence in God. Obedience is the beſt Sacrifice. The Senſe of David'*s Evils inflameth his Prayer.*

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. **W**HAT *is the Subject of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* is a Celebration of God's great Mercy and Goodneſs vouchſafed unto *David*, and all his People. He propheſieth here under his Type of our Saviour *Chriſt*, his bitter and patient Suffering, fervent Prayer, and wonderful

Deliverance; alſo of the putting down the Offerings and Sacrifices of the *Old Teſtament*, by the only Offering of *Chriſt*, and of the preaching of the Goſpel to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; with the Confuſion and Deſtruction of all Enemies, and the great Rejoicing of all the Faithful who love the Salvation of God, and magnify his glorious Name for his manifold Mercies vouchſafed unto them.

Q. *In what Senſe are we to take* Ver. 6. Sacrifice and Offering thou doeſt not deſire; mine Ears haſt thou opened; Burnt-offering and Sin-offering thou haſt not required?

A. Theſe Words may, in an improper Senſe, belong to the Perſon and Time of *David*; when God might be ſaid *not* to *deſire* or *require* legal Sacrifices comparatively, as negative Expreſſions are frequently underſtood, *Matth.* ix. 13. 1 *Cor.* i. 17. and in this very Caſe of Sacrifices, as Verſe 16. *Jer.* vii. 22, 23. *Hoſ.* vi. 6. So the Senſe is, Thou didſt deſire Obedience more, or rather than Sacrifices, as was ſaid 1 *Sam.* xv. 22. But in a proper, literal and full Senſe, they belong only to the Perſon and Times of the *Meſſias*, in whoſe Name *David* uttereth theſe Words. And ſo the Senſe of the Place is, God did not *deſire or require* them, for the Satisfaction of his own Juſtice, and the Expiation of Sin, which could not be done by the Blood of Bulls and Goats, *Heb.* x. 4, 5, 6. But only by the Blood of *Chriſt*, which was typified by them, and which *Chriſt* came into the World to ſhed, in purſuance of his Father's Will, as it here follows, Ver. 7, 8. So here is a Prediction concerning the Ceſſation and Abolition of the legal Sacrifices, and a Subſtitution of a better, inſtead of them. —— *Mine Ears haſt thou opened*, in the *Hebrew*, *bored*. The Senſe is, either, 1. Whereas many Men have no Ears to hear, as is implied, *Rev.* ii. 7. xi. 17. or ſtop their Ears, as *Pſalm* lviii. 4. *Zech.* vii. 11. thou haſt given me open Ears to hear and obey the Precepts, as this Phraſe is uſed, *Iſa.* l. 5. although, indeed, there is another Verb in the Text, which much alters the Caſe. Or, 2. I have wholly devoted myſelf to thy perpetual Service, and thou haſt accepted of me as ſuch, and ſignified ſo much by the *boring* of *mine Ears*, according to the Law and Cuſtom in that Caſe, *Exod.* xxi. 5, 6. *Deut.* xv. 17. But as only one Ear was then bored, and here it is *Ears*, this may be either an Enallage of the plural Number for the ſingular, as is frequent in Scripture; or elſe it may be ſo expreſſed emphatically, to intimate that *Chriſt* was more ſtrictly obliged to a more univerſal Obedience, not only Active, to which the legal Servants were bound, but alſo Paſſive, to be obedient even unto the Death, to which they were not obliged. The LXX *Jewiſh* Writers, whom the Apoſtles follows, *Heb.* x. 5. tranſlate theſe Words, *A Body haſt thou prepared me:* Wherein, though the Words differ, the Senſe is the ſame; for the *Ears* ſuppoſe a *Body* to which they belong, and the *preparing* of a *Body*, implies the preparing or diſpoſing of the Ears, and the Obligation of the Perſon for whom a Body was prepared, to ſerve him who prepared it; which the boring of the Ear ſignifies.

Q. *To whom do theſe Words*, Verſe 7. *moſt properly belong*, Then ſaid I, Lo I come; in the Volume of the Book it is written of me?

A. Theſe Words do moſt literally and truly belong to *Chriſt*; and the Senſe is this; ſince thou requireſt a better Sacrifice than thoſe of the Law, Lo, I do offer myſelf to *come*, and I will in due Time *come*, to wit, *from Heaven*, or *in the Fleſh*, or *into the World*, as this Phraſe is more fully expreſſed and explained in divers Places in Scripture, particularly, *Heb.* x. 5. where this Paſſage is explained and applied to *Chriſt*. —— *In the Volume of the Book.* *Volume* and *Book* are indifferently uſed of any Writing, and both Words ſeem here to expreſs the ſame Thing, as may appear by comparing *Jer.* xxxiv. where we have the ſame Words, and what is called *the Roll* or *Volume of a Book*, Ver. 2, 4. is called ſimply a *Roll* or *Volume*, Ver. 6, 20, and *the Book*, Ver. 10, 13. it being uſual with the *Hebrews* to join two Words together in like Manner; of which we have an Inſtance in Ver. 2. of this Pſalm, *miry Clay* Heb. *Clay of Mire.* Now by this *Volume of the Book*, is meant either, 1. Of the Predeſtination, in which *Chriſt* was written, as being *fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World*, 1 *Pet.* i. 20. But that is a ſecret Book not to be read by any living, and therefore not fitly alledged as an Evidence in this Matter. Or 2. Of a legal Inſtrument, wherein the Contract was drawn betwixt God and him, wherein he obliged himſelf to ſerve God, and to execute his Will in all Things; it being the Manner of the *Hebrews* to write their Contracts in a little *Volume* or *Book*. But, 1. We read of no ſuch Uſage among the *Hebrews*, in the Contracts between Maſter and Servant, but only of the boring the Servant's Ear, *Exod.* xxi. 6. So the Foundation of this Alluſion is deſtroy'd. 2. At leaſt there was no ſuch Contract written between God and him. And if it be ſaid, that he only ſpeaks thus by way of Alluſion, this is but a Suppoſition without Ground. And when the Words may be properly underſtood as they ſound, of a Thing really done, why ſhould we forſake the plain Senſe without Neceſſity? 3. The Phraſe here uſed agrees not to this Senſe; for then he ſhould have ſaid, *I am written in the Volume of the Book, i. e.* in the Catalogue of thy Servants; for in that Caſe the Perſons, or their Names, are conſtantly ſaid to be written, as *Exod.* xxxii. 32, 33. *Pſalm* lxix. 28. *Dan.* xii. 1. *Luke* x. 20. *Heb.* xii. 23. *Rev.* xiii. 8. and xx. 15. and not any Thing to be written of them, as it is here. Or 3. Of the holy Scriptures. In which ſomething, indeed, was written concerning *David*; namely, That he was *a Man after God's own Heart*, 1 *Sam.* xiii. 14. But it muſt be remembered, that thoſe Books were not written till after *David*'s Death, in whoſe Time there was no Book of Scripture extant, but the five Books of *Moſes*, unleſs you except that of *Job*. And therefore this is meant of the Law of *Moſes*, which is commonly and emphatically called *the Book*, and was made up in the Form of a Roll or Volume, as the *Hebrew* Books generally were, *Ezek.* iii. 1, *&c.* And ſo this Place manifeſtly points to *Chriſt*, and muſt neceſſarily be underſtood of him only, concerning whom much is ſaid in the Books of *Moſes*, as is evident from *Luke* xxiv, 27, 44. *John* v. 46. *Acts* iii. 22. and xxvi. 22. and xxviii. 32. and this Senſe being plain, natural, and unforced, and exactly agreeing both in the Words and Truth of the Thing, and with the Belief of all *Chriſtians*, I ſee no Reaſon why we may not acquieſce in it.

Pſalm XLI.

David *ſhews God's Care of the Poor; confeſſes his Sins, and complains of the Treachery of his Enemies; but flies to God for Succour.*

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. CAN *you inform me what was the Occaſion of this Pſalm?*

A. Some ſore Diſeaſe or Affliction, which God had inflicted upon *David*, and which gave his Enemies Opportunity to diſcover their Malice and Hatred againſt him, was certainly the Occaſion of this *Pſalm*. He deſcribes the Bleſſings here, which they are to obtain at God's Hand, who demean themſelves piouſly and compaſſionately towards the Afflicted, the Poor and Needy. He prays to God for Favour, and complains very feelingly of the Bitterneſs of his falſe Friends, eſpecially of the Unfaithfulneſs of a ſpecial one, either *Achitophel*, or ſome other perfidious Counſellor or Courtier, who was a Type of the Traitor *Judas*, to whom therefore it is applied, *John* xiii. 18. He aſſureth himſelf of God's Favour, and doth heartily, and with Fervency of Spirit praiſe the Almighty, his God, Protector and Benefactor.

Pſalm XLII.

The Pſalmiſt *being deprived of God's Service, ardently deſires to be in God's Houſe again. He rouſes up his Soul unto a firm Hope and Confidence in God. His Enemies reproach him. His Faith in God.*

To the chief Muſician *Maſchil*, for the Sons of *Korah*.

Q. CAN *you certainly tell who was the Penman of this* Pſalm?

A. The Penman of this *Pſalm* is uncertain, as not being named in the Title. It was compoſed, either, 1. By *David*, when he was baniſhed from the Houſe of God, either by *Saul*'s Tyranny, or by *Abſalom*'s Rebellion. Or 2. By the Sons of *Korah*, in the Time of the Captivity of *Babylon*. Whence ſome read the Words of the Title of this Pſalm, *Maſchil of the Sons of Korah*. But this is not uſual in this Book, to name the Author of a *Pſalm* ſo obſcurely and indefinitely: For the Sons of *Korah* were a numerous Company, and it is not likely that all, or divers of them ſhould join in the inditing this and the following *Pſalms* that paſs under the ſame Name: Nor is there any one *Pſalm* where the Author is named, but he is one certain and ſingle Perſon. And therefore it ſeems more probable that *David* penned this, as it is confeſſed he did ſome other *Pſalms* which have not his Name in the Title.

Q. *What is the main Purport of this* Pſalm?

A. This is a *Pſalm* of Inſtruction, as the Word *Maſchil* ſignifies, wherein the Prophet *David* doth bitterly bemoan his being deprived of the Comfort of the publick Worſhip of God, during his Exile, and complains of the blaſphemous Expreſſions of his Enemies, which cauſed his Spirits to be overwhelmed: Nevertheleſs, he rouſeth up his Soul again, unto a firm Hope and Confidence in God, who, as he formerly was, ſo he ſtill is, and ever will be, and would ſuddenly ſhew himſelf to be his God, though for a Seaſon he might hide his Face, or withdraw his Help from him.

Pſalm XLIII.

David *prays againſt his fierce and crafty Enemies; and to be reſtored to God's Temple; promiſes to ſerve him joyfully. He encourages his Soul to truſt in God.*

Q. BY *whom, and upon what Occaſion was this* Pſalm *compoſed?*

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have been compoſed by the ſame Author, and upon the ſame Occaſion with the former. *David* prays to have Juſtice done him againſt his fierce and crafty Enemies, making his Complaint to God of his Diſtreſs, entreating for a gracious Performance of his Promiſes, and encouraging his drooping Soul with Faith and Confidence in the Almighty Being he made his Application to. How fervently does he ſend out his Soul to God, on the Wings of the moſt ardent Devotion!

Judge me, O God, and plead my Cauſe againſt an ungodly Nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjuſt Man. For thou art the God of my Strength, why doſt thou caſt me off? why go I mourning becauſe of the Oppreſſion of the Enemy? O ſend out thy Light and thy Truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy Hill, and to thy Tabernacle. Then will I go unto the Altar of God, unto God my exceeding Joy; yea, upon the Harp will I praiſe thee, O God, my God. Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul? and why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God.

Pſalm XLIV.

The Church commemorates paſt Mercies. The Arm of God, and the Sword of Iſrael, *put them in Poſſeſſion of the Land. Their Truſt is in God, and not in their Bow. They complain of divers Troubles, of which their Sin is the Cauſe. They profeſs their Integrity. A fervent Prayer for Help.*

To the chief Muſician of the Sons of *Korah*, *Maſchil*.

Q. PRAY *inform me of the Author and particular Occaſion of this Pſalm?*

A. This is not certain. It is plain that it was compoſed with reſpect unto the calamitous Condition of the Church and People of *Iſrael*, whom it ſuppoſeth to be in a State of Captivity and Perſecution. But whether it was made by *David*, who foreſaw and foretold, by the Spirit of God, their future Captivity, and framed this for their Uſe in that State, or by ſome other holy Man of God, when they were actually in this Condition, is not determined, nor at all neceſſary for the underſtanding of it.

Q. *The 19th Verſe ſeems to want ſome Explanation.*

A. The Words are, *Though thou haſt broken us in the Place of Dragons*, &c. or rather, *into*, as others render it; which ſeems much more emphatical. And ſo this Verb may be rendered, *thou haſt humbled*, or *brought us down*, as all the Antients rendered it. Or, this is a pregnant Verb, as they call them, one Verb put for two; of which many Inſtances may be given. So it may be rendered, *thou haſt ſore broken us*, caſt us *into*: Or, *thou haſt*, *by ſore Breakings*, brought us *into*. By inflicting upon us one Breach after another, thou haſt brought us to this Paſs.——*The Place of Dragons, i. e.* A Place extremely deſolate, ſuch as Dragons frequent, *Iſaiah* xiii. 21. and xxxiv. 13. and xxxv. 7. and therefore full of Horror, Danger, and Miſchief. Thou haſt thrown us among People as fierce and cruel as Dragons.

PSALM XLV.

The Pſalmiſt celebrates the Beauty of Chriſt, *above that of the Children of Men; alſo his Terror and Conqueſt over his Enemies; of his everlaſting Throne and Unction over his Fellows; and the Church is invited to forſake her Father's Houſe, that* Chriſt *may delight in her; her Glory and Excellency by his Graces, which ſhall be remembred and praiſed for ever.*

To the chief Muſian upon *Shoſhannim*, for the Sons of *Korah*, *Maſchil*. A Song of Loves.

Q. I *Deſire you to explain the Title to this* Pſalm?

A. The Word *Shoſhannim* is alſo prefixed to *Pſal.* viii. lx. and lxix. and ſeems to be the Name of a Song or Tune, or Inſtrument of Muſick. It properly ſignifies *Lillies* or *Roſes*; which ſome apply to the Subject of the *Pſalm*, becauſe thoſe Flowers were uſed in Garlands, or otherwiſe in nuptial Solemnities, and becauſe *Chriſt* calls himſelf the *Lilly* and the *Roſe*, *Cant.* ii. 1. ——*A Song of Loves*; namely, of *Chriſt* and his Church. Or, *of the beloved ones*, *i. e.* the Virgins, who waited on the Bride, as ſome Men did on the Bridegroom, who thence were called his *Friends*, John iii. 29. In whoſe Name and Perſon this Pſalm was probably uttered.

Q. *What is the Subject Matter of this* Pſalm?

A. The ſubject Matter of this *Pſalm* is, by the Conſent of *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian*, antient and modern Interpreters, agreed to be the *Meſſias*, and his Marriage with the Church of God. It is an excellent prophetical Epithalamium or Wedding-Song; but there are many Things which do not agree with *Solomon* (ſome ſuppoſing this Pſalm to be made on Occaſion of *Solomon*'s marrying *Pharaoh*'s Daughter) ſuch as the warlike Poſture and Exploits, Verſes 3, 4, 5. and the Title of God in the next Verſe; which is appropriated to *Chriſt*, and affirmed to be incommunicable to any meer Creatures, *Hebrews* i. 8.

As the *Pſalm* is begun with the Celebration of the King's Praiſes, ſo it ends with it, and adds this important Circumſtance, that this nuptial Song ſhould not only ſerve for the preſent Solemnity, as others of that Kind do, but that it ſhould be remembered and ſung in all ſucceſſive Generations. This plainly ſhews it was not compoſed upon ſo ſlight and tranſitory Occaſion, as that of *Solomon*'s Marriage with *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, which was ſoon forgotten, and the *Iſraelites* had little Cauſe to remember it with any Satisfaction; but upon that great, glorious, and everlaſting Marriage between *Chriſt* and Church, of which this was moſt properly and litterally verified.

As the Reader cannot but be pleaſed with the Beauties that muſt ſtrike his Imagination in every Verſe of this divine Poem, we ſhall therefore give it him entire.

My Heart is inditing a good Matter; I ſpeak of the Things which I have made touching the King; my Tongue is the Pen of a ready Writer. Thou art fairer than the Children of Men; grace is poured into thy Lips; therefore God hath bleſſed thee for ever. Gird thy Sword upon thy Thigh, O moſt mighty, with thy Glory and thy Majeſty. And in thy Majeſty ride proſperouſly, becauſe of Truth and Meekneſs, and Righteouſneſs; and thy Right-Hand ſhall teach thee terrible Things. Thine Arrows are ſharp in the Heart of the King's Enemies; whereby the People fall under thee. Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the Scepter of thy Kingdom is a right Scepter. Thou loveſt Righteouſneſs, and hateſt Wickedneſs; therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladneſs above thy Fellows. All thy Garments ſmell of Myrrh and Aloes, and Caſſia; out of the ivory Palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. Kings Daughters were among thy honourable Women; upon thy Right-Hand did ſtand the Queen in Gold of Ophir. *Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider, and incline thine Ear; forget alſo thine own People, and thy Father's Houſe, So ſhall the King greatly deſire thy Beauty; for he is Lord, and worſhip thou him. And the Daughters of* Tyre *ſhall be there with a Gift, even the Rich among the People ſhall intreat thy Favour. The King's Daughter is all-glorious within; her cloathing is of wrought Gold. She ſhall be brought unto the King in Raiment of Needlework; the Virgins, her Companions, that follow her, ſhall be brought unto thee. With Gladneſs and Rejoycing ſhall they be brought; they ſhall enter into King's Palaces. Inſtead of thy Fathers ſhall be thy Children, whom thou mayeſt make Princes in all the Earth. I will make thy Name to be remembered in all Generations; therefore ſhall the People praiſe thee for ever and ever.*

PSALM XLVI.

The Confidence and ſafe Condition of the Church under God's Care, manifeſted in his wonderful Deliverances of her from her Enemies. He exhorts alſo to conſider it, and magnify his Name.

To the chief Muſician for the Sons of *Korah*, A Song upon *Alamoth*.

Q. HOW *do you interpret* Ver. 4. There is a River, the Streams whereof ſhall make glad the City of *God*?

A. He either ſpeaks of, or alludes to the River of *Kedron*, 2 *Sam.* xv. 23. *John* xviii. 1. and its two Streams or Rivulets flowing from it, *Gihon* and *Shiloah*, 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 30. *Iſa.* viii. 6. which being ſmall and contemptible, or ſtill or gentle Waters, are not unfitly oppoſed to the vaſt and unruly Waters of the Sea. He inſinuates the weak Condition of God's Church, as to outward Advantages, that they had not one Sea to oppoſe another, but only a ſmall River; which though in itſelf deſpicable, yet was ſufficient to refreſh and defend them in ſpite of all their Enemies. And as the *Sea*, and *Waters* thereof, Ver. 2, 3. are to be underſtood metaphorically, as all agree, ſo alſo, very probably, are this River and Streams: Which therefore may deſign the gracious Preſence and Aſſiſtance, and Bleſſing of the Lord (which is frequently deſcribed under the Name of *Waters*, as *Iſaiah* xi. 9. and xii. 3. *Zech.* xiv. 8, &c.) or the Lord himſelf, who is expreſsly ſaid to be unto the City of *Zion*, for its Defence, *a Place of broad Rivers and Streams*, *Iſaiah* xxxiii. 20, 21. which probably alludes to this Text, or at leaſt explains it.

PSALM XLVII.

The Church is exhorted to praiſe God, who ſubdues his Enemies, and gives her an excellent Inheritance. A Promiſe of calling and gathering the Gentiles.

To the chief Muſician, a *Pſalm* for the Sons of *Korah*.

Q. DOES *not the Subject of this* Pſalm *bear an Alluſion to ſome* Chriſtian *Doctrine?*

A. This *Pſalm* may ſeem to have been compoſed upon Occaſion of carrying the Ark, from the Houſe of *Obed-Edom* into the City of *Zion*, 2 *Sam.* vi. and 1 *Chron.* xiii. 16. But, as *Zion* was a Type of the Church, and the Ark a Type of *Chriſt*, ſo this hath a farther Reference, even to *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion into Heaven, and, as conſequent thereunto, to the ſpreading of his Kingdom in all the Parts and Nations of the World, as will plainly appear from the Matter of this *Pſalm*, wherein the Church is exhorted to praiſe God, who ſubdueth her Enemies, and gives her an excellent Inheritance, with a Promiſe of calling the *Gentiles*.

Q. *I ſhould be glad to have explained the 9th Verſe*, The Princes of the People are gathered together, even the People of the God of *Abraham*: For, the Shields of the Earth belong unto God?

A. The Princes of the People. Either 1. The Heads of the Tribes of *Iſrael*, who were gathered together to the Tabernacle, or Temple, upon ſolemn Feaſts. Or rather, 2. *The Princes* (or the *voluntary* and *willing* Ones, as this Word is rendered, *Pſ.* cx. 3.) of the *Gentiles*, who were here known by the Name of the People, Ver. 1, 3, who were divided in their Principles, Intereſts, and Religions, but are now united and gathered together unto *Chriſt*, laying their Scepters at his Feet, and jointly owning and promoting his Worſhip and Service. So he ſpeaks of the Converſion of the *Gentiles*; though he only mentions their Princes, becauſe their Converſion might ſeem to be moſt difficult in ſundry Reſpects, and therefore that being affirmed, the Converſion of their People, with, or after them, might very reaſonably be ſuppoſed — *The God of* Abraham. So he explains the former Clauſe, and ſhews what People he ſpeaks of; and it is obſervable, he doth not ſay *the People of* Abraham, leſt this ſhould be appropriated to the *Iſraelites*; but *the People of the God of* Abraham, *i. e.* who worſhip the God of *Abraham*, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*. So this is a Prophecy of the Converſion of the *Gentiles*; which is alſo intimated by the Name here us'd, which is not his old and firſt Name *Abram*, but his new Name *Abraham*, given him to ſignify, that he ſhould be *the Father of many Nations*, *Gen.* xvii. 5. Or theſe Words with the former, may be, and are by divers learned Interpreters render'd, *the Princes of the People* (*i. e.* of the *Gentiles*) *are* (*i. e.* ſhall be, as is uſual in prophetick Style) *gathered* unto (which Particle is ſometimes underſtood, as *Pſ.* v. 8. *Jer.* xxvi. 10. *Hoſ.* ii. 14.) *the People of the God of* Abraham, *i. e.* unto the *Jews*, and ſo both *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſhall be united in one Religion; and ſo God *ſhall reign over the Heathen, and be King of all the Earth*, as is here ſaid, Ver. 7, 8, and *all People* ſhall *clap* their *Hands* for Joy, as Ver. 1.———*Shields of the Earth.* Either 1. The Protection of the People of all the Earth. Or rather, 2. Their Princes or Rulers, who are fitly call'd Shields, *Hoſ.* iv. 18. becauſe by their Office they are, or ſhould be the common Parents and Protectors of all their People, to defend them from all Oppreſſions and Injuries. Theſe, ſaith he, are the *Lord's*, *i. e.* at his Diſpoſal, or ſubject to his Dominion, both as to their Hearts and Kingdoms. And ſo this is here conveniently added, as the Reaſon of that great and improbable Event, foretold in the foregoing Words, that the Princes of the People (which of all others were moſt lofty, wilful, and incorrigible) ſhould join and ſubject themſelves to the Lord, and to his Church. By this Means God ſhall be greatly glorify'd, and appear to be far above all the Princes of the World, and above all other Gods.

PSALM XLVIII.

The Prophet declares the Glory and Excellency of the Church, preſerved from her potent Enemies; for which God is glorified, and the Faithful invited to take Notice of its Beauty and Firmneſs, to tranſmit it to the following Generations.

A Song and *Pſalm* for the Sons of *Korah*.

Q. CAN *you inform me what particular Event gave Occaſion to the penning this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* was compoſed upon Occaſion of ſome eminent Deliverance, vouchſafed by God to the City of *Jeruſalem*, from ſome potent Enemy, or dreadful Danger; either that in *Jehoſhaphat*'s Time, 2 *Chron.* xx. or that under *Hezekiah*, 2 *Kings* xviii. 19. In both which Times there were holy Prophets, by ſome of whom this *Pſalm* might be made; deſcribing the Glory and Excellency of the Church under the Figure of *Jeruſalem*, preſerv'd from her potent Enemies, whereby God is glorify'd, with an Exhortation to all the Faithful to take Notice of, and conſider the Beauty and Stability of the Church, to tranſmit it for an everlaſting Remembrance.

But the Stile and Language of this *Pſalm* is ſo beautiful and poetical, that I can't help preſenting it to the Reader, in its own native Dreſs.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praiſed in the City of our God, in the Mountain of his Holineſs. Beautiful for Situation, the Joy of the whole Earth is Mount Zion, *on the Sides of the North, the City of the great King. God is known in her Palaces for Refuge. For lo, the Kings were aſſembled, they paſſed by together. They ſaw it, and ſo they marvelled, they were troubled, and haſted away. Fear took hold upon them there, and Pain, as of a Woman in Travel. Thou breakeſt the Ships of* Tarſhiſh *with an Eaſt-Wind. As we have heard, ſo have we ſeen in the City of the Lord of Hoſts, in the City of our God, God will eſtabliſh it for ever.* Selah. *We have thought of thy Loving-Kindneſs, O God, in the midſt of thy Temple. According to thy Name, O God, ſo is thy Praiſe unto the Ends of the Earth: thy Right-Hand is full of Righteouſneſs. Let Mount* Zion *rejoice, let the Daughters of* Judah *be glad, becauſe of thy Judgments. Walk about* Zion, *and go round about her: tell the Towers thereof. Mark ye well her Bulwarks, conſider her Palaces; that ye may tell it to the Generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our Guide even unto Death.*

PSALM XLIX.

The Pſalmiſt having ſtirred up all Men to Attention, ſhews their vain Truſt in Riches, and the contrary Truſt of the Faithful in God. He exhorts them not to fear the Proſperity of the Wicked, for it cannot deliver him from the Grave.

To the chief Muſician; a *Pſalm* for the Sons of *Korah.*

Q. *ON what Occaſion, do you imagine, was this* Pſalm *compoſed?*

A. This *Pſalm* was penn'd upon the ſame Occaſion with *Pſalm* xxxix, and lxxiii, *viz.* upon the Contemplation of the Affliction of the People of God, and of the Proſperity and Glory of ungodly Men. The Deſign is to ſtir up all Men to Attention, ſhewing their vain Truſt in Riches, and the holy Truſt and Confidence of the Faithful in God, who will raiſe them from the dead, and give them Life eternal; therefore exhorting the Godly, not to fear the Riches or Power of worldly Men.

Where ſhould I fear in the Days of Evil, when the Iniquity of my Heels ſhall compaſs me about? Verſe 5. The Meaning of the firſt Part of this Verſe is, That there is no ſufficient Cauſe, why he, or any good Man ſhould fear, which is to be underſtood of exceſſive and immoderate Fear, cauſing Dejection, Deſpondency, or Diſtruſt of God's Providence and Goodneſs. —— *In the Days of Evil.* Either 1. Of Sin; when Iniquity of all Sorts abounds. Or 2. Of Miſery; in Times of great Diſtreſs and Calamity, either publick or private, when wicked Men flouriſh, and good Men are oppreſſed and perſecuted. —— *The Iniquity of my Heels.* By which he underſtands, either 1. His Afflictions, which he might juſtly call the Puniſhment of his ſinful Actions; for Iniquity is commonly put for the Puniſhment of it, and the Heels are put for a Man's Footſteps, and metaphorically for one's Ways or Actions, as *Pſ.* lvi. 6. Or 2. *The Iniquity, i. e.* the violent and injurious Deſigns and Practices of his malicious and ungodly Enemies, who, as he here ſays, *did compaſs him about.* This Senſe is favour'd both by the *Syriac* and *Arabic* Interpreters; the former of whom render the Words thus, *the Iniquity of my Enemies hath compaſſed me*; and the latter thus, *when mine Enemies ſhall* compaſs me about: And by the main Scope of the *Pſalm*, which is to comfort himſelf and other good Men againſt that great Scandal of the Proſperity of the Wicked, and the Oppreſſion and Miſeries of the Righteous. But all the Difficulty is, why he calls this *the Iniquity of the Heels.* Thus taken; this Genitive Caſe, *of my Heels*, ſeems to note, not the efficient or meritorious Cauſe of this *Iniquity* or Puniſhment of it, but the Object about which this Iniquity is exercis'd; as Nouns in the Genitive Caſe are frequently taken. Thus, *the Spoil of the Poor*, Iſa. iii. 14. is not that Spoil which was made by them, but upon them. And *the Violence of the children of* Judah, as it is in the *Hebrew* Text, *Joel* iii. 19. is that which is done againſt them. Thus, *the Iniquity of my Heels*, is the Iniquity wherewith they compaſs and ſeek to trip up my Heels; whereof *David* often ſpeaks, as *Pſ.* xxii. 16. and xvii. 11. and lvi. 6. and lvii. 6. And therefore it is not ſtrange, that the Iniquity of his Enemies is here noted to be exerciſed about his *Heels* and *Footſteps*, as this Word ſignifies either, becauſe they malignantly obſerved all his Steps or Ways, that they might have Occaſion to load him with Reproaches, in Order to his Ruin; or becauſe they *purpoſed* to trip up his Heels, or to *overthrow his Goings*, as he complains, *Pſ.* cxl. 4. Beſides, the Words may be render'd, *the Iniquity of my Supplanters*; for the *Hebrew* Word rendered *Heels*, may be, and is by ſome learned Interpreters, taken for a Particle of that Verb, which ſignifies to *ſupplant*, or trip up the Heels, or circumvent; from whence *Jacob* had his Name. And this Character fitly agrees with *David's* Enemies, who were not only moſt malicious, but alſo very deceitful and treacherous, as he every-where complains.

PSALM L.

God comes with great Majeſty into his Church, and gathers his Saints together; teſtifies he has no Pleaſure in Ceremonies, but in Sincerity of Obedience; threatens the Wicked for contemning his Word; and ſhews who it is that glorifies him.

A *Pſalm* of *Aſaph.*

Q. *THIS* Pſalm *is ſaid to be* Aſaph's; *pray who was he?*

A. Aſaph was not only the chief of the ſacred Singers, 1 *Chron.* xv. 16. and xxv. 2. but alſo a Prophet, 1 *Chron.* xxv. 1. and a Compoſer of ſome *Pſalms*, as is evident from 2 *Chron.* xxix. 30. and therefore, as is moſt probable, of thoſe that go under his Name.

Q. *What has* Aſaph *principally in View in this* Pſalm?

A. His Deſign in this *Pſalm* is partly to reprove, and proteſt againſt the common Miſcarriages of many Profeſſors of Religion, who ſatisfied their own Conſciences, and fancied, they pleaſed God with their external and ceremonial Performances, notwithſtanding their groſs Neglect of thoſe more neceſſary and fundamental Duties of Piety, Juſtice, and Charity; partly, to inſtruct Men concerning the Nature of the true and acceptable Worſhip of God; and partly, to prepare the *Iſraelites* for that Change, which ſhould be made in the outward Form and Way of God's Worſhip, under, and by the *Meſſias*, and of the Abolition of the legal Sacrifices, which God did not appoint for his own Need, nor for his People's perpetual Uſe.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in this* Pſalm?

A. The Prophet introduces God, as coming with great Majeſty to judge his People in a ſolemn Manner, and gathering together his Saints; teſtifying, he has no Pleaſure in Ceremonies, but in Sincerity of Obedience, threatning the Wicked for deſpiſing his Word, and ſhewing, that the juſt Man ſhould enjoy that true and everlaſting Happineſs, prepared for the true Servants of the Lord, that is, ſhould enjoy the Preſence of the tremendous God of Heaven and Earth, ſhould converſe with Angels and miniſtring Spirits. Nor was this Happineſs to be tranſitory or fading, it was to be eternal, and without ceaſing, as God has often declared, therefore, let us lay up our Treaſures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Ruſt doth corrupt, and where Thieves cannot break through and ſteal. What ſublime Ideas has the *Pſalmiſt* of the Majeſty of Heaven!

The mighty God, even the Lord hath ſpoken, and

and called the Earth from the riſing of the Sun, unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the Perfection of Beauty, God hath ſhined. Our God ſhall come, and ſhall not keep Silence: A Fire ſhall devour before him, and it ſhall be very tempeſtuous round about him. He ſhall call to the Heavens from above, and to the Earth, that he may judge his People. Gather my Saints together unto me: Thoſe that have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice. And the Heavens ſhall declare his Righteouſneſs: For God is Judge himſelf. Selah. *Hear, O my People, and I will ſpeak;* O Iſrael, *and I will teſtify againſt thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-Offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no Bullock out of thy Houſe; nor He-Goats out of thy Folds. For every Beaſt of the Foreſt is mine, and the cattle upon a thouſand Hills. I know all the Fowls of the Mountain; and the wild Beaſts of the Field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the World is mine, and the Fulneſs thereof. Will I eat the Fleſh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats? Offer unto God Thankſgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the moſt High. And call upon me in the Day of Trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.*

PSALM LI.

David *prays to God for the Remiſſion of his original and actual Sins, whereof he makes a deep Confeſſion; and for the Renovation of his Holy Spirit, to ſupport himſelf, and inſtruct others; promiſing alſo ſincere, and unfeigned Thankfulneſs; with a Prayer for the Good of the whole Church.*

To the chief Muſician, a *Pſalm* of *David,* when *Nathan* the Prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to *Bath-ſheba.*

Q. PRAY *explain the Title of this* Pſalm?

A. To the chief Muſician; i. e. to be ſung by him, and other ſacred Muſicians, publickly in the Temple, through all Ages; that his Repentance might be as manifeſt and publick as his Crime and Scandal was ——— *When the Prophet* Nathan *came to him.* After his Conſcience was awakened by *Nathan's* Words, 2 *Sam.* xii. and *Nathan* was gone, *David* falls very ſeriouſly upon the Practice of ſincere Repentance, and digeſted his Meditation into this *Pſalm.*

PSALM LII.

David *reproves the Inſolence of* Doeg; *propheſies his Deſtruction; the Righteous rejoice at it. He ſhews the Strength and Hope of this wicked Man, but places his own Truſt and Confidence in God, and praiſes him.*

To the chief Muſician, *Maſchil,* a *Pſalm* of *David,* when *Doeg* the *Edomite* came and told *Saul,* and ſaid unto him, *David* is come to the Houſe of *Ahimelech.*

Q. IS *there nothing in this* Pſalm *that needs Explanation?*

A. David reproves the Inſolence of *Doeg* the *Edomite,* and his treacherous Perfidiouſneſs, denouncing on him the Judgment of God, whereat the Righteous would rejoice. He ſheweth the Strength and vain Hope of this wicked Man, but places his own Truſt and Confidence in God's conſtant Mercy and Goodneſs; for this is the wiſeſt and ſafeſt Courſe, as the Saints, whoſe Judgments only ought to be valued, have ever found it by their own Experience; however, *Doeg* and his Accomplices may account it Folly, and the ready Way to Ruin. But the laſt Words of the 9th Verſe, *for it is good before thy Saints,* may properly enough be joined with the preceding Clauſe, thus, *I will wait upon thy Name before the Saints* which ſeems to ſuit beſt with the firſt Clauſe, *I will praiſe thee;* which ſurely, was meant of praiſing God publickly, or before the Saints; and then it follows properly. And in the mean Time, *I will wait on thy Name in the Preſence of thy Saints,* who ſhall plainly ſee that I do ſo by the whole Courſe of my Life. And thoſe Words, *for it is good,* may be incloſed with a *Parentheſis,* as is very uſual in Scripture, and may be referred, either to God's Name, *for thy Name is good;* or to *wait on it, for it is good to wait upon it.*

PSALM LIII.

David *deſcribes the Atheiſm and Corruption of Men, and convinces the Wicked by the Light of their own Conſcience. He glories in the Salvation of God.*

To the chief Muſician upon *Mahalath, Maſchil,* a *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. IS *not this a Repetition of ſome other* Pſalm *in this Book?*

A. This *Pſalm,* ſome few Words excepted, is wholly the ſame with *Pſalm* xiv. and therefore the Reader is referred thither. The Compiler or Compilers of *David's Pſalms,* had ſo great a Reverence for their Compoſer, whom they knew to be guided by divine Inſpiration, that they would not loſe any of his Fragments, and therefore, repeated this *Pſalm* with the Variations he had made.

PSALM LIV.

David, *complaining of his Oppreſſions, prays for God's Protection, and for the righteous Puniſhment of his Enemies; placing his Hope in God's Help, he promiſes a free Sacrifice of Thankſgiving.*

To the chief Muſician on *Neginoth, Maſchil,* a *Pſalm* of *David,* when the *Ziphims* came and ſaid to *Saul, Doth not* David *hsde himſelf with us?*

Q. PRAY *explain Ver.* 7. For he hath delivered me out of all Trouble; mine Eye hath ſeen his Deſire upon mine Enemies?

A. He ſpeaks of it as a Thing already done; either to expreſs his Aſſurance of it, or, becauſe this *Pſalm* was made after it was done.——— *His Deſire,* or *thy Vengeance;* which may be underſtood out of Ver. 5. But there is no Neceſſity of any Supplement, the Words in the *Hebrew* run thus, *Mine Eye hath looked upon mine Enemies:* Either with Delight, as this Phraſe ſignifies, *Pſal.* xxii. 17, *&c.* or without Fear or Shame. I ſhall not be afraid to look them in the Face, having God on my Side.

PSALM LV.

David *being ſurrounded with Danger and Diſtreſs, complains to God; prays, that he would fruſtrate* *the Practice of his cruel and falſe Enemies; and ſtrengthens himſelf with God's Protection, and his Enemies utter Deſtruction.*

To the chief Muſician on *Neginoth*, *Maſchil*, a *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. I *Would know the right Senſe of Ver.* 9. Deſtroy, O Lord, and divide their Tongues; for I have ſeen Violence and Strife in the City.

A. Divide their Tongues; that is, deſtroy them by dividing their Speech, as thou didſt at *Babel*; their Votes, Opinions, and Counſels; which was eminently done among *Abſalom*'s Followers, 2 *Sam.* xvii. *For I have ſeen Violence and Strife*; or, *I do ſee* or *perceive*, by certain and general Report, that Injuſtice, Fraud, Oppreſſion and Contention, bear Rule there, inſtead of that Juſtice and Peace, which I eſtabliſhed and maintained in it.—— *In the City*. Either 1. In *Keilah*, where *David* thought to abide; or 2. In *Gibeah*, where *Saul* had his Abode; or rather, 3. In *Jeruſalem*, which is called *the City*, by Way of Eminency, and which in *Abſalom*'s Time was the chief Seat of Rebellion, and a meer Sink of Sin. And this Circumſtance is noted as an Aggravation of their Wickedneſs, that it was committed in that City, where the Throne and Seat of publick Juſtice was; and where God was in a ſpecial Manner preſent and worſhipped; and where they had great Opportunities, both for the Knowledge and Practice of their ſeveral Duties.

Pſalm LVI.

David, *praying to God, complains of his Sufferings, and magnifies his Word; is confident of God's fulfilling it, and promiſes to praiſe him for it.*

To the chief Muſician upon *Jonath-elem-rechokim, Michtam of* David, *when the* Philiſtines *took him in* Gath.

Q. THERE *ſeems ſome Difficulty in underſtanding the Title of this* Pſalm; *which pray explain?*

A. Jonath-elem-rechokim, is ſuppoſed to be the Name of a Song. But many render it as the Words ſignify, *concerning the dumb Dove afar off.* Which agrees very well to *David* in his preſent Circumſtances. He calls himſelf a *Dove* for his Innocence, and Folly (which is aſcrib'd to the Dove, *Hoſ.* vii. 11.) in caſting himſelf into this Snare; and for his Vexation and Perſecution by his Enemies, thoſe Birds of Prey; and for his ſad and mournful Poſture. *Silent* he was, and it was Prudence ſo to be in that Place and Condition; for he was remote enough from his Father's Houſe, and from God's Sanctuary where his Heart was.———*In* Gath; where he took Refuge, when chas'd by *Saul*'s reſtleſs Malice; and where the following Meditations came into his Mind, which, after his Eſcape, he digeſted into this Order and *Pſalm.*

Being chas'd by the Fury of his Enemies into a ſtrange Country, *David* was a dumb Dove, not ſeeking Revenge. He ſheweth that it was now Time for God to help him, Man being againſt him; he relies intirely upon God's Promiſe, though he does not perceive immediate Help. He declares, that, having receiv'd the Benefits he requir'd, he was bound to pay his promis'd Vows and Thankſgiving, as mindful of the great and marvellous Mercies of God.

Pſalm LVII.

David, *in Prayer, flies to God for Protection and Favour in his dangerous Condition; deſcribes the wicked Projects of his Enemies, and encourages himſelf, from God's Mercy, to praiſe him.*

To the chief Muſician, *Al-taſchith*, *Michtam* of *David*, when he fled from *Saul* in the Cave.

Q. WHAT *means the Word* Al-taſchith?

A. Al-taſchith ſignifies, *deſtroy not*. Which ſome think to be a Preface, containing the Sum of the *Pſalm*, and reminding *David* of his great Diſtreſs, in which he then was; which obliged him to make fervent Prayers to God, that he would not deſtroy him, nor give him up into the Hands of his Enemies, who always deſign'd and deſir'd to deſtroy him, and now ſeem'd to have a fair Opportunity of effecting it.

Pſalm LVIII.

David *reproving wicked Judges, deſcribes their Nature, and prays God to puniſh and deſtroy them, for his own Glory, and the Joy of the Righteous.*

To the chief Muſician, *Al-taſchith*, *Michtam* of *David.*

Q. BE *pleas'd to give me your Senſe of Ver.* 9. Before your Pots can feel the Thorns, he ſhall take them away as with a Whirlwind, both living, and in his Wrath?

A. Before your Pots can feel the Thorns, i. e. before your Pots can be thoroughly heated. —— *He ſhall take them away*; *i. e.* mine Enemies; whoſe ſudden Deſtruction he deſcribes under this Similitude. —— *Both living, and in his Wrath.* Heb. *as living* (*i. e.* alive, as he did *Korah*; the Particle *as* being here not a Note of Similitude, but of Truth or Aſſeveration, as *John* i. 14.) *as in Wrath*, *i. e.* as a Man mov'd with great Wrath deſtroys his Enemy without Mercy, and is ready to devour him alive, if it were poſſible: Or, *both that which is raw* (as the *Hebrew* Word *Chai* ſignifies, *Lev.* xiii. 16. 1 *Sam.* ii. 15. namely, the raw Fleſh, ſuppos'd to be in the Pot to be boil'd) *and the burning Fire.* There is, indeed, great Variety of Conſtruction and Interpretation of theſe *Hebrew* Words; and no Wonder, conſidering the Conciſeneſs of that Language, and that this is a proverbial Speech; nor is it of any great Importance; becauſe it is not in any great Point of Faith, and becauſe the Senſe of it is agreed on, the only Difference being about the Manner and Ground of the Phraſe.

Pſalm LIX.

David *prays for Deliverance from his Enemies; and relates his own Innocence, and their Cruelty. He truſts in God, and prays againſt them; he promiſes Thankfulneſs to God, for being his Defence and Refuge.*

To the chief Muſician, *Al-taſchith*, *Michtam* of *David*; when *Saul* ſent, and they watch'd the Houſe to kill him.

Q. THERE *ſeems ſome Obſcurity in the Senſe of Ver.* 13. *which I ſhall be glad to have clear'd up?*

A. The Words run thus; *Conſume them in Wrath, conſume them, that they may not be; and let them know that God ruleth in* Jacob, *unto the Ends of the Earth.*

Earth.——*That they may not be*; namely, in the Land of the Living any more; as this Phraſe is frequently underſtood. ——*And let them know, i. e.* experimentally, and to their Coſt,——*That God ruleth*; namely, over and above them: That though *Saul* be King, yet God is his Superior in Power and Authority, and all Things ſhall be diſpoſed among us, not as pleaſeth *Saul*, as his Paraſites ſuggeſt to him, but as God will; and therefore I ſhall be preſerved, and, in due Time, crowned, in ſpite of all that *Saul* or his Forces can do againſt me.——*In Jacob, i. e.* in the Land, and over the People of *Iſrael*, whoſe King and Governor he is in a peculiar Manner.——*Unto the Ends of the Earth.* Which Words may be referred, either, 1. To God's ruling; let them know *that God ruleth*, not only in *Jacob*, but alſo *to the Ends of the Earth.* Or, 2. To Mens knowing, *let them*, or *let Men know even to the Ends of the Earth, that God ruleth in* Jacob: Let thy Judgments be ſo manifeſt and dreadful in the Deſtruction of thy wicked Enemies, that not only the *Iſraelites*, but even the remote Nations of the World may ſee it, and acknowledge thy Power and Providence in it. The Senſe is, That by thoſe eminent and extraordinary Diſcoveries of thy Power, Wiſdom and Juſtice, it may appear to all Men, that thou art no puny, inferior or topical God, like the Gods of the Heathens, whoſe Government is confined to a narrow Compaſs, but the high and mighty God, and the great Ruler of the whole World.

PSALM LX.

The Pſalmiſt, complaining of former Judgments acknowledges God's preſent Mercy; comforting himſelf in the Promiſes, prays for Help, and truſts therein.

To the chief Muſician upon *Shuſhan-eduth*, *Michtam* of *David*, to teach, when he ſtrove with *Aram-naharaim* and with *Aram-zobah*, when *Joab* returned, and ſmote of *Edom*, in the Valley of *Salt*, twelve thouſand.

Q. P*RAY explain the ſeveral Terms made uſe of in the Title to this Pſalm?*

A. Shuſhan-eduth, ſeems to be the Name of an Inſtrument, Song or Tune, then well known, but now quite forgotten; it may be rendered, *The Lilly*, or *Roſe of the Teſtimony*, or *Oracle*: But why it was ſo called, is a Matter of mere Conjecture. ——*To teach*, namely, in an eminent Manner; or for the ſpecial Inſtruction of God's Church and People in ſome Points of great Moment; as of the Calamities of the Church, and the certainty of God's Promiſes of Deliverance, on the Conditions of Faith, and Obedience. Or, whereas other Songs were to be learned by the *Levites*, or ſome of them; this poſſibly was one of them which the People alſo were to be taught, and were to ſing upon Occaſion, becauſe of the publick and general Concernment which they all had in the Matter herein contained.——*Aram-naharaim*; or *the Syrians* (ſo called from *Aram*, the Son of *Sem*, *Gen.* x. 22.) *of the two Rivers*, or of *Meſopotamia*, the Country between thoſe great and famous Rivers, the *Tygris* and *Euphrates*.——*Aram-zobah*; or *the Syrians of Zobah*, Part of *Syria*, ſo called, 2 *Sam.* viii. 5, 12.——*When* Joab *returned, and ſmote of* Edom *in the Valley of* Salt, *twelve thouſand.* This Report ſeems not to agree with the Hiſtories to which this *Pſalm* is ſuppoſed to relate, 2 *Sam.* viii. 13. neither in the Numbers ſlain, which are here only 12000, and there 18000; nor in the Perſons to whom this Victory is aſcribed, who is *Joab* here; *David*, 2 *Sam.* viii. 13. and *Abiſhai*, 1 *Chron.* xviii. 12. neither in the Perſons ſlain, who are *Edomites*, 1 *Chron.* xviii. 12. but *Syrians* here, and 2 *Sam.* viii. 13. But theſe Difficulties may be eaſily reſolved by theſe Conſiderations, 1. That *David* being King, and *Joab* General of all his Forces, and *Abiſhai* his Lieutenant-General, as to a conſiderable Part of the Army, the ſame Victory may well be aſcribed to any, or every one of them; as it is uſually done in the *Roman* and *Grecian* Hiſtories. 2. The *Syrians* and *Edomites* were united in this War. 3. That 12,000 might be ſlain in the pitched Battle, and the reſt by their Purſuers in their Flight. 4. That theſe ſeveral Places may ſpeak of ſeveral Fights.

David having obtainod Victory of God againſt his Enemies, doth here compare the former ſad Condition of the Land, with the preſent happy Change under his Reign; he triumphs at God's Aſſiſtance and Promiſes, praying for, and reſting aſſured of the farther fulfilling thereof, againſt the reſt of his Enemies; for without the Help of the Almighty, vain are the Efforts of Men.

PSALM XLI.

David, *in great Danger, flies to God for Deliverance, upon Experience of his former Love; vows perpetual Service, for having heard his Prayers; and aſſuring himſelf of long Life, promiſes Thankfulneſs.*

To the chief Muſician on *Neginah*, A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. H*OW do you underſtand* Ver. 6. Thou wilt prolong the King's Life; and his Years, as many Generations.

A. He calls himſelf King, either, 1. Becauſe he was actually King, though *Abſalom* uſurped the Throne. Or, 2. Becauſe he was deſigned and anointed to be King; and by calling himſelf *King*, he ſupports himſelf under his preſent Streights, and declares his Confidence of God's Promiſe of the Kingdom to him. Yet we muſt not think that *David* did commonly and publickly call himſelf *King*, which had neither been true nor convenient for his Affairs: But this *Pſalm* was either compoſed while *Saul* lived, or at leaſt was only penned for his private Uſe and Comfort, and not *committed to the chief Muſician*; which, indeed, it could not be till *David* had the Kingdom, and the Inſpection of the ſacred Muſick and Service of the Tabernacle.——*And his Years as many Generations*; namely, as long as if he had had a Leaſe of his Life and Reign for many Ages. Thus he ſpeaks, partly becauſe his Kingdom was not like *Saul's*, a Matter of one Age, expiring with his Life, but eſtabliſhed to him and his Heirs for ever; and partly, becauſe *Chriſt*, his Son and Heir, and in his own Perſon, ſhould poſſeſs the Kingdom for ever.

PSALM LXII.

David *profeſſes his Confidence in God, to the Diſcouragement of his Enemies, but to the Encouragement of the Godly. No Truſt in Man or worldly Things,*

Things, but in God, to whom Power, Mercy and Juſtice belong.

To the chief Muſician, to *Jeduthun*, A Pſalm of *David.*

Q. G*IVE me the Interpretation of* Ver. 2. Alſo unto thee, O Lord, belongeth Mercy; for thou rendereſt to every Man according to his Work.

A. The Word *Mercy* in the Text ſignifies *Benignity*, or Readineſs to do Good. Thou art no leſs willing than able to defend and preſerve all that put their Truſt in thee. —— *For*, or *therefore*: For the following Words ſeem to be either a Reaſon, or Proof of, or an Indifference from the two foregoing Properties of God, *Power* and *Mercy.* God is almighty, therefore he can eaſily ſubdue and deſtroy all his and mine ungodly Enemies, and recompence unto them all their malicious and wicked Practices. He is alſo mild and merciful, and therefore will pardon good Mens Failings, and graciouſly reward me and others of his People, according to our Integrity. ——— *According to his Work.* Thou rendereſt to every Man according to the Nature and Quality, though not according to the Proportion of their Works, whether they be good or bad. This, as he is obliged to do by his holy Nature, and by that Reſpect which he oweth to his own Glory, ſo he is able to do it, being omnipotent, and willing to do it to the godly (which was the only Thing to be doubted, becauſe of their manifold and great Corruptions and Imperfections) becauſe he is merciful and gracious.

PSALM LXIII.

David, *in the Wilderneſs, is complaining of his Baniſhment from God's Houſe, and longs for it. His Manner of bleſſing God. His Experience, Hope, and Delight in God; comforts himſelf, that his Enemies ſhall be deſtroyed, and that he ſhall be in Safety.*

A *Pſalm* of *David*, when he was in the Wilderneſs of *Judah.*

Q. T*HE 11th Verſe ſeems ſomewhat obſcure; wherefore pray explain it?*

A. The Text runs thus: *But the King ſhall rejoice in God, every one that ſweareth by him ſhall glory; but the Mouth of them that ſpeak Lies ſhall be ſtopped.* —— *The King.* I am already anointed King, and who ſhall be actually King, when theſe mine Enemies are fallen by the Sword. He ſpeaks of himſelf in the third Perſon, either out of Modeſty, or out of Prudence, becauſe it was ambiguous, and might be underſtood, either of himſelf, or of *Saul*, to avoid the Envy of the Expreſſion, if this *Pſalm* was compoſed before he was King.— *Sweareth by him.* Either, 1. By the King; by whom they ſometimes did ſwear, as *Gen.* xlii. 15. 2 *Sam.* xv. 21. But they alſo ſwore by ſome other Perſons of Eminence, tho' under the King, as 1 *Sam.* i. 26. and xx. 3. Nor is it likely, that the *Pſalmiſt* would juſtify thoſe Kinds of Oaths, this Practice of ſwearing by one's Name, being accounted a Part of that Worſhip which belongs to God, both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament.* If this is meant of the King, it might better be rendered, *that ſwearing to* (for ſo the Particle *Beth* is ſometimes uſed) *him*, as Subjects uſed to ſwear Homage to their Prince: So the Senſe is, All thoſe who ſhall own me for their King. 2. By God, who was laſt mentioned; who ſweareth by the Name of God, namely, *in Truth and Judgment, and Righteouſneſs*; *ſwearing* being often put for the whole Worſhip of God, whereof it is a conſiderable Part, and *Swearers* by God for Worſhippers of him, as *Iſa.* xix. 18. —— *Shall glory, i. e.* Shall rejoice in my Deliverance and Exaltation, both for their Reſpect to the Honour and Service of God, which I ſhall advance, and for the Benefits which all good Men, and the whole Kingdom ſhall feel by my Government; whereas, in *Saul's* Time the vileſt Men were exalted, and good Men oppreſſed and perſecuted, and the whole Kingdom groaned under his Tyranny. —— *They ſpeak Lies*; who now make it their Buſineſs to invent or ſpread lying and ſlnaderous Reports concerning me and others of God's People. ——— *Shall be ſtopped.* I ſhall ſeverely puniſh and reſtrain ſuch wicked Practices.

PSALM LXIV.

The Pſalmiſt *deſcribes the crafty and wicked Practice of his Enemies; prays God for his Guard and Deliverance; and foretels their utter Ruin, to the Honour of Gad, and Joy of the Righteous.*

To the chief Muſician. A Pſalm of *David.*

Q. I*S there any Thing particularly obſervable in this* Pſalm?

A. The Contents of this *Pſalm* plainly ſhew, that it was made in a Time when *David* was greatly diſtreſſed and reproached; wbich he was both under *Saul*, and in the Time of *Abſalom's* Rebellion. He complains of his Enemies, and deſcribing their crafty, cruel and wicked Practices, he prays unto God for Protection and Deliverance, foretelling their utter Ruin, to the Honour of God, and Joy of the Righteous; not out of Malice and Ill-will to the Perſons of their Enemies, but ſolely for the Glory of God, which, by this Means, is fully vindicated, and greatly advanced.

PSALM LXV.

David *praiſes God for ſpiritual Bleſſings, and extols the Happineſs of thoſe who dwell in his Courts; and expatiates on the divine Goodneſs many ways ſhewn to the Children of Men.*

To the chief Muſician. A Pſalm and Song of *David.*

Q. W*HAT is the Deſign of this* Pſalm?—

A. The Deſign of this *Pſalm* ſeems to be to declare the great and glorious Work of divine Providence, both towards the Church and Land of his People, and towards the reſt of Mankind. God is praiſed for ſpiritual Bleſſings, as hearing Prayer, and purging away Sin, and for the Happineſs of thoſe who dwell in his Courts; as alſo for temporal Mercies, Bleſſings and Benefits, which he imparteth upon Mankind in General, both by governing the Word, and by the Abundance of bodily Neceſſities. The *Pſalmiſt* ſhews that all the Order of Nature is a Teſtimony of God's Love towards us, who cauſeth all Creatures to ſerve our Neceſſity.

By terrible Things in Righteouſneſs, wilt thou anſwer us, O God of our Salvation; who art the Confidence of all the Ends of the Earth, and of them that are afar off upon the Sea. Which, by his Strength ſetteth faſt the Mountains; being girded *with Power. Which ſtilleth the Noiſe of the Seas, the Noiſe of their Waves, and the Tumult of the People. They alſo that dwell in the uttermoſt Parts, are afraid at thy Tokens; thou makeſt the Out-goings of the Morning and Evening to rejoice. Thou viſiteſt the Earth, and watereſt it; thou greatly enricheſt with the River of God, which is full of Water; thou prepareſt them Corn, when thou haſt ſo provided for it. Thou watereſt the Ridges thereof abundantly; thou ſettleſt the Furrows thereof; thou makeſt it ſoft with Showers, thou bleſſeth the ſpringing thereof. Thou crowneſt the Year with thy Goodneſs, and thy Paths drop Fatneſs. They drop upon the Paſtures of the Wilderneſs; and the little Hills rejoice on every Side. The Paſtures are clothed with Flocks; the Valleys alſo are covered over with Corn; they ſhout for Joy, they alſo ſing.*

Pſalm LXVI.

The Prophet exhorts all to praiſe God for his wonderful Works, eſpecially for delivering his Church out of all Troubles. He promiſes Thanſgiving to God, and to pay the Vows he made in Trouble; and declares God's ſpecial Goodneſs to himſelf.

To the chief Muſician, A Song or Pſalm.

Q. W*HO was the Author of this* Pſalm, *and when was it compoſed?*

A. The Author and Time of compoſing this *Pſalm*, are uncertain. This is plain, and enough for our Underſtanding of it, that it was made upon Occaſion of ſome great and glorious Deliverance afforded to the *Iſraelites*, after and out of ſome grievous and general Calamity, and as ſome, not improbably conceive, that out of *Babylon*. Every Sentence diſcovers the moſt elevated Piety of a Soul devoting itſelf to the Praiſe of God.

Make a joyful Noiſe unto God, all ye Lands. Sing forth the Honour of his Name; make his Praiſe glorious. Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy Works? through the Greatneſs of thy Power ſhall thine Enemies ſubmit themſelves unto thee. All the Earth ſhall worſhip thee, and ſhall ſing unto thee, they ſhall ſing to thy Name. Selah. *Come and ſee the Works of God; he is terrible in his doing toward the Children of Men. He turned the Sea into dry Land; they went through the Flood on Foot, there did we rejoice in him. He ruleth by his Power for ever, his Eyes behold the Nations; let not the Rebellious exalt themſelves;* Selah. *O bleſs our God, ye People, and make the Voice of his Praiſe to be heard. Which holdeth our Soul in Life, and ſuffereth not our Feet to be moved. For thou, O God haſt proved us; thou haſt tried us, as Silver is tried. Thou broughteſt us into the Net, thou laideſt Affliction upon our Loyns. Thou haſt cauſed Men to Ride over our Heads, he went through Fire and through Water; but thou broughteſt us out into a wealthy Place. I will go into thy Houſe with Burnt-offerings; I will pay thee my Vows, which my Lips have uttered, and my Mouth hath ſpoken when I was in Trouble. I will offer unto thee Burnt-ſacrifices of Fatlings, with the Incenſe of Rams; I will offer Bullocks with Goats;* Selah. *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul. I cried unto him with my Mouth, and he was extolled with my Tongue. If I regard Iniquity in my Heart; the Lord will not hear me. But verily God hath heard me, he hath heard me, he hath attended to the Voice of my Prayer. Bleſſed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his Mercy from me.*

Pſalm LXVII.

The Church prays for the Enlargement of the Kingdom of God, to the Joy of the Nations, and for the Increaſe of ſpiritual and temporal Bleſſings.

To the chief Muſician on *Neginoth*. A Pſalm or Song.

Q. W*HAT is the Subject purſued in this Pſalm?*

A. This Pſalm contains a Prayer for the Church of *Iſrael*, as alſo for the *Gentile* World, whoſe Converſion is prophetically deſcribed; and that when the People of the Earth ſhall be converted to the Worſhip and Service of the true God, he will take away his Curſe from the Earth, and cauſe it to yield them abundance of all Sorts of Fruit. Under which one Bleſſing, promiſed under the Law, to them who obey God, all other Bleſſings, both temporal and ſpiritual are comprehended, as is very uſual in the *Old Teſtament*.

Pſalm LXVIII.

At the removing the Ark, David *exhorts to praiſe the Lord for his wonderful Power and Love in delivering his People out of* Egypt, *leading them through the Wilderneſs, ſubduing their Enemies, and chuſing* Zion *for his Habitation. He bleſſes God for his Judgments on his Church's Enemies, for his Promiſes to his People, and for his Threats to the Cruel. The Kingdoms of the Earth are called upon to ſing to the Lord, whoſe Power and Majeſty is heard in the Heavens, and whoſe Strength and Excellency is over* Iſrael.

To the chief Muſician, A Pſalm or Song of *David*.

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve concerning this Pſalm?*

A. The Occaſion of this *Pſalm* ſeems to have been *David*'s Tranſlation of the Ark to *Zion*, which was managed with great Solemnity and Devotion, and celebrated with ſome *Pſalms*, and this among the reſt; for the firſt Words are the very ſame which *Moſes* appointed for ſuch Occaſions, *Numb.* x. 35. and the following Verſes purſue the ſame Matter with the firſt. Thence he falls into a Deſcription of ſome of the excellent Properties and glorious Works of the God to whom this Ark belonged. But as *David* knew that both himſelf and the Ark were Types of *Chriſt*, and that the Church and People of *Iſrael* were a Type of the *Catholick* Church, conſiſting of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and that the legal Adminiſtrations and Actions were Types of thoſe of the Goſpel; he therefore, by the Spirit of Prophecy, looked through and beyond the preſent Actions and Types, into the great Myſteries of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, and of the ſpecial Privileges of the *Chriſtian* Church, and of the Converſion of the *Gentiles* unto God, and therefore intermixeth ſome Paſſages, which directly and immediately belong to thoſe Things, although the Words be ſo ordered, that they carry a manifeſt Alluſion to the preſent Actions, and may, in ſome Sort be applied to them, tho' in a more obſcure, improper, and ſecondary Senſe. Nor is it ſtrange, that in the ſame *Pſalm* there is ſuch a Mixture of Things, whereof ſome belong only to the Action or Events of that Time, and ſome only to *Chriſt* and Goſpel Times; if it be conſidered that the *Pſalmiſt*, in himſelf doth frequently expreſs divers, and thoſe contrary Paſſions and Diſpoſitions, as Hope and Fear, *&c.* in the ſame *Pſalm*, and ſometimes in the ſame Verſe; and eſpecially that the ſacred Penmen, in the Compoſition of theſe Writings, were wholly inſpired, governed, and moved to ſpeak of the higheſt Myſteries of the Goſpel, even ſuch Things as they themſelves did not fully underſtand, as appears from 1 *Pet.* i. 10, 11. But let the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeak for himſelf.

Let God ariſe, let his Enemies be ſcattered; let them alſo that hate him, flee before him. As Smoke is driven away, ſo drive them away; as Wax melteth before the Fire, ſo let the Wicked periſh at the Preſence of God. But let the Righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God, ſing Praiſes to his Name; extol him that rideth upon the Heavens, by his Name JAH, *and rejoice before him. A Father of the Fatherleſs, and a Judge of the Widow, is God in his holy Habitation. God ſetteth the Solitary in Families; he bringeth out thoſe which are bound with Chains, but the Rebellious dwell in a dry Land. O God, when thou wenteſt forth before thy People; when thou didſt march through the Wilderneſs.* Selah. *The Earth ſhook, the Heavens alſo dropped at the Preſence of God; even* Sinai *itſelf was moved at the Preſence of God, the God of* Iſrael. *Thou, O God, didſt ſend a plentiful Rain, whereby thou didſt confirm thine Inheritance, when it was weary. Thy Congregation hath dwelt therein, thou O God, haſt prepared of thy Goodneſs for the Poor. The Lord gave the Word, great was the Company of thoſe that publiſhed it. Kings of Armies did flee apace; and ſhe that tarried at home divided the Spoil. Though ye have lien among the Pots, yet ſhall ye be as the Wings of a Dove covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold. When the Almighty ſcattered Kings in it, it was White as Snow in* Salmon. *The Hill of God is as the Hill of* Baſhan, *an high Hill, as the Hill of* Baſhan. *Why leap ye ye high Hills? this is the Hill which God deſireth to dwell in, yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever. The Chariots of God are twenty thouſand, even Thouſands of Angels; the Lord is among them as in* Sinai, *in the holy Place. Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led Captivity captive; thou haſt received Gifts for Men; yea, for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Bleſſed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with Benefits, even the God of our Salvation.* Selah. *He that is our God, is the God of Salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the Iſſues from Death. But God ſhall wound the Head of his Enemies; and the hairy Scalp of ſuch a one as goeth on ſtill in his Treſpaſſes. The Lord ſaid, I will bring again from* Baſhan, *I will bring my People again from the Depths of the Sea: That thy Foot may be dipped in the Blood of thine Enemies, and the Tongue of thy Dogs in the ſame. They have ſeen thy Goings, O God, even the Goings of my God, my King, in the Sanctuary. The Singers went before, the Players on Inſtruments followed after; amongſt them were the Damſels playing with Timbrels. Bleſs ye God in the Congregations, even the Lord from the Fountain of* Iſrael. *There is little* Benjamin *with their Ruler, the Princes of* Judah *and their Counſel, the Princes of* Zebulun, *and the Princes of* Naphthali. *Thy God hath commanded thy Strength; ſtrengthen, O God, that which thou haſt wrought for us. Becauſe of thy Temple at* Jeruſalem, *ſhall Kings bring Preſents unto thee. Rebuke the Company of Spearmen, the Multitude of Bulls, with the Calves of the People, 'till every one ſubmit himſelf with Pieces of Silver; ſcatter thou the People that delight in War. Princes ſhall come out of* Egypt, Ethiopia *ſhall ſoon ſtretch out her Hands unto God. Sing unto God, ye Kingdoms of the Earth; O ſing Praiſes unto the Lord.* Selah. *To him that rideth upon the Heaven of Heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth ſend out his Voice, and that a mighty Voice. Aſcribe ye ſtrength unto God, his excellency is over* Iſrael, *and his Strength is in the Clouds. O God thou art terrible out of thy holy Places, the God of* Iſrael *is he that giveth Strength and Power unto his People; bleſſed be God.*

PSALM. LXIX.

David *(as a Type of* Chriſt*) complains of his heavy and manifold Afflictions; fervently prays for Help and Deliverance; gives over his Enemies to Deſtruction, and praiſes God in Confidence of being accepted, and his Sins forgiven.*

To the chief Muſician upon *Shoſhannim*, A Pſalm of *David*.

Q. HAVE *you any Thing particular to remark concerning this* Pſalm?

A. This Pſalm of *David* conſiſts of his Complaints fervent Prayers, and comfortable Predictions of his Deliverance, and the Ruin of his Enemies. But the Condition of this Pſalm is like that of divers others, wherein, although the Matter and Subſtance of it agree, in ſome Sort to *David*, yet there are ſome ſingular Paſſages which he delivers with a particular Reſpect unto *Chriſt*, of whom he was an eminent Type, and upon whom his Thoughts were much and often fixed, and of whom they are more fully and fitly underſtood, and therefore they are juſtly applied to him in the *New Teſtament*.

Q. How do you expound, Ver. 21?

A. The Words are theſe, *They gave me alſo Gall for my Meat, and in my Thirſt they gave me Vinegar to drink.*—— *Gall* or *Poiſon*, or *bitter Herbs*, Hoſ. x. 4. ſee *Deut.* xxix. 18. *Jer.* ix. 15. *Lament.* iii. 19. Inſtead of giving me that Pity and Comfort which my Condition required, they barbarouſly added to my Afflictions. Theſe Things were metaphorically fulfilled in *David*, but properly and literally in *Chriſt*, the Deſcription of whoſe Sufferings was principally intended here by the Holy Ghoſt, who therefore directed *David*'s Pen to theſe Words, and poſſibly informed him, that this ſhould be accompliſhed in *Chriſt*: Which may not ſeem improbable, if we conſider the following Imprecations, which are ſo many, and ſo ſevere, that they may ſeem to exceed the Bounds of Juſtice and Charity, if applied to *David*'s Enemies, as a Recompence for their Injuries to him; whereas they moſt deſervedly and fitly belong to the Enemies and Murderers of *Chriſt*.

PSALM LXX.

David *prays to God for Help, to the Shame of his Enemies, the Joy of the Godly, and the magnifying of his Name.*

To the chief Muſician, A Pſalm of *David*, to bring to remembrance.

Q. I*S not this Pſalm, at leaſt the Subſtance of it, to be found elſewhere?*

A. The Contents of this Pſalm, are almoſt all to be found in *Pſalm* xl. 13, *&c.* Nor is it ſtrange that they are here repeated, becauſe the ſame or like Occaſions were often repeated. As theſe Things were joined with many Paſſages in *Pſalm* xl. So they are diſtinctly repeated, as a Form of Prayer, which himſelf and others might uſe in ſuch a Condition.

PSALM LXXI.

The Pſalmiſt, in Confidence of his Faith, and in Experience of paſt Favours, prays to God to deliver him, but to conſume his Enemies, promiſing conſtantly to hope in him; prays for Perſeverance; praiſes God, and promiſes to do it chearfully.

Q. C*AN you give any probable Conjecture at what Time, and on what Occaſion this Pſalm was penned?*

A. It is plain that this Pſalm was written in a Time of *David*'s great Diſtreſs, and his old Age, mentioned in Verſes nine and eighteen; which proves that it belongs not to the Time of *Saul*, but rather to the Time of *Abſalom*'s Rebellion, which happened in his old Age.

Q. *In what Senſe does* David *ſay*, Ver. 7. I am as a Wonder unto many, but thou art my ſtrong Refuge?

A. A Wonder or *Prodigy*; either, 1. Of Mercy, for the wonderful Protections and Deliverances which God hath given me. Or rather, 2. Of Judgment, for my many and ſore Calamities, as appears from the next Words. They wonder'd, at the Calamities which befel me, who have made it the chief Care and whole Buſineſs of my Life to ſerve and glorify God; me whom God hath ſo eminently owned, and crowned with ſuch a conſtant Succeſſion of Bleſſings and Deliverances from Time to Time: That ſuch a Man ſhould be forſaken by ſo gracious a God, and perſecuted even to Death by his own Son, whom he had ſo tenderly loved; and deſerted by the Body of his own People, who had generally expreſſed ſo good an Opinion of him, and to whom they had ſo many ſingular Obligations for his juſt and wiſe Government; this was, indeed, Cauſe of Wonder. But though Men deſert me, yet God is my ſure and certain Refuge.

PSALM LXXII.

David *praying for* Solomon, *ſhews the bleſſed and glorious State of his Kingdom* (*as typifying* Chriſt's) *in its Duration, Largeneſs, and Graciouſneſs; and concludes alſo with a hearty Thankſgiving.*

A Pſalm for *Solomon.*

Q. H*AD* David, *when he wrote this Pſalm, only* Solomon *in View?*

A. That this Pſalm was made by *David* is evident; and that it was made with Reſpect to *Solomon*, is no leſs certain from the very Title of it. That *David*, or at leaſt the Holy Ghoſt, which dictated this Pſalm, did look beyond *Solomon*, and unto the *Meſſiah*, of whom *Solomon* was an illuſtrious and unqueſtionable Type, ſeems as manifeſt from divers Paſſages of this Pſalm, which do not agree with *Solomon*, nor with any other King but the *Meſſiah*; and from the Confeſſion of the *Jewiſh* Doctors themſelves, who underſtand it ſo; and the Pſalmiſt deſignedly wrote it in ſuch a Stile, that the Reader might be led by it to the Contemplation of *Chriſt*, and of his Kingdom, upon this Occaſion. Which was the more neceſſary for the Support and Comfort of God's true *Iſrael*, becauſe the Spirit of God foreſaw *Solomon*'s dreadful Apoſtaſy, and the great Calamities and Miſcarriages of his Succeſſors, and of the Kingdom under their Hands; and therefore was pleaſed to fortify their Hearts with that glorious Condition, which they ſhould enjoy under the *Meſſiah*, who ſhould certainly come.

Q. *Why is this called the laſt of* David's *Pſalms*, Ver 20.

A. Either, 1. Becauſe it is the laſt of that Part or Book of Pſalms, which reached from the Beginning of them hitherto, whereof the far greateſt Number were compoſed by *David*, and all of them digeſted into this Order, the reſt which follow, being collected by ſome other holy Men, after *David*'s Death, and compoſed Part by *David*, and Part by other Prophets. Or rather, 2. The laſt Pſalm which *David* compoſed: For this was wrote but a little before his Death, as we may judge from the firſt Verſe, which is to be applied to *Solomon*, who was anointed King, his Father yet living.

PSALM LXXIII.

The Prophet being under Temptation, by Reaſon of proſperous Wickedneſs, declares his Diffidence thereupon, and ſhews the Way to overcome ſuch Temptations, namely, by his Knowledge of God's Purpoſe to deſtroy the Wicked, and ſuſtain the Righteous.

A Pſalm of *Aſaph.*

Q. W*HY is this Pſalm aſcribed to* Aſaph?

A. It is called a Pſalm *of Aſaph*, or *for Aſaph*, the famous Muſician, to whom divers of *David*'s Pſalms were committed, as *Pſal.* l. *&c.* but becauſe *Aſaph* was not only a ſkilful Muſician, but alſo was divinely inſpired, and the Author of ſome Pſalms, as is manifeſt from 2 *Chron.* xxix. 30. and the Stile of this Pſalm ſeems a little different from that of *David*, it is not improbable that *Aſaph* was the Author or Penman of it.

Q. *What is the Subject purſued in this Pſalm?*

A. The Subject of this Pſalm is the ſame with *Pſalm* xxxvii. the Prophet deſcribing, what a heavy Temptation it is to the Faithful, to ſee the Wicked proſper, whilſt they themſelves are afflicted; ſhewing the right Way to overcome Temptations, by conſidering of God's wiſe Government, ſerving to the Conviction and Deſtruction of the Wicked, but to the Benefit of the Godly; eſpecially that they may learn to take or ſeek their perfect Content in nothing but the Grace of, and Communion with God.

PSALM LXXIV.

The Church complains of the Deſolation which the Enemies had made in the Temple and Synagogue; prays God to help, by his great Power, againſt the Reproach and Blaſphemy of the Enemies; and prays for God's beloved and covenanted Ones.

Maſchil of Aſaph.

Q. W*HY is this Pſalm entitled* Maſchil *of* Aſaph?

A. That is, compoſed by *Aſaph*; either, 1. By that famous *Aſaph* who flouriſhed in *David*'s Time, and by the Spirit of God foreſaw and foretold the Things here mentioned. But the clear, exact, particular and pathetic Deſcription of the Thing here expreſſed, looks much more like a Narrative of what is paſt, than a Prophecy of what is to come, which uſually is delivered more darkly. Beſides, ſuch a Prophecy of the Deſtruction of the Temple before it was built, would have been a great Diſcouragement to the Building of it, and would probably have been taken Notice of by *Solomon* in his Prayer at the Dedication of it. Or, 2. By ſome of his Poſterity, who is called by his Father's Name, *Aſaph*, as the Children of *Iſrael* were frequently called *Jacob* or *Iſrael*, and *David*'s Succeſſors, *David*. Or, 3. By ſome other Perſon of that Name, tho' of another Family; who then was a Man of Note, tho' now his Memory is loſt. Or this may be rendered *Aſaph*, *i. e.* for his Poſterity; and it might be ſaid by ſome other holy Man of God. But the former ſeems more probable.

Q. *What has the Prophet principally in View in this Pſalm?*

A. This *Pſalm* ſpeaks of the Deſtruction of the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, and of the People of God by the *Chaldeans*; though ſome think it looks farther, even to the Pollution of the Temple by *Antiochus*. Altho' the Things ſaid to be done, Ver. 6, 7, 8. agree much better to the former, and were not acted by *Antiochus*. The Church laments the Deſolation made by Enemies in the Temple and Synagogue, praying to God for Deliverance againſt the Reproach and Blaſphemy of the Enemies.

O God, how long ſhall the Adverſary reproach? Shall the Enemy blaſpheme thy Name for ever? Why withdraweſt thou thy Hand, even thy Right-hand? pluck it out of thy Boſom. For God is my King of old, working Salvation in the Midſt of the Earth. Thou didſt divide the Sea by thy Strength; thou brakeſt the Heads of the Dragons in the Waters. Thou brakeſt the Heads of the Leviathan *in Pieces, and gaveſt him to be Meat to the People inhabiting the Wilderneſs. Thou didſt cleave the Fountain and the Flood; thou driedſt up mighty Rivers. The Day is thine, the Night alſo is thine; thou haſt prepared the Light and the Sun. Thou haſt ſet all the Borders of the Earth; thou haſt made Summer and Winter. Remember this, that the Enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the fooliſh People have blaſphemed thy Name. O deliver not the Soul of thy turtle Dove unto the Multitude of the Wicked, forget not the Congregation of thy poor for ever. Have Reſpect unto the Covenant; for the dark Places of the Earth are full of the Habitations of Cruelty. O let not the Oppreſſed return aſhamed; let the Poor and Needy praiſe thy Name. Ariſe, O God, plead thine own Cauſe; remember how the fooliſh Man reproaches thee daily. Forget not the Voice of thine Enemies; the Tumult of thoſe that riſe up againſt thee, increaſeth continually.*

PSALM LXXV.

The Pſalmiſt, *praiſing God for his wondrous Works, promiſes to judge uprightly; rebukes the Proud and Fooliſh with God's Providence, and declares he will execute Juſtice.*

To the chief Muſician *Al-taſchith*, A Pſalm, or Song of *Aſaph*.

Q. PRAY *explain the Title to this Pſalm?*

A. Of, or *to*, or *for Aſaph*; which may be put by way of Oppoſition to the foregoing and general Expreſſion, *To the chief Muſician*, which is here limited to, and explained of *Aſaph*. As *Pſ.* lxii. having ſaid, *To the chief Muſician*, he adds to *Jeduthun*; and then follows the Author, *David*. This *Pſalm* was either compoſed by *David*, or by *Aſaph* in *David's* Name and Perſon, as it is not unuſual for Poets to bring in Princes ſpeaking in their Perſons. The Word *Al-taſchith* ſignifies *deſtroys not*.

Q. *Upon what Occaſion was this Pſalm written?*

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to relate to the Time when *David* had entered upon, but not got full Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom. He gives God Thanks for the gracious Change of Affairs in *Iſrael*, and vows, that being once made by God King over *Iſrael*, he will reign piouſly, puniſhing the Wicked, and promoting the Good; praiſing God who ſuffers the Godly to drink of the Cup of his Wrath, but makes the Ungodly ſuck up the Dregs.

PSALM LXXVI.

A Declaration of God's Majeſty and gracious Preſence in the Church. An Exhortation to ſerve him with Reverence.

To the chief Muſician on *Neginoth*, A Pſalm or Song of *Aſaph*.

Q. CAN *you inform me when, and on what Occaſion this* Pſalm *was compoſed?*

A. The ſpecial and immediate Occaſion of this *Pſalm* was unqueſtionably ſome eminent Deliverance vouchſafed by God to his People of *Iſrael*, and eſpecially to *Jeruſalem*, which the *Pſalmiſt* thought fit to celebrate; but which and when it was, is both needleſs to inquire, and hard to determine. The Prophet gives Thanks to God for his gracious Preſence, manifeſted to his People, by a wonderful Deliverance of them from inſolent and potent Enemies, whom God had brought to nothing, exhorting thereupon to prayer, and giving Praiſes to the Almighty. How excellently does he deſcribe the Power and Majeſty of God!

At thy Rebuke, O God of Jacob, *both the Chariot and Horſe are caſt into a dead Sleep. Thou, even thou art to be feared, and who may ſtand in thy Sight when thou art angry? Thou didſt cauſe Judgment to be heard from Heaven; the Earth feared, and was ſtill, when God aroſe to Judgment to ſave all the Meek of the Earth;* Selah. *Surely the Wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee; the Remainder of Wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain. Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God; let all that be round about him bring Preſents unto him that ought to be feared. He ſhall cut off the Spirit of Princes; he is terrible to the Kings of the Earth.*

PSALM LXXVII.

The Prophet ſhews what a fierce Combat he had with Diffidence; and his Victory by the Conſideration of God's wonderful Works and former Mercies.

To the chief Muſician, to *Jeduthun*, A *Pſalm* of *Aſaph*.

Q. TO *what particular Occurrence or Occaſion does this* Pſalm *relate?*

A. This *Pſalm* was compoſed upon ſome grievous and long Calamity of the People; either the *Baby-*

loniſh Captivity, or ſome other. The Prophet deſcribes, by his own Example, very lively, how it afflicts God's People, when they have no Evidence of his gracious Preſence; but through the Conſideration of God's faithful Promiſes and former Mercies, he is raiſed and ſtrengthened through Faith.

How deeply the Pſalmiſt was affected with the Senſe of his paſt Troubles, and the Greatneſs of God's Power, and of his infinite Goodneſs, is beſt ſeen in his own Words.

Will the Lord caſt off for ever; and will he be favourable no more? Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? doth his Promiſe fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in Anger ſhut up his tender Mercies? Selah. *And I ſaid, This is my Infirmity; but I will remember the Years of the Right-hand of the moſt High. I will remember the Works of the Lord, ſurely I will remember thy Wonders of old. I will meditate alſo of all thy Works, and talk of thy Doings. Thy Way, O God, is in the Sanctuary; who is ſo great a God as our God? Thou art the God that doſt Wonders; thou haſt declared thy Strength among the People. Thou haſt with thine Arm redeemed thy People, the Sons of* Jacob *and* Joſeph. *Selah. The Waters ſaw thee, O God, the Waters ſaw thee; they were afraid; the Depths alſo were troubled. The Clouds poured out Water, the Skies ſent out a Sound; thine Arrows alſo went abroad. The Voice of thy Thunder was in the Heaven; the Lightnings lightned the World, the Earth trembled and ſhook. Thy Way is in the Sea, and thy Path in the great Waters, and thy Foot-ſteps are not known. Thou ledeſt thy People like a Flock, by the Hand of* Moſes *and* Aaron.

PSALM LXXVIII.

An Exhortation to attend to, and inſtruct others in the Word and Works of God. A Rehearſal of the divine Love and Long-ſuffering to the unbelieving and obſtinate Iſraelites, *in their Journey from* Egypt *to the Land of* Canaan. *Rejecting the Reſt of the Tribes; he chuſes* Zion *for a Place of Worſhip, and* David *to a Kingdom.*

Maſchil of *Aſaph.*

Q. DOES *any Thing in this* Pſalm *deſerve our peculiar Attention?*

A. From this *Pſalm* the *Iſraelites* were to learn to hope and truſt in God, and ſtedfaſtly to keep his Laws and Covenant. The Prophet begins with an Exhortation to the People, to attend to, and inſtruct others in the Word and Works of the Lord; he rehearſes at large the fatherly Love and Long-ſuffering of God; by which having ſtriven againſt the manifold Unthankfulneſs of his People, at laſt he forſook *Shiloh*, and paſſing by the reſt of the Tribes, choſe out *Zion* in *Judah* for the Place of his Worſhip, and *David* out of *Judah* over the Kingdom; the ſame being a Type or Figure of the everlaſting Kingdom of Chriſt. The ſuccinct Account which the *Pſalmiſt* here gives of God's Dealings with *Iſrael*, is wrote in ſo elegant a Style, and the Turn he gives to every Event, ſo truly poetical, that the Reader muſt be pleaſed to have the Deſcriptions at large.

“ Marvellous Things did he in the Sight of their Fathers, in the Land of *Egypt*, in the Field of *Zoan*. He divided the Sea, and cauſed them to paſs thorough, and he made the Waters to ſtand as an Heap. And in the Day-time alſo he led them with a Cloud, and all the Night with a Light of Fire. He clave the Rocks in the Wilderneſs, and gave them Drink as out of the great Depths. He brought Streams alſo out of the Rock, and cauſed Waters to run down like Rivers. And they ſinned yet more againſt him, by provoking the moſt High in the Wilderneſs. And they tempted God in their Heart, by asking Meat for their Luſt. Yea, they ſpake againſt God: They ſuid, Can God furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs? Behold, he ſmote the Rock, that the Waters guſhed out, and the Streams overflowed; Can he give Bread alſo? Can he provide Fleſh for his People? Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth; ſo a Fire was kindled againſt *Jacob*, and Anger alſo came up againſt *Iſrael*: Becauſe they believed not in God, and truſted not in his Salvation: Though he had commanded the Clouds from above, and opened the Doors of Heaven, and had rained down Manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the Corn of Heaven. Man did eat Angels Food; he ſent them Meat to the full. He cauſed an Eaſt-wind to blow in the Heaven; and by his Power he brought in the South-wind. He rained Fleſh alſo upon them as Duſt, and feathered Fowls like as the Sand of the Sea. And he let it fall in the Midſt of their Camp, round about their Habitations. So they did eat, and were well filled; for he gave them their own Deſire; they were not eſtranged from their Luſt; but while their Meat was yet in their Mouths, the Wrath of God came upon them, and ſlew the fatteſt of them, and ſmote down the choſen Men of *Iſrael*. For all this they ſinned ſtill, and believed not for his wondrous Works. Therefore their Days did he conſume in Vanity, and their Years in Trouble. When he ſlew them, then they ſought him; and they returned and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheleſs, they did flatter him with their Mouth, and they lied unto him with their Tongues. For their Heart was not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant. But he being full of Compaſſion, forgave their Iniquity, and deſtroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his Anger away, and did not ſtir up all his Wrath. For he remembered that they were but Fleſh; a Wind that paſſeth away and cometh not again. How oft did they provoke him in the Wilderneſs, and grieve him in the Deſart? Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of *Iſrael*. They remembered not his Hand, nor the Day when he delivered them from the Enemy. How he had wrought his Signs in *Egypt*, and his Wonders in the Field of *Zoan*; and had turned their Rivers into Blood; and their Floods that they could not drink. He ſent divers Sorts of Flies among them, which devoured them; and Frogs which deſtroyed them. He gave alſo their Increaſe unto the Caterpillar, and their Labour unto the Locuſt. He deſtroyed their Vines with Hail, and their Sycamore-trees with Froſt. He gave up their Cattle alſo to the Hail, and Flocks to hot Thunder-bolts. He

“ caſt upon them the Fierceneſs of his Anger, Wrath and Indignation and Trouble, by ſending evil Angels among them. He made a Way to his Anger, he ſpared not their Soul from Death; but gave their Life over to the Peſtilence. And ſmote all the Firſt-born in *Egypt*; the Chief of their Strength in the Tabernacles of *Ham*; but made his own People to go forth like Sheep, and guided them in the Wilderneſs like a Flock. And he led them on ſafely, ſo that they feared not; but the Sea overwhelmed their Enemies. And he brought them to the Border of his Sanctuary, even to this Mountain, which his Right-hand had purchaſed. He caſt out the Heathen alſo before them, and divided them an Inheritance by Line, and made the Tribes of *Iſrael* to dwell in their Tents. Yet they tempted and provoked the moſt high God, and kept not his Teſtimonies; but turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their Fathers; they were turned aſide like a deceitful Bow. For they provoked him to Anger with their high Places, and moved him to Jealouſy with their graven Images, when God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred *Iſrael*; ſo that he forſook the Tabernacle of *Shiloh*, the Tent which he placed among Men; and delivered his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Enemies Hand. He gave his People over alſo unto the Sword, and was wroth with his Inheritance. The Fire conſumed their young Men; and their Maidens were not given to Marriage. Their Prieſts fell by the Sword; and their Widows made Lamentation. Then the Lord awaked as one out of Sleep, and like a mighty Man that ſhouteth by reaſon of Wine. And he ſmote his Enemies in the Hinder parts; he put them to a perpetual Reproach. Moreover, he refuſed the Tabernacle of *Joſeph*, and choſe not the Tribe of *Ephraim*. But choſe the Tribe of *Judah*, the Mount *Zion* which he loved. And he built his Sanctuary like high Places, like the Earth which he hath eſtabliſhed for ever. He choſe *David* alſo his Servant, and took him from the Sheep-folds; from following the Ews great with young, he brought him to feed *Jacob* his People, and *Iſrael* his Inheritance. So he fed them according to the Integrity of his Heart; and guided them by the Skilfulneſs of his Hands.”

PSALM LXXIX.

The Pſalmiſt *complains of the Ruin and Deſolation of* Jeruſalem; *expoſtulates with God about his long Anger and Jealouſy; entreats for the Forgiveneſs of their Sins, and ſpeedy Help and Mercy, to the everlaſting Praiſe of his Name.*

A *Pſalm* of *Aſaph*.

Q. HAVE *you any Obſervation to make upon this* Pſalm?

A. The Church of God laments the extream Cruelty of their Enemies, who had deſtroyed *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, entreating the Lord, that forgetting and forgiving their Sins, he would for his own Glory's Sake, graciouſly and ſpeedily deliver them, and puniſh their Enemies, to the everlaſting Praiſe of his Name.

This *Pſalm* was doubtleſs compoſed upon the ſad Occaſion of the Deſtruction of *Judea* and *Jeruſalem*, by the *Chaldeans*; or rather by *Antiochus*; as may be gathered from 1 *Mac.* vii. 16, 17. where, in the Relation of the Perſecution of *Antiochus*, the ſecond and third Verſes of this *Pſalm* are cited.

PSALM LXXX.

The Pſalmiſt *bemoans the Miſeries and ſad Condition of the Church; that God's paſt manifold Mercies are changed into deſolating Judgments; he prays for a Deliverance out of them, with a Promiſe of Thankfulneſs.*

To the chief Muſician upon *Shoſhannim Eduth*, A *Pſalm* of *Eduth*.

Q. WHAT *is the Signification of the Word* Shoſhannim?

A. This ſeems to be the Name of a muſical Inſtrument; tho' many ſeparate the latter Part of the Word from the former, and expound *Eduth*, *a Teſtimony*, or Witneſs between God and his People, of his Relation to them, and of their Dependance upon him.

Q. *Upon what Occaſion was this* Pſalm *compoſed?*

A. This *Pſalm* was compoſed, either, 1. Upon the ſame Occaſion with the former, namely, the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Chaldeans*, as moſt conceive. Which yet ſeems not probable, becauſe here is no Mention of the Temple, nor of *Jeruſalem*, as in the preceding Pſalm; nor of the Tribe of *Judah*, which was moſt concerned in that Deſolation, but of *Joſeph*, Ver. 1. and of the Tribes of *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, which were gone into Captivity long before that Time; nor do the Expreſſions in this Pſalm import ſuch a deſolating Judgment, as thoſe in the former do. Or, 2. On the Occaſion of the Ten Tribes, as ſome others imagine. But why then is *Benjamin* named, which is none of that Number, who were carried away Captives, but was joined with *Judah?* Or, 3. On Occaſion of ſome other Calamities which befel the Tribes of *Iſrael* after their Diviſion into two Kingdoms, and before the Captivity and Deſtruction of either of them. In which all the Evils mentioned in this Pſalm did befal them, ſometimes in one Tribe or Part, and ſometimes in another, as is manifeſt from their Hiſtory.

PSALM LXXXI.

An Exhortation to a ſolemn praiſing of God, which he requires for his manifold Mercies and Deliverances; God exhorting to Obedience, complains of their Diſobedience, which tendeth to their own Hurt and Affliction.

To the chief Muſician upon *Gittith*, A *Pſalm* of *Aſaph*.

Q. FOR *what Uſe or Purpoſe was this* Pſalm *intended?*

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have been made for the Uſe of the Church in ſolemn Feaſts; particularly, either upon every firſt Day of the Month, or upon the firſt Day of the ſeventh Month, which was celebrated with a more ſolemn Blaſt of Trumpets, *Lev.* xxiii. 24. *Numb.* xxix. 1. Becauſe that Month was more ſacred than others, by reaſon of the Concurrence of diverſe religious Ceremonies; in it the Prophet exhorts the People highly to praiſe the Lord God, for his manifold Mercies and Deliverances; complaining of the Diſobedience of the People, tending to their own Hurt.

Q. *Pleaſe to explain the 5th Verſe?*

A. The Words run thus; *This he ordained in* Joſeph *for a Teſtimony, when he went out of the Land of* Egypt; *where I heard a Language that I underſtood not*, Ver. 5.——*This*; namely, the blowing of Trumpets, mentioned in the preceding Verſe. ——*In* Joſeph. Among the Poſterity of *Joſeph*; *i. e.* the People of *Iſrael*, as is evident both from the foregoing Verſe, where they are called *Iſrael*, and from the following Words in this Verſe, where they are deſcribed as coming out of *Egypt*, which was common to all the Tribes of *Iſrael*, who are ſometimes called by the Name of *Joſeph*; *Pſal.* lxxx. 1.————*A Teſtimony*. For a Law, which is often called *a Teſtimony*. Or rather, 2. For a Witneſs and Memorial of that glorious Deliverance mentioned in the following Words. For, 1. That this was a *Statute* and *Law* he had expreſſed, Ver. 4. which it is not likely he would here repeat, eſpecially in a more dark and doubtful Phraſe. 2. He ſeems to declare the End of that Law, which was to be a *Teſtimony*.————*When he*; *i. e.* God, *he* who *ordained*, as was now ſaid————*Went out*. As a Captain at the Head, or on the Behalf of his People————*Through the Land of* Egypt. To execute his Judgments upon that Land or People. Or, *againſt*, &c. to deſtroy it. Or, *out of* it, as both antient and Modern Interpreters render this Particle *al*, which in other Places is put for *meal*, and *meal*, is put for *min*, *from*, or *out of*, as is manifeſt by comparing 2 *Kings* i. 28. with 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 8. So this Text notes the Time when this and the other Feaſts were inſtituted, even at *Sinai*.————*Where I*, *i. e.* My Progenitors, for all the ſucceſſive Generations of *Iſrael* make one Body, and are ſometimes ſpoken of as one Perſon. ————*A Language that I underſtood not*. Either, 1. The Language of God himſelf ſpeaking from Heaven on *Sinai*, which was ſtrange and terrible to me. Or rather, 2. The *Egyptian* Language, which at firſt was very ungrateful and unknown to the *Iſraelites*, *Gen.* xlii. 23. and probably continued ſo for ſome conſiderable Time, becauſe they were much ſeparated both in Place and Converſation from the *Egyptians*, through *Joſeph*'s pious and prudent Means. This Expoſition is confirmed from *Pſal.* cxiv. 1. where this very Thing is mentioned as an Aggravation of their Miſery; and from other Places of Scripture, where this is ſpoken of as a Curſe and Plague, to be with a People of a ſtrange Language, *Deut.* xxviii. 49. *Jer.* v. 15.

Psalm LXXXII.

The Pſalmiſt, *after exhorting and expoſtulating with the Judges, reproves their want of Judgment and Negligence, and prays the Lord to judge.*

A *Pſalm* of *Aſaph*.

Q. W*HAT are the Contents of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* contains an Admonition, either, 1. To the chief Rulers of *Iſrael*, either Judges or Kings, or their great Council, called the *Sanhedrim*. Or rather, 2. To all the Rulers of the ſeveral Nations of the World, to whom this Word might come, as may be gathered partly from the Expreſſions here uſed, which are general, and not peculiar to the Governors of *Iſrael*, and therefore not raſhly and unneceſſarily to be reſtrained; and partly from the laſt Verſe, where he mentions the whole Earth and all Nations, as concerned in the Contents of this *Pſalm*.

Q. *In what Senſe do you underſtand the firſt Verſe*; God ſtandeth in the Congregation of the Mighty; he judgeth among the Gods?

A. God ſtandeth; as Judge, diligently to obſerve all that is ſaid or done there; and to give Sentence accordingly. The Judge ſits when he hears Cauſes, but ſtands up when he gives Sentence. Or, *Standing* doth not note the Poſture, but only the Being or Preſence of a Perſon, as *Iſa.* xi. 10. Whence this *Hebrew* Word is by ſome learned Interpreters render'd, *is preſent*, and by others, *preſideth*, as 1 *Sam.* xix. 20.————*Of the Mighty*; or, *of the Gods*, as 'tis explained in the next Clauſe; the ſingular Number being put for the plural. By *Gods*, or the *Mighty*, he underſtands Kings, or other chief Rulers, who are ſo called becauſe they have their Power and Commiſſion from God, and act as his Deputies in his Name and Stead, and muſt give an Account to him of all their Actions. And by their *Congregation* he underſtands not a Convention, or Aſſembly of ſuch Perſons, who ſeldom meet together; but either, 1. All Congregations or Aſſemblies of People in which Magiſtrates ſit to execute Juſtice. Or, 2. All Perſons whatſoever of this holy Order or Number: For the *Hebrew* Word here render'd *Congregation*, doth not always ſignify an Aſſembly of Perſons met together in one Place, but ſometimes notes all the particular Perſons of, or belonging to ſuch a Sort or Body of Men, tho' diſperſed in divers Places, as *Pſal.* xxvi. 5. *Prov.* xxi. 16. Some render it, as it is in the *Hebrew*, *in the Congregation of God*, in his own Congregation, the Noun being put for the Pronoun, as is uſual in the *Hebrew* Text, *i. e.* in the Conventions or Tribunals of Princes or Rulers, which he rightly calls *his*, becauſe their Authority is wholly derived from him. But the former Expoſition ſeems more agreeable both to the following Words, and to the Scope and whole Body of the *Pſalm*——*The Gods*, *i. e.* Judges and Magiſtrates, as they are called Ver. 6. and in divers other Places in Scripture.

Psalm LXXXIII.

The Church's Complaint to God of her Enemies Conſpiracies. Her Prayer againſt Oppreſſors; that God would fill them with Shame, and make them know that he alone is Jehovah.

A Pſalm or Song of *Aſaph*.

Q. C*AN you inform me what gave Occaſion to the penning this Pſalm?*

A. The Occaſion of this Pſalm is manifeſt from the Body of it; and it ſeems to have been a dangerous Attempt, and Conſpiracy of divers neighbouring Nations againſt *Iſrael* or *Judah*. It ſeems to be a Form of Prayer againſt the Danger the Church was in, probably, that mentioned, 2 *Chron.* xx. Wherein all the People here mentioned, might be engaged, though all of them be not there expreſſed; this being uſual in the ſacred Hiſtorians, for the latter to record ſome Paſſages which the former omitted. Or, it may have a more general Reſpect, to the ſeveral Enterprizes and Combinations, of all thoſe People againſt them, ſome at one Time, and ſome at another.

PSALM LXXXIV.

The Prophet having commended the Sanctuary, longs for Communion with it; ſhews the bleſſed State and Condition of thoſe that dwell therein; prays to be reſtored to it; prefers one Day therein, before a thouſand elſewhere. What the Word of the Lord is to them that truſt in him.

To the chief Muſician upon *Gittith*, A *Pſalm* for the Sons of *Korah*.

Q. PRAY *who was the Author of this* Pſalm?

A. The Author of this *Pſalm* ſeems to have been *David*; partly, becauſe it is aſcribed to no other, and becauſe it is moſt agreeable to his Stile and Condition, and the Occaſion of it, his Baniſhment or Abſence from the Place of God's Worſhip; either in *Saul's* Time, or rather during *Abſalom's* Rebellion. The Prophet complains that he cannot have Acceſs to the Church of God, to make Profeſſion of his Faith, and to profit in Religion. He ſhews the bleſſed State and Condition of ſuch as dwell in the Sanctuary, prayeth to be reſtored into it, preferring one Day therein before a thouſand elſewhere.

Q. *I deſire your Explanation of* Ver. 6. Who paſſing through the Valley of *Baca*, make it a Well; the Rain alſo filleth the Pools.

A. *Who paſſing*, or *being uſed to paſs*; for he ſeems not to ſpeak of one particular Act, but of a common Courſe or Cuſtom.——*Of Baca*; a Place ſo called, which ſome *Jewiſh* and other Writers affirm to have been a very dry Place, and therefore incommodious for Travellers in thoſe hot Countries, and in hot Seaſons. Which Place may be here mentioned not excluſive of other Ways and Paſſages, for this Highway being but one, and on one Side of *Jeruſalem*, could not be a general Way for all the *Iſraelites* thither, but ſynechdochically, for all the Places of like Nature, which made their Journey to *Jeruſalem*, unpleaſant or inconvenient. But their Zeal for God's Service eaſily overcame theſe and other Difficulties. Or, *The Valley of Tears*, as this Valley might be called for the Trouble and Vexation which Travellers found by Reaſon of Drought, or otherwiſe——*A Well*, or *Wells*, *i. e.* They dig divers little Pits or Wells in it for their Relief. This Trouble they willingly undertook, rather than neglect the Opportunity of going up to *Jeruſalem* at their ſolemn Feaſts. And poſſibly they did this, not only for themſelves, but for the Benefit of other Travellers who came after them.——*The Rain alſo filleth the Pools.* God recompenſeth their Diligence in making Pits, or little Pools, or Ciſterns, with his Bleſſing, ſending Rain wherewith they may be filled, and thirſty Travellers refreſhed. Poſſibly the Words may be thus rendered, which is more agreeable to the Order of the *Hebrew* Text, *yea*, or *alſo*, and ſo the *Hebrew* Particle *Gam*, hath that Emphaſis, which, as ſome learned Interpreters obſerve, is not to be given to it in any other Tranſlation. They do not only make little Pits or Wells, as was now ſaid, but alſo *Pools* or *Ciſterns which the Rain filleth*, or *may fill*, *i. e.* which may receive and keep the Rain which God ſendeth for the Refreſhment of theſe Travellers, whoſe great Numbers made the Proviſion of Waters more neceſſary. But it is not neceſſary to underſtand this and the foregoing Clauſe of what theſe Paſſengers did for their own Uſe, as they travelled thro' this and ſuch Places; but it may be meant of what pious Perſons did before that Time, who having their Hearts ſet upon God's Houſe, and the Paths leading to it, as Ver. 5. and being deſirous to advance the Worſhip of God, and encourage the People to come to *Jeruſalem*, endeavoured to make thoſe Ways eaſy and convenient; and particularly, becauſe thoſe Eaſtern Countries were hot and dry, and Springs of Water ſcarce; as we may learn from *Gen.* xxvi. 15. and *Judg.* i. 15. and therefore they made theſe Pits or Ciſterns in proper Places for the Convenience of People paſſing in their Journey's to the Houſe of God.

PSALM LXXXV.

The Pſalmiſt, from the Experience of former Mercies, prays God for the Continuance of them; reſolves to wait on the Lord, and hear what he will ſpeak. His Confidence in his Goodneſs, Mercy and Truth.

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* for the Sons of *Korah*.

Q. CAN *the particular Time be aſſigned when this* Pſalm *was compoſed?*

A. This *Pſalm* is thought to have been made after the Return of the People from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; wherein the Pſalmiſt gives Thanks to God for that glorious Deliverance, and implores his Mercy in compleating that Work, and reſcuing his People from the Relicks of their Bondage, and from the Vexation which they had from their Neighbours, after their Return into the Land of *Canaan*.

Q. *Pleaſe to give me your Expoſition of* Ver. 13. Righteouſneſs ſhall go before him, and ſhall ſet us in the Way of his Steps.

A. *Before him*; as his Harbinger or Attendant. He ſhall work and fulfil all Righteouſneſs; he ſhall glorify and ſatisfy the Righteouſneſs of God, and ſhall advance the Practice of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs among Men.——*Shall ſet us in the Way of his Steps*; *i. e.* ſhall cauſe us to walk in thoſe righteous Ways wherein he walketh, and which be hath preſcribed to us: But this *us* is not in the *Hebrew*, and may ſeem too liberal a Supplement. And the Words may be, and are, by almoſt all other Interpreters, rendered otherwiſe, *He* (*i. e.* God) *ſhall ſet* (which may note his Stability and Conſtancy in ſo doing) *it* (*i. e. Righteouſneſs*, laſt mentioned) *in the Way of his Steps*, *i. e.* in the Way wherein he walketh. So the Senſe of this laſt Clauſe is the ſame for Subſtance with the former, as is very uſual in this Book; Righteouſneſs, in that Clauſe, goes before him; in this, it goes along with him.

PSALM LXXXVI.

David *ſtrengthens himſelf in Prayer, by the Truth of his Religion, and by God's Goodneſs and Readineſs to hear; deſires the Continuance of his Grace; complains of his proud Enemies, entreats for ſome Token of his Love, to their Shame and Confuſion.*

A Prayer of *David*.

Q. DOES *not* David *diſcover a vain-glorious Pride, where he ſays,* Ver. 2. Preſerve my Soul, for I am holy: O thou my God, ſave thy Servant that truſteth in thee?

A. I am Holy; ſanctified, in ſome Meaſure, by thy Grace, and ſincerely devoted to thy Service. This *David* ſpeaks, not in a way of vain Oſtentation, but partly as a powerful Argument to move God to hear his Prayer, becauſe he was one of thoſe to whom God had engaged himſelf by Promiſe and Covenant; and partly by way of juſt Vindication of himſelf from the Cenſures of his Enemies, who repreſented him to the World, as a groſs Diſſembler, and ſecretly a very wicked Man; concerning which he here makes a ſolemn Appeal to God, deſiring Audience and Help from God, on no other Terms, than upon this Suppoſition, that he was a holy Man. Which, by the way, ſavoureth no more of Arrogance, than where he, in another Place profeſſeth his great Love to, and Longing after God, his ſincere Obedience to all God's Commands, and his Hatred of every falſe Way, and the like.

PSALM LXXXVII.

The Prophet ſpeaks of the Nature and Glory of the Church, and God's Love to it; of the Increaſe, Honour and Comfort of the Members thereof.

A Pſalm or Song for the Sons of *Korah*.

Q. *AT what particular Time was this* Pſalm *compoſed?*

A. This *Pſalm* was, without doubt, compoſed after the Building of the Temple; and, as learned Men think, and it ſeems probable, when the People were newly returned out of *Babylon*, and laboured under many Diſcouragements about the Return of moſt of their Brethren; and the very many Difficulties and Obſtructions they met with in rebuilding their Temple and City.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by* Foundation, Ver. 1?

A. Either, 1. The Foundation, *i. e.* Argument, or Matter of this *Pſalm*. So theſe Words are thought to be a Part of the Title, the Words being thus in the *Hebrew* Text, *For the Sons of* Korah *a Pſalm or Song, whoſe Foundation is in the Mountains*. But, 1. The Word rendered *Foundation*, is no where uſed in that Senſe. 2. There is no Title in the Book of *Pſalms* like it. Or rather, 3. Of the City or Temple of *God*, of which he ſpeaks in the following Verſes; and as the Begining is ſomewhat abrupt, which ſeems the only Ground of the foregoing Expoſition, it ſhould be obſerved, that it is not unuſual in Scripture; and the Pronoun Relative, ſuch as this is, is often put without any foregoing Antecedent, which is to be fetched out of the following Words or Verſes; as *Numb.* xxiv. 17. *I ſhall ſee him*, or *it*; *i. e.* the Star, which follows afterwards. Alſo, *Pſalm.* cv. 19. *Prov.* vii. 8. *Cant.* i. 2. And the Ground of thoſe abrupt Speeches there referred to, ſeems the ſame with this here; and the Relative *his* in the Text had a certain Antecedent in the *Pſalmiſt*'s Thoughts, though not in his Words. The Word *Foundation* may poſſibly be emphatical, becauſe this *Pſalm* might be compoſed when the Foundations of the ſecond Temple were newly laid, and the old Men, who had ſeen the Glory of the former Houſe, were dejected at the Sight of this, *Ez.* iii. 11, 12. And ſo the Meaning of this Paſſage may be this, Be not diſcouraged, O ye *Jews*, that your Temple is not yet erected, and the Foundations of it only laid, and thoſe too but very mean in Compariſon of the Magnificence of your former Temple, but take Comfort in this, that your Temple hath its Foundations laid, and thoſe ſure and firm; ſure, becauſe not laid in the Sands or Bogs, but in the Mountains; and firm, by divine Eſtabliſhment, becauſe thoſe Mountains are holy, conſecrated to God, and therefore maintained and eſtabliſhed by him. Or, he may uſe this Word *Foundation* in Oppoſition to the Tabernacle, which was moveable, and without Foundation, to note the Stability and Perpetuity of this Building.

Q. *What does the* Pſalmiſt *mean by* Rahab, Babylon, Philiſtia, Tyre *and* Ethiopia, Ver. 4?

A. Rahab is *Egypt*, ſo called *Pſalm* lxxxix. 10. but whether from its Pride or natural Strength, or Figure, is not material. Under *Rahab*, *Babylon*, and *Philiſtia*, he ſeems to include all the keeneſt Enemies of *Iſrael* or the Church of God, who ſhall now not only be reconciled, but united to them. By *Tyre* and *Ethiopia*, are to be underſtood the Nations that ſurround them; for *Tyrus* was on the *North*, *Ethiopia* or *Arabia* (for that ſeems rather to be meant by *Cuſh*) on the *South*, thoſe neareſt to them, and thoſe more remote from them.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

The Pſalmiſt *declares his former Practice of Prayer to God; begs preſent Audience; acquaints the Lord with the Miſery and Frailty, which he ſuffers from God's Wrath and the Unkindneſs of his Friends. His Mourning and Ejaculation.*

A Song or Pſalm for the Sons of *Korah*, to the chief Muſician upon *Mahalath Leannoth*, *Maſchil* of *Heman* the *Ezrahite*.

Q. *EXplain the ſeveral Terms in the Title of this* Pſalm?

A. Mahalath. This ſeems to be the Name of the Tune or Inſtrument, *Pſalm* liii.———*Leannoth*. This may either be the latter Part of the proper Name of the Tune or Inſtrument; or an appellative Name; and ſo ſome render it, *to ſing*, or to *be ſung*, to wit, alternately.—— *Heman*; probably the ſame Perſon who was famous in *David*'s Time, both for his Skill in Muſick, and for general Wiſdom. See *Kings* iv. 31.

Q. *To what Uſe and Purpoſe may this* Pſalm *be applied by us?*

A. This Pſalm was compoſed upon a particular Occaſion, *viz. Heman*'s deep Diſtreſs and Dejection of Mind, almoſt to Deſpair. But though this was the Occaſion of it, it is of more general Uſe, for the Inſtruction and Conſolation of all good Men, when they come into ſuch Deſpondencies; and therefore was, by the Direction of the Holy Spirit made publick, and committed to the Sons of *Korah*. This *Pſalm* may be reduced into this, My whole Life has been filled with a Succeſſion of deadly Calamities, O Lord, take ſome Pity upon me, and let me have a little Breathing before I die.

PSALM LXXXIX.

The Pſalmiſt *praiſes God for making and keeping Covenant with* David *and his Seed; for his great Power and Care over the Church; and for his Favours to the Kingdom of* David. *Then complaining of contrary Events, expoſtulates with, prays to, and bleſſes God.*

Maſchil of *Ethan* the *Ezrahite.*

Q. WHO *was this* Ethan *mentioned in the Title?*

A. Ethan; either he who is mentioned 1 *Kings* iv. 31. and then the *Pſalm* is prophetical of Things to come; which yet, after the Manner of the Prophets, he repreſents as preſent. And this prophetical *Pſalm* might be left upon Record, as a Cordial for *David*'s Family, in their future Diſtreſſes, which *Ethan*, by the Spirit of Prophecy foreſaw. Or, Secondly, ſome other Perſon of the ſame Name, and inſpired by the ſame Spirit, who had lived in the Times of which the *Pſalmiſt* here ſpeaketh.

Q. *What is the particular Subject treated of in this Pſalm?*

A. This *Pſalm* manifeſtly treats of the declining and calamitous Time and State of the Houſe of *David*, either firſt in *Rehoboam*'s Reign; to which thoſe Expreſſions, Verſe 40, 41, 42. do not agree. Or, Secondly, ſome other Perſon of the ſame Name, at, or about the Time of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity.

The *Pſalmiſt* praiſes God for his Mercy, and for his Faithfulneſs in keeping his Covenant made with *David* (typically repreſenting *Chriſt* here) and all true Believers; as likewiſe for his great Power and Care in Behalf of his Church, complaining, nevertheleſs, of the heavy Preſſures which the Church of God doth undergo, praying for Deliverance, and concluding with Words to this Effect: Let thine Enemies reproach thee, and thy Promiſes, concerning the ſending of the *Meſſiah*, and the Deliverance of thy People by his Hand, I do and will heartily bleſs and praiſe thee for them, not doubting but thou wilt conſider and take away all our Reproaches, and, in thine own due Time (which is the beſt) ſend him who is the Conſolation and Expectation of *Iſrael*, and the Deſire of all Nations.

PSALM XC.

Moſes *declares the Eternity and Providence of God; deſcribes the Miſery and Shortneſs of Man's Life; prays for Wiſdom to number his Days; and for the Knowledge and ſenſible Experience of God's good Providence.*

A Prayer of *Moſes*, the Man of God.

Q. ON *what Occaſion did* Moſes *compoſe this Prayer?*

A. Moſes, conſidering that terrible, but righteous Sentence of God, concerning all of that ſinful Generation in the Wilderneſs, (*Numb.* xiv.) takes that Occaſion to publiſh theſe Meditations concerning Man's Mortality and Miſery in this Life, which might be uſeful both to that and to all ſucceeding Generations. How fervent is his Prayer to God! How elegant, how expreſſive is his Deſcription of the Frailties of human Life.

Lord, thou haſt been our Dwelling-place in all Generations. Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the Earth and the World, even from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, thou art God. Thou turneſt Man to Deſtruction; and ſayeſt, Return ye Children of Men. For a thouſand Years, in thy Sight, are but as Yeſterday, when it is paſt, and as a Watch in the Night. Thou carrieſt them away as with a Flood, they are as a Sleep; in the Morning they are like Graſs which groweth up. In the Morning it flouriſheth, and groweth up; in the Evening it is cut down and withereth. For we are conſumed by thine Anger, and by thy Wrath are we troubled. Thou had ſet our Iniquities before thee, our ſecret Sins in the Light of thy Countenance. For all our Days are paſſed away in thy Wrath; we ſpend our Years as a Tale that is told. The Days of our Years are threeſcore Years and ten; and if by Reaſon of Strength they be fourſcore Years, yet is their Strength, Labour and Sorrow; for it is ſoon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the Power of thine Anger? even according to thy Fear, ſo is thy Wrath. So teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom. Return, O Lord, how long? And let it repent thee concerning thy Servants. O ſatiſfy us early with thy Mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our Days. Make us glad according to the Days wherein thou haſt afflicted us, and the Years wherein we have ſeen Evil. Let thy Work appear unto thy Servants, and thy Glory unto their Children. And let the Beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and eſtabliſh thou the Work of our Hands, eſtabliſh thou it.

PSALM XCI.

The Pſalmiſt *repreſents the State of the Godly; their Safety and Place of Habitation; are preſerved by the comfortable Promiſes of God. Of his Support and Salvation.*

Q. THE *Author of this* Pſalm *is not named, nor the Occaſion mentioned; both which I would know?*

A. The Penman of this *Pſalm* is uncertain: The Occaſion of it ſeems to have been that great Peſtilence, recorded 2 *Sam.* xxiv. The *Pſalmiſt* repreſents in what Condition the Godly are in this World, rehearſing the many Benefits and manifold Favours they were Partakers of, who put their whole Confidence in the Lord; declaring he is their Support and Salvation, either in this World, when it is expedient for his Service and Benefit, or, at leaſt, in the next World, where they ſhall live to Eternity, in the bliſsful Sight and Enjoyment of God in all his Glory.

Q. *Does not the* Pſalmiſt, *in the 7th Verſe, promiſe himſelf, or expect from God, more than he could reaſonably hope for?*

A. The Text ſtands thus: *A thouſand ſhall fall at thy Side, and ten thouſand at thy Right-Hand; but it ſhall not come nigh thee.*—— *At thy Side, at thy* Left *Side*; becauſe this is oppoſed to the *Right Side* here following, —— *But it ſhall not come nigh thee.* This and ſuch Kind of Promiſes are not to be underſtood abſolutely and univerſally, as if no truly good Man could be cut off by the Plague or other common Calamities, which is confuted both by plain Texts of Scripture, and by unqueſtionable Experience; but with due Limitations and Conditions, either on Man's Part, as if there be a Defect in his Faith or Obedience; or on God's Part, when God ſees that Death is more for his Good than Life, as it apparently is, when righteous Men are taken away from the Evil to come, as *Iſa.* lvii. 1. In which Caſe, though God doth not give the Thing promiſed, yet he giveth a far greater Mercy inſtead of it, and ſo fulfils his Promiſe in the beſt Senſe, and with moſt Advantage. As if one Man ſhould ſolemnly promiſe another to give him his

Food every Day, he not only might, but ought, notwithſtanding his Promiſe, to deny and withdraw this Food, when his Body is ſo diſtempered, that in the Judgment of his wiſeſt Phyſicians, the taking of his Food would endanger his Life.

Psalm XCII.

An Exhortation to praiſe God for his great Works; his Judgments on the Wicked, and gracious Promiſes to the Righteous, who ſhall be fruitful.

A Pſalm or Song for the Sabbath-day.

Q. WHAT *is the Argument of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* celebrates the Works of God, both that firſt and great Work of Creation, and that ſucceeding and no leſs wonderful Work of his Providence, by which he upholds and governs all his Creatures, and eſpecially that by which he rules all Sorts of Men, both good and bad, and that by which he preſerves his Church and People. This glorious Work of God, in compenſating the ſhort Proſperity of the Wicked with everlaſting Puniſhment, and of exchanging the momentary Afflictions of the Juſt with eternal Glory and Happineſs, both clearly demonſtrate that God is juſt and blameleſs in all the Diſpenſations of his Providence in this World.

Psalm XCIII.

A Deſcription of the Majeſty and Power of God. The Certainty of God's Word, and Neceſſity of Holineſs in God's Houſe.

Q. PRAY *what is the principal Subject purſued in this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* contains an Aſſertion or Declaration of God's ſovereign and univerſal Dominion in, and over the whole World. This is ſet forth for the Comfort of God's Church and People, againſt all the Aſſaults of their numerous and potent Adverſaries; and alſo to give an Intimation and Aſſurance of the Accompliſhment of that great Promiſe of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, which is not to be confined to the *Iſraelites*, but to be extended to all Nations; which, though wonderful in our Eyes, the ſupreme and almighty Ruler of the World could eaſily effect. Here is a Deſcription of the Majeſty and Power of God, the Certainty of his Word, and the Neceſſity of Holineſs in his Houſe. How ſublime does he deſcribe the Majeſty of God!

The Lord reigneth, he is cloathed with Majeſty, the Lord is cloathed with Strength, wherewith he hath girded himſelf; the World alſo is eſtabliſhed, that it cannot be moved. Thy Throne is eſtabliſhed of old; thou art from Everlaſting. The Floods have lifted up, O Lord, the Floods have lifted up their Voice; the Floods lift up their Waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the Noiſe of many Waters, yea, than the mighty Waves of the Sea. Thy Teſtimonies are very ſure; Holineſs becometh thine Houſe, O Lord, for ever.

Psalm XCIV.

The Pſalmiſt *calls to God for Juſtice; complains of Tyranny and Impiety; teaches Fools God's Providence; ſhews the bleſſed Effects of Affliction; and a Promiſe of his Preſence with the Afflicted.*

Q. HAVE *you any Obſervations to offer upon any Part of this* Pſalm?

A. The 9th Verſe runs thus: *He that planted the Ear, ſhall not he hear? he that formed the Eye, ſhall not he ſee?* The Word is very emphatical, ſignifying the excellent Structure of the Ear, or the ſeveral Organs or Inſtruments belonging to the Senſe of Hearing, and the exact Poſition and firm Settlement of all thoſe Parts in their proper Places; which is juſtly admired by all that underſtand it. ——*Shall he not hear?* He muſt neceſſarily. The Truth of the Inference depends upon that evident and undeniable Principle in Reaſon, that nothing can give to another that which it hath not either formally, or more eminently in itſelf, and that no Effect can exceed the Virtue of its Cauſe. ——*He that formed the Eye.* By which he ſeems to intimate the accurate and moſt curious Workmanſhip of the Eye, which is obſerved by all that write upon that Subject.

Psalm XCV.

An Exhortation to praiſe God for his great Power, Goodneſs and Tenderneſs to his People. A Caution againſt Hardneſs of Heart; God's Threatning againſt it confirmed by an Oath.

Q. PRAY *what have you to obſerve concerning this* Pſalm?

A. The Author of this *Pſalm* was *David*, as is affirmed, *Heb.* iv. 7. although it is delivered in general Terms, as an Invitation to Mankind, to yield unto the true God, that Praiſe, Worſhip and Obedience which he requires and deſerves, yet it hath a ſpecial Reference to the Days of the *Meſſiah*; of which Chriſtians have no great Reaſon to doubt, ſeeing it is underſtood ſo by the *Hebrew* Doctors themſelves; alſo by the Apoſtles *Heb.* iii. 7, &c. and eſpecially *Heb.* iv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. where he not only expounds it of thoſe Times, but proves that it cannot be meant of the former Times and State of the Church. How piouſly does the *Pſalmiſt* pour out his Soul to God in the following Terms!

O come let us ſing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful Noiſe to the Rock of our Salvation. Let us come before his Preſence with Thankſgiving, and make a joyful Noiſe unto him with Pſalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods. In his Hands are the deep Places of the Earth; the Strength of the Hills is his alſo. The Sea is his, and he made it; and his Hands formed the dry Land. O come let us worſhip and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is our God, and we are the People of his Paſture, and the Sheep of his Hand; to Day if ye will hear his Voice, Harden not your Heart, as in the Provocation, and as in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderneſs; when your Fathers tempted me, proved me, and ſaw my Works. Forty Years long was I grieved with this Generation, and ſaid, It is a People that do err in their Heart, for they have not known my Ways. Unto whom I ſwear in my Wrath, that they ſhould not enter into my Reſt.

Psalm XCVI.

All the Inhabitants of the Earth and Sea are called upon to praiſe the Lord for his great Honour and Majeſty, and for his wiſe Government of the World.

World. Heaven and Earth are called upon to rejoice before him, for his general Judgment.

Q. *WHO was the Author, and what was the Occaſion of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* was compoſed by *David*, upon Occaſion, or at the Time of the bringing of the Ark into the Tabernacle, which God had prepared for it in *Zion*, as may be gathered by comparing it with 1 *Chron.* xvi. 7, 23, 24, *&c.* where almoſt the whole *Pſalm* is to be found. As the Ark was an evident Type of the *Meſſiah*, ſo *David*'s Thoughts, or at leaſt the Deſign of the Spirit of God, which indited this *Pſalm*, was extended beyond, and above it, even to the Time of the *Meſſiah*, and to his glorious and univerſal Kingdom, in which, not the *Jews* only, but the *Gentiles* ſhould worſhip the true God, and kiſs his Son the *Meſſiah*. All the Inhabitants of the Earth and Sea are exhorted to praiſe God for his great Honour, Majeſty, Excellency, Creation and Government of the World, and all that therein is; Heaven and Earth are called to rejoice before him for his righteous Judgments.

O ſing unto the Lord a new Song; ſing unto the Lord all the Earth. Sing unto the Lord, bleſs his Name; ſhew forth his Salvation from Day to Day. Declare his Glory among the Heathen, his Wonders among all People. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praiſed; he is to be feared above all Gods. For all the Gods of the Nations are Idols; but the Lord made the Heavens. Honour and Majeſty are before him; Strength and Beauty are in his Sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye Kindreds of the People, give unto the Lord Glory and Strength. Give unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name; bring an Offering and come into his Courts. O worſhip the Lord in the Beauty of Holineſs; fear before him all the Earth. Say among the Heathen, that the Lord reigneth; the World alſo ſhall be eſtabliſhed that it ſhall not be moved; he ſhall judge the People righteouſly. Let the Heavens rejoice, and let the Earth be glad; let the Sea roar, and the Fulneſs thereof. Let the Field be joyful, and all that is therein; then ſhall all the Trees of the Wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the Earth; he ſhall judge the World with Righteouſneſs, and the People with his Truth.

PSALM XCVII.

A Deſcription of the Majeſty of God's Kingdom; the Church's Joy at his Juſtice and Judgment upon Idolaters. An Exhortation to Godlineſs and ſpiritual Rejoicing.

Q. *PRAY what is the Scope and Drift of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have both the ſame Author and Scope with the former.

The *Pſalmiſt* might take Occaſion to pen it from thoſe ſignal Manifeſtations of God's Power and Righteouſneſs on his Behalf, and againſt his Enemies, yet he had a further Aim in it, namely, the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, which he here deſcribes. And whereas there are two Comings of the *Meſſiah* plainly deſcribed in the *New-Teſtament*, theſe are but confuſedly mentioned in the Old; and the Prophets ſometimes ſpeaks of his coming in Words and Phraſes which ſeem more properly to agree to the ſecond, as *Mal.* iii. 1, 2. and iv. 1, 2. But whatever the *Pſalmiſt* deſigned or underſtood, this is certain, that the Holy Ghoſt meant the laſt Clauſe of Ver. 7. of Chriſt, as is affirmed *Heb.* i. 6. and therefore it is more than probable, that all the reſt of the Pſalm is to be underſtood of him, and his Coming and Kingdom.

PSALM. XCVIII.

The Prophet exhorts Jews, Gentiles, *and all the Creatures, to praiſe God for his Truth and Salvation.*

A *Pſalm.*

Q. *TO what Perſon or Thing does this* Pſalm *relate?*

A. The Matter and Scope of this *Pſalm* is the ſame with the former, and is an evident Prediction of the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, and of the bleſſed Effects reſulting therefrom. The Prophet exhorts the *Jews*, and likewiſe the Heathen, yea, all Creatures to the Praiſe of God, becauſe of his Kindneſs, his Truth, Salvation and Deliverance by *Jeſus Chriſt*, as will appear from the Contents of it.

O ſing unto the Lord a new Song, for he hath done marvellous Things; his Right-hand, and his Holy Arm hath gotten him the Victory. The Lord hath made known his Salvation; his Righteouſneſs hath he openly ſhewed in the Sight of his Brethren. He hath remembered his Mercy and his Truth towards the Houſe of Iſrael; *all the Ends of the Earth have ſeen the Salvation of our God. Make a joyful Noiſe unto the Lord, all the Earth; make a loud Noiſe and rejoice, and ſing Praiſe. Sing unto the Lord with the Harp; with the Harp, and the Voice of a Pſalm. With Trumpets and Sound of Cornet make a joyful Noiſe before the Lord, the King. Let the Sea roar, and the Fulneſs thereof; the World and they that dwell therein. Let the Floods clap their Hands; let the Hills be joyful together, before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the Earth; with Righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the World, and the People with Equity.*

PSALM XCIX.

The Pſalmiſt *ſets forth the mighty Power of God in* Zion. *God's Holineſs a Reaſon for our praiſing him; Equity and Chearfulneſs executed in* Jacob. *The Church exhorted by the Example of their Forefathers to praiſe and magnify him in his holy Hill.*

Q. *IS* David, *or the* Meſſiah, *the Perſon referred to in this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* is ſuppoſed to be *David's*, and the Matter of it ſeems to ſuit to his Time, and the State of Affairs which then was; though as *David* was a Type of *Chriſt*, ſo this *Pſalm* may look beyond *David*, unto the *Meſſiah*; but it does not ſpeak ſo fully and clearly as the foregoing Pſalms do. This *Pſalm* ſpeaks alſo of the mighty Power of God, and his Righteouſneſs and Kindneſs towards his People; with an Exhortation likewiſe to the Church, to praiſe and magnify God, after the Example of *Moſes* and *Aaron*.

Q. *What do you apprehend to be the true Senſe of the 8th Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe; *Thou anſweredſt them, O Lord our God; thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them, tho' thou tookeſt Vengeance of their Inventions,*

tions, Ver. 8.——*Thou anſwered'ſt them*; the Interceſſors, *Moſes, &c.* before mentioned,——*Forgaveſt them*; either *Moſes* and *Aaron*, who ſinned, and whoſe Sins God pardoned, yet ſo as to puniſh them by an Excluſion from the Land of *Canaan*. Or rather, 2. The People for whom they prayed, which tho' not expreſſed, may be eaſily underſtood from the following Words, and from the Hiſtory to which they relate. For this *Forgiving* was evidently the Effect of God's *anſwering* the Prayers of the Perſons above-mentioned. ——*Tho' thou tookeſt Vengeance of their Inventions.* This Clauſe limits and explains the former. Thou didſt forgive the Sins of the People, not abſolutely, and univerſally, for thou didſt puniſh them ſeverely, but ſo far as not to inflict that total and final Deſtruction upon them, which they deſerved, and thou hadſt threatened. *Exod.* xxxii. 10, 14, 34.

PSALM C.

An Exhortation to praiſe God joyfully for his Greatneſs, Power, Goodneſs and Faithfulneſs to the Church.

A Pſalm of Praiſe.

Q. FOR *what Uſe or Purpoſe was this* Pſalm *compoſed?*

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have been compoſed for the Uſe of the *Iſraelites*, in their Thankſgivings, or upon other ſolemn Occaſions of praiſing God, as the Title ſpeaks. The *Pſalmiſt* propheſieth, that God's Benefits, in calling the *Gentiles*, ſhall be ſo great, that they ſhall have wonderful Occaſion to praiſe his Mercy, and rejoice.

PSALM CI.

David *makes a Vow to praiſe the Lord, to walk perfectly for an Example; to deſtroy all the wicked; and to delight in the Faithful of the Lord.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. AT *what particular Juncture was this* Pſalm *compoſed?*

A. This *Pſalm* was compoſed by *David*, between the Time of God's promiſing the Kingdom to him, and his actual Poſſeſſion of it, as appears from Verſe 2, and from the Contexture of the *Pſalm*, wherein *David* conſidereth what manner of King he would be, when God ſhould place him on the Throne; promiſing openly that he would be merciful and juſt, in puniſhing Vice, and encouraging the Godly. Magiſtrates muſt immediately puniſh Vice, leaſt it get too great a Head; and if Heathen Magiſtrates are bound to do this, how much more are they who have the Charge of Church of God.

Q. *Pleaſe to give me the genuine Senſe and Interpretation of the 5th Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe: *Whoſo privily ſlandereth his Neighbour, him will I cut off; him that hath a proud Look, and a proud Heart, will not I ſuffer.* Ver. 5. The firſt Clauſe intimates thoſe, who by ſecret Inſinuations and Accuſations againſt others, ſeek to gain the royal Favour, and to advance themſelves on the Ruin of others; ſuch are the common Peſts of Courts and Kingdoms——*Him that hath a high Look and a proud Heart.* Theſe he mentions, becauſe Pride is the common Plague of Courts, and the Source of many Enormities in Courtiers; it makes them imperious and inſolent towards the poor oppreſſed Subjects, who reſort to them for relief; it inclines them to evil Counſels and Courſes, not ſuch as conduce to the publick Good, but ſuch as are moſt ſuitable to their Ambition and private Intereſt; it makes them oppreſſive and injurious to others, the better to furniſh them with the Means of gratifying their own Luſt.

PSALM CII.

The Church prays for Audience, and complains of her Sufferings; comforts herſelf in the eternal Mercy of God, which is to be recorded for future Generations. Deliverance from the Babyloniſh *Captivity, and the Reſtauration of* Jeruſalem *foretold.*

A Prayer to the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his Complaint before the Lord.

Q. IS *this* Pſalm *to be taken in a literal or metaphorical Senſe?*

A. It ſeems to have been compoſed in the Time of their Captivity, and near the End of it; Verſes 13, 14. But as the literal *Jeruſalem* was a Type of the ſpiritual, or of the Church of God, and of *Chriſt*; and the Rebuilding of the former a Type of the Reviving and Edification of the latter, ſo the *Pſalmiſt* looks through that Mercy of the Rebuilding of the City *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, to the farther Progreſs, and to the Perfection of that Work, which was in the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, by whom it was to be compleated, and by whom the *Gentiles* were to be brought to the Knowledge and Worſhip of the true God.

The Church complains of her heavy Affliction, prays for Deliverance, comforts herſelf with the eternal Mercy of God, and the everlaſting unlimited Power of the Lord, promiſing to praiſe and thank him for it. She comforts herſelf by the Deliverance from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and the Reſtoration of the Temple; here is likewiſe underſtood the Deliverance by *Chriſt*, and the calling of the Heathen to his Communion. If Heaven and Earth periſh, much more Man ſhall periſh; but the Church, by Reaſon of God's Promiſe, endureth for ever.

PSALM CIII.

David *ſtirs up himſelf to bleſs God, who forgives him his Sins, redeems and ſatisfies his Soul, and for other manifold Mercies to himſelf and the Church. He conſiders the Frailty of Men, and ſhews God's everlaſting Mercy to his covenanted Ones. He exhorts all Creatures to praiſe him.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. PRAY *what are the Contents of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* contains a thankful Commemoration and Celebration of God's Mercies to the *Pſalmiſt* himſelf, to the People of *Iſrael*, and to all good Men; with an Exhortation to Angels (whoſe conſtant Buſineſs and Delight it is to execute the Commands and Will of God) and all Creatures both in Heaven and Earth, according to their ſeveral Capacities, to bleſs and praiſe the Holy Name of the King of Heaven and Earth. Thus he Ends the *Pſalm* with the ſame Words wherewith he began it.

PSALM CIV.

The Prophet ſtirs up himſelf to praiſe God for his Power manifeſted in the Creation; his Wiſdom and Power in governing all Things; vows perpetually to praiſe him; and curſes the Unthankfulneſs of the Wicked.

Q. *PRAY what was the Prophet's principal View in penning this* Pſalm?

A. As the foregoing *Pſalm* treats of the ſpecial Favours of God to his Church and People, ſo this declares and celebrates the wonderful and gracious Works of God to all Mankind, in the Creation of this viſible World, and in the wiſe and powerful Diſpoſition of all Things therein, to Man's Uſe and Comfort. The Prophet vows perpetually to praiſe God; but as for thoſe ungodly Creatures, who do not regard the Works of the Lord, nor give him the Glory due to his Name, but diſhonour God, and abuſe his Creatures, provoking thereby the Almighty to deſtroy the Earth, and all Things upon it, it is his Prayer, for God's Honour and the Safe-guard of Mankind, that thoſe obſtinate Sinners may be taken out of the World, that they may no longer infect it, nor procure its total Deſtruction. But thou, O my Soul, come not into this wretched Society, but employ thy ſelf in the great Work of bleſſing and praiſing God; and it is my Deſire and Hope that others will follow my Example. But let us hear the *Pſalmiſt* in the beautiful and elegant Language with which he has dreſſed the following Rhapſody.

Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul; O Lord my God, thou art very great, thou art cloathed with Honour and Majeſty. Who covereſt thy ſelf with Light, as with a Garment; who ſtretcheſt out the Heavens like a Curtain. Who layeth the Beams of his Chambers in the Waters, who maketh the Clouds his Chariot, who walketh upon the Wings of the Wind. Who maketh his Angels Spirits; his Miniſters a flaming Fire. Who laid the Foundation of the Earth, that it ſhould not be removed for ever. Thou coveredſt it with the Deep as with a Garment; the Waters ſtood above the Mountains. At thy Rebuke they fled; at the Voice of thy Thunder they haſted away. They go up by the Mountains; they go down by the Valleys unto the Place which thou haſt founded for them. Thou haſt ſet a Bound that they may not paſs over; that they turn not again to cover the Earth. He ſendeth Springs into the Valleys which run among the Hills. They give Drink to every Beaſt of the Field; the wild Aſſes quench their Thirſt. By them ſhall the Fowls of the Heaven have their Habitation, which ſing among the Branches. He watereth the Hills from his Chambers; the Earth is ſatisfied with the Fruit of thy Works. He cauſeth the Graſs to grow for the Cattle, and Herb for the Service of Man; that he may bring forth Food out of the Earth; and Wine that maketh glad the Heart of Man, and Oil to make his Face to ſhine, and Bread which ſtrengtheneth Man's Heart. The Trees of the Lord are full of Sap; the Cedars of Lebanon *which he hath planted. Where the Birds make their Neſts; as for the Stork, the Fir-trees are her Houſe. The high Hills are a Refuge for the wild Goats, and the Rocks for the Conies. He appointeth the Moon for Seaſons; the Sun knoweth his going down. Thou makeſt Darkneſs, and it is Night; wherein all the Beaſts of the Foreſt do creep forth. The young Lions roar after their Prey, and ſeek their Meat from God. The Sun ariſeth, they gather themſelves together, and lay them down in their Dens. Man goeth forth to his Work, and to his Labour until the Evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! in Wiſdom haſt thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy Riches. So is this great and wide Sea, wherein are Things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great Beaſts. There go the Ships; there is that* Leviathan, *whom thou haſt made to play therein. Theſe wait all upon thee; that thou mayeſt give them Meat in due Seaſon. That thou giveſt them, they gather; thou opened thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hideſt thy Face, they are troubled; thou takeſt away their Breath, they die, and return to their Duſt. Thou ſendeſt forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou reneweſt the Face of the Earth. The Glory of the Lord ſhall endure for ever; the Lord ſhall rejoice in his Works. He looketh on the Earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the Hills, and they ſmoke. I will ſing unto the Lord, as long as I live; I will ſing praiſe unto my God, while I have my Being. My Meditation of him ſhall be ſweet; I will be glad in the Lord. Let the Sinners be conſumed out of the Earth, and let the Wicked be no more; bleſs thou thee Lord, O my Soul. Praiſe ye the Lord.*

PSALM CV.

An Exhortation to praiſe God, and to remember his Works and Wonders. A Recital of God's Promiſes to, and Providence over Abraham, Joſeph, *and* Jacob *in* Egypt; *over* Moſes *delivering the* Iſraelites, *whom he fed in the Wilderneſs, and planted in* Canaan.

Q. CAN you prove who was the Penman of this Pſalm?

A. The Penman of this *Pſalm* was *David*, as is manifeſt from 1 *Chron.* xvi. 8, *&c.* Foraſmuch as the *Iſraelites* were exempted from the common Condemnation of the World, and were elected to be the People of God, the Prophet exhorteth them to ſhew themſelves mindful by Thankſgiving. The People are bid to celebrate and praiſe God, in regard of all his Wonders and Benefits, with a Rehearſal of the Faithfulneſs of his Promiſes made and performed to the Patriarchs; as alſo of the Wonders ſhewed to *Moſes* and the *Iſraelites*, in the *Deſart*, to whom he gave the Land of the Heathen, and the Fruits of their Labour, their Cities, Vine-yards, Olive-yards, *&c.* And on this eaſy Condition he did theſe Wonders, that they might obſerve his Statutes, and keep his Laws.

The Providence of God manifeſted to the *Iſraelites*, in Conſequence of the Covenant and Promiſes made with the Patriarchs of that People, is ſo finely deſcribed in this *Pſalm*, that whoever reads it with any Attention, muſt be pleaſed.

“O ye Seed of *Abraham* his Servant, ye children of *Jacob* his choſen. He is the Lord our God, his Judgments are in all the Earth. He hath remembered his Covenant for ever, the Word which he commanded to a thouſand Generations. Which Covenant he made with *Abraham*, and his Oath unto *Iſaac*: And confirmed the ſame unto *Jacob* for a Law and to *Iſrael* for an everlaſting Covenant: Saying, Unto thee will I give the Land of *Canaan*, the Lot of your

Inheritance. When they were but a few Men in Number; yea, very few, and Strangers in it. When they went from one Nation to another, from one Kingdom to another People. He ſuffered no Man to do them Wrong; yea, he reproved Kings for their Sakes: Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm. Moreover, he called for a Famine upon the Land; he brake the whole Staff of Bread. He ſent a Man before them, even *Joſeph*, who was ſold for a Servant. Whoſe Feet they hurt with Fetters; he was laid in Iron, until the Time that his Word came; the Word of the Lord tried him. The King ſent and lodged him; even the Ruler over the People, and let him go free. He made him Lord of his Houſe, and Ruler of all his Subſtance: To bind his Princes at his Pleaſure; and teach his Senators Wiſdom. *Iſrael* alſo came into *Egypt*; and *Jacob* ſojourned in the Land of *Ham*. And he increaſed his People greatly, and made them ſtronger than their Enemies. He turned their Heart to hate his People, to deal ſubtily with his Servants. He ſent *Moſes* his Servant, and *Aaron* whom he had choſen. They ſhewed his Signs among them, and Wonders in the Land of *Ham*. He ſent Darkneſs, and made it dark; and they rebelled not againſt his Word. He turned their Waters into Blood, and ſlew their Fiſh. Their Land brought forth Frogs in abundance, in the Chambers of their Kings. He ſpake, and there came divers Sorts of Flies, and Lice in all their Coaſts. He gave them Hail for Rain; and flaming Fire in their Land. He ſmote their Vines alſo, and their Fig-trees; and brake the Trees of their Coaſts. He ſpake, and the Locuſts came; and Caterpillars, and that without Number, and did eat up all the Herbs in the Land; and devoured the Fruit of their Ground. He ſmote alſo all the Firſt-born in their Land; the chief of all their Strength. He brought them forth alſo with Silver and Gold; and there was not one feeble Perſon among their Tribes. *Egypt* was glad when they departed; for the Fear of them fell upon them. He ſpread a Cloud for a Covering; and Fire to give Light in the Night. The People aſked, and he brought Quails, and ſatisfied them with the Bread of Heaven. He opened the Rock, and the Waters guſhed out, they ran in the dry Places like a River. For he remember'd his holy Promiſe, and *Abraham* his Servant. And he brought forth his People with Joy, and his Choſen with Gladneſs: And gave them the Lands of the Heathen; and they inherited the Labour of the People: That they might obſerve his Statutes, and keep his Laws, praiſe ye the Lord.”

PSALM CVI.

The Pſalmiſt *exhorts to praiſe God, and prays for the Remiſſion of his Sin. The Story of the* Iſraelites *Rebellion, and of God's Mercy, in their Journey from* Egypt *to* Canaan, *rehearſed; concluding with a Prayer and Praiſe unto the Lord.*

Q. *CAN you aſſign the exact Time and Occaſion of penning this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* was unqueſtionably compoſed in the Time of the Captivity and Diſperſion of the *Iſraelites*, as is manifeſt from Verſe 47; but whether it was that of *Babylon*, or ſome other of a later Date, is neither eaſy nor neceſſary to determine. Here is an Exhortation to the praiſing and celebrating of the Lord, with a Prayer for Remiſſion of Sins, which the People of God confeſs to have committed, as well as their Fathers; whereunto is annexed, a ſhort Rehearſal of the Obſtinacy of the *Iſraelites* in the Deſart, and the Mercy of God ſhewed them ſtill, concluding with an humble Prayer to the Almighty, and bleſſing his moſt holy Name.

PSALM CVII.

An Exhortation to the Redeemed to praiſe and celebrate the Lord, and to obſerve his manifold Providences to Strangers and Captives, to Sick and Seamen, and to all others; commending them that carefully obſerve it.

Q. *TO what Sort of People is this Pſalm to be applied?*

A. Moſt of the *Pſalms* have a peculiar Reſpect unto the Church and People of God, or to ſome eminent Members thereof; but there are ſome few *Pſalms* which have a more general Reſpect unto all Nations, of which Number this is one. The *Pſalmiſt* diſcourſes of the merciful Providence of God towards all Mankind, exhorting and exciting to the Praiſing and Celebration of the Lord, all thoſe who are delivered from their Adverſaries, all ſtragling and wandering Strangers, Captives or Priſoners, Sick, or Sea-faring People; and finally, all Sorts of People, by reaſon of the changeable Condition of every Land and Perſon, through God's all-diſpoſing Providence. He takes Notice alſo of God's Judgments, and by this Repreſentation of the Judgments and Mercies of God, he invites all Nations to an Acknowledgment of the true God, to praiſe him for his Favours, and to tremble at his Judgments, which is their juſt Duty and reaſonable Service. Who, that has any Taſte for poetical Diction, but muſt be delighted with his Deſcription of the Power and Works of God in the great Deep, and the Dealings of Providence with the Inhabitants of the Earth?

They go down to the Sea in Ships, that do Buſineſs in great Waters: Theſe ſee the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep. For he commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy Wind, which lifteth up the Waves thereof. They mount up to Heaven, they go down again to the Depths, their Soul is melted becauſe of Trouble. They reel to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken Man, and are at their Wit's End. Then they cry unto the Lord in their Trouble, and he bringeth them out of their Diſtreſſes. He maketh the Storm a Calm, ſo that the Waves thereof are ſtill. Then are they glad, becauſe they are quiet, ſo he bringeth them unto their deſired Haven. O that Men would praiſe the Lord for his Goodneſs, and for his wondrous Works to the Children of Men. Let them exalt him alſo in the Congregation of the People, and praiſe him in the Aſſembly of the Elders. He turneth Rivers into a Wilderneſs, and Water-ſprings into dry Ground: A fruitful Land into Barrenneſs, for the Wickedneſs of them that dwell therein. He turneth the Wilderneſs into a ſtanding Water, and dry Ground into Water-ſprings. And there he maketh the Hungry to dwell, that they may yield Fruits of Increaſe. He bleſſeth them alſo, ſo that they are multiplied greatly, *and ſuffereth not their Cattle to decreaſe. Again they are miniſhed and brought low through Oppreſſion, Affliction and Sorrow. He poureth Contempt upon Princes, and cauſeth them to wander in the Wilderneſs, where there is no Way. Yet ſetteth he the Poor on high from affliction, and maketh him Families like a Flock. The Righteous ſhall ſee it, and rejoice; and all Iniquity ſhall ſtop their Mouth. Whoſo is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe Things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving Kindneſs of the Lord.*

PSALM CVIII.

David *rouzes up himſelf to praiſe God; prays for his Aſſiſtance according to his Promiſe. His Confidence in God's Help.*

A Song or Pſalm of *David.*

Q. *IS not this a Repetition of ſome other* Pſalm *or* Pſalms?

A. This *Pſalm* is almoſt Word for Word taken out of the two foregoing *Pſalms*; the firſt five Verſes out of *Pſalm* lvii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. and the reſt out of *Pſalm* lx. 5, *&c.* This only is obſervable, that the *Pſalmiſt* deſigning to take the Body of this *Pſalm* out of *Pſalm* lx. doth induſtriouſly lay aſide that mournful Preface, Ver. 1, 2, 3, 4. and borrows one more pleaſant out of *Pſalm* lvii. The Reaſon of which Change is ſuppoſed to be this, that *Pſalm* lx. was compoſed in the Time of his Danger and Diſtreſs, and the latter after his Deliverance. *David* rouzes himſelf up to the praiſing of the Lord, praying withal for the Aſſiſtance of God, being fully aſſured, that through his Almighty Favour, he ſhould have the upper Hand of his Enemies.

PSLAM CIX.

David *complaining of his falſe Accuſers, who requited him Evil for Good, devotes them and their Children to all Miſery and Oblivion, becauſe of their Unmercifulneſs and Cruelty; ſhews his great Affliction, prays for Deliverance, and promiſes Thankfulneſs.*

To the chief Muſician. A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. *PRAY what Perſon or Perſons had the* Pſalmiſt *in view, when he compoſed this* Pſalm?

A. It is ſufficiently evident from the Body of this *Pſalm,* that it was compoſed by *David,* when he was in a State of Perſecution, either by *Saul,* or by *Abſalom,* and that amongſt and above the Reſt of his Enemies, he takes very particular Notice of, and breaks forth into vehement Expreſſions of Anger againſt one particular Perſon; but whether it were *Doeg* or *Achitophel* is not certain, nor at all neceſſary to know. But as *David* was, and very well knew himſelf to be a Type of *Chriſt,* and conſequently his Enemies did typify or repreſent ſome ſingular and eminent Enemy of *Chriſt,* which though *David* might not, yet the Spirit of God, which indited this *Pſalm,* did know to be *Judas,* and accordingly directed all theſe bitter Invectives and Imprecations againſt him, who deſerved and received far worſe Puniſhments for his monſtrous Wickedneſs, than all that are here mentioned.

And that he was the Perſon principally aimed at in this *Pſalm,* will ſeem very probable to him who conſiders *David*'s mild and merciful Temper, even to his Enemies, which he profeſſes in Words, in this very Book, *Pſ.* xxxv. 12, 13, 14. and practiſed in Deeds, as *Pſal.* xvi. 10, 11. and xix. 22, 23. and withal the Severity of theſe Imprecations, reaching not only to the Perſons of his Enemies, but to their Children, who yet, by the Law of God, were not to ſuffer for their Parents Sins, *Deut.* xxiv. 16.

PSALM CX.

The Pſalmiſt *celebrates the Kingdom of* Chriſt; *his everlaſting Prieſthood; his mighty Conqueſt over his Enemies; his Suffering and Triumph.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. *HAD not the* Pſalmiſt Jeſus Chriſt *and the Times of the Goſpel in View, when he compoſed this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* was written by *David*; and our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt,* in *Mat.* xxii. 44. gives the Interpretation hereof, ſhewing it cannot properly be applied to *David,* but himſelf. This *Pſalm* (being a ſhort Draught of the whole Goſpel) ſpeaks of the Calling of *Jeſus Chriſt* to the ſpiritual Kingdom of his Church, and his everlaſting Prieſthood; repreſenting farther the mighty Conqueſt over his Enemies, and his Triumph over them: Under the Similitude of a Captain, ſo greedy to deſtroy his Enemies, that he ſcarce drinks by the Way, the *Pſalmiſt* ſhews how God deſtroys his Enemies.

Q. *Do not the* Jews *aſcribe this* Pſalm *to ſome other Author?*

A. That the Penman of this Pſalm was not *Eliezer, Abraham*'s Servant, writ on Occaſion of *Abraham*'s Victory over the King's. *Gen.* xiv. (as ſome of the later *Jews* have deviſed, out of Oppoſition to *Chriſtianity*) nor any other Perſon but *David,* is evident from the Title of it, which is Part of the ſacred Text. That this *Pſalm* belongs to the *Meſſiah,* is abundantly evident both from the expreſs Words of the *New-Teſtament, Acts* ii. 34. 1 *Cor.* xv. 25. *Heb.* i. 13. and x. 13. and from the Conſent of the antient *Hebrew* Doctors manifeſted implicitly, *Matt.* xxii. 44. and expreſsly from their own Mouths; and from the Matter of the *Pſalm,* which can by Means be made to agree with *David,* who was not *David's Lord,* not a *Prieſt,* much leſs *a Prieſt for ever,* or after the Order of *Melchiſedeck,* the Prieſthood of *Aaron,* being, in *David*'s Time, in Uſe and Force. And whereas divers others *Pſalms,* though principally directed to, and to be underſtood of the *Meſſiah,* yet in ſome Sort may be underſtood concerning *David* alſo, or at leaſt took their Riſe and Occaſion from *David,* or from ſomething relating to him, this *Pſalm* is directly, immediately, and ſolely to be underſtood as relating to the *Meſſiah*; the Spirit of God ſo wiſely ordering this Matter, that it might be a moſt expreſs and convincing Teſtimony againſt the unbelieving *Jews,* concerning the true *Meſſiah,* and the Nature and Quality of his Kingdom. For theſe Reaſons we ſhall give it the Reader entire.

The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou at my Right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Foot-ſtool. The Lord ſhall ſend the Rod of thy Strength out of Zion; *rule thou in the midſt of thine Enemies. Thy People ſhall be willing, in the Day of thy Power, in the Beauties of Holineſs from the Womb of the Morning: Thou haſt the Dew of thy Youth. The Lord hath ſworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Prieſt*

Prieſt for ever, after the Order of Melchiſedeck. *The Lord, at thy Right-Hand, ſhall ſtrike through Kings in the Day of Wrath. He ſhall judge among the Heathen, he ſhall fill the Palaces with the dead Bodies; he ſhall wound the Heads over many Countries. He ſhall drink of the Brook in the Way; therefore ſhall he lift up the Head.*

Q. *I deſire you to explain the latter Part of the 3d Verſe,* From the Womb of the Morning: Thou haſt the Dew of thy Youth.

A. This Place is judged the moſt difficult and obſcure of any in this Book. The Words are diverſly render'd and underſtood. They are to be underſtood, I. Of *Chriſt* himſelf, and that in reſpect, either 1. Of his divine and eternal Generation, which may be called *the Dew of his Youth* or *Birth*, and which he may be ſaid to have had from *the Womb of the Morning*, before the firſt Morning and Light was created, or brought out of its Womb; that is, before the World was, which is a common Deſcription of Eternity, in Scripture: Or, 2. Of his human Nature and Birth; and ſo the Words may be thus rendered, *From the Womb of the Morning*; or, as it is rendered by divers others, *From the Womb, from the Morning*; that is, from thy very firſt Birth, *thou haſt*, or *hadſt the Dew of thy Youth*; that is, thoſe eminent Bleſſings and Graces wherewith thou waſt enriched, or *thy Youth*, or *Childhood was* like *the Dew*, precious and acceptable. Or rather, II. Of *Chriſt*'s Subjects or People, of whom he evidently ſpoke in the former Part of the Verſe. For it ſeems not probable, that the *Pſalmiſt*, after he had diſcourſed of *Chriſt*'s Advancement to his Kingdom, and his Adminiſtration of it, and Succeſs in it, both as to his Enemies and Friends, ſhould run back to his Birth, either divine or human, both which were evidently and neceſſarily ſuppoſed in what he had already ſaid of him. But then theſe Words may be read either, 1. Separately, as two diſtinct Clauſes, as they ſeem to be taken by our *Engliſh* Tranſlators, and by the *Colon* which they placed in the Middle. And ſo the firſt Clauſe belongs to the foregoing Words, as noting the Time when *the People ſhould be willing*, which having declared more generally in theſe Words, *in the Day of thy Power*, he now deſcribes more particularly and exactly, that they ſhould be ſo even *from the Morning*, or in a poetical Strain, very ſuitable to this Book, *from the Womb of the Morning*, namely, of that Day of his Power; that is, from the Beginning of *Chriſt*'s Entrance upon his Kingdom, which was after his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion into Heaven, and from the very firſt Preaching of the Goſpel, after that Time, when Multitudes were made *Chriſt*'s willing People, by the Preaching of the Apoſtles, *Acts* ii. 3, 4. 5, *&c.* And for the ſecond Clauſe, it is to be underſtood thus, *thou haſt*, or as it is in the *Hebrew*, *to thee* is *the Dew of thy Youth*, or *of thy Childhood*; for the Word *jeled*, from which this is derived, ſignifies ſometimes a *young Man*, and ſometimes a *Child* or *Infant*. By *Youth* or *Childhood* he here ſeems to underſtand thoſe young Men or Children which ſhall be born to the *Meſſias*, who are called his *Children*, *Heb.* ii. 13. and *his Seed*, *Iſa.* liii. 10. wherein poſſibly there might be an Alluſion to this *Dew*. Thus the Abſtract is here put for the Concrete, which is frequent in the *Hebrew* Tongue, as *Circumciſion* and *Uncircumciſion* are put for the Circumciſed and the Uncircumciſed, *&c.* And even in the *Latin* Tongue this very Word *Youth* is often uſed for a *young Man*, or for a *Company* of young Men. By the *Dew of Youth*, he means *Youth* or young Men like *Dew*, the Note of Similitude being often underſtood. And this Progeny of *Chriſt* is compared to the Dew, partly becauſe of their great Multitude, being like Drops of Dew, innumerable, and covering the whole Face of the Earth, *Sam.* xvii. 12. And partly becauſe of the ſtrange Manner of their Generation, which, like that of the Dew, is done ſuddenly and ſecretly, and not perceived till it be accompliſhed, and to the Admiration of thoſe that behold it; ſee *Iſa.* xlix. 21. Or, 2. Jointly, as one entire Sentence, *The Dew of thy Youth*, (*i e.* thy Poſterity, which is like Dew, as before explained) is as the Dew (which may very well be underſtood out of the foregoing Clauſe, as the Word *Feet* is underſtood in like Manner, *Pſ.* xviii. 33. *He maketh my Feet like Hinds* Feet) *of* or *from the Womb of the Morning*, it is like the Morning Dew, as it is called both in Scripture, *Hoſ.* vi. 4. and in other Authors. Nor is it ſtrange that a *Womb* ſhould be aſcribed to the Morning, ſince we read of the *Womb of the Sea*, and of *the Womb of the Ice or Froſt*, *Job* xxxviii. 8, 28, 29.

PSALM CXI.

The Pſalmiſt, *by his own Example, exhorts all Men to praiſe God; rehearſes his glorious and wonderful Works; his keeping Covenant with them that fear him, whoſe Fear is the Beginning of Wiſdom.*

Q. WHEREIN *conſiſts the Excellency of this* Pſalm?

A. The Excellency of it appears, as from other Things, ſo from the *Pſalmiſt*'s Care to digeſt the ſeveral Parcels of it into an exact Order, according to the Order of the Letters in the *Hebrew* Alphabet, the better to fix it in the Memories of thoſe who read it.

This *Pſalm* is a ſhort, yet full Commemoration of the Works of God, wherein the Prophet exhorts all Men, by his Example, to praiſe God, rehearſing the Glory of his Works, and exhorting every one to the Practice of Piety, or true Religion, which conſiſts in the Fear, Worſhip, and Service of God, and is the only Foundation of, and Introduction to all true Wiſdom.

PSALM CXII.

The Bleſſedneſs of them that fear the Lord in this Life, and in that to come; for which the Wicked envied them, and are grieved.

Q. PRAY *give the true Senſe of* Verſe 4?

A. The Words run thus: *Unto the Upright there ariſeth Light in the Darkneſs: He is gracious and full of Compaſſion, and righteous.*——*Ariſeth Light in Darkneſs.* Although he is ſubject to the Troubles and Calamities of this Life, as others are, yet God will give him Support and Comfort in them, and an happy Iſſue out of them; whereas the Wicked ſink under them, and their preſent Miſeries uſher in their eternal Deſtruction. ——*He is gracious.* Either, 1. God; and ſo this is added, as a Reaſon why God cauſeth Light to ſhine to the Upright out of Darkneſs, becauſe the Lord is *gracious*, *&c.* Or rather, 2. The good or upright Man, of whom he ſpeaks, both in the foregoing and following Words. So this is either, 1. A Reaſon why God dealeth thus with good Men; it is not from a partial or fond Affection to them, but becauſe they are ſuch Perſons to whom God hath engaged himſelf, by Promiſe and Covenant to bleſs, they are *gracious*, *&c.* Or, 2. As an Effect of their Affliction and Deliverance out of it; thereby they learn to be more *merciful* and *compaſſionate*, and *juſt*, or bountiful to others in Want and Miſery.

PSALM CXIII.

An Exhortation to all Men to praiſe the Lord for his Excellency and Greatneſs; for his Condeſcention to the poor and humble minded.

Q. PRAY *what is the Subject of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* is a Declaration of God's powerful and univerſal Providence towards all Men, and eſpecially toward his afflicted People. The often Repetition of *praiſe the Lord*, is to ſtir up our cold Dulneſs to praiſe God, ſeeing his Works are ſo wonderful, and for that we are created for the ſame Cauſe; for by preferring the poor to high Honour, and giving the Barren Children, the *Pſalmiſt* ſhews that God works not only in his Church, but alſo by his Miracles.

He maketh the barren Woman to keep Houſe, and to be a joyful Mother of Children, Ver. 9.——*To keep Houſe*; Heb. *to dwell in an Houſe*, or *amongſt Children*; to wit, proceeding from her own Body, as is clearly implied by the Oppoſition of this to her Barrenneſs. And the Word *Houſe* is often put for Children, as *Exod.* i. 23. *Ruth.* iv. 11. *Pſ.* cxv. 10, 12. and ſo it is explained in the next Clauſe.

PSALM CXIV.

The Pſalmiſt rehearſing God's delivering the Iſraelites *out of* Egypt, *exhorts all Creatures to praiſe him.*

Q. PRAY *what Tranſaction or Event does this* Pſalm *commemorate?*

A. This *Pſalm* is a ſolemn Commemoration of the Deliverance of the Children of *Iſrael*, out of *Egypt*; and probably it was to be ſung, among others, at the Celebration of the Paſſover. *Judah* is mentioned as the Chief of all the Tribes, not only in Number and Power, but alſo in Dignity, in which the Kingdom was to be ſeated. *Gen.* xlix. 10, *&c.* as at this Time it actually was, and from which the *Meſſiah* was to ſpring. It is written in an elegant and lofty Strain, and therefore deſerves the Readers particular Attention.

When Iſrael *went out of* Egypt, *the Houſe of* Jacob *from a People of ſtrange Language.* Judah *was his Sanctuary, and* Iſrael *his Dominion. The Sea ſaw it, and fled;* Jordan *was driven back. The Mountains ſkipped like Rams, and the little Hills like Lambs. What ails thee, O thou Sea, that thou fleddeſt? thou* Jordan, *that thou waſt driven back? Ye Mountains, that ye ſkipped like Lambs? Tremble thou Earth at the Preſence of the Lord, at the Preſence of the God of* Jacob. *Which turned the Rock into a ſtanding Water, the Flint into a Fountain of Waters.*

PSALM CXV.

The Church prays to God to preſerve her from the Vanity of Idol-worſhip; exhorts to Confidence in him, being aſſured of his Bleſſing; her Reſolution to praiſe the Lord.

Q. PRAY *what was the Occaſion of this* Pſalm?

A. The Occaſion of this *Pſalm* was to manifeſt ſome eminent Danger or Diſtreſs of the People of *Iſrael*, from ſome idolatrous Nations. But whether it was that mentioned, 2 *Chron.* xx. or what other, is but a Matter of Conjecture, and not worth our Inquiry. The Godly pray unto the Lord, to keep and preſerve them for the ſake of his glorious Name, ſhewing the great Vanity of Idols and Idolaters, exhorting every one unto Faith in the true God, with an Aſſurance of his Bleſſing.

Q. *What does the* Pſalmiſt *mean by thoſe Words*, Ver. 8. They that make them are like unto them?

A. They that make them; or, *they that obſerve, or worſhip them.* For the *Pſalmiſt's* Quarrel was not ſo much with thoſe few Artiſts who formed the Images, as with all the Adorers of them. And the Word here rendered *make*, ſometimes ſignifies to *worſhip*, as ſome underſtand it, not without Probability, *Exod.* xxxii. 35. *becauſe they made* (*i. e.* worſhipped) *the Calf which* Aaron *made*; and it often ſignifies to obſerve, as when Men are ſaid *to make* (as it is in the *Hebrew*) *the Sabbath*, Deut. v. 15. and *the Releaſe*, and *the Paſſover, and the Feaſt of Weeks*, as *Deut.* xv. 1. and xvi. 1, 10. ——*are like unto them.* This is a ſharp Reflection, either, 1. Upon the Idols whoſe higheſt Diſtinction is to be made like unto Man, a mortal, weak, and miſerable Creature, infinitely inferior to the true God. Or, 2. To the Makers or Worſhippers of them, who by this abſurd and fooliſh Action, ſhew that they are as ignorant and ſtupid, and void of all Senſe and Reaſon as their Images.

PSALM CXVI.

The Pſalmiſt profeſſeth his Love to God for his manifold Mercies; promiſes to walk holily; prays for his future Protection; and ſtudies and promiſes to be thankful.

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve upon this Prayer?*

A. This Prayer is ſo pathetical and pious that it gives a very lively Idea of the devout Frame of Soul that *David* was then in.

I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my Voice, and my Supplications. Becauſe he hath inclined his Ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The Sorrows of Death compaſſed me, and the Pains of Hell got hold upon me: I found Trouble and Sorrow. Then called I upon the Name of the Lord; O Lord, I beſeech thee, deliver my Soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preſerveth the Simple; I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy Reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou haſt delivered my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord, in the Land of the Living. I believed, therefore have I ſpoken; I was greatly afflicted. I ſaid in my haſte, all Men are Lyars. What ſhall I render unto the Lord, for all his Benefits towards me? I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the

Lord. I will pay my Vows unto the Lord, now in the Preſence of all his People. Precious in the Sight of the Lord, is the Death of his Saints. O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant, and the Son of thy Hand-maid; thou haſt looſed my Bonds. I will offer to thee the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving, and will call upon the Name of the Lord. I will pay my Vows unto the Lord, now in the Preſence of all his People. In the Courts of the Lord's Houſe, in the Midſt of thee, O Jeruſalem. *Praiſe ye the Lord.*

Q. *Explain the 13th Verſe,* I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

A. I will take the Cup of Salvation; I will offer the Sacrifice of Thankſgiving unto the Lord, as this Phraſe ſeems to be explained, Verſe 17, where the latter Clauſe of the Verſe is the ſame with that which here follows. The Phraſe is taken from the common Practice of the *Jews* in their Thankſgivings, in which a Feaſt was made of the Remainders of the Sacrifices, and the Offerers, together with the Prieſts, did eat and drink before the Lord; and amongſt other Rites, the Maſter of the Feaſt took a Cup of Wine in his Hand, and ſolemnly bleſſed God for it, and for the Mercy which was then acknowledged, and then gave it to all the Gueſts, who drank ſucceſſively of it. See 1 *Chron.* xvi. 2, 3. To which Cuſtom it is ſuppoſed our bleſſed Saviour alludes in the Inſtitution of the Cup, which alſo is called *the Cup of* Bleſſing, 1 *Cor.* x. 16. which is in Effect *the Cup of Salvation.* This Metaphor of a *Cup* is uſed both of Afflictions, as *Pſ.* xi. 6. and lxxv. 9. and of Comforts, *Pſ.* xxiii. 5. *Jer.* xvi. 8.

PSALM CXVII.

An Exhortation to all Nations to praiſe God for his Mercy and Truth's ſake.

Q. PRAY *what is the Prophet's View in this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* contains a Prophecy of the Calling of the *Gentiles,* as appears both from the Matter of it, and from *Rom.* xv. 11. where it is quoted to that Purpoſe. It contains an Exhortation to all Nations to praiſe God for his Mercy and Truth's ſake.

Q. *In Verſe* 2. *it is ſaid,* For his merciful Kindneſs is great towards us: *Who is meant by* us?

A. Either, 1. Towards us *Jews,* to whom he hath given thoſe peculiar Priviledges which he hath denied to all other Nations. But this may ſeem an improper Argument to move the *Gentiles* to praiſe God for his Mercies to others, from which they were excluded. Or, 2. Towards all of us, all the Children of *Abraham,* whether carnal or ſpiritual, who were to be incorporated together, and made one Body, and one Fold, by and under the *Meſſiah, John* x. 16. *Epheſ.* ii. 14. which Myſtery ſeems to be inſinuated by this Manner of Expreſſion.

PSALM CXVIII.

The Pſalmiſt exhorts all to praiſe the Lord, who had been merciful to them. By his own Experience ſhews how good it is to Truſt in the Lord, who had delivered him from his Enemies. Under the Type of the Pſalmiſt, the Coming of Chriſt, *whom the Chief of the People refuſed, is expreſſed and bleſſed.*

Q. A*Bout what Time, and what Occaſion did* David *compoſe this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* was moſt probably compoſed by *David,* when the Civil-Wars between the Houſes of *Saul* and *David* were ended, and *David* lately ſettled in the Kingdom of all *Iſrael,* and had newly brought up the Ark of God to his royal City.

But tho' this was the Occaſion, yet *David,* or at leaſt the Spirit of God, which indited this Pſalm, had a further Reach, and higher Deſign in it, eſpecially in the latter Part of it, which was to carry the Reader's Thoughts beyond the Type to the Antitype, the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom, who was chiefly intended in it. Which is apparent both from the Teſtimonies produced out of it to that Purpoſe in the New Teſtament, as *Mat.* xxi. 9, 42. *Mark* xii. 10, 11. *Acts* iv. 11. *&c.* and from the Conſent of the *Hebrew* Doctors both antient and modern; one Evidence thereof is, that in their Prayers for the *Meſſiah,* they uſe ſome Part of this *Pſalm,* and likewiſe from the Matter itſelf. The Form of this *Pſalm* may ſeem to be dramatical, and ſeveral Parts of it are ſpoken in the Names of ſeveral Perſons, yet ſo, that the Diſtinction of the Perſons, and their ſeveral Paſſages is not expreſſed, but left to the Obſervation of the intelligent and diligent Reader, as it is in the Book of the *Song of* Solomon, and in ſome Part of *Eccleſiaſtes,* and in many profane Writers. *David* ſpeaks in his own Name from the Beginning to Verſe 22. and from thence to Verſe 25, in the Name of the People; and then concludes in his own Name.

PSALM CXIX.

This Pſalm *contains the Commendation of God's Word.* David'*s Love to it. A Prayer for Grace to carry himſelf according to it; with an Account of God's Law, Inſtitutions, Commandments, Teſtimonies, Precepts, Word, Promiſes, Way, Name, Righteouſneſs, Truth,* &c. *with a Prayer for Help and Aſſiſtance.*

Q. WHAT *do you remark upon this* Pſalm, *and the ſeveral Diviſions of it?*

A. This *Pſalm* is divided into two and twenty Parts, or Pauſes, in every one of which there are eight Verſes, and each begins in the *Hebrew* with that Letter whereby each Part is called. So all the Verſes of the firſt Part begin with an *Aleph,* or *A.* The Verſes of the ſecond, every one with *Beth,* as *B*; and ſo forward in Order, according to the *Hebrew* Alphabet, or *A, B*; which is the Reaſon that ſome among the Learned have called this *Pſalm, The A, B, of Piety and Goodneſs.* Every Verſe of this *Pſalm* contains either a ſpecial Praiſe and Commendation of the Word of God, by reaſon of its Excellency; or a Teſtification of *David's* Love unto it; or elſe a Prayer of Grace, to carry himſelf according to it. Obſerve, that in every Verſe of this *Pſalm, David* makes mention either of God's Law, Inſtitutions or Ordinances, Commandments, Teſtimonies, Precepts, Word, Promiſes, Ways, Judgments, Name, Righteouſneſs, Truth, and the like; except only Verſe 122. wherein he calls upon God for Help and Aſſiſtance.

BETH.

Becauſe Youth is moſt given to Licentiouſneſs, he chiefly warns them to frame their Lives betimes to God's Word. If God's Word be graven in our Hearts, we ſhall be the more able to reſiſt the Aſſaults of *Satan*, and therefore the Prophet deſires God to inſtruct him daily more and more therein. He doth not boaſt of his Virtues, but ſets forth an Example for others to follow, and leave worldly Vanities.

GIMEL.

Here the *Pſalmiſt* ſhews that we ought not to deſire to live, but to ſerve God, and that we cannot ſerve him aright, except he open our Eyes and Minds; for ſeeing the Life of Man in this World is but a Paſſage, what would become of him, if the Word of God was not his Guide. He declares, that in all Ages, God had plagued all ſuch as maliciouſly and contemptuouſly departed from his Truth; and ſays, that when the Powers of the World gave Sentence againſt him (that is, *David*) the Law of the Lord was his Guide, Counſellor, and Comforter.

DALETH.

I am in evident Danger of preſent Death, that is, almoſt brought to the Grave, and without thy Word I cannot live. I have confeſſed my Offences, and now depend wholly on thee. If God did not maintain us by his Word, our Life would drop away like Water. Inſtruct me in thy Word, whereby my Mind may be purged from Vanity, and taught to obey thy Will. I have reſolutely perſiſted in the Practice of thy Precepts, in ſpight of all Temptations, Reproaches, Perſecutions, and Diſcouragements, to which I was expoſed for ſo doing. I will obey thy Precepts with all Readineſs, Fervency, and Diligence, when thou ſhalt knock off thoſe Fetters of remaining Corruption, and give me a more noble and generous Diſpoſition towards thee, and eſtabliſh me with thy free Spirit, as is expreſſed, *Pſ.* li. 12.

HE.

He ſhews, that he cannot follow on to the End, except God teach him often, and lead him forward, not only in outward Converſation, but alſo with inward Affection. He prays againſt Covetouſneſs, which is the Root of all Evil, 1 *Tim.* vi. 20. He begs that his Heart may ſtill delight in the gracious Word of God, and that he may not fall into Diſhonour, begging for Strength to continue in Righteouſneſs.

VAU.

He ſets forth, that God's Mercy and Love is the firſt Cauſe of our Salvation, and begs that promiſed Mercies may be performed, that he may be able to anſwer thoſe who reproached him. He ſays, that whereas other Princes delight in the Glories and Vanities of the World, yet he would make the Study and Practice of Religion his peculiar Care.

ZAIN.

Though he feels the Hand of God ſtill to lie upon him, yet he reſteth on his Promiſe, and comforts himſelf therein; he ſays, he remembered the Examples by which God declared himſelf to be Judge of the World, ſo that he did not value the Scoffs of the Wicked, who trample Religion under Foot. *David* expreſſes alſo here a vehement Zeal for God's Glory, and his Indignation againſt the Wicked. It was a mixed Paſſion made up of Indignation at their Perſons as ſinful, an Abhorrency of their Sins, and Dread and Sorrow at the Conſideration of the Judgments of God coming upon them.

CHETH.

Whereas other Men place their Portion and Happineſs in worldly Things, *David* chuſes God for his Portion and chief Treaſure, as he ſaid, *Pſalm* xvi. 5. and lxxiii. 26. intreating the gracious Preſence and merciful Aſſiſtance of the Almighty; he ſhews, that none can embrace the Word of God, except he conſiders his own Imperfections and Ways; he declares his Readineſs to praiſe the Lord, and begs for the Knowledge of God's Word, as a ſingular Token of his Favour.

TETH.

Having proved by Experience, that God was true in his Promiſe, *David* deſires that he would increaſe him in Knowledge and Judgment. He acknowledges that before the Lord touched him, he went aſtray; ſo that the Uſe of God's Rod is to call us home. He confeſſes that before he was chaſtened, he was rebellious, as a Man by Nature is; he complains of the Proud, who are puffed up with Vanity, and a vain Eſteem of themſelves.

JOD.

Becauſe God leaves not his Work that he hath begun, the Prophet deſires Grace a-new, that is, that he would continue his Mercies; for, when God ſhews his Grace towards any, he teſtifies to others, that he doth not fail thoſe who put their Truſt and Confidence in him.

CAPH.

David declares, though his Strength failed him, yet his Soul groaned and ſighed, his natural Moiſture being dried up and burnt, yet he relied on the Word of God. He complains that his Enemies have not only oppreſſed him violently, but alſo craftily conſpired againſt him, and finding no Help on Earth, he lifteth up his Eyes to Heaven.

LAMED.

Becauſe none ſhould eſteem the Word of God, according to the Changes of Things in this World, *David* ſhews, that it abides in Heaven, and therefore is immutable. Seeing the Earth and all the Creatures therein remain in that State, wherein God created them, much more doth his Truth remain conſtant and unchangeable; there is nothing ſo perfect in Earth, but it hath an End, only the Word of God is eternal: Thus the Prophet proves by Effects, that he is God's Child, becauſe he ſeeks to underſtand his Word.

MEM.

We cannot love the Word of God, except we exerciſe our ſelves therein, and practiſe it; for whoſoever doth ſubmit himſelf to do the Will of God, ſhall not only be ſafe againſt the Practices of his Enemies, but learn more Wiſdom than they who profeſs it, and are Men of Experience. Of ourſelves we can do nothing, but when God doth inwardly inſtruct us with his Spirit, how amiable, how delightful are thoſe divine Graces!

NUN.

Of our ſelves we are but Darkneſs, and cannot ſee, except we are enlightened by the Word of God; for which Reaſon, all the Faithful ought to bind themſelves to God, by a ſolemn Oath and Promiſe. The Prophet implores the Almighty, to accept of his Prayers and Praiſes, for though he was expoſed to perpetual and extream Danger, he did not forget the Law of the Lord; and as he inclined his Heart, ſo he did not neglect his Duty, but cheerfully complied with the Motions of the Spirit, yielding up his Mind and Heart to the Study and Practice of good and holy Works.

SAMECH.

Whoſoever would embrace God's Word aright, muſt abhor all Fancies and Imaginations both of himſelf and others. The Prophet bids the Wicked to go far from him, and not to hinder him from keeping the Law of the Lord. He deſires God's continual Aſſiſtance, leſt he ſhould faint in the Race which he had begun; he ſays, that the Obſervation of God's terrible Judgments upon the Wicked, and the Conſcience of his own Infirmity and manifold Sins, makes him fear leſt he ſhould puniſh him alſo, as he might juſtly do, if God ſhould be ſtrict to mark what is amiſs in him, or leſt he ſhould partake with them in their Sins, and conſequently in their Plagues.

AIN.

David requeſts of God to put himſelf between his Enemies and him. he does not boaſt that he is the Servant of God to any other End than by putting God in Mind, that, as he made him his by his Grace, ſo he would continue his Favour towards him. He ſhews, that when the wicked have brought all Things to Confuſion; then it is God's Time to help, and ſend Remedy.

PE.

The Prophet admires the Teſtimonies of God, containing high and ſecret Myſteries; though the Simple who ſubmit themſelves to God, have their Eyes opened, and their Minds illuminated, as ſoon as they begin to read the Word of God. He prays that God's Word may be ingrafted in him, and that the Almighty would look upon him with a favourable Countenance, becauſe his plentiful and perpetual Tears were Witneſſes of his deep and unfeigned Sorrow for God's Diſhonour and Diſpleaſure, and for the Miſeries which Sinners brought upon themſelves and others.

TSADDI.

We cannot confeſs God to be righteous, except we live uprightly and truly as he hath commanded. Gold muſt be refined, but the Word of God is Perfection itſelf. The Life of Man without the Knowledge of God is Death; and the true Trial is, to praiſe God in Adverſity.

KOPH.

David ſhews that all his Affections and whole Heart were bent towards God, to obtain Help in his Dangers and Adverſities. He was more earneſt and zealous in the Study of God's Word, than the Watchmen in their Charge. He ſhews the Nature of the Wicked to be to perſecute againſt their Conſcience. His Faith is grounded upon God's Word, that he would ever be at Hand, when his Children are oppreſſed.

RESH.

Without God's Promiſe there is no Hope of Deliverance from Affliction; this the Wicked lack, and therefore can have no Hope of Salvation. It is a ſure Sign of Adoption when we love the Law of God, and it grieves good Men to ſee the Wicked condemn God's Glory; for all the Words of the Lord are found to be true and certain, and ſo they will be to the End of the World.

SCHIN.

The Threatnings and Perſecutions of Princes could not make *David* ſhrink from confeſſing God, whom he feared more than Men. He declares that he often, and at ſundry Times, praiſes the Lord; for they who love the Lord muſt proſper. We muſt firſt have Faith before we can work and pleaſe God.

TAU.

The Prophet entreats the Lord to hear his Supplications, and to deliver him from his Calamities, that he might worſhip him with Freedom, and glorify his Name in a more ſolemn and publick Manner. He ſets forth how he had been baniſhed by the Power and Tyranny of his Enemies, from all his Friends and Relations, and, which is far worſe, from the Place of God's Worſhip and Preſence, and forced to wander to and fro, hiding himſelf in Mountains, Caves, and Woods, and expoſed to a thouſand Snares and Dangers; yet, among all thoſe Tribulations and Hardſhips, he did not forget the Commandments of his God.

PSALM CXX.

David *prays againſt lying Lips and deceitful Tongues; and complains that his Habitation was unavoidably among wicked and unpeaceable Men.*

A Song of Degrees.

Q. HOW *do you underſtand the Title to this Pſalm?*

A. *Of Degrees.* Or, of *Aſcents*, as others render it, as the Word properly ſignifies. This Title is given to this and the fourteen following Pſalms, for the following Reaſons, as ſome conceive. 1. Becauſe of the excellent Matter of them, as eminent Perſons are called *Men of high Degree*, 1 *Chron.* xvii. 17. For in them are contained, as learned Men have obſerved, many Doctrines of great Uſe and Importance, and delivered with exceeding Brevity and Elegance. Or, 2. Becauſe they were ſung upon the fifteen Degrees of Stairs of the Temple, which the *Jewiſh* Writers mention, or, at leaſt, upon ſome high Place. Or, 3. Becauſe they were ſung with a loud Voice. Or, 4. Becauſe they were ſung by the *Jews* when they returned from *Babylon* and went up to *Jeruſalem*. Which ſome judge the more probable, becauſe it ſuits with the Order of theſe Pſalms; whereof the firſt were to be uſed by them when they were preparing for their Departure, and ſuffered Delays in it from the Calumnies of their Enemies; the ſecond, in their Journey; the third, upon their Arrival at *Jeruſalem*; the fourth, after their Building the

Temple, &c. And although one of theſe Pſalms is aſcribed to *David*, and another to *Solomon*, yet they alſo, as well as the reſt, might be applied to this Uſe; and ſo might this Pſalm alſo, tho' *David* firſt compoſed it upon another Occaſion. Or, 5. From ſomething which was peculiar in them, either in the Poetry, or Manner of ſinging them. But theſe Things being now loſt and unknown, not only to *Chriſtians*, but even to the *Jews*, we muſt be contentedly ignorant as well of this, as moſt other Titles of the Pſalms; and the rather, becauſe they do not at all concern the Matter, nor are they neceſſary to the underſtanding them.

This is a Prayer againſt evil Tongues, and falſe Railers, with a Complaint of the *Pſalmiſt* that he could not avoid converſing with, or among evil Men.

PSALM CXXI.

The Pſalmiſt *ſhews that the great Safety of the Godly is from the Lord, who keeps them in their Outgoings and In-comings from all Evil.*

A Song of Degrees.

Q. D*OES any Thing in this* Pſalm *occur worthy Obſervation?*

A. The Matter of this *Pſalm* ſufficiently ſhews that the *Pſalmiſt* was ſtruggling with great Difficulties and Oppoſitions, looking every where for Help, as Men in ſuch Circumſtances uſe to do, turning his Eyes to God and his Providence, and encouraging himſelf by the Promiſes of God made to his People.

I will lift mine Eyes unto the Hills from whence cometh my Help, Ver. 1.——*Unto the Hills.* Eito *Sion* or *Moriah*, which are called *the holy Mountains*, *Pſ.* lxxxvii. 1. Or rather, 2. To the Hills in general, whereof there were many in the Land of *Canaan*, and upon which the Forces, which he hoped would come to his Aſſiſtance, might be ſeen at a great Diſtance.——*Cometh my Help*; or, *may come*, Heb. *will come.*

PSALM CXXII.

David *profeſſes his Joy when he went into the Houſe of the Lord; prays for the Welfare, Proſperity, and Peace of it.*

A Song of Degrees of *David.*

Q. F*OR what peculiar Uſe or Purpoſe did* David *pen this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have been written by *David*, for the Uſe of the People, when they came up to *Jeruſalem* to the ſolemn Feaſts.. He rejoices that God had appointed a Place where the Ark ſhould ſtill remain. By the artificial Joining and Beauty of the Houſes, he means the concordant Love between the Citizens. In the Houſe of the Lord was placed the Throne of Juſtice, the Figure of Chriſt's Kingdom, for the Welfare, Proſperity, and Peace of which, the Prophet prays.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 4th Verſe?*

A. Whither the Tribes go up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Teſtimony of Iſrael, *to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord*, Ver. 4.—*The Tribes.* Not ſome few pious People of each Tribe, as in *Saul*'s Time, and under the Judges, whole Tribes, not only one or two of the Tribes, as it was during the late Civil Wars; but all the Twelve Tribes.——*of the Lord.* Whom God hath choſen to be his People, and whom he hath invited and required to reſort thither——*Teſtimony of* Iſrael. Unto the Ark, which is oft called *the Teſtimony*, *Exod.* xvi. 34, &c. and more fully *the Ark of the Teſtimony*, *Exod.* xxvi. 33, 34. becauſe of the Tables of the Covenant laid upon it, which are called *God's Teſtimony*, and *the Tables of the Teſtimony*, *Exod.* xxv. 16. And this may well be called the *Teſtimony of*, or *to Iſrael*, becauſe it was given by God to them, and for their Good. Or, by, or according to *the Teſtimony of* Iſrael, *i. e.* God's Command given to *Iſrael*, which may be alledged here as a Reaſon which moved them to this Journey.——*To give Thanks in the Name of the Lord.* To worſhip God; this one eminent Part or Action thereof being put for all the reſt.

PSALM CXXIII.

The Godly profeſs their patient truſting and Confidence in God; and withal earneſtly pray to be delivered from the Contempt of the Proud.

A Song of Degrees.

Q. P*RAY help me to underſtand the 2d Verſe?*

A. The Words run thus; *Behold, as the Eyes of Servants look unto the Hand of their Maſters, as the Eyes of a Maiden unto the Hand of her Miſtreſs; ſo our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have Mercy upon us*, Ver. 2.—*Hand of their Maſter.* Either, 1. For Supply of their Wants, which comes from their Maſter's Hand. Or, 2. For Pity, the Hand being the Inſtrument whereby Maſter's commonly correct their Servants; and looking to the Hand may expreſs the Poſture ſupplicating for Mercy. Or rather, 3. For Help and Defence againſt their Oppreſſors. For Servants were unable to defend themſelves, and were not allowed to wear defenſive Weapons, but expected, and had, Protection from their Maſters in Caſe of Injury. For this Phraſe of *having One's Eyes towards another*, both in this and other ſacred Books, conſtantly notes Expectation and Deſire of Help from them, as *Pſ.* xxv. 15. and lxix. 4. *Iſaiah* xvii. 7. *Ezek.* xxiii. 27, &c. And the Phraſe of God's *having Mercy* upon another, moſt commonly ſignifies that Act or Effect of his Mercy in helping or delivering him.

PSALM CXXIV.

The Church ſets forth God's Mercy for a miraculous Deliverance out of the apparent Danger of powerful Enemies, and bleſſes him for it.

A Song of Degrees of *David.*

Q. I*S there any Thing in this* Pſalm *that needs a Remark?*

A. This *Pſalm* was compoſed by *David* in the Name, and for the Uſe of all the Church and People of *Iſrael*; as a Thankſgiving for their Deliverance from ſome eminent Danger or Dangers from proud and potent Enemies. Many ſuch they had in *David*'s Time; but which of them is here intended, is hard to determine, and not worth the Enquiry.

The Prophet ſhews, that God was ready to help at Need, and that there was no other Way to be ſaved, but only by his Means. He makes uſe of moſt proper Similitudes, to expreſs the great Danger that the Church was in, and out of which God miraculouſly delivered them.

Psalm CXXV.

The Stedfaſtneſs of ſuch as truſt in God. A Prayer for the Godly to do them good, and againſt the Ungodly to deſtroy them.

A Song of Degrees.

Q. WHAT *was the Prophet's chief Deſign in compoſing this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* was deſigned for the Conſolation and Encouragement of God's Church and People in all Ages, againſt all the Plots and Malice of their inveterate and irreconcileable Enemies.

Although the World be ſubject to Changes, yet the People of God ſhall ſtand ſure, and be defended by the Providence of God; for, though God ſuffers his People to be under Afflictions for a Time, leſt they ſhould embrace Wickedneſs, yet they are not left without Hope of the Mercy of the Almighty. Here is alſo a Prayer for the Godly, and againſt the Ungodly.

Psalm CXXVI.

The Church celebrates the Mercy of God for her Return from the Babylonian *Captivity; prays that he would perfect his Work; and foretels the good Succeſs thereof.*

A Song of Degrees.

Q. WHO *was the Author of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* was compoſed by *Ezra*, or ſome other Man of God, at the Return of *Iſrael* from *Babylon*. Their Deliverance was a Thing incredible, and therefork took away all Cauſe of Ingratitude; the Church celebrates and praiſes God for his great Mercies vouchſafed unto her, praying him to perfect his Work, and foretelling the good Succeſs thereof.

Q. *How are we to underſtand the 4th Verſe;* Turn again our Captivity, O Lord, as the Streams *of the* South?

A. Our Captivity. As thou haſt brought us home, bring home alſo the reſt of our Brethren who are diſperſed and yet remain Captives in *Babylon*, or in any other Parts of the World——*As the Streams of the South.* As thou art pleaſed ſometimes to ſend Waters into dry and barren Grounds, ſuch as the ſouthern Parts of *Canaan* and the Parts adjacent were; which is an Act of thy great Power and Goodneſs; and no leſs will this Return of thy People be, and no leſs ſhall we rejoice in it, and bleſs God for it.

Psalm CXXVII.

No Succeſs in City or Family without God's Bleſſing and Protection. Good Children are his Gift; their Happineſs that have them.

A Song of Degrees for *Solomon*.

Q. WHO *do you imagne was the Author of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* was thought to be made by *Solomon*; it teaches, that all Welfare and Proſperity comes from the Bleſſing of the Lord, both in Cities and Families; and that good Children are a Bleſſing of God. Such Children ſhall be able to ſtop their Adverſaries Mouths, when their godly Life is maliciouſly accuſed before the Judges, whoſe Seat was uſually in the Gates of the City.

Q. *The firſt and latter Part of the 2d Verſe ſeems not well connected.*

A. The whole Text ſtands thus: *It is in vain for you to riſe up early, to ſit up late, to eat the Bread of Sorrows: For ſo he giveth his beloved Sleep.* ——*For ſo*; namely, by his Bleſſing, which though not expreſſed, is underſtood out of the former Verſe, where it is twice expreſſed. As therefore he ſaith it is in vain for them to build or watch, if God do not give his Bleſſing and Aſſiſtance, Ver. 1. So here he adds, that it is in vain to be diligent in their Callings (underſtand) without God's Bleſſing. But the *Hebrew* Word rendered *ſo*, may be, and is by others, rendered *when*, or, *whereas*, or *ſince*; by others *rightly*, or *well*, when it is needful or convenient for them; by others, *certainly*, the Sleep which they have is undoubtedly from God's Bleſſing, without which all Endeavours would be ineffectual.——*His beloved Sleep.* His People, who, though hated and maligned by Men, are beloved of God, over whom his Providence watched in a ſpecial Manner. In this Name he ſeems to allude to the Name of *Jedidiah*, which was given to *Solomon*, and ſignifies, *The beloved of the Lord*, 2 *Sam.* xii. 25. He gives them quiet Reſt, both of Body and Mind, which thoſe greedy Worldlings cannot enjoy, *Eccleſ.* v. 11.

Psalm CXXVIII.

The Pſalmiſt ſhews the happy State of him that fears God, in his Labour, Wife, and Children; he ſhall ſee the Good of Jeruſalem, *and Peace upon* Iſrael.

A Song of Degrees.

Q. PLEASE *to explain and apply the Similitude in the 3d Verſe?*

A. Thy Wife ſhall be as a fruitful Vine by the Sides of thine Houſe; thy Children like Olive Plants round about thy Table.——*As a fruitful Vine.* Like the Vine for Fruitfulneſs; Or, like that Sort of Vines known by this Name for its eminent Fruitfulneſs, as ſome Trees amongſt us are for the ſame Reaſon called *the great Bearers.*——*By the Sides of thine Houſe.* Where the Vines are commonly planted for Support and other Advantages; which being applied to the Wife, may ſignify either, 1. The Wife's Duty to abide at home, *Tit.* ii. 5. as the Harlot is decypherrd by her gadding abroad, *Prov.* vii. 11. 12. Or rather, 2. The Legitimacy of the Children, which are begotten at home by the Huſband, and not abroad by Strangers.——*Like Olive Plants.* Numerous, growing and flouriſhing, good both for Ornament and manifold Uſes, as Olive Trees are. ——*Round thy Table.* Where they ſhall ſit at Meat with thee, for thy Comfort and Safety.

Psalm CXXIX.

The various and manifold Afflictions of the Church deſcribed; ſhe is delivered out of all; thoſe that hate her are curſed and devoted to Judgment.

A Song of Degrees.

Q. THE *3d Verſe ſeems ſomewhat difficult; which therefore pray explain?*

A. The Words are theſe: *The Plowers plowed* *upon my Back*; *they made long their Furrows.* —— *Upon my Back.* They have not only thrown me down, and trodden me under Foot, but have cruelly tormented, wounded and mangled me, and had no more Pity upon me, than the Plowmen hath upon the Earth which he cuts up at his Pleaſure. He ſaith, *Upon my Back*, either becauſe they did literally ſcourge the Captives upon their Backs with ſuch Cords as are mentioned, Ver. 4. though we do not read that the *Iſraelitiſh* Captives were thus uſed by any of their Enemies; or, by Way of Alluſion to that Uſage, which made a Sort of Furrowns in their Backs, on which they uſed to lay on their Strokes. ——— *Long Furrows.* They oft repeated their Injuries, and prolonged my Torments.

PSALM CXXX.

The Pſalmiſt *being troubled for, and acknowledging his Sins, profeſſes his Hope in God, and exhorts* Iſrael *alſo to hope in him?*

A Song of Degrees.

Q. PRAY *what is the* Pſalmiſt's *Drift in this* Pſalm?

A. The *Pſalmiſt* being in great Diſtreſs and Sorrow, declares that we cannot be juſt before God, but by Forgiveneſs of Sins; becauſe, by Nature, God is moſt merciful, therefore the Faithful reverence him. He ſhews to whom God's Mercy appertains, to *Iſrael*, this is, to the Church, and not to the Reprobate. His Expreſſions are wonderfully pathetick and affecting.

Out of the Depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my Voice; let thine Ears be attentive to the Voice of my Supplications. If thou, Lord, ſhouldeſt mark Iniquities; O Lord, who ſhall ſtand? But there is Forgiveneſs with thee; that thou mayeſt be feared. I wait for the Lord, my Soul doth wait, and in his Word do I hope. My Soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the Morning; I ſay, more than they that watch for the Morning. Let Iſrael *hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is Mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption. And he ſhall redeem* Iſrael *from all his Iniquities.*

PSALM CXXXI.

David *teſtifies his Humility, and exhorts* Iſrael *to truſt in the Lord.*

A Song of Degrees of *David*.

Q. DOES *not* David, *in this* Pſalm, *commend himſelf too much?*

A. This *Pſalm* ſeems to have been compoſed by *David*, during *Saul's* Perſecution; when he was charged with boundleſs Ambition, and a greedy Deſire of the royal Throne, and that he ſought it by wicked Practices againſt *Saul's* Life and Dignity. And for his own juſt Vindication he is forced to publiſh his own Integrity, and to declare, that as the Right of the Kingdom was not ſought or coveted by him, but freely conferred upon him by the unexpected and undeſired Favour of God; ſo that he had no Thought or Deſign to invade the Throne, before his Time, but was willing to ſtay God's Leiſure for it, and, in the mean Time, was reſolved to behave himſelf towards *Saul*, as became a faithful Subject, ſeeking nothing but to preſerve his own Life from the Rage of unrighteous and bloody Men; and then ſets ſorth his own Humility, as an Example to all Rulers and Governors, exhorting *Iſrael* always to rely on the Almighty.

PSALM CXXXII.

David, *in Prayer, commends unto God the Care he had for the Ark; his Prayer over it. A Rehearſal of God's Oath, and Promiſes of the everlaſting Kingdom of* Chriſt.

A Song of Degrees.

Q. WAS David *or* Solomon *the Author of this* Pſalm?

A. The Penman of this *Pſalm*, was either *David*, when God had graciouſly declared his Acceptance of *David's* Deſire to build an Houſe for God, and his Purpoſe of eſtabliſhing the Kingdom of *David*, and his Seed for ever; or *Solomon*, as may be gathered from the whole Matter of the *Pſalm*, which ſeems better to agree with him than with *David*, particularly from Ver. 8, 9, 10. compared with 2 *Chron*. vi. 41, 42. where we have the ſame Words, with but a ſmall Variation.

David's Carefulneſs about the bringing the Ark into *Jeruſalem*, his Prayer over it, and a Rehearſal of the Oaths and Promiſes which God had made to *David* and his Church, touching the everlaſting Kingdom of *Chriſt*, are well expreſs'd in the following Terms.

For the Lord hath choſen Zion; *he hath deſired it for his Habitation, ſaying, This is my reſt for ever, here will I dwell, for I have a Delight therein. I will abundantly bleſs her Proviſion; I will ſatisfy her Poor with Bread. I will alſo cloath her Prieſts with Salvation; and her Saints ſhall ſhout aloud for Joy. There will I make the Horn of* David *to bud; I have ordained a Lamp for mine anointed. His Enemies will I cloath with ſhame; but upon himſelf ſhall his crown flouriſh.*

Q. *The 6th Verſe ſeems a little obſcure*; Lo, we heard of it at *Ephratah*; we found it in the Fields of the Wood. *What does the* Pſalmiſt *mean by* Ephratah *and* the Fields of the Wood?

A. At Ephratah. Either 1. *Bethlehem*, which is called *Ephratah*, *Gen*. xxxv. 19. and xlviii. 7. *Mich*. v. 2. So the Senſe is either this, We heard a Rumour at *Bethlehem*, among *David's* Relations, that the Ark ſhould be removed to a new Place, and that *David* had pitched upon that: Or this, We heard that *Bethlehem* would be the Place for it, becauſe it was the City of *David*. Or rather, 2. In the Tribe of *Ephraim*, which was alſo called *Ephratah* or *Ephrathah*, as is manifeſt, becauſe the Men of *Ephraim* were called *Ephrathites*, *Judg*. xii. 5. in the *Hebrew* Text, though in the *Engliſh* it be *Ephramite*. So *Jeroboam* is called an *Ephrathite*, 1 *Kings* xi. 26. So the Senſe is, We heard it from our Fathers, that the Antient Place of it was *Shiloa*, which was in the Land of *Ephraim*. Whereby he covertly intimates, that God rejected and forſook that Place, and *choſe not the Tribe of* Ephraim, *Pſalm* lxxviii. 67. that ſo he might make way for *Zion*, the Place choſen by God for it, as it follows here, Ver. 13. ——— *We found it in the Fields of the Wood.* We afterwards found it elſewhere, in a Field, or in one of the Fields of the Wood; for that little Spot of Ground on which the Tabernacle or Temple was built, was not likely to be in ſeveral Fields. Thus *Jeptha* was buried *in the Cities of* Gilead, *Judg*. xii. 7. *i. e.* in one of them. This is meant, either

1. Of the Mount *Moriah*, which might poſſibly be called *the Field of the Wood*, as being antiently a Place of Wood, *Gen.* xxii. 13. or of *the Thraſhing-floor of* Araunah, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 28. which, before the building of the Temple, is ſaid to have been a woody Place. Or rather, 2. Of *Kirjath-jearim*, which ſignifies *a City of Woods*, in the Field and Territories whereof, the Ark was ſeated for twenty Years, 1 *Sam.* vii. 1, 2. and from this Place was removed to *Zion*, 2 *Sam.* vi. 1, *&c.*

Pſalm. CXXXIII.

David *extols the Benefit and Excellency of the Unity and brotherly Communion of the Faithful.*

A Song of Degrees of *David*.

Q. UPON *what Occaſion was this* Pſalm *compoſed?*

A. This *Pſalm* was compoſed by *David*, upon the happy Occaſion of the ending of the Civil War between the two Houſes of *Saul* and *David*. In which having felt the ſad Effects of Diſcord and Diviſion, both the King and the People were more ſenſible of the great Bleſſing of Reconciliation and Unity.

Q. *Pray explain the Third Verſe?*

A. Theſe are the Words, *As the Dew of* Hermon, *and as the Dew that deſcended upon the Mountains of* Zion; *for there the Lord commandeth Bleſſing, even Life for evermore.*——— *Hermon.* It is no leſs grateful than the Dew, is which falls upon that great and goodly Mount of *Hermon*, whereby it is both refreſhed and made fruitful. ——— *Mountains of* Zion. And as the Dew which falleth *upon the Mountains of* Zion, *i. e.* Either upon the ſeveral Parts, Ridges, or Tops of the Mountain, whereof one was peculiarly called *Sion*, and another called *Moriah*, or upon the Mountains which are about *Jeruſalem*, *Pſal.* cxxv. 2. which was oft called *Zion*, as *Pſalm* cxxxii. 13. and theſe may be oppoſed to *Hermon*, which was remote and beyond *Jordan*. But, perhaps, the *Dew* is not taken litterally; for the falling of the Dew availed little to the Refreſhment or Improvement of the Hills of *Sion* and *Moriah*, eſpecially as they were then covered with Buildings; but allegorically, for the Favour or Bleſſing of God, which is frequently called and compared to the Dew, *Prov.* xix. 12. *Iſa.* xviii. 4. *Hoſ.* xiv. 5. *Mich.* v. 7. and thus it may ſeem to be explained in the following Clauſe: And ſo the Senſe of the Place is, It is as deſirable as the natural Dew which falls upon Mount *Hermon*, nay, as that bleſſed and heavenly Dew of God's Ordinances and Graces which he hath commanded to fall upon the Mountains of *Sion*. And if it ſhould ſeem ſtrange, that the Dew ſhould be taken literally in the firſt Clauſe, and myſtically in the next, we have a like Inſtance *Matt.* viii. 22. *Let the Dead* (ſpiritually) *bury the Dead* (naturally.)

Pſalm CXXXIV.

The Prieſts and Levites *are exhorted to bleſs the Lord in his Sauctuary.*

A Song of Degrees.

Q. PRAY *what is particularly obſervable in this* Pſalm?

A. The Form of this *Pſalm* ſeems to be dramatical. In the two firſt Verſes the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks in the Name of ſome eminent Perſon, either the King or Chief-prieſt, exhorting and requiring all the Prieſts and *Levites* to perform the Duties of their reſpective Places and Functions; and in the laſt Verſe, in the Name of the Prieſts and *Levites*, returning him Thanks for his good Advice.

Pſalm CXXXV.

The Servants of the Lord are exhorted to praiſe him for his Mercy to Iſrael, *and for his Judgments on* Egypt *and other Nations. The Vanity of Idols, and they that truſt in them. The Houſe of* Aaron *and* Levi *are exhorted to bleſs God.*

Q. WHAT *does this* Pſalm *chiefly contain?*

A. This *Pſalm* contains an Exhortation to all the *Iſraelites*, eſpecially to the Prieſts and *Levites*, to praiſe God for his great and wondrous Works, ſome Particulars whereof are here recorded, *viz.*

He cauſeth the Vapours to aſcend from the Ends of the Earth, he maketh Lightnings for the Rain; he bringeth the Winds out of his Treaſuries. Who ſmote of the Firſt-born of Egypt, *both of Man and Beaſt. Who ſent Tokens and Wonders into the midſt of thee,* O Egypt, *upon* Pharaoh, *and upon all his Servants. Who ſmote great Nations, and ſlew mighty Kings;* Gihon *King of the* Amorites, *and* Og *King of* Baſhan, *and all the Kingdoms of* Canaan. *And gave their Land for an Heritage, an Heritage unto* Iſrael *his People. Thy Name,* O *Lord, endureth for ever, and thy Memorial,* O *Lord, throughout all Generations. For the Lord will judge his People, and he will repent himſelf concerning his Servants. The Idols of the Heathen are Silver and Gold, the Work of Mens Hands. They have Mouths, but they eat not; Eyes have they, but they ſee not. They have Ears, but they hear not; neither is there any Breath in their Mouths. They that make them are like unto them; ſo is every one that truſteth in them. Bleſs the Lord,* O *Houſe of* Iſrael; *bleſs the Lord,* O *Houſe of* Aaron. *Bleſs the Lord,* O *Houſe of* Levi; *ye that fear the Lord, bleſs the Lord. Bleſſed be the Lord out of* Zion, *which dwelleth at* Jeruſalem. *Praiſe ye the Lord.*

Pſalm CXXXVI.

The Pſalmiſt *exhorts all to praiſe God for his Power and Wiſdom in governing the World; for delivering the* Iſraelites *out of* Egypt, *and bringing them to the promiſed Land.*

Q. DOES *any Thing in this* Pſalm *want Explanation?*

A. The Matter of this *Pſalm* is the ſame with the former, only it is a little more fitted to the Uſe and Service of the Temple, by the continued Repetition of that ſolemn Clauſe, *For his Mercies endureth for ever*, which was much uſed by the ſacred Singers, 2 *Chron.* vii. 3. and xx. 25.

Pſalm CXXXVII.

The ſad Complaint of the Jews *in Captivity. Of the Scoffing of their Enemies, yet their Conſtancy to remember* Jeruſalem. *Judgments imprecated upon* Edom *and* Babylon.

Q. THE *Author and Occaſion of this* Pſalm *have been Subjects of much Diſpute, which I deſire you to adjuſt?*

A. The Penman of this *Pſalm* is uncertain; the Occaſion of it was unqueſtionably the Conſideration of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; and it ſeems to have been compoſed, either during the Time of that Captivity; or preſently after their Deliverance out of it. This *Pſalm* ſets forth the ſad Complaint of the *Jews*, againſt the Scoffing and Jeering of their Enemies, who would have them ſing merry Songs; concluding with imprecating Judgments on *Edom* and *Babylon*. This Song is of the elegiac Kind, and deplores the unhappy State of the captive *Jews* in *Babylon*.

By the Rivers of Babylon, *there we ſat down, yea we wept, when we remembred* Zion. *We hanged our Harps upon the Willows, in the midſt thereof. For there they that carried us away captive, required of us a Song; and they that waſted us, required of us Mirth, ſaying, Sing us one of the Songs of* Zion. *How ſhall we ſing the Lord's Song in a ſtrange Land? If I forget thee,* O Jeruſalem, *let my Right-Hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my Tongue cleave to the Roof of my Mouth, if I prefer not* Jeruſalem *above my chief Joy. Remember, O Lord, the Children of* Edom, *in the Day of* Jeruſalem; *who ſaid, Raſe it, raſe it, even to the Foundation thereof. O Daughter of* Babylon, *who art to be deſtroyed; happy ſhall he be that rewardeth thee, as thou haſt ſerved us. Happy ſhall he be that taketh and daſheth thy little ones againſt the Stones.*

PSALM CXXXVIII.

David *praiſes God for his Goodneſs and Truth ſhewn to him, and foretels that the Kings of the Earth ſhall praiſe him; and profeſſes the Fruit of his truſting in God, in the midſt of Troubles.*

A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. P*RAY give me the genuine Senſe of the Second Verſe?*

A. The Text is this; *I will worſhip towards thy holy Temple, and praiſe thy Name, for thy Loving-kindneſs, and for thy Truth; for thou haſt magnified thy Word above all thy Name.* ——— *Towards thy holy Temple*; where the Ark was: He ſaith *towards* it, becauſe he was not permitted to enter into it. —— *Above all thy Name.* For thou haſt glorified thy Word or Promiſe, or thy Faithfulneſs in fulfilling thy Promiſes unto me, more than other of thy glorious Perfections by which thou art known. Not that one of God's Attributes is really in itſelf more great and glorious than another; but as here God's gracious Promiſe made to *David*, and the wonderful Accompliſhment thereof, in ſpite of all thoſe Difficulties that ſtood in the Way, and which ſeemed to Men to be inſuperable, was at this Time more obſerved and admired more than any other of the Attributes or Actions. But here we muſt remember, that amongſt the reſt of the Promiſes made to *David*, one was, that the *Meſſias* ſhould come out of his Loins, and that thoſe Parts of the promiſed Mercies which *David* had actually received, were Pledges to aſſure him, that he ſhould receive the reſt in due Time, and eſpecially that great and eminent Word of Promiſe concerning the *Meſſias*, who may well be ſaid to be magnified above all God's Name.

PSALM CXXXIX.

David *magnifies the All-ſeeing Providence of God; his great and tender Mercies to him, before he had a Being in the World; abhors all Converſe with wicked Men; prays for, and teſtifies his Sincerity.*

To the chief Muſician a *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. H*AVE not the* Jews *a particular Value for this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* is eſteemed, by the *Hebrews*, the moſt excellent in the whole Book. The Matter of it is noble and ſublime, and ſo is the Style. The Occaſion of it ſeems to have been thoſe heavy Cenſures and Reproaches, wherewith *David* was loaded by his Enemies, who branded him for a notorious Hypocrite and Impoſtor, that pretended Religion only for the covering and promoting his own ambitious and wicked Deſigns againſt his lawful King, whoſe Life and Crown he ſought to take away. Againſt theſe he comforts himſelf with the Conſideration of God's Omniſcience, to whom he appeals as the only proper Judge of the Integrity of his Heart, declaring he will have no Communion with evil and wicked Men. How finely does he deſcribe the Omniſcience and Omnipreſence of God!

Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither ſhall I flee from thy Preſence? If I aſcend up into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my Bed in Hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea: Even there ſhall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right-Hand ſhall hold me. If I ſay, ſurely the Darkneſs ſhall cover me; even the Night ſhall be Light about me. Yea, the Darkneſs hideth not from thee; but the Night ſhineth as the Day; the Darkneſs and the Light are both alike to thee. For thou haſt poſſeſſed my Reins; thou haſt covered me in my Mother's Womb. I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth right well. My Subſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in Secret, aud curiouſly wrought in the loweſt Parts of the Earth. Thine Eyes did ſee my Subſtance, yet being unperfect, and in thy Book all my Members were written, which in continuance were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious alſo are thy Thoughts unto me, O God? How great is the Sum of them? If I ſhould count them, they are more in Number than the Sand; when I awake I am ſtill with thee.

PSALM CXL.

The Pſalmiſt *prays for Deliverance and Safety from wicked Men, for Judgment upon them, and comforts himſelf with an Aſſurance of God's Righteouſneſs.*

To the chief Muſician, A *Pſalm* of *David*.

Q. B*Y whom, and on what Occaſion was this* Pſalm *compoſed?*

A. This *Pſalm* was compoſed by *David*, upon Occaſion of thoſe ſlanderous reproachful Speeches, and treacherous Dealings, which *David* had from his Enemies, in the Time of *Saul*, of which we have an Account in the Hiſtory. He begs the Lord to ſave and deliver him from wicked Men, whoſe Deſtruction he intreats, with confident Aſſurance of the Righteouſneſs of the Almighty God of *Iſrael*.

Q. *Whom are we to underſtand by* the Head, *Verſe* 9?

A. Let us read the whole Verſe; *As for the Head of thoſe that compaſs me about, let the Miſchief of their own Lips cover them.*——*The Head,* or *Heads,* the ſingular Number put for the plural, as is frequent. By which he underſtands, either, 1. Their publick Heads, their Chiefs or Ringleaders, who were moſt malicious, and by whom all the reſt were ſupported and ſtirred up. Or, 2. Their proper and natural Heads, as this Word is uſed, *Ver.* 7. And this Covering of their Heads here, is oppoſed to that Covering of *David*'s Head there.——*Let the Miſchief of their own Lips cover them.* Let the Miſchiefs, which by their Calumnies they deſign againſt me, fall upon themſelves.

PSALM CXLI.

David *prays that he may be heard and comforted; that his Service might be ſincere; and his Life ſafe from the Snares of his Adverſaries.*

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. THERE *ſeems an Obſcurity in the 7th Verſe, which I deſire you to clear up?*

A. In order to do this, it will be neceſſary to recite the whole Verſe, thus; *Our Bones are ſcattered at the Grave's Mouth, as when One cutteth and cleaveth Wood upon the Earth.*——*Our Bones.* My Bones and thoſe of my Friends and Followers: Our Skin and Fleſh are in a Manner conſumed, and there is nothing left of us but a Company of dead and dry Bones. Whereby he intimates that their Condition was deſperate. See *Ezek.* xxxvii. 11. *At the Grave's Mouth.* Either, 1. Literally and properly. So barbarouſly cruel were our Enemies, that they not only killed us, but left our Carcaſſes unburied, by which our Fleſh and Sinews, *&c.* were conſumed, or torn in Pieces by wild Beaſts, and our Bones diſperſed upon the Face of the Earth, our common Grave; or, if any of my Followers were dead and buried, they pulled their Bones out of the Grave, and ſcattered them about. Or rather, 2. Metaphorically. So the Senſe is, our Caſe is almoſt as hopeleſs as of thoſe who are dead, and whoſe Bones are ſcattered in ſeveral Places.——*As when One cutteth and cleaveth Wood upon the Earth.* As much neglected and deſpiſed by them, as the Chips which a Carpenter makes when he is cutting Wood, which he will not ſtoop to take up. Or rather, as the LXX. and *Chaldee,* and *Syriac* underſtand it, and as it is in the *Hebrew, As when one* (the Husbandman) *cutteth and cleaveth the Earth,* or *in the Earth;* which he teareth without any Mercy.

PSALM CXLII.

David *finding Help no where in his Streights and Difficulties, comforts himſelf in Prayer to God.*

Maſchil of *David.* A Prayer, when he was in the Cave.

Q. I*N what Senſe does* David *ſay, Ver.* 1. I cried to the Lord with my Voice? *and why does he repeat the Expreſſion?*

A. The Words run thus: *I cried unto the Lord with my Voice; with my Voice unto the Lord did I make my Supplication.*——*With my Voice.* Either, 1. With the Voice of my Soul: But ſo this Addition would be ſuperfluous, and much more the Repetition of it, becauſe that is neceſſarily implied in the former Word, *I cried,* and in the following, *did I make Supplication.* Or rather, 2. With my corporeal Voice, which the Fervour of my Soul forced me to uſe, when I could not do it without ſome Danger, the Enemy being at the Mouth of the Cave. And ſo this Addition is emphatical, and therefore is repeated. But it's probable that *David* ſpoke with a low Voice, and that he might do ſo without eminent Danger, is manifeſt from that Diſcourſe which paſſed between *David* and his Men, even when *Saul* was entered into the Cave, 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 4, 5, 6 7.

PSALM CXLIII.

The Pſalmiſt prays that God in his Faithfulneſs would hear him, and not enter into Judgment with him; complains of his perſecuting Enemies; prays alſo for ſpeedy Deliverance, for Sanctification, and the Deſtruction of his Enemies.

A *Pſalm* of *David.*

Q. D*O you find any Thing deſerving Remark in this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* is much of the ſame Nature with the former, and ſeems to have been compoſed much about the ſame Time, and upon the like Occaſion. This is the laſt of thoſe called *penitential* Pſalms, the former being *Pſalm* vi, xxxii, xxxviii, li, cii, and cxxx.

David being oppreſſed with ſome grievous and extraordinary Affliction, piouſly and humbly refers himſelf and his Cauſe to God as his only Refuge. Hear how he laments his wretched and diſtreſsful Condition!

Hear my Prayer, O Lord, give Ear to my Supplications; in thy Faithfulneſs anſwer me, and in thy Righteouſneſs. And enter not into Judgment with thy Servant; for in thy Sight ſhall no Man living be juſtified. For the Enemy hath perſecuted my Soul, he hath ſmitten my Life down to the Ground, he hath made me to dwell in Darkneſs, as thoſe that have been long dead. Therefore is my Spirit overwhelmed within me; my Heart within me is deſolate. I remember the Days of old, I meditate on all thy Works; I muſe on the Work of thy Hands. I ſtretch forth my Hands unto thee; my Soul thirſteth after thee, as a thirſty Land; Selah. *Hear me ſpeedily, O Lord, my Spirit faileth; hide not thy Face from me, leſt I be like unto them that go down into the Pit. Cauſe me to hear thy Loving Kindneſs in the Morning, for in thee do I truſt: cauſe me to know the Way wherein I ſhould walk, for I lift up my Soul unto thee. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine Enemies; I flee unto thee to hide me. Teach me to do thy Will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the Land of Uprightneſs. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy Name's Sake; for thy Righteouſneſs Sake bring my Soul out of trouble. And of thy Mercy cut off mine Enemies, and deſtroy all them that afflict my Soul; for I am thy Servant.*

PSALM CXLIV.

David *bleſſes God for his Mercy to him in his Wars and Government; confeſſes his own and Man's Nothingneſs; prays that he would deliver him from*

from his powerful Enemies; and promiſes to praiſe him. The Happineſs of that Kingdom, whoſe God is the Lord.

A *Pſalm* of David.

Q. WHAT *do you apprehend is the Nature of this* Pſalm?

A. This *Pſalm* is partly gratulatory for Mercies received, and partly petitionary for farther Bleſſings. It ſeems to have been compoſed after the Death of *Saul*, and in the Beginning of the Reign of *David*, when he was expoſed to many Perils, both from his own rebellious Subjects, and from the *Philiſtines*, and other foreign Enemies; yet he nevertheleſs had a good Proſpect and Aſſurance of a more compleat and eſtabliſhed Felicity, vowing to praiſe God for his Bleſſing.

That our Oxen may be ſtrong to Labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our Streets.——*To labour*, Heb. *laden*, either with Fleſh and Fat, as many underſtand it; or, as others, with Young: But then the foregoing Word is not to be rendered *Oxen*, but *Cows*, as the ſame Word, and in the ſame Maſculine Gender, is uſed *Deut.* vii. 13. And ſo this agrees with the former Prayer for the Sheep, Ver. 13. and he wiſheth the ſame Bleſſing and Fruitfulneſs both for greater and ſmaller Cattle.——*Breaking in.* To wit, of our Enemies invading the Land, or aſſaulting our Cities, and making Breaches in the Walls.——*Nor going out.* Namely, of our People, either out of the Towns and Cities to fight with an invading Enemy; or, out of the Land into Captivity.——*No complaining.* Or, *no Outcry*, or *Howling* for ſad Tidings, or publick Grievances or Calamities.

PSALM CXLV.

David *magnifies God for his Greatneſs and terrible Acts; for his Goodneſs and everlaſting Kingdom; for his Care and Providence over all; and for his ſaving Mercies to them that fear him.*

David's Pſalm of Praiſe.

Q. PRAY *what occurs in this* Pſalm *deſerving Obſervation?*

A. This *Pſalm* and the reſt which follow, are wholly laudatory, ſetting forth the Greatneſs, Uprightneſs, glorious and terrible Acts of the Lord; likewiſe for his everlaſting Kingdom's Sake, his Favour and tender Care over all, but eſpecially thoſe who fear him, and call upon his holy Name. How beautifully does the *Pſalmiſt* vary his Phraſes! How elegantly does he expreſs the different Kinds of the Mercy and Goodneſs of God ſhewn, not only to himſelf, but to all Mankind!

I will extol thee, my God, O King, and I will praiſe thy Name for ever and ever. Every Day will I bleſs thee, and I will praiſe thy Name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praiſed; and his Greatneſs is unſearchable. One Generation ſhall praiſe thy Works to another, and ſhall declare thy mighty Acts. I will ſpeak of the glorious Honour of thy Majeſty, and of thy wondrous Works. And Men ſhall ſpeak of the Might of thy terrible Acts; and I will declare thy Greatneſs. They ſhall abundantly utter the Memory of thy great Goodneſs, and ſhall ſing of thy Righteouſneſs. The Lord is gracious and full of Compaſſion; ſlow to Anger, and of great Mercy. The Lord is good to all; and his tender Mercies are over all his Works. All thy Works ſhall praiſe thee, O Lord, and thy Saints ſhall bleſs thee. They ſhall ſpeak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power. To make known to the Sons of Men his mighty Acts, and the glorious Majeſty of his Kingdom. Thy Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, and thy Dominion endureth throughout all Generations. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiſeth up all thoſe that be bowed down. The Eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou giveſt them their Meat in due Seaſon. Thou openeſt thine Hand, and ſatisfieſt the Deſire of every living Thing. The Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in Truth. He will fulfil the Deſire of them that fear him; he alſo will hear their Cry, and will ſave them. The Lord preſerveth all them that love him, but all the Wicked will he deſtroy. My Mouth ſhall ſpeak the Praiſe of the Lord; and let all Fleſh bleſs his holy Name for ever and ever.

PSALM CXLVI.

The Pſalmiſt vows perpetual Praiſes to God, and exhorts that none put their Truſt in Man; for God, in regard of his Power, Faithfulneſs, and everlaſting Government, is only worthy to be confided in.

Q. WHAT *particular Act of Devotion is the Subject of this* Pſalm?

A. The Pſalmiſt ſtirs up himſelf, and all his Affections to praiſe God; and that God may have the whole Praiſe, he forbids all vain Confidence in Men; ſhewing that by Nature we are more inclined to put our Truſt in Creatures, than in God our Creator, whoſe Power, Faithfulneſs, and everlaſting Government is ſet forth.

The Lord preſerveth the Strangers; he relieveth the Fatherleſs and Widow; but the Way of the Wicked he turneth upſide down, Ver. 9.——*He turneth upſide down.* He overthroweth their Goings, as the Phraſe is, *Pſ.* cxl. 4. He maketh them to loſe their Way; he not only fruſtrateth their Plots and Enterprizes, but turneth them againſt themſelves. This, and all the foregoing Sentences, are ſo many Arguments to encourage all good Men to truſt in God in all their Straits and Afflictions.

PSALM CXLVII.

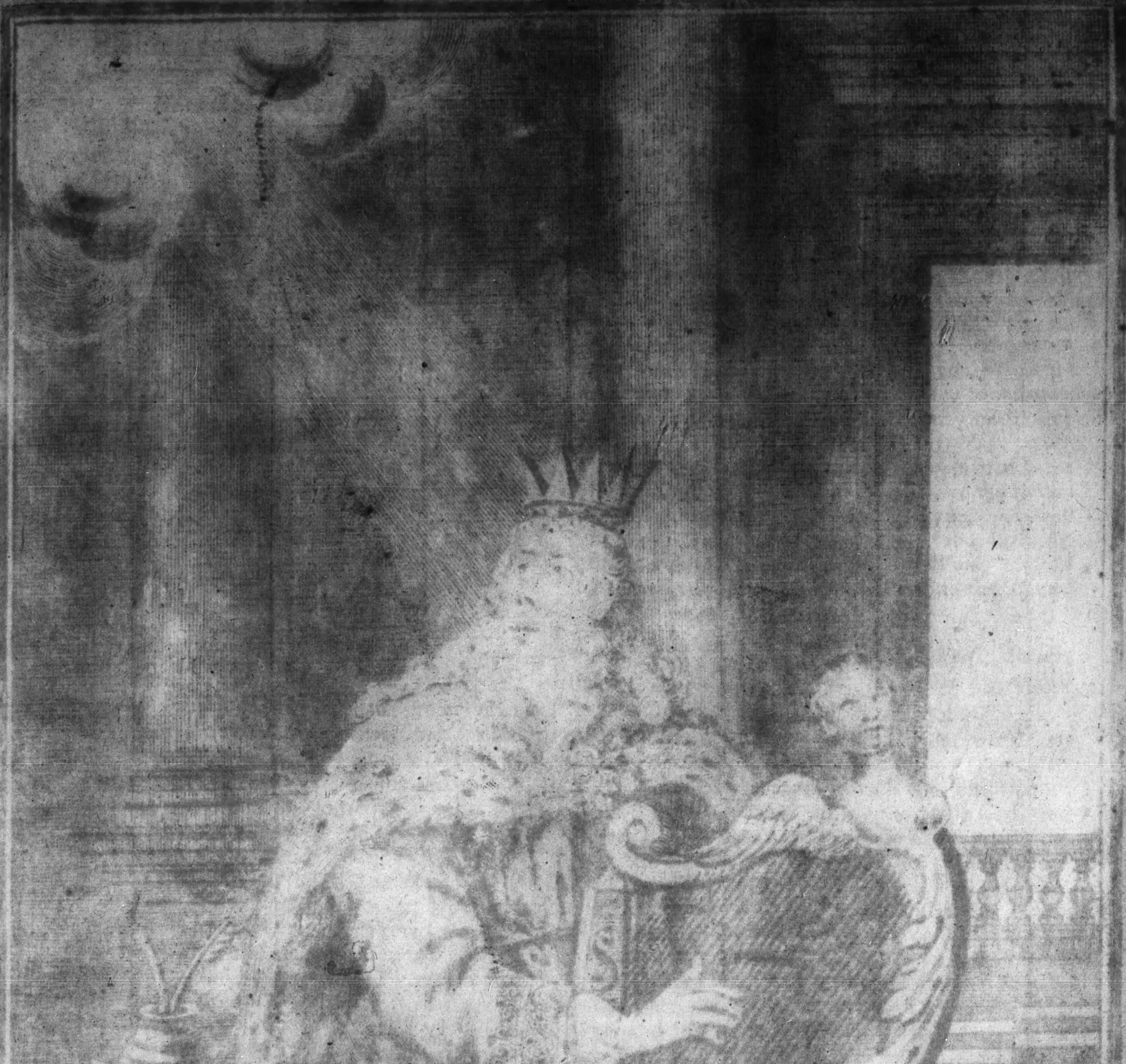
The Prophet exhorts the People to praiſe God for his Care of his Church; his Wiſdom and Government over all; and for his Salvation to the Faithful.

Q. IT *has been diſputed who was the Author of this* Pſalm, *and on what Occaſion it was compoſed; what is your Opinion?*

A. This *Pſalm* may ſeem, from Verſes 2 and 13, to have been compoſed by ſome holy Prophet, after the Return of *Iſrael* from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. The People are exhorted to magnify the almighty Name of God, by reaſon of his providential Protection of his Church, his Wiſdom, unlimited Power, and Government over all, to the Praiſe of his holy Name, and the Salvation of the Faithful.

Q. *Explain the Senſe of the 4th Verſe*; He telleth the Number of the Stars; he calleth them all by their Names?

PSALM. CL.



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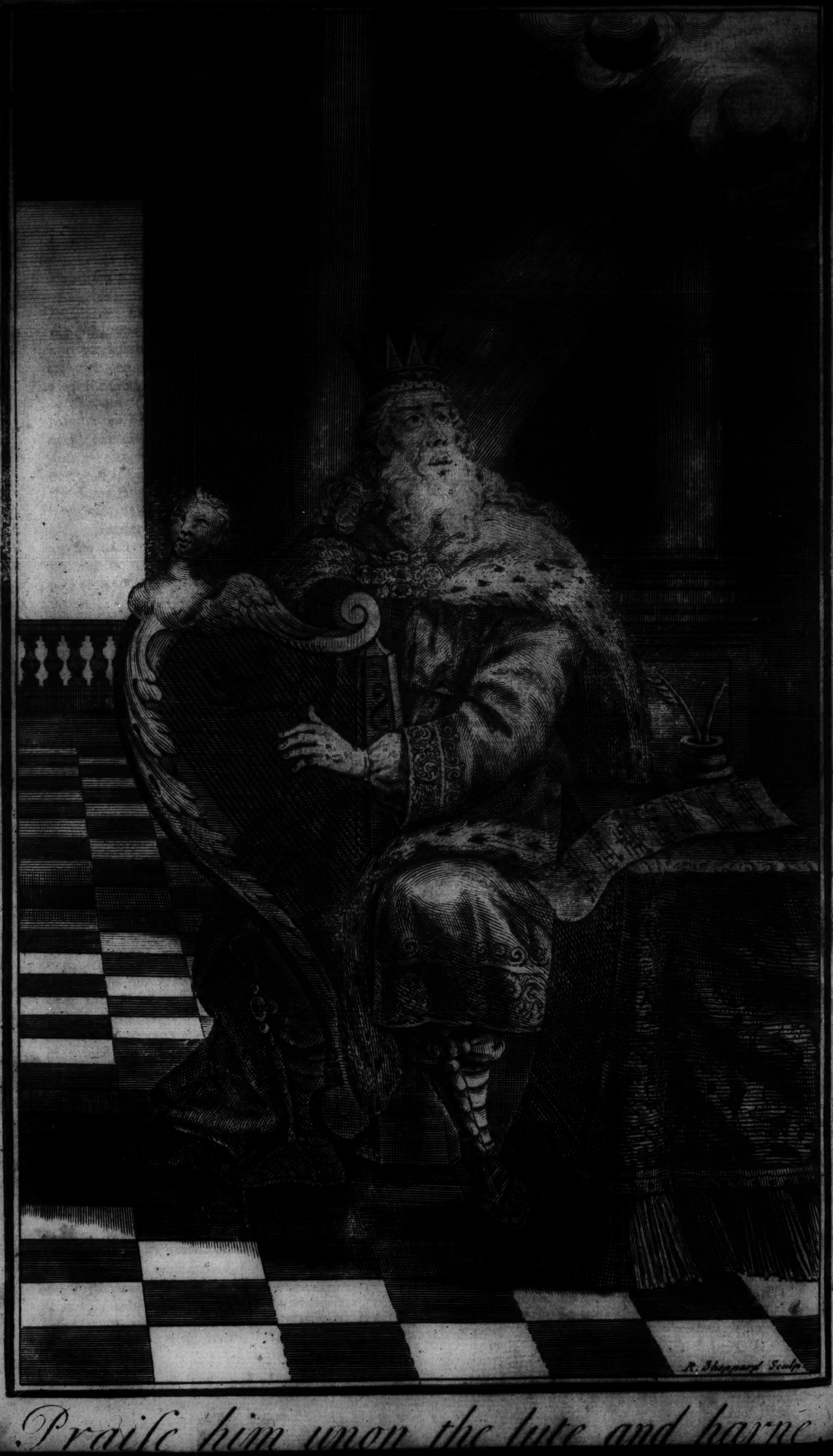
Praise him upon the lute and harp

PSALM. CL.


R. Sheppard Sculp.

Praiſe him upon the lute and harpe.

A. He telleth the Number of the Stars. Which no Man can do, *Gen.* xxii. 17. For that Number of 1025, which Aſtronomers reckon up, are only ſuch as are diſtinctly viſible to the Eye, and moſt conſiderable for their Influences.——*He calleth them all by their Names.* This ſignifies, 1. That he exactly knows them, as we do thoſe whom we call by Name; he is able to give them proper and diſtinct Names, becauſe he accurately underſtands their ſeveral Natures and Operations. 2. That he hath a ſovereign Power over them, as Men have over their Children or Dependants, whom they can call by Name; that he governs and appoints all their Motions and Influences to the fulfiling of his own Pleaſure and Purpoſes.

PSALM CXLVIII.

The Pſalmiſt exhorts all celeſtial and terreſtrial Creatures, eſpecially Man, to praiſe God for his Favour and Mercy to his Church.

Q. WHAT *is the true Import of the Word* Horn *in the laſt Verſe?*

A. The *Horn* in Scripture doth commonly denote Strength, Victory, Glory, and Felicity, as *Deut.* xxxiii. 17. and elſewhere; which Work of God, in exalting their *Horn*, is their Glory, and makes them praiſe-worthy, or obliges and provokes them in a ſingular Manner to perform this great Duty of praiſing God, which is ſo frequently neglected by others.

This *Pſalm* is enlivened with ſo true a Spirit of exalted Devotion, and the Style and Strain of it ſo well adapted to kindle the Fervour of holy Zeal in a pious Soul, that the reading it muſt be both delightful and profitable to every one who has any Concern to propagate the Glory of his Maker.

Praiſe ye the Lord. Praiſe ye the Lord from the Heavens; praiſe him in the Heights. Praiſe ye him all his Angels; praiſe ye him all his Hoſts. Praiſe ye him Sun and Moon; praiſe him all ye Stars of Light. Praiſe him ye Heavens of Heavens, and ye Waters that be above the Heavens. Let them praiſe the Name of the Lord; for he commanded, and they were created. He hath alſo eſtabliſhed them for ever and ever; he hath made a Decree which ſhall not paſs. Praiſe the Lord from the Earth, ye Dragons, and all Deeps. Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, ſtormy Wind fulfilling his Word. Mountains and all Hills, fruitful Trees and all Cedars. Beaſts and all Cattle, creeping Things, and flying Fowl. Kings of the Earth, and all People; Princes, and all Judges of the Earth. Both young Men and Maidens, old Men and Children. Let them praiſe the Name of the Lord; for his Name alone is excellent, his Glory is above the Earth and Heaven. He alſo exalteth the Horn of his People, the Praiſe of all his Saints; even of the Children of Iſrael, *a People near unto him. Praiſe ye the Lord.*

PSALM CXLIX.

An Exhortation to praiſe God for his Love to his People, and for enabling them by his Power to overcome their Enemies.

Q. WHAT *is the Scope and Deſign of this* Pſalm?

A. The Scope and Deſign of this *Pſalm* is to ſtir up and encourage the People of God to praiſe him for his rare and manifold Benefits beſtowed on his Church in general, and his People of *Iſrael* in particular, eſpecially, either, 1. For their Deliverance out of *Babylon*, and the Promiſes which God had given them of the Perfection of that Work, and the Enlargement of their Power and Dominion in the World. Or rather, 2. For the Eſtabliſhment of the Kingdom of *Iſrael* in *David*'s Hands, and for that Safety, Glory and Victory over their Enemies, which they expected by that Means, in that they were preferred before all other Nations, it was a new Creation, therefore, *Pſ.* xcv. 7. they were called the Sheep of God's Hands. God, as he is the Creator of Soul and Body, commands both to ſerve him, that the People may be Subject to him, as their moſt lawful King.

But the *Pſalmiſt*, or Spirit of God, which dictated this *Pſalm*, had a farther Proſpect, even to the *Meſſiah*, of whom *David* was a Type, and who was to ſucceed him in the Throne, and to bring that Kingdom to its higheſt Perfection; and ſo divers of the *Jewiſh* Doctors underſtand this *Pſalm*.

PSALM CL.

An Exhortation to celebrate the Holineſs, Power, and Kindneſs of God, with all Sorts of muſical Inſtruments.

Q. IS *there any Thing in this* Pſalm *particularly deſerving Regard?*

A. This *Pſalm* agrees much with the former; and is an Invitation to all Men to praiſe God, and eſpecially to the *Levites*, or thoſe who were appointed to this Work, as may be gathered both from the Place in which they were to praiſe him, which is, according to our Tranſlation, in the Sanctuary, and from that great Variety of Inſtruments here mentioned, all which were frequently uſed in the Service of the Temple, and ſeldom in any other Place. Every living Creature in Heaven and in Earth are exhorted to praiſe the Lord. But the Apoſtle St. *John* declares this more fully: And every Creature that is in Heaven, and upon the Earth, and under the Earth, and that are in the Sea, and all that is therein, I heard ſay, *To him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb, be the Thankſgiving, and the Honour, and the Glory, and the Power, in all Eternity, Amen.* Hallelujah.

Q. *What do you underſtand by* Sanctuary *and* the Firmament of his Power, Ver. 1?

A. In his Sanctuary. In his Temple, where this Work was to be performed conſtantly and ſolemnly; or, who dwelleth *in his Sanctuary.* So it deſcribes and limits the Object of their Praiſes: Or *for* (as this Particle is uſed in the next Verſe) *his Sanctuary*, for this great Favour of placing his Sanctuary and Dwelling-place amongſt them.——*The Firmament of his Power.* In his heavenly Manſion, there let the bleſſed Angels praiſe him; or, who dwelleth *in the Firmament*, or *ſpreading forth of his Power*; to wit, in the Heavens, which were ſtretched out by his great Power, and in which are the glorious Teſtimonies of his infinite Power; or, *for the Firmament*, &c. for that glorious and aſtoniſhing Piece of his Workmanſhip.

Q. *Being now come to the Concluſion of the Book of* Pſalms, *which we have obſerved, was compoſed not only by different Writers, but, ſome of them, at ſome Hundreds of Years Diſtance from others: I would therefore have your Thoughts upon* Pſalmody *in general, as likewiſe who firſt wrote in that Way?*

A. Among the various Methods which the Holy Ghoſt took to inform and illuminate the Minds of the Prophets of old, that of elevating their Souls into ſpiritual Songs, divine Canticles, and ſublime poetical Deſcriptions, was no inconſiderable one. *Moſes* was the firſt, in Scripture, who practiſed this Kind of Writing; but others after him, inſpired by the ſame heavenly Muſe, beautified their Thoughts and Language with the ſame ſhining Dreſs; as the many poetical Compoſitions ſcatter'd up and down the ſacred Records, ſufficiently evince. But this celeſtial Gift was more peculiarly, as it was more abundantly, conferred on *David* than on any other of the inſpired Writers: But his Excellence did not conſiſt wholly in the compoſing Part; he was perfectly ſkill'd in Muſick itſelf; he could adapt Tunes to his Songs, and play thoſe Tunes on ſeveral Sorts of Inſtruments. Nor was he ſatisfied with being the compleateſt Maſter of Muſick in his Time, but he made that Uſe of it, to which it ſhould be principally applied, namely, to celebrate the Praiſes of God, and to raiſe and heighten the Zeal and Piety of his Saints in the Church.

Q. *In what Manner was Muſick eſtabliſhed and performed in the* Jewiſh *Church?*

A. The Uſe of Muſick in the Sanctuary, had, indeed, been introduced before *David*'s Time, tho' we have no Account at what Time, on what Occaſion, or in what Manner, it became a Part of the *Jew*'s Divine Worſhip. However, 'tis certain it never was regularly eſtabliſhed till *David* took it under his Patronage. He was ſo delighted, I may ſay tranſported, with this Method of worſhipping his God, that, not ſatisfied with his own Performances, he inſtitutes a new Order, and erects a new Office for the Uſe and Encouragement of ſacred Muſick; which Office was to be executed by a certain Number of *Levites* ſelected for that Purpoſe, who were to take their Turns in their Attendance upon it, like the other Officers of the Temple. To the Chief of theſe Singers and Muſicians, *David*, and other Compoſers, gave their Songs and Hymns to be fitted to proper Tunes, or to ſing them as Occaſion required, whether the Subject of them was of general Concernment to the whole Church, or on ſome certain Occaſion, which at that Time, might be ſuited only to the private Condition of the Writer of it, yet when publiſh'd, might be applied to the Caſe of others, and prove beneficial for the Inſtruction and Edification of particular good Men, and to all Believers in their private Capacities. Theſe Songs were to be ſung in the Temple at the Time of offering the Sacrifices, as well daily, as on the Sabbath, and ſolemn Feſtivals; and their Voices were to be accompanied with all Manner of inſtrumental Muſick; which, in my Opinion, muſt bear ſome Reſemblance to our Cathedral Service.

Q. *What have you to remark concerning the ſeveral Compoſitions in the Book of* Pſalms?

A. All theſe Songs or Canticles were ſo well known to be the Products of Men divinely inſpired, that the Prieſts always regarded them as ſuch, and laid them up among the reſt of their holy Books. 'Tis generally believed, that they were thus collected into one Book or Volume, by *Ezra*, after the Return of the *Jews* from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, without any Regard to the Order of Time in which each Pſalm was compoſed. The *Hebrews* call this Book *Tehillim*, or, for ſhortneſs, *Tillim*, *i. e.* Songs, or Singings of Praiſe; that being the Deſign and Import of a great Number of the Pſalms therein contained. The *Greek* Tranſlators gave them the Appellation of *Pſalms*, or *Pſalter*, which Term is likewiſe preſerved in the *Greek New Teſtament*, and hath continued the uſual Title of the Book, among the *Latins*, and other Chriſtian Nations, in their vulgar Idioms; although the *Greek* Word properly implies and ſignifies ſuch a Kind of Songs as are fitted and adapted with Tunes for muſical Inſtruments, plaid on, or touched with the Hand, after the Manner uſed in the publick Service in the Tabernacle and Temple, in the *Old Teſtament*. They are commonly called, *The Pſalms of* David, in regard, that King *David* himſelf, as one indued with ſingular Ability by the Holy Ghoſt, for inditing and compoſing Pſalms, as 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1, 2. was the Author of moſt of them; the reſt being written by other Prophets and Men of God, as *Moſes*, *Aſaph*, &c.

Q. *Have you any Thing to obſerve concerning the Matter and Subjects of theſe Pſalms?*

A. The Matter and Subjects of theſe Pſalms, are various and many, as they comprehend, as it were in Epitome, the whole Scripture, wherein the whole Circle of moral Virtues and ſpiritual Actions, are reduced to Practice, and all the Accidents Caſualties, and Neceſſities of human Life, ſo minutely deſcrib'd and decypher'd, that we might not miſtake the Way to true Happineſs, here or hereafter. To quicken the Zeal, and enliven the Piety of the good Man, he has ſet before him the divine Motions and heavenly Ejaculations of the *Pſalmiſt*, ſtirred up and raiſed by the Holy Ghoſt, who with his Power, accompanied the Style, the Numbers, and the Art of the ſacred *Hebrew* Poeſy, and the grave and holy Conſorts of Muſick joined to it. Yet, upon the whole, we are to make this Diſtinction, that in ſome Pſalms God ſpeaks to his Church and to his own People, and in others to his Enemies; to the firſt by Inſtructions, Exhortations, Corrections, Conſolations, Promiſes, and Prophecies, eſpecially of the *Meſſiah*, and his ſpiritual and everlaſting Kingdom, of which there are in this Book more obvious and plain Teſtimonies, than in any other Part of the *Old Teſtament*. To his Enemies he ſpeaks by Threatenings and Reproofs, in order to reclaim them from their Rage. In other Places the *Pſalmiſts* ſpeak, or cauſe the Church to ſpeak to God, in Confeſſions, Complaints, Prayers, Praiſes, and Thankſgivings; or to the Faithful, in Inſtructions, Exhortations, Corrections, and Reprehenſions; or to themſelves, in Meditations, Confirmations, and ſpiritual Encourrgements. The chief Deſign and great Purpoſe of all which is, to frame and inſtruct the godly Man, how, in this World, he ſhall ſtrike out his Way to Life everlaſting, that is, by glorifying God with the moſt ſincere and unalienable Affection to him, and by keeping his Soul in a conſtant, lively, and ſpiritual Exerciſe and Application of the Doctrine of Piety, and in the Fruition of God's Grace in the Joy and Comfort of the Holy Ghoſt; in which heavenly Work he will be greatly aſſiſted by practiſing theſe Pſalms, in Fervour of Spirit and Purity of Mind.

'Tis not, therefore, without Reaſon, that the Churches of God ſo highly eſteem this Book, and prize it as an unvaluable Jewel. Some call it a Garden of Pleaſures; a Shop furniſhed with Remedies for all Diſeaſes; the Store-houſe or Treaſury of a Chriſtian. Others ſtyle it an Anatomy, or Diſſection of the believing Soul; a Mirror and Looking-glaſs of the manifold and unſearchable Wiſdom of God; the compleat Summary, or compendious Rehearſal of the whole Bible, Law and Goſpel, or of all the true Knowledge and Worſhip of God. This will appear by conſidering the Matter of which it conſiſts, namely, ſolid and wholeſome Doctrinals and Inſtructions concerning the Nature and Being of God and the ſacred Trinity; with Reſpect to the Divine Attributes, the eternal Counſel and Decree, the holy Word and mighty Works of God; eſpecially the Mercies and Benefits beſtowed on his Church on one Side, and his Juſtice and Judgments on the Ungodly on the other; alſo, touching the Perſon and ſaving Office of the *Meſſiah*, our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, his eternal Godhead, his Incarnation, Suffering, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, and Sitting at the Right-hand of God; alſo of the enlarging and ſpreading of his Kingdom among the *Gentiles*, by the preaching of the Goſpel; of the ſinful Eſtate and Condition of Man, the Quality and Property of Regeneration, true Repentance, and the Love and Fear of God; of the Nature of true Faith, Reliance on God, the Aſſurance of Salvation, and the Combat between the Fleſh and Spirit. Alſo, of the Catholick or Univerſal Church of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the Church, her Government and Diſcipline, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveneſs of Sins, the Reſurrection of the Body, and Life everlaſting. It likewiſe contains many excellent Rules of practical Morality; we have here deſcribed all Manner of ſpiritual Duties and Exerciſes of Godlineſs, as ſundry and various Forms of bleſſing and praiſing God; of giving Thanks for Mercies received; of Vows of Thankfulneſs, with a Number of devout and fervent Prayers to God for whatever may conduce to his Glory, and the Welfare, both general and particular, of all and every true Believer, eſpecially in all Kinds of Affliction, Temptation, Trouble, and Diſtemper. It likewiſe preſents us with a ſet of holy Meditations, with the exceeding ſweet and ſolacing Comforts, Conſolations, and Strengthenings in Faith, Patience, and all Godlineſs. Inſomuch that there is no poſſible Condition of a Chriſtian, but he may be ſupplied out of this Book, as well for the calming his Conſcience, as the furthering his Salvation. It behoves, therefore, every Chriſtian, of whatever Rank and Station in Life he may be, to read, peruſe, and ſtudy this Book, with the moſt aſſiduous Care and diligent Attention; ſo to enure himſelf to the peculiar Style and Manner of ſpeaking in the divine Language of the holy Ghoſt; and if, by this Means, he gets a right Taſte of its genuine Beauties and Excellencies, and ſome Experience of its Virtue and Efficacy, it will reſt upon his Soul, like a moſt ſweet and wholeſome Dew of Heaven; he will never be ſatiated with it, but will be pleaſed to ſee it ſpread through all his Words and Actions, and ſettle in his Heart. This is the very End for which it is ſo frequently inculcated and recommended to us, as well in the *Old*, as in the *New Teſtament*, by *Chriſt* himſelf and his Apoſtles.

Q. *Did not the Antients divide this Book into ſeveral Parts?*

A. The *Hebrews* divided this Book (which by *Chriſt* himſelf is called the *Book of Pſalms*, *Luke* xx. 42.) into five Parts, or little Volumes; the *Firſt* extends to the End of *Pſalm* xli. concluding with *Amen, and Amen.* The *Second*, to the End of *Pſalm* lxxii. concluding in the ſame Terms, *Amen and Amen*, and *the End of* David's *Prayers*. The *Third*, to the Concluſion of *Pſalm* lxxxix. likewiſe ending in *Amen and Amen.* The *Fourth*, to the End of *Pſalm* cvi. which is *Amen, Hallelujah.* The *Fifth* is the Concluſion of *Pſalm* cl. being the laſt of the Book, and ending in *Hallelujah.*

Q. *In what Manner has this Book of* Pſalms *been generally uſed by* Chriſtians?

A. The *Chriſtian* Church has, in all Ages, with great Reaſon, appointed the *Pſalms* to be conſtantly read in its publick Service: There being no Book in the holy Scriptures, wherein are ſuch high Raptures of Devotion, tranſmitting to Mankind the moſt awful and ſublime Ideas of the Supreme Being, and the Immenſity of his Goodneſs in the Redemption of the World by the *Meſſiah*.

The learned Dr. *Hammond*, in his Preface to the *Paraphraſe on the Pſalms*, ſays, "That the Fathers of the Church aſſure us, that in the firſt Ages of *Chriſtianity*, Pſalmody was the conſtant Attendant, ſometimes of their Meals, generally of their Buſineſs, in the Shop and in the Field: That they learnt the whole Book by Heart, and during their whole Age continued ſinging or ſaying *Pſalms*.

Q. *What do you obſerve concerning the Style and Manner in which theſe* Pſalms *are wrote?*

A. There is nothing, certainly, doth more prepare the Mind for the higheſt Felicities, than the Contemplation and Love of the Supreme Being; for infinite Goodneſs, Omnipotence, and Omniſcience, do dilate, awe and chear the Spirits, while they are fixed upon them; the Ideas of which, together with their Effects, as conveyed to the Mind in this ſacred Book, are the beſt Helps to divine Contemplation, as will appear in the few Inſtances following, *viz.*

When the royal Prophet contemplates the Almighty Power of the Creator, it is thus expreſſed:

Pſal. viii. 1. *O Lord how excellent is thy Name in all the Earth! thou haſt ſet thy Glory above the Heavens.*

Pſal. cii. 25, 26. *And thou, Lord, in the Beginning haſt laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Work of thine Hands; they ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt.*

Pſal. xc. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou haſt formed the Earth and the World, even from everlaſting to everlaſting, thou art God.*

When he ſings of the Mercy of the Lord, and would make known his Faithfulneſs to all Generations, in how lofty a Manner does the *Pſalmiſt* expreſs it!

Pſal. cxxxix. 2, 5, 6. *I have ſaid, Mercy ſhall be built up for ever, and thy Faithfulneſs ſhalt thou eſtabliſh in the very Heavens: And the Heavens ſhall praiſe thy Wonders, O Lord, and thy Faithfulneſs in the Congregation of the Saints; for who is he in the Heavens that can be compared unto the Lord? Who, among the Sons of the Mighty, can be likened unto the Lord?*

With what Thankfulneſs and Joy does he acknowledge the divine Goodneſs!

Pſal. ciii. *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bleſs his holy Name; who forgiveth all* *thine Iniquities, who healeth all thy Diſeaſes, who redeemeth thy Life from Deſtruction.*

When he contemplates the Condeſcenſion of God to Mankind, with what Solemnity doth he reflect upon it?

Pſal. viii. *When I conſider thy Heavens, the Work of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars, which thou haſt ordained; what is Man, that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man, that thou viſiteſt him?*

When he expreſſes the Senſe of his Guilt, and implores Pardon, with what Humility doth he proſtrate himſelf?

Pſal. li. *Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to thy Loving-kindneſs; according to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies, blot out my Tranſgreſſions; waſh me throughly from mine Iniquity, and cleanſe me from my Sin; for I acknowledge my Tranſgreſſion, and my Sin is ever before me: Behold, I was ſhapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.*

When he expreſſes his Hope in God, with what Confidence is it fixed?

Pſal. xlvi. *God is our Refuge and Strength, a very preſent Help in Trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the Earth be removed, and though the Mountains be carried into the midſt of the Sea; for the Lord of Hoſts is with us, the God of* Jacob *is our Refuge.*

When the *Pſalmiſt* implores the divine Favour, with what Elegancy doth he expreſs the Vehemence of his Deſires?

Pſal. xlii. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirſteth for God, for the living God. Early will I ſeek thee; my Soul thirſteth for thee, my Fleſh longeth after thee, to ſee thy Power and thy Glory.*

When he ſpeaks of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, how ſublime are the Repreſentations of his Grandeur and Magnificence?

Pſal. cxlv. *I will extol thee, O God, my King, and will bleſs thy Name for ever and ever. All thy Works ſhall praiſe thee, O Lord, and thy Saints ſhall bleſs thee; they ſhall ſpeak of the Glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy Power; to make known to the Sons of Men his mighty Acts, and the glorious Majeſty of his Kingdom. Thy Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, and thy Dominion endureth throughout all Generations.*

If the brighteſt Ideas, and ſublimeſt Expreſſions of the moſt celebrated Poets be compared with theſe, they will appear to be flat and mean: Theſe are Thoughts too elevated for any thing leſs than an inſpired Heart to conceive.

Q. *As theſe* Pſalms *take in a Variety of Subjects; I ſhould be glad if you will reduce them to general Heads.*

A. They may be diſpoſed under the following Heads.

1. As they give a Repreſentation of the Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous, and the very different State the Ungodly are in; as in the Firſt, and many other *Pſalms.*

2. As they are expreſs Prophecies of the *Meſſiah*, deſcribing his Paſſion, Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion.

3. The great Oppoſition that was to be to his Kingdom, by the Princes of the Earth, and the cruel Sufferings that his Subjects ſhould undergo for many Ages; but he ſhould *rule his Enemies with a Rod of Iron, and daſh them in Pieces like a Potter's Veſſel*, as in the ſecond *Pſalm.* The Truth of which is fully verified by the Hiſtory of all Ages; and to this *Pſalm* St. *Peter* expreſly refer[illegible]

4. The Grandeur, Magnificence, and Univerſality of his Kingdom, which was to diffuſe the Knowledge of the only true God throughout the World; and thereby introduce ſuch a State of Righteouſneſs and Peace, as ſhould free Mankind from that Oppreſſion and Cruelty, under which the World had ſo long groaned; and which are referred to by the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles; as alſo by *Iſaïah*, *Daniel*, and other Prophets; as in *Pſalms* xlv, lxviii, lxxii, lxxxix, xcii, xcvi, xcviii, xcix, and cx.

5. As they have an expreſs Reference to the State of the *Jews*, under their ſeveral Captivities, and their laſt great Diſperſion, under which they have lain now above fifteen hundred Years; and from which they are to be reſtored, as is foretold by *Moſes* and other Prophets, and to which ſeveral of the *Pſalms* allude.

6. As they are Hymns of Praiſe, wherein the Majeſty, Glory, Power, and Mercy of the Deity are celebrated; wherein devout Minds may have a Foretaſte of celeſtial Joys.

But the greateſt Part of the *Pſalms* are Supplications, and contain a Syſtem of the moſt exalted Devotion, that ever Mankind was bleſſed with; calculated for the various Diſtreſſes, Afflictions and Temptations, with which renewed Souls are to conflict.

Our Saviour commands the *Jews*, that they ſhould *ſearch the Scriptures, for in them* (ſays he) *you think you have eternal Life; for they are they which teſtify of me:* And therefore we find, that both our Saviour and the Apoſtles, in very many Inſtances, uſe the very Expreſſions of the *Pſalms*, and, in many Places refer to them.

In order, therefore, that every pious Soul may make the true Uſe of this ſacred Book, let it be conſidered; That as all the Works of Nature, all the Magnificence of the Creation are diſplayed in it, to raiſe the higheſt Ideas of the ſupreme Being, ſo all the Weakneſs of human Nature are likewiſe fully repreſented, and moſt paſſionately bewailed; that the divine Mercy, in the Redemption of the World by the *Meſſiah*, may be magnified above all the Glories of the Creation, the Height, the Depth, the Breadth and Length of which ſurpaſſes all Knowledge.

The Contemplation whereof ſo affected the great Genius of the Lord *Bacon*, that in his Confeſſion of Faith he hath this wondrous Expreſſion.

“I believe that God is ſo holy, pure, and jealous, as it is impoſſible for him to be pleaſed in any Creature, though the Work of his own Hands: So that neither Angel, Man, nor World could ſtand, or can ſtand one Moment, in his Eyes, without beholding the ſame in the Face of a *Mediator*: And therefore, that before him, with whom all Things are preſent, the Lamb of God was ſlain before all Worlds. Which is the great Myſtery, and perfect Center of all God's Ways with his Creatures, and unto which all his other Works and Wonders do but ſerve and refer.

While Men continue in their Infidelity, it is not to be thought that any Book of Devotion can be entertained with the leaſt Regard: But whenever it ſhall pleaſe the divine Mercy to awaken any of them from their fatal Phrenzy, they may find ſuch Repreſentations in the Book of *Pſalms*, and Goſpel, of the divine Mercy, as may give them Hope of Pardon. Of this there is a famous Inſtance in the Caſe of the Earl of *Rocheſter*, whoſe Wit and Parts were much ſuperior to any of the modern Infidels; and whoſe Repentance was as remarkable, as his Vice and Prophaneſs had been before.

Beſides theſe, there are another Sort of Men, who have entertained ſuch elated Opinions of the Self-ſufficiency of their own Reaſon, and think themſelves ſo rich in the Plenitude of their own Underſtanding, that they need no ſuperior Influence, and therefore entertain Notions of a Devotion moſt agreeable to their fancified Self-ſufficiency.

Q. *What Compariſon is there betwixt this and other Parts of the inſpired Writings?*

A. A Compariſon may very juſtly be made between the *Pſalms* of *David*, and the Epiſtles of St. *Paul*, for theſe Reaſons; namely, That the Diſpenſations towards the royal Prophet and the Apoſtle, are very much alike: They both were appointed to their high Offices by God himſelf; the one by an immediate Command, the other by a miraculous Viſion from Heaven. The royal Prophet expreſſes the Raptures of Joy and Delight that his Soul often felt in the Contemplation of the divine Glory and Goodneſs. The great Apoſtle, in an Ecſtaſy, being wrapped up to the third Heavens, heard Words, and felt Joys that were ineffable. And as there is a Parallel between them, in their ſublime Delights, ſo is there alſo in their Complaints and Afflictions. The royal *Pſalmiſt* cries out, that his *Strength failed him, becauſe of his Iniquity*; that *the Enemies of his Soul were too ſtrong for him*; that his *Soul was caſt down within him, and became deſolate*. The Apoſtle complains of the Remainders of Sin, whereby when he *would do Good, Evil was preſent*; and therefore breaks out into this Exclamation, *Oh! wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this Body of Sin and Death?* He feels the Buffetings of *Satan*, and earneſtly prays to be delivered from them; complains that he was often *caſt down, though not forſaken*. Both theſe inſpired Perſons agree in their Repreſentations, that *many are the Afflictions of the Righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all*. That the ſevereſt and moſt hazardous of theſe, are thoſe that are internal, ariſing from the Conflicts with Sin, and the Allurements of this World, and the Powers of Darkneſs.

How Believers are to be ſupported under theſe Trials, is fully expreſſed in the Book of *Pſalms*, and the many rich and precious Promiſes that are contained in the Goſpel, which are both the Anchor and Rock of immortal Souls, in their Paſſage through this tempeſtuous World, to the Reigns of celeſtial Peace and Joy.

The following Paſſage, taken from the Preface to the Earl of *Clarendon*'s Meditations upon the *Pſalms*, addreſſed to his Children, ſhews, that theſe divine Poems may be of ſingular Uſe to every ſincere Worſhipper of God.

"My Children, you have undergone ſo great a Share with me, in all the Inconveniencies and Afflictions of my Baniſhments, that it is but Juſtice to aſſign you a Share likewiſe of whatſoever I have gotten by them: I do confeſs to you, I found ſo great a Serenity and Tranquility of Mind, in compoſing theſe Conſiderations and Reflections upon the *Pſalms* of *David*, that I am willing to believe, that the Reading them may adminiſter ſome kind of Relief and Eaſe to you, in any Trouble or Adverſity to which you may be expoſed; at leaſt, that they may yield ſome Hints to rouſe up other riper Thoughts of your own, which may produce that Eaſe and Relief, by diſpoſing you to ſuffer no Day to paſs, without at leaſt reading ſome of the *Pſalms*; and carefully to obſerve, whether there be not, in every one of them, ſomewhat that doth immediately concern yourſelves, and refer or reflect upon your own Thoughts, your own Hopes and Fears, or ſome other of your Affections and Paſſions. Though there is no Part of the Scriptures, towards which we ought not to have all the Reverence Imaginable; yet it is plain, both by the Eſteem and frequent Uſe of them in the Church of the *Jews*, and the Injunction of all *Chriſtian* Churches, (how diſagreeing ſoever among themſelves) that the *Pſalms* be more conſtantly read than any other Part of the Scripture; that in all Times ſomewhat extraordinary hath been thought to have been contained therein, for the Inſtruction, Encouragement, and Reformation of Mankind; and for the rendering our Lives more acceptable to God Almighty. And he was a very learned Man, who thought the Book of *Pſalms* to contain the Sum and Abridgment of all that is in the *Old Teſtament*: That all that *Moſes* had derived to us in his Hiſtory, or preſcribed to us in the Law; and whatſoever the reſt of the Prophets wrote, in exhorting Men to Virtue, and foretelling what was to come, is all comprehended in the *Pſalms*. We may, in Truth believe, that whoſoever is very converſant in the *Pſalms*, cannot be ignorant of any Thing that is abſolutely enjoined to be done, or not to be done; and of any Thing that is abſolutely neceſſary to be believed throughout the whole Body of Scripture; and it hath a greater Teſtimony, and is more frequently urged for the Advancement of *Chriſtianity* throughout the *New Teſtament*, than any other Part of the Bible."

Q. *What particular View had* David *in compoſing theſe* Pſalms?

A. The royal Prophet having collected immenſe Treaſures for building the Temple, who, being under the immediate Direction of the Holy Spirit, compoſes theſe ſacred Hymns, and tranſmits them to the Prieſts and *Levites*, to be daily uſed in the Temple; and thereby to inſtruct the *Jews*, not to reſt in the bare performance of the Ceremonial Law, but to direct them thereby in the Knowledge and Practice of that ſpiritual Worſhip, which the *Meſſiah* was to introduce, when all their Sacrifices and carnal Ordinances were to be aboliſhed.

Hererein we are fully taught how to preſent our Supplications, and how to obtain that Grace, which may enable us to worſhip the Moſt High in an acceptable Manner.

This ſacred Book is that bright Mirrour, which, whoſoever looks into, will diſcloſe all the ſecret Thoughts and Intents of the Mind, and lead it to the Knowledge of itſelf; which, even the *Gentile* Philoſophers accounted the Baſis of true Wiſdom.

Who can view the curious Frame of a human Body (when ſkilfully anatomized) without the greateſt Wonder and Delight? wherein we perceive how the Blood circulates through all the Veins and Arteries; how the Heart beats and gives the animal Spirits a conſtant Motion; how each Nerve and Muſcle performeth their ſeveral Operations; upon the exact Regularity of which depends Health and Life; and which ſhews how fearfully and wonderfully we are made.

If the Texture of the animal Frame be ſo curiouſly wrought, how delicate muſt that of the rational Soul be? And if the firſt produce ſuch Wonders and Delight, what will the latter, when well underſtood? And as both theſe have their Beauties and Excellencies, ſo likewiſe have their Weakneſſes and Diſeaſes: And in diſcovering thoſe that belong to the Mind, the royal Prophet may not improperly be called, the Anatomiſt of the Soul.

For as he deſcribes the Excellencies of the divine Law, ſo he diſcloſes and laments the ſinful Weakneſs of his Nature, which rendered him incapable to perform an exact Obedience to ſuch pure and perfect Precepts: Under the Conſciouſneſs of which he doth not deſpond, but excites all the Powers of his Soul, to ſeek and implore the Aids of Heaven. Herein he diſcloſes what were his Deſires, his Hope, his Joys, his Griefs, his Fears; and what was his Support in all theſe. It may be ſtiled the Journal of his Mind; repreſenting the daily Tranſactions of his Soul with the Almighty: Wherein he delineates the many Difficulties and Temptations he paſſed through, the great Oppoſitions he met with from the Enemies of his Soul, (as is often expreſſed) and how he overcame them.

Q. *Some Commentators have applied* David's *Complaints only to his perſonal and outward Afflictions; to obviate which Miſtake, as I apprehend it is, it may be requiſite to give a ſhort View of the Life of this great Prince.*

A. He was, by the immediate Command of Heaven, appointed to be their King and a Prophet, in the Time of his Youth, when he was keeping his Father's Sheep; wherein he was ſo endued with a divine Power, that he reſcued the Lambs under his Care, from the Mouth of a Lion, and the Paws of a Bear.

And herein he was the Type of the *Meſſiah*, who, by the Evangelick Prophet, is deſcribed under this Emblem; *He ſhall feed his Flock like a Shepherd; he ſhall gather the Lambs in his Arms, and carry them in his Boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with Young.* And he was to ſubvert the Dominion of the Prince of Darkneſs, and reſcue Mankind from the Power of Sin: His Throne was to be eſtabliſhed in Righteouſneſs and Peace, and ſhould ſubvert all the Tyrannies of the World; which, in the prophetick Stile, are repreſented by the Hieroglyphicks of ſavage Beaſts: The *Chaldean* Empire by a Lion, the *Medo-Perſian* by a Bear, the *Greek* by a Leopard, the *Roman* by a Dragon; and the *Antichriſtian*, or *Papal* Empire, by all theſe.

From the heroic Act of killing the Lion and the Bear, *David* was ſo animated, that he encountered the *Philiſtine* Giant, who had ſtruck a panick Fear into all the *Hebrew* Army; which engaged both the Admiration and Affection of moſt of his Countrymen, and eſpecially of the then Heir of the Crown.

The Spirit of God being withdrawn from King *Saul*, nothing but the divine Muſick, with which this Youth was inſpired, could allay the black Diſeaſe of his Mind; which come at laſt to be turned upon him, whom he endeavours to deſtroy, firſt by Craft, and then by open Violence; vainly purſuing him, who was under the immediate Guard and Protection of Heaven. And herein alſo was he the Type of our Saviour, who was perſecuted and reviled by the High-prieſt, *Herod*, and the Rulers of the *Jewiſh* Nation.

Saul being vanquiſhed in Battle, and ſlain, he ſucceeded to the whole Kingdom of *Iſrael*, according to the Appointment of Heaven: He ſubdued all the Nations to the Banks of the *Euphrates*; and as the Commanders of his Army were Men of great military Prowes, Valour and Strength, ſo in theſe he was ſuperior to them all; his Courage being ſuch, that he ſingly charged through a whole Troop; his Strength and Activity ſo great, that a Bow of Steel was broken by his Arms; his Virtue and Humanity ſo generous, that when *Saul*, his cruel Perſecutor, was fallen into his Power, he declines the Opportunity of killing him, and ſo taking Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom to which he was appointed. The Conſtancy of his Friendſhip is moſt elegantly expreſſed by himſelf, in his Lamentation upon the Death of his Friend *Jonathan*. He ſees his Kingdom eſtabliſhed in Peace, and leaves to *Solomon*, his Succeſſor, a vaſt Treaſure for building the Temple.

The chief Diſturbance of his Reign, was the Rebellion of *Abſalom*, which laſted but a few Months. This and the Plague being the Correction from Heaven for his Sins, (as he himſelf acknowledgeth.)

So that it muſt be allowed, that he was not only the moſt heroick and opulent Prince that ever was in the World, but of the moſt exalted Genius both in Poetry and Muſick.

From theſe Conſiderations, there is reaſon to conclude, that moſt of his Complaints proceeded from inward Trials, Conflicts and Temptations, which will appear, if the Expreſſions in the *Pſalms* are duly conſidered, and compared with each other.

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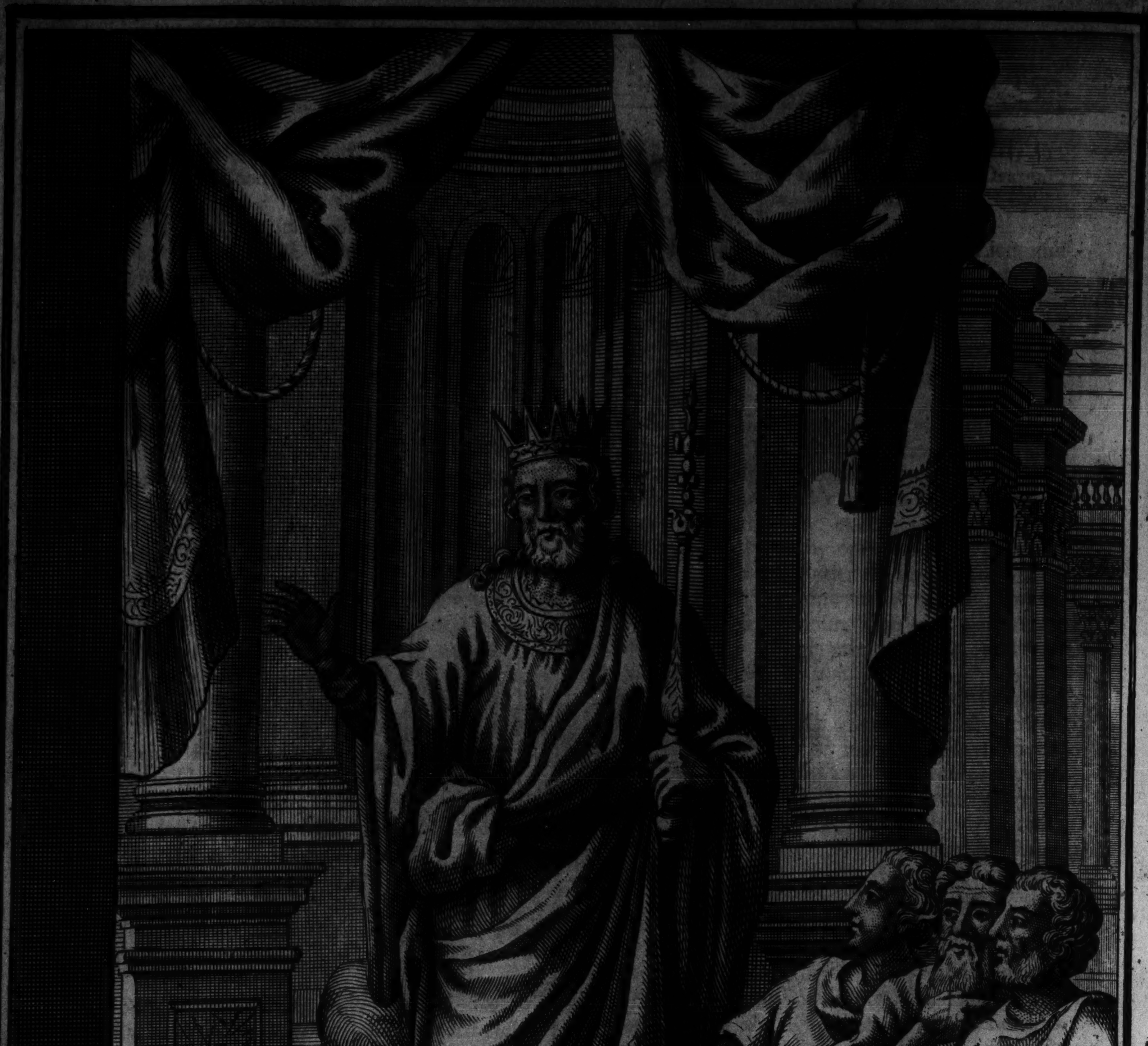
THE PROVERBS.



The proverbs of SOLOMAN, the ſon of DAVID King of Iſrael

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

The Penman of this Book is expreſſed in the Title, Solomon, *who was famous for his* Proverbs, *of which he ſpoke* Three Thouſand, *as it is recorded,* 1 Kings iv. 32. *the moſt eminent and uſeful of them being doubtleſs collected in this Book. And that the greateſt Part of this Book was compoſed by* Solomon, *does ſufficiently appear; becauſe that Part of it which was collected and compoſed by other Hands, is ſo plainly diſtinguiſhed from the other Part,* Ch. xxv. 1. *The nine firſt Chapters contain the Precepts of Wiſdom, called* Proverbs; *wherein we are not to expect that Order and Coherence which is in many Books of Scripture.*

The wonderful Love of God towards his Church, is declared in this Book: Foraſmuch as the Sum and Effect of the Scripture is here ſet forth in brief Sentences, which contain partly Doctrine, and partly Manners, with Exhortations to both. The Preface, contained in the nine firſt Chapters, is full of grave Sentences, and deep Myſteries, to allure the Hearts of Men to the diligent reading of the Parables that follow; which are left as a precious Jewel to the Church, and were gathered and committed to Writing by the Servants of Solomon, *who indited them.*

CHAP I.

The Uſe of the Proverbs. *An Exhortation to fear God and believe his Word. The Glory of thoſe Children that obey the Instruction of their Parents. A Caution againſt yielding to enticing Sinners. The Contrivance, Arguments and Invitation of theſe Sinners. Reaſons againſt complying with them. Wiſdom's Call to Repentance; her Promiſe; her Complaints and Threatenings. The Fruit of Sin. Peace to the Penitent.*

Q. WHAT *is the true Import and Signification of the Word* Proverb?

A. The Word *Proverb* or *Parable*, ſignifies a grave and notable Sentence, worthy to be kept in Memory. In this Book we are taught what we ought to know and follow, and what we ought to refuſe; we are eſpecially to know the Word of God, wherein is the only true Knowledge.

Q. *What Leſſons of Instruction are we taught in this Chapter?*

A. We are taught to ſubmit ourſelves to the Correction of thoſe who are wiſe, to live juſtly, and to render to every one what belongs to him. Here is an Admonition to beware of the Company of the Wicked; and the eternal Wiſdom is brought in, complaining that ſhe is deſpiſed, exhorting to true Repentance, threatening everlaſting Deſtructions to all diſobedient Ones, and promiſing aſſured Happineſs to the Obedient. As as a wicked Man's Mind is often full of Anxiety in the midſt of all his outward Proſperity and Glory, ſo the Mind of a good Man is filled with Peace and Joy, even his outward Man is expoſed to many Troubles.

A. What Kind of Wiſdom *is that deſcribed* Ver. 20. *and how is ſhe ſaid* to utter her Voice in the Streets?

A. Having expreſſed the Counſels and Invitations of Folly, and of wicked Men, he now declareth the Voice of Wiſdom. By the Name of Wiſdom, or *Wiſdoms*, as it is in the *Hebrew*, he ſeems to underſtand the Wiſdom or Counſel of God revealed to the Sons of Men by his Word; which he calls *Wiſdom* here, as alſo *Prov.* ix. 1. either to note the Excellency of this Wiſdom beyond all other, as the greateſt and chief Beaſt is called *Behemoth* or *Beaſts*, *Job.* xl. 13. or becauſe it conſiſts of a Multitude of wiſe Precepts; or becauſe it hath been delivered to Men at ſundry Times, in divers Manners, and by many Perſons, Prophets and Apoſtles, and eſpecially by the Son of God, who is called *the Wiſdom of God*, *Luke* xi. 49. and this Wiſdom is ſaid to cry with a loud Voice, to intimate both God's Earneſtneſs in inviting Sinners to Repentance, and their Inexcuſableneſs if they do not hear ſuch loud Cries. —— *Without*, or *abroad*, or *in the Streets* or *open Places*, as many render it, and as it is in the next Clauſe. Not in Corners and privily, as Seducers perſuade Men to Error or Wickedneſs, being afraid of the Light, but openly and publickly before all the World.

Chap. II.

Solomon *exhorts his Son to get Wiſdom; tells him the Benefit he ſhall receive thereby, and the Evils he would avoid. The wicked Man's Ways are deſcribed. An Habitation promiſed the Righteous. The End of the Wicked miſerable.*

Q. W*HAT are the particular Maxims laid down in this Chapter?*

A. Solomon adviſes us to give due Attention to his Words and to give ourſelves to the true Knowledge of God without Hypocriſy, for this is the true Wiſdom to know and fear God; and the Word of God will teach us how to govern ourſelves, and will preſerve us from all Vices, eſpecially Whoredom, whereunto Man is moſt prone. Adulterers and Whoremongers are very rarely brought to Repentance, but are generally hardened by the Power and Deceitfulneſs of that Luſt, and by God's juſt Judgments peculiarly inflicted on ſuch Perſons; for it is the ready and certain Way to Death, which it brings many Ways, by waſting a Man's vital Spirits, and ſhortening his Life; by expoſing him to many and dangerous Diſeaſes, which are the Effects of inordinate Luſts; as alſo to the Fury of jealous Husbands or Friends, and ſometimes to the Sword of Civil Juſtice, and undoubtedly without Repentance, to the Wrath of God, and the ſecond Death.

Q. *Who is the* ſtrange Woman, *Ver.* 16?

A. By the *ſtrange Woman Solomon* means an Adultereſs or Whore, called *ſtrange*, partly becauſe ſuch Perſons were common Heathens, or are ſuppoſed to be ſuch by Reaſon of that ſevere Law againſt thoſe Practices in *Iſraelitiſh* Women, *Deut.* xxiii. 17. or are juſtly reputed Heathens, as being degenerate *Iſraelites*, who are often called *Strangers*, as in the Book of *Pſalms*; and partly, becauſe Converſation with ſuch Perſons is forbidden to Men, as thoſe *Iſraelites* who were not *Levites*, are called *Strangers*, *Numb.* i. 51. in Reſpect of the holy Things which they were forbid to touch; and forbidden Fire, is called *ſtrange Fire*, *Numb.* iii. 4.

Q. *How do you underſtand the* 17*th Verſe*, Which forſaketh the Guide of her Youth, and forgetteth the Covenant of her God?

A. The Guide of her Youth. Namely, her Husband, whom ſhe took to be her Guide and Governor, and that in her Youth; which Circumſtance is added to aggravate her Sin and Shame, becauſe Love is commonly moſt ſincere and fervent between an *Husband* and *the Wife of his Youth*, as they are for that Reaſon emphatically called *Prov.* v. 18. *Iſa.* liv. 6. *&c.*——*Forgetteth*, or violateth, or breaketh, as that Word is commonly uſed in a practical Senſe. ——*The Covenant of her God.* The Marriage Covenant; ſo called, partly, becauſe God is the Author and Inſtitutor of that Society and mutual Obligation; and partly, becauſe God is called to be the Witneſs and Judge of that ſolemn Promiſe and Covenant, and the Avenger of the Breach of it.

Chap. III.

Solomon *exhorts his Son to Obedience, and truſt in God; to honour God with our Eſtates; the Advantage of ſo doing; to Patience under God's Chaſtiſements. The Happineſs of him that findeth Wiſdom. The Benefits of Wiſdom. Another Exhortation to perform our Duty; to Charitableneſs; to avoid Strife and Envy. The Miſery of the Wicked, and Bleſſings of the Juſt.*

Q. G*IVE an Account of what Doctrines are inculcated in this Chapter?*

A. Long life is the Bleſſing of God, which he gives to thoſe who ſerve him, ſo far forth as is expedient for them. By Mercy and Truth *Solomon* means the Commandments of the firſt and ſecond Table, or elſe the Mercy and Faithfulneſs that we ought to uſe towards our Neighbours.

By the *Navel*, Ver. 8. the whole Body is comprehended, it is a noble and uſeful Part of the Body, by which the Infant receives Nouriſhment in the Womb, and which is the Ligament or Bond by which the Bowels, a principal Part of the Body, are united and preſerved.

Marrow is the Nouriſhment and Strength of the Bones, and a great Preſerver and Prolonger of Life, as the Decay of it is a chief Cauſe of the Weakneſs, Dryneſs, and Decay of the Body.

The Senſe of the Verſe is, the Wiſdom or fear of God is not only uſeful to the Salvation of the Soul, but alſo the Health and Welfare of the Body; both as it prevents thoſe Diſeaſes and Diſtempers, which are often procured by ſinful Luſts and Paſſions, and as it gives us an Intereſt in all the Promiſes of God, putting us under the Care of his ſpecial Providence.

Here is an Exhortation to Liberality to the Miniſters of God, and to the Poor; and we are taught not to think the Chaſtening of the Lord, an unneceſſary, uſeleſs, and troubleſome Thing, but rather Eſteem it as a Privilege and Favour from God, and a Benefit to ourſelves. Afflictions are not Infelicities, but they ſhew God's Purpoſe to purge us from our Sins, and to make us fit for his Preſence and Kingdom.

Wiſdom brings with it many uſeful, precious, and profitable Things; it prevents evil Practices, Strife, Impatience, *&c.* but the fooliſh are hated by God. The Wicked may have a temporary Glory, but the Wiſe ſhall enjoy it not only for a Seaſon, but as an Inheritance conſtant an eternal.

Q. *I would know the full Force of* Solomon's *Precept*, *Ver.* 11. My Son, deſpiſe not the Chaſtening of the Lord; neither be weary of his Correction?

A. Deſpiſe not. Either, 1. By making light of it; and ſo this is one Extreme oppoſed to another in the next Clauſe. Or rather, 2. By accounting it an unneceſſary, uſeleſs, and troubleſome Thing; but rather eſteem it as a Privilege and Favour from God, and a Benefit to thyſelf; for ſuch Negatives do often imply the contrary Affirmatives by a common Figure called *Meioſis*, as *Prov.* 17. 21. and frequently elſewhere. And this Senſe ſeems to agree better both with the following Clauſe, which repeats the ſame Thing with ſome Aggravation, after the Manner, and with the Reaſon uſed to enforce this and the following Command, Ver. 12. which concerns not ſuch as are inſenſible, but rather ſuch as had too deep a Senſe of the Evil of Affliction. ——*Neither be weary of his Correction.* Neither eſteem it tedious and intolerable, but endure it with Patience and Chearfulneſs.

Chap. IV.

Solomon *ſhews the Excellency of his Doctrine. His Counſel to get Wiſdom and Underſtanding; the Honour which comes thereby; its good Effects. He dehorts from the Paths of the Wicked, and exhorts to keep ſeveral Precepts for the better Government of one's ſelf. Precepts concerning the Government of the Eyes, Heart, Mouth, and Feet.*

Q. WHAT *is the Subject purſued in this Chapter?*

A. Solomon gives his Inſtructions in the Perſon of a Preacher or Miniſter, which is as a Father unto the People. He ſets forth how he was taught and inſtructed by his Parents, and exhorts all Men, with many cogent Reaſons and Arguments to apply their Hearts to Wiſdom. He bids us direct all our Actions by a good Intention to a right End, and to keep our Mind fixed upon that Way which leads to it, and bidding us conſider our Actions before we do them, he concludes with a Direction to fly all Extreams, and neither add to the Commands of God, nor take from them.

Q. *Why does* Solomon, *Ver.* 3. *call himſelf his* Father's Son, tender and only beloved in the Sight of his Mother?

A. My Father's Son. In a ſpecial Manner, his beſt beloved, and deſigned for his Succeſſor in the Throne.——*Tender.* Young and tender in Years, and capable of any Impreſſions, and tenderly educated.——*Only beloved.* Heb. *only*, or *the only Son*: Or rather, becauſe *Bathſheba* ſeems to have had other Sons, 1 *Chron.* iii. 5. *as an only Son*, as dearly beloved as an only Son: In which Senſe this Title is given to *Iſaac*, *Gen.* xxii. 2, 12, 16. though he had another Son, and to others. All theſe Circumſtances are mentioned to ſhew the Neceſſity and great Benefit of wholeſome Inſtruction (which his royal Parents would not neglect, no not in his tender Years) and thereby to prepare and excite them by his Example to receive Inſtruction.

Chap. V.

An Exhortation to the Study of Wiſdom; to ſhun the Company of ſtrange Women. The Miſchief of Whoredom and Riots. Chaſtity recommended in a Marriage State. God's pondering our Ways, an Argument to cloſe with the Exhortation. The miſerable End of the Wicked.

Q. PRAY *what Point, in particular, does* Solomon *treat of in this Chapter?*

A. Beſides an earneſt Exhortation to the Study of Wiſdom, here is an Admonition to beware of unchaſte Women, and to live a chaſte and delightful Life in Wedlock; that is, at all convenient Times. For that there may be Exceſs in the Uſe of the Marriage-bed is manifeſt, not only from many Places of Scripture, but from the Light of Nature, and the Conſent of wiſe and ſober Heathens, who have laid Reſtraints upon Men in this Particular; for a Man may be drunk with his own Wine, and intemperate with his own Wife. The Almighty ſeeth all Things, and in vain doth the Wicked think to diſentangle himſelf from his Luſts, by repenting when he grows in Years, and to eſcape Puniſhments; for he is in perfect Bondage to his Luſts, and is neither able nor willing to ſet himſelf at Liberty; if he does eſcape the Rage of a jealous Husband, exaſperated Relations, or the Sentence of the Magiſtrate, yet he ſhall be infallibly overtaken by the righteous Judgments of God.

Q. *In what Senſe do you take the Metaphor of* Waters, *uſed Ver.* 15?

A. This Metaphor of *Waters* here, and in Verſes 16, 17, 18. is to be underſtood, either, 1. Of the free and lawful uſe of a Man's Eſtate, both for his own Comfort, and the Good of others. Or rather, 2. Of the honeſt Uſe of Matrimony, as the proper Remedy againſt the filthy Practices mentioned *Ver.* 3, *&c.* This beſt ſuits with the Context both before and following; and thus it is explained in *Ver.* 18. So the Senſe is, content thy ſelf with the Delights which God alloweth thee, with the ſober Uſe of the Marriage-Bed. Why ſhouldeſt thou ramble about, treſpaſſing againſt God and Men, to ſteal their Waters, which thou mighteſt freely take out of thine own Well or Ciſtern? The Ground of the Metaphor, is this, that Waters were ſcarce and precious in thoſe Countries, and therefore Men uſed to make Ciſterns and Wells for their own private Uſe. And the ſame Metaphor of *Waters*, of a *Pit*, or *Well*, is applied to Things of this Nature elſewhere, as *Prov.* xxiii. 27. *Iſa.* xlviii. 1. and li. 2.

Chap. VI.

The Danger of becoming Surety, and the Way of Deliverance from it. Sluggards reproved from the Similitude of the Ant. The Behaviour of the Wicked deſcribed; his ſudden Ruin. Seven Things that are diſpleaſing to God. The Benefits of keeping the Commandments. The Miſchief of Adultery.

Q. THIS *Chapter begins with Obſervations concerning Suretiſhip; pray explain the Nature of it?*

A. Solomon forbids us to become Surety one for another, according to the Rule of Charity, but that we conſider, for whom, and after what Sort, ſo that the Creditor may not be defrauded.

Q. *I deſire you to give the genuine Senſe of Ver.* 3. Do this now, my Son, and deliver thy ſelf, when thou art come into the Hand of thy Friend, go humble thy ſelf, and make ſure thy Friend?

A. Into the Hand; into the Power——*of thy Friend.* Either, 1. Of the Creditor, who, poſſibly may be alſo thy Friend; yet take the following Courſe with him, and much more if he be a Stranger. Or, 2. Of the Debtor, for whom, as being thy Friend, thou didſt become Surety; whereby thou art not only in the Creditor's Power, to exact Payment, but alſo in the Power of the Debtor, who by his Neglect or Unfaithfulneſs, may expoſe thee to the Payment of the Debt. And this may ſeem beſt to agree both with Verſe 1. where *Friend* is taken in that Senſe, and is diſtinguiſhed from the Creditor, who is called a *Stranger*, and with the Words here following; for this *humbling of himſelf* was not likely to have much Power with a Stranger, and a griping Uſurer; but might probably prevail with his Friend, either to take effectual Care to pay the Debt, or at leaſt to diſcharge him from the Obligation, or to ſecure him againſt it ſome other

Way.———*Go humble thy ſelf*, Heb. *offer thy ſelf to be trodden upon*, or *throw thy ſelf down* at his Feet. As thou haſt made thy ſelf his Servant, bear the Fruits of thine own Folly, and humble and earneſtly implore his Patience and Clemency.——*And make ſure thy Friend*, or, *and prevail with thy Friend*, ſtrive to win him by thy inceſſant and earneſt Solicitations. Or, *honour* or *magnify thy Friend*, which is fitly and properly oppoſed to, and indeed, is in ſome good Meaſure done by the humbling a Man's ſelf before him.

Q. *Is there nothing more that deſerves Remark in this Chapter?*

A. He expreſſes, in a lively Manner, the Nature of Sluggards, who, though they ſleep ever ſo long, yet have never enough, but always covet more; and he ſhews what Inconveniencies idle Perſons and Sluggards come to, by calling them wicked Men and ſlanderous; he tells us of ſix, yea ſeven Things which God hates, and ſets forth the Duty of Children, in reſpect of the good Inſtructions of their Parents; eſpecially that they ſhould be preſerved from whoriſh and adulterous Woman, who he ſays will firſt bring to Beggary, and then ſeek the Deſtruction of thoſe concerned with them; he does not approve of Theft, but ſhews it is not ſo abominable as whoredom, foraſmuch as Theft might be redeemed, but Adultery was a perpetual Infamy and Death by the Law of God. He ſhews that Man, by Nature, ſeeketh his Death, who hath abuſed his Wife, concluding that neither the Law of God, nor the Law of Nature, admit any Ranſom for the Adulterer. His Picture of the Sluggard is very natural.

Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, conſider her Ways, and be Wiſe. Which having no Guide, Overſeer, or Ruler, provideth her Meat in the Summer, and gathereth her Food in the Harveſt. How long wilt thou ſleep, O Sluggard? when wilt thou ariſe out of thy Sleep? Yet a little Sleep, a little Slumber, a little Folding of the Hands to Sleep. So ſhall thy Poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy Want as an armed Man.

CHAP. VII.

Solomon *again perſuades to keep his Laws, and delight in Wiſdom. A young Man void of Underſtanding, is enſnared by an Harlot; one deſcribed from her Practice and Subtilty; the Danger of complying with her ſet forth under the Similitude of a Bird. He craves their Attention, and dehorts from Uncleanneſs.*

Q. P*RAY give us a View of the Drift and Deſign of* Solomon *in this Chapter?*

A. Nothing ought to be ſo dear to us as the Word of God, nor ſhould we look on any Thing more, nor mind any Thing ſo much.

By a Parable, *Solomon* declares their Folly, who ſuffer themſelves to be abuſed by Harlots; for he ſhews, that there were none ſo impudent, but were ſecretly aſhamed; he deſcribes certain Conditions peculiar to Harlots; ſets forth their Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation, and that neither Wit nor Strength can deliver them who fall into the Hands of Harlots; for without Repentance, Hell will certainly be their Portion. His Deſcription of a Harlot's Allurements to delude and enſnare Youth, is very beautiful and natural.

For at the Window of my Houſe I looked through my Caſement, and behold among the ſimple ones, I diſcerned among the Youths, a young Man void of Underſtanding, paſſing through the Street near her Corner, and he went the Way to her Houſe. In the Twilight, in the Evening, in the black and dark Night; and behold, there met him a Woman, with the Attire of a Harlot, and ſubtil of Heart. (She is loud and ſtubborn, her Feet abide not in her Houſe. Now is ſhe without, now in the Streets, and lieth in wait at every Corner) ſo ſhe caught him and kiſſed him, and with an impudent Face ſaid unto him, I have Peace-offerings with me; this Day have I payed my Vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to ſeek thy Face, and I have found thee. I have deckt my Bed with Coverings of Tapeſtry, with carved Works, with fine Linnen of Egypt. *I have perfumed my Bed with Myrrh, Aloes, and Cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of Love until the Morning, let us ſolace ourſelves with Loves. For the good Man is not at Home, he is gone a long Journey. He hath taken a Bag of Money with him, and will come Home at the Day appointed. With her much fair Speech ſhe cauſed him to yield, with the Flattering of her Lips ſhe forced him. He goeth after her ſtraightway, as an Ox goeth to the Slaughter, or as a Fool to the Correction of the Stocks; till a Dart ſtrike through his Liver, as a Bird haſteth to the Snare, and knoweth not that it is for his Life.*

CHAP. VIII.

Wiſdom's Fame, Call, and Exhortation; her Excellence, Nature, and Hatred of Evil; her Power, and Love to the Godly; her Riches, Eternity, and Delight in the Children of Men. An Exhortation to true Wiſdom. The Happineſs of thoſe that are truly wiſe. The Fruits of Sin.

Q. W*HAT Doctrines are particularly inculcated in this Chapter?*

A. Solomon declares that Man is the Cauſe of his own Perdition, and that he can pretend no Ignorance, foraſmuch as God calleth to all Men by his Works, to follow Virtue, and to flee from Vice. He declares that the Word of God is eaſy unto all, who have a Deſire unto it, and are not blinded by worldly Affairs; for except a Man hath Wiſdom, which is the true Knowledge of God, he can neither be prudent nor a good Counſellor; for Honours, Dignity, or Riches come not by Man's Wiſdom or Induſtry, but by the Providence of God.

Q. *Of what Kind is* the Wiſdom *mentioned Verſe* 1, &c.

A. It is a great Queſtion what this *Wiſdom* is, of which *Solomon* diſcourſeth ſo largely and profoundly in this Chapter. Some underſtand it of that Attribute and Perfection of the Divine Nature, which is called Wiſdom, whereby God perfectly knows all Things, and makes known to Men what he judgeth neceſſary or expedient for them to know. Others underſtand it of the ſecond Perſon in the Godhead, the Son of God, who is called *the Wiſdom of God, Luke* xi. 49. And it cannot fairly be denied, that ſome Paſſages do beſt agree to the former, and others to the latter Opinion. Poſſibly both may be joined together, and the Chapter may be underſtood of *Chriſt* conſidered, partly in his perſonal Capacity, and partly in Regard of his Office, which was to impart the Will of God to Mankind, which he did; 1. By revealing it to, and writing it upon the Mind of Man, at his firſt Creation: For it was *Chriſt* who then gave Being, Life and Light to Mankind, as is undeniably evident from *John* i. 1, 2, 3, *&c.* By publiſhing it to the holy Patriarchs and Prophets in the Time of the Old Teſtament; for it was *Chriſt* who ſpake and diſcovered Things to them from Time to Time, as is manifeſt from 1 *Pet.* i. 11. and iii. 18, 19, 20. and from many other Texts both in the Old and New Teſtament. 3. By declaring it by his own Mouth, and by his Apoſtles and Miniſters under the Goſpel.——*And Underſtanding put forth her Voice?* clearly and audibly inſtructs Men how to avoid thoſe fleſhly Luſts? He oppoſeth the inviting Words of Wiſdom, to the ſeducing Speeches of the Harlot in the preceeding Chapter.

By Earth, in the one and thirtieth Verſe of this Chapter, he means, that Man who is the Work of God, in whom Wiſdom took Pleaſure; inſomuch, as for Man's Sake, the divine Wiſdom took Man's Nature and dwelt among us, filling us with unſpeakable Treaſures, and this is that Solace and Paſtime ſpoken of here.

But the Excellency and divine Perfections of Wiſdom are ſet forth in ſo elegant and poetical a Style, and deſcribed in ſuch ſublime Expreſſions, that the moſt critical Reader muſt be pleaſed with it.

I Wiſdom dwell with Prudence, and find out Knowledge of witty Inventions. The Fear of the Lord is to hate Evil; Pride and Arrogancy, and the evil Way, and the froward Mouth do I hate. Counſel is mine, and ſound Wiſdom; I am Underſtanding, I have Strength. By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice. By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth. I love them that love me, and thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me. Riches and Honour are with me; yea, durable Riches and Righteouſneſs. My Fruit is better than Gold, yea, than fine Gold; and my Revenue than choice Silver. I lead in the Way of Righteouſneſs, in the Midſt of the Paths of Judgment; that I may cauſe thoſe that love me, to inherit Subſtance; and I will fill their Treaſures. The Lord poſſeſſed me in the Beginning of his Way, before his Works of old. I was ſet up from Everlaſting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was. When there were no Depths, I was brought forth; when there were no Fountains abounding with Water. Before the Mountains were ſettled; before the Hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the Earth, nor the Fields, nor the higheſt Part of the Duſt of the World. When he prepared the Heavens, I was there; when he ſet a Compaſs upon the Face of the Depth; when he eſtabliſhed the Clouds above; when he ſtrengthned the Fountains of the Deep; when he gave to the Sea his Decree, that the Waters ſhould not paſs his Commandment; when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth. Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable Part of his Earth, and my Delights were with the Sons of Men. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye Children; for Bleſſed are they that keep my Ways. Hear Inſtruction, and be wiſe, and refuſe it not. Bleſſed is the Man that heareth me, watching daily at my Gates, waiting at the Poſts of my Doors. For whoſo findeth me, findeth Life, and ſhall obtain Favour of the Lord. But he that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own Soul; all they that hate me, love Death.

CHAP. IX.

Wiſdom's Call to her People to a Communion and Fellowſhip with herſelf, ſet forth under a Similitude of making a Feaſt; her Preparation and Invitation. She dehorts from evil Company. Her Counſels concerning Reproof and Inſtruction. A Deſcription of the Fear of God, with the Benefits thereof. The Nature of a fooliſh Woman; her Invitation, and Arguments to enſnare the Simple. The miſerable State of thoſe that are deceived by her.

Q. WHAT *do you underſtand by the* Houſe, *which* Wiſdom *is ſaid* to build?

A. The Words at length are theſe; *Wiſdom hath built her Houſe; ſhe hath hewen out her ſeven Pillars.* Ver. 1.————*Her Houſe.* For the Reception and Entertainment of her Gueſts, as appears from the following Paſſages. This Houſe is oppoſed to the Harlot's, mentioned Chap. vii. 8. and it's to be underſtood, either, 1. Of the heavenly Houſe, or Palace of Glory. Or rather, 2. Of the Church which *Chriſt*, the Wiſdom of the Father, hath erected and eſtabliſhed in the World, in which this following Feaſt is made, which is called God's *Houſe*, 1 *Tim.* iii. 5. *Heb.* iii. 3, 4.——*Seven Pillars.* Many Pillars; whereby is intimated both the Beauty and Stability of the Church. By *Pillars* we are to underſtand Prophets, Apoſtles, and Miniſters of holy Things, who in Scripture are called Pillars, *Gal.* ii. 9. and elſewhere.

Q. *The 2d Verſe likewiſe ſeems to want ſome Explanation.*

A. The Text ſtands thus; *She hath killed her Beaſts; ſhe hath mingled her Wine; ſhe hath alſo furniſhed her Table,* Ver. 2.————*She hath killed her Beaſts.* Made Proviſion for the Gueſts; which is meant of the Ordinances, Gifts, Graces, Comforts, and eternal Felicities, which God doth offer and give to Men, in and by the Church.————*Mingled her Wine.* Either, 1. With Spices, to make it ſtrong and pleaſant; this mixed Wine being eſteemed the beſt, *Chap.* xxiii, xxix, xxx. Or, 2. With Water, as they uſed to do in thoſe hot Countries, partly for Refreſhment, and partly for Wholeſomeneſs. Whereby alſo may be intimated, that Wiſdom teacheth us Temperance in the Uſe of our Comforts.——*Furniſhed her Table.* With all Neceſſaries, and now waits for the Gueſts.

CHAP. X.

From this Chapter to the twenty-fifth, are ſundry Obſervations concerning moral Virtues, and their contrary Vices, with excellent Rules for the Government of our Converſation.

Q. MAKE *what Obſervations occur to you upon the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. The nine foregoing Chapters are as a Preface to ſtir up Men to give diligent Attention to the enſuing Proverbs, which, for the moſt Part, are divers and different, and depend not one upon another. *Solomon* treats of wiſe and fooliſh Children, of unjuſt and juſt Riches, and Poverty; of Idleneſs and Diligence; of the Bleſſing and Proſperity of the Righteous, and of the Miſery and Calamity of the Wicked; of Wiſdom and Folly in ſpeaking; of Uprightneſs and Perverſeneſs in Converſation; of the Winking of the Eyes; of Hatred and Love; of Diſcipline; of Back-biting; of the contrary Delight of the fooliſh and the wiſe.

Q. *Do not the nine foregoing Chapters contain* Proverbs of Solomon? *why then does this begin with thoſe Words?*

A. This and the following Chapters contain *the Proverbs of Solomon,* properly ſo called; for the preceding Chapters, though they had this Title in the Beginning of them, yet properly and truly were only a Preface or Introduction to them, containing a general Exhortation to the Study and Exerciſe of Wiſdom, to ſtir up the Minds of Men to a greater Attention and Regard to all its Precepts, ſome of which here follow; of which, in general theſe Things are to be obſerved, in order to aſſiſt us in the right Underſtanding of them. 1. That theſe Sentences are generally diſtinct and independant, having no Coherence or Connection one with another, as moſt other Parts of Scripture have. 2. That ſuch Sentences being very ſhort, as their Nature requires, more is underſtood in them than is expreſſed, and the Cauſes are commonly to be gathered from the Effects, and the Effects from the Cauſes, and one oppoſite to another. 3. That they are delivered by Way of Compariſon and Oppoſition, which, for the moſt Part, is between Virtue and Vice, but ſometimes is between two Virtues, or two Vices.

Q. *Pray interpret the Senſe of Verſe* 6. Bleſſings are upon the Head of the Juſt; but Violence covereth the Mouth of the wicked?

A. Bleſſings are upon the Head of the Juſt. All Sorts of Bleſſings are wiſhed to them by good Men, and conferred upon them by God. He ſaith, *upon their Head,* either to ſhew, that theſe Bleſſings came from above; and that openly, and in Sight of the World; ſo that he can confidently ſpeak of them to God's Praiſe, and to his own Comfort and Honour; or becauſe Bleſſings were commonly pronounced by Men with this Ceremony of laying their Hands on the Head of the Party bleſſed.—*But Violence.* Either, 1. Their own Violence and Injuſtice, which may be here put for the Puniſhment of it, as *Iniquity* is often put for the Puniſhment of Iniquity. Or, 2. Violence, or the violent, injurious and miſchievous Practices of others againſt them, deſerved by their own Violence againſt others, and inflicted on them by the Curſe and righteous Judgments of God.—*Covereth the Mouth of the Wicked;* or *ſhall cover, i. e.* ſhall fall upon them. The Phraſe of covering their Mouth, is uſed either, 1. With Alluſion to the antient Cuſtom of covering the Mouths and Faces of condemned Malefactors; ſee *Eſth.* vii. 8. *Job.* ix. 24. Or, 2. To ſignify, that the Curſe and Judgment of God upon them ſhould be ſo manifeſtly juſt, that their Mouths ſhould be ſtopped, and they not be able to ſpeak a Word, either againſt God, or for themſelves. Or, 3. To intimate, that God's Judgment upon them ſhould be publick and evident to all that behold them, as a Covering put upon a Man's Face or Mouth is, as for the ſame Reaſon, the Bleſſings of the Juſt were ſaid to be upon their Heads. And the *Mouth* may be put for the *Face,* or *Countenance,* by a *Synecdoche.* But this Clauſe is differently render'd by divers learned Interpreters; thus, *the Mouth of the Wicked covereth* (*i. e.* concealeth, or ſmothereth within itſelf, and doth not utter that) *Violence* and *Injury,* which he meditateth in his Heart, and deſigneth to do others; and therefore ſhall be accurſed and miſerable. But this ſuits not ſo well with the former Clauſe, wherein the *Bleſſings of the Juſt* are not meant actively of thoſe Bleſſings which they wiſh or give to others, but paſſively of thoſe Bleſſings which others wiſh or give to them; and conſequently, this *Violence* is not underſtood of that which they do to others, but of that which is done to them by others.——

CHAP. XI.

Q. WHAT *are the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. All falſe Weights, Meaſures and Deceits are condemned; of Pride and Humility; of Uprightneſs and Perverſeneſs in Converſation; of the Riches of the Wicked; of Hypocriſy; of the Righteous and Wicked; of deſpiſing one's Neighbour; of Back-biting; of Counſellors; of Suretiſhip; of a good and bad Woman; of Mercy and Cruelty; of Liberality and Covetouſneſs; the covetous Men who ſpare their Riches, to the Hindrance of their Families, ſhall be deprived thereof miſerably. Although the Wicked are rich, yet they are but Slaves to the Godly, who are the true Poſſeſſors of the Gifts of God.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 17th Verſe;* The merciful Man doth Good to his own Soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own Fleſh;

A. To his own Soul. To himſelf, becauſe his Liberality ſhall turn to his own infinite Advantage, both in this Life and the next.—*Cruel.* Hard-hearted and uncharitable to others.—*Troubleth his own Fleſh.* Either, 1. His own Children or Kindred, who are commonly expreſſed by this very Word, for whoſe Sakes he is thus covetous and uncharitable, that he may hoard it up for them; But they, ſaith the wiſe Man, ſhall have nothing but Trouble and Vexation, and God's Curſe with it. Or, 2. Himſelf, denominated here from his *Fleſh* or Body, as in the former Branch from *his* Soul. But he mentions his *Fleſh* rather than his *Soul,* to intimate that the Miſchiefs of his Covetouſneſs ſhall not only fall upon his Soul, which he deſpiſeth, but upon his Fleſh or outward Man, which is the only Thing he feareth.

CHAP. XII.

Q. OF *what Subjects does the wiſe Man treat in this Chapter?*

A. Of him who hates Reproof; of good, righteous, upright, and wicked Men; the Difference of a prudent and diſgraceful Woman; of Good and Evil; ſpeaking and witneſſing Truth and Falſhood; of modeſt Perſons and vain Boaſters; of diligent and ſlothful Perſons and Deceivers; of the Wrath and Boaſting of Fools, and of the Silence of the Prudent, who bridles his Affection, and thereby avoids Shame; of Heavineſs and Gladneſs of Heart; of the Practice of Juſtice and Godlineſs, which though it expoſes a Man to ſome Danger and Inconveniencies in this World, yet it will certainly lead him to Life and Happineſs, whereas the End of all wicked Courſes is Death and Deſtruction.

Q. *Pleaſe to explain a little the 10th Verſe*; A righteous Man regardeth the Life of his Beaſt; but the tender Mercies of the Wicked are cruel?

A. His Beaſt. Which is employ'd in his Service; he will not deſtroy it, either by Labours beyond its Strength, or by denying to it neceſſary Food or Reſt, or by any other Way; and much more will he be pitiful to his own Servants, and to poor Men.——*The tender Mercies of the Wicked are cruel.* There is much Cruelty mixed even with their moſt merciful Actions, when they pretend, or intend to ſhew Mercy. Heb. *The Bowels of the*, &c. Thoſe very Bowels which in others is the Seat of Pity, in him are harden'd and ſhut up, and only ſtir him up to Cruelty. Inſtead of that Mercy which is natural to other Men, he hath nothing but Cruelty. Their *Mercies* are ſaid to be *cruel*, as *the Fooliſhneſs*, and *Weakneſs of God*, are ſaid to be *wiſe* and *ſtrong*, 1 *Cor.* i. 25.

CHAP. XIII.

Q. W*HAT are the Points chiefly inſiſted on in this Chapter?*

A. Of a wiſe Son and a fooliſh one; of him who uſes his Tongue to God's Glory, and the Profit of his Neighbour, and of him who ſpeaks raſhly, boldly, and impudently; of Idleneſs and Diligence, of the Upright and Righteous, and of good and wicked Men; of Riches and Poverty; of Pride and Weakneſs; of Hoping and Deſiring; of the Contempt of the Word of God, and Fear of his Commands; of good Underſtanding and Prudence; of faithful and unfaithful Meſſengers; of converſing with wiſe Men and Fools; of due Correction to Children; and that God's Favour and Bleſſing gives the Righteous a competent Eſtate, an Heart to uſe it, and Comfort and Satisfaction in it; whereas wicked Men commonly want either all theſe Bleſſings, or at leaſt ſome of them.

Q. *I would know the true Interpretation of* Ver. 19. The Deſire accompliſhed is ſweet to the Soul; but it is an Abomination to Fools, to depart from *Evil.*

A. The firſt Clauſe intimates, that the Satisfaction of a Man's Deſires by the Enjoyment of the Things deſired, is very acceptable to him. Which may be taken either, 1. Of the Deſire of Fools, which may be underſtood out of the next Clauſe. So the Senſe of the Verſe is, It is ſweet to Sinners to indulge and ſatisfy their Deſires, which are wholly carnal and ſinful, and for that Reaſon they love Sin, and hate the Thoughts of leaving it, becauſe their Deſires are wholly and fully ſet upon it. Or, 2. Of good Deſires, or of the Deſires of wiſe and good Men, as the LXX, and *Chaldee*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* Interpreters underſtand it, by the Oppoſition of *Fools* in the next Clauſe. So the Senſe may be this; The Deſires of good Men are ſet upon what is good, and they rejoice when they attain it, and are griev'd when they fall ſhort of it; but the Deſires of the Wicked are to ſet upon Sin, and it is a Pleaſure to them to commit it, and an Abomination to be hinder'd from it. Or rather, 3. Of Deſires in general. Whatever Men earneſtly deſire, the Enjoyment of it is very ſweet and grateful to them; and therefore Sinners rejoice in the Purſuit and Satisfaction of their ſinful Luſts, and abhor all Reſtraint and Mortification of them: For this is certain and confeſſed, that many Things are underſtood in theſe ſhort proverbial Speeches, which are not expreſſed.——*But* or *and*, as this Particle properly ſignifies; or *therefore*, as it is frequently uſed.

CHAP. XIV.

Q. W*HAT Kind of Subjects does this Chapter contain?*

A. Every wiſe Woman takes Pains to profit her Family, and to do that which concerns her Duty in her Houſe, but the fooliſh Woman is negligent: Of walking aright, and being perverſe and full of Hypocriſy; of fooliſh and wiſe Speeches; of Labour in Tillage; of Witneſſes, Scorners, Prudence and Simplicity; of Confeſſion of Sin, and Sorrow and Joy of Heart; the Condition of the Wicked and the Godly; of Self-conceit, Prudence, and ſudden Anger; the Allurement of Sin ſeems ſweet, but the End thereof is Deſtruction; for he who forſakes God, ſhall be puniſhed, and grow weary of the Sins he delighted in; the Wicked muſt ſtand in Awe of the Good.

Q. *Pray give me your Senſe of the 9th* Verſe: Fools make a Mock of Sin; but among the Righteous there is Favour?

A. Fools; wicked Men, as appears from their Oppoſition to the *Righteous*, in the next Clauſe.——*Make a Mock of Sin.* Pleaſe and ſport themſelves with their own and other Men's Sins, which is an high Offence and Provocation to God and good Men. Or, as others render it, *excuſe* or *cover Sin*; Sin againſt God or Men, and then juſtify, or extenuate their Sins, which is, no doubt, an Injury. Poſſibly this Clauſe may be rendered, *Sin deludes and makes a Mock of Fools*, or Sinners, *i. e.* expoſes them to Shame and Contempt, which is fitly oppoſed to *Favour* in the next Clauſe. And thus two antient and learned Interpreters, *Aquila* and *Theodocian* render it. And this ſuits exactly with the *Hebrew* Words; whereas, in the other Tranſlation, the Noun and Verb governed by it, are of divers Numbers, which though ſometimes allowed, yet is not to be ſuppoſed without Neceſſity.——*The Righteous.* Who are ſo far from making a Mock at Sin, or excuſing it, that they do not allow themſelves to commit it. *There is Favour.* They find Favour both with God and Men, as this Word, thus generally expreſſed, is uſed, Chap. xi. 27. becauſe they make Conſcience of ordering their Lives ſo, that they offend neither God nor Man; or if they offend either, they heartily repent of it, ſo far are they from excuſing it, or pleaſing themſelves with it. Or, there is *Good-will*, as the Word properly, and uſually is taken; they have a real Love, and are ready to do all Offices of Kindneſs one to another, and therefore neither ſin againſt others, nor rejoice in the Sins of others.

CHAP. XV.

Q. P*RAY what is the Sum and Subſtance of this* Pſalm?

A. Solomon treats here of wiſe and fooliſh Speeches, and of God's Omniſcience, Knowledge and Providence, of deſpiſing the Inſtructions of a Father; the Riches of the Righteous will proſper, but the Wicked, if they have much, are full of Care and Trouble. That Thing is abominable before God, which the Wicked think to be moſt excellent, for their Sacrifices are not acceptable; of Joy and Heavineſs, Wiſdom and Folly; Contentment with the Fear of God is valuable; of the angry Man, and he who is patient and meek; of Slothfulneſs, of good and bad Children, of good and bad Counſellors or Adviſers; of the Way to Heaven and Happineſs, of Pride, and the Lords Protection of the Widows; of the Thoughts of the Wicked; of Covetouſneſs and Gifts; of good Report, the Fear of God, and Humility; for God exalts none but thoſe who are truly humble.

Q. *The 19th Verſe ſeems to want ſome Explication.*

A. The Words are theſe; *The Way of the ſlothful Man is an Hedge of Thorns; but the Way of the Righteous is made plain.*——*The Way of the ſlothful Man.* The Way in which he does or ought to walk; any good Work which he pretends or deſires to undertake.——*An Hedge of Thorns.* As it is expreſſed, *Hoſ.* ii. 6. troubleſome and perplexed, and full of ſuch Difficulties as he deſpaireth, and therefore never ſtriveth to overcome.————*The Way of the Righteous.* Who is always diligent in his Calling, which is one Branch of Righteouſneſs, and therefore is fitly oppoſed to the *Slothful*, who is joined with the Wicked, *Matt.* xxv. 26. and cenſured as ſuch both in Scripture and Heathen Authors, becauſe Idleneſs is in itſelf a Sin, and leads the Way to many other Vices.——*Is made plain.* Is eaſy and pleaſant to him, notwithſtanding all the Diſcouragements and Difficulties he meets with.

CHAP. XVI.

Q. WHAT *are the Points diſcuſſed in this Chapter?*

A. The Almighty derides the Preſumption of Men, who dare to attribute to themſelves any Thing, as to prepare their Hearts, or ſuch like, ſeeing they are not able to ſpeak a Word without God gives leave. Of Pride, Reconciliation, and the Fear of God; of pacifying of Enemies; of Contentment of Kings; of doing Juſtice to one's Neighbour with Weights; of the Value of Wiſdom, of holding Converſation with the Godly; of truſting and relying on the Word of God; of wiſe Speeches and the ſweet Words of Conſolation flowing from a godly Heart; of Labour; of ungodly, froward and violent Men; the hoary Head joined to Virtue, is to be admired; of Patience and Long-ſuffering; and that there is nothing to be attributed to fortune, for all Things are determined by the Counſel of God, which ſhall come to paſs.

Q. *There ſeems a little Obſcurity in the 4th Verſe, which I ſhould be glad to have cleared up.*

A. In order to do this, it will be neceſſary to recite the Words of the Text; *The Lord hath made all Things for himſelf; yea, even the Wicked for the Day of Evil.*————*Hath made*; or *hath wrought*, or *doth work*; for the *Hebrews* expreſs the preſent as well as the paſt Time, by this Tenſe; he ordereth or diſpoſeth; for this may be underſtood either of the Works of Creation, or of Providence.——*All Things*; and eſpecially all Men. *For himſelf*; for his own Service and Glory; for the Diſcovery and Illuſtration of his own Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs, Truth, Juſtice, and his other moſt glorious Perfections.——*The Wicked*; wilful and impenitent Sinners.——*For the Day of Evil*; for the Time of Puniſhment, as this Phraſe is uſed, *Pſal.* xlix. 5. *Jer.* xvii. 18. of which the Scripture frequently ſpeaks, both to warn Sinners of their Danger, and to ſatisfy the Minds of thoſe who are amazed and diſquieted with the Conſideration of the preſent Impunity and Felicity of wicked Men. Men make themſelves wicked, and God therefore makes them miſerable.

Q. *Are the Maxims contained in Verſe 10. true in all reſpects?*

A. Let us read the whole Verſe, and then we ſhall be the better able to judge of it; it runs thus; *A divine Sentence is in the Lips of the King; his Mouth tranſgreſſeth not in Judgment.*——*A divine Sentence*, Heb. *Divination*, which ſometimes is taken in a good Senſe for *Prudence*, as *Iſa.* iii. 2. A great Sagacity and piercing Judgment to diſcern dubious and difficult Caſes.——*Is* or *ſhould be*, for the Verb is wanting in the *Hebrew*, and this may be ſupplied as well as *is*. And he ſeems not ſo much to ſpeak of the Matter of Fact, as if it were thus in all Kings, which is notoriouſly untrue, as of the Duty of Kings, in whom Wiſdom is a neceſſary Qualification. For thus the two following Proverbs, Ver. 12, 13. muſt be underſtood, otherwiſe they muſt be repugnant to common Experience.——*Of the King.* Either, 1. Of wiſe Kings, who only are worthy of that Name and Office; *King* being here put for a wiſe King, as a *Name* is put for a *good Name*, and a *Woman* for a *good Woman*, *Eccl.* vii. 28. and then it is true in Fact, as it was in *David*, 2 *Sam.* xiv. 17. and in *Solomon*, 1 *Kings* iii. 28. Or, 2. Of Kings in general, in the Senſe before given; for as the Word is generally expreſſed without any Limitation, both here and Ver. 12, 13. it may ſeem preſumptuous to confine it to thoſe few Kings who are, or were wiſe and good.————*Tranſgreſſeth not*; or *ſhall* or *ſhould not tranſgreſs*, or go beyond the Bounds of Religion and Juſtice.

CHAP. XVII.

Q. PRAY *what are the Subjects treated of in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter treats of Quietneſs and Strife, of wiſe Servants, the trying of Hearts, lying Lips, mocking of the Poor and miſerable, Childrens Children and Fathers; Excellence of ſpeaking and keeping ſilent; of Gifts; of forgiving one's Neighbour; of Fools and Folly; of Rebellion; of rewarding Evil for Good; of Contention; of Cenſures and Friends; of Suretyſhip; of Pride and Perverſeneſs of Heart and Tongue; of Joy, and an abject Mind; of the Geſtures of them who have Underſtanding; for a Fool is reckoned wiſe who holds his Peace, becauſe he is ſenſible of his own Folly, and therefore forbears to ſpeak, leſt he ſhould diſcover it, which is a great Point of true Wiſdom.

Q. *There is an Expreſſion or two in Verſe 24. which pray explain.*

A. The Verſe ſtands thus: *Wiſdom is before him that hath Underſtanding, but the Eyes of a Fool are in the Ends of the Earth.*————*Before him*, or *in* (as the Particle *Beth* is uſed, *Deut.* ii. 7. and is here rendered, by divers Interpreters) *the Face* or *Countenance.* The Senſe is either, 1. His Wiſdom appears even in his Geſtures and Looks, which are moſtly, compoſed and grave. Or, 2. Wiſdom is before him, or in his Sight, as the Mark at which he aims, or as the Rule by which he conſtantly walketh and ordereth all his Steps from Time to Time, minding his preſent Duty and Employment. ——*The Eyes of the Fool are in the Ends of the Earth.* The Senſe of this Clauſe alſo, is either, 1. His Folly appears in his light, unſteady, and diſorderly Carriage and Looks. Or, 2. His Mind is wavering and unſettled; he neither propoſeth a right and certain End to himſelf, nor is he conſtant in the Uſe of fit Means to attain it; he neglects his preſent Buſineſs, and true Intereſt, and wanders about in purſuit of earthly Vanities, minding chiefly thoſe Things which are remoteſt from him, and which are his leaſt Concern.

Cahp XVIII.

Q. P*LEASE to recite the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. He who loves Wiſdom will ſeparate himſelf from all Impediments, and give himſelf wholly to ſeek it; but a Fool hath no Deſire to do ſo. Of wiſe Speeches; the Office and Duty of a Judge; of fooliſh Speeches; of Whiſpering and Talebearing; of Slothfulneſs in Work; of Confidence in God, the Refuge of the Godly againſt all Trouble: Of Riches, of Pride and Humility; of giving an indiſcreet Anſwer; of increaſing in Knowledge; of Gifts and Law-ſuits: If a Controverſy cannot otherwiſe be decided, it is beſt to caſt Lots to know whoſe the Thing ſhould be; of Difference between Brethren, which are hardly pacified; of the Uſe of the Tongue: He who is joined to a virtuous Woman in Marriage, is bleſſed by the Lord: Of the Difference between the Words of the Poor and Rich; a Friend is ſometimes preferable to a Brother; that is, oftentimes ſuch are found, who are more ready to do a Kindneſs, than thoſe bound by Duty.

Q. *I don't rightly apprehend the genuine Meaning of the 1ſt Verſe:* Through Deſire a Man having ſeparated himſelf, ſeeketh and intermeddleth with all Wiſdom.

A. Seeketh and intermedleth with all Wiſdom: According to this Interpretation, the Senſe is, *through Deſire* (of it, to wit, of Wiſdom, which is eaſily underſtood out of the End of the Verſe; ſuch Ellipſes being frequent in Scripture) *a Man having ſeparated himſelf* (being ſequeſtered from the Company, Noiſe and Buſineſs of the World) *ſeeketh and intermedleth with all Wiſdom*; *i. e.* uſeth all Diligence, that he may ſearch and find out all ſolid Knowledge and true Wiſdom. And this earneſt Deſire and Endeavour to get true Wiſdom, is fitly oppoſed to the Fool's Contempt of Wiſdon, or to his Deſire of it, not for Uſe and Benefit, but only for vain Oſtentation, which is expreſſed in the next Verſe, although Coherence is little regarded by Interpreters in the ſeveral Verſes and Proverbs of this Book. But this is otherwiſe render'd in our *Engliſh* Bible, and by divers others, *He that ſeparateth himſelf* (either, 1. from his Friend; or rather, 2. from other Men, affecting Singularity) *ſeeketh according to his Deſire* (to gratify his own Inclinations and Affections) *and intermeddleth* (for this Word is uſed in a bad Senſe, *Prov.* xvii. 1,. and xx. 3. and it is not found elſewhere, except in this Place) *in every Buſineſs*, as proud and ſingular Perſons are commonly pragmatical, delighting to find Fault in others, that they may get ſome Reputation to themſelves by it. *Heb. in every Thing that is*, thruſting themſelves into the Affairs and concerns of other Men. Or, as this laſt Clauſe is and may be rendered, and *contendeth*, Heb. *mingleth himſelf* (for Words of that Signification are commonly uſed for *contending* or *fighting*, as *Deut.* ii. 5, 9, 19. *Iſa.* xxxvi. 8. *Dan.* xi. 10.) *with*, or *againſt all Reaſon or Wiſdom*; whatever a Man ſpeaketh againſt his Opinion or Deſire, though it be never ſo reaſonable or evident, he rejects it, and obſtinately maintains his own Opinion.

Chap. XIX.

Q. V*Arious are the Subjects treated of in this Chapter, of which pleaſe to give a ſhort View.*

A. Solomon here treats of the Poor and Rich; of Indiſcretion; of Wealth procuring Friends; of falſe Witneſſes and lying Lips; of the Favour of Princes, and the Deſire of Gifts; of Underſtanding and Wiſdom; of Servants having too much Power, and bearing Rule; of Meekneſs and Charity; of a King's Favour and Diſpleaſure; of a fooliſh Son; the Difference of a brawling and prudent Wife; of Slothfulneſs; of Godlineſs and Impiety; of Liberality to the Poor; of Diſcipline to Children; of Anger and Wrath; Man's Device ſhall not have Succeſs, except God govern it, whoſe Purpoſe is unchangeable; of vain Boaſting of a Kindneſs done; and a poor Man, who is honeſt, is to be eſteemed above the wicked Rich; of the Fear of God; of an ungodly Witneſs, who hath no Reverence for the Seat of Juſtice, nor for the Preſence of God there, nor for that ſacred and ſolemn Word of executing Judgment, but in ſpite of all gives in falſe Teſtimony; but Judgments are prepared for Scorners and Fools, either by Men, or, at leaſt, by God, although they are deferred for a Time, yet they are treaſured up for them, and ſhall be infallibly inflicted on them.

Q. *Pray explain Verſe* 22. The Deſire of a Man is his Kindneſs, and a poor Man is better than a Liar?

A. The Deſire of a Man. Either, 1. Of any or every Man: All Men deſire, and it is deſirable to be a Capacity of being kind and bountiful to others, whereby they gain Love and Honour, and many other great Advantages. Or 2. of the poor Man, expreſſed in the next Clauſe. The hearty Will or Deſire of being kind or liberal to others in Neceſſity, is all the Kindneſs a poor Man can ſhew, and is accepted by God, and ſhould be owned by Men as a real Kindneſs, 2. *Cor* viii. 12. Or 3. Of the rich Man, as may be gathered from the Oppoſition of this Man, to the poor Man, in the following Clauſe. So the Senſe may be this, There is a Sort of rich Men, all whoſe Kindneſs and Charity conſiſts in good Deſires and Well-wiſhes to Perſons in Miſery, *Saying to them, Depart in Peace, be ye warmed and filled, but not giving them thoſe Things which are needful*, Jam. ii. 16. And this Senſe ſeems to agree well with the following Clauſe. ——*A poor Man*; Who is not able to give what he deſires to do.——*Is better than a Liar*: Than a rich Man who feeds the Poor with good Words and fair Promiſes, but performs not what he pretends, and is able to do.

CHAP. XX.

Q. *GIVE me a ſummary Account of what is contained in this Chapter?*

A. Wine has ſuch an Effect on Drunkards, that it cauſeth them to be vain and idle, and ſo juſtly derided by others. Of the Anger of Kings; of Contention, Lazineſs, boaſting of one's own Goodneſs and Faithfulneſs; of Uprightneſs: The ſinful State of Man; Weight and Meaſure, Judgment of Childrens Doings and Actions: The hearing Ear and ſeeing Eye, the Policy of Buyers, the Value of wiſe Speeches, of taking Security, of unrighteous Gain, Backbiting, curſing one's Parents, Riches haſtily gotten, Deſire of Revenge, and waiting on God. The Events of human Life are neither ordered nor foreſeen by Man, but only by the Providence of God; and therefore Men ſhould only mind the doing their Duty, and then quietly depend upon God, for a happy Iſſue of their Endeavours. Of Vows, and the Soul of Man; of Youth and old Age: Grievous Wounds or Stripes do cleanſe, not only the outward Man, by keeping it from evil Actions, but even the inward Man, by expelling or ſubduing vile Affections.

Q. *I ſhould be glad to have explained the firſt Clauſe of Verſe* 16. Take his Garment that is Surety for a Stranger?

A. Take it as a Pledge, without which he ought not to be truſted, becauſe by this Action he diſcovers himſelf to be a Fool, and takes the Way to Beggary.

Q. *But does not this Precept contradict that Law which forbids the taking of a Garment for a Pledge,* Exod. xxii. 26?

A. Not in the leaſt, for the Caſes vaſtly differ; for that Law concerned only the Poor, who were forced to borrow for their own Neceſſity, and therefore deſerve Pity; whereas this concerns thoſe only, who are, or would be thought rich and ſufficient Security for others, and who borrow not for their own Need, but for a meer Stranger, for which Folly they deſerve to be ſeverely puniſhed. Beſides, this may be only a Prediction, though delivered in the Form of a Precept, as many Precepts are; and ſo ſhews what may be expected by him that is guilty of ſuch Folly, even that he ſhall be ſtript of his Garments and other Neceſſaries.

Q. *The Senſe of Verſe* 30. *is not very plain to my Underſtanding; I deſire you therefore to give me your Interpretation of it?*

A. The Words run thus: *The Blueneſs of a Wound cleanſeth away Evil; ſo do Stripes the inward Part of the Belly.*——*The Blueneſs of a Wound cleanſeth away Evil:* Grievous Wounds, which make Men black and blue, or ſevere Puniſhments, are the moſt effectual Means to reclaim a wicked Man, and to purge out his Corruption. ——*So do Stripes,* Heb. *and Stripes,* which anſwer to the *Wounds* in the former Clauſe.——*The inward Part of the Belly.* Either, 1. Which pierce even to the inward Parts of the Belly, and ſo we are to underſtand out of the former Branch, *cleanſe away Evil.* Or, 2. They cleanſe the inward Parts of the Belly, *i. e.* of the Heart. So this is an Addition to the former Clauſe, and the Senſe of the whole is, grievous Wounds or Stripes do cleanſe not only the outward Man, by keeping it from evil Actions, but even the inward Man, by expelling or ſubduing vile Affections; which is mentioned as a great and bleſſed Benefit of affliction.

CHAP. XXI.

Q. *WHAT are the Maxims and Precepts inculcated in this Chapter?*

A. Although Kings ſeem to have all Things at Command, yet they are not able to bring their own Purpoſes to paſs, any otherwiſe than God hath appointed; much leſs are Inferiors able. Of Self-conceit and the weighing of the Heart; of Juſtice and Sacrifices; of Pride and the Practice of the Wicked; of Diligence and haſtening to be rich; of unrighteous Riches, and wicked Men; of Corruption and Purity of Man; of brawling Women, and the Simple made wiſe; of Unmercifulneſs and not giving Ear to the Petitions of our poor Brethren; of Gifts and Rewards of the Righteous, Upright, and Merciful: Of Wiſdom, Underſtanding, and Counſel; of him who gives himſelf to ſenſual and immoderate Pleaſures: Advice given to keep ourſelves from offenſive and provoking Speeches, for a licentious and abuſive Tongue frequently brings a Man into Trouble; of Slothfulneſs, Covetouſneſs, falſe Witneſſes: God's Will and Works not to be reſiſted; for who can prevail againſt the Counſel of God? The Succeſs of the Battle depends not upon human Strength or Art, but merely upon the Providence of God, who gives the Victory when and to whom he pleaſes, and often to thoſe who have leaſt Reaſon to expect it.

Q. *In what Senſe does* Solomon *ſay, Verſe* 1. The King's Heart is in the Hand of the Lord, as the Rivers of Water; he turneth it whitherſoever he will?

A. The King's Heart: His moſt inward Purpoſes and Inclinations, which ſeem moſt in a Man's Power, and out of the Reach of all others; and much more his Tongue and Hand, and all his outward Actions. He names *Kings,* not to exclude other Men.——*As the Rivers of Waters.* Which Husbandmen or Gardeners can draw, by little Channels, into the adjacent Grounds, as they pleaſe, and as their Occaſions require.——*He turneth it;* directs and bends, partly by ſuggeſting thoſe Things to their Minds, which have a commanding Influence upon their Wills and Affections, which being God's Creatures, muſt needs be as ſubject to his Power and Pleaſure, as either Men's Minds or Bodies are, and which he moves ſweetly and ſuitable to their own Nature, though ſtrongly and effectually. ——*Whitherſoever he will.* So as they ſhall fulfil his Counſels and Deſigns, either of Mercy or Correction to themſelves, or to their People.

Q. *What do you ſuppoſe is the true Senſe of Verſe* 28. A falſe Witneſs ſhall periſh; but the Man that heareth, ſpeaketh conſtantly?

A. A falſe Witneſs, Heb. *a Witneſs of Lies,* one who is forward to ſpeak or ſwear falſe Things, or ſuch Things as he hath not heard or learned from others, nor ſeen, but deviſed in his own Heart, *ſhall periſh;* ſhall be ſeverely puniſhed by God or Men, and ſhall be confounded and ſilenced, becauſe none will, for the future, regard or credit his Teſtimony.——*But the Man that heareth.* He who hears before he ſpeaks, and witneſſeth nothing but what he hath heard or ſeen, and knows to be true.——*Speaketh conſtantly.* Doth not contradict himſelf, but always affirms the ſame Thing. Or, as moſt other Interpreters render the Words *ſpeaketh* (or *may ſpeak*, dare freely and boldly ſpeak) *for ever*; when Liars are cut off, he lives, and is in a Capacity of ſpeaking and bearing Witneſs again and again, as Occaſion requires, as long as he lives, and his Teſtimony will be received.

CHAP. XXII.

Q. WHAT *are the Topicks handled in this Chapter?*

A. A good Name is truly valuable, and it is got by doing well; the Rich and Poor live together, and depend one upon the other; a prudent Man foreſees Things, but the Fooliſh raſhly proceed; Humility and the Fear of the Lord are moſt commendable; the perverſe Man leads an uneaſy Life; good Inſtructions are neceſſary for Youth, for Impreſſions made in childiſh Years will remain; bring a Child up virtuouſly, and he will ſo continue. The Poor muſt comply with the Humour of the Rich, who take Advantage of his Neceſſities; the Power which the Wicked uſe with Cruelty, ſhall be taken away; he who looks upon the Wants and Miſeries of others with Compaſſion and Kindneſs, will be acceptable to the Lord. Of the Scorner, Pureneſs of Heart, and Grace of Lips; of right Knowledge and Faithfulneſs; of the Sluggard. Here is a Caution againſt the fair and flattering Speeches of a ſtrange Woman, for it is eaſy to fall, but hard to get up. It is a rare Thing for any Perſon, once entered into the Courſe of Whoredom, ſincerely to repent of it, and turn from it. Of oppreſſing the Poor; the Words of the Wiſe, and Commendation of theſe Proverbs. The Company of a paſſionate Man is to be avoided, and we are not raſhly to become Surety for another. Land-marks are not to be removed, becauſe they diſtinguiſh the Land of ſeveral Poſſeſſors, who might be injured. The diligent Man is fit to be employed in the Service of Princes.

Q. *Pray give me your Explanation of* Ver. 2. The Rich and the Poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all?

A. The Rich and the Poor meet together. Either, 1. In a Way of Hoſtility or Oppoſition, as this Word is ſometimes uſed, the Rich contemning, and Oppreſſing the Poor; and the Poor envying and purloyning from the Rich; and ſo the following Words are a Reaſon why that Hoſtility ſhould ceaſe. Or, 2. In a Way of mutual Converſe, they live together, and need one another.——*The Lord is the Maker of them all.* Not only as they are Men, but alſo as they are poor or rich, a Difference which comes wholly from God's Providence. They have one common Creator, Lord, and Judge; nor can the one deſpiſe, grudge at, or envy the other, without a Reflection upon God.

Q. *The Proverb contained in Verſe* 12. *is ſomewhat intricate; which pray explain?*

A. The Eyes of the Lord preſerve Knowledge, and he overthroweth the Words of the Tranſgreſſor. God, by the watchful Eye of his Providence, maintains and defends *Knowledge*, or Men of Knowledge; the Abſtract being put for the Concrete, as *Pride* is put for a *proud Man*, *Pſ.* xxxvi. 11 *Deceit* for the *Deceitful*, as *Prov.* xii. 17. So here *Knowledge* for knowing and good Men, ſuch as the laſt Verſe ſpoke of, whoſe Hearts are pure, and Speeches gracious; not only the King ſhall be their Friend, as is ſaid there, but God alſo, which he adds here.——*The Words of the Tranſgreſſor.* Their falſe and flattering Speeches, whereby they deſigned and expected to gain the Favour and Friendſhip of great Men, which are oppoſed to the ſincere and gracious Speeches of good Men, implied in the firſt Clauſe of this Verſe, and expreſſed in the foregoing; or as others render it, and the Word is commonly uſed, the Matters, all his Counſels, Hopes, Enterprizes, and Concerns.

CHAP. XXIII.

Q. PRAY *what are the Rules for our Practice enjoin'd in this Chapter?*

A. We are to eat with Sobriety, and to bridle our Appetites, as it were, by Force and Violence; for the Rich often invite their Inferiors to their Table, not out of Love, but for their own ſecret Purpoſes. There is no ſolid Happineſs in Riches; we are not to hold Converſation with Fools; we are not to remove Land-marks, or oppreſs the Fatherleſs; a Child is to be corrected; of good Children, Wine-drinkers, Gluttons, and ſlumbering; we are to be obedient to our Parents, becauſe the Mother with Pain and Hazard brings forth the Child, and the Obligations for the tender Care of our Education are indelible. We are always to avoid Whoredom and Drunkenneſs, as two deteſtable Sins.

Solomon gives here a very natural Deſcription of the Drunkard.

Who hath Wo? who hath Sorrow? who hath Contentions? who hath Babbling? who hath Wounds without Cauſe? who hath Redneſs of Eyes? They that tarry long at the Wine, they that go to ſeek mixed Wine. Look not thou upon the Wine when it is Red, when it giveth his Colour in the Cup, when it moveth itſelf aright. At the laſt it biteth like a Serpent, and ſtingeth like an Adder. Thine Eyes ſhall behold ſtrange Women, and thine Heart ſhall utter perverſe Things. Yea, thou ſhalt be as he that lieth down in the midſt of the Sea, or as he that lieth upon the Top of a Maſt. They have ſtricken me, ſhalt thou ſay, and I was not Sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when ſhall I awake? I will ſeek it yet again.

Q. *Is the Precept, enjoin'd Ver.* 2. *to be taken in a literal Senſe?*

A. The Words are theſe; *And put a Knife to thy Throat, if thou be a Man given to Appetite*, Ver. 2.——*Put a Knife to thy Throat.* Reſtrain and moderate thine Appetite, as if a Knife, or ſome other Thing ſtuck in thy Throat, and hindered thee from ſwallowing what thou didſt deſire; or, as if a Man ſtood with a Knife at thy Throat ready to kill thee, if thou didſt trangreſs; or, though it be as irkſome to thee to do ſo, as if thou hadſt a Knife put to thy Throat. So this is to be underſtood metaphorically, as that Phraſe of *cutting off the Right-hand*, &c. *Mat.* v. 29, 30. Or, *For* thou doſt (or *leſt thou ſhouldſt*, as the *Syriac* Interpreter renders it; or *otherwiſe thou wilt or ſhouldſt*) *put a Knife to thy Throat.* So the Senſe is, when thou goeſt to Feaſts, thou doſt expoſe thyſelf to great and manifeſt Hazards, to thy own Intemperance, and to all its dangerous Conſequences, and to the ill Effects of other Mens Intemperance. ——*Given to Appetite.* Prone to Exceſs in Eating and Drinking.

Chap. XXIV.

Q. PRAY *what are the general Heads of Inſtruction contained in this Chapter?*

A. Of envying and keeping Company with wicked Perſons, Scorners and Fools, and of their Nature and Condition; of Wiſdom and Counſel; of Fainting in Adverſity, and delivering the Innocent; we are not to deviſe Miſchief againſt the Family, Perſon, or Poſſeſſion of the righteous; we are not to triumph over an Enemy; we are to honour and obey God, the King, and all in Authority, and carefully to avoid Sedition; of the Duty of a Judge, of anſwering pertinently, plainly and truly; of Domeſtic Prudence and Tillage; not to deceive our Neighbours, or deſire Revenge; of Slothfulneſs, which certainly is the Fore-runner of Poverty.

Q. *What is the Scope and Senſe of the* 12*th Verſe?*

A. Let us read the whole Text, and then remark on the ſeveral Parts of it: *If thou ſayeſt, behold, we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the Heart conſider it? and he that keepeth my Soul, doth not he know it; and ſhall not he render to to every Man according to his Works?*——*We knew it not.* I was Ignorant either of his Innocence, or of his extreme Danger, or of my Power to relieve. ————*Doth not he that pondereth the Heart conſider it?* That this is only a frivolous Excuſe, and that the true Reaſon of thy neglect was, thy Want of true Love to thy Brother, whoſe Life thou waſt, by the Law of God, and of Nature, obliged to preſerve, and thy ſinful Self-love, and a carnal Fear of ſome Miſchief or Trouble, which might befal thee, in the Diſcharge of thy Duty.——*He that keepeth thy Soul.* God, who is *the Preſerver of Men, Jer.* vii. 20. who daily doth, and who only can keep thee both in and from the greateſt Dangers. And this Favour of God may be here mentioned, partly as a ſtrong Obligation upon him to preſerve him who is made after God's Image, and whom God hath commanded him to love and preſerve; partly, as an Encouragment to the Performance of his Duty herein, from the Conſideration of God's ſpecial Care and Watchfulneſs over thoſe that do their Duty; and partly, to intimate to them the Danger of their Neglect of their Duty, whereby they will forfeit God's Protection over themſelves, and be expoſed to many Dangers and Calamities. Or, as others render it, and as the *Hebrew* Verb is frequently uſed, *he that obſerveth thy Soul*, that ſeeth all the ſecret Thoughts, and inward Motions of the Heart. Which Expoſition is favoured both by the following Words, *Doth not he know it?* Which agrees better to God's *obſerving*, than to his *preſerving* a Man's *Soul*; and by the former Clauſe, to which this Tranſlation doth more exactly anſwer, the ſame Thing being here repeated in other Words, after the Manner of theſe ſacred Writers.——*According to his Works.* God will certainly deal with thee as thou haſt dealt with him, either by rewarding thee for the Performance of thy Duty, or by puniſhing thee for the Neglect of it.

Chap. XXV.

Obſervations about Kings. A Caution againſt Contentions; againſt revealing of Secrets; the Reaſon of this Caution. Divers other Rules.

Q. T*O what do the proverbial Sentences in this Chapter relate?*

A. God does not reveal the Cauſe of his Judgment to Man. A King rules by the Word of God, therefore he muſt uſe Diligence in trying Cauſes, for when Vice is removed from a King, he is a meet Veſſel for the Lord's Uſe. Of Cauſes, or Law-Suits, of Reproof in due Seaſon. The Man who boaſts of a falſe Liberality is like a Cloud which hath an outward Appearance and nothing within; of Forbearance and good Words. We are to uſe every Thing with Moderation; Directions given for Converſation; a falſe Witneſs deteſtable, as is an unfaithful Perſon; we muſt be kind to our Enemies, and love thoſe who hate us, for their Conſciences will move them to acknowledge the Benefits received; of an hypocritical Tongue, and a brawling Woman; of good Tidings; the Weakneſs of the Godly before the Wicked; it is not only ſinful but ſhameful alſo, and a Sign of a vain and mean Spirit, induſtriouſly to ſeek for Honour and Applauſe from Men; and he who cannot bridle his Paſſions, expoſes himſelf to manifold Dangers and Miſchiefs.

Q. *How do you underſtand the* 1*ſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

This is an Introduction or Preface to the following Part of this Book; which let us firſt read, and then explain; *Theſe are alſo Proverbs of* Solomon, *which the Men of* Hezekiah *King of* Judah *copied out.* The Proverbs which are contained in this and the following Chapters, were *copied out* by Perſons appointed by *Hezekiah* for that Purpoſe; but whether they were the Prophets *Iſaiah, Hoſea*, or *Micah*, who lived in his Days, or ſome others, is neither evident nor material. Moſt of them are political Precepts, and ſuch as in a particular Manner concerned *Hezekiah* and other Princes to know, for the regulating their Conduct, both with Reſpect to their Families and Kingdom.————*Copied out.* Either out of other Books or Writings of *Solomon*, concerning natural or civil Things, of which we read, 1 *Kings* iv. 32. or out of the hiſtorical Records then extant concerning *Solomon*'s Speeches and Actions in the Hiſtory of the Kings of *Judah*, often mentioned in the holy Scripture.

Q. *In what Senſe are we to underſtand the* 22*d Verſe*: For thou ſhalt heap Coals of Fire upon his Head, and the Lord ſhall reward thee?

A. For, underſtand, *in ſo doing*, which Words are expreſſed *Rom.* xii. 20. where this Text is quoted.——*Thou ſhalt heap Coals of Fire upon his Head.* Either, 1. In a bad Senſe, thou ſhalt hereby aggravate his Sin, and occaſion a more ſpeedy and grievous Vengeance from God, which, like Fire from Heaven, ſhall fall upon his Head, and conſume him; not that he perſuades him to do a Kindneſs with an evil Intent, with an Expectation or Deſire, or Deſign of bringing God's Wrath upon him; but only foretells what would happen, and diſſuades him from taking Vengeance, and provokes him to Kindneſs inſtead of it; becauſe Vengeance is God's peculiar Work, which he will certainly inflict upon ſuch Perſons; which Argument is uſed to that very

Purpoſe by *St. Paul, Rom.* xii. 19. Or, 2. In a good Senſe, Thou ſhalt melt him into Repentance, and inflame him with Love and Kindneſs to thee for ſo unexpected and undeſerved a Favour; he ſhall be as heartily grieved and tormented with the Thoughts of his vile and wicked Carriage towards thee, as a Man would be who had burning Coals of Fire upon his Head. But if theſe Coals of Fire do not melt him, and he ſtill hardens his Heart againſt thee, they will conſume him. Thus, either Way, thou ſhalt be ſecured from him. The Metaphor ſeems to be taken from Founders, who melt the hardeſt Metals by heaping Coals of Fire upon them. And *the Head* may be here mentioned rather than any other Part, becauſe in the Scripture-phraſe, both Bleſſings and Curſes are ſaid to fall upon Men's Heads, *i. e.* Upon them, *Heads* being frequently put for Perſons.——*The Lord ſhall reward thee.* Thy Charity to him ſhall be fully recompenced to thee, if not by him, yet by God, which is far better.

CHAP. XXVI.

Rules how to behave towards Fools. The ſlothful Man deſcribed. The Character of a contentious Man, and of a Buſy-body, and Tale-bearer. The Evil of Hypocriſy and Lying.

Q. PRAY *what Leſſons of Inſtruction are we taught in this Chapter?*

A. Honour is not to be given to a Fool, becauſe he neither deſerves it, nor knows how to uſe it, but his Folly is increaſed and expoſed by it. An undeſerved Curſe is of no Effect; Fools are to be corrected, and their ſilly Queſtions not to be anſwered, beſides ſeveral excellent Sayings or Sentences of Fools; of Self-conceit, and the ſlothful Man; a meddling Fool makes a Rod for his own Back; of Wrongs done under a falſe Pretence of Kindneſs and Familiarity; of the Tale-bearer and contentious People; of Hypocriſy; of a lying and flattering Tongue, which though it be more ſmooth and plauſible than a ſlandering Mouth, yet is in Fact no leſs pernicious, betraying others either to Sin, or to Danger and Miſchief.

Q. *In what Senſe is God to* reward the Fool, and the Tranſgreſſor, Ver. 10?

A. God, who is oft called *Great, Pſ.* lxxxvi. 10. cxxxv. 5. *&c.* and is deſcribed by the Name of *The moſt High, Pſ.* ix. 2. and xxi. 7. *&c.* who created all Things, and therefore obſerveth and governeth all Men and Things, will certainly give that Recompence which is meet for, and deſerved by *Fools and Tranſgreſſors*; *i. e.* by ſuch as ſin either through Ignorance or Heedleſneſs, or wilfully and wickedly. Or, as it is in the Margin, *A great Man* (a Prince or Potentate, who are called by this Title, *Eſth.* i. 8. *Dan.* i. 3, *&c.*) *grieveth* (as the Word is uſed, *Iſa.* li. 9. xxxv. 5. *&c.*) *all* (to wit, all that are ſubject to him, or all that ſtand in his Way) *he hireth* (as this Word moſt commonly ſignifies) *the Fools, he hireth alſo Tranſgreſſors.* So the Senſe is, It is the Manner of many Princes to vex and oppreſs their Subjects, which becauſe they cannot do by themſelves alone, they hire others, both *Fools*, who neither know nor conſider what they do, and *Tranſgreſſors*, who are ready to execute all their Commands, right or wrong, that that they may be their Inſtruments at that Work.

CHAP. XXVII.

Counſel againſt Self-conceitedneſs. The Evil Effects of Envy. The Praiſes of a faithful Friend. The different Fruits of Prudence and Folly. Sundry Rules and Cautions.

Q. WHAT *uſeful Doctrines are we taught in this Chapter?*

A. We are here forwarned againſt Preſumption and Self-conceit; of the Wrath of Fools, and Envy; faithful Reproof is a principal End and Benefit of Friendſhip, proceeding from an upright and faithful Soul; many Inconveniencies attend upon Plenty, and from Poverty the Rich may learn Moderation, and the Poor, Content; as the rolling Stone gathers no Moſs, ſo the Mind of a fickle Man is unhappy; grateful and pleaſant are the good and faithful Counſels of a Friend; the Son, who orders his Affairs wiſely, makes his Father rejoice, for prudence is a Bleſſing, and Simplicity a Curſe; of Suretiſhip, and a brawling Wife; of witty Diſcourſe reviving the Spirits; a faithful Servant is to be rewarded; as a Man's Face repreſents itſelf in the Water, ſo is one Friend towards another; as the Grave devours all the Bodies that are put into it; and is always ready to receive more, ſo the Eye is never ſatisfied; a Man is to be tried by his Behaviour when he is praiſed, if he carries himſelf humbly and modeſtly he is a good Man; of obſtinate Fools, prudent Houſe-keeping, and temporal Wealth.

Q. *Wherein conſiſts the Propriety of the Simile in the 19th Verſe?*

A. The Words, in which it is expreſſed, are theſe; *As in Water Face anſwereth to Face, ſo the Heart of a Man to Man.* The Senſe is either, 1 As the Image of a Man's Face in the Water, anſwers to his natural Face who looks into it; or, as in Water one Man's Face is like another's, the Difference of Men's Faces being not there viſible, ſo one Man reſembles another, either in the Temper of his Mind or Body, in which many Men are alike one to another; or in the Corruption of his Nature, in which all are alike. Or, 2. As a Man may ſee his own Face if he looks in the Water, which is Nature's Looking-glaſs, or into any other Looking-glaſs, ſo a Man may diſcern his own Heart, if he looks into thoſe Glaſſes whereby it diſcovers itſelf; if he examines his Thoughts and Inclinations, together with the general Courſe of his Actions. Or, 3. As the Face of a Man ſtanding by the Waters, is viſible, not only to himſelf, but to others alſo, who obſerve his Diſpoſition and Carriage.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The Character of the Righteous and of the Wicked; the bleſſed Fruits of Integrity, and evil Effects of Sin. The Evil of concealing, and Bleſſedneſs of confeſſing Sin. The Evil of Oppreſſion and Violence; the Benefit of Induſtry and Faithfulneſs; with ſundry other Obſervations.

Q. WHAT *is the Nature and Tendency of the Obſervations which the wiſe Man makes in this Chapter?*

A. Of good and bad Conſciences; if a wicked Prince reign the Land is puniſhed, but a good one reſtores Peace and Tranquility; a poor Man advanced, who oppreſſes another, is the worſt of Oppreſſors,

preſſors, becauſe he diſcovers a baſe Mind; evil Men are praiſed by the Evil; but the Good know their Duty better; the Poor who walk uprightly are far more happy than a wicked rich Man; of good and bad Sorts of Men, and of Uſury; the Prayer of the Wicked is of no Avail; of Seducing; of good and bad Government; of Confeſſion of Sins, of the Fear of God, and Hardneſs of Heart; the Life of a wilful Murderer is not to be ſaved; of good and bad Converſation; of Diligence and Idleneſs; of Reproof and Flattery; he that robs his Father or Mother, is no leſs guilty than a Thief, becauſe he hath no Right to the actual Poſſeſſion of his Father's Goods before his Death, or without his Conſent; of Confidence in God; he that truſts to his Wit, ſlighting the Advice of others, eſpecially of God, will receive the Fruit of his Folly, *viz.* Deſtruction; Alms-deeds are commendable; at the Downfal of the Wicked the Righteous flouriſh and appear in Publick; and being advanced to that Power which the wicked Rulers have loſt, they promote Righteouſneſs, whereby the Number of wicked Men is diminiſhed, and the Righteous are multiplied,

Q. *What Reaſon or Ground is there for the Aſſertions contained in Verſe 2?*

A. Let us recite the whole Verſe. *For the Tranſgreſſions of a Land, many are the Princes thereof; but by a Man of Underſtanding and Knowledge, the State thereof ſhall be prolonged.* ---- *Many are the Princes thereof.* Either, 1. Together, contending for Supremacy. Or rather, 2. Succeſſively, as appears from the following Clauſe. Their Princes are ſoon cut off, and other Perſons, frequently of other Families, ſucceed them in the Throne, which is juſtly threatened as a Curſe; becauſe ſuch frequent Changes are ſeldom for the better, but commonly for the worſe, and are frequently attended with Blood and Slaughter, with the Change and Subverſion of Laws, with heavy Taxes and Changes, with the Ruin of many Families, and with many other Miſchiefs. ———— *By a Man of Underſtanding and Knowledge*: A wiſe and good Man. Which may be underſtood either, 1. Collectively, for *Men of Underſtanding, &c.* as it is rendered in the Margin, *i. e.* When the Men or People of a Land are wiſe and good. Or rather, 2. Singularly; either *firſt*, Of a wiſe and righteous Prince, who, by the good Government of himſelf, his Family and Kingdom, by puniſhing and preventing the Tranſgreſſions of his People, turns away God's Wrath, and ſaves himſelf and them. Or, *ſecondly*, Of any other Man of eminent Wiſdom or Piety, who prevents this Judgment, either by his good Counſels to the Prince and People, for the ſake of one Man, as he did *Zoar* for *Lot*, *Gen.* xix. 20, 21. and the *Iſraelites* for *Moſes*, *Pſ.* cvi. 23. ------ *The State thereof ſhall be prolonged*; the Land ſhall enjoy its former State and Tranquillity, and the Life of their good Prince ſhall be prolonged.

CHAP. XXIX.

The Excellency of Wiſdom, with Rules for Government. The Parents Duty to correct their Children. The Miſery of them that know not God's Law. Of Anger, Pride, Thieving, Cowardice and Corruption. The Godly and Wicked an Abomination to each other.

Q. PRAY *what does* Solomon *diſcourſe of in this Chapter?*

A. The Excellency of Wiſdom, and of good and bad Government; the Son who follows Harlots, not only ruins himſelf, but diſpleaſes his Parents; of the Flatterer, the Wicked and the Righteous; of a wiſe Man's contending with a Fool; bloody minded Men hate the Righteous, and ſeek to deſtroy them; of talking too much; a Ruler muſt not delight in Flattery; Correction and Inſtruction are to be given to Children; of Prophecy; an angry, a proud Man, and a Thief, are to be avoided; Honour, like a Shadow, flees from them who purſue it, and follows them who flee from it; of Truſt in God; Men ſtudy to pleaſe and engage their Rulers, but all depends upon God, who rules and inclines their Minds and Hearts as he pleaſes; an unjuſt Man is hated by God, ſo there is no righteous Man but muſt abhor him.

Q. *Shew the Force of* Solomon's *Reaſoning in the 9th Verſe*: If a wiſe Man contendeth with a fooliſh Man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no Reſt.

A. Contendeth. Either judicially, or otherwiſe, debating any Matter with him, endeavouring to convince him of any Error. ——*Whether he.* The wiſe Man, *rageth* (or *is angry*) or *laugheth*, i. e. whether he deal ſharply and ſeverely with him, rebuking him for his Folly, or mildly and pleaſantly ſmiling at it, *there is no Reſt*, no End or Fruit of the Debate, the Fool will not be ſatisfied or convinced. Or, as it is in *Hebrew*, *He*, (to wit, the Fool laſt named, to whom the following Behaviour ſeems more fitly to agree) *both rageth and laugheth*, and *there is no Reſt*, he will never be quieted, he will not yield nor be convinced, but perſiſts in his Folly, which he diſcovers ſometimes by fooliſh Laughter and Scorning.

Q. *In what Senſe are we to underſtand the 13th Verſe*: The poor and deceitful Man meet together: The Lord lighteneth both their Eyes?

A. The deceitful Man. Heb, *The Man of Deceits*, or *of Uſuries, i. e.* who hath enriched himſelf by ſuch Practices.——*Meet together*: Converſe together, and one needeth the other, as Chap. xxii. 2.—— *Lighteneth both their Eyes.* Either their bodily Eyes with the Light of the Sun, which promiſcuouſly ſhines upon both; or the Eyes of their Minds with the Light of Reaſon and Grace, which he indifferently gives them; and therefore the one ſhould not envy nor deſpiſe the other, but be ready to ſerve and oblige one another, as God doth Good to both.

CHAP. XXX.

Agur's *Prophecy, wherein he acknowledges his own Ignorance, the Purity of God's Word, with the Happineſs of them that truſt in him. He dehorts from adding to the Scriptures. The two Points of his Prayer. Four wicked Generations. Four Things inſatiable. Parents not to be deſpiſed. Four Things hard to be known. The Way of an adulterous Woman. Four Things intolerable. Four Things little, but wiſe. Four Things ſtately.*

Q. CAN *you give any Account of the Perſons mentioned Verſe 1?*

A. Agur was an excellent Man in Virtue and Knowledge, in the Time of *Solomon*, but is no where mentioned but in this Place. Some think by *Ithiel* and *Ucal* is meant God and *Chriſt*. *Ithiel* is as much as *God is with me*, agreeing very near with the Name *Emanuel*, *Iſaiah* vii. 14. *Ucal* ſignifies, *I ſhall prevail*, or *be able*. Others, more probably, conceive them to be the Names of *Agur*'s Companions, or Scholars, or his Sons, who received the enſuing Proverbs of him.

Q. *What is the Purport of* Agur's *Diſcourſe?*

A. The Wiſdom, Creation, and governing of all Things pertain to God the Father, and the Son; the Purity and Perfection of God's Word is extolled. *Agur* prays for two Things, the firſt to be free from Vanity, and being given to lying; the ſecond to enjoy a moderate Fortune; thus as his firſt Petition was againſt the Sins themſelves, ſo this Latter is againſt the Occaſion of them.

Agur forbids us raſhly to accuſe a Servant; four evil Generations; four Things not to ſatisfied; four Things very difficult to be found out; four Things not to be borne; four ſmall but very wiſe Creatures; four Creatures which walk decently, ſtately, and with great Alacrity and Courage; of ceaſing from, and preventing Wrath.

Q. *In what Senſe does* Agur *ſay*, Verſe 3. I neither learned Wiſdom, nor have the Knowledge of the Holy?

A. *I neither learned Wiſdom*: I have not been taught in the Schools of Wiſdom, as the Sons of the Prophets were, as the Prophet *Amos* was, *Amos* vii. 14, 15. Or I have not learned it neither by my own Underſtanding and Study, nor by the Help of other Men. ——*Nor have the Knowledge of the Holy*. Either, 1. Of the holy Angels, who are called *Holy* by Way of Eminency, as *Deut.* xxxiii. 2. *Job* xv. 15. But it was vain to deny that angelical Knowledge to be in him, which no Man imagined to be in him, and which was not in *Adam* in his State of Innocence. Or, 2. Of the holy Prophets, ſtrictly ſo called, have received, whereby I ſhould be enabled to explain thoſe great Myſteries wherein you deſire Information from me. Or, 3. Of holy Things, of the Mind and Will of God concerning Man's Salvation, and the Way which leads to it. Not that he denieth he had any Knowledge of theſe Things, but only a full, comprehenſive, and perfect Knowledge, which they falſely ſuppoſed to be in him.

Q. *Deſcribe the* Horſe-leach *and her* two Daughter, *and the other Things mentioned Verſe* 15?

A. *The Horſe-leach hath two Daughters, crying, Give, give. There are three Things that are never ſatisfied, yea, four Things ſay not, It is enough.* ——*The Horſe-leach*. An inſatiable Creature, ſucking Blood till it be ready to burſt.——*Hath two Daughters*. Which are either, 1. The two Forks into which her Tongue is divided, and wherewith ſhe ſucks: But Anatomiſts, who have accurately obſerved and deſcribed the Frame of that Creature, tell us, that it has a Tongue, and that it ſucks either by three little Teeth, or by ſeveral Parts of the Mouth gathered and compreſſed together. Or rather, 2. The following Things that reſemble the Horſe-leach in its Inſatiableneſs; nothing being more common than to call thoſe Perſons, or Things, the *Sons* or *Daughters* of thoſe whoſe Examples they imitate. And whereas, it is objected, that they are not only two, but *three*, yea, *four*, as is ſaid in the next Clauſe; the Anſwer is eaſy; that tho' he begins with two, yet from thence he proceeds to three and four, all which are ſaid to be the Daughters of the Horſe-leach, if the Words be rendered commodiouſly, and as they are in the *Hebrew*.——*Give, give*. Never filled, always craving, and ready to receive more.——*There are three Things*: Or, *yea* (which may be underſtood in this, as it is in our Tranſlation of the next Clauſe) *they* (to wit, the Daughters of the Horſe-leach) are *three*. ——*That are never ſatisfied*. Which is added, partly to explain the former Clauſe, *Give, give*, and to ſhew the Cauſe of that exceſſive Deſire of more, becauſe they were not contented with what they had; and partly to give the Reaſon why he calls them the *Daughters of the Horſe-leach*.——*Yea, four Things ſay not*. Or, yea, *they* (the Daughters before-mentioned) are *four*, which *ſay not*.

Chap. XXXI.

Lemuel's *Leſſons concerning Charity and Temperance. The proper Uſe of Wine. An Exhortation to righteous Judgment. Deſcription of a virtuous Wife. The Vanity of Beauty: The Good are to be pleaſed.*

Q. WHO was King Lemuel, *and what was the* Prophecy *his Mother taught him*

A. King *Lemuel* was *Solomon*, by the general Conſent both of *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Writers, to whom this Name doth very fitly agree; for it ſignifies one *of*, or *from God*, or *belonging to God*, and ſuch an one was *Solomon* eminently, being given by God to *David* and *Bathſheba*, as a Pledge of his Reconciliation to them, after their Repentance; of whom it is expreſly ſaid, that *the Lord loved him*, 2 *Sam.* xii. 24. and who was appointed by God himſelf to ſucceed *David* in the Kingdom. Poſſibly his Mother gave him this Name, to remind him of his great Obligations to God, and of the Juſtice and Neceſſity of his devoting himſelf unto God's Service and Glory.——*The Prophecy*. So called, becauſe ſhe did, either by natural Sagacity, or by divine Inſpiration, foreſee *Solomon*'s Danger, and what Sins he was moſt likely to be inclined or tempted to commit.——*Bathſheba*, who having truly repented of her Adultery, did not only avoid it in herſelf for the future, but ſeriouſly endeavour to prevent that, and ſuch like Sins in others, and eſpecially in *Solomon*, whom the Remembrance of her Sin might probably provoke to an Imitation of her Example. *Solomon*'s Deſcription of a virtuous and good Woman is well worth the Reader's Peruſal.

Who can find a virtuous Woman; for her Price is far above Rubies. The Heart of her Husband doth ſafely truſt in her, ſo that ſhe ſhall have no need of Spoil. She will do him Good, and not Evil, all the Days of her Life. She ſeeketh Wool and Flax, and worketh willingly with her Hands. She is like Merchants Ships, ſhe bringeth her Food from afar. She ariſeth alſo while it is yet Night, and giveth meat to her Houſhold, and a Portion to her Maidens. She conſidereth a Field, and buyeth it; with the Fruit of her Hands ſhe planteth a Vineyard. She girdeth her Loins with Strength, and ſtrengtheneth her Arms. She perceiveth that her Merchandize is good; her Candle goeth not out by Night. She layeth her Hands on the Spindle, and her Hands hold the Diſtaff. She ſtretcheth out her Hand to the poor; yea, ſhe reacheth forth her Hands to the Needy. She is not afraid of the Snow for her Houſhold; for all her houſhold are clothed with Scarlet.

She maketh herſelf Coverings of Tapeſtry, her Clothing is Silk and Purple. Her Husband is known in the Gates, when he ſits among the Elders of the Land. She maketh fine Linen, and ſelleth it, and delivereth Girdles unto the Merchant. Strength and Honour are her Clothing, and ſhe ſhall rejoice in Time to come. She openeth her Mouth with Wiſdom, and in her Tongue is the Law of Kindneſs. She looketh well to the Ways of her Houſhold, and eateth not the Bread of Idleneſs. Her Children ariſe up, and call her Bleſſed; her Husband alſo, and he praiſeth her; many Daughters have done virtuouſly; but thou excelleſt them all. Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain; but a Woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be praiſed. Give her of the Fruit of her Hands, and let her own Works praiſe her in the Gates.

Q. *I acknowledge you have given me ſatisfactory Anſwers to all the Queſtions I have asked of you; however, muſt deſire your Reſolution of ſome few more Queries in Relation to this Book before we take an entire Leave of it; the firſt is, What are the Qualifications requiſite in a Writer of* Proverbs?

A. It was the Cuſtom of the wiſe Men of Antiquity, to digeſt their Thoughts and Sentiments into ſhort and conciſe Sayings and Sentences, which contained much more than was expreſſed. Theſe Sentences or Proverbs, were the Reſult of a great deal of Experience, Obſervation, and Reading; and it required a penetrating Wit, a clear Judgment, and an Underſtanding of a large Reach, to reduce within the Compaſs of a few Words, what had coſt a vaſt deal of Pains and laborious Study to collect and digeſt in ſuch a ſuccinct and comprehenſive, yet in ſo plain and intelligible a Method.

Q. *What particular View had thoſe antient Worthies in reducing their Learning and Wiſdom into ſo ſhort a Compaſs?*

A. The Purpoſe and Deſign of theſe great Men in dealing out their Wiſdom in ſuch ſmall Parcels, ſeems to have been the more firmly to fix their Inſtructions and Precepts of Morality on the Minds and Memories of their Hearers. And it was certainly a very proper Method; for a Man would much more eaſily retain a Doctrine couched in a few ſententious Words, that at once ſtrike and captivate the Judgment, than when dilated and diffuſed into numberleſs Particulars of a long Lecture. The learned Antients have rendered themſelves as remarkable, and are as famed for their wiſe Sayings, and conciſe and judicious Apothegms, as for their larger Works of Genius and deep Learning; and no Wonder, ſince thoſe Sayings and Apothegms were generally an Epitome of long Lectures and large Volumes.

Q. *Has it not been obſerved, that the Genius of a Nation, and the natural Diſpoſition of a People may be known from the Proverbs current and in Vogue among them?*

A. This the Learned have obſerved, and I believe, is in a great Meaſure true, as a curious Obſervator, who would take the Pains to make the Diſquiſition, and critically compare the Nature and Significance of Proverbs, with the general Temper, Bent and Inclination of that particular People by whom they are uſed, would undoubtedly find.

Q. *How long has the Practice of writing in Proverbs been in Uſe?*

A. This Method of conveying Inſtruction is of very early Date. The firſt and greateſt Philoſophers among the Heathens made uſe of it; and the wiſe and great Men among the *Iſraelites* were particularly famous for it; and as theirs were ſome of the firſt Writings that were extant in the World, it is very probable that the Ethnick Philoſophers learned it from them.

Amongſt other wiſe Men mentioned in Scripture, *Solomon* was more eſpecially diſtinguiſhed for the Excellency of his Proverbs; he was inſpired by God to utter a great Number of ſuch Sentences, as we may find 1 *Kings* iv. 32. of which a Volume was compiled by himſelf; and ſome were collected by the Direction of King *Hezekiah*, from ſome other of his Books; and were all put together in this Epitome, and entitled, *the Proverbs of Solomon.*

Q. *How have the learned divided this Book?*

A. Into two Parts; the firſt conſiſts of the nine firſt Chapters, and is a general Preface to what follows. The ſecond is contained in the enſuing Chapters, comprizing all the ſaid Sentences or Proverbs. In the firſt, the wiſe Man brings heavenly Wiſdom, admoniſhing, exhorting, and calling upon Men who go aſtray after the Vices, the Follies, and Diſorders of the World, and are ſeduced by evil Examples, Temptations, and Allurements, and by which Means they are hurried on in Sin, to the Hazard of their eternal Welfare; reclaiming them to the Knowledge, Study, Love, and Exerciſe of true ſpiritual Wiſdom, which conſiſts in the lively Underſtanding of God's Truth and Will, the Parent of the ſincere Fear of his holy Name, whoſe ſovereign Dignity, Authority, and Worth he extols, and diſplays the true and ſalutary Uſe and Purpoſe thereof, as it contributes to his Preſent Happineſs in this Life, and aſſiſts him in attaining to the Felicities that are reſerved in Heaven for the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of the truly wiſe and good Man.

In the ſecond Part, by a great Number of ſhort Sentences, and moral Mottoes, he gives the Faithful divers Documents and inſtructive Leſſons, concerning all Manner of Virtues to be practiſed, and Vices to be avoided, Truths to be known, and Dangers and Inconveniencies to be aware of, Singularities to be obſerved, and Duties to be practiſed by Perſons of all Degrees, Ages, and Vocations, in all Occurrences and Circumſtances of Life, both towards God, themſelves, and their Neighbours; to frame their Conduct and Behaviour in a good and godly Manner towards the Divine Being, by that Means to attract and draw down his Bleſſings upon them, and to avoid and eſcape his Judgments; to paſs their Lives in Content, Security and Eaſe; but chiefly to guide them into the Haven of heavenly Glory, and everlaſting Reſt.

Q. *What do you obſerve concerning this* Book of Proverbs *in general?*

A. The ſubject Matter of this Book of Proverbs is wholly independent, hardly any one Verſe having Relation, or Connection, either with the Antecedent, or Conſequent: So that what the *Epigrammatiſt* ſaid of his unneighbourly Neighbour, may almoſt each Proverb here ſay of the next to itſelf, *Nothing ſo near in Place, nothing more remote* in Senſe and Meaning, than one Verſe often is, *to its next Neighbour.*

We may therefore compare this Book to a *ſtately Houſe* built, not on a continued, contiguous Foundation, but on ſeveral diſtinct, poliſhed Pillars, as *Wiſdom* built her Houſe, *Chap.* ix. 1. Or we may compare it to a Cabinet filled with rich and orient Pearls and Jewels not tied or linked together in any Chain or Connection, but ſcattered here and there, without Method. What therefore we do not *find*, we muſt *make*, *viz.* a *Method*, which cannot be done but by reducing the greater Part of the Proverbs to ſome general Heads, to which they do moſt naturally relate. In this Diſpoſition, it's not to be expected, that every Proverb ſhould be bound up in this Method (in ſo great a Number which lay thus looſe and unconnected) ſome, no doubt, will fall aſide, which we ſhall leave to the pious and obſervant Reader to reduce to its proper Place.

Q. *Pray, if you can, reduce the great Variety of Proverbs contained in this Book, into ſome general Heads?*

A. Theſe Proverbs may be divided, 1. Into *Solomon*'s *Ethicks*, or *Morals*, containing Rules of Life and Converſation. 2. *Politicks*, containing Rules of Government of Kingdoms. 3. *Œconomicks*, or Rules for the Government of Families.

Q. *Pray diſtinguiſh and explain the* Ethical Part *of theſe Proverbs?*

A. The *Ethicks* here taught are either general, ſhewing wherein Virtue doth conſiſt, *viz.* in the *Mean*, and Vice, its contrary, in the Extremes; or the Rule of Virtue, *viz.* of *God's Law*. In particular, in the four cardinal Virtues of Prudence, Juſtice, Temperance, and Fortitude. 1. Of Prudence, which hath *her Eyes in her Head*, to ſee all Things, and to foreſee, as *Solomon* ſpeaks, *Eccleſ.* ii. 14. and *her Heart at her Right-hand*, to do all Things dexterouſly and with Judgment, *Eccleſ.* x. 2. Prudence contains in it Wiſdom, which dwells with Prudence, and is commended from the Author and Giver of it, God; becauſe in it is Safety from Sin, from Puniſhment, and Hell; becauſe in it is a Guide of our Actions and Words; and becauſe it beſtows Wealth, Honour and Life. In it is likewiſe contained Providence, which foreſees the Opportunities of good Things, and with the Piſmire provides Meats in Summer; and the Approach of Evil, and the Means of avoiding it. Diſcretion is likewiſe a Branch of it, whereby a Man *handleth a Matter wiſely*, Chap. xvi. 20. and *looks well to his Going*, Chap. xiv. 15.

The Vices which are the Oppoſites of Prudence are, being *otherwiſe*, *Eccleſ.* vii. 16. 1. Fooliſhneſs; which may comprehend the *mere Fool*, whoſe *Fooliſhneſs is Folly*, Chap. xiv. 24. who *hath a Price in his Hand to get Wiſdom, but hath no Heart to it.* Chap. xvii. 16. *Wiſdom is too high for him*, Chap. xxiv. 7. 2. *A raſh Fool* that *uttereth his Mind*, Chap. xxix. 11. and is *haſty in his Words*, Chap. xxix. 20. A wicked Fool, that *mocketh at Wiſdom*, Chap. xiv. 9. *to whom Folly is Joy*, Chap. xv. 21. And in the *Proverbs* generally where we read *Fool*, we are to underſtand the *Sinner*, and the *Wicked*; who for refuſing Wiſdom are puniſhed, in a Curſe on their Wealth, Life, Fame and Prayers; and in the Evil inflicted, as of Afflictions, Death and Damnation.

II. Juſtice is next to Prudence; for a *Man of Underſtanding walketh uprightly*, Chap. xv. 21. giveth to every one his own, *viz.* To God, Piety; which comprehends Faith, Fear, Honour, namely, with our beſt Poſſeſſions and Subſtance, and with our beſt Times; *Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, Eccleſ.* xii. 1. and Obedience to God's Will. To Men, in Fidelity in Dealing and Reproof; in Truth; to which are oppoſed four Sins, or Sinners, 1. The Liar, of whom we find his Practice, Chap. xiv. 5. his Diſcovery, he varieth continually; and his Puniſhment, Chap. ix. 5. Chap. xii. 22. 2. The Slanderer, Chap. xvi. 27, *&c.* 3. The Diſſembler, whether he be ſuch from his Malice, his Vain-glory, his Covetouſneſs, or his Impenitence, in hiding his Sins. 4. The Flatterer, Chap. xxix. 5, *&c.* Love is another Branch of Juſtice to Men, and is ſeen by paſſing by Offences, and doing Good to our Enemies, Chap. xv. 21. The Vices contrary to Love are, 1. Contention, which being once raiſed, is not eaſily allay'd, Chap. xviii. 19. 2 Envy, whereby the *Soul of the Wicked wiſheth Evil*, &c. Chap. xxi. 10. and *which moveth him to be glad when his Enemy falleth*, &c. Chap. xxiv. 17. which is a Sin dangerous to the Sinner himſelf, Chap. xiv. 30. to others, Chap. xxvii. 4. and moſt dangerous when ſet upon an evil Subject, when a Man envieth the Condition of the Wicked, Chap. xxiv. 19. Chap. iii. 31. Chap. iii. 17. Mercy is likewiſe comprehended in Prudence. *Let not Mercy and Truth forſake thee*, Chap. iii. 3. and it is exerciſed, 1. On the Beaſt, Chap. xii. 10. 2. On Men, by forgiving Treſpaſſes, and by Charity to the Poor. 3. Even on the Perſon of the Merciful, making God his Debtor; for *the merciful Man rewardeth his own Soul*, Chap. xi. 17. Chap. xxi. 21. Chap. xiv. 21. The Vices contrary to Mercy are, Unmercifulneſs, Oppreſſion, and Blood-thirſtineſs. Prudence alſo comprizes Liberality, which is bleſſed with greater Increaſe, Chap. xi. 24, 25. The Vices that are the Oppoſites of Liberality, are, 1, Covetouſneſs, deſcribed by its Symptoms, Chap. xix, *&c.* and by its Puniſhment, Chap. xviii. 11. 2. Prodigality, in too much Expence, Chap. 12. 9. *&c.* and in neglecting a Man's Eſtate, and impoveriſhing it by Suretiſhip, Chap. xxii. 26, 27. There is likewiſe a Juſtice to a Man's ſelf, which is ſeen in a diligent Attendance on his Calling, Chap. xvi. 26. which is profitable to get Wealth and Honour. The Vice oppoſed to Diligence, is Slothfulneſs, deſcribed by the Diſpoſition of it, Chap. xix. 24. Chap. xxvi. 24. *&c.* and by the Danger of it, Chap. xxiv. 30, 31, 32, *&c.*

III. Temperance is the Moderation of our Deſires, and includes, 1. Sobriety in reſtraining the Appetite in Eating and Drinking. The Vice oppoſed to Temperance, is Exceſs, as dangerous to the Body, Soul, and Eſtate of a Man. 2. Modeſty in ſpeaking, uſing few Words, Chap. xvii. 27, *&c.* which proves him wiſe, Chap. x. 19. and keeps him ſafe. Chap. xxi. 23. The oppoſite Vice is Loquacity, Chap. xv. 2, *&c.* 3. Humility in Words and Actions, Chap. xxix. 23, *&c.* The Oppoſite of Humility is Pride, Chap. xxx. 12, 13. Chaſtity, Chap. v. 13. the contrary of which is Incontinence, Chap. v. 20. 5. Meekneſs, Chap. xvi. 32, *&c.*

IV. Fortitude is that Virtue, whereby the *Spirit of a Man ſuſtaineth his Infirmities*, Chap. xviii. 14. and which makes the *Righteous as bold as a Lion*, Chap. xxviii. 1. and contains in it, 1. Confidence, Chap. iii. 5, 6, *&c.* The Vice oppoſed to it is

Diffidence and Deſpair, fainting in the Day of Adverſity, *Whoſe Heart bringeth a Snare upon him*, Chap. xxiv. 10. 2. Patience under God's afflicting Hand, Chap. xx. 22. The Vice oppoſed to Patience, is Impatience and Murmuring at God's Dealing with us, Chap. xix. 3. the Iſſue of which is Deſtruction without Remedy, Chap. xxix. 1.

Q. *Now ſpeak to the next Diviſion of theſe Proverbs, namely, of* Solomon's Politicks.

A. In this Diviſion are deſcribed the Qualities and Duties, 1. Of a King, the ſupreme Magiſtrate. 2. Of a Counſellor of State, or inferior Magiſtrate. 3. Of a Courtier. 4. Of a Subject.

I. Concerning Monarchy, or kingly Government, *Solomon* ſhews whence the Power and Authority of Kings is derived, and to whom it owes its Original; that it is, not of ſo mean and baſe an Extraction as the Will and Pleaſure of the collective Body, or a Power derived from the People, but from God, ſaying, *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice*, &c. Chap. viii. 15, 16. He deſcribes a King, 1. By the Qualities of his Perſon, *viz.* Natural, he muſt be high, not only in Place, but in Blood, *Bleſſed art thou, O Land, when thy King is the Son of Nobles, Eccleſ.* x. 17. For it is a Monſter in Nature to ſee a Servant have Rule over Princes, Chap. xiv. 10. and in itſelf intolerable, Chap. xxx. 21, 22. He is likewiſe deſcribed by his moral Qualities, 1. Negatively, ſhewing that he muſt not be laſcivious, riotous, an Oppreſſor, falſe, an Oppoſer of good Counſel, guilty of Bribery, hearkening to Lies. 2. Affirmatively, evincing that he muſt be to others juſt, merciful and bountiful; in himſelf patient, wiſe, valiant, ſecret and reſerved. 2. By his Actions relating to his Office, which are, to judge righteouſly, and remit mercifully.

II. With Reſpect to Counſellors, *Solomon* obſerves, that where no Counſel is, the *People fall*, &c. Chap. xi. 14. Counſel is the Gift of God, to qualify Kings to conſult the Welfare of the State, and to ſupport the Grandeur of the Throne. A Counſellor is appointed, either for the Soul, Chap. xxix. 18. or for the State; and in ſuch an one are required Wiſdom to determine Cauſes, Piety towards God, and Juſtice free from Partiality, Bribery and Oppreſſion.

III. The Courtier. *In the Light of the King's Countenance is Life, and his Favour is as the Cloud of the latter Rain*, Chap. xvi. 15. which Favour that the Courtier may obtain, he muſt be diſcreet, religious, both in Heart and Actions, humble, diligent and faithful in promoting ſuch Suits as he hath undertaken, knowing that *Hope deferred maketh the Heart ſick*, Chap. xiii. 12.

IV. In regard to the Subject; in the *Multitude of the People is the Honour of the King*, Chap. xiv. 28. Of the Subject God requires, to his King, Reverence and Obedience; to his fellow Subjects as Superiors, Reſpect and Honour; as Inferiors, favourable Dealing and Mercy; as his Equals, Juſtice and Peaceableneſs with regard to Trade and Commerce; that he till the Ground; that he expoſe Corn to Sale; that he bring home his Merchandiſe, Chap. xxxi. 14. With Reſpect to private Society, that he be provident to overſee his own Eſtate, Chap. xxvii. 23. juſt in the Maintenance of Property, not removing Land-marks, Chap. xxii. 28. not entering into the Field of the Fatherleſs, Chap. xxiii. 10. not to increaſe Riches by Uſury, Chap. xxiii. 4, 5. that he be true to his Friend, who muſt be regarded in his Reproof, in his Advice, in his Requeſts, yet not to preſs or be preſſed to Suretiſhip, Chap. xvii. 18.

Q. *The laſt Diviſion you have made of theſe Proverbs, is into* OEconomics, *which pray explain?*

A. OEconomics conſiſt in a threefold Relation, *viz.* 1. Of the Husband and Wife. 2. Of Parents and Children. 3. Of Maſters and Servants.

I. The Husbahd that findeth *a good Wife findeth a good Thing, and receiveth Favour of God*, Chap. xviii. 22. who muſt behave himſelf towards her wiſely, as *the Guide of her Youth*, Chap. ii. 17. and as *the Head to which ſhe is a Crown*, Chap. xii. 4. 2. Chaſtly, Chap. v. 15, 16, 17. for Adultery ends in Death, Chap. ix. 18. 3. Quietly, lovingly and chearfully, Chap. v. 18, 19.

A virtuous Wife is the Crown of her Husband, Chap. xii. 4. It is required of her, that ſhe be, 1. Faithful to her Husband, not wanton, knowing ſhe is tied to him by the *Covenant of God*, Chap. ii. 17. not ſuch an one as is deſcribed, Chap. vii. 6, 7, 8, 9, *&c.* not provoking her Husband to Jealouſy, Chap. vi. 34, 35. 2. Dutiful and obedient. 3. Prudent and diſcreet. 4. Provident and careful in her own perſonal Labours, in her Bargains, in her liberal Proviſions for herſelf, her Husband, Family, and the Poor, and in overſeeing her Servants, Chap. xxvii. In her Diſcharge of theſe Duties, ſhe is reverenced and bleſſed by her Children, and praiſed by her Husband, and by her own Works.

II. The Relation between Parents and Children; *Childrens Children are the Crown of Elders, and the Glory of Children are their Parents*, who owe to their Children Proviſion and Means to maintain them, Inſtruction and Correction. Children owe their Parents Obedience to their Inſtructions, and are to be careful of their Parents Eſtates, and eſpecially not to purloin from them; and of their Peace and Content, ſo as not to vex or offend them by their perverſe Carriage and Conduct.

III. The third and laſt Relation is between the Maſter and Servant: *He that is deſpiſed and hath a Servant of his own, is better than he that honoureth himſelf and lacketh Bread*, Chap. xii. 9. The Maſter muſt give the Servant Food and Correction; and the Servant owes his Maſter Faithfulneſs and Diligence; whereas, on the contrary, *As Vinegar to the Teeth, and Smoak to the Eyes, ſo is a ſlothful Meſſenger to him that ſends him*, Chap. x. 26.

Thus have we, in an analytical Way, and briefly as we could, reduced into a Sort of Method, this inconnected and the disjointed Book of *Proverbs*, and hope our Labour herein will be of ſome Service to the pious and intelligent Reader, in digeſting the many and different Materials of which it is compoſed, and ſo more effectually fix them in his Mind and Memory, and by that Means more eaſily reduce them into Practice.

THE BOOK
OF
ECCLESIASTES,
OR THE
PREACHER.

THREE Things in general are to be noted concerning this Book. 1. The Author of it; who was Solomon, *as is evident both from the common Conſent of* Jewiſh *and* Chriſtian *Writers, and from the expreſs Words of the firſt Verſe. Nor can any Thing be oppoſed to it but bold and groundleſs Conjectures. That he wrote it in his old Age, is more than probable from divers Paſſages in it, as, that he did it after his Buildings,* Chap. ii. 4. *which yet took up twenty Years of his Life,* 1 Kings ix. 10. *and after ſome conſiderable Enjoyment of them; and planting of Gardens and Orchards, and reaping the Fruit of them,* Chap. ii. 5, 6. *and after long and much Conſideration and Experience of all thoſe Methods in which Men expected to find Happineſs, and after he had been deeply plunged in impure and inordinate Loves,* Chap. vii. 27, &c. *He wrote this Book therefore as a publick Teſtimony of his Repentance, and Deteſtation of all thoſe vain and wicked Courſes, to which, in his Youth, he had addicted himſelf; following therein the Example of his Father* David, *who, after his ſad fall, penned the 51ſt Pſalm. And the Truth of this Opinion may be confirmed by that Expreſſion,* 2 Chron xi. 17. They walked in the Way of *David* and *Solomon*; *that is, wherein they walked before their fall, and after their Repentance.*

The 2d Thing to be noted in this Book, is, the Form or Method of it. For, as there are ſome Paſſages in it ſeemingly offenſive and impious, for which its Authority has been ſuſpected by ſome, it muſt be conſidered that it is in Part dramatical; that Solomon *ſpeaks ſome and moſt Things in his own Name, but ſome other Things in the Names, and according to the Opinions of thoſe worldly and ungodly Men, as is undeniably manifeſt both from the Scope and Deſign of the Book, as it is expreſſed both in the Beginning and Concluſion of it, and from his ſerious and large Diſputation againſt thoſe wicked Principles and Courſes. And this Way of Writing is not unuſual amongſt both ſacred and profane Writers.*

The third Thing obſervable in this Book, is, the Deſign and Buſineſs of it; which is, to deſcribe Man's true Happineſs, and the Way leading to it; by aſſerting and proving, that it is not to be found either in ſecular Wiſdom, or in ſenſual Pleaſures, in worldly Greatneſs and Glory, in Abundance of Riches; or in a vain Profeſſion of Religion; ſhewing alſo that it is only to be had by the Fear of God and Obedience to his Laws, which alone can give a Man a contented and chearful Enjoyment of his preſent Comforts, and Aſſurance of future and everlaſting Happineſs.

CHAP. I.

All is Vanity; our Labour great and unprofitable. The whole Courſe of Things in a continual Fluctuation. Nothing in Nature is ſatisfied. Nothing new; old Things are forgot. The ſearch after Wiſdom is a vain Labour; it cannot ſupply our Wants; nor ſatisfy our Deſires; but increaſes Sorrow: All this the Preacher found out by Experience.

Q. WHY *does* Solomon *here call himſelf* a Preacher?

A. Solomon is here called a Preacher, or one that aſſembles the People, becauſe he teaches the true Knowledge of God, and how Men are to paſs their Lives in this tranſitory World. He condemns the Opinion of thoſe Men, who ſet Felicity in any Thing but God alone, ſeeing all Things in this World are as Vanity and nothing. By the Sun, Wind and Rivers, he ſhews that the greateſt Labour and longeſt hath an End, and therefore there can be no true Happineſs in this World. He ſpeaks of Times and Seaſons, and Things done in them, which, as they have been in Times paſt, ſo come they to paſs again. He proves, that if any could have attained to Felicity in this World, by Labour and Study, he chiefly ſhould have obtained it, becauſe he had Gifts and Aids of God thereunto above all others. Wiſdom and Knowledge cannot be attained without great Pain of Mind and Body; for when a Man hath attained to the higheſt, yet is his Mind never fully Content; therefore in this World there is no ſolid Happineſs.

The Words of the Preacher, the Son of David, *King of* Iſrael, Ver. 1. ——*The Preacher*; who was not only a King, but alſo a Teacher of God's People, which he did both by Words, on ſome ſolemn Occaſions, and by Writings. Who having ſinned grievouſly and ſcandalouſly in the Eyes of all the World, juſtly thought himſelf obliged to preach and publiſh his true Repentance for all his Folly and Wickedneſs, and to give publick Warning and wholſome Counſels to all Perſons to avoid thoſe Rocks on which he had ſplit. The *Hebrew* properly ſignifies either *gathering* or *gathered*, and ſo it implies either, 1. A Preacher, as it is commonly rendered, whoſe Office it is to gather in Souls unto God or his Church. Or, 2. A Penitent or Convert, or one gathered or brought back by true Repentance unto God, and to his Church, from which he had wickedly revolted.——*King of* Iſrael. This is added, partly as a Deſcription of the Perſon or Author of this Book, *Solomon*, who was the only Man who was both *Son of* David, and *King of* Iſrael, and partly as an Agravation of his Sin, becauſe he was the *Son of David*, a wiſe and godly Father, who had given him both excellent Counſel, and for his general Courſe, a good Example; and for the evil Example which he gave him in the Matter of *Uriah*, that alſo, conſidered with his hearty and effectual Repentance for it, and the dreadful Puniſhments of it upon his Perſon and Family, was a fair Warning, and a moſt powerful Inſtruction to him, to learn by his Father's Example; and becauſe he was a King, not by Birth, for he was not *David's* eldeſt Son, but by the ſpecial Favour and Deſignation of that God whom he had now ſo ill requited, and that in *Jeruſalem*, an holy City, the Place of God's ſpecial Preſence, and of his Worſhip, where he had daily Opportunities to know, and Obligations to practiſe better Things, which Place he had defiled by his horrid Sins, and thereby made it, and all God's People, the true Religion, and the Name of the bleſſed God, odious and contemptible among all the Nations that were round him.

Q. *I am in ſome Doubt, whether I rightly apprehend the true Meaning of Verſe* 6. The Wind goeth toward the *South*, and turneth about unto the *North*; it whirleth about continually, and the Wind returneth again according to the Circuits.

A. The Wind. The Wind alſo blows ſometimes from one Quarter of the World, and ſometimes from another; all of them being ſynechdochically taken, are comprehended under theſe two eminent Quarters. But, becauſe this Word *Wind*, is not expreſſed in the *Hebrew*, but is only borrowed or underſtood from the latter Clauſe of the Verſe, this firſt Clauſe is, by other judicious Interpreters, underſtood of the Sun, of which he laſt ſpoke; the Words being thus rendered, according to the *Hebrew*, *Hi* (the Sun) *goeth towards the South* (which he doth one Half of the Year) *and turneth about unto the North*, as he doth the other Half. And ſo here is the whole Motion of the Sun towards the four Quarters of the World particularly deſcribed; his daily Motion from Eaſt to Weſt, and back againſt, Verſe 5. and his yearly Motion from North to South, between the Signs of *Cancer* and *Capricorn*.——*And the Wind returneth again, according to his Circuits.* This Clauſe is by all underſtood of the Wind, which is fitly mentioned immediately after the Sun, becauſe it hath its Riſe from the Sun, who is therefore called *the Father* of the Winds, which uſually riſe with the Sun, and are laid when it ſets. But then it is rendered thus, very agreeably to the *Hebrews*, *the Wind goeth continually whirling*, or *compaſſing about*, *and he returneth again to his Circuits*, being ſometimes in another Quarter, and ſucceſſively returned to the ſame Quarters in which he had formerly been.

CHAP II.

Pleaſure and Mirth alſo are Vanity. The ſame the Preacher pronounces of Wine, Buildings, Gardens, Servants, Silver, Gold and Muſick. Wiſdom excels Folly, but the like Event is to both, and both are forgotten; therefore is Wiſdom alſo Vanity, and Life hateful. Men labour, but they know not for whom; for the Fool enjoys the wiſe Man's Pains. Nothing is better than contentedly to enjoy what God gives us.

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects, and in what Manner treated of in this Chapter?*

A. Solomon makes the Diſcourſe with himſelf, as though he would try whether there were Content in Eaſe and Pleaſure; he ſays, that although he gave himſelf up to Pleaſures and Wantonneſs, yet he thought to keep Wiſdom and the Fear of God in his Heart. He ſhews that true Happineſs does not conſiſt in Wine, Buildings, Gardens, Servants, Cattle, Silver, Gold or Muſick; this the Preacher ſearched out and found, and none need try after him.

Wiſdom excels Folly, but the like Event is to the Wiſe and Fooliſh, both are forgotten, therefore Wiſdom is alſo Vanity, and Life hateful. Men labour they know not for whom, for the Fool enjoyeth what a wiſe Man got. When Man hath toiled all he can, he can get no more than Food and Refreſhment, yet this comes of the Bleſſing of God.

This Chapter contains a moſt elegant Deſcription of the Vanity of human Ambition, of the ſmall intrinſick Value of what we inconſiderately call Pleaſures, and the trifling and tranſient Satisfaction to be found in all the Acquiſitions, Poſſeſſions, and Enjoyments of this Life. We ſhall therefore preſent the Reader with it entire.

I ſaid, in mine Heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with Mirth, therefore enjoy Pleaſure: And behold, this alſo is Vanity. I ſaid of Laughter, It is mad; and of Mirth, What doth it? I ſought in mine Heart to give myſelf unto wine (yet acquainting mine Heart with Wiſdom) and to lay hold on Folly, till I might ſee what was that Good for the Sons of Men, which they ſhould do under the Heaven,

ven, all the Days of their Life. I made me great Works, I builded me Houſes, I planted me Vineyards, I made me Gardens and Orchards, and I planted Trees in them of all Kind of Fruits. I made me Pools of Water, to water therewith the Wood that bringeth forth Trees. I got me Servants and Maidens, and had Servants born in my Houſe; alſo I had great Poſſeſſions of great and ſmall Cattle, above all that were in Jeruſalem *before me. I gathered me alſo Silver and Gold, and the peculiar Treaſure of Kings, and of the Provinces; I gat me Men-ſingers and Women-ſingers, and the Delights of the Sons of Men, as muſical Inſtruments, and that of all Sorts. So I was great, and increaſed more than all that were before me in* Jeruſalem; *alſo my Wiſdom remained with me. And whatſoever mine Eyes deſired, I kept not from them, I withheld not my Heart from any Joy; for my Heart rejoyced in all my Labour, and this was my Portion of all my Labour.*

Then I looked on all the Works that my Hands had wrought, and on the Labour that I had laboured to do; and behold, all was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit, and there was no Profit under the Sun. And I turned myſelf to behold Wiſdom, and Madneſs, and Folly; for what can the Man do, that cometh after the King? even that which hath been already done. Then I ſaw that Wiſdom excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth Darkneſs. The wiſe Man's Eyes are in his Head, but the Fool walketh in Darkneſs; and I myſelf perceived alſo, that one Event happeneth to them all. Then ſaid I, in my Heart, As it happeneth to the Fool, ſo it happenneth even to me; and why was I then more wiſe? Then I ſaid in my Heart, that this alſo is Vanity. For there is no Remembrance of the Wiſe more than of the Fool for ever; ſeeing that which now is, in the Days to come ſhall all be forgotten; and how dieth the wiſe Man, as the Fool? Therefore I hated Life, becauſe the Work that is wrought under the Sun, is grievous unto me; For all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. Yea, I hated all my Labour which I had taken under the Sun; becauſe I ſhould leave it unto the Man that ſhall be after me. And who knoweth whether he ſhall be a wiſe Man or a Fool? yet ſhall he have Rule over all my Labour, wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have ſhewed myſelf wiſe under the Sun. This is alſo Vanity. Therefore I went about to cauſe my Heart to deſpair of all the Labour which I took under the Sun. For there is a Man whoſe Labour is in Wiſdom, and in Knowledge, and in Equity; yet to a Man that hath not laboured therein, ſhall he leave it for his Portion. This alſo is Vanity, and a great Evil. For what hath Man of all his Labour, and of the Vexation of his Heart, wherein he hath laboured under the Sun? For all his Days are Sorrows, and his Travel Grief; yea his Heart taketh not Reſt in the Night. This alſo is Vanity. There is nothing better for a Man, than that he ſhould eat and drink, and that he ſhould make his Soul enjoy Good in his Labour. This alſo I ſaw, that it was from the Hand of God. For who can eat? Or who elſe can haſten hereunto more than I? For God giveth to a Man that is good in his Sight, Wiſdom and Knowledge, and Joy; but to the Sinner he giveth Travel, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This alſo is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.

CHAP. III.

Every Thing has its Time. All God's Decrees are eternal and unchangeable. The Vanity of unjuſt Judgment. God is the Great Judge of all; and he will make Men know, that they are here but as brute Beaſts.

Q. W*HAT Leſſons of Inſtruction are convey'd to us in the firſt eight Verſes of this Chapter?*

A. Solomon, in the Beginning of this Chapter, very emphatically ſets before us the different Times and Seaſons for the accompliſhment of all human Purpoſes.

To every Thing there is a Seaſon, and Time to every Purpoſe under the Heaven. A Time to be born, and a Time to die; a Time to plant, and a Time to pluck up that which is planted; a Time to kill, and a Time to heal; a Time to break down, and a Time to build up; a Time to weep, and a Time to laugh; a Time to mourn, and a Time to dance; a Time to caſt away Stones, and a Time to gather Stones together; a Time to embrace, and a Time to refrain from embracing; a Time to get, and a Time to loſe; a Time to keep, and a Time to caſt away; a Time to rent, and a Time to ſew; a Time to keep ſilence, and a Time to ſpeak; a Time to love, and a Time to hate; a Time of War, and a Time of Peace.

The Preacher teaches here, how all Things in the World have their Time and Seaſon: He ſpeaks of the Diverſity of Time for two Reaſons; firſt, to declare that there is nothing in this World perpetual; next, to teach us not to be grieved, if we have not all Things at once, according to our Deſires, neither enjoy them ſo long as we would wiſh; concluding thence, that a Man cannot do better than enjoy the Gifts of God in this Life, with a quiet and merry Heart, doing Good unto his Neighbour. The Preacher mentions the Iniquity too often practiſed in Courts of Juſtice; and that Man is not able, by his Reaſon and Judgment, to put Difference between Man and Beaſt, as touching thoſe Things whereunto both are ſubject; for the Eye cannot judge any otherwiſe of a Man being dead, than of a dead Beaſt; but by the Word of God and Faith we know the Difference.

Q. *How are we to underſtand the Diſtinction between* the Spirit of a Man, *and* the Spirit of a Beaſt, *which* Solomon *makes*, Ver. 11?

A. It might be objected, that the Condition of Men and Beaſts are vaſtly differing, becauſe Man's Spirit goeth upwards to God, Chap. xii. 7. but the Spirit of a Beaſt goeth downwards with its Body, and periſheth with it. To this he anſwers, *Who knoweth this?* Which is not to be underſtood as if no Man knew it; or as if the Thing were utterly uncertain and unknown, for he knew it, and poſitively affirms it, Chap. xii. 7. but that few know it; as the ſame Manner of Expreſſion is underſtood, *Prov.* xxxi. 10. *Who can find? Iſai.* liii. 1. *Who hath believed?* Which denotes the Scarcity or Difficulty of the Thing. Beſides, he ſeems here to ſpeak not ſo much of a ſpeculative, as of a practical Knowledge, as ſuch Words are moſt commonly uſed. Who conſiders or regards this, or lays it to Heart? True it is, there is ſuch a Difference, which is alſo known and believed by wiſe and good Men; but the Generality of Mankind

kind never mind it; their Hearts are wholly ſet upon this Life, and upon preſent and ſenſible Things, and they place all their Hopes and Happineſs in them, and take no Thought nor Care for the Things of the future and inviſible World. And as to them, with whom *Solomon* hath to do in this Matter, the Argument is ſtrong and good; being, as Logicians term it, *An Argument to the Man*; and there is no conſiderable Difference between ſenſual Men and Beaſts, becauſe their Affections are ſet upon the ſame Objects, and both of them are Partakers of the ſame ſenſual Satisfactions, and ſubject to the ſame ſenſual Pains and Miſeries, and their Hopes and Felicity periſh together, namely, at Death; and therefore ſuch Men are no more happy than the Beaſts that periſh. Others underſtand it thus, *Who knoweth this?* to wit, by Senſe or Experience; or merely by his own Reaſon, or without the Help of Divine Revelation. But the former ſeems to be the true Senſe.

CHAP. IV.

The Vanity of Oppreſſion, by Reaſon whereof the Dead and Unborn are better than the Living. Of Envy, Sloth, Quarrels, Covetouſneſs, and Selfiſhneſs. The Advantage of Society and Friendſhip. The poor better than fooliſh Kings. The People always rejoice in Changes.

Q. PRAY *what new Topicks does* Solomon *go upon in this Chapter?*

A. Solomon here makes another Diſcourſe with himſelf, concerning the Tyranny of them, who oppreſſed the Poor; and conſidering the Uncertainty, Vanity, Vexations of Spirit, and outward Calamities of this preſent Life, a wiſe Man would not count it worth his while to live, but would chuſe Death rather than Life.

A Sluggard is in an ill Condition, and for Idleneſs is compelled to deſtroy himſelf; and ſo Men have not an Heart to enjoy their own Labour. As Man when he is alone can neither help himſelf nor others, the Preacher ſhews how neceſſary it is, that Men ſhould live in Society. A wiſe Child is better than a fooliſh King, who hath neither Wiſdom to govern himſelf, nor to receive the Counſels or Admonitions of wiſer Men, but is wilful and incorrigible; and the Humour of the common People hath no End, but paſſes from one Generation to another; they ever were, and are, and will be unſtable and reſtleſs, and given to Change.

Q. *I am ſomewhat at a loſs as to the true Senſe and Connection of Verſe* 15. I conſidered all the Living which walk under the Sun, with the ſecond Child which ſhall ſtand up in his ſtead?

A. All the Living. The general Diſpoſition or Humour of common People in all Kingdoms, that they are fickle and inconſtant, weary of their old Governors, and deſirous of Changes.——*Under the Sun.* This is a *Periphraſis*, or Deſcription of living or mortal Men, like that, *Eccleſ.* vii. 11. *that ſee the Sun.*——*With the ſecond Child.* Theſe Words may be joined, either, 1. With thoſe *which walk*, or, *that they walk under the Sun* (*i. e.* upon the Earth) *with the ſecond Child, i. e.* follow, favour, and worſhip him as the Riſing-ſun, upon whom the Eyes and Hopes of moſt People are fixed. Or, 2. With the firſt Words, *I conſidered all the Living which walk under the Sun, i. e.* the Temper of all Subjects or People, together *with* the Condition of the ſecond Child. Which may be underſtood either, 1. In general, of a Kings *Child*, or Son and Heir, who is called *Second*, in reſpect of his Father, whoſe Succeſſor he is to be, or, 2. That wiſe and poor Child mentioned Verſe 13. who is ſaid *to come to reign*, Verſe 14. and may well be called *the ſecond* to the old and fooliſh King who *became poor*, Verſe 15. being depoſed from his Kingdom, whom he ſucceeds, being put in his Place either by the Humour of the People, or by ſome higher Power.——*Stand up, i. e.* Ariſe to reign, as that Phraſe ſignifies, *Dan.* viii. 22, 23. and xi. 2, 3, *&c.*

Q. *Pray interpret the Senſe of Verſe* 16?

A. The Words are as follows; *There is no End of all the People, even if all that have been before them; they alſo that come after ſhall not rejoice in him; ſurely this alſo is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.*——*There is no End of all the People.* The Senſe is either, 1. The People which have this Humour are without End, or innumerable, as this Phraſe ſignifies, *Job* xxii. 5. *Iſa.* ii. 7. Or, 2. This Humour of the common People hath no End, but paſſeth from one Generation to another; they ever were, and are, and will be unſtable and reſtleſs, and given to Change; which Senſe the following Words ſeem to favour.——*Before them.* Either, 1. Before the two Kings above-mentioned, the Father and Son, or the Predeceſſor and Succeſſor. All thoſe who ſtood, or deſired to ſtand in their Preſence, and waited upon them, as the Word is uſed, 2 *Sam.* xvi. 19, 1 *Kings* x. 8. Or rather, 2. Before the preſent Generation of Subjects who earneſtly deſired and promoted the Change of Government here expreſſed; for theſe are evidently oppoſed to thoſe *that come after*, which all Interpreters underſtand of the People, not of the Kings. So here are three Generations of People noted, the Authors of the Preſent Change, their Parents and their Children, and all are obſerved to have the ſame Inclinations in theſe Matters.——*Shall not rejoice in him.* They ſhall be as weary of the Succeſſor, though a wiſe and worthy Prince, as their Parents were of his fooliſh Predeceſſors. The Reaſon whereof is partly from that Itch of Novelty and Curioſity which is natural and common to Mankind, and partly from their vain and fooliſh Hopes of Advantage from ſuch Changes.

CHAP. V.

Vanities in divine Matters; in murmuring and repining; in Riches and Covetouſneſs: For Riches rob Men of their Eaſe, procure their Death, fly away, and cannot be carried with them into the Grave. A contented Life is beſt, and in the Gift of God.

Q. HAVE *you any particular Remarks to make on this Chapter?*

A. The ſeven firſt Verſes of this Chapter are inſerted partly as the only effectual Remedy againſt all the foregoing Vanities, and partly as a Caution to take heed of bringing Vanity into the Service of God, or of worſhipping God vainly and fooliſhly. *Solomon* teaches the Congregation how they ſhall behave themſelves in the Exerciſe of outward Worſhip; next, how to demean themſelves when they ſee that Rulers and ſuch as are in Authority do not adminiſter Juſtice, which is the beſt Way of thriving, the Vanity of Riches, and Covetouſneſs: He next ſhews that the Happineſs of Man conſiſts in a chearful Enjoyment of the Gifts of God, which to be able to do, is likewiſe a Gift of God.

Q. *I don't rightly comprehend the Senſe of the Preacher in the 6th Verſe, nor the Connection of the ſeveral Parts of it with one another.*

A. In order that you may perfectly underſtand the whole, it's neceſſary to recite the Text at large; *Suffer not thy Mouth to cauſe thy Fleſh to ſin; neither ſay thou before the Angel, that it was an Error; wherefore ſhould God be angry at thy Voice?* ———*Suffer not thy Mouth.* By uttering any raſh or fooliſh Vow.———*Thy Fleſh.* Thy ſelf; the Word *Fleſh* being oft put for the whole Man, *Gen.* vi. 12, &c. And it ſeems to have ſome *Emphaſis* here, and to intimate, either, 1. That ſuch Vows were made upon fleſhly or carnal, and not upon ſpiritual and religious Motives. Or rather, 2. That *the Fleſh*, or corrupt Nature of Man, which is oft called *Fleſh*, was exceedingly prone to ſet itſelf at Eaſe and Liberty from ſuch Bonds, and to neglect the chargeable Duties of Religion.——*Before the Angel.* Either, 1. The bleſſed Angels, the ſingular Number being put for the plural, who are preſent in the publick Aſſemblies, in which theſe Vows were generally made, *Pſal.* lxvi. 13. where they obſerve both the Matter and Manner of Men's religious Performances, 1 *Cor.* xi. 10. who, as they rejoice in the Converſion of a Sinner, *Luke* xv. 10. ſo are diſpleaſed with the Sins of Men, and eſpecially ſuch as are committed in or againſt the Worſhip of God. Or, 2. *Chriſt*, who in the *Old Teſtament* is frequently called an *Angel*, as *the Angel of the Covenant*, *Mal.* iii. 1. becauſe he even then acted as God's Meſſenger, appearing and ſpeaking to the Patriarchs and Prophets in his Father's Name, as a Preſignification of his future Incarnation; and who is, and was in a ſpecial Manner preſent in all religious Aſſemblies, and being omniſcient and omnipreſent, exactly knew and obſerved all the Vows which Men made, and whether they did perform or violate them. Or rather, 3. The Prieſt or Miniſter of Holy Things, who was to require of the People the Payment of their Vows, to whom all Sacrifices for Sins of Ignorance, or Errors about Vows or other Things were to be brought, *Lev.* v. 4, 5. for ſuch Perſons are oft called Angels, or, as this *Hebrew* Word is commonly render'd *Meſſengers*, as *Job* xxxiii. 23, &c. And this Title ſeems to be given to the Prieſt here, not without ſome *Emphaſis*, becauſe the Vow made to God was paid to the Prieſt, as one ſtanding and acting in God's Name and Stead, and belonged to the Prieſt, as God's Angel or Ambaſſador, to diſcharge Perſons from their Vows, when there was juſt Occaſion ſo to do.———*An Error.* I did fooliſhly and unadviſedly in making ſuch a Vow, and therefore I hope God will excuſe me; and inſtead of that which I had vowed, accept of a Sacrifice for my Ignorance, according to his Law for Sins of Ignorance, *Lev.* iv. 2.——*Wherefore ſhould God be angry?* Why wilt thou provoke God to anger?——*At thy Voice.* Either, 1. At the Vows which thou haſt haſtily uttered. Or rather, 2. At theſe frivolous Excuſes, wherewith thou deludeſt thine own Conſcience, and vainly imagineſt thou canſt deceive God himſelf.——*And deſtroy the Work of thine Hands.* Blaſt all thy Contrivances, Labours, and Eſtate, and particularly that Work or Enterprize for the Succeſs whereof thou madeſt theſe Vows, which being, as thou thinkeſt, finiſhed, thou refuſeſt to pay thy Vows; but know that God can quickly undo that which thou haſt done, and plentifully return thine Indignities and Injuries offered to him into thine own Boſom.

CHAP. VI.

The Vanity of Riches without Uſe. Of Children and Old Age without competent Wealth; their Obſcurity is worſe than not to have been. All Labour is for Neceſſaries of Life, which one getteth as well as another. It is good to enjoy what we have, and not deſire what we have not; for our Portion is appointed us; and we our ſelves are vain; and other Things do but increaſe our Vanity.

Q. WHAT *does the Preacher ſpeak of in this Chapter?*

A. In this Chapter the Preacher relates the Miſery of niggardly and covetous Men, to whom God gives not a liberal Heart to uſe their Riches, judging that Riches are no ways advantageous or beneficial unto them, to help them to the Attainment of temporal Felicity, but on the contrary, that they hinder and are hurtful: To be content with that which God hath given, is better than to follow Deſires never to be ſatisfied; for there is no State wherein Man can live to have perfect Quietneſs in this Life.

Q. *I ſhould be glad if you will give me your Interpretation of the 10th Verſe.*

A. Let us firſt ſee what it contains: *That which hath been, is named already, and it is known, that it is Man; neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.*———*Is named already.* This Verſe is added either as a Proof of what he laſt ſaid concerning the Vanity and wandering of unſatiable Deſires; or as a farther Inſtance of the Vanity of all Things in this Life.———*That which hath been* (or *is*, for the *Hebrew* Verb may be rendered either Way, to wit, Man conſidered with all his Endowments and Enjoyments, whether he be wiſe or fooliſh, rich or poor; Man, who is the chief of all viſible and ſublunary Beings, for whom they all were made) *is named already*, even by God, who, preſently after his Creation, gave him the following Name, to ſignify what his Nature and Condition was, and would be, *Heb. What is that which hath been*, or *is*, it *is*, or *hath been named already.* Others underſtand it thus; All the ſeveral Conditions which Men have had, or ſhall have in the World, Riches or Poverty, &c. are already named, *i. e.* appointed or determined by God's unchangeable Council, and invincible Providence: But though this be true, it ſeems not to ſuit ſo well with the following Clauſe, as the other Interpretation doth.——*And it is known that it is Man.* This is certain and manifeſt, that that Being which makes all this Noiſe and Stir in this World, however magnified by themſelves, and ſometimes adored by Flatterers, and however differenced from, or advanced above others, by Wiſdom or Riches, or the like, is but a *Man*, *i. e.* a mean earthly Mortal, a miſerable Creature, as his very Name ſignifies, which God gave him for this very End, that he might be always ſenſible of his vain, baſe and miſerable Eſtate in this World, and therefore never expects Satisfaction and Happineſs in it.———*With him that is mightier than he.* With Almighty God, with whom Men are very apt to contend upon every ſlight Occaſion, and againſt whom they are ready to murmur for this Vanity, Mortality, and Miſery of Mankind, although they brought it upon themſelves by their own Sins. So this is ſeaſonably added to prevent the Abuſe of the foregoing Paſſage.

Cahp. VII.

A good Name is deſireable; and the Houſe of Mourning and Rebuke better than Songs and Laughter. Exhortations to Patience and Perſeverance. God's Providence ſhould render us contented; our Duty both in Proſperity and Adverſity. Prudence and the Fear of God neceſſary in this World. The Praiſe of Wiſdom. All Men are Sinners. Other Men's Opinions of thee not to be too much regarded. An evil Woman more bitter than Death. God created Man good.

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve in general concerning the Points diſcuſſed in this Chapter?*

A. The Preacher having largely diſcourſed of the Vanity of all worldly Things, and having ſaid in the laſt Verſe of the foregoing Chapter, That no Man knew what was beſt for him, he now proceeds to preſcribe ſome Remedies againſt thoſe Vanities, and to direct Men in the right Method of obtaining that Felicity which is not to be expected or found in this World.

Q. *In what Senſe may a Man be ſaid to be* righteous over-much, *or* over-wiſe, *according to that Injunction of the Preacher,* Verſe 16?

A. This Verſe and the next have a manifeſt Reference to Verſe 15. being two References drawn from the two Clauſes of the Obſervation there recorded. And this Verſe was delivered by *Solomon,* either, 1. In the Name and Perſon of an ungodly Man, who taketh Occaſion to diſſuade Men from the Practice of Righteouſneſs and true Wiſdom, becauſe of the Danger which attends it, and is expreſſed in the Middle of the former, and the End of this Verſe. Therefore, ſaith he, it is not good to be more nice than wiſe, take heed of Strictneſs, Zeal, and Forwardneſs in Religion. And then the next Verſe contains an Antidote to this poiſonous Suggeſtion; yea, rather, ſaith he, be not wicked or fooliſh over-much; for that will not preſerve thee, as thou mayeſt imagine, from the laſt Clauſe of Verſe 15. but will occaſion and haſten thy Ruin. But ſeeing theſe Words are very capable of another Senſe, and there is no Proof or Evidence of this Senſe in them, as there is in all other Places where *Solomon* ſpeaks in the Perſon of an Epicure, this Interpretation may ſeem to be dangerous, and liable to Miſconſtruction. Or, 2. In his own Perſon: And ſo theſe Words are a Caution to prevent, as far as may be, that Deſtruction which often befalls righteous Men.——*Be not righteous over-much.* Either, 1. By being too ſevere in obſerving, cenſuring and puniſhing the Faults of others beyond the Rules of Equity, without allowing for human Infirmities, extraordinary Temptations, the State of Times, and other Circumſtances. Or, 2. By being more juſt than God requires, either laying thoſe Yokes and Burthens upon a Man's ſelf, or others which God hath not impoſed upon him, and which are too heavy for him; ſee *Mat.* xxiii. 4. or condemning or avoiding thoſe Things as ſinful, which God hath not forbidden, which really is Superſtition, but is here called *Righteouſneſs,* abuſively, becauſe it is ſo in Appearance, and in the Opinion of ſuch Perſons. So he gives them the Name, but by adding *over-much* denies the Thing; becauſe Righteouſneſs, as well as other Virtues, avoids both the Extreams, the Exceſs as well as the Defect. Or, 3. By imprudent and unſeaſonable Oſtentation or Exerciſe of Righteouſneſs where it is not neceſſary; as if a Proteſtant travelling in a popiſh Country, ſhould publickly profeſs his Religion to all he meets with; or when a Man caſts the Pearl of Reproof before Swine, againſt that Caution, *Mat.* vii. 6. So this is a Precept that Men ſhould manage their Zeal with godly Wiſdom, and with Condeſcenſion to others, as far as may be. But this is not to be underſtood, either, 1. Of ſuch Prudence as keeps a Man from the Practice of his Duty, but only of that Prudence which directs him in ordering the Time, Manner, and other Circumſtances. Or, 2. As if Men ſhould be too good, or too holy, ſince the ſtricteſt Holineſs any Man in this Life can arrive at, falls far ſhort both of the Rule of God's Word, and thoſe Examples of God and Chriſt, and the holy Angels, which are propounded in Scripture for our Imitation.———*Over-wiſe.* Be not wiſe in thy own Conceit, nor *above what is written,* 1 *Cor.* iv. 6. nor above what is meet, which here is implied to be the Cauſe of being *righteous over-much.*——*Why ſhouldeſt thou deſtroy thy ſelf?* For thereby thou wilt unneceſſaryly expoſe thy ſelf to Danger and Miſchief.

Chap. VIII.

Kings to be greatly reſpected. Our Times uncertain. Death irreſiſtible. An evil Magiſtrate buried and forgot. Men grow hardened in Sin, becauſe not preſently puniſhed; however, they ſhall not eſcape. The Righteous ſuffer while the Wicked proſper; therefore Mirth, and a contented Enjoyment of God's Gifts is preferable to immoderate Care. God's Work herein paſt finding out.

Q. P*RAY what Topicks of Inſtruction does the Preacher inſiſt on in this Chapter?*

Q. Here is an Exhortation to yield all due Obedience to the King and the Magiſtrates; that Man hath no Power to ſave his own Life, and therefore muſt not raſhly caſt himſelf into Danger.

The Preacher next relates ſome other Vanities of this Life: As namely, how Subjects are oppreſſed by evil Magiſtrates; that many Men continue in Sin, becauſe they are not preſently puniſhed, however, they ſhall not eſcape Puniſhment, though often the Godly are afflicted, and the Wicked proſper in this World; concluding, that it is beſt in this Life for a Man to enjoy the Gifts of God with Chearfulneſs, laying aſide the unneceſſary and ſuperfluous Care for the Things of this Life.

Q. *What is your Senſe of the* 10*th Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe; *And ſo I ſaw the Wicked buried, who had come and gone from the Place of the Holy, and they were forgotten in the City where they had ſo done; this is alſo Vanity,* Ver. 10.——*And ſo.* In like Manner, or ſuch another Vanity and Diſorder.——— *Wicked.* Wicked Princes and Rulers, as the next Clauſe limits this,——*Buried.* Die quietly in their Beds, and are afterwards buried in State and Pomp; whereas, in Truth, they deſerved an untimely End, and no other than the Burial of an Aſs. ——*Who had come and gone.* Who had adminiſtered publick Juſtice and Government, which is frequently ſignified by the Phraſe of *coming in* and *going out before the People, Numb.* xxvii. 17. The LXX *Jewiſh* Interpreters, whom ſome others follow, and render the Word, *they were praiſed,* applauded and adored, by the Variation of a Letter in the *Hebrew* Word, which alſo is very like that Letter in the Text.——*The Place of the Holy.* By which he underſtands, either, 1. The holy City *Jeruſalem,* or the holy Land, where *Iſrael* dwelt; which may be added to aggravate the Wickedneſs of ſuch Perſons from the Obligations, Counſels and Examples, which they had to do better Things. Or, 2. The Seat of Majeſty and Judgment, which may well be called *the Place,* or *Seat of the Holy, i. e.* of God, who is called *the Holy One, Habak.* iii. 3. and elſewhere; who is in an eſpecial Manner in, and Preſident over thoſe Places, whoſe Work, and for whom, and in whoſe Name and Stead Magiſtrates act, who therefore are called *Gods.* See *Exod.* xxii. 28, *&c.* and the Throne or Tribunal ſeems to be ſo called here, to aggravate their Wickedneſs, who being ſacred Perſons, and advanced by God into ſo high and ſacred a Place, betrayed ſo great a Truſt, and both practiſed and encouraged that Wickedneſs which by their Office they were obliged to ſuppreſs and puniſh. *They were forgotten.* Whereas they were deſigned to ſpread and perpetuate their Names and Memories to ſucceeding Ages, *Pſ.* xlix. 11. ——*In the City where they had ſo done.* Come to and from the Place of the Holy, where they lived in great Splendor, and were buried with great Magnificence, which might have kept up their Remembrance, at leaſt in that Place.—— *This is alſo Vanity.* That Men ſhould ſo earneſtly thirſt after, and pleaſe themſelves with worldly Greatneſs and Glory, which is ſo ſoon extinct, and the very Memory of it quickly worn out of the Minds of Men.

Chap. IX.

All Things are in the Hand of God; his Love or Hatred not viſible, but the like happen to Good and Bad in this Life, and in Death they know nothing hereof, and are themſelves forgotten; it is therefore beſt for a Man to enjoy the Gifts of God with Chearfulneſs. An Exhortation to Diligence in our Calling, and to leave the Iſſue to God. The Praiſe of God.

Q. THE *firſt Verſe ſeems a little obſcure; which therefore pray explain?*

A. Let us firſt read the Text; *For all this I conſidered in my Heart, even to declare all this, that the Righteous, and the Wiſe, and their Works, are in the Hand of God; no Man knoweth either Love, or Hatred, by all that is before them.*————*For,* or *therefore,* as the LXX render it.——*All this.* All that I have ſaid concerning the Methods of Divine Providence towards good and bad Men. ——*To declare this.* To make this evident, firſt to myſelf, and then to others, as Occaſion required.————*That the Righteous and the Wiſe.* Whom he mentions not excluſively, as if wicked Men were not in God's Hand, for the next Clauſe relates both to good and bad Men, but eminently, becauſe by the Courſe of God's Providence towards them, they might ſeem to be quite neglected and forſaken of God.————*Their Works.* Either efficiently, all their Actions and Employments; or objectively, all Things done to them, all Events that befal them.————*In the Hand of God.* Are ſubject to his Power and Government by his Providence, as this Phraſe is uſed, *Prov.* xxi. 1. *Mat.* xxviii. 11. And therefore, though we cannot fully underſtand the Reaſon of all God's Works, as he now ſaid, Chap. viii. 17. yet becauſe they are done by his unerring Hand, we may be aſſured that they are done both righteouſly and juſtly, and that no Man hath Cauſe to murmur at the Proſperity of the Wicked, or at the Calamities of good Men.——*No Man knoweth either Love or Hatred, by all that is before them.* No Man can judge by the preſent and outward Conditions or Diſpenſations of Providence, whether God loves or hates them, for whom he loves he chaſtens, and permits thoſe he hates to proſper in the World. And this Tranſlation and Interpretation agrees well with the following Verſe; though it differs from almoſt all antient and modern Tranſlations. And theſe Words, with the foregoing Clauſe, are tranſlated otherwiſe, and that Word for Word, according to the *Hebrew, The Righteous and the Wiſe, and their Works are in the Hand of God, alſo Love and Hatred:* (underſtand out of the foregoing Clauſe, *are in God's Hand.* And this may be meant either, 1. Of God's Love and Hatred which he diſpoſeth when, and to whom, and in what Manner he pleaſeth. Or, 2. Of Men's Love and Hatred, *alſo* their *Love* and their *Hatred,* the Pronoun *their* being repeated out of the former Clauſe, as is frequent in Scripture. And ſo the Senſe is, that not only Men's Works, as he now ſaid, but even their inward Paſſions or Affections, which ſeem to be moſt in their Power, are as much in God's Diſpoſal as their outward Actions. Then follows the laſt Clauſe in the ſame Order in which the Words lie in the *Hebrew* Text) *no Man knoweth all,* or *any Thing which is before him, i. e.* Whereas all Men, and all their Affections, Actions, and the Conſequences of them are perfectly known to God, and diſpoſed by him, Men know nothing, no, not ſuch Things as are moſt plain, eaſy, and familiar to them, and can neither foreſee the plaineſt Things, nor diſpoſe of the ſmalleſt Things as they pleaſe, but all Things are wholly ordered and over-ruled by God's Providence, not as Men imagine or deſire, but as he ſees fit.

Chap. X.

Obſervations on Wiſdom and Folly; of Rulers; Talkativeneſs, Imprudence, and its Miſchiefs. Kings, hurtful, and deſireable. Of Sloth; Feaſts. The King muſt not be curſed.

Q. WHAT *inſtructive Leſſons does* Solomon *inculcate in this Chapter?*

A. Solomon recommends Wiſdom to every one, and adviſes to beware of Folly, and he gives Inſtructions how Men ſhould behave themſelves in the Preſence of a King, when he is offended. The Ignorance and Beaſtlineſs of the Wicked is ſuch

tha,

that they know not common Things, and yet will they diſcuſs high Matters.

The Preacher ſpeaks again how profitable Wiſdom is, and how hurtful Folly, eſpecially in a Prince, who may not be ſecretly curſed; becauſe we cannot work Evil ſo ſecretly, but it will be known by an omniſcient Deity.

Q. *Pray explain the 11th Verſe*; Surely the Serpent will bite, without Inchantment, and a Babbler is no better?

A. Will bite, without Inchantment. If not ſeaſonably prevented by the Art and Care of the Charmer; which Practice he doth not juſtify, but only mention by way of Reſemblance, *Pſ.* lviii. 5. *A Babbler*, Heb. *A Maſter of the Tongue*; which may be underſtood, either, 1. Of the Detracter or Slanderer, who, like a Serpent, bites ſecretly; who may be ſo called, becauſe he takes Liberty to uſe his Tongue as he liſts, without Regard either to the Offence, of God, or to the Injury of others; like them who ſaid, *Our Lips are our own; who is Lord over us?* But we do not ſee how this Phraſe ſhould be limited to the Detracter, which equally belongs to all Abuſers of the Tongue in any other Way; or how this particular Vice of Detraction comes to be inſerted here among Things of a quite differing Nature. Or, 2. Of an eloquent Perſon, who may well be called *a Maſter of the Tongue*, or *of Speech*, nothing being more uſual in the *Hebrew* than to call a Man *Maſter* of that he excels in, or, hath a full and free Power to uſe. And this Clauſe is, and may be rendered thus, *and* there is *no Excellency or Profit to the Maſter of the Tongue, i. e.* the moſt eloquent Perſon, who doth not underſtand, and in due Time uſe the Charmer's Art, cannot by all his Eloquence afterwards hinder the biting of the Serpent, or the miſchievous Effects of it: And ſo this agrees with the principal Scope of this Chapter, which is to ſhew the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of Wiſdom, and the Miſchief of Folly.

CHAP. XI.

Liberality to the Poor commended. We know not what we may come to. God gives Rain plentifully; our Time of doing Good is ſhort. Difficulties not to be too much regarded. The Providence of God full of myſterious Events, which ſhould quicken us to Duty and Diligence. Life is Sweet; but the Days of Death ſhall be many. Young Men are exhorted in the Midſt of their Pleaſures to think of Judgment.

Q. PRAY *what moral Duties does* Solomon *recommend to our Practice in this Chapter?*

A. Solomon having diſcovered divers Vanities, and amongſt others, the Vanity of heaping up Riches, he now teaches us, that it is our Intereſt as well as Duty, not ſo much to lay them up, as to lay them out in pious and charitable Uſes. Future Events we cannot foreſee, and therefore it is our Wiſdom and Duty to caſt off all diſtracting Cares, and diſtruſtful Fears about them, and chearfully to commit ourſelves, and Affairs, into the Hand of God. Life is ſweet unto Men, yet there are more evil Days than good; and in the Midſt of our Pleaſures and Delights we ſhould think of the Day of Judgment.

Q. *Shew the Force of the Preacher's Reaſoning in Verſe* 5; As thou knoweſt not what is the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child; even ſo thou knoweſt not the Works of God who maketh all.

A. The Way of the Spirit. Of the Spirit or Soul of Man, how it firſt comes into the Body of the Child in the Womb, whether from God by Creation, or from the Parents by Propagation; nor how it is united with, and ſo fixed in the Body, that it cannot get out of it when it would, nor how and whither it goes out of the Body; all which Things are great Myſteries. Others tranſlate it, of *the Wind whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*, as *John* iii. 8. or how violently it will blow, or how long it will laſt. But the former Tranſlation ſeems to agree better with the following Clauſe. ——*How the Bones.* The whole Body, which is elſewhere ſignified by the Bones, *Pſ.* xxxiv. 20. and xxxv. 10. becauſe they are a principal Part, and the very Foundation and Support of the Body. ——*Grow in the Womb.* How it comes to paſs, that one and the ſame ſmall Quantity of Seed ſhould diverſify itſelf into Skin, Fleſh, Sinews, Veins, Bones, and Intrails, or how it receiveth Nouriſhment and Growth.——*Even ſo thou knoweſt not the Works of God.* What God is doing, and will do with thee and others; the Counſels and Methods of God's Providence in the future Time of thy Life, what Evil God will ſend upon the Earth, Verſe 2. or what Weather he will ſend, as Verſe 4. how long, or how little a while God will continue thy Life or Eſtate, and how ſoon God will call thee to an Account. Theſe and many other future Events, thou canſt not foreſee, and therefore thy Wiſdom and Duty is to caſt off all diſtracting Cares, and diſtruſtful Fears about them, and chearfully commit thyſelf, and all thy Affairs, into the Hand of God in well doing.

Q. *What is the Allegory conveyed to us in the 6th Verſe?*

A. In the Morning ſow thy Seed, and in the Evening with-hold not thine Hand; for thou knoweſt not whether ſhall proſper, either this or that, or whether they both ſhall be alike good.——In the Morning. Early and late, in all Seaſons and Occaſions; do it ſpeedily and continually; be not weary of it.————*Sow thy Seed.* Do all good Works, eſpecially that of Almſgiving, as *ſowing* is underſtood, 2 *Cor.* ix. 6. *Gal.* vi. 7.——*With-hold not thine Hand.* From working or giving.——*Whether ſhall proſper.* Which ſhall proſper moſt, as the next Clauſe explains it; the poſitive Degree being put for the comparative, or the ſuperlative, which is not unuſual in the *Hebrew* Text. Which ſhall beſt anſwer thine End, or do moſt Good to others, or which ſhall tend moſt to the Comfort of thy great and laſt Account; for thy Morning Alms may poſſibly be given to an unworthy Perſon, or to one who did not need it, and will abuſe it; and thy Evening Alms may fall upon a Perſon of eminent Worth; yea, upon an Angel in human Shape, which is remembered as a Motive to Hoſpitality, *Heb.* xiii. 2. or upon one in extreme Neceſſity, who poſſibly might have periſhed both in Soul and Body, if thou hadſt not comforted and relieved him; Or, one Time thou mayeſt give with more ſincere Intention, or with more tender Compaſſion than another Time, and ſo one will be more right and acceptable to God than the other. ——*Whether they both ſhall be alike good.* Equally ſucceſsful to the Receiver, or to the Giver.

Chap. XII.

Early Piety recommended before Old Age come on, and Death be near: Old Age deſcribed; and Death. The Concluſion; all is Vanity. The Preacher's End in this Book. The Sum of all Learning, Experience, and Happineſs is to fear God, and keep his Commandments; becauſe God will bring all to Judgment.

Q. W*HAT is the Point which the Preacher has in View in this Chapter?*

A. The wiſe Man exhorts young Men to apply and accuſtom themſelves unto Piety, before old Age comes on, and Death approaches, both which are here deſcribed. Hereupon follows the Concluſion of this Book, that all is Vanity, and that the Sum of all Learning is this, *To fear God, and keep his Commandments*; that is, make Conſcience of practiſing whatſoever God requires, how coſtly, troubleſome or dangerous ſoever it be; for we muſt be called to Judgment about it, when not only outward and viſible Actions will be taken Notice of, but even our inward and ſecret Thoughts.

The World doth but deceive its Favourites, by making them falſly to conceit that they are bleſſed. Here we are taught to be charitable and liberal, and to whom; that we ought to dedicate our Youth to the Lord. So that really, in the Main, here is made known to us the Way of Salvation, that ſo we ſhould not be addicted to earthly Things, but heavenly; and to have our Heart inflamed, and lifted up to Heaven; for as much as Man's true Felicity conſiſteth in this, that he is united to the Lord; and conſequently no earthly Thing muſt be accounted dear to us, but rather rejected and deſpiſed, except as they may promote us to that heavenly Treaſure, which is ſure and permanent.

The firſt ſeven Verſes of this Chapter contain a very beautiful and expreſſive Allegory of the Infirmities of old Age.

Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the Evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no Pleaſure in them; while the Sun, or the Light, or the Moon, or the Stars be not darkened, nor the Clouds return after the Rain; in the Day when the Keepers of the Houſe ſhall tremble, and the ſtrong Men ſhall bow themſelves, and the Grinders ceaſe, becauſe they are few, and thoſe that look out of the Windows be darkened. And the Doors ſhall be ſhut in the Streets, when the ſound of the Grinding is low, and he ſhall riſe up at the Voice of the Bird, and all the Daughters of Muſick ſhall be brought low; alſo when they ſhall be afraid of that which is high, and Fears ſhall be in the Way, and the Almond-tree ſhall flouriſh, and the Graſhopper ſhall be a Burden, and Deſire ſhall fail; becauſe Man goeth to his long Home, and the Murmurs go about the Streets; Or ever the Silver Cord be looſed, or the Golden Bowl be broken, or the Pitcher be broken at the Fountain, or the Wheel broken at the Ciſtern. Then ſhall the Duſt return to the Earth as it was; and the Spirit ſhall return unto God who gave it.

Q. *I wiſh you would explain the difficult Paſſages in this allegorical Deſcription?*

A. By the *darkening of the Sun, Light, and Moon*, is intimated, the great Change from the Joy and Proſperity which Men had in their youthful Days into anxious Sorrow and manifold Calamities. A State of Comfort and Happineſs is often deſcribed by the Light of the Sun, *&c. Iſa.* xiii. 9, *&c.*——*Nor the Clouds return after the Rain.* Which notes a perpetual Succeſſion and Reciprocation of Rain, and Clouds bringing Rain, and then Rain and Clouds again, and ſo on without End; which expreſſeth either, 1. The Rheums or Defluctions which inceſſantly flow in and from old Men, for Want of natural Heat and Strength to prevent or remove them. Or rather, 2. The continual Viciſſitude of Infirmities, Diſeaſes, and Griefs incident to old Men.——*The Keepers of the Houſe.* The Ribs and Bones of the Body; or rather the Hands and Arms, which are its Defence, and which are eſpecially ſubject to this *trembling*, by paralitical or other Diſtempers.——*The ſtrong Men.* The Back, Thighs, or Legs, which are the Strength of the Body, and which in old Men are feeble.——*The Grinders*; the Teeth.——*Thoſe that look out of the Windows.* The Eyes. By the *Windows* he means either the Holes or Sockets of the Eyes; or the Eye-lids; or the Humours and Coats of the Eyes, noted by Anatomiſts, which are the chief Inſtruments by which the Eyes ſee.——*The Doors be ſhut in the Streets.* The Mouth, or two Lips, which like a Door open and ſhut the Way, which leads into the Streets or Paſſages of the Body.——*When the Sound of the Grinding is low.* When the Teeth or *Grinders* are looſe and few, whereby the Speech is low, and the Noiſe in eating but ſmall.——*And he ſhall riſe up at the Noiſe of the Bird.* He ſhall riſe early, as ſoon as the Birds begin to chirp, being incapable of Reſt or Sleep.—*All the Daughters of Muſick ſhall be brought low* All thoſe Senſes or Parts of the Body employed in Muſick or Song, ſhall be caſt down from their former Excellency, and become incapable of Muſick, or delighting in it.——*When they ſhall be afraid of that which is high.* The Paſſion of Fear is incident to old Men; and they are afraid of high Things, leſt they ſhould fall upon them; or of high Places, of going up Hills or Stairs, which is irkſome to them, becauſe of their Weakneſs, Giddineſs, and Dread of falling.——*Fears ſhall be in the Way.* Leſt as they are walking they ſhould ſtumble, fall, or be thruſt down.——*The Almond-Tree ſhall flouriſh.* Their Heads ſhall be as full of grey Hairs as the Almond-Tree is of white Flowers.——*The Graſhopper ſhall be a Burden.* If it accidentally hops or reſts upon them; they cannot endure the leaſt Burden, being a Burden to themſelves.——*Or ever the Silver Cord be looſed, or the Golden Bowl be broken, or the Pitcher be broken at the Fountain, or the Wheel broken at the Ciſtern.* By the *Silver Cord* is ſignified the Pith, or Marrow of the Back-bone; which riſes in the Brain, and thence deſcends to the Extremity of the Back-bone, together with the Nerves and Sinews, which, as Anatomiſts obſerve, are nothing but the Production and Continuation of the Marrow. This Silver Cord is looſed, broken, relaxed, obſtructed or diſabled for its proper Service. Anſwerable hereunto, by the *Golden Bowl* is intimated the Membranes of the Brain, particularly the innermoſt, called the *Pia Mater*, becauſe with a motherly Care it defends the Brain, aſſiſts and governs its Actions, inſinuates itſelf into all Parts of the Brain, following its various Windings and Turnings, keeping each Parcel of it in its proper Place, and diſtinguiſhing and dividing one Part from another, to prevent Diſorder and Miſchief. This is not unfitly called a *Bowl*, partly becauſe it is round, and partly becauſe it receives and contains in it all the Subſtance of the Brain; and a *golden* Bowl, partly for its Preciouſneſs and Uſefulneſs, partly for its Colour, which is ſomewhat yellow. This may properly be ſaid to be broken, becauſe, at the Approach of Death, it is often ſhriveled up or broken. In the two laſt Clauſes *Solomon* deſcribes the chief Organs or Veſſels for the Production, Diſtribution, and Circulation of the Blood in Man's Body. For though the Doctrine of the Circulation of the Blood lay hid and unknown for many Ages, and the Honour of the Invention of it is juſtly aſcribed to a Phyſician of our own Country, yet it is not improbable but it was well known to *Solomon*. According to this Notion, *the Fountain* is the Right Ventricle of the Heart, which is now acknowledged to be the Spring of Life, and of vital Spirits; and the *Pitcher* is the Veins which convey the Blood from it to other Parts, and eſpecially the arterial Vein, as Anatomiſts call it, by which it is tranſmitted to the Lungs, and thence to the Left Ventricle of the Heart, where it is better elaborated, and then by the Pulſe thrown out into the great Artery, or *Arteria Aorta*, and by its Branches diſperſed into all the Parts of the Body, to give them Life and Vigour, which being done, the Reſidue of the Blood is carried back by the Veins into the Right Ventricle of the Heart, whence it is diſpoſed, and ſo runs in a perpetual Round, unleſs obſtructed by ſome Diſorder in the Body. The *Ciſtern* is the Left Ventricle of the Heart, and the *Wheel* ſeems to be the great Artery that is joined to it, and fitly ſo called, becauſe it is the firſt and great Inſtrument of this Rotation or Circulation of the Blood, which, by its Pulſe is forcibly thruſt out into all Parts of the Body, whence, by various Windings and Turnings, it returns thither again, and thus continues its Journey, whilſt Life and Health laſt; and when any of theſe are diſabled for the Diſcharge of their Functions, then are they properly ſaid to be broken. *The Pitcher is broken at the Fountain*, when the Veins do not return the Blood to the Heart, but ſuffer it to ſtand ſtill and cool within them; whence comes that Coldneſs of the outward Parts, which is a near Fore-runner of Death. And *the Wheel is broken at* the Ciſtern, when the great Arteries do not perform their Office of conveying the Blood into the Left Ventricle of the Heart, and of thruſting it out thence into the leſſer Arteries, whence comes a ceaſing of the Pulſe, a certain Sign of approaching Death.

Q. *Have you any Thing to obſerve concerning the Title of this Book?*

A. This Book was, by the *Greek* Interpreters, called *Eccleſiaſtes*, that is, *the Preacher*; but by *Solomon* himſelf, in his original and native Tongue, *Preachereſs*; becauſe in this Book he brings in Divine Wiſdom, of which he himſelf had ſo large and eminent a Portion, making, in his Perſon, towards the latter End of his Life, a ſolemn kind of Speech, intended for the Inſtruction of the Church, upon two very weighty and neceſſary Points. The firſt is, how a faithful Man ought and may wiſely govern his Life in this World, to live happily therein. The other, how we ſhall direct it towards the ſovereign End of eternal Happineſs.

Upon the firſt he ſhews, that ſince the World, and all its Goods, Pleaſures, Accidents, and the Succeſſions of it, are all tainted and corrupted by Vanity, which Sin hath brought into it; having no perpetual Duration, certain Eſtabliſhment, equal Tenure or Succeſſion; wanting the Fruit of permanent Happineſs: The good and virtuous Man ought not to ſettle his Hopes, nor fix his Heart upon it, or labour unreaſonably in getting the imaginary Goods of it, or needleſſly trouble himſelf to avoid or correct the Evils and Diſorders of it; but ought to content himſelf with a ſweet and peaceable, though ſuperficial and tranſitory Enjoyment of them, without Anxiety, Avarice, or immoderate Deſire; though with Care and Providence in his Vocation, under the Conduct of true Wiſdom; whoſe Worth he mightily extols, as being the Princeſs, as one calls her, of Man's Life and all his Actions. Seeing Man is by it directed in the true Service of God, and in all Virtues and Duties in every Courſe and Circumſtance of Life whatever, publick or private.

Upon the ſecond Point, he teacheth the godly Man to fix his Mind and Heart continually upon eternal Life, as the ſole End he ought to have in View, during his Paſſage over this Stage of Mortality; and to prepare himſelf for the Poſſeſſion of that glorious Inheritance, by frequent and ſerious Meditations on Death, which is the beſt Curb to reſtrain us from running into the Exceſſes of this World; by the religious Fear of God, and Apprehenſion of his Judgment to come; and by ſtrict Obedience to his moſt holy Laws and Commandments. So that this Book may be very juſtly called the Treaſury of Precepts pertaining to true Happineſs, and the ſovereign Good of Man, the *Summum Bonum* which the Heathen Philoſophers ſo eagerly ſought after, but never found.

THE SONG
OF
SOLOMON.

IN this Song, Solomon, *by the moſt ſweet and comfortable Allegories and Parables, deſcribes the perfect Love of* JESUS CHRIST, *the true* Solomon, *and King of Peace; as likewiſe the faithful Soul, or his Church, which he hath ſanctified and appointed to be his Spouſe, holy, chaſte, and without Reprehenſion. So that here is declared the ſingular Love of the Bridegroom towards the Bride, and his great and excellent Benefits, wherewith, of his own mere Bounty and Grace, he doth enrich her, without any Reſpect to her Merit or Deſerving. Alſo the earneſt Affection of the Church, which is inflamed with the Love of* Chriſt, *deſiring to be more and more joined to him in Love.*

Chap. I.

A Deſcription of the earneſt Longings of the Church after Chriſt. *A Confeſſion of her Deformity; prays for Direction;* Chriſt's *Direction and Command; he commends her for her Strength and Comelineſs; and gives her gracious Promiſes. The Church's Commendation of* Chriſt *both for the Sweetneſs of Fellowſhip with him, and the Excellency of Ordinances.*

Q. IS *this* Song of Solomon *proper to be read by all Sorts of Perſons indifferently?*

A. This Book requires a ſober and pious, not a laſcivious and fooliſh Reader; for which Reaſon ſome of the antient *Hebrews* adviſed young Men to forbear the reading of it, till they were thirty Years of Age.

Q. *What are the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. In this Chapter is firſt deſcribed unto us the great and earneſt Longing of the Church, after the Grace and Favour of *Chriſt*, and her outward contemptible Countenance, but inward Beauty, with her Danger among falſe Brethren. Here is a Conſolation and Inſtruction of *Chriſt* unto his Church, and the great Joy of the Spouſe, becauſe of the Love of *Chriſt* unto her. Here is alſo ſet forth *Chriſt*'s Delight in his Church, and the Love of the Church for the Bridegroom.

Q. *Why is this Book entitled, Verſe* 1. The Song of Songs, which is *Solomon*'s?

A. The Song of Songs. The moſt excellent of all Songs, whether compoſed by ſacred or profane Authors, by *Solomon*, or any other. So this *Hebrew* Phraſe is underſtood in other Caſes; as *the Holy of Holies* ſignifies the moſt holy; and the higheſt King is called the *King of Kings.* And ſo this might well be called, whether you conſider the Author of it, who was a great Prince, and the wiſeſt of all mortal Men, the two *Adams* only excepted; or the Subject of it, which is not *Solomon*, but *a greater than* Solomon, even *Chriſt*, and his Marriage with the Church; or the Matter of it, which is moſt lofty and myſterious, containing in it the greateſt and nobleſt of all the Myſteries either in the *Old* or *New Teſtament*; moſt pious and pathetical, breathing forth the warmeſt Flames of Love between *Chriſt* and his People, moſt ſweet and comfortable, and uſeful to all that read it with ſerious and Chriſtian Eyes. Nor is it the worſe, becauſe profane and wanton Wits abuſe it, and endeavour to faſten their abſurd and filthy Senſes upon ſome Paſſages in it. —— *Which is* Solomon. Which was compoſed by *Solomon*; but whether before his Fall, or after his Repentance is not eaſy to determine, nor neceſſary to be known.

Q. *Does not* Soloman *fall too ſuddenly and abruptly upon his Subject, Verſe* 2?

A. The Verſe reads thus: *Let him kiſs me with the Kiſſes of his Mouth, for his Love is better than Wine.* The Beginning of this Book is abrupt, and may ſeem diſorderly; but is ſuitable to, and uſual in Writings of this Nature, wherein Things are not related in an hiſtorical and exquiſite Order, but that which was firſt done is brought in, as it were accidentally after many other Paſſages; as we ſee in *Homer*, *Virgil*, and in the *Greek* and *Latin* Comedians. —— *Let him kiſs me with the Kiſſes of his Mouth.* Theſe are the Words of his Spouſe, as all acknowledge, wherein ſhe breathes forth her paſſionate Love for the Bridegroom, whom ſhe doth not name, but only intimate by the Pronoun Relative, *him*, which is here put *without*, and for the Antecedent, as *Pſalm* lxxxvii. 1. Which Manner of Expreſſion ſhe uſeth, becauſe it was needleſs to name him, as being well known to the Perſon or Perſons to whom ſhe ſpeaks, and being the only Perſon in her Thoughts and Speeches. By *Kiſſes*, which were the uſual Tokens of Love and good Will, ſhe means nothing elſe but the Communication and Manifeſtations of his Love and Favour to her, as the following Clauſe explains this; his Graces and Comforts breathed into her from the Mouth and Spirit of *Chriſt.*——*Thy Love.* This ſudden Change of the Perſon is frequent, eſpecially in ſuch pathetical Diſcourſes. Firſt, ſhe ſpeaks of him as abſent, and at a Diſtance; but ſpeedily grows into more Acquaintance with him, and by ardent Deſire and Faith, embraces him as preſent. ——*Better than Wine.* Than the moſt delicious Meats or Drinks, or than any ſenſual Delights; this one Kind being ſynechdochically put for all the reſt.

Chap. II.

The excellent Majeſty of Chriſt, *and of his Church. The Benefits which the Church receives from him.* Chriſt's *Love to his Church. The Church ſick of Love; her Prayer for Help. His Care for her in this Condition. The Hope and Calling of the Church.* Chriſt's *Care of the Church; her Profeſſion, Faith and Hope.*

Q. WHAT *are the Properties and Perfections of* Chriſt *and his Church, that are here celebrated?*

A. The Excellency and Dignity of *Chriſt*, and of his Church is here related. *Chriſt's* Care of his Church, and the Benefits and Comforts ſhe receives from him, who loves her ſo much. Here is an Excitation to the public Profeſſion of *Chriſt*, in regard the Winter of Perſecution is paſt, with an Admonition to beware of the cloſe and ſecret Enemies of the Church. The Bride having come to *Chriſt* upon his gracious Invitation, makes her Boaſt of him, and of that intimate Union and Communion which was between them. *Chriſt* abides and refreſhes himſelf among his faithful People, who are compared to Lillies.

How ſoft and pathetical is the Language, how eaſy and flowing the Diction that deſcribes the ſweet Intercourſes betwixt *Chriſt* and his Church!

I am the Roſe of Sharon, *and the Lilly of the Valleys. As the Lilly among Thorns, ſo is my Love among the Daughters. As the Apple-tree among the Trees of the Wood, ſo is my beloved among the Sons. I ſat down under his Shadow with great Delight, and his Fruit was ſweet to my Baſte. He brought me to the Banqueting-Houſe, and his Tanner over me was Love. Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Aples, for I am ſick of Love. His Left-hand is under my Head, and his Right-hand doth embrace me. I charge you, O ye Daughters of* Jeruſalem, *by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the Field, that ye ſtir not up, nor awake my Love, till he pleaſe. The Voice of my Beloved! behold he cometh leaping upon the Mountains, ſkipping upon the Hills. My beloved is like a Roe, or a young Hart; behold he ſtandeth behind our Wall, he looketh forth at the Windows, ſhewing himſelf through the Latteſs. My beloved ſpake, and ſaid unto me, Riſe up my Love, my fair one, and come away For lo, the Winter is paſt, the Rain is over and gone. The Flowers appear on the Earth, the Time of the ſinging of Birds is come, and the Voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land. The Fig-Tree putteth forth her green Figs, and the Vines with the tender Grape, give a good ſmell. Ariſe my Love, my fair one, and come away. O my Dove, that art in the Clefts of the Rock, in the ſecret Places of the Stairs; let me ſee thy Countenance, let me hear thy Voice; for ſweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely. Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes that ſpoil the Vines; for our Vines have tender Grapes. My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the Lillies. Until the Day break, and the Shadows flee away; turn my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of* Bether.

Chap. III.

The Church ſeeks Chriſt, *and rejoices when ſhe finds him. Her Charge to the Daughters of* Jeruſalem *concerning her Beloved. The Manner of* Chriſt's *coming out of the Wilderneſs. His Bed, Guard and Chariot; its Make, Matter and Furniture. An Invitation of the Faithful to the Kingdom of Glory.*

Q. WHAT *are the Tranſactions, between* Chriſt *and his Church, related in this Chapter?*

A. The Church by Night, that is, in Troubles, ſeeks *Chriſt*, but is not immediately heard; at length ſhe finds him, and takes faſt hold of him, giving a ſtrict Charge not to have her Spouſe awaked. The Manner of *Chriſt*'s coming out of the Wilderneſs, which is referred to the Church of *Iſrael*, which was led in the Wilderneſs forty Years. The Bridegroom's Bed or Bedſtead is repreſented under that of *Solomon*, by whoſe Bed is meant the Temple; the Faithful are invited under rhetorical and flouriſhing Terms or Words of *Solomon*'s Marriage with his Spouſe, to the Kingdom of Glory.

Q. *In the 10th Ver. is a Deſcription of* Solomon's *Chariot; what Properties or Excellencies in the Church, are ſignified by it?*

A. Solomon's Chariot is thus deſcribed: *He made the Pillars thereof of Silver, the Bottom thereof of Gold, the Covering of it of Purple; the midſt thereof being paved with Love, for the Daughters of* Jeruſalem.——*The Pillars thereof of Silver.* The Pillars of *Solomon*'s Chariot, by which it was either ſupported or adorned. Which may ſignify either, 1. Miniſters, who are called Pillars, *Gal.* ii. 9. and of Silver, becauſe they are, or ſhould be pure and precious like Silver. Or, 2. The Firmneſs and Certainty of *Chriſt*'s Word, both of his Doctrine and Promiſes, which alſo are *pure as Silver*, *Pſ.* xii. 6. Although there is no Neceſſity that this or the following Particulars ſhould be diſtinctly applied to ſeveral Things in or about the Goſpel; but this in general may ſuffice, that as all theſe Particulars are added to ſhew the Perfection and Beauty of the Chariot, ſo they imply, that *Chriſt*'s Word is every way amiable, perfect, and able to make the Man of God perfect. ——*The Bottom.* Either, 1. The Couch or Seat, which was made of, or covered with Cloth of Gold. Or, 2. The under or lower Part, which was, at leaſt, covered with pure Gold. Whereby he may ſeem to underſtand the Foundation of the Word and Promiſe, which is either God's Covenant, or *Chriſt*'s Mediation, in whom all the Promiſes are Yea and Amen.——*The Covering.* Either,

1. The Curtains whereby the Perſons in the Chariot are covered or hid from the Sight of the People. Or rather, 2. The uppermoſt Part of it, either on the Outſide or Inſide. Some render the Word, *the Seat or Seats* —— *of Purple*; which repreſents *Chriſt's* Blood, which is our Propitiatory or Covering to ſhelter us from God's *Wrath.* ——*The midſt.* The inward Parts, eſpecially thoſe between the upper and and lower Parts, already mentioned. ——*paved.* Covered and and adorned. ——*With Love.* With beautiful and lovely Ornaments, ſuch as curious Embroidery, enriched with Gold and precious Stones; *Love* being here put for lovely Objects, as *Fear* is oft put for terrible Things. Whereby we are to underſtand the Love of *Chriſt* to the Sons of Men, or his lovely Life, Death, and Reſurrection, *&c.* which is the moſt amiable Part of the Goſpel. ——*For the Daughters of* Jeruſalem. For their Delight and Comfort, who are all concerned and bear a Part in the Marriage.

Chap. IV.

Chriſt *commends his Church for her Beauty; he calls her to go with him, and manifeſts his Affection for her. A farther Commendation of her. She prays for the effectual Operation of his Spirit on her, to make her fruitful.*

Q. W*HAT are the Beauties and Excellencies which* Chriſt *here commends in his Church?*

A. Chriſt delighting in his Church, commends all that is in her, and hath Reſpect unto the Multitude of the Faithful, which are many. The Bridegroom commends the Spouſe for her Beauty, telling her he will be abſent from her for a while, yet promiſes to call his Faithful from all Corners of the World, calling his Church Siſter, in reſpect he hath taken the Fleſh of Man. The Church confeſſeth that all her Glory and Beauty comes of *Chriſt*, who is the true Fountain of all Grace; ſhe deſires *Chriſt* to comfort her, and to pour the Graces of the Spirit upon her, which Spirit is meant by the North and South Wind.

Q. *To what Graces and Virtues in the Church, does the Deſcription in the firſt Verſe allude?*

A. Let us read the Text, and then try if we can explain the Metaphors it contains: *Behold thou art fair, my Love, behold thou art fair, thou haſt Doves Eyes within thy Locks; thy Hair is as a Flock of Goats, that appear from Mount* Gilead. ——*Behold*; Theſe and the following Words are evidently ſpoken by the Bridegroom to, and concerning his Spouſe. ——*Thou art fair.* Not in thy ſelf, but by my Beauty, being cloathed with my Righteouſneſs, and adorned with all the Graces of my Spirit, which I acknowledge to be in thee. ——*Thou art fair.* He repeats it, both to confirm the Truth of his Aſſertion, and to ſhew the Sincerity and Fervency of his Affection to her. —— *Thou haſt Doves Eyes.* Thou art harmleſs, chaſte, *&c.* as appears by thine Eyes, which commonly diſcover the Temper of the Mind or Perſon. And, whereas, the Beauty of the Spouſe is here deſcribed in ſeveral Parts, we need not labour much about the Application of each Particular to ſome diſtinct Member or Grace of the Church, this being the chief Deſign of this Deſcription of a Birde who is beautiful in all Points, to ſhew that Compleatneſs and abſolute Perfection which the Church hath in part received, and ſhall more fully receive from *Chriſt* in the future Life. Yet, becauſe the Church is a Body, conſiſting of divers Members, and enriched with Variety of Gifts and Graces, I know no Reaſon, but the ſeveral Parts of this Deſcription may have a more ſpecial Regard to one or more of them. And ſo her Eyes may here note, either, 1. Her Teachers, who are *inſtead of Eyes* to her, as the Phraſe is, *Numb.* x. 31. whence they are called *Seers* and *Guides*, *&c.* Or, 2. The Diſpoſition of her Mind or Heart, which is compared to the *Eye, Matt.* vi. 22, 23. and is oft diſcerned in the Eyes, are not wanton and wandering, or lofty, but ſober, humble, and confined within their proper Bounds, looking directly upon her Husband, and not aſquint upon other Lovers, nor minding other Gods or Chriſts. If the *Eyes* ſignify Teachers, the *Locks* may note the People aſſembled to hear them, to whom they are a great Ornament when they they thrive by their Teaching. ——*Thy Hair.* The Hair of thine Head, which is a great Ornament to the Female Sex, 1 *Cor.* xi. 15. This *Hair* may ſignify either, 1. The inward Thoughts and Meditations. Or rather, 2. The outward Converſation, and viſible Fruits of Holineſs, which greatly adorn the Profeſſors and Profeſſion of Religion, as Hair doth the Head, as implied 1 *Tim.* ii. 9, 10. 1 *Pet.* iii. 3, 4, 5. ——*Flock of Goats*; which are comely and orderly in going, *Prov.* xxx. 29, 31. and afford a goodly Proſpect. Or rather, as the Hair, which Word is here to be underſtood (as appears from the Compariſon itſelf, and from divers Places where *Goats* are put for *Goats-hair*, as it is in the *Hebrew* Text, *Exod.* xxv. 4. and xxvi. 7.) of *a Flock of Goats*, which, in theſe Parts, was of extraordinary Length, Thickneſs, Softneſs, and Comelineſs, and much more like to the Hair of a Man or Woman, than the Hair of our Goats is, as is evident both from Scripture, *Gen.* xxvii. 16. 1 *Sam.* xix. 13. and from the Teſtimony of other antient Writers, as *Apuleius*, *Martial*, &c. —— *That appears from Mount* Gilead. That feeding there, or coming down from thence, or going up thither, ſhew themſelves evidently to thoſe who ſtand below it, or near them. He mentions *Gilead* as a very fruitful Place, and fit for the breeding of all Sorts of Cattle, as is manifeſt from *Numb.* xxxii. 1. *Jer.* l. 19. *Mich.* xii. 14. and eſpecially of Goats; partly, becauſe it was an hilly and woody Country, and partly, becauſe it abounded with reſinous, oily, and gummy Trees, as appears from *Gen.* xxxvii. 25. *Jer.* viii. 22. and xlvi. 11. wherewith the Goats are much delighted, as *Dioſcorides* obſerves. And ſome affirm, that the Hair of theſe Goats was commonly of a yellow Colour, as may ſeem probable from 2 *Sam.* xviii. 13, 16. compared with 1 *Sam.* xvi. 12. and from *Cant.* vii. 5. which alſo, in antient Times, was eſteemed a Beauty in Men or Women, as the Learned know.

Chap. V.

Chriſt *anſwers the Church's Invitation, and ſhews her the Delight he took in her Fruit. She confeſſes her Negligence in not opening the Door to* Chriſt; *the harſh Uſage ſhe meets with; ſhe tells the Daughters of* Jeruſalem *ſhe is ſick of Love to* Chriſt. *Their Queſtion concerning him. A De-*

ſcription of Chriſt *by his Graces, in whom ſhe boaſts.*

Q. I*N what Manner is the Dialogue between the Bridegroom and his Spouſe purſued in this Chapter?*

A. Here the Bridegroom makes Anſwer to the Invitation of the Church, and ſhews that he has a ſingular Delight in the Fruits of the Spouſe. She acknowledges that ſhe once neglected to let the Bridegroom in, but that afterwards ſhe riſing to let him in, he was gone away, which very much troubled her, her Enemies endeavouring to blaſt her Reputation, and to treat her as one who had no Relation to *Chriſt*. She deſcribes the Beauty of *Chriſt*, telling her Companions they have no Cauſe to wonder or to blame her for being tranſported with Love to ſo excellent a Perſonage.

Q. *Pray explain the figurative Expreſſions in in Verſe 13?*

A. His Cheeks are as a Bed of Spices, as ſweet Flowers; his Lips like Lillies, dropping ſweet ſmelling Myrrh.——*His Cheeks.* His Face or Countenance, an eminent Part whereof is the Cheeks, in which the Beauty or Deformity of a Face greatly conſiſts. ——*A Bed.* Which being higher than other Parts of the Garden, fitly repreſents the Cheeks, which are higher than other Parts of the Face.——*Of Spices.* Not of dry Spices, for they are not in Beds, but of aromatical Flowers, which both delight the Eye with a pleaſant Proſpect, and the Smell with their Fragrancy. This may alſo ſignify the Down or Hair upon the Bridegroom's Cheeks, which is the Evidence of his mature and vigorous Age, and may denote that *Chriſt*'s Sweetneſs snd Gentleneſs, is accompanied with Majeſty, Gravity and juſt Severity.——*Sweet Flowers.* This may be added to explain the former Phraſe. Or, *Flowers of Perfumes, i. e.* Boxes in which Perfumes were put, which, by their Height or Form, had ſome Reſemblance to a Turret.——*Like Lillies.* Beautiful and pleaſant. Or this is meant of that Sort of Lillies of a red or purple Colour, as antient Writers affirm, and ſo ſignify the grateful and agreeable Colour of the Lips. This may note, that Grace which was poured into *Chriſt*'s Lips, and which flowed from them in ſweet and excellent Diſcourſes. ——*Sweet ſmelling Mrryh.* Not only grateful to the Eye, as Lillies are, but alſo fragrant to the Smell.

Chap. VI.

An Enquiry after Chriſt. *The Church's Anſwer, and Confeſſions of her Faith in* Chriſt. Chriſt *ſhews the Graces of his Church, acquaints her where he had been, and what he had been doing, and diſcovers his Affection to her, and invites her to return to him again.*

Q. T*HERE are ſome Expreſſions in Verſe 13. which ſeem to want Explanation.*

A. The whole Verſe runs thus: *Return, return,* O Shulamite, *return, return, that we may look upon thee: What will you ſee in the* Shulamite? *As it were the Company of two Armies.*——*Return. Chriſt* recals his Spouſe, who but juſt before had purſued after *Chriſt*; ſo now, when *Chriſt* was coming, or come to her, ſhe was ready to wander and to go aſtray from him, and according to the common and corrupt Diſpoſition of Mankind; and therefore he ſeeks to ſtop or reclaim her, and oblige her to return to her firſt Love, and to repent more throughly than ſhe had yet done. This Word return is repeated four Times, to intimate both *Chriſt*'s paſſionate Love to her, and earneſt Deſire of her Return, and her Backwardneſs to it, which made ſo many Calls to it neceſſary. ——*Shulamite.* This Title ſignifies either, 1. One born to, or belonging to *Jeruſalem*, called alſo *Salem, Pſal.* lxxvi. 2. Or, The Wife of *Solomon*, thus called after her Husband's Name, *Iſa.* iv. 1. And as *Chriſt* is called after the Name of *Solomon*, Chap. iii. 7, 9, 11. ſo the Church is fitly deſcribed by the Title of *Solomon*'s Wife.——*That we look upon thee.* That I and my Companions and Friends may contemplate thy Beauty. ——*What will you ſee?* But what do you, my Friends, expect to diſcover in her? *Chriſt* propoſes the Queſtion, that he may give the following Anſwer; and that they ſhould take ſpecial Notice of this as a very remarkable Thing in her..—— *As it were the Company.* Whereby he intimates, that this one and only Spouſe was made up of the whole Multitude of Believers. ——*Of two Armies.* Either, 1. Oppoſite one againſt the other; and ſo this may note the Conflict betwixt the Fleſh and Spirit, which is in all the Faithful in this Life. Or, 2. Conference together, and ſo may ſignify either, 1. The Collection and Union of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which ſhall be one Day under *Chriſt* their common Head, *Eph.* ii. 15. Or, 2. The Safety and Strength of the Church, which is compared to *an Army with Banners*, Ver. 4, 10. and here to a numerous Hoſt diſtributed into *two Armies.* Wherein alſo there may be an Alluſion to that Story *Gen.* xxxii. 1. where this very Word, here rendered *two Armies*, is uſed.

Chap. VII.

A farther Deſcription of the Church's Grace. Chriſt's *Deſign to viſit the Church, with the bleſſed Effect thereof. She profeſſes her Faith and Deſire; She invites him to Communion with her; her View in ſo doing.*

Q. W*HAT is chiefly to be obſerved in this Chapter?*

A. The Bridegroom, who ſpoke the laſt Words, here continues his Speech, and breaks forth into an elegant Deſcription and Commendation of the Spouſe, partly from the Parts of her Body, and partly from her Ornaments: In which the ſame Thing is to be obſerved, which was noted concerning her Deſcription of the Bridegroom, that there is no Neceſſity of a diſtinct Application of every Part of it, the Deſign being only this, to deſcribe the Beauty and Glory of the Church, under the Repreſentation of a beautiful and noble Woman. This is alſo obſervable, that in the Deſcription of *Chriſt* ſhe begins at the Head, and ſo goeth downwards, Chap. v. 11, *&c.* but *Chriſt* in the Deſcription of the Spouſe proceeds from the Feet upwards.

Q. *Pray expound the 13th Verſe?*

A. This I will endeavour; but let us ſee what the Words are. *The Mandrakes give a Smell, and at our Gates are all Manner of pleaſant Fruits new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my Beloved.* ——*Mandrakes.* This *Hebrew* Word is uſed, *Gen.*

xxx. 14, 15. and the Signification of it is very much doubted and diſputed by Interpreters. But this is certain, that the Word ſignifies ſweet and pleaſant Flowers; and therefore if it be underſtood of Mandrakes, they were of another Sort than ours; as it is no unuſual Thing for Flowers of the ſame Kind, in ſeveral Climates, to have very differing Names and Qualities.——*At our Gates.* Either, 1. Growing there upon the Walls, in Gardens or Orchards near the Door of our dwelling-houſes. Or rather, 2. Brought thither by divers Perſons to congratulate and adorn our Nuptials, or laid up for our Entertainment, as may be gathered from the Nature of the Fruits, which were not only *new*, and growing, but alſo *old*, and *laid up.*——*New and Old.* Fruits of this Year, and the former, that the Variety might delight. Which ſeems to be ſpiritually meant of the various Fruits and Operations of the Spirit, and Degrees of Grace in ſeveral Believers.——*Laid up for thee.* Which have been produced by my Miniſtry for thy Service and Glory.

Chap. VIII.

The Church expreſſes her Deſires of Familiarity with Chriſt, *by the Entertainment ſhe deſigned for him. She charges the Daughters of* Jeruſalem *not to diſturb her Beloved. A Commendation of the Church for her Faith in* Chriſt. *She prays for a full Aſſurance of his Love; her inſatiable Deſire. The Calling of the* Gentiles. *The Church prays for* Chriſt's *Coming.*

Q. P*RAY what do we learn from this Chapter?*

A. The Spouſe wiſhes and deſires that the Bridegroom might appear in the Fleſh, and dwell with her; ſhe charges the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* not to diſtrub her Beloved, and prays for the full Aſſurance of the Bridegroom's Love unto her. After which ſhe ſpeaks of her young Siſter, that is, of the Church of the *Gentiles*, who, if ſhe be ſure and faſt, is meet for the Husband to dwell in. The Church promiſes Fidelity and Conſtancy, deſcribing the Care which the Bridegroom himſelf taketh of his Vineyard, for *Chriſt* dwells in his Church, and the Faithful hear his Voice. The Spouſe longeth after the ſpeedy Appearance of her Groom; that is, ſhe prays for that great and bleſſed Day of the general Reſurrection and Judgment, when all the Shadows, not only of Ignorance, Sin, and Calamity, but even of all Ordinance, and outward Adminiſtrations, ſhall ceaſe, and make Way for the Church's immediate Enjoyment of her beloved Spouſe.

Q. *Pray help me to apprehend the Meaning of Verſe* 8. We have a little Siſter, and ſhe hath no Breaſts: What ſhall we do for our Siſter in the Day that ſhe ſhall be ſpoken for?

A. Theſe are manifeſtly the Words of the Bride, ſtill continuing her Speech. The preſent Church, which was that of the *Jews*, ſpeaks of another future Church, which was to conſiſt of the *Gentiles*, which ſhe calls *little*, becauſe ſhe was the younger Siſter, and then ſcarce had a Being; and ſhe calls her her *Siſter*, partly becauſe ſhe was ſo in the Purpoſe of God, their common Father, though then a Stranger to him; and partly to intimate, that the *Gentile* Church ſhould be admitted to the Participation of the ſame Privileges with that of the *Jews.* ———— *Hath no Breaſts.* No grown and full Breaſts, as Virgins have when they are ripe for Marriage, *Ezek.* xvi. 7. Which ſignifies the then doleful Eſtate of the *Gentiles*, which were not grown up into a Church-Eſtate, and wanted the Milk or Food of Life, both for itſelf, and for its Members.——*What ſhall we do for our Siſter?* Teach us to know and perform our Duty to them, which is to embrace them with ſincere and fervent Affections, to promote their Coming to *Chriſt*, and to rejoice in it, and not to envy or murmur at it, as the *Jews* did in the Days of *Chriſt*, and of his Apoſtles————*When ſhe ſhall be ſpoken for.* To wit, for bringing her into the State of Matrimony; when *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, and others the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who were Members of the *Jewiſh* Church, did ſpeak and act for the Converſion of the *Gentiles.*

Q. *The Allegory of the 9th Verſe ſeems to want Explanation.*

A. The Text runs thus: *If ſhe be a Wall, we will build upon her a Palace of Silver; and if ſhe be a Door, we will incloſe her with Boards of Cedar.* This ſeems to be *Chriſt*'s Anſwer to the foregoing Queſtion of the *Jewiſh* Church concerning their Siſter Church of the *Gentiles*, for which they were very ſollicitous. *Chriſt* therefore engages himſelf to take Care of her, and to provide for her, as the Matter may require, and beſt ſuit her Condition. If the *Gentiles*, when they are converted, ſhall be like a *Wall*, ſtrong and firm in Faith, ſtedfaſt againſt all Aſſaults and Temptations; for a *Wall* in Scripture Uſe, ſignifies Strength, *Iſ.* xxvi. 1. *Jer.* xv. 20. and elſewhere.——*We*, my Father, and I, and the Holy Ghoſt, as the principal Builders, and my Miniſters, as Workers with, and under us.—*Will build upon her a Palace of Silver*, will add more Strength and Beauty to her, will enlarge and adorn her, make her more amiable in my Eyes, and more glorious in the Eyes of the World.——*And if ſhe be* as *a Door*, which is weaker than a Wall, and where the Enemy doth or may break in upon her; if ſhe be weak in Faith, and ſometimes overcome by the Tempter, yet we will not therefore reject and forſake her, but *we will incloſe*, or (as many others render the Word) *ſtrengthen* or *fortify her with Boards of Cedar*, which are not only beautiful, but alſo ſtrong and durable. If ſhe be ſincere, and open the Door of her Heart to me, though ſhe be weak, I will come in to her, and make her ſtronger.

Q. *The Senſe of the 12th Verſe ſeems to me neither very plain, nor well connected.*

A. That the Senſe is not deficient in either of theſe Reſpects, I ſhall preſently ſhew: But firſt let us read the Text. *My Vineyard which is mine, is before me; thou,* O Solomon, *muſt have a thouſand, and thoſe that keep the Fruit thereof, two hundred.*——*My Vineyard.* My Church, which is oft compared to a Vineyard. It is much doubted and diſputed whether this Verſe be ſpoken by *Chriſt*, or by his Spouſe; the firſt Clauſe ſeems to agree beſt with the former, and the following Clauſe to the latter. Poſſibly the Difficulty may be reconciled by aſcribing the firſt Clauſe to *Chriſt*, and the latter to the Spouſe; ſuch Interlocutions being frequent in this Book, and in other Writings of this Kind.——*Which is mine.* This Repetition is not idle, but emphatical, to ſhew that *Chriſt* had a more eminent and ſpecial Title to this Vineyard,

yard, becauſe it was purchaſed, not by his Money, but by his Blood; and becauſe it was his, not only for the ſhort Time of this preſent Life, as *Solomon*'s was, but to all Eternity. ——*Is before.* Is under my own Eye and Care, and is not wholly committed to the Care and Management of others, as *Solomon's* was; *I the Lord do keep it Night and Day*, Iſaiah xxvii. 3. *I am with it to the End of the World*, Mat. xxviii. 20.————*Thou*, O Solomon, *muſt have a Thouſand.* Theſe are the Church's Returns to *Chriſt*, who is here called *Solomon*, as he was, Chap. iii. 9, 11. as elſewhere he is called *David*. Doſt thou, O *Chriſt*, keep thine own Vineyard, which *Solomon* did not? Then ſurely it is meet that thou ſhouldeſt receive, and thou ſhalt receive as large a Revenue from thy Vineyard, as he did from his.————*And thoſe that keep the Fruits thereof, Two Hundred.* Though the chief Revenue thereof belongeth, and is juſtly given to thee, yet thy Miniſters, who ſerve thee in thy Vineyard, ſhall have, and are allowed by thee to receive, ſome Encouragement for their Service. See 1 *Cor.* ix. 7.

Q. Pray explain the 10th Verſe; I am a Wall, and my Breaſts like Towers; then was I in his Eyes as one that found Favour?

A. I am a Wall.————Theſe ſeem to be the Words of the *Jewiſh* Church to *Chriſt*; O Lord, by thy Grace I am what thou wouldeſt have my Siſter to be, *a Wall*, and therefore do humbly beg and hope, that according to thy Promiſe to her in that Caſe, thou wilt build upon me a Palace of Silver.————*My Breaſts like Towers.* Which ſtand out from and above the Wall, and are an Ornament and Defence to it.————*Then was I in his Eyes as one that found Favour.* When by his Grace I was made a Wall, he was well pleaſed with me, and with his own Workmanſhip in me.

Q. *I think you have not ſufficiently explained what is meant by* Breaſts *in the Text, and mentioned likewiſe in ſome other Places in this Book.*

A. By *Breaſts* ſome underſtand the *two Teſtaments*, or the *two Sacraments*: But theſe are rather *Chriſt*'s than the Church's Breaſts. Others, the Church's fervent Love to *Chriſt*, and to all the Saints, for the Breaſts ſignify Love, *Prov.* v. 19. *Cant*. i. 13. Others, her Fruitfulneſs, both in good Works, and in bringing up Children unto *Chriſt*, like a Nurſe with her Breaſts.

Q. *Pray expound the 13th Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe; *Thou that dwelleſt in the Garden, the Companions hearken to thy Voice; cauſe me to hear it.*————*Thou that dwelleſt.* The *Hebrew* Word is of the feminine Gender, which plainly ſhews that *Chriſt* ſpeaks here to his Spouſe, being about to depart from her for a Seaſon, as the next Verſe ſhews.————*In the Gardens.* Not in the Wilderneſs of the World; for Believers are *choſen*, or *called out of the World*, *John* xv. 19. but in the Church, the Garden of God, which God hath fenced, or appropriated to himſelf. He ſaith *Gardens*, becauſe of the many particular Congregations, into which the Church is divided.——By *Companions* underſtand the Friends of the Bride and Bridegroom.——*Hearken to thy Voice.* Diligently obſerve all thy Words and Behaviour towards me, and all the Tranſactions betwixt thee and me.————*Cauſe me to hear it.* When I am gone from thee, let me hear thy Prayers, Praiſes, and the Preaching of my Goſpel in the World.

Q. Having given me Satisfaction in the ſeveral doubtful Paſſages that I have propounded to you in the Courſe of this Book; I ſhall deſire your Anſwer to ſome Queſtions in Relation to the Book itſelf? And Firſt, Whether ſome have not queſtion'd its Divine Inſpiration?

A. That this Book was of Divine Inſpiration, is ſo clear and evident, that as the *Jewiſh* Writers note, none ever queſtioned it, though ſome other of *Solomon*'s Writings were doubted of. And the ſame Arguments which prove the Divinity of other Books, are found here, ſuch as the Quality of the Penman, who was confeſſedly a Man inſpired by God; the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of the Matter; the ſacred and ſublime Majeſty of the Style, and the ſingular Efficacy of it upon the Hearts of ſober and ſerious Perſons, who read it with due Preparation; and thoſe other Characteriſticks of Divine Inſpiration, which are commonly known, and by which this Book is equally diſtinguiſhed.

Q. *What Method did the Penman of this Book obſerve in writing it?*

A. The Plan and Form of this Book is plainly dramatical, wherein the ſeveral Parts or Speeches of it are uttered by, or in the Name of ſeveral Perſons, who are introduced as Speakers to carry on the Dialogue, and ſupport the Deſign of it. The Perſons are four, the Bridegroom, the Bride, and the Friends and Companions of one and the other. Nor is it declared what or when each of them ſpeak; which is ſecretly couched, and left to the Apprehenſion and Underſtanding of the prudent and intelligent Reader, as is uſual in Writings of this Nature.

Q. *I think it's generally ſuppoſed that this Book is wholly allegorical; but have not ſome been of a different Opinion?*

A. The Deſign of the Book in general, is to deſcribe the paſſionate Loves and happy Marriage of two Perſons, their mutual Satisfaction in that happy State, and the bleſſed Fruits and Effects thereof. But then it is not to be underſtood carnally, concerning the Nuptials of *Solomon* and *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, as ſome have vainly imagined; although the Occaſion of this Love and Marriage might poſſibly be taken from that; or rather, he makes an Alluſion to that; but ſpiritually, concerning God, or *Chriſt*, and his Church and People. This is ſufficiently evident from the Deſcriptions of this Bridegroom and Bride, which are ſuch as could not, with any Decency be uſed or meant concerning *Solomon* and *Pharaoh's* Daughter; and when he is brought in like a Country Shepherd, Chap. i. 7. and is called his Bride's Brother, Chap. v. 2. and when he gives ſuch high and exceſſive Commendations to himſelf, and when ſhe is made the *Keeper of Vineyards* and *of Sheep*, Chap. i. 6, 8. and to be like *Pharaoh*'s Horſes, to have *an Head like Carmel*, *a Noſe like a Tower*, *Eyes like Fiſh-pools*, *Teeth like a Flock of Sheep*, &c. Chap. vii. 4, 5. There are alſo many other ſuch Kind of Expreſſions and Deſcriptions, which being applied literally to *Solomon* and his Bride, are abſurd and monſtrous.

Hence it follows, that this Book is to be underſtood myſtically, or allegorically, concerning the ſpiritual Love and Marriage which is between God or *Chriſt*, and his Church, or every believing Soul. And this will appear more than probable from the following Particulars.

I. That the Scriptures both of the Old and New Teſtament are full of myſtical and allegorical Paſſages; which being known and confeſſed, is needleſs to prove.

II. That the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, or the *Meſſiah*, and of his being the Head, Husband and Saviour of God's Church or People, was not only well known, at leaſt to the Prophets, and the wiſe and pious *Iſraelites*, in the Time of the Old Teſtament, but alſo in the Writings of *Moſes*, in the Books of *Pſalms* and *Proverbs*, and in the Prophets, as may be eaſily proved.

III. That God compares himſelf to a Bridegroom, and his Church to a Bride, *Iſa*, lxii. 5. *Hoſ.* ii. 16, 19, 20. In which Places, by comparing theſe with many other Texts of Scripture, by God or the Lord, is meant *Chriſt*, the ſecond Perſon in the Godhead, who then was to come down, and ſince did come from Heaven to Earth, for the Conſummation of that eternal Project of Marriage between God and his People. Which alſo is fully confirmed by the Writings of the New Teſtament, which were deſigned for the Explication of the Old, in which *Chriſt* is expreſly declared to be the Bridegroom or Husband of his Church, *Mat.* ix. 15. and xxii. 2. *John* iii. 29. 2 *Cor.* xi. 2. *Epheſ.* v. 23. *Rev.* xix. 7, *&c.*

The 45th *Pſalm*, which is a Kind of Abridgment of this Book, was written concerning the *Meſſiah*, as all Interpreters, both *Chriſtian* and *Jewiſh* agree, and concerning the myſtical Marriage between *Chriſt* and his Church.

Q. *What Remarks do you make on the Title of this Book?*

A. Amongſt a great Number of ſpiritual Canticles, penned by *Solomon*, this was, by him, or the Church after him, called the *Canticle of Canticles*, by way of Eminence, for the ſuperior Excellency of it, as being the Maſter-piece of all the reſt. The antient *Jews* had ſo great a Veneration for it, that comparing theſe ſacred Books, which go in *Solomon*'s Name, to the three Parts of the Temple that he built, they liken the *Proverbs* to the Porch, *Eccleſiaſtes* to the Holy Place, and this *Canticle* to the moſt Holy: To ſignify that it is the Treaſury of the moſt ſacred and higheſt Myſteries of Holy Scripture. And, indeed, the Subject thereof is not ſo much concerning the ordinary State of the Elect, nor of the common Actions of their Faith and Piety, nor of God's ordinary Benefits beſtowed upon them; as of the firſt Fruits of the Virtues of the Age to come, of the inward Infuſion of *Chriſt*'s Grace into their Hearts, and of the unſpeakable Comforts of his Spirit, with the lifting up of the Soul and Mind, and of the ſtrong Effects of Faith in the greateſt Endeavours, and of the Divine Love, purged from all worldly Thoughts and Affections. All theſe are by *Solomon* repreſented in this Book, bringing in, by a prophetic Spirit, *Chriſt* dead, riſen again, and aſcended into Heaven, after he had contracted a ſpiritual Marriage with the Church, and every faithful Soul, coming from Time to Time (while ſhe is reſident in this World, expecting the Accompliſhment of this Marriage in Heaven) to viſit her with new Aſſurances of his Love, and the Enjoyment of his Preſence, with inward incitements to yield unto him all Duties of Love, Faith, Perſeverance and Invocation, and eſpecially to follow him with her Heart up to Heaven, where he reſides in Glory, and whither, in his appointed Time, he will gather her, where-ever ſhe is ſcattered, up unto him. Theſe Virtues he deſcribes two Ways; in the one the Church or faithful Soul, prevents him with her Deſires and Prayers. In the other, ſhe is prevented by *Chriſt*, who preſents himſelf unto her unawares: To ſhew, on the one Side, it is proper for her to deſire with Fervency to reliſh theſe firſt Fruits; and on the other, that the Time and Means to obtain them are at *Chriſt*'s free Appointment, and when it pleaſeth him; though he never quite deprives God's Children of them in this World, in Caſe they be deſired with a holy Zeal, and the Soul diſpoſed thereunto with a religious Preparation. If the Church receives them readily and fervently, there enſueth all Manner of Joy and Comfort. But if ſhe be ſlack and negligent therein, the Occaſion is loſt, and there follow great Troubles and Afflictions. Both Ways there always appeareth the infinite Love of *Chriſt*, and the Church's lively Faith and interchangeable Love. Whereupon ſhe burſts forth into Divine Praiſes, and Admiration of her Bridegroom's Perfections, which raviſh her in Faith, Joy and Love. And *Chriſt* alſo on his Side, by his Approbation authorizeth and exalteth the Gifts and Graces which he hath conferred upon his Church by the Spirit of Regeneration, and exhorteth her to a lively and continual aiming at the Mark of her heavenly Vocation. Which ſhe alſo proteſts, equally to deſire, framing herſelf, notwithſtanding, to the Neceſſity of ſtaying the Time prefixed by the Lord; praying him always to ſtrengthen her in her Weakneſs. *Chriſt* is brought in accompanied by his Friends, and the Church by her Companions. His Friends are the Holy Angels, and glorified Spirits: Her Companions are the particular Churches, or the faithful Souls, or thoſe who deſire to join themſelves unto her by Faith. *Chriſt* makes the Angels Partakers of his rejoicing, becauſe of the Work of his Grace. The whole Body of the Church communicates her Knowledge, Inſtruction, and Light to the faithful Souls, or to the particular Churches, extending her Care even to the *Gentiles*, of whoſe Calling ſhe hath been informed and inſtructed by the Lord. Now it is to be conſidered that whatſoever is ſpoken in this Book, in poetical and figurative Terms, muſt be directly referred to ſpiritual Meanings, to which it perfectly and properly belongs; whereas ſhould it be taken in any other Senſe, there would be nothing but monſtrous Abſurdities.

THE BOOK
OF THE PROPHET
ISAIAH.

GOD, according to his Promiſe, Deut. xviii. 15. *that he would never leave his Church deſtitute of a Prophet, hath, from Time to Time accompliſhed the ſame: Whoſe Office was not only to declare to the People the Things to come, whereof they had a ſpecial Revelation; but alſo to interpret and declare the Law, and to apply particularly the Doctrine contained briefly therein, to the Utility and Profit of thoſe to whom they thought it chiefly to appertain, and as the Time and State of Things required. And principally in the Declaration of the Law, they had reſpect to three Things, which were the Ground of their Doctrine:* Firſt, *to the Doctrine contained briefly in the two Tables:* Secondly, *to the Promiſes and Threatnings of the Law: And,* Thirdly, *to the Covenant of Grace and Reconciliation, grounded upon our Saviour* Jeſus Chriſt, *who is the End of the Law: Whereunto they neither added nor diminiſhed, but faithfully expounded the Senſe and Meaning thereof; and according as God gave them Underſtanding of Things, they applied the Promiſes particularly for the Comfort of the Church, and the Members thereof; and alſo denounced the Menaces againſt their Enemies of the ſame; not for any Care of, or Regard to the Enemies, but to aſſure the Church of their Safeguard by the Deſtruction of their Enemies. And as touching the Doctrine of Reconciliation, they have more clearly treated of it than* Moſes, *and ſet forth more lively* Jeſus Chriſt, *in whom the Covenant of Reconciliation was made: In all theſe Things,* Iſaiah *did excel all the Prophets, and was moſt diligent to ſet out the ſame, with moſt vehement Admonitions, Reprehenſions, and Conſolations; ever applying the Doctrine, as he ſaw that the Diſeaſe of the People required. He declareth alſo many notable Prophecies which he had received from God, as touching the Promiſe of the* Meſſiah, *his Office, and his Kingdom. Alſo of the Favour of God toward his Church, the Vocation of the* Gentiles, *and their Union with the* Jews, *which are the moſt principal Points contained in this Book, and a Gathering of his Sermons that he preached: Which after certain Days that they had ſtood upon the Temple-Door (for the Manner of the Prophets was to ſet up the Sum of their Doctrine for certain Days, that the People might the better mark it, as* Iſaiah viii. 1. *and* Hab. ii. 2.) *the Prieſts took down, and reſerved it among their Regiſters: And ſo by God's Providence theſe Books were preſerved as a Monument to the Church for ever. As touching his Perſon and Time, he was of the King's Stock, (for* Amoz *his Father was Brother to* Azariah *King of* Judah, *as the beſt Writers agree) and he propheſied more than ſixty-four Years, from the Time of* Uzziah *unto the Reign of* Manaſſeh, *whoſe Father-in-Law he was (as the* Hebrews *write) and by whom he was put to Death. And in reading of the Prophets, this one Thing among others is to be obſerved, that they ſpeak of Things to come, as though they were now paſt, becauſe of the Certainty thereof, and that they could not but come to paſs, becauſe God had ordained them in his ſecret Counſel, and ſo revealed them to his Prophets.*

CHAP. I.

Judah's *Sins; her Judgments; her Worſhip is rejected. Exhortations to Repentance. Promiſes of Grace and Mercy. Threatnings of ſore Judgments; and Complaints by Reaſon of their Backſlidings.*

Q. *FROM what Stock or Lineage did* Iſaiah *ſpring; and what does his Name import?*

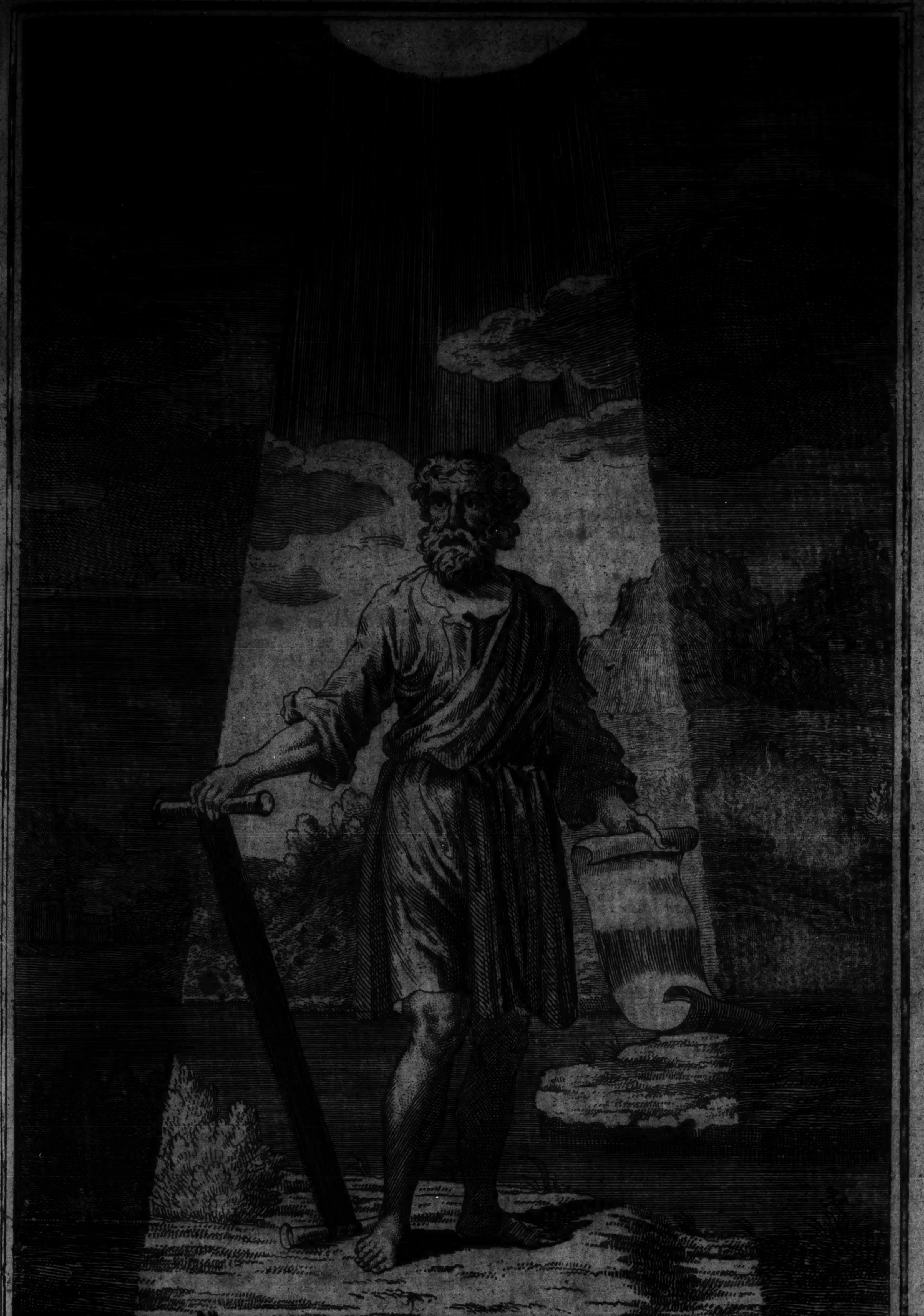
A. The Signification of the Name *Iſaiah* is *Salvation from the Lord:* He was of the Stock of *David,* and Lineage of *Chriſt,* and is called by way of Eminence, the Evangelical Prophet. This Book is a Revelation or Prophecy, which was one of the two Means, whereby God declared himſelf to his Servants in old Time, as *Numb.* xii. 6. and therefore the Prophets were called Seers, 1 *Sam.* ix. 9. *Iſaiah* was chiefly ſent to *Judah* and *Jeruſalem,* but in this Book are Prophecies concerning other Nations.

Q. *What does the Prophet treat of in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet complains of the *Jews,* becauſe of their great Diſobedience and Rebellion, notwithſtanding they had been ſorely ſmitten by God. He

compares

ISAIAH CHAP. I.



Smith Sculp.

The Prophecy of Iſaiah

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compares them to thoſe of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and rejecting their Worſhip, he exhorts them to Repentance and Amendment of Liſe, with Promiſes of Grace and Mercy; but if they obſtinately perſiſted in Diſobedience, then ſore and heavy Judgments are threatened. The Prophet wonders at the ſad and ſudden Change and Back-ſliding of the *Jews*, yet offers them Mercy again if they repent, denouncing heavy Judgments againſt Idolaters, who ſhould be as ſuddenly and eaſily conſumed by God's Judgments, as Tow is by the Fire.

Q. *Who was* Amoz, *the Father of* Iſaiah?

A. He was either the Brother of *Amaziah* King of *Judah*, as the *Hebrew* Writers fancy; or rather, ſome other Perſon then well known.

Q. *How do you underſtand the firſt Clauſe of Verſe* 29: For they ſhall be aſhamed of the Oaks which ye have deſired?

A. That is, the *Oaks*, which, after the Manner of the Heathen, you have conſecrated to idolatrous Uſes, that under them you might worſhip your Idols, as they did, *Ezek.* vi. 13. *Hoſ.* iv. 3.

CHAP. II.

A Prophecy of Chriſt's *Kingdom, the Calling of the* Gentiles, *and Rejection of the* Jews *for their Idolatry and Pride. The great Majeſty and Power of God; and his Terrors on the Wicked. An Exhortation to fear God, and not to truſt in Man.*

Q. P*RAY expound the Prophecy contained in in the 2d Verſe?*

A. Let us firſt read it: *And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt Days, that the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the Top of the Mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the Hills; and all Nations ſhall flow unto it.*——*And*, or *Now*, as this Particle is render'd, 1 *Sam.* ix. 1.——*In the laſt Days.* In the Times of the *Meſſiah*, or the Goſpel, as the Generality of *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Writers underſtand it, and as may appear from the Uſe of this Phraſe in this Senſe, *Jer.* xlviii. 47, *&c.* and from the Converſion of the *Gentiles* here promiſed, which was not to be till that Time; and from the Nature of the Thing, for this was really the laſt Time and State of the Church in the World; the *Jewiſh* Pedagogy was to be aboliſhed, but *Chriſt*'s Inſtitutions were to continue to the End of the World.——*The Mountain of the Lord's Houſe.* The Temple of the Lord which was upon Mount *Moriah*; which yet is not to be underſtood literally of that material Temple, but myſtically of the Church of God, as appears from the next following Words, which will not admit of a literal Interpretation; and from the flowing of all Nations into it, which was not to that Temple, nor indeed was fulfilled till that Temple was deſtroyed; and from the frequent Uſe of this Metaphor, *the Temple*, or, *the Houſe of the Lord*, concerning the Chriſtian Church; both in the Old and New Teſtament *ſhall be exalted above the Hills*, ſhall be placed and ſettled in a moſt glorious Manner, being advanced above all other Churches and Kingdoms in the World.——*All Nations.* Thoſe *Gentiles* whom you now deſpiſe, and judge to be abhorred and quite forſaken of God.——*Shall flow unto it.* Shall come in great Abundance, and with great Eagerneſs, like a River, as the Word ſignifies.

Q. *As the firſt Part of this Chapter is generally eſteem'd a Prophecy of* Chriſt's *Kingdom, how can the laſt Clauſe of Verſe* 4; Nation ſhall not lift up Sword againſt Nation, neither ſhall they learn War any more, *be properly referred to the Goſpel Times, which have produced quite contrary Effects?*

A. The Meaning of theſe Words is this; He ſhall root out thoſe great Animoſities and Hoſtilities which were between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *Eph.* ii. 13, *&c.* and between ſeveral Nations, ſubduing Mens Pride, Paſſions, and Luſts, which are the Cauſes of all Wars and Contentions; and working Humility, Meekneſs, Self-denial, and true and fervent Love to all Men, from whence Peace neceſſarily follows. This was the Deſign of the Goſpel in all, and the Effect of it in thoſe that rightly received it. And that War and Diſſenſion which was occaſioned by the Preaching of the Goſpel, as was foretold, *Mat.* x. 21, 22. it was wholly accidental, by Reaſon of Mens corrupt Intereſts and Luſts, which the Goſpel oppoſed, and it was not among thoſe who received the Goſpel in the Love of it; but between them and thoſe who were either open Enemies or falſe Friends to them and to the Goſpel. But if this Place be underſtood of an external and general Peace which was to be in the World in the Days of the *Meſſiah*, this alſo may in due Time be verified, when all *Iſrael* ſhall be ſaved, and the Fulneſs of the *Gentiles* ſhall be brought in, and both *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſhall be united together into one Fold, under *Chriſt* their great Shepherd; all which is prophecied and promiſed, *John* x. 16. *Rom.* xi. and elſewhere; for it is not neceſſary that all the Prophecies concerning the Kingdom the *Meſſiah* ſhould be accompliſhed in an Inſtant, or at the Beginning of it; but it's ſufficient if they are fulfilled before the End of it. And ſome of them do manifeſtly belong to the laſt Days of that Kingdom. And therefore there is no Truth nor Weight in that Argument which the *Jews* bring from this Place, againſt our *Meſſiah*, becauſe of thoſe which have hitherto been, and ſtill are among Chriſtians; for this does not prove that theſe Wars ſhall never ceaſe; or that there ſhould not be ſuch a Peace in the World as they underſtand before the End of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom.

CHAP. III.

Great Confuſion on both People and Rulers for their Sins. Peace to the Righteous, and Miſery to the Wicked. The Oppreſſion and Covetouſneſs of the Rulers. The Pride of Women, and its Judgments.

Q. P*RAY what are the Sins which the Prophet reproves the People for in this Chapter; and the Judgments he denounces for their Wickedneſs?*

A. Iſaiah here deſcribes the grievous and manifold Judgments, that would befal the *Jews*, as well the common People as the Rulers, becauſe of their many and crying Sins, and that God would take away every Thing, that the *Jews* eſteemed, or boaſted themſeves of: But the Prophet aſſures the Godly, that the Almighty would defend them in the Midſt of Troubles. He threatens the People, becauſe of the Arrogance and Pride of their Women, who gave themſelves up to all Wantonneſs and Diſſoluteneſs, delighting to dreſs them laſciviouſly, after the Manner of looſe and wanton Perſons. He declares that God will not only puniſh the Women, but their Husbands, who have ſuffered this Diſſoluteneſs, and alſo the Common-wealth, which hath not remedied thoſe Enormities.

The Prophet here gives us a Liſt of the Ornaments that were worn by the *Jewiſh* Ladies in thoſe Times.

In that Day the Lord will take away the Bravery of their tinkling Ornaments about their Feet, and their Cauls, and their round Tires like the Moon, the Chains, and the Bracelets, and the Mufflers. The Bonnets, and the Ornaments of the Legs, and the Head-bands, and the Tablets, and the Ear-rings, the Rings, and the Noſe-Jewels; the chargeable Suits of Apparel, and the Mantles, and the Wimples, and the Criſping-pins, the Glaſſes, and the fine Linen, and the Hoods, and the Veils. And it ſhall come to paſs, that inſtead of ſweet Smell, there ſhall be Stink; that inſtead of a Girdle, a Rent; and inſtead of well-ſet Hair, Baldneſs; and inſtead of a Stomacher, a Girding of Sackcloth; and Burning inſtead of Beauty.

Chap. IV.

In the Extremity of Evils, Chriſt's *glorious Kingdom ſhall appear to thoſe who are left above. They ſhall be holy; purged; a Glory and Defence ſhall be upon them. A Sanctuary from Evils.*

Q. THE *Senſe of the firſt Verſe ſeems a little intricate which therefore pray explain?*

A. And in that Day ſeven Women ſhall take hold of one Man, ſaying, We will eat our own Bread, and wear our own Apparel; only let us be called by thy Name, to take away our Reproach.——In that Day. Of which he had been ſpeaking, Chap. ii. 3. In that calamitous Time.——*Seven.* Many. A certain Number for an uncertain.——*Shall take hold.* Shall ſue to him, and even lay Hands upon him, contrary to their Cuſtom, and their natural Modeſty.——*Of one Man.* Becauſe few Men ſhall ſurvive that dreadful Stroke. They who before were not contented with their own Husbands, are now glad of a ſeventh Part of a Husband.——*Wear our own Apparel.* We will eaſe thee of that Charge, which would otherwiſe fall upon thee by God's Law, *Exod.* xxi. 10.——*Let us be called by thy Name.* Own us for thy Wives.——*To take away our Reproach.* Virginity was eſteemed a Reproach, eſpecially among that People, becauſe it was a Token of Contempt from Men, and of the Curſe of God; Children, the uſual Fruit of Marriage, being both an Honour to their Parents before Men, and a great Bleſſing of God, eſpecially to that People, from ſome of whoſe Loins the *Meſſiah* was to ſpring.

Q. *What do you underſtand by* the *Branch* of the Lord, Verſe 2?

A. Either, 1. The Church and People of *Iſrael*, often called God's *Vine*, or *Vineyard*, and the *Branch of the Lord's planting*, *Iſa.* lx. 21. Or, 2. The *Meſſiah*, who in Scripture is commonly defined by this Title, *the Branch*, *Iſa.* xi. 1. *Jer.* xxiii. 5. and xxxiii. 15. *Zach.* iii. 1. *Whoſe Name is expreſly ſaid to be the Branch*, *Zech.* vi. 12. of whom not only Chriſtians, but even the *Hebrew* Doctors underſtand it. For, after the foregoing Miſeries were brought on the *Jews*, by the Remainders of the *Grecian* Empire, of which *Daniel* prophecies exactly and particularly, and afterwards by the *Roman* Empire, the *Meſſiah* was born; and after that at the Deſtruction brought upon the *Jewiſh* City, Temple, and Nation, by *Titus*, the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* became *beautiful and glorious*, as it here follows.

Chap. V.

Iſrael *God's Vineyard; his Mercies and their Unfruitfulneſs. Judgments denounced againſt Covetouſneſs, Drunkards, and their Laſciviouſneſs. The great Miſery of the* Jews. *Judgments on Impiety, Strong-drinkers, and unjuſt Judges. God's Anger, and the* Chaldeans *Army againſt them.*

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects proceeded upon in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet, by a Song concerning the Lord's Vineyard, puts the People in mind of the great Mercies which God had ſhewed unto them; and, on the contrary, their great Unthankfulneſs and Ingratitude towards him, which was the Cauſe that God rejected them. Here is a Woe denounced againſt the Rich and Covetous, Drunkards, the Laſcivious, and riotous Perſons; and by the Execution of this juſt Judgment upon his Enemies, God will appear to be an Holy God, to the Conſolation of the Godly.

Here is a farther Woe againſt unrighteous Perſons, againſt the Scoffers at the Threatnings of God, and thoſe that take away the Difference between Good and Evil; who juſtify and approve wicked Men and Things, and condemn Piety, Virtue, and righteous Perſons. Judgments are alſo denounced againſt the Proud, Drunkards, and unrighteous Judges. Here alſo is ſet forth the gathering together, the marching, and cruel Practice of the Army of the *Chaldeans* againſt the *Jews*, who would look up to Heaven, as Men in Diſtreſs uſually do, but no Light were they to ſee there; their Comforts were to be wholly eclipſed, and their Hopes like the giving up the Ghoſt.

Q. *The Prophet begins this Chapter with a Song; pray explain the introductory Part in the firſt Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe; *Now will I ſing to my Well-beloved, a Song of my Beloved touching his Vineyard; my Well-beloved hath a Vineyard in a very fruitful Hill.——Will I ſing.* I will record it to be a Witneſs for God, and againſt you, as *Moſes* did his Song, *Deut.* xxxi. 19.——*To my Well-beloved.* To the Lord of the Vineyard, as appears by the laſt Clauſe of the Verſe, to God or *Chriſt*, whom I love and ſerve, and for whoſe Glory, eclipſed by you, I am greatly concerned.——*A Song of my Beloved.* Not deviſed by me, nor the Effect of my Envy or Paſſion; but inſpired by God, which therefore it behoveth you to lay to Heart.——*Touching his Vineyard.* His Church, very often, and fitly called a *Vineyard*, becauſe of God's ſingular Reſpect to it, Care of it, and Delight in it, and Expectation of good Fruit from it, &c.——*A very fruitful Hill.* Hills being the moſt commodious Places for Vines, *Pſal.* lxxx. 10. *Heb. in a Horn* (which may ſignify either, 1.

The Figure or Shape of the Land of *Canaan*, which reſembles an Horn. Or, 2. The Height or Hillineſs of that Land, as Horns are the higheſt Parts of Beaſts. Or, 3. The Goodlineſs or Excellency of it, as an *Horn*, when it is aſcribed to a Man, ſignifies his Glory and Dignity, *Job.* xvi. 15.) *the Son of Oil*, which, by a vulgar *Hebraiſm*, denotes an oily and fat Soil.

CHAP. VI.

The Glory of the Lord. Iſaiah *terrified; is confirmed in his Meſſage. The People's Obſtinacy, for which their Deſolation is threaten'd. A Remnant ſhall be ſaved.*

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve upon the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. God ſhews not himſelf to Man in his Majeſty, but according as the Capacity of Man is able to comprehend him; that is, by viſible Signs, as St. *John Baptiſt* ſaw the Holy Ghoſt in the Form of a Dove. The Prophet is greatly affrighted at this Viſion, becauſe God appeared as a *Judge* ready to give Sentence; but the Prophet is confirmed and ſtrengthened in his Office and Calling, and declares his Willingneſs and Readineſs to ſerve his God, and is ſent to the *Jews* to declare unto them their final Ruin and Deſtruction, becauſe of their Obſtinacy and Hardneſs of Heart, yet ſo, as that ſtill an holy Seed ſhould be reſerved and left among them.

Q. *The laſt Verſe ſeems ſomewhat obſcure; which therefore pray explain?*

A. I ſhall; but firſt let us read the Text. *But yet it ſhall be a Tenth, and it ſhall return, and ſhall be eaten; as a Teil-tree, and as an Oak whoſe Subſtance is in them, when they caſt their Leaves; ſo the holy Seed ſhall be the Subſtance thereof.*——*A Tenth.* A ſmall Remnant reſerved; that Number being put indefinitely, as is very uſual.——*Shall return.* To wit, out of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, into their own Land.——*Shall be eaten.* That Remnant ſhall be devoured and deſtroy'd a ſecond Time, by the Kings of *Syria*, and afterwards more effectually by the *Romans.*——*As an Oak.* Or, yet *as*, &c. or, nevertheleſs *as*, &c. ſuch Particles being frequently underſtood in the *Hebrew*. So the Senſe of the following Words of the Verſe ſeem to be this, Although the *Jewiſh* Nation ſhall undergo a ſecond and a greater Deſolation by the *Romans*, yet there ſhall be another Remnant, not ſuch an one as came out of *Babylon*, which, for the moſt Part, were corrupt and degenerate, as appears by the ſacred Hiſtories and Prophecies relating to that Time; but an holy Seed, a Number of ſelect and godly *Iſraelites*, who ſhall afterwards look upon him whom they pierced, and mourn over him, as *Zech.* xii. 10. and by me received to Mercy.——*When they caſt their Leaves.* Who, when their Leaves are wither'd and caſt, as it is in Winter, have a Subſtance, or Subſiſtence, or Support within themſelves, to wit, a vital Principle, which preſerves Life in the Root and Body of the Tree, and in due Time ſends it forth into all the Branches. But others take the *Hebrew* Word *Shallecheth*, for the proper Name of a Place, to wit, a Cauſeway which led from the Palace to the Temple, 1 *Chron.* xxvi. 16. and ſo the Place is and may be rendered thus, *As a Teil-tree* (or *an Elm*) *and as an Oak*, the ſingular Number put for the Plural. *As the Elm and the Oaks which* are *at* or *by Shallecheth* (on both Sides of which Way Trees were planted, to beautify and ſupport the Cauſeway, as ſome have obſerved) *have Subſiſtence and Support in them*, either, 1. For themſelves; they ſtand faſt and firm, when other Trees are blown down. Or, 2. For the Way which they uphold.——*So the holy Seed ſhall be the Subſiſtence thereof.* Or rather, *the Support thereof*, as the ſame Word in the following Clauſe ſignifies; that is, of the Land or People, which, were it not for the ſake of theſe elect Perſons, ſhould be totally and finally rooted out; or of that tenth Part, which ſhall be delivered and preſerved for the ſake of that holy Seed, thoſe true hearted *Iſraelites* that are among them.

CAHP. VII.

Ahaz, *afraid of* Rezin *and* Pekah, *is comforted by* Iſaiah, *refuſing to chuſe a Sign,* Chriſt *is promiſed for one. His Judgment is prophecied to come by* Aſſyria.

Q. O*N what Occaſion, and to what Purpoſe did* Iſaiah *utter this Prophecy?*

A. Jeruſalem being beſieged by *Rezin* and *Pekah*, God ſends *Iſaiah* unto *Ahaz*, to comfort and encourage him, telling him, that his Enemies ſhould effect nothing, but be deſtroyed; and in Confirmation hereof, the Lord bid *Ahaz* ask for a Sign, but he perverſely refuſed it, upon which the Conception and Birth of *Chriſt* is declared under the Name of *Immanuel*; which ſignifies, *God with us*, God dwelling among us in our Nature, *John* i. 14. God and Man meeting in one Perſon, and being a Mediator between God and Men. For the Deſign of theſe Words is not ſo much to relate the Name by which *Chriſt* ſhould commonly be called, as to deſcribe his Nature and Office.

Ahaz having rejected the Offer of the Almighty in not asking a Sign, and being obſtinate, is told by the Prophet, that the Kingdom of *Judah* ſhould be deſtroyed by the *Egyptians* and *Aſſyrians*, with an Account of the miſerable State and Condition of the Land of *Judah*, which was to be utterly ſpoiled and deſtroyed.

Q. *In what Senſe was* Damaſcus *the Head of* Syria; *and how are the* threeſcore and five Years *to be computed, Ver.* 8?

A. The whole Verſe runs thus: *For the Head of* Syria *is* Damaſcus, *and the Head of* Damaſcus *is* Rezin; *and within threeſcore and five Years ſhall* Ephraim *be broken, that it be not a People.*——*The Head of* Syria *is*: Or rather, *ſhall be*; for the Verb is not expreſſed in the *Hebrew* Text, and therefore may be either way ſupplied. The Senſe is, *Damaſcus* ſhall ſtill continue to be the Capital and chief City of the Kingdom of *Syria*; and therefore *Jeruſalem* ſhall not be taken, nor become a Part of *Rezin*'s Dominion; but he ſhall be kept within his own Bounds, and be King of *Damaſcus* only, and not, as he hopes, of *Jeruſalem.*——*Within threeſcore and five Years.* To be computed either, 1. From the Prophecy of *Amos*, who propheſied in the Days of *Uzziah, two Years before the Earthquake,* Amos i. 1. which the *Jews* affirm to have happened about the Time of his Uſurpation of the Prieſt's Office, and being ſmitten with Leproſy, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 16, &c. which, though it be not proved, yet it may be admitted, becauſe it cannot be diſproved. And it is more than probable, that that Action and Accident was divers Years before his Death, during which Time *Jotham* acted as his Viceroy, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 21. And the Prophecy of *Amos* being expreſs and full, concerning the Deſtruction of the People and Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, being alſo freſh in the Memory of many now living, the Prophet *Iſaiah* might well have reſpect to it. So the Senſe is, as if he had ſaid, There ſhall be but fixty five Years between the Delivery and Execution of that Prophecy. And ſo the Number of Years may be thus made up. Fix the Beginning of them ten Years before *Uzziah*'s Death, add the ſixteen Years of *Ahaz* his Reign, and then ſix of *Hezekiah's* Reign, in which *Iſrael* was carried captive, 2 *Kings* xviii. 10. theſe make up forty-eight Years; for the ſeventeen Years, remaining of the ſixty-five, may be taken out of the reſt of *Hezekiah*'s Reign. For although the Tranſportation of that People began in the ſixth Year of *Hezekiah*, yet it might be computed or repeated divers Years after, and compleated ſeventeen Years, *Jer.* lii. 28, 29, 30. Or rather, theſe Years may be computed from the Time of this Prophecy of *Iſaiah*. And whereas, it may be objected againſt this Opinion, that the Judgment here threaten'd was executed in the ſixth Year of *Hezekiah*, as before noted, and therefore within eighteen or nineteen Years of this Prophecy, which was delivered in the third or fourth Year of *Ahaz*; two Things may be anſwered, 1. That the *Iſraelites* were not tranſported in the ſixth Year of *Hezekiah*: For although *Samaria* is ſaid to be taken in the ſixth Year of *Hezekiah*, 2 *Kings* xviii. 10. and the Tranſportation of the *Iſraelites* is mentioned immediately after it, Ver. 11. yet it doth not thence follow, that it was done immediately, and at that one Time; becauſe this is not unuſual in Scripture, in hiſtorical Relations, to mention thoſe Things together, which were done at a conſiderable Diſtance one from another; as it is recorded *Acts* vii. 15, 16. *Jacob—died, he and our Fathers, and were carried over into* Sychem, *and laid in the Sepulchre of* Abraham, &c. Altho' it was above 200 Years e'er all that which is ſaid in thoſe few Words was done. 2. That this Work of Traſportation was not done at once, but ſucceſſively, and by Degrees. Thus it certainly was in the Tranſportation of *Judah*, which was begun in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s ſeventh Year, continued in his eighteenth Year, and perfected in his twenty-third Year, *Jer.* lii. 28, 29, 32. And thus it might be, and probably was, in this Tranſportation. It might be begun preſently after the taking of *Samaria*, and afterwards continued, until the whole Body of the People was removed. And as ſoon as that was done, and not before, the King of *Aſſyria* brought into their Place thoſe new Colonies mentioned 2 *Kings* i. 24. Which that it was not done at the Time of the taking *Samaria*, but many Years after it, ſeems evident, becauſe thoſe Colonies were not brought there by *Shalmanezer*, who took *Samaria*, 2 *Kings* xviii. 10. nor *Sennacherib*, his next Succeſſor, but by *Eſarhaddon*, *Ezra* iv. 2. who was the Son and Succeſſor of *Sennacherib*, 2 *Kings* xix. 37. and reigned above fifty Years; for he ſeems to have begun his Reign by comparing 2 *Kings* xviii. 13. and xix. 35, 36, 37. and ſo he reigned with *Hezekiah* about fifteen Years, and with *Manaſſeh* about forty Years, as Sir *John Marſham* affirms in his *Chronicus Canon*, &c. p. 496. And this Work of tranſporting the Remainder of the *Iſraelites*, and bringing the new Colonies, might not be done till towards the End of his Reign: Which Delay might be occaſioned by his Wars, or other great Affairs.

Q. *How was the Birth of a Virgin propheſied, Ver.* 14. *which was not to come till ſo many Ages after, a Sign of their Deliverance from the preſent Danger?*

A. 1. Becauſe this was a clear Demonſtration of God's infinite Power and Goodneſs, and Faithfulneſs, and conſequently of the certain Truth of all God's Promiſes from Time to Time, which can never fail, ſo long as thoſe Attributes of God ſtand: And Mens Faith is ſtrong or weak, as they believe or doubt of them. See *Pſal.* lxxvii. 8. and lxxii. 12, 20. *Rom.* iv. 20, 21. and ſo this was a ſecret Suſpicion that God either could not, or would not deliver them. 2. Becauſe that Promiſe (not only the actual Giving, which was not long after, but even the Promiſe) of the *Meſſiah*, which had been made long ſince, and often renewed, and was univerſally believed by all God's Mercies and Promiſes unto them, 2 Cor. i. 20. and a Pledge of the Accompliſhment of them. 3. Becauſe this promiſed Birth did ſuppoſe and require the Preſervation of that City, and Nation, and Tribe, in and of which the *Meſſiah* was to be born; and therefore there was no Cauſe to fear that utter Ruin which their Enemies now threaten to bring upon them. 4. This is one, but not the only Sign here given as is evident from Ver. 16.

Q. *Is the Word, tranſlated* Virgin, *to be taken in a litteral Senſe?*

A. The *Jews*, that they may obſcure this plain Text, and weaken this Proof of the Truth of the *Chriſtian* Religion, pretend that this *Hebrew* Word ſignifies a *young Woman*, and not a *Virgin*. But this corrupt Tranſlation is eaſily confuted, 1. Becauſe this Word conſtantly ſignifies a *Virgin* in all other Places of Scripture where it is uſed, as *Gen.* xxiv. 43. compared with Ver. 15. *Exod.* ii. 8. *Pſ.* lxviii. 25. *Cant.* i. 3. and vi. 8. alſo *Prov.* xxx. 19. *The Way of a Man with a Maid*, or *a Virgin*. For, tho' it be ſuppoſed that he did deſign and deſire to corrupt her, and afterwards did ſo; yet ſhe may well be called a *Virgin*, partly becauſe he found her a Virgin, and partly becauſe ſhe ſeemed and pretended to others to be ſuch, which made her more careful to uſe all poſſible Arts to preſerve her Reputation, and ſo made the Diſcovery of her impure Converſation with the Man more difficult; whereas, the Practices of common Harlots are eaſily and vulgarly known. 2. From the Scope of this Place, which is to confirm their Faith by a ſtrange and prodigious Sign, which ſurely could not be, that a Woman ſhould conceive a Child, but that a Virgin ſhould conceive, &c.

CHAP. VIII.

A Prophecy that Syria *and* Iſrael *ſhould be ſubdued by* Aſſyria; Judah *alſo to be afflicted. God's Judgments irreſiſtible, and to be feared. The Lord is a Sanctuary to the Godly, and a Stone of ſtumbling to the Wicked. Idolaters threaten'd with heavy Judgments.*

Q. *TO what Subjects or People does this Prophecy of this Chapter chiefly relate?*

A. Here is a Prophecy of the Ruin and Deſtruction of *Syria* and *Iſrael* by the *Aſſyrians,* who ſhould likewiſe paſs through the Land of *Judah,* and grievouſly afflict it for the Iniquity thereof, but not utterly ſubdue. The Prophet exhorts the Faithful to let God, and not the Kings of *Syria* and *Iſrael,* be the chief Object of their Fear. The Deſpiſers of God's Word, Idolaters and Wizzards are threatened, for that living Men ſhould enquire of the living God, is proper and reaſonable; but it is highly abſurd for them to forſake him, and to ſeeks for dead Idols, either to the Images, or the Spirits of dead Men, which are ſuppoſed to dwell and ſpeak in them.

Q. *Pray give me your Expoſition of the eighteenth Verſe?*

A. Let us firſt read the Words: *Behold, I and the Children whom the Lord hath given me, are for Signs and for Wonders in* Iſrael, *from the Lord of Hoſts, which dwelleth in Mount* Zion. Theſe Words are literally ſpoken by *Iſaiah* concerning himſelf, but withal myſtically concerning *Chriſt,* of whom he ſpeaks more frequently and fully than any other Prophet, and of whom he was an evident Tipe; and therefore they are fitly applied to *Chriſt, Heb.* ii. 13.——*I and the Children.* Either, 1. His natural Children, whoſe very Names were prophetical, and Signs of future Events, Chap. vii. 3. and viii. 3, 4. Or, 2. His ſpiritual Children, whom he had either begotten or brought up by his Miniſtry. For the Prophets were called *Fathers,* not only with reſpect to the young Prophets, who were commonly called *the Sons of the Prophets,* but alſo in Relation to others, as 2 *Kings* ii. 12. and xiii. 14. And this Senſe ſeems more probable than the former, becauſe it agrees beſt, 1. With the following Words, which ſeem too lofty and emphatical to be uſed concerning his natural Children; for their prophetical Names, which, if they were *Signs,* could not properly be called *Wonders.* 2. With the Context and Scope of the Place, which is to ſet forth the Incredulity of the *Iſraelites,* and their Contempt and Rejection of *Chriſt,* and of all his faithful Meſſengers, both the Prophets, who were ſent as Harbingers before his coming. 3. With *Hebrews* ii. 13. where they are expounded of ſpiritual Children.——*For Wonders.* Are a Gazing-Stock to, and admired by them, for our Folly in believing in God's Promiſes: For ſo the believing *Jews* now were, to *Ahaz* and the Generality of the People, who thought it their Wiſdom and Intereſt to procure Aid from *Aſſyria,* and eſteemed thoſe Fools, who, upon Pretence of relying on God, would neglect ſo great an Advantage. And ſo the Prophet foretels they ſhould be when the *Meſſiah* did come; which is the myſtical, as the other is the literal Senſe, and ſo both of them may be meant in this Place.——*In Iſrael.* Even amongſt the *Iſraelites,* who have been taught, and do profeſs better Things.——*From the Lord of Hoſts.* Which came to paſs by the wiſe Counſel and Providence of God, in which I willingly acquieſce.——*Zion.* Where the Temple now was, and where the *Meſſiah* was to ſet up his Kingdom.

CHAP. IX.

Joy in the midſt of Affliction. The Birth, Perſon, Office and Kingdom of Chriſt. *Judgments threatened againſt* Iſrael *for their Pride, Impenitency and Hypocriſy.*

Q. *WHAT are the Doctrines or Inſtructions conveyed to us in this Chapter?*

A. After the great Threatnings denounced in the preceding Chapter, the Church is comforted by a Promiſe of being reſtored to great Glory by the *Meſſiah,* who is here called Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace; which can agree with no one but *Chriſt,* who was God as well as Man, to whom the Title of God or *Jehovah* is given, both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament,* as *Jer.* xxiii. 6. *John* i. 1. *Rom.* ix. 5. and in many other Places.

The Prophet returns to his Threatnings againſt *Ephraim,* for the Pride and Obſtinacy of the People of *Iſrael,* whoſe Wickedneſs, as a Pair of Bellows, kindles the Fire of God's Wrath, which conſumes his obſtinate Enemies. The People were to be ſo reduced, that every one ſhould greedily and violently ſeize upon any Proviſions that came in his Way; and though there was no foreign Enemy, yet they ſhould deſtroy one another; for their Greedineſs ſhould be ſo inſatiable, that one Brother ſhould eat up another, as though he ſhould eat his own Fleſh.

Q. *I deſire your Interpretation of the firſt Verſe?*

A. *Nevertheleſs, the Dimneſs ſhall not be ſuch as was in her Vexation, when at firſt he lightly afflicted the Land of* Zebulun, *and the Land of* Nephthali, *and afterwards did more grievouſly afflict her by the Way of the Sea, beyond* Jordan *in* Galilee *of the Nations.* The Words thus rendered, contain a Mitigation of the foregoing Threatning; and ſo the Senſe of the Verſe may be thus, The Calamity of this Land and his Inhabitants ſhall be great, yet not ſuch as was brought upon the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes, by the King of *Aſſyria,* who, at firſt, indeed, dealt more gently with them, but at laſt quite rooted them out, and carried them away into a dreadful Captivity, from whence they were not to return, no, not when the *Meſſiah* came into the World; for, after this Darkneſs, of which I have now ſpoken, there ſhall come a glorious Light, as it follows in the next Verſe. The *Dutch* Interpreters take it in the ſame Senſe, and render the Words thus, *But* the Land *that was diſtreſſed ſhall be utterly darkned.* To the ſame Purpoſe they muſt be thus rendered, according to the *Hebrew, But Darkneſs ſhall not be,* (*i. e.* ſhall not abide or continue; for to *be,* is ſometimes put for to *abide,* or *continue to be,* as 1 *Sam.* xii. 14. *Prov.* xxiii. 5) *unto her* (the Land, which by Conſent of Interpreters, is underſtood here, as it was Chap. viii. 21.) *to whom* this *Diſtreſs* is or ſhall be. She ſhall be diſtreſſed and darkened, as Chap. viii. 22. but not irrecoverably, and for ever. Some underſtand the Words to be an Aggravation of the Darkneſs or Miſery threatened, Chap. viii. 22. rendering the Words thus, *For the Dimneſs ſhall not be, &c.* And ſo the Senſe is this, This ſhall not be ſo ſlight an Affliction, as that which befel them by *Pul,* 2 *Kings.* xv. 19. nor as that which ſucceeded it by *Tiglath-Pileſer,* who, at the Deſire of *Ahaz,* did, about this Time, make another Invaſion on the Land of *Iſrael,* 2 *Kings* xv. 29. and was an heavier Stroke than the former; but this ſhall be far heavier than either of them. But the former Senſe ſeems to agree beſt with the following

Verſes, and with *Mat.* iv. 13, 14, 15. where theſe Words are expounded as a Promiſe, and ſaid to be fulfilled by *Chriſt's* preaching the Goſpel in theſe Parts. ———*When at the firſt.* In the firſt Invaſion which the King of *Aſſyria* made upon *Iſrael.* ——*He,* God, who is often underſtood in ſuch Caſes, and who is here ſuppoſed the Author or Inflicter of this Judgment. Or, it is an impersonal Speech, *be afflicted,* for *was afflicted,* than which nothing is more common in the *Hebrew* Language. ———*Lightly afflicted.* Either, 1. By *Pul*; or rather, 2. By *Tiglath-pileſer,* who at this Time invaded and ſubdued theſe Parts, as is expreſſed 2 *Kings* xv. 29. ——*Land of* Zebulun, *and the Land of* Naphthali. Theſe Parts are particularly mentioned, becauſe this Storm fell moſt heavily upon them; but under them the other Parts of the Land are included by the Figure *Synechdoche.* —— *Afterwards did more grievouſly afflict.* Either, 1. By *Tiglath-Pileſer*; or rather, 2. By *Shalmaneſer,* who took *Samaria,* and carried *Iſrael* into Captivity, 2 *Kings* xvii. 5, 6. Of which Calamity, though yet to come, the Prophet ſpeaks as if it were paſt, as the Manner of the Prophets is. ——— *By the Way of the Sea.* In that Part of the Land which bordereth upon the Sea; to wit, the Lake of *Geneſareth,* which is frequently called *a Sea,* as *Mat.* iv. 18. *John* i. 21, *&c.* and upon which the Portions of *Zebulun* and *Naphthali* were bordering.——*Beyond* Jordan: or, *on this Side* Jordan; for this Proportion is uſed both ways, and this Land might be ſaid to be *beyond* or *on this Side* Jordan, in divers reſpects, ———Galilee *of the Nations*; or Galilee *of the Gentiles*; to wit, the *Upper-Galilee,* ſo called, becauſe it bordered upon the *Gentiles.* But this laſt Clauſe, and the two preceding, are otherwiſe rendered and interpreted by divers learned Men, as a Prophecy concerning the Light of the Goſpel that ſhould ſhine in thoſe Parts. *As at the firſt Time*; to wit, in the former Ages of the *Jewiſh* Church and Commonwealth (*he made the Land of* Zebulun, *and the Land of* Naphthali *vile* and *contemptible*) as he might be ſaid to have done, partly by expoſing them to ſome Calamities which other Tribes eſcaped, and partly by denying them thoſe Honours and Privileges which he afforded to other Tribes, *John* vii. 52. and i. 46. *Can any good come out of* Nazareth? which was an eminent City of *Galilee.* So in the *latter* or *laſt* Time (to wit, in the Days of the *Meſſiah,* or of the Goſpel, which are frequently ſo called in the Scriptures both of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*) *he made it* (*i. e.* he will make it, for the Prophet ſpeaks of Things to come as paſt, as he doth moſt commonly in this Prophecy) *glorious,* (to wit, by *Chriſt's* firſt preaching the Goſpel in thoſe Parts) *in,* or *towards the Way of the Sea,* (to wit, of *Galilee* or *Geneſareth*) *beyond,* or *on this Side* Jordan, *in* Galilee *of the* Gentiles.

Chap. X.

The Woe of unjuſt Oppreſſors; *of* Aſſyria *for her Pride and Oppreſſion. A Remnant of* Iſrael *ſhall be ſaved.* Sennacherib *marching towards* Jeruſalem. *His Judgment.*

Q. W*HAT Subjects does the Prophet treat of in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a Commination or Threatning againſt the unrighteous Judges, and reſervers of Judgment; as alſo againſt the *Aſſyrians* for their Pride and Ambition, they having another Aim in deſtroying *Iſrael,* than the Lord had. The all gracious God nevertheleſs declares that a Remnant ſhall be ſaved; this ſmall Number, which ſeemed to be conſumed, and yet, according to God's Decree, is ſaved, ſhall be ſufficient to fill all the World with Righteouſneſs. The Word *Righteouſneſs* is added as a Reaſon why a Remnant, and why but a Remnant ſhould return; becauſe God would both glorify his Juſtice, and maniſeſt his Mercy. And in this mixed Senſe the Apoſtle ſeems to expound this Place, *Rom.* ix. 27, 28.

The Prophet reſumes his former Diſcourſe concerning the *Aſſyrian* Invaſion of *Judah*; which he deſcribes, after the Manner of the Prophets, as a Thing preſent, and ſet down the ſeveral Stages by which *Sennacherib* marched towards *Jeruſalem,* intimating he ſhould be able to do no more againſt it, but that he and his Commanders ſhould be deſtroyed.

Q. *How underſtand you the 9th Verſe:* Is not *Calno* as *Carchemiſh?* is not *Hamath* as *Arpad?* is not *Samaria* as *Damaſcus*?

A. Is not Calno, *as* Carchemiſh? Have not I conquered one Place as well as another, the ſtronger as well as the weaker? Have not I, from Time to Time, added new Conqueſts to the old? *Calno* ſeems the ſame with *Calneh, Gen.* x. 10. *Amos* vi. 2. a great and ſtrong City. *Carchemiſh* was a City upon *Euphrates,* 2 *Chron.* xxxv. 20. *Jer.* xlvi. 2. *Hamath* was an eminent City of *Syria,* not far from from *Euphrates,* called *Hemath,* or *Hamath the Great, Amos* vi. 2. of which ſee 2 *Kings* xiv. 28. and xvli. 24. *Jer.* xlix. 23, 17. *Arpad* ſeems to have been an obſcure Place, not being elſewere named. Is not that as ſoon conquered as this? ———*Is not* Samaria *as* Damaſcus? Or, ſhall *not* Samaria *be as* Damaſcus? Shall I not take that, as I have this City? For although *Damaſcus* poſſibly was not yet taken by the *Aſſyrians,* yet the Prophet ſpeaks of it as actually taken, becauſe theſe Words are prophetically delivered, and ſuppoſed to be uttered by the King of *Aſſyria,* at or about the Siege of *Samaria,* when *Damaſcus* was taken.

Chap. XI.

Chriſt, *a Branch cut out of the Root of* Jeſſe, *endued with the Spirit of the Lord, ſhould ſet up a Kingdom by the Preaching of his Word. The Members of his Church ſhould live in Peace and Unity, be victorious over their Enemies; and to him ſhould the* Gentiles *ſeek.*

Q. W*HAT Inſtructions do we learn from this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet having diſpatched the *Aſſyrians,* and comforted the People of God, with the Promiſe of their Deliverance from thoſe formidable Enemies, now he proceeds farther, and declares, that God would do greater Things than that for them, that he will give their long expected, and much deſired *Meſſiah,* and by him will work Wonders of Mercy for them. For this is the Manner of the Prophets, to take the Occaſion of particular Deliverances, to fix the Minds of the People upon their great and everlaſting Deliverance from all their Enemies, by the *Meſſiah*; who ſhould ſet up a Kingdom by the Preaching of his Word, and that the Members of his Church ſhould live in Peace and Unity, and be victorious over their Enemies: And when *Chriſt* ſhould have gathered his Church by the Preaching of the Goſpel, all Things ſhould be ſmooth and plain, without Let or Hindrance, ſo that the *Gentiles* might come in.

Q. *Pray explain the firſt Verſe*; And there ſhall come forth a Rod out of the Stem of *Jeſſe*, and a Branch ſhall grow out of his Roots?

A. A Rod; or *Twig*, called a *Branch* in the next Clauſe. Parents are oft compared to Roots or Trees, and their Children to Branches. He ſpeaks of the moſt eminent Branch, of that famous Son of a Virgin, *Iſa.* vii. 14. of that wonderful Child, *Iſa.* ix. 6. not of *Hezekiah*, as ſome of the *Jews* and *Judaizing Chriſtians* conceit, but of the *Meſſiah*, as will evidently appear from the following Deſcription.——*Stem*, or *Trunk*; or rather *Stump*; for the Word properly ſignifies a Trunk cut off from the Root. Or, *Root*, as the LXX here render the Word, and as it is explained in the next Clauſe. By which he clearly implies, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be born of the Royal Houſe of *David*, at that Time when it was in a moſt forlorn and contemptible Condition, like a Tree cut down, and whereof nothing is left but a Stump or Root under Ground. Which really was the State of *David*'s Family when *Chriſt* was born; but it was in a far better Condition at the Birth of *Hezekiah*.——*Of Jeſſe.* He doth not ſay of *David*, but of *Jeſſe*, who was a private and mean Perſon, 1 *Sam.* xviii. 11, 23. to intimate, that at the Time of *Chriſt*'s Birth, the Royal Family ſhould be reduced to it's primitive Obſcurity.——*A Branch ſhall grow.* He ſpeaks of one not yet born, and therefore not of *Hezekiah*, who was born divers Years before his Father *Ahaz* (in whoſe Time this Prophecy was delivered) was King, 2 *Kings* xvi. 2. and xx. 30. but of the *Meſſiah*.——*Out of his Roots.* Out of one of his Roots, *i. e.* Branches, as this Word *Root* is ſometimes uſed, by a uſual Figure called *Metonymy*, as it is here below, Ver. 10. *Iſa.* liii. 2. *Hoſ.* xiv. 5.

Chap. XII.

A Thankſgiving of the Faithful for their Redemption.

Q. SHould this Thankſgiving be confined to the Uſe of the Children of* Iſrael?

A. Here is a Thankſgiving which *Chriſtians* ſhould make for their Redemption by *Chriſt*, the Knowledge of which is not confined to the Land of *Iſrael*, but reaches to all Nations; therefore we are to praiſe the Lord, who hath ſhewed his Power, and made it appear, by his glorious Deeds done amongſt us.

And in that Day thou ſhalt ſay, O Lord, I will praiſe thee; though thou waſt angry with me, thine Anger is turned away, and thou comfortedſt me. Behold, God is my Salvation; I will truſt, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah *is my Strength and my Song, he alſo is become my Salvation. Therefore with Joy ſhall ye draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation. And in that Day ſhall ye ſay, Praiſe the Lord, call upon his Name, declare his Doings among the People, make mention that his Name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent Things; this is known in all the Earth. Cry out and ſhout, thou Inhabitant of* Zion; *for great is the Holy One of* Iſrael *in the Midſt of thee.*

Chap. XIII.

God's Armies. The Deſtruction of Babylon *by the* Perſians *and* Medes. *Their great Diſtreſs and Anguiſh; and their utter Deſolation.*

Q. PRAY *what is the Subject of the Prophecy contained in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet foretels the Deſtruction of the *Babylonian* Monarchy by the *Perſians* and *Medes*, to whom the Lord here ſpeaks, and exhorts them hereunto. Next he turneth himſelf to the People, telling them, he hath ſtirred up the *Medes* and *Perſians* againſt *Babylon*. The Coming of the *Perſians* and *Medes* is repreſented; after which he foretels that very great Anguiſh and Diſtreſs would befal the *Babylonians*; that *Babylon* ſhould be deſtroyed, and the Land being forſaken by Men, ſhould be poſſeſſed by Wild Beaſts, who delight in ſolitary Places.

Q. *What do you underſtand by the* Burden of *Babylon*, Ver. 1?

A. The Burden. This Title is commonly given to ſad Prophecies, which indeed are grievous Burdens upon them on whom they are laid. See 2 *Kings* iv. 25. *Jer.* xxiii. 33, 36.——*Of Babylon.* Of the City and Empire of *Babylon* by *Cyrus*, for their manifold and great Sins, and in order to the Deliverance of his People.

Q. *The 2d Verſe ſeems ſomewhat obſcure?*

A. It runs thus: *Lift ye up a Banner upon the high Mountain, exalt the Voice unto them, ſhake the Hand, that they may go into the Gates of the Nobles.* ——*Lift ye up a Banner.* To gather Soldiers together for this Expedition.——*Upon the high Mountain.* Whence it may be diſcerned at a conſiderable Diſtance. Withal, he ſeems to intimate, that their Enemies ſhould come from the mountainous Country of *Media*.——*To them.* To the *Medes*, who are named below, 17.——*Shake the Hand.* Beckon to them with your Hand, that they may come to this Service.——*That they may go into the Gates of the Nobles.* That they may go and fight againſt *Babylon*, and take it, and ſo enter into the Palaces of the King, and of his Princes, and ſpoil them at his Pleaſure; which the *Medes* and *Perſians* did. The Manner of Expreſſion implies, how eaſily and expeditiouſly they did their Work.

Q. *The 19th and three following Verſes of this Chapter, contain a Prophecy of the utter Deſtruction of* Babylon; *when, and in what Manner was this Prophecy accompliſhed?*

A. This wonderful Event is foretold in theſe Words; *And* Babylon, *the glory of Kingdoms, the Beauty of the* Chaldees *Excellency, ſhall be as when God overthrew* Sodom *and* Gomorrha, *it ſhall never be inhabited, neither ſhall be dwelt in from Generation to Generation, neither ſhall the* Arabian *pitch Tent there, neither ſhall the Shepherds make their Folds there, but wild Beaſts of the Deſart ſhall be there, and their Houſe ſhall be full of doleful Creatures, and Owls ſhall dwell there, and Satyrs ſhall dance there, and the wild Beaſts of the Iſlands ſhall cry in their deſolate Houſes, and Dragons in their pleaſant Palaces, and her Time is near to come, and her Days ſhall not be prolonged.* The full Accompliſhment of this Prophecy is thus related by the learned Dr. *Prideaux*, in the Year 293 before *Chriſt*: *Seleucus* built *Seleucia* on the *Tigris*, at the Diſtance of forty Miles from *Babylon*. It was placed on the weſtern Side of that River, overagainſt the Place where now *Bagdad* ſtands on the eaſtern Side, which ſoon grew to be a very great City. For *Pliny* tells us it had in it Six Hundred Thouſand Inhabitants, and there are not much above an Hundred Thouſand more in *London*, which is now (waving the ſabulous Account which is given of *Nankin* in *China*) beyond all Diſpute the biggeſt City in the World. For by reaſon of the Breaking-down of the Banks of the *Euphrates*, the Country near *Babylon* being drowned, and the Branch of that River, which paſſed thorough the Middle of the City, being ſhallowed and rendred unnavigable, this made the Situation of *Babylon* by this Time ſo very inconvenient, that when this new City was built, it ſoon drained the other of all it's Inhabitants. For it being ſituated much more commodiouſly, and by the Founder made the Metropolis of all the Provinces of his Empire beyond the *Euphrates*, and the Place of his Reſidence, whenever he came into thoſe Parts, in the ſame Manner as *Antioch* was for the other Provinces which were on this Side that River; for the Sake of theſe Advantages the *Babylonians* in great Numbers left their old Habitations, and flocked to *Seleucia*. And beſides, *Seleucus* having called this City by his own Name, and deſigned it for an eminent Monument thereof in after Ages, gave it many Priviledges above the other Cities of the Eeaſt, the better to make it anſwer this Purpoſe; and theſe were a farther Invitation to the *Babylonians* to tranſplant themſelves to it. And by theſe Means, in a ſhort Time after the Building of *Seleucia*, *Babylon* became wholly deſolated, ſo that nothing was left remaining of it but its Walls. And therefore, *Pliny* tells us, *That it was exhauſted of its Inhabitants, and brought to Deſolation, by the Neighbourhood of* Seleucia *on the* Tigris, *which* Seleucus Nicator *built there on Purpoſe for this End.* And *Strabo* ſaith the ſame, as doth alſo *Pauſanias* in his *Arcadics*, where he tells us, *That* Babylon, *once the greateſt City the Sun ever ſaw, had in his Time* (i. e. about the Middle of the ſecond Century) *nothing left but its Walls.* Theſe remained long after. For the Space within being made a Park by the *Parthian* Kings, for the keeping of wild Beaſts in it for their Hunting, the Walls were kept up to ſerve for a Fence to the Incloſure; and in this State it was in *Jerom*'s Time, who lived in the fourth Century. For he tells us, *That excepting the Walls, which were repaired for the Incloſing of the wild Beaſts, that were there kept, all within was Deſolation:* And in another Place, *That* Babylon *was nothing elſe, in his Time, but a Chace for wild Beaſts kept within the Compaſs of it's antient Walls for the Hunting of the King*, that is, of *Perſia*. For after the *Parthians*, there reigned in *Jerom*'s Time, over thoſe Countries a Race of *Perſian* Kings, and continued there to the Time of the *Saracen* Empire, by which they were extinguiſhed. When, or how thoſe Walls became demoliſhed, is no where ſaid, no Writer for ſeveral Hundred Years after *Jerom*'s Time ſpeaking any more of this Place. The firſt after him, that makes mention of it, is *Benjamin*, a *Jew* of *Tudela* in *Navarre*, who, in his *Itinerary*, which he wrote near ſix Hundred Years ſince (for he died in the Year of our Lord 1173) tells us, that he was upon the Place where this old City formerly ſtood, and found it then wholly deſolated and deſtroyed; only he ſaith, *Some Ruins of* Nebuchadnezzar's *Palace were then ſtill remaining, but Men were afraid to go near them, by reaſon of the many Serpents and Scorpions that were then in the Place.* *Texeira*, a *Portugueſe*, in the Deſcription of his Travels from *India* to *Italy* tells, *That there was nothing more remaining of this old and famous City, but only ſome few footſteps of it, and that there was no Place in all that Country leſs frequented than that Tract of Ground whereon it formerly ſtood.* And *Rauwolf*, a *German* Traveller, who paſſed that Way in the Year of our Lord 1574, tells us the ſame Thing. His Words are as followeth; “The Village of *Elugo* lieth on the Place were formerly old *Babylon*, the Metropolis of *Chaldea*, did ſtand. The Harbour lieth a Quarter of a League off, whereunto thoſe uſe to go, that intend to travel by Land to the famous City of *Bagdad*, which is ſituated farther to the Eaſt on the River *Tigris*, at a Day and Half's Diſtance. This Country is ſo dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and ſo bare, that I ſhould have doubted very much, whether this potent and powerful City, (which once was the moſt ſtately and famous one of the World, ſituated in the famous and fruitful Country of *Sinar*) did ſtand there, if I ſhould not have known it by its Situation, and ſeveral antient and delicate Antiquities, that ſtill are ſtanding hereabout in great Deſolation. Firſt, by the old Bridge which was laid over the *Euphrates*, whereof there are ſome Pieces and Arches ſtill remaining built of burnt Brick, and ſo ſtrong, that it is admirable.——Juſt before the Village of *Elugo* is the Hill whereon the Caſtle did ſtand, in a Plain, whereon you may ſtill ſee ſome Ruins of the Fortification, which is quite demoliſhed and uninhabited. Behind it, and pretty near to it did ſtands the Tower of *Babylon*.——This we ſee ſtill, and it is Half a League in Diameter, but is ſo mightily ruined and low, and ſo full of venomous Reptiles, that have bored Holes through it, that one may not come near it within Half a Mile, but only in two Months in the Winter, when they come not out of their Holes. Among theſe Reptiles there are chiefly ſome in the *Perſian* Language called *Eglo* by the Inhabitants, that are very poiſonous. They are bigger than our Lizards, *&c.*” All which Ruins here mentioned by *Rauwolf*, are no doubt the ſame which *Benjamin* of *Tudela* ſaith were the Ruins of the Palace of *Nebuchadnezzar*, that is the old Palace which ſtood on the Eaſtern Side of the River. For it is of that only, that *Benjamin* and *Rauwolf* ſpeak. Of the Ruins of *Babylon* on the weſtern Side, where the new Palace ſtood, which *Nebuchadnezzar* himſelf built, neither of them do take any Notice. All this put together ſhews how fully and exactly hath been fulfilled all that which the Prophet *Iſaiah* propheſied of this Place.

CHAP. XIV.

A Phrophecy of the Deliverance of Iſrael *from the* Babyloniſh *Captivity; their triumphant Inſultation over* Babel. *God's Prophecy againſt it. God's Purpoſe againſt* Aſſyria. Paleſtine *is threatened.*

Q. WHAT *is the Prophet's Deſign in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophets ſhews why God haſten to deſtroy his Enemies, *viz.* becauſe he will deliver his Church, and that the *Gentiles* ſhall be joined with the Church, and Worſhip of God. Words are laid down wherewith the *Babylonians* are to be jeered and mocked, after the Lord had ſtirred up the *Medes* and *Perſians* for their Deſtruction; and as the Lord had begun to deſtroy the *Aſſyrians* in *Sennacherib*, ſo he would continue to deſtroy them wholly, when the *Jews* were delivered from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. *Paleſtine* is threatened, but *Zion* ſtands on a firm Foundation, and though in a very diſtreſſed and deplorable Condition, and ſeems to be forſaken by her God, yet ſhe ſtands upon a firm Foundation, and God, who firſt founded her, will again reſtore and eſtabliſh her, and his poor deſpiſed People ſhould reſort to her, as to a ſtrong and ſure Refuge.

Q. *Whom does the Prophet mean by* Lucifer Son of the Morning, Ver. 12?

A. The whole Verſe runs thus; *How art thou fallen from Heaven,* O Lucifer, *Son of the Morning? How art thou cut down to the Ground, which didſt weaken the Nations?——Fallen from Heaven.* From the Height of thy Glory and royal Majeſty. As Kings are ſometimes called *Gods* in Scripture, ſo their Palaces and Thrones may be fitly called the *Heavens.————O Lucifer.* Which properly is a bright and eminent Star, which uſhers in the Sun and the Morning; but is here metaphorically taken for the high and mighty King of *Babylon.* And it's an uſual Thing both with prophetical and profane Writers to deſcribe the Princes and Potentates of the World, under the Title of the Sun or Stars of Heaven. Some underſtand this Place of the Devil, to whom it may be myſtically applied: But as he is never called by this Name in Scripture, ſo it cannot be literally meant of him, but of the King of *Babylon,* as is undeniably evident from the whole Context, which certainly ſpeaks of one and the ſame Perſon, and deſcribes him as plainly as Words can do it. The Title of *Son* is given in Scripture not only to a Perſon or Thing begotten or produced by another, but alſo in general to any Thing which is any way related to another; in which Senſe we read of *a Son of Stripes,* Deut. xxv. 2. *The Son of a Night,* Jonah iv. 10. *A Son of Perdition,* John xvii. 12. and, which is more agreeable to the preſent Caſe, *The Sons of* Arcturus, Job. xxxviii. 32.

Q. *Pray interpret the 31ſt Verſe?*

A. Howl, O Gate, cry, O City, thou whole Paleſtina *art diſſolved; for there ſhall come from the North a Smoak, and none ſhall be alone in his appointed Time.——O Gate. The Gate* is put either, 1. Metaphorically, for the People paſſing through the Gates, or for the Magiſtrates and others who uſed to meet in the Gate for Judgment. Or, 2. Synechdochically, for the City, as *Gates* are commonly put, *Jer.* xxii. 19. and as it is explained in the next Words.——*O City.* City is here put collectively for their Cities; ſee 1 *Sam.* vi. 17.——*Diſſolved,* Heb. *melted.* Which may be underſtood either, 1. Of the fainting of their Spirits and Courage, as *Exod.* xv. 15. Or, 2. Of the Diſſolution of their State.————*From the North.* Either, 1. From *Judea*; which lay Northward from ſome Part of the *Philiſtines* Land. But in Truth *Judea* lay more Eaſt than North from *Paleſtine,* and therefore the *Philiſtines* are ſaid to be on *the Weſt, Iſa.* xi. 14. and never on the North. Or, 2. From *Chaldea,* as may be gathered, 1. From the Scripture Uſe of this Phraſe, which generally deſigns that Country, as *Jer.* i. 14, 15, *&c.* 2. From *Jer.* 47. where Deſtruction is threaten'd to the *Philiſtines from the North,* Ver. 2. which all underſtand of the *Chaldeans* under *Nabuchadnezzar.* And whereas it is ſpeciouſly objected, That this ſuits not with the next Verſe, which ſpeaks of *Zion*'s Safety at the Time of this Deſtruction of the *Philiſtines,* whereas *Zion,* and the Land and People of *Judah,* were deſtroyed together with the *Philiſtines* by *Nebuchadnezzar*; 'tis anſwer'd, That that Verſe is added to expreſs the far differing Condition of God's People, and of the *Philiſtines* in the Events of that *Babylonian* War; and that whereas the *Philiſtines* ſhould be irrecoverably and eternally deſtroyed thereby, and no Remnant of them ſhould be left, as was ſaid, Ver. 30. God's People, though they ſhould be ſorely ſcourged, and carried into Captivity, yet they ſhould be ſtrangely preſerved, and after ſome Years deliver'd, and reſtored to their own Land and Temple; whereby it would appear, that *Zion* ſtood upon a ſure Foundation, and, though grieviouſly ſhaken, yet it could not be utterly and finally overthrown.————*A Smoke.* A grievous Judgment and Calamity, which is oft ſignified by *Smoke, Gen.* xv. 17, &c. either becauſe Smoke is generally accompanied by Fire, or becauſe it cauſeth a great Darkneſs in the Air; for Afflictions are frequently deſcribed by *Fire* and *Darkneſs.——Appointed Times.* When God's appointed Time ſhall come for the Execution of this Judgment, not one Perſon of all that numerous Army, which is ſignified by the *Smoke* laſt mentioned, ſhall retire and deſert his Colours, or lag behind the reſt; but ſhall march with great Unanimity and Alacrity, and none of them ſhall withdraw his Hand till the Work be finiſhed, till the *Philiſtines* be utterly deſtroy'd.

CHAP. XV.

The Deſtruction of Moab *foretold.*

Q. TO *what does the Prophecy in this Chapter particularly relate?*

A. Here is a Deſcription of the cruel Deſolation and Miſery that ſhould befal the Land of the *Moabites,* who ſhall flee to their Idols for Succour, but it ſhall be too late; for the *Aſſyrians* were to lay them waſte, by the juſt Judgment of God, ſo that by no Means they ſhould eſcape the Hand of God: Thus will the Almighty puniſh the Enemies of his Church.

Q. *The Contents of the 5th Verſe are too intricate for my Apprehenſion; which I therefore deſire you to interpret?*

A. My Heart ſhall cry out for Moab, *his Fugitives ſhall flee unto* Zoar, *an Heifer of three Years old: For by the mounting up of* Luhith *with Weeping ſhall they go it up; for in the Way of* Horonaim, *they ſhall raiſe up a Cry of Deſtruction.————My Heart doth cry out for* Moab. Their approaching Deſtruction is ſo dreadful, that although they are a moſt vile Nation, and by their implacable Enmity againſt God and his People, do abundantly deſerve it, yet the Reſpect I have to human Nature fills me with Horror at the very Thought of it.——*His Fugitives.* Or, *his Bars*, as others render it, and as the Word is frequently taken, *Exod.* xxvi. 26, 27. whereby we may underſtand their valiant Men, or their Princes and Rulers, who, as they are called *the Shields of the Earth*, *Pſal.* xlvii. 9, becauſe, like Shields, they do, or ſhould defend their People; ſo for the ſame Reaſon they may be called *Bars*, becauſe Bars are the Strength of the Gates of Cities or Caſtles, and therefore are mentioned as ſuch, *Pſal.* cxlvii. 13, &c.——*Shall flee unto* Zoar. Or, ſhall *cry unto Zoar*; either ſhall cry as they go along the Way, even till they come to *Zoar*; or, ſhall cry ſo as they may be heard to *Zoar*; which may be eaſily underſtood out of the foregoing Verſe. *Zoar* was a Town bordering upon *Moab*, *Gen.* xix. 20, 21, 22.——*An Heifer of three Years old.* Which ſome underſtand of the City of *Zoar*, ſo called for her Strength and Wantonneſs. But ſuch a Deſcription of *Zoar* ſeems very improper and impertinent in this Place. The Words therefore are to be tranſlated here, as they are by our Tranſlators, *Jer.* xlviii. 34. *As an Heifer of three Years old*; and ſo they belong to their Cry, and ſignify that it is ſtrong and loud, like that of ſuch an Heifer.——*They ſhall raiſe up ſuch a Cry.* He ſignifies, that the Cry ſhould be univerſal, in all Places where they come, and reaching from one Side of the Country to another. Of *Luhith*, ſee *Jer.* xlviii. 4, 5.——*Of Deſtruction.* Such a Cry as Men ſend forth when they are juſt falling into the Pit of Deſtruction.

Chap. XVI.

The Moabites *exhorted kindly to entertain the baniſh'd* Jews. *They are threatened for their Pride and Arrogance. The Prophet bewails them. Their Judgment.*

Q. *I would know in what Manner the Prophecy in this Chapter is to be applied?*

A. The Prophet gives an Exhortation to the *Moabites*, to entertain kindly the baniſh'd *Jews*: But, foraſmuch as they refuſed through Pride and Arrogance to comply herewith, therefore the Lord threatens them that they ſhould be deſtroyed and cut off; and that their Plague ſhould be ſo great, that it would move any Man to lament with them. The Prophet pities their Caſe, but proceeds in relating the Miſeries that were drawing on them, and names the exact Time it ſhould come to paſs.

Q. *Explain the firſt Verſe?*

A. Send ye the Lamb to the Ruler of the Land, from Sela *to the Wilderneſs, unto the Mount of the Daughter of* Zion. The Prophet continues his Prophecy againſt *Moab* in this Chapter, and here turns his ſpeech to them, and counſels them what to do, to prevent, if poſſible, the threatened Deſolation. In the firſt Clauſe he adviſes them to the Practice, either, 1. Of Juſtice: Pay that Tribute of Lambs and Goats which you obliged your ſelves to pay unto *David*, and to his Poſterity, 2 *Sam.* viii. 2. and pay it not unto *Iſrael*, as you have done, 2 *Kings* iii. 4. but unto the King of *Judah*, who is the rightful Heir of *David*, and King of the Land. Or, 2. Of Piety; *Send a Lamb*, for a Sacrifice unto God, who is *Ruler of the Land*; to wit, of your Land no leſs than of ours, or, *of the Earth*, as the Word is commonly rendered, who is *the God of the whole Earth*, as he is called, *Iſa.* liv. 5. Make your Peace with God, by Sacrifice, for all your Injuries done to him, and to his People. Theſe Words may be alſo underſtood ironically, and the Deſign of them may be to repreſent their miſerable and deſperate Condition; as if he had ſaid, You have tried all other Ways, and ſought to your Idols, Chap. xv. 2. and all in vain; now ſeek to the God of *Iſrael*, who alone can help you. But, alas! he is highly incenſed againſt you, and coming to deſtroy you. But this ſeems to be rather a ſerious Advice, by comparing theſe Words with Ver. iii. 4.——*Sela.* An eminent City of *Moab*, ſeated upon a Rock, which is here named, either becauſe the King and his Court at this Time reſided there, or for ſome other Reaſons then evident, though now unknown.——*To the Wilderneſs.* To the Wilderneſs of *Moab*, of which we read, *Numb.* xxi. 11. and ſo onward to *Zion*, as it follows. Or, this may be added as a Deſcription of the Place called *Sela*. Hence ſome render the Words, Sela *of the Wilderneſs*; and others, *Sela*, which lieth or looketh *towards the Wilderneſs*. And this Limitation might be the more neceſſary, to diſtinguiſh this from other Places of *Moab* called by the ſame Name, which, ſignifying a *Rock* might be common to ſeveral Places in that rocky, Country.——*Zion.* Unto the Temple upon Mount *Zion*.

Chap. XVII.

Damaſcus, Samaria, Iſrael, *and their Cities to be ruined by the* Aſſyrians. *A Remnant ſhall conſider and repent. The reſt plagued for their Impiety. The Woe of* Iſrael's *Enemies.*

Q. *PRAY what is the Argument of this Chapter?*

A. Damaſcus, *Samaria*, and the Cities of *Iſrael* are to be ruined by the *Aſſyrians*. The Ten Tribes gloried in their Multitude and Alliance with other Nations, therefore the Prophet ſaith they ſhall be brought down, and the *Syrians* alſo. He ſheweth that the Corrections of God ever bring forth ſome Fruit, and cauſe his People to turn from their Sins, to conſider and humble themſelves; but the Wicked and Obſtinate fall under the Judgments of God. He compares their Enemies, the *Aſſyrians*, to a Tempeſt, which riſes over Night, and in the Morning is gone; with a triumphant Concluſion, uttered by the Prophet in the Name of the People of God.

Q. *What do you apprehend to be the true Senſe of Verſe 9?*

A. In that Day ſhall his ſtrong Cities be as a forſaken Bough, and an uppermoſt Branch, which they left, becauſe of the Children of Iſrael; *and there ſhall be Deſolation.* In the Day of *Jacob's* Trouble, of which he ſpake, Ver. 4. and here, and afterwards ſpeaks.——*An uppermoſt Branch.* Which he that pruneth the Tree neglecteth, either becauſe he eſteems it uſeleſs and inconſiderable, or becauſe he cannot reach it.——*Which they left, becauſe of the Children of* Iſrael. The Senſe is, either, 1. *Which they*, to wit, the Enemies, *left*, or, *which ſhall be left* (the active Verb being put imperſonally, as it frequently is in the *Hebrew* Text) *becauſe of*, or *for the Children of* Iſrael; which God inclined their Hearts to leave or ſpare, out of his Love to his *Iſrael*. Thus this is mentioned as a Mercy, or Mitigation of the Calamity. But this ſeems not to agree either with the foregoing or following Words, both which manifeſtly ſpeak of the Greatneſs of the Judgment. And that their ſtrong Cities were not left for them, but taken from them, ſeems evident from Ver. 3, 4. Or, 2. As the Cities (which Words are eaſily underſtood out of the former Part of the Verſe, where they are expreſſed) *which they* (to wit, the *Canaanites*, as the LXX expreſs it, and it was needleſs to name them, becauſe the Hiſtory was ſo well known to them to whom the Prophet writes) *left* or *forſook* (which they did either by departing from them, or being deſtroyed out of them) *becauſe of* (or *before*, or *for Fear of*) *the Children of* Iſrael. And this was a very fit Example to awaken the *Iſraelites* to a ſerious Belief of this Threatening, becauſe God had inflicted the ſame Judgment upon the *Canaanites*, and that for the ſame Sins of which they were guilty.

CHAP. XVIII.

God in Defence of his Church, will deſtroy the Ethiopians; *the Benefit thereof to the Church.*

Q. PRAY *what is the Subject of the Prophecy in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a Prophecy againſt the *Ethiopians*, who, by a Divine Sentence, are to be trodden down by their Enemies; but God would take Compaſſion on his Church, and receive the little Remnant as an Offering to himſelf. The Prophet ſpeaks likewiſe of the Converſion of the *Gentiles* to God and Chriſt, by the Preaching of the Goſpel; the Accompliſhment of which Promiſe is recorded in the Hiſtory of the Church.

Q. *The firſt Verſe has theſe Words*; Woe to the Land ſhadowing with Wings, which is beyond the Rivers of *Ethiopia*; *the Senſe of which ſeems to me not very clear?*

A. Woe to the Land. Either, 1. Of *Arabia*; or, 2. Of *Ethiopia* beyond *Egypt*; or, 3. Of *Egypt*, as ſome both antient and latter Interpreters judge; of whom he ſpeaks more darkly in this Chapter. But this Controverſy will be beſt determined by examining the following Deſcription. ——*Shadowing with Wings.* The Title of *Wings* is often given, both in Scripture and in other Authors, to divers Things which have ſome kind of Reſemblance to Wings, as to the Battlements of a Houſe or Temple, *Mat.* iv. 5. to the Skirts of a Garment, *Ruth* iii. 9. to an Army, *Iſa.* viii. 8. and to the Sails of a Ship, as this Word is here commonly underſtood, and as uſed in other Authors. And *ſhadowing with Wings*, is nothing elſe, but overſpread or filled with them. Which Title may be given either to *Ethiopia* or *Egypt*, in regard of the great Numbers, either, 1. Of their Armies. Or rather, 2. Of their Ships or Veſſels ſailing upon the Sea or Rivers: For, 1. In theſe they exceeded moſt Nations who had Dealings with the *Jews*, whereas other Nations equalled or exceeded them in numerous Armies: But they had an innumerable Company of Ships or Boats, not only becauſe of the Commodiouſneſs of the River *Nilus*, and its many Branches, and the *Red-ſea*, and the *Midland-ſea*, for Navigation; but alſo becauſe of the frequent Overflowings of the *Nilus* over their Land, which made them abſolutely neceſſary. 2. This beſt ſuits with the next Verſe. The LXX and *Chaldee* Interpreters who beſt underſtood the *Hebrew* Words and Phraſes expound it ſo.——*Which is beyond.* Or, *on this Side*, as this Particle is rendered, *Numb.* xxi. 13. Or, as others tranſlate it, *beſides*, which may comprehend both Sides; and ſo the Land of which he ſpeaks is ſuppoſed to be ſituated on both Sides of the River or Rivers; which is moſt true both of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*.——*The Rivers of.* A learned Writer underſtands this of three or four Rivers of *Arabia-Chuſæa*, whereof one flows into the *Red-ſea*, another into the *Midland-ſea*, and a third into a great Lake. Which being very inconſiderable Rivers, and running in ſuch diſtant Channels, 'tis not probable that this Land ſhould receive it's Denomination from them. And therefore it ſeems more reaſonable to underſtand this of the greater River *Nilus*, which comes from *Ethiopia*, and runs through the Length of the Land, and through *Egypt*, into the *Midland-ſea*; and which is here called *Rivers*, in the plural Number, as alſo *Exod.* vii. 19. *Iſa.* vii. 18. *Nahum* iii. 8. And ſo it might well be called, either for its Greatneſs, or for the many Rivers that run into it, or for the various Streams or Channels into which it is divided; as *Tigris*, for the ſame Reaſon, hath the ſame Title *Rivers* aſcribed to it, *Nahum* ii. 6.——*Of Ethiopia.* Heb. *of Cuſh*. By which he ſeems to underſtand, 1. *Arabia*, which in many Places of Scripture comes under that Name, though not in all Places, as ſome learned Men contend. Nor doth this Place ſeem to be underſtood here, becauſe theſe Rivers were not interpoſed between *Judea*, in which *Iſaiah* wrote this Prophecy, and *Arabia*; nor were the Rivers of *Arabia*, mentioned before, interpoſed between *Judea* and *Egypt* or *Ethiopia*: And beſides, thoſe Rivers were but ſmall and inconſiderable, and therefore this Land, whatſoever it is, could not have been denominated from them, eſpecially when it is not properly ſituated either beyond them, or on this Side of them. But if this *Cuſh* be *Arabia*, perhaps it were better to underſtand *the Rivers*, or *the River*, as it was explained before, of the *Red-ſea*, beyond which indeed both *Egypt* and *Ethiopia* were, in reference to *Arabia*. And whereas it may be objected, That the Title of *River*, or *Rivers* is very improperly given to the Sea, it may be fairly anſwer'd, That as Rivers are ſometimes called by the Name of *the Sea*, as *Euphrates* is, *Iſa.* xxi. 1. *Jer.* li. 36. So this very Word here render'd *River*, is uſed concerning the Sea in the *Hebrew* Text, *Jonah* ii. 3. and indeed may not unfitly be given to the *Red-ſea*, which both for it's Length and Breadth hath a manifeſt Reſemblance to ſome large Rivers in the World. And the Words may very truly be underſtood either of *Egypt*, or *Ethiopia*, both which Countries, in this Senſe, are beyond the *Rivers*, or *River* of *Arabia*. Or, 2. *Ethiopia*, properly ſo called: For the *Cuſhites* or *Ethiopians* are diſtinguiſhed by *Herodotus*, and divers other both antient and later Writers, into the Eaſtern, which ſeem to be the *Arabians*; and the Weſtern, which ſeem to be the *Ethiopians* under *Egypt*. And it is probably thought, that theſe *Cuſhites* were firſt planted in *Arabia*, and upon their Increaſe, Part of them paſſed over into *Africa*, by croſſing the *Red-ſea*, which was a very ſhort and eaſy Paſſage, and ſettled there. And according to this Interpretation of the Word, the Deſcription of the Land given in the laſt Clauſe of this Verſe agrees either to *Ethiopia*, or to *Egypt*, as is evident from what hath been already ſaid for the clearing of this dark and difficult Verſe.

CHAP. XIX.

The Confuſion of Egypt; *their inteſtine Diſſenſion; their Idols deceive them; cruel Lords over them; their Waters fail them; their Trade dead; their Princes and Counſellors made fooliſh; their Terror before the Lord. The Calling of* Egypt *to the Church. The Covenant of* Egypt, Aſſyria *and* Iſrael.

Q. *WHAT gave Occaſion to the Prophet to denounce thoſe terrible Judgments we here read againſt* Egypt?

A. Becauſe the *Egyptians* truſted in the Defence of their Country, in the Multitude of their Idols, and in the Valour of their Men, the Lord ſhews that he will come over all their Munitions in a ſwift Cloud; that their Idols ſhall tremble at his coming, and that the Hearts of Men ſhall faint; he ſhews that the Sea, and *Nile* their great River, whereby they thought themſelves moſt ſure, ſhould not be able to defend them from his Anger, but that he would ſend the *Aſſyrians* among them, who ſhould treat them as Slaves. Their Trade and Counſels are to be brought to nought; for it is uſual in Scripture to deſcribe the Deſtruction of a Country, by taking away the Comodities thereof, as in Vines, Fleſh, Fiſh, and ſuch like Things whereby Countries are enriched. Conſidering that through the Occaſion of the *Egyptians*, the *Jews* made not God their Defence, but put their Truſt in them, and were therefore now puniſhed, they ſhall fear, leſt the like befal them. The *Egyptians* are to be converted to the Worſhip of the true God; and this Prophecy was accompliſhed in the Time of *Chriſt*. By the two Nations of *Egypt* and *Aſſyria*, which were then the chief Enemies of the Church, is ſhewn, that the *Gentiles* and the *Jews* ſhould be joined together in one Faith and Religion, and ſhould be all one Fold under *Chriſt* their Shepherd.

Q. *I requeſt your Explanation of Verſe* 18?

A. In that Day ſhall five Cities in the Land of Egypt *ſpeak the Language of* Canaan, *and ſwear to the Lord of Hoſts; one ſhall be called the City of Deſtruction.*——*In that Day.* After that Time, as this Phraſe is uſed, *Iſa.* iv. 2, *&c.* In the Times of the Goſpel, which are oft noted in the Prophets by that very Expreſſion.——*Shall five Cities.* A conſiderable Number of their chief Cities, a certain Number being put for an uncertain.——*Speak the Language of* Canaan. Profeſs the *Jewiſh* Religion, agree with them in the ſame Mind; which is fitly ſignified by ſpeaking the ſame Language, becauſe *out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh.* Thus the changing and purifying a People's Lips, is uſed to ſignify the Change of their Hearts and Lives, *Zeph.* iii. 9. and praiſing God with one Mouth, to note their Unity and Conſent in the Faith, *Rom.* xv. 6.——*Swear to the Lord of Hoſts.* It is well obſerved by ſome learned Interpreters, that he doth not ſay, *ſwear by the Lord*, which is the moſt common Phraſe, and which, being one eminent Part and Act of Worſhip, is put for the whole, but *ſwear to the Lord*; which Phraſe is alſo uſed, 2 *Chron.* xv. 14. *Pſ.* cxxxii. *Iſa.* xlv. 23. and it implies the Dedication or Oblation, and yielding up of a Perſon or Thing to the Lord, by a ſolemn Vow, Covenant, or Oath, as appears by the Places now quoted. In like Manner God is ſaid to *ſwear to* a Man, *Deut.* xxvi. 15. and one Man to another, *Gen.* xxi. 23. when they oblige themſelves by Oath to do ſuch or ſuch a Thing for them. And therefore what is called *ſwearing to God*, *Iſa.* xlv. 23. is rendered or expounded *bowing the Knee* (which ſignifies the ſubjecting a Man's ſelf) *to God*, and *confeſſing to God*, *Rom.* xiv. 11.——*One.* Not one of the five, for they are ſuppoſed to be ſaved in the foregoing Clauſe; but one City, or another City, the ſixth City. As divers Cities ſhall be converted and ſaved, ſo other Cities ſhall continue in their Impenitence, and be deſtroyed. Others render this Clauſe thus, *One* of them *ſhall be called* (or, *ſhall be*; for *to be called* is oft put for *to be*) *the City of the Sun*; or, as the *Grecians* call it, *Heliopolis*; which the *Egyptians* call *On*, *Gen.* xli. 45. a very eminent City, and a chief Seat of Idolatry, being a City of Prieſts, as *Strabo* reports; and therefore it's Converſion to the Faith was more wonderful.

CHAP. XX.

The Captivity of Egypt *and* Ethiopia *repreſented, in order to take off the* Jews *from ſeeking to them for Help.*

Q. *I deſire you will inform me what King of* Aſſyria Sargon *was, mentioned Verſe* 1?

A. This is much diſputed. It's well known, that one and the ſame Perſon hath ſeveral Names both in Scripture and profane Authors. And therefore this may be either, 1. *Salmaneſer*, who when he took *Samaria*, might alſo, by *Tartan*, take this Place. Or, 2. *Sennacherib*, who, before he came to *Jeruſalem*, *came up againſt and took all the fenced Cities of* Judah, 2 *Kings* xviii. 13. of which *Aſhdod* might be reckoned one, as being in the Tribe of *Judah*, *Joſ.* xiii. 3. and taken by *Hezekiah* from the *Philiſtines*, as it ſeems probable from 2 *Kings* xviii. 8. Or, 3. *Eſarhaddon*, *Sennacherib*'s Son, who by cutting off the firſt Letter, is called *Sarchedon*, *Tobit* i. 21. and thence, poſſibly, by Abbreviation, *Sargon*: Who might do this Thing in *Hezekiah*'s Time, ſome Years after his Father's Death, and his coming to the Empire, though not recorded in Scripture: For no doubt there were many great Actions wholly omitted in the ſacred Writings.

Q. *Did* Iſaiah, *as ſeems to be affirmed in the 3d Verſe,* Walk three Years naked and bare foot?

A. Not conſtantly, but when he went abroad among the People, to whom this was appointed for a Sign. Some think it was only three Days, a *Day* being uſually put for a Year in prophetical Scriptures, as *Numb.* xiv. 33, 34. *Ezek.* iv. 4, 5, 6. But although *a Day* be put for *a Year*, yet *a Year* is never put for *a Day*. However, we are not to ſuppoſe that he went wholly naked, which had been indecent and ſcandalous, and withal very dangerous, at leſt to do ſo for three Years; but without his upper Garment, as Slaves and Priſoners uſed to do, whoſe Poſture he was to repreſent, Verſe 4.

CHAP. XXI.

The Prophet's Fear and Trouble at his Viſion of Babylon's *Ruin by the* Medes *and* Perſians. *He mocks* Babel. Edom, *ſcorning the Prophet, is called to Repentance. The Time of* Arabia's *Calamity ſet.*

Q. WHAT *is the Subject of the Prophecy contained in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a Prophecy concerning the Ruin of the *Babylonians*, by the *Perſians* and *Medes*; and the Prophet expreſſes his Horror in hearing and ſeeing, to intimate the dreadful Horror which ſhould ſeize upon them. The Prophet's Viſion, concerning the Fall of *Babylon*, and a Speech made to the *Jews*, with a Prophecy concerning the Judgments that ſhould befal the *Edomites*, as alſo the *Arabians*. The Pity which the *Grecians* ſhewed to the fugitive *Edomites*, is here mentioned; as alſo the Ruin and Deſtruction of the Children of *Kedar*, who were expert in the Uſe of Bows and Arrows.

Q. *In what Senſe do you underſtand the firſt Verſe?*

A. Let us firſt recite the Words, and then try to explain them; *The Burden of the Deſart of the Sea, as Whirl-winds in the South paſs through, ſo it cometh from the Deſart, from a terrible Land.* ——— *Deſart of the Sea.* Of *Babylon*, as is evident from her Deſtroyers, the *Medians*, Ver. 2. 9. She ſeems to be called *Deſart*, prophetically, to intimate, that although ſhe was now a moſt populous City and Kingdom, yet ſhortly ſhould be turned into a deſolate Wilderneſs, as was threatened, Chap. xiii. 19, *&c.* But the Word here rendered *Deſart*, ſometimes ſignifies a *Plain*; and thus it moſt properly agrees with *Babylon* and the Land about it, which Geographers note to be a very plain Country, without any conſiderable Mountains in it. It is called the *Deſart of the Sea*, becauſe it's ſituated by the Sea, as *the Iſles of the Sea*, *Eſt.* x. 1. are thoſe Countries which were beſide the Sea. And the Title of *the Sea* might well be given to the Waters of *Babylon*, becauſe of the great Plenty and Multitude of them, the great Channel of *Euphrates*, and the ſeveral leſſer Channels cut out, and the vaſt Lakes of Water; in which reſpects it is ſaid *to ſit upon many Waters*, *Jer.* li. 31. the Name of *Sea* being given by the *Hebrews* to every great Collection of Waters.——— *In the South.* In thoſe Parts which lay Southward from *Judea*, where there were many and great Deſarts, in which the Winds have great Force. ——— *Paſs through.* As meeting with no Stop or Oppoſition.——— *So it.* The Burden or Judgments, or *he*, the *Median*, as in the next Verſe. ——— *From the Deſart.* From *Media* and *Perſia*; thus expreſſed, either becauſe thoſe Countries were full of Deſarts; or becauſe a great Deſart lay between them and *Chaldea*, as Geographers and Hiſtorians report.——— *From a terrible Land.* From the *Medes*, a warlike and formidable People as appears both from ſacred and profane Writers.

CHAP. XXII.

The Anguiſh of Judah; *the Prophet much grieved by the* Perſians, Medes, *and* Aſſyrians; *he reproves their human Wiſdom, and profane Joy, which God would certainly puniſh.* Shebnah's *Deprivation for his Pride.* Eliakim *put in his Place.*

Q. PRAY *what is the Argument purſued in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet ſpeaks to *Jeruſalem*, whoſe Inhabitants were fled up to the Houſe-tops, for fear of their Enemies the *Perſians*. He puts them in mind how God delivered them once from *Sennacherib*, who brought the *Perſians* and *Cyrenians* with him, that they might, by returning to God, avoid the great Plague which they ſhould ſuffer by *Nebuchadnezzar*. *Shebna* is reproved and threatened for his Pride, and *Eliakim* put in his Place.

Q. *Pray give the Interpretation of the third Verſe?*

A. All thy Rulers are fled together; they are bound by the Archers; all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far. ——— *All thy Rulers.* *Zedekiah* and his chief Commanders, whoſe Flight he foretels.——— *Bound by the Archers.* Heb. *from the Bow*; *i. e.* So as they were diſabled from uſing the Bow; which is an uſual *Hebraiſm*, as *from a King*, is put for *from being a King*, 1 *Sam.* xv. 23. and *from ſeeing*, *Pſ.* lxix. 23. is rendered that *they cannot ſee*, *Rom.* xi. 10. But this Word is by ſome, and may well be joined to the foregoing Clauſe; for the Words in the *Hebrew* lie thus, *All thy Rulers are fled together from the Bow* (or *Bowmen*, as this Word is render'd, *Iſa.* xxi. 17.) *they are bound.* Which ſeems moſt plain and enforced, and ſuits beſt with the following Words, as alſo with the Prophet's Uſe of the ſame Phraſe, Chap. xxi. 15. *they fled*——*from the bent Bow*, *&c.*——— *All that are found in thee.* That remain there with *Zedekiah* in the Siege; for thoſe who had fled to the *Chaldeans* had ſaved their Lives and Liberties.——— *Are bound together.*——— In Fetters, *Jer.* lii. 11.——— *Fled from far.* Which fled to *Jeruſalem* from the remoteſt Parts of the Land, and from their Enemies; whereof ſome had fled away, but were purſued and overtaken by their Enemies, and bound as others had been. And the Words ſeem to be well rendered, *they fled far away*, as this very Word is uſed, *Iſa.* xxiii. 7. which may be underſtood of the ſame Perſons who fled, but were taken in their Flight, as was now ſaid; or of others, who fled away, when others abode there and were bound.

CHAP. XXIII.

The Deſtruction of Tyre, *from God, for her Pride. The Time of her riſing again, and Converſion to God.*

Q. THE *miſerable Overthrow of* Tyre *is foretold in this Chapter; but in what Manner?*

A. The City of *Tyre*, which now ſtood in it's Strength and Glory, being ſeated in an Iſland, upon a Rock, abounding in Riches, mighty in Naval Power, having lately conquered that Navy the *Aſſyrians* had brought againſt them. Yet this City was, according to this Prophecy, deſtroyed, and that twice, firſt by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and long afterwards by *Alexander the Great*: And Although this Prophecy ſeems directly and properly to reſpect the former Deſtruction, yet it ſeems to have ſome Reference to the latter alſo. The Prophet ſhews, that God, by the Preaching of the Goſpel, would call *Tyre* to Repentance, and turn her Heart from Avarice and filthy Gain to the true Worſhip of God.

Q. *I deſire your Expoſition of Verſe* 15?

A. And it ſhall come te paſs in that Day, that Tyre *ſhall be forgotten ſeventy Years, according to the Days of one King: After the End of ſeventy Years ſhall* Tyre *ſing as an Harlot.* ——Tyre *ſhall be forgotten.* Neglected and forſaken by thoſe that uſed to reſort thither. —— *Seventy Years.* During the whole Time of the *Jewiſh* Captivity in *Babylon.* For *Tyrus* was taken by *Nebuchadnezzar, Jer.* xxvii. 3, 8. *Ezek.* xxvi. 7. a little after the taking of *Jeruſalem,* and was reſtored by the Favour of the *Perſian* Monarchs, after the Return of the *Jews* from the Captivity of *Babylon.*—— *According to the Days of one King.* Either, 1. Of the Kingdom of *Babylon,* which laſted ſo long after this Time; the Word *King* being put for *Kingdom,* as it is *Dan.* vii. 17. and viii. 21. Or, 2. Of one royal Race, of *Nebuchadnezzar,* including his Son, and his Son's Son, in whom his Family and Kindom were to expire, *Ezek.* xxviii. 7. ——Tyre *ſhall ſing as an Harlot.* She ſhall, by Degrees, return to her former State of Proſperity and Traffick, whereby ſhe ſhall eaſily entice the Nation of the World to converſe and trade with her, as Harlots uſe to entice their Cuſtomers by laſcivious Songs.

Q. *When, by whom, and on what Occaſion was this Prophecy againſt* Tyre *accompliſhed?*

A. As the Hiſtory of the Fate of *this* City will help to explain not only this, but ſeveral other Paſſages both of *Iſaiah* and *Ezekiel,* and is very curious in itſelf, we ſhall give it, as related by the learned Dr. *Prideaux,* thus: “ *Eluleus* King of *Tyre,* ſeeing the *Philiſtines* brought low by the War which *Hezekiah* had lately made upon them, laid hold of the Opportunity of reducing *Gath* again under his Obedience, which had ſome Time before revolted from him. Whereon the *Gittits* applying themſelves to *Salmaneſer,* engaged him in their Cauſe, ſo that he marched with his whole Army againſt the *Tyrians.* Whereon *Sidon, Ace* (afterwards called *Ptolemais,* and now *Acon*) and the other maritim Towns of *Phœnicia,* which had, till then, been ſubject to the *Tyrians,* revolted from them, and ſubmitted to *Salmaneſer.* But the *Tyrians* having in a Sea-Fight, with twelve Ships only, beaten the *Aſſyrian* and *Phœnician* Fleets, both joined together, which conſiſted of ſixty Ships; this gave them ſuch a Reputation in naval Affairs, and made their Name ſo terrible in this ſort of War, that *Salmaneſer* would not venture to cope with them any more at Sea, but turning the War into a Siege left an Army to block up the City, and returned into *Aſſyria.* The Forces which he left there much diſtreſſed the Place by ſtopping their Aquæducts, and cutting off all the Conveyances of Water to them. To relieve themſelves in this Exigency they digged Wells, from whence they drew up the Water, and by Help of them held out five Years, at the End of which *Salmaneſer* dying, this delivered them for that Time. But they being over puffed up with this Succeſs, and growing very inſolent hereon, provoked that Prophecy againſt them in this Chapter of *Iſaiah,* which foretold the miſerable Overthrow, that ſhould afterwards happen unto them, and was accordingly effected by *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon.*

“ In the 26th Year of the Captivity of *Jehoiachin,* which was the 15th after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem, Nebuchadnezzar* made himſelf Maſter of *Tyre,* after a Siege of thirteen Years Continuance, and utterly deſtroyed the Place, that is, the City which was on the Continent, the Ruins of which were afterwards called *Palæ-Tyrus,* or *old Tyre.* But before it came to this Extremity, the Inhabitans had removed moſt of their Effects into an Iſland about Half a Mile diſtant from the Shore, and there built them a new City. And therefore, when *Nebuchadnezzar* entered that, which he had ſo long beſieged, he found little there wherewith to reward his Soldiers in the Spoil of the Place, which they had ſo long laboured to take, and therefore wrecking his Anger upon the Buildings, and the few Inhabitants who were left in them, he raſed the whole Town to the Ground, and ſlew all he found therein. After this it never more recovered its former Glory, but the City on the Iſland became the *Tyre* that was afterwards ſo famous by that Name, the other on the Continent, never riſing any higher than to become a Village by the Name of *Old Tyre,* as was before ſaid. That it was this *Tyre* only that *Nebuchadnezzar* beſieged, and not the other on the Iſland, appears from the Deſcription of the Siege, which we have in *Ezekiel.* For thereby we find that *Nebuchadnezzar* made a Fort againſt the Place, and caſt up a Mount againſt it, and erected Engins of Battery to break down its Walls, which could not be ſaid of the *Tyre* on the Iſland; for that was was all ſurrounded by the Sea. And that he alſo took and utterly deſtroyed that City, appears likewiſe from the Writings of the ſame Prophet. But that the City on the Iſland then eſcaped this Fate, is manifeſt from the *Phœnician* Hiſtories. For in them, after the Death of *Ithobal* (who was ſlain in the Concluſion of this War) we are told that *Baal* ſucceeded in the Kingdom, and reigned ten Years; and that after him ſucceeded ſeveral temporary Magiſtrates one after another, who, by the Name of *Judges,* had the Government of the Place. It is moſt probable, that after *Nebuchadnezzar* had taken and deſtroyed the old Town, thoſe who had retired into the Iſland, came to Terms and ſubmitted to him, and that thereon *Baal* was deputed to be their King under him, and reigned ten Years: That at the End of the ſaid ten Years (which happened in the very Year that *Nebuchadnezzar* was again reſtored after his Diſtraction) *Baal* being then dead, or depoſed, the Government, to make it the more dependent on the *Babylonians,* was changed into that of temporary Magiſtrates, who, inſtead of the Name of Kings, had only that of *Suffetes,* or *Judges,* given unto them, which was a Name well known among the *Carthagenians,* who were deſcended of the *Tyrians,* for ſo their chief Magiſtrates were called. It had its Derivation from the *Hebrew* Word *Shophetim,* i. e. *Judges,* which was the very Name whereby the chief Governors of *Iſrael* were called, for ſeveral Generations, before they had Kings. And under this Sort of Government the *Tyrians* ſeem to have continued for ſeveral Generations before they had Kings. And under this Sort of Government the *Tyrians* ſeem to have continued for ſeveral Years after, till they were reſtored to their former State, by *Darius Hyſtaſpes*, ſeventy Years after.

“And here I cannot but obſerve, how exactly the Chronology of the *Phænician* Annals agreeth with that of the Holy Scripture. *Ezekiel* placeth the taking of *Tyre* by *Nebuchadnezzar* in the 26th Year of the Captivity of *Jehoiachin*. For in the firſt Month, and in the firſt Day of the Month of the 27th Year he ſpeaketh of that City, as newly taken by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and therefore the taking of it muſt have been in the Year before, that is, in the twenty-ſixth of the ſaid Captivity. This fell in the 32d Year of the Reign of *Nebuchadnezzar*, according to the *Babyloniſh* Account, from which Year according to *Ptolemy*'s Canon, the firſt Year of *Cyrus* at *Babylon*, will be the 36th, and ſo, according to the *Phænician* Annals, will it be exactly the ſame. For, according to them, after the taking of *Tyre* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Baal* had the Government of it ten Years, *Ecnibal* two Months, *Chelbes* ten Months, *Abbar* three Months, *Mitgonus* and *Geraſtatus* ſix Years, *Balatator* one Year, *Merball* four Years, and *Hirom* 20 Years, in whoſe 14th Year, ſay the ſame Annals, *Cyrus* began his Empire. And putting all theſe together, the 14th of *Hirom* will be exactly the 36th Year from the 32d of *Nebuchadnezzar*, which was the 26th of the Captivity of *Jehoiachin*, the Year according to *Ezekiel*, in which *Tyre* was taken. And therefore it doth hereby appear, that the ſaid *Phænician* Annals place the taking of *Tyre* in the very ſame Year that *Ezekiel* doth. For the twenty-ſixth Year from the Captivity of *Jehoiachin*, computed downward, in which *Ezekiel* placeth it, and the thirty ſixth Year from the 14th of *Hirom* computed upward, in which the *Phænician* Annals place it, will be exactly the ſame Year.

“But although what is predicted of the Deſtruction of *Tyre* by *Iſaiah*, and by *Ezekiel*, was in Part verified in the Deſtruction of that City, by *Nebuchadnezzar*, yet there are ſeveral Particulars in theſe Prophecies, which ſeem applicable to this only. For *Nebuchadnezzar's* Devaſtation reached no farther than *Old Tyre*, thoſe who were in the Iſland eſcaped that ruin. But the Deſolation of both is plainly threatened in ſome Parts of theſe Prophecies, that is, of that which ſtood on the Iſland, as well as that which was on the Continent, and this *Alexander* only effected. *Old Tyre* he wholly demoliſhed to make his Cauſey to the New; by the Means of which having taken that new Town, he burnt it down to the Ground, and deſtroyed or enſlaved all the Inhabitants. Eight thouſand he ſlew in the Sackage of the Town, and two thouſand of thoſe he took Priſoners, he cauſed to be crucified. Thoſe who were before ſent to *Carthage*, eſcaped this Ruin, and a great Number were ſaved by the *Sidonians*, and ſecretly conveyed away in their Ships, on the taking of the Place; all the reſt, to the Number of thirty thouſand, were ſold for Slaves. The Cruelty to the two thouſand who were crucified, was unworthy of a generous Conqueror. This *Alexander* did to gratify his Rage, for being ſo long detained before the Place, and there ſo valiantly reſiſted; but afterwards, to palliate the Matter, he gave out, that it was done by way of juſt Revenge upon them, for their Murdering their Maſters; and that being Slaves by Origin, Crucifixion was the Puniſhment proper for them. This depended upon an old Story. For ſome Ages before, the Slaves of *Tyre* having made a Conſpiracy againſt their Maſters, murdered them all in one Night, (ſave only *Strato*, whom his Slave ſecretly ſaved) and marrying their Miſtreſſes, continued Maſters of the Town; and from them the preſent *Tyrians* being deſcended, *Alexander* pretended thus to revenge on them the Murder committed by their Progenitors ſome Ages before; and to make it look the more plauſible, he ſaved all of the Family of *Strato*, as not being involved in the Guilt, and among them *Azelmelic* their King, who was of it, and continued the Crown ſtill to him and his Family, after he had again repeopled the Place. For having thus rid it of its former Inhabitants, he planted it a-new with Colonies drawn from the neighbouring Places, and from thence would be eſteemed the Founder of that City, though in Truth, he was the cruel Deſtroyer of it.”

CHAP. XXIV.

Judgments on Judah *for their Defilements and Tranſgreſſions. A Remnant ſhall praiſe God. God, by his Judgment on his People and their Enemies, will advance his Kingdom.*

Q. P*RAY what is the Deſign and Import of this Prophecy?*

A. This Prophecy is a Concluſion of that which hath been threatened to the *Jews*, and other Nations, from the thirteenth Chapter; and therefore by the Earth is meant thoſe Lands which were before named. Judgments are propheſied againſt *Judah*, for their Defilement and Tranſgreſſions, but however, a Remnant ſhould be ſaved, to praiſe the Lord, with an Exhortation to Thankſgiving for it. The Prophet proceeds to ſpeak again of the Deſtruction of the *Jews*, for their Wickedneſs, and alſo of the Grace and Mercy of God towards them.

Q. *Pray give the true Senſe of Verſe 22?*

A. And they ſhall be gathered together as Priſoners are gathered in the Pit; and ſhall be ſhut up in the Priſon; and after many Days ſhall they be viſited. —— *Shall be gathered together.* By God's ſpecial Providence, in order to their Puniſhment, as the following Words ſhew. And thus the unbelieving *Jews* were generally gathered together at *Jeruſalem*, to their ſolemn Feaſt, when *Titus* came and beſieged; and after ſome Time took and deſtroyed them. Which was a very remarkable Hand of God, as *Joſephus* and other Hiſtorians obſerved. And this, very poſſibly may be meant in this Place; it being confeſſed, that divers Paſſages, in this Chapter, concern the Times of the *Meſſiah*. ———— *Shall be ſhut up in Priſon.* As Malefactors, taken in ſeveral Places, are uſually brought to one common Priſon, where they are reſerved in order for their Trial and Puniſhment. ——*Shall be viſited.* Either, 1. In Judgment, as *viſited* is often uſed. So the Senſe is, after they have been puniſhed with long Impriſonment, and tormented with Expectation and Fear, they ſhall be brought forth to receive condign Puniſhment. Or rather, 2. In Mercy. And ſo the Senſe may be either, 1. After the *Jews* ſhall have ſuffered many grievous Things from the *Aſſyrians, Chaldeans, Perſians and others,* at laſt their *Meſſiah* and Deliverer ſhall come into the World, *&c.* Or, 2. After the unbelieving and apoſtate *Jews* ſhall have been ſhut up in Unbelief, and in great Tribulation, for many Ages together, they ſhall be convinced of their Sin, in crucifying their *Meſſiah*, and brought home to God and *Chriſt*, by true Repentance.

Chap. XXV.

God is glorious in his Judgments on Babel; *and in his People's Salvation.*

Q. PLEASE *to interpret the 11th Verſe?*

A. *And he ſhall ſpread forth his Hand in the Midſt of them, as he that ſwimmeth ſpreadeth forth his Hands to ſwim: And he ſhall bring down their Pride, together with the Spoils of their Hands.* ——*He.* Either, 1. *Moab,* who being plunged into a Sea of Troubles, ſhall endeavour to ſwim out of it, but to no Purpoſe. Or rather, 2. The Lord, who is deſigned by this Pronoun *he*, both in the latter Clauſe of this Verſe, and in the following Verſe; whoſe Power they ſhall be no more able to reſiſt, than the Waters can reſiſt a Man that ſwims, who, with great Facility divides them as he paſſes through them. ——— *Shall ſpread forth his Hands*, or *ſtretch forth his Hands.* With all that Wealth they have gained by Rapine, and ſpoiling of God's People, and others. But the Words are rendered by others, *with* or *by* (as this *Hebrew* Particle is uſed, *Eſther* ix. 25.) *the Arms of his Hands*; which he may mention, becauſe the Strength of a Man, and of his Hands, conſiſteth in his Arms; whence alſo *the Arm*, in Scripture, is oft put for Strength; or by the *Motion* or *Stroke of his Hands*, as all the antient Tranſlators do, in Effect render it. And this ſeems to agree beſt with the Metaphor here borrowed from one that ſwimmeth, which is performed in that Manner.

Chap. XXVI.

A Song inciting to Confidence in God, and celebrating the Bleſſings of Righteouſneſs; his Judgments on their Enemies, and Favour to his People; their Chaſtiſement, Repentance and Hope.

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects celebrated in this Song?*

A. This is a Song of Praiſe, whereby the *Jews* thank their omnipotent God for Deliverance, with an earneſt Exhortation to truſt in God, and to walk in the Paths of his Commandments. The Rod of God is neceſſary, but the Wicked are and ſtill remain hardened. How the Lord did deal with the *Jews*, their Repentance, Hope and Comfort, in his coming down from Heaven; which in Scripture he is frequently ſaid to do, when he undertakes any great and glorious Work, either of delivering his People, or deſtroying their Enemies.

In this Song there are ſo many ſublime Expreſſions concerning the Judgments of God, his righteous Dealings with the Wicked, and his merciful Proceedings with his People; all which, tho' particularly applicable to the State of the *Jews* at that Time, yet now may be of uſe to the pious Perſon, to awaken his Zeal, and ſtir up his Affections when he ſees the various Diſpenſations of Providence to Mankind.

In that Day ſhall this Song be ſung in the Land of Judah, *We have a ſtrong City, Salvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks. Open ye the Gates, that the righteous Nation which keepeth the Truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whoſe Mind is ſtayed on thee; becauſe he truſteth in thee. Truſt ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord* Jehovah *is everlaſting Strength. For he bringeth down them that are on high, the lofty City he layeth it low, even to the Ground, he bringeth it even to Duſt. The Foot ſhall tread it down, even the Feet of the Poor, and the Steps of the Needy. The Way of the Juſt is Uprightneſs; thou moſt upright, doſt weigh the Path of the Juſt. Yea, in the Way of thy Judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the Deſire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Remembrance of thee. With my Soul have I deſired thee in the Night, yea, with my Spirit within me will I ſeek thee early; for when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs. Let Favour be ſhewed to the Wicked, yet will he not learn Righteouſneſs; in the Land of Uprightneſs will he deal unjuſtly, and will not behold the Majeſty of the Lord. Lord, when thy Hand is lifted up, they will not ſee; but they ſhall ſee, and be aſhamed for their Envy at the People, yea, the Fire of thine Enemies ſhall devour them. Lord, thou wilt ordain Peace for us; for thou alſo haſt wrought all our Works in us, O Lord our God, other Lords beſides thee have had Dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy Name. They are dead, they ſhall not riſe; therefore haſt thou viſited and deſtroyed them, and made all their Memory to periſh. Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a Prayer when thy chaſtning was upon them. Thou haſt increaſed the Nation, O Lord, thou haſt increaſed the Nation, thou art glorified; thou hadſt removed it far unto all the Ends of the Earth. Like as a Woman with Child that draweth near the Time of her Delivery, is in pain, and cryeth out in her Pangs; ſo have we been in thy Sight, O Lord. We have been with Child, we have been in Pain, we have, as it were, brought forth Wind, we have not wrought any Deliverance in the Earth, neither have the Inhabitants of the World fallen. Thy dead Men ſhall live, together with my dead Body ſhall they ariſe: Awake and ſing ye that dwell in Duſt; for thy Dew is as the Dew of Herbs, and the Earth ſhall caſt out the Dead. Come, my People, enter thou into thy Chambers, and ſhut thy Doors about thee; hide thyſelf, as it were, for a little Moment, until the Indignation be overpaſt. For behold the Lord cometh out of his Place, to puniſh the Inhabitants of the Earth for their Iniquity; the Earth alſo ſhall diſcloſe her Blood, and ſhall no more cover her Slain.*

Chap. XXVII.

God's Care over his Vineyard; his Chaſtiſements on them; his ſevere Judgments againſt them; and their Return.

Q. GIVE *me a general Account of the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. Here we have an Account of the Deſtruction of the Enemies of the Church of God, particularly of *Leviathan*, by whom ſome underſtand the *Devil*: But although it may be applied to him in a myſtical Senſe; it ſeems to be literally meant of ſome potent and viſible Adverſary, which ſeems moſt agreeable to the following Verſes, and to the Uſage of this and other Prophets. Here is a Threatning added concerning the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and an Account of the Return of ſome *Jews* from the Lands into which they were diſperſed.

Q. *What do you apprehend to be the genuine Senſe of Verſe* 8?

A. In Meaſure when it ſhooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; he ſtayeth his rough Wind in the Day of the Eaſt Wind.——*In Meaſure.* With Moderation, in certain Proportions which God meeteth out and fitteth to their Strength.——*It ſhooteth forth.* When the Vine ſhooteth forth its luxuriant Branches, he, like the Vine-dreſſer, cutteth them off, but ſo as not to ſpoil or deſtroy the Vine. Or, as divers Interpreters render it, and the Word properly and frequently ſignifies *in* or *by caſting*, or *diſmiſſing*, or *ſending her* or *it out*, or *when thou doſt caſt* or *ſend her out*; to wit, out of her own Land, in which ſhe was planted, into Captivity. He alludes to a Man that divorceth his Wife, which is expreſſed by this Word; but withal intimates, that this ſhall not be peremptory and perpetual, as other Divorces were.——*Thou wilt debate with it.* God is ſaid to *debate* or *contend* with Men, when he executeth his Judgments upon them, *Iſa.* xlix. 25, *&c.*——*His rough Wind.* He mitigateth the Severity of his Judgment. But ſcarce any of the antient or modern Tranſlators agree with our own in this Verſion; nor is the *Hebrew* Verb ever uſed in this Signification of *ſtaying* or *reſtraining*; beſides, our Tranſlation takes no notice of the *Hebrew* Prepoſition. But this Word unqueſtionably ſignifies to *remove* or *take away*, as 2 *Sam.* xx. 13. *Prov.* xxv. 4, 5. and thus moſt Interpreters underſtand it. And ſo the Place is very properly thus rendered, *he* (or, when *he*, which Particle may be eaſily underſtood out of the former Clauſe, as is uſual) *removeth* (underſtand either *it*, to wit, the Vine, or *them*, the Enemies of God and his People. And ſo this agrees with the former Verſe, in repreſenting the different Way of God againſt his People, and his and their Enemies. Either way there is only the Defect of the Pronoun (which is uſual in the *Hebrew* Language) *with*, or *by his rough Wind*, by which ſometimes Vines and other Trees are pulled up by the Roots, as 1 *Kings* xix. 11. whereby he underſtands his moſt terrible Judgments.——*In the Day of the Eaſt Wind.* In the Time when he ſendeth forth the Eaſt Wind, which he mentions, becauſe that Wind, in thoſe Parts, was moſt violent and hurtful to Trees and Fruits, and therefore is uſed to ſignify the moſt grievous Calamities.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The Drunkenneſs of Ephraim; *their Deſtruction; a Remnant ſhall be honourable. Their Unteachableneſs; their Mock at God's Threatnings.* Chriſt *prophecied for a ſure Foundation to Believers, and Deſtruction to Mockers, who are exhorted to amend. God's Providence, its Work and Seaſons towards the Church, ſet out by a Husbandman.*

Q. WHAT *particular Point is purſued in this Chapter?*——

A. Deſtruction is denounced againſt *Ephraim*, but yet the Lord would bring the Remnant of his People unto Safety. The Prophet complains of the Drunkenneſs of *Judah*, and that there is none among them capable and willing to be taught the good Knowledge of God: They ſpeak of the Word of God, with Scorn and Contempt, repeating the Word of God in a ſcoffing Manner, and with a ſtammering and ridiculous Tone, ſaying, *Precept upon Precept*, &c. as if they had ſaid, It ſeems the Prophet takes us to be mere Children, who need to be taught our firſt Rudiments, and that but very ſlowly; and for which the Prophet threatens that they ſhall be overcome by ſtrange Nations. Here is a comfortable Promiſe concerning the ſending the *Meſſiah*, for the Support of Believers, and to aggravate the Miſery of the unbelieving *Jews*, who are ſorely threaten'd. The Prophet exhorts to Amendment of Life, for, as a skilful Husbandman knows his Time and Manner of acting, ſo doth the Lord well know it, who inſtructs the Husbandman in it.

Q. *I deſire your Aſſiſtance in interpreting the* 17*th Verſe:* Judgment alſo will I lay to the Line, and Righteouſneſs to the Plummet, and the Hail ſhall overflow the Hiding-place.

A. Righteouſneſs to the Plummet. I will execute Judgment, as it were by a Line and Plummet annexed to it, *i. e.* with Exactneſs and Care. And this may be underſtood, either 1. That God would ſo order and ſettle Things in his Church, that Juſtice and Judgment ſhould prevail, and not Iniquity, as hitherto it had done. Or rather, 2. That as God would build up and preſerve all Believers upon that Foundation-ſtone, ſo he would ſeverely puniſh, and utterly deſtroy all thoſe unbelieving *Jews*, who ſhould reject that Stone. For *the Line* and *Plummet*, or the *Plumb-line*, was not only uſed in erecting Buildings, but alſo in pulling them down; thoſe Parts of the Building being thus marked out, which were to be demoliſhed; and therefore is uſed in Scripture, to ſignify the Deſtruction of a Place or People, as is evident from 2 *Kings* xxi. 13, *&c.* and this Senſe agrees beſt with the following Clauſe and Verſe.——*The Waters ſhall overflow the Hiding-Place.* My Judgments, which in Scripture are compared to a Storm of Hail or Rain, ſhall diſchoer the Vanity of all your Craft and wicked Devices, and ſhall ſweep you away with the Beſom of Deſtruction, in ſpite of them.

CHAP. XXIX.

The Temple and City of Jeruſalem *deſtroy'd; her unſatiable Enemies; their Senſeleſſneſs and deep Hypocriſy. The Scorner and Oppreſſor being cut off, the reſt ſhall be converted.*

Q. PRAY *give me your Expoſition of Ver.* 1. Woe to *Ariel*, to *Ariel* the City where *David* dwelt: Add ye Year to Year; let them kill Sacrifices.

A. Ariel. This Word ſignifies, *a ſtrong Lion*, or *the Lion of God*, and is uſed concerning *Lion-like* Men, as it is rendered, 1 *Chron.* xi. 22. and of *God's Altar*, *Ezek.* xliii. 15, 16. which ſeems to be thus called, becauſe it devoured and conſumed the Sacrifices upon it, as greedily and irreſiſtibly, as a Lion doth his Prey. If the Altar be here meant, it is put ſynechdochically for the Temple, and the Words may be rendered, *Woe to* Ariel, *to* Ariel of, or in *the City*, or, and *the City*; for that

Conjunction is oft underſtood, *Iſa.* xxii. 6. *Hab.* iii. 11. And ſo the Threatning is denounced both againſt the Temple, and againſt *Jeruſalem.* But he ſeems rather to underſtand it of *Jeruſalem,* as may be gathered, 1. From the next Words, which ſeem to be added by way of Appoſition, to explain what he meant by the ambiguous Term, *Woe to* Ariel, *to* Ariel, even *to the City.* 2. From the following Verſes, which plainly declare that this *Ariel* is the Place which God threatens that he would *diſtreſs* and fill with *Heavineſs,* Ver. 2. and *lay ſiege againſt her,* Ver. 3. and that the *Nations* ſhould *fight againſt her,* Ver. 7. All which Expreſſions agree much better to *Jeruſalem,* than to the Altar. And this City might be called *Ariel,* or the *ſtrong Lion,* either, 1. For its eminent Strength in regard of its Situation and Fortifications, by reaſon whereof it was thought almoſt impregnable, both by themſelves and others, *Lam.* iv. 12. Or, 2. For its Lion-like Fierceneſs and Cruelty, for which ſhe is called the *bloody City, Ezek.* vii. 23, *&c.* and for which her Princes are called *Lions, Ezek.* xix. 2. Or, 3. In regard of the Altar of God, which was erected in, and confined to that City, and in which the Strength and Glory of that City did chiefly conſiſt.——*The City where* David *dwelt.* The royal City and Seat of *David* and his Poſterity. Which is here mentioned as the Ground of their Confidence; and withal, it is implied, that their Relation to *David,* and their ſuppoſed Intereſt in the Promiſes made to him, and to his Seed, ſhould not ſecure them from the Deſtruction here threaten'd.——*Let them kill the Sacrifices.* Go on killing Sacrifices from Time to Time, one Year after another, whereby you think to appeaſe me, and ſecure yourſelves, but all ſhall be in vain.

Q. *The 9th Verſe ſeems likewiſe to want your Explanation.*

A. The Text ſtands thus: *Stay yourſelves and wonder, cry ye out, and cry, They are drunken, but not with Wine; they ſtagger, but not with ſtrong Drink.*——*Stay yourſelves and wonder.* Pauſe upon it, and you will ſee Cauſe to wonder at the Stupidity of this People, of which he is now about to ſpeak. He directs his Speech either to the religious Part of the People, or to thoſe particular Perſons, who heard him, when he deliver'd his Prophecy.——*And cry.* Cry out again and again, either in way of Supplication for them, or rather through Aſtoniſhment and Horror. Or, *They take Pleaſure,* or *ſport themſelves* (as this Word moſt commonly ſignifies) *and riot:* In the midſt of all theſe Threatnings and Dangers, they are ſecure, and give themſelves up to Senſuality; which is Matter of juſt Wonder.——*Not with Wine.* But either, 1. With drinking the Cup of God's Fury, wherewith they are ſaid to be made drunk, *Iſa.* li. 17, 20. And then *they are drunk,* is put for *they ſhall be drunk,* after the Manner of the Prophets. Or 2. With the Spirit of Giddineſs or Stupidity, which makes them like drunken Men, inſenſible of their Danger, and not knowing what to do.

Chap. XXX.

The Prophet threatens the People for their Confidence in Egypt, *and Contempt of God's Word. God's Mercies towards his Church; his Wrath and the People's Joy in the Deſtruction of* Aſſyria.

Q. W*HAT Kind of Prophecies are the Subjects of this Chapter?*

A. The Lord threatens the *Jews* who applied to the *Egyptians* for Help, and foretels it would avail them nothing; he commands his Prophet to write his Prophecy, and complains of the Rebellion of his People, threatening that *Jeruſalem* ſhould be laid waſte, but promiſes Mercy to the Penitent, to whom he would give faithful Teachers, whom they ſhould hear, and caſt away Idolatry. Here is alſo a Prophecy concerning the Deſtruction of the *Aſſyrians,* by the fierce Anger of the Lord, at which the People of God ſhould rejoice.

Q. *In what Senſe do you explain the Prophecy contained in the 6th Verſe?*

A. The Burden of the Beaſts of the South: Into the Land of Trouble and Anguiſh, from whence come the young and old Lion, the Viper and fiery flying Serpent; they will carry Riches upon the Shoulders of young Aſſes, and their Treaſures upon the Bunches of Camels, to a People that ſhall not profit them.——*The Burthen.* Either, 1. The Prophecy, which is often called the Burden. Or rather, 2. The Burden of Riches or Treaſures, as it is explained in the latter Part of the Verſe.——*Beaſts of the South.* Which is carried upon Aſſes or Camels, as it follows, into *Egypt,* which lay ſouth-ward from *Judea.*——*Land of trouble and Anguiſh.* Into *Egypt,* or *Ethiopia,* or *Cuſh*; for both are are joined together in this Matter, *Iſa.* xx. Whoſe Land ſeems to be called *a Land of Trouble and Anguiſh,* prophetically, becauſe they ſhould diſtreſs them, and not help them, as was ſaid of the *Aſſyrians* in the like Caſe, 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 20. Some render it, *by* or *through the Land,* &c. and underſtand it of the vaſt Wilderneſs that lay between *Judea* and *Egypt.* But it is more proper and important to ſpeak of the Land, to which theſe Men and Beaſts went, than of that through which they were to paſs, which it was needleſs ſo particularly to deſcribe; nor was the direct Road from *Judea* to *Egypt,* ſuch a Place as is here deſcribed.——*Whence come the young and old Lion.* Which may be underſtood properly, becauſe theſe and the following Creatures did abound, and were fierce and miſchievous both in *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*; but withal, ſeems to deſign the Craft and Cruelty of that People, and the Danger of their Confederacy with them, and the Harm they ſhould have from them.——*The Viper and fiery flying Serpent.* That there were flying Serpents in thoſe Parts, is affirmed, not only in Scripture, but alſo by *Herodotus, Cicero, Ammianus,* and divers other Authors.——*They.* The *Jews,* deſigned by the ſame Pronoun *they,* Ver. 5.——*Carry their Riches.* Either, 1. To ſecure them; or rather, 2. To procure their Aſſiſtance.——*Young Aſſes.* Much uſed there for carrying Burdens, as is evident from *Gen.* xxxii. 15.——*Bunches of Camels.* Upon the Backs, which were ſtrengthened with Bunches, by a *Synechdoche.*

Q. *Pray explain the Allegory in the 26th Verſe?*

A. The Words run thus: *Moreover the Light of the Moon ſholl be as the Light of the Sun, and the Light of the Sun ſhall be ſeven-fold, as the Light of ſeven Days, in the Day that the Lord bindeth up the Breach of his People, and healeth the Stroke of their Wound.*——*As the Light of the Sun.* For Conſtancy and Brightneſs; which, as the following Clauſe is to be underſtood metaphorically of the moſt glorious and comfortable Condition of God's Church, far ſurpaſſing what it was in former Ages. And ſo this, as well as other Paſſages in this Chapter, concerns the Times of the Goſpel. ——*As the Light of ſeven Days.* As if the Light of ſeven Days were combined together in one: It's Light ſhall then be more tranſcendantly glorious and bright, than it hath hitherto been. Which magnificent Expreſſions ſeem to be too high for the Deliverance of the *Jews*, either from *Sennacherib*, or out of *Babylon*; and much better agree to the Times of the Goſpel, in which the Light is far more clear, and the Grace of God much more abundant than ever it was in former Times. And this Expoſition ſeems the more probable, becauſe it is the Manner of the Prophets, and eſpecially of this, who is rightly called the *Evangelical Prophet*, to take all Occaſions to ſpeak of the Days of the *Meſſiah*, and of the bleſſed Priviledges of that Time and State of the Church, among which, they conſtantly reckon *Light*, whether you take it for Knowledge or for Comfort, to be one.————*And healeth the Stroke of their Wound.* When God ſhall effectually cure the Wounds and Breaches of his People, firſt making up the Breach betwixt him and them, then making *Iſrael* and *Judah* to be one, who now are ſadly divided; and making *Jew* and *Gentile* to be one Fold under one Shepherd, even the *Meſſiah*, which the Prophets foretell, that it ſhall be in the Times of the Goſpel.

CHAP. XXXI.

The Folly and Puniſhment of Truſt in Egypt. *God will fight for* Jeruſalem, *if they will turn unto him.* *The Fall of* Aſſyria.

Q. *CAN you aſſign the Reaſon of the Prophet's forbidding the* Iſraelites *to contract any Friendſhip or Alliance with the* Egyptians?

A. There were two ſpecial Cauſes why the *Iſraelites* ſhould not join Amity with the *Egyptians*: Firſt, Becauſe the Lord had commanded them never to return thither, *Deut.* xvii. 18. and xxviii. 68. leſt they ſhould forget the Benefit of their Redemption: And, ſecondly, Leſt they ſhould be corrupted with the Superſtition and Idolatry of the *Egyptians*, and ſo forſake God. The Lord ſhews the *Jews*, that if they would truſt in him, he is ſo able, that none can reſiſt his Power, and ſo careful over them, as a Bird over her Young, which ever flies about them for their Defence. He touches their Conſcience, that they might earneſtly feel their grievous Sins, and ſo truly repent, foraſmuch as now they are almoſt drowned and paſt Recovery. The Downfal of *Aſſyria* is foretold, which was accompliſhed ſoon after, when *Sennacherib*'s Army was diſcomfited, and he fled to his Caſtle in *Nineveh* for Refuge.

Q. *Pray in what Senſe do you interpret the 9th Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe; *And he ſhall paſs over to his ſtrong Hold for fear, and Princes ſhall be afraid of the Enſign ſaith the Lord, whoſe Fire is in* Zion, *and his Furnace in* Jeruſalem.——*He ſhall paſs over to his ſtrong Hold.* *Sennacherib* ſhall flee away, with all Speed, from *Jeruſalem*, to his ſtrong City of *Nineveh*, *Iſa.* xxxvii. 37. Or, as it is in the Margin, and as the Words lie in the *Hebrew* Text, his *Rock* i. e. his Strength, the greateſt Champions of his Army, to whom he truſted) *ſhall paſs away* (ſhall flee with all Speed from *Jeruſalem*) *for fear*, leſt the Sword of the deſtroying Angel ſhould overtake them.——*Afraid of the Enſign.* Either, 1. Of any Enſign. This dreadful Judgment ſhall ſtrike them with ſuch Terror, that they ſhall not dare to look any Enemy in the Face. Or, 2. Of the Lord's Enſign, which he hath lifted up againſt them.————*Whoſe Fire is in* Zion. So the Senſe is, either, 1. Whoſe Fire is continually burning on the Altar in *Zion*, like a Fire to defend his People, and to conſume their Enemies; for which End God promiſed, That he would *be unto* Jeruſalem *a Wall of Fire round about*, Zech. ii. 5, *&c.* and that he would *make the Governors of* Judah *like a Hearth of Fire among the Wood, and like a Torch of Fire in a Sheaf*; and that *they* ſhould *devour all the People round about.* Poſſibly theſe and the following Words, may be thus render'd, *Who* will be a *Fire* (to wit, a conſuming Fire) *to him* (to the King of *Aſſyria*, of whom he is here ſpeaking) *in Zion* (from whence he will ſend forth that Fire which ſhall conſume his Army: Or, for *Zion*, for *Zion*'s ſake; for the Prefix here render'd *in*, frequently ſignifies *for*) and *a Furnace to him in*, or *for* Jeruſalem.

CHAP. XXXII.

Chriſt's *Kingdom, and its Bleſſings. Careleſs Women ſhall be troubled, and the Land laid waſte till a Reſtoration.*

Q. *TO whom does the Prophecy in this Chapter more eſpecially relate?*

A. This Prophecy is of *Hezekiah*, who was a Figure of *Chriſt*; and therefore it ought chiefly to be referred to him. By Judgment and Juſtice is meant an upright Government, both in Policy and Religion. He promiſes to give them true Light, which is the pure Doctrine of God's Word. He propheſieth of ſuch Calamity to come, that they will not ſpare the Women and Children, and therefore adviſes them to take heed betimes. The Prophet ſpeaks again of the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, and ſhews what he ſhould work in the Hearts of the Elect, by the Holy Ghoſt, with Threatnings againſt the Wicked.

Q. *What Interpretation do you give of the 15th Verſe?*

A. Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on High, and the Wilderneſs be a fruitful Field, and the fruitful Field be accounted for a Foreſt.——*From on High.* And this Calamity and Deſolation ſhall, in a Manner, continue until the Time come, in which God will *pour*, or, as the *Hebrew* Word properly ſignifies, *reveal*, *i. e.* evidently and plentifully pour out *his Spirit* from Heaven upon his People. Which was done in ſome Sort upon the Return of the People from *Babylon*, when God, by his Spirit, ſtirred up the Spirit of *Cyrus* to give them Liberty to return and build both the City and Temple: But was far more fully and clearly accompliſhed in the Days of the *Meſſiah*. But indeed the Promiſes contained in theſe, and the following Words and Verſes, were not fulfilled upon their coming out of *Babylon*, after which Time they had but *a little reviving* in their Bondage, *Ezra* ix. 8. and continued in Servitude and Diſtreſs under the *Perſian* Emperors, *Neh.* ix. 36, 37. and afterwards ſuffered many and grievous Calamities from the Kings of *Syria*, and *Egypt*, and from the *Romans*; which ſuits very ill with that glorious Promiſe here following, Ver. 18. And therefore theſe Promiſes concern the Times of the Goſpel, when God's Spirit was in a moſt evident and glorious Manner poured forth upon the Apoſtles, and other believing *Jews*, to the Aſtoniſhment of their Adverſaries; and when the following Promiſes were in a good Meaſure fulfilled, and are more fully to be accompliſhed in God's due Time.—— *The fruitful Field be counted for a Foreſt.* Which is allegorically underſtood. The Meaning may be this; God's People, who were deſolate and deſtroy'd, ſhall be revived and flouriſh, and their flouriſhing Enemies ſhall be brought to Deſolation and Deſtruction. It may alſo ſignify, the Converſion of the barren and deſpiſed *Gentiles*, and the Rejection of the *Jews*, in the Time of the *Meſſiah*.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The Deſtruction of the Enemies of the Church, terrifies the Sinners in Zion. The Safety and Privileges of the Righteous.

Q. PRAY *what are the Subjects of the Prophet's Sermon in this Chapter?*

A. The Deſtruction of *Sennacherib* and his Camp or Army is foretold. To pray and to ſeek Help from God is right, becauſe he is the chief Refuge of the Faithful in Time of Trouble. The miſerable Condition of *Jeruſalem*, before the Lord ſmote *Sennacherib*, is deſcribed, but the Lord ariſes for the Help of his People, derideth the *Aſſyrians*, and ſtirs up every one to admire and wonder at their Deſtruction, teaching what ought to be done for the obtaining of God's Bleſſing. Here is alſo a farther Promiſe of Victory and Peace, eſpecially in the Time of the *Meſſiah*. The *Aſſyrians* and Enemies of the Church are derided, and their Deſtruction declared as if they had periſhed by Shipwreck; but the Lord comforts the Church, and ſhews that the Members thereof ſhall be enriched with all Benefits both of Soul and Body.

Q. *In what Senſe are we to underſtand the Expreſſions in the 18th Verſe*; Thine Heart ſhall meditate Terror; where is the Scribe? where is the Receiver? where is he that counted the Towers?

A. Thine Heart ſhall meditate Terror. That is, either, 1. A Premonition concerning a future Judgment; as if he had ſaid, Before theſe glorious Promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed, thou ſhalt be brought into great Streights and Troubles. Or rather, 2. A thankful Acknowledgment of a Deliverane from a former Danger, as if he had ſaid, When thou art deliver'd, thou ſhalt with Pleaſure and Thankfulneſs, recal to Mind thy former Terrors and Miſeries.———*Where is the Scribe?* &c. Theſe Words are either, 1. Words of Gratulation and Inſultation over the Enemy. Or rather, 2. The Words of Men diſmayed and confounded, ſuch as proceeded from the *Jews* in the Time of their Diſtreſs; and are here remember'd to aggravate their preſent Miſery. For the Officers here mentioned, ſeem not to be thoſe of the *Aſſyrian* Army, who were actually fighting againſt the *Jews* and *Jeruſalem*, (for then he would rather have mentioned the *Captains of the Hoſts*, as the Scripture commonly doth in theſe Caſes, than the *Scribes and Receivers*, &c.) but rather of the *Jews* in *Jeruſalem*, who, upon the Approach of *Sennacherib*, began to make military Preparations for the Defence of the City, and to chuſe ſuch Officers as were neceſſary and uſual for that End; ſuch as theſe were, to wit, the *Scribe*, whom we call *Muſter-Maſter*, he was to make and keep a Liſt of the Soldiers, and to call them together as Occaſion required.—*The Receiver*, who received and laid out the Money for the Charges of the War; and he that *counted the Towers*, who ſurveyed all the Parts of the City, and conſidered what Towers or Fortifications were to be made for the Security of the City. And unto theſe ſeveral Officers the People reſorted, with great Diſtraction or Confuſion, to acquaint them with all Occurrences, and to ſpur them on to their ſeveral Works, or to tranſact Matters with them as Occaſion required.

CHAP. XXXIV.

God's Fury and Wrath againſt his Church's Enemies; their Land utterly deſolate; the Certainty and Duration thereof.

Q. AGainſt *what People does the Prophet here denounce Divine Judgments?*

A. The Prophet ſays that God hath determined in his Counſel, and hath given Sentence for the Deſtruction of the *Edomites* and other Nations, who were Enemies to the Church; whoſe Lands ſhall be ſo waſted and deſtroyed, that it ſhould be no more inhabited by Men, but by wild and terrible Creatures; and that this Deſolation or Deſtruction ſhould, in every Particular, be fully accompliſhed, and laſt for ever.

Q. *What is the great Event deſcribed in thoſe lofty Expreſſions in the 4th Verſe?*

A. And all the Hoſt of Heaven ſhall be diſſolved, and the Heavens ſhall be rolled together, as a Scroll and all their Hoſt ſhall fall down as the Leaf falleth off from the Vine, and as a falling Fig from the Fig-tree.———*Hoſt of Heaven.* The Sun, Moon, and Stars, which frequently come under this Name in Scripture, as *Deut.* iv. 19, *&c.*——*Shall be diſſolved.* Shall ſeem to be diſſolved. So great ſhall be the Confuſion and Conſternation of Mankind, as if the whole Frame of the Creation was broken in Pieces. Some underſtand this of the general Judgment, which ſome Paſſages here following will not permit. But it is very uſual for prophetical Writers, both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, to repreſent great and general Calamities, in ſuch Words and Phraſes, as properly agree to the Day of Judgment; as on the contrary, the glorious Deliverance of God's People are ſet forth in ſuch Expreſſions, as properly agree to the Reſurrection from the Dead. *Ezek.* xxxvii. 7, *&c.*———*Rolled together as a Scroll*, Heb. *as a Book*; for Books were then written in Scrolls, which they uſually rolled up together; and when they were ſo, no Man could read any Word in it; and no more ſhall any Man be able to ſee thoſe goodly Lights of Heaven, for they all ſhall be obſcured and confounded. This Phraſe is alſo, *Iſa.* viii. 1. *Rev.* vi. 11.———*As the Leaf that falleth off from the Vine.* When it is withered.———*As a falling Fig.* Which falleth either through great Maturity, or being thruſt out by green Figs coming forth, or by any other Accident.

Q. *Pray explain the 5th Verſe*; For my Sword ſhall be bathed in Heaven; behold, it ſhall come down upon *Idumea*, and upon the People of my Curſe to Judgment?

A. Shall be bathed. In the Blood of theſe People. *Heb. is,* or *ſhall be drank.*——————*In Heaven.* Either, 1. In my Church, which is called *Heaven, Dan.* viii. 10. *Rev.* iv. 1. in and againſt which, theſe Enemies are ſaid to be gathered together. Or, 2. In the higheſt Heaven, where God dwells; in which this is ſaid to be done, becauſe it was there decreed and appointed to be done.——————*Upon* Idumea. Upon the *Edomites,* who, though they were nearly related to the *Iſraelites,* and were circumciſed as well as they, yet were their moſt implacable Adverſaries, watching all Opportunities, and being ready to join with all thoſe that attempted to deſtroy them; whereof we have many Intimations and Inſtances in Scripture. But theſe are not named excluſively, but rather comprehenſively, and ſynechdochically, for all the Enemies of God's Church, of whom they were a conſiderable Part, and an eminent Type.——————*Of my Curſe.* To whom my Curſe belongs, or whom I have curſed, and devoted to utter Deſtruction, as the *Hebrew* Word properly ſignifies.

Chap. XXXV.

The joyful flouriſhing of Chriſt's *Kingdom; the Weak he ſtrengthens and comforts; his Miracles; the Proſperity and Peace of his People.*

Q. TO *what does the Prophet's Prediction in this Chapter relate?*

A. He prophecies of the full Reſtauration of the Church, both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* under *Chriſt,* which ſhall be fully accompliſhed at the laſt Day; and the Church which was before compared to a barren Wilderneſs, ſhall, by *Chriſt,* be made moſt plenteous and beautiful; and he ſhews that the Preſence of God is the Cauſe that the Church does bring forth Fruit, and flouriſh: He willeth all to encourage one another, and eſpecially the Miniſters, to exhort and ſtrengthen the Weak, that they may patiently abide the Coming of God, which is at Hand; and he relates the Miracles which the *Meſſiah* ſhould do. Compare *Mat.* ix. 27, *&c.* xi. 15. xii. 22. xx. 30. xxi. 14. *John* ix. 6, 7.

Q. *Be pleas'd to expound the 8th Verſe?*

A. And an Highway ſhall be there, and a Way, and it ſhall be called the Way of Holineſs, the Unclean ſhall not paſs over it, but it ſhall be for thoſe; the way-faring Men, though Fools, ſhall not err therein.——*An Highway* and a *Way* are not to be taken for two different Ways, but for one and the ſame Way, even to a Cauſey, which is both raiſed Ground, as the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies, and a Way; both ſignifying a convenient and common Road or Path for Travellers, ſuch as the Doctrine of the Goſpel is, which is frequently compared to a Way, both in the *Old and New Teſtament.*——————*The Way of Holineſs.* It ſhall be an holy Way, trodden by holy Men, and filled with holy Practices, *the People* (walking in it) *ſhall be all,* (*i. e.* a great Number of them, not ſo few as in the Time of the Law) *righteous,* as is declared and propheſied afterwards, *Iſa.* lx. 21.——————*The Unclean ſhall not paſs over it.* Either to diſturb or defile it. Unclean Perſons ſhall, in a good Meaſure, be kept or caſt out of my Church, by the ſtrict Exerciſe of good Diſcipline here, and hereafter not one unclean Perſon ſhall enter into my Kingdom.——*It ſhall be for thoſe.* But this Way ſhall be appropriated to thoſe Perſons above-mentioned; the Weak, Blind and Lame, whom God will heal and ſave, Ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. The Pronoun Relative is put without an Antecedent, as in many other Places. But this, and the following Clauſe is, and may well be rendered otherwiſe, *and he* (to wit, God, who is oft deſigned by this Pronoun, and is eaſily underſtood out of the Context) ſhall be *to,* or *with them walking* in the *Way* (their Companion and Guide in their Way, which is a great Felicity) *that Fools may not err therein,*——*ſhall not err therein.* The Way ſhall be ſo plain and ſtrait, that even the moſt fooliſh Travellers (who are deſcribed by this Character, *That they know not the Way to the City,* Eccleſ. x. 15.) cannot eaſily miſtake it.

Chap. XXXVI.

Sennacherib *invades* Judea; *and ſends* Rabſhakeh *to ſollicit the People with blaſphemous Expreſſions to revolt. His Words are told to* Hezekiah.

Q. WHO *was this* Sennacherib; *and what was the Occaſion of his invading* Judea?

A. Salmaneſer King of *Aſſyria* being dead, after he had reigned fourteen Years, *Sennacherib* his Son ſucceeded him in the Kingdom, and reigned about eight Years. He is the ſame whom the Prophet *Iſaiah* (c. xx. 1.) called *Sargon.* As ſoon as he was ſettled in the Throne, he renewed the Demand, which his Father had made upon *Hezekiah* for the Tribute, which *Ahaz* had agreed to pay in the Reign of *Tiglath-Pileſer* his Grandfather, and on his Refuſal to comply with him therein, denounced War againſt him, and marched with a great Army into *Judea* to fall upon him. This was in the fourteenth Year of the Reign of King *Hezekiah.*

Q. *About what Time did* Sennacherib *undertake this Invaſion againſt* Judea; *and what Meaſures did* Hezekiah *take thereupon?*

A. Towards the End of the fourteenth Year of *Hezekiah*'s Reign, *Sennacherib* came up with a great Army againſt the fenced Cities of *Judah,* and took ſeveral of them, and laid Siege to *Lachiſh,* threatning *Jeruſalem* it ſelf next. Whereon *Hezekiah* taking Advice of his Princes and chief Counſellors made all Manner of Preparations for it's Defence, repairing the Walls, and making new Ones, where they were wanting, and fortifying them with Towers, and all other Works and Buildings neceſſary for their Defence. And he provided alſo Darts and Shields in great Abundance, and all other Arms and Artillery, which might be any way Uſeful for the Defending of the Place, and the annoying of the Enemy on their coming againſt it. And he cauſed all the People to be enroll'd and marſhal'd for the War, that were fit and able for it, placing over them Captains of Experience to inſtruct them in all Military Exerciſes, and to conduct and lead them forth againſt the Enemy, whenever there ſhould be an Occaſion for it. And he took Care alſo to ſtop up all the Wells, that were without the Walls of *Jeruſalem* for a great Compaſs round the City, and diverted all Brooks and Water-courſes from coming that Way, thereby to diſtreſs the Enemy for want of Water, ſhould they come and ſet down before that Place. And farther, to ſtrengthen himſelf the more againſt ſo potent and formidable an Enemy, he entered into Alliance with the King of *Egypt* for their mutual Defence. But the Prophet *Iſaiah* condemned this Alliance, as carrying with it a Diſtruſt in God, telling the *Jews*, that they ſhould confide in him alone for their Deliverance, who would himſelf come down to fight for Mount *Zion*, and deliver and preſerve *Jeruſalem* from the Power of the Enemy, that was then riſen up againſt it: And that whatſoever Truſt they ſhould place in *Egypt* ſhall all come to nothing, and be of no Benefit to them, but rather turn to their Shame, their Reproach, and their Confuſion, and ſo in the Event it accordingly happened.

Q. *As the Hiſtory of the Wars which* Sennacherib *carried on againſt* Egypt, *and the Reaſon of turning his Arms that Way, will help to elucidate ſeveral Paſſages in* Iſaiah *relating to the Fate of that Kingdom, and bring the Story home to this Chapter, I deſire you to relate it as particularly as you can?*

A. *Sennacherib* being informed of all theſe Preparations, which *Hezekiah* had made for his Defence, and perceiving thereby how difficult a Work it would be to take ſo ſtrong a City, when ſo well appointed and provided for its Defence, he became inclined to hearken to Terms of Accommodation, and therefore on *Hezekiah*'s ſending to treat with him, it was agreed that *Hezekiah* paying unto him three Hundred Talents of Silver, and thirty Talents of Gold for the preſent, and duly rendering his Tribute for the future, there ſhould be Peace. But when *Sennacherib* had received the Money, he had little Regard to this Agreement, but ſoon after broke it, and again renewed the War, as will be hereafter ſhewn. However for the preſent he gave him ſome Reſpite and marched againſt *Egypt*, and the better to open his Way into that Country, he ſent *Tartan* one of his Generals before him to take *Aſhdod*, or *Azotus*, from the taking of which Place the Prophet *Iſaiah* dates the Beginning of the War, which *Sennacherib* had with the *Egyptians*, wherein, according as that Prophet had foretold, he much afflicted that People three Years together, deſtroying their Cities, and carrying Multitudes of them into Captivity. At that Time *Sevechus* the Son of *Sabacon*, or *So* the *Ethiopian*, was King of *Egypt*, whom *Herodotus* calls *Sethon*, and repreſents him as a Prince of ſo fooliſh a Conduct, as was moſt likely to bring ſuch a Calamity upon his Kingdom, whenſover it ſhould be aſſaulted by any Enemy. For affecting the Office of a Prieſt he neglected that of a King, and cauſing himſelf to be conſecrated chief Pontiff of *Vulcan*, gave himſelf wholly up to Superſtition; and having no regard to the warlike Defence of his Kingdom, he ſo far neglected and diſcouraged the Military Order, which were there maintained for it, that he took from them their Tenures, which in the Time of the former Kings his Predeceſſors had been allowed them for their Support; which gave them ſuch a juſt Cauſe of Offence and Indignation againſt him, that when he had need for their Valour on this Occaſion, they would not fight for him, whereupon he was forced to raiſe an Army of ſuch raw and unexperienced Men as he could get out of the Shopkeepers, Tradeſmen, Labourers, and ſuch like People, which being wholly unable to cope with ſuch an Army of Veterans, as *Sennacherib* brought againſt them, he did with great Eaſe over-run the Country, and make what Devaſtation in it he pleaſed. And at this Time ſeems to have been brought upon *No-Amon*, a famous City in *Egypt*, that Deſtruction, which the Prophet *Nahum* ſpeaks of (*Ch.* iii. 10.) where he tells us, that her Inhabitants were carried into Captivity, her young Children daſhed in Pieces in the Top of her Streets, and her great Men divided by Lot among the Conquerors, and put into Chains to be led away as Slaves and Captives. All which he tells us happened while *Egypt* and *Ethiopia* were her Strength, which plainly points out unto us this Time, when an *Ethiopian* Prince reigned over *Egypt*. For *Sabacon* or *So* the Father of *Sevechus* was an *Ethiopian*, who made himſelf King of *Egypt* by Conqueſt, and therefore during his and his Son's Reign *Egypt* and *Ethiopia* were as one Country, and they mutually helped each other, an Inſtance whereof will not be wanting in this War.

But *Sennacherib* did not end this War with the ſame Succeſs as he began it. For having laid Siege to *Peluſium*, and ſpent much Time in it, he was at length forced to break up from thence, and retreat out of *Egypt* becauſe of *Tirhakah* King of *Ethiopia*. For he being come into *Egypt* with a great Army to help *Sevechus* his Kinſman, was on a full March towards *Peluſium* to relieve the Place, which *Sennacherib* hearing of durſt not abide his coming, but raiſed the Siege and returning into *Judea* encamped again at *Lachiſh*, where he renewed the War with *Hezekiah* notwithſtanding the Agreement of Peace, which he had before made with him, and to let him know as much he ſent *Tartan*, *Rabſaris*, and *Rabſhakeh*, three of his principal Captains, with that proud and blaſphemous Meſſage, which we have at full recited in two Places of the Holy Scripture. It was deliver'd to the King's Officers from under the Walls of *Jeruſalem* in the Hearing of all the People, and in the *Hebrew* Tongue. For they hoped thereby to draw the People to a Revolt, but failing of Succeſs herein returned to *Sennacherib* without accompliſhing their Deſign. The Perſon appointed to deliver this Meſſage was *Rabſhakeh*, who by his ready ſpeaking of the *Hebrew* Tongue ſeems to have been an Apoſtate *Jew*, or elſe one of the Captivity of *Iſräel*. By Office he was the King's Chief Cupbearer, as his Name imports. On their Return they found *Sennacherib* decamped from *Lachiſh*, and laying Siege to *Libnah*, where hearing that *Tirhakah* on his finding him gone from *Peluſium* was marching after him, as in Purſuit of one flying from him, he led forth his Army againſt him, and gave him a great Overthrow. For it was from God by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, Chap. xviii. and xx. before laid as a Burden upon *Egypt*, and as a Burden upon *Ethiopia* thus to be puniſhed by him, and he was no more than God's Executioner herein. But before he went forth to this laſt War he ſent again to *Hezekiah*, adding a moſt blaſphemous Letter to his former Meſſage, defying therein both him, and alſo the Lord his God in a moſt impious Manner, which juſtly provoked the Wrath of God againſt him to that Degree, as brought a moſt diſmal Deſtruction upon him to the cutting off of almoſt all his Army. For when ſwelling with his Victory over the *Ethiopians* he was on his full March towards *Jeruſalem* with thorough Purpoſe utterly to deſtroy that Place and all in it, an Angel of the Lord went forth, and in one Night ſmote in the Camp of the *Aſſyrians* an Hundred Four-ſcore and five Thouſand Men, ſo that when he aroſe in the Morning he found almoſt all his Army dead Corps, with which being terrified he fled out of

Judea in great Confuſion, and made all the haſte he could back again to *Nineveh*, where he dwelt all the remainder of his Life in Diſhonour, Shame, and Regret. This happened in the 18th Year of King *Hezekiah*, and four Years after *Sennacherib* firſt came into thoſe Parts. After this *Hezekiah* reigned the reſt of his Time in great Peace and Proſperity, being feared and honoured by all the Nations round him, by reaſon of the Favour which they ſaw he had with the Lord his God, in the great and wonderful Deliverance which he had vouchſafed unto him. So that none of them, after this, would any more lift up their Hand againſt him.

Chap. XXXVII.

Hezekiah *mourns, and ſends to* Iſaiah *to pray for them; he comforts them.* Sennacherib *being called away againſt the King of the* Ethiopians, *ſends a blaſphemous Letter to* Hezekiah; *his Prayer.* Iſaiah's *Prophecy. An Angel ſlays the* Aſſyrians. Sennacherib *is ſlain at* Nineveh, *by his Sons.*

Q. *IN the 26th Verſe we have an Account of the vaſt Deſtruction of the* Aſſyrian *Army by an Angel: In what Manner was this effected?*

A. The *Babyloniſh Talmud* has it, that this Deſtruction upon the Army of the *Aſſyrians* was executed by Lightning, and ſome of the *Targums* are quoted for ſaying the ſame Thing. But it ſeemeth moſt likely, that it was effected by bringing on them the hot wind, which is frequent in thoſe Parts, and often, when it lights among a Multitude, deſtroys great Numbers of them in a Moment, as it frequently happens in thoſe vaſt Caravans of the *Mahometans*, who go their annual Pilgrimages to *Mecca*. And the Words of *Iſaiah*, which threatned *Sennacherib* with a Blaſt that God would ſend upon him, ſeem to denote this Thing.

Herodotus gives us, from the Relation of the *Egyptian* Prieſts, ſome kind of a diſguiſed Account of this Deliverance from the *Aſſyrians*, in a fabulous Application of it to the City of *Peluſium*, inſtead of *Jeruſalem*, and to *Sethon* the *Egyptian* King, inſtead of *Hezekiah*; by whoſe Piety he ſaith it was obtained, that while the King of *Aſſyria* laid ſiege to *Peluſium*, a great Number of Rats were miraculouſly ſent into his Army, which, in one Night, did eat all their Shield-ſtraps, Quivers and Bowſtrings, ſo that on their riſing the next Morning, finding themſelves without Arms for carrying on the War, they were forced to raiſe the Siege and be gone. And it is particularly to be remarked, that *Herodotus* calls the King of *Aſſyria*, to whom he ſaith this happened, by the ſame Name of *Sennacherib*, as the Scriptures do, and the Time in both doth alſo well agree, which plainly ſhews, that it is the ſame Fact, that is refered to by *Herodotus*, although much diſguiſed in the Relation; which may eaſily be accounted for, when we conſider that it comes to us through the Hands of ſuch as had the greateſt Averſion both to the Nation and the Religion of the *Jews*, and therefore would relate nothing in ſuch a Manner as might give any Reputation to either.

Q. *What Courſe did* Sennacherib *take, after this terrible Ruin of his Army?*

A. After this terrible Blow, and the Loſs of ſo great an Army, *Sennacherib* was ſo weakened, that he had no way of again recovering himſelf, which making him fall into contempt among his Subjects, ſeveral of his Provinces revolted from him, and particularly *Media*, which was the largeſt and the moſt conſiderable of all his Empire. For the *Medes*, when they heard in how low a Condition he was returned to *Nineveh*, immediately ſhook off his Yoke, and ſet up for themſelves in a ſort of democratical Government; but ſoon growing ſick of the Confuſions, which this cauſed among them, they were forced to have recourſe to Monarchy for the Remedy, and next Year after choſe *Deioces* for their King, whom they had formerly made great uſe of, as a common Arbitrator of their Differences; and for the great Proof which he had given of his Juſtice and Abilities on ſuch Occaſions, they advanced him to this Dignity. He began his Reign in the 19th Year of King *Hezekiah*, and having repaired, beautified and enlarged the City of *Ecbatana*, he made it the royal Seat of his Kingdom, and reigned there with great Wiſdom, Honour and Proſperity fifty three Years, during which Time it growing to be a great City, he is for this Reaſon reckoned by the *Greeks* to have been the Founder of it.

Sennacherib after his Return to *Nineveh*, being enflamed for his great Loſs and Diſappointment, as if he would revenge himſelf upon his Subjects for it, grew thenceforth very cruel and tyrannical in the Management of his Government, eſpecially towards the *Jews* and *Iſraelites*, abundance of whom he cauſed every Day to be ſlain and caſt into the Streets; by which ſavage Humour having made himſelf ſo intolerable, that he could no longer be born by his own Family, his two eldeſt Sons, *Adramelech* and *Sharezar*, conſpired againſt him, and falling upon him, while he was worſhipping in the Houſe of *Niſroch* his God, they there ſlew him with the Sword; and thereon having made their Eſcape into the Land of *Armenia*, *Eſarhaddon*, his third Son, reigned in his ſtead. Some Commentators will have it, that he had vowed to ſacrifice theſe his two Sons to appeaſe his Gods, and make them the more favourable to him for the Reſtoration of his Affairs, and that it was to prevent this, this, that they thus ſacrificed him. But for this there is no other Foundation, but that ſcarce any thing elſe can be thought of, which can afford any Excuſe for ſo wicked and barbarous a Parricide.

Chap. XXXVIII.

Hezekiah *falls ſick, receives from* Iſaiah *a Meſſage of Death; but by Prayer has his Life prolonged; and, as a Sign thereof, the Sun goes backwards. His Song of Praiſe to God.*

Q. *WHAT is the Subject of the Prophet's Sermon in this Chapter?*

A. Soon after the *Aſſyrians* were ſlain, *Hezekiah* fell ſick, and his Heart was touched with the Fear of God's Judgment, ſeeing he had appointed him to die, ſo quickly after his Deliverance from ſo great a Calamity, as one unworthy to remain in that State: And alſo fore-ſeeing the great Change that ſhould come in the Church, foraſmuch as he left no Son to reign after him; for as yet *Manaſſeh* was not born, and when he reigned he proved a Tyrant. On *Hezekiah*'s Prayer, the Lord did not only promiſe to prolong his Life but to give him Reſt and Quietneſs from the *Aſſyrians*, and gave him a Sign he would perform it. The thankful King left a Song of Lamentation and Thankſgiving to all Poſterity, as a Monument of his own Infirmity, and grateful Heart for God's Benefits, as *David* did *Pſalm* li. The Prophet *Iſaiah* bad *Hezekiah* to lay a Lump of Figs for a Plaiſter on the Boil, and he ſhould recover; which was rather a Sign appointed by God, than a natural Means of the Cure; for if it had the Virtue to ripen a Sore, yet it could never cure ſuch a dangerous and peſtilential Diſeaſe in ſo ſhort a Time.

Q. *Pray give me a Paraphraſe on Verſe 15?*

A. The Words are theſe: *What ſhall I ſay? He hath both ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done it; I ſhall go ſoftly all my Years in the Bitterneſs of my Soul.*——*What ſhall I ſay?* I want Words ſufficient to expreſs my deep Senſe of God's Dealing with me.——*Himſelf hath done it.* He foretold it by his Word, and effected it by his Hand. This Clauſe and Verſe is either, 1. A Continuance of his Complaint hitherto deſcribed; God hath paſſed this Sentence upon me, and hath alſo put it in Execution, and to him I muſt ſubmit myſelf. Or 2. A Tranſition or Entrance into the Thankſgiving, which is undoubtedly contained in the following Verſes. So the Senſe is, God hath ſent a gracious Meſſage to me, by his Prophet, concerning the Prolongation of my Life; and he, I doubt not, will make good his Words therein. And this Senſe ſeems the more probable. 1. Becauſe here is mention made of his Years to come; whereas, in his Sickneſs he expected not to live to the End of a Day. 2. Becauſe the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt, and the Seventy, and *Syriac* and *Arabic* Interpreters expound it ſo in their Verſions. 3. Becauſe this ſuits beſt with the Context and Coherence of this Verſe, both with the former and following. For as he endeth the foregoing Verſe with a Prayer to God for long Life, ſo in this he relates God's gracious Anſwer to his Prayer: And if this Verſe be thus underſtood, the next hath a convenient Connection with this, whereas, it ſeems very abrupt and incoherent, if the Thankſgiving begin there. ——*I ſhall go ſoftly.* I ſhall walk in the Courſe of my Life, either, 1. Humbly, with all humble Thankfulneſs to God for conferring ſo great a Favour upon ſo unworthy a Perſon. Or 2. Eaſily and peaceably with Leiſure, not like one affrighted, or running away from his Enemy. Or 3. By ſlow and gentle Paces, as Men commonly ſpin out their Days, by Degrees, unto a juſt Length, which is not unfitly oppoſed to his former State and Time of Sickneſs, wherein his *Days* were *ſwifter than a Weaver's Shuttle*, and *then a Part*, as *Job* complained on a like Occaſion, *Job.* vii. 6. and ix. 25. and were cut off like a Weaver's, Ver. 12.——*In the Bitterneſs of my Soul.* Ariſing from the Remembrance of that dangerous Condition, from which God hath delivered me: For great Dangers, though paſt, are often very terrible to thoſe that reflect upon them. But the Words may be rendered (*Iſa.* xviii. 4.) *the Bitterneſs of my Soul*, after the Deliverance from this bitter and dangerous Diſeaſe: Which may be compared with Verſe 17, where he ſaith, *For*, or *after Peace I had great Bitterneſs*, as he here preſageth and aſſureth himſelf of the contrary, That he would have Peace after his great Bitterneſs. The *Chaldee* Paraphraſt renders the Words, *Becauſe of my Deliverance from Bitterneſs of Soul*; *Bitterneſs* being put for *Deliverance from Bitterneſs*, as *five* is put for *lack of five*, as we render it, *Gen.* xviii. 28. and *Fat* for *want of Fat*, *Pſ.* cix. 24. and *Fruits* for *want of Fruits*, *Lam.* iv. 9. and other ſuch like Defects there are in the *Hebrew*, which is a very conciſe Language.

CHAP. XXXIX.

The King of Babel *ſends Ambaſſadors with a Letter and a Preſent to* Hezekiah, *who ſhews them all his Treaſure.* Iſaiah *foretels him of the* Babyloniſh *Captivity; his Reſignation.*

Q. WHO *was this* Merodach-baladan; *and what was his Inducement to ſend an Embaſſy to Hezekiah?*

A. The Name of this Prince *Joſephus* found in that famous *Chaldean* Hiſtorian, *Beroſus*. He ſeems to have been the King of *Aſſyria*'s Viceroy in *Babylon*, and, upon that terrible ſlaughter of 185,000 in the *Aſſyrian* Hoſt, and the Death of *Sennacherib*, and the Differences among his Sons, to have uſurped an abſolute Sovereignty over *Babylon*; and either himſelf, or his Son, deſtroyed the *Aſſyrian* Monarchy, and tranſlated the Empire to *Babylon*. He was moved to ſend to *Hezekiah* by the Greatneſs of his Miracle, and becauſe he ſhewed himſelf an Enemy to his Enemies; but chiefly becauſe he would join with them, whom God favoured, and have their Help, if Occaſion ſerved. *Hezekiah* ſhews the Ambaſſadors all his Treaſures, for which *Iſaiah* reproves him, and foretels the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. By the Grievouſneſs of the Puniſhment is declared how greatly God deteſts Ambition and vain Glory.

The Hiſtory contained in this Chapter, is related in the ſame Words, 2 *Kings* xx. 12, &c. only he who is here called *Merodach*, is there *Berodach*, merely by the Change of one Letter, which is very uſual in the *Hebrew* Language, eſpecially in the proper Names, as *Dimon* is put for *Dibon*, *Iſa.* xv. 19. and the ſame Man is called *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Nebuchadretſar*. This King is called *Merodach*, from the Idol of that Name, *Jer* l. 2. and *Baladan* from his Father's Name. But whether this Man was an *Aſſyrian* or a *Babylonian*, is not eaſy to determine, nor worth the Enquiry. 'Tis certain, that about this Time there were Wars between the *Aſſyrians* and *Babylonians*, the Iſſue whereof was, that the latter dubdued the former.

CHAP. XL.

The Preaching of the Goſpel by John Baptiſt *and the Apoſtles. The Power and Wiſdom of God in governing the World. The Folly of Idolatry. God knows the State of his People, and both can and will protect them.*

Q. PRAY *what is the Purport of the Prophet's Sermon in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet having foretold the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, doth here arm his People againſt it, by the Conſideration of their certain Deliverance out of it, and their bleſſed Condition after it; as in other Things, ſo eſpecially in the coming of the *Meſſiah*, and the great and glorious Privileges conferred upon God's Church and People in his Days.

In this Chapter is ſet forth a Prophecy of the coming of *Chriſt*, the preaching of the Goſpel by *John Baptiſt* and the Apoſtles, and the Power and Efficacy of the Word of God. The Power and Wiſdom of God in governing of the World, whoſe Image neither can nor may be made. The Folly of Idolaters, the Vanity of all the great ones of this World, and a Reproof of them that complain, that God neither can nor will protect them.

Q. *Is the Perſon and Event deſcribed Ver.* 3. *to be referred only to the Miſſion and Office of* John the Baptiſt?

A. The Words are, *The Voice of him that crieth in the Wilderneſs, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make ſtrait in the Deſart a High-Way for our God.* ——*The Voice.* An abrupt and imperfect Speech, ſuch as there are many in the *Hebrew* Language. Methinks I hear a Voice, or a Voice ſhall be heard. ——*Of him that crieth in the Wilderneſs.* Which Words declare the Place, either, 1. Where the Cry was made. Or 2. Where the Way was to be prepared, as it is expreſſed in the following Clauſe, which is added to explain this. And ſuch Places being commonly Path-leſs, and many Ways incommodious to Travellers, it was the more neceſſary to prepare a Way there: But come both to one Thing; for the Cry was to be in that Place which was to be prepared. This Place ſeems to be underſtood not immediately of the Deliverance of the *Jews* out of *Babylon*, and of ſmoothing the Paſſage from thence to *Judea*, which lay through a great Wilderneſs, but ultimately and principally concerning their Redemption by the *Meſſiah*, whoſe coming is uſhered in by the Cry of *John the Baptiſt*, who did both cry and prepare the Way in the Wilderneſs, *Mat.* iii. 1, *&c.* where the Text is directly expounded of him. But the Terms *Wilderneſs* and *Deſart*, ſeem to be here chiefly uſed in a metaphorical Senſe, to expreſs the deſolate and forlorn Condition of the *Jewiſh* Nation, and eſpecially of the *Gentile* World, when *Chriſt* came to redeem them; for ſo theſe Words are frequently uſed in prophetical Writing. ——*Prepare ye the Way.* You, to whom this Work belongs. He alludes to the Cuſtom of Princes, who ſend Pioneers before them, to prepare the Way through which they intend to paſs: The meaning only is this, that God ſhall, by his Providence, ſo order the Empires and Affairs of the World, as to make way for the Accompliſhment of his Promiſe.—— *Of the Lord. For the Lord*, as is it expounded in the next Clauſe, that the Lord may walk in it: Which, tho' it may be underſtood of their coming out of *Babylon*, when God might, in ſome ſort, march in the Head of them, conducting and preſerving them; yet it was more evidently fulfilled, when *Chriſt*, who was and is God bleſſed for ever, came into the Word in a viſible Manner.—— *Make ſtrait.* Either *direct*, in Oppoſition to crooked, or even and level, in Oppoſition to the Mountains and Valleys mentioned in the next Verſe.

CHAP. XLI.

God called Abraham, *and was with him. The Nations idolatrous.* Iſrael *encouraged by Promiſes of Safety and Deliverance. The Vanity of Idols. Redemption by* Chriſt.

Q. DOES *this Chapter afford us any thing particularly remarkable?*

A. God, as though he pleaded his Cauſe with all Nations, requires Silence, that he may be heard in his Right. He declares that he was the God who called *Abraham* (who was the Pattern of God's Juſtice in delivering his Church) from the Idolatry of the *Chaldeans*, to go to and fro at his Commandment, and placed him in the Land of *Canaan.* And although the World ſet up never ſo many Gods, yet they diminiſhed nothing of the Glory of the Omnipotent, for he is all one, unchangeable, which hath ever been, and ſhall be for ever.

Here is a friendly and comfortable Speech of the Almighty to the godly *Iſraelites*, with a Promiſe that he would deliver them, by deſtroying their Enemies, and bleſſing the Faithful, but threatning Idolaters.

The whole Chapter is written in ſo lofty and elegant a Stile, and ſo wonderfully deſcribes the Acts of divine Providence, as muſt ſtrike the Reader with Admiration, and force him to pronounce the whole to proceed from a Mind enlightened by the immediate Revelation of God.

Keep ſilence before me, O Iſlands, and let the People renew their Strength; let them come near, then let them ſpeak: Let us come near together to judgment. Who raiſed up the Righteous Man from the Eaſt, called him to his Foot, gave the Nations before him, and made him rule over Kings? He gave them as the Duſt to his Sword, and as driven Stubble to his Bow. He purſued them and paſſed ſafely; even by the way that he had not gone with his Feet. Who hath wrought and done it, calling the Generations from the Beginning? I the Lord, the firſt, and with the laſt, I am he. The Iſles ſaw it, and feared, the Ends of the Earth were afraid, drew near and came. They helped every one his Neighbour, and every one ſaid to his Brother, Be of good Courage. So the Carpenter encouraged the Goldſmith, and he that ſmootheth with the Hammer, him that ſmote the Anvil, ſaying, Is is ready for the ſodering; and he faſtned it with Nails that it ſhould not be moved. But thou Iſrael *art my Servant,* Jacob *whom I have choſen, the Seed of* Abraham *my Friend. Thou whom I have taken from the Ends of the Earth, and called thee from the chief Men thereof, and ſaid unto thee, Thou art my Servant, I have choſen thee, and not caſt thee away. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee, yea I will uphold thee with the Right-hand of thy Righteouſneſs. Behold, all they that were incenſed againſt thee, ſhall be aſhamed and confounded; they ſhall be as nothing, and they that ſtrive with thee, ſhall periſh. Thou ſhall ſeek them, and ſhall not find them, even them that contended with thee; they that war againſt thee ſhall be as nothing, and as a Thing of nought. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy Right-hand, ſaying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. Fear not thou Worm* Jacob, *and ye Men of* Iſrael; *I will help thee, ſaith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of* Iſrael. *Behold, I will make thee a new ſharp threſhing Inſtrument having teeth; thou ſhalt threſh the Mountains, and beat them ſmall, and ſhalt make the Hills as Chaff. Thou ſhall fan them, and the Wind ſhall ſcatter them; and thou ſhalt rejoice in the Lord, and ſhalt glory in the Holy One of* Iſrael.

When the Poor and Needy ſeek Water, and there is none, and their Tongue faileth for Thirſt, I the

Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael *will not forſake them. I will open Rivers in High-places, and Fountains in the midſt of the Valleys; I will make the Wilderneſs a Pool of Water, and the dry Land Springs of Water. I will plant in the Wilderneſs the Cedar, the Shittah-tree, the Myrtle and Oil-tree: I will ſet in the Deſart the Fir-tree, and the Pine, and the Box-tree together, that they may ſee, and know, and conſider, and underſtand together, that the Hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of* Iſrael *hath created it. Produce your Cauſe, ſaith the Lord; bring forth your ſtrong Reaſons, ſaith the King of* Jacob. *Let them bring them forth, and ſhew us what ſhall happen: Let them ſhew the former Things what they be, that we may conſider them, and know the latter End of them, or declare us Things for to come. Shew the Things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods; yea, do good or do evil, that we may be diſmayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your Work of nought; an Abomination is he that chooſeth you. I have raiſed up one from the North, and he ſhall come; from the riſing of the Sun ſhall he call upon my Name, and he ſhall come upon Princes as upon Mortar, and as the Potter treadeth Clay. Who hath declared from the Beginning, that we may know? And beforetimes, that we may ſay, He is Righteous; yea, there is none that heareth your Words. The firſt ſhall ſay unto* Zion, *Behold, behold them, and there was no Counſellor, that when I asked of them, could anſwer a Word. Behold, they are all Vanity, their Works are nothing; their molten Images are Wind and Confuſion.*

CHAP. XLII.

The Perſon and Office of Chriſt, *appointed by the Father. A new Song to God, for his Goſpel among the* Gentiles. *The Idolatry of the Heathen, and Obſtinacy.*

Q. *IN what Manner is* Chriſt *and his Offices here deſcribed?*

A. In reſpect of his Manhood *Chriſt* is here called Servant; for the Prophets uſe to make mention of *Chriſt*, after they have declared any great Promiſe, becauſe he is the Foundation whereupon all the Promiſes are made and ratified. He only is acceptable to God, and they that come by him, for there is no other Means of Reconciliation. He ſhall declare himſelf Governor over the *Gentiles*, call them by his Word, and rule them by his Spirit although his Coming ſhall not be with Pomp and Noiſe, as earthly Princes. He will not hurt the Weak and Feeble, but comfort and ſupport them; and though he favours the Weak, yet he will not ſpare the Wicked, but will judge them according to Truth and Equity. The Obſtinacy and Hardneſs of Heart of the *Jews* is ſet forth, for they were ſecure and ſtupid under God's Judgments, neither fearing them when threatened, nor truly ſenſible of God's Hand in them, the Cauſes of his Diſpleaſure againſt them, nor the Method of Cure.

Q. *Is not the Deſcription in the firſt Verſe intended for the Perſon of the* Meſſiah?

A. The Deſcription runs thus: *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my Soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he ſhall bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles.* The Prophet having, in the former Chapter detected the Vanity of Idols, by their groſs Ignorance of future Things to come, in the Prediction of the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, and the Deliverance of the *Jews* out of it by *Cyrus*; he now addeth a more eminent and remote Example of it, and foretells the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, and ſeveral great Effects or Conſequences thereof; Which he rather doth, becauſe this was the Perſon by whom the Idols were to be utterly aboliſhed, as was foretold, *Iſa.* ii. 18. compared with Ver. 2, 3, 4. and as it fell out in the Event: This having been obſerved, not only by *Chriſtians*, but even by the learned Heathens, not without Aſtoniſhment, That at that Time, when *Chriſt* came into the Word, Idols were generally ſtruck dumb, and the Oracles ceaſed. —— *My Servant.* The Perſon of whom he here ſpeaketh, is by ſome ſuppoſed to be *Cyrus*, and by others *Iſaiah*, and the People of the *Jews*. But the moſt and beſt Interpreters underſtand this Place of *Chriſt*; and although ſome learned Men have done wrong to the ſacred Text, and to the *Chriſtian* Cauſe by expounding ſome Places of *Chriſt*, without ſufficient Evidence, yet this is one of the many Places in this Prophecy, which, without manifeſt Violence, cannot be applied to any other; which is ſo evident, that not only the Generality of *Chriſtians*, but divers of the moſt learned *Jews* underſtand it of the *Meſſiah*, and of him alone; and ſeverely cenſure their Brethren, that expounded it of any other Perſon, and affirm that they are ſmitten with Blindneſs in this Matter. Moreover, this Place is expreſsly interpreted of *Chriſt*, *Mat.* xii. 18, *&c.* And to him, and to him only all the Particulars here following do truly belong. —— *Whom I uphold.* Whom I will aſſiſt and enable to do and ſuffer all thoſe Things which belong to his Office to do. —— *Mine Elect.* Choſen by me to this great Work of Mediation and Redemption, to which he is ſaid to be *ſealed* and *ſent*, *John* vi. 27, 29. and *predeſtinated*, 1 *Pet.* i. 23. and *choſen of God* 1 *Pet.* ii. 4. ———— *In whom my Soul delighteth.* Or, as this ſame Word is often rendered, *is well pleaſed*, both for himſelf and for all People, being fully ſatisfied with that Sacrifice which he ſhall offer unto me. —— *I have put my Spirit upon him.* I have furniſhed him with that Abundance and Eminency of Gifts and Graces, which are neceſſary for the Diſcharge of his high and hard Employment. —— *He ſhall bring forth.* Shall publiſh or *ſhew*, as this Word is tranſlated, *Mat.* xii. 18. ſhall bring to light what before was hid in his Breaſt, or his Father's Boſom. ———— *Judgment.* This Word is very ambiguous, and elſewhere is put for Puniſhment, which cannot be meant here, becauſe the whole Context ſpeaks of his Mercy and Sweetneſs, and not of his Severity; but here it is clearly put for God's Law, as this very Word is expounded here below, Verſe 4. and as it is frequently uſed in Holy Scripture, *Pſ.* cxix. and elſewhere; which alſo beſt agrees with the *bringing forth* or *publiſhing* of it here mentioned, Publication being neceſſarily required, and conſtantly uſed about Laws. And this Interpretation is confirmed by the following Words, *to the Gentiles.* For the Things which *Chriſt* publiſhed to all the World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were nothing elſe but the Law, and Will, and Counſel of God concerning Man's Salvation, and the Way and Means of obtaining it. —— *To the* Gentiles. Not only to the *Jews*, to whom the Knowledge of God's Laws had been hitherto appropriated, but to the Heathen Nations.

Chap. XLIII.

Promiſes to protect and enlarge the Church. God appeals to them as Witneſſes of his Power and Knowledge; foretels the Deſtruction of Babylon; *and a new Deliverance of his People, whoſe Sins againſt God's Mercies, render them inexcuſable.*

Q. WHAT *Leſſons of Inſtruction does the Prophet teach the* Iſraelites *in this Chapter?*

A. After the Threatnings denounced in the foregoing Chapter, God here promiſes Deliverance to his Church, becauſe he hath regenerated, adopted, and called them; and he foretels their Deliverance from the Captivity of *Babylon*, and ſo of the Calling of the univerſal Church, alluding to that which is written, *Deut.* xxx. 3. He proves that the Gods of the *Gentiles* are vain, and that he alone is the true and Almighty God, who choſe his People, not becauſe of their Merits and Deſerts, but out of free Grace, that he might have Glory and Praiſe from them for ſo ſtupendous a Mercy.

In what pathetic and affectionate Terms is the Love of God expreſſed for his People!

But now thus ſaith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, *and he that formed thee,* O Iſrael, *Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy Name, thou art mine. When thou paſſeſt through the Waters, I will be with thee; and thro' the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: When thou walkeſt through the Fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the Flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of* Iſrael, *thy Saviour: I gave* Egypt *for thy Ranſom,* Ethiopia *and* Seba *for thee. Since thou waſt precious in my Sight, thou haſt been honourable, and I have loved thee, therefore will I give Men for thee, and People for thy Life. Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy Seed from the Eaſt, and gather thee from the Weſt. I will ſay to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back: Bring my Sons from far, and my Daughters from the Ends of the Earth; even every one that is called by my Name: For I have created him for my Glory, I have formed him, yea, I havemade him.*

Q. *Pray give me the Senſe of Ver.* 27. Thy firſt Father hath ſinned; and thy Teachers have tranſgreſſed againſt me?

A. Thy firſt Father. Either, 1. *Adam*, from the Guilt and Filth of Sin is propagated to thee. Or rather, 2. *Abraham*, who might well be called *the firſt Father* of the *Iſraelites*, becauſe they all deſcended from him, had all their Right and Title to God's Ordinances and Promiſes, and other ſpecial Privileges from God's Covenant made with *Abraham*, and with his Seed; who is emphatically called their Father, *Joſh.* xxiv. 2, *&c.* and the *Jews* glorified in, and truſted to that Relation, which they had to *Abraham*, as *Matth.* iii. 9. *John* viii. 33. and elſewhere. And this agrees well with the foregoing Context. For having ſufficiently intimated, that they had no Merit of their own, he now adds, that even their Father *Abraham*, to whoſe Merits they truſted, had no Merits of his own, nor any Occaſion of boaſting; for he alſo was a ſinful Man, and hath left ſome Inſtances of his Failings. Or, the *firſt Fathers* may be put collectively for their *Fore-fathers*, and ſo he tells them, that as they were Sinners, ſo alſo were all their Progenitors, yea, even the beſt of them, *Abraham*, and *David*, and others, for whoſe Sakes they expected to be pardoned and rewarded. And this, indeed, is uſual with God to upbraid the *Iſraelites* with the Sins of their Fathers. ——*And thy Teachers.* Thy Prieſts and Prophets, who were generally ſuppoſed to be the holieſt Part of that People; and therefore, if theſe were Tranſgreſſors, the People had no Reaſon to fancy themſelves innocent.

Chap. XLIV.

God comforteth the Church with his Promiſes. The Vanity of Idols, and Folly of Idol-makers. He exhorteth to praiſe God for his Redemption and Omnipotency.

Q. PRAY *what are the Subjects treated of in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a farther Promiſe concerning ſpiritual Mercies, and the Lord proves he is the true God, but that Idols are vain, and of no Value, as alſo their Makers, and thoſe that worſhip them; therefore God exhorts the *Jews* to cleave to him. The Lord is our Redeemer and Maker, and is to be praiſed for his Wiſdom, Truth, Power and Goodneſs, for he confirms his Promiſes concerning bodily and ſpiritual Deliverance; and God here mentions *Cyrus* by his proper Name, two hundred Years before he was born, that this might be an undeniable Evidence of the Certainty and Exactneſs of God's Foreknowledge, and a convincing Argument, and ſo moſt fit to conclude the Diſpute between God and Idols.

How urgent is the Prophet in calling upon the People to be mindful of the Things of which he had been diſcourſing to them? How earneſt and elegant is his Invitation to the inanimate Creation, to celebrate the tranſcendent Greatneſs of God's Mercy and Deliverance to his People? How glorioully does he ſet forth the omnipotent Power and Majeſty of God?

Remember theſe, O Jacob *and* Iſrael; *for thou art my Servant; I have formed thee, thou art my Servant:* O Iſrael, *thou ſhalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick Cloud, thy Tranſgreſſions, and as a Cloud thy Sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye Heavens, for the Lord dath done it: Shout ye lower Parts of the Earth; break forth into ſinging ye Mountains, O Foreſt, and every Tree therein: For the Lord hath Redeemed* Jacob, *and glorified himſelf in* Iſrael. *Thus ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the Womb. I am the Lord that maketh all Things, that ſtretcheth forth the Heavens alone, that ſpreadeth abroad the Earth by myſelf: That fruſtrateth the Tokens of the Liars, and maketh Diviners mad, that turneth wiſe men backward, and make their Knowledge fooliſh. That confirmeth the Word of his Servant, and performeth the Counſel of his Meſſengers, that ſaith to* Jeruſalem; *Thou ſhalt be inhabited; and to the Cities of* Judah, *ye ſhall be built, and I will raiſe up the decayed Places thereof: That ſaith to the Deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy Rivers: That ſaith of* Cyrus, *He is my Shepherd, and ſhall perform all my Pleaſure, even ſaying to* Jeruſalem, *thou ſhalt be built; and to the Temple, Thy Foundation ſhall be laid.*

CHAP. XLV.

Cyrus, *his Work and Strength foretold. God hath all Power; and will aſſiſt* Cyrus. *The Myſtery of Providence. Idols and their Worſhippers ſhall be deſtroyed; and God alone exalted.* The Gentiles *come in to* Chriſt.

Q. WHAT *are the Points the Prophet purſues in this Chapter?*

A. To aſſure the *Jews* of their Deliverance againſt the great Temptations that they ſhould abide, God names the Means, and Perſon, who hath not only his Calling from God, but Gifts and Abilities to perform whatever he ſhoul be put upon: Not that *Cyrus* did know God, to worſhip him right, but he had a certain particular Knowledge, as prophane Men may have, of his Power, and ſo was compelled to deliver the People of God. The Almighty comforts the *Jews*, as if he would ſay, Though when ye look to the Heavens and Earth for Succour, ye ſee nothing now but Signs of God's Wrath, yet I will cauſe them to bring forth moſt certain Tokens of your Deliverance, and of the Performance of my Promiſe, which is meant by Righteouſneſs, having appointed *Cyrus* to this Uſe and Purpoſe. The Deliverance of the *Jews* from *Babylon* by *Cyrus*, was a Type of the Redemption of God's People by *Chriſt*; wherefore the *Jews* are exhorted to Patience, though their Deliverance be deferred for a Time; ſhewing, that they ſhould not repent their long Patience, but the Wicked and Idolaters ſhould be deſtroyed. The *Gentiles* are called and invited to turn unto *Chriſt*, the Lord foretels he ſhould be acknowledged and honoured by all Nations, who ſhould rejoice and triumph in him as their God and Portion.

Q. *To what Times and Perſons does the Subject Matter of the 24th Verſe relate?*

A. Surely ſhall one ſay, In the Lord have I Righteouſneſs, and Strength; even to him ſhall Men come, and all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed. ———*Shall one ſay.* Or, *ſhall he ſay*, each, or every one of thoſe, whom he now ſaid, that they ſhould bow their Knees to God, and ſwear by him, Ver. 23. or, *it ſhall be ſaid*, ſuch active Verbs being oft uſed imperſonally.——*In the Lord.* By, or from God alone, or the *Meſſiah*, who is the true *Jehovah*, as well as Man.——— *Have I Righteouſneſs.* *To juſtify me from all Things from which I could not be juſtified by the Law of* Moſes, *Acts* xiii. 39. This plainly points us to the *Meſſiah*, whoſe very Name is, *The Lord our Righteouſneſs*, *Jer.* xxiii. 6. and whoſe great Buſineſs it was *to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, *Dan.* ix. 24. and who was *made unto us of God Righteouſneſs*, 1 *Cor.* i. 30.———*And Strength.* Support and Aſſiſtance to bear all my Burdens, and overcome all my Enemies, and perform all my Duties. The Senſe is, The *Gentiles* ſhall expect and obtain from *Chriſt* both Juſtification, and Forgiveneſs of Sins by his Blood, and Sanctification by his Spirit.——*To him ſhall Men come.* The *Gentiles* ſhall come to God and *Chriſt*, either, 1. By Conſtraint, or Neceſſity to be judged by him at the laſt Day. Or, 2. Willingly, by Prayer to ſeek, and by Faith to receive Righteouſneſs and Strength from him: Which ſeems better to agree with the foregoing Clauſe, which ſpeaks of true Believers only. *Coming to Chriſt* is put for *believing on him*, *Mat.* xi. 28. *John* v. 50. ———*And all that are incenſed againſt him ſhall be aſhamed.* But all his implacable Enemies ſhall be brought to Shame and Puniſhment.

CHAP. XLVI.

The Ruin of Babylon, *and her Idols. God's Love and Faithfulneſs to the* Jews. *Idols not to be compared with God, for Power, Knowledge, and ſure Salvation.*

Q. GIVE *ſome Account of the Idols* Bel *and* Nebo, *here mentioned, and what elſe is contained in this Chapter?*

A. Bel was an Idol in great Eſteem among the *Aſſyrians*, *Perſians*, and *Babylonians*. It is thought to be the Planet of the Sun worſhipped under that Name. *Nebo* was another of their famous Idols, which uſed to deliver Oracles, as his Name ſignifies. The Downfal of theſe Idols and the Ruin of the *Babylonians* is here propheſied of. God puts the *Jews* in Mind of his Love and Faithfulneſs towards them, exhorting them to make no Image nor Likeneſs of him, ſetting before their Eyes the Folly of Idolaters, and proving by his Works which he formerly did, and now of late, for his Church, that he alone is the true God, illuſtrious for his glorious Wiſdom, Truth, and Goodneſs.

Q. *Whom does the Prophet mean in the 12th Verſe*; Hearken unto me, ye ſtout-hearted, that are far from Righteouſneſs?

A. Ye ſtout-hearted. Or, *ye whoſe Hearts are proud*, or *hard*, or *ſtubborn*. He ſpeaks either, 1. To the *Babylonians*, you who are ſtout againſt God, and ſay or think, that neither God nor any Man can deliver my People out of your Hands. Or, rather, 2. To *the Houſe of Jacob*, expreſſed, Ver. 3. where he beſpeaks them in the ſame Words here uſed, *hearken to me*; and to whom alone he directed his Speech in this whole Chapter; for though he ſpeaketh of the *Babylonians*, yet he doth not ſpeak to them; and to whom the Prophet for the moſt Part turns his Speech in all his Prophecies, unleſs where there is ſomething in the Text or Context, which determines it to ſome other Perſon or People. And this very Crime of Stoutneſs, or Hardneſs of Heart, is moſt juſtly and moſt frequently charged upon the *Jews*, by their own Prophets, every where, becauſe of their groſs Contempt of, and Incorrigibleneſs under all God's Words and Works. And the Prophet ſpeaks this, either to the *Jews* of his Generation; or rather to that Generation which was carried captive to *Babylon*, whoſe Stout-heartedneſs is particularly noted and reproved, *Zech.* vii. 11, 12. *Mal.* iii. 13, 14, 15.———*That are far from Righteouſneſs.* That are not only void of, but Enemies to Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs; that give up your ſelves to Wickedneſs, that deſpiſe my Counſels, Promiſes and Threatnings.

CHAP. XLVII.

God's Judgments upon Babylon *and* Chaldea, *for their Cruelty towards God's People; their Pride and other Sins; their Enchantments ſhall not deliver them.*

Q. WHAT *are the Points advanced in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a farther Prophecy concerning the Deſtruction of the *Babylonian* Monarchy, for their

Cruelty and Unmercifulneſs uſed towards the People of God. Their Puniſhment was to be as great as Imagination can reach; and their vain Confidence is derided, who put their Truſt in any Thing but God, condemning alſo ſuch vain Sciences, ſerving to no Uſe, but to delude the People, and to bring them from depending wholly on God.

A. Is not the 4th Verſe brought in ſomewhat abruptly and improperly?

A. The Words are, *As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name, the Holy One of* Iſrael. According to this Verſion, the Prophet inſerts this Paſſage in the Midſt of this Prophecy againſt *Babylon*, as *Jacob* inſerts a like Paſſage in the Midſt of his Bleſſing and Prophecies concerning his Children, *Gen.* xlix. 18. and this may be here interpoſed, either, 1. As the Reaſon why the Judgment here denounced ſhould be certainly inflicted, becauſe he who had undertaken it was *the Lord of Hoſts*, and therefore able to effect it, and the *Holy One*, and *the Redeemer of* Iſrael, whom the *Babylonians* had cruelly oppreſſed, whoſe Quarrel God would avenge upon them, and whom he had determined and promiſed to deliver out of their Hands. Or, 2. As a pathetical Exclamation or Acclamation of God's People, for this wonderful Work of breaking the Staff of their Oppreſſors, which they here aſcribe to God, as he is their God and Redeemer, whom they here make their Boaſt of, and whom they celebrate for this glorious Deliverance. But becauſe theſe Words, *as for*, are not in the *Hebrew* Text, and therefore another Word may be as conveniently ſupplied; this Verſe may be, and is by ſome learned Interpreters, otherwiſe render'd, and joined with the foregoing Words thus, *I will take Vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a Man, ſaith our Redeemer, whoſe Name is the Lord of Hoſts, the Holy One of* Iſrael. For the Word *ſaith*, or *ſaying*, is frequently underſtood, and therefore ſupplied by Tranſlators, as 1 *Kings* xx. 34. *Pſal.* xxvii. 8. and cv. 15. and in this very Prophecy, *Iſa.* v. 9. and xlv. 14.

CHAP. XLVIII.

God reproves their Hypocriſy and Obſtinacy by his Prophecies; he ſpares them for his own Name's Sake; and that they may learn to know him aright. God's powerful Salvation a Motive to Obedience.

Q. W*HAT is the Subject of the Prophet's Diſcourſe in this Chapter?*

A. The Lord complains of the *Jews* Hypocriſy, Obſtinacy, and Contempt of his Prophecies, yet ſpares them for his Name's Sake, that they may learn to know aright. The *Jews* are exhorted to the Keeping of the Commandments of God, with a Promiſe of Bleſſing, and a happy Deliverance out of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; for God ſhews, it will be as eaſy to deliver them, as he did their Fathers out of *Egypt*. And God having ſhewn the Peace and bleſſed Deliverance which he would certainly give to his People, adds an Explication and Limitation of this Mercy, declaring that wicked Men ſhould not enjoy the Benefit of this Mercy.

Q. *In what Senſe are we to underſtand the 14th Verſe?*

A. All ye aſſemble your ſelves and hear; which among them hath declared theſe Things? the Lord hath loved him; he will do his Pleaſure on Babylon, *and his Arm ſhall be on the* Chaldeans.——*All ye.* Ye *Jews*, to whom he addreſſed his Speech, Ver. 12. and continues it, Ver. 16, 17, &c.——*Aſſemble your ſelves.* I challenge you all to anſwer what I have ſaid before, and now am going to ſay again.————*Which among them hath declared theſe Things?* Which of the Gods that any of you have ſerved, or do hanker after?————*The Lord hath loved him.* To wit, *Cyrus*, who might eaſily be underſtood out of the foregoing Context, in which he is frequently mentioned. The Pronoun is put for the Noun, as is uſual both in Scripture and in other Authors. Now God loved *Cyrus*, not with a ſpecial, and everlaſting, and complacential Love, for he was an Heathen, and had ſome great Vices as well as Virtues; but with that general Love and Kindneſs, which God hath for all his Creatures, as *Pſal.* cxlv. 9. and moreover with that particular Kind of Love which God hath for ſuch Men as excel others in any Virtues, as *Cyrus* did; in which Senſe *Chriſt* loved the young Man, *Mark* x. 21. and with a Love of Good-will and Beneficence. God had ſuch a Kindneſs for him, as to make him a moſt glorious and victorious General and King, and the great Inſtrument of Deliverance for his own People; which was a ſingular Honour and Advantage to him, and might have been far greater, and extended to the eternal Salvation of his Soul, if he had not wanted a Heart to uſe the Price which God hereby put into his Hand. And as *Anger* being aſcribed to God, is not meant of the Affection, for ſuch Paſſions are inconſiſtent with the Perfections of God's Nature, but of the Effect: ſo the *Love* of God, when it is applied in Scripture, to ſuch Perſons as *Cyrus*, is not ſo much to be underſtood of an inward Affection, as of the outward Effects of it; and ſo this Love is explained in the following Words, by that proſperous Succeſs which God gave him againſt the *Chaldeans.*————*He will do his Pleaſure on* Babylon. *Cyrus* ſhall execute what I have appointed him to do for the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, and for the Redemption of my People; which was in it ſelf a good Work.——*His Arm ſhall be on the* Chaldeans. He ſhall ſmite and ſubdue them.

CHAP. XLIX.

Chriſt *being ſent to the* Jews, *complains of them. He is ſent to the* Gentiles *with gracious Promiſes. God's Love to his Church perpetual. The ample Reſtoration of the Church, its Enlargement, and powerful Deliverance out of Captivity.*

Q. W*HO and what are the Perſons and Things deſcribed in this Prophecy?*

A. Chriſt declares unto all Nations his Calling, complains of the *Jews* Unbelief, ſpeaks of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, comforts the Priſoners and afflicted Ones, and promiſes to remove all Things that may hinder their coming to him. He comforts the dejected *Jews*; with a Promiſe of encreaſing their ſpiritual Seed, that Kings ſhould be their nurſing Fathers. This was in ſome Sort fulfilled by *Cyrus*, *Ahaſuerus*, and ſome few others of the *Perſian* Kings or Queens; but much more truly and fully by thoſe many Kings and Emperors of the *Gentile* World, who after the Time of *Chriſt* did both themſelves embrace the true Religion, and alſo ſet it up and encouraged the Propagation thereof in their ſeveral Dominions. The Lord farther promiſes to deliver his People from the Hand of their Enemies, both temporal and ſpiritual, by which all Men ſhall be forced to acknowledge the Lord for their Saviour and Redeemer.

Q. *In what Senſe do you explain Verſe* 1?

A. Liſten, O Iſles, unto me, and hearken ye People from far. The Lord hath called me from the Womb, from the Bowels of my Mother hath he made Mention of my Name.——Liſten, O Iſles. God having in the laſt Words ſecretly ſignified the Wickedneſs of the *Jewiſh* Nation, after ſo glorious a Deliverance, and foreſeeing that, for their Wickedneſs, he ſhould caſt them off, he here turneth his Speech to the Nations of the *Gentiles*, who are frequently deſcribed in this Prophecy, and elſewhere, under the Title of *Iſles*, and inviteth them to hearken to thoſe Counſels and Doctrines which the *Jews* would reject.——*Unto me.* Unto *Chriſt*: For it is apparent from Verſe 6. and other Paſſages of this Chapter, that *Iſaiah* ſpeaks theſe Words in the Name of *Chriſt*, by whoſe Spirit they were dictated to him, 1 *Pet.* i. 11. and unto whom alone they belong. So this Chapter is a Prophecy of *Chriſt*, which alſo is very proper and ſeaſonable in this Place. The Prophet having at large propheſied of the Deliverance of the *Jews* out of *Babylon*, he proceeds now farther, and propheſieth of the Redemption of the World by *Chriſt*, of which that Deliverance out of *Babylon* was a Type and Forerunner.——*Hearken ye People from far.* Which live in Countries far from *Judea*, now the only Place of God's ſpecial Preſence and Worſhip. It is evident from the foregoing Clauſe, and many other Paſſages following, that he ſpeaks of Diſtance of Place, not of Time.——*The Lord hath called me from the Womb.* This, or the like Expreſſion is uſed of *Jeremy*, Chap. i. 5. and of *Paul*, *Gal.* i. 15. but it was far more eminently true of *Chriſt*, who, as he was choſen to this great Office of Redemption from Eternity, ſo he was ſeparated and called to it before he was born, being both conceived and ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt in his Mother's Womb, and ſent into the World upon this Errand; of whom ſee *Mat.* i. 21. and *Luke* i. 31. *&c.*——*Made Mention of my Name.* Called by my Name, and by ſuch a Name as ſignified my Office and Work, in the Places now mentioned.

CHAP. L.

The Dereliction of the Jews *is not of* Chriſt; *for he hath Power to ſave; and was obedient in that Work; and God is preſent with him. An Exhortation not to truſt in ourſelves, but in God.*

Q. TO *what Purpoſe is* Chriſt *here introduced?*

A. Chriſt teſtifies that he is not the Cauſe of the Rejection of the *Jews*, but that their own Sins are the Occaſion of it; he relates his Power, and how faithfully he hath executed his Office, even with Reproach and Sufferings, but by the Help of his heavenly Father he overcomes all Enemies, not ſhrinking from any Perſecution or Calamity. He exhorts the believing *Jews* to truſt in the Lord, and threateneth the Wicked with the Torments of Hell.

Q. *I ſhould be glad to have your Expoſition of Verſe* 1?

A. Firſt hear the Words; *Thus ſaith the Lord, Where is the Bill of your Mother's Divorcement, whom I have put away? Or which of my Creditors is it to whom I have ſold you? Behold, for your Iniquities have you ſold yourſelves, and for your Tranſgreſſions is your Mother put away.* This is another Sermon begun here, and continued in the next Chapter. The main Scope of it is to vindicate God's Juſtice, and to convince the *Jews* that they were the Cauſe of all the Calamities which they imputed to God.——*Where is the Bill of your Mother's Divorcement?* God had formerly eſpouſed the *Iſraelites* to himſelf in a Kind of matrimonial Covenant, but ſeem'd to caſt them off when he ſent them to *Babylon*, and wholly rejected them afterward from being his People, and took the *Gentiles* into their ſtead; which great and wonderful Change was foretold in the *Old Teſtament*, and accompliſhed in the *New*. And becauſe God foretold that theſe ſtrange Diſpenſations would provoke the *Jews* to murmur and quarrel with God, for caſting them off without ſufficient Cauſe, as indeed they were always prone to accuſe God, and to vindicate themſelves, he bids them produce their Bill of Divorce: For thoſe Huſbands who put away their Wives merely out of Levity or Paſſion, were obliged to give their Wives a Bill of Divorce, which vindicated the Wife's Innocence, and declared, that the Huſband's Will and Pleaſure was the Cauſe of the Divorce; ſee *Deut.* xxiv. 1. *Mat.* xix. 3.——*Which of my Creditors is it to whom I have ſold you?* Have I any Creditors to whom I was willing or obliged to ſell you for the Payment of my Debt? Produce then the Bill of Sale to witneſs againſt me. Parents might, and in ſome Caſes were forced to ſell their Children to their Creditors; *Exod.* xx. 7. 2 *Kings* ix. 1.——*For your Tranſgreſſions is your Mother put away.* You can blame none but your ſelves and your own Sins, for all your Captivities and Miſeries.

CHAP. LI.

Abraham *our Pattern to truſt in* Chriſt; *in his Promiſes, and righteous Salvation; God is conſtant, but Men are tranſitory. A Prayer of the Godly in Affliction. The Lord's Anſwer. He bewails* Jeruſalem. *The bitter Cup taken from her, and given to her Enemies.*

Q. WHAT *Points of Inſtruction does the Prophet go upon in this Chapter?*

A. The Lord comforts the People, and exhorts them to Faith and Penitence, promiſing to deliver them ſpeedily, and that his Salvation ſhall be conſtant and permanent, though Men are corruptible and tranſitory. He puts them in Remembrance of his great Benefits in their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, that thereby they might learn to truſt in him conſtantly. He comforts them by the ſhort Time of their Baniſhment, for in ſeventy Years they were reſtored, and the greateſt Empire of the World deſtroyed. Here is likewiſe a Deſcription of the Power of God to help them, taking the bitter Cup away from them and giving it to their Enemies.

Q. *There are ſome Difficulties in the 16th Verſe, which I ſhould be glad to have explain'd?*

A. And I have put my Words in thy Mouth, and have covered thee in the Shadow of mine Hand, that I may plant the Heavens, and lay the Foundations of the Earth, and ſay unto Zion, Thou art my

People.——*And I have put my Words in thy Mouth.* Theſe great and glorious Promiſes which are in thy Mouth, are not the vain Words of Man, a weak and unconſtant, and unfaithful Creature, but the Words of the Almighty, unchangeable, and faithful God. Theſe Words are manifeſtly ſpoken by God, either, 1. To *Iſaiah*, to whom theſe Promiſes were delivered. Or, 2. To *Chriſt*, of whom, and to whom many Things are ſaid in this Prophecy. And ſuch abrupt and ſudden Apoſtrophe's to Perſons not mentioned in the foregoing Words, are not unuſual in this Prophecy. Or rather, 3. To *Iſrael*, to God's Church and People, to whom he ſpeaks both in the foregoing and following Verſes. For God's Word is frequently ſaid to be *put into the Mouths*, not only of the Prophets, but of the People alſo, *Iſa.* lix. 21. *Deut.* xxx. 14, *&c.*——*And have covered thee with the Shadow of mine Hand.* Have protected thee by my almighty Power, *Iſa.* xlix. 2.——*And lay the Foundations of the Earth.* I have given thee theſe Promiſes, and this Protection in all thy Calamities, to aſſure thee of my Care and Kindneſs, and bring thee to the glorious Eſtate which is reſerved for the Days of the *Meſſiah*, which in Scripture Phraſe is called a *making new Heavens, and a new Earth*, *Iſa.* lxv. 17, *&c.*————*And ſay unto* Zion, *Thou art my People.* That I may own thee for my People, in a more illuſtrious Manner than ever I have done.

CHAP. LII.

The Church redeemed, and called upon to rejoice therein. The univerſal Preaching of the Goſpel glorious. A Call to free our ſelves from Bondage. Chriſt's *Kingdom ſhall be exalted.*

Q. *I Would know what is the general Drift and Purpoſe of the Prophet in this Diſcourſe?*

A. The Prophet ſpeaks in this Chapter of the Deliverance of the *Jews* out of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, which is a Type of the ſpiritual Redemption of the Church by *Chriſt*. The Grace and Excellency of the Preaching of the Goſpel is ſet forth, with a Promiſe that the Lord will protect his Church. After this it ſheweth, that *Chriſt* ſhall be exalted, when he ſhall have humbled himſelf to the utmoſt, being hated and vilified by the Generality of the *Jews*, more than any Man upon Earth, and was accounted and called by them a Deceiver, a *Samaritan*, a Blaſphemer, and a Devil, *&c.* but nevertheleſs the *Gentiles* were to hear from his Mouth many excellent Doctrines, which ſhould be new and ſtrange to them, ſuch as Men are very deſireable to hear; and particularly they were to hear from him that comfortable Doctrine concerning the Converſion and Salvation of all Nations, which was not only new to them, but was ſtrange and incredible to the moſt of the *Jews* themſelves.

Q. *To what Perſons or Things are the Expreſſions in Verſe* 7. *applicable?*

A. The Words in the Text run thus; *How beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings, that publiſheth Salvation, that ſaith unto* Zion, *thy God reigneth!*——*How beautiful.* Theſe are the Words of rejoicing and Admiration. They are exceeding precious and exceptable.——*Upon the Mountains.* Of *Zion* and *Moriah*, which are ſometimes mentioned as one Mountain, and ſometimes as two. Or, in the mountainous Country of *Judea*, to which theſe glad Tidings were brought, and from which they were ſpead abroad into other Countries.——*Are the Feet.* Which carry this welcome Meſſage, or the Meſſenger himſelf.——*Of him.* Or, of them, for the ſingular Number is oft put for the plural; although it may be emphatically uſed to ſignify, that although there were many Meſſengers, yet one was Chief, and the Lord of the Embaſſy, whoſe Coming was more acceptable than the reſt; which ſuits excellently to the *Meſſiah*, who is called the *Meſſenger of the Covenant*, *Mal.* iii. 1. and is oft ſaid to be *ſent* by God, *John* vi. 38, *&c.* to publiſh the glad Tidings of Salvation.——*That publiſheth Peace*, &c. Thoſe emphatical and repeated Expreſſions are a ſufficient Evidence, that ſomething farther and better is here intended than their Deliverance out of *Babylon*, which in itſelf was but an imperfect Work, and reached at firſt but to a few of that numerous People, and was attended with many Fears and Sorrows, and Remainders of their Bondage, *Ezra* ix. 8, 9. *Neh.* i. 3. and that although that was the Beginning of theſe glad Tidings, yet they extended much farther, even to the Coming of *Chriſt*, by whom true *Peace* and *Salvation* were only procured.——*Thy God reigneth.* It is true, this might in ſome Sort be ſaid when God ſo over-ruled the Affairs of the World, and the Heart of *Cyrus*, that the People were freed from their *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and reſtored unto, and ſettled in their own Land. Although he that conſiders the State of God's People in their own Land after their Return, will find, that the Reign of God in and over the World was not then either conſpicuous or glorious. And therefore it ſeems far more reaſonable to underſtand it of the Days of the *Meſſiah*, when God diſcovered and exerciſed his Dominion over the World far more eminently than ever he had done from the Beginning of the World until that Time.

CHAP. LIII.

The Prophet complains of the Incredulity of the Jews. *The Humility, Sufferings, and Death of* Chriſt, *and the bleſſed Effects thereof; his Exaltation and Glory.*

Q. *THIS Chapter, I think, is generally ſuppoſed to have Reſpect to the Times of the Goſpel; in what Manner does the Prophet ſet forth theſe Things?*

A. The Prophet declares, that few or none of the *Jews* will believe the Goſpel, or receive *Chriſt* when he comes among them; becauſe he was not to come into the World with ſecular Pomp and Glory, like an earthly Monarch, but he comes mean and lowly, as a young Sprig or tender Branch. And whereas it may ſeem an unreaſonable and incredible Thing, that ſo excellent, glorious, innocent, and juſt a Perſon ſhould meet with this Uſage, it muſt be known that his Griefs and Miſeries were not laid upon him for his own Sake, but wholly and ſolely for the Sake of wicked Men, in whoſe Stead he ſtood, and whoſe Sins he ſuffered; and though he died for Sin, yet after his Reſurrection he was to live for ever, and this his Death is to reſtore Life to his Members, *Rom.* vi. 9. God the Father delivered him into the Hands of the Wicked, and to the Power of the World, to do with him what they would; but *Chriſt* ſhall receive great and happy Succeſs in this glorious Undertaking; he ſhall conquer all his Enemies, and lead Captivity captive, as is ſaid, *Eph.* iv. 8. and ſet up his univerſal and everlaſting Kingdom in the next World. He prayed upon Earth for all Sinners, and particularly for thoſe who crucified him, *Luke* xxiii. 34. and in Heaven he ſtill interceeds for them, not by an humble Petition, but by a legal Demand of thoſe good Things which he purchaſed for his own People, by the Sacrifice of himſelf, which, though paſt, he conſtantly repreſents to his Father, as if it were preſent, although, he was not only crucified between two Thieves, but *Barrabas*, who for Murder and Sedition was caſt into Priſon, was preferred before *Jeſus Chriſt* the Son of God, *Mark* xv. 28. *Luke* xxii. 37.

This Chapter contains ſo true and juſt a Deſcription of the Perſon, Office, Mediation, Humiliation, Death, Burial, Interceſſion, and everlaſting Kingdom of *Jeſus Chriſt*, that had the Prophet lived after his Coming, and been an Eye-witneſs of theſe Things, he could ſcarce have been more particular in his Relation of them; we ſhall therefore give it the Reader entire.

Who hath believed our Report? and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? For he ſhall grow up before him as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry Ground; he hath no Form nor Comlineſs; and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no Beauty that we ſhould deſire him. He is deſpiſed and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; and we hid as it were our Faces from him; he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows; yet we did eſteem him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our Iniquities; the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone aſtray; we have turned every one to his own Way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth; he is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, ſo he openeth not his Mouth. He was taken from Priſon and from Judgment; and who ſhall declare his Generation? for he was cut off out of the Land of the Living; for the Tranſgreſſion of my People was he ſtricken. And he made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death, becauſe he had done no Violence, neither was any Deceit in his Mouth. Yet it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, he hath put him to Grief; when thou ſhalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he ſhall ſee his Seed, he ſhall prolong his Days, and the Pleaſure of the Lord ſhall proſper in his Hand. He ſhall ſee of the Travel of his Soul, and ſhall be ſatisfied; by his Knowledge ſhall my righteous Servant juſtify many; for he ſhall bear their Iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a Portion with the Great, and he ſhall divide the Spoil with the Strong; becauſe he hath poured out his Soul unto Death; and he was numbred with the Tranſgreſſors, and he bare the Sin of many, and made Interceſſion for the Tranſgreſſors.

CHAP. LIV.

The Bleſſing and Fulneſs of the Goſpel-Church. The Gentiles *become* Chriſt's *Spouſe, to whom his Love is everlaſting; her Glories. The Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. The Church's ſure Preſervation.*

Q. *THE Prophet having, in the laſt Chapter, diſcourſed largely of* Chriſt *and the Goſpel Times, what Subject does he treat of in this?*

A. After that he hath declared the Death of *Chriſt*, he ſpeaks to the Church, becauſe it ſhould feel the Fruit of the ſame, and calls her barren, becauſe that in the Captivity ſhe was a Widow without any Hope to have any Children. The Lord promiſes to beſtow Benefits on the Church, and that he would greatly increaſe and enlarge the ſame, embracing her as his loving Spouſe with everlaſting Grace and Favour, adorning her moſt gloriouſly with the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and promiſing to protect her againſt all her Enemies, ſo that ſhe ſhould neither have any juſt Cauſe of Fear, nor be given up to the Torment of Fear without Cauſe. It is God who governs all Things for the Good of his Elect, and Man can do nothing, but ſo far as God permits; for ſeeing all are his Creatures, he muſt needs govern and guide them: Farther aſſuring his Church that he would deliver her not only from the Fury of War, but alſo from the Strife of Tongues, from all Threatnings, Boaſts and Reproaches of her Enemies, and from all the Claims and Pretences which they have of any Right and Power over her, ſo that her Enemies ſhould neither prevail by Violence, nor Pretence of Juſtice.

The Prophet having largely diſcourſed of the Sufferings of *Chriſt*, and of the bleſſed Fruits or Effects thereof, among which one is, that he ſhould have a numerous Seed that ſhould believe on him, and that when the *Jews* rejected him, the *Gentiles* ſhould gladly receive him; and here foreſeeing by the Spirit of God that glorious State of the Church, he rejoiced at it, as *Abraham* did on the like Occaſion, *John* viii. 56. and breaks forth into this Song of Triumph. He turneth his Speech to the Church and Spouſe of God, or of *Chriſt*, as is manifeſt from Ver. 1. and eſpecially from Ver. 5. and from *Gal.* iv. 27. where it is ſo expounded. And although this Chapter is by ſome underſtood of the flouriſhing Condition of the *Jewiſh* Church and State after their Return from *Babylon*, yet the magnificent and glorious Promiſes it contains; ſo vaſtly exceed their Condition at that Time, which was full of Uncertainties, Diſtractions, and Troubles, as all the Hiſtories of thoſe Times aſſure us, and far from that Glory and laſting Tranquillity which is here aſſured to her, that it muſt neceſſarily be referred to the Times of the Goſpel, in which all that is here ſaid was, or will be remarkably fulfilled. And therefore as the preceding Chapter doth directly and literally ſpeak of *Chriſt*, ſo doth this literally ſpeak of the Church of *Chriſt*, or of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, of whom the antient *Hebrew* Doctors underſtood it. And every Reader muſt be of the ſame Opinion who conſiders every Paſſage of it, in its true Light; which therefore we have tranſcribed, as follows.

Sing, O barren, thou that didſt not bear; break forth into Singing, and cry aloud thou that didſt not travail with Child; for more are the Children of the deſolate, than the Children of the married Wife, ſaith the Lord. Enlarge the Place of thy Tent, and let them ſtretch forth the Curtains of *thine Habitations; ſpare not, lengthen thy Cords, and ſtrengthen thy Stakes. For thou ſhalt break forth on the Right-hand and on the Left; and thy Seed ſhall inherit the* Gentiles, *and make the deſolate Cities to be inhabited. Fear not, for thou ſhalt not be aſhamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou ſhalt not be put to Shame; for thou ſhalt forget the Shame of thy Youth, and ſhalt not remember the Reproach of thy Widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine Husband (the Lord of Hoſts is his Name) and thy Redeemer the Holy One of* Iſrael, *the God of the whole Earth ſhall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a Woman forſaken and grieved in Spirit, and a Wife of Youth, when thou waſt refuſed, ſaith thy God. For a ſmall Moment have I forſaken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather thee. In a little Wrath I hid my Face from thee, for a Moment; but with everlaſting Kindneſs will I have Mercy on thee, ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the Waters of* Noah *unto me; for as I have ſworn that the Waters of* Noah *ſhould no more go over the Earth; ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the Mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee. Oh thou afflicted, toſſed with Tempeſt, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy Stones with fair Colours, and lay thy Foundations with Saphires. And I will make thy Windows of Agates, and thy Gates of Carbuncles, and all thy Borders of pleaſant Stones. And all thy Children ſhall be taught of the Lord, and great ſhall be the Peace of thy Children. In Righteouſneſs ſhalt thou be eſtabliſhed; thou ſhalt be far from Oppreſſion, for thou ſhalt not fear; and from Terror, for it ſhall not come near thee. Behold, they ſhall ſurely gather together, but not by me; whoſoever ſhall gather together againſt thee, ſhall fall for thy Sake. Behold, I have created the Smith that bloweth the Coals in the Fire, and that bringeth forth an Inſtrument for his Work, and I have created the Water to deſtroy. No Weapon that is formed againſt thee ſhall proſper; and every Tongue that ſhall ariſe againſt thee in Judgment, thou ſhalt condemn. This is the Heritage of the Servants of the Lord, and their Righteouſneſs is of me, ſaith the Lord.*

Chap. LV.

An Invitation to ſeek for ſpiritual Bleſſings from Chriſt, *whom the Father ſends; his Grace infinite; his Word powerful; the Joy of Believers.*

Q. I*N what Manner is* Chriſt *and his Offices deſcribed in this Chapter?*

A. Chriſt, by propoſing his Graces and Gifts to his Church, exempts the Hypocrites, who are full of their worldly Luſts, and ſo thirſt not after thoſe Waters. The ſame Covenant is here mentioned, which God, through his Mercy, ratified and confirmed to *David*, that it ſhould be eternal, 2 *Sam.* vii. 13. God the Father declares for what End and Purpoſe he ſent *Chriſt*, namely, to call the *Gentiles*, which before he did not receive to be his People. When the Lord offersThis himſelf by his Preaching, it is the Duty of Man to give Attention; and God promiſes to give them his Grace and Bleſſing in a very ample and plentiful Manner, to the Joy and Rejoicing of all his Creatures.

Q. *Explain the Allegory in the firſt Verſe?*

A. Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money; come ye, buy, and eat, yea, come, buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price.——Every one. Not only *Jews* but *Gentiles*. The Prophet having largely diſcourſed of *Chriſt*, Chap. liii. and of the Church of *Chriſt*, Chap. liv. here invites all Perſons to come to *Chriſt*, and to his Church.——*That thirſteth.* For the Grace of God, and for the Bleſſings of the Goſpel. This Thirſt implies a vehement, active, reſtleſs Deſire after it, not to be ſatisfied with any Thing ſhort of it.——*Come ye to the Waters.* Which are mentioned either, 1. As the Place where they were to buy the following Commodities. It being uſual to convey Proviſions to Cities by Rivers. Or rather, 2. As the Commodity to be bought, the Graces and Comforts of God's Spirit, which are frequently compared to *Waters, Iſa.* xii. 3. and xxxvi. 6, 7. *John* vii. 37, 38. and which are deſigned by all theſe metaphorical Expreſſions of *Waters, Wine, Milk*, and *Bread.——He that hath no Money.* Even thoſe who are moſt poor in the World, and thoſe that are moſt worthleſs and wicked, if they do but thirſt, may be welcome.——*Buy.* Procure or receive that which is freely offer'd you, if you do but come for it, and are willing to take it. Thus *buying* is uſed, *Prov.* xxxiii. 23. *Rev.* iii. 18. Nor can this be underſtood of *buying* properly, becauſe here is no Price paid. *Wine and Milk.* Which are ſynechdochically put for all Sorts of Proviſions; which alſo are to be underſtood of Goſpel Bleſſings, as is evident from the following Words.

Chap. LVI.

The Bleſſedneſs of the Godly without any Reſpect of Perſons. The Prophet inveighs againſt blind Watchmen.

Q. W*HAT Obſervations occur to you on reading this Chapter?*

A. The firſt nine Verſes of this Chapter ſeem to belong to the foregoing Prophecy; and from the Conſideration of God's Promiſes made to them, he moveth them to perform their Duty to him, promiſing the converted *Gentiles*, that their Worſhip and Service ſhould be pleaſing and acceptable to him, for that he did not reſpect Perſons. The Prophet ſhews that Affliction ſhall come through the Fault of the Governors, Prophets, and Paſtors, whoſe Ignorance, Negligence, Avarice, and Obſtinacy provoked God's Wrath againſt them.

Q. *Give me the true Senſe of Verſe* 1. Thus ſaith the Lord, keep ye Judgment, and do Juſtice; for my Salvation is near to come, and my Righteouſneſs to be revealed?

A. Keep ye Judgment, and do Juſtice. This Phraſe elſewhvre ſignifies the Duties which one Man oweth to another, but here it ſeems to ſignify thoſe which Men owe to God, as it's explained in the following Verſes.——*For my Salvation.* That eminent Salvation by the *Meſſiah* ſo largely promiſed, and inſiſted upon in the foregoing Chapters; for which it behoves you to prepare yourſelves, and in which, without this Condition, you ſhall receive no Benefit or Share.——*Is near to come.* So the Scripture uſeth to ſpeak of Things at a great Diſtance, as if they were preſent, or at Hand. *Hab.* ii. 3. *Jam.* v. 89. *Rev.* xxii. 20.——*My Righteouſneſs.*

Righteouſneſs. The ſame Thing which he now called *Salvation,* and here calleth his *Righteouſneſs,* becauſe it is an evident Demonſtration of God's Righteouſneſs, as in the fulfilling of his Promiſes, ſo in the Puniſhment of Sin, and in the Salvation of Sinners upon juſt and honourable Terms.

Chap. LVII.

The bleſſed Death of the Righteous; not duly lamented by the Jews; *who alſo commit Idolatry, and truſt in Man; they are threatened. Evangelical Promiſes to the Penitent. No Peace to the Wicked.*

Q. P*RAY what does this Chapter afford worthy Remark?*

A. The Lord upbraids the *Jews* with their exceſſive Heedleſſneſs, becauſe they regarded not the Death of holy and godly Men; as alſo becauſe they derided the Prophets, committed Idolatry, and truſted to human Help. Therefore he threatens to puniſh them, yet comforts the Penitent, and promiſes them Grace and Mercy; but the Wicked are to have no Peace, their Minds being reſtleſs, perpetually hurried and tormented with their own Luſts and Paſſions, with the Horror of their Guilt, and dread of the divine Vengeance due, and ready to fall upon them.

Q. *I am doubtful whether I rightly comprehend the Senſe of the 9th Verſe.*

A. And thou wenteſt to the King with Ointment, and didſt increaſe thy Perfumes, and didſt ſend thy Meſſengers far off, and didſt debaſe thyſelf even unto Hell. ——*Thou wenteſt.* Either by thyſelf, or by thy Meſſengers, as it follows: Or, *thou didſt look;* to wit, earneſtly, with Expectation and vehement Affection. ——*To the King.* Either to *Moloch,* which was, as it were, the King or chief of their Idols, and which ſignifies a King; or to the great King of *Aſſyria,* called *the King* by way of Eminence, to whom the *Iſraelites,* in the Days of *Iſaiah,* were very prone to truſt, and ſend Preſents. Although the Word *King,* may be here taken collectively for the Kings of *Aſſyria* and *Egypt,* or any other King, from whom they deſired or expected Help, in their Streights. And ſo the Prophet here paſſeth from their Idolatry to another Sin, even their carnal Confidence in heathen Princes, for which they are oft ſeverely reproved; altho' theſe two Sins were commonly joined together, and they often received Idolatry from thoſe Kings whoſe Help they deſired.——*With Ointment.* With precious Ointment, and particularly with Balm, which was of great Price, and was a Commodity peculiar to thoſe Parts, and was ſometimes ſent as a Preſent, *Gen.* xliii. 11, *&c.*——*Didſt increaſe thy Perfumes.* Didſt ſend great Quantities thereof to them, to procure their Aid. ——*Didſt ſend thy Meſſengers far off.* Into *Aſſyria,* which was far from *Judea.* ————*Didſt debaſe thyſelf, even unto Hell.* Thou waſt willing to ſubmit to the baſeſt Terms to procure their Aid.

Chap. LVIII.

The Jews *Hypocriſy. A true and counterfeit Faſt deſcribed. Promiſes due to Godlineſs, and to the keeping of the Sabbath.*

A. P*RAY what are the chief Points of Inſtruction advanced in this Chapter?*

Q. God commands the Prophet to upbraid the *Jews* with their Hypocriſy in their Faſting, *&c.* and teaches them what a true Faſt is, and what he requires: He promiſes all Proſperity and Bleſſing to them who ſerve him in Uprightneſs of Heart, and lay aſide Wickedneſs, eſpecially thoſe who keep holy the Sabbath, by not ſpeaking vainly or impertinently, it not being ſuitable to the Day, neither tending to the Profit or Pleaſure, but rather injurious, as being contrary to the Reſt, Quiet, and ſedate Compoſedneſs of the Sabbath.

The Hypocriſy of the *Jews* in their Faſts and other Parts of religious Worſhip, their Duties with reſpect thereto are ſo exactly pointed out and deſcribed, and the happy Conſequences of their right Obſervance of thoſe Duties ſo plainly ſhewn in this Chapter, that we could not forbear giving it the Reader entire.

Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy Voice like a Trumpet, and ſhew my People their Tranſgreſſion, and the Houſe of Jacob *their Sins. Yet they ſeek me daily, and delight to know my Ways, as a Nation that did Righteouſneſs, and forſook not the Ordinance of their God: They aſk of me the Ordinances of juſtice; they take Delight in approaching to* God. *Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not? Wherefore have we afflicted our Soul, and thou takeſt no Knowledge? Behold, in the Day of Faſt you find Pleaſure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye faſt for Strife and Debate, and to ſmite with the Fiſt of Wickedneſs; ye ſhall not faſt as ye do this Day, to make your Voice to be heard on high. Is it ſuch a Faſt that I have choſen? A Day for a Man to afflict his Soul? Is it to bow down his Head as a Bulruſh, and to ſpread Sackcloth and Aſhes under him? Wilt thou call this a Faſt, and an acceptable Day to the Lord? Is not this the Faſt that I have choſen? to looſe the Bands of Wickedneſs, to undo the heavy Burdens, and to let the Oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every Yoke? Is it not to deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and that thou bring the Poor that are caſt out, to thy Houſe? when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyſelf from thine own Fleſh? Then ſhall thy Light break forth as the Morning, and thine Health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily: And thy Righteouſneſs ſhall go before thee, the Glory of the Lord ſhall be the Rere-ward. Then ſhalt thou call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer; thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay,* Here I am: *If thou take away from the midſt of thee the Yoke, the putting forth of the Finger, and ſpeading Vanity: And if thou draw out thy Soul to the Hungry, and ſatisfy the afflicted Soul; then ſhall thy Light riſe in Obſcurity, and thy Darkneſs be as the Noon-day. And the Lord ſhall guide thee continually, and ſatisfy thy Soul in Drought, and make fat thy Bones; and thou ſhalt be like a watered Garden, and like a Spring of Water, whoſe Water fails not. And they that ſhall be of thee, ſhall build the old waſte Places; thou ſhalt raiſe up the Foundation of many Generations; and thou ſhalt be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Reſtorer of Paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy Foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy Pleaſure on my Holy-day, and call the Sabbath a Delight, the Holy of the Lord, honourable, and ſhalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own Pleaſure, nor ſpeaking thine own Words: Then ſhalt thou delight thyſelf in the Lord, and I will cauſe thee to ride upon the High-places of the Earth, and feed thee with the Heritage of* Jacob *thy Father, for the Mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it.*

CHAP. LIX.

Sin ſeparates between God and us. The Sins of the Jews *Calamity is for Sin. Salvation only of God. The Covenant of the Redeemer.*

Q. W*HAT is the Argument purſued in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet ſhews that the Cauſe was not in the Lord's Hand, that the *Jews* were not delivered, but it was intirely owing to their Sins which hindered, which Sins are related. On Confeſſion of their manifold Sins and Offences, God promiſes to deliver his People, and puniſh their Enemies; that he would ſend a Redeemer among them, and govern them for ever by his Spirit and Word, with Apoſtles, Miniſters and Teachers of the Church to all ſucceeding Ages; it may alſo have a ſpecial Reference to the Goſpel, or new Covenant in *Chriſt*.

Q. *I deſire ſome Remarks on Verſe* 1. Behold, the Lord's Hand is not ſhortened, that it cannot ſave; neither his Ear heavy, that it cannot hear?

A. Not ſhortened. He is not grown weaker than in former Time, as omnipotent as ever he was; *Hand* is here put by *Synechdoche* for *Arm*, and ſo *Strength*, becauſe the Strength of a Man is generally exerted in his Arm, as is thus applied to God, in bringing *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, *Pſ.* cxxxvi. 12.——*His Ear heavy.* Or thick of hearing; he is not like your Idol-Gods, that have Hands, and cannot help, and Ears and cannot hear. The Phraſes are much to the ſame Purpoſe, except only that they ſeem to be appropriated to the double Cavil or Quarrel, that the *Jews* might have with God; as, 1. Surely, if God were not heavy, or hard of hearing, he could not but hear thoſe ſtrong Cries that we put up in the Day of Faſt. Or, 1. If he did hear, certainly he could not help us; and thus it may have Reſpect to the Beginning of the thirty eighth Chapter. Or, the Words may be by way of Confirmation and Eſtabliſhment, and ſo may relate to the Cloſe of it, to let them know, that if they ſought him, as they ought, and as was before preſcribed, he was not inexorable, but willing to hear, and able to make good all thoſe Promiſes he had made from the 8th Verſe to the End. The Sum is, to ſhew that the Fault is not in God, that their Faſts and Cries were not regarded, for his *Ear* was as quick as ever; nor their Services rewarded, for his *Hand* was as able to help as ever; but the Obſtruction lay in their Sins, as is poſitively aſſerted Verſe 2. and a more particular Account given of them in the Sequel.

Q. *Pray expound the 5th Verſe:* They hatch Cockatrice Eggs, and weave the Spider's Webb; he that eateth of their Eggs dieth, and that which is cruſhed, breaketh out into a Viper?

A. They hatch Cockatrice Eggs; by which underſtand *Adder* or *Baſilisk*; one Kind put for another; a proverbial Speech, ſignifying, by theſe *Eggs*, miſchievous Deſigns, and by hatching them, their putting them in Practice; this is to ſhew, that Miſchief is natural to them, and they can do no otherwiſe, as Poiſon is natural to theſe Eggs. *And weave the Spider's Webb.* Another proverbial Speech, whereby is taught, both how by their Plots they weave Nets, lay Snares induſtriouſly, with great Pains and Artifice, whereby they may intangle and involve their poor Neighbours in Intricacies and Perplexities, and ſo devour them, as the Spider weaves her Webb to catch Flies, and then to feed on them: And alſo, how that they contrived nothing but what will tend to their own Ruin, as the Iſſue of the Viper is the Death of the Mother; and they and their Deſigns will come to nothing, and not anſwer their End, as the Spider's Webb is ſoon ſwept away, and is ſeen no more, which well agrees with what follows.——*He that eateth.* Here is a catachreſtical Alluſion, noting that he who hath Commerce with them, and approves their Counſels, which are the *Eggs* which they hatch, will be poiſoned with them.——*And that which is cruſhed, breaketh out into a Viper.* If *and* be *copulative* here, then the Senſe is either, If any ſeek to cruſh and diſappoint their Plots; or if they be ſprinkled or diſperſed, they will ſeek his Ruin, will be as a Viper to him; but if *and* be *cauſal*, as it often is, and may be here, then the Senſe is, as if he had ſaid, *he dieth*, becauſe the *Eggs* being cruſhed, a poiſonous Viper proceeds from it; the more you partake of their Counſels, the more you are infected, there lies ſuch a deadly Poiſon embodied in them.

CHAP. LX.

The Glory of the Church in the abundant Acceſs of the Gentiles, *and the great Bleſſings to be beſtowed upon her after a ſhort Affliction.*

Q. D*O the Contents of this Chapter point at* Chriſt *and the* Goſpel-Times?

A. The Church is here exhorted by the Lord to rejoice, becauſe of the glorious Bleſſings purchaſed for her by *Chriſt*, enlightning her with the true Knowledge of God, which the *Gentiles* ſhould likewiſe enjoy, and join themſelves to it, whereby it ſhould be adorned, beautified, enriched and protected by the Lord. Though the Church, at firſt, will be but a very few, yet will it increaſe unto many thouſands; as ſoon as it begins it ſhall haſten apace, as it did by St. *Peter*'s Sermons, three thouſand in one Day. *Acts* ii. and five thouſand in another, *Acts* iv. and ſo ſoon filled the whole World; and St. *Paul* planted whole Churches, as the *Iſraelites* in *Egypt* increaſed from ſeventy Perſons to a vaſt Multitude.

In this Chapter the Prophet ſo plainly deſcribes the Times of the *Meſſiah*, the glorious Effects which the preaching of the Goſpel had upon the *Gentile* World, and the happy State of the Church in thoſe Days, that he muſt be wilfully blind, who cannot read in every Verſe thoſe wonderful Events.

Ariſe, ſhine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee. For behold, the Darkneſs ſhall cover the Earth, and groſs Darkneſs the People; but the Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his Glory ſhall be ſeen upon thee. And the Gentiles *ſhall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightneſs of thy Riſing. Lift up thine Eyes round about and ſee; all they gather themſelves together, they come to thee, thy Sons ſhall come from far, and thy Daughters ſhall be nurſed at thy Side. Then thou ſhalt ſee and flow together, and thine Heart ſhall fear and be enlarged, becauſe the Abundance of the Sea ſhall be converted unto thee, the Forces of the Gen*tiles *ſhall come unto thee, the Multitude of Camels ſhall cover thee; the Dromedaries of* Midian *and* Ephah: *All they from* Sheba *ſhall come; they ſhall bring Gold and Incenſe, and they ſhall ſhew forth the*

Praiſes of the Lord. All the Flocks of Kedar *ſhall be gathered together unto thee, the Rams of* Nebajoth *ſhall miniſter unto thee; they ſhall come up with Acceptance on mine Altar, and I will glorify the Houſe of my* Glory. *Who are theſe that fly as a Cloud, and as the Doves to their Windows? Surely the Iſles ſhall wait for me, and the Ships of* Tarſhiſh *firſt, to bring thy Sons from far, their Silver and their* Gold *with them, unto the Name of the Lord thy* God, *and to the* Holy One *of* Iſrael, *becauſe he hath glorified thee. And the Sons of Strangers ſhall build up thy Walls, and their Kings ſhall miniſter unto thee; for in my Wrath I ſmote thee, but in my favour have I had Mercy on thee. Therefore thy Gates ſhall be open continually, they ſhall not be ſhut Day nor Night, that Men may bring unto thee the Forces of the* Gentiles, *and that their Kings may be brought. For the Nation and Kingdom that will not ſerve thee, ſhall periſh; yea thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly waſted. The Glory of* Lebanon *ſhall come unto thee, the Fir-tree, the Pine-tree, and the Box together, to beautify the Place of my Sanctuary, and I will make the Place of my Feet glorious. The Sons alſo of them that afflicted thee, and all they that deſpiſe thee, ſhall bow themſelves down at the Soles of thy Feet; and they ſhall call thee, The City of the Lord, the* Zion *of the Holy One of* Iſrael. *Whereas thou haſt been forſaken and hated, ſo that no Man went thro' thee, I will make thee an eternal Excellency, a Joy of many* Generations. *Thou ſhalt alſo ſuck the Milk of the* Gentiles, *and ſhalt ſuck the Breaſts of Kings, and thou ſhalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty* One of Jacob. *For Braſs I will bring Gold, and for Iron I will bring Silver, and for Wood Braſs, and for Stones Iron: I will alſo make thy Wall Salvation, and thy Gates Praiſe. The Sun ſhall be no more thy Light by Day, neither for Brightneſs ſhall the Moon give Light unto thee: But the Lord ſhall be unto thee an everlaſting Light, and thy God thy Glory. Thy Sun ſhall no more go down, neither ſhall thy Moon withdraw itſelf; for the Lord ſhall be thine everlaſting Light, and the Days of thy Mourning ſhall be ended. Thy People alſo ſhall be all righteous; they ſhall inherit the Land for ever, the Branch of my planting, the Work of my Hands, that I may be glorified. A little one ſhall become a thouſand, and a ſmall one a ſtrong Nation; I the Lord will haſten it in its Time.*

CHAP. LXI.

Chriſt *and his bleſſed Office. The Church's Repair, Increaſe, and Joy.*

Q. HOW *are the Paſſages in this Chapter applicable to* Chriſt *and his Church?*

A. Chriſt ſhews that he is anointed, and for what Reaſon, as alſo what excellent Mercies he would beſtow on his Church, and likewiſe ſpeaks again of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and of the Mercies which God would beſtow upon his People. The Church thankfully acknowledges God's Kindneſs to her in the before-mentioned Promiſe, expreſſed here in the Greatneſs of her Affection, with Reference both to her preſent Deliverance from *Babylon*, and to the Happineſs of her Goſpel State. Theſe Things will not be done in a Corner, but will be eminently conſpicuous in the Sight of all the World; for which Purpoſe, thoſe Hymns penned by the Godly, will ever be famous in the Churches of *Chriſt* to all Ages, as of *Moſes, Hannah, Mary, Zachary, Simeon, &c.*

Q. *Let me have your Interpretation of Verſe* 2. To proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord, and Day of Vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn?

A. To proclaim. To declare, as it reſpects the *Jews*, that their Liberty is at Hand.——*The acceptable Year.* The happy Age of God's Grace, either of which will be grateful and welcome News to them, or acceptable to God, at a Time wherein it pleaſeth him to favour them; but this muſt be underſtood of a farther Extent than to *Babylon*, or rather unto Mankind in *Jeſus Chriſt*, *Gal.* iv. 4. *Tit.* iii. 4. called a Time of God's Good-will, in that angelical Song, *Luke* ii. 14. on Account of thoſe good Tidings which the Angels brought, Verſes 10, 11. called ſo poſſibly from the ſovereign Pleaſure of God, having no Reſpect to any Satisfaction from Man.——*Year.* Not preciſely, as if *Chriſt* preach- but one Year, the Miſtake of ſome Antients, mentioned and refuted by *Irenæus*, Lib. II. Chap. xxxviii. but for Time indefinitely, and may include the whole Time of preaching the Goſpel. See *Rom.* x. 15. which poſſibly is the Meaning of the Word *now*, 2 *Chron* vi. 2. and probably hath a pertinent Alluſion to the Year of *Jubilee*, which was a general Releaſe proclaimed by Sound of Trumpet, which relates alſo here to the Word *Proclaiming*, *Lev.* xxv. 13.——*The Day of Vengeance.* On *Babylon*, it being neceſſary, that when God will deliver his People, he ſhould take Vengeance on their Enemies; but myſtically and principally, *viz.* Satan, Sin and Death.——*To comfort all that mourn.* Either by Reaſon of Sufferings or their Sins. *Mat.* xi. 28. Or the Miſeries of *Sion*.

CHAP. LXII.

A Prayer of the Watchmen for the Church, in Confidence of God's gracious Deſigns and Promiſes to it.

Q. PRAY *what are the Points of Inſtruction recommended in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet ſaith, that he will never ceaſe to declare unto the People the good Tidings of their Deliverance: He foretels the happy and glorious State of the *Chriſtian* Church, which ſhall be married unto *Chriſt*, and no more contemned as a Woman forſaken of her Huſband. Faithful Watchmen are promiſed, *viz.* Prophets, Paſtors and Miniſters; and they are exhorted never to ceaſe to call upon God by Prayer, for the Deliverance of his Church, and to teach others to do the ſame. The Church is promiſed Reſt and Peace, and that ſhe ſhould increaſe by the Converſion of the *Gentiles*.

Q. *In what Senſe is the* 10*th Verſe to be interpreted?*

A. Let us firſt ſee what the Words are: *Go through, go through the the Gates; prepare ye the Way of the People, caſt up the Highway, gather out the Stones, lift up a Standard for the People.*——*Go through, &c.* It is doubled by way of Emphaſis; as if he had ſaid, make haſt to your own Land; as if *Cyrus* ſhould ſay, Get you out of Captivity as ſoon as you will, Chap. xlviii. 20. Or, it may intimate an Invitation, iſſued out from them at *Jeruſalem*, to thoſe that were ſcattered about in the Captivity, therein poſſibly typifying the going of *Chriſt's* Diſciples into the various Parts of the World, to bring thoſe that were ſcattered up and down into the Church. Or, go meet the *Gentiles*, whom God purpoſed to bring into the Church, that by pure Doctrine, and your holy Lives, they may be the ſooner won. ——*Prepare ye the Way.* Let them not have any Obſtructions in their Way; he ſeems to call upon others to prepare the Way for *Chriſt*, as was propheſied, Chap. xl. 3. accordingly, it was ordered to be *caſt up*, Chap. lvii. 13.——*Gather out the Stones.* That there be no Stumbling-ſtone or Offence in the Way; or, as if he had ſaid, Go to and fro, and remove every Scandal that they may boggle at, *Rom.* xiv. 13.——*Lift up a Standard.* An Alluſion to Soldiers, that uſually ſet up their Standard, that the Army may know whither to repair from all Quarters. And *lifting it up*, is, that it may be more viſible, Chap. xi. 10, 11, 12. and thus is *Chriſt* held forth in the preaching of the Goſpel. ——*For the People.* Or, over the People.

Chap. LXIII.

Chriſt's *Victory over his Enemies, and Mercy towards his Church; in Judgment remembers Mercy. The Church's Prayer and Complaint in Faith.*

Q. AGAINST *whom is the threatening Part of this Prophecy denounced; and who is the Champion therein deſcribed?*

A. This Prophecy is againſt the *Idumeans*, and their Enemies which perſecuted the Church, on whom God will take Vengeance, and is here ſet forth all bloody, after that he hath deſtroyed them in *Bozrah*, the chief City of the *Idumeans*; theſe their greateſt Enemies, under the Title of Circumciſion, and the Kindred of *Abraham*, claimed to themſelves the chief Religion, and hated the true Worſhippers. The Prophet further deſcribes the glorious Victory of *Chriſt* over the Enemies of his Church, and the Praiſe and Commendation of the great Goodneſs of God. He moves the People to remember God's Benefits in Times paſt, that they may be ſtrengthened and confirmed in their Troubles. He makes a Confeſſion of the People's Sins, for which God was offended, but had Compaſſion again, calling to mind his former Mercies; concluding with a Prayer, for farther Grace and Protection from the Almighty.

Q. *Pray expound Verſe* 13. That led them thro' the Deep, as an Horſe in the Wilderneſs, that he ſhould not ſtumble?

A. Shewing that God did not dry up ſhallow Places but the very Depth of the Sea, the very Channel, which is the deepeſt Part; or between thoſe Heap of Waters that ſtood up as a Wall on each Side of them, which might make it ſeem terrible, and therefore it is aſcribed to their Faith, *Heb.* xi. 29. ——*In the Wilderneſs*; or *Plain*, for ſo Wilderneſs is ſometimes taken, and may be here meant, by comparing it to a Valley in the next Verſe, *viz.* with as much Safety as the Horſe runs up and down the plain Ground; or, with as much Eaſe and Tenderneſs, as an Horſe led by the Bridle; not as Men affrighted, but ſoberly and orderly. ——*That they ſhould not ſtumble.* This may be taken metaphorically, they come to no Harm, or properly, that though the Sea was but newly divided, yet it was ſo dried, that the Mud, as alſo the Unevenneſs of the Ground, was not any Occaſion of ſtumbling, or their ſticking in it; probably ſo dried and ſmoothed by the Wind, that God ſent it as were to prepare the Way before them. See Chap. iv. 3, 4, 5.

Chap. LXIV.

The Church's Prayer continued, for the Illuſtration of God's Glory, with a Confeſſion of their Sins, and Complaint of their Afflictions.

Q. WHAT *Subject does the Prophet here treat of?*

A. The Prophet continues his Prayer begun in the latter Part of the laſt Chapter, deſiring God to declare his Love towards his Church, by Miracles and mighty Power, as he did in Mount *Sinai*; beſeeching the Almighty to deliver them as he had done formerly; confeſſing and acknowledging the abominable, many, and crying Sins of the People, and their Unworthineſs of Mercy; praying eſpecially for the building up of *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, which the *Jews* thought ſacred and inviolable, in which they gloried, becauſe it was the Place where the Divine Service was performed, and the Glory of God manifeſted.

Q. *Be pleaſed to explain Ver.* 6. But we are all as an unclean Thing, and all our Righteouſneſſes are as filthy Rags; and we all do fade as a Leaf, and our Iniquities, as the Wind, have taken us away?

A. As an unclean Thing. He alludes either to Things unclean, under the ceremonial Law, wherein the Leproſy was found, and was to be burnt, *Lev.* xiii. 55. or rather to Perſons unclean. They compare their preſent State with the former. As if he had ſaid, formerly there were ſome that feared thee, and walked uprightly before thee, and were in thy favour; but now we are all as one polluted Maſs, nothing of good left in us, by reaſon of univerſal Degeneracy, *Iſa.* i. 4, 6. *All our Righteouſneſſes.* This, according to moſt Commentators, refers either to the Obſervances of the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, wherein they thought their Righteouſneſſes did much conſiſt; or, to the beſt Work and Actions that can be performed by us; or, to our natural and univerſal Depravities. But the beſt Interpreters refer it to the groſs Provocations that this People were guilty of, cauſing God to caſt them out of their Habitations, or elſe to their Perſons; that is, the moſt righteous among us; and being plural, it raiſeth it up to the higheſt Degree, the Scripture frequently putting the Abſtract for the Concrete, as *Wiſdoms* for the *greateſt Wiſdom*, Prov. ix. 1. So that the Meaning is, The very beſt of us all are no better than the uncleaneſt Things and Perſons, ſee *Micab.* vii. 2, 3, 4. and the rather, becauſe he lived about the Time of *Iſaiah.*——*As filthy Rags.* A Cloth made up of Patches, or ſuch as came from a putrid Sore, or were defiled with the menſtruous Blood of a Woman; the LXX. as the Rag of one that *ſits down*; poſſibly alluding to *Rachel*, *Gen.* xxxi. 34, 35. or whatever may be moſt filthy. ——*Fade as a Leaf.* Blown off the Tree, and ſo withers. *Have taken us away.* Carried us away to *Babylon*, from our Habitations, as Leaves hurried away by a boiſterous Wind; our Iniquities have been the procuring Cauſe.

Chap. LXV.

The Calling of the Gentiles. *The* Jews, *for their Incredulity, Idolatry, and Hypocriſy, are rejected; yet a Remnant ſhall be ſaved. Judgments on the Wicked, and Bleſſings on the Godly. The flouriſhing and peaceable State of the* New Jeruſalem.

Q. *IS it your Opinion that the firſt Verſe refers to the Converſion of the* Gentiles *under the Goſpel Miniſtration?*

A. That in the primary Senſe the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, is a Prophecy of the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, upon the Rejection of the *Jews*, for their Contempt and Crucifixion of *Chriſt*, cannot be doubted by any, who will not aſſume to themſelves a greater Ability to inprepret the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament than St. *Paul* had, who, *Rom.* x. 20. expreſly ſo interprets and applies it; and this ſhews the Vanity of the *Jews* in their other Interpretations of this Chapter, and other Parts of Holy Scripture.

Q. *What is the general Tenour of this Chapter?*

A. The Penitent are promiſed they ſhall be delivered, but thoſe, who inſtead of ſerving God, are the Servants of Men, in complying with Idolatry and Superſtition, are ſorely threatened; for God promiſes to diſtinguiſh them, by afflicting them when thoſe who worſhipped him with Sincerity ſhou[illegible] promiſing to bring it to paſs, that ov[illegible]he whole Earth, if any Man bleſs h[illegible]s another, it ſhall be in God. And we[illegible] from the latter Part of this Chapter, [illegible] is the Work of God to reſtrain the Wolves and Serpents of this World, who would elſe be always hatching Miſchief againſt the Innocent.

Q. *To whom, or what, is the Deſcription in Verſe 4. to be applied?*

A. Which remain among the Graves, and lodge in the Mountains, which eat Swine's Fleſh, and Broth of abominable Things is in their Veſſels.—— *Remain amongſt the Graves.* They *remained amongſt the Graves*, either there expecting Revelations by Dreams, or there *conſulting with Devils*, who were thought to delight in ſuch Places, or to practice *Necromancy*, all which were forbidden, *Deut.* xviii. 11. *Chron.* viii. 10.—— *Lodge in the Mountains.* And they *lodged in the Monuments*, the *Hebrew* Word here uſed has occaſion'd Interpreters to vary in their Senſe of it. The Word only ſignifies *Places kept*, or *obſerved*; ſome interpret it of Idol-Temples, ſome of Caves and Dens, in which the Heathens uſed to worſhip their Idols, ſome of Tombs or Monuments of dead Perſons; beſides the Idolatry of the Thing, there was in it a ſinful Imitation of the Heathens, and a ſwerving from the Rule which God had given them.——*Swine's Fleſh.* They did alſo eat Swine's Fleſh, contrary to the Divine Law, *Lev.* xi. 7. *Deut.* xiv. 8. and ſuffered in their Veſſels.—— *Broth of abominable Things*; ſo the Word is uſed, *Judges* vi. 19, 20. others read it *Parts* or *Pieces of abominable Things*; that is, Broth or Pieces of ſuch Fleſh as was to the *Jews* unclean by the Law, *Lev.* xi. every Creature of God is good, but God's *Prohibition* had made the Fleſh of divers Creatures an abominable Thing to the *Jews*, they might not touch their Fleſh, *Lev.* xi. 28. But they taking the Meaſures of their Duty from their Appetite, or from their Reaſon, concluding from natural Principles, made no Conſcience of the Law of God. This was their Iniquity, which is farther aggravated in the next Verſe.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by* New Heavens, and a new Earth, *Verſe* 17?

A. The whole Verſe runs thus; *For behold, I create new Heavens, and a new Earth, and the former ſhall not be remember'd nor come into Mind.* I will tell you yet a more admirable Thing: I am about wholly to alter and change the *State*, not only of *my People*, who are now afflicted, reſtoring them to a more lightſome State, more free from Troubles and Afflictions, but bringing a new Face upon the *World*, ſending my Son to raiſe up a new Church, and to inſtitute a new Worſhip, *John* iv. 21, 24. and giving out my Spirit in a more plentiful Manner, *Acts* ii. 17. which new State ſhall abide until a *New Heaven and Earth appear, in which ſhall dwell nothing but Righteouſneſs*, 2 *Pet.* iii. 13. *Rev.* xxi. 1. And that State of Things ſhall be ſuch, and ſo glorious, as the former State of my People ſhall not be remember'd, nor come into Mind. Whether this *new Heavens and new Earth* here promiſed, ſignifies ſuch a State of the Church wherein *Chriſt* ſhall perſonally reign upon Earth, over his Saints, the Wicked being deſtroy'd (as ſome have thought he ſhall for a thouſand Years) is much to be queſtion'd, no ſuch Concluſion being deducible from this and parallel Texts.

Q. *To what Times or Events does the Prophecy in the 25th Verſe relate?*

A. The Wolf and the Lamb ſhall feed together, and the Lion ſhall eat Straw like the Bullock, and Duſt ſhall be the Serpent's Meat, they ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy Mountain, ſaith the Lord. This Verſe relates to the ceaſing of Perſecution. The People of God, for their *Whiteneſs and Innocence*, are often compared to *Lambs* and *Sheep*, wicked Men to *Wolves* and *Lions*, for their Antipathy to the Seed of the Woman: God here promiſeth to take off the Fierceneſs of his People's Enemies, ſo that they ſhall live quietly and peaceably together. Under the Metaphor of the *Serpent's eating the Duſt*, their proper Meat, inſtead of flying upon Men, God promiſeth Tranquillity to his Church; ſuch a Time when Men ſhould mind their proper Buſineſs, and not make it their Work to eat up the People of God like Bread.—— *They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy Mountain.* But ſome will ſay, *When ſhall theſe Things be?* The Scripture records no ſuch Preriod of any Time yet paſt. And it's probable that this is a Promiſe yet to be fulfilled, and it's not for us *to know the Times and the Seaſons*; but in the mean while let our *Faith* and *Patience* be ſeen; and we may learn, that it's God's Work to reſtrain the *Wolves* and *Serpents* of the World, who would elſe be always doing what they are ſometimes doing; and it is a ſad Sign that God is not at Peace with that People, where we ſee Wolves devouring Lambs, and Serpents deſtroying Men inſtead of licking up Duſt, nor well pleaſed with that Part of his Holy Mountain where there is nothing but *hunting* and *deſtroying*, biting and devouring one another. When God ſhall be at Peace with a People theſe Things ſhall not be found amongſt them.

CHAP. LXVI.

God is ſerved by the Spirit, and not with Ceremonies. The wonderful Births and Benefits of the Goſpel Church. Severe Judgments denounced againſt the Wicked. The Gentiles *ſhall be an holy Church. The eternal Puniſhment of the Wicked.*

Q. *WHAT is the Prophet's main Drift and Deſign in this Chapter?*

A. He deſcribes the Majeſty of God as ſo great, that it fills both Heaven and Earth, and therefore cannot be included or confined to a Temple like an Idol; condemning hereby their vain Confidence, who truſted in the Temple and Sacrifices, ſeeing that both the Temple and the Things therein, with the Sacrifices, were made and done by his Appointment he ſheweth that he hath no need thereof, and that he can be without them, *Pſalm* l. 10. Becauſe the *Jews* thought themſelves holy by offering of their Sacrifices, and in the mean Time had neither Faith nor Repentance, the Almighty declares that he doth no leſs deteſt theſe Ceremonies, than he does the Sacrifices of the Heathens, who offered Men, Dogs, and Swine to their Idols; for they diſcovered their Wickedneſs and Hypocriſy; but notwithſtanding this, he encourageth the Faithful by promiſing to deſtroy their Enemies, who pretended to be their Brethren, but were Hypocrites, and hated by him. He farther proceeds to ſhew, that their Enemies ſhould hear a more terrible Voice, even Fire and Slaughter, ſeeing they would not hearken to the gentle Voice of the Prophets, calling them to Repentance; and that the Reſtoration of the Church ſhould be ſo ſudden and contrary to all Men's Opinions, as when a Woman is delivered before ſhe looketh for it, and that without Pain in Travail; for as by his Power and Providence a Woman travaileth, and is delivered, ſo hath he Power to bring forth his Church at his appointed Time, and to give her Felicity and Proſperity in Abundance. At the Preaching of the Goſpel, the Courſe of Worſhip was to be conſtant and ſettled, not like the *Jewiſh* Church; for *Chriſtians* are not bound to keep the *Jewiſh* Sabbath or New Moons, *Gal.* iv. 10, 11. *Col.* ii. 16. The *Jews* were only obliged to appear three Times in a Year, at *Jeruſalem*, but (ſaith the Prophet) the *Chriſtian* Church ſhall worſhip God from one Sabbath to another; and the Wicked ſhall have a Worm in their Conſciences that ſhall never die, and fiery Wrath of God upon their Souls and Bodies, that ſhall never go out.

Q. *There are Difficulties in the 17th Verſe, which I ſhould be glad to have explained?*

A. They that ſanctify themſelves, and purify themſelves in the Gardens, behind one Tree in the Midſt, eating Swine's Fleſh, and the Abomination, and the Mouſe, ſhall be conſumed together, ſaith the Lord. ——*In the Gardens.* That the *Jews* might not think that the Judgments threatned, concerned only the Heathen, he tells them that they concerned the Idol-Worſhipers amongſt them, and not Idolaters only, but ſuch as broke his Laws about Meats, which he had prohibited them to eat. Thoſe that *ſanctified* and *purified* themſelves in Gardens, in which they worſhipped Idols, *Chron.* i. 29. and lxv. 3, 4. *Kings* 2, 3. and xv. 13. The Word tranſlated *Gardens*, ſignifieth ſuch as were thick and planted with Trees. Some think that *Achar* is here a proper Name of an Idol, behind which, or behind whoſe Temple theſe Idolaters were wont to purify themſelves. Theſe Gardens were Places too, as well for bruitiſh Luſts as Idol-worſhip, as we may learn from 1 *Kings* xiv. 24, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 7. and they, by theſe Waſhings, thought to make themſelves clean.——*Eating Swine's Fleſh*, which is forbidden, *Lev.* xi. 7, &c. ——*And the Abomination.* Either any abominable Things, or all thoſe Beaſts forbidden the *Jews* for Meat, *Lev.* xi. 9, 10, &c. Some think a particular abominable Thing is here meant, and fancy it is the *Weaſel*, which *Lev.* xi. 29. is joined with the *Mouſe*, is found no-where but here and there, and 1 *Sam.* vi. 4, 5, 11, 18. Some think it is not that Creature we call a *Mouſe*, (becauſe a Mouſe is not properly a creeping Thing; but the Word, *Lev.* xi. 22. ſignifieth a creeping Thing,) but rather think it ſignifieth ſome *Serpent.* It is a Matter of no great Conſequence. The Senſe is, that God would not only deſtroy the open and groſs Idolaters and ſuperſtitious Perſons, but all thoſe who made no Conſcience of yielding Obedience to the Law of God, in ſuch Things as ſeemed to them of a minute Nature, and ſuch as they might eaſily have yielded Obedience to; he ſays, they ſhall all periſh together. In the Day of Judgment the idolatrous *Pagan* and *Papiſt*, and the leud and diſobedient Proteſtant ſhall fare alike. Baptiſm and Memberſhip in the *Chriſtian* Church, without Holineſs, and a Conformity of Practice, will no more ſave Men from God's Wrath, than Circumciſion and Memberſhip did in the *Jewiſh.*

Q. *How do you underſtand the 19th Verſe*: And I will ſet a ſign amongſt them, and I will ſend thoſe that eſcape of them into the Nations, to *Tarſhiſh*, *Pul* and *Lud*, that drew the Bow, to *Tubal* and *Javan*, to the Iſles afar off, that have not heard my Fame, neither have ſeen my Glory, and they ſhall declare my Glory among the *Gentiles*?

A. It is on all Hands agreed, that this Verſe is a Prophecy of the Converſion of the *Gentiles.* By *Sign*, here ſome underſtand an *Enſign*, as the Word ſignifies *Pſ.* lxxiv. 4. which is a military Sign to gather People together; by this may be underſtood *Chriſt*, *Luke* ii. 24. *Iſ.* xi. 10. or as others, the *Miniſtry of the Word*, attended with Miracles, (often called Signs) theſe were ſet amongſt the *Jews* firſt, then among the *Gentiles*. Others, (but leſs probably) underſtand by *Sign*, a Mark of Diſtinction, like that mentioned *Ezek.* ix. 4. ſo as, ſaith he, ſome ſhall eſcape and not be deſtroyed; and for thoſe that ſhall eſcape, I will ſend them to *Tarſhiſh*, *Pul*, *Lud*, *Tubal*, *Javan*, to *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*, to all Nations that had never before heard of God, or his true Worſhip.——*And they ſhall declare my Glory among the* Gentiles. And they ſhall every where preach the Goſpel, and ſet up my Goſpel Ordinances and Inſtitutions. This was eminently made upon the Apoſtles leaving the *Jews*, and turning to the *Gentiles*, *Acts* xi. 46. and more fully after at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, when the Believers among the *Jews*, as well as the Apoſtles, went about publiſhing the Goſpel to all People, which was the declaring of the Lord's Glory.

Q. *Being now come to a Concluſion of this Book of* Iſaiah, *I beg leave to aſk ſome Queſtions, in Relation to the* Jewiſh *Prophets and their Functions*:

And firſt, what do you apprehend was their proper Buſineſs and Employment?

A. The Teachers of the antient Church were of two Sorts, 1. Ordinary, the Prieſts and *Levites.* 2. Extraordinary, the Prophets. Theſe were immediately called by God, without Diſtinction of Lineage or Profeſſion, and inſpired, as with other ſingular Gifts and Graces, ſo with a ſupernatural Knowledge of Divine Myſteries, and of future Things; and inveſted by God with an Authority ſuperior, not only to the ordinary Teachers of the Church, but, in ſome ſort, even to the Civil Powers of the Nation. The Summaries of their Speeches and Sermons, ſet down in Writing by themſelves, were kept in the Temple, and added to other holy Books, to ſtand for divine and authentical Scripture and Doctrine, to be made uſe of in eccleſiaſtical Lectures and Expoſitions. Yet their Miniſtry was no way concerned in the ceremonial and ordinary Service, nor in the common Guidance and Government of the Church, but was directed to theſe three three general Ends. 1. To maintain, by the Preaching and Word, the Religion and Cuſtoms in their Purity, to correct and purge the Vices and Corruptions, which, from Time to Time crept in amongſt them, to oppoſe all human Power which ſhould be contrary to God's holy Will; and finally, to keep or reinſtate all Things in their former Order, as, by the ſame Spirit, they were eſtabliſhed in the Beginning. 2. To keep always alive the Promiſes of the *Meſſias*, to hold the Faith and Expectation of Believers always bent towards him, and to comfort and ſtrengthen the Church in her Sufferings, by ſetting before her the Promiſe of her Reſtoration in the Advancement of *Chriſt*'s ſpiritual Kingdom. 3. To be the Miniſters of God's Oracles, in many particular Occurrences, for the revealing his ſecret Will, to reſolve perplexed Points, and to give Directions and Counſel in difficult Caſes; to denounce Threatnings, to beat down the Pride of the Rebellious, and to bring Believers to Repentance. Finally, they were Inſtruments of God's continual Communication with his Church, and of his ſovereign Power and Government over her; a ſtrengthening of the ordinary Miniſtry, and a Remedy againſt Diſorders and growing Evils.

Q. *How many Prophets were there? And what Rank did* Iſaiah *and his Writings hold among them?*

A. Theſe holy Prophets, whoſe Writings are contained in the ſacred Scripture, are Sixteen: Of theſe *Iſaiah* is firſt in Place, and, as is very probable, in Time alſo. But undoubtedly he was Cotemporary with *Hoſea*, and, as ſome think, with *Micah*; while others affirm *Hoſea* was before him: Compare *Iſa.* i. 1. with *Hoſea* i. 1. The *Jews* tell us he was of the Blood Royal of *Judah*, which is uncertain. But, without Diſpute he was the Prince of all the Prophets, whether we conſider the great Extent and Variety of his Prophecies, the Excellency and Sublimity of thoſe Myſteries which were revealed to and by him, the Majeſty and Elegance of his Style, or the incomparable Livelineſs and Power of his Sermons, which he was diverſly moved to preach and deliver, according to the Variety of Times, or Occaſions he met with, being ſometimes under pious and virtuous Princes, and ſometimes different ones. And, according to the Diverſity of Occaſions that offered, he framed his Sermons, the Subſtance whereof is contained in this Book, and may be referred to theſe two general Heads, namely, the Law and the Goſpel.

In the firſt he diſcovers, accuſes, and ſeverely condemns the Sins of the People, in all Sorts and Conditions of Perſons: In the laſt he applies to the Penitent, and Reſidue of the Elect, the only Remedy of God's Grace, and the Comfort of the Promiſe of eternal Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt*. And though both theſe Parts are ſo mixed together, and interwoven in almoſt every Chapter of this Book; yet one may obſerve, that the Prophet urges and amplifies the Doctrines and ſacred Myſteries of the Goſpel, chiefly at ſuch Time, when the Malice, Wilfulneſs, and Obſtinacy of the People obliged him to denounce the moſt dreadful Evils that after happened to the *Jewiſh* Church, by the woful Devaſtation brought upon it by the *Chaldeans*; and in predicting the wonderful and univerſal Bleſſings that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were to enjoy under the *Meſſiah*.

So clear was this Prophet's Foreſight into Futurity, and ſo exactly was he informed by the Holy Sprit, concerning the Perſon and Offices of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo plainly does he deſcribe him, ſo magnificently ſpeak of him in many Places, in regard of his eternal Deity, his Birth in the Fleſh, his Office of Saviour, his Doctrines, Actions, Sufferings, Glory and Benefits, eſpecially of his ſending the Holy Ghoſt, that with very good Reaſon, an antient Doctor called him the *Fifth Evangeliſt*; declaring theſe Things not only to the *Jews*, but indifferently to all thoſe Nations, that in their due Time were to be grafted into the Body of the Church: To many of theſe he denounced God's ſevere Judgments, yet tempered with the Promiſe of Grace in *Chriſt* towards all, except the *Babylonians*, who, by reaſon of their Pride, and mercileſs perſecuting the Church, bore the Image of the Kingdom of the World, *Antichriſt*, and his Faction, condemned, together with the Devil, who is Head thereof, to everlaſting Perdition; the Horrors of which are alſo deſcribed in a very lively Manner, in ſeveral Paſſages of this Book. All theſe Things, eſpecially thoſe relating to the *Meſſias*, the Prophet ſets forth ſo plainly, amply, and perſpicuouſly, that he ſeems rather to write an Hiſtory of Tranſactions already done, than a Prophecy of Things to come.

Q. *Of how many Parts or Diſcourſes, does this Book conſiſt?*

A. The Book of the Prophecies of *Iſaiah*, may be divided into ſix diſtinct Parts. In the firſt Part, which conſiſts of the twelve firſt Chapters, the Prophet treats of ſundry Points which concern the People of *Iſrael*, whom he boldly reproves, fully inſtructs, earneſtly exhorts, and effectually comforts. In the ſecond Part, which begins at the thirteenth Chapter, and ends at the twenty-ninth, are deſcribed the Prophecies which relate to foreign Kingdoms, Enemies to the People of God, and alſo to the Ten Tribes of *Iſrael*, that had rent themſelves off from *Judah*, againſt whom he denounces the moſt heavy Judgments; yet intermingling therewith ſweet and comfortable Promiſes of Grace and Mercy for the Penitent. From the twenty-ninth Chapter to the thirty-ſixth, which is the third Part, is ſet forth the Deſolation and the Deſtruction of the City of *Jeruſalem* by the *Babylonians*, and the Captivity of the

Jews, who were carried from their own Land to *Babylon*; yet, amidſt all the terrible Things which the Prophet foretold would happen to *Iſrael*, he does not forget to ſoften the Rigour of the Judgments threatened, with ſome precious Comforts concerning the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, the Bleſſings of his Reign, and the Glories of his Kingdom. In the fourth, *viz.* from Chapter thirty-ſix to forty, is occaſionally inſerted the Hiſtory of King *Hezekiah*, taken from 2 *Kings* xviii. and 2 *Chron.* xxxii. From the fortieth Chapter to the forty-ninth, which includes the fifth Part, the Prophet foretels the Coming of *Chriſt*, and the ſpiritual Deliverance of his Church, repreſented by that of the *Jews* out of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity by King *Cyrus*; together with their Reſtoration to their former State. From the forty-ninth Chapter to the End of the Book, which is the ſixth and laſt Part, are declared divers exceeding clear and evident Prophecies concerning the Perſon and Office of *Chriſt*, his Kingdom, Sufferings, Death, and Glorification; the Preaching of the Goſpel; the Calling of the *Gentiles*; the Benefits and Privileges purchaſed and obtained by *Chriſt* for his Elect; and the Condition of the Church of God while militant here upon Earth, and hereafter, when it ſhall be triumphant in Heaven.

Q. *What are ſome of the moſt remarkable Predictions contained in this Book?*

A. The great Character and high Eſteem which the Prophecies of *Iſaiah* had deſervedly obtained by the Certainty of their Predictions, appears, among a Number of others, from one ſingle Event, namely, that relating to the Return of the *Jews* from their Captivity in *Babylon*. Concerning which, *Joſephus*, the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian, has this remarkable Paſſage: After God had rouzed the Spirit of *Cyrus*, he cauſed him to write circular Letters throughout all *Aſia*, to this Effect. “*Thus ſaith King* Cyrus. Since the great God hath conſtituted me King of this World; I am perſuaded it is he whom the *Jews* worſhip, for he foretold my Name by his Prophets, and that I am to build his Temple at *Hieroſolyma*, in the Land of *Judea*.” *Cyrus* came to know theſe Things by the Prophecies of *Eſaias*, which he left two hundred and ten Years before this happened; For he ſaid that God had privately made him this Revelation. “'Tis my Will that *Cyrus*, whom I have conſtituted King of many powerful Nations, ſhall ſend my People back into their own Country, and build my Temple.” This Prophecy was declared by *Eſaias* one hundred and forty Years before the Deſtruction of the Temple. Therefore, when *Cyrus* peruſed this Paſſage, he admired God's Fore-knowledge and Providence, and a ſudden Deſire excited him to fulfil what was written. To this End he aſſembled the moſt conſiderable of the *Jews* of Note at *Babylon*, and told them, “That he gave them Leave to return into own Country, and there rebuild *Hieroſolyma* and the Temple of God; that he would aſſiſt them in the Undertaking, and write to his Governors in *Judea*, to ſupply them with Gold and Silver, towards carrying on the Building of the Temple, and alſo with Sheep for their Sacrifices.” *Joſ. Antiq.* B. xi. C. 1.

We ſhall give ſeveral other Inſtances wherein this Prophet eminently diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the Importance of his Predictions, and their exact Accompliſhment.

In the ſixth Year of *Tiglath-Pileſer*, *Ahaz* began to reign over *Judah*, who confederating together, againſt *Pekah* King of *Iſrael*, invaded his Land with a great Army, and having harraſſed it all over, they went to *Jeruſalem*. The Deſign of *Tiglath-Pileſer* was to have wholly extirpated the Houſe of *David*, and to have ſet up a new King over *Judah*, the Son of *Tabeal*. Who this Perſon was, is no where ſaid in Scripture, but he ſeems to have been ſome potent and factious *Jew*, who having revolted from his Maſter the King of *Judah*, excited this War againſt him, in order to dethrone him, and to reign in his ſtead.

But God intending only to puniſh *Ahaz* for his Wickedneſs, and not the whole Family of *David*, for which, for *David's* Sake, he always expreſſed Mercy and Favour, he was pleaſed to prevent the Miſchief by blaſting the whole Deſign. To this End he ſent the Prophet *Iſaiah* to *Ahaz* to encourage him valiantly to withſtand the Enemy in the Defence of the City, and to aſſure him, that they ſhould not prevail againſt him. And, as a Confirmation of the Truth of what he told him, gave him two Signs, the one to be accompliſhed ſpeedily, the other ſome Ages after.

The firſt was, that the Prophet ſhould take him a Wife, who ſhould immediately, on that Marriage, conceive a Son; and that before that Son ſhould be of Age to diſcern between Good and Evil, both theſe Kings ſhould be cut off from the Land; which accordingly ca[illegible]. For the Prophet, immediately after [illegible] before *Maher-ſhalal-haſh-baz*, the S[illegible] of that Marriage, arrived to the Ag[illegible]ing between Good and Evil, both theſe [illegible] were ſlain, *Rezin* in the third Year of *Ahaz*, and *Pekah* the next Year after.

The other Sign was, that a Virgin ſhould conceive and bear a Son, who ſhould be called *Emmanuel*, that is, *God with us*, the *Meſſias*, that was promiſed, God manifeſted in our Nature, and for a while here dwelling with us to accompliſh the great Work of our Salvation. Which Prophecy was then delivered to comfort and ſupport the drooping and deſponding Spirits of the Houſe of *David*; who, ſeeing ſo great a Force armed againſt them, and intending their Deſtruction, were under terrible Apprehenſions, as if their Extirpation was then at hand. From which Deſpair this Prophecy fully relieved them, in the Aſſurance that their Houſe ſhould ſtand and continue, till this Prediction ſhould be accompliſhed, and the *Meſſias* born of their Race, in ſuch a Manner as was hereby foretold.

After this the two Kings, according to the Word of the Prophet, failing of their Deſign, were forced to raiſe the Siege, and return home, without prevailing in the Enterprize they had undertaken.

Another Event, in which the Power and Spirit of this Prophet were remarkably exerted, was the Sickneſs and Recovery of King *Hezekiah*, and the Circumſtances that attended both. *Hezekiah* falling ſick of the Peſtilence, had a Meſſage from God, by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, to ſet his Houſe in order, and prepare for Death. But, on his hearty Prayer to God, he obtained another Meſſage from him, by the ſame Prophet, which promiſed him Life for fifteen Years longer, and alſo Deliverance from the *Aſſyrians*, who were then coming againſt him;

and, to give him thorough Aſſurance thereof, by a miraculous Sign, God, at his Requeſt, made the Sun go backward ten Degrees upon the Sun-Dial of *Ahaz*. And accordingly a Lump of Figs having been, by the Prophet's Direction, made into a Plaiſter, and laid to the peſtilential Boil, he recover'd within three Days, and went to the Houſe of God to return Thanks for ſo wonderful a Deliverance.

Merodach Baladan hearing of this miraculous Recovery, ſent Ambaſſadors to congratulate him thereon, which *Hezekiah* was much pleaſed with. Their coming, on this Occaſion, ſeems principally to have been for two Reaſons. The firſt, to enquire about the Miracle of the Sun's Retrogradation, the *Chaldeans* being then, above all other Nations, addicted to Aſtronomy. And the other, to enter into Alliance with him againſt *Sennacheric*, whoſe growing Power the *Babylonians* had Reaſon to fear, as well as the *Jews*. And to make the *Babylonians* put the greater Value upon his Alliance, on this Account, ſeems to be the Reaſon that *Hezekiah* ſhewed thoſe Ambaſſadors his Riches, Treaſures, Armory, &c. But by this he having expreſſed the Vanity and Pride of his Mind, God ſent him, by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, a rebuking Meſſage for it, and alſo a Prophecy of what the *Babylonians* ſhould afterward do unto his Family.

Towards the End of the fourteenth Year of *Hezekiah*'s Reign, *Sennacherib* came up with a vaſt Army [illegible] and *Jeruſalem*. Whereupon *Hezeki*[illegible] Manner of Preparations for his Defence, [illegible] ſtrengthen himſelf the more againſt ſo [illegible] an Adverſary, he entered into an Allian[illegible] as carrying with it a Diſtruſt in God, telling the *Jews*, that they ſhould confide in him alone, for their Deliverance, who would himſelf fight for *Zion*, and deliver and preſerve *Jeruſalem* from the Enemy that was then come up againſt it; and that whatſoever Truſt they put in *Egypt*, it ſhould come to nothing, but rather turn to their Reproach and Confuſion; and ſo, in the Event it accordingly happen'd.

Sennacherib being informed of all theſe Preparations, thought proper to hearken to Terms of Accommodation. A Peace was accordingly concluded, and *Sennacherib* marched againſt *Egypt*; and the better to open his Way into that Country, he ſent *Tartan*, one of his Generals, before him, to take *Aſhdon*, or *Azotus*; from the taking of which Place, the Prophet *Iſaiah* dates the Beginning of the War which *Sennacherib* had with the *Egyptians*, wherein, according as that Prophet had foretold, he much afflicted that People for three Years together.

In the 9th Verſe of the 47th Chapter of *Iſaiah*, ſtands this Prophecy, *That two Things ſhould come to them* (*the* Babylonians) *in a Moment, in one Day, the Loſs of Children and Widowhood, and that theſe ſhall come upon them, in their Perfection, for the Multitude of their Sorceries, and the great Abundance of their Inchantments.* This Prophecy was wonderfully accompliſhed at the Time that *Babylon* was beſieged by *Darius*, from whom the *Babylonians* had revolted. This Siege laſted twenty Months, and the Inhabitants ſeeing themſelves begirt with an Army that they could not cope with in the Field, they turned their Thoughts wholly to the ſupporting themſelves in the Siege; in order to which they took a Reſolution, the moſt deſperate and barbarous that ever any Nation practiſed. For to make their Proviſions laſt the longer, they agreed to cut off all unneceſſary Mouths among them, and therefore drawing together all the Women and Children, they ſtrangled them all, whether Wives, Siſters, Daughters, or young Children, uſeleſs for the Wars, excepting only that every Man was allowed to ſave one of his Wives, whom he beſt loved, and a Maid-Servant to do the Work of the Houſe. In what greater Perfection could theſe Calamies; ſo exactly predicted by the Prophet, come upon them, than when they themſelves became the Executioners of them?

Xerxes returning from his Expedition into *Greece*, to his capital City, took *Babylon* in his Way, and plundered and deſtroy'd all her magnificent Temples that were dedicated to the Worſhip of Idols, wherein were amaſſed immenſe Riches; herein was fulfilled that Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, Chap. xxi. 9. *All the graven Images of her Gods hath he broken unto the Ground.*

With reſpect to the Perſon of *Iſaiah*, it is conceived, that *Amoz* his Father, was the Brother of *Azariah*, King of *Judah*, and ſo of Royal Extraction. As to his Death, though the holy Text gives no Acconnt of it, yet eccleſiaſtical Writers tell us, that under King *Manaſſeh* (who is reported to have been his Son-in-Law) he was, in his extreme old Age, after he had lived upwards of a hundred Years, and propheſied more than Sixty of them, moſt barbarouſly put to Death, by being ſawed in two with a wooden Saw. To which, very probably, the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* might refer, when he ſaid, *They were ſawed aſunder, Heb.* xi. 37. He collected into one Volume all the Prophecies he had made under the Kings *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz* and *Hezekiah*.

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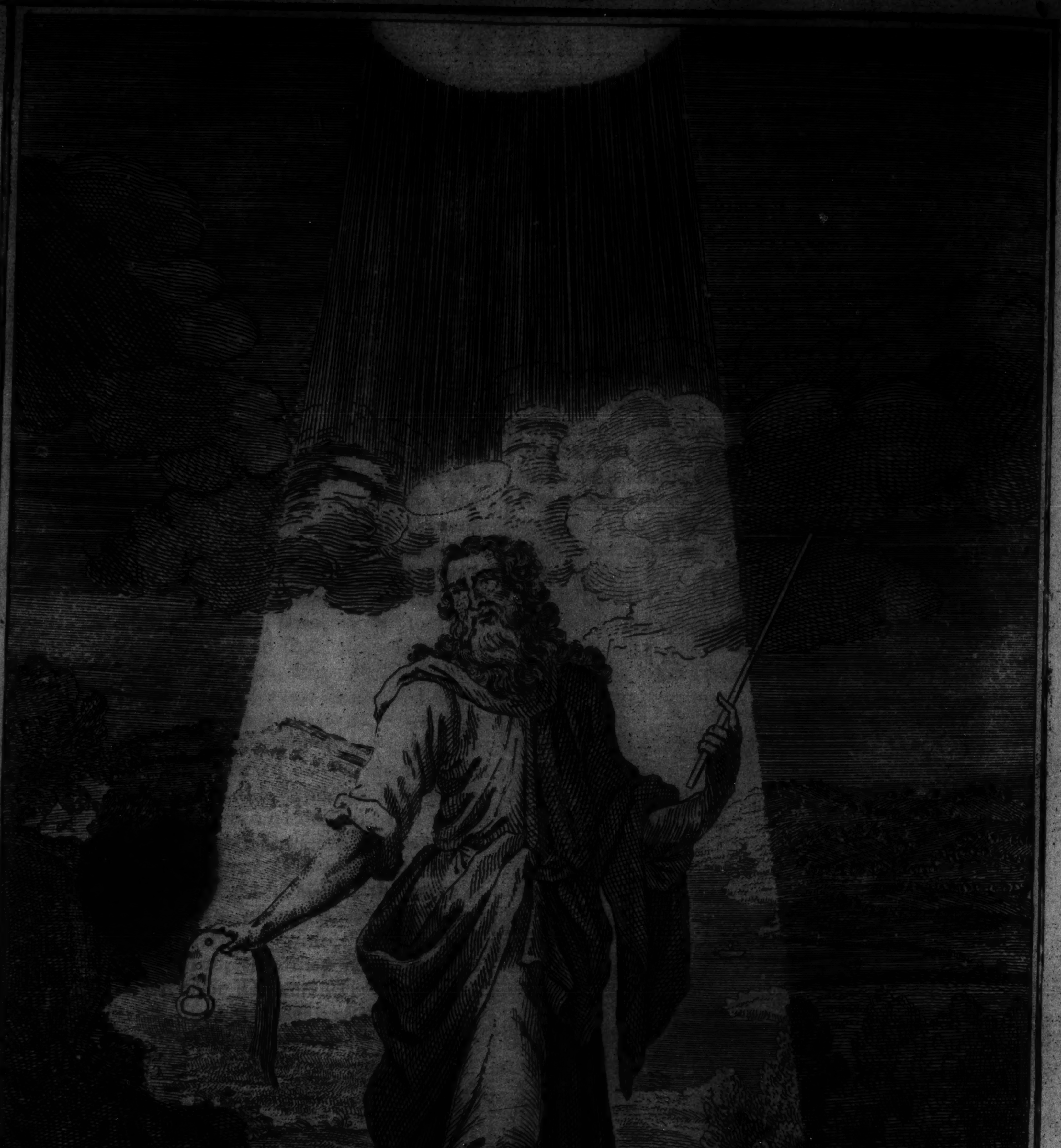
JEREMIAH CHAP. I.



The Prophecy of Jeremiah.

Smith Sculp.

THE BOOK
OF THE PROPHET
JEREMIAH.

It was the great Unhappineſs of this Prophet, to be Phyſician to a diſtempered State, whoſe Diſeaſe prevailed againſt all the Remedies he could apply; and indeed no wonder all Things were ſo much out of Order, when the Book of the Law had been wanting above ſixty Years. He was called to be a Teacher *in his Youth, in the Days of good* Joſiah, *and ſanctify'd and ordained by God to his prophetical Office from his Mother's Womb,* Chap. i. 15. *in a very evil Time, though afterwards the People proved much worſe upon the Death of that good King. He ſetting himſelf againſt the Torrent of the Corruptions of the Times, was always oppoſed, and unkindly treated by his ungrateful Countrymen, as alſo by falſe Prophets, and the Princes, Prieſts and People, who encouraged all their Impieties and Unrighteouſneſs. At length he threatened their Deſtruction and Captivity by the* Chaldeans, *which he lived to ſee; but foretels their Return after ſeventy Years: All which accordingly came to paſs. His Sermons, notwithſtanding they abound with dreadful Threatnings, yet contain many comfortable Promiſes of the* Meſſiah, *and the Days of the Goſpel; he denounces alſo heavy Judgments againſt the Heathen Nations, that had afflicted God's People, both ſuch as were near, and thoſe that were more remote, as* Egypt, *the* Philiſtines, Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, Damaſcus, Kedar, Hazor, Elam, *but eſpecially* Babylon *herſelf, that is made ſo great a Type of* Antichriſtian Babylon *in the* New Teſtament. *Upon the Murder of* Gedaliah, *whom the* Chaldeans *had made Governor of* Judea, *he was forcibly carried into* Egypt, *where, (after he had prophecied, from firſt to laſt, between forty and fifty Years) probably he died; ſome ſay he was ſtoned.*

Whatever elſe we hear mentioned of his Writings, as the Prophecy of Baruch, &c. *they are either counterfeit, or it is likely we have the Sum of them in this Book; though poſſibly ſome of his Sermons might have ſome Enlargements in that Roll, which, by his Appointment, was written by* Baruch, Chap. xxxvi. 2, *&c.*

CHAP. I.

The Pedigree, Time, and Calling of Jeremiah, *confirmed againſt his Excuſes. His Viſions of an Almond-Rod and Seething-Pot. His heavy Meſſage againſt* Judah. *God promiſes him his Aſſiſtance.*

Q. *WHAT have you to obſerve concerning this Chapter?*

A. We have here an Account of *Jeremiah*'s Pedigree, and the Time of his prophetical Office, in which he is confirm'd by a Token againſt his Excuſes, revealing to him the Viſions of an Almond-Rod and a Seething-Pot. The Almond-Tree bloſſoms, bearing Fruit early, quickly and ſpeedily, which ſignified that the Lord would be quick, diligent, and ready to perform his Word upon the *Jews*. By the Pot we are to underſtand the City of *Jeruſalem*, and the Land of *Judea*, wherein God would, as it were, ſeethe and boil the *Jews* in his Wrath, by the Fire of the *Babylonians*, whoſe Country lay northward from *Canaan*. The Lord quickens and haſtens the Prophet upon this Work, and gives him a ſtrict Commiſſion againſt thoſe of *Judah*, with a Promiſe of his Almighty Aſſiſtance and Protection.

The Manner of God's calling *Jeremiah* to the prophetic Office, has ſomething in it ſo very ſolemn and particular, that the Deſcription of it muſt be as entertaining as the Deſign and End of it was ſignificant and important.

Then the Word of the Lord came unto me, ſaying, Before I formed thee in the Belly, I knew thee; and before thou cameſt forth out of the Womb, I ſanctified thee, and I ordained thee a Prophet unto the Nations. Then ſaid I, Ah Lord God, behold, I cannot ſpeak, for I am a Child. But the Lord ſaid unto me, Say not, I am a Child, for thou ſhalt go to all that I ſhall ſend thee, and whatſoever I command thee, thou ſhalt ſpeak. Be not afraid of their Faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, ſaith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his Hand, and touched my Mouth, and the Lord ſaid unto me, Behold, I have put my Words in thy Mouth. See, I *have this Day ſet thee over the Nations, and over the Kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down and deſtroy, and to throw down, and to build and to plant.*

Q. *In what Senſe are we to underſtand the laſt Verſe cited*; See, I have this Day ſet thee over the Nations, and over the Kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and deſtroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant?

A. The Prophet having now received his Commiſſion, he is directed to whom to go, namely, to the greateſt, not only ſingle Perſons, but whole Nations, as the *Babylonians, Perſians* and *Egyptians*, and exhorted to Greatneſs of Mind, as being an Ambaſſador from God, to deliver his Meſſages without Flattery or Cowardice, and that he might make that proud People ſenſible of their Folly, that looked upon themſelves as above Reproof, he gives his Prophet this large Authority. —— *To root out, and to pull down.* That is, to prophecy that I will pull down; which I will as certainly effect, as if thou hadſt done it thy ſelf; For, according to Scripture Uſage, the Prophets are ſaid to do that which they foretel will come to paſs, *Gen.* xlix. 7. *Ezek.* xliii. 3. The Meaning is, to pronounce Deſtruction. Hence God is ſaid to deſtroy them by the Word of his Mouth, *Hoſ.* vi. 5. and ſo are all the following Expreſſions to be underſtood. The Reaſon why God uſeth ſo [illegible] Words to the ſame Purpoſe, ſeems to be, partly to ſhew how all Kind of Wickedneſs, and Contempt of God had taken root; which poſſibly may be one Reaſon why he places pulling down and rooting [illegible] before Building and Planting, to ſhew what a deal of Rubbiſh there was to be removed, before he could repair and reform his Church and State; or rather, becauſe the Prophet was to begin with theſe in his Prophecy, as appears by his ſecond Viſions, Verſes 11, 13, and partly to quicken the Prophet's Zeal againſt them.

Chap. II.

God's numerous and continued Mercies render the Idolatry of the Jews *inexcuſable, and unparallel'd in any Nation, and themſelves the Cauſes of their Calamities. Their groſs Idolatry, Incorrigibleneſs, Bloodſhedding and Hypocriſy.*

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects of the Prophet's Sermon in this Chapter?*

A. Now God begins by *Jeremiah* to deal with the the *Jews*, and to put him upon his Work, having fitted him for it; this ſeeming to be his firſt Sermon. God ſets before the Eyes of his People, in a ſerious Manner, the many Mercies which he had beſtowed upon them from the Beginning, and vehemently complaining of their abominable, continual, and moſt unreaſonable idolatrous Unthankfulneſs, the like not to be parallel'd among the *Heathens*, and their horrible and double Wickedneſs, whereby they themſelves are the Cauſe of their own Miſeries.

Here is alſo an upbraiding of their running to *Egypt* and *Aſſyria*, alſo of their looſe, impudent, ſtiff-necked, manifold and more than heatheniſh Idolatry, and ſhameful Forgetfulneſs and forſaking of God. They are further charged with ſhedding the Blood of the Prophets and Faithful, and God is not angry with the *Jews*, ſo much becauſe they ſinned, as becauſe they will not acknowledge their Sin.

O Generation, ſee ye the Word of the Lord; have I been a Wilderneſs unto Iſrael? *A Land of Darkneſs? Wherefore ſay my People, We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee? Can a Maid forget her Ornaments, or a Bride her Attire? Yet my People have forgotten me Days without Number. Why trimmeſt thou thy way to ſeek love? Therefore haſt thou alſo taught the wicked ones thy Ways. Alſo in thy Skirts is found the Blood of the Souls of poor Innocents: I have not found it by ſecret ſearch, but upon all theſe. Yet thou ſayeſt, Becauſe I am innocent, ſurely his Anger ſhall turn from me; behold, I will plead with thee, becauſe thou ſayeſt, I have not ſinned. Why gaddeſt thou about ſo much to change thy Way? Thou alſo ſhalt be aſhamed of* Egypt, *as thou waſt aſhamed of* Aſſyria. *Yea, thou ſhalt go forth from him, and thine Hands upon thine Head; for the Lord hath rejected thy Confidences, and thou ſhalt not proſper in them.*

Chap. III.

God's Forbearance with the Idolatry of Judah, *who is worſe than* Iſrael. *The Promiſes of the Goſpel to the Penitent. Miſery by Sin; Salvation only of God.*

Q. WHAT *are the Topicks of the Prophet's Diſcourſe in this Chapter?*

A. God's great Forbearance with the wicked and obſtinate Idolatry of *Judah*, and an Invitation to Repentance. Here is alſo a Compariſon of the Wickedneſs of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, who took no Warning by *Iſrael*'s ſinning, but exceeded them in Wickedneſs; nevertheleſs, *Iſrael* alſo is invited to Repentance, with evangelical Promiſes, concerning the gathering of the elect *Jews* and *Gentiles* unto the Church of *Chriſt*, the ordaining the Office of Preaching, the repealing of the Ceremonies, and the inſtituting a new Form of Worſhip; alſo concerning the Spirit of Adoption, of Prayer, and of true Repentance, whereof God gives his Elect a Pattern, and the Inheritance of the heavenly *Canaan*.

How affectionately does God call upon and invite *Iſrael* to turn from their Backſlidings, and to lay hold of his offered Grace and Mercy? What Encouragements does he give them?

Go, and proclaim theſe Words toward the North, and ſay, return thou backſliding Iſrael, *ſaith the Lord, and I will not cauſe mine Anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, ſaith the Lord, and I will not keep Anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine Iniquity that thou haſt ſcattered thy Ways to the Strangers under every green Tree, and ye have not obeyed my Voice, ſaith the Lord. Turn, O backſliding Children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a City, and two of a Family, and I will bring you to* Zion. *And I will give you Paſtors according to mine Heart, which ſhall feed you with Knowledge and Underſtanding. And it ſhall come to paſs, when ye be multiplied and increaſed in the Land; in thoſe Days ſaith the Lord, they ſhall ſay no more, The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; neither ſhall it come to mind, neither ſhall they remember it, neither ſhall they viſit it, neither ſhall that be done any more. At that Time they ſhall call* Jeruſalem *the Throne of the Lord, and all the Nations ſhall be gathered unto it, to the Name of the Lord, to* Jeruſalem; *neither ſhall they walk any more after the Imagination of their evil Heart.*

Heart. In thoſe Days the Houſe of Judah *ſhall walk with the Houſe of* Iſrael, *and they ſhall come together out of the Land of the North, to the Land that I have given for an Inheritance unto your Fathers. But I ſaid, How ſhall I put thee among the Children, and give thee a pleaſant Land, a goodly Heritage of the Hoſts of Nations? And I ſaid, Thou ſhalt call me, my Father, and ſhalt not turn away from me. Surely, as a Wiſe treacherouſly departeth from her Husband; ſo have you dealt treacherouſly with me, O Houſe of* Iſrael, *ſaith the Lord. A Voice was heard upon the high Places, Weeping and Supplications of the Children of* Iſrael; *for they have perverted their Way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God. Return, ye back-ſliding Children, and I will heal your Back-ſlidings: Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is Salvation hoped for from the Hills, and from the Multitude of Mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the Salvation of* Iſrael. *For Shame hath devoured the Labour of our Fathers from our Youth; their Flocks and their Herds, their Sons and their Daughters. We lie down in our Shame, and our Confuſion covereth us; for we have ſinned againſt the Lord our God, we, and our Fathers, from our Youth even unto this Day, and have not obeyed the Voice of the Lord our God.*

CHAP. IV.

An Invitation to true Repentance by Promiſes, and by fearful Judgments coming on them by the Babylonians, *contrary to the Predictions of their falſe Prophets. A grievous Lamentation for the Miſeries of* Judah.

Q. W*HAT do you find obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. This ſeems to be a Continuation of the former Sermon: So that *Iſrael* having promiſed Repentance, they are directed how it muſt be qualified, *viz.* it muſt not be hypocritical and feigned, but real and hearty.

Here is a large Declaration and Repreſentation of the future Deſtruction of *Judea* by the *Babylonians*, for their Sins, contrary to the Predictions of falſe Prophets; for the Inhabitants of all Ranks and Qualities ſhall ſeek to eſcape the Fury of the *Chaldean* Army; ſuch a Conſternation ſhall be among them, that they ſhall run into every Hole to hide themſelves: Thus *Manaſſeh* was taken among the Thorns, 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 11. Upon the Conſideration of theſe Things the Prophet bitterly laments, crying out as one even under great Pain and Torment, doubling his Words for want of Vent, thereby expreſſing the Exceſs of his Sorrow, which in Words was inexpreſſible.

In the ſeven and twentieth Verſe, God ſeems to declare, that though he was greatly moved with Anger, yet he was not inexorable, but in the Midſt of Judgment would remember Mercy, for after ſeventy Years Captivity he brought his People back again.

Q. *How do you expound Verſe* 1?

A. If thou wilt return, O Iſrael, *ſaith the Lord, return unto me, and if thou wilt put away thine Abominations out of my Sight, then ſhalt thou not remove.* This ſeems to be a Continuation of the former Sermon: So that *Iſrael* having promiſed Repentance, they are directed how it muſt be qualified, *viz.* It muſt not be hypocritical and feigned, but real and hearty, Chap. xxiv. 7. as *Joſiah's* was, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 25. and it muſt be unto the Lord, not to this and that Idol, hither and thither, ſhifting about, but unto *me*; See Chap. ii. 36. or to my Worſhip, and as thou haſt promiſed, Chap. iii. 22. And this Senſe agrees beſt with their Coherence; or, it may be an emphatical, ſhort, peremptory Expreſſion, If thou wilt return, return; make no longer Demur or Delay about it; like that *Iſa.* xxi. 12. The *Hebrews* read the Words in the future Tenſe, *If thou wilt return, thou ſhalt return*; and ſo they may be taken partly as a Promiſe, and that with Reference to their returning to their own Land; and ſo they concern *Iſrael*; thus *Deut.* xxx. 2, 3, 4, 5. But if the Word be taken in the Notion of *reſting*, not *returning*, as ſome do, and as it is taken *Iſa.* xxx. 15. then it rather concerns *Judah*; as if the Prophet had ſaid, Thou ſhalt abide quietly where thou art, and ſhalt not wander into Captivity; and this may agree with the laſt Expreſſion in that Verſe, *remove*; or elſe with Reference to the Aſſiſtance which God would give them to return to him; partly, and that rather, as a Direction (for in the *Hebrew*, though the Word *Return* be in the future Tenſe, yet it is often uſed imperatively)——*Thine Abominations, viz.* Idols; (a *Metonomy* of the *Adjunct*,) which are ſo abominable in God's Sight, *Deut.* xxvii. 15. *Ezek.* xx. 7, 8.————*Out of my Sight.* Though God's Eye be every where; and hence implieth, that Idols are no where to be admitted, either in private or publick; yet it relates particularly to the Place of his more immediate Preſence, as their Land and Temple, 1 *Kings* ix. 3. and ſpiritually to our Hearts, Hypocrites thinking it enough, if they conceal their Wickedneſs from Men's Eye.——*Then ſhalt thou not remove.* If this be read imperatively, then it is *remove not*, as it may be read; and ſo it agrees with *Iſrael*, Depart not from me to thy Idols upon the Mountains and Hills. If read in the future Tenſe, then it agrees with *Judah*, thou ſhalt not go out of thy Land into Exile.

CHAP. V.

None godly in Judah. *They ſwear falſely, though God be a God of Truth; they are incorrigible and ſenſeleſs, and know not the Law, or elſe willingly violate it. Their Idolatry, Adultery, Contempt of God's Word and Prophets. They forſake, forget, and fear not God, whoſe Power is ſo great. They are Rich through Deceit and Violence; their falſe Prophets.*

Q. P*RAY what are the Subjects diſcourſed of in this Chapter?*

A. Whether this begins a new Sermon, or is Part of the former, is neither certain nor material; but here the Prophet is called upon to go up and down, and ſearch here and there, in every Part of the City, and make a diligent Inquiry in every Street and Place of Concourſe, for a juſt Man.

The People are accuſed of groſs Sins, as falſe and hypocritical ſwearing; for either they ſwear to that which is falſe; or, if to that which is true, they are ſo perfidious, that they do it deceitfully, not in Reverence to that holy Name by which they ſwear: Thus they proſtitute the Name of God, making themſelves guilty of Hypocriſy. They are told of their Obſtinacy, Hardneſs of Heart, Idolatry,

try, Adultery, Whoredom, Contempt of God's Word, and of his Prophets.

God declares, that among the *Jews* are found Men guilty of wicked and thieviſh Devices, and of Injuſtice and Judgment, and that he cannot wink at thoſe Things. Beſides, falſe Prophets and wicked Prieſts prevailed among them, which is ſo prodigious or ſtupendous a Crime, that it is beyond the Thought or Apprehenſion of Man to conceive, much more to expreſs, and ſo abominable, that a Man would even loath the Thoughts of it; for all which Sins God threatens to puniſh them by the *Chaldeans*, yet without deſtroying them utterly.

Q. *What Nation is that which is deſcribed in Verſe* 15?

A. Lo, I will bring a Nation upon you from far, O Houſe of Iſrael, *ſaith the Lord; it is a mighty Nation, it is an antient Nation, a Nation whoſe Language thou knoweſt not, neither underſtandeſt what they ſay.*——*From far.* From *Chaldea*.——*O Houſe of* Iſrael. By theſe are meant *Judah*; for *Iſrael* properly ſo called, *viz.* the Ten Tribes, were in Captivity before; ſee Chap. iv. 1. called the Houſe of *Iſrael*; not only becauſe they deſcended from *Jacob*, but becauſe they were the chief of that Stock.——*It is a mighty Nation.* It is both potent, or as the Word is, *rough* and *harſh*, and of great Antiquity, ever ſince the laying the firſt Foundation of *Babylon* by *Nimrod*, about 170 Years after the Flood; and hence it is called the Land of *Nimrod*, *Mic.* v. 6. And this greatly adds to their Cruelty, that they have had Dominion and Rule in their Hands ſo long, and whereby they have not only grown more proud and haughty, but having been brought up ſo long in Ways of Blood and Slaughter, they muſt needs, by this Time, become skilful to deſtroy.——*Whoſe Language thou knoweſt not.* Which makes thy Caſe more deſperate. It is a great Diſadvantage when Perſons underſtand not one another; they will neither underſtand thy Entreaties, nor thou their Offers, being both unintelligible and inexorable, which will render thy Condition much more ſad and perplexed; Speech being that by which the Affection is readily communicated, and is the Bond of human Society. Hence this was Part of the Judgment threatned, *Deut.* xxviii. 36, 49, 50. the *Jews* not well underſtanding the *Syrian* Tongue, which the *Chaldeans* ſpake, having no Converſe with them before the Captivity. It was this put a Stop to all Converſe at the Building of *Babel*.

CHAP. VI.

God ſends and ſtrengthens the Babylonians *againſt* Judah, *for her Oppreſſion, Spoils and Obſtinacy, which provoke God's Wrath and their Deſtruction. Their Covetouſneſs, falſe Confidence, and Impudence. Both People and Prieſts refuſe to obey God. Their hypocritical Worſhip ſhall not prevent their ſure Deſtruction. The People called upon to mourn; the Prophet encouraged to reprove them.*

Q. TO *whom does the Prophet apply himſelf in this Chapter; and what is the Subject of his Diſcourſe?*

A. The Prophet here ſpeaks to the Children of *Benjamin* chiefly, becauſe they ſhould take Heed by the Example of their Brethren, the other Half of their Tribe, which were now carried away Captives. The *Babyloniſh* Captivity is plainly repreſented before the Eyes of the People, the beſieging and taking of *Jeruſalem*, and the Captivity enſuing.

The People are exhorted to Repentance; but, foraſmuch as all Manner of Wickedneſs, as Cruelty, Oppreſſion, Violence, Hardneſs of Heart, Rebellion, Obſtinacy, Covetouſneſs, Backbiting, Falſehood, Flattery both of Prieſts and Prophets, Contempt of God's Word, and following their own Imaginations, and hypocritical Worſhip prevailed; he foretels that they ſhall all, one after another, be thruſt out of the Land; but God ſpeaks by way of Encouragement to the Prophet, and tells him, he had made him a fortified Tower, that he might diſcover the Carriages of his People, and to aſſure him, though they ſhould make ſeveral Attempts againſt him, yet he ſhould be kept ſafe, as in a Caſtle or Fortreſs, for the People are impudent, obſtinate, and inflexible.

Q. *Pray explain the ſeveral metaphorical Expreſſions in Verſe* 1?

A. O ye Children of Benjamin, *gather yourſelves to flee out of the Midſt of* Jeruſalem, *and blow the Trumpet in* Tekoa; *and ſet up a Sign of Fire in* Beth-haccerem; *for Evil appeareth out of the North, and great Deſtruction.*——*Ye Children of* Benjamin. He means, either the *Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, becauſe Part of it ſtood in the Lot of *Benjamin*, *Joſh.* xviii. 28. or elſe he means all *Judah*, becauſe, when the ten Tribes fell off, the Tribe of *Benjamin* adhered to *Judah*, and was incorporated into them. If it be asked, why the Prophet here rather ſpeaks to *Benjamin* than to *Judah*, the Reaſon probably may be, becauſe he being of *Anathoth*, was of that Tribe, and therefore mentions them as his own Countrymen.——*Gather yourſelves*, &c. ſpoken either *ironically*, that they ſhould ſet themſelves in Array, and make Head againſt the Enemy that is at Hand; or rather that they ſhould flee away together at once, make haſte together out of *Jeruſalem* in Troops, as the next Expreſſions intimate, not counſelling them what they ſhould do, *viz.* for Succour, Chap. iv. 5, 6. but rather telling them what they muſt expect, *viz.* to be forced to flee out of it, if they may eſcape.——*Blow the Trumpet in* Tekoa. Gather yourſelves by the Sound of Trumpet at *Tekoa*, poſſibly alluding to the Name which ſignifies *trumpeting*; or rather, it being one of thoſe fenced Cities twelve Miles from *Jeruſalem*, that *Rehoboam* built, and made exceeding ſtrong, 2 *Chron.* vi. 11, 12. and being built upon the Advantage of a Hill towards the North of *Judea* in the Way that the *Babylonians* were to come, there furniſh yourſelves out of that Armory, and ſee if you can make Head againſt them. An *Irony*; a Place noted in Scripture, where dwelt that *Tekoitiſh* Woman that interceded with *David* for *Abſalom* by the Subornation of *Joab*, 2 *Sam.* xiv. 2. and alſo for the Herdſmen, of whom *Amos* was, *Amos* i. 1. and it is probable, a Place, where in Time of Danger, they uſed, by Sound of Trumpet, to ſummon the People together.——*A Sign of Fire.* The Word uſed is of very large Extent; *Maſet* is uſed for any Thing that is lifted up, neither is there any more in the Text. The LXX alſo render it only a Sign, and the Sign *of Fire* poſſibly is mentioned, rather than any other, by a *Metonymy* of the Subject, becauſe, partly in Time of Danger of Invaſion, it is the moſt uſual and commodious Sign, being ſeen in regard of its living, or raiſing up of itſelf at once, a far off; or *fire a Beacon*, and a Sign whereby the *Benjamites* themſelves once found they were ſurprized, *Judges* xx. 38, 40. It is alſo a Sign ſooneſt given of any; or poſſibly, as being a more proper Sign than any other would be to the Vine-Dreſſers, that they ſhould ſecure themſelves in ſome ſafe Place, which ſeems to be pointed at in the next Word *Beth-haccerem*, which ſeems a uſual Thing, *Iſa.* v. 1. Or it may be the Name of a Town, ſuch a one, as ſome report, lay between *Jeruſalem* and *Tekoa*, the ſame mentioned, *Neh.* iii. 14. though that ſeems to be adjoining to *Jeruſalem*; which ever it be, it is probable it relates to ſome Place noted for Vineyards, which were wont to be planted on Hills, and lying in the Way that the *Chaldeans* were to come, and by theſe two we are to underſtand other Places that lie on that Coaſt.

CHAP. VII.

A Call to true Repentance, and Exhortations not to live in Theft, Adultery, Perjury, &c. *Their Confidence in the Temple, and external Worſhip reproved. The Prophet is forbid to pray for them. Their Idolatry; their Sacrifices rejected, and Obedience required. They are called to mourn for their Abominations in* Tophet.

Q. *In what Manner does the Prophet here inſtruct the People?*

A. God cauſes his People to be exhorted to true Repentance, and not to believe the falſe Prophets, who ſay, That for the Temple's Sake, and the Sacrifices there, the Lord would preſerve and nouriſh them in their vain Sin and Confidence. He accuſes them of Theft, Murder, Adultery, Perjury, *&c.* and that as Thieves, hid in Holes and Dens, think themſelves ſafe, ſo when they, *i. e.* the *Jews*, were in the Temple, they thought to be covered with the Holineſs thereof, and that God could not ſee their Wickedneſs, becauſe they depended ſo much on the Temple, which was, for his Promiſe, that he would be preſent and defend them where the Ark was: He ſends them to God's Judgment againſt *Shiloh*, where the Ark had remained above three hundred Years, and after was taken, the Prieſts ſlain, and the People miſerably diſcomfited.

The Prophet is forbidden to pray for the People, becauſe of their idolatrous Outrages; he rejects their Offerings, and requires Obedience, inſtead of former and preſent Diſobedience: And he exhorts to mourn for the Abominations of *Tophet*, whoſe Valley ſhould be filled with dead Carcaſſes, till there be Place for no more, that hereby it may be ſo polluted, that no Thoughts of Holineſs may remain in it; for a dead Carcaſs, under the Law, was unclean, and that which was before a Valley of Pleaſure and great Delight, and they had dedicated to their falſe Gods, was to be a Valley of Slaughter.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by the* Temple of the Lord, *Verſe* 4?

A. Let us quote the Words, as they ſtand in the Text: *Truſt ye not in lying Words, ſaying, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are theſe.* The Temple of the Lord was ſo called, becauſe this was God's Houſe, wherein he had promiſed to dwell, and that for ever, *Pſal.* cxxxii. 13, 14. they flatter themſelves, that he would dwell no where elſe, and would not depart, and certainly would not ſuffer the *Chaldeans* to deſtroy this, and therefore that no Evil could befal them, as they promiſed themſelves, *Micah* iii. 11. Therefore the Prophet cautions them not to deceive themſelves in truſting to the Temple, and its Buildings, as the two Courts and Houſe, and Holy of Holies, implied in the Word *theſe*, which he, as it were, points to with his Finger; and in which theſe Hypocrites thought themſelves ſo ſecure by a treble Wall, Fort, or Bulwark, that they could not miſcarry; but he would have them to know, that neither theſe, nor the Services belonging to them, will be be able to ſecure them, Ver. 8. Chap. iv. 14. And it is likely their falſe Prophets did ſo perſuade them; whoſe Prophecies he here calls *lying Words*; but God lets them know, that he doth not chuſe a Nation for the Place's Sake, but the Place for the Nation's Sake; the like Caution the Apoſtle give them, 1 *Cor.* x. 2, *&c.* The Emphaſis that may be in this threefold Repetition, ſeems rather to relate to the confident, and often reiterated Brags and Boaſts of the Temple, that were in their Mouths, than to the Worth and Excellency of it, in regard of God's owning it.

CHAP. VIII.

The Calamities of the Jews, *both dead and alive. Their bruttiſh Impenitence. Their vain Boaſt of Wiſdom; their Covetouſneſs, Security and impudence; their grievous Judgments; bewailed by the Prophet.*

Q. *What Leſſons of Inſtruction does the Prophet here give the People?*

A. Here is a farther Prophecy concerning the future juſtly deſerved Reproach and Diſtreſs of the *Jews*, as well dead as alive; for the Enemy, for Greedineſs of Gain, would rifle their Graves, and lay their Carcaſſes before thoſe Idols which they worſhipped in their Life-time, to ſee if they could afford Aſſiſtance: And the Afflictions they ſhould feel through God's Judgments, were to be ſo great, that Death would be more eligible than Life, becauſe they were full of Hypocriſy, every one following his own Fancy, without any Conſideration.

He upbraids them with a continual brutiſh Impenitence, (diſgracing them by the Example of dumb Creatures) ſottiſh and falſe boaſting of Wiſdom, wreſting of the Law; Falſhood, ſcornful Flattery, and Impudence of the falſe Prophets and Prieſts, general Tranſgreſſion and Idolatry; all which God threatned to puniſh by the *Babylonians*, for which the Prophet mourns and laments bitterly.

When I would comfort myſelf againſt Sorrow, my Heart is faint in me. Behold the Voice of the cry of the Daughter of my People, becauſe of them that dwell in a far Country: Is not the Lord in Zion? *is not her King in her; why have they provoked me to anger with their graven Images, and with ſtrange Vanities? The Harveſt is paſt, the Summer is ended, and we are not ſaved. For the Hurt of the Daughter of my People am I hurt; I am black; Aſtoniſhment hath taken hold on me. Is there no Balm in* Gilead? *Is there no Phyſician there? Why then is not the Health of the Daughter of my People recovered?*

Q. *Give me ſome Account of the* Balm of Gilead, *mentioned Verſe 22. and which was formerly in ſo high Eſteem among Phyſicians?*

A. Let us read the whole Verſe, and then explain the ſeveral Parts of it: *Is there no Balm in* Gilead? *Is there no Phyſician there? Why then is not the Health of the Daughter of my People recovered?* ——*Balm in* Gilead. *Gilead* was famous for *Balm*, *Gen.* xliii. 11. taken for *Roſin* or *Turpentine*, which is a Kind of more liquid *Roſin*, and either flows or drops from certain Trees, of its own accord, (the *Greek* Word for *Roſin* ſignifying *to flow*) or their Juices flow from ſeveral Holes pierced in them, as from *Pine*, *Cedar*, *Cypreſs* or *Terebinth* Tree. The *Engliſh* Word *Roſin* has a near Affinity with the ſame Word in the *Hebrew*, *Greek* and *Latin* Languages, and in all of them ſignifying, that the Nature of it is to diſſolve Hardneſs, to clear and cloſe up Wounds.——*Phyſician.* Or *Chirurgeon*; probably in a Country where were ſuch Plenty of Remedies, there could be no want of Artiſts, whereby their Cures might be facilitated, by Means of which the *Gileadites* and *Arabians* did excel there.——*Recovered.* Heb. *gone up*; the like Expreſſion, 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 13. the Work was perfected, *Heb. the Healing*, went up upon the Work; and ſo *Neh.* iv. 7. the Prophet expreſſes his grievous Complaint, by Way of Admiration, by a *Metaphor*, implying the Inveteracy and Obſtinacy of their Hearts, that either would [illegible] come to the *Phyſician*, or that they ſhould be thus incurable, where they wanted not for Prophets and Teachers, or any ſpiritual Means flowing down daily upon them: Can *Jeruſalem* and *Judah* be without ſpiritual *Phyſicians*? Some underſtand it by way of *Sarcaſm*; as if he had ſaid, Where are your Medicines, your Arms, your Counſels, your Confederacies? And where are your Phyſicians, your Princes and Prieſts, that promiſed you Relief? Without God there's no Help in any Means; but the former is more natural and agrees beſt with the Beginning of the next Chapter.

Chap. IX.

Jeremiah *continues his Lamentation for their Adultery, Deceit and Idolatry, which God would certainly puniſh. No Truſt in ourſelves, but in God, who will puniſh all Nations.*

Q. PRAY *what are the Subjects diſcourſed of in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet ſhews the great Compaſſion that he had towards his People, ſeeing he could never ſufficiently lament the Deſtruction that he ſaw hanging over them; which is a ſpecial Note to diſcern the true Prophets from the Hirelings. He ſhews that there was more Quietneſs and greater Safety for him to dwell among wild Beaſts, than among this wicked People, ſave that God hath injoined him the Charge to reprove them for their many and crying Sins.

God dehorts his People from vain Confidence, and teaches them to truſt in him alone; and laſtly, he threatens not only the *Jews*, as Abuſers, but alſo the *Gentiles* round about, as Deſpiſers of Circumciſion. Here ends the Sermon which begun at Chap vii.

Q. *I ſhould be glad if you will explain the Prophet's Meaning in Verſe* 10?

A. For the Mountains will I take up a Weeping and Wailing, and for the Habitations of the Wilderneſs a Lamentation, becauſe they are burnt up, ſo that none can paſs through them, neither can Men hear the Voice of the Cattle; both the Fowls of the Heaven, and the Beaſts are fled, they are gone.——*Weeping and Wailing.* The Prophet having, Verſe 1. taken up a Lamentation for the Slaughter of the People, he now re-aſſumes it for the Deſolation of the whole Land, every Part of it being to be laid waſte: See Chap. iv. 23, 26. And it either ſets forth the Greatneſs of his Grief, that ſhall reach to the very Mountains, as the Words may be read; or rather, the Cauſe of this Mourning, becauſe he preſently adds, *for the Habitations of the Wilderneſs.*——*Habitations.* *Plain* or *Valley*, as it often ſignifies; ſo the Word is uſed *Iſa.* lxiii. 13, 14. or *pleaſant Plains.* The Country of *Judea* being mountainous, theſe Plains and Valleys were their chief Places for Paſturage, which greatly aggravates the Devaſtation; theſe ſhall be burnt up, and the Herbage ſo burnt, that it ſhall be left utterly barren, like a parched Heath, Ver. 12. The *Mountains* ſhall not be able to ſecure them, nor the *Valleys* to feed them. ——*That none can paſs through them.* Either there being no Path; the LXX. render it, *on the Paths of the Wilderneſs*; or none to paſs to and fro, and ſo leave it deſolate; ſo far are they from being inhabited, Chap. ii. 6.——*The Voice of the Cattle.* There, where once, all ſort of Cattle and Fowls in great Plenty were wont to feed and graze, there is not ſo much as the Chirping of a Bird, the Bleating of a Sheep, or Lowing of an Ox to be heard. See Chap. xxiii. 10, 12, 13, and l. 3. They are ſaid to be fled and gone; either the Enemy ſwept away all, or they have forſaken the Land, becauſe there was no Food, *Jer.* xii. 4. a figurative Expreſſion of an univerſal Deſolation.

Chap. X.

They are forbid to be afraid of the Tokens of Heaven, and conſult vain Idols, which are not to be compared with the Majeſty of Heaven, who is Jacob's *Portion. The* Babylonians *deſtroy the Temple; the brutiſh Paſtors and the Flocks are ſcattered. The Prophet's humble Supplication.*

Q. TO *what Perſons and Things does this Diſcourſe relate?*

A. Here begins another Sermon: This is, moſt probably, relating to *Jechonias* and the *Jews* that were already in Captivity. God forbids his People to give Credit to, or fear the Conſtellations and Conjunctions of Stars and Planets, which have no Power of themſelves, but are governed by him, and whoſe ſecret Motions and Influences are not known to Man; and therefore there can be no certain Judgment thereof, for they are not to compared with the Majeſty and Power of God, who is *Jacob's* Portion.

The Prophet warns the *Jews* to prepare themſelves for Captivity, ſhewing that the Time was at Hand, that they ſhould feel the Things whereof he told them: Whereupon the Prophet, in his own, and in the Name of the Church, prays unto God for moderating his Judgments; foraſmuch as God cannot only be known and glorified by his Mercy that he uſed towards his Church, but alſo by his

Juſtice in puniſhing his Enemies, he prays that his Glory may fully appear in the one and the other.

Q. *What was the Ground or Occaſion of the Prophet's Caution in Verſe* 2. Learn not the Way of the Heathen, and be not diſmayed at the Signs of Heaven, for the Heathen are diſmayed at them.

A. The *Jews* being to live among the *Chaldeans*, in their Captivity, where many of them were already, the Prophet admoniſhes them againſt the Superſtitions of the *Chaldean* Idolaters, which he underſtands here by *Heathen*, who were alſo much addicted to *Aſtrology*, and eſteemed it the Original of Sciences. The *Cuſtom* and *Manners* he here calls their *Way*, as is frequent in Scripture, *Lev.* xviii. 3, *&c.*——*The Signs of Heaven.* This was a Practice and Cuſtom ſo common among them, that judicial Aſtrologers, of what Nation ſoever, were generally termed *Chaldeans*; a Practice ſo hateful to God, that ſometimes he poſitively prohibits it, *Deut.* xviii. 10, 14. and ſometimes in a way of Scorn and Deriſion, *ſarcaſtically* ſends them to ſuch, *Iſa.* xlvii. 13. and often labours to perſuade them againſt it; for tho' Aſtronomy be not only lawful, but uſeful, as being ſubject to Reaſon, and the Rules of Art, whereby many Actions of human Life are directed, guided and proportioned; yet *Judicial Aſtrology* is, indeed, originally *diabolical* and heatheniſh; and though God ſometimes ſuffers their Predictions to fall out right, yet it is to puniſh the Curioſity of the Enquirers.——*The Heathen are diſmay'd at them.* Leave this to Heathens, it doth not become God's People, who depend wholly upon him; for indeed the Heathen, as many ignorant *Chriſtians* to this Day, were more afraid of the Signs of Heaven, and aſtrological Predictions, than of God, and what is foretold in his Word of Prophecy; as if Things were rather governed by the Influence of the Stars, than by the Providence of God; not but that we may be affected by ſuch preternatural Appearances in the World, which God doth extraordinarily cauſe to appear, as ſome Tokens of his approaching Judgments, *Joel* ii. 30, 31. *Matth.* xxiv. 7. *Luke* xxi. 11.

CHAP. XI.

God's Covenant; their Diſobedience; Evil threatened to come on them, and on the Men of Anathoth, *for conſpiring to kill* Jeremiah.

Q. RECITE *the general Heads of the Subjects here treated of.*

A. The Almighty proclaims his Covenant with *Iſrael* and *Judah*; for which Reaſon he intends to bring a great and unvaoidable Miſchief upon them. The Prophet is likewiſe forbidden to pray for the People, becauſe of their abominable Lewdneſs.

We have no Mention of this Conſpiracy in Holy Writ, but it is plain, from the nineteenth Verſe of this Chapter, and what follows to the End, that the Men of *Anathoth* (which was *Jeremiah*'s own Town) were offended at his propheſying ſo ſharp Things againſt *Judah*, and had threatened to kill him, if he would not leave off that Stile. The Prophet deſires God to take Vengeance on them; and the Prayers of God's Prophets, though they may have ſometimes too much Paſſion and human Infirmities mixed with them, yet are heard of God. Thus the ſame Thing the Men of *Anathoth* deſigned to do againſt him, was to fall upon them, utterly to conſume them, ſo as no Remembrance of them ſhould remain.

Q. *In what Senſe was that Accuſation of* Judah *true, Verſe* 13?

A. The Accuſation againſt *Judah* is conceived in theſe Words: *For according to the Number of thy Cities were thy Gods,* O Judah, *and according to the Number of the Streets of* Jeruſalem, *have ye ſet up Altars to that ſhameful Thing, even Altars to burn Incenſe unto* Baal. Not that they had juſt ſo many Idols as were Cities in *Judah*, or Altars as were Streets in *Jeruſalem*; the Meaning is, they had very many, and that the People, who lived in every Street and City, were guilty. Which he calls *their Shame*, or the ſhameful Thing, becauſe it was what they had Reaſon to be aſhamed of, and what would certainly bring them to Shame and Confuſion. —— *Baal.* *Baal* ſignifies *Lord*, and was a common Name given to more Idols than one; the *Phœnicians* uſed the Name *Baal*, the *Chaldeans*, *Bel*, *Hoſ.* ii. 16. God forbad his People to call him by this Name, becauſe ſo abuſed to Idolatry. Many think that the Sun was what the *Phœnicians* worſhipped under that Name: ſome ſay *Saturn*. *Manaſſes*, who preceded *Joſiah*, reared Altars for *Baalim*, made Groves and worſhipped all the Hoſt of Heaven, and ſerved them, 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 3. Learned Men ſay, that the *Aſians* called the ſame Idol *Baalim*, whom thoſe of *Europe* called *Jupiter*. That Opinion of many learned Men is not improbable, That the Heathens acknowledged one ſupreme Being, whom they worſhipped in ſeveral Creatures; ſome miſtaking the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars* to be he, others other Things; theſe they called *Baalim*, *Lords*, as they called the principal God *Baal*. The Heathens Idolatry ſeems to be worwipping God *in Creatures*, and paying a divine Homage to ſuch as the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and others far inferior to them, not believing that thoſe Creatures were the *Divine Being*, but that the *Divine Being* was in them, and from them would hear and anſwer their Supplicants; which though the Heathens might be a little excuſed in, having no Scriptures to ſhew them the Nature of the true God, and how he would be worſhipped; yet in the *Jews* was inexcuſable, they having the Oracles of God committed to them, which both ſhewed them the true Nature of God, and let them know that no Creature could bear any Similitude or Repreſentation of him; and that his Will was, that they ſhould pay their Homage to him, without any Similitudes or Repreſentations to excite them to that Homage; and which were fit for nothing but to beget, in the Minds of People, falſe Conceptions and Apprehenſions of the Divine Being, which is purely ſpiritual; notwithſtanding which Direction from the divine Law, the *Jews*, after the Manner of the Heathens, would pay their Homage to God, before *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars*, and before *Images* made with Hands, and make Altars to ſuch Creatures and Images, which was the Idolatry God complains of, and of which he declares a greater Abhorrence than almoſt every other Sin. It is likely that *Baal*, here mentioned, was the *Sun*, becauſe it was near the Times of *Manaſſes*, who thus highly offended God; and it is probable, that tho' *Joſiah* had begun a good Reformation; yet a great deal of this Leaven was left in the common People; beſides that the Sins of *Manaſſes*, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 26. are reckoned up as the ſpecial proximate Cauſe of this Wrath of God againſt *Judah*.

Chap. XII.

Jeremiah *complains of the Proſperity of the Wicked; by Faith he ſees their Ruin. God admoniſhes him of his Brethrens Treachery againſt him, and laments his Heritage. A Return from Captivity promiſed to the Penitent.*

Q. W*HAT are the Subjects of the Prophet's Sermon in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet complains to God of the Proſperity of his wicked Countrymen, and prays him to take them away, that the Land may not ſuffer any longer for their Wickedneſs. God inſtructs the Prophet, and foretels the Treachery of his Countrymen againſt him. The Lord complains of the deſperate Rebellion of his own Heritage, which he muſt therefore lay waſte by the *Babylonians*, and puniſh it with Barrenneſs: Yet, in the mean Time, (not intending the neighbouring Heathen Nations ſhould go unpuniſhed, who, upon this Occaſion, would likewiſe be ready to fall upon *Iſrael*) with a Promiſe of the Deliverance of his People, and his Grace and Mercy to the *Gentiles*, who, with his own People, ſhould turn unto him; but for thoſe, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that ſhall continue in Unbelief, and go on in Courſes of Rebellion and Diſobedience (ſaith God) I will utterly deſtroy that People. Thus, *Iſa.* lx. 12. *The Nation and Kingdom that will not ſerve me ſhall periſh, yer thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly waſted.*

Q. *Pleaſe to interpret the 5th Verſe?*

A. If thou haſt run with the Footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how can'ſt thou contend with Horſemen? And if in the Land of Peace, wherein thou truſtedſt, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the Swelling of Jordan? That this is the Anſwer of God to the Prophet, is reaſonably agreed by the beſt Interpreters, as alſo that this is a proverbial Expreſſion; but as to the Application of it in this Place, there is ſome Difference. Some ſay it thus: "If thou doſt not underſtand what is done by the Men of thy own "City, how canſt thou think to fathom my Diſ"penſations of Providence in the Government of "World?" But this Senſe ſeems not very probable, becauſe the Scope of the Proverb ſeems to be this, "If thou art not able to encounter leſſer "Dangers, how wilt thou be able to overcome "greater? But the beſt Senſe ſeems to be this: "*Jeremy*, I have greater Dangers for thee to "encounter than thoſe thou art expoſed to at "*Anathoth*; if thou art ſo diſturbed with them, "who are Footmen, how wilt thou be able to grap"ple with thoſe far greater Enemies that thou "art like to meet with at *Jeruſalem?* —— *The Swelling of* Jordan. *Anathoth* ſeems alſo to be underſtood by *Land of Peace*, that Land of thy Friends wherein thou didſt confide: If thy Friends thou haſt there met with, tire thee, what wilt thou do *in the Swelling of* Journey? That is, in a Place where thou are like to meet with an Increaſe of greater Troubles, like the Swelling of *Jordan* (which in Harveſt uſed to overflow its Banks.) This Senſe of the Text ſeems beſt to agree with what went before before, and what follows.

Chap. XIII.

In the Type of a Linnen Girdle, God prefigures their Deſtruction, under the Parable of Bottles filled with Wine, is foretold their Drunkneſs with Miſery. He exhorts to prevent theſe Judgments, which are the Cauſe thereof.

Q. H*AD* Jeremiah *really and actually a Command from God, to do as he is here bidden; or was it only in Viſion?*

A. As the River *Euphrates* was ſo far from *Jeruſalem*, it is evident that this was a Viſion, whereby was ſignified, that the *Jews* ſhould paſs over the *Euphrates*, to be Captives in *Babylon*, and there, for Length of Time, ſhould ſeem to be rotten, although they were joined to the Lord before, as a Girdle about a Man.

By the Similitude of filling a Wine-bottle full of Wine, is ſhewed, that Gad will make them altogether drunk in Miſery with the Cup of his Wrath; and yet he exhorts them to prevent thoſe Miſeries by an humble Repentance, eſpecially the King and Queen, ſuppoſed to be *Jehoiachim* and his Mother: Yet he ſhews, that the *Jews*, by their continued Sins, had ſo inured themſelves to wicked Practices, that it was as much Labour in vain to endeavour to reclaim them, as to go about to waſh a Black-a-more white, or to take out the natural Spots of a Leopard; for which Reaſon he fortels their utter Deſtruction.

Q. *I deſire you to expound the Parable of the* Girdle, *as it is declared Verſe* 1?

A. Thus ſaith the Lord unto me, Go and get thee a Linnen Girdle, and put it upon thy Loins, and put it not in Water. God's Deſign, by what is recorded in this Chapter, is by two Types, as in two Glaſſes, to let the People underſtand, by the Prophe, how he looked upon them, and what they were in his Eyes, and alſo what he would do unto them, and they might expect from him; to this Purpoſe he directs the Prophet to procure himſelf a Girdle, not Woollen, but *Linnen*, made of Flax, or the like, and to put it not upon his Cloaths, but on his Loins, to ſignify (as ſome think) that this People was a People whom God had made near to him. He commands him not to put it in Water, to ſoften it, as ſome think; Linnen newly made, before it is wetted in Water, being rough; and this they conceive the Prophet is forbidden, for a further Type of the Stiffneſs, Roughneſs, and Stubborneſs of this People. Others think, it typifies that God was no Cauſe of this People's rotting and growing corrupt.

Q. *As there were many Rivers nearer than the* Euphrates, *can any tolerable Reaſon be given why the Prophet ſhould be ſent ſo far to hide his Girdle?*

A. This Injunction on the Prophet is delivered, Verſe 4. *Take the Girdle that thou haſt got, which is upon thy Loins, and ariſe, go to* Euphrates, *and hide it there in a Hole of the Rock.* God a ſecond Time commands the Prophet to take this Girdle and carry it to *Euphrates*. This River was the Border of the promiſed Land; *Reuben's* Lot was bounded by it. The Prophet was commanded to hide his Girdle in the Hole of a Rock in that River. But why there? Were there not other Rivers nearer, where he might have hid it? It is judged by ſome, that they ſhould be carried out of their own Borders into Captivity; or rather, that they had corrupted, and were become rotten, by doing after the Faſhions and Manners of the Heathens, who had lived on the other Side of *Euphrates*, but (an hundred Years before this) captivated the Ten Tribes, and lived on the hither Side.

Q. *The Moral of this Parable is declared Verſe 9. which pray explain?*

A. Thus ſaith the Lord, After this Manner will I mar the Pride of Judah, *and the great Pride of* Jeruſalem. By this it appears, that God commanded *Jeremiah* to do this, not only as a Repreſentation of the rotten and corrupt State of this People, but of his Vengeance which ſhould ſuddenly be brought upon them, though they were *a proud People*, lifted up and ſwelled in the Opinion of themſelves, from the Favour which God had ſhewed them, in making them a People near unto him, as it were wearing them upon his Loins; yet they having corrupted themſelves by mixing their Streams with the Streams of *Euphrates*, Corrupting themſelves with the Superſtitions, Corruptions, and Idolatries of the Heathens, God would make uſe of ſome of thoſe Nations to abate their Pride; and they ſhould rot amongſt thoſe People, and in ſome of thoſe Nations with whom, and by by whoſe Example they had joined againſt the Lord.

Q. *Some more Circumſtances relating to the Girdle, are applied to their proper Signification in the 11th Verſe; which pray recite and explain?*

A. The Verſe runs thus: *For as the Girdle cleaveth to the Loins of a Man, ſo have I cauſed to cleave unto me the whole Houſe of* Iſrael, *and the whole Houſe of* Judah, *ſaith the Lord, that they might be unto me for a People, and for a Name, and for a Praiſe, and for a Glory; but they would not hear.* Here God opens to the Prophet, why he commanded him to put the Girdle about his Loins, *viz.* To ſhew that he, of ſingular Favour, had uſed the *Jews*, as a Man uſeth a Girdle which he faſtens about his Loins, and as a Man wears a Girdle made up of ſome coſtly Materials for an Honour and Praiſe to him, ſo God's Deſign in honouring this People, wearing them as a Girdle, was, that they might bring him Honour and Glory, living to his Praiſe, and in Obedience to his Commands, eſpecially ſuch Commmands as related to his Worſhip ——*But they would not hear.* But they would not anſwer God's Deſign, nor hearken to any Counſels of that Nature which he gave them, and therefore he was reſolved to pluck them from his Loins, and to ſuffer them to rot, and conſume as that Girdle was rotted. See *Pſal.* lxxxi. from Verſe 8. to the End, which is an excellent Comment on this Text.

Chap. XIV.

A grievous Famine propheciedd. The Prophet prays, but God will not be entreated for them. Lying Prophets are no Excuſe for them. The Prophet's Complaint.

Q. WHAT *is the Subject-Matter of this Prophecy?*

A. Here is a Prophecy of a great Drought, and the Miſeries that ſhould enſue thereupon in *Judea*, and the Prophet in a mournful and fervent Prayer, confeſſing the People's Sins, intreats God for them; but the Lord forbids him to offer any Interceſſions for them, annexing Reaſons why he ſhould not. The Prophet, however, excuſes the People, as much as he can, by the ſeducing of the falſe Prophets, but it does not avail, God being determined to puniſh thoſe Prophets and the People together.

The Prophet is by God directed to ſpeak ſtill of the Calamities of this People, as a Thing paſt, though yet to come, according to the uſual Stile of prophetical Writings; and to tell them, that whatſoever their falſe Prophets told them, yet he ſo certainly knew the contrary, that he could even wiſh himſelf melted into Tears for them, and had even, already before his Eyes, the doleful Spectacle of their Miſeries. Some in the Field ſlain by the Sword of their Enemies, others within the Walls almoſt ſtarved to death.

Although the Prophet knew that God caſt off the Multitude, which were Hypocrites and Baſtard-Children, yet he was aſſured, that for his Promiſe ſake, he would ſtill have a Church, for which he prays. He teaches the Church a Form of Prayer, to humble themſelves to God by true Repentance, which is the ſole Means to avoid this Famine, which was the Beginning of God's Plagues.

Q. *When did that* Dearth *happen which is propheciedd of in the firſt and following Verſes?*

A. What *Dearth* this was, we are not told; nor when it happened; ſome think it was in the Time of the Siege of *Jeruſalem*; others, that it was at the Beginning of the Reign of *Zedekiah*; but their Opinion is the moſt probable, who think it was in the Time of *Jehoiakim*; for we read, Chap. xxxvi. 9. of an extraordinary Faſt by them proclaimed, which many judge was on this Occaſion: The *Hebrew* Phraſe here uſed, ſignifying *The Manner of Reſtraints*, gives Interpreters Liberty to abound in their Senſes of this Text; but the following Words makes it evident, Verſes 4, 5. that the *Reſtraints* here mentioned, was God's reſtraining of Water from them, ſo that the *Dearth* was occaſioned from a great Drought, which is elegantly deſcribed in the five next Verſes, and deprecated, Ver. 7, 8, 9. which makes, indeed, but a Preface to the Revolution of the Mind and Will of God in this Prophecy. In theſe three Verſes, the Prophet humbly confeſſes and deplores the Sins of his People, and acknowledges the Juſtice of God in their Puniſhment. This, and the remaining Part of the Chapter is full of the Prophet's zealous Interceſſions with God in Behalf of his ſinful Country. How elegantly does he vary his Arguments, how warmly does he enforce them in his Pleadings with God, that he would not utterly reject his People, but be ſtill gracious unto them?

O Lord, though our Iniquities teſtify againſt us, do thou it for thy Name's Sake: But our Back-ſlidings are many, we have ſinned againſt thee. O the Hope of Iſrael, *the Saviour thereof in time of Trouble, why ſhouldeſt thou be as a ſtranger in the Land, and as a wayfaring Man, that turneth aſide to tarry for a Night? Why ſhouldeſt thou be as a Man aſtoniſhed, as a mighty Man that cannot ſave? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midſt of us, and we are called by thy Name, leave us not. Thus ſaith the Lord unto this People, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their Feet, therefore the Lord doth not accept them, he will now* *remember their Iniquity, and viſit their Sins. Then ſaid the Lord unto me, Pray not for this People for their Good. When they faſt I will not hear their Cry, and when they offer Burnt-offering and an Oblation, I will not accept them; but I will conſume them by the Sword, and by the Famine, but I will give you aſſured Peace in this Place. Then ſaid I, Ah Lord God, Behold the Prophets, ſay unto them, Ye ſhall not ſee the Sword, neither ſhall ye have Famine, but I will give you aſſured Peace in this Place. Then the Lord ſaid unto me, The Prophets propheſy Lies in my Name, I ſent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither ſpake unto them; they propheſy unto you a falſe Viſion and Divination, and a Thing of Nought, and the Deceit of their Heart,* &c.

CHAP. XV.

The Rejection and Judgments of the Jews, *and the Sins which procured them. The Prophet complains that the People curſe and perſecute him for theſe Prophecies; they are threatned, and he inſtructed comforted.*

Q. I*S not the Diſcourſe in this Chapter continued from the laſt?*

A. Yes; *Jeremiah* having been once denied, ſolliciteth God again, as we had in the four laſt Verſes of the former Chapter. God here replies to that Prayer; and the Sum of what he ſaith is, That he was inexorable in their Caſe, and commands him, on the contrary, to preach and pronounce upon the People moſt ſore and heavy Plagues (eſpecially four Kinds) mentioning the Sins whereby they deſerved them.

In the tenth Verſe the Prophet cannot be excuſed from a great Meaſure of Paſſion and human Infirmity; he almoſt curſes the Day of his Birth, denouncing himſelf a woeful miſerable Man, to be born a Man of Strife and Contention to the whole World; that is, thoſe Nations in it, againſt which God ſent him to denounce his Judgments; which Denunciations, how true ſoever, and the Truth of which they afterwards did effectually find, yet they were not able to bear, and therefore they ſtrove with him, and contended againſt him; yet it was not for his Sin.

In Anſwer to the Complaint of the Prophet, God ſpeaks to him to this Purpoſe. I will, by my Providence, ſo order it, that how cruelly and ſeverely ſoever the Enemy deals with thy Countrymen, yet he ſhall uſe thee kindly when he ſhall take the City. This muſt certainly be the true Meaning of the 11th Verſe. See the fulfilling of this Prophecy, Chap. xxxix. 11. and xl. 3, 4. The Prophet makes a farther Complaint, that the People curſe and perſecute him for his Prophecies, for which God threatens them, and inſtructs and comforts *Jeremiah.*

Q. *In what Manner was the Prophecy in the 4th Verſe fulfilled?*

A. And I will cauſe them to be removed into all Kingdoms of the Earth? becauſe of Manaſſeh *the Son of* Hezekiah, *King of* Judah, *for that which he did in* Jeruſalem. Though the Body of the People were removed into *Babylon,* yet as it is more than probably that many of them fled into other Countries to ſave themſelves; ſo no doubt but the King of *Babylon* removed them into ſeveral Kingdoms belonging to his large Empire.——*Becauſe of* Manaſſeh, *&c.* What *Manaſſeh* did, may be read, 2 *Kings* xxi. 11. Some queſtion, whether God means the perſonal Sin of *Manaſſeh* and his Miniſters, or only the Sins of the ſame Kind that the *Jews* ſtill continued. *Manaſſeh* lived 55 Years, his Son *Joſiah* 31 Years; it was now the Time of *Jehoiakim,* the Son of *Joſiah,* who reigned but eleven Years, and it's probable this was his fifth Year. Though the People were bad enough ſtill, yet it's not probable they were ſo bad as in the Time of *Manaſſeh.* All *Joſiah*'s Reign was a Time of Reformation, though much of their old Leaven of Idolatry and Superſtition was ſtill remaining in them. Whatever therefore ſome think, God undoubtedly means the Guilt that *Manaſſeh* and his Subjects contracted 40 Years before this Time. Nor is there any Reaſon to queſtion, whether it's conſiſtent with the Juſtice of God, to puniſh the Sin of Parents upon their Poſterity, when it's no more than we ſee done every Day in the Puniſhment of Traitors and Felons, by ſeizing the Eſtates of their Children; and in War, in taking of Cities and fortified Places; and it's no more than God hath threatened in the ſecond Commandment, and declared it as a Part of his Name, *Exod.* xxxiv. and done in a Multitude of Scriptural Inſtances. *Manaſſeh* is here named as the Son of *Hezekiah,* for his Shame, in degenerating from ſo good a Parent; it is expreſly ſaid, 2 *Kings* xxii. 26. that notwithſtanding *Joſiah's* Reformation, that the Lord turned not from the Fierceneſs of his Wrath, kindled againſt *Judah* for the Provocations of *Manaſſeh.*

CHAP. XVI.

The Prophet, under the Types of abſtaining from Marriage, from Houſes of Mourning and Feaſting, repreſents to the People their approaching Miſery, and ſhews the Cauſe of it. Their Return from Captivity ſtranger than their Deliverance from Egypt. *The Prophet's Comfort in the Calling of the* Gentiles.

Q. B*Eſides what the Prophet is ordered to tell the People, here are ſeveral Injunctions laid on him in particular; the Reaſons of which I deſire you to explain?*

A. In the fourth Verſe of this Chapter, God opens the Reaſons, why he would not have the Prophet marry, nor multiply Relations. In evil and calamitous Times, thoſe who multiply Relations, do but multiply Sorrows and Afflictions to themſelves; the Apoſtle in evil Times tells the *Corinthians,* that married Perſons ſhould have Trouble in the Fleſh, 1 *Cor.* vii. 28. and *Chriſt* pronounces a Woe to thoſe that ſhould be with Child, and to thoſe that gave Suck, at the Time when *Jeruſalem* ſhould be beſieged. God tells the Prophet, that he was reſolved, that the People of this Land, both young and old, ſhould die miſerable Deaths, and die ſo faſt, there ſhould be none to bury them. They ſhould die by the Sword and the Famine, and be devoured by the Fowls and the Beaſts; and therefore it was better for him to abide free from Relations, for whoſe Miſeries he would be as much concerned as for his own Affliction.

God did not only forbid his Prophet to go into Houſes of Mourning, to eat and to drink according to their Cuſtom, to comfort thoſe who had loſt their Friends, but he forbid him alſo to go into

Houſes, where they uſually eat and drank upon a more chearful Account; and he declares, that he laid this Injunction upon him as a Type, that his Countrymen, by ſuch his Forbearance, might underſtand that God in his Providence was about to put an End to all their Civil Mirth in their Days.

The Sins of the People, which were the Cauſe of their Plagues, are related, but God adjoins a gracious Promiſe of the Deliverance of his People; after which he proceeds in his Threatnings, and a Relation of the Cauſes thereof.

The Prophet hearing God's Reſolution, before he ſhewed this People any Mercy, to be avenged on them for their Sins, leaves off ſpeaking to him upon that Argument, but applieth himſelf to God for Mercy for himſelf, and to confirm his Faith in him, gives him Names ſuited to his Hopes in him, and which might declare his Faith in him, for the obtaining of Favour from him in an evil Day; and he comforts himſelf with the Thoughts of thoſe good Days that were coming, when not only the *Jews* ſhould be again reſtored to their Country, but the *Gentiles* alſo from all Parts of the World (whom alſo many of the *Jews* ſhould accompany) ſhould apply themſelves to God, confeſſing that both they and their Fathers, in their worſhipping dumb Idols, had but inherited Lies and Vanity, and Things that were unprofitable.

Q. *What is there farther ſaid in Relation to the People?*

A. The Lord declares, that becauſe all the Goodneſs and Mercy which he had ſhewed the *Jews*, would not learn them to know him, his Might, and Power; he would, once for all, make them underſtand it, by the dreadful Strokes of his Vengeance. They ſhall know (ſaith the Lord) that my Name is *Jehovah*; that I am not ſuch a one as their Idols, but one who have my Being from myſelf, and give Life and Being to all other Things, have all Might and Power in my Hand, and can do whatſoever I pleaſe; and one that will make good whatſoever I have ſpoken, whether in a way of Promiſe, or Threatning.

Q. *What do you apprehend to be the genuine Senſe of Verſe 7?*

A. Let us firſt ſee what the Words are; *Neither ſhall Men tear themſelves for them in Mourning, to comfort them for the Dead; neither ſhall Men give them the Cup of Conſolation to drink for their Father, or for their Mother.* If we allow our Tranſlation of the firſt Clauſe of this Verſe, it will be hard to give a tolerable Senſe of the Words; for then *tearing* is the ſame as *cutting themſelves*, mentioned in the former Verſe; which though it might a be paſſionate Expreſſion of the Perſon's Sorrow that did it, yet how it ſhould comfort the Friends of the Deceaſed, will be hard to conceive. The Word hath but two Significations, and we have here given it what worſt ſuits the Text. It ſignifies to *divide*, and to *tear* or *rend*, *Iſa.* lviii. 7. we interpret it *deal*; that is, *divide* thy Bread to the Hungry. So certainly, it ought to have been tranſlated here. *Neither ſhall Men deal out Bread for them in Mourning to comfort them for the Dead*, and ſeems to aim at a Cuſtom amongſt them, when they had a Friend who had loſt a Relation, to ſend them ſome Meat or Victuals (for amongſt the *Hebrews* all Things that they eat were called Bread) and then to go and dine, or ſup with them, to have an Opportunity to ſpeak comfortably to them. This is the right and plain Senſe of the Words, as is evident by the next Phraſe; *Neither ſhall Men drink the Cup of Conſolation for their Father*, &c. as in ſuch Caſes they uſed to have ſomething to eat, ſo alſo they ſent them Bottles of Wine, or other chearing Liquor to drink, that they might forget their Sorrows; this is called, *The Cup of Conſolation*, from the End for which the ſending and drinking of it was intended. God tells them that the Time ſhould come that ſo many of them ſhould die, and ſo faſt, that the reſt ſhould be ſo near the Brink of the Grave, that they ſhould have no Leiſure for, or Heart to obſerve theſe Ceremonies.

Chap. XVII.

The Captivity of Judah *for her Sin. Truſt in Man curſed, in God bleſſed. The deceitful Heart and moſt ſecret Practices are known to God. The Salvation of God. The Prophet complains of the Mockers of his Prophecies; and is ſent to renew the Covenant of hallowing the Sabbath.*

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects handled in this Chapter?*

A. The deſperate Wickedneſs and Obſtinacy of the *Jews*, appearing even in their Children, Judgments muſt follow. Here is ſet forth the curſed Condition of him who puts his Truſt and Confidence in Men, and the bleſſed Condition of him who relies on God, for God ſearches the inward Wickedneſs of Man's Heart, therefore thoſe, who by Craft and ſecret Practices heap up unjuſt Riches, ſhall not eſcape his Puniſhment.

The Prophet, ſpeaking to God, repreſents himſelf as a Perſon wounded or ſick, either with the Senſe of God's Diſhonour, by the Sins of the People, or with their Reproaches or Threatnings; begging of God, to heal him, in whoſe Power alone it was and who would certainly do it.

By naming the Sabbath-Day, the Prophet comprehends the Thing, that is thereby ſignified: For if they tranſgreſſed in the Ceremony, they muſt needs be culpable of the reſt, ſee *Exod.* xx. 8. And by the Breaking of this Commandment, he makes them Tranſgreſſors of the whole Law, for as much as the firſt and ſecond Tables are contained therein.

If the *Jews* kept the Sabbath holy, then both their City and their Temple, their Civil and Eccleſiaſtical State were to continue and flouriſh in that Order wherein it was. But if they acted contrary to their Duty, then God would deſtroy their City, the higheſt and nobleſt Structures ſhould be burnt; and though the Hand of the Enemy ſhould do this, yet God ſhould order it ſo, as it ſhould be a Fire of his kindling, and therefore not like to be quenched, till it had effected the Thing for which God ſo kindled it.

Q. *What Truth is there in the Aſſertion, Verſe* 11. *that* the Partridge ſitteth on Eggs and hatcheth them not?

A. It is no Wonder if we cannot be certain as to the Senſe of theſe Words, ſo far as they concern natural Hiſtory, when we are not certain what Bird it is to which they relate. We tranſlate the Word *Partridge*, others will have it the *Cuckow*; but certain it is, it's the ſame Word which we tranſlate *Partridge*, 1 *Sam.* xxvi. 20. and Cuckows were not much hunted after. How the Partridge is ſaid to *ſit on Eggs and hatch them not*, is yet a more difficult Queſtion. It may be occaſioned theſe ſeveral Ways, *viz.* Either ſitting upon *Wind-Eggs*, or *being killed* before the Eggs are hatched, or having *its Eggs deſtroyed* by the Male-Partridge, or by a Dog, or rather Vermin; or her Neſt being found, having her Eggs taken from her, that it is hard to determine which the Prophet means. Of all other Explanations, that of St. *Hierom* ſeems the leaſt probable, though the Thing be true (if we may believe *Caſſiodorus*, and other natural Hiſtorians) that *Partridges* have ſuch a Love and Deſire to hatch young ones, that having loſt their own Eggs, they will ſteal the *Eggs* of other *Partridges* and hatch them, and that the Birds being hatched, the young ones knowing the Cry of their proper Dams, hearing them call, leave the *Partridge* that hatched them: But if this were the Senſe, the Words would run thus, *As the Partridge ſitteth upon Eggs, and hatcheth them, but enjoyeth them not*; whereas they are, *hatched them not*; that is, having loſt them either by ſome Man that hath taken them from her, or by ſome Vermin or wild Beaſt.——*So he that getteth Riches*, &c. So he that getteth an Eſtate by Oppreſſion, Fraud, or unrighteous Actions, ſhall loſe it again before he comes to die, and at his Death ſhall underſtand what a Fool he was to take ſo much Pains to no more Purpoſe.

Chap. XVIII.

By the Parable of a Potter, God's abſolute Power and Diſpoſal of Nations is ſet forth. Judah's *unparallell'd Revolt, and her Judgments. The Prophet prays againſt his Conſpirators.*

Q. WHAT *Kind of Viſion does the Prophet here communicate to the People?*

A. God expounds to the Prophet his Deſign in bidding him go to the Potter's Houſe; it was to confirm him in the Power that he had over his Creatures. For, ſaith he, As the Clay to the Potter, ſo is his Houſe of *Iſrael* (and indeed ſo are all the Sons and Daughters of Men) unto God: God hath the ſame Power over them that a Potter hath over the Clay, and a greater Right to do what he pleaſes with them, than any Potter hath relating to his Clay; the Clay is but the Potter's Purchaſe, not his Creature, but Man is God's Creature. God, by his Prophet *Iſaiah*, made uſe of the ſame Similitude, *Iſaiah* xlv. 9. So doth the Apoſtle, *Rom.* ix. 20. That God hath an abſolute Sovereign Power to do what he pleaſes with the Work of his Hands, cannot be denied by any Man of Senſe; whether God uſes his Sovereignty in the eternal Puniſhment of Sinners, that is another Thing: He hath a ſovereign Power, but he acts as a juſt Judge, rendering to every Man according to his Works.

God's Threatnings of Evil muſt be underſtood with this Condition, unleſs Men and Women repent and turn from their evil Ways: And his Promiſes of Good muſt be underſtood with this Condition, if thoſe to whom they are made be a willing and obedient People, and keep in the Way of the Lord's Statutes.

The Prophet complains of the blood-thirſty Counſels of the Wicked againſt him; and, ſeeing the obſtinate Malice of his Adverſaries, which daily grew more and more, the Prophet, moved by God's Spirit, without any carnal Affection, prays for their Deſtruction, becauſe he knew it would tend to God's Glory, and the Profit and Advantage of his Church.

Q. *There are Difficulties in the* 14*th Verſe too hard for me to ſolve; your Expoſition therefore will be very acceptable?*

A. The Words run thus; *Will a Man leave the Snow of* Lebanon, *which cometh from the Rock of the Field? Or ſhall the cold flowing Waters coming from another Place be forſaken?* Our moſt learned Interpreters differ in their Opinions as to the Senſe of the firſt Clauſe of this Verſe. The general Senſe is plain and obvious that it is a fooliſh Thing for Men to forſake God, who is the Fountain of all Good and Refreſhment; and what Men do not uſe to do with reſpect to poor creature Comforts, not to be named with God. But for the grammatical Senſe of the Words, is not ſo obvious. The vulgar Latin tranſlates them, *Shall the Snow of* Lebanon *fail from the Rock of the Field? The* LXX. *Shall the Dugs fail from the Rocks?* Or, *The Snow from* Lebanon. The *Syriack* Verſion follows them; the *Arabic* tranſlates it, *Should the Snow fail from the Mountain of Breaſts, and from* Lebanon. The *Chaldee* Paraphraſt thus gloſſeth, *Behold, as it cannot be, that the Snow Water ſhould fail from* Lebanan. *Pagnine* ſeems to make *Lebanon* the Nominative Caſe, and renders the Senſe thus, *Shall* Lebanon *leave the Snow from the Rock of the Field?* Our Tranſlators ſupply theſe Words, *a Man*, and ſo make that the Nominative Caſe, and *Lebanon* the Genitive. *Lebanon* was a mountanous Place in which were Rocks; it had alſo fruitful Valleys; Snow fell upon theſe Rocks, and on a Thaw ran down into the lower Places, and was grateful to them, as it moiſtened them, and made them fruitful.———*Or ſhall the cold flowing Waters*, &c. This latter Part of the Verſe ſeems as hard as the former. *Pagnine* tranſlates it, *Shall other cold flowing Waters be forſaken?* The vulgar *Latin*, or, *Can the other cold flowing Waters be plucked up?* The LXX and *Syriac*, or *Shall the Water fail, violently ſnatched up or taken away with the Wind?* The *Arabic*, or *Should the foreign cool Waters deſiſt?* The *Chaldee* Paraphraſt gloſſeth, *So the Rain Waters that come down*, and *the Waters of the Fountains that Spring ſhall not fail.* In this great Variety, it is difficult to aſſign the particular Senſe of theſe Phraſes, the Knowledge of which depends upon ſome Properties or Cuſtoms of thoſe Places with which we are not well acquainted. The next Verſe is the beſt Guide we have, where the Sin laid to the Charge of this People, is *their forſaking God*; which Sin is here aggravated by this Topic, that Reaſon teacheth Men not to forſake a greater Good for a leſſer, though the greater Good were but a poor Creature-Comfort, not to be compared with God. This is the general Senſe, Scope, and Sum of this Verſe: So that we need not be very ſolicitous in aſcertainting the particular grammatical Senſe.

Chap. XIX.

Under the Type of breaking a Potter's Veſſel, is foreſhewn the Deſolation of the Jews *for their Sins committed in the Valley of* Hinnom, *and elſewhere.*

Q. WHAT *is the Deſign and End of the Prophet's Viſion in this Chapter?*

A. By the Token of the Potter's Pot, which the Prophet is commanded to break in the Valley of the Son of *Hinnom*, God, by the Prophet, ſhews firſt to the civil and eccleſiaſtical Rulers, and afterwards to all the People in the Court of the Temple, the moſt horrible Deſolation of *Jeruſalem*, for the Abominations which they committed in that Valley, and conſequently every where elſe.

The Prophet aſſures the People from God, that he would moſt certainly juſtify all his Words, and bring to paſs all his Threats againſt that City, and that they muſt thank themſelves for it, for hardening their Hearts, ſo as all as he had ſaid made no Impreſſion upon them, nor found any Place with them.

Q. *Where lay the Valley of the Son of* Hinnom; *and what does the Prophet mean by the* Eaſt-Gate, *Verſe* 2?

A. This Valley of the Son of *Hinnom*, was very near *Jeruſalem*, of which one *Hinnom* was Owner in *Joſhua*'s Time, *Joſh.* xv. 8. and xviii. 16. The Valley is in Scripture ſometimes called, *Ge-hinnom*, from whence came the *Greek* Word *Gehenna*, uſed by our Saviour for *Hell*, *Mat.* v. 22. becauſe of the helliſh Torments they there put their Children to, when they ſacrificed them, and of the diſmal Cries they made.——*Eaſt-Gate.* In the *Hebrew* it is the *Sun Gate*, ſuppoſed to be ſo called, becauſe the Sun riſeth in the Eaſt. This Valley is ſaid to have been ſituated near to this Gate; whither *Jeremy* is commanded to go, and there to proclaim the Words contained in the following Verſes.

Q. *Pray give me your Expoſition of Verſe* 11?

A. The Words in the Text ſtand thus: *And ſhalt ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, even ſo will I break this People, and this City, as one breaketh a Potter's Veſſel, that cannot be made whole again, and they ſhall bury them in* Tophet, *till there be no Place to bury,* Verſe 11.——*Lord of Hoſts.* A Name ordinarily given to God, here very properly, to let them know that he had ſaid nothing with his Lips, but what he had Power by his Hands to accompliſh, being the Captain General of all the Armies of his Creatures.——*That cannot be made whole again.* God, by ordering the Prophet to carry no other Veſſel, but one of *Earth*, had a Deſign upon the breaking of it, not only to ſhew them that he would bruiſe, wound or damage them greatly, but ſo deſtroy them, as there ſhould be no preſent Remedy. If a Veſſel of Braſs, Silver, Gold, &c. be broken, it may be mended; but an earthen Veſſel, if broken, cannot be made whole.——*They ſhall bury them in* Tophet. He tells them, that this *Tophet*, which they had made a Place of barbarous ſlaughter for their Children killed for idolatrous Sacrifices, ſhould continue for a Slaughter-Houſe, but of another Nature, even for them that had committed ſuch Wickedneſs in it, who ſhould be ſlain there in ſuch Multitudes, that they ſhould want Ground to bury the dead Carcaſes.

CHAP. XX.

Paſhur, *ſmiting* Jeremiah *for this Prophecy, receives a new Name, and a fearful Doom.* Jeremiah's *Complaint under their Treachery and Contempt; rejoices in hopes of Vengeance, and curſes his Birth.*

Q. WHAT *are your Obſervations upon this Chapter?*

A. For the former Prophecy, *Jeremiah* is ſmitten by *Paſhur* the Prieſt, and put in Priſon; but being releaſed, he changes *Paſhur*'s Name, and denounces terrible Judgments againſt him, his Friends, and all the People, by the King of *Babylon*. God's Meaning was, not that he ſhould, by Men, be no longer called *Paſhur* (for doubtleſs after this he was called by the ſame Name he had before) but his State and Condition ſhould not anſwer the Name *Paſhur*, which ſignifies, as ſome ſay, *A noble flouriſhing Prieſt*, or, as others, *One, who by his Authority, makes others to tremble*; but *Magor Miſſabib*, that is, *Fear and Terror on all Sides.* This is expounded in the next Verſe: God threathing to fill this wicked Prieſt with Terrors, that he and all his Friends ſhould be affrighted, reflecting upon his moſt miſerable State and Condition; and his Friends, from whom he might poſſibly expect ſome Relief, ſhould be as miſerable as he: And it would be an Addition to his Miſery, that his Eyes ſhould ſee it, and view his whole Country ruined, ſome being ſlain by the Sword, and others carried into Captivity.

Thoſe who teach others to diſobey the Commandments of God, ſeldom eſcape that Vengeance which comes upon thoſe ſeduced by them. *Paſhur* was one whoſe Office it was was to have taught others the Fear of the Lord, and Obedience to his Will; but he taught them falſe Things, and is not patient to hear the Will of God. *Jeremiah* tells him, he ſhould feel the Truth of it, for he himſelf ſhould be one of thoſe who ſhould be carried into Captivity, ſhould die there; and this alſo ſhould be the Portion of all his Friends, whom he had ſeduced by his falſe and lying Prophecies.

The following Part of the Chapter, to the End of it, contains a Complaint or Prayer of the Prophet unto God, made (as ſome think) during his Impriſonment by *Paſhur*; but the certain Time is not known. On a ſudden the Prophet changes his Style, and curſes the Day of his Birth; which makes *Calvin* and ſome other Commentators think, that theſe Words proceed from *Jeremiah*, rather as a Repetition of a former Paſſion, into which the Abuſes of his Enemies had put him, than as the immediate Product of his Spirit at this Time. Whenever they were mentioned, they ſpeak a very extravagant Paſſion, to ſhew us, that though *Jeremiah*, was a good Man, yet he was but a Man, encompaſſed with Infirmities, and ſubject to like Paſſions with other Men. We find *Job* in the like Paſſion, Chap. iii. 3. Theſe great Failures of God's People ſtand in Scripture, as Rocks in the Sea appear to mind Mariners to keep off them, not to run upon them.

Q. *In the ſecond Verſe it's ſaid, that* Paſhur *ſmote* Jeremiah *the* Prophet, *and put him in the* Stocks, *that were in the* high Gate *of* Benjamin, *which was by the* Houſe *of the* Lord: *Now I deſire to be ſatiſfied what Sort of a Weapon it was wherewith* Paſhur *ſmote* Jeremiah; *and likewiſe what Kind of Stocks they were, in which they put the Prophet?*

A. It is not ſaid how he ſtruck him, tho' ſome think it moſt probable with his Fiſt, as the falſe Prophet ſtruck *Micaiah*, 1 *Kings* xxii. 24.——*Put him in the Stocks.* 'Tis uncertain what is here meant by Stocks, whether ſuch an Engine as is in Uſe amongſt us to puniſh Offenders, which we call by that Name. Or, as others, an Engine like our Pillory, where Malefactors are faſtened by the Necks. Or, as others, with three Holes, one for the Neck of the Offender, and one for each Hand; or whether merely a Priſon, where he was kept all Night a Priſoner; the *Hebrew* Word will not determine us farther, than that it was a Place of Reſtraint; and where that will not determine, other Conjectures are as uncertain as needleſs.——*Which was by the Houſe of the Lord.* There is as much Uncertainty as to the Place where this Priſon or theſe Stocks were; we are told it were near the *Temple*, and in the *high Gate* of *Benjamin*; but whether this was a Gate belonging to the *Temple* that opened toward that Part of the Country, or a *Gate of the City* that opened that Way, whether in the inner or outward Wall, whether called the *Higher-gate*, becauſe nearer the Temple, or upon ſome other Account, are nice and various Speculations, the Determination of which is of no Moment for us to know.

Chap. XXI.

Zedekiah, *in the Siege, ſends to* Jeremiah *to enquire of the Event of the War. The Prophet foretels a hard Siege, and miſerable Captivity; counſels the People to fall to the* Chaldeans, *and upbraids the King's Houſe.*

Q. WAS *it from a Principle of Piety that* Zedekiah *deſired to know the Event of the War?*

A. King *Zedekiah* ſends to the Prophet, to enquire the Event of the War; not that the King was touched with the Repentance of his Sins, and ſo ſought to God, as did *Hezekiah*, when he ſent to *Iſaiah*, 2 *Kings* xix. 1. *Iſaiah* xxxvii. 2. but becauſe the Prophet might pray unto God to take this preſent Plague away, as *Pharaoh* ſought unto *Moſes*, *Exod.* ix. 28.

The King received a very harſh Meſſage from the Lord, telling him that himſelf would be againſt *Jeruſalem*, that he would deliver it into the Hands of the King of *Babylon*, who ſhould burn it with Fire; and this Fire he ſaith ſhall not determine in the Deſtruction only of this City, but in the total Devaſtation of all the Country adjacent to *Jeruſalem*.

Q. *When, and by whom, was the Word of the Lord brought to* Jeremiah, *as mentioned in the firſt Verſe?*

A. God in ſundry Times, and divers Manners, ſpake in Times paſt to the Fathers, by the Prophets, *Heb.* i. 1. The two principal were *Viſions* and *Dreams*, *Numb.* xii. 6. How the following Word came to *Jeremiah*, is not expreſſed; it is enough that he knew it came from the Lord. 'Tis evident, that ſome Prophecies, in this Book, are not put in the ſame Order they were delivered in Chap. xxv. we have an Account of the Word of the Lord which came to *Jeremiah*, in the 4th Year of *Jehoiakim*, who was the ſecond Son of *Joſiah*, made King by *Pharaoh-Necho*, purſuing his Victory (2 *Chron.* xxxv. 22.) upon the Battle in which *Joſiah* was killed. The People made *Jehoahaz* King, who reigned but three Months, and the Conqueror carrying him away, made *Eliakim*, his Brother, King, changing his Name to *Jehoiakim*, who reigned eleven Years; that is, ſeven Years after the Word of the Lord, mentioned Chap. xxv. came to *Jeremiah*; after whom *Jehoiachin*, his Son, reigned three Months and ten Days: *Zedekiah* was his Uncle, the Son of *Joſiah*, he reigned eleven Years. So that it is plain that *Jeremiah*'s Prophecy (mentioned Chap. xxv.) was ſeven Years and three Months before this, beſides the Number of Years that *Zedekiah* had reigned. But ſome think that *Jeremiah*, Ch. xxiii. 24, 25. does but repeat to *Zedekiah*'s Meſſengers, what he had before propheſied. This Meſſage was, as appears by the next Verſe, when *Nebuchadnezzar* was come up to make War againſt *Jeruſalem*, *Jer.* xxxix. 1. *Jeremiah* was at Liberty, when the Word of the Lord, at this Time came to him, ſo that it was ſome Time before the City was taken. The fatal Siege held about a Year and a Half, as appears by Chap. xxxix. 1, 2. The *Paſhur* mentioned here, was not the ſame mentioned Chap. xvi. who was the Son of *Immer*, of the ſixteenth Courſe of the Prieſts, and of a more rugged ill Temper; this was the Son of *Malchiah*, and ſo of the fifth Courſe. See 1 *Chron.* xxiv. 9, 14.

Chap. XXII.

God ſends the Prophet to Court, with Promiſes and Threats againſt the King's Houſe at Jeruſalem. *The Judgment of Shallum; of* Jehoiakim; *and of* Coniah.

Q. JEREMIAH, *we find, Ver.* 1. *is commanded to go to Court; but for what Purpoſe?*

A. The Errand he was ſent upon, was to tell them there, what they had to do, if they meant to proſper; but foraſmuch as they practiſed the contrary, he threatens the King's Houſe, and *Jeruſalem*, with utter Deſtruction, and that their Deſtroyers ſhould not only be egged on, by their own Luſts and Malice, but commiſſioned and influenced by God, and ſhould come ſufficiently prepared for their Work. For the Sins of the *Jews* were not of an ordinary Nature, but idolatrous, in worſhipping Images and Idols, which, indeed, were no Gods, but only in the Opinion of thoſe Nations who worſhipped them. The reſt of this Chapter conſiſts of a Prophecy againſt *Shallum*, *Jehoiakim*, and *Coniah*.

Q. *Who was* Shallum, *mentioned Ver.* 11?

A. Some think he was *Jehoahaz* the Son of *Joſiah*, 1 *Chron.* iii. 15. called *Johanan*; there is alſo one *Shallum* mentioned, but he is there mentioned as the fourth Son of *Joſiah*. In the Book of *Kings* we read only of three Sons which *Joſias* had, *viz.* *Jehoahaz*, *Jehoiakim*, and *Zedekiah*. Moſt think that this *Shallum* was *Jehoahaz* or *Johanan* (as he is called 1 *Chron.* iii. 15.) who was, indeed, the ſecond Son of *Joſiah*; for it is plain from 2 *Kings* xxiii. 31, 36. that *Jehoiakim* was two Years older otherwiſe he could not have been twenty-five Years old when he began to reign after *Jehoahaz*, who began to reign at twenty-three Years of Age, and reigned but three Months. But 1 *Chron.* iii. 15. he is called *Joſiah*'s Firſt-born, becauſe he was firſt made King; and here he is called *Shallum* from the Shortneſs of his Reign, in Deriſion to the *Jews*, who ſo called him, on Account of their good Hopes of their Proſperity under him; and in Alluſion to *Shallum* the Son of *Jabeth*, and of the laſt Kings of the Ten Tribes, mentioned 2 *Kings* xv. 13. who reigned but a

Month; for this, as ſome think, could not be that *Shallum* mentioned after *Zedekiah*, as the fourth Son of *Joſiah*, 1 *Chron.* iii. 15. for that *Shallum*, they ſay, never reigned: This, as the Text ſays, reigned three Months, *inſtead of* Joſiah *his Father*; which Phraſe ſeems alſo to conclude that he immediately ſucceeded his Father *Joſiah*. He was carried away from *Jeruſalem* ſoon after his Acceſſion to the Crown, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 31. 32. impriſoned at *Riblah*, and Ver. 34. died in *Egypt*.

CHAP. XXIII.

Woe to wicked paſtors; the ſcattered Flock ſhall be gathered; Chriſt *ſhall rule and ſave them. Againſt falſe Prophets and Mockers of the true.*

Q. I*N the firſt Verſe a Woe is denounced againſt the* Paſtors; *who were they?*

A. There is the like Woe againſt the Paſtors denounced, *Ezek.* xxxiv. 2. Interpreters judge, that by the Paſtors are here to be underſtood the Civil Magiſtrates; for Verſe 9. he denounces the Judgments of God againſt their Eccleſiaſtical Officers: The Civil Magiſtrates, at this Time, in *Judah*, were great Tyrants; and, whereas, God had committed his People (who he calls the Sheep of his Paſture) to them in Truſt, that they ſhould protect and govern them, and that they might live under them godly and peaceable Lives, in Proſperity, they had acted quite contrary to their Truſt, and worried the People like Wolves, inſtead of feeding them like Shepherds. God took notice of their Oppreſſions, and by the Prophet denounces this Woe againſt them, to verify that of *Solomon*, *Eccleſ.* v. 8.

Q. *What is there farther obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a Prophecy of the Reſtitution of the Church in the Time of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the true Branch, and the Lord our Righteouſneſs: Nor is this the only Place where *Chriſt* is called our Righteouſneſs, 1 *Cor.* i. 30. This is an eminent Proof of the Godhead of *Chriſt*; he is here called *Jehovah*, and what is proper to God alone, *viz.* to juſtify, is here applied to *Chriſt*. The Prophet ſaith *Chriſt* ſhall be ſo called, that is, by his People who ſhould believe in him, and truſt in him alone for that Righteouſneſs wherein they ſhould at the laſt Day ſtand before God; thus he was to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs, *Dan.* ix. 24. He who knew no Sin, was made Sin (that is, a Sacrifice for Sin) for us, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.

The Prophet aggravates the Greatneſs of that Salvation, which ſhould be brought by *Chriſt* to all true *Iſraeltes*, by comparing it with the Deliverance of their Forefathers out of the Land of *Egypt*; which he ſaith it ſhould ſo far tranſcend and excel, that the Deliverance out of *Egypt* ſhould not be named when this Salvation ſhould appear, which ſhould be after their Return from *Babylon*, and when God ſhall gather them from all Countries, which was fulfilled, when, by the preaching of the Goſpel, not the *Gentiles* only, who were converted, but many of the *Jews* alſo, which were ſcattered abroad, *James* i. 1. 1 *Pet.* i. 1. Poſſibly Part of this Promiſe or Prophecy remains yet to be accompliſhed, for the *Jews* are not yet come dwell in their own Land; unleſs that Term be to be expounded of *Chriſtians*, who, during the Times of Perſecution in the primitive Church, were ſcattered abroad, but upon the ceaſing of thoſe Perſecutions, when *Chriſtian* Emperors came to have the Government, returned to their own Countries, where they enjoyed a more ſtill and quiet Habitation.

Q. *In what Manner does* Jeremiah *treat the Prophets of his Time?*

A. The Prophet having denounced the Wrath of God againſt the wicked Rulers of *Judah*, under the Notion of Paſtors, proceeds to diſcharge the like Truſt, with reference to thoſe Orders of Perſons among the *Jews*, whoſe Office it was, or at leaſt who took upon them to reveal the Mind and Will of God to the People, and who were, upon that Account, called Prophets; for theſe he declares a great Paſſion and Trouble, either for their Sake, in Proſpect of that Vengeance of God which he ſaw was like to be poured out upon them; or, for the People's Sake, who had been deceived by their unfaithful Revelations of the divine Will, and led into Wickedneſs by their vile Example; for this, he ſaith, his Heart was broken, his Bones ſhook, and he was aſtoniſhed and ſtupified like a drunken Man, he knew not what he did, he was ſo ſtricken at the Apprehenſions of the Wrath of the Lord, ready to be revealed againſt them, and to conſider what Words the Holy Ghoſt had put into his Mouth, to ſpeak againſt them: For their whole eccleſiaſtical Order, all their Miniſtry were profane, not merely hypocritical, but lewd, immoral, and debauched. There is no more certain Sign of a ruined Nation, than when God ſuffers in it a lewd and corrupt Miniſtry.

Q. *But does he not ſay ſomething to the People, as well as to their Paſtors and Prophets?*

A. The Prophet threatens the People who derided or miſinterpreted the Words of God, the living God, and who ſcoffed and derided his Prophets; for which Reaſon God declares he would forget them as to Affection, and bid them not to flatter themſelves that he would not do it, becauſe of their Fathers, or becauſe he gave *Jeruſalem* to their Fathers; from that very City he would withdraw his ſpecial Providence, and from that Land which heretofore was called the Land which the Lord thy God careth for, upon which the Eyes of the Lord are always, from the Beginning of the Year even to the End of the Year, *Deut.* xi. 12. and that he would caſt both City and People out of his gracious Preſence, ſo as he would no longer do them Good as he had done; that they ſhould be a Reproach, and that not for a few Days, but for ever.

CHAP. XXIV.

Under the Type of good and bad Figs, the Prophet deſcribes the Return of ſome from Captivity, and the Ruin of Zedekiah *and the reſt.*

Q. W*HAT is the Purport of the Prophet's Viſion in this Chapter?*

A. The Sum of what God, by his Prophet, reveals in this Chapter, is, that he would deal more graciouſly with thoſe carried into Captivity with *Jeconiah* the Son of *Jehoiakim* (of which read 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12. 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 20.) than with thoſe who ſhould afterwards be carried into Captivity with *Zedekiah*; and this the Prophet hath revealed to him in a Viſion of two Baskets of Figs.

Q. *I would know what is meant by the* two Baſkets of Figs, *Ver.* 1.

A. Some think thoſe two Baskets of Figs were ſuch as the People had brought for their Firſt-fruits, becauſe they are mentioned as ſet before the Temple; but this might be no more than a Viſion, or an Appearance of two Baskets. The Time of this Viſion was ſomewhat betwixt the carrying away of *Jeconiah*, of which we read 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12. *&c.* and 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 20. and the carrying away of *Zedekiah* his Uncle, which was eleven Years after: In 2 *Kings* xxiv. 16. there is particular Mention of the King of *Babylon*'s carrying away the Craftſmen and the Smiths a thouſand.

Q. *In the ſecond Verſe is a Deſcription of the Figs: Pray explain what the Prophet intended to repreſent by theſe Figs?*

A. *One Basket had very good Figs, even like the Figs that are firſt ripe: and the other Basket had very naughty Figs, which could not be eaten, they were ſo bad.* God afterwards explains to the Prophet, and he to the King's Houſe, the Significancy of this Viſion. The Figs firſt ripe are uſually beſt: By theſe good Figs, as will appear from the following Verſes, are intended *Jeconiah* or *Jehoiakin*, with the 10,000 mentioned 2 *Kings* xxiv. 14. and the 7000 in ver. 16. who went into Captivity. By the *bad Figs* are ſignified *Zedekiah* and the reſt of the People carried with him into Captivity. Some may object, that *Jeconiah*, and the People then carried away, were wicked enough, why elſe were they carried away, and being ſo, why are they compared to good Figs? Tho' they were bad, yet they might be comparatively good, ſince this People, for the eleven Years they continued in their own Land, after their Brethren were carried away, not only continued in their former Courſes, but ſtill grew worſe and worſe. Again, they ſeem not to be called good or bad Figs with reſpect to their Manners or Quality, but in reſpect to what God intended to do with them, *viz.* to uſe them as bad Figs are uſed, not fit to be eaten.

CHAP. XXV.

The People's Diſobedience to the Prophets reproved. The ſeventy Years Captivity foretold, and after that the Deſtruction of Babylon. *By a Cup of Water is foreſhewn the Deſtruction of all Nations. The Howling of the Shepherds.*

Q. WHAT *does the Viſion of the Prophet afford us worthy Obſervation?*

A. The Prophet, by God's Command, ſets before the Eyes of the People his own and other Prophets conſtant and continual Miniſtry, in exhorting them to Repentance, but that it had no Effect on them. For this Reaſon he tells them that God would plague them (as alſo other Nations) by the King of *Babylon*, with ſeventy Years Bondage.

This Prophecy is very famous, in regard of its fixing the particular Space of Time in which the *Jews* abode in the Captivity of *Babylon*. Altho' God, whoſe all the Creation is, and who is the Lord of all the Hoſt of his Creatures, doth often make uſe of Heathens, and other wicked Men, to puniſh his own People, yet he will at laſt puniſh them too; and ordinarily when he doth puniſh them, it is with a more ſevere and grievous Deſtruction, than that by which he puniſhes his People, *Iſaiah* xxvii. 7. thus he threatens to make the *Chaldeans* a perpetual Deſolation.

Q. *How do you underſtand the Metaphor of the* Wine-cup of God's Fury, *Verſe* 15?

A. God's Judgments are often in Scripture expreſſed under the Notion of a Cup of hot and intoxicating Drink, and their Sufferings is ſet out under the Notion of drinking ſuch a Cup, as *Pſalm* lxxv. 8. *Job* xxi. 20. *Iſaiah* lvii. 17. *Pſalm* xi. 6. and lx. 3. *Lam.* iv. 21. *Ezek.* xxiii. 32, 34. and God makes *Jeremiah* to ſee the Appearance of ſuch a Cup in a Viſion, and bids him carry it to the Nations to whom he ſent him, to ſignify to them that his Wrath ſhould be poured out on them, and they ſhould drink of it, whether they would or not, be diſturbed, mad, and rage like Men overcome with Wine, becauſe of the dreadful Judgments God would ſend among them.

Q. *What was that City which was called by the* Name of the Lord, *Verſe* 29?

A. By this City he means *Jeruſalem*, elſewhere called the *Holy City*. The Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* iv. 17. ſpeaks much to this Purpoſe, *The Time is come that Judgment muſt begin at the Houſe of God; and if it firſt begin at us, what ſhall the End be of them that obey not the Goſpel of God?——If God ſpares not the green Tree, how ſhall he ſpare thoſe who are dried and withered?* Atheiſts, lewd and prophane Perſons, have little Reaſon to promiſe themſelves an Eſcape from God's righteous Judgments, when they ſee God not ſparing thoſe that make the higheſt Profeſſion of him, and ſtand in ſome Relation to him.

Q. *Why is* Aſhdod *called a* Remnant, *Verſe* 20?

A. This Place had formerly been one of the five Capital Cities of the Country of the *Philiſtins*. After this the *Egyptians* got Poſſeſſion of it, and by well fortifying of it made it ſo ſtrong a Barrier of their Empire on that Side, that *Sennacherib* could not enter *Egypt*, till he had by *Tartan*, one of his Generals, made himſelf Maſter of it, and when he had gotten it into his Poſſeſſion, finding the Importance of the place, he added ſo much to its Strength, that notwithſtanding his unfortunate Retreat out of *Egypt*, and the terrible Loſs of his Army in *Judea* immediately after, the *Aſſyrians* ſtill kept it even to this Time, and it was not without a long and tedious Siege, that the *Egyptians* at laſt became again Maſters of it. And when they had gotten it, they found it in ſuch a manner waſted and reduced by ſo long a War, that it did them but little Service afterwards, it being then no more than the Carcaſe of that City, which it had formerly been. And therefore the Prophet *Jeremiah* calls it, *the Remnant of* Aſhdod, intimating thereby that it was then only the poor Remains of what it had been in Times foregoing.

Q. *Have you any other Remarks to make on this Viſion?*

A. God orders the Prophet to reveal his Will unto them preſently, to revenge himſelf upon them, in Words to this Purpoſe:——Tell them, that I who hitherto have been toward them as a Lamb, will now be to them as a Lion: That there ſhall be ſuch Confuſion and Noiſes, as ſhall ring over all the World; for God's Quarrel is not againſt the *Jews* only, but other Nations. Tell them, that God in any Thing he doth will not act unjuſtly: If Men will plead with him, he will plead with them, and make it appear that he acts righteouſly. He will give up many to the Sword, but they ſhall be ſuch only as by their Wickedneſs have deſerved it, recompenſing to them their own Works and Evil-doings. That thoſe who ſhould be ſlain by Commiſſion from the Lord, in this Time of Judgment, ſhould be in all Places, and ſo numerous, that there ſhould be none left to lament for, or to bury the Dead; but the dead Bodies ſhould lie and rot upon the Surface of the Earth, and as the Dirt of it.

Shepherds, and the Principals of the Flock, are of the ſame Significancy, for by both the civil Rulers are meant, and theſe he calls a-forehand to bewail their Fate, for the Days were now come they ſhould be ſlain and ſcattered: And he tells them, their Fall ſhould be like the Fall of a Criſtal Glaſs, or ſome delicate tender Veſſel, which when it falls breaks to Pieces, ſo that it cannot again be ſet together. In ordinary Diſpenſations of Judgment, there is ſome Way left to eſcape: Great Men are likelieſt to find it; but he tells them, that the greateſt Men ſhould find no Way to flee from, or eſcape this terrible Puniſhment from God; for a great Outcry of the Princes and Rulers is foretold, when they ſhall ſee how the Lord hath ſpoiled the Cities in which they lived ſplendidly. God had before compared himſelf to a Lion, Ver. 30. So in the laſt Verſe he declares himſelf to move about like a Lion, who, when he goes out to ſeek his Prey, leaves his Covert. The Effect of this riſing up of God out of his Covert, is the Deſolation of the Land through the Fierceneſs of the Enemy, cauſed from the fierce Anger of God, now ready to be poured out upon this People.

Chap. XXVI.

The Prophet, by God's Command, in the Court of the Temple, threatens that the Temple ſhall be as Shiloh, *and the Land a Curſe. He exhorts to Repentance; he is apprehended and arraigned. His Apology. The Princes clear him by the Examples of* Micah *and* Urijah, *and by the Care of* Ahikam.

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve upon the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet by Command from God, threatens all People in the Court of the Temple, that God, if they continue diſobedient, will make the Temple like *Shiloh*, which he had abandoned, and the Land a Curſe upon all Nations.

God was yet pleaſed to exhort them to Repentance, not that he was ignorant of their Obſtinacy and the Hardneſs of their Hearts, which was the future Event, but to let them know that their Deſtruction would be of themſelves, he would give them both a Time and Space, and alſo Means for Repentance, and the Prevention of the Judgments of God coming on them: He did give them Time, for it was after this eleven Years before the Captivity of *Jehoiakim*, and two and twenty before that of *Zedekiah*; and for Means, God afforded them the Miniſtry of this Prophet. Repentance, applied to Man, ſignifies a Change of Heart and Counſels, as as well as of his Courſe of Actions: In the unchangeable God, it ſignifies the turning of the Courſe of Providence, not bringing that Evil upon them, for the Evil of their Doings, which ſuppoſing their Progreſs and Obſtinacy in their ſinful Courſes, he had fully reſolved to bring upon them.

The Prophet having diſcharged his Office, was by the Chief of the Prieſts, with the Aſſiſtance of the People, apprehended and threatned with Death, charging him with being a falſe Prophet. When the Nobles and other Civil Magiſtrates heard of the Tumult occaſioned by *Jeremiah's* unpleaſing Prophecy, they came from the King's Court, where the Noble and great Officers in Nations uſually are, to the Temple, and ſat down at the Entry of the new Gate of the Lord's Houſe, where the Prieſts and Prophets accuſed *Jeremiah*.

In the corrupt State of Kingdoms and Cities, the eccleſiaſtical Officers always were Enemies to the Miniſters of God, as we ſhall find in the whole Story both of the *Old* and *New-Teſtament*. The Prophet's Enemies ſpeak to the Members of the great Court, who are called Princes, and alſo to the People who were in the Court, charging *Jeremiah* with Sedition, by propheſying falſely, which was a capital Crime. It was the Charge againſt St. *Stephen*, *Acts* vi. 13. that he ſpake blaſphemous Words againſt the holy Place; to prove this, they appeal to thoſe of the People who heard him.

Q. *The Prieſts having accuſed the Prophet of high Crimes and Miſdemeanours, how does he defend himſelf againſt the Charge?*

A. He acknowledgeth that he hath propheſied againſt the Temple, and againſt the City, and tacitly allows they had Power to take Cognizance of ſeditious Perſons, and falſe Prophets, and doth not deny but ſuch Perſons deſerved to die; but denies that he was a falſe Prophet, or guilty of any Deſign to ſtir up Sedition, for he had ſaid nothing but what God had ſent him to ſpeak, and therefore could not propheſy what was falſe, nor was he to be charged with any ſeditious Deſign. He owns he was in their Power, but doth not acknowledge they could juſtly reſtrain and queſtion him; nor doth he dare them, to do what they had a natural Power to do, by ſaying, Do with me what ſeemeth good unto you. The Phraſe imports no more than that he could not hinder their doing with him what they pleaſed: The Hands in which he was, were the Hands of Violence, not of Juſtice; for though they had a juſt Power againſt falſe Prophets, yet they had no ſuch Power againſt any Prophet ſent by the Lord, Let the Matter of his Prophecy be never ſo threatening and ungrateful to them. Therefore he addeth, If you make this Sedition, and put me to Death for it, you have a natural Power to do it, but you will get nothing by it, but farther bringing down the Vengeance of God upon you, by ſhedding my Blood without a Cauſe, the Guilt of which will be added to your other Guilt, and lie upon you and upon your City. For you may think and talk what you pleaſe, it is certain Truth, that I ſpake nothing out of an evil Deſign, nor of my own Head, but only what the Lord ſent me to ſpeak.

Q. *Was this Defence of the Prophet allowed ſufficient?*

A. The Judges, in this Caſe, with the Aſſent of the People, acquit the Prophet, and vindicate him from the Charge of Seditition given againſt him by the corrupt Prieſts, and falſe Prophets, diſtinguiſhing one, who of his own Head ſpreads falſe News, and threatens Evil to a Place, and one who doth it by Authority from God, or by divine Revelation, which is here meant by, In the Name of our Lord God. Thus the Civil Magiſtrates taught the Prieſts and the Prophets a Point

Divinity, which they ought to have been ignorant of.

Some may inquire how the Princes knew that what *Jeremiah* ſpake, he ſpake in the Name of the Lord? To which it may be replied, that *Jeremiah* had been a Prophet above twenty Years, for he began in the thirteenth Year of *Joſiah*, Chap. i. 1, 2. *Joſiah* reigned thirty one Years, 2 *Kings* xxii. 1. then *Shallum* or *Jehoahaz* reigned three Months; this was in the Beginning of *Jehoiakim*'s Reign, in which Time they had had a large Experience both of his Doctrines and Converſation; and tho' the Prieſts and Prophets, who had the like Experience, were filled with Malice and Prejudice; yet the Princes and a Part of the People were more equal; and though the People were many of them led away with the Prieſts, yet hearing the Prophet's Defence, and the Princes Judgment upon it, they concur with them to acquit the Prophet.

Q. *Who was this* Ahikam, *who appeared ſo powerfully in the Prophet's Defence?*

A. Ahikam was the Father of *Gedaliah*, who was afterwards made Governor of the Land, under the *Chaldeans*, and the Son *Shaphan* the Scribe, (who was chief Miniſter of State under King *Joſiah*) and Brother to *Gemariah*, *Elaſah*, and *Jaozaniah*, who were great Men in thoſe Days, and Members of the Council with him, and therefore, in Conjunction with them, he had a great Intereſt there, which he made Uſe of, on this Occaſion, to deliver the Prophet from that Miſchief which was intended againſt him.

Chap. XXVII.

The Prophet ſends Yokes to five neighbouring Kings, thereby foreſhewing their Subjection to Nebuchadnezzar. *He exhorts them to yield, and not to believe falſe Prophets. The like he does to* Zedekiah. *The Remnant of the Veſſels ſhall be carried to* Babylon, *and there continue till the appointed Time.*

Q. EXPLAIN *a little the Viſion of the Yokes, and the other Parts of this Prophecy?*

A. The Prophet is commanded to wear a Yoke upon his Neck, and likewiſe to ſend Yokes to five neighbouring Kings, to inform them, that they ſhould be forced to bow their Neck, with *Judah*, under *Nebuchazzar*'s Yoke; and the more willing they did it, the bettter it would be for them, without hearkening unto falſe Prophets.

Jeremiah afterwards amply explains all this unto King *Zedekiah*, moreover propheſying that the remaining Veſſels of the Temple ſhould be likewiſe carried to *Babylon*, and there continue till the Time appointed: See the fulfilling of this Prophecy, 2 *Kings* xxv. 13, 14, 15. 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 18. and that they remained in *Babylon* till the End of the Captivity, appears from *Dan.* v. 2. where we read of *Belſhazzar*'s ſending for them to drink Wine in, at his fatal Feaſt. The other Part of the Prophecy was fulfilled, as we may read *Ezra* i. 7, 8, 9. So punctually was *Jeremiah*'s Prophecy in this Place fulfilled, and ſo exactly doth one Part of the holy Scripture agree with another, which are great Arguments to prove the divine Authorities of the holy Scripture.

Q. *There is a Difficulty in the firſt Verſe, concerning the Time of* Jeremiah's *being commanded to ſend the Bonds; which I deſire you to explain?*

A. In the Beginning of the Reign of Jehoiakim *the Son of* Joſiah *King of* Judah, *came this Word unto* Jeremiah *from the Lord, ſaying.* A Difficulty ariſes from this Verſe, which there have been various Attempts to reſolve. It is ſaid, this Word of the Lord came to *Jeremiah* in the Beginning of the Reign of *Jehoiakim*, and Verſe 3. the Prophet is bid to ſend the Bonds and Yokes, by the Hand of the Meſſengers who came to *Jeruſalem* to *Zedekiah* King of *Judah*, who began not to reign till eleven Years after the Beginning of the Reign of *Jehoiakim*. To ſolve this Difficulty, ſome think, 1. That *Jehoiakim* was a common Name to all the Sons of *Joſiah*, and that *Zedekiah* is here called *Jehoiakim*; but there ſeems little Foundation for this Conjecture from Holy Writ. 2. Others imagine it is an Error in thoſe that copied out the Prophecies; but this is dangerous to admit. 3. Others believe, that the Prophecy came in the Beginning of the Reign of *Jehoiakim*, but was to be concealed till the Reign of *Zedekiah*. But 4. Their Opinion ſeems moſt probable, who think that this Command came to the Prophet firſt in the Time of *Jehoiakim*, but was to be repeated by the Prophet often, and accordingly was ſo until, and in the Time of *Zedekiah*; not that he always went about with Bonds and Yokes about his Neck, but that at Times he put them on, and went about with them, as a Type of that Bondage, which the *Jews* were ſuddenly to endure.

Chap. XXVIII.

Hananiah's *falſe Prophecy*; Jeremiah's *Anſwer.* Hananiah *breaks* Jeremiah's *Yoke*; Jeremiah *foretels an iron Yoke, and* Hananiah's *Death.*

Q. DOES *this Chapter afford any thing worthy Obſervation?*

A. Hananiah propheſies falſly, counterfeiting the Stile of the true Prophets, both in the Names which he gives unto God, and in ſpeaking of what God would go, as already done.

The true Prophet *Jeremiah* ſpeaks to this falſe Prophet with as much Boldneſs as he had ſpoke to him with Impudence, and in the ſame Preſence of the Prieſts, and of the People, but with a Preface of great Charity and Modeſty; being as much as to ſay, The Lord give unto him this People an Heart to reform and amend their Ways, that the Words which thou haſt ſpoken may come to paſs: But *Jeremiah* propheſied to the contrary, appealing to the Event. Upon this, *Hananiah* broke the Yoke from *Jeremiah*'s Neck, who not able to endure to hear ſuch Lies, went away in Teſtimony of his Diſſent from him, and Adherence to what he had ſaid. Soon after God ſends him back to the People and to *Hananiah*, with the Meſſage, That he, by his falſe Prophecy, had done the People no good, but hurt, farther incenſed God againſt them, and provoked him to make their Judgment heavier, giving them Iron Yokes, inſtead of thoſe of Wood.

Jeremiah being a ſecond Time confirmed in the Truth of this Revelation, and having likewiſe a ſpecial Revelation relating to this falſe Prophet, comes now and tells him his Doom, *viz.* that he ſhould die within a Year, becauſe he had taught the People to believe, and to hope for, and truſt to what was falſe, and they were never like to ſee; ſo dangerous a Thing it is for Miniſters to teach

People contrary to the revealed Word of God. Seeing this Thing was evident in the Eyes of the People, yet they returned not to the Lord, it is maniſeſt that, Miracles cannot move us, neither the Word of God itſelf, except God touch the Heart.

Q. *How could the* fourth Year *be properly called the* Beginning *of* Zedekiah's *Reign, as it is* v. 1?

A. Many Things are ſaid to untie this Knot; but the beſt Solution ſeems to be this. Though it be ſaid *in the fourth Year*, yet it is not ſaid in the fourth Year of *Zedekiah*'s *Reign*; it is therefore ſuppoſed, that *the fourth Year of the ſabbatical Courſe* is here intended. The *Jews* had a Kind of *Jubilee* every ſeventh Year; it was a Year when the Land was to reſt, and not to be tilled, *Lev.* xxv. 1, 2, 3, 4. and in that Year they were to releaſe their Debtors and Servants, *Deut.* vxi. 1. Which Notion of this fourth Year is very probable, if the Year, wherein the City was beſieged, was a Sabbatical-Year, a Year of Reſt. For if *Zedekiah*'s firſt Year was the fourth of the ſeven that made the Sabbatical-Circle, his third Year was another Sabbatical-Year, and his tenth another; preſently after which the City was taken. Of this *Hananiah*, mention'd in the Text, we read no more in Scripture, and it is probable, from the Place where he lived, which was one of the Cities of the Prieſts, that he was a *Prieſt*, but no more than a pretended Prophet. He comes to *Jeremy* in the *Temple*, where he uſed to deliver his Prophecies, to confront him in the Preſence both of the Prieſts and People.

CHAP. XXIX.

Jeremiah's *Letter to the Captives in* Babylon, *exhorting them to be quiet there; not to believe falſe Prophets; nor expect to return till after the ſeventy Years. The Deſtruction of thoſe who remained in* Judah *for their Diſobedience. The fearful End of two lying Prophets.* Shemaiah's *Letter againſt* Jeremiah, *who reads his Doom.*

Q. PRAY *give the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. Jeremiah ſends Letters to *Babylon* unto the *Jews*, who were carried thither captive with *Jeconiah*, exhorting them to be peaceable and quiet there, to pray for the Peace of *Babylon*, not to believe their falſe Prophets and Dreamers, nor to expect Deliverance before the Expiration of ſeventy Years: Believe it, (ſaith the Prophet) you ſhall be ſo far from returning, whatever your idle Prophet tells you, that your Brethren that are here ſhall be brought to you, or deſtroyed with the Sword, Famine, or Peſtilence, or ſcattered into other Kingdoms, where they ſhall be made a Curſe, an Aſtoniſhment, an Hiſſing, and a Reproach.

Here is alſo a ſevere Prophecy againſt *Ahab* and *Zedekiah*, and of thoſe two Perſons we read no more in Holy Writ; that they pretended to be Prophets, when as what they ſaid was not the Will of God, but a Falſhood, we learn out of this Verſe, and that they were both of them burnt by the King of *Babylon*, we find in Verſe 22. The Prophet *Jeremiah* further denounces Judgment againſt *Shemaiah*, who had written from *Babylon* to *Jeruſalem*, that they ſhould puniſh *Jeremiah* for his Letters. *Shemaiah* the falſe Prophet flatters *Zephaniah* the Chief Prieſt, as though God had given him the Zeal and Spirit of *Jehoiada*, to puniſh whoſoever treſpaſſed againſt the Word of God, of which he would have made *Jeremiah* one, calling him a Raver and a falſe Prophet: But *Jeremiah* foretold that he and his whole Poſterity ſhould be rooted out, and neither he nor they ſhould live to the Time of the Pepples Return from the Captivity of *Babylon*; becauſe by the Falſhoods which he had taught, he had been an Inſtrument to make the People diſobey the Commands of God.

Q. *There are ſeveral Things in Verſe 26. which I would willingly have explained?*

A. The whole Verſe runs thus: *The Lord hath made thee Prieſt in the ſtead of* Jehoiadah *the Prieſt, that ye ſhould be Officers in the Houſe of the Lord, for every Man that is mad, and maketh himſelf a Prophet, that thou ſhouldeſt put him in Priſon, and in the Stocks.*——————*The Prieſt.* That is, the High-prieſt, as ſome have thought, but it appears from 2 *Kings* xxv. 18. that *Seraiah* was at that Time the High-prieſt, and this *Zephaniah* was the ſecond Prieſt, as he is there ſtiled; as alſo Chap. lii. 24. nor muſt any think that the *Jehoiadah* here meant, was the immediate Predeceſſor of *Zephaniah*; for beſides that, *Jehoiadah* was High-prieſt, which *Zephaniah* never was; there were near 2000 Years betwixt the Death of *Jehoiadah* and this Time; in the ſtead thereof ti here ſignifieth, that thou ſhouldeſt be like the good High-prieſt *Jehoiadah*, unleſs ſome other *Jehoiadah* was meant, who was turned out, and this *Zephaniah* put in his Room.——*For every Man that is mad.* That thou mighteſt have a Care of Religion, and particularly of Perſons, who being mad or phrantick, make themſelves Prophets.——*Put them in Priſon and in the Stocks.* The Prieſt had a Power to reſtrain ſuch Perſons, by impriſoning them, or putting them *in the Stocks*, by which moſt agree, a particular Puniſhment is expreſſed, but for the Nature and Way of it, it is not determined.

CHAP. XXX.

God ſhews Jeremiah *the Deliverance and Return of the* Jews. *He comforts* Jacob. *Their Return ſhall be gracious. Wrath ſhall fall on the Wicked.*

Q. WHAT *Topicks does the Prophet proceed upon in this Chapter?*

A. Jeremiah receives a Command to write his Prophecy in a Book, becauſe the People ſhould be aſſured, and their Poſterity confirmed in the Hope of this Deliverance promiſed. He ſhews, that before this Deliverance ſhall come, the *Chaldeans* ſhould be extremely afflicted by their Enemies, and that they ſhould be in ſuch Perplexity and Sorrow as a Woman in her Travail.

The *Jews* are comforted by a Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, who ſhall come of the Stock of David, according to the Fleſh, and ſhould be the true Paſtor, who is ſet forth, and his *Ezek.* xxxiv. 25. Kingdom that ſhall be everlaſting in the Perſon of *David*. Herein God's great Mercy is commended towards his People, who doth not deſtroy them for their Sins, but correct and chaſtiſe them, 'till he hath purged and pardoned them, and ſo burns the Rods by which he puniſhed them; and it is ſhewn how the People ſhall, with Praiſe and Thankſgiving, acknowledge this Benefit; becauſe their Poſterity alſo ſhall be as Happy, and in as much Repute as before this carrying into *Babylon*, God declaring, that in that Day he would renew his Covenant with *Iſrael*, (at leaſt the true *Iſraelites*) and they ſhould be his People; to ſerve and to obey him; and he would be their God to protect and bleſs them with all temporal aed ſpiritual Bleſſings.

The wicked are threatned with Deſtruction, and *Jeremiah* withal lets them know, that what the falſe Prophets had ſaid was all a Falſhood, for the Lord was angry, and was determined to puniſh them. And though at preſent they would not believe it; yet when it came to paſs, they ſhould conſider what he had told them.

Q. *In the third Verſe God promiſed, that* he will bring again the Captivity of *Iſrael* and *Judah*: *Pray how, and when, was this Promiſe fulfilled?*

A. Iſrael never returned, as to the Body of the People, but thoſe of the ten Tribes, which were God's People, did return. We read, *Luke* ii. 36. of one *Anna*, who was of the Tribe of *Aſher*, and many more doubtleſs, did return according to the Promiſes, *Chap.* iii. 12, 14. and xxiii. 6. and xxxi. 1, 6. *Ezek.* xxxvii. 21, 22. But it's uncertain whether this Promiſe of returning to their own Land was fulfilled in thoſe few of the ten Tribes who joined themſelves with thoſe of *Judah*, after they were returned from *Babylon*, or remains yet in part to be fulfilled. The former is moſt probable, and that there ſhall be no ſuch Time when the *Jews* ſhall return again to *Jeruſalem*, and poſſeſs their own Land; for it is hard to give an Account where the Poſterity of the ten Tribes be, by whoſe Return the Promiſe ſhould be juſtified. Beſides, that the Phraſe in the Beginning of this Verſe, *For lo the Day is come*, ſeems to import a more ſpeedy fulfilling of the Promiſe, than after ſome thouſands of Years, though it's certain the *Jews* feed themſelves with ſome ſuch Expectations.

Q. *When, and in whom, were the Promiſes in Verſe* 21. *fulfilled?*

A. Let us firſt ſee what they are; *And their Nobles ſhall be of themſelves, and their Governor ſhall proceed from the midſt of them, and I will cauſe him to draw near, and he ſhall approach unto mo: For who is he that engageth his Heart to approach unto me, ſaith the Lord?* This Promiſe was made good in *Zorobabel*, and other Governors of the *Jews* after their Return out of Captivity, till they came to be ſubdued by the *Romans*. Some reſtrain this to Chriſt, who was born of the *Jewiſh* Nation; it is he, ſay they, who was meant by *David*, ver. 9. and it is not improbable that the Senſe may reach unto *Chriſt*; but it ſeems literally to be underſtood of *Zorobabel*, and to be oppoſed to *Strangers* ruling over them, which was no ſmall Part of their Calamity, while they were in Captivity.—— *He ſhall approach unto me.* That is, he ſhall ſerve me, and I will favour them, and not be as one at Diſtance, or far off from them. Some underſtand this of the Civil Government that ſhould be after the Captivity, ſome of the People, ſome of *Chriſt*; thoſe who underſtand it of the Governor, make it ſignify that ſpecial Favour he and his Religion ſhould be in with God. Thoſe who interpret it of the People, make it to ſignify their Religion, and their Favour with God. Thoſe who refer it to Chriſt, interpret it of his Favour with God, by whom alſo the Saints have their Acceſs.—— *For who is he that engageth his Heart to approach unto me, ſaith the Lord?* Interpreters are yet more divided in their Senſe of this Phraſe; ſome apply it to *Chriſt*, either as an Admiration of his Excellency, or as denoting that none but he could draw near to God in the Manner he did, nor had ſuch Delight in the Sons of Men as he; none but he durſt look in the Face of an angry God. Others underſtood it of God's People, intimating that in the Day they ſhould return out of Captivity, thoſe would be but few, who with any ſerious Purpoſe of Heart would apply themſelves unto God; or ſignifying the Impotency of Man heartily to draw nigh to God, till God cauſeth him ſo to do; and ſome think the Words have a Reference to the Covenant mentioned in the next Verſe.

CHAP. XXXI.

The Reſtauration of Iſrael *publiſhed.* Rachel *mourning, is comforted.* Ephraim *repenting, is brought home.* Chriſt *promiſed. His Care over the Church. His New Covenant. The Stability and Enlargement of the Church.*

Q. DOES *this Chapter afford any Thing worthy Remark.*

A. Under the Type of the Redemption from the *Babylonian* Captivity, here is a farther Prophecy concerning the gathering, reſtoring and bleſſing of the Catholick Church of the Elect, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by the Meſſiah *Jeſus Chriſt*.

To declare the Greatneſs of God's Mercy in delivering the *Jews*, he ſhews that they were like to the *Benjamites* or *Iſraelites*; that is, utterly deſtroyed and carried away, inſomuch, that if *Rachel*, the Mother of *Benjamin*, ſhould have riſen again to ſeek for her Children, ſhe ſhould have found none remaining. To this Mourning St. *Matthew* alludes, there being a Lamentation like this, when *Herod* cauſed the Infants of two years old to be ſlain in *Bethlehem*, and in the Coaſts about *Bethlehem*, of which *Ramah* was one.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Promiſe of the Reſtauration of the* Jews, *v.* 8, 9?

A. The Prophecies of the Reſtoration of the *Jews*, are very ordinarily prefaced with two Attributes of God, the one of which aſſerts his Power to do the Thing promiſed; for what cannot be done by the Lord of Hoſts? The other aſſerting his Goodneſs or Good-Will to his People, becauſe he is their God, related to them, in Covenant with them: Ability and Love, or Good-Will to us, being the two Pillars of our Faith and Confidence in God, which requires no more than that we ſhould be aſſured that the Perſon whom we truſt is able and willing to do what we truſt him for.

Q. *What is there more deſerving our Notice in this Chapter?*

A. The Revelation of *Ephraim*'s being brought home again, was made to *Jeremiah* in a Dream, from whence he waking, looked about him, and he was very well pleaſed with his Sleep at that Time, becauſe of the gracious Promiſes concerning *Judah*, which the Lord had in that Dream revealed to him. Or elſe in a Viſion, upon the Sight and Hearing of which he was as well pleaſed as a Man that had ſlept quietly, had had no ill and unpleaſing, but ſweet and delightful Dreams.

God promiſes to make a new Covenant with the Houſe of *Iſrael*; that is, with thoſe *Iſraelites*, indeed who ſhould be without Guile (as *Chriſt* ſays of *Nathaniel*, *John* i. 47.) with thoſe who are (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* ii. 29.) *Jews* inwardly, by the Circumciſion of the Heart and Spirit, ſpoken of and promiſed by God, *Deut.* xxx. 6. In the

Times of the Goſpel, God's Laws are not abrogated and made void. Chriſt himſelf came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil it; but it is written in the Hearts of God's true people, by the Finger of the Spirit, not in Tables of Stone only; and they become obedient to it, not from Compulſion and Force, but from their ſecret Approbation and Acknowledgement of it, as holy, juſt and good; for God makes the Root of all his Grace to be free Pardon and Remiſſion of their Sins.

There are Ordinances of Worſhip, which are God's Laws relating to his Worſhip, and Ordinances of Juſtice, which are God's Laws for the executing civil Juſtice, and Ordinances of Nature, which are God's Eſtabliſhments for the working of natural Cauſes.

Chap. XXXII.

Jeremiah, *in the Siege of* Jeruſalem, *being impriſoned by* Zedekiah, *buys a Field, takes Witneſſes, draws a Writing, ſeals and delivers it to* Baruch *to preſerve, as a Token of the People's Return. He prays with Admiration of God's Majeſty and Works; and repreſents his own Conflict. God confirms the Captivity for their Sins; but promiſes a gracious Return.*

Q. W*HAT is chiefly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. Jeremiah, in the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, being impriſoned by King *Zedekiah*, for his Prophecies, at God's Command buys a Field, and makes the Purchaſe with all the uſual Formalities; to make it public he ſigned and ſealed it before Witneſſes, and delivered it to *Baruch* (who was a Scribe and Attendant of *Jeremiah*, one who wrote Things for him, and from his Mouth) to keep in the Preſence of the *Jews*.

Baruch is commanded to put the Evidences in an earthen Veſſel, that they might continue many Days, that is, not defaced; had they been hid many Days in the Earth, they would have been rotten; had they been above Ground in a Box or Cheſt, they might have been loſt, or taken away by the Soldiers plundering houſes, or at leaſt burnt with Fire.

The Prophet expounds God's Meaning in this Command to him, and his own Deſign in ſo formal buying of ſo ſmall a Purchaſe, eſpecially conſidering, that very probably, *Jeremiah* was no great Purchaſer, nor greedy of Purchaſes: He lets them know that all this was for a Sign of the Truth of what God had revealed to him concerning the Peoples Return, though after many Days, (ſeventy Years from this Time) and alſo of the firm Aſſent he gave to that divine Revelation, that Purchaſes ſhould one Day be enjoyed again in *Judea*, and Houſes, Fields and Vineyards in it, ſhould again be poſſeſſed.

Q. *In the 16th and nine following Verſes, is a Prayer of* Jeremiah; *what do you obſerve upon it?*

A. The Prophet begins his Prayer with a Recognition of God's Omnipotency, and the Infiniteneſs of his Power, which was ſhewed in his firſt making the Heaven and the Earth, as we read *Gen.* i. *Pſalm* cxlvi. 6. God himſelf uſed this Inſtance to confirm his Peoples Faith in his Ability to do what he pleaſed, Chap. xxvii. 5. It it obſervable, that the Servants of God, in holy Writ, uſed in their Prayers to give God ſuch Names, as might help to confirm their Faith as to what they asked. Nothing can farther be neceſſary to confirm our Faith that we ſhould have what we ask, than for us to be perſuaded that the Perſon is able to do it, and alſo willing. The Prophet begins with a Declaration of his Faith in God as to the firſt, then he proceeds to the ſecond, calling God the Lord of Hoſts (which is the Name God gave himſelf, *Ex.* xxxiv. 7. *Deut.* v. 9, 10.) and of the Clauſe declarative of the Vengeance of God in puniſhing Children for their Parents Sins, are many Inſtances in Scripture, *Joſ.* vii. 24. 1 *Sam.* ii. 33, 34. 1 *Kings* xiv. 10, 11. and xxi. 24.

Jeremiah having acknowledged God's Power, Omniſcience, Goodneſs, Truth and Faithfulneſs, comes to own his Juſtice, confeſſing that this People, for whom God had done ſo much, had very ill requited him, not obeying his Voice; that is, the Law of God. This he aggravates, by ſaying they had done nothing of what he commanded, not breaking ſome particular Law, but the whole Law of God. Therefore God was righteous, in bringing this Sword, Peſtilence and Famine upon them.

God aſſures *Jeremiah*, that he will, indeed, firſt puniſh his People for their great Sins, but afterwards perform his Promiſe, and moreover cauſe the Church to enjoy the Grace of the new Covenant, both temporally and eternally, both corporally and ſpiritually.

Chap. XXXIII.

God promiſes to the Captivity a gracious Return, a joyful State, and ſettled Government. Chriſt *the Branch of Righteouſneſs; his everlaſting Kingdom and Prieſthood; and the Stability of a bleſſed Seed.*

Q. W*HAT Leſſons of Inſtruction does this Viſion convey to us?*

A. Jeremiah was forced out of the Temple, God follows him to the Priſon, and there reveals his Mind to him more than once. The Wickedneſs of the *Jews* in perſecuting the Prophet, could not make God's Promiſes of no Effect for Mercy to be ſhewn to the People, after the Captivity, which though made before, are again confirmed a ſecond Time; for this Chapter, for Subſtance, contains many more Promiſes of the like Nature with thoſe in the foregoing Chapter. God farther foretels the taking of *Jeruſalem*, the carrying away of the People, and bringing them back from *Babylon*, as alſo of a bleſſed, joyful and quiet Condition.

Q. *What does* Jeremiah *mean by* the Branch of Righteouſneſs *Ver.* 15?

A. Whatſoever the *Jews*, and ſome others ſay, *the Branch of Righteouſneſs*; here ſpoken of, can be meant of no other but *Chriſt*, who is called a Branch out of the Stem of *Jeſſe*, Iſaiah xi. 1. The Branch of the Lord, *Iſaiah* iv. 2. A righteous Branch, Chap. xxiii. 5. The Kings they had hitherto had, of the Line of *David*, were moſt of them unrighteous Men, but God promiſed, that after the Captivity they ſhould have a Branch of *David* that ſhould execute Judgment and Righteouſneſs in the Land, for the Protection and Government of thoſe who feared him.

The Promiſe that *David* ſhould never want a Man to ſit upon the Throne of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, Ver. 17. is apparently a Promiſe relating to *Chriſt*, whoſe Kingdom is, and ſhall be everlaſting. For as long as *Iſrael* remained a Kingdom, thoſe of the Line of *David* ruled over it; when that failed, *Chriſt* came in the Fleſh, who rules, and ſhall rule over the *Iſrael* of God for ever.

Q. *In what Senſe are we to underſtand the 18th Verſe;* Neither ſhall the Prieſts, the *Levites*, want a Man before me, to offer Burnt-Offerings, and to kindle Meat-Offerings, and todo ſacrifice continually?

A. The beſt Interpreters underſtand this *Verſe* as relating to a Miniſtry to abide in the Church to the End of the World, according to *Matt.* xxviii. 20. Nor is it unuſual for God, in the *Old Teſtament*, to expreſs Promiſes relating to, and to be fulfilled under the Goſpel, by Expreſſions and Terms proper to the *Old Teſtament*, as *Iſaiah* xlvi. 23. and in this Senſe it muſt be expounded, or reſtrained to the Times immediately following the Captivity; but it is generally underſtood as a Promiſe for a Goſpel Miniſtry to ſucceed the Miniſtry of the *Jewiſh* Church, and to abide to the End of the World.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by the Seed of* Jacob, Abraham, Iſaac *and* David, *Verſe* 26? *And the* Covenant of Day and Night, *Ver.* 20?

A. By the Covenant of Day and Night here is meant the ſame with the Ordinances mentioned Chap. xxxi. 35. God's Law eſtabliſhed in the Courſe of natural Cauſes, by Virtue of which the Day and Night orderly ſucceed one another.

By the Seed of *Jacob*, and of *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, are meant the Body of the *Jews*, to whom thoſe three Patriarchs were common Heads. By the Seed of *David*, Perſons lineally deſcended from *David*, who ſhould rule over the *Iſrael* of God. The Meaning is, as God had ſaid before, that the Reſtoration of them, to their own Land, ſhould as certainly ſucceed their Captivity, as the Night ſuceeds the Day, or Day the Night. God had as certainly eſtabliſhed and ordained the one as the other, though not as yet ſo eſtabliſhed the one in the Order of natural Cauſes, as the other, God would certainly have Mercy on them, and in ſhewing this, would take Care that one of the Seed of *David* ſhould be their Ruler, which was fulfilled in the *Meſſiah*.

CHAP. XXXIV.

The Captivity of King Zedekiah, *and the City. The Princes and People, by ſolemn Covenant, according to the Law, diſmiſs their Bond-Servants, But the* Babylonians *leaving the Siege, they reaſſume them. For this God threatens a Return of the Enemy, and Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem.

Q. WHAT *is the Purport of the Prophet's Viſion in this Chapter?*

A. God cauſes it to be told to King *Zedekiah*, by the Prophet, what ſhould befal *Jeruſalem*, his own Perſon, and what End he ſhall have; and foraſmuch as the People, by a ſolemn Covenant, had ſet at Liberty all Servants, according to the Law, but afterwards, when the *Babylonians* were departed from the City, and had left the Siege, brought them again into Bondage, God foretels them, that he will cauſe the Enemy to come again, to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, with the Land, and in an ſpecial Manner to puniſh thoſe Covenant-breakers. The Motion of Armies are under the Government of Divine Providence, they are at God's Command; when he bids them come, they come; what he bids them do, they do; and will certainly effect what God hath determined. When we come to Chap. xxxix. we ſhall read of the fulfilling of this Prophecy.

Q. *In what Senſe could* Zedekiah *be ſaid to* die in Peace, *Ver.* 5. *ſince he died in Captivity, and in Priſon? Explain likewiſe the other Parts of the ſame Verſe?*

A. The whole Verſe ſtands thus: *But thou ſhalt die in Peace; and with the Burnings of thy Fathers the former Kings which were before thee, ſo ſhall they burn Odours for thee, and they will lament thee, ſaying, Ah Lord! for I have pronounced the Word, ſaith the Lord.* This is the only Place that informs us concerning the Manner of *Zedekiah*'s Death, and that both negatively and poſitively. Negatively, that he did not die by the Sword, the King of *Babylon* took him, killed his Sons before his Eyes, then put out his Eyes, and bound him in Chains, Chap. xxxix. 7. but killed him not, as we learn from this Text, he dying a natural Death, which is here meant by *dying in Peace*, and had an honourable Burial; which the King of *Babylon* would not allow *Jehoiakim*, as we read, Chap. xxii. 18. he was buried *with the Burial of an Aſs*, and his Body was *caſt out of the Gates of* Jeruſalem, and no Man lamented for him; but as to *Zedekiah*, they burned *ſweet Odours for him* (after the Manner of the Burial of Kings, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 14.) and made *ſolemn Lamentation* for him. The *Jews*, in their *Chronology*, called *Seder Olam*, give us the Form of their Lamentation, thus; *Alas!* Zedekiah *is dead, who drank the Dregs of all Ages*; that is, was puniſhed for the Sins of all former Ages.

Q. *Give ſome Account of the Ceremony of* cutting a Calf in two, and paſſing between the Parts of it, *as we find it, Ver.* 18?

A. In this Verſe is mentioned a Ceremony which they uſed in making of Covenants, not without ſomething of a Warrant from a divine Precedent, *Gen.* xv. 9, 10. It is ſaid, Ver. 19. that ſame Day the Lord made a Covenant with *Abraham*, (that Covenant was a Promiſe that *Abraham*'s Seed ſhould poſſeſs the Land of *Canaan*) Ver. 8. *Abraham* ſaid unto God, *Whereby ſhall I know that I ſhall inherit it*, Ver. 9. God bids him *take a Heifer of three Years old, and a She-goat of three Years old, and a Ram of three Years old*, &c. Ver. 10. it is ſaid, that *he took them, and divided them in the midſt, and laid each Piece one againſt another.* Indeed we read nothing there of the Parties covenanting, paſſing between the Parts ſo divided, but this was afterwards uſed in making Covenants betwixt Men, which had in it a ſecret Imprecation, or wiſhing that they might be cut in Pieces like thoſe Beaſts, if they did not keep the Covenants which they made. It ſhould ſeem, that theſe *Jews*, in the making of their ſolemn Promiſe or Covenant with God, about releaſing their Servants, uſed this Rite; they cauſed a Calf, or Heifer to be cut in Pieces, and the Parts to be laid in the Temple, right over-againſt one another, then they recited this Covenant, and in the way of a ſolemn Promiſe, or Confirmation of their Reſolution

tion to make their Promiſe good, they paſſed between the Parts of the Calf or Heifer ſo cut; tacitly agreeing, that God ſhould cut them in Pieces like that Beaſt, if they did not make their Words good. Hence is the *Hebrew* Phraſe of *cutting a Covenant*, for making it. This was a Ceremony ordinarily uſed amongſt the Heathens, as *Cicero*, *Livy*, and others inform us.

CHAP. XXXV.

By the Obedience of the Rechabites, *God condemns the Diſobedience of the* Jews. *The* Rechabites *are bleſſed.*

Q. HERE *are great Commendations of the* Rechabites; *pray who were they? And what were their Principles?*

A. The *Rechabites* had their Name from *Rechab* their Father, who, as appears from 1 *Chron.* ii. 55. deſcended from *Hemath*, who was a *Kenite*; this *Hemath* was *Jethro*, the Father-in-law of *Moſes*, who is alſo called *Hobab*, *Judg.* iv. 11. We read, *Judg.* i. 16. that his Children went up out of the City of *Palm-Trees*, with the Children of *Judah*, which lieth in the South of *Arad*, and they went and dwelt among the People; the *Rechabites* here mentioned, deſcended from his Stock. God commands *Jeremiah* to bring them into ſome of the Chambers, and to ſet Wine before them. This was either to make the Thing more publick; or it may be for the Reproof of the Prieſts who drank too much Wine.

According to God's Commands, *Jeremiah* aſſembled the *Rechabites*, and ſets Veſſels of Wine before them, not commanding them to drink it, but only inviting them; but they refuſed to drink any on Account of the Prohibition of *Rechab* their Father. The Reaſon why he left Poſterity this Charge, is uncertain, probably to warn them againſt the Luxury which then began to abound in *Iſrael*, and being deſirous that they ſhould inure themſelves to a more hardy and laborious Life; being originally *Kenites*, and uſed to Husbandry, and keeping of Sheep and other Cattle, he deſired they would live according to their Quality.

The *Rechabites* having refuſed to drink Wine, proceed to inform *Jeremiah* of other Ordinances, which they likewiſe kept, *viz.* that they kept no Houſes, planted no Vineyards, and no Fields, or Seed of their own, but dwelt in Tents, that is, moveable Habitations, which they could, with little Labour, remove at any Time, as they had Convenience to feed their Flocks; this was their ordinary Way of living, until Neceſſity compelled them to come and live at *Jeruſalem*, being afraid of being otherwiſe deſtroyed, by the Foragers of the *Chaldean* and *Syrian* Armies.

God, in his Revelation of his Mind to the Prophet expounds to him, why he had ſent him to bring the *Rechabites* into the Temple, and commanded him to ſet Wine before them, and invite them to drink of it, *viz.* that by their Refuſal of doing according to that Invitation, in Obedience to their Anceſtors Commands, he might convince the *Jews* of their Diſobedience to his Commands, tho' God's Commands were more advantageous than the Commands of *Jonadab*: Firſt, *Jonadab* was but an earthly Parent, and ſo had no abſolute univerſal Sovereignty over his Children, but God was the Lord of Hoſts, the God of *Iſrael*. Secondly, *Jonadab*'s Command was not the Command of a moral Duty, but the doing of a Thing which they might do, or leave undone. God required of them what was but their moral Duty, and for which there was the higheſt Reaſon. Thirdly, *Jonadab*'s Command had no Promiſe annexed, God's Precept had a Promiſe annexed, yet they had not yielded him that Obedience which the Sons of *Jonadab* had yielded him; he was their Father, but where was his Honour? Therefore the Lord confirms the Threatning which we have often met with before, concerning the Ruin of the *Jews*, only the meritorious Cauſe of it is farther amplified, they not paying that Homage to God, which thoſe *Rechabites* paid to an earthly Parent, and had continued it for three hundred Years together.

Jonadab had prudently adviſed his Sons, as before mentioned, they were Things they might do, and which, by Experience, they found not hurtful to them, but of great Profit and Advantage, and that with Reference to all the Ends of Man's Life. Herein they yield Obedience, and pay a Reverence to their Parent; and this pleaſes God, who promiſes to reward them with Continuance of their Family, according to what he had ſaid, *Exod.* xx. 12. in the Fifth Commandment, which the Apoſtle calls the firſt Commandment with Promiſe.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Jeremiah *cauſes* Baruch *to write his Prophecy, and to read it publickly. The Princes ſend to fetch the Roll, and read it. They adviſe* Jeremiah *and* Baruch *to hide themſelves.* Jehoiakim *tears Part of the Roll and burns it.* Jeremiah *denounces his Judgment.* Baruch *writeth a new Copy.*

Q. JEREMIAH *is commanded* Ver. 2. *to* take a Roll of a Book; *pray what do you underſtand by that?*

A. By *a Roll of a Book* is to be underſtood Parchments, which antiently were Books, the Art of binding Books being not then known. The Precept is for recording all the Revelations he had from God for twenty and two Years paſt; for he began to propheſy in the thirteenth Year of *Joſiah*, who reigned one and thirty Years, ſo that as he propheſied eighteen Years during the Life of *Joſiah*; and this was the fourth Year of the Reign of *Jehoiakim*. God would have them recorded, that there might be a Memorial of them; that the Truth of them might appear, when God ſhould bring them to paſs, the Time of which now drew very near.

Q. *What do you obſerve concerning* Baruch, *and his reading* Jeremiah's *Roll of Prophecies to the Princes and People?*

A. Although *Jeremiah* had propheſied of the Captivity of *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, and of the many Calamities that ſhould befal both Prince and People, yet this working nothing upon their hardned and obdurate Hearts, God commanded him to collect together and write in a Roll, all the Words of Propheſy, which had been ſpoken by him againſt *Iſrael*, and againſt *Judah*, and againſt the Nations, from the 13th Year of *Joſiah* (when he was called to the prophetick Office) to that Time, whereon *Jeremiah* called to him *Baruch* the Son of *Neriah*, a chief Diſciple of his, who being a ready Scribe, wrote from his Mouth, all as God had commanded, and then went with the Roll, which he had thus written, up into the Temple, and there read it in the hearing of all the People, on the great Faſt of Expiation, when all *Judah* and *Jeruſalem* were aſſembled together at that Solemnity. For *Jeremiah* being then ſhut up in Priſon, for his former Prophecying, could not go thither himſelf, and therefore, by God's Command, *Baruch* was ſent to do it in his ſtead; and, at his firſt reading of the Roll, whether it were that *Jehoiakim* and his Princes were then abſent to take care of the Borders of the Kingdom, which *Nebuchadnezzar* was then juſt ready to invade, or that, amidſt the Diſtractions, which uſually happen on ſuch impending Dangers, Mens Minds were otherwiſe engaged, no Reſentments were, at that Time, expreſſed either againſt the Prophet, or his Diſciple, on this Occaſion. But *Baruch* being much affrighted and diſmay'd at the Threats of the Roll which he had thus wrote and publickly read, the Word of Propheſy, which we have in the xlvth Chapter of *Jeremiah*, was ſent from God on purpoſe to comfort him, and a Promiſe is therein given him, that amidſt all the Calamities, Deſtructions and Deſolations, which, according to the Words of the Roll, ſhould be certainly brought upon *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, he ſhould be ſure to find a Deliverance; for that none of them ſhould reach him, but God would give him his Life for a Prey in all Places whereſoever he ſhould go.

Q. *What* Faſt *was this, on which* Baruch *read the Roll?*

A. This *Faſt* was appointed upon a particular Emergency; whether it was for the Famine which was in the Land, or to avert the Ruin which they juſtly feared from the King of *Babylon*, who had lately brought them under his Servitude, is not certain; the yearly Faſt, *Lev.* xxiii. 27. was to be kept the ſeventh Month; nor did God ever ordain any Faſt to be obſerved in the ninth Month.

Q. *In the 23d Verſe we read, that the King* burnt the Roll; *as this was a high Contempt of God and his Prophet, in what Manner did the People reſent it?*

A. The *Jews* keep an annual Faſt, even to this Day, for the burning of this Roll. The Day marked for it, in their Calendar, is the 29th of *Ciſleu*, (which is the 9th Month in the *Jewiſh* Calendar) eleven Days after that, which they kept for that Faſt, on which it was read in the Temple. But the reading of the Roll on the Faſt of the 18th of *Ciſleu*, and the burning of it, according to the Account given thereof by *Jeremiah*, ſeemed immediately to have followed each other.

Q. *Do you apprehend that* Baruch *read the Roll twice in the Temple?*

A. As the reading of the Roll by *Baruch*, is in the xxxvith Chapter of *Jeremiah* twice related; ſo it's plain to me, that it was twice done. For in the firſt Relation it is ſaid to be done in the fourth Year of *Jehoiakim*, and in the ſecond it is ſaid to be done in the 5th, which plainly denotes two different Times. And in the firſt Relation *Jeremiah* is ſaid to be ſhut up in Priſon, when the Roll was read; but it the ſecond Relation, it plainly appears, he was out of Priſon, for he was then at full Liberty to go out of the way, and hide himſelf. For theſe Reaſons, I take it for certain, that the Roll was twice read, and I have Archbiſhop *Uſher* with me, in the ſame Opinion, whoſe Judgment muſt alway be of the greateſt Weight in ſuch Matters.

CHAP. XXXVII.

The Egyptians *raiſe the Siege of the* Chaldeans; *and* Zedekiah *ſends to* Jeremiah, *to pray and enquire of the Lord for him.* Jeremiah *propheciers the return and Victory of the* Chaldeans; *is apprehended for a Fugitive; is beaten and put into Priſon; he aſſures* Zedekiah *of the Captivity, and entreating for Liberty, obtains ſome Favour.*

Q. GIVE *us the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. Zedekiah, though Diſobedient, ſends to *Jeremiah*, to requeſt his Interceſſion to God for him, foraſmuch as it ſeemed, that the *Chaldeans*, being engaged againſt *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, might, indeed, wholly leave the Siege.

The Subſtance of the Anſwer, returned by the Prophet to the King, is this: That whereas they pleaſed themſelves with Fancies, that the *Babylonian* Army, now withdrawn to meet the *Egyptians*, ſhould return no more to the Siege, it was a Dream. He aſſures them from God they ſhould return, beſiege the City, take and burn it; and therefore they did but deceive themſelves to think otherwiſe; for though they were gone, yet it was but for a ſhort Time. He farther aſſures them, that the Power or Weakneſs of the *Chaldeans* was inconſiderable; for, if their whole Army was made up of wounded Men, or if they could prevail ſo far as to wound all their Soldiers, or thruſt them through (as the Word is tranſlated, Chap. li. 4.) yet they ſhould do the Work. When God is reſolved upon an Effect, the Inſtruments are very little to be regarded. It is not the Arm of Fleſh, but the Power of God, which in that Caſe alone is to be conſidered.

Jeremiah having no farther Revelation from God, which he was under an Obligation to communicate, endeavoured to get away privately amongſt the Multitude of the People, returning home to their own Dwelling, taking Advantage of the withdrawing of the *Chaldean* Army; but *Jeremiah* was apprehended, as one who was about to deſert the City, and to fall off to the *Chaldeans*. The Prophet, upon this, was brought before the Princes, was beaten, and put into a loathſome Dungeon, in hopes of hearing ſome comfortable News from him, but ſtill was told of the *Chaldean* Army being victorious, and that God would certainly deliver him into the Hand or Power of the King of *Babylon*.

Though *Jeremiah* had dealt very faithfully with the King and Princes, and they had uſed him very hardly and cruelly, caſting him, for no juſt Cauſe, into a naſty Priſon, and *Jeremiah* knew, well enough, that *Zedekiah* was very ſoon to be diſarmed of his Power, yet (to learn us our Duty) he ſpeaks with all due Reſpect and Reverence to his Sovereign, though a very bad Man, and one who had dealt very ill with him; but *Jeremiah*, by this, got the Place of his Confinement changed, and had an Allowance of Bread.

Jeremiah remained here, 'till, upon the Suggeſtion of the Princes, he was removed to a worſe Place, as we ſhall read in the ſixth Verſe of the next Chapter, where he ſtaid not long, but was again removed to the Court of the Priſon, as we ſhall read there Verſe, 13. where (as it follows

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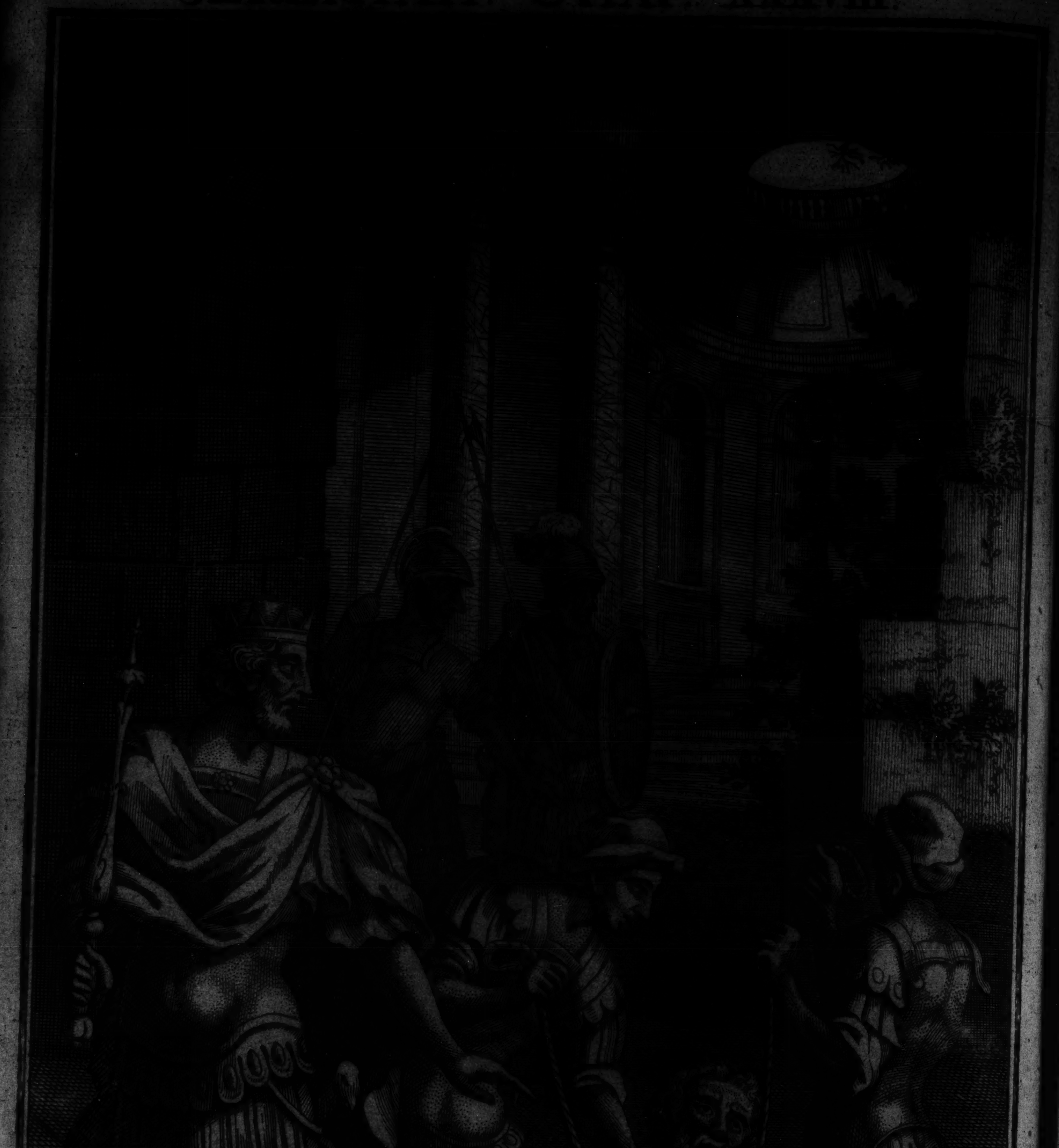
JEREMIAH CHAP. XXXVIII.



So they drew up Jeremiah *with cords, out of the dungeon.*

there, Verse 28.) he continued until the City [illegible] taken.

Chap. XXXVIII.

Jeremiah is cast into a Dungeon for his [illegible] *by* Ebed-melech, *with the King's* [illegible] *taken out again. He has a secret Conference with the King, in which he advises him, by yielding, to save his Life. By the King's Command he conceals the Conference from the Princes. He abides in Prison till* Jerusalem *is taken.*

Q. W*HAT is the History of this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet now seems under sad Circumstances, the Princes seek his Life, though for delivering no other Doctrine than he had been preaching twenty Years; their Pretence was, his discouraging and weakening the military Part of the City, letting them know he laboured in vain, for the City was not defensible. The Prophet was delivered into the Hands of the Princes, who thrust him into a Hole, the Bottom of which was nothing but Mire, into which the Prophet sunk.

In this melancholy Imprisonment God was pleased to raise up a Friend to *Jeremiah*, who was a Stranger, and not one of his Countrymen. The Courage of *Ebed-melech* was very remarkable; he interceeded with the King, and openly complained of the Cruelty of the Princes, telling the King, that *Jeremiah* must inevitably starve, if he continued where he was. The Representation of this good Eunuch had this good Effect on the King, that he ordered *Ebed-melech* to take thirty Men (very probably to guard him against any Opposition) and take *Jeremiah* out of the Dungeon, which he did, and the Prophet remained in the Court of the Prison, till the City was taken.

Zedekiah sends again to *Jeremiah* to come to him, but receives tha same Answer he had before; but he commands the Prophet what to answer the Princes who should inquire about their Conversation, and the Prophet followed the King's Instructions.

Chap. XXXIX.

Jerusalem *is taken;* Zedekiah's *Sons are slain; his Eyes put out; the City burnt; all the Nobles of* Judah *slain; and the chief of the People carried into Captivity.* Nebuchadnezzar's *Charge concerning* Jeremiah. *God's Promise to* Ebed-melech.

Q. H*OW long did the Siege of* Jerusalem *last?*

A. The Siege of *Jerusalem* lasted a Year and a Half, for it was the fourth Month of *Zedekiah's* eleventh Year before it was taken; it is said here to be broken up, because their Way of taking fortified Places then was by breaking down the Walls of the Besieged with Iron Rams and Engines, as we now do with great Guns; and it seems the City was taken by Surprize.

Q. *What became of* Zedekiah *when the City was taken?*

A. Zedekiah fled, but was pursued, taken, and brought before the King of *Babylon*, who ordered his Sons to be slain in his Sight, then his Eyes to be put out, and he to be carried in Chains to *Babylon*. Thus the two Prophecies were fulfilled; that of this Prophet, Chap. xxxiv. 4. that *Zedekiah* should [illegible]

[illegible] Jeremiah were barely [illegible] down, but Nebuchadnezzar [illegible] particular Orders about Jeremiah [illegible] is more than probable, that *Nebuchadnezzar* had been informed by some of the chief Commanders of his Army, who had it from some of the *Jews* who had escaped out of the City to the *Chaldean* Army, that *Jeremiah* had constantly told the King and the Nobles, that the *Chaldeans* should take the City, and as steddily persuaded both the King, *Princes* and People, to surrender it to them, and prevent the Effusion of Blood; that he was imprisoned for this, and that he had been a great Sufferer that Way, and that this made this Heathen Prince so kind to the Prophet, as to give this Order.

Q. *In the foregoing Chapter we read, that* Ebed-melech *had stood* Jeremiah's *Friend, even at the Hazard of his own Life; Did he receive any Marks of God's Favour for this in the general Desolation?*

A. For *Ebed-melech's* Kindness to *Jeremiah*, God promised to deliver him, so he should not die by the Sword, but how little soever he saved, he should save his Life, because he had put his Trust in God, not fearing the Wrath of Men in doing what was his Duty.

We read no more in holy Writ of this Man, and so cannot tell how otherwise God dealt with him; only we may be assured, that he was not slain by the *Chaldeans*. From this we may observe, first, how kind God hath always declared himself to those who have shewed the least Kindness to those who have been his true and faithful Ministers. Secondly, That the Root of such good Works as God rewards, must be Faith, a trusting in the Lord. Thirdly, That those who do good Works out of a Principle of Faith, may be yet incumbered with slavish Fears.

Chap. XL.

Jeremiah *being set at Liberty by* Nebuchadnezzar, *goes to* Gedaliah; *to whom also the remaining* Jews *repair.* Johanan, *revealing* Ishmael's *Conspiracy, is not believed.*

Q. W*HAT is chiefly observable concerning this Chapter?*

A. For an Introduction into the farther Prophecies of *Jeremiah* to the remaining *Jews*, here is related how he was fetch'd away from the midst of the Captives, and being very favourably dealt withal, joineth himself to *Gedaliah* at *Mizpah*; whither all the Fugitives, and those who were left in the Land did resort, and were comforted and advised by *Gedaliah*. *Johanan* cautioned *Gedaliah* to beware of *Ishmael*, but he believed him not; in which *Gedaliah* shewed an excellent Temper, not to be over credulous and suspicious: Charity thinks no ill; but he shewed not that Prudence which became a chief Magistrate. He ought to have been watchful against one about whom he received such an Information, which, in the next Chapter, we shall find he was not, but was slain by him.

Q. *Give some Account of the City* Mizpah, *to which* Jeremiah *retired, Verse 6?*

A. In the Hiſtory of *Jacob* we read, that after a Stay of ſeveral Years at *Haran*, making his Eſcape from thence, he was overtaken by *Laban*, his Father-in-law, in a mountainous Tract which was afterwards called *Gilead*, i. e. *A Watch-tower*, becauſe at the Covenant which was made between *Laban* and him, an Heap of Stones was gathered, to remain a Monument of it; and, upon that Occaſion, *Laban*'s Expreſſions are theſe,——*The Lord watch between me, and thee, when we are abſent one from another. If thou wilt afflict my Daughters, or if thou wilt take other Wives, beſides my Daughters, no Man is with us; ſee God is Witneſs between me and thee*, Gen. xxxi. 49. From that Time, the Place where this Covenant was made, and where probably in Memory of it, a City in After-ages was built, was called *Mizpah*; it was ſituate on the Eaſt-ſide of the River *Jordan*, and, in the Diviſion of the Land, fell to the Tribe of *Dan*; and here it was, that *Gedaliah* choſe to fix his Habitation, or perhaps was ordered to fix it here, becauſe (as himſelf intimates, *Jer.* xl. 10.) it lay neareſt of any to *Babylon*, from whence he was to receive his Inſtructions, as to the Adminiſtration of the Government.

Q. *Of what Family was* Iſhmael; *and what induced him to be guilty of ſo much Treachery, as we read in the next Chapter?*

A. That *Iſhmael*, who was of the Blood Royal of *Judah*, ſhould attempt to take away the Life of *Gedaliah*, as in *ver.* 14. is no Wonder at all: His Envy of the other's Promotion, and his Ambition to make himſelf a King, might be ſtrong Incitements to what he did; but why *Baalis* ſhould have any Hand in ſo black a Deſign, we can hardly imagine any other Reaſon, than the ancient and inveterate Hatred, which the *Ammonites* always had againſt the *Hebrews*, and therefore this King of theirs, ſeeing, that the *Jewiſh* Nation was at this Time, in a Manner brought to nothing, was minded to take Revenge for all the Injuries that his Anceſtors had received from them, and to give the finiſhing Stroke to their Ruin, by cutting off their Governor, and ſo diſperſing all the Remains of that unhappy People, which was now gathered together at *Mizpah*. But whatever their Views might be, 'tis certain, that they put their Deſign in ſpeedy Execution; for the Murder of *Gedaliah* happened but two Months after the Deſtruction of the City and Temple of *Jeruſalem*, *viz.* on the ſeventh Month (which is *Tiſri*, and anſwers in Part to our *September* and *October*) and on the thirtieth Day of the Month. For that Day the *Jews* have kept as a Faſt, in Commemoration of this Calamity (which indeed was the Completion of their Ruin) ever ſince.

CHAP. XLI.

Iſhmael, *under a Colour of Friendſhip, kills* Gedaliah *and others, both* Jews *and* Chaldeans. *He purpoſes to carry the Reſidue captive to the* Ammonites, *but they are reſcued from him by* Johanan, *who intends to fly into* Egypt.

Q. HERE *we have an Account formed and executed by* Iſhmael, *againſt* Gedaliah, *the Governor of the Land; pray give an Hiſtorical Relation of the whole Affair?*

A. After *Nebuchadnezzar* was returned to *Babylon*, all thoſe, who before for fear of the *Chaldeans* had taken Refuge among the Neighbouring Nations, or had hid themſelves in the Fields and the Deſarts, after their Eſcape, on the Diſperſion of *Zedekiah*'s Army in the Plains of *Jericho*, hearing that *Gedaliah* was made Governor of the Land, reſorted unto him, and he having promiſed them Protection, and ſworn unto them, that they ſhould be ſafe under his Government, they ſettled themſelves again in the Land, and gathered in the Fruits of it. The Chief among theſe were *Johanan* and *Jonathan* the Sons of *Kereah*, *Seraiah* the Son of *Tanhuneth*, *Azariah* the Son of *Hoſhaiah*, *Iſhmael* the Son of *Nethania*, and others.

But *Iſhmael* came to him only out of a treacherous Deſign. For being of the Seed Royal he reckoned to make himſelf King of the Land, now the *Chaldeans* were gone; and for the accompliſhing of it had formed a Conſpiracy to kill *Gedaliah*, and ſeize the Government, and *Baalis* the King of the *Ammonites* was confederated with him herein. But *Johanan* the Son of *Kereah* having got Notice of it, he and all the chief Men of the reſt of the People went to *Gedaliah*, and informed him of it, propoſing to kill *Iſhmael*, and thereby deliver him from the Miſchief that was intended againſt him. But *Gedaliah* being of a very benign Diſpoſition, and not eaſy to entertain Jealouſies of any one, would not believe this of *Iſhmael*, but ſtill carried on a friendly Correſpondence with him, of which *Iſhmael* taking the Advantage came to him in the ſeventh Month, which anſwers to our *September*, when the People were moſt of them ſcattered Abroad from him, to gather in the Fruits of the Land, and while they were eating and drinking together at an Entertainment, which *Gedaliah* had, in a very friendly Manner, made for him and his Men, they roſe upon him, and ſlew him, and at the ſame Time ſlew alſo a great Number of the *Jews* and *Chaldeans*, whom they found with him, in *Mizpah*, and took the reſt Captive. And the next Day hearing of eighty Men, who were going on a religious Account with Offering and Incenſe to the Houſe of God, they craftily drew them into *Mizpah*, and there ſlew them all, excepting ten of them, who offered their Stores for the Redemption of their Lives. And then taking with them all the Captives, among whom were the Daughters of King *Zedekiah*, they departed thence to go over to the *Ammonites*. But *Johanan* the Son of *Kereah*, and the reſt of the Captains, hearing of this wicked Fact, immediately armed as many of the People as they could get together, and purſued after *Iſhmael*, and having overtaken him at *Gibeon* re-took all the Captives, but he and eight of his Men eſcaped to the *Ammonites*. This Murder of *Gedaliah* happened two Months after the Deſtruction of the City and Temple of *Jeruſalem*, in the ſaid ſeventh Month, and on the 30th Day of the Month. For that Day the *Jews* have kept as a Faſt in Commemoration of this Calamity ever ſince, and *Zechariah* alſo makes mention of it as obſerved in his Time, calling it by the Name of the Faſt of the ſeventh Month, and they had Reaſon to keep a Faſt for it, for it was the Completion of their Ruin.

Q. *We read, Ver.* 3. *that* Iſhmael ſlew all the *Jews* that were about *Gedaliah*, at *Mizpah*; and *Ver.* 10. *that* he carried away Captive, all the reſidue of the People that were at *Mizpah*, &c. *How is this conſiſtent?*

A. All the *Jews*, Ver. 3. muſt be underſtood in a reſtrained Senſe, concerning thoſe about *Gedaliah*; for he carried away many as Priſoners, as alſo *Zedekiah*'s Daughters, who either had concealed themſelves at the taking of the City, or were left behind by the Conquerors, as not like much to hurt them; and having done this, he knew there was no abiding for him long there, ſo he haſtens away to the *Ammonites*, who imployed him in this Murder; but *Johanan* reſcued the Captives, and came and dwelt with them in the Habitation of *Chimham*, of which read, 2 *Sam.* xix. 37, 38, 40. It was but reaſonable for them to think that *Nebuchadnezzar* would take the Murder as an Affront done to himſelf, *Gedaliah* being conſtituted Governor by him: And though *Johanan* had nothing to do in that Murder, yet he did not know but that the King of *Babylon* being ignorant of any Parties among the *Jews*, might look upon them all as guilty who were *Jews*, and revenge *Gedaliah*'s Blood upon all the Remainder of that Nation; he therefore chuſes them an Habitation for the Preſent, from whence they might in a ſhort Time go down into *Egypt*, which was *Johanan*'s Deſign, as we ſhall read in the next Chapter.

Q. *What do you underſtand by the Tokens of Mourning, Ver.* 5. *viz,* That they had their Beards ſhaven, and their Cloaths rent, and had cut themſelves?

A. Though it is expreſly prohibited in the Law, *Ye ſhall not make any Cuttings in your Fleſh for the Dead, nor print any Marks upon you*, Levit. xix. 28. yet this ſeems to relate only to ſuch Practices, when they became *ſuperſtitious* and were done in Honour to falſe Gods: For in Caſes of ordinary Mourning for the Dead, for any other grievous Diſaſter, the Words of the Prophet ſeem to imply, as if they had been permitted in common Uſe: *Both the great and ſmall die in the Land: They ſhall not be buried, neither ſhall Men lament for them, nor cut themſelves, nor make themſelves bald for them, neither ſhall Men tear themſelves in Mourning to comfort them for the Dead*, xvi. 6, 7.

Q. *What is meant by* Treaſures, *Ver.* 8?

A. Treaſures (according to the common Phraſe of Scripture) ſignifies any Thing that is hid, or kept in Reſerve, whether it be Gold, Silver, Corn, Wine, Oil, Apparel, or any other Thing: And, among the People of the *Eaſt*, it was an uſual Thing to bury their Corn, and other Proviſions in deep Holes or Caverns, which they dug and filled up ſo very dexterouſly, that no one could perceive that the Earth had been moved, nor could any find them out, but thoſe who made them.

Q. *Can you give any Account of the City* Chimham, *mentioned Ver.* 17?

A. Chimham may be ſuppoſed, from 2 *Sam.* xix. 28. to have been antiently given by King *David* to *Chimham*, the Son of old *Barzillai*, the *Gileadite*, and which, at this Time, bore his Name, though near five hundred Years after the firſt Donation. It was in the Neighbourhood of *Bethlehem*, about two Leagues from *Jeruſalem*, and hither the poor People betook themſelves, becauſe it was at a much farther Diſtance from *Babylon*, than *Mizpah*, and in their ſtraight Way to *Egypt*, in caſe they ſhould determine to go thither, as they ſeemed inclinable to do, becauſe there they ſuppoſed that they ſhould *have no War, nor hear the Sound of the Trumpet, nor have Hunger of Bread*, Ver. 14.

CHAP. XLII.

Johanan *and the People deſire* Jeremiah *to enquire of God, promiſing Obedience to his Will.* Jeremiah *aſſures them of Safety in* Judea, *and Deſtruction in* Egypt; *reproves their Hypocriſy and Obſtinacy.*

Q. WHAT *do we learn from the Hiſtory of this Chapter?*

A. Johanan and all the People deſire *Jeremiah* to aſk Counſel of God for them; their Requeſt was, that he would put up his Prayer to God for the Remnant; for now there was but a ſmall Remnant of *Jews* left, a few of many.

The People promiſed a ſtrict Obedience to what God ſhould be pleaſed to direct: And the Prophet, after ten Days, received an Anſwer from God, which he preſently communicated to the Princes and People, bidding them not to fear to dwell in the Land, for God would protect and preſerve them.

In the general the Prophet threatens them, that in *Egypt* they ſhould meet with the ſame Evils, the Fear of which made them fly out of their own Country, the Sword and the Famine. The Sword of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who, after this, fully conquered *Egypt*; and a Famine through Want of Bread: For although *Egypt* was a fruitful Country, yet we know there was Famine there, againſt which *Joſeph* provided; beſides, Scarcity of Victuals commonly follows great Armies. Thoſe who ſhun Dangers, or think to ſhun them by Acts of Diſobedience to God, ordinarily are ſuffered by God to take ſuch Courſes, as they fall into the ſame, or worſe Dangers, than what they laboured to avoid.

CHAP. XLIII.

Johanan, *and the Commanders, diſcredit* Jeremiah*'s Prophecy, and carry him and* Baruch, *with the reſt of the People, into* Egypt. *He propheſies, by a Type, the Conqueſt of* Egypt *by the* Babylonians.

Q. DID *the People comply with the Advice which* Jeremiah *gave him in the foregoing Chapter?*

A. Johanan, the Commanders, and all the proud ones among the People, reſolved not to obey the Meſſage God had ſent them by *Jeremiah*; and this Reſolution they preſently put in practice. Although it is certain *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* were not willing to go along with them, and probably many of the People were againſt it; yet theſe rebellious Captains forced them along with them, ſo as many of them were now a kind of Priſoners to their own Countrymen.

By a Type *Jeremiah* prophecies at *Tahpanhes*, the Conqueſt of *Egypt* by the *Babylonians*: And the Almighty, by his Prophet, declareth a particular Hatred to the Idols of *Egypt*, and that he would burn up their Temples.

Q. *Had the People any Reaſon for their Charge againſt* Baruch, *Ver.* 2, 3.

A. Their Accuſation runs in theſe Words; *The Lord our God hath not ſent thee to ſay, Go not into* Egypt, *to ſojourn there; but* Baruch, *the Son of* Neriah, *ſetteth thee on againſt us, for to deliver us into the Hands of the* Chaldeans, *that they may put us to Death, and carry us away Captives into* Babylon;

Babylon. But what Foundation the People ſhould have for this their Accuſation againſt *Baruch*, it is no eaſy Matter to conceive; only we may ſuppoſe, that as *Baruch* was preſerved, and taken care of by the *Chaldeans*, as well as his Maſter, and was equally againſt maintaining the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, when *Nebuchadnezzar* came before it; and that, as he had been ſometime at *Babylon* himſelf (See *Baruch* i. 1, 3.) and was, probably not ſo virulent in his Speeches againſt the *Chaldeans*, as the other *Jews* were; this, to a blind mutinous Mob, was Reaſon enough to ſuſpect him of being engaged in the Enemies Party.

Q. *In what Senſe is* Nebuchadnezzar *called God's Servant?* Verſe 10.

A. It is very obſervable, that, in ſeveral Places of *Jeremiah*'s Prophecy (*viz.* Chap. xxv. 9. Chap. xxvii. 6. and here Verſe 10.) *Nebuchadnezzar* is call'd God's Servant, on Purpoſe to ſhew us, that as great a Prince as he was, he was no more than the Executioner of his Commands; that he was the General of his Troops, and that all the Victories he gain'd, and the Conqueſts he won, were, by his Direction and Appointment; for no Writers ſpeak with ſo much Deference of God, as do the Prophets, becauſe they only knew, by the Inſpiration of the Divine Spirit, to expreſs, with a proper Dignity, what the greateſt Monarchs are in Compariſon with the Divine Majeſty.

Q. *What does the Word* Beth-ſhemeſh, *Verſe* 13. *import?*

A. Beth-ſhemeſh ſignifies *the Houſe of the Sun*, and it is alſo the Name of a City in *Egypt*; ſo moſt take it as the Name of a City, which had its Name from a famous Temple built in it to the Honour of the Sun. This Idol is called on, *Gen.* xli. 45. By this it appears that the *Egyptians*, as well as other Pagans, paid divine Adoration to the Creature.

God threatens not only the Deſtruction of the idolatrous Temples, but the Houſes of the Inhabitants of *Egypt*, by the King of *Babylon*; from whence thoſe *Jews*, had they believ'd, might have underſtood, that they would not have the Security which they promiſed themſelves in the Land of *Egypt*.

CHAP. XLIV.

Jeremiah *repreſents to the People in* Egypt, *the former Sins and Puniſhment of* Judah; *and propheſies their Deſtruction in* Egypt. *Their Obſtinacy, for which he threatens them; and, as a Sign, propheſies the Duſtruction of* Egypt.

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve upon the frequent Remonſtrances which* Jeremiah *made againſt the Obſtinacy and rebellious Practices of his Countrymen the* Jews?

A. The Patience and Goodneſs of God to this Remnant of his antient People is very remarkable; he does not leave them, even in their Rebellion, but ſends *Jeremiah*, whom he had before ſent to prevent their going into this idolatrous Country, to try, if in *Egypt* they would be brought to a better Mind; but the *Jews* were deſperately obſtinate, for which the Prophet grievouſly threatens them the ſecond Time, and for a Token foretels what ſhould befal the King of *Egypt*.

Q. *Deſcribe the Places in which the* Jews *are ſaid to have ſettled in* Egypt?

A. The Places in which the *Jews* ſettled themſelves in the Land of *Egypt*, are ſaid to have been *Magdol*, *Tahpanhes*, *Noph*, and the Country of *Pathros*. *Magdol* is the ſame Place in *Egypt*, which *Moſes* makes Mention of, *Exod.* xiv. 2, over-againſt *Baal-Zephon*, not far from the *Red-Sea*. *Tahpanhes* is *Daphne*, not far from *Peluſium*, the firſt City in *Egypt*, in the Road from *Judea*, and as it were the Key. *Noph* is *Memphis*, ſituate above the parting of the *Nile*, or where the *Delta* begins, and not a little famous for its *Pyramids*: And the Country of *Pathros* is the ſame with *Thebais*, or the *Upper Egypt*, ſo called from the City *Thebes*, which was the firſt Capital of it.

Q. *Who was* Pharaoh, *then King of* Egypt?

A. Pharaoh-Hophra, mentioned in this Chapter, was called by the Heathen Writers *Apries*, by others *Vaphres*, and was the Grand-Child of *Pharaoh-Necho*, as *Herodotus* writes; who further ſays, that he, being vanquiſhed by his own Subject, *Amaſis*, was, at laſt, delivered unto the *Egyptians*, (who had made an Inſurrection againſt him) and was ſtrangled by them. Some conceive, that this *Pharaoh-Hophra* cauſed the Prophet *Jeremiah* to be killed; very likely, becauſe of this Prophecy, and at the Requeſt of thoſe wicked *Jews*; it may be he delivered him unto them to be ſtoned.

Q. *In what Manner, and when were the Threatning, contained in the* 14th Verſe, *accompliſhed?*

A. In the 14th Year, after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which was the 25th Year of the Captivity of *Jehoiachim*, the Judgments which God had denounced by the Mouth of his Prophets againſt *Pharaoh Hophra*, or *Apries*, King of *Egypt*, began to operate againſt him. For, the *Cyrenians*, a Colony of the *Greeks*, that had ſettled in *Africa*, having taken from the *Lybians* a great Part of their Land, and divided it among themſelves, the *Libians* made a Surrender both of themſelves and their Country into the Hands of *Apries*, to obtain his Protection. Hereupon *Apries* ſent a great Army into *Lybia*, to wage War againſt the *Cyrenians*, which having the Misfortune to be beaten and overthrown in Battel, were almoſt all cut off, and deſtroyed, ſo that very few of them eſcaped the Carnage, and returned again into *Egypt*; whereon the *Egyptians*, entertaining an Opinion that this Army was ſent by *Apries* into *Lybia*, of Purpoſe to be deſtroyed, that he might, when rid of them, with the more Eaſe and Security govern the Reſt, became ſo incenſed againſt him, that a great many of them imbodying together revolted from him. *Apries* hearing of this, ſent *Amaſis*, an Officer of his Court, to appeaſe and reduce them again to their Duty.

But while he was ſpeaking to them, they put on his Head the Enſigns of Royalty, and declared him their King, which he accepting of ſtay'd among them, and increaſed the Revolt; at which *Apries* being much incenſed, ſent *Paterbemis*, another Officer of his Court, and one of the firſt Rank among his Followers, to arreſt *Amaſis*, and bring him unto him; which he not being able to effect amidſt ſo great an Army of Conſpiraters, as he found about him, was on his Return very cruelly treated by *Apries*. For, out of Anger for his not effecting that, for which he ſent him, though he had no Power to accompliſh it, he outragiouſly commanded his Noſe and his Ears to be immediately cut off. Which Wrong and Indignity offer'd to a Man of his Character and Worth, ſo incenſed the reſt of the *Egyptians*, that they almoſt all join'd with the Conſpirators in a general Revolt from him. Whereon *Apries* being forc'd to flee, made his Eſcape into the Upper *Egypt* towards the Borders of *Ethiopia*, where he maintained himſelf for ſome Years, while *Amaſis* held all the reſt.

Q. *But did not* Nebuchadnezzar *finiſh the Ruin of this Prince?*

A. Nebuchadnezzar and his Army having ſerved ſo long before *Tyre*, *'till every Head was bald, and every Shoulder peeled*, through the Length and Hardſhip of the War, and gotten but little on the taking of the Place to reward him and his Army for their Service in executing the Wrath of God upon the Place, by reaſon that the *Tyrians* had ſaved the beſt of their Effects in the Iſland, God did, by *Ezekiel*, promiſe them the Spoils of *Egypt*. And accordingly, this very ſame Year, immediately after this Siege was over *Nebuchadnezzar* taking the Advantage of the inteſtine Diviſions, which were then in that Country, by reaſon of the Revolt of *Amaſis*, marched with his Army thither, and over-running of the whole Land, from *Migdol* or *Magdolum*, (which is at the firſt entring into *Egypt*) even to *Syene* (which is at the fartheſt End of it, towards the Borders of *Ethiopia*) he made a miſerable Ravage and Devaſtation therein, ſlaying Multitudes of the Inhabitants, and reducing a great Part of the Country to ſuch a Deſolation, as it did not recover from in forty Years after. After this, *Nebuchadnezzar* having loaded himſelf and his Army, with the rich Spoils of this Country, and brought it all in Subjection to him, he came to Terms with *Amaſis*, and having confirmed him in the Kingdom, as his Deputy, returned to *Babylon*.

During this Ravage of the Land of *Egypt*, by the *Babylonians*, moſt of the *Jews*, who had fled thither after the Murder of *Gedaliah*, fell into their Hands. Many of them they ſlew, others they carried captive with them to *Babylon*. The few that eſcaped, ſaved themſelves by fleeing out of *Egypt*, and afterwards ſettled again in their own Land, at the End of the Captivity.

After *Nebuchadnezzar* was gone out of *Egypt*, *Apries*, creeping out of his hiding Places, got towards the Sea-Coaſts, moſt likely into the Parts of *Libya*, and there hiring an Army of *Carians*, *Ionians*, and other Foreigners, marched againſt *Amaſis*, and gave him Battle near the City of *Memphis*, in which being vanquiſhed and taken Priſoner, he was carried to the City of *Sais*, and there ſtrangled in his own Palace. And hereby were compleated all the Prophecies of the Prophets *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*, which they had foretold both concerning him, and his People, eſpecially that of *Jeremiah*, relating to his Death, whereby it was foreſhewn, *That God would give* Pharaoh Hophra, *King of* Egypt, *into the Hands of his Enemies, and into the Hand of them that ſought his Life, as he gave* Zedekiah *King of* Judah *into the Hands of* Nebuchadnezzar *his Enemy that ſought his Life*, Ver. 30. Which was exactly fulfilled on his being taken Priſoner, and executed by *Amaſis*, in the Manner as I have ſaid. It is remarked of him, by *Herodotus*, that he was of that Pride and high Conceit of himſelf, as to vaunt, that it was not in the Power of God himſelf to diſpoſſeſs him of his Kingdom, ſo ſurely he thought himſelf eſtabliſhed in it; and agreeably hereto is it, that the Prophet *Ezekiel* charged him with ſaying, *The River is mine and I have made it*, Ch. xxix. 9. For the firſt twenty Years of his Reign, he had enjoyed as proſperous a Fortune as moſt of his Predeceſſors, having had many Succeſſes againſt the *Cyprots*, the *Zidonians*, the *Philiſtines*, and other Nations, but after he took on himſelf, *Caligula* like, to be thought as a God, he fell from his former State, and made that miſerable Exit, which I have related. After his Death *Amaſis*, wirhout any farther Oppoſition, became poſſeſſed of the whole Kingdom of *Egypt*, and held it from the Death of *Apries* forty four Years. This happened in the nineteenth Year after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*.

Chap. XLV.

Jeremiah *inſtructs and comforts* Baruch.

Q. WHAT *Obſervations occur to you upon reading this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter ought to have been annexed to the thirty-ſixth Chapter, or immediately to have followed it, for the Writing of *Jeremiah*'s Prophecies we read of there; it was eighteen Years before this Time, that the Prophet thus ſpoke to *Baruch*, upon the Writing of thoſe Prophecies, which, as we read there, brought both *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* into a great deal of Danger, which probably gave *Baruch* the Occaſion of the Complaint we read of in the third Verſe.

Thus ſaith the Lord, the God of Iſrael *unto thee, O* Baruch, Ver. 2. *Jeremiah* had, in his former Diſcourſes, revealed the Will of God concerning Nations, here he revealeth it as to *Baruch*, his Secretary or Clerk; upon which Account ſome compare him to *Paul* writing to *Philemon*, as well as the Churches.

Q. *What are the* great Things *which* Jeremiah *forbids* Baruch *to ſeek after* Ver. 5?

A. And ſeekeſt thou great Things for thyſelf? Seek them not; for behold I will bring Evil upon all Fleſh, ſaith the Lord: But thy Life I give unto thee for a Prey, in all Places whither thou goeſt. What great Things *Baruch* expected is not expreſſed, and impoſſible to be determined with any Certainty. They could not be Honour nor Riches; the Time of *Jehoiakim*'s Reign was no Time for any pious rational Man to expect any Thing of that Nature: He might expect to have been a Prophet, as *Eliſha* was, who firſt was but a Servant to *Elijah*. Or at leaſt he might expect Reſt and Protection, when others met with Diſturbance; but it may be, the Meaning is no more than this, Doſt thou expect what none meet with, who fear God? Never think of it, for I am bringing Calamities and Miſery upon the whole Nation wherein thou liveſt. However, I will preſerve thy Life, that is all thou art to expect, and thou ſhalt live to ſee the Time, that thou wilt judge of the great Booty that thou ſhalt have left thee. This Meſſage of God to *Baruch*, teaches us, that God expects from his People a Spirit ſuited to his Diſpenſations, and that they ſhould keep their Spirits low, in a Time of public Calamities of that Nation or Kingdom in which they are; but to content themſelves with ſuch Allowances as God proportions to them, at ſuch a Time, without Diſcontent or Murmuring, and to bleſs God for any Marks of gracious Providence, which he, in ſuch a Time, will pleaſe to ſet upon them, be thankful for them, and ſatisfied with them.

Chap. XLVI.

The Overthrow of Pharaoh's *Army. The Conqueſt of* Egypt *by* Nebuchadnezzar. *God's People comforted.*

Q. HAVE *you any Thing in particular to obſerve concerning this Chapter?*

A. The Prophecies of Judgments from the Beginning of this, to the fifty-ſecond Chapter, are all againſt foreign Nations, which are called *Gentiles*, as to whom God revealed his Will for the Puniſhment of them, and for the Relief and Satisfaction of the People, to whom the moſt of them had been bitter Enemies.

This particular Chapter contains the Revelation of the Will of God, concerning *Egypt*, whither ſome of the *Jews* fled for Refuge, after this Time, and which had been a great Occaſion of Sin to the *Jews* before, not only from their having too many Leagues with them, and Confidence in them, but from their communicating in their Idolatry with them, *Jer.* ii. 16. the Children of *Noph* and *Tahpanhes* brake the Crown of their Head.

Q. *In what Senſe do you underſtand* Ver. 17. They did cry there, *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt* is but a Noiſe, he hath paſſed the Time appointed?

A. That is, the *Ethiopians* and *Lubims* that ſhould come to help the King of *Egypt*, ſhould cry, *Pharaoh* is but a Noiſe; that is, hath made a great Noiſe, but is come to nothing. Others explain it thus, *Pharaoh* is a Man of Noiſe and Tumult, that hath given a great deal of Diſturbance both to himſelf and us. —— *He hath paſſed the Time appointed.* That is, ſay moſt Interpreters, he hath paſſed the Time which himſelf fixed, whereat he would come and fight the *Chaldeans*. But theſe Words compared with the next Verſe, incline others to think, that either *Pharaoh*'s Soldiers, or his Allies, are here introduced mocking at *Pharaoh*, promiſing himſelf that *the King of* Babylon ſhould not come, and laughing at *Jeremiah*'s Prophecy, ſaying, *The Time appointed was paſt*; that is, the Time of his coming, mentioned by *Jeremiah*, was paſt. *Jeremiah* foretels that *Pharaoh*'s Army and Confederates would ſee Reaſon to cry out, *Pharaoh*, in ſaying ſo, was but a *Noiſe*.

Chap. XLVII.

The Deſtruction of the Philiſtines, Tyrians, Zidonians, *and others by the Sea-ſide.*

Q. WHAT *is the Subject of this Prophecy?*

A. In the former Chapter the Prophet foretold the Judgments of God upon the *Egyptians*, who were the *Jews* ſeeming Friends, but their real Enemies; as they were the Occaſions to them of Idolatry, and of a ſinful Confidence in them. He comes, in this Chapter, to foretel the Judgments of God upon the *Philiſtines*, who were inveterate Enemies to the *Jews*, againſt whom alſo *Iſaiah*, Chap. xiv. 29. of his Prophecy, and *Ezekiel* and *Amos* propheſied, *Ezek.* xxv. 15. *Amos* i. 6. and alſo *Zephaniah*, in Chap. ii. 4, 5. of his Prophecy.

The Time when *Jeremiah* had this Revelation, is ſet down to let us know, that it was in the Time of the *Philiſtines* Proſperity, when the Prophet could ſee no ſuch Effect exiſtent, or probable in its Cauſes; but the Prophet let them know that God had given the Sword its Commiſſion; and therefore it could not ſtop till *Askelon* and the People on the Sea-ſhore were deſtroyed by it.

Q. *Pray expound the 7th Verſe*; How can it be quiet, ſince the Lord hath given it a Charge againſt *Askelon*, and againſt the Sea-Shore, there hath he appointed it?

A. This Verſe muſt be expounded according to the Senſe of the preceding; for if the Words of that be underſtood as the Words of the *Philiſtines*, the Words of this Verſe muſt be underſtood as the Words of the Prophet, putting them out of Hopes of the Sword's ſtopping, becauſe what it did, was by Commiſſion from God, which it muſt execute. If the Words of the foregoing Verſe be underſtood as the Prophet's Words, the Words of this are either of the Prophet correcting himſelf, and concluding the Sword ſhould not be quiet, becauſe it was edged by God himſelf, who had given it his Commiſſion, which it muſt execute: Or the Words of God, letting the Prophet know, that he had given this Sword his Commiſſion, and therefore it could not ſtop till *Askelon*, and the People on the Sea-ſhore were deſtroyed by it.

Chap. XLVIII.

The Judgment of Moab *for their Pride, their Security, and human Confidence, eſpecially for their Contempt of God, and Inſolence towards his People. Their Reſtoration.*

Q. WHO *were the* Moabites; *where lay their Country; what is the Purport of this Prophecy againſt them; and when was it fulfilled?*

A. The Prophet having, in the forty ſixth Chapter denounced God's Judgments againſt *Egypt*, and againſt the *Philiſtines* in the laſt Chapter, comes to do the like againſt the *Moabites*. *Moab*, the Father of theſe *Moabites*, was the Son of *Lot*. *Gen.* xix. 37. The *Moabites* Country lay in the Way the *Iſraelites* went to *Canaan*, *Numb.* xxi. 11, 17. near the Country of the *Ammonites*. *Balak* was King of it, when the *Iſraelites* paſſed by it, who ſent for the Sorcerer *Balaam* to curſe them, *Numb.* xxii. 4. but who, Chap. xxiv. 5, &c. bleſſed them. They ſeduced the *Iſraelites* to Adultery and Idolatry, Chap. xxv. 1. The Prophet cloſing the threatning Part of his Prophecy againſt *Moab*, repeats the ſame Thing which he had often ſaid, that the *Moabites* ſhould be carried into Captivity, by the King of *Babylon*, and denounces a Woe unto them upon that Account.

Some think this Prophecy was fulfilled upon the Return of the *Jews* out of *Babylon*, when the *Jews* inhabited the Land of *Moab*, *Zeph.* ii. 9. but this does not ſeem to be the bringing again the Captivity of *Moab*, but of *Judah*; beſides, in that Place it is ſaid, that *Moab* ſhould be as *Sodom*, and the Children of *Ammon* as *Gomorrah*, even the breeding of Nettles and Salt-Pits, and a perpetual Deſolation. It is therefore rather to be underſtood of a ſpiritual Reduction of them, by calling ſome of them under the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, as the *Jewiſh* Doctors themſelves interpret it.

Q. *Pray interpret the Senſe of Verſe* 27. For was not *Iſrael* a Deriſion to thee? Was he found among Thieves? For ſince thou ſpeakeſt of him, thou skippeſt for Joy?

A. It is an ill Thing to mock at the Miſeries of others, eſpecially ſuch as we have ſome Relation to. The *Moabites* were deſcended from *Lot*, who was nearly related to *Abraham*, who was the Father of the *Jews*, and ought not to have mocked at them, but to have pitied their Neighbours and Kindred; they either mocked at the Ten Tribes, when they were carried into Captivity by *Salmanezar*, or at *Judah* captivated by the King of *Babylon*, God threatneth the *Ammonites*, *Ezek*. xxv. 6. and the *Edomites* by *Obadiah*, for the ſame Miſdemeanor.—— *Was he found among Thieves?* Why didſt thou deal by *Iſrael* as Men deal by Thieves, when they are brought to ſhame? Ought he not to have been by thee accounted in a better Rank than that of Thieves?—— *Thou ſkippeſt for Joy.* Inſtead of compaſſionating the *Jews* in their Calamity, thou never ſpeakeſt of them but with Joy and Triumph. Others give it a different Senſe, *viz. For thoſe Words againſt him, thou thyſelf ſhalt wander.* But the Word, as here uſed, will not bear that Senſe, though it does originally ſignify to *wander*.

CHAP. XLIX.

The Judgment of the Ammonites. *Their Reſtoration. The Judgment of* Edom, Damaſcus, Kedar, *and* Hazor; *of* Elam *and its Reſtoration.*

Q. OF *what Family were the* Ammonites, *and where lay their Country?*

A. The *Ammonites* were the Poſterity of *Ben-Ammi*, *Lot*'s inceſtuous Child, by his youngeſt Daughter. *Gen*. xix. 38. Their Country was near the *Jews* Country; the *Jews* in their Journey from *Egypt* to *Canaan* to poſſeſs it, paſſed by their Country, but were by God forbidden to meddle with it, becauſe he had given it to the Children of *Lot*, *Deut*. ii. 19. but they proved bad Neighbours to the *Iſraelites* when in *Canaan*. Theſe *Ammonites* are threatned with a ſevere Puniſhment, and are promiſed to be brought out of Captivity, but when this was fulfilled the Scripture ſaith not. *Joſephus* tells us ſomething, but it is rather thought to refer to the Converſion of ſome of the *Ammonites*, as well as other Heathens, unto Chriſt.

Q. *Who was the Progenitor of the* Edomites?

A. The *Edomites* were the Poſterity of *Eſau*, the eldeſt Son of *Iſaac*, but diſinherited, the Bleſſing being given to his younger Brother *Jacob*, who was the Head of the twelve Tribes of the *Iſraelites*, *Gen*. xxvii. 29. God there, Verſe 39, promiſed him that he ſhould have a fat, and plentiful Country, tho' his Brother ſhould be his Lord; and foretold, that he ſhould break his Brother's Yoke from off his Neck; the Land of *Seir* was his Country, *Gen*. xxxii. 3.

Q. *What is the Scope of this Prophecy againſt* Edom?

A. The Scope of the Prophet is to ſhew that *Edom* ſhould be totally deſtroyed, their Deſtruction was certain. For as Men, when they would confirm their Promiſe or threatning to do any Thing, add an Oath to it, ſo doth God, who, having no greater to ſwear by, ſwears by himſelf; and that which God would here confirm next his threatning againſt *Edom*, expreſſed under the Notion of *Bozrah* (a Part for the whole) *Bozrah* being its principal City, *Iſai*. lxiii. 1. as well as the City of *Moab* (as we found in the foregoing Chapter) and that which he threatens it with, was not being a Reproach, a Waſte, and a Curſe for a Time, but for Ever.

Q. *The Prophet next denounces Judgments againſt* Damaſcus, *does he not thereby mean* Syria?

A. No doubt but he does; becauſe *Damaſcus* was the Metropolis of *Syria*, *Iſa*. vii. 8. and xvii. 3. or *Aram* (as in the *Hebrew*) becauſe it was a Country inhabited by the Poſterity of *Aram*, one of the Sons of *Shem*; Part of it lay betwixt *Babylon* and *Arabia*, and was called *Meſopotamia*, lying betwixt the two Rivers of *Tigris* and *Euphrates*. The Lord declared that he would bring Judgments that ſhould burn in *Damaſcus* like a conſuming Fire, and that it ſhould reach to the royal Seat of *Benhadad*. 2 *Kings* viii. 7. or elſe *Benhadad* (ſignifiing the Son of *Hadad*) which was their Idol, was the common Name of all the Kings of *Syria*, as *Pharaoh* was to the King of *Egypt*, *Amos* i. 4. *Kedar*, *Gen*. xxv. 13. was one of the Sons of *Iſhmael*, whoſe Poſterity inhabited Part of *Arabia Petræa*. *Hazor* was the head City to ſeveral Kingdoms in *Joſhua*'s Time, *Jabim* was King of it in the Time of *Deborah*, *Judges* iv. 2. The Prophet foretels, that *Nebuchadnezzar* ſhould alſo conquer thoſe Kingdome, and ſaith, he heard the Lord call to *Nebuchadnezzar* to go up againſt them.

Q. *Who was* Elam; *and who were the People called by that Name, againſt whom the Prophet denounces Judgments in the 34th and following Verſes?*

A. *Elam* was the Son of *Shem*, *Gen*. x. 20. His Poſterity were called *Elamites*; theſe are the *Perſians*, as is moſt probable, tho' ſome judge that the *Perſians* were at too great a Diſtance from the *Jews*, to be the People meant here; but we read of no other *Elam* in Scripture, but in *Perſia*, *Dan*. viii. 2. and though they were, indeed, at a great Diſtance, yet it is probable that *Nebuchadnezzar* having conquered the *Aſſyrians*, might alſo make ſome Inroads into *Perſia*, the King of which afterwards conquered *Babylon*. This Prophecy being in the firſt Year of *Zedekiah*, muſt needs be long before the Thing was done, for it was ten Years before the King of *Babylon* took *Jeruſalem*.

Q. *When was this Prophecy againſt the* Elamites *fulfilled?*

This Prophecy is judged to be fulfilled when the *Perſians* made a Defection from the King of the *Medes*, who was Son-in-Law to *Nebuchadnezzar*. Others think that this Prophecy was accompliſhed by *Alexander* the King of *Macedon*, or rather by his Succeſſors.

Q. *In what Senſe does God ſay,* He will ſet his Throne in *Elam*, *Ver*. 38?

A. God here calls the Throne of *Nebuchadnezzar*, or *Cyrus*, or *Alexander* (whoever he was that conquered the *Perſians*) his Throne; Firſt, becauſe God gave it to the Conqueror. Secondly, becauſe God ſhewed himſelf the Lord of Hoſts, or the Lord of the whole Earth, by diſpoſing of the Kingdom of *Perſia* at his Peaſure.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by* the latter Days, *when* Elam *was to be delivered*, *Ver*. 39?

A. The like Promiſe was to *Moab*, Chap. xlviii. 47. and as to *Ammon*, the ſame latter Days, either ſignify after many Days, or in the Time of the *Meſſias*. In the latter Senſe it is referred to the ſpiritual Liberty which ſome of thoſe poor Heathens were brought into by the Goſpel. We read, *Acts* ii. 9. that ſome of thoſe *Elamites* were at *Jeruſalem* at *Pentecoſt*, and were ſome of thoſe converted to *Chriſt*.

Chap. L.

The Judgment of Babel, *and the Land of* Chaldea, *for their Idolatry, Tyranny and Pride; with gracious Promiſes of the Redemption of* Iſrael, *intermixed.*

Q. *AGAINST what ſort of People does the Prophet proceed to denounce Judgments in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet having, from the xlvith Chapter, been denouncing the Judgments of God againſt the other *Gentiles*, the *Egyptians*, *Moabites*, *Philiſtines*, *Ammonites*, *Edomites*, *Syrians*, *Kedarens*, *Hazarites*, *Elamites* or *Perſians* (moſt of whom had been Enemies to the *Jews*) in theſe two Chapters he denounceth God's Judgments againſt the *Chaldeans* and *Babylonians*. Theſe were to execute God's Vengeance on all the Reſt, and therefore are themſelves threatned in the laſt Place, to be deſtroyed by the *Medes*; the Prophecy againſt them, is mixed with many gracious Promiſes to the *Jews*.

Q. *Pray give an Explanation of Ver.* 2. Declare ye among the Nations, and publiſh, and ſet up a Standard, publiſh and conceal not: Say, *Babylon* is taken, *Bel* is confounded, *Merodach* is broken in Pieces, her Idols are confounded, her Images are broken in Pieces?

A. The Prophet calls to Men to publiſh it among other Nations, and to ſet up a Standard to make ſome Signal, or gather all People together, to hear what he had to ſay from God againſt *Babylon*, which had been an Inſtrument of great Miſchief to moſt People that lived about them, to whom therefore it would be good and joyful News, to hear that *Babylon*, their common Enemy, was ruined. By *Bel* and *Merodach* are meant two principal Idols of the *Babylonians*, as moſt think; but that is not ſo well agreed. Some conceive that *Bel* is *Baal* by Contraction; but their Opinion is moſt probable, who imagine it was the Image of one *Belus*, who was formerly a King of *Babylon*; and they judge the like of *Merodach*: We find in Scripture, that *Merodach* was ſome of their Kings Names, *Iſa.* xxxix. 1. Chap. lii. 31. It was an ordinary Practice among the Heathens, on the Death of any of their Princes, who had been famous in their Government, to pay a divine Homage to their Images and Statues. Theſe Idols are ſaid to be confounded, becauſe they ſhould not be able, in this Emergency, to help their Supplicants, or becauſe they ſhould be deſtroyed together with the ſilly People that adored them.

Q. *To what particular Event does the Prophecy in the third Verſe relate?*

A. The Words in the Text run thus; *For out of the North there cometh up a Nation againſt her, which ſhall make her Land deſolate, and none ſhall dwell therein; they ſhall remove, they ſhall depart both Man and Beaſt.* From *Media*, which lay northward from *Babylon* and *Aſſyria*, through which lay the Way of *Cyrus* to *Babylon*. This Prophecy ſeems to relate not only to *Cyrus*'s firſt taking of *Babylon*, who dealt very gently with it, but to a ſecond taking of it, by *Darius* King of the *Medes*, who, upon their Defection from the *Perſian* Monarchy, came and made a horrible Devaſtation amongſt them, hanging up (as Hiſtorians tells us) four thouſand of their Nobles, and ſlaying Multitudes of the common People; or of the Miſchief done them afterwards by *Seleucus Nicanor*, who is ſaid to have built a City within ninety Miles of *Babylon*, by which Means *Babylon* was utterly deſolated.

Chap. LI.

The ſevere Judgments of God againſt voluptuous, covetous, tyrannical and idolatrous Babel, *in the Revenge, and for the Redemption of* Iſrael. Jeremiah *delivers the Book of this Prophecy to* Seraiah, *to be caſt into* Euphrates, *in Token of the perpetual ſinking of* Babylon.

Q. *WHAT is the Subject of this Prophecy?*

A. In this Chapter the Prophecy of the Deſtruction of *Babylon* is continued under new Metaphors: He begins with that of a Wind, a deſtroying Wind, as northerly Winds are ordinarly very pernicious; but the *Hebrew* Idiom ſo ill ſuits that of other Languages, that it is no eaſy Matter poſitively to aſſert the Senſe of the Word uſed. But the beſt Interpreters judge our Tranſlation to have beſt hit the Senſe; them that dwell in the Heart, that is, in the midſt of the *Chaldeans*, who are ſaid to have riſen up againſt God, to ſtrive againſt God, Chap. l. 24.

Q. *For what Reaſon did the Prophet order* Seraiah *to throw his Prophecy into the* Euphrates?

A. It hath been often ſaid that the *Euphrates* was that great River which ran by the Walls of *Babylon*; into this River *Seraiah* is commanded by *Jeremiah* to throw this Roll of Prophecy againſt *Babylon*, ſymbolically to teach the *Jews*, that according to the Tenour of this Prophecy, the Time ſhould come, after ſome Years, when *Babylon* ſhould be deſtroyed, never to riſe again to any great View or Degree of Splendor, no more than that Roll, with the Stone tied to it, ſhould riſe from the Bottom of *Euphrates*.

Q. *Explain the Expreſſions and Phraſes in the 27th Verſe?*

A. Let us read the Verſe: *Set ye up a Standard in the Land, blow the Trumpet amongſt the Nations, prepare the Nations againſt her, call together againſt her the Kingdoms of* Ararat, Minni, *and* Aſhchenaz, *appoint a Captain againſt her, cauſe the Horſes to come up againſt her as the rough Caterpillars.* The firſt Clauſe of this Verſe is expounded by the Words of the following; ſetting up of Standards, and blowing of Trumpets, are preparatory to bring Armies together; they are military Signs of the Will of theſe Princes or Generals, whoſe thoſe Standards are, and to whom thoſe Trumpets belong; that the Soldiers, who are under their Command, ſhould gather themſelves together to the Places where thoſe Standards are ſet up, and thoſe Trumpets blown. What this Kingdom of *Ararat* was, and thoſe of *Minni* and *Aſhchenaz*, is very hard to determine; we read of a Mountain called *Ararat*, where the Ark reſted after the Flood; of *Minni* we read no-where elſe; moſt Writers think theſe two Kingdoms were within *Armenia*. *Aſhchenaz* deſcended from *Noah* by *Japhat*, *Gen.* x. iii. Certain it is, the Emperor of the *Medes* had the Dominion of theſe Places, from whence it is very probable that either *Cyrus*, or *Darius*, or both, drew out Soldiers to help them to conquer the *Chaldeans*.——*Appoint a Captain*, &c. After People are gathered together for War, the firſt Thing to be done, is to put them into military Order, and to conſtitute a General.—— *Let the Horſes come up like the rough Caterpillars.* Others read it, like the waſting Caterpillar, or like the horrible affrighting Caterpillar. Great are the Diſputes amongſt critical Interpreters what Caterpillars are here meant, the Caterpillars being generally ſmooth; but as we know not the Complexion of Inſects over all the World, ſo even amongſt us we ſee ſome Caterpillars that look a little rough; that which alone we are to attend to, is, why the *Median* Horſes are compared to theſe Inſects; undoubtedly it is, either, 1. With reſpect to their Numbers, for Caterpillars, in thoſe Countries, uſed to come in Multitudes. Or, 2. In Regard of the Horror and Trembling cauſed by them, in People, when they came, being a great Plague to the Places which they infeſted.

Chap. LII.

A Repetition of the Reign of Zedekiah. *Of the Siege, Taking and Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *with the Cauſes thereof, and what farther happened there.* Evil-Merodach *advances* Jehoiachin.

Q. WHAT *Obſervations occur to you, upon reading this Chapter?*

A. It is generally thought that what we have in this Chapter, was not penned by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, who, it is not probable, would have ſo largely repeated what he had related before, Chap. xxxix. and could not hiſtorically relate what happened after his Time, as ſome Things which are mentioned towards the End of the Chapter, from Verſe 31, to the End. They therefore rather think it penned by ſome or other of thoſe in *Babylon*, and put in here as a Preface to the Book of *Lamentations*. What we have in the three firſt Verſes, is intirely taken out of 2 *Kings* xxiv. 18, 19, 20.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the hiſtorical Part of this Book?*

A. The Hiſtory of the Kings of *Judah* ends here. I ſhall only note the ſevere Judgment of God upon this People, whoſe Kingdom was made up of the two Tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, and Half the Tribe ef *Manaſſeh*. In the numbering of the Perſons belonging to thoſe two Tribes, *Numbers*, Chap. i. counting Half of the Tribe of *Manaſſeh*, we find one hundred twenty-ſix thouſand one hundred; *Numb.* xxvi. we find of them one hundred and forty-eight thouſand four hundred and fifty. Here, Verſe 30, we find no more of them carried into Captivity, than four thouſand and ſix hundred: From whence we may judge, what a Multitude of them were ſlain by the Sword, or killed by the Famine and Peſtilence; though we make a great Allowance for ſuch as were left in the Land, to dreſs Vineyards and to till the Ground. It is a dreadful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God, to mock his Meſſengers, deſpiſe his Words, and miſuſe his Prophets, till there be no Remedy, as this People did, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 16.

Q. *We read, Ver.* 33, 34. *of the kind Uſage* Jehoiachin *met with at the Hands of the King of* Babylon; *what do we learn from hence?*

A. He treated him like a Prince, with a Reſpect becoming his former State; he took Care both for his Habit and Diet; for his Habit, that it ſhould be decent, ſuch as became a Perſon of his Quality, tho' a Captive; for his Diet, that he ſhould have it in his Court, thereby inſtructing others that it is the Duty of all Men to treat thoſe with Humanity whom Providence has thrown into their Power; that Decency which is due to the Unfortunate, as Men, and as Men who have known better Circumſtances; and the Excellency of that Golden Rule, *To do unto others as we would they ſhould do unto us.* Thus *Jehoiachin*'s Lot was different from that of his Father *Jehoiachim*, whoſe Body was caſt out, as we read before: As alſo from that of his Uncle *Zedekiah*, who not only died in *Babylon*, but died a Priſoner; his Nephew *Jehoiachin* died there, and a Captive, but not in Durance.

Q. *Does not the latter Part of the Chapter afford ſomething worthy Remark?*

A. The four laſt Verſes of this Chapter are the ſame as 2 *Kings* xxv. 27, 28, 29, 30. and being found here in a narrative Form, related as a Piece of Hiſtory of a Thing done, not in a prophetical Stile, is an Argument that this whole Chapter is no Part of the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, and not probably wrote by him; for he beginning his Prophecy in the thirteenth Year of *Joſiah*, who reigned thirty-one Years, and continued it three Months, during the Reign of *Jehoahaz*, and the Reign of *Jehoiachim*, which laſted eleven Years and three Months, which was the Length of that of *Jehoiachin* (or *Jeconiah*) and eleven Years during the Reign of *Zedekiah* twenty-five Years, it muſt needs be ſixty-five Years and a Half after the Word of the Lord firſt came to *Jeremiah*, before the Death of *Jehoiachin*; ſo that if the Prophet lived till that Time, he muſt be near an hundred Years old, which is not probable.

Q. *Being now come to a Concluſion of this Book, I ſhall beg leave to propound ſome Queſtions, which could not ſo properly have been aſked before. The firſt is, What was the Reaſon of God's ſending Prophets with extraordinary Commiſſions; and why* Jeremiah, *in particular, was ſent?*

A. As in the Church's extremeſt Afflictions and Calamities, God never failed to raiſe ſome great and eminent Inſtruments for her Comfort and Deliverance; ſo in her greateſt and moſt horrible Depredations, did he ſend her excellent Servants and Miniſters to ſtand in the Gap of imminent Ruin, and interpoſe themſelves between the Wrath of God and rebellious Man, by moving his Obſtinancy to Repentance and appeaſing God's Wrath by Prayers and Interceſſions; and in Default of one or the other, to juſtify, at leaſt, God's Judgments, and condemn the rebellious and hardened World. This he did in a very eminent Degree, by the Means of his Servant *Jeremiah*, to the *Jewiſh* Nation. For this whole State and Government, both civil and eccleſiaſtical, being corrupted and perverted, God's Service neglected, polluted, and almoſt annihilated by public Idolatries, and the common Courſe of Life defiled and depraved by an Inundation of all Manner of reigning Sins and Debaucheries; and finally, the very Form and Appearance of a Church being almoſt cancelled and extinguiſhed, and God even ready to thunder out his laſt Sentence, he would firſt raiſe up *Jeremiah*, born of prieſtly Race, and endowed with all the moſt eminet Qualities belonging to the due Exercſe of it, to oppoſe himſelf to that Torrent of Sins and Evils, by lively Cenſures, Reprehenſions, Denunciations and Proteſtations, and to try whether he could call them to Repentance and Converſation, before the Fulneſs of God's Judgments did overflow.

But all theſe Remedies of Grace, and Means of Reconciliation, proving ineffectual and unprofitable, and the Prophet being at length overcome by the People's untamed Malice, he was at laſt employed to denounce the Decree of their total Ruin, which hung over their Heads, and was threatned from the *Chaldeans*, who, by the Deſolation of *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, ſhould ſubvert the Kingdom, and the whole Body and Form of a Commonwealth, and ſhould carry away the People into a long Captivity; reſerving, nevertheleſs, after the Manner of all Prophets, for the Remnant of the Elect and true Believers, excellent Promiſes of Grace, Aſſurances of Preſervation, of their returning from *Babylon*, at the End and Expiration of ſeventy Years, and of their temporal Re-eſtabliſhment; and eſpecially of their eternal Salvation by *Chriſt*, the only Foundation and lively Root of Hope and Reſtauration to all the Fathers; of whoſe Coming, Covenant, Benefit, Kingdom and Prieſthood, he propheſieth in divers Places, in divine and ſublime Strains.

And, to ſhew that God's Juſtice was not aſleep, concerning other Nations, which had been Occaſions of Corruptions or Stumbling-Blocks to the People, or aſſiſting to the Deſtruction of them, God gives him a Commiſſion to propheſy againſt them alſo, and to tell them that they ſhould likewiſe be involved in the ſame general Innundation of the *Chaldeans*. But God cauſes the Prophet, in a more eſpecial Manner to thunder out his fierceſt and loudeſt Threats on the Head of *Babylon*.

Q. *What is your Opinion of* Jeremiah's *manner of diſcharging his Office?*

A. We may diſcern in this Prophet, in the Exerciſe of this his Office, not only a moſt entire Fidelity towards God, but alſo a hearty Charity and Compaſſion towards his Nation, bearing in his own Perſon, and digeſting in his holy Boſom, all the Anguiſh and Paſſion of the moſt ſenſible Sorrow, whereof the People made themſelves uncapable, thro' their own perverſe and ſtubborn Obſtinancy. Nor was the Prophet leſs ſincere in giving Glory to God, and his own Example for the Inſtruction of all God's true and faithful Servants, in diſcovering his own Infirmities, the Combats of Impatience which he felt, in ſo toilſome and contentious an Exerciſe of many Years Continuance; deſcribing alſo the Corrections, Comforts, and ſtrengthening of God's Spirit, by which he was able to ſtand to the Trial, and finiſh his Courſe.

Q. *What more is obſervable concerning the Writings of this Prophet?*

A. To the prophetic Part of this Book, *Jeremiah*, in divers Places joins the hiſtorical; in which he relates how unworthily his Miniſtry had been received and entertained, both by great and ſmall; how he had been contradicted and oppoſed both by Prieſts and Prophets; his Perſon deſpiſed, ſlandered, aſſaulted by Violence, and ſecret Conſpiracies; threatned, beaten, perſecuted, and impriſoned in extreme Miſery; yet was ſtill upheld and ſupported by God, and comforted by ſome few, a Remainder of holy Souls. And at laſt, how the Event verified his Prophecies, when the *Chaldeans*, after divers Inroads, over-run the Country, changed the Kings, ſubdued the State, and carried away Part of the People into Captivity, did at laſt execute the final Sentence, by the taking, ſacking and laying *Jeruſalem* waſte, burning the Temple, killing the royal Progeny, their Nobles and Commanders, and tranſporting the King, and the Remainder of the People, into grievous Captivity to *Babylon*; all which fell out before the Prophet's own Eyes, tho' he himſelf was preſerved by a ſingular Providence. He alſo ſets forth, that notwithſtanding all theſe calamitous Accidents, the Heart of that perverſe Nation was no way humbled.

Q. *About what Time of* Jeremiah's *Age was he called to the Exerciſe of the prophetic Office?*

A. The Prophet *Jeremiah* was called to be a Teacher in his Youth, being ſanctified and ordained by God to the prophetic Office from his Mother's Womb. He began his Miniſtry in the Reign of good *Joſiah*, who was ſucceeded in the Throne by his Son *Jehoahaz*, whoſe Reign laſted but three Months, being depoſed by the King of *Egypt*, and his Brother *Eliakim* made King in his Room, and his Name changed to *Jehoiakim*; thus the Crown of *Judah* became tributary to *Egypt*. *Jehoiakim*, inſtead of taking Warning by the manifeſt Judgments of God, inflicted on his Predeceſſors, imitates them in their worſt Actions; notwithſtanding which, tho' he deſerved immediate Puniſhment, God, in Mercy, to reclaim him and his People, ſent his ſervant *Jeremy* to exhort them to Repentance, and aſſure them, that if they perſiſted in their wicked Courſe of Living, he would make the Temple like the Houſe of *Shiloh*, and *Jeruſalem* a Curſe, or a Pattern for curſing to all Nations. This Freedom of Speech in *Jeremy*, brought on him the Perſecution of the Prieſts and falſe Prophets, who brought him before the Prince, in order to have Sentence of Death pronounced againſt him; but was by them acquitted, by Means of his Friend *Ahikam*, one of the King's Counſellors.

Q. *What followed upon this?*

A. Soon after this, *Nebuchadnezzar*, King of *Aſſyria*, invaded *Judea*, and beſieged *Jeruſalem*, took it, and carried the King, and Part of the holy Veſſels to *Babylon*. After *Jehoiakim* continued Priſoner ſome Time, he was reſtored to his Crown, on Condition he ſhould become tributary to the King of *Babylon*. In the fourth Year of his Reign *Jeremy* delivered another Meſſage to the Inhabitants of *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, in which he poſitively told them, that ſince no Admonitions or Warnings would ſerve them, the Lord would bring *Nebuchadnezzar*, with all the northern Nations, againſt them, and that they ſhould ſerve the King of *Babylon* ſeventy Years, at the End of which he would puniſh the *Aſſyrians* and *Chaldeans*, and other Nations that had afflicted them, for their Iniquities.

Q. *Give a general View of the Hiſtory of* Jeremiah, *and of the Time wherein he prophecied?*

A. Now, in order to give a true Hiſtory of the Life, Miniſtry, Sufferings and Tranſactions of this good Man *Jeremiah*, it will be neceſſary to take a ſhort View of the Time and State of Things wherein God ſo eminently employed him for the Reformation of his People. This we have already done in Part, and now proceed.

And now *Jehoiakim* having continued three Years in Subjection to *Nebuchadnezzar*, in the fourth refuſed any longer Submiſſion to him. Upon which *Nebuchadnezzar* ordered him to be attacked by ſome *Chaldean* Troops, joined by the *Syrians*, *Moabites*

bites and *Ammonites*. This War laſted ſome Time, during which, God frequently admoniſhed *Jehoiakim* and his People to return to their Duty. The firſt of which was this: The Approach of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Army having frighted the *Rechabites* from their Habitation, they fled to *Jeruſalem* for Safety. The Lord intending by theſe to convince and reprove *Jehoiakim* and the *Jews*, he bid *Jeremy* the Prophet bring them into an Apartment in the Temple, and to offer them Wine; which they refuſed, alledging that it was contrary to their Inſtitution, which they had hitherto religiouſly obſerved. The Prophet commended their Obedience, and promiſed them a Reward from God; and turning it upon the *Jews*, he reproached them, who were the peculiar People of the Lord, for being leſs obedient than the poor *Rechabites*, who were not of the Stock of *Iſrael*. But this Method not having the intended Effect, the Lord commanded *Jeremy* to make a Book, and write in it all the Prophecies which the Lord had given him againſt *Iſrael* and *Judah*, from his firſt beginning to propheſy, to ſee if the *Jews*, upon hearing all the Judgments ſummed up together againſt them for their Diſobedience, would return to their Duty, that he might forgive them. In order to this, *Jeremy* imployed *Baruch* his *Amanuenſis*, to write what he ſhould dictate to him; and when it was finiſhed, the Prophet bid *Baruch* take it, and becauſe it was ſhut up, that he might not enter into the Houſe of the Lord, to go and read it to the People, in the Temple, upon the Faſt-Day. *Baruch* purſues his Inſtructions, and going to the Temple, read what he had written in the Book. This was done in *Gemariah*'s Apartment, and afterwards in the Secretary's Office, before all the Princes; who being ſatisfied that what *Baruch* read, was the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s inditing, they adviſed him and *Baruch* to withdraw to ſome Place of Security, till they knew the King's Pleaſure concerning the Book: Which they ſecuring in the Secretary's Office, went and told the King what they had heard. Upon which, ſending *Jehudi*, one of his Attendants, for it, he commanded him to read it: But he had not gone far in it, when the King, impatient at the Judgments that threaten'd him, took the Book out of his Hand, and cut it into Pieces, and notwithſtanding the Importunity of ſome of the firſt Quality about him, he threw it into the Fire, where it was burnt. And to ſhew his Want of Penitence, he diſpatched away Officers to apprehend the Prophet *Jeremiah*, and his *Amanuenſis Baruch*; but Providence had ſecured them. This wilful Act of *Jehoiachim*, in burning the Roll, ſo provoked the Lord, that he commanded the Prophet to provide another, and write the ſame Words that were in the firſt, with this Addition, That *Jehoiakim* ſhould have none to ſit on the Throne of *David*, and his dead Body ſhould be caſt out, in the Day to the Heat, and in the Night to the Froſt, and that he would bring upon the Inhabitants of *Judah* all the Evils pronounced againſt them. And to let him ſee that God was in earneſt, he permitted this obſtinate Prince to fall into the Hand of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who put him in Irons, intending to have carried him to *Babylon*, if he had not died on the Way.

To *Jehoiakim* ſucceeded his Son *Jehoiakin*, a Youth of about eighteen Years of Age: Who treading in the Steps of his wicked Father, the Lord ſent him his Doom by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, which was ſoon executed upon him; for in the fourth Month of his Reign *Nebuchadnezzar* having conceived ſome ill ſuſpicion of this young Prince, who was viciouſly inclined, came and beſieged *Jeruſalem* in Perſon, at the Head of a powerful Army. *Jehoiachin* finding himſelf too weak to defend the Place, ſurrrendered himſelf, his Mother, his Princes, Officers, and Servants, to the King of *Babylon*, who carried them all away Priſoners, taking with them all the Treaſures of the Temple and the Royal Palace, and all the uſeful Artificers, leaving none but the pooreſt Sort of Peope behind.

The Conqueror having thus diſpoſed of the Captives, above ſeven thouſand in Number, ſubſtituted to *Jehoiakin*, his Uncle *Mattaniah*, the third Son of good King *Joſiah*, whoſe Name he changed to *Zedekiah*, who, tho' he had ſeen the Ruin of his two Brothers, *Jehoahaz* and *Jehoiakim*, and of his Nephew *Jehoiakin*, yet perſiſted in their wicked Ways, God ſent the Prophet *Jeremiah* to admoniſh him, who related to them the Viſion of the Baſket of Figs, the one good, and the other naught. By the firſt repreſenting the Captivity of thoſe that were in *Babylon*, which being limited to a Time, was for the Good of their Poſterity: The latter the Condition of *Zedekiah*, and thoſe that remain'd in the Land of *Judah*, all which the Lord threatened to deliver up to their Enemies, and make them a Reproach and Curſe in all Places; adding, that the Lord would ſend the Sword, Famine and Peſtilence among them, till they were conſumed.

About this Time was *Ezekiel* called to the Office of a Prophet, and made to ſee Viſions of God. He having been inſtructed and encouraged in the Service of God, by the glorious Diſcoveries made to him, propheſied the ſame Things at *Babylou*, that *Jeremiah* did at *Jeruſalem*; which confirming *Jeremiah*'s Prophecies, was a great Comfort to him. Thus did theſe two great Prophets viſit the People with ſeveral Warnings, endeavouring, by his very ſignificant Emblems, and direct Prophecies, to reclaim them. But they ſtill perſiſting in their Obſtinacy and Diſobedience, God brought upon them thoſe Judgments he had ſo often by his Prophets threaten'd, and which *Zedekiah*'s Impiety haſtened: For he revolting, in the ninth Year of his Reign, from *Nebuchadnezzar*, who had made him King, provoked the haughty *Babyloniſh* Monarch to march with a vaſt Army, and beſiege *Jeruſalem*.

The *Jews* being cloſely beſieged, the Prophet *Jeremiah* frequently applied to the King, telling him his own, and the Fate of the City; which at laſt ſo affected *Zedekiah*, that he and his People, to ſhew ſome Token of Reformation, agreed to proclaim a Manumiſſion or Liberty to all *Hebrew* Servants of either Sex, which they ratified by the uſual Solemnity of dividing a Calf into two Parts, and paſſing between them. But this they ſoon retracted; for upon the coming of *Hophra*, King of *Egypt*, to the Relief of *Jeruſalem*, the *Chaldeans* raiſed the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, and went to fight the *Egyptians*; and the People of *Jeruſalem*, that had made the Proclamation of Liberty, thinking that *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Army fled for fear of the *Egyptian* Army, made the Servants return every one to his reſpective Duty and Service. This Prevarication ſo incenſed the Lord that he repeats his former Judgments of Sword, Famine and Peſtilence, by his Servant *Jeremiah*. Upon which, ſoon after *Zedekiah* ſent *Jebucal* and *Zephaniah* the Prieſt, to the Prophet *Jeremiah*, to deſire him to pray to the Lord for them. But he returned Anſwer, That they were miſtaken to think the *Chaldeans* gone, and ſuppoſing that the *Chaldeans* ſhould be worſted, for that though none but wounded Men ſhould be left, yet they ſhould fire the City.

After this, the Prophet ſeeing the Siege raiſed for the preſent, thought to take this Opportunity of the Gates being open, and go into the Country; but being ſtopped by the Guard, was ſeized by a Deſerter, and carried before the Princes, who were in ſuch a Rage, that they fell upon him, beat him, and committed him to Priſon. From whence he was, by the King's Order, releaſed and brought to his houſe, where, between themſelves, the King asked him if he had any Word from the Lord concerning him. Yes, replied *Jeremiah*, for thou ſhalt be delivered into the Hands of the King of *Babylon*. Then expoſtulating with the King the Hardſhip of his Caſe, who, for telling the Truth in the Siege of the City, and other Things, was puniſhed and confined, and the falſe Prophets excuſed, he deſired the King to put him in a more commodious Priſon, and he was removed, and better Care taken of him, ſo long as any Proviſion was left.

The good old Prophet though in Priſon, ſpoke what the Lord commanded him; and all that he ſaid being a conſtant Denunciation of the heavy Judgments of God againſt the City and People of *Jeruſalem*; particularly, that it ſhould be taken by the King of *Babylon*, and that they ſhould languiſh under thoſe three Plagues, Famine, Peſtilence and Sword; the Princes were ſo inraged, that they went to the King, and remonſtrated to him that the Prophet ought to be put to Death, for he, by thoſe Speeches, diſcouraged the Soldiers and People. The King, in this Diſtreſs, not daring to conteſt with his People, who, upon every little Occaſion, were too apt to mutiny, bid them do what they pleaſed. Upon which they took the good old Man, and let him down by Cords into a naſty miry Dungeon, where he muſt have inevitably have periſhed, had not God raiſed him up a Friend in the Perſon of *Ebedmelech*, an Eunuch Blackmore, who interceded with the King for him, and procured him to be brought back to his former Priſon. For this Courteſy, *Jeremiah* aſſured that when the City ſhould be taken, he ſhould not fall by the Sword. And now the King having the Prophet near him again, he deſired him not to hide any Thing from him that he ſhould aſk. But the Prophet, who had been ill treated before, for ſpeaking his Mind ſo freely, began now to capitulate with him, That if he would promiſe not to put him to Death, if what he ſhould report to him, did not pleaſe him, and if he gave him good Advice, he would obſerve it, then he would freely anſwer him. To the firſt the King anſwered poſitively, that no-body ſhould hurt him; and as to the ſecond he was ſilent. However, the Prophet ventured to adviſe him to ſurrender to the King of *Babylon*, with aſſurance of good Quarter for himſelf and Family. The King ſcrupled at it, but the Prophet perſiſted; and at the breaking off the Diſcourſe, the King obliged him to Secreſy, which, for his own Sake, he obſerved; for if the Princes had known what had paſſed between him and the King, it might have coſt the Prophet his Life.

The Siege drawing near to an End, the People, through the Scarcity of Proviſions, are reduced to Extremity, being forced to rake the very Dunghills for Food, and at laſt to feed on one another. In this ſad Condition the City was taken by Storm, in the eleventh Year of *Zedekiah*'s Reign. The *Chaldeans* having poſſeſſed themſelves of one Gate, King *Zedekiah*, with the few Forces he had left, endeavoured to eſcape at another Gate; but the City being incloſed on every Side with the Enemies Army, he had not gone far before he was taken, and the few that were with him diſperſed. The wretched King thus taken, was carried to *Nebuchadnezzar*, who was then at *Riblah*, where, to add to his Miſery, he ſaw his Sons put to Death before his Face, and the Princes of *Judah*, who had oppoſed his inclining to believe the Prophet *Jeremiah*, were likewiſe ſlain. As for himſelf, the King of *Babylon* commanded his Eyes to be put out, and binding him in Fetters of Braſs, he carried him in Triumph to *Babylon*, where he died in Priſon. The People being put to military Execution, the Enemy fell to plunder and deſtroy the Place. This *Nebuzaradan*, Captain of the King of *Babylon*'s Guards, executed with the utmoſt Rage; for he threw down the Walls, burnt the Temple and royal Palaces, and all the great Men's Houſes, and ſet the reſt of the City on fire. Thoſe that eſcaped the Sword, with them that had deſerted during the Siege, were ſent Priſoners to *Babylon*; none but a few of the poor Sort being left to till the Country. All the ſacred Veſſels, Utenſils and Treaſures of the Temple were carried off, together with the Prieſts and ſome Officers that uſed to attend the Service of the Lord.

Before *Nebuzaradan* had begun the demoliſhing of the Place, the King of *Babylon* having underſtood what Pains the Prophet *Jeremiah* had taken to incline the King of *Judah*, and his Princes, to a timely Surrender, and what Hardſhips he had ſuffered for ſo doing, gave a ſtrict Charge to *Nebuzaradan* to have a ſpecial Regard to him, and to grant whatever he ſhould deſire. But in the Heat of the Action he had neglected to inquire after him, and they that had the Charge of tranſporting the Captives, had carried him away among the reſt, as far as *Ramah*. Upon which *Nebuzaradan* ſent for him back, and gave him his Liberty. *Jeremiah* underſtanding by *Nebuzaradan*, that the King of *Babylon* had made *Gedaliah* Governor of the Land, he went to him, by *Nebuzaradan*'s Advice, and dwelt with him at *Mizpah*, as did ſeveral of King *Zedekiah*'s Officers, who, upon the taking of the City, had fled, and were diſperſed about the Country. Among theſe were *Iſhmael*, who was of the royal Blood, and *Johanan* and *Jonathan*, two Brothers, and other principal Men. All which *Gedaliah* took into his Protection, on Condition they would be ſubject to the King of *Babylon*, giving them leave to ſettle in what Towns they pleaſed, and furniſh themſelves with Winter Stores. The ſame Liberty he gave to all the *Jews* that returned from the Countries to which, in the common Danger, they had fled.

Jeremiah the Prophet having taken up his Dwelling with *Gedaliah*, at *Mizpah*, was carried from thence by *Iſhmael* the Conſpirator, after the Death of the Governor, among the reſt of the Captives; and *Iſhmael* being routed, he accompanied *Johanan* to their new Habitation of at *Chimham*. Here *Johanan*

hanan his Company addreſſed the Prophet, and intreated him to pray to the Lord for them, to direct them what Courſe to take. The Prophet promiſed them he would, and faithfully return them the Anſwer which the Lord ſhould give. Upon which they entered into a Covenant of Obedience to the Prophet, and he ſupplicated God for them: But ten Days were paſſed before he received an Anſwer; when calling *Johanan* and the People together, he told them, That if they would live in Subjection to the King of *Babylon*, and tarry in *Judah* till his appointed Time, the Lord would ſkreen them from all Danger, and raiſe them up again; but if they offered to go to *Egypt*, the Sword, Famine and Peſtilence ſhould purſue them. This Advice being contrary to their Inclinations, they would not believe it, but rudely told the Prophet he ſpoke falſely; and notwithſtanding he urged in his Defence, that they had diſſembled with him, when they intreated him to pray to the Lord for them, and gave a Confirmation of the Judgments that would attend them, they perſiſted in their former Reſolution of going to *Egypt*, and removed thither with all the Remnant of *Judah*, taking the Men, Women and Children, with all the late King's Daughters, the Prophet *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* his Scribe.

St. *Jerom*, in the Life of this Prophet, and *Dorotheus*, in his *Synopſis* of the Lives and Deaths of the Prophets and Apoſtles, tells us, that he was ſtoned to death in *Egypt*, by his own Renegado Countrymen the *Jews*, for preaching againſt their Idolatry; and of this ſome interpret that of St. *Paul*, *they were ſtoned*, *Heb.* ix. 37. It appears, indeed, by the Account we have of their Behaviour, *Jer.* xliv. 16. that they were bent both againſt him, and his Reproofs, and therefore it muſt be more likely that they were the Authors of his Death, than (as ſome ſay) the *Egyptians* were, for his propheſying againſt them, and King *Pharaoh-Hophra*. For the *Egyptians* (according to the ſame Tradition) having, by the Prophet's Prayers, been freed from the Crocodiles, which very much infeſted them, had him in ſuch great Honour and Eſteem, that in Teſtimony thereof, they buried him in one of their royal Sepulchres. The Truth is, *Jeremiah* was, all his Life-Time, expoſed to the ill Treatment of the *Jews*, whoſe Irregularities and ſad Apoſtacy he was always reproving; and therefore the Author of the Book of *Eccleſiaſticus*, in the Encomium which he gives of this Prophet, ſeems to draw his Character from the Perſecutions he endured; *they intreated him Evil, who nevertheleſs was a Prophet, ſanctified in his Mother's Womb*, Eccleſ. xlix. 7.

The ſame Author, in his Life of this Prophet, tells us, that he was put to Death by a Prince of the Children of *Iſrael*, whom he reproved for Idolatry; but who this Prince of the *Jewiſh* Nation ſhould be, upon the River *Chebar*, where *Ezekiel*, in the Time of his Captivity lived, it is difficult to tell. He was buried, as ſome ſay, in the ſame Cave wherein *Shem* and *Arphaxad* were depoſited, upon the Banks of the *Euphrates*: But *Benjamin* of *Tudela*, in his Travels tell us, that at ſome Leagues from *Bagdat*, he ſaw a magnificent *Mauſoleum*, which was ſaid to be this Prophet's Tomb, upon the Top of which there was a famous Library, wherein, ſay they, was the original of the Prophet's Predictions, written with his own Hand; that in the Tomb there is a Lamp continually burning, maintained at the expence of the Head of the Captivity, who reſort thither with a numerous Retinue; and that not only the *Jews*, but the *Perſians*, *Medes*, and many of the *Muſſelmen*, made this a Place of Devotion, and came thither to make their Preſents, and perform their Vows.

THE
LAMENNATIONS
OF
JEREMIAH.

THIS Book beareth the Title of Lamentations, *which ſeemeth to be taken from* 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. *and ſheweth ſufficiently what the Argument of this Book is, namely, ſad Complaints, which the Prophet makes in his own Name, and in the Name of the whole Church, for the miſerable Deſtruction of the Kingdom of* Judah, *and of the City of* Jeruſalem; *as alſo for the moſt woeful Condition of the* Jews, *who, the moſt Part, periſhed by the Sword, the Famine, and the Peſtilence.*

This Book is ſo pathetically written, that no Writings of the moſt eloquent Heathen Authors are, or may be compared with it.

There are, indeed, other Lamentations *beſides theſe recorded in Scripture, and* 2 Sam. i. 19. &c. *for the Death of* Saul *and* Jonathan; *as alſo for the Deſtruction of the City of* Tyrus, Ezek. xxix. 17. *But this Book of* Jeremiah, *ſpeaking of a general Calamity that is to come upon the People of God, hath alone, in a ſpecial Manner, obtained and kept the Name of* Lamentations, *almoſt among all People and Nations of* Chriſtendom: *As the high Song of* Solomon *alone beareth that Name, though yet there be divers moſt excellent Songs in Scripture beſides;* as Exod. xv. *the Songs of* Moſes *and the Children of* Iſrael; *of* Miriam, *and of the* Iſraelitiſh *Women for their Deliverance, and* Pharaoh's *drowning in the* Red-Sea; *as alſo of* Deborah, *in the Book of* Judges, *Chap.* v. *and of* Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. *and of the holy bleſſed Virgin* Mary, Luke i.

When the Prophet Jeremiah *wrote this Book is uncertain: Some are of Opinion that it was partly written immediately after the Death of that pious King* Joſiah, *after whoſe Death the Affairs of the* Jews *daily grew worſe and worſe, as appeareth by* 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. *and* Zach. xii. 11. *But others conceive that it was written after the Deſtruction of the City of* Jeruſalem, *and of the Temple by the* Chaldeans, *namely, after that the remaining* Jews, *were in great Multitudes, carried away out of their own Country, into Bondage to* Babel, *as the Words do continually intimate the ſame. See Chap.* i. 3, &c. *and* ii. 2, &c.

CHAP. I.

Jeremiah *laments the former Excellency and preſent Miſery of* Jeruſalem, *for her Sin. She complains of her Grief, and confeſſes God's Judgments to be righteous.*

Q. JEREMIAH *had often foretold the Ruin and Deſtruction of his Countrymen, the* Jews, *for their many enormous Crimes: But is there any Thing extraordinary in prophecying the Downfal of a People that give themſelves up to all Manner of Wickedneſs?*

A. Although *Jeremiah* was a greater Prophet than any of us can pretend to be, and had Revelations of particular future Contingencies, which we have not; yet every one may propheſy a Ruin to the Enemies of God's Church and People, and ſuch as rejoice in their Ruin. God never uſing a Rod againſt his People, which he doth not at laſt burn; nor ever countenancing Inhumanity in any; but much leſs when it is rooted in a Malice againſt himſelf, and his Intereſt in the World.

Q. *How does he deſcribe the Miſery which he laments?*

A. So intenſe was the Prophet's Sorrow for the Calamities brought on his People, that he breaks out into the moſt pitiful and affecting Expreſſions.

Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? Behold and ſee, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the Day of his fierce Anger. From above hath he ſent fire into my Bones, and it prevaileth againſt them: He hath ſpread a

Net for my Feet, he hath turned me back; he hath made me deſolate, and faint all the Day. The Yoke of my Tranſgreſſions is bound by his Hand; they are wreathed, and come up upon my Neck: He hath made my Strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their Hands, from whom I am not able to riſe up. The Lord hath trodden under Foot all my mighty Men in the midſt of me; he hath called an Aſſembly againſt me, to cruſh my Young Men: The Lord hath trodden the Virgin, the Daughter of Judah, *as in a Wine-preſs. For theſe Things I weep, mine Eye, mine Eye runneth down with Water, becauſe the Comforter that ſhould relieve my Soul, is far from me; my Children are deſolate, becauſe the Enemy prevailed.* Zion *ſpreadeth her Hands, and there is none to comfort her: the Lord hath commanded concerning* Jacob, *that his Adverſaries ſhould be round about him;* Jeruſalem *is as a menſtruous Woman among them. The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled againſt his Commandment: Hear, I pray you, all People, and behold my Sorrow; my Virgins and my young Men are gone into Captivity. I called for my Lovers, but they deceived me; my Prieſts and my Elders gave up the Ghoſt in the City, while they ſought their Meat to relieve their Souls. Behold, O Lord, for I am in Diſtreſs; my Bowels are troubled; mine Heart is turned within me, for I have grievouſly rebelled: Abroad the Sword bereaveth, at home there is as Death. They have heard that I ſigh, there is none to comfort me; all mine Enemies have heard of my Trouble, they are glad that thou haſt done it: Thou wilt bring the Day that thou haſt called, and they ſhall be like unto me. Let all their Wickedneſs come before thee: And do unto them, as thou haſt done unto me for all my Tranſgreſſions; for my Sights are many, and my Heart is faint.*

CHAP. II.

Jeremiah *laments the Miſery of* Jeruſalem; *its Cauſes, and the Enemies Deriſion. An Exhortation to true Sorrow and Repentance.*

Q. W*HY does the Prophet call the People of* Iſrael, Daughter, *Ver.* 1?

A. It is obſerved that great States and Kingdoms are often in Scripture expreſſed under the Notions of Daughters, *Pſal.* cxxxii. 8. *Iſaiah* xlvii. 1, 5. *Jerem.* xlvi. 11. *Iſaiah* x. 30. The Meaning is: How hath God obſcured all the Beauty and Glory of the Church and State of the *Jews*?

Q. *In the ſame Verſe the Prophet calls the People of* Iſrael, *God's* Foot-ſtool; *but why?*

A. The Earth is called the Lord's Foot-ſtool, *Iſaiah* lxvi. 1. *Mat.* v. 35. *Acts* vii. 49; but here plainly the Temple is underſtood, called God's Foot-ſtool, 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 2. and the whole Temple ſeems rather to be underſtood than the Ark; for we read of no Indignity offered to the Ark by the *Chaldeans*, more than to any other Part of the Temple. God had ſuffered the *Chaldeans* to burn the whole Temple: And it may juſtly be doubted, whether thoſe other Texts, that mention a worſhipping at God's Foot-ſtool, is not nnderſtood of worſhipping in the Temple, for it was not the Privilege of all the *Jews* to come ſo near the Ark as to worſhip before that; the Reaſon of the Complaint is God's Permiſſion to the *Chaldeans* to burn the Temple. See *Jerem.* lii. 13.

Q. *What is the Prophet's Advice to the People under their Calamities?*

A. The Prophet calls upon the *Jews* not to be ſlothful in this their evil Day, but to riſe up from their Beds, and at all Times of the Night to betake themſelves to God by Prayer, and and not in a cold lazy Manner, but ſo as to pour out their Hearts with their Words; and he moves to it, as for their own Sake, ſo for the Sake of their young Children, who every where were ſtarved to death.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by* Altar *and* Sanctuary, *Ver.* 7?

A. The whole Verſe runs thus; *The Lord hath caſt off his Altar: He hath abhorred his Sanctuary: He hath given up into the Hands of the Enemy the Walls of her Palaces; they have made a Noiſe in the Houſe of the Lord, as in the Day of a ſolemn Feaſt.* By *Altar* and *Sanctuary*, ſeems not to be meant, ſtrictly here, the Places ſo called, which are ſaid to be the Lord's, becauſe he directed the making of them, and they were dedicated to the Service, and uſed for no other Purpoſe, but the ſtated Worſhip and Communion of the Church of the *Jews*; as *Altar* is taken, 1 *Cor.* x. 18. God, by ſuffering the Place to be ſo deſtroyed, where alone they might ſacrifice, ſeemed to have abhorred his own Inſtitutions, as it is ſaid, *The Prayers of the Wicked are an Abomination to the Lord.*——*The Walls of the Palaces.* He ſaith, the Lord alſo had deſtroyed the moſt ſtately of their civil Edifices.——*As in the Day of a ſolemn Feaſt.* And the Enemy with their Triumphs and Blaſphemies had made as great Noiſe, to the Reproach and Diſhonour of God, as before thoſe that ſung holy Songs, or play'd on Inſtruments, were wont to make in the Temple, to the Honour and Glory of God.

CHAP. III.

The Faithful bewail their Miſery and Contempt. They encourage themſelves from the Conſideration of the Juſtice, Providence and Mercies of God. They ſtir up themſelves to Repentance, Patience, Prayer, aud Confidence of Deliverance of themſelves, and divine Vengeance on their Enemies.

Q. W*HAT does the Prophet particularly lament in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet complains of the Puniſhment and Afflictons that he endured by the falſe Prophets and Hypocrites, when he declared the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, as *Jerem.* xx. 2. He proceeds in lamenting the miſerable State of the *Jewiſh* Nation, and the Scoffing of their Enemies, yet comforts himſelf with the Conſideration of God's Mercy, Juſtice and Providence: He ſtirs up himſelf and all the *Jews* to Repentance, and Prayer unto God; repeating their Miſeries, comforting them with God's giving a gracious Ear to their Cries, and remaining confident that God would take Vengeance on their Enemies.

The Prophet having firſt poured out his own moſt bitter Complaints, and lamented his own unhappy and diſconſolate Condition, he takes Comfort in the Mercies of God, and firmly perſuades himſelf that God will yet have ſome Regard and Compaſſion for his own People; this he does in the moſt elegant and moſt moving Terms.

It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not conſumed, becauſe his Compaſſions fail not. They are new every Morning: Great is thy Faithfulneſs. The Lord is my Porton, ſaith my Soul, therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for

for him, to the Soul that ſeeketh him. It is good that a Man ſhould hope and quietly wait for the Salvation of the Lord. It is good for a Man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth. He ſitteth alone and keepeth Silence, becauſe he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his Mouth in the Duſt, if ſo be there may be Hope. He giveth his Cheek to him that ſmiteth him, he is filled full with Reproach. For the Lord will not caſt off for ever. But though he cauſe Grief, yet will he have Compaſſion according to the Multitude of his Mercies, for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men. To cruſh under his Feet all the Priſoners of the Earth. To turn aſide the Right of a Man before the Face of the moſt High, to ſubvert a Man in his Cauſe, the Lord approveth not. Who is he that ſaith, and it cometh to paſs, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the Mouth of the moſt High proceedeth not Evil and Good? Wherefore doth a living Man complain, a Man for the Puniſhment of his Sins; let us ſearch and try our Ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our Heart with our Hands unto God in the Heavens. We have tranſgreſſed and have rebelled, thou haſt not pardoned. Thou haſt covered with Anger, and perſecuted us: Thou haſt ſlain, thou haſt not pitied. Thou haſt covered thyſelf with a Cloud, that our Prayer ſhould not paſs through. Thou haſt made us the Off-ſcouring and Refuſe in the midſt of the People. All our Enemies have opened their Mouths againſt us. Fear and a Snare is come upon us, Deſolation and Deſtruction. Mine Eye runneth down with Rivers of Water, for the Deſtruction of the Daughter of my People, mine Eye trickleth down, and ceaſeth not, without any Intermiſſion: Till the Lord look and behold from Heaven. Mine Eye affecteth mine Heart, becauſe of all the Daughters of my City. Mine Enemies chaſed me ſore like a Bird, without cauſe. They have cut off Life in the Dungeon, and caſt a Stone upon me. Waters flowed over mine Head, then I ſaid, I am cut off. I called upon thy Name, O Lord, out of the low Dungeon. Thou haſt heard my Voice, hide not thine Ear at my Breathing, and my Cry. Thou dreweſt near in the Day, that I called upon thee: Thou ſaidſt, Fear not. *O Lord, thou haſt pleaded the Cauſes of my Soul, thou haſt redeemed my Life. O Lord, thou haſt ſeen my Wrong, judge thou my Cauſe. Thou haſt ſeen all their Vengeance, and all their Imaginations againſt me: Thou haſt heard their Reproach, O Lord, and all their Imaginations againſt me; the Lips of thoſe that roſe up againſt me, and their Device againſt me all the Day. Behold their ſitting down and their riſing up, I am their Muſick. Render unto them a Recompence, O Lord, according to the Work of their Hands. Give them Sorrow of Heart, thy Curſe unto them. Perſecute and deſtroy them in Anger from under the Heavens of the Lord.*

Q. *What do you ſuppoſe is the Import of the Prophet's Imprecation*, v. 65. Give them Sorrow of Heart, thy Curſe unto them?

A. The Word tranſlated Sorrow of Heart, is found no where in Holy Writ, which makes a certain particular Explication of it to be very difficult, and hath given Interpreters a ſtrange Liberty in tranſlating it, *Shield*, *Sorrrow and Grief*, *Obſtinacy or Hardneſs of Heart*, *Perplexity*, *Objection*, *or breaking of Heart*; the beſt Guides we have to direct us in the Senſe of it are, 1. The other Things joined with it, *Perſecution*, *Deſtruction*, *a Recompence according to their Works*; ſo that ſome afflictive Evil of an heavy Nature is certainly ſignified by it. 2. The Analogy of Faith, which reſtrains us from wiſhing or praying for ſpiritual or eternal Evils, againſt our worſt Enemies; it therefore probably ſignifies ſuch Perplexty and Breaking of Mind as commonly attend a State of great Affliction.

CHAP. IV.

Zion *bewails her Miſery; confeſſes her Sins. The Miſeries of her chief Ones; of Women, who killed and dreſſed their own Children. The Sin of the falſe Prophets and Prieſts; their vain Hope; their King taken Priſoner.* Edom *is threatned; and* Zion *comforted.*

Q. *WHAT do you underſtand by* Gold *and* Stones, *ver.* 1?

A. By the *Gold* is meant the Princes, as by the *Stones* is to be underſtood the Prieſts, who are now to be looked upon no better than earthen Veſſels, the Workmanſhip of an ordinary Potter. God carrying *Jeremiah* down to the Potter's Houſe, *Jerem.* xviii. 2. and xix. 1. had taught them that they were indeed made ſo, and as miſerably and irreparably broken in Pieces.

Q. *What are the other Subjects of the Prophet's Lamentation here?*

A. Here is a farther Complaint of the lamentable Condition of the People of the *Jews*, with an Acknowledgement that their Sins are the Cauſe of it. Horrid Miſeries are threatned to the Chief of the People, and the Condition of thoſe who periſhed by the Sword, is preferrable to thoſe who died by Famine, becauſe they had a quicker Death. So great, ſo heavy is the Judgment that Women eat their own Children. This was according to what was threatned in caſe of Diſobedience, *Deut.* xxviii. 57. and a Thing which hath often happened in Sieges, 2 *Kings* vi. 29. Such Things did happen in laſt Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, as we read in *Joſephus*; and though we read no ſuch Thing happening in the Siege of it by *Nebuchadnezzar*, yet that there were ſome ſuch Inſtances appears from the Text.

The Prieſts and Prophets being ſpiritually blind, polluted themſelves with Blood, either the Blood of the Children which they ſlew, or the juſt Men mentioned, Verſe 13. the Slaughter of whom they either encouraged, or at leaſt did not diſcourage, ſo that a Prophet or Prieſt could not be touched, who was not legally polluted.

Q. *What more do you find that merits Conſideratian in this Chapter?*

A. The Things which he ſo paſſionately lamented, were come to paſs, contrary to all mens Expectations; the principal Cauſes being the Cruelty of the *Jews*, and their vain Confidence in Man, for they truſted in the Help of the *Egyptians*. To this is added, a Prophecy of God's Vengeance againſt *Edom*, and the Prophet comforting the Church by this, that after 70 Years their Sorrows ſhall have an End, whereas the Wicked ſhall be tormented for ever.

CHAP. V.

An humble Prayer, preſenting to the Lord their great Miſery; confeſſing their Sins; and imploring Deliverance.

Q. UPON *what particular Occaſion did the Prophet make this Prayer?*

A. This Prayer, as thought, was made when ſome of the People were carried away captive, others, as the pooreſt, remained, and ſome went into *Egypt* and other Places for Succour; though it ſeems the Prophet, foreſeeing their Miſeries to come, thus prayed.

Q. *What is the chief Purport of this Prayer?*

A. The Prophet intreats the Lord to turn the *Jews* unto him, by giving them Repentance, when their Condition would be altered and it would be well with them. Thus the Prophet prays for Mercy and Deliverance.

Q. *In what manner does* Jeremiah *conclude his Lamentations?*

A. The Prophet concludes his Lamentations with a Prayer, containing a brief Summary of the ſorrowful Circumſtances of his People, acknowledging that their Sins had been the Cauſe of their Calamities, and beſeeching God that he would turn their Hearts unto him, and reſtore them to their former State, that it might be with them as in times paſt.

Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; conſider and behold our reproach. Our Inheritance is turned to Strangers, our Houſes to Aliens. We are Orphans and Fatherleſs, our Mothers are as Widows. We have drunken our Water for Money, our Wood is ſold unto us. Our Necks are under Perſecution: We labour and have no reſt. We have given the Hand to the Egyptians, *and to the* Aſſyrians, *to be ſatiſfied with Bread. Our Fathers have ſinned and are not, and we have borne their Iniquities. Servants have ruled over us: There is none that doth deliver us out of their Hand. We gat our Bread with the peril of our Lives, becauſe of the Sword of the Wilderneſs. Our Skin was black like an Oven, becauſe of the terrible Famine. They raviſhed the Women in Zion, and the Maids in the Cities of* Judah. *Princes are hanged up by their Hand: The Faces of the Elders were not honoured. They took the young Men to grind, and the Children fell under the Wood. The Elders have ceaſed from the Gate, the young Men from their Muſick. The Joy of our Heart is ceaſed, our Dance is turned into Mourning. The Crown is fallen from our Head: Woe unto us that we have ſinned. For this our Heart is faint, for theſe Things our Eyes are dim. Becauſe of the Mountain of* Zion, *which is deſolate, the Foxes walk upon it. Thou, O Lord, remaineſt for ever: Thy Throne from Generation to Generation, wherefore doſt thou forget us for ever, and forſake us ſo long time? Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we ſhall be turned: Renew our Days as of old. But thou utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth againſt us.*

Q. *How do you underſtand the Senſe of the 6th Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe: *We have given the Hand to the* Egyptians, *and to the* Aſſyrians, *to be ſatiſfied with Bread.* The Ten Tribes were all carried Captives into *Aſſyria*, and many of the Kingdom of *Judah* fled into *Egypt*, after the taking of *Jeruſalem. Giving the Hand* may either ſignify working with their Hands, and labouring for them; or, yielding themſelves up to their Power, or lifting up the Hands as Supplicants to them, or ſtriking Hands and making Covenants with them, or lending them their Hands to help them, and all to get any thing to live upon.

Q. *In what Senſe does the Prophet ſay, Ver.* 7. Our Fore-fathers have ſinned and are not, and we have borne their Iniquities?

A. We muſt not underſtand this in the ſame Senſe as *Ezek.* xviii. 2. where God reflects upon them for uſing a Proverb to this Senſe. It is the Prophet who here ſpeaks, and in the Name of the godly *Jews*, who would would not excuſe themſelves, as if they ſuffered merely for their Fore-fathers Sins. But the Prophet confeſſes, and bewails that God had puniſhed their Iniquities, and the Iniquities of their Fore-fathers together, and it was better with their Fore-fathers who ſinned, and were dead and gone, than with them upon whom the Puniſhment of their Iniquity did abide, and was like ſo to do a long Time.

Q. *Does not the Prophet, in the laſt Verſe, expreſs a good deal of Diffidence and Deſpondency in the Mercy of God?*

A. The Words are theſe; *But thou haſt utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth againſt us.* Our Tranſlators have here ſo rendered the *Hebrew* Particle, that the Words ſeem to expreſs ſome Diffidence in the Prophet of God's Mercy in reſtoring the People to their former State; ſome Expreſſions of which Nature we find falling from the moſt eminent Servants of God, in an Hour of great Temptation: But where ſuch a Senſe is not neceſſary, it is hard to put it upon a Text. Some therefore expound the *Hebrew* Words, in this Place, *But if.* Others tranſlate them, *Although thou haſt*, &c. Mr. *Calvin* prefers the Tranſlation of them by *Niſi, Unleſs thou haſt utterly rejected us*, and that, by this Expreſſion, the Prophet confirms himſelf againſt Temptations of Diffidence, becauſe it was impoſſible God ſhould utterly caſt off his People, *Rom.* xi. 2. Others read it, *Interrogatively, Haſt thou utterly rejected us?* Which does not ſuppoſe that the Prophet believed he had, though his preſent Providence ſhewed him very angry with them.

Q. *Is not this Book of* Lamentations *an Inſtance of* Jeremiah's *extraordinary Zeal for his People?*

A. Jeremiah, after he had, by his holy Miniſtry, diſcharged all the Offices of Fidelity to God, and Charity towards his Nation, that he might, if poſſible, prevent their approaching Ruin, even after that happened, ſtill continued his former Zeal and Affection, and began to burden his innocent Soul with the Senſe and Feeling of the Calamities that befel his Country, and made his ſacred Tongue Inſtruments of public Grief. For this very Purpoſe, the Holy Ghoſt choſe him to ſhew, that in the moſt ſacred Veſſels of his Grace he infuſes the moſt lively and ſharpeſt Feelings and Senſations of the Evils of his Church, and of God's Judgment; and gives them the cleareſt Lights to diſcern the true Cauſes thereof, and to make a right and true Uſe of them.

Q. *What induced the Prophet to write this Book of* Lamentations?

A. It was a due Senſe of the Troubles and Afflictions of his People, that induced *Jeremiah* to compoſe this ſhort Book of *Lamentations*; which, though they were deſigned peculiarly to lament the ſad Diſtreſſes and woful Circumſtances to which that unhappy Nation was reduced, yet will it ſerve for a Form to the Church in like Caſes, in all after Ages; not to teach any to abandon themſelves to Deſpair, Murmurings and Blaſphemy againſt God;

Precipices into which exceſſive Lamentations often plunge carnal Men; but to prevent that ordinary Vice which extreme Griefs do produce, namely, an inſenſible Stupefaction, and an obdurate Heart; and to diſpoſe the Spirit of Man to Humiliation, in order to make him capable of the Comforts of God's Spirit, promiſed to broken Hearts and diſconſolate Souls, ſo diſpoſing him to a true Converſion, Prayer, and Invocation of God; to which the Lamentations are greatly aſſiſting both for Matter and Encouragement.

To this End the Prophet, full of the very Bowels of Compaſſion, doth, in a poetical and florid Stile, lament, in the Name of the Church, the Miſery whereto it was brought by the Deſolation of the Kingdom, *Jeruſalem* and the Temple; the Conſumption of the People reduced to almoſt nothing, the Diſperſion and Captivity of almoſt all the reſt. This he illuſtrates two Ways; 1. By admiring and wondering at the Greatneſs of theſe incredible and unexampled Calamities. And, 2. By a lively Repreſentation of the People's exceſſive Sins, which had induced the Lord to this extreme Act of Juſtice.

Q. *From whence did this Book derive its Name of* Lamentations?

A. The Book of *Lamentations*, in *Greek*, *Latin*, and *Engliſh*, hath its Name from the Subject Matter of it, which is *Lamentation*; ſo likewiſe among the *Hebrew* Writers. But in the *Hebrew* its Title is taken from the firſt Word of the Book, which is alſo obſervable of the five Books of *Moſes*. That it was written by *Jeremiah*, is without Diſpute, becauſe in the *Hebrew* it is ſtiled, *the Book of* Jeremiah.

Q. *At what Time, and on what Occaſion was this Book written?*

A. That the Occaſion was the Miſeries of the People, by Reaſon of the Famine, Sword and Captivity, is evident from every Part of it; but whether they were thoſe Miſeries which began with the Death of *Joſiah*, and continued till the City was taken, which was twenty-two or twenty-three Years after; or thoſe only which began with the Siege, and followed on many Years, is doubted by ſome. That *Jeremiah* lamented for *Joſiah*, and all the ſinging Men and ſinging Women ſpake of *Joſiah* in their *Lamentations*, is plain from 2 *Chron.* xxxv. 25. But that theſe were the Forms they uſed, or that they were compoſed on Account of that ſad Event, does not appear; and the Miſeries which the Prophet mentions, beſel not the People in the Time of *Joſiah*, but during the Siege, more than twenty Years after *Joſiah*'s Death. Nor is there any Thing that looks like a Lamentation for *Joſiah*, through the Book, unleſs Chap. iv. 20. which alſo may fairly be interpreted of *Zedekiah*. Some think that *Jeremiah* began to write them upon the Death of *Joſiah*, and continued his Stile till the Time of the Captivity, deſcribing the Miſeries the People ſuffered all along that Time.

In the four firſt Chapters are ſeveral Alphabets of Letters, beginning the ſeveral Verſes, each Verſe beginning with a new Letter, except Chap. iii. where every three Verſes begin with a Letter; the Myſtery of which we do not underſtand, and perhaps no Myſtery was intended in it, only the Chapters were ſo compoſed for the Help of the Memory.

The whole Book conveys this plain Moral, namely, that Sin will bring Nations from the higheſt Dignity to the Depth of Miſery, however formerly diſtinguiſhed by the Favour of God; and that, in every State of Affliction and Miſery, Submiſſion and Humiliation is our indiſpenſible Duty.

Whatever other Writings, beſides the two Books of the *Prophecy* and *Lamentations*, we find aſcribed to *Jeremiah*, we may reaſonably conclude are ſpurious and counterfeit, as the Prophecies of *Baruch*, *&c.* Or, if he did write any Thing more, it is probable we have the Sum and Subſtance of what he ſo wrote, in the Book of his Prophecy; though poſſibly ſome of his Sermons might have ſome Enlargements in that Roll, which, by his Appointment, was written by *Baruch*, *Jer.* xxxii. 2, *&c.*

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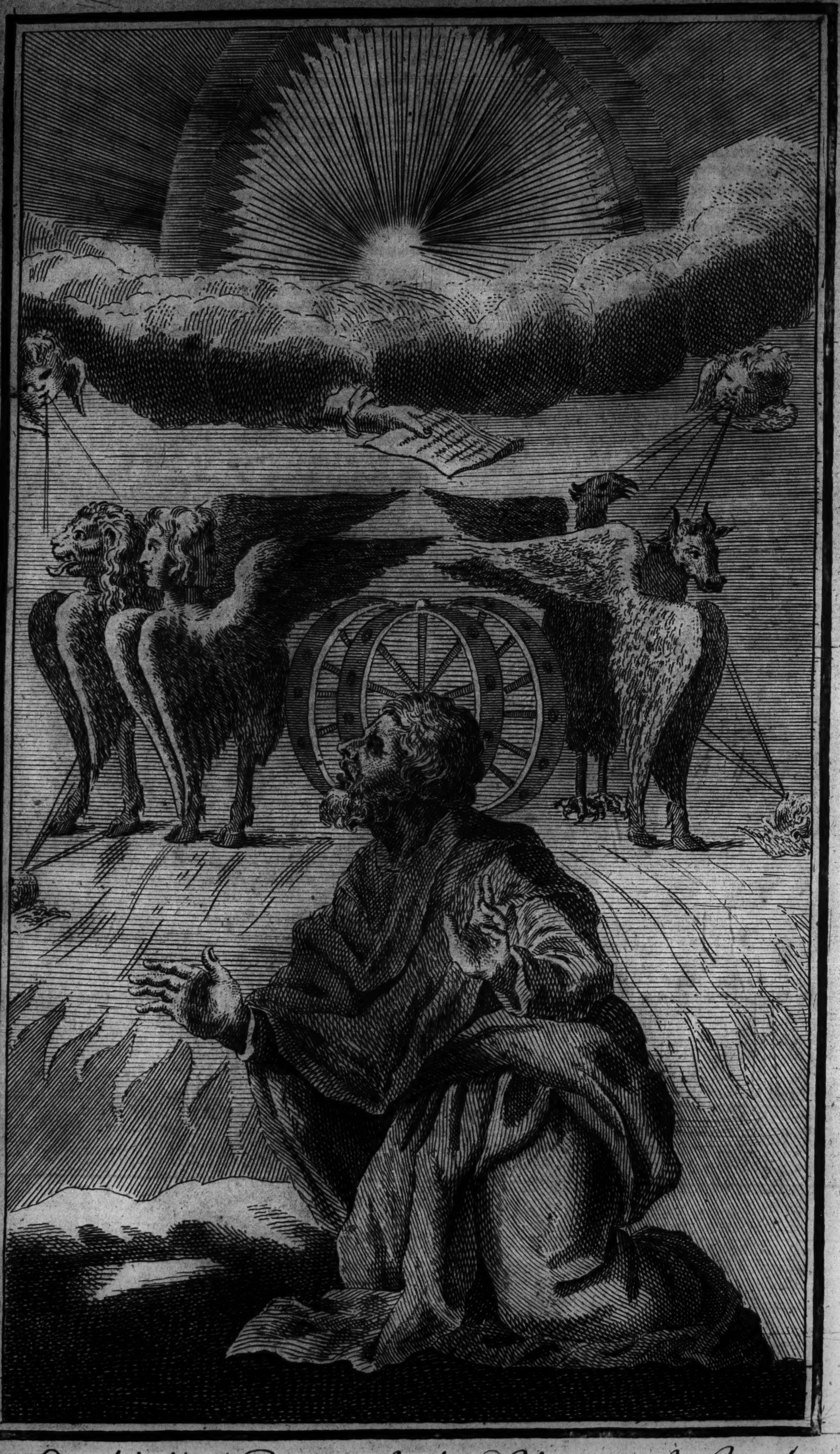
EZEKIEL CHAP. I. Ver. 4.



Ezekiel's Vision of the Glory of God.

THE BOOK

OF THE PROPHET

EZEKIEL.

AFTER that Jehoiachin, *by the Counſel of* Jeremiah *and* Ezekiel, *had yielded himſelf to* Nebuchadnezzar, *and ſo went into Captivity with his Mother, and divers of his Princes, and of the People, certain began to repent and murmur that they had obeyed the Prophet's Counſel, as though the Thing which they had propheſied ſhould not come to paſs, and therefore their Eſtate ſhould be ſtill miſerable under the* Chaldeans; *by reaſon whereof he confirmed his former Prophecies, declaring, by new Viſions and Revelations ſhewed unto him, that the City ſhould moſt certainly be deſtroyed, and the People grievouſly tormented by God's Plagues, inſomuch that they that remained, ſhould be brought into cruel Bondage. And leſt the Godly ſhould deſpair in theſe great Troubles, he aſſureth them that God will deliver his Church at the Time appointed, and alſo deſtroy their Enemies, which either afflicted them, or rejoyced in their Miſeries: The Effect of the one and the other ſhould chiefly be performed under* Chriſt, *of whom in this Book are many notable Promiſes, and in whom the Glory of the new Temple ſhould perfectly be reſtored. He propheſied theſe Things in* Chaldea, *at the ſame Time that* Jeremiah *propheſied in* Judah, *and began in the fifth Year of* Jehoiachin's *Captivity.*

CHAP. I.

The Time of Ezekiel's *Prophecy at* Chebar. *His Viſion of four Cherubims, of the four Wheels, and of the Glory of God.*

Q. *WHAT do you obſerve concerning the extraordinary Viſions deſcribed in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet ſets forth the Time and Place of his Prophecy, and relates a wonderful Viſion of four Beaſts, and of four Wheels. The Beaſts were four, either to denote the ſufficient Number of them, or to ſhew God would uſe the four Chiefs of his Angels; or, perhaps, to let the *Jews* know he had as many Officers of his Wrath, as they could find Corners of the World to fly unto. Each Face is compared to what is moſt excellent in its Kind; Man excels in Wiſdom, Lions in Strength, the Ox in Patience and Conſtancy of Labour, the Eagle in Speed and high Flight. So in the Miniſtry of Angels, and Government of the World, by the Providence of God, what is moſt excellent may be obſerved.

The Wheels being ſuppoſed ſpherical or round, every Way as a Globe, by an exact and curious framing of two Wheels, one in another; the four Semi-circles, which are in Wheels, may be well taken for theſe four Sides on which theſe Wheels do move, and ſuch a Wheel will readily be turned to all Points of the Compaſs, as a Ball on a Billiard-Table. They had no Occaſion to go back to turn, as we ſee other Chariots or Coaches muſt do, putting back ſomewhat to alter their Courſe, nothing could divert them, or put them out of their Courſe. So firm and ſure are the Methods, ſo unalterable and conſtant the Purpoſes of God, and ſo invariable the Obedience and Obſervance of holy Angels.

The Prophet ſees a farther Viſion of a Throne, whereon the Lord did manifeſt himſelf in the Form of a Man, as Ruler and Judge of all the World.

It was not the full Glory of God, it was not the Splendor of unveiled Majeſty, it was the Likeneſs of his Glory, ſuch as the Prophet might bear and tell to us; the Fulneſs of his Glory is inacceſſible Light, the Prophet could not ſee it, and unſpeakable Majeſty, and the Prophet could not tell it to us. Such was the Voice, and ſuch the Things ſpoken, that the Prophet ſeems to confeſs he could not ſay whoſe Voice it was, but it was divine, powerful and aſtoniſhing, being ſuch as is deſcribed, Verſe 25. ſuch was the Voice he heard.

Q. *Pray explain the Viſion in the 5th Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe: *Alſo out of the midſt thereof come the Likeneſs of four living Creatures. And this was their Appearance, they had the Likeneſs of a Man.——Out of the midſt thereof.* Of the Fire, or the *Amber* which appeared, as having four Wheels.——*The Likeneſs.* Theſe were not, indeed, living Creatures, but the Appearance of them, and, as ſome think, ſignify the four Evangeliſts;

geliſts; and as others, more likely, the holy Angels, whoſe Attendance beſpeaks the Majeſty of God, and the terrible Judgments to be executed on the *Jews*. And they are Four, either to denote the ſufficient Number of them, or to ſhew God would uſe the four Chiefs of his Angels; or perhaps to let the *Jews* know, he had as many Ways to puniſh, and as many Officers of his Wrath, as they could find Corners of the World to fly to. Or, ſince the Appearance of a Chariot in the midſt of this Viſion is ſuppoſed, 'tis fitteſt that four living Creatures ſhould anſwer to the four Wheels thereof.——*And this was their Appearance.* The Form in which theſe four each appeared to the firſt View, or at ſome Diſtance.——*The Likeneſs of a Man.* The Stature, the greater Part of them appeared of human Shape; for they had Face, Hands, and Thighs, and their Poſture erect in Standing, or Motion, as Man's is.

CHAP. II.

Ezekiel, *being terrify'd by the former Viſion, the Spirit helps him up. His Miſſion to the rebellious and obſtinate* Iſraelites. *He is encouraged and ſtrengthened againſt their Obſtinacy. The Meſſage itſelf. The Viſion of a Roll full of Woe and Lamentation.*

Q. WHAT *is the Purport of this Viſion?*

A. The Prophet being terrified by the former Viſion, is raiſed by God, who infuſed his holy Spirit into him, calling him to the prophetical Office among the Children of *Iſrael*, with Inſtructions concerning their Obſtinacy and Rebellion.

The Prophet, newly come out of that aſtoniſhing Trance wherein he lay, and ſtanding on his Feet, hearing what was ſpoken, and poſſibly looking if he might ſee who ſpoke, he diſcovers an Hand, either of one of thoſe Angels who miniſtred before the Lord, or the Hand of God, or of Chriſt: This might fortify the Prophet when he ſaw a Hand as ſoon with him, as he was ready to hear and obey; Power and Skill to defend and guide him will ever be as ready as his Obedience.

Q. *Of what Faſhion or Make were the Books in thoſe antient Times?*

A. Their Books were not of the Faſhion and Make as ours now are, but written in Parchment, and in the Length of it, and ſo one Piece faſtened to the other, till the whole would contain what was to be written; and then it was wrapt or rolled about a round Piece of Wood, faſhioned for that Purpoſe. In this Roll given to the Prophet were written ſuch Things as would make the ſtouteſt Heart lament, inwardly grieve and mourn, expreſs it in viſible Tokens and Woe, ſad Thoughts and Gueſſes at worſe to come; ſo this Prophet's Meſſage would be a moſt heavy Burden to the *Jews*, and other Nations againſt whom he propheſied.

CHAP. III.

The Prophet, at God's Command, eats up the Roll. His Charge, Inſtruction, and Encouragement againſt the Peoples Obſtinacy. God Inſtructs him in the Office and Uſefulneſs of a faithful Prophet, ſhews him his Glory, and foretells his future Uſage and Treatment. God ſhuts and opens the Prophet's Mouth.

Q. IN *the third Verſe the Prophet is commanded* to cauſe his Belly to eat, and to fill his Bowels with his Roll: *How are we to underſtand this?*

A. The Mouth is the proper Inſtrument of eating, but when Meat is eaten and digeſted, the Belly is ſaid to eat; the Prophet muſt not juſt taſte, but he muſt chew, ſwallow down, retain, and fill his Belly with God's Word. This ſhews that the Miniſters of God may ſpeak nothing as of themſelves, but that only which they have received of the Lord.

Q. *How could ſuch bitter Tidings be ſweet to the Prophet, as ſeems intimated by the Expreſſion,* it was in my Mouth as Honey for Sweetneſs, *when they were nothing but* Lamentations, and Mourning and Woe, *Chap.* ii. 10.

A. It was ſweet to receive ſuch Things by Revelation from God, and ſo to converſe with God; it is ſweet to foreſee future Events, to foretel God's juſt Judgments againſt Sinners, and to have Proſpect of a Vindication of the Honour of God, and Credit of the Prophet; who ſeeing all theſe Things with a well compoſed Mind, and juſt Zeal for God, could not but approve and be pleaſed therewith.

Q. *I deſire your Expoſition of Verſe* 6. Not to many People of a ſtrange Speech, and of an hard Language, whoſe Words thou canſt not underſtand: Surely, had I ſent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee.

A. This Verſe, tho' much the ſame, yet ſtrengthens and illuſtrates what is laid down in the foregoing. *Many People* here may be according to the Comprehenſiveneſs of the *Hebrew* Word, either numerous whoſe Multitudes would be their Pride, and tempt them to deride thee. Or, mighty in Valour, and Feats of War and Policy, whoſe Might would harden them. Or, far off, who would wonder a Stranger ſhould come to tell them their Deſtiny. Or, divers Nations that thou ſhouldeſt need divers Tongues, to ſpeak to them all in their own Language. This difficult Work is reſerved to thoſe whom *Shilo* will ſend, 'tis kept till the Times when the Spirit poured forth, ſhall enrich with the Gift of Tongues in Goſpel-days.——*Whoſe Words thou canſt not underſtand.* Words are articulate and ſignificant, and when underſtood, they are Words to the Hearer, but whilſt not underſtood, they are but empty and barbarous Sounds, as the Apoſtle obſerves, 1 *Cor.* xiv.——*Surely, had I ſent thee to them*, &c. Theſe Words in the *Hebrew* occaſion Difficulty, and Variety of Interpretations, but all of no great Moment. Some would refer them to the *Jews*, and make them ſpeak this Senſe; Hadſt thou gone in any Name but mine they would have heard, ſo parallel it with *John* v. 43. but 'tis better, and more agreeable with the Text, to refer it to many Nations mentioned, who would have heard what the Houſe of *Iſrael* refuſed to hear (of which *Jonah's Ninevites* are a pregnant Proof) and to them I would have ſent thee (ſay ſome) but that they did not underſtand thee; this is but a very ſlender Gueſs, and ill conſiſts with the Power of God, which can give the Tongue, if he would have ſent the Meſſage, as he intimated to *Moſes* unwilling to go. Our Verſion has well rendered the Words with that Aſſeveration, *ſurely*, is expreſſed what ſome will have the *Hebrew* Word to be, a Form of an Oath: God aſſures the Prophet the Meſſage is ſuch that any Men in their Wits would hear, go therefore to thy People, try whether they will act like Men and hear, eſpecially, as their Condition is quite different from what

I now ſuggeſt of the Nations, for the *Jews* are few, weak, reduced to this, by neglecting to hear Reaſon; they ſhould now hear, repent, ſeek me, do my Word, and live.

CHAP. IV.

God commands the Prophet to pourtray the City of Jeruſalem *upon a Tile; and by the Prophet's lying on his right and left Side, ſhews the Time of his Forbearance with it. By the Proviſion of the Siege, is ſhewn the Greatneſs of the Famine.*

Q. F*OR what Purpoſe was the Prophet order'd to delineate the City of* Jeruſalem?

A. The Prophet is commanded to draw a Map of *Jeruſalem* whence they were come, who now were in *Babylon*, and probably repented that they had left *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, and murmured againſt them that adviſed to it. But he let them know by this Sign, that *Jeruſalem* ſhould ſuffer much more than ever they ſuffered, that thoſe who remained, and were ſinning againſt God, ſhould bear a long Siege, a very grievous Famine, and cruel Slaughters.

Q. *What is intimated by the Prophet's being commanded to lie, firſt, on his* Left Side, *and then on his* Right.

A. The Siege being deſcribed, the Prophet is commanded to lie on his Left-ſide, a Poſture which was to ſignify the ſettled Reſolution of the Beſiegers, who had taken up their Abode, till the Siege was finiſhed in taking *Jeruſalem*; as the Prophet in the Sign, ſo God in very Deed, had patiently borne with them, and points out the Number of Years wherein apoſtate *Iſrael* had ſinned againſt him, for he did bear with them according to the Number of Days, wherein the Prophet lay on his Left-ſide.

At the End of 390 Days the Prophet was to turn to his Right-ſide, and bear the Iniquity of the Houſe of *Judah*: And that this is the true Account appears by the ſixth Verſe being compared with *Ch.* i. 1, 2. and *Ch.* viii. 1. By the Proviſionfor the Siege is ſhewn the greatneſs of the Famine. The Lord would take away their Proviſion that they might die with Want, be puniſhed for all their Sins, and diſappointed of all that their falſe Prophets promiſed them; and under the ſtrangeſt Diſappointments, be filled with the ſtrongeſt Amazement and Horror, at the woeful Miſeries of one another, falling dead in each others helpleſs Sight.

Q. *Pray explain the* 10*th Verſe*; And thy Meat which thou ſhalt eat, ſhall be by Weight, twenty Shekels a Day: From Time to Time ſhalt thou eat it?

A. Thy Meat. The mean and coarſe Bread which thou muſt eat, and be content with.—— *By Weight.* Not full, as once, not as much as you will, but a ſmall Pittance delivered by Weight to all, which beſpeaks the extreme Penury and Streights the City ſhould be brought to.—— *Twenty Shekels.* Some ſay five Ounces, others ten, the greater of the two ſcarce enough to maintain Life; and yet 'tis probable enough 'twas but five Ounces of Bread which was his Allowance. A hard Caſe, when the Law of the Twelve Tables allowed of a Pound of Bread daily to their Priſoners for their Diet. But here the Prophet hath but half that Allowance if the twenty Shekels were the Shekels of the Sanctuary; and he has but a Quarter of that Allowance if they were common Shekels by which his Moiety was weighed.—— *From Time to Time.* At ſet Hours this was weighed out, and no more could be had at any other Time, whether Morning or Evening, once in twenty-four Hours, ſtill at the appointed Hour; and poſſibly there might be different Hours appointed to different Perſons, and every one muſt obſerve his own Time.

CHAP. V.

The Prophet being commanded by God to ſhave his Head, and divide the Hair, repreſents thereby the many Plagues of the Jews *for their Rebellion, by Famine, Sword and Diſperſion.*

Q. W*HAT is the ſubject Matter of this Viſion?*

A. The Prophet is commanded by God to ſhave his Head and Beard: And we are told into how many Parts the Hair was to be divided. From the twelfth Verſe to the End of the Chapter, we have a particular and more expreſs Declaration how God would execute his ſevere Judgments upon his People: For in the laſt Verſe are mentioned the four ſore Plagues wherewith God waſtes Nations, all ſent out againſt the *Jews*, and their Commiſſion ſigned from Heaven with a Witneſs, *Our ſelf.* I have ſpoken it, ſaith the Lord.

Q. *How are we to underſtand the firſt Verſe, where the Prophet is commanded to* ſhave his Head and his Beard?

A. The Words at Length are theſe: *And thou Son of Man, take thee a ſharp Knife, take thee a Barber's Razor, and cauſe it to paſs upon thy Head, and upon thy Beard; then take thee Balances to divide the Hair.* 'Tis not unlikely that this Command was given to the Prophet as ſoon as he had underſtood the former Chapter's Viſion.—— *A ſharp Knife.* A Sword or Knife very ſharp; ſo the grievous Judgments of God are expreſſed, Chap. xxi. 9, to 16. and here the ſpeedy, ſweeping, and irreſiſtible Judgment againſt this People is aptly ſet forth. —— *A Barber's Razor.* This, in different Words, is the ſame Thing, and explains the former, and makes the Emblem more exact; for by Hair ſhaved and deſtroyed, is the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and its People, repreſented unto us. Now, that the Certainty of this may the more plainly appear, both as a Sword for Strength, and ſharp for cutting; nay, a Razor, much ſharper, that ſhaves cloſe, leaves nothing behind it, and cannot be reſiſted by the weak Hair, ſo ſhall it be here with this People. By the Head is ſignified the Chief, as King, Rulers, and the City; by the Beard, the common Citizens, or the Towns round about.—— *Take the Balances.* Juſt and exact Scales, an Emblem of Divine Juſtice and Equity.—— *To weigh.* The Prophet's weighing repreſents God's weighing theſe Men and their Ways.—— *The Hair.* Theſe light, vain, and worthleſs ones, Inhabitants of this ſinful City, 2 *Sam.* x. 4, 5. Thus he foretells them their Mourning, Reproach, and Deformity now coming upon them; for all this is ſignified by ſhaving the Head and Beard.

Q. *Pray expound the ſecond Verſe?*

A. Let us firſt recite the Words: *Thou ſhalt burn with Fire a third Part in the midſt of the City, when the Days of the Siege are fulfilled; and thou ſhalt take a third Part, and ſmite about it with a Knife; and a third Part thou ſhalt ſcatter in the*

Wind, and I will draw out a Sword after them. ——*Thou ſhalt burn with Fire.* Theſe Words note either Peſtilence, or Famine, with the Diſpleaſure of God, and the burning of the City and Citizens. —— *A third Part in the midſt of the City.* Deſcribed in the Title, Chap. iv. 1. a Type of what ſhould be done in *Jeruſalem.*—— *When the Days of the Siege are fulfilled.* When the 390 Days of thy lying againſt the pourtray'd City ſhall be ended; for when *Jeruſalem* ſhall be taken at the End of the Siege, the City ſhall be burnt, and who can ſay that none of the Inhabitants were burnt, as the two falſe Prophets, *Ahab* and *Zedekiah*, *Jer.* xxix. 22. Many, no doubt, who hid themſelves in Vaults and Cellars, were burnt in the burning of the City.—— *A third Part.* 'Tis not neceſſary that this Part ſhould be equal to the former, if it be proportionable 'tis enough, perhaps it might be ſomewhat leſs than the firſt Third.——*Smite about it with a Knife.* Theſe were ſuch as fell, either in defending the Walls, or ſallying out during the Siege, or were found in the Army when the City was taken, or were overtaken in their Flight, with their moſt unhappy King, or by Law-martial were adjudged to die by the Conqueror; alſo the Women and Children who died in the Siege by Famine and Peſtilence, might be a greater Third.—— *And a third Part.* Thoſe that fell to the *Chaldeans*, or fled to *Egypt*, or other Countries, tho' they eſcape ſomewhat longer, yet carrying the like Sins, are at laſt overtaken with the like Evils.—— *Thou ſhalt ſcatter in the Wind.* Tho' theſe diſpoſed of themſelves, yet there was God's Hand in it; he ſcattered thoſe who fled away of their own Heads.

Q. *I deſire you to explain the third Verſe*; Thou ſhalt alſo take thereof a few in Number, and bind them in thy Skirts?

A. As Men tie up in a Handkerchief, or in the Skirt of their Garment, what they would not loſe; ſo ſome few ſhall be kept, God will not caſt off the whole Houſe of *Iſrael.*

CHAP. VI.

The Deſtruction or Ruin of the Land threaten'd, for the abominable Sin of Idolatry. Promiſes of Favour to a Remnant. The Prophet is commanded to lament the Sins and Calamities of the People.

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects propoſed for our Conſideration in this?*

A. Here is a Prophecy of the Deſtruction of the Land, for the abominable Idolatry of the People; and the Prophet ſpeaks to all the Places where the *Iſraelites* accuſtomed to commit their Idolatry, threatening their Deſtruction, and that their dead Carcaſes ſhould be laid before their Idols, in Contempt of their Power and Force, which ſhall be neither able to deliver the People nor themſelves: But the Prophet nevertheleſs ſhews, that in all Dangers and Adverſities, God will preſerve a few to be the Seed of his Church, and call upon his Name.

The Prophet is commanded to ſmite with his Hand, and with his Foot. Here are two Actions, both ſignifying a Mixture of Affection in the Perſon, as Wonder and Amazement, Indignation and Diſpleaſure, Grief and Sorrow, Pity and and Commiſeration; all which are required in the Prophet, to ſhew both the Evil of the Sin he did ſee, and the Evil of Sufferings which he did foreſee on *Iſrael.*

Q. *Explain the ſeveral doubtful Phraſes and Expreſſions in Verſe 9?*

A. The whole Verſe runs thus; *And they that eſcape of you ſhall remember me among the Nations, whether they ſhall be carried Captives, becauſe I am broken with their whoriſh Heart, which hath departed from me, and with their Eyes which go a whoring after their Idols: And they ſhall loath themſelves for the Evils which they have committed in all their Abominations.* —— *And they that eſcape.* Some, not all of them; for ſome of the Eſcaped did not bethink themſelves, as *Jer.* xlii. 43. —— *Shall remember me.* My Precepts which they violated, my Mercies which they abuſed, my Threats which they deſpiſed, my Promiſes, my Judgments which I have executed; and ſhall conſider, and return, and ſeek me in their Affliction. —— *Among the Nations.* In their own Land they forgot and ſinned, in a ſtrange Land they ſhall remember and weep: So the Remnant is bettered by Afflicions. At Liberty they were Captives to Sin and Idols, when in Captivity they ſhall ſhake off that Bondage, and become my Servants. —— *Becauſe I am broken with their whoriſh Heart.* The *Chaldee* Paraphraſe and *Syriac* Verſion, read theſe Words actively, as doth the *Vulgar Latin*; *Becauſe,* or *when I have broken,* &c. And if this vary from the grammatical Conſtruction, yet it carries very good Senſe, and agreeable to the foregoing Words. Their whoriſh Hearts would ſtill have forgotten God, if he had not broken their Hearts with Judgments; but they remembred, when broken; and this breaking was the Occaſion or Cauſe of their remembring God. Others read this paſſively, as our Verſion, and as the *Hebrew* Form moſt uſually bears, *I am broken*; it is an Alluſion to a miſuſed Husband, whom a treacherous Wife hath broken; as, 1. His Peace and Content. 2. His Love and Tenderneſs. 3. His Patience and Forbearance. 4. His Purpoſes. 5. His Offers and Promiſes: So that, as overcome with Grief and Anger, and contrary to his natural Inclination, he ceaſes courting her Love, and in his Jealouſy takes Revenge, and then ſhe bethinks herſelf. —— *Their whoriſh Heart,* or *Heart of Whoredom*; *i. e.* idolatrous Hearts which were full of that Sin, addicted to it, delighted in it, and wedded to it.——*Which hath departed from me.* Idolatrous Hearts do actually depart from God, as an adulterous Wife actually departs from her Husband. ——*With their Eyes which go a whoring.* As it vexes a Husband to ſee his Wife fixing her Eyes with Delight on her Adulterer, and turning them with Scorn from him, as this breaks the Husband's Patience; ſo in this Caſe *Iſrael's* Eyes were to Idols, and delighted in them, expected Help from them, were ready to ſerve them: All which broke their Husband's, *i. e.* God's Patience, and provoked him to a ſevere Revenge. *They ſhall loath themſelves.* With a Mixture of Grief towards God offended, Indignation againſt themſelves offending, of Abhorrence of the Offence, and Shame before all for it, ſhall they ſhew their Repentance.——*For the Evils.* Or, *Wickedneſſes*; or, as *Pſal.* xxxii. 5. *Iniquities of Sin,* the deepeſt and darkeſt Part of Sin, the complicated Evils that were in each Act.——*Which they have committed in all their Abominations.* 'Tis a Hypocrite's Repentance, which is but for ſome, this, of the reſerved Remnant, ſhall be found for all Sins, for all Kinds of their Abominations.

CHAP. VII.

A Prophecy of the final and dreadful Deſolation of the Land. The pitiful Mourning of thoſe that eſcape. The Ruin of the Sanctuary, becauſe of Iſrael's *Sins. Under the Type of a Chain is repreſented their miſerable and mournful Captivity.*

Q. WHAT *is the Import of this Viſion?*

A. Here is a farther Prophecy of the final and moſt fearful Deſolation of the whole Land of *Judah*, the pitiful Lamentation of thoſe that eſcape; becauſe of their Sins they ſhall be like Men aſtoniſhed, both high and low, deſperate, heartleſs, comfortleſs, and void of Counſel, be carried into Captivity.

As to the Temple, God declares he would no longer protect it; but that Foreigners, who by the Law were excluded coming to it, ſhould enter and take the Riches of it as a lawful Prey. The Prophet is farther commanded to make a Chain, either to ſignify, that like Criminals they ſhould be brought in Chains before God their Judge, or as guilty and condemned, ſhould be led away in Chains, becauſe Murders and Oppreſſions abounded in them.

Q. *Pray expound the 11th Verſe?*

A. Violence is riſen up into a Rod of Wickedneſs; none of them ſhall remain, nor of their Multitude, nor of any of theirs, neither ſhall there be wailing for them.——*Violence.* With Fierceneſs, which is their natural Temper, *a bitter and haſty Nation,* Hab. i. 6. with Eagerneſs and impetuous Vigour executing, and with Injuſtice and Violence oppreſſing all. ————*Is riſen up.* Is grown up to be, though a Rod to puniſh bad Men, yet to be worſe than thoſe it puniſhes; in ſhort, you may expect the very worſt from the Power, Pride, and Violence of thoſe I am now letting in upon you. Or it may refer to *Iſrael*; thus your Tribe (or Rod, the ſame Word) bloſſoms, but it is in Sin, and that in Pride and Violence ſo grown, that it is a moſt wicked Rod of Injuſtice and Oppreſſion to your Neighbours, Brethren, Servants, *&c.* as *Jeremiah*, *Hoſea*, and other Prophets, as well as *Ezekiel*, complained. And now your Sins thus ripe, your Sorrows muſt be very near; as 'tis not many Months between the budding of the Tree, and the ripening and gathering of the Fruit.——*None of them ſhall remain.* This alſo is fairly applicable to both *Chaldeans* and *Jews*; the *Jews* ſhould be utterly waſted, firſt for their Sins, which God will puniſh by this violent, proud, mighty Enemy; and afterwards he will deſtroy Root and Branch of that mighty Oppreſſor: And ſo ſad ſhall the Sufferings of both be, that the Living ſhall not bewail their dead Friends, becauſe they ſhall judge the Dead in a better Caſe than the Living. And though the Words may have this double Meaning, yet I take them to refer principally and firſt to the *Jews*, and their approaching Sorrows.

Q. *Pray explain the firſt Clauſe of the 13th Verſe.* For the Seller ſhall not return to that which is ſold, although they were yet alive?

A. The Seller. He that now ſells is of that Age, that he can ſcarce promiſe himſelf till the Expiration of the ſeventy Years Captivity.——*Shall not return.* Either out of Captivity, or at the Year of Jubilee, he ſhall never, with Grief, behold another in Poſſeſſion of that he was forced to ſell. Nor does this contradict *Jeremiah*, who promiſed a Return; for he foretels the Return to Children and Poſterity; *Ezekiel* denies a Return to antient particular Rights, Eſtates, and Poſſeſſions.——*Although they were yet alive.* For if any ſhould ſurvive the Captivity, yet the Conqueror waſting and deſtroying all, would confound all diſtinct Titles, and antient Boundaries.

CHAP. VIII.

God brings the Prophet into the Temple, ſhews him the Image of Jealouſy, and the abominable Idolatry of the Jews, *and many creeping Things in the Chamber of Imagery; the Women weeping for* Tammuz; *the Worſhippers of the Sun. They make light of all Abominations; but God will puniſh them without Mercy.*

Q. W*Hat is there particularly remarkable in this extraordinary Viſion?*

A. In this Chapter is repreſented when, where, and how this Viſion was revealed unto the Prophet: God brings him into the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, and ſheweth him the Image of Jealouſy (very probably ſome Idol erected by *Manaſſeh*) and with divers creeping Things, abominable Beaſts, and graven Images.

Q. *Who was* Tammuz, *mentioned Verſe 14?*

A. Here is ſpecified the irreligious Worſhip of the Women, commemorating with Tears, an infamouſly luſtful and unclean Whoremonger or Votary of *Venus*, ſnatched from her by the Wound of a Boar, ſay ſome; this Weeping implies all the beaſtly Rites of the Idol. *Tammuz* was the Name of an heatheniſh Idol, which by many is held to have been the Idol of the *Egyptians*, called *Oſiris*, who had been the Husband of of one *Iſis*, who having loſt her Husband in *Egypt*, cauſed him every Year to be lamented by a kind of moſt filthy unclean Idolatry. Some ſay he was a Magician, others, a handſome young Man, but notorious for the Love of Women. Some ſay he was an Adulterer, ſlain by his Brother the King of *Egypt*, and mangled in Pieces; his torn Members were thrown into the River, but gathered by the fond Adultereſſes, and Rites of Worſhip fitted to ſo lewd an Idol, whoſe Adulteries, laſcivious Practices, and immodeſt Geſtures theſe She-prieſts acted over, before the Idol, with Men of the like Lewdneſs, of whom, what they received as Rewards of their proſtituting themſelves, was offered to *Venus*. The Place where this Idolatry was practiſed, is conceived to have been by the Gate of the Prieſts Court, in the Chambers that were built about the Temple for the Prieſts, and where Women, by the Law, were forbid to come; but nevertheleſs God's Temple was turned into a lewd Brothel.

Q. *In the third Verſe are related ſeveral Particulars of a wonderful Viſion ſhewn to* Ezekiel; *which I deſire may be explained?*

A. Let us firſt read the Words: *And he put forth the Form of an Hand, and took me by a Lock of mine Head, and the Spirit lift me up between the Earth and the Heaven, and brought me, in the Viſions of God, to* Jeruſalem, *to the Door of the* *inner Gate, that looketh towards the North, where was the Seat of the Image of Jealouſy, which provoketh to Jealouſy.* All this was acted viſionally, not corporally, or actually, and ſo is all that is here ſpoken of to Verſe 16.——*And the Spirit lift me up.* He ſeemed to fly as ſwift as a Bird through the Air.——*And brought me, in the Viſions of God,* to Jeruſalem. Carried me to *Jeruſalem*; where, in Viſions ſtrange and glorious, I beheld what was done there: This was no Deluſion, but a Revelation from Heaven, though all was done in Extaſy; yet he was fully aſſured of every Particular he ſaw done in the Temple, whither he was carried in Spirit, not in Body, by the Hand or Spirit of *Chriſt.*——*The inner Gate.* To the Door of the Gate of the inner Court, or Court of the Prieſts.——*Towards the North.* The Temple Courts had four Gates towards the four Quarters of the World; and this was the North-gate, which opened into the great Court where *Ahaz* had ſet up his *Damaſcene* Altar, 2 *Kings* xvi. 11. and where the Idols were ſet up too.——*The Image of Jealouſy,* of *Baal,* which *Manaſſeh* had ſet up. It was called the Image of Jealouſy, becauſe it was ſo notorious an Affront to God, who married *Iſrael* to himſelf, that above all others it provoked him to Anger againſt his People.

Chap. IX.

A Viſion, whereby is ſhewn God's Vengeance to Jeruſalem; *yet they that ſighed for its Abominations, are ſaved. The Prophet's Interceſſion for them. God, for their Abominations will ſhew them no Pity.*

Q. P*RAY what is chiefly remarkable in this Chapter?*

A. God commands ſix Men to execute his Vengeance in *Jeruſalem,* and the Glory of the Lord departed from the Place where it had before dwelt. The Almighty commands a Man, clothed in Linnen, firſt to ſet a Mark upon all the Godly; but it is too curious and uſeleſs to enquire what Mark this was. All this happened in Viſion, for a Figure of Diſtinction which God makes in his general Judgments between his Elect Believers, and the Wicked. Becauſe the Word *Mark,* in the *Hebrew* is *Thau,* and that the ſame Word is the Name of the Letter *T,* and that this Letter, in antient *Hebrew* Characters is made in Figure of a Croſs, ſome antients have believed, that this Mark was a Sign of the Croſs, which figured *Chriſt's* Blood, the only Mark of Salvation to Believers; but this is mere Conjecture, and no certainty in it. It is ſufficient, that, after the Manner of Man's ſpeaking, the Lord aſſures us his Remnant are ſafe, as what is under a Seal, which none can or dare break open.

The Mark being put on the Godly, the ſix Slaughter-men are commanded to deſtroy all the reſt without Remorſe, and not to regard even the Holineſs of the Temple.

The Prophet is greatly troubled; and in moſt humble and earneſt Manner addreſſing to God as one that would intreat Mercy for a ruined State, the Almighty gave a ſpeedy Anſwer, that his Reſolution was fixed, and that the Wicked ſhould find him a Sovereign vindicating himſelf. The Prophet concludes this Chapter with an Account of a Man cloathed in Linnen, reporting the Execution of his Commiſſion.

Q. *Pleaſe to expound the ſixth Verſe?*

A. It runs thus; *Slay utterly Old and Young, both Maids and little Children, and Women, but come not near any Man upon whom is the Mark; and begin at my Sanctuaary: Then they began at the antient Men which were before the Houſe.* My Purpoſe is to exterminate and make deſolate, therefore ſlay all that are deſigned for Deſtruction.——*Old.* Whoſe venerable Age, if innocent, might have awed you; whoſe Wiſdom might have preſerved others as well as themſelves,——*and Young.* Who ſhould be a Seed-plot, or Nurſery for Poſterity, cut off them too.——*Maids and little Children, and Women.* Regard no State or Sex, neither the Lovelineſs of the Virgin, the Prettineſs of the Infant, nor the Comelineſs and Gravity of the Matron, come not near to any ſealed Forehead; you may ſee them, though they bluſh for their own Sins, and for the Sins of others, yet they look up to me, and wait for me in the Way of my Judgments; they will lift up their Heads, and look you in the Face.——*Begin at my Sanctuary.* Both the Execution, and Diſtinction, at my Sanctuary; there are the great Sinners, and the abominable Sins which have brought this on them; and that all *Iſrael* may know, that nothing but Repentance can ſecure them.——*At the ancient Men.* The Seventy, or *Sanhedrim,* Chap. viii. 10, 11. who were Governors in the Temple and Houſe of God by their Office, but Idolaters by Practice and Principles.

Chap. X.

The Viſion of the Coals of Fire to be ſcattered over the City. Of the Wheels and Cherubims, with their Order and Motion.

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve from the Viſion in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a farther Viſion of the Glory of the Lord, being like unto the former, which the Prophet had ſeen by the River *Chebar:* And of the fiery Coals which the Man, cloathed with Linnen, received to ſcatter them over the City. This Fire was the Vengeance of God upon the People; for he ſits between the Cherubims, and is a conſuming Fire to Sin.

The Glory of the Lord ſeems here to have changed its Place three Times: Firſt, from the Cherubims to the Threſhold of the Temple; ſecondly, from thence again to the Cherubims; thirdly, over the Cherubims to the Eaſt-gate, or Foremoſt-gate, to go forth out of his Houſe.

The Prophet deſcribes both Cherubims and Wheels as full of Wiſdom, and as governed by an excellent Wiſdom. Angels have not Bodies of Fleſh; but Body here is figurative, ſo Back, Wings, and Hands: The two latter are expreſsly aſcribed to the Cherubims, *Ver.* 8. the two former not mentioned before, but all full of Eyes, that is, Wiſdom, Foreſight, Watchfulneſs, and Diligence.

Q. *Pray explain the Viſion in the ſecond Verſe.*

A. Let us firſt read the Words; *And he ſpake to the Man clothed with Linnen, and ſaid, Go in between the Wheels, even under the Cherub, and fill thine Hands with Coals of fire from between the Cherubims, and ſcatter them over the City. And he went in,* *in my Sight.* ——*And he*; that ſat on the Throne; that is, God who rules the World and Church.——By *the Man cloathed with Linnen* is meant *Chriſt.* ————*Go in between the Wheels.* It is ſaid, *Ch.* i. 18. that the Wings of the Wheels were dreadful; but here is a Divine Command which encourages him, inſures his Safety, and leſſens the Dread and Terror. Whether he was to go in between the four, or between the two foremoſt, or rather between the Wheels that made up one Wheel, is not material to enquire.————*And fill thine Hand with Coals.* This expreſſes the Fulneſs of the Vengeance which would overtake them, and the Certainty and Speedineſs of Judgments; for ſuch a Quantity of Coals in the Hand, ready to be ſcattered abroad, will very ſoon ſet all in a Flame. ——*From between the Cherubims.* Which either intimates, that this Fire was the Vengeance of God upon them; for he ſits between the Cherubims, and is a conſuming Fire to Sin; or, that the Vengeance was for Sins againſt the Grace of God, who ſat between the Cherubims, and thence gave out his Grace toward *Iſrael*, *Exod.* xxv. 20, 21. *Heb.* ix. 5. But abuſed Grace will kindle into Fire.——*And ſcatter them over the City.* That it may take Fire in all Parts, and none eſcape; ſo caſt the Fire, that the Coals may fall on every Part.——*And he went in in my Sight.* Which aſſured the Prophet of the Certainty, and intimated too the Speed of the Effect, which would happen in five Years Time.

Chap. XI.

The Prophet ſhews the wicked and baſe Counſel and Preſumption of the Princes of Iſrael. *A Prophecy of their Sin and Puniſhment. The Prophet being troubled, God ſhews him his Purpoſe in ſaving a Remnant, but of puniſhing the Obſtinate. The Glory of the Lord leaves the City.* Ezekiel *brought in a Viſion to his captive Brethren in* Chaldea.

Q. WHAT *are the Viſions related in this Chapter?*

A. God ſhews the Prophet the Wickedneſs of the chief Rulers in *Jeruſalem*, who mock'd at his Prophecies; and the Prophet is commanded to propheſy againſt them. The Charge and Command is doubled, both to engage the Prophet, and to intimate a double Miſery coming upon them, a Miſery they ſhall not have Courage to laugh at.

The Prophet in his Viſion ſaw the ſudden Death of *Pelatiah*, as an Execution of the aforeſaid Threatnings; wherefore he feared God would preſently deſtroy every Thing, and bring ſtrange Judgments on the reſt of the People.

God ſhews the Prophet, how thoſe at *Jeruſalem* reproached thoſe who were gone into Captivity, as though they were caſt off and forſaken by God, who, on the contrary, promiſes them both ſpiritual and corporeal Bleſſings: That they ſhall be yet a little Church; ſhewing the Lord will ever have ſome to call upon his Name, whom we will preſerve and reſtore, though they may be afflicted for a Time.

The ſame Spirit of God, which carried the Prophet to *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, now brings him back in like Manner, to his captive Brethren in *Chaldea*; not corporally, but in an Extaſy or Rapture of his Spirit, by the Power of God, who commanded him to ſpeak plainly and fully to the People.

Q. *Give the true Senſe and Import of the Promiſe in the nineteenth Verſe.*

A. And I will give them one Heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you; and I will take the ſtony Heart out of their Fleſh, and will give them an Heart of Fleſh.——This may be underſtood cauſally, and ſo gives an Account how the Reformation, mentioned, *Ver.* 18. ſhould be effected.——*I will.* The Lord himſelf, and he aſſumes it thrice in this Verſe.——*Give them.* Of free Grace it is that this renewed Heart is in any one; Length, Grievouſneſs, and Multiplicity of Troubles will not, cannot work it, unleſs God frame and renew it.——*One Heart.* They were ſcattered abroad through the *Babyloniſh* Dominions, were under various Circumſtances which might divide them, and keep them from each other, and from centering in a Return, but I will ſtir up their Heart, and with one Heart they ſhall gather together, when the Return ſhould be proclaimed; *Cyrus* ſhall firſt give them Leave, and I will next give them a Heart to return; and on their Way there ſhall be great Unity; and when come to *Jeruſalem*, the Temple, and reſtore religion, as *Jer.* xxxii. 39. I will give them Judgment and Underſtanding, Mind and Will, Affections and Conſcience; all fixed only on God, and their Obedience to to him, as Verſe 20. This one Heart is called a new Spirit. ——*I will put a new Spirit within you.* An excellent, regenerate, holy and ſincere Soul: They were of a baſe, corrupt, and hypocritical Spirit, divided between God and Idols; but when God brings them back, they ſhall have another Frame, quite changed and made new.————*The ſtony Heart.* That hard, inflexible, undutiful, incorrigible Diſpoſition which was in their Fathers, who refuſed to be amended; I will take that away——*Out of their Fleſh.* Fleſh in Scripture ſometimes ſignifies an unrenewed, carnal, ſinful State, as *Rom.* vii. 18. ſometimes the Body, *Pſal.* xxxviii. 3. ſometimes the whole Man, *Luke* iii. 6. *Rom.* iii. 20. and in this Place, the Perſons, the whole Man. ————*Will give them an Heart of Fleſh.* Not like the old hard and ſtony, but tractable, conſiderate, obedient, ſubmiſſive to my Law, and reformable on my Admonitions. All which in Part, and ſo far as concerned thoſe Times, was fulfilled in the *Jews* that returned from *Babylon*, and more fully is made good to us in theſe Goſpel-Days.

Chap. XII.

The Prophet, in his own Perſon, repreſents the Flight of Zedekiah, *and of the People; eats and drinks with Trembling, in Token of the Deſolation of the* Jews. *God reproves their Preſumption, and foretels the certain and ſudden Accompliſhment of the Viſion.*

Q. GIVE *the Contents of this Viſion?*

A. The Prophet is commanded by God to repreſent, in his own Perſon, the Flight and Captivity of King *Zedekiah* and his People, except a few; he is alſo ordered to eat his Bread and drink his Water with Care and Anguiſh, for a Token to the *Jews*.

God rejects the taunting Proverb of the *Jews* foretelling, on the contrary, a ſudden Accompliſh, ment of his Prophecies. Theſe proverbialiſing Scoffers compared the true Prophet with the falſe, theſe predicted Proſperity and Return of the Captives from *Babylon*, within few Years, and before *Jeruſalem* be deſtroyed; ſo they flattered the People. The true Prophets foretel long Captivity, bloody Slaughters, ſtrait Siege, and a burnt City and Temple. The Lord directs the Prophet to warn the People mildly, to tell them the Days are very near indeed, and there will be no Adjournment. Now it will be done as ſoon as ſpoken almoſt, and God will make ſhort Work with them in Righteouſneſs, and a few Days will bring his Judgments to Light.

Q. *The ſecond Verſe contains ſome Expreſſions which I ſhould be glad to have explained?*

A. Son of Man, thou dwelleſt in the midſt of a rebellious Houſe, which have Eyes to ſee, and ſee not; they have Ears to hear, and hear not, for they are a rebellious Houſe. The Prophet knowing the Captivity would be long, had ſettled his Habitation, and probably found ſome Favour with the Enemy, who might accommodate him with a better, or more convenient Abode than the reſt of his Brethren had.——*In the midſt of a rebellious Houſe.* In their Captivity, too many of them retained their ſtubborn, murmuring and rebellious Humour, and blamed, quarrelled with, and condemned thoſe who counſelled them to yield, and themſelves for yielding; and probably excited thoſe at *Jeruſalem* to hold out, ſave themſelves, and reſcue their Brethren: Theſe will ridicule thy Words, yet ſpeak them, for they are mine, and ſhall be accompliſhed. —— *They have Ears to hear.* They have Senſe and Capacity enough, if they would but exert it, to underſtand and conſider what thou ſpeakeſt; expreſſed by a double Phraſe, *Eyes and Ears*; yet they contemptuouſly refuſe to ſee and hear, they will not conſider, lay to Heart, repent and reform.——*For they are a rebellious Houſe.* They have conſpired together, and all they will reſolve or deſign is, to do whatever is good in their own Eyes, and whatever their wild Imaginations, raiſed by falſe Prophets, ſuggeſt.

Chap. XIII.

God commands Ezekiel *to reprove the falſe Prophets, and their untempered Mortar; and the lying Propheteſſes and their Pillows. Their Hunting the Souls of the People; and their making the Heart of the Righteous ſad.*

Q. WHAT *were thoſe* Pillows *for the* Arm-Holes, *and* Kerchiefs *mentioned in the 18th Verſe?*

A. This is a figurative Speech, expreſſing their Flatteries and Security, which the Women promiſed to every one, who came to know the Fate of themſelves and others; in Token of which Safety and Eaſe either theſe Women did put them for theſe Enquirers to ſleep on, or elſe to lean on, as they lay on their Side at Meat; or elſe theſe Gypſies or Fortune-tellers did ſleep, or pretend to ſleep on thoſe Pillows, and thereby ſignify the Peace, Safety and Eaſe, which theſe People ſhould have.

The *Kerchiefs* were either Veils or triumphal Hats or Caps, which were made for the Propheteſſes, and theſe were put upon the Head of every one who conſulted them: By theſe Habits the deceived Enquirer was either perſuaded he was made fit to receive the Oracle, or was to interpret the Sign as a Promiſe of Victory over the *Babylonians*, and a triumphant Reſt in *Judea*. The Veils were put on to ſignify the Shame with which their Enemies Faces ſhould be covered: The triumphant Cap, to denote the Joy of the *Jews*; but the Event ſhewed which belonged to the one and the other.

Q. *The Senſe of ſome Expreſſions in the 19th Verſe ſeems a little obſcure; which therefore pray explain?*

A. Let us firſt ſee what the Verſe contains: *And will ye pollute me among my People for Handfuls of Barley, and for Pieces of Bread, to ſlay the Souls that ſhould not die, and to ſave the Souls alive that ſhould not live, by your lying to my People that hear your Lies?* ——*Will ye pollute?* Prophanely contradict what is indeed ſpoken in my Name, pretending my Name for that I never ſpake, nor will do? ——*Among my People.* My peculiar People, who have my Word and Prophets, by which your Lies are diſcovered, and farther will be: What ſhameleſs Impudence is it to abuſe my Name, counterfeit my Hand and Seal, to them that do, or might know both! —— *Handfuls of Barley.* For a mean Reward, tell Fortunes for a Penny. But there may be herein a Proviſion made againſt the Famine which was threaten'd, and would come, for which this Grain might be kept. —— *Pieces of Bread.* Bread, Morſels of Bread; mercenary Sorcereſſes! that thus make Sale of their Predictions to feed their hungry Bellies! —— *To ſlay the Souls that ſhould not die.* You denounce Evil to the Beſt, perhaps threatening thoſe in *Babylon* with Death, whom God will keep alive there.——*By your lying to my People that hear your Lies.* Moſt falſely flattering thoſe that come to you, and moſt maliciouſly threatening thoſe that come not, becauſe they know you ſpeak your own Lies. You ſave whom I'll kill, and kill whom I'll ſave.

Chap. XIV.

The Elders of Iſreal *ask Counſel of God, who anſwers them according to the Multitude of their Idols, threatens their Ruin, and exhorts to Repentance for fear of Judgment. God's irrevocable Sentence of bringing Famine upon them. Of noiſome Beaſts, and a deſtroying Sword. Of Peſtilence. A Remnant ſhall be preſerved for the Comfort of others.*

Q. WHAT *Subject does the Prophet handle in this Chapter?*

A. Some of the eldeſt of the People came to the Prophet, as if to ask Counſel of God; but the Lord by his Prophet anſwereth them according to the Deſert of their Idolatry and Hypocriſy, threatning Ruin to all ſuch Enquirers, and to the ſeducing Prophets who propheſied to the Enquirers according to what they deſired and wiſhed for, annexing a Promiſe for the Penitent.

God ſhews that the Interceſſions, even of the moſt holy Men that ever were (ſuch as were *Noah, Daniel,* and *Job*, moſt eminent for moſt holy and upright walking with God, very dear to him, exceedingly deſirous of the Welfare of others, powerful in Prayer) would not be able to help *Jeruſalem*, nor any People whom he had firmly decreed to puniſh; but that they ſhould only deliver their own Souls.

The Almighty foretels that ſome ſhall be left, and ſhall be alſo carried to the other *Jews* to *Ba-*

inner Gate, that looketh towards the North, where was the Seat of the Image of Jealouſy, which provoketh to Jealouſy. All this was acted viſionally, not corporally, or actually, and ſo is all that is here ſpoken of to Verſe 16. —— *And the Spirit lift me up.* He ſeemed to fly as ſwift as a Bird through the Air. —— *And brought me, in the Viſions of God, to* Jeruſalem. Carried me to *Jeruſalem*; where, in Viſions ſtrange and glorious, I beheld what was done there: This was no Deluſion, but a Revelation from Heaven, though all was done in Extaſy; yet he was fully aſſured of every Particular he ſaw done in the Temple, whither he was carried in Spirit, not in Body, by the Hand or Spirit of *Chriſt*. —— *The inner Gate.* To the Door of the Gate of the inner Court, or Court of the Prieſts. ———— *Towards the North.* The Temple Courts had four Gates towards the four Quarters of the World; and this was the North-gate, which opened into the great Court where *Ahaz* had ſet up his *Damaſcene* Altar, 2 *Kings* xvi. 11. and where the Idols were ſet up too. ———— *The Image of Jealouſy*, of *Baal*, which *Manaſſeh* had ſet up. It was called the Image of Jealouſy, becauſe it was ſo notorious an Affront to God, who married *Iſrael* to himſelf, that above all others it provoked him to Anger againſt his People.

CHAP. IX.

A Viſion, whereby is ſhewn God's Vengeance to Jeruſalem; *yet they that ſighed for its Abominations, are ſaved. The Prophet's Interceſſion for them. God, for their Abominations will ſhew them no Pity.*

Q. P*RAY what is chiefly remarkable in this Chapter?*

A. God commands ſix Men to execute his Vengeance in *Jeruſalem*, and the Glory of the Lord departed from the Place where it had before dwelt. The Almighty commands a Man, clothed in Linnen, firſt to ſet a Mark upon all the Godly; but it is too curious and uſeleſs to enquire what Mark this was. All this happened in Viſion, for a Figure of Diſtinction which God makes in his general Judgments between his Elect Believers, and the Wicked. Becauſe the Word *Mark*, in the *Hebrew* is *Thau*, and that the ſame Word is the Name of the Letter *T*, and that this Letter, in antient *Hebrew* Characters is made in Figure of a Croſs, ſome antients have believed, that this Mark was a Sign of the Croſs, which figured *Chriſt*'s Blood, the only Mark of Salvation to Believers; but this is mere Conjecture, and no certainty in it. It is ſufficient, that, after the Manner of Man's ſpeaking, the Lord aſſures us his Remnant are ſafe, as what is under a Seal, which none can or dare break open.

The Mark being put on the Godly, the ſix Slaughter-men are commanded to deſtroy all the reſt without Remorſe, and not to regard even the Holineſs of the Temple.

The Prophet is greatly troubled; and in moſt humble and earneſt Manner addreſſing to God as one that would intreat Mercy for a ruined State, the Almighty gave a ſpeedy Anſwer, that his Reſolution was fixed, and that the Wicked ſhould find him a Sovereign vindicating himſelf. The Prophet concludes this Chapter with an Account of a Man cloathed in Linnen, reporting the Execution of his Commiſſion.

Q. *Pleaſe to expound the ſixth Verſe?*

A. It runs thus; *Slay utterly Old and Young, both Maids and little Children, and Women, but come not near any Man upon whom is the Mark; and begin at my Sanctuaary: Then they began at the antient Men which were before the Houſe.* My Purpoſe is to exterminate and make deſolate, therefore ſlay all that are deſigned for Deſtruction. —— *Old.* Whoſe venerable Age, if innocent, might have awed you; whoſe Wiſdom might have preſerved others as well as themſelves, —— *and Young.* Who ſhould be a Seed-plot, or Nurſery for Poſterity, cut off them too. —— *Maids and little Children, and Women.* Regard no State or Sex, neither the Lovelineſs of the Virgin, the Prettineſs of the Infant, nor the Comelineſs and Gravity of the Matron, come not near to any ſealed Forehead; you may ſee them, though they bluſh for their own Sins, and for the Sins of others, yet they look up to me, and wait for me in the Way of my Judgments; they will lift up their Heads, and look you in the Face. —— *Begin at my Sanctuary.* Both the Execution, and Diſtinction, at my Sanctuary; there are the great Sinners, and the abominable Sins which have brought this on them; and that all *Iſrael* may know, that nothing but Repentance can ſecure them. —— *At the ancient Men.* The Seventy, or *Sanhedrim*, Chap. viii. 10, 11. who were Governors in the Temple and Houſe of God by their Office, but Idolaters by Practice and Principles.

CHAP. X.

The Viſion of the Coals of Fire to be ſcattered over the City. Of the Wheels and Cherubims, with their Order and Motion.

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve from the Viſion in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a farther Viſion of the Glory of the Lord, being like unto the former, which the Prophet had ſeen by the River *Chebar*: And of the fiery Coals which the Man, cloathed with Linnen, received to ſcatter them over the City. This Fire was the Vengeance of God upon the People; for he ſits between the Cherubims, and is a conſuming Fire to Sin.

The Glory of the Lord ſeems here to have changed its Place three Times: Firſt, from the Cherubims to the Threſhold of the Temple; ſecondly, from thence again to the Cherubims; thirdly, over the Cherubims to the Eaſt-gate, or Foremoſt-gate, to go forth out of his Houſe.

The Prophet deſcribes both Cherubims and Wheels as full of Wiſdom, and as governed by an excellent Wiſdom. Angels have not Bodies of Fleſh; but Body here is figurative, ſo Back, Wings, and Hands: The two latter are expreſsly aſcribed to the Cherubims, *Ver.* 8. the two former not mentioned before, but all full of Eyes, that is, Wiſdom, Foreſight, Watchfulneſs, and Diligence.

Q. *Pray explain the Viſion in the ſecond Verſe.*

A. Let us firſt read the Words; *And he ſpake to the Man clothed with Linnen, and ſaid, Go in between the Wheels, even under the Cherub, and fill thine Hands with Coals of fire from between the Cherubims, and ſcatter them over the City. And he went in,* *in my Sight.* ——*And he;* that ſat on the Throne; that is, God who rules the World and Church.—— By *the Man cloathed with Linnen* is meant *Chriſt.* ————*Go in between the Wheels.* It is ſaid, *Ch.* i. 18. that the Wings of the Wheels were dreadful; but here is a Divine Command which encourages him, inſures his Safety, and leſſens the Dread and Terror. Whether he was to go in between the four, or between the two foremoſt, or rather between the Wheels that made up one Wheel, is not material to enquire.————*And fill thine Hand with Coals.* This expreſſes the Fulneſs of the Vengeance which would overtake them, and the Certainty and Speedineſs of Judgments; for ſuch a Quantity of Coals in the Hand, ready to be ſcattered abroad, will very ſoon ſet all in a Flame. ——*From between the Cherubims.* Which either intimates, that this Fire was the Vengeance of God upon them; for he ſits between the Cherubims, and is a conſuming Fire to Sin; or, that the Vengeance was for Sins againſt the Grace of God, who ſat between the Cherubims, and thence gave out his Grace toward *Iſrael*, *Exod.* xxv. 20, 21. *Heb.* ix. 5. But abuſed Grace will kindle into Fire.——*And ſcatter them over the City.* That it may take Fire in all Parts, and none eſcape; ſo caſt the Fire, that the Coals may fall on every Part.——*And he went in in my Sight.* Which aſſured the Prophet of the Certainty, and intimated too the Speed of the Effect, which would happen in five Years Time.

CHAP. XI.

The Prophet ſhews the wicked and baſe Counſel and Preſumption of the Princes of Iſrael. *A Prophecy of their Sin and Puniſhment. The Prophet being troubled, God ſhews him his Purpoſe in ſaving a Remnant, but of puniſhing the Obſtinate. The Glory of the Lord leaves the City.* Ezekiel *brought in a Viſion to his captive Brethren in* Chaldea.

Q. W*HAT are the Viſions related in this Chapter?*

A. God ſhews the Prophet the Wickedneſs of the chief Rulers in *Jeruſalem*, who mocked at his Prophecies; and the Prophet is commanded to propheſy againſt them. The Charge and Command is doubled, both to engage the Prophet, and to intimate a double Miſery coming upon them, a Miſery they ſhall not have Courage to laugh at.

The Prophet in his Viſion ſaw the ſudden Death of *Pelatiah*, as an Execution of the aforeſaid Threatnings; wherefore he feared God would preſently deſtroy every Thing, and bring ſtrange Judgments on the reſt of the People.

God ſhews the Prophet, how thoſe at *Jeruſalem* reproached thoſe who were gone into Captivity, as though they were caſt off and forſaken by God, who, on the contrary, promiſes them both ſpiritual and corporeal Bleſſings: That they ſhall be yet a little Church; ſhewing the Lord will ever have ſome to call upon his Name, whom we will preſerve and reſtore, though they may be afflicted for a Time.

The ſame Spirit of God, which carried the Prophet to *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, now brings him back in like Manner, to his captive Brethren in *Chaldea*; not corporally, but in an Extaſy or Rapture of his Spirit, by the Power of God, who commanded him to ſpeak plainly and fully to the People.

Q. *Give the true Senſe and Import of the Promiſe in the nineteenth Verſe.*

A. And I will give them one Heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you; and I will take the ſtony Heart out of their Fleſh, and will give them an Heart of Fleſh.——This may be underſtood cauſally, and ſo gives an Account how the Reformation, mentioned, *Ver.* 18. ſhould be effected.——*I will.* The Lord himſelf, and he aſſumes it thrice in this Verſe.——*Give them.* Of free Grace it is that this renewed Heart is in any one; Length, Grievouſneſs, and Multiplicity of Troubles will not, cannot work it, unleſs God frame and renew it.—— *One Heart.* They were ſcattered abroad through the *Babyloniſh* Dominions, were under various Circumſtances which might divide them, and keep them from each other, and from centering in a Return, but I will ſtir up their Heart, and with one Heart they ſhall gather together, when the Return ſhould be proclaimed; *Cyrus* ſhall firſt give them, Leave, and I will next give them a Heart to return; and on their Way there ſhall be great Unity; and when come to *Jeruſalem*, the Temple, and reſtore religion, as *Jer.* xxxii. 39. I will give them Judgment and Underſtanding, Mind and Will, Affections and Conſcience; all fixed only on God, and their Obedience to to him, as Verſe 20. This one Heart is called a new Spirit. ——*I will put a new Spirit within you.* An excellent, regenerate, holy and ſincere Soul: They were of a baſe, corrupt, and hypocritical Spirit, divided between God and Idols; but when God brings them back, they ſhall have another Frame, quite changed and made new.————*The ſtony Heart.* That hard, inflexible, undutiful, incorrigible Diſpoſition which was in their Fathers, who refuſed to be amended; I will take that away——*Out of their Fleſh.* Fleſh in Scripture ſometimes ſignifies an unrenewed, carnal, ſinful State, as *Rom.* vii. 18. ſometimes the Body, *Pſal.* xxxviii. 3. ſometimes the whole Man, *Luke* iii. 6. *Rom.* iii. 20. and in this Place, the Perſons, the whole Man. ————*Will give them an Heart of Fleſh.* Not like the old hard and ſtony, but tractable, conſiderate, obedient, ſubmiſſive to my Law, and reformable on my Admonitions. All which in Part, and ſo far as concerned thoſe Times, was fulfilled in the *Jews* that returned from *Babylon*, and more fully is made good to us in theſe Goſpel-Days.

CHAP. XII.

The Prophet, in his own Perſon, repreſents the Flight of Zedekiah, *and of the People; eats and drinks with Trembling, in Token of the Deſolation of the* Jews. *God reproves their Preſumption, and foretels the certain and ſudden Accompliſhment of the Viſion.*

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The Elders of Iſreal *aſk Counſel of God, who anſwers them according to the Multitude of their Idols, threatens their Ruin, and exhorts to Repentance for fear of Judgment. God's irrevocable Sentence of bringing Famine upon them. Of noiſome Beaſts, and a deſtroying Sword. Of Peſtilence. A Remnant ſhall be preſerved for the Comfort of others.*

Q. WHAT *Subject does the Prophet handle in this Chapter?*

A. Some of the eldeſt of the People came to the Prophet, as if to aſk Counſel of God; but the Lord by his Prophet anſwereth them according to the Deſert of their Idolatry and Hypocriſy, threatning Ruin to all ſuch Enquirers, and to the ſeducing Prophets who propheſied to the Enquirers according to what they deſired and wiſhed for, annexing a Promiſe for the Penitent.

God ſhews that the Interceſſions, even of the moſt holy Men that ever were (ſuch as were *Noah, Daniel,* and *Job,* moſt eminent for moſt holy and upright walking with God, very dear to him, exceedingly deſirous of the Welfare of others, powerful in Prayer) would not be able to help *Jeruſalem,* nor any People whom he had firmly decreed to puniſh; but that they ſhould only deliver their own Souls.

The Almighty foretels that ſome ſhall be left, and ſhall be alſo carried to the other *Jews* to *Babylon*

bylon, as an Example of God's Juſtice towards them. The Lord declaring they ſhould be fully ſatisfied that he had but too much Cauſe and moſt juſt Reaſon for all he had done againſt *Jeruſalem* and its Land, and Inhabitants of both; that they ſhould know his Hand as they felt the Weight; ſo they ſhould ſee the Juſtice of it too againſt them, and the Mercy of it towards them.

Q. *In what Senſe may God be ſaid to* deceive a Prophet, *and yet puniſh him for what he may ſay under that Deception, as ſeems intimated, Verſe* 9?

A. The whole Verſe runs thus: *And if the Prophet be deceived when he hath ſpoken a Thing, I the Lord have deceived that Prophet, and I will ſtretch out my Hand upon him, and I will deſtroy him from the midſt of my People* Iſrael. The Prophet who makes this his Trade and Gain, the falſe Prophet, who ſpeaks all ſerene and quiet, in hopes of Reward for his kind Anſwer to thoſe who deſired to hear what might pleaſe them, more than what God commanded, promiſed, or threatned, ſuch an one I permitted to err, or juſtly left him in his Blindneſs, that he ſhall not diſcern his own Self-deceivings; or elſe when ſuch Prophet promiſes Good, and thinks the Concurrence of all ſecond Cauſes tends to it, yet I will diſappoint and fruſtrate, as, *Iſa.* xliv. 25. if the Confederacies to ſave were in Likelihood ſufficient, and it were no Preſumption to hope the beſt, if your Prophets on this Ground promiſed you Succeſs, yet they ſhall deceive you, for I would defeat and diſappoint both them and you: Thus the Senſe will not carry a moral and culpable deceiving, but a juſt defeating and diſappointing, or diſabling ſecond Cauſes, on which the Diſappointment of Hopes will follow. If *Egypt*'s Arms had ſo weakened the *Babylonians*, that none but wounded Men remained, yet the Promiſe of your Eſcape ſhall fail you, O *Iſraelites*, for, *Jer.* xxxvii. 10, 11. theſe ſhould riſe up and burn your City.

CHAP. XV.

By the Unfitneſs of the Vine-branch for any Work, is ſhewn the Rejection and utter Ruin of Jeruſalem, *for their Sins.*

Q. IN *what Senſe was the Houſe of* Iſrael *compared to a* Vine?

A. The Houſe of *Iſrael* is often compared to a Vine, which when barren or fruitleſs, is very contemptible and unprofitable; this the Prophet minds them of to humble them, and awaken them to Fruitfulneſs: By this is meant, that if *Jeruſalem*, which bare the Name of God's Church, did not bring forth Fruit, it ſhould be utterly deſtroyed: For though the People eſcaped one Danger, another ſhould overtake them; but they committed not one ſingle Treſpaſs, but had been ſo perpetually treſpaſſing, that it ſeemed a continued Act, and all done with the greateſt Aggravation.

Q. *The Similitude of a* Vine-Tree *is farther ſhewn Verſe* 6. *in another Inſtance; which pray explain?*

A. Let us ſee how it ſtands in the Text: *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, As the Vine-tree among the Trees of the Foreſt, which I have given to the Fire for Fewel, ſo will I give the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, ver. 6.—— *As the Vine-trees among the Trees of the Foreſt.* Either thus, When the Vine is, as the wild Trees of the Foreſt, barren and fruitleſs, it is leſs worth than the Foreſt-tree; ſo are you, O Houſe of *Iſrael*, in my Account. Or elſe, As Trees of the Foreſt are for the Fire in all the leſs valuable Parts of them, ſo are all the Branches and Body of the barren Vine, which you are, O *Jeruſalemites*.—— *So will I give the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem. For by their Sins they have kindled a Fire, which ſhall burn every barren Branch in the barren and fruitleſs Vine.

Q. *There are Difficulties in the ſeventh Verſe, which I ſhould be glad to have clear'd up?*

A. In order to which let us firſt recite the Words: *And I will ſet my Face againſt them; they ſhall go out from one Fire, and another Fire ſhall devour them. And ye ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I ſet my Face againſt them.*—*I will ſet my Face againſt them.* I will look upon them with an angry and diſpleaſed Countenance, which is enough to deſtroy them, or to fill them with Terrors.——*They ſhall go out from one Fire*, &c. Either ſhift for themſelves, and fly from one Evil, which, as Fire, conſumed them; or elſe, be caſt by others, by their Enemies, out of one Evil into another; from a leſs which troubled them, to a greater which devours them.—— *And ye ſhall know.* You that are in *Babylon*, and hear what Miſchiefs are heaped on *Jeruſalem* one after another, ſhall know that 'tis my Anger and Fury poured out upon them.

CHAP. XVI.

By the Similitude of a new-born miſerable Infant, is repreſented the State of Jeruſalem. *God's ſpecial Love to them. Their Ingratitude, Whoredom and idolatrous Contracts. God's ſevere Judgment upon them for their Sins, which exceeded thoſe of* Sodom *and* Samaria. *A Promiſe of Mercy and Reſtoration to them in the End.*

Q. GIVE *a ſummary Account of the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. By the Similitude of a new-born miſerable Infant, God preſents before the Eyes of the *Jews* their Unworthineſs, and his ſpecial Love and Kindneſs, which he ſhewed them out of meer free Grace. Hear, O Heavens, and be aſtoniſhed at the Complaint God doth make againſt this unthankful, forgetful and perfidious People, guilty of vile Unthankfulneſs and Unfaithfulneſs, manifeſted by all Manner of Idolatry and heatheniſh Covenants; for which Reaſon God ſent his ſevere Judgments upon them, which they (being worſe than their Siſters, *Sodom* and *Samaria*) had well deſerved. The Lord having denounced a perpetual Puniſhment to the ſtubborn impenitent Body of the *Jewiſh* Nation, doth now promiſe to the Remnant that they ſhall be remembered and obtain Covenanted Mercy: Not by that old Covenant which was violated, not by external Ceremonies which were a great Part of the firſt Covenant, but by that Covenant which writes the Law in the Heart, and puts the Fear of God into the Inward Parts.

Q. *Why does the Prophet put the* Jews *in Mind that their Father was an* Amorite, *and their Mother an* Hittite, *Verſe* 3.

A. Let us read the whole Verſe: *And ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord God unto* Jeruſalem, *Thy Birth, and thy Nativity is of the Land of* Canaan; *thy Father was an* Amorite, *and thy Mother an* Hittite. The proud and blinded *Jews* thought their Original more pure than that of the Heathen, This was an old Tradition among them; now that the Prophet is to acquaint them with the Truth of their polluted Original, which they will ſtorm and fret at, he comes thus prefacing his Diſcourſe with a Divine Commiſſion.——*Thus ſaith the Lord God.* Who knows all we are and do, who is ſo juſt and true, ſpeaks not any Thing but the very Truth, who is ſupreme Judge and Arbitrator of Controverſies. He tells the Peophet what they were, and commands him to tell them.—*Unto Jeruſalem*; that is, the whole Race of the *Jews*, as ver. 2. Or, perhaps, in a more ſpecial Manner the Inhabitants and Natives of that proud City, who thought it a ſingular Privilege to be born there, which the *Jews* counted more holy than the reſt of the Land of *Canaan*.—*Thy Birth, and thy Nativity.* Thy Habitation and thy Kindred: Thy Root whence thou didſt ſpring, the Rock whence thou waſt cut, the Place where thou greweſt up, the Company and Commerce thou didſt uſe, all were of the Land of *Canaan*; and thou haſt a Fulneſs of their vicious Nature, Manners and Practices, both in civil and relegious Things, as vile and obnoxious to my Curſe as *Canaan* itſelf.——*Thy Father.* If the Prophet refers to *Abraham*, it muſt be underſtood of his State and Religion before God called him, when he, and his Father and Kindred, worſhipped ſtrange Gods beyond the River, *Joſh.* xxiv. 14. The Prophet refers to ſhew who were in *Egypt*, the *Jews* Anceſtors that dwell there, it's certain that many of them forgot *Abraham*'s God, joined with the *Egyptian* Idolaters, and were polluted with their Idols, *Joſh.* xxiv. 2. If you take it figuratively, and call thoſe Fathers whom we reverence, conſult, obey, and imitate, as well as we may call ſuch Fathers; theſe were not the beſt and holieſt of Men, *Matth.* iii. 7. O ye *Jews*, be it known to you, whatever you think, you have no Cauſe to boaſt of your nobler or purer Deſcent, your Fountain was corrupt and poiſonous.——*Thy Father was an* Amorite. Might have been for Likeneſs of Manners. ——*An* Amorite. Either this comprehended all the reſt of the curſed Nations; or, becauſe the *Amorites* were moſt powerful and mighty, ſo were moſt wicked amongſt them; it was the *Amorites* who were filling up their Sins, *Gen.* xv. 16.——*Thy Mother an* Hittite. Sometimes the ill Nature of the Father is corrected in the Child by the Sweetneſs of the Mother; but you *Jews* were not ſo happy; your Mother was as bad as your Father; both prodigiouſly vile in their Inclination, civil Converſe, and Choice of their Religion, and in the Practice of it. The Daughters of *Heth* were Women of ill Fame, and worſe Manners, *Gen.* xxvii. 46. enough to make a good Soul weary of Life. Such is your Race, O ye *Jews*!

CHAP. XVII.

Under the Parable of two Eagles and a Vine is repreſented the Captivity of the King and the People of Jeruſalem, *for revolting from* Babylon *to* Egypt. *A Promiſe to plant the Goſpel for the Salvation of his People.*

Q. *EXplain the Parable of the* two Eagles?

A. Under the Parable of an Eagle (ſwift, ſtrong, rapacious, and of a lofty Flight) fetching a Cedar-branch from *Lebanon*, as alſo another great Eagle to whom that Vine bowed itſelf, God preſents before his People, the carrying away Captive of King *Jehoiachin* and others by the King of *Babylon*, and *Zedekiah*'s Perjury and Revolt to the King of *Egypt*; for which God foretels that he ſhould be forſaken of *Egypt*, and of his own People, and ſhould be carried away Captive to *Babylon*. Can it be likely Vengeance ſhould not overtake ſuch Ingratitude? Can Perjury be the Way for any Man's Deliverance? Can ſuch notorious ſinning end in any Thing but Miſery?

Q. *What farther is remarkable in this Chapter?*

A. Whereas the Judgments threatned might ſeem to threaten the utter Extirpation of the Seed of *David*, now the Lord is pleaſed to aſſure its Continuance, and raiſing of the *Meſſiah* from that Houſe according to Promiſe. All Nations, the *Gentiles* as well as the *Jews* are to build, breed, and multiply under the Kingdom of Chriſt; it ſhall no more be confined to the *Jews*, but extend to the *Gentiles* alſo. The Power, Goodneſs, and Faithfulneſs of God, who can do what he pleaſes, and will do what he promiſes, is the Aſſurance of the future Accompliſhment of his Word; for he hath plucked up the proud Enemies, and ſet up his Church which was low and contemned.

Q. *I deſire your Expoſition of the third Verſe?*

A. The Words in the Text are theſe; *And ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord God, A great Eagle with great Wings, long-winged, full of Feathers, which had divers Colours, came unto* Lebanon, *and took the higheſt Branch of the Cedar.*——*A great Eagle.* *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*, as *Ver.* 12.——*With great Wings.* Mighty Provinces on each Side of his Kingdom.——*Long-winged.* His Kingdom was vaſtly extended, *Dan.* iii. 3. the greateſt King then living.——*Full of Feathers.* His Kingdom was very full of People.——*Which had divers Colours.* Were of divers Nations, Languages, and Manners; ſo that this Eagle may be well thought to be of that Sort which is the greateſt in the kind, and beſt reſembles him who was the greateſt Monarch in the World at that Time.——*He came unto* Lebanon. He came, not as a Traveller, to gratify his Curioſity, but as an Invader to enlarge his Dominions. He came either to the Temple built with Cedars of *Lebanon*; or *Jeruſalem*, the chief City of the Country, where this great, fruitful, and pleaſant Hill was; or the whole Country ſet forth by its chiefeſt Hill, which runs about 125 Miles in Length, and encloſes the Land of *Judea* on the North-ſide.——*And took the higheſt Branch of the Cedar.* Took Captive and carried away with him *Jehoiachim* King of *Judah*; or the Royal Family, or rather the whole Nation of the *Jews*.

CHAP. XVIII.

God reproves them for uſing the Proverb of ſour Grapes, whereby the Jews *accuſe him of Injuſtice; ſhews how he deals with a righteous Father, and with the wicked Son of ſuch a Father, and with a juſt Son of a wicked Father; with a wicked Man repenting, and with a righteous Man back-ſliding. God defends his Juſtice, and exhorts to Repentance.*

Q. *WHAT is the Prophets Drift and Deſign in this Chapter?*

A. It is to ſhew that there can be Colour of partial Judgment in the Proceedings of God, who is equally God to all; who hath as great Intereſt in the Son, as in the Father, and as kindly would deal with the Son, as with the Father. —— The Almighty keeps to that Rule of Equity, that no innocent Perſons ſhould be prejudiced by the Guilty. If any one that is, for ought we can diſcern, abſolutely innocent, yet ſuffers for another Man's Sin, it is moſt certain ſuch a Sufferer is not abſolutely innocent, but ſome way or other is guilty of the Sin for which he ſuffers.

In the latter Part of this Chapter God invites the *Jews* to repentance, declaring he has no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked. This is an Argument to perſuade to Converſion, taken from the gracious Nature of God, who takes Pleaſure in the Return of a Sinner, for that is the Meaning of the Words, Sinners diſpleaſe God when they undo themſelves, they pleaſe him when they return.

Q. *Pray explain the 8th Verſe?*

A. It runs thus: *He that hath not given forth upon Uſury, neither hath taken any Increaſe, that hath withdrawn his Hand from Iniquity, hath executed true Judgment between Man and Man.* —— *He that hath not given forth.* Lent or put into another's Hand, on Condition of returning not the ſame, or equal Value, but much more. —— *Upon Uſury.* Biting Uſury (as the Word implies) which, no doubt, is prohibited, becauſe of the Injury it does the Borrower, and the undue Gain it brings the Lender. A rigorous impoſing Condition of Gain, for the Loan of Money or Goods, and exacting them without Reſpect to the Condidition of the Borrower, whether he gain or loſe, whether Poverty occaſioned his borrowing, or whether a viſible Likelihood of Gain, by employing the borrowed Goods; ſuch ſort of Uſury is both againſt the Law of Charity, as well as againſt the expreſs Will of God, *Exod.* xxii. 25. *Lev.* xxv. 35, &c. —— *Any.* This Word is not in the *Hebrew*, tho' Interpreters inſert it here for the greater Emphaſis and Weight. —— *Increaſe.* This Increaſe is, by the Criticks in the *Hebrew*, ſaid to be either a receiving of the Borrower ſome Gratuity for lending that, for which the Borrower muſt pay Uſe alſo; a Kind of Oppreſſion too common among us, called Procuration, or Continuation; or elſe, when the Buyer is required to increaſe the Price, or return the Thing he bought, by growing dearer than at the Time he received it, proves an Oppreſſion to him. And this, 'tis thought, was uſual among the covetous Traders, who ſold and gave a Day for Payment; but if the Commodity grew dearer, they exacted the Thing again, or the increaſed Price. —— *That hath withdrawn his Hand from Iniquity.* This is hardly to be taken in the larger Senſe, as if refer'd to all Iniquity, but in a reſtrictive Senſe, as it refers to the Iniquity and Injuſtice of Lenders and Sellers; he that hath with Care and Conſcience withdrawn his Hand from all indirect or direct Ways for forbidden Uſury. —— *True Judgment between Man and Man.* This refers to the particular Caſe of Uſury and taking Increaſe; as if the Prophet would make every Man judge of the Caſe, before he takes any Thing, and requires him to judge according to Truth, whether any, or how much may be expected and received, whether no Wrong be to the Lender or Borrower in the Caſe. And ſo the whole will amount to this, He that in his Lending hath truly weighed the Borrower's Caſe, and uſed him with Kindneſs, as he would be uſed himſelf, this Man is no Uſurer.

CHAP. XIX.

A Lamentation for the wicked Adminiſtration and miſerable End of the Princes of Iſrael*; under the Parable of Lions Whelps; and for* Jeruſalem *under the Parable of a Vine waſted by the Eaſt-Wind, and a Fire out of his Branches.*

Q. RELATE *the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. Here is a prophetical Lamentation for the wicked Adminiſtration and miſerable End of *Jehoiahaz* and *Zedekiah* Kings of *Judah*; as alſo for the Ruin of all the Land of *Judah*, under the Parable of a Lioneſs, Lion's Whelps, and young Lions. The Story of this you have 2 *Kings* xxiii. 33. Theſe barbarous Conquerors uſed *Jehoahaz* as Men uſe a Lion, put and kept him in Chains, and carried him captive into *Egypt* where he died. The tenth Verſe begins the ſecond Part of this Chapter, and ſpeaks in Reproch of *Zedekiah*, that wicked King, in whoſe Blood, that is, in the Race of his Predeceſſors, *Jeruſalem* ſhould have been bleſſed according to God's Promiſe, and flouriſhed as a fruitful Vine. This flouriſhing Vine firſt degenerated, brought forth Fruit to itſelf, not to God, grew proud and abuſed God's Mercy to all manner of Sin; ſo that the Eaſt-Winds, meaning the *Chaldeans*, ſhould deſtroy it. Deſtruction was to come by *Zedekiah*, who, through his Perfidiouſneſs and Rebellion againſt *Nebuchadnezzar*, ſhould be the Cauſe of the laſt Deſolation, the regal Dignity ceaſing, and the *Jews* to have no crowned Head to rule over them.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 12th Verſe?*

A. Let us read it: *But ſhe was plucked up in Fury, ſhe was caſt down to the Ground, and the Eaſt-wind dried up her Fruit: Her ſtrong Rods were broken and withered, the Fire conſumed them.* This flouriſhing Vine firſt degenerated, brought forth Fruit to itſelf, not to God, and grew proud, abuſed God's Mercies to all Manner of Sins. —— *Pluck'd up in Fury.* Was violently, ſuddenly, and totally routed, tore up by the Roots, ſo was the flouriſhing Kingdom of the *Jews* overthrown. —— *She was caſt down to the Ground.* Had ſhe been again ſet, there might have been ſome Hope; but being plucked up Root and Branch together, it is periſhed for ever. —— *The Eaſt-wind.* To haſten the utter Deſtruction hereof, an Eaſt-wind, that blaſting piercing Wind blows upon her the King of *Babylon*, with all his Power, raiſed of God to pull up this ſinful Kingdom. —— *Dried up her Fruit.* Blaſted all her Fruit, depoſed her King, captivated him, his Family, and the whole Kingdom. —— *Her ſtrong Rods.* All the choice Men, the Counſellors, Warriors, Artificers, all that were like to be the Strength of the Kingdom. —— *Were broken.* By *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Hand pluck'd away, and removed to *Babylon*, where they lay as withered Branches. —— *The Fire conſumed them.* Called Fury, in the firſt Clauſe of the Verſe. God's Diſpleaſure, for their Sins their Adverſaries Rage, and their own Animoſities burnt them up; their Houſes and Palaces, their City and Temple, all burnt, and even ſome Perſons were conſumed by this Fire alſo, beſides ſome who the Conqueror cruelly roaſted.

CHAP. XX.

God *refuſes to be conſulted by the* Elders *of* Iſrael*; ſets before them his Forbearance, and their Father's*

Rebellion in Egypt, *in the Wilderneſs and* Canaan; *promiſes to gather and reſtore his People, by the Goſpel. Under the Name of a Foreſt is foretold the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem.

Q. PRAY *what Point of Inſtruction does the Prophet purſue in this Chapter?*

A. Some of the Elders of the People came again unto the Prophet to aſk Counſel of God; but God tells them by the Prophet that he will not be enquired of by them, but ſets before them his great Forbearance, and the continual obſtinate Idolatries of their Forefathers in *Egypt*, in the Wilderneſs, and in *Canaan*; yet he promiſes his People that he will retain his Right over them, and exerciſe it on them, as on combined Rebels; and that he will not ſuffer them to live at Eaſe in an idolatrous Country, where they ſheltered, but would bring them out, either by voluntary Submiſſion to own his Scepter and Government, or by a conquered Subjection to yield to his Sword and Power.

Under the Name of Foreſt of the South-field (great Cities and Multitudes of People being often likened to Foreſts) the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalm* and *Judah* is foretold; and that all Perſons ſhould wither, and be parched or burnt with Terrors, Labours, Flight, Famine and Sickneſs, occaſioned by the mighty Invaſion of the *Chaldeans*.

When the Prophet had done his Duty, and propheſied, and the People ſhould have heard and underſtood, he returns with a Complaint of their quarrelling, cenſuring, flouting, and reproaching him for it. One while they account him mad, out of his Wits, taken up with Raptures and Extaſies, or elſe otherwiſe doting and dreaming: Thus they fortify themſelves in their Atheiſm, Infidelity, Idolatry, and all other Sins, not fearing God, but contemning his Servants.

Q. *How do you interpret the firſt Verſe?*

A. Let us firſt ſee what the Words are? *And it came to paſs in the ſeventh Year, in the fifth Month, the tenth Day of the Month, that certain of the Elders of* Iſrael *came to enquire of the Lord, and ſat before me.——In the ſeventh Year.* Of *Jeconiah*'s Captivity, and *Zedekiah*'s Reign, two Years and four Months before *Nebuchadnezzar* beſieged *Jeruſalem.——In the fifth Month, in the tenth Day of the Month.* Which anſwers to the twenty-ſeventh of *Auguſt.——Certain of the Elders of* Iſrael. Some of note among the Elders and Rulers of *Iſrael:* Either ſome of the Captives in *Babylon*, as moſt likely they were, Chap. xiv. 1. They were not of the Prieſts, or *Levites*, but of the Laity, Civil-Magiſtrates and Officers, who might be ſent to view the State of *Babylon*, and to obſerve what Poſture Things were in; the better to reſolve on what *Zedekiah* and his Councils were forming, whether it would be adviſable to ſhake off the Yoke of the King of *Babylon*, by a Rebellion, or patiently bear it: This probably was their main Enquiry now, which was two Years and five Months before the Siege began; during which Time, 'tis likely the Deſign was reſolved on, framed, Proviſion made of all Sorts, and at laſt a Rebellion raiſed. *——To enquire of the Lord.* Though they had already reſolved what they would, as appears afterwards, yet they come to enquire of the Lord. Prophets neither could, nor pretended to reſolve ſuch Enquiries; but the Lord, whom the Prophet conſulted.*——Sat before me.* Whether it ſpeaks the Quality of the Perſons, that did not ſtand as mean Perſons, or their Reſolution to wait for an Anſwer, or it be a Phraſe proper with the *Jews* to expreſs the common Deportment of the Country, is left to Conjecture.

CHAP. XXI.

A bitter Prophecy againſt Jeruſalem *and the whole Land, under the Sign of Fighting. A Prophecy of the bright and ſharp Sword againſt* Jeruſalem, *the Kingdom, and the* Ammonites.

Q. AGAINST *whom does the Prophet denounce Judgments here?*

A. God commands the Prophet to preach very ſharply againſt *Jeruſalem*, the Temple, and the whole People of the Land, both high and low, concerning the Sword of the Lord, for which the Prophet muſt ſigh and lament, for a token to the People.

The Prophet foretels that the King of *Babylon* ſhould enter into Conſultation, whether he ſhould firſt ſet upon *Jeruſalem*, or upon the Land of the *Ammonites*, but yet that he ſhould firſt march to *Jeruſalem*, becauſe of their Perjury. The Kingdom of *Judah* is never to recover its former Glory and Strength, but conſume, till the Scepter be quite taken away from *Judah*, and Way made for the *Meſſiah*, who is he that is to come, whoſe is the Dominion, and to whom the Father will give it: So the final Deſolation of the temporal Kingdom of the Seed of *David*, which was moſt heavy Tidings to the carnal *Jews* is threatened; and the eternal Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, moſt joyful Tidings to the believing *Jews*, is promiſed.

In Verſes 19, 20. we have the Mention of *Rabbath*, chief City of the *Ammonites*, in equal Danger with *Jeruſalem*; but while *Jeruſalem* is threatened, *Rabbath* is no further minded, till now God directs the Prophet to declare the Ruin thereof.

Q. *Give us your Senſe of Verſe* 21?

A. The Words in the Text are theſe; *For the King of* Babylon *ſtood at the Parting of the Way, at the Head of the two Ways, to uſe a Divination: He made his Arrows bright, he conſulted with Images, he looked in the Liver.* The Prophet, by reaſon of the certainty of the Thing, ſpeaks of what ſhall be, as if it were already paſt. *He ſtood, i. e.* He will make a Halt, pitch his Camp and conſult. *——At the Parting of the Way.* On the Borders of *Arabia* the Deſart, to which one Road brings Travellers from *Babylon*, and then divides and becomes two, one leading to *Jeruſalem*, the other to *Rabbath.——To uſe Divination.* To conſult with his Gods, and to caſt Lots; and here the Prophet foretels what Sort of Divination he would uſe.*——He made his Arrows bright.* This, the firſt Kind of Divination, he uſed by Arrows, either by writing on them the Names of the Cities and Countries, then putting them into a Quiver, and then mixing them, and then drawing them out, determined the Courſe he ſhould take according as the Names were on the Arrows; or perhaps by ſhooting the Arrows, and judging by the Flight of them; or caſting them up in the Air, and divining by their Fall, as Beggars are ſaid to go that Way their Staff falls. So then, if *Jeruſalem* were on the firſt Arrow drawn out of the Quiver, or if the Arrows fell beſt, or moſt that Way.—— *He conſulted with Images.* The next Way of divining was by aſking Counſel of his Idol, or Image, which being made artificially by the Skill of their judgling Prieſts or Conjurers, with little Help they could give Anſwers, and the Image uttered aloud what the Sorcerer ſpake more ſoftly, ſomewhat like the artificial whiſpering Places which convey the Voice from unſeen Perſons; or, by a divine Permiſſion, the Devil might give Anſwer from thoſe Images.——*He looked in the Liver.* The third Divination is by Sacrifice, and judging of future proſperous and unproſperous Events, by the Intrails, and more eſpecially by the Liver, its Poſition and Colour. All theſe he uſed, that he might proceed with the greater Confidence of Succeſs.

CHAP. XXII.

A Catalogue of the abominable Sins of Jeruſalem. *God foretels their Diſperſion, that he might melt them in the Furnace of his Anger. God complains of the general Wickedneſs of Prophets, Prieſts, Princes and People.*

Q. PRAY *give the Interpretation of the 25th Verſe?*

A. The Words in the Text ſtand thus; *There is a Conſpiracy of her Prophets in the midſt thereof, like a roaring Lion ravening the Prey: They have devoured Souls; they have taken the Treaſure and precious Things; they have made many Widows in the midſt thereof.*——*A Conſpiracy of her Prophets.* A Contrivance or framing among themſelves, a Deſign to ſpeak all alike flattering ſmooth Words, and give out Promiſes of Peace and Safety, when there was no Peace; they would have the *Jews* believe, in little Time, the Veſſels of the Lord's Houſe, and the Lord's People in *Babylon*, ſhould be brought back, as *Jer.* xxviii. 1, 2, 3. But becauſe *Jeremiah* faithfully told them, that it would be no ſuch Thing, but that *Zedekiah*, the People, and the reſt of the Veſſels ſhould be carried into *Babylon*, they conſpire againſt him and all of his Sentiments, *Jer.* xx. ii. and perſecute them with one Conſent. 'Tis added, *her Prophets*, not God's, the falſe Prophets, ſuch as *Hananiah*, Jer. xxviii. 1, 2.——*In the midſt thereof.* Of the Land, but principally of *Jeruſalem*, the Metropolis and Reſidence of the Court, where were ſuch as loved to be flattered, and of whom Flatterers would be rewarded.——*A roaring Lion.* Whom Hunger enrages, and makes him roar in a moſt dreadful Manner, as ſome obſerve of theſe Creatures, when they hunt their Prey, and when they have ſeized and are tearing it; ſo did theſe falſe Prophets with Cruelty and Fierceneſs purſue the true Prophets, and ſuch as believed their Word, feared the Judgments, and mourned for the Sins of a ſelf-ruining People.——*They have devoured Souls.* Have eat up, impoveriſhed and ſuck'd dry, Men that believed and maintained them, the Deceit uſed by all falſe Prophets; or they have taken in their Plotting, and ſwallowed down whole, the Perſons that disbelieved and oppoſed their Lies.——*They have taken the Treaſure.* They did not without a Reward, tell their Lies, nor would propheſy without a Reward out of the Treaſures of thoſe that adviſed them; ſo they drained the People of their Riches.——*And precious Things.* Either it is a farther Exclication of what he had ſaid, or poſſibly it may tell us, that where Money was not to be had, theſe falſe Prophets would demand ſomething of Value; and if it were Money's Worth, they were then for bartering their Prophecies, and ſo gulled theſe Sots.——*They have made her many Widows.* One while by raiſing Perſecutions, and cutting off Huſbands from their Wives; another while, and which moſt agrees with the Place, perſuading, encouraging, and bewitching *Zedekiah*, and the Princes and People, to hold out the War, and run all the Hazards and Extremities of that Siege, which filled *Jeruſalem* with dead Huſbands and forlorn Widows.

CHAP. XXIII.

Under the Whoredoms of Aholah, *and* Aholibah, *is deſcribed the Sin of* Samaria *and* Jeruſalem. Aholibah *plagued by her Lovers; both lamented and judged.*

Q. WHAT *is the Prophet's View in deſcribing the Whoredoms of theſe two Women,* Aholah *and* Aholibah?

A. Under the Names of two Women, *Aholah* and *Aholibah*, God deſcribes at large the Whoredoms and Adultery of *Samaria* and *Jeruſalem*, or *Iſrael* and *Judah*; for which Cauſe both theſe unſatiable Adultereſſes were to be ſentenced and dealt with according as Juſtice therein required. No Words are able ſufficiently to expreſs the Rage of Idolaters, and therefore the Holy Ghoſt here compares them to thoſe, who in their raging Love and filthy Luſts, dote upon the Images and Paintings of them, after whom they luſt.

The *Babylonians* were likewiſe to deſtroy the Princes, Prieſts and People, and to ſeize all the Treaſures and Riches of the Land, that all the Word might ſee their ſhameful forſaking of God to ſerve Idols; and their Afflictions ſhould be ſo great, that they ſhould cauſe them to loſe their Senſes and Reaſon.

Q. *Who were the Perſons and People deſcribed Verſe 23?*

A. The Babylonians, *and all the* Chaldeans, Pekod, *and* Shoa, *and* Koa, *and all the* Aſſyrians *with them: All of them deſirable young Men, Captains and Rulers, great Lords and renowned, all of them riding upon Horſes.* The *Babylonians* and *Chaldeans* are well known; and ſome imagine the following Names are Titles of ſome of the great Commanders in this Army, which came againſt *Jeruſalem*; but they are Names of diſtinct Countries or Provinces under the *Babyloniſh* Government, and *Pekod* is the Province between the Rivers *Tygris* and *Lycus*; in this was ſituated old *Nineveh*, and was the principal Province of the Kingdom; tho' ſome others think *Pekod* was *Bactriana*, are now called *Usbeck* and *Curaſſan*, fierce, thieviſh, and barbarous of old.——*Shoa.* Either *Sia* in *Armenia*, as the *Sohai*, among which were *Adiabeni*, and this contained the middle Part of the Kingdom of *Babylon*, and was *Aſſyria Mediana*.——*Koa.* This bordered on *Media*, the Inhabitants called *Kohai*, dwelt about *Arbel* or *Arbelis*, or *Arbela*, and comprehended *Ganyamela*, where the Fortreſs *Ganga*, looks like this *Koha*, being eaſily changed from *Koa* to *Ganga*, by the Change of two *Hebrew* Letters into G; a People likely enough to be cruel and barbarous, by their very Situation.——*All the* Aſſyrians. All theſe Sons or Subjects of, or Confederates with the *Aſſyrian* Monarchy.—— *Deſirable young Men, Captains, &c.* in Verſe ſix, they are deſcribed by their Beauty and rich Apparel; here as objects of Terror.

Chap. XXIV.

The Day, Year and Month of the Babylonians *coming before* Jeruſalem. *The Parable of a boiling Pot, ſhewing the fearful Calamity of it. The Prophet being forbidden to mourn for his own Wife, repreſents the inexpreſſible Calamity of* Jeruſalem.

Q. EXPLAIN *the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. The Year, Day and Month of the *Babylonians* coming before *Jeruſalem* (about the 29th of *December*) is here ſet down. By the Parable of a hot Seething-Pot, with Pieces of Fleſh and Bones, is pourtrayed the fatal Calamity that ſhould be ſo great, as that they ſhould not mourn even for the Deſtruction of the Temple, which they had held in ſo great Eſteem.

The Prophet, in his own Perſon, is commanded to repreſent this, as being forbidden to mourn for his own Wife, whoſe Death God foretells him, and further declares, that when he had fulfilled theſe Prophecies, by the taking and ruining *Jeruſalem,* he would cauſe Tidings thereof to be brought unto the Prophet, who ſhould put the People in mind of thoſe Things for their Inſtruction and Correction.

Q. *Explain the Parable of the* Seething-Pot, *Verſe* 5?

A. It is thus deſcribed; *Take the Choice of the Flock, and burn alſo the Bones under it, and make it boil well, and let them ſeeth the Bones of it therein.*—*Take the Choice of the Flock.* Pick out the very beſt in the Flock; that is, the greateſt, richeſt, and moſt powerful for Authority and Intereſt in the Nation and City. ——*And burn alſo.* Or heap together in order to burn, to make a Fire with.——*The Bones under it.* The Bones, not of the Pieces to be boiled, but the Bones of the many Innocents in *Jeruſalem,* and in the Land, for their Blood crieth for Vengeance, and their Bones ſcattered on the Face of the Earth, will both make and maintain this Fire.——*And boil it well.* Let the Fire be ſo great, and the Pot ſo long over it, till all within be boiled thoroughly, ſo boiled that all the Strength and Marrow be waſted, and the very Fleſh drop to Pieces; ſo ſhall this People be waſted by his Judgment.——*Seeth the Bones of it therein.* See the preceding Verſe. This is doubled to aſſure us, that however it fared with the meaner Sort, the more conſiderable Part of the *Jews* ſhould not eſcape. In this Allegory there may lie couched an exact Correſpondence between the Sins and Puniſhments of this People; their Sin was the ſlaying the beſt, or by oppreſſing them they broke Bones, boiled out the Marrow, ſucked them dry, and now God will retaliate to theſe Men.

Chap. XXV.

A Prophecy of God's Vengeance againſt the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites *and* Philiſtines, *for their rejoicing at the Deſtruction of God's Temple and People.*

Q. PRAY *expound the Prophecy againſt the* Ammonites, *Verſe* 4?

A. Behold therefore, I will deliver thee to the Men of the Eaſt for a Poſſeſſion, and they ſhall ſet their Palaces in thee, and make their Dwellings in thee: They ſhall eat thy Fruit, and they ſhall drink thy Milk.——*I will deliver thee.* I the God, whom thou haſt deſpiſed, whoſe Worſhip thou haſt vilified, I will avenge myſelf, and deliver thee up. *To the Men of the Eaſt.* The *Medes* and *Perſians,* ſay ſome, the *Babylonians* ſay others; but this ſuits not well with Geography; *Arabians,* ſay others, Allies of *Nebuchadnezzar,* who, it is likely recompenſed their Labour and Service with giving them this Country when it was conquered, as it was five Years after the Deſolation of *Jeruſalem.*——*For a Poſſeſſion.* They ſhall ſettle on it, as a very convenient Country for their Sheep and Camels, and poſſeſs it as their Inheritance.——The Word *Palaces* ſeems little to agree with *Arabians* who dwelt in Tents; but this Manner of dwelling many of them would be willing to change, as they might to ſo great an Advantage in a Country ſo fruitful as this was. Beſides, the Word ſignifies what is fenced, as *Iſa.* ii. 15. and is paraphraſed by Camp, as *Arabians* had their Munitions and fortified Camps, and theſe they ſhall ſet here, whilſt they ſtay; in which Senſe it is explained by the next Words,——*And make their Dwellings in thee.* Theſe ſhall ſet up their Tents, as the Word properly ſignifies; their Tents and Habitations they would fortify in ſome Manner or other, that in their Camp they might be ſafe, if they did not build Cities in the Country.——*Shall eat thy Fruit.* The Fruit of the Land was once thine, of the Trees thou planted it.——*Shall drink thy Milk.* Which, in ſo fruitful a Land, and rich Paſtures, they had in Abundance, from the Multitude of their Kine; and it was a Drink that well ſuited with thoſe hot Climates.

Chap. XXVI.

The Time of this Prophecy. The Deſtruction of Tyrus, *for their rejoicing at the Calamity of* Jeruſalem, *threatned by the* Chaldeans. *A Deſcription of the Mourning and Aſtoniſhment that ſhall be at the Fall of* Tyrus.

Q. THE *Deſtruction of* Tyrus *is the Subject of this Viſion: Pray what is aſſigned as the Cauſe, and who were the Inſtruments to accompliſh it?*

A. Becauſe the City of *Tyrus* rejoiced at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem,* her Deſolation is foretold by the *Chaldeans,* who were a mighty Army for fighting, and a great Train of Hangers on, who were ready enough to do Miſchief to any Country; and if need required, theſe would ſweep all before them, whereſoever they came.

Here is a Deſcription of the Terror, Aſtoniſhment and Lamentation, that there ſhall be at the ſudden and unexpected Deſtruction of *Tyre;* which is to be ſo horrible, that all the World ſhould hear thereof, and be afraid. Rich, populous, potent, wiſe, renowned *Tyre,* as once it was, ſhall never more be found; and alas, that which is now on the Continent, is not fit to bear its Name, much leſs to be counted the ſame City.

Q. *Pray give me your Interpretation of the ſecond Verſe?*

A. *Son of Man, becauſe that* Tyrus *hath ſaid againſt* Jeruſalem, Aha, *ſhe is broken that was the Gates of the People: She is turned unto me, I ſhall be repleniſhed, now ſhe is laid waſte.*———*Tyrus.* The City put for the People: It's probable it was an univerſal Joy, therefore aſcribed to the whole City, built on a Rock, and an Iſland of the ſame Name, not far diſtant from the Continent, then a very great trading Port and City.——*Hath ſaid againſt* Jeruſalem. Either God revealed this to the Prophet ſo ſoon as theſe inſulting *Tyrians* ſpoke it, or elſe *Ezekiel* ſpeaks of it prophetically, and as if it were already come.——*Aha.* Shewed great Joy at the Fall of *Jeruſalem*, and triumphed over her. ——*She is broken.* By *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Army. ———*That was the Gates of the People.* Near to the Gates of the Cities were uſually the great Merchants; and ſo here *Jeruſalem* is called the great Mart of Nations, People from all Parts reſorting to her for Trade or Religion.———*She is turned unto me.* Trading Intereſt will turn unto me; they that carried Merchandize to *Jeruſalem*, will now bring it to me.———*I ſhall be repleniſhed.* Have full Trade, my Haven full of Ships, Streets full of Buyers and Sellers, Shops full of Wares, Houſes full of Lodgers, and Purſes full of Money.———*Now ſhe is laid waſte.* She reflected on waſted *Jeruſalem* with Joy, which was impious, injurious and inhuman, to rejoice in the Ruin of her Neighbour.

CHAP. XXVII.

A Deſcription of the Glory and Accommodations of Tyrus; *the great and terrible Fall thereof, to the Loſs and Aſtoniſhment of other Kings and Nations.*

Q. WILL *you pleaſe to give the Contents of this prophetic Viſion?*

A. The Prophet is commanded to pen a mournful Narrative of the Fall of *Tyrus*, with a Deſcription of her Glory, Pleaſures, and the Accommodations that many Nations had had by all Manner of Commerce and Trading from her. On the contrary, here is a Prophecy of her terrible Fall, as alſo the Loſs, Aſtoniſhment, Mourning and Hiſſing, that ſhall be made thereat by the neighbouring Nations, and their Kings, who ſhall not be able to conceal the Diſcompoſure of their Mind, but diſcover in their Countenance a Trouble made up of Grief, Fear and Indignation; Grief for their Friends, Fear for themſelves againſt that Cruelty and Inhumanity, which, without reſpect to any Thing dear to Mankind, ruined the Glory of the World, deſtroyed what could not be repaired by all the Riches, Wiſdom and Bounty of the *Babyloniſh* Kingdom. Both theſe Parts of her Story, her flouriſhing Condition, and her dreadful Downful, are very elegantly deſcribed by the Prophet.

Now, thou Son of Man, take up a Lamentation for Tyrus; *and ſay unto* Tyrus, *O thou that art ſituate at the Entry of the Sea, which art a Merchant of the People for many Iſles, Thus ſaith the Lord God,* O Tyrus, *thou haſt ſaid,* I am of perfect Beauty. *Thy Borders are in the midſt of the Seas, thy Builders have perfected thy Beaty. They have made all thy Ship-boards of Fir-trees of* Senir; *they have taken Cedars from* Lebanon, *to make Maſts for thee. Of the Oaks of* Baſhan *have they made thine Oars: The Company of the* Aſhurites *have made thy Benches of Ivory, brought out of the Iſles of* Chittim. *Fine Linnen, with broidered Work from* Egypt, *was that which thou ſpreadeſt forth to be thy Sail; Blue and Purple from the Iſles of* Eliſhah, *was that which covered thee. The Inhabitants of* Zidon *and* Arvad *were thy Mariners: Thy wiſe Men,* O Tyrus, *that were in thee, were thy Pilots. The Antients of* Gebal, *and the wiſe Men thereof, were in thee thy Calkers; all the Ships of the Sea with their Mariners, were in thee to occupy thy Merchandiſe. They of* Perſia, *and of* Lud, *and of* Phut, *were in thine Army, thy Men of War: They hanged the Shield and Helmet in thee, they ſet forth thy Comelineſs. The Men of* Arvad *with thine Army, were upon thy Walls round about, and the* Gammadims *were in thy Towers; they hanged their Shields upon thy Walls round about: They have made thy Beauty perfect.* Tarſhiſh *was thy Merchant by reaſon of the Multitude of all kind of Riches; with Silver, Iron, Tin and Lead they traded in thy Fairs.* Javan, Tubal *and* Meſhech, *they were thy Merchants; they traded the Perſons of Men, and Veſſels of Braſs in thy Market. They of the Houſe of* Togarmah *traded in thy Fairs with Horſes and Horſemen, and Mules. The Men of* Dedan *were thy Merchants, many Iſles were the Merchandiſe of thine Hand: They brought thee for a Preſent, Horns of* Ivory *and* Ebony. Syria *was thy Merchant by reaſon of the Multitude of the Wares of thy making: They occupied in thy Fairs with* Emeralds, *Purple and broidered Work, and fine Linnen, and Coral and Agate.* Judah *and the Land of* Iſrael *they were thy Merchants: They traded in thy Market Wheat of* Minnith, *and* Pannag, *and Honey, and Oil of Balm.* Damaſcus *was thy Merchant in the Multitude of the Wares of thy making, for the Multitude of all Riches: In the Wine of* Helbon; *and white Wool.* Dan *alſo and* Javan *going to and fro, occupied in thy Fairs: Bright Iron, Caſſia and Calamus were in thy Market.* Dedan *was thy Merchant in precious Cloaths for Chariots.* Arabia, *and all the Princes of* Kedar, *they occupied with thee in Lambs, and Rams, and Goats: In theſe were they thy Merchants. The Merchants of* Sheba *and* Raamah, *they were thy Merchants: They occupied in thy Fairs with the chief of all Spices, and with all precious Stones and Gold.* Haran, *and* Canneh, *and* Eden, *the Merchants of* Shebar, Aſhur, *and* Chilmad *were thy Merchants. Theſe were thy Merchants in all Sorts of Things, in blue Cloaths, and broidered Work, and in Cheſts of rich Apparel, bound with Cords, and made of* Cedar *among thy Merchandiſe. The Ships of* Tarſhiſh *did ſing of thee in thy Market, and thou waſt repleniſhed, and made very glorious in the Midſt of the Seas. Thy Riches and thy Fairs, thy Merchandiſe, thy Marriners and thy Pilots, thy Calkers, and the Occupiers of thy Merchandiſe, and all thy Men of War that are in thee, and in all thy Company, which is in the Midſt of thee, ſhall fall into the Midſt of the Seas, in the Day of thy Ruin. The Suburbs ſhall ſhake at the Sound of the cry of thy Pilots. And all that handle the Oar, the Mariners, and all the Pilots of the Sea, ſhall come down from their Ships, they ſhall ſtand upon the Land; and ſhall cauſe their Voice to be heard againſt thee, and ſhall cry bitterly, and ſhall caſt up Duſt upon their Heads, they ſhall wallow themſelves in the Aſhes. And they ſhall make themſelves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with Sackcloath, and they ſhall weep for thee with Bitterneſs of Heart, and bitter Wailing. And in their Wailing they ſhall take up a Lamentation for thee,* *and Lament over thee, ſaying, What City is like* Tyrus, *like the deſtroyed in the Midſt of the Sea? When thy Wares went forth out of the Seas, thou filledſt many People, thou didſt enrich the Kings of the Earth, with the Multitude of thy Riches, and of thy Merchandiſe. In the Time, when thou ſhalt be broken by the Seas, in the depths of the Waters, thy Merchandize and all thy Company in the Midſt of thee ſhall fall. All the Inhabitants of the Iſles ſhall be aſtoniſhed at thee, and their Kings ſhall be ſore afraid, they ſhall be troubled in their Countenance. The Merchants among the People ſhall hiſs at thee, thou ſhalt be a Terror, and never ſhalt be any more.*

Q. *I deſire your Explanation of ſome difficult Expreſſions in the ſixth Verſe?*

A. The Words in the Text are theſe: *Of the Oaks of* Baſhan *have they made thine Oars; the Company of the* Aſhurites *have made thy Benches of Ivory, brought out of the Iſles of* Chittim.—— *Of the Oaks of* Baſhan. Of Pines, ſay ſome; of Cheſnut-trees, ſay others; but ſince Oaks, and thoſe of *Baſhan*, are famous in Sacred Writ, I know not why we ſhould not keep up to our own Verſion, ſince the primary Notes of the *Hebrew* lead us to it.—— *The Company of the* Aſhurites, *&c.* As we read theſe Words, there ariſes many Difficulties in expounding them: But if the Conjecture of the learned *Bochart* be well conſidered, it will ſeem very probable the Words would be better rendered thus, *Thy Benches they have made of Ivory, with Box brought out, &c.* [illegible] Iſles of *Chittim* afforded much and large Box-trees, [illegible] Ivory, or Elephants Teeth, we know, is the Merchandiſe of other Countries, and the Elephant a Foreigner to all the Parts of *Europe*; nor are the Teeth of Elephants of that Largeneſs to afford Breadth for Seats and Benches; nor ſhall we find any ſuch Company of *Aſhurites*, if we enquire for them. The Opinion therefore of that learned Man ſeems highly probable, that here are two Words divided, and by Miſtake tranſlated as divided Words, which ought to have been read in one Word; and ſo tranſlated as 'tis in *Iſa.* xli. 19. where we tranſlate the *Hebrew* Word *Box*. Then all is plain, and the Senſe is this, that from the Iſles, and Parts about the *Ionian*, *Egean*, and other Seas of the *Mediterranean*, where this Box-tree is a Native, as in *Corſica*, *Apulia*, &c. and of great Growth and Firmneſs, fit to ſaw into Boards for Benches, they were conveyed to *Tyrus*, where the Artiſts inlaid theſe Box-boards with Ivory, and made them beautiful Seats in their Galleys and Ships.

Chap. XXVIII.

The Deſtruction of the King of Tyrus, *for his Pride, foretold. A Lamentation for his Beauty and Glory, compared with his future Fall and Miſery. A Prophecy of Judgment againſt* Zion, *with a Promiſe of the* Church's *Reſtoration.*

Q. PRAY *what were the Grounds of this terrible Denunciation againſt the King of* Tyrus?

A. The Deſtruction of the King of *Tyrus* is foretold for his Pride and Inſolence, in entertaining Thoughts which became none but God; who projected Things which none but God could effect; who promiſed himſelf perpetual Peace, Safety, Riches and Happineſs in himſelf, and from himſelf. But though he was ſo vainly puffed up with the Fulneſs of his Wiſdom, and Perfection of his Beauty, yet neither his Wiſdom ſhould prevent or defeat the Attempts of his Enemies, nor his Beauty charm their Rage: He was to fall by them, though he dwelt in the midſt of Delights, and his Habitation was as beautiful as *Eden*. All that have heard, ſeen, or formerly known his Riches, Power, Allies, Wiſdom and Vigilance, ſhall be amazed at the certain News of his great Fall, from the greateſt Glory to the greateſt Reproach.

Q. *Where was ſituated the City* Zidon?

A. *Zidon* was a City North-weſt from *Canaan*, at the Foot of Mount *Libanus*, a King's Seat of old, and from which *Tyrus* deſcended, as a Swarm caſt out of the Hive, *Iſa.* xxiii. 2. It was a great City in *Joſhua*'s Time, *Joſ.* xi. 8. and xix. 28. and built by *Sidon*, *Canaan*'s Son, *Gen.* x. 15. and 1 *Chron.* i. 13. a famous Mart full of Merchants, like *Tyre*, and as full of Sin as Riches. This City of *Zidon* is threatned by God's Wrath to be overthrown; with a Promiſe of the Reſtoration of the Church.

Q. *How do you underſtand the fourteenth Verſe?*

A. *Thou art the anointed Cherub that covereth; and I have ſet thee ſo; thou waſt upon the holy Mountain of God; thou haſt walked up and down in the midſt of the Stones of Fire.——Thou art the anointed Cherub.* It is better to keep the Order of Words as they ſtand in the *Hebrew*, and which the *French* alſo obſerve, thus, *Thou art a Cherub anointed, a Protector, or one who covereth for Defence.* For thy Wiſdom, Power, and Excellency, like a Cherub, or Angel; for the Sacredneſs of thy Perſon and Office, as anointed of God; for the Exerciſe of thy Power and Office, as a Shield, as a Protector of the Weak; thus thou art, or thinkeſt thyſelf herein.—— *I have ſet thee ſo.* I, whom thou forgetteſt, I have made thee ſo, ſet thee above others; this ſhould have been Matter of Thanks and Humility, not of Pride and Atheiſm. Thus the Sarcaſm is continued, and he is upbraided for his Inſolence.—— *Thou waſt upon the holy Mountain of God.* Or thus, in the holy Mountain a God thou haſt been; ſo it is an *Irony*, and ſuits the reſt; Or elſe, in purſuance of our Verſion, thou waſt advanced to kingly Dignity, (which *David* calls a Mountain, *Pſ.* xxx. 7.) a ſacred Office, and of Divine Inſtitution and Conſecration, and thou haſt in Pride exalted thyſelf above me, as well as above Men.—— *Thou haſt walked up and down.* In a proud and ſtately Manner.—— *In the midſt of the Stones of Fire.* Surrounded every way in thy Chambers, Beds, and Cloaths, with Stones that ſparkle like Fire; thy Crown, thy Throne, thy Chariots, thy Umbrella's or Canopies, glittering, and dazzling Beholders; as if thus alſo thou wouldeſt contend with God, who is cloathed with Light.

Chap. XXIX.

A Prophecy of Judgment againſt Pharaoh *for his Treachery to* Iſrael, *and the Deſolation of* Egypt *foretold; its Reſtoration after forty Years; but no Grounds of Confidence for* Iſrael; *but a Reward to* Nebuchadnezzar *for deſtroying* Tyrus. *A Promiſe of* Iſrael's *Reſtoration.*

Q. PRAY *what is chiefly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. The Time is mentioned when this Prophecy was made, againſt *Pharaoh* (who is compared to a

Dragon, which Interpreters ſay was the *Crocodile,* who hides himſelf in the River *Nile*) and all *Egypt*; but with a Promiſe of a Deliverance from Captivity, after ſome Time; but that they ſhould not have full Dominion, but be under the *Perſians, Grecians,* and *Romans*: And the Reaſon is, becauſe the *Iſraelites* ſhould no more put their Truſt in them, but learn to depend upon God.

The Land of *Egypt* God will give unto King *Nebuchadnezzar*, for a Reward of his Services againſt *Tyrus*; at the Siege of which Place he took great Pains, and had his Army ſorely handled, ſo that he had more Pain than Profit at the taking of *Tyrus*.

About the Time when *Egypt* was ſpoiled, *Nebuchadnezzar* returned to *Babylon*, his Wars firſt, and ſoon after his Life ended about ſix or ſeven Years after his Return out of *Egypt* into *Babylon*; for about the 36th or 37th of his Reign, he finiſhed his Conqueſt of *Egypt*, and in the 43d Year he died at *Babylon*. *Jehoiakim* by *Evil-merodach* was advanced, *Jer.* lii. 31, 32, 33. beſides Dignities given to *Daniel*, the three Children, and many others, under whoſe Authority and Favour the Affairs of the *Jews* began, as a Root that had Life in it, to ſpring and flouriſh.

Q. *In what Manner was performed the Tranſaction related Verſe* 18?

A. *Son of Man*, Nebuchadnezzar, *King of* Babylon, *cauſed his Army to ſerve a great Service againſt* Tyrus: *Every Head was made bald, and every Shoulder was peeled: Yet had he no Wages, nor his Army, for* Tyrus, *for the Service that he had ſerved againſt it.*—— *Cauſed his Army.* The Army, the inferior Officers, and principal Commanders, 'tis likely, were weary of the Siege, and might adviſe the raiſing of it; but the Authority, Preſence and immoveable Reſolution of the King, kept them on ſtill, and made them hold out.—— *A great Service.* 'Twas Service to the Juſtice of God in puniſhing the *Tyrians* by the Ambition of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who would not endure any Thing to ſtand againſt him. 'Twas Service both for the Hardneſs of the Work, and the unreaſonable Length of the Siege, it continuing thirteen Years ſucceſſively.—— *Every Head was made bald.* Either Age or Sickneſſes (which often make Men bald) or continued wearing of their Helmets, ſpoiled the beſt Head of Hair amongſt them. Or perhaps it notes the weeping Bargain they had, tho' they maſtered *Tyre*, where they got no Booty, and both *Nebuchadnezzar* and his Army might ſhave their Heads in token of Mourning for their Loſs, rather than crown their Heads with Garlands of Joy for winning the City.—— *Every Shoulder was peeled.* Either their Cloaths were worn ſo out, they had ſcarce any to their Backs in ſo long a Siege, or galled and bliſtered with carrying Stones, Timber, Iron and Earth for Fortifications, and to make a Paſſage from the Continent to *Tyre*; which Sores, when healed, left Scabs or dead Skin, which peeled off.—— *Yet had he no Wages.* For tho' *Tyre* was very rich when firſt beſieged, no doubt but much Wealth was carried away by Shipping during the Siege, which none could prevent, and what was left might be preſerved by Articles of Surrender; for moſt believe it was delivered on Capitulation, and the Conqueror had only Victory for his Pains and Charge.

CHAP. XXX.

The Deſtruction of Egypt, *and her Confederates, foretold. The Arm of* Babylon *ſtrengthened to ſcatter the* Egyptians *among the Nations.*

Q. PRAY *what* Day *is that which the Prophet, Verſe* 3. *tells the People* is near?

A. Let us recite the Words, which we ſhall find run thus: *For the Day is near, even the Day of the Lord is near, a cloudy Day, it ſhall be the Time of the Heathen.*—— *The Day.* The Time of ſuch Diſtreſſes, as the like was never known by you.—— *Is near.* It will begin in your Overthrow in the *Cyreniac* and *Lybic* Deſarts, in a very little Time; next it will continue in your Civil War; and finally end in the *Babyloniſh* Conqueſt. And you ſhall be miſerably routed in the Deſarts of *Lybia*, immediately after the Civil War, which for eleven Years together ſhall waſte you; and then *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Forces will be upon you: So that, whereas there may be about ſixteen or eighteen Years between the Prophecy and its Accompliſhment, here is thirteen or fourteen of them taken up in Sorrows and Afflictions, Fore-runners of the laſt.—— *The Day of the Lord.* Of the Lord's ſore Diſpleaſure againſt *Egypt* and its Allies. —— *Is near.* Within two Years.—— *A cloudy Day.* A dark Day; ſo Times of Trouble are called; whereas Proſperity is a Day of Light. Troubles like Storms, violent Storms, are black. —— *The Time of the Heathen.* Of the *Egyptians* to be waſted, and of the *Babylonians* to waſte them; the Day of Pride, Cruelty and Revenge to the one, of Falling, Spoil and Deſtruction to the other.

Q. *Who were the People deſcribed by their Countries of* Ethiopia, Lybia, Lydia, Chub, *&c. in the fifth Verſe?*

A. Let us read the Verſe: Ethiopia, *and* Lybia, *and* Lydia, *and all the mingled People, and* Chub, *and the Men of the Land that is in League, ſhall fall by the Sword.*—— *Ethiopia. Heb. Cuſch*, who are commonly thought to be *Ethiopians* in *Africa*; but ſome more inquiſitive Geographers have found them originally and chiefly in *Arabia*, which was either ſubject to, or an Ally of *Egypt* in its Proſperity; and theſe were, as *ver.* 4. in a panick Fear, leſt the *Babylonians* ſhould paſs the Sea, and take them in their Way home.—— *Lybia. Heb. Phut.* Hence the *Puteans* or *Phutans*, who were afterwards better known by *Lybians*, a Part of whoſe Country was on the Borders of *Egypt*.—— *The mingled People.* The hired Soldiers from all Parts; a confuſed Mixture of Nations, ſuch as the *Lybians* had got together; or all *Arabia*, or all that ravenous ſort of People, that like Crows flock to Slaughter, ſo theſe Soldiers of Fortune followed the Wars; and the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies *Crows, Lev.* xi. 15. as well as a mixed Multitude.—— *Chub. Ethiopians*, South beyond *Egypt*, the Inhabitants of the inmoſt *Lybia*, which reaches to the *Nigritæ, Negroes*; perhaps they may be the *Nubians* at this Day, by a Letter eaſily changed.—— *The Men of the Land that is in League.* The *Sons of the Land of the Covenant.* Some refer it to the *Jews*, Children of the Covenant; but this is forced; 'tis all the People in League with *Egypt*.—— *Shall fall with them by the Sword.* i. e. With the *Egyptians*, in War, by the Sword of *Babylon*.

Q.

Q. *Where was ſituated the City* Noph?

A. Noph, in antient Times, was called *Memphis*, and now *Grand Cairo*, the chief City of *Egypt*, the City of their King firſt, of their Prieſts by Conſequence, and of all their ſeveral Gods; but the *Chaldeans* deſtroyed the Neſt and Birds too.

Q. *The City* No *is mentioned Verſe* 14. *pray where was it ſituated?*

A. No was a very large and populous City, ſituate on one of the Mouths of the *Nile*, and on the Sea, *Nahum*. iii. 8. Now *Alexandria* ſtands where that did; but 'twas greater in Sin than in People, and it was viſited with very great and dreadful Judgments, *Nahum* iii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Q. *Deſcribe the City* Aven, *and* Pi-beſeth, *mentiond Verſe* 17?

A. Aven was antiently *Bethſhemeth*, and *Heliopolis*, an idolatrous City that worſhipped the Sun, and in which was a ſtately Temple built to that Planet; its Greatneſs was 150 Furlongs, ſix Miles and three Quarters in Compaſs, a very vain and ſinful City, as its Name *Aven* imports. *Pi-beſeth* is *Bubaſtus*, and called alſo *Hæpheſtus*, no inconſiderable Place, and probably not far from *Aven*; it ſeems to have been ſome convenient paſs.

Q. Tehaphnehes *ſeems likewiſe to have been a Place of ſome Importance, as we find it intimated Verſe* 18. *pray give ſome Account of it?*

A. This was a great and goodly City of *Egypt*; called alſo *Tachapanes*, *Tachpanes*, *Tahapanes*, *Tahpanes*, *Chanes* and *Hanes*, *Iſa*. xxx. 4. all which it ſeems to have had from *Taphenes*, a Queen of *Egypt* in *Solomon*'s Time, 1 *Kings* xi. 19, 20. It ſtood not far from *Sin* or *Peluſium*, and called by the *Greeks*, a little ſoftening the Name, *Daphne Peluſiaca*; it was a royal City, in which *Pharaoh* had a Palace, to which many *Jews* fled, when forbidden of the Lord, by the Prophet *Jeremy*, Chap. xliv. It's one of the firſt Cities you come to, out of the Deſart of *Sin*, and was one of the Keys of *Egypt*.

CHAP. XXXI.

The Prophet ſhews Pharaoh *the Glory of* Aſſyria; *foretels their Ruin for their Pride; and that the like Deſolation ſhould fall on him and his People.*

Q. WHAT *is the Import of this Viſion?*

A. God preſents, before the Eyes of *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, and his People, the Eminency, Glory and Pride of the King and Kingdom of *Aſſyria*, under the Parable of an high fair Cedar-Tree, ſhewing there was no greater Power in the World than his was. But this great Kingdom was to be deſtroyed by the *Babylonians*, becauſe of their Pride and Haughtineſs, for an Example to all others. To cauſe this Deſtruction of the King of *Aſſyria* to ſeem more horrible, he ſets forth other Kings and Princes that are dead, as though they rejoiced at the Fall of ſuch a Tyrant. This is a lively Picture and Pattern of proud *Pharaoh*: Juſt ſo firm and ſure is his Condition, as this *Aſſyrian*'s was, and ſo ſhall he fare with his Pomp and Pride.

Q. *Pray explain the* 11*th Verſe?*

A. The Text ſtands thus, *I have therefore delivered him into the Hands of the Mighty-one of the Heathen; he ſhall ſurely deal with him. I have driven him out for his Wickedneſs.* —— *I have delivered him.* This, ſay ſome, is no prophetic Style; I have, becauſe I will; for moſt certainly God would accompliſh this Threatning upon him. —— *Him.* The proud King of *Aſſyria*, the infamous *Sardanapalus*, who inherited all the Vices of his Progenitors, more than he did their Kingdoms. ——*Into the Hands of the Mighty-one of the Heathen.* This Mighty-one, ſome ſay was *Cyrus*, or rather *Arbaces*, who firſt ſtruck at the Root of this Cedar, and cut him down; and well might this Man, tho' no King, when he attempted this, be ſtiled the Mighty-one of the Heathen, who could bring together 400,000 *Medes*, *Perſians*, *Babylonians* and *Arabians*, a Power ſufficient to beſiege the *Aſſyrian King* two Years in his own City and Palace. ————*He ſhall ſurely deal with him.* This he did effectually; for he held him beſieged, without Hopes of Relief, till at two Years End the vicious King burnt himſelf with his Palace. —— *I have driven him out for his Wickedneſs.* With Diſgrace for his lewd ſhameleſs Courſes, as a Wife is caſt out by Divorce for Adultery, *Lev.* xxi. 7. So was *Sardanapalus* caſt out for his Effeminacy and Lewdneſs; for Hiſtory informs us, that this firſt gave *Arbaces* Encouragement to lay a Deſign againſt him; and he was driven out, as the Prophet words it, by a Breach of two Miles and a Half wide, made by the Floods, which were occaſioned by continual Rain, which the Walls of *Nineveh* could not withſtand; ſo that God, rather than Man, drove out this Beaſt.

CHAP. XXXII.

A Lamentation for the fearful Fall of Egypt; *for their Pride and Tyranny, the Sword of* Babylon, *ſhall deſtroy it. A Deſcription of their Fall and Ruin, with other proud Rulers and Nations.*

Q. WHAT *is the Purport of this Prophecy, and when was it fulfilled?*

A. Here is a Lamentation for *Pharaoh*'s Terrible Fall, by reaſon of his Pride, Tyranny, continual unquiet ſtirring and moleſting of the People round about him; for as the River *Nile* overflowed *Egypt*, ſo God would make the Blood of *Pharaoh*'s Hoſt to overflow it. This came to paſs in leſs than four Years after this Prophecy; for the *Chaldeans* ſpoiled the Land of *Egypt*, and took Poſſeſſion of every Thing they thought fit.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. From Verſe nineteen the whole is a moſt elegant perſonating of the Dead, as if ſenſible and acquainted, diſcourſing with, and rejoicing at the Fall of proud Tyrants, who took no Warning by their Fall. In this Chapter the Actors are, the Prophet, the King of *Egypt*, his People and their Auxiliaries.

The Prophet begins with this Queſtion-Dialogue, Art thou better than others, that thou ſhouldſt not die, and be laid in Duſt, as well as others? Speak, *Hophra*, if thou haſt any Privilege to plead, what haſt thou to ſay, why thou ſhouldeſt not go down to the Pit, as a deſpiſed Mortal? The Prophet hearing no Plea of Privilege, adjudgeth him to the Grave, or lays him down with ſomewhat of Sarcaſm, Go down like others; Take up thy Lodging, thy long, dark and diſmal Receſs, where thy Duſt and Bones ſhall never be known by any royal Figure, among profane and loathed Carcaſſes; for a Burial with the Uncircumciſed is a Note of Diſhonour and Contempt. Thus far for the King and Princes. As to the People, the Prophet determines concerning them, which die as others, and fall undiſtinguiſhed, that they muſt be laid in the Pit.

The Lord declares *Pharaoh* ſhall ſuffer as they, ſince he ſinned as they; he made himſelf like them, by choice of their Vices, and God would make him like them, by like Miſeries and juſt Recompences; and theſe ſhall be to his Subjects as well as to himſelf. *Hophra* was ſtrangled, and probably caſt out without Burial; *Amaſis* was taken out of his Tomb, and burnt to Aſhes: So unlike the Condition of the Dead, which uſually is Reſt to the Body, was their Condition after Death, who in Life made it unlike, and imagined it was above the Condition of mortal Men.

Q. *Where lay the Countries of* Meſhech *and* Tubal, *mentioned Verſe 26? And when, and in what Manner was this Prophecy againſt them accompliſhed?*

A. By *Meſhech* underſtand *Cappadocians*, with the *Moſchi*, who dwelt about *Chalcis*, the Country now called *Mingrelia.*——*Tubal.* The *Aſiatic Iberians*, &c. the *Albanians* towards the *Caſpian Sea.* In the full Extent of theſe *Moſchi*, *Cappadocians* and *Albanians*, may be included the *Scythians*, who were their next Neighbours. *Junius* is of Opinion, that the *Scythians* are here meant. To which it will be objected, that they never had ſuch an eſtabliſhed Kingdom worth noting. 'Tis true we have no Account that this barbarous People were ever Lords of the World; yet it is certain they ſpread Terror and Deſolation wherever they came, eſpecially in thoſe Expeditions which their Kings made into *Aſia*, which *Vel. Paterculus* reports, they waſted, 306 Years before *Rome* was thought of; and that was about 1082 Years before the Birth of *Chriſt.* Again we find them in Arms (as numerous, no doubt, as when *Tomyris* their Queen deſtroyed *Cyrus*, or when they attacked their Neighbours in later Times) and with thoſe Arms waſted the *Cimmerii*, a People ſeated near them in the *Euxine Sea*, and *Palus Meotis*; and about the ſame Time they waſted *Aſia*, they forced *Cyaxares* from the Siege of *Nineveh*, ſo formidable were they at that Time: This was 634 Years before the Birth of *Chriſt*, and about 117 after *Rome* was built. About this Time, or in this Expedition, they took *Sardis*, the royal Seat of *Cræſus*, to which *Ovid* gave the Title of Great, only the Caſtle held out. The *Scythians*, in thoſe Days were a Terror to all Nations. Nay, *Helvicus* tells us from *Herodotus*, that they had the Imperial Power, were Lords of *Aſia* for twenty-eight Years; and their Power it ſeems was ſo great, that *Cyaxares* was glad to decline dealing with them openly, and to have Recourſe to Stratagem to overthrow them, which he did, as *Calviſius* tells us, *A. M.* 3344. by the Help of *Halyattes*, King of the *Lydians*. Theſe Things were freſh in Memory when *Ezekiel* propheſied thus againſt *Egypt*; for they fell out about the eighth or ninth Year of *Pharaoh-Necho*, fourteen Years before *Pharaoh-Hophra* came to the Crown; now about the ſixth Year of his Reign, came this Word of the Lord to *Ezekiel*; ſo that the Prophet might well mention theſe as Inſtances of God's Power in abating the Pride, and deſtroying the Kingdoms of the Mighty, and theſe with Reaſon are brought in among the *Perſians* and *Aſſyrians*.

Chap. XXXIII.

God ſhews the Prophet his Duty, and the Duty of all faithful Prophets, as they are Watchmen; alſo the Juſtice of his Ways toward the Penitent and the Revolter. He defends the Equity of his Proceedings. Jeruſalem *being taken, the Deſolations of the Land foretold. God's Judgments upon the Flatterers and Mockers of the Prophets.*

Q. *In what Manner does the Prophet inſtruct the People in this Chapter?*

A. By the Parable of a faithful Watchman in the Land, God ſhews the Prophet his Duty, and that of all faithful Teachers. He declares to the Murmurers and Hypocrites among the captive *Jews*, that he deals well and juſtly with Penitents, and Backſliders, defending the Juſtice of his Ways againſt their Calamities; for, ſays the Lord, O leave Sin, ceaſe to do Evil, be perſuaded to repent; it will pleaſe me to pardon your Faults, to throw away the Rod, and to ſave your Perſons. Death is your Choice, not mine, ſo long as you go on in the Way that is not good; whoſo ſinneth againſt me wrongeth his own Soul; and Love to Sin is interpretatively a Love and chuſing of Death. 'Tis your culpable Will, not my ſevere Reſolution that you die.

The Prophet having Tidings of the taking of *Jeruſalem*, by the powerful Influence of the Prophetic Spirit, foretels what ſhould become of thoſe left in the Land, who ſhould be conſtrained to own and ſubmit to the Lord, who had ſo juſtly puniſhed them for their Sins: God telling the Prophet, that when all he had propheſied againſt the *Jews* ſhall, as that he had propheſied againſt the Nations, come to paſs to their Ruin, they ſhould know he was no Muſician, but a Prophet ſent by God, to forwarn them to fly from Wrath, not employed by Men to pleaſe their wanton Ear and Fancy.

Q. *Pray expound the 24th Verſe?*

A. Let us firſt ſee what it contains; *Son of Man they that inhabit thoſe Waſtes of the Land of* Iſrael, *ſpeak, ſaying,* Abraham *was one, and he inherited the Land, but we are many, the Land is given us for Inheritance.*——*They that inhabit.* Who were left behind, having either hid themſelves, but now come out of their Holes, or returned from neighbouring Countries, whither they fled, or ſuch as were permitted by the Conqueror to ſtay and plant Vineyards.——*Thoſe Waſtes of the Land of* Iſrael. Places once very fruitful and abounding with People, but now by the Spoil of the Soldiers, emptied of Inhabitants, and made as a deſolate Wilderneſs.——*Speak.* Thus think and ſpeak, thus with vain Reaſonings they deceive themſelves.——Abraham *was one, and he inherited the Land.* Our Father had an hereditary Right to all this Land; we Children of *Abraham*, tho' diminiſhed, are many, and the divine Goodneſs will ſurely appear then, and continue to us both Right and Poſſeſſion, and we ſhall fill the Land, and recover our former State and Privileges.——*The Land is given us for Inheritance:* The perpetual Inheritance is ours. Thus with vain fallacious Arguments they deceive one another.

CHAP. XXXIV.

A Reproof to the wicked Shepherds of God's People; his Judgment againſt them; his Providence and Care for his Flock. Chriſt the chief Shepherd and Prince of his Church is promiſed. The Church's ſafe and happy Condition under his Government.

Q. I *Would know what Point is chiefly purſued in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a Prophecy againſt the wicked Shepherds of God's People; that is, the Rulers of the People, both political, as Kings, Magiſtrates and Princes; as alſo eccleſiaſtical, Prieſts and Prophets. God promiſes that he will ſeek out his Sheep himſelf, deliver them, feed them right, and put a Difference between Sheep and Sheep, Rams and Goats. The Conſtruction is emphatical in the *Hebrew*; that is, I the Owner, the Lover, the Maker, the great Shepherd, even I who committed the People to your Care, never ſubmitted them to your Rapine and Cruelty, but am as angry with you for devouring them, as I am zealous for their Welfare; I will demand them of you: I know how many I delivered to your keeping, and I expect an Account of ſo many again; I will ſee in what State and Condition they are too, being determined to gather them together from the Places to which they are ſcattered.

The Almighty is graciouſly pleaſed to ſend the chief Shepherd and Prince of his Church *Jeſus Chriſt*, under whoſe Government his Sheep ſhall be bleſſed and happy; for he is the great, good, chief, and only Shepherd, that laid down his Life for his Sheep. In the laſt Verſe of this Chapter, that we may not miſtake the Allegory, God ſaith, this Flock of my Paſture are not Sheep literally, but they are Men expreſſed by this Emblem, and theſe Men are thoſe I am God to, and will be ſo for ever.

Q. *Pray expound the 13th Verſe?*

A. *And I will bring them out from the People, and gather them from the Countries, and will bring them to their own Land, and feed them upon the Mountains of* Iſrael *by the Rivers, and in all the inhabited Places of the Country,* ——— *I will gather out from toe People.* When *Cyrus*'s Proclamation came forth that the *Jews* might return, this Prophecy was litterally fulfilly; for God actually inclined the Minds of the *Jews* to retire from the People amidſt whom they had dwelt ſeventy Years. See *Ezra* i. 5, 6. and vii. 13.———*Gather them from the Countries.* Aſſemble them together, as they really did at the Place appointed, without the Limits of the Country where they were; which Place was on the Banks of the River *Abava* or *Diana*, near where it falls into *Euphrates*, in the Country called *Adiabene*, and having its Scource in the inward Receſſes of the *Babylonian* Kingdom, in their Way to *Jeruſalem*.———*And will bring them.* Lead, conduct, and as a Shepherd go before them, till I have put them in Poſſeſſion again of their own Land, namely *Canaan*, which was their own by Grant from the Crown of Heaven, antiently poſſeſſed by their Fathers, and out of which they were caſt by Violence.——*And feed them upon the Mountains.* God will provide for, maintain, and nouriſh them, *upon the Mountains, i. e.* Places proper for Sheep, where now they ſhall once more be kept.——*By the Rivers.* Water-brooks, as *Pſal.* lxii. 1. which run down from the Spring-Heads in the Sides and Tops of the Mountains with Impetuoſity and Noiſe; or if greater Rivers, they are thoſe that run by the Foot of the Mountains on which theſe Sheep ſhall feed.———*In all the inhabited Places of the Country.* This may explain the former; on ſuch Hills, ſituated by the Rivers, the returned Captives would firſt ſettle Habitations; thus *litterally*; but ſpiritually it refers to the gathering the Elect, by the Goſpel, throughout the World.

CHAP. XXXV.

The utter Ruin of Mount Seir *predicted, for the Hatred of* Iſrael, *and rejoicing at their Miſery.*

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve upon this Prophecy?*

A. The Prophet is commanded to put himſelf in a Poſture, looking towards Mount *Seir*, to propheſy againſt it, and to declare how inevitable the Stroke will be which God gives from above. The Lord declares he will puniſh the *Edomites*, becauſe they reproached, ſcoffed at, and vilified his People, as if they had been the People of ſome deaf Idol; but God ſays, he will make them know that he is the Lord who heard all their Blaſphemies, and will puniſh them for it, by ruining all their Land; and by theſe Judgments the Lord will be known.

Q. *What was the Grounds of the continual Hatred which the* Edomites *bare to the* Iſraelites, *as expreſſed, Verſe 5?*

A. Let us read the whole Verſe; *Becauſe thou haſt had a perpetual Hatred, and haſt ſhed the Blood of the Children of* Iſrael, *by the force of the Sword, in the Time of their Calamity, in the Time that their Iniquity had an End.* Edom was of the ſame Stock, Brother to *Jacob*, and it was a Sin to diſlike or envy, but greater to hate, and greateſt to retain a perpetual Hatred, an hereditary Enmity from from *Eſau*'s Time, the Father of the *Edomites* till uow; near 1200 Years had the Seed of *Eſau* hated the Poſterity of *Jacob* for inheriting the Bleſſing, which yet there is Reaſon to believe they as little valued, as their Father did before them.——*And ſhed the Blood of the Children of* Iſrael. Sometimes by ſudden Incurſions, and at other Times by an open War, or by taking Side with thoſe who were always their declared Enemies; thus the Sword of *Edom* was always drawn and ready againſt *Jacob*'s Seed.——*By the Force of the Sword.* With Fierceneſs, Cruelty and implacable Hatred, as appears, *Obad.* v. 11, 12, 13, 14.——*In the Time of their Calamity.* Their deepeſt Calamity, when all was loſt, their City taken, and none to pity or help them, then did *Edom* execute his cruel Hatred, *Pſal.* cxxxvii. 7.———*The Time that their Iniquity had an End.* When their Iniquity was charged on them, and they were puniſhed for it, which brought them to final Ruin.

CHAP. XXXVI.

The People of Iſrael *comforted by the Deſtruction on their Enemies, and by the Bleſſing of God upon* Iſrael; *yet* Iſrael, *for their Sins, chaſtized and puniſhed. They are again reſtored, not for their own Merits, but by his Mercy and peculiar Favour.*

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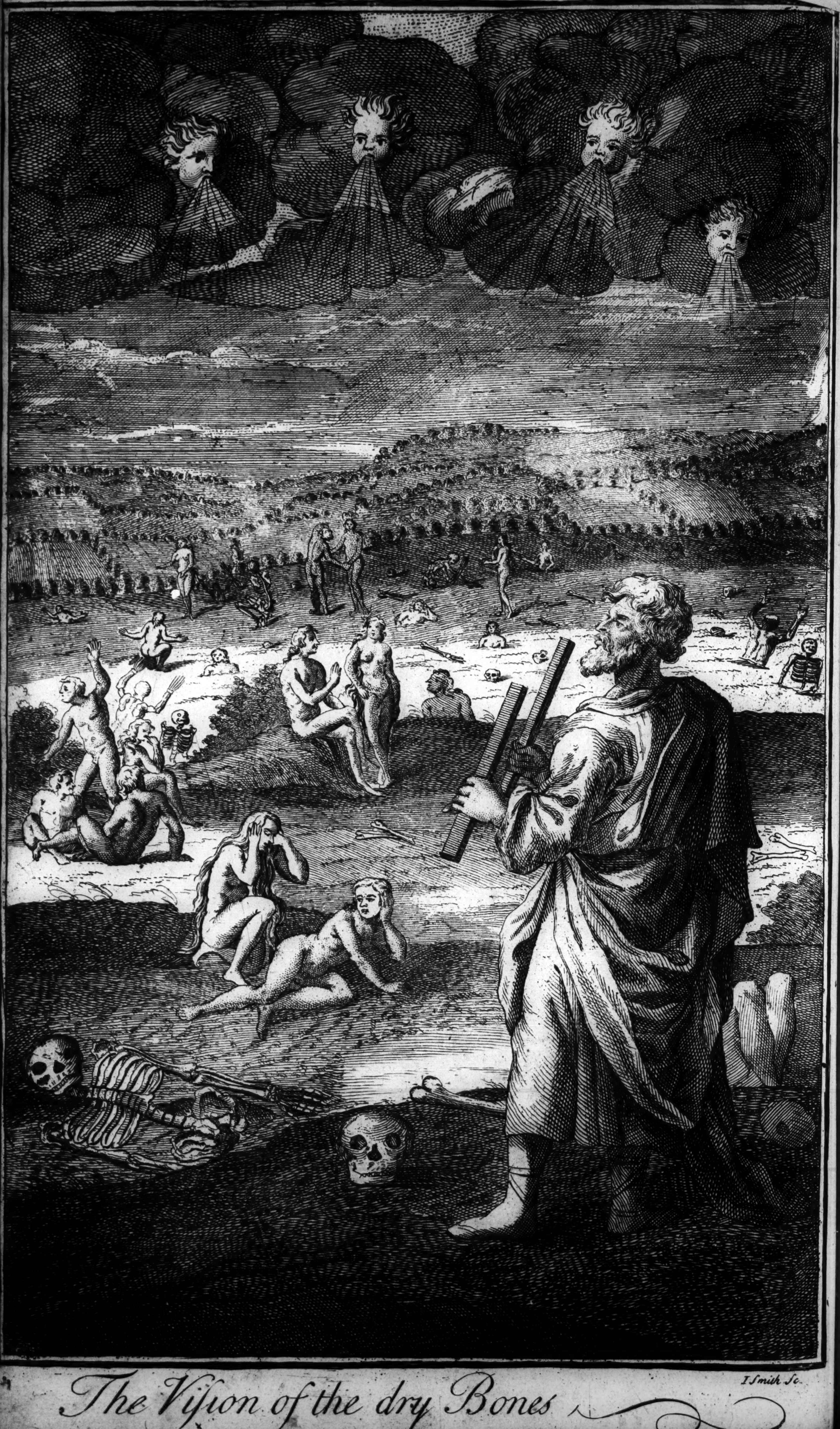
EZEKIEL CHAP. XXXVII



I Smith Sc.

The Viſion of the dry Bones

Q. THIS *Prophecy is directed againſt the Enemies of Gods Church; how does the Prophet proceed in it?*

A. By the Speech directed to the Mountains of *Iſrael,* God foretels that he will, in great Zeal, execute Vengeance upon the Enemies of his Church, who had derided, oppreſſed, and made Havock of her, and that he will moſt glorioully reſtore, multiply, and bleſs her, which was accompliſhed under *Chriſt,* to whom all theſe temporal Deliverances did direct them.

God ſhews that he was neceſſitated to puniſh and chaſtiſe his Church, for the Honour of his holy Name; but that he will again, for his Name's Sake, out of his free Grace and Mercy, abundantly favour her, cleanſe her, ſanctify her by his Holy Spirit, fill her with all Manner of Bleſſings, and everlaſtingly ſave her: For he would not ſuffer his Name to be had in Contempt; the Heathen would have been apt to reproach, had the Church been ſuffered to have periſhed.

Q. *The ſecond Verſe ſeems to want ſome Explanation?*

A. It reads thus; *Thus ſaith the Lord God, Becuaſe the Enemy had ſaid againſt you,* Aha, *even the antient high Places are ours in Poſſeſſion.*——*The Enemy.* Many were the Enemies of God's People, but they ſo conſpired in one Conſent, and were ſo united in their Humours, Enmity and Carriage, that the Prophet ſpeaks of them but as one, and particularly of *Edom.*——*Aha.* Rejoycingly and with inſulting Pride, as *Ammon* did, Chap. xxv. 3. and *Tyre,* Chap. xxvi. 6.——*The antient Places.* The everlaſting Hills, Foundations, as theſe of *Iſrael,* are from the Beginning, and ſhall be to the End; what they aim at, is a deriding of *Iſrael,* who by promiſe from God claimed theſe Mountains as a perpetual Inheritance, but were now caſt out of it, and they hereby tax the God of *Iſrael* as not keeping his Promiſe, ſo they blaſpheme God and inſult his People.——*Are ours.* Our Right, as of the elder Houſe, now Conquerors; thus they pretend a Right to juſtify their Injuſtice.——*In Poſſeſſion.* We are now where we ſhould have been theſe 1160 Years or more, where we thought we would be one Time or other, in ſpite of them and all their Boaſts of their God; we are where we will keep, and from whence none ſhall drive us. Such impious Brags were their Sin, and are implied in the Words.

CHAP. XXXVII.

By the Reſurrection of dry Bones, the dead Hope of Iſrael *is revived, and their Deliverance from Captivity foretold. By the joining of two Sticks is ſhewn the Union of* Iſrael *and* Judah. *The everlaſting Kingdom of* Chriſt *promiſed.*

Q. HOW *are the Viſions in this Chapter to be applied?*

A. By the Viſion of the Reſurrection of the Dead, God aſſures his People, that he will deliver them out of the Captivity of *Babylon,* where they now were, like Men that were dead and buried, and will bring them again into their own Land. He propheſies alſo under the Token of joining two Sticks together in one Hand, that he will join the Houſes of *Iſrael* and *Judah,* unite them under one King and Shepherd the Meſſiah *Jeſus Chriſt,* and will make his everlaſting Covenant of Grace with them, and be in their Aſſemblies and Hearts; of which ſpiritual Preſence the Tabernacle and Sanctuary heretofore were Signs and Pledges, *Lev.* xxvi. 11, 12. 1 *Cor.* iii. 16. 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. *Epheſ.* ii. 21, 22.

Q. *What may be repreſented by the Union of* Iſrael *and* Judah?

A. As the Diviſions and Enmity between *Judah* and *Ephraim* (whereof *Samaria* was the chief City) was, as it were, a Repreſentation of the two hoſtile Parts or Diviſions of Men, namely *Jews* and *Gentiles;* ſo was the uniting of them a Repreſentation or Figure of the uniting of the univerſal Church, or of all the Elect throughout the whole World, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles,* by one Spirit and one Faith, under one Head, King and Saviour, which is our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt,* the promiſed *Meſſiah:* Although now indeed ſome of the Ten Tribes joined themſelves unto *Judah,* and ſo went together out of *Babylon,* 1 *Chron.* ix. 3. yet the true ſpiritual Conjunction and Uniting began in the Time of our Saviour *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, (ſee *John* iv. 9, 12, 23, 35, 39, 41. *Acts* ii. 9, 10, 11. and viii. 5, 14. and ix. 31.) and is conſequently proſecuted among the *Jews,* and principally among the *Gentiles,* and ſhall continue to the End of the World, until all the ſpiritual *Iſrael* be called, and be united into one Body and one Church, and ſaved in the Hand of God, that is, in the Lord *Chriſt,* who is herein the Father's Servant, unto whoſe Hand he hath delivered all Things, and unto whom he draweth all the Elect. See *Matth.* xxviii. 19. *Acts* i. 1. *Rom.* xi. 25, 26. *Epheſ.* ii. 13, *&c.*

This Chapter therefore being ſo very ſignificant and expreſſive, as well of the Reſurrection of the Dead, as of the ſpiritual Conjunction of *Jews* and *Gentiles* under one Head, the *Meſſiah,* in the Times of the Goſpel, we ſhall give it the Reader entire.

The Hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of God, and ſet me down in the midſt of the Valley which was full of Bones. And cauſed me to paſs by them round about, and behold there were many in the open Valley, and lo they were very dry. And he ſaid unto me, Son of Man, can theſe Bones live? And I anſwered, O Lord God, thou knoweſt. Again he ſaid unto me, Propheſy upon theſe Bones, and ſay unto them, O ye dry Bones, hear the Word of the Lord. Thus ſaith the Lord God unto theſe Bones, Behold, I will cauſe Breath to enter into you, and ye ſhall live, and ye ſhall know that I am the Lord. So I propheſied as I was commanded: And as I propheſied there was a Noiſe, and behold a ſhaking, and the Bones came together, Bone to his Bone. And when I beheld, lo the Sinews and Fleſh came up upon them, and the Skin covered them above; but there was no Breath in them. Then ſaid he unto me, Propheſy unto the Wind, propheſy, Son of Man, and ſay to the Wind, Thus ſaith the Lord God, Come from the four Winds, O Breath, and breathe upon theſe Slain, that they may live. So I propheſied as he commanded me, and the Breath came into them, and they lived and ſtood up upon their Feet, an exceeding great Army. Then he ſaid unto me, Son of Man, theſe Bones are the whole Houſe of Iſrael: *Behold, they ſay, Our Bones are dried, and our Hope is loſt, we are cut off for our Parts. Therefore propheſy and ſay unto them, thns ſaith the Lord God, Behold, O my People, I will open your Graves, and cauſe you to come up out of your Graves, and bring you into the Land* *of* Iſrael. *And ye ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your Graves, O my People, and brought you up out of your Graves. And ſhall put my Spirit in you, and ye ſhall live, and I ſhall place you in your own Land: Then ſhall ye know that I the Lord have ſpoken it, and performed it, ſaith the Lord. The Word of the Lord came again unto me, ſaying, Moreover, thou Son of Man, take thee one Stick, and write upon it, for* Judah, *and for the Children of* Iſrael *his Companions; then take another Stick, and write upon it, For* Joſeph *the Stick of* Ephraim, *and for all the Houſe of* Iſrael *his Companions. And join them one to another into one Stick, and they ſhall become one in thine Hand. And when the Children of thy People ſhall ſpeak unto thee, ſaying, Wilt thou not ſhew us what thou meaneſt by theſe? Say unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the Stick of* Joſeph *which is in the Hand of* Ephraim, *and the Tribes of* Iſrael *his Followers, and will put them with him, even with the Stick of* Judah, *and make them one Stick, and they ſhall be one in mine Hand. And the Sticks whereon thou writeſt, ſhall be in thine Hand before their Eyes. And ſay unto them, Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold I will take the Children of* Iſrael *from among the Heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every Side, and bring them into their own Land. And I will make them one Nation in the Land upon the Mountains of* Iſrael, *and one King ſhall be King to them all; and they ſhall be no more two Nations, neither ſhall they be divided into two Kingdoms any more at all: Neither ſhall they defile themſelves any more with their Idols, nor with their deteſtable Things, nor with any of their Tranſgreſſions; but I will ſave them out of their Dwelling-places, wherein they have ſinned, and will cleanſe them; ſo ſhall they be my People, and I will be their God. And* David *my Servant ſhall be King over them; and they all ſhall have one Shepherd: they ſhall alſo walk in my Judgments, and obſerve my Statutes and do them. And they ſhall dwell in the Land that I have given unto* Jacob *my Servant, wherein your Fathers have dealt, and they ſhall dwell therein, even they and their Children, and their Childrens Children for ever, and my Servant* David *ſhall be their Prince for ever. Moreover, I will make a Covenant of Peace with them, it ſhall be an everlaſting Covenant with them, and I will place them, and multiply them, and will ſet my Sanctuary in the midſt of them for evermore. My Tabernacle alſo ſhall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they ſhall be my People. And the Heathen ſhall know that I the Lord do ſanctify* Iſrael, *when my Sanctuary ſhall be in the midſt of them for evermore.*

CHAP. XXXVIII.

The Army and March of Gog *againſt* Iſrael. *The Lord's mighty Hand and Judgment againſt him. God hereby magnifies himſelf in the Eyes of many Nations.*

Q. *WHAT was God's Deſign in ordaining the Prophet to denounce Judgments againſt* Gog?

A. Since the two former Chapters had aſſured ſo great and wonderful Bleſſings to the *Jews*, after their Return out of *Babylon*, and the gathering them together in their own Land, it is more than probable, the *Jews* would expect an Accompliſhment of all theſe Things quickly after their Return; and if Troubles ſhould, as they did, intervene and prove long, be diſcouraged and quarrel with Providence: God doth therefore, in this and the next Chapter forewarn them, by telling what Enemies and Troubles would interpoſe themſelves, to the great Loſſes and Dangers of the *Jews*, before they ſhould overcome them, and God ſhould fully and finally deliver them.

Q. *What were the People called by the Name of* Gog?

A. Gog was a People who came of *Magog*, the Son of *Japhet*, *Gen.* x. 2. *Magog* alſo here ſignifies a certain Country; ſo that by theſe two Countries, which had the Government of *Greece* and *Italy*, he means the principal Enemies of the Church; and he ſhews that the Enemies ſhould bend themſelves againſt the Church, but it ſhould be to their own Deſtruction.

Q. *By explaining the ſecond Verſe, you will give ſome Light into the Hiſtory of* Gog, Magog, &c.

A. *Son of Man, ſet thy Face againſt* Gog, *the Land of* Magog, *the chief Prince of* Meſhech *and* Tubal, *and propheſy againſt him.*——*Againſt* Gog. This cannot be one ſingle Perſon, or one only Prince, though probably it points out ſome one, by whom the Troubles foretold were begun, yet the Succeſſors of this one, whoever he was, are included and deſigned by this *Gog*; nor is he to be limited to one certain Nation, that he was King of, nor yet confined to one Age, or (it may be) to two or three. Some will fix the Beginnings of this *Gog* among the *Seleucidæ*, and take in the others who divided the *Grecian* Empire among themſelves, and who did much Hurt to the *Jews*, the Hiſtory of which we have in Part in the Books of the *Maccabees*. The Reaſon of their being called *Gog*, perhaps was this: *Gyges*, who gave Name to the Land, Predeceſſor to *Cræſus* (being Grandſon to *Gyges*) was conquered by *Cyrus*, and deprived of the Kingdom, which was made and became tributary to the *Perſians*, till taken from them by the *Grecians*; and when that Kingdom was divided, it fell among the Succeſſors of *Alexander*, in *Seleucus*'s Line, and ſo the *Seleucidæ* may, not improbably, be thought pointed at by *Gog*, whoſe Country fell into the Hand of *Seleucus* by his Succeſſes againſt *Antigonus*. And of all the *Seleucidæ*, the ſixth from *Seleucus* ſtands faireſt for it, namely *Antiochus Epiphanes*, a Type of *Antichriſt*, and a fierce Enemy of the *Jews*. Others judge this War, in which *Gog* was Prince and Leader, refers to Times much later, and there are ſeveral Particulars that do not ſuit well with *Antiochus Epiphanes*. They therefore refer it to ſome *Scythian* King or Kings, and that the Time is ſtill to come, wherein this Prophecy is to be fulfilled. And that it muſt intend the Enemies of God's Church, who deſcended from the *Scythians*, and are now Maſters of *Cappadocia*, *Iberia*, *Armenia*, or in Confederacy with the *Tartars*, and thoſe northern Heathens. Now the Arms and Equipage here mentioned, well ſuit with the *Scythians*, and they with the *Turks*, as likely to make Part of this Army. But others think, that all the Enemies of *Iſrael*, in all Quarters, all, both open and ſecret Enemies are here intended, and that the antichriſtian Forces and Combinations are what the Prophet foretels; and if from any Conjunction of Affairs, in theſe later Times, one might make a Conjecture, the Invaſion of the *Turks* on one Side, and the Plots and Contrivances of others on this Side *Chriſtendom*, to extirpate the Northern Hereſy (as ſome have have called our Religion) poſſibly the *Conſtantinopolitan Antichriſt*, and the *Roman Antichriſt*, with all their Aſſociates and Aſſiſtants, are this *Gog*. ——*The Land of* Magog. *Magog* is at leaſt Part of *Scythia*, and comprehends *Syria*, in which was *Hierapolis*, and by them called *Scythopolis*. It is then that Country which is now in Subjeſtion to the *Turks*; and may be extended through *Aſia Minor*, and the Countries of *Sarmatia*, &c. from thoſe Parts under more than one in Succeſſion of Time, and in the laſt Time under ſome particular active, undertaking and daring Prince, Enemy of *Iſrael*; all their Power will be ſtirred up againſt *Chriſt* and *Chriſtians*. ———— *Prince*. What we render Prince, may as well be the proper Name of *Araxes* in *Arabick*, a principal River of *Armeuia*, and ſo the firſt Country mentioned under the Command of *Gog*, or the *Scythians* of Mount *Taurus*, which were called *Rhos*.

CHAP. XXXIX.

God's Judgments upon Gog *and* Magog, *more particularly deſcribed.* Iſrael's *Victory and Triumph over them.* Gog's *Burial, the Manner how, and Place where. A great Sacrifice prepared by the Lord himſelf, for his People. God known by his Judgments amongſt the Heathen and* Iſrael. Iſrael *being puniſhed for their Sin, and taking Shame to themſelves, are reſtored to God's Favour, and ſhall be plagued no more.*

Q. THE *Prophecy againſt* Gog *is ſtill continued; what do we learn from it?*

A. Here is a farther Prophecy of God's Judgments upon *Gog* and *Magog*, and the Greatneſs of the Overthrow is lively deſcribed by divers Circumſtances; after this Deſtruction the Church ſhall have great Peace and Tranquillity, and burn all their Weapons, becauſe they ſhall no more fear the Enemy: And this is chiefly meant by the Accompliſhment of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom, when by their Head *Chriſt*, all Enemies ſhall be overcome.

God will make it known that he puniſhed his People for their Sins, and the Heathen ſhould be convinced, they overcame them not by their own Strength, neither yet by the Weakneſs of God's Arm, but that this was permitted for the Peoples Sins; but now God promiſes he will graciouſly gather his People again, reſtore them, pour out his Spirit upon them, and ſhew them everlaſting Favour and Mercy. It was Sin that cauſed God to hide his Face, and now Grace ſhall be given to keep them out of Sin, and to engage them to conſtant Obedience, that God may rejoice over them to do them good in this their latter End.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 11th Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe; *And it ſhall come to paſs in that Day, that I will give unto* Gog *a Place there of Graves in* Iſrael, *the Valley of the Paſſengers, on the Eaſt of the Sea; and it ſhall ſtop the Noſes of the Paſſengers; and there ſhall they bury* Gog, *and all his Multitude; and they ſhall call it the Valley of* Hamon-Gog.——*In that Day.* When God ſhall have deſtroy'd this Prince and his formidable Army.——*I will give unto* Gog. And to many that are with him; for ſome, Verſe 4. were given to the Birds and Beaſts to be devoured.——*A Place there of Graves in* Iſrael. Beſides many other Reaſons for burying theſe ſlaughter'd Multitudes, the Humanity that Religion requires would influence the *Jews* to it; and God tells us, that *Gog* ſhall have a Grave in *Iſrael*. He came to take Poſſeſſion, and ſo ſhall, but not as he purpoſed and hoped, but as God intended; *Gog* ſhall poſſeſs his Houſe of Darkneſs in the Land, which he invaded to make a Prey of.————*The Valley of the Paſſengers on the Eaſt.* This Valley hath here its Name and Situation; the Name from the frequent Travels of Paſſengers through it from *Egypt* and *Arabia Felix* into the Northern Parts, and from theſe again into *Egypt* and *Arabia*. By its Situation, which is on the Eaſt-ſide of the *Dead-ſea*, to diſtinguiſh it from the Valley on this Side *Jordan* Weſtward, in which is *Dotham*. Now in this Valley the *Jews* defeated the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Tyrians* and *Sidonians*, 1 *Macc.* v. This might be a Type or Firſt-fruits, and Aſſurance of this great Victory, but no more; for this was of a few againſt a few, and in this Fight but few fell.———— *It ſhall ſtop the Noſes of the Paſſengers.* The Stink of the putrifying Carcaſes ſhould make Travellers ſtop their Noſes.————*There ſhall they bury* Gog. Partly to diſcharge the Duty of Humanity, tho' to dead Enemies; but chiefly to remove the Nuſance from the Eye and Noſe, and to prevent Diſeaſes that frequently ariſe from ſuch Smells. This Prince, whoever he be, ſhall there fall, and be buried with his Multitude. ———— *They ſhall call it the Valley of* Hamon-gog. This Appellation is not yet known to be given to any Valley, probably becauſe this Prophecy is not yet fully accompliſhed.

CHAP. XL.

The Time, Manner and End of the Lord's appearing to the Prophet in a Viſion. A Deſcription of the ſeveral Chambers, Parts and Arches of the Houſe, particularly of the Eaſt-gate; the Gate that looketh towards the North; the Gate towards the South; the Tables; the Chambers of the Singers; the Porches of the Houſe.

Q. PRAY *give the Purport of this Viſion?*

A. The Time and Manner of this Viſion is ſet forth. An Angel, in the Form of a Man, inſtructs the Prophet concerning the End of the Viſion; concerning the Wall that went round about, and the Meaſures; concerning the Gates and Courts, *viz.* the outermoſt Court and its Appurtenances, where the People uſed to aſſemble; the innermoſt or middlemoſt Court, with its Appurtenances, where the Furniture of the *Levites* was, and where the Offerings were prepared; concerning the third or innermoſt Court, or Court of the Prieſts, where the Altar of Burnt-offering ſtood; laſtly, concerning the Poſt of the Porch of the Houſe. By the Poſt of the Porch, is meant the Wall, which was five Cubits thick on either Side of the Valley or Porch.

Q. *There are Difficulties in the 5th Verſe, which are paſt my Skill to unravel; and therefore deſire your Aſſiſtance?*

A. Let us firſt read the Words, and then try to expound them; *And behold, a Wall on the Outſide of the Houſe round about, and in the Man's Hand a meaſuring Reed of ſix Cubits long, by the Cubit, and an Hand-breath: So he meaſured the Breadth* *of the Building one Reed, and the Height one Reed.* This was that outward Wall which encompaſſed the whole Ground on which the Temple ſtood, and the Courts thereto belonging; a Wall that encompaſſed the whole Mount *Sion*, on whoſe Top the Temple ſtood.————*On the Outſide of the Houſe.* This Paſſage clears what Wall it was, *viz.* the outmoſt of the three, with which the Floor of the Temple and the Mount were encompaſſed.——*In the Man's Hand.* The Prophet is called to ſee and hear, but the Reed is not in his Hand; *Chriſt*, who is this Man, hath, and keeps the Reed in his own Hand, as the only fit Perſon to take the Meaſures of all. ——*A meaſuring Reed.* Or Cane, for this meaſuring Rod or Staff, was of the Canes growing in that Country, ſtrait, long, and light, and proper for the Uſe of Architects. ——*Six Cubits long.* Each Cubit conſiſted of eighteen Inches of our common Account; there is much Diſpute concerning the exact Dimenſions of this Cubit; it is certain, it was about a *Roman* Foot and a half, which comes very near to our *Engliſh* Foot and a Half, or eighteen Inches, or one half Yard.—— *And an Hand-breadth* added to each ſix Cubits, not as ſome have ſuppoſed to each Cubit.————*The Breadth of the Building one Reed.* The Thickneſs of the Walls, which were one Reed and one Hand's-breadth, or three Yards and three Inches thick. ——*And the Height one Reed.* The Height was equal, taking the Meaſure, not from the Bottom of the Wall in the Valley, on the Outſide, which was of different Height, as the Valley was of different Depth, but taking the Meaſure from the *Area*, or Floor on the Inſide of the Wall; it was in the whole Circuit of equal Height, as here.

CHAP. XLI.

The Meaſures, Parts, Chambers of the Temples, together with its Ornaments.

Q. WHAT *was the Building and Menſuration thereof, deſcribed Verſe* 12?

A. *Now the Building that was before the ſeparate Place, at the End toward the Weſt, was ſeventy Cubits broad, and the Wall of the Building was five Cubits thick round about and the Length thereof ninety Cubits.* This is a new Building not yet mentioned, but now meaſured by itſelf.——*The ſeparate Place.* Either the *Temple*, with all the appendant Treaſury-Chambers; or the *Oracle*, which was in the Weſt-end of the Temple; or that twenty Cubits Space, which was cut off from the Chambers, and the five Cubits Space before them, by a Breaſt-Wall, as ſome think. ——*At the End towards the Weſt.* Either of the Temples, Oracle, or Space aforeſaid toward the Weſt. ——*Seventy Cubits broad.* Interpreters are neither agreed about the Fabrick, nor the Dimenſions of it here intended to be meaſured; and as little agreed how to compute the Meaſures, every one however makes out his own Account, whether the Thing he meaſures be the right or not. Firſt, ſuppoſe the Temple and the Weſt-part of it from North to South, thus; twenty Cubits the Oracle; each Side-Wall ſix Cubits; Breadth of the Chambers on each Side four; Thickneſs of the Out-walls of theſe Chambers on both Sides five Cubits each; a void Space of five Cubits compaſſing the whole; and then the low or Breaſt-Wall that incloſed this Space five Cubits thick on each Side, making up the third Ten, produced the ſeventy Cubits. But they who think of a diſtinct Building on the Weſt End of the Temple, do alſo in their Method make out the Account. ——*Five Cubits thick round about*, Theſe Proportions are eaſily laid together, which will make up the Total, and agree with the Temple thus; Temple and Oracle with their Walls, ſeventy Cubits; Porch eleven; and Chambers and Walls nine Cubits. And thoſe who will have a new Structure here meaſured (which is more than was in the firſt Temple-Fabrick) will make all correſpond to their *Hypotheſis*, and it is more eaſy to object againſt another's Plan, than demonſtrate your own. The beſt is, an Error in this Matter is of no great Conſequence.

CHAP. XLII.

A Deſcription of the Court with the Chambers; the Uſe of them for the Prieſt and the holy Things. The Meaſure of the outer Court.

Q. PRAY *expound the* 20*th Verſe*; He meaſured it by the four Sides: It had a Wall round about, five hundred Reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a Separation between the Sanctuary and the profane Place?

A. *He meaſured it by the four Sides.* The whole Wall; repeating the Number of the Sides.——*It had a Wall round about.* The whole had ſuch a Wall: Had each Side been five hundred Reeds, the Prophet muſt, in Propriety of Speech, have ſaid, *They*, i. e. the Sides; not *it*, i. e. the whole Compaſs of the Wall.——*Five hundred Reeds long, and five hundred broad.* In ſuch an equilateral Square there is properly no Length, for all Sides are equal: But, becauſe in the Temple Structure there was Length and Breadth, therefore, that *Latus* or Side which runs in a ſtrait Line, parallel to the Breadth of the Temple, is the Breadth of this *Iſopleuron*, or equilateral Square. He ſpeaks not here of the Thickneſs, though Breadth and Thickneſs are ſometimes the ſame. ——*To make a Separation.* To diſtinguiſh, and accordingly exclude or admit Perſons; for all might not go in. ——*Between the Sanctuary and the profane Place.* Not the Temple: But we muſt remember here, that the *Jews* accounted the whole Earth profane, *i. e.* common or unclean, compared with *Canaan*, and *Canaan* common or leſs holy than *Jeruſalem*; and every Part the nearer the Temple, the more holy: And ſo here the outward Court was incloſed to diſtinguiſh it by its comparative Holineſs, it was more holy than all without it.

CHAP. XLIII.

The Glory of the Lord returns into the new Temple; his Promiſe and dwelling with his People, if they put away their Sins; exhorts them to repent, and obſerve the Law of the Houſe. The Meaſure and Uſe of the Altar and Burnt-Offering.

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects treated of in this Chapter?*

A. The Glory of the Lord comes from the Eaſt into this new Temple, and fills it; the Rays of Glory, like the Sun-Beams, ſhade the dark Earth to ſhine with glorious Light.

The Lord ſpeaks unto the Prophet, and promiſes to dwell there for ever, among his People, and cleanſe them from Sin, which cauſed him to remove out of the old Temple. The Prophet is commanded to repreſent exactly the whole Building unto the People, to the End that they may repent, and be made Partakers of this whole Work of God's Grace.

Here is a general Law concerning the Holineſs of this whole Place. Holineſs becomes God's Houſe or Temple; this relative Holineſs referred to preſonal and real Holineſs, and required it. The whole Circuit of this Mountain ſhall be holy, but the Top of it, on which the Temple ſtands, ſhall be moſt holy, into which only holy Perſons and holy Things ſhall be brought.

The reſt of this Chapter conſiſts of the Meaſure, Dedication and Uſe of the Altar of Burnt-Offering, which God promiſed to accept with ſignal Tokens of Favour and Kindneſs.

Q. *Explain the ſecond Verſe?*

A. *And behold the Glory of the God of* Iſrael *came from the Way of the Eaſt; and his Voice was like a Noiſe of Waters, and the Earth ſhined with his Glory.*——*And Behold.* Sometimes this Word is expletive; but here, no doubt, it expreſſes the Joy the Prophet had to ſee this excellent Viſion, which ſhould not be ſeen there any more for above ſixty Years; for, in the ſixth Year of the Captivity, the Glory of God left the City, Chap. xi. 22, 23. and now the Prophet foreſees its Return after the ſettling the Temple, its Building and Ordinances, which took up the Length of Time, as is evident from *John* ii. 20. which Time of forty ſix Years (*viz.* thirty in *Cyrus*, eight in *Cambyſes*, and about ſix in *Darius*'s Reign) is very near accounted for. So that between the Departure and Return of the Glory of God, are about one hundred and ſix or eight Years, and about eighty between this Viſion and the Accompliſhment.——*The God of* Iſrael. Of him who is an infinitely glorious Being, yet in Covenant with us, as his peculiar People.——*Came from the Way of the Eaſt.* When the Glory departed it went eaſtward, and now that it returns, it comes from the Eaſt.——*His Voice was like the Noiſe of many Waters.* Tho' by the Voice of God Thunder is ſometimes meant, yet here it was an articulate Voice, as appears Verſes ſeven and eight; perhaps this might be attended with Thunder, as was uſual in ſuch Caſes. A terrible and mighty Voice, as the Noiſe of the boiſterous Waves of the Sea; ſo Chap. i. 24. *Rev.* i. 15.

Chap. XLIV.

The Uſe of the Eaſt-Gate for the Prince. God commands the Prophet to reprove the People for chuſing Idolatrous Prieſts to miniſter before him. The Children of Zadock *ſettled and inſtructed in the Miniſtry; and their Maintenance aſſured.*

Q. IS *here any myſtical or concealed Meaning in this Viſion?*

A. The ſpiritual Uſe of the Eaſt-Gate of the Sanctuary for the Prince: He may, 'tis his Privilege, or he ſhall; that is, 'tis his Duty to enter at this, and to come out at it, that the People may know which Way to look, when they would ſee their High-Prieſt enter to make Atonement, which may be myſtical, and include our looking to the great High-prieſt, the Saviour of the World.

The Lord, whoſe Glory was in the Temple, ſpeaks again unto the Prophet, exhorting him to go on, with a Command to reprove his People for their former putting in of unlawful, unmeet, and unfit Miniſters into his Houſe, who are to be utterly removed from thence, and be abaſed in their Miniſtry. The Children of *Zadock* are ſettled in their Miniſtry, inſtructed concerning their Duty, and aſſured of their Maintenance.

Q. *Pray give the true Senſe of the ſeventh Verſe?*

A. It runs thus: *In that ye have brought into my Sanctuary Strangers, uncircumciſed in Heart, and uncirtumciſed in Fleſh, to be in my Sanctuary to pollute it, even my Houſe, when ye offer my Bread, the Fat and the Blood; and they have broken my Covenant, becauſe of all your Abomination.* Either by abuſing your Power, you have licenſed, or by conniving you have permitted to come into my Houſe, Foreigners and Heathen, who had their Idols in the very Courts of the Temple; even the moſt prophane, impious, and worſt of them. No uncircumciſed Perſon ſhould come into the Court of the People; but you have brought them into the very Sanctuary, at the Time of publick Worſhip, and when you have been offering my Bread, *&c.* Some think that the prophane Careleſneſs of the *Jewiſh* Rulers was ſuch, that they ſuffered uncircumciſed Perſons to be Prieſts among them, and to approach God's Altar. This was done in *Solomon*'s degenerate Days, and the Days of *Ahaz*, *Manaſſeh*, and *Amon*. This Liberty was permitted the Heathen in the Time of the Meat-Offering, or the Firſt-fruits of Corn and Dough, and the Shew-Bread; alſo, when the Fat was taken off the Sacrifices that were burnt, and when the Blood was poured out and ſprinkled, the Prieſts and Rulers of my Houſe, through a ſinful Familiarity with Heathens, have given them the Courage to aſk; and you have not Zeal nor Courage enough to refuſe them, but you have ſatisfied their forbidden Curioſity, and ſhewed them all theſe Things; or, as was ſaid, have advanced ſome to be Prieſts in my Houſe, and ſuffered others to be Prieſts of Idols, ſtanding and worſhipped in my Courts. The whole Nation of the *Jews*, the People of the Land are turned Idolaters, have mixed with Heathen, and forſook my Law, taking Example from your Practices, or complying with your Superſtitions and idolatrous Inventions.

Chap. XLV.

A certain Portion of Land ſeparated for the Sanctuary, Prieſts and Levites; for the City and the Prince. Ordinances concerning manifold Offerings for the People and the Prince.

Q. IN *the firſt Verſe a Portion of Land is meaſured out: How much did the whole contain in* Engliſh *Meaſure?*

A. Let us read the whole Verſe; *Moreover, when ye ſhall divide by Lot the Land for Inheritance, ye ſhall offer an Oblation unto the Lord, an holy Portion of the Land: the Length ſhall be the Length of five and twenty thouſand Reeds, and the Breadth ſhall be ten thouſand, this ſhall be holy in all the Borders thereof round about.* The *Jews*, on their Return from Captivity, had not the Land divided to them by Lot, as it was by *Joſhua*; but Lot and Inheritance, in Scripture, frequently ſignify the ſame Thing, and the Expreſſion alludes to the uſual Way of dividing Inheritances. Concerning this Allotment, neither the Word *Reed*, nor *Cubits* are expreſſed in the *Hebrew*; our Tranſlators ſupply *Reeds*, but the *French* read it *Cubits*. The *Greek* keeps to the *Hebrew*, and adds not *Reed* or *Cubit*. Could it be demonſtrated which is here intended, we might proceed with greater Clearneſs and Certainty. 'Tis true, *Reeds* are firſt mentioned as the Meaſure, but *Cubits* are alſo very often mentioned as a known Meaſure in meaſuring the Temple and Courts; ſee Chap. xl, xli, xlii, xliii. Beſides, the ſecond Verſe expreſsly ſays *Cubits*; and it's probable it hath Relation, as well to the 25,000 in the firſt Verſe, as to the 500 in the ſecond Verſe. The Cubit-Meaſure, therefore, ſeems preferable to the Reed; otherwiſe, the whole Content would ſeem too large: For, at Reed-Meaſure, this Portion contains at leaſt ſeventy ſeven Miles, and a little more in Length; but, at Cubit-Meaſure, it amounts to but twelve Miles and a Half. This eaſily, the other hardly imaginable; ten thouſand Reeds is at leaſt thirty Miles and a Half, but the ſame Number of Cubits amount to five Miles in Breadth: And this ſeems the moſt likely to be intended, and eaſieſt to be underſtood.

CHAP. XLVI.

Ordinances for the Prince in his Worſhip; for the People and Prince together. An Order for the Prince's Gift to his Sons and Servants. The Court of boiling and baking for the Prieſts and Levites.

Q. PRAY *what does the Prophet treat of in this Chapter?*

A. Ordinances are made for the Prince in particular, in the Worſhip of God, and for the People of the Land and the Prince together; alſo of the continual Burnt-Offering, and of the Gifts of the Prince to his Sons, and to his Servants. Here is alſo a Deſcription of the Kitchins of the Prieſts and Levites. Theſe Rows of Buildings were ſo framed, that the Caldrons and Pots were placed under them: It is likely they might be like Cloiſters, over which was a Roof to cover both the Prieſt and Levite-Cooks, and the Meats they dreſs; and they were either open as a Cloiſter, or had Windows, out of which the Smoke of the Fire, or Steam of the Meat paſſed.

Q. *Pray explain the Method of preparing the Offerings, preſcribed Verſe* 2.

A. *And the Princes ſhall enter by the Way of the Porch of that Gate without, and ſhall ſtand by the Way of the Poſt of the Gate, and the Prieſt ſhall prepare his Burnt-Offering and his Peace-Offerings, and he ſhall worſhip at the Threſhold of the Gate: then he ſhall go forth, but the Gate ſhall not be ſhut until the Evening.*———He muſt come in at the Gate which is between the Court of the *Jews*, and the Court of the Prieſts, which is here called, *The Gate Without*, or *The Outer Gate* of that Court, and ſo go up to the Gate within, which leads into the inmoſt Court, and roſe by ten, twelve, or fifteen Stairs, ſay ſome. While this ſolemn Service was performing, to make Attonement for the Prince; or while the Sacrifices of Peace-Offerings were offering for himſelf, he was directed to ſtand before the Lord; in other Caſes he might ſit.——*By the Poſt of the Gate.* One of the inward Poſts, where he might beſt ſee the Sacrifice offered, but muſt not go into the Court; none were ſuffered to enter there, but thoſe, who by God's Appointment, were to miniſter before him. —— *The Prieſt ſhall prepare his Burnt-Offering and his Peace-Offerings*, Chap. xiv. 22, 23, 24. It's ſaid, the Prince ſhall prepare, here, the Prieſts: But theſe Places ſpeak of different Preparations; the Prince prepared by buying, or bringing the beſt of his own for Sacrifice; the Prieſt prepared by receiving and bringing the Sacrifice to the Altar, ſlaying, and diſpoſing of all Things according to Rule. The Houſholder prepares, and ſo does his Cook prepare the Feaſt; each of them prepares what is reſpectively proper for him: So here the Prince prepares, but does not Sacrifice; the Prieſt prepares, but does not buy, or bring the Sacrifices.——— *He ſhall worſhip.* He ſhall bow himſelf, as the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies: 'Tis a praying Poſture, *Exod.* xii. 27. in which Poſture the Prince, as well as all others who attend on God, while the expiatory Sacrifice is offering, and their Reconciliation is made, is to be while the Prieſt is offering.——— *At the Threſhold of the Gate.* Where his Eye might ſee enough, if his Underſtanding were enlightned with the Knowledge of theſe Myſteries; he need not approach nearer to God, than his Faith could now carry him, while at the Threſhold.——— *Then he ſhall go forth.* Not ſtay to gaze or talk; but, as he came to worſhip, ſo having worſhipped, he muſt return.——— *But the Gate ſhall not be ſhut until the Evening.* 'Till all the Sacrifices were offered, and the Offerers reconciled. Now each Offerer was to bring his Offering to this Gate, and there give it to the Prieſt, and there lay his Hands on the Head of the Sacrifice, *Lev.* i. 3, 4.

CHAP. XLVII.

The Viſion of the holy Waters flowing out of the New Jeruſalem; *the Virtue of them. The Borders of the Land of Inheritance deſcribed, and divided amongſt* Iſrael *and Strangers.*

Q. PRAY *what is the Nature and Import of this Viſion?*

A. After the Temple was meaſured, the Ordinances of it ſettled, and what pertained to Prince and People aſſigned, the Angel or Spirit of God brought the Prophet again unto the Door of the Houſe through Waters. This was all done in Viſion: For, by the Waters are meant the ſpiritual Graces that ſhould be given to the Church under the Kingdom of Chriſt: For, the Virtues of theſe Waters were great, and refreſhed Multitudes: For, when God beſtows his Mercy in ſuch Abundance, the Miniſters ſhall, by their preaching, win many.

The Borders of the Land are ſettled. By the Land of Promiſe he ſignifies the ſpiritual Land, whereof this was a Figure; and in this ſpiritual Kingdom there ſhould be no Difference between *Jew* nor *Gentile*, but that all ſhould be Partakers of Inheritance, in their Head, our bleſſed Redeemer, *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *Let me have your Expoſition of Verſe* 8?

A. Thus it runs: *Then ſaid he unto me, Theſe Waters iſſue out toward the Eaſt Country, and go down into the Deſart, and go into the Sea; which being brought forth into the Sea, the Waters ſhall be healed.*——— *Toward the Eaſt Country.* Some read it as a proper Name, and ſo render it: They run toward *Galilee* in the Eaſt, and indeed the *Hebrew* bears it, as to the Sound of the Word; but this cannot be the Meaning of the Place; for neither

ther the upper *Galilee*, nor the lower was Eaſt, but Northweſt from *Jeruſalem*, toward *Tyre*: Our Tranſlation, therefore, more properly renders it the Eaſt-Country, or Border, as the *Hebrew* ſignifies.——*The Deſart.* To *Arabia*, ſay the Seventy in their *Greek* Verſion; if this was the Courſe of the Waters, their Current ran quite contrary to that of *Galilee*, which lay North and by Weſt from *Jeruſalem*. 'Tis the Champain plain Country, or the Deſart, as we read it, and may literally be underſtood of the Deſart of *Maon*, or *Kadeſh*, or *Ziph*, which bordered on the *Dead-Sea*; and this ſuits well enough with *En-gedi* and *En-eglaim*. mentioned as bordering on theſe Waters, *ver.* 10. —— *And go into the Sea.* The Sea of *Tiberias*, ſay ſome, and others the *Dead-Sea*, or Lake of *Sodom*, which wanted Healing.——*Which being brought forth into the Sea.* When they run into this Sea, or fall into it.——*The Waters ſhall be healed.* The Waters of the Sea ſhall be healed, or made wholeſome. Where the Grace of God from his Temple and Altar flows as this Water, it heals the corrupt vicious Nature of Man, and renders barren, horrid, and terrible Deſarts, as a Land of Waters and Gardens; ſo repreſented here and ſo promiſed by the Lord, *Iſa.* xxxv. 1, 2. and xliii. 19, 20. and li. 3. To this we may add, that, as the *Hebrew* Doctors do, ſo we may take it here, that theſe flowing Waters do divide themſelves, ſome flowing towards one Sea, namely, that of *Tiberias*, this towards *Galilee*; other Parts towards *Arabia* the Deſart, and ſo in their Way take their Courſe by *En-gedi* the Deſart of *Zip*, and diſembogue themſelves into the *Dead-Sea*.

Q. *The true Senſe and Meaning of Verſe* 10. *wants likewiſe ſome Explanation?*

A. *And it ſhall come to paſs, that the Fiſhers ſhall ſtand upon it, from* En-gedi *even unto* En-eglaim; *they ſhall be a Place to ſpread forth Nets, their Fiſh ſhall be according to their Kinds, as the Fiſh of the great Sea, exceeding many.*——*The Fiſhes ſhall ſtand upon it.* Men, whoſe Trade is to fiſh for a Livelihood, and Profit, ſhall diſpoſe of themſelves about theſe Waters; either on the Shore, along the River-Side, or in Boats on the Sea, to take the Fiſh. ——*From* En-gedi. Which lay on the Southweſt of the Lake of *Sodom*; ſo near, that 'tis reported there are Trees which bear Fruit beautiful to the Eye, but being touched with the Hand, fall to Aſhes; yet in Parts more remote from this Sea, *En-gedi* affords excellent Vines, *Cant.* i. 1S. or Gardens of Balſam-Trees.——*En-eglaim.* A City on the North-eaſt of the *Dead-Sea*, where *Jordan*, and two more leſſer Rivers, run into, at the North, and North-eaſt End of this Sea.——*To ſpread forth Nets.* All along on the Weſt-Side of this Sea, to dry them.——*Their Fiſh ſhall be according to their Kinds, as the Fiſh of the great Sea, exceeding many.* Fiſh of all Sorts, like thoſe in the great Sea for Number, Growth and Goodneſs, and of exceeding Bigneſs in their ſeveral Kinds. All this is myſtical, and fulfilled, ſince Chriſt hath made his Miniſters, as he made his Apoſtles, Fiſhers of Men.

CHAP. XLVIII.

The Portion of the Twelve Tribes in the new Land of Inheritance. Of the Sanctuary, City, Suburbs, and of the Prince. The Meaſure and Gates of the New City.

Q. PRAY *what are the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. The Diviſion of the new Land of Inheritance, among the twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*, ſo that the Place (whereof there was firſt Mention made, Chap. xiv.) which was ſet apart for the Sanctuary, the Prieſts, *Levites*, City, and the Prince, came to be divided between the ſeven northern, and the five ſouthern Tribes. Here is alſo the Meaſure and Gates of the new City, with the Names of the Gates, and of the City.

The Lord, who, as his Name alone is JEHOVAH, ſo is he the only true God, faithful to promiſe, rich in Mercy, glorious in Majeſty, righteous in his Judgments, wiſe and holy in his Government, whoſe Preſence makes us Happy, whoſe withdrawing from us leads to Miſery. This God will, by his Favour and Preſence, repel Enemies, and protect his People, bring with him the Confluence of all Good to Perſons, Families and Cities; this God will be there to dwell, govern, defend, proſper and crown. The People are bleſſed that are in ſuch a Caſe; for their God is the Lord, *Pſ.* cxliv. 15. Such was the Caſe of the Typical earthly *Jeruſalem*, the City of God, the true Church of God: Such the Caſe of evrey true ſincere Believer, who may, wherever he is, in his way of Duty, ſtill write JEHOVAH *ſhammah*, *My God is here*: And it is beſt to be where he is, till he bring me within the Gates of the glorious City, where inconceivable Light and Love, from the immediate Preſence of God, give every one an eternal Demonſtration: To him be Glory for ever. *Amen.*

Q. *In the eighth Verſe, the Portion of Lands is aſſigned to the Twelve Tribes, and a different Portion is allotted for the Sanctuary,* &c. *Now I would know the exact Meaſurement of the Whole, and whether the ſeveral Allotments are proportionable one to the other?*

A. Let us read the Verſe: *And by the Border of* Judah, *from the Eaſt-Side unto the Weſt-Side, ſhall be the Offering, which ye ſhall offer of five and twenty thouſand Reeds in Breadth, and in Length as one of the other Parts, from the Eaſt Side unto the Weſt-Side; and the Sanctuary ſhall be in the midſt of it.* The Word *Reeds* is here ſupplied by the Tranſlators; but *Cubits* ſeems rather to be underſtood; for the Greatneſs of the Portion, meaſured by Reeds, will eat out the Tribes, or leave but little for them, as appears thus. The whole Length from North to South was about 160 Miles, the Breadth of 60. Now 25,000 Reeds make at leaſt 77 Miles, at 1000 Paces to a Mile. Theſe 77 taken out of 160, there will remain but 83 for the twelve Tribes, which will afford not quite 7 Miles in Breadth for each Tribe; whereas 77 Miles are alloted to the Prieſts, *Levites* and City; ſo that there will remain but 83 Miles for the twelve Tribes; that is, to each almoſt 7 Miles. Now this ſeems very diſproportioned; but if we reckon 25000 Cubits, this will give the holy Portion and City 12 Miles and a Half Square, as broad as long, and near as much in Breadth, and almoſt five Times as much in Length to each Tribe; which appears thus, 12 Times 12 make 144, and 12 Quarters make three Wholes; give then each Tribe 12 and a Quarter, you divide 147 by 12 and a Quarter: Now to this, add the Prince's Portion; the holy Portion, and the City Land, which is 12 Miles and a half, and you remove out of the old Temple. The Prophet is commanded to repreſent exactly the whole Building unto the People, to the End that they may repent, and be made Partakers of this whole Work of God's Grace.

Here is a general Law concerning the Holineſs of this whole Place. Holineſs becomes God's Houſe or Temple; this relative Holineſs referred to preſonal and real Holineſs, and required it. The whole Circuit of this Mountain ſhall be holy, but the Top of it, on which the Temple ſtands, ſhall be moſt holy, into which only holy Perſons and holy Things ſhall be brought.

The reſt of this Chapter conſiſts of the Meaſure, Dedication and Uſe of the Altar of Burnt-Offering, which God promiſed to accept with ſignal Tokens of Favour and Kindneſs.

Q. *Explain the ſecond Verſe?*

A. *And behold the Glory of the God of* Iſrael *came from the Way of the Eaſt; and his Voice was like a Noiſe of Waters, and the Earth ſhined with his Glory.*——*And Behold.* Sometimes this Word is expletive; but here, no doubt, it expreſſes the Joy the Prophet had to ſee this excellent Viſion, which ſhould not be ſeen there any more for above ſixty Years; for, in the ſixth Year of the Captivity, the Glory of God left the City, Chap. xi. 22, 23. and now the Prophet foreſees its Return after the ſettling the Temple, its Building and Ordinances, which took up the Length of Time, as is evident from *John* ii. 20. which Time of forty ſix Years (*viz.* thirty in *Cyrus*, eight in *Cambyſes*, and about ſix in *Darius*'s Reign) is very near accounted for. So that between the Departure and Return of the Glory of God, are about one hundred and ſix or eight Years, and about eighty between this Viſion and the Accompliſhment.——*The God of* Iſrael. Of him who is an infinitely glorious Being, yet in Covenant with us, as his peculiar People.——*Came from the Way of the Eaſt.* When the Glory departed it went eaſtward, and now that it returns, it comes from the Eaſt.——*His Voice was like the Noiſe of many Waters.* Tho' by the Voice of God Thunder is ſometimes meant, yet here it was an articulate Voice, as appears Verſes ſeven and eight; perhaps this might be attended with Thunder, as was uſual in ſuch Caſes. A terrible and mighty Voice, as the Noiſe of the boiſterous Waves of the Sea; ſo Chap. i. 24. *Rev.* i. 15.

CHAP. XLIV.

The Uſe of the Eaſt-Gate for the Prince. God commands the Prophet to reprove the People for chuſing Idolatrous Prieſts to miniſter before him. The Children of Zadock *ſettled and inſtructed in the Miniſtry; and their Maintenance aſſured.*

Q. I*S here any myſtical or concealed Meaning in this Viſion?*

A. The ſpiritual Uſe of the Eaſt-Gate of the Sanctuary for the Prince: He may, 'tis his Privilege, or he ſhall; that is, 'tis his Duty to enter at this, and to come out at it, that the People may know which Way to look, when they would ſee their High-Prieſt enter to make Atonement, which may be myſtical, and include our looking to the great High-prieſt, the Saviour of the World.

The Lord, whoſe Glory was in the Temple, ſpeaks again unto the Prophet, exhorting him to go on, with a Command to reprove his People for their former putting in of unlawful, unmeet, and unfit Miniſters into his Houſe, who are to be utterly removed from thence, and be abaſed in their Miniſtry. The Children of *Zadock* are ſettled in their Miniſtry, inſtructed concerning their Duty, and aſſured of their Maintenance.

Q. *Pray give the true Senſe of the ſeventh Verſe?*

A. It runs thus: *In that ye have brought into my Sanctuary Strangers, uncircumciſed in Heart, and uncircumciſed in Fleſh, to be in my Sanctuary to pollute it, even my Houſe, when ye offer my Bread, the Fat and the Blood; and they have broken my Covenant, becauſe of all your Abomination.* Either by abuſing your Power, you have licenſed, or by conniving you have permitted to come into my Houſe, Foreigners and Heathen, who had their Idols in the very Courts of the Temple; even the moſt prophane, impious, and worſt of them. No uncircumciſed Perſon ſhould come into the Court of the People; but you have brought them into the very Sanctuary, at the Time of publick Worſhip, and when you have been offering my Bread, &c. Some think that the prophane Careleſneſs of the *Jewiſh* Rulers was ſuch, that they ſuffered uncircumciſed Perſons to be Prieſts among them, and to approach God's Altar. This was done in *Solomon*'s degenerate Days, and the Days of *Ahaz*, *Manaſſeh*, and *Amon*. This Liberty was permitted the Heathen in the Time of the Meat-Offering, or the Firſt-fruits of Corn and Dough, and the Shew-Bread; alſo, when the Fat was taken off the Sacrifices that were burnt, and when the Blood was poured out and ſprinkled, the Prieſts and Rulers of my Houſe, through a ſinful Familiarity with Heathens, have given them the Courage to aſk, and you have not Zeal nor Courage enough to refuſe them, but you have ſatisfied their forbidden Curioſity, and ſhewed them all theſe Things; or, as was ſaid, have advanced ſome to be Prieſts in my Houſe, and ſuffered others to be Prieſts of Idols, ſtanding and worſhipped in my Courts. The whole Nation of the *Jews*, the People of the Land are turned Idolaters, have mixed with Heathen, and forſook my Law, taking Example from your Practices, or complying with your Superſtitions and idolatrous Inventions.

CHAP. XLV.

A certain Portion of Land ſeparated for the Sanctuary, Prieſts and Levites; for the City and the Prince. Ordinances concerning manifold Offerings for the People and the Prince.

Q. I*N the firſt Verſe a Portion of Land is meaſured out: How much did the whole contain in* Engliſh *Meaſure?*

A. Let us read the whole Verſe; *Moreover, when ye ſhall divide by Lot the Land for Inheritance, ye ſhall offer an Oblation unto the Lord, an holy Portion of the Land: the Length ſhall be the Length of five and twenty thouſand Reeds, and the Breadth ſhall be ten thouſand, this ſhall be holy in all the Borders thereof round about.* The *Jews*, on their Return from Captivity, had not the Land divided to them by Lot, as it was by *Joſhua*; but Lot and Inheritance, in Scripture, frequently ſignify the ſame Thing, and the Expreſſion alludes to the uſual Way of dividing Inheritances. Concerning this Allotment, neither the Word *Reed*, nor *Cubits* are expreſſed in the *Hebrew*; our Tranſlators ſupply *Reeds*, but the *French* read it *Cubits*. The *Greek* keeps to the *Hebrew*, and adds not *Reed* or *Cubit*. Could it be demonſtrated which is here intended, we might proceed with greater Clearneſs and Certainty. 'Tis true, *Reeds* are firſt mentioned as the Meaſure, but *Cubits* are alſo very often mentioned as a known Meaſure in meaſuring the Temple and Courts; ſee Chap. xl, xli, xlii, xliii. Beſides, the ſecond Verſe expreſsly ſays *Cubits*; and it's probable it hath Relation, as well to the 25,000 in the firſt Verſe, as to the 500 in the ſecond Verſe. The Cubit-Meaſure, therefore, ſeems preferable to the Reed; otherwiſe, the whole Content would ſeem too large: For, at Reed-Meaſure, this Portion contains at leaſt ſeventy ſeven Miles, and a little more in Length; but, at Cubit-Meaſure, it amounts to but twelve Miles and a Half. This eaſily, the other hardly imaginable; ten thouſand Reeds is at leaſt thirty Miles and a Half, but the ſame Number of Cubits amount to five Miles in Breadth: And this ſeems the moſt likely to be intended, and eaſieſt to be underſtood.

CHAP. XLVI.

Ordinances for the Prince in his Worſhip; for the People and Prince together. An Order for the Prince's Gift to his Sons and Servants. The Court of boiling and baking for the Prieſts and Levites.

Q. PRAY *what does the Prophet treat of in this Chapter?*

A. Ordinances are made for the Prince in particular, in the Worſhip of God, and for the People of the Land and the Prince together; alſo of the continual Burnt-Offering, and of the Gifts of the Prince to his Sons, and to his Servants. Here is alſo a Deſcription of the Kitchins of the Prieſts and Levites. Theſe Rows of Buildings were ſo framed, that the Caldrons and Pots were placed under them: It is likely they might be like Cloiſters, over which was a Roof to cover both the Prieſt and Levite-Cooks, and the Meats they dreſs; and they were either open as a Cloiſter, or had Windows, out of which the Smoke of the Fire, or Steam of the Meat paſſed.

Q. *Pray explain the Method of preparing the Offerings, preſcribed Verſe* 2.

A. *And the Princes ſhall enter by the Way of the Porch of that Gate without, and ſhall ſtand by the Way of the Poſt of the Gate, and the Prieſt ſhall prepare his Burnt-Offering and his Peace-Offerings, and he ſhall worſhip at the Threſhold of the Gate: then he ſhall go forth, but the Gate ſhall not be ſhut until the Evening.*——He muſt come in at the Gate which is between the Court of the *Jews*, and the Court of the Prieſts, which is here called, *The Gate Without*, or *The Outer Gate* of that Court, and ſo go up to the Gate within, which leads into the inmoſt Court, and roſe by ten, twelve, or fifteen Stairs, ſay ſome. While this ſolemn Service was performing, to make Attonement for the Prince; or while the Sacrifices of Peace-Offerings were offering for himſelf, he was directed to ſtand before the Lord; in other Caſes he might fit.——*By the Poſt of the Gate.* One of the inward Poſts, where he might beſt ſee the Sacrifice offered, but muſt not go into the Court; none were ſuffered to enter there, but thoſe, who by God's Appointment, were to miniſter before him. —— *The Prieſt ſhall prepare his Burnt-Offering and his Peace-Offerings,* Chap. xiv. 22, 23, 24. It's ſaid, the Prince ſhall prepare, here, the Prieſts: But theſe Places ſpeak of different Preparations; the Prince prepared by buying, or bringing the beſt of his own for Sacrifice; the Prieſt prepared by receiving and bringing the Sacrifice to the Altar, ſlaying, and diſpoſing of all Things according to Rule. The Houſholder prepares, and ſo does his Cook prepare the Feaſt; each of them prepares what is reſpectively proper for him: So here the Prince prepares, but does not Sacrifice; the Prieſt prepares, but does not buy, or bring the Sacrifices.——*He ſhall worſhip.* He ſhall bow himſelf, as the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies: 'Tis a praying Poſture, *Exod.* xii. 27. in which Poſture the Prince, as well as all others who attend on God, while the expiatory Sacrifice is offering, and their Reconciliation is made, is to be while the Prieſt is offering.——*At the Threſhold of the Gate.* Where his Eye might ſee enough, if his Underſtanding were enlightned with the Knowledge of theſe Myſteries; he need not approach nearer to God, than his Faith could now carry him, while at the Threſhold.——*Then he ſhall go forth.* Not ſtay to gaze or talk; but, as he came to worſhip, ſo having worſhipped, he muſt return.——*But the Gate ſhall not be ſhut until the Evening.* 'Till all the Sacrifices were offered, and the Offerers reconciled. Now each Offerer was to bring his Offering to this Gate, and there give it to the Prieſt, and there lay his Hands on the Head of the Sacrifice, *Lev.* i. 3, 4.

CHAP. XLVII.

The Viſion of the holy Waters flowing out of the New Jeruſalem; *the Virtue of them. The Borders of the Land of Inheritance deſcribed, and divided amongſt* Iſrael *and Strangers.*

Q. PRAY *what is the Nature and Import of this Viſion?*

A. After the Temple was meaſured, the Ordinances of it ſettled, and what pertained to Prince and People aſſigned, the Angel or Spirit of God brought the Prophet again unto the Door of the Houſe through Waters. This was all done in Viſion: For, by the Waters are meant the ſpiritual Graces that ſhould be given to the Church under the Kingdom of Chriſt: For, the Virtues of theſe Waters were great, and refreſhed Multitudes: For, when God beſtows his Mercy in ſuch Abundance, the Miniſters ſhall, by their preaching, win many.

The Borders of the Land are ſettled. By the Land of Promiſe he ſignifies the ſpiritual Land, whereof this was a Figure; and in this ſpiritual Kingdom there ſhould be no Difference between *Jew* nor *Gentile*, but that all ſhould be Partakers of Inheritance, in their Head, our bleſſed Redeemer, *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *Let me have your Expoſition of Verſe* 8?

A. Thus it runs: *Then ſaid he unto me, Theſe Waters iſſue out toward the Eaſt Country, and go down into the Deſart, and go into the Sea; which being brought forth into the Sea, the Waters ſhall be healed.*——*Toward the Eaſt Country.* Some read it as a proper Name, and ſo render it: They run toward *Galilee* in the Eaſt, and indeed the *Hebrew* bears it, as to the Sound of the Word; but this cannot be the Meaning of the Place; for neither

ther the upper *Galilee*, nor the lower was Eaſt, but Northweſt from *Jeruſalem*, toward *Tyre*: Our Tranſlation, therefore, more properly renders it the Eaſt-Country, or Border, as the *Hebrew* ſignifies.——*The Deſart.* To *Arabia*, ſay the Seventy in their *Greek* Verſion; if this was the Courſe of the Waters, their Current ran quite contrary to that of *Galilee*, which lay North and by Weſt from *Jeruſalem*. 'Tis the Champain plain Country, or the Deſart, as we read it, and may literally be underſtood of the Deſart of *Maon*, or *Kadeſh*, or *Ziph*, which bordered on the *Dead-Sea*; and this ſuits well enough with *En-gedi* and *En-eglaim*. mentioned as bordering on theſe Waters, *ver.* 10. ——*And go into the Sea.* The Sea of *Tiberias*, ſay ſome, and others the *Dead-Sea*, or Lake of *Sodom*, which wanted Healing.——*Which being brought forth into the Sea.* When they run into this Sea, or fall into it.——*The Waters ſhall be healed.* The Waters of the Sea ſhall be healed, or made wholeſome. Where the Grace of God from his Temple and Altar flows as this Water, it heals the corrupt vicious Nature of Man, and renders barren, horrid, and terrible Deſarts, as a Land of Waters and Gardens; ſo repreſented here and ſo promiſed by the Lord, *Iſa.* xxxv. 1, 2. and xliii. 19, 20. and li. 3. To this we may add, that, as the *Hebrew* Doctors do, ſo we may take it here, that theſe flowing Waters do divide themſelves, ſome flowing towards one Sea, namely, that of *Tiberias*, this towards *Galilee*; other Parts towards *Arabia* the Deſart, and ſo in their Way take their Courſe by *En-gedi* the Deſart of *Zip*, and diſembogue themſelves into the *Dead-Sea*.

Q. *The true Senſe and Meaning of Verſe* 10. *wants likewiſe ſome Explanation?*

A. *And it ſhall come to paſs, that the Fiſhers ſhall ſtand upon it, from* En-gedi *even unto* En-eglaim; *they ſhall be a Place to ſpread forth Nets, their Fiſh ſhall be according to their Kinds, as the Fiſh of the great Sea, exceeding many.*——*The Fiſhes ſhall ſtand upon it.* Men, whoſe Trade is to fiſh for a Livelihood, and Profit, ſhall diſpoſe of themſelves about theſe Waters; either on the Shore, along the River-Side, or in Boats on the Sea, to take the Fiſh. ——*From* En-gedi. Which lay on the Southweſt of the Lake of *Sodom*; ſo near, that 'tis reported there are Trees which bear Fruit beautiful to the Eye, but being touched with the Hand, fall to Aſhes; yet in Parts more remote from this Sea, *En-gedi* affords excellent Vines, *Cant.* i. 1S. or Gardens of Balſam-Trees.——*En-eglaim.* A City on the North-eaſt of the *Dead-Sea*, where *Jordan*, and two more leſſer Rivers, run into, at the North, and North-eaſt End of this Sea.——*To ſpread forth Nets.* All along on the Weſt-Side of this Sea, to dry them.——*Their Fiſh ſhall be according to their Kinds, as the Fiſh of the great Sea, exceeding many.* Fiſh of all Sorts, like thoſe in the great Sea for Number, Growth and Goodneſs, and of exceeding Bigneſs in their ſeveral Kinds. All this is myſtical, and fulfilled, ſince Chriſt hath made his Miniſters, as he made his Apoſtles, Fiſhers of Men.

CHAP. XLVIII.

The Portion of the Twelve Tribes in the new Land of Inheritance. Of the Sanctuary, City, Suburbs, and of the Prince. The Meaſure and Gates of the New City.

Q. PRAY *what are the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. The Diviſion of the new Land of Inheritance, among the twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*, ſo that the Place (whereof there was firſt Mention made, Chap. xiv.) which was ſet apart for the Sanctuary, the Prieſts, *Levites*, City, and the Prince, came to be divided between the ſeven northern, and the five ſouthern Tribes. Here is alſo the Meaſure and Gates of the new City, with the Names of the Gates, and of the City.

The Lord, who, as his Name alone is JEHOVAH, ſo is he the only true God, faithful to promiſe, rich in Mercy, glorious in Majeſty, righteous in his Judgments, wiſe and holy in his Government, whoſe Preſence makes us Happy, whoſe withdrawing from us leads to Miſery. This God will, by his Favour and Preſence, repel Enemies, and protect his People, bring with him the Confluence of all Good to Perſons, Families and Cities; this God will be there to dwell, govern, defend, proſper and crown. The People are bleſſed that are in ſuch a Caſe; for their God is the Lord, *Pſ.* cxliv. 15. Such was the Caſe of the Typical earthly *Jeruſalem*, the City of God, the true Church of God: Such the Caſe of evrey true ſincere Believer, who may, wherever he is, in his way of Duty, ſtill write JEHOVAH *ſhammah*, *My God is here*: And it is beſt to be where he is, till he bring me within the Gates of the glorious City, where inconceivable Light and Love, from the immediate Preſence of God, give every one an eternal Demonſtration: To him be Glory for ever. *Amen.*

Q. *In the eighth Verſe, the Portion of Lands is aſſigned to the Twelve Tribes, and a different Portion is allotted for the Sanctuary,* &c. *Now I would know the exact Meaſurement of the Whole, and whether the ſeveral Allotments are proportionable one to the other?*

A. Let us read the Verſe: *And by the Border of* Judah, *from the Eaſt-Side unto the Weſt-Side, ſhall be the Offering, which ye ſhall offer of five and twenty thouſand Reeds in Breadth, and in Length as one of the other Parts, from the Eaſt Side unto the Weſt-Side; and the Sanctuary ſhall be in the midſt of it.* The Word *Reeds* is here ſupplied by the Tranſlators; but *Cubits* ſeems rather to be underſtood; for the Greatneſs of the Portion, meaſured by Reeds, will eat out the Tribes, or leave but little for them, as appears thus. The whole Length from North to South was about 160 Miles, the Breadth of 60. Now 25,000 Reeds make at leaſt 77 Miles, at 1000 Paces to a Mile. Theſe 77 taken out of 160, there will remain but 83 for the twelve Tribes, which will afford not quite 7 Miles in Breadth for each Tribe; whereas 77 Miles are alloted to the Prieſts, *Levites* and City; ſo that there will remain but 83 Miles for the twelve Tribes; that is, to each almoſt 7 Miles. Now this ſeems very diſproportioned; but if we reckon 25000 Cubits, this will give the holy Portion and City 12 Miles and a Half Square, as broad as long, and near as much in Breadth, and almoſt five Times as much in Length to each Tribe; which appears thus, 12 Times 12 make 144, and 12 Quarters make three Wholes; give then each Tribe 12 and a Quarter, you divide 147 by 12 and a Quarter: Now to this, add the Prince's Portion; the holy Portion, and the City Land, which is 12 Miles and a half, and you have 159 Miles and three Quarters, which is the Length of the whole Land; thus the Breadth of each Portion, for each Tribe, but the Length of each exceeded that of the Princes by 12 and a Half, and the Holy Portion, as much as 60 exceeds 12 and a Half.—— *And in Length as one of the other Parts, from the Eaſt-Side unto the Weſt-Side.* That is, 25,000 in Length, which amounts to 12 Miles and a Half. Now the Reſidue of the Land, from the Sea Eaſtward, abutting on the whole Breadth of the holy Portion, by equal Proportion, will be 23 and one Quarter, and as much from the other Side, meaſuring from the Eaſtern Bounds of the holy Portion, to the utmoſt Bounds eaſtward of the Land, which is 60 Miles from its utmoſt Weſtern Bounds, as appears thus: Take an Oblong Square, whoſe Breadth is 12 and a Half, its Length 60; ſuppoſe in the very Middle 12 and a Half Square taken up, there will remain, at each End, the Half of 47 and three Quarters, which is 23 and three Quarters. According to this, we conceive the Prince had aſſigned him very near as much as two Tribes, and almoſt four Times as much as the holy Oblation.

Q. *What was the Meaſurement of the City, as deſcribed in the laſt Verſe?*

A. *It was round about eighteen thouſand Meaſures: and the Name of the City from that Day ſhall be, The Lord is there.——Round about.* Meaſuring all four Squares.——*Eighteen thouſand Meaſures.* Or Cubits, at which proportioned Meaſures it was about five Miles in Compaſs: If the Meaſure were Reeds, it would be 30 Miles, and 325 Yards in Compaſs of the Walls, which is ſcarce credible; whereas the other is the Proportion the City might have been built to, if the Sins of the *Jews* had not prevented it. —— *And the Name of the City from that Day.* From the Day of the Lord's reſtoring this People, rebuilding their City, and re-eſtabliſhing his Worſhip, and their thankful, pure, and holy worſhipping of God there; from the Day that ſuch wonderful Mercy produces a ſuitable Return to God, from that Day it ſhall be ſaid of *Jeruſalem.* ——*The Lord is there.* The Lord, who as his Name alone is *Jehovah*, ſo is he the only true God, glorious in Majeſty, righteous in his Judgments, wiſe and holy in his Government, whoſe Preſence makes us Happy, whoſe withdrawing from us leaves us to Miſery. This God will, by his Favour and Preſence, protect his People, and repel their Enemies, and bring with him the Confluence of all Good, to all Perſons, Families and Cities: This God will be there to dwell, govern, defend, proſper, and crown them all. The People is bleſſed that is in ſuch a Caſe, for their God is the Lord, *Pſ.* cxliv. 15. Such was the Caſe of the typical, earthly *Jeruſalem*, though not long; ſuch is, and ſhall be for ever the Caſe of the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, the City of God, the true Church and Temple of God.

Q. *Being now come to the Concluſion of the laſt Chapter of this Prophet, I ſhall take the Liberty of asking ſome general Queſtions in relation to this Prophet and his Writings. The firſt is, What was God's Deſign of ſending Prophets to the* Jews *while they were Captives in Babylon?*

A. God, who at all Times, in the midſt of his ſevereſt Judgments, hath given ſome Teſtimonies of Grace and Favour towards the Reſidue of his Elect and true Believers, did the like in the Peoples Captivity in *Babylon*, raiſing them up excellent Prophets, who gathered and kept united the Reliques of that great Shipwreck by preaching to them the Word of God in the lively Demonſtration of the Spirit, for the Converſion and Amendment of their Souls, by a Repreſentation of the preſent Evils; and alſo of their Comfort, by the Aſſurance of their Reſtoration, promiſed in the appointed Time.

Q. *Of what Family or Lineage was our Prophet* Ezekiel?

A. *Ezekiel*, one of the moſt eminent of theſe Teachers, was, by Deſcent, a Prieſt, and by Commiſſion a Prophet; his Commiſſion he received from Heaven, as will appear from the firſt, ſecond, rnd third Chapters. He was carried into Captivity with King *Jehoiachin*; and had been in *Babylon* five Years when firſt called to the prophetick Office, at the ſame Time as *Jeremiah* prophecied in *Jeruſalem.* During his Captivity he met with many Things that were Occaſions of Grief to himſelf, and which were the Cauſe of this Prophecy. There were many of his Countrymen who were very uneaſy in their Captivity, repented they had render'd themſelves ſo eaſily, call'd into Queſtion the Truth and Integrity of *Jeremiah*, and himſelf, and were ready to do them Violence; and even continued their former Impieties to ſuch a Degree, that by their evil Practices the Name of God was blaſphemed.

Q. *What was the Prophet's principal Work among his Countrymen?*

A. In order to redreſs the aforeſaid Evils, *Ezekiel* is extraordinarily called, commiſſioned, qualified, and aſſiſted in the prophetick Office; in Diſcharge of which he reproves and calms the Diſcontented, and exhorts and encourages them to return to a right Frame of Hope and Patience. He calls upon the Prfoane and Wicked to acknowledge God's juſt and equal Proceedings with them, and their unequal and unrighteous Dealings towards him. He directs the Sincere and Honeſt-hearted to the right Performance of their Duties. He encourages the few Godly among them, with many comfortable Promiſes of Good which they ſhould yet enjoy in their own Land, and of Grace and Favour from Heaven, confirms what *Jeremiah* had preached, adviſed, and foretold in *Jeruſalem*, exactly harmoizning with him, though the one was at *Babylon*, and the other at *Jeruſalem*, deſtitute of all Means of conferring with each other. In all theſe Particulars he is ſometimes very plain, ſometimes ſpeaks in Riddles, in which Kind he is more frequent than any other of the Prophets, and in them all is very deep and myſterious; to the Quarrelſome and Froward theſe were dark and unintelligible, but to the Humble and Teachable, more ſignificant and clear.

Q. *Give a ſummary Account of the Book of* Ezekiel?

A. In the three firſt Chapters he opens his Commiſſion: In the next twenty-one Chapters he preaches in ſevere Terms againſt the Sins of the *Jews*; this they diſlike, are weary of, and for this they inſult the Preacher; who is therefore ordered ſome Time to forbear, and to leave them to that ſevere Sermon which the King of *Babylon*'s Army ſhould preach to them in the Deſtruction of their Country, City and Temple, which ſhould effectually convince, and grievouſly wound the Hearts of them all.

Hereupon the Prophet, by a ſpecial Order from God, preaches againſt the Heathen round about, through the twenty-fifth, and ſo on to the End of the thirty-ſecond Chapter; after which he is ordered to preach Repentance and Pardon, with Grace and Favour to *Iſrael*, to proclaim the *Meſſiah's* Kingdom, and to aſſure them of the wonderful Overthrew of their Enemies, the Rebuilding of the City and Temple in Greatneſs and Splendor to exceed what it ever was, on Condition they became a reformed People, aſhamed of their former Tranſgreſſions, and ſincerely applied themſelves to love and ſerve God and keep his Ordinances; which yet they had little Regard to after their Return, as appears from the Menaces, Complaints, and Reproofs which every where abound in the Prophecies of *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*, who lived after the joyful Return from Captivity, and ſaw the Impieties of theſe releaſed Captives.

A great Part of the Prophet's Diſcourſes in the thirty-third, thirty-fourth, and thirty-ſixth Chapters, and ſo on to the End, are typical and myſterious, and refer to the Return, as the Emblem of a ſpiritual Deliverance out of ſpiritual Captivity.

The Subject of this Prophecy, in almoſt every Part of the Book, is, to ſhew, that the Son of God, the Head and King of his Church, reſiding in Grace and Power in his Temple, after he had a long Time endured the Ingratitude, Rebellions, Idolatries, and general Corruptions of his People, nouriſhed by their falſe Teachers and Prophets, and wrought up to the higheſt Aggravations, by the bad Government of their Guides and Rulers, as well Eccleſiaſtical as Civil; at laſt determined to forſake his Temple, and Abode amongſt them; ſhewing the Prophet this Departure in Viſions at ſeveral Times, for a ſharper Reproof of the *Jews* Impenitence, for which he would at length utterly forſake and give them into the Hand of the *Chaldeans*, who ſhould exterminate and diſperſe them, burn and throw down their Temple, raze their City, kill their Kings and Princes, and finally extinguiſh in *Jeruſalem* all Signs of a Commonwealth or Church; whereof he would, notwithſtanding, preſerve the Seed, in *Babylon*, amongſt thoſe poor Captives, to make it revive and flouriſh again in the appointed Time. The Prophet likewiſe declares and exaggerates at large, in divers Chapters, the Cauſes of this ſevere Decree; namely, the Violation of all God's Commandments, both of the firſt and ſecond Table, in a ſuperlative Degree. He alſo taxes thoſe who were already in *Babylon*, with the ſame Sins, and denounces againſt them the ſevereſt Threatenings. Then he turns himſelf to other Nations, Neighbours of the *Jews*, and who had been either a Cauſe of miſleading them, or had maliciouſly aſſiſted in their Deſtruction and Overthrow, to rejoice at it; eſpecially *Tyre*, *Egypt*, and *Edom*, whom he tells they ſhall be overwhelmed in the ſame *Chaldean* Deluge. He then proceeds to foretel the Ruin of *Gog* and *Magog*, the laſt and crueleſt Perſecutors and Enemies of the Church, to which he again applies himſelf towards the End of the Book, and comforts it with the Promiſes of eternal Redemption through the *Meſſias*, and the Eſtabliſhment of his Kingdom in this World; which is magnificently repreſented by the Viſion of the admirable Reſtoration of *Solomon's* antient Temple, deſcribed very particularly in its firſt Form and State; to which the Church, renewed by *Chriſt*, ſhould be every way correſpondent in ſpiritual Excellence and Glory, by his returning to it, and making it his eternal Reſidence; and by ſettling in it a perpetual Order of ſpiritual Piety, pure Service of God, Holineſs and Righteouſneſs; after which ſhould follow a compleat and celeſtial Happineſs.

Q. *It may not perhaps be thought unentertaining or unprofitable to give here a diſtinct View of the Method, Manners, and general Import of ſeveral Prophecies and Sermons uttered by this inſpired Teacher, in the Courſe of his Miniſtry, which will give us a Clue to the true Meaning of ſeveral dark Paſſages relating to the Hiſtory of the Times in which this Prophet lived.*

A. In the fifth Year of *Zedekiah*, which was alſo the fifth Year of *Jehoiachin's* Captivity, and the thirtieth from the great Reformation made in the eighteenth Year of King *Joſiah*, *Ezekiel* was called of God to be a Prophet among the *Jews* of the Captivity. And this ſame Year he ſaw the Viſion of the four Cherubims, and the four Wheels, which is related in the firſt Chapter of his Prophecies. The ſame Year were alſo revealed unto him the 390 Years of God's utmoſt Forbearance of the Houſe of *Judah*, and the Judgment which, after that, God would inflict upon both, as the whole is contained in the fourth, fifth, ſixth and ſeventh Chapters of his Prophecies.

In the ſame Year *Ezekiel*, being in a Viſion, was carried to *Jeruſalem*, and there ſhewn all the ſeveral Sorts of Idolatry, which were practiſed by the *Jews* in that Place; had revealed unto him the Puniſhments which God would inflict upon them for thoſe Abominations, and this makes up the Subject of the eigth, ninth, tenth and eleventh Chapters of his Prophecies. But at the ſame Time God promiſed to thoſe of the Captivity, who avoiding theſe Abominations, kept themſelves ſteady and faithful to his Service, that he would become a Sanctuary unto them in the ſtrange Land, where they were carried, and bring them back again unto the Land of *Iſrael*, and there make them flouriſh in Peace and Righteouſneſs, as in former Times. All which the Prophet declared to the *Jews* of *Babylon*, among whom he dwelt.

In the ſeventh Year of *Zedekiah*, God did, both by Types and Words of Revelation, foreſhew unto *Ezekiel* the taking of *Jeruſalem* by the *Chaldeans*, *Zedekiah's* Flight from thence by Night, the putting out of his Eyes, and his Impriſonment and Death at *Babylon*, and alſo the carrying away of the *Jews* at the ſame Time into Captivity; the Deſolation of their Country, and the many and great Calamities which ſhould befal them for their Iniquities; and this is the Subject of the 12th Chapter of his Prophecies. And what is contained in the ſeven following Chapters, was alſo the ſame Year revealed unto him, and relates moſtly to the ſame Subject.

On the tenth Day of the tenth Month, in which the Siege began in *Jeruſalem*, was the ſame revealed *Zedekiah* in *Chaldea*, where, by the Tipe of a boiling Pot, was foreſhewn unto him the diſmal Deſtruction which ſhould thereby be brought upon that City. And the ſame Night the Wife of the Prophet, who was the Deſire of his Eyes, was by a ſudden Stroke of Death taken from him, and he was forbidden by God to make any Manner of Mourning for her, or appear with any of the uſual Signs of it upon him, thereby to foreſhew, that the holy City, the Temple, and the Sanctuary, which were dearer to them than any Wife can be in the Eyes of her Husband, ſhould not only by a ſpeedy and ſudden Stroke of Deſtruction be taken from them, but that the Calamity enſuing thereon ſhould be ſuch, and ſo great, as ſhould not allow them as much as to mourn for the Loſs of them.

Pharaoh Hophra coming out of *Egypt* with a great Army to the Relief of *Zedekiah*, *Nebuchadnezzar* raiſed the Siege of *Jeruſalem* to march againſt him. But before he went on this Expedition, he ſent all the captive *Jews*, which he then had in the Camp, to *Babylon*, the Number of which were eight hundred thirty and two Perſons.

The *Egyptians*, on the coming of the *Chaldeans* againſt them, durſt not ſtay to engage in Battle with ſo numerous and well appointed an Army, but withdrawing on their Approach, retired again into their own Country, treacherouſly leaving *Zedekiah* and his People to periſh in that War, which they had drawn them into. Whereon the Prophet *Ezekiel* reproaching them for their Perfidy, in thus becoming a Staff of Reed to thoſe, whom by Oaths and Covenants of Alliance, they had made to lean and confide on them, denounced God's Judgments againſt them, to be executed both upon King and People, in War, Confuſion and Deſolation for forty Years enſuing, for the Puniſhment thereof. And alſo foretold, how after that they ſhould ſink low and become a mean and baſe People, and ſhould no more have a Prince of their own to reign over them; which hath accordingly come to paſs: For not long after the Expiration of the ſaid forty Years, they were made a Province of the *Perſian* Empire, and have been governed by Strangers ever ſince. For, on the Failure of the *Perſian* Empire, they became ſubject to the *Macedonians*, and after them to the *Romans*, and after the *Romans* to the *Saracens*, and then to the *Mamalukes*, and are now a Province of the *Turkiſh* Empire.

The Prophet *Ezekiel* is ſaid to have been ſlain in *Chaldea*, by a Prince of the People of *Iſrael*, whom he reproved for worſhipping Images.

Q. *Give me Leave now to enquire more particularly of ſome obſcure Paſſages in this Book, which I apprehend you have not ſufficiently explained. The Viſion in the firſt Chapter, which the* Rabbins *call* The Deſcription of the Chariot, *is ſo very intricate and abſtruſe, that they would not permit it to be read by any, until they were arrived at the Age of thirty; you will therefore excuſe me, if I deſire ſome farther Elucidation thereof?*

A. The Deſign of the Prophet, in that Chapter, is to repreſent the great and glorious Appearance of *God*, coming to give him Inſtructions in the Management of his prophetick Office; and to this Purpoſe he makes uſe of Images, foreign indeed to our Manner of Writing, but what are all ſignificant and full of Majeſty. He ſeats himſelf on a radiant Throne, ſupported by Cherubims moved by Wheels of an uncommon Make, covered with the Canopy of Heaven, and encircled with the Rainbow; and though, in the Deſcription of the Cherubims and Wheels, there may be ſomething not ſo agreeable to our Way of thinking, yet we are not to ſuppoſe, but that in the whole, it was adapted to the Age, wherein the Prophet wrote, and in each Part, perhaps, did include an excellent Moral. Angels, of what Rank or Denomination ſoever, are all miniſtering Spirits, and the Inſtruments of God's Providence in the Government of the World; and therefore are repreſented here as ſupporting his Throne, and in Alluſion, very likely, to the triumphal Chariots of Eaſtern Princes, which were drawn by ſeveral Sorts of Beaſts; they are ſaid *every one to have four Faces.* Their Wings denote their Readineſs and Alacrity; their Eyes their Sagacity and Vigilance; their Hands their Prudence and Dexterity; their Feet, their Steadineſs and Reſolution in performing the divine Commands; and *the Noiſe of their Wings, when they went,* expreſſed the Terribleneſs of the Judgments which they were to execute upon *Jeruſalem*, and all the *Jewiſh* Nation.

And in the like Manner the Make and Faſhion of the Wheels, which theſe Cherubims actuate, ſhews that all the Ways of Providence are uniform, and ſubſervient to each other; as their *going perpetually forward* intimates, that Providence does nothing in vain, but always accompliſhes its Deſigns. The Largeneſs of the Rings, or Circumference of the Wheels, denote the vaſt Compaſs of Providence, *which reacheth from one End to another mightily*: Their being full of Eyes implies, that the Motions of Providence do concur in carrying on their great Deſigns. Thus full of Inſtruction is every little *Symbol* in this Deſcription! And therefore it is doing Injuſtice to the Character of the Prophet, to find Fault with his Images, becauſe they agree not with the preſent Mode, or to cenſure his Writings before we underſtand them.

Q. *In your Account of* Gog *and* Magog, *Chap.* xxxviii, xxxix. *you recited ſeveral Opinions of the Learned, concerning theſe two Perſonages, but did not determine poſitively who they really were; I deſire you therefore to give a more definitive Judgment of this Matter?*

A. His Prophecy concerning *Gog* and *Magog*, is perhaps deſervedly thought one of the moſt difficult Paſſages that occurs in the *Old Teſtament*; and accordingly the Conjectures about it have been various. It is generally agreed, however, that the Words *Gog* and *Magog* are not real, but fictitious Names; and therefore their Wars with the People of God ſome have applied to the Cruelties of *Antiochus Epiphanes* againſt the *Jews*; others to the Perſecutions of the *Gentiles* againſt the *Chriſtians*; ſome to the Irruptions of the *Goths* and other barbarous Nations into the *Roman* Empire; others to the Ravages which the *Turks* made in *Aſia*, and ſome Parts of *Europe*; and others again to thoſe (as it is propheſied elſewhere) Oppreſſions which, in the latter Days, *Antichriſt* ſhall bring upon the true Profeſſors of our moſt holy Religion.

The main Current of Interpreters will have the *Gog* in *Ezekiel* to be *Antiochus*; but then there are ſome Exceptions to this Opinion, that may be gathered from *Ezekiel* himſelf. For, whereas the *Gog* in *Ezekiel was to fall upon the Mountains of* Iſrael; *was to be buried in the Eaſt of the* Mediterranean *Sea*; was to have his Army deſtroyed, *by their turning their Swords upon one another*; and the *Iſraelites* were to gather their *Spoils, and burn their Arms for ſeveral Years*. Whoever looks into the Hiſtory of *Antiochus*, will ſee that he died at a little Town called *Taba*, in the Confines of *Perſia* and *Babylonia*; that, upon his Death, his Army ſuffered no Defeat, neither did the *Jews* reap any

Advantage by it, becauſe his Son *Antiochus Eupater* continued to oppreſs and harraſs them with Wars, as much as ever.

But if *Antiochus* was not the *Gog* in *Ezekiel*, the Queſtion is, Who was? And to reſolve this Queſtion, we may obſerve that (be the Perſon who he will) the Prophet ſpeaks of him as a powerful Prince, who ſhould come from the North with an numerous Army, made up of different Nations, exaſperated againſt the *Jews*, and with full Intent to plunder and ravage their Country; but that he ſhould be diſappointed in his Deſign, and his Army miraculouſly deſtroy'd.

We may obſerve farther, that this Event was to happen after the Return from the Captivity, becauſe the Prophet mentions it as a Thing future, *Ezek.* xxxviii. 8. *Thou ſhalt come into a Land* (ſpeaking of *Gog*) *that is brought back from the Sword, and againſt a People who hath lately returned from amidſt the Nations, where they had been diſperſed*; which can be meant of none but the *Jews*; but that it could not happen after the Time of the *Maccabees*, becauſe the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory is, from thence ſo very well known, that a Tranſaction of this Nature, could not well eſcape us; and therefore we may conclude, that it was between the Return from the Captivity, and the firſt appearing of the *Maccabees*, (a very obſcure Interval as to the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory) that what the Prophet relates of *Gog* and his Adventurers, came to paſs; and if ſo, we can ſee no Prince or Potentate, to whom the Characters, which the inſpired Writer gives of him, can ſo properly belong as to *Cambyſes* the Son of *Cyrus*.

According to the Accounts of all Hiſtory, he was cruel and barbarous, exceſſively impious, and inſatiably covetous. His Indignation againſt the *Jews* he expreſſed by a *Revocation* of a Grant, which his Fathers gave for the Rebuilding of their City and Temple. He led a large Army into *Egypt*, compoſed of all the different Nations, that *Ezekiel* mentions, who were over-whelmed (a great many of them at leaſt) by the driving Sands of the Deſarts. In his Return from *Egypt*, he died at *Ecbatana* in *Paleſtine*, at the Foot of Mount *Carmel*, which faces the *Mediterranean* Sea, of a Wound which he received by his Sword falling accidently out of the Scabbard; ſo that a great many Lines of the Picture, which the Prophet draws of *Gog*, meet in *Cambyſes*, though it muſt be acknowledged that all do not.

What bids fair for this Opinion, however, is the Order and Series of Events which *Ezekiel* ſeems to have obſerved in his Prophecies: For having firſt foretold the taking of *Jeruſalem*, the Captivity of *Babylon*, and the Deſolation of *Tyre*, *Egypt*, and ſome other Countries neighbouring upon *Judea*, he proceeds, in the next Place, to the Diſſolution of the *Chaldean* Monarchy, and the Return of the *Jews* from their Captivity; but before they are well ſettled in their native Country, *Gog* and his numerous Army are introduced to trouble their Repoſe, and threaten their Ruin, but that God interpoſes to rid them of this fierce Enemy, who is ſaid to have fallen in the Mountains of *Iſrael*, he and all his Army. It muſt be owned indeed that the Writers of the Life of *Cambyſes* make Mention of no Intention in this Prince to fall foul upon the *Jews*, nor do they ſay any Thing of the Deſtruction of his Army, inſuant upon his Death; but upon the Suppoſition that the Prophecy relates to him, God, who knew the evil Diſpoſition of that Prince's Heart towards the *Jews*, has given us this Part of his, which no profane Author can penetrate: *Thus ſaith the Lord, it ſhall alſo come to paſs, that at the ſame Time thou ſhalt think an evil Thought, and ſhalt ſay, I will go up to the Land of unwalled Villages, I will go to them that are at reſt, that dwell ſafely, all of them dwelling without Walls, and having neither Bars nor Gates, to take a Spoil, and to take a Prey, to turn thine Hand upon the deſolate Places that are now inhabited, and upon the People that are now gathered out of the Nations*, Ezek. xxxviii. 11, 12. What became of his Army, after he was dead, we cannot tell. *Herodotus*, who gives us the largeſt Account of him, immediately after his Deceaſe, paſſes to the Hiſtory of the *Magian*, who uſurped his Throne: And therefore we may ſuppoſe, that as they conſiſted of ſo many different Nations, and followed him only by Compulſion; when once their Head was gone, they crumbled into Parties, quarrelled, and (as the Prophet had foretold) turned their Arms upon one another, which was no more than what the *Philiſtines* did in the Time of *Saul* and the *Midianites*, when *Gideon* judged *Iſrael*.

Q. *Another Difficulty, which I humbly conceive, you have not ſufficiently explained, is* Chap. iv. 5, 6. *where the Time is computed in which the Prophet is to* bear the Iniquity of the Houſe of *Iſrael*.

A. The Paſſage is this; *I have laid upon thee the Years of their Iniquity, according to the Number of Days, three hundred and ninety Days; ſo ſhalt thou bear the Iniquity of the Houſe of* Iſrael. *And when thou ſhalt accompliſh them, lie again on thy Right-Side, and thou ſhalt bear the Iniquity of the Houſe of* Judah, *forty Days. I have appointed thee each Day for a Year.* The Generality of the Commentators, who take God's laying upon the Prophet the Years of his People's Iniquity, to denote his forbearing to puniſh them for their Offences, for ſuch a determinate Time, do agree that there is an exact Sum of three hundred and ninety Years mentioned in this Place; that this Sum is to begin from the Time that *Jeroboam* firſt ſet up the Golden Calves; and that the 390 and 40 Years, are not diſtinct Numbers, but that the leſs is to be included in the greater; but then the Queſtion is, where we are to end theſe three hundred and ninety Years, or to which of the Captivities do they extend?

Several learned Men, of great Authority, make theſe Years to end at the laſt Captivity by *Nebuzaradan*, Captain of the Guards under *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*, and four Years after the laſt Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which happened in the eleventh Year of *Zedekiah*; for from the Times of the ſetting up of the Calves, ſay they, to this laſt Invaſion, are juſt 390 Years; from the eighteenth Year of *Joſiah*, when the Kingdom of *Judah* entered into Covenant with God, to this Time, are juſt forty Years; and by this laſt Captivity, all the Predictions of the ſeveral Prophets, relating thereto, were perfectly fulfilled.

It is to be obſerved, however, that this laſt Captivity was ſo ſmall, ſo ſudden, and attended with ſo little Difficulty, as can by means come up to the Pomp and Solemnity of the Prophet's Deſcription, in that very Chapter wherein this *Epocha* is mentioned. The Account which we have of the Invaſion is this; “ Whilſt *Nebuchannezzar* lay at “ the Siege of *Tyre*, he ſent *Nebuzaradan*, with “ Part of his Army to invade the Land of *Iſrael*, “ on purpoſe, as it is ſuppoſed, to revenge the “ Death of *Gedaliah*, becauſe there was no other “ Reaſon for his falling upon the poor Remains “ of thoſe miſerable People, whom he himſelf had “ left and ſettled there. In this Expedition *Nebuzaradan* ſeizing upon all the *Jews* whom he “ found in the Land, made them Captives, and “ ſent them to *Babylon*; but they all amounted “ to no more than ſeven hundred and forty five “ Perſons.” Here was no Reſiſtance made, no Siege maintained, no Famine incurred. The People fell a cheap and an eaſy Prey, becauſe they were ruined and deſtroyed before. But now, in the Expedition, to which the Prophet alludes, *Jeruſalem* was beſieged, and the Defendants reduced to the Neceſſity of *eating Bread by Weight, and with Care, and of drinking Water by Meaſure and with Aſtoniſhment*, as *Ezekiel* expreſſes it.

For this Reaſon we ſhould rather incline to the *Hypotheſis* of thoſe whoſe who end both the Computations at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* in the eleventh of *Zedekiah*, who, according as they compute the Time from *Jeroboam*'s Apoſtacy, makes the Period of God's forbearing the Houſe of *Iſrael*, from thence to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, to contain juſt *three hundred and ninety Years*; and who begin the forty Years of God's Forbearance of the Houſe of *Judah*, from the Miſſion of the Prophet *Jeremiah* to preach Repentance to them, *i. e.* from the thirteenth Year of *Joſiah*, when he was firſt called to this Office; from which Time, to the laſt Year of *Zedekiah*, when *Jeruſalem* was deſtroyed, were exactly forty Years. For ſince the hundred and twenty Years of God's forbearing the old World, is reckoned from the Miſſion of *Noah* to preach Repentance, there ſeems to be ſome Parity of Reaſon, that his forty Years Forbearance of the Kingdom of *Judah* ſhould be reckoned from the like Miſſion of *Jeremiah*.

But there is another Way of explaining this Paſſage; for, if by the Word Iniquity, which God imputes to the *Houſe of* Iſrael and *Judah*, we are to underſtand the Puniſhment of their Iniquity (which is very common, and ſeems to be the moſt natural Senſe in this Place) 'tis plain, that as the whole Tenour of the Prophet's Diſcourſe, ſeems to denote an Event future, and far diſtant, it may not improperly relate to the Continuation of God's Puniſhment of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, for their great and manifold Provocations.

Now the Puniſhment of *Iſrael* for their Iniquities may be ſaid to commence at the taking of *Samaria*, in the Reign of *Hoſhea*, as that of *Judah* did at the taking of *Jeruſalem*, in the Reign of *Zedekiah*. If then we reckon from the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* to the Time when *Cyaxares* the IId. (whom the Scripture calls *Darius* the *Medean*) became King of *Babylon*, we ſhall find it about forty Years; and as he was a known Favourer of the *Jews*, and might therefore give them Leave to return home, we may be allowed to infer, that here the Term of their Puniſhment did expire. And, in like Manner, if we reckon from *Salmanaſſer*'s taking *Samaria*, to the laſt Victory which *Alexander the Great* obtained over *Darius Codomannus*, whereby he bebame ſole Monarch of all *Aſia*, we ſhall find it to be much about 390 Years: And as his Kindneſs to the *Jews* was very remarkable, we may here date the Reſtoration of their Liberty, and conſequently their Releaſe from the Puniſhment which God inflicted on them for their Sins.

Thus, accordingly as we take the Senſe of the Words in the Prophet, the Hiſtory which is alluded to, puts on a different Aſpect, and relates to a different Period.

Q. *How do you account for the many ſeeming Abſurdities in the Writings not only of this, but ſeveral other of the Prophets?*

A. Were we ſufficiently acquainted with the Stile and Manner of Writing that was in uſe in theſe Days, and eſpecially in the Eaſtern Countries, we ſhould think it no ſtrange Thing to find them expreſſing themſelves by *Types* and *Figures*, *parabolical* Repreſentations, and *emblematical* Actions. For however it comes about, ſo it is, that Mankind has all along been marvellouſly taken with *Story* and *Picture*. Theſe excite the Curioſity of our Nature, they tempt us to learn, help us to remember, and convey Inſtruction to the Mind, in a more pleaſing and effectual Manner than plain Documents can; and hence it came to paſs, that a great Part of the Learning of the Wiſemen of the Eaſt conſiſted in *Prophecies, in ſubtle and dark Parables, and in the Secrets of grave Sentences*, as the Author of the Book of *Eccleſiaſticus* has branched it out; for *to underſtand a Proverb, and the Interpretation, the Words of the Wiſe, and their dark Sayings*, Prov. i. 6. was the very beſt Deſcription that *Solomon* himſelf could give of *Wiſdom*. Among the Antients, indeed, *Mythology* was in the higheſt Eſteem. The *Egyptians*, who were in great Reputation for Learning, delivered their Notions in *Hieroglyphicks*; and from them the *Grecians* took the Mode of couching their Meaning in Fable. *Heſiod*, who contends with *Homer* for Antiquity, is ſuppoſed, by *Quintilian*, to be the Author of the Fables, which go under the Name of *Æſop*; but, however this be, the very Suppoſition of his being ſo, makes it probable, that he did write Fables, as perhaps moſt Men of Learning and Note, in thoſe Days accuſtomed themſelves to this Form of Writing.

But beſides this parabolical Way of Writing, which was in great Vogue among the Antients, and to which the *Jews*, by a Kind of natural Genius, were wonderfully inclined, the People of the Eaſt had a Way of Expreſſing themſelves by Actions, as well as Words, and to enforce the Matter they were upon, would frequently make Uſe of outward and viſible Signs and Repreſentations. This, as our learned Mr. *Mede* ſhews, was the Practice of the *Indians*, *Perſians* and *Egyptians*; and even among the *Romans*, who were a People that uſed great Modeſty of Stile, and more Gravity in their Actions, than many other Nations, it was a cuſtomary Thing in their Orations and Pleadings, to uſe all Arts to raiſe the Paſſions by Actions and Repreſentations, as well as Words, inſomuch that they would frequently hang up the Picture of the Thing they were to ſpeak to. *Cicero* tells us of himſelf, that he ſometimes took up a Child, and held it in his Arms to move Compaſſion; and to excite Horror and Indignation, nothing was more common, than for the Accuſers to produce, in open Court, a bloody Sword, or the Garments of the Wounded, the Bones that had been taken out of the Wound, or to ſhow the

Scars, that it had left behind it; for it can hardly otherwiſe happen, but that by this Means they ſhould fix the Attention of their Hearers, when, at one and the ſame Time they ſpeak to their Eyes and Ears both.

From theſe few Remarks it appears in general, that the figurative Expreſſions of the Prophets, their Actions, and Types, and Parables were not incongruous to the Cuſtoms of the Times and Places where they lived, and yet very proper Means to give a lively and affecting Repreſentation of the Meſſage they had to deliver: And to proceed to the Paſſage which ſeems to give Diſguſt.

To take ſeveral of theſe in their litteral Senſe, would be an effectual Way to diſparage the divine Precept, which, according to this Acceptation, would put the Prophet upon acting in a Manner quite inconſiſtent with common Prudence: And therefore Interpreters are generally agreed, that the Things of this Kind, which will not come under a literal Conſtruction, were either tranſacted in Viſion, *i. e.* The Prophet in a Dream, or ſome other *Deliquium*, imagined that he did ſuch and ſuch Things, and then related them to the People; or that they were Parables, which God dictated to the Prophet, and the Prophet recited to the People: Only it muſt be obſerved, that the literal Interpretation of a Text always claims the Preference, if there be not ſome weighty Reaſon againſt it, or ſome Intimation in the Text itſelf, that the Words are figurative and enigmatical.

The Prophet *Jeremiah* is ordered by God *to take the Wine-Cup of his Fury at his Hand*, and to carry it *up and down, far and near* Jeruſalem, *and the Cities of* Judah, *and the Kings and Princes thereof*; *to* Pharaoh *King of* Egypt, *and his Servants, Princes and People*, *to all the* Arabians, *and Kings of the Land of* Uz; *to the Kings of the Land of the* Philiſtines, Edom, Moab, *and* Ammon; *to the Kings of* Tyre *and* Zidon, *and of the* Iſles *beyond the Sea*, Dedan, Tema *and* Buz; *to the Kings of* Zimri, *of the* Medes *and* Perſians, *and all the Kings of the* North. *Jer.* xxv. 15. Now, ſince it was morally impoſſible for the Prophet to viſit all theſe Kings and Nations in Perſon, and the Nature of the Thing would not admit of any real Performance, it could be no otherwiſe done than in Viſion. *The Cup of God's Wrath* is a common Figure in Scripture to denote the Severity of his Judgments; and therefore when the Prophet ſays, that *he took the Cup at the Lord's Hands, and made all the Nations drink thereof*, he can mean no more, than that he propheſied againſt theſe ſeveral Nations, and by Virtue of the Spirit of Foreknowledge, which God had imparted to him, pronounced their Doom.

In like Manner ſending Yokes and Bonds to ſeveral Kings, whoſe Ambaſſadors were then at *Jeruſalem*, can hardly be underſtood in a Senſe altogether literal, becauſe it is not probable either that Ambaſſadors would take the Yokes at his Hands, or carry them to their reſpective Maſters; but then, as Yokes and Bonds are common Figures in Scripture to denote Captivity, and the Miſeries that do attend it, his ſending Yokes and Bonds may ſignify no more than his declaring from God the Fate of theſe Princes, when the King of *Babylon* was let looſe upon them. Only it muſt be obſerved, that the Prophet might really make ſome of theſe Yokes and Bonds, (as the Scripture ſays expreſly, that he put one upon himſelf) to enliven the Idea, and make the Impreſſion of what he was to ſay more ſtrong and emphatical. For theſe ornamental Figures, and affecting Images, interſperſed with it, added new Face and Dignity to the Prophet's Meſſage, made it more awful and ſolemn in the Delivery, and gave it the Advantage of a deeper and more durable Impreſſion.

In like Manner again, the whole Affair of this Prophet's Girdle, his carrying it to the *Euphrates*, hiding it in a Rock, and at ſuch a determinate Time going for it again, and finding it quite rotten and ſpoiled, can hardly be taken in a literal Senſe, becauſe the vaſt Diſtance of the Place, and Trivialneſs of the Errand, as well as the Impoſſibility of getting out of *Jeruſalem*, if it was then inveſted by the *Babylonians*, make ſtrongly againſt it; and therefore we may ſuppoſe, that all this was tranſacted in the Prophet's Imagination only; that in the Night-Time God ſent upon him a Viſion, wherein all this Series of Things ſeemed to be performed by him, to imprint it the deeper upon his Underſtanding, that the Kingdom of *Judah*, which was once as nearly united to God, as the Girdle is to a Man's Loins, ſhould be utterly ruined and deſtroyed; and tho' the River *Euphrates* be at a wide Diſtance from the Prophet's Place of Abode, yet in the Viſion (which is never confined to Places) it might be more aptly made choice of, than any other, thereby to denote to the *Jews*, that over that River they were to be carried captive to the City of *Babylon*.

The ſhort of the Matter is, ſeveral Things which the Prophets ſet down as Matters of Fact, might not be actually done, but only repreſented as done, to make the more lively Impreſſion upon their Readers and Hearers. Nay, there are ſeveral Commands which God gives *Ezekiel* in particular, ſuch as his *lying for 390 Days upon one Side*, (which was next to a Thing impoſſible) *his baking Bread with Man's Dung*, (which was next to a Thing unſeemly) and his *ſhaving his Head and Beard*, (which, as he was a Prieſt, was a Thing expreſly forbidden him) that the Prophet is never once ſaid to have performed, nor were they indeed given him with an Intent that he ſhould perform them, but only relate them to the People, and ſo make them *Signs unto the Houſe of* Iſrael, *i. e.* either Reſemblances of Things paſſed, or Prognoſtications of Things to come.

S. *Peter*, we may obſerve, was commanded, in his Viſion, to do what he never did; *Riſe* Peter, *kill and eat*; nay, by his Reply it appears, that he himſelf did not think that he was any ways bound to obey the Command: *Not ſo, Lord, for I have never eaten any Thing that is common or unclean*; and yet the Uſe which he made of this Viſion, was to report it to the Church as a Sign or emblematical Indication of God's having accepted the *Gentiles* into the Goſpel Terms of Salvation. And, in like Manner, when *Ezekiel*, in his Viſion, received the Command of *ſhaving his Head and Face*, his Anſwer might have been in St. *Peter's* Strain, *Not ſo, Lord*, for by thy Law I am forbidden *to make Baldneſs upon my Head, or to ſhave off the Corner of my Beard*; and yet he might relate this Viſion to the People, the better to inforce the Threats which God had authorized him to denounce againſt *Jeruſalem*, *Ezek.* v. 8, 9. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, behold I, even I am againſt* *thee, and will execute Judgments in the midſt of thee, in the Sight of the Nations; and I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, becauſe of all thy Abominations.*

In a Word, the Prophets, in their Viſions, might receive ſeveral Commands concerning Things illegal or indecent; but then they conſidered theſe, not as formal Commands, but as Types, Emblems and Predictions, delivered to them in a preceptive Form, in order to imprint, the Things intended, the deeper upon their Minds, and to make their Repreſentation thereof to the People, with whom they had to do, more lively and affecting: Nor ſhould it ſeem ſtrange that the divine Wiſdom, in this Caſe, makes choice of Things improper, and ſometimes impracticable, ſince his Purpoſe in ſo doing, is to make the Prophet perceive at once that it was all ſymbolical, and not deſigned to direct him how, and what to act, but how and what to apprehend, foreſee and foretel of Things to come.

The Account of *Ezekiel's* packing up his Houſehold Goods, removing them by Night, and breaking through the Walls of his Houſe, to carry them away more ſecretly; though ſome Interpreters have looked upon it, as the mere Narration of a Viſion, or the Recital of a Parable, yet to us it ſeems more probable, that the Whole was tranſacted juſt in the Manner wherein it is deſcribed, eſpecially conſidering the near Reſemblance between the Prediction and the Event. For after the Prophet, by the ſymbolical Action of removing his Goods in a Fright, had typified the taking of *Jeruſalem*, he proceeds to apply what he had done in this Prediction, *Ezek.* xii. 11, *&c. I am your Sign, like as I have done, ſo ſhall it be done unto them: They ſhall remove and go into Captivity; they ſhall dig through the Wall to carry out thereby; and the Prince that is among them, ſhall bear upon his Shoulder in the Twilight, and ſhall go forth: My Net alſo will I ſpread upon him, and he ſhall be taken in my Snare, and I will ſcatter, toward every Wind, all that are about him, to help him, and all his Bands.* And accordingly the Event happened, for 2 *Kings* xxv. 4, 5. *When the City was broken up,* ſays the Hiſtorian, *all the Men of War fled by Night, by the Way of the Gate, between two Walls, which is by the King's Garden, (for the* Chaldeans *were againſt the City round about) and the King went the Way toward the Plain. But the Army of the* Chaldees *purſued after the King, and overtook him in the Plains of* Jericho, *and all his Army were ſcatter'd from him.*

The like is to be ſaid of the ſame Prophet's being ordered by God to delineate upon a Slate the City of *Jeruſalem*, and the *Babyloniſh* Camp inveſting it, *viz.* That the Portraiture of the Fort, the Mount, the Camp, and battering Rams againſt it, are ſo very like to what happened at the Siege, that we can hardly forbear preſuming that the whole Narration is literal, or that the Prophet did really draw a Sketch of the Siege of the City, as God commanded him. For (as we obſerved before) it was a Practice ſometimes among the beſt of Orators, to repreſent in a Picture the particular Thing they were to ſpeak to, thereby to gain the readier Attention of their Hearers, why ſhould it be thought inconſiſtent with the Character of a Prophet, or any Diminution of his Diſcretion or Gravity, to do the ſame Thing, in order to gain the ſame End?

Thus we have endeavoured to vindicate the Actions of the Prophets, or rather the Wiſdom of God, which put them upon ſuch Actions, from all Imputations of Weakneſs and Folly, and ſhall only obſerve farther, that our Miſconceptions of theſe Things muſt, in a great Meaſure, proceed from our Ignorance of the prophetick Stile (ſays a learned Examiner of this Stile:) "For all Places of "Scripture that are expreſſed in allegorical or pro-"verbial Forms of Speech, or by Types and Re-"ſemblances of Things (as all Prophecies more or "leſs are) muſt needs have been better underſtood "in thoſe Times, when they were written, than "they can be now, becauſe we have but an im-"perfect Notion of many Things, to which the "Alluſion is made, and from whence the Simili-"tude is taken." *Jenkins's* Reaſonableneſs, Vol. II. Chap. 7.

THE

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET DANIEL.

For the better underſtanding of this Book of Daniel, *and the Mind of God in it, it will be neceſſary to conſider the following Particulars; 1. The Author or Penman,* Daniel. *2. The Book itſelf.*

Let us, I. *Conſider the Author,* Daniel. *He was, 1. A Prophet, as appears by his Prophecy; of the little Stone cut out of the Mountain without Hands, meaning* Chriſt *the* Meſſiah *and his Kingdom, what he ſhould do,* Chap. ii. *and* Chap. vii. *to the End of the Book. The ſix firſt Chapters are* Hiſtorical, *the ſix laſt* Prophetical. *2. As to his Lineage, he was one of the Royal Seed. 3. He was a Captive. 4. He was excellently qualified with Piety, Wiſdom, Beauty. 5. As to his Education, he was trained up three Years in Learning. 6. His Advancement for his Parts and Wiſdom. 7. He was faithful and blameleſs in his Place of Honour to which he was preferred. 8. His Care and Kindneſs for his Companions, whoſe Promotion he procured. 9. His ſingular Holineſs and Power with God in Prayer,* Ezek. xiv. 14. *10. His Faithfulneſs and Conſtancy in the worſhip of God, maugre the Envy and Perſecution of his Enemies. 11. The ſtrange Providence of God in his Preſervation and Deliverance. 12. His ſignal Integrity, and flouriſhing State under ſeveral Kings Reigns, even in critical Times, and great Changes, unto his old Age, and beyond the ſeventy Years of Captivity.*

II. *As to the* Book itſelf, *both the* Hiſtorical *and* Prophetical *Part of it, eſpecially the Latter, we find, 1. Great Variety therein. 2. Famous Predictions of the* Meſſiah; *of dreadful Wars, fearful Deſolations to Countries, and the* Jewiſh *Nation in Particular, for putting* Chriſt *to Death; great Perſecutions of the Church by the* Grecians *and* Romans *eſpecially, in which* Antiochus *and* Antichriſt *are pointed at. Theſe Things are all of ſuch weighty Conſideration, that our bleſſed Saviour calls for eſpecial Underſtanding in the reading even one Part of it,* Matt. xxiv. 15. *His Chronology and Calculations may be called the* Key of Time, *relating to the Church's Sufferings and Deliverances.* Daniel *was the greateſt Favourite we read of, namely, of the King of Heaven,* Chap. iii. 23. *and* x. 11. *and of the greateſt Kings then on Earth. He was the nobleſt Pattern of a publick Spirit, for the* Church of God, *for whoſe Affliction he was deeply afflicted in the midſt of his Court Honours and Employments.*

Chap. I.

Jehoiakin's *Captivity.* Daniel, Hananiah, Miſhael, *and* Azariah *carried to* Babylon, *where, refuſing the King's Portion, they feed on Pulſe and Water; they are fatter and fairer than they that did eat of the King's Portion. Their Wiſdom ten Times better than that of the Magicians.*

Q. W*HAT is chiefly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. *Nebuchadnezzar* having taken *Jeruſalem,* took the Veſſels of the Houſe of God, and carried them to *Shinar,* which was a Plain by *Babylon,* where was the Temple of their great God, and is here taken for *Babylon.*

Nebuchadnezzar kept certain of the King's Seed; his Purpoſe was to keep them as Hoſtages, that he might ſhew himſelf victorious; and that by their being inſtructed in his Religion, they might favour rather him than the *Jews,* and ſo be able to ſerve him as Governors in the Land: Beſides, by this Means the *Jews* might be better kept in Subjection, they fearing otherwiſe to procure Hurt to theſe noble young Men.

The King required three Things, *viz.* that they ſhould be of noble Birth, that they ſhould be witty and learned, and that they ſhould be of a ſtrong and comely Stature, that they might do him better Service. This he did for his own Advantage, therefore it is no Praiſe to his Liberality: Yet in this he is worthy Praiſe, that he eſteemed Learning, and knew it was a neceſſary Means to govern by.

Nebuchadnezzar ordered theſe Princes to be inſtructed in the Learning and Language of the *Chaldeans,* that they might forget their own Religion and Country Faſhions, to ſerve him the better to his Purpoſe; he alſo appointed them the beſt of Proviſions.

Among theſe were four Princes of the Royal Lineage of *Judah,* viz. *Daniel, Hananiah, Miſhael,* and *Azariah*; but the Prince of the Eunuchs changed their Names, that they might altogether forget their Religion: For the *Jews* gave their Children Names, which might ever put them in Remembrance of ſome Point of Religion, therefore this was a great Temptation, and a Sign of Servitude, which they were not able to reſiſt.

Q. *Is there any thing particularly remarkable in the Names of theſe Men?*

A. It is very remarkable, that, as all their former Names related to the true God, ſo all the Names, which, on this Occaſion, were impoſed upon theſe four *Jewiſh* Youths, had ſome Reference or other to *Babyloniſh* Idols. *Daniel,* in *Hebrew,* ſignifies, *God is my Judge*; *Belteſhazar,* in *Chaldee,* is, *the Treaſure of* Baal; *Hananiah,* in *Hebrew,* is, *well pleaſing to God*; *Shadrach,* in *Chaldee,* is, *the Inſpiration of the Sun*; *Miſhael,* in *Hebrew, proceeding from God*; *Meſhach,* in *Chaldee, belonging to the Goddeſs* Meſhach; *Azariah,* in *Hebrew, God is my Help*; and *Abednego,* in *Chaldee,* the *Servant of* Nego, *i. e.* the *Sun,* or the *Morning Star,* both Deities among the *Babylonians,* and ſo called becauſe of their Brightneſs.

Q. *What might be the Reaſon of* Daniel's *Requeſt, that he might not eat of the King's Portion?*

A. *Daniel* requeſted of the Principal of the Eunuchs, that he might not eat the Portion of the King's Meat and Wine allotted to him: Not that he thought any Religion to be in the Meat or Drink; (for afterwards he did eat) but becauſe the King ſhould not entice him by this ſweet Poiſon to forget his Religion and accuſtomed Sobriety; and that in his Meat and Drink he might daily remember of what People he was: And *Daniel* brings in this, to ſhew how God, from the Beginning aſſiſted him with his Spirit, and at length called him to be a Prophet: For he was eſteemed in *Babylon* as a Prophet, as long as that Commonwealth ſtood.

The Prince of the Eunuchs, after ſome Heſitation, complied with *Daniel*'s requeſt; and inſtead of Fleſh and Wine, *Daniel* and his Companions lived on Pulſe and Water, with which they grew fair and fat. It may be that *Daniel* and his Companions had an Eye to that which is written, *Deut.* viii. 3. *Man liveth not by Bread alone, but,* &c.

Q. *Deſcribe the Office of* Maſter of the Eunuchs?

A. What we render *Maſter of the Eunuchs,* may very likely ſignify the chief Miniſter of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Court. Such Officers, in the Palaces of *Eaſtern* Princes, were uſually called Eunuchs; becauſe they, who had the Controul of the King's Houſhold (as we ſay) were ordinarily ſuch, tho' many Times it might be otherwiſe. The *Jews* have a Notion, that *Daniel,* and his three Companions, were, by the Order of *Nebuchadnezzar,* made Eunuchs, that the Prophecy of *Iſaiah* might be fulfilled, *Thy Sons, that ſhall iſſue from thee, ſhall they take away, and they ſhall be Eunuchs in the Palace of the King of* Babylon, Chap. xxxix. 7. But that is no concluſive Reaſon; becauſe, in that Prophecy, as well as in the Paſſage we are now upon, the Name of Eunuch might mean no more, than any Perſon, who had an Employment at Court.

CHAP. II.

Nebuchadnezzar *Dreams, and forgets his Dream; requires it of his Wiſe-men, with Promiſes and Threatnings; they being unable to do it, are decreed to die.* Daniel *deſires Reſpite, prays to God for Wiſdom, underſtands the Dream. He praiſes God; is brought to the King, and declares his Dream, and its Interpretation, for which he is promoted.*

Q. WHAT *is the Subject of this Chapter?*

A. *Nebuchadnezzar* had a Dream, which, by Reaſon of the Strangeneſs of it, terrified him ſo much, that it made him ſtart out of his ſleep. The King upon this, ſent for his Magicians, Aſtrologers, Sorcerers and *Chaldeans,* who pretended great Skill in natural and ſupernatural Things, to tell him his Dream, and the Interpretation thereof. Theſe Impoſtors anſwered, That, if the King would relate his Dream, they could interpret it, but that otherwiſe it was out of their Power; this enraged the King ſo much, that he made a Decree to ſlay all the Wiſe-men in *Babylon,* among whom *Daniel* and his Companions were ſought after; but *Daniel* perſuaded *Arioch,* who had the Charge to execute the King's Commands to deſiſt, telling the King he would interpret the Dream.

Q. *In the ſecond Verſe are mentioned* Magicians, Aſtrologers, Sorcerers, *and* Chaldeans; *what were their different and reſpective Employments?*

A. In the *Hebrew* they are thus written; The *Chartumim,* the *Aſaphim,* the *Mecaſphim,* and the *Chaſdim. Chartumim,* according to the *Septuagint,* ſignifies *Sophiſts*; but, according to St. *Jerom, Diviners, Fortune-tellers, Caſters of Nativity,* &c. *Aſaphim* has no Derivation from the *Chaldee* Tongue, but no ſmall Reſemblance to the *Greek* Word *Sophos,* (whether the *Greeks* took this Word from the *Babylonians,* or the *Babylonians* from them) and therefore the *Septuagint* have rendered it by Philoſophers. *Mecaſphim,* is thought, by ſome, to be *Necromancers,* ſuch as pretended to raiſe the Dead, to gain Intelligence of Things future; but, the *Septuagint* have rendered it by a Word, that denotes ſuch Inchanters, as made uſe of noxious Herbs and Drugs, the Blood of Victims, and the Bones of the Dead, for their ſuperſtitious Operations. The other Word, *Chaſdim,* is the ſame with *Chaldeans,* and here ſignifies a ſort of Philoſophers among the *Babylonians,* who dwelt in a ſeparate Part of the City, and were exempt from all public Offices and Employments. Their Study was natural Philoſophy, Aſtrology, Divination, or the foretelling of future Events, by the Obſervation of the Stars, the Interpretation of Dreams, the Science of Augury, the Worſhip of their Gods, *&c.* as *Diodorus Siculus,* Lib. 1. gives us an Account of them.

Q. *How many Kinds of Magic are there?*

A. *Magic* is properly of three Kinds, Natural, Artificial, and Diabolical. The firſt of theſe is no other than natural Philoſophy, but highly improved and advanced; whereby the Perſon, that is well ſkilled in the Power and Operation of natural Bodies, is able to produce many wonderful Effects, miſtaken by the Illiterate for diabolical Performances, but ſuch as lye perfectly within the Verge of Nature. Artificial Magic is what we call *Legerdemain,* or Slight of Hand, the merry Tricks of Jugglers (as we corrupt the Word *Joculatores*) far from exceeding the Power of Art, though many Times they paſs with the Vulgar for diabolical likewiſe. Diabolical Magic, is that which is done by the Help of the Devil, who, having great Skill in natural Cauſes, may aſſiſt thoſe that are in League and Covenant with him, to do many ſtrange and aſtoniſhing Things. It ſeems, however, by the Diſcourſe which paſſed between *Nebuchadnezzar* and his Magicians, that they had no Knowledge in the Sciences they pretended to; that the King himſelf looked upon them as no better than a Pack of Impoſtors; and that they had no Familiarity with any wicked Demons, who, he thought, might have helped them out at this dead Lift; therefore they told the King, *It is a rare Thing which the King requireth, and there is none other, that can ſhew it before the King, except the God, whoſe Dwelling is not with Fleſh*, ver. 11.

Q. *What is there farther remarkable in this Chapter?*

A. There are four Things here very ſtrange and wonderful. Firſt, That *Arioch*, inſtead of executing the King's Decree ſpeedily, ſhould make this Stop. Secondly, That he ſhould dare to ſee the King's Face when he was ſo wroth, inſtead of doing what his Commiſſion tied him to. Thirdly, That *Daniel* ſhould have the Boldneſs to go into the King when he was in his Fury. Fourthly, That he ſhould deſire Time, and obtain it of the King, who had denied the ſame Thing to the Wiſe-men. To this we anſwer, That the ſignal Hand of God was in all this. In particular, *Daniel* was in great Eſteem with the King, above all the Wiſe-men, Chap. i. 19, 20. Beſides, he gave both *Arioch* and the King Hopes he would ſhew and interpret the King's Dream.

Q. *What have you to obſerve concerning* Daniel's *Behaviour after he had undertaken to anſwer the King's Demand?*

A. It is not improbably conjectured, that *Daniel* ſpent the Night in Watching and Prayer, for Night-Viſion is diſtinguiſhed from Dreams, *Numb.* xii. 6. but whether ſleeping or waking *Daniel* had the ſame Thing revealed unto him, which *Nebuchadnezzar* had, with this Difference, the King remembered not his Dream, nor knew what it meant, but *Daniel* was able to tell the Dream, and give the Meaning of it alſo. He then gave Thanks and Praiſe to the Father of Lights, from whom all Wiſdom comes, who heard his Prayer; and *Daniel* went to *Arioch*, deſiring him not to deſtroy the Wiſe-men, for he could interpret the Dream; whereby it appears that many were ſlain, and the reſt, at *Daniel's* Offer, were preſerved on that Condition; not that *Daniel* favoured their wicked Arts, but in Pity, not regarding whether their Sciences were lawful or no.

Q. *How did* Daniel *behave himſelf when he came before the King?*

A. Daniel, being introduced to the King, affirms that Man, by Reaſon and Art, is not able to attain to the Knowledge of God's Secrets; but the underſtanding thereof muſt come of God: Whereby he ſmites the King with a certain Fear and Reverence of God, that he might be more apt to receive the high Myſteries that ſhould be revealed; becauſe he had ſaid, that God only muſt reveal the Signification of this Dream; the King might have aſked why *Daniel* undertook to interpret it; therefore he ſhews he was but God's Miniſter, and had no Gifts, but ſuch as God had given him to ſet forth his Glory.

Q. *Pray explain* Daniel's *Interpretation of the King's Dream?*

A. By Gold, Silver, Braſs and Iron, are meant the *Chaldean*, *Perſian*, *Macedonian* and *Roman* Kingdoms, which ſhould ſucceſſively rule all the World, till *Chriſt* (who is here called the Stone) come himſelf, and deſtroy the laſt: This was to aſſure the *Jews*, that their Afflictions ſhould not end with the Empire of the *Chaldeans*, but that they ſhould patiently abide the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, which ſhould be at the End of this fourth Monarchy.

By theſe different Emblems of Metals and Stone, God intended to ſignify to *Nebuchadnezzar*, the ſeveral Empires that were to be in the World. The *Aſſyrian* or *Chaldean* is repreſented by Gold, becauſe it was the firſt, and the moſt magnificent, if not moſt extenſive; and *Nebuchadnezzar*, being then upon the Throne, is ſaid to be the Head of it. That of Silver is the *Perſian*, founded by *Cyrus*, upon the Ruins of the *Chaldean*; but inferior to the *Chaldean*, in its Duration, at leaſt, if not in its Extent. That of Braſs is the *Grecian*, founded by *Alexander*, upon the Ruins of the *Perſian*; and its Character is, that *it ſhould bear Rule over all the Earth*, Verſe 39. which was verified in its great Founder: For, upon his Return from *India* to *Babylon*, the Ambaſſadors of almoſt all the known Parts of the World reſorted thither, to pay their Homage and Acknowledgment of his Dominion. That of Iron is the *Roman* Empire, which is diſtinguiſhed by *its breaking in Pieces and ſubduing all Things*, Verſe 40. For, whilſt it was in its full Strength and Vigour, under its Conſuls and firſt Emperors, it brought under its Dominion all the Kingdoms and States that were then ſubſiſting in *Europe*, *Africa*, and a great Part of *Aſia*: But, from that Time, it became a Mixture of Iron and Clay: Their Emperors proved moſt of them vicious and corrupt, either by their Tyranny, making themſelves hateful to their Subjects, or by their Follies and Vices contemptible. Laſtly, that of the *Stone out of the Mountain* is the fifth Monarchy, or the Kingdom of the *Meſſias*, which, againſt all the Power and Policy of the *Roman* Empire, prevailed, not by an external Force, but by the powerful Preaching of the Goſpel, to the Suppreſſion and Defeat of Wickedneſs and Impiety, Idolatry and Superſtition, and *it ſhall ſtand for ever, and never be deſtroyed*, Verſe 44. which can be ſaid of no other Kingdom, but that of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which, for this ſeventeen hundred Years and upwards, has withſtood the Violence of Perſecutions, and all other Contrivances formed againſt it, and has the ſure Promiſes of its almighty Founder on its Side, that *the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*, Matt. xvi. 18.

Q. *In Conſequence of* Daniel's *interpreting the King's Dream, not only himſelf, but his three Friends were promoted; but to what Employments?*

A. Shadrach, *Meſhach* and *Abednego*, were ſubſtituted as Lieutenants for the King's Service, under *Daniel*, which, as the Curious obſerve, was chiefly about Agriculture, and gathering Revenues and Proviſions for the Court: But *Daniel* was a Privy-Counſellor, and Lord-Chancellor, about the arduous Affairs of the King and Kingdom; ſitting ſometimes in Judgment, and alſo admitting and conducting Perſons and Cauſes to the King, as there was Occaſion; to whom there was difficult Acceſs, according to the Magnificence and Majeſty of the Kings of the *Eaſt*. Thus *Daniel* ſat in the King's Gate, to be near and ready for the King's chiefeſt Buſineſs, which denoted Honour and high

Favour. We muſt look upon *Daniel's* Promotion to be for the Service and Protection of his Brethren, in their preſent State of Captivity, as *Mordecai's* was; and this ſhews that God remembers his People in their low Eſtate, and doth not leave himſelf without Witneſs to them, in raiſing up nurſing Fathers for them.

Q. *What is obſervable in* Daniel's *Addreſs to the King?*

A. *Joſephus* introduces *Daniel*, as making this Preamble to his Diſcovery, and Explanation of the King's Dream. "It is not thro' any high Conceit of my own Wiſdom, as if I underſtand more than the *Chaldeans* do, or any deſigned Reproach upon them, for not being able to reſolve a Queſtion, which I am able to unriddle, that I engage in this Matter; for I am not a Perſon that pretends to more Skill and Knowledge than my Neighbours; but it is purely the Work of God, in Pity to the Miſerable, and in Mercy to my Prayers, for the Life and Safety of myſelf and my Friends, that he has now laid open this Dream to me, and explained the Meaning of it. Nor have I been ſo ſollicitous for the Safety of myſelf and my Companions under your Diſpleaſure, as for your own Honour and Glory, leſt you ſhould tarniſh them, by putting to Death (contrary to all Right and Juſtice) ſo many worthy Men, merely becauſe they were not able to do a Thing that is impoſſible for Fleſh and Blood to perform." This is to be obſerved, however, that though a great Part of the Book of *Daniel* be in *Hebrew*, yet this Speech of his to the King, as well as the Dialogue, which paſſed between the King and his Magicians; the King's Decree, wherein he orders the golden Statue to be worſhipped; and that other, wherein he declares his Dream of the vaſt large Tree, which *Daniel* expounded; the Hiſtory of the Feaſt which *Belſhazzar* made; of his Prophanation of his ſacred Veſſels, and the terrible Viſion of the Hand-writing, which he ſaw upon the Wall; the Beginning of the Reign of *Darius*; the Honours he conferred on *Daniel*, and the Viſion of the four Beaſts, denoting the four Monarchies; that all theſe, I ſay (*viz.* from the fourth Verſe of the ſecond Chapter, to the Beginning of the eighth Chapter) are wrote in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* Language, which, at that Time, were both the ſame, and both as familiar to our Prophet, as was his Mother-Tongue.

CHAP. III.

Nebuchadnezzar *erects a golden Image, and commands all to worſhip it; which* Shadrach, Meſhach *and* Abednego *refuſing to do, are accuſed, fear not the King's Wrath, are caſt into the fiery Furnace, and ſafely delivered by the Power of God. The King, ſeeing the Miracle, calls them forth; bleſſes God for his Faithfulneſs and Power; and makes a Decree to ſerve the God of* Shadrach, Meſhach *and* Abednego.

Q. WHAT *was* Nebuchadnezzar's *View in ſetting up this vaſt Image?*

A. Under Pretence of Religon and Holineſs, in making an Image to his Idol *Bel*, *Nebuchadnezzar* ſought his own Ambition and vain Glory; and this ſhews that he was not touched with the true Fear of God before, but that he confeſſed him on a ſudden Motion, as the Wicked when they are overcome with the Greatneſs of his Works. The *Greeks* Interpreters write, that this was done eighteen Years after the Dream: And as may appear, the King feared leſt the *Jews*, by their Religion, ſhould have altered the State of his Commonwealth, and therefore he meant to bring all to one kind of Religion, ſeeking his own Quietneſs, rather than God's Glory.

Two Things are obſervable in *Nebuchadnezzar's* Proclamation, which were two dangerous Weapons wherewith Satan uſed to fight againſt the Children of God; the Conſent of the Multitude, and the Cruelty of the Puniſhment: For although ſome feared God, yet the Multitude which conſented to the Wickedneſs, aſtoniſhed them: And here the King required not an inward Conſent, but an outward Geſture, that the *Jews* might by little learn to forget their true Religion.

Q. *Proceed to the other Parts of this Chapter.*

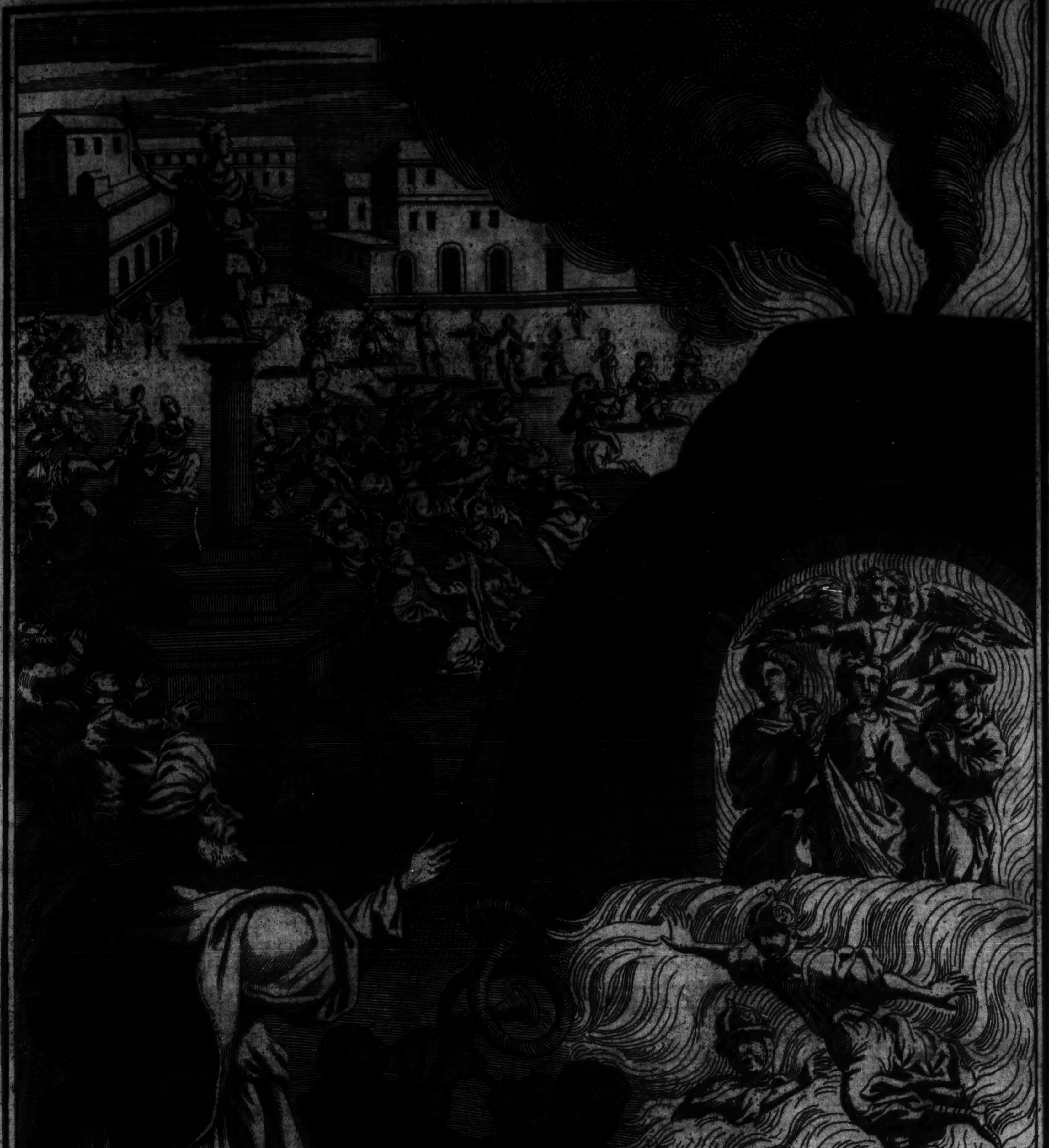
A. *Shadrach, Meſhach* and *Abednego*, for neglecting to worſhip the Image, are thrown into a fiery Furnace; but it ſeems *Daniel* was not accuſed, becauſe he was greatly in the King's Favour. So urgent was *Nebuchadnezzar* to have theſe three thrown into the Furnace, that thoſe who threw them in were ſlain by the Flame. A ſignal Hand of God upon ſuch as execute wicked Commands, who, though migty Men, had no Might to eſcape the Flame at the Mouth of the Furnace, when the other eſcaped in the midſt of it.

Nebuchadnezzar, on looking into the Furnace, perceived the three holy Men walking in the Fire, and with a fourth Perſon, whom he compared to the Son of God. The King's Fury being abated, he bade *Shadrach, Meſhach* and *Abednego* come forth, for now he could at once confeſs and acknowledge the true God to be the Moſt High above all Gods, and the three Worthies to be his faithful Servants, who had not ſo much as the Smell of the Fire on their Bodies and Cloathes. Here was a pure Act of God's Omnipotence, to divide between the Fire and its moſt intenſe Heat, and to maſter any Creature in the World, in its Height, by working againſt and above Nature, whoſe utmoſt Sphere of Activity is limited by God.

Q. *What Kind of Image was it which* Nebuchadnezzar *ſet up?*

A. Grotius is of Opinion, that the Image which *Nebuchadnezzar* ſet up, was the Figure of his Father *Nabopolaſſar*, whom, by this Means he intended to deify: But others think that it was his own Statue which he erected, to gain the Adoration of his People in this Form. We cannot, however, in what we find *Nebuchadnezzar* ſaying to *Daniel's* Friends, perceive that he any where upbraids them with Contempt offered, either to his Perſon or his Statue, but only that they *would not ſerve his Gods, nor worſhip the Image which he had ſet up*, Verſe 14. And therefore others have imagined, that this was neither his own, nor his Father's Statue, but that of *Jupiter*, which was afterwards found in the Temple of *Belus*, when *Xerxes* plundered it of its immenſe Riches; among which were ſeveral Images of maſſy Gold, but one more eſpecially *fifty Foot high*, which might be the ſame that *Nebuchadnezzar* conſecrated in the Plains of *Dura*. For though that is ſaid to have been ſixty Cubits, *i. e.* ninety Foot high, yet we may ſuppoſe that it ſtood upon a Pedeſtal of forty Foot high, and ſo the Image and the Pedeſtal together might make ninety; otherwiſe there would

DANIEL. CHAP. III.



Shadrach, Meſhach, *and* Abednego, *caſt into the burning fiery furnac*

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would be no Proportion between its Heighth and its Breadth, according to the Deſcription we have of it Ver. 1.

Q. *Was the burning Criminals in a fiery Furnace, an uſual Puniſhment in thoſe Times?*

A. The Puniſhment of burning in a fiery Furnace was pretty common in theſe Parts of the World, ſo that ſome will have it, that *Abraham*, before he departed from *Chaldea*, was made to undergo it, but eſcaped by a miraculous Preſervation, founding their Opinion on *Gen.* xi. 31. Of this Furnace in particular it is related, that the King's Servants having received the Command to heat it ſeven Times hotter, *Ceaſed not to make the Oven hot with Roſin, Pitch, Tow, and ſmall Wood, ſo that the Flame ſtreamed forth above the Furnace forty and nine Cubits; and paſſed through and burnt the* Chaldeans, *it found about the Furnace.* See The Song of the three holy Children, Verſe 23, *&c.*

Q. *How are we to underſtand that Expreſſion of* Nebuchadnezzar, *Verſe 25. when he ſaw, as he thought, four Men walking in the Fire,* The Form of the fourth is like the Son of God?

A. *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Expreſſion, upon this Occaſion is, *Lo! I ſee four Men walking looſe in the midſt of the Fire, and the Form of the fourth is like the Son of God.* Whereupon ſome have thought that this Prince having little or no Knowlege of the true Religion, imagined that he ſaw ſome Demi-God, an *Apollo*, an *Hercules*, a *Mercury*, for Inſtance, the Son of a ſuperior God, walking with the three *Hebrew* Youths, in the fiery Furnace. The Notion, it muſt be owned, agrees very well with the antient Theology of the *Grecians*, to which that of the *Chaldeans* had no ſmall Reſemblance: But as Angels are ſometimes in Scripture called the Sons of Gods, *Job* i. 6. and xxxviii. 7. and moſt Nations had only a Belief of their Exiſtence, but high Conceptions likewiſe of their Power; the King explains himſelf what he means by *the Son of God*, when in Joy for their Deliverance he cries out, *Bleſſed be the God of* Shadrach, Meſhach *and* Abednego, *who hath ſent his Angel, and delivered his Servants that truſted in him!* Ver. 8. Or, (as it is in the *The Song of the three holy Children*) *The Angel of the Lord came down into the Oven, together with* Azariah *and his Fellows, and ſmote the Flame out of the Oven, and made the midſt of the Furnace, as if it had a moiſt whiſtling Wind, ſo that the Fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them.* As if the Flame itſelf (according to the Expreſſion of *Joſephus*) had been conſcious of the Injuſtice of their Sentence, and ſuſpended the very Nature of its conſuming Quality, in Favour of the Innocent.

Q. *May not the* Song of the Three Children *in the* Apocrypha, *be properly introduced here?*

A. According to the vulgar *Latin* Edition of this Chapter, between the twenty-third and twenty-fourth Verſes, is added *The Song of the three Children*; but being no-where extant, either in the *Hebrew* or *Chaldee* Language, and never received in the Canon of Holy Writ, by the *Jewiſh* Church, or by the antient *Chriſtians*, our Church has thought proper to place it among the *Apocryphal* Writings, (where it ſtands next to the Book of *Baruch*) tho' the Church of *Rome*, by a Decree of the Council of *Trent*, [*Seſſ.* 4.] has not only given it, but the Hiſtory of *Suſanna* likewiſe, and of *Bel* and the *Dragon* (which moſt of the Antients looked upon as mere Fables) a Place among the canonical Scriptures. The *Song* itſelf conſiſts of two Parts, a *Prayer*, and a *Thankſgiving*. The Prayer is a devout Confeſſion of the Sins of the People, and Acknowledgement of God's Righteouſneſs, in bringing their Captivity, and other Calamities upon them: And the Thankſgiving is a ſolemn Excitation of all Creatures whatever, but more eſpecially of the thee *Hebrew* Children, who were thus *ſaved from the Hand of Death, to bleſs the Lord, praiſe him, and exalt him above all for ever.*

CHAP. IV.

Nebuchadnezzar *declares to All the Wonders and Kingdom of God; relates his Dream, and* Daniel's *Interpretation of it, who counſels the King to repent. The Event confirms* Daniel's *Interpretation; for which the King praiſes God.*

Q. H*AVE we any Thing particularly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet *Daniel* here ſets down another ſtrange Story, after he had finiſhed that of the three young Men: This the Prophet ſets forth, not in his Words, but in the Words of the King's own Proclamation, that it might paſs with undoubted Credit, and without all Diſpute, ſent thro' all his vaſt Kingdoms, and queſtionleſs put into the King's Archives.

This Chapter is a publick Confeſſion, before the People, of the Wonders God wrought for *Nebuchadnezzar*, by the Means of *Daniel*, and for which the King proclaimed the Glory of the Lord to all the World.

Q. *Was* Nebuchadnezzar*'s Shape and Form really and actually transformed into that of a Beaſt?*

A. *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Shape or Form was not changed into a Beaſt, but he was either ſtricken mad, and ſo avoided Men's Company, or was caſt out for his Tyranny, and ſo wandered among the Beaſts, and eat Herbs and Graſs.

Q. *Is there any Aptneſs in the Compariſon of a Prince to a Tree?*

A. It is very obſervable, that in the Writings of the Prophets, Princes are frequently compared to Trees, *Ezek.* xvii. 5, 6. and xxxi. 3. *Jer.* xxii. 15. *Pſal.* xxxvi. 35. And 'tis the Notion of *Grotius*, that a Tree, ſeen in a Dream, according to the Principles of the *Indians*, *Perſians* and *Egyptians*, denotes ſome great and excellent Perſonage; but nothing is more precarious than theſe Obſervations, becauſe in the Dreams which come from God, he may repreſent an eminent Perſon under a thouſand different Types, as well as that of a ſtately Tree.

Q. *What is meant by a* Watcher, *Verſe* 13.

A. The Words in our Tranſlation are, I ſaw a *Watcher*, which, as it came down from Heaven, could be no other than an Angel. The *Chaldee* Word is *Nir*, from whence St. *Jerom* imagines, that the *Pagans* derived their *Iris*, the Meſſenger of the Gods; and by ſome Expreſſions in Verſe 17. it looks as if the *Chaldeans* had a Notion (for the King, we may ſuppoſe, ſpeaks according to the common Sentiments of the People) that their *Watchers* or *Holy Ones* in Heaven, did conſtitute an Aſſembly of Judges, or were an Order of bleſſed Spirits, who took under their Cognizance and Deciſion, the Fate of Men; for by the Decree of theſe *Watchers* it was, that the *Tree*, in the Viſion, was ordered to be cut down.

Q. *How are we to underſtand thoſe Words, Verſe* 16. Till ſeven Times paſs over him?

A. The Ambiguity of this Expreſſion (which the Prophet, in the Expoſition of the Dream, ſtill adheres to) has occaſioned a great Variety of Opinions concerning it. Some maintain, that as the *Perſians* diſtinguiſhed their Years into two Seaſons, Winter and Summer, the ſeven Years of *Nebuchadnezzar* muſt be reckoned in this Manner, which will therefore reduce them to the Space of three Years and an Half. *Dorotheus* (in his *Synopſis* of the Lives of the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*) tells us, that God did indeed condemn *Nebuchadnezzar* to ſeven Years Habitation with Brutes; but that, at the Prayers and Interceſſions of *Daniel*, the ſeven Years were reduced to ſeven Months. The Word *Time*, according to others, denote no more than the Space of a Month; ſo that the King's Diſorder, of courſe, laſted no longer than ſeven Months; whereof (according to Computation) for the firſt forty Days he continued in his Frenzy, as a Madman; in the forty Days following, he bewailed his Offences; and in the laſt forty Days he recovered by Degrees from his Infirmity: But all theſe are idle Conjectures. A Year was the common Meaſure of Time among the *Chaldeans*, eſpecially in the Chronicles of their Kings, and therefore, in this Particular, we need no Interpreter for *Daniel*, than *Daniel* himſelf, who in ſundry Places of his Prophecy, particularly in Chap. vii. 25. 35. has ſet *a Time, and Times, and the divided*, or Half *of a Time*, for the Space of three Years and an Half.

Q. *How long was it after this Viſion, that the Judgment threatened in it, was executed upon him?*

A. God delay'd the Execution of his Threats againſt this Prince, and gave him a whole Year's Reprieve, Verſe 29. to ſee if he would repent, and turn unto him; but perceiving that he ſtill perſiſted in his Crimes, as ſoon as the Meaſure of his Iniquity was full, he ſmote and reduced him to the Condition of a Beaſt. This is *Theodoret's* Notion of the Matter; but St. *Jerom* rather thinks, that this King being terrified with the Threats, and touched with the Exhortations of the Prophet, began to ſet about his Reformation, and by Acts of Charity and Mercy, to reconcile himſelf to God, for which he obtained a Delay of his Puniſhment for a Years's Space; but that, inſtead of perſevering in theſe good Purpoſes, he ſuffered himſelf to fall into Pride, upon the Contemplation of the mighty Works he had done, and ſo, by his Vanity loſt what he had gained by his Charity.

Q. *How long did this Prince reign, and when did he die?*

A. He died in the Year of the World 3442, and before *Chriſt* 562; after he had reigned, from the Death of his Father, according to the *Babyloniſh* Account, three and forty Years. He was certainly one of the greateſt Princes that had appeared in the *Eaſt* for many Ages before him, and according to *Megaſthenes* (as he is quoted by *Joſephus Antiq.* Lib. x. cap. 11.) both for his Enterprizes and Performances, far excelled even *Hercules* himſelf. The ſame Hiſtorian (as he is quoted by *Euſebius*, *Præp.* Lib. ix. cap. 41.) informs us, that a little before his Death, he foretold his Subjects of the coming of the *Perſians*, and their ſubduing the Kingdom of *Babylon*; but this he might gather from the Prophet *Daniel*, and eſpecially from the Interpretation of his Dreams.

CHAP. V.

Belſhazzar*'s wicked Feaſt; prophanes the Veſſels of the Temple; is troubled at a Hand-writing, which the Magicians could not read.* Daniel, *by the Queen's Recommendation is ſent for; he refuſes the King's Gifts; reproves his Pride and Idolatry; then reads and interprets the Hand-writing, which portends his Ruin.* Darius *the* Median, *in the ſame Night, takes his Kingdom.*

Q. W*HAT is* Daniel's *Deſign in giving the Hiſtory contained in this Chapter?*

A. Daniel recites this Hiſtory of King *Belſhazzar*, *Evilmerodach's* Son, to ſhew God's Judgments againſt the Wicked, for the Deliverance of the Church, and how the Prophecy of *Jeremiah* was true, that they ſhould be delivered after ſeventy Years.

Q. *What do youy obſerve upon this* great Feaſt, *with which* Belſhazzar *entertained his Nobility?*

A. The Kings of the eaſtern Parts uſed to ſit alone commonly, and diſdained that any ſhould ſit in their Company; but now *Belſhazzar*, to ſhew his Power, and how little he regarded his Enemy who then beſieged *Babylon*, he made a ſolemn Banquet, and uſed Exceſs in their Company, which is meant here by drinking Wine. Thus the Wicked are moſt diſſolute and negligent, when their Deſtruction is at Hand.

The King having the Wine, liked it ſo well, that he reſolved to make a merry Day of it, and in order to it, ſent for the Veſſels of God's Temple, which he did in Scorn and Contempt, triumphing thereby over God and his People: But this Sport laſted not long, they had more Honour for the Veſſels of their own Idols, which they kept ſacred and untouched; therefore the Prophet upbraids them with this inſolent Profaneneſs, for the Concubines alſo drank in them.

The Figure of a Man's Hand writing upon a Wall, ſtruck the King and his Aſſociates in finging, with the utmoſt Conſternation, and the Report of it, went through the whole Court; ſo that the Queen, who was his Grand-mother *Nebuchadnezzar's* Wife, heard of it, came to the King and informed him of *Daniel*.

A. *After* Daniel *was brought in, how he did behave himſelf on this extraordinary Occaſion?*

A. Daniel being introduced to the King, excuſed himſelf from receiving any Reward: He puts *Belſhazzar* in mind how God dealt with his Father, and that he might have the fuller Blow in the Application of what he was going to inform him of. He charges *Belſhazzar* with three or four Things: Firſt, That he polluted the Veſſels of the Lord: Secondly, that he praiſed Idol-Gods of Metal, Wood and Stone, which cannot hear, ſee or know: That he had not glorified the true God, in whoſe Hands was his Breath, and all his Ways, and that he had highly diſhonoured, affronted, and reproached him.

Daniel gives an Interpretation of the Writing, and notwithſtanding it was a ſad unwelcome Meſſage to *Belſhazzar*, yet he would be as good as his Word, and performed his Promiſe, for his Princes were Witneſſes to it, and the Word of thoſe Kings was counted ſacret: Beſides, it was a great Thing *Daniel* had unfolded; all were convinced of it, as well as the King. But it may be aſked, how came *Daniel* to accept that Honour now, which he ſeemed to refuſe before? To this it may be anſwered, that he refuſed before, leſt he ſhould ſeem to prophecy for Reward, which was diſhonourable; now it is as it were forced upon him, for the King commanded it: And there is as much Danger and Crime with ſome in refuſing a Favour, as Boldneſs in begging.

Q. *In what manner was* Daniel'*s Prediction accompliſhed?*

A. The Veracity of *Daniel's* Predicton was confirmed by *Belſhazzar's* Death, and *Darius* ſucceeding in the Kingdom: This was he who, with *Cyrus*, beſieged and took *Babylon*; he gave himſelf the Name of *Darius*, being before called *Narbonnedas*. He was Chief in the Siege, and firſt in the Quarrel againſt the *Chaldees*.

Q. *Pray who was this* Belſhazzar?

A. Great is the Difference among Hiſtorians and others, who this *Belſhazzar* (who is generally agreed to be the ſame with the *Narbonnedas* in *Beroſus*, and the *Labynetus* in *Herodotus*) was. Some will have him to be of the royal Blood of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and others, no way related to him. Some maintain that he was a *Babylonian*, and others affirm that he was a *Mede*: And of thoſe who allow him to be of the royal Family of *Nebuchadnezzar*, will have it that he was his Son, and others that he was his Grandſon; and therefore, to clear this Matter we muſt obſerve, Firſt, That *Belſhazzar* (be he who he will) was certainly of the Seed of *Nebuchadnezzar*, becauſe he is expreſly called his Son in ſeveral Places of the fifth Chapter of *Daniel*, and in the ſecond Book of *Chronicles*, Chap. xxxvi. 20. it is ſaid that *Nebuchadnezzar* and his Children or Offſpring, reigned in *Babylon*, until the Kingdom of *Perſia* commenced. 2dly, That, according to the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxxiv. 7. the Nations of the Eaſt were to ſerve *Nebuchadnezzar*, and his Son, and his Son's Son, and Succeſſors to him in the Throne of *Babylon*. 3dly, That as *Evilmerodach* was *Nebuchadnezzar's* Son, of all the Kings that reigned after him at *Babylon*, none but *Belſhazzar* could be his Son's Son: For *Neriglissar* was only his Daughter's Huſband, and *Laboroſoarchod* was *Neriglissar's* Son; ſo that neither of them was either Son or Grandſon to *Nebuchadnezzar*. 4thly, That according to *Herodotus*, Lib. 1. the laſt King of *Babylon* (who without Doubt was *Belſhazzar*, becauſe, immediately after his Death, the Kingdom was given to the *Medes* and *Perſians*, Verſes 28, 30, 31.) was Son to the great Queen *Nitocris*; but now, *Nitocris* to have a Child that was Grandſon to *Nebuchadnezzar*, could be Wife to other than *Evilmerodach*; and therefore, putting all this together, it appears that *Belſhazzar*, the laſt King of *Babylon*, was the Son of *Evilmerodach*, by *Nitocris* his Queen, and conſequently Son's Son to *Nebuchadnezzar* his Father, becauſe it is the uſual Stile of Scripture to call any *Anceſtor* upward, Father, and any *Deſcendant* downward, Son.

Q. *How happen'd it that the Wiſemen of* Babylon *did not underſtand the Writing on the Wall as well as* Daniel?

A. The Writing very probably might be in a Character unknown to the *Chaldeans*, as the old *Hebrew*, *Phœnician* and *Samaritan* were; or if they were acquainted with the Character, yet ſuch is the Genius of moſt of the *Oriental* Languages, where ſo little Uſe is made of Vowels, and where the Pronunciation and Sequel of the Diſcourſe generally determine the Signification of the Letters, that a Man may be a perfect Maſter of a Language, and yet not able to read and comprehend a Word, when it ſtands alone, and without any Context, as it is in the Caſe of *Mene. Tekel. Upharſin.* A Man, for Inſtance, that underſtands the *Hebrew* Tongue never ſo well, were he to meet *dbr* ſtanding alone would have much ado to read them, becauſe, according to the Manner that we pronounce them, the Letters will admit of many different Significations; and it is the ſame in the *Chaldee* Language, wherein the Words, we are now ſpeaking of, were wrote.

Q. *Explain the Marks of Honour which the King promiſed to confer on the Perſon who ſhould interpret the Writing*, Verſe 7?

A. The King's Words are theſe; *Whoever ſhall read this Writing, and ſhew me the Interpretation thereof, ſhall be cloathed with Scarlet, and have a Chain of Gold about his Neck, and ſhall be third Ruler in the Kingdom*, Ver. 7. From whence it appears, that the Kings of *Babylon* wore the ſame Ornaments, and in rewarding their Favourites, gave the ſame Marks of Honour, that the Kings of *Perſia* and their Succeſſors did. For Purple, we find, in ſeveral *Greek* Authors, was the ordinary Habit of the Kings of *Perſia*, and of the Princes of the Court that were in the higheſt Poſts of Honour. The Chain or Collar of Gold was one of the greateſt Marks of Diſtinction that the *Perſian* Kings could beſtow upon their Subjects; and *to be the third Ruler of the Kingdom* was the ſame ſublime Office, that *Darius* the *Mede* put *Daniel* in, Chap. vi. 1, 2. when he conſtituted him one of the Preſidents over the hundred and twenty Princes, that he had made Governors over the Provinces.

Q. *In the ſecond Verſe we read*, that the King, his Princes, his Wives, and his Concubines *were all at the Feaſt which he made for them; and yet in the tenth Verſe it follows, that the Queen, upon hearing the News of the Hand-writing*, came into the Banqueting-Houſe?

A. It muſt be obſerved, that this Queen was not one of his Wives, but *Nitocris* his Mother, and ſhe ſeems there to be called the Queen by Way of Eminency, becauſe ſhe had the Regency of the Kingdom under her Son, for which her great Wiſdom duly qualified her. For this Reaſon *Herodotus* ſpeaks of her, as if ſhe had been Sovereign of the Kingdom (in the ſame Manner as *Semiramis* is ſaid to have been) and attributes to her all thoſe Works about *Babylon*, which other Authors aſcribe to her Son.

Q. *It is obſervable, that when the Prophet came into the King's Preſence, he aſked him*, Art thou that *Daniel*? *Which ſeems to imply, that though he was one of the chief Miniſters of State*, Chap. viii. 27. *the King did not know him?*

A. This only ſhews that *Belſhazzar* was a Man who minded nothing but his Pleaſures, and left all Things elſe to the Management of others; a Conduct too often followed by ſuch Princes as think Kingdoms made for nothing elſe but to ſerve their Pleaſures, and to gratify their Luſts!

Q. *What Stratagem did* Cyrus *make uſe of in taking* Babylon?

A. Cyrus had laid before the Town to little or no Purpoſe, for the Space of two Years, when, underſtanding that a great annual Feaſt was approaching, wherein the *Babylonians*, in Honour to their Idol *Sheſhach*, were wont to ſpend the whole Night in Revelling and Drunkenneſs, he thought this no improper Time to attempt to ſurprize them. To this Purpoſe, having poſted one Part of his Men at the Place where the River ran into the City, and another where it came out, with Orders to enter, by Way of the Channel, as ſoon as they found the River fordable; about the Cloſe of the Evening he fell to work, broke down the Dams, and turned aſide the Stream; ſo that, by the Middle of the Night, the River was ſo drained, that the Parties, according to their Orders, entered the Channel, and finding the Gates, leading down to the River, open, by them they aſcended into the City, and made directly to the Palace, where they ſlew the King, and all thoſe that were about him. By this Stratagem, *Cyrus* became Maſter of *Babylon*, but he took no care to repair the Breach in the Banks of the River; ſo that all the Country on that Side was overflown, and the Current which went to *Babylon*, grew afterwards ſo ſhallow, as to become unfit for the ſmalleſt Navigation. So fully verify'd were all theſe Prophecies concerning *Babylon: Behold I will ſtir up the* Medes *againſt her*, Iſaiah xiv. 7. *I will dry up her Sea, and make her Springs dry*, Jer. li. 36. *I will make drunk her Princes and mighty Men and they ſhall ſleep a perpetual Sleep, and not awake*, Verſe 57. Babylon, *the Glory of Kingdoms, the Beauty of the* Chaldees *Excellency ſhall be like* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, Iſa. xiii. 19. *for I will make it a Poſſeſſion for the Bittern, and Pools of Water*, Iſaiah. xiv. 23. *ſays the King, whoſe Name is the Lord of Hoſts.*

For though the whole Power of the Army, and the chief Conduct of other Affairs were in the Hands of *Cyrus* (and therefore we find him in *Ptolemy's* Canon as immediate Succeſſor to *Belſhazzar*, who is there call *Nabonadius*) yet as long as his Uncle lived, *Cyrus* allowed him a joint Title with him in the Empire, and, out of Deference to him, yielded him the firſt Place of Honour in it; though, in Reality, he had no more than the Name and Shadow of Sovereignty, except in *Media*, which was his own proper Dominion, before any Conqueſts were made.

Chap. VI.

Darius *makes* Daniel *the Chief of the Preſidents; they envy him, and obtain an idolatrous Decree, to pray unto none but the King for thirty Days.* Daniel *is accuſed, and caſt into the Lion's Den; is preſerved, and his Accuſers thrown in and devoured.* Darius *magnifies God, and makes a Decree that all ſhould worſhip him.*

Q. WHAT *gave Occaſion to the Princes to conſpire againſt* Daniel?

A. Darius having obtained the Kingdom of *Babylon*, advanced *Daniel* above an hundred and twenty Princes; this was an Occaſion of Envy, ſo that the Princes moved the King to make an idolatrous Decree, that no Man ſhould in thirty Days put up a Petition to any, ſave the King alone, upon pain of being caſt into the Den of Lions.

Q. *Does it not ſeem a little ſtrange that* Darius *ſhould ſo readily accept of an Honour which was due to God alone?*

A. By this we ſee to what a Pitch of Vanity and Arrogance thoſe Eaſtern Princes were arrived when we find *Nebuchadnezzar*, in *Daniel*, aſking the three *Hebrew* Youths, *Who is that God that ſhall deliver you out of my Hands?* Chap. iii. 15. when we find it ſaid of another of that Name, in the Book of *Judith*, *who is God, but* Nabuchodonoſor? *he will ſend his Power and deſtroy them from the Face of the Earth*, Chap. vi. 2, 3. and more eſpecially, when we find the *Perſians* making it a Matter of State Policy, to have the Perſons of their Kings in the ſame Veneration as they had their Gods.

Q. *Did* Daniel, *upon paſſing this Decree, alter his Conduct?*

A. The Deſign being laid by the Princes, they watched *Daniel* narrowly, and it took; they came and found all open. He feared not to be found praying; he prevented their breaking open of Doors, and ruſhing in, or making Proof; he owned all, and freely offered himſelf.

It was a conſtant Cuſtom among the *Jews*, for thoſe that were in the Country, or in any diſtant Land, to turn towards *Jeruſalem*; and for thoſe that were at *Jeruſalem*, to turn towards the Temple when they pray'd; And the probable Reaſon of this might be, the Words of *Solomon*, in his Prayer to God, at the Conſecration of the Temple: *If thy People, when led away Captive, pray unto thee toward their Land, which thou gaveſt unto their Fathers City which thou haſt choſen, and the Houſe which I have built for thy Name; then hear thou their Prayer, and their Supplication in Heaven, thy Dwelling-place, and maintain their Cauſe*, 1 Kings viii. 48, 49.

Q. *How did the King behave on his being informed that* Daniel *had tranſgreſſed his Decree?*

A. When the King heard that *Daniel* had tranſgreſſed his Commands, he was angry with himſelf, that he ſhould be ſo moved by his Courtiers againſt an innocent Perſon of ſo much Honour and Honeſty, and laboured to ſave him till Sun-ſet, but in vain, for the wicked Courtiers inſiſted upon his Puniſhment; ſo that the King recommending *Daniel* to his God, ordered him to be caſt into the Den of Lions, and the Courtiers got the King to ſeal up the Den; and by this they took the Power from the King of delivering *Daniel*, becauſe they knew he favoured him.

By this it ſeems as if the *Perſian* Government, at this Time, was a kind of mixed Monarchy, conſiſting of a King and Nobles; foraſmuch as we find that the King could do nothing of Importance without his Counſellors, nor had he Power to alter any Thing that was determined in Council.

The King could not ſleep that Night, but roſe early in the Morning, and between Hope and Fear called unto *Daniel*, who prayed for the King's Proſperity, though he ſuffered under his Hands, telling the King, that his God had delivered him for the Innocence of his Cauſe, and not for the Righteouſneſs of his Perſon.

Q. *When* Darius *was ſatisfied of* Daniel's *Safety, how did he deal with the Accuſers?*

A. Darius was glad to find *Daniel* alive, and ordered him out of the Lions Den, and his Accuſers with their Children and Wives to be put therein, who were immediately ſlain by the Lions. Thus they digged a Pit for another, and fell into it themſelves; which the Heathens ſay was a very juſt Law, the Law of Retaliation, which the Lord doth often obſerve, as in *Adonibezec* and *Ahab's* Caſes and many more; for the King's Juſtice in this Fact we need not trouble ourſelves, it being the Cuſtom of the arbitrary Tyrants of the *Eaſt*.

The *Lex Talionis* condemned all Calumniators to the ſame Sort of Puniſhment, which they intended to have brought upon others; and in this Caſe, among the *Perſians*, it was a frequent Thing to include all the Family in the Penalty inflicted on the Father; but *Abominandæ Leges* (ſays *Ammianus Marcellinus*) *per quas, ob noxam unius, omnis Propinquitas perit.*

Q. Daniel's *Accuſers being thus ſeverely puniſhed, what Step did* Darius *take next?*

A. *Darius*, after this, made a Decree that every one ſhould take heed how they ſpoke againſt the God of *Daniel*, and to own him for the only living God.

It is a good deal more than probable, that this Decree in Favour of the *Jews*, was in a great Meaſure owing to *Daniel's* good Offices. *Cyrus*, at his firſt coming to *Babylon*, after he had taken the City, found him there an old Miniſter of State, famed for his great Wiſdom over all the *Eaſt*, and in many Things for a Knowledge ſuperior to the reſt of Mankind; and accordingly we find that he not only employ'd him as ſuch, but upon ſettling of the Government of the whole Empire, made him firſt Superintendant, or prime Miniſter of State, over all the Provinces of it. In this Station of Life *Daniel* muſt have been a Perſon of great Authority at Court, and highly in the Eſteem of his Prince, and therefore, as we find him earneſt in his Prayer to God for the Reſtoration of his People, Chap. ix. we cannot but think that he would be equally warm in his Interceſſions for it with the King, To which Purpoſe it is not improbable that he might ſhew him thoſe Paſſages in *Iſaiah*, which ſpeak of him by Name, an hundred and fifty Years before he was born, as a great Prince and Conqueror, the Ruler of many Nations, and the Reſtorer of his People, by cauſing his Temple to be built, and the City of *Jeruſalem* re-inhabited. For, that *Cyrus* had ſeen thoſe Prophecies, the Thing is plain, not only from the Teſtimony of *Joſeph. Antiq.* Lib. xi. cap. 1. but from the Recital that is made of them in the Decree itſelf, *Ezra* i. 2. and if ſo, who ſhould be ſo proper to ſhew them to him, and to recommend the Accompliſhment of them to his princely Care, as *Daniel*, who had ſo great Credit with him, and ſo paſſionate a Concern for the Reſtoration of *Sion*?

Chap. VII.

Daniel ſees a Viſion of four Beaſts; of the Antient of Days delivering a Kingdom to the Son of Man. The Interpretation thereof, which troubles Daniel.

Q. WHAT *are the Maxims chiefly inculcated in this Chapter?*

A. Whereas the People of *Iſrael* looked for a continual Quietneſs after theſe ſeventy Years as *Jeremiah* had declared, *Daniel* ſhews that this Reſt could not be a Deliverance from all Troubles, but a Beginning, and therefore encouraged them to look for a continual Affliction, till the *Meſſiah* be revealed, by whom they ſhould have a ſpiritual Deliverance, and all the Promiſes fulfilled, whereof they ſhould have a certain Token in the Deſtruction of the *Babylonian* Kingdom.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by the* Winds *and the* Beaſts *which* Daniel *ſaw in this Viſion?*

A. What is meant by *Winds*, becauſe *Daniel* doth not expound it, Expoſitors think there is Room left for every one's Conjecture, wherein that ſeems moſt likely, that by the four Winds is ſignified Commotions of contrary Nations and Factions ſtrivinging together by Wars, and producing theſe four Beaſts ſucceſſively.

The four great Beaſts are four Monarchies, great in Compariſon of particular Kingdoms that were little to them; Beaſts for their Idolatry, tyrannical Oppreſſions and Depredations.

The firſt Beaſt ſignified the *Chaldean* or *Aſſyrian* Empire, the ſecond the *Medes* and *Perſians*, the third the *Grecian* Monarchy, and the fourth the *Roman* Empire. By Thrones caſt down muſt be meant the Kingdoms of this World, deſtroyed by *Chriſt*, the King and Judge of all, called *The Antient of Days*, becauſe of his eternal Deity, without Beginning or Ending of Days.

From the fifteenth Verſe to the End of this Chapter, *Daniel* receives the Interpretation of his Viſion, at which he is very much troubled in Spirit.

Q. *Pray expound the firſt Verſe?*

A. It runs thus; *In the firſt Year of* Belſhazzar *King of* Babylon, Daniel *had a Dream, and Viſions of his Head upon his Bed: Then he wrote the Dream, and told the Sum of the Matter.* This Prophecy is wtitten in *Chaldee*, as a Memorial to *Belſhazzar*, with the Reverence which his Father and Grandfather ſhewed towards God, who had done ſuch mighty Things for them, and againſt them, to humble their Pride, and to make them know that the moſt high God ruled, and that they reigned at his Mercy. Yet *Belſhazzar* made no good Uſe of it, but lifted himſelf in Profaneneſs and Pride, till the Wrath of God plucked him down. Now *Daniel* begins to declare the Viſions of God revealed to him at ſundry Times, therefore he goes back to the firſt of *Belſhazzar*. It is obſerved by the Curious, that the Word *Belſhazzar* is here changed by the Prophet, one Letter being tranſpoſed, which greatly alters the Signification; for his Name, Chap. v. 1. ſignifies *Treaſures ſearched out and poſſeſſed*; but the Words in the Text ſignifies, *Bell is conſumed with the Fire of an Enemy*, as was propheſy'd by *Jeremiah* Chap. l. 2. The *Jews* uſed to change the Names of Idols and Idolaters, and it turned to a Reproach to them, as *Grotius* proves. Theſe Viſions of *Daniel* were ſeen, and recorded by him in Writing, for the Benefit of the Church, to rectify their Miſtake (for they thought all Things would ſucceed proſperouſly after their Return from Captivity) and let them know that they ſhould find a World of Troubles in many Generations following, ſince all the four Monarchies, which he calls Beaſts, there was but one paſſed. This *Daniel* dreamed, ſaw, wrote, and told the Sum of.

Chap. VIII.

The Prophet's Viſion of a Combat between the Ram *and the He-goat; of the 2300 Days of Sacrifice.* Gabriel *comforts* Daniel, *interprets the Viſion to him*; Daniel *is aſtoniſhed thereat.*

Q. WHAT *is the Interpretation of this Viſion?*

A. After the general Viſions, *Daniel* comes to particular Viſions, as touching the Deſtruction of the Monarchy of the *Perſians* and *Macedonians*; for the Ruin of the *Babylonians* was at Hand, and alſo he had ſufficiently ſpoken thereof.

Daniel having obtained the Favour of knowing ſomething, longed for a more clear Diſcovery of thoſe Things, and had his Deſire granted; for an Angel (ſuppoſed to be *Gabriel* or *Michael*) appeared to tell him the Meaning of his Viſion; but ſo glorious was the Angel, that *Daniel* could not bear his Glory; but the Angel touched and encouraged him, telling him all he deſired.

After this Viſion, *Daniel* was ſick for ſeveral Days; but having digeſted his Grief, and recovered Strength, he minded his Place, Duty and Truſt, and concealed the whole, that they might not ſee it by his Countenance; tho' he had deep Thoughts of Heart about it.

Q. *What were the Kingdoms or People repreſented by the* Ram with two Horns that were high, one higher than the other, and the higher came up laſt?

A. By the *Ram with two Horns* is meant the Kingdom of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, as Ver. 20. where it is ſo interpreted. Before it was called a *Bear*, and here a *Ram*, both noting the ſame Thing, though by different Expreſſions: A *Ram*, becauſe he is a fighting Creature. The *two Horns were high*; that is, they were very powerful.—— *One was higher than the other.* That is the *Median*, tho' it *came up laſt*, yet was higheſt at Firſt; but afterwards the *Perſian* was much ſuperior in Magnificence and Fame, which was verified in *Cyrus*, whoſe Wealth was immenſe, even fifty Millions of Talents.

Q. *Explain the 14th Verſe?*

A. *And he ſaid unto me, Unto two thouſand and three hundred Days; then ſhall the Sanctuary be cleanſed.——And he ſaid unto me.* That Angel unnamed: Why did he ſpeak to *Daniel*, and not to the Angel that aſked him, as in the preceding Verſe; where by the firſt Saint is meant an holy Angel, by the other *Jeſus Chriſt*, a Numberer or Revealer of Secrets? The Reaſon was, becauſe *Daniel*, and the Church to which he was related, and was to communicate his Anſwer, was moſt concerned in it, and the Angel that aſked the Queſtion, did it upon their Account.——*Unto two thouſand three hundred Days.* This ſeems to many learned Men, very difficult to underſtand; that is, where to begin, and where to end theſe Days. Some explain it thus; a Year contains 365 Days; then 2300 makes ſix Years, three Months and eighteen Days, reckoning in two Days of the Leap-Years, gained from the ſupernumerary Hours and Minutes. Now this Time begins at *Antiochus*'s firſt Entrance into *Judea*, when he profaned the Prieſthood; and alſo takes in his ſecond Coming in, when he interdicted their Worſhip, ſet up an Idol in the Temple, and interrupted the daily Sacrifices. Others count 2300 Days from the People's Revolt, which was procured by *Menelaus*, which began in the Year 141 of the Reign of the *Seleucidæ*, 1 *Mac.* i. But *Antiochus* did not act his Impieties till the next Year after, *viz.* 142. in the ſixth Month, and the ſixth Day: From whence, if we reckon to the 25th Day of the 9th Month of the Year 148, there will fall out preciſely ſix Years, three Months and eighteen Days. Others reckon differently, *viz.* from the Beginning of *Antiochus*'s Profanations to his Death; from 143 to 148, taking in both Years to the Number. For though *Judas Maccabæus* recovered the City, and cleanſed the Temple in 148; yet *Antiochus* was not dead till 149; till when the Work was not finiſhed. Others make it to begin in the Year of the *Seleucidæ* 145, and to end 151, two Years after *Antiochus*'s Death for the Abomination of Deſolation was ſet up in the Month *Chiſleu*, 1 *Mac.* i. 57. and not till two Years after *Antiochus*'s Death was *Nicanor* overthrown with all his Army. Others reckon not Days, but Sacrifices (at two every Day) and reſtrain the Time to fewer Years, out of *Maccabees.*

CHAP. IX.

Daniel *underſtanding by Books the Time of the Captivity, makes Confeſſion of Sins, and prays for the Reſtauration of* Jeruſalem. Gabriel *informs him of the Seventy Weeks; at the End whereof Deliverance ſhould be wrought by the* Meſſiah.

Q. WHAT *is the Subſtance of this Viſion?*

A. Daniel prays to the Lord for *Jeruſalem*'s Reſtoration; the Lord hears and inſtructs him; he alſo reveals unto him, by the Angel *Gabriel*, the Time of ſeventy Weeks, (theſe Weeks of Days, and theſe Days are ſo many Years, the Angel uſes the Number Seventy to ſhew the Favour of God towards them, that they might have ſo much Liberty and Joy, as their ſeventy Years Bondage and Sufferings amounted to) at the End whereof the true ſpiritual Deliverance ſhould be brought, not only to the *Jews*, but alſo to all Mankind, by *Chriſt* the Prince. The Angel ſpeaks alſo of the fearful Deſtruction that ſhould come upon the unthankful and obſtinate People of the *Jews*.

This Scripture ſhews the Coming of the *Meſſiah* ſo clearly, his Sufferings, and the Wrath of God ſo ſeverely on the *Jews* for it, that it thoroughly confutes their Unbelief, and fully confirms our Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *Pray interpret the 21ſt Verſe*; Yea, whilſt I was ſpeaking in Prayer, even the Man *Gabriel*, whom I had ſeen in the Viſion at the Beginning, being cauſed to fly ſwiftly, touched me about the Evening Oblation?

A. From this Verſe naturally ariſe the following Obſervations. 1. We ſee here *Daniel* uſed vocal Prayer, pouring out his Soul. 2. That the Saints, in Prayer, do parly with God; it is an humble, holy and fervent unboſoming our Soul to God. 3. That holy Men, in confeſſing the Sins of the Nation, confeſs their own Sins too, and that impartially, begging Pardon for all. 4. That when a Child of God ſets himſelf in earneſt to ſeek God in Prayer, the Lord hears him. Compare Verſe 20, with 23. 5. As the Angels are miniſtring Spirits, ſo their chiefeſt Meſſages relate to the Church of God. Thus *Gabriel* before, Chap. viii. 16. thus here; alſo to *Zachary* and *Mary*, *Luke* i. 11, 19, 26. about the Incarnation of *Chriſt*, and our Salvation by him. 6. God herein gives great Encouragement to Prayer, and fulfils his Promiſe made of old to his People, in this behalf, *Lev.* xxvi. 40, 41, 42. *Deut.* xxx. 1, 2, 3. *Iſa.* lxv. 24. *It ſhall come to paſs before they call I will anſwer, and while they are yet ſpeaking I will hear.* 7. The Lord is quick in hearing, and helping his People. The Angel was made to fly ſwiftly, even unto Wearineſs, as ſome tranſlate it: Or, *To fly with Flight,* Heb. i. 8. The Time of the Evening-Sacrifice was a ſolemn and ſet Time of Devotion. Then God heard *Elijah* and did Wonders, 1 *Kings* xviii. 36, 37, 38. and *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Saviour of the World, was ſacrificed for us, at that Time, about the ninth Hour. *Matthew, Mark* and *Luke* mention *Chriſt*'s giving up the Ghoſt at the ninth Hour, which was at the Time of the Evening-Sacrifice. At this Time *Gabriel* is ſent to *Daniel* to tell him the Time of the *Meſſiah*'s Death, and the Conſequences of it; that are ſet forth in his Prophecies concerning the ſeventy Weeks.

Daniel's Prayer and Confeſſion is ſo ardent and pathetick, ſo full of holy Ardour and importunate Supplications to God, that it at once diſcovers his Zeal for the Honour of the Almighty, and his moſt affectionate Concern for his Country.

And I ſet my Face unto the Lord God, to ſeek by Prayer and Supplications, with Faſting, and ſackcloth, and Aſhes. And I pray'd unto the Lord my God, and made my Confeſſion, and ſaid, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the Covenant and Mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his Commandments: We have ſinned and have committed Iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy Precepts, and from thy Judgments. Neither have we hearkened unto thy Servants the Prophets, which ſpake in thy Name to our Kings, our Princes, and our Fathers, and to all the People of the Land. O Lord, Righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee, but unto us Confuſion of Faces, as at this Day: To the Men of Judah, *and to the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *and unto all* Iſrael *that are near, and that are far off, through all the Countries whither thou haſt driven them, becauſe of their Treſpaſs that they have treſpaſſed againſt thee. O Lord, to us belong Confuſion of Face, to our Kings, to our Princes, and to our Fathers, becauſe we have ſinned againſt thee. To the Lord our God belongs Mercies and Forgiveneſſes, though we have rebelled againſt him. Neither have we obeyed the Voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his Laws which he ſet before us, by his Servants the Prophets. Yea, all* Iſrael *have tranſgreſſed thy Law, even by departing that they might not obey thy Voice, therefore the Curſe is poured upon us, and the Oath that is written in the Law of* Moſes, *the Servant of God, becauſe we have ſinned againſt him. And hath confirmed his Words which he ſpake againſt us, and againſt our Judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great Evil; for under the whole Heaven hath not been done as hath been upon* Jeruſalem. *As it is written in the Law of* Moſes, *all this Evil is come upon us; yet made we not our Prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our Iniquities, and underſtand thy Truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the Evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is Righteous in all his Works which he doth; for we obeyed not his Voice. And now, O Lord our God, that haſt brought thy People forth into the Land of* Egypt *with a mighty Hand, and haſt gotten thee Renown as at this Day; we have ſinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy Righteouſneſs, I beſeech thee, let thine Anger and thy Fury be turned away from thy City* Jeruſalem, *thy holy Mountain: Becauſe for our Sins, and for the Iniquities of our Fathers,* Jeruſalem *and thy People are become a Reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the Prayer of thy Servant, and his Supplications and cauſe thy Face to ſhine upon thy Sanctuary that is deſolate, for the Lord's Sake. O my God, incline thine Ear and hear; open thine Eyes and behold our Deſolations, and the City which is called by thy Name; for we do not preſent our Supplications before thee, for our Righteouſneſſes, but for thy great Mercies. O Lord hear, O God forgive, O Lord hearken and do, defer not, for thine own ſake, O my God; for thy City, and thy People are called by thy Name.*

CHAP. X.

Daniel, *humbling himſelf before God, ſees a Viſion; being affrighted, is comforted by an Angel, who foretells what would befal the* Jews, *at which he is troubled, and ſtrengthened by the Angel, who ſhews him what is noted in the Scripture.*

Q. PRAY *give the Senſe of the* 21ſt *Verſe?*

A. *But I will ſhew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of Truth; and there is none that holdeth with me in theſe Things, but* Michael *your Prince.*—— *Noted in the Scripture of Truth.* In the peremptory Decree and Purpoſe of God, more authentic and unalterable than the Laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians*; there it is noted, how God had appointed to deliver the *Jews* from the *Perſians* by the *Greeks*; and from the *Greeks* by the *Maccabees*, eſpecially the *Seleucidæ* and *Lagedi*; and how the *Romans* ſhould come after and plague the People of God a long Time, both by perſecuting Emperors, and by *Antichriſt*, and how that alſo ſhould have an End.—— Michael *your Prince. Jeſus Chriſt* alone is the Champion and Protector of his Church, when all the Princes of the Earth, beſides, deſert or oppoſe it. For it cannot be meant properly of *Angels*, as *Popiſh* Interpreters would have it, thereby to countenance their *Angel-worſhip*; for can we imagine, upon rational and orthodox Principles, that the Angels of Heaven ſhould be divided into Parties, and but two of them mind the Cauſe of the Church of God, with other Abſurdities, which *Popiſh* Writers fix upon this Text of Scripture.

Q. *Who was meant by* the King of *Perſia*, and *Michael* the Chief of Princes, *Verſe* 13?

A. Let us read the Verſe; *But the Prince of the Kingdom of* Perſia *withſtood me one and twenty Days: but lo,* Michael, *one of the chief Princes came to help me, and remained there with the Kings of* Perſia. The firſt Clauſe of this Verſe has ſome Difficulty, and has given room for Diverſity of Expoſitions. Some expound it of earthly Princes, and ſome of Angels, and among them, ſome will have it that good Angels are meant, who, they ſay, have the Patronage of the ſeveral Kingdoms of the Earth; but who can imagine that good Angels ſhould quarrel one with another? Therefore, ſay others, they are bad Angels that oppoſe the People of God, and their Deliverance, ſeeking rather their Ruin, as *Michael* and the *Devil* ſtrove, *Rev.* xii. 7. Now ſometimes God permits Satan to do much this Way. But by the Prince of *Perſia*, moſt probably, is meant *Cambyſes*, who was an Enemy to the *Jews*, and hindered the Building of the Temple. Now he could not properly reſiſt the Angel, but figuratively he did. Angels Power is not unlimited, but bounded by Commiſſion and Inſtructions from God. Therefore God ſuffered the wicked Counſels of *Cambyſes* to take Place for a while; but *Daniel* by his Prayers, and the Angel by his Power, overcame him at laſt. And this very Thing laid a Foundation for the Ruin of the *Perſian* Monarchy, Verſe 20. and doubtleſs, that King was ſtirred up to his evil Machinations againſt the People of God, by the Prince of the Powers of Darkneſs, that rules in the Children of Diſobedience, *Epheſ.* ii. 2.———*But lo,* Michael, *one of the chief Princes came to help me.* This is ſuppoſed to be Chriſt. 1. His Name ſignifies, *Who is like God.* 2. He is the firſt in Dignity above all the Angels, *Heb.* i. 4, 5, *&c.* called *Archangel*, and the Church's Prince, Ver. 21. 3. The chief Champion of his Church, helping *Gabriel*, not as his Fellow, but as his General. Thus we ſee what Care God takes of his Church's Safety againſt their potent Enemies, by doubling their Succours (when he could do it, if he pleaſed, without Means) thereby to conſult his own Glory in the World, by defeating the Counſels, and breaking the Powers of the mightieſt Enemies, after he had given them Scope to do their worſt.

Q. *How do you underſtand the laſt Clauſe of the laſt Verſe*; And there is none that holdeth with me in theſe Things but *Michael* your Prince?

A. By *Michael* the Prince, I underſtand *Jeſus Chriſt*, who alone is the Champion and Protector of his *Church*, and who alone is all-ſufficient, when all the Princes of the Earth deſerted or oppoſed it. For it cannot be meant of *Angels* in any ſound Senſe, as *Popiſh* Interpreters would have it, thereby to countenance their *Angel-worſhip*; for can we imagine, upon rational and orthodox Principles, that the Angels of Heaven ſhould be divided into Parties, and but two of them mind the Cauſe of the Church of God, with other like Abſurdities which accompany the *Popiſh* Senſe which their Writers put upon this Text of Scripture.

CHAP. XI.

A Prophecy of the Kings of Perſia *and* Greece. *The Leagues and Conflicts of the Kings of the* South *and the* North. *The Cruelty and Wickedneſs of one King above the reſt, and of other Enemies of God's People. The Invaſion and Tyranny of the* Romans.

Q. WHAT *do we learn from the Hiſtory of this Chapter?*

A. Here is a Prophecy concerning the Overthrow of the Kingdom of *Perſia*, by *Alexander the Great*; as alſo of certain Kings of *Egypt* and *Syria*, eſpecially of one King's Cruelty and Wickedneſs above all the reſt, ſuppoſed to be the *Roman* Government, whether by their Senate, or Emperors, who were to obſerve no certain Form of Religion as other Nations, but were to change their Gods at their Pleaſure, yea, contemn them, and prefer themſelves to their Gods; beſides, they were to be without all Humanity, for the Love of Women is taken for a ſingular and great Love, as 2 *Sam.* i. 26.

The Angel forewarns the *Jews*, that when they ſhould ſee the *Romans* invade them, and that the Wicked ſhould eſcape their Hands, that then they ſhould not think but that all this was done by God's Providence, foraſmuch as he warns them of it ſo long before; and therefore he would ſtill preſerve them.

Q. *Is there any Thing particularly obſervable in the firſt Verſe?*

A. Let us ſee how it reads; *Alſo I, in the firſt Year of* Darius *the* Mede, *even I ſtood to confirm and ſtrengthen him.* This Verſe ſhould have been the laſt of the tenth Chapter, for it pertains to it; and the ſecond Verſe of this Chapter ſhould have been the firſt; an Error, thoſe who divided the Scripture into Chapters, have been guilty of more than once.——Darius *the* Mede. Thus ſpeaks the Angel to *Daniel*, becauſe *Darius* had the Rule of *Babylon*, by the Conſent of *Cyrus*: He ſettled the Monarchy of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, upon the Ruin of the *Babylonians*, for the verifying of the Prophecies, and for the Protection and Preſervation of the Church.

Q. *The ſecond Verſe likewiſe requires ſome Explanation?*

A. *And now will I ſhew thee the Truth, behold there ſhall ſtand up three Kings in* Perſia, *and the fourth ſhall be far richer than they all; and by his Strength, thro' his Riches, he ſhall ſtir up all againſt the Realm of* Græcia.———*And now will I ſhew thee Truth.* This is that Thing which *Daniel* ſaith, Chap. x. 1. was *revealed unto him, and was true*, i. e. plain, without any Obſcurity, and ſhoud ſuddenly and certainly come to paſs.———*There ſhall ſtand up three Kings in* Perſia. Which notes their Flouriſhing and Strength; for after them that Monarchy declined. Theſe three were *Cyrus*, *Smerdis*, and *Darius Hiſtaſpis*. Some put *Cambyſes* for *Cyrus*, others add *Xerxes*, who is put as a fourth in this Verſe, and made more potent than all the other three, becauſe his Father *Darius* had amaſſed incredible Treaſures, and he himſelf drove the ſame Trade for ſix Years ſucceſſively, before he made his Expedition againſt *Greece*. There were more Kings of *Perſia* beſide theſe four, but they had no Concern with the People of God; but thoſe four had either in hindering or helping in building the Temple; and therefore the Angel's Inſtruction from God to *Daniel*, was principally touching thoſe four who are mentioned.———*By his Strength, thro' his Riches, he ſhall ſtir up all againſt the Realm of* Græcia. He had vaſt Territories from *India* to *Ethiopia*; he had a Navy of 1200 Ships, and an Army of 800,000 Men, as *Cteſias* writes; but *Herodotus* ſpeaks of a prodigious Army that *Xerxes* had, little ſhort of five Millions and an Half, which he led againſt the Realm of *Greece*, where he made incredible Havock at *Thermopylæ* and *Athens*, as both *Grecian* and *Latin* Hiſtorians mention.

Q. *To what Times, Things and Perſons do the Contents of the ſixth Verſe relate?*

A. Let us read the whole Verſe; *And in the* End *of the Years they ſhall join themſelves together; for the King's Daughter of the South ſhall come to the King of the North, to make an Agreement; but ſhe ſhall not retain the Power of the Arm; neither ſhall he ſtand, nor his Arm; but ſhe ſhall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that ſtrengthened her in theſe Times.*———*And in the End of the Years they ſhall join themſelves together,*

ther, i. e. The Succeſſors of thoſe firſt Kings of *Egypt* and *Syria* ſhall join and make Leagues. This Confederacy was made at two ſeveral Times; the firſt Peace was concluded between *Ptolomy Lagus* and *Antiochus Soter*. The other (which is here meant) was between *Ptolomy Philadelphus* and *Antiochus Theus* the Son of *Soter*. ——— *The King's Daughter of the South ſhall come to the King of the North. Bernice* ſhall come from *Egypt*, and marrywith *Antiochus Theus*, who was Son of *Antiochus Soter*, and Nephew to *Seleucus Nicanor*, for her Father brought her to *Peluſium* with an infinite Sum of Gold and Silver for her Dowry. Here was nothing ſincere on either Side, for each gaped after the other's Kingdom, and covered all with a League and a Marriage; for *Antiochus* put away his lawful Wife *Laodice*, by whom he had two Children, that he might make her Siſter his Wife. Thus ſacred Wedlock and Leagues were violated.—— *But ſhe ſhall not retain the Power of the Arm.* She continued not in Favour and Authority.——*Neither ſhall he ſtand, nor his Arm.* For now *Antiochus* put away *Berenice*, and took *Laodice* again, who made away with *Antiochus* by Poiſon,and ſet up her Son *Seleucus Callinicus* in his Stead, who ſlew *Bernice*. From hence many cruel Wars and Tragedies aroſe between thoſe two Kings.——*But ſhe ſhall be given up*, &c. See here the miſerable Fates of wicked Princes and Courts, whoſe ſinful Politicks moſt commonly end in their Ruin; for ſo it did to theſe two Families; in which God by his Angel inſtructs *Daniel*, to inform and ſatisfy him about theſe wonderful Providences relating to his Church and their Enemies.

Q. *The ſeventeenth Verſe runs thus*; He ſhall ſet his Force to enter with the Strength of his whole Kingdom, and upright ones with him: Thus ſhall he do, and he ſhall give him the Daughter of Women, corrupting her; but he ſhall not ſtand on his Side, neither be for him?

A. This may be explained in the following Manner.——— *He ſhall ſet his Face to enter with the Strength of his whole Kingdom.* He (*Antiochus*) ſhall uſe all the Force and Fraud he can to maſter *Egypt*, and engroſs it to himſelf, becauſe *Ptolomy* was then young, and not able to match him. ——— *And upright ones with him.* Many of the religious *Jews* joined with him, called Righteous in oppoſition to the reſt of his Army, which was compoſed of Idolaters, and a prophane Rabble of the Heathen.——— *And he ſhall give him the Daughter of Women. Antiochus* ſhall give *Cleopatra* his Daughter, who was young, to young *Ptolomy*; called *the Daughter of Women* for her Beauty and rare Qualities, which ſhe afterwards diſcovered, and gave in Dowry with her *Cœloſyria, Phenice* and *Judea*, dividing the Tribute and Revenues between them, as *Saul* gave *Michal* to *David* to be a Snare to her Husband, to betray and deſtroy him.——— *But ſhall not ſtand on his Side.* She ſtuck to her Husband's Intereſt, and not her Father's.

Q. *Pray expound the eighteenth Verſe*; After this ſhall he turn his Face unto the Iſles, and ſhall take many: But a Prince for his own Behalf ſhall cauſe the Reproach offered by him to ceaſe; without his own Reproach he ſhall cauſe it to turn upon him?

A. By the *Iſles*, I underſtand the Iſles and Seacoaſts of that Part of the *Mediterranean* and *Egean* Sea, as *Cyprus, Rhodes*, &c. alſo *Aſia* the leſs, with the *Grecian* Coaſt; for the *Hebrews* call Countries bordering on the Sea, *Iſles*; particularly *Greece* and *Italy*. The Meaning is, that this *Antiochus* craftily deſiſted for a Time from his Enterprize againſt *Egypt*, for fear of the *Romans*; and diſſembling with them both, preſumed he ſhould out-wit them all, and therefore perſuaded as many of the *Greeks* as he could, to take Part with him againſt the *Romans*, ſlighting and reviling them.——— *But a Prince for his own Behalf ſhall cauſe the Reproach offered by him to ceaſe.* A brave *Roman* Ambaſſador, and Commanders ſent by the *Roman* Senate, namely, *Atilius*, and chiefly *Scipio*, beat *Antiochus* at his own Weapons of Power and Policy, and turned the Reproach *upon his own Head*; for they fell upon him, becauſe *Ptolomy* required Help of them, who was beſieged by *Antiochus*; they raiſed the Siege, and recovered all that he had gotten from them; for the *Romans* were dexterous in protecting their Allies, and in retorting Indignities and Affronts offered them by Incroachers and Oppreſſors.

Q. *In what Manner was the Prophecy in the nineteenth Verſe fulfilled*; Then ſhall he turn his Face towards the Fort of his own Land: But he ſhall ſtumble and fall and not be found?

A. Being beaten in Battle by *Scipio*, with 30,000 *Romans*, he himſelf having 70,000; and rejecting the Counſel of *Hannibal*, he yielded upon diſhonourable Terms to deliver his Ships and Elephants to the *Romans*, and all the Places he had taken from them, which turned to his Diſgrace. Then he turned his Face homeward, and was made to be content with the Narrow Limits of the remoteſt Part of his Kingdom; and tho' he ſported himſelf with his Retirement, yet was he not in Safety, but was ſlain when he ſought to enrich himſelf with the ſacrilegious Spoils of the Temple. Thus *Antiochus*, called *the Great*, came to nothing.

Q. *Who was that* Raiſer of Taxes, *mentioned Verſe* 20?

A. The whole Verſe is thus read; *Then ſhall ſtand up in his Eſtate a Raiſer of Taxes in the Glory of the Kingdom; but within few Days he ſhall be deſtroyed, neither in Anger nor in Battle.* This *Raiſer of Taxes* was *Seleucus Philopator*, a very covetous Griper, who fleeced his Subjects; and upon being told by his Friends, that this would alienate his Friends from him, anſwered, Money was his beſt Friend, and therefore ſpared not to rob the Temple, for which Cauſe he ſent *Heliodorus* to plunder that Treaſury, 2 *Macc.* iii. 7. therefore ſaid *to raiſe Taxes in the Glory of his Kingdom.* But he lived not out the third Part of his Father's Reign; nor died by open Force, but by Poiſon, or the ſecret Treachery of *Heliodorus*, as ſome write of him. The Seed of Evil-doers are never renowned in Life or Death.

Q. *Who is that* vile Perſon, *Verſe* 21. *who, it is ſaid,* ſhall ſtand up in his Eſtate?

A. Let us read, and then try to explain the whole Verſe; *And in his Eſtate ſhall ſtand up a vile Perſon, to whom they ſhall not give the Honour of the Kingdom; but he ſhall come in peaceably, and obtain the Kingdom by Flatteries.* This *vile Perſon* was *Antiochus*, called *Epiphanes*, that is Illuſtrious; thus he was ſtiled by his Flatterers and Admirers: But the People of God accounted him infamous, baſe, treacherous, and barbarous, ſuch were his Manners; and accordingly the Angel calls him here a *vile Perſon*, the Type of *Antichriſt*; and may more properly be called *Epimanes*, a *mad Perſecutor.* ——— *To whom they ſhall not give the Honour of the Kingdom.* Neither Peers nor People; nor was he the Heir, but Nephew, or Brother to *Philopater*'s Son; but he cheated him of the Kingdom, and crept in by Flatteries; that is, he was a great Flatterer of the *Romans*, as well as of his People, 'till he got up and ſhut out *Demetrius*, the Son of *Seleucus*. So vile a Flatterer was he, that he would bathe in the ſame Bath with mean People, to make them believe he was Good-natur'd and not proud. He ſoothed and courted the Nobles with much Kindneſs, and Preſents, and ſaid he was but Guardian to his Brother's Son the Heir, 'till he deſtroyed him.

Q. *Pray expound the thirtieth Verſe, which runs thus*; For the Ships of *Chittim* ſhall come againſt him; therefore he ſhall be grieved and return, and have Indignation againſt the holy Covenant: So ſhall he do, he ſhall even return, and have Intelligence with them that forſake the holy Covenant.

A. By *the Ships of* Chittim, underſtand the *Romans* out of *Italy*, and Parts of the *Archipelago* under them, who ſhall come with Force, and they ſhall vex and afflict him; for the *Romans* had Harbours for their Ships and Gallies in *Cilicia*, *Macedonia*, and other Parts of the Coaſts; whereby, after they had ſubdued *Greece*, they purſued *Antiochus* into *Aſia*, and ſent into *Egypt* to prevent his going into *Alexandria*. This grieved and fretted him: For when he lingred, and formed Excuſes, *Popilius* the *Roman* Ambaſſador, made a Circle about him with his Rod, commanding he ſhould not ſtir thence 'till he gave him a poſitive preſent Anſwer; by which, ſore againſt his Will, he was fain to pack away out of *Egypt*, and withdraw his Navy and Garriſons. This made his Heart boil with Rancour, which he ſpit out againſt all the *Jews*; therefore it's ſaid, *He ſhall be grieved*, &c. *And have Indignation againſt the holy Covenant*; being ſollicited to it by *Jaſon* firſt, and *Menelaus* afterwards, who were Apoſtates, and Betrayers of their Brethren and the true Worſhip of God, 2 *Macc.* iv. 26, 27. becauſe *Onias* was in Power; this they envied, and therefore went over to *Antiochus*.

Q. *There are ſome Things in the thirty ſixth Verſe which I don't rightly underſtand, therefore deſire you to explain them?*

A. Let us read the whole Verſe; *And the King ſhall do according to his Will, and he ſhall exalt himſelf, and magnify himſelf above every God, and ſhall ſpeak marvellous Things againſt the God of Gods, and ſhall proſper 'till the Indignation be accompliſhed: For that that is determined ſhall be done.* —— *The King*; that is, the *Roman* Government; whether by the *Senate*, by *Emperors*, or by the Biſhop of *Rome*; who ſhall drive out the *Imperial* Power not only from *Rome*, but from *Italy*, and all the *Weſtern* Empire as far as he could, by ſtriking in with the barbarous Nations that invaded it, who are called *ten Kings*. See *Rev.* xvii. 10, 11, 12, 13. as all the ſeven or eight Governments of *Rome* are called *Horns*, and the Horns *Kings*. ver. 10, 11. The Sum is this; Tho' it's granted ſome of theſe Things are applicable to *Antiochus*, yet the Angel ſpeaks of him here and henceforward but by the by, and very lightly; his main Scope is *Antichriſt*, as will appear in the Interpretation. ——— *Shall do according to his Will.* *Antiochus* did according to his Will; he ſhall be arbitrary in his Actions, notwithſtanding any Checks of divine and human Laws. The Cauſe follows. ——— *And he ſhall exalt and magnify himſelf above every God*, &c. This is true of the *Romans*, who would deify what they pleaſed, and defy and ungod it again. This is eſpecially true of the Perſecutors of *Chriſt* and Chriſtians, in the Times of the *Emperors*, but moſt notoriouſly ſo of the *Roman* Antichriſt. See how this agrees with that Prophecy. 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 3, 4, to ver. 10. *Rev.* xvii. 3. ——— *And ſhall proſper 'till the Indignation be accompliſhed.* Then ſhall *Antichriſt* continue long and prevail. Read *Rev.* xiii. —— *For that that is determined ſhall be done.* That which God hath decreed to be done by him againſt the Saints ſhall be done, and that which God hath purpoſed to be done upon him, ſhall be executed alſo to his Deſtruction.

Q. *I deſire to know who is meant by* the God of Forces. *Verſe* 38?

A. The *Hebrew* Word *Mauzzim*, ſignifies the God of Strength, or Strong-holds. The *Phenicians* worſhipped *Mars* the God of War, who was likewiſe the Object of *Antiochus*'s Worſhip. But we are come to the *Romans*; and tho' many have conjectured ſeveral Senſes of this Word *Mauzzim*, tranſlated *God of Forces*, yet none comes nearer than Mr. *Mede*, who interprets it of *Dæmons*, or tutelar Gods, which the *Romans* ſhould worſhip with *Chriſt*, ſuppoſing them to be Angels or Saints. So the Meaning is, that in *Chriſt*'s Seat, or Place, the Temple, they ſhould worſhip Saints and Angels with *Chriſt*, as the *Propoſition* imports, which it's notorious they continue to do even at this Day. That which made the Place obſcure, was, that Men generally took this ſtrange God for an Idol; for indeed ſo the *Jews* call the Gods of the Gentiles; and ſo does the *Old Teſtament* often, becauſe they are foreign to the true God, who was their God; but the true God was foreign and ſtrange to the *Romans*, becauſe their Gods were Idols. Therefore the Philoſophers called *Chriſt* a *ſtrange God*. This God they ſhould honour with Gold and Silver, and precious Stones; the *Vulgar* tranſlates *Mauzzim Protector*, and we know too well how the *Romaniſts* adorn the Churches and Shrines of theſe their Patrons and tutelar Saints, *Pſ.* xxvii. 1. and xxviii. 8. and xxxi. 3. And the Fathers ſometimes fatally hit upon this Expreſſion at the firſt conſecrating and honouring of *Martyrs*, calling them Strong Holds, and Strong Towers of Defence; but the Council of *Conſtantinople* called them the Devil's Strong Holds; and thus they called their Images alſo.

Q. *What were thoſe* Seas *between which the Tabernacles of his Palace was to be planted*, *Ver.* 45?

A. The *Euxine* and *Mediterranean* at *Conſtantinople*, and even to the *Red Sea*, in the glorious holy Mountain in the *Eaſtern* Church of Chriſt. So the *Turk*. Or in the *Weſtern* Seas, *Mediterranean* and *Adriatick*; ſo the *Pope*, reaching to the *Weſtern* Ocean; both *Antichriſt*, one without, and the other within the Temple of God.

CHAP. XII.

Michael *delivers God's People from their long Trouble*, Daniel *deſires to know the Time*; *the Angel informs him*; *but he underſtands it not.* *A Promiſe to him that waiteth.*

Q. WHAT *occurs to your Obſervation in this Chapter?*

A. The Angel here notes two Things; firſt, that the Church ſhall be in great Affliction and Trouble at *Chriſt*'s Coming; and next, that God will ſend his Angel to deliver it, whom here he calls *Michael*, meaning *Chriſt*, which is meant by the Preaching of the Goſpel. All ſhall riſe at the general Reſurrection, which Thing he here names, becauſe the Faithful ſhould have ever Reſpect to that; for in the Earth there ſhall be no ſure Comfort.

The Angel tells *Daniel*, that tho' there are few now deſirous to know the future State of the Church, yet the Time will come, that many ſhall endeavour to get Knowledge of theſe holy Things, and ſhall likewiſe increaſe in Knowledge.

The Angel ſignifies, that it is not in Man to appoint the Time of *Chriſt*'s coming, but that they are bleſſed who patiently abide his appearing. He then tells *Daniel*, I have revealed to thee ſo much of theſe Things as I had in Commiſſion, that thou and thy People ſhould be prepared for the Sufferings which ſhall come upon them, and yet not without Hope of a glorious Deliverance. In which Hope thou ſhalt die, and reſt from Fear or feeling of Trouble, till the Reſurrection of the Juſt, to the Joys of another World. Which ſome make to be here, after all Enemies are deſtroyed, at leaſt to begin here, and to be conſummated in Heaven eternally; comparing this with *Rev.* xix. 20, 21.

Q. *How do you interpret the firſt Verſe?*

A. Let us read it; *And that Time ſhall* Michael *ſtand up, the great Prince which ſtandeth for the Children of the People, and there ſhall be a Time of Trouble, ſuch as never was ſince there was a Nation, even to that ſame Time: And at that Time thy People ſhall be delivered, every one that ſhall be found written in the Book.* The Event hinted at in the firſt Clauſe of the Verſe, we may interpret of the Heat of *Antiochus*'s Perſecution, but their Arguments are not cogent; for the Meaning is this; As after the Death of *Antiochus* the *Jews* had ſome Deliverance and Reſpite, ſo there will be yet a more famous Deliverance to the People of God when *Michael* your Prince, that is, *Meſſiah* the Prince, ſhall ſignally appear for your Salvation. He is called *the great Prince*; but theſe Words refer not in their Contexture to the Times of *Antiochus*, but to *Antichriſt*, and to that Part of them which are the laſt Part. Yet I think the trueſt Meaning is to interpret the Words, *at that Time*, of all the Time of *Chriſt*, from his firſt Coming to the laſt. Theſe all are the laſt Times, wherein God ſpake to us by his Son, *Heb.* i. 1, 2, 3. to which the Name *Michael* anſwers well, that is, *who is like God*, which notes his Equality with God, *Phil.* ii. 6. It was neceſſary *Chriſt* ſhould appear as a Prince to comfort his People againſt the Oppreſſion of *Herod*, and the *Romans*, by bringing in a glorious Salvation, which ſhould wholly free the Elect *Iſrael* of God from the *Roman* Yoke, both under the perſecuting *Emperors*, and under *Antichriſt*.—— *Every one that ſhall be found written in the Book.* Thus *this Election* is called by a *Metaphor* uſual in Scripture, and drawn from the uſage of Men in many Caſes, namely, writing ſome ſelect Mens Names in a Book; ſhewing that the Salvation ſhall not be national, either to the *Jews*, or to any *Gentile* Nation, but only a gathering together of the Elect of God that are ſcattered abroad; called therefore a Remnant, *Rom.* ix.

Q. *Why was* Daniel *ordered* to ſhut up the Words, and Seal the Book, *Verſe* 4?

A. The Words in the Text ſtand thus: *But thou, O* Daniel, *ſhut up the Words, and Seal the Book even to the Time of the End: Many ſhall run to and fro, and Knowledge ſhall be increaſed.* In the Words in the firſt Clauſe of the Verſe, we muſt not ſuppoſe that the Angel forbids all Knowledge of the Things here foretold; for *whatſoever is written, is written for our Learning:* But the Meaning is, 1. That *Daniel* muſt take Notice of the ſpecial Favour of God to him, to make ſo great Diſcoveries of the Divine Secrets. 2. That they were intruſted with him, that thereby he might ſee the Force and Fruit of his Humiliation and fervent Prayer. 3. That he ſhould ſuppreſs and lay up theſe Things for the Support of the Godly in their future deep Afflictions. 4. That God would never utterly forſake his People, tho' their Sins juſtly provoked him to lay his Hand heavy upon them. 5. That theſe Things be kept from the Prophane, who would make an ill uſe of them. 6. The Book was commanded to be ſealed, becauſe it would be long e'er the Words would be all fulfilled, whereas thoſe that were ſhortly to be fulfilled were forbidden to be ſealed. See 2 *Chron.* xxi. 12. *Iſa.* viii. 16. *Rev.* xxii. 10. ———— *Many ſhall run to and fro.* They ſhall diligently enquire and ſearch theſe Prophecies concerning the Fate of the Church, and ſhall ſee and admire both the Preſcience and Providence of God concerning Things to come; they ſhall know the Signs of the Times, and wait upon God in the way of his Judgments. *Pſ.* lxxvii. 5, 6, 7. *Iſa.* xxvi. 8. 1 *Pet.* i. 10, 11, 12. The miſerable *Jews* pervert this Scripture, and forbid the People by dire Threatnings to calculate Times, leſt thereby they ſhould find that *Jeſus Chriſt* is the true *Meſſiah.* Thus are they wilfully and judicially blinded, *Acts* xxviii. 26. *Rom.* xi. 8.———— *And Knowledge ſhall be increaſed.* He means chiefly in Goſpel-kinds, which came by the preaching of *Chriſt*, and ſearching the Scriptures about it.

Q. *How do you calculate the two Numbers in Ver.* 11, 12. *namely, the* 1290 *Days, and the* 1335 *Days?*

A. Theſe Days are either natural, and properly ſo called, and ſo the Times of *Antiochus* are hereby noted; or, prophetical Days, a Day for a Year, *Ezek.* iv. 6. and thus 129 Days are forty two Months, which, if we multiply at thirty Days the Month, make the Sum 1290. Here many learned Expoſitors join in Opinion in calculating theſe Days by Years, beginning the 1290 Days from the Profanation of the Temple, to the Letter of King *Antiochus* to the *Jews*, 2 *Macc.* xi. 27. and ſo make them to end exactly then; and as to the *Abomination* of *Deſolation*, ſee Notes on Chap. viii. 18. they aſcertain the *Epocha* to be either from *Antiochus*'s coming, who was called the Prince of Abominations, or from the Worſhip of God being forbidden by *Antiochus*, and at laſt reſtored by *Judas Maccabeus*, and confirmed by *Antiochus*; from thence to the Death of *Antiochus* are 45 Days, which added to 1290, make 1335. But this is a falſe Account, and contrary to the Scope of this Place, as well as to Hiſtory and Chronology, as is proved at large by the Learned Mr. *Joſeph Mede.* The *Jews* make theſe Days to end at the Coming of *Chriſt*; but are uncertain when to begin their Reckoning, and ſo are guilty of frequent and groſs

Miſtakes. Moſt Chriſtian Writers refer it to the ſecond Coming of *Chriſt*. Mr. *Mede* makes the chief Revelation of *Antichriſt* to be in 1123; the latter End of Number 1335, ends in *A. C.* 1168; and ſo the Type of *Antichriſt*, which is *Antiochus Epiphanes*, leads us by the Hand to the Revelation of *Antichriſt*, which fell out *Anno* 1105, to 1120, between which Time the *Papal* Power was greatly augmented, the Church greatly perſecuted, after great Numbers of them had ſeparated from the Abominations of *Rome*, openly declaring it to be *Antichriſtian:* Therefore the Angel ſaith, the Saints by their Trials ſhall be *purified and made white*, that is, by thoſe cruel Perſecutions which befel them from their ignorant and enraged Enemies.

Q. *You have, to my Satisfaction, removed a great many Difficulties and Abſurdities that have occurr'd in the Courſe of this Prophecy; however there are ſome remaining which I have not yet had a proper Opportunity to aſk your Judgment upon, and which therefore I ſhall now take the Liberty to do. And firſt, could* Daniel *be properly ſtiled a* Prophet, *ſince we don't read that he ever taught or inſtructed the People?*

A. Although *Daniel* never publicly exerciſed the Calling or Function of a Prophet, in the Quality of an eccleſiaſtical Perſon to preach to the People and expound, in ſacred Aſſemblies, the Revelations communicated to him by God; yet this Book has always been numbered with the reſt of the Prophets, as containing moſt ſpecial and admirable Predictions concerning the State of the World, and of the Church, from his Time 'till *Chriſt*'s coming in the Fleſh. Theſe Prophecies and Predictions were collected by himſelf, and publiſhed in this Book.

Q. *Of how many Parts does the Book of* Daniel *conſiſt?*

A. The Book of *Daniel* divides itſelf into two Parts, the one hiſtorical, the other prophetical. In the firſt he ſets down what remarkable Events happened to himſelf in the Courſe of his Life, in order to make himſelf acknowledged a true Prophet, authorized by God; relating alſo, that in his Youth he was carried Captive to *Babylon*, and with others of the ſame Nation, Age and Condition, choſen to be inſtructed, and conſequently employed in Places of Honour and Truſt in that Empire; but that God had, by his particular Care, eclipſed thoſe human Inſtructions, by an Infuſion of divine Gifts and Graces; firſt, in a Spirit of Sanctification, Zeal and Piety, tried by cruel Torments inflicted on *Daniel*'s three Companions, in their Youth, and on himſelf in his old Age; alſo an excellent Underſtanding and Wiſdom, wherewith *Daniel* was remarkably diſtinguiſhed, even to a Proverb. Thus *Daniel* and his three Companions, for their many noble Endowments, and ſuperior Talents, were promoted to eminent Dignities of State, to the great Service, Suſtenance and Comfort of the Church, in her Captivity and Sufferings in *Babylon:* And laſtly in the Spirit of Prophecy, with which *Daniel* was inſpired, manifeſted by bringing to remembrance the Dreams which *Nebuhadnezzar* had forgot, and then interpreting them; and afterwards in the Evils which threatened the ſudden Ruin of *Belſhazzar*; it being the Will of God, by the Means of his Prophet, to tranſmit to Poſterity, his terrible Judgments on the unmeaſurable Pride of the one, and the profane Sacrilege and Inſolence of the other of theſe Kings, under whom his People had been carried away and kept in long and cruel Slavery.

But this divine Effuſion of the Holy Spirit upon *Daniel*, ſhone forth with a peculiar Luſtre in the incomparable Viſions he ſet down in the latter Part of this Book, concerning the four Monarchies of the World, until the Coming of *Chriſt*; and eſpecially touching the *Seleucidæ*, Kings of *Syria*, and other Succeſſors of *Alexander*, under whom the *Jewiſh* Church ſhould ſuffer moſt grievous and mournful Accidents, particularly *Antiochus Epiphanes*, the moſt cruel, ſubtil and malicious Perſecutor that ever that Church had; his principal Deſign being utterly to extirpate the true Worſhip of God, together with every Impreſſion of Piety in Mens Hearts; by whom is likewiſe figured and foretold the Perſecutions of *Rome*, whilſt it was Heathen; and alſo of *Antichriſt*, the laſt deadly Enemy of the Chriſtian Church, as *Antiochus* had been of the *Jewiſh*, againſt whoſe Outrages the Prophet ſtrengthens and comforts the Church, by the Promiſe of God's Help and Deliverance in his appointed Time; but with God's Promiſe of eternal Salvation by *Chriſt*, who being eſtabliſhed by the Father, to be the everlaſting King of the World, ſhould from Time to Time cauſe Ruin to fall on thoſe Empires, and at laſt the Foundation of his own ſpiritual and everlaſting one, on the Redemption purchaſed by his Death, (the prefixed Time whereof is more clearly ſhewn to him, than to any other Prophet) through which all antient Rites and Ceremonies being accompliſhed in their Signification, the Uſe of them ſhould be aboliſhed to make way to the true Service of God in Spirit and Truth; foretelling alſo, that as *Chriſt*'s Kingdom ſhould be exerciſed in juſtly puniſhing the *Jewiſh* Nation for their Incredulity and Rebellion; ſo on the other Hand it ſhould produce Salvation, a glorious Reſurrection, and eternal Happineſs to all Believers.

Q. *But notwithſtanding the great Character* Daniel *has obtained in all Ages of the Church, and the high Eſteem his Prophecy has always had, as well among the* Jews, *as among the Learned and Pious of all Nations, where it has been divulged and read together with the reſt of the ſacred Writ; notwithſtanding the deep and myſterious Things it contains, and the important Subjects it treats of; yet have there not been found Men, who have endeavoured to derogate from the Merit of its Author, and even to queſtion the Genuineneſs of the Book itſelf?*

A. That there were ſuch a Perſon as *Daniel*, of the *Jewiſh* Captivity in *Babylon*, famous for his Diſcovery of future Events, and for his great Piety and Devotion towards God, can hardly be denied; that the Diſcourſes and Predictions of a Perſon ſo highly in favour with God, ſhould be put in Writing, either by himſelf, or ſome other; and when committed to Writing ſhould be carefully preſerved, is reaſonable to believe; and that the Book which has deſcended to us, contains the Revelation, and other Accounts of Things which God was pleaſed to communicate to him, will ſufficiently appear by the Sequel.

The Character which the Prophet *Ezekiel* gives his Cotemporary *Daniel*, is his ſingular Prevalence with God in Prayer; and whoever looks into the Book, that goes under his Name, will fin[illegible] its Author verifying this Character, and his Succeſs, in this Particular, exemplified in ſeveral Inſtances. His Deliverance out of the Den of Lions, and of his Companions out of the fiery Furnace, (Facts that are recorded in the preſent Book) are expreſly mentioned in the Prayers of old *Eleazar* in *Egypt*, under the Rage of *Ptolemy Philopator* againſt the *Jews*, and of *Mattathias*, the Father of the *Maccabees*, in *Judea*, under the Perſecution of *Antiochus Epiphanes*; and their Examples are propoſed as Motives to Confidence in God, and Conſtancy in their Religion; ſo that the *Jews*, in thoſe Times took this Book to be written by *Daniel* himſelf, and accordingly made uſe of it. Nay, not long before theſe Times, we find *Nehemiah* beginning his ſolemn Prayer to God, in *Daniel*'s own Words, almoſt with no Variation. *O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the Covenant and Mercy to them that love him, and his Commandments*, which is a plain Proof, not only that he looked upon this Book of *Daniel* as true and authentic, but that he eſteemed his Manner of praying likewiſe not unworthy his Imitation.

Joſephus we know was a Prieſt well verſed in the Law, and in the ſacred Writings, whoſe Authority he profeſſes to follow through all his Antiquities; and yet he ſeems to prefer *Daniel* above other Writers of that Kind, and to give us a more particular Account of his, than of all the other Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* put together: For he informs us, *That* Daniel *not only foretold future Things, (which was common to him with other Prophets) but that he ſet the Time likewiſe for their coming to paſs: That this Book therefore was held among the ſacred Writings, and read in public Aſſemblies* (which is the peculiar Privilege of canonical Books) *in his Days, becauſe the Completion of the Events he foretold, gained him Belief with all Mankind.* Nay, if we will give Credit to this ſame *Joſephus*, this Book of *Daniel*'s was looked upon as genuine, and of a divine Authority, even in the Time of *Alexander the Great*; otherwiſe the High-prieſt had put a Banter upon him, when at his coming to *Jeruſalem*, and going into the Temple, he ſhewed him a Paſſage in it, wherein was foretold, under the Emblem of an *He-goat with one Horn* overcoming a *Ram with two*, that a certain King of *Greece* would conquer the *Perſians*; which *Alexander* took to himſelf, and perhaps, upon that very Account, might treat the *Jewiſh* Nation with more Clemency than he did their Neighbours.

But, however this be, it is certain, that in, and before the Times of our bleſſed Saviour, the *Jews* received the Book of *Daniel* as authentick Scripture, without any Suſpicion of the contrary. For, whereas the Name of the *Meſſias*, and of *the Son of Man*, which they applied to the Deliverer, whom they expected, the Title of the *Kingdom of God*, and of *Heaven*, uſed for the State of Things under that Deliverer, his coming in the *Clouds of Heaven*, his taking *all Judgment upon himſelf, and the Reſurrection of the Dead*, purſuant upon that his Coming, are Expreſſions manifeſtly borrowed from *Daniel*: Theſe Expreſſions were, at that Time, the current Language of the *Jews*, inſomuch that we find none of them ſurprized, when they heard the *Baptiſt* telling them, that *the Kingdom of God was at Hand*, or our Saviour calling himſelf ſo frequently *the Son of Man*, and citing *Daniel* the Prophet by Name; which they certainly would have been, and thereupon raiſed no ſmall Clamour, had they perceived that he was obtruding a ſpurious Book upon them for canonical.

Upon the whole therefore, we may conclude that ſince there confeſſedly was ſuch a Perſon as *Daniel*, whoſe Character in the Prophet *Ezekiel* agrees with what we find in our preſent *Daniel*; ſince this Book of his has the Teſtimony of *Joſephus*, (no incompetent Judge in a Matter of this Nature) was commonly cited in the Times of the Saviour, was referred to before the Times of the *Maccabees*; nay, was thought genuine in the Times of *Alexander*, and has received no ſmall Confirmation from the Uſe and Application which *Nehemiah* makes of it, either we muſt ſuppoſe, that all theſe Perſons, in their different Generations, were miſtaken, or elſe we muſt allow that our preſent Book of *Daniel* is no fictitious Piece of later Date, but the Work of the very Prophet, whoſe Name it bears, and who lived in the Age which the ſacred Records have aſſigned him.

Q. *The People, whom God had expelled from* Canaan, *were Diviners, Southſayers, Obſervers of Times, and Interpreters of Dreams, whom he declares to be his Abomination; may we not therefore juſtly wonder, that* Daniel, *who was ſo ſcrupulous in other Things, ſhould enter into a Community with ſuch as taught theſe prohibited Acts?*

A. It is no valid Objection, either againſt his perſonal or prophetic Character, that he was educated in the Learning of the *Chaldeans*; conſiſting chiefly in what they call Aſtrology, or the Knowledge of the celeſtial Motions, the Art of Building, and the Art of War. Some curious and ſuperſtitious Arts, that were abhorrent to the Law of *Moſes*, they were famous for practiſing; but there is no Neceſſity for us to infer from thence, that *Daniel* and his Friends were ever initiated in theſe; on the contrary, we may be allowed to argue thus: That, had there been any Thing criminal in the Method of their Education, they who refuſed to *defile themſelves with the King's Meat*, would never have complied with it. They refuſed the King's Proviſions, not only becauſe he might probably have ſuch Things ſerved up at his Table, as were prohibited by their Law; but, becauſe it was cuſtomary likewiſe, in moſt Nations, before their Meals, to make an Oblation of ſome Part of what they eat or drank to their Gods, as a thankful Acknowledgment, that whatever they enjoyed proceeded from their Bounty: So that every Entertainment had in it the Nature of a Sacrifice; and therefore *Daniel* and his Friends looked upon the Proviſions, which came from the King's Table, as Meat offered to Idols, and upon that Account eſteemed them unclean. But the ſame Principle that moved them to this, would have reſtrained them from the Study of the *Chaldean* Learning, had any of their impious or unwarrantable Sciences been impoſed upon them.

The King indeed is ſaid, *Dan.* i. 20. *to have found them ten Times better than all the Magicians and Aſtrologers that were in his Realm*: But theſe Words, in antient Times, were not appropriated to the Evil Senſe which they now bear, but ſignified, in the general, Men of Wiſdom and Learning, ſkilled in the Knowledge of Things natural and divine. Thoſe who in St. *Matth.* ii. 1. are called *Magi*, our Tranſlation has rendered *Wiſemen*, becauſe the *Evangeliſt* ſeems to have given them that Name, not as a Note of Infamy, but as an honourable Title. And, in like Manner, why may not the Words be here underſtood of ſuch Perſons as employed themſelves in the lawful Search of natural Cauſes and Effects, of the curious Products of the Earth, and the regular Motions of heavenly Bodies? For when *Daniel* made Interceſſion to the Captain of the Guard, *Dan.* ii. 24. that the *Wiſemen of* Babylon *might not be ſlain*, we can hardly ſuppoſe, that all of theſe were ſuch as ſtudied unlawful Arts and Sciences, ſince he himſelf was afterwards made Maſter and Preſident over them.

Nay, even ſuppoſing that theſe *Wiſemen* of *Babylon* made Profeſſion of ſome Sciences, whoſe only Foundation was Superſtition and Deceit, yet, why muſt their *Hebrew* Diſciples be obliged to purſue the ſame? Might they not follow ſuch Studies, as beſt ſuited their *Genius*, and the Principles of their Religion? The ſame Indulgence which they obtained from the *Maſter of the Eunuchs*, with regard to their Proviſions, may well be ſuppoſed to have been granted them in Relation to their Studies, in Caſe any Difficulty of this Kind had been impoſed upon them. But there is no Occaſion for our imagining this. The Maſters of theſe *Occult Sciences* (as they call them) had many good Reaſons for not obtruding them upon their Diſciples; and *Daniel* and his Companions, who were deſigned to attend in the King's Preſence, were more properly to be educated in another Way, *viz.* in the Knowledge of the Purity of the *Chaldee* Tongue, of the Arts of War and Policy, of the State and Revenues of the Kingdom, and ſuch other lighter and more polite Accompliſhments, as would make their Perſons and Services more acceptable at Court, than any Proficiency, in theſe abſtruſe Matters could do. But, put the Caſe that they were at any Time called to Lectures in any of the Sciences that were not ſo ſtrictly warrantable, we cannot ſee why they might not be permitted to attend to them and hear them (*Acts* vii. 22. Moſes *was learned in all the Wiſdom of the* Egyptians, *viz.* (*Dan.* 17.) not with a Purpoſe to follow them, or to ſquare their Lives or Sentiments according to them, but purely to put themſelves into a Capacity, upon a proper Occaſion, to confute them, and with more Advantage to expoſe their Falſeneſs and Abſurdity.

Q. *How came* Daniel *to be exempted from the fiery Furnace?*

A. It was not for any more excellent Proficiency in thoſe *black Arts* which were prohibited by the Law of God, that he obtained an Exemption from the Puniſhment of the fiery Furnace, but either becauſe he was abſent upon ſome Pretence or other, (as moſt of the *Jews* might chuſe to be abſent upon this Occaſion) or becauſe he was not accuſed to the King at this Time, for refuſing to worſhip the Idol which he had ſet up, tho' he might be preſent at the Dedication.

Nebuchadnezzar, we read, *Dan.* iii. 2. had ſummoned all his Princes, Counſellors, Governors, Captains, and all other his Officers and Miniſters, to be preſent and aſſiſting at the Solemnity of this Dedication; and therefore it is not likely that *Daniel*, who was one of the Chief of them, ſhould be allowed to be abſent; but his Enemies thought it moſt adviſable not to begin with him, becauſe of the great Authority he had with the King, but rather to fall firſt upon his three Friends, (whoſe Promotion in the Province of *Babylon* raiſed their Envy) that thereby they might more ſucceſsfully pave the Way to his Ruin: But the miraculous Interpoſition of Providence, in behalf of his Friends, quaſhed all farther Accuſations againſt him; and for this Reaſon it is, that no Mention is made of him in this whole Tranſaction.

Q. *Did not* Moſes *prohibit the interpreting of Dreams; why then is* Daniel *commended for his Skill in it?*

A. It is ſaid indeed of him, *Dan.* i. 17. *That he had Underſtanding in all Viſions and Dreams*; and Dreams we know, among the Eaſtern People were held in great Regard: They obſerved them much, and applied to ſuch Perſons as pretended to explain them for their Interpretation: Nor can it be denied, that in the earlieſt Ages of the World, it was the received Opinion, that ſuch Dreams as were attended with unuſual Circumſtances, did portend and ſignify ſome future Event; and that they were frequently ſent from God, *who in a Dream, in a Viſion of the Night, ſpake once, yea, twice to Men*, as *Elihu* affirms in *Job* xxxiii. 14, 15. Now if Dreams be figurative, and often ſent from God, it can hardly be thought, that in all Caſes the Interpretation of them ſhould be unlawful; and therefore we may obſerve that in that very Place where *Moſes* forbids the *Hebrews* to conſult Magicians and Interpreters of Dreams, he nevertheleſs tells them, *Deut.* xviii. 15. *That the Lord their God would raiſe up to them from among their Brethren, a Prophet like unto him, whom they ſhould conſult and hearken to.* So that though the *Iſraelites* were forbidden to make uſe of Soothſayers or Diviners, as the Cuſtom of the Nations was, to whoſe Poſſeſſions they ſucceeded; yet were they permitted to addreſs themſelves to God and his Prophets, in order to learn the Explanation of their Dreams, and the Prediction of future Events; conſequently there could be no Crime in *Daniel's* applying him to this Kind of Knowledge, ſince, whatever Excellency he had this Way, the Scripture takes care to aſcribe it to the peculiar Gift of God.

Q. *But is not* Daniel *miſtaken in the Names of the Princes whoſe Hiſtory he relates?*

A. Daniel, indeed, lived in great Proſperity, and in the Capacity of a Prime Miniſter, under ſome of the *Babylonian* and *Perſian* Monarchs, and therefore, if through Ignorance, he has miſtaken their Names, or recorded any Thing of them that is not true, this we allow will have a ſuſpicious Aſpect upon the Authority of his Writings: But when it is conſidered how common a Thing it was for the Princes of the Eaſt, upon one Occaſion or other, to multiply their Names, and not only by Foreigners, but even by their own People, to be called ſometimes by one Name, and ſometimes by another: How uſual it was for them to continue the Titles of Honour, which were conferred in Conſideration of thoſe great Exploits, whereby the Dignity of their Family was originally raiſed, and to adopt them into the Number of their own: How cuſtomary it was, upon their Acceſſion to the Kingdom, for them to change their Names, and yet the firſt and private Name be ſtill retained by moſt other People, while the Imperial Name appeared in publick Acts, and was uſed at home only: Whoever conſiders this, I ſay, will ceaſe his Wonder, when amidſt ſuch Variety of Appellations, for one and the ſame Perſon, he finds *this* Hiſtorian making uſe of one, and *that* of another, according as his Fancy, his Pronunciation, or the Cuſtom of the Country where he lived, led him. *Daniel*, in all Probability, calls the ſame Perſon *Darius Medus*, whom the *Greek* Hiſtorians call *Cyaxares* the Second: But when it is obſerved that theſe Hiſtorians agree with *Daniel*, as to the main Points of this Narration, *viz.* that *Babylon* was taken by an Army of *Medes* and *Perſians*, whereof the *Medes* being the Superior, were at that Time named firſt; that *Cyaxares* King of *Media* aſſiſted at the Siege (and was treated by *Cyrus* as his Chief) after a Day of Riot and Revelling, by diverting the Courſe of the River *Euphrates*; that *Cyaxares* being old, and naturally unactive, choſe rather to live at *Ecbatana*, the Capital of *Media*, while *Cyrus* attended the Affairs of the Government of *Babylon*, and that *Cyrus*, upon his Death, ſucceeded to the whole Empire: If we obſerve, I ſay, the exact Agreement between theſe Hiſtorians, as to the chief Matters of Fact, we may eaſily diſpence with ſome ſmall Difference in Point of Names; eſpecially conſidering that the Authors lived at no leſs a Diſtance than *Babylon* is from *Greece*, and that the *Greeks* conſequently might make uſe of the Name, which he went by in *Media*, as beſt known to them, which the *Babylonians*, after he had taken their City, changed into *Darius Medus*, or the *Victorious Mede*, and which *Daniel*, being Captive in the ſame Place, might in Conformity call him.

It happens, indeed, that there is now and then a Word or two in the Book of *Daniel*, which may ſeem to have ſome Analogy to the *Greek* Tongue, and, with ſome little Variation, may be derived from it; but then it is to be obſerved, that the Words of this Kind are for the moſt Part *technical* Terms, ſuch as might ſlip into any Language, from whence they are borrowed. *Architects* and *Mechanicks*, we know, uſe to this Day ſeveral *Greek* and *Arabick* Terms of Art, in their reſpective Profeſſions; and yet they do not pretend to underſtand the Language from whence they came; and might not *Daniel*, ſpeaking in Terms of Art, as he certainly does when he names the muſical Inſtruments (very probably of the *Grecian* Make) which were uſed at the Conſecration of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s golden Image, why might not he, I ſay, make uſe of the Words of a foreign Extract, and, at the ſame Time, be ſuppoſed a Stranger to the other Parts of the Language? Nor is the Mixture of ſome *Greek* Terms in *Chaldee* Language ſo difficult to account for, if we will but allow what *Grotius* upon the Place obſerves, *viz.* “That before *Daniel*'s Age, many Colonies, both of the *Ionians* and *Æolians*, having ſettled themſelves in *Aſia Minor*, (which lies contiguous to ſome Provinces of the *Eaſtern* Kingdoms) might that way communicate the Names of what they invented or improved, even as far as *Babylon* itſelf.

Our learned Biſhop *Chandler* is fully of Opinion, that the Names of the Inſtruments mentioned in *Dan.* iii. 5. are not *Greek*, but *Eaſtern* Derivations, and that from thence they did paſs to the *Greeks*, who with a little Alteration, adapted them to their Pronunciation or Termination of Words. For, as he argues, “That their Names were at firſt given them in the Country where the Inſtruments themſelves were invented, can hardly be doubted; if therefore ſuch Inſtruments as are here ſpecified, were uſed in the Eaſt; if their Names be proved to be barbarous; and if an Eaſtern Root be aſſigned for their Derivation, which no *Greek* Term will ſuit ſo well,” (all which he endeavours to prove in ſeveral Inſtances) then may we be allowed to infer, that the Names of theſe Inſtruments (whatever Affinity they may ſeem to have to the *Greek* Language) were originally Oriental; which Opinion is confirmed by the Teſtimony of *Strabo*, Lib. x. who aſſures us that the Names of muſical Inſtruments, ſuch as *Nablia*, *Sambuca*, and *Barbitos* were derived from barbarous Languages, by which the *Greeks* denoted the Eaſtern Tongues.

Q. *Have not ſome learned Men affirmed, that the Book of* Daniel *is not of equal Antiquity, and therefore not of the ſame Authority, with the other Parts of* Sacred Writ?

A. The Tranſlation of the *Septuagint* has been held in ſuch Eſteem, that to have any Part of Scripture omitted in it, would give a juſt Suſpicion, as if it had not been extant, or not known at the Time, when thoſe learned Men undertook the Work: But this is ſo far from being true in the Caſe of *Daniel*, that we find *Juſtin Martyr* citing Paſſages out of it; that we find St. *Jerom* giving us ſeveral various Readings, different from thoſe in *Theodotian*, and ſometimes from thoſe of *Aquilia* and *Symmachus* out of it, and at the ſame Time tells us, that this Tranſlation of *Daniel* was repudiated, and that of *Theodotian* ſubſtituted in its Room, by the Doctors of the Church.

It was *Origen*, indeed, who firſt brought it into Diſcredit, by comparing it with that of *Theodotian* from the Original, in his *Hexapla*, which ſhewed its Imperfections a little too plainly; but then its Degradation proves, that before this happened to it, it was all along uſed in the *Chriſtian* Church.

Q. *Is not* Daniel *rejected or ill-uſed by the beſt of the* Jewiſh *Authors?*

A. The Omiſſion of *Daniel*'s Name, in the Enumeration of the Prophets, which we meet with in *Eccleſiaſticus*, is of no great Moment, becauſe we find no Mention made of *Job* or *Ezra*, and yet they had both Books that went under their Names, as well as he. The Truth is, the Hiſtory of the Book itſelf may give us ſome Grounds to think that *Daniel*'s Character might poſſibly have been in it at firſt, tho' upon ſome Occaſion or other, it afterwards came to be dropped. *Jeſus* the Grandfather (as we read in the *Prologue*) wrote it in ſeveral Volumes and left it behind him unfiniſhed: The Original fell into ſuch Hands, as carried it into *Egypt*, where *Jeſus* the Grandſon met with it, and having applied all orderly into one Volume, upon Account of the Pains which he had taken with it, he joined his own Name with that of his Grandfather, in the Title-Page; but it fared with this, as it does with other Books, to loſe in the Tranſlation, and to ſuffer by Copyiſts, inſomuch, that whoever will be at the Trouble to compare the *Greek* Editions with one another, and with the various Tranſlations, will diſcover Words, Parts of Sentences, and whole Periods to be ſo frequently omitted, altered, contracted, explained or enlarg'd, as to abate his Wonder, that the Mention of any Perſon (though never ſo conſiderable) ſhould be omitted in a Book that is delivered to us ſo variouſly and imperfectly. But there may be another Reaſon aſſigned for this Omiſſion: Moſt Part of the *Old Teſtament* was written in *Hebrew*, which was the common Language of *Judea*, and in it did *Jeſus* the Son of *Sirach* write this Book of *Eccleſiaſticus*. Now, as a great Part of the Books of *Ezra* and *Daniel* was written in *Chaldee*, which was a Tongue not ſo well known in *Judea*, it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that the Author's Ignorance of that Tongue might be the true Occaſion, why he omitted theſe two great Men, and all Account of their Writings, in the Catalogue of the Prophets.

There are ſundry Reaſons likewiſe to be given, why we have no *Chaldee* Paraphraſe upon *Daniel*, as well as the reſt of the Prophets: For, beſides a good Part of *Daniel* is in the *Chaldee* Tongue, and, upon that Account, might leſs need one, 'tis a general Complaint among the *Jews* themſelves, that a great many of their ancient *Targums* have been loſt, and an acknowledged Caſe, that ſome of their ſacred Writers (ſuch as *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* for Inſtance, Men famous in the *Jewiſh* Story, and the latter of them highly celebrated by the Son of *Sirach*) never had any. The Truth is, the frequent Calamities which befel the *Jewiſh* Nation, and diſperſed them into other Countries, made them negligent of their Books; left them no Leiſure to tranſcribe long *Paraphraſes*; and when, by mixing among other People, they had loſt the Knowledge of the Language, left them no Ability to do it: So that, amidſt this Ignorance and Confuſion, 'tis no Wonder if any Copies were loſt, ſome of which have ſince come to Light, but there is Reaſon to apprehend, that the *Targum* upon *Daniel* never will. For ſo much does *Daniel* ſpeak of the *Meſſiah*, deſcribe the Signs, and define the Time of his Coming ſo preciſely, that the *Jews*, perceiving the Advantages that their Adverſaries the *Chriſtians* might make of it, were under ſtrong Temptations, either to omit, or ſuppreſs the *Paraphraſe* of a *Prophet*, ſo diametrically oppoſite to them; and, accordingly, we have a Story from one of their *Rabbins*, that ſavours not a little of ſome ſuch Practice, *viz.* "That when *Jonathan* had finiſhed his *Targum* on " *Job*, *Proverbs*, and the *Pſalms*, and was going " on to *Daniel*, he was reſtrained by a Voice, " which bad him give over *there*, leſt the Sons of " Men ſhould learn from *Danièl* the Time of the " *Meſſias*."

However this be, ſince *Daniel* is ſo far from being paſſed by in *any diſhonourable Manner*, that even *Jonathan* himſelf, in his *Targum* on the other Prophets, expreſſes a great Regard to him, by applying Predictions found only in his Book, to Texts in other Prophets, that he was then interpreting; ſince, in doing of this, he follows *Daniel* in his Ideas, Phraſes, and Words, and explains Paſſages in other Prophets by ſuch, as were plainer and fuller, in his Opinion, in him; it certainly follows that (however his *Paraphraſe* be loſt) *Daniel* was in his Eſteem a Prophet of equal, if not ſuperior Credit to the Prophets he was then commenting upon.

Whether the *Jews* were, more than other Nations, addicted to the publiſhing of ſpurious Tracts, under the Names of their great Authors, and particularly under *Daniel*'s Name, it concerns us not to enquire; ſince the very Suppoſition implies thus much, that with the *Jewiſh* Church, at that Time, the Writings of *Daniel* were held in high Eſteem (for, in ſuch a Caſe, who would chuſe an inglorious Father) when theſe baſe Pieces came out in his Name. The having *Impoſtures* father'd on him therefore, is ſo far from being any Prejudice to *Daniel's* genuine Writings, that it rather redounds to the Confirmation of their Authority, ſince what was ſpurious did no ſooner appear in the Light, but it was deſpiſed, rejected and condemned. The *Prayer of the three Children* was not read in all the Copies of the *Septuagint*; the Story of *Suſanna*, in ſome *Manuſcripts*, ſtood apart from the Book of *Daniel*, in others after it; and for the Fable of *Bel and the Dragon*, it was not intended, by its firſt Inventor, to paſs under the Name of *Daniel*, but of one *Habakkuk*, the Son of *Jeſus*, of the Tribe of *Levi*, till *Theodotian*, in his *Greek* Edition of the Bible, thought proper to change its *Title*.

The Truth is, the *Jewiſh* Church always looked upon theſe Pieces as ſpurious, and therefore allowed them much the ſame Place in their Scriptures, that the *Apocriphal* Books have in our *Engliſh* Bibles; but the genuine Book of *Daniel* they held always in the greateſt Veneration, eſteeming the Author of it as one of the Chief of their Prophets; until *Maimonides*, a learned *Jew* of the twelfth Century, in order to bar all Proofs, that might be drawn from him in Favour of *Chriſtianity*, thought fit to degrade him from his *prophetick* Character, and place him in the Number of *Hagiographal* Writers only.

Hard is the Fate of a Prophet, when the very *Clearneſs*, as well as *Obſcurity* of his Writings muſt be imputed as an Objection againſt his Authority; but certainly we muſt allow, that it is as eaſy for an *All-knowing* God to foretel all Circumſtances of an Event, or to reveal the whole Series of Events, in their proper Connexion and Succeſſion, as to declare one ſingle Occurrence. Such Knowledge, and ſuch Wiſdom are the *eſſential* Attributes of God; nor can there be any Abſurdity in his imparting his Knowledge of future Events, with more or leſs Reſerve, to one Man than another; only one would think, that the freer ſuch Communications were, and the more conſpicuous the Revelation, the more excellent ſhould the Prophet, whom God pleaſed to honour in this Manner, be accounted. So unreaſonable are the Prejudices of thoſe, who make the *Clearneſs* of Prophecies an Argument againſt them, and endeavour to exclude *Daniel* from the Number of Prophets, for a Reaſon, that beſt entituled him to that Character!

Q. *But what ſhall we ſay, in other Places, to his dark and abſtruſe Way of Writing, his* figurative *and parabolical, his* enigmatical *and emblematical Stile, his uncouth Images and Symbols, entirely unlike the other Prophets, but vaſtly agreeable to that Turn, which the* Jews *took up, when they came to be formed in the Schools of the* Greeks?

A. All the *Greek* Authors, that we are acquainted with, are Strangers to this Manner of Writing: They abound indeed in *Figures*, and *Allegories*, but the *ſymbolical* and *emblematical* Form was purely *Oriental*, and what other Prophets, as well as *Daniel*, as Occaſion requires, purſue.

For does not *Iſaiah* foretel the Deſtruction of the *Egyptians* under the Image of God's *ſtriking with a great and ſtrong Sword the* Leviathan (or Crocodile) *and ſlaying the great Dragon, that is in the Sea?* Does not *Jeremiah* ſpeak of the *Aſſyrians* under the Name of a *Dove*, becauſe *Semiramis* had made that Bird the Symbol of her Nation? Does not *Ezekiel* propheſy of *Pharaoh* under the Figure of *a great Dragon that lives in the midſt of the River*; of the King of *Babylon* under the Emblem of a *large Eagle with great Wings*; and of the *Aſſyrian*, under the Similitude of *a tall Cedar under Lebanon*, exalted above all Trees, and reaching the Clouds with its Top, *&c.* the very ſame Figure whereby the Kingdom of *Nebuchadnezzar* was repreſented? It is the Genius of the *Eaſtern* People to be delighted with Fiction and Imagery, and (as Sir *John Chardin*, in his Deſcription of *Perſepolis*, tells us) nothing is more common with their Authors, than to call Countries by the Names of their Emblems, which are, as it were the *Arms* of that Nation; and, in forming theſe Emblems to make uſe, not only of *natural* Animals, but of ſuch as are *chimerical* and *fabulous* likewiſe, Beaſts with Wings, and Birds with four Feet and long Ears.

“ Among the Figures, upon the Walls and Pillars of an ancient Temple, in this once famous *Metropolis* of *Perſia* (ſays Biſhop *Chandler*) there are ſome very monſtrous for Figure and Size. A winged Lion with a Crown on his Head; a winged Lion flying on the Back of a Bull; the Body of a Horſe with Wings on his Back; and a Man's Head covered with an high Bonnet crowned, *&c.* In Images and Hieroglyphicks (continues he) here one may ſee the Wars of Princes, and Countries, and their Succeſſes, expreſſed. The Beaſt repreſents the People, or Land in War; their running at each other, their Engagement, and the Crown on the Head of one of them, or his taking the other by the Hair of the Head, and ſtabbing him, points out his Victory.”

Now, ſince this Method of deſcribing Things by *Images* was ſo cuſtomary in the Age, and Place where *Daniel* was Captive, 'tis reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he conformed himſelf to it, and that the fictitious Animals, which he makes mention of, were no improper Emblems of the ſeveral Empires whereof he writes. The *Ram* for Inſtance, was the royal Enſign of the *Perſians*, as *Ammianus Marcellinus* obſerves; the *Goat*, ſince their King *Carinus*, was the Arms of *Macedon*; and therefore how aptly does *Daniel ſee a Goat with a notable Horn* (for an Horn is always an Emblem of Power and Dominion, *Deut.* xxxii. 17. *Pſal.* lxxxix. 17.) to which he gives *Wings*, becauſe of the *Quickneſs* of his Succeſs, to *run againſt a Ram with unequal Horns, and caſt him to the Ground*, Dan. vii. 7. when he foretels, what the *Mede* and *Perſian* Empire ſhould do, and ſuffer from the *Macedonian Greeks*? Upon *the Breaking of the great Horn*, or *Alexander*'s dying in the Height of his Triumphs and Proſperity, how properly do *four others come up towards the four Winds of Heaven*, ver. 8. to denote the Diviſion of his Empire among four Kings, whereof *Ptolemy* had *Egypt*, and the adjoining Countries to the *South*; *Antigonus* had *Aſia*, to the *North*; *Seleucus* had *Syria*, to the *Eaſt*; and *Antipater*, *Greece*, and *Macedonia*, to the *Weſt*.

Dan. viii. 9, &c. *A little Horn coming out of one of theſe, and waxing exceeding great towards the* South, *and* Eaſt, *and pleaſant Land*, nay, *waxing ſo great, as to caſt down ſome of the Hoſt of Heaven, and of the Stars to the Ground, and ſo trample upon them*, may ſeem a wild extravagant Rant; but when it is conſidered, that all this is meant of *Antiochus*, who was afterwards, called by his Flatterers, *Epiphanes*, though himſelf a vile Perſon, and Uſurper of the Kingdom; that it is to repreſent him, as ſoon as he got Poſſeſſion of the *Syrian* Kingdom, taking Advantage of the Youth of *Ptolomy Philometor*, and invading *Egypt*, to the *South*; *Armenia* and *Perſia*, to the *Eaſt*; and *Judea*, which is here ſtiled the *pleaſant Land*, and frequently deſcribed as a Land *flowing with Milk and Honey*; that it is to repreſent him perſecuting the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation, here ſtiled the *Hoſt of Heaven*; murdering the principal Men of both, here called the *Stars*; depoſing their *High-prieſt*, whoſe Title is the *Prince of the Hoſt*; profaning their Temple, polluting their Altar, aboliſhing their Law, and eſtabliſhing Idolatry by a ſolemn Edict, as whoever has read of the mad and impious Actions of *Antiochus* muſt know; when this is conſidered, I ſay, a ſmall Allowance for the *Oriental* Manner of pompous Writing will reduce theſe Images to a tolerable Size.

Many of the *Heathen* Writers give us this Account of *Antiochus*, *viz.* that he would frequently get out of the Palace, and ramble about the Streets of *Antioch*, with two or three Perſons only accompanying him; that in his Rambles, he would drink with Strangers, and Foreigners, and even with the meaneſt and vileſt of them; that, when he heard of any young Company met together to make merry, he would intrude himſelf among them, and revel away the Time with them, in Cups, and Songs, and other Frolicks, without any Regard to common Decency, or his own royal Character; that, in theſe Frolicks, he would often go out into the Streets, and there ſcatter his Money by Handfuls, for the Rabble to ſcramble for; that, at other Times, he would go about with a Crown of Roſes upon his Head, and, in a *Roman* Gown would walk the Streets alone, carrying a Parcel of Stones in his Lap, to throw at thoſe that ſhould follow after; thas he was much addicted to Drunkenneſs, and Laſciviouſneſs; was frequently found in the Company of Pathicks, and common Proſtitutes, on whom he would gratify his Luſt publickly, and in the Sight of the People; and that, having ſor his *Catamites*, two vile Perſons, called *Timarchus*, and *Heraclides*, who were Brothers, he made the *former* of them Governor of *Babylon*, and the *other* his Treaſurer in that Province. The ſhort is, his Freaks, Follies, and Vices were ſo many, that Men were in Doubt whether he were a *Madman*, or a *Fool*, though the former of theſe was generally thought his trueſt Character; and therefore inſtead of *Epiphanes*, *the Illuſtrious*, they commonly called him *Epimanes*, the *Madman*.

The plain Truth is, Princes and States were, in old Times, painted by their *Symbols*, which are therefore called in *Greek*, their *Gnoriſmata*, and, in after Ages, came to be diſtinguiſhed by Writers under the Names of ſuch *Symbols*, as well as by their proper Appellations: And therefore *the Lion with Eagles Wings*, ſignifying the Strength of the *Aſſyrian* Empire, and the Celerity of its Conqueſts; *the Beaſt with three Ribs in his Mouth*, intimating the Reduction which *Cyrus* made of *Babylon*, *Lydia*, and *Egypt* to the *Perſian* Monarchy; the *Leopard with four Wings and Heads*, denoting *Alex-*

ander, and his four Succeſſors; and the *other Beaſt with Iron Feet and ten Horns*, repreſenting the *Roman* Empire, and the ten Kingdoms, or Principalities, into which it was divided, was a Language as well known to ſkilful Readers at that Time, as are the Arms, the Colours, and the Field of *Eſcutcheons*, in theſe latter Days to Heralds.

Biſhop *Lloyd* has given us the following Liſt of the ten Kingdoms, which aroſe out of the Diſſolution of the *Roman* Empire, and the Time of their Riſe. 1. *Huns* erected their Kingdom in that Part of *Pannonia*, and *Dacia*, which from them was called *Hungary*, about *A. D.* 356. 2. *Oſtrogoths* ſettled themſelves in the Countries that reach from *Rhetia* to *Meſſa*, even as far as *Thrace*, about 377, and afterwards came into *Italy* under *Alaricus* in 410. 3. *Viſigoths* ſettled in the *South* Parts of *France*, and in *Catalonia* about 378. 4. *Franks* ſeized upon Part of *Germany*, and *Gaul*, *A. D.* 40. 5. *Vandals* ſettled in *Spain*, and afterwards ſet up their Kingdom in *Africa*, *A. D.* 704. 6. *Suevin*, and *Aliani* ſeized the *Weſtern* Parts of *Spain*, *A. D.* 407. and invaded *Italy*, 457. 7. *Burgundians* came out of *Germany* into that Part of *Gaul*, called from them *Burgundy*, 407. 8. *Rugians*, and *Thuringians* ſettled in *Italy* under *Odoacer*, about 476. 9 *Saxons* made themſelves Maſters of *Great-Britain*, about the ſame Time, 167. And, 10. *Longobards* ſettled firſt in *Germany*, *A. D.* 383, and afterwards ſucceeded the *Heruli* and *Thuringi* in *Hungary*.

Porphyry, no doubt, was well acquainted with this *Hieroglyphick* Way of Writing, becauſe all the Objections which he makes to theſe Prophecies of *Daniel*, concerning the four Empires, is, that they were too plain and perſpicuous, and more like *hiſtorical Narratives* of Facts already done, than *prophetical Predictions* of Things to come. But, however this Enemy of Chriſtianity might urge the Plainneſs of this Prophet's Predictions, in order to invalidate the Authority of his Book, it muſt not be denied, but that God, in his great Wiſdom, has ſo ordered the Matter (for the Exerciſe of our Faith and Induſtry) and ſo framed the *prophetick* Stile, that there ſhould be ſtill ſome Shade, and Remains of Obſcurity abiding upon the *Face* of almoſt every Prophecy, even after the Time of its Completion: And therefore, inſtead of being ſurprized at the great Variety of Computations, which *Chronologers*, and other learned Men, have put upon the *ſeventy Weeks* mentioned in *Daniel*, Chap. ix. 24. we may much rather wonder how, at this Diſtance of Time, they have been able to come to any tolerable Exactneſs.

This *Porphyry* was a learned *Heathen*, born at *Tyre* in the Year of *Chriſt* 930, and there called *Malchus*; but upon his going among the *Greeks*, he changed it to *Porphyry*, which is much of the ſame Signification; for *Malchus*, in the *Phœnician* Language, which was then ſpoken at *Tyre*, ſignifies a King, as *Porphureos*, in the *Greek*, denotes one that wore *Purple*, which none but Kings, and royal Perſons, were then permitted to do. He was a bitter Enemy to the *Chriſtian* Religion; and therefore wrote a large Volume againſt it, containing *fifteen* Books, whereof the *twelfth* was wholly levelled againſt the *Prophecies* of *Daniel*: But, becauſe the Predictions of this Prophet concerning the ſeveral Empires, were acknowledged, on all Hands, to have been fulfilled, he did not go about to diſprove it; on the contrary he endeavoured to maintain, by the Teſtimony of the beſt *Greek* Hiſtorians then extant, that they were fulfilled ſo exactly, and ſo minutely, that it was impoſſible for them to be the Predictions of the *Daniel* who belonged to the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and muſt therefore be the ſpurious Compoſition of ſome later Author. But this Argument St. *Jerom*, in his Comment upon *Daniel*, fully turns upon him. It is much to be lamented however, that not only this whole Work of *Porphyry* is loſt, but that alſo the Books of *Euſebius*, *Apollinarius*, and *Methodius*, which were wrote in anſwer to this *Heathen* Adverſary (to the great Damage both of *divine* and *human* Knowledge) have all undergone the ſame Fate.

Q. *The Learned have greatly varied in their Interpretation of the* Seventy Weeks; *what is your Opinion of that Paſſage?*

A. The Words of the Prophecy are theſe; —— *Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy holy City, to finiſh the Tranſgreſſion, and to make an End of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs, and to ſeal up the Viſion and Prophecy and to anoint the moſt Holy. Know therefore and underſtand, that from the coming forth of the Commandment to reſtore and to build* Jeruſalem, *unto the* Meſſiah, *the Prince, ſhall be ſeven Weeke, and the Street ſhall be built again, and the Wall, even in troubled Times; and, after threeſcore and two Weeks, ſhall* Meſſiah *be cut off, but not for himſelf: And the People of the Prince that ſhall come, ſhall deſtroy the City and the Sanctuary, and the End thereof ſhall be with a Flood; and, at the End of the War, Deſolations are determined. And he ſhall confirm the Covenant with many, for a Week, and, in the midſt of the Week, he ſhall cauſe the Sacrifice and Oblation to ceaſe; and for the Overſpreading of Abominations, he ſhall make it deſolate, even until the Conſummation, and that determined ſhall be poured upon the Deſolate.*

Now, to ſet theſe Words in a right Light, we muſt conſider, 1ſt, That the main Deſign and Intention of them is, to foretel the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, his aboliſhing the *Jewiſh*, and ſetting up a new and more perfect Religion; which is ſo manifeſt to every common Reader, that the latter *Jews* (to avoid the Force of this one Prophecy) have either adventured to exclude the whole Book of *Daniel* from the Number of inſpired Writers, or to pronounce a Curſe upon any, that ſhall pretend to compute the Time of the *Meſſiah*'s Coming. 2dly, It is agreed by moſt Interpreters, that the Seventy Weeks here ſpoken of (according to the prophetic Stile) are to be taken for Weeks of Years, every one of which contained ſeven Years, and ſo the ſeventy Weeks will amount to 490 Years, at the Expiration of which Term, the Matters contained in this Prophecy, were to have their Accompliſhment: But then the Queſtion is, at what Point of Time theſe ſeventy Weeks, or, which is all one, the 490 Years, either began or expired? For, if we can but find out one of theſe Periods, there will be leſs Difficulty in ſtating the other. Now, it ſeems pretty plain, that the ſeveral Events, ſpecified in the Beginning of this Prophecy, *viz.* 1. To finiſh or reſtrain Tranſgreſſions. 2. To make an end of Sin. 3 To make Expiation or Reconciliation for Iniquity. 4. *To bring in everlaſting Righteouſneſs.* 5. *To ſeal up*, or compleat, and *fulfil*

fulfil the Viſion and Prophecy. And, 6. *To anoint*, or conſecrate *the moſt Holy*, were all accompliſhed in the great Work of our Salvation, by the Death and Paſſion, and by the Doctrine and Reſurrection of our Saviour *Chriſt*. For *he was anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Power*, to be our Prieſt, our Prophet, and our King.

As our Prieſt, he offered himſelf a Sacrifice upon the Croſs, and thereby made Attonement for our Sins, which is making an End of them, by taking away their Guilt; and in ſo doing, working Reconciliation for us with God. As our Prophet he gave us his Goſpel, a Law of everlaſting Righteouſneſs, and the only Revelation we are to expect: And as our King, he ſent his Holy Spirit into our Hearts, to guide and influence us according to this Law; whereby he hath taken an effectual Method to reſtrain and extinguiſh in us all Manner of Tranſgreſſion; and in doing all this he has ſealed up, *i. e.* fulfilled and thoroughly finiſhed all that by Viſions and Propheſies had been before revealed concerning him.

Since therefore all theſe Events were brought to paſs and accompliſhed, at the Time of *Chriſt*'s Death, this muſt determine us where to fix the End of the Weeks, wherein theſe Events were to be accompliſhed: And, if the End of theſe Weeks is to be fixed at the Death of *Chriſt*; then 4thly, this will determine us where to place the Beginning of them, *viz.* 490 Years before, which is the very Year and Month wherein *Ezra* had his Commiſſion from *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, King of *Perſia*, for his returning to *Jeruſalem*, and there to reſtore the Church and State of the *Jews*.

Moſt learned Men agree, that the Death of *Chriſt* happened in the Year of the *Julian* Period 4746, and in the *Jewiſh* Month *Niſan*; and therefore, if we reckon 490 Years backward, this will lead us to the Month *Niſan*, and in the Year of the *Julian* Period 4256; which, according to *Ptolemy*'s Canon, was the ſeventh Year of *Artaxerxes*'s Reign, in which the Scripture tells us (*Ezra* vii. 7.) that this Commiſſion was granted.

Others are of Opinion, that the Commiſſion here intended, was not that which was given to *Ezra*, but that which *Nehemiah* had from *Artaxerxes*, in the twentieth Year of his Reign at which Period they place the Commencement of theſe ſeventy Weeks, which being reduced to 490 Lunar Years, brings us down to the Time when our Saviour *Chriſt* was put to death. There are ſome Variations, indeed, concerning the Calculation of theſe Years. Chronologers differ among themſelves a little, but the greateſt Difference does not exceed nine or ten Years, and yet, even this, *Petavius*, who has treated of the Subject in his twelfth Book *De Doctrina Temporum*, has endeavoured to accommodate, by ſhewing that the Words of the Prophecy of *Daniel*, concerning the *going forth of the Command to reſtore and rebuild* Jeruſalem, ought to be underſtood of the compleat Execution of this Order, which was performed by *Nehemiah* only, and that the twentieth Year of *Artaxerxes* mentioned in *Nehemiah* i. 1. ought to be explained, not of the twentieth Year of *Artaxerxes* alone, but of the twentieth from the Time that his Father made him his Aſſociate in the Throne, which was ten Years before his Death; which ten Years being deducted from the Number of Years that elapſed from the Decree of *Artaxerxes*, in favour of *Nehemiah*, to the Death of *Jeſus Chriſt*, deliver the Chronologers out of all their Perplexities, and diſpel all the Difficulties that the few ſupernumerary Years occaſioned.

The only Objection againſt this Computation is, That the Words of the Prophecy ſeem to denote a real Building of the City, ſince it makes mention of its Streets and Walls, whereas that Work was executed upon the Decree by *Cyrus*, ſeveral Years before *Ezra* was in Commiſſion. But this Objection will be of little Force, if once it be conſidered that figurative Expreſſions are, in a Manner, neceſſary in Prophecies, and that nothing is more common in Scripture, than by *Jeruſalem*, in particular, to mean the whole political and eccleſiaſtical State of the *Jews*.

There is another Difficulty obſervable in the Prophecy, which deſerves our Attention, and that is, the Diviſion of the ſeventy Weeks into three diſtinct Periods, *i. e.* into ſeven Weeks, ſixty two Weeks, and one Week, to each of which a different Event is aſſigned. In the ſeven Weeks, or forty-nine Years, from the *going forth of the Commandment*, the *Streets and Walls of* Jeruſalem, *i. e.* the Reſtoration and Eſtabliſhment of the Church and State of the *Jews* is to be accompliſhed. In the *ſixty two Weeks*, or 434 Years more, the *Meſſiah* is to come and make his Appearance in the World; and in one Week, or ſeven Years after this, he is to *confirm a Covenant with many, and cauſe the Sacrifice and Oblation to ceaſe*: All which were literally fulfilled. For in the Space of forty-nine Years, which anſwers to *ſeven Weeks*, the Reformation and Eſtabliſhment of the *Jewiſh* Church and State was carried on and compleated, firſt by *Ezra*, in Virtue of a Decree granted him in the ſeventh Year of *Artaxerxes*; and afterwards by *Nehemiah*, in Virtue of another granted him by the ſame Prince, in the twentieth Year of his Reign. From that Time, in the Space of 434 Years, which anſwers to *ſixty two Weeks*, our bleſſed Saviour appeared in the World as the *Meſſiah*: and for the ſeven Years after that, (which anſwers to the one Week in the Prophecy) firſt by his Forerunner *John the Baptiſt*, for the Space of three Years and a Half more, he confirmed the Covenant of the Goſpel, with as many of the *Jews* as were converted and embraced theſe Laws of everlaſting Righteouſneſs which he publiſhed; and at length, by the Sacrifice of his moſt precious Blood, made all other Victims and Oblations (which were but Types and Emblems of his) for ever ceaſe and be aboliſhed. As to the other Part of the Prophecy, it relates ſo evidently to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, that it needs no Explanation. Whoever has read *Joſephus*, cannot but obſerve, that by the Deſtruction of the City and Sanctuary, by the People of the Prince that was to come, who with their Armies and deſolate Abominations, ſhould invade *Judea*, as with a Flood, and by a terrible and conſuming War, bring utter Ruin and Deſtruction upon it, and upon all the People of the *Jews* that ſhould dwell therein, can be meant nothing but *Titus*, at the Head of the *Roman* Army, executing the Wrath of God, for the murther of his Son, our Saviour, upon that devoted City and People, in ſuch a terrible Manner as that Hiſtorian has related.

Q. *Did* Daniel *return with the reſt of his Brethren from the Captivity to* Jeruſalem?

A. We do not find that *Daniel* took the Advantage of the Edict which *Cyrus* made in favour of the *Jews*, and therefore we may ſuppoſe, that as he did not return with them to *Jeruſalem*; the King might require his Continuance with him, and *Daniel* might the rather conſent to it, as having thereby a better Opportunity to befriend his Countrymen upon an Exigence. To this Purpoſe, it is highly probable he attended the *Perſian* Court, which, after the taking and defacing of *Babylon*, reſided in the Summer at *Shuſhan* or *Suſa*, and in Winter at *Ecbatana*. In the Palace of *Shuſhan* *Daniel* (as himſelf tells us, Chap. viii. 1, &c.) had ſeveral Viſions. In this City (as *Joſephus* informs us, *Antiq.* l. 10. c. 12. where, inſtead of *Ecbatana*, St. *Jerom* reads *Suſa*) he built a famous Edifice, finiſhed with ſuch exquiſite Art, that it continued freſh and beautiful in his Days; and in this City, the common Tradition is, that he died in the third or fourth Year of *Cyrus*, and about the 91ſt Year of his Age; for even to this Day (we learn from *Benjamin's Itinerarium*) the Inhabitants of the Place (at preſent called *Tuſter*) ſhew his Monument. But the moſt valuable Monument left behind him is his Writings, whereof the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian gives us this Character. *He had this peculiar Bleſſing attending him, that he lived in great Reputation, both with Prince and People, and when he died, left an immortal Memory behind him. His Writings, which are ſtill extant, and in common Uſe, we keep as a ſure Pledge that he had an Intimacy and Converſation with God; for he did not only foretel future Events, as other Prophets did, but mentioned the preciſe Time when ſuch and ſuch Things ſhould come to paſs: And whereas other Prophets were more employed in foreboding Calamities and ill News, which drew upon them Diſgrace from Princes, and Hatred from the People;* Daniel, *on the contrary, foretold nothing but happy Events, and what was agreeable; ſo that the Nature of his Predictions was ſuch, as gained him the Good-will of all, and ſuch the Certainty of them, as gained him a ready Credence with all; which (as the Hiſtorian remarks) may ſerve, not only to eſtabliſh a Veneration for the Memory of a Man, whom God ſo ſignally honoured, but to confound likewiſe the impious Doctrines of the* Epicurians, *which will not allow of any over-ruling Providence, interpoſing in the Government and Preſervation of the Univerſe, but will have the whole Courſe of ſublunary Thing nothing more than one grand Huddle of Contingencies. For when I conſider the Prophecies of* Daniel, (ſays he) *I cannot but blame the Ignorance or Irreverence of thoſe who make make it their Profeſſion to decry Providence, as if God took no Care of us; ſince it is impoſſible to conceive how there ſhould be ſuch a Correſpondence between the Things foretold at one Time, and fulfilled ſo many Ages after, if, according to their Opinion, every Thing were left to run at Random, and fall out at Hap-hazard.*

Q. *What was the Occaſion of* Nebuchadnezzar's *Pride?*

A. Whoever looks back upon the Actions of *Nebuchadnezzar*, will eaſily perceive that he was a great and ſucceſsful Warrior; that, during his Father's Life-Time, and while he commanded the Army as a General under him, he drove the *Egyptians* (the only Nation that pretended, at this Time, to rival the *Babyloniſh* Monarchy) out of *Syria* and *Paleſtine*, took *Jeruſalem*, and carried away the People into Captivity; and that, upon his own Acceſſion to the Throne, he overcame the *Phœnicians* and *Tyrians*, over-ran all *Egypt*, and made it tributary, and returned home in Triumph, loaded with rich Spoils. The Scripture, however, does not impute the Occaſion of his Pride to the Number of his Conqueſts, or the Extent of his Dominions, but to the State and Magnificence of his royal City, in which, as it were at one View, he ſaw all the Fruits of his martial Toil, all the Spoils of his many Victories, and all the Revenues of his vaſt Empire, comprized and diſplayed in their utmoſt Splendor. For while he was walking in his Palace at *Babylon*, very probably in his hanging Gardens, and in the uppermoſt Terraſs of them, from whence he might have a full Proſpect of the whole City, Chap. iv. 3. *Is not this great* Babylon (ſaid he to himſelf) *which I have built for the Houſe of the Kingdom, by the Might of my Power, and for the Honour of my Majeſty?*

Q. *As the City of* Babylon *is very famous in Hiſtory for its Antiquity and Grandeur, a Deſcription of it, I believe, would be very entertaining?*

A. *Babylon* was one of the moſt antient Cities of the World. It was founded by *Nimrod*, not long after the Building of the famous Tower of *Babel*, was enlarged and beautified by *Semiramis*; but *Nebuchadnezzar* was the Perſon that put the finiſhing Hand to it, to make it one of the greateſt Wonders of the World; and therefore it may not be amiſs to take a ſhort Survey of the Works that are generally aſcribed to him, in order to ſee what Grounds he might have have for this arrogant Vaunt.

1. The whole City, which ſtood on a large Plain, conſiſting properly of two Parts, which were divided by the River *Euphrates*. That Part of it which was on the Eaſt Side of the River, was the old City; the other, on the Weſt Side, was added by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and the whole was a Square of an hundred and eighty Furlongs, or fifteen Miles every Way, which made the whole Circumference of it to be an hundred and eighty Furlongs, or exactly threeſcore Miles. Its Walls, which were in Thickneſs 87 Foot, in Height 350 Foot, and in Compaſs 480 Furlongs, were all built of large Bricks, cemented together by Bitumen, a glutinous Slime, which iſſuing out of the Earth in that Country, binds ſtronger and firmer than Lime, and in a ſhort Time grows harder than the very Brick and Stone which it cements.

The City was encompaſſed, without the Walls, with a vaſt Ditch, filled with Water, and lined with Bricks on both Sides, after the Manner of a Counterſcarp, and as the Earth which was dug out of it, made the Bricks wherewith the Walls were Built, we may judge of the Depth and Largeneſs of the Ditch, from the vaſt Height and Thickneſs of the Walls. In the whole Compaſs of the Wall there were an hundred Gates, *i. e.* five and twenty on each of the four Sides, all made of ſolid Braſs, and between every two of theſe Gates, at proper Diſtances, were three Towers; four more at the four Corners of this great Square; three between each of theſe Corners, and the next Gate on either Side; and every one of theſe Towers was ten Foot higher than the Walls.

Anſwering to every one of theſe Gates, there was a Street which led from Gate to Gate; ſo that there were fifty in all, each fifteen Miles long;

whereof twenty-five going one Way, and twenty-five another, they croſſed each other at right Angles, and ſo cut the whole City out into 676 Squares, each of which was four Furlongs and an Half on every Side, *i. e.* two Miles and a Quarter in Compaſs; and round theſe, on every Side towards the Street, ſtood the Houſes, all built three or four Stories high, with Fronts adorned with all Manner of Embelliſhments, and with Yards and Gardens thrown backwards. Beſides theſe, there were four other Streets, built only on one Side, becauſe they had the Wall on the other, which went round the four Sides of the City, and were all of them two hundred Foot broad, tho' the other Streets were but an hundred and fifty.

Quite croſs the City ran a Branch of the River *Euphrates*, which entered in on the North, and went out on the South Side, and over it, in the very Middle of the City, was a Bridge of a Furlong in Length, and thirty Foot in Breadth, built with wonderful Art, to ſupply the Defect of a Foundation in the Bottom of the River, which was all ſandy. By this Bridge a Communication was kept up between the two Parts of the City, and at the two Extremities of it ſtood two Palaces, the old one to the Eaſt, and new one to the Weſt Side of the River; the former of which took up four of the Squares abovementioned, the other nine, and the Temple of *Belus*, which ſtood near the old Palace, took up another.

2. The Temple of *Belus* which was one of the moſt wonderful Works in the World, was a Square of a Furlong on each Side, *i. e.* half a Mile in the whole Compaſs, and conſiſted of eight Towers (or what ſeemed like Towers) built one above another. *Herodotus* tells us, that the Way to go up it was by Stairs on the outſide round it; from whence it ſeems moſt likely, that the whole Aſcent to it was by the Benching-in, drawn in a ſloping Line from the Bottom to the Top, eight Times round it, and that this made the Appearance of eight Towers one above another. The eight Towers (as they are called) being like ſo many Stories, were each of them ſeventy-five Foot high, and in them were many great Rooms, with arched Roofs, ſupported by Pillars, which, after that the Place was conſecrated to an idolatrous Uſe, were all made Parts of the Temple; but the moſt ſacred Part of all, and where the chiefeſt Devotions were performed, was the uppermoſt Story, over which, on the Top of the Tower, was an Obſervatory, by the Benefit of which it was, that the *Babylonians* advanced their Knowledge in Aſtronomy beyond all other Nations.

Some, following the Miſtake of the *Latin* Verſion of *Herodotus*, wherein the loweſt of theſe Towers is ſaid to be a Furlong thick, and a Furlong high, will have each of theſe Towers to be a Furlong high, which amounting to a Mile in the whole, is enough to ſhock any one's Belief. But the *Greek* of *Herodotus*, which is the *authentick* Text of the Hiſtorian, ſays no ſuch Thing, but only that it was a Furlong long, and a Furlong broad, without mentioning any Thing of its Height at all. And therefore *Strabo*, in his Deſcription of it, calling it a Pyramid, becauſe of its decreaſing and benching in at every Tower, ſays of the whole, that it was a Furlong high, and a Furlong on every Side, which, without any farther Addition, makes it exceed the greateſt of the Pyramids of *Egypt*, I mean for its Height. For whereas the Height of the talleſt Pyramid was no more than 481 Foot, that of the Temple of *Belus* was 600, *i. e.* higher by 119 Foot, which is one Quarter of the whole.

The *Babylonians* made great Boaſt of the Antiquity of their Knowledge in *Aſtronomy*. They reckoned four hundred ſeventy three thouſand Years, from the Obſervations of their firſt *Aſtrologers*, to the Arrival of *Alexander the Great*: But *Ariſtotle*, who was curious in enquiring into the Truth of what was related of theſe *Obſervations*, deſired of *Caliſthenes*, his Scholar, who accompanied *Alexander* to *Babylon*, to ſend him *aſtronomical* Obſervations which had been made for one thouſand nine hundred and three Years, which came within an hundred and fifteen Years of the Flood, or fifteen after the Tower of *Babel* was built, but fell ſhort of their other monſtrous Computations; notwithſtanding, this of *Caliſthenes* ſeems to be a little enlarged, becauſe, according to our Chronology, we reckon no more than about eighteen hundred Years from *Nimrod* and the Tower of of *Babel*, to the Reign of *Alexander* at *Babylon*.

This Tower, on which was the Obſervatory, and the ſeveral Rooms in it, were all that was called the Temple of *Belus*, until *Nebuchadnezzar* enlarged it with vaſt Buildings, which were erected in a Square of two Furlongs on every Side, or a Mile in Circumference; on the outſide of which was a Wall encloſing the the whole, in which were ſeveral Gates leading to the Temple, all made of ſolid Braſs, very probably from the brazen Veſſels, which, from the Temple of *Jeruſal* were carried to *Babylon*.

The Temple ſtood till the Time of *Xerxes*, but he, on his Return from the *Grecian* Expedition, having firſt plundered it of its immenſe Riches, among which were ſeveral Images or Statues of maſſy Gold, demoliſhed the whole of it, and laid it all in Ruins. *Alexander* upon his Return to *Babylon*, from his *Indian* Expedition, propoſed to have rebuilt it, and to that Purpoſe ſet ten Thouſand Men on work to clear away the Rubbiſh; but his Death, in a ſhort Time after, put an End to all further Proceedings in that Deſign, and (as modern Travellers aſſure us) the Knowledge of the very Place where it once ſtood, is at this Time loſt.

3. Near this Temple, on the Eaſt Side of the River, as we ſaid, ſtood the old Palace of the Kings of *Babylon*, four Miles in Circumference; and exactly over-againſt it, on the other Side of the River, was a new Palace, built by *Nebuchadnezzar*, eight Miles in Compaſs, and ſurrounded with three Walls, one within another. But the moſt wonderful Thing belonging to it, were the hanging Gardes which *Nebuchadnezzar* made, in Complaiſance to his Wife *Amylis*, Daughter of *Aſtyages*, King of *Media*; for ſhe retaining a ſtrong Inclination for the Montains and Foreſts of her own Country, deſired to have ſomething like it in *Babylon*, and therefore to gratify her, he erected this monſtrous Work of Vanity.

Theſe Gardens contained a Space of four hundred Foot Square, and were carried up aloft into the Air, in the Manner of ſeveral large Terraſſes one above another, and ſtrengthened by a Wall ſurrounding it on every Side, of two and twenty Foot in Thickneſs.

On the Top of the Arches were laid large flat

Stones, ſixteen Foot long, and four broad; over them was a Layer of Reeds, mixed with a great Quantity of Bitumen; over this were two Rows of Brick, cloſely cemented together by Plaiſter; over theſe were laid thick Sheets of Lead, all this to keep the Moiſture of the Mould from draining away; and then, laſtly, upon this Lead was laid ſuch a Quantity of Earth heaped together, as afforded Depth enough for the largeſt Trees to take Root in it. For in this Garden there was every Thing that could either delight the Eye, or gratify the Curioſity, beautiful and large Trees, Flowers, Plants, and Shrubs, and to keep every Thing verdant and gay, in the upper Terraſs; there was an *Aqueduct*, or Engine, which drew up Water out of the River, into a Kind of *Reſervoir* above, and from thence watered the whole Garden.

4. The River, indeed, at a certain Seaſon of of the Year, *viz.* in the Months of *June*, *July*, and *Auguſt*, by the Sun's melting the Snow in the Mountains of *Armenia*, uſed to overflow its Banks, in the ſame Manner as the *Nile* in *Egypt* does, to the great Damage of the City and Country of *Babylon*; and therefore, to prevent this Inconvenience for the future, *Nebuchadnezzar* had two artificial Canals cut, on the Eaſt Side of the *Euphrates*, in order to carry off the ſuperfluous Water into the *Tigris*. One of theſe Canals diſcharged itſelf near *Seleucia*, and the other over-againſt *Apamia*; and for the farther Security of the Country, from the Head of theſe Canals, down to the City, and ſome Way lower, he made vaſt Banks of Brick and Bitumen; but the moſt wonderful Part of the Work was within the City.

There, on each Side of the *Euphrates*, he built, from the very Bottom of the Channel, a great Wall of the ſame Thickneſs with the Walls of the City, *i. e.* eighty ſeven Foot thick, and an hundred and ſixty Furlongs long, which are twenty Miles of our Meaſure, and therefore this Work muſt have begun two Miles and a Half above the City, and continued two Miles and an Half below it, becauſe the City throughout was no more than fifteen Miles) in Length; and over-againſt every Street, that croſſed the River, he made, on each Side, a brazen Gate in the Wall, and Stairs leading down to the River, from whence the Inhabitants uſed to paſs in Boats from one Part of the City to the other.

It was neceſſary, however, that while this Work was carrying on, the Stream ſhould be diverted ſome other Way; and therefore, to this Purpoſe, he had a vaſt *artificial Lake* made to the Weſt of *Babylon*, which, according to the loweſt Computation, was forty Miles Square, and an hundred and ſixty in Circumference, and being of a proportioned Depth, was able to contain all the Waters until the Work was finiſhed. When this was done, the River was returned to its former Channel; but the Lake, and the Canal, which led to it was ſtill preſerved, becauſe they were found of Uſe, not only to prevent the Danger of all Overflowings of the River, but to keep Water likewiſe all the Year round, as in a common Reſervatory, which might be let out, upon proper Occaſions, by Sluices, for the Improvement and Fertility of the Ground.

Theſe are ſome of the vaſt Works which the Generality of Hiſtorians aſcribe to *Nebuchadnezzar*, and upon the View and Contemplation of which he grew ſo arrogant and elated, as to think himſelf equal, if not ſuperior to God: For, *Is not this great* Babylon, *which I have built for the Honour of my Majeſty?* ſays he of himſelf; and *Who is God but* Nebuchadnezzar? ſaid his Sycophants concerning him, *Judith* vi. 2. If he was the ſame we will credit the Account in the Book of *Judith*, relating to this Prince, he was in his Temper a profeſſed *Atheiſt*: The Senſe of his Succeſs in Life, and of the wonderful Works which he had atchieved, both in a civil and Military Capacity, had ſo intoxicated his Reaſon, as to make him become Fool enough, to *ſay in his Heart, there was no other God but himſelf*; for this is the avowed Purpoſe of his ſending his Armies under the General *Holofernes*, Chap. iii. 8. *That all Nations ſhould worſhip him only, and that all Tongues and Tribes ſhould call upon him as God.*

Fit therefore it was, that ſuch impious Pride ſhould be abaſed, and that he, who ſet himſelf above the Rank of Men, and upon a Level with God, nay, in an Elevation ſuperior to God, ſhould be made ſenſible of his own Dependent State, and taught Humility, and Self-annihilation, by being degraded to the Condition of a Brute. He *had ſaid in his Heart*, (for of him is that Prophecy in *Iſaiah* xv. 12.) *I will aſcend into Heaven, I will aſcend above the Heights of the Clouds, I will be like the Moſt High.——But how art thou fallen from Heaven, O* Lucifer, *Son of the Morning? How art thou cut down to the Ground, who didſt weaken the Nations?——They that ſee thee, ſhall narrowly look upon thee, and conſider thee,* ſaying, *Is this the Man that made the Earth to tremble, that did ſhake all Kingdoms, that made the World as a Wilderneſs, and deſtroyed the Cities thereof?* And well they might when they ſaw *him dwelling with the Beaſts of the Field, eating Graſs like Oxen, and wet with the Dew of Heaven, with his Hair grown like Eagles Feathers, and his Nails like the Claws of Birds*, Dan. iv. 32, 33.

Q. *Do you imagine that* Nebuchadnezzar *was actually transformed into a Beaſt, as ſeems intimated in the laſt recited Text; if not, what was his real Diſtemper?*

A. Nebuchadnezzar's *real Metamorphoſis* into an Ox, both as to his *outward* and *inward* Form, is a Notion too groſs for any but the *Vulgar*, who may be taken, perhaps, with ſuch Fictions of the Poets; and what we have no need to recur to (thereby to multiply Miracles to no Purpoſe) from any Words in the Text, which will fairly admit of another Interpretation.

The *Metempſycoſis* of an Ox's Soul into *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Body, thereby to communicate the ſame Motions, Taſte, and Inclinations, that are obſervable in that Animal, is a Notion unknown to all Antiquity; for, according to the Doctrine of *Pythagoras*, ſuch a Tranſmigration was never made, until the Body was actually dead; beſides the manifeſt Incongruity of ſuppoſing two Souls, a rational and a brutal, animating the ſame Prince, or the Prince's Soul departed from him, and become the Subſtitute to a Brute.

A *Faſcination*, both in the Eyes of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Subjects, and in his own Fancy and Imagination, which made them believe, that he was really changed into an Ox, and had the Figure of one, is a Notion every whit as liable to Exception. For, beſides that it is difficult to conceive how a

Deception of this Kind could abide upon a whole Nation, for the Space of ſeven Years, the Scripture takes Notice of no *evil Spirit* in this whole Tranſaction, but imputes all to the ſole Power of God, who can humble the Proud, and chaſtiſe the Wicked as he pleaſes.

The moſt general therefore, and moſt probable Opinion is, That *Nebuchadnezzar*, by the juſt Judgment of God was puniſhed with *Madneſs*, which ſo diſordered his Imagination, that he fancied himſelf a Beaſt, and was prompted to act like one.

There is a Diſtemper, not a very common one, indeed, but what has befallen ſeveral, which Naturaliſts and Phyſicians call *Lycanthropy*, when, by the Power of Depraved Imagination, and a diſtempered Brain, a Man really thinks that he is a Wolf, an Ox, a Dog, or the like, and accordingly in his Inclinations, Motions and Behaviour, cannot forbear imitating the particular Creature which he fancies himſelf to be. In this Manner *Nebuchadnezzar*, imagining that he was become an Ox, walked upon all four, fed upon Graſs, went naked, lowed with his Voice, and butted (as he thought) with his Horns, and in ſhort, did all the Actions, as far as he was able, that a real Ox is known to do. Hereupon his Subjects perceiving this Change in him, took him and bound him as Madmen are wont to be treated; but at laſt he eſcaping out of their Hands, fled to the Fields, where he herded with the Cattle, expoſed to the Dew of Heaven, and the other Inclemencies of the Weather, where his neglected Body became horrid and dreadful to behold; where his Hair and his Nails, in Proceſs of Time grew in the hideous Manner that the Prophet had deſcribed them; and where his Heart, *i. e.* his Apprehenſion, Appetite, and Inclinations, by the Continuance of his Diſtemper, became quite brutal, and of the ſame Taſte with the Beaſts that graze.

The Scripture, indeed, at firſt Sight, ſeems to intimate, that he had no Senſe of Miſery, nor made any Reflection upon himſelf, or what he was doing, until God was pleaſed to remove his afflicting Hand: For theſe are his own Words, *At the End of the Days, I* Nebuchadnezzar *lift up mine Eyes unto Heaven, and my Underſtanding returned unto me,* which ſeem to imply, that all along before this, his Reaſon was in a Kind of *Deliquium*, and without any Conſciouſneſs of what he was about; but then it may be asked, Wherein would his Puniſhment and Humiliation conſiſt, if the Man was inſenſible, if he knew nothing of the Matter, nay, if he took Pleaſure (as moſt Madmen do) in the Diſorder of his Imagination?

To be miſerable, and not to know it, by ſome may be thought the very Height of Miſery; but the Perſon in *Horace*, who frequented the empty Theatre every Day, and delighted himſelf with the Reveries of his own Fancy, with Plays and Shows, which no body ſaw but himſelf, was not well pleaſed with his Friends, when they had recovered him to his Senſes.

To anſwer the Ends of Providence therefore, in afflicting in this Manner, this haughty and aſſuming Prince, which to mortify his Pride, and to bring him to a State of Humiliation, and Acknowledgement of God's ſuperiour Hand, we may ſuppoſe, that at certain Intervals, at leaſt, he had a Senſe and Perception of his Miſery; that he was degraded, but being carried away by his brutal Appetite, found it not in his Power to extricate himſelf. St. *Paul*, in his Deſcription of a Man given up to his Luſts (whereof *Nebuchadnezzar*, in his preſent Condition, is no improper Emblem) has theſe remarkable Words. *I know that in me* (i. e. *in my Fleſh*) *dwelleth no good Thing; for to will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not; for the Good that I would, I do not, but the Evil that I would not, that I do. For though I delight in the Law of God, after the inner Man, yet I ſee another Law in my Members, warring againſt the Law in my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin, that is in my Members. O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* And, in like Manner, if we ſuppoſe this King of *Babylon* in ſuch a perpetual Struggle and Conflict with himſelf; ſeeing his Error, but not able to avoid it; ſenſible of his Diſgrace, but not capable to redreſs it; committing the Things which his Soul abhorred; and deteſting himſelf for what he found himſelf neceſſitated to do, till God ſhould think fit to reſtore his Underſtanding, by allaying the Ferment of his Blood and Humours, correcting his Appetite, and ranging his Ideas into their proper Order; if we ſuppoſe this, I ſay, we have before us the Image of a Creature compleatly miſerable; Reaſons for his Humiliation, during his Affliction, innumerable; a Fountain to ſupply his Gratitude, upon the Removal of it inexhauſtible; and from his Example, this Lecture of Admonition to all ſucceding Generations. *Thus ſaith the Lord, let not the wiſe Man glory in his Wiſdom, neither let the mighty Man glory in his Might; let not the rich Man glory in his Riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciſeth Loving Kindneſs, Judgment and Righteouſneſs in the Earth, for in theſe Things I delight, ſaith the Lord.*

What *Nebuchadnezzar* ſays of himſelf, with Regard to his Duty, is very remarkable. *I bleſſed the Moſt high, and praiſed and honoured him that liveth for ever, whoſe Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion, and his Kingdom is from Generatian to Generation; all the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing, and none can ſtay his Hand, or ſay unto him, what doſt thou? I therefore now praiſe and extol, and honour the King of Heaven, all whoſe Works are Truth, and his Ways Judgment, and thoſe that walk in Pride, he is able to abaſe,* Dan. iv. 34, *&c.* Which is enough, one would imagine, to make us think charitably of the Converſion and final End of this Prince, and with St. *Auſtin* to conclude, that whatever happened to him, by way of Puniſhment, was deſigned by Providence for his Soul's Health.

THE BOOK
OF THE PROPHET
HOSEA.

HOSEA, *of all the Prophets, is doubtleſs the obſcureſt and moſt difficult to be underſtood; and though he came not as* Iſaiah *and* Amos *do ſometimes, nor as* Ezekiel *and* Zechariah *frequently with Viſions, yet his Sentences and conciſe Stile, peculiar to himſelf, render it, many Times, difficult to find out firſt, and next to declare the genuine and undoubted Senſe of the Words. It was a very debauched Age our Prophet lived in, and you will find him very ſharp againſt the Vices of the Ten Tribes, and very plain and open in his Threats for their Sins, which he ſaw puniſhed; for he lived to ſee* Samaria *taken, himſelf made Priſoner, and the People carried into Captivity. As it is not agreed when he began, ſo neither is it how long he continued to prophecy.*

The Kings of Judah *and* Iſrael, *in whoſe Time he firſt appeared as a Prophet, had long Reigns; the one reigning forty one, the other fifty two; in which long Space of Time very different Beginnings may be conjectured. All agree that he continued a Prophet very long, ſeventy Years at leaſt, ſome ſay ninety. The Sum of what he prophecied is here given us in ſhort Heads, rather than in a continued Diſcourſe. And as it was preached in* Iſrael *(though we read not of the Places where* Hoſea *lived or died, or preached, it is moſtly within the Hearing of the Court) ſo it more particularly relates to* Iſrael *or the Ten Tribes; declaring to them what their Sins were, adviſing them to repent, promiſing them Mercy upon their ſincere Repentance, threatning grievous Judgments on their Impenitence, foretelling their Rejection, if they did not amend; and, for the Comfort of the Godly, predicting Mercy to them, intermixing many Promiſes of the future Kingdom and Coming of the* Meſſiah, *to whom many ſhould be converted, and by him be ſaved, and eſpecially of the Two Tribes, who hear from the Prophet a more comfortable Meſſage (of returning to their own Land) than* Iſrael, *which muſt not expect any Return, that is, for the whole Body of the People. He cloſes his Prophecy either with a Form of Confeſſion and Supplication for the Remnant returned, or Prediction in what Manner they would return, confeſs, ſupplicate, and rely upon God alone; to which Duty performed, he annexed ſweet and excellent Promiſes, contained both temporal and ſpiritual Bleſſings.*

CHAP. I.

The Time when Hoſea *prophecied. He, by marrying* Gomer, *repreſents* Iſrael's *ſpiritual Whoredom, and ſhews God's Judgments againſt it; begets* Jezreel; *the Reaſon of his Name.* Lo-ruhamah *and* Lo-ammi, *the Reaſon of their Names. A Promiſe of the glorious Reſtoration of* Judah *and* Iſrael.

Q. WHAT *are the general Contents of this Chapter?*

A. The Time is ſet forth when *Hoſea* propheſied, who, at God's Command typifies or repreſents *Iſrael's* ſpiritual Whoredom, and God's Judgments, by his marrying of *Gomer*; and on her begets *Jezreel*, *Lo-ruhamah* and *Lo-ammi*.

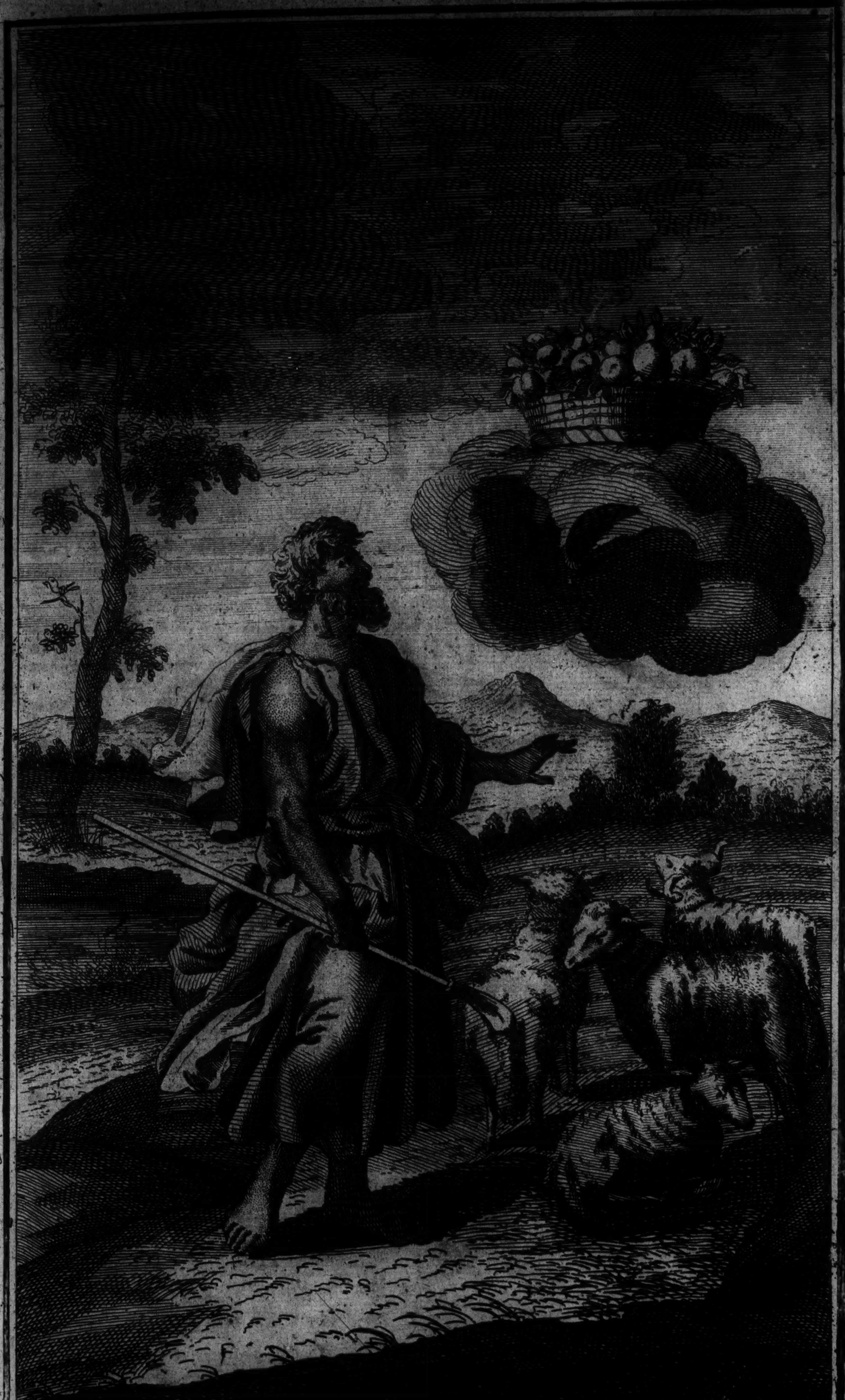
Q. *How do you interpret the Words* Gomer, Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah, *and* Lo-ammi?

A. Gomer ſignifies a Conſumption or Corruption. By *Jezreel* is meant, that they ſhould no more be called *Iſraelites*, of which they boaſted, becauſe *Iſrael* did prevail with God, but that they were as *Baſtards*, and therefore ſhould be called *Jezreelites*, that is, *ſcattered People*, alluding to *Jezreel*, which was the chief City of the Ten Tribes under *Ahab*, where *Jehu* ſhed ſo much Blood, 2 *Kings* x. 8, 11. *Lo-ruhamah* is, *no obtaining Mercy*, whereby he ſignifies God's Favour was departed from them. *Lo-Ammi* was the Sign or Type of the Ten Tribes who had rejected God, and would not be reclaimed; for the Meaning of the Word is, *Not my People*.

Becauſe they thought that God would not have been true in his Promiſe, except he had preſerved them, he declares that though they were deſtroyed, yet the true *Iſraelites*, which are Sons of the Promiſe, ſhould be without Number, and ſhould be ſtiled the Sons of the living God, who is the Fountain of Life to his Children, and who gives them lively Affections to ſerve him, and to offer

living

AMOS CHAP. I.



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The Prophecy of Amos

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living Sacrifices to the living God, *Rom.* xii. 1, 2. and 1 *Theſſ.* i. 9.

Q. *Pray expound the ſecond Verſe?*

A. *The Beginning of the Word of the Lord, by* Hoſea, *Go take unto thee a Wife of Whoredoms, and Children of Whoredoms: For the Land hath committed great Whoredoms, departing from the Lord.*——*The Beginning of the Word of the Lord.* This, ſay ſome, gives *Hoſea* the Precedence of all the Prophets that have written diſtinct Books of their Prophecies; but ſimply, he was not the firſt of all the Prophets; for in *David* and *Solomon*'s Times we meet with *Nathan* and *Abijah.* Or this Beginning may be, that at the very firſt of God's ſpeaking to *Hoſea,* he commanded him to take a Wife, *&c.* ———— *The Lord ſaid to* Hoſea; *i. e.* directed and commanded him; this was a Warrant to him to do that which otherwiſe was unſeemly for a Prophet to have done.————*Take unto thee a Wife of Whoredoms.* This was, ſay ſome, done in Viſion, and was to be told to the People as other Viſions were; it was parabolically propoſed to them, and this might be ſufficient to convince the *Jews,* would they have conſidered it well, as *David* conſidered *Nathan*'s Parable. Others ſay it was really acted, and that the Prophet, did as commanded, marry a Strumpet, or that proved to be ſo after ſhe was married. And though this would have been unſeemly in the Prophet, had he done it without this particular Direction, now the Scandal ceaſeth, and it is fit God ſhould be obeyed, and the Prophet may with Credit do what God, by his Command, had made a neceſſary Duty; namely, to marry a notorious lewd Whore.——*Children of Whoredoms.* Either ſuch as were born of ſuch a Mother as ſhe was, addicted to Lewdneſs; or elſe, with the Mother, made his Wife, he is to receive and maintain the Children ſhe had by her Adulteries. And thus underſtood, it may lead our Thoughts to God's rich Mercy towards their Anceſtors, who were (*Abraham* himſelf not excepted) Idolaters when they lived on the other Side the River, *Joſh.* xxiv. 23. yet God took them, and married them to himſelf, and ſhewed wonderful Kindneſs to them and theirs; all which is ſlighted and forgotten by their Poſterity, by you, O Idolatrous *Iſraelites!* Or it may refer more expreſsly to what God did for *Iſrael,* when he brought them out of *Egypt,* and made a Covenant with them in *Horeb,* which was a ſolemn eſpouſing them to himſelf, and ſhewed them to God. The Lord found them tainted with *Egyptian* Idolatries; yet, as the Prophet here, he married them to himſelf, and covenanted with them to be faithful to him, but they broke the Covenant.————*The Land hath committed great Whoredoms.* The *Hebrew* Phraſe, *Playing the Harlot,* ſpeaks the Continuance of this Idolatry among them, as well as the Greatneſs of the Whoredom. From their Forefathers they had been Idolaters, while God was giving them his Law (from the nuptial Day to *Hoſea*'s Time) they committed ſpiritual Whoredom, and firſt made, then worſhipped the golden Calf. Thus they left their firſt Husband, and doted on Adulterers, on Idols, as Chap. ii. 5.

Q. *The third Verſe reads thus;* So he went and took *Gomer* the Daughter of *Diblaim,* which conceived and bare him a Son; *is this to be underſtood Literally or Parabolically?*

A. If we take it Literally, this *Gomer* will be ſome known Harlot, perhaps famous for, her Beauty and Skill in the Curtezan's Art, as her Name may Import. If we take it as a Parable, we muſt take this Name for a made Name, aſſumed for its Signification; but in the beſt Senſe *Iſrael* was perfect with the Perfection which God did put upon her, *Ezek.* xvi. 14. he made her *Gomer*; and in the worſt Senſe ſhe had made herſelf *Gomer,* one who was drawing to her End, who had undone and conſumed herſelf; and ſo in one Word, God's Bounty of Mercy, and *Iſrael*'s Ingratitude is ſet forth, together with the Puniſhment that was haſtening upon her.——*The Daughter of* Diblaim. Literally underſtood, this *Diblaim* muſt be either Father or Mother of this *Gomer,* or elſe the Name of the Place where ſhe was born. Parabolically underſtood, *Diblaim, Bunches of dried Figs,* may imply the Deliciouſneſs of her Proviſion made by God, ſuch as was made at great Feaſts, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 18. and thus it will ſuit Chap. ii. 5, 9. and the Places where the Fig is mentioned as Fruit with which God had bleſſed *Iſrael.* All which abuſed to Luxury and Sin, will now make Wickedneſs Deſolate. —— *Which conceived and bare him a Son.* This ſeems to favour the literal Acceptation of all this as really done, and not only as reputed in Viſion, Parable, or Heroglyphic. But ſince either way it may be applied to the Purpoſe in Hand, I ſhall leave it to the Choice of the judicious Reader, to interpret and apply it as he thinks beſt.

CHAP. II.

The Faithful in Iſrael *contend with the People for their Idolatry, and ſet before them God's Judgments. God's gracious Promiſes of Peace, and his entring into Covenant with his Church.*

Q. WHAT *is the Signification of the Word* Ammi, *Verſe* 1, *and what are the other Points diſcuſſed in this Chapter?*

A. *Ammi* ſignifies my People, and *Ruhama,* having obtained Mercy; therefore God ſays, Seeing, that I have promiſed you Deliverance, it remains that you encourage one another to embrace the ſame, conſidering that ye are my People, on whom I will have Mercy. God likewiſe bids the People to ſet his Judgments before their Eyes, by Reaſon of their abominable Idolatry and Unthankfulneſs: After that, he promiſes to reſtore his Church, and abundantly to bleſs the ſame in the Time of the *Meſſiah.* Here are glad Tidings, gracious Promiſes and wonderful Mercies to the true *Iſraelites*; after Afflictions have brought them to God, after they are converted from Sin, by thoſe Means: At which Time God would be called *Iſhi,* that is, my Husband, knowing he was joined to them by an inviolable Covenant; but God would no more be called *Baali,* that is, my Maſter, becauſe that Name they applied to their Idols.

The Almighty promiſed ſo to bleſs them, that all Creatures ſhould favour them, and that he would make a Covenant with them not to be broken. The Earth was to bring forth plentifully, and this People, of whom the Prophet ſpeaks, ſhall openly confeſs the Lord is their God, Sovereign to command and rule, and Saviour to deliver and ſave them, their God to give them Law and Life, to direct their Obedience, and to be their exceeding great Reward for it; their God to ſanctify, juſtify and glorify them.

Q. *Pray explain the ſixth Verſe?*

A. Therefore behold, I will hedge up thy Way with Thorns, and make a Wall, that ſhe ſhall not find her Path. —— *Therefore behold.* Becauſe ſhe is ſo impetuous and ſhameleſs in her Idolatrous Courſes, nothing hath, and ſhe reſolves nothing ſhall hinder her from following them; therefore, thou lewd Woman, take Notice, that ſince thou wilt ſet no Bounds to thy Luſts, and thy Wandrings to ſatisfy them, I will deal with thee, as Men do with unruly and rambling Beaſts, ſet a Hedge of Thorns about thee; *i. e.* compaſs thee in with Wars and other Calamities, which ſhall wound and pierce thee, ſo that if thou wilt purſue thy ſinful Courſes, thou ſhalt have but little Pleaſure in them. —— *And make a Wall.* Another Alluſion to the Method Men uſe to keep in wild Cattle, which would break through Hedges, but cannot break through Walls; God will make the Calamities of this People, as a ſtrong and high Wall, over which they cannot leap, and through which they cannot break: So was the *Aſſyrian* Army under *Salmaneſer*, which coop'd them up in a long Siege of *Samaria*, and at laſt took them, and carried them into a long Captivity, which ſtill laſts. —— *She ſhall not find her Paths.* Wherein ſhe went, when ſhe ſought to *Egypt* and to *Syria* for Help; but by my Judgments, and her Enemies, Power and Watchfulneſs, ſhe ſhall always be watched and guarded, ſo that ſhe ſhall find no Way to ſend to them for Relief. Theſe were her Paths; whereas a chaſt Wife would ſeek to her Huſband for Relief.

Chap. III.

By his loving and buying an Adultereſs, God ſhews the long and deſolate Condition of Iſrael *before their Reſtoration.*

Q. W*HAT is the Subject of this Diſcourſe?*

A. Here the Prophet repreſents the Perſon of God, who loved his Church before he called her, and did not withdraw the ſame when ſhe gave herſelf unto Idols. Let this be the Emblem of my Love to the Children of *Iſrael*. By this I intend, ſaith God, to let *Iſrael* know how I have loved, and how ſhe hath loved: How greatly, dearly, conſtantly on my Part; how ſlightly, inconſtantly, falſely on her Part.

After long and ſore Troubles, having broken the Hearts and opened the Eyes of the *Iſraelites*, then they ſhall repent, with Reverence pray, depend on, conſult their God, and worſhip his Son the *Meſſiah*, whom the Father will ſend out of his infinite Goodneſs and Kindneſs.

Q. *I deſire your Interpretation of the ſecond Verſe?*

A. *So I bought her to me for fifteen Pieces of Silver, and for an Homer of Barley.* The firſt Clauſe of this Verſe exactly deſcribes the State of the *Jews* when in *Egypt*, tainted with *Egyptian* Idolatry, and poor without a Portion; bought or redeemed to be affianced to God. Whatever was the exact Quantity and Value of theſe Pieces, we need not here curiouſly enquire; it was about half the Value of a Slave, *Exod.* xxi. 32. and was about thirty-ſeven Shillings and ſix Pence. —— *An Homer of Barley.* This Meaſure might be about fourteen Buſhels; ſo the whole for her Diet, will amount to twenty-one Buſhels, no great Proviſion for her Suſtenance. Barley, the meaneſt ſort of Proviſion, is twice mentioned, the more fully to ſet forth *Iſrael's* Indigence and Ingratitude to God, and God's Bounty to *Iſrael*.

Chap. IV.

God threatens Iſrael *for the Wickedneſs of the People, and Prieſts, eſpecially for their abominable Idolatry; warning* Judah *againſt it by* Iſrael's *Calamity.*

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve from the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. He who ſpeaks is the great God; though the Meſſenger be a Man, the Meſſage is not Man's, but it is the Word, the Meſſage of the Sovereign, holy, juſt and mighty JEHOVAH; who ever ſpeaks moſt important Things, Things that reſpect our Duty and Safety.

God does vehemently rebuke and threaten *Iſrael*, by reaſon of the general Wickedneſs and Stubbornneſs of the People, Prieſts and Prophets, eſpecially for their abominable ſpiritual and bodily Whoredoms. They left their God, refuſing to be under his Guidance, endeavouring to evade his Corrections, and to fortify themſelves, Rebel-like againſt his Prophets, ſent to reprove them, truſting to their Idols.

Judah is forewarned, not to follow the Example of *Iſrael*, and the Deſtruction that hung over their Heads is foretold. Their Idols, which they worſhipped and depended on, ſhould be their Shame and Confuſion; for thy God, O *Judah*, hath curſed ſuch People: *Confounded be all they that ſerve graven Images, that boaſt themſelves of Idols*, Pſal. xcvii. 7. *If* Iſrael *do, yet,* O Judah, *do not thou ſo.*

Q. *How do you interpret the fourth Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe; *Yet let no man ſtrive, nor reprove another; for thy People are they that ſtrive with the Prieſt.* Though Judgments great and waſting are ſo ſure, though the approaching Calamities will lay all utterly deſolate; yet let none of private Capacity, no Prieſt or Prophet any more open their Mouths to reaſon and debate with this People; but let all know they are ſo obſtinate and hardened, 'tis to no Purpoſe to warn any more. No longer ſtrive or contend with them as in Cauſes pleaded before a Judge, lay not the Law before them, who have ſo often refuſed to hear it. No more chide or ſharply inveigh againſt their Sins and Ways. Or this whole Paſſage may be thus read, *Yet certainly there is none who may or can ſtrive*, &c. All are ſo corrupted, that there is none free who may with Confidence argue againſt others. But our Verſion is beſt. —— *Thy People are as they that ſtrive.* Thy Countrymen, *Hoſea*, if the former Words be the Words of God to the Prophet: Or elſe, if they be the Words of God to the People, then he ſpeaks to them of the Temper of their Neighbours and People with whom they dwelt. It is much one which we take, for *Hoſea* was now amongſt them; and whether his People or no, they are ſtill the ſame Perſons ſpoken of. There is no Ingenuity, Modeſty, or Fear of God or Man left among them, they will contend with their Teachers, Reprovers, and Counſellors. They will juſtify themſelves, and condemn all Reproof; they will adhere to Sin, and reject all better Advice, like thoſe we read of, *Mal.* i. 2, 7, and ii. 14. —— *With the Prieſt.* This doth not ſuppoſe, much leſs aſſert, the Prieſts of *Baal* to be true Prieſts; but were they as true as they were falſe, yet ſuch was the Temper of the People, that they would not hear, conſider, and amend, whoever

ever conteſted with them. Let them alone therefore to periſh like obſtinate Sinners.

CHAP. V.

God withdraws himſelf from the Prieſts, the People, and Princes of Iſrael *for their Pride, Treachery, and other Wickedneſſes. God will not return to them till they acknowledge their Offences and repent.*

Q. PRAY *give a ſummary View of this Chapter?*

A. Proclamation is made, and the Criminals are cited to appear and attend their Charge, among whom the Prieſts are firſt ſummoned: Not the Tribe of *Levi*, nor God's Prieſts, but *Baal*'s Prieſts, Prieſts of the High-places, as *Jeroboam* called them; and theſe Prieſts, and the Princes catched the poor People in their Snares, as the Fowlers did the Birds in the high Mountains.

The Prophet ſets forth the Judgments of God, by the Enemies, upon all the Eſtates of *Iſrael*, and upon *Judah* alſo, becauſe of their Tyranny, cutting them off from all divine and human Help in their Diſtreſs, God declaring that he would not return till they confeſſed and humbled themſelves for their Sins, by a ſincere Repentance.

Q. *In what Senſe do you underſtand the ſeventh Verſe*; They have dealt Treacherouſly againſt the Lord; for they have begotten ſtrange Children; now ſhall a Month devour them with their Portions?

A. The whole Houſe of *Iſrael*, Prieſts, People, and Princes, have falſified their Word and Promiſe of Fidelity and Conſtancy of Love and Affection, which they engaged when they entered into Covenant with me, turned Idolaters, and have worſhipped and relied on falſe Gods. ——— *They have begotten ſtrange Children.* As if it were not enough that they were Idolaters, they have trained up their Children in the ſame Idolatry, partly by their Inſtructions, and more by their Examples. ——*Now.* Or, therefore, or e're long.——*Shall a Month.* Either the New Moon, one particular Species of ceremonial ſuperſtitious Worſhip put for all the reſt, as ſome interpret it; or rather, a Time not long (as an Age) not as to the old World, nor as to *Nineveh*, forty Days, but a ſhorter Time; poſſibly it may refer to *Shallum*'s ſhort Time of Uſurpation, which laſted but a Month. —— *Devour them.* The *Aſſyrians* ſhall make a ſpeedy Conqueſt over you.—— *With their Portions.* Not only Perſons, but their Goods and Chattels are expoſed to the ſpeedieſt Spoiling; and as a Token of ſuch future ſpeedy Deſolation, the Prophet points out a ſhort Reign of one of the Uſurpers, and foretells the preciſe Time of his Continuance, that when they ſhould ſee this come to paſs, they might believe the reſt foretold by the Prophet ſhould alſo come to paſs. Nor is this Conjecture without ſome Ground, ſince we know that *Shallum* ſlew *Zachariah* before the People, 2 *Kings* xv. 10. implying the People's Concurrence herein, and their accepting of *Shallum* with Expectation of Peace and Proſperity, to the Increaſe of their Portion under his Government, all which was blaſted at the Month's End.

CHAP. VI.

An Exhortation to Repentance, and truſt in God, with a promiſe of Mercy. Complaint of their Inconſtancy in Good, and their Boldneſs in Evil.

Q. WHAT *is the Prophet's Drift and Purpoſe in this Chapter?*

A. The former Chapter ended with a Declaration of God's Reſolution, to bring his choſen ones, true *Iſraelites*, by deep Diſtreſs to Repentance, and to ſeek him whom they had forſaken. This Chapter begins with a Declaration of the Succeſs of this Project; the Penitent *Iſraelites* are here brought in, exhorting one another to Repentance, and Confidence in God's Mercy.

In the fourth Verſe God enters into a Debate, with both *Iſrael* (here called *Ephraimites*) and with the other two Tribes; he ſhews their being fickle in Good, and bold in Evil, for which he juſtly puniſhed them.

Q. *Pray explain the ſecond Verſe?*

A. The Words are theſe; *After two Days will he revive us, in the third he will raiſe us up, and we ſhall live in his Sight.* In this Verſe it is moſt certain we are to regard both the literal and hiſtorical Senſe, and diſtinguiſh it from the myſtical and accommodated Senſe; in the latter theſe Words foretel the Death and Reſurrection, and future Glory of *Chriſt* and *Chriſtians*, as 1 *Cor.* xv. 4. and ſo are generally interpreted and applied by Expoſitors. As to the latter, the Hiſtory in brief is thus: After ſome ſhort Time of Suffering for our Sins, or rather when our Sufferings have brought us to Repentance and Return to God, our God will ſoon after ſhew us his Grace and Favour, and revive our dead State. It is not needful to enquire how long Time theſe two Days intend, 'tis a certain Time for an uncertain, two Days for a ſhort Time. God doth not delay long when we return to him, *Jer.* x-xi. 18, 19, 20.———— *Will he revive us.* Though we were as dead Men, buried in our Miſeries, and neither deſerved from God, nor could hope from any other Hand, a Reſurrection and Recovery to a better State; yet our merciful God will quicken us again. *Ezra* iv. 8, 9. expreſſes their Return out of Captivity in thoſe Words that might Paraphraſe our Prophet. —— *In the third Day he will raiſe us up.* Mercy recovers by Degrees, and therefore a third Day is added, in which this People ſhall be raiſed up, increaſed, eſtabliſhed, confirmed; poſſibly the Prophet may allude to the third Day, which is ſaid to be a critical Day to the Wounded, who conceive Hopes if better on that Day; or poſſibly it may refer to the third Decree of *Darius* made to *Nehemiah* for building *Jeruſalem*; and the two Days may refer to the Times of *Cyrus* reviving the *Jews*, firſt by the Decree of Liberty and command to build the Temple. The ſecond Day or Times that of *Darius Hyſtatopis* to *Zerubbabel* and *Joſhua* for building the Temple, in which Work his Bounty revived the Hopes of the *Jews*; however poor and unable, yet the Temple ſhould be built, and the Worſhip of God reſtored. This was a great Reviving, but their Settlement was upon the third Decree, which was given out by *Artaxerxes Longimanus* to *Nehemiah*, Chap. ii. 1. —— *We ſhall live in his Sight.* Flouriſh in Peace, Wealth, and Joy; in pure Worſhip of God; in Righteouſneſs among ourſelves; in Safety from Enemies; the Eye of our God being upon us for Good, and we filled with the Fruits of his Favour, inheriting his Promiſes here, till we fully poſſeſs them in the light of Glory.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the eleventh Verſe?*

A. It runs thus; *Alſo O* Iſrael, *he hath ſet an*

Harveſt for thee when I returned the Captivity of thy People. This Verſe is confuſſedly very dark to Interpreters, who agree not whether *Judah* be Vocative or Nominative, or who it is that ſetteth, whether *Ephraim*, *Judah*, or God, or what Captivity is here meant; whether one paſt or to come; the Conciſeneſs of our Prophet makes him very obſcure.——— *Alſo O* Judah. Or alſo *Judah*; that is, as *Iſrael* is polluted, and muſt expect to be chaſtiſed; or O *Judah*, thou art like polluted *Iſrael* in Sin, and mighteſt be every way like in Puniſhment.——— *He hath ſet a Harveſt for thee.* But thy God hath appointed an Harveſt for thee, thou ſhalt not, as *Iſrael*, be utterly cut off, a Seed of thee ſhall be ſown, and thou ſhalt reap the Harveſt with Joy.——— *When I returned the Captivity of my People.* When I ſhall return, rather, ſo it looks to what is to come; or elſe, foraſmuch as I will turn thy Captivity.

Chap. VII.

God complains of the groſs Sins, as Falſhood, Malice, Lies, &c. Pride and Obſtinacy, &c. amongſt all Degrees of Men. Wrath againſt them; with his Complaint of their Hypocriſy.

Q. P*RAY what Subjects are here treated of it?*

A. God aſſumes the Perſon of a Phyſician or Surgeon, who compaſſionately endeavours to cure a People ſick and wounded; ſuch was the Houſe of *Iſrael*, the whole Body of the People.

God complains of their common Heat and Eagerneſs in all Manner of groſs Sins, bearing Sway as well among the great ones at Court, as among the Vulgar; ſuch as were Falſhood, Stealing, Robbing, Malice, Lies, wicked Alliances, Drunkenneſs, Mockery, and Entrance into Leagues with Heathens, accompanied with a ſtupid Pride, Obſtinacy, and Senſeleſſneſs. God foretells them his rigteous Judgments, and goes on complaining of their Hypocricy and Incorrigibleneſs, in truſting to their own Strength.

Q. *I deſire your Expoſition of the firſt Verſe?*

A. *When I would have healed* Iſrael, *then the Iniquity of* Ephraim *was diſcovered, and the Wickedneſs of* Samaria: *for they commit Falſhood: and the Thief cometh in, and the Troop of Robbers ſpoileth without.* Whether this Chapter be a new Sermon, or a Continuation of that begun, Chap. vi. we need not enquire, nor are there any Particulars by which we can gueſs at the Time when this healing Work was attempted, but ſo ſoon as it was endeavoured, it's ſpoken indefinitely, and ſo to be interpreted.——— *I would have healed* Iſrael. God aſſumes the Perſon of a Phyſician, as aboveſaid.——— *Then the Iniquity of* Ephraim *was diſcovered.* The hidden, old, and putrifying Sores, here called Iniquity, the Impieties and Injuſtice; of *Iſrael*, called *Ephraim*, or of *Ephraim* the chief Tribe of this revolting Kingdom. Some would have it mean the Rulers or principal Men. Their Iniquity was diſcovered, or broke out, as it frequently happens in curing old Sores, ſome deeper and more rooted Diſtemper. unthought of by the Surgeon, appears.——— *The Wickedneſs of* Samaria. *Samaria* was the royal City of the Kingdom, where Citizens, Prieſts, Prophets, and Courtiers, as much outſhone others, as they exceeded them in Wealth and Eaſe.——— *For they commit Falſhood.* Where lying and cozening each other is acted as if it were a Buſineſs they were bound to attend. —— *The Thief cometh in.* Secret Thefts, or robbing others, by ſubtle and undiſcerned Methods. —— *The Troop of Robbers ſpoileth without.* And open Violence, by Hands joined to Hands, to ſpoil abroad. In a Word, the Strength and Danger of their Diſeaſe appears and increaſes more and more under the Endeavours to heal them.

Chap. VIII.

God threatens Iſrael *for tranſgreſſing his Law and Covenant; for ſetting up a King of their own. Their Idolatry threaten'd by conſuming the Fruit of their Land, and their Diſperſion among the* Gentiles. *God refuſes their Sacrifices, and threatens them for their Sins; and* Judah *alſo.*

Q. W*HAT Points of Inſtruction does the Prophet here purſue?*

A. The Lord here commands the Prophet to publiſh, as by Sound of Trumpet, that which God will bring upon apoſtate *Iſrael*, to awaken them with the Alarm of War; and God by this gives notice to *Iſrael* of the Enemies Approach, ready to purſue, deſtroy, carry away the People, and to conſume the Fruit of their Land, becauſe of their forgetting, forſaking, and deſpiſing of God, his Covenant, Law, and all wholſome Inſtructions; in a Word, all that is good; and ſetting up a Kingdom of their own, without God: Having thereby inſtituted and purſued all Manner of Idolatry, hypocritical Worſhip, and eſpecially that abominable one of the Calves, with heatheniſh Leagues and Alliances.

Judah having imitated *Iſrael*, and made themſelves like to *Iſrael* in Sin, God will make them alike in Sufferings; their Fire which their Sin hath kindled, ſhall conſume both.

Q. *How do you underſtand the fifth Verſe?*

A. *Thy Calf,* O Samaria, *hath caſt thee off; mine Anger is kindled againſt thee: How long will it be e're they attain to Innocency?* *Jeroboam* at firſt ſet up two Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*; but 'tis probable that is Proceſs of Time there were more ſet up in other Places; for when *Iſrael* forgot his God, he built Temples, Verſe 14. The Calf then here is the chief Idol ſet up in *Samaria*, and worſhipped there; the Prophet in Contempt of the Idol, and in Deriſion of their Folly, gives it its right Name; 'tis no God, but a Calf, nor yet ſo much, for that it is ſenſeleſs and without Life.—— *Hath caſt thee off.* Been the Occaſion of caſting thee far off: Or elſe thus; If thy God, if thy Idol. thy Calf, has done ought, 'tis Miſchief; thy Calf could not keep itſelf in *Samaria*, but is either carried a captive God, or broken into Pieces, is carried piece-meal into *Aſſyria*, and ſo hath caſt thee off; it carries ſomewhat of Irony in it. —— *Mine Anger is kindled againſt them.* Vow it is evident, that my Anger, as Fire, burns againſt the Idols, Idol-makers and Idol-worſhippers, and ſhall ſo burn till they are purified or conſumed.—— *How long will it be e're they attain to Innocency.* The Prophet is very conciſe, and perhaps here muſt be ſuppoſed ſome or other (ſome one of the People, or the Prophet himſelf) ſighing out to God, How long ſhall thine Anger burn? and Anſwer returned by God, How long will it be e're they be cleanſed?

Chap. IX.

God threatens the Iſraelites *with ſpeedy Famine, Captivity, and Deſtruction; their Corruptions and Abominations threaten'd with Barrenneſs and Slaughter of their Children; their Diſperſion among the Nations for deſpiſing God.*

Q. PRAY *what ſort of Sins are the* Iſraelites *reproved for in this Chapter?*

A. God checks *Iſrael* for their idolatrous Rejoicing in the Harveſt-time, which he will ſoon put an End to, by the coming Famine, the carrying them away Captive, the want of the publick Worſhip, and the Mourning and Deſolation of their Land.

Falſe and true Prophets are oppoſed one to the other, and in Tribulation the People ſhall know that they were deluded by them who alledged themſelves to be their Prophets and ſpiritual Men. The Prophet's Duty is to bring Men to God, and not to be a Snare to pull them from God.

Here is a farther Complaint of *Iſrael*'s deep Corruption, after the Example of their unthankful idolatrous Forefathers, for which God threatens them with Barrenneſs, and a Slaughter of their Children; and the Prophet ſeeing the great Plagues of God towards *Ephraim*, prays to God to make them barren, rather than this great Slaughter ſhould come upon their Children. Here is alſo a farther Recital of their Idolatry, with a Denunciation of God's Wrath and Judgment: The chief Cauſe of their Deſtruction is, that they commit Idolatry, and corrupt their Religion in *Gilgal*.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the firſt Verſe?*

A. *Rejoice not,* O Iſrael, *for Joy, as other People: For thou haſt gone a whoring from thy God, thou haſt loved a Reward upon every Corn-floor.* This might ſeem a moroſe Humour of a diſcontented ſullen Preacher. What! forbid a People to rejoice when Things proſper with them? When ſhould they rejoice, if not then? The Prophet, who had a deeper Reach, and took a large Proſpect of Things, had good Cauſe to adviſe, or warn, or forbid as he does; for he ſaw more Cauſe to grieve than to rejoice, and to mourn than to be merry.——*O* Iſrael. You of the ten Tribes.——*For Joy.* For any Thing that is counted juſt Matter of Joy; though at preſent you proſper under the victorious Arms of *Jeroboam* the Second, or *Menahem*, and the Safety he hath procured by a Confederacy with *Aſſyria*, though at other Times theſe might be Matter of rejoicing, now in thy Circumſtances, O *Iſrael*, 'tis not meet thou ſhouldeſt ſhew any Gladneſs.—— *As other People.* With Feaſtings, publick Games, and Triumphs, or with ſolemn Sacrifices of Thankſgiving, or with erecting Statues to the Memory of your great and brave Commanders, or for continuing the Remembrance of their Atchievements. —— *For thou haſt gone a whoring from thy God.* With thee, O *Iſrael*, 'tis as unſeemly as 'tis for an adulterous Wife to rejoice and be jovial, whilſt the Guilt of her Adulteries, and the Shame of her Lewdneſſes, and the Diſpleaſure of her Husband fly in her Face, and whiſper Reproofs in her Ear. —— *Thou haſt loved a Reward.* Such as is given by Adulterers to lewd Women.—— *Upon every Corn-floor.* Thou haſt loved to ſee thy Floor full, and haſt thought and ſaid thy Idols had ſo furniſhed thee, and therefore thou didſt love them. Tho' Mirth might become an honeſt Woman, it doth not ſo well ſuit with a diſhoneſt Adultereſs; the very Place, the Company, and Occaſion upbraid ſuch an one rejoicing with her lewd Adulterers: Beſides, this Adultereſs's Joys will be ſhort, and end in Sorrow and Shame; ſo will thine, O *Iſrael*.

Chap. X.

God complains and reproves Iſrael'*s manifold Sins of Unthankfulneſs, Idolatry,* &c. *threatens their Ruin, and the carrying away of their Calves, to their Shame. His juſt Judgments, by their Enemies, inflicted on them and their King.*

Q. EXPLAIN *the firſt Verſe?*

A. Iſrael *is an empty Vine, he bringeth forth Fruit unto himſelf: According to the Multitude of his Fruit, he hath increaſed the Altars: According to the Goodneſs of his Land, he hath made goodly Images.*——*Iſrael* and *Ephraim*, with this Prophet, are convertible Terms, and ſignify the ſame People, the Ten Tribes that revolted from the Houſe of *God*.—— *An empty Vine.* A Vine waſted and ſpoiled, that hath loſt its prolifick Virtue of bringing forth Fruit, or is robb'd and ſtript of the Fruit it produces; this partly for want of the divine Protection and Benediction, which they were wont to have, and partly from an inherent Barrenneſs and Weakneſs in this Vine.——*He bringeth forth Fruit himſelf.* Whatever Fruit was brought forth by its remaining Strength, was not brought forth to God, for his Service and Honour, but for themſelves, for their own Uſe, for the Service of a State Intereſt, to make Preſents and to pay Tribute; or which is yet worſe, to maintain the Worſhip of Idols. ——*According to the Multitude of his Fruit.* When the Land yielded more plentiful Increaſe, this Plenty was impiouſly employed on multiplied Idols, or on multiplied Altars built to the ſame Idols.——*He hath increaſed the Altars.* Of their Idols, either by adding to the Number of Altars, or to the Number of Sacrifices offered to the Idols on their Altars.—— *According to the Goodneſs of his Land.* Idolaters ſottiſhly imagined that the Goodneſs of their Land was a Bleſſing on them from their Idols: Thus ſacrilegiouſly they robbed God, and on this Miſtake they proceed to farther Impiety. ——*He hath made goodly Images.* More ſtately, more curiouſly wrought, more richly adorned; and it is moſt likely, more for Number too, accounting it a great Devotion to have many, and rich Statues of their Idols.

Chap. XI.

God's Love and Kindneſs to Iſrael *ſince their being in* Egypt; *their Abuſe of Mercy, Diſobedience and Ingratitude. His Judgment upon them; their Captivity in* Aſſyria. *A Promiſe of Mercy, and their Converſion to him; the Deceitfulneſs of* Ephraim *and* Iſrael, *but the Thankfulneſs of* Judah.

Q. PRAY *give the Senſe of the 10th Verſe?*

A. *They ſhall walk after the Lord; he ſhall roar like a Lion: When he ſhall roar, then ſhall the Children tremble from the Weſt.* They whom infinite Mercy ſpareth, the choice Remnant, ſhall hear and obey, worſhip and depend on the Lord, on the *Meſſiah*, of whom theſe and the Words in the next Verſe certainly ſpeak. They refer alſo to the Return out of Captivity, both in Hiſtory and Type of our Deliverance out of ſpiritual and eternal Captivity. —— *He ſhall roar like a Lion. Chriſt*, the *Lion* of the Tribe of *Judah*, ſhall ſend out his Goſpel, which is meant by the *Lion*'s roaring, *Joel* iii. 16. of whom it is obſerved, that he does by roaring gather his Whelps and others of his Kind to the Prey; thus by the Voice of the mighty Lord in the Goſpel the Elect ſhall be gathered to partake of eternal Life.——*When he ſhall roar, then the Children ſhall tremble from the Weſt.* The Spirit, by its Power, awakening them to a Sight of their Sins, ſhall make them fear and tremble; *from the Weſt, i. e.* to the Ends of the Earth. This is the myſtical Senſe; but the literal, probably, refers to the Return of the *Jews* out of Captivity, when many out of *Aſſyria* and *Egypt* returned, and ſome report 100,000 from *Ethiopia Cuſæa*, and the Parts towards *Arabia*; and probably this has Reſpect to *Darius*'s Decree, on the Behalf of thoſe who followed the Counſel of *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, finiſhed the Temple, reſtored the Worſhip of God, reformed ſtrange and unlaw-Marriages, paid their Tithes, *&c.* in theſe they follow'd the Lord; and *Darius* made a Decree for them, terrible to the Children of the *Weſt*, as the roaring of a Lion. Let this Work go forward, *Ezra* vi. 7, *&c.* who dares hinder it? Let Timber be taken out of his Houſe, and a Gallows made thereof, and ſuch be hanged thereon, Ver. 11, 12. All this filled the Inhabitants thereof with great Fear, when God thus gathered his diſperſed ones.

Chap. XII.

God reproves Ephraim *and* Judah *for their Sins, and covenanting with the* Aſſyrians; *exhorts them by his former Mercies to Repentance. The unjuſt Dealings and Idolatry of* Ephraim *provokes God's Wrath.*

Q. G*IVE a ſummary Account of this Chapter?*

A. God reproves *Ephraim* and *Judah* for their Sins, and Covenant with the *Aſſyrians*; ſetting before them his great Favours and Mercies ſhewed to their Forefather *Jacob*, and to them all, exhorting them to a ſerious Repentance. As for *Ephraim*, he is more like the wicked *Canaanites* than godly *Abraham*, or *Iſaac*; and ſeeing the People will not acknowledge God's Benefits, he declares he will bring them again to dwell in Tents, as in the Feaſt of the Tabernacles, which they now contemned. The People are bid to remember *Jacob*'s Flight in extreme Miſery and Servitude; and the ſecond, which was their coming out of *Egypt*, in a glorious Deliverance, by the Hands of *Moſes*; that they might be afraid, leſt God ſhould cauſe the People, the third Time to be led into Captivity.

After all Means uſed from Time to Time, to reclaim idolatrous ſinning *Iſrael*, yet ſtill they provoked God to Indignation by their Idolatries, Perjuries, Oppreſſions, Murders, and all Manner of Sins, which uſe to be rife among Idolaters, theſe Things were Bitterneſs unto God; and for this Reaſon God promiſes to return the Shame on *Ephraim*, which he had caſt upon his Omnipotency, his Worſhip, Temple and Prophets.

Chap. XIII.

Ephraim'*s Glory and Excellency, by reaſon of Idolatry vaniſhes. God's Anger ſtirred up by their Unthankfulneſs; his gracious Promiſes of Mercy and Salvation to them. The Deſtruction of all* Samaria *threaten'd for their Rebellion.*

Q. W*HAT are the Subjects of the Prophet's Diſcourſe here?*

A. Ephraim's Authority and Excellency dies and vaniſhes; by taking *Baal* to be their God, ading this Idolatry to their former Sins. The falſe Prophets perſuaded the Idolaters to offer their Children, after the Example of *Abraham*: And God ſhews how they ſhould exhort one another to the ſame, and to kiſs and worſhip thoſe Calves which were their Idols; yet God calls them to Repentance, declaring he is their only Saviour, and reproving their Ingratitude.

The Deſtruction of *Ephraim* is certain, and God's Benefits towards them, declare it comes not of him; therefore their own Malice, Idolatry, and vain Confidence in Men, muſt needs be the cauſe thereof.

The Prophet aſſures *Ephraim* that the Puniſhment of his Sins will overtake him ſuddenly, with very great Anguiſh, and with as great a Certainty, as ſuddenly, inevitably, and with as much Danger as a travelling Woman, if he be not wiſer, and return to God. As a Child that ſticks in the Birth, ſo *Ephraim* juſt at the Birth heſitates, one while will, another whiſe will not return to God, thus dieth under Delay. It is farther declared, that no Power ſhall reſiſtt God, when he will deliver his; even in Death will he give them Life; but Deſtruction is to fall on the Wicked, becauſe they will not change his Purpoſe. The Deſtruction of *Samaria* is likewiſe predicted.

Q. *The firſt Verſe requires ſome Explanation?*

A. *When* Ephraim *ſpake, trembling, he exalted himſelf in* Iſrael; *but when he offended in* Baal, *he died.* ——*When.* So ſoon as, or according as, as the *Hebrew* Phraſe bears and implieth, there was a Time when, according to the Word of *Ephraim*, there was deep Impreſſion on the Hearers. —— *Ephraim.* Who, ſay ſome, was *Jeroboam* Son of *Nebat*, an *Ephramite*; but this is wide of Truth, nor ſuits the Text, which refers to their worſhipping of *Baal*, and this came into Uſe in *Iſrael*, in *Ahab*'s Time, 1 *Kings* xvi. 31. his Wife *Jezebel*, Daughter to *Ethbaal*, King of the *Zidonians*, prevailed with him to take away her Country Idol, and add to *Jeroboam's* Calves. *Ephraim* here, is either the Tribe of *Ephraim*, which, of all the Ten Tribes was the moſt powerful, and when angry and diſcontented, made the other Tribes afraid, or rather the whole Kingdom of *Iſrael*, called frequently in *Hoſea*, *Ephraim.* —— *Spake.* When he conſulted, commanded, threatened, or ſent out his Proclamation; 'tis ſpeaking like a King, or a Kingdom's ſpeaking, which is back'd with Power ſufficient to act as they ſpeak. —— *Trembling.* The Tribes, and the neighbouring Kingdoms apprehended Danger, and were fearful of the Conſequences too, all Men felt within themſelves a Commotion and dreadful Apprehenſion of the Conſequence. Such once was the Authority, Power and Glory of *Ephraim.* —— *He exalted himſelf in* Iſrael. Was magnified, advanced, and made glorious; the Kingdom flouriſhed in Multitudes of People; in Abundance of Wealth, in the Succeſſes of their Counſels, and in their Credit abroad. In this flouriſhing State, *Ephraim*, a principal

Tribe, and which ſet up for the royal Dignity, and carried it, had a principal Share; and is ſaid to exalt himſelf in or with *Iſrael.* —— *But when he offended in Baal.* So ſoon as he ſinned, by taking *Baal* to be his God, added Idolatry to his former Sins.——*He died.* Undid himſelf, loſt his Power, Glory and Bravery, and became as a dead Man.

Chap. XIV.

Iſrael *exhorted to Repentance, and taught the Practice of it. A Promiſe to heal their Backſlidings, and beſtow on them great Bleſſings.*

Q. THE Prophet exhorts the People to Repentance, to avoid all the before-mentioned Plagues, willing them to declare by Words their Obedience and Repentance; he ſhews them alſo how they ſhould confeſs their Sins, declaring that this is the trueſt Sacrifice that the Faithful can offer, even Thanks and Praiſe: And to encourage them, he declares how ready God is to receive them them that repent.

The Lord, on their Repentance, promiſes Pardon, with a gracious Promiſe of the Grace and Bleſſings to come under the *Meſſiah.* The People are farther directed heedfully to obſerve, conſider, and put in Practice both theſe and all other godly Inſtructions: Whoſoever, with any tolerable Degree of Wiſdom, will view theſe Things, and ſeriouſly conſider of them, they ſhall underſtand and know that the Prophet hath given the beſt Advice, and that it is the ſafeſt Way to follow it, for fear of falling under the Weight of their own Sins, and God's Wrath.

The reaſoning upon Righteouſneſs and Judgments to come, by a Priſoner at the Bar, threw once a *Roman* Governor into a Fit of Trembling: It is from theſe Pangs that Men of vicious Lives are endeavouring to ſkreen themſelves by Infidelity, and the Hopes that their Souls and Bodies will expire together; and this is the Opiate upon which their fancied Happineſs depends.

Although the holy Scripture inſtructs us in all Things neceſſary to our everlaſting Salvation, and affords the greateſt Comfort and Support in our Paſſage to it, yet ſuch is the Pride and Perverſeneſs of ſome Men, that they chuſe to be guided by their own weak Reaſon, rather than ſubmit to the Direction of the Divine Revelation. But it is no Wonder that thoſe who are indulging their vicious Inclinations, ſhould hate that Light, which not only reproves, but denounces eternal Vengeance againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of Men.

Q. *Pray expound the 5th Verſe?*

A. *I will be as the Dew unto* Iſrael: *He ſhall grow as the Lilly, and caſt forth his Roots as* Lebanon.——*I,* the Lord, who have pardoned, and am appeaſed.——*Will be as the Dew.* I will refreſh and water, that they may grow, be fruitſul, and flouriſh; as the Dew in thoſe Countries, where it was more abundant than with us, and for ſome Months together ſupplied the Want of Rain; ſo God will refreſh and comfort, and make fruitful in good Works, thro' his Grace, ſuch as return to him.——*Unto* Iſrael. Thoſe who do unfeignedly, not hypocritically, confeſs, pray, and repent.——*He ſhall grow as the Lilly.* Which grows apace, is fragrant, beautiful, and delights in Valleys, and often grows among Thorns; ſo the *Iſrael* of God, though among Troubles, and in low Eſtate, yet is comely and fragrant to the Lord, and grows up in him ſpeedily.——*And caſt forth his Root as* Lebanon. Put for the Trees of *Lebanon*; as thoſe Trees ſpread forth their Roots, grow up to Strength, are moſt beautiful, odoriferous and durable, (Cedars in *Lebanon* are theſe Trees,) ſo ſhall the true *Iſrael* be bleſſed of God, ſo flouriſhing and happy ſhall the Church be under *Chriſt.*

Q. *Being come to the Concluſion of this Book, what general Obſervations do you make upon it?*

A. No Part of this Prophecy being hiſtorical, the Reader need only be informed, that it relates to, and treats of the Times of the Kings of *Iſrael,* from the latter Part of the Reign of *Jeroboam* the Second, to the Time of the Captivity of the Ten Tribes by *Salmaneſer*; and from the latter Part of the Reign of *Uzziah,* through the Reigns of *Jotham* and *Ahaz,* and unto the Beginning of the Reign of *Hezekiah,* Kings of *Judah.* This Prophecy therefore will be underſtood, and read to the beſt Advantage, along with the Stories of thoſe Times, as related in the fourteenth, fifteenth, ſixteenth, ſeventeeth, and eighteenth Chapters of the Book of *Chronicles*; according to which it appears, that *Jeroboam* was co-temporary with *Uzziah,* who began his Reign in the twenty-ſeventh Year of *Jeroboam*; reckoning thence to the forty-firſt Year of his Reign, which was the laſt of *Jeroboam,* there will be fourteen Years of *Uzziah*'s Reign, in which *Hoſea* propheſied. But if there were ſome Years of Viceroyſhip in which *Amaziah* reigned with his Father *Joſiah,* and the like between *Jeroboam* and his Father, then a longer Synchroniſm ariſes between *Uzziah* and *Jeroboam,* and a larger Space of Time for *Hoſea* to propheſy in their Days.

Jotham, who ſucceeded *Uzziah* as Governor, and judged the People, while *Uzziah,* being a Leper, was, according to the Law, retired from converſing with Men, and dwelt in a ſeparate Houſe, retained the royal Title and Authority; but it is uncertain how many Years this was: Some ſay fifteen Years, others four, (for we read 2 *Kings* xv. 33. that he reigned ſixteen Years; now the four here mentioned, ſeem to be thoſe Years of his Viceroyſhip or Government for *Uzziah*) yet others ſay, his Governor's Power was of ſhorter Date, and that *Uzziah* was ſtruck with the Plague of Leproſy, in the laſt Year of his Age and Reign. This ſeems ſcarce conſiſtent with the Report of *Jotham*'s being over the Houſe of the King, judging the People, and the Leper King's dwelling in a ſeparate Houſe, till the Day of his Death, 2 *Kings* xv. 5. and 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 21. They ſeem miſtaken who place this Stroke of Leproſy ſo late; and they err as much who place it at the twenty-fifth of *Uzziah,* and make him a Leper, and ſeclude him twenty-ſeven Years.

THE BOOK

OF THE PROPHET

JOEL.

Since ſo many undeterminable Points of leſs Moment occur in our Prophet, as of what Tribe he was, whether his Father was a Prophet, whether he prophecied in Jeroboam's *or* Hezekiah's *Time; whether Contemporary with* Hoſea, Amos, *and* Iſaiah; *whether he preached to the Ten Tribes, or to the Two Tribes; or to both; whether the Locuſts are literal only, or typical, and ſignificative of Enemies, or how many Years they continued; what Nation they did prefigure; when the Execution began, when ended; or when he began, or how long he continued to prophecy; ſince all theſe Things are doubtful, we may well reſt contented in the indiſputable Things of greater Moment, ſuch as the Divine Authority with which he came, atteſted by himſelf,* Chap. i. 1. *and confirmed to us by the Apoſtle,* Acts ii. 17. Rom. x. 13. *and by* Chriſt *himſelf,* Matt. xxiv. 29. Mark xiii. 24. Luke xxi. 25. *All he ſpoke is the Word of God. The pernicious Conſequences of national Sins, ſuch as were viſible on God's own People at this very Time in parching Drought, devouring Locuſts, and Famine. The only Method for removing theſe Judgments, were Faſting, Prayer, and Amendment of Life. The ſucceſſive Sufferings of the Church under the ſeveral Monarchies till the Coming of the* Meſſiah, *with the wonderful Preſervation of the Good during thoſe Times. The juſt and final Deciſions of God will make for his Children againſt their Oppreſſors in thoſe Kingdoms, doing it by raiſing the ſucceeding Empire to puniſh and overthrow the precedent. The Converſion of the* Jews, *the Calling of thr* Gentiles. *The Advancement of the Kingdom of the* Meſſiah, *and Communication of Gifts and Graces to the Church. The final and univerſal Deciſion of all Things that concern God and his Church on the one Side, and their Enemies on the other. The general Judgment of Quick and Dead, are the great Subjects he doth in plainer or darker Terms ſet before us. In the unfolding of the Whole, whoever excludes the Letter and Hiſtorical Reference, will fail on one Hand; and whoever excludes the Typical or Myſtical Reference, will err as much on the other. In a due and juſt Application of both lies the true Mean.*

CHAP. I.

Joel, *by Gods Command, ſets before them divers fearful Judgments; which he exhorts them to obſerve, to mourn and lament. A Command to faſt and pray, by reaſon of their Calamity.*

I*N what King's Reign did the Prophet* Joel *flouriſh?*

A. The Time of *Joel's* prophecying, tho' not demonſtrable, is with the greateſt Probability laid about the latter End of *Jeroboam* the Second's Reign over *Iſrael*, and in the Days of *Uzziah* over *Judah*. The Prophet, at God's Command, ſets before the People the fearful Plague of all Manner of Vermin, exhorting them to take ſpecial Notice thereof, and conſider the ſame; as alſo to mourn and lament; with a Command to faſt and pray by reaſon of it.

Q. How do you interpret the ſixth Verſe?

A. Let us read it; *For a Nation is come up upon my Land, ſtrong, and without Number, whoſe Teeth are as the Teeth of a Lion, and he hath the Cheek-teeth of a great Lion.* This Verſe favours their Conjecture, who take the Locuſts and Vermin, mentioned Ver. 4, to be emblematical in Part, as well as litteral; for it ſeems not very ſuitable to call their Teeth the Teeth of a Lion.——*A Nation.* An innumerable Multitude of Locuſts and Caterpillers, here called a Nation, as *Solomon* calls the Conies and Ants, *Prov.* xxx. 25, 26. Prognoſtick of a very numerous and mighty Nation, that e'er long ſhould invade *Judah*.——*Is come upon my Land.* Or ſuddenly will come upon *Canaan*, which he calls his Land, or more particularly the Two Tribes, *Judea* ſtrictly taken.——*Strong and without Number.* Mighty in Power, and undaunted in Courage, if ye refer it to the *Aſſyrians* and *Babylonians*; if to thoſe Vermin they are, though each by itſelf, yet in thoſe Multitudes which come, ſtrong enough, and irreſiſtible, and ſhall do God's Work; that is, waſte the Land, and devour all before them; and in ſuch Multitudes, that none of you ſhall be able to count them.—*The Teeth of a Lion.* A ſtrong Lion of middle Age, that hath

Whelps, and hunts the Prey for them.—— *A great Lion.* Which is old and more fierce and terrible in his Looks, no ways leſſened in his Strength, and that preys for his young ones. Now what Waſte ſuch Lions make, ſuch the *Aſſyrians* make.

Chap. II.

The Prophet ſhews Zion *the Terribleneſs of God's Judgment; exhorts to Humiliation and Repentance, by enjoining Faſting and Prayer; promiſes a Bleſſing thereon. The bleſſed State of* Zion *at the coming of the* Meſſiah, *and the fearful Trouble of the World at his laſt Appearance.*

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects of Inſtruction in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet continues his Advice or Exhortation to the Prieſts, who were by Office appointed to ſummon the ſolemn Aſſemblies, and to call them together by Sound of Trumpet or Cornet, and ſo he ſets before their Eyes the Terribleneſs of God's Judgments, exhorting to ſerious Humiliation and Repentance, enjoining Faſting and Praying, and thereupon promiſing God's Bleſſing, and the Plague's Removal.

He farther prophecies of preſent and future Bleſſings, and the bleſſed State of the Church through the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, and ſending forth of the *Holy Ghoſt*; foretelling withal fearful Troubles in the World before the terrible Day of the Lord. Great to all, terrible to the Rejectors and Perſecutors of *Chriſt*. This was fulfilled partly in the Devaſtation of *Jeruſalem*, but ſhall fully and finally be fulfilled in the Day of *Judgment*, and at the Conflagration of the World. But the Lord will preſerve his peculiar People, called to the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, to profeſs his Name, to believe in *Chriſt*, and by him to wait for eternal Life and Glory, *John* x. 16. *Acts* xiii. 46. *Rom.* xi. 4, 5, 7.

The Prophet, in this Chapter, warns *Iſrael* of the dreadful Judgments of God that were coming upon them; what theſe Judgments in particular were, Interpreters are divided in their Opinions, whether they were the Deſolations of the *Chaldeans, Babylonians*, or Locuſts; and ſome think, from the ſublime Expreſſions uſed by the Prophet, he means the dreadful Coming of God to judgment at the laſt Day, and the Calamities which are to precede it. However, the whole Chapter is written in ſo elegant and divine a Strain, that we ſhall make no Scruple to give it the Reader entire.

Blow ye the Trumpet in Zion, *and ſound an Alarm in my holy Mountain: Let all the Inhabitants of the Land tremble: For the Day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at Hand; a Day of Darkneſs, and of Gloomineſs, a Day of Clouds and of thick Darkneſs, as the Morning ſpread upon the Mountains: A great People and a ſtrong, there hath not been ever the like, neither ſhall be any more after it, even to the Years of many Generations. A Fire devoureth before them, and behind them a Flame burneth: The Land is as the Garden of* Eden *before them, aud behind them a deſolate Wilderneſs; yea, and nothing ſhall eſcape them. The Appearance of them is as the Appearance of Horſes, and as Horſemen, ſo ſhall they run. Like the Noiſe of Chariots on the Tops of Mountains ſhall they leap; like the Noiſe of a Flame of Fire that devoureth the Stubble, as a ſtrong People ſet in battle array. Before their Face the People ſhall be much pained: All Faces ſhall gather Blackneſs. They ſhall run like mighty Men, they ſhall climb the Wall like Men of War, and they ſhall march every one on their Ways, and they ſhall not break their Ranks. Neither ſhall one thruſt another, they ſhall walk every one in his Path: And when they fall upon the Sword, they ſhall not be wounded. They ſhall run to and fro in the City. They ſhall run upon the Wall, they ſhall climb up upon the Houſes: They ſhall enter in at the Windows like a Thief. The Earth ſhall quake before them, the Heavens ſhall tremble, the Sun and the Moon ſhall be dark, and the Stars ſhall withdraw their ſhining. And the Lord ſhall utter his Voice before his Army: For his Camp is very great: For he is ſtrong that executeth his Word: For the Day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it? Therefore alſo now, ſaith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your Heart, and with faſting and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your Hearts and not your Garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: For he is Gracious and Merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great Kindneſs, and repenteth him of the Evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a Bleſſing behind him, even a Meat-offering, and a Drink-offering unto the Lord your God? Blow the Trumpet in* Zion, *ſanctify a Faſt, call a ſolemn Aſſembly. Gather the People; ſanctify the Congregation; aſſemble the Elders; gather the Children, and thoſe that ſuck the Breaſt; let the Bridegroom go forth of his Chamber, and the Bride out of her Cloſet. Let the Prieſts, the Miniſters of the Lord, weep between the Porch and the Altar, and let them ſay, Spare thy People O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to reproach; that the Heathen ſhould rule over them: Wherefore ſhould they ſay among the People, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous of his Land, and pity his People. Yea, the Lord will anſwer and ſay unto his People, Behold, I will ſend you Corn, and Wine, and Oil, and ye ſhall be ſatisfied therewith: And I will no more make you a Reproach among the Heathrn. But I will remove far off from you the northern Army, and will drive him into a Land barren and deſolate, with his Face toward the Eaſt Sea; and his hinder Part towards the utmoſt Sea; and his Stink ſhall come up, and his ill Savour ſhall come up, becauſe he hath done great Things. Fear not, O Land, be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great Things. Be not afraid, ye Beaſts of the Field; for the Paſtures of the Wilderneſs do ſpring, for the Tree beareth her Fruit, the Fig-tree and the Vine do yield their Strength. Be glad then, ye children of* Zion, *and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he hath given you the former Rain moderately; and he will cauſe to come down to you the Rain, the former Rain, and the latter Rain the firſt Month. And the Floors ſhall be full of Wheat, and the Fats ſhall overflow with Wine and Oil. And I will reſtore to you the Ears that the Locuſt hath eaten, the Canker-worm, and the Cater-pillar, and the Palmer-worm, my great Army which I ſent among you. And ye ſhall eat in plenty, and be ſatisfied; and praiſe the Name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wonderfully with you and my People ſhall never be aſhamed. And ye ſhall know that I am in the midſt of* Iſrael, *and that I am the Lord your God, and none elſe; and my People ſhall never be aſhamed. And it ſhall come to paſs afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all Fleſh; and your Sons and your Daughters ſhall* *propheſy; your old Men ſhall dream Dreams, your young Men ſhall ſee Viſions: And alſo upon the Servants and upon the Handmaids in thoſe Days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will ſhew Wonders in the Heavens, and in the Earth, Blood and Fire, and Pillars of Smoke. The Sun ſhall be turned into Darkneſs, and the Moon into Blood, before the great and terrible Day of the Lord comes. And it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever ſhall call on the Name of the Lord ſhall be delivered; for in Mount* Zion, *and in* Jeruſalem, *ſhall be Deliverance, as the Lord hath ſaid, and in the Remnant whom the Lord ſhall call.*

Q. *In what Senſe do you take the twenty-firſt Verſe*; Fear not, O Land, be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great Things?

A. The Land is ſaid to quake, at the Approach of this devouring Army; now at the Approach of Mercy 'tis encouraged, and commanded not to fear; by the ſame Figure, and in the ſame Senſe, it ſhall not fear now, as before it did quake.—— *Be glad and rejoice.* This tells us that *Fear not*, was a *Meioſis*, to ſhout for Joy, or to expreſs the greateſt Confidence.———— *For the Lord*; who is your God, whom you ſeek, who by me aſſures you, 'tis his gracious Purpoſe to do great Things for your Good. —— *Will do great Things.* The Locuſts, God's Meſſengers and Servants, did great Things againſt, but now God will recall theſe and will do great Things for *Iſrael*.

Chap. III.

God's Judgments againſt the Enemies of his Church. He calls to the Gentiles *to prepare for War; ſhews his awful Appearance in* Zion; *promiſes everlaſting Happineſs to his Church, and threatens the utter Deſtruction of his Enemies.*

Q. A*GAINST whom does the Prophet denounce Judgments in this Prophecy?*

A. Here is a Prophecy of God's Judgments upon the Enemies of his Church, deriding their vain Devices and Preparations againſt the ſame. God calls to the *Gentiles* to prepare for War, and ſhews his awful Appearance in *Zion*, promiſing everlaſting Happineſs to his Church, whom he will cleanſe from Blood, becauſe the Lord dwells in *Zion*. As much as to ſay, I am *Jehovah* dwelling in *Zion*, where the Law of Grace was publiſhed, where the Wonders of pardoning and ſanctifying Grace are wrought, that *Iſrael* might be a People with whom the holy God might dwell. Now, whereas this can be done but in Part, here on Earth, there is a *Zion* above, whither *Jehovah*, who dwells there, will take every Saint after the Day of Judgment, having firſt vindicated, acquitted, and pronounced them purified, and meet for the Enjoyment of the Holy-one,

Q. *There are Difficulties in the ſecond Verſe which I ſhould be glad to have expounded?*

A. The whole Verſe runs thus; *I will alſo gather all Nations, and will bring them into the Valley of* Jehoſhaphat, *and will plead with them there, for my People, and for my Heritage* Iſrael, *whom they have ſcattered among the Nations, and parted my Land.*———— *I will alſo gather all Nations.* In the Type it is not ſimply all Nations, but all thoſe Nations that have with hoſtile Minds, oppreſſed and ſcattered *Judah*; in the Anti-Type, it is all Nations that have been Enemies to *Chriſt* and the Church. —— *And will bring them down.* This is ſpoken with Reſpect to the low Situation of the Place, being a Valley, to which we muſt deſcend. —— *Into the Valley of* Jehoſhaphat. Much Difficulty Interpreters find in explaining this Paſſage; we muſt conſider it as a Type, and ſomething ſignified by it; as thus, the Valley where *Jehoſhaphat*, 2 *Chron.* xx. 22, *&c.* diſcomfited numerous and formidable Enemies, and then triumphed in God with Praiſes to him, was the Valley of Bleſſing; ſo the whole Church may be this Valley of Bleſſing; and in this God will judge the Enemies of his People, and give them Occaſions of praiſing God for his righteous Judgments, and *Jeruſalem* his Church ſhall ſee it; as the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem* might ſee what was done in the Valley of *Jehoſhaphat*, if they would be at a little Pains to go out of the City.—— *And will plead with them for my People.* After the manner of a juſt and impartial Judge, I will debate my People's Cauſe, and do them right. In the midſt of my Church, ſignified by the Valley of *Jehoſhaphat*, the Valley of the Judgment of God.——*My People.* *Judah*, including the Two Tribes; but, as in their Hiſtory, bearing a Type of the Chriſtian Church.—*My Heritage* Iſrael. Purchaſed and poſſeſſed by me ever ſince they were brought out of *Egypt*; though many Times invaded and injured by their unjuſt Neighbours, who were ſo much their Enemies, becauſe they were my peculiar People, and kept to my Worſhip.—— *Whom they have ſcattered among the Nations.* Either by Force, driving them out of their Habitations; or elſe carrying them into Captivity, and diſperſing them after their inſolent Humour.—— *And parted my Land.* Divided among themſelves, the Land I gave to my People to hold immediately of me, ſo it was my Land that they divided, their Robbery and Spoil was Sacrilege: Such is the Injuſtice and Oppreſſion of the Perſecutors of the Church now; and ſo God will judge them in due Time.

Q. *Pray who were the* Sabeans, *mentioned Verſe* 8?

A. The *Sabeans* were a People in the Parts of *Arabia* moſt remote from *Tyre* and *Zidon*, and were accounted the Ends of the Earth, *Matt.* xii. 42. and ſpread themſelves along by the Sea-Coaſts on both Sides of the *Arabian* Bay, or *Red-Sea*, and paſt over that Sea, and ſettled in *Africa*, and were Part of that Country which now does, or lately did belong to the Emperor of *Abaſſia*, who (as the King of *Spain* in both *Indies*) glories in being King of both *Sabeas*, and Succeſſor to the Queen of *Sheba*; to one, or both of theſe *Sabeans*, did the *Jewiſh* Men-ſellers diſpoſe of thoſe Slaves.

Q. *Pray expound the fourteenth Verſe*; Multitudes, Multitudes in the Valley of Deciſion; for the Day of the Lord is near in the Valley of Deciſion?

A. *Multitudes, Multitudes.* Whether Prediction or Exclamation with Wonder; 'tis doubled to intimate the mighty numerous Armies contending one againſt another, and threſhing each other, overthrowing numberleſs Men between the Conqueror and Conquered; ſo that each Kingdom was overthrown ſucceſſively. The *Aſſyrian* overthrown by *Arbaces* and *Pul-belochus*, conſpiring againſt *Sardanapalus*, where the Multitudes were ſo great, that the Blood of the Slain is by *Diodorus Siculus*, reported to have coloured the Water of a River; and the Number of the Conſpirators Army before

Nineveh, is ſaid to be 400,000. After this we meet *Sennacherib*'s mighty Hoſt againſt *Egypt* and the *Philiſtines*, to neither of which could he march but either through Part of *Judea*, or very near it; after this he had 185,000 ſlain in one Night before *Jeruſalem*, beſides *Necho*'s Army marching towards *Carchemiſh*, and *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Army in purſuit of the routed *Egyptians*; and the Armies of *Alexander the Great*; and after theſe the Armies of the *Seleucidæ* and the *Lagidæ*——*In the Valley of Deciſion.* Where God, by wiſe Providence, having gathered them, did, by juſt Determination of the Victory, decide their Quarrels, and by the Conqueror puniſhed the Conquered for their Sins againſt God and his People.——*For the Day of the Lord.* The Day of Vengeance, and righteous Recompence upon his Enemies.——*Is near.* If it begin in the Puniſhment of *Nineveh* and the *Aſſyrian* Kingdom, by the cutting off *Sennacherib*'s Army, it was in *Joel*'s Time, not above Sixty-four Years, ſuppoſing *Joel* prophecied in *Jeroboam* the Second's Time, and probably not twenty Years to this *Day of the Lord*, if *Joel* prophecied this in *Hezekiah*'s Time, or after the Captivity of the Ten Tribes by *Salmaneſer*, which was *A. M.* 3283, and *Sennacherib*'s Overthrow was 3294, eleven Years after the Deportation, as Archbiſhop *Uſher* affirms.

Q. *Pray explain the twenty-firſt Verſe*; For I will cleanſe their Blood that I have not cleanſed, for the Lord dwelleth in *Zion*.

A. *For. Heb.* And——*I will cleanſe.* I will purge away both by the Spirit of Sanctification, and by free Pardon in the Blood of the Redeemer, by their Sufferings alſo, by the Waters of Affliction, as well as by the waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the *Holy Ghoſt.*——*Their Blood.* Their moral Pollutions and Sinfulneſs compared here to Blood, as alſo *Ezekiel* xvi. 6, 9. and ſo Men in a ſinful State are called Fleſh and Blood, *Matt.* xvi. 17. and *Gal.* i. 16. God will pardon and purify Believers; and when they are pardoned and purified, nothing attempted againſt them ſhall ſucceed.——*That I have not cleanſed.* Which before I had not taken away; what was wanting in their Sanctification and Juſtification, and Reconciliation, I will make up in them and to them.

Q. *What Remarks do you make upon this Prophecy of* Joel *in general?*

A. As this Prophecy is generally held to relate to the *Jews* (that is, the Houſe of *Judah* only,) So the general Scope of it is to ſet forth, in the moſt ſenſible Manner, the grievous Judgments that either were then already come, or were at Hand ready to come upon them from the Lord; in order to bring them to a due ſenſe of their ſinful Eſtate, to an hearty Sorrow for it, and true Repentance of it: With Direction how to manifeſt their Repentance; and an Aſſurance, that if they did ſo, the Lord would yet be gracious to them; and would not only remove the Famine they ſuffered under (by removing the Drought that had cauſed it, and ſending Rain which would produce Plenty of good Things for them) but would eaſe them alſo of the Fears they were in, by removing from them the northern Army, which probably might be that of *Sennacherib*, the haughty King of *Aſſyria*, who, by *Rabſhekah* ſent them ſuch threatning Meſſages in King *Hezekiah*'s Time.

But eminently remarkable, and exceeding precious, are thoſe Parts of his Prophecy, which glance at the Glory of the Goſpel-Times; wherein (amongſt other Bleſſings) is promiſed the general pouring forth of the Spirit of God upon all Fleſh, in all Degrees and Stations of Men, whether High or Low, Bond or Free, Male or Female: The Effects of which ſhould appear in both their Sons and Daughters Prophecying, *Joel* ii. 28, 29. Which the Apoſtle *Peter*, long after, yet in the Beginning of the Chriſtian Church, applied to that great Effuſion of the Spirit upon the Apoſtles, and the reſt of the Believers, aſſembled at *Jeruſalem*, ſoon after the Aſcention of our bleſſed Lord, *Acts* ii. 16, &c.

THE BOOK
OF THE PROPHET
AMOS.

AMONG many other Prophets that God raiſed up to admoniſh the Iſraelites *of his Plagues, for their Wickedneſs and Idolatry, he ſtirreth up* Amos, *who was an Herdman or Shepherd of a poor Town, and gave him both Knowledge and Conſtancy to reprove all Eſtates and Degrees, and to denounce God's horrible Judgments againſt them, except they did in Time repent; ſhewing them that if God ſpared not the other Nations about them, who had lived, as it were, in ignorance of God in reſpect to them, but for their Sins will puniſh them, that they could look for nothing but an horrible Deſtruction, except they turned to the Lord by unfeigned Repentance. And finally, he comforteth the Godly with the Hope of the Coming of the* Meſſiah, *by whom they ſhould have perfect Deliverance and Salvation.*

CHAP. I.

The Condition of Amos, *and the Time of his Propheſying. He declares God's Judgments upon* Syria, *upon the* Philiſtines, Tyrus, Edom, *and* Ammon.

Q. *WAS not this* Amos *the Father of* Iſaiah, *as ſeems intimated in the firſt Verſe of the firſt Chapter of that Prophet?*

A. They who think that this *Amos* was Father to the Prophet *Iſaiah*, either diſcern not the Difference there is in the two *Hebrew* Words; or pronounce haſtily without conſidering what each is in the *Hebrew*; in which Tongue theſe Words have but two Letters the ſame, that is, *M* and *O*, the others are quite different; as alſo is the Signification of each; for the one imports *Strength* and *Might*, the other *Burthen* or *heavy Weight*.

Q. *What does this Chatper contain?*

A. Here Mention is made of the Condition of *Amos*, and the Time of his propheſying. He ſhews that whatſoever is fruitful in *Iſrael* ſhould ſhortly periſh, and that all the People round about ſhould be deſtroyed for their manifold Sins; which are meant by three and four, which make ſeven: Becauſe the *Iſraelites* ſhould the more deeply conſider God's Judgments towards them. If the *Syrians*, *Philiſtines*, &c. ſhall not be ſpared for their Cruelty, it is not poſſible that *Iſrael* ſhould eſcape Puniſhment, which hath committed ſo many grievous Sins againſt God and Man.

Q. *Pray give the Genuine Senſe of the 3d. Verſe*; Thus ſaith the Lord, For three Tranſgreſſions of *Damaſcus*, and for four I will not turn away the Puniſhment thereof; becauſe they have threſhed *Gilead*, with threſhing Inſtruments of Iron?

A. For three Tranſgreſſions of Damaſcus. This certain Number is put for an uncertain; Three, *i. e.* many; eſpecially, as it is here joined with Four; their Tranſgreſſions are ſo multiplied, are grown to ſuch Heighth and Number. *Damaſcus* was a City of *Syria*, and very antient; *Abraham's* Steward was of this City; it lay North-Eaſt from *Canaan*; was conquered by *David*, loſt by *Solomon*, recovered by *Jeroboam* the Second, tho' ſoon after loſt again, and was in *Ahaz's* Time the Seat-Royal of *Rezin*, whom *Tigleth-Pileſer* ſlew, 2 *Kings* xvi. 9. When it was in its Power and Greatneſs, it mightily oppreſſed *Iſrael*; it is here, by a *Synechdoche*, put for the whole Kingdom of *Syria*.—— *I will not turn away the Puniſhment thereof.* Some refer this to *Damaſcus*; God threatens that ſhe ſhall have no Reſt; others ſay, it is a Threat that God would not convert it, but leave the *Syrians* to their own Impenitence; but our Verſion is full and plain; it is a Threat of Puniſhment they ſhould certainly fall under. God would no longer continue to be gracious and patient towards ſuch Sinners, nor divert the menaced Puniſhment foretold by the Prophet, deſerved by the People, and which ſhall be executed by an impartial Hand. ——*They have threſhed.* The *Syrians* have firſt gathered (as Husbandmen gather Sheaves into a Floor) next trod them under Foot, beat them ſmall, *i. e.* with the utmoſt Cruelty deſtroyed Perſons, Towns, and Cities. ——*Gilead.* Of this Name there was a Mountain fifty Miles in length; alſo a Country and City of the ſame Name, poſſeſſed by the *Reubenites*, *Gadites* and *Manaſſites*; now the *Gilead* in this Text, is by a very uſual Figure put for the Inhabitants of the Country or City, whom *Hazael*, King of *Syria*, as was foretold by *Eliſha*, 2 *Kings* viii. 12. did moſt barbarouſly murder,

der, as appears by the Words of this Text.——*With threſhing Inſtruments of Iron.* Rakes, Flails, Harrows, Saws, or heavy Wheels of Iron; whichſoever of theſe are the Inſtruments meant, it is moſt certain it was a moſt cruel and barbarous Manner of uſing them.

Chap. II.

God's Judgments upon Moab, Judah *and* Iſrael, *for their abominable Sins of Oppreſſion, Uncleanneſs, Idolatry, and Unthankfulneſs, with their ſore and unavoidable Deſtruction.*

Q. *GIVE the Interpretation of the firſt Verſe, which runs thus:* Thus ſaith the Lord, For three Tranſgreſſions of *Moab*, I will not turn away the Puniſhment thereof; becauſe he burnt the Bones of the King of *Edom* into Lime?

A. In this Form the Prophet began, Chap. i. Ver. 4. Here he threatens a Nation of ſome Kin to *Iſrael*, as was *Ammon*, and as great an Enemy; they appeared early Enemies to *Iſrael*, and took moſt wicked Ways to ruin them, firſt, hiring *Balaam* to curſe them, *Numb.* xxii. 23. which not ſucceeding, he acts a viler Part, and by lewd Harlots draws *Iſrael* to Sin, *Numb.* xxv. 1, 2, *&c.* *Moab* was alſo the ſecond Oppreſſor of *Iſrael*, who for their Sins were delivered into the Hands of *Eglon* King of *Moab*, who oppreſſed them eighteen Years, *Judges* iii. 14. for which and other hoſtile Carriages, they are here threaten'd; yet their Inhuman Treatment of *Edom*'s King is only expreſſed; the other Hoſtilities to *Iſrael* are implied.——*Becauſe he.* That is, the King of *Moab*; but who he was, is not here nor elſewhere mentioned, though ſome ſay it was *Meſha*, and refer this to 2 *Kings* iii. 4. yet it's not very likely that this was the King who acted ſuch a Cruelty.——*Burnt the Bones.* It would have been barbarous to have burnt the Fleſh and Nerves of an Enemy; but to make the Fire ſo hot, and to continue it ſo long as to burn Bones into Aſhes, is much more barbarous.——*Of the King of* Edom. This ſomewhat aggravates the Cruelty; he was no common Man, but a King, who was ſo uſed; his Name, the Time when it was done; whether it were ſome King alive or dead, and his Bones digg'd up, is not mentioned, but either way it was barbarous, tho' it were done to Bones digg'd out of the Grave, as ſome imagine.——*Into Lime.* Or Aſhes, or calcin'd the Bones, reduced them by Fire into Duſt, and (as others conjecture) uſed their Aſhes inſtead of Lime to plaiſter the Walls and Roofs of his Palace; and this was done in Hatred and Contempt of the King of *Edom*.

Q. *What do you apprehend to be the genuine Senſe of Verſe 7?*

A. *That pant after the Duſt of the Earth on the Head of the Poor, and turn aſide the Way of the Meek: And a Man and his Father will go in unto the ſame Maid, to profane my holy Name.*——*That pant after,* &c. Or ſwallow up, as the Word is moſt frequently rendered by our Interpreters, and ſo, perhaps, more evidently declares their Inhumanity and Violence, in making a Prey of the Poor, who walk with Duſt on their Heads, by reaſon of the Diſtreſſes that are upon them; and without any Compaſſion towards them, greedily, as it were, at once ſwallow up and devour the Poor, whom, by the Law of God, and the Office they bear, as Judges, they ſhould deliver out of the Hands of the Oppreſſor.——*And turn aſide the Way of the Meek.* Preverſely and maliciouſly interpret the Actions, Words and Deſigns of the Humble and Meek, of the compaſſionate and merciful, who pity the Poor in their Straits and Dangers.——*A Man and his Father will go in unto the ſame Maid.* Theſe corrupt Judges, and violent Oppreſſors, are alſo ſhameleſs Adulterers and Fornicators; they commit that Lewdneſs which the better inſtructed Heathens abhor and forbear; a Kind of inceſtuous Pollution, the Father and Son keep the ſame Harlot, and go in unto her.——*To profane my holy Name.* Thus they profanely diſhonour me by caſting off my Law, and doing that which is ſo ſhamefully indecent and unlawful; and giving Heathens Occaſion to blaſpheme my Name, and to think, or ſay, *Like People, like God.*

Chap. III.

God puniſhes Iſrael *above all others, becauſe of his great Kindneſs to them, and their Ingratitude to him. A Publication of God's righteous Judgments, and their Cauſes.*

Q. *WHAT are the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. The Almighty declares, that he will puniſh the *Iſraelites* for their baſe Ingratitude, and ſhews that his Threats and Puniſhments are juſt and true, upbraiding them with Unpliableneſs againſt all the Warnings of Heaven.

God calls the Strangers round about, ſuch as the *Philiſtines* and *Egyptians*, to be Witneſſes of his Judgments againſt the *Iſraelites*, for their Cruelty and Oppreſſion; for the Fruit of their Cruelty and Theft appears by their great Riches which they have in their Houſes; but God will ſend an Enemy againſt them, who ſhall let but a few eſcape, becauſe of their Idolatry and Pride.

Q. *How do you expound the 12th Verſe?*

A. Let us firſt read it: *Thus ſaith the Lord, as the Shepherd taketh out of the Mouth of the Lion two Legs, or a Piece of an Ear; ſo ſhall the Children of* Iſrael *be taken out that dwell in* Samaria, *in the Corner of a Bed, and in* Damaſcus, *in a Couch.* This Verſe, in brief, foretels how few, and with what Difficulty they ſhall eſcape, who are not ſwallowed up by the approaching Judgments, as the Prophet elegantly expreſſes it in the following Similitude.——*As the Shepherd taketh out of the Mouth of the Lion two Legs.* As the Shepherd reſcues a ſmall Part of a Sheep or Lamb, when a fierce Lion hath ſeized and torn it; or a Piece of an Ear, leſs conſiderable than the Legs; ſo ſhall ſome of the Children of *Iſrael*, or ſome of the Ten Tribes; that is, the poorer, meaner, and worthleſs Sort of them eſcape when *Samaria* is taken.——*In the Corner of a Bed.* Lying in ſome dark Corner, and on a Piece of a Bed, as the poor do in moſt Places.——*Damaſcus.* The chief City of *Syria*, taken by *Tiglath-Pileſer*, much about the Time when he waſted *Iſrael* in Aid of *Ahaz* againſt *Rezin* and *Pekah*.——*In a Couch.* Some few of the poor Sort among them alſo ſhall eſcape, pitied by the Enemy, when he finds them weakly and ſick upon their Couches.

Chap. IV.

God ſwears that Samaria *ſhall be carried Captives for their Oppreſſion, Idolatry, and Incorrigibleneſs,*

neſs, notwithſtanding their many Judgments, yet by his Power and Majeſty he invites them to Repentance.

Q. W*HAT does the Prophet mean by* the Kine of *Baſhan*, Ver. 1?

A. That is, the great Ones at *Samaria* and all the People, to be carried away Captives, and into Baniſhment, becauſe of their Violence, Drunkenneſs, Idolatry, and Incorrigibleneſs, notwithſtanding the many Plagues ſent among them; inviting them, nevertheleſs, again unto Repentance, by ſetting before them his Mercy and Power; for he alone is Lord, the eternal and mighty God, whoſe ſovereign Power and Command all Creatures obey, and act for or againſt us as he willeth.

Q. *I deſire you to explain the 4th Verſe*; Come to *Beth-el*, and tranſgreſs at *Gilgal*, multiply Tranſgreſſion; and bring your Sacrifices every Morning, and your Tithes after three Years?

A. Beth-el. The known Place of the *Moſcholetria*, or Calf-Worſhip.——*And tranſgreſs.* This makes it appear to be an Irony, and intimates either the giving them up to their obſtinate way of ſinning, or leaving them hopeleſs and incorrigible Sinners, or deriding their Truſt and Dependance on Idols, to which they ſacrificed at *Beth-el*; ſee what will be the Iſſue thereof, and how you will ſucceed therein. *Gilgal* was alſo a Place much reſorted to for Idol-Worſhip. Since you will not be warned, go on, try whether God likes your Sacrifices there are as well as you like them, and whether they will be a Means to ſave you from Judgments, or Sins haſtening Judgments on you.——*And bring your Sacrifice every Morning.* In the ſame ironical Manner God, by *Amos*, expreſſes his own Diſpleaſure, reproves their Sins, and threatens them with Puniſhment, though they imitate the inſtituted Worſhip at *Jeruſalem*, *Exod.* xxix. 38, 39.——*And your Tithes after three Years.* God had commanded the Tithes every third Year ſhould be brought and laid up in a publick Store houſe; to this Law, with the ſame Irony, the Prophet here again alludes.

CHAP. V.

A Lamentation for Iſrael's *Fall and Decreaſe. An Exhortation to ſeek the true God, and forſake Idolatry; to repent of their Obſtinancy; the terrible Day of Judgments. A Rejection of all hypocritical Worſhip and Service.*

Q. W*HAT is the Subject of this Prophecy?*

A. Under a Lamentation the Lord foretels *Iſrael's* Fall, and the Decreaſe of their Multitude, being warned and exhorted to ſeek the mighty and dreadful God, and to forſake their Idolatry, they nevertheleſs go on ſtill in doing Wrong and Violence, committing all Manner of heinous Sins, hating all Reproof and Admonitions, ſo that there can be no Exceptions made at God's Judgments upon them. He renews his Exhortation to Repentance, declaring that the eternal glorious God, who is Lord of all, and can help them, having all the Hoſt of Heaven and Earth at his Diſpoſal, he will be with them, bleſs and ſave them yet, notwithſtanding all their former Sins: But by Reaſon of their Obſtinacy, he tells them of the terrible and unavoidable Day of his Judgments, which now they ſcoff at: He detects all the hypocritical Shews of their Worſhip, becauſe, under the Pretence thereof, they practiſed nothing but Idolatry, even as their Forefathers; for which God declares they ſhall be carried into a grievous Captivity.

Q. *The 8th Verſe ſeems ſomewhat difficult to underſtand; which therefore pray explain?*

A. *Seek him that maketh the Seven Stars and* Orion, *and turneth the Shadow of Death into the Morning, and maketh the Day dark with Night; that calleth for the Waters of the Sea, and poureth them out upon the Face of the Earth; the Lord is his Name.——Seek him.* Tho' this be not in the *Hebrew*, yet it's well ſupplied by our Interpreters.——*The Seven Stars.* A famous Conſtellation, and whoſe riſing about *September* was uſually accompanied with Rains and ſweet Showers, which, as Chap. iv. Ver. 7. had been with-holden, whence proceeded want of Water and Bread; now the Prophet adviſes to ſeek the Lord, who can give them Rain and Corn, by the kindly Influence of that watry Conſtellation, which, as he made, ſo he guides and manages.——*Orion.* Which ariſing about *November*, uſually brings cold Rains and Froſts, intermixed with great Uncertainty of Weather, but very ſeaſonable for the Earth, to make it fruitful; this is mentioned to perſuade the People to repent, who were afflicted with ſuch Barrenneſs and Unfruitfulneſs, as brought Famine with it.——*And turneth the Shadow of Death into Morning.* Spoken proverbially, as turning the greateſt Adverſity (here called the Shadow of Death) into as great Proſperity, here called the Morning, *Pſ.* xxiii. 4.——*And maketh the Day dark with the Night.* This metaphorically expreſſes a Change of Proſperity into Adverſity; ye Houſe of *Iſrael* think well of it; you, who are in a dangerous Situation, are adviſed to ſeek him, who can on a ſudden remove all Evil from you, and bring all Good unto you; ſeek him therefore, and ſeek not Idols.——*That calleth for the Waters of the Sea.* Either to raiſe them to terrible Swellings and Rage, or rather calls up the Waters out of the Sea, by commanding the Vapours to aſcend, which he turns into Rain, and then pours them out from the Clouds to make the Earth fruitful. He only is God who doeth theſe Things; the Lord is his Name.

CHAP. VI.

Woe and Captivity is threaten'd to Zion *and* Samaria, *for their Eaſe and Security. God ſwears that he will deſtroy them by Plagues and other Judgments. Their Perverſeneſs and Obſtinacy the Cauſe of all this.*

Q. P*RAY what do we learn from this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet threatens the Wealthy with Woe and Captivity, by reaſon of their carnal Security, wicked Vanity and Profuſion. God ſwears that he will deliver up the City into the Enemies Hands, with all which is therein, and Cauſe the the reſt to periſh by his Plagues, without ſparing great or ſmall; the Deſtruction ſhall be ſo great, that none ſhall almoſt be left to bury the Dead; and therefore they ſhall burn them at home, to carry out the burnt Aſhes with more Eaſe; and becauſe of *Iſrael's* ſenſeleſs Perverſeneſs, Obſtinacy, and fooliſh Haughtineſs, God will ſend an oppreſſing Enemy upon them.

Q. *Pray explain the ſecond Verſe?*

A. *Paſs ye unto* Calneh, *and ſee; and from thence go ye to* Hamath the Great: *then go down to* Gath *of the* Philiſtines; *be they better than thoſe Kingdoms? Or their Border greater than your Border?* ——*Paſs ye unto* Calneh. Run over the Hiſtory of that great and antient City; ſee *Jer.* vii. 12. It was built by *Nimrod*, *Gen.* x. 10. and after a long Growth to Power, Wealth and Security, thro' 1300 Years, was at laſt ruined, probably in the Civil Wars, which ended in the utter Ruin of *Sardanapulus* by *Arbaces* and *Phul-Belochus*, Grandfather to *Salmaneſer*, who captivated *Iſrael*; the Story of which, freſh in the Days of *Amos*, is thus referred to for a Warning to *Iſrael.* ————*See.* Conſider well the Fate of that City on the *Euphrates*, rich, delightful, and as you, full of Sin. ———— *Hamath the Great.* The Head of the *Syrian* Kingdom, lately overthrown by *Tiglath-Pileſer*, a very freſh Inſtance of God's juſt Indignation againſt ſecure Sinners, and a very fit Warning to *Iſrael.*——*Gath.* The chief City of the *Philiſtines*, a few Years before waſted by the Arms and Cruelty of *Hazael*, 2 *Kings* xii. 17. By theſe Examples learn to mend your Ways, or expect to periſh like them. —— *Be they better*, &c. The reading this Paſſage interrogatively, renders it darker than if it was read aſſertively; yet they were better, *i. e.* greater, and their Bounds larger than theſe Kingdoms of *Iſrael* and *Judah*: But if you retain our Verſion, it will amount to this: Are they, *i. e.* *Iſrael* and *Judah*, better, more juſt, more thankful and merciful than theſe Kingdoms, that they ſhould hope to eſcape? Or is the Border of theſe two Kingdoms greater, that they ſhould hope to ſtand by Power?

CHAP. VII.

The Viſion of the Graſhoppers, and conſuming Fire, Judgments upon Iſrael *are turned away by the Interceſſion of* Amos. *The Viſion of the Plumb-Line, ſhewing the utter Rejection and Ruin of* Iſrael. Amaziah *the Prieſt accuſes* Amos *of Conſpiracy. His Defence, and* Amaziah's *Judgment and Ruin.*

Q. I*N what Manner does the Prophet inſtruct his Countrymen in this Chapter?*

A. By three ſeveral Viſions, the firſt of Graſhoppers, the ſecond of conſuming Fire, (in regard of both which God is pleaſed to accept of the Prophet's Interceſſion) and the third of a Plummet or Level, there is repreſented here, that after much Patience God will ſpare *Iſrael* no longer, neither the King's Poſterity.

After the Prophet had prophecied that the Kingdom ſhould be deſtroyed, the Prieſt *Amaziah* complains of him to the King, charging him with Conſpiracy and Sedition; and when this Inſtrument of *Satan* was not able to compaſs his Purpoſe by the King, he tried another Practice; and that was, to frighten the Prophet, that he might depart, and not reprove their Idolatry openly, and ſo hinder his Profit; but *Amos* defends himſelf by God's Call, and denounceth the Judgment of God upon *Amaziah* and his Family. Thus God uſes to prove the Authority of his Prophets by his Plagues and Judgments upon their malicious Enemies.

Q. *In what Senſe does* Amos *ſay*, *Ver.* 14. I was no Prophet, neither a Prophet's Son?

A. Let us read the whole Verſe: *Then anſwer'd* Amos, *and ſaid to* Amaziah, *I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's Son; but I was an Herdman, and a Gatherer of Sycomore Fruit.* So ſoon as this falſe Accuſer had, under the Pretence of Friendſhip, given Advice, and withal intimated his Reſolution to uſe his Authority to make *Amos* deſiſt, if he did not do it voluntarily; *Amos* anſwers him readily, boldly, and yet ſmoothly, and out-ſhoots the Court-Pontiff in his own Bow. —— *I was no Prophet.* Not originally, or by Succeſſion, or by Study, or by any human Deſignation or Preparation, as many have been. ————*Neither was I a Prophet's Son.* My Father was no Prophet, nor was I bred up in the School of the Prophets, ſuch as 2 *Kings* ii. 3, *&c.* Though you call me Seer, whether ironically or ſeriouſly, I matter not, but aſſure you I am not ſuch by Art or Trade, or for a livelihood. —— *But I was an Herdman.* By Breeding, Choice, and Occupation, I was and ſtill am an Herdman, and have my Employment therein, in or near *Tekoa* in *Judea*, on which I can live; though I propheſy without Stipend or Salary, I needed not run into the prophetick Work for my Bread————*A Gatherer of Sycomore Fruit.* The Tree and Fruit are known by one Name; *Paleſtine* abounded with both, and the Fruit was ſweet, not large, yet good for Food, both for Man and Cattle, as ſome Fruits are with us; on theſe I could ſtill, as I formerly did, live and be content.

CHAP. VIII.

By the Basket of Summer-Fruit is ſhewn the Nearneſs of Iſrael's *End for their Oppreſſion, God ſwears utterly to ruin and deſtroy* Iſrael; *their miſerable Condition and Want of the Word.*

Q. P*RAY give your Thoughts upon the 9th Verſe, which ſeems not very eaſy to be underſtood?*

A. *And it ſhall come to paſs in that Day, ſaith the Lord, that I will cauſe the Sun to go down at Noon, and will darken the Earth in the clear Day.* —— *It ſhall come to paſs.* It will moſt certainly happen.——*In that Day.* When God begins to execute theſe his juſt and ſevere Judgments on the Ten Tribes.——*That I.* The great, juſt, holy, and terrible God, who am provoked by theſe Sins, have denounced theſe Judgments, my Hand ſhall be evident in it.————*Will cauſe the Sun to go down at Noon.* Literally, ſay ſome, but erroneouſly; by the *Sun* I underſtand rather the ſettled State of their Proſperity under their preſent Government in the Houſe of *Jehu*; and it may refer particularly to the King and Court, which *Jeroboam* at his Death left, like the Sun at Noon, in the Heighth of their Glory, as all know, who are acquainted with the Hiſtory of thoſe Times. So *Iſrael's* Sun, as at Noon, ſet under the dark Cloud of home-bred Conſpiracies and Civil Wars, by *Shallum*, *Menahem*, *Pekah* and *Hoſhea*, till the Midnight-Darkneſs drew on by *Pul*, *Tigleth-Pileſer*, and *Shalmaneſer.* ———— *I will darken the Earth.* I will bring a thick Cloud of Troubles and Afflictions on the the Earth; that is, the common People, the whole Body of the Nation. The *Sun* ſpeaks the Royalty, Nobility, and Great-ones of this Kingdom, by an Alluſion well known in Scripture; and the *Earth* ſignifies the common ſort of People, and all are here threatened. ————

In the clear Day. When they thought (as in *Jeroboam*'s Time) all was ſafe, ſure, and well ſettled, far from the Night of Sorrow and Trouble, then God would execute his threaten'd Judgments upon them.

CHAP. IX.

Another Viſion, ſhewing their unavoidable Ruin for their Unthankfulneſs, and great Security. The Kingdom of Chriſt *promiſed, a Remnant ſaved. The Deliverance and everlaſting Happineſs of* Iſrael *in the latter Days.*

Q. H*OW does the Prophet inſtruct the People in this Chapter?*

A. By another Viſion and the Explanation thereof, the unavoidable Deſtruction and Tranſportation of the *Iſraelites* is farther confirmed, becauſe of their degenerating Unthankfulneſs and great Security. He ſhews that God will declare himſelf an Enemy to them in all Places, and that his Elements and Creatures ſhall be Enemies to deſtroy them. The deepeſt Receſſes, the Heart or Centre of the Earth, or the Graves; or litterally, for ſo we may lay the Suppoſition, were it poſſible to be done, to hide in the Center of the Earth, or the Depth of Hell, could not ſecure us from the all-ſeeing Eye of the great *Jehovah*: For Hell is naked to God, and the Grave could not hide ſome of thoſe Sinners, when dead and buried, the Rage of Famine, or of the Enemy, might dig ſome out of their Graves: Could they fly up to Heaven, they would be out of the Reach of Men; but there they would meet an offended God, and he would caſt them down. By the wonderful Power of God, by the making of the Heavens and the Elements, it is impoſſible for Men to eſcape the Judgments of God when he puniſhes.

Although God deſtroy the rebellious Multitude, yet he will ever reſerve the Remnant of his Church to call upon his Name, ſuffering none of them to periſh in his Wrath. The Almighty declares he will ſend the promiſed *Meſſiah*, and reſtore by him the ſpiritual *Iſrael*; and that then their Enemies, as were the *Edomites*, and others, ſhould be joined with the *Jews* in one Society and Body, whereof *Chriſt* ſhould be the Head. That at that Time there ſhould be great Plenty of all Things, ſo that when one Kind of Fruit is ripe, another ſhould follow, and every one in Courſe. The Accompliſhment hereof is under *Chriſt*, when they are planted in his Church, out of the which they can never be pulled, after they were once grafted therein.

Q. *To what Time does the Prophecy in the 11th Verſe relate?*

A. Let us read the Words; *In that Day will I raiſe up the Tabernacle of* David *that is fallen, and cloſe up the Breaches thereof; and I will raiſe up his Ruins, and I will build it as in Days of old.* This Promiſe has undoubtedly a double Aſpect to the Return out of Captivity, and to the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom. If we would duly explain this and the following Verſe, let us firſt look to the literal and hiſtorical Meaning. ——*In that Day.* A very uſual Phraſe in Sacrifice, whereby a Time fixed and certain, yet unknown to us, is intended in the ſet Time which God hath prefixed.——*Will I raiſe up.* Lay the Foundation and build up, reduce out of Captivity, and re-eſtabliſh in their own Land.——*The Tabernacle of* David. The Houſe of *David*, and thoſe that adhered to his Family; which are here called a *Tabernacle*, partly for that it never did, after the Captivity, riſe to a free and independent Kingdom, and partly, becauſe it would diſtinguiſh the *Jews* from the apoſtate *Iſraelites*, who wholly forſook *David*'s Houſe. ——*That is fallen.* By a Revolt of Ten Tribes in Twelve, whereby their State became low, and fell to the Ground.——*And cloſe up the Breaches thereof.* Which are in it, by that long Diviſion, ſince *Jeroboam* the Firſt's Time; which Breaches ſhall, upon the Return out of Captivity, be made up by the voluntary Union of the Remnant of the Ten Tribes, which ſhall return with the Two Tribes out of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity.——*And I will raiſe up his Ruins.* By diſpoſing the Minds of the Kings of *Perſia* to advance *David*'s Line to the Government of the reſtored Captives, and continuing it in the ſupreme Power till the *Meſſiah*'s Coming, and by rebuilding *Jeruſalem* and the Temple, and ſettling true Religion among them. *And I will build it as in the Days of old.* Much the ſame as it was before the Sack of the City and Temple, and the carrying the People captive. All which, as far as they are temporal Concerns do ſuppoſe and did require a ſincere and hearty Turning to God; as did the like Promiſes made by other Prophets. And how far ſoever they fell ſhort of theſe Promiſes, it was through Unbelief, and other Sins, as *Haggai*, *Zechariah* and *Malachi* complain in their Prophecies. Now as it refers to the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, it is a Prophecy of the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, *Acts* xv. 16, 17.

Q. *Are the Promiſes in the the 13th Verſe to be conſider'd in a literal or figurative Senſe?*

A. Let us read the Words: *Behold, the Days come, ſaith the Lord, that the Plowman ſhall overtake the Reaper, and the Treader of Grapes him that ſoweth Seed; and the Mountains ſhall drop ſweet Wine, and all the Hills ſhall melt.* If this Promiſe be litterally taken, it is an Aſſurance of an abundant Plenty to the returned Captives; if myſtically, the abundant Grace that ſhould be poured forth in the Goſpel Days.——*Behold the Days come.* Mark well, ye captiv'd *Jews*; the Time will certainly come, nay, it haſtens on, when he who breaks up the Ground, and prepares it for ſowing, ſhall be ready to tread on the Heels of the Reapers, who ſhall have a Harveſt ſo large, that before he can gather it all in, it will be Time to plow the Ground, and prepare it for the Seed, for the next Year's Crop. Beſides, ſo great ſhall their Vintage be, that e'er the Treaders of Grapes can have finiſhed their Work, the Seedman ſhall be ſowing his Seed againſt next Harveſt. The *Jews* made their Vineyards on the Mountains; and theſe Vineyards ſhall be ſo fruitful, and new Wine ſo plentiful, as if it had trickled like Streams down the Mountain; or as if whole Hills were melted into ſuch Liquors. And if this Promiſe was never perfectly fulfilled, it was becauſe the Sins of the returned Captives did, in a great Meaſure, prevent theſe Bleſſings promiſed under a tacit Condition, which they never did fulfil.

Q. *What do you obſerve in general on the Prophecy of* Amos?

A. If we might be allowed to make Conjecture at the Quality of our Prophet's Sermons, by the Signification of his Name, we muſt conclude that they contain heavy Tidings and grievous Judgments coming on to thoſe to whom he is ſent to preach; *Amos*, in the *Hebrew*, being derived from a Word which ſignifies *to burden, to lay on a Weight or Load*. But we have a ſurer Rule whereby to judge of this Prophecy.

This Prophet, by ſome antient Writers, but erroneouſly, is ſaid to be the Father of *Iſaiah*; but beſides that, *Iſaiah* was Cotemporary with *Amos*, which fairly argues that it is very unlikely that *Iſaiah* ſhould be the Son of *Amos*. *Amoz* the Father of *Iſaiah*, is a Name quite different from *Amos*, both in Letters with which each is ſpelt, and in Signification alſo. And if *Iſaiah* was of the royal Line, as ſome affirm, and Nephew either to *Amaziah* or *Uzziah*, by a Brother, it cannot be conceiv'd how *Amos*, a plain Herdſman of *Tekoa*, ſhould be his Father. It is certain he was by Birth, or Education, or Employment, or in all theſe Reſpects of the Tribe of *Judah*; and as certain, that by an immediate Call from God, he was taken from the Herdſman's Work, and made a Prophet, Chap. vii. 14, 15.

In Purſuance of the Commiſſion which he received from God, he preaches againſt thoſe Nations that bordered on, and had been grievous, oppreſſive, and old Adverſaries to *Iſrael* and *Judah*, Chap. i. 3, *&c.* where he expreſly declares future juſt Executions upon *Syria*, *Paleſtine*, *Tyre*, *Edom*, *Ammon* and *Moab*; by which he greatly prevents the Prejudices which *Iſrael* and *Judah* might have had againſt his Perſon and Doctrine. Now he may more freely reprove and threaten God's People for their Sins, ſince he ſo openly threatened their Enemies; and they who could credit him as a Prophet in his Predictions and Comminations againſt Foreigners, muſt in Reaſon, as well and as readily believe him a Prophet in his Reproofs and Predictions againſt themſelves.

He beſtows the far greater Part of his Diſcourſes on *Iſrael*, or the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes, to whom he was principally ſent; yet does he propheſy againſt *Judah* alſo, and to both he is very ſharp in his Reproofs, impartial in his Cenſures, earneſt in his Perſuaſions to repent, very full in his Encouragements to this Duty, and demonſtratively evident in his Charges of Sin upon them. He had *Iſaiah*, *Hoſea*, and *Joel* his Co-temporaries, tho' it does not appear how long.

Q. *Is there any Thing remarkable in the Style and Language of this Prophet?*

A. He is in many Places ſententious and conciſe, and therefore ſometimes a little obſcure. Altho' he brings many of his Alluſions and Arguments from his Country Employment, yet he adapts them with ſuch admirable Skill, beautifies them with ſuch inimitable Eloquence, and fortifies them with that Loftineſs of Stile, as declares his Work to be from him who gave to Man Judgment, Fancy and Tongue, and impreſs'd the intrinſick Character of Divinity on our Prophet's Writing. He was a Perſon of moſt undaunted Reſolution, Prudence of Conduct, and of ſpotleſs Integrity, as appears by the Conteſt he had with *Amaziah*, Chief of the Prieſts at *Beth-el*, Chap. vii. 10, *&c.*

Q. *About what Time do you conjecture that our Prophet lived?*

A. He lived when *Judah*'s Affairs were tolerably well and proſperous, and when *Iſrael*'s were in the higheſt *Meridian*, when they thought themſelves ſecure againſt all the Dangers he foretold. *Uzziah* had pretty well recovered *Judah*, and ſettled it; and *Jeroboam* had highly advanced *Iſrael*'s Fame, Riches and Power. With their Growth in theſe, Sins grew as faſt and as exorbitant, and called for Judgments, which our Prophet foretels very plainly and in expreſs Words, Chap. vii. 11, 17. and in very ſignificant Hieroglyphicks, Chap. vii. 8, 9. He foretels the Earthquake, Chap. i. 1. an Emblem of thoſe civil Diſſenſions which ſhook their Foundations, and half ruined them before the *Aſſyrians* conquered and captivated them. Theſe Miſeries laſted through an *Interregnum* of eleven Years, ſay ſome, but certainly through the Reigns of *Zechariah*, *Shallum*, *Menahem*, *Pekahiah*, *Pekah* and *Hoſhea*; in whoſe Times all the Calamities were ſwallowed up in a greater, their perpetual Captivity, which came upon them about fifty-four, or ſixty-five Years after the Death of *Jeroboam* the Second; near to whoſe Court, and within their Hearing, *Amos* preach'd many, perhaps moſt of his Sermons; and therefore you may obſerve his Reproofs, Threats, and Predictions ſeem calculated for that Court, who were highly guilty of the Sins he reproved, and were called to repent of them; and becauſe they did not, they deeply ſuffered both in the Civil Wars, under thoſe four Uſurpers and Conſpirators, *Shallum*, *Menahem*, *Pekah* and *Hoſhea*, and moſt deeply in the *Aſſyrian* Captivity.

THE BOOK

OF THE PROPHET

OBADIAH.

The Idumeans *who came of* Eſau, *were mortal Enemies always to the* Iſraelites, *who came of* Jacob; *and therefore did not only vex them continually with ſundry Kinds of Cruelty, but alſo ſtirred up others to fight againſt them. Therefore when they were now in their greateſt Proſperity, and did moſt triumph againſt* Iſrael, *which was in great Affliction and Miſery, God raiſed up this Prophet to comfort the* Iſraelites, *foraſmuch as God had now determined to deſtroy their Adverſaries, which did ſo ſore vex them, and to ſend them ſuch as ſhould deliver them, and ſet up the Kingdom of the* Meſſiah, *which he had promiſed.*

Chap. I.

The Deſtruction of Edom *for their Pride, Violence and Cruelty againſt* Jacob. *Gracious Promiſes of great Deliverance and Victory.*

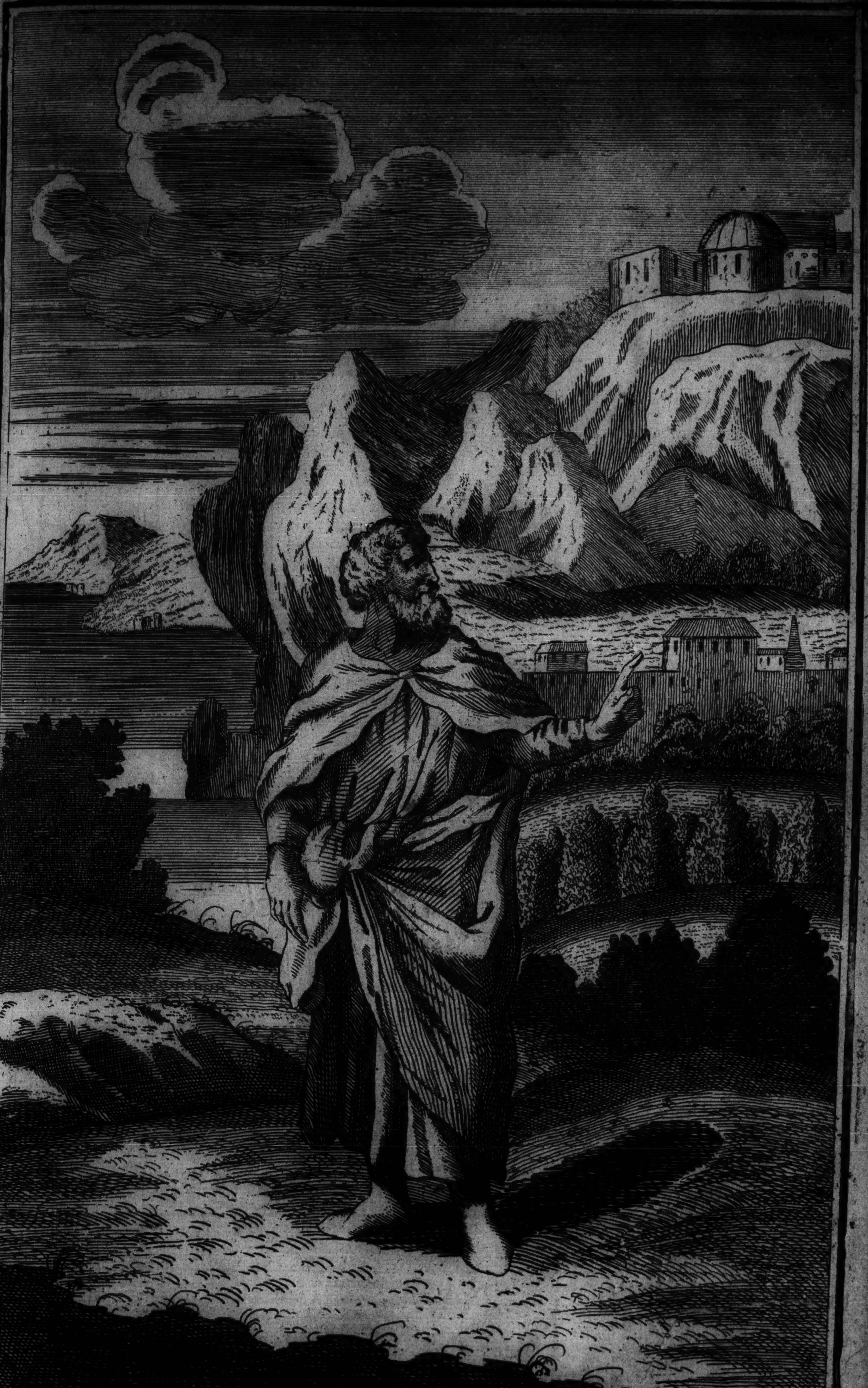
Q. *WHAT is the Purport of this Prophecy?*

A. Here is a Prophecy of God's dreadful Judgments upon *Edom*, becauſe of their Inſolence, Violence and Cruelty againſt the People of God; and, on the contrary, of the Preſervation and Salvation of the Church, which God promiſes to reſtore and enlarge. He deſcribes how the Church ſhall be enlarged and have great Poſſeſſions, but this chiefly is accompliſhed under *Chriſt*, when the Faithful are made Heirs and Lords of all Things by him who is their Head. God will raiſe up in his Church ſuch as ſhall rule and govern for the Defence of the ſame, and Deſtruction of his Enemies under the *Meſſiah*, whom the Prophet calls here the Lord and Head of his Kingdom.

We cannot deny, but that there is a great Obſcurity generally ſpread over the Writings of the Prophets; but then we affirm, that ſuch Obſcurity is neceſſary for wiſe Purpoſes, and providential Reaſons. For, as the Creator of the World governs it with Wiſdom, and, with great Condeſion, had the *Holy Spirit* revealed to the Prophet's future Events ſo diſtinctly, as that they might have expreſſed the moſt minute Circumſtances of Time, Place, Perſons, *&c.* in proper Terms; had the Predictions, I ſay, been ſo plain and apparent, that every Body, at firſt Sight, might ſee the whole Contrivance, and look through all the Scenes of the Action; they could never have been accompliſhed, without offering Violence, by ſome miraculous Interpoſition, to Mens voluntary determinations.

Q. *Who was this Prophet* Obadiah?

A. He conceals his Nation, Family, and Place of Abode; however ſome think he was a proſelyted *Edomite*, filled with the prophetick Spirit, that he might be fitted to declare God's Judgments againſt *Edom*. But this Suggeſtion will no more prove him an *Idumean*, than 'twill prove *Jonah* or *Nahum* to be proſelyted *Aſſyrians*; or *Iſaiah*, *Amos*, *Jeremiah*, and *Ezekiel* to be of ſo many different Countries, becauſe they propheſied againſt ſo many different Nations. Some will have him the ſame who was in Favour with *Ahab*, but more with God, for hiding and feeding his Prophets by fifty in a Cave. But that Tranſaction was too early for this Prophet. Others ſay, he was Captain of the Band of Fifty, whom, at his Requeſt, *Elijah* ſpared; or, that he was one of thoſe ſent by *Jehoſhaphat*, 2 *Chron.* xvii. 17. to inſtruct the *Jews*. This, however, is certain, that he was a Prophet ſent of God, and that his Diligence and Faithfulneſs anſwered his Name *Obadiah*, i. e. *The Servant of the Lord*; whoſe Meſſage he delivered, though we are not certain when, in what King's Reign, or what Prophets he was co-temporary with. Some imagine he was co-temporary with *Jeremiah*, and think that the 37th and 39th Chapters of that Prophet, beſides *Lam.* iv. 21. afford Arguments to prove it; but if they did not live together at the ſame Time, yet they preached the ſame Things againſt *Edom*, which were in due Time fulfilled, though we cannot preciſely define the Time.



The Prophecy of Obadiah

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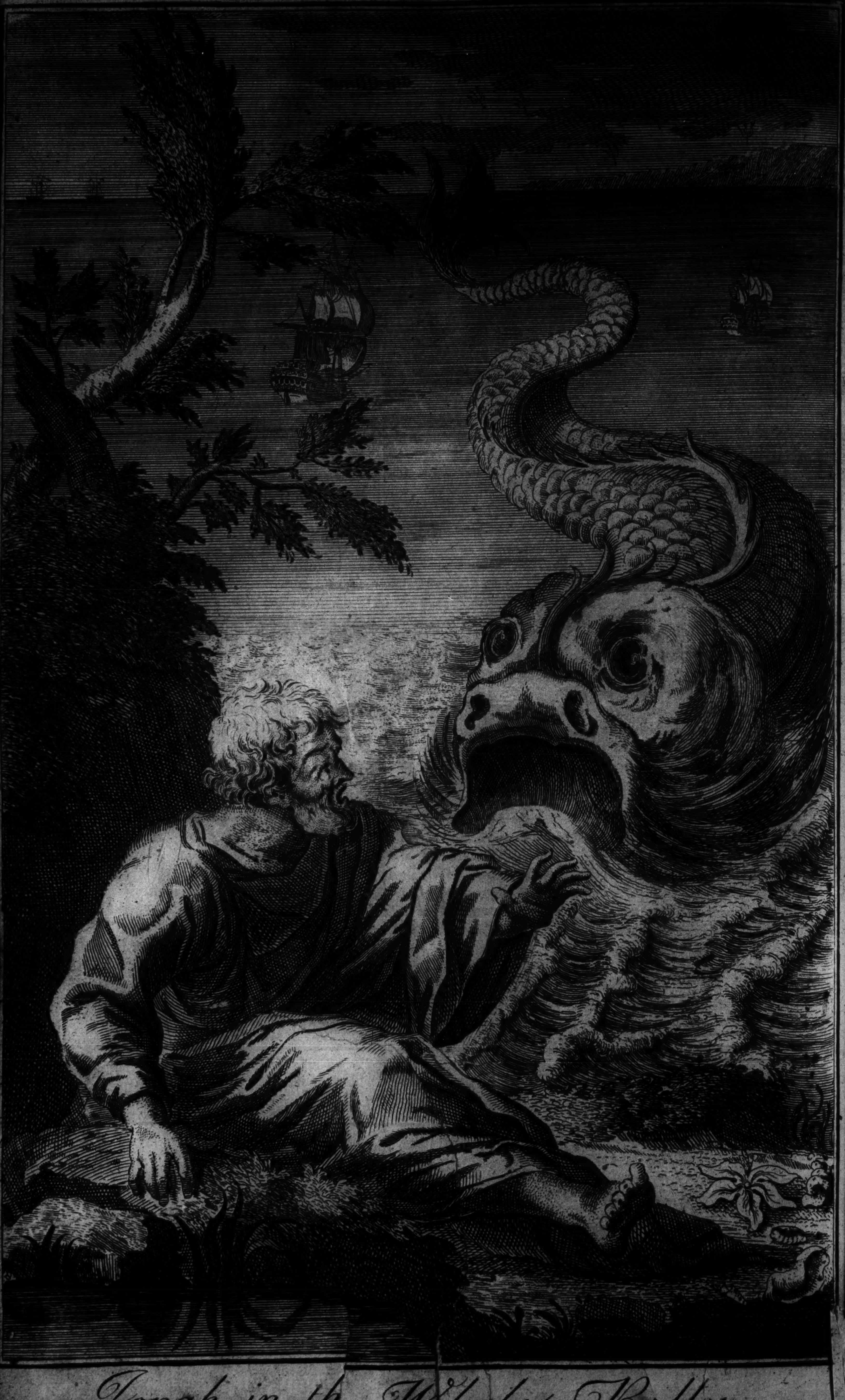

Jonah in the Whales Belly.

THE BOOK

OF THE PROPHET

JONAH.

OUR Prophet owns himſelf both by his Father's Name, *and by his Country: Of the latter there is no great doubt, tho' it appears not whether he was born at* Gath-Hepher, *or whether it was the Place of his Abode, when he was called to go Envoy to the great City* Nineveh. *But as to the former, ſome are dubious whether it was an aſſumed Name, and carried in it the Character of ſome Grace or Virtue which was eminently in the Man, or whether it was the proper Name of the Perſon.* Amittai *in the* Hebrew *denoutes Truth; tho'* Jonah, *a Dove by Name, denonces dreadful Judgments againſt* Nineveh, *yet he does it as* God's *Prophet; and God tells us, by* Jonah's *Pen, He is the Son of his Truth. Whether* Obadiah *was his Father, and had this ſignificant Name given him for his owning the Truth of God, and his true Prophets, in the Times of* Ahab's *Apoſtacy; and whether his Mother were that Widow whoſe Son* Elijah *raiſed from the Dead; whether he were the Perſon ſent by* Elijah *to anoint* Jehu, Eliſha, *and* Hazael, *as the* Jewiſh *Writers affirm, cannot be demonſtrated, or if it could, would be of no great Moment or Uſe to us. It is clear (though this be the only Book under his Name) that he was employ'd as a Prophet in* Iſrael, *before he was ſent into* Aſſyria; *for* 2 *Kings* xiv. 25. *he prophecied the future proſperous Succeſſes of* Jeroboam the Second, *enlarging and eſtabliſhing the the Borders of* Iſrael; *yet it is not certain to us, whether he appeared a Prophet before* Jeroboam's *Time, or in the Beginning of his Reign. Not far from this Time we are ſure we may date his Time, and range him among the firſt of the Prophets, who have left their entire Volumes behind him. By this alſo we may gueſs who was the King of* Aſſyria, *who gave ſuch a rare Example of Repentance. It admits a Diſpute, whether it was* Sardanapulus *or* Beleſus, *otherwiſe* Phul Belocus, *and* Phul *in Scripture Hiſtory; if the Time do not beſt ſuit the latter (as I think it may) rather than to the former, yet the unparallel'd Retirement of* Sardanapulus *reported in Hiſtory, ſeems a probable Reaſon why it ſhould be ſome Monarch, that, more like a gallant Man, lived more free, open, and of eaſy Acceſs, that the News might, as it's ſuggeſted he did, come to his hearing on the firſt Day; ſuch Temper, it is like,* Phul Belochus *was of. But whoever was the King,* Jonah *little expected the Succeſs he found; he thought ſo great a King and City would not mind him, or elſe wold deride and puniſh him; or if they believed him, then they would ſpare them, and* Jonah *would be exclaimed againſt as a falſe Prophet. Upon this he declines the Embaſſy; and was hardly perſuaded by God to undertake it. When a Miracle has ſet him on his Work, and he he ſucceeds in it, he grows paſſionate, and will die. God ſpares and pardons him as well as* Nineveh, *(which falls under the Ruin foretold by* Nahum) *and ſo leaves him a Type of* Chriſt's *Burial and Reſurrection, and an Inſtance how far a good Man may be ſome Time from his Duty, and that great Paſſions may be in a Prophet.*

CHAP. I.

Jonah, *ſent by God to preach at* Nineveh, *flies to* Tarſhiſh, *and is purſued by God with a great Tempeſt; he is diſcovered, by caſting Lots, to have occaſioned it: The Mariners pray and ſacrifice, and on* Jonah's *Advice, caſt him into the Sea, and the Storm ceaſes. God appoints a great Fiſh to ſwallow him up; in whoſe Belly he abode three Days and three Nights.*

Q. G*IVE a ſummary Account of this Chapter?*

A. *Jonah* was ordered by God to go to *Nineveh*, and and reprove the Inhabitants thereof for their many great and crying Sins, but *Jonah* eudeavoured to fly to *Tarſhiſh*, whereby he declared his Weakneſs, that would not promptly follow the Lord's calling, but gave place to his own Reaſon, which perſuaded him, that he ſhould do nothing to profit there, ſeeing he had done ſo little good among his own People.

Jonah embarked on board a Ship at *Joppa*, that was going to *Tarſhiſh*, but God purſued him with a Tempeſt, ſo great and aſtoniſhing, as undeniably ſhewed that it was ſupernatural, and from God.

Q. *Pray where was ſituated* Joppa, *the Place to which* Jonah *retired?*

A. *Joppa* is a Sea-port Town in *Paleſtine*, upon the *Mediterranean*, and was formerly the only

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Port which the *Jews* had upon that Coaſt, whither all the Materials, that were ſent from *Tyre*, towards the Building of *Solomon*'s Temple, were brought and landed. The Town itſelf is very antient, for profane Authors reckon it was built before the Flood, and derive the Name of it from *Jopa*, the Daughter of *Elolus*, and Wife of *Cepheus*, who was the Founder of it. Others are rather inclined to believe, that it was built by *Japhet*, and from him had the Name of *Japho*, which was afterwards moulded into *Joppa*, but is now generally called *Jaffa*, which comes nearer to the firſt Appellation. The Town is ſituated in a fine Plain, between *Jamnia* to the South, *Cæſarea* of *Paleſtine* to the North, and *Rama*, or *Romula*, to the Eaſt: But, at preſent, is in a poor and mean Condition, nor is its Port by any Means good, by reaſon of the Rocks, which project into the Sea. The chief Thing for which this Place was famous, in antient *Pagan* Hiſtory, is the *Expoſition of Andromeda*, the Daughter of *Cepheus* King of *Egypt*, who, for her Mother's Pride, was bound to a Rock, in order to be devoured by a Sea-monſter, but was delivered by the Valour and Bravery of *Perſeus*, who afterwards married her: For in the Times of *Mela* and *Pliny*, there were ſome Marks remaining (as they themſelves teſtify, *nempe Mela*, l. 1. c. 11. *Plin.* l. 5. 13. *Joſeph de Bello Jud.* l. 3. c. 15.) of the Chains wherewith this royal Virgin was bound to the Rock which projects into the Sea. But all this is mere Fiction, firſt founded upon the Adventure of *Jonah*, who ſet ſail from this Port, and then improved with the Addition of ſome particular Circumſtances.

Q. *How came the Mariners to imagine that the Diſtreſs they were in, was brought upon them immediately from God?*

A. In this Diſtreſs every one applied to the God he worſhipped, except *Jonah* who was faſt aſleep; but the Ship-maſter miſſing him, went and awaked him, bidding him pray to his God for Deliverance. After they had prayed, which was neceſſary in ſuch Caſes, as being a religious Means, they caſt out the Goods which loaded the Ship, which was a proper natural Means of Safety; but none appeared, ſtill the Tempeſt, and their Danger with it, continued; a ſhrewd Symptom that there was one or other among them, whoſe Sins had provoked God to do this, and that it was fit to be known who this was; and whoſoever firſt moved for making the Search, all agree in the Expedient to caſt Lots, when God determines and ſingles out *Jonah*. The Mariners are ſatisfied he was the Man, and deſires him to give an Account of himſelf, which he readily and freely does.

Although *Jonah* had recounted all, and given Glory to God, taken Shame to himſelf, and ſatisfied the Seamen, yet the Sea grew higher and higher, more tempeſtuous in itſelf, and ſo more dangerous to them, they were ſenſible ſomewhat muſt be done with *Jonah* to quiet all. Their Fear was leſt they ſhould miſtake herein, and therefore they aſk his Council, which he readily gave them, *viz.* to throw him over-board into the Sea, declaring that then the Tempeſt would ceaſe. The Mariners nevertheleſs ſtrove to get aſhore, but in vain, for the Sea ran high, ſo that after they had prayed to God, they caſt *Jonah* into the Sea, which was immediately calm, as *Jonah* had told them; upon which the Men praiſe the Lord.

Q. *What Account do the* Jewiſh *Writers give of this Story of* Jonah?

A. The *Jewiſh* Doctors, who are great Lovers of Prodigies, are not even ſatisfied with what they meet with in this Hiſtory of *Jonah*, but have over and above added, that, as ſoon as the Ship, wherein he was embarked was under Sail, it all on ſudden ſtood ſtock ſtill, ſo that it could not be made to move neither backward nor forward, notwithſtanding all the Pains that the Mariners took in rowing: But others, with more Probability ſay, that while all the reſt of the Ships were quiet and unmoleſted, the Storm fell upon none, but that wherein *Jonah* was, which made the Seamen think, that there was ſomething miraculous in it, and thereupon called upon the Company that ſailed with them, to come and caſt Lots, as the ſuperſtitious Cuſtom among the Heathen was, whenever they were in any great Diſtreſs; that accordingly they caſt Lots three different Times which ſtill fell upon *Jonah*; and that they let him down ſeveral Times with a Rope, without plunging him into the Sea, and as oft as they did it, found the Storm abate, and whenever they pulled him up again, found it increaſe; ſo that at laſt they were forced to commit him to the Mercy of the Waves: All which are Circumſtances, which the Scripture-Account neither favours nor contradicts. The People of the *Eaſt* have a Tradition, that it was not above four Leagues from *Joppa*, over-againſt *Antipatris*, that the Seamen threw *Jonah* over-board.

God, by his almighty, wiſe and fatherly Providence, had prepared a great Fiſh to ſwallow *Jonah*, where he remained three Days and three Nights; whereby God made this Prophet to become a Type of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. See *Matt.* xii. 40. and xvi. 4. *Luke* xi. 30.

CHAP. II.

Jonah's *Prayer and Vow. The Fiſh, at God's Command, ſpews him out on the Shore.*

Q. WHAT *is chiefly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. Here is a Prayer, which contains the Prophet's Thoughts and Motions whilſt he was in the Fiſh, was ſet down in Writing by him, after his Deliverance; with the Addition of Thankſgiving.

Although Fiſh are deſtitute of Reaſon, and underſtand not as Man, yet they have Ears to hear their Creator; and readily obey. The Whale preſently obeys the Word, it could no longer keep *Jonah* a Priſoner.

This Prayer and Thankſgiving is wrote in a moſt pious, elevated, and divine Strain, and well worthy the Reader's Peruſal.

Then Jonah *prayed unto the Lord his God out of the Fiſh's Belly, and ſaid, I cried by reaſon of mine Affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; and out of the Belly of Hell cried I, and thou heardeſt my Voice. For thou hadſt caſt me into the deep, in the midſt of the Seas, and the Floods compaſſed me about, all thy Billows and thy Waves paſſed over me. Then I ſaid, I am caſt out of thy Sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy Temple. The Waters compaſſed me about even to the Soul; the Depth cloſed me round about, the Weeds were wrapped about my Head. I went down to the Bottom of the Mountains; the Earth with her Bars was about me for ever; yet haſt thou brought up my Life from Corruption, O Lord my God. When my Soul fainted with-*

in me, I remembred the Lord, and my Prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy Temple. They that obſerve lying Vanities, forſake their own Mercy. But I will ſacrifice unto thee with the Voice of Thankſgiving, I will pay that that I have vowed: Salvation is of the Lord.

Q. *Pray explain the eighth Verſe?*

A. *They that obſerve lying Vanities, forſake their own Mercy.* Whoſoever depends upon and ſeeks for Help from Idols or falſe Gods, as do the Heathen Mariners, do depend upon falſe Grounds, and wait for moſt lying and deceiving Objects. This Obſervation of the Prophet is not only true, with reſpect to that particular Caſe to which he then applied it, but is likewiſe applicable to all our Creature Dependencies.

Q. *In what Senſe are we to underſtand the tenth Verſe;* And the Lord ſpake unto the Fiſh, and it vomited out *Jonah* upon the dry Land?

A. *And.* Or, as the Particle is ſometimes rendered, *then, i. e.* after *Jonah* had prayed, and acted his Faith, though in the Whale's Belly.—— *The Lord.* Who made Heaven and Earth, and commanded both, who is the God of Salvation.— *Spake.* Commanded, ſignified it to be his Pleaſure; as the ſame Word prepared the Fiſh, and brought it to give Attendance to receive the Priſoner; ſo now it diſcharges the Keeper, and requires him to ſet the Priſoner at Liberty.———— *Unto the Fiſh.* Though Fiſhes are deſtitute of Reaſon, and underſtand not a Man, yet they have Ears to hear their Creator, and readily obey.———— *And it vomited out* Jonah. The Command required this, nor could it be a Deliverance without this; had he been caſt out of the Whale's Belly any where elſe in the Sea, he had been drowned; but now, that which was his Danger, ſhall be his Safety, a Ship now to land him, which before was like to be his Grave. The Scripture does not ſay where he was thus ſet on Shore; but conſidering he was to go to *Nineveh* and preach Repentance to them, it's a very obvious Conjecture that any Man might make, that the Whale ſet *Jonah* on ſhore on ſome Place on the *Syrian* Coaſt neareſt to *Nineveh*: And on View of the Charts, any indifferent Geographer would conjecture, that it was ſomewhere on the Bay or Gulph of *Lajazzo*, antiently the *Sinus Iſſicus*, or ſomewhat near to *Alexandretta*, as the *French*, or *Scandaroon*, as the *Turks* call it; whence though a long, yet by the Maps appears to be the ſtraiteſt Journey to *Nineveh*. They who conjecture it was on the *Euxine* Sea, conſider not the ſtrait Paſſage of the *Propontis*, nor the Length of 1600 Miles from *Joppa* to that Part of the *Euxine* neareſt to *Nineveh*; but he that ſaid *Jonah* was landed on *Nineveh's* Shore, was much wider in his Gueſs, and never conſidered that *Nineveh* was built on the *Tigris*, ſome hundreds of Miles from *Joppa*; and if the Fiſh brought him thither, it was by a Compaſs of many thouſand Miles, which would require ſome Months to run over. Their Conjecture therefore bids faireſt, who confine it to ſome Place on the *Syrian* Coaſt, and not far from *Scandaroon*.

CHAP. III.

Jonah *is ſent again, and preaches to the* Ninevites; *they believe; the King and People humble themſelves before the Lord, and amend their Ways, hoping thereby to find Mercy. God repents, and ſpares them.*

Q. WHAT *have we in this Chapter, that calls for our Conſideration?*

A. The firſt Time *Jonah* rebels againſt the divine Command, now better prepared and humbled, he is tried again; God doth give him the Gift of Prophecy, and by that ſignifies his Reconciliation to him; and admits him into his old Station, by ſending him to *Nineveh*.

Jonah propheſied, that in forty Days *Nineveh* would be deſtroyed, unleſs the People repented. The King and People upon this put on Sackcloth, faſted and prayed; and upon this God revoked his Sentence, which was but conditional, in his Mind and ſecret Decree, and gave *Jonah* Notice thereof.

Q. *Why did the* Ninevites *compel their Cattle to faſt, as well as themſelves?*

A. This Hiſtory tells us, that, *By a Decree from the King and his Nobles, neither Man nor Beaſt, neither Herd nor Flock, were allowed to taſte any Thing, but were kept up from feeding and drinking Water.* This was carrying their *Abſtinence* to a greater Severity than what we find practiſed even among the *Jews*. For though, in Times of publick Calamity, and on the Day of ſolemn Expiation, we find that they made their Children faſt, as we may gather from *Joel* ii. 16. yet we no where read of their extending that Rigour to their Cattle. *Virgil*, indeed, in one of his *Eclogues*, brings in a Shepherd telling his Companion, that for the Death of *Julius Cæſar*, the Mourning was ſo general, that even the Sheep, and other Creatures, were not drove to Water. But then the Queſtion is, whether this may not be looked upon as a poetical Exaggeration? From *Homer*, and ſome other antient Authors, we learn, that when any *Hero* or great Warrior died, the Cuſtom was to make his Horſes faſt for ſome Time, and to cut off Part of their Hair; nor may we forget mentioning, that ſome Hiſtorians tell us of the People inhabiting the *Canaries* and *Peru*, *viz.* that in the Times of great Drought, they ſhut up their Sheep and Goats, without giving them any Thing to eat, upon Preſumption, that their loud Cries and Bleating will reach Heaven, and prevail with God to give them Rain.

Q. *Who was this King of* Nineveh *who thus humbled himſelf on the preaching of* Jonah?

A. The Text tells us of the King of *Nineveh*, that upon the Preaching of *Jonah*, *he laid his Robe from him, and covered him with Sackcloth, and ſat in Aſhes*, and (what is pretty ſtrange) ſome have thought, that the King, thus penitent upon this Occaſion, was *Sardanapalus*, a Man famous among Heathen Authors for his Luxury and Riches, and in whoſe Reign the famous City of *Nineveh* was taken by *Arbaces* and *Beleſis*. But others, with more Probability, ſuppoſe, that it was *Pul*, the Father of this *Sardanapalus*, whom ſome Heathen Authors call *Anabaxarus*, and others *Anacyndaraxus*. For as he died (according to *Uſher*) about the Year of the World 3237, he might be upon the Throne in the Reign of *Jeroboam* the ſecond, King of *Iſrael*, which was the Time when *Jonah* was ſent to *Nineveh*.

CHAP. IV.

Jonah, *diſpleaſed at God's ſparing the* Ninevites, *complains of it; God reproves him for it, and by a* Gourd *inſtructs, and convinces him.*

Q. WHAT *do we find remarkable in this Chapter?*

A. The divine Forbearance ſparing the great and ſinful City of *Nineveh*, was very diſagreeable to *Jonah*'s haſty and fierce Temper, and to his Love of his own Credit; and it afflicted him to ſee *Nineveh* ſurvive the forty Days limited for their Continuance. *Jonah* would yet have *Nineveh* a Sacrifice to God's Juſtice, and an eternal Monument of his Truth who foretold it.

In a peeviſh Humour *Jonah* is weary of Life, and prays for Death, yet in this Requeſt ſome Mixture there is of Grace with Paſſion, ſomewhat of Mercy to *Jonah*, in that he doth not give him up to his own Paſſion.

The Almighty is ever Gracious, ſlow to Anger, and of great Kindneſs, elſe *Jonah* had not lived a Moment longer to repent him of his laſt Sins in this Matter. God is pleaſed to argue with him to this Effect. Is thy vehement Anger warrantable? Or will this Anger of thine do good to thyſelf or others? Think well of it, whether thou doſt act like a Prophet, like one that fears God, or like a Man in this thine Anger.

Jonah, nevertheleſs, made him a Booth, and waited for the Deſtruction of the City; and in the Night the Lord cauſed a Gourd (a wild Plant with long and broad Leaves) to ſpring up, which was a farther Means to cover *Jonah* from the Heat of the Sun, as he remained in his Booth, at which *Jonah* rejoiced; but the next Morning God ſent a Worm to deſtroy the Gourd, ſo that the Sun beat vehemently upon *Jonah*, and he wiſhed for Death. God reproves him for his paſſionate Temper, but he declares, if in the Violence of this Paſſion he ſhould die (as we know ſome have) yet he was not to blame. Thus he charges God with uſing him hardly, and breaking his Heart, though he had come a long Journey to deliver a Meſſage he would fain have been excuſed from; ſo unreaſonable is *Jonah*'s Anger. Inſtead of puniſhing ſo notorious an Offender, God mercifully reproves *Jonah*, who would pity himſelf and the Gourd, and yet would reſtrain God to ſhew his Compaſſion to ſo many thouſand People, many of whom were Children and Infants.

Q. *Pray expound the eleventh Verſe?*

A. *And ſhould not I ſpare* Nineveh, *that great City, wherein are more than ſixſcore thouſand Perſons that cannot diſcern between their Right-Hand and their Left-Hand, and alſo much Cattle?* —— *And ſhould not I ſpare* Nineveh. May not I, by virtue of my Sovereignty, pity, ſpare or pardon, if I will? Or is there not good Reaſon to incline me to do it, and to juſtify my doing it? —— *That great City.* *Jonah*, thou haſt Pity on a ſorry Shrub, and ſhall thy God be by thee confined, that he ſhould not have Pity on a vaſt and mighty City? A ſtately Structure, which coſt immenſe Treaſures, was the Labour of almoſt one Million and an Half of Labourers, through eight Years; the great Wonder of the World. Thy Gourd, *Jonah*, may not be named in compariſon with this City; only in a Paſſion this muſt be ruined to pleaſe thee, and thy Gourd muſt not, leſt it diſpleaſe thee: Is this equal? Wouldſt thou have me leſs merciful to ſuch a goodly City, than thou art to a Weed? —— *Wherein are more than ſixſcore thouſand Perſons, that cannot diſcern between their Right-Hand and their Left-Hand.* It was a ſingle Gourd *Jonah* pitied, and is angry that it was ſmitten; here are many hundred thouſands of Men and Women; which I have pitied and ſpared: Here are more than ſixſcore thouſand Innocents who are Infants, who are my Creatures made for Eternity, who grow ſlowly under my Care and Charge; whom I value as my own: And peeviſh *Jonah*, wilt thou not allow me to ſhew Pity to mine own valuable Creatures, when thou pitieſt what is neither thine nor valuable? Had it been thine, this might have required thy Affection; had it been of Worth, this might have excuſed thy Earneſtneſs for it, but all this aggravates this thy fierce and cruel Paſſion againſt *Nineveh*. —— *And alſo much Cattle.* Beſide Men, Women and Children, who are in *Nineveh*, there are many others of my Creatures that are not ſinful, and my tender Mercies are and ſhall be over all my Works: If thou would'ſt be their Butcher, yet I will be their God. I know how to impreſs their Minds with a continued Belief that *Jonah* came from God to preach Repentance, and that it was their Repentance prevented their Overthrow; I can ſalve thy Credit *Jonah*, and yet not humour thy Cruelty: Go *Jonah*, reſt thyſelf content, and be thankful; that Goodneſs, Mercy and Kindneſs that ſpared *Nineveh*, hath ſpared thee in this thy inexcuſable Frowardneſs. I will be to repenting *Nineveh* what I am to thee, a God gracious and merciful, ſlow to Anger, and of great Kindneſs; and I will turn from thee the Evil thou, and they deſerve.

Q. *What ſort of a Plant was the* Gourd, *mentioned Verſe* 6?

A. The Word *Kikajon*, by the *Septuagint*, *Arabic* and *Syriac* Verſions, is called a *Gourd*, but moſt of the antient *Greek* Tranſlators, following St. *Jerom* in this Particular, chuſe rather to render it *Ivy*. St. *Jerom*, however, acknowledges, that the Word *Ivy* does not anſwer the Signification of the *Hebrew Kikajon*, though he thinks it much better in this Place than a *Gourd*, which growing cloſe to the Earth, could not have ſhaded *Jonah* from the Heat of the Sun: For the *Kikajon*, according to him, is a Shrub which grows in the ſandy Places of *Paleſtine*, and increaſes ſo ſuddenly, that in a few Days it comes to a conſiderable Height. It is ſupported by its Trunk, without being upheld by any Thing elſe, and by the Thickneſs of its Leaves, which reſemble thoſe of a Vine, affords, in hot Weather, a very agreeable Shade.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Concluſion of this Book?*

A. This Book ends as abruptly as it begins: It begins with a Conjunctive Copulative, *And the Word of the Lord came upon* Jonah (ſo it ſhould be read) which has made ſome Commentators think, that this was but an Appendix to ſome of his other Writings; and it ends without giving us any Manner of Account, either what became of the *Ninevites*, or of *Jonah* himſelf, after this Expedition. 'Tis likely, indeed, from the compaſſionate Expreſſions which God makes uſe of towards the *Ninevites*, that for that Time he reverſed their Doom; and it is not improbable, that *Jonah*, when he had executed his Commiſſion, and been ſatisfied by God concerning his merciful Procedure, returned into *Judea*; but the Author of the Lives and Deaths of the Prophets, who goes under the Name of *Epiphanius*, tells us, that, returning from *Nineveh*, and being aſhamed to ſee that his Prediction was not fulfilled, he retired, with his Mother to the City of *Tyre*, where he lived in the Plain of *Sear*, until he died, and was buried in the Cave of *Cenezeus*, Judge of *Iſrael*: But who the Author means by *Cenezeus*, unleſs it be *Caleb*, who is frequently ſirnamed the *Kenezite*, (tho' we do not read of his being ever a Judge of *Iſrael*) or rather *Othniel*, who was the Son of *Kenaz*, and one that judged *Iſrael*, we cannot tell.

Q. *Has not the Hiſtory of* Jonah *more the Air of a Fable, than a true Narrative of Facts really done?*

A. In the whole Compaſs of the *Old Teſtament*, I know of no Paſſage that has been ſo popular a Topic of Banter and Ridicule, and which the Lovers of Infidelity, in all Ages, have ſo much delighted to deſcant upon, as the Story of *Jonah*'s *continuing three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly*. The Story, indeed, at firſt Hearing, ſounds ſurpriſingly; and therefore we need not wonder, that the Wit and Sagacity of a *Porphyry* or a *Julian*, found ſome plauſible Exceptions againſt it, which our modern Retailers, and malicious Improvers of their Objections, have endeavoured to decry as a wild Romance, or at beſt but a parabolical Repreſentation of ſomething elſe.

Q. *Pray give ſome Deſcription of the City* Nineveh?

A. Nineveh, at the Time when *Jonah* was ſent thither, was the Metropolis of the *Aſſyrian* Empire, and one of the largeſt and moſt antient Cities in the World. According to the beſt Chronologers, it was built a little after the Flood, and very ſoon after the Tower of *Babel*, by *Nimrod*; but being afterwards greatly enlarged by *Ninus*, from him it received its Name. It was ſituated upon the Banks of the *Tigris*, and (as *Diodorus* has given us the Deſcription of it) was in Length an hundred and fifty Stadia, in Breadth fourſcore and ten, and in Circumference four hundred and ſeventy; which being reduced to our Meaſure, made it about one and twenty Miles long, nine broad, and four and fifty round. How ſtately its Walls, and how lofty its Towers were, the ſame Hiſtorian has taken care to inform us; and how great the Number of its Inhabitants was, we may learn from *the ſixſcore thouſand Children who could not diſcern between their Right-Hands and their Left*: For, according to a proportionate Computation, the whole muſt have been above ſix hundred thouſand Perſons.

Q. *But is it not ſtrange that God ſhould have ſo great a Regard for the Inhabitants of* Nineveh, *ſince I don't find they were acknowledged to be his People?*

A. We have a wrong Conception of God, if we think that, becauſe he made the Children of *Iſrael* his peculiar People, he therefore neglected all the World beſides. On the contrary, *Though he ſhew'd his Word unto* Jacob, *and his Statutes and Ordinances unto* Iſrael, *Pſ.* cxlvii. 19. in a particular Manner, yet he did not leave himſelf without a Witneſs in other Nations; but whenever they were drawing Deſtruction upon themſelves, took care to acquaint them with their impending doom. To this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that not only *Iſaiah*, *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*, but almoſt all the other Prophets do foretel the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, and publiſh the divine Threats againſt *Egypt*, *Edom*, and the other Kingdoms neighbouring upon *Canaan*; that *Jeremiah*, in particular, was ordered by God to make himſelf Bonds and Yokes, and to ſend them to the Kings of the *Ammonites*, of *Tyre* and *Zidon*, and other Princes, by the Hands of their Miniſters, who were then at the Court of *Zedekiah* King of *Judah*, with his Admonition to their Maſters, that unleſs they repented of their evil Ways, he would deliver them into the Power of *Nebuchadnezzar* King of *Babylon*, whom he calls his Servant, even as he does *Cyrus* his anointed (for being appointed to execute his Will) ſome hundred Years before he was born, and therefore we need leſs wonder, that we find God intereſting himſelf in the Preſervation of the large and populous City of *Nineveh*, upon which depended the whole Fate of the *Aſſyrian* Empire, ſince in all Ages he has given Proofs of his Protection, and abſolute Dominion over other Nations, as well as the *Iſraelites*, either in threatening their Diſobedience, in order to procure their Amendment, or, if they deſpiſe his Threatenings, in puniſhing their Obſtinacy, as they deſerve.

Q. *Had God any remote Deſin in Shewing this peculiar Favour to the* Ninevites?

A. Whether God might deſign this Call to the *Ninevites*, as a Pledge and Aſſurance of his future Admiſſion of the People of all Nations into the Privileges of the *Chriſtian* Covenant, this certainly he might have done under this immediate View, *viz.* to ſhew the Diſparity between his People and Aliens, and upon the Compariſon of their ſeveral Behaviours, ſhame them for living unreclaimed, under the conſtant Preaching of his Prophets for ſo many Years, when a People, whom they deſpiſed, as being Strangers to the Covenant of Promiſe, had, by the mighty Power of his Word, been converted in the Space of three Days.

Nothing is more common in Scripture, than to find God complaining of his People, for not attending to the Meſſages which he ſent them, *Jer.* vii. 25, *&c. Since the Day that their Fathers came forth out of the Land of* Egypt (ſays God to one of the Meſſengers) *even unto this Day, I have ſent unto them all my Servants, the Prophets, daily riſing up early, and ſending them; yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their Ear, but hardened their Neck, and did worſe than their Fathers; therefore thou ſhalt ſpeak all theſe Words unto them, but they will not hearken, and thou ſhalt call unto them, but they will not anſwer thee.* God therefore, very well foreknowing the Succeſs that this Prophet would meet with, might ſend him with Commiſſion to preach to the *Ninevites*, not only in Purſuance of his kind Purpoſes to them, but with an Intent likewiſe, to render his own People inexcuſable, even as our Saviour repreſents the Caſe of the *Jews*, in his Days, who refuſed to hear, *Mat.* xii. 41. *The Men of* Nineveh *ſhall riſe in Judgment with this Generation, and ſhall condemn it, becauſe they repented at the Preaching of* Jonah, *and behold a greater than* Jonah *is here.*

Q. *What might be the true Cauſe of* Jonah's *Reluctance to preach to this People?*

A. Some have imagined, that one great Cauſe of *Jonah*'s declining the Order at firſt, and his going at laſt, with ſo much Reluctancy to *Nineveh*, might be ſome Suſpicion, that in caſe theſe *Gentiles* ſhould liſten to his Preaching, it might be, not only a laſting Reproach, but a Means of Reprobation likewiſe to his Countrymen, who, under the conſtant Miniſtration of ſo many Prophets, were only become more obdurate in Sin; and therefore, jealous of the Honour of his Nation, and too ſolicitous for their Preſervation, he could not prevail with himſelf to accept of a Commiſſion that ſeemed to interfere therewith, leſt a ready Compliance with the divine Commands, at *Nineveh*, ſhould prove the Diſparagement at leaſt, if not the utter Rejection *of his Brethren, his Kinſmen after the Fleſh*, Rom. ix. 3.

The Prophet himſelf, however, has ſuggeſted another Reaſon for his Unwillingneſs to go to *Nineveh*, and that is, the ſuperabundant Mercy of God, which he foreſaw would be moved to Pity, at the Prayers and Tears of the People, and therefore he remonſtrates thus; Chap. iv. 2. *I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my Saying, when I was yet in my Country? Therefore I fled before unto* Tarſhiſh, *for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, ſlow to Anger, of great Kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the Evil.* But how plauſible ſoever this Excuſe may be, yet upon the Face of the whole Affair, it appears, that the Prophet conſidered himſelf a little too much, and therefore we may conclude, that the true Reaſon for his declining this Errand, was the Hazard and Difficulty of the Undertaking, and the great Uncertainty of its Succeſs: The very ſame Thought that deterred *Moſes* from applying to *Pharaoh*, to grant the *Iſraelites* their Liberty; and *Gideon* from taking up Arms to reſcue his Country, from the Slavery of the *Midianites*: For as each of theſe made their ſeveral Excuſes, *I am of uncircumciſed Lips*, ſays one, *and how ſhall* Pharaoh *hearken unto me?* And, *I am the leaſt in my Father's Houſe*, ſays the other, *and how then ſhall I ſave* Iſrael? So might *Jonah* ſay, within himſelf, "*I am leſs than the leaſt of the Prophets*, and how then can I expect that the People of ſo great and opulent a City will give any Attention to my Preaching; that they will not rather take the Alarm, and fall upon me, when I come to tell them that their Ruin and Deſtruction is ſo near approaching. I'll get quit of this dangerous Affair, therefore, as well as I can; and becauſe I conceive that the Spirit of Prophecy (which, upon this Account, makes me ſo uneaſy) will not purſue me, after I am gone out of the *Holy Land*, I'll make the beſt of my Way into *Cilicia*; for when I have got at ſome Diſtance from *Judea*, God, perhaps, may think no more of ſending me, but may find him out ſome other Prophet, that is better qualified for his Purpoſe." But *David* in *Pſ.* cxxxix. 6. *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit*, (as one better inſtructed, than *Jonah* ſeems to be, in this Article of his Omnipreſence, addreſſes himſelf to God) *or whither ſhall I flee from thy Preſence? If I aſcend up into Heaven, thou art there; if I go down into Hell, thou art there alſo; if I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea, even there alſo ſhall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right-Hand ſhall hold me*; which no Man ever ſo *experimentally* found to be true, as did this Prophet, while he ſojourned in the Deep, and took up his Habitation in the *Whale*'s Belly.

Q. *Was the Fiſh that ſwallowed* Jonah, *really a* Whale?

A. Some learned Men, indeed, are of Opinion, that the Fiſh which ſwallowed up *Jonah*, was not a *Whale*, becauſe the largeſt of theſe (as they tell us) have in Proportion, but, very narrow Gullets, ſuch as are not capable of receiving a Man intire into their Stomachs; and therefore they imagine, that it was what they call the *Lamia*, or *Sea-Dog*, which, though leſs in Bulk than a Whale, has a Gullet ſo vaſtly large, that if its Throat were kept open with a Gag, a Dog may go down into its Stomach, wherein there have frequently been found Men, all whole and entire, and ſometimes clad in Armour.

It muſt be acknowledged, that the Hebrew *Dag-gadol*, which the Text in *Jonah* makes uſe of, ſignifies no more than a great Fiſh; but then it makes ſomething for the common Opinion, that the *Whale* is the largeſt Species we know of, that ſwims in the Sea. The Antients, indeed, ſeem to have enlarged too much in their Account of this Animal. *Pliny* talks of ſome that were ſix hundred Foot long, and above half as much broad. *Solinus* make others no leſs than eight hundred Foot long, and *Dionyſius* ſeems to affirm of others, that they had a Throat wide enough to ſwallow up a Ship with all its Rigging. But tho' theſe may paſs for extravagant *Exaggerations*, yet an Author, who has wrote expreſly upon this Subject, gives us this Account, "That in the Northern Seas there are *Whales* of ſuch prodigious Bigneſs, that when their Fleſh is taken off, and nothing left but Skeletons, they look like large Veſſels, or rather like ſpacious Houſes, with ſeveral Chambers and Windows in them, wherein a whole Family might find Room to live." Their Mouths (every one allows) is capable of containing ſeveral Men at once.

Q. *How is it poſſible to conceive that* Jonah *ſhould be ſwallowed down unhurt into the Whale's Belly?*

A. It cannot be thought, indeed, but the *Oeſophagus* in Creatures that are *dead*, muſt be contracted to a great Degree, in compariſon to what it is, when they are alive; and eſpecially when they are eating; in which Caſe it is capable of ſo great *Dilatation*, (as is evident from a *Pike*'s ſometimes ſwallowing another Fiſh almoſt of its own Magnitude) that we need not much fear but that the Fiſh, which God had provided for that Purpoſe, was able to gulp *Jonah* down at once, without ever hurting him. For the Whale, as we are told, has neither Teeth nor Tuſhes, (whereas the *Sea-Dog* has four or five Rows of Teeth in each Jaw) and is therefore the much properer of the two to receive into its Stomach any Thing alive, without the Danger of *Contuſion*.

Q. *But ſuppoſe* Jonah *might be convey'd ſafe thro' the Jaws and Gullet of the Whale, how can we account for his living ſo long as three Days in that diſmal Manſion?*

A. The Scripture indeed ſpeaks preciſely of *three Days and three Nights*, Jonah i. 17. but as *Jonah* was a Type of our Saviour, and his abode in the Belly of the Whale a Prefiguration of our Saviour's Continuance *in the Heart of the Earth*, Matth. x. 40. there is ſome Reaſon to think, that the *Type* and the *Antitype*, in this Reſpect, were both alike, and that as our Lord was but one whole Day, and Part of two more, in the Grave, ſo *Jonah* might continue no longer in the Deep, and yet, according to the *Hebrew* Way of Computation, both be truly ſaid to have been *three Days and three Nights*, in their reſpective Confinements. But not to inſiſt on this *Abbreviation* of Time, what ſome *Naturaliſts* tell us of the *Food* of the *Whale, viz.* that it does not live on Fleſh, but on Weeds, on the Froth of the Sea, Inſects, and ſuch ſmall Fiſh, as are eaſy of Digeſtion; and that conſequently, as having a colder Stomach, it was a fitter Receptacle for the Prophet, than any other Fiſh, that was *carnivorous*, might be of ſome Conſideration, perhaps, were we not diſpoſed to call in the miraculous Power of God, which alone could preſerve him in theſe Circumſtances: But then we cannot but allow, that as he ſuſpended the Violence of the Fire from hurting the three young Men that were caſt into the Furnace; and as he made St. *Peter*'s Body, either ſo *light* as to *walk* upon the Waters, or the Waters ſo *ſolid* as to ſupport it; ſo, with the ſame Facility, he might controul the acid Humours in any Creature's *Stomach*, and make it, for ſuch a determinate Time, loſe its Faculty of *Digeſtion*; for, in all this, there is nothing that ſurpaſſes the Power of the great Author of Nature, who gives or ſuſpends the Activity of all Bodies, who ſtops or controuls, who changes or modefies, as he thinks fit, all the Motion which he communicates to Matter, of what Kind ſoever it be. And in like Manner, though it be impoſſible, according to the ordinary Laws of Nature, for a Man to *breathe* in the Stomach of a Fiſh, or at leaſt to draw in ſuch a Quantity of Air, as is requiſite to give a due Circulation to his Blood; yet ſince it is neither contrary to the Nature, nor ſuperior to the Power of God, by one Means or other to effect the Thing, if it be but agreeable to his Will, we cannot ſee any Reaſon why it may not be done.

Q. *But other Miracles*, it may be ſaid, *were done for ſome wiſe Ends of Providence, and when there ſeems to have been an urgent Occaſion for God's exerting his Almighty Power: When the* Iſraelites, *his People (for Inſtance) were encloſed between the* Red-Sea *and the* Egyptian *Army, there was a Neceſſity for his opening them a Paſſage that was never known before, to faciltiate their Eſcape: And when they were all in Danger of periſhing by Thirſt, it ſeems not incongruous that he ſhould make the Water flow, even* out of the ſtony Rock; *for to give them* ſupernatural *Succours, where the* natural *abſolutely failed, was no more than what might be expected from him: But where was the Neceſſity of preſerving* Jonah, *and preſerving him by a Miracle, ſo incomprehenſible, when, after the Renegade had confeſſed his Fault, God might, with the leaſt Beck of his Will, have either appeaſed the Storm, or run the Ship on Shore?*

A. The Prophets, however inveſted with great Power, and ſometimes intruſted with high Commiſſions from God, were *Men ſubject to the like Paſſions*, and Infirmities *as we are*, James v. 17. is evident not only from the Teſtimony of the Apoſtle, but from the Account of their own Behaviour likewiſe. The Prophet that was ſent to *Bethel* to denounce God's Judgment againſt the idolatrous Altar, was a ſad Example of human Frailty, in giving Credit to the Perſuaſions of another, even when tney contradicted a divine Command. *Jonah*, when he was directed to go to *Nineveh*, diſcovered the like, if not greater Tokens of human Infirmity, when, inſtead of purſuing that Jonrney, he bent his Courſe another Way, not without ſome vain Hopes of evading, by that Means, the divine Preſence: And therefore, as God ſent a Lion to ſlay the Prophet of *Judah*, for his too much Credulity, ſo ſome have imagined, that he not only purſued this Prophet of *Iſrael* with a dreadful Storm, but even had him thrown over-board, and ſwallowed up by this *Sea-Monſter*, in Puniſhment for his Perverſeneſs and Prevarication. God indeed, by his over-ruling Power, made the Belly of this Monſter a Place of Security to him; but what Notions the Prophet himſelf had of this ſtrange Habitation, *Jonah* ii. 3. *Where the Floods compaſſed him about, and the Billows and Waves paſſed over him*, we may learn from his Meditations in the Deep, Ver. 2. *When he cried, by Reaſon of his Affliction, to the Lord, and he heard him*: So that, upon the Preſumption that God intended not to deſtroy him, the *primary* Reaſon, we may imagine, for his appointing this Fiſh to ſwallow him up, was to ſtop his fugitive Prophet, as he was endeavouring to make his Eſcape: But then, *in the midſt of Judgment thinking upon Mercy*, after a Confinement of three Days and three Nights, in the Deep, whereby he both taught him better Obedience for the future, and rectified his Notions concerning the divine *Omnipreſence*, he ordered his *Jailer* (if we may ſo ſpeak) to give him his Liberty, and deliver him ſafe on Shore.

Q. *Can you aſſign the particular and preciſe Place where* Jonah *was landed by the Whale?*

A. The *Oriental* Traditions do vaſtly differ as to the Place where *Jonah* was caſt upon the Land. *Joſephus* muſt needs be under a groſs Miſtake, when, to throw him upon the Coaſt of the *Euxine Sea*, he makes the Whale (which could hardly be any quick Mover) run *eight hundred Leagues*, at leaſt, in three Days and three Nights: Neither as others, who, from the moſt upper Part of the *Mediterraen*, carry him into the *Ocean*, and thence into the *Red-Sea*, or the *Perſian Gulph*, in the like Space of Time, are happier in their Conjectures. The Ship, we know, was bound for *Tarſus*, a great Trading Town in *Cilicia*, a Province of *Aſia Minor*, at the Eaſt End of the *Mediterranean Sea*; and therefore the moſt probable Opinion is, that ſomewhere on this Coaſt the Fiſh diſembogued itſelf of *Jonah*; and if ſo, the Mariners, who by the Time he was ſet on ſhore, had arrived at their Port, when they heard the ſtrange Account of his Deliverance, muſt have become Converts to the Worſhip of that God only, who, in this Inſtance, had ſhewn himſelf able *to do whatever he pleaſed, in Heaven and in Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep Places*, Pſal. cxxxv. 6.

Q. *Can any Reaſon be given for ſo ſudden a Reformation in the* Ninevites?

A. In the Storm which St. *Paul*, in his Voyage from *Crete* to *Rome* underwent, an Angel ſtood by him one Night, and ſaid to him, *Lo, God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee*: And if, by the Expreſſion, we may underſtand the Salvation of their Souls, as well as their Bodies, a ſufficient Reaſon it was, for God's permitting this Diſtreſs to fall upon them, ſince eventually it proved the Occaſion of their Converſion. And in like Manner, if the ſudden ceaſing of the Storm, upon *Jonah*'s being caſt forth into the Sea, made ſo ſtrong en Impreſſion upon the Mariners that ſail'd with him; how can we think but that this miraculous Eſcape out of that mercileſs Element would make them all Proſelites to his Religion? And if we may ſuppoſe farther, that ſome of the Ship's Crew accompanied him to *Nineveh*, as knowing the Purpoſe of his Errand thither, to teſtify to the People, that he was the ſame Man who was in this Manner delivered from the Jaws of the Deep, or that the the *Ninevites* came by their Intelligence of this Miracle by ſome other Means; we have here a good Reaſon why they repented at his Preaching, and conſequently why God wrought this wonderful Works upon him, in order to give his *Predictions* more Weight and Authority.

Nay, farther we may ſuppoſe, that when the People of *Nineveh* heard *Jonah* preaching about their Streets, and threatening their City with ſo ſudden a Deſtruction, their Curioſity would naturally lead them to enquire who that Perſon was, and by whoſe Authory it was that he took ſo much upon him? And being informed, that he was of a Nation *which had God more nigh unto them in all Things that they called upon him for, and had Statutes and Judgments more righteous* than any other People upon Earth: The People, I ſay, who were inform'd of all this, could not well fail of giving God the Glory due unto his Name, for ſending a Prophet of his favourite Nation, and one of ſo diſtinguiſhing a Character, to give them Notice of their impending Doom. And therefore we may well admit (as another Motive to his working this Miracle) the Deſire he had to raiſe the Fame of a Nation he had taken ſo immediately under his Care, as well as to have the Glory of his own Name magnified among the *Gentiles*.

Q. *Do prophane Writers take any Notice of this Story of* Jonah?

A. It is not only in the ſacred Records that we meet with this Hiſtory of *Jonah*, but in the Fables, related by ſeveral Heathen Authors, both in Verſe and Proſe, we find evident Footſteps and Memorials of it. *Hercules* was the great Champion of the *Grecians*, and his Fame they were wont to adorn with all the remarkable Exploits that they could collect in any Nation heard of. It is not improbable therefore, that the Adventure of his jumping down the Throat of the Sea-dog, which *Neptune* had ſent to devour him, and there concealing himſelf for three Days, without any Hurt, ſave the Loſs of a few Hairs which came off by the Heat of the Creature's Stomach, was founded upon ſome blind Tradition which theſe People might have of what happened to *Jonah*. Nor can the known Story of *Arion*, thrown over-board by the Seamen, but taken up by a Dolphin, and carried ſafe to *Corinth*, be juſtly referred to any other Original; ſince, beſides ſome Reſemblance in their Names, and no great Diſparity in the Times wherein they lived (which are both Circumſtances that make for this Hypotheſis) the ſuppoſed Difference in their reſpective Callings can be no Manner of Objection to it, becauſe the ſame Word in the *Hebrew* Tongue ſignifies both a Prophet and a Muſician: And therefore it is remarkable, that as *Arion* played the Tune, wherewith he charmed and allured the Fiſh to ſave him, before he jumped overboard; ſo *Jonah*, when he found himſelf ſafely landed, uttered what is called a Prayer, but is, in reality, a lofty Hymn, in Commemoration of his great Deliverance, as appears by this Specimen: *The Waters compaſſed me about, even to the Soul; the Depth cloſed me round about, and Weeds were were wrapped about my Head. I went down to the Bottoms of the Mountains; the Earth with her Bars was about me for ever; yet haſt thou brought up my Life from the Pit, O Lord my God.*

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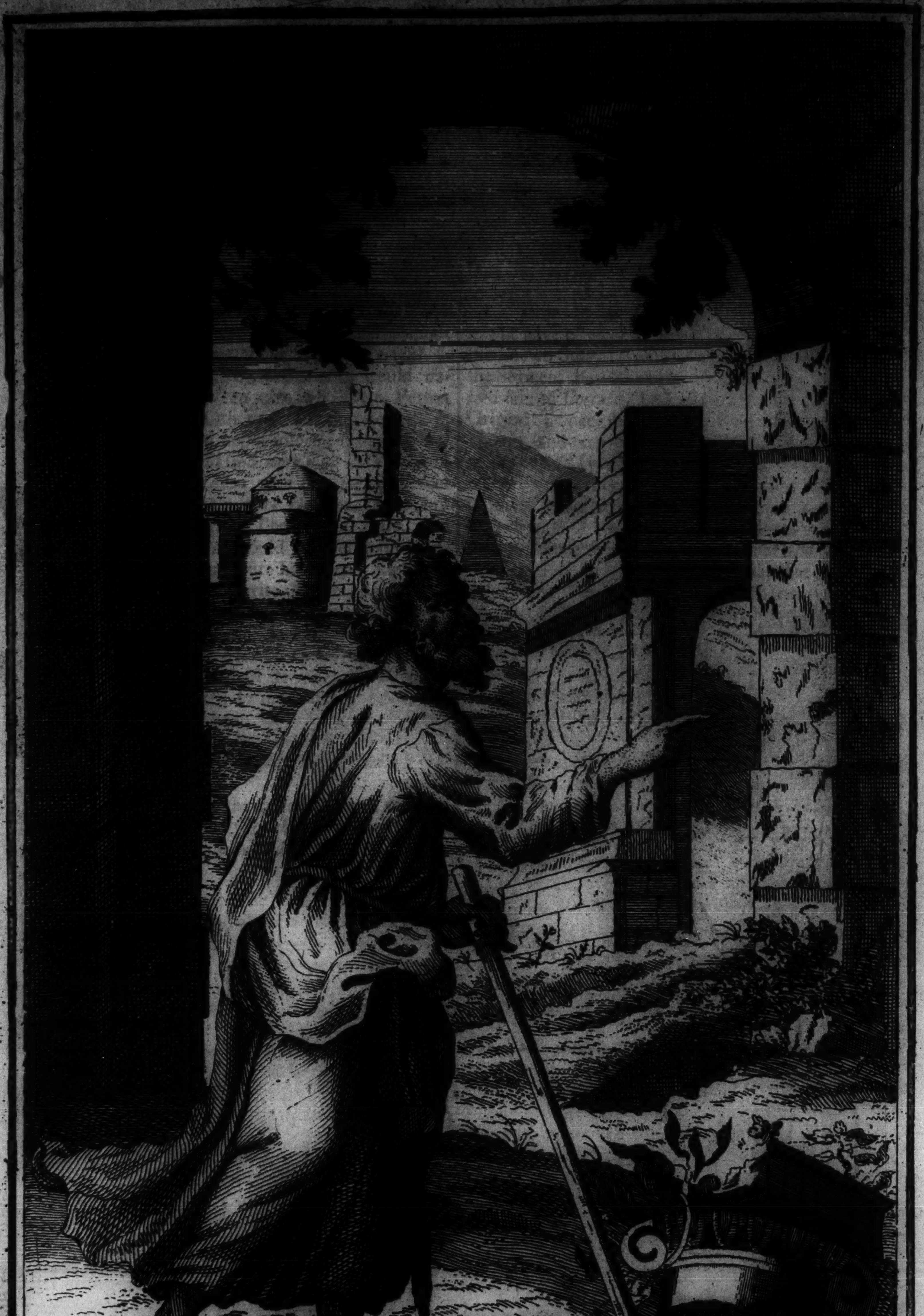
MICAH CHAP. I.



Smith Sc.

The Prophecy of Micah.

THE BOOK
OF THE PROPHET
MICAH.

MICAH *the Prophet, of the Tribe of* Judah, *ſerved in the Work of the Lord concerning* Judah *and* Iſrael, *at the leaſt, thirty Years; in which Time* Iſaiah *propheſied. He declareth the Deſtruction, firſt of the one Kingdom, and then of the other, becauſe of their manifold Wickedneſs, but chiefly for their Idolatry. And to this end he noteth the Wickedneſs of the People, the Cruelty of the Princes and Governors, and the Permiſſion of falſe Prophets, and the delighting in them. Then he ſetteth forth the Coming of* Chriſt, *his Kingdom, and the Felicity thereof. This Prophet was not that* Micaiah *which reſiſted* Ahab *and all his falſe Prophets, as* 1 Kings xxii. 8. *but another of the ſame Name.*

Chap. I.

Micah's *Country and Time of Prophecying. He ſhews the Wrath of God againſt* Jacob *for their Idolatry, and againſt* Samaria *and* Jeruſalem. *He exhorts to deep Humiliation and Mourning.*

Q. WHAT *have we obſervable in this firſt Chapter of* Micah?

A. Here are deſcribed the Country, Calling, and the Time of the Prophecying of *Micah.* He publiſhes the Coming of God to judge his People, becauſe of their Malice and Obſtinacy, whom he had ſo often exhorted to Repentance; he ſummoneth them to receive God's Judgments, taking all Creatures and God himſelf to Witneſs, that the Preaching of his Prophets, which they have abuſed, ſhall be revenged.

Alſo here is a Prophecy and prophetical Repreſentation of the Deſolations and Miſeries, that were to come upon *Iſrael* and *Judah* in general, and divers Places in particular, and partly lay heavy upon them already; ſo the Prophet adviſes the People to deep Humiliation and Mourning.

Q. *How does* Micah *begin his Prophecy?*

A. This we read in the firſt Verſe; which runs thus; *The Word of the Lord that came to* Micah *the* Moraſthite, *in the Days of* Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, *Kings of* Judah, *which he ſaw concerning* Samaria *and* Jeruſalem. This Prophet begins his Prophecy after the ſame Manner, as *Hoſea, Joel, Jonah,* and *Zephaniah* begin theirs. Though *Hierom, Epiphanius,* and *Dorotheus* report *Micah* to be the ſame with the Son of *Imlah,* 1 Kin. xxii. 8. yet *Rabbi. Sol. Jarchi*'s Reaſon why this could not be is ſatisfactory; for one Generation and almoſt a half intervened between *Ahab* and *Jotham. Ahab* died about the Year of the World 3046; *Jotham* began to reign about *A. M.* 3190; by which it appears there were 144 Years between *Micaiah* the Son of *Imlah,* and *Micah* our Prophet. ——— *The Moraſthite.* Whether *Mareſhah,* rebuilt by *Rehoboam,* 2 Chron. xi. 8. (called *Beth-gebarim* in after Times) of which Verſe 1;. of this Chapter; or whether *Moreſheth,* Verſe 15. gave him this Sirname; or whether, becauſe *Micah* was born there, or elſe dwelt there, is not eaſily reſolved, nor very material to know.——*In the Days of* Jotham. It is not ſaid what Year of *Jotham* this Prophet began; 'tis probable it was about the Beginning of his Reign, *A. M.* 3190; of whom we have this Character, 2 *Kings* xv. 34, 35. *He did right,* &c. yet the High-places were not removed. Religion was not wholly corrupted, as in *Iſrael,* yet was it wholly abaſed with their own Mixtures. —— *Ahaz.* The very worſt of all *Judah*'s Kings, all Things conſidered; he brought the *Baalitical* Idolatry into *Judah.* ——*Hezekiah.* The beſt Son of the worſt Father, who reformed *Judah.* How long *Micah* propheſied during his Reign, we can but conjecture; poſſibly 'till the fourteenth Year of *Hezekiah.* So he may be ſuppoſed to have propheſied ſixteen Years in *Jonathan*'s Time, as many under *Ahaz,* and fourteen under *Hezekiah,* in all 46 Years, and ſurvived the Captivity of *Iſrael* ten Years; which he lamented, as well as foretold.—— *Kings of* Judah. *Judah* is only named, but *Benjamin* is included. —— *Samaria.* The Metropolis of the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and by a well known Figure put for the whole Kingdom. ——

Jeruſalem. As both had linked together in Sinning, God links them together in Suffering, and commands *Micah* to do ſo.

Chap. II.

Woe and Bondage threatened againſt Oppreſſion and Violence. A Lamentation and Reproof for Injuſtice, for deſpiſing prophetical Admonitions, and delighting in falſe Prophets. A Promiſe of gathering and reſtoring Jacob *unto* Chriſt.

Q. WHAT *does this Chapter contain?*

A. Woe, cruel Bondage, and Baniſhment out of the Land of *Canaan*, pronounced upon the violent Oppreſſors, Thieves and Robbers among the People. Alſo a Lamentation and Reproof for Injuſtice, for deſpiſing prophetical Reproofs, for delighting in falſe Prophets, and upon the Enemies dividing their Land; ſo that they ſhould have no more Land to divide as in Times paſt, and as they uſed to meaſure them in the Jubilee, for God hath given the Enemy Succeſs and Power to divide their Fields, and allot them to others.

Q. *Explain the 5th Verſe?*

A. *Therefore thou ſhalt have none that ſhall caſt a Cord by Lot in the Congregation of the Lord.——Therefore.* Becauſe your Sins are ſo great, univerſal and incorrigible, have provoked God to frame and deſign this Deſolation againſt you, and becauſe he will puniſh you according to your Ways. ———*Thou.* Either Oppreſſor, ſpoken thus as to one, that it might comprehend every one of them who are deſcribed Verſe 2. or elſe this *Thou* is the whole Family, ſpoken of Verſe 3. perhaps both theſe may be meant here. ——*Caſt a Cord by Lot.* None that ſhall ever return to this Land, to claim an Inheritance there, or to ſee it allotted by Line, and given to them to poſſeſs it; the Prophet here alludes to the Manner of dividing Fields, and Inheritances, as of old in Uſe among them, as in *Joſhua*'s Time; ſo both the whole Family in general, and in the great ones, Oppreſſors and Extortioners, are more particularly menaced with an utter and perpetual Excluſion out of the Land in which they ſinned, and whence they were carried Captives; whoever do, neither they nor their Poſterity ſhall poſſeſs Inheritances in it.——*In the Congregation of the Lord.* They ſhould no more be the Congregation of the Lord, nor ſhould they be ſo, or ſtand in the Congregation of the Lord at any Time hereafter, to claim the Portion among God's People. Thus they are rejected and diſinherited, which to this Day is verified on the main Body of this People.

Chap. III.

God's Judgments on the Princes for their Tyranny; on the Prophets for their Falſhood; and on both for their Wickedneſs, and corrupting the People.

Q. HOW *does* Micah *proceed in this Chapter?*

A. In farther Diſcharge of his prophetick Office, and his Direction from the Lord, the Prophet proceeds to preach and ſet forth God's Judgments upon the wicked Governors for their Covetouſneſs, Theft, and Murder; comparing them to Wolves, Lions, and the moſt cruel Beaſts. Judgments are alſo denounced againſt the Prophets ſeducing the People, who devour all their Subſtance, and then flatter them, promiſing that all ſhall go well; but if their Appetites and Bellies are reſtrained, then they invent all Ways of Miſchief; and as they walk in Darkneſs, and prophecy Lies, ſo God will reward them with groſs Blindneſs and Ignorance; ſo that when others ſhall ſee the bright Beams of God's Graces, they ſhall grope as blind Men in the Night.

The Prophet being aſſured of his Vocation by the Spirit of God, ſets himſelf alone againſt the Wicked, ſhewing how God, both gave him Gifts, Ability, and Knowledge to diſcern between Good and Evil, and alſo Conſtancy to reprove the Sins of the People, and not to flatter them.

Q. *What Inſtructions does the 12th Verſe afford us?*

A. The Words are theſe; *Therefore ſhall* Zion *for your Sake be plowed as a Field, and* Jeruſalem *ſhall become Heaps, and the Mountain of the Houſe as the High-places of the Foreſt.* By this it appears, that this Sermon was preached to *Judah* and its Governors, Prieſts and Prophets, who were thus wicked in *Ahaz*'s Time, and probably continued ſo in the Beginning of the Reign of *Hezekiah*; *Jeremiah* puts this beyond Diſpute, Chap. xxvi. 18. ſaying, that *Micah* ſpake theſe Words to all *Judah.* As for the Time, it was, in all Likelihood, as ſome ſuppoſe, before the tenth Year of *Hezekiah*; but it ſeems more probable it was in the very Beginning of *Hezekiah*'s Reign, and that this might awaken them of that Age to comply with *Hezekiah* in the Reformation. *Zion* is here threaten'd as endanger'd, nay, ruined by the Sins of the Magiſtrates, Prieſts and Prophets; they thought that *Zion* ſhould be their Safety, however they ſinned; God, by his Prophet, aſſures them of the quite contrary, and that their Sins ſhould be the Danger and Deſtruction of *Zion.* ——*For your Sake.* Becauſe your Sins are ſo great and many; God would have ſpared *Sodom* for the ſake of righteous Men; theſe may be a Safety to a City; but God will not ſpare the Wicked for the ſake of any Place, nor ſhall a Temple be more Security to wicked People, than Heaven was to ſinning Angels. Though theſe flagitious Men cried out againſt *Micah*, and ſuch like Men, as a publick Danger. ——*Plowed as a Field.* Either by the Enemy and Conqueror, thereby forbidding it to be plowed without his Leave, or by ſuch as remained after the Body of the People was carried captive.——*Jeruſalem.* One of the goodlieſt Cities of the World, proud in its lofty and beautiful Buildings, the City of the great King. ——*Shall become Heaps.* Shall lie in Rubbiſh, its ſtately Buildings ſhall be demoliſhed, and lie buried in her own Ruins. ————*And the Mountain of the Houſe.* The holy Mountain, on which the Temple, one of the Wonders of the World, ſtood beautified with the rareſt Buildings; ſhall lie ſo long waſte, as to be over-run with Wood as a Foreſt, and a Lodge of wild Beaſts.

Chap. IV.

A Promiſe of the future Glory, Enlargement and peaceful Condition of the Church under the Meſſiah. *Their final Deliverance from, and Victory over all their Enemies.*

Q. DOES *not this Prophecy refer to the* Meſſiah?

A. Yes; it is a Prophecy of the future Glory ſpreading abroad; and peaceable Condition of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, among the converted *Jews* and *Gentiles.* Here is alſo a Comfort for the *Jewiſh* Church againſt the approaching *Babylonian* Captivity, by aſſuring them of the final Deliverance from, and Victory over all the Enemies of the Church. God gives the Church this Victory ſo often as he overcomes their Enemies; but the Accompliſhment thereof ſhall be the laſt Coming of *Chriſt*.

The future Glory of the Church is very elegantly deſcribed in the firſt ſeven Verſes thus:

But in the laſt Days it ſhall come to paſs, that the Mountain of the Houſe of the Lord ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the Top of the Mountains, and it ſhall be exalted above the Hills, and People ſhall flow unto it. And many Nations ſhall come and ſay, Come and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, and to the Houſe of the God of Jacob, *and he will teach us of his Ways, and we will walk in his Paths; for the Law ſhall go forth of* Zion, *and the Word of the Lord from* Jeruſalem. *And he ſhall judge among many People, and rebuke ſtrong Nations afar off, and they ſhall beat their Swords into Plow-ſhares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks; Nation ſhall not lift up a Sword againſt Nation, neither ſhall they learn war a[illegible] more. But they ſhall ſit every Man under his Vine, and under his Fig-tree; and none ſhall make them afraid; for the Mouth of the Lord of Hoſts hath ſpoken it. For all People will walk every one in the Name of his God, and we will walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever. In that Day, ſaith the Lord, will I aſſemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted. And I will make her that halted a Remnant, and her that was caſt afar off, a ſtrong Nation; and the Lord ſhall reign over them in mount* Zion, *from henceforth even for ever.*

Chap. V.

The Birth of Chirift *promiſed to be at* Bethlehem-Ephratah; *and the Converſion of the* Gentiles *foretold, together with his feeding and governing the Church. Their Growth and Victory over all their Enemies. God's Vengeance againſt the Diſobedient.*

Q. W*HAT is the principal Subject of this Prophecy?*

A. Here is a Prophecy of the Birth of our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt* at *Bethlehem*, and the Converſion of the *Gentiles*; and the Prophet ſhews that the Coming of *Chriſt* and all his Ways were appointed of God from all Eternity. He compares the *Jews* to Women with Child, who for a Time ſhould have great Sorrows, but at length ſhould have a comfortable Deliverance. This *Meſſiah* ſhall be a ſufficient Safeguard, and tho' the Enemy invaded for a Time, yet God ſhall ſtir up many who ſhall be able to deliver.

The Prophet foretels the Downfal of all unlawful Acts, declaring God would deſtroy all Things wherein they put vain Confidence; and this he would do with unparallelled Terror, ſo that they ſhould be Warning-pieces to others.

Q. *Pray expound the 5th Verſe?*

A. *And this Man ſhall be the Peace, when the* Aſſyrian *ſhall come into our Land; and when he ſhall tread in our Palaces, then ſhall we raiſe againſt him ſeven Shepherds, and eight principal Men.* This Verſe is very abſtruſe, and the Particulars not eaſily accommodated to Times and Things. —— *And this.* So the *Hebrew*, and it may be read as the Neuter Gender, and be referred to Time, or Thing, or both, following the Text thus; At that Time this Thing ſhall be our Peace, *viz.* when the *Aſſyrian* ſhall invade us, we ſhall, by our Prayers raiſe ſufficient Strength againſt him, here expreſſed by ſeven Shepherds, *&c.* Our Verſion ſupplies the Defect of the Subſtantive with *Man*; namely, the *Meſſiah*, the Ruler, who ſtands and feeds in the Strength of the Lord. ———— *Shall be the Peace.* Which is promiſed to, and expected by the Power of God; all their Preſervations and Deliverances are not only for the Sake, but effected by the Power of the *Meſſiah.* ——*When the* Aſſyrian *ſhall come into our Land.* As *Sennacherib* did within a few Years after this Prophecy was delivered, and then by the Power and Authority of the *Meſſiah* was *Sennacherib* and his Army defeated, and the Peace of *Judea* ſecured. ——*When he ſhall tread in our Palaces.* Which the *Aſſyrian* did in all the Cities of *Judah*, except *Jeruſalem*, as was foretold, *Iſa.* viii. 8, 9, 10, and xxxvii. 32, 33, 34, 35. ——*Then ſhall we. Hezekiah*, and with him the Prophets and People, by Prayer to God, ſhall prevail with God to ſend Deliverance and Salvation to them. ———— *Raiſe againſt him ſeven Shepherds.* The Number is certain, but put for an uncertain; and the Quality of thoſe raiſed, is expreſſed by Shepherds in a Decorum to the Repreſentation of the People of God by the Metaphor of a Sheep or Flock, the Care of which properly belonged to Shepherds. —— *And eight principal Men.* Here again a determinate Number is put for an indeterminate, and for a ſufficient Number, that the Effect may be ſure, God will raiſe a ſufficient Number of Deliverers for his People; this the Phraſe imports, as elſewhere, ſix Troubles and ſeven, *Job.* v. 15. Thus, with reſpect to the Letter and hiſtorical Reference, the Words ſeem to predict the wonderful Deliverauce of *Hezekiah* and *Jeruſalem* from the *Aſſyrians*; but no doubt they have a myſtical and ſpiritual Reference, and contain a Prediction of that Peace which *Chriſt* made, and now maintains for his Churches againſt all Enemies, tipified by the *Aſſyrians.* Beſides this Expoſition, ſome have given another, *viz.* The Word rendered Peace, ſignifies alſo Recompence, and ſo might be rendred. This ſhall be the Recompence of the *Aſſyrian* by the ſeven Shepherds, which he ſhall have for his invading and ſpoiling *Judea*, and for his Attempt againſt *Jeruſalem.*

Chap. VI.

God's Controverſy with his People for their Unthankfulneſs. He rejects their Services, and ſhews them their Duty; reproves and threatens their Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, and the idolatrous Practice of Omri *and* Achab, *with Deſolation.*

Q. H*AVE we any Thing particularly remarkable in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet takes the high Mountains and hard Rocks to witneſs againſt the Obſtinacy of the People, by Reaſon of their Unthankfulneſs for

God's continual Mercies. God rejects their Sacrifices, and ſhews what it is he requires, and they ſtand bound to perform. Foraſmuch as the People gave themſelves to Unrighteouſneſs, Oppreſſion, Lies and Deceit, together with the idolatrous Practices of *Omri* and *Ahab*, he threatens them with Deſolation, Famine, Helpleſſneſs, and the Sword; all which the Prophet has couched in a divine and heavenly Strain, and well worthy the Reader's moſt ſerious Attention.

Hear ye now what the Lord ſaith, Ariſe, contend thou before the Mountains, and let the Hills hear thy Voice. Hear ye, O Mountains, the Lord's Controverſy, and ye ſtrong Foundations of the Earth: for the Lord hath a Controverſy with his People, and he will plead with Iſrael. *O my People, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Teſtify againſt me. For I brought thee up out of the Land of* Egypt, *and redeemed thee out of the Houſe of Servants, and I ſent before thee* Moſes, Aaron, *and* Miriam. *O my People, remember now what* Balak *King of* Moab *conſulted, and what* Balaam *the Son of* Beor *anſwered him from* Shittim *unto* Gilgal, *that ye may know the Righteouſneſs of the Lord. Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf before the high God? Shall I come before him with Burnt-Offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſands of Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my Firſt-born for my Tranſgreſſion, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul? He hath ſhewn thee, O Man, what is Good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? The Lord's Voice crieth unto the City, and the Man of Wiſdom ſhall ſee thy Name; hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it. Are there yet the Treaſures of Wickedneſs in the Houſe of the Wicked, and the ſcant Meaſure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked Balances, and with the Bag of deceitful Weights? For the rich Men thereof are full of Violence, and the Inhabitants thereof have ſpoken Lies, and their Tongue is deceitful in their Mouth. Therefore alſo will I make thee deſolate, becauſe of thy Sins. Thou ſhalt eat, but not be ſatisfied, and thy caſting down ſhall be in the midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt take hold, but ſhalt not deliver: And that which thou delivereſt will I give up to thee Sword. Thou ſhalt ſow, but thou ſhalt not reap; thou ſhalt tread the Olives, but thou ſhalt not anoint thee with Oil; and ſweet Wine, but ſhalt not drink Wine. For the Statutes of* Omri *are kept, and all the Works of the Houſe of* Ahab, *and ye walk in their Counſels, that I ſhould make thee a Deſolation, and the Inhabitants thereof an hiſſing: Therefore ye ſhall bear the Reproach of my People.*

CHAP. VII.

The Church complains of her ſmall Number, the Corruption of Great and Small; exhorts to truſt in God, not in Man; triumphs over her Enemies. God comforts her with Mercies, confounds her Enemies, and pardons her Sins; all which ſhe admires, and waits by Faith for the Coming of Chriſt.

Q. W*HAT does this Chapter afford worthy Obſervation?*

A. The Church complains of her ſmall Number, and the general Corruptions of great and ſmall ones, for which God's Judgment is at Hand. She gives warning not to confide in Man, but puts her Truſt and Confidence in God. She triumphs over her Enemies, and comforts herſelf with his future Work of Grace by the *Meſſiah*, their Shepherd, though *Canaan* ſhould lay waſte. The Church chearfully ſpeaking to *Chriſt*, God promiſes to ſhew her wonderful Things. She propheſies of the Confuſion of the Enemies of the Goſpel, ſhe ſtands in Admiration at the Grace of God, and waits in Faith for the Coming of *Chriſt*. The Church is aſſured that God will declare in Effect the Truth of his merciful Promiſe which he had made of old to *Abraham*, and to all that ſhould apprehend the Promiſe by Faith.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the laſt Verſe?*

A. Thou wilt perform the Truth to Jacob, *and the Mercy to* Abraham, *which thou haſt ſworn unto our Fathers from the Days of old.* ——— *Thou.* O God of Mercy, Wiſdom, Power and Faithfulneſs, whoever are honoured with being thine Inſtruments and Servants in doing ſomewhat herein, the Work is thine, thou ſhalt raiſe up a Deliverer, *Cyrus* ſhall be thine Anointed to do this great Work.——*Wilt perform.* Give, actually beſtow, what thou haſt in Mercy promiſed.——*The Truth.* Nothing ſo certain as the Word of God; it is the Truth by Way of Eminency, his Promiſe is Yea and Amen.———*To* Jacob. The Poſterity of *Jacob*; he was that plain-hearted Man, who gives now Name to all the Upright and Honeſt among his Seed which God will never finally caſt off; tho' now carried captive, they ſhall flouriſh, as Ver. 10, 11, 12. and this as they are a Type of a more glorious redeemed People.——*And the Mercy.* It was mere Grace in God to promiſe *Abraham* and his Seed ſuch excellent Privileges which *Abraham*'s natural Seed did inherit; but both this Seed, and this Mercy, looked beyond the natural Deſcendants of *Abraham*, and beyond their Return to the Land of *Canaan*, whence they were carried: The Mercy to *Abraham* was, that in his Seed all Nations ſhould he bleſſed, *Luke* i. 54, 55, 68. and holpen.——*To* Abraham. Not only as Father to *Iſrael* after the Fleſh, but to him as Father of the Faithful.——*Which thou haſt ſworn.* Not that there was on God's Part any need of ſuch Confirmation, but that on our Part all Doubt might be removed, and we, by the immutable Things of God, might have ſtrong Conſolation, as *Heb.* vi. 18.—— *Upon our Fathers.* Becauſe this Mercy was frequently repeated in the Promiſes to the Fathers after *Abraham*'s Time; by which Promiſes was Mercy to be perpetuated in *Abraham*'s Seed, till the Redemption of the *Iſrael* of God by the *Meſſiah* (of which all temporal Deliverances of *Iſrael* were Figures) ſhould be effected.——— *From the Days of old.* Ever ſince *Abraham*'s Days, and God's gracious adopting his Seed to be a peculiar People of God; into this we do, as *Iſrael* did, reſolve our Aſſurance of final Deliverance.

Q. *Of what Tribe and Family was the Prophet* Micah?

A. Our Prophet *Micah* was without doubt of the Tribe of *Judah*; but of what Note or Eſtimation his Family was for Riches, Authority, or Credit, does not appear; thoſe, for ought we know, might be very eminent, though not mentioned, becauſe his great Abilities for, and faithful Diſcharge of the prophetick Office, needed no Credentials or Countenance from any ſuch external Advantages. 'Tis unqueſtionably true that he came from God; and conſequently his Prophecy is of Divine Authority: *Jeremiah* gave Teſtimony to it, and cites ſome conſiderable Authority from the Opinion of certain Elders of that Time, who held him to be a Prophet ſent of God, *Jer.* xxvi. 18, 19. He was not, as ſome were, confin'd to one Kingdom, but had his Commiſſion enlarged to preach to the Kingdoms of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, which were now grown old in Sin, and univerſally corrupted with Idolatry and Impiety, with Inhumanity, Tyranny, and cruel Oppreſſion; with Falſhoods and Deceits, Ingratitude to God, and Forgetfulneſs of him; vain Confidence in the lying Promiſes of falſe Prophets, and in their ceremonial Services: All which *Micah*, as became a faithful Miniſter in his Office, openly, ſeverely, and impartially diſcovers, reproves, and threatens, as well in the Princes and Prophets, as the whole Body of the People in both Kingdoms; which are ſo cloſely joined by the Prophet, that it requires a very ſteady and quick Eye to diſcern which of them is moſt directly concerned in the Prophet's Diſcourſe, or whether both are equally intended, yet ſo as in Order of Time *Iſrael* firſt, and *Judah* next. His Phraſe, Connections, and Tranſitions, are very often obſcure, and fairly capable of different Interpretations, as every one will ſee, who will be at the Pains of comparing the *Engliſh* Verſion with the *Hebrew* Text, and the Paraphraſes and Commentaries of Men ſkilled in that Kind of Learning.

Q. *What have you to obſerve concerning the Style and Manner of this Prophet's Writings?*

A. *Micah* having propheſied at the ſame Time as did *Iſaiah*, is alſo very like him in the Subject, Terms, and Style of his Sermons; and there is little Doubt to be made, but they were acquainted and converſed with each other. His Diſcourſes have a very particular Reſpect to the Temper of thoſe Times he lived in, and will be beſt underſtood by thoſe who diſtinctly read over and digeſt the Hiſtory of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, as they are recorded in the firſt and ſecond Book of the *Kings*, from the firſt Apoſtaſy of *Iſrael* from God, and their Revolt from the Houſe of *David*. But more eſpecially the Stories of *Judah* thro' the Reigns of *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah*; and of *Iſrael* thro' the Times of *Zechariah*, *Shallum*, *Menahem*, *Pekah*, and *Hoſhea*; in which moſt of the Sins here reproved and threatened were predominant, and which were (while *Micah* lived) puniſhed according to his Word, with Sword, Famine, Peſtilence and Captivity.

Q. *What is farther to be obſerved of the Writings of this Prophet?*

A. Our Prophet having ſeverely reproved the Princes, Prophets and People for their notorious Tranſgreſſions of God's Law, and their other horrid Impieties, and denounced the Judgments of God upon them, and their approaching Diſperſion by the *Aſſyrians* and *Chaldeans*, he turns himſelf to the Reſidue of true Believers, promiſes them on the one Side temporal Deliverance from the Captivity of *Babylon*; and on the other, the everlaſting Salvation of the whole Church, gathered out of all Nations, thro' *Chriſt*, whoſe Birth in the Fleſh, and Place thereof he particularly deſcribes; to which he adds excellent Prophecies concerning the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, the Calling of the *Gentiles*, the eternal Glory and Happineſs of the Church, and Deſtruction of all her Enemies.

He deſcribes the Coming of *Chriſt*, 1. By his Humanity, implied in the Place of his Birth; *And thou* Bethlehem Ephratah, &c. *out of thee ſhall come*, &c. Chap. v. 2. 2. By his Godhead; *Whoſe Goings forth have been of old, from Everlaſting.* By his kingly Office; *He is to be Ruler in* Iſrael. Which Kingdom of his is to be ſtable and eternal, ſignified by the Poſture of Standing; *He ſhall ſtand, and feed, or rule*, &c. Chap. v. 4. His Kingdom is likewiſe to be powerful; *Ruling in the Strength of the Lord:* So that what Power there is in God, ſo much Protection there is in *Chriſt.* Laſtly, his Kingdom ſhall be univerſal; *He ſhall be great to the Ends of the Earth.*

THE BOOK

OF THE PROPHET

NAHUM.

AS they of Nineveh *ſhewed themſelves prompt and ready to receive the Word of God at* Jonah's *preaching, and ſo turned to the Lord by Repentance: So after a certain Time, rather giving themſelves to worldly Means to increaſe their Dominion, than ſeeking to continue in the Fear of God, and tread in the Steps wherein they had begun, they caſt off the Care of Religion, and ſo returned to their Vomit, and provoked God's juſt Judgment againſt them, in afflicting his People. Therefore their City* Nineveh *was deſtroyed, and* Merodach-Baladan *King of* Babel *(or as ſome think* Nebuchadnezzar*) enjoyed the Empire of the* Aſſyrians*: But, becauſe God hath continual Care of his Church, he ſtirreth up his Prophet to comfort the Godly, ſhewing that the Deſtruction of their Enemies ſhould be for their Conſolation. And as it ſeemeth, he propheſied about the Time of* Hezekiah, *and not in the Time of* Manaſſeh *his Son, as the* Jews *write.*

Chap. I.

A Deſcription of the Majeſty and Nature of God, who is ſevere to his Enemies, and gracious to his People. The Prophet threatens the Ninevites *with Ruin, and thereby comforts the Godly.*

Q. WHAT is meant by Burden, *Ver.* 1?

A. When the Prophets were ſent to denounce Judgments againſt a Nation or City, the Word was uſually called the Burden of *Moab*, *Iſa.* xv. 1. of *Egypt*, *Iſa.* xix. 1. of *Babylon*, *Iſa.* xiii. 1. of *Damaſcus*, *Iſa.* xvii. 1. So here the Calamities foretold, are called the Burthen of *Nineveh*.

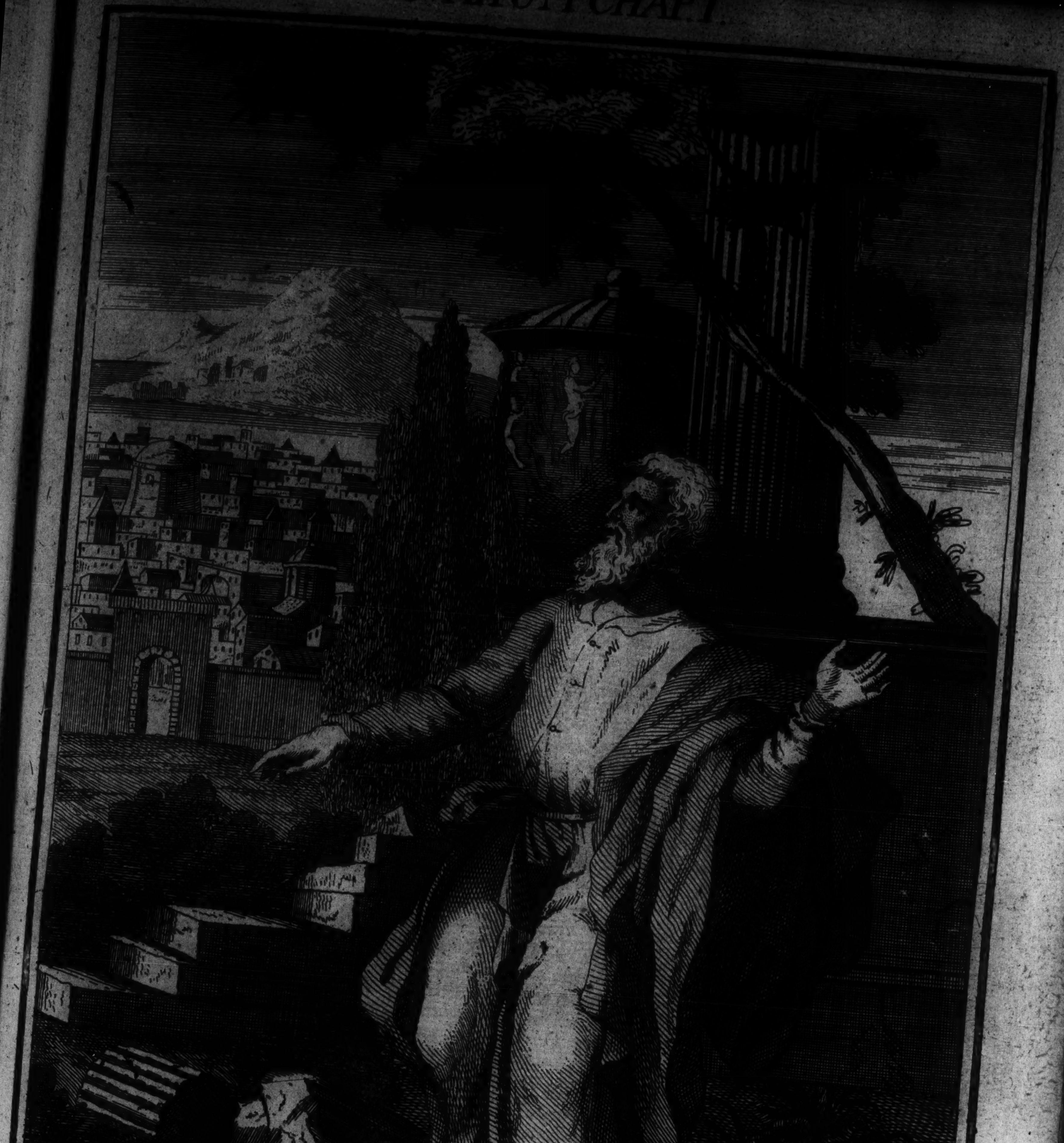
Q. *What is the Subſtance of this Chapter?*

A. Here is a Deſcription of the Nature of God, that he is ſtrong and ſevere againſt his own and People's Enemies, but gracious towards the Godly and them that love him. The Prophet proceeds to threaten the *Ninevites* with Ruin, and comforting the godly *Jews*, and foretelling them that their Enemy, the King of *Aſſyria*, ſhould be defeated. This King of *Aſſyria* was *Sennacherib*, who fell by the Swords of his Sons, *Iſa.* xxxvii. 7, 37, 38. The Language and Stile the Prophet writes in, is very lofty and poetical.

God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, he revengeth and is furious, the Lord will take Vengeance on his Adverſaries; and he reſerveth wrath for his Enemies. The Lord is ſlow to Anger, and great in Power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked: the Lord hath his Way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm, and Clouds are the Duſt of his Feet. He rebuketh the Sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the Rivers: Baſhan *languiſheth, and* Carmel, *and the Flower of* Lebanon *languiſheth. The Mountains quake at him, and the Hills melt, and the Earth is burnt at his Preſence, yea, the World and all that dwell therein. Who can ſtand before his Indignation? And who can abide in the Fierceneſs of his Anger? His Fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him. The Lord is good, a ſtronſt Hold in the Day of Trouble, and he knoweth them that truſt in him. But with an overrunning Flood he will make an utter End of the Place thereof, and Darkneſs ſhall purſue his Enemies. What do ye imagine againſt the Lord? He will make an utter End: Affliction ſhall not riſe up the ſecond Time. For while they are drunken as Drunkards, they ſhall be devoured as Stubble fully dry. There is one come out of thee, that imagineth Evil againſt the Lord: A wicked Counſellor. Thus ſaith the Lord, Though they be quiet, and likewiſe many, yet thus ſhall they be cut down, when he ſhall paſs through; though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. For now will I break his Yoke from off thee, and I will burſt thy Bonds aſunder. And the Lord hath given a Commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy Name be ſown: But of the Houſe of thy Gods will I cut off the graven Image, and the molten Image, I will make thy Grave, for thou art vile. Behold upon the Mountains the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings, that bringeth good Tidings, that publiſheth Peace: O* Judah *keep thy ſolemn Feaſts, perform thy Vows:*

For

NAHUM CHAP I



The Prophecy of Nahum

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For the Wicked ſhall no more paſs through thee, he is utterly cut off.

CHAP. II.

The fearful and victorious Armies of God againſt the Ninevites, *becauſe of their Tyranny againſt the People of God.*

Q. WHAT *do we learn from the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. Here is a farther Prophecy of the Deſtruction of the *Ninevites*, by the *Babylonians*, becauſe of their Tyranny againſt the People of God, and other Nations; for the Inhabitants of *Nineveh* were cruel like Lions, given to all Oppreſſion, and ſpared no Violence or Tyranny to provide for their Wives and Children.

Q. *What is meant by* Huzzab, *Ver.* 7?

A. Let us read the whole Verſe; *And* Huzzab *ſhall be led away captive, ſhe ſhall be brought up, and her Maids ſhall lead her as with the Voice of Doves, tabring upon their Breaſts.* —— *Huzzab.* This is variouſly taken, but the moſt probable Gueſs is, that it is meant of the Queen, who kept cloſe in the Palace or Temple, for the greater Strength and ſuppoſed Sacredneſs of the Place, where ſhe might ſafely hide herſelf. —— *Shall be carried away Captive.* Without due Reſpect to her royal Dignity, ſhall be hurried into a ſtrange Land, with other Captives, and (as others) be expoſed to Danger and Inſolence. ——*Her Maids.* Ladies that waited on her in her Royal State, now ſhall be her Companions in her Captivity.—— *Shall lead her.* Support their ſorrowful, weary, and fainting Queen, ſpent with ſuch Travel as ſhe had not been uſed to. ——*With the Voice of Doves.* Sighing forth thoſe Complaints they durſt not ſpeak out. —— *Tabring upon their Breaſts.* Theſe Maids of Honour ſhould now, in Captivity, ſtrike on their Breaſts, but with ſuch Caution and Fear of being diſcovered, in lamenting their State, as ſhould be but like the Tabor lightly plaid upon; or elſe, inſtead of nuptial Inſtruments, on which they were uſed to ſing, now they ſhall ſtrike their Breaſts and ſigh out their Sorrows.

CHAP. III.

The miſerable State of Nineveh *and* Aſſyria *like that of* No, *and deſtroy'd for the ſame Sins. Their Strength and great Power ſhall avail nothing.*

Q. WHAT *are the Points handled in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet ſhews how the *Chaldeans* ſhall haſte, and how couragious their Horſes ſhall be in beating the Ground, when they come againſt the *Aſſyrians*. He compares *Nineveh* to an Harlot, who, by her Beauty and Subtilty entices young Men and brings them to Deſtruction.

The Deſtruction of the City of *Nineveh*, and of the *Aſſyrians*, is foretold, after the Example of the City of *No*, (now called *Alexandria*) which was deſtroyed for the like Sins *Nineveh* committed. The Prophet adds thereunto that Strength and great Power ſhould avail them nothing, that all ſhould rejoice at their Downfal, no Hearts to pity, or Hands to help them, but every one ready to wiſh that all who were as they were, Enemies to Mankind and Juſtice, might, as thoſe wicked People did, periſh without Help or Pity.

The meaning is, There is no People, nor Nation, whom ye trouble and moleſt not, without ceaſing; therefore they will all rejoice in thy Deſtruction, and praiſe God's juſt Judgments for it. No one will concern himſelf to preſerve thy diſperſed ones; ſo thou and they are left hopeleſs and ruined; for the Shepherds are ſome dead, and cannot, and the reſt ſlumber and will not lay to Heart their Condition.

Q. *Pray expound the 9th Verſe?*

A. Ethiopia *and* Egypt *were her Strength, and it was infinite:* Put *and* Lubim *were thy Helpers.* It is not very probable that this *Ethiopia* ſhould be that remote Country that lay South of *Egypt*, tho' indeed it is poſſible; and while *Egypt* was in Friendſhip with No-*Amon* or *Alexandria*, the Aids might, in length of Time, come from *Ethiopia* or *Habaſſia*: But there was a *Cuſh*, an *Ethiopia* in *Arabia*, near to *Egypt* and *Alexandria*, whoſe People were the likelieſt to undertake the Aſſiſtance of *Alexandria*, their Neighbour, See 2 *Chron.* xiv. 9. —— *And* Egypt. This *No* or *Alexandria* mentioned in the preceeding Verſe, was either a City ſubject to, and was Part of *Egypt*, or if (as ſome conjecture) it was a free City, and was in League with *Egypt*. —— *Were her Strength.* Furniſhing Soldiers and warlike Aſſiſtance, on all Occaſions, to *Alexandria*, which relied on theſe Confederates. ——*And it was infinite.* They never made an End of their Confederacies and warlike Proviſions. It is reported by Hiſtorians, that when *Amaſis* reigned, *Egypt* reckoned 20,000 Cities; and when *Zerah*, King of *Ethiopia*, came againſt *Aſa*, his Army conſiſted of a Million of Men, and 300,000 Chariots; theſe were the Aſſociates of *Alexandria.* —— *Put* or *Phuteans*, or the *Moors*, who lie to the Weſtward of *Alexandria.* —— *Lubim.* The People which inhabited that Part of *Africa*, thought to be that which is now called *Cyrene*. ——*Were thine Helpers.* Thine, O *No*, or *Alexandria*.

Q. *In what Senſe muſt be interpreted the 19th Verſe:* There is no healing of thy Bruiſe; thy Wound is grievous; all that hear the Bruit of thee, ſhall clap their Hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy Wickedneſs paſſed continually?

A. *There is no healing.* In a Word, thou *Nineveh* muſt die; thy Bruiſe he will not heal, who gave it, and others cannot. God, by the *Chaldeans*, hath wounded thee, and thy Friends cannot bind up the Wound.——*Of thy Bruiſe.* Thy ſhiver'd and broken State. —— *Thy Wound is grievous.* It has brought a Weakneſs on thee; thou art ſick with thy Wound, and fainteſt, and art not able to bear a Cure.——*All that hear the Bruit of thee.* All that hear of thy former Carriage, and preſent Calamities, —— *Shall clap the Hands over thee.* Shall inſult and rejoice at thy Misfortune.—— *For upon whom.* No Kingdom, State, City, or Family almoſt round about thee, nor can one be named. —— *Hath not thy Wickedneſs.* Thy Sin, thy Idolatry, Luxury, *&c.* thy Tyranny, Pride, Oppreſſion, and Cruelty; thy illegal unprecedented Violence. —— *Paſſed.* Without any Bounds, and in a moſt vehement and fierce Manner.——*Continually.* Either always treading down and trampling upon thoſe whom thou hadſt ſubdued, or elſe having conquered and ſpoiled one State, didſt immediately fall upon ſome other.

Thus all ſuffered by thee, and all rejoice at thy utter Downfal; and as none have Cauſe to befriend thee, ſo none find Hearts to Pity thee, or Hands to help thee; but on the contrary, every one is ready to wiſh, that all who are as thou wert, that is, Enemies to Mankind and Juſtice, may, and as thou, periſh without Help or Pity.

Q. *Of what Country and Family was the Prophet* Nahum?

A. Nahum is one of thoſe Prophets whoſe Family and Country is concealed, and it would be more Labour than Profit to ſpend Time on the Enquiry after the one or other. He is ſtiled the *Elkoſhite*, and poſſibly born and bred in *Elkoſh*, a Town of *Galilee*, an obſcure Place, of which, perhaps, we had heard no more, had it not been written that this Man was born there, to allude to that of the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* lxxxvii. 5. The Time of his appearing in Publick to diſcharge his prophetick Office, is much more material, being a Key to the whole Prophecy. Now it is certain that *Nahum* was a Prophet in Office, whilſt the Kingdom of *Aſſyria* was not only ſtanding, but whilſt it was ſtanding in its Glory and entire Strength, whilſt it was dangerous and terrible to its Neighbours. It is to me evident, that *Nahum* propheſied before the Deſtruction of *Sennacherib's* Army, for he foretelleth the Death of *Sennacherib*, Chap. i. 14. It is certain alſo he appeared after *Hoſea* and the Ten Tribes were carried Captive by *Salmaneſer*. This was in *Anno Mundi* 3229, as *Helvicus*, or 3283, as Archbiſhop *Uſher* and Doctor *Lightfoot*, in the ninth Year of *Hoſea*, which was the ſixth of *Hezekiah*, 2 *Kings* xviii. 10. and ſome few Years before the Death of *Salmaneſer*, whoſe Son *Senacherib* ſucceeded, and invaded *Egypt* and *Judea* in the 14th Year of *Hezekiah*, eight Years after *Samaria* was taken, and the Ten Tribes were captivated; within which Time, and probably toward the fifth of thoſe eight, *Nahum* is ſent a Prophet to quiet, ſupport and encourage *Hezekiah* and his Subjects, againſt all the Threats and Power of the *Aſſyran* Tyrant, who threatned to deſtroy *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, from accompliſhing whereof the Tyrant ſhall be ſo far, that God will turn it to his Ruin. And here, as a fit Seaſon, the Prophet declareth the final and utter Ruin of the *Aſſyrian* Empire, and its capital City *Niheveh*, as a juſt Revenge for all their Oppreſſions of their Neighbours, but eſpecially in Revenge of their reiterated Violence againſt *Iſrael* and *Judea*; on Account of which good Tidings the Prophet had his Name *Nahum*, which in the *Hebrew* is from a Word ſignifying to comfort, and alſo to repent: Indeed Repentance is preparatory to Comfort, and tho' his Preaching againſt *Nineveh* be the Comfort of *Jeruſalem*, no doubt he called *Jeruſalem* to repent, which is probably called from Chap. i. Ver. 15. *Keep thy ſolemn Feaſts*, O Judah, *perform thy Vows.* This whole Prophecy, except the 15th Verſe of this Chapter, is directed againſt *Nineveh*, the Head of the *Aſſyrian* Kingdom, and againſt the whole Kingdom, which, with all Sorts of Men and Women in it, are threatned with very ſore and heavy Judgments, with final Deſolation or Captivity for their Sins; all which was fulfilled by the Lord, uſing the *Babylonian* and *Median* Power to overthrow the Power of *Aſſyria*, and particularly by the joint Forces of *Nebopollaſar* and *Aſtyages*, as is by the moſt learned Archbiſhop *Uſher* obſerved, in *Anno Mundi* 3378. Yet others tell us the final Ruin of the *Aſſyrian* Kingdom, foretold by *Nahum*, came much ſooner, and that in the Death of *Eſarhaddon* or *Aſſaradinus*, the *Aſſyrian* Monarchs did expire. But though I determine not the Number of Years during which this threatned Monarchy did ſtand, yet be they fewer or more, *Nahum's* Prophecy was fulfilled in the Deſtruction of *Nineveh*, and the Subverſion of the *Aſſyrian* Monarchy; and the *Jews* were no more infeſted by the *Aſſyrian*, though they were by the *Babyloniſh* Kingdom.

THE BOOK
OF THE PROPHET
HABAKKUK.

THE Prophet complaineth unto God, conſidering the great Felicity of the Wicked, and the miſerable Oppreſſion of the Godly, which endure all kind of Affliction and Cruelty, and yet can ſee no End. Therefore he had this Revelation ſhewed him of God, that the Chaldeans *ſhould come and take them away Captives, ſo that they could look for no End of their Troubles as yet, becauſe of their Stubborneſs and Rebellion againſt the Lord. And leaſt the Godly ſhould deſpair, ſeeing this horrible Confuſion, he comforts them by this, that God will puniſh the* Chaldeans *their Enemies, when their Pride and Cruelty ſhall be at the Height: Wherefore he exhorts the Faithful to Patience by his own Example, and ſhews them a Form of Prayer, wherewith they ſhould comfort themſelves.*

CHAP. I.

The Prophet complains of the great Witkedneſs of the Jews; *ſhews the fearful Vengeance of the* Chaldeans *againſt them; yet prays for them, and againſt their Enemies.*

Q. PLEASE *to give the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet complains unto God, and bewails, that among the *Jews* is left no Equity or brotherly Love, but inſtead thereof reigneth Cruelty, Theft, Contention and Strife. He declares, that by Reaſon of thoſe Sins, the *Chaldeans* ſhould come ſuddenly upon them, with great Power, and deſtroy all Things.

The Prophet prays to the Lord, that the Enemies having ſinned more grievouſly than the *Jews*, may not be ſuffered to ſatisfy all their miſchievous Deſires upon them, but be rather puniſhed themſelves. The Prophet ſeems to ſay, Wilt thou, O moſt juſt, mighty God and Judge, ſuffer theſe Things always? The Prophet, by the Queſtion, intimates to us, that God moſt certainly will not ſuffer it always. The Lord will, in fit Time ariſe and break the Oppreſſor's Arm, and ſave the diſtreſſed Church and People of God.

Q. *Pray explain the 14th Verſe?*

A. *And maketh Men as the Fiſhes of the Sea; as the creeping Things that have no Ruler over them.* ——*And maketh.* Not by infuſing cruel, ravenous and inſatiable Appetites, but permitting them to act according to ſuch Appetite as was already in them.——*Men.* Who ſhould be juſt to all, and wrong none; who were once framed for mutual Help in Civil Societies, and whoſe Actions ſhould be beneficent, kind and humane. ——*As the Fiſhes.* Of which the greater live on the leſſer, and greedily and continually feed on the ſmaller Fry.——*Of the Sea.* Where the Devourers are more for Numbers, of greater Bulk, and ſwallow greater Multitudes of the leſs. ——*As the creeping Things.* Which in the Waters are Food for the leſſer Fry; ſo the World, like the Sea, is wholly Oppreſſion. ————*No Ruler over them.* None to defend the Weak, and reſtrain the Mighty, and give Law to all.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 15th Verſe?*

A. *They take up all of them with the Angle; they catch them in their Net, and gather them in their Drag; therefore they rejoice and are glad.* ——*They.* Either more generally Oppreſſors every where, or elſe particularly the *Chaldeans.*——*Take up.* Draw them out ſlily and craftily when they are taken by that Bait.——*All of them.* Without Diſtinction, all alike, good or bad. ——*With the Angle.* It may refer to the Delight theſe Oppreſſors took in theſe Courſes, or to their private way of deſtroying. ———— *They catch them in their Net.* Another Method of the *Chaldean* Rapine, namely, like catching of Fiſh, not ſingly, nor one by one, but deſtroying many together.—*And gather them.* As if they could never have enough; theſe *Chaldeans* do, like Fiſhermen, drive Men into their Nets and Snares.——*In their Drag.* This is a third Way of deſtroying Fiſh. The *Chaldeans* would uſe all Ways to deſtroy the *Jews.* ——*Therefore they.* The greedy and cruel *Chaldeans.*——*Rejoice.* Both in their own Gain, and in the *Jews* Ruin. ———— *And are glad.* The Phraſe is varied, to ſhew the Certainty of the Thing, and probably to intimate the double Joy they took in their proſperous Oppreſſion.

Q. *I deſire your Expoſition of Verſe* 16?

A. *Therefore they ſacrifice unto their Net, and burn Incenſe unto their Drag: Becauſe by them their Portion is fat, and their Meat plenteous.*——*Therefore.* Becauſe they thrive and proſper, in which they ſhould ſee and acknowledge thy wiſe and mighty Providence. ——— *They ſacrifice unto their Net.* They idolize and pay divine Honours to it; they aſcribe the Praiſe of Victories and acquired Glory to their own Contrivances, Wiſdom and Power; as if the Fiſherman ſhould make his Net his God, and offer Sacrifice for a good Draught of Fiſhes, to the Net that took them. ——— *And burn Incenſe unto their Drag.* Another Part of divine Honour, and moſtly uſed in giving Thanks and Praiſes; which divine Honour they pay to their own Power and Policy, their Counſel, Conduct and Arms, expreſſed in the Metaphor of a Fiſherman's Drag. ——— *And their Meat.* The Revenues of the Kingdom in General, and thoſe of particular Subjects, eſpecially of the Commanders and military Officers; thoſe who help to ſpread, draw and empty the Net. —— *Plenteous.* Abundant, that it might ſeem a ſufficient Proviſion, as well as a pleaſant Meſs, enough for Quantity, and as ſweet in Quality. 'Tis likely theſe Gormandizers not only eat the Fat of the Land they waſted, but laid up a Store for themſelves for Time to come.

Chap. II.

The Prophet, waiting by Faith for an Anſwer, ſhews the Deſtruction of the Chaldeans *for their Inſatiableneſs, Cruelty, Intemperance and Idolatry.*

Q. WHAT *does the Prophet diſcourſe upon in this Chapter?*

A. The firſt Chapter ended with that difficult and perplexed Queſtion, Why God ſuffers the Wicked ſo long to proſper in their Oppreſſions of the Righteous? This Chapter repreſents the Prophet waiting and muſing, ſtudying with himſelf what Account he might give to himſelf, and waiting what Account God would give him of it. The Lord charges him to ſet plain before the Eyes of the *Jewiſh* People the Deſtruction of the *Chaldeans*, that it ſhould aſſuredly come to paſs; only they, the *Jews*, ſhould wait patiently for it; which is afterwards declared more circumſtantially, *viz.* becauſe of the exceſſive Pride, Greedineſs, Tyranny, Intemperance, Blood-thirſtineſs and Idolatry of thoſe their Enemies.

Q. *What is meant by* Watch, *Verſe* 1?

A. Let us read the Words; *I will ſtand upon my Watch, and ſet me upon the Tower, and will watch to ſee what he will ſay unto me, and what I ſhall anſwer when I am reproved.* He will ſtand in a Poſture of meditating, obſerving and waiting.——*Upon my Watch.* Poſſibly the Prophet may have Reſpect to the Manner of the *Jews*, who in their ſolemn Prayers and waiting on God, had their Stations and Watches, as *Buxtorf* obſerves, in their Synagogues at *Jeruſalem*. But it ſeems more probable that the Prophet reſolves to be like one who is appointed for a Watchman, as Prophets are, *Ezek.* iii. 17. for the People of God. Or paſſively, in my Watch, *i. e.* where my Adverſaries like beſieging Enemies, obſerve and watch me. It contains his diligent and perſevering Expectation and Obſerving.———*And ſet me.* Fixedly, and with Reſolution not to leave my Station, as the *Hebrew* implies; 'tis the ſame Thing more emphatically expreſs'd by the Word *Stand.*——*Upon the Tower.* Either Watch-Tower, or beſieged Tower, or within a Circle, out of which I will not ſtir till I have received an Anſwer. ——— *And will watch.* Moſt attentively obſerve.———*To ſee what he will ſay.* What the Lord will ſignify unto me, who am waiting for his Anſwer, as well for my own Satisfaction, as the Information of others.———*And what I ſhall anſwer.* There are many who are perplexed at the Intricacy of Providence, and ſome deſire to be inſtructed; ſome propoſe Doubts and Fears; and others quarrel, and perverſely wrangle, with God and his Prophets: And how I may anſwer theſe from the Word of God, is what I wait for, ſays the Prophet.———*When I am reproved.* When called upon to give an Account of the Myſteriouſneſs of Providence, either to ſatisfy Doubters, or to ſilence Quarrellers.

Q. *Pray explain the 4th Verſe?*

A. *Behold, his Soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the Juſt ſhall live by his Faith.* ———*Behold.* Note it, there are two ſorts of Perſons who concern themſelves in this puzzling Queſtion of the divine Providence; ſome object, quarrel, and conteſt with God, proudly, diſcontentedly and and impatiently. Others enquire humbly, ſubmitting themſelves to God, and waiting for him.———*His Soul.* The Heart and Mind of every ſuch a one.———*Which is lift up.* That proudly conteſts with the Juſtice and Wiſdom of Divine Providence, that ſlights Promiſes and Deliverance at ſo great a Diſtance, and provides for his Safety by his own Cunning and Wit.———*Is not upright in him.* Is very corrupt and wicked, full of (not only Diſtruſts, but) poſitive Concluſions againſt God's future puniſhing the Wicked; ſuch a one is ſo wicked, that he thinks God will not puniſh the violent and bloody, the ſuperſtitious and idolatrous *Babylonians.*——*The Juſt.* The Humble, Upright, and comparatively righteous One, who adores the Depth of Divine Providence, and is perſuaded of the Truth of divine Promiſes, and approves the Seaſon God chuſes.———*Shall live.* Supports himſelf, and quiets his own Heart, whilſt he foreſees the approaching Deliverance of *Sion.*———*By his Faith.* His well-grounded Dependance on a Perſuaſion of the Truth of God's Promiſes touching the Relief of the faithful Servants of God, whoſe Deliverance he believes to be certain, and ſo waits for the Performance of Promiſes made to him and them.

Chap. III.

The Prophet prays God to remember his People in their Captivity. The fearful Appearance of God in bringing Iſrael *out of* Egypt. *He trembles at the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *yet comforts himſelf in the Strength and Salvation of God.*

Q. WHAT *have we obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. *Habakkuk* prays to the Lord, that he would preſerve his People in the *Babylonian* Captivity. For the ſtrengthening of his own and and the Peoples Faith, he relates how powerfully God protected his People, when he led them forth out of *Egypt* into the Wilderneſs; beſides, he relates how he was terrified, when he underſtood *Jeruſalem* ſhould be deſtroyed; yet he comforts himſelf again with the Conſideration of the Help of the Almighty.

The Prophet had in his own, and in the Name of all the Godly, made a full Profeſſion of his Faith, and Reſolution to behave himſelf with Joy in the midſt of Troubles: And he gave us an Account on what Grounds he ſpeaks ſo, it is becauſe the Lord God is his Strength. He ſays the chief Singer upon the Inſtruments of muſick ſhall have Occaſion to praiſe God for this great Deliverance of his Church.

This Chapter is juſtly eſteemed one of the moſt poetical Pieces in the whole Scripture; its Images are vaſtly ſtrong and ſtriking; its Language and Stile lofty and ſublime, and has all thoſe noble Decorations that ſo eminently diſtinguiſh the fineſt Productions of the moſt celebrated Poets. Whoever therefore has a Taſte of the true Sublime, muſt be agreeably entertained with, and admire the exalted Genius of this inſpired Writer.

A Prayer of *Habakkuk*, the Prophet, upon *Sigionoth*.

O Lord, I have heard thy Speech and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy Work in the midſt of the Years, in the midſt of the Years make known; in Wrath remember Mercy. God came from Teman, *and the holy one from* Paran. Selah. *His Glory covered the Heavens, and the Earth was full of his Praiſe. And his Brightneſs was as the Light, he had Horns coming out of his Hand, and there was the hiding of his Power. Before him went the Peſtilence, and burning Coals went forth at his Feet. He ſtood and meaſured the Earth: He beheld, and drove aſunder the Nations, and the everlaſting Mountains were ſcattered, the perpetual Hills did bow; his Ways are everlaſting. I ſaw the Tents of* Cuſhan *in Affliction; and the Curtains of the Land of* Midian *did tremble. Was the Lord diſpleaſed againſt the Rivers? Was thy Wrath againſt the Sea, that thou didſt ride upon thine Horſes, and thy Chariots of Salvation? Thy Bow was made quite naked, according to the Oaths of the Tribes, even thy Word.* Selah. *Thou didſt cleave the Earth with Rivers. The Mountains ſaw thee, and they trembled, the overflowing of the Water paſſed by; the Deep uttered his Voice, and lift up his Hands on high. The Sun and Moon ſtood ſtill in their Habitation; at the Light of thine Arrows they went, and at the Shining of thy glittering Spear. Thou didſt march through the Land in Indignation, thou didſt threſh the Heathen in Anger: Thou wenteſt forth for the Salvation of thy People, even for Salvation with thine anointed, thou woundedſt the Head out of the Houſe of the Wicked, by diſcovering the Foundation unto the Neck.* Selah. *Thou didſt ſtrike through with his Staves the Head of his Villages; they came out as a Whirlwind to ſcatter me: Their rejoycing was as to devour the Poor ſecretly. Thou didſt walk through the Sea with thine Horſes, through the Heap of great Waters. When I heard, my Belly trembled; my Lips quivered at the Voice; Rottenneſs entred into my Bones, and I trembled in my ſelf, that I might reſt in the Day of Trouble; when he cometh up unto the People, he will invade them with his Troops. Although the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall Fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Fields ſhall yield no Meat, the the Flock ſhall be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no Herd in the Stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. The Lord God is my Strength, and he will make my Feet like Hinds Feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high Places. To the chief Singer on my ſtringed Inſtruments.*

Q. *Pray explain the 17th and 18th Verſes?*

A. *Although the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall Fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Fields ſhall yield no Meat, the Flock ſhall be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no Herd in the Stall.* To War foreſeen, the Prophet adds Famine, and deſcribes it to be the moſt grievous, as indeed it was afterwards found to be.——*The Fig-tree.* Which in that Country was a conſiderable Part of their Proviſion to live upon. —— *Shall not bloſſom.* Not give the leaſt Sign of bringing forth Fruit. —— *Neither ſhall Fruit be in the Vines.* Which were alſo the Riches and Subſiſtence of the People in thoſe Countries.——*The Labour of the Olive.* Either Labour beſtowed on the Olive, or the Fruit which the Olive brings forth, called here Labour, by an Alluſion to human Labour.—— *Shall fail.* I appoint the Expectation of both Dreſſer and Eater.——*And the Fields.* Ploughed and ſown. —— *Shall yield no Meat.* Corn for Bread.——*The Flock ſhall be cut off from the Fold.* Either by Wolf, Murrain, or by the waſting *Babylonians.* In the Fold where they were wont to be ſafe, there are they in greateſt Danger, becauſe ſo they may be ſwept away all at once. ——*There ſhall be no Herd in the Stall.* No great Cattle kept in the Stall for Labour, or for Feeding.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation. As for my Part, adds the Prophet, I will look for Joy, and expect Matter of Rejoicing in the Lord, who will preſerve a Remnant, and redeem them; who will rebuke *Babylon*, and who will very ſtrangely deſtroy it. The Prophet renews his own Faith, and confirms them. All ſhall end in Salvation to him and Believers.

Q. *Let us now take a Review of this Prophecy; pray what is the principal View and Intent thereof?*

A. The Prophecy of *Habakkuk* ſeems to be an exact ſtating of that perplexed Caſe, touching the ſeeming Unequalneſs of the Proceedings of God in the Government of the World, in which the Good ſuffer Evil, and the Evil-doers rejoice in Proſperity; the more Righteous are afflicted, and the more Unrighteous proſper; nay, the Worſt domineer over the Beſt among Men. This Caſe baffled the Wiſe among Philoſophers, and it much troubled *David* and *Jeremiah*, *Pſal.* lxxiii. 2, 3, *&c. Jer.* xii. 1, 2. and have ever been Matter of ſome Wonder to the beſt and wiſeſt of Men, as here 'twas to *Habakkuk*, who lived in the Times of great Impieties againſt God, and of great Injuſtice amongſt Men. 'Tis moſt probable he lived and propheſied in the Days of *Manaſſeh*, when the Wicked devoured the Man that was more righteous than himſelf; and this is the Subject of his Complaint, Chap. i. 1, 2, 3, 4. Thoſe grievous Sins which then abounded, he declareth ſhall be puniſhed by the *Chaldeans*, at which he again wondereth; it grieveth him to ſee in *Judah* the Beſt afflicted by the Worſt; and it as much Grief to him to foreſee the wicked Nation of the *Chaldeans* proſper in the Ruins of a more righteous Nation, from the fifth to the eleventh Verſe of the firſt Chapter, which God reſolveth for him in the ſecond Chapter, where the Sins of *Judah* and the Sins of the *Chaldeans* are enumerated, and at once both are threatened with Puniſhment; when the *Chaldeans* have puniſhed *Judah*'s Sins, the *Medes* and *Perſians* ſhall puniſh the Sins in the *Chaldeans*. In all which the unſpotted Righteouſneſs, and the admirable Wiſdom of God is ſeen, in the Government of his Church chaſtiſed for her Sins againſt God, and in his Government of the World, ſinning highly againſt God, and with greater Wickedneſs acting the ſame, or worſe Things than thoſe, for which, by their Means God had before puniſhed his Church. In fine, the Prophet, with ſteady Faith and fervent Prayer addreſſeth himſelf to God, and in a moſt elegant Manner recounting God's Mercy and Faithfulneſs to his People, Chap. iii. leaves it both a Foundation to our Hope, and a Pattern for our Practice. He doth reſolve, as we ſhould, to wait for, rejoice in, and ſubmit to the Lord, in the greateſt Diſtreſſes and Darkneſs of Providence. An excellent Subject for our Meditations at this Day, as well as in the Days of our Prophet, whoſe Name ſeems to imply his Wreſtlings with theſe Difficulties, or his laying hold and embracing of God; our ſafeſt Courſe in ſuch Circumſtances, being to rely upon God. We can but gueſs at the Time of his propheſying, and that we think is rather in the Time of *Manaſſeh*, than of *Hezekiah* or *Joſiah*, though poſſibly he might live and be a Prophet in the firſt Part of *Joſiah*'s Reign. What Tribe or what Family he was of, we pretend not to tell you, ſince we cannot pretend to know; but we are ſure he was not the pretended Meſſenger that carried a Meſs of Broth out of *Judea* into *Babylon*, for *Daniel*'s Dinner; and we think it as great a Wonder, any thinking Man ſhould now believe it, as it would at that Day have been, if really done.

Q. *What is obſervable in the Stile and Manner of this Prophet?*

A. This Prophecy is conceived partly in Manner of a Prediction, and partly in Form of a Meditation. For the Prophet having ſhewn his extreme Grief, in beholding God's long Patience with his People that ran into all Manner of Wickedneſs (to whom he therefore denounceth their laſt Ruin by the *Chaldeans*) afterwards falls a wondering, Why God ſhould ſo exalt and cauſe the *Babylonians* to proſper and flouriſh, who were a violent, greedy, diſſolute and proud Nation, even in the higheſt Degree, to whom he had committed the Execution of his Judgments upon his People. But the Lord, by a Viſion, bringeth him and every Believer to the Exerciſe of Faith and Patience; the only Help in all their Calamities, is ſtaying for the Effect of his Juſtice upon ſuch wicked Nations in a Curſe and utter Deſtruction. Whereupon the Prophet reſting upon God's good Will and Pleaſure, doth in a Song celebrate his glorious antient Deliverances; and by aſſured Faith conceives the like from theſe preſent Evils: Whereupon, rejoicing in Spirit, he gives him Praiſes and Thanks.

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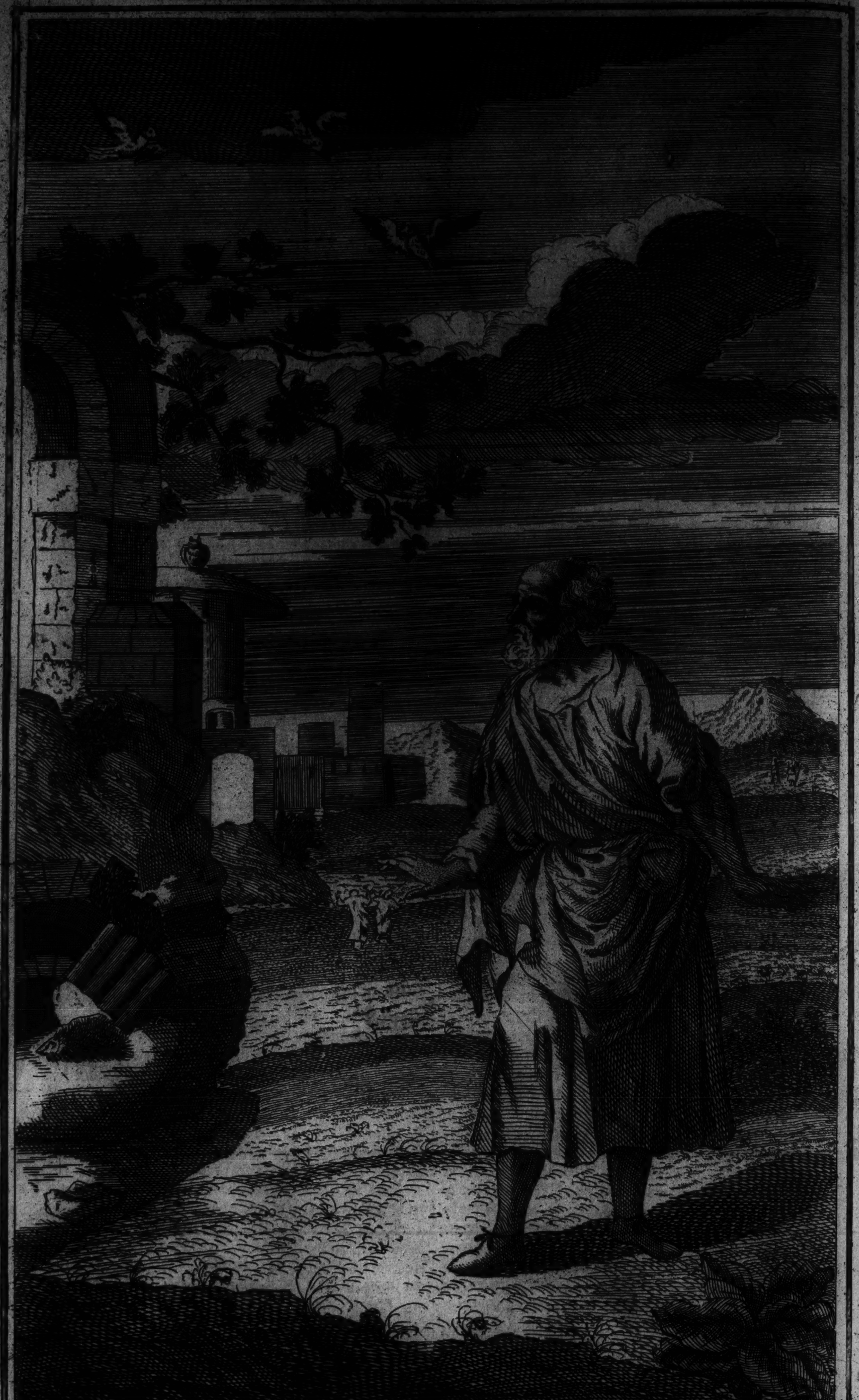

The Prophecy of Zephaniah.

THE BOOK

OF THE PROPHET

ZEPHANIAH.

SEEING the great Rebellion of the People, and that there was now no Hope of Amendment, he denounceth the great Judgment of God, which was at Hand, ſhewing that their Country ſhould be utterly deſtroy'd, and they carried away Captives by the Babylonians. *Yet for the Comfort of the Faithful, he propheſieth of God's Vengeance againſt their Enemies, as the* Philiſtines, Moabites, Aſſyrians, *and others, to aſſure them that God had a continual Care over them. And as the Wicked ſhould be puniſhed for their Sins and Tranſgreſſions, ſo he exhorteth the Godly to Patience, and to truſt to find Mercy by Reaſon of the free Promiſe of God made unto* Abraham: *Therefore quietly abide till God ſhewed them the Effect of that Grace whereby, in the End, they ſhould be gathered unto him, and counted as his People and Children.*

CHAP. I.

God foretels the Deſolation of Jeruſalem *and* Judah, *by the* Babylonians *for their Idolatry and many other Sins; exhorts them to Repentance; ſhews the Nearneſs of their Captivity; and that nothing ſhall be able to deliver them from Deſtruction.*

Q. WHAT *Kind of Subjects are handled in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet tells them, that although God had, with wonderful Patience, waited and forborn, now he would wait no longer, but with ſpeedy Executions fulfil his Threats, and accompliſh his Wrath, which he did within twenty Years after this Prophecy, as is moſt likely, on the accurateſt Computation we can make of the Times of *Zephaniah*'s propheſying, and *Nebuchadnezzar*'s taking the City.

The five laſt Verſes contains an elegant Deſcription of the Terrors of that dreadful Day, in which the great God would bring his Armies againſt *Judah* and *Jeruſalem.*

The great Day of the Lord is near, it is near, and haſteth greatly, even the Voice of the Day of the Lord: The mighty Man ſhall cry there bitterly. That Day is a Day of Wrath, a Day of Trouble and Diſtreſs, a Day of Waſtneſs and Deſolation, a Day of Darkneſs and Gloomineſs, a Day of Clouds and thick Darkneſs. A Day of the Trumpet and Alarm againſt the fenced Cities, and againſt the high Towers. And I will bring Diſtreſs upon Men, that they ſhall walk like blind Men, becauſe they have ſinned againſt the Lord, and their Blood ſhall be poured out as Duſt, and their Fleſh as the Dung. Neither their Silver nor their Gold ſhall be able to deliver them in the Day of the Lord's Wrath, but the whole Land ſhall be devoured by the Fire of his Jealouſy; for he ſhall make even a ſpeedy Riddance of all them that dwell in the Land.

Q. *I deſire an Explanation of the 4th Verſe?*

A. Let us firſt read it; *I will alſo ſtretch out my Hand upon* Judah, *and upon all the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *and I will cut off the Remnant of* Baal *from this Place, and the Name of the* Chemarims *with Prieſts.*——*I will alſo,* Heb. *And I will,* or *and I have*; ſo Prophets ſpeak of what ſhall moſt certainly be, as if already done.——*Stretch out my Hand.* This ſeems to intimate ſome immediate Stroke from God. Thus *Jer.* li. 25. *Ezek.* vi. 14. ——*Upon* Judah. *Benjamin* is included, tho' only *Judah* is named.——*Upon all the Inhabitants.* It will be an univerſal Deſtruction of them, either by Sword, Famine, Peſtilence or Captivity; both Citizens and Sojourners, all ſhall periſh or ſuffer by ſome or other of theſe Ways.——*Of Jeruſalem.* Tho' it was the holy City beautified with the Temple of God, yet all ſhould not ſecure it, *Jer.* vii. 4.——*I will cut off the Remnant of* Baal. Whatever remains of the Idolatry of *Baal,* his Idols, Temples, Sacrifices, Prieſts, Ornaments and Worſhippers. Whether this refers to Times after the Reformation by *Joſiah,* or to Times before it, need not ſcrupulouſly be enquired into.———*From this Place.* This Idolatry had filled *Jeruſalem* itſelf.———*And the Name.* Both the Name and the Memory of them alſo, for his Name includes both.———*The* Chemarims. Either ſo called from the black Garments they wore, or from their ſwarthy Colour, occaſioned by the black Smoak of Incenſe, which they were almoſt continually in; or Door-keepers, Sextons of *Baal*, or voluntary Servants, or ſuch as the Popiſh Monks, or the Apoſtles of *Aaron's* Houſe, who, tho' Prieſts by Birth and Office, and therefore ſhould have been ſtedfaſt to, had fallen from the true God and his Worſhip.

Q. *What does the Prophet mean by* the Day of the Lord's Sacrifice, *Verſe* 8?

A. Underſtand the Slaughter to be made by the *Babylonians*, called here a Day of Sacrifice, that we might ſee clearly the juſt and exemplary Proceedings of God. Theſe People ſinned in ſacrificing to ſtrange Gods, and God will puniſh them, by making them a ſtrange Sacrifice to his Anger.

Q. *What Place was* Makteſh, *mentioned, Verſe* 11?

A. Some read it appellatively: The Mortar in which antiently, before the Corn-mill was known and uſed, they pounded and beat their Corn for Bread, and likewiſe Spices. Others ſay it is the lower Town or Valley of *Cedron* in *Jeruſalem*, a deep Valley that ſurrounded the Mountain of the Temple, which reſembled a deep Mortar, they gave it the Name of *Makteſh*.

Chap. II.

The Prophet exhorts Iſrael *to Repentance, before the Judgments fall upon them. The* Philiſtines, Moabites, Ammonites, Ethiopia *and* Aſſyria *threatned with Judgments.*

Q. P*RAY what Points of Inſtruction does the Prophet here recommend to the Conſideration of the People?*

A. The Prophet exhorts the *Jews* to Repentance, and adviſes them to deſcend into themſelves, and grther themſelves together, leſt they be ſcattered like Chaff, before the Judgments fall upon them, eſpecially the godly ones, who yet remained in the Country.

The *Philiſtines*, *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Ethiopia* and *Aſſyria*, are threatened with Judgments, and the City of *Nineveh* in particular, ſo that People, who paſſed by, ſhould deride their Arrogance, and contemn their ungodly Ways, yet with ſome Pity towards this deſolate City.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of Verſe* 14?

A. *And Flocks ſhall lie down in the midſt of her, all the Beaſts of the Nations; both the Cormorant and Bittern ſhall lodge in the upper Lintels of it: Their Voice ſhall ſing in the Windows, Deſolation ſhall be in the Threſholds; for he ſhall uncover the Cedar-Work.* ——— *In the midſt of her. Nineveh* ſhall be ſo razed, that Flocks of Cattle ſhall lie down in the midſt of it. ——— *All the Beaſts.* All Sorts of Beaſts which are found in thoſe Countries, the Tame under the Guard of Watching-Shepherds, and wild ones ſeeking their Prey, ſhall attend about thoſe Places. —— *The Cormorant and Bittern.* Birds that are ſolitary, and delight in deſolate Places, in reedy Fens, where they ſeek their Food, and are looked upon as unlucky Birds. —— *Shall lodge in the upper Lintels.* Shall either make their Neſts there, and ſeek and chuſe their Lodging there; they ſhall rooſt there in the Night, upon the Pillars, Turrets or Pinnacles. — *Shall ſing in the Windows.* Theſe doleful Creatures ſhall make a ſad melancholy Noiſe, which ſhall be all the Muſic to be heard in their deſolate Windows. —— *Deſolation ſhall be in the Threſholds.* The loweſt Part of their Houſes, from Top to Bottom, nothing but Waſte and Ruin: Inſtead of beautiful Ladies looking out of the Windows and Doors, and ſinging, now are heard the doleful Notes of Cormorants and Bitterns. ——— *For he ſhall uncover the Cedar-Work.* Or, when the *Babylonians* have burnt the Houſes, or beat down the curious Roofs and Coverings of Cedar, the Beauty and the Defence of their Houſes.

Chap. III.

The Prophet complains of the Oppreſſion and Stubborneſs of Jeruſalem, *and threatens them with God's Judgments. An Exhortation to wait for the Reſtauration, Cleanſing and Protection of the Church, and the Deſtruction of her Enemies.*

Q. W*HAT Points of Inſtruction does the Prophet here recommend to the Conſideration of the People?*

A. The Prophet complains of the Sins among all Sorts and Conditions of People in *Judea*, eſpecially of their being perverſe and Stiff-necked. He threatens them with God's Judgments by his Jealouſy. God is jealous for his own Glory, for his Ordinances and Statutes, which the *Jewiſh* People, Princes, Prophets and Prieſts, had notoriouſly violated.

After the Judgments are denounced, the Prophet declares how God would bring the Heathen to the Knowledge of him, and cleanſe his Church from her Sins, protecting her, deſtroying her Enemies, till he ſhould bring her to Glory. This Promiſe removes an Objection that might be made by the diſperſed ones, How can we return? I will gather you, ſaith the everlaſting God, who changeth not.

From the fourteenth Verſe to the End, the Prophet, in a very pious and divine Strain, exhorts the Church to be joyful, and for her Comfort promiſes her many Bleſſings, Deliverance from her Enemies, and much Glory and Honour from all Nations.

Sing, O Daughter of Zion, *ſhout O* Iſrael, *be glad and rejoice with all the Heart, O Daughter of* Jeruſalem. *The Lord hath taken away thy Judgments, he hath caſt out thine Enemy: The King of* Iſrael, *even the Lord is in the midſt of thee; thou ſhalt not ſee Evil any more. In that Day it ſhall be ſaid to* Jeruſalem, *Fear thou not; and to* Zion, *Let not thine Hands be ſlack. The Lord thy God in the midſt of thee is mighty; he will ſave, he will rejoice over thee with Joy, he will reſt in his Love, he will joy over thee with ſinging. I will gather them that are ſorrowful for the ſolemn Aſſembly, who are of thee, to whom the Reproach of it was a Burden. Behold, at that Time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will ſave her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them Praiſe and Fame in every Land, where they have been put to ſhame. At that Time will I bring you again, even in the Time that I gather you: For I will make you a Name and a Praiſe among all People of the Earth, when I turn back your Captivity before your Eyes, ſaith the Lord.*

Q. *Can you give any Account of this Prophet's Family and Pedigree?*

This Prophet, by a ſomewhat larger Account of his Pedigree, gives us ground to gueſs of what Family he might be, the laſt named may poſſibly be the good King *Hezekiah*; the Names are the ſame in Chap. i. Ver. 1. and 2 *Kings* xviii. 1. By his Freedom with Princes and King's Children, reproving them, Ver. 8. and threatning them with the Loftineſs of his Stile, may fairly be admitted a Conjecture at ſomewhat more than ordinary in his Deſcent; but whether of Royal Blood or no, he came with a divine Warrant, and with a prophetic Spirit, ſharply reproving all Ranks of Men for their Sins, of which, in particular, Idolatry, Apoſtaſy, and Neglect to enquire for the true Religion, and the true God; and the ſinful Faſhions of great Ones in their Habits, and the violent Oppreſſion of the great Ones, are named Chap. i. 5, 6, 8, 9. which Sins, and many others which then abounded amongſt them, are threatened with ſevere Puniſhments, and with utter Deſolation, which had already befallen ſome of the neighbouring Nations named, and propoſed as Examples to the *Jews*, to move them to conſider, repent and amend, and prevent the threatening Judgments, which, unleſs they repented, would come ſuddenly.

Q. *When did he live?*

A. This Prophet lived and prophecied but few Years before the Captivity of *Babylon*, together with many others, who by their Preaching ſought to keep off the imminent Ruin: Exhorting that wretched People to Repentance and Converſion, to prevent God's Judgments. And ſuch is alſo the only Subject of this Prophecy; in which *Zephaniah* denounceth the approaching Deſolation by the *Chaldeans*; for a Puniſhment of their Idolatries, Tyrannies, Oppreſſions, and incorrigible Wickedneſs; which reigned in all the People, high and low; from which he earneſtly exhorteth them to turn. Then he turneth towards the true Believers, and the Elect, whom he comforteth with the Promiſes of Deliverance from thoſe Evils, and of everlaſting Salvation by *Chriſt*, who ſhall gather together his Church, from amongſt all Nations in the World; and ſanctify, bleſs, and glorify it for ever, and ruin all her Enemies.

Q. *What farther is obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. In the firſt Verſe of this Prophecy we have a Genealogy of *Zephaniah*'s Progenitors ſet down; to diſtinguiſh him from *Zephaniah* the Son of *Mebaſeia*, who likewiſe lived in the Time of *Joſiah*. Our *Zephaniah* was cotemporary with the Prophet *Jeremiah*, and the Propheteſs *Hulda*. See 2 *Kings* xxii. 14. and 2 *Chron*. xxxiv. 22. and xxxv. 25. and *Jer*. i. 2. He lived after *Joſiah* had reformed the Worſhip of God, and true Religion, from the Idolatries with which it had been abuſed.

The firſt Chapter begins with a Declaration of the Purpoſe of God, which was either ſpoken audibly, or clearly manifeſted by ſuch Signs as the Prophet readily underſtood. The divine Authority of this Prophecy is here alſo aſſerted; it is called *the Word of the Lord*; but the preciſe Manner in which the Prophet came by it, is unneceſſary to enquire into; ſince we are well aſſured that *Zephaniah* did not Hammer out of his own Brain the News he brought them, but received from God what he communicated to them.

The Name of *Zephaniah*, according to its original Derivation, ſignifies one hidden of the Lord, or God's Secretary, or one who is God's Watchman, whom God hath ſet over the Houſe of *Judah*, as *Ezekiel* Chap. iii. is ſaid to be.

By the Pedigree here given us, we can gather no Certainty what his Progenitors were, whether Princes, (as ſome think he was the Great-Grandſon of *Hezekiah*, the Name here mentioned being the ſame) or whether Prophets, or only eminent known Men. He prophecied before the Captivity, and the Things and Events he foretels are much of the ſame Nature with thoſe predicted by *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*, in whoſe Time he lived.

THE BOOK

OF THE PROPHET

HAGGAI.

WHEN the Time of ſeventy Years Captivity, prophecied by Jeremiah, *was expired, God raiſed up* Haggai, Zechariah *and* Malachi, *to comfort the* Jews, *and to exhort them to the building of the Temple, which was a Figure of the ſpiritual Temple and Church of God, whoſe Perfection and Excellency ſtood in* Chriſt. *And, becauſe that all were given to their own Pleaſures and Advantages, he declareth that the Plague of Famine, which God then ſent among them, was a juſt Reward of their Ingratitude, in that they condemned God's Honour, who had delivered them. Yet he comforteth them, if they will return to the Lord, with the Promiſe of greater Felicity, foraſmuch as the Lord will finiſh the Work that he hath begun, and ſend* Chriſt *whom he had promiſed, and by whom they ſhould attain to perfect Joy and Glory.*

Chap. I.

God putting the Iſraelites *in mind of his Love, complains of their Unthankfulneſs. The Irreligion of Prieſts and People, who are exhorted to repent.*

Q. *WHAT are the Subjects of this Prophecy?*

A. The Prophet checks the Chief of the People at *Jeruſalem*, becauſe they dwelt in ſtately Houſes, and left the Temple of the Lord unrepaired, telling them that it was for this Neglect of theirs that God withheld his Bleſſing from them in other Things; therefore he exhorts them to re-aſſume the repairing of the Temple, and to finiſh it.

This Exhortation was convincing and awakening, ſo that the Princes and People ſhewed their Obedience and the Willingneſs of their Minds; upon which the Lord comforts them by his Prophet, declaring he would be with them.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 18th Verſe?*

A. *Then ſpake* Haggai *the Lord's Meſſenger unto the People, ſaying, I am with you, ſaith the Lord* ——*Then.* When the People ſhewed their Obedience, and the Willingneſs of their Minds, then God encouraged them by his Prophet.——— *Meſſenger.* Legate or Envoy, the *Hebrew* Word alſo ſignifies an Angel; but that is not ſufficient to prove their Opinion, who fancy that *Haggai* was not a Man, but an Angel in the Form of a Man; the Word here uſed (derived from a Word that ſignifies *to ſend*, and paraphraſed by a Word that primarily ſignifies *to ſend*, as Meſſengers are ſent) intimates an Angel, from his Office and Work, as he miniſters before the Lord, and runs ſwiftly on his Errand; it ſpeaks not the Nature or Eſſence of Angels, as they are Spirits. The *French* Verſion reads it like ours, *Ambaſſador.* So *Haggai* was God's Meſſenger or Ambaſſador to his People, no Angel.———*The Lord's Meſſage.* As becomes an Ambaſſador in the Words of his Maſter, ſo *Haggai* delivered the Lord's Meſſage. ———*Unto the People.* Not including the Governors; but the People are mentioned, becauſe the Prophet ſpoke to the whole Aſſembly, or becauſe the Lord would encourage them moſt, who moſt needed Encouragement. —— *I am with you.* A great Promiſe, and which contains all they can need or deſire; it inſures God's Preſence always with them, and his Aſſiſtance always to them, and his Bleſſing always upon them. He will be always for, as well as with them, and then *Tatnai, Shethar-boznai, Sanballat,* and all other Conſpirators with them, ſhall not prevail to hinder the Work. ———*Saith the Lord.* This ſolemn Atteſtation added Weight to the Promiſe.

Chap. II.

God reproves the Prieſts for neglecting and corrupting the Covenant, and the People for prophaning God's Holineſs by their Idolatry, Adultery, and charging him with delighting in that which is evil.

Q. *PRAY what does the Prophet treat of in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet exhorts *Zerubbabel, Joſhua,* and the People, to go on diligently in the Building of the Temple, promiſing them God's Aſſiſtance; foretelling

telling them withal, the *Meſſiah* (our bleſſed Saviour *Chriſt*) was perſonally to appear in this Temple, whereby the Glory of this Temple ſhould exceed the former.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the 7th Verſe?*

A. *And I will ſhake all Nations, and the Deſire of all Nations ſhall come, and I will fill this Houſe with Glory, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.* ——*I will ſhake all Nations.* Which were literally fulfilled in the Overthrow of the *Perſian* Monarchy, by the *Grecians*, in the Civil Wars, and ſucceeding Troubles under *Alexander* and his Succeſſors, the Growth of the *Roman* Power by ſubduing their Neighbours, and their Diſſenſions and home-bred Wars, all huſhed and ſilenced by *Auguſts*, a little before the Birth of *Chriſt*. Theſe Convulſions began a little after this Prophecy, and continued long; in which the *Jews*, under the *Maccabees* had their Share. —— *The Deſire of all Nations ſhall be fulfilled. Chriſt*, the moſt deſirable, becauſe the moſt helpful to all Nations; to the Knowledge of whom, ſome Prophets in all Ages attained, whom they earneſtly deſired, and who was deſired by all who knew their own Miſery, and his Sufficiency to ſave them; who was to be the Light of the *Gentiles*, as well as the Glory of his People *Iſrael*. —— *I will fill this Houſe.* Which you now build, this Second Temple. The firſt had a Fulneſs of Glory in its magnificent Structure, rich Ornaments, and coſtly Sacrifices; this was a worldly Glory; but that which is here promiſed is a heavenly Glory, from the Preſence of *Chriſt* in it. ——*With Glory.* Of my Preſence, healing and comforting, ſaith the *Meſſiah* the King of Glory, who entered theſe everlaſting Doors, *Pſal.* xxiv. 7, 1.——*Saith the Lord of Hoſts.* This is a ſolemn Sealing and Certainty of the Thing, uſed by this Prophet, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*, who ſtile him the Lord of Hoſts near an hundred Times.

Q. *Have you any Thing to remark concerning the Perſon and Prophecy of this Prophet* Haggai?

A. Haggai is the firſt Prophet that appears in the Name of the Lord of Hoſts, to awaken, reprove, direct, exhort and encourage both the Governor, High-prieſt and People; returned out of Captivity, to the reſtoring and ſettling the Worſhip of God, to the re-builing the Temple, whoſe Foundations, together with the Altar of Burnt-offering, had been laid ſeventeen or eighteen Years ago, but the finiſhing of the Temple prohibited by *Cambyſes*, all the Time of his being Vice-Roy to his Father *Cyrus*, and during his own Reign, and neglected near two Years in *Darius Hyſtaſpes's* Time, through the Covetouſneſs of many, the Coldneſs of ſome, and the Cowardice of others among the *Jews*; who were all bent on their own private Concerns, and pleaded it was not Time to ſet about the building of God's Temple, and who, in all Probability, would have deferred it much longer, had they been let alone: Now therefore the Lord doth, in Zeal for his own Glory, and in Mercy to his People, ſend his Servant *Haggai* to awaken them to their Duty, which was this, the Building of the Temple, and reſtoring the pure Worſhip of God; he reproves them for neglecting this, tells them this Sin was the Cauſe of the Penury and Scarcity which afflicted them theſe fifteen or ſixteen Years paſt, aſſures them that ſo ſoon as ever they begin the Work, their Ground, their Cattle, their Vines and Olives ſhould wonderfully increaſe their Store, promiſeth God's Preſence with them, and with it a Supply of Gold and Silver which are his; and he will bring them, as he did by the Bounty of *Darius*, and the Contributions of others. All which particularly, and at large, are ſet down in the fixth and ſeventh Chapters of *Ezra*: And ſo in four Years Time the Temple was finiſhed, the Feaſt of Dedication was celebrated, and the final Iſſue anſwered to the Name of the Prophet, (who, ſent of God, ſet it forwards) *Haggai*, who hath his Name from the Word that ſignifieth *a Feaſt*, as if we ſhould call him *Feſtivus*. He cloſeth all with a cloſe Prediction of many and long Wars, and Seditions to come among the *Gentiles*, to the Overthrow of the Enemies of the *Jews*.

THE

THE BOOK
OF THE PROPHET
ZECHARIAH.

TWO Months after that Haggai *had begun to propheſy,* Zechariah *was alſo ſent by the Lord to help him in the Labour, and to confirm the ſame Doctrine. Firſt therefore, he putteth them in remembrance, for what Cauſe God had ſo ſore puniſhed their Fathers; and yet comforteth them, if they will repent unfeignedly, and not abuſe this great Benefit of God in their Deliverance, which was a Figure of that true Deliverance, which all the Faithful ſhould have from Death and Sin by* Chriſt. *But becauſe they ſtill remained in their Wickedneſs, and Coldneſs to ſet forth God's Glory, and were not yet made better by their long Puniſhment, he rebuketh them moſt ſharply: Yet for the Comfort of the Repentant, he ever mixeth the Promiſe of Grace, that they might by this Means be prepared to receive* Chriſt, *in whom all ſhould be ſanctified to the Lord.*

Chap. I.

The Prophet exhorts Iſrael *to Repentance, that they might eſcape the Judgments their Fathers underwent. The Viſion of the Horſes, and their Meanings. At the Angel's Prayer comfortable Promiſes are made to* Jeruſalem. *The Viſion of the four Horns and four Carpenters.*

Q. G*IVE the general Heads of this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet exhorts the *Jews* to true Repentance, that they might not incur the like Judgments with their Fathers.

In a Viſion, God communicates his Word, Mind or Will to the Prophet. By the Man upon the red Horſe is meant the Son of God appearing in human Shape, who, as chief, ſends his Angels, who gives him an Account. The Colour of the Horſe ſignifies God's fierce Anger inflamed againſt the Enemies of his People, the Execution of which this Angel came to tell the Prophet of. The Myrtle Trees repreſent the Church, compoſed of weak and low Plants, but precious and holy. By the Property of the Myrtle-Tree, which delights in Valleys, Sea-Shores and River-Sides, is ſignified the lowly and abject Condition of the Church in this World, and particularly the Subjection it was in at that Time under the *Perſian* Empire.

The Horſemen behind the Son of God were created Angels, Miniſters and Warriors under that Head, *Pſalm* lxviii. 17. By the different Colours, it ſeems, may be underſtood the Angels ſeveral Services; the red ones for Puniſhment, the white for Grace, and the ſpeckled ones for a Puniſhment, mixed with Rigour, Mercy and Correction. At the End of the Viſion the Prophet is told that *Jeruſalem* ſhould be built again.

After the Prophet had ſeen theſe Things, heard theſe comfortable Words, and received Commiſſion to publiſh all the good Tydings he had heard, he lift up his Eyes and beheld four Horns: Theſe were Emblems of the Enemies of the *Jews*, for Strength, Fierceneſs, and for their Number from all Parts of the World. The Prophet was farther ſhown four Carpenters, or Smiths: Theſe Carpenters or Smiths are God's Inſtruments, who with their Mallets and Hammers break thoſe hard and ſtrong Horns which would overthrow the Church, and declare that no Enemy's Horn is ſo ſtrong, but God hath an Hammer to break it in Pieces.

Q. *Pray give the Interpretation of the firſt Verſe?*

A. *In the eighth Month, in the ſecond Year of* Darius, *came the Word of the Lord unto* Zechariah *the Son of* Barachiah, *the Son of* Iddo *the Propet, ſaying,* ——— *In the eighth Month.* Called in the *Hebrew* both *Mareſchuan* and *Bul*, and anſwers to Part of our *October* and *November*, two Months after *Haggai* began to encourage the *Jews* to build the Temple; and in the ſecond Year of *Darius*, the Son of *Hyſtaſpes*, and the third *Perſian* Monarch.——— *Came the Word of the Lord.* Which was his Warrant and divine Call, the Lord communicated to him what he was to communicate to others. ——— *Unto* Zechariah. His Name beſpeaks him a Remembrancer of God, or it may ſpeak God remembring him and the reſt of the People. ——— *The Son.* The *Jews* called Deſcendants in a Right-Line Sons, though they were Grandſons, or Great-Grandſons; in this Senſe, ſome ſay, *Zechariah* is the Son of *Baruch*, and the

Son of *Iddo*. This *Zechariah* is not he that is mentioned 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 20. This is too early by many Years; nor is this *Zechariah* the Father of *John the Baptiſt*; this is as much too late: but moſt likely it is that *Zechariah* whom the *Jews* ſlew between the Temple and the Altar, *Mat.* xiii. 25.——— *Barachiah.* This Name is expreſsly mentioned *Mat.* xxiii. and his Time exactly ſuits the Time pointed at by the Evangeliſt.——— *The Son of* Iddo. One of this Name you have 2 *Chron.* ix. 25. but this is too old to be the ſame with him in the Text; for there will be found 450 Years Diſtance between *Iddo* the Seer, and the *Iddo* here mentioned.

Chap. II.

The Viſion of meaſuring Jeruſalem, *ſhews God's Care of it.* Zion *in Captivity, exhorted to repair home; her Enemies Deſtruction threatened. A Promiſe of God's Preſence in the midſt of her.*

Q. PRAY *what does this Chapter afford worthy Obſervation?*

A. Here is an Account of the third Viſion, namely, a Man (that is, the Angel who was Chriſt; for in reſpect of his Office he is often called an Angel; but in reſpect of his eternal Eſſence is God, and ſo called) with a meaſuring Line meaſuring the Place of the *New Jeruſalem*; ſhewing withal the great Multitude of the Inhabitants of this City, and how God would protect the ſame. After this, the *Jews* remaining in *Babylon* are exhorted to repair home, with Promiſes that God would deſtroy their Enemies, convert the *Gentiles*, and take continual Care of his Church.

The Promiſe of God's Preſence with his Church in the latter Days, is very elegantly deſcribed in the four laſt Verſes of this Chapter.

Sing and rejoice, O Daughter of Zion: *for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, ſaith the Lord. And many Nations ſhall be joined to the Lord in that Day, and ſhall be my People; and I will dwell in the midſt of thee, and thou ſhalt know that the Lord of Hoſts hath ſent me unto thee. And the Lord ſhall inherit* Judah, *his Portion in the Holy Land, and ſhall chooſe* Jeruſalem *again. Be ſilent, O all Fleſh, before the Lord; for he is raiſed up out of his holy Habitation.*

Chap. III.

Under the Type of Joſhua *is repreſented God's Love to his Church, his Care and the Proviſion he hath made for her.* Chriſt, *the Branch, promiſed.*

Q. PRAY *what is the Subject purſued in this Chapter?*

A. The fourth Viſion of the Prophet is here ſet forth, *viz.* the High-Prieſt *Joſhua*, in whoſe Perſon is repreſented, how God loves, pardons, ſanctifies and protects his Church. *Chriſt* the Branch is promiſed, who did ſo humble himſelf, that not only he became the Servant of God, but alſo the Servant of Men; and therefore in him they ſhould have Comfort, although in the World they were condemned, *Iſa.* xi. 1. *Jer.* xxiii. 5. and xxxiii. 14, 15. *Luke* i. 78.

Q. *The ninth Verſe is too difficult for my Comprehenſion; I deſire you therefore to explain it?*

A. *For behold, the Stone that I have laid before* Joſhua: *Upon one Stone ſhall be ſeven Eyes, behold I will engrave the graving thereof, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I will remove the Iniquity of that Land in one Day.*——— *For behold.* This is an *Ellipſis*, and to make it up we muſt repeat that of the 8th Verſe, *Hear now*, *&c.* For behold (pointing to a particular Stone) that Stone which I have laid, ſaith God, in the Sight of *Joſhua*, or which he ſaw laid in the Building of the Temple.——— *Upon one Stone ſhall be ſeven Eyes.* Or that one Stone are ſeven Eyes, and *Joſhua* and his Fellows are commanded to obſerve it; the Meaning of which the Angel will explain to them preſently. It is not improbable that this one Stone might be a Corner-Stone, and a principal Corner-Stone; and the Eyes engraven on it, ſo placed, that they might look many Ways; ſo it will be a more exact Emblem of Chriſt the chief Corner-Stone, and of his perfect Knowledge and Wiſdom, fitting him to govern his Church, and provide for it.——— *I will engrave the Graving thereof.* The Engraving engraved, *i. e.* moſt artificially, lively, and with excellent Contrivance.——— *I will remove the Iniquity of that Land in one Day.* Or, and I have removed, I have pardoned the Iniquity of this Land at once. Thus the Emblem or Type, which I ſhall once more ſet before you in plainer Words: Hear now, O *Joſhua*, thou and thy Fellows; for behold there is one Stone, and on that Stone ſeven Eyes moſt curiouſly engraven, and this laid in thy Sight, and in the Sight of thy Fellows. From hence we learn, that the Temple founded on ſuch a Corner-Stone, built by the Wiſdom of the chief Builder, guarded and watched over by an all-ſeeing Providence; is the Bleſſing and Honour of that People, whoſe Sins are all forgiven. The farther ſpiritual Meaning diſcovers the *Meſſiah* the chief Corner-Stone, the Goſpel-Church founded thereon, guided by the perfect Wiſdom, preſerved by never-erring Providence, and bleſſed with the Pardon of all her Sins, taken away in one Day, by the meritorious Death of her Redeemer.

Chap. IV.

The Golden Candleſtick and two Olive-Trees, ſhew the Succeſs of Zerubbabel *in building the Temple; he prays for a farther Explanation of this Viſion.*

Q. PRAY *what do you remark concerning the Viſions in this Chapter?*

A. It is likely there was ſome Space of Time between theſe Viſions, during which the Prophet, in his Extaſy, was as it were aſleep; that is to ſay, without any Object of prophetick Revelation, without any Action or Motion of the Spirit towards it.

The golden Candleſtick and Olive-Trees are an Emblem of the Church, both what it is made of, *viz.* pure Gold, and what made for, to be a Light in the World, to ſhine as Lamps that continually burn, maintained Oil, diſtilled from the Olive-Trees, not preſſed out by Man, but continually, freely, and abundantly dropping or flowing from theſe Olive-Trees. The Angel applies this to the Holy Ghoſt, by whoſe powerful Operation *Zerubbabel* ſhould perfect the Building of the Temple. *Zechariah* prays for a farther Explanation of this Viſion, and obtains the ſame.

Q. *Pray explain the ſixth Verſe?*

A. *Then he anſwered and ſpake unto me, ſaying, This is the Word of the Lord unto* Zerubbabel, *ſaying,*

ing, Not by Might, nor by Power, but by my Spirit, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts. So ſoon as *Zechariah*, in the preceding Verſe, had owned his Ignorance; the Angel replied, This Word of the Lord is to *Zerubbabel*, it is particularly deſigned to him, and in an Emblem prefigures what a Church, how precious as Gold, how full of Light, how framed, how maintained it ſhould be by God himſelf. This Hieroglyphick is a Repreſentation of what the Church ſhould be.——*Zerubbabel.* The Governor on whom lay moſt of the Care and Trouble of building the Temple; yet let him not be diſcouraged, for the finiſhing this Work depends on God. ——*Not by Might.* Or by an Army, as the *Hebrew* Words bear. You may think you ſhall need an Army to defend you in carrying on this Building, which the ill Will of your Neighbours would hinder; but I tell you there is no Need of an Army. ——*Nor by Power.* Courage and Valour, which make Armies formidable; neither of theſe have you any Need of. Or Might or Power may here be of the ſame Import, and added here only for Elegance and Aſſurance of the Thing.——*But by my Spirit.* Which garniſhed the Heavens, and can beautify the Church, which moved upon the Darkneſs in the Creation, and brought forth a beautiful and mighty Structure, and can do as much now. By Spirit we may underſtand either the third Perſon of the Trinity, engaged in building the Church with the Father and the Son; or by the Spirit you may underſtand the Power of God. Either is Encouragement enough, and ſecures the future Effect, and promiſes a future State of the Church, pure and precious as Gold, full of Knowledge in the Doctrines of God, as this Candleſtick with ſeven Lamps, full of Holineſs from abundant Meaſures of Grace, perſevering in it by continued Supplies from the Spirit of Grace in Ordinances, *&c.*

Q. *What do you underſtand by* the two anointed ones, *Verſe* 14?

A. Not *Enoch* and *Elias*, nor the two Witneſſes, nor *Peter* and *Paul*, nor the two Churches of *Jew* and *Gentile*; nor principally *Zerubbabel* and *Joſhua*, though perhaps the Expoſition may glance upon them, and the two Orders of Magiſtracy and Miniſtry in them; as theſe are Types of *Chriſt* in his two Offices, King and Prieſt; or *Chriſt* and the Comforter: In this nothing certain can be determined.

CHAP. V.

By the flying Roll the Prophet ſhews the Puniſhment of Thieves and Swearers. By the Woman preſſed in an Ephah, the everlaſting Deſtruction of the Church's Enemies is repreſented.

Q. P*RAY give ſome general Explanation of the Viſion in this Chapter?*

A. Becauſe the *Jews* had provoked God to ſend his Plagues, by contemning his Word, and caſting off all Judgment and Equity, he ſhews that God's Curſes, written in the Roll or Book, had juſtly fell both on them and their Fathers; but now if they would repent, God would ſend the ſame among the *Chaldeans* their former Enemies.

By a Woman ſitting in an Ephah (a Meaſure containing about ten Pottles) are ſignified the Puniſhments which God would bring upon his diſobedient People, and which he would turn from his penitent People upon the Enemies of his Church. Hereby is ſhewn the irrecoverable Eternity of the Puniſhment of the Wicked, oppoſite to the terminate and ſhort Duration of the Puniſhment of the Church, ſignified before by the flying Book or Roll

Q. *Pray interpret the fifth Verſe?*

A. *Then the Angel that talked with me went forth, and ſaid unto me, lift up now thine Eyes, and ſee what is that that goeth forth.*——*Went forth.* Went on, proceeded; or as we read it, went forth from ſome retired Place, though he does not tell us what it was, or where he was with the Prophet when the laſt Viſion appeared.——*Lift up thine Eyes.* Now the Prophet is come forth with the Angel, he is commanded to look up and obſerve what he ſees going forth from *Jeruſalem*, or the Temple.

Q. *The ſixth Verſe likewiſe wants ſome Explanation?*

A. *And I ſaid, What is it? And he ſaid, This is an Ephah that goeth forth. He ſaid, moreover, This is their Reſemblance through all the Earth.*——*And I ſaid.* *Zechariah* knew not what this was he ſaw, ſo far was he from knowing what it meant. ——*And he ſaid, This is an Ephah.* The Angel gratifies his Curioſity, and tells him he ſaw an Ephah; this, ſay ſome, was the greateſt Meaſure among the *Hebrews*; but ſay others, their *Corus* was much greater; however, it was a great Meaſure, and frequently taken for any Meaſure; when ſtrictly taken, it held about three Buſhels. —— ——*That goeth forth.* Out of the Temple of *Jeruſalem.*——*He ſaid moreover.* Having told the Prophet what the Thing was, the Angel adds, ——*This is their Reſemblance through the Earth.* How dark ſoever this may ſeem, yet it is a clear Emblem of this People every-where. Thus there is a limited Time and Meaſure for them, whilſt they are ſinning, and filling up the Ephah with their Sins, they will find that the Ephah of Wrath is filled up alſo to be poured out upon them, or as the *Hebrew*, this their Eye; or as the *French* Verſion, This the Eye they have upon them, *&c.* *i. e.* God's Eye obſerves how they fill their Ephah with Sin, that he may ſuitably puniſh, that his Ephah of Wrath may fill alſo.

CHAP. VI.

The Viſion of four Chariots ſhews that God will execute his Judgments upon his Enemies. By the Crown of Joſhua *is ſhewn the Temple and Kingdom of* Chriſt. *Gracious Promiſes to the Church, on their Obedience.*

Q. E*XPLAIN the ſeveral Viſions here related?*

A. By Chariots here, as by Horſes before, are meant the ſwift Meſſengers of God to declare his Will, and execute his Judgments upon the Enemies of his Church. By the brazen Mountains is meant the eternal Counſel and Providence of God, becauſe he hath from Eternity decreed what ſhall come to paſs, and that which neither *Satan* and all the World can alter or revoke.

In the firſt Chariot were red Horſes, ſignifying the great Cruelty and Perſecutions the Church had endured under divers Enemies. In the ſecond were black Horſes, ſignifying that they had endured great Afflictions under the *Babylonians*. In the third were white Horſes, repreſenting their

State under the *Perſians*, who reſtored them to Liberty. In the fourth were griſled and bay Horſes, typifying that God would ſometimes give his Church Reſt, and pour his Plagues upon their Enemies, as he did in deſtroying *Nineveh* and *Babylon*, and others their Enemies.

By the Charge of making Crowns, is ſignified the royal and prieſtly Office of *Chriſt*, who was to build up the Temple of the Lord. The Accompliſhment of this (ſaith the Prophet) ſhall prove my Words to be God's Word, and that I am ſent of him. The literal Part ſhall come to paſs alſo, in your Days, if you will obey the Voice of the Lord your God, ſpoken by me. The myſtical Part ſhall come to paſs alſo; and if ye will believe and obey, the *Gentiles* ſhall come in and be your Brethren, made up of one Church with you, and help to build the Temple, the ſpiritual Temple. But if ye obey not, ye ſhall be caſt out, and the *Gentiles* be taken in to be God's People, and to build his Temple.

Q. *Pray give the true Senſe of Verſe* 12?

A. *And ſpeak unto him ſaying, Behold the Man whoſe Name is the* BRANCH, *and he ſhall grow up out of his Place, and he ſhall build the Temple of the Lord.* —— *Speak unto him.* Unto *Joſhua*, but in the Hearing of others, and in the Name of the Lord. —— *Behold.* Conſider throughly the Import and Meaning of this unuſual Ceremony. ——*The Man.* Thou, *Joſhua*, art the Type or Figure, but the Man ſignified by thee, is that great Perſon whom God hath promiſed, and you expect, and who ſhall come. —— *The Branch.* who was ſo called long ſince, *Meſſiah Ben David*; this wonderful Perſon is the Man that is crowned as King and Prieſt by Proxy, or in Effigy: Thou, O *Joſhua*, art the Pourtrait, he is the Branch itſelf, Chap. iii. 8. ——*He ſhall grow up.* Tho' you, perhaps, may ſuſpect the Root dry or dead, yet aſſuredly it is not, the Branch will ſpring up, *Meſſiah* King and Prieſt, ſhall be born in due Time. —— *Out of his Place.* Of the ſame Tribe and Family, and in the Place foretold. — *He ſhall build the Temple of the Lord.* He it is, though unſeen, that ſtands by you, that builds the material Temple: Neither *Zerubbabel*, nor *Joſhua*, nor all the *Jews* could do any Thing without *Chriſt*, in the preſent Building, which yet is far inferior to the ſpiritual Temple, which *Chriſt* will build, beautify and preſerve, and dwell in for ever.

Chap. VII.

The Captive Jews *enquire about the Faſt kept by their Forefathers.* Zachariah *reproves it. An Exhortation to ſhew Mercy. Their refuſing to hear God's Word, the Cauſe why God will not hear their Prayer, but ſcatters them.*

Q. WHAT *Point does the Prophet here diſcourſe of?*

A. The reſt of the People who remained yet in *Chaldea* ſent to the Church at *Jeruſalem*, for the Reſolution of thoſe Queſtions, becauſe theſe Faſts were conſented to by the Agreement of the whole Church, the one in the Month the Temple was deſtroyed, and the other when *Gedaliah* was ſlain.

The Prophet *Zechariah* ſays, (as from God) Did ye not eat and drink for your own Conveniency and Neceſſity? And ſo likewiſe ye did abſtain according to your own Fancies, and not after the Preſcription of my Law. He ſhews that they did not faſt with a ſincere Heart, but for Hypocriſy; and that it was not done of pure Religion, becauſe it lacked thoſe Offices of Charity, which ſhould have declared that they were godly. They would not carry the Lord's Burden, which was ſweet and eaſy, but would bear their own, which was heavy and grievous to the Fleſh, thinking to merit thereby; which Similitude is taken of Oxen which ſhrink at the Yoke.

Q. *In what Senſe do you take what is ſaid in the 5th Verſe?*

A. *Speak unto all the People of the Land, and to the Prieſts, ſaying, when ye faſted and mourned in the fifth and ſeventh Months, even thoſe ſeventy Years, did ye at all faſt unto me?* ——*Speak unto all the People.* Either by the Meſſengers who came in their Name, or to all the *Jews* that were at *Jeruſalem.*——*Of the Land.* By which it ſeems to be not the Loiterers in *Babylon*, but the Returned in *Judea.*——*And to the Prieſts.* Some of theſe perhaps doubted, and others might overvalue, and dote on theſe voluntary Services, and needed, as well as deſerved a Reproof. —— *When ye faſted and mourned.* Who preſcribed this your Faſt? And, ſince you needs would, (as you were at your own Liberty to faſt and mourn) who was the better for it? Or did you do it to pleaſe me? —— *In the fifth Month.* In ſad Remembrance of the burning of the Temple on the 10th Day of that Month.——*Or ſeventh.* For the Murder of *Gedaliah*, ſlain by *Iſhmael*, *Jer.* xli. 2. ——*Even thoſe ſeventy Years.* So many they were ſince *Gedaliah*'s Death to this Time of Enquiry, which is made now as many Years after the Return, as *Gedaliah* was ſlain after the Beginning of the Captivity. —— *Did ye at all faſt unto me?* Whatever was in it, you had not my Command, nor did deſign to honour me; as you ordered it, ſo you pleaſed yourſelves in it, not me: You wept more for the Inconveniencies of the Thing, than for the Sinfulneſs of it. Had you faſted to me, you would have abſtained more from Sin, which I forbad, than from Meats which I did not prohibit.——*Even to me.* As if God had ſaid, I put it once more to you, Did you indeed faſt to me?

Chap. VIII.

The Prophet comforts the Jews *with the Reſtauration of* Jeruſalem. *They are actuated and encouraged to build the Temple by God's Favour to them. He exhorts them to Godlineſs. Their Faſting ſhall be turned into Joy. Gracious Promiſes of Enlargement made unto them.*

Q. HOW *does* Zechariah *inſtruct the People in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet aſſures the *Jews*, who were active in the Buildings of the Temple, that God would bleſs them abundantly, and reſtore his decayed Church by *Chriſt*. After this he exhorts them to Godlineſs, with a Promiſe, that inſtead of their former Miſeries, they ſhould have Cauſe to rejoice; and laſtly, he ſpeaks of the Calling of the *Gentiles*.

Q. *Pray help me to underſtand the 9th Verſe?*

A. Let us read it; *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, Let your Hands be ſtrong, ye that hear in theſe Days,* *theſe Words by the Mouth of the Prophets, which were in the Day of the Foundations of the Houſe of the Lord of Hoſts was laid, that the Temple might be built.*———*Let your Hands be ſtrong.* Be of good Courage, and hearten on each other to the Expectation of God's Promiſe, and the doing your Duty.—*Ye.* You returned Captives.—*That hear.* This is an Argument to revive their Courage; they hear God, by his Word, very fairly propoſing great Things.———*In theſe Days.* In theſe Days of *Darius Hyſtaſpes*, ſome twelve or fifteen, or perhaps eighteen Years ſince the Time I pointed at. In theſe Days of Hope from *Darius* favourably helping, but moſt from God aſſiſting and bleſſing.———*Theſe Words.* Promiſes, Exhortations and Counſels.———*By the Mouth of the Prophets. Haggai* and *Zechariah.*—*Which were in the Day that the Foundation of the Houſe of the Lord of Hoſts was laid.* In the ſecond Year of *Cyrus*, which if reckoned from his ſucceeding his Father *Cambyſes* in the *Perſian* Throne, and his Father-in-Law *Cyaxares* in the Throne of *Media*, which happened about *A. M.* 3767, to the ſecond of *Darius Hyſtaſpes*, *A. M.* 3485, that is eighteen Years paſt, will make it probable that *Haggai* and *Zechariah* are intended here: But to lay it ſo, that this re-edifying of the Temple be in the ſecond of *Darius Nothus*, is to make theſe two Prophets either to be ſilent 112 Years together, or to preach with little Succeſs, and leſs Complaint; for I don't remember that either of them charges this People with this particular Fault.———*That the Temple might be built.* According to God's Command and your Duty.

CHAP. IX.

God deſtroys his Enemies, but defends his Church. Exhorts Zion *to rejoice at the Coming, and her Deliverance by* Chriſt; *promiſes Victory over her Enemies, and all Manner of Bleſſings.*

Q. WHAT *are the Points of Inſtruction purſued in this Chapter?*

A. The Deſtruction of the Enemies of God's People is threatened; and here is a Prophecy of the Deliverance and Protection of his Church by *Chriſt* her everlaſting King, whoſe Entrance into *Jeruſalem* is plainly deſcribed. See *Luke* xix. 35. Here is an Exhortation to the reſt of the *Jews* remaining yet in *Babylon*, to depart thence, and to return to *Jeruſalem*; God promiſing them Victory againſt their Enemies, and all Manner of Bleſſings.

Q. *I deſire an Explanation of Verſe* 5?

A. Aſhkelon *ſhall ſee it and fear*; Gaza *alſo ſhall ſee it, and be very ſorrowful, and* Ekron, *for her Expectation ſhall be aſhamed, and the King ſhall periſh from* Gaza, *and* Aſhkelon *ſhall not be inhabited.*—*Aſhkelon.* Threatened by *Zephaniah*, Chap. ii. Ver. 4. which Threat was executed by the *Babylonians* ſoon after the Captivity of the *Jews*, when *Nebuchadnezzar* waſted the Sea-Coaſt, and beſieged and took *Tyrus*; but this Threat of *Zechariah* was fully executed by *Alexander the Great*, as is moſt likely.———*Shall ſee it.* As Cities ſee the Fall of neighbouring Cities, they ſhall have the News of it, and know it; perhaps ſome *Aſhkelonites* may be there, and ſee the Siege and tell it.———*And fear.* As Men that have no Power to defend themſelves, nor Means left of flying from the *Enemy.*———Gaza *ſhall alſo ſee it, and be very ſorrowful.* Another ſtrong Town, a Principality of the *Philiſtines*, Enemies to *Iſrael*, which in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Time ſuffered with *Tyrus*, *Zeph.* ii. 4. and ſhall again ſo ſuffer in *Alexander*'s Time, as here foretold: At the News of *Tyrus*'s Fall ſhall take a Fright, and fall into the Sorrows of a travailling Woman, as the Word imports.—*And* Ekron, *for her Expectation.* A City famous for Idolatry, ſhall as much fear and grieve as *Aſhkelon* or *Gaza*. Her Hope that *Tyrus* would break *Alexander*'s Power, or hold out againſt it, and be a Refuge to her Citizens, who could not hope to withſtand the Conqueror.———*Shall be aſhamed.* Turned into Shame and Confuſion.———*And the King ſhall periſh from* Gaza, *and* Aſhkelon *ſhall not be inhabited.* The Government be overthrown, and perhaps this literally was fulfilled when *Alexander the Great* took *Gaza*, after two Months Siege, and received two ſlight Wounds; and finding *Betis* the King, or Vice-Roy, advanced to the Dignity by *Darius*, thought fit to put him to a cruel Death, as *Curtius* l. 4. For ſome Years it ſhall be as waſte, or as it was laid by the *Babylonians*, according to *Zeph.* ii. 4.

Q. *There are ſome Expreſſions in the* 14*th Verſe too difficult for me to underſtand; which pray explain?*

A. *And the Lord ſhall be ſeen over them, and his Arrow ſhall go forth as the Lightning; and the Lord God ſhall blow the Trumpet; and ſhall go with Whirlwinds of the South.*———*And the Lord ſhall be ſeen over them.* The Almighty God, the God of *Iſrael*, Lord of Hoſts, ſhall manifeſtly appear for them by his Works of Power againſt their Enemies.———*And his Arrows ſhall go forth as the Lightning.* Alluding to Warriours that then uſed the Bow; God's Judgments which ſlew his Church's Enemies, were ſwift, irreſiſtable, and ſudden in ſtriking and killing them: Which breaks forth with Violence, and runs from Eaſt to Weſt in a Moment, which is very terrible ſome Times.———*And the Lord ſhall blow the Trumpet.* Their God, the God of *Iſrael*, gives the Alarm to them to provide for War, ſounds the Call to bring them together, and the March alſo for their moving, and ſounds the Charge too; God will infuſe new Courage, and give Directions.———*And ſhall go with Whirlwinds of the South.* In the Head of them as Captain-General, with Fury and Strength like that of Whirlwinds: In the South the mightieſt Whirlwinds are raiſed, or Whirlwinds of *Temen*; ſome think the Prophet alludes to the Tempeſt about *Sinai*, at the Deliverance of the Law, when all *Iſrael* and *Moſes* too quaked for fear, *Deut* v. 23, 24, 25. Ye quaked exceedingly, and deſired to ſee no more ſuch Sights.

CHAP. X.

The Prophet exhorts the Jews *to ſeek God, and not to Idols in their Diſtreſſes, and promiſes ſpiritual Bleſſings and Mercies, which God would give his Church.*

Q. HOW *does* Zechariah *inſtruct the People in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet reproves the *Jews*, becauſe by their own Infidelity they put back God's Graces promiſed, and ſo Famine came by God's Judgments; to avoid this Plague, therefore he adviſes them

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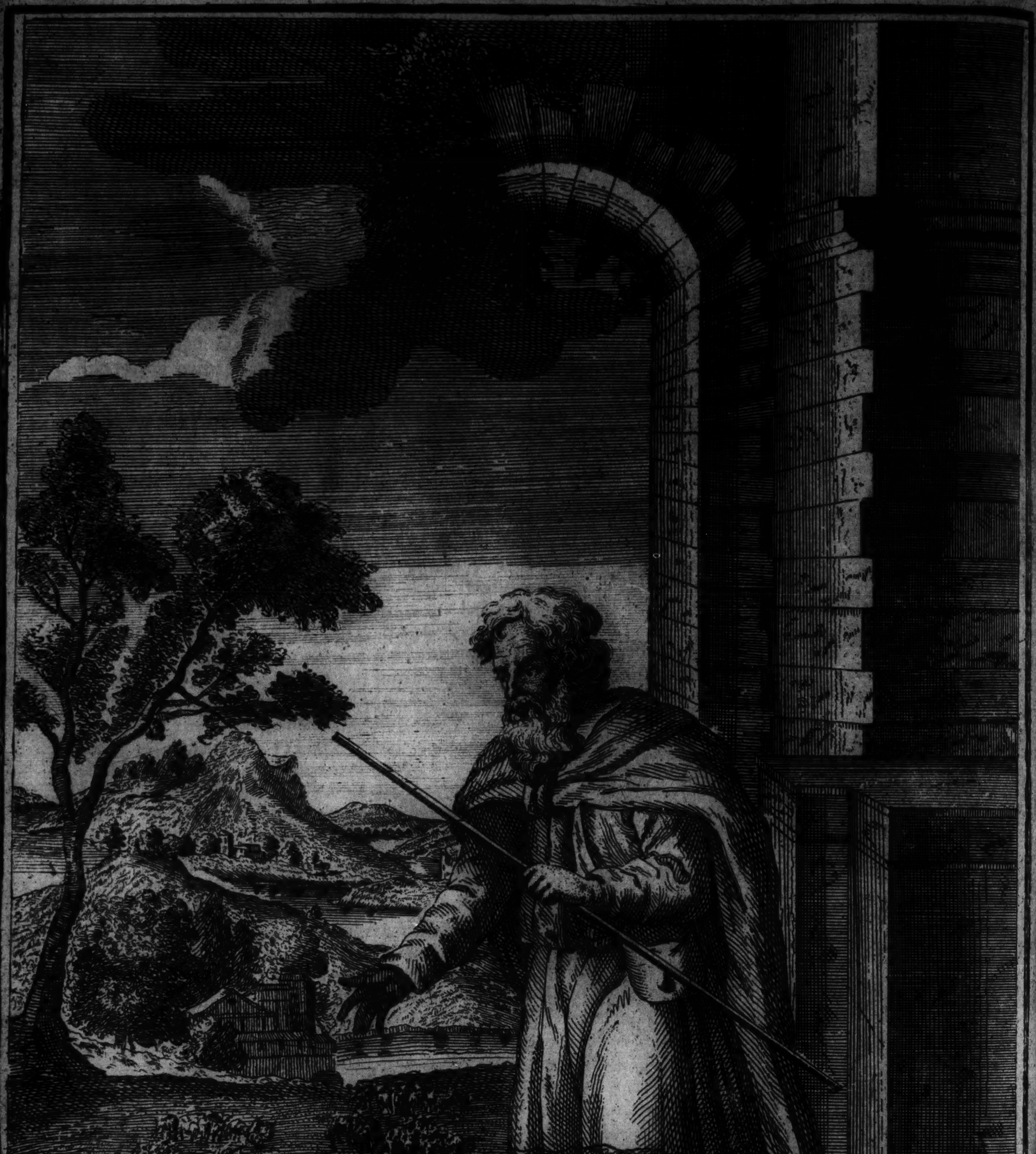
ZECHARIAH CHAP. XI.



Zechariahs Viſion

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them to turn to God, to pray in Faith to him, and he will give Abundance. He calls to remembrance God's Puniſhments in Times paſt, becauſe they truſted not in him, but in their Idols and Sorceries, by which they were ever deceived.

The Prophet ſpeaks alſo of ſpiritual Mercies and Benefits, and the Victory which the Lord will give his Church in the Time of the *Meſſiah.*

Q. *Of what particular Time does the Prophet ſpeak in the 1ſt Verſe?*

A. Let us read it; *Ask ye of the Lord Rain, in the Time of the latter Rain, ſo the Lord ſhall make bright Clouds, and give them Showers of Rain, to every one Graſs in the Field.* —— *Ask.* It was a Time of great Scarcity with the *Jews* while the Temple and City lay waſte, and the Prophets from God aſſure them it is for neglecting to rebuild the Temple, to which Work the Lord does earneſtly call by *Haggai* and *Zechariah,* with Promiſes of great Bleſſings, which forthwith God would give to them, if they ſet to this Work and ſeek the Lord by Prayer; to which Duty he doth direct them in this Chapter, to the Building of the City and Temple they muſt add Prayer, for the Bleſſing is prepared, and ſhall be given when asked.——*Ye.* *Jews* returened from *Babylon,* ſettled in your City, and returnd to the Worſhip of God, and to whom many excellent Promiſes are made, you muſt pray.——*Of the Lord Rain, in the Time of the latter Rain.* Which uſually came about Spring to fill the eared Corn, and to bring forth the Graſs, to make the Trees and Plants, with their Fruit, to be full and large; this latter Rain made Plenty of all Proviſion, and is proverbially uſed to ſignify a great Bleſſing, *Hoſ.* vi. 3.—— *So the Lord ſhall make.* By making the Vapours aſcend from the Earth, he will cover the Heavens with Clouds; ſee how *Job* xxxviii. 28. doth, elegantly deſcribe this Word of God.——*Bright Clouds.* Clouds which bring Rain, and pour it it out abundantly, when they are opened with Thunders and Lightnings, which do, as it were, broach the Clouds, they unſtop their Bottles, and they are bright Clouds through the Lightnings which break from them, *Job* xxviii. 26. and xxxviii. 25, 26.——*And give them Showers of Rain.* The *Jews,* his People, plentiful Showers of Rain that ſhall fatten the Earth, and make it fruitful. —— *To every one Graſs in the Field.* None ſhall miſs it, nor the Effect of it on Corn or Graſs; Corn for Man, and Graſs for Beaſt.

Q. *Pray expound the 12th Verſe?*

A. *And I will ſtrengthen them in the Lord, and they ſhall walk up and down in his Name, ſaith the Lord.* ——*And I will ſtrengthen them in the Lord.* Their God and *Chriſt,* ſay ſome; and it is true enough, whether theſe Words ſo mean or no; God and *Chriſt* are the Strength of the Church, and of all Believers. ——*They ſhall walk up and down.* Shall manage all their Affairs, civil and military, ſecular and eccleſiaſtical. ——*His Name, ſaith the Lord.* By Authority derived from, and by Power received of him, by Wiſdom given from above, to the Glory of our God, and our Redeemer. Thus far the great Things promiſed to the *Jewiſh* Church and were to be fulfilled, in the Time from the rebuilding the Temple and City, to the Coming of *Chriſt,* through 490 Years; in which Time, if ought fell ſhort of Promiſe, it was becauſe the Sins of the People provoked God to alter the Courſe of his Providence toward them.

CHAP. XI.

The Deſtruction of Jeruſalem, *and the* Jewiſh *Nation foretold for their great Unthankfulneſs to, and Contempt of* Chriſt; *God's own are cared for, and others threatened. The Staves of Beauty and of Bands broken. The Curſe of a fooliſh Shepherd.*

Q. W*HAT Subjects are diſcourſed of in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter is comminatory, and foretels the Ruin of *Jeruſalem* and the Temple; the ſecond Temple by the *Romans,* and the Captivity of the *Jews* under them for their rejecting of *Chriſt;* and downwards.

Becauſe the *Jews* thought themſelves ſo ſtrong, by Reaſon of Mount *Lebanon,* that no Enemy could come to hurt them, the Prophet ſhews, that when God ſends the Enemies, it ſhall ſhew itſelf ready to receive them.

Beſides their Ingratitude, God accuſes them of Malice and Wickedneſs, which did not only forget his Benefits, but eſteem them as Things of nought; and he ſignifies, that they ſhould have a certain Kind of Regimen, and outward Shew of Government; but in Effect it ſhould be nothing, for they ſhould be Wolves and devouring Beaſts, inſtead of Shepherds.

Q. *How do you interpret the 4th Verſe?*

A. *Thus ſaith the Lord my God, feed the Flock of the Slaughter.*——*Thus ſaith the Lord my God.* God the Father.——*Feed:* O *Zechariah,* feed, comfort, rule; but rather the Father ſpeaks to *Chriſt* the Son, and appoints him, who is the eternal Shepherd, to feed his Sheep.——*The Flock of the Slaughter.* Appointed to the Slaughter by different Hands, and for different Cauſes. It ſpeaks of the People of the *Jews* who were killed by many Hands, during 450 Years they were a Flock of Slaughter to the *Egyptians, Chaldeans, &c.* afterward to the *Romans,* who ſlew their Citizens, and burnt their City.

Q. *Has not the 12th Verſe a Reference to* Chriſt?

A. Let us ſee how it reads; *And I ſaid unto them, If ye think good, give me my Price; and if not, forbear: So they weighed for my Price thirty Pieces of Silver.* —— *And I ſaid unto them.* Upon parting, *Chriſt* ſeems, after the Manner of Men, to mind them of his Pains and Care for them, and would have them reckon with him.—*If ye think good.* He puts it to them, whether they thought he deſerved ought at their Hands, and what it was.—— *Give me my Price; and if not, forbear.* Though I need not your Money or Pay, I deſerve more than you will give, and therefore do in this as liketh you. ——*So they.* The Rulers of the *Jews,* the High-prieſt, Chief-prieſts and Phariſees.——*Weighed for my Price thirty Pieces of Silver* Which was the Manner of paying Money in thoſe Days; which amounts to thirty ſeven Shilling and ſix Pence, the Value of the Life of a Slave, *Exod.* xxi. 32. This was fulfilled when they paid *Judas Iſcariot* ſo much to betray *Chriſt, Mat.* xxvi. 15. and xxvii. 9.

Q. *The 13th Verſe I apprehend has the ſame Relation to* Chriſt *as the former: It runs thus*; And the Lord ſaid unto me, caſt it unto the Potter; a goodly Price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty Pieces of Silver, and caſt them to the Potter in the Houſe of the Lord.

A. *And the Lord ſaid unto me.* God the Father, with Deteſtation of ſo vile an Affront, and Undervaluing of his Son, ſaid to *Zechariah*, in this Theatre, perſonating *Chriſt* ſometimes. ———*Caſt it unto the Potter.* As being ſo little it would hardly purchaſe any Thing but what was cheapeſt among them, a little earthen Ware.——*A goodly Price that I was prized at among them.* In an Irony God upbraids the Shepherds of his People, who prized the great Shepherd no higher.—*And I took the Pieces of Silver.* I *Zechariah*, who in this Part now emblematically does what *Judas* will with Horror do, when he has ſold innocent Blood, and betrayed it. —*And I caſt them to the Potter, in the Houſe of the Lord.* Or rather caſt them into the Houſe of the Lord for the Potter; all which the *Jewiſh* Rulers act over in their proſecuting *Chriſt* unto Death.

Chap. XII.

Jeruſalem *a Cup of trembling to her People, and a burthenſome Stone to her Adverſaries.* Judah's *Victory and Reſtauration. A Spirit of Grace and Supplication promiſed; views our pierced Redeemer, followed with Mourning. All Families ſhall mourn apart.*

Q. WHAT *is the Import of this Prophecy?*

A. Here is a Prophecy that the Lord will deſtroy the Enemies of the *Chriſtian* Church, but defend and protect his own People, promiſing withal, that he would endue the elect *Jews* with Faith and Repentance.

It would be tedious to repeat the Names of every Family and their Wives, therefore a great comprehenſive Account may ſerve; ſome of every Family and their Wives, therefore a general comprehenſive Account may ſerve; ſome of every Family of the whole Remnant of *Iſrael* mourn, believe, look to, and obey *Chriſt* the *Meſſiah*. So the Mourning for *Chriſt* bears ſome Proportion to their violent Dealing againſt *Chriſt*, and they by Faith live by the Blood they did ſpill, and get to Glory by him whom they loaded with Reproaches; what will not Grace do, when it converts, accepts, comforts, and glorifies ſuch Offenders?

Q, *Pray interpret the 2d. Verſe?*

A. *Behold I will make* Jeruſalem *a Cup of trembling unto all the People round about, when they ſhall be in the Siege both againſt* Judah *and againſt* Jeruſalem. ———*Behold I will make* Jeruſalem. That weak, unwalled, poor, and thinly inhabited City, Type of the Church, and much more the Church which is Antitype to *Jeruſalem*. *A Cup of Trembling.* They ſhall drink their own Bane, whoſe Swords be drinking the Blood of the Inhabitants of this *Jeruſalem*; there is Poiſon mixed in the Cup of the Wrath of God, which he will put into the Hands of ſuch as are wicked ones, and they muſt drink it off.———*Unto all the People round about.* To the Heathen round about, to all of them, all have more or leſs, at one Time or other, moleſted *Jeruſalem*, and God remembers it, and hath provided for them a Cup of Aſtoniſhment, againſt the Day in which they beſiege her, thinking then to finiſh all their Attempts againſt *Jeruſalem.* ———*When they ſhall be in the Siege.* Strange Siege laid againſt a whole Country, and mighty Powers will be little enough to do this, it requires a moſt extraordinary Proviſion; now when all this is in Readineſs, and no viſible Means of Eſcape, then will God make them drink the Wine of Aſtoniſhment, and caſt them into a dead Sleep. —— *Both againſt* Judah. The Land of *Judah.*———*And againſt* Jeruſalem. Typically and myſtically the Church of *Chriſt*.

Chap. XIII.

The Fountain opened to cleanſe Jeruſalem *from Idolatry and falſe Prophecy. Of the Suffering and Death of* Chriſt; *of the Deſtruction of the Wicked, and Salvation of the Elect, after their Trial.*

Q. WHAT *do we learn from the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. A Prophecy is here made of Forgiveneſs and waſhing away of Sins by *Chriſt*, *viz.* When the Lamb of God ſhall be offered up a Sacrifice for Mankind, and the Goſpel ſhall be preached, in which the glad Tidings of our Redemption are publiſhed.

The Extirpation of idolatrous Worſhip and falſe Doctrine is foretold. *Satan* fell from Heaven like Lightning, as *Chriſt* tells us, when the Goſpel was preached by thoſe he ſent; and it is well known the Birth of *Chriſt* ſilenced the *Devil*, that he could no more give Anſwers to thoſe who enquired at his Oracles: The Light of the Goſpel is ſuch, that none of the Idols can bear it.

The Prophet warns the *Jews*, that before this great Comfort ſhould come under *Chriſt*, there ſhould be an horrible Diſſipation among the People; for their Governors and Paſtors ſhould be deſtroyed, and the People ſhould be as ſcattered Sheep. This the Evangeliſt applies to *Chriſt*, becauſe he was the Head of all Paſtors. *Mat.* xxvi. 31. *Mat* xxiv. 31. *Mark* xxiv. 27.

Q. *Some Expreſſions in Verſe 4. need Explanation?*

A. *And it came to paſs in that Day, that the Prophets ſhall be aſhamed every one of his Viſion, when he hath propheſied; neither ſhall they wear a rough Garment to deceive.*——*And it ſhall come to paſs in that Day.* By this Means it will come to paſs, ſuch ſharp Reproofs, ſuch impartial Threats, ſuch convincing Arguments will have a good Effect.———*That the Prophets ſhould be aſhamed, every one of his Viſion, when he had propheſied.* Theſe Prophets will ſee their Error and be aſhamed, and give over what they bluſh at, and is their Shame. —— *Neither ſhall they wear a rough Garment.* Such Garments the true Prophets were wont to wear, and theſe Cheats had uſed for a Cover to their jugling Hypocriſy; but when thoroughly convinced, none ſhall need pull, they will themſelves caſt off thoſe Garments. ——*To deceive.* By firſt ſeeming to be more holy and ſtrict than they are, and next on ſuch ill-grounded Opinions, Religion, and Practice. It is an excellent Work of the Grace of God to recover Deceivers, and to make them turn off the Deceiver, and deal plainly and faithfully with others and themſelves.

Q. *The Denunciation in the ſeventh Verſe, ſeems to be aimed againſt* Chriſt; *pray explain in what Manner?*

A. *Awake, O Sword, againſt my Shepherd, and againſt the Man that is my Fellow, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts: Smite the Shepherd, and the Sheep ſhall be ſcattered: And I will turn mine Hand upon the little Ones.* Various Ways Interpreters take to ſhew what they think to be the Connexion of the Words; it is eaſier to ſay what are the Contents and Deſign of them. It is poſſible they are ſubjoined to the former to vindicate *Chriſt* from the Suſpicion of an Impoſtor, though he was wounded, for this his Father did foretel by *Zechariah*, 490 Years, more or leſs, before Hand; ſo that theſe Wounds are not the Works of an Impoſtor, but Teſtimonies of his Truth, and that he really is the *Meſſiah.*—— *Awake.* 'Tis God's Commiſſion, or rather Prediction, the Imperative put for the Future. ——— *O Sword.* Afflictions, Perſecutions, and the Croſs.—— *Againſt my Shepherd.* Who is my faithful Shepherd, and will lay down his Life for my Sheep. ——— *And againſt the Man that is my Fellow.* Who became Man, that he might be my Servant and die. *My Fellow*, or my Equal, who was ever with me, and my Delight, *Prov.* viii. 30. *Man my Fellow*, ſpeaks *Chriſt* Man with us, and God with his Father, God-Man in one Perſon. —— *Smite the Shepherd.* This great and good Shepherd ſhall be ſmitten; that is, he ſhall die for my Sheep, and before he dies ſhall ſuffer much for them.——— *And the Sheep ſhall be ſcattered.* As affrighted, deſtitute of one to look after them, and which muſt be Partakers with their Shepherds in Sufferings.——— *And I will turn my Hand upon the little Ones.* God will, ſay ſome, turn his Hand againſt the little Ones, and ſmite them too. But others ſay, this turning of the Hand is in Favour, and for Protection, 'tis a Hand turned over them, as if he would keep the Hand off them, while others, fitter to bear it, ſuffer. By *little Ones*, underſtand new, and therefore weak Converts and Diſciples.

CHAP. XIV.

The Calamities of Jeruſalem, *yet their Enemies ſhall be deſtroyed. The Coming of* Chriſt, *and the Graces of his Kingdom promiſed. The Plagues and Puniſhments of* Jeruſalem's *Enemies. A Remnant turn to the Lord. Their univerſal Holineſs.*

Q. IN *what Manner does the Prophet inſtruct the People in this Chapter?*

A. The Prophet arms the Godly againſt the great Temptations that ſhould come, before they enjoyed this proſperous Eſtate promiſed under *Chriſt*; that when theſe Dangers ſhould come, they might know they were warned of them before.

Mention is here made alſo of the rare Gifts which the Lord would pour forth upon his Church, of their bleſſed and glorious Eſtate, and of the Puniſhment and Deſtruction of their Enemies. Here alſo is foretold the Converſion of ſome of them, with the holy Zeal of the Church.

Holineſs unto the Lord, was the Inſcription on the rich Mitre of the *Jewiſh* High-Prieſt, denoting the great Holineſs of his Office, how he was dedicated to God, and that he ought to keep himſelf holy in all Things, eſpecially in Things of divine Worſhip. Now in thoſe Days of the Goſpel, when *Gentiles* are converted to *Chriſt*, made Prieſts unto God, are made holy Nations, a Royal Prieſthood, the Grace of God ſhall ſo abound and prevail, that common ordinary Things, in the Hands of Chriſtians, much more their Perſons, ſhall bear the dedicating Inſcription of Holineſs to the Lord, and by their Study of Holineſs, they ſhall make good their Motto.

Q. *I deſire you would expound the eighth Verſe?*

A. *And it ſhall be in that Day, that living Waters ſhall go out from* Jeruſalem; *half of them toward the former Sea, and half of them toward the hinder Sea: In Summer and in Winter ſhall it be.*——— *And it ſhall be in that Day.* When the Goſpel ſhall be preached, and the Days of dark Ceremonies among the *Jews*, and darker Ignorance and Idolatry among the Heathens ſhall end. ——— *That living Waters.* Not only ſuch as Springs and Fountains afford, living Waters, in Oppoſition to ſtanding, muddy and dead Waters; but ſuch as *Ezek.* xlvii. 1, 6, 7. give Life; the quickening, ſaving Truths of the Goſpel, with all its Ordinances in Purity.——— *Shall go out.* Spread themſelves, or flow down as Currents from good Springs.——— *From* Jeruſalem. The Church of *Chriſt*, the true *Jeruſalem.*—— *Half of them towards the former Sea.* Or *Eaſtern* Sea, ſo far Eaſtward, as the Sea will give leave.——— *And half of them toward the hinder Sea.* Or *Weſtern* Sea. Synechdochically it is both *Eaſt*, *Weſt*, *North* and *South*; ſo from *Jeruſalem, i. e.* the Church, the Doctrine of the Goſpel is preached abroad, and runs down as doth living Water. ——— *In Summer and in Winter ſhall it be.* Perpetually, without Intermiſſion or Interruption, theſe Waters ſhould never dry away, nor ever loſe their healing Virtue.

Q. *In what Senſe do you underſtand the ninth Verſe?*

A. *And the Lord ſhall be King over all the Earth: In that Day ſhall there be one Lord, and his Name one.* ——— *And the Lord.* God; Father, Son, and Spirit. —— *Shall be King.* Acknowledged to be ſo; Men ſhall confeſs, that as he only is, ſo he ought to be owned only true God and King of his Church. ——— *Over all the Earth.* Over the Heathen, the *Gentiles* or *Roman* Empire, as well as once over the *Jewiſh* State.——*Shall there be one Lord and his Name one.* Of depoſing Idols, and advancing the true God; all his Churches ſhall caſt off Idolatry, and agree in worſhipping one God, in one Way of ſpiritual Worſhip and hearty Obedience.

Q. *Pray explain the ſeventeenth Verſe?*

A. *And it ſhall be, that whoſo will not come up of all the Families of the Earth unto* Jeruſalem, *to worſhip the King, the Lord of Hoſts, even upon them ſhall be no Rain.*——— *And it ſhall be that whoſo will not come up.* If there be any more remiſs than they ought herein, and neglect to worſhip the Lord.——— *Of all the Families of the Earth unto* Jeruſalem, *to worſhip the King the Lord of Hoſts, even upon them ſhall be no Rain.* They ſhall be puniſhed with want of Rain, and with want of the Bleſſings which plentiful and ſeaſonable Rain produceth, their Land ſhall be barren.

Q. *Give the Senſe of the nineteenth Verſe?*

A. *This ſhall be the Puniſhment of* Egypt, *and the Puniſhment of all Nations that come not up to keep the Feaſts of Tabernacles.*———*This ſhall be* the *Puniſhment of* Egypt. And what he ſaith of *Egypt*, he ſaith of all Contemners of his Law and Worſhip; their Sin is the ſame, their Puniſhment ſhall be the ſame; for with God is no reſpect of Perſons.

Q. *Is there any Thing particularly obſervable in the Prophet* Zechariah's *Miſſion?*

A. *Zechariah* is the ſecond Prophet who came from God to the returned Captives; and his Errand to them was both to ſecond *Haggai*'s Exhortations, and to reveal more fully, than he doth, all the future Revolutions and Events, to the final Deſolation of *Jeruſalem*, and the ſecond Temple by the *Romans*; and the Rejection of the *Jews* for their Sins, notwithſtanding all the Mercies of God, and for their rejecting and murdering the *Meſſiah*; who, being rejected by the *Jews*, taketh in the *Gentiles*, and eſtabliſheth his Church amongſt them: This is revealed unto *Zechariah*, and communicated to the *Jews* by him; with a Declaration of the future Ruin of the *Perſian* Kingdom by the *Grecians*, and alſo of the Wars of the *Seleucidæ* and *Lagidæ*, and their Overthrow by the *Romans*. During the Series of theſe Times the *Jews* were to grow Numerous, Wealthy and Powerful; and ſo long as they kept their Covenant with God, were to do wonderful Things, and be eminently owned of God, and be either wonderfully ſecured amidſt theſe Troubles, or more wonderfully victorious over thoſe that troubled them.

Q. *What is there remarkable in his Prophecies, and the Accompliſhment of them?*

A. On the twenty-fourth Day of the Eleventh Month (that is about the Beginning of our *February*) the Prophet *Zechariah* had in a Viſion that Revelation made unto him, which is contained in the Book of his Prophecies from the ſeventh Verſe of the firſt Chapter to the ninth Verſe of the ſixth Chapter. The Subſtance of which is, to expreſs the Mercy that God would ſhew unto his People, in the Reſtoration and Redemption of *Zion*, and the Vengeance which he would execute upon thoſe that had oppreſſed them.

And, indeed, what *Zechariah* foretold, or promiſed to them, was in its Time made good amongſt them; his Predictions were punctually fulfilled; if the Promiſes were not, it was becauſe the *Jews*, by their Sins, cut themſelves off from the Promiſes, which may be obſerved in thoſe Intervals of Times between *Zechariah*'s Prophecying, and the Coming of the *Meſſiah*. Now the firſt Interval was above two hundred Years to the Death of *Alexander the Great*, during which Time the *Jews* enjoyed Peace in common with the Subjects of the *Perſian* Empire, and the particular Favour of *Alexander* the Conqueror during his Life. Theſe Years were Years of Growth to the *Jews*. The next Interval through the Wars of *Alexander*'s divided Captains, and between the *Seleucidæ* and the *Lagidæ*, was an Interval of ſome great Troubles, and yet of greater Preſervation to the *Jews*. The next Interval is that of the *Maccabees*, during which thoſe Victories were gotten, which do almoſt exceed our Belief; but whilſt Times were thus changed, the *Jews* continued much the ſame, unthankful to God, cold in Religion, and added to their Sins daily; till at laſt God delivered them into the Hands of the *Romans*, whoſe General, *Pompey the Great*, depoſed *Hyrcanus* from the Throne, and reſtored the High-Prieſthood to him; from henceforth the *Jews* Sins and Miſeries grew together, till the Threatning, *Zech.* xiv. 2. was accompliſhed, the City of *Jeruſalem* taken, the Houſes rifled, *&c.* Thus by a various Intermixture of Providences, God try'd the *Jews* whether they would, as became his People, repent of their former Sins, amend their future Doings, believe his Promiſes, and obey his Precepts, that he might bleſs them; that ſo all the Good (foretold by this Prophet) might have crowned them. But if they failed (as they did) in thoſe Points of Duty, then all the Evil threatned ſhould (as it did) overtake them, and as *Zechariah* foretold, continue on them as it doth to this Day. This Prophecy then contains the Revolutions of the *Jews*, and the Empires of *Perſia* and *Greece*, and the *Romans*, in whoſe Times the *Jews*, by killing the Lord of Life, filled up their Meaſure; and by whoſe Hands God puniſhed them, by deſtroying their Polity, razing their City, burning their Temple, and captivating the People, which laſteth to this Day.

Q. *Can you give any Account of this Prophet's Death, and the Time of his Prophecying?*

A. The *Jews* have a Tradition, that in the laſt Year of *Darius* died the Prophets *Haggai*, *Zechariah* and *Malachi*, and that thereon ceaſed the Spirit of Prophecy from among the Children of *Iſrael*, and that this was the Obligation or Sealing up of Viſion and Prophecy ſpoken by the Prophet *Daniel*. And from the ſame Tradition they tell us, that the Kingdom of the *Perſians* ceaſed alſo the ſame Year. For they will have it, that this was the *Darius* whom *Alexander* conquered, and that the whole Continuance of the *Perſian* Empire was only fifty-two Years, which they reckoned thus: *Darius the Median* reigned one Year, *Cyrus* three Years, *Cambyſes* (who they ſay was the *Ahaſuerus* who married *Eſther*) ſixteen Years, and *Darius* whom they would have to be the Son of *Eſther*, thirty-two Years. And this laſt *Darius*, according to them, was the *Artaxerxes* who ſent *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* to *Jeruſalem*, to reſtore the State of the *Jews*. For they tell us, that *Artaxerxes*, among the *Perſians*, was the common Name of their Kings, as that of *Pharaoh* was among the *Egyptians*. This ſhews how ill they have been acquainted with the Affairs of the *Perſian* Empire. And their Countryman *Joſephus*, in the Account which he gives of thoſe Times, ſeems to have been but very little better informed concerning them.

This *Zechariah* was the Son of *Barachiah*, of the Family of *Iddo*: Who beginning to propheſy in the eighth Month of the ſecond Year of King *Darius*, firſt puts them in mind of their Father's Diſobedience, who, by refuſing to hearken unto the Lord, by his Prophets, had highly provoked him to Diſpleaſure. Then warning them not to be like their Fathers therein; he exhorted them to turn unto the Lord; aſſuring them that if they did ſo, he would turn unto them.

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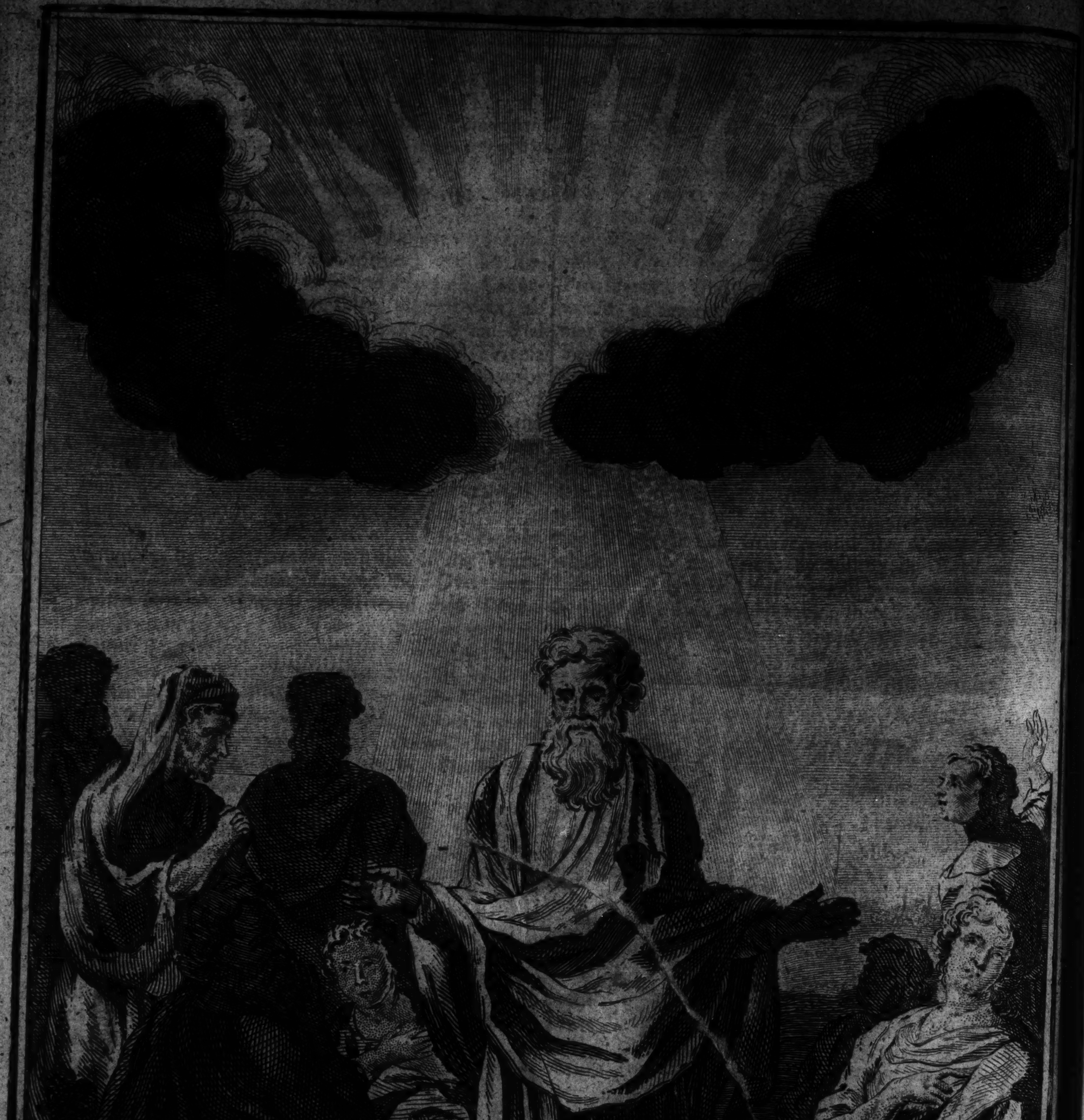
MALACHI CHAP. I



J. Smith Sculp.

The Prophecy of Malachi.

THE BOOK
OF THE PROPHET
MALACHI.

This Prophet was one of the three whom God raiſed up for the Comfort of his Church after the Captivity, and after him there was no more until John Baptiſt *was ſent; which was either a Token of God's Wrath or an Admonition that they ſhould with more fervent Deſires look for the Coming of the* Meſſiah. *He confirmeth the ſame Doctrine, that the two former do; but chiefly he reproveth the Prieſts for their Covetouſneſs, and for that they ſerved God after their own Fancies, and not according to the Preſcript of his Word. He alſo noted certain peculiar Sins, which were then among them, as marrying of idolatrous and many Wives, Murmurings againſt God, Impatiency, and ſuch like. Notwithſtanding, for the Comfort of the Godly, he declareth that God would not forget his Promiſe made unto their Fathers, but would ſend* Chriſt *his Meſſenger, in whom the Covenant ſhould be accompliſhed, whoſe Coming ſhould be terrible to the Wicked, and bring all Conſolation and Joy unto the Godly.*

CHAP. I.

God putting the Iſraelites *in Mind of his Love, complains of their Unthankfulneſs. Of the Irreligion of Prieſts and People; he exhorts them to the Repentance of their Profaneneſs and Wearineſs in his Service. The Corrupters of God's Worſhip accurſed.*

Q. WHAT *does this Chapter afford worthy Obſervation?*

A. The Lord puts the *Iſraelites* in mind of his Love to them, which he ſhewed therein, that he loved *Jacob*, and hated *Eſau*. This declares their great Ingratitude, who did not acknowledge this Love; which was ſo evident, that he choſe *Abraham* from out of all the World, and next choſe *Jacob*, the younger Brother, of whom they came.

The Prophet ſets forth the Irreligion of both Prieſts and People, earneſtly exhorting them to Repentance, and to leave off Profaneneſs and Tardineſs in the Worſhip of God, ſuch as the Faithful among all Nations in the *New Teſtament* ſhould practiſe. Heathens reverence this Name, and will do ſo when converted, and no *Jews* ought to undervalue it.

Q. *How do you apprehend the Force of the Argument in Verſe 2?*

A. *I have loved you, ſaith the Lord: Yet ye ſay, Wherein haſt thou loved us? Was not* Eſau Jacob's *Brother? ſaith the Lord: Yet I loved* Jacob. God here aſſerts his antient Love, which in many Generations paſt he had ſhown to *Iſrael*; I have, ſaith the Lord, Time out of Mind, yea, from before the Birth of your Father *Jacob*, and in Truth before *Abraham* was, deſigned more Kindneſs to you than to others, and from the Time of *Jacob* I have undeniably ſhown it. And this deſerved what I have not found at your Hands, a Love ſomewhat correſpondent to mine; but inſtead of ſuch Love, ſome are ready to ſay they ſaw no ſuch Thing, or to diſpute perverſly in what it appeared. — *You.* Both perſonally and relatively conſidered, as you are in yourſelves, or as you were in your Fathers and Progenitors. ——*Saith the Lord.* Their Ingratitude extorts this ſolemn Proteſtation, they ſhould readily have owned, and not put God to avow the Love he had ſhown them. ————*Yet ye ſay.* Or, *and*; you do querulouſly, and with Ignorance enough object to me, and put me on it to vindicate my Love, and expoſe your Ingratitude. ——*Wherein.* Or, *for what?* Is there not ſome Cauſe? Did not *Abraham*'s Love deſerve a Love for us his Poſterity? Moſt perverſe Pride! ————*Haſt thou loved us?* Who have been Captives, and groaned under the Miſeries of it all our Days, till of late; is this Love to us? —— *Was not* Eſau Jacob's *Brother?* Since they are ſuppoſed thus to object by ſuch carping Queſtions, God will give them Anſwer; Was not *Eſau Jacob*'s Brother? Had they not one and the ſame Grandfather? Was not *Abraham* as near to one as the other? Did not one Father beget them, and one Mother bear them? Did they not both lie in the ſame Womb? Was there not as much of *Abraham* and *Iſaac* in *Eſau*, as in *Jacob?* Or what of Nature, Conſanguinity, and outward Privilege was there in one more than in another? What that was, *Eſau* might claim, for he was of the eldeſt. In *Eſau*'s Perſon his Progeny is included, as appears in the next Verſe. *Jacob* was the younger Brother, and your Father, O unthankful *Jews!* ——— *Yet I loved* Jacob. I preferred him in the Birthright, and this of free Love, before any Merit could be dreamt of; I loved his Perſon, and have loved his Poſterity with an unparallel'd Love, and ſhewed it to all.

Chap. II.

God reproves the Prieſts for neglecting and corrupting the Covenant; and the People for prophaning God's Holineſs by their Idolatry, Adultery, and charging him with a Delight in that which is Evil.

Q. W*HAT is the Purport of this Diſcourſe?*

A. The Lord ſpeaks unto the Prieſts chiefly, but under them he includes the People alſo; he threatens them with Puniſhment unleſs they amend their Lives, reproaching them that they were turned aſide from the Piety and Sincerity of their Forefathers.

I am apt to think that the irreligious Sentiments of the Prieſts, their ſuperficial managing of the ſolemn Worſhip of God, their Adulteries, and multiplying of Wives, hitherto unpuniſhed, had brought them either to think there was no ſuch Thing as moral Goodneſs, or Viciouſneſs in the Actions of Men; or that if there were, ſince no Puniſhment was laid on the Vicious, nor any Encouragement or preſent Reward beſtowed on the Virtuous, that God did not, or ever would concern himſelf to judge it; and ſo by an undue Way of arguing, had concluded themſelves into Atheiſm, and the very Height of Wickedneſs. That this is likely enough, the preſent Age confirms, in which, unpuniſhed Enormities are the Arguments of Atheiſts againſt God and his Providence; and unleſs he damn them, they'll not believe the Being of a God: But ſuch muſt remember, they ſhall know and believe it at laſt, though perhaps then too late.

Q. *Shew the Force of the Prophet's Reaſoning in the 10th Verſe?*

A. *Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherouſly every Man againſt his Brother, by profaning the Covenant of his Father?* Have not we *Jews*, *Abraham* or *Jacob* to our Father, with whom God made a Covenant, by which their Poſterity were made a peculiar People, ſeparated from other Nations, and on very weighty Reaſons forbid to join or intermix with ſtrange Nations.—— *Hath not one God created us?* The Prophet ſpeaks of that great and gracious Work of God, creating them to be a choſen People, a Nation formed to ſhew forth his Praiſe, *Deut.* xxxii. 6, 18. ſo we *Chriſtians* are created in *Chriſt Jeſus*, *Eph.* ii. 10. and are in him new Creatures, 2 *Cor.* v. 17. ——— *Why do we.* The Prophet was not guilty of the Fault, yet ſpeaks as one of the Community, partly to take off the Envy of the *Jews*, and to cut off all Occaſion of quarrelling againſt his Word; and partly to inſinuate the Senſe he had of this Thing, and the Affection he had for them, tho' he reproved them.—— *Deal treacherouſly.* Deſpiſe, ſo ſome explain it, break our Faith in the Marriage-Contract engaged, to carry it diſloyally, againſt the Duty we owe to God's Law, which equally binds us, as our Wives, to mutual Love, Honour and Faithfulneſs; and why then do we take Heathen Wives, ('tis bad if a *Jew* unmarried do it, but here the Caſe is worſe) *Jewiſh* Wives being diſliked, rejected, and ſo greatly deſpiſed? why do we this againſt the Blood of Conſanguinity? And we the Sons of *Abraham* thus abuſe the Daughters of *Abraham*? Why do we ſo little regard the Bond of Religion? We are one People, the Sons and Daughters of one God, who hath called us, ſeparated us from the Heathen to keep Religion pure and unmixed, why then do we tranſgreſs thus? ——— *Every Man.* The Fault was very common among the People and Prieſts too, even ſince their Return out of *Babylon*.——— *Againſt his Brother.* This Wrong was done immediately againſt the Wife, but the Father, Brothers, or Kinſmen of the wronged Wife were mediately, and by Conſequence wronged; but the whole Family of the Wife thus uſed, is perfidiouſly injured, but Brothers, as Principal of the Family, are named. ——— *By profaning the Covenant of our Fathers.* Violating the Covenant of God, the Law, which approves no Polygamy, and forbids marrying of Idolaters.

Chap. III.

Chriſt *the Meſſenger of the Covenant promiſed. The Terribleneſs of his Coming to purify his People. God complains of their Sin and Rebellion. Their Sacrilege. God's Pardon, if they repent and reform. Their Abuſe and Slight of God's Service the Reaſon of it. A Promiſe of God's Love and Mercy to them that fear him.*

Q. P*RAY what is the Subject of the Prophecy in this Chapter?*

A. The Miſſion of St. *John the Baptiſt*, the Coming of *Chriſt*, who ſhall ſeparate the Hypocrites from the Children of God, is foretold; whereupon follows a Threatning of Puniſhment for the manifold Sins reigning among the *Jews*, and an Exhortation to Repentance, and to deal faithfully in bringing about Tenths and Tythes.

The Prophet condemns the *Jews* of double Blaſphemy againſt God; firſt, in that they ſaid, that God had no Reſpect to them, who ſerved him; and next, that the Wicked were more in his Favour than the Godly.

The Prophet bids the People return to their Reaſon, enforced by the convincing Power of God's Judgments to come, and gives a comfortable Encouragement to the Godly.

Chap. IV.

The Burning of the Proud and Wicked foretold. The Sun of Righteouſneſs promiſed to them that fear the Lord. An Exhortation to remember the Law of Moſes. *The Coming and Office of* Elijah *the Prophet foretold.*

Q. P*RAY what does the Prophecy in this Chapter import?*

A. The Proud and Wicked are to be conſumed with Fire, but the Sun of Righteouſneſs is promiſed to ſuch as fear the Lord. Here is a Prophecy of the Coming and Office of *Elijah*; and this Perſon here called *Elijah*, was *John Baptiſt*, as is clear from *Matth.* xvii. 9, to 13. *Elias is come, and they have done to him whatſoever they* *liſted*, Verſe 12. *then underſtood the Diſciples that he ſpake of* John the Baptiſt; *and he was that* Elias, *if they would receive him*, Matth ix. 10, 11, 12, 13.

In the laſt Verſe is deſcribed the Office and Work that *John Baptiſt* ſhould be employed in at his Coming; *He ſhall turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children*, &c. When *John* made his Appearance there were many great and unnatural Diviſions and Quarrels among the *Jews*, in which Fathers ſtudied Miſchief to their own Children; they were divided and ſpitefully bent againſt them, as well in civil as religious Concerns. Some by *Fathers* and *Children* underſtand *Jews* and *Gentiles*; whoſe Souls being converted to *Chriſt*, their Hearts were turned one to another. Alſo undutiful Children, eſtranged by the ſame Means, and on the ſame Accounts, from their Fathers, by obeying the Call to Repentance, and baptized into it, religious Quarrels ceaſe, and the Hearts of both Parents and Children unite to *Chriſt* firſt, then to each other, and all to God; which ſhould they refuſe to comply with, God would deſtroy the Land of *Judea* and its Inhabitants.

Q. *What Conjectures have there been concerning the Perſon of the Prophet* Malachi, *and the Time of his Appearance?*

A. Concerning this Prophet ſome have thought (but without good and ſufficient Ground) that he was an Angel in the Form of a Man; others think him to be *Ezra*: But as it is the plainer, ſo the ſurer Opinion, that he was a Prophet of that Name and a Man diſtinct from *Ezra*, and ſent the laſt of all the Prophets. His Time of appearing among the *Jews* cannot be determined preciſely, but it is beſt gueſſed to have been about the Time of *Nehemiah*'s reforming the ſtrange Marriages, *Neh.* xiii. 23, 28. with *Mal.* ii. 11. and when he reformed the ſacrilegious Detainure of Tithes, *Neh.* xiii. 10, 11. with *Mal.* iii. 8. as Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerveth. Now this Reformation of *Nehemiah* was about *Anno Mundi* 3590, as Dr. *Lightfoot*; or 3545 as *Helvicus*, or 3589 as Archbiſhop *Uſher's Annals*. Whatever was his Time of appearing, it is certain he lived in a very vicious Age, in which both Prieſts, as well as People, were leaven'd with either perverſe Thoughts of the Divine Providence, or brutiſh Atheiſm, denying the Deity and Providence; contemptuous Thoughts of the Worſhip of God; ſacrilegious Practices, robbing God of Tithes and Offerings; ſhameleſs juſtifying theſe their Practices; boundleſs or monſtrous Unfaithfulneſs to their Wives, caſting off *Jewiſh* to marry *Gentile* Wives, or elſe ſuperinducing the *Gentile* Women, and enſlaving the *Jewiſh* to them; caſting off the Law of God, or which is equally bad (if not worſe) wreſting it to their own ſinful Sentiments. All which he doth ſeverely reprove, and requires them to reform, and foretels the Day of the *Meſſiah*'s Coming to ſit as a Refiner and Purifier; whoſe appearing, ſuch Sinners and Sins would not be able to bear; and tells them of his Fore-runner, who in the Spirit and Power of *Elias* ſhould come, and prepare a People for the *Meſſiah*: Till then (as their Duty was) he commands them in the Name, and by the Authority from God, that they remember the Law of *Moſes*, which God commanded in *Horeb*; thereby intimating ſome great Change in the Law, at the Coming of the *Meſſiah*; and intimating alſo, that they ſhould expect no more Prophets till the Great Prophet himſelf ſhould come unto them.

Q. *Being now come to a Concluſion of the* Old Teſtament, *which we hope we have explained to the Satisfaction of our Readers, and before we proceed to give an Expoſition of the New, in the ſame Manner, I muſt deſire you to make ſome Obſervations on the* Sacred Writings *in general?*

A. The Holy Scriptures for their Antiquity, Dignity, and other Excellencies, far outſhining all the Writings of the Antients, I take it to be not only proper to the preſent Purpoſe, but uſeful to the Reader to ſay ſomething of them. Indeed, if we conſider how many Centuries have paſs'd ſince ſome of them were firſt compiled, and how miraculouſly they have been preſerved and tranſmitted to theſe Times, they may from hence alone be ſaid to be the immediate Book of God; which, out of his great Care he hath provided for us, that in them we may ſee his Will, and from thence learn our Duty. Next to this, we are to eſteem and value holy Scriptures, as containing in them all Manner of Knowledge that is uſeful and entertaining. Would you know, whence natural Philoſophy, with Aſtronomy and other Appendages on it, are ſaid to derive their Original? See in the Books of *Geneſis*, *Job* and *Eccleſiaſtes*. What Books abound more in Ethicks or moral Precepts, than the ſacred and ſententious *Proverbs* and *Wiſdom of Solomon?* What more certatin, regular or pleaſant Hiſtory and Chronology, diverſified with Variety of Narration, can we find, than in *Geneſis*, *Exodus*, *Joſhua*, *Judges?* &c. How free from Sophiſtry are the holy Scriptures, and how ſolid and logical are the Arguments uſed in them? Geometry plainly appears in the Building of the Tabernacle; and the working in Metals and Wood was known long before the Building of *Solomon*'s Temple. In ſhort, all Manner of Learning, Languages, Arts and Sciences, are comprehended within thoſe ſacred Pages. The Texture of them indeed is ſo exactly diſpoſed by the Holy Ghoſt, that they are a Magazine accommodated to all Places, Times and Perſons in the greateſt Emergencies. So that St. *Baſil* juſtly calls them a *Pharmacopeia* well ſtocked with Medicines, for all Uſes and Neceſſities. From hence, in Time of Perſecution, the Martyrs drew Conſtancy and Courage: From hence, in Time of Peace and Religion, the Learned gain'd Wiſdom and Eloquence: In Times of Hereſy they furniſh the Orthodox with Stabiliment of Faith, and aſſiſted them in the Subverſion of Error: From hence, in Proſperity, we learn Humility and Modeſty; in Adverſity, Magnanimity and Patience. In Trepidity it arms us with an honeſt Zeal; and finally, if through Length of Time, or Neglect, Abuſes inſinuates into our Diſcipline, and corrupt our Morals, nothing but the Rule of God's Word can reſtore Religion to its priſtine State and Dignity; for that alone is the Standard of our Thoughts and Guide of our Actions.

But we need no other Recommendation of theſe ſacred Writings, than that of our bleſſed Saviour, who had commanded us to ſearch the Scriptures. And in pious Obedience to his Precept, the Apoſtles and Fathers of the Church (too many here to be inſerted) have made it their great Concern and Care for the Good of Mankind, to exhort all Men to the Study of them. The *Old Teſtament* is indeed in itſelf a Syſtem of all kind of Knowledge uſeful for the Conduct of human Life; and from which the Philoſophers and Legiſlators of all Ages drew the choiceſt of their Obſervations. The Church hath borrowed much from that admiable Policy in the Acts and Laws of *Moſes*, both judicial and ceremonial; and the Authors of both Canon and Civil Law have from hence derived their moſt uſeful and advantageous Inſtitutions. But the Excellency of ſacred Hiſtory will more evidently appear, if by a juſt Antitheſis we compare it to the Accounts of the beſt and moſt antient Heathen Writers, both Philoſophers and Hiſtorians. How obſcure and trifling are their Stories of *Deucalion*'s Flood, of *Prometheus* and *Hercules*, and their general Notions of the World's exiſting from Eternity: In ſhort, all profane Story is ſtuffed with Obſcurity and fabulous Antiquity before the *Olympiads*, which was their firſt certain Period of Time, and which did not commence till many Centuries after the Legiſlator *Moſes* had written the Pentateuch; ſo that from the firſt 3000 Years of the World and more, we have no certain Hiſtory to depend upon, but this of *Moſes* and the *Hebrews*. And, indeed, if we pay that juſt Deference and Eſteem to it, which we ought, we ſhall find it the trueſt Light and Guide we can chooſe in the Tranſactions of Life. There only we have the true Account of the Riſe and Fall, of the Virtues and Vices of the moſt early Kingdoms and States of the World; and by their Example, either in Felicity or Infelicity, learn to be wiſe and happy. If we compare the *Greek* and *Roman* Hiſtorians with the Pentateuch and the reſt of the ſacred Hiſtory, we ſhall find the latter to abound with the more illuſtrious Examples of heroic Virtue. *Rome* may boaſt of her *Torquatus* and *Brutus*, who, in a more brutal than generous Bravery, ſacrificed their Sons to the publick Good: But who would not rather admire the religious Obedience in pious *Abraham*, who had deſtin'd his innocent and only Son *Iſaac* a Victim to the Will of God? Hiſtorians and Poets may in exalted Strains applaud the Courage of the *Horatii*, and other Champions, who in Defence of their Country ſlew their Enemies in ſingle Fight; but how ſhort do they come of the God-like *David*, who, though but a Stripling, encounter'd and ſlew that vaſt Tower of Fleſh, the monſtrous *Goliah*, and by his Death pathed out an eaſy Victory to the *Iſraelites* over the *Philiſtines*? *Alexander*'s Virtue is worthy of Praiſe, who, when he had conquered *Darius*, would not give himſelf the Pleaſure of ſurveying his beautiful Captives, leſt he ſhould be tempted to Deſire: But what is this to the Continence of *Joſeph*, who fled from the actual Sollicitations of his laſcivious Miſtreſs into a loathſom Dungeon? They may praiſe *Lucretia*'s revenging her violated Chaſtity, by her own Murder; whilſt the holy Scriptures more deſervedly extol *Suſanna*, who expoſed herſelf to Death by ſhunning the luſtful Embraces of the two wicked Elders. They may talk of the Fortitude and Succeſs of their warlike Heroes, their *Cæſars*, *Pompeys*, *Scipios*, *Hannibal* and *Alexander*; but how much more illuſtrious are the Examples of *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, *Sampſon*, *Gideon*, *David* and *Saul*? who, inſpired with more than human Courage, with a handful of Men, in compariſon of their Enemies vaſt Numbers, trampled them under Foot; and to facilitate whoſe Conqueſts, the very Elements conſpired, and fought on their Side.

The great Apoſtle in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* Labours very accurately, thro' the whole eleventh Chapter, to prove the great Trials of the Saints from the Hiſtory of the *Old Teſtament*, who perſiſted in their Duty under the greateſt Severities and Sufferings.

1. But beſides theſe general Advantages of the *Old Teſtament*, there are ſome more peculiar to it; the firſt of which is, that the *New Teſtament* cannot be underſtood without it. The Apoſtles in their Writings often cite it, and more often allude to it; and our Bleſſed Lord taking his laſt Leave of his Diſciples, tells them; *Theſe are the Words I ſpake unto you, whilſt I was ſtill with you; that all muſt be fulfilled, which was written of me in the Law of* Moſes, *and in the Prophets, and in the* Pſalms, *Luke* xxiv. 44. And if we conſider the whole Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, without Regard to the *Old Teſtament*, it will be moſt intricate and obſcure Writing that ever was penned; for it is ſo interwoven with it, that unleſs we refer to one, the other is altogether unintelligible.

2. *Chriſt* being the End of the Law, all Things which are ſpoken of in the *Old Teſtament*, relate to *Chriſt* and his Servants, as well in a literal as an allegorical Senſe: And in this the *Old Teſtament* excels the *New*; for the *Old* wants neither, but the *New*, for the moſt Part, wants the allegorical Meaning. *Our Fathers*, ſaith *Paul*, *were all under this Cloud, and all paſſed through the Sea, and and were all baptized unto* Moſes, *and in that Cloud, and that Sea; and did all eat the ſame ſpiritual Food, and did all drink the ſame ſpiritual Drink; for they drank of the ſpiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was* Chriſt, &c. *Now all theſe Things were Types unto them, and were written to admoniſh us, upon whom the Ends of the World are come*, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 3, 4, 11. And hence the ſame Apoſtle ſhews us, that the Underſtanding of the *Old Teſtament* was tranſmitted from the *Jews* to us. *Therefore their Minds are hardened, for until this Day remaineth the ſame Covering untaken away, in the Reading of the* Old Teſtament, *which Veil in* Chriſt *is put away. But even unto this Day, when* Moſes *is read, the Veil is laid over their Hearts*, 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15.

3. Another great Advantage there is, that the *Old Teſtament* is a Magazine ſo well provided with Variety of Figures, Examples, Doctrine, and ſententious Oracles, not only relating to Faith, but to the Information of a good Life, that from hence we may plentifully furniſh ourſelves with Arguments and Reaſons on all honeſt Occaſions. Thus our bleſſed Lord, by the Example of *Noah* and *Lot*'s Wife, ſtirs up the Slothful to Watchfulneſs, *Luke* xvii. 27, 30. He threatens the obſtinate *Jews* with the Remembrance of *Sodom* and *Nineveh*, and the Queen of the *South*; and terrifies the uncharitable Rich with the Words of *Abraham* to *Dives* in Hell; *They have* Moſes *and the Prophets, let them hear them*, Luke xvi. 29. St. *Paul*, as hath been before obſerved, ſays, *All theſe Things were done to them for Examples to us, that we ſhould avoid thoſe Judgments God had afflicted them with, for their Fornication, Idolatry, Murmuring*, &c. For the Holy Spirit of God, which was primary to, and conſcious of all Ages, hath ſo diſpoſed the holy Scriptures, that they are uſeful, not only to the *Jews*, but to *Chriſtians* in all Times. Which *Tertullian* in his Book *De Cultu Fœmin.* c. 22.

confirms; for there he ſays, *That there is no Enunciation of the Holy Ghoſt, ſo particularly directed to any preſent Occaſion, as not to be of Uſe and Advantage in general.* St. *Auguſtine* ſeems ſo pleaſed with the Harmony between the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, that towards the End of the thirteenth Book againſt *Fauſtus*, he ſays, *In Commemoration of our Faith, in Conſolation of our Hope, and Exhortation of us to Charity, we read the Books of the Prophets and Apoſtles; betwixt whom there is ſo exact an Harmony, that it is like the celeſtial Trumpet, which rouzes us from our ſluggiſh Mortality, to contend for the Palm of our heavenly Calling.* And indeed they are ſo well adapted to each other, that their Reſemblance and Affinity are as natural and near, as that of the Shadow to the Body. In fine, the Learned of all Ages, have in all Cauſes, Councils, and judicial Proceedings, found great Intereſt and Advantage in conſulting the holy Scriptures. It was a royal Expreſſion indeed of *Robert* King of *Sicily* to *Francis Petrarch! I tell the my* Petrarch, *thoſe holy Letters are dearer to me than my Kingdom; and, were I under a Neceſſity of quitting one, it ſhould be my Diadem.*

4. The laſt Advantage I ſhall mention of the *Old Teſtament* as is, that it had the Honour to precede the *New*, ſo it gave Witneſs to it, as St. *John Baptiſt* did to *Chriſt*, both he, *Moſes*, and the Prophets going before him to prepare the Way for him; to give Knowledge of Salvation to his People, to give Light to them that ſat in Darkneſs and in the Shadow of Death, and to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace. In Cogniſance or Confirmation of which, *Moſes* and *Elias* appeared at the Transfiguration of *Chriſt* upon the Mount, bearing Witneſs of him, and ſpeaking of his Departure, *Luke* ix. 31. Who, that had been ignorant of the *Old Teſtament*, would formerly have believed *Chriſt* or his Goſpel? How ſhould a *Jew* be converted and brought to *Chriſt*, but by the Manuduction of *Moſes* and the Prophets, who foretold his Coming into the World, and the great Occaſion, as well as Manner of it? Indeed, ſo great is the Force and Demonſtration of the Goſpel-Truths, that comparing the Tranſactions of our Saviour's Life, with what was foretold of them, none can doubt of the Completion of thoſe Predictions in Him only. All which added ſtill the greater Reverence to the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, as being a Type or Prefiguration of the *New*. But none go ſo far in the Eulogies of *Moſes* and the Law, as our bleſſed Saviour himſelf. *The Law was given by* Moſes, John i. 27. *There is one that accuſeth you, even* Moſes; *had ye believed on him, ye would have believed on me; for he wrote of me: But if ye believe not his Writings, how ſhall ye believe my Words?* John v. 45, 46, 47. *Beginning at* Moſes *and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them all the Things that were written of him in the holy Scriptures. Likewiſe* Philip *finding* Nathaniel, *tells him, we have found him of whom* Moſes *did write in the Law, and alſo the Prophets,* Jeſus *the Son of* Joſeph, *that was of* Nazareth, *John* i. 45. Certainly, as *Tertullian* againſt *Marcion* often obſerves, the Harmony between the Two Teſtaments, the Conſent or Agreement between *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, the Prophets and Apoſtles, the Synagogue and the Church, muſt needs be a great Teſtimony of the Truth of *Chriſt* and his Goſpel. Having ſaid thus of thoſe incomparable Hiſtories, and other excellent Things contained in the *Old Teſtament*, it may not be improper to ſay ſomething of the Authors or Compilers of them. And firſt of *Moſes*.

And here, conſidering the Dignity of that great and excellent Legiſlator and Hiſtorian, to whom God did the Honour of ſpeaking Face to Face, it may ſeem almoſt a Preſumption to give his Character. I ſhall only, in ſhort, ſay this, that for ſome thouſands of Years, the Sun did not behold his Fellow. He was from his Infancy brought up in a Court, where he received all the Advantages of a royal Education, becoming the Son and intended Heir of a King. He was well ſkilled in *Egyptian* Learning, converſing at Court till he was forty Years old; at which Time being divinely inſpired, he withdrew from the Court of *Pharaoh*, and diſdaining to be thought the Son of *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, he choſe rather to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, than enjoy the Pleaſures of a courtly ſinful Life. Being forced to fly to *Midian*, he undertook the poor Employment of feeding Sheep. In which Time God appeared to him in a Buſh, and gave him Commiſſion to be the Ruler and Leader of his People; wherein he ſhewed an admirable Conduct and Oeconomy, leading an almoſt innumerable Multitude of obſtinate headſtrong People, through a horrid Deſart for forty Years. They often diſobliged him by their mutinous and ingrateful Carriage; yet, like a true Father of his Country, he forgave them and always interpoſed between them and their angry God, who, but for him, had often revenged himſelf upon them; and was hardly diſſuaded from extirpating them and their Name, and raiſing another Nation to *Moſes* in their ſtead.

But if we inquire more particularly into the Abilities and Virtues of this excellent Perſon, we ſhall find him the greateſt and moſt honoured Mortal that ever was born, till the Son of God condeſcended to bleſs the World in human Shape. He was Prophet, Prince and Poet. For the firſt we have his own Acknowledgment: *The Lord thy God ſhall raiſe up unto thee a Prophet like unto me, from among thy Brethren*, Deut xviii. xv. For the ſecond, God himſelf inveſted him with imperial Power, when he gave him a Commiſſion to deliver and govern his People, *Exod.* iii. 10. That he was a Poet, appears from thoſe eleven *Pſalms* intitled to him, from *Pſal.* lxxxix. to *Pſal.* c. Beſides the many perſonal Favours God beſtowed upon this great Man, he was pleaſed to honour him with this particular Notice of Diſtinction, that he was the moſt faithful of his Servants, to whom he would communicate his Will by expreſs Words, *Numb.* xii. 7, 1. And, indeed, if we conſider the frequent Interviews between God and *Moſes*, the Conveyance of the Law by him, and his daily converſing and pleading for the People in the Tabernacle, where God more immediately revealed himſelf, we may juſtly call him *the Secretary of the divine Wiſdom*; by whoſe Prayers, more than by *Joſhua*'s Valour, *Amalek* was ſubdued. I ſhall not need to advance his Character by enumerating his wondrous Works in *Egypt*, his miraculous Conduct of the *Iſraelites* through the *Red-Sea*; his furniſhing them with Food from Heaven; his producing Water by a Miracle, from Matter to which Nature had denied it; and his vindicating God's Honour, and his own Reputation, from the

Calumnies of their Enemies, by a juſt Execution on *Corah* and his Aſſociates. Whoever examines the Adminiſtration of this great Man, he will find in him the moſt refined Policy and exact Oeconomy, that ever adorned the Character of a moſt illuſtrious Legiſlator; for he had to do with a moſt obſtinate, rebellious, and ingrateful People, and whom he governed with ſuch Dexterity, that he always brought them to a Senſe of their Duty. But in the Diſcharge of this Part of his high Office, his Love and Care of their Safety more eminently appeared than all his other Perfections, not only in that Heat of Zeal, when he begg'd of God rather to deprive him of the Enjoyment of the promiſed Land, than deny it to his People; but in thoſe preſſing Inſtances and fervent Admonitions throughout the whole Book of *Deuteronomy*, wherein he calls God and Man, Heaven and Earth to witneſs, that he may incline their Hearts to a ſtrict and more ſacred Obſervance of the Law of God. Nor was his Humility the leaſt Embelliſhment of his Character; for tho' the *Iſraelites* had often provoked him by their Clamours, Reproaches, and Apoſtacy, and ſometimes threaten'd to ſtone him, unmoved he beheld their Ingratitude, and inſtead of revenging himſelf by Threats and Puniſhments, he humbly addreſs'd himſelf to God in their Behalf, to deprecate the Judgments they deſerved: And for this Virtue God himſelf expreſly diſtinguiſhes him with this Eulogy, *That he was the meekeſt Man upon Earth.* And for the ſake of this endearing Quality, *Moſes* is thought by ſome, ſo to have recommended himſelf to God, that he admitted him to behold as much of the divine Eſſence as his human Nature was capable of ſeeing; with which more fond and aſpiring Men were not fit to be truſted. Then as to the Death of this illuſtrous Prophet and Prince, it was as wonderful as the great Tranſactions of his Life; for God himſelf paid him the funeral Honours, by burying him ſo ſecretly, that no Man ever knew where his Sepulchre was.

But all that we have hitherto ſaid comes far ſhort of the ſacred Eulogies of inſpired Writers, who have celebrated the Memory of this great Legiſlator, in moſt exalted Strains. Hear *Siracides*, Chap. xlv. “*Moſes* was the Beloved of God and Men, and his Remembrance is bleſſed. God made him like the glorious Saints (the holy Patriarchs) and terrible to his Enemies. By his Words he cauſed Wonders to ceaſe, and magnified him in the Sight of Kings (*viz.* of *Pharaoh*) concerning whom the Lord ſaid to him, *Behold, I have made thee a God to* Pharaoh, *Exod.* vii. 1. giving him the Command of his People, and ſhewing him his Glory. He ſanctified him with Faith and Meekneſs, and choſe him out of all Men. He cauſed him to hear his Voice, and took him into the Cloud; he gave him the Commandments before his Face, even the Law of Life and Knowledge, that he might ſhew *Jacob* his Covenant, and *Iſrael* his Judgments.”

Hear the great Apoſtle in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. xi. 24. *By Faith* Moſes, *when he was come to Age, refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter, chooſing rather to ſuffer Adverſity with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin for a Seaſon, eſteeming Rebuke for* Chriſt's *Sake, greater Riches than the Treaſures of* Egypt; *for he had Reſpect to the Reward.* *By Faith he forſook* Egypt, *not fearing the King's Diſpleaſure, ſubmitting with Patience, as he that ſaw him who was inviſible. Through Faith he inſtituted the Paſſover and Effuſion of Blood, leſt he that ſlew the Firſt-born ſhould touch them. By Faith he paſſed through the* Red-Sea, *as on dry Land, which when the* Egyptians *attempted to do, they were ſwallowed up.*

Hear St. *Stephen* the Protomartyr, *Acts* vii. 22, 30, 35, 38. Moſes *was mighty in Word and Deed; to whom, in the Wilderneſs of Mount* Sin, *an Angel appeared in a Flame of Fire in a Buſh; him God ſent for a Prince and a Deliverer, by the Hand of the Angel which appeared to him in the Buſh; he brought them out, doing Wonders and Miracles in the Land of* Egypt. *This is he that was in the Congregation* (the Church) *in the Wilderneſs with the Angel, which ſpake to him in Mount* Sinai, *and with our Fathers, who received the lively Oracles to give unto us.*

Nor is the Teſtimony of the Fathers and later Writers in Commendation of *Moſes*, to be deſpiſed, who ſpeak with the utmoſt Reſpect and Reverence of him. *Juſtin Martyr*, in his *Paræneſis* to the “*Gentiles*, ſays, *Moſes* wrote his Hiſtory in *Hebrew*, before the Characters of *Greek* were found out, which *Cadmus*, from the *Phœnicians* firſt diſcovered to the *Greeks*. Whence *Plato* to *Timæus* ſays, that the wiſe *Solon* returning from *Egypt*, told *Critias*, he had heard an *Egyptian* Prieſt, who ſaid to him, O *Solon*, you *Greeks* are young Men in Learning and Diſcipline.” And a little after, the ſame *Juſtin Martyr* ſays, out of *Diodorus*, that *Orpheus*, *Homer*, *Solon*, *Pythagoras*, *Plato* and others, when they were in *Egypt*, altered their Minds concerning *Polytheiſm*; being inſtructed by the *Egyptians* (who had it from *Moſes*) that there was but one God, who in the Beginning created Heaven and Earth. And laſtly, he affirms, that *Plato* learned from *Moſes* the Being of a God, the Creation of Things, the divine Word, the Reſurrection of the Body, the Judgment and Puniſhment of the Wicked, the Reward of the Juſt, and the Holy Ghoſt; which he ſuppoſes to be the Soul of the World: But it is very certain, that *Plato* did not rightly underſtand *Moſes*, when he diſtorted his Meaning to ſuch ridiculous Fancies, as led him into moſt egregious Errors.

St. *Gregory Nazianzen*, in *Orat.* xxii. calls *Moſes*, “The moſt illuſtrious Legiſlator, and moſt holy of Prieſts, who being taken into the Converſation of God, became a Spectator of the divine Secrets.

St. *Auguſtin* againſt *Fauſtus*, l. xxii. c. 69. ſays, “*Moſes* was the moſt faithful Servant of God; humble in declining ſo weighty a Miniſtry, but dutiful in undertaking it; juſt in keeping, and abſolute in executing it; vigilant in Government, ſmart in Juſtice, zealous in Love, and patient in Suffering, &c.

St. *Cyril* of *Alexandria*, in a handſome and well deduced Chronology, proves *Moſes* to be before the moſt antient of the *Gentile* Heroes.

Conſtantine the Great, in his Oration, very elegantly ſets forth the Worth and Dignity of *Moſes*, *Euſeb.* c. 7. “Who, *ſays he*, can ſay enough in Honour of him, who reduced a People out of the greateſt Confuſion, into the moſt exact Order? Who, by gentle Perſuaſions, quieted “their mutinous Spirits, and from a moſt ſervile Condition, brought them to the Enjoyment of Liberty. Who, in Wiſdom, ſo far excelled all that were ſuperior to him in Years, that he became the Standard of Knowledge, both in his own and ſucceeding Times, and a bright Example of moral Virtues to *Heathens* as well as *Hebews*, eſpecially to *Pythagoras* and *Plato*, who were zealous Emulators of his Continency.

St. *Ambroſe*, lib. i. cap. 2. *de Cain & Abel*, ſays, “*Moſes* was the Figure of that Preceptor that was to come, who ſhould preach the Goſpel, fulfil the *Old Teſtament*, build the *New*, and feed the People with celeſtial Aliment. Hence the Dignity of his human Condition is ſo highly advanced, that he is called by the Name of God: *I have ſet thee as a God to* Pharaoh, Exod. vii. 1. (that is, I have given thee Authority to ſpeak to him in my Name.) And indeed he became his Character; for he was Maſter of his Paſſions, not inclined to worldly Deſires, but in Mind and Body endeavoured to form himſelf after the Likeneſs of that Perfection of his God, as far as Nature would permit; and therefore we read quite differently of him, to what we do of others, who die through ſome Defect of Nature; but with him it was otherwiſe; for notwithſtanding his great Age, he retained the Uſe of all his Faculties and Senſes to the laſt, his Eyes not failing, nor his natural Force abated; but died according to the Word of the Lord.”

I ſhall conclude this Character of *Moſes* with what *Joſephus*, *Euſebius* and others, in ſhort, but very comprehenſively ſay of him; that among all the Traditions of the Antients, and Opinions of the Moderns, and all the Collections of *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* Hiſtorians, *Moſes* appears to be the firſt Theologiſt, Philoſopher, Poet, and Hiſtorian in the World.

As to the Writers of the other Parts of the *Old Teſtament*, I ſhall be the more brief, having ſubjoined to each Book, particular an Account of them, as could be collected from *Hiſtory*.

The firſt Catalogue of ſacred Books was made by the *Jews*, but by whom is not certainly known. It is highly probable it was by *Ezra*, who collected all the ſacred Books of the *Old Teſtament*, and ſhewing the Collection to the *Jews*, it was received and approved by his whole Nation, as containing all the ſacred Writings. *Joſephus* ſays they had two and twenty Books, which contained all that related to the *Jewiſh* Nation, from the Beginning of the World till his Time.

The five Books written by *Moſes* contain the Hiſtory of near three thouſand Years, from the Creation till his Death. The Prophets, who ſucceeded him, wrote in thirteen Books all that happened from his Death to the Reign of *Artaxerxes*, the Son of *Xerxes*, King of *Perſia*. They had alſo four Books of Hymns and Songs. *Joſephus* adds, That there were Books written from the Time of *Artaxerxes* down to his Days; but there being no Prophet amongſt them to write them, as there had been in former Times, they were not eſteemed ſacred, nor the People obliged to read them.

It is not certain whether *Joſhua* wrote the Book that goes by his Name; but it is very probable it was written by his Command; and very ſoon after his Death; for *Moſes* had often, during his Adminiſtration, in which *Joſhua* was Chief under him, ordered him to write the moſt remarkable Occurrences in a Book. It contained a Hiſtory of about ſeventeen Years.

Some are of Opinion, that every Judge wrote, or cauſed to be written, what was tranſacted in his Days; and that all theſe Tranſactions were collected and put into one Book, either by *Samuel* or *Ezra*. The Book of *Judges* contains the Hiſtory of three hundred Years and upwards, from the Death of *Joſhua* to the Death of *Sampſon*. As for the Story of *Ruth*, it is certain ſhe lived in the Times of the *Judges*, probably under *Shamgar*. The *Jews* made but one Book of this and *Judges*.

The four Books that follow, *viz.* two of *Samuel*, and two of *Kings*, contain the Hiſtory of near ſix hundred Years. The firſt Book of *Samuel* to the five and twentieth Chapter, was written by *Samuel* himſelf; the Prophets *Gad* and *Nathan* finiſhed it, and wrote the ſecond Book of *Samuel*. The two Books of *Kings* were written by *Jeremiah* or *Ezra*.

The two Books of *Chronicles* were written after the four former. 'Tis generally believed that they were written by *Ezra*, who collected them partly out of the other Books of the *Bible*, and partly out of the Papers which were yet extant in his Days, but ſince loſt.

Ezra wrote that Book which is called by his Name, and contains the Hiſtory of eighty-two or eighty-three Years, from the firſt Year of *Cyrus*, to the twentieth of *Artaxerxes Longimannus*.

The Book of *Nehemiah* was certainly written by himſelf, and contains the Hiſtory of about thirty-one Years, from the Reign of *Artaxerxes* to the Beginning of *Darius* called the Baſtard.

The Time and Author of the Book of *Eſther* are very uncertain. Some think it was written by *Ezra*, or *Joachim* the Prieſt, the Grandſon of *Jozedec*. It is very reaſonable to think, that the *Ahaſuerus* here mentioned muſt be *Darius* the Son of *Hyſtaſpes*, becauſe he reigned from *India* to *Ethiopia*; which excludes all the Kings before *Cambyſes*, and even *Cambyſes* himſelf, becauſe he did not conquer *Egypt*. It is thought by ſome, that this Book of *Eſther* was written upon the Account of the *Vows* of *Purim*. *Pur* is a *Perſian* Word, and ſignifies a *Lot*, whence this Feaſt of the *Jews* is called *Purim*, or the Feaſt of *Lots*. It began on the fourteenth of the Month *Adar*, and continued till the End of the fifteenth, *Eſther* ix. 21. It was inſtituted by *Mordecai*, in Remembrance of the *Jews* Delivery from *Haman* before whom Lots were caſt Day by Day, and Month by Month, for the Deſtruction of them. In theſe two Days they read the Hiſtory of *Eſther* in their Synagogues, and as often as they hear the Name of *Haman* mentioned, they beat with their Fiſts and Hammers upon the Benches and Boards, as if they did knock on *Haman*'s Head. By *Herodotus*'s ſaying, That *Darius* had a Wife, which he loved ſo paſſionately, that he ſet the Crown upon her Head, there is great Reaſon to believe, that *Ahaſuerus* muſt be this *Darius*.

As to the Story of *Job*, ſome have queſtioned the Truth of this Hiſtory; but *Job* being mentioned in *Holy Writ* with ſo much Applauſe, it would be a Fault to doubt it. In *Ezek*. xiv. 14. and in the general Epiſtle of St. *James*, Chap. v. ver. 11.

11. The Time *Job* lived in is very hard to be known, as well as the Author. Some ſay it was written by himſelf; others will have *Moſes* to be the Author of it. Theſe are but Conjectures and upon ſlight Grounds. It is generally believed, that *Job* lived before *Moſes*, and that his Miſeries befel him, when the Children of *Iſrael* were in the Wilderneſs. Some are of Opinion, that he was deſcended of *Nahor*, *Abraham*'s Brother; others from *Eſau*, which laſt is moſt probable. In the thirty-ſixth of *Geneſis* there is mention made of one *Jobab* amongſt the Kings of *Edom*, which is almoſt the ſame with *Job*.

Q. *Having in the foregoing Diſcourſe, given ſome Account of the inſpired Penmen of the Holy Scriptures, I deſire you will ſay ſomething of the Scriptures themſelves, the Language they have been wrote in, the ſeveral Verſions of them, and for what Uſes, before and after the Appearance of our Saviour, and the Commencement of the* New Teſtament?

A. The learned Dr. *Prideaux* has taken abundance of Pains to ſet this Matter in a true Light, and ſeems to have exhauſted Antiquity for Materials to give the World a right Knowledge in what Manner the *Old Teſtament* paſſed through the Hands of the *Jewiſh* Doctors and Rabbies. We ſhall therefore take the Liberty to make an Extract from this learned Author, of what we have to ſay upon this Head.

About ſixty Years before the Coming of *Chriſt*, flouriſhed two of the moſt eminent Doctors among the *Jews*, that the Times in which they lived, could boaſt of, namely, *Thammai* and *Hillel*. Theſe two learned Perſons ſet up each of them a School, which their reſpective Maſters rendered famous for the Literature then in Vogue, and for the Number of Scholars each of them inſtructed.

Hillel bred up above a thouſand Scholars in the Knowledge of the Law, of which eighty were reckoned to be of greater Eminency than the reſt. For of them ſay the *Jewiſh* Writers, thirty were worthy on whom the Divine Glory ſhould reſt, as it did upon *Moſes*; and thirty for whom the Sun ſhould ſtand ſtill, as it did for *Joſhua*; and the twenty others were of a midling Size. The eminenteſt of them all was *Jonathan Ben Uzziel*, the Author of the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe upon the Prophets; with whom was cotemporary *Onkelos*, who was Author of the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe upon the Law. But whether he was a Scholar of *Hillel*'s or no, is not ſaid. There are other *Chaldee* Paraphraſes beſides theſe two; but what, or how they were, or for what Uſe they ſerved, not being as yet any where mentioned in this Work, it is proper we here give the Reader an Account of them.

The *Chaldee* Paraphraſes are Tranſlations of the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, made directly from the *Hebrew* Text into the Language of the *Chaldeans*, which Language was antiently uſed through all *Aſſyria*, *Babylonia*, *Meſopotamia*, *Syria* and *Paleſtine*; and it is ſtill the Language of the Churches of the *Neſtorian* and *Maronite* Chriſtians in thoſe eaſtern Parts, in the ſame Manner as the *Latin* is the Language of the Popiſh Churches here in the *Weſt*. And therefore theſe Paraphraſes were called *Targums*, becauſe they were Verſions or Tranſlations of the *Hebrew* Text into this Language. For the Word *Targum* ſignifieth, in *Chaldee*, an Interpretation or Verſion of one Language into another, and may properly be ſaid of any ſuch Verſion or Tranſlation; but it is moſt commonly by the *Jews* appropriated to theſe *Chaldee* Paraphraſes. For being among them what were moſt eminently ſuch, they therefore had this Name by Way of eminency eſpecially given unto them.

Theſe *Targums* were made for the Uſe and Inſtruction of the vulgar *Jews*, after their Return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. For although many of the better Sort ſtill retained the Knowledge of the *Hebrew* Language, during that Captivity, and taught it their Children; and the Holy Scriptures that were delivered after that Time, excepting only ſome Parts of *Daniel* and *Ezra*, and one Verſe in *Jeremiah*, were all written therein; yet the common People, by having ſo long converſed with the *Babylonians*, learned their Language, and forgot their own. It happened, indeed, otherwiſe to the Children of *Iſrael* in *Egypt*. For although they lived there above three Times as long as the *Babyloniſh* Captivity laſted, yet they ſtill preſerved the *Hebrew* Language among them, and brought it back entire with them into *Canaan*. The Reaſon of this was, in *Egypt* they all lived together in the Land of *Goſhen*; but on their being carried Captive by the *Babylonians* they were diſperſed all over *Chaldæa* and *Aſſyria*, and being there intermixed with the People of the Land, had their main Converſe with them, and therefore were forced to learn their Language, and this ſoon induced a Diſuſe of their own among them; by which Means it came to paſs, that after their Return the common People, eſpecially thoſe of them who had been bred up in that Captivity, underſtood not the Holy Scriptures in the *Hebrew* Language, nor their Poſterity after them. And therefore when *Ezra* read the Law to the People, he had ſeveral Perſons ſtanding by him, well ſkilled in both the *Chaldee* and *Hebrew* Languages, who interpreted to the People in *Chaldee*, what he firſt read to them in *Hebrew*. And afterwards, when the Method was eſtabliſhed, of dividing the Law into fifty-four Sections, and of reading one of them every Week in their Synagogues (according as hath already been deſcribed) the ſame Courſe of Reading to the People the *Hebrew* Text firſt, and then interpreting it to them in *Chaldee*, was ſtill continued. For when the Reader had read one Verſe in *Hebrew*, an Interpreter ſtanding by, did render it in *Chaldee*, and then the next Verſe being read in *Hebrew*, it was in like Manner interpreted in the ſame Language as before, and ſo on from Verſe to Verſe alternatively read firſt in *Hebrew*, and then interpreted in *Chaldee*, to then End of the Section; and this firſt gave Occaſion for the making of *Chaldee* Verſions for the Help of theſe Interpreters. And they thenceforth became neceſſary, not only for their Help in the publick Synagogues, but alſo for the Help of the People at home in their Families, that they might there have the Scriptures for their private Reading, in a Language which they underſtood.

For firſt, as Synagogues multiplied among the *Jews*, beyond the Number of able Interpreters, it became neceſſary that ſuch Verſions ſhould be made, for the Help of the leſs able. This was done at firſt only for the Law, becauſe at firſt the Law only was publickly read in their Synagogues, till the Perſecution of *Antiochus Epiphanes*; but after that Time, Leſſons being read out of the Prophets, in thoſe religious Aſſemblies, as well as out of the Law, the ſame Reaſon rendered it neceſſary, that *Chaldee* Verſions ſhould be made of theſe Scriptures alſo. And ſecondly, the Uſe of the People (which was the other Reaſon for the compoſing of thoſe Verſions) made this neceſſary for all the Scripture, as well as for the Law and the Prophets. For all Scripture being given for our Edification, all ought, for this End, to have them in a Language they underſtood. For when God gave his Law unto *Iſrael*, he enjoined, that they ſhould have his Commandments, Statutes and Judgments always in their Hearts, that they ſhould meditate on them Day and Night, teach them their Children, and talk of them, when they did ſit in their Houſes, and when they did walk by the Way, and when they lay down, and when they roſe up; and that all might be the better enabled to perform all this, it was ſtrictly enjoined by a Conſtitution of the Elders from antient Times, that every Man ſhould have by him a Copy of the Holy Scriptures fairly written out by his own, or if he could not write himſelf, by ſome other Hand, for his Inſtruction herein. But how could this be done, if they had thoſe Scriptures only in a Language which they did not underſtand? It was neceſſary therefore, that as they had the *Hebrew* Text for the Sake of the Original, ſo alſo that they ſhould have the *Chaldee* Verſion for the Sake of helping them to underſtand it. Indeed the Letter of the Law, which commands what I have here mentioned, extends no further than the five Books of *Moſes*; for no more of the Holy Scriptures were then written, when that Law was given; and alſo the Conſtitution above-mentioned, which was ſuperadded by the Elders, is by poſitive Words limited thereto. But the Reaſon of the Thing teacheth the whole Word of God. For ſince all of it is given for our Inſtruction, we are all equally obliged to know one Part of it, as well as the other. And therefore this cauſed, that at length the whole Scriptures were thus tranſlated from the *Hebrew* into the *Chaldee* Language, for the Sake of thoſe who could not otherwiſe underſtand them. For to lock up from the People, in an unknown Language, that Word of God, which was given to lead them to everlaſting Life, was a Thing that was not thought agreeable either to Reaſon or Piety in thoſe Times.

This Work having been attempted by divers Perſons at different Times, and by ſome of them with different Views (for ſome of them were written as Verſions for the publick Uſe of the Synagogues, and others as Paraphraſes and Commentaries for the private Inſtruction of the People) hence it came to paſs, that there were antiently many of theſe *Targums*, and of different Sorts, in the ſame Manner as there antiently were many different Verſions of the ſame Holy Scriptures into the *Greek* Language, made with the like different Views; of which we have ſufficient Proof in the *Octapla* of *Origen*. No doubt, antiently there were many more of theſe *Targums*, than we now know of, which have been loſt in the length of Time. Whether there were any of them of the ſame Compoſure, on the whole Scriptures, is not any where ſaid. Thoſe that are now remaining were compoſed by different Perſons, and on different Parts of Scripture, ſome on one Part, and others on other Parts, and are in all theſe eight Sorts following, 1. That of *Onkelos* on the five Books of *Moſes*. 2. That of *Jonathan Ben Uzziel* on the Prophets; that is, on *Joſhua*, *Judges*, the two Books of *Samuel*, the two Books of *Kings*, *Iſaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and the twelve *minor Prophets*. 3. That on the Law, which is aſcribed to *Jonathan Ben Uzziel*. 4. The *Jeruſalem Targum* on the Law. 5. The *Targum* on the five leſſer Books, called the *Megilloth*, i. e. *Ruth*, *Eſther*, *Eccleſiaſtes*, *The Song of Solomon*, and the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*. 6. The ſecond *Targum* on *Eſther*. 7. The *Targum* of *Joſeph the One-eyed*, on the Book of *Job*, the *Pſalms*, and the *Proverbs*, and 8. The *Targum* on the firſt and ſecond Book of *Chronicles*. On *Ezra*, *Nehemiah* and *Daniel*, there is no *Targum* at all. The Reaſon given by ſome for this is, becauſe a great Part of thoſe Books is written in the *Chaldee* Language, and therefore there is no need of a *Chaldee* Paraphraſe upon them. This indeed is true of *Daniel* and *Ezra*, but not of *Nehemiah*; for that Book is originally written in the *Hebrew* Language. No doubt antiently there were *Chaldee* Paraphraſes on all the *Hebrew* Parts of thoſe Books, though now loſt. It was long ſuppoſed that there were no *Targums* on the two Books of *Chronicles*, becauſe none ſuch were known, till they were lately publiſhed by *Beckius*, at *Augsburg* in *Germany*, that on the firſt Book *Anno Dom.* 1680, and that on the ſecond *Anno* 1688.

As the *Targum* of *Onkelos* is the firſt in order of Place, as being on the *Pentateuch*, which is the firſt Part of the Holy Scriptures; ſo I think it is not to be doubted, but that it is the firſt alſo in order of Time, and the antienteſt that was written of all that are now extant. The *Jewiſh* Writers, though they allow him to have been for ſome Time of his Life cotemporary with *Jonathan Ben Uzziel*, the Author of the ſecond *Targum* above-mentioned, yet make him much the younger of the two. For they tell us that *Jonathan* was one of the prime Scholars of *Hillel*, who died about the Time when our Saviour was born; but that *Onkelos* ſurvived *Gamaliel the Elder*, *Paul's* Maſter (who was the Grandſon of *Hillel*, and died not till eighteen Years before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*) for they relate that *Onkelos* aſſiſted at the Funeral of this *Gamaliel*, and provided for it ſeventy Pound of Frankincenſe at his own Charge. But there are ſeveral Reaſons which prevail with me to think *Onkelos* the antienter of the two; the chief and principal of them is the Style in which his *Targum* is written. That Part of *Daniel* and *Ezra*, which is in *Chaldee*, is the trueſt Standard whereby to try the Purity of the *Chaldee* Language. For this Language, as well as all others, being in a conſtant Flux, and in every Age deviating from what it was in the former, it follows from hence, that the farther any *Chaldee* Writing doth in its Stile differ from that antient Standard, the later certainly it is; and the nearer it comes to it, we may as certainly conclude the antienter it is. No *Chaldee* Writing now extant coming nearer to the Stile of what is written in that Language by *Daniel* and *Ezra*, than the *Targum* of *Onkelos*, this to me proves that *Targum* of all others to be the moſt antient. And I can ſee no other Reaſon why *Jonathan Ben Uzziel*, when he undertook to compoſe his *Targum*, ſhould paſs over the Law, and begin with the Prophets, but that he found *Onkelos* had done this Work before him, and with that Succeſs in the Performance, which he could not exceed. This *Targum* of *Onkelos* is rather a Verſion than a Paraphraſe; for it renders the *Hebrew* Text, Word for Word, and for the moſt Part accurately and exactly, and it is by much the better Sort. And therefore it hath always been had in eſteem among the *Jews*, much above all the other *Targums*, and being ſet to the ſame muſical Notes with the *Hebrew* Text, it is thereby made capable of being read in the ſame Tone with it in their public Aſſemblies. And that it was accordingly there read alternatively with the Text, in the Manner it is above deſcribed, *Elias Levita* tells us, who, of all the *Jews* that have handled this Argument, hath written the moſt accurately and fully of it. For he ſaith, "That the *Jews*, holding themſelves obliged, every Week in their Synagogues to read twice that *Paraſhah* or Section of the Law, which was the Leſſon of the Week (that is in the *Hebrew* Original firſt, and then in the *Chaldee* Intrepretation after it) made Uſe of the *Targum* of *Onkelos* for this Purpoſe; and that this was their Uſage even down to his Time (which was about the firſt Part of the ſixteenth Century:) And that for this Reaſon, though 'till the Art of Printing was invented, there were of the other *Targums* ſcarce above one or two of a Sort to be found in a whole Country; yet then the *Targum* of *Onkelos* was every where among them."

That the *Targum* of *Onkelos* on the Law, and *Jonathan* on the Prophets, are as antient as our Saviour's Time, if not antienter, is the Opinion of both *Jews* and *Chriſtians*. The *Jewiſh* Hiſtorians poſitively ſay it; for they tell us, that *Jonathan* was the moſt eminent of all the Scholars of *Hillel*, who died about the Time that our Saviour was born, and that *Onkelos* was contemporary with *Gamaliel* the elder (the ſame that was St. *Paul*'s Maſter) as is above-mentioned. For although the *Jewiſh* Writers are very wretched Hiſtorians, and often give us groſs Fables inſtead of true Narratives, yet whenever they do ſo, there is either ſomething internal in the Matter related, or external to it from other Evidences, that convict them of the Falſity; but where there is nothing of this, the Teſtimony of the Hiſtorian is to ſtand good in that which he relates of the Affairs of his Country or People. And therefore there being nothing concerning theſe two *Targums*, which can be alledged either from what is contained in them, or from any external Evidence to contradict what the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorians tell us of their Antiquity, I reckon their Teſtimony is to ſtand good concerning this Matter: And this Teſtimony is ſtrongly corroborated by the Style, in which they are pened. For it is the pureſt, and the beſt of all, that is written in the *Jeruſalem* Dialect, and without the Mixture of thoſe many exotick Words, which the *Jews* of *Jeruſalem* and *Judea* afterwards took into it from the *Greek* and *Latin*, and other Languages; this proves them to have been written before thoſe *Jews* had that common Converſe with thoſe Nations, from whom theſe Words were borrowed, and eſpecially before *Jeruſalem* and *Judea* were made a Province of the *Roman* Empire. For although the *Jews* of the Diſperſions had long before converſed with thoſe Nations, and learned their Language, yet this did not affect the *Jews* of *Jeruſalem* and *Judea*, but they ſtill retained their vulgar Tongue, in the ſame Dialect, in which it had been formed, after their Return from *Babylon*, till *Pompey* had ſubjected them to the *Roman* Yoke; but after that, *Greeks*, *Romans*, *Italians*, and other Subjects of the *Roman* Empire, either as Soldiers or Civil Officers, or on other Occaſions coming into that Country, and there mixing themſelves among them, from that Time they firſt began to borrow from them thoſe Words which corrupted their Language. And therefore ſince theſe *Targums* of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* are the cleareſt of this Corruption of all that we have in the *Jeruſalem* Dialect, this may aſſuredly convince us, that they were written before this Corruption had obtained any Prevalency among that People. And for this Reaſon I reckon them both to have been compoſed before our Saviour's Time, and the *Targum* of *Onkelos* to be the antienter of the two, becauſe it is the purer, though the other comes very little behind it herein, which evidently ſhews it to have been written very ſoon after it. The *Jews* ſpeak very magnificent Things of *Jonathan*, but ſay little of *Onkelos*, though they manifeſtly prefer the *Targum* of *Onkelos* before that of the other, as indeed it deſerves they ſhould, it being by much the more exact of the two; the Reaſon of this is, they all hold *Jonathan* to have been a natural *Jew*; but the general Vogue among them being, that *Onkelos* was a Proſelyte, and Siſter's Son to *Titus*, who deſtroyed *Jeruſalem*, for both theſe Reaſons, though both are groſs Miſtakes, they have leſſer Regard to his Memory than to that of the other, though they have the greater for his Work.

All theſe *Targums* are of great Uſe for the better Underſtanding not only the *Old Teſtament*, on which they were written, but alſo of the *New*. As to the *Old Teſtament*, they vindicate the Genuineneſs of the preſent *Hebrew* Text, by proving it the ſame that was in uſe when theſe *Targums* were made, contrary to the Opinion of thoſe, who think the *Jews* corrupted it after our Saviour's Time. They help to explain many Words and Phraſes in the *Hebrew* Original, for the Meaning whereof we ſhould otherwiſe have been at a Loſs; and they hand down to us many of the antient Cuſtoms and Uſages of the *Jews*, which much help to the illuſtrating of thoſe Scriptures, on which they are written. And ſome of theſe with the Phraſiologies, Idioms, and particuliar Forms of Speech, which we find in them, do in many Inſtances help as much for the illuſtrating and better underſtanding of the *New Teſtament* as of the *Old*. For the *Jeruſalem Chaldee* Dialect, in which they are written, being the ſame, which was the vulgar Language of the *Jews* in our Saviour's Time, many of its Idioms, Phraſiologies, and Forms of Speech, which from hence came into the Writings of the *New Teſtament*, are found in theſe *Targums*, and from thence are beſt to be illuſtrated and explained.

They alſo very much ſerve the *Chriſtian* Cauſe againſt the *Jews*, by interpreting many of the Propheſies of the *Meſſiah* in the *Old Teſtament*, in the ſame Manner as the *Chriſtians* do, I ſhall here inſtance ſome of them.

Gen. iii. 15. God ſaith unto the Serpent, *It* (that is the Seed of the Woman) *ſhall bruiſe thy Head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his Heel.* *Chriſtians* interpret this of the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom; and the *Jeruſalem Targum*, and that called *Jonathan*'s on the Law, do the ſame.

Gen. xlix. 10. *Jacob* propheſieth that *the Scepter ſhould not depart from* Judah, *nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until* Shiloh *ſhould come. Chriſtians* underſtand this of the *Meſſiah*, and from thence prove againſt the *Jews*, that the *Meſſiah* muſt, according to this Prophecy of him, have been long ſince come; becauſe long ſince, that is, for many Ages paſt, there hath been no regal Power in *Judah*, no Prince of that Nation ruling with the Scepter over them; nor any from between their Feet, that is, any born of that People, to make Laws or adminiſter Juſtice among them, becauſe for many Ages paſt the whole *Jewiſh* Polity hath utterly ceaſed from among them, and they have no where, ſince the Time of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the true *Meſſiah*, been governed by their own Princes, or their own Laws; but every-where by Strangers, and the Laws of Strangers, among whom they have lived. The *Jews*, to evade the Force of this manifeſt Argument againſt them, object, firſt, that the Word *Shebet* in the *Hebrew* Text, which we interpret a *Scepter*, the Inſtrument of Rule, ſignifieth alſo a *Rod*, which is the Inſtrument of Chaſtiſement, and therefore ſay, that though this ſhould be underſtood of the *Meſſiah*, the Meaning would be no more than that their Chiſtiſement, that is, the Baniſhment which they now ſuffer in their Diſperſions among ſtrange Nations, ſhould not ceaſe (as they all reckon it will not) till their *Meſſiah* ſhall come to deliver them from it. But in the ſecond Place they object, that they do not allow that the *Meſſiah* is meant by the Word *Shiloh* in this Prophecy. But in both theſe Particulars the *Chaldee* Paraphraſes are againſt them. For the Words of the *Onkelos* in this Text are, *There ſhall not be taken away from* Judah *one having the Principality, nor the* Scribe, *from the Sons of his Children, till the* Meſſiah *ſhall come.* And the *Jeruſalem Targum*, or Paraphraſe, and that called *Jonathan*'s agree with him in both theſe Particulars. For they both interpret *Shebet* of the Principality, and *Shiloh* of the *Meſſiah*, and therefore all three of them help the *Chriſtian* Cauſe in this Matter.

Numb. xxiv. 17. Part of this Prophecy of *Balaam* there recited, is, *There ſhall come a Star out of* Jacob, *and a Scepter ſhall riſe out of* Iſrael, *and ſhall bear Rule over all the Children of* Seth. We *Chriſtians* interpret this of the *Meſſiah*, and ſo doth *Onkelos* in his *Targum* on that Place. For his Words are, *A King ſhall riſe out of the Houſe of* Jacob, *and the* Meſſiah *ſhall be anointed out of the Houſe of* Iſrael, *who ſhall rule over all the Sons of Men.* And the *Targum* called *Jonathan*'s interprets this in the ſame Matter alſo, as that of *Onkelos* doth; and it is here to be obſerved that the *Targumiſts* rightly render this Phraſe, *All the Children of* Seth, by the Phraſe, *All the Sons of Men.* For all the Children of *Seth*, ſince the Flood, are the ſame with all the Chidren of *Adam*, and theſe are all Men. And this ſhews, according to this Prophecy, the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was not to be a peculiar Kingdom for the *Jews*, but univerſal for all Mankind. And agreeable hereto, *Maimonides* interprets this whole Text. His Words are as followeth: *A Scepter ſhall riſe out of* Iſrael; *this is the King* Meſſiah; *and ſhall ſmite the Corners of* Moab; *this is* David, *as it is written* (2 Sam. viii. 2.) *and he ſmote* Moab, *&c. And he ſhall bear Rule over Children of* Seth; *this is the King* Meſſiah *of whom it is written* (Pſalm lxxii. 8.) *He ſhall have Dominion from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth.*

Iſaiah ix. 6, 7. The Words of the Prophet are, *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government ſhall be upon his Shoulder, and his Name ſhall be called Wonderful Counſellor, the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the Encreaſe of his Government there ſhall be no End, upon the Throne of* David, *and upon his Kingdom to order it, and to eſtabliſh it with Judgment, and with Juſtice from henceforth even for ever. Chriſtians* all hold that this is ſpoken of the *Meſſiah*; and *Jonathan*, in the *Targum* which is truly his, doth on that Place ſay the ſame.

Iſaiah. xi. This whole Chapter we *Chriſtians* underſtand of the *Meſſiah*, and the Peaceableneſs and Happineſs of his Kingdom. *Jonathan* doth the ſame in the *Targum* thereon, and in it doth twice make Expreſſion thereof, that is, on the firſt Verſe, and on the ſixth.

Iſaiah lii, and liii. What is contained in theſe two Chapters, from the ſeventh Verſe of the firſt of them, to the End of the other, is all a continued Prophecy of the *Meſſiah*. So St. *John* in his Goſpel xii. 38. and St. *Paul* to the *Romans* x. 16. do teach us, and ſo all *Chriſtians* hold, having ſo great Authority for it. But the Deſcription there given of a ſuffering *Meſſiah* not agreeing with the Notion which the *Jews* have of him, who expect a *Meſſiah* reigning and triumphing in temporal Pomp and Power, ſeveral of them reject this Interpretation, and wreſt it to the whole People of *Iſrael*. But the *Targum* of *Jonathan* interprets it of the *Meſſiah*, as the *Chriſtians* do, and twice within the Compaſs of the Prophecy (*i. e.* Chap. lii. 13. and Chap. liii. 10.) applies it to him. And *Jonathan* having compoſed this *Targum* before *Chriſt*'s Time, the ſerving of either Party cannot be ſuppoſed to to have influenced him to have written otherwiſe, than appeared to him to be the plain Truth of the Matter, and that this Prophecy can be underſtood of none other than the *Meſſiah*, is manifeſt from the whole Tenour of it. And it is as manifeſt, that it was all compleated in *Chriſt* our Lord. And therefore others among the *Jews* having rightly judged, that the Wreſtings abovementioned are not ſufficient to baffle the true Meaning of this Prophecy, have, for the evading hereof, invented another Device; that is, that there are to be two *Meſſiahs*, and both yet to come, one of which, they ſay, is to be of the Tribe of *Ephraim*, (and they therefore call him *Meſſiah* the Son of *Ephraim*, and ſometimes *Meſſiah* the Son of *Joſeph*) and the other of the Tribe of *Judah*, and the Lineage of *David*; and they therefore call him *Meſſiah* the Son of *David*. The firſt of theſe (who, they ſay, will be the Forerunner of the other) they make to be a ſuffering *Meſſiah*, and tell us of him, that he is to fight againſt *Gog*, and having overcome him, ſhall afterwards be ſlain by *Armillus*, whom they hold to be the greateſt Enemy that ſhall ever appear againſt the Church of God in this World. And of this *Meſſiah the Son of Ephraim*, they interpret all that is foretold in the *Old Teſtament* of the Sufferings of *Chriſt* our Lord, eſpecially what is foretold of him in this Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, and in that of *Zechariah* xii. 10. in which laſt they interpret the Words, *whom they have pierced*, of his being to be pierced and run throgh by the Sword of *Armillus*, when he ſhall be ſlain by him. The other *Meſſiah*, that is, *Meſſiah the Son of* David, they make to be a conquering and reigning *Meſſiah*, that ſhall conquer and kill *Armillus*, and reſtore the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, and there reign in the higheſt Glory and Felicity: And of him they interpret all that is ſaid in the Scripture of the *Old Teſtament* of the Glory, Power and Righteouſneſs of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom. But all that they thus tell us of their twofold *Meſſiah*, is a mere Fiction, framed without ſo much as a Pretence to any Foundation in Scripture for it; a vile and moſt pitiful Fetch, invented only to evade what they cannot anſwer; and their being forced to have Recourſe to ſuch a wretched Shift, is a plain giving up of the Cauſe they make uſe of it for.

Micah. v. 2. The Words of the Prophet are, *And thou* Bethlehem Ephratah *ſhalt be Chief among the Thouſands of* Judah; *Out of thee ſhall come forth unto me, he that is to be Ruler in* Iſrael. This is the true Tranſlation of the *Hebrew* Text, and this all *Chriſtians* underſtand of the *Meſſiah*, and ſo antiently did the Chief-prieſts and Scribes of the People of the *Jews*, when conſulted by *Herod*. But ſince that Time, in Oppoſition to the Goſpel, *Jewiſh* Writers have endeavoured to give this Text another Meaning, ſome interpreting it of *Hezekiah*, and ſome of *Zerubbabel*, and ſome otherwiſe. But *Jonathan*, who perchance was one of thoſe *Scribes* whom *Herod* conſulted, gives the true Meaning of it by interpreting it of the *Meſſiah*, in the ſame Manner as we *Chriſtians* do. For this Verſion of the Text is, *Out of thee ſhall come forth before me the* Meſſiah *who ſhall exerciſe ſovereign Rule over* Iſrael.

Pſalm ii. This *Pſalm* we *Chriſtians* interpret to be a Prophecy of the *Meſſiah*, and hold it all to be fulfilled in our Saviour, and the Erection of his Kingdom againſt all Oppoſition which it met with from the *Jews*, *Heathens*, and the Princes and Rulers of the Earth. And ſo the holy Apoſtles underſtood it of old, *Acts* iv. 25, 26, 27. and Chap. xiii. 33. *Hebrews* i. 5. In Oppoſition hereto the *Jews* apply it wholly and ſolely to *David* himſelf, and will allow it no other Meaning either literal or typical, but what is terminated in his Perſon. But the *Targum* is on our Side, for it interprets this *Pſalm*, to be a Prophecy of the *Meſſiah*, as all *Chriſtians* do.

Pſalm lxxii. This *Pſalm* alſo the *Jews* underſtand of *Solomon*; but *Chriſtians* as a Prophecy of the *Meſſiah*; And the *Targum* is on our Side herein, for it applies it to the *Meſſiah* in the ſame Manner as we do. Many other Inſtances might be produced out of theſe *Targums*, wherein the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* are illuſtrated and explained for the Advantage of the *Chriſtian* Cauſe againſt all Oppoſers. But theſe are ſufficient to give the Reader a Taſte of all the reſt, and alſo to ſhew how uſeful theſe *Targums* may be, to a *Chriſtian* Divine, in all Controverſies about the *Meſſiah*, eſpecially againſt the *Jews*. For theſe *Targums* being their own Books, all Arguments taken out of them, if any Thing can convince that obſtinate People, muſt be of a very convincing Force againſt them, eſpecially when they are out of the *Targums* of *Onkelos* on the Law, and *Jonathan* on the Prophets. For theſe they hold to be of the ſame Authority with the ſacred Word itſelf.

5 DE 60

The END *of the* OLD TESTAMENT.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,

By Way of

QUESTION and ANSWER.

WHEREIN

All **DIFFICULTIES** are methodically ſolved; the hiſtorical PART regularly carried on; ſeeming CONTRADITIONS reconciled; and every OBJECTION clearly anſwered and made eaſy and intelligible, ſo that a Common Underſtanding may be inſtructed to ſolve any Difficulty in this Part of SACRED WRIT.

Adorned with Maps, Cuts, *&c.* Deſigned by the beſt Artiſts.

By S. SMITH, *D. D.*

LONDON:
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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO
St. MATTHEW.

MATTHEW *was the Son of* Alpheus, Mar. ii. 14. *called alſo* Levi; *by Employment a Publican, that is, one who gathered* Cuſtom *for the* Romans (*an Officer generally hated by the People, and not reputed very honeſt.*) Chriſt *called him* from the Receipt of Cuſtom *to be* his Diſciple, Mat. xi. 3, 10. *He was ſent out as one of the twelve Apoſtles,* Mat. x. 3. *So that he was both an Eye and* Ear-witneſs *of what he wrote. What became of him after* Chriſt's *Aſcenſion is uncertain, and as dubious as to any Dependance to be made on what* Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians *ſay in the Caſe, who wrote three or four hundred Years afterwards. The Time of his writing this Goſpel is uncertain, ſome ſay eight, ſome nine, and ſome fifteen Years after* Chriſt's Aſcenſion. *It hath been a Queſtion alſo, whether he wrote in* Hebrew *or* Greek: *It is moſt probable that he* (*as the other* Evangeliſts) *wrote it in* Greek, *though it hath been once or twice tranſlated into* Hebrew.

This Goſpel of St. Matthew *contains an Hiſtory of the Birth, Life, Miracles, Death, and Reſurrection of the* Holy Jeſus: *All which are moſt ſtupendous and amazing Matters, and Myſteries; as well as the moſt neceſſary Truths to be known and believed in the World.*

The Subſtance of the enſuing Goſpel of St. Matthew *is, that the everlaſting Son of God, at the Time appointed and foretold, took Human Fleſh from the Sacred Virgin, by the miraculous Operation of the Holy Ghoſt, by whom alſo his human Nature was perfectly ſanctified even from his firſt Conception, and accumulated with all manner of Graces by God. That having ſpent many Years in a private Life, he was by God his Father, at the Time of his being baptized by* John the Baptiſt, *inſtalled in the publick Exerciſe of his Office of* Meſſiah, *which having faithfully executed he aſcended into Heaven, to take Poſſeſſion of his everlaſting Kingdom. Now the Hiſtory of this Goſpel conſiſts more particularly in deſcribing his Converſation in the World, as is related to his Actions, Doctrines, and Sufferings. His Actions may be conſidered as Natural, Civil, Eccleſiaſtical, Spiritual and Divine. In ſome of which he hath ſhewn the Truth of his human Nature; in others his exceeding Charity and Mildneſs; his voluntary Obedience and Humility; his Holineſs, Righteouſneſs, and perfect Innocence; and in others his divine and infinite Power.*

CHAP. I.

The Genealogy of Chriſt *from* Abraham *to* Joſeph. *His Conception by the Holy Ghoſt, and Birth of the Virgin* Mary. Joſeph's *Doubts of her, is ſatisfied by an Angel, who interprets the Names of* Chriſt.

Q. WHAT *is Obſervable in this Pedigree which St.* Matthew *gives of* Chriſt?

A. The Evangeliſt, deſigning to write a Narrative of our Saviour's Life, begins with his Pedigree and Genealogy, and ſhews whom he deſcended from, namely, from *David* and *Abraham.* Where we may obſerve, 1. That *David* is named before *Abraham*, becauſe he being a King, and an illuſtrious Type of the Meſſias; the *Jews* expected, and do to this Day expect, that the Son of *David* ſhould reign over them; and that they ſhould enjoy a temporal Kingdom by him. 2. The Names given to our bleſſed Saviour, are *Jeſus* and *Chriſt*: *Jeſus* is his *Hebrew* Name, and ſignifies a Saviour; *Chriſt* is his *Greek* Name, and ſignifies anointed; from whence ſome infer an Imitation and Encouragement, that both *Hebrews* and *Greeks*, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* may alike come unto *Chriſt* for Life and Salvation; he being the common Saviour of both; according to that of St. *John*, 1 Epiſt. ii. 2. *He is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but alſo for the Sins of the whole World.* Both the Evangeliſts, St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, mention our Saviour's Pedigree; the former by his reputed Father's ſide, the latter by his Mother's ſide: The Deſign of both was to preſent us with a general Draught of our Saviour's Pedigree and Deſcent, and not to be ſtrict and accurate in numerating every individual Perſon. This ſhould teach us not to be over curious in ſcanning the

the Parts of this Genealogy, much leſs captiouſly object againſt it, for if the Evangeliſts were not critical and exact in compoſing this Genealogy, why ſhould we ſhew our ſelves ſo in examining of it? Rather let us attend to the Deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in writing it, which was two-fold. 1. For the Honour of our Saviour, as Man; ſhewing who were his Noble and Royal Progenitors according to the Fleſh. 2. For the Confirmation of our Faith, touching the Reality of our Saviour's Incarnation.

The Scriptures making mention of all his Progenitors, from the firſt Man *Adam*, to his reputed Father *Joſeph*, will not ſuffer us to doubt, either of the Truth of his human Nature, or of the Certainty of his being the *promiſed Meſſias*. Hence we may learn, that the Wiſdom of God hath taken all neceſſary Care, and uſed all needful Means for ſatisfying the Minds of all unprejudiced Perſons touching the Reality of *Chriſt's* human Nature, and Certainty of his being the promiſed *Meſſias*: For both theſe Ends is our Saviour's Genealogy and Deſcent recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

Q. *Who was* Rahab, *mentioned Verſe* 5?

A. That *Rahab*, ſays Doctor *Hammond*, was the Wife of *Salmon*, and Mother of *Booz*, is not ſet down in the Old Teſtament, nor in the Genealogy in St. *Luke*, but recited by this Evangeliſt either out of the *Cabala*, or Tradition, or elſe from ſome other written Authors of ſufficient Credit among the *Jews*; as the Names of *Jannes* and *Jambres*, 2 *Tim.* iii. 8. appear to have been, and ſome others.

Q. *Has not the ſame Author a Remark upon* Jechoniah, *mentioned Verſe* 12?

A. He ſays, That, of *Jechoniah* 'tis pronounced (*Write this Man Childleſs*, Jer. xxii. 30.) which ſeems to infer, that *Salathiel* was not his Son, but his Heir only. And thus hath the learned *Grotius* ſet it, *Luke* iii. that *Joſias* begat *Jechoniah*, i. e. *Jehoiakim*, another *Jechonias*, that died childleſs, *Zedekias* (his Uncle) ſucceeding him, and *Aſſir* ſucceeding *Zedekias*, and then *Salathiel* the Son of *Neri* was *Aſſir's* Heir, and ſo is here ſaid to be begotten by *Jechoniah*. For that of leaving one Heir or Succeſſor is a kind of civil begetting, as God is ſaid to have begotten Sons, whom he hath only adopted. And therefore when we read in *Jer.* xxii. 28. of *Jechoniah's* Seed caſt into a Land, &c. *i. e.* carried captive with him; and in 1 *Chron.* iii. 17. when in his Genealogy we read, the Sons of *Jechoniah*, *Aſſir*, and *Salathiel* his Son, this may be the Meaning of it, that theſe were his Heirs or Succeſſors, though others interpret it otherwiſe, either, that his Children ſhould be cut off, or at leaſt, that none of his Seed ſhould ſit upon the Throne of *David*, which is there rendered as *Jeremiah's* Speech, *For no Man of his Seed ſhall proſper*, Ver. 30.

Q. *Have not the Learned ſtarted ſome Difficulties concerning the Interpretation of the* 13*th Verſe?*

A. Doctor *Hammond* has a Remark to this Effect. In a very antient *Hebrew* Copy of this Goſpel, this Verſe is ſomewhat varied; thus, *And* Eliakim *begat* Abner, *and* Abner *begat* Azor, &c. By which Interpretation of *Abner* the fourteen Generations are compleated, in which otherwiſe there ſeems a Defect, *Salathiel* being probably the firſt of this third fourteen, and not *Jechoniah* (as *Solomon* was the firſt of the ſecond, and not *David*) from whom to *Chriſt* there will then be but fourteen, if *Abner* be not thus added. Another way of making up the fourteen, is, by putting *Jachim* in, Verſe 11. (as *Robert Stephens* ſet down in his *Var. Lect.*) *Joſias* begat *Jachim*, and *Jachim* begat *Jeconias*; and to this the Genealogy agrees, 1 *Chron.* iii. 15. and if this be taken, then *Jechoniah* muſt be the firſt of the laſt fourteen; ſo that the Word *from* in Verſe 17. ſhall ſignify *from the Beginning of*, or from the 11th Verſe, from that Time about or before the Tranſportation.

Q. *What has been noted concerning the Women named in our Saviour's Genealogy?*

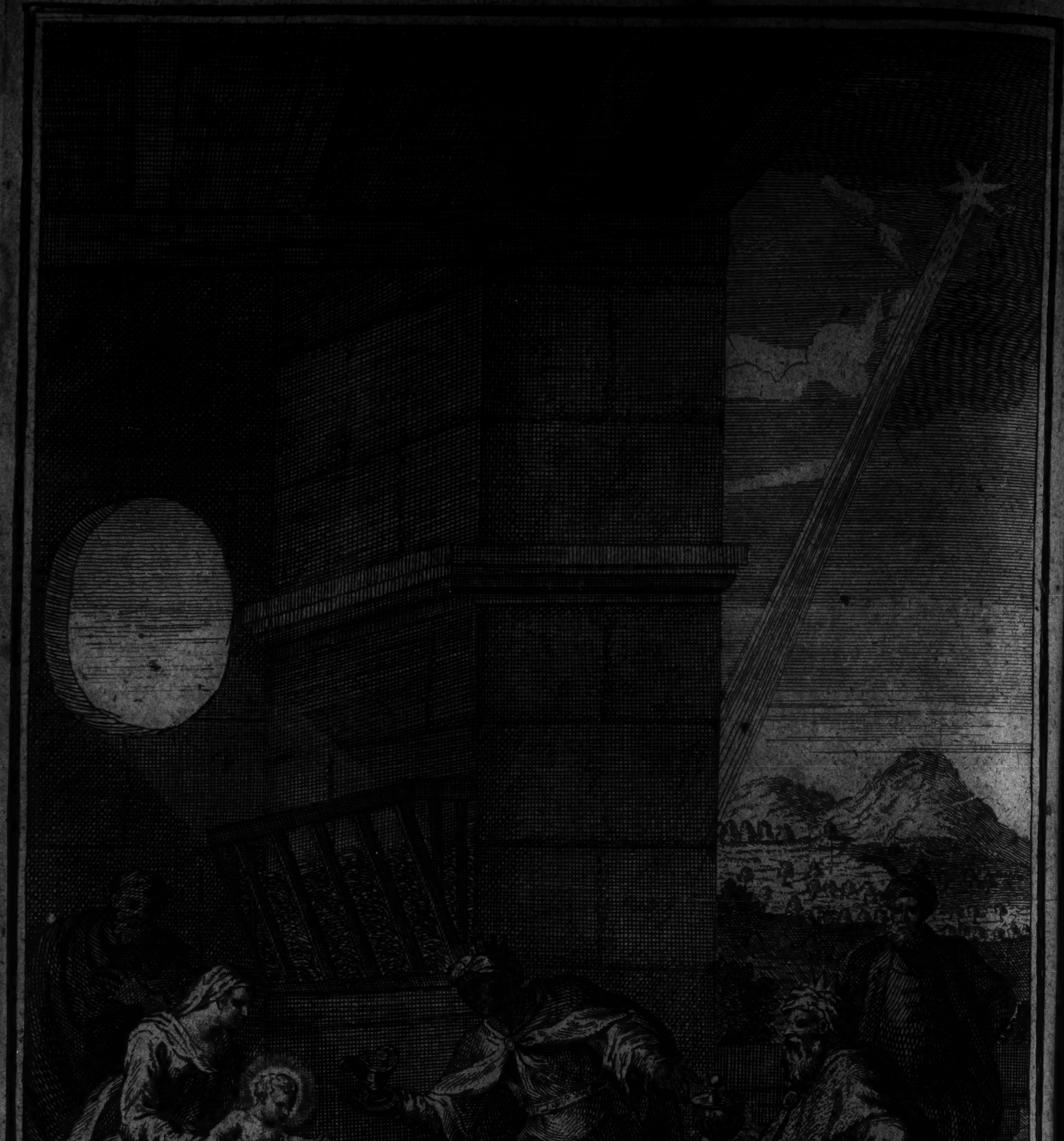
A. It has been obſerved, that moſt of them have a Brand of Infamy upon them. *Thamar* was one with whom her Father-in-law *Judah* committed Inceſt; *Rahab* is called an Harlot; *Ruth* came of *Moab*, whom *Lot* begat of his own Daughter; and *Bathſheba*, the Wife of *Uriah*, was one with whom *David* committed Adultery. Now the Wiſdom of God hath thought fit to leave all this upon Record, for ſeveral Ends and Purpoſes. 1. To denote the Freeneſs of God's Grace, which extends itſelf in the ſaving Effects and Benefits of it, to them that are moſt unworthy and ill deſerving. 2. To encourage the greateſt Sinners to go unto *Chriſt* by Faith, and ſeek to be grafted into him; for as *Chriſt*, by the Power of his Godhead, did purify our Nature from all the Pollutions of his Anceſtors, ſo he can, by the Power of his Grace and Spirit, ſanctify our Perſons and Nature, how foul and impure ſoever they either are, or have been. 3. Hereby our Lord gives us to underſtand, that he came to ſave the moſt notorious Sinners, as well as thoſe whoſe Lives have been leſs ſcandalous. 4. This is recorded for the Support of thoſe who are illegitimate and baſe-born, how vile ſoever their Parents Sin has rendered them in the Eyes of Men, it is their own Sin only that expoſes them to Contempt in the Sight of God.

Q. *The* 23*d Verſe contains a Prophecy of* Iſaiah *concerning the Birth and Name of* Chriſt, *and which pray explain; it runs thus,* Behold a Virgin ſhall be with Child, and ſhall bring forth a Son, and they ſhall call his Name *Emmanuel*, which being interpreted, is, God with us?

A. This Verſe is, by Dr. *Hammond*, thus explained. Theſe Words, ſays he, in *Iſaiah*, had there a literal Senſe, (whether really to be then performed, or only in Viſion, is not certain) which is thus to be interpreted; The Child given for a Sign to *Ahaz*, was to have this Name given him, *Emmanuel*, which ſignifies God with us: Not that that Child, born in *Iſaiah's* Time, ſhould be God, but (as *Gen.* xxii. 14) the Place where God provided a Ram inſtead of *Iſaac*, is called *Jehovah-jireh*, God will ſee or provide; which concludes not that the Place was God, or that the Place ſhould ſee, but only that that was to be a memorative of God's ſeeing and providing; ſo here, that the Impoſition of this Name upon this Child ſhould ſignify (as a Sign given *Ahaz* to that Purpoſe) that God would afford him his peculiar Preſence and Aſſiſtance againſt his Enemies. And ſo all is plain in *Iſaiah*; only it muſt be added, that if the Term *they ſhall call*, be the right Reading of the Place, then there is a Scheme of the ſacred Dialect diſcernable in it, whereby *they ſhall call*, is but a Phraſe for *he ſhall be called*. And accordingly Verſe 21. for *thou ſhalt call*, ſpoken to *Joſeph*, ſome Copies have *they ſhall call*, i. e. he ſhall be called. But the

BRITISH
5 DE 60
MUSEUM

S. MATTHEW CHAP. II



The wiſe men's Offering.

the antient Copy which *Beza* ſent to the Univerſity of *Cambridge*, reads, *thou ſhalt call*; whereupon, though our *Bibles* read, *A Virgin ſhall conceive, and ſhall call*, yet in the Margin it was thought Neceſſary to ſet it, *Thou O Virgin ſhalt call*. And ſo in the Epiſtle appointed by the Church for the Annunciation of *Mary*, it is rendered, and *thou his Mother ſhalt call*.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Marriage of* Joſeph *with the Virgin* Mary?

A. Concerning the Marriage of *Joſeph* with the Virgin *Mary*, we have this to remark, *viz.* It is piouſly believed, though not poſitively in Scripture aſſerted, that the Virgin had no other Child but our Saviour; it is a very probable Opinion, tho' not an infallible article of Faith, as the Church of *Rome* would make it; for the Word until ſignifies in Scripture, as much as never. So *Gen.* xxviii. 15. *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have promiſed*; that is, I will never leave thee. So the Words following, *her Firſt-born*, do not imply that ſhe had any Child after; but that ſhe had none before. That Child which firſt openeth the Womb, is uſually in Scripture called the Firſt-born, though there was no other born after. Thus *Joſh.* xvii, 1. *Machir* is called the Firſt-born of *Manaſſeh*, though he had no more Children. So that *Chriſt*, not only as God, but alſo as he was Man, was the Firſt born and only Son. St. *Auſtin* expounds and applies *Ezek.* xliv. 7. to the Virgin *Mary*; this Gate ſhall be ſhut, it ſhall not be opened, and no Man ſhall enter in by it, becauſe the Lord God of *Iſrael* hath entered in by it, therefore it ſhall be ſhut. And others of the Antients ſay, that as *Chriſt* lay in a Tomb, in which none lay in but himſelf, ſo he lodged in a Womb in which none ever lay, either before or after himſelf. But he adds, what the Virgin was afterwards, is of ſmall Concern to his Myſtery, therefore not to be enquired after. And yet it is now paſſed, by ſome, into a Matter of Faith, that the Virgin *Mary* was ever a Virgin, and it hath been ſtyled an Hereſy to hold the contrary; but how it is conſiſtent with good Divinity to make that an Article of divine Faith, which is founded on no divine Revelation, or to make that neceſſarily to be believed, which confeſſedly is not contained in the holy Scripture, let the Church of *Rome* anſwer.

CHAP. II.

The Wiſemen, directed by a Star, come to Jeruſalem *to know where* Chriſt *ſhould be born.* Herod *being troubled, conſults the Prieſts about the Place of his Birth, and ſends to them* Bethlehem, *and to bring him Word. They finding the Child and his Mother, worſhip and offer him Gifts; being warned of God, returned to their own Country another Way. God appearing to* Joſeph, *bids him flie into* Egypt *with* Jeſus *and his Mother.* Herod *kills all the Children of* Bethlehem. *After* Herod's *Death,* Joſeph, *with the Child and his Mother, return to* Galilee.

Q. WHAT *Obſervations occur to you from the Hiſtory of this Chapter?*

A. Our Saviour's miraculous Conception, by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, being recorded in the firſt Chapter; ſeveral remarkable Circumſtances relating to his Birth, are ſet down in this; namely, the Place of his Birth, *Bethlehem*; and the Time, in the Days of *Herod* the King. Upon which we ſhall make the following Obſervations.

1. With reſpect to the Place of our Lord's Birth, *Bethlehem*, not at *Athens*, at *Rome*, or at *Jeruſalem*, nor in any opulent or magnificent City, but in the meaneſt of the Cities of *Judah*; thereby ſhewing us, that his Kingdom is not of this World, and that he little regarded Pomp and outward Greatneſs.

2. The Time of our Lord's Birth, in the Days of *Herod* the King. This *Herod* being a Foreigner, and made King by the *Romans*, who now reigned over the *Jews*; in him was fulfilled *Jacob*'s Prophecy, *Gen.* xlix. 10. *That the Sceptre ſhould not depart from* Judah; that is, the *Jews* ſhould have Governors of their own Nation, until *Shiloh* came; this is, until *Chriſt*, the promiſed *Meſſiah*, came in the Fleſh. So that, conſidering the Circumſtance of Time and Place, where and when *Chriſt* was born, it was and is wilful Obſtinacy in the *Jews*, to deny that the *Meſſiah* is come in the Fleſh.

3. That Tribute of Honour which was paid unto our Saviour at his Birth; the Wiſemen of the *Eaſt* came and worſhipped him; that is, the *Chaldean*, *Arabian* or *Perſian* Aſtronomers, who, as the Firſt-fruits of the *Gentiles*, ſeek after *Chriſt*, whilſt his own People the *Jews* rejected him. They enquire after *Chriſt*, they do not aſk, whether he was born, but where; not doubting of the Fact, but ignorant of the Place. The Ground of their Enquiry was, *For we have ſeen the Star:* They had ſeen a Star; but how did they know it to be his Star? Probably by divine Revelation, they had a Light within, as well as a Star without. The End of their Journey was, *We are come to worſhip him*; that is, to pay all that Honour and Homage which is due to a great and mighty Prince; all that Adoration and worſhip, which belongs to the *Meſſiah*, the Redeemer of the World.

4. That when *Chriſt* came into the World to ſave Men, it caſt the World into a Conſternation, and cauſed wonderful Diſturbances; *Herod* is firſt concerned, and then all *Jeruſalem* with him; *Herod* for fear of loſing his Kingdom; *Jeruſalem* for fear of new Commotions. Thus *Chriſt*, who was the Angels Song, the wiſe Men's Joy, and *Iſrael's* Conſolation, becomes *Herod*'s Fear, and *Jeruſalem*'s Terror.

5. *Bethlehem* was the City of *David*'s Birth, and of *Chriſt* the Son of *David*. *Bethlehem* ſignifies the Houſe of Bread, and was ſo called from its Fertility and Fruitfulneſs; and, as ſome think, with Reference to *Chriſt* the true Bread of Life, born there. It was a Mean and contemptible Place in itſelf; but being honoured with *Chriſt*'s Preſence, how great is it?

6. How *Herod* clokes his intended Cruelty with diſguiſed Hipocriſy; he had Murder in his Heart, when he pretended to worſhip *Chriſt* with his Mouth. He calls him the young Child, not the young King; that was too big to come out of *Herod*'s proud Mouth; he could neither bear the Thing, nor brook the Title.

7. That the Star which for ſome Time had diſappeared, now appears again to the farther Direction of the Wiſemen in finding *Chriſt*. They were warned of God not to return back to *Herod*. But did they act the honeſt Men in not returning? *Anſw.* It appears not that they promiſed *Herod* to

return, though he expected it; or, if they did, it was in Conſideration that *Herod* ſhould come and worſhip *Chriſt*, not to murder him; but if they promiſed him never ſo poſitively, God gave them a Diſpenſation from that Promiſe, by commanding them to return home another Way.

8. The extraordinary Humiliation of our Lord by Perſecution even in the very Morning of his Life; he was baniſhed almoſt as ſoon as born. Flie into *Egypt*, for *Herod* will ſeek the young Child to deſtroy him. Into *Egypt*, an unlikely Place for Safety; who could expect Liberty in that Houſe of Bondage? But any Place is good if God ſends us thither, and *Chriſt* be in our Company. *Joſeph* readily complies with the divine Command; Faith gave Wings to his Obedience, and inſtantly baniſhes all his Fears, and afforded a fuller Supply than all the Treaſures of the *Arabian* Princes. But though he flies, it is privately in the Night, and he prudently begins his Journey when the leaſt Notice could be taken of his Motion; teaching us, that when our Direction is clear, our Compliance ſhould be ſpeedy.

9. How *Herod* having played the Fox before, acts the Lion now; his ſecret Policy not ſucceeding, he breaks out into open and inhuman Cruelty; and thoſe holy Innocents fall a Sacrifice to *Herod's* Rage, and die for *Chriſt*, who came to die for them. Some affirm, that *Herod* did not ſpare his own Child, then at nurſe on the Coaſts of *Bethlehem*; which made *Auguſtus* ſay, he had rather be *Herod's* Hog, than *Herod's* Child; becauſe the *Jews* neither killed nor eat Swine's Fleſh. And *Herod*, in compliance with the *Jews*, abſtained from it alſo.

10. The loud and bitter Cry the Mothers at *Bethlehem* made for the Death of their Children; great Lamentation was made by *Rachel*, that is, by the Women inhabiting in and about *Bethlehem*, where *Rachel's* Sepulcher was; for the Land about *Bethlehem* was called *Rachel*, from *Rachel's* Sepulcher in thoſe Parts.

11. *Herod's*; like a bloody Perſecutor, he is ſent unlamented to his Grave. Hiſtorians ſay, that out of his Hody iſſued ſuch impure Streams of Blood, that the Loathſomeneſs and Pain made him attempt to kill himſelf. *Herod* being dead an Angel is diſpatched to acquaint *Joſeph* with it, who thereupon returns.

12. A threefold Interpretation is given of the Words, he ſhall be called a *Nazarene*. Some read the Words, 1. He ſhall be called a *Nazarite*; the *Nazarites* were a religious Sect among the *Jews*, who abſtained from Wine, and came not near the Dead, for fear of Pollution: *Chriſt* was a holy Perſon, but no *Nazarite*, in a ſtrict Senſe; for he drank Wine, and touched the dead. 2. Others read the Words, he ſhall be called a *Netzar*, a Branch, in Alluſion to *Iſa.* ii. 1. where he is called a Branch of the Root of *Jeſſe*. *Chriſt* was that true Branch, of which the Prophets had ſo often ſpoken. 3. Others will have the Word *Nazarene* refer to the City *Nazareth*; hence his Diſciples were called the Sect of the *Nazarenes*; that is, the Followers of him that dwelt at *Nazareth*; and *Chriſt* himſelf was pleaſed to own the Title, Acts xxii. 8. I am *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, &c. here we may obſerve the great Humility of our Saviour; he was born at *Bethlehem*, a little City; he lives at *Nazareth*, a poor contemptible Village; he aſpires not after the Grandeur of the World, but is meek and lowly in Spirit.

Q. *Who were theſe Wiſe-men, and what was the exact Time of their coming to* Bethlehem?

A. The *Greek* Word here uſed for Wiſe-men, is *Magi*; which ſignifies not only ſuch as we uſually call *Magicians* or *Sorcerers*, but alſo Philoſophers, Studients and Profeſſors of Liberal Sciences, eſpecially of Aſtronomy, without any ill Character upon them. Theſe were then famous among the *Perſians*, and were both their Kings and their Prieſts, and ſo among other Nations alſo, eſpecially the Eaſtern, and were, at that Time, honoured and known for the Study of good Learning; and ſo the Words, *from the Eaſt*, are perhaps to be joined with, *the wiſe* or *learned of* or *from the Eaſt*, (as the *Jews* of, or from *Theſſalonica*, *Acts* xvii. 13.) not to the Word *came*, as if they came from the Eaſt of *Jeruſalem* thither. Theſe are, by an antient Commentator on *Plato*, mentioned under the Name of *Chaldeans*, ſo much famed for Skill in Aſtronomy. Now the Time of their coming to *Bethlehem*, when it was, is not diſtinctly known, but may be concluded not to be before the twelfth Day from his Birth, not only by the Diſtance of *Bethlehem* from their home, but by one Circumſtance which is recorded. 'Tis here ſaid, that immediately after the Wiſe-men's Departure; the Angel appeared to *Joſeph*, and diſpatched them to *Egypt*; which could not be before the Time of *Mary's* Purification; *for then*, ſaith Luke, *they went up to* Jeruſalem, *Luke* ii. 22. which cannot be ſuppoſed to be after their going into *Egypt*; nor betwixt the Departure of the *Magi*, and their going thither, for that had been to throw themſelves into *Herod's* Hands at *Jeruſalem*, which they were commanded to avoid, by going into *Egypt*. From *Jeruſalem*, it ſeems, they returned to *Bethlehem*, and there dwelt in an hired Houſe, till after the coming and departure of the *Magi*; and therefefore the Tradition, which makes the *Epiphany* the twelfth Day from the Day of the Nativity, may mean it of that Time twelve Months, according to which it is, that, upon exact enquiring the Time of the Star's appearing, *Herod*, Verſe 16. appoints the killing of all the Children from two Years old and under, which probably he would not have done, if they had told him, that the Star appeared but a few Days ſince. Or elſe, ſecondly, the Word *Epiphany*, ſignifying Appearance, may denote the Time of the firſt appearing of the Star to them in their Countries, Verſe 2. differing from that other Appearance, Verſe 9. and that might well come to be exactly known by the Church from the Intelligence that was given by the *Magi*, Verſe 7. and that might be the very twelfth Day from *Chriſt's* Nativity. And then, thirdly, the *Greek* Word *Epiphany*, is the Word to ſignify *Chriſt's* Appearance in the World, the Nativity, which among the Antients is commonly ſtyled *Epiphany*, and *Theophany*, the *appearing ſimply*, or *the appearing of God*; and the Feaſt of the Nativity being celebrated twelve Days, of which the firſt and the laſt, according to the Cuſtom of the *Jews* in their Feaſts, were high or chief Days of Solemnity, each of theſe might fitly be called *Epiphany*, in that Senſe, and not only referring to the Star, though not excluding, but containing it alſo, as a ſpecial Circumſtance belonging to the Nativity.

Chap. III.

John, *in the Wilderneſs, preaches Repentance. His Life and Baptiſm; reproves the* Phariſees *for placing Salvation in being* Abraham's *Children; ſhews the Dignity of the Perſon, Baptiſm and Doctrine of* Chriſt; *and baptizes him in the River* Jordan.

Q. WHAT *are the Inſtructions conveyed to us in this Chapter?*

A. The *Evangeliſt*, paſſing over the whole Minority of *Chriſt*'s Life, in private, till he was thirty Years of Age, brings him from *Nazareth*, and ſhews him entring upon his publick Miniſtry, having *John the Baptiſt* for his Harbinger and Forerunner.

This Chapter begins with an Account of *John*'s entring upon his Office, and the Method he took in the Execution of it, *viz.* He preached in the Wilderneſs of *Judea*; not in populous *Jeruſalem*, but in a barbarous Wilderneſs, where the Inhabitants were few, ignorant and rude; he preached the Doctrine of Repentance: This was to prepare the People for the *Meſſiah*, and the Grace of the Goſpel. The Motive or Argument he uſes to inforce his Exhortation is, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*; that is, now is the ſo much expected Time of the appearing of the *Meſſiah* come; the *Old Teſtament* Diſpenſation is now to be revealed; therefore repent and amend your Lives.

Q. *Has not* John's *Receſs in the Wilderneſs been made uſe of to ground ſome odd Notions upon?*

A. The Manner of *John Baptiſt*'s living in the Wilderneſs, has given the *Papiſts* a Handle to propagate a Notion, that he was the Founder of the Order of Hermits, but without Grounds; ſince what he did, was by God's Command, what they do is in purſuance of their own Whims and Fancies; he was a Preacher in the Wilderneſs, they bury themſelves alive, without being of any Service to Society: His Continuance in the Wilderneſs was but ſhort, for ſoon afterwards he appeared at Court, and preached before *Herod*; but they oblige themſelves by a Vow, to live and die Hermits.

The next Thing obſervable in *John* was, the Plainneſs of his Habit and Diet; a Suit of Camel's Hair was his Dreſs, which, with his leathern Belt, very much reſembled the Manner of *Elijah*; his Diet was ſuitable, for he fed upon Herbs and the wild Products of Nature, which gave *Nazianzen* Occaſion to ſay, that *John* was all Voice; a Voice in his Diet, and a Voice in his whole Converſation.

John ſoon met with good Encouragement in his Miniſtry from a numerous Attendance, and thronged Audiences of the People, who came to him to be baptized, and to confeſs their Sins; which the *Papiſts* make an Argument to ſupport their Doctrine of auricular Confeſſion, but erroneouſly, for the Confeſſion of theſe Converts was voluntary, general, publick and open, and not in the Ear of the Prieſt; it was a Confeſſion of Sin before Baptiſm; in all which Circumſtances it widely differs from the *Romiſh* auricular Confeſſion; *John* admitted theſe Perſons to Baptiſm, on their Confeſſion of Sins, and Promiſe of Amendment.

Some of his Auditors were ſuch whom he little expected, *Phariſees* and *Sadduces.* The Doctrines and Practices of theſe Men were ſo well known to *John*, that he made no ſcruple to ſalute them with that cutting Compellation, *O Generation of Vipers, who hath warned you?* It was a Matter of Wonder and Admiration, to ſee ſuch Men turn Proſelites: However, the *Baptiſt* having ſharply reproved them, adds a ſeaſonable Exhortation, *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.* Hence we may learn, Repentance is fruitful of good Works, anſwerable to its Nature. He enforces his Argument with a very neceſſary Caution, *Think not to ſay within yourſelves, we have* Abraham *to our Father*, &c. Truſt not to, nor boaſt of your external Priviledges; don't flatter yourſelves, that becauſe you are the Deſcendants of *Abraham*, and the only viſible Church, that therefore you are out of the reach of the Judgments of God; no, God can, from an obdurate hardened *Gentile* World, who worſhip Stones, raiſe up a People to himſelf, take them into Covenant, and caſt you all out, though of the Blood of *Abraham*, who yet have not *Abraham's* Faith in your Hearts, or Obedience in your Lives.

The *Baptiſt* purſues his Diſcourſe, and urges Repentance from another Motive, namely, the Certainty, Severity, and Suddenneſs of that Vengeance which would overtake them, if they continued Impenitent; now is *The Ax laid to the Root of the Trees*, therefore, *every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down and caſt into the Fire.* Sins of Omiſſion, in the Eyes of God, are as offenſive as Sins of Commiſſion; the Neglects of Duty render us as liable to the Effects of divine Juſtice, as the Acts of Sin: Such Trees as ſtand in God's Orchard, and bear no good Fruit, will be made Fuel for everlaſting Burning.

Q. *Explain the 12th Verſe, which runs thus;* Whoſe Fan is in his Hand, and he will throughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner; but he will burn the Chaff with unquenchable Fire?

A. Theſe Words contain a Compariſon of *Chriſt* the promiſed *Meſſiah*, to an Huſbandman, and the *Jewiſh* Church to a Barn-floor; the Huſbandman with his Winnow ſeparates the Corn from the Chaff, the one he preſerves, the other he burns. The Word of *Chriſt* is his Fan, accompanied with the Wind of Diſcipline; and in the Church there will be a Mixture of Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, Hypocrites and ſincere *Chriſtians*: But this Floor *Chriſt* will purge, but not deſtroy its Eſſence or Exiſtence.

Q. *The 13th and following Verſes give an Account of the baptizing of* Chriſt *by* John; *what do you obſerve upon this Paſſage?*

A. The *Evangeliſt* here acquaints us with our Saviour's ſolemn Inauguration, and Entrance upon his prophetick Office by Baptiſm, or waſhing with Water, according to the Form uſed by the Prieſts under the ceremonial Law, *Exod.* xxix. 4. Here we may take Notice of the Time of *Chriſt's* entring upon his publick Miniſtry, after he had lived in Obſcurity thirty Years at *Nazareth.* Likewiſe the Action itſelf, *Chriſt* is baptized now, as he was circumciſed before, not becauſe of any Impurity in his Nature, but that by this Symbol he might enter himſelf into the Society of *Chriſtians*, as by Circumciſion he had done into that of the *Jews*; that by his own Baptiſm, he might ſanctify that Ordinance to his People, that he might fulfil the Righteouſneſs of the ceremonial Law, which required the waſhing of Prieſts in Water, when they entered on their Office; the great Condeſcenſion of *Chriſt* in ſubmitting to the Baptiſm of *John*; which was to put an Honour on *John*'s Miniſtry. But ſo great was *John's* Humility that he forbad him. Why? becauſe he knew he needed it not; he knew likewiſe that himſelf was a Sinner; and leſt the People might apprehend *Chriſt* was a Sinner, and wanted the Baptiſm of Repentance as well as themſelves. The Anſwer which *Chriſt* returned to *John*, was very proper; the Senſe of which is, that it became them to own every divine Inſtitution, particularly the Righteouſneſs of the ceremonial Law, which required the waſhing of Prieſts with Water, when they entered upon their Office.

Q. *What followed thereupon?*

A. This ſolemn Inauguration of *Chriſt* into his prophetick Office, was accompanied with a threefold Miracle, *viz.* The opening of the Heavens; the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, in the Form of a Dove; the Voice of God the Father concerning his Son. Here we have an Inſtance of the bleſſed Trinity; the Father ſpeaks from Heaven; the Son comes out of the Water; and the Holy Ghoſt appears upon him. We may obſerve from hence, that the Holy Ghoſt is not a Quality, or an Operation, but a Perſon really diſtinct from the Father and Son. But why did the Holy Spirit now deſcend upon *Chriſt*, ſeeing he was now truly and really God? Becauſe the Divinity of *Chriſt* was quieſcent in him, till he entred on his prophetick Office at the Age of about thirty. And the Holy Ghoſt now deſcends, firſt, for the Deſignation of his Perſon, to ſhew that *Chriſt* was the Perſon ſet apart for the Work and Office of a Mediator; ſecondly, for the Qualification of his Perſon, for the Performance of his Office. This was *Chriſt*'s Unction, *Iſa.* lxi. 1. when *he was anointed above his Fellows, to be the King, Prieſt and Prophet of his Church.*

Chap. IV.

Chriſt *faſting in the Wilderneſs forty Days, is thrice tempted by* Satan. *The Devil leaves him, and the Angels miniſter to him. He dwells at* Capernaum, *and begins to preach; calls* Peter *and* Andrew, James *and* John; *preaches the Goſpel, and heals all Diſeaſes in* Galilee.

Q. W*HAT do you underſtand by* Chriſt'*s being* led up of the Spirit into the Wilderneſs, *Verſe* 1?

A. The efficient Cauſe of *Chriſt*'s going into the Wilderneſs, to be thus tempted of the Devil, was, *He was led up of the Spirit*, ſaith St. *Matthew. The Spirit drove him*, ſays St. *Mark*: That is, the Holy Spirit of God, not *Satan* the unclean Spirit; for the Devil is rarely called the Spirit, unleſs with a Brand annexed, as, the evil or unclean Spirit. Chriſt *was led by the Spirit*, that is, he was carried by a ſtrong Impulſe of the Spirit of God into the Wilderneſs, to be tempted by *Satan*. Here obſerve, that *Satan* could not aſſault our Saviour till he was led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs, for that End; and he ſhall not aſſault any of his Members, but by the divine Permiſſion.

Q. *Was* Chriſt'*s faſting* forty Days, and forty Nights, *an Example ſet for our Imitation?*

A. Whoever conſiders the Weakneſs of human Nature, cannot but allow, that ſo great and ſo long an Abſtinence, without any Senſe of Hunger (for the *Evangeliſts* tell us, that our Saviour was only hungry afterwards) muſt be altogether miraculous, and ſo no Duty to us; and if he reflects withal, that the End of his Faſt was not to chaſtize or ſubdue that Body, which was never irregular, (as the Deſign of all our Faſting is) he muſt allow that our Saviour, in this Particular, ſet no Precedent to us; and therefore it is Cruelty, or a ſuperſtitious Folly at leaſt, in a Matter ſo ſupernatural, to enjoin Men to follow his Steps.

Q. *Pray give the Signification of the Word* Devil, *who is here ſaid to tempt our Saviour?*

A. The Word *Devil*, which anſwers exactly with the *Hebrew Satan*, ſignifies a *Calumniator* or *Accuſer*; and, as it occurs in Scripture, always in the ſingular Number, is ſuppoſed to denote that evil Spirit who tempted our firſt Parents, the Chief of the Rebel-Angels, and the avowed Enemy of the Saints.

Q. *One of the Temptations with which the Devil aſſaulted our Saviour, was, to* command Stones to be made Bread; *what might be the Occaſion of this Temptation?*

A. The Occaſion of this Temptation ſeems to have been our Saviour's Hunger and want of Bread. The Sin our Saviour was tempted to, was Diſtruſt, to queſtion his Sonſhip: *If thou be the Son of God*; and next to diſtruſt his Father's Providence and Care, *Command that theſe Stones be made Bread*: As if *Satan* had ſaid, How improbable is it that thou ſhouldeſt be highly favoured, and yet ſo deſerted? What! the Son of God, and yet ready to ſtarve! Certainly, if thou canſt not ſupply thy Neceſſities, thou art not a-kin to God. This ſeemed a home Thruſt, but was eaſily parried by our Saviour, with that never-failing Weapon, the Word of God. *Satan* himſelf has not the Impudence to oppoſe Scripture. What Monſters of Impiety then are they, who ridicule and deride them? They not only contradict the Practice of *Chriſt*, but outdo the Devil himſelf in Impudence.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Devil's ſecond Temptation?*

A. Satan, though foiled, is not beaten out of the Field; but having gotten farther Permiſſion, takes up the Body of our Saviour, and ſets it on one of the Battlements of the Temple, and tempts him to the Sin of Self-murder, *Caſt thyſelf down*: But though *Satan* may tempt, he can't compel; he may entice, but not force any to Sin, without their own Conſent. *Satan* quotes Scripture for his Argument, *He ſhall give his Angels Charge over thee. Chriſt* had before alledged Scripture to *Satan*, here *Satan* retorts Scripture back again to *Chriſt*; but how wretchedly does the Devil wreſt, pervert, and miſapply the Scriptures? When God promiſes his Angels ſhall keep us, 'tis to be underſtood, in God's Ways, not in any of our own crooked Paths. *Chriſt* anſwers him with another Text of Scripture; which hints to us, that as *Chriſt* compares Scripture with Scripture, ſo ſhould we, if we would find out the true Senſe and Meaning of it; for Scripture is the beſt Interpreter of itſelf.

Q. *What do you underſtand by* the Pinnacle of the Temple, *upon which the Devil ſet our Saviour?*

A. According to the Deſcription that *Joſephus* gives us of the Temple which *Herod* built, we hear of no Pinnacles, or lofty Turrets above the reſt of the Building; and, therefore have Reaſon to think, that the *Greek*, which is rendered *Pinnacle*, ſhould rather ſignify the Battlement, or that Parapet-wall which was carried round the Top of the Temple (as well as private Houſes, *Deut.* xxii. 8.) to keep Men from falling from the Roof. And if we may be allowed to conjecture on what Part of the Battlement it was, that the Devil placed our Saviour, it ſeems very likely that it was on the Top of that Gallery, whoſe Building (according to the ſame Author) was ſo prodigious high, and the Valley underneath it ſo ſtupendiouſly deep, that it turned one's Eyes and Head to look from the Top to the Bottom of it; and was, indeed, one of the moſt confounding Spectacles under the Sun.

Q. *Pray give ſome Account of the* Wilderneſs, *and the* High Mountain, *where our Saviour was tempted?*

A. The beſt Account that we have, both of the Wilderneſs and high Mountain, where our Lord was tempted, is in the Travels of Mr. *Maundrel*, (for the Antients tell us very little of them) who informs us, ——— That, in his Journey from *Jeruſalem* to *Jordan*, after he paſſed over Mount *Olivet*, he proceeded in an intricate Way, among Hills and Valleys interchangeably; and after ſome Hours travel in this ſort of Road, arrived at the mountainous Deſert, into which our bleſſed Saviour was led by the Spirit, to be tempted by the Devil; *A miſerable dry Place*, ſays he, *it is, conſiſting of high rocky Mountains, ſo torn and diſordered, as if the Earth had here ſuffered ſome great Convulſion, in which its very Bowels had been turned outward. From the Top of theſe Hills of Deſolation, we had, however, a delightful Proſpect of* Arabia, *the* Dead-Sea, *and the Plains of* Jericho, *into which laſt we deſcended, after about five Hours March from* Jeruſalem. *As ſoon as we entered the Plain, we turned upon the left Hand, and going about one Hour that Way, came to the Foot of the* Quarantania, (*ſo called from our Lord's forty Days Faſt*) *which they ſay, is the Mountain where the Devil tempted him with the viſionary Scene of all the Kingdoms and Glories of the World. It is very high and ſteep, and its Aſcent not only difficult, but dangerous.* This is the Account which our Countryman gives us of the Place where our Saviour was probably tempted: But it is not to be ſuppoſed, that even from the higheſt Mountain in the World, the Devil could ſhew all the Kingdoms of it, and therefore the moſt rational Account of this Matter, is, that, *as he was the Prince of the Power of the Air, he formed an airy Horizon* (as Dr. *Lightfoot* expreſſes it) *before the Eyes of* Chriſt, *which might carry ſuch a pompous and glorious Appearance of Kingdoms, States and Royalties, in the Face of it, as if he had ſeen thoſe very Kingdoms and States in Reality.* God, we are told, cauſed *Moſes* to ſee the whole *Land of Promiſe* from the Top of *Nebo* (as it is generally thought) by repreſenting it to him in a large Plan or Map of it, in all the Valleys round about him; and in like Manner (by the divine Permiſſion) in all the Valleys round about the high Mountain, on which our Lord ſtood, the Devil might make a large Draught of the ſtately Edifices, the Guards and Attendants of Kings and Princes, appearing in their Splendor, viſible to the Eye, which he could not have ſeen ſo advantageouſly, had he ſtood on a Plain.

Q. *Satan's next Attack upon our Saviour, was, to tempt him to the Sin of Idolatry, even to worſhip the Devil himſelf; What do you infer from hence?*

A. St. *Matthew* has it, *If thou wilt fall down and worſhip me:* St. *Luke*. *If thou wilt worſhip before me.* Whence we may gather, ſays Dr. *Lightfoot*, that if to worſhip before the Devil, be to worſhip the Devil; then to worſhip before an Image is to worſhip the Image. The Bait to allure our Saviour to commit this Idolatry, was a quick and full View of the Glories of the World. But with Indignation does our Saviour repel this Temptation, *Get thee hence!* and the Weapon he uſes is the Scripture, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God.* God is the ſole Object of religious Worſhip. Now behold the Iſſue of this Combat: Satan is conquered, and quits the Field. Nothing is ſo effectual to make the Devil flie from us, as a vigorous Reſiſtance. Then follows our Saviour's Triumph; *Angels came and miniſter'd unto him*; Food to his hungry Body, and Food to his tempted Soul. They came no ſooner, leſt it ſhould be thought he wanted their Aſſiſtance: They came now, becauſe he was pleaſed to make uſe of it.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. Our Saviour hearing of *John*'s Impriſonment, retires into *Galilee* for his own Safety, to the City of *Capernaum*. *Chriſt* had three Cities, which he called his own: *Nazareth*, where he was bred; *Bethlehem*, where he was born; and *Capernaum* where he dwelt: This was a Sea-coaſt Town in the Borders of *Zabulon* and *Naphthali*. Thus was fulfilled *Iſa*. ix. 12. which declares, that in that dark Part of the Country, the *Meſſiah*, the true Light ſhould ſhine forth.

Here our Saviour begins to enter upon his prophetick Office, and, by Preaching, to make known the Will of God to Mankind; and his Doctrine is the ſame that *John the Baptiſt* preached, namely, Repentance; and his Argument is the ſame, namely, the Appearance of the *Meſſiah*.

Q. *What do we learn from* Chriſt'*s calling ſeveral Perſons to be his Diſciples?*

A. *Jeſus Chriſt*, as he was the great Prophet of the Church, had Power and Authority to appoint Teachers under him; and accordingly here begins to call his Apoſtles to that great Work. The Perſons he calls are illiterate Fiſhermen; *Peter*, a Stranger to Eloquence and human Learning. Hereby our Saviour took Care that his Goſpel ſhould be known to be the *Power of God*, and not the *Wiſdom and Device of Man.* He commands them to follow him, before they are ſent out by him. We muſt be *Chriſt*'s Diſciples before we are his Miniſters, his Followers before we are his Ambaſſadors. We muſt learn *Chriſt* before we preach him, otherwiſe we may fiſh for a Livelihood, for Honour and Applauſe, but not for Souls. *Chriſt* gives his Apoſtles, for their Encouragement, a Promiſe to make them *Fiſhers of Men.* Some Fiſh, ſays Biſhop *Hall*, cleave to the Rocks, others play upon the Sands, and more wallow in the Mud: And we ſhall labour all our Days, and catch nothing, if *Chriſt* doth not bring our Fiſh to Net, and incloſe them in it, as well as aſſiſt us in throwing it.

Peter, *James*, *Andrew* and *John*, being called to the Apoſtleſhip, *Chriſt* goes out with them to the Work of preaching the Goſpel, and laboured himſelf as much as any of them: He did not ſend them forth as Curates to labour, and lie at home himſelf upon his Couch at Eaſe.

Chap. V.

Chriſt's *Sermon on the Mount; ſhews who are the Bleſſed; the Salt of the Earth; the Light of the World; a City on a Hill; the Candle. He comes to fulfil the Law; ſhews what it is to kill, to commit Adultery, and to ſwear; exhorts to ſuffer Wrong, to love our Enemies, and labour after the higheſt Perfection.*

Q. W*HAT are the Subjects treated of in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter, and the two following, contain *Chriſt*'s famous Sermon upon the Mount, which comprehends and epitomizes the whole of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*. Our Saviour begins his Sermon with a Declaration of thoſe who are bleſſed, including an Exhortation to Duty, with a Reward annexed to the Performance of it. By this Sermon the Chriſtian World will be judged at the laſt Day; and by the Particulars of it we muſt either ſtand or fall.

Q. *What do we learn from* Chriſt's *preaching his Sermon on a* Mount?

A. The Place where our Saviour preached this Sermon was upon a Mountain, probably for Conveniency to himſelf, and Advantage to his Auditory: Some, indeed, have found out a Myſtery in it, *viz.* That as the Law was firſt given on a Mountain, ſo *Chriſt* would now explain it on a Mountain; or to ſhew the Sublimity of his Doctrine and Precepts. The Poſture in which he preached was ſitting, according to the Cuſtom of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, who ſat, to ſhew their Authority. The Sermon itſelf begins with Beatitudes and Bleſſings, and is accompanied with Promiſes of Reward; not as the Law was delivered, on Mount *Sinai*; with Thunder and Threatnings, with Fire and an Earthquake, but in a ſtill ſoft Voice. Our Lord's Lips are full of Grace, they drop as the Honey-comb. Bleſſings and Promiſes are our Encouragements to Obedience.

Q. *In what Senſe are thoſe* bleſſed who are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake?

A. The Diſciples and followers of *Chriſt*, tho' their Lives are never ſo Holy and inoffenſive, yet they muſt expect Sufferings and Perſecution; but that ſuch Sufferings and Perſecutions will afford a Man the moſt ſolid Comfort, and entitle him to real Bleſſedneſs: And 'tis the Command of *Chriſt*, that they who ſuffer for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, ſhould not only be Meek and Patient, but Joyous and Chearful.

Q. *Why are Chriſtians and Miniſters compared to* Salt?

A. For a double Reaſon. 1. Becauſe it is the Nature of Salt to preſerve Things from Corruption and Putrefaction, and to render them Savoury and Pleaſant. Thus Miniſters are to endeavour, by the Purity of their Doctrine, to ſweeten putrifying Sinners, that they may become ſavoury to God and Man; and may be kept from being fly-blown with Errors, Hereſies, and falſe Doctrine. 2. Becauſe Salt has a piercing Power in it, which ſubdues the whole Lump, and turns it into its own Nature: Such a piercing Power is there in the Miniſtry of the Word, that it ſubdues the whole Man to the Obedience of itſelf.

Q. *How are Chriſtians and Miniſters* the Light of the World?

A. Not originally, but derivatively; not efficiently, but inſtrumentally. *Chriſt* himſelf is the original Light of the World, Miniſters are Lights by way of Derivation and Participation from him. The End of his communicating this Light unto them, was, to enlighten, direct, and quicken others: Even as the Sun, and a Candle, diffuſe Light to all within their reach; ſo ſhould all Chriſtians, and particularly Miniſters, by the Light of their Lives and Doctrine, direct People in the Way to Heaven. From whence *Chriſt* infers, that our good Works muſt ſhine, but not blaze; all Vain Glory and Oſtentation muſt be avoided in the good Works we do. Though we muſt abound in good Works, that Men may ſee them, yet not be taken of them. The glorifying of God, and doing good to Mankind, muſt be the great End of all the Good we perform.

Q. *How do you interpret that Saying of our Saviour's, Verſe* 17. Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil?

A. Our Saviour informs his Followers, that he did not intend to aboliſh any Part of the moral Law, or to free Mankind from any Part of their Duty, either towards God or Man, but that he came to fulfil it, by yielding a perſonal Obedience to it, and by a more perfect Interpretation of it, than was given by the *Phariſees*, who taught, that the Law only reached the outward Man, and reſtrained outward Actions; but *Chriſt*'s Intent was to give the full Senſe and ſpiritual Import of the moral Law. One reaſon of his not abrogating the moral Law, is drawn from the Duration and Perpetuity, the Unchangeableneſs and Immutability of the Law. The Law of God is an eternal and unchangeable Rule of Life and Manners, and is to ſtand in Force as long as the World ſtands, and the Frame of the Heaven and Earth endures. Whoever therefore, ſhall allow himſelf in the Omiſſion of any known Duty, or in the Commiſſion of any known Sin, ſhall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven is the Prize ſet before us, which to obtain, we muſt be holy and righteous Perſons; but the Righteouſneſs which is to entitle us to this glorious Reward, muſt exceed the Righteouſneſs of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*. 1. In its Principle and Motive, Love to God, not the Applauſe of Men. 2. In its Aim and End, not worldly Gain and Intereſt, but God's Glory. 3. In the Manner of Performance. The *Phariſees* had reſpect only to the outward Action, without any Regard to the inward Intention, and to that Purity of Heart which God required. We are therefore to exceed the *Phariſees* in Sincerity, Simplicity, Humility, Charity and Univerſality of Obedience to all God's Commands.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Expoſition which* Chriſt *gives of ſeveral of the Commandments, in the twenty-firſt and following Verſes?*

A. Our Saviour expounds the ſpiritual Senſe and Meaning of the Law, and ſo vindicates it from the corrupt Gloſſes of the *Phariſees*. But obſerve, *Chriſt* doth not deliver a new Law, but expounds the Old. In the Expoſition of the ſixth Commandment he ſhews, that beſides the actual taking away of Life, a Perſon may violate that Command. 1. By raſh Anger. 2. By diſgraceful and reviling Words. For the preventing of which he exhorts his Followers to brotherly Agreement, and mutual Reconciliation; and he urges his Argument from the Danger of Neglect; which is two-fold; the firſt reſpects our preſent Duties and Services, when we wait upon God at his Altar, and attend upon him in holy Offices. None of our Services will find Acceptance, if in our Heart there be Malice and Hatred, Anger and Ill-will againſt our Brother. The ſecond Danger is, when we appear before God in Judgment; then God will be our Adverſary, *Chriſt* our Judge, Satan our Accuſer, and Hell our Tormenter; if now from the Heart we do not forgive our Brother his Treſpaſſes.

In expounding the ſeventh Commandment, which the *Phariſees* underſtood only of the actual and carnal Sin of Uncleanneſs, our Saviour condemns even the ſecret Deſire of ſuch a Thing, and even ocular Adultery. And as the Eye is the Inlet to Sin, *Chriſt* commands to pluck it out, which is not to be underſtood literally, but ſpiritually, to mortify the Luſts of the Fleſh, and of the Eye, which otherwiſe will prove a dangerous Snare to the Soul. Our Saviour farther vindicates the ſeventh Commandment from the corrupt Gloſſes of the *Phariſees*. God had tolerated the *Jews* in caſe of Uncleanneſs, to put away their Wives, by a Bill of Divorce. Hereupon the *Phariſees* maintained it lawful to put away the Wife upon every ſlight Occaſion. This Abuſe *Chriſt* corrects, and ſhews, That Divorce, except in Caſe of Adultery, is a certain Breach of the ſeventh Commandment; and that when Perſons are unjuſtly put away, it's unlawful for them to marry any other.

Chriſt next expounds the third Commandment, which requires a reverend Uſe of God's Name. Now the *Phariſees* taught, that Perjury was the only Breach of this Commandment; and that ſwearing was nothing, if they did not forſwear themſelves; and that Perſons were only obliged to ſwear by the Name of God in publick Courts of Juſtice, but in their ordinary and common Diſcourſe they might ſwear by any of the Creatures. In Oppoſition to theſe wicked Principles and Practices, *Chriſt* ſays, *Swear not at all*; i. e. 1. Swear not prophanely in your ordinary Diſcourſe. 2. Swear not unduly by any of the Creatures, which is aſcribing a Deity to them. 3. Swear not lightly, upon any trifling Occaſion; ſo that an Oath is not here forbidden, but reſtrained; for to take an Oath upon a ſolemn Occaſion, is a Chriſtian and Neceſſary Duty; and even *Chriſt* himſelf, when adjured by the High-Prieſt, did anſwer upon Oath. To avoid therefore the Occaſion and Danger of raſh ſwearing, he recommends Simplicity and Plainneſs of Speech; either Affirming or Denying, according to the Nature of the Thing; letting Oaths alone till we are called to them upon great Occaſions, for ending Strife between Man and Man.

The Remainder of this Chapter contains divers other Leſſons and Inſtructions, which are all eaſily underſtood, and therefore a Comment on them is unneceſſary.

CHAP. VI.

The Continuation of Chriſt's *Sermon on the Mount. How to give Alms, Pray, Faſt; where our Treaſure is to be laid up; no Man can ſerve God and Mammon; and deborts from being ſollicitous about worldly Things, but to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God.*

Q. W*HAT are the Doctrines inculcated in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter is a Continuation of our Saviour's incomparable Sermon upon the Mount, in which he cautions his Diſciples againſt the Hypocriſy and Vain-glory of the *Phariſees*, both in their Alms-giving and Prayers. With reſpect to the Duty of Alms-giving, contained in the firſt four Verſes, we may obſerve, 1. The Duty directed to, Alms-giving, after a right Manner; *Do not your Alms before Men*; ſome Copies read it, *Do not your Righteouſneſs before Men:* Becauſe Alms-giving is a conſiderable Part of that Righteouſneſs and Juſtice, which we owe to our Neighbour; he that is Uncharitable is Unjuſt. 2. Our Saviour's cautionary Direction in giving of Alms, *Take heed that you do them not to be ſeen of Men:* We ought to do our Alms before Men, that God may be glorified; not to be ſeen of Men, that ourſelves may be applauded. 3. The particular Sin which our Saviour warns his Diſciples againſt in giving their Alms: Namely, Oſtentation and Vain-glory, which the *Phariſees* were notoriouſly guilty of, ſounding a Trumpet, to call People about them, when they gave their Alms. 4. The Advice given by our Saviour for the Prevention of this Sin and Danger; namely, to do our Alms as ſecretly as we can: *Let not thy left Hand know what thy right Hand doth.* The Secreſy of our Charity is one good Evidence of its Sincerity. Hence the *Egyptians* made the Emblem of Charity a blind Boy, reaching out Honey to a Bee that had loſt her Wings.

In the next Place our Saviour warns his Diſciples againſt the ſame *Phariſaical* Hypocriſy in praying, which he had before reproved in Alms-giving. It was lawful to pray in the Synagogues, and to pray ſtanding, and that before Men; but to do this with Deſign to be applauded by Men, is condemned by *Chriſt*. Our Buſineſs in Prayer lies with God; we are not to concern ourſelves, how Men like our Performances; is is ſufficient if God approves and will accept them. To cure the foregoing Vanity, *Chriſt* directs to ſecret Prayer in our Cloſets, where God is the Witneſs, and will be the Rewarder of our Sincerity.

Not only a vain-glorious Oſtentation in Prayer, but a vain-glorious Multiplication of Words, by idle Tautoligies and impertinent Repetitions, is condemned: After the Manner of the Heathen, who expected to have their Prayers granted for the Multiplicity of Words they uſe. Yet note, that it is not all Repetition of the ſame Words in Prayer, which *Chriſt* here condemns, for he himſelf prayed thrice, uſing the ſame Words, *That the Cup might paſs from him.* Nor, 2. are we to apprehend, that Prayers continued to a conſiderable Length are forbidden by *Chriſt*; for *Solomon*'s Prayer was ſuch, 1 *Kings*. viii. *Nehemiah*'s ſuch, Chap. iii. *Chriſt* continued in Prayer all Night. And we read of St. *Paul*'s praying Night and Day, 1 *Theſſ.* iii. 10. and of his commanding the Churches to be *inſtant in Prayer*. But *Chriſt* here condemns Prayers lengthened out upon an Apprehenſion that we ſhall be heard for our much ſpeaking, or can move God by Arguments, while we continue in our Sins.

Q. What do you obſerve upon the Form of Prayer which Chriſt *has here given us?*

A, *Chriſt* gave this Form of Prayer, to ſerve as a Pattern or Plat-form, according to which all our Prayers ought to be framed. This is commonly called the Lord's Prayer, which may be thus paraphraſed: *O thou our Father in* Jeſus Chriſt! *who remaineſt in thy Throne in Heaven, and art there perpetually praiſed, and perfectly obeyed by glorious Angels and glorified Saints; grant that thy Name may be glorified, thy Throne acknowledged, and thy holy Will obeyed here on Earth below, by us thy Sons and Servants, moſt ſincerely and readily, in the ſame Proportion to what is done in Heaven. And becauſe by the frailty of our Natures, we cannot ſubſiſt without the Comforts and Supports of Life, we crave, that ſuch a Proportion may be given us, as may be ſufficient for us; and that we may be content with our Allowance. And knowing that thy Holineſs and Juſtice obliges thee to puniſh Sin and Sinners, we plead with thee for the ſake of thy Son's Satisfaction, to pardon our daily Treſpaſſes which we are guilty of in this State of Imperfection; as we do freely and heartily forgive others that have offended and wronged us. And ſeeing that by the Reaſon of the Frailty of our Natures, we are prone to ruſh upon, and run into Temptation; we crave, that, by the Power of thy omnipotent Grace, we may be kept from Satan's Temptation, from the World's Allurements, from our own evil Inclinations, and be preſerved unblameable to thine everlaſting Kingdom, which is exalted over all Perſons, over all Places, over all Things, in all Times paſt, preſent, and to come: And accordingly, in Teſtimony of our Deſires, and in Aſſurance to be heard and anſwered, we ſay* Amen. *So be it, ſo let it be, even ſo, O Lord, let it be for ever.*

The Learned obſerve, that this Prayer is taken out of the *Jewiſh* Liturgies, in which it is entirely found, except thoſe Words, *As we forgive thoſe that treſpaſs againſt us.* From whence *Grotius* notes, how far *Chriſt*, the Lord of his Church, was from affecting Novelties, or deſpiſing any Thing, becauſe it was a Form.

Q. *What other Duties does our Saviour here inſtruct us!*

A. The next Duty which our Saviour inſtructs his Diſciples in, is that of religious Faſting, which is a Devotion of the whole Man, Soul and Body, to a ſolemn and extraordinary Attendance upon God, at a particular Time, ſet apart for that Purpoſe; in order to the deprecating of his Diſpleaſure, and for the ſupplicating of his Favour, accompanied with an Abſtinence from bodily Food, and ſenſual Delights, and from all ſecular Affairs and worldly Buſineſs. Our Saviour's Direction about Faſting is double. 1. He cautions us to beware of an Abuſe in Faſting: *Be not as the Hypocrites are, of a ſad Countenance*; that is, Do not affect a ſullen Sadneſs, Ghaſtlineſs, and unpleaſantneſs of Countenance, like the hypocritical Phariſees, who vitiate and diſcolour their Faces. Hypocriſy can paint the Face black and ſable, as well as Pride with red and white. 2. He counſels us to take the right Way in Faſting: To anoint the Head and waſh the Face; that is, to look as at other Times, uſing our ordinary Garb and Attire, and not to affect any Thing that may make us look like Mourners, when really we are not ſo.

Four Arguments our Saviour uſes to diſſuade us from the Sin of anxious Care; 'tis Needleſs, 'tis Fruitleſs, 'tis Heatheniſh, 'tis Brutiſh. 1. 'Tis Needleſs; *Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of thoſe Things, and will certainly provide for you:* And what need you take Care, and God too? 2. 'Tis Fruitleſs; *Which of you, by taking Thought, can add one Cubit to his Stature?* That is, by all our ſollicitatous Care, we can add nothing to the Length and Comfort of our Lives. 3. 'Tis Heatheniſh; *After all theſe Things do the* Gentiles *ſeek.* 4. 'Tis Brutiſh; nay, worſe than Brutiſh: *The Fowls of the Air, and the Beaſts of the Fields are fed by God, much more ſhall his Children.* Has God a Breakfaſt for every little Bird that comes chirping out of its Neſt, and for every Beaſt of the Wilderneſs that comes leaping out of its Den? *And will he not much more provide for you, O ye of little Faith?* Surely he that feeds the *Ravens* when they Cry, will not ſtarve his Children when they pray. Naturaliſts obſerve of the Raven, that ſhe expoſes her young Ones as ſoon as they are hatch'd, leaves them meatleſs, and fatherleſs, to ſhift and ſtruggle with Hunger as ſoon as they come into the World; and either by the Dew of Heaven, or Flies, or Worms, God feedeth them; when they gape and cry, they are provided for: from whence our Saviour infers, that Man being much better, that is, a more conſiderable Creature than the Fowls, the Providence of God will provide for him, though no Solicitude and anxious Thoughtfulneſs of his contributes thereunto.

CHAP. VII.

Chriſt forbids raſh Judgment againſt a Brother; to caſt Pearls before Swine; preſſes to earneſt and inſtant Prayer; to enter in at the ſtreight Gate; to beware of falſe Prophets in Diſguiſe: Who are known by their Fruits; we are not to be Hearers only, but Doers of God's Word. By a Houſe built on a Rock, he ſhews the Benefit of thoſe who hear and do; and by a Houſe on the Sand, the Miſery of thoſe who hear and do not.

Q. WHAT *does this Chapter furniſh worthy our Obſervation?*

A. Our bleſſed Saviour in this Chapter, concludes his Sermon on the Mount, with an Exhortation to ſeveral Duties. Upon the whole, we may collect the following Obſervations.

1. A prohibition, judge not. This is not meant of our ſelves, but of our Neighbour: The firſt is a Duty, the other a Sin: Yet is not all judging of others condemned, but a judging our Neighbour's State or Perſon, raſhly and rigidly, cenſoriouſly, or uncharitably; eſpecially unrighteouſly and unjuſtly. And the Reaſon of the Prohibition is added: If ye judge others raſhly, God will judge us righteouſly. But note, Chriſt doth not here forbid judicial judging by the Civil Magiſtrate, nor Eccleſiaſtical judging by the Church Governors, whoſe Office authorizes them ſo to do. Nor does he forbid one Chriſtian to paſs a Judgment on the notorious Actions of another, ſince the Duty of Reproof cannot be performed without it; but it is ſuch a raſh and cenſorious Judging of our Brother, as is void of Charity, and accompanied with Contempt, eſpecially if we have been guilty of the ſame or greater Sins before him.

2. By the Mote in our Brother's Eye, is to be underſtood little or ſuppoſed Sins: By the Beam in our own, is meant ſome notorious Sin we are conſcious of in our ſelves. Hence we may learn, that thoſe who are moſt cenſorious of the leſſer Infirmities of others, are uſually moſt notoriouſly guilty of far greater Failings themſelves; that thoſe who deſire

others ſhould look upon the Failings of others with a cenſorious Eye; and that there is no ſuch Way to teach us Charity in judging others, as to exerciſe Severity in judging ourſelves.

3. By that which is holy, in Verſe 6. underſtand the Work and Ordinances in general; but Admonition and Reproof in particular: By Dogs and Swine, incorrigible and irreclaimable Sinners, hardened Scorners of holy Things: 'Tis a proverbial Speech expreſſing how ſuch charitable Reprehenſions are to be caſt away upon incorrigible Sinners. So that *Chriſt* will not have his Word offered to ſome Sinners, leſt they ſhould abuſe it; alſo leſt they ſhould abuſe thoſe that bring it.

4. In the 7th to the 12th Verſe, are contained a Precept and a Promiſe; the Precept or Duty commanded, is Importunity and Conſtancy in Prayer, we muſt aſk, ſeek and knock: The Promiſe or Mercy inſured, is Audience and Acceptance with God. God loves to be giving, and to give good Gifts is his Delight. But Prayer is the Key that opens both his Heart and Hand; yet not every Perſon, nor every Prayer ſhall find Acceptance with God; the Perſon praying muſt be a Doer of God's Will, *John* ix. 31. and not regard iniquity in his Heart, nor entertain any grudge againſt his Neighbours; the Matter we pray for, muſt be what is agreeable to God's Will, and the Manner of our Prayer muſt be in Faith, with Fervency and unfainting Perſeverance.

5. The great Rule of Righteouſneſs and Equity in all our Dealings with Men, is, To do as we would be done unto. It is a ſhort, full and clear Rule; both the Light of Nature, and the Law of *Chriſt* bind it upon us. It is the Law and the Prophets; that is, the Sum of the *Old Teſtament*; ſo far as concerns our Duty to our Neighbour, and the Sum of the ſecond Table. This is the whole of the Law and the Prophets, to love God above ourſelves, and to love our Neighbours as ourſelves.

6. There are but two Ways in which the Race of Mankind travel; the one ſtrait and narrow, that leads to Life and Salvation; the other broad and wide, which leads to Hell and Deſtruction. The Metaphor of the Gate denotes our firſt Entrance into a religious Courſe of Life, and its being ſtrait denotes the Difficulty that attends Religion at firſt. Evil Habits are to be put off; old Companions in Sin to be parted with; but when once Faith and Patience have ſmoothed the Way, Love will make our Work delightful to us.

7. Two Sorts of Deceivers our Saviour warned his Diſciples againſt; namely, falſe *Chriſts*, and falſe Prophets. Falſe *Chriſts* were ſuch as pretended to be the true *Meſſiahs*; falſe Prophets, ſuch as pretended to own *Chriſtianity*, but drew People away from the Simplicity of the Goſpel. The Ground of this Caution is, They come in Sheep's Cloathing, but inwardly are ravening Wolves; that is, they make fair Pretences to Strictneſs in Religion, and to greater Degrees of Mortification and ſelf-denial than others. The Rule given us to judge of them is, *By their Fruits you ſhall know them.* Good Teachers, like good Trees, will bring forth the good Fruits of Truth and Holineſs; but evil Men and Seducers, like corrupt Trees, will bring forth Error and Wickedneſs, in their Life and Doctrine.

8. There will be Multitudes at the great Day who ſhall be really diſowned by *Chriſt*, as none of his Servants, that did nominally own him for their Lord and Maſter: Many that have now propheſied in his Name, ſhall then periſh in his Wrath; many that have caſt out Devils, ſhall be caſt out too.

A bare Name and Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*, without the Practice of it, is a very inſufficient Ground to build our Hopes of Heaven and Salvation upon. Gifts are not ſufficient Evidences for Heaven. Gifts are as the Gold which adorns the Temple, but Grace is like the Temple that ſanctifies the Gold.

9. The wiſe and fooliſh Builder. The firſt is not the frequent Hearer, but the faithful Doer of the Word, or the obedient *Chriſtian*; the Houſe is Heaven and the Hope of eternal Life: The Rock is *Chriſt*; the building upon Sand, is reſting in the bare Performance of outward Duties; the Rains, the Winds, and the Floods are all Kinds of afflicting Evils, Sufferings and Perſecutions that may befall us.

In the laſt Verſes of the Chapter we are acquainted with the Manner of *Chriſt*'s Teaching; it was with Authority; that is, it was grave and ſerious, pious and ardent, plain and profitable. With what Brevity, without Darkneſs! with what Gravity without Affectation! with what Eloquence, without meretricious Ornaments, were our Lord's Diſcourſes! The Majeſty he ſhewed in his Sermons, made it evidently appear, that he was a Teacher ſent from God, and cloathed with his Authority. His Succeſs was agreeable to his powerful Preaching, *The People were aſtoniſhed.* Hence learn, that ſuch is the Power of *Chriſt*'s Doctrine, when accompanied with the Energy of the holy Spirit, that it makes all the Auditors Admirers, yea, Believers; it cauſes Aſtoniſhment in their Minds, and Reformation in their Manners.

Q. *What is meant by the Word* Mote, *Verſe* 3?

A. Dr. *Hammond* explains it two Ways; 1. By giving us the Signification of the Word in *Greek*, *viz.* a thin dry Piece of Wood; and taking it in that Notion, the leaſt Splinter or Shiver imaginable, of very little, yet of ſome Length, it will be here very fitly uſed, as an oppoſite to the Beam, the biggeſt and longeſt Piece of Wood which is uſed. By comparing the next Verſe (which is the varying the Phraſe a little) with a proverbial Speech among the *Jews* in and before *Chriſt*'s Time, ſet down afterward with ſome Variation in the *Talmud*, thus, *They which ſay to others, take out the ſmall Piece of Wood out of thy Teeth, are anſwered, Take out the Beam out of thine Eyes*; to check the Importunity of thoſe who are always cenſuring and condemning others for ſmall Matters, reprehending them for Trifles, when they themſelves are guilty of thoſe Things which are much more to be reprehended.

CHAP. VIII.

Chriſt *cleanſes the Leper; admires the Centurion's Faith, and heals his Servant of the Palſy; cures* Peter's *Mother-in-law of a Fever, and many other Diſeaſes. A Scribe reſolves to follow him; his Anſwer both to him, and to one of his Diſciples. He rebukes their Unbelief. He diſpoſſeſſes two Men of unclean Spirits, and ſuffers them to go into Swine. The Inhabitants of the*

City being acquainted with it, deſire him to depart.

Q. *IN This Chapter we have an Account of ſeveral Miracles wrought by our Saviour; the firſt is, that of a Man cured of the Leproſy; pray give ſome Account of this Diſtemper of the Leproſy, and the* Jews *Notions of it?*

A. The Leproſy was a Diſtemper very common among the *Jews*. It proceeding from a general Corruption of the Blood and Juices, rendered the Perſon tainted with it, extremely loathſome and deformed; and, in hot Countries eſpecially, was, of all Diſtempers, the moſt ſpreading in the Body, and the moſt contagious to others. But then, with regard to the Notions of the *Jews*, and their Law concerning it, it was ſtill more deteſtable. It ſeparated the Perſon infected with it, from all civil and religious Communion; it diſtinguiſhed him by all the outward Significations of Sorrow and Shame, it was generally looked upon as a Plague inflicted by God, for ſome enormous Crime; it was thought ſo far above the Power of Art, that the very Attempt to cure it by Medicine was eſteemed an impious Preſumption. In ſhort, it was dreaded as the higheſt of all legal Pollutions; and required a great Variety of Luſtrations, before the Patient could be reſtored to the Privilege of being clean *Levit.* xiii.

Q. *But how came our Saviour to run the Hazard of making himſelf unclean, by touching one that was manifeſtly ſo, as* Lev. v. 3?

A. Whatever the Law, concerning the Leper's Uncleanneſs might be, it ſeems, as if the Prieſt, that officiated about him, was not affected by it, becauſe we find him directed to make ſo near an Examination and Inſpection into his Diſtemper, *Levit.* xiii. 14, *&c.* *Aaron*, we may obſerve, tho' he officiated about his Siſter *Miriam*, in her Leproſy, is not ſaid to have contracted any Pollution by it; and therefore well might a much greater High-prieſt than *Aaron*, in Virtue of his Office, claim the ſame Immunity. But then, in Virtue of his Divinity, it was impoſſible for him to incur any legal Uncleanneſs; As therefore the Effect wrought upon this Leper, was a plain Demonſtration, that the *Finger of God was in it*, and he conſequently approved of the Action, ſo the *Jews* made it a received Rule, that a *Prophet might vary from, and even change the Ritual Law*: And, from hence we may infer, that as *Elijah* and *Eliſha* both might touch the dead Children whom they raiſed to Life again, without any Imputation of Uncleanneſs, 1 *Kings* xvii. 19. and 2 *Kings* iv. 34. ſo might our Saviour touch this Leper; though the Opinion of ſome is, that he did not properly touch him, as a Leper, becauſe the Moment that he ſtretched out his Hands, the Leproſy was cured; but if it were not, the Obſervation of *Theophylact* ſtill ſtands good, *viz. That our Lord might touch the Leper, in order to ſhew, that it was not neceſſary to obſerve thoſe leſſer Matters of the Law; that touching an unclean Perſon did not defile one that was pure himſelf; and that the only Thing, indeed, that did defile, was the Leproſy of the Soul.*

Q. *Why did our Saviour here, as well as elſewhere, command the concealing of his Miracle.*

A. We may aſſign for Reaſons, not only his Modeſty and great Humility, that there might be no Appearance of Oſtentation in him, and that the *Jews* might have no Pretence to accuſe him *of ſeeking his own Glory*, Matt. xii. 16. but becauſe, at this Time, it was not proper to irritate the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* (who had already made him quit *Judea*) too much. He knew, that in ſuch a determinate Space, they would bring about what God in his Counſel had decreed: In the mean Time, *he was to work the Work of him that ſent him, while it was Day*, John ix. 4. and to propagate his Goſpel, as much as poſſibly he could, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; which could not have been ſo conveniently done, if the Greatneſs of his Miracles had once provoked the Malice and Envy of his Enemies, to make their utmoſt Oppoſition againſt them. He knew likewiſe the mad and capricious Humour of the Multitude, and had Reaſon to apprehend *that they would come and take him away by Force, and make him a King*, John vi. 15. if all his Miracles had been blazed abroad, before he had ſufficiently inſtructed them in the ſpiritual Nature of his Kingdom. As therefore he was far from being a Friend to Popularity, or Sedition, he deſired that ſeveral of his Miracles might be ſuppreſſed, leſt any bad Conſequences ſhould attend the Publication of them, until his own Reſurrection from the Dead, ſhould be an undeniable Proof and Confirmation of all the reſt. And this I take to be the Reaſon of his referring the *Phariſees*, when they came to demand a Sign of him, to that of the Prophet *Jonah*, *Matt.* xii. 39. whereby he implyed, that he would uſe no more Means for their Conviction, until, by the Miracle of his Reſurrection, his divine Power, and the Completion of the antient Types and Prophecies, ſhould be ſo evidently manifeſted, as to leave them without all Excuſe.

Q. *But what Reaſon can be given why our Saviour ſent the Leper to the High-prieſt?*

A. The Prieſthood, at this Time, was much degenerated from its primitive Inſtitution, and many human Rites and Ordinances were added to God's Law, concerning the Prieſts Examination of the Leper, who pretended to be clean; and yet our Lord ſent this Leper to ſubmit to all theſe new-invented Ceremonies, as knowing, that though they did indeed corrupt, yet they did not extinguiſh the divine Inſtitution. The divine Inſtitution was no more than this, That when a Leper was cured, he was to appear at the City Gate, and the Prieſts were to examine whether he was truely healed or no; if he was, the Prieſt received him into the City, and by Degrees into the Temple, whither he ſhould bring two clean Birds of any Kind, (the marginal Note ſays Sparrows) and having made a Bunch of Cedar and Hyſop, mixed together, ſhould tye them with a ſcarlet Ribbon made of Wool; that to this Bunch of Cedar and Hyſop one of theſe Birds ſhould be faſtened alive, and the other killed by the Leper that was cured, and its Blood received in a Veſſel filled with Water; that when this was done, the Prieſt ſhould take the Bunch with the live Bird, and having dipped both in the Water, tinged with the Blood of the other Bird, ſhould ſeven Times ſprinkle the Leper with it; and that, after this, the live Bird ſhould be let looſe to flye where it would, and the Perſon thus healed and purified, ſhould again tobe admitted into the Society of the Healthy, and a Communion in religious Offices, *Levit.* xiv. 1, *&c.*

Q. *After the Leper had ſhewn himſelf to the Prieſt*, Chriſt *orders him to offer the Gift that Moſes commanded*, for a Teſtimony unto them; *What is meant by the laſt Words*, a Teſtimony unto them?

A. Various are the Senſes in which the Words, *a Teſtimony to them* are taken; for they may ſignify that the Gift or Oblation, which the Leper was to carry, would be a Means to evince the Perfection of his Cure, when the Prieſts had examined and admitted it as ſuch; that this would likewiſe be an Evidence to the People, who ſtood by at that Time, and ſaw him cured, when they ſhould hear that the Prieſt had pronounced him clean; a Proof to the Prieſts, that himſelf was an Obſerver of the Law, by requiring his Patient to comply with the Ceremonies of it; and a full Demonſtration that he was a Prophet come from God, ſince they themſelves owned that a Leproſy could only be cured by *the Finger of God*.

Q. *The next Miracle here related, is the healing of the Centurion's Servant, a Paralitic; What do you obſerve hereupon?*

A. This Centurion was a Heathen, a *Roman* Soldier, and an Officer; yet he believed and confided in the Power of *Chriſt*. He comes to *Chriſt*, not for himſelf, his Wife, or Child, but for a Servant that was ſick. Some Maſters have no more regard to their ſick Servants, than to their Oxen or Swine. He applies to *Chriſt*, the beſt Phyſician, not with a formal Relation of the Caſe, but with a vehement Aggravation of the Diſeaſe, My Servant is grievouſly tormented. But though he earneſtly urges his Petition, yet we find in him a happy Mixture of Humility and Faith; he owns his Unworthineſs of having *Chriſt* come under his Roof, yet acknowledgeth *Chriſt*'s Power, that by ſpeaking a Word only, he could heal his Servant. Our Saviour exceeds both his Deſires and Expectations, and offers to come and heal his Servant. Our Lord once refuſed to ſtir a Foot to heal the Son of a Nobleman, *John* iv. 47. Here the Centurion doth but barely tell *Chriſt* of his poor Servant's Sickneſs, and *Chriſt*, both unaſk'd and undeſired, ſays, *I will come and heal him*. We may likewiſe obſerve the Notice which our Saviour takes of the Centurion's Faith; *he wondered at it*: *Chriſt* wrought this Faith as God, and wondered at it as Man.

We do not find our Saviour wondering at worldly Pomp and Greatneſs; but when he ſees the gracious Acts of Faith, he is raviſhed with Wonder: And from this Story of the Centurion, he takes Occaſion to ſpeak of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and the Rejection of the *Jews*. The unbelieving *Jews* are called the Children of the Kingdom; becauſe born within the Pale of the viſible Church, they preſumed, that the Kingdom of Heaven was entailed upon them, becauſe they were *Abraham*'s Seed; they boaſted of their external Privileges.

Q. *The next Miracle here recorded is, the curing* Peter's *Wife's Mother of a Fever; What do you remark hereupon?*

A. Here it is worthy Obſervation, that Marriage in the Miniſters of the Goſpel, yea even in the Apoſtles themſelves, and in *Peter* the chiefeſt of them, was neither cenſured nor condemned by our Saviour. St. *Peter* had a Wife and Family, which our Saviour condeſcends to viſit; and the firſt Thing he takes notice of, is this ſick Perſon, whom he relieves.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Chriſt's *caſting out Devils?*

A. About the Time of our Saviour's Appearance in the Fleſh, it was uſual for the Devil to poſſeſs Perſons bodily, and grievouſly to torment them. This is one of the dreadful Evils Sin has rendered us liable to; when we give *Satan* the Poſſeſſion of our Bodies. But *Chriſt* is the ſtrong Man that muſt caſt him out: Our *Jeſus*, by his Word alone can deliver from *Satan*'s Power, and all the ſad Effects and Conſequences thereof. But with what ſympathizing Pity does he exerciſe theſe Acts of Mercy and Compaſſion towards poor Creatures? He took our Infirmities, he bore our guilt, which was the Cauſe of theſe Griefs and Sorrows, and he bore the Sorrows themſelves, by a tender Sympathy with us under the Burden of them.

Q. *What is there more deſerving Remark in this Chapter?*

A. The next Thing obſervable is, the Reſolution a Perſon took to follow *Chriſt*; which was commendable, if not made for ſiniſter Ends, and ſecular Advantages; which, it is feared, was the Caſe here, by our Saviour's Anſwer, *Foxes have Holes, &c.* that is, My Condition is worſe than the Birds of the Air, or the Beaſts of the Earth. Hence learn, that thoſe who expect to gain any Thing by following *Chriſt*, but the Salvation of their Souls, will find themſelves miſerably miſtaken. *Chriſt* is ſtyled here the Son of Man, to ſhew the Truth of his Humanity, and the Depth of his Abaſement, when being the Son of God, he ſubmitted to be made Man.

Q. *In what Senſe does our Saviour forbid the* burying of the Dead, *Verſe* 21?

A. When our Saviour prohibits the burying the Dead, we are not to ſuppoſe that he diſallows civil Offices from one Perſon to another, much leſs of a Child to a Parent, either living or dead: But he informs us, that no Office of Love or Service to Man muſt be preferred to our Duty to God, and that ſuch as are employ'd in the Miniſtry, muſt mind that alone, and leave inferior Duties to other Perſons.

Q. *Here is related a remarkable Tranſaction at Sea; what do you obſerve thereupon?*

A. *Chriſt* and his Diſciples being got out to Sea, a Storm ariſes, which ſadly terrifies the Diſciples; their Lord being then aſleep, thereby ſhewing himſelf to be truly and really Man; as he took upon him our Nature, ſo he ſubjected himſelf to our Infirmities. The Diſciples awaked him with a ſad Outcry, *Lord, ſave us; we periſh*. Here was Faith mixed with human Frailty: They had Faith in his Power that he could ſave them, but being aſleep, they concluded he muſt awake before he could ſave them; but tho' his human Nature ſlept, his divine Nature did not ſlumber. However, in the midſt of their Fears they believed *Chriſt*'s Power, which he accordingly immediately exerted, and calms the Rage of the Sea, and rebukes the Diſciples for their Fears. The Diſciples Faith in forſaking all to follow *Chriſt*, was great, but in this Inſtance it was weak, through the Prevalency of their Fear.

Q. Chriſt *and his Diſciples being drove on the oppoſite Shore, were met by two Perſons poſſeſſed with Devils; pray explain this Paſſage?*

A. In the *Old Teſtament* we read of but few, if any, poſſeſſed with evil Spirits; but of many in the *New Teſtament*. Our Saviour came into the World to deſtroy the Works of the *Devil*; therefore he ſuffered *Satan* to enter ſome human Bodies, to ſhew his divine Power in caſting him out. The Devils knew him to be the Son of God, but not their Saviour, and therefore cry out, *What have we to do with thee? Or thou with us? Art thou come to torment us before the Time?* Which intimates that the Torments of the Devils are not yet at their Height, but a Time will come when they will be increaſed. We have here likewiſe a remarkable Inſtance of *Satan*'s limited Power, that a whole Legion of Devils had not Power to deſtroy one Man, nor able to hurt the meaneſt Creature without Permiſſion. Although *Chriſt* ſeldom wrought any deſtructive Miracle; yet, that the People might ſee how great the Power and Malice of the Devil would be, if not reſtrained by *Chriſt*, he permits them to enter the Swine: and how glad was *Satan* of this Permiſſion of doing Miſchief, though to a Herd of Swine?

This miraculous Cure of the Poſſeſſed, was ſo far from working Belief in the People, that it rather enraged them for the Loſs of their Swine; and made them deſire *Chriſt* to depart from them; who accordingly took ſhip, and we never read of his return to them afterwards.

CHAP. IX.

Chriſt *coming to his own City, cures one of the Palſy. The* Scribes *charge him with Blaſphemy; he vindicates himſelf; calls* Matthew *from the Receipt of Cuſtom; eats with Publicans and Sinners, and defends his ſo doing; juſtifies his Diſciples for not faſting; cures a Woman of a bloody Iſſue, and raiſes* Jairus's *Daughter; gives Sight to two blind Men; heals a dumb Man poſſeſſed with a Devil; the Multitude marvel; the* Phariſees *blaſpheme; he takes Compaſſion on the Multitude; and exhorts to pray for faithful Labourers.*

Q. AFTER Chriſt *was come to* Capernaum, *a Paralytic was brought to him to be cured, which our Saviour performed; but whether this was done on Account of the Faith of the Patient, or thoſe that brought him, I would gladly be informed?*

A. *Chriſt* being come to his own City, *Capernaum*, he is preſented with a Patient, one ſick of the Palſy, which being a Relaxation of the Nerves, weakens the Joints, and confines the Perſon to his Bed. But however incurable the Diſeaſe be reckoned, they were firmly perſuaded he was able to give Relief, and they found him as willing as able: No ſooner did they exert their Faith, but he exerted his divine Power in healing. It was not the Sick Man's Faith, but that of his Friends; the Faith of others may prevail for us. And ſuch is the wonderous Efficacy of Faith, that it obtains not only what was deſired, but more than was expected: They deſired only the healing of the Body, but *Jeſus* ſeeing their Faith, heals Body and Soul too. *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*; intimating that Diſeaſes proceed from Sin, becauſe *Chriſt* firſt ſpeaks of forgiving them; but it is thought that *Chriſt* ſpeaks here rather of the temporal Puniſhment, than the eternal; becauſe that depends on our own Faith, not others. But however good and pious our Saviour's Deſign was, he is accuſed of Blaſphemy, Sorcery, and the blackeſt Crimes. But our Saviour eaſily refuted this Slander of the *Phariſees*, and gave them a twofold Demonſtration of his Godhead. 1. By letting them underſtand he knew their Thoughts. 2. By aſſuming to himſelf a Power to forgive Sins: Now, who can forgive Sins but God?

Q. *When* Chriſt *had performed the Cure, what followed?*

A. The Cure being wrought, the Multitude marvelled, but believed not; they admired our Saviour as an extraordinary Man, but did not believe in him as the Son of God; they praiſe God for giving ſuch Power to heal the Bodies of Men, but not for ſending his Son into the World to ſave the Souls of Men.

Q. *We have an Account of the Calling of* Matthew *to be a Diſciple, and of* Chriſt's *eating with Publicans and Sinners; what do you obſerve hereupon?*

A. The Number of our Lord's Apoſtles not being compleated, he chuſes *Matthew*, a grinding Publican. *Matthew* readily complies with the Call. When the inward Call of the Spirit, ſays Biſhop *Hall*, accompanies the outward Call of the Word, the Soul readily complies, and preſently yields Obedience to the Voice of God.

Chriſt invited *Matthew*, to a Diſcipleſhip, *Matthew* invites *Chriſt* to a Feaſt. We don't find, whenever *Chriſt* was invited to any Table, that he refuſed to go, whoever was the Inviter; not for the Pleaſure of eating, but for the Opportunity of converſing and doing good. At this Feaſt were many Publicans and Sinners, who were, no doubt, of *Matthew*'s Acquaintance. This mightily offended the *Phariſees*, who cenſured *Chriſt* for converſing with Sinners. But what does our Lord anſwer them? They that are whole need not a Phyſician. You *Phariſees*, who, in your own Opinion are whole, are puffed up with a Conceit of your own Righteouſneſs, I have no Hopes of doing you any Good; for ſuch as think themſelves whole, deſire not the Help of a Phyſician.

Q. *Who was this* Matthew?

A. *Grotius*, and thoſe that follow him, are of Opinion, that the *Levi* mentioned, *Luke* v. 27. is not the ſame with *Matthew*, in *Matt.* ix. 9. becauſe *Matthew* never calls himſelf *Levi*, nor does *Mark* or *Luke* ever call *Levi*, *Matthew*. But the Anſwer to this has long ſince been given by St. *Jerom*, in *Matthew* ix. 9. *viz.* that the other two *Evangeliſts* (as their Charity and good Nature became them) endeavoured to cover the Infamy of their Brother's former Way of Life, and therefore never call him the *Publican*, leſt they ſhould ſeem to reproach him with the Remembrance of his former Converſation, but ſpeak of him under his other Name; tho' he, out of his great Humility, in the *Goſpel* written by himſelf, does not only take the more commonly known Name of *Matthew*, but adds that odious Title likewiſe of *Matthew the Publican*. Since then the Cuſtom of having more Names than one, is known to have prevailed among the *Jews*; and as St. *Mark* calls him *Levi* the Son of *Alpheus*, ſo *Matthew*, in all Church Hiſtory, is ſaid to be the Son of one of the ſame Name; and the Hiſtory of the Perſon *Levi* in *Mark* and *Luke*, agrees ſo exactly with what is ſaid of him, who in the other *Evangeliſt*, is called *Matthew*, and there is not one circumſtantial Difference to be perceived, we cannot but conclude that this *Matthew* and *Levi* were one and the ſame Perſon.

The old Enemies of our Religion, *Julian* and *Porphyry*, accuſed *Matthew* of Folly and Inconſiderateneſs, in following a Man whom he knew nothing of. But St. *Jerom*'s Reply is, That he could not want a ſufficient Knowledge both of our Saviour's Doctrine and Miracles before his Call. The *Publicans* we find were great Frequenters of the Synagogues and other Places where our Saviour taught; and of all others expreſſed the greateſt Eagerneſs to be inſtructed by him; and therefore, if *Matthew* was of the ſame Diſpoſition, he could not want Opportunities of being acquainted with our Saviour's Preaching; and of the wonderful Works which he did every where; but more eſpecially at *Capernaum*, it was impoſſible for him to be ignorant. It is very probable, therefore, that *Matthew*, upon ſuch Conviction, was inclinable to become one of our Saviour's Diſciples, even before he called him. But if he was not, the Luſtre and Majeſty of the Divinity, hid under the Manhood, but ſhining conſpicuouſly in the Face of *Jeſus Chriſt*, was enough to attract every one that he caſt his Eyes upon; at leaſt that powerful Impulſe, which he, to whom all Hearts are open, knew how to inject into *Matthew*'s Breaſt, could not fail to do it; and from this ſupernatural Movement, doubtleſs it chiefly was, that ſo readily, and without Heſitation, he left all and followed *Chriſt*.

Nor was it only among the *Jews*, but among the *Heathens* likewiſe, that the Name of a *Publican* was infamous. For, according to their Writers, they were accounted no better than Thieves and Cheats; fierce Violence, unpuniſhed Rapine, and ſhameleſs Covetouſneſs were their publick Profeſſion. And it is ſaid of *Theocritus*, that being asked, *Which was the crueleſt among the Beaſts?* his Reply was, *That of thoſe in the Mountains, the Bear and the Lion, but of thoſe in the City, the* Publicans *and* Sycophants.

Q. *Explain the Force of our Saviour's Reaſons, why he kept Company with* Publicans *and Sinners?*

A. The Arguments which our Saviour uſes to the *Phariſees*, for his keeping Company with *Publicans* and *Sinners*, are theſe three: Firſt, *They that are whole, need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick*, Matt. ix. 12. by which he intimates to them, that in converſing with ſuch Sort of Perſons, he was about the Diſcharge of his proper Buſineſs; and that, as a Phyſician's Profeſſion did ſometimes call him among Patients that had the moſt virulent Diſtempers; ſo he, whoſe Office it was to heal Souls, ought not to refuſe his Aſſiſtance to thoſe, whoſe Circumſtances moſt of all wanted his Help and Advice. Secondly, God's ſaying, in the Prophet *Hoſea*, vi. 6. *that he would have Mercy*, meaning thereby all the kind Offices, whereby we promote our Neighbour's Advantage, *rather than Sacrifice*, i. e. the Rites and Ordinances of the ceremonial Law; whereby he taught them, that though theſe latter might, in their due Place and Seaſon, be acceptable to God, yet Charity to the Souls of Men (which was the higheſt Act of Mercy, and that wherein he was then employing himſelf) was much more eſteemed by him. Thirdly, That *he came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*, or that the great Deſign of his Appearance in the World was, to change the corrupt Manners and Diſpoſitions of Men; a Change, which the Righteous ſtanding leſs in need of, ſhould no more grudge the Opportunities of it to Sinners, than the Healthful ought to think themſelves diſparaged, when the Phyſician forbears his Viſits to them, which he makes to the Sick. Some Commentators, however, have obſerved, in this laſt Argument, a ſevere Irony, and thus they expound it, *I am not come to cure thoſe that think themſelves well, nor to ſave thoſe that account themſelves Righteous, as you* Phariſees *ſeem to do; but I am to cure thoſe who find themſelves ſick, and are ſenſible of the Burthen of their manifold Iniquities, as theſe* Publicans *ſeem to be.*

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Chriſt's *Diſcourſe about* Faſting?

A. The *Phariſees* ſet on the Diſciples of *John*, to contend with *Chriſt* about faſting, alledging that *John*'s Diſciples faſted often, *Chriſt*'s not all. Our Saviour owns it, and juſtifies his Diſciples by two Reaſons: 1. Becauſe it was unſuitable to them, while *Chriſt*'s bodily Preſence was with them; which made it a Time of Joy, and not of Mourning and Faſting. 2. It was intolerable for them; they were raw, green and tender, and could no more bear the Severities of Religion at preſent, than an old Garment could bear a Piece of new ſtiff Cloth, to be ſet into it, which will make the rent worſe, if the Garment comes to a Stretch; nor more than old Bottes could keep new Wine.

Q. *What were the Faſts moſt in Uſe in thoſe Times?*

A. Beſides the publick Faſts appointed by the Church, the *Phariſees* in general did faſt two Days every Week, and thoſe of more Strictneſs than ordinary, four. The Diſciples of *John* too, who was himſelf a Man of ſuch Abſtinence, that our Saviour ſays of him, He *came* (comparatively) *neither eating nor drinking*, Matt. xi. 18. did, no doubt, in a great Meaſure, follow the Example of their Maſter; and now that he was confined in Priſon, might, very probably, double their Faſts, and their Prayers to God for his Deliverance. And if they and the *Phariſees* were able to do this, why ſhould the Diſciples of *Chriſt* be deemed inſufficient? Now to this it may be anſwered, that among the *Jews*, there were not only the Sects of *Eſſenes* and *Phariſees*, who led an auſtere Life, but alſo Schools of the Prophets, many of whom were *Nazarites*, and conſecrated to the Service of God; and, beſides theſe, the *Jews* had likewiſe academical and private Schools, from whence might come Diſciples to *John*, and the *Phariſees*, already trained up to Faſting and Penance, and other ſevere Duties of Religion. But now it is certain, that the Diſciples of our Lord were choſen from their Fiſhing-trade, and ſo came to him wholly unacquainted with, and unfitted for theſe Auſterities, which, to impoſe upon them now, was not neceſſary: Becauſe his Continuance among them was not to be long, and after his Departure they would have Occaſion, more than enough, to exerciſe theſe, and many more painful Duties in the Propagation of the Goſpel, and the Perſecutions which would attend it.

Q. *What is there farther remarkable in this Chapter?*

A. While he was diſcourſing with *John*'s Diſciples, he is interrupted by a Ruler, who humbly intreats him to come and lay his Hand on his Daughter, in order to recover her. Where we may obſerve the Weakneſs of his Faith, as if *Chriſt* could not have cured her, without coming to her, or laying his Hand upon her; but *Chriſt*, without regarding the Weakneſs of his Faith, complies with his Requeſt; but in his Way to the Ruler's Houſe, a diſeaſed Woman comes behind him, touches his Garment, and is inſtantly healed: The Virtue lay not in her Finger, but in her Faith, or rather in *Chriſt*, which her Faith inſtrumentally drew forth.

Chriſt being come to the Ruler's Houſe, finds the People buſied in preparing for the Interment of the dead Corps, with Muſick and other Solemnities. The Cuſtom of Muſick at Funerals was derived from the Heathens, not mentiened in the *Old Teſtament*. Our Saviour tells them the Damſel was not dead, but only aſleep. Her Soul, 'tis true, might be ſeparated from her, but not fixed in its eternal Manſion. Souls departed are under the Conduct of Angels, good or bad, to their ſeveral Places, of Bliſs or Miſery. The Soul of this Damſel was, probably, under the Guard of Angels, near her dead Body, waiting the Pleaſure of *Chriſt*, in Reference to it; either to reſtore it again to the Body, or to tranſlate it to its eternal Manſion. From theſe Words of *Chriſt*, *The Maid is not dead, but ſleepeth*, the *Jeſuits* plead for their Doctrine of Equivocations and mental Reſervations, alledging, that when *Chriſt* ſaid, *She is not dead*, he reſerved in his Mind, *In reſpect of my Power*. But the Words were evidently ſpoken to thoſe who were preparing for her Interment and Funeral-Rites, and accordingly only intimate, that ſhe was not ſo dead, as that there was any Occaſion for theſe Preparations, and that he was come to awake her out of her Sleep.

Q. *Why does our Saviour, Verſe* 17. *compare his Diſciples to* old Bottles?

A. The Bottles which were in the Eaſt, and at this Time very common in *France*, were not made of Glaſs, as ours are, but were certain Bags made of Goats-skins, having the Hair on the Inſide, and were well pitched and ſewed together. They are very good Veſſels to preſerve Wine, Oil, or any other Liquor in; and in this Reſpect, more eſpecially, very convenient to carry from Place to Place, becauſe, fall they never ſo often, they will not break, unleſs they be very old or decay'd. In which Senſe our Saviour compares his Diſciples, before the Deſcent of the Holy Spirit upon them, to *old Bottles*, becauſe they were not capable either of comprehending or practiſing all that Perfection which he came into the World to teach Mankind.

Q. *What more do you find in this Chapter worthy Remark?*

A. Going from thence, two blind Men call after him by the Name of the Son of *David*; which ſhewed that they believed him to be the *Meſſias*; and according to their Faith ſo was their Succeſs; their Faith capacitated them for a Cure.

The next Cure our Saviour performed, was upon a dumb Man poſſeſs'd by a Devil. This Man's Dumbneſs was cauſed by the Devil's Poſſeſſion; and his Cure was a Demonſtration of *Chriſt*'s divine Power, and a convictive Evidence of his being truly and really God. But ſo great was the Blindneſs, Obſtinacy, and Malice of the *Phariſees*, that they charged *Chriſt* with having made a Contract with the Devil: But how unlikely was it, that *Satan* ſhould lend our Saviour a Power againſt himſelf, and for the Deſtruction of his own Kingdom?

Laſtly, we have an Account of *Chriſt*'s Diligence and Aſſiduity in the Office of his Miniſtry; he went about preaching the Goſpel, and healing Diſeaſes. *He*, ſays Dr. *Whitby*, *who doth not inſtruct his Flock, and feed them with the ſincere Milk of the Word, from an Heart full of Love to God, and Compaſſion to Souls, deſerves not the Name of a true Shepherd.*

CHAP. X.

Chriſt *gives his Diſciples Power to work Miracles; their Names and Number. His Charge and Inſtruction for their Journey; comforts them againſt Perſecutions; ſhews them the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe that confeſs him before Men, with the Miſery of thoſe that deny him. The End of his coming into the World; the Reward of thoſe that receive and refreſh his Diſciples.*

Q. WHAT *do we find in this Chapter for our Inſtruction?*

A. Our Saviour, in this Chapter gives his Diſciples his firſt Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel. As the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation aroſe from twelve Patriarchs, ſo the *Chriſtian* Church was planted by twelve Apoſtles, commiſſioned thereto by *Chriſt*. The Power he delegated to them was over unclean Spirits, and for healing Diſeaſes in his Name. And after his Reſurrection, they were enabled to confer this Power on others, by laying their Hands upon them; a plain Demonſtration of the Truth of the *Chriſtian* Faith.

Q. *Here we have a Liſt of our Saviour's Diſciples; what do you remark concerning them?*

A. In reckoning up the twelve Apoſtles, *Peter* is named the firſt, and *Judas* laſt. *Peter* ſtands the firſt, becauſe firſt called; or probably, becauſe the eldeſt of them, or becauſe for Order-ſake, he might ſpeak before the reſt; from whence might be inferred a Primacy, but not a Superiority of Degree. *Judas* is laſt named, with a Brand of Infamy ſet upon him, that he was a Traytor. Obſerve, that though the Truth of Grace be abſolutely neceſſary to a Miniſter's Salvation, yet the Want of it doth not diſanul his Office, or ſet aſide the Lawfulneſs of his Miniſtry: *Judas*, though a Traytor, was a lawful Miniſter. *Judas* preaches *Chriſt* as well as the reſt, and was not excepted when *Chriſt* ſaid, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me.*

Q. *Why does our Saviour forbid his Diſciples to go to the* Gentiles *and* Samaritans?

A. This Prohibition was only temporary, whilſt *Chriſt* was upon Earth; he orders them to go rather to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, to the *Jews* his own People, to whom he was promiſed; but afterwards the Apoſtles were commanded to teach all Nations; and *Samaria*, after *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion, received the Goſpel by the Preaching of *Philip*. *Chriſt* calls the *Iſraelites* Sheep, though they obey'd not their Shepherd's Voice, becauſe they were God's choſen People; and he calls them the loſt Sheep, becauſe they were both loſt in themſelves, and alſo in great Danger of being eventually

ally and finally loſt, by the Ignorance and Wickedneſs of their ſpiritual Guides.

Q. *What was the Commiſſion that our Saviour gave the Apoſtles?*

A. The Duty enjoined the Apoſtles was preaching, and their Doctrine to be, *That the Kingdom of Heaven was at Hand*; that is, that the promiſed *Meſſiah* was come, had erected his Kingdom in the World, and expected their Obedience to his Laws. The Apoſtles were likewiſe empower'd to work Miracles, for the Confirmation of their Doctrine, but were charged to work freely, without any Regard to their own private Intereſt. *Moſes's* Miracles were as great Judgments as Wonders; but theſe delivered Men from Miſery, from bodily Diſeaſes, from the Power and Malice of evil Spirits.

Q. *How far did* Chriſt's *Command to make no Proviſion for their Journey, extend?*

A. Chriſt's Command, to make no Proviſion for their Journey, was only temporary, and extended only to this firſt Out-ſetting: He encourages them to truſt in God for Protection and proviſion. As it is a Miniſter's Duty to truſt to God for Maintenance, ſo it is the Duty of the People to provide for the Miniſter's Comfortable Subſiſtence.

Q. *What other Inſtructions did* Chriſt *give his Diſciples on this Occaſion?*

A. Our Saviour proceeds to inſtruct his Diſciples with reſpect to their Behavionr and Conduct in their Journey in preaching the Goſpel. They were to behave decently; not to wander about like Vagabonds, but having entered a City or Village, they were to enquire who ſtood beſt affected to the Goſpel, and there to turn in. They were likewiſe enjoined civil and religious Courteſy; when they entered a Houſe, to wiſh thoſe in it Mercy, Grace and Peace. But if, notwithſtanding ſuch civil and modeſt Demeanour, they ſhould be rejected, they were to ſhake off the Duſt of their Feet; which was an emblematical Action, and intimated, that God would in like Manner ſhake off them, and eſteem them no better than the vileſt Duſt. *Grotius* obſerves, that the Sin of thoſe who rejected the Goſpel, muſt be a wilful Sin, which it was in their Power to avoid; becauſe it render'd them obnoxious to greater Puniſhment than *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were to ſuffer at the Day of Judgment, and becauſe committed againſt greater Light, and a greater Confirmation of the Truth.

But as the Apoſtles would probably meet with Difficulties and Diſcouragements, our Saviour arms them againſt the World, telling them, *he ſent them forth as Sheep among Wolves*, intimating that the Enemies of the Goſpel were as maliciouſly inclined to devour and deſtroy the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, as Wolves are to devour Sheep: He therefore recommends to them Prudence and Innocence; the Wiſdom of the Serpent, to avoid the World's Injuries; and the Harmleſſneſs of Doves, in not revenging them. As Piety without Policy is too ſimple to be ſafe, ſo Policy without Piety is too ſubtil to be good. Our Saviour farther tells them, they ſhould be brought before Magiſtrates and Rulers, for his Sake, but adviſes them not to be anxiouſly thoughtful what they ſhould ſay, becauſe they ſhould be immediately aſſiſted by the Spirit of God. So that though Truth may be oppoſed, yet its Defenders ſhall never be aſhamed; God himſelf will ſuggeſt ſuch Truths to their Minds, as all their Oppoſers ſhall not be able to refute. *Chriſt* here only forbids diſtruſtful Thoughts, becauſe that they ſhould not, like Orators and Advocates, ſtrive to make ſtudied Pleas, or rhetorical Apologies for themſelves, ſince the Spirit would be in their Mouths, and give them immediate Supplies. But not only Miniſters, but all *Chriſtians* in general, were to experience the Enmity of the World, which would extinguiſh, even the natural Affection of the neareſt and deareſt Relations towards each other; however, this is our Comfort, that if our Sufferings end not in our Life-Time, they will end with our Lives.

Our Saviour farther directs his Apoſtles, and cautions them to take a prudent Care of their own Preſervation, allowing them to flee in Time of Perſecution, and aſſures them, that before they had gone through all the Cities of the *Jews*, preaching the Goſpel, he would certainly come in Judgment againſt *Jeruſalem*, and ſeverely deſtroy his own Murtherers, and their Perſecutors. He teaches them, that they were not to expect kinder Uſage from an unkind World, than he himſelf met with; the Diſciple muſt not hope to be above his Maſter. He exhorts them, therefore, to a free Profeſſion and open Publication of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, from this Conſideration, that whatever they ſay or do, ſhall be brought to light, proclaimed and publiſhed to the World. Let it be our Care to do good, and it will be *Chriſt's* Care to diſcover the Goodneſs which we do, to vindicate it from Miſconſtruction, and ſet it in its cleareſt Light. He likewiſe warns them againſt a ſinful, ſervile, ſlaviſh Fear of impotent Man, and recommends a holy, awful and prudential Fear of the omnipotent God, who is able to kill both Body and Soul. Here is a certain Evidence that the Soul dies not with the Body; Man may kill the Body, but it is denied that he can kill the Soul: It is ſpoken of temporal Death; conſequently the Soul doth not periſh with the Body, nor is reduced to an inſenſible State by the Death of the Body; nor can the Soul be ſuppoſed to ſleep as the Body doth, till the Reſurrection: For an intelligible, thinking, and perceiving Being, as the Soul is, cannot be deprived of Senſation, Thought and Perception, no more than it can loſe its Being: The Soul, after the Death of the Body, being capable of Bliſs and Miſery, muſt continue in Senſation.

Chriſt fortifies his Diſciples againſt all diſtruſtfull Fears and diſtracting Cares, by inculcating the Doctrine of divine Providence, which concerns itſelf for the meaneſt Creatures.

Q. *I deſire you to expound the 34th Verſe,* Think not that I am come to ſend Peace on Earth; I came not to ſend Peace, but a Sword.

A. When our Saviour ſays, he is not come to ſend Peace on the Earth, but a Sword, we muſt diſtinguiſh between the intentional Aim of *Chriſt's* Coming, and the accidental Event of it. His intentional Aim was to propagate and promote Peace in the World, but through the Corruption of Man's Nature, the accidental Event of his Coming is War and Diviſion; not that theſe are genuine and natural Fruits of the Goſpel, but occaſional and accidental only.

Q. *What other Inſtructions does* Chriſt *give his Diſciples?*

A. In the Cloſe of the Chapter, *Chriſt* encourages his Diſciples to Faithfulneſs in their Office, by aſſuring them, that he ſhall eſteem all the Kindneſs ſhewn to them, as done unto himſelf. Hence we may learn, that the leaſt Office of Love and Reſpect, of Kindneſs and Charity, which we ſhew to any of the Miniſters or Members of *Jeſus Chriſt*, for his Sake; *Chriſt* accounts it as done unto himſelf, and it ſhall be rewarded by himſelf.

CHAP. XI.

John, *in Priſon ſends two Diſciples to* Chriſt; *his Anſwer to them; his glorious Teſtimony of* John; *upbraids the* Jews *of Unbelief; threatens* Chorazin, Bethſaida *and* Capernaum *for their Unfruitfulneſs; praiſes his Father that it was his good Pleaſure to reveal his Will to Babes; invites the weary and heavy laden Sinners to come to him for Eaſe and Refreſhment.*

Q. W*HAT are the Scenes of Action our Saviour is engaged in in this Chapter?*

A. Our Lord having ſent out his Diſciples to plant and propagate the Goſpel, now follows himſelf. The preaching of the Goſpel is a great and neceſſary Work, incumbent on all the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, let their Dignity and Pre-eminency in the Church, be what it will. None of the Servants are above the Lord. If there be any Diſtinction between teaching and preaching, it is this, teaching is in order to the Converſion of Sinners, and preaching in order to the Edification of Saints.

Q. *What do you obſerve concerning* John's *Meſſage to* Chriſt?

A. John's Meſſage to our Saviour, was not for his own Information, but for the Satisfaction of his Diſciples, who, ſays Biſhop *Tillotſon*, out of great Zeal to their Maſter, envied *Chriſt* himſelf, and were unwilling to believe any one greater than their Maſter. *John* therefore, out of a pious Deſign, to confirm his Diſciples in the Belief of *Jeſus*'s being the true *Meſſias*, ſends them to our Saviour, to hear the Doctrine which he taught, and ſee the Miracles which he wrought. The Way *Chriſt* takes for the Conviction of *John*'s Diſciples was by appealing to their Senſes concerning the Miracles he wrought. *Chriſt* was literally, as well as myſtically, what he told them; he was an Eye of Underſtanding to the Ignorant, a Hand of Power to the Weak; he opened an Ear in deaf Hearts, to receive the Word of Life; and the poor are evangelized, that is, turned into the Spirit and Temper of the Goſpel, as the *Greek* World ſignifies. Widely different were the Doctrines of the *Phariſees*, and *Rabbies*, *viz.* vain Traditions, allegorical Interpretations, and cabaliſtical Deductions, which tranſcended the Capacity of the Vulgar, who received but little Inſtructions at their Schools. Happy is the Man, who far from being offended at the Perſon or Doctrines of *Chriſt*, believes in him, and grounds his Expectation of Heaven and Salvation upon him.

Q. *What is your Opinion of our Saviour's Encomiums on* John?

A. Our Lord having ſatisfied *John*'s Diſciples, next gives a large Encomium on *John* himſelf, not to them, for they had already too high an Opinion of their Maſter, but to the Multitude, who thought too meanly of him, poſſibly becauſe of his Impriſonment and Sufferings. Once the People had high Thoughts of *John*, but now they undervalued him. See the Uncertainty of popular Applauſe; he who to-day is cried up, to-morrow is trodden down; But *Chriſt* took this Opportunity, when *John* was thus forſaken and in Diſgrace, to proclaim his Worth, to vindicate his Innocency, and to maintain his Honour. But though *John* was greater than all the Prophets that went before him, ſeeing more of *Chriſt* than all of them, yet he ſaw leſs than they that came after him. The meaneſt Evangelical Miniſter, that preaches *Chriſt* come, is to be preferred before all the old Prophets who propheſied of *Chriſt* to come. This Preference of the Evangelical Miniſter is, partly in reſpect of his Doctrine, which is more Spiritual and Heavenly; partly in reſpect of his Office, which is to preach *Chriſt* crucified and riſen again; and partly in reſpect of divine Aſſiſtance; for *John* wrought no Miracle, as did the Apoſtles of our Lord. Nor did the Holy Ghoſt fall upon *John*; nor did he ſpeak by any extraordinary Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit, ſent down from Heaven, as the Apoſtles did.

Our Saviour commends *John's* Miniſtry from the Succeſs of it. Never any Miniſter (before) diſcovered the *Meſſiah*, and his Kingdom, ſo clearly as *John* did; and therefore never was there ſuch Zeal to preſs into the Kingdom of Heaven amongſt any, as the Hearers of *John* had. Thoſe who reſolve for Heaven, muſt offer Violence in the taking it; none but the Violent are Victorious: They take it by Force. Which Words are both Reſtrictive and Promiſſive; none but the Violent take it, and the Violent ſhall take it. Others, by the Violent, underſtand the *Publicans* and *Sinners*, and poorer Sort of People, who, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* imagined, had no Right to the *Meſſiah*; theſe, as violent Invaders, and bold Intruders, embrace the Goſpel, and do, as it were, take it by Force from the learned Rabbies.

John has this further Commendation, that the Law and the Prophets, till his Coming, foretold the *Meſſiah*; but not ſo determinately and clearly as he did: And accordingly he was that *Elias* who *Iſaiah* and *Malachi* foretold ſhould be the Harbinger and Forerunner of *Chriſt*. But why is he called *Elias*? Poſſibly becauſe they were alike Zealous in the Works of God; alike Succeſsful in that Work; and alike perſecuted for that Work; the one by *Jezebel*, the other by *Herodias*.

Q. *In what Manner does* Chriſt *reprove the* Phariſees, *and the People?*

A. In the next Place *Chriſt* deſcribes the perverſe Humour of the *Phariſees*, whom nothing could induce to the embracing the Goſpel, neither *John*'s Miniſtry, nor *Chriſt*'s. This our Saviour ſets forth two Ways. 1. Allegorically. 2. Properly. By way of Allegory, he compares them to ſullen Children, whom nothing would pleaſe; of ſuch a cenſorious and capricious Humour, that God himſelf, though he uſed Variety of Means, could not pleaſe them. *John*, for the Auſterity of his Life, and Severity of his Doctrine, they cenſured as having a Devil. *Chriſt*, who was of a free and familiar Converſe, complying with their Cuſtoms, and accompanying with them at their Feaſts, diſpleaſed them as much as *John*'s Reſervedneſs, *Chriſt's* Affability towards Sinners, they call Approbation of their Sins; and his ſociable Diſpoſition, Looſeneſs and Luxury.

Chriſt having gone through the Cities of *Galilee*, preaching the Doctrine of Repentance, confirming it with Miracles, yet finding Multitudes ſtill remain impenitent, he upbraids them ſeverely for their Contempt of Goſpel-Grace. The Cities upbraided were *Chorazin*, *Bethſaida*, and *Capernaum*; he preached in their Pulpits, and wrought his Miracles among them; other Cities only heard, they ſaw; but where he preached moſt, he prevailed leaſt. He does not upbraid them for Diſreſpect of his Perſon, but for Diſobedience to his Doctrine. The Places he upbraids them with, are *Tyre* and *Sidon*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, Nations Rude and Barbarous, out of the Pale of the Church, ignorant of a Saviour, and of the Way to Salvation by him. *Capernaum*'s Sentence ſhall exceed *Sodom*'s for Severity, becauſe ſhe exceeded *Sodom* in the Enjoyment of Means and Mercy. The Caſe of thoſe who are Impenitent under the Goſpel, is, of all others, the moſt Dangerous.

Q. *What next comes under Conſideration?*

A. Our Saviour having thus upbraided theſe Deſpiſers of his Goſpel, proceeds to glorify his Father, for the wiſe and free Diſpenſation of his Goſpel-Grace to the Meaneſt and moſt Ignorant: whilſt the wiſe and prudent, the great and learned Men of the World, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, undervalued it, from whom God, in Judgment, did hide the Myſteries of the Goſpel, and ſaid, *Ye ſhall not ſee*; becauſe they had ſaid, *We will not ſee*. By hiding theſe Things from the Wiſe and Prudent, we are not to underſtand God's putting Darkneſs into them; but his leaving them to their own Darkneſs, or denying them that Light they did not deſire to ſee; plainly intimating, that God judicially hides the Myſteries of heavenly Wiſdom from worldly Wiſe Men.

Q. *What does the following Part of our Lord's Diſcourſe contain?*

A. Our Lord then opens his Commiſſion, and declares, 1. His Authority; that all Authority is committed to him, as Mediator, from God the Father. 2. His Office; to reveal his Father's Mind and his Will to a loſt World. In conſequence of which, he invites ſuch as are weary of the Burden of Sin, the Slavery of Satan, and the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, to come unto him for Reſt and Eaſe. He exhorts them to take his Yoke upon them. This Phraſe of taking the Yoke, is Judaical, the *Jewiſh* Doctors ſpeak frequently of the Yoke of the Law; the Yoke of the Commandments; and the Ceremonies impoſed upon the *Jews* are called *A Yoke*, Acts xv. 10. *Chriſt's* Diſciples muſt wear his Yoke; which is two-fold; a Yoke of Inſtruction, and a Yoke of Affliction. *Chriſt*'s Law is a Yoke of Inſtruction; it reſtrains our natural Inclination, it curbs our ſenſual Appetites. *Take my Yoke upon you.* 1. Becauſe he, as a Lord, lays it upon us. 2. Becauſe he, as a Servant, firſt bore it. *Learn of me*, both what, and how to bear. *For my Yoke is eaſy, and my Burden is light.* My Service is good and gainful, profitable and uſeful; not only tolerable, but delightful; and as my Yoke is, ſuch is my Burden: The Burden of my Precepts, and of my Croſs, both light, not abſolutely, but comparatively; the Weight of my Croſs is not comparable with the Glory of m Crown.

Q. *What does the Word* Hell *import, Verſe* 23?

A. The Word *Hell*, mentioned in *ver.* 23. doth not here ſignify, ſaith Dr. *Hammond*, the Place of Hell, but a State of Periſhing or Diſſolution. *Among prophane Writers*, ſays he, *it's clear; that the Word ſignifies not the Place of the Damned, nor any kind of Place, either common to both, or proper to either Bliſs or Woe, but only the State of the Dead.* This he endeavours to prove by many learned Quotations out of Heathen Authors, and from ſeveral Paſſages out of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, where the Word can bear no other Meaning. But theſe Quotations are too long to be inſerted here.

CHAP. XII.

Chriſt *vindicates his Diſciples from breaking the Sabbath, by plucking* Ears of Corn; *he is Lord of the Sabbath, proved by reſtoring a wither'd* Hand. The Phariſees *conſpire againſt him; he eſcapes; caſts a Devil out of a blind and dumb Man; confutes the blaſphemous Opinion of the* Phariſees *of him; Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt never to be forgiven. Idle Words to be accounted for. He refuſes the* Phariſees *a Sign, except that of* Jonah; *oppoſes the Faith of the* Ninevites, *and of the Queen of the* South *to their Unbelief and Obſtinacy; ſhews their End by a Similitude; declares who are his Brother, Siſter, and Mother.*

Q. SHEW *the Force of our Saviour's Arguments in defending his Diſciples againſt the* Phariſees, *about breaking the Sabbath?*

A. The *Phariſees*, who laid hold on every Occaſion to cavil with our Lord, ſeeing the Diſciples plucking Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-Day, affirmed, that in ſo doing they broke the Sabbath. They don't charge them with Theft; but with a ſervile Labour on the Sabbath-Day. In anſwer to this Charge of the *Phariſees*, *Chriſt* defends the Action of his Diſciples, by a double Argument. 1. From *David*'s Example, which ſhews that a ceremonial Precept muſt give way to a moral Duty; and that Works of Mercy and Neceſſity, for the preſerving our Lives, and the better fitting us for Sabbath-Service, are certainly lawful on the Sabbath-Day. 2. From the Example of the Prieſts in the Temple, who kill the Sacrifices, and do other bodily Labour on the Sabbath-Day. Now, ſaith *Chriſt*, if the Temple-Service can juſtify Labour on the Sabbath, I am greater than the Temple, and my Authority and Service can juſtify what my Diſciples have done. Beſides, God never intended, that the Ceremonies of his Service in the firſt Table, ſhould hinder works of Mercy preſcribed in the ſecond. All God's Commands are for Man's good. Where both cannot be obeyed, he will have the moral Law performed, and the ceremonial Service omitted. And as *Chriſt* was the real Son of God, he had Power over the Sabbath, to diſpenſe with, and even to abrogate or change it at Pleaſure. Another Diſpute happened between our Saviour and the *Phariſees* concerning the Sabbath, whether it was a Breach of that Day, to heal a Perſon with a withered Hand. *Chriſt* refutes them from their own Practice of helping their Cattle in Diſtreſs on that Day. But ſo great was their Envy vy and Malice againſt him, that this merciful and miraculous Cure inſtigated them to conſpire againſt him; which he knowing, withdrew himſelf; thereby teaching his Miniſters, that 'tis their Duty to avoid the Hands of Perſecutors, and Prudent to preſerve their Lives, unleſs when their Sufferings are like to do more good than their Lives.

Q. *Proceed in your Obſervations?*

A. Theſe Acts our Saviour did, that it might appear, that he was the true *Meſſias* propheſied of by *Iſaiah*, chap. xiii. 1, 2. *Behold my Servant*, &c. *Chriſt* is God the Father's Servant, employed in the moſt noble Service. With what Meekneſs and Gentleneſs does *Chriſt* ſet up his ſpiritual Kingdom in the World? How gently does he treat thoſe of infirmer Grace? He tenderly cheriſhes the ſmall Beginnings, and the loweſt Degrees of ſincere Grace, which he obſerves in any of his People. By the *bruiſed Reed* and *ſmoaking Flax*, I underſtand ſuch as are broken with a Senſe of Sin, ſuch as are ſo much over-powred with Corruption, that they rather ſmoak than burn or ſhine; ſuch as are thus low and mean in Spirituals, *Chriſt* will not break with his Power, nor quench with his Rebukes, till he has perfected their Converſion.

Q. *What Inſtruction does our Saviour's next Miracle afford us?*

A. The next Miracle our Saviour performed, was on one whom the Devil had deprived both of Sight and Speech. This Miracle was ſo ſurprizing, that the People cry out, *Is not this the Son of* David? That is, the promiſed *Meſſias*. This ſtirred up the jealous Envy of the *Phariſees*; they miſconſtrue this Action, and vilely aſſert, that *Chriſt* caſteth out Devils by the Help of the Devil. Our Saviour, to vindicate himſelf from ſo foul an Aſperſion, argues, 1. That it was highly improbable Satan ſhould lend him his Power, to uſe it againſt himſelf. 2. Our Saviour tells them, they might as well attribute all Miracles to the Devil, as thoſe he wrought. There were certain *Jews*, it ſeems, who caſt out Devils in the Name of the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*: The *Phariſees* acknowledged, that thoſe did it by the Power of God; and there was no Reaſon, but their Malice, why they ſhould not confeſs, that what he did was by the ſame Power. His End and Purpoſe in caſting out Devils, was to ſhew them, that the *Meſſias* was come, becauſe he wrought thoſe Miracles to prove that he was the *Meſſias*. 3. The Devil is very ſtrong and powerful, and no Power is ſtronger than his, but God's only: Now, if *Chriſt* was not aſſiſted by a Divine Power, he could never have caſt out this ſtrong Man, who reigns in the World as in his Houſe.

Q. *Pray what is that* Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, *which our Saviour ſays*, ſhall not be forgiven?

A. In diſcourſing of the Forgiveneſs of Sin, *Chriſt* diſtinguiſhes between ſpeaking againſt the Son of Man, and ſpeaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt. By the firſt is meant, all thoſe Reproaches which were caſt upon our Saviour's Perſon as Man, without reflecting upon his Divine Power as God. Such was their reproaching him with his Birth, their cenſuring him for a Wine-bibber, *&c.* But by ſpeaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt is meant, their blaſpheming and reproaching that Divine Power whereby he wrought his Miracles; which was an immediate Reflection on the Holy Spirit, and a Blaſpheming of him. The Heinouſneſs and Nature of this Sin conſiſted in this, that the *Phariſees*, contrary to the Conviction of their own Minds, maliciouſly aſcribed our Saviour's Miracles to the Power of the Devil, charging him to be a Sorcerer and a Magician, and to have a familiar Spirit, by whoſe Help he did thoſe mighty Works; when in Truth he did them by the Spirit of God. The Caſe of ſuch Blaſphemers is not only dangerous, but deſperate; becauſe they reſiſt their laſt Remedy, and oppoſe the beſt Means for their Conviction. *Chriſt* refers the *Phariſees* to judge of himſelf and his Doctrine, by the Miracles he wrought. If he wrought by the Devil, his Works would be as bad as the Devil's; but if his Works were good, they muſt own them to be wrought by the Power of God; *For a Tree is known by its Fruit?*

Q. *Does not our Saviour rail, when he calls the* Phariſees *by hard Names?*

A. Our Saviour, in the Fervency of his Zeal, calls the *Phariſees* a *Generation of Vipers*; intimating, that they were a venomous and dangerous Sort of Men. So that it is not always railing and indiſcreet Zeal, to call wicked Men by ſuch Names as their Sin deſerves.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in this Diſcourſe of* Chriſt *to the People?*

A. In the next Place our Lord diſcovers a double Treaſure in the Heart of Man. 1. An evil Treaſure of Sin and Corruption, both natural and acquired, from whence proceed evil Things. 2. A good Treaſure of Grace, in a ſanctified and renewed Man; which is the Source and Spring from whence all good and gracious Actions flow.

Our Saviour proceeds to cenſure idle Words; that is, ſuch as have no Tendency to promote the Glory of God, or the Good of others. There are two Sorts of Words which fall under *Chriſt*'s Cenſure, *viz.* Sinful and Idle. Sinful Words are blaſphemous, cenſorious, lying and ſlandering Words. Idle Words are ſuch as ſavour of nothing of Wiſdom and Piety, nor tend to make men wiſer or better. *Chriſt* enforces his Argument to be watchful over our Words, from the Conſideration, that by our Words we ſhall be juſtified, or condemned. By, *juſtified*, he does not mean meritoriouſly, but declaratively: Good Words declare Goodneſs in ourſelves, and we ſhall be declared good to others by our Words, if our Words and Actions correſpond with one another. Juſtification and Condemnation will paſs upon Men at the Day of Judgment, according to the State of the Perſon and Frame of the Heart; now our Words will juſtify or condemn us in that Day, as Evidences of the State and Frame of the Soul.

Q. *Had not our Lord given many inconteſtible Proofs of his Divine Nature? Why then ſhould the* Phariſees *deſire more?*

A. Infidelity, mixed with Obſtinacy, is never ſatiſfied. However, *Chriſt* tells them, they ſhall have one Sign more, to wit, that of his Reſurrection from the Dead, after his Continuance in the Grave Part of three natural Days, typified by the Burial of *Jonas* three Days in the Whale's Belly. The Sin of the *Phariſees* in rejecting *Chriſt*'s Miracles and Miniſtry, was far greater than that of the *Ninevites*, had they rejected *Jonas*'s Meſſage and Miniſtry, ſent by God amongſt them.

The Deſign of the Parable in *Ver.* 43, 44. is to ſhew, that the *Phariſees*, by rejecting the Goſpel, and refuſing to believe in *Chriſt*, were in a ſevenfold worſe Condition, than if the Goſpel had never been preached to them, nor a Saviour come among them; becauſe, by his Miniſtry, Satan was, in ſome Sort, caſt out.

Q. *What do we learn from the 46th and following Verſes?*

A. In the laſt Verſes we have a Proof of the Verity of *Chriſt*'s human Nature; he had Affinity and Conſanguinity with Men, Perſons near in Blood to him, called his Brethren, that is, Couſin-germans. In the Account of this Affair, we may obſerve, the Holy Virgin was not wholly free from Failings and Infirmities; for here ſhe unſeaſonably interrupts our Saviour, when preaching to the People, and employed in his Father's Buſineſs. And though *Chriſt* did not neglect his Holy Mother, nor diſregard his near Relations, yet he preferred his Father's Buſineſs before them.

Q. *In the 27th Verſe* Beelzebub *is mentioned, as though he was a Chief among the infernal Powers: Pray what Rank did the* Jews *imagine he held among the Evil Spirits?*

A. By ſeveral Paſſages in the Goſpel, it ſeems evident, that the *Jews*, at this Time, had a Notion of a kind of Empire, and Subordination among the infernal Powers, and that the Prince of this Empire was called *Beelzebub*. *Beelzebub* ſignifies properly, the *God of Flies*; but why a Name of ſo mean an Import ſhould denote the Head of the apoſtate Angels, it is not ſo eaſy a Matter to determine, unleſs we will admit of this Conjecture, *viz.* that, as the People of *Ekron* had an Idol, which they ſtiled *Beelſamen*, *i. e.* the *God of Heaven*, by other Nations called *Jupiter Olympius*; the *Jews*, who uſed to give Nicknames, or Names of Contempt to all falſe Gods, called it ſometimes *Beelzebub*, or the *God-Fly*, becauſe theſe Heathens worſhipped it under the Figure of that Inſect, and ſometimes *Beelzebub*, or the *God of Ordure*, becauſe ſome ſort of Flies delight to feed on Excrements. However this be, 'tis certain that the Apoſtles, in ſeveral Places of their Writings, do ſeem to inſinuate, that among the apoſtate Spirits, there was one Superior to the reſt, whom therefore they call *the Prince of Darkneſs*, Luke xxii. 53. *the Prince of this World*, John xxii. 31. and the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, Eph. ii. 2. who, in the Days of *Tobit*, went under the Name of *Aſmodeus*, Chap. iii. 8. and is now by the *Jews* generally called *Sammael*, and by the *Chriſtians*, *Lucifer*.

Q. *In the ſame Verſe it is intimated, that the* Jews *had the Power of caſting out Devils; pleaſe to explain the Manner of it?*

A. That it was cuſtomary among the *Jews* to caſt out Devils, by the Invocation of the Name of the Moſt High, we may learn from *Juſtin Martyr*; who, in his Dialogue with *Trypho*, tells him, that *If any* Jew *exorciſed a Devil, in the Name of the God of* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *perhaps he would obey him*; as alſo from what *Irenæus* tells us, *viz.* that *By the Invocation of the Name of God, even before the Advent of our Lord, Men were ſaved from evil Spirits and all kind of Demons*; and from what *Origen* (*cont. Celſ.*) affirms, *viz.* that *The Name of the God of* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob *being uſed by the* Jews, *in the Incantation of Devils, did great Miracles:* And, if this was a common Practice among the *Jews*, then will the Force of our Saviour's Argument be this, ———— "You make no doubt, but that your Exorciſts, who uſe the Name of God, do eject Devils by Virtue of that Name; and how partial is it then in you, to paſs an unjuſt Cenſure upon me, in whom you ſee far greater Evidences of the Finger of God, in my caſting out all Manner of evil Spirits, and healing all kind of Diſeaſes?"

Q. *How can our Saviour be ſaid to have continued as long in the Grave, as* Jonah *did in the Whale's Belly, when there was but two Nights, and one whole Day, between his Death and his Reſurrection?*

A. Now, for a Reſolution of this ſeeming Difficulty, we muſt obſerve, *firſt*, That the *Hebrews* began their Computation of a natural Day from the Evening, or Night preceeding; ſo that, from one Sun-ſet to another Sun-ſet, they reckoned a compleat Day, even as *Moſes* does, when he ſays, *The Evening and the Morning were the firſt Day*, Gen. i. 5. *Secondly*, That it is a common Thing with them, as well as other Nations, to put Part of a Day for the Whole, ſo that whatever is done in any Part of the Day, is properly enough ſaid to be done on that Day. And *thirdly*, That they uſually reckon that to be done in ſo many Days, or ſo many Days and Nights, which begins in any Day. Now allowing this Manner of Computation, and reckoning that the firſt Day began on *Thurſday* at Sun-ſet, and ended upon Friday at Sun-ſet; ſince our Saviour died on *Friday*, about three in the Afternoon, by putting a Part for the Whole, here we have one Day. *Saturday* is allowed on all Hands to be another; and, ſince the third Day began on *Saturday* at Sun-ſet, and our Saviour roſe on the Morning following, that Part of the Day being likewiſe put for the Whole, is fairly computed for the third. The *Hebrew* Child, according to Law, was to be circumciſed the eighth Day, but then the Day of its Birth and Circumciſion were both counted; and, in like Manner, if we reckon the Day on which *Chriſt* died, for one, and that on which he roſe, for another, including, withal, the Night belonging to the former, we may properly enough ſay, that, in Imitation of the Prophet *Jonah*, *he was three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth.*

Q. *Who were our Saviour's Brethren, mentioned Verſe 46?*

A. The Words in the Text are, *His Mother and his Brethren*; but as the Word *Brethren* (according to the Language of the *Jews*, (*Gen.* xxix. 12. *Levit.* x. 4.) is of great Latitude, theſe Brethren are ſuppoſed to be either *Joſeph's* Sons by a former Wife, and ſo our Saviour's Brothers-in-Law, or the Children of *Mary*, the Wife of *Cleophas*, and ſo his Couſin-germans. There is, indeed, a Tradition in the Church, that before his eſpouſing the Virgin *Mary*, *Joſeph* had another Wife, whoſe Name was *Iſcha*, by whom he had ſix Children, four Sons, *James*, *Joſeph*, *Simon* and *Jude*, and two Daughters, whoſe Names, ſome ſay, were *Eſther* and *Thamar*, others *Mary* and *Salome*. But whoever compares *Matt.* xiii. 55. and xxvii. 56. *Mark* xv. 40. and *John* xix. 25. together, will find, that the four Perſons, there ſaid to be our Saviour's Brethren, were the Sons of *Mary* the Wife of *Cleophas* or *Alpheus*, for the Name is all one, and Siſter to the Bleſſed Virgin; and ſo theſe Brethren of his (as we ſaid) were no more than his Couſin-germans. Others, however, ſtrenuouſly maintain the former Opinion, *viz.* that *Mary*, the Mother of *Jeſus*, was their Mother, *i. e.* their Step-Mother, and they conſequently his Brothers-in-Law; and that, 1ſt, Becauſe this Opinion retains the proper Signification of the Word *Brethren*, in which the *Jews* always ſeem to uſe it, when they ſpeak of our Lord's Brethren and Siſters; and 2dly, Becauſe it agrees with the Senſe of Antiquity, which, ever before St. *Jerom*'s Time (ſays the learned *Pearſon*) looked upon them as the Brethren of our Lord, who lived with his Mother, and are therefore ſo frequently found together, *Matt.* xii. 46. *John* ii. 12.

Who are my Mother and Brethren, &c. We have another Speech of our Saviour's, much of the ſame Import with this. For when a certain Woman in the Company, upon hearing his excellent Doctrine, broke out into this Exclamation, *Bleſſed is the Woman that bare thee, and the Paps which thou haſt ſucked*, his Reply is, *Yea, rather bleſſed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it*, Luke xi. 27, 28. For *whoſoever ſhall do the Will of my Father, who is in Heaven, the ſame is my Brother, and Siſter, and Mother*, Matt. xii. 50. which Texts do not derogate any Thing from the Honour truely due to the bleſſed Virgin, as the Mother of the *Meſſiah*, but only ſhew the Folly of ſome, who exalt her above *Chriſt*, whom *Chriſt* conſidered only as his Mother, and ſeems here to ſet beneath every true Believer; though, conſidered as a Believer likewiſe, ſhe has a juſt Title to Pre-eminence; and it is, *by that, ſhe is infinitely more happy than if ſhe had been his Mother according to the Fleſh.*

CHAP. XIII.

Jeſus, *in a Ship, teaches the Multitude in Parables; the Diſciples Happineſs in knowing of Myſteries above others. Unbelief and Stupidity a Judgment. The Parable of the good Seed and Tares; of Muſtard-Seed; of Leaven. The Reaſon of his teaching by Parables. The Parable of Treaſure hid in a Field; the ſeeking of goodly Pearls; a Net caſt into the Sea.* Jeſus *asks his Diſciples whether they underſtood theſe Things; their Anſwer.* Chriſt, *teaching in the* Synagogue, *is deſpiſed by his Countrymen; his Anſwer thereto. Their Unbelief hinders his doing any mighty Works.*

Q. *IN what Manner does our Lord inſtruct the People in this Chapter?*

A. Our Saviour here begins a new Sermon, altho' preached on the ſame Day with that in the preceding Chapter. This Aſſiduity of our Lord in preaching the Goſpel, affords a good Pattern for his Miniſters to imitate. The Place he preached in was a Ship. It is not the Place that ſanctifies the Ordinance, but the Ordinance the Place. The Manner of his preaching was by Parables and Similitudes; which was the antient, and a very effectual Way of Inſtruction among the *Jews*; for it at once made the Mind attentive, the Memory retentive, and the Auditors inquiſitive after the Meaning of the Parable. Some imagine our Saviour's Parables were taken from the different Employments of his Hearers; ſome of them being Husbandmen, he reſembles his Word to Seed ſown in the Field: The Scope of which Parable is to ſhew, that there are four ſeveral Sorts of Hearers of the Word, and but one that hear to a ſaving Advantage, and likewiſe the different Succeſs of the Word preached. As Seed has a fructifying Virtue in it, by which it increaſes and produces more of its own Kind, ſo has the Word a quickening Virtue in it, to regenerate and enliven Souls dead in Treſpaſs and Sin. As Seed doth not thrive in all Ground alike, ſo neither doth the Word fructify alike in the Hearts of Men; there is a Difference both from the Nature of the Soil, and from the Influence of the Spirit. The Cauſe of Unfruitfulneſs is not the ſame in all: In ſome it is the Policy of *Satan*, that Bird of Prey, which follows God's Plough, and ſteals away the precious Seed; in others it is a hard Heart of Unbelief; in others the Cares of the World, like Thorns, overgrow the good Seed, and hinder the Influences of the Sun. The beſt Ground doth not bring forth Fruit alike; ſome more, ſome leſs; ſome thirty, ſome ſixty, ſome a hundred fold.

The Diſciples, on hearing this Parable, queſtion *Chriſt*, why he ſpeaks to the People in that myſterious Manner, which they could not underſtand? *Chriſt* anſwers, To you my Diſciples, and ſuch as you are, who love the Truth, and deſire to obey it, the Spirit gives an effective, operative and experimental Knowledge, not barely to know theſe Things, but to believe them, and to feel their Power in your Hearts. But the Generality of Hearers content themſelves with a bare notional Knowledge of what they hear; a Parable therefore is well enough for them. *Chriſt* tells them further, that whoever improves the Grace he has received, ſhall obtain farther Meaſures and Degrees of it: But from him that doth not improve what he has already received, ſhall be taken away, that which to himſelf and other he ſeemed to have, his common Gifts and moral Endowments.

Our Saviour adds another Reaſon for his ſpeaking in Parables, namely, that *ſeeing they ſee not*; and *hearing they hear not, neither underſtand.* This ſeems to have a peculiar Reference to the *Phariſees*, who attended *Chriſt*'s Miniſtry, not with an honeſt Intention of being inſtructed, but to cavil at every Thing they heard. Our Saviour tells them, he had formerly ſpoken Things very plainly and clearly to them, and wrought Miracles among them, to convince them of his Divinity, and the Truth of his Doctrine: But they would not believe in either, and therefore he would not ſpeak to them in dark Parables, that they may be judicially blinded; they ſinfully ſhut their Eyes againſt the cleareſt Light, and ſaid they would not ſee; and now *Chriſt* cloſes their Eyes judicially, and ſays they ſhall not ſee.

Our Saviour then pronounces his Diſciples bleſſed, in that they had received the Truths of the Goſpel ſo far, as they were already taught them. Next he expounds to them the Parable of the Sower; the Scope of which is, to ſhew the different Effects of the Word of God upon the Hearts of Men, and the Reaſon of that Difference. The Seed is the Word, the Sower is the Preacher, the Soil is the Heart and Soul of Man. The Hearts of ſome Hearers are like High-way Ground, in which the Seed is not covered with the Harrow of Meditation; others are like ſtony Ground, in which the Word has no Root, i. e. in their Underſtandings, Memories, Conſciences, Will, or Affections. Some are like thorney Ground. Thorns are covetous

Deſires, which choak the good Seed, and render the Word unfruitful and unprofitable. But the good *Chriſtian* hears the Word attentively, believes it ſtedfaſtly, applies it particularly, and practices it univerſally.

Q. *What does the Parable of* good Seed *and* Tares *import?*

A. The Deſign of this is to ſhew, that univerſal Purity is not to be expected in the Church of God in this Life; but as Tares and Wheat grow together in the ſame Field, ſo Hypocrites and ſincere Chriſtians are, and will be intermixt in the ſame Church, and are hardly diſtinguiſhable one from the other. St. *Jerom* obſerves, that in the Eaſtern Countries, the Tares and Wheat were ſo much alike while in the Blade, that the Difference between them was ſcarce diſcernible. Hypocrites and ſincere *Chriſtians* will be mingled together, till the Day of Judgment, when *Chriſt* will make a thorough Separation, and divide the Tares from the Wheat. *i. e.* the Righteous from the Wicked.

The next Parable is of the Muſtard-Seed; the Intent of which is to ſhew, how the Goſpel, from little, unlikely and contemptible Beginnings, ſhould ſpread, increaſe and grow up, like as Muſtard-Seed, the ſmalleſt of Grain, grows to a conſiderable Height; and as a little Leaven turns a great Heap of Meal into its own Nature, ſo the Goſpel ſhould ſpread and increaſe, Nations and Countries become *Chriſtians.*

The Parable of the Tares *Chriſt* explains after this Manner. The Sower of the good Seed was himſelf, who firſt planted the Goſpel; the Field was the World, that is, the Church in the World; the good Seed is ſincere *Chriſtians,* the Tares are prophane Sinners and Hypocrites; the Enemy is the Devil; the Harveſt is the End of the World, and the Angels are the Reapers.

The Treaſure hid in a Field, and the Pearl of great Price, repreſent *Chriſt,* the Grace of the Goſpel, and the Way to Life and Salvation therein diſcovered: He that is thoroughly convinced of the Value of the Grace of *Chriſt,* will part with all he has to obtain it.

The Deſign of the Parable of the Net, is to ſet forth the State of the Goſpel-church, which is like a Net, wherein bad Fiſhes are involved with the good. As the good Fiſhes do not break thro' to get from the bad, before the Time of Separation; ſo muſt not *Chriſtians* forſake a Church's Communion, becauſe of the preſent Mixture of Good and bad in the Church. For a mixed Communion in the Church, and the good *Chriſtians* communicating with the bad, doth neither defile the Ordinances of *Chriſt,* nor pollute thoſe that ſincerely join in them.

Chriſt being willing to know whether his Diſciples had profited any Thing by the ſeveral Parables he had put forth and explain'd to them, asked if they underſtood them, they replied in the affirmative; he proceeds to deſcribe a Goſpel Miniſter, whom he denominates a houſhold Steward, whoſe Office it is to provide for the Family both Plenty and Variety. Two eſſential Qualification are required in a Steward, Faithfulneſs and Prudence. He muſt be honeſt and faithful, in bringing out of his own Treaſure, not another's; and he muſt be prudent in bringing Things new as well as old; not new Truths, but old Truths in a new Dreſs, leſt the Family, by always feeding upon the ſame Diſh, do nauſeate it, inſtead of being nouriſhed by it.

Q. Chriſt *having finiſhed his Parables, viſited his Countrymen in* Galilee *and* Nazareth, *and preached in their* Synagogues; *pray what was the Succeſs?*

A. They admired, but did not believe. They rejected his Miniſtry, becauſe of the Meanneſs of his Perſon, the Contemptibleneſs of his outward Condition, and the Poverty of his Relations. *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* This was the ſtumbling Block to many, and which kept moſt from believing on him. None but a ſpiritual Eye can diſcern Beauty in an humble Saviour. Our Lord tells them he don't wonder, that ſo few of his own Countrymen, to whom he had been ſo familiarly known, deſpiſed his Perſon, and rejected his Doctrine; ſince a Prophet is generally leaſt eſteemed where he has been brought up; becauſe, perhaps, the Follies of his Childhood and Youth are remembered to his Diſadvantage. Their Unbelief was an Obſtruction to *Chriſt*'s Miracles; *Chriſt* did not, becauſe he would not do any mighty Works there; their Unbelief bound his Hands, and hindered the Execution of his Power.

Q. *Was the Carpenter's Trade, at which our Saviour wrought, the ſame with that ſo called by us?*

A. The *Greek* Word we tranſlate *Carpenter,* is of general Signification, and denotes any Worker, in Wood, Metal, or Stone; but the Tradition of the Church has all along been, that our bleſſed Saviour was what our Tranſlation has ſpecified, a Carpenter; and *Juſtin Martyr* aſſures us, that he made Plows and Yokes, which at that Time were the Carpenter's Buſineſs. However this be, it is certain, that by the *Jewiſh* Canons, all Parents were bound to teach their Children ſome Trade; that their moſt celebrated *Rabbins* thought it a great Reproach not to be of ſome Profeſſion; and that there was a peculiar Reaſon why our Saviour ſhould be of one, and that no liberal one neither, even to take off all Suſpicion of his being bred up in curious Arts, which his Enemies, at all Times, were forward enough to ſay, notwithſtanding the Diſadvantages of his Education.

Q. *What was the Buſineſs or Employment of a Jewiſh Scribe, mentioned Verſe 52?*

A. The Word *Scribe,* ſays Dr. *Hammond,* is here ſet oppoſite to Diſciple, ſignifies him that is ſkilful in the Moſaical Law, (as the Diſciple has thereto ſuper-added the Knowledge of the Goſpel) or any Man condeſired as furniſhed with ſacred Inſtructions and Obſervations out of the Law and the Prophets, any Skill in the Myſteries of the *Old Teſtament,* or *Jewiſh* Religion; who, when he becomes a Diſciple, or turns *Chriſtian,* he becomes furniſhed with the Myſteries of the *New Teſtament.* By this Means he is here ſaid to be like the Houſe-keeper, who, for the maintaining his Family all the Year long, is ſuppoſed to have a Repoſitory or Store-houſe for Proviſions, and thereto have laid in Proviſions of both Sorts, new and old; the new or daily Purveyance, and the old which we call the Store. And being thus furniſhed, when any Entertainment is made, he brings forth and uſeth what is neceſſary of both. Thus doth this knowing *Jew,* being now farther inſtructed by *Chriſt,* lie under an Obligation of performing, as Occaſion requires, all Actions both of moral and Chriſtian Virtues; but eſpecially of *Chriſtians,* which are the new, here firſt named, tho' laſt meant.

Chap. XIV.

Herod's *Opinion of* Chriſt. *The Reaſon why* John *was impriſoned and beheaded.* Jeſus *departs into a deſart Place; the People follow him; he heals their Sick; feeds five thouſand with five Loaves and two Fiſhes; ſends his Diſciples on Ship-board, and goes up into a Mountain to pray. The Ship toſſed, and* Chriſt *on the Sea. The Diſciples ſee him and are troubled; he comforts them.* Peter *walks on the Sea, beginning to ſink,* Chriſt *ſaves him, and rebukes his Unbelief. They all own him to be the Son of God. He heals the Diſeaſed of* Geneſareth, *by the Touch of his Garment.*

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve upon the Hiſtory of this Chapter?*

A. Herod at length hears of the Fame of *Jeſus*, and from the Account given him of the wonderful Things that *Chriſt* did, imagines that *John*, whom he had cruelly beheaded, was come again. Hence it is plain, that our Saviour came not to Court; and that *Herod*'s Conſcience told him, he had committed Violence on an innocent Man. He who put the *Baptiſt* to death, was *Herod* the King, who had invited him to preach at Court, and heard him gladly: It was *Herod Antipas*, Son to *Herod* who ſought *Chriſt*'s Life, Chap. ii. 'twas he who put *John* to Death, for telling him of his Crimes. Men in Power are impatient of Reproof, and imagine that their Authority gives them a Licenſe to tranſgreſs. The Crime he charged him with, was in one Act, Adultery, Inceſt and Violence. Adultery, that he took another Man's Wife; Inceſt, that he took his Brother's Wife; Violence, that he took her in ſpite of her Huſband.

Q. Herod, *we find here, celebrated his Birth-Day with great Magnificence; was this an uſual Cuſtom in antient Times?*

A. That it was an uſual Cuſtom with Kings to celebrate the Day of their Birth, and that of their Acceſſion to to the Throne, (for the Word may be applied to either) with great Solemnity, we have an Example as old as *Pharaoh*, *Gen.* xl. 20. nor need we doubt, but that, on ſuch joyful Occaſions, there were Muſick and Dancing, and all Manner of Diverſions to entertain the Company: But that Perſons of the firſt Rank and Diſtinction ſhould act Part of theſe Diverſions, was a rare and unwonted Thing; and therefore St. *Chryſoſtom* is of Opinion, that *Herodias*, foreſeeing what would happen, forced this young Lady upon a Thing which would better become an Actreſs upon the Stage.

Q. *Who and what was* Herodias, *that it ſhould be unlawful for* Herod *to marry her?*

A. This *Herodias*, (as *Joſephus* relates the Matter) *in Contempt of the Laws of her Country, married again to* Herod, *the natural Brother of her Huſband, ſeparating herſelf from him, whilſt living, although he had a Child by her*; ſo that being guilty both of Inceſt and Adultery, ſhe might well be called his unlawful Wife.

Q. *Pray who was this* Herod *that put* John *to Death?*

A. Herod was no more than a *Tetrarch*, or one of thoſe Four among whom his Father's Kingdom was divided; but St. *Mark*, Chap. vi. 14. gives him the Title of a King, as himſelf, do doubt was fond enough of it, and perhaps, in the Provinces under his Dominion, was generally called called by it. Why he came to be concerned at the young Lady's deſiring ſo ſtrange a Boon as that of the *Baptiſt*'s Head, is no Wonder. The very Mention of ſuch a Thing, from ſuch a Perſon, and in ſuch an Aſſembly, was enough to ſhock any Man of leſs than uncommon Barbarity; but then the *Evangeliſt* informs us, that *Herod* had conceived a good Opinion of the *Baptiſt*, as a juſt and holy Man, and when he heard him (he did it very gladly,) in many Things he followed his Advice, *Mark* vi. 20. and not only ſo, but feared the Reſentment of the People likewiſe, (with whom he was in high Eſteem) when they ſhould come to be informed of the Cauſe and Circumſtance of his Death, *Verſe* 5. There might, however, be another Reaſon, leſs obſerved, for *Herod*'s Concern upon this. It was now his Birth-day; and it was uſual even among heathen Princes, at ſuch a Time, to be gay and merry, to think of no ill Omens, to ſurceaſe all Contentions, and not ſo much as to deprive of Life, even condemned Criminals, on that Day, when the Sovereign of the Country received his, leſt they ſhould offend or ſadden the Genius that preſided over their Nativity: And therefore it is more than probable, that *Herod*, who was more than half a Pagan, might have the ſame Notion of the Thing. But, if he had not, it can hardly be thought, but that ſuch an Execution would damp the Joy of the Meeting, and procure him more Enemies among the thinking Part of the Company, than the Non-performance of a wicked and illegal Oath could have done.

Q. *In what Manner did* Herodias *uſe the Head of* John, *when ſhe had got it?*

A. When *Herodias* had got the Baptiſt's Head in her Poſſeſſion, it is ſaid, that ſhe thruſt his Tongue through with a Bodkin; and for fear that the Head, if buried with the Body, ſhould be Re-united, and riſe again to diſturb her unlawful Luſt, and diſquiet *Herod*'s Conſcience, ſhe buried it in her own Palace; but where his Apoſtles buried his Body, the *Evangeliſts* have not informed us, only we are told, that in the Time of *Julian* the Apoſtate, his Tomb was ſhewn at *Samaria*, where the Inhabitants of the Country opened it, and burnt Part of his Bones, but the reſt were ſaved by ſome *Chriſtians*, that carried them to one *Philip*, an Abbot of *Jeruſalem*, who preſented them to St. *Athanaſius*; but ſome Time after, when *Theodoſius* built a Church, in Honour of the *Baptiſt*, in the Place where the Temple of *Serapis* ſtood, *Ann. Dom.* 396, theſe holy Relicks were repoſited in it: Tho' what became of his Head, we no where read, only the Abbot *Villeloin* tells us, in his Memoirs, that he ſaw one at *Amiens*; but this was the fifth or ſixth Head of the *Baptiſt*, that in the Courſe of his Travels he had the Honour to kiſs.

Q. *Can you tell who was the Executioner of* John the Baptiſt?

A. The *Greek* Word which we render *Executioner*, in the Hiſtory of the *Roman* Emperors, ſignifies a *Soldier of the Guard*; and among the *Jews*, *Romans*, *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians*, it was cuſtomary for one of the King's Guard to be the Executioner of thoſe whom he had condemned to Death.

Q. *About what Time was* John the Baptiſt *put to Death; and what was his Character?*

A. He died about two Years and three Months after his Entrance upon his publick Miniſtry, in the thirty-fifth Year of his Age, and was the firſt who ſuffered upon the Account of the Goſpel, though ſeldom called the Proto-Martyr. *He was, deed, a Man* (according to the Character which *Joſephus* gives of him) *endued with all Virtue, who exhorted the* Jews *to the Practice of Juſtice towards Men, and Piety towards God; and alſo to Baptiſm, which would become acceptable to God, if they renounced their Sins, and to the Clearneſs of their Bodies, added the Purity of Souls.*

Q. *Did not God inflict ſome ſignal Judgment on* Herod, *his Wife and Daughter, for their Cruelty in putting* John *to Death?*

A. It may not be improper here to take Notice of the remarkable Providence of God, in avenging the Death of this righteous Man upon *Herod*, *Herodias*, and her Daughter. 1ſt, As the War between *Herod* and *Aretas* King of *Arabia*, was occaſioned by *Herod*'s wicked Contract with *Herodias*, to eject his Daughter, who was his lawful Wife, and to marry her who was his Brother *Philip's*; ſo *Joſephus* declares, that the *Jews* looked upon his putting *John* to Death, as the Cauſe of the Miſcarriage of his Army, *God being angry with him for the Death of* John the Baptiſt. 2dly, Envying the Glory of her Brother *Agrippa*, upon whom *Caligula* had conferred the the Title of a King, *Herodias* prevailed with her Husband to repair to *Rome*, in order to requeſt the like Favour of the Emperor; but the Emperor having received a bad Impreſſion againſt him, inſtead of granting what he deſired, deprived him of his Government, and baniſhed both her and him to *Lions* in *France*, where they lived ingloriouſly, and died miſerably; and this, according to *Joſephus*, was done in Puniſhment of her Envy, and of his Readineſs to hearken to her Solicitations. And thirdly, Of her Daughter it is related, that as ſhe was going over the Ice in Winter, the Ice brake and let her in up to the Head, which, upon the meeting of the Ice again, was ſevered from her Body. And this Story, if true, (as it is confidently told us by *Nicephorus*) is a wonderful Inſtance of God's avenging Providence.

Q. *What Notions may we ſuppoſe* Herod *entertained of a future State, from his ſaying to his Servants, on hearing the Fame of* Jeſus, This is *John the Baptiſt*, he is riſen from the Dead?

A. Several of the antient *Jewiſh* Writers, as well as ſome modern Rabins, are of Opinion, that the Souls of Men and Women, when they died, went into other Bodies, inſomuch that they imagine, that the Soul of *Moſes* was the ſame with that of *Abel*; and that of the *Egyptian* whom *Moſes* ſlew, the ſame with that of *Cain*: But, whether the *Jews* had this Notion of the *Tranſmigration of Souls* (as *Joſephus*, de Bell. lib. vii. cap. 25. and *Philo*, de Somniis, ſeem to tell us) it can hardly be thought, that what *Herod* here ſays, in regard to our Saviour, was ſpoken in Alluſion to it, becauſe it is not conceivable, how the Soul of *John*, lately dead, could enter into the Body of *Chriſt*, which, for thirty Years and upwards, had been informed by another Soul. And therefore his Words muſt be underſtood, not of the *Tranſition* of the *Baptiſt*'s Soul, but of his *Reviviſcence*, or returning to Life again. For as it was an Opinion among the *Jews*, that, at the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, ſome of their Prophets would riſe from the Dead; *Herod* had ſome Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that *John*, whom all the *Jews* held to be a Prophet, might be permitted to return into the World, and perhaps, to avenge his Death upon the Tyrant.

Q. *What is obſervable in* Chriſt's *Manner of diſtributing the Loaves and Fiſhes to the Multitude?*

A. The *Evangeliſts* make uſe of two Words upon the Occaſion of *Chriſt*'s feeding the Multitude; *Bleſſing*, and *giving of Thanks*; and, by the former of thoſe ſome Interpreters underſtand the multiplying Virtue, which he then commanded down upon the Suſtenance, that he was going to give to the People, and its marvelous Increaſe in the Hand of the Diſtributors, whereby it became a Repaſt ſufficient for ſo large a Multitude: Tho' others think that he did no more than what we call *ſaying Grace*, *i. e.* thanked God for his bountiful Proviſion of all Things, and begged his Bleſſing upon what he was going to diſpenſe among the People, that it might tend to the wholſome Nouriſhment of their Bodies. However this be, 'tis enough to warrant the indifferent Uſe of theſe two Words, that the Forms of Addreſs to Almighty God, upon the Uſe of his Gifts for our Refreſhment, have uſually been of a mixed Nature, and conſiſting partly of Praiſes and partly of Petitions, becauſe the End of ſuch Devotions is manifeſtly twofold, *viz.* to render our Acknowledgments to God for his Liberality, and then to beg of him, that the good Creatures which he had given us, may be ſanctified to our Uſe.

Q. *What do you remark concerning the Miracle itſelf?*

A In this Miracle, which could not be done without a creating Power, our Lord not only ſhewed himſelf to *be God*, *bleſſed for evermore*, but took from the unbelieving *Jews* all manner of Cavil, and Exeeption to his Works. For tho' Devils might, by Compact, give Place to one another, and ſome Exorciſts of their own might poſſibly caſt them out; yet none ever pretended to multiply Bread and Fiſh to ſuch a Proportion, that ſo ſmall a Quantity of either ſhould ſeed ſuch a Number, and then leave ſo great a Remainder.

Q. *Why did our Saviour order the Fragments to be gathered up into Baskets?*

A. It was a ſufficient Reaſon for our Saviour's ordering the Fragments to be gathered up, and put in Baskets, that, from them might appear both the Reality of the Miracle, and the exceeding greatneſs of the Increaſe; but becauſe our Lord aſſigns another, by ſaying, *Gather up the Fragments, that nothing be loſt*, he hath herein ſhewed us, that all Reſerving for the the future is not unlawful; that Charity is very conſiſtent with Frugality; indeed, not only that they may, but that they ſhould, go together; for God will be ſure to make a mighty Difference between the Virtue, and the ſpecious Extream beyond it; between the liberal and the laviſh Man.

Q. *Do not the* Evangeliſts *differ in their ſeveral Accounts of the Diſciples Voyage which is here related?*

A. St. *Mark* tells us, that our Saviour ordered his Apoſtles to croſs the Sea, and to wait for him on the other Side, at *Bethſaida*, Chap. vi, 55. St. *John* writes, that accordingly they entered into the Ship, but, inſtead of going where they were directed, they ſteered their Courſe towards *Capernaum*, Chap. vi. 17. and yet, after all, if we will believe St. *Matthew*, they landed at laſt, neither at *Bethſaida* nor *Capernaum*, but in the Country of *Genneſartt*, Chap. xiv. 34. Now to reconcile this, we need only remember what all the Evangeliſts tell us, *viz.* that while the Apoſtles were on Board, there aroſe a ſtrong Gale of Wind, which, blowing from the *North*, proved, in a manner, quite contrary to them, ſo that, inſtead of making the Port of *Bethſaida*, which is on the *North* Coaſt of the Sea of *Galilee*, the next Morning they found themſelves on the oppoſite Side, not far from *Tiberias*, and to the *South* of *Capernaum*. Though therefore our Saviour ordered them to go to *Bethſaida*, yet they could not do it, becauſe the Wind was againſt them. Their next Attempt therefore was, to get to *Capernaum*, but even that they could not do; but, being forced to yield to the Storm, were carried a good way below to the *South* of it, from whence they juſt touched at *Nazareth*, and thence proceeded to *Capernaum*.

Q. *How came the Diſciples to fancy that they ſaw a Spirit walking on the Sea?*

A. It was a common Opinion among the *Jews*, that Spirits did ſometimes appear cloathed in an human Form; but what put the Apoſtles at this Time in the greater Fright, was their imagining, that thoſe who appeared at Night, were uſually evil Spirits, and that this, which they now ſaw, might poſſibly be the *Demon* who had raiſed the Storm.

Q. *What are your Obſervations on* Peter's *asking Chriſt to come to him on the Sea, and Chriſt's Behaviour to him?*

A. In *Peter's* Requeſt we may obſerve his Faith and Diſtruſt; his Diſtruſt, when he ſaid, *If it be thou*; his Faith, when he ſaid, *Bid me come unto thee*: Faith enabled him to ſtep down on the watery Pavement; Faith ſaid, Lord, ſave me; but it was Diſtruſt that made him ſink. See the imperfect Compoſition of Faith and Fear in the beſt of Saints on Earth! Sincerity of Grace is only found here; Perfection only in Heaven: Whilſt *Peter* believes, the Sea is as firm as Braſs under him; when he fears, he ſinks. Two Hands upheld *Peter*, the Hand of Chriſt's Power, and the Hand of his own Faith; the firſt laid hold on *Peter*, and the laſt laid hold on the Power of Chriſt. If we let go our Hold on Chriſt, we ſink; if he lets go his Hold on us, we drown. But the Mercy of Chriſt is no ſooner ſought, but found; immediately Jeſus put forth his Hand and caught him. But though Chriſt gave him a Check; *O thou of little Faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?* Though Chriſt likes believing, he approves not doubting.

CHAP. XV.

The Phariſees charge Chriſt's Diſciples with the Breach of the Elders Tradition, by eating with unwaſhen Hands. Chriſt vindicates them, and reproves the Phariſees; ſhews what does and what does not defile a Man. He goes into the Coaſts of Tyre *and* Sidon. *A Woman of* Canaan *earneſtly deſires him to diſpoſſeſs her Daughter, which, after much Entreaty, he does, and commends her Faith. He heals many by the Sea of* Galilee; *feeds* 4000 *with ſeven Loaves and a few Fiſhes, and departs into the Coaſts of* Magdala.

Q. *WHY are the Scribes and Phariſehes, who came to queſtion Chriſt, deſcribed by their being of* Jeruſalem? *ver.* 1.

A. The *Sanhedrim*, which ſat at *Jeruſalem*, and was the ſupreme Court in all religious Affairs, ſent Meſſengers to *John the Baptiſt*, when he began his Preaching, enquiring who he was, and by what Authority he baptized, *John* i. 19. and, as the Phariſees had charged our Saviour's Diſciples with a Violation of the Sabbath, in plucking and rubbing of Ears of the Corn, and himſelf with the ſame Crime, in curing the Sick on the Sabbath-day, it is not improbable that theſe Accuſations had reached *Jeruſalem*, and that the Scribes and Phariſees, here mentioned, were Emiſſaries ſent from the *Sanhedrim*, to watch and obſerve our Saviour. And this ſeems the rather to be ſo, becauſe they were ſo very ready (when they could not find him guilty of any Violation of the Laws of God) to pick a Quarrel with him about ſome Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, which he, and his Diſciples, thought not ſo very neceſſary to be obſerved.

Q. *What were thoſe* Traditions of the Elders, *which the Phariſees charge Chriſt's Diſciples with tranſgreſſing?*

A. The Traditions, in the *Jewiſh* Church, came to gain Credit upon this Preſumption, that *Moſes*, when he received the Law from God on Mount *Sinai*, which he recorded in his five Books, was inſtructed, at the ſame Time, in ſeveral Things which God enjoined him not to commit to Writing, for fear that the Heathens ſhould tranſcribe them: That in theſe Things, *Moſes* inſtructed his Succeſſor *Joſhua*, and from *Joſhua* they were tranſmitted through the Elders of the People, by oral Conveyance only, until *Ezra*, after the Return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, collected them all together, and made the *Cabbala*, in ſeventy-two Books, which wrs kept by *Gamaliel* and others that ſucceeded, as Heads of the *Sanhedrim*, until the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*: That, about an hundred and twenty Years after this, *R. Judas* the Son of *Simon*, compoſed a Book of them, called the *Miſhna*, that is, *the ſecond Law*, which is indeed the moſt antient Collection of Traditions that the *Jews* have: That, three hundred Years after this, *R. Jonathan*, meeting with more, compiled them into a larger Volume; and an hundred Years after this, another *Rabbi* made a Collection of ſuch as were found among the *Jews* who remained in *Babylon*: That theſe two (which are a kind of Supplement and Explication of the *Miſhna*) are called, the one the *Talmud* of *Jeruſalem*, and the other, of *Babylon*; and that, by them the *Jews*, at this Day, are governed in Matters eccleſiaſtical, all the World over. Nay, ſo extravagant is their Veneration for them, that we find them preferring them before the written Law; for, that *the Words of the Scribes are more lovely than thoſe of the Law, and the Words of the Antients of greater Weight than thoſe of the Prophets*, are ſtanding Maxims among thom, tho' ſavouring not a little of Blaſphemy. In Relation to the particular Cuſtom of waſhing before Meat, their Canon is, that, *Whoſoever deſpiſeth the Waſhing of Hands, is worthy to be excommunicated, he comes to Poverty, and will be extirpated out of the World*: For, according to the Senſe of one of their Doctors, *viz. R. Aquiba*) *he that takes Meat with unwaſhed Hands, is worthy of Death*; and therefore, when the ſame Doctor was in Priſon, and had Water enough both to drink and waſh his Hands, he choſe to do the latter; becauſe, *It is better*, ſays he, *to die with Thirſt, than to tranſgreſs the Tradition of the Elders.* 'Tis no wonder then, that Perſons inured to thoſe Notions, ſhould ſo readily take Exception at our Saviour's omitting what were indeed (though they thought not ſo) Matters of an indifferent Nature.

Q. *How did the* Jews *make the Law of honouring our Parents of none Effect by their Traditions?*

A. The Way whereby the *Jews* made the Law of honouring and ſubſiſting their Father and Mother, of no Effect, was, by pretending that whatever their Parents requeſted of them, was a *Corban*, *i. e.* that they had devoted it as a Gift or Offering to God, or to his Temple; and whatever was thus devoted, was not to be touched, be the Neceſſity never ſo urgent: For their Canon about Vows was, "That they reach even to Things commanded; "and take Place, as well in Things required by "the Law, as Things indifferent; that a Man "may be ſo bound by them, that he cannot, without "great Sin, do what God had commanded to "be done; and that, in this Caſe, if he makes a "Vow which cannot be performed without breaking "a Commandment, his Vow muſt be ratified, "and the Commandment violated." This was a Superſtition which the *Phariſees*, and other Doctors of the Law, who had a Property in the Gifts and Oblations that were made in the Temple, thought themſelves concerned to indulge; and therefore, when any pretended that their Parents ſtood in need of their Help, they told them, that if they did but acquaint them, that it *was a Gift*, or that they had vowed ſuch a Portion of their Eſtate to ſacred Uſes, that would, before God, excuſe them from relieving their Parents. Nay, they affirmed farther, that if a Man did but in a Paſſion ſay, that the Thing, which another asked of him, was a *Corban*, though it were not actually conſecrated to religious Uſes, this was Vow enough to prevent his relieving that other Perſon, even, putting the Caſe, that it were his own Father, unleſs they ſhould abſolve him from it, which they would undertake to do, for ſo many Shekels of Silver, *Levit.* xxvii. ſuch an abundant Reaſon had our bleſſed Saviour to charge the *Jewiſh* Doctrs with making one of the greateſt Commands, in the ſecond Table of the Law, void by their Traditions concerning Vows.

Q. *Where were ſituated the Cities* Tyre *and* Sidon?

A. Tyre and *Sidon* were two conſiderable Cities, ſeated on the *Mediterranean* Sea; and the Country adjoining to them, which lay to the Weſt and North of *Galilee*, was called the Coaſts or Territories of *Tyre* and *Sidon*. The old Inhabitants of this Tract were Deſcendants of *Canaan* (for *Sidon* was his eldeſt Son) and continued in Poſſeſſion of it much longer than they did of any other Part of the Country. The *Greeks* call it *Phœnicia*, and when, by Right of Conqueſt it became a Province of *Syria*, it took the Name of *Syrophœnicia*; and from hence the Woman, whom St. *Matthew* calls a *Canaanite*, is by St. *Mark* ſtiled a *Syrophœnician*, as being, both by Religion and Language, a *Greek*.

Q. *In the 21ſt and ſeven following Verſes, is related a Converſation between* Chriſt *and a Woman of* Canaan; *what do you obſerve thereupon?*

A. Our bleſſed Lord, never weary in well-doing, goes thence into the Borders of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, where a Woman, of the Race of the *Canaanites*, earneſtly intreats him in behalf of her Daughter. Our Saviour, at firſt, returns her no Anſwer, to ſhew that *Chriſt* ſometimes thinks proper, and fitteſt for us, that our Prayers ſhould be unanſwered. When he doth anſwer, he gives rather a Repulſe than Comfort. *Chriſt* hath often Love in his Heart to his People, when they can read none in his Countenance. But *Chriſt*'s former Silence, and his preſent Denial, cannot ſilence the poor Woman. She comes, ſhe cries, ſhe worſhips, *Lord help me.* How undaunted is the Grace of Faith! *Chriſt*, notwithſtanding proceeds in his ſeeming Severity; he calls her not a Woman, but a Dog; and, as it were, ſpurns her from his Feet, with a harſh Repulſe. Strange! that a good Woman, in Diſtreſs too, and an humble Supplicant, ſhould be thus rated out of *Chriſt*'s Preſence for a Dog! But *Chriſt* puts the ſtrongeſt Faith of his own Children upon the ſevereſt Trials. She humbly grants all, and meekly deſires the Dog's Place; not to crowd to the Table, but to creep under it, and to partake of the Crumbs of Mercy that fall from thence. How powerful was her Faith, which *Chriſt* himſelf could no longer withſtand; but cries out, *O Woman, great is thy Faith!* Hence learn, that no Grace ever goes away from *Chriſt* uncrowned. Mercy is as ſurely ours, as if we had it, if we have but Faith and Patience to wait for it. But how does this poor Woman's Faith appear to be great? Becauſe, having no Promiſe to rely upon, and ſuffering ſo many Repulſes with ſeeming Contempt, ſhe ſtill retained a good Hope of *Chriſt*'s Kindneſs and Mercy.

Q. *What is our Saviour next engaged in?*

A. From thence *Jeſus* goes to a Mountain ſituated near the Sea of *Galilee*, where the People reſorted to him in great Numbers, bringing their Lame, Blind, Dumb and Diſeaſed, all whom he healed. In this Action of the People we ſee their great Charity in bringing poor Wretches to *Chriſt*, who were not able to come of themſelves; and their Faith, in relying on his Power, and believing his Willingneſs to heal and relieve them. This Miracle ſtruck them with Admiration and Wonder, to ſee ſuch Cures wrought, as exceededed the Courſe of Nature, and the Power of Art; wherefore they glorified the God of *Iſrael*, acknowledging the wonderful Work of his Power and Mercy.

We have, in the next Place, the Miracle of *Chriſt*'s feeding the hungry Multitude, to the Number of four Thouſand, with ſeven Loaves and a few ſmall Fiſhes. In which we may obſerve a double Action of our Saviour: 1. He gave Thanks, that is, he prayed for a Bleſſing on the Food; which ſhould teach us, That if the Son of God looked up to Heaven, and bleſſed his Food, we ſhould not ſit down to our Food as a Beaſt to his Fodder, without craving his Bleſſing upon it. 2. He gave to his Diſciples. Becauſe the Diſciples queſtioned, through the Weakneſs of their Faith, whether ſuch a Multitude could be fed with ſo ſmall a Proviſion. *Chriſt*, to convince them of their Error, diſtributes the Bread by them; making uſe of their Eyes and Hands, for their Conviction and Satisfaction. And ſurely they could have no doubt remaining, when they ſaw that after the whole Multitude had eat, and were fully ſatisfied, ſeven Baskets were filled with the Fragments that were left. It's hard to ſay, ſays Dr.

Fuller, which was the greater Miracle, the miraculous Eating, or miraculous Leavings. If we conſider what they eat, we may juſtly wonder that they left any Thing; if what they left, that they eat any Thing.

Q. *On what Coaſts was ſituated* Magdala, *mentioned in the laſt Verſe?*

A. Dr. *Hammond* notes on the Word *Magdala*, whither *Chriſt* went from the Mountain, That what the *Greek* here reads *Magdala*, the *Syriac* reads *Magedu*; the vulgar Latin *Magedan*; which makes it probable, that this Coaſt of *Magdela* is all one with the Valley of *Mageddon*, or *Megiddo*, which belonged to the Tribe of *Manaſſes*, *Joſ.* xvii. 11. *Judges* i. 27. where *Joſias* was ſlain, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 29. by *Pharaoh Necho*. For to this belongs the Narration of that Story in *Herodotus*, *Necho* fought on Foot with the *Syrians* (that is, the *Hebrews*) in *Magdol*, and had the Victory; and, as it follows, after the Fight took *Cadytis*, or *Cadiſh*, which was a great City of *Syria*.

Chap. XVI.

The Phariſees *require a Sign*; Chriſt *reproves them*; *warns the Diſciples againſt the Leaven of the* Phariſees; *they reaſon about what he means. The People's Opinion of* Chriſt. Peter's *Confeſſion, pronounced bleſſed and promiſed the Keys of the Kingdom. He foretels his Sufferings and Death at* Jeruſalem; *reproves* Peter, *and exhorts his Followers to take up their Croſs*; *their Reward for ſo doing.*

Q. THE Phariſees *and* Sadduces *deſire of* Chriſt *a Sign from Heaven*; *but what Sort of a Sign did they require?*

A. The *Phariſees* and *Sadduces* were Perſons of contrary Opinions and Intereſts, yet both agree in tempting and oppoſing *Chriſt*. They demand of him a Sign from Heaven; they were not ſatisfied with earthly Signs, ſuch as the multiplying the Loaves, *&c. No*, ſay they, *let us ſee a Miracle from Heaven, ſuch as* Moſes *and* Elias *wrought*. This they deſired, not ſo much for their Satisfaction, as out of Curioſity; nay, wicked Treachery. This our Saviour knew, and therefore rejected their Demand, with a ſevere Reflection: *O ye Hypocrites, ye can diſcern the Face of the Sky, but ye cannot diſcern the Signs of the Times.*" As if he had ſaid, Were not your Eyes blinded with Malice and Obſtinacy, you would as eaſily diſcern that theſe are the Times of the *Meſſias*, and that I am he, by the Miracles I have wrought, as you can form a Judgment of the Weather, by the Aſpect of the Sky. But our Saviour doth not here condemn the Study of Nature, or the making Obſervations on the State of the Weather from the Face of the Sky: What he blamed was, that they were better ſkilled in the Signs of the Weather, than in the Signs of the Times. As God, by natural Signs, gives Intimation of a Change of natural Things, ſo, by his providential Diſpenſation he warns us of a Change in civil Things.

Q. Chriſt *having thus reproved the* Phariſees, *to whom does he next turn his Diſcourſe?*

A. To his Diſciples, whom he reproves for their Dulneſs, and their putting a carnal Senſe upon his Words, when he bid them *beware of the Leaven of the* Phariſees, which they apprehended he had ſpoken of the Leaven of Bread, and not of the *Phariſees* Doctrine. The Metaphor, by which *Chriſt* ſets forth the corrupt Doctrine of the *Phariſees*, is Leaven; partly, becauſe of its Sourneſs, and partly becauſe of its Diffuſiveneſs. Leaven is a Piece of ſour Dough, that diffuſes itſelf into the whole Maſs or Lump of Bread, with which it is mixed. Whence our Lord intimates, that the *Phariſees* were a ſour Sort of People, and their Doctrines like themſelves, poiſonous and pernicious in their Conſequences; the Contagion of which *Chriſt* cautions his Diſciples to beware of.

Q. *After this Reprehenſion of the Diſciples, what does our Saviour next proceed to ſpeak of?*

A. In the next Place we have a Converſation between our Saviour and his Diſciples, concerning himſelf. Being willing to ſettle and eſtabliſh their Belief, that he was their promiſed *Meſſias*, he demands what Opinions Men entertained of him. The Apoſtles anſwer in general, that ſome ſaid he was *John*, ſome *Elias*, and ſome *Jeremias*; ſo that we find there was a Diverſity of Judgments and Opinions concerning *Chriſt*, even whilſt among Men, who daily ſaw and heard him. *Well but*, adds *Chriſt*, *whom do you, my Diſciples, ſay that I am? You that have heard the Holineſs of my Doctrine, and ſeen the Divinity of my Miracles.* *Peter*, in the Name, and as the Mouth of all the Apoſtles, openly confeſſes, *Thou art* Chriſt *the Son of the living God.* Our Saviour was ſo highly pleaſed with this free Confeſſion, that he pronounces *Peter*, and the reſt in him, bleſſed; *Bleſſed art thou* Simon; and tells him, that no Man, not the Wiſdom or Reaſon of Man, but God the Father, by the Operation of the Spirit, and Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, had wrought this divine Faith in him, and drawn forth this glorious Confeſſion from him.

Q. *We have next a Converſatation betwixt* Chriſt *and* Peter; *what do you remak thereupon?*

A. As *Peter* confeſſed *Chriſt*, ſo *Chriſt* confeſſes him: *Peter* ſaid, *Thou art* Chriſt, *Chriſt* ſays, *Thou art* Peter; alluding to his Name ſignifying a Rock; which Title he had made good by the Strength, Stability, and Triumph of his Faith; and for which he obtains of *Chriſt* a double Promiſe: 1. For the Building, 2. For the upholding of his Church. *Upon this Rock will I build my Church.* Upon what Rock? Upon *Peter*, the Rock confeſſiing, ſay the *Papiſts*: But if ſo, no more is ſaid of *Peter* here, than of all the Apoſtles elſewhere, *Gal.* ii. 9. Upon *Chriſt* the Rock confeſſed, ſay the Proteſtants; for *Chriſt* is the Foundation-Stone upon which his Church is built; *Epheſ.* ii. 20. So that upon the Rock of *Peter*'s Confeſſion, that fundamental Truth, that *Chriſt* is the Son of the living God, is the Church built. Yet *Chriſt* may be ſaid to build his Church upon *Peter*, as he uſed his Miniſtry in laying the Foundation of a *Chriſtian* Church among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; he being the firſt Preacher of the Faith which he here confeſs'd, firſt to the *Jews*, *Acts* ii. and then to the *Gentiles*, *Acts* x. And accordingly, St. *Peter*'s converting three Thouſand Souls by his Miniſtry, *Acts* ii. 41. Some reckon a punctual fulfilling of the Promiſe here made him. Whence it is evident, that in this Matter, St. *Peter* neither had, nor can have a Succeſſor; and if the *Pope* will pretend to it, he muſt not ſit at home, lording it there over God's Heritage, but muſt go in Perſon to the unbelieving *Jews*, and unconverted *Heathens*, as *Peter* did, and labour, by his preaching, to bring over *Turk*, *Jew*, and *Infidel* to *Chriſtianity*. Our Saviour likewiſe promiſes the upholding, as well as the building of his Church; *The Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*; that is, all the Policy and Power of the Devil and his Inſtruments ſhould not deſtroy my Church, nor extinguiſh the Light of this divine Truth, which thou haſt now confeſſed, that I am the true *Meſſias*, the Son of the living God.

Another Promiſe of *Chriſt* to *Peter*, and in his Name to the reſt of the Apoſtles, is, that he will give him the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; that is, the Key of Doctrine, and the Key of Diſcipline, or full Power and Authority to preach the Goſpel, to adminiſter Sacraments, and execute Church Cenſures. The Speech is metaphorical, and alludes to Stewards and Officers in great Houſes, who have the Charge of the Key of the Houſhold. The Miniſters of *Chriſt* are the Stewards of his Houſe, to whom *Chriſt* commits the Key of his Church, though the Pope would ſnatch them away, and keep them himſelf; he ſnatches at *Peter*'s Keys, but makes Shipwreck of *Peter*'s Faith, arrogating *Peter*'s Power, but abrogating his holy Profeſſion. This Power of the Keys *Chriſt* never deſigned as a Peculiar to *Peter*, but diſpenſed it to them all promiſcuouſly; and accordingly the Apoſtles exerciſed it independently of *Peter*, in converting thoſe of the Circumciſion as well as he. And St. *Paul*, who was the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, opened the Kingdom of Heaven to far more of them than ever *Peter* did; and therefore had this Key of the Kingdom given to him, as much as to St. *Peter*.

Q. *In the 20th Verſe our Lord charges his Diſciples, that they ſhould* tell no Man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt: *Does not this ſeem ſomewhat Strange?*

A. The Reaſons for this Prohibition ſeems to be theſe: 1. Becauſe the Glory of his Godhead was not to be fully manifeſted till after his Reſurrection, and then to be publiſhed by himſelf, and confirmed by his own Miracles. 2. Leſt the Knowledge of it ſhould have hindered his Miracles: For, had the Rulers known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. *Chriſt* was ſo intent upon laying down his Life for Sinners, that he would not have his Death hindered, by an untimely Declaration of his being truly and actually God.

Q. *In the latter Part of the Chapter* Chriſt *informs his Diſciples of his future Sufferings and Death: What was his Views in telling them of theſe Things?*

A. *Chriſt* now begins to open to his Diſciples more fully the Occaſion of his Miſſion, and to acquaint them with his approaching Sufferings, Death and Reſurrection. This he did to ſatisfy them that he was really God, by his fore-knowing and foretelling Things to come; to convince them, that his Kingdom was not of this World, as they ſurmized; and to prevent their being offended at his Sufferings, and to prepare them for their own. *Peter*, who had a ſingular Affection for our Saviour, could not bear to hear of his Sufferings, and therefore beſeeches him to ſpare himſelf, little imagining that Satan ſet him on to hinder the Redemption of Mankind, by diſſuading *Chriſt* from dying. But obſerve with what Indignation *Chriſt* rejects his Advice; *Get thee behind me Satan.* Though it was *Peter*'s Tongue, it was *Satan* that directed it; therefore *Chriſt* calls *Peter* by Satan's Name.

From hence our Saviour takes Occaſion to recommend his Religion to every one's Choice: *If any Man will come after me*, &c. that is, if any Man chuſe and reſolve to be a *Chriſtian*, he propounds his Terms, 1. Self-denial; *Let him deny himſelf.* By which we are not to underſtand the denying and renouncing our Senſes in Matters of Faith, or of our Reaſon in Matters of Religion; but that we ſhould part with all our earthly Comforts for the ſake of *Chriſt*, and his Holy Religion. 2. Goſpel-ſuffering. He muſt *take up his Croſs*; an Alluſion to a *Roman* Cuſtom, that the Malefactor to be crucified took his Croſs upon his Shoulder, and carried it to his Execution.

Q. *How do you underſtand the laſt Verſe of this Chapter*; Verily I ſay unto you, there be ſome ſtanding here, who ſhall not taſte of Death, till they ſee the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom?

A. This Verſe carries a threefold Senſe and Interpretation: 1. Some will have the Words refer to our Saviour's Transfiguration, mentioned in the next Chapter: As if he had ſaid, Some of you, as *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, ſhall ſhortly ſee me on Mount *Tabor* in ſuch Glory as I will come in to Judgment. 2. Others underſtand them of *Chriſt*'s exerciſing his kingly Power in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* and the *Jewiſh* Nation; which St. *John* did live to ſee. 3. Others refer the Words to the Times of the Goſpel after *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, when the Goſpel was preached far and near, according to St. *Mark* iii. 1.

Q. *Pray illuſtrate that Saying of our Saviour to* Peter, *Verſe* 11. Thou art *Peter*, and upon this Rock will I build my Church? *And, Verſe* 19. I will give thee the Keys of Heaven?

A. The Name of *Peter*, or *Cephas* (as it is in the *Syriack*) our bleſſed Lord gave to *Simon*, when his Brother *Andrew* firſt brought them together; and, in Alluſion to this Name it is, that he calls him the *Rock*, or *Stone*, upon which he intended to *build his Church*; ſome indeed, by this *Rock*, think, that our Saviour intends himſelf, and that, in uttering theſe Words, he pointed at his own Perſon, as he ſeems to have done, upon another like Occaſion, when he ſpeaks to the *Jews*, *Deſtroy this Temple* (meaning his own Body) *and in three Days I will raiſe it up:* But the Senſe ſeems abſtruſe, and the Tranſition abrupt, that our Saviour, ſpeaking to *Peter*, and calling him a *Rock*, ſhould, with the ſame Breath, paſs to himſelf, and yet not ſay, *upon myſelf*, but *upon this Rock* (and St. *Peter* vas the only Rock he mentioned) *will I build my Church:* Others therefore would rather have St. *Peter*'s *Faith* and *Confeſſion* to be the *Rock* here ſpoken of; as it muſt be acknowledged indeed, that, in this Confeſſion of his, the Sum and Subſtance of the *Chriſtian* Doctrine is compriſed; but then it ſhould be conſidered, that as our Lord, without all doubt, meant to ſay ſomething ſingular to St. *Peter*, as a Reward of his frank Confeſſion of him, if this Confeſſion was all the *Rock* he intended, here was nothing particular ſaid to the Apoſtle, and yet, at the ſame Time, the whole Grace of the Alluſion to his Name was intirely loſt. It is reaſonable therefore to think, that, as our Saviour here directs his Speech, not to the whole College of the Apoſtles, but to St. *Peter* only, and ſeems to promiſe him ſomething peculiar, as the Reward of his liberal Confeſſion, the Senſe of the Expreſſion ſhould be, That he would, in a more eminent

Manner, make uſe of his Miniſtry, in laying the firſt Foundation of the *Chriſtian* Church, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*: As we find he did the former, in his moſt efficacious Sermon at the Day of *Pentecoſt*, and the latter, in the Converſion of *Cornelius* and his Company.

There is a Paſſage in *Iſaiah* which (as ſome imagine) helps us to the Knowledge of what our Saviour means by *the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; 'tis, where God foretels *Eliakim*, that he *will call him and cloath him with the Robe of* Shebna (who was over the Houſhold) *and ſtrengthen him with his Girdle, and commit his Government into his Hand, and lay the Key of the Houſe of* David *upon his Shoulder*, &c.

This Cuſtom of carrying Keys upon Mens Shoulders may ſeem very ſtrange to us; but the Ancients had their Keys made very large, and in the Form of a Sickle, and the Weight and Shape of them was ſuch, that they could no otherwiſe be carried conveniently, but as we ſee our Reapers carry their Sickles.

Now, becauſe the Key was an Enſign of great Honour and Power, and what the chief Stewards in Princes Palaces uſually wore, as an Indication of their Office, our Saviour makes uſe of this Expreſſion, to denote that Authority and Juriſdiction wherewith he inveſted the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, in the Adminiſtration of the Affairs of his Church. But beſides the *Key of Government*, there is the *Key of Knowledge*, which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* are blamed for having taken away; and therefore, as the Uſe of a Key is to open a Door or Gate, we ſhould rather think the Import of *Chriſt's* Promiſe here to *Peter* is, that he ſhould be the Perſon, who ſhould firſt open the Myſteries of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, both to *Jew* and *Gentile*, by the Power of his Preaching, make the firſt Converts among both, and, by the Rite of Baptiſm, receive ſuch Converts into the Pale of the *Chriſtian* Church: And by the *Binding* and *Looſing* which follows (tho' ſome are willing to extend them to the Power of *Excommunication* and *Abſolution*) we ſhould rather be inclined to think, that, according to the Language then in Uſe among the *Jews*, our Saviour means the forbidding, or permitting ſuch and ſuch Things; that he is here declaring his Will, that his Apoſtles ſhould ſettle the Affairs of his Church, by Virtue of their infallible Spirit; ſhould determine what was lawful or unlawful for *Chriſtians* to do, and that ſuch their Determinations ſhould be ratified in Heaven: "*Whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on Earth*, i. e. declare to be forbidden, ſhall expoſe the Man, that commits it, to Puniſhment; and *whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth*, or declare to be lawful now (though formerly forbidden) ſhall be allowed to be done, without any one's incurring my Diſpleaſure:" So that, in this Senſe, the Words are a Foundation of our Faith and Obedience to the Doctrines and Commands of the Apoſtles, and of the Ceſſation of the ritual Precepts of the Law of *Moſes*.

According to this Expoſition the Senſe of our Lord's Promiſe to *Peter* (ſuppoſing it Perſonal, and directed to him only) will be this,———
Thy Name ſignifies a *Rock*, and, ſuitable to that Name, ſhall be thy Work and Office; for upon thee, *i. e.* upon the Strength of thy Preaching, ſhall the Foundation of my Church be laid. Thee I will appoint to make the firſt Converts, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to my Holy Religion; and, by the Ordinance of Baptiſm, to admit them into the Communion of Saints; and to thee I will give Power to enact Laws, for the good Government of my Church; to determine what is proper or improper to be done, and to releaſe my People from the Obſervation of *legal Ceremonies*.

This is the full Force of our Saviour's Speech to *Peter*; and yet it neither denotes, nor implies any oecumenical, paſtoral Power in him (much leſs in his Succeſſors) above the reſt of the Apoſtles. For if he be here called the *Rock*, or *Foundation-ſtone*, the ſame Honour is attributed to the reſt, where it is ſaid, that *we are built upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles*, Jeſus Chriſt *himſelf being the chief Corner-ſtone*. If he had the Power of the Keys intruſted with him, and thereby admitted the firſt Converts, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, into the *Chriſtian* Church; both *James* and *John* exerciſed the ſame Office, in converting thoſe of the *Circumciſion*; and St. *Paul* opened the Kingdom of Heaven to many more *Gentiles* than ever he did. If he had Authority to diſcharge the Converts he made from the Obſervation of the *Ceremonial Law*, St. *Paul*, without doubt, had the ſame with regard to his; and perhaps a clearer Notion of the *Chriſtian* Liberty, than St. *Peter* ſeems to have had; when he gave Occaſion to the other to *withſtand him to the Face*, and ſo frequently to declare, *that we are not juſtified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of* Jeſus Chriſt: And, whatſoever the Senſe of *binding* and *looſing* may be, 'tis certain, that the ſame Power and Authority was given, in as ample a Manner, to *all* the Apoſtles in general, where it is ſaid, *Whatſoever YE ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever YE ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven:* And again, *Whoſeſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſeſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.* So wiſely did our Saviour ſettle an Equality among his Apoſtles, that *there might be no Schiſm* in his Church, but that *in him all the Building fitly framed together* (as the Apoſtle continues the Metaphor) *might grow into an Holy Temple in the Lord.*

Q. *Where was ſituated the City of* Cæſarea Philippi?

A. The City of *Cæſarea Philippi* is ſituated near the Head of the River *Jordan*, and was by the *Canaanites* called *Laiſh*, or *Leohem*, Judg. xviii. 7. but, being taken by ſome of the *Danites*, it was by them called *Dan*, and is generally reputed the utmoſt Border, Northward, of the Land of *Iſrael*. It was uſually called, by *Heathen* Writers, *Paneas*, from the adjoining Spring, *Paneum*, or *Panion*, which is commonly taken for the Fountain-head of *Jordan*. *Auguſtus Cæſar* gave it, and all the Territories belonging to it, to *Herod the Great*. He having re-built the Place, gave it and the Tetrarchy of *Iturea* and *Trachonitis* (which is adjoining) to his youngeſt Son *Philip*; who, when he had enlarged and beautified it, ſo as to make it the Capital of his Dominions, and chief Place of his Reſidence, gave it the Name of *Cæſarea Philippi*; partly, to complement *Tiberius Cæſar*, who was then Emperor; partly, to preſerve the Memory of his own Name; and partly, to diſtinguiſh it from another *Cæſarea*, mentioned in *Acts* x. 1. ſituate on the *Mediterranean*, and built by his Father, in Honour of his great Benefactor *Auguſtus Cæſar*.

Q. *Various were the Opinions of the People concerning* Chriſt, *as we read, Verſe* 14. *Pray what Foundation had they for their ſeveral Notions?*

A. Thoſe who held that *Jeſus*, was *John the Baptiſt* riſen from the Dead, were of the ſame Opinion with *Herod* the *Tetrarch*, Matthew xiv. 2. and ſeem to have imbibed the Notion of the *Phariſees*; who (according to *Joſephus*) uſed to ſay, that *a good Man might eaſily return to Life again.* Thoſe who took him for *Elias*, ran into the general Opinion of the Nation, that *Elias* was to come before the *Meſſiah*, and anoint him when he came; and therefore, notwithſtanding his Doctrine and Miracles, they could not conceive him to be the *Meſſiah*, ſo long as his mean Appearance was contrary to their Expectations: And thoſe who thought him to be *Jeremias*, ſeem to have eſpouſed the Sentiments of their Doctors, who looked upon that Prophet as the Head of the whole Order, not improbably upon the Character which God gives him, *Before I formed thee in the Belly I knew thee, and before thou waſt out of the Womb I ſanctified and I ordained thee, a Prophet to the Nations*, Jer. i. 5.

Q. *How came* Peter *to be ſo well informed, as to the Nature and Office of* Chriſt, *as to make that noble Confeſſion,* Thou art *Chriſt*, the Son of the living God; *and why did he, rather than any of the reſt, ſpeak on this Occaſion?*

A. That the reſt of the great Truth which St. *Peter* declares, *viz.* that *Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of the living God*, no one can doubt, who calls to mind the Atteſtation made of it before by *John the Baptiſt*, John i. 34. the frequent Confeſſion of it by evil Spirits, diſpoſſeſſed before their Eyes, *Mark* iii. 15. and that full Declaration of it in the whole Fraternity, *We believe, and are ſure, that thou art that* Chriſt, *the Son of the living God*, John vi. 69. for which Reaſon we find the Fathers, upon this Occaſion, ſpeaking of St. *Peter*, as the Mouth, the Tongue, the Voice of the Church, and a kind of Foreman to the reſt of the Apoſtles; for this they might think a Matter of Decency and good Manners, a Means to prevent Confuſion and Diſorder, and a Token of that Union and Harmony, which was among them, that one Man ſhould ſpeak for all the reſt. And why that *one Man* ſhould be St. *Peter*, rather than any of the reſt, may very well be imputed to the Seniority of his Age, the natural Fervor of his Temper, and his longer Attendance upon our bleſſed Saviour, than ſeveral of the reſt had been employed in. Theſe are ſufficient Reaſons for his delivering the Judgment of the Company, and for our accounting his Confeſſion the common Voice of all to a Queſtion, which had evidently been propounded to them all.

Our Saviour's Anſwer, in the Words in the Text, are, *Fleſh and Blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. xvi. 17. But how did God reveal this to St. *Peter?* Thoſe who pretend that he had a *peculiar Revelation*, not vouchſafed to any others, without which he could not have owned *Chriſt* to have been *the Son of God*, muſt not only allow the like Revelation to *Nathaniel*, John ii. 49. to the *Centurion*, who was preſent at our Lord's Crucifixion, *Matth.* xxvii. 54. and to all others, who made Declaration of the ſame Faith; but muſt likewiſe excuſe all thoſe *Jews* who did not believe in *Chriſt*; becauſe it was not in their Power ſo to do without this peculiar Revelation. Without running ourſelves into thoſe Premunires therefore, we may reaſonably conclude, that the Senſe of our Saviour's Words is this, ——— "What others ſay of me, *viz.* that I am *John*, *Elias*, *Jeremiah*, or the like, this thou haſt learnt from Men; but the Faith which thou haſt now confeſſed concerning me, though it required of thee a due Attention to the Proofs given of it, yet, ſince thoſe Proofs are the Doctrine which I teach from God, and the Miracles, done in Confirmation of it, and are apparently the Finger of God, thy Faith muſt be acknowledged to be the Reſult, not of human Wiſdom, but of divine Revelation. God has given thee a teachable and intelligent Mind, to perceive, by my Doctrine and Miracles, that I am the true *Meſſiah*, notwithſtanding the Obſcurity of my Appearance; and therefore thou may'ſt be truly ſaid to be *taught of God*, becauſe my Doctrine is the *Word*, and my Miracles are the *Power* of God."

Q. *What does our Saviour mean by* his Church, *Verſe* 18?

A. It is very evident, that, whereas the Word *Church* is capable of two Senſes, and taken, in common Speech, ſometimes for a Place ſet apart for the publick Performance of ſuch Worſhip; our Saviour intends it here in the latter of theſe Senſes, and that the *Building of this Church* (which is a Metaphor of frequent Uſe in the *New Teſtament*) ſignifies the doing all thoſe Things, either in private *Chriſtians*, or publick Communities of them, which may contribute to their Growth in Grace and Goodneſs, their mutual Strength and Support, their Perfection and Continuance; and accordingly, *Chriſtians* thus united together, are called *a ſpiritual Houſe*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. *an heavenly Building, fitly framed together, and an Habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph. ii. 21, 22.

Q. *In the ſame Verſe are theſe Words;* And the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it; *which pray explain.*

A. Some Interpreters mean by the Word *Hades*, which we tranſlate *Hell*, the State or Place of the Dead; and by the *Gates of Hades*, the *Power of Death*; and ſo the Words, applied to the Members of *Chriſt's* myſtical Body, or to particular *Chriſtians*, will mean, "That though at preſent Death has the Dominion over them, yet ſhall not his Conqueſt of thoſe that die in the Lord, be abſolute and final. They ſhall not continue dead to all Eternity; but ſhall revive a ſecond Time to a better Life, and triumph over this laſt great Enemy of Mankind." Others by *Hell* underſtand the Place of infernal Torments; and ſo, by an eaſy Figure, apply it to the Devil and his Angels, inhabiting thoſe Regions of Darkneſs; but among the *Jews* more eſpecially, the Gates were Places of *Judicature*, and where Magiſtrates met to conſult for the Security of the Publick; it hence comes to paſs, that by *the Gates of Hell*, they mean the *Strength* and *Policy* of the Wicked, and ſo make the Senſe of our Saviour's Promiſe to be this, ——— That notwithſtanding all the wicked Contrivances of *Satan* and his Inſtruments, to deſtroy the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity in the World, yet all their Power and Policy ſhould not be able to effect it. *Chriſt's* Holy Religion ſhould ſtand and flouriſh, in deſpight of their wicked Contrivances; and, however a Defection might happen, in ſome particular

Places, to the End of the World he ſhould never want a Society of Men, confeſſing, with St. Peter, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of the living God,* Matth. xvi. 16.

Q. *What is the proper Senſe of* Peter's *Speech to our Saviour,* Be it far from thee Lord?

A. Peter's Words in the *Greek*, tranſlated, *Be it far from thee Lord,* we may render, *Be merciful to thyſelf, ſpare thyſelf.* Since the Rulers at *Jeruſalem* have ſuch malevolent Deſigns againſt thee, why ſhouldeſt thou think of going any more among them? If they intend to evil-intreat thee, and take away thy Life, *be thou kind and favourable to thyſelf,* avoid the Danger, by keeping at a Diſtance from it, and conſult thine own Preſervation by continuing here. This ſeems to be the proper Senſe of St. *Peter*'s Words, and they were doubtleſs ſpoken with a good Intention, and ſingular Affection for his Maſter, but ſtill they argued great Weakneſs in him, in pretending to contradict one, whom he had juſt before acknowledged to be *the* Chriſt, *the Son of God,* and denote him ignorant of the Redemption of Mankind by that Death which God, in his wiſe Counſel had determined.

Q. *Explain our Saviour's Anſwer to* Peter, *on this Occaſion,* Get thee behind me, *Satan,* thou art an Offence unto me?

A. The Words of our bleſſed Saviour upon this Occaſion are, *Get thee behind me,* Satan, *thou art an Offence to me.* Not that we are to think that our Saviour ever imagined that St. *Peter* had any pernicious Deſigns againſt him, as the great Enemy of Mankind has, when he tempts and deludes them into Sin; but his Meaning is, that his Interpoſition in this Affair was very unſeaſonable, and highly repugnant to his Deſign of coming into the World, which was to ſave it. "Thou thinkeſt, perhaps, (ſays he) *Peter,* that in this thy Advice thou ſheweſt thy Kindneſs to me, as a Friend, that reſpects my Welfare, and art tender of my Preſervation; but, inſtead of that, thou art an Adverſary to me (for ſo the Word *Satan* ſignifies, *Numb.* xxii. 32. 2 *Sam.* xix. 23. 1 *Kings* v. 4.) in thy endeavouring to draw me aſide from doing what is my Father's Will and Command, *John* x. 18. I told thee that *I muſt ſuffer*; that ſuch is the determinate Counſel of God, and ſuch my fixed Purpoſe and Reſolution; and therefore all Advice to the contrary is what I cannot away with; it is an Offence to me; it is an Abomination." So dear was the Salvation of Mankind to *Jeſus Chriſt*, that he could not hear even one of the Chief of his Apoſtles diſſuading him from it, without ſome Emotion of Anger and Indignation.

CHAP. XVII.

Chriſt's *Tranſfiguration.* Moſes *and* Elias *appear and talk with him. The Diſciples fall down for Fear;* Jeſus *touches and encourages them, and charges them to conceal the Viſion till he is riſen. They aſk him about the Coming of* Elias; *he proves that he was already come. He rebukes that unbelieving Generation, and heals a Lunatick. Unbelief the Cauſe why his Diſciples could not caſt out the Devil. He foretels his Suffering and Reſurrection; his Diſciples Sorrow thereupon. He works a Miracle to pay Tribute.*

Q. WHAT *View had our Saviour in the Tranſfiguration?*

A. To know the true End and Deſign of our Saviour's Tranſfiguration, it may not be improper to look a little into the Context, where we find that after *Peter's* confeſſing him to be *the Chriſt, the Son of the living God, from that Time began he to ſhew unto his Diſciples, how he muſt go unto* Jeruſalem, *and ſuffer many Things of the Elders, and chief Prieſts and* Scribes, *and be killed, and be raiſed again the third Day.* Nor was this all, for he foretold them, that they likewiſe were to ſuffer many grievous Perſecutions for his Name's Sake; and therefore he recommended to them the unpleaſant Doctrines of *Self-Denial, and taking up the Croſs and following him,* with this great, though diſtant Encouragement, that *When the Son of Man ſhould come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels, he ſhould then reward every one according to his Works,* Matt. xvi. 27.

Theſe Predictions, Doctrines and Promiſes were ſo contrary to the Expectation of his Diſciples, who hoped in him to have a temporal Prince and Deliverer, a Reſtorer of the decayed State of *Iſrael*, and Promoter of themſelves to great Honours and Employments, that our Saviour thought proper, (not many Days after) in order to revive their Faith and Truſt in him, and to fortify their Minds againſt what was likely to enſue, to take as many with him into the Mount, as made up a legal Evidence, and there to give them an ocular Conviction of what he had promiſed, in Recompence of what they were to ſuffer, by aſſuming, for a while, the Luſtre and Appearance of a glorious Body; which ſo raiſed their drooping Hearts, that we find St. *Peter* immediately declaring, *Lord, it is good for us to be here, and if thou wilt, let us make here three Tabernacle, one for thee, and one for* Moſes, *and one for* Elias. For the Deſign of theſe Words is, not only to ſecure his Maſter, by ſtaying in that Retreat, from the Sufferings and Death, which would be the Conſequence of his going to *Jeruſalem,* (as St. *Chryſoſtom* and others underſtand it) but to expreſs likewiſe the Pleaſure and Satisfaction he took in this Tranſfiguration, and glorified Company; and how he reſumed freſh Spirit and Comfort, from a Miracle which was emblematical of the glorious State, not of *Chriſt* only, but of all good *Chriſtians* after their Reſurrection.

Q. *Does the Scripture give an Account of any other Tranſfiguration reſembling this?*

A. The only Inſtance we have in Scripture of any Tranfiguration like unto this, is in the Caſe of *Moſes*, after he had been forty Days and forty Nights with God on Mount *Sinai*; for upon his Deſcent, we are told, that the Skin of his Face ſo ſhone, that the Children of *Iſrael* were afraid to come nigh him, and therefore he put a Veil on his Face, while he talked with them. That our bleſſed Lord, in the Act of his Tranfiguration, might probably have Reſpect to this preceding one of *Moſes*, and both in the Nature of the Change, and the Place where 'twas wrought, deſign ſome Conformity thereunto, is what we are at Liberty to ſuppoſe; and conſequently can account why the Scene of this Tranſaction was in a Mountain, rather than a Valley.

Q. *Why were no more than the three Apoſtles,* Peter, John *and* James *allowed to be Spectators of* Chriſt's *Tranſfiguration?*

A. This was a Vouchſafement, fit only to be communicated to ſuch as were of his more immediate Confidence, and ſtood in the higheſt Degree of his Eſteem; to ſuch, as for their Zeal and Affection to him, were honoured and diſtinguiſhed with a peculiar Title; and after his Reſurrection, appointed by Providence to be the great Pillars of his Church; and beſides that, it would have looked like Vanity and Oſtentation in him, to have taken the Multitude into the Mount, and there made a publick Sight of his Miracles, which was the Thing he always carefully declined: Beſides this, I ſay, there ſeems to be ſomething in the Transfiguration itſelf, which might have been of dangerous Conſequence for the Multitude to have been admitted to.

St. *Peter*, who himſelf was one of thoſe who were with him on the holy Mount, gives us this Account of it. *We have not followed cunningly deviſed Fables*, ſays he, *when we made known unto you the Coming of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *but were Eye-witneſſes of* his Majeſty; *for he received from God the Father, Honour and Glory, when there came ſuch a Voice to him from the* excellent Glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am pleaſed.* Now, by his *Majeſty*, in this Place, moſt properly is to be underſtood that Luſtre and Radiancy, wherein he appeared, when his *Face ſhone as the Sun, and his Garments* (pierced through with the Beams that were darted from his Body) *became as white as Light:* For to *ſhine as the Sun*, is a Phraſe expreſſing ſomething belonging to celeſtial Majeſty; and white and ſplendid Garments are proper for Kings and royal Miniſters of the heavenly Court. And in like Manner, by the excellent Glory from whence the Voice proceeded, can be meant nothing but the bright and ſhining Cloud that then appeared, which the *Jews* call the *Shechinah*, and is made up (as ſome imagine) of an Hoſt of Angels, the conſtant Symbol of the divine Preſence; and how great and magnificent this Symbol is, we may in ſome Meaſure learn from the Viſion of the Prophet *Daniel*. *The Antient of Days did ſit, whoſe Garment was white as Snow, and the Hair of his Head like pure Wool: His Throne was like the fiery Flames, and his Wheels as burning Fire: A fiery Stream had Iſſue from before him; thouſands of thouſands miniſtered unto him, and ten thouſand Times ten thouſand ſtood before him.*

Suppoſing then that this was the Manner of our Saviour's Transfiguration, that not only in his own Perſon he was arrayed with all this Glory and Luſtre, but had likewiſe an angelic Hoſt ſurrounding him, two of the greateſt Prophets of antient Ages attending him, and a Voice from Heaven, declaring him to be *the well beloved Son of God*; while the Multitude ſtood by, and ſaw and heard all this, it would have been almoſt unavoidable, but that, upon ſuch Conviction of his being the *Meſſiah*, they would have taken him by Force, and made him a King. But ſince (as our Saviour tells us) his Kingdom was not of this World, nor to come with the Pomp and Obſervation which the *Jews* expected; and ſince one of his great Concerns was, that no Diſturbance of the Civil Government ſhould be occaſioned by him, or laid to his Charge, he wiſely made choice of three only, (but theſe the principal of his Apoſtles) to whom he exhibited a Specimen of his future Glory; which had he done to the Multitude, it might probably have occaſioned a general Inſurrection; and as he came down from the Mount, he charged them, *That they ſhould tell the Viſion to no Man, till after his Reſurrection.*

Q. *Were* Moſes *and* Elias *on the Mount in their own proper Perſons?*

A. From the Word *Orama*, which we render *Viſion*, ſome have ſuppoſed that *Moſes* and *Elias* were not there in their proper Perſons, but that the Apoſtles, in their Fancy and Imagination, had only a ſtrong Idea or Impreſſion of them; or at moſt, that their Spectres, or ſhadowy Reſemblances of them only were there. Since the *Evangeliſts*, however, ſpeak of them in a perſonal Character and Capacity; ſince they repreſent them as *talking with* Chriſt, *and ſpeaking of his Deceaſe, which he was to accompliſh at* Jeruſalem; ſince they tell us, that when they were come out of the Extaſy, into which this Viſion had caſt them, they ſaw two Men ſtanding with him; it is much more probable to think, that *Moſes* and *Elias* were really there, and that God had, ſomewhere or other, from the Time of their Departure out of this World, preſerved both their Bodies to this. The Scriptures, indeed, are expreſs as to *Elias*, that he was tranſlated *into Heaven*, by the Miniſtry of Angels, reſembling *a Chariot of Fire, and Horſes of Fire*; and it is a pretty general Opinion, both among *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Authors, taken, as is ſuppoſed, from ſome apocryphal Book, that *Moſes* did not die, but was tranſlated into Heaven, or ſome terreſtrial Paradiſe, in the ſame Manner as were *Enoch* and *Elias*. There is a Paſſage in St. *Jude*, where *Michael* the Archangel is ſaid to contend with the Devil, and diſpute about the Body of *Moſes*, which, (if taken in a literal Senſe) will greatly favour this Opinion; for if we can but ſuppoſe that the Conteſt between this good and evil Angel, concerning *Moſes*'s Body, related not to its Burial (as ſome will have it) but its Aſſumption into Heaven, or ſome other Place of Happineſs, which the *Devil* might oppoſe, and urge the Obligation of his dying the common Death of all Men, for this Reaſon, more eſpecially, becauſe he had once taken away the Life of an *Egyptian*: If we can but ſuppoſe, I ſay, that the Conteſt aroſe upon this Subject, then may we eaſily conceive, both how *Moſes* might ſubſiſt in a ſeparate State, from the Time of his Aſſumption; and how he, together with *Elias*, might be diſpatched from thence upon this Occaſion, to ſet off the Luſtre of our Lord's Transfiguration, by their appearing, at the ſame Time, in their reſplendent Robes of Glory.

And, indeed, if this was the Purpoſe of their Errand, what Subject can we ſuppoſe ſo proper, and ſo well becoming the Converſation of three ſuch illuſtrious Perſons, as the Redemption of Mankind, by the Death and Paſſion of the Son of God. What theſe two antient Prophets had, in their Times, imperfectly revealed; nay, what the Angels of Heaven deſired at all Times to look into, *viz.* the Harmony of the divine Attributes in this ſtupendous Work, *The Depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God*, Rom. xi. 33. *and the Breadth and Length, and Depth, and Height of the Love of* Chriſt, *which paſſeth all Knowledge*, Eph. iii. 18, 19. *Myſteries which have been hid from Ages and from Generations, but are now made manifeſt to the Saints*, Col. i. 26. Theſe were the ſublime Subjects (for theſe are implied in their ſpeaking of *Chriſt*'s Deceaſe) of their Converſation at this Interview; and, in Compariſon of theſe, how jejune and worthleſs are all the wiſe Sayings of Philoſophers, or Compoſitions of human Wit? With good Reaſon therefore, might the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, (who himſelf was no mean Proficient in what the World falſly call Knowledge) inſtead of the *Excellence of Speech and Wiſdom, determine to know nothing*, among his *Corinthians, but* Jeſus Chriſt, *and him crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2. For *we preach* Chriſt *crucified*, ſays he, *unto the* Jews *a Stumbling-Block, and unto the* Greek *Fooliſhneſs; but unto them that are called, both* Jews *and* Greeks, Chriſt *the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God*, Chap. i. Ver. 23. *For of God he is made unto us Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, and Sanctification and Redemption*, Ver. 30.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Peter's *Behaviour, on this awful Occaſion?*

A. Peter was ſo raviſhed with this Viſion, that he entreats a Continuance of it, and deſires Permiſſion to make three Tabernacles. This Motion was well meant and devout, though unadviſed and raſh. *Peter* errs in deſiring a Perpetuity of that Condition which was tranſient and momentary. This Viſion was only a Taſte of Glory, not a full Repaſt. He errs, in that he would enter into Heaven's Glory, without ſuffering or dying. But a Cloud is drawn over the Diſciples Eyes, in order to allay the Splendor of that Glory with which they were were ſwallowed up; and to hinder farther prying and looking into it. From this Cloud God gave a Teſtimony concerning *Jeſus Chriſt* his Son, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* Note, he is a Son, therefore for Nature coeſſential, for Dignity coequal, for Duration coeternal with the Father; and a beloved Son, becauſe of his Likeneſs and Conformity to him. Father's Likeneſs is the Cauſe of Love; a Union of Wills cauſes a mutual Endearment of Affections; the Excellency of his Mediation, *In whom I am well pleaſed. Chriſt*'s Mediation for us, makes God appeaſable to us; and the Authority of his Doctrine, *Hear ye him*; not *Moſes* and *Elias*, who were Servants, but *Chriſt*, my Son, whom I have commiſſioned to be the great Prophet and Teacher of my Church; therefore adore him as my Son, believe in him as your Saviour, and hear him as your Law-giver.

Q. *What was the Name of the Mountain on which our bleſſed Lord was transfigured?*

A. That the Mountain on which our Saviour was transfigured, was Mount *Tabor* (which ſtood in the midſt of the *Lower Galilee*, at an equal Diſtance between the *Mediterranean* and the Sea of *Tiberias*) is a Matter confirmed by the Voice of all Antiquity, but ſome modern Writers are of a different Opinion; becauſe *Tabor* (ſay they) does not ſtand in the Way between *Cæſarea Philippi* and *Capernaum*; and that our Saviour travelled from *Cæſarea* to this Mount, (which is almoſt through the whole Length of *Galilee*) is a little too much to ſuppoſe. *Lightfoot* on *Mark* ix. But this he had Space enough to do in the ſix intervening Days between his Diſcourſe and his Transfiguration; and that he really did ſo, is made very probable, both from St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*, that after he had finiſhed his Diſcourſe with his Diſciples, he entered upon his Journey; and, we hear nothing more of him, until the Expiration of ſix whole Days, *Matt*. xvii. 1, *Luke* ix. 2. but, after his Return from the Mount, and Cure of the *Demoniac*, that was brought before him, 'tis ſaid, that he and his *Diſciples parted thence, and paſſed through* Galilee, *i. e.* the remaining Part of *Galilee*, to come to *Capernaum*, Luke iii. 30, 33.

Q. *To whom does* Chriſt *ſpeak*, Verſe 17. O faithleſs and perverſe Generation, how long ſhall I be with you, *&c*?

A. The Rebuke which our Saviour utters upon this Occaſion, *O faithleſs and perverſe Generation, how long ſhall I be with you, &c?* ſeems to be intended for the whole Company, and every one to have a Share in it, in Proportion to their Deſerts. The Diſciples are not exempted, for they are charged with Infidelity. The Father of the Patient is pointed at, for his Faith was wavering, *Mark* ix. 21, *&c.* And the whole Nation of the *Jews* is included in it, for this was expreſly their Character of old, *A very froward and perverſe Generation, in whom is no Faith*, Deut. xxiii. 5, 20.

Q. *We have an Account of a notable Cure performed by our Saviour on a Perſon poſſeſſed with a Devil, which it is ſaid, the Diſciples could not caſt out*, becauſe of their Unbelief: *Pray what were the Notions of the* Jews *concerning Demoniacs; and why were not the Diſciples able to diſpoſſeſs the evil Spirit from this Perſon?*

A. Joſephus, who himſelf was a *Phariſee*, and well acquainted with the Notions of every Sect of the *Jews*, gives it for a current Opinion, that the Demons, in his and ſome preceding Ages, were nothing elſe but the Souls of wicked Men, who after Death, took Poſſeſſion of the Living; and were continually either afflicting and tormenting, or exciting and ſolliciting them to ſuch Sins as they found were agreeable and complexional to them; and that, according to their different Ways of vexing or tempting thoſe that they poſſeſſed, they had different Appellations given them; an unclean Spirit, a deaf and dumb Spirit, a Spirit of Infirmity, *&c.* In Conformity to this Notion, perhaps it is, that our Saviour here takes Notice of the different Kinds of evil Spirits, and, as among wicked Men, there are different Degrees of Impiety, and ſome are more hardened and profligate than others; ſo he ſeems to intimate, that ſome of theſe Spirits are more deſperate and malicious than others, *Matt*. xii. 45. But all of them obſtinate enough, (might they have their own Option) unwilling to leave the Bodies they have taken Poſſeſſion of. Here they think themſelves ſafe, and, in ſome Meaſure, ſcreened from the divine Vengeance; and therefore we find them, at ſometimes crying to our Lord, *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee? Art thou come to torment us?* Matt. viii. 29. And, at others, when commanded to depart, tearing and torturing the Poſſeſſed, and quiting their Habitation, not without much Reluctancy, *Mark*. ix. 26. The Apoſtles, no doubt, had adjured this evil Spirit before, in their Maſter's Name, and on ſeveral Occaſions had found the prevailing Power of it, even when their Faith was not ſo well approved, as it was at preſent: And yet, how Faith becomes neceſſary in the Exorciſm of Devils, when we find Strangers doing it in the Name of *Chriſt*, *Mark* ix. 28. or how the Faith of the Apoſtles came to be defective now, when not many Days before is was ſo very effectual, *Mark* vi. 13. why ſome evil Spirits were

Proof againſt the Name of *Chriſt*, whilſt others fled at the bare Mention of it; and why ſome ſurrendered at the firſt Summons, while Faſting and Prayer was the only Artillery that could diſlodge others? Theſe, and many more Queſtions that might be raiſed from our Saviour's Words, are Points wherein the beſt Commentators, we have met with, have not once attempted to give us any Satisfaction.

Q. *Why is this poſſeſ'd Perſon call'd a* Lunatick?

A. The *Greek* Word tranſlated *Lunatick*, coming from a Word that ſignifies the Moon, anſwers exactly to the *Engliſh Lunatick*, from *Luna*; but there is a Miſtake in rendering it. For, whereas the *Engliſh* Word *Lunatick* is commonly taken for a Madman; ſuch a one eſpecially, whoſe Diſtemper grows worſe towards the Full of the Moon; 'tis plain from all Symptoms, ſuch as being convulſed, foaming at the Mouth, grinding his Teeth, falling into the Fire, and bruiſing and tearing himſelf, *&c.* That the Diſorder under which this Perſon laboured, was an *Epilpſie*, or the *Falling-ſickneſs.* Now the Reaſon why this Diſeaſe is expreſſed by the Word *Lunatick*, is becauſe the Moon has the ſame Influence on it, that it has in Madneſs. Both Diſtempers lie in the Brain, and the Changes of the Moon affect thoſe that are ſubject to the one, as well as the other. When therefore the *Evangeliſts* tell us of this Epileptick, that the Devil took him, that he threw him down, caſt him into a Fit, and made him tear and bruiſe himſelf: The Meaning of all this is, that as, in thoſe Days, it was a common Thing for the Devil to have Power over Mens Bodies, which Power he employ'd in bringing Diſeaſes upon them; ſo it was in the preſent Caſe. The Devil that poſſeſſed this young Man, caſt him into frequent Fits of the Falling-ſickneſs (as all Demoniacks, we find, have one Diſtemper or other attending them) of which there was no Way to cure him, but by caſting out the Devil.

Q. *What was that* Cuſtom *or* Tribute *mention'd in the latter Part of the Chapter?*

A. With Reſpect to the Tribute collected for the Uſe of the Temple, every *Jew*, that was twenty Years old, was obliged to pay annually two *Attick Drams*, or half a Shekel (about fifteen Pence of our Money) for the *Uſe of the Sanctuary*, Exod. xxx. 13, 16. or to buy Sacrifices, and other Things neceſſary for the Service of the Temple: And that this was the Tribute which the Collectors here demanded, and not any Tax payable to the *Roman* Emperors, as ſome imagine, is evident, not only from our Saviour's Argument, *viz.* That he was the Son of that heavenly King, to whom it was paid, and conſequently had a Right to plead his Exemption; but from the *Greek* Word *Didrachma*, which (according to *Joſephus*) was the proper Word for this *Capitation Tax*, that was paid to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*; whereas the *Cæſarean* Tribute Money was the *Denarius*, a *Roman* Coin, and would have been gathered by the uſual Officers, the Publicans, and not by the Perſons, who are here ſtiled (as by a known Title) *they, that receiv'd the* Didrachma.

The Piece of Money that *Peter* was directed to take out of the Fiſh's Mouth, to pay the Tribute due from them both, amounted to four Drachms, or one Shekel; in our Money, about half a Crown; and the Reaſon, why our Saviour paid for none of the Apoſtles, but St. *Peter* only, was, becauſe theſe Receivers demanded it only of thoſe, that dwelt at *Capernaum* (as our Saviour and St. *Peter* did) leaving the other Apoſtles to pay it in the ſeveral Places of their Abode.

Chap. XVIII.

Chriſt *reproves the Ambition of his Diſciples, from the Example of a little Child; ſhews the Danger of Offences, and exhorts to avoid them; directs how to deal with an offending Brother, and how often to forgive him, which he ſhews by a Parable of a King taking an Account of his Servants, and his Puniſhment on the unforgiving Servant.*

Q. I*N the Beginning of this Chapter is an Account of a Conteſt among the Diſciples, concerning Superiority of Place in* Chriſt's *Kingdom; the ſame Thing is related by the other* Evangeliſts, *tho' with ſuch differing Circumſtances as ſeem not eaſily reconcileable?*

A. There is ſome ſmall Difference in the ſeveral Ways, wherein the Evangeliſts have related the Diſpute among the Apoſtles concerning their Preference in *Chriſt*'s Kingdom; St. *Matthew* tells us, that *the Diſciples came to* Jeſus, *ſaying, who is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven?* Chap. xviii. 1 St. *Mark*, that *Chriſt* put this Queſtion to them, *and they held their Peace,* Chap. ix. 33. and St. *Luke*, that they had been diſputing this Point among themſelves, and *Jeſus, perceiving the Thought of their Hearts, took a Child,* &c. Ch. ix. 46, 47. Now, to reconcile this ſeeming Repugnancy, we muſt obſerve, that as our Saviour was going to *Capernaum*, his Diſciples followed him, *diſcourſing among themſelves* (as St. *Mark* has it) *who of them was to be the greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*; that when they came to him into the Houſe, having ſtill the ſame ambitious Notions in their Minds, he asked them, *What was it that you diſcourſed of in the Way?* But they being aſhamed to tell him, held their Peace; and that then our Saviour, who well underſtood what the Subject of their Diſcourſe had been, endeavoured, by the Example of a Child, to cure their Diſtemper, and to inform them what Diſpoſition of Mind was proper to qualify them both for his Kingdom of Grace here, and his Kingdom of Glory hereafter. St. *Matthew*, indeed, according to our Tranſlation, repreſents the Thing, as if the Diſciples had put the Queſtion to their Maſter, *Who ſhould be greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*; but that the Participle *perceiving* relates not to *Jeſus*, but to the Diſciples, and means not the external Speech, but the inward Reaſoning of their Minds, is obvious from their Silence, which St. *Mark* takes Notice of, and our Saviour's *perceiving the Thoughts of their Hearts*, which St. *Luke* remarks: For had themſelves propounded the Queſtion to our Saviour (as the Verſion in St. *Matthew* ſeems to imply) we cannot ſee why they ſhould not anſwer his Demand, which tended to the ſame Purpoſe; nor can we imagine, why he ſhould be repreſented, as perceiving the Thoughts of their Hearts, had they already declared theſe Thoughts in plain Words.

The Apoſtles, as well as other *Jews*, had imbibed the Notion (which they never got quit of, until the Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt* inſtructed them better) that the *Meſſiah* when he came upon Earth, ſhould erect a temporal Kingdom; and (as the *Jews*

Jews in general expect) that they ſhould then be conſtituted Lords over all other Nations; ſo the Apoſtles (who believed their Maſter to be the *Meſſiah*) were naturally led to think, that they ſhould have the Preference before all other *Jews*; and that ſince the King *Meſſiah* (according to the Cuſtom of other Sovereigns) was to have ſome Officers of the higheſt Rank, they made no Queſtion but that ſome of them ſhould be made choice of, tho' they were not ſo well agreed, who were the fitteſt or moſt deſerving of theſe high Poſts of Honour. Some of them were our Lord's Relations, and others had Parts and Endowments extraordinary; of ſome he had given high Commendations, and others he had admitted to a Participation in his moſt ſecret Retirements. Theſe Things might poſſibly raiſe ſome Emulation among them: And therefore, as our Saviour's Dominion was not of this World, he plainly tells them, that all ſuch worldly Deſires and Expectations were inconſiſtent with the ſpiritual Kingdom which he was to erect, and wherein *he who deſired to be firſt, was to be laſt of all, and Servant of all.*

Q. *Pray who was the Child whom* Chriſt *ſet before his Diſciples as a Pattern of Meekneſs and Humility?*

A. Some of the Antients are of Opinion, that this Child was St. *Ignatius*, who was afterwards Biſhop of *Antioch*, and famous in the Chriſtian Church for his writing and dying in the Defence of the Truth. However this be, it is certain that a Child, who has no Concern for Dominion or Empire over others, who is free from all covetous Deſires of Wealth, and knows nothing of what a Poſt of Honour means, was, in this Caſe, a very proper Emblem of that Simplicity, Innocence and Humility, that our Lord requires in all his Diſciples.

Q. *Can you ſay what Kind of Offence that was, that deſerved ſo ſevere a Puniſhment as is mentioned,* Ver. 6.

A. The Words in the Caution are, *Whoſo ſhall offend one of theſe little Ones, which believe in me, it were better for him, that a Millſtone were hanged about his Neck, and that he were drown'd in the Sea.* To offend or ſcandalize, is to diſcourage Men in the Profeſſion and Practice of Religion, and by Indignities and Perſecutions, as well as by bad Examples, to occaſion their apoſtatizing from the Faith: For we can hardly imagine that ſo ſevere a Puniſhment, as is here threaten'd, ſhould be inflicted for a Crime of leſs Aggravation than it amounts to. *Grotius*, upon this Place, is of Opinion, that the *Millſtone about the Neck* alludes to a Cuſtom of drowning among the *Syrians.* But St. *Jerome* thinks, that this Manner of Execution was in uſe among the *Jews*; for, according to Dr. *Alix*, it was cuſtomary for them to caſt execrable Men into the *Dead-Sea*, with a Stone tied to them. 'Tis certain from *Diodorus Siculus*, and others, that among the *Greeks*, this was the antient Puniſhment for ſacrilegious Perſons; and from *Suetonius* we may learn, that for the Pride and Covetouſneſs, wherewith ſome in publick Offices had oppreſſed the Provinces where they lived, *Auguſtus* had them caſt into the River, with great Weights about their Necks.

Q. *Pray explain our Saviour's Diſcourſe about Offences, Ver.* 7, &c.?

A. From what he ſays upon this Subject, we may obſerve, that Scandals or offenſive Actions in the Church of *Chriſt*, will certainly happen amongſt thoſe who profeſs Religion, and the Name of *Chriſt*; that this Neceſſity ariſes partly from the Wickedneſs and Deceitfulneſs of Mens Hearts and Natures, God permitting thoſe to have their natural Effects; that ſcandalous and offenſive Actions from thoſe who confeſs the Name of *Chriſt*, are fatal ſtumbling-Blocks to wicked worldly Men; and that the Offence which wicked Men take at the Falls of the Profeſſors of Religion, to the hardening themſelves in their wicked Practices, is Matter of juſt Lamentation: *Woe unto the World becauſe of Offences.* Our Lord therefore exhorts us to cut off all Occaſions that may betray us into Sin; and to mortify our darling and beloved Luſts, tho' as dear to us as our Right Eye. If our Love and Affection to Sin be mortify'd, our bodily Members may be preſerved, for they will no longer be the Inſtruments of Sin, but of Holineſs.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in this Diſcourſe of our Saviour to his Diſciples?*

A. The next thing that occurs in our Saviour's Diſcourſe is, his cautionary Direction to the Men of the World, concerning his Members: *Take Heed that ye offend not one of my little Ones*; don't undervalue nor neglect, much leſs injure or afflict them; becauſe, adds he, their Angels being continually in the Preſence of God, are always ready to execute his Will, by revenging any Wrongs and Injuries done to his Friends and Children. Hence we learn, that the Office and Employment of the glorious Angels, is to be the immediate Attendants on the ſupreme Being and Sovereign of the World; and that ſuch is the Regard of God for the meaneſt of his Children, that he commits the Care of them to the holy Angels. St. *Jerome* obſerves, that great is the Dignity of theſe little Ones, ſince every one of them from his Birth hath an Angel delegated to preſerve him. But tho' others think that the Opinion of a tutelary Angel, or of one particular Angel, having the Cuſtody of one particular Saint, as his continual Charge, has not a ſufficient Foundation in the Scripture; yet all the Angels in Heaven are miniſtring Spirits to them; and tho' they do not always attend upon his Perſon (for they ſtand in the Preſence of God) yet it is to receive his Commands, either to help them in their Exigencies, or puniſh thoſe that injure them.

Our Saviour continues his Argument againſt giving Offence to his Children and Members; which he urges from the Ranſom he was to pay for their Redemption. To illuſtrate this, he compares himſelf to a good Shepherd, who regards every one of his Sheep; and if any go aſtray, he ſeeks it with Deſire, and recovers it with Joy.

With Regard to Treſpaſſes among Brethren, our Lord lays down an excellent Rule, which ſhews that Brotherly Reproof and Admonition is a Duty incumbent upon Church-Members; that it muſt be given privately and prudently, which failing, *Chriſt* has appointed Church-Officers, to execute Church-Cenſures on the Obſtinate and Irreclaimable; and that Perſons juſtly falling under the Cenſures of the Church, are to be look'd on as contumacious and ſtubborn Offenders, and the Members of the Church to avoid Society and Converſation with them. *Chriſt* adds, that he will ratify in Heaven whatever the Church aſſembled doth in his Name upon Earth; whether to the cenſuring the

Guilty, or the abſolving the Penitent; and promiſes, that whenever they meet together in his Name, to celebrate any ſacred Inſtitution of his, or execute any Church-Cenſures, he will be in the Midſt of them, to quicken their Prayers, to ratify their Sentence, and to accept their Endeavours.

Q. *What do you remark upon* Peter's *Queſtion, concerning the forgiving Offences, and* Chriſt's *Anſwer?*

A. St. *Peter* puts a Queſtion to our Saviour, *How often Chriſtians ſhould forgive Offences to their Brethren, profeſſing Repentance? Chriſt* anſwers, *That we are to multiply our Pardon as our Brother manifeſts Repentance.* Not that we are hereby obliged to take the frequent Offender into our Boſom, and to make him our Intimate; but to lay aſide all Malice, all Thoughts and Deſires of Revenge, and to be ready and willing to do him any Offices of Love or Friendſhip.

Q. *In the Parable of the King calling his Servants to Account, one of them ow'd him* 10,000 *Talents; how much did that amount to in Sterling Money?*

A. The ten Thouſand Talents mentioned in the Parable of the King's calling his Servants to Account, in our Money, amount to one Million eight Hundred and ſeventy-five Thouſand Pounds; whereas the Hundred Pence, that his Fellow-ſervant was indebted to him, was but about three Pounds two Shillings and Six-pence.

Q. *What Inſtruction does this Parable afford us?*

A. The doctrinal Obſervation, that properly reſults from the Puniſhment of the ungrateful Debtor, mentioned in the ſame Place, is this, That our Sins once forgiven, may, by a Forfeiture of that Pardon by our future Miſbehaviour, be again charged upon us; for God's Pardons in this Life are not abſolute, but conditional only: According to the Petition of the Lord's Prayer, they are anſwerable to our Dealings with others; and are likely to be no longer continued to us than we perform the Condition.

CHAP. XIX.

Jeſus, *coming into* Judea, *heals their Sick; explains the true Notion of Divorce, and ſhews when Marriage is neceſſary; receives and bleſſes little Children; ſhews the young Man how he may obtain eternal Life, and commands him to ſell his Goods and follow him; which he refuſes, and departs ſorrowful.* Chriſt *ſhews the Difficulty of a rich Man's entering into Heaven, and promiſes his Diſciples, who had forſook all, a large and glorious Reward in the other World.*

Q. IN *the firſt Verſe it is ſaid; Jeſus* departed from *Galilee,* and came into the Coaſt of *Judea; how was the whole Kingdom divided at that Time?*

A. The Kingdom of *Iſrael* was, at this Time, divided into three Provinces, namely, *Galilee, Samaria,* and *Judea.* In *Galilee,* were the Cities of *Nazareth, Chorazin, Bethſaida,* and *Capernaum;* here *Chriſt* dwelt, and ſpent a conſiderable Part of his Time, in preaching and working Miracles: But now he takes his Leave of *Galilee,* never to return again: Woe to that People, whoſe Unthankfulneſs for *Chriſt*'s Preſence and Miniſtry, cauſes him finally to forſake them. On leaving *Galilee,* he paſſes thro' *Samaria,* who refuſing to receive him, he comes into the Coaſts of *Judea,* where Multitudes of People flock'd after him; but not the great Ones, the Mighty, and Noble, were his Followers, but the Sick and Weak, the Deaf and Blind, the Diſeaſed and Diſtreſſed. None but ſuch as find their Need of *Chriſt,* will ſeek after, or come unto him.

Q. *The* Phariſees *here propound a Queſtion to our Saviour concerning Divorce: Pray what was the general Opinion of the* Jews *concerning this Matter?*

A. The *Jews,* at this Time, were divided in their Opinions, as to the Matter of their Divorces. Some of them, who followed the Sentiments of the School of *Shammah,* held, that the Wife was to be put away only for the Crime of Adultery, becauſe *Moſes* directs, that this might be done, in Caſe the Huſband *had found ſome Uncleanneſs in her,* Deut. xxiv. 1. But others, who adhered to the Notions of the School of *Hillel* (and they were by much the greater Number) maintained, on the contrary, that this was permitted to be done for any Cauſe whatever, becauſe, in the ſame Verſe, it is expreſſed, that, *if ſhe found not Grace* in her Huſband's Eyes, ſhe was divorceable. This was the Queſtion which the *Phrriſees* brought to our Saviour, thinking that he muſt have decided it, either againſt the Law of *Moſes,* or againſt the Determination of one of theſe two famous Schools, and, one Way or other, have become offenſive to the People; but our Saviour evaded all this, by reducing Matrimony to its original Inſtitution.

This is a Matter which the *Heathens* themſelves ſeemed not unacquainted with; and therefore it is ſaid in *Hierocles,* that *Nature prompts us to Marriage, in that ſhe hath made us ſo, that two ſhould live together, and have one common Work to beget Children;* and that Tale of *Plato,* in his *Convivium, That Man, at firſt, was made Male and Female, and that, though* Jupiter *cleft them aſunder, there was a natural Love towards one another, and an Inclination to heal haman Nature, by making one again of two,* ſeems to be only a Corruption of the Account in *Geneſis* of *Eve*'s being made out of *Adam*'s Rib.

The *Phariſees,* in their Reply to our Saviour, ſeem to intimate, that the Lawfulneſs of Divorces was founded upon a divine Command; *Why then did* Moſes *command to give her a Bill of Divorcement, and put her away?* But *Moſes* no-where commands, but only, in ſome Caſes, permits the doing of this; nor is the Deſign of the whole Precept to give any Encouragement to this Practice, but only to provide, that (in caſe Men will be ſo perverſe and hard-hearted, as to turn away their Wives upon every ſlight Occaſion) the Thing might be done in a proper and publick Manner, not by Word of Mouth, but by Bill of Divorcement, delivered in Form, that when the Woman is thus diſmiſſed, ſhe may not be quite ruined, but left at her Liberty to become another Man's Wife, *Deut.* xxiv. 2.

But here the Queſtion is, whether this Diſpenſation excuſed the common Divorces among the *Jews* (which our Saviour looks upon as an Infringement of the primitive Inſtitution of Marriage) from all Sin, eſpecially that of Adultery, in the Sight of God? 'Tis granted, indeed, that theſe Divorces were contrary to the Equity and genuine Intention of God's firſt Inſtitution of Marriage; but then it muſt be added, that God, by his Servant *Moſes*, had diſpenſed with his own Inſtitution; that under ſuch his Diſpenſation, there could be no Prohibition; and that, where there was no Prohibition, there could be no Tranſgreſſion; unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that God could forbid, and permit the ſame Thing at the ſame Time. Our Saviour, indeed, upon this Occaſion, preſcribes a new Law, which had not before obtained among the *Jews*; he retracts the Diſpenſation that *Moſes* had given; he reduces Mrrriage to its primitive Inſtitution; and, except in Caſes of Adultery, allows of no Divorces, but accounts them all null and invalid: However, under the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation it was not ſo. From the Permiſſion given to the Women, when they were thus divorced, to be married to others, it is evident that theſe Divorces quite diſſolved the Bond of Matrimony, otherwiſe we muſt ſay, that God gave theſe Women, when they married again, a Toleration to live in a State of Adultery, and ſo, at long-run, the whole Commonwealth of *Judea* muſt, by a divine Permiſſion, have been filled with Adulteries and ſpurious Offspring, which is incongruous to the Wiſdom and Purity of Almighty God to imagine.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Diſciples Reply to* Chriſt, *concerning Marriage?*

A. The Diſciples, who were not yet entirely diſengaged from Carnality, and the Practice of ſinful Cuſtoms, in which they had been brought up, raſhly reply, That if ſuch be the Caſe, it is not good to marry. But our Lord anſwers them to this Effect, You, my Diſciples, do not conſider what you ſay. All Men cannot abſtain from Marriage, without ſinning, but only thoſe to whom God has given the Gift of Continence, and Grace of Chaſtity. Some, indeed, by Nature, or natural Impotence, are unfit for Marriage. Others wickedly are made unfit by Caſtration, others by religious Mortification bring under their Bodies, that being freed from the Incumbrances that attend a Marriage-State, they may give themſelves up the better to a holy Life.

Q. *In the* 13*th Verſe, we read, that little Children were brought to* Chriſt; *but for what Purpoſe?*

A. Not to baptize, but to bleſs them. The Parents eſteeming *Chriſt* as a Prophet, bring their Infants to him, that they may receive the Benefit of his Bleſſing and Prayer. Hence obſerve, That Infants are Subjects, capable of Benefit by *Jeſus Chriſt*, capable of his Bleſſing on Earth, and Preſence in Heaven, and conſequently may be baptized. But, ſay ſome, *Chriſt* neither baptized them, nor commanded his Diſciples ſo to do. True; they were already entered into Covenant with God by Circumciſion, and *Chriſtian* Baptiſm was not yet inſtituted. *John's* was the Baptiſm of Repentance, of which Infants were incapable.

Q. *What is the next remarkable Action* Chriſt *is engaged in?*

A. Next we find *Chriſt* engaged with a Perſon, who wanted to know, what he muſt do to gain eternal Life. This Perſon was either a *Phariſee*, or the Diſciple of one who did not own *Chriſt* to be God, or come from God; but taught, that eternal Life was attainable, by fulfilling the Law in that imperfect Senſe, which the *Phariſees* have of it. And, accordingly, *Chriſt* reproves him for calling him Good; for there is none eſſentially and originally good, but God only; nor any derivatively good, but he that receives his Goodneſs from God only. From this Place, the *Socinians* Argue againſt the Divinity of *Chriſt*, thus: He to whom the Title of Good doth not belong, cannot be God moſt High. But by our Lord's Words, this Title belongs not to him, but only to God the Father; and therefore, God the Father muſt be God alone. To this 'tis anſwered, *Chriſt* may be ſuppoſed to ſpeak to this young Man thus: Thou giveſt me a Title which was never given to the moſt renowned Rabbins, and which agrees to God alone; now thou oughteſt to believe, that there is ſomething more in me than Humane, if thou conceiveſt that this Title of Good belongs to me. Again; our Saviour might convince him of the Errors of the *Phariſees*, who believed, that they might, without the Knowledge of him, the true *Meſſias*, inherit Heaven, by keeping the Law, according to their looſe Explanations of it; *Chriſt* therefore lets him underſtand, that if he expected Salvation by the Moral Law, he muſt keep it perfectly, which is impoſſible for Man in his lapſed Eſtate. The Duties our Saviour inſtances in, are thoſe of the ſecond Table, which Hypocrites moſt fail in; but the ſincere Practice of our Duty to our Neighbour, is a ſingular Evidence of our Love to God. Theſe Duties, the young Man ſaid, he had kept from his Youth; and, perhaps, might ſay it truly, according to the Interpretation of the *Phariſees*. But our Saviour, in his Reply, tells him, If thou wilt be a *Chriſtian*, thou muſt maintain a Readineſs and Diſpoſition to part with all thou haſt at my Call, and at my Command, and to follow after me, obey my Doctrine, and imitate my Example. This ſeemed a hard Condition to the young Man, and *he went away Sorrowful.* Unregenerate and carnal Men are ſadly concerned where they cannot have Heaven upon their own Terms. Hence our Saviour takes Occaſion to diſcourſe with his Diſciples concerning the Danger of Riches, and the Difficulty that attends rich Men in their Way to Salvation; which he farther explains by a proverbial Speech, uſed among the *Jews*, to ſignify a Thing of great Difficulty, next to an Impoſſibility.

The Diſciples, who were ſenſible, how ſtrongly the Heart of Man is ſet upon Riches, cry out, *Lord, who can be ſaved? Chriſt* removes their Wonder, by adding, that what may ſeem impoſſible with Man, was not ſo with God; that God can bring Men to Heaven by the mighty Power of his Grace, notwithſtanding any Obſtacles in the Way. *Peter* hereupon, in the Name of the reſt, tells *Chriſt*, *Behold we have forſaken all and followed thee.* What all? His tattered Fiſher-Boat and ragged Nets, ſcarce worth mentioning: Yet how is it magnified, and uſhered in with, *Behold, Lord, we have left all!* But how gracious is our Lord's Anſwer? You that have left all to follow me, ſhall be no Loſers by me; for in the Regeneration, that is, at the Reſurrection, when Believers ſhall be perfectly renewed, and ſhall enjoy my Kingdom, then as I ſit upon the Thone of my Glory, ſo ſhall you ſit with me in a higher Degree of Dignity and Honour, judging the Twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*; that is, the *Jews* firſt, for their Unbelief, and then all other Deſpiſers of Goſpel-Grace and Mercy;

and then all Believers in general ſhall be abundantly recompenſed for all their Suffering and Loſſes in this Life, for his Sake; and even in this Life the Gifts and Graces, the Comforts and Conſolations of the Holy Spirit, ſhall be an Hundredfold better Portion, than any Thing we can part with for the ſake of *Chriſt* and his Goſpel here.

Q. *Pray explain that Saying of our Saviour, Verſe* 24. It is eaſier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter the Kingdom of God?

A. There are three different Opinions among Interpreters concerning the Meaning of this proverbial Saying, of a Camel's going through the Eye of a Needle. Some imagine, that at *Jeruſalem* there was a Gate ſo very low and narrow, that a loaded Camel could not paſs throught it, and that, by Reaſon of its Littleneſs, it was called *the Needle's Eye*; but all this is mere Fiction, deviſed on purpoſe to ſolve the ſeeming Difficulty.

The *Jews*, indeed, to ſignify a Thing impoſſible, had a common Proverb among them, that an *Elephant cannot paſs through the Eye of a Needle*. Now our Saviour, ſay ſome, was pleaſed to change this Proverb from an Elephant (which was a Beaſt that few had ſeen) to a Camel, a Creature very common in *Syria*, and whoſe Bunch on his Back hindered him from paſſing through any ſtrait Entrance. But others, not able to diſcern any Analogy between a Camel and a Needle's Eye, think that the *Greek* Word here ſignifies a Cable or thick Rope, which Mariners uſe in caſting their Anchors; and that the rather, not only becauſe there is ſome Similitude between a Cable and a Thread, which is uſually drawn through the Eye of a Needle, but becauſe the *Jews* (as the learned *Buxtorf* acquaints us) have a Proverb of the like Import, relating to the Cable, as they have to the Elephants; for ſo they ſay, that *as difficult is the Paſſage of the Soul out of the Body, as that of a Cable through a narrow Hole.* Whether of theſe two Interpretations takes place, it is a Matter of pure Indifference: Only we may obſerve, that the Application of the Proverb to the rich Man's entring into the Kingdom of Heaven, muſt not be underſtood abſolutely, but only ſo, as to denote a Thing extreamly difficult, if not impoſſible, without an extraordinary Influence of the divine Grace.

Q. *But why were the Diſciples ſo aſtoniſhed at this Saying of* Chriſt?

A. *They were exceedingly amazed, ſaying, who then can be ſaved?* But why ſhould they ſtart this Queſtion, when there were apparently more Poor than Rich in the World? Theſe Poor, however, the Diſciples might think, were, by their Poverty, expoſed to as many and great Temptations, as the Rich were; and as the World, they ſuppoſed, was made up either of thoſe that were rich, or of thoſe that deſired to be ſo; from hence they collected the Difficulty for any to get to Heaven.

Q. *I deſire your Expoſition of the latter Part of the 28th Verſe,* When the Son of Man ſhall ſit on the Throne of his Glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of *Iſrael?*

A. Some Interpreters refer theſe Words to that Authority, both in Matters of Diſcipline and Doctrine, which the Apoſtles, after the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, were, by the Lord's Commiſſion and Appointment, to exerciſe in the *Chriſtian* Church; but moſt underſtand them of the Honours that are to be conferred upon them in a future State. And here ſome have taken great Pains to determine, what Judgment theſe Perſons ſhall paſs, as that they ſhall condemn the Errors of wicked Men by their Doctrines, and the Malice and Obſtinacy of Infidels, by their Perſecutions, *&c.* while others have undertaken to aſſign them their Parts in the Proceſs of the laſt great Day, and repreſent them as ſo many Aſſiſtants to the ſupreme Judge, ſitting upon the Examination and Trial of Mankind, while all the reſt ſtand at the Bar. But though we are all well aſſured, that ſuch a Judgment ſhall be, yet, as to the particular Circumſtances and Formalities of it, the Scripture ſeems to give us but a ſlender Inſight; and therefore, ſetting aſide all dark Conjectures about this Matter, the moſt ſafe and probable Way of applying this Paſſage is, to look upon it as ſpoken *after the Manner of Men*, to ſignify, in general, a brighter Crown, or more exquiſite Degrees of Happineſs and Glory. The Apoſtles accompanied and ſtuck cloſe to *Chriſt*, in his loweſt Eſtate: They kept the Faith, under the greateſt Preſſures and Temptations; they were indefatigably diligent, undauntedly conſtant in their Labours and Sufferings for the Truth, and moſt eminently ſerviceable in advancing the Kingdom of *Chriſt* upon Earth; and therefore they ſhall receive an eminent Diſtinction in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Q. *How do you underſtand the laſt Verſe,* Many that are firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt ſhall be firſt?

A. The *firſt* reſpects the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in general; The *ſecond*, all Profeſſors of *Chriſtianity* in particular. The *Jews* as neareſt to the Kingdom of Heaven, but for their Infidelity ſhall be laſt in it, that is, ſhall never come there. And the *Gentiles*, who are looked upon as Dogs, and fartheſt from Heaven, ſhall be firſt there, on their Converſion and Faith in me. As the Words reſpect all Profeſſors, the Senſe is, many that are firſt in their own Eſteem, and in the Opinion of others, at the Day of Judgment ſhall be laſt, and leaſt in mine and my Father's Account. And many that were little in their own, and leſs in the Eſteem of others, ſhall yet be firſt and higheſt in my Favour.

CHAP. XX.

Chriſt, *by the Similitude of Labourers, called at ſeveral Times into a Vineyard, proves that God is in Debt to no Man. Going with his Diſciples to* Jeruſalem, *foretels his Suffering and Reſurrection; rebukes the Wife of* Zebedee, *for her ambitious Requeſt and Ignorance; teaches his Diſciples Humility and Lowlineſs; reſtores Sight to two blind Men.*

Q. WHAT *Leſſons of Inſtruction does the Parable of the Houſholder ſending Labourers into his Vineyard, convey to us?*

A. The Parable of a certain Maſter of a Family ſending Labourers into his Vineyard, is, in a great Meaſure, taken from the *Jeruſalem Targum*; where we have an Account of a King's hiring Labourers and paying one, for a few Hours Work, the whole Days Hire, which occaſioned great

Murmuring among the reſt. It was our Saviour's Cuſtom, we may obſerve, to make frequent Uſe of *Jewiſh* Proverbs in his Diſcourſes; and ſome learned Men have taken Notice, that the Form of Prayer which he taught his Diſciples, is chiefly compiled from the *Jewiſh* Liturgies. Since therefore he was to teach the People in a parabolical Way, he thought it no Diſparagement to his Parts, to employ ſuch of their Parables, as were proper to his Purpoſe of illuſtrating the ſpiritual Matters of his Kingdom; as well knowing that theſe Parables, which were in common Uſe, and familiar to them; would be leſs offenſive, and better remembred by them, than thoſe of his own Invention.

Q. *In what Manner was this Parable to be applied?*

A. It has a twofold Senſe and Interpretation given of it, and both analogical. One of which relates to the Calling of the *Gentiles*. The *Jews* were the firſt People God had in the World, and were hired into the Vineyard early in the Morning; the *Gentiles* not till late in the Day, yet they, by the Favour and Bounty of God ſhall receive the ſame Reward of eternal Life, which was promiſed to the *Jews*, who bare the Heat and Burden of the Day, while the *Gentiles* ſtood idle. By the other analogical Senſe are ſignified all Perſons indefinitely, called by the Goſpel into the viſible Church; the laſt called ſhall have their Reward together with the firſt; accordingly this Parable imports the Freeneſs of divine Grace in the Diſtributions of thoſe Rewards which the Hand of Mercy confers upon God's Servants. The Vineyard is the Church, the Husbandman is God, the Labourers are particular Perſons. God's going at divers Times into his Vineyard, intimates the ſeveral Ages of Man's Life; ſome are called early in the Morning, ſome at Noon, others at Night. So when God ſhall diſpenſe his Rewards, thoſe who went firſt into the Vineyard, and did moſt Service, God will plentifully reward; and thoſe who came in later, but did faithful Service, ſhall be mercifully rewarded, as appears from the Sequel of the Parable. When the Evening of their Days is come, and their Work done, they are called to receive their Hire; in the Diſtribution of which, tho' God makes no Difference in his Servants Wages, for the Time of their Work, yet he will make a Difference for the Degrees of their Service. All ſhall have Equity, but ſhall not have equal Bounty. This Inequality of Rewards doth not make God an unjuſt Accepter of Perſons; he may give Grace and Glory in what Meaſure and Degree he pleaſes, without the leaſt Shadow of Unrighteouſneſs; and tho' we may have laboured longer than others, yet it becomes us to have a low Eſteem both of our Services and ſelves.

Q. *What do you remark upon* Chriſt*'s telling his Diſciples again of his approaching Sufferings?*

A. In the Courſe of his Goſpel, we find our Lord forewarning his Diſciples, no leſs than three Times, of his approaching Sufferings and Reſurrection. The firſt Intimation of this Kind, was in the Coaſts of *Cæſarea Philippi*; when, after St. *Peter's* Confeſſion of him to be *the* Chriſt, *the Son of the living God, he began to ſhew unto his Diſciples, how that he muſt ſuffer many Things*, &c. The next we meet with was immediately after his Transfiguration in the Mount; when, as he came down from thence, with the three Apoſtles who where the Companions of his Privacies, he reminded them of what he had told them before, *viz. That the Son of Man ſhould be delivered into the Hands of of Men.* The third Warning was that which he gave his Apoſtles apart, when he was going to *Jeruſalem* to ſuffer, or, as ſome think, when he was going to *Bethany*, in order to raiſe *Lazarus* from the Dead: And it is obſerved of theſe ſeveral Warnings, that they riſe by Degrees, and grow more full and diſtinct, in Proportion as the Things drew nearer. Thus, the *firſt* is delivered in general Terms: *The Son of Man muſt ſuffer many Things and be rejected, and ſlain, and raiſed the third Day.* The *ſecond* is enforced with this ſolemn Preface, *Let theſe Sayings ſink down in your Ears*; and the *third* deſcends to a more particular Deſcription of that tragical Scene, *He ſhall be delivered to the* Gentiles, *and mocked, and ſpitefully entreated, and ſpitted on; and they ſhall ſcourge him, and put him to Death, and the third Day he ſhall riſe again.* Now, whether we conſider the Danger the Apoſtles were in, of being oppreſſed with an Affliction, ſo ſenſible, as the Death of their Maſter; or the general Miſtake wherewith they were infected, concerning the Splendor and Pomp of the *Meſſiah's* Kingdom, or the Scandal that would neceſſarily ariſe from the Notion of a crucified Saviour, this Method of fore-warning his Diſciples of what was to come upon him, was highly requiſite, to ſuſtain them in their Tribulation, to rectify their Sentiments, and remove all Offence, as it ſhewed that his Death was voluntary, conſonant to the Predictions of the Prophets, agreeable to the Council and Appointment of God, and the Shame of his Crucifixion abundantly recompenſed by the Glories of his Reſurrection.

Q. *Was not the Petition of the Mother of* Zebedee*'s Children, very preſumptuous as well as ambitious?*

A. The Mother of *James* and *John* might be encouraged to aſk the firſt Places in his Kingdom, upon the Account of her near Relation to the *bleſſed Virgin*, her conſtant accompanying our Saviour, and diligent Attendance upon him; and might conceive thoſe Hopes of her Sons future Exaltation, from the pompous Name which our Lord had given them, and the great Privilege to which he had admitted them (but excluded others) of attending him in his Privacies.

Q. *What does our Saviour mean by the Symbol of the* Cup, *which he uſes, Verſe 22?*

A. It was antiently the Cuſtom, at great Entertainments, for the Governor of the Feaſt to appoint to each of his Gueſts the Kind and Proportion of Wine they were to drink, and what he had thus appointed them, it was thought a Breach of good Manners either to refuſe, or not drink up. Hence a *Man's Cup*, both in ſacred and profane Authors, came to ſignify the *Portion*, whether of good or Evil, which befals him in this World. Not unlike what we meet with in the *Pſalmiſt*, *In the Hand of the Lord there is a Cup, and the Wine is red; it is full mixed, and he poureth out of the ſame: As for the Dregs thereof, all the Ungodly of the Earth ſhall drink them out*, Pſal. lxxv. 8. And what our Saviour means by this Expreſſion, we cannot be to ſeek, ſince, in two remarkable Paſſages, *Luke* xxii. 42. and *John* xviii. 11. he has been his own Interpreter, for *Lethale poculum bibere*, or to *taſte* *of Death*, was a common Phraſe among the *Jews*, and from them we have Reaſon to believe that our Lord borrowed it.

Q. *In what Manner was* Chriſt's *Prediction concerning* James *and* John, *Verſe* 23. *fulfilled?*

A. The Prediction concerning the Fate of *James*, and *John*, was literally fulfilled in St. *James*, who was put to Death by *Herod*, and ſo, in the higheſt Senſe of the Words, was made to *drink of our Lord's Cup*, and, though St. *John* was not brought to ſuffer Martyrdom, yet his being ſcourged and impriſoned by the Council at *Jeruſalem*, put into a Chaldron of burning Oil at *Epheſus*, and baniſhed into *Patmos* for the Word of God, and for the Teſtimony of *Jeſus Chriſt*, may well be ſuppoſed to be ſome Part of that *bitter Cup*, which our Saviour drank; and that he, who underwent ſuch Torments, as nothing but a Miracle could deliver him from, may, with great Juſtice, be eſteemed a Martyr.

Q. *Pray explain the 25th Verſe?*

A. The Words in the Text are, *The Princes of the* Gentiles *exerciſe Dominion over them, and they that are great, exerciſe Authority upon them; but it ſhall not be ſo among you: But whoſoever will be great among you let him be your* MINISTER. And from hence ſome have inferred, that our Saviour forbids them, who will be his Diſciples, or the Subjects of his Kingdom, the Exerciſe of all civil and eccleſiaſtical Dominion. But if it be conſidered, that civil Government was, from the Beginning of the World, inſtituted by God (and therefore called *his Ordinance*, Rom. xiii. 2.) for the *Puniſhment of Evil-Doers*, and for the Defence of *thoſe that do well*; that *Chriſtianity*, when it came into the World, made no Alteration in Things of this Nature, but left the Magiſtrate, after his Converſion, ſtill bearing the Sword, in the ſame Manner as he did before; and that the Exerciſe of his Power is a Thing ſo ſacred, as to intitle, not only Princes, but even their deputed Miniſters of Juſtice, to the Stile of *Gods* in Scripture; it muſt be allowed, that what is reputed ſo honourable, and found ſo beneficial, ſo ſtrict a Bond of human Virtue, and ſo firm a Guard againſt all Kinds of Wickedneſs, can never be forbidden in any *Chriſtian* Commonwealth. And, in like Manner, ſince, among the Gifts diſtributed for the Uſe of the Church, we read of Governments, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. and find Mention made of *thoſe, who are ſet over us in the Lord*, 1 Theſſ. v. 12. to whom we muſt yield Obedience, and ſubmit ourſelves, *Heb.* xiii. 7, 17. ſince we find that the Apoſtles had *the Rod*, 1 *Cor.* iv. 21. and Power given of the Lord, to *deliver over to Satan*, 1 *Cor.* v. 5. and to *revenge all Unrighteouſneſs*, 2 *Cor.* x. 6. and ſince, in the Nature of the Thing, it is every whit as impoſſible for a Church to ſubſiſt without eccleſiaſtical Government, as it is for a State without civil, it muſt needs follow, that the one is as neceſſary, and of divine Inſtitution, as much as the other. All therefore that our Saviour can be preſumed to forbid in theſe Words, is, ſuch a Dominion, whether in Church or State, as is attended with Tyranny, Oppreſſion, and a Contempt of the Subjects that live under it. Such, for the moſt Part, was the Government that obtained in the *Eaſtern* Countries; and therefore, in Oppoſition to this, our ſpiritual Rulers are put in mind that they *feed the Flock which is among them, taking the Over-ſight thereof, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind, neither as being Lords of God's Inheritance, but Enſamples to the Flock*, 1 *Pet.* v. 2, 3. that their higheſt Station in the Curch is not ſo much a Place of Dignity, as a Charge and Office, which ſubjects them to the Wants and Neceſſities of thoſe they rule over; and that the moſt honourable Poſt they can have in his Kingdom, is only a larger Miniſtry, and Attendance upon others; for, *Who is* Paul? *Who is* Apollos? *but Miniſters by whom ye believed*, 1 Cor. iii. 4. *For we preach not ourſelves* (ſays the Apoſtles to the *Corinthians*) *but* Chriſt Jeſus *the Lord, and ourſelves your Servants for* Jeſus *ſake*, 2 Cor. iv. 5.

Q. *What other Inſtructions does our Saviour give his Diſciples on this Occaſion?*

A. As an Inticement to the Diſciples to practice Humility, our Lord propounds to them his own inſtructive Example, *I came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter* to the Wants and Neceſſities of others, both for Soul and Body. What a Sight is it, to ſee an humble Saviour and an haughty Sinner! Did *Chriſt* lay down his Life for us, and ſhall we not lay down a Luſt for him? He gave his Life a Ranſom, that is, he ſuffered in our ſtead, died in our Place, and gave his Life for ours; agreeable to the Opinion of both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that their particular Victims were Ranſoms for the Life of the Offender, and that he who gave his Life for another, ſuffered in his Stead, to preſerve him from Death. *He gave his Life a Ranſom for many.* It is elſewhere affirmed, that he taſted Death for every Man, even for them that denied the Lord who bought them. The Word, *many*, in other Places of Scripture, is not excluſive of ſome, but incluſive of all. Thus *Dan.* xii. 2. *Many that ſleep in the Duſt ſhall ariſe*; anſwers St. *John* v. 28, 29. *All that ſleep in the Grave ſhall hear his Voice.* Thus *Rom.* v. 15. *Through the Offence of one many died*; anſwers 1 *Cor.* xv. 22. *In* Adam *all died.* There is a virtual Sufficiency in the Death of *Chriſt* for the Salvation of all Mankind, an actual Efficacy for the Salvation of them that repent, believe and obey the Goſpel.

This Chapter concludes with a notable Miracle wrought by *Chriſt* on two blind Men, in the Sight of a great Multitude which followed him. In which obſerve the blind Mens Faith, in acknowledging *Jeſus* to be the true *Meſſias*, for this the Title of the Son of *David* ſignifies; and their Fervency in crying ſo earneſtly after *Chriſt* for Mercy and Healing, *Have Mercy upon us, thou Son of* David.

CHAP. XXI.

Chriſt *ſends two of his Diſciples for an Aſs, and rides thereon to* Jeruſalem. *The Multitude honour him. He drives the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple. Being hungry, curſes the fruitleſs Fig-Tree. He puts the* Phariſees *to ſilence. By anſwering the Parable of the two Sons, they condemn themſelves. The Parable of an Houſholder planting a Vineyard, and letting it out; his Application thereof to the Prieſts and Elders.*

Q. WHENCE *does* Bethphage *derive its Name?*

A. *Bethphage* ſignifies the *Houſe of Figs*, or *Dates*, and might, very probably, have its Name from the ſeveral Trees of theſe Kinds, that grew there. It was a ſmall Village of the Prieſts, ſituate in Mount *Olivet*, and, as it ſeems, ſomewhat nearer *Jeruſalem* than *Bethany*.

Q. *Where was ſituated the* Mount of Olives, *and why was it ſo called?*

A. Mount *Olivet*, doubtleſs, had its Name from the great Number of Olive-Trees, that grew upon it. It lay a little without *Jeruſalem*, on the *Eaſt* Side of it, about five Furlongs from the City, ſays *Joſephus*, but he muſt be underſtood of the very neareſt Part of it, ſince St. *Luke* makes the Diſtance to be a *Sabbath-day*'s Journey, *i. e.* eight Furlongs, or a Mile, unleſs we ſuppoſe that he means the Summit of the Hill, from which our Saviour then aſcended, *Acts* i. 12. Mr. *Maundrel* tells us, that he, and his Company, going out of *Jeruſalem*, at St. *Stephen*'s Gate, and croſſing the Valley of *Jehoſaphat*, began immediately to aſcend the Mountain; that, being got above two thirds of the Way up, they came to certain Grotto's, cut, with intricate Windings, and Caverns, under Ground, which were called the *Sepulchers of the Prophets*; that a little higher up were twelve arched Vaults, under Ground, ſtanding ſide by ſide, and built in Memory of the Apoſtles, who are ſaid to have compiled their Creed in this Place; that, ſixty Paces higher, they came to the Place where *Chriſt* is ſaid to have uttered his Prophecy concerning the final Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and, a little on the Right-hand, to another, where he is ſaid to have dictated, a ſecond Time, the *Lord's Prayer* to his Diſciples; that, ſomewhat higher, is the Cave of a Saint, called *Pelàgia*; a little above that a Pillar, denoting the Place where an Angel gave the bleſſed Virgin three Days Warning of her Death; and, at the Top of all, the Place of our bleſſed Lord's Aſcenſion.

Q. *Why did* Chriſt *order his Diſciples to bring the* Colt, *as well as the Aſs?*

A. It is well remarked by *Grotius*, that ſuch Animals as were never employed in the Service of Men, were wont to be choſen for ſacred Purpoſes, inſomuch that the very *Heathens* thought thoſe Things, and Sacrifices, moſt proper for the Service of their Gods, which had never been put to profane Uſes. Thus the *Philiſtines* returned the Ark, in a new Cart, drawn by Heifers, that had never before undergone the Yoke, 1 *Sam.* vi. 7. But the chief Deſign, that our Saviour might have, in the Orders which he gave his Diſciples, was, that, the Prophecy might, by this means, receive its full Completion: *Tell ye the Daughters of* Sion, *behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and ſitting upon an Aſs, and a Colt the Foal of an Aſs.* The former Part of the Verſe is taken from *Iſa.* lxii. 11. and the latter, from *Zach.* ix. 9. Both, by the *Jews*, are acknowledged to relate to the *Meſſiah*, and, with regard to the latter, *R. Joſeph* was wont to ſay, "May the *Meſſiah* come, and may I be "worthy to ſit under the Shadow of the Tail of his Aſs,"

Q. *It has been a Diſpute among learned Men, Whether our Lord rode upon the Aſs, or the Colt, or on both alternately: Pray give the Grounds of their ſeveral Opinions?*

A. Thoſe who contend for his riding on both, obſerve, from the Words of the Prophet *Zechariah*, Chap. ix. 9. that Mention is made of riding both *upon an Aſs, and a Colt, the Foal of an Aſs*; and from St. *Matthew*, Chap. xxi. 7. they obſerve farther, that the Diſciples having brought the *Aſs, and the Colt*, which our Saviour had ſent them for, *put on them their Cloaths, and ſet him thereon.* Since therefore the Relation of St. *Matthew* thus literally agrees with the Prophecy of *Zechariah*, and both expreſly aſſert, that our Saviour did actually ride upon the Aſs, as well as the Colt, they ſee no Reaſon, why theſe Texts ſhould not be taken in their moſt plain and obvious Meaning, and do thence infer, that, for the more exact fulfilling of the Prophecy, our Saviour did actually ride, Part of the Way upon the one, and the remaining Part upon the other. The Generality of Interpreters, however, are againſt this. They ſuppoſe, that as there was no Occaſion for our Saviour's riding upon both, in ſo ſhort a Journey; and, as the other three Evangeliſts only make mention of the Colt, there ſeems to be a Neceſſity for admitting of the Figure called *Enallage Numeri*, in this Place; and that, as when we read, that the *Ark reſted on the Mountains of* Ararat, we underſtand only upon *one of them*; ſo here, when St. *Matthew* tells us, that the Diſciples brought the *Aſs, and the Colt, and put their Cloaths on them*, that is, *upon one of them*, i. e. the Colt, as the Words of the Prophecy itſelf will bear: Nor was there any other Reaſon for bringing the Mother along with it, but that Foals will not uſually go without their Dams.

Q. *Is there not ſomething particularly remarkable in the Order which* Chriſt *gave his Diſciples, to fetch the Aſs and her Colt?*

A. Very remarkable is our Saviour's Preſcience, even as to the moſt minute Matters, in the Orders which he gives his Diſciples, *viz.* 1. You ſhall find a Colt; 2. On which no Man ever ſat; 3. Bound with his Mother; 4. In *Bivio*, or where two Ways meet; 5. As you enter into the Village; 6. The Owners of which will, at firſt, ſeem unwilling that you ſhould unbind him; 7. But when they hear I have need of him, they will let him go. And no leſs remarkable is the chearful Obedience of theſe Diſciples to a Command, which carnal Reaſoning might have ſtarted many Objections againſt, and which nothing leſs than a ſtedfaſt Perſuaſion, that he, who ſent the Meſſage, would be ſure to give Succeſs to it, could have prevailed upon them to execute, as they did, without any Demur, or Delay.

Q. *In the 9th Verſe we find the Multitude crying,* Hoſanna to the Son of David; *Was not this grounded on ſome antient Practice, or Cuſtom among the* Jews *on ſolemn Feſtivals?*

A. At the Feaſt of the Tabernacles, it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews*, not only to ſing *Hoſanna*'s with the greateſt Joy, but alſo to carry Palm-Branches in their Hands, *Lev.* xxiii. 40. and to deſire (as the *Jews* ſtill wiſh, at the Celebration of this Feaſt) that they may rejoice in this Manner, at the Coming of the *Meſſiah*. Nor was it only at this Feſtival, but upon any other Occaſion of ſolemn Rejoicing, that the *Jews* made uſe of this Ceremony: For ſo we find, that upon the Enemies evacuating the Tower of *Jeruſalem*, *Simon* and his Men, *entered into it, with Thankſgiving and Branches of Palm-Trees, and with Harps and Cymbals, and with Viols and Hymns, and Songs.* Nay, the very ſame Manner of expreſſing their Joy, prevailed among other Nations, as well as the *Jews*; for ſo *Heroditus* relates, that they, who went before *Xerxes*, as he paſſed over the *Helleſpont*, ſtrowed the Way with Myrtle-Branches: And, therefore, we need leſs wonder, that we find ſuch of the Company, as were, by our bleſſed Saviour's Miracles, convinced of his being their King, and the promiſed *Meſſiah*, teſtifying their Joy upon this his Inauguration into his Kingdom, in ſuch a Manner as they, as well as other Nations, upon ſuch joyful occaſions, were accuſtomed to.

It was a common Practice, among the People of the *Eaſt*, upon the Approach of their Kings and Princes, to ſpread their Veſtments upon the Ground, for them to tread or ride over. In conformity to this Cuſtom, we find the Captains, when they proclaimed *Jehu* King, putting their Garments under him; and *Plutarch* relates, that when *Cato* left his Soldiers to return to *Rome*, they ſpread their Cloaths in the Way, which was an Honour (as he obſerves) then done to few Emperors. But the *Jews* that accompanied our Saviour at this Time, looked upon him, as greater than any Emperor, as a Prince that was come to reſcue them from the *Roman* Yoke, and reduce all Nations under their Subjection; and therefore, in this Manner, they choſe to teſtify their Homage and Veneration of their univerſal Monarch, making now a publick Entry into his Capital of *Jeruſalem*.

Q. *What is the proper Signification of the Word* Hoſanna?

A. *Hoſanna*, or rather *Hoſa-na*, is an *Hebrew* Word, which ſignifies, *Save, I beſeech thee*, and was a common Acclamation, which the *Jews* uſed in their Feaſt of Tabernacles; not only in Remembrance of their paſt Deliverance from *Egypt*, but in hopes likewiſe of a future one, by the Coming of the *Meſſiah*. Now the Reaſon why the Acclamations, upon this Occaſion, ran rather in theſe Words, than in the common Form of *Long live the King*, or the like, was, becauſe in the Character which the Prophet gives of the *Meſſiah*, he is called a *Saviour*, or one bringing Salvation to them, *Zech.* ix. 9. And therefore, to ſhew the Excellency of this, above all other Kings, the People addreſs him in Words, taken from the *Pſalmiſt, Help us now, O Lord, ſend us now Proſperity*, Pſal. cxviii. 25. But, becauſe *Hoſanna* is likewiſe a Form of Bleſſing; and in the Inauguration of Princes, People are always pleaſed with the rightful Succeſſion; therefore they adjoin *Hoſanna to the Son of* David, *i. e.* the Lord proſper and heap Favours and Bleſſings upon him. Now, becauſe God promiſed the *Jewiſh* Nation a King, deſcended from that Royal Line, therefore they continue their good Wiſhes, *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord*; and becauſe again it is natural for Men, in ſuch Tranſports, to reiterate their joyful Acclamations, even as if they deſired to make them reach Heaven, as well as Earth, therefore it is added, *Hoſanna in the Higheſt*.

Q. *Has it not been objected to this Part of our Saviour's Hiſtory, that, conſidering the Solemnity of the Occaſion, his publick Entry into the Capital of his Kingdom, as the long expected King of the* Jews, *his Appearance was very inglorious, and unbecoming his high Character?*

A. To this it is anſwered, That at a former Paſſover, when the People, in Admiration of our Saviour's Miracles, would have paid him kingly Honours, he withdrew, and refuſed that unreaſonable Teſtimony of their Zeal, becauſe the accepting theſe Honours then, would have been liable to Miſrepreſentation, and might have obſtructed the Efficacy of his Preaching. But now, that the Courſe of his prophetick Office was finiſhed, and the Time of his leaving the World, and returning to his Father, ſo near at Hand, he thought it not amiſs to accept of their Readineſs to acknowledge and proclaim his Royal Dignity, and himſelf to go up to *Jeruſalem*, in a more publick Manner than uſual, that thereby he might exaſperate his Bloodthirſty Enemies, and ſo draw on his intended Paſſion.

To exaſperate his Enemies, indeed, a more pompous Appearance might have been more conducive, and more agreeable to his Regal Dignity: But in this our Saviour was not left to his own Option; ſince the Prophet ſo long before, had preſcribed the Form of his Entry into *Jeruſalem*, as a Characteriſtick of his being the true *Meſſiah*, there could be no deviating from it, even though he could have procured his numerous Guards, and triumphal Chariots, ſplendid Attendants, and other Enſigns of Royalty, to adorn the Day of his Inauguration. *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of* Zion, *ſhout, O Daughter of* Jeruſalem, *behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is juſt, and having Salvation, lowly, and riding upon an Aſs, and upon a Colt, the Foal of an Aſs.* This is the Prophecy, whereby our Saviour was directed, at this Time, in his Approach to *Jeruſalem*; and, to juſtify his Conduct in this Particular, it may not be amiſs to enquire a little into the true Reaſon of it.

To this Purpoſe we may obſerve (with a learned Prelate of our own) that the Law which God gave to the Kings of *Iſrael* (whenever there ſhould be any) *not to multiply Horſes to themſelves*, was founded upon a ſpecial Promiſe, that he would continue to be (as he had all along been) their Defence againſt their Enemies, that this was a Law, wherein every Prince, that was to ſucceed to the Government of *Iſrael*, was concerned, and deſigned for a ſtanding Trial, both of Prince and People, whether they had Truſt and Confidence in God; that while this Law was obſerved, the Troops of *Iſrael* were Victorious, and though few in Number, and ſeemingly unfit for Action, proved an Over-match for Royal Armies; that when it came to be laid aſide, and Kings, as they declined in their Confidence towards God, began to *multiply their Horſes and Chariots* of War, they ſoon ſunk in their military Succeſſes, till at length the whole Land was carried away Captive: And therefore, *Woe unto them*, ſays the Prophet, *that ſtay on Horſes, and truſt in Chariots, becauſe they are many, and in Horſemen, becauſe they are ſtrong, but look not unto the* Holy one of Iſrael, *neither ſeek the* Lord.

Now, to apply this to the Prophecy before us. Since the Kings of *Iſrael* were obliged to renounce the Aſſiſtance of Horſes and Horſemen, and to depend on God for Succeſs in the Day of Battle; and ſince thoſe, who did ſo, were their Nation's Deliverers, and thoſe that did otherwiſe, were Deſtroyers of it; under which of theſe Capacities, think we, ſhould the King, whom God promiſed to the Daughter of *Jeruſalem*, come? Should he appear (as ſome of the late Kings of *Iſrael* had) in all the Pomp and Pride of War, ſurrounded with Horſes and Chariots, in direct Oppoſition to the Law of God? Or ſhould he appear, like ſome of the antient *Worthies, who by Faith ſubdued Kingdoms, and out of Weakneſs were made ſtrong*: Kings who feared God, and therefore feared no Enemy; and who, though mounted on Aſſes, were able to put to flight the Thouſands and ten Thouſands of Chariots and Horſes that came againſt them. To reſolve us in this Enquiry, the Prophet himſelf comes in to our Aid, for, immediately after his Deſcription of the promiſed King, he adds, *and I will cut off the Chariot from* Ephraim, *and the Horſe from* Jeruſalem, plainly ſhewing that the Character given of the *Meſſiah*, viz. *that he ſhould ride on an Aſs*, was in Oppoſition to the Pride of their warlike Kings, who by their Strength in Chariots and Horſes, had ruined themſelves and their People.

Thus neceſſary it was for the promiſed *Meſſiah*, and for our Saviour conſequently, who came in that Character to approach the *Daughter of* Zion, riding on an Aſs, even though it were a Creature more deſpicable than we imagine it. But after all, it is mere Prejudice, and too fond an Attachment to the Manners and Cuſtoms of our Country, that makes us conceive any Thing contemptible in an Aſs; or any Thing ridiculous or inconſiſtent with the Gravity and Dignity of our bleſſed Saviour, in riding upon one. For if we look into other Countries, particularly into *Judea*, we ſhall find Perſons, of the higheſt Diſtinction, uſually ſo mounted. We ſhall find the chief Governors of *Iſrael*, deſcribed in the *Song of* Deborah, *as riding on white Aſſes*; the thirty Sons of *Jair*, who was Judge and Prince of the Country, for two and twenty Years, riding upon as many Aſſes, and commanding in thirty Cities. Nay, we ſhall find *Abſalom* (though in other Reſpects a Man of Pomp,) on the very Day of Battle, mounted on a Mule, the Colt of an Aſs; and, on his Coronation-Day, *Solomon* was provided with no better Equipage: And therefore we can never Account it any Reproach, for the meek and humble *Jeſus*, to ride into *Jeruſalem* on the Foal of an Aſs, when *David*, the greateſt of his Anceſtors, and *Solomon* the wiſeſt (as long as he was wiſe) rode in the ſame Manner.

The Perſons, who attended him in this Proceſſion, were a mixed Multitude, conſiſting of Diſciples and common People, ſuch as were moved to do thus, from the Doctrines and Miracles which they had heard and ſeen, and were forward to pay him what Honour they could. They had no Quality, or outward Splendor, nor indeed, no Titles, or eminent Poſts to recommend them; but they were very remarkable for their Sincerity and honeſt Zeal, their hearty Affection to *Chriſt*; and firm Perſuaſion of his being the true *Meſſiah*; and theſe, to him, who is no Reſpector of Perſons, and who came not to ſet up a *Kingdom, of this World*, rendered thoſe Tributes of Praiſe and Acknowledgment, though from Men mean and inſignificant, as to any temporal Reſpects, more acceptable, more becoming his Character, and more truly for his Honour, than any diſſembled or intereſted Homage of Rulers or Rabbins, the greateſt or wiſeſt of the *Sanhedrim*, could have been; for external Advantages are of no Conſideration with God, while they want good Diſpoſitions within to recommend them.

Whether this was the ſame Multitude, or another ſpirited up, that clamoured ſo loudly againſt our bleſſed Saviour, but five Days after theſe joyful Exclamations, tis much to be queſtioned; but, ſuppoſing it was, whoever conſiders the ſubtle Management of Men in Poſt and Power, and the Eaſineſs and ſervile Fears, uſual in thoſe of a mean depending Condition, will not be much ſurprized at ſuch a ſudden Change; but from hence he may ſatisfy himſelf, what very Reeds the Affections of the People are; and how apt they are to bend with every Wind of Faction and Intereſt, and malicious Inſinuation, even when moſt Zealous, and ſeemingly moſt Sincere.

Q. *Who were theſe Money-changers, and why did they exerciſe their Trade in the Temple?*

A. The Money-changers, whoſe Tables our Saviour overthrew, were not unlike our Merchants, or Bankers, who deal in Bills of Exchange, and either remit Money to foreign Places, or anſwer ſuch Draughts, as, by their Correſpondents Abroad, are made upon them: And conſidering that the *Jews* (how far ſoever they lived from it) were obliged to repair to *Jeruſalem*, there to offer their Sacrifices, and pay their half Shekel, for the Uſe of the Temple, *Exod.* xxx. 13. The Inſtitution of ſuch Dealers in Money was highly neceſſary, that the *Jews*, in their ſeveral Diſperſions, who were to come up to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, paying their Money to Merchants at home, might have it, to anſwer their Occaſions, ſafe from Thieves, and from the Trouble of Carriage, when they arrived at *Jeruſalem*. Whether therefore the Buſineſs of theſe Money-changers was only to return Money from diſtant Parts, or to change foreign Money into current Coin, or larger Money into leſs Pieces; or perhaps to do all this, there was certainly nothing blame-worthy in the Profeſſion, had it not been for ſome intervening Abuſe. In like Manner, it may be ſaid of thoſe, who bought or ſold Cattle for Sacrifices; ſince it would have been highly inconvenient for every Worſhipper, who lived at a conſiderable Diſtance, to bring them up with him; ſuch Men were neceſſary in their Way, as were likewiſe the Sellers of Doves, becauſe every *Iſraelite* did not keep this Kind of Birds, and yet no one Creature was ſo often required in Sacrifice, as they. Our Saviour therefore, in this Tranſaction, muſt not be thought to blame all ſuch Traffick in general, but only to find Fault with the People, for having taken up an improper Place for the Exerciſe of their reſpective Callings: And therefore, to let them know, that it was not out of Paſſion, or any peeviſh Reſentment againſt them, but purely in Obedience to a divine Command, that he made this Reformation; he told them, that it was written, *My Houſe ſhall be called an Houſe of Prayer.* This is the Character which the Prophet *Iſaiah* gives of it, Chap. lvi, 7. and if it be an Houſe appointed for Prayer, and other religious Offices, then it is no proper Place for *the Tables of Money-changers, and the Seats of thoſe that ſell Doves*, who have the Markets of *Jeruſalem*, and their own Shops and Houſes to trade in.

Q. *In what Senſe does* Chriſt *ſay, that the Houſe of God was become* a Den of Thieves?

A. The Expreſſion, *a Den of Thieves*, is thought by ſome to be an Alluſion to thoſe Gangs of Robbers, which, at this Time, infeſted *Judea*, and uſed to hide themſelves in Holes, and Dens of the Mountains, as appears from the Hiſtory of *Joſephus*, in ſeveral Places: But our Lord here plainly refers to that Paſſage in *Jeremiah*, where the Prophet introduces God complaining, *Is this Houſe, which is called by my Name, become a Den of Robbers in your Eyes? Behold, even I have ſeen it, ſaith the Lord,* Chap. vii. 11. But how could the Houſe of God become a Den of Robbers? How could ſuch Violence be committed in ſo ſacred a Place? St. *Jerom*, in his Commentary upon *Matthew* xxi. 12, 13. aſcribes all this to the Avarice of the Prieſts, and gives us a lively Deſcription of the ſeveral Artifices, whereby they endeavoured to enrich themſelves. “In the Temple of *Jeruſalem*, ſays he, the fineſt, and moſt ſpacious in the whole World, whither *Jews* aſſembled almoſt from all Countries, Sacrifices of different Kinds, ſome from the Rich, and others from the poorer Sort, were preſcribed by the Law; but, becauſe thoſe, who came from afar, often wanted ſuch Sacrifices, the Prieſts took the Advantage to buy up all thoſe Beaſts, which were appointed for this Purpoſe; and, having ſold them to thoſe that wanted, received them at their Hands back again. Becauſe ſome, who came to worſhip, were ſo very poor, that they had not Money enough to purchaſe ſo much as the leſſer Sacrifices, which were Birds, to remedy this Inconveniency, the Prieſts ſet up Bankers, in one of the Courts of the Temple, to lend them Money upon Security: But, finding they could not do this, without tranſgreſſing the Law, which forbids Uſury, they had recourſe to another Device, which was to appoint a kind of Pawn-brokers, inſtead of Bankers, *i. e.* Men, who, for the Advance of a ſmall Sum, took Fruits, Herbs, and other Conſumables, inſtead of Uſe-money. Our Lord therefore having obſerved this Way of Traffick, which the Prieſts had ſet up in his Father's Houſe, not only expelled their Agents, but arraigned them likewiſe for a Pack of Thieves, *for he is a Robber*, ſays the Father, *who makes Lucre of Religion, and whoſe Worſhip is not ſo much the Veneration he has for God, as the Opportunity of making his own Intereſt and Advantage*.”

Q. *Pray explain that Expreſſion Verſe* 16. Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings thou haſt perfected Praiſe?

A. Theſe Words are cited from *Pſalm* viii. 2. and ſeem to vary a little from the Original, which is thus rendered, *Out of the Mouth of the very Babes and Sucklings thou haſt ordained Strength.* But, when it is conſidered, that the only *Strength*, which can proceed from the Mouth of Children, muſt be *Praiſe*, or Words put into their Mouths, to celebrate the Praiſes of the *Meſſiah*, the Phraſe in the *Pſalmiſt*, and in the *Evangeliſt*, muſt needs mean the ſame Thing; and our Saviour, in the Application of it to the chief Prieſts and Scribes, ſeems to inſinuate, “That theſe Acclamations of the Children were not fortuitous, but by a divine Inſtinct, and for the fulfilling of an antient Prophecy; and that therefore, their declaring him to be the *Meſſiah*, or the Son of *David*, ſhould be looked upon as a kind of Call from Heaven, to inform and inſtruct them in what they were to do.”

Q. *How do you interpret the Parable of the* Man and his two Sons?

A. By the *Man* is ſignified *God*, and by his *two Sons*, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The *Jews* are the ſecond Son; they promiſed to God a perfect Obedience, and yet did nothing: The *Gentiles* are the other Son, who, at firſt, refuſed to obey, and gave themſelves up to Idolatry, and all manner of Wickedneſs, but, upon the Preaching of the Goſpel, repented; and, after their Converſion, applied themſelves in earneſt to do the Will of God. The Parable, according to our Lord's own Interpretation of it, *Matthew* xxi. 32. is applicable likewiſe to two Kinds of *Jews*, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who pretended to ſo much Religion, and ſuch mighty Zeal for the Performance of the Law, when, in Reality, they obſerved none of its weightier Precepts; and the *Publicans* and *Sinners*, who, though at firſt they lived in Practices quite abhorrent to the Precepts of Religion, yet, upon the Preaching of *John the Baptiſt*, were ſeveral of them converted, and attending to the Doctrine of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, in proceſs of Time, became obedient to their heavenly Father's Will, *ver.* 31.

Q. *The Parable of the* wicked Husbandmen *requires likewiſe ſome Explanation?*

A. For the Explication of the Parable of the *wicked Husbandmen*, we muſt obſerve, That the Houſe-holder here, in *Verſe* 33. is Almighty God, and the Vineyard is the *Jewiſh* People, conſidered in their ſpiritual Capacity; that his planting and hedging it about, ſignifies his peculiar Favour and Providence, in communicating to them his Will, and, by Laws and Ordinances peculiar to themſelves, diſtinguiſhing them from all other Nations, to be his own People; that the *Wine-preſs* and *Tower*, and other ſuitable Conveniencies, denote the *Temple* and *Altar*, which he built among them, together with all thoſe Advantages and Opportunities of ſerving him acceptably, which he afforded them; that the *Husbandmen*, to whom this Vineyard was let out, were the *Prieſts* and *Levites*, the *Doctors* and *Rulers* of that Church and People; who are here repreſenteded as wanting in their Duty, and negligent in cultivating the Vineyard, or inſtructing the People committed to their Charge; that the Fruits are no other than Returns of Duty, proportioned to the Advantages of knowing and performing it; that the Servants ſent to demand the Fruits, were the Prophets, whom God, from Time to Time, commiſſioned to reprove, exhort, and quicken to their Duty, both Prieſts and People, by Denunciations of Vengeance, and Promiſes of Reward; that the *Son*, whom he ſent at laſt, was our bleſſed Saviour, whom the *Jewiſh* Prieſts and Rulers treated in no better Manner, than they had done the Prophets of old; but, inſtead of reverencing him as the Son of God, and as he proved himſelf to be by divers Manifeſtations of divine Power, put him to a cruel and ignominious Death; and therefore well might the Lord of the Vineyard *deſtroy theſe wicked Men*, &c. as we find from the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian, *Joſephus*, as well as other Writers, that God, for their great Impiety, brought the *Roman* Armies upon that Nation, and, by them, burnt their City and Temple, deſtroyed and diſperſed the People, and carried his Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, *to other Husbandmen, who ſhoul drender him the Fruits in their Seaſon*, ver. 41.

CHAP. XXII.

The Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son; the Jews *invited, and refuſe to come. The* Gentiles *called.*

called. The Sentence on him that had not the wedding Garment. Tribute ought to be paid to Cæſar; *he encounters and refutes the* Sadduces *concerning the Reſurrection, anſwers a Lawyer, and confounds the* Phariſees *about* Chriſt.

Q. PRAY *interpret the Parable of the* Marriage of the King's Son?

A. The *King*, in the Parable of the *Marriage Feaſt*, repreſents God the Father; the *Son*, the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* (who is frequently deſcribed as the Spouſe of his Church) and the *Marriage-Feaſt*, the Diſpenſation of the *Goſpel*. The *Gueſts*, that were firſt invited to the Feaſt, were the *Jews*; the *Servants* ſent forth to call them, were the *Prophets*, *John the Baptiſt*, and the *Apoſtles*; upon their Refuſal, the other *Gueſts*, brought in to ſupply their Room, were the *Gentiles*; and the Perſon who wanted the *Wedding-Garment*, is an Emblem of all thoſe, who profeſs and receive, but do not live up to, the Principles of *Chriſt*'s Religion.

Q. *Who are the* Herodians, *whom the* Phariſees *ſent to intangle* Chriſt *with intricate Queſtions?*

A. The *Herodians* are commonly, and moſt probably, ſuppoſed to ſignify the Partiſans, and Favourers of *Herod*; but what their Principle was, as to the Matter now in Hand, is not ſo generally agreed. Some think them Enemies to the *Roman* Government, and that they only watched a favourable Opportunity to make *Herod's* Family abſolute. Others think them intirely in the Intereſt of the Emperor, as *Herod* himſelf then was; for having, by his Indulgence, been advanced to the Regal State, he acted for, and under him, in collecting the Cuſtoms and publick Dues. This Opinion ſeems the more probable, becauſe it is more agreeable to the *Phariſees* preſent Deſign: For, had they ſent Perſons all of one Sentiment, *Chriſt* might have eaſily ſatisfied them all; but now, by ſending Men of different Judgments, they made it impoſſible for him to content both Parties; ſince, in determining for the Payment of the Tribute, he muſt have given Offence to the *Phariſees*; and, in Effect, renounced thoſe Liberties and Privileges, which ſome of the *Jewiſh* Doctors inſiſted upon; and, in pronouncing againſt it, he was ſure to incur the *Herodians* Diſpleaſure, and make himſelf obnoxious to the Juriſdiction of the Civil Sword. The *Herodians*, therefore, may well be preſumed to have been Perſons of a Principle different from the *Phariſees*, whoſe Addreſs and Cunning, upon this Occaſion, ſeems to have lain chiefly in the Management of the Meſſengers.

Q. *Give a true State of the Queſtion, which they put to our Saviour on this Occaſion?*

A. The State of the Queſtion, *Whether it was lawful for them to pay Tribute to* Cæſar, *or not*, truly taken, ſeems to be this, ——— The Government of the *Jews* had fallen into the Hands of the *Maccabees*, and, in Succeſſion, to one of them, named *Alexander*. He had two Sons, *Hyrcanus*, and *Ariſtobulus*, the youngeſt of which made War upon the Elder, and aſſumed unto himſelf the Government. *Hyrcanus*, and his Party, being not able to reſiſt him, called in the Aſſiſtance of the *Romans*. *Pompey*, at their Requeſt, beſieged *Jeruſalem*, and had the Gates ſurrendered to him by a Faction within, that favoured *Hyrcanus*; but *Ariſtobulus* and his Adherents fought it out, till at laſt they were vanquiſhed and overpowered. The *Romans* put *Hyrcanus* in Poſſeſſion of the Government; but, at the ſame Time, obliged him to hold it by their Favour and Permiſſion; which laid the Foundation of great and laſting Diſſenſions among the *Jews*; ſome ſubmitting to the *Roman* Power, as thinking they had a fair Title both by Conqueſt and Surrender; while others objected, that the Surrender was made by a Party only, and not the whole Body of the People; that it was not Conqueſt, but Treachery, which brought *Jeruſalem* to their Mercy; and, conſequently, that they were Uſurpers, and *Hyrcanus* and his Followers, Betrayers of their Country. That which contributed not a little to make this Controverſy ſtill greater, was, what *Joſephus* and *Euſebius* relate concerning *Judas* the *Gaulonite*. He, about the Time of the Taxation, in which (as St. *Luke* ſays) our Saviour was born, diſquieted the Minds of many, and repreſented the Decree of *Auguſtus* for that Purpoſe, as a Mark of Infamy and Servitude not to be born. This Man is ſaid to have inſtituted a particular Sect, one of whoſe Tenets was,—That no *Jew* ought to pay Tribute, or to acknowledge any Sovereign Lord, but God only; and that they were his peculiar People, and therefore bound to maintain their Liberty, eſpecially againſt profane and uncircumciſed Pretenders, ſuch as the *Roman* Emperors were. So that, the paying of Tribute to *Cæſar*, was not, at this Time, a Queſtion of meer Curioſity, but a Matter of Moment, with regard to Practice; nor was it a Point of Bravery only, in the Eſteem of the *Phariſees*, and others of that Party, but a Scruple of Conſcience, and a Debate of Religion, whether this Tribute ſhould be paid or not.

Every one knows that the *Roman* Emperors were wont to diſperſe their Money through all the Provinces belonging to their Juriſdiction; that this Money was ſtamped with the Image, or Buſt of the Emperor, on one Side; and on the Reverſe, with ſome Figure or other, repreſenting *Victory*, *Plenty*, *Peace*, or the like; and that this Tribute, or Capitation-Tax, (which, according to *Ulpian*, the Males from fourteen, and the Females from twelve Years old, were obliged to pay) was uſually collected in this Money, and no other, as the only current Coin at *Rome*.

Some Interpreters are of Opinion, that our Saviour's Words do not determine *Cæſar*'s Right to demand Tribute; but, ſince the *Jews* had now ſubmitted to the *Roman* Government (as they had formerly done to the *Aſſyrian*) which national Submiſſion, with Promiſe of Fidelity, having now obtain'd about an hundred Years, was a juſt Ground for *Cæſar*'s Right; ſince, beſides this, *Cæſar* had indulged them in the Exerciſe of their Religion, and the Enjoyment of their civil Rights; had fought their Battles, and protected them againſt the common Enemy, the *Arabians* and *Parthians*, and the like; ſince, more eſpecially, it was a received Maxim among the *Jews*, that wherever the Money of any Perſon was own'd, as the current Coin of the Kingdom, there the Inhabitants acknowledged that Perſon to be their Lord and Governor; and ſince the *Jews* accepted, and traffick'd with *Cæſar*'s Money, and held it current in all their Payments; our Saviour's Anſwer, *Render therefore to* Cæſar, which is founded upon their own Principles, muſt needs be deem'd a poſitive Declaration of *Cæſar*'s Right to receive Tribute, and ſuch other Acknowledgments,

ledgments, as belonged to the State and Dignity of the Poſt, wherein Providence had placed him. It might indeed be objected, ſays *Grotius*, on *Matth.* xxii. 20. that the *Romans* ruled over the *Jews*, and *Cæſar* over the *Romans*, in Fact only, and without any Right to do ſo; but *Chriſt* ſhews, that this Objection ſignifies nothing to the Matter in hand: For, ſince Peace cannot be ſecured without Forces, nor Forces had without Pay, nor Pay without Taxes or Tribute; it follows, that Tribute ought to be paid to the Perſon actually governing (ſo long as he continues to govern) in Conſideration of the common Safety and Protection, which are ſecured by the preſent Poſſeſſor of the Government, whoever that Poſſeſſor be.

Q. *What is obſervable in the Diſcourſe that paſs'd betwixt our Saviour and the* Sadduces, *about the Reſurrection?*

A. The Diſcourſe of the *Sadduces* was founded upon this Miſtake,——That, if there ſhould be a *Reſurrection of Bodies*, there would neceſſarily follow a Revival of the ſame Relations likewiſe, and that the State of the World to come would be like the State of this preſent World, in which, for the Propagation and Continuance of Mankind, Men and Women marry, and are given in Marriage; which groſs Notion of theirs our Saviour endeavours to rectify.

The Words, which our Saviour produces in Proof of the Reſurrection, are thoſe which God uſes to *Moſes*, *I am the God of thy Father, the God of* Abraham, *the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob, *Exod.* iii. 6. and the Argument which is implied in them in this, That, ſince to *be the God of any one* is a fœderal Expreſſion, which denotes God to be a kind Benefactor, who either doth, or will do good to ſuch Perſons as are in his Favour, and under his Protection; ſince *God is not the God of the Dead*, and can have no Regard or Confideration for ſuch, as are mere *Non-Entities*, or ſo dead, as never to return to Life again; and ſince, in his Life, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, received no ſuch ſignal Kindneſſes from the Almighty, as anſwer the emphatical Expreſſion of his being *their God*, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that God, in declaring himſelf to be *their God*, did ſolemnly engage himſelf to make them happy after this Life, according to what the Author to the *Hebrew* obſerves, *Wherefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God, in that he hath prepared for them a City*, Heb. xi. 16. This Way of arguing was of great Force againſt the *Sadduces*, who denied the Immortality of the Soul, as well as the Reſurrection of the Body; and at the ſame Time it fully proves the Reſurrection of the Body: For, ſince the Souls of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, were not the entire Perſons of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, which conſiſted of Bodies as well as Souls, it would from hence follow, that God could truly be their God, *i. e.* their Rewarder and bounteous Benefactor, no other Way than by a Reſurrection of their Bodies, to be re-united to their proper Souls.

Q. *Why is the Perſon, who put a Queſtion to our Saviour, Verſe* 35. *called a* Lawyer; *and what is the Import of his Queſtion?*

A. The Perſon, here called a *Laywer*, is, by St. *Luke* called a *Scribe*, and by St. *John* ſtiled a *Doctor*; but in this Diverſity of Words there is no Difference of Senſe: For the *Scribes* were of two Sorts, or had at leaſt two Offices; the one was, *to ſit in the Chair of* Moſes, Ver. 2. *i. e.* to read and interpret the Law of *Moſes* to the People; the other to expound to them the Traditions which they pretended to have received from *Ezra*, (about 500 Years before *Chriſt*) who is ſo frequently ſtiled, *A Scribe of the Law of the Lord, who read in the Book of the Law, and expounded it*, Ezra vii. 12. *Neh.* xii. 36. and viii. 2, *&c.* And, becauſe the Traditions which they taught, and obliged the People to obſerve, were called *Laws*, they thence had the Appellations of *Lawyers*: And, as ſome of the *Scribes* were the Perſons appointed to copy out the Bible for ſuch as had Occaſion for it, and to take Care of the Preſervation of the Purity of the Text; ſo others employed themſelves in taking the like Pains about the Traditions of the Elders, and from thence, very likely (though they were all of the ſame Order of Men) they might have different Denominations.

The Queſtion that this *Jewiſh* Doctor put to our Saviour, *viz. Which was to be accounted the greateſt Commandment of all?* was no frivolous or impertinent one, but what, at this Time, divided the greateſt Part of the learned Men among the *Jews*; ſome giving the Preference to the Obſervation of the *Sabbath*, others to the Ordinance of *Circumciſion*, and others to the Precept of *Sacrifices*; never conſidering the great Command recorded in *Deut.* vi. 5. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might*, or that other recorded in *Levit.* xix. 18. *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf*, until our Saviour reminded them of them.

Q. *Who is to be eſteemed our* Neighbour, *whom a Man is to love as himſelf?*

A. That by our Neighbour here we are to underſtand every other Perſon, who is capable of Kindneſs from us, or ſtands in need of our Help, is evident from our Saviour's Determination in the Caſe of the *Jew* and the good *Samaritan*, and from the Example we are called upon to imitate in this Affection, *viz.* the Love of God and our bleſſed Saviour; and from theſe evangelical Precepts, which extend this Duty to all Men: But by the *loving our Neighbours as ourſelves*, it is not required, either that we ſhould Love him from the ſame inward Principles which excite our Affection to ourſelves, or that we ſhould love him to the ſame Degree and Proportion that we love ourſelves, but only that we ſhould make the Affection, which we bear to ourſelves, the Rule we are to follow, in expreſſing our Love to him; or (in other Words) that we ſhould love him in all the Inſtances wherein we expreſs our Love to ourſelves, though not in an equal Meaſure.

Q. *Pray explain the 40th Verſe?*

A. The Words in the Text are, *On theſe two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*, which is a Metaphor taken from the Cuſtom mentioned by *Tertullian* of hanging up their Laws in a publick Place, to be ſeen of all Men; and imports, that in them is contained all that the Law and Prophets do require, in reference to our Duty to God and Man. For though there be ſome Precepts of Temperance, which we owe to ourſelves, yet are they ſuch, as we may be moved to perform from the true Love of God, and of our Neighbour. For the Love of God will preſerve us from all Impatience, Diſcontent, and evil Luſtings. It will make us watchful over ourſelves to keep a good Conſcience, as being ſollicitous for our eternal Welfare: And the Love of our Neighbour will reſtrain us from all angry Paſſions, ſuch as Envy, Malice, and other Perturbations, which ariſe againſt him; ſo that theſe two Commandments may be very juſtly called an *Abridgmeut*, or *Compendium* of the whole Scripture.

CHAP. XXIII.

Chriſt *exhorts the Multitude, and his Diſciples, to obſerve the Doctrine of the* Phariſees, *but not imitate their Practice; ſhews their Ambition, and cautions his Diſciples to beware of them; denounces Woe againſt them for divers Offences; threatens them with eternal Deſtruction, for abuſing and killing his Meſſengers; and pathetically bewails the ſad Eſtate and Condition of* Jeruſalem.

Q. *WHAT do you remark upon* Chriſt's *Diſcourſe to the* Multitude *concerning the Doctrine and Practices of the* Scribes *and* Phariſees?

A. The great Doctors and ſpiritual Guides of the *Jews*, were the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*. *Scribe* was the Title given to an Office; *Phariſee*, the Name of a Sect. Our Lord had had many Controverſies with theſe Men, in order to convince them both of their Errors and Wickedneſs. But neither our Saviour's Miniſtry nor Miracles being ſufficient to overcome their Malice and Obſtinacy, he denounces eight ſeveral Woes againſt them. But firſt he kindly warns his Diſciples and the Multitude againſt the pernicious Practices of this Sort of Men, ſaying, *The* Scribes *and* Phariſees *ſit in* Moſes's *ſeat*; that is, they teach and expound the Law of *Moſes*, which they were wont to do ſitting, *Whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do*; that is, if what they teach you be agreeable to the Word of God, and the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets: If they go not out of *Moſes*'s Chair, into their own unwritten Traditions, follow their Doctrine, and obey their Precepts. *But do not after their Works*, follow not their Example, take heed of their Pride and Hypocriſy, their Ambition and Vain-glory. No People are obliged to follow their Teachers Pattern and Example any farther than its agreeable to Scripture Rule, and conformable to *Chriſt*'s Example, *Do not after their Works, who ſay and do not*.

The Reaſon which *Chriſt* aſſigns for this Caution he gives his Followers, is, that the heavy Burthens which the *Phariſees* laid on the People's Shoulders; that is, the Rules, Canons, Auſterities and Severities, by them introduced and impoſed on their Hearers, they would not undergo the leaſt Part of themſelves. No Man ought to preſs upon others what he is unwilling to perform himſelf. *Chriſt* having given this Caution in general, now deſcends to particulars, and admoniſhes his Diſciples and the Multitude to beware of imitating the *Phariſees* in their Oſtentation and Hypocriſy, particularly, 1. In their Works, which they do to be ſeen of Men. 2. They made broad their Philacteries, and enlarged the Borders of their Garments. Theſe Philacteries were certain Scrolls and Labels of Parchments, in which were written the Ten Commandments, and ſome Sections of the Law; theſe they tied to their Foreheads, and pinned upon their left Sleeve, that the Law of God might be continually before their Eyes, and always in their Memories, according to *Deut*. vi. 8. By enlarging the Borders of their Garment, *Chriſt* hints at the Fringes and blue Ribbons cloſe woven together, which the *Jews* wore upon their Garments, *Numb*. xv. 37, 38. to repreſent the Connection, Complication, and inſeparable Conjunction of God's Commandments among themſelves; and to put them in mind, that which way ſoever they turned their Eyes, they might meet with ſome pious Admonition to keep the Law of God. Theſe Philacteries the *Phariſees* wore broader, and their Fringes longer that other Men, that the People might think they were more mindful of the Law of God than others. 3. They were very ambitious of Precedency at Feaſts, and in the Synagogues, and loved to be publickly ſaluted by the Titles of *Rabbi*, *Father*, *Maſter* and *Doctor*. This Affectation our Saviour condemns. Theſe *Phariſees* were for carrying a Library of God's Law on their Cloaths, ſcarce a Letter of it in their Hearts.

Be not ye, ſays our Saviour, *called Rabbi*; not ſimply condemning the giving or receiving theſe Titles of *Rabbi*, *Maſter*, *Father*; but the vain-glorious Affectation of ſuch Titles. He likewiſe condemns that Authority and Dominion over the Conſciences of Men, which the *Phariſaical* Doctors had uſurped, enjoining their Doctrines and Injunctions as the Command of the living God. In effect they aſſumed to themſelves Infallibility. But *Chriſt* alone, the great Prophet and infallible Teacher of his Church, is the only Perſon to whoſe Doctrine and Precepts we owe abſolute Faith and Obedience; One is our Maſter, even *Chriſt*. As God will abaſe, and Men deſpiſe the proud, eſpecially Miniſters; ſo will God exalt, and Men honour thoſe that ſtoop to the meaneſt Services for the good of Souls: Whoſoever exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; a Saying frequent with our Saviour, as well as among the *Jews*.

Q. *Our Lord denounces here many grievous Woes againſt the* Phariſees: *Pray give your Obſervations upon them ſeverally?*

A. Our Saviour denounceth eight ſeveral Woes againſt the *Phariſees*: The firſt is for perverting the Scriptures, and keeping the true Senſe and Knowledge of them from the People. This St. *Matthew* calls the ſhutting up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men; St. *Luke*, a taking away the Key of Knowledge from Men, which is an Alluſion to a known Cuſtom among the *Jews*, in the Admiſſion of their Doctors; for thoſe that had Authority given them for interpreting the Law, were ſolemnly initiated, by delivering to them a Key and a Table-Book. So that by the Key of Knowledge is meant the Interpretation and Underſtanding the Scriptures; and by taking away the Key of Knowledge is ſignified, 1. That they arrogated to themſelves alone the Underſtanding the Scripture. 2. That they kept the true Knowledge of the Scriptures from the People, eſpecially the Prophecies relating to the *Meſſias*; and ſo hindered Men from embracing our Saviour's Doctrine, who were well inclined to it.

The ſecond Woe denounced againſt the *Phariſees*, is for their groſs Hypocriſy, in colouring over their Covetouſneſs with the Pretence of Religion; making long Prayers publickly for Widows, and then perſuading them to give liberally to the

Corban, or the common Treaſure of the Temple; ſome Part of which was employed for their Maintenance.

The third Woe denounced againſt them, is for their falſe-ended Zeal, in proſelyting *Heathens* to the *Jewiſh* Religion; not piouſly deſigning to ſave them, but to have their Conſciences and Purſes at their Diſpoſal; and when you have poiſoned them, ſays our Saviour, by your corrupt Doctrine, and hardened them in a Courſe of Sin, by your wicked Example, they are more the Children of of Hell than before you practiced upon them.

Our Lord denounces the fourth Woe againſt the *Phariſees* for their erroneous Doctrine concerning Oaths. They taught Men to ſwear by the Creatures; and that ſome Oaths made by the Creatures were obligatory, others not. As, that if a Man ſwore by the Temple, or by the Altar, it was nothing, *i. e.* he was not bound by ſuch an Oath. But if a Man ſwear by the Gold of the Temple, and the Altar, *i. e.* by the Gifts offered to the *Corban*, or Treaſury of the Temple, and by the Sacrifices and Oblations on the Altar: Such an Oath they affirmed was binding, becauſe it was for their Profit, that the Gifts of the Altar, and the Gold brought into the Treaſury ſhould be accounted moſt holy, ſince that would incite the People the more readily to Offer. This horrid Hypocriſy and covetouſneſs *Chriſt* ſeverely reproves, and ſhews, that Oaths made by the Creatures, though unlawful, yet being once made, did oblige, as if the Parties had ſworn by God himſelf. For he that ſwears by the Temple, ſwears by it, and him that dwells therein.

Woe is alſo denounced againſt their Oſtentation of a preciſe keeping the Law in the minuteſt Matters, and neglecting weightier Duties. They pay Tythe of Mint, Aniſe, and Cummin, but omitted Judgment, Mercy and Faith; that is, juſt Dealing Charity, and Faithfulneſs in their Promiſes and Covenants one with another. This, ſays our Saviour, is to ſtrain at a Gnat, and ſwallow a Camel. A proverbial Expreſſion, intimating, that ſome Perſons pretend to great Niceneſs and Scrupuloſity about ſmall Matters, and but little about Duties of the greateſt Moment. However, tho' ſome Duties are of greater Moment than others, yet a good Man omits none willingly.

In the ſixth Woe *Chriſt* does not condemn their legal, or traditional waſhing of their Pots or Cups, or any external Decency or Cleanlineſs in Converſation. But his Deſign is to ſhew them the Vanity of outward Purity, without inward Sanctity.

The next Woe is denounced againſt the *Phariſees* for deceiving the People with an outward Shew of Piety and Religion: Their Lives were ſeemingly religious, but their Hearts were full of Hypocriſy and all Impurity, like Sepulchres painted without, and full of Rottenneſs within.

The eighth Woe denounced againſt the *Phariſees*, is for their grand Hypocriſy in pretending great Honour to the Saints departed. Their Hypocriſy appeared in three Particulars. 1. That they continued in their own Wickedneſs, yet recommended the Saints departed. 2. In profeſſing great Reſpect for the dead Saints, and at the ſame Time perſecuting the living. Thus the Church of *Rome*, who magnify Martyrs, and canonize Saints departed, have added to their Numbers, by ſhedding their Blood. 3. In taking falſe Meaſures of their Love to Saints departed, from their building their Tombs, and garniſhing their Sepulchres; whereas our beſt Reſpect to them is ſhewn in imitating their Virtues, and cheriſhing their Followers.

Our Saviour having denounced the foregoing Woes againſt the *Phariſees*, adds a Prediction, and a ſevere Denunciation. A Prediction foretelling the cruel Uſage the Apoſtles and firſt Propagators of the Goſpel ſhould meet with from the *Jews*. A ſevere Denunciation, *That upon you may come all the righteous Blood ſhed upon the Earth, from* Abel *to* Zecharias *the Son of* Jehoiada, *2 Chron.* xxiv. 20. who was the laſt Prophet, whoſe Murder is related by Name in the *Old Teſtament*. But theſe Words are not to be underſtood, as if the End of *Chriſt*'s ſending the Prophets was, that the *Jews* might put them to Death, and bring their righteous Blood upon themſelves; but only as this was the Conſequence of it.

Our Lord concludes this Chapter with a pathetical Lamentation over *Jeruſalem*; and ſets forth his Affection for her, by a lively Metaphor and Similitude of a Hen gathering her Chickens under her Wings. But they obſtinately rejected his Grace and Favour; the Iſſue of which was, *Behold your Houſe is left unto you deſolate*; that is, it certainly and ſuddenly will be ſo.

CHAP. XXIV.

Jeſus *foretels the Deſtruction of the Temple, and the Calamities that ſhall precede it. The Signs of his coming to Judgment; the Day and Hour unknown; therefore he exhorts to watch and be ready.*

Q. DESCRIBE *the Grandeur of the Temple, with which the Diſciples were ſo taken, that they could not forbear ſhewing it to our Saviour, Ver. 1?*

A. Joſephus, who gives us a Deſcription of the Temple built by *Herod*, tells us, among other Things, that *the whole Fabrick was made of durable white Stone, ſome of which were five and twenty Cubits long, eight in Height, and twelve in Breadth.*

The Ornaments of the Temple were the Spoils which their Kings had taken in War; the rich Preſents which foreign Princes, upon certain Occaſions, had made; and the coſtly Gifts which the *Jews*, from all Parts of the World, uſed to ſend to the Temple of *Jeruſalem*. Theſe were hung againſt the Walls, and the Pillars of the Temple, for the People to behold; and when *Herod* had rebuilt it, he not only replaced all the former Ornaments, but added ſeveral others, eſpecially the Spoils which he took in his War with the *Arabians*, and a Vine of maſſy Gold, of prodigious Weight and Value, which was his own free Gift.

Q. *When was this Prediction of our Saviour, concerning the Deſtruction of the Temple fulfilled?*

A. The Prophecy of our bleſſed Saviour, of the entire Ruin of the Temple, was, in a great Meaſure, accompliſhed about forty Years after; when (as ſeveral *Jewiſh* Authors tell us, *Taurus*,) i. e. *Terentius Rufus*, whom *Titus* left chief Commander of the Army in *Judea*, did, with a Plow-ſhare, tear up the Foundations of the Temple, and thereby ſignally fulfilled the Words of the Prophet, *Therefore ſhall* Zion, *for your Sakes, be plowed as a*

Field, and Jeruſalem *ſhall become Heaps, and the Mountains of the Lord as the high Places of the Foreſt*, Micah iii. 12. It can hardly be thought, however, but that, notwithſtanding this Demoliſhment, there might be *left one Stone upon another*, and therefore ſomething more was wanting towards the literal Completion of our Saviour's Prophecy, to which the Emperor *Julian*, in ſome Meaſure, contributed: For, having given the *Jews* Licence to re-build their Temple at *Jeruſalem*, they took away every Stone of the old Foundation to help to build their new Edifice; but Heaven prevented their Deſign: For Flaſhes of Lightning (as our beſt Hiſtorians tell us) burſt out from the Foundation they had dug, and ſo blaſted and terrified them, that they were forced to give over their Enterprize, after they had pulled up and removed all the Remains of the old Temple.

Q. Chriſt *likewiſe foretels many ſad Calamities that ſhould fore-run the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem: *How and when were they accompliſhed?*

A. Never were there ſo many Impoſtors, or falſe *Chriſts*, as in the Time a little before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, (*Joſeph. Antiq.* l. ii. c. 6.) doubtleſs becauſe this was the Age, wherein the *Jews*, from the Prophecy of *Daniel*, were taught to expect their *Meſſiah*.

Beſides the *Syrians*, not long before the Deſtruction of their City (*Joſeph. Antiq.* l. ii. c. 19.) the Conteſts between *Otho* and *Vitellius*, and *Vitellius* and *Veſpaſian*, at *Rome*, were much about the ſame Time, and the Oppreſſion of the Governors of *Judea*, who minded nothing but to inrich themſelves, had ſo irritated the Minds of the People, that for ſome Time before their final Calamity, we read of nothing but Rebellions and Revolts, Parties and Factions, and Bands of Robbers harraſſing and infeſting the Country.

In the fourth Year of *Claudius* (as *Euſebius* informs us) there happened a great Famine, which oppreſſed all the *Roman* Empire, but more eſpecially *Paleſtine*, where many periſhed (according to *Joſephus*) for lack of Food. And the ſame Hiſtorian informs us, that when one *Niger* was ſlain by the *Jews*, he imprecated Famine and Peſtilence upon their Cities, which God accordingly inflicted.

In the Reigns of *Claudius* and *Nero*, there happened many Earthquakes in *Aſia Minor* and the Iſles of the *Archipelago*, where *Jews* inhabited; (*Euſeb. Chron.* and *Tacit. Annal.* l. 2.) And *Joſephus* acquaints us that in the Night, when the *Idumæans* encamped before *Jeruſalem*, *there blew a dredful Tempeſt of Wind and Rain, accompanied with ſuch terrible Flaſhes of Lightning, Claps of Thunder, and bellowing of Earthquakes, that put all People to their Wits-end to think what theſe Prodigies might portend.*

In his Preface to the Hiſtory of the Wars of the *Jews*, *Joſephus* undertakes to record the Miſeries and Calamities, which befel that Nation, and the Signs and Prodigies which preceded their Ruin. To this Purpoſe he tells us, that for a whole Year together, a *Comet*, in the Figure of a Sword, hung over the City, and pointed as it were directly down upon it; that there were ſeen in the Clouds, Armies in Battle-array and Chariots, encompaſſing the Country, and inveſting their Cities; that, at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, in the Middle of the Night, a great Light ſhone upon the Temple and Altar, as if it had been Noon-Day; that, at the ſame Feaſt the great Gate of the Temple made all of maſſy Braſs, and which twenty Men could hardly ſhut, opened of itſelf, though faſtened with Bolts and Bars; that at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, ſoon after, when the Prieſts went into the Temple to officiate, they heard, at firſt, a kind of confuſed Noiſe, and then a Voice calling out earneſtly, in articulate Words, *Let us be gone, let us be gone*; and that theſe Prodigies were really ſo, we have the Teſtimony of *Tacitus*, a *Roman* Hiſtorian of that Age.

That Part of our Saviour's Prediction concerning the Perſecution of *Chriſtians*, was literally fulfill'd before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. As ſoon as *Chriſtianity* began to ſpread, the *Jews* wrote Letters to every Part of the World againſt the Profeſſors of it, in order to raiſe Perſecutions againſt them. St. *Paul*, before his Converſion, *breathing out Threatnings, and Slaughter againſt the Diſciples of Chriſt*, Acts ix. 1. *ſhut up many of them in Priſon, both Men and Women*, Acts xxii. 4. xxvi. 10. himſelf, when converted, and *Silas*, were not only impriſoned, but beaten in the Synagogue, *Acts* xvi. 13. as were likewiſe *Peter* and *John*, *Acts* v. 18. *Stephen*, the firſt Martyr, was ſlain by the Council, *Acts* vii. 1. and *James the Leſs*, by *Ananus* the High Prieſt: Multitudes of *Chriſtians* were perſecuted to Death by *Saul*, *Acts* xxii. 4. by the *Jews*, as *Juſtin Martyr* teſtifies; and by the Emperor *Nero*, as *Tacitus* relates, *Annal.* l. 15. for the Profeſſors of our moſt holy Religion, before the Principles of it came to be enquired into, were looked upon as the common Enemies of Mankind; inſomuch that whoſoever killed them, thought that he did God Service, *John* xvi. 2.

That before the Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* State, the *Chriſtian* Religion had ſpread itſelf over all the Parts of the then known World, we may reaſonably conclude, from the Labours of St. *Paul*, who alone carried the Goſpel through *Judea*, *Syria*, *Arabia*, *Greece*, *Macedonia*, *Achaia*, *Aſia Minor*, *Italy*, &c. And if the other Apoſtles, whoſe Travels we are not ſo well acquainted with, did the like, there is no doubt to be made, but that *their Sound went into all the Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of the World*, Rom. x. 18. St. *Peter* addreſſes his firſt Epiſtle to the Elect that were in *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Aſia* and *Bithynia*; and *Clemens*, who was his Contemporary, and immediate Succeſſor to the See of *Rome*, in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, tells us, *That the Nations beyond the Ocean were governed by the Precepts of the Lord.* An Event this! which he only could foretel, who having all Power in Heaven and Earth, was able to effect.

Q. *In what Senſe is the 29th Verſe to be taken*; Immediately after the Tribulation of thoſe Days, ſhall the Sun be darkened, and the Moon ſhall not give her Light, and the Stars ſhall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the Heavens ſhall be ſhaken?

A. That theſe Words are not to be taken in a literal Senſe, 'tis plain, becauſe that, after the Sacking of *Jeruſalem*, by *Veſpaſian*'s Army, no ſuch Thing as is here mentioned, happened to the Sun, Moon, or Stars. Theſe Expreſſions therefore muſt be metaphorical, and do here denote, as they frequently do in the Writings of the Prophets, and other Authors, the intire Deſtruction, and utter Deſolation, which is brought upon any Nation. For in this Language the Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaks of the Deſtruction of *Babylon: The Day of the Lord cometh, cruel, both with Wrath and fierce Anger, to lay the Land deſolate, and he ſhall deſtroy the Sinners thereof out of it: For the Stars of Heaven, and the Conſtellations thereof ſhall not give their Light; the Sun ſhall be darkened in his going forth, and the Moon ſhall not cauſe her Light to ſhine,* Chap. xiii. 9. which, according to *Maimonides,* are *proverbial Expreſſions, importing the Deſtruction, and utter Ruin of a Nation, and of ſuch Perſons more eſpecially, who, for their State and Dignity, might be compared to the Sun, Moon and Stars.* Accordingly, the Senſe of our Saviour's Words muſt be, That after the taking and deſtroying of *Jeruſalem,* God's Judgments would ſtill purſue the People; ſo that thoſe who ſurvived the Ruin of their Country, ſhould be diſperſed into different Regions, ſold for Slaves, or reduced to a Condition worſe than Slavery. And ſo the Event proved: For thoſe that were carried to *Rome,* ſerved only to adorn the Triumph of their Conqueror: Thoſe that fled to *Antioch* for Shelter, were cruelly maſſacred there: Thoſe that maintained the Caſtle of *Maſſada,* rather than fall into the Hands of the Enemy, agreed to ſlay one another: Thoſe that eſcaped to *Thebes* and *Alexandria,* were brought back and tortured to Death; and thoſe of *Cyrene,* who joined a falſe Prophet, named *Jonathan,* were all cut to Pieces by the *Roman* General. All this happened immediately after the taking of *Jeruſalem*; and, without any farther Search into their Hiſtory, is enough to verify our Saviour's Expreſſion, that *the Sun was darkened and the Moon gave no Light* upon that wretched People.

The Deſolation which the *Jews* ſuffered in this laſt War with the *Romans,* was ſo vaſtly great, that all Hiſtory can ſcarce furniſh us with an Example of the like Nature. The Number of the Slain was eleven hundred thouſand; the Number of Priſoners was ninety-ſeven thouſand. Thoſe that were above ſeventeen, were ſent into *Egypt* to work in the Mines; thoſe that were under that Age, were ſold for Slaves into different Countries; and a great Number of others were diſtributed in the *Roman* Provinces, to be expoſed to wild Beaſts on the *Theatre*; and, as Gladiators, to kill one another, for the Sport and Diverſion of the Spectators: *Until the Cities were waſted without Inhabitant, and the Houſes without a Man, and the Land was utterly deſolate, and the Lord had removed Men far away, and there was a great Forſaking in the midſt of the Land,* as the Prophet expreſſes it, *Iſaiah* vi. 11, 12.

Q. *When this Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *foretold by* Chriſt, *was near at Hand, did the* Chriſtians *retire from it?*

A. The *Chriſtans* took the Advice of our Saviour: For when *Ceſtius Gallus* had beſieged *Jeruſalem,* and, without any viſible Cauſe, on a Sudden raiſed the Siege, the *Chriſtians,* who were in the City, took this Opportunity to make their Eſcape to *Pella* in *Paræa,* a mountainous Country; and to other Places under the Government of King *Agrippa,* where they found Safety. Thus punctually were all the Predictions of our Saviour fulfilled; ſo that, *whoever ſhall compare them* (as *Euſebius,* in his *Eccl. Hiſt.* l. iii. c. 7. expreſſes it) *with the Account of* Joſephus, *concerning the Wars of the* Jews, *cannot but admire the Wiſdom of* Chriſt, *and own his Predictions to be divine.*

Q. *Does the Puniſhment inflicted on the evil Servant, Verſe* 51. *allude to any Method of puniſhing Criminals, uſed in thoſe Times?*

A. The Puniſhment inflicted on the evil Servant is ſaid to be *cutting aſunder.* In the ſame Manner as *Samuel* uſed *Agag,* 1 Sam. xv. 33. and *David* the *Ammonites,* 2 Sam. xii. 31. and *Nebuchodonoſor* threatened the Blaſphemers of the true God, *Dan.* iii. 29. This Puniſhment was, in old Times, inflicted on thoſe that were falſe to their Creditors, Rebels to their Prince, or Betrayers of the Country; nor was it in uſe only among the *Eaſtern* People, but among the *Romans*; as we learn from *Suetonius* in the Life of *Caius,* and among the *Greeks,* as *Homer, Sophocles,* and *Ariſtophanes* informs us: And therefore this Puniſhment, ſays our Saviour, will I inflict on thoſe that are perfidious to their Covenant in Baptiſm, and Enemies to my Government.

CHAP. XXV.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins; of the Talents entruſted with three Servants; the Approbation of thoſe who traded well; the Sentence and Puniſhment of him who hid his Talent in a Napkin. Chriſt *deſcribes the laſt Judgment.*

Q. PRAY *explain the Parable of the* Ten Virgins?

A. The better to underſtand the Parable of the *wiſe and fooliſh Virgins,* we ſhould do well to obſerve what the Cuſtom at Marriages was, to which our Saviour ſeems to allude. When the Bridegroom was to bring home his Bride (which was generally the concluſive Ceremony, and done in the Night-Time) the young Women of the Town, to which ſhe was to come, in order to do her Honour, went to meet her with lighted Lamps: She too, according to her Quality and Condition, had her Companions and Servants attending her, and ſome of the moſt beautiful Ladies of the Place, from whence ſhe came, going before her. And moſt modern Travellers inform us, that among the *Eaſtern* People (eſpecially the *Perſians*) this Way of conducting the Bride home, with Lamps and lighted Torches, ſtill prevails. None need be told, that by the Bride-groom we are to underſtand our Saviour *Chriſt*; by the Bride his Church; by the Virgins, *Chriſtians* in general; and by the *Oil in their Lamps,* the neceſſary Qualifications of Faith and good Works.

Q. *How do you underſtand the Parable of the Maſter's truſting ſeveral Talents to be improved by his Servants for his Uſe and Intereſt?*

A. For an Explication of the Parable, of the Talents entruſted with diligent and ſlothful Servants, we may obſerve, that the Man *travelling into a far Country,* is our Saviour *Chriſt,* who, by aſcending into Heaven, has deprived the Church of his corporeal Preſence; that his Servants are *Chriſtians* in general, or more particularly the Apoſtles and firſt Miniſters, who ſucceeded him in the Propagation of the Goſpel; and the Talents committed to their Management, are the ſupernatural Gifts which he beſtowed upon them, and all the Endowments both of Body and Mind, all the Helps, and Means, and Opportunities which he gives us, in order to ſerve him, and to work out our Salvation.

Q. *Do you conceive what that* Throne of Glory *will be which* Chriſt *will ſit on, at the laſt Day?*

A. That the Throne of Glory, upon which *Chriſt* ſhall ſit at the laſt Day, will be nothing elſe but a bright and refulgent Cloud, we have Reaſon to believe, from the Teſtimony of the Angels that attended at our Lord's Aſcenſion. For while the Apoſtles, then preſent, were *looking ſtedfaſtly towards Heaven, as he went up, behold two Men ſtood by them in white Apparel, who ſaid, Ye Men of* Galilee, *why ſtand ye gazing up to Heaven? This ſame* Jeſus, *which is taken up from you into Heaven, ſhall ſo come in like Manner as ye have ſeen him go into Heaven,* Acts i. 9, 10. which compared with our Lord's own Declarations concerning his ſecond Coming, *Mark* xiii. 26. with what St. *Paul* foretels, 1 *Theſ.* iv. 17. and St. *John* foreſaw, *Revel.* xiv. 14. are abundantly ſufficient to juſtify the generally received Opinion, that, as our bleſſed Saviour went up into Heaven, ſo he ſhall return thence to Judgment, upon a true and material Cloud.

Q. *When* Chriſt *ſhall come in his Glory,* all Nations ſhall be gathered before him, *Verſe* 32. *but where?*

A. The Manner in which our Saviour expreſſes himſelf, upon this Occaſion, ſeems to imply, that the general Judgment is to be held in ſome particular Place; and from a Paſſage in the Prophet *Joel,* ſeveral modern, as well as antient Doctors, are of Opinion that the Valley of *Jehoſhaphat* is appointed to be the Place: *For I will gather all Nations,* ſays God, *and will bring them down into the Valley of* Jehoſhaphat, *and I will plead with them there for my People, and for my Heritage* Iſrael, Chap. iii. 2. but as the Word *Jehoſhaphat,* in that Text, ſignifies the *Judgment of God,* the Valley of *Jehoſhaphat* denotes any Place, in general, where God exerciſes his Judgments. The Truth is, if all Nations of the World muſt appear before *the Judgment Seat of* Chriſt; and, that they may receive the Things done in the Body, are to be cloathed with their Reſurrection Bodies, there muſt neceſſarily be required a large Space to contain them; and therefore St. *Paul* ſeems to point out the grand Expanſum of the Air, as the moſt convenient for that Purpoſe.

Q. *What do you obſerve generally on the Manner of* Chriſt's *paſſing the Sentence on the* Righteous *and* Wicked *at the laſt Day?*

A. The whole Race of Mankind being ſummoned to Judgment, and ſeparated, the Sheep being placed on the Right-Hand, and the Goats on the Left of the Judge, Sentence is firſt pronounced on the Righteous, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father*; which may be ſuppoſed either to relate to the World's Judgment of them, who accounts them vile and accurſed; or to the Sentence of the Law, which pronounces all its Tranſgreſſors accuſed, *Gal.* iii. 9. But here is an Abſolution from both. *Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.*

The Lord *Jeſus,* at his firſt Coming, will adjudge all his People unto a glorious State of everlaſting Happineſs, which his Father has prepared, and himſelf has purchaſed for them.

Our Lord then declares, not the meritorious Cauſe of his Saints Happineſs, but the infallible Signs of ſuch as ſhall inherit that Happineſs, the Characters of the Perſons who might expect it. Such as fed him, cloathed and viſited him in his Members. From hence ſome would gather, that no Mention will be made of the Sins of the Righteat the Day of Judgment; for they obſerve, that *Chriſt* here only mentions the good Works of his Saints, not a Word of their Failings. But obſerve the Saints Reply; *Lord, when did we ſend thee Cloath, or viſit thee?* We have forgot the Time, though ſuch is thy Goodneſs to remember it. When *Chriſt* comes to reward his People, they will be aſtoniſhed at the Poverty and Meanneſs of their own Services, and at the Tranſcendancy and Greatneſs of his Rewards. But, ſays *Chriſt, Inaſmuch as ye did it to the leaſt of theſe, my Brethren, ye did it unto me.* Such is the indearing Intimacy betwixt *Chriſt* and his Members, that whatſoever is done to any of them, is eſteemed by him as done unto himſelf.

Next is the Sentence of Condemnation denounced againſt the Wicked, who were at *Chriſt*'s Left-Hand. This doth not ſo much denote the Ignominy of the Place, as the Impiety of their Choice; they took up with Left-Hand Mercies, Wealth, Dignities and Honours. As for the good Things at God's Right-Hand they never ſought after them. Wherefore, ſays *Chriſt, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; you gave me no Meat, ye took me not in.* Man, and Man alone, is the Cauſe of his own Deſtruction and Damnation.

Chap. XXVI.

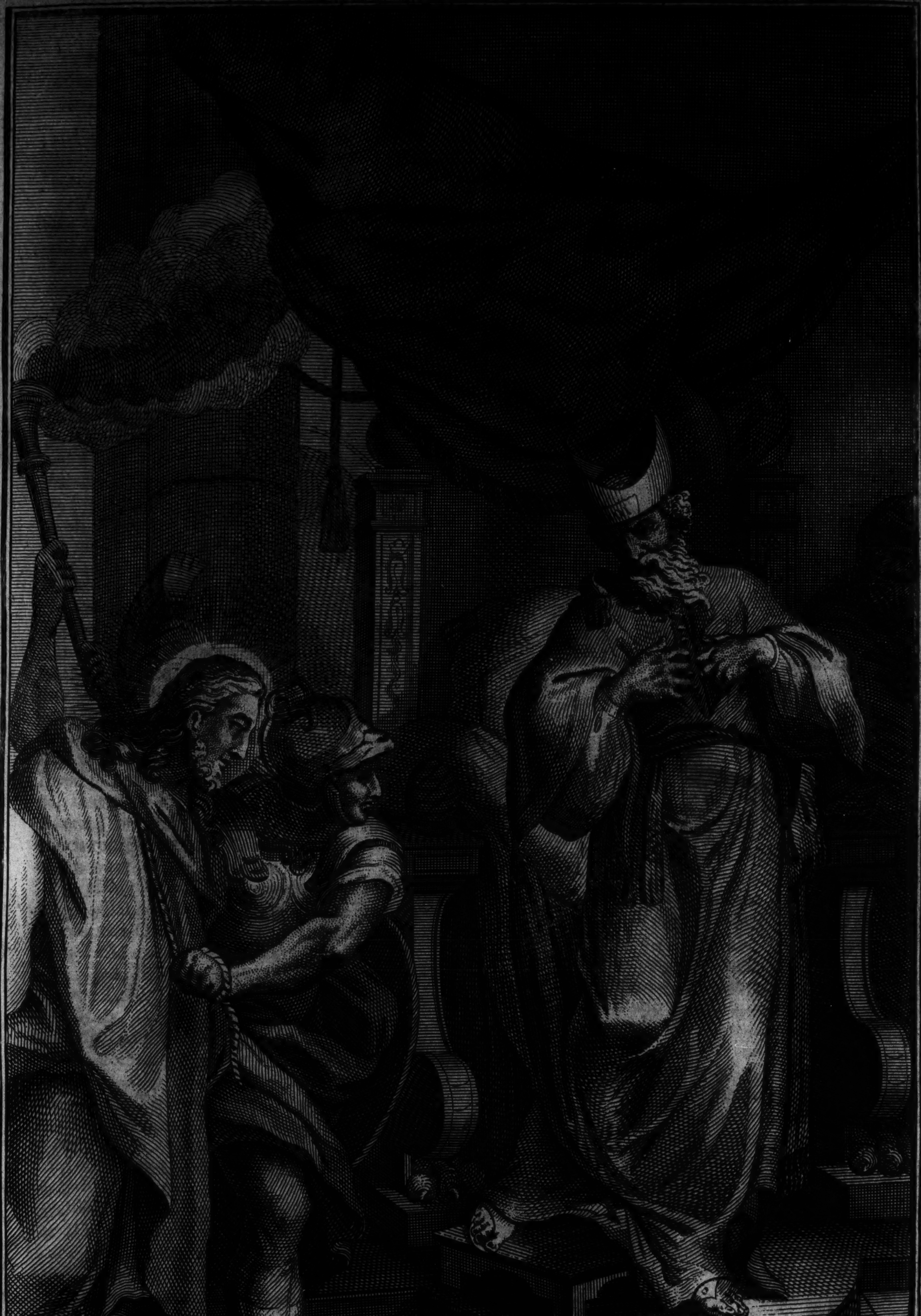
Chriſt *acquaints his Diſciples with the Time and Manner of his Sufferings. The Rulers aſſemble, and conſpire how to take and kill him. A Woman pours precious Ointment on his Head; his Diſciples diſpleaſed thereat; he vindicates her good Work.* Judas, *for thirty Pieces of Silver, agrees to betray* Chriſt. *The Paſſover kept, and* Judas *declared the Traytor. The Lord's Supper inſtituted.* Chriſt's *Diſcourſe with his Diſciples;* Peter's *Confidence;* Chriſt *foretels that he ſhould thrice deny him. His Agony and Prayer; his Rebuke of, and Exhortation to his Diſciples.* Judas *betrays him with a Kiſs.* Peter *attempts to reſcue him, but is reproved.* Jeſus *led to* Caiaphas, *examined, and found guilty of nothing. They accuſe him of Blaſphemy, and uſe him baſely.* Peter's *Denial of him, and Sorrow for it.*

Q. WHAT *general Obſervations do you make upon the Hiſtory of this Chapter?*

A. The Beginning of this Chapter gives an Account of a Conſpiracy formed by the Prieſts, Scribes and Elders, that is, the whole *Sanhedrim,* or General Council of the *Jewiſh* Church, againſt the Life of our bleſſed Saviour. The Time when this Conſpiracy was managed, was at the Time of the Paſſover. Indeed, at firſt the chief Prieſts did not incline to that Fury, fearing an Uproar among the People; but *Judas* preſenting them with a fair Opportunity to apprehend him, they changed their Purpoſe; and, accordingly, at the Feaſt of the Paſſover our Saviour Suffered. This was not without a Myſtery, that *Chriſt* the Lamb of God, whom the Paſchal Lamb typified and repreſented, ſhould be offered up at the Feaſt of the Paſſover; ſignifying thereby, that he was the true Paſchal Lamb, and that the legal Shadow ought to ceaſe in the Exhibition of him.

Q. *What*

S. MATT. CHAP. XXVI.



CHRIST *derided*.

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Q. *What Day of the Week was it that this wicked Compact was made between the Grand Council and* Judas, *to betray his Maſter?*

A. According to the Tradition of the Church, the Conſultation, which the *Sanhedrim* held, and the Agreement which *Judas* made with them to betray our Lord, were on *Wedneſday*; and therefore they give it as a Reaſon, why they faſted on *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays*, becauſe on the one *Chriſt* was betray'd, and ſuffered on the other.

Q. *Who was this* Caiaphas, *who was then High-Prieſt?*

A. *Caiaphas*, the High-prieſt, is called, by the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian, *Joſeph*. The High-prieſthood he purchaſed of *Valerius Grachus*; and, after he had ten Years enjoyed that Dignity, was depoſed by *Vitellius*, Governor of *Syria*, and ſucceeded by *Jonothan*, the Son of *Ananus*, or *Annas*.

Q. *What was the Value of thoſe* Pieces of Silver *for which* Judas *bargain'd to betray his Maſter?*

A. The Pieces of Silver which *Judas* received to betray his Maſter, were *Staters*, or *Shekels of the Sanctuary*; thirty of which amounted to three Pounds and fifteen Shillings of our Money; the uſual Price that was given for a Man or Maid Servant, *Exod.* xxi. 32. 'Tis hardly ſuppoſable that any of theſe Pieces are at this Time extant, though both at *Rome* and *Paris* there are Pieces ſhewn, which are pretended to be the very ſame that were Part of the Price of the Purchaſe of our Saviour's Blood; but Perſons well ſkilled in that Art, aſſure us, that theſe Pieces are only the antient Medals of *Rhodes*; on the one Side ſtamped with a *Coloſs*, which repreſents the Sun, and on the other a Roſe, which was the City Arms, as we call it.

Q. *While* Chriſt *was refreſhing himſelf in the Houſe of* Simon *the Leper, a Woman* pours a Box of precious Ointment on his Head; *What do you remark thereupon?*

A. *Jeſus* being in *Bethany*, at the Houſe of *Simon* the Leper, a Woman, who, St. *John* ſays, was *Mary*, the Siſter of *Lazarus*, to do Honour to *Chriſt*, pour'd a Box of precious Ointment on his Head, according to the Cuſtom of the *Eaſtern* Countries, who uſed to do it at their Feaſts and Banquets. This when *Judas*, and ſome other Diſciples whom he had influenced, ſaw, they murmured, thinking it a needleſs Prodigality, and tacitly reflected on *Chriſt* himſelf, for ſuffering that waſteful Expence. But our Lord vindicates this good Woman, and rebukes them, *Why trouble you the Woman?* Next, he defends the Action, calling it a good Work, *She hath wrought a good Work upon me.* And laſtly, gives the Reaſon of her Action, *She did it for my Burial.* As Kings and great Perſons, in thoſe *Eaſtern* Countries, at their Funerals, were embalmed with Odours and ſweet Perfumes: So, ſays our Saviour, this Woman, to declare her Faith in me, as her King and Lord, doth with this Box of Ointment, as it were beforehand, embalm my Body for its Burial. *Chriſt* adds, *But me ye have not always*; which Words plainly overthrow the *Tranſubſtantiarians*, which ſuppoſe *Chriſt* perpetually preſent in the Hoſt, contrary to what he declares here.

Chriſt having defended this Woman from the Calumny of *Judas*, declares, ſhe ſhall be rewarded with an honourable Memorial in all Ages of the Church. What Care doth *Chriſt* take to have the good Deeds of his Children not buried in the Duſt with him, but be had in everlaſting Remembrance!

Q. *In the ſeventeenth Verſe is is ſaid,* The firſt Day of the Feaſt *the Diſciples asked* Jeſus, *where he would have them prepare the Paſſover: How could this be properly ſaid to be* the firſt Day of the Feaſt, *when the Feaſt was not then begun?*

A. It is no uncommon Thing to put the Word *firſt* for that which properly *went before*. Thus in the *Old Teſtament* it is ſaid, *that the Hands of the Witneſſes ſhall be* firſt *upon him*, that is, condemned to die, *to put him to Death, and afterwards the Hands of all the People*, Deut. xvii. 7. But if the Hands of the Witneſſes ſhould firſt diſpatch him, there would be no Occaſion for the Hands of the People. In the firſt Book of *Maccabees*, it is twice ſaid of *Alexander the Great*, that he reigned *firſt* over *Greece*, Chap. i. 1. and vi. 2. but every one knows, that before him there were ſeveral Kings in *Macedonia*, *before* he reigned in *Aſia*: And, to the ſame Purpoſe, in the *New Teſtament*, we find St. *Paul* ſtiling our bleſſed Lord *the Firſt-born of every Creature*, Coloſſ. i. 14. *i. e.* begotten of the Father *before* the Production of any Creature; and telling us, that *the Husbandman that laboureth muſt* firſt *partake of the Fruits*, i. e. he muſt labour before he can reap the Fruits of his Travel; and, in like Acceptation of the Word, the *firſt* Day of the Feaſt, may be interpreted the Day *before* the Feaſt, as might be proved likewiſe by *Heathen* Authors.

Q. *Do you apprehend that the Perſon at whoſe Houſe our Lord order'd the* Paſſover *to be made ready, knew him?*

A. It is to be obſerved, that the Houſes in *Jeruſalem*, at this Time of the Feaſt, were of common Right to any that would eat the *Paſſover* in them; and yet it is not unlikely, that our Lord might be well known to the Maſter of the Houſe; who, very probably, took it as an high Honour, that he had made Choice of his, rather than any other, to eat the *Paſchal* Supper in.

Q. *Pray what Poſture was uſed in eating the* Paſſover?

A. At the firſt Inſtitution of the *Paſchal Supper*, the *Iſraelites* were commanded to eat it in a ſtanding Poſture, and in haſte; but here we find our Saviour, and his Apoſtles, eating it lying down, or inclining on their Left-Side, as it was then the Manner of the *Jews*. When, or upon what Account, this Alteration came to be made, we have no other Information, than what we find in the Writings of their *Rabbins*, *viz.* that they uſed this leaning Poſture, as Freemen do, in Memory of their Freedom; and therefore, though at their ordinary Meals, they commonly ſat at Table, as we do; yet, whenever they were minded to regale themſelves, they uſed this Poſture of *Diſcumbency*, and eſpecially at the *Paſchal Supper*, no other was allowed. Thus lying on Beds, or Couches, made for that Purpoſe, with a Table before them, whereon they leaned, they ſtretched out their Feet behind them, thereby to remove the leaſt Shew of ſtanding to attend, or to go upon any one's Employment, which might carry in it any Colour of Servitude, or Contrariety to their Freedom. And from this Poſture of ſitting, or leaning upon a Table with their Elbow, one after another, we rightly underſtand thoſe Texts, which ſpeak of the beloved Apoſtle's leaning on the Boſom, or on the Breaſt of *Jeſus*, as the learned *Lightfoot*, in his

Diſcourſe of the Temple-Service has amply ſhewn.

Q. *Has it not been diſputed, whether* Judas *was actually preſent at the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper?*

A. It is a great Queſtion among the Antients, whether *Judas* was preſent, at our Lord's Inſtitution of the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, or abſented himſelf before. St. *Luke*'s Words, which are ſubſequent to the Inſtitution, *Behold, the Hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on tht Table,* Chap. xxii. 21. ſeem to imply that he was preſent, and partook of the *Euchariſt*; but many Commentators are of a contrary Opinion, *viz.* that after our Saviour had declared him to be the Man, who ſhould betray him (which was between the *Paſchal* and *Euchariſtical Supper*) he immediately left the Company, and went away; and that conſequently there is a Miſlocation in St. *Luke*'s Words.

Q. *Is there any Room to conclude, from our Saviour's Words, that the People are excluded from participating of the* Wine *in the Lord's Supper?*

A. The Reaſon which our Saviour gives for our participating of the Cup, *viz. Becauſe it is the Blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins,* concerns the Laity as well as the Prieſts, becauſe his Blood was equally ſhed for both; and therefore the Command, *Drink ye all of this,* to which the Reaſon is annexed, concerns them likewiſe. But there is another Reaſon, why our Lord ſaid to his Apoſtles, *Eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, viz.* that, by ſo doing, they might remember his Death, his Body broken, and his Blood equally ſhed for them, ſays St. *Luke*, and *ſhew it forth till his ſecond Coming,* 1 Cor. xi. 26. Now this, as St. *Paul* demonſtrates, concerns all Believers, as well as *Prieſts*, and therefore the *drinking of the Cup* (by which this Commemoration is made) as well as *eating of the Bread*, muſt equally concern them.

Q. *How are we to underſtand that Saying of* Chriſt *to his Diſciples, Verſe* 29. I will not drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine, until that Day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom?

A. Some are of Opinion, that by the *Kingdom of God* here (as in ſeveral other Places) we are not to underſtand Heaven, or the Happineſs we are there to enjoy, but rather the Goſpel-State, and the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, which began at his Reſurrection, and was more fully eſtabliſhed when *he ſat down at the Right-Hand of Power, and was made Heir of all Things*; and conſequently, that our Lord's drinking of Wine, may then relate to this *eating and drinking with his Diſciples, after he aroſe from the Dead,* Acts x. 41. But, becauſe the Felicities of Heaven are frequently repreſented under the Metaphors of eating and drinking, *Matth.* viii. 11. *Luke* ii. 30. Others make the Senſe of our Saviour's Words to be this, *I will not henceforth drink of the Fruit of the Vine, but both you and I, in my Father's Glory, ſhall be ſatisfied with Rivers of Pleaſure, far ſweeter, and more excellent than the richeſt Wines can be.* There is, however, a third Way of interpreting this Paſſage, which, by comparing it with the Words of St. *Luke*, ſeems by much the moſt probable; and that is, by making the Fruit of the Vine ſignify, in a peculiar Manner, the Cup in the Paſſover, or the Cup of Charity in the *Poſtcœnium* of the Paſſover, whereon the Sacraments of *Chriſt*'s Body and Blood were founded. For, that *Chriſt* was now to die, and neither before or after his Reſurrection, to eat any more Paſſovers with his Apoſtles, or any more to drink the Cup of Charity, now deſigned to a *Chriſtian* Uſe, is ſufficiently evident. It is obſervable, therefore, in St. *Luke*, Chap. xxii. 16. that the Words are directly applied to the *Paſſover*; *I have deſired to eat this Paſſover, for I will no more eat of it*; and by repeating the *Cup*, Verſe 18. the *Evangeliſt* muſt mean *the Cup of the Paſſover*, or the *ſacramental Cup of Charity*, which ſucceeded it; and conſequently our Saviour's Meaning muſt be, That he would no more uſe theſe typical Adumbrations, being himſelf now ready to perform what was ſignified and expreſſed by them, *i. e.* to paſs ſuddenly from Earth to Heaven, through a Red Sea of Blood, and there to compleat the Myſtery of the Sacrament, by uniting his Diſciples one to another, and making them all Partakers of his heavenly Riches.

Q. *What have Writers obſerved concerning the* Crowing of the Cock?

A. It is commonly remarked by profane Authors, that the Cock uſually crows twice in a Night; once about Midnight, and the ſecond Time at the fourth Watch of the Night, or much about Break of Day; that this latter, as being the louder and more obſervable, is that which is properly called *Cock-crowing*; and that, of this Crowing of the Cock, the *Evangeliſts* are to be underſtood, when they relate *Chriſt*'s Words thus *before the Cock crow* (*i. e.* before that Time of Night, which is emphatically ſo called) *thou ſhalt deny me thrice*, appears from St. *Mark*'s ſaying, that the Cock crowed after the firſt Denial of *Chriſt*, and crowed the ſecond Time, after his third Denial.

Q. *What uſeful Inſtructions does* Peter's *repeated Aſſurances that he would not forſake his Maſter, and his Failure afterwards, afford us?*

A. Though to be of good Cheer under Tribulation, does by no Means infer that Firmneſs of Mind, (as ſome Philoſophers of old miſcalled it) which preſerves a Man from being at all afflicted with Calamities, or moved from his uſual Eaſineſs of Temper; yet thus much it certainly means, That neither the Sharpneſs of any Afflictions we feel, nor the Terror of any we fear, ſhould ſo far vanquiſh our Reaſon and Religion, as to drive us upon unlawful Methods of declining the one, or delivering ourſelves from the other. We are to ſatisfy ourſelves in the Juſtice, the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of him, who orders all the Events that befal us; to entertain them all with Meekneſs and much Patience; to bring our Wills into Subjection to the divine Will; to rejoice in the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience; and to preſerve it at any Rate, though with the Hazard, nay, certain Loſs of all our worldly Advantages; and to ſet the Supports and Rewards of perſecuted Truth, and afflicted Piety, in Oppoſition to all the Diſcouragements and Preſſures from Abroad, and all the Frailties of feeble and too yielding Fleſh and Blood at Home.

We may be bold to affirm of St. *Peter*'s Reſolution, that it was an honeſt one, *i. e.* both as juſt in the Matter, and as ſincere in the Intention, as ever was made by Man, or ever ſhall be made to the End of the World; and yet this Reſolution miſcarried, and ended only in the Shame of the Reſolver. St. *Chryſoſtom* takes Notice of three

Faults that may be reckoned in it. Firſt, The little Conſideration *Peter* had of our Saviour's Predictions concerning his Fall. Secondly, The Preference which he gave himſelf above the reſt of his Brethren: And Thirdly, The Preſumption he place in his own Strength, inſtead of imploring Ability of him, whence all human Sufficiency is derived; and therefore the Son of God, ſays he, ſuffered him to fall, in order to cure his Arrogance and vain Confidence in himſelf.

Q. *From whence did* Gethſemane *derive its Name?*

A. The Garden of *Gethſemane*, which took its Name from the Wine-Preſſes in it (as Mr. *Maundrel* informs us) is an even Plat of Ground, not fifty ſeven Yards ſquare, lying between the Foot of Mount *Olivet*, and the Brook *Cedron*. It is well planted with Olive-Trees, and thoſe of ſo old a Growth, that they are believed to be the ſame that ſtood there in our Saviour's Time; but this is hardly poſſible. At the upper Corner of the Garden is a flat naked Ledge of Rock, ſuppoſed to be the Place on which the Apoſtles *Peter*, *James* and *John* fell aſleep, during our Lord's Agony: A few Paces from thence is a Grotto, in which he is ſaid to have undergone that bitter Part of his Paſſion; and (which is very remarkable) in the Midſt of the Garden there is a ſmall Slip of Ground, twelve Yards long, and one broad, reputed the very Path on which the Trayter *Judas* walked up to *Chriſt*, when he ſaid, *Hail Maſter*, and kiſſed him, which the *Turks* themſelves have walled in, as accounting the very Ground accurſed, on which was acted ſuch an infamous Tragedy.

Q. *To what End did* Chriſt *ſay to his drowſy Diſciples*, The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Fleſh is weak?

A. This was not intended as an Excuſe or Mitigation of the Apoſtles ſinful Neglect of their Maſter, but as a Motive to their Vigilance and Prayer, and ſeem to imply thus much, *You have all made large Promiſes*, that if you ſhould die with me, you would not forſake me; *and this you ſaid really, and with a Purpoſe to do it: Yet let me tell you, when the Temptation actually aſſaults, when Fear, Shame and Pain, the Danger of Puniſhment, and of Death, are within View, and preſent to your Senſe, the Weakneſs of the Fleſh will certainly prevail over theſe Reſolutions, if you uſe not the greateſt Vigilance, and do not pray with Fervency for the divine Aſſiſtance.*

Q. *What was the* Hymn *which* Chriſt *and his Diſciples ſung at his Supper?*

A. The *Hymn* ſung by our Lord and his Diſciples, at his laſt Supper, is thought by ſome to be Part of the great *Allelujah*, which begins at the cxiiith, and ends at the cxviiith *Pſalm*; and, by the *Jewiſh Rituals*, was ordered to be ſung conſtantly at the *Paſchal-Supper*. Others think that it was a different Hymn, compoſed by *Chriſt*, and accommodated to the particular Inſtitution of the *Euchariſt*: But *Grotius* is of Opinion, that it was no other than that Thankſgiving of his, which St. *John* has recorded in the xviith Chapter of his Goſpel. As our bleſſed Saviour, however, in all his religious Conduct was no Lover of Innovations, it ſeems more probable, that, upon this Occaſion, he made uſe of the *Pſalms* that were then cuſtomary in the *Jewiſh* Church; in which (as the *Jews* obſerve) are mentioned the Sorrows of the *Meſſiah*, and the Reſurrection of the Dead.

Q. *I deſire you to illuſtrate that Saying of our Saviour to* Judas, *Judas*, betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs, *Verſe* 18.

A. To betray in this Caſe, was equivalent to Murther. It was to deliver him into their Hands, who he knew, both from common Rumour, and his Maſter's own Words, *Matt.* xvi. 21. had a Deſign upon his Life; and therefore this could not be done without expreſs Malice. But Secondly, This Betrayer was a Servant, one who had given up his Name and Faith to our Lord, and done himſelf the Honour, at leaſt, if no other Benefit, to preach his Goſpel, and to work Miracles by the Power of his Commiſſion; and therefore, for ſuch a one to betray him, could not be done without great Perfidiouſneſs. Thirdly, The Perſon betray'd is called the *Son of Man*, which is both the humbleſt and moſt obliging of our Saviour's Titles, and implies, that even to *Judas* himſelf he had always been a kind and gracious Maſter, had treated him with the ſame Advice and Overtures, that he had done to the reſt of the Twelve; and therefore to betray him was high Ingratitude. Fourthly and laſtly, to betray him with a Kiſs, which all the World had been uſed to interpret as a conſtant Symbol either of Love or Homage, (both which his Maſter had ſo well merited at his Hands) and now to make this a Signal of his Treaſon, was to play a Piece of the moſt groſs Hypocriſy. So ſevere is the Accuſation, which our Lord brings againſt this abandoned Apoſtle, tho' expreſſed in the mildeſt Terms!

Q. *In what Senſe do we underſtand the* 52d. *Verſe?*

A. Our Saviour's Words to *Peter*, are theſe, *Put up thy Sword into its Place, for all that take the Sword, ſhall periſh by the Sword.* But this Rebuke we muſt not underſtand as an abſolute forbidding all Manner of uſing the Sword among *Chriſtians*, but only as teaching us the great Duty of Submiſſion to the Powers that are ſet over us. One private Perſon is, no doubt, in Defence of himſelf againſt the Aſſault of another private Perſon, permitted to unſheath his Sword; but if it be once granted, that private Perſons, when they think themſelves injured by Magiſtrates, may take up the Sword againſt them, Tumults would be endleſs, and the Authority of the Laws, and the Deciſion of Judges precarious: *If therefore neither the Malice of the* Jews, *nor the Innocence of our Lord; if neither the Truth of our Religion, perſecuted in its Founder, nor the apparent Marks of Malice and Envy, of Violence and Oppreſſion, which appeared in the whole Courſe of their Perſecution of him, were ſufficient to warrant St.* Peter *to draw the Sword in his Defence, againſt the legal Authority, by which they acted, we muſt conclude, that neither will any of theſe Pretences ſuffice to juſtify any other* Chriſtians *in the like Circumſtances now: But if it pleaſes* God, *at any Time, to permit the lawful Powers to be againſt us, we muſt patiently ſubmit to their Authority, and not, with this warm Apoſtle, draw the Sword againſt thoſe, to whom God has committed the Power of the Sword.* It may be queſtioned, however, whether this is the true Import of the Words, which *Grotius* and ſome others have interpreted: *Put up thy Sword; there is no need for thy uſing it in my Defence, againſt* *the Injuries of the* Jews; *for, by God's Sentence and Decree, they who take the Sword, to ſhed the Blood of the Innocent, ſhall periſh by the Sword; and this the* Jews *ſhall find, by the tremendous Vengeance, which the Sword of the* Romans *ſhall execute upon them for this Fact.* Which Interpretation is confirmed by what we read in *Rev.* xiii. 10. *He that killeth with the Sword, muſt be killed with the Sword.* Here is the Ground *of the Faith and Patience of the Saints,* viz. that that God, to whom Vengeance belongs, will plead their Cauſe, and recompence Vengeance to their Enemies.

Q. *Our Lord, in his farther Anſwer to* Peter, *ſays, that by praying to the Father, he could be aſſiſted with more than* twelve Legions of Angels; *pray what Number of Men made up a* Legion?

A. A *Legion,* in the *Roman* Militia, was a Body of Men conſiſting of 7500; compoſed each of ten *Cohorts,* as a Cohort was of fifty *Maniples,* and a Maniple of fifteen Men; ſo that twelve Legions would amount to ſeventy-two Thouſand Angels; but in this our Saviour means no more than a great Number.

Q. *In the 57th Verſe it is ſaid, that they led* Jeſus *away to* Caiaphas *the High-prieſt; but* John *ſays,* Chap. xviii. 13. *that* they led him away to *Annas* firſt: *How do you explain this Difficulty?*

A. *Annas* (who by *Joſephus* is called *Ananus*) had been High-prieſt, enjoying that Dignity for eleven Years! and, even after he was depoſed, retained ſtill the Title, and had a great Share of the Management of all publick Affairs. When *John the Baptiſt* entered upon the Exerciſe of his Miniſtry, he is called the High-prieſt in Conjunction with *Caiaphas,* Luke iii. 2. though, at that Time, he did not act in that Character; and, when our Saviour was apprehended, he was firſt brought to his Houſe, according to St. *John,* Chap. xviii. 14. though the other *Evangeliſts* paſs that over in Silence, becauſe there was nothing done to him there; and it looks, as if he had been only detained there, until the Council, met at the Houſe of *Caiaphas,* was ready for him.

Q. *The High-prieſt here* adjures Chriſt *to tell him who he was: Of what Uſe or Significancy were theſe* ſolemn Adjurations *in thoſe antient Times?*

A. The *Jews* in general, but eſpecially their Judges and Magiſtrates, had a Cuſtom of adjuring by the Name of God, or of exacting an Oath of thoſe, whoſe Crimes did not ſufficiently appear by the Evidence of Witneſſes, or any other Means. The Perſon, thus interrogated, was obliged to ſpeak Truth; and, in all doubtful Caſes, his Confeſſion, or Denial, was deciſive, either to acquit or condemn himſelf.

Q. *When the High-prieſt heard* Chriſt's *Anſwer, he* rent his Cloaths; *What might that intimate?*

A. The Rending the Cloaths was a Token of Indignation, holy Zeal, and Piety, among the *Jews,* expreſſed on ſeveral Occaſions, eſpecially of Grief, in Humiliation; and of Anger, on hearing any blaſphemous Speech. This however was forbidden the High-prieſt, not only as to his ſacerdotal Veſtments, but alſo as to his other Garments, becauſe he was not to appear before God in the Habit of a Mourner; but they, by their Traditions, had ſo qualified that Precept, as to allow him to rend his Cloaths at the Bottom, though he was not permitted to do it from the Top to the Breaſt.

From the High-prieſt's rending his Cloaths, as ſuppoſing *Chriſt* had ſpoke the groſſeſt Blaſphemy, we may obſerve, that the *Jews* of that Age did not think, that the *Meſſiah* was to be GOD, but only a *Man,* who could not challenge to himſelf *Divinity;* ſeeing they never concluded our Lord to be a Blaſphemer, becauſe he ſaid he was the *Chriſt,* but only becauſe he ſaid he *was the Son of God,* and thereby made himſelf *equal with God.*

Q. *Is it not reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that* Peter, *ever afterwards, remembered the* Crowing of the Cock?

A. It is reported of St. *Peter,* that, ever after, when he heard the Cock crow, he wept, remembring the old Inſtrument of his Repentance and Converſion, and his own Unworthineſs, for which he never ceaſed to do Acts of Sorrow and Penance.

Q. *How was it that* Peter *was ſuſpected for a* Galilean *by his Tongue?*

A. The *Galileans* ſpake the ſame Language that the reſt of the *Jews* did; but then they had a certain uncouth Accent, and Manner of Expreſſion, which diſtinguiſhed them from others, and made them be contemned and ridiculed by the Natives of *Judea.*

Q. *Will* Peter's *Denial of* Chriſt *with* Oaths and Curſes, *admit of any Mitigation?*

A. Some of the Antients have taken great Pains to extenuate the horrid Oaths and Imprecations of St. *Peter,* with which he denied *Chriſt.* St. *Ambroſe* on *Luke,* and *Hilary* on *Matthew,* both aſſert, that the Apoſtle did not lye, in ſaying, *I know not the Man,* but only diſguiſed the Truth, renouncing *Chriſt* in the Quality of a *Man,* but not as the *Son of God.* But this (according to St. *Jerom*) *is to defend the Servant, by accuſing the Maſter of a Lye;* for if St. *Peter* did not actually deny him, our Lord muſt have falſly affirmed, *thou ſhalt deny me thrice.* The Opinion of thoſe therefore is rather to be embraced, who acknowledge that St. *Peter,* by denying *Chriſt* with his Mouth, committed a mortal Sin, and fell from Grace; and, as it is certain, that, by confirming this Denial with an Oath, and adding horrid Execrations to it, his Sin was highly aggravated, inſtead of accounting (as ſome do) his Denial a Sin of Infirmity, wherein his Heart was true, though his Mouth was falſe, we can hardly think, that he could do all this without great Checks of his Conſcience; and that, conſequently, for the preſent, he was in a State of Defection, though his bitter Weeping, and quick Repentance, after that *Chriſt* had looked upon him, might, thro' Mercy, make an Attonement for his Tranſgreſſion.

CHAP. XXVII.

The Chief Prieſts take Counſel againſt Jeſus, *deliver him bound to* Pilate. Judas *repents, throws down the Pieces of Silver, and hangs himſelf; they diſpoſe of it.* Chriſt *arraigned and accuſed before* Pilate, *who is cautioned by his Wife to have nothing to do with him. The Rulers prefer* Barabbas *to* Chriſt. Pilate, *waſhing his Hands, declares his Innocence; they imprecate the Guilt upon themſelves and their Children.* Chriſt *delivered to be crucified. The Soldiers abuſe him. He is crowned with Thorns, mocked, and crucified, and two Thieves with him. Darkneſs over all the Land; he yields up the Ghoſt; the Veil of the Temple rent; Graves open; dead Saints ariſe. The Centurion's Confeſion.* Joſeph *begs the Body of* *of* Jeſus, *and buries it in his new Tomb. The Rulers ſeal the Stone, and ſet a Watch.*

Q. IN *the laſt Chapter we have an Account of an* Aſſembly *wherein* Chriſt *was examined and found guilty; here the Chief Prieſts and Elders are aſſembled again; or was it the ſame Court of Juſtice that ſat the Night before?*

A. The Aſſembly which was held the Night before, and wherein our Saviour was declared worthy of Death, was neither *general* nor *judicial*, according to the Senſe of the Law, which did not allow of Juſtice to be adminiſtred in private, or in the Night-time; and therefore the High-prieſts and Rulers met again in the Morning, in the Council-Chamber in the Temple (which they could not do the Night before, becauſe the Temple was then always ſhut) there to re-examine our Saviour, and condemn him in Form.

Q. *Where-abouts ſtood the Houſe of* Pontius Pilate?

A. At *Jeruſalem* the People ſhew you, at this Time, the Palace of *Pilate*, or rather the Place, where they ſay it ſtood; for now an ordinary *Turkiſh* Houſe poſſeſſes its Room. In this pretended Houſe (which ſtands not far from St. *Stephen*'s Gate, and borders on the *Area* of the Temple, on the *North* Side) they ſhew you a Room, in which *Chriſt* was mocked with the Enſigns of Royalty, and buffeted by the Soldiers; and, on the other Side of the Street (which was antiently another Part of the Palace) is the Room, where they ſay our Lord was ſcourged.

Q. *Of what Family and Country was* Pilate?

A. It is not certainly known of what Family, or Country, this Governor, *Pontius Pilate*, was, tho' it is generally believed that he was of *Rome*, at leaſt of *Italy*. He ſucceeded *Gratius* in the Government of *Judea*, in which he continued for ten Years, *i. e.* from the Twelfth, to the Twenty-ſecond of *Tyberius*, and is repreſented by *Philo* (*de Legatione ad Caium*) as a Man of an impetuous and obſtinate Temper; and a Judge, who uſed to ſell Juſtice, and, for Money, pronounce any Sentence that was deſired. The ſame Author makes mention of his Rapines, his Injuries, his Murthers, the Torment he inflicted upon the Innocent, and the Perſons he put to Death without any Form of Proceſs. In ſhort, he deſcribes him as a Man that exerciſed an exceſſive Cruelty, during the whole Time of his Government, from which he was depoſed by *Vitellius*, the Proconſul of *Syria*; arriving at *Rome*, the Emperor *Caligula* baniſhed him to *Vienna* in *Gaul*, where he was reduced to ſuch Extremity, that he killed himſelf with his own Hands. The Evangeliſts call him the *Governor* (though, properly ſpeaking, he was no more than the *Procurator* of *Judæa*) not only becauſe Governor was a Name of general Uſe, but becauſe *Pilate* acted as one, by taking upon him to judge in criminal Matters, as his Predeceſſors had done, and other *Procurators* in the ſmall Provinces of the Empire, where there was no *Proconſul*, conſtantly did.

Q. *What Remark do you make on the Death of* Judas?

A. Such is the Purchaſe of Treaſon, and the Reward of Covetouſneſs. It is cheap in its Offers, momentary in its Poſſeſſion, unſatiſfying in its Fruition, uncertain in its Stay, ſudden in its Departure, horrid in the Remembrance, and a Ruin, a certain and miſerable Ruin in the Event.

Though the original Words for *he went and hanged himſelf* may perhaps mean no more, than his falling into a violent ſuffocating Fit of Sadneſs and Deſpair, which might ſtop all the natural Paſſages, and ſo, for want of Vent, make him burſt aſunder, and his Guts break out at his Navel; yet to me, the moſt natural and obvious Signification of the Word is preferable. The only Difficulty is, how to reconcile his *hanging of himſelf*, with what is elſewhere recorded of him, *viz.* that, *falling headlong, he burſt aſunder in the midſt, and all his Bowels guſhed out*, Acts i. 18. But to this Purpoſe the Conjectures of ſeveral have been various. Some think, that he hanged himſelf on a Tree, but that the Branch yielding, and bending to the Ground, he was not, at that Time, ſtrangled, but afterwards fell into a Dropſy, of which he burſt and died. Others imagine, that he threw himſelf from ſome Place, higher than that on which he intended to hang himſelf, and that by the Force of the Swing, when he caſt himſelf off, the Rope broke, ſo that he fell to the Ground and burſt. Others ſuppoſe, that, as he might hang himſelf in ſome private Place, he probably there continued, until his Belly ſwelled (as it commonly happens to ſuch as die in that Manner) and, in a ſhort Time, his Bowels burſt out: And for this they have the Authority of ſome Copies, which, inſtead of *falling down headlong*, have, *thus hanging, he burſt aſunder, and all his Bowels guſhed out*. But, in whatever Manner this came to paſs, we cannot ſee, why, in this extraordinary Inſtance, we may not admit of more than ordinary Providence, to make the Death of this Traitor more remarkable.

Q. *Why was it* not lawful *for the* Jews *to put the Money, with which* Judas *had ſold his Maſter, into the Common Treaſury?*

A. It was a Cuſtom among the *Jews*, which was afterwards imitated by the firſt *Chriſtians*, that it ſhould not be lawful for Executioners to offer any Thing, or for any Alms to be received of them; and ſo, by Analogy, any Money with which a Life was bought, was not to be put into the Treaſury.

Q. *Where lay the* Potter's Field, *which was bought with this Money?*

A. The Valley of *Jehoſhaphat* runs croſs the Mouth of another Valley, called the Valley of *Hinnon*, lying at the Bottom of Mount *Sion*. On the *Weſt-ſide* of this Valley is the Place called *the Potters Field*, where, not improbably, the People of that Trade were uſed to dry their Pots, before they baked them. It was afterwards called *the Field of Blood*, for the Reaſon that the *Evangeliſt* aſſigns; but at preſent, from that Veneration which it has obtained among *Chriſtians*, it is named *Campo Sancto*, or the *Holy Field*. It is a ſmall Plat of Ground, not above thirty Yards long, and about half as much broad; and one Moiety of it is taken up by a ſquare Fabrick, about twelve Yards high, built for a Charnel-houſe, and covered over with a Vault, in which are ſome Openings, to let down the Bodies that are to be buried there. The Earth muſt certainly be impregnated with a very corroſive Salt, if what ſome tell us be true, *viz.* that it can diſſolve a Body in the Space of twenty-fours. Thoſe however, who have looked down through the Openings, tell us, that they could ſee many Bodies under ſeveral Degrees of Decay, from whence they conjectured, that this Grave does not make ſuch quick Diſpatch with the Corps committed to it, as is commonly reported. The *Armenians* have the Command of this Burying-place, for which they pay to the *Turks* a Rent of a *Zequin* a Day; and, a little below the *Campo Santo*, is ſhewn an intricate Cave, or a Sepulchre, conſiſting of ſeveral Rooms, one within another, in which the Apoſtles are ſaid to have hid themſelves, when they forſook their Maſter, and fled.

Q. *What Sort of Strangers were deſigned to be buried in this Field?*

A. The Strangers, for whom the *Potters Field* was deſigned a Burying-place, may be either Men of other Nations, with whom the *Jews* would have no Commerce, even when they were dead, and therefore provided a ſeparate Burying-place for them; or they might be *Jews*, who, coming from far to *Jeruſalem* to ſacrifice, died there, before their Return Home, and ſo the Prieſts provided a Burying-place for them.

Q. *Was the Cuſtom of* releaſing *ſome notorious Offender at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, practiced before this Time?*

A. As the Feaſt of the *Paſſover* was celebrated by the *Jews* in Memory of their Deliverance from *Egyptian* Bondage, it was very agreeable to the Nature of that Feaſt, and therefore cuſtomary at that Time (tho' practiſed on no other Feſtivals) to make this Releaſe. It is obſerved however, that this Practice was no Cuſtom of the *Jews*, even when they had the Civil Adminiſtration in their Hands, but a Piece of Popularity, or Favour of the Procurator, firſt brought in by *Pilate*, and afterwards continued by ſome *Chriſtian* Emperors, who, by a general Law, commanded the Judges, that, on the firſt Day of the *Paſſover*, not all *Jewiſh* Priſoners, but ſuch as were committed for particular Crimes, ſhould be diſcharged.

Q. *Who was* Pilate*'s Wife; and how came ſhe to have ſuch an extraordinary Dream concerning our Saviour?*

A. From the Time of *Tiberius*, the Governors of Provinces were allowed to take their Wives along with them, which was a Privilege not granted them before. This Wife of *Pilate's*, according to the general Tradition, was named *Claudia Proſcula*; and, in Relation to her Dream, ſome are of Opinion, that as ſhe had Intelligence of our Lord's Apprehenſion, and knew, by his Character, that he was a righteous Perſon, her Imagination, being ſtruck with theſe Ideas, did naturally produce the Dream we read of. But, as our Saviour was apprehended about Midnight, out of the City, and without *Pilate*'s Privity, and detained in the Houſe of *Annas*, until it was Day, there was no Poſſibility for her having any Notice of it; therefore we have the juſter Reaſon to believe, that this Dream was ſent providentially unto her, for the clearer Manifeſtation of our Lord's Innocence.

Q. Pilate, *to declare his Innocence of the Blood of* Jeſus, *whoſe Life the* Jews *were reſolute to have,* waſhed his Hands; *pray was this grounded on a* Jewiſh *or* Gentile *Cuſtom?*

A. *Waſhing of Hands*, with a Deſign to denote *Innocency*, was not peculiar only to the *Jews*, but cuſtomary among other Nations; becauſe by the Element of Water it is natural to ſignify Purity and Cleanneſs: But then the Queſtion is, Whether, in Conformity to the *Jews* or *Gentiles*, it was, that *Pilate* made uſe of this Ceremony? To expiate an unknown Murder, the Elders of the next adjacent City were wont to waſh their Hands, and ſay, *Our Hands have not ſhed this Blood*, Deut. xxi. 6, 7. and the *Pſalmiſt*, having renounced all Confederacy with wicked and miſchievous Men, makes this Reſolution, *I will waſh my Hands*, in Teſtimony of *my Innocency*, Pſal. xxvi. 6. From which Paſſages *Origen* is of Opinion, that *Pilate* did this in Compliance with the Manners of the *Jews*; that by *Actions*, as well as Words, he might declare to them the Opinion he had of our Lord's Innocence. But, as *Pilate* was a *Roman*, others are rather inclined to think, that, in this Action, he conformed himſelf to the Manners of the *Gentiles*. The *Scholiaſt* upon *Sophocles* (in *Ajace*) informs us, that it was the Cuſtom among the Antients, when they had killed a Man, or ſhed Blood, to waſh their Hands in Water, thereby to purify them from their Defilements. Nay, *Clemens Romanus* informs us, (lib. ii. c. 52.) that, when Judges were going to pronounce Sentence of Death, they uſually lift up their Hands to Heaven, thereby to denote their own Innocency; and 'tis not improbable, that they waſhed their Hands before they did ſo, that they might lift them up with the more Purity.

Q. *Pray give ſome Account of the Puniſhment by* Crucifixion?

A. Crucifixion was a Death, the moſt dreadful of all others, both for the Shame, and the Pain of it. So ſcandalous, that it was inflicted, as the laſt Mark of Deteſtation, upon the vileſt of People. It was the Puniſhment of Robbers, and Murtherers, provided that they were *Slaves* too; but otherwiſe, if they were *free*, and had the Privileges of the City of *Rome*, this was then thought a Proſtitution of that Honour, and too infamous a Puniſhment for ſuch an one, let his Crimes have been what they would. The *Form* of a Croſs was that of two Poſts, cutting one and other at right Angles. On that which ſtood upright, the Body was faſtened, by nailing the Feet to it, and on the other tranſverſe Piece, by nailing the Hands on each Side. Now becauſe theſe Parts of the Body, being the Inſtruments of Action and Motion, are provided by Nature with a much greater Quantity of Nerves than others have Occaſion for, and becauſe all Senſation is performed by the Spirits contained in theſe Nerves, it will follow, that wherever they abound, the Senſe of Pain, muſt needs, in Proportion, be more quick and tender. But though the Pain of this kind of Death was exceedingly ſharp, yet, as none of the Vitals were immediately affected, the Body continued, thus ſtretched out, and hanging upon the Nails, that faſtened it to the Croſs, until Exceſs of Anguiſh had, by Degrees, quite exhauſted the Spirits, and driven out the Soul, which muſt needs make the Death, which our Saviour ſubmitted to for our Sakes, ſlow and lingring, as well as painful and ignominious: So lingering, that St. *Andrew* was two whole Days upon the Croſs; and ſome other Martyrs have been rather ſtarved, and devoured by Birds, than killed with the Torments of the Tree.

Q. *Who was this* Simon *who bore the Croſs of* Chriſt, *and in what Country was the City* Cyrene, *from whence he came?*

A. *Libya*, in its proper Acceptation, denotes thoſe Parts of the *African* Continent, which lie about

bout the *Mediterranean* Sea, from *Egypt Eaſtward,* to the greater *Syrtis,* or *Gulph of Sidra, Weſtward.* In the *Weſtern* Part of this *Libya* ſtood *Cyrene,* a City of great Note, and once of ſuch Power, as to contend with *Carthage* for Pre-eminence: But whether this *Simon,* whom the Soldiers compelled to carry our Saviour's Croſs, was a *Jew* or *Pagan,* is a Queſtion that hath been diſputed among the Antients. Several Fathers have thought that he was a *Gentile,* and that herein he was a Type of that idolatrous People, who were afterwards to be called to the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, and to carry the Croſs after *Chriſt.* But others, from his Name, rather imagine that he was a *Jew,* and that, as there were great Numbers of that Nation in *Egypt,* and the Neighbouring Countries, this *Simon* might be one, whoſe Habitation was at *Cyrene* in *Libya,* but was now come up to *Jeruſalem,* at the Time of the Paſſover. He is called by St. *Mark,* Chap. xv. 21. the Father of *Alexander* and *Rufus,* becauſe theſe two Perſons were become famous in the *Chriſtian* Church, at the Time when this Apoſtle wrote his Goſpel; but whether he himſelf was, at this Time, a Diſciple of *Chriſt,* and afterwards Biſhop of *Boſtra* in *Arabia,* where he ſuffered Martyrdom, by being burnt alive by the *Pagans,* is much to be queſtioned, though ſome have aſſerted it; but not, I fear, from ſufficient Authority.

Q. *The Place where our Saviour was crucified, was* Golgotha: *Why was it ſo called, and whereabouts did it lie?*

A. Golgotha, in the *Syriac,* (vulgarly called the *Hebrew* Tongue) ſignifies the ſame that *Calvary* does in *Latin,* and was ſo called, either becauſe the Form of the Mount did ſomewhat reſemble a Man's Skull, or rather, becauſe it being the common Place of Execution, a great Number of dead Mens Skulls were uſually ſeen there. It is a ſmall Eminency, or Hill upon the greater Mount of *Moriah*; and, as it was anciently appropriated to the Execution of Malefactors, it was therefore ſhut out of the Walls of the City, as an execrable and polluted Place; but, ſince it was made the Altar, on which was offered up the precious and all-ſufficient Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World, it has recovered itſelf from that Infamy; and has always been reverenced, and reſorted to by *Chriſtians,* with ſuch Devotion, as has drawn the City round about it, ſo that it now ſtands in the midſt of *Jeruſalem,* and a great Part of the Hill of *Sion* is ſhut out of the Walls, to make Room for the Admiſſion of Mount *Calvary*; and this the rather, becauſe it was a Tradition generally received by the primitive *Chriſtians,* that the *firſt,* as well as the *ſecond Adam,* was buried here; and that this was the Place where *Abraham* was about to have offered his Son *Iſaac,* the Type of our bleſſed Lord.

Q. *The* Evangeliſts *ſeem to vary in their Account of the Potion that was given to* Chriſt. *St.* Matthew *ſays, it was* Wine mingled with Gall; *St. Mark,* Wine mingled with Myrrh; *pray explain this Difficulty?*

A. Interpreters, and others, vary very much about the Paſſage concerning the offering our Lord Wine mixed with Gall, taking it two different Ways, as St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* ſeem to expreſs it, that in St. *Matthew*'s Senſe, *Vinegar mingled with Gall,* was a bitter poiſonous Draught, to ſtupiſy the Perſon who drank it, that by benumming his Senſes he might feel leſs Pain. Thoſe that differ from this, ſay, that by the Piety of ſome of the Diſciples, and not improbably of ſome of thoſe good Women who uſed to miniſter to *Jeſus,* there was prepared *Wine mingled with Myrrh,* which, according to *Pliny,* among the *Levantines,* was an excellent and pleaſant Mixture, and ſuch as the Piety and Indulgence of theſe Nations uſed to adminiſter to condemed Perſons, to fortify their drooping Spirits againſt the Terrors of approaching Death. But ſtill there is a Difference between the two *Evangeliſts,* ſince the former affirms, that the Potion offered to our Saviour was *Vinegar mingled with Gall,* the latter, *Wine mingled with Myrrh*; and, to reconcile this, the eaſieſt Way is to ſay (with our learned Dr. *Lightfoot*) that there were two Cups offered to our Lord, at the Time of his Paſſion, one of *Wine mingled with Myrrh,* by ſome of his Friends, before he was nailed to the Croſs, and the other of *Vinegar,* by the Soldiers, in a ſcoffing and inſulting Manner, after he was nailed to the Croſs; which is better than to ſay, with ſome great Men, that the antient Tranſlator of St. *Matthew* from the *Hebrew* or *Syriack,* miſtaking the Word *Marra,* which properly ſignifies *Bitterneſs,* might put *Gall* (which in *Syriack* is *Marar,* and derived from the ſame Root) inſtead of *Myrrh.*

Q. *Who were the* two Malefactors *that were crucified with our Saviour?*

A. The Malefactors here mentioned, were probably ſome of thoſe factious and ſeditious Gangs, which *Judea,* at this Time was full of. Under Pretence of publick Liberty, they committed all Manner of Violence and Outrage; and, ſtirring up the People againſt the *Roman* Government, drew upon the Nation all the Calamity which afterwards befel it. As it was cuſtomary to crucify ſeveral Malefactors at the ſame Time, eſpecially if convicted of the ſame Crimes, our Saviour, who was accuſed by the *Jews* of ſeditious Practices, had two, who were really guilty of that Crime, executed with him; and they placed him in the midſt, as in the moſt honourable Place, purely in Deriſion, and with the ſame malevolent Spirit, that made them array him in a purple Robe, a Scepter, and a Crown.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the* Inſcription *that* Pilate *ordered to be fixed on the Croſs?*

A. The Inſcription which *Pilate* ordered to be fixed on the Top of our Saviour's Croſs, was in the three moſt general Languages; in *Hebrew* or the *Syriac,* which was then the common Language of the Country; in *Greek,* which was the Language of Commerce almoſt all the *Eaſt* over; and *Latin,* becauſe of the Majeſty of the *Roman* Empire, which, at that Time extended its Dominion over the then known World. The whole Inſcription, however, is ſaid to have been written after the *Jewiſh* Manner, *i. e.* from the Right-hand to the Left, that it might be more legible to the *Jews,* though, by converſing with the *Romans,* they began now to underſtand a little *Latin.*

Q. *In the 44th Verſe it is ſaid, that* the Thieves caſt the ſame in his Teeth; *in* Luke xxiii. 39. *that* one of the Malefactors reviled him: *But how do you reconcile this Difference?*

A. This ſeeming Contradiction Commentators reconcile, by ſhewing that it was a common Thing in the *Hebrew* Stile, to uſe the plural Number inſtead of the ſingular: As when it is ſaid, that the Ark reſted on the Mountains of *Ararat*, Gen. viii. 4. *i. e.* on one of the Mountains, and that *God overthrew the Cities where* Lot *dwelt*, Gen. xix. 29. when he could only dwell in one at a Time; with ſeveral other Examples, both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*. But I ſee no Reaſon why we may not underſtand this Paſſage as St. *Chryſoſtom* and St. *Jerom* have done, *viz.* *That both of the Thieves did, at firſt, rail on* Jeſus, *probably thinking, by that Artifice to obtain ſome Help towards procuring their Pardon; but being diſappointed of their Hopes, and hearing* Jeſus *pray for his Crucifiers, one of them was thereby prevailed upon and converted:* Eſpecially ſince, according to this Interpretation, the Operations of God's Grace upon this Man's Mind, were more more ſudden and ſtrong, and his Converſion more miraculous.

Q. *In what Senſe do you interpret the latter Clauſe of the 46th Verſe?*

A. The Words are, *Eli! Eli! Lamaſabacthani; My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Theſe Words are taken from the twenty ſecond *Pſalm*, which is allowed, by all Commentators, to relate to the *Meſſiah*; for which Reaſon our Saviour made uſe of them, rather than any other, to evidence his Title to that Character. Now, in the *Hebrew* Way of ſpeaking, it is certain that God is ſaid to leave or forſake any Perſon, when he ſuffers him to fall into great Calamities, and lie under great Misfortunes, and does not help him out of them. To this Purpoſe *Zion*, having been long afflicted, is brought in by *Iſaiah*, complaining *the Lord hath forſaken me, the Lord hath forgotten me*, Chap. xlix. 14. And as the royal *Pſalmiſt* is very frequent in ſuch Complaints, ſo he explains the Senſe of them, when he addreſſes himſelf to God, *Why art thou ſo far from my Prayer*, ſo that tho' *I cry in the Day-Time, thou heareſt not?* Pſalm xxii. 1, 2. That *David* was not fallen into any Deſpondency, is manifeſt from his calling God ſo fiducially his God; and that our bleſſed Saviour was not (as ſome think) under any Failure of his Truſt in God, or any Perturbation of Spirit from the Senſe of divine Wrath, is evident from his ſaying of his ſuffering Condition, *it is finiſhed*, and from the very Words, wherein he breathed his laſt, *Father, into thy Hands I commit my Spirit.*

Q. *To what Purpoſe did they offer to give our Saviour* Vinegar in a Spunge?

A. The Vinegar and Spunge, in Executions of condemned Perſons, were ſet ready to ſtop the too violent Flux of Blood, that the Malefactor might be the longer in dying, but to the bleſſed *Jeſus* they were exhibited with Scorn; for being mingled with Gall, the Mixture was more horrid and unpleaſant.

Q. *Why did the By-ſtanders imagine that* Chriſt *called upon* Elias *to aſſiſt him?*

A. There was a Tradition among the *Jews*, that it was *Elias*'s proper Office to come and ſuccour ſuch as were in Miſery: And, accordingly, ſome of the *Jews*, either deceived with the Reſemblance of the Words, thought that our Lord called *Elias* to his Help; or elſe giving a malicious Turn to the Senſe of the Words, which they well enough underſtood, they inſulted him, for his calling in vain *Elias* to his Help.

Q. *Give ſome Account of the* Veil of the Temple, *which was rent on this tremendous Occaſion?*

A. In the ſecond Temple, between the *Holy Place*, and the *Moſt Holy* (ſays *Maimonides*) there was no Partition-wall, tho' in the firſt Temple there was one, built of the Thickneſs of a Cubit. The Diviſion between them was made by two Veils, one from the Extremity of the *Holy Place*, and the other from the Extremity of the *Moſt Holy*, with a void Space of a Cubit between. The like Form of Separation was obſerved in the Temple which *Herod* rebuilt, as *Joſephus* informs us; and therefore it muſt be a Miſtake in thoſe, who think that this Veil was a Partition-Wall of Stones. Whether of the two Veils, that which belonged to the *Holy Place*, or that which hung in the *Moſt Holy*, was, at this Time rent in twain, is a Queſtion among the Antients, though the Words of the Author to the *Hebrews*, where he tells us, that *Chriſt*, as our High-prieſt, *has conſecrated for us a new Way through the Vail*, ſo that we may with *Boldneſs, enter into the Holieſt by the Blood of* Jeſus, *Heb.* x. 19, *&c.* ſeems to be a pretty clear Determination of it.

Q. *It is ſaid, Verſe* 51. *that* the Earth did quake, and the Rocks rent; *are there yet remaining any Traces or Footſteps of that Earthquake?*

A. In the Church of the Sepulchre (which ſtands on *Mount Calvary*) is ſtill to be ſeen that memorable Cleft in the Rock, occaſioned, as it is ſaid, by the Earthquake which happened at our Lord's Crucifixion. This Cleft as to what now appears of it) is about a Span wide at its upper Part, and two deep. After this it cloſes; but then it opens again below, and runs down to an unknown Depth of Earth. That this Rent was made by the Earthquake which happened at our Lord's Paſſion, there is only Tradition to prove: But that it is a natural and genuine Breach, and not counterfeited by any Art, the Senſe and Reaſon of every one, that ſees it, may convince him; for the Sides of it fit like two Tallies to each other, and yet it runs in ſuch intricate Windings, as could not be well counterfeited by Art, or performed by any Inſtrument.

Q. *It is farther ſaid, Ver.* 52. *that* the Graves were opened, and many Bodies of Saints which ſlept aroſe: *I pray who were theſe Saints?*

A. Since St. *Paul* ſtiles our Saviour *the Firſt-Born from the Dead*, Col. i. 18. and *the firſt Fruit of them that ſlept*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. moſt Commentators are of Opinion, though ſeveral Tombs were opened, as ſoon as our Saviour expired, yet none of the Saints aroſe, until he returned from the Grave: But then, who theſe Saints were, is no eaſy Matter to conjecture. Some think, that the *Man after God's own Heart*, King *David*, or ſome of the antient Patriarchs, might beſt deſerve this Pre-eminence: But on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, St. *Peter* tells the *Jews* plainly, that the Body of *David* was ſtill in its Sepulchre, and not *aſcended into Heaven*, Acts ii. 29, 34. and St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, tells us of the Patriarchs, that *they had not received the Promiſe, God having deſigned, that they, without us, ſhould not be made perfect*, Heb. xi. 29,34. The moſt probable Conjecture therefore, is, that they were ſome of thoſe who believed in *Jeſus*, (as old *Simeon* did) and died a little before his Crucifixion; becauſe of theſe it is ſaid, that they *went into the Holy City, and appeared to many*, and ſo, very probably were well known to thoſe, to whom they appeared, as having been their Contemporaries.

Q. *Who was the* Centurion, *that upon ſeeing the Miracles which attended this Execution, made that generous Confeſſion,* Truly this was the *Son of God?*

A. The Centurion who attended at *Chriſt*'s Crucifixion, according to ſome, was named *Longinus*; and the Tradition is, That, upon his Converſion to the Chriſtian Faith, being expelled from the *Roman* Army wherein he ſerved, he returned to *Cappadocia*, where he began to preach *Jeſus Chriſt*, but was there beheaded, and his Head carried to *Pilate*. But all this ſeems to be a Fable, for which there is no Foundation in Hiſtory.

Q. *What is here ſignified by the Expreſſion,* the Son of God?

A. That *the Son of God* did not always ſignify one, who was ſo by eternal Generation, but only one that was his beloved and adopted Son, is apparent from hence, that what is here called *the Son of God*, is, in St. *Luke* xxiii. 47. ſaid to be a juſt Man. For though the *Jews* very well knew, from the ſecond *Pſalm*, that their *Meſſiah* was to be the *Son of God*; yet that they did not know him to be ſo, in the higher Senſe of the Word, ſeems to be evident, becauſe they did not know how *David* could call *him Lord*, Matth. xxii. 16.

Q. *Why is* Joſeph *taken Notice of as a* rich Man?

A. The Riches and honourable Station of *Joſeph*, are mentioned, not out of any Vanity and Oſtentation, that a Perſon of ſo conſiderable a Figure ſhould pay Reſpect to the Body of our bleſſed Lord; but chiefly to ſhew how ſtrangely God brought about an antient Prophecy concerning the *Meſſiah*, *viz.* that, notwithſtanding the infamous Manner of his dying, he ſhould *make his Grave with the Rich, at his Death*, Iſaiah liii. 9. which, in itſelf, was a moſt unlikely Thing; not only becauſe the Bodies of them that were crucified, did, by the *Roman* Laws, hang upon the Gibbet, ſometimes until they were conſumed; but becauſe the *Jews* (though they did not allow of this Severity to the Dead) did nevertheleſs always bury their Malefactors in ſome publick, neglected and ignominious Place; and ſo, in all Probability, muſt our Saviour have been treated, had not *Joſeph* applied himſelf to the Governor, in whoſe Diſpoſal the Bodies of executed Perſons were.

Q. *Where was ſituated* Arimathæa?

A. Ramatha (from when *Arimathæa* is formed) ſignifies *Height*. It is placed by St. *Jerom* between *Lydda* and *Joppa*; but modern Travellers ſpeak of it as lying between *Joppa* and *Jeruſalem*, and ſituated on a Mountaintain, though very different from *Ramathaim-Zophim*, the Place where *Samuel* was born, and which lay to the *North*, whereas *Arimathæa* was to the *Weſt* of *Jeruſalem*.

Q. *How happened it that* Joſeph, *who never before publickly profeſſed himſelf a Diſciple of* Chriſt, *ſhould, after his Deceaſe, ſhew ſo open a Regard for him?*

A. Beſides, that this might be an Inſtance of the Efficacy of thoſe Impreſſions which God makes upon Men's Minds, even at the moſt unlikely Seaſons of prevailing; the Deſire which *Pilate* had expreſſed, to ſave our Lord's Life, and avowed Unwillingneſs to condemn him, together with the Prodigies that had accompanied his Crucifixion, and made now every Heart relent, might be Motive enough for him to go in boldly to *Pilate*, (as St. *Mark* expreſſes it) and beg the Body of him, before it was taken from the Croſs. According to the *Miſhna*, the neareſt Relations of thoſe that ſuffered as Criminals, were not permitted to put their Bodies into Family Tombs, until their Fleſh was all conſumed in the publick Sepulchres; and this might poſſibly be the Reaſon why *Joſeph* made ſuch Haſte with his Requeſt to the Governor, *viz.* that he might prevent our Lord from being caſt into one of the publick Charnel-houſes, appointed for the Reception of Malefactors Bodies.

Q. *Can you deſcribe the Form and Dimenſions of our Lord's Tomb?*

A. There are ſeveral Circumſtances in the Deſcription of our Saviour's Tomb, which contribute very greatly to the Confirmation of the Truth of his Reſurrection. As Firſt, The Place of his Interment was near adjoining to the City, that thereby the Miracle of his Reſurrection might be better known to all the *Jews*, and his own Apoſtles more eſpecially. Secondly, His Tomb was a new one, wherein never Man before was laid, and therefore, when his Body left this Sepulchre empty, no Suſpicion could remain of its being any other Body, than that which *Joſeph* had taken down from the Croſs, and diſpoſed of in that Place. Thirdly, It was hewn out of a Rock, incapable of being undermined, or dug through; and therefore there was no poſſible Way for the Perſon depoſited in a Place ſo contrived, to get out again, except only at the Mouth or Door of the Cave. And yet, Fourthly, A large Stone, which (according to Mr. *Maundrel*, who ſaw it) is two Yards and a Quarter long, one broad, and one thick, cloſed up the Entrance of it; all which was watched by a ſtrong Guard of ſixty Soldiers: So that, as the Centry would not ſuffer the Body to be convey'd out by this Way, the Nature of the Place would not allow it by any other; therefore, had not our Lord been more than Man, he could never have forced his Paſſage out. Of ſuch mighty Significance it is to us, that ſo punctual a Deſcription is given the World of our bleſſed Lord's Burial, and all the Circumſtances relating to it, ſince they all contribute great Strength to theſe two moſt important Articles of the *Chriſtian* Faith, the Death and Reſurrection of *Jeſus*.

This Sepulchre of *Joſeph*'s, which fell to our Lord's Share (according to the Deſcription of thoſe that have lately ſeen it) is a Kind of ſmall Chamber, almoſt ſquare within; whoſe Height, from Bottom to Top, is eight Feet and an Inch; its Length ſix Feet and an Inch; and its Breadth, fifteen Feet and ten Inches; its Entranee, which looks towards the *Eaſt*, is but four Feet high and two Feet ten Inches wide. The Place within, where our Lord's Body was laid, takes up a whole Side of the Cave. It is a Stone raiſed from the Ground to the Height of two Feet and four Inches; whoſe Length is five Feet eleven Inches; and its Breadth two Feet and eight Inches, placed lengthwiſe from *Eaſt* and *Weſt*. The Stone is ſtill remaining, even to this Day; but the particular Parts of it are not viſible, it being incruſted over with white Marble.

Q. *With whoſe Signet did they ſeal the Stone with which they ſtopped the Mouth of the Sepulcher?*

A. When *Daniel* was caſt into the Lions Den it is ſaid, *That the King ſealed the Stone that was laid upon the Mouth of it, with his own Signet, and with the Signet of his Lords, that the Purpoſe might not be changed concerning* Daniel, Chap. vi. 17. and from hence, ſome have ſuppoſed, that the Stone, wherewith our Lord's Sepulchre was cloſed, was ſealed with *Pilate*'s Signet, becauſe it was a Matter of publick Concern; and others have fancied, that it was farther ſecured by a great Chain, that went acroſs it, and that the Marks thereof were viſible in the venerable *Bede*'s Time.

Chap. XXVIII.

Women reſort to the Grave; an Angel declares to them the Reſurrection of Chriſt, *and enjoins 'em to bid his Diſciples to meet him in* Galilee. Chriſt *himſelf appears to the Women; they worſhip him; he ſends 'em to his Brethren. The Rulers give large Sums of Money to the Soldiers, to falſify the Report of his Reſurrection.* Chriſt *on the Mount appears to his Diſciples, who worſhip him. He declares his Power in Heaven and Earth; ſends them to baptize and teach all Nations, and promiſes his Preſence with them to the End of the World.*

Q. *In the Account which ſeveral of the Evangeliſts give of what was tranſacted at the Sepulcher, in the Morning of the firſt Day of the Week, there ſeems a Repugnancy, which I ſhall be glad if you will reconcile?*

A. The ſeeming Oppoſition between what is recorded in the xvith Chap. of *Mark*'s Goſpel, concerning ſome Circumſtances that happened at our Lord's Sepulchre, and the Narrations of the other *Evangeliſts*, made ſome of the Antients (as St. *Jerom* informs us) call in queſtion its Authority. But, as this Chapter was owned in the Times of *Irenæus*, and is quoted in the apoſtolick Conſtitutions, a ſmall Matter of diſtinguiſhing, added to what Dr. *Whitby* has done, by way of Appendix to it, will be a Means ſufficient to reconcile them. As to the Difference between the Account in St. *Luke*, who mentions the Viſion of Angels to *Mary Magdalen*, before her going to *Peter*, and that in St. *John*, who makes it ſubſequent to it; our learn'd *Hammond* is of Opinion, that this and ſeveral other Inconſiſtences may be adjuſted by this one Conſideration, That St. *Luke* writing from Notes, which he had collected from Eye-witneſſes, and not from his own Knowledge, obſerves not ſo exactly the Order of Time, wherein Things were done and ſpoken, but oftentimes in another Method, puts together Things of Affinity to one another, though not done or ſaid at the ſame Time. For ſo in Relation to the Tranſactions at our Lord's Sepulchre, he firſt ſets down all that concerns the Women together, and then that which concerns *Peter*; though Part of that, which concern'd the Women, was done after what is mention'd of St. *Peter*: For the punctual Obſervation of Order, ſays our *Annotator*, is not neceſſary when Things themſelves are truly recited. The right Order of the Story he therefore ſuppoſes, is this,——Mary *and the other Woman came to the Sepulchre, but found, that before their coming, an Angel, with an Earthquake, had rolled away the Stone, and that the Body was gone. Upon this* Mary *returns to* Peter *and* John; *tells them what ſhe had ſeen; and they, to ſatisfy themſelves of the Truth of her Report, haſten to the Sepulchre; and having found Things juſt as ſhe told them, went away again. In the mean Time, the Women ſtay at the Sepulchre, wondering at this ſtrange Event; and then follows the Viſion of Angels, ſitting upon the Stone, and within the Sepulchre, ſpeaking to the Women, and aſſuring them of the Reality of* Chriſt's *Reſurrection; upon which they depart the ſecond Time, to tell the Apoſtles the News.*

Q. *What was that* Saying *which St.* Matthew *ſpeaks of as current among the* Jews, *at the Time when he wrote his Goſpel, Verſe* 13?

A. Some are of Opinion, that the Report, which the *Evangeliſt* ſpeaks of, as current among the *Jews*, that *the Diſciples ſtole away the Body by Night*, was not, that our Lord's Diſciples came and ſtole him away, but that the Soldiers were corrupted by the High-prieſts to ſay ſo. This, indeed, gives a quite different Turn to the Thing, and is very favourable to the *Chriſtian* Cauſe; but yet, whoever conſiders the circular Letters, mention'd by *Juſtin Martyr*, which the Rulers in *Jeruſalem* ſent to the principal *Jews* all the World over, concerning the Fact, and the great Pains which (as *Tertullian* informs us) they every where took to propagate it, together with the Care which he, and the other antient Apologiſts, employ'd to confute this ſenſeleſs, but malicious Lye, muſt needs be of a contrary Opinion, *viz.* that the Report was ſpread, not againſt the *Jewiſh* Rulers, but the *Chriſtian* Diſciples; and was not quite extinct, when St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel, *Ch.* xxviii. 15. which was much about eight Years after *Chriſt*'s Death.

Q. Jeſus, *in the 19th Verſe, bids his Diſciples go and teach* all Nations: *What do you underſtand by* all Nations?

A. Tho' the *Greek* Word, tranſlated *Nation*, does, in ſome particular Places, ſignify the Tribes and Families of the *Jews*; yet this we are to obſerve, that wherever Mention is made of preaching the Goſpel, in order to gain Converts to the *Chriſtian* Faith, the Word relates primarily to the ſeveral Parts of *Judea*, and to the *Jews*, whereſoever they are, in their Diſperſions abroad; then ſecondarily, to the *Gentiles* mingled with the *Jews*; and finally, to the whole *Gentile* World, when, upon the *Jews* rejecting the Goſpel, the Apoſtles were forced to depart from them; for ſuch the Tenor of their Commiſſion, and ſuch their conſtant Practice was. *It was neceſſary* (ſays *Paul* and *Barnabas* to the *Jews*) *that the Word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you* (which refers, I ſuppoſe, to ſome Precept of *Chriſt* which made it neceſſary) *but ſeeing ye have put it from you, lo, we turn to the* Gentiles, *Acts* xiii. 46.

Q. *Pray explain the laſt Clauſe of the laſt Verſe,* Lo, I am with you always to the End of the World?

A. I am, and will be with you, and your Succeſſors, lawfully called by my Power and Authority, and by the Bleſſing and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit; I will be with you, to uphold my Ordinances, to protect, encourage, and reward you, and all your Succeſſors in the faithful Diſcharge of your Truſt; and this not for a Day, a Year, or an Age, but even to the End and Conſummation of all Ages. From whence we may learn, that the Miniſtry of the Word, and Adminiſtration of the Sacraments are a ſtanding and perpetual Ordinance, to continue in the *Chriſtian* Church throughout all Ages; and that all the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt*, in what Part of the World ſoever God ſhall caſt their Lot, and in what Time ſoever they ſhall happen to live, may comfortably expect *Chriſt*'s gracious Preſence with their Perſons, and his Bleſſing upon their Labours.

Of all Places the Apoſtles would leaſt of all have choſen *Jeruſalem* to tarry in, had not our Lord poſitively commanded it there. For *Jeruſalem* was now a juſtly abhorred and deteſted Place, reeking freſh with the Blood of the holy and innocent *Jeſus*; and yet *Jeruſalem* is the Place, choſen by *Chriſt*, for the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon his Apoſtles, becauſe there was the greateſt Company of Spectators to behold this noble Work, and to be wrought upon by it; and becauſe there had been the Scenes of his greateſt Humiliation, and therefore, there he was minded to ſhew forth his Power and Glory.

Q. *What is the Deſign of the Conference betwixt* Chriſt *and his Diſciples in the laſt Verſes of this Chapter?*

A. The Subject and Deſign of this Conference was, to impower and inſtruct the Apoſtles in the Nature of the great Work they were now undertaking. In the firſt Place *Chriſt* aſſerts his own Power and Authority; *All Power is given to me, both in Heaven and Earth.* It was not given to him as Mediator, but was inherent in him, as God, from all Eternity. His Power on Earth was that of gathering a Church out of all Nations, and an Authority to rule, govern and defend the ſame from all his Adverſaries. This Power *Chriſt* delegated to his Apoſtles: *Go ye therefore, and teach and baptize all Nations; inſtructing them to obſerve all Things whatſoever I command you.* This Power is threefold. 1. To congregate and gather a Church out of all Nations. Before he had confined them only to *Iſrael*, now they muſt travel, and proſelyte Heathen Countries, which before had been taught of the Devil. Go and diſcipline all Nations, without Diſtinction of Country, Sex or Age, and make the Goſpel-Church as large as you can. 2. To baptize in the Name of the Trininity. Here note, that all adult and grown Perſons are firſt to be taught and inſtructed before they are baptiſed. But it follows not from hence, that the Children of ſuch Parents may not be baptized before they are taught; for in that Caſe the Children of *Chriſtian* Parents would be in a worſe Condition than thoſe of the *Jews*, and the Proſelytes of the *Jewiſh* Religion, who being circumciſed themſelves, their Children were not denied Circumciſion at eight Days old. In like Manner have we no Reaſon to deny the Children of baptized Parents, who are in Covenant themſelves, the Sign and Seal of the Covenant, which is Baptiſm. 3. Another Branch of this Power delegated to the Apoſtles was, to preſs upon all their Converts an univerſal Obſervance of, and Obedience to all his Commands. The preaching of the Goſpel is the chief Part of the Miniſter's Work, and no Apoſtle thought himſelf above that Duty. The The Promiſe ſubjoined is, *Lo, I am with you to the End of the World.*

Q. *Let us now review ſome Paſſages in St.* Matthew *that have eſcaped us: Has not the Evangeliſt committed a Miſtake, in Relation to the thirty* Pieces of Silver, *mentioned in the 9th Verſe of the foregoing Chapter, that were given for our Saviour's Blood, when, inſtead of* Zechariah, *in whom alone that Prophecy is to be found, he cites* Jeremiah, *who has not a Word about it?*

A. In moſt of the *Latin* and *Greek* Copies, indeed, we have the Word *Jeremiah* at preſent, but it is much to be queſtion'd, whether it was in the Original, ſince the *Syriack* and *Perſick* Verſions mention no Name, but barely the *Prophet*; and thoſe Copies (in St. *Auſtin*'s Opinion) are moſt to be relied on, which have not the Name of *Jeremiah* inſerted in them, becauſe this might poſſibly proceed from the Ignorance or Careleſſneſs of ſome Tranſcriber. Some of our modern Reconcilers have another Way of accounting for this. They endeavour to prove, from the Writings of the *Jewiſh Rabbins*, that before, under, and after the ſecond Temple, the Order of the ſacred Books was ſeveral Times tranſpoſed; and that, in the Time when St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel, the Book of *Jeremiah* (as does now that of *Iſaiah*) ſtood firſt in the Volume of Prophets, and ſo became the running Title of all the reſt. For, that the firſt Book in a Volume may give Name to the reſt, is obvious, ſay they, from the Words of our Saviour's telling his Diſciples, that *all Things muſt be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of* Moſes, *and in the Prophets, and in the* Pſalms *concerning him*: Where, by the Word *Pſalms*, he means all the *Hagiographa*, conſiſting of Hymns to God, and Documents of Life, and are all ſo called, becauſe, in that Part of the Diviſion of the *Old Teſtament*, they had obtained the firſt Place. But as there are no Words cited, in the like Manner, from any other Prophet in the whole *New Teſtament*, Others have imagined, that the Paſſage which St. *Matthew* quotes, was originally in the authentick Copies of *Jeremiah*, but that, by the Malice of the *Jews*, it was erazed, becauſe it was looked upon as too plain a Prophecy of this Circumſtance of our Saviour's Life; or rather, that it was recorded in a certain Apocryphal Book of *Jeremiah's*, from whence St. *Jerom*, expreſly tells us, that he read the very Words here quoted, in an *Hebrew* Volume, communicated to him by a *Jew* of the *Nazarene* Sect: And, that it was no Diſparagement to cite an *Apocryphal* Book, is manifeſt from the Practice of the Apoſtles, who make mention of *Jannes* and *Jambres*, though they no where occur in canonical Scripture; who quote the Prophecy of *Enoch*, though generally reputed an Apocryphal Book; nay, and produce the Sayings of *Aratus*, *Epimenides* and *Euripides*, though ſuch Books, ſay they, were not received into the Canon, yet they might nevertheleſs contain ſuch Truths as were worthy of Belief.

Thoſe, however, who have compared the Writings of theſe two Prophets together, have obſerved that *Zechariah* was ſo cloſe an Imitator of *Jeremiah*, as to give juſt Occaſions for the Saying of the *Jews*, viz. *That the Spirit of* Jeremy *had paſſed into* Zechary, *and ſo both together made but one Prophet*: And from hence others have concluded, that the ninth, tenth, and eleventh Chapters of *Zechariah* were not wrote by him, but by *Jeremiah*, though, at preſent, they go under the other's Name. The Book of *Pſalms*, we know, though the whole Collection be called

David's, contains many Pieces that were not of his Compoſition. In that of *Proverbs*, there are ſeveral wiſe Sentences (beſides thoſe of *Solomon*) aſcribed to *Agur*, the Son of *Jakeh*, and to the Mother of King *Lemuel*; and, by Parity of Reaſon, theſe Chapters of *Zechariah* might originally have been written by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, tho', in Proceſs of Time, they happened to creep in among the Works of his great Imitator.

And, indeed, whoever looks into the Contents of theſe Chapters, will ſoon perceive, that ſuch Things are related in them, as are inconſiſtent with the Time wherein *Zechariah* lived, but very well agree with that of *Jeremiah*: That what he ſays (for Inſtance) of the Pride of *Aſſyria* being brought down, and the Scepter of *Egypt* being departed, could not be foretold by him, becauſe theſe Events were then paſſed and gone, but might very well be predicted by *Jeremiah*; that what he ſays by *Gaza* and *Aſkelon*, as Cities then in Being, could not be recorded of him; foraſmuch as theſe Places were deſtroyed long before his Days, but might properly enough be mentioned by *Jeremiah*, becauſe, in his Time they ſubſiſted; and that the Earthquake which he alludes to, in the Days of *Uzziah*, was of too diſtant a Date to be remembered in his Time; though it is not unlikely, that Tradition might have tranſmitted the Report of it down as far as the Days of *Jeremiah*. If then there be found in *Zechariah* Things inconſiſtent with his Time, but ſuch as comported very well with the Period wherein *Jeremiah* lived, it is natural to think, that though the whole Book went under another's Name; yet ſtill ſuch Parts of it as contained theſe Things, muſt have been wrote by a Perſon with whom they were co-incident, and that therefore St. *Matthew* is ſo far from committing any Blunder, that he makes a very valuable Diſcovery, in aſcribing the Prophecy now before us, to its proper Author.

Q. *But how was it poſſible for* Chriſt, *ſingly, to drive all the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, as we read,* Chap. xxi?

A. St. *Jerom*, indeed, reckons this one of the greateſt Miracles that ever our Saviour did, and imputes his Ability to do it, to a certain divine Majeſty, which at that Time appeared in his Looks, and ſtruck the Company with ſuch a reverential Fear and Reſpect to his Perſon, as reſtrained them from making any Oppoſition: But, without having Recourſe to any Thing miraculous in this Tranſaction, we need only remember, that our Lord was juſt now come up from *Bethany* to *Jeruſalem*, in a ſort of royal and triumphant Proceſſion; that he was attended, on the Road, and into the City, with *a very great Multitude*, nay, *with Multitudes that went before, and followed after*; that theſe all went along with him into the Temple, and proclaimed (as they had done on the Road) *Hoſanna to the Son of* David; and that the Concourſe, in ſhort, was ſo great, that *all the City was moved*, and even the *Chief-prieſts were afraid of him*, and of the People too, *becauſe they took him for a Prophet, and were attentive to hear him*.

Now it is no hard Matter to imagine, that the People, ſeeing our Saviour proceed to the Temple in this triumphant Manner, might haply call to mind the Prediction of the Prophet *Malachi*, *The Lord whom ye ſeek, ſhall ſuddenly come to his Temple, even the Meſſenger of the Covenant, in whom ye delight, and ye ſhall purify the Sons of* Levi, *that they may offer to the Lord an Offering of Righteouſneſs*; and that, from the Remembrance of this Prophecy, they might be encouraged to abet his Reformation of the Temple. Nor is it to be doubted, but that a Conſciouſneſs of Guilt in the Profaners themſelves might, in ſome Meaſure, contribute to their Submiſſion and Acquieſcence, even in the ſame Manner as his Enemies were ſtruck backwards with the Senſe of their own Guilt, as well as the Majeſty of his Appearance, and fell to the Ground, when they came to apprehend him in the Garden. So that, upon the whole, we are to conſider our Saviour in this Action, not in the Form of a deſpiſed Man, but of a triumphant Monarch rather, at the Head of an infinite Number of People, all rejoicing in the Completion of an antient Prophecy, all acknowledging him for their *Meſſiah* and King, and thereupon all ready to ſupport him in any Reformation that he ſhould think proper to attempt.

Q. *What is your Opinion of the prodigious Darkneſs, which, St.* Matthew *ſays, overſpread the Land for three Hours, when our Saviour hung upon the Croſs?*

A. This is far from a Miſrepreſentation of the Matter of Fact, ſince we have it confirmed by the Teſtimony of *Phlegon*, who, in the xivth Book of his *Chronicles*, tell us, that in the fourth Year of the 202d *Olympiad* (which anſwers exactly to that of our Lord's Death) *there was the greateſt Eclipſe of the Sun that had ever been before, inſomuch, that at Noon-day the Stars were ſeen in the Sky*: By the Authority of *Thallus*, a *Greek* Hiſtorian, who, in his third Book ſpeaks of the Darkneſs that accompanied our Saviour's Death, and which he, in like Manner called an Eclipſe; by the Appeal which *Tertullian* and others made to the *Roman* Archives (where the Account that *Pilate* ſent to *Tiberius*, of the Miracles which happened at our Lord's Paſſion, was depoſited) for the Truth of this prodigious Darkneſs; and laſtly, the general Conſent of all *Chriſtian* Authors, for the Space of the ſix firſt Centuries, who, in treating on this Teſtimony of *Phlegon* and *Thallus*, together with this Appeal to the *Roman* Records, without the leaſt Heſitation or Diffidence of their Truth: So that the only Difficulty is, to know by what Means this ſtrange Phænomenon was effected.

Phlegon and *Thallus*, indeed, as they are cited by *Chriſtian* Writers, ſeem to make this Darkneſs a common Eclipſe, occaſioned (as others are) by an Interpoſition of the Moon between the Sun and the Earth; and thence ſome inferred, that there was nothing extraordinary in it: But, as it is a Thing very well known, that the Paſſover (when our Lord ſuffered) was always appointed at the Full of the Moon, and is a Thing naturally impoſſible, that an Eclipſe ſhould happen, when the Moon is in this Condition; we have Reaſon to think, that this was an haſty Concluſion that theſe two Authors made, without ever bethinking themſelves of the Rules of Aſtronomy; that finding, in the publick Records of the Time of *Tiberius*, an Account of a prodigious Darkneſs, which at Noon-day made the Stars appear in the Firmament, this they ſuppoſed could have been effected only by an Eclipſe of the Sun, and upon ſuch Suppoſition affirmed that it was: But, for one

Circumſtance unwarily advanced, it were Madneſs to reſt their Teſtimony, which, in other Reſpects, exactly agrees with the Account of the ſacred Writings.

Others, by the Manner of their Expreſſion, ſeem to imply, that the Sun, upon this Occaſion, with-held its Rays, and, as it were, eclipſed itſelf, by reſtraining its Luſtre from iſſuing forth; never conſidering that Light, in the Sun, is no accidental Thing, nor any Quality which it can ſuppreſs or exert, as it thinks proper. To ſhine is as neceſſary to it, as is its Being: Nor can its Rays meet with any Obſtruction, but when ſome opaque Body or other intervenes between us and them; and therefore, when the Fathers, in Conformity to the Stile of the Scripture, ſay, that the Sun, or the Stars withdrew their Shining, this muſt be looked upon as a figurative and popular Manner of Expreſſion, which ſeems to give theſe celeſtial Bodies a kind of free Action, thereby to make us more ſenſible of the Abſence or Suſpenſion of their Effects.

Others, therefore, with more Probability think, that as the ſacred Hiſtory ſays nothing of the Sun, this Darkneſs which it takes Notice of, was occaſioned by a great Number of condenſed Clouds, which gathering in the Air, intercepted the Light of the Sun, and for the Space of three Hours, produced the ſame Effect that once happened in the Land of *Egypt*, *a Darkneſs that might be felt*. This Hypotheſis makes the Matter very eaſy, by placing the whole Miracle in the quick Formation of the Clouds at ſuch a Point of Time, and the ſpeedy Diſperſion of them, after ſuch a Continuance; only we muſt ſuppoſe that by *the whole Earth*, which St. *Luke* tells us, was covered with this Darkneſs, we are to underſtand the Land of *Judæa* only, in which Senſe the Phraſe does not unfrequently occur in Scripture.

And, indeed, as the other wonderful Things, which came to paſs at our Saviour's Paſſion, ſuch as the trembling of the Earth, the rending of the Rocks, the opening the Graves, and tearing the Veil of the Temple, were tranſacted at *Jeruſalem*, or at moſt in *Judea* only; ſo we have Reaſon to believe, that the Darkneſs which accompanied theſe Miracles, was of no greater Extent than they; becauſe the chief Deſign of this uncommon Appearance in the Heavens was, to convince the *Jews*, who blaſphemed our Lord and his Diſciples, who believed on him, both then preſent at his Crucifixion, that notwithſtanding all the Humiliation, to which he voluntarily ſubmitted, he was, in Reality, the great Creator of the Univerſe; and even, while he was hanging on the Croſs, the Ruler and Director of all its Elements and Motions.

Q. *Has it not been reckon'd as an Abſurdity in our Saviour, to expect* Fruit *on a* Fig-tree *at a Seaſon of the Year when it was well known there was none growing?*

A. Whoever conſiders the Series of the Sacred Hiſtory, may ſoon convince himſelf, that the Miracle which our Saviour wrought on the barren Fig-tree, happened about the eleventh Day of the *Jewiſh* Month *Niſan*, on *Tueſday*, very probably before the *Paſſover*; for the *Paſſover*, we know, was kept on the fourteenth Day of *Niſan*, which anſwers to the latter end of our *March*. And that, at this Time, there were Figs in *Judæa* ripe, and fit for gathering, we have ſome Authority to believe.

When *Moſes* ſent away the Spies in ſearch of the Land of *Canaan*, it was, we are told, *in the Time of the firſt ripe Grapes*, and *they returned from ſearching, after forty Days*, and brought from thence *Pomegranates and Figs, as well as Cluſters of Grapes*. Now the *Septuagint* Verſion ſays, that it was in the *Spring*, when theſe Spies ſet forward; and *Philo*, in his Life of *Moſes*, ſeems to be of the ſame Opinion. Suppoſing then, that it was about the Middle of the *Spring* (which, in *Judea* began about the Middle of *January*) that the Spies ſet out, and they were returned ſome Days before the *Paſſover*; and if the Figs, which they brought, as well as the Grapes, were ripe and full grown, then were they ripe in *Judæa*, at the very Time that our Saviour is here ſaid to have looked for them.

Solomon, in his Book of *Canticles*, gives us a lively Deſcription of the *Spring*; and, among other Signs of its being come, makes mention of this, ——— That *the Fig-tree putteth forth her green Figs, and the Vines, with their tender Grapes, give a good Smell*, or (as it may more litterally be rendered) *The Fig-tree hath begun to give a Flavour to her young Figs, and the Vines a good Smell to the tender Grape*. Now, if in the Middle of our *January*, the Figs were ſo forward, as then to give a Flavour, it is reaſonable to think, that in ſo warm and fruitful a Climate, as *Judea* was, there might be ripe ones about the latter End of *March*, which is the preciſe Time when our Saviour ſought for them upon this Fig-tree.

The Truth is, there were in *Judea* Fig-trees of different Kinds; and, beſides the ordinary Sort (which, according to our Saviour, did not put forth its Leaves until the near Approach of *Summer*) the *Jewiſh* Writers make mention of one early Kind in particular, (called by them *Banothſhuath*) which never wanted Leaves, and very ſeldom Fruit. Nay, *Pliny* tells us of ſome Sort of Fig-trees in *Syria*, (under which Name he frequently comprehends *Judea*) that *had always Leaves; and when the Fruit of the preceeding Year was gathered, the Fruit began immediately, and was growing all the Winter long*; and therefore we need leſs wonder at what the Emperor *Julian* aſſerts, *viz.* that, at *Damaſcus*, in *Syria*, *there was a Sort of Fig-tree, whoſe Fruit, both old and young, grew together, and laſted beyond the Year*; or at what a very eminent Traveller, and great Naturaliſt teſtifies, *That ſome Sort of Figs growing in the* Archipelago, *in Winter, Spring and Summer; but that the Garden-Fig is not ripe there 'till the End of* Auguſt, *or the Beginning of* September. From all which we may be allowed to conclude, that there might be Figs in *Judea* fit to eat, at the Time when our Saviour went to look for ſome on this Tree.

Without entring into any other Solution then, if there were two Sorts of Fig-trees in *Judea*, the one much earlier than the other, and thence two Seaſons of ripe Figs, the one much later than the other, and (as it is natural to ſuppoſe) the latter much more common and plentiful than the former; the latter was properly called *the Time of Figs*, and the *Evangeliſts* might very truly ſay, that at the Time of the Paſſover, *it was not yet come*, i. e. the common and ordinary Seaſon for Figs was not yet come; though, admitting this to be one of the early Kind, he might well expect to find ſomething upon it, ſince, by the Speciouſneſs of its

Leaves, it looked ſo promiſing at a Diſtance.

He, without doubt, knew perfectly well, before he went up to it, whether it had any Fruit on it, or no; but as he intended to work a Miracle upon it, and by its ſpeedy withering away, emblematically to ſhew his Diſciples the near approaching Ruin of the *Jewiſh* Nation; be it what it would, it anſwered the main End; but then it could not have been ſo fit a Type and Reſemblance of the *Jews*, had it not been barren, nor exhibited their Fate in ſo lively a Manner, had it not been curſed, and ſo withered away.

Q. *Did not our Saviour exert an Authority that did not properly belong to him, when he ſo ſeverely reprov'd the* Scribes *and* Phariſees?

A. The *Jewiſh* Nation, at our Saviour's Coming, was, in all Degrees and Orders of Men, ſadly corrupted; but in none ſo much as in the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who pretending to be the Doctors and Expounders of the Law, had vacated the Obligation to almoſt all moral Honeſty, by the Introduction of their falſe Gloſſes and Comments. Their great Shew of outward Sanctity, however, great Oſtentation in their Prayers and Piety, and punctual Performance of the ceremonial Part of their Religion, gave them great Authority among the People, and as high a Conceit of themſelves; inſomuch that they expected a blind Submiſſion to their Injunctions, and all imaginable Tokens of Reſpect and Veneration, whenever they appeared in publick: Though all this while their pretended Sanctity was but a Veil to cover their Vices, and inward Impurity, an Art to gain a Reputation, by making the beſt of the Shadow, while they wanted the Subſtance of Godlineſs.

Now if ſuch was the Depravity of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, when our Saviour lived among them, none can doubt, but that, as he was a Teacher ſent from God, he had a proper Authority to reprove them; ſince, under the *Moſaic* Law, this was a Duty incumbent even on private Perſons, and what they could not, without a manifeſt Breach of Charity, decline: For *thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart, thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him*: Where we may obſerve, that in the Eye of this Law, not to rebuke our Brother is interpretatively to hate him; and therefore our Saviour ſtands in need of no farther Apology for reproving the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who had ſuch a Number of Sins upon them; ſince there was no omitting that, without violating this Command.

In his Rebukes, indeed, there ſeems to be a Spirit of Severity, ſomething that looks like Anger, and ſeveral Terms of Diminution and Diſreſpect. But it ſhould be conſidered, that as Anger is a Paſſion implanted in human Nature, in itſelf, and upon all Occaſions, it cannot be unlawful; nay, when employed about proper and deſerving Matters, ſuch as the Honour of God, the Reverence due to his Laws, the Love of Virtue, and the Correction of Vice, it is not only innocent, but highly neceſſary and commendable. For there is a Tameneſs of Spirit which deſerves Cenſure; and, in ſuch Caſes, we even do well, when we are angry.

In like Manner it may be obſerved, that Terms of Diſparagement and Reproach are, in ſome Caſes allowable, and more particularly when Men (as St. *Paul* expreſſes it) *are rebuked ſharply, to render them ſound in the Truth.* From the Mouth of a Superior they are often of Uſe, and ſometimes of Neceſſity to rouze and awaken ſtupid Men; to make them more effectually both ſenſible, and aſhamed of their Follies; to expoſe the horrible Abſurdities of pernicious Opinions, or the flagrant Enormities of wicked Practices; and in ſhort, are hardly ever diſcommendable, where Charity is at the Bottom; and an high Authority in the Reprover gives ſuch Language Countenance.

Now as none can call in Queſtion our Saviour's Authority, if he thought it convenient to make uſe of ſuch Severity in his Reproofs of a Set of People who moſt juſtly deſerved it; ſo need not any be offended at his denouncing ſo many Woes againſt them, when he finds God giving the Prophets of old, ſent to his Prieſts, who were negligent in their Duty, and corrupted in their Morals, juſt as they were now, Inſtructions to addreſs them in the ſelf-ſame Manner: *Thus ſaith the Lord God, Woe be unto the Shepherds of* Iſrael, *that do feed the Flock! Ye eat the Fat, and ye cloath you with the Wool; ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the Flocks*, Ezek. xxxiv. 3.

Q. *How could our Saviour ſay, that the Commandment he gave his Diſciples* to love one another *was new, ſince it was no other than what* Moſes *had given the* Jews *long before?*

A. This Commandment, indeed, of *loving one another*, is by our Lord and Saviour ſo much enlarged, as to the Object of it, extending to all Mankind, and even to our greateſt Enemies; is ſo greatly advanced and heightened, as to the Degree of it, even to the laying down of our Lives for one another; and is ſo effectually taught, ſo mightily encouraged, and ſo much urged and inſiſted upon, that tho' it was a Precept delivered by *Moſes*, yet, conſidering in what Manner the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had perverted the Senſe, and confined and diſcouraged the Practice of it, it may well enough be ſaid to have received in our Saviour a Republication. And, tho' it was not altogether unknown to other Nations before, yet it was never ſo taught, ſo encouraged; never was ſuch an illuſtrious Example given of it, never ſo much Streſs and Weight laid upon it, by any Philoſophy or Religion that was ever before in the World.

Q. *What is meant by the* Abomination of Deſolation, *mentioned,* Chap. xxiv. 15. *And what Text in* Daniel *does our Lord refer to?*

A. There are three Paſſages in the Prophet *Daniel*, which mention *the Abomination that maketh deſolate*; and to any of theſe our Saviour may be ſuppoſed to allude, for they are all Predictions of the Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* State, when the Sacrifice and Oblations ſhould be made to ceaſe. 'Tis the Senſe, indeed, that our Saviour ſeems more to attend to, than the Words of the Prophecy; and becauſe it was the Cuſtom of the *Roman* Armies to have an Eagle for their Enſign, in which they placed a Kind of Divinity; and to carry their Emperors Images along with them, to which they paid a religious Adoration, and therein committed ſuch Idolatry, as was highly deteſtable to every *Jew*; it is hence ſuppoſed, that *the Abomination ſtanding in the holy Place*, means the *Roman* Army, with theſe hated Objects of their Idolatry, beſieging *Jeruſalem*; and that therefore it's called a Deſolation, becauſe it was appointed by Almighty God, to lay the Country, City, and Temple of *Jeru*-

ſalem deſolate and waſte; for ſo St. *Luke* ſeems to have explained it by a parallel Place, *When ye ſhall ſee* Jeruſalem *encompaſſed with Armies, then know, that the Deſolation is nigh.*

Jeruſalem, indeed, may perhaps, in ſome Places of Scripture, be called the *Holy Place*, but this is a Title ſo peculiar to the Temple, that we cannot but think, that our Saviour, in the Application of the Prophecy, intended it ſo here; eſpecially ſince his Diſciples, by ſhewing the Statelineſs of its Building, gave the whole Riſe to his Diſcourſe. But now, if we ſuppoſe the Temple to be this holy Place, we cannot ſee how the Abomination here ſpoken of, could be the *Roman* Army, and their Enſigns, becauſe neither of theſe were ever in the Temple, until the Taking and Sacking of the City, and could therefore, in this Reſpect, be no Preſages at all. If we ſuppoſe the City of *Jeruſalem* to be this holy Place, it is certain, that this Abomination was lodged in it, long before the Approach of *Titus* with his Army, becauſe the *Romans* had all along a ſtrong Garriſon over-againſt the Temple, in Fort *Antonia*, where their Colours and Standard were ſet up: Nor can we readily conceive why the military Enſigns, under *Titus*, ſhould be thought an Abomination of Deſolation, here ſpoken of, ſhould refer to that groſs Profanation of the Temple, which the Zealots, (who called themſelves ſo from their pretended Zeal for their Country's Liberty and Welfare) a little before the Beginning of the Siege of *Jeruſalem*, were perpetually committing. This Faction being headed by *Eleazar* the Son of *Ananias* the High-prieſt, and ſtrengthened by an Acceſſion of Ruffians from all Parts of the Country, took Sanctuary in the Temple, and made uſe of it, both for a Place of Defence againſt their Adverſaries, and for the Seat of their Tyranny and Uſurpation. Here they aſſumed to themſelves the Power of diſpoſing of the Pontificate, and deſtroying the Succeſſion of the Prieſthood, promoted Creatures of their own, who had neither Blood nor Merit, to that ſacred Function. Here they erected their Courts of *Juſtice*, and, after the Formality of Mock-Trials, ſentenced to Death whom they diſliked, and then ſent their blood-thirſty Hirelings to ſee the Sentence put in Execution. Here they committed ſuch Violence and Rapine, ſuch Murther and Maſſacres, as made the Temple, in Reality not only a Den of Thieves, but a common Slaughter-houſe likewiſe (as *Joſephus* calls it) to as many as they could get in their Power: And therefore it is highly probable that this abominable Deſolation is meant of the heinous Wickedneſs of theſe Zealots. This, when once it began to appear, the Diſciples were cautioned to decline the approaching Storm, by making the beſt of their Way out of *Jeruſalem*, which they could not have done ſo well, had they ſtay'd till the Siege was formed, and the *Roman* Army had inveſted the Town.

Q. *When our Saviour bids his Diſciples go and teach all Nations,* baptizing them, *does he hint at any Cuſtom that then prevailed among the* Jews?

A. That it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews*, before our Saviour's Time, (and as they themſelves affirm) before the Beginning of the Law, to baptize, as well as circumciſe, any Proſelyte that came over to them from another Nation; and in caſe ſuch a Perſon had any Infant Children then born to him, that they, at their Father's Deſire, were in like manner circumciſed, baptized and admitted as Proſelytes, is manifeſt from the inconteſtable Evidence of their Writers. The Incapacity of the Child to declare and promiſe for himſelf, was not looked on as a Bar againſt his Reception into the Covenant, but the Deſire of the Father to dedicate him to the true God, was accounted available, and ſufficient to juſtify his Admiſſion; and the Reaſon they give for this is; that the Things they are admitted to, were undoubtedly for their Good; for *one might privilege a Perſon,* ſay they, *tho' he be incapable of knowing it, but one ought not to diſprivilege any one, without his Knowledge and Conſent.*

Now this gives great Light to our better underſtanding the Meaning of our Saviour, when he bids his Diſciples *go and teach all Nations, baptizing them.* Baptiſm he took as the eaſier Rite of the two; and having converted it into an evangelical Precept, made it the federal Form of Admiſſion into his Religion, as Circumciſion had been in the *Moſaic* Diſpenſation; and, as he gave his Apoſtles no Directions in their Commiſſion concerning little Children, it may juſtly be preſumed, that, with regard to them, he left them to proceed, juſt in the ſame Manner as the Church, wherein they lived, had been accuſtomed to do, and that was to make them Proſelytes to his Religion by Baptiſm.

Q. *Is there any Analogy between the* Jewiſh Circumciſion, *and* Chriſtian Baptiſm?

A. That in the *Jewiſh* Church Infants were Part of thoſe who engaged in Covenant with God, is evident from theſe Words of *Moſes* to all the People; *Ye ſtand this Day before the Lord your God, you and your Little-ones, that thou ſhouldeſt enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God, that thou mayeſt be a People to him, and he unto thee a God*; and that in the *Chriſtian* Church, Children, in the like Manner, are under the Covenant of Grace, is more than intimated in St. *Peter's* Exhortation to ſuch Perſons as he had converted, that they would receive Baptiſm in order to make their Children likewiſe capable of it, becauſe *the Promiſe was to them and their Children,* i. e. the Promiſe of Remiſſion of Sins, and of receiving the *Holy Ghoſt*, (mentioned immediately before) which appertained to the Covenant that belonged to them and to their Children. Now, if the Promiſe and Covenant belonged to the Children, as well as the Parents, there is no Queſtion to be made, but that Baptiſm, which is the Seal of the Covenent, and the viſible Confirmation of the Promiſe, belongs to them likewiſe; and if Infants have a Covenant Right to Baptiſm, we may ſafely infer, that *Chriſt* never intended to debar them of it; and that conſequently, though they are not expreſly named, yet are they moſt certainly implied in the Commiſſion of the baptizing of all Nations: For ſince the Univerſal includes all Particulars, and Children make up a conſiderable Part of all Nations, the Words of the Commiſſion may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to comprize them; nor can we forbear thinking, but that, when we read of whole Families that were baptized, there muſt of courſe have been ſeveral Chrildren in them; becauſe the *Greek* Work, which, in this Caſe, is render'd Houſhold, according to the Obſervation of the Learned, is of a large Signification, and takes in every individual Perſon of the Family, Women as well as Men and Children, as well as grown Perſons.

The Adult, indeed, before they were admitted as Proſelytes to the *Jewiſh* Religion, were to be inſtructed in the Fundamentals of the Law in the Weight and Burthen of it; and in the Nature of its Rewards and Penalties; and to profeſs their Submiſſion to it; but then, it muſt be obſerved, that theſe Pre-requiſites in the Parent, who was capable of ſuch Inſtruction, did not exclude the Children then born, from the Rite of Baptiſm; ſo far from this, that by the Sentence of the *Sanhedrim*, the Church was obliged to baptize them, as having a Right to the Ordinance by their Parent's Faith. And, in like manner, they, who were arrived at a competent Age and Underſtanding, were to be inſtructed in the Principles of the *Chriſtian* Religion, were to *confeſs with their Mouth the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *and to believe in their Heart, that God had raiſed him from the Dead,* before they were admitted to Baptiſm. This was a Condition required of them, becauſe they were able to do it: But why this Condition ſhould exclude the Children of *Jewiſh* Proſelites (who were uſually baptized together with their Parents) we cannot ſee.

Our Children, indeed, cannot underſtand the Nature and End of the Ordinance of Baptiſm; but neither were the *Jewiſh* Children, at eight Days old, able to know what the Purpoſe of Circumciſion was. They have no actual Faith of their own, but the Faith of thoſe who preſent them in the Congregation, is imputed, and themſelves are ſanctified, by being born of believing Parents. They have no Room for Repentance, but then they have Innocence, which is a much better Qualification; and though they cannot ſtipulate for themſelves, yet have they Proxies and Sureties (of early Inſtitution both in the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Church) to contract, in their Names, whoſe Act is looked upon, and accepted by God, as theirs. In the mean Time, that Infants, and young Children (though inſenſible of what is done for them) may have Favours conferred on them, and are capable of receiving ſpiritual Advantages to their Souls, is plain from that Paſſage in the evangelical Hiſtory, where, when *young Children were brought to* Chriſt, *he took them up in his Arms, laid his Hands on them, and bleſſed them,* namely, by praying for a Bleſſing, by pronouncing a Bleſſing, and by actually conferring a Bleſſing on them; and if they are capable of being bleſſed, why ſhould they be thought incapable of being baptized? Since Baptiſm, in the main, is but a ſolemn Benediction, as it inſtates us in the Privileges and Benefits of the Goſpel, ſuch as Adoption, and the Acceptance of our Perſons.

In ſhort, the Covenant of Grace is a Deed of Gift, made to us by *Chriſt,* wherein he promiſes to beſtow upon us eternal Life and Happineſs: And, as it would be abſurd to ſay, that a Child's Name ought not to be put into any Deed or Legacy, until he be of Age to underſtand it; ſo it is equally abſurd, and far more injurious, to exclude our Children from this heavenly Legacy, which *Chriſt,* out of the Riches of his Goodneſs, has bequeathed unto them: Eſpecially, conſidering that the primitive Church did all along, and every national Church, at this Day in the World, does admit their Children into the *Chriſtian* Covenant by this Ordinance; that many of the moſt antient Writers plead the Neceſſity of it, for the Expiation of original Guilt; and ſpeak of it as a great Sin in Parents, and others that have Opportunity, to ſuffer any Child of theirs, or any other Perſon under their Care, to die unbaptized.

Q. *Why did our Saviour, in the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, make uſe of Expreſſions ſo liable to Exception as theſe,* This is my Body, this is my Blood?

A. In relation to this Sacrament, there can be no great Difficulty in our Saviour's Words, if we will but admit, that the Scripture, very frequently, makes uſe of figurative Expreſſions, and in Matters of a ſacramental Nature, more eſpecially, is apt to put the Sign for the Thing ſignified; as *Gen.* xli. *the ſeven good Kine are ſeven Years,* Dan. viii. 20. *the Ram with two Horns are the Kings of* Media *and* Perſia, *Gal.* iv. 23. Sarah *and* Agar *are the two Covenants*; and *Rev.* i. 20. *the ſeven Stars are the Angels of the ſeven Churches,* are Inſtances of this kind: And when *Moſes,* ſpeaking of the *Paſchal* Lamb, tells the *Iſraelites, This is the Lord's Paſſover,* even before the Lord had paſſed over them, and ſmitten the *Egyptians*; and of the unleavened Bread, uſed at the *Paſchal* Feaſt; *This is Bread of Affliction which your Fathers did eat in the Land of* Egypt; his Meaning can be no other, than that theſe Things were a Repreſentation and Memorial of what had befallen their Forefathers in *Egypt.* And therefore it is no Wonder, that our bleſſed Saviour, in the Inſtitution of this Sacrament, ſhould make choice of the like Form of Expreſſion, as was in Uſe in the *Jewiſh* Church, upon the like Occaſions; and conſequently, that when he ſays, *this is my Body,* and *this is my Blood,* his Meaning muſt be, that *This Bread in my Hand, and the Wine in this Cup, do ſignify and repreſent to you my Body and Blood; and that in eating and drinking of theſe, you are made Partakers of my Body and Blood,* i. e. *of the real Benefits of my Death and Paſſion.*

And, indeed, if we conſider that our bleſſed Saviour celebrated this Sacrament before his Paſſion, we ſhall ſoon perceive that his Words could not poſſibly bear any other Conſtruction; for how could he hold himſelf in his own Hand, or give his Diſciples his Body broken, and his Blood ſhed, when, at this Time, he was alive, and no Violence had been offered him? They ſaw his Body whole before them, and knew that his Blood was in his Veins, and therefore could not but conclude, that what they eat and drank, according to the Evidence of their Senſes, was Bread and Wine; for had they underſtood our Saviour's Words, in their literal Meaning, it is hardly imaginable, but that they, who upon all other Occaſions, were ſo full of their Queſtions and Objections, would, upon the hearing of this Paradox, have ſtarted ſome ſuch Scruples as theſe,———*We ſee this to be Bread, and that to be Wine, and we ſee that thy Body is diſtinct from both; we ſee that thy Body is not broken, nor is thy Blood ſhed,* How therefore can theſe Things be?

The antient Apologiſts for our holy Religion take notice, that this was one of the greateſt Accuſations the *Heathens* brought againſt the *Chriſtians,* that they did eat human Fleſh, which they endeavoured to refute, and conſtantly rejected as the vileſt Calumny, and moſt abominable Thing: But now, had they underſtood our Saviour's Words in a literal Senſe, and thereupon made it an Article of Faith, that they did daily eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, with what Sincerity could they (without all Limitation or Diſtinction) not only have denied, hied, but even deteſted the doing ſo? Nay, nothing is more obvious, than that primitive Writers continually ridicule the *Heathens*, for worſhipping ſuch Deities as might be eaten, and inſtance particularly the *Egyptians*, who made the ſame Fleſh, which ſome of them did conſecrate as a God, the Food of others. But, how can it poſſibly be conceived, that they ſhould thus ridicule and expoſe the Religion of *Heathens* for that very Thing which made ſo great a Part in their own; or brand that, as the very Extremity of Madneſs and Folly, when done by others, which their Faith taught them, was the higheſt Act of religious Worſhip, when performed by themſelves? Theſe Things, ſurely, give us ſufficient Reaſon (with *Scotus*) to admire, that *ſuch an Interpretation ſhould be put upon this one Article, as makes our Faith contemptible to all that are guided with Reaſon*; and, at the ſame Time to aſſert, that, as it is apparently againſt Humanity, and againſt Piety, to break with our Hands, to tear with our Teeth, and to devour, as we do common Food, the Fleſh and Blood of *Chriſt*, the Scorn of Atheiſts and Infidels will never ceaſe, until the Doctrine, which eſtabliſhed theſe Poſitions, be baniſhed from the *Chriſtian* Church.

Q. *Conſidering the Importance of* Chriſt's *Reſurrection, were there not too few Witneſſes of it? And did not his publick Appearance afterwards ſeem, in ſome Degree, neceſſary, for the Conviction of the* Prieſts, Scribes *and* Phariſees, *as the only Method he could take, to work upon their Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs?*

A. We own, indeed, that the whole Streſs of the *Chriſtian* Cauſe lies upon the Truth of our Lord's Reſurrection, and that all proper Methods of convincing the World were neceſſary upon this Occaſion; but then it ſhould be conſidered, that our Lord, being now, after his Reſurrection, to act according to the Majeſty of the divine Nature, and not according to the Infirmities and Condeſcenſion of the Human, it did not ſo well comport with the Dignity he had aſſumed, to converſe publickly, or to ſubmit himſelf to the Cenſures, and freſh Affronts of his Enemies. But allowing it had been conſiſtent, yet the unbelieving *Jews* (eſpecially the Chief-prieſts and Rulers) were of all Men moſt unworthy to have ſo extraordinary a Way of Conviction afforded them.

They had already deſpiſed the Evidence that was given them; and not only ſo, but maliciouſly imputed the plaineſt Miracles, that ever were wrought, to the Power and Operation of the Devil. Now, if any Thing can render Men incapable of the Favour of a farther Conviction, ſuch a malicious Reſiſtance of the Evidence, which our Saviour's Miracles carried along with them, would probably do it; eſpecially if we conſider, that the greateſt of all the Miracles, which he wrought in his Life-time (we mean the raiſing of *Lazarus* from the Grave, after he had been dead four Days) was ſo far from convincing them, that though they could not deny the Thing, they took that Occaſion to reſolve to put him to death: And therefore what Reaſon was there, that *Chriſt* ſhould appear to them for their Conviction, who had conſpired to compaſs his Death, even becauſe they knew he had raiſed one from the Dead?

But ſuppoſing, for the preſent, that our Saviour had appeared publickly to the *Jewiſh* Rulers; yet, ſince neither the Darkneſs at his Death, nor the Earthquake at his Reſurrection, neither the Declaration of the Centurion, on the one, or the Confeſſion of the Soldiers, on the other Occaſion, had wrought in them any Remorſe, we can hardly ſuppoſe, but that, had he ſo appeared, they would have offered to lay violent Hands upon him: In which Caſe, had our Saviour vaniſhed out of their Hands (as perhaps he might) what would they have concluded from thence, but that they had ſeen a Ghoſt, a Spectre, or Apparition? And what Conviction would that have wrought, but that their Senſes had been impoſed upon by ſome magical Illuſion? And what Effect would this have had upon their Minds, towards bringing them to a Belief that *Chriſt* was truly riſen? None at all.

In many of the *Jews* (eſpecially their Chief-prieſts and Elders) *the God of this World had ſo blinded their Eyes, and hardened their Hearts*, that they would not have believed one Tittle of our Saviour's Reſurrection; or, in caſe they did believe it, ſuch was their Malice and Perverſeneſs, that they would not have teſtified, that they ever had ſeen him, after his Reſurrection. Now they that are wicked enough to deny what they believe, will, at a Pinch, deny alſo what they know to be true: And therefore, ſuppoſing that our Lord had ſhewn himſelf to all his Enemies, and to all the People, and but ſome of them (eſpecially of the great Men in Authority) had denied that ever they ſaw him after his Reſurrection, this would have exceedingly weakened the Teſtimony of thoſe who vouched and confeſſed it: For he that appeals to the Knowledge of another, for the Truth of a Matter of Fact, is ſo far from gaining, that he loſes Credit by the Appeal; if the other Perſon denies that he knows any thing of it. If therefore our Lord had appeared to his Perſecutors (it being likely that his Diſciples would appeal to their Knowledge) they, by proteſting the Contrary, would have gained a terrible Advantage againſt the *Chriſtians*, upon that Appeal. Herein therefore is manifeſt the Wiſdom of *Chriſt*, that in making Choice of particular Witneſſes, *viz.* ſuch Perſons only as would be ſo far from diſſembling their Knowledge, that they would always be ready to ſeal their Teſtimony with their Blood, he hath ſettled the *Chriſtian* Faith upon a better Foundation than if he had appeared in the Temple, or in the Midſt of *Jeruſalem*, to the whole People of the *Jews*.

The Truth is, it is not the Number of Witneſſes, but the Character and Qualifications of the Perſons, together with the Evidence itſelf, in its full Force and Circumſtances, that are chiefly to be regarded in Matters of this Nature. If but a few Men (as the Apoſtles did) by undeniable Miracles, can make it ſufficiently appear, that what they ſay is true, and that God himſelf confirms the Truth of it; they can appeal to every Man's own Senſes, before whom they work Miracles, and make every one that ſees them, a Witneſs to the Truth of their Doctrines. In this Caſe God himſelf bears Witneſs to it; and what the High-prieſt ſaid, upon a very different Occaſion, every Stander-by finds himſelf conſtrained to declare in this: *What need have we of any farther Witneſſes? For we ourſelves have heard of their own Mouths*, (in the miraculous Gift of Tongues) *and ſeen with our own Eyes* (in the many wonderful Works which they have publickly wrought) a full and authentick Teſtimony of *Chriſt's* Reſurrection.

THE

THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO
ST. MARK.

THAT *the Author of this compendious Hiſtory of the* Goſpel, *was not one of the twelve Apoſtles, is evident to any who will read over their Names,* Matth. x. *and* Mark iii. *That he was one of the Seventy, whom* Chriſt *ſent out afterwards, is ſaid by ſome, but upon what Evidence is not certain. That he was one of* Chriſt's *Diſciples, is without Diſpute. There was* John *ſurnamed* Mark, Act xii. 12. *Some think he was the Penman of this Goſpel, but others doubt it; the Antients always calling him* Mark. *We read of a* Mark, *Siſter's Son to* Barnabas, Col. iv. 10. *and of* Mark *employed in the Miniſtry,* 2 Tim. iv. 11. Peter *calls one of this Name* his Son, 1 Pet. v. 13. Paul *calls one of this Name* his Fellow-labourer, Phil. v. 24. *He who was ſirnamed* Mark *(added to* John *as his Prænomen) went along with* Barnabas *to* Cyprus, *upon the Diſſention between* Paul *and him,* Acts xv. 39. *Of the many different Perſons in Scripture of this Name, which of them was the* Evangeliſt, *we have not Light enough in Scripture to know; which yet we ſhould not have wanted, had it been material for us to know; and Writers are as uncertain in their Accounts of him. Some will have him to be one, ſome another. Some have thought that this Goſpel was dictated by* Peter *to* Mark. *We are alſo told, that he wrote this Hiſtory at* Rome, *then preached the Goſpel in* Egypt, *and was the firſt Biſhop of* Alexandria, *where he was buried, dying in the eighth Year of* Nero. *Theſe various Accounts Men may believe, or not, as they ſee Reaſon, ſince they are related by Writers, who are ſaid to have wrote, what we have of their Works, at leaſt* 300 *Years after* Mark's *Time. The beſt Interpreters agree in this, that* Mark *wrote his Goſpel in* Greek, *tho' a native* Jew, *well underſtanding that Language.* Hierom *tells us, that he wrote it at* Rome, *from the Mouth of* Peter, *who dictated to him. But this is very uncertain; for the Scripture no-where mentions that* Peter *ever was at* Rome.

CHAP. I.

The Office and Baptiſm of John; *he ſhews the Dignity and Power of* Chriſt, *and Spirituality of his Baptiſm; baptizes him in* Jordan; *the Spirit deſcends on him; the Father's Teſtimony of him. The Spirit drives* Chriſt *into the Wilderneſs, where he is tempted of* Satan *forty Days; in the End is miniſter'd unto by Angels.* John *being in Priſon,* Jeſus *preaches the Kingdom of Heaven; calls* Andrew, James *and* John. *Preaches at* Capernaum, *and caſts an unclean Spirit out of a Man; the People are amazed at his Doctrine. He cures* Peter's *Mother-in-law of a Fever, and heals many Diſeaſes. He departs into a ſolitary Place; all Men ſeek for him; preaches throughout* Galilee; *cleanſes a Leper; charges him Silence, who publiſhes the Matter.*

Q. WHAT *is the proper Signification of the Word* Goſpel?

A. The Word *Evangelicum* ſignifies, in general, *good News*, and is of the ſame Import with out *Saxon* Word *Goſpel*; only in the ſacred Uſe of them both there ſeems to be a *Metonymy*, whereby the Words that denote *good News*, are ſet to ſignify *the Hiſtory* of that good News, *viz.* of the Birth and Life, the Miracles and Doctrine, the Death and Reſurrection of our Saviour *Chriſt*; all of which, put together, do make up the joyful Tidings, which we call the *Goſpel:* And from this Etymology of the Words, the Perſons who have recorded the Life and Actions of our Saviour, are called *Evangeliſts*, or Writers of the Goſpel. The Works of this Kind, which are received as canonical, are but four, *viz.* that of St. *Matthew*, St. *Mark*, St. *Luke* and St. *John*; but the ſpurious Pieces which are handed down to us (even tho' ſeveral of them be loſt) do exceed the Number of forty. The Truth is, the antient Hereticks began generally with attacking the Goſpels, in order either to maintain their Errors or excuſe them. To this Purpoſe ſome rejected all the genuine Goſpels, and ſubſtituted others that were ſpurious, in their Room. This produced the Goſpels of *Apelles*, *Baſilides*, *Cerinthus*, the *Ebonites* and *Gnoſticks*. Others corrupted the true Goſpels, by ſuppreſſing whatever gave them any Trouble, and inſerting whatever might favour their erroneous Doctrines. Thus the *Nazarenes* corrupted the original Goſpel of St. *Matthew*, as the *Marcionites* did that of St. *Luke*, while the *Alogians* rejected St. *John*, as the *Ebonites* did St. *Matthew*; and the *Valentimians* only acknowledged St. *John*, as the *Corinthians* did St. *Mark*.

Q. *To what Places in Scripture does the* Evangeliſt *refer, in his Deſcription of* John Baptiſt, *Verſes* 2, 3. Behold I ſend my Meſſenger before thy Face, which ſhall prepare thy Way before thee. The Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make his Paths ſtrait; *and what is the proper Import of the Words?*

A. There are two Places in the Prophets referred to, both by our Saviour and his Evangeliſts, wherein the *Baptiſt* is deſcribed under this Character. The former is in the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *The Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make ſtreight, in the Deſert, an High-way for our God*, Chap. xl. 3. and the latter (which is more plain and expreſs) is in *Malachi*, *Behold I will ſend my Meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the Way before me*, &c. Chap. iii. 1. Both the Paſſages allude to Harbingers, and ſuch other Officers, as, upon the Journies of Princes, are employed to take Care that the Ways be levelled and put in Order, and all ſuch Obſtructions removed as might hinder their Paſſage, or render it leſs commodious: And the Manner in which the *Baptiſt* thus prepared the Way of the Lord, was by his Preaching, and by his Baptiſm. By his Preaching he endeavoured to bring the *Jews* to a due Senſe of their Sins; to abate their Confidence in being of *Abraham*'s Seed, and punctual Obſervers of the ceremonial Law; and to forewarn all of the dreadful Effects of God's Anger, who did not bring forth Fruits worthy of Repentance. And by his Baptiſm, when adminiſtered to ſuch Perſons as were under the Obligation of the Law, he plainly ſhewed that he was therein admitting them to ſome Privileges which they had not before, *viz.* the Remiſſion of their Sins upon their Faith and Obedience to him, who was the Meſſenger of the Covenant. Since therefore the *Baptiſt* was born ſix Months before our Saviour, and entered upon his Miniſtry ſix Months before our Saviour began his; and ſince no Part of his Doctrine terminated in itſelf, and his Baptiſm referred every one to *Chriſt* for Acceptance and Salvation; he is very properly ſaid to be his Harbinger, *a Meſſenger ſent to prepare the Way before him*, or to ſet all Things in Readineſs for his Approach, by putting an End to the Old, and making an Entrance into the new Diſpenſation; in which Senſe he is repreſented by the Fathers, as a Kind of middle Partition between the Law and the Goſpel; of the Law, as a Thing now come to a Period, and of the Goſpel, as commencing under him, who was ſhortly to make his Appearance.

Q. *What has been obſerved concerning the Baptiſm of* Chriſt?

A. The Obſervation of the *Greek* Church, in Relation to our Saviour's Baptiſm, is this, that he who aſcended out of the Water, muſt firſt deſcend down into it; and conſequently, *That Baptiſm is to be performed, not by ſprinkling, but by waſhing the Body.* And indeed he muſt be ſtrangely ignorant of the *Jewiſh* Rites of Baptiſm, who ſeems to doubt of this, ſince, to the due Performance of it, they required the Immerſion of the whole Body, to ſuch a Degree of Nicety, that if any Dirt was upon it, that hindered the Water from coming to that Part, they thought the Ceremony not rightly done. The *Chriſtians*, no doubt, took this Rite from the *Jews*, and followed them in their Manner of performing it. Accordingly, ſeveral Authors have ſhewn, that we read no where in Scripture of any one's being baptized, but by Immerſion, and from the Acts of Councils; and antient Rituals have proved, that this Manner of Immerſion continued (as much as poſſible) to be uſed, for thirteen hundred Years after *Chriſt*. But it is much to be queſtioned, whether the Prevalence of Cuſtom, and the over Fondneſs of Parents, will ever ſuffer it to be reſtored, eſpecially in theſe cold Countries.

Q. *At the Baptiſm of* Chriſt *it is ſaid*, the Heavens were opened; *in what Manner do you conceive that this appeared?*

A. The Words in St. *Matthew* are, *Lo the Heavens were open*, in St. *Mark*, *cloven* or *rent*, as the original Word ſignifies. The common People of the *Jews*, indeed were of Opinion, that the Heavens were firm and ſolid, and that the Fire which fell from thence upon the Face of the Earth, burſt through this Firmament, and made an Opening in this vaſt Convex that ſurrounds us: And therefore it is that the *Evangeliſts* expreſs themſelves in this Manner, in Accommodation to the Prejudices and Capacities of the Vulgar. But by the Phraſe we need underſtand no more, than that a ſudden Beam of radiant Light came darting from the Skies, (like a Flaſh of Lightning from the Clouds) and made it ſeem as though the Heavens had been opened, or rent, to let it out; becauſe, to the naked Eye, the Air, at that Time, ſeems to divide, to make a clearer and fuller Way for the Light.

Q. *It is ſaid Verſe* 10. *that* the Spirit, like a Dove, deſcended upon him: *Did the Holy Spirit aſſume the* real Shape *of a* Dove, *in his Deſcent upon* Chriſt?

A. The Antients were generally of Opinion, that the *Holy Ghoſt*, in his Deſcent upon our Saviour, aſſumed the real Shape of a Dove, which, at that Time more eſpecially, was a very proper Repreſentation of his Dove-like Nature, *Iſaiah* xliii. 2. and of all ſuch as were to receive the ſame Spirit, and are required to be as harmleſs as Doves; but moſt of the Moderns (though they allow that the bleſſed Spirit did, at this Time, aſſume a viſible Shape, to render his Deſcent manifeſt) do maintain that that the *Greek* Words relate not to the Body or Shape of a Dove, but to the Manner of a Dove's deſcending, and lighting on any Thing. Whether of theſe Opinions ſhould prevail, it is idle to diſpute, ſince neither of them are deſtitute, of ſome Countenance from Scripture, neither of them of them injurious to the Dignity of the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. *Wherein did* Chriſt's *Preaching excel that of the* Scribes, *as Verſe* 22?

A. There are ſome Opinions, wherein the Excellency of *Chriſt*'s Preaching, above that of the *Jewiſh* Doctors did conſiſt. Some think, that his Teaching was not ſo much in the Manner of an Inſtructor, as a Legiſlator, and one who, in his own Name, had Power to propound the

Terms of Life and Death. But though this, in Relation to *Chriſt*'s Divinity, be certainly true; yet it is not ſo agreeable, either to his prophetick Office, or his frequent Declarations, *That the Doctrine, which he taught, was not his own, but his who ſent him; and that he ſpake not of himſelf, but as his Father had commanded him,* John vii. 16. and xxii. 49. Others imagine, that the Excellency of *Chriſt*'s Preaching conſiſted in the Miracles, wherewith he confirm'd his Doctrine; for ſo the *Evangeliſt* repreſents the Matter: *They all marvelled, ſaying, what is this new Doctrine, for with Authority he commandeth the unclean Spirits, and they obey him?* Verſe 27. But becauſe another *Evnngeliſt* tells us, that it was his Doctrine, without his Miracles, that aſtoniſh'd the People, *Matth.* vii. 29, others are of Opinion, that this Excellency lay in the graceful and likely Manner of his Delivery, not like the Teachers of the *Jews*, who read their Lectures of the Law ſo coldly, ſo perfunctorily, as never to affect the Hearts of their Hearers; and that, in ſhort, he ſpake as a Prophet, who had a full Commiſſion from God to deliver his Meſſage to them; not as the Scribes, who pretended only to deliver the Traditions of their Forefathers.

Q. *In the 24th Verſe, an unclean Spirit that poſſeſſed a Man, confeſſed* Chriſt *to be* the Son of God: *Is it certain that the Devil really knew that our* Saviour *was* the Son of God, *or did he ſpeak by Gueſs?*

A. There are two *Evangeliſts* who relate this Miracle, and, in the Concluſion of it, both tell us, that our Saviour *ſuffered not the Devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him to be* Chriſt, *Mark* i. 34. *Luke* iv. 41. but, notwithſtanding this, ſome Interpreters do not ſcruple to affirm the contrary, *viz.* That the Devil had no perfect Perception of our Lord's Divinity, until his Reſurrection from the Dead. The State of Humiliation which he choſe, the Obſcurity which he lived in, and the Perſecutions which he ſuffered, without ever employing his Power to redreſs them; the Care which he took to conceal his moſt renown'd Actions, and to refer the Glory of them all to God alone, deceived the Devil, and kept him in Suſpence. For had he known *Jeſus*, ſay they, he would never have put into the Heart of *Judas* to betray, or of the *Jews* to crucify him, ſince this was the proper Way to accompliſh Man's Redemption. But the Anſwer to this is obvious,——That, though the Devil did know *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, yet he did not know the Myſtery of Man's Redemption. When he firſt eſſay'd our Lord in his Temptations, he ſpeaks indeed in a diffident Manner, *If thou be the Son of God*; but, by his Defeat, he ſoon perceived that his Antagoniſt was more than Man. Tho' therefore he perfectly knew him to be the Son of God, yet ſeeing him inveſted with our Nature, he might, very likely, be ſo far infatuated, as to think, that, by deſtroying his Humanity, he might poſſibly defeat God's great Deſign. For how ſublime ſoever we may ſuppoſe his intellective Faculties to be, yet the wonderful Work of Man's Salvation by the Death of *Chriſt*, the Apoſtle plainly tells us, is, what no finite Underſtanding could comprehend, until *God was pleaſed to make all Men ſee, what is the Fellowſhip of the Myſtery, which, from the Beginning of the World, hath been hid in God, to the Intent that now, unto Principalities, and Powers in heavenly Places, might be known, by the Church, the manifold Wiſdom of God, according to the eternal Purpoſe, which he purpoſed in* Chriſt Jeſus *our Lord*, Eph. iii. 9. *&c.*

Q. *Was there any Thing extraordinary in recovering* Peter's *Wife's Mother from a Fever, which is a common Diſtemper, and frequently cured?*

A. This Miracle did not lie in the Cure of an incurable Diſeaſe, but in the Manner of the Cure, which was with a Touch, the Suddenneſs of it, her Fever immediately left her; and the Perfectneſs of it, in that ſhe was able to riſe, and wait on the Company. This is ſaid to be *Peter*'s Wife's Mother; and from hence it may be preſumed, that *Peter*, who was himſelf of *Bethſaida*, had married a Woman of *Capernaum*, and there lived with his Mother-in-Law.

The curing of Diſeaſes, and the caſting out of Devils, were undoubtedly two diſtinct Things, and conſequently is an Error in thoſe, who, in their *Annotations* upon the very Texts, where they are mention'd ſeparately, endeavour to perſuade us, that the Devils caſt out were only Diſeaſes.

CHAP. II.

Chriſt *preaching at* Capernaum, *heals a Paralytick. The* Phariſees *charge him with Blaſphemies. He calls* Levi *from the Receipt of Cuſtom; vindicates his eating with Publicans and Sinners; and his Diſciples for not faſting, and plucking the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-Day.*

Q. THE *firſt Part of this Chapter gives an Account of the miraculous Cure of a* Paralytick, *who not being able to get through the Croud, was let down through the Roof of the Houſe: But how could they poſſibly uncover the Houſe, when they could not ſo much as get to it, much leſs upon it, by Reaſon of the Throng? And what is the Nature of the Diſtemper called the* Palſy?

A. The Word *paralytick*, in the *Greek*, ſignifies to *reſolve* or *relax*, and ſeems to imply that this Diſtemper is a Relaxation of the Nerves, though it ſometimes proceeds from other Cauſes. It is always attended with great Weakneſſes and Obſtructions of the Blood and Juices, which deprive the Limbs of their Motion, and ſometimes occaſion great Pain. This Diſtemper is reckon'd above the Power of all Medicines to remove; and yet our Saviour cured it ſeveral Times, merely by a Word ſpeaking.

To have a right Notion of this Matter, we muſt obſerve, that the Houſes in *Judea* were, for the moſt part (even as they are to this Day) low built and flat roofed, and ſurrounded with a Battlement about Breaſt high, according to God's own Injunction, *Deut.* xxii. 8. ſo that, to go up to the Top of their Houſes, the *Jews* had two Ways; one by a Pair of Stairs within the Houſe, leading up to a Trap-Door, which lay even with the Roof; and the other on the Outſide of the Houſe, by a Ladder, or Pair of Stairs rather, either fix'd or moveable, by which they could aſcend to the Roof, when they pleaſed, without ever going into the Houſe itſelf. Since this then was the general Faſhion of *Jewiſh* Houſes, we need not doubt, but that this at *Capernaum* was of the ſame Figure and Make; and therefore the Bearers of the Paralytick, finding that they could not come at the Door, by Reaſon of the Crowd, bethought themſelves of another Expedient. They went round a private Way, and coming to the Stairs, which ſtood on the Outſide of the Houſe, up theſe they carry him, and preſently gain the Top. But finding the Trap-Door (or Way of the Roof, as the *Jews* call it) ſhut againſt them, they immediately go to work, and forcing it open (which St. *Luke* calls *uncovering* or *breaking up the Roof*, Chap. ii. 4, becauſe the Door, which lay even with the Roof, when let down and ſhut, was reputed a Part of it) they convey'd him down that Way, which St. *Luke* calls letting him down through the Tiling, *i. e.* through the Roof, which (except where the Door was) was all paved with large Tiles; and by this Means they found it no very difficult Matter *to place him in the Midſt before* Jeſus.

Q. *Was it the Faith of this poor Man, or his Friends, that recommended him to our Saviour's compaſſionate Regard?*

A. Some have ſuppoſed, that becauſe the Hiſtory makes no Mention of any Faith, but that of the Friends and Bearers of this impotent Man, that therefore the Patient himſelf had no Part in that virtuous Diſpoſition, which inclined our Saviour to compaſſionate him; and thence they infer, how far a Man may be benefited by the Faith and Interceſſion of others in his Behalf. But it is a Miſtake to think, that the Words, *their Faith*, excludes that of the ſick Perſon: For had he not been perſuaded that *Chriſt* was able to cure him, he would never have ſuffered himſelf to be preſented to him, in a Method ſo troubleſome to his weak Condition. We read, indeed, of no Petition that he made to our Lord; but the Violence of his Diſtemper might poſſibly have deprived him of the Uſe of Speech; or if it had not, the very Spectacle of a Body ſo debilitated, the Manner of the Action, and the Fatigue which he muſt have undergone in it, all ſpoke for him, and carried a more moving Eloquence, than it was poſſible for any Tongue to utter.

Q. *What is the Meaning of thoſe Words of our Saviour to the Paralytick,* Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee?

A. The *Jews* were of this Perſuaſion, that every Diſeaſe of the Body (thoſe eſpecially which were of a grievous Nature) were ſent upon Men for the Puniſhment of their Sins; and though they might carry this Maxim too far, *John* ix. 3. yet ſure it is, that the Scriptures repreſent moſt of the Calamities of Life, as the natural Effect of Men's Iniquities. And therefore ſome have obſerved, that as the Word *Sins* is frequently put for the Puniſhment of Sins, our Saviour's forgiving the Man's Sins, was no more than a Declaration of his Intention to cure his Diſtemper: Whereas it is plain, that our Saviour ſpeaks of them, as two diſtinct Things, when he puts the Queſtion to the Company, *Whether it is eaſier to ſay, Thy Sins be forgiven thee, or to ſay, Take up thy Bed and walk,* Matt. ix. 4.

Q. *Our Saviour, to juſtify his Diſciples from the Charge of* breaking the Sabbath, *by* plucking Ears of Corn, *as they walked through the Fields, brings the Example of* David's *taking* Shew-bread *at the Hands* Abiathar *the High-peieſt; but* Abiathar *was not then* High-prieſt, *but* Abimelech: *Pray ſolve this Difficulty?*

A. Doctor *Hammond* remarks on the Words, "In the Days of *Abiathar* the High-prieſt," in the 26th Verſe, that they ought not to be underſtood to ſignify, under *Abiathar* the High-prieſt, for it was in *Abimelech*'s Time, 1 *Sam.* xxi. 1. who was *Abiathar*'s Father; and the Story is known, that *Abimelech*, and the reſt of the Prieſts, almoſt the whole Family, were, by *Saul*'s Appointment, ſlain, for ſuccouring *David* at that Time, *Abiathar* (here named) peculiarly eſcaping out of this Slaughter, and ſucceeding in the High-prieſthood upon this Occaſion, and ſo continuing long under *David*'s Reign. It is therefore neceſſary that the Words be ſo rendered, as to denote the Time immediately preceeding *Abiathar*'s being High-prieſt. And this uncertain Signification of Prepoſitions, in the New Teſtament, proceeds from the like of the *Hebrew* in the Old. Thus in *Matt.* xxi. 19. when it is ſaid, *Chriſt ſaw a Fig-tree in the Way*, it muſt not be rendered *in*, but *at ſome Diſtance from*, the Way; for ſo in *Mark* we read, *Seeing a Fig-tree afar off.*

See *Matt.* ix. and xii. for other Remarks on the Hiſtory contained in this Chapter.

CHAP. III.

Chriſt, *on the Sabbath, heals a withered* Hand. *The* Phariſees *conſpire againſt him; he departs thence; the Multitude follow him; he heals their Diſeaſed, and caſts out Devils; ordains twelve Apoſtles, to preach and work Miracles. The Multitude flock to him; his Friends reckon him mad. The* Scribes *charge him with having a Devil; he confutes their Blaſphemy, and ſhews, that the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall never be forgiven. Who are his Brother, Siſter, and Mother.*

Q. THE *greateſt Part af this Chapter, being contained in the* 12*th of* Matthew, *I ſhall only deſire a few particular Obſervations upon the Contents of this. And firſt, What do you obſerve on the People's Readineſs to hear our Saviour?*

A. People come from all Parts, when our Saviour begins to preach. His Miniſters find it thus: At their firſt coming amongſt a People, they are moſt acceptable, and they do moſt Good; the Peoples Affections are then warmeſt, and perhaps the Miniſters too. The People, who thus zealouſly attended our Saviour's Miniſtry, were of the common and ordinary Sort; the Poor received the Goſpel, whilſt the *Phariſees*, and Men of Rank, the mighty, the noble, and the wiſe Men after the Fleſh, deſpiſed our Saviour's Perſon, ſlighted his Miniſtry, and ſought his Life. The ordinary and meaneſt Sort of People have always been more zealous and forward in embracing the Goſpel, than ever the great, the rich, and honourable Part of the World have been. It is a ſad, but a certain Truth, Heaven is a Place where few (comparitively) of the great Men of the World are like to come; their Temptations are many, their Luſts are ſtrong, and their Eſtates, through their own Abuſe, become Fewel to their Luſts.

Q. *What Instructions does our Saviour's calling the twelve Apoſtles afford us?*

A. As the *Jewiſh* Church aroſe from twelve Patriarchs, ſo the *Chriſtian* Church was planted by twelve Apoſtles. *Chriſt* having called his Diſciples to him, gives them their Commiſſion. None may undertake the Work and Calling of the Miniſtry but thoſe whom *Chriſt* appoints and calls. The Perſons commiſſioned, were Diſciples before they were Apoſtles, to teach us, that thoſe who preach the Goſpel, ought to be trained up in the Faith and Doctrine of the Goſpel, before they undertake a publick Charge. But though *Chriſt* called his Apoſtles now, he did not now ſend them forth; *He ordained twelve that they ſhould be with him*; that is, that they might converſe with him, and be Eye and Ear-Witneſſes of his Life, Doctrine and Miracles. And having been thus with *Chriſt*, and prepared by him for their Work, afterward they went forth. If the Apoſtles, who were called and qualified extraordinarily, were to ſpend ſome Time with *Chriſt*, to receive Direction and Inſtruction from him, before they entered on their Word of Preaching, how much more needful is it for ſuch as are ordinarily called, to be well fitted and furniſhed for the miniſterial Service, before they undertake it?

In recording the Names of the Apoſtles, *Peter* ſtands firſt in the Liſt, and *Judas* laſt. *Peter* is named firſt, becauſe probably elder than the reſt, or for Order ſake he might ſpeak before the reſt. From whence may be inferred a Primacy, though not a Supremacy; a Priority of Order, not a Superiority of Degree. As the Foreman of the Grand-Jury has a Precedency, but no Pre-eminency; he is firſt in Order, but has no Authority or Power over the reſt. *Judas* is named laſt, with a Brand of Infamy upon him, that he was the Perſon that betrayed his Lord and Maſter. So that though the Truth of Grace be abſolutely neceſſary to a Miniſter's Salvation, yet the Want of it doth not diſanul his Office, nor hinder the Lawfulneſs of his Miniſtry. Laſtly obſerve, that our Saviour ſirnamed *James* and *John*, *Boanerges*, Sons of Thunder. St. *Jerom* thinks this Name was given them, becauſe, being with *Chriſt* at his Tranſfiguration in the Mount, they heard the Father's Voice out of the Cloud like Thunder. Others think them ſo called, becauſe they were more vehement and earneſt than the reſt in preaching; and did, with greater Zeal and Power ſound forth the Goſpel like Thunder. It is very probable, *Chriſt* gave them this Name from a Foreſight of the Heat and Zeal of their Temper, of which they ſoon gave an Inſtance, in deſiring Fire to come down from Heaven, to conſume the *Samaritans*.

Q. *Not only the* Scribes *and* Phariſees *blaſpheme* Chriſt's *Miracles, but even his Friends caſt injurious Reflections upon him: What does this teach us?*

A. Our Saviour and his Apoſtles were ſo followed, where-ever they went, that they had ſcarce Reſpite enough to take neceſſary Refreſhment; and our Lord is as ready to teach, as the People are to hear; he regards not the ſatisfying his Hunger, ſo he can but inſtruct them. But how raſhly do our Lord's Friends cenſure his Neglect of proper Suſtenance? They conclude he is beſide himſelf, out of his right Mind, and accordingly went out to lay hold upon him. It often happens, that the Servants of God meet with the ſtrongeſt Temptations and Diſcouragements from their neareſt Relations by Blood or Alliance. The *Scribes* likewiſe endeavour to fix a malicious Slander upon him, namely, that he was poſſeſſed of the Devil, and by his Aſſiſtance caſt forth Devils out of others. Good God! how was thy own and only Son, the holy and innocent *Jeſus*, cenſured, ſlandered, and falſely accuſed of the worſt of Crimes; of Gluttony, of Blaſphemy, and of Sorcery! can any of thy Children expect Freedom from the Perſecution of the Tongue, when Innocence itſelf could not protect the holy Son from Slander and Accuſation? But our Lord's Anſwer and Apology for himſelf, fully confutes their Calumny and reproves his Accuſers. To confute their Slander, our Lord, by ſeveral Arguments ſhews the Improbability and Abſurdity of the Devil's caſting out himſelf, and of his oppoſing and deſtroying his own Kingdom. Our Saviour having ſufficiently refuted this abſurd Notion of the *Scribes*, next informs them whence he had his Power of caſting out Devils, even from God himſelf; and accordingly he compares *Satan* to a ſtrong Man well armed with Weapons to defend his Houſe; and he compares himſelf (cloathed with divine Power) to one that is ſtronger than the ſtrong Man. So that the Argument runs thus: The Devil is very ſtrong and powerful, and there is no Power, but God only, that is ſtronger than his. If then, (ſays *Chriſt*) I was not aſſiſted with a divine Power, I could never caſt out the ſtrong Man, who reigns in the Bodies and Souls of Men, as in his Houſe. *Chriſt*'s divine Power only is ſuperior to *Satan*'s Strength.

Hence our Saviour takes Occaſion to ſhew his Adverſaries the Heinouſneſs of their Sin in loading him with ſo foul a Charge; namely, that they were guilty of no leſs a Crime, than of Blaſphemy; he charges them with ſinning the unpardonable Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. As if *Chriſt* had ſaid, All the Reproaches which you caſt upon me, as Man, are pardonable; as when you check me with the Poverty and Meanneſs of my Birth, when you cenſure me for a Wine-bibber, a Glutton, a Friend and Companion of Sinners, and the like unjuſt Crimes. But when you blaſpheme that divine Power, by which all my Miracles are wrought, by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, this makes your Condition only dangerous but deſperate, not becauſe you reſiſt the laſt Remedy, and oppoſe the beſt Means for your Conviction.

Chap. IV.

Chriſt, *in a Ship teaches the Multitude. The Parable of the Sower explain'd; of the Candle and Candleſtick; of the Seed growing inſenſibly; of the Grain of Muſtard-Seed. A Storm ariſing, the Diſciples are afraid, and awake* Chriſt. *He rebukes the Storm, and their Unbelief; they are aſtoniſhed.*

Q. THE *firſt Part of this Chapter to the 20th Verſe, is largely treated of in our Notes upon* Matth. iii. *I ſhall therefore deſire your Explanation of the Parable of the diligent Huſbandman?*

A. This Parable affords an inſtructive Leſſon to the Miniſters of the Goſpel faithfully to do their Parts, in ſowing the Seed of the Word amongſt their People, and then not to be over-ſollicitous about the Event, but to leave the Iſſue to God; not to be diſcouraged, though the Fruit of their Labour doth not preſently appear. Accordingly Chriſt propounds the laborious Huſbandman to his Miniſters Imitation. As the Huſbandman, when he has prudently and painfully caſt his Seed into the Ground, is not anxiouſly diſquieted, but goes to Bed and reſts in Hope, and at length the Corn ſprings up, firſt the Blade, next the Ear, and then the Grain. In like Manner let the Miniſters of God do their Duty without Diſcouragement, *In the Morning ſow their Seed, and in the Evening not* *withhold their Hand.* And although the Seed ſown doth not preſently appear, perhaps not in our Days, and ſeems rotten among the Clods, yet it may afterwards appear with a plentiful Increaſe, when our Heads are laid among the Clods; verifying that Saying of our Saviour, *One ſoweth, and another reapeth.* The Miniſtry is the ordinary, neceſſary, and principal Means which God hath appointed for ſowing the Seeds of Grace in the Hearts of his People. *So is the Kingdom of God, as if a Man ſhould caſt Seed into the Ground.* The Virtue and Efficacy of the Word preached, depends not on the Parts of a Man, but on the Power of God. *The Seed ſpringeth up, he knoweth not how.* Happy we, if as God's Husbandmen we are imployed in plowing, ſowing, or reaping, our Lord will reward us, not according to our Succeſs, but according to our Endeavours.

Q. *How do you underſtand the* 12*th Verſe,* That ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive, *&c?*

A. Theſe Words, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, note the Obduration of the *Iſraelites*, which fell upon them from God's Deſertion, as a Puniſhment of their not making uſe of the Talents which he had given them: And ſo this Verſe is anſwerable and parallel to *Mat.* xiii. 15. or the End of the Place in *Iſaiah* vi. 9, 10. recited at large in St. *Matthew*, but here, and alſo Luke viii. 10. and *John* xii. 40. epitomized and ſummed up, *leſt they ſhould ſee*, &c. and therefore, from the Importance of the whole Place in *Iſaiah* and *Matthew*, the Senſe of it (here, where it is ſhortly recited) muſt be taken, *viz.* that upon ſhutting their Eyes; that is, voluntary Obduration of Heart againſt God, God withdraws his Grace, which otherwiſe he would have afforded them, and doth afford others. Agreeably to that of *Procopius* on *Iſaiah*, *The Power of Seeing was preſent to them from the Grace of him that was ſeen; their not ſeeing was an Accident or Conſequence of ſhutting their Eyes.* And ſo here, their not ſeeing for want of Light (the Obſcurity of thoſe Parables in which God ſpake to them) was a Puniſhment of their Winking, and not being willing to ſee.

CHAP. V.

Chriſt, *in the Country of the* Gadarenes, *diſpoſſeſſes a Man of a Legion of Devils, and permits them to go into the Swine. The* Gadarenes *pray him to depart. The Man that had been poſſeſſed, publiſhes what had been done, throughout* Decapolis. *A Woman ſick of a Bloody-Iſſue, by touching his Garment, is made whole. He comforts her, and commends her Faith. Raiſes the Ruler's Daughter from the Dead.*

Q. WHERE *was ſituated the Country of the* Gadarenes?

A. Gadara was one of the Cities beyond *Jordan*, belonging to the Country called *Decapolis*, which was ſometimes in the Hands of the *Jews*, and ſometimes of the *Syrians*; but at this Time was inhabited by both. The *Syrians* were *Heathens*, and conſequently made uſe of Swine, not only for Food, but for Sacrifices likewiſe: And 'tis not improbable, that the *Jews* of the Country might be tempted to feed Swine, by the Advantage they made in ſelling them to their Heathen Neighbours. This was againſt a Prohibition of their Law, 'tis true; but Laws, we know, are not always obſerved, and, perhaps, leaſt of all at *Gadara*, which being in the Extremity of the *Jewiſh* Territories, and under the Juriſdiction of *Heathens*, left the *Jews* without any Reſtraint upon them, but that of *Conſcience*, which is too frequently violated for the Sake of Gain. Our learned Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves, that it is highly probable, that this City *Gadara*, or the Country of the *Gadarenes*, was for the moſt Part *Pagans*, or apoſtatized *Jews*, becauſe they bred up ſo many Swine, which to the *Jews* were unclean Beaſts.

Q. *Was not our Saviour guilty of great Injuſtice, in permitting the Deſtruction of ſuch a Number of Swine, that were the Property of other Men?*

A. The Swine, which were deſtroyed, in Conſequence of the Permiſſion which our Saviour gave the evil Spirit to enter into them, belonged either to the *Jews* or *Gentiles* of *Gadara:* If they belonged to the *Jews*, it cannot be denied, but they were juſtly puniſhed for breaking their own Laws and Conſtitutions, which forbad them to keep any; nor can our Saviour's Right of inflicting the Puniſhment be called in Queſtion, becauſe it was a received Maxim among the *Jews*, that any Perſon inveſted with the Character of a Prophet, and acting by the Spirit of God, might, without the Aſſiſtance of a Magiſtrate, put the Laws in Execution againſt Offenders: And therefore we, who acknowledge our *Jeſus* to have been *more than a Prophet*, can never be at a Loſs to account for his exerciſing Authority among the *Jews*, which (according to their Confeſſion) was allowable in the loweſt of that Order. But if the Heathens of *Gadara* were the Owners of theſe Swine, our Saviour might be induced to permit the Devils to enter them, not only to teach them the Sacredneſs of the *Jewiſh* Laws, which they, on Account of the Prohibition of Swines Fleſh, may be ſuppoſed to have ridiculed; but to cure them likewiſe of their idolatrous Worſhip of *Demons*, and to engage them to embrace the *Chriſtian* Faith. For when they ſaw our Lord's Power over ſuch a Multitude of Devils, exhibited in their Poſſeſſion of ſuch a Number of Swine, (had they made a right Application of the Miracle) they could not but perceive the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine, and the Madneſs of their worſhipping ſuch impure Spirits, as were both caſt out of the Men, at his Command, and could not enter into the Swine, without his Permiſſion.

They could not but perceive, I ſay, that our Saviour was a Prophet ſent from Heaven, that what he did was by a Commiſſion from God, and conſequently that he could not be guilty of any Injuſtice in the Deſtruction of the Swine, which, upon this Suppoſition, was not his Act, but the Act of Providence. He, indeed, as a Man, had no Right to deſtroy the People's Swine, but God, who is the ſupreme Proprietor of the whole Earth, moſt certainly had; and ſhall we then complain of him for ſuch a Puniſhment as this, when every Day we ſee more ſurprizing Inſtances before our Eyes? When we ſee him laying whole Nations waſte with Peſtilence, with Famine, and with Earthquakes, ſhall we confeſs his ſovereign Authority, in theſe Caſes, and yet, upon the Loſs of two thouſand Swine, cry out and ſay, *Why haſt thou done this?* The Heathens themſelves (upon the Suppoſition of a Providence) will acknowledge this to be unreaſonable: Nor can our Saviour (as acting by a divine Commiſſion) ever be juſtly blamed, becauſe he once or twice did the ſame Thing which God does every Day.

But, after all, whether the Proprietors were *Jews* or *Gentiles*, the Words in the Text do not imply, that our Saviour was either principal or acceſſory to the Deſtruction of the Swine. St. *Mark*, indeed, tells us, that *he gave the Devils Leave*; and St. *Luke*, that *he ſuffered them* to enter into Swine; but by this is meant no more, than that he did not prevent them; that he did not interpoſe his divine Power, in order to hinder them from entering; but if this made our Saviour a Sharer in the Deſtruction of the Swine, by Parity of Reaſon, it will make God (becauſe he permits it) anſwerable for all Evils that is done under the Sun. Thus, whether we ſuppoſe the *Jews* or *Heathens* Owners of the Herd of Swine, our Saviour's permitting the Devils to enter into them, made him not acceſſory to their Deſtruction; or, if it be ſaid, that he did it with a punitive Intent, it was either to make the *Jews* ſuffer for the Breach of their Law, or the *Heathens* for their obſtinate Idolatry; which his Character of a Prophet, and the Teſtimony of his being *the Son of the moſt high*, without all Controverſy, authorized him to do.

Q. *We have here an Account of but* one *Demoniac that was cured by our Saviour; whereas St.* Matthew, *who ſeems to relate the ſame Tranſaction, tells us there were two,* Chap. viii. *How do you reconcile this Difference?*

A. To reconcile this ſeeming Difference, Dr. *Lightfoot* ingeniouſly conjectures, that one of theſe two was a *Gargaſen* and a *Jew*, and ſo, in caſting the Devil out of him, our Lord did no more than what he had frequently done in *Judea*, but the other a *Gadaren*, *i. e.* one of an heathen City, as *Joſephus* teſtifies, for which Reaſon St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* take chiefly Notice of him, as a more remarkable Inſtance, becauſe he, and the *Syrophœnician* Woman were the only two Heathens, that we read of, our Saviour cured. But there is a farther Reaſon for the *Evangeliſt's* taking Notice of one rather than the other; and that is, that the one, in his Behaviour, was more remarkable than the other; was poſſeſſed with an unclean Spirit, called himſelf *Legion*, and could not be bound with Fetters or Chains; went about naked, and cutting himſelf with Stones; and when he was cured, diſtinguiſhed himſelf by deſiring to follow *Chriſt*: Circumſtances all, which St. *Matthew* omits, but St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* have particularly related, and, upon theſe Accounts, might very likely think, that he fell more properly under their Conſideration, than the other.

Q. *What were thoſe* Tombs *that theſe Demoniacs reſorted to?*

A. The Tombs which the *Evangeliſts* here mention, are ſaid to be in the Mountains, and in the Wilderneſs: For the Cuſtom of the *Jews* was, to have their Tombs, like ſo many little Cells, cut out in the Sides of Caverns, and hollow Parts of Rocks and Mountains, at ſome Diſtance from their Towns, and uſually in very lonely and deſolate Places; into which it was uſual for the Devils to compel thoſe whom they poſſeſſed, in order to confirm Men in the vain Perſuaſion that the Souls of thoſe that died in any Crime, were after Death, turned into Devils.

Q. *Why did this Man, when he was recovered, deſire to be with* Chriſt; *and why was he refus'd?*

A. One Reaſon, as ſome imagine, why this Man deſired to be with *Chriſt*, was his Fear leſt the Devil, at his Departure, ſhould ſeize upon him again; and it was partly to avoid the Suſpicion of vain Glory, whereof our Lord might have given ſome Umbrage, had he carried him about with him all thoſe, upon whom his greateſt Miracles were wrought, and partly to ſhew, that in his Abſence he was able to protect ſuch as believe and truſt in him, from the Malice of evil Spirits, that he would not accept of his Company.

Q. *Who was this* Jairus, *called a* Ruler of the Synagogue?

A. Some learned Men are of Opinion, that *Jairus*, the Ruler of the *Synagogue*, was the Preſident of the Conſiſtory of the Twenty-three Judges who were appointed in every City, to puniſh ſuch Offences as were not capital; but it is more generally thought, that he was not a civil Magiſtrate, but a leading Man in the *Synagogue*, of *Capernaum*, who had, in a great Meaſure, under his Direction ſuch Things as related to the Service of God. We are to obſerve, however, that the Word *Archiſynagogus*, is ſometimes taken in a ſtrict Senſe, for the Perſon who was the Preſident, the Head and Maſter of the *Synagogue*, who, according to this Acceptation, was but one; and at other Times, in a larger Senſe, ſo as to comprehend the Presbyters and Elders likewiſe, in which Acceptation, the Rulers of the *Synagogue* were more than one. How many they were, is no where declared, becauſe that depended upon the Largeneſs of the City, and Number of thoſe who frequented the Place of divine Worſhip; only we may obſerve, that *Jairus* was not the chief Preſident, becauſe he is called *one* of the *Rulers of the Synagogue*, *Mark* v. 22.

Q. *Was the Woman, who had a* Bloody-Flux, *a* Jew *or a* Gentile?

A. *Euſebius* tells us for a Certainty, that the Woman with a Bloody-Flux was a *Gentile*, living in *Paneas*, or *Cæſarea Philippi*, a Town ſituate near the Head of the River *Jordan*, and upon the Report of others, relate this Story, *That by the Gate of the Woman's Houſe, was erected a Braſs Statue, bearing the Effigies of a Woman upon her Knees, in the Poſture of a Supplicant; that oppoſite to her, their ſtood the Effigies of a Man in Braſs, reſembling our Saviour, ſtretching out his Hand to the Woman; that at the Feet of this Statue, an unknown Plant ſprung up, which reaching to the Borders of his Garment, became a preſent Remedy againſt all Manner of Diſeaſes; and that theſe Statues were ſtanding even unto the Time of the Emperor* Maximinus, *who took them away from this City.* But (not to inſiſt on the Exceptions that might be made to this Story, which ſavours much of the Superſtition of later Times,) how a Woman, who, as all the *Evangeliſts* inform us, had ſpent all that ſhe had, ſhould be able to erect two ſuch coſtly Statues, or how the *Jews*, in all their Wars, or the *Gentiles*, who were both bitter Enemies to *Chriſtianity*, ſhould ſuffer ſuch a Confirmation of it to remain ſo long, we can by no Means imagine.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Expreſſion, Verſe* 30. *Jeſus* knowing that Virtue was gone out of him?

A. Hence it is evident, that the Virtue whereby our Savionr did theſe miraculous Cures, was not communicated to him, but reſided in him, and conſequently proves that he was God. For the Virtue whereby the Prophets and Apoſtles did their Cures, is aſcribed to God; as when it is ſaid, that *God did ſpecial Miracles by the Hand of* Paul, *Acts* xix. 11. But the Miracles done by *Chriſt*, are imputed to the *Virtue which went out of him, and healed all that ſought to touch him*, Luke vi. 19. *The Virtue's going out of him*, however, is a vulgar Expreſſion, and muſt not be taken in its literal Senſe, as if it were a Quality diſtinct from the Perſon of *Chriſt*, and what might paſs from him to another; becauſe the divine Power reſiding in him, was incapable of any Alienation or Diminution, be the Cures he performed never ſo many, or never ſo miraculous; and therefore the only Meaning of the Expreſſion muſt be, that it went out, with Regard to us, or according to our Conception and Apprehenſion of Things, when it diſcovered and manifeſted itſelf in the Cure of ſome Diſeaſe, or any outward Effects.

Our Saviour's Diſciples, we find, admired at his asking this Queſtion, *Luke* v. 31. but the Reaſon for his doing ſo, we may ſuppoſe, was to diſcover to the People the Greatneſs of the Miracle, which, without this Examination, might have gone off without being known; to ſhew them the Strength and Virtue of the Woman's Faith and Confidence in his Power; and thence to convince *Jairus*, who began a little to ſtagger in his Faith, that he was able to revive his Daughter, even tho' ſhe was dead, if he did but believe.

Q. *When* Jeſus *came to* Jairus's *Houſe, it is ſaid,* He ſaw the Tumult, *which I ſuppoſe was the Noiſe of the Muſick made by the* Minſtrels, *mentioned by St.* Matthew, Chap. 9. *Pray, was it uſual to make Muſick at Funerals, or at the Death of Perſons in thoſe Times?*

A. In all the Books of the *Old Teſtament*, there is not the leaſt Hint given us of any muſical Inſtruments employed in Funerals. We read, indeed, a good deal of mourning for the Dead, of Mourners hired on purpoſe, and of the diſmal Ditties which the People ſung, to excite Sorrow in others: But the Uſe of Muſick was reckoned an incongruous Thing, and no ways comporting with the Solemnity of this ſad Occaſion. Among Heathen Authors there is frequent Mention made of it, as a Thing long in Uſe, both with the *Greeks* and *Romans*; and therefore we may preſume, that from theſe Nations it was, that the *Jews* borrowed and adopted it into their Funeral Ceremonies. That among them in was in Uſe in our Saviour's Time, at leaſt among Perſons of the better Rank, is plain from the Paſſage now before us; that it was an eſtabliſhed Cuſtom in the Time of *Joſephus*, is evident from what the *Rabbins* enjoin, *viz.* that none, even of the meaner Sort, ſhould, at the Funeral of a Wife, have fewer than two Flutes, beſides the Voices of old Women, who, by their ſad Modulation, were to extort Lamentation from others.

Q. *Did our Saviour ſpeak exactly true, when he ſaid,* The Maid is not dead but ſleepeth?

A. The Reaſon which our Saviour gives for his deſiring them to ceaſe their funeral Ceremonies is, that *the Maid is not dead, but aſleep*, Luke viii. 52. Now, in ſeveral Places of the *New Teſtament* eſpecially, Death is called a Sleep, *John* xi. 11. *Acts.* vii. 60. 1 *Cor.* xv. 6, *&c.* and therefore our Saviour only makes uſe of this Word as a ſofter Signification, not ſo much with a Deſign to impoſe upon thoſe to whom he directed his Speech, as to teſtify his Humility and great Modeſty, in his Deſire to conceal his divine Power. The Perſons he ſpoke to, were certainly thoſe who were preparing for her Interment, and performing the Funeral Rites belonging to it; and therefore he only intimates, that ſhe was not ſo dead as they accounted her, *i. e.* not to come to Life again before the Reſurrection; but that her Death was no more than what he could remove, with the ſame Facility, as another might be, awakened out of Sleep.

Chap. VI.

Chriſt *preaching in his own Country, is deſpiſed, and ſhews how they diſhonoured their own Prophets. Sends out his Apoſtles, and inveſts them with Power to preach and do Miracles. The Opinion of* Herod, *and others concerning* Chriſt. John *beheaded, and buried by his Diſciples. The Apoſtles return, and give an Account to* Chriſt *of what they had done and taught.* Jeſus *pities, teaches and feeds the Multitude. Walks on the Sea to his Diſciples, and comforts them. Coming to* Genneſaret, *heals all that touch him.*

Q. W*HAT is your Opinion of* Chriſt's *inveſting his Diſciples with the ſame Power as he himſelf had, of working Miracles?*

A. Among all the Accounts which the Heathens have given us of their famous Magicians and Workers of Wonders, there are none to be found, who pretended to a Power to delegate their Virtue to others, or to impart their Power to them, upon the Invocation of their Names, or Belief of their Doctrine. Hence *Arnobius* having ſummed up the Miracles which our Saviour did, adds, That he *not only did them by his Power, but permitted many others to do them by Invocation of his Name; nor did he any peculiar and aſtoniſhing Miracles himſelf, that he did not enable his* Little-ones, *and even Ruſticks to perform:* Whereupon he asks thoſe he writes to, *Did ever that* Jupiter, *whom the* Romans *worſhip in their Capital, give the like Power to any Mortal!* And then concludes this to be a Demonſtration of a truly divine Power: *For to transfer your miraculous Power to a Man, and to give Authority and Strength to a Creature to do that, which you alone can do, is an infallible Evidence of one that hath Power over all, and the Cauſes of all Things at his Beck.*

Q. *The Diſciples, in curing the Sick,* anointed them with Oil: *Did that contribute any Thing to the Recovery?*

A. That it was uſual with the *Jews* to preſcribe Oil as a proper Thing to anoint the Sick, in order to their Recovery, Dr. *Lightfooot* upon Ver. 13. has full proved; nor can we think that the Apoſtles having no Command from *Chriſt* to do ſo, would have uſed this Ceremony, had it not been cuſtomary among their Countrymen: But whether they did it ſymbolically, in hopes of obtaining to the Patient the Oil of Gladneſs, or only medicinally; it is certain that the Virtue which attended it, when uſed by the Apoſtles, could not be natural, and inherent in the Oil, but muſt be ſupernatural, and derived from him who ſent them, becauſe this Unction always produced a certain and conſtant Cure in thoſe that were anointed.

The other Parts of this Chapter, which relate the Beheading of *John Baptiſt*; the Miracle of our Saviour's feeding 5000 People with five Loaves and two Fiſhes; his walking on the Sea, and landing at *Genneſaret*, we read, *Matt.* xiv. upon which our Notes are very particular and large, to which we muſt therefore refer the Reader.

Chap. VII.

The Phariſees *charge the Diſciples with breaking the Traditions of the Elders in eating Bread with unwaſhen Hands.* Chriſt *charges them with Hypocriſy, and breaking the Commandments with their Traditions; teaches the People what it is that defiles the Man; caſts a Devil out of a* Syrophenician *Woman's Daughter; and heals with his Spittle one that was Deaf, and had an Impediment in his Speech.*

Q. W*HY does our Lord call the* Phariſees *Hypocrites?*

A. In ſeveral Places of the *Goſpel,* our Lord calls the *Phariſees* Hypocrites; not only becauſe they placed the Worſhip of God, and a great deal of Sanctity and Religion, in Ceremonies of human Inſtitution, and, though they pretended to extraordinary Purity, did all their good Works to be ſeen of Men, *Matth.* xxiii. 5. but more eſpecially in this Place; becauſe, being ſuperſtitiouſly careful to avoid the outward Pollution of the Body, by abſtaining from the Touch of any Thing, which they reputed unclean, and waſhing their Hands whenever they thought they had done ſo, they left that which was within, *viz.* their Hearts and Affections, full of Iniquity, Uncleanneſs, Extortion, and Exceſs, *Matth.* xiii. 25. and *Luke* xi. 39. but for *Chriſt*'s Example in this Particular, we muſt not be forward to pronounce Men Hypocrites; becauſe we have neither that Authority, nor that Knowledge of their Hearts, which he had.

Q. Chriſt, *in curing the deaf and ſtammering Perſon, took a Kind of Method in doing it, by putting his Fingers into his Ears, and wetting his Tongue with Spittle: But was this of any Efficacy in the Cure?*

A. Chriſt made uſe of viſible Signs, to repreſent that divine inviſible Virtue, which was inherent in him, and which, upon that Occaſion, he intended to exert: And therefore, becauſe deaf Perſons ſeem to have their Ears cloſed, he put his Fingers into the Man's Ears, to intimate, that, by his Power, he would open them; and, becauſe the Tongue of the Dumb ſeems to be tied, or to cleave to the Palate, therefore he moiſten'd it with Spittle, to ſignify that he would looſe and give free Motion to it. Theſe, it is true, were not capable to effect the Cure, but they had this Uſe in them, that they excited the Obſervation and Attention of the People, before whom theſe Cures were wrought.

Q. *What Inſtructions does this Cure of the impotent Man afford us?*

A. From this Relation we may make the following Remarks. 1. The bitter Fruits and ſad Effects of Sin, Deafneſs, Dumbneſs, and Blindneſs on the whole human Nature: As Death, ſo all Diſeaſes entered into the World by Sin. Sin firſt brought Infirmities and Mortality into our Natures, and the Wages of Sin are Diſeaſes and Death. 2. That the Bleſſing of bodily Health and Healing is from *Chriſt*; who, by his divine Power, as he was God, miraculouſly and immedately healed them that were brought unto him. 3. The Actions and Geſtures which our Saviour uſed in healing this deaf Perſon. He puts his Finger into his Ears, he ſpit and touched his Tongue. Not that theſe were Means or natural Cauſe effecting the Cure, for there was no healing Virtue in the Spittle, but only outward Signs. Teſtimonies and Pledges of *Chriſt*'s divine Power and gracious Readineſs to cure the Perſon in Diſtreſs. 4. How *Chriſt* withdrew the Perſon from the Multitude, whom he was about to help and heal; teaching us, that in all our Works we ought to avoid all Shew of Oſtentation and Vain-glory; to ſet God's Glory before our Eyes, and not ſeek our own Praiſe. 5. The Effect which this Miracle had upon the Multitude; it occaſioned their Aſtoniſhment and Applauſe: *They were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid, He hath done all Things well.* It becomes us to take Notice of the wonderful Works of God, and alſo to extol the Author of them. This is one Way of glorifying our Creator.

Q. *What Sort of* Markets *were thoſe the* Jews *reſorted to, as intimated Verſe* 4?

A. Dr. *Hammond* obſerves that the *Greek* Word for Market, ſignifies any promiſcuous or popular Aſſembly. Theſe are principally of two Sorts; either firſt, to buy and ſell, or ſecondly, to reſort to for Juſtice; and the Word here uſed commonly ſignifies both, or either of theſe. Thus *Acts* xvi. 19. where at *Philippi* the Owners or Maſter of the *Pythoneſs,* conceiving themſelves injur'd by St. *Paul, Apprehended him, and drew him to the Hall to the* Roman *Magiſtrates there.*" But in which of theſe two Senſes the Word is to be taken in this Place, is not eaſily to be decided, which bears both indifferently, but from the Buſineſs in hand, which is the Tradition of waſhing among the *Jews.* That, we know, was upon any legal Uncleanneſs, or Suſpicion of having contracted any ſuch: And to that all promiſcuous Aſſemblies were liable, where Heathens were uſually intermixed, or poſſibly ſome *Jews* under ſome legal Uncleanneſs. But at that Time, when the *Jews* were under the *Roman* Procurators, their Courts of Judicature were moſt eminently ſo, the Procurator and his Band or Guard of Soldiers being always there. On this Ground it is diſtinctly ſaid, *John* xviii. 28. that *The* Jews *would not go in thither, that they might not be defiled;* which Teſtimony makes it clear, that going in to the *Judgment-hall* (the ſame Word in *Greek* as here put for Market) was by the *Jews* reſolved to be Matter of Defilement. And there not being any ſo clear Teſtimony in Scripture, for the other Senſe, ſignifying a Market, a Place of buying and ſelling, it may be thought reaſonable to prefer the Interpretation of the Word in this Place, for a Court-hall, from whence all the *Jews* that came were obliged to waſh themſelves, as from a legal Pollution. But I rather adhere to that which Mr. *Pocock* hath conceived, in reference to the Word, as it ſignifies a Market, interpreting the Place from a Rule of the Rabbins, ſet down by *Maimonides* thus, *A Man ſhall waſh his Hands in the Morning, ſo that it ſhall ſuffice him for the whole Day, and he ſhall not need to waſh his Hands as often as he eats; which holds in caſe he do not avail his Mind any other Way* (*that is, go abroad,* *or meddle with Buſineſs, go to Market,* &c.) *but if he do ſo, he is bound to waſh his Hands as oft as there is need of waſhing,* that is, before he eat or pray. And ſo that may well be the Meaning of the Place, *the* Phariſees *eat no Meat before they have waſhed their Hands*; and in Caſe, after the Morning Waſhing they go to Market, or fall to any wordly Buſineſs, wherein there may be very eaſily ſome legal Pollution, they muſt waſh their Hands again before they dine.

The other Parts of this Chapter, not here enlarged upon, are explained in our Obſervations upon *Matth.* xv.

CHAP. VIII.

Chriſt *feeds the Multitude with ſeven Loaves, and a few Fiſhes; refuſes to ſhew the* Phariſees *a Sign; warns the Diſciples againſt the Leaven of the* Phariſees; *reſtores Sight to a blind Man; asks the Diſciples the People's Opinion of him.* Peter's *Confeſſion. He foretels his own Paſſion and Reſurrection; rebukes* Peter; *exhorts to Self-denial and the Croſs; the Benefit of ſo doing; and the Loſs and Shame of thoſe that neglect it.*

Q. I *Shall give you little Trouble in explaining this Chapter, becauſe the greateſt Part of it is contained in* Matth. xvi. *However, let me ask you, what was that* Sign from Heaven, *which the* Phariſees *required of* Chriſt?

A. The Sign, which they wanted to ſee, may be ſuppoſed to be, either ſuch a Shower of Manna, as *Moſes*; or ſuch a Clap of Thunder, as *Samuel*; or ſuch a Fall of Fire, as *Elijah*; or ſuch an Arreſt of the Sun, as *Joſhua* once called for. Now, ſuppoſing that our Saviour had been flexible enough to humour them in their unreaſonable Requeſt, what Reaſon have we to think, that theſe aerial or celeſtial Prodigies would have wrought in them any more Conviction, than thoſe Miracles which were inconteſtable, done in their Preſence, within their Feeling, and Compaſs of Examination? Theſe, we ſee, they imputed to a diabolical Power, and much more might they do it to thoſe that were at ſo vaſt a Diſtance, ſince they could not be ignorant of what is ſaid of the *Prince of the Power of the Air,* in the Book of *Job, viz.* that the *Fire, which fell from Heaven,* and conſumed that holy Man's Subſtance, as well as the *Wind* which over-turned the Houſe where his Children were met together, were the Effects of *Satan*'s procuring.

What Notions the antient *Jews* had of the Power of Magick, we cannot poſitively ſay; but it is certain that the *Heathen* Magicians made it their Boaſt, that they could ſtop the Courſe of the Sun, Moon and Stars, turn them into Darkneſs as they pleaſed, and make them obey their Voice: And if the *Phariſees* had the like Notions of theſe Things, their demanding a *Sign from Heaven* was to no manner of Purpoſe; becauſe, upon their own Suppoſition, that our Lord acted by a magical Power, what they deſired him to do, was not above the Sphere of his Ability; and if they thought it ſo, it could never have been uſed to work in them any good Conviction; becauſe the ſame Hardneſs of Heart, and Hatred of him, would have kept them under the ſame Perſuaſion ſtill, that all his Wonders, whether above or below, whether in Heaven or on Earth, whether on human or celeſtial Bodies, were done by the Aſſiſtance of the Devil.

Q. *Our Lord being come to* Bethſaida, *he there cures a blind Man; which being attended with ſome particular Circumſtances, I ſhould be glad to have the whole explained?*

A. In this Tranſaction ſeveral Things deſerve our particular Regard: Firſt, what evident Proof the *Phariſees* had of our Lord's divine Power and Godhead: He had before cauſed *the Deaf to hear, the Dumb to ſpeak, and the Lame to walk*; now *he makes the blind to ſee*; yet did the *Phariſees* obſtinately reſiſt all Means of Conviction, and continued in their Oppoſition to the Truth, to their inevitable and unutterable Condemnation.

Secondly, The wonderful Humility, the great Condeſcenſion of *Chriſt* towards this blind Man; *He took him by the Hand and led him*; ſhewing how ready and willing he was to help and heal him. See here a ſingular Pattern of condeſcendieg Grace and Mercy in our dear Redeemer, in that he vouchſafed with his own Hands to take and lead a poor blind Man through the Streets of *Bethſaida*, in the Sight of all the People.

Thirdly, Our Lord leads the blind Man our of the Town before he heals him; not in the Town where all the People might take Notice of it; inſtructing us thereby to avoid all Shew of Ambition, Oſtentation, and Vain-glory in what we do; Even *as* Chriſt *ſought not his own Glory, but the Glory of him that ſent him.*

Fourthly, The Manner of the Cure wrought upon this blind Man; it was by Degrees; not inſtantaneous, and at once; he had firſt a dark, dim and obſcure, afterwards a clear and perfect Sight. *Chriſt* thereby gave Evidence of his abſolute and omnipotent Power, that he was not tied to any particular Means or Manner, or Order of Working; but wrought his Miracles variouſly, as he ſaw was moſt for the Glory of God, and the Benefit of his People.

Laſtly, The Charge given by our Saviour, not to publiſh this Miracle in the Town of *Bethſaida*; a Place where *Chriſt* had ſo often preached and wrought ſo many Miracles. But the Inhabitants had obſtinately and contemptuouſly deſpiſed both his Doctrine and Miracles; therefore we read, *Matth.* xi. 21. that our Saviour denounced a Woe againſt *Bethſaida*, aſſuring her, *That it would be more tolerable for* Tyre *and* Sidon *than for her.* The higher a People riſe under the Means, the lower they fall, if they miſcarry. Such a People as have been neareſt to Converſion, being not converted, ſhall have the greateſt Condemnation when they are judged.

Q. *Among the Inſtructions which our Saviour gave the People, he taught then the Doctrine of the Croſs: What do we learn from hence?*

A. The Terms which our Lord propoſes to the People, if they would become his Followers, are, Self-denial, Goſpel-ſuffering, and Goſpel-ſervice, *Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, take up his Croſs and follow me.* And the Reaſons our Lord urges to induce Men to practice theſe Duties, are, *He that ſave his Life ſhall loſe it; and he that is willing to loſe his Life for the Goſpel-ſake, the ſame ſhall find it.* Intimating to us, that the Love of this temporal Life is a great Temptation to Men to deny *Chriſt*, and to renounce his holy Religion; and that the ſureſt

Way to attain eternal Life is chearfully to lay down our temporal Life, when the Glory of *Chriſt*, and the Honour of Religion requires it at our Hand. This Reaſon he confirms by a double Argument; the firſt drawn from the Excellency of eternal Life, or the Life of the Soul; the ſecond, from the Irretrievableneſs of this Loſs, or the Impoſſibility of redeeming the Loſs of the Soul, by any Ways or Means whatſoever. *What ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* Hence learn, that God hath intruſted every one of us with a Soul of ineſtimable Worth and Price, capable of being ſaved, or loſt, and that to all Eternity; and that the Gain of the whole World is not comparable with the Loſs of one precious Soul: The Soul's Loſs is an inconceivable, incompenſable, and irrecoverable Loſs.

The Inference which our Lord draws from hence is, that whoſoever ſhall deny or diſown him, either in his Perſon, his Goſpel, or Members, for fear or favour of Men, ſhall, with Shame, be diſowned and rejected eternally, by him, at the laſt Day. There are two Paſſions that make Perſons diſown *Chriſt* and Religion, in the Day of Temptation; namely, Fear and Shame. Many good Men have been overcome by the former, as St. *Peter*, and others; but we find not any good Man guilty of the Latter; that is, that denied *Chriſt* out of Shame. Shame argues a rotten, unſound, and corrupt Heart. If any Man thinks it beneath his Honour and Quality to own the oppoſed Truth, and deſpiſed Members of *Jeſus Chriſt*, he will think it much more beneath him, his Honour and Dignity to own them at the great Day. It is not ſufficient, that we own *Chriſt* by believing in him, but we muſt alſo honour him by an outward Profeſſion of him. Such as are aſhamed of *Chriſt*'s Doctrine or Members, are aſhamed of *Chriſt* himſelf. Such as either for Fear dare not, or for Shame will not own the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, or his Members now, ſhall find *Chriſt* aſhamed to own and confeſs them at the great Day.

CHAP. IX.

Chriſt's Transfiguration. *The Diſciples queſtion him about the Coming of* Elias; *he aſſures them that he is come; reproves the Peoples Unbelief; and, upon the Faith of a Parent, caſts a Dumb Spirit out of a Child; the Reaſon why his Diſciples could not do it; foretells his Suffering and Reſurrection; teaches his Diſciples Humility and mutual Kindneſs, from the Example of a Child. The Danger of Offence. Sins to be mortified. The Miſchief of Apoſtacy.*

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve upon the firſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. Interpreters have given a three-fold Senſe to this Verſe. Some refer the Words to the Times of the Goſpel after *Chriſt's* Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, when the Goſpel was ſpread and propagated far and near, and *the Kingdom of God came with Power.* 2. Others underſtand theſe Words of *Chriſt*'s coming, and exerciſing his kingly Power in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; which ſome of the Apoſtles then ſtanding by, lived to ſee. 3. Others (as moſt agreeable to the Context) underſtand the Words, as relating to our Saviour's Transfiguration. As if he had ſaid, ſome of you, meaning *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, ſhall ſhortly ſee me upon Mount *Tabor*, in ſuch Splendor and Glory, as ſhall be a *Præludium*, a Shadow and Repreſentation of that Glory which I ſhall appear in, when I come to judge the World at the laſt Day. And whereas our Saviour ſays not, There be ſome ſtanding here, who ſhall not die, but *which ſhall not taſte of Death*; this implies two Things. 1. That after they had ſeen this Transfiguration, they muſt taſte of Death as well as others. 2. That they ſhould taſte of it, and no more. Hence may be inferred, That the faithful Servants and Diſciples of *Chriſt* muſt at length, in God's appointed Time, taſte and have Experience of Death, as well as others; and that although they muſt taſte of Death, yet they ſhall not drink the Dregs of that bitter Cup, though they fall by the Hand of Death, yet ſhall they not be conquered by it, but in the very Fall ſhall riſe Victorious.

Q. *When our Lord came down from the Mount, he found his Diſciples engaged in a Diſpute with the* Scribes: *Pray what was the Subject of their Debate?*

A. What the Subject-matter of the Debate was, between the *Scribes* and his Diſciples, the *Evangeliſts* have not informed us; but it ſeems not unlikely, that the *Scribes* were diſputing with the Apoſtles, about their Maſter's ejecting Devils, and the Power, which in that Matter he had conferred upon them; becauſe, in the Caſe before them, they ſaw them nonpluſt, and not able to caſt a Devil out of one, who, in his Abſence, was brought to them. This is the rather probable, not only becauſe our Saviour's diſpoſſeſſing Devils was what gravelled and vexed the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* more than all his other Miracles, and forced them to the ſorry Refuge of, *He caſts out Devils by* Belzebub *the Prince of Devils*; but becauſe, upon his coming to the timely Relief of his Apoſtles, and demanding of the *Scribes*, what they were queſtioning and diſputing about, it immediately follows, *One of the Multitude anſwered, and ſaid, Maſter, I have brought unto thee my Son, which hath a dumb Spirit,*——*And I ſpake to thy Diſciples, that they ſhould caſt him out, and they could not*, Verſe 17, 18.

Q. *How could a Perſon who was not a Follower of* Chriſt, *caſt out Devils in his Name, as St.* John *ſays he did Verſe 38.?*

A. That the Man who, as St. *John* inform'd *Chriſt*, caſt out Devils in his Name, though he was not of their Number, did truly caſt them out, our Lord's Anſwer ſuppoſes, and his Diſciples ſaw with their Eyes; but then the Queſtion is, How a Perſon, who did not follow *Chriſt*, could caſt out Devils in his Name? To which it may be anſwered, Firſt, That this Perſon might believe in *Jeſus*, without being one of his Retinue, and follow his Doctrine, though he did not his Perſon. *Secondly*, He might do Miracles in the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*, without being one of his true Diſciples, even as *Judas* is ſuppoſed to have done, and thoſe others, to whom our Lord will profeſs, *I never knew you, depart from me, ye Workers of Iniquity:* Matthew vii. 23. Or, *Thirdly*, He might be a Diſciple of *John the Baptiſt*, and ſo do his Miracles in the Name of *Chriſt ſhortly to come*. But by what Means ſoever it was, that he did them, 'tis no ſmall Confirmation of the Truth of *Chriſtianity*, that our Saviour's Name was thus Powerful, even among thoſe that did not follow him, and therefore were incapable of doing any Thing by way of Compact with him.

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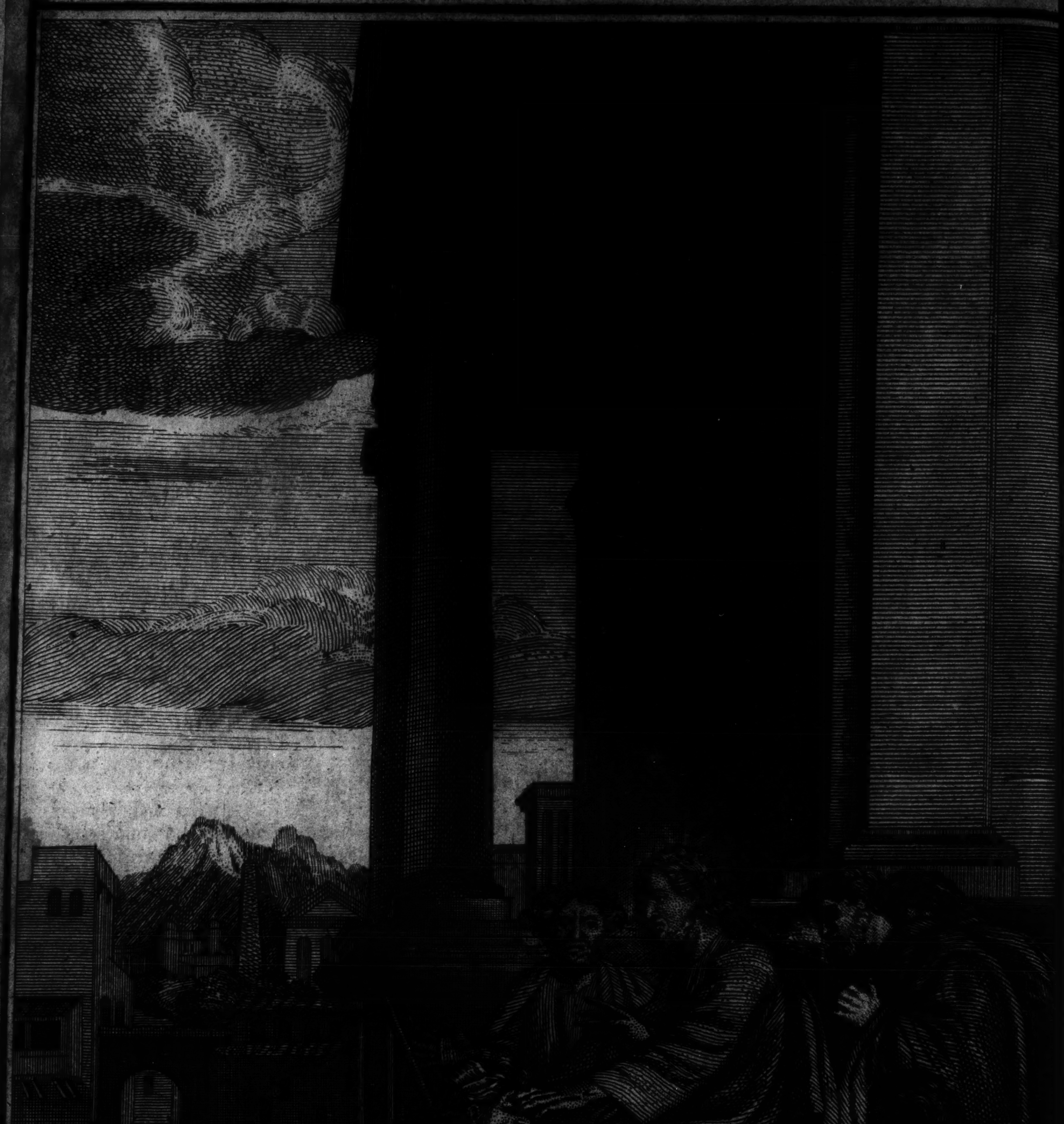

blind **BARTIMEUS** *cured.*

Q. *How do you underſtand that Expreſſion of our Saviour,* Verſe 49. Every one ſhall be ſalted with Fire?

A. That is, every one who refuſes to cut off a right Hand, or to pluck out a right Eye; *i. e.* to mortify their Boſom-luſts, and beloved Corruptions, *ſhall be ſalted with Fire*; i. e. *thrown into Hell-fire.* Their being ſalted with Fire imports, that as to their Being, they ſhall be preſerved (even as Salt preſerves Things from Corruption) that they may be the Objects of the eternal Wrath of God. But as every unſavoury Sinner ſhall be given up to everlaſting Deſtruction, yet, every Sinner, who has given himſelf up a Sacrifice to *Chriſt*, ſhall be ſalted not with Fire, but with Salt; not to be conſumed and deſtroyed, but to be preſerved and kept ſavoury. The Grace of Mortification is that to the Soul, which Salt is to the Body; it preſerves it from Putrefaction, and renders it ſavoury.

Our Lord compares *Chriſtians* in general, and his Miniſters in particular, unto Salt, for a double Reaſon. 1. Becauſe it is the Nature of Salt to preſerve Things from Corruption and Putrefaction, and to render them ſavoury and pleaſant. Thus are the Miniſters of *Chriſt* to endeavour, by the Purity of their Doctrine, to ſweeten putrifying Sinners, that they may become ſavoury unto God and Man, and be kept from being fly-blown with Errors and falſe Doctrine. 2. Becauſe Salt has an Acrimony, a piercing Power in it, which ſubdues the whole Lump, and turns it into its own Nature. Such a piercing Power is in the Miniſtry of the Word, that it ſubdues the whole Man to the Obedience of it-ſelf.

The Hiſtorical Part of this Chapter, which we have not here touch'd upon, ſee *Matthew* xvii. and xviii.

Chap. X.

Chriſt, *in* Judea, *diſputes with the* Phariſees, *concerning Divorce; receives and bleſſes little Children, and is diſpleaſed with thoſe that rebuke them. Inſtructs the young Man in the Way to eternal Life. Shews the Difficulty of a rich Man's entring into the Kingdom of Heaven; and the Reward of thoſe that follow him; foretels his Sufferings and Uſage at* Jeruſalem; *rebukes the Ambition of two of his Diſciples, and forbids Lordſhip over one another; and reſtores blind* Bartimeus *to his Sight.*

Q. THE *greateſt Part of this Chapter being contained in* Mat. xix. *and* xx. *we ſhall therefore be the briefer here. In what Senſe do you take that Expreſſion, Verſe* 21. Then *Jeſus* beholding him, loved him?

A. He loved him with a Love of Pity and Compaſſion, with a Love of Courteſy and Reſpect. There may be ſome amiable and lovely Qualities in natural and unregenerate Men; and Goodneſs, in what Kind or Degree ſoever it is, attracts *Chriſt*'s Love towards a Perſon. If *Chriſt* loved Civility, what Reſpect has he for ſincere Sanctity? And therefore our Lord adds this Admonition, *one Thing thou lackeſt*, which was true Self-denial, in renouncing the Sin of Covetouſneſs, and the inordinate Love of worldly Wealth. We ought, upon God's Call, to maintain ſuch a Readineſs of Mind, as to be willing to part with all that is dear to us for God's ſake; and accordingly he enjoins him to ſell what he had, and to give to the Poor. This was not a common, but a ſpecial Precept, belonging particularly to the young Man. It was a Commandment of Trial, like that given to *Abraham*, Gen. xxii. to convince him of his corrupt Confidence in Riches: Yet it is thus far of general Uſe to all, to teach us ſo to contemn worldly Poſſeſſions, as to be willing to part with them, when they hinder our Happineſs and Salvation. It follows, *And take up the Croſs*; in Alluſion to the *Roman* Cuſtom, when the Malefactor was to be crucified, he bare his Croſs on his Shoulder, and carried it to the Place of Execution. 'Tis not the taking, but the patient bearing of the Croſs, which is our Duty. The Effect which our Saviour's Admonition had upon the young Man, was, *He was ſad and grieved at that ſaying.* Thoſe who are wedded to the World, will renounce *Chriſt* rather than the World, when the World and *Chriſt* ſtand in Competition.

Q. *What is particularly obſervable in* Chriſt's *reſtoring blind* Bartimeus *to his Sight?*

A. In this Narrative we may obſerve, 1. The blind Man's Faith, in acknowledging *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*; for ſo much the Title of the Son of *David* imports. 2. His Fervency in crying ſo earneſtly to *Chriſt* for Mercy and Healing, *Have Mercy upon me, thou Son of* David. A true Senſe of Want will make the Soul cry unto *Chriſt* with Earneſtneſs and Importunity. 3. The great Compaſſion and Condeſcenſion of *Chriſt* towards this poor blind Man, *He ſtood, he called him, and enlightened his Eyes.* A mighty Inſtance of *Chriſt*'s Divine Power: He that can open blind Eyes with a Touch of his Finger, by his own Power, is really God; his Touch is an omnipotent Touch. 4. Although *Chriſt* well knew the Condition of this blind Man, yet before he would reſtore his Sight, he muſt ſenſibly complain of the want of Sight, and cry out to him for Help and Healing. *Chriſt* knows all his Creatures Wants, but takes no Notice of them, till they make them known to him by Prayer. 5. The Method and Manner the blind Man takes to expreſs his Thankfulneſs to *Chriſt* for recovered Sight; *He aroſe and followed* Jeſus. Mercy from *Chriſt* is then well improved, when it engages us to follow him. This ſhould be the Effect of all Salvations, Mercies and Bleſſings conferred upon us. He praiſeth God beſt, that ſerveth him moſt. The Life of Thankfulneſs conſiſts in the Thankfulneſs of Life.

Q. *Pray was it cuſtomary, among the* Jews, *for a Woman to* put away her Husband, *as ſeems intimated, Verſe* 12?

A. Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, That that which is here ſaid convertibly of Divorces, the Wife putting away the Husband, and the Husband the Wife, muſt not be underſtood, that the Wife hath (or ever had) in any Caſe, Power to put away the Husband, as, in the common Caſe of Fornication, the Husband may put away the Wife. For there is that Difference between the Husband and the Wife, that renders the one Lawful, and the other not, *viz.* the Dominion of the Husband over the Wife, which the Wife, whoſe Part is Obedience, *Gen.* iii. 16. 1 *Pet.* iii. 5. hath not back again over the Husband; and accordingly in the Law, though there be Liberty given to the Man of putting away the Wife, in more Caſes than *Chriſt* allows of, yet there is none given to put away the Husband in any Caſe; and *Chriſt*, who reſtrained that Liberty of the Man, to the one Caſe of Fornication, cannot be thought (and no where appears) to have enlarged or extended that Duty to the Wife. As for the ſame kind of Reſemblance of it here in the Text, it will ceaſe to be ſo, by obſerving either of theſe two Things. 1. That the only Thing here in Hand, in theſe two Verſes, is, to ſet down the unlawful and adulterous Divorces, *viz.* thoſe that are attended with marrying ſome other; for ſuch are all they equally, whether committed by the Man, or by the Woman; and ſo there is no occaſion to ſtate that other Queſtion of lawful Divorces, which had been made by the *Phariſees*, *Ver.* 2. and anſwered negatively, *Ver.* 3, *&c.* and conſequently all that is here ſaid is, that the Wife, however ſeparated from the Husband, may not marry again; not that ſhe may not, in any Caſe, lawfully ſeparate. Many Things there are, of this Nature, in the Scripture, which are ſpoken only to prepare for ſomething elſe, and have themſelves no farther Importance, all the Weight of the Speech lying on that other Part to which they prepare. 2. The Word that is here, and in other Places of the *New Teſtament*, uſed for divorcing, falls out to be a Word which ſignifies not putting away, as that denotes any Act of Authority, but abſolving, looſing, releaſing from a Debt, or a Bond; and ſo it may be ſaid of the *Greek* Words here tranſlated, *put away her Husband*, that it is releaſing, abſolving, not putting away, the Husband, that is, doing what is in her Power to do, but not pretending to more. The *Grecians* were wont to ſpeak more accurately, calling it on the Man's Part, to ſend, or caſt out the Wife; but on the Wife's Part, to leave, or forſake the Husband; which, though practiced among the *Heathen*, ſometimes, yet, being but an Act of Deſertion, it pretends not to any Authority over him that is forſakea.

Q. *Who are underſtood by the* Many, *Verſe* 12?

A. The ſame Author remarks on the Word *Many*, That they who were called and choſen firſt to be Diſciples, who conſequently ought to have expreſſed more Zeal, more Fidelity, and taken more Pains in the Apoſtolical Office, are here called the firſt, in reſpect cf their being firſt called into the Vineyard; and ſuch were *Peter* and *John*, and the reſt of his preſent Diſciples. The laſt were thoſe who were called later; as St. *Paul*, who ſaith truly of himſelf, that as he was born out of due Time, ſuddenly (not regularly, as the Diſciples in *Chriſt*'s Life-time, who had been Diſciples a long Space before they had Commiſſion of Apoſtleſhip) ſo he was in Labour more abundant, *&c.* 1 *Cor.* xv. 10. and 2 *Cor.* xi. 23. And they that have written the Itineraries of the Apoſtles, have obſerved the Truth of it; St. *Paul* having travelled much farther than either St. *Peter* or St. *John*, as they have deſcribed their Circuit.

CHAP. XI.

Chriſt *rides in Triumph to* Jeruſalem; *being hungry, curſes the barren Fig-tree; purges the Temple. The Neceſſity of forgiving others, when we aſk Forgiveneſs. The* Phariſees *queſtion* Chriſt *about his Authority; he ſilences them with the Baptiſm of* John.

Q. THE *Hiſtory of this whole Chapter, being contained in* Matthew xx. and xxi. *I ſhall only aſk you one Queſtion in Relation to the Fig-tree, which our Saviour curſed; and that is, Why our Lord ſhould curſe this Tree for not having any Fruit upon it, when it is ſaid, Verſe* 13. The Time of Figs was not yet?

A. Doctor *Hammond* obſerves on the Words, *Not yet*, that they are truly rendered. What the Meaning of the Word *Time*, or *Seaſon*, here is, will be the only Difficulty. If the Time, or Seaſon of the Year wherein Figs are ripe, ſo that it be here ſaid, it was not the Time of ripe Figs, then many Inconveniencies will follow.

As firſt, that will not be (as this Paſſage is deſigned) a reaſonable Account why there was nothing but Leaves on the Tree, for green Figs there might be, and ſo ſomewhat beſides Leaves, though the Time of ripe Figs was not yet come.

Secondly, It is not to be imagined that *Chriſt* being hungry, *Verſe* 12. and thereupon going out of his Way to a Fig-tree, in all account to find ſome Fruit there, ſhould do ſo at a Time when he knew Fruit was not ripe, green Figs being as unfit for Food as could be imagined.

Thirdly, If we conſider the Time there ſpecified, we ſhall have Reaſon to doubt, whether, thus interpreting the *Greek* Word put for *Time*, there were indeed any Truth in the Speech, there being great Probability, that at this Time of the Year Figs, in *Judea*, were wont to be ripe. For it was immediately before the *Paſſover* (preſently after the *Hoſanna*'s) both here and in *Matthew*; and that is about the Time of *Putting the Sickle into the Corn*, Deut. xvi. 9. and their offering their Firſt-fruits (ſeven Weeks before *Pentecoſt*, Lev. xxiii. 16.) by which it is evident, that Figs were ripe in that Country. This may be confirmed by a Paſſage in *Ariſtophanes*, which, tranſlated, is thus, *At the Time the* Cucknow *ſounds out her Note* (that we know, is at the Beginning of our Spring) *then all the* Phenicians (that is the Inhabitants of *Canaan*) *reaped their Wheat and their Barley in their Fields.* And that was the Meaning of the Proverb, *When the* Cuckow *cries, we reap*; by *we, noting the Circumciſed*, as appears by the Scholiaſt in theſe Words, *Among the* Egyptians *there were many circumciſed.* And then that the Fruits were gathered at the ſame Time with the Corn, appears, among many other Evidences of *Philoleg.* and *Cajus*, p. 797. where *Petronius* in his Letter to *Cajus*, about ſetting up the Image of *Jupiter* in the Temple, tells him his Fear that the provok'd *Jews* would ſet on Fire all the Fruits on the Ground; *For the Fruit was now ripe, and therefore Care muſt now be taken for the taking in the Fruits, not only the Corn in the Field, but the Fruit of the Trees.* From which Circumſtance *Baronius* duly concludes, that this of the deſigned Dedication of the Image was at the *Paſſover*, and ſo a Puniſhment that might mind the *Jews* of their Sin of crucifying *Chriſt* at that Time of the Year. As for that Objection which is apt to deceive many, and ſo impoſed upon St. *Chryſoſtom*, becauſe this Time of *Eaſter* is not the Time of Harveſt in other Places; whereupon that Father ſpeaking of *Pentecoſt*, ſays, *It was the Time when the Sickle was to be put into the Harveſt, and the Fruits to be gathered in*; 'tis eaſily anſwered, that the Difference of the Climate betwixt *Judea* and *Greece*, and much more betwixt *Judea* and us, being ſo great, and the Forwardneſs of Fruit depending ſo immediately on that, there can be no Strangeneſs in it.

For theſe and other Reaſons, it ſeems improbable that this ſhould be the Meaning of the Words. Another Notion, I conceive, there is of the *Greek* Word for Time or Seaſon, which is ſubject to none of theſe, nor any other Inconveniencies. For the Word literally ſignifying *a ſeaſonable Time*, and Time being of a great Latitude, belonging to any Part of Time, an Age, a Year, and not only Part of a Year; tho' the Firſt, of an Age, cannot, yet the Second, of a Year, may be applicable to this Place; and then the Meaning will be, that that *was not a Seaſon of Figs*, that is, a good Fig-Year, a Year that brought forth any Store of Figs in that Country. And in this Interpretation the whole Paſſage will appear very perſpicuous; Chriſt *was hungry, and ſeeing a Fig-tree afar off, having Leaves*, that is, looking very promiſingly, he went out of his Way to it, *if ſo be he might find any Thing*, that is, any one or more Figs upon it. *And when he came to it, he found nothing but Leaves*, not one Fig of any Kind, ripe or other; of which this Reaſon is render'd, *for it was not a kindly ſeaſonable Year of Figs.* Whereupon *Chriſt* immediately curſeth the Tree, for having ſuch promiſing Verdure of Leaves, but no kind of Fruit on it; and ſo ſymbolically foretels the Fate of that People of the *Jews*, who were at this Time very barren of good Works, it was a very ill Seaſon of Fruit with them, tho' they made many promiſing fair Profeſſions.

Heinſius hath here propoſed, converting it from *It was not a Seaſon of Figs*, into *for where he was*, (that is, in that Place) *the Seaſon of Figs*, that is, it was the Seaſon of ripe Figs.

The Exceptions which offer themſelves againſt this Conjecture are many. 2. The great Change that it made by this Means even from a Negative to an Affirmative, from one Member of a Contradiction to another; which, if it were allowed would be upon no greater Ground than of a Conjecture, the Conſequence would be very dangerous. 2. If in this Caſe a Conjecture were admitted, the Words ſo read would be in a Style diſcernibly different from all the reſt of the Work: For of either of theſe Forms of ſpeaking, *where he was*, for *in that region or place*, in oppoſition to other Climates, or of *Seaſon of Figs*, ſo conciſely, for *it was the Seaſon of Figs*, it would be hard to find any Example in the New Teſtament. And then, tho' to reduce a perplex'd, intricate, unuſual Form of ſpeaking, to a perſpicuous ordinary Phraſe, it might be reaſonable to propoſe a Conjecture; yet to force it by this Means from an uſual to a ſtrange Form, (for which there is no Example) will not be very reaſonable. Laſtly, there is no need of uſe of any Change, as already appears; but on the contrary, if the Change were admitted, the Verſe would now be leſs intelligible than now it is. For the Words are a Reaſon as the Particle, For aſſure us: Now that which is next before, and to which this is affixed as a reaſon, being this, that *coming to the Fig-tree he found nothing but Leaves*, the Words in that new Reading, *for where he was it was the Seaſon of Figs*, cannot be thought a reaſon of that (the Seaſon for Fruit cannot be a reaſon that there was no Fruit) but would be of the contrary; whereas the Words in the old Reading are a clear Reaſon of it. There was no Figs but only Leaves to be found, *for it was not a Seaſon of Figs.* The only Thing poſſible to be replied is, that the Words ſo altered ſhall be a Reaſon of *Chriſt's* going to the Tree to ſee *if there were any Fruit on it*, and not of his *finding no Fruit.* Which if it be ſaid, then I anſwer, that this is moſt unreaſonable, when the Words as they lie are regularly a reaſon of what went next before, to change them upon Conjecture into the direct contrary, and then affix them as a Reaſon of what is farther off, and with which they do not connect, but might with as much Reaſon as farther ſerved, and connected with any other (yet Remoter) Paſſage, to which a freſh Conjecture would accommodate them.

CHAP. XII.

The Parable of the Vineyard let out to cruel Husbandmen; ſhews the Rejection of the Jews, *and Calling of the* Gentiles. *The* Phariſees *Queſtion, and* Chriſt's *Anſwer about paying Tribute to* Cæſar. *Rectifies the Error of the Sadduces about the Reſurrection; anſwers a Scribe which is the greateſt Commandment; confutes the Phariſees Opinion of himſelf; cautions againſt their Vain Glory, Ambition and Hypocriſy, and commends the poor Widow's Offering above all.*

Q. WHEN *was the* Jewiſh *Treaſury inſtituted, and to what Uſes was the Money put into it applied?*

A. The firſt Inſtitution of the *Jewiſh* Treaſury, we find in 2 *Kings* xii. 9. where it is ſaid, that *Jehoida the Prieſt took a Cheſt, and bored a Hole in the Lid of it, and ſet it before the Altar, on the Right-ſide, as one goeth into the Houſe of Lords, and the Prieſts, that kept the Door, put therein all the Money, that was brought into the Houſe.* This Money was at that Time, given for the Reparation of the Temple, and, in after Ages the Money caſt into the Treaſury, even in our Saviour's Time was deſigned not only for the Poor, but for ſacred Uſes, and the adorning of the Temple, which might occaſion *Joſephus* to ſay, that the Temple was built not only with the Money contained in the holy Treaſury likewiſe, and with the Tribute, which were ſent from all Parts of the World.

Q. *To what other Uſes was this Treaſury deſign'd?*

A. We muſt know, that in the Temple, (where our Saviour now was) there was Treaſury, or rather Treaſuries. Dr. *Lightfoot* ſays, there were Treaſure-chambers called *Leſacoth*, and thirteen Treaſure-cheſts called *Sopheroth*, all called by the general Name of *Corban*, or *Cornobach*: Two of theſe Cheſts were for the half Shekel, which every *Iſraelite* was to pay according to the Law, *Exod.* xxx. 12, 13. There were eleven more, the Inſcription upon which ſhewed what Money was to be put there, *viz.* 1. For the Price of two Turtle-Doves, or two young Pidgeons. 2. For the Burnt-Offering of Birds. 3. For the Money offered to buy Wood for the Altar. 4. For thoſe who gave Money to buy Frankincenſe. 5. For thoſe who offered Gold for the Mercy-ſeat. 6. For the Reſidue of the Money for the Sin-offering. 7. For the Reſidue of the Money for a Treſpaſs-offering. 8. For the Reſidue of an Offering for Birds. 9. For the Surplus of a *Nazarite's* Offering. 10. For the Reſidue of a *Leper's* Treſpaſs-offering. 11. For whoſoever ſhould offer an Offering of the Herd. The *Iſraelites* tied to their ſeveral Offerings, were not tied to provide themſelves, but they might bring Sums of Money, with which the Prieſts provided for them; and if there was a Surpluſage, it was put into one or other of theſe Cheſts. Theſe Cheſts were placed in that part of the Temple, which was called the Court of the Women; not becauſe none but Women might come there, but becauſe Women might go no farther; as the Court of *Gentiles* (into which *Jews* came) was ſo called, becauſe the *Gentiles* might go no farther. Our Lord ſo ſat, as he obſerved Men come and put their Offerings into one of theſe Cheſts. He ſaw many *Jews* that were rich caſting in much Money of Silver, or Gold, or Braſs, tho' braſs Money was moſt in uſe. Amongſt others a poor Widow came, and threw in two Mites, which made a Farthing.

As to the value ſhe threw in, let us hear what the learned Dr. *Lightfoot* ſays in his Temple-ſervice, *chap.* xix, *The Weight of the Piece of Silver mentioned in the Law, was three hundred and twenty Barley-corns. The Wiſe Men added to it, and made it four hundred eighty four Barley-corns. This made four* Denarii, *each* Denarius, *made ſix* Meahs, *which in* Moſes's *Time was called a* Gerah. *The* Merah *made two* Pondions, *the* Pondion *made two* Iſſarins, *or* Aſſariuſſes. *The* Iſſarius *or* Iſſarine, *was the Weight of four Barley-corns, the Weight of a* Mite *was half a Barley-corn.* According to this rate, the *Widow's* two Mites, made in Silver the Weight of a middling Barley-corn. This our Saviour calls, *All that ſhe had*, that is, all that ſhe had to ſuſtain her Life. *Arius Montanus* thinks that the Meaning is, all that ſhe had to uphold Life for one Day. For it is ſaid, that this Quantity was uſually reckon'd the Livelihood, or a Sufficiency for a poor Man for one Day.

Chriſt ſays, ſhe had caſt in more than the reſt; not ſtrictly more, but according to Value; comparing what they were liable to do, with what ſhe was able to do. The great Inſtruction, which this Hiſtory affords us, is 1. That the poorer Sort of People are not excus'd from Good Works, 2 *Cor.* viii. 2, 3, 2. That God in his Acceptation of our Good Works looks at the Heart, not at the Quantum of what we do, 2 *Cor.* viii. 12. If there be firſt a willing Mind, it is accepted, according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not. It is the Obedience and Love which God accepteth, not the Largeneſs nor Smallneſs of the Gift. 3. A Perſon ought ſometimes to give what he cannot well ſpare himſelf, and be ready to diſtribute not only to his Power, but even above and beyond his Power. 2 *Cor.* viii.

Q. *May we not conclude from the Phariſees putting that iuſiduous Queſtion to Chriſt about paying Tribute to* Cæſar, *that ſome of the* Jewiſh *Sects refuſed to pay Tribute?*

A. Dr. *Hammond* has the following Note on the Word Tribute, *verſe* 14. *Judas* of *Gallilee* (called indifferently *Gallentonia* and *Gallilæus* (was, ſays *Joſephus*, Head of a fourth Sect among the *Jews*, and having *Saddok*, a *Phariſee*, joined to him, he ſollicited the People to Defection, telling them that God was to be their only Maſter and Prince, and no Mortal to be acknowledg'd ſuch; that the requiring a Tax from them, if it were paid by them, was a manifeſt Profeſſion of Servitude, and that it was their Duty to vindicate their Liberty, by which Means he raiſed a great Sedition among the *Jews*, and was the Cauſe, under Pretence of defending the publick Liberty of innumerable Miſchiefs to the Nation. Of this Sect it is poſſible they might ſuſpect that *Chriſt* might be a Favourer, and the rather for his being accounted a *Gallilean*; and that therefore they now come and aſk him this Queſtion. And tho' he anſwers moſt punctually in Favour of the *Roman* Emperor, yet there is ſo much Caution in his Speech, that the *Phariſees* were not able to take any Advantage againſt him, it is therefore improv'd into an Accuſation againſt him, that he *forbad to give Tribute to* Cæſar, *Luke* xxxiii. 2.

See the 22*d*, and 23*d*, of St. *Matthew*, for the other Hiſtorical Paſſage in his Chapter, your Explanation thereof.

CHAP. XIII.

Chriſt *foretells the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *comforts his Diſciples againſt Perſecution; ſhews how they might eſcape to propagate the Goſpel. The Calamities of the* Jews *in thoſe Days; falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets. The Manner of his Coming to Judgment. An Exhortation to Watchfulneſs againſt that Time, and the Time of Death.*

Q. THIS *whole Chapter is contained almoſt Word for Word, in* Matth. xxiv. *I ſhall therefore deſire Satisfaction only in one Point, namely, How we are to underſtand our Saviour, when he ſays,* v. 32. *ſpeaking of* the laſt Day, *no Man, not the Angels, nor even* the Son *himſelf, but* the Father *only knew of it?*

A. Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, that this whole Diſcourſe, belongs to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, no one can doubt who compares it with, *Matt.* xxvi. and *Luke* xxi. Which having been the Matter of *Daniel's* Predictions, and afterwards of ſome of *John*'s Viſions in the *Revelations*, and here of *Chriſt*'s, it was moſt certain that the Time of it was revealed to this Son of Man, and other his Servants, and therefore of that, and of the particular Circumſtances connecting to the laſt Point of that, it cannot be underſtood that, *knoweth of that no Man*, *&c.* That Day and Hour muſt be more nicely interpreted, not to ſignify the Time more looſely, but more ſtrictly that very Point of Time when this fatal Blow was ſtruck. And of this, to preclude the Curioſity of Men, and to engage their Vigilance, *Chriſt* tells them, that no Diſpenſation of God's either by Man, viz. *Daniel*, or any other Prophet, or by Angels, or (which is the higheſt) *by the Son of Man*, had ordered us to know the Times or the Seaſons, this being no Part of the prophetick Office of any Man, or within the Commiſſion of *Chriſt* himſelf, to reveal this Secret to them.

Dr. *Hammond*, in his farther Explanation of this difficult Paſſage, ſhews a great deal of Learning. He ſays, that what the *Agnoetæ* taught in this Matter, and wherein their ſuppos'd miſtake, conſiſted, is not obvious to define. They were thus called, becauſe they defined from this Text, that Chriſt, *as Man, was ignorant of ſome Things, in the ſame Manner as he ſuffered Grief, &c.* For this, *Theodoſius*, Biſhop of *Alexandria*, wrote againſt them, but his Authority is not great, being himſelf as a Heretick, and his Followers called *Theodoſiani* or *Jacobitæ*. But *Eulogius*, Biſhop of *Alexandria* alſo wrote againſt them; and the Sum of his Argument is this; that what is here ſaid of *Chriſt*, imports, *In that his Body*, viz. *the human Nature, of which he was the Head, was not without Ignorance; as he is ſaid to be made a Sin and a Curſe* *for us, becauſe the Head appropriating to itſelf the Things of the Body, he thus took upon the Things of the Body*, viz. *of us ſinful Men.* Yet after this, tho' he much diſlikes, that either according to his Divinity or Humanity, Ignorance ſhould be attributed to him, he cannnot but acknowledge with *Gregory Nazianzen. That he knows indeed as God, but is ignorant as Man*; only adding, that the Fathers who acknowleged or admitted Ignorance in our Saviour in Reſpect of his Humanity, *did not produce this as a Doctrine*, but to repreſs the *Arians*, made Uſe of it.

Of this Diſcourſe of *Eulogius*, Pope *Gregory*, in one of his Epiſtles, is of Opinion, that what he ſaid of *Chriſt*'s Words, that they were to be referred to him, *in Reſpect of his Body, which we are*, is true; and that St. *Auguſtine* had often expreſſed himſelf to the ſame Senſe; adding alſo another Interpretation of the Words, not that *the Son of Man was ignorant of that Day, but that he would by no Means permit it to be known.* After this he propoſes another Subtilty, as he ſtiles it, that the *only Son being incarnate, and made perfect Man, knew the Day in his human Nature, but not from his human Nature, becauſe being made God-man, he knew it only by the Power of his Deity.* This certainly hath Truth in it, but it is not eaſily diſcerned how it oppoſes thoſe, who, acknowledging *Chriſt* God-man to know all Things in this hypoſtatical Union, yet affirm him in Reſpect of his Humanity, to be *ignorant of ſome Things*: For it is not neceſſary, they ſhould mean any Thing more in this affirming, than that he hath not this Knowledge of all Things, but from the Divinity only.

In that Epiſtle of *Gregory*, one Thing is reſolved, which may poſſibly give ſome Light to this whole Matter, *viz. That he that is a* Neſtorian, *cannot be an* Agnoeta. If this be true, then we have a competent Cauſe of the *Agnoetæ* being revered among Hereticks, for ſuch the *Neſtorians* doubtleſs were, denying the human and divine Nature in *Chriſt*. But Hiſtory rather inclines us to believe, that the *Agnoetæ* were *Eutychians* more than *Neſtorians*; for *Theodotius* was one of thoſe who oppoſed the Council of *Chalcedon*; and thoſe that broke off from him (about this Point of *Chriſt*'s being ignorant of ſome Things in reſpect of his Humanity) had been, till then, of his Communion, and ſo Oppoſers of that Council.

Theſe *Eutychians* Hereſy conſiſted in this; *they affirmed ſo cloſe an Union betwixt the Word and the human Nature, that they became but one Nature*, and this was refuted in that Council of *Chalcedon*; and the *Agnoetæ* being of that Council, muſt be ſuppoſed to adhere to this Hereſy; then indeed, it muſt be acknowledged they were Hereticks; and their Hereſy ſo much worſe than bare *Eutychianiſm*, as it is Blaſphemy to impute Neſcience or Ignorance to God. This therefore ſeems to be the Ground of defining theſe *Agnoetæ* to be Hereticks; for ſuch they were, if they thus taught. But for the Doctrine of thoſe who held firmly the Decrees of all the firſt four general Councils, and ſo condemn all the Hereſies there condemned, and particularly that of *Neſtorius*, who divided the Perſons, and of *Eutychus*, who confounds the Natures in *Chriſt*, and only affirms, that though, as God, he knew all, yet as Man, he was ignorant of ſome Things, juſt in the ſame Manner as he was paſſible and ſubject to all human Infirmities, which had not Sin in them; and this his own Expreſſion affirmeth, *That the Son of Man knew not the Day and Hour*; this ſure is ſo far from Hereſy, that it is the unanimous Aſſertion of all the Fathers, to which neither the Council of *Chalcedon*, nor any other hath taught any Thing contrary.

CHAP. XIV.

The Rulers conſpire againſt Chriſt. *A Woman anoints his Head.* Judas *betrays him.* Chriſt *eating the Paſſover, ſhews in what Manner he ſhould be betray'd; inſtitutes his laſt Supper; foretels the Diſciples of their Offence. His Agony and Prayer; reproves them for their Drowſineſs, and exhorts them to watch and pray; is betray'd and apprehended; his Diſciples fly. He is accuſed of Blaſphemy before the High-prieſt; is buffetted and abuſed.* Peter *denies him thrice; his Sorrow and Repentance.*

Q. THIS *Chapter is little more than a Repetition of the 26th of St.* Matthew, *which the Reader will find ſufficiently explained in our Remarks thereon. But as St.* Peter *makes a conſiderable Figure in this Hiſtory; I deſire you will deſcribe his Character?*

A. Amongſt all the Apoſtles and Diſciples of *Chriſt*, we meet with none ſo extraordinary, either for Faith or Obedience, as St. *Peter*. He was an early Profeſſor, *Matth.* iv. 18. and a glorious Confeſſor, *Matth.* xvi. 16. *Thou art the* Chriſt, *the Son of the living God.* Which Confeſſion of his Faith, like a Rock, was to be the Foundation of the Goſpel Church in all Ages; and *Chriſt* was pleaſed to put that Honour on *Peter*, as to uſe his Miniſtry, in firſt laying the Foundation of a Chriſtian Church among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, he being the firſt Preacher to them of that Faith which he did here confeſs. To the *Jews*, *Acts* ii. we read of three thouſand Souls converted and baptized; and to the *Gentiles*, *Acts* x. in the Converſion of *Cornelius* and his Friends, whom God directed to ſend, not to *Jeruſalem* for *James*, nor to *Damaſcus* for St. *Paul*, but to *Joppa* for St. *Peter*, whom *Chriſt* had appointed for that Work, that he might tell him Words by *which he and his Houſhold ſhould be ſaved.*

The next extraordinary Quality obſervable in this Saint, was his great Courage. At *Chriſt*'s Command he ventures to walk on the Waves of the Sea, *Matth.* xiv. 28. being firmly perſuaded that whatever *Chriſt* injoined his Diſciples, he would give them Strength and Ability to perform. Nor was that a leſs noble Inſtance of his Courage, when he was enabled to ſay, *Though I die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.* No doubt, but the good Man really reſolved to do as he ſaid, little ſuſpecting that he ſhould with Oaths and horrid Imprecations deny and abjure his dying Maſter.

An undaunted Courage, and heroic Greatneſs of Mind, appeared in this Apoſtle, when he told the *Jews*, to their Faces, that they were guilty of Murder, and muſt never expect Salvation, any other way, than by Faith in that *Jeſus* whom they had ignominiouſly crucified, and unjuſtly ſlain. Nor did St. *Peter* ſay this in a Corner, or behind a Curtain, but in the *Sanhedrim*, that open Court of Judicature, which had ſo lately ſentenced and condemned his Lord and Maſter.

St. *Peter* was likewiſe eminently diſtinguiſhed for his Humility and Lowlineſs of Mind. An Inſtance of it we have, when *Cornelius* would have entertained him with Expreſſions of more than ordinary Honour and Veneration, falling down at his Feet, and ready to adore him, but this humble Apoſtle was ſo far from complying with it, that he plainly told him, that he was no other than ſuch a Man as himſelf. And when our Lord, by a ſtupendous Act of Condeſcenſion, ſtoop'd ſo low as to waſh the Diſciples Feet, *Peter* could by no Means be perſuaded to admit of it, neither could he be induced perſonally to accept of it, till *Chriſt* was, in a Manner, forced to threaten him into Obedience, and Compliance with it, *John* xiii. 8.

Admirable was his Love and Zeal for his Lord and Maſter, inſomuch that he could and did appeal to his Omniſciency for the Truth and Sincerity of it; *Lord, thou knoweſt all Things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* 'Twas Love that cauſed him to draw his Sword in his Maſter's Defence, againſt a Band of Soldiers, and an armed Multitude. 'Twas Love that cauſed him to engage ſo deep, as to ſuffer and die, rather than deny him.

Theſe were his exemplary Virtues; his Failings were theſe, He had too great a Confidence of his own Strength, notwithſtanding the Warning our Lord gave him, that *Satan* had deſired to ſift him as Wheat. None are ſo likely to be overcome by Temptation, as thoſe that are leaſt afraid of it. There's great Danger in the Conceit, that becauſe we have long kept our Innocence, we can never loſe it; and that becauſe we have been once or twice victorious over Temptation, we muſt ever be Conquerors, *Cor.* x. 12. *Let him that think he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall*; let him keep a jealous Eye on the Inconſtancy and Weakneſs of his Nature, and with a believing Eye look up to the Power and Promiſe of God, that he may be preſerved from falling, and preſented Faultleſs in the Day of *Chriſt*.

His Fears were too ſtrong for his Faith. The inſolent Affronts offered to his injured Maſter, cauſed him to forget his former Reſolutions, and inſtead of being a valiant Confeſſor, he turns a ſhameful Renegado, renouncing him for whom a little he reſolved to die. Hence learn, that ſlaviſh Fear is a moſt tumultuous and ungovernable Paſſion; its powerful Aſſaults not only vanquiſh the ſtrongeſt Reaſon, but ſometimes overcome the ſtrongeſt Faith. 'Tis a Weapon which the Tempter uſes to the Diſcomfort of ſome, and Deſtruction of others, and therefore ought to be guarded againſt, by thoſe who ſet any Value on the Peace and Comfort of their Souls.

His ſlaviſh Fear was the Occaſion of his ſinful Equivocation, in ſaying, *I am not the Man*, and that prepared him for a down right Denial, and his Denial for an abſolute Abjuration, with an Imprecation and an Anathema, ſwearing that he knew not the Man! Is this, *Peter*, thy owning thy Lord? This thy dying with him, rather than deny him? Haſt thou forgot all thy Promiſes and Engagements to him, and all the dear and ſweet Pledges of his Love, ſo lately ſhewn thee? Thy Example teaches us, how dangerous it is to truſt to mere human Strength, to rely on an Arm of Fleſh; for had not thy denied and forſaken maſter pray'd for thee, and timely ſuccoured thee, *Satan* would not only have winnow'd thee like wheat, but ground thee to Powder.

Obſerve farther, what a Complication of Sins was included in that one, of *Peter's* denying his Maſter. The higheſt Ingratitude, unaccountable Raſhneſs, in venturing into ſuch Company, tarrying there ſo long, and without a Call; and, for a Time, their impenitence and Hardneſs of Heart. It's ſafe and good to reſiſt the Beginning of Sin: If we yield to *Satan* in one Temptation, he will certainly aſſault us with more and ſtronger. *Peter* here proceeded from a Denial to a Lie, from a Lie to an Oath, from an Oath to a Curſe. Let us reſiſt Sin at firſt, for then we have moſt Power, and Sin has leaſt. *The Lord looked on* Peter, *and* Peter *remembered the Word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly.* If *Chriſt* had not looked towards *Peter*, *Peter* would never more have looked towards *Chriſt*; nor was it barely the Turn of *Chriſt's* bodily Eye that brought this Diſciple to a ſorrowful Remembrance of his Sin; had not his outward look been accompanied with the ſecret Influence of his Spirit, it had certainly proved ineffectual.

Chriſt looked on *Judas*, after his Treaſon, and reproved him too; but neither that Look, nor that Reproof did break his Heart. As the Sun with the ſame Beams ſoftens the Wax, and hardens the Clay, ſo a Look from the ſame *Chriſt* leaves *Judas* hardened and impenitent, and melts down *Peter* into Tears. Though Tears are not always a Sign of true Repentance. *Peter*, after he had wept bitterly for Sin, never more returned to the After-Commiſſion of it; but he who before was as timorous as a Hare, became afterwards as bold as a Lion. He, who before ſo ſhamefully denied, nay, abjured his Maſter, afterwards openly confeſſed him, and ſealed that Confeſſion joyfully with his Blood. 'Tis uſually obſerved, that a broken Bone once well ſet, never after breaks again in the ſame Place; a returning Backſlider, when once more reſtored, contracts ſuch a Hatred of former Sins, as never more to return to the Commiſſion of them. Let *Peter's* Fall be a Warning to all Profeſſors againſt preſumptuous Confidence, and his Reſtauration be an Encouragement to all Backſliders, to renew their Faith and Repentance.

Q. *In what Senſe do you underſtand theſe Words, Verſe* 56. Their Witneſſes agree not together?

A. Dr. *Hammond* ſays, theſe Words belong not to the Agreement, or Diſagreement of their Teſtimony, but to the Weight of them, or Sufficiency to the Matter in Hand, of putting him to death, either in Reſpect of the Number of the Witneſſes, but eſpecially of the Crime charged on him. The Teſtimonies that were looked for, were ſuch as would be ſufficient to put him to Death, and that muſt not be under two or three Witneſſes, and for a Crime which is by Law Capital. Now there were many Knights of the Poſt brought in to witneſs againſt him; yet, it is probable that their Witneſſes were of ſeveral Matters, not two or more to one Matter, ſo that they were not ſufficient in Reſpect of the Number of Witneſſes. Afterwards, Ver 27. the Witneſſes agree, more than one in Teſtimony; and though it be not in *Matthew* or *Mark* ſet down in the ſame Words exactly, yet the Difference is not real but verbal betwixt them, (as in many other Narrations) and each of them affirm that the Witneſſes ſaid the ſame Thing. In that

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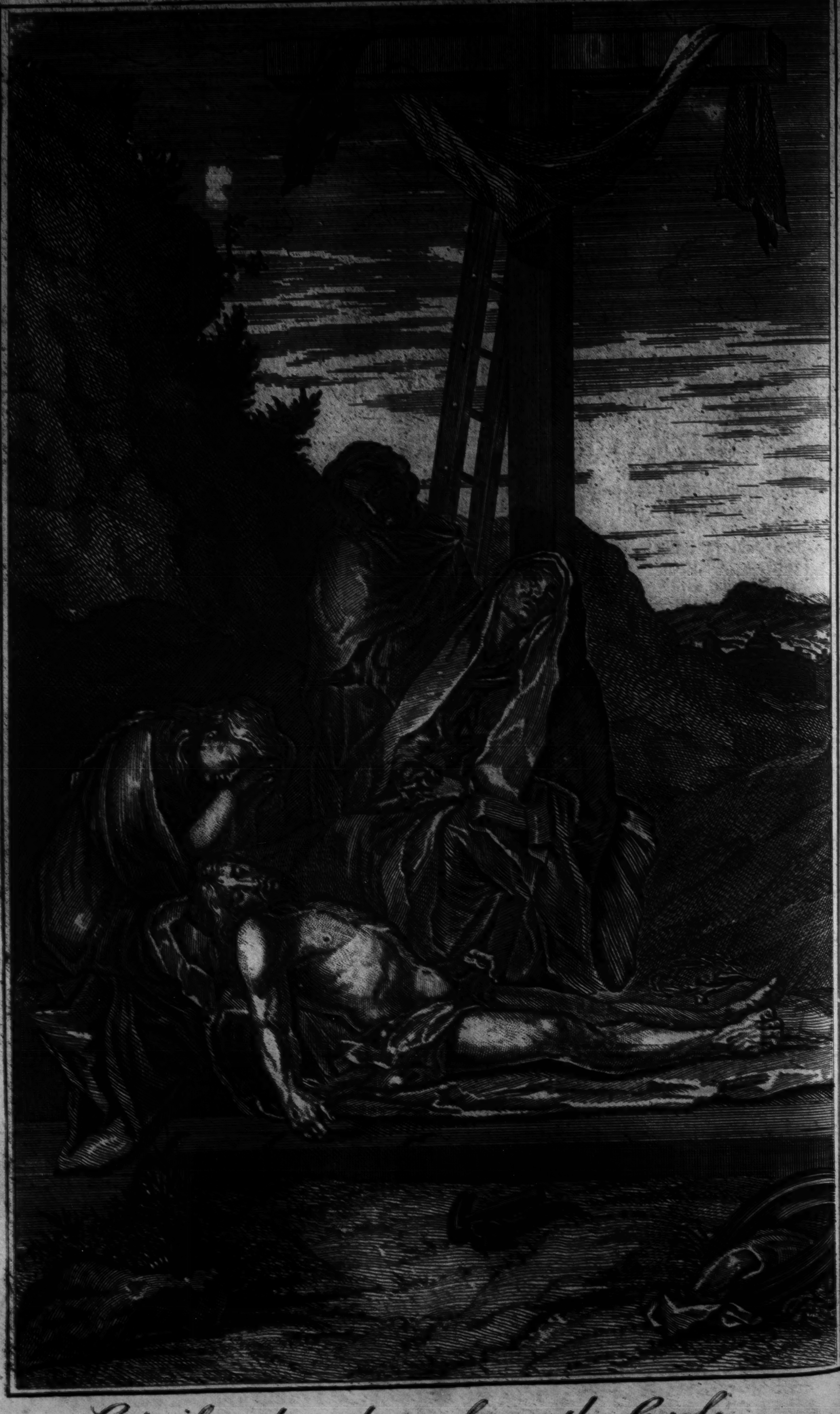
MARK XV. 46.



Chriſt taken down from the Croſs.

Verſe therefore they *agree not together*, ſignify that the Teſtimonies were not of any capital Crime, or of ſuch Importance, as that, allowing them to be true, a Man ſhould be put to death for them. And therefore it is, that the Chief-Prieſt was fain to examine him, and at laſt adjured him, that out of his own Mouth he might draw ſomewhat to condemn him. (For ſo the Faſhion of adjuring was deſigned, *Numb.* x. 13. when an Accuſation is not ſufficiently proved, and there is no Witneſs againſt him.) And when, by *Chriſt*'s Anſwer, he concludes that he had ſpoken blaſphemouſly, then he riſes up and and ſays, *What Need have we of any farther Witneſs?*

Q. *Who was the young Man that fled away naked, Verſe 52?*

A. Who the young Man was, who fled away naked out of his Hands of the Soldiers, who took him for one of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples, has been a Matter of ſome Diſpute among the Antients. *Epiphanius* and St. *Jerom* are of Opinion, that it was *James*, the Brother of our Lord; but, upon our Lord's being apprehended, he, among the reſt, forſook him and fled, and we hear nothing of his Return. St. *Chryſoſtome*, *Ambroſe* and *Gregory* have a ſtrong Imagination that it was *John*, the beloved Apoſtle; but *John*, we read, was with *Chriſt* in the Garden, cloathed, and cannot therefore eaſily conceive how he came to fly naked. It ſeems moſt probable therefore, that this young Man might be no ways related to our Saviour, but hearing a Noiſe in the Garden, which might not be far diſtant from the Houſe where he lodged, in the Village of *Gethſemane*, he aroſe and followed the Company in his Night-gown (as we have rendered it) in pure Curioſity to ſee what was the Matter, and that, when the Guards were for ſeizing him, he fled away naked, *i. e.* with nothing but his Shirt on, for ſo the Expreſſion may be underſtood.

Chap. XV.

The Rulers bring Jeſus *bound before* Pilate, *who, to pleaſe the People, ſcourges and delivers him to be crucified.* Simon, *the* Cyrenian, *bears the Croſs; they crucify him, and part his Garments. His laſt Agony and Death. The Centurion's Confeſſion.* Joſeph *buries him.*

Q. *AS the whole Hiſtory of this Chapter is contained in* Matt. xxvii. *I ſhall here avoid ſuch Remarks as were there made upon it. Pray, ſince our Lord was to riſe again in ſo ſhort a Time as three Days, why was he buried at all?*

A. 1. Our Lord was buried to declare the Certainty of his Death, and the Reality of his Reſurrection; and for this Reaſon did God's Providence order it, that he ſhould be embalmed, to cut off all Pretentions; for in this Kind of Embalming, his Mouth, Ears, and Noſtrils were filled with Odours and Spices, ſo that there could be no latent Principle of Life in him; his being thus buried then, did demonſtrate him to be certainly and actually dead.

2. *Chriſt* was buried, to fulfil the Type and Prophecies extant in the Scripture concerning him. Jonas *being three Days and three Nights in the Belly of the Whale*, was a Type of Chriſt's *being three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth.* The Prophet *Iſaiah* Chap. liii, 9. even declared our Lord's Funeral, and the Manner of it, long before he was born, *He made his Grave with the Wicked, and with the Rich in his Death*; pointing, by that Expreſſion, at *Joſeph*'s Tomb, who was a rich Man, and laid him in the Tomb deſigned for himſelf.

3. He was buried to compleat his Humiliation; *They have brought me to the Duſt of Death*, ſays *David*, a Type of *Chriſt*. This was the loweſt Step he could poſſibly deſcend, in his abaſed State; lower he could not be laid; and ſo low his bleſſed Head muſt be laid, elſe he had not been humbled to the loweſt Degree of Humiliation.

4. *Chriſt* went into the Grave, that he might conquer Death in its own Territories and Dominions. His Victory over the Grave cauſes his Saints to triumph and ſing, *Grave where is thy Deſtruction?* Our dear Redeemer has perfumed the Grave by his own lying in it; ſo that a Pillow of Down is not ſo ſoft to a Believer's Head, as a Pillow of Duſt.

Laſtly, This Doctrine of our Saviour's Burial may be of excellent Uſe to us his Diſciples and Followers. 1. For Inſtruction. Here we may ſee the amazing Depths of our Lord's Humiliation, from what, and to what his Love brought him, even from the Boſom of his Father, to the Boſom of the Grave. How does the Depth of his Humiliation ſhew us the Sufficiency of his Satisfaction! and therewith the Heinouſneſs of our Tranſgreſſion! 2. For Conſolation againſt the Fears of Death and the Grave; the Grave received *Chriſt*, but could not detain him; Death ſwallowed him up, as the Fiſh did *Jonas*, but quickly vomited him up again; and ſo ſhall it be done to the Members; the Grave could not long keep him, it ſhall not always keep us; as his Body reſted in Hope, ſo ſhall ours alſo; and although we ſee Corruption, yet ſhall we not always lie under the Power of Corruption. In ſhort, *Chriſt* lying in the Grave, has changed and altered the Nature of the Grave; it was a Priſon before, a Bed of reſt now; a loathſome Grave before, a perfumed Bed now; he, whoſe Head is in Heaven, need not fear to put his Feet into the Grave. *Awake and ſing, thou that dwelleſt in the Duſt*, for the Enmity of the Grave is ſlain by *Chriſt*. 3. For our Imitation: Let us ſtudy and Endeavour to be buried with *Chriſt*; that is in reſpect of our Sins, *Rom.* vi. 4. *Buried* with him unto Death. Our Sins ſhould be as dead Bodies in ſeveral Reſpects. Are dead Bodies removed out of the Society of Men? So ſhould our Sins be removed far from us. Do dead Bodies in their Graves ſpend or conſume by Degrees? So ſhould our Sins be to ourſelves. Do dead Bodies wax out of Memory, and in Time are quite forgotten? So ſhould our Sins alſo, in reſpect of any Delight we take in remembring them; we ſhould always remember our Sins to our Humiliation, but never think or ſpeak of them with any Delight or Satisfaction; for this, in God's Account, is a new Commiſſion of them, and lays us under an aggravated Guilt and Condemnation.

Q. *Why is* Simon *ſo particularly diſtinguiſhed by his Country and Family?*

A. Simon the *Cyrenian*, Verſe 21. has a particular Mark of Diſtinction, as being the Father of *Alexander* and *Rufus*. It is an Obſervation made by ſome, that, that when the Father is made known by the Son, or Sons, it intimates more Eminency in the Son, than in the Father. Many therefore think this *Simon* was a *Pagan*; and imagine that his Son *Alexander* was the ſame mentioned *Acts* xix. 33. perſecuted there by the *Jews*; and *Rufus*, he whom *Paul* ſaluteth, *Rom.* xvi. 13. calling him *choſen of the Lord.* They ſay they were both at *Rome* where they judge *Mark* was when he wrote this Hiſtory; and that *Mark* mentions them as thoſe who could atteſt the Truth of this Part of the Hiſtory. The Father bore *Chriſt*'s Croſs (or one End of it) which is all we read of him. The Sons believed on him, who died upon it. So free is divine Grace, fixing where it pleaſeth.

Q. *Why did they cloath our Saviour with Purple?*

A. The Obſervation which Dr. *Hammond* makes, is, that many Particulars mentioned in their Dealing with *Chriſt*, were not from the *Jewiſh*, but the *Roman* Cuſtoms. Such was the putting the purple or ſcarlet Robe upon him, which the Text here ſays, was done by the Soldiers, and *Luke* by *Herod*'s Servants, or elſe the *Roman* Guards, *Luke* xxii. 11. *Lazarus Bayſius* ſays, this purple or ſcarlet Gown, or Robe, was of the *Roman* Faſhion, called by them a painted Gown, and accordingly by St. *Luke*, Chap. xxviii. it is ſaid to be a gorgeous Robe, and was, by way of Scoff, brought to *Chriſt*, by the Soldiers, as if it had been ſent by the Senate and People of *Rome* to him, who, as the *Jews* ſaid, pretended to be their King.

Q. *What is to be underſtood by* the Subſcription of his Accuſation, *Verſe* 26?

A. That it was the *Romans* Cuſtom to write the Crime, for which any Man ſuffered Death, in a Table, and carry it before him to Execution, appears by *Euſebius*, in his Eccefiaſtical Hiſtory; where, of *Attalus* the Chriſtian Martyr, it is ſaid, that he was led about the Amphitheatre, with a Table carried before him, in which was written, in *Latin*, *This is* Attalus *the Chriſtian.* So in *Suetonius*, *He brought him out and caſt him to the Dogs, with this Title or Inſcription*, He ſpoke impiouſly. And as of other Kinds of Death, ſo was this particularly the Method uſed with thoſe who were crucified. This was mentioned by *Dionyſius*, of a Servant, that he was carried to the Croſs, with a Writing, or Words, declaring the Cauſe of his being put to Death. From theſe Records of the *Romans*, appears the Propriety of all theſe Expreſſions in the ſeveral Evangeliſts, *The Superſcription of the Cauſe, or of his Crime*, here in *Mark*; the *Charge, or Cauſe, written over his Head*, Matt. xxvii. 37. and ſimply, *Inſcription*, *Luke* xxii. 38. and *Title*, *John* xix. 19. all to the ſame Purpoſe, noting this *Roman* Cuſtom in dealing with him.

Q. *Who was* James the Leſs, *Verſe* 40. *-and why was he ſo called?*

A. That the Comparative is here taken for the Poſitive, the leſs or the younger, doth not appear from any Circumſtance of this Text, or Analogy of other Places. And there were three of this Name, ſo known, two Apoſtles, and the third the Brother of our Lord; that this Title of the Leſs in the Comparative, could be no Character of the third of theſe, to diſtinguiſh him from the other two. That which is moſt probable is, that it is an Abbreviation of the *Greek* Words, which ſignify *little in Stature*, the Phraſe uſed of *Zaccheus*, *Luke* xix. 3. and ſo notes this *James* to have been about *Zaccheus*'s Size or Pitch, and ſo diſtinguiſhes him from the others of that Name, who, it ſhould ſeem were not ſo.

Q. *Why was* Joſeph *of* Arimathea *called a* Counſellor, *Verſe* 43?

A. What is meant by *Counſellor*, here is, Matter of ſome Queſtion. Moſt probable it is, that it imports one of the *Decuriones*, placed by the *Romans* in their Colonies or Provinces. So ſays *Fornerius*, *The* Decuriones *were called Counſellors, becauſe they were choſen to give Counſel.* Now what the *Decurio* is, we find in the *Digeſts*, lib. 50. *They were ſo called, becauſe at the firſt, when the Colonies were ſent out, the tenth Part of them were appointed to ſit as a ſtanding Council, to manage Affairs*; and ſuch an one at this Time was *Joſeph*, and he a Perſon of great Eminence.

Chap. XVI.

Women, on the Sabbath, come to the Grave. An Angel declares to them the Reſurrection of Chriſt, *and ſends them to acquaint his Diſciples and* Peter, *of it.* Chriſt *appears, firſt to* Mary Magdalen; *She tells the Diſciples of it; they disbelieve her. He appears to two of them going into the Country; then to the Eleven, and upbraids their Unbelief; commiſſions them to preach the Goſpel, and confers on them the Power of Miracles. Aſcends to Heaven.*

Q. THE *Narrative contain'd in this Chapter, is given us by St.* Matthew, Chap. xxviii. *and therefore I ſhall only animadvert upon ſuch Paſſages as are not there taken Notice of. At the 9th and five following Verſes we have an Account of a threefold Appearance of our Saviour after his Reſurrection; all which I ſhould be glad to have, ſeverally, explained and illuſtrated?*

A. His firſt Appearance was not to the *Virgin Mary*, but to *Mary Magdalen*, who had been a grievous Sinner; this our Lord did for an Argument of Comfort to all true Penitents. *Mary* goes immediately to his Diſciples, whom ſhe finds weeping and mourning, and tells them *ſhe had ſeen the Lord, but they believed her not.* His ſecond Appearance was to two Diſciples going into the Country; that is, into the Village of *Emmaus*; as they were in the Way, *Jeſus* joined himſelf to their Company, but their Eyes were holden by the Power of God, that they did not diſcern him in his own proper Shape, but apprehended him to be another Perſon, whom they converſed with. His third Appearance was *to the Eleven, as they ſat at Meat, whom he upbraids with their Unbelief*; and to convince them effectually that he was riſen from the Dead, *he eats with them a Piece of broiled Fiſh, and of an Honey-comb.* Not that he needed it, his human Nature being now immortaliz'd; but to aſſure them that he had ſtill the ſame Body. On the whole, we may obſerve, how induſtriouſly our Lord endeavours to confirm his Diſciples in the Doctrine of his Reſurrection: So ſlow and backward were they to believe that the *Meſſiah* was riſen again from the Dead, that all the Predictions in the Scripture, all the Aſſurances they had received from our Saviour's own Mouth, yea, all the Appearances of our Saviour to them, after he was actually riſen, were little enough to confirm and eſtabliſh them in the certain Belief that he was riſen from the dead.

Q. *What do you obſerve on our Saviour's Aſcenſion into Heaven, as related Verſe 19?*

A. Here we have the grand Article of the *Chriſtian* Faith aſſerted, namely, our Lord's Aſcenſion, likewiſe his Exaltation, expreſſed by his *ſitting at God's Right-Hand*; he aſcended now to Heaven in his human Nature, for in his divine Nature he was there already; and it was neceſſary that he ſhould thus aſcend, in order to his own perſonal Exaltation and Glorification. When he was on Earth, his Humility, Patience, and Self-denial, were exerciſed by undergoing God's Wrath, the Devil's Rage, and Man's Cruelty; now he goes to Heaven, that they may be rewarded; he that is a patient Sufferer upon Earth, ſhall be a triumphant Conqueror in Heaven; alſo, with Reſpect to his Church on Earth, it was convenient our Lord ſhould aſcend into Heaven, namely, to ſend down the Holy Spirit upon his Apoſtles, which he did at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*. *If I go not away* (ſays *Chriſt*) *the Comforter will not come, but if I depart, I will ſend him to you.*" And likewiſe to be a powerful Advocate and Interceſſor with his Father in Heaven, on Behalf of his Church and Children here on Earth, *Heb.* ix. 24. Chriſt *is entered into Heaven itſelf, there to appear in the Preſence of God for us.*

Finally, *Chriſt* aſcended into Heaven, to give us an Aſſurance, that in due Time we ſhould aſcend after him, *John* xiv. 2. *I go to prepare a Place for you.* Hence the Apoſtle calls our Saviour, *Our Fore-runner*, Heb. vi. 19. Now if *Chriſt*, in his Aſcenſion was a Fore-runner, then there are ſome to follow after. To the ſame Purpoſe is that Expreſſion of the Apoſtle, Eph. ii. 6. *He hath made us ſit together in heavenly Places in* Chriſt; that is, we are already ſat down in him, and e'er long ſhall ſit down by him; we are already ſat down in him as our Head, and hereafter ſhall ſit down by him as his Members. The only way to this, namely, to aſcend unto him, and to ſit down with *Chriſt* in Heaven, is to live like him, and to live unto him here on Earth: *If any Man love me, he will follow me, and where I am, there ſhall alſo my Servant be*, John xxvi. 26.

Q. *What Truths does the laſt Verſe of this Chapter inſtruct us in?*

A. The laſt Verſe acquaints us with the general Publication of the Goſpel, by the Apoſtles, They went forth and preached every where. The Reaſon of the Efficacy and Succeſs of their preaching was, the divine and miraculous Power that accompanied it, *The Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the Word with Signs following.* The Induſtry of the holy Apoſtles was incredibly great, yet was their Succeſs greater than their Induſtry, even beyond all human Expectation; which will evidently appear, if we conſider,

1. The vaſt ſpreading of the God ſo far in ſo ſhort a Space of Time; for in thirty Years after *Chriſt's* Death, it was ſpread through the greateſt Part of the *Roman* Empire, and reached as far as *Parthia* and *India*.

2. The wonderful Power and Efficacy which the Goſpel had upon the Lives and Manners of Men; the Generality of thoſe that entertained it, were both in Word and Deed, Obedient to it; becauſe *Chriſtianity* being an hated and perſecuted Profeſſion, no Man could have any Inducement to embrace it, who did not reſolve to practiſe it.

3. The Weakneſs and Meanneſs of the Inſtruments that were employed in propagating the Goſpel, ſhews the Succeſs of it to be very great and ſtrange, a Company of plain and illiterate Men, moſt of them deſtitute of the Advantages of Education, and unſupported by the Countenance of any Authority whatſoever; yet did they, in a ſhort Time, draw the World after them. The powerful Oppoſition which was raiſed againſt the Goſpel, namely, the Prejudices of Education, the Power of in-dwelling Luſts, and alſo the Powers of the World, then in Being, were in a ſtrong Combination againſt it; yet did *Chriſtianity* bear up againſt all Oppoſition, and made its Way through all the the Reſiſtance that the Luſts and Prejudices of Men, armed with the Power and Authority of the whole World, could make againſt it.

4. The great Diſcouragements that Men were then under to embrace the Goſpel, and the *Chriſtian* Profeſſion; all the Evils of this World threatened them; Mockings and Scourging, Baniſhment and Impriſonment, Reproach and Ruin; Death, in all its fearful Shapes was preſented to them, to deter them from embracing this Religion.

Obſerve farther the Reaſon of this wonderful Succeſs, *The Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the Word with the Signs following.* The Lord wrought with them; this points at the inward Operation of the Spirit upon the Minds of Men. 'Tis ſweet and proſperous working in Fellowſhip with *Chriſt* and his Holy Spirit; he directs his Miniſters, he aſſiſts them, he guides their Lips, influences their Minds, quickens their Affections, ſets home their Inſtructions, and crowns all their Endeavours with his Bleſſing. And confirmed their Doctrine with Miracles; ſuch as healing Diſeaſes, raiſing the Dead, caſting out Devils, inflicting corporeal Diſeaſes on ſcandalous Perſons, and ſometimes Death itſelf. Upon the whole we learn, that the Truth and Divinity of the *Chriſtian* Religion, was and is certainly of God, and therefore never could, never can be overthrown.

Q. *All the* Evangeliſts *agree in their Report of an angelick Appearance at the Sepulcher of our Lord, immediately after the Reſurrection, yet vary in the Manner of it: Pray explain and reconcile their ſeveral Accounts; and give ſome Reaſon why the Women ſhould be affrighted at ſo amiable an Appearance?*

A. Both *Luke* and *John* mention two Angels in the Habit of young Men; *Matthew* ſpeaks of one *ſitting upon the Stone.* The Women might ſee him *ſitting upon the Stone*, and yet find him within alſo; the Motions of Angels are quick and undiſcernible to our Senſe; or the Stone might be rolled inward. That the Women were *affrighted*, is no Wonder, conſidering how apt we are to be affrighted by any *Apparitions.* They preſently fly from the Sepulcher amazed, and ſay nothing to any Body till they came into the City, where they tell it to the Diſciples.

St. *Matthew* omits many Things more diſtinctly related by the other Evangeliſts. When the Women came to the Sepulcher, they firſt entered in; ſo ſay *Mark* and *Luke*; it was within that they ſaw the Angel; they were affrighted; the Angel bids them not to fear, he knew that they ſought *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*; ſhews the Place where his Body lay; reminds them of *Chriſt*'s Words to them in *Galilee*, and that there they ſhould ſee him, as he had told them, *Matt.* xxvi. 32. *Mark* xiv. 28. They preſently departed with *Fear* and *great Joy*. *Mark* ſays, *trembling* and *amazed*. *John* does not ſay *unbelieving*, yet ſays it in Effect, when he relates their Words to *Simon Peter*, *They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him.* The Cauſe of their Fear and Amazement, was doubtleſs the Appearance of the Angel. The Cauſe of their ſudden Joy, was the News that he was *riſen*. Their Joy ſeems no more than a ſudden Flaſh of Paſſion, not riſing from a Perſuaſion of the Truth of what they heard, but, upon ſecond Thoughts, concluded that Somebody had removed his Body; neither did the Apoſtles themſelves believe it, but looked on it as an *idle Tale:* For, as St. *John* ſays, Chap. xx. 9. *As yet they knew not the Scripture, that he muſt riſe again from the Dead.* They knew it notionally; but they did not give a firm and fixed Aſſent to it. It was not, it ſeems, in the Power of their Wills to believe this Article of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection; for as they had a divine Revelation of the Thing from *Chriſt* himſelf, we cannot but think they had a Mind and Good-will enough to believe it; but God had not given them, as yet the Power of Faith as to this Point.

Q. *Having thus concluded our Remarks on the Goſpel of this Evangeliſt, give me Leave to aſk you ſome Queſtions, about his Family, Country, Travels, Sufferings and Death. And firſt pray tell me of what Lineage and Family he was?*

A. Tho' the Name of *Mark* ſeems to be of *Roman* Extraction, yet the *Evangeliſt* now before us, was born of *Jewiſh* Parents, and originally deſcended from the Tribe of *Levi*. What his proper Name was, or upon what Change or Accident of Life he might aſſume this, we have no Manner of Intelligence; but as it was no unuſual Thing for the *Jews*, when they went into the *European* Provinces of the *Roman* Empire, to conform to the Cuſtoms of the Country, and, while they continued there, to be called by ſome Names of common Uſe; ſo ſome have conjectured, that when *Mark* attended upon St. *Peter* to *Rome*, he might at that Time take upon him this Name; which (as he never returned to *Judea* to reaſſume his own) he for ever after retained. In the Writings of the Apoſtles we read of ſeveral called by this Name. There is *John*, whoſe Surname was *Mark*; *Mark*, the Siſter's Son of *Barnabas*; *Mark*, whom St. *Paul* calls his Fellow-labourer; and *Mark* whom St. *Peter* ſtiles his Son: But which of theſe was the *Evangeliſt*, or whether the *Evangeliſt* might not be a Perſon diſtinct from any other of theſe, has been a Matter of ſome Doubt among the Learned.

Q. *Was he a Diſciple of* Chriſt, *or afterwards converted by one of the Apoſtles?*

A. That he was one of the Seventy Diſciples, and, among them, one of thoſe who took Offence at our Lord's Diſcourſe of *eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood*, ſome of the Antients have affirmed; but *Euſebius* from *Paphias*, who was Biſhop of *Hieropolis*, and lived near thoſe Times, tells us poſitively, that he was no Hearer or Follower of our Saviour. He was converted by ſome of the Apoſtles, and moſt likely by St. *Peter*, to whom he was a conſtant Retainer, and ſerved him in Capacity of an *Ammanuenſis*, and an Interpreter. For, tho' the Apoſtles were divinely inſpired, and among other miraculous Powers, had the Gift of Languages conferred on them; yet the Interpretation of Tongues ſeems to be a Gift, more peculiar to ſome, than others, and it might be St. *Mark*'s Talent, either by Word or Writing to expound St. *Peter*'s Diſcourſes to thoſe, who underſtood not the Language werein they were delivered.

Q. *In what Part of the World did St.* Mark *preach the Goſpel?*

A. He accompanied St. *Peter* in all his Travels; preached Chriſtianity in *Italy* and at *Rome*; and, at the Requeſt of the *Chriſtians* in thoſe Parts, compoſed his Goſpel, which St. *Peter* afterwards reviſed and approved. From *Italy* he went into *Egypt*, and having fixed his chief Reſidence in *Alexandria*, he there, and in the Country round about, propagated the *Chriſtian* Faith with ſuch Succeſs, that Multitudes both of Men and Women not only became Converts, but engaged themſelves likewiſe in a more ſtrict Profeſſion of the Religion that he taught them, than ordinary.

Philo, in his *Treatiſe of a contemplative Life*, gives us a long Account, and high Commendations of a Set of People, who, in a pleaſant Place, near the *Maræotick* Lake in *Egypt*, formed themſelves into religious Societies, and lived a ſtrick philoſophick Life; and theſe, *Euſebius* affirms to have been *Chriſtians* converted and brought under theſe admirable Rules by St. *Mark*, at his coming into *Egypt*: But, whoever conſiders *Philo*'s Account, will plainly find that he means it of *Jews*, and Profeſſors of the *Moſaic* Religion, and not of the *Chriſtians*; partly, becauſe it is improbable that *Philo*, being a *Jew*, ſhould give ſo great a Character and Commendation of *Chriſtians*, who were ſo hateful to the *Jews*, at that Time, in all Places in the World: Partly becauſe *Philo* ſpeaks of them as an Inſtitution of a conſiderable Standing, whereas *Chriſtians* had but lately appeared in the World, and were later come into *Egypt*; and partly, becauſe many Things in *Philo*'s Account do not way ſuit with the State and Manner of *Chriſtians* at that Time.

From *Alexandria* he went Weſtward; and paſſing through the Countries of *Marmorica*, *Pentapolis*, and others, in his Way to *Lidya*, (though the People were barbarous in their Manners, as well as idolatrous in their Worſhip) by his preaching and Miracles, he not only converted, but before he departed, confirmed them in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel. Upon his Return to *Alexandria* he preached with all Boldneſs, ordered and diſpoſed of the Affairs of the Church, and wiſely provided for the Continuance thereof, by conſtituting Governors and Paſtors in it. The great Number of Miracles which he wrought, and the Reproaches which ſome of the Converts made upon the ſenſeleſs Idols of the *Egyptians*, ſo exaſperated their Rage, that they were reſolved to deſtroy this Introducer of a new Religion among them. It was at the Time of *Eaſter*, when the great Solemnities of their God *Serapis* happened to be celebrated, at which *Feſtival*, the Minds of the People being excited to a paſſionate Vindication of the Honour of their Idol, they broke in upon St. *Mark*, then engaged in the ſolemn Celebration of divine Worſhip, and binding his Feet, they dragged him through the Streets, and other rugged Places, to a Precipice near the Sea; but, for that Night, they thruſt him into a dark Priſon, where his Soul, by a divine Viſion, was ſtrengthened and encouraged under the Ruins of a ſhattered Body. Early next Morning the Tragedy began again. For, in the ſame Manner, as they had done the Day before, they dragged him about, till his Fleſh being raked off, and his Veins emptied of Blood, they threw it into a Fire, and ſo burnt it; but his Bones and Aſhes the *Chriſtians* gathered up and decently intombed near the Place where he uſually preached.

Q. *What gave the Occaſion to St.* Mark *to write his Goſpel?*

A. After the Defeat of *Simon Magus*, (whereof we ſhall have Occaſion to ſay more hereafter) the Reputation of the *Chriſtian* Religion grew ſo great, and Converts at *Rome* became ſo many, that they were deſirous to have in Writing thoſe Doctrines which had hitherto been imparted to them by Word of Mouth only. St. *Mark*, to whom this Requeſt was made, accordingly ſet himſelf to recollect what he, by long Converſation, had learned from St. *Peter*, who, when the other had finiſhed the Work, peruſed, corrected, and recommended it to the Uſe of the Churches: And for this Reaſon it is, by ſome of the Antients, ſtyled St. *Peter's* Goſpel; not that St. *Peter* dictated it to St. *Mark*, but becauſe St. *Mark* did chiefly compoſe it out of that Account which St. *Peter* uſually delivered in his Diſcourſes to the People. And accordingly St. *Chryſoſtom* obſerves, that the *Evangeliſt*, in his nervous Stile and Manner of Expreſſion, takes a great Delight in imitating St. *Peter*.

This Goſpel, indeed, was principally deſigned for the Uſe of the *Chriſtians* at *Rome*; and from hence ſome may be apt to think it highly congruous, that it ſhould at firſt be written in the *Latin* Tongue; but it muſt be conſidered, that as the *Jewiſh* Converts, in that City, underſtood but little *Latin*, ſo there were few *Romans* that did not underſtand *Greek*, which (as appears from the Writers of that Age) was the genteel and faſhionable Language of thoſe Times; nor can any good Reaſons be aſſigned, why it ſhould be more inconvenient for St. *Mark* to write his Goſpel in *Greek*, for the Uſe of the *Romans*, than that St. *Paul* ſhould, in the ſame Language, write his Epiſtle to that Church.

Q. *What became of the Copy which St.* Mark *wrote?*

A. The original *Greek* Copy, under St. *Mark's* own Hand, is ſaid to be extant at *Venice*, at this Day, written (as they tell us) by him at *Aquileia*, and from thence, after many hundred of Years, tranſlated to *Venice*, where it is ſtill preſerved, tho' the Letters ſo worn out, with Length of Time, that they are not capable of being read. There are likewiſe ſome *Greek* Manuſcripts, wherein the twelve laſt Verſes of this Goſpel are omitted; but they are extant in the greateſt Number of the moſt antient and authentick Copies, as well as in the Works of *Iræneus*, an Author of prior Date to any of the Manuſcripts that want them: It is not to be queſtioned therefore, but that they originally belonged to St. *Mark's* Goſpel and were ſuppreſſed by ſome ignorant or conceited Tranſcriber, upon the Account of ſome ſeeming Contradiction between St. *Matthew* and this other *Evangeliſt*, which, with a ſmall Skill in critical Learning, may be eaſily reconciled.

Q. *Is the Goſpel of St.* Mark *any other than an Abridgment of that of St.* Matthew?

A. We cannot compare St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* together, but muſt perceive, that the latter had ſeen the Writings of the former, becauſe he often uſes the ſame Terms, relates the ſame Facts, and takes notice of the ſame Circumſtances; but we muſt not therefore infer, that all he intended in his Work was ſimply to abridge him; becauſe he begins his Goſpel in a different Manner; he omits ſeveral Things, particularly our Lord's Genealogy; he varies from him in the Order of his Narration; he relates ſome Facts that the other has omitted; he enlarges upon others in many Particulars, and (what is no mean Argument of his Truth and Impartiality in all the reſt) the ſhameful Lapſe and Denial of his beloved Maſter, St. *Peter*, he ſets down, with more and more aggravating Circumſtances, than any of the other *Evangeliſts* have recorded.

THE GOSPEL
ACCORDING TO
St. LUKE.

WHO the Penman of this Hiſtory was, the certain Time when he wrote it, and the Occaſion of his writing it, we have but little Information from Holy Writ; and there is ſuch Uncertainty in Traditions, that it is hardly worth the Labour to tranſcribe the various Conjectures of Writers on this Occaſion. Such of them as would have him to be Barnabas, *or one of the* Seventy, *ſeem not to have conſidered what* Luke *himſelf ſays,* Chap. i. 2. *that he wrote,* as they delivered them unto him, which from the Beginning were Eye-witneſſes, *nor was, (from the firſt at leaſt) a* Miniſter of the Word.

That there was one Luke, *a Co-temporary with* St. Paul, *and his Fellow-labourer, appears from* 2 Tim. iv. 14. *In the two laſt mentioned Texts, he is joined with* Demas, *and in* Col. iv. 14. *he is called the* beloved Phyſician. *Theſe three Texts ſeem to ſpeak of one and the ſame Perſon, who, probably, at firſt practic'd* Phyſick, *but afterwards becoming a Diſciple, he exerciſed the Miniſtry; and it is generally thought, that this* Luke *the* Phyſician *was the Penman both of this Hiſtory, and of the* Acts of the Apoſtles. *Whether by Nation he was a* Syrian, *or a* Roman, *or of what other Country, is an uſeleſs Speculation. That he was an* Evangeliſt, *we know; that is, one inſpired by God, to tranſmit to the World, the Hiſtory of the* Birth, Life, Death, Reſurrection, *and* Aſcenſion *of our* Saviour; *as alſo of the* Acts of the Apoſtles, *until* Paul *was Priſoner at* Rome.

His Hiſtory of the Goſpel contains many remarkable Things relating to Chriſt, *not mentioned by the other* Evangeliſts. *The Generation of* John Baptiſt; *the Narrative concerning* Zacharias; *the Angel's coming to the* bleſſed Virgin; Elizabeth's *Exclamation when* Mary *came to viſit her, and her Salutation of her; the Publication of* Chriſt's *Birth to the Shepherds; the Teſtimony of* Simeon *and* Anna *given of* Chriſt; *ſeveral Circumſtances concerning our Saviour's Birth; his diſputing with the Doctors at twelve Years of Age: Things of great Uſe to compleat the Hiſtory both of* John the Baptiſt, *and of* Chriſt, *but entirely omitted by the other* Evangeliſts. *He likewiſe gives us ſeveral Parables, not related any where elſe; alſo divers Circumſtances, and Pieces of Hiſtory which are left out, though the Subſtance of them is recorded by the other* Evangeliſts.

CHAP. I.

St. Luke's *Preface. The Parentage and Life of* Zacharias *and* Elizabeth. *An Angel appears to him in the Temple, and promiſes him a Son; the Manner of his Education and Office.* Zacharias *not believing, is ſtruck Dumb.* Elizabeth *conceives. The Angel* Gabriel *viſits the Virgin* Mary, *tells her ſhe ſhould bring forth the Son of God, and declares, that a Son ſhould be born to her Siſter* Elizabeth. Mary *goes to* Elizabeth; *their Greeting.* Mary *praiſes God.* Elizabeth *brings forth a Son, who, being circumciſed, is called* John. Zacharias *recovers his Speech, and prophecies of* Chriſt, *and of* John; *who, growing ſtrong in Spirit, dwells in the Wilderneſs.*

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve upon the* Dedication *and* Preface *to this Goſpel of St.* Luke?

A. St. *Luke* dedicates his Goſpel, and the Acts of the Apoſtles, to his Friend and Patron *Theophilus*, who was, as ſome think, an honourable Senator; or an eminent Perſon in the Church, as others ſuppoſe: But many take the Word *Theophilus* not for a proper Name, but an Appellative, ſignifying every one that loves God; to whom St. *Luke* addreſſes his Diſcourſe.

The firſt four Verſes in this Chapter are a Preface to the following Hiſtory, and acquaint us with the Reaſons which induced St. *Luke* to write, namely, becauſe divers Perſons in that Age had impudently, and inconſiderately, ſet up to write Goſpels, without Direction from the Spirit of God, whoſe Errors and Miſtakes were to be corrected by a true Narrative. Some imagine St. *Luke* here hints at the Goſpel of the *Nazarenes*, of *Thomas*, *Matthias*, *Nicodemus*, and many others, which the Church ſoon ſaw Cauſe to reject. But others think that thoſe Writings were not ſo early; but that *Luke* obſerving that many wrote this famous Hiſtory, and ſome, for want of a due Information, not ſo exactly as they ought, as having their Materials only

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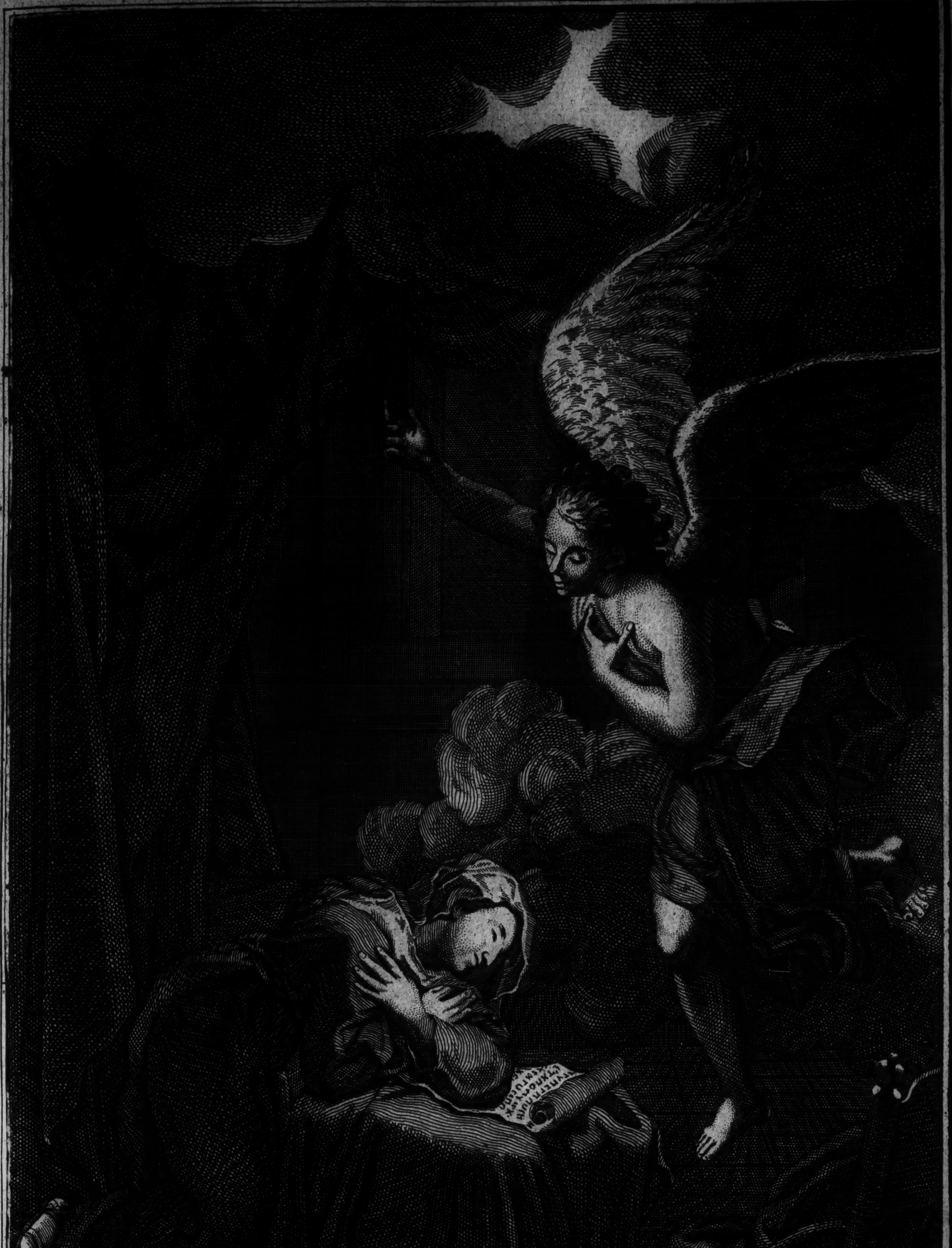

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from the Report of others; or, becauſe Printing not being then invented, but every Thing in Manuſcript, of which his Friend *Theophilus* might not have an Opportunity to get a Sight, he undertook, himſelf, to compile a Hiſtory of theſe Things, having the Advantage to underſtand all Things from the firſt. This he was the better able to do, partly from his Familiarity with St. *Paul*, and partly by his Converſation with the other Apoſtles; who, conſtantly attending our Saviour, were Eye and Ear-witneſſes of thoſe Things that are the ſubject Matter of the enſuing Hiſtory.

Q. *Pray of what Order of the Prieſts was* Zacharias?

A. Some of the Fathers were of Opinion, that this *Zacharias* was, at this Time, High-prieſt, upon a falſe Suppoſition, that the Offering of Incenſe was reſerved for the High-prieſt only: But, beſides the Teſtimony of *Joſephus*, who tells us expreſly, that *Simon* the Son of *Boethus*, was High-prieſt this Year; it appears from St. *Luke* himſelf, that *Zacharias* was no more than an ordinary Prieſt of the Family, or Courſe of *Abia*, which of the four and twenty Courſes, appointed by *David*, for the Service of the Temple, when it ſhould be built, was the Eighth, 1 *Chron.* xxvi. 10. For though it was the High-prieſt's Prerogative, on the great Day of Expiation, to enter into *the Holy of Holies*, and there burn Incenſe, which no ordinary Prieſt might do, *Levit.* xvi. 12. yet, in the common Service of the Day, each Prieſt, whoſe Lot it was, went every Morning and Evening into the *Sanctum*, or Body of the Temple, and there burnt the daily Incenſe upon the Altar, which was placed before the Veil of the *moſt holy Place*, Exod. xxx. 6, *&c.* For theſe and ſeveral other Reaſons, which Annotators have produced, it ſeems plain that *Zacharias* could not poſſibly be High-prieſt at this Time; and, whatever Credit may be given to the Tradition, That by the Order of *Herod the Great*, he was put to Death, between the Porch and the Altar, *viz.* in the Incloſure that ſurrounded the Altar of Burnt-Offering; and that, when every one was ignorant of his Murther, a certain Prieſt, thinking that he ſtaid too long, entered into the Temple and found him dead, and his Blood congealed on the Ground, and at the ſame Time heard a Voice, that it ſhould be never wiped out, until his Revenger came: Whatever Credit, I ſay, may be given to this Tradition, it was doubtleſs upon this Foundation that many of the Antients thought, that *Zacharias*, the Father of *John the Baptiſt*, was that *Zachariah*, the Son of *Barachiah*, mentioned by our Saviour in the Goſpel, whoſe Blood was ſhed *between the Temple and the Altar*.

Q. *Is there any Thing remarkable concerning the Time when* John *was conceived by his Mother* Elizabeth?

A. St. *Luke*, in particular, takes Notice, that the Time when our Lord's Fore-runner was to be conceived, was in the Reign of *Herod*, Son of *Antipater* (for it was *Herod Antipas* that put him to Death) commonly called *the Great*, who, under the *Romans*, fought his Way to the Government of the *Jews*, and came to his Throne by the Slaughter of their *Sanhedrim*; by which Means he extinguiſhed all the Dominion, which, till that Time, they held in the Tribe of *Judah*; not in a ſingle Perſon, indeed, (for that was extinguiſhed in the *Aſmonæan* Family) but in a ſelect Number out of the royal Tribe; and ſo verified the Prophecy of old *Jacob*, Gen. xlix. 10. *That the Scepter*, or Government, *was departed from* Judah, *and the Lawgiver from between his Feet*, which was a certain Sign that *Shiloh*, i. e. the *Meſſiah*, was ſhortly to come.

Q. *What is meant by that Expreſſion, Verſe* 8. He executed the Prieſt's Office in the Order of his Courſe?

A. The ſeveral Courſes of the Prieſts began on the Sabbath-Day, and continued to ſerve till the Sabbath following; but, becauſe they were now increaſed to a greater Number (*Joſephus* tells us, that there was no leſs than a Thouſand in each Courſe) there were ſeveral Parts of the Prieſtly Office, whereof burning of Incenſe was one, which the Courſe, that then miniſtred, ſeems to have divided among themſelves, for the Week they were to attend.

Q. *It is ſaid, Verſe* 10. That the whole Multitude of the People were praying without: *What ſort of Perſons made up this Multitude of Worſhippers; and in what Manner did they perform their Worſhip?*

A. A *Jewiſh* Congregation, for the moſt Part, conſiſted of all the Prieſts of the Courſe which was then in waiting, of the *Levites*, and of certain ſtationary Men, as they called them, who repreſented the Body of the People, beſides ſome other accidental Worſhippers; and when the Prieſt went into the Sanctuary, or within the firſt Veil, to offer Incenſe, Notice was given by the Sound of a Bell, that it was then the Time of Prayer, whereupon every one preſent offered up his Supplications to God ſilently: And though this ſilent Prayer was not commanded, yet there ſeems a manifeſt Alluſion to it, in thoſe Words of St. *John*, where, *at the Offering of Incenſe with the Prayers of the Saints*, 'tis ſaid, *there was Silence in Heaven for half an Hour*, Rev. viii. 1, *&c.* Nor is that Paſſage in *Eccleſiaſticus*, Chap. l. 19, 20. any bad Repreſentation of this Part of the *Jewiſh* Worſhip, *And the People beſought the Lord, the moſt High, by Prayer, before him that is merciful, 'till the Solemnity of the Lord was ended; and then he went down* (viz. *Simon* the High-prieſt) *and lifted up his Hands over the whole Congregation of the Children of* Iſrael *to give the Bleſſing of the Lord with out Lips.*

Q. *What Notions had the* Jews *concerning thoſe Viſions that ſometimes appeared in the Temple?*

A. The *Jews* had a peculiar Notion, that ſuch like Apparitions as appeared to *Zacharias* in the Temple, were always fatal to thoſe that had them, and a ſure Token of their inſtantaneous Death, *Gen.* xvi. 13, 22, 30. *Exod.* xx. 19, *&c.* but if this were not true, it is natural for Men to be affrighted at ſudden and unuſual Things, eſpecially at any divine Appearance, whether of God himſelf taking a viſible Shape, or authorizing an Angel to do ſo. For tho' God does not make the Appearances to affrighten us, yet ſuch is the Imbecillity of our Nature, that we cannot but be ſtartled at them; and Reaſon good there is, that God, by this Means, ſhould both declare his own Glory and Majeſty, and humble his poor Creatures, in order to make them more ſuſceptible of his divine Revelation.

Q. *Was* Zacharias *juſtly puniſhed with Dumbneſs, for only deſiring a Sign of the Angel, to confirm his Belief of a Thing ſo contrary to human Reaſon?*

A. The Words of *Zacharias* to the Angel are, *Whereby ſhall I know this? For I am an old Man, and my Wife well ſtricken in Years,* Luke i. 18. much of the ſame Import with thoſe of *Abraham*, upon a like Occaſion, *Whereby ſhall I know that I ſhall inherit the Land of* Canaan? *Gen.* xviii. 8. How then came it to paſs, that *Abraham* was gratified with a Sign on the ſame Requeſt, for which *Zacharias* was puniſhed with Dumbneſs? Now, tho' there may be a great Similitude in the Words, which are ſpoken by ſeveral Perſons, yet there may, at the ſame Time, be a very conſiderable Difference in the Heart and Habit of Mind, from whence they proceed, which, we muſt allow, God can ſee much better than we can perceive by Words. In relation to *Abraham* then, the Holy Spirit bears him Teſtimony, that *He ſtaggered not at the Promiſe through Unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God, being fully perſuaded, that what he had promiſed he was able to perform,* Rom. iv. 19. and therefore, if he aſked a Sign, it was not to beget, but to nouriſh and confirm this Faith in him. But in *Zacharias* the aſking of a Sign ſavoured of perfect Infidelity, in that he believed not an Angel, appearing to him in the Name of the Lord, and in a Place where evil Angels durſt not come: An Angel telling him, *his Prayers were heard*, which evil Angels could not know; and acquainted him with Things that tended to the Glory of God, the Completion of his Promiſes, and the Welfare of Mankind, which evil Angels would not do. His Puniſhment therefore was the juſt Reſult of his Unbelief; but (what ſhews the Mercy of God in inflicting it) it was a Puniſhment of ſuch a Nature, as carried with it an Anſwer to his Deſire, being no more than a Privation of Speech, until the Words of the Angel were fulfilled.

Q. *Where was the City of* Nazareth *ſituated?*

A. *Nazareth* was a City of the *Lower Galilee*, ſituate in the *South* Part of that Province, and ſo not far from the Confines of *Samaria* to the *South*, and nearer to the Territories of *Tyre* and *Sidon* to the *North-weſt*. According to Mr. *Maundrell*'s Account, in his Journey from *Aleppo*, it is at preſent only an inconſiderable Village, lying in a Kind of round concave Valley, on the Top of an high Hill. Here is a Convent built over (what is ſaid to be) the Place of the Annunciation, or where the bleſſed Virgin received the joyful Meſſage brought her by the Angel. Here is likewiſe the Houſe of *Joſeph*, the very ſame (as the Friars of the Convent tell you) wherein the Son of God lived, for near thirty Years, in Subjection to Man; and not far from hence, they ſhew you the Synagogue wherein our bleſſed Saviour preached that Sermon, *Luke* iv. 16. whereby his Countrymen were ſo exaſperated, that they *roſe up, and thruſt him out of the City*, and led him to the Brow of the Hill, whereon their City was built, *that they might caſt him down headlong*, Luke iv. 28, 29. for which Reaſon that Brow is, to this Day, called the *Mountain of Precipitation*.

Q. *The Angel was ſent, Verſe* 27. to a Virgin eſpouſed to a Man whoſe Name was *Joſeph*, of the Houſe of *David*; and the Virgin's Name was *Mary: Which Words I ſhould be glad to have explained?*

A. Theſe Words, in my Opinion, might be placed in this Manner,—*To a Virgin of the Houſe of* David; *eſpouſed to a Man, whoſe Name was* Joſeph, *and the Virgin's Name was* Mary; becauſe this agrees better with the Words of the Angel, *The Lord God ſhall give him the Throne of his Father* David. For, ſince the Angel had plainly told the Virgin, that ſhe ſhould have this Son without the Knowledge of any Man, it was not *Joſeph's*, but *Mary's* being of the Houſe of *David*, that made *David* his Father. Of her immediate Parents, however, the Scripture tells us nothing, not ſo much as their Names; but from Tradition we learn, that ſhe was the Daughter of *Joachim* and *Anna*, of the royal Tribe of *Judah*, and yet related to the Race of *Aaron*, becauſe *Elizabeth*, the Wife of *Zacharias*, was her Couſin.

Q. *Pray what was the antient Manner of* Eſpouſing?

A. Eſpouſing, or betrothing, was nothing elſe but a ſolemn Promiſe of Marriage, made by two Perſons, to each other, at ſuch a Diſtance of Time as they agreed upon. The Manner of performing this Eſpouſal was either by a Writing, or by a Piece of Silver given to the Bride, or by Cohabitation. The Writing that was prepared on theſe Occaſions, ran in this Form: *On ſuch a Day of ſuch a Month, in ſuch a Year,* B, *the Son of* B, *has ſaid to* C, *the Daughter of* C, *Be thou my Spouſe, according to the Law of* Moſes *and the* Iſraelites, *and I will give thee, for the Portion of Virginity, the Sum of two hundred* Zuzims, *as it is ordained by the Law. And the ſaid* C *has conſented to become his Spouſe upon theſe Conditions, which the ſaid* B *has promiſed to perform upon the Day of Marriage. To this the ſaid* B *obliges himſelf; and for this he engages all his Goods, even as far as the Cloak which he wears upon his Shoulder. Moreover, he promiſes to perform all that is intended in Contracts of Marriage, in Favour of the* Iſraelitiſh *Women. Witneſſes,* B, C, D. The Promiſe by a Piece of Silver, and without Writing, was made before Witneſſes; when the young Man ſaid to his Miſtreſs, *Receive this Piece of Silver as a Pledge that you ſhall become my Spouſe.* Laſtly, the Engagement by Cohabitation (according to the *Rabbins*) was allowed by Law, *Deut.* xxiv. 1. but it had been wiſely forbidden by the Antients, becauſe of the Abuſes that might happen, and to prevent the Inconvenience of clandeſtine Marriages. After ſuch Eſpouſal was made (which was generally when the Parties were young) the Woman continued with her Parents ſeveral Months, if not ſome Years (at leaſt till ſhe was arrived at the Age of *Puberty*) before ſhe was brought home, and her Marriage conſummated: For ſo we find that *Sampſon*'s Wife remained with her Parents a conſiderable Time after Eſpouſal, *Judg.* xiv. 15. and that the bleſſed Virgin was diſcernably with Child before ſhe and her intended Huſband came together, *Matthew* i. 11. Whether this Method of betrothing was at firſt ordained, or only approved by God, *Deut.* xx. 7. or whether it be now of any Obligation to us *Chriſtians*, we ſhall not pretend to determine. It is certain, that it has nothing that is typical, nothing of the carnal Ordinance in it, but ſomething very proper and convenient, *viz.* that the Parties contracted may have ſome intermediate Time to think ſeriouſly of the great Change they are going to make in their Conditions; to diſcourſe more freely together about their domeſtick Affairs; and to implore God's Bleſſing and Protection over them and theirs, in all the Changes and Chances in this mortal Life.

Q. *Pray what do you obſerve upon the Angel's naming our Saviour, before he was conceived in the Womb?*

A. We read but of few Inſtances in Scripture, where Men had Names determined for them, by particular Appointment from Heaven, and before the Time of their Birth, as was that of our Saviour *Jeſus*; and as ſuch Names appear to be very ſignificant, ſo the Perſons, diſtinguiſhed by them, were always remarkable for ſome extraordinary Qualities or Events, which their reſpective Names were deſigned to denote. Our Lord's Name, indeed, in Senſe and Subſtance, is the ſame with *Joſhua*, that famous Leader heretofore, who after the Death of *Moſes*, ſettled the *Iſraelites* in the promiſed Land, and ſubdued the Enemies that oppoſed their Entrance into it. But as that earthly was a Figure of the hervenly *Canaan*, ſo was the Captain of *That*, an eminent Type of our Salvation; and, if he was worthy to be called a Saviour, much more is this *Jeſus*, what his Name imports; for he delivers us from the heavieſt of all Bondages, and from the moſt formidable of all Enemies, as he, and he only it is, who ſaves his People from their Sins.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Prediction of the Angel, concerning* Chriſt, *Verſe* 32. And the Lord God ſhall give unto him the Throne of his Father *David?*

A. The Prophets, in their Predictions, are very full and expreſs, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be a great King, and deſcend from the Line of *David*; ſee *Pſal.* xi. 7. *Iſaiah* ix. 6, 7. *Dan.* vii. 14. and *Ezek.* xx. 27. and therefore the Angel, in his Meſſage to *Mary*, characteriſes him, as a Succeſſor to that Prince's Throne, and ſeems to accommodate himſelf, in ſome Meaſure, to the Prejudice of the *Jews*, and perhaps of the Virgin-Mother herſelf, who being bred up in the *Synagogue*, might expect that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be a temporal Prince, as well as they. But our Lord's *Kingdom* (as himſelf plainly declares) *is not of this World*, nor of the like Nature with other Empires upon Earth. His Reign is in the Hearts and Minds of Men and his Communion is in the Church, againſt which *the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail*, and in which, *of the Increaſe of his Government and Peace there ſhall be no End*. Iſai. ix. 7. *until the End cometh, when he ſhall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father*; 1 Cor. xv. 24.

Q. *Does not* Mary's *Reply to the Angel, Verſe* 34. *expreſs ſome Diffidence?*

A. Mary's Expoſtulation is, *How ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not Man?* Which ſome look upon as no more than a Reply of Admiration, and a Deſire to be farther informed in what Manner God intended to effect ſuch a wonderful Work; though others perceive in them ſome Indications of Diffidence, but what might be moſt excuſable, becauſe there had been no ſuch Precedent of the Divine Power made in the World, as to cauſe a *Virgin to conceive and bring forth a Son.* Some are of Opinion that *Mary*, very early in her Life, had made a Vow of perpetual Chaſtity; and that *Joſeph* was appointed her Husband, not to live with her in the ordinary Uſe of Marriage, but meerly to be the Guardian of her Virginity: But beſides that, no Vows of perpetual Virginity were ever in Uſe among the *Jews*, it ean hardly be ſuppoſed that a *Jewiſh* Woman, in whom Barrenneſs was reputed a Reproach, and looked upon as a Curſe, would be ever induced to make one. Among the Precepts of the Law, the *Jewiſh* Doctors account Matrimony to be one, *Gen.* i. 21. from which none are exempted, but they who devote themſelves wholly to the Study of the Law. But, ſince this was not the Bleſſed Virgin's Caſe, it reflects a Diſhonour upon her Memory to imagine, that after ſhe had entered into ſuch a Vow, ſhe ſhould admit of an Eſpouſal to *Joſeph*, which could be for no other End but meerly to mock him.

Q. *What are your Notions of the Virgin's Conception by the Holy Ghoſt?*

A. This Action is thus deſcribed in V. 34. *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee*; wherein, according to the uſual Modeſty of Scripture Language, is implied all that Action of the Holy Ghoſt, whereby the Bleſſed Virgin was inabled to become fruitful, and the Place of ordinary Generation was, in this Caſe, ſupplied. Now when this Action is, in the Scripture, repreſented as intirely the Work of God, and yet is attributed to the Holy Ghoſt in particular, we are not to underſtand it ſo peculiarly his, that the two other Perſons, ſubſiſting in the Godhead, ſhould have no concern in it; for here that Rule of the Schools takes Place, that the entire Union of the Divine Nature makes all ſuch Actions common to all three, as do not refer to the Properties and Relations, by which they ſtand diſtinguiſhed from each other. As therefore the Holy Spirit began the firſt Creation by moving (or brooding as it were) upon the Face of the Waters, ſo did he here begin the new Creation, by conveying a Principle, or Power of Fruitfulneſs into a Perſon, otherwiſe incapable of it: And yet, as there, without the Father and his divine Word, or Son, *not any Thing was made, that was made*, John i. 3. ſo did he here bring this ſecond, *this Creation of a new Thing*, Jer. xxxi. 22. to Effect, by the ſame Co-operation of the undivided Trinity, as he had done the former.

Q. *In what Part of the Country did* Zacharias *and* Elizabeth *live?*

A. *Hebron*, probably, was the Place where *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* lived, and where *John the Baptiſt* was born, becauſe it was not only one of the Cities appointed for the Prieſts to dwell in, *Joſh.* xx. 7. but ſituated likewiſe in Mountains, which, running croſs the Middle of *Judea*, from *South* to *North*, gave to the Tract, which they run along, the Name of the *Hill-Country*. *Hebron* was ten Leagues diſtant from *Jeruſalem*, and forty from *Nazareth*, which made it a long Journey for the Bleſſed Virgin, had not her Zeal to go and partake in her Couſin's Joy, made her ſurmount all Difficulties.

Q. *How do you account for the* Babe's leaping in the Womb for Joy, at the Salutation of *Mary?*

A. 'Tis ſaid, indeed, of the *Baptiſt*, that he *ſhould be filled with the Holy Holy Ghoſt from his Mother's Womb*; and from hence ſome have thought, that this extraordinary Motion of the Child in *Elizabeth*, was an Act of his own, and proceeded from a Senſation of Joy, which himſelf felt at the Salutation of the Bleſſed Virgin: But, beſides that, *being filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his Mother's Womb*, means no more than that the Power of the Holy Ghoſt ſhould be diſcerned to be upon him very early. It is certain, that Infants in the Womb are not capable of any Joy themſelves, as having no Apprehenſions of Good to be enjoyed, or Evil to be avoided; but as they are ſenſibly affected with the Joy or Grief, or Surprize of the Parent, to whom they are united, the uncommon Motion of the Child, at this Conjuncture muſt be occaſioned by the Joy which tranſported his Mother.

Q. *What is obſervable in the Song of the Bleſſed Virgin?*

A. It was cuſtomary among the *Jews*, for pious and devout Perſons, when they found themſelves inſpired, upon great and ſolemn Occaſions to celebrate the Praiſes of God, in Songs made on purpoſe. Several of this Kind we meet with in the *Old Teſtament*, but this of the Bleſſed Virgin is the the firſt that occurs in the *New*, and for the Majeſty of its Stile, the Nobleneſs of its Sentiments, and that Spirit of Piety, which runs through the Whole, is inferior to none.

Q. *What was the Cuſtom of* circumciſing *and* naming *Children among the* Jews?

A. The *Jews* had a poſitive Command in their Law, that no Child ſhould be circumciſed before the eighth Day, becauſe the Mother, for ſeven Days was reputed unclean, and ſo was the Child, by touching her, *Levit.* xii. 1, 2. but the Law appointed no certain Place, in which Circumciſion was to be done, nor any certain Perſon that was to perform it; neither did it enjoin that the Child ſhould have his Name given him at that Time, only the Cuſtom prevailed of doing it then, becauſe, when God inſtituted the Rite, he changed the Names of *Abraham* and *Sarah*.

The *Jews*, from the firſt Beginning, ſeem to have made it a Point of Religion, to give ſuch Names to their Children, as were ſignificative either of God's Mercy to them, or of their Duty to God; and from the Paſſage now before us (tho' it was no antient Uſage) it ſeems to be a Cuſtom introduced, at leaſt in the Days of *Zacharias*, to call Children by the Name of their Parents, or the neareſt Relations (as it is uſual now among us) if there was no particular Reaſon to the contrary.

Q. *St.* Matthew, *in his Goſpel*, Ch. i. 19. ſays, *that Joſeph*, her Husband, was a juſt Man: *If ſo, and that he was ſatisfied his intended Wife had, ſome Way, violated her Chaſtity, inſtead of ſcreening her Crime, ought he not to have brought her to Puniſhment, according to the Law*, Deut. xxii. 20, 25?

A. Now it is to be obſerved, that upon the Diſcovery of his Wife's Pregnancy, *Joſeph* had the Choice of three Things. 1ſt, Either he might, notwithſtanding this, have taken her to his Houſe, as his Wife, becauſe the Law of Divorce laid none under an Obligation, but gave a Permiſſion only, in Caſe of ſome diſcovered Uncleanneſs, to put away the Wife: Or 2dly, He might give her a Bill of Divorcement, either in publick or in private, (for that was left to his Option) either before two or three Witneſſes, or before a proper Magiſtrate, and that without ſpecifying any Crime againſt her: Or 3dly, He might, according to the Law, have brought her upon her Trial, whether, in the Matter of her Pregnancy, ſhe had ſuffered a Rape, or was herſelf conſenting, *Deut.* xxii. 23, 24. Had therefore *Joſeph* done the firſt of theſe, he muſt have acted contrary to his own Honour, and have incurred the common Reproach, that he, *who retained an Adultereſs, is a Fool.* Had he done the laſt of theſe, he was not ſure of convicting her, becauſe, upon Examination, it might appear that ſhe had been forced; and, in that Caſe, the Man that did it was to die, *Deut.* xxii. 25. or ſhe might have been with Child before her betrothing, and, in that Caſe ſhe was only obliged to marry the Perſon that had abuſed her, Ver. 28, 29. Upon the Whole, therefore, *Joſeph* thought it the beſt and juſteſt Way to proceed upon the Foot of a Divorce. *Mary's* being viſibly with Child, was Reaſon ſufficient to authorize his parting with her; but he did not know for certain, that ſhe was guilty of Adultery, or that conſequently ſhe deſerved to die; and therefore he did not think it right, by bringing her upon her Trial, to expoſe her.

Q. *St.* Matthew *likewiſe tells us, in the ſame Verſe before quoted, that* not being willing to make her a publick Example, was minded to put her away privily: *Pray what was the Method of Separation uſed among the* Jews *on ſuch Occaſions?*

A. The common Way of Separation among the *Jews* was, by the Man's giving the Woman a Letter of Divorce. This, in their Language, is called *Gheth*, and the Subſtance of it is to this Effect. *On ſuch a Day, Month, and Year, and at ſuch a Place,* I. A. *divorce you voluntarily, put you away, and reſtore you to your Liberty, even you* B. *who was heretofore my Wife, and I permit you to marry whom you pleaſe.* When the Day of Divorce comes, the *Rabbi* that attends, having ſtrictly examined both Parties, and finding that they are reſolved to part, bids the Woman open her Hands, and when ſhe has received the Deed, cloſe them both together, leſt it ſhould chance to fall to the Ground. The Man, when he gives her the Parchment (for on Parchment the Bill of Divorce was to be wrote in the Preſence of two *Rabbins*, and with many other trifling Circumſtances) tells, *Here is thy Divorce. I put thee away from me, and leave thee at Liberty to marry whom thou pleaſeſt*; and when the Woman has taken it, and the *Rabbi* read it over once more, ſhe is intirely free. There is in this Ceremony, however, to be remarked, that they always endeavour to have ten or twelve Perſons at it, beſide the two Witneſſes who ſign the Deed. When therefore *Joſeph* intended to diſmiſs *Mary* privately, it could not be by having no Witneſſes at all, but as few as the Nature of the Thing would bear, and by giving her the Letter of Divorcement into her own Hand, which ſhe might ſuppreſs, if ſhe thought fit, or by inſerting no Accuſation againſt her in it, in Caſe it came to be read before the Company.

Chap. II.

Joſeph *goes to* Bethlehem, *to be taxed, with* Mary *his Wife, where* Chriſt *is born. An Angel declares his Birth to the Shepherds; the Angels Song of Praiſe. The Shepherds go to ſee* Chriſt. *The Circumciſion of the Child; is called* Jeſus, *and preſented to God.* Simeon *takes him in his Arms, bleſſes him, and prophecies concerning him; likewiſe* Anna. *Being twelve Years old, his Parents take him with them to* Jeruſalem; *he diſputes with the Doctors in the Temple; returns to* Nazareth, *is ſubject to his Parents, and increaſes in Wiſdom, Stature, and Grace.*

Q. IN *what Tribe was ſituated the* City Bethlehem; *and what induced* Mary *to take a Journey thither, ſo near her Time of Travail?*

A. Bethlehem, where our Saviour was born (for there was another City of the ſame Name, in the Tribe

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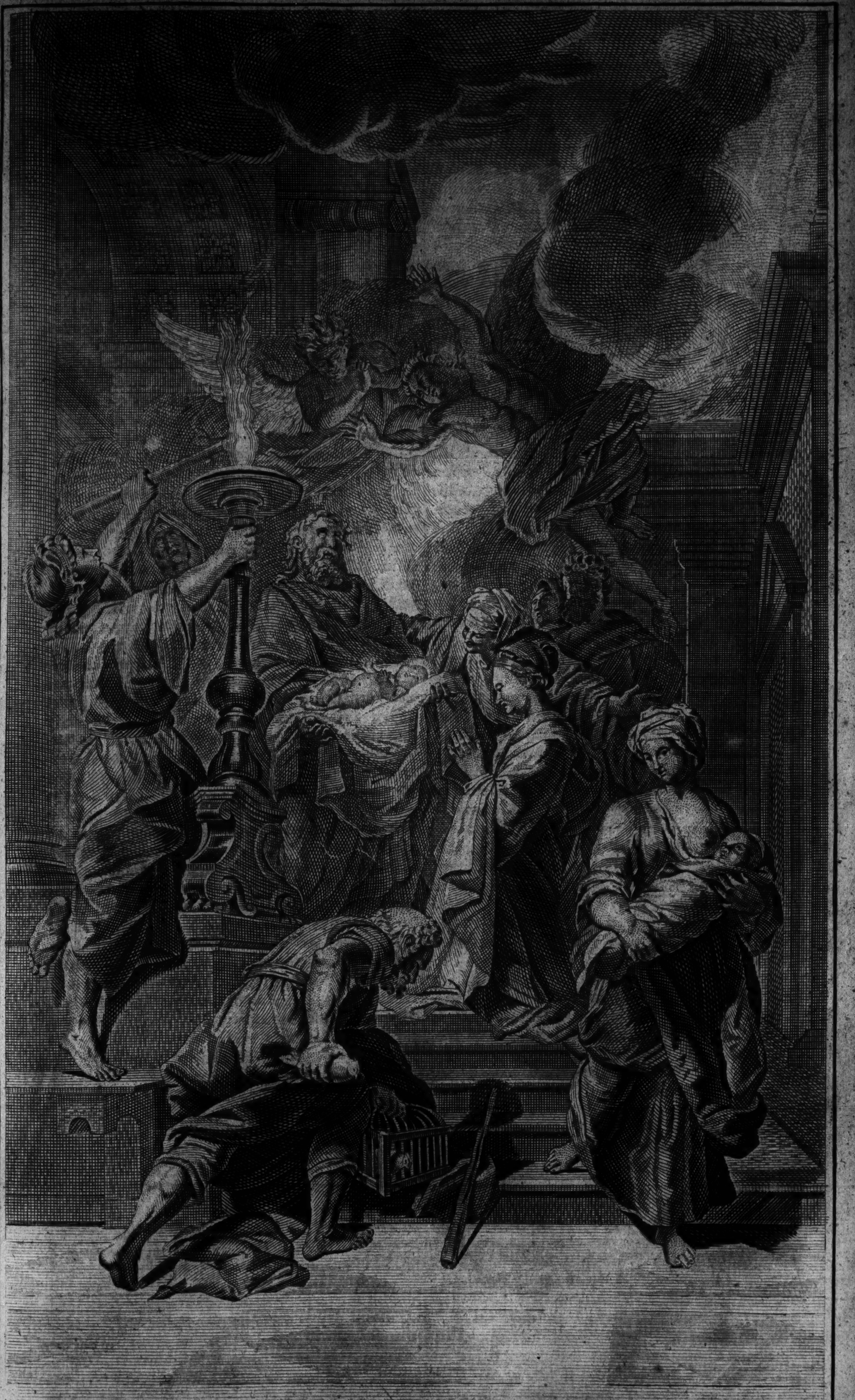

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Simeons Prophecy concerning Christ

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Tribe of *Zebulon*) is ſituate on the Declivity of an Hill, in the Tribe of *Judah*, two Leagues diſtant from *Jeruſalem*, and near thirty from *Nazareth*; ſo that we might juſtly wonder, how the Bleſſed Virgin, big with Child as ſhe was, could be able to take ſo long a Journey on Foot, (for we hear of no other Voiture that ſhe had) were it not preſumable, that the Child, which ſhe conceived without the Loſs of her Virginity, ſhe might be enabled to carry, without the Senſe of any Load, or Uneaſineſs. What might poſſibly be the Motive of her taking ſuch a Journey, is not ſo well accounted for, by pretending that ſhe was an Heireſs, and the ſole Relict of her Family, which, upon this Occaſion, ſhe was obliged to repreſent; as it is by ſaying, that this was done by the eſpecial Providence and Appointment of God, who ordered this *Enrollment* (which *Auguſtus* intended to have had done before) to be delayed to this very Time, and then inſtigated the Bleſſed Virgin to accompany her Huſband, that ſo *Chriſt* might be born in *Bethlehem*, according to the Prediction of the Prophet, *Micah* v. 2. and that his Lineage and Family might, at that Time, be known and preſerved in the publick Tables. The Brith, indeed, of our bleſſed Saviour, (more than its Extent or Riches) has made *Bethlehem*, ever ſince, a Place of high Renown, which was generally viſited by Pilgrims, and at preſent is furniſhed not only with a Convent of the *Latins*, but alſo with one of the *Greeks*, and another of the *Armenians*. Here are ſhewn you the very Place where our Saviour was born, the Manger in which he was laid, and the Cave or Grott in which the Bleſſed Virgin hid herſelf, and her divine Babe, from the Malice of *Herod*, for ſome Time before their Departure into *Egypt*. Here are ſhewn you likewiſe the Chapel of St. *Joſeph*, the ſuppoſed Father of our Lord; the Chapel of the *Innocents*, as alſo thoſe of St. *Jerom*, St. *Paula*, and *Euſtochium*. About Half a Mile Eaſtward from the Town, you ſee the Field where the Shepherds were watching their Flock, when they received the glad Tidings of the Birth of *Chriſt*, and, not far from the Field, the Village where they dwelt.

Q. *In what Form were built the* Inns *in thoſe Countries; and what Sort of Entertainment had Travellers in them?*

A. The *Inns* in the Eaſt are, even to this Day, large ſquare Buildings, but generally no more than one Story high, with a ſpacious Court in the Middle of them. Into this Court you enter in at a wide Gate, and, on the Right and Left-hand, meet with Rooms that are appointed for Travellers to lodge in: Thoſe that come firſt, take the Rooms they like beſt, but muſt be mindful to provide themſelves both with Bedding and Victuals, becauſe the Rooms are perfectly naked, and have no Furniture in them. 'Tis ſome Comfort, however, that, for this Lodging (ſuch as it is) you'll pay nothing, only a ſmall Toll to the Town, as you paſs along; and have no Reaſon to fear the Loſs of any Thing you bring with you, becauſe the Maſter of the Inn takes great Care of the Gate at Night, and is, indeed, reſponſible for the Safety of whatever Baggage you carry into your Lodging.

Q. *How could* Mary *perform the Office of Midwife herſelf, ſince we read of none that aſſiſted her?*

A. The Office of Midwife, which the holy Virgin herſelf performed, ſhe could not have done, to be ſure, had ſhe been delivered in the common Manner of other Women: But it was always the Opinion of the Church, from the Days of *Gregory Nazianzen*, until now (tho' before his Days there were ſome Opinions to the contrary) that, as there was no Sin in the Conception, ſo neither had the Virgin any Pains in the Production; for to her alone the Puniſhment of *Eve*, that *in Sorrow ſhe ſhould bring forth Children*, did not extend, becauſe where nothing of Sin was the Ingredient, there nothing of Miſery could cohabit.

Q. *It is ſaid, Verſe* 7. *that ſhe brought forth her* firſt-born Son: *Does not this ſuppoſe ſhe had more Children afterwards?*

A. The Word *Firſt-born*, in Scripture, admits of various Significations: Sometimes (and moſt commonly, indeed) it denotes the eldeſt of two or more Children, as *Eliab* is called the Firſt-born of *Jeſſe*, 1 *Sam*. xvii. 13. at others, the firſt that is born, without Regard to any elſe; as when God ſays to *Moſes*, *Sanctify to me all the Firſt-born*, Exodus xiii. 2. In ſome Places it imports, figuratively, what is moſt dearly beloved by us; in which Senſe God frequently calls the *Iſraelites* his Firſt-born; and in others, what is moſt remarkable for Greatneſs or Excellency, as God promiſes *David* (who was but a younger Brother of the Family) to make him the Firſt-born of the Kings of the Earth, *Pſalm* lxxxix. 28. In any of theſe three laſt Senſes our Saviour might very properly be called his Mother's Firſt-born Son, for as much as he was really her firſt Child; her moſt, and only beloved, and the moſt illuſtrious of his Race: But then *Joſeph*'s not knowing his Wife, until ſhe was delivered of her firſt-born Son, ſeems to imply that he knew her afterwards. Thoſe who maintain the perpetual Virginity of the bleſſed Mother, tell us, that the *Greek* Words, which we render until, in ſeveral Places of Scripture, has Relation only to the Time which precedes, and not to that which follows any Event; ſo that he knew her not until, may be taken in the ſame Senſe, as *Samuel* came not to ſee *Saul* till the Day of his Death, 1 *Sam*. xv. 35. *i. e.* he never came to ſee him: But (beſides that, moſt of the Paſſages, which are produced to this Purpoſe, are far from coming up to the Caſe in Hand) ſince the Angel commanded *Joſeph* to take *Mary* as his Wife, without any Intimation, that he ſhould not perform the Duty of an Huſband to her, it is not eaſy to conceive, why he ſhould live twelve Years with her, and all that while deny that Duty, which both the Law and the Canons of the *Jews* command the Huſband to pay his Wife, *Exod*. xxi. 10. If we imagine that our Saviour would have been diſhonoured in any other's lying in the ſame Bed after him, we ſeem to forget, how much he humbled and debaſed himſelf, in lying in that Bed firſt, and then in a Stable, and a Manger. But, leaving this Queſtion to thoſe who affect to be curious beyond what is written, we may ſafely conclude with St. *Baſil*, ——*That though it was neceſſary for the Completion of the Prophecy, that the Mother of our Lord ſhould continue a Virgin, until ſhe had brought forth her Firſt-born; yet, what ſhe was afterwards, 'tis idle to diſcuſs, becauſe it is no manner of Concern to the Myſtery.*

Q. *Pray, was it neceſſary that* Chriſt, *as God-man, ſhould conform to the Law of Circumciſion?*

A. Our bleſſed Lord, as he was the ſupreme Lawgiver of the World, was not, in Strictneſs, bound to the Obſervation of his own Law, nor did he ſtand in any Need of Circumciſion, conſidered as a Remedy againſt original Sin, becauſe, in his Incarnation, he had contracted no Pollution; but as he was made of a Woman, made under the Law, and came (as himſelf teſtifies, *Mat.* iii. 15.) to fulfil all Righteouſneſs, it became him to receive the Character, which diſtinguiſhed the *Jews* from all other Nations. Among the *Jews*, indeed, it was thought a Reproach to keep Company with Perſons that were not circumciſed. *Thou wenteſt in to Men uncircumciſed, and didſt eat with them*, is the Accuſation, which they brought againſt St. *Peter*, *Acts* xi. 3. and therefore, as our Lord was ſent chiefly to the loſt Sheep of *Iſrael*, he could not have been qualified for their Acceptance and free Converſation, had he not ſubmitted to this Ordinance. Of him was that moſt glorious of all the Promiſes made to *Abraham* intended, *In thy Seed ſhall all the Nations of the Earth be bleſſed*, Gal. iii. 16. And therefore fit it was, that he ſhould have the Seal or Teſtimony of Circumciſion, in order to ſhew, that he was truly and rightly deſcended of that Anceſtor; and, as he was come to be the Mediator of a new and better Covenant, it was but decent, that the former ſhould recede with Honour; and that it might do ſo, himſelf ſhould approve of a Sacrament, which was both of divine Inſtitution, and a Means of Admiſſion into that former Covenant.

Q. *How many Days were the Women, by the* Jewiſh *Law, allowed for their Purification, after the Birth of a Child?*

A. The Law concerning the Purification of Women, we have in the twelfth Chapter of *Leviticus*, wherein it is ordained, that a Woman, after bearing of Children, ſhould continue, for a certain Number of Days, in a State, which the Law termed unclean. For the ſeven firſt Days, all Converſation or Contact polluted them, that approach'd her, and for three and thirty Days more (which in all amount to forty) ſhe was ſtill, tho' in an inferior Degree, reputed unclean; but, at the Expiration of this Term, if her Child was a Son (for the Time was double for a Daughter) ſhe was commanded to bring a Burnt-offering, and a Sin-offering, which wiped out the Stain, which the Law had laid upon her, and reſtored her to all the Purity and Privileges ſhe had before. Now tho' the micaculous Conception of the Bleſſed Virgin, ſet her quite above any Obligation to the Law of Impurity, yet ſince her being a Mother was ſufficiently notorious, tho' the Manner of her being ſo was a Secret, 'twas fit, that ſhe ſhould ſubmit, as the known Mother of a Son, to the Ceremonies expected from her. Her Sin-offering was not indeed due in any Senſe, but ſhe lay under the ſame legal Incapacity, in the Eye of the World, as other Women did, and was to be reſtored to the Temple by it: Her Burnt-offering was not due, as that of other Parents is, to commemorate a Deliverance from Pangs and Danger; but never ſure were Thanks ſo juſtly due for any Son, as this; never from any Mother, as from her, who had the Honour to bring forth her own, and the World's Saviour, the Bleſſing and Expectation of all the Earth. As therefore he was circumciſed in his own Perſon, tho' the myſtical and moral Part of Circumciſion had nothing to do with him: So his Mother ſubmitted to all the Purifications, of any other *Iſraelitiſh* Woman, tho' ſhe partook not in any Degree of the Infirmities, and Pollutions common to other Births.

Q. *Was the Offering which* Mary *made, that which was appointed by Law?*

A. What the Bleſſed Virgin offered, we read, was a pair of *Turtles*, which being the Oblation appointed only for the meaner Sort of People, *Lev.* xii. 6, 8. diſcovers the Poverty of *Joſeph* and *Mary*, that they could not reach to a Lamb of the firſt Year, the Offering, which they, who had Ability, were obliged to make.

Q. *Who was this* Simeon, *who took the young* Jeſus *in his Arms, and bleſſed him?*

A. Some are of Opinion that this *Simeon* was the Son and Succeſſor of *Hillel*, a very famous Doctor in the *Jewiſh* Church, before our Saviour's Time, and that he was either the Father or Maſter of *Gamaliel*, at whoſe Feet St. *Paul* was educated. But beſides that, we can hardly ſuppoſe, how a Perſon of this Note could make ſo publick a Declaration in Favour of our Lord, and yet no more Notice be taken of it; if we look into the ſeveral Revelations which God, at this Time, was pleaſed to give of his Son, we ſhall find that none of them were directed to any of the *Phariſees*, or principal Doctors of the Law, but that to *Joſeph* a Carpenter, to *Zacharias* an ordinary Prieſt, and to a Company of poor Shepherds, ſuch Diſcoveries were made; and therefore it is much more reaſonable to preſume, that this *Simeon*, to whom God had revealed the Time of *Chriſt*'s Coming, was ſome honeſt plain Man, more remarkable for his Piety and Devotion, than any other Quality or Accompliſhment. When he came into the Temple, it is ſaid, that among the other Mothers, who brought their Children to be preſented to the Lord, he obſerved the holy Virgin all ſhining with Rays of Light, and that, putting the Multitude aſide, he went directly to her, gave her his Bleſſing, took the Child *Jeſus* in his Arms, and being divinely inſpired, pronounced the Canticle, *Nunc dimittis. Nicephorus* relates, that as ſoon as he returned the Child to his Mother, he died; and *Epiphanius* adds, that the *Hebrew* Prieſts refuſed to give him Burial, becauſe he had ſpoken of our Saviour with too much Advantage. But theſe Traditions may be groundleſs Fictions.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 39th Verſe?*

A. *When they had performed all Things according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into* Galilee, *to their own City* Nazareth, which muſt be interpreted of ſome Time at leaſt, after they had performed theſe Things. For, upon Suppoſition, that the *Magiaus* came to *Bethlehem*, after that *Joſeph* and *Mary* had been at *Jeruſalem* with the Child, upon the Child's Return from thence, his Parents muſt have taken *Bethlehem* in their Way, and there made ſome ſmall Stay (in which Time we ſuppoſe that the *Wiſemen* came) before they departed to the Place of their ſettled Abode: Becauſe the other two Suppoſitions, *viz.* that the *Wiſemen* came to *Bethlehem* before the Preſentation of the Child at *Jeruſalem*, or that they came not till he was in the ſecond Year of his Age, when his Parents, upon ſome Buſineſs or other, happened to be at *Bethlehem*, are attended with more Difficulties, than can eaſily be ſurmounted.

Q. *Was their any particular Reaſon why the Parents of* Chriſt *carried him to* Jeruſalem *when he was juſt twelve Years of Age?*

A. It is commonly obſerved by thoſe that are learned in the Cuſtoms and Inſtitutions of the *Jewiſh* Church, that until a Child was of twelve Years old, he was not obliged to go to *Jeruſalem*, at the Time of the *Paſſover*; and that tho' their Youths were uſually thirteen before they were brought before the Maſters of the *Synagogue*, to give an Account of their Proficiency in Religion (which anſwers, in a great Meaſure, to the *Chriſtian* Rite of Confirmation) yet, ſince the Seaſon then appointed, was accommodated to the Capacities and Abilities of Children in General, without forbidding thoſe of Qualifications extraordinary, and whoſe Genius (in the *Jewiſh* Phraſe) *did run before the Commandment*, to appear ſooner, our Saviour might offer himſelf, to his Examination, a Year before the common Time; and this is the beſt Reaſon that can be aſſigned for his ſtaying behind his Parents, when he could not but know, that they were departed from *Jeruſalem* without him; and for his being found in one of the Rooms adjoining to the Temple, where the Doctors of the Law uſed to meet, not only to reſolve the Queſtions that were brought before them, but to examine likewiſe and confirm ſuch of the Youth as they found to be qualified for that Ceremony; which, according to the ſame Authors, was uſually performed by devout Prayers and ſolemn Benedictions.

Q. *How could* Mary, *who was conſcious of the extraordinary Conception and Birth of* Chriſt, *be ſo anxious about his Safety?*

A. It may ſeem a little ſtrange, that *Mary* and *Joſeph*, who had been ſufficiently inſtructed, one would think, in the great Article of *Chriſt*'s Divinity, and therefore muſt certainly know, that as *he was the Power and Wiſdom of God*, he could neither fall into any Danger, nor come to any Harm, ſhould ſo mightly afflict themſelves, when they came to miſs him. The Reaſon which *Origen* ſeems to aſſign is, not that his Parents ſuppoſed that he was loſt, or come to any Miſchance, but were apprehenſive that he had withdrawn himſelf to ſome other Place, and was poſſibly gone up to Heaven, there to continue until his eternal Father ſhould think proper to ſend him down again: But the moſt eaſy and natural Solution is, that without ever conſidering what they had ſufficient Reaſon to believe concerning his Divinity and Omnipotence, they ſuffered themſelves to be carried away by their natural Tenderneſs, and could not, without great Concern, ſee themſelves deprived of his Company, uncertain of what had befallen him, or for what poſſible Reaſon he ſhould abſent himſelf from theirs. It muſt not be denied, however, that though ſomething may be allowed to a Parent's Fondneſs, yet it does not appear, from their whole Conduct, and eſpecially from *Mary*'s Complaint, and our Saviour's Reply, that they had, as yet, a clear and perfect Knowledge of his divine Nature in Union with the human; and therefore the *Evangeliſt* has remarked upon them, *That they underſtood not the Saying which he ſpake unto them.*

From the Words in the Text, *After three Days they found him*, we need not thence infer, that they were three Days ſeeking him, but rather, that it was three Days from the Time they ſet out from *Jeruſalem*; going on their Journey the firſt Day; returning to *Jeruſalem* the ſecond; and finding him in the Temple on the third: For ſince they found him in the Temple, which, in all Probability, was the firſt Place they ſought for him in, we can hardly imagine that they ſhould be three Days in *Jeruſalem* before they found him.

Q. *Can any Reaſon be given, why the* Evangeliſts *have related no Particulars of our Saviour's Life, from the twelfth Year of his Age, till he began his Miniſtry, which was about the thirtieth; becauſe, if in this intermediate Space, he did any Thing worthy of Remembrance, it ought, one would think, to have been recorded?*

A. When it is conſidered, that the End of the ſacred Penmen was, not ſo much to gratify our Curioſity, as to conſult our Profit, we cannot but admire the great Wiſdom of God (by whoſe Inſpiration they wrote) in paſſing by the leſs active Parts of our Lord's Life, which would certainly have ſwelled their Goſpels to immenſurable Volumes, fit for the Peruſal of none but the Studious, and ſuch as had Plenty of Time at their Command; whereas now, taking the four Goſpels together, they make but a ſmall Book, and ſeparately, no more than little Manuals that may be carried about us where-ever we go, may be ſoon read over, and as eaſily remembered, even by Men of mean Capacities, and no great Leiſure; and yet they contain all the Tranſactions of our Saviour's Life, which chiefly concern us to know; We mean, ſuch as relate to his mediatorial Office; as that he came into the World to teach us; to die, and to riſe again for us; to inſtruct us by his heavenly Doctrine, as our Prophet; to offer himſelf a Sacrifice on the Croſs, as our Prieſt; and to looſe the Bands of Death, and aſcend triumphant into Heaven, as our King. *For there are alſo many other Things*, ſays the Evanveliſt, *that* Jeſus *did, which are not written in this Book, but theſe are written, that ye might believe that* Jeſus *is the* Chriſt, *the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name*, John xxi. 25, and xx. 31.

Q. *In the laſt Verſe it is ſaid, Jeſus* increaſed in Wiſdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man: *But how could he, who was the eternal Wiſdom of the Father, be improved in any Quality of the Mind? Or how could He, who was co-eſſential and co-eternal with the Father, be ſuppoſed to grow in Favour with him, in whoſe Boſom he reſided from all Eternity?*

A. The Anſwer is, that all Things in Scripture, which are ſpoken of *Chriſt*, are not ſpoken with reſpect to his entire Perſon, but only with reſpect to one or other of the Natures, that are united in that Perſon. His divine Nature was infinite, and conſequently capable of no Improvements, but his Human was: And therefore, tho' the divine *Logos* was united to the human Soul, by his Conception, yet might the divine Nature communicate its Powers to the Human, by diſtinct and gradual Illuminations; and accordingly we may obſerve, that all publick Manifeſtations of it to the World, ſeem to have been induſtriouſly declined, till Ripeneſs of Years and Judgment had carried him up to the Perfections of a Man. So little Reaſon have we to ſuppoſe, that he, who condeſcended to be like us in Body, ſhould think it below him to be ſo too, in that other no leſs eſſential, but much more noble Part of us, our Soul, without which it was impoſſible for him to be Man; ſo little Reaſon had they to imagne that the divine Eſſence in him ſupplied the Place and Offices of intellectual Faculties.

Chap. III.

The Time of John's *entring on his Office; a ſhort Account of his Preaching; he exhorts the* Phariſees *to repent and be baptized; anſwers ſeveral Queſtions; teſtifies of* Chriſt; *is impriſoned by* Herod; Jeſus *baptized by* John, *to whom the Heavens are opened.* Chriſt's *Age and Genealogy traced to* Adam.

Q. C*AN you give any Account from Hiſtory how* John *paſſed his Life till his Entry on the publick Miniſtry?*

A. How *John* paſſed the former Part of his Life, the Scripture is ſilent; but there is an antient Tradition in the Church, that *Elizabeth*, hearing of the ſad Havock which *Herod*'s Barbarity had made among the Infants in *Bethlehem*, fled into the Wilderneſs, to ſecure her Child from the Tyrant's Rage, and there attended him with all the Care and Tenderneſs of an affectionate Mother: That the Child was about eighteen Months old, when his Mother thus fled with him, but after forty Days ſhe died, and his Father *Zacharias*, at the next Time of his Miniſtration, was, by the Command of *Herod* (becauſe he would not diſcover the Place of his Son's Concealment) put to Death: That in this Deſtitution of natural Parents, God ſent an Angel to be his Nouriſher and Guardian (as he had formerly done to *Elijah*, when he fled from the Rage of *Ahab*) until he came of Strength to provide for himſelf, and that then he lived in the Manner that the *Evangeliſts* have deſcribed. When he began his Preaching it is not ſo well agreed. *Lightfoot*, and ſome others, who believe that our Saviour was born in *September*, and that *John* was now beginning to be thirty Years of Age, are of Opinion that he began his Miniſtry about the Paſſover; but *Uſher* and his Followers, do with more Probability ſuppoſe, that his Preaching began upon the tenth Day of the ſeventh Month (which anſwers to our nineteenth Day of *October*) five Days before the Feaſt of *Tabernacles*, upon the great Day of *Expiation*, when the High-prieſt entered the *Holy of Holies*, and when ſo ſolemn a Faſt was enjoined, that whoſoever did not afflict his Soul at that Time, was to be cut off from the People.

Q. *Wherein conſiſted the Difference between the Baptiſm of* John, *and that of* Chriſt?

A. Baptiſm, we know, was no new or ſtrange Thing among the *Jews*. It was acknowledged and practiſed as an Emblem of *Purification* from paſt Guilt, and a Rite entering ſolemnly into Covenant with God. The Expoſitors of the Law agree, that this Ceremony paſſed upon the whole Congregation of *Iſrael*, juſt before the Law was given at Mount *Sinai*; and their Cuſtom, in all ſucceeding Ages, has been, to receive their heathen Proſelytes by Baptiſm as well as by Sacrifices and Circumciſion. In Conformity to this therefore, *John* both adminiſtered and exhorted his Followers to his Ordinance of Baptiſm, as an Evidence of their Penitence for paſt Sins, and Profeſſion of better Obedience for the Future: But then, as Faith is a Qualification for Baptiſm, as well as Repentance, he propounded our Lord, for the Object of Faith to all who received this Ordinance at his Hands: *For* John *verily baptized with the Baptiſm of Repentance, ſaying unto the People, that they ſhould believe in him, who ſhould come after him*, i. e. *on* Chriſt Jeſus, *Acts* xix. 4. It is a great Miſtake therefore, in ſome, to ſuppoſe that the Baptiſm of *John* was, in Subſtance, the ſame with what *Chriſt* did afterwards inſtitute: For *John* neither did, nor could baptize his Diſciples in the *Name of the Holy Ghoſt*, as the Apoſtles did, becauſe the *Holy Ghoſt was not given*, Joh vii. 39. he did not baptize them in the Name of *Chriſt*; for had he done ſo, there had been no Occaſion for the Queſtion, *Whether he himſelf were the* Chriſt, or not? *Luke* iii. 15. Herein therefore lay the Imperfection of *John*'s Baptiſm, that though it prepared Men to be *Chriſtians*, yet it did not make them ſo; and therefore we find St. *Paul* baptizing again ſome Diſciples at *Epheſus*, (who had before received the Baptiſm of *John*,) in order to fit them for the Reception of the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* xix. 5, 6.

Q. *What was the Food which* John *ſubſiſted upon in the Wilderneſs?*

A. There is no Reaſon for running into Criticiſms, what the common Diet of the *Baptiſt* was, whether Fowl or Fiſh, or Herbs or wild Peaſe, (for the *Greek* Word has been made to ſignify all theſe) ſince the Thing is notorious, that Locuſts (in the moſt obvious Senſe of the Word) were Creatures which the *Levitical* Law looked upon as clean, and allowed the *Jews* to eat, *Levit.* xi. 22. that they were a common Food, as the Antients affirm, in *Afric*, *Perſia*, *Syria*, and even *Paleſtine* itſelf; that according to the Account of ſome modern Authors, in ſome Places they are brought in Waggon-loads, and ſold in the Market for the common People to feed on; and that they are frequently ſeen upon the Banks of the River *Jordan*, of the ſame Form, but much larger than ours; and being either fried in Oil, or dried in the Sun, are accounted a good Sort of Food. As little Reaſon is there for Men to puzzle themſelves about what this wild Honey means, ſince every one knows that *Judea* was ſo famed for Plenty of Honey, that, in ſeveral Places of Scripture, it is ſaid to flow with Honey; and from the Inſtances of *Sampſon*, *Judg.* xiv. 8. and *Jonathan*, 2 *Sam.* xix. 25. it muſt be concluded, that wild Honey, ſuch as either diſtilled from the Boughs like Dew, or was found in the Cliffs of Rocks, or hollow Trunks of Trees, was no uncommon Thing in that Country. But tho' theſe Locuſts and wild Honey, may, very properly be taken in their natural and moſt obvious Senſe, yet it muſt not therefore be thought that *John* never eat any Thing elſe, but that, for the Generality, he made uſe of ſuch ſlender Diet, and contented himſelf with what the deſart Place, which he choſe for his Habitation, could afford him.

Q. *In the Account which St.* Mark *gives of* John, Chap. i. 6. *it is ſaid, he was cloathed with* Camel's Hair: *Pray deſcribe this Sort of Cloathing?*

A. We are told, by ſome Authors, that the Hair of Camels, about the *Caſpian Sea*, was formerly the ſofteſt in the World, of which was made a very fine Stuff; and that in the Empire of the Great *Cham* of *Tartary*, in the City of *Calacia*, the Metropolis of the Province of *Tangouth*, there is a Kind of Cloth, which the Inhabitants call *Zam-*

belotte, the ſame, no doubt, with what we call *Camlet*, made of Wool and Camel's-Hair, prefectly good, and as fine as any Cloth whatever. But there is Reaſon good to think, that *John*'s Habit was far from being of this Kind, becauſe it would not ſo well ſuit with the Condition of a Man living in the Wilderneſs, to whom our Saviour oppoſes thoſe that are cloathed in ſoft Raiment; would not ſo well agree with the *Evangeliſt*'s Deſign of ſetting forth the *Baptiſt*'s Auſterity in his Habit, as well as his Diet; nor comport ſo well with the Deſcription of *Elias*, whom he came to repreſent, *an hairy Man, and one girt with a Girdle of Leather about his Loins*, 2 Kings i. 8. Though therefore we may not infer from the Expreſſion, that the *Baptiſt*'s Habit was mere Sackcloth, as ſome would have it, yet we cannot but conclude from thence, that it was plain and coarſe, ſuch as became the Place where he lived, where Camels, we are told, were in great Plenty, and a Prophet and Preacher of Righteouſneſs to wear.

Q. *We read, Verſe* 12. *that the* Publicans *alſo came to be baptized: What was their Buſineſs or Employment?*

A The *Publicans* were Perſons of no particular Sect, nor of any religious Function among the *Jews*, but certain publick Officers, whom the *Romans* employ'd to collect their Tributes, Tolls and Impoſts. This Office was once of great Account among the *Romans*, and conferred upon none leſs than the *Equeſtrian* Order; but when it came to fall into the Hands of the *Jews*, who farmed it of the *Romans*, it ſoon became baſe and infamous, and more eſpecially odious to the *Jews*, upon theſe two Accounts: 1ſt, Becauſe theſe Tributes were looked upon as a ſtanding Inſtance of their Slavery, which they, who made ſuch Boaſts of their being a free-born People, and inveſted with that Priviledge by God himſelf, could leaſt of all endure. And, 2dly, Becauſe theſe *Publicans* having farmed the Cuſtoms, of the *Romans*, at high Rates, did generally make uſe of all Methods of Extortion and Oppreſſion, to enable them both to pay their Rents, and to make ſome Advantage to themſelves. Upon theſe Accounts, the *Publicans*, as conſpiring with the *Romans*, both to impoveriſh and enſlave their Countrymen, became ſo univerſally abhorred by the *Jewiſh* Nation, that they held it unlawful to do them any Act of common Courteſy; nay, even to eat or drink with them, for which we find them ſo frequently blaming our Saviour.

Q. *The* 21ſt *Verſe gives an Account af* Chriſt's *being baptized by* John; *and in* Matthew iii. 14. *that* John forbad him: *But how could* John *forbid him, when he ſays of himſelf,* I knew him not, but that he that ſent me to baptize with Water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending and remaining on him, the ſame is he who baptizeth with the *Holy Ghoſt*, John i. 33?

A. Now to this it may be anſwered, that ſince one Part of *John*'s Miniſtry was *to bear witneſs of that Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*, it was highly neceſſary, that our Saviour ſhould be unknown to him in Perſon, before he came to his Baptiſm, that the World might have no Suſpicion of any Colluſion, or that the *Baptiſt* teſtified of him by Compact. Though notwithſtanding he had never ſeen the Face of our Saviour, becauſe they were bred up in different Countries, yet by a particular Revelation, he knew that he was already come into the World, and was ſhortly to baptize with the *Holy Ghoſt*; and therefore when our Saviour came, and preſented himſelf to be baptized, he had immediately another Revelation, that this was the great Perſon, of whom he had been told before; even as *Samuel*, having been told by God, that *on the Morrow, a Man ſhould come to him to be the Captain over his People* Iſrael, 1 *Sam.* ix. 15. upon *Saul*'s appearing, had another Inſpiration, reſembling the *Baptiſt*'s here, *Behold the Man of whom I ſpake to thee*, Ver. 17.

Q. *Next follows the Genealogy of our Saviour, in which Criticks obſerve a manifeſt Difference from that given by St.* Matthew; *which, as it is a Matter of great Moment, I deſire you to adjuſt and reconcile?*

A. There is, indeed, a great and uncommon Difference between St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, in their Genealogies of our Saviour; but to accommodate this, we may obſerve, Firſt, That theſe two *Evangeliſts* were Men of different Nations, and, in that Reſpect, had different Deſigns. For St *Matthew* was, by Birth, a *Jew*, wrote his Goſpel for the Benefit of the *Jewiſh* Converts; and wrote it, very probably, in their Language; and as he adhered to the received Cuſtom of the *Jews*, in this Matter of Genealogy, he began his Deduction no higher than *Abraham*, the Father of the *Hebrews*; but St. *Luke* was a *Gentile*, and may truly be called the *Evangeliſt*, as St. *Paul* was the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*; and therefore, when he comes to relate the Pedigree of *Jeſus*, he takes a different Method, and carries it up as far as *Adam*, the Father of Mankind.

Secondly, We may obſerve likewiſe, that St. *Matthew* intends only to ſet down our Lord's Political or royal Pedigree, by which he had a Right to the Crown of the *Jews*, but St. *Luke* ſhews his natural Deſcent through the ſeveral Succeſſions of thoſe from whom he took Fleſh and Blood: And to this Purpoſe we find St. *Matthew* (as we ſaid juſt now) beginning his Reckoning only from *Abraham*, to whom the firſt Promiſe of the Kingdom was made, whereas St. *Luke* runs his Line up to *Adam*, the firſt Head and Fountain of human Nature, which plainly ſhews, that the one deduced only his Title to the Crown, and the other the natural Deſcent of his Humanity.

That St. *Matthew* uſes the Word *begat* only in a political Senſe, is clear from hence, That he applies it to him, who had no Child, even to *Jeconiah*, of whom it is expreſly ſaid, *Jer.* xxii. 30. that God *wrote him Childleſs*; whereupon, being depoſed by the King of *Babylon*, *Zedekiah*, his Uncle, was made King; and afterwards, upon the Removal of him likewiſe, there remaining no more of the Line of *Solomon*, *Salathiel* being next of Kin, was declared King of the *Jews*; which *Salathiel*, upon that Account, is ſaid, by St. *Matthew*, Chap. i. 12. to have been begotten by *Jeconiah*, not becauſe he was naturally his Son, but only illegally or politically ſo, as ſucceeding in the Kingdom during *Jeconiah*'s Captivity.

Thirdly, We may obſerve farther, that as *David* had ſeveral Sons by former Wives, ſo by *Barſheba* likewiſe he had three, beſides *Solomon*, whereof the eldeſt, next to him, was *Nathan*, and that *Chriſt* deſcended naturally from *David*, not by *Solomon*, but by *Nathan*; for, though it be frequently ſaid in Scripture, that the *Meſſiah*, ſhould ſpring from *David*, it is never ſaid, that ſhe ſhould deſcend from *Solomon*; for which Reaſon St. *Luke* only deduces *Nathan*'s Line, which came into the Poſſeſſion of the Throne, upon *Jeremiah*'s Captivity, and Want of Iſſue, in the Perſon of *Jechonias*

Fourthly. We may obſerve again, that the Crown of *Judah*, being now come into the Line of *Nathan*, in the Perſon of *Salathiel*, and after him, in the great and renowned *Zorobabel*; foraſmuch as the two *Evangeliſts* agree, from *Jeconiah* to *Zorobabel*; and after him divide, each aſcribing to him a different Succeſſor, *viz.* the former *Abiud*, and the latter *Rheſa*, we may rationally ſuppoſe, that theſe two were the Sons of *Zorobabel*, and that from *Abiud*, the elder Brother, lineally deſcended *Joſeph*, according to the Computation of St. *Matthew*; and from *Rheſa*, the younger Brother, deſcended *Mary*, of whom *Jeſus* was born, according to the Deſcription of St. *Luke*.

Fifthly. Once more we may obſerve, that it was a Cuſtom of the *Jews*, not to reckon the Women by Name, in her Pedigree, but to reckon the Huſband, in Right of his Wife; for which Reaſon we are not to think it ſtrange, that we find *Joſeph* twice reckoned, firſt in his own Right, by St. *Matthew*, and then in his Wife, *Mary*'s, Right, by St. *Luke*: For it is certain, that *Mary* was properly the Daughter of *Eli*, and that *Joſeph*, who, in the Account, ſucceeds him, is ſo reckoned; not as his natural Son, but as his Son-in-law, inſtead of his Wife *Mary*, as the Manner of the *Jews*' was: And, accordingly, it is remarked by ſome learned Men, that St. *Luke* does not ſay of *Joſeph*, that he was the Son of *Eli*, but only he *was of* Eli, *i. e.* related to him, and belonging to his Family, as his Son-in-law. Fit, however, it was, that the Genealogy of *Jeſus* ſhould be deduced from *Joſeph*, becauſe it was ſo generally received by the *Jews*, that *Jeſus* was the Son of the Carpenter, the Son of *Joſeph*; ſo that if *Joſeph* had not been acknowledged to have been of the Tribe of *Judah*, and of the Family of *David*, ſince, according to the received Rule of the *Jews*, that *the Family of the Mother is not called a Family*, they would not have failed to have objected this, as a juſt Prejudice againſt all our Lord's Pretences of being the *Meſſiah*.

The Sum of theſe Obſervations, in ſhort, is this, That the royal Line of *David*, by *Solomon*, being extinct in *Jeconiah*, the Crown and Kingdom paſſed into the next younger Line of *Nathan*, another Son of *David*, in *Salathiel* and *Zorobabel*; this *Zorobabel* having two Sons, *Abiud* and *Rheſa*, the royal Dignity deſcended of Right upon the Line of *Abiud*, of which *Joſeph* was the laſt; and he marrying the Virgin *Mary*, who ſprung from the Line of *Rheſa*, the younger Son of *Zorobabel*, and, as ſome imagine, having no Iſſue himſelf, his Right paſſed into the Right of *Mary*, being next of Kin, and, by that means, upon *Jeſus* her Son; ſo that he was both naturally the Son of *David*, and alſo legally the King of the *Jews*, the latter of which is accounted to us by St. *Matthew*, as the former is by St. *Luke*.

This ſeems to be a pretty clear Deduction of our Saviour's Pedigree, and is capable of giving a fair Solution to a great many of thoſe Objections which ariſe from the different Names, or the unequal Numbers in the Names, or the unequal Diſtances from each other, which are diſcernable in the two Genealogies. But, perhaps, Interpreters might ſave themſelves the Trouble of giving a Reaſon for ſeveral Difficulties occurring therein, by ſaying, that St. *Matthew* (concerning whom the main Diſpute is) recites his Account, as he found it in the authentick Copies of the *Jews*, who, doubtleſs, in every Family, had preſerved ſome known and approved *Genealogy* of their Deſcent from *Abraham*, the Father of their Nation, in whom they ſo much gloried, and from whoſe Loins they expected the promiſed *Meſſiah*.

That even in our Saviour's Time, the *Jews* had Genealogical Tables, wherein they kept an Account of their Families and Tribes, is evident from what *Jaſephus* ſays, *viz. That he gave the Succeſſion of his Family, as he found it written in the publick Books*; nor need we queſtion, but that the like, or greater Care was employed to preſerve the Stems of the royal Family of *David*. Since then the *Jews*, who lived in the Time when the Goſpels were publiſhed (though exactly curious in Things of this Nature, and withal maliciouſly bent againſt *Chriſt* and *Chriſtianity*) never once endeavoured to invalidate the Account which theſe *Evangeliſts* give us; this ſeems to be a ſufficient Proof, that theſe Genealogies, when they firſt came abroad, were neither thought erroneous, nor inconſiſtent, but agreeable to the publick Records then in Uſe; and, if any Difficulties now ariſe in them, they are not to be attributed to any real and intrinſick Cauſe, but accidentally to the Ignorance of Interpreters, for want of proper Helps, at this Diſtance of Time, whereby to explain them.

CHAP. IV.

Jeſus, *faſting forty Days in the Wildegneſs, is tempted by the Devil; returns into* Galilee, *and thence to* Nazareth, *where he preaches, and ſhews them why he did no Miracles there; at which they are angry, and attempt to deſtroy him.* Chriſt *teaches at* Capernaum *on the Sabbath; caſts a Devil out of a Man; heals* Peter's *Mother-in-law of a Fever, and many diſeaſed Perſons; preaches to other Cities.*

Q. THE *greateſt Part of the Hiſtory of this Chapter, being related either by* Matthew *or* Mark, *and ſufficiently explained by our Remarks; we ſhall now confine our Obſervations only to ſuch Things as have not before been taken Notice of.* Galilee *is remarkable for many Tranſactions performed therein; Pray give ſome Deſcription of this famous Province?*

A. Galilee is a Province of *Paleſtine*, which extends itſelf chiefly into the *Northern* Parts thereof. The Tribes which it contains, are *Iſſachar*, *Zebulon*, *Naphthali*, and *Aſher*, with Part, as ſome ſay, of *Dan* and *Paræa*, beyond the River *Jordan*. On the *North*, it is bounded by *Lebanon* and *Syria*; on the *Weſt*, by *Phœnicia*; on the *South*, by *Samaria*; and on the *Eaſt*, moſtly by the River *Jordan* and the *Sea of Galilee*. It is generally divided into two Parts, the *Upper*, and the *Lower Galilee*, whereof the former is called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, *Matthew* iv. 15. either becauſe it was chiefly poſſeſſed by the *Gentiles*, with *Jews* interſperſed among them; or rather, becauſe it bordered upon *Gentile* Nations, ſuch as the *Phœnicians*, *Syrians*, and *Arabians*. The whole Country, according to *Joſephus*, was fruitful and well cultivated, and the

People laborious and induſtrious. The Number of its Towns and Villages was prodigious great, and ſo well inhabited, that the leaſt of them did not contain leſs than fifteen Thouſand Souls. The Natives were a bold intrepid Race of Men, who defended themſelves bravely againſt the foreign Nations that ſurrounded them; but then their Wealth and Proweſs made them Seditious, and very apt to rebel againſt the *Romans*, for which they ſuffered ſometimes very much.

Q. *What was the Method of Worſhip obſerved in the* Jewiſh *Synagogue?*

A. That the *Synagogue*-worſhip was, at this Time, loaded with Rites and Ceremonies of human Invention, that the Prieſts were very defective in the Diſcharge of their Functions, and the Manners of thoſe who met there very much corrupted, no one can doubt, who is at all acquainted with the Scriptures and the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory; and yet we find, that our Saviour and his Diſciples, as Members of the Church of *Nazareth*, went conſtantly every Sabbath-day to theſe Synagogues, preſerving thereby *the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, and, upon ſlight Pretences, *not forſaking the aſſembling of themſelves together, as the Manner of ſome is*, Heb. x. 15.

Q. *Had the* Nazarenes *any Law, Cuſtom, or Precedent, for ſuch a tumultuous Execution as they intended againſt* Chriſt?

A. Such kind of popular Executions as the *Nazarenes* intended for our Saviour, when they would have caſt him from the Brow of the Hill, were then, ſometimes, tolerated; and, under Pretence of Zeal for the Law, ſeveral were put to Death (eſpecially in Times of publick Calamity, and when the *Jews* were in greateſt Diſtreſs) without the Formalities of Juſtice. But what made the *Nazarenes* ſo exceedingly outragious againſt our Saviour was, his declaring them unworthy of the Miracles he had done at *Capernaum*, his equalizing himſelf to ſome of the greateſt of the antient Prophets; and, by the Inſtances of the *Sidonian* Woman, and *Naaman* the *Syrian*, plainly intimating, that his Goſpel would chiefly be received by the *Gentiles*.

Q. *What Means did our Lord uſe, to make his Eſcape from them?*

A. How he got out of their Hands, when they had laid hold of him, the Scripture does not tell us; nor is it our Concern to be curious to enquire. We know very well that it was an eaſy Thing for him, who was God as well as Man, to quit himſelf of any mortal Enemies: But how he did it, whether it was by blinding them for the Preſent, or making himſelf inviſible; or merely by allaying their Rage, and changing their Wills, 'tis impoſſible to determine. Which Way ſoever he did it, 'twas certainly ſomething miraculous; and therefore deprived the *Nazarenes* of the Liberty of complaining, that he had done no Miracles among them.

CHAP. V.

Chriſt *teaches out of a Ship. A miraculous Draught of Fiſhes. The Diſciples leave all and follow* Chriſt. *He cleanſes a Leper. Lawyers come to hear his Doctrine. He cures a Paralytick, whereby he proves his Authority to forgive Sins. Calls* Levi, *who leaves all to follow him.* Levi's *Feaſt, where* Chriſt *eats with* Publicans; *at which the* Phariſees *murmur; he vindicates his ſo doing, and defends his Diſciples for not faſting.*

Q. WHERE *abouts was ſituated the* Lake of Geneſareth, *mentioned Ver. 1.?*

A. The Lake, to which our Saviour retired, when he left the *Nazarenes*, which (according to *Joſephus*) is forty Furlongs in Breadth, and in Length an hundred, was, in the Times of the Old Teſtament, called the *Sea of Cinnereth*, Numb. xxxiv. 11. but the Writers of the New have given it three different Appellations. For, as it's called the *Sea of Galilee*, from the Province of *Galilee* in general, ſo it is called the *Sea of Tiberias*, from a Town of that Name ſtanding on its weſtern Shore; and the *Lake of Geneſareth*, from that particular Tract of *Galilee*, which bounded it a great Way, on the weſtern Side. The Lake lies upon a Gravel, which makes its Water both of a good Colour and Taſte. It is ſofter than either Fountain or River Water, and withal ſo very cold, that it will not grow warm tho' ſet in the Sun in the hotteſt Seaſon of the Year. The River *Jordan* runs through the midſt of it, which ſtocks it with a great Variety of Fiſh, of a peculiar Taſte and Shape, not to be equalled in any other Place. In ſhort, it was a common Saying among the *Jews*, *that God loved the Sea of* Galilee *more than any other Sea*; which ſo far holds good, that this Sea, above all others, was honoured with the Divine Preſence of our bleſſed Saviour, while he dwelt at *Capernaum*, very frequently; and even once after he was riſen from the Dead.

Q. *At the third Verſe we read of Chriſt's entring into a Ship, in order to teach the People from thence: But as the Account which is given of this Affair by the ſeveral* Evangeliſts, *manifeſtly varies; I ſhould be glad if you can reconcile the ſeeming Difference?*

A. St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*, in their Relations of this Tranſaction of Chriſt's going into the Ship, are pretty uniform, but St. *Luke* differs from them ſo widely, that Interpreters have been at ſome Pains to reconcile them. For, whereas the two former tell us, that theſe Fiſhermen were *caſting a Net into the Sea*, St. *Luke* informs us, that *they had gone out of their Ships*, and had *waſhed their Nets*, beſides ſome other Variation in the Manner of the Call of the four Apoſtles. But not to enter into a minute Examination of Particulars, we ought to conſider, that ſome Allowances are reaſonable and neceſſary to be made, for the Variation of Circumſtances in one Hiſtorian, who makes it his Buſineſs to recount Matters diſtinctly, and at large, and in another, whoſe Intention it is, only to declare Facts in general, without entering into the Series and Order of each Action. Now, this is the Caſe of the two former Evangeliſts: They deſigned no more than a ſummary Account of theſe four Apoſtles Call, and their Compliance with it; and therefore they contented themſelves with ſetting down apart, ſo much firſt, as relates to *Andrew* and *Peter*, and afterwards what related to *James* and *John*. But St. *Luke*, who propoſes, to ſhew the Manner and whole Proceſs of the Call, records the Miracle at large, and interweaves ſeveral remarkable Paſſages, which were not needful to be mentioned in the brief Account of St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*, but highly conducive to St. *Luke*'s Purpoſe of undertaking to deſcribe the miraculous Draught of Fiſhes, *Luke* v. 10. which, upon our Lord's Command to make a freſh Experiment, was taken.

Q. Peter *having ſeen the miraculous Draught of Fiſhes, cries out,* Depart from me, for I am a ſinful Man, O Lord: *Pray explain the Import of theſe Words?*

A. We have ſeveral Inſtances, both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, of Perſons ſtruck with dreadful Apprehenſions at the Preſence of the divine Majeſty, or even of ſome Angel, or a Prophet, delivering a Meſſage from him. And therefore *Grotius* ſuppoſes, that *Peter*'s Caſe was much the ſame with that of the Widow of *Sarepta*, when ſhe complained to *Elijah*, *What have I to do with thee, O thou Man of God, art thou come unto me to call my Sins to Remembrance?* 1 Kings xvii. 18. But others more juſtly think, that *Peter*'s Words are expreſſive rather of his high Sentiments of our Lord, and the Conſciouſneſs of his own Unworthineſs to be found in ſuch a Perſon's Company, and that therefore they do not a little reſemble that glorious Declaration of the Centurion in the Goſpel, *Lord, I am not worthy, that thou ſhouldeſt come under my Roof, but ſpeak the Word only, and my Servant ſhall be healed*, Matth. viii. 8.

Q. *Our Lord, to recover* Peter *from his Aſtoniſhment, at the miraculous Draught of Fiſhes, tells him,* From henceforth thou ſhalt catch Men: *But how?*

A. The Words in our Tranſlation, *From henceforth thou ſhalt catch Men*, in the *Greek* have ſomething very remarkable. For it does not ſay, that *Peter* ſhould catch Men, as People generally do wild Beaſts or Fiſhes, in order to kill them, and eat them; but that he ſhould *take them alive*, as ſuch Fiſh and wild Creatures are taken, that are deſigned to be put in Stews and Parks; and therefore the Senſe of the Words is, *Thou ſhalt be a Fiſher of Men*, but ſuch a Fiſher, as ſhall preſerve them alive; as ſhall retrieve them, in ſhort, from Error, and Ignorance, and Death; and conduct them them to Truth and Knowledge, and eternal Life.

Q. *The Hiſtory contained in the 2d to the 11th Verſe of this Chapter, ſeems to be the ſame with that in* Matth. iv. 18, &c. *and yet one may diſcern a conſiderable Variation one from the other: Pray explain and reconcile this Difference between them?*

A. Dr. *Hammond* has the following Note upon thoſe Words in Verſe 2. *Gone out of them.* Some Difference, ſays he, ſeems to be between *Chriſt*'s coming to the two Boats, *&c.* here ſet down, from what it had been in St. *Matthew.* There *Peter* and *Andrew* were *caſting Nets into the Sea*, or Lake, *Matth.* iv. 18. and *James* and *John were in the Ship, mending their Nets*, Ver. 21. But here it is ſaid indifferently of them, *having departed from their Boats, they waſhed, or had waſhed their Nets.* So again it is ſaid, that *Chriſt* called *Andrew* and *Peter*, and they followed him, *Matth.* iv. 20. *And departing thence* he ſaw the other two, and called them, Ver. 22. But here when *Peter* was called, *James* and *John* were with him; and unleſs they were called at the ſame Time with *Peter*, there would be found no other Mention of their Call.

In anſwer to this, it muſt be firſt obſerved in general, that *Matthew* and *Mark* making a brief ſummary Relation, and leaving out a main Particular of this Story, as his ſeeing and coming to their Boats, and his calling them, and their following him, do, on Occaſion of his coming firſt to one Boat, then to the other, ſet down all that belongs to the one, before they proceed to the other, which is very ordinary in all Stories, when yet many of the Paſſages are intermixed.

This being premiſed, it muſt next, to reconcile the firſt ſeeming Difference, be obſerved, That the Word tranſlated, *were waſhing*, muſt be underſtood of the Time paſt indefinitely, and be beſt rendered, *they had juſt waſhed their Nets*; and ſo for the Word render'd, *were gone out of them*, by after that *they had gone out and waſhed*, (that is, they had given over fiſhing at that Time) and having done ſo, they were returned to their Boats again, before this Time, when it is ſaid of *Chriſt*, that he ſaw their Ships ſtanding by the Lake, that is, at the Point ſpecified here, *Ver.* 1. when ſtanding by the Lake, the People preſſed upon, or flocked unto him, to hear the Word. And as this is intimated by St. *Luke* v. 3. (when it is ſaid, that *Chriſt* entered into one of the Ships, and deſired *Simon* to thruſt out a little, which notes that he was come back to the Boat again) and as this is all that is affirmed by St. *Luke* in that Matter, ſo it agrees very well with that which is ſaid by St. *Matthew*: For before this it is, at *Chriſt*'s firſt coming to the Lake, that St. *Matthew* deſcribes them in another Poſture, *Jeſus walking by the Sea of* Galilee, *ſaw two Brothers,* Simon *and* Andrew, *caſting a Net into the Sea*; which, as it may poſſibly ſignify fiſhing, ſo it may otherwiſe be interpreted, not to be actually fiſhing at that Time (for that is expreſſed *Luke* v. 4. by letting down their Nets to catch, and by launching out into the Deep, or Midſt of the Lake) but more probably their waſhing their Nets in the Sea, as they were ſitting on the Shore, (and then that will be all one with waſhing or ſcowring of them, which as now paſt, is here mentioned by St. *Luke*) And departing from thence, ſaith St. *Matthew*, he ſaw other two Brothers, the Sons of *Zebedee*, in the Ship, mending their Nets; whereas, mending their Nets was ſubſequent to their waſhing of them, and ſuppoſes it paſt, (as they had waſhed here doth) ſo it agrees with St. *Luke's* Affirmation, Ver. 7. where they are ſuppoſed to be in the Boat. The Deſign of St. *Luke* in ſetting down this Circumſtance of their having gone out of their Boats, and waſhing their Nets, was doubtleſs to intimate, what is after affirmed, Ver. 5. that at the Time of *Chriſt*'s coming thither, they had deſpaired of catching any Fiſh, and ſo had given over for that Time, and had ſet to waſhing, and after that they ſat in one Boat, ſaith St. *Matthew*, to mend their Nets; which, as it is a farther Evidence of their Reſolution to fiſh no more at that Time, ſo it is an Enhancemence of the Miracle following, of the great Draught of Fiſh, which St. *Luke* ſets down at large, but which neither *Matthew* nor *Mark* meddle with. Which order being ſuppoſed in the firſt Part, the ſecond will follow very agreeably, and all be capable of an exact Harmony, by compounding of *Matthew* and *Luke* together thus: *Jeſus* walking by the Sea of *Galilee*, at his firſt coming thither, ſaw two Brothers, *Simon* called *Peter*, and *Andrew* his Brother, caſting their Net into the Sea, *Matth.* iv. 18. that is, waſhing of it, *Luke* v. 2. When he had ſtaid a little while with them, he went on to another

ther Boat, and there found other two Brethren, *James* the Son of *Zebedee*, and *John* his Brother, in a Boat with *Zebedee* their Father, who having newly waſhed, were now mending their Net, Ver. 21. Both theſe precedent to, and ſo reconcilable with the ſubſequent Paſſages mentioned *Luke* v. 2. He ſaw two Ships ſtanding or abiding by the Lake, that is, at the Shore, and the Fiſhermen having gone out of them, had waſhed their Nets. And then, (on the People's preſſing about him to hear, Ver. 1.) follows that Paſſage (not related by *Matthew* or *Mark*) that he went out into one of the Ships, or Boats, that of *Peter*, Ver. 3. and having, contrary to *Peter*'s Intention, perſuaded him to launch out and let down the Net, to try what he could catch, he there wrought that Miracle which had like to have drowned the Boat, and occaſioned the calling in of *James* and *John* to their Relief, and gave them all an aſtoniſhing Evidence of his Power. Hereupon, to remove their Fear, *Chriſt* ſaith to *Simon*, Ver. 10. *Fear not, henceforth thou ſhalt catch Men.* At which Time, I ſuppoſe, he called not him only, but all the other three, that had their Share in this Miracle. This *Matthew* ſets down firſt of *Peter* and *Andrew*, Ver. 19. to whom he ſaith, *Follow me, I will make you Fiſhers of Men*; and immediately they followed him, Ver. 20; and then of the other two, Ver. 22, who alſo left their Nets, Boat, and Father, and followed him; which Act of their ready following, St. *Luke* ſets down agreeably, though more diſtinctly, Ver. 11. When they had brought their Boats to Land, they left all, and followed him; that is, when the two Pair of Fiſhermen, with their Boats ſo laden, that they were afraid they would ſink, had brought them ſafe to Shore, had this farther Evidence of *Chriſt*'s Power, in delivering them from Danger, being all called, they all obeyed his Call, left their Trade and Goods, and attended him as Diſciples, ever after.

And whereas, of his calling the Sons of *Zebedee*, St. *Mark* has it, he ſaw them mending their Nets, and ſtraitway he called them, *Mark* i. 19, 20. which ſeems to place no Space or Interval betwixt his coming to their Boat and calling them, That may eaſily be anſwered by obſerving, 1. That the Word rendered *preſently*, is not always taken in that nice Senſe, to ſignify, immediately, but often is taken in a Latitude, and includes a greater Interval, than is here ſuppoſed to have been. 2. The Difficulty in this Period may be cleared by the Conſtruction of the Words thus, *He ſtraitway called them, and they left their Father*; that is, as ſoon as he called them, they immediately left; for ſo it is read in St. *Matthew*, He calls them, and they immediately left their Boat, &c.

CHAP. VI.

Chriſt *defends his Diſciples for plucking the Ears of Corn; cures a withered Hand on the Sabbath, and juſtifies his ſo doing. Cauſes twelve Diſciples; cures ſeveral Sick and poſſeſſed Perſons; tells them who are bleſſed, and who not; exhorts to obſerve ſeveral Precepts; teaches that a Man ſhould look to himſelf, before he reproves another; and that we may know a Tree by its Fruit; proves by a Houſe built on a Rock, that we muſt not only know, but do his Will.*

Q. PRAY *what is meant by the* Second Sabbath after the Firſt, *Ver.* 1?

A. The *Jews* had ſeveral *Sabbaths*, beſides the *ſeventh Day Sabbath*, which was weekly; all their feſtival Days were called *Sabbaths*. In the *fourteenth Day of the firſt Month*, at Evening began the Paſſover; on the fifteenth Day began their Feaſt of *unleavened Bread*, which held ſeven Days, every one of which was called a *Sabbath*; but the *firſt Day*, and *ſeventh Day*, were to be the Days of *Holy Convocation*, in which no Work was to be done that was ſervile, *Lev.* xxiii. 7. Then they had their Feaſt of *Firſt-Fruits*. Fifty Days after they had their Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*. Some, by the *ſecond* Sabbath after the firſt, underſtand the *ſeventh Day* of the Feaſt of *unleavened Bread*. Others, *their ſecond great Feſtival*. It is very hard to reſolve, and not material for us to know.

Q. *The 20th and following Verſes, ſome imagine, are an Epitome of St.* Matthew, *Chap.* v, vi, vii. *and that both* Matthew *and* Luke *mean the ſame Sermon, preached at the ſame Time: What is your Opinion?*

A. Thoſe who ſay that *Luke*'s is a Repetition of St. *Matthew*'s Sermon, argue thus. 1. That Sermon is ſaid to be preached on a Mountain; this, when he came down, and ſtood upon the Plain; by which ſome underſtand only a plainer and more level Part of the Mountain. 2. That very many Paſſages in the remaining Part of this Chapter, are plainly the ſame with thoſe we find in one of the three Chapters of St. *Matthew*. Others are of another Mind. 1. Becauſe of the Phraſe here uſed, *he came down* and *ſtood in the Plain*, which it ſeems difficult to interpret, either of the Top of the Mountain, which might be a Plain, for how could he then be ſaid to come down? Or of a plainer Place of the *Mountain*. 2. The Multitude deſcribed there, are ſaid to have come from *Galilee*, *Decapolis*, *Jeruſalem*, *Judea*, and *beyond Jordan*. Theſe are ſaid to have come from *Judea*, *Jeruſalem*, and the *Sea-Coaſts* of *Tyre* and *Sidon*. But, 3. Principally, from the great Difference in the Relations of *Matthew* and *Luke*. 1. Many *large Diſcourſes* are not touched by St. *Luke*; namely, that which gives a true Interpretation of the Law; his Diſcourſes, *Matth.* vi. about *Alms*, *Prayer*, *Faſting*. 2. *Luke* here puts in three Verſes together, wherein there are Woes denounced, of which *Matthew* ſays nothing. Now, thought it be uſual with the *Evangeliſts* to relate the ſame Diſcourſe and Miracles, with ſome differing Circumſtances, yet not with ſuch conſiderable Variations. *Matthew* declares nine Beatitudes pronounced by *Chriſt*; *Luke* but four, and thoſe greatly varying from St. *Matthew*.

But farther; thoſe Things which have induced ſome to think, that this is the ſame Sermon, are Arguments for the contrary Opinion. Thus, as to the Place, *Matthew* ſays, it was when he was *gone up into a Mountain, and ſat down*; *Luke* that he was *come down* and *ſtood in the Plain*. Nor are their Arguments ſtrengthened by ſaying, that moſt of the Paſſages in this Chapter, are to be found in the vth, 6th and 7th Chapters of *Matthew*; for as they are not here exactly repeated, ſo what ſhould hinder, but our Saviour might, at another Time, and to another Auditory, preach the ſame Things which concerned all Men?

Q. *Here are ſeveral Woes denounced, namely, againſt the* Rich, *the* Full, *thoſe thoſe that* laugh, *and againſt them of* whom all Men ſpeak well: *Are theſe Woes to be underſtood abſolutely, or with ſome Limitation?*

A. Theſe Woes are not to be underſtood abſolutely, but reſtrainedly; the Woe does does not belong to Men, becauſe they are *rich*, becauſe they are *full*, becauſe they *laugh*; but becauſe they place their Happineſs in theſe Things, take up with them for their Portion, and rejoice in them as their chief good, valuing themſelves by what they have in Hand, not by what they have in Hope: He that is rich and righteous, he that is good and gracious, whoſe Heart is empty of Pride and vain Confidence; he that laughs when God ſmiles, he that expreſſes himſelf joyfully, when God ſhews himſelf graciouſly; ſuch a Man is rich in Grace, who is thus gracious in the midſt of Riches; for to be rich and holy, argues a Richneſs of Holineſs.

The next Woe is pronounced againſt thoſe of whom all Men ſpeak well; in which Words our Lord's Deſign is not to condemn any of his Diſciples or Miniſters, who, by doing their Duty have gained a fair Reputation amongſt the Men of the World; but to let us underſtand how rarely it is attained; for uſually the beſt Men are worſt ſpoken of; neither the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament*, nor *John the Baptiſt*, the Prophets of the *New Teſtament*, nor *Chriſt* himſelf, nor his Apoſtles, did ever gain the Good-Will or Good-Word of the Men of that Generation in which they lived. The Applauſe of the Multitude (that caſual Judge of Good and Evil) rather attends the Vain than the Virtuous. None have ever been ſo much reproached, as the faithful Miniſters of God, who have learned to take Pleaſure in Reproaches, Grace teaching us to bid them welcome. The World has all along taken effectual Care, by their cruel Mockings, Scandals, and ſharp Invectives, to free the Miniſters of God, in all Ages, from the Danger of our Saviour's Woe here denounced; *Woe unto you, when all Men ſhall ſpeak well of you.*

Q. *How are we to underſtand thoſe Precepts of* loving our Enemies, *returning* Bleſſings *for* Curſes, *&c.*

A. This expreſſes the noble Spirit of *Chriſtianity*, and the large Extent of *Chriſtian* Charity; it comprehends all Mankind, even the worſt of Men, our Enemies that ſeek our Deſtruction. *Chriſtianity* is ſo far from allowing us to perſecute them that hate us, that it commands to love them that perſecute us.

Obſerve here the Nature and Quality of the Duty enjoined, *Love your Enemies*; there the inward Affection is required, *Bleſs them that Curſe you*; there outwardly, *Do good to them that hate you*; here real Acts of Kindneſs and Beneficence are required to be done to the worſt of Enemies, though they be guilty of the worſt of Crimes, Calumny and Cruelty, ſtriking both at our Reputation and Life.

Hence learn that *Chriſtianity* obliges us to bear a ſincere Love to our moſt malicious Enemies, to be ready at all Time to pray for them, and on all Occaſions to do them good. Thus to do is an Imitation of God our Maſter, of *Chriſt* our Saviour. 'Tis for the good of this lower World, and the Way to a better; it is the Ornament of our Religion, and the Perfection of our Nature; and an high Degree and Pitch of Virtue. To which may be added the next Duty, Not to revenge Injuries; where private Revenge is the Thing forbidden, and we are directed, rather to ſuffer a double Wrong, than to ſeek a private Revenge. *Chriſtianity* obliges us to bear many Injuries patiently, rather than to revenge one privately; we muſt leave the Matter to God and the Magiſtrate. The Truth is, Revenge is a very troubleſome and vexatious Paſſion; the Man's Soul ſwells and boils, is in Pain and Anguiſh, and has no Eaſe. Beſides, by our revenging one Injury, we neceſſarily draw on another, and bring on a perpetual Succeſſion of Injuries and Revenges; whereas, Forgiveneſs prevents Vexation to others, or Diſquiet to ourſelves.

Q. *How far does that Command of our Saviur extend,* Give to every Man that aſketh of thee, and of him that taketh away thy Goods, aſk them not again, *Verſe* 39?

A. On the Word *aſk*, Dr. *Hammond* makes the following Remarks: “ If the Word, ſays he, ſignifies to require or demand, or aſk them not again, the Prohibition will be ſomewhat ſtrange, and not ſo agreeable either to the Context, or to the Duty of Liberality here preſcribed. For if the Words, *From him that taketh thy Goods*, be ſo interpreted, as to underſtand it an involuntary depriving us of them, it will then be the Means to offer up the *Chriſtian* to the Violence of every unjuſt Perſon, and oblige him never to make uſe of *Chriſtian* Judicatures, or Arbitrations, (which appear not to be forbidden the *Chriſtian*) to get his own again; nay, not ſo much as to challenge, or lay Claim to it, when he finds it in another's Hands. Which, beſides that, it is not agreeable to any other Precept of the Goſpel, is not at all pertinent to the Buſineſs of Liberality, that uſhers in, and of Charity, that immediately attends theſe Words. Or if the Words, *He that taketh thy Goods*, be (as no doubt they ought) interpreted of borrowing or receiving by way of Loan, then the not demanding, or aſking them again, makes that Loan all one with a Gift, and ſo the ſame that had before been ſaid, only an Addition of a Fraud in him that borrows and pays not again.

“ The ſureſt way then of underſtanding theſe Words aright, which are a double Rule for our Charity, regulating both our Gifts and our Loans, will be to obſerve the Force of the *Greek* Word; for, *Aſk*, among the *Greek* Tranſlators of the *Old Teſtament*, particularly in the Book of *Nehemiah*, where it frequently occurs, ſtands for exacting of Uſury. So 2 *Macc.* iv. 37. That which is rendered, *required it*, moſt probably ſignifies the *receiving Uſe*, the Period being beſt rendered thus,, *As for the Money,* &c. *he put it not into any good Courſe, but* Soſtratus *took the Uſe of it, for unto him belonged the managing of the Money.* According to which Notion, the Tranſlation here will be very agreeable, and the Senſe commodious, *From him that receiveth* (not taketh by Force) *by way of Loan, thy Goods, require not Uſury of him*, lend freely to the poor Borrower, without taking or requiring Uſe of him, as indeed the every one that aſketh, to whom we are commanded to give, is not to be extended to the covetous, craving Rich, but

“ to the deſtitute, diſtreſſed poor Man, and “ obliges him that is able, not him who is not “ able to give.”

Q. *Pray illuſtrate the 38th Verſe*; Give, and it ſhall be given unto you, good Meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall Men give into your Boſom. For with the ſame Meaſure that ye mete withal, it ſhall be meaſured to you again?

A. Mr. *Burkit* thinks there is not any one Text of Scripture that declares the Bounty of God more fully in rewarding Acts of Charity and Mercy, than this. How liberal a Benefactor is God! How ſure and bountiful are the Returns *Chriſt* makes to us, for the Relief given to him in his Members! He promiſes us here, not bare Meaſure, but good Meaſure; *preſſed down, ſhaken together, and running over*: Nothing adds more to the Meaſure than the ſhaking of the Buſhel, the crowding and preſſing the Corn, and heaping till the Meaſure runs over; now a Meaſure will run over as long as you pour. Hence learn, that Charities done in Faith, in Obedience to God, and with an Eye to the Glory of God, will produce a certain and plentiful Increaſe. Liberality is the way to Riches; giving is the beſt way of Thriving; a little Charity from us, if we have but a little, is looked upon by God as a great deal: But it is the greateſt Imprudence as well as Impiety, to do but a little, when we have Ability to do much; for he that ſows bountifully ſhall reap bountifully; *Good Meaſure preſſed down, and running over.*

CHAP. VII.

Chriſt *heals the Centurion's Servant, and commends his Faith; raiſes a Widow's Daughter at* Nain, *from the Dead; anſwers the Queſtions of* John's *Diſciples; and proves, by his Works that he is the* Meſſiah; *commends the Office of* John. *The Publicans juſtify God, but the* Phariſees *contemn his Counſel.* Chriſt *upbraids their wicked Cenſures of the* Jews, *under the Similitude of Childrens Practice in the Market; eating in* Simon's *Houſe, a Woman waſhes his Feet with her Tears;* Simon *taking Offence at it,* Chriſt *defends her, by the Similitude of two Debtors.*

Q. THE *firſt Part of this Chapter to Verſe* 11. *containing the Story of healing the Centurion's Servant, is related* Matthew, viii. *The next Thing that deſerves our Notice, is our Lord's Tranſaction at* Nain: *Pray where was ſituated this City? And what other Obſervations do you make on this Paſſage?*

A. Naim, or *Nain*, ſo called for the Pleaſantneſs of its Situation, was a Town of *Galilee*, about two Leagues from *Nazareth*, and not ſo much from Mount *Tabor*, between which and the City ran the River *Kiſon*: And from our Saviour's meeting the Funeral coming out at the Gates, we may learn, that it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews* to bury their Dead out of the City, becauſe they looked upon their Graves, as Places full of Pollution; whereas we *Chriſtians*, in hopes of a joyful Reſurrection, and upon Preſumption that many of thoſe, whoſe Bodies are repoſited in the Earth, are in a State of Felicity in Heaven, look upon theſe Places with great Reſpect and Veneration, and accordingly have our Tombs erected always very near, and ſometimes within the Body of our Churches.

The People of *Naim* do, *Luke* vii. 16. acknowledge *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, or that great Prophet, whom *Moſes* had promiſed to the *Jews*: *The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet, from the midſt of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him ſhall ye hearken*, Deut. xviii. 15. for they deſcribe this Prophet in the very ſame Terms that *Zacharias*, the Father of *John the Baptiſt*, makes uſe of to denote the *Meſſiah*, *The Lord hath viſited his People*, Luke i. 68.

Q. *In the Meſſage which* John *ſent to* Chriſt, *to know who he was, why does he ſtile him,* he that ſhould come, *and not rather by his proper Title, the* Meſſiah?

A. The Words in the Text are, *Art thou he that ſhould come*, or rather, *he that is come.* For the Prophecies of the *Meſſiah*, in the *Old Teſtament* were ſo plain, and yet his Perſon or Name ſo unknown to the *Jews*, that they were wont to expreſs it by ſome Circumlocution, and more eſpecially by this of *he that cometh*, for ſo he is termed, *Matt.* iii. 11. xxi. 9. *Luke* vii. 20. xix. 38. *John* xii. 13. and *Heb.* x. 37, *&c.* and this Name they gathered from *Habakkuk*, where he is called, *He that ſhall come*, Chap. ii. 3. and from *Daniel*, where he is ſtiled, *He that cometh with the Clouds of Heaven*, Chap. vii. 13.

Q. *How could the ſeeing the Things done by our Saviour, convince* John's *Diſciples that he was really the* Meſſiah?

A. Becauſe the Performance of theſe Things was exactly anſwering the Character which the Prophet had given the *Meſſiah, viz.* That *at the Coming of God to ſave them, the Eyes of the Blind ſhould be opened, and the Ears of the Deaf unſtopped*; that *the Lame ſhould leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb ſhould ſing*, Iſa. xxxv. 4, *&c.* and therefore, inſtead of giving them a direct Anſwer, which might be liable to the old Objection of his *dearing Record of himſelf*, John viii. 13. our Saviour refers them to the Miracles they ſaw him do; Miracles of the ſame kind that were predicted of the *Meſſiah*, and then leaves it to their own Maſter to draw the Concluſions from thence; which was a Method of Conviction more ſhort and ſtrong, and withal more agreeable to our Saviour's Modeſty and great Humility, than any long Detail of Arguments would have proved.

Q. *In what Senſe does our Saviour affirm, Verſe* 26. *that* John *was* more than a Prophet?

A. Maimonides obſerves, that tho' the *Jews* generall rechon eleven Degrees of Prophecy, yet two of theſe were ſomething more ſublime and excellent than ordinary Prophecy. The one of theſe was what they called the *Gradus Moſaicus*, when the Prophet had a familiar Converſe with God upon all Occaſions; and the other, when he had Revelations, not from a Dream or Extaſy, but an immediate Dictate of the Holy Ghoſt. Of this ſort was *John the Baptiſt*, who was plainly foretold by the Father, *Matth.* iii. 17. *John* xiii. 3. and as plainly proclaimed it to others, *that* Jeſus *was the Lamb of God.* Other Prophets ſpeak of the Coming of *Chriſt*, but then they did it in a dark and obſcure Manner: They ſaw him only at a Diſtance, in a Dream, or in a Viſion of the Night, and couched their Predictions under a Veil of enigmatical Phraſes; but the *Baptiſt* ſpake of him openly and diſtinctly. He knew him; he was converſant with him; he pointed him out to the

People; he had, in ſhort, the Honour of baptizing him, and hearing the Voice from Heaven teſtifying of him, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed.* And upon theſe Accounts we find him called a great and illuſtrious Perſon, *Luke* i. 15. one *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*; and, by way of Excellence, *the Prophet of the Moſt High*, Ver. 16.

Q. *Pray explain the Allegory, Verſe* 32. They are like unto Children ſitting in the Market-Place, and calling one to another, and ſaying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced, we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept?

A. Theſe Words ſeem to be a Proverb, founded upon a Cuſtom among the *Jewiſh* Children, to imitate what they ſaw done by others, upon greater Occaſions, and particularly the Cuſtom of Feſtivities or Funerals; when, in the former, as ſoon as the Muſician ſtruck up a Tune, the Company began to dance to his Pipe; and, in the latter, as ſoon as ſome old Women had begun the mournful Song, the reſt followed, lamenting and beating their Breaſts. Theſe the Children were uſed to act, and perſonate in the Streets at play; and when one had begun the Muſician's Part, and another the the old Woman's Part, and the reſt did not follow them in theirs, this gave Occaſion to the proverbial Saying, which our Saviour applies to the preſent Purpoſe, in this Senſe; "I and *John* "have both of us invited you to enter into the "Kingdom of Heaven, or to turn to God by Re-"pentance: *John*, by the Auſterities of his Life, "and I, by my Affability and Courteſy, have "endeavoured to recommend ourſelves; but all to "no Purpoſe. You will neither mourn with him, "nor laugh with me; but, for that very Reaſon, "cenſure and revile our different Behaviour, ac-"counting him, for his reſerved Temper, no bet-"ter than a melancholy Kind of Madman; and "me, for my open and free Converſation, a "mere Glutton and Wine-bibber."

To come unto Chriſt, in the Phraſe of the *New Teſtament*, is to believe in him, and to become one of his Diſciples; and this Invitation our Saviour gives to all Mankind in general, and to the *Jews* in particular. To all Mankind, foraſmuch as all, without the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, are heavy laden with the Burden of their Sins, and the Calamities incident to Life; are ſurrounded with a Cloud of Ignorance, and held in Bondage through the Fear of Death: And to the *Jews* in particular, foraſmuch as they, under their Diſpenſation, were oppreſſed with a Load of Ceremonies, *a Yoke which neither they, nor their Fathers were able to bear*, Acts xv. 10. beſides the additional Weight which the *Phariſees* laid upon them, by their Traditions, *heavy Burdens, and grievous to be borne*, *Matth.* xviii. 4.

Q. *Is the Story of our Saviour's being entertained by a rich* Phariſee, *Ver.* 36, *&c. the ſame related by St.* Matthew, Chap. xxvi. *and* John xii?

A. The Hiſtories agree ſcarce in any Thing, unleſs it be in bringing the *Alablaſter Box of Ointment*, and *anointing* our Saviour's Feet, which, in theſe Countries, eſpecially at great Entertainments, was no uncommon Thing. But now the Anointing, in the other *Evangeliſts*, was done at *Bethany*, within two Miles of *Jeruſalem*; *this*, in St. *Luke*, in *Galilee*; *that*, in the Houſe of one *Simon the Leper*; *this*, in the Houſe of one *Simon a Phariſee*; *that* but a little before our Saviour's Paſſion; *this*, a conſiderable Time before it. At *that*, *Judas* was offended for the Waſte of the Ointment; at *this*, *Simon* for the Woman's touching our Saviour: Upon *that* Occaſion, our Lord vindicates the Woman from one Head of Argument, and upon *this* from another. So that all Circumſtances make it plain, that theſe were different Actions, done by different Perſons, and at different Times.

Q. *Who was this Woman who waſh'd our Saviour's Feet with her Tears, wiped them with the Hair of her Head, and anointed them with precious Ointment?*

A. Who this Woman was, the Goſpel no where tells us. We read indeed of three Perſons, who, by ſeveral *Evangeliſts*, are ſaid to have anointed our Lord's Head and Feet, *viz.* *Mary Magdalene*, *Mary*, the Siſter of *Lazarus*, and this other Woman, whom St. *Luke* calls a *Sinner*: And ſome Commentators make theſe three to be one and the ſame Perſon. It is to be obſerved, however, that the Siſter of *Lazarus* is, all along, repreſented as a Perſon of great Sobriety and Virtue, who always lived at *Bethany*, was none of our Lord's Attendants, nor ever came into *Galilee*; and, conſequently, was a Woman diſtinct from *Mary Magdalene*, who was of his Retinue, *Luke* viii. 2. and from this other Woman, who anointed his Feet in *Simon*'s Houſe: But, whether this *Mary Magdalene*, and this Woman, here call'd a *Sinner*, might not be the ſame Perſon, is not ſo eaſy to determine. The Characteriſtick of *Magdalene* is, that ſhe was the Perſon, *out of whom our Lord had caſt ſeven Devils*; but then, if the Ejection of theſe Devils be underſtood (as ſome will have it) in an allegorical Senſe, the Words will well ſuit with the *Sinner* in St. *Luke*; or, ſuppoſe they were real Devils, the Ejection of them might be ſome Time before her coming into *Simon*'s Houſe, and (as our Saviour's Vindication of her ſeems to imply) her Reformation conſequent thereupon, tho' *Simon* knew nothing of it. For theſe Reaſons ſome have imagined, that the *Sinner* in St. *Luke*, and *Mary Magdalene*, were both the ſame Perſon; and that ſhe was called *Magdalene*, from the Town and Caſtle of *Magdal*, where her Husband, who had been a Man of great Diſtinction, but then dead, had lately his Habitation. It muſt not be diſſembled however, that the moſt general and prevailing Opinion is, that theſe were two different and diſtinct Women.

Q. *In what Poſture did the People of that Country uſually eat their Meals; and on what Occaſions was it cuſtomary to uſe Ointments?*

A. The Manner of the *Eaſtern* People was to lie upon a kind of Bed or Couch, while they were at Meat; to put off their Sandals before they lay down, and to have their Servants and Domeſticks ſtand behind at their Feet; ſo that this Woman wanted not an Opportunity to expreſs her Devotion to our Lord, while he was in this Poſture.

That it was a cuſtomary Thing among the Antients, eſpecially at great Entertainments, to uſe Ointments and coſtly Perfumes, appears from ſeveral Authorities. The *Pſalmiſt* plainly informs us, that this was the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, when, in Acknowledgment of God's great Bounty to him, he declares, *Thou haſt prepared a Table for me, thou haſt anointed my Head with Oil, and my Cup ſhall be full*, Pſal. xxiii. 5. The *Scholiaſt* upon *Ariſtophanes* acquaints us with the ſame Cuſtom among the *Greeks*, when he makes it a Rule, that *they who invite to an Entertainment, ſhould bring forth to their Gueſts Crowns and Ointments.* The general Cuſtom indeed, upon theſe Occaſions, was to anoint the Head, and very ſeldom the Feet: But, beſides that the latter was a Token of more Humility, and no leſs Eſteem in this Woman, ſhe could not, perhaps, have an Opportunity of coming at our Saviour's Head, without giving ſome Diſturbance to the Company.

Q. *Pray in what Manner were Women of ill Fame treated by the* Jews; *and what was the Ground of* Simon's *Objection*, Ver. 39?

A. Tho' the *Jewiſh* Religion permitted Harlots of their own Nation to enjoy all the Privileges of other Women, except that their Oblations were rejected as impure; yet the *Phariſees*, who pretended to a greater Degree of Sanctity than others, would not admit them to civil Uſage, or the common Benefits of Society, and thought Religion itſelf, and the Honour of every Prophet, concerned in this Preciſeneſs. This was the Reaſon of *Simon*'s making this Objection within himſelf: But therein he draws three falſe Concluſions; *firſt*, That had *Jeſus* been a Prophet, he muſt have known what the Woman was; as if Prophets knew every Thing, and were able to look into the Secrets of the Heart. *2dly*, That, as this Woman was a Sinner, our Saviour ſhould not have ſuffered her to touch him; as if the external Touch of a Perſon, engaged in any vicious Courſe, could communicate Pollution to one that was innocent. And *3dly*, That this Woman, whom he knew to be a Sinner ſome Time before, was ſtill in the ſame Condition; as if it were not in the Power of God, at any Time, to touch the Heart, and, in a Moment, to inſpire ſincere Repentance.

Chap. VIII.

Chriſt travels through every City, preaches the Goſpel, his Diſciples and certain Women miniſtring unto him. The Parable of the Sewer, explained. He compares his Doctrine to a Candle ſet in a Candleſtick; he that hath, more ſhall be given him; ſhews who are Brother, Siſter, and Mother; rebukes the Wind, and calms the Sea; caſts out a Legion of Devils, and permits them to enter the Swine. Going with Jairus *to heal his Daughter, cures a Woman of a bloody Iſſue, and raiſes* Jairus's *Daughter from the Dead.*

Q. ALMOST *all the Paſſages in this Chapter, being before related either by* Matthew *or* Mark, *we have but little to offer on what we find here. However, let me aſk you, whether it was not a Reflection on our Lord's Conduct, that in going about from Place to Place preaching the Goſpel, he ſhould ſuffer Women to accompany him?*

A. With Reſpect to thoſe Women who followed Chriſt, and miniſtered unto him, ſeveral things are obſervable,

1. That Women made a conſiderable Number of Chriſt's Followers, as they did afterwards of his Apoſtles, *Acts* xxi. 4. And it is no Diſgrace, but Matter of Glory, and Cauſe of Thankfulneſs to Miniſters, if the Word of God is attended by, and bleſſed unto the weaker Sex. In moſt of our Communions are generally found two Women to one Man.

2. One of theſe Women that followed Chriſt, was *Joanna*, the Wife of *Herod*'s Steward. What! one of *Herod*'s Family tranſplanted into Chriſt's Houſhold! Even in the worſt Societies and Places, God has a Number to ſtand up for his Name, and bear Witneſs to his Truth; we read of a *Joſeph* in *Pharaoh*'s Court, of an *Obadiah* in *Ahab*'s, of a *Daniel* in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s, of a Church in *Nero*'s Houſe, and of a *Joanna* here in a bloody *Herod*'s Family, who had put *John the Baptiſt* to Death.

3. The holy Courage and Reſolution of our Saviour's female Followers. No doubt but they met with Taunts and Jeers, Scoffs and Scorns enough, and perhaps from their Husbands too, for following the Carpenter's Son, and a few Fiſhermen; but this does not damp, but inflame their Zeal. But where God gives Courage, it is not in the Power of Man to make afraid.

4. The pious and charitable Care of theſe holy Women, to ſupply the Wants and Neceſſities of our Saviour, *They adminiſtered unto him of their Subſtance.* Where note, the great Poverty of Chriſt, he lived upon the Basket, he would not honour the World ſo far as to have any Part of it in his own Hands, but was beholden to others for what he eat and drank? yet muſt we not ſuppoſe that Chriſt or his Apoſtles were common Beggars, but it is probable there was a Bag or common Purſe amongſt them, which upon Occaſion ſupplied their Neceſſities; and that there were certain Siſters or Chriſtian Women, as the learned Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, who accompanied Chriſt and his Apoſtles in their Travels, and provided Neceſſaries for them, when they went up and down preaching the Goſpel.

Behold the condeſcending Grace and Humility of Chriſt; he was not aſhamed either of theſe Women following him, or of thhir adminiſtring to him, becauſe of their former vicious Courſe of Life; it is not what we formerly were, but what we now are, that Chriſt conſiders; it is a Glory to him to have great and notorious Sinners brought to a Compliance with him. The Reproach is not that they have been Sinners; for Chriſt did not give himſelf for a People that were pure and holy, without Spot or Wrinkle, but to make them ſo by his Word or Spirit, *Epheſ.* v. 26. Chriſt is only aſhamed of thoſe that eat of his Bread, and lift up the Heel againſt him.

Q. *What other Obſervations occur to you upon reading the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. From Verſe 55, *Her Spirit came again*, is confuted the Atheiſm of thoſe who would make the Soul merely the Craſis, or ſome Affection of the Body; for here it is proved to be a Being that can ſubſiſt of itſelf, in a State of Separation from the Body. It is ſaid, *her Spirit returned again*, not Chriſt gave her a new Spirit. Chriſt did not here exert a creating Power, but only ſent forth that Power with which he was inveſted to raiſe the Dead. The Corpſe was laid out, Life was reſtored to the Girl, and ſhe roſe out of Bed, as an ocular Demonſtration not only of her Revival, but of her perfect Health.

There is a ſeeming Difference between St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*, in relating the Story of the Demoniac, who, *Mark* ſays, publiſhed the great Things God had done for him in *Decapolis*, Mark v. 20. St. *Luke* ſays, it was a City of the *Gadarenes.* This is eaſily reconciled, if what *Pliny* ſays be true, namely, that *Gadara* is a Town of *Decapolis* was partly on this Side *Jordan*, and partly on the other Side.

We have the following Notes from Dr. *Hammond*.

On Verſe 14. *Bring no Fruit to Perfection*, he obſerves, that the *Greek* Word for this is beſt explained by *Heſychius*, who has it thus, *to bring forth Fruits in their Seaſon, or perfect Fruits. Phavorinus, to bring forth perfectly. Joſephus* uſes it of Women that go their full Time, that do not miſcarry or bring forth Abortives; and ſo here it belongs to that Corn that proſpers, and thrives, and comes on well, and continues till Harveſt, and miſcarries not by any Defect in the Soil, or other ill Accident.

On Verſe 23. *The Lake*, he remarks, that that which is here truly called the Lake (for ſo it was, the Lake, and not the Sea, of *Geneſareth*) is called the Sea, *Matth.* viii. 24. and the Sea of *Galilee*, Matt. iv. 18. and John vi. 1. the Sea of *Tiberias*. And all this not becauſe it was a Sea, but becauſe of the Ambiguity of the *Hebrew* Term for it, which as it ſignifies the Sea, ſo any Lake or Confluence of Waters, and is uſed for that great Veſſel in the Temple, *2 Kings* vii. 23. which being of ſuch a Largeneſs (thirty Cubits round, and five Cubits high, and containing two thouſand Baths) was a Kind of Lake, and is there ſo called, *a molten Lake*, the *Hebrew* Word being there uſed, and by us rendered Sea, but would be more properly, Lake. And ſo the *Greek* Word rendered in the other Goſpels, Sea, would be better, according to the Senſe, rendered Lake, the Lake of *Galilee*, and *Tiberias*.

On Verſe 31. *The Deep*, he notes, that the *Greek* Word ſhould here ſignify *the Pit of Hell*, the Place created for the Devil and his Angels, wherefoever it is ſituate, may be gueſs'd by the Nature of the Word, which ſignifies, Bottomleſs, and from the Uſe of it in ſome other Places of the New Teſtament, as *Revel.* ix. 1, 2. and xi. 7. and xvii. 8. and xvii. 8. and xx. 1, 3. where there is mention of Chains, as there is of Hell, 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. And ſo alſo the Context here inclines; for the firſt Requeſt of the Devil to Chriſt was, Ver. 28. *I beſeech thee torment me not*; and in the other Goſpel, *Matt.* viii. 29. *Art thou come to torment me before my Time?* expreſſing the Devil's Fear, that by this coming of Chriſt he ſhould be preſently caſt into the Chains of Hell, and confined to thoſe Torments, which he thought belonged not to him till the Day of Judgment; and the next was in plain Words, not *to ſend him into Hell, or the Pit*.

CHAP. IX.

Chriſt ſending forth his Diſciples to preach the Goſpel, gives them Power over evil Spirits, and to heal the Sick. Herod *deſires to ſee Chriſt. The Apoſtles return with Joy. Chriſt feeds five thouſand Men with five Loaves and two Fiſhes. Divers Opinions concerning Chriſt; he foretels his Crucifixion and Reſurrection; exhorts them to confeſs him. His Transfiguration; caſts out an unclean Spirit; tells the Diſciples who ſhould be the greateſt among them; dehorts them from forbidding any to caſt out Devils in his Name; is refuſed Entertainment by the* Samaritans, *and reproves his Diſciples for their Deſire of Revenge.*

Q. *IN the firſt Six Verſes of this Chapter, we have the Inſtructions which our Lord gave his Diſciples when he ſent them to preach the Goſpel: But as this was a very arduous Task, and required, one would think, Men of Learning and maſterly Abilities to execute, why did our Saviour chuſe Perſons for this Purpoſe, ignorant, with reſpect to Literature, and of no great Capacities?*

A. Had human Wiſdom indeed been conſulted in the Election of Chriſt's Apoſtles, it would have made choice of the profoundeſt Rabbins, the acuteſt Philoſophers, and the moſt powerful Orators, who, by the Strength of Reaſon, and Arts of Eloquence, might have triumphed over the Minds of Men, grappled with the Stubbornneſs of the *Jews*, and baffled the fine Notions and Speculations of the *Greeks* and *Romans*; but then it muſt be allowed, that one Argument for the Proof of the Divinity of the Chriſtian Religion had been loſt. Nay, it might have been objected, "That no Wonder indeed, that this Religion ſhould thrive ſo well in "the World, when it had all human Advantages "to aſſiſt it, and was ſupported, and carried on "by the united Force of the Reaſon and Eloquence "of ſuch renowned Scholars." But now, by making choice of weak and illiterate Perſons, to be his Apoſtles and firſt Publiſhers of the Goſpel, our Lord has taken an effectual Means, that *our Faith ſhould not ſtand* (as St. *Paul* expreſſes it) *in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the Power of God*, becauſe *their Speech and their Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom, but in the Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power*.

And indeed, what leſs than a divine Power could have enabled a few Mechanicks, who had no Art or Addreſs of their own, to propagate a new and unheard of Religion, contrary to the Laws every where eſtabliſhed, and contrary to Mens natural Paſſions and Appetites, with ſuch a wonderful Succeſs, as, in the Space of twenty or thirty Years, to extend it over all the principal Parts of the *Roman* Empire; and, in the next Age, to fill all Places, Cities and Iſlands, Caſtles and Boroughs, Palaces and Senates, Courts and Camps, with Multitudes of Converts, as the great Apologiſt, *Tertullian*, juſtly glories? Doubtleſs, if ever there was an Intervention of divine Power in human Affairs, it was here, *when God choſe the fooliſh and weak Things of the World to confound the Wiſe and Mighty*, and when Simplicity and Ignorance not only had the Advantage, but abſolutely triumphed over all the Wit and Learning, and Power and Policy of the World.

That therefore the mighty Force of Chriſtianity, to make its Way through the greateſt Obſtacles, might more evidently appear, the Inſtruments, which our Saviour employ'd in the Propagation of it (ſo far as their own Abilities, either natural o required, were concerned) were the meaneſt th can be imagined; but, by an extraordinary Communication of his bleſſed Spirit to them, he inſpired them with the Gift of Languages, that they might be able to addreſs themſelves to People of all Nations; with the Power of working Miracles, that they might be able to confirm the Truth of the Doctrine which they taught; and, upon all Emergencies, *with ſuch a Mouth and Wiſdom, as all their Adverſaries were not able to gainſay or reſiſt*.

Q. *But why are not the ſame extraordinary Gifts as requiſite to perform the ſeveral Functions of the Miniſtry now, as they were then?*

A. Theſe and ſeveral other extraordinary Gifts did more than ſupply the natural Defects which the Apoſtles laboured under, in the Execution of ſo great a Work; but now, that theſe Gifts are withdrawn, our Religion eſtabliſhed, and the Canon of the holy Scriptures compleated, their Succeſſors have a different Province to manage. Inſtead of travelling all the World over, and compaſſing Sea and Land to gain Proſelytes to the Chriſtian Faith, their Duty is, *to keep in Order* the Things that are ſettled, and *to feed the Flock of God that is among them, taking the Overſight thereof, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind; not as Lords over God's Inheritance, but as Enſamples to their Flock;* and, inſtead of delivering to their reſpective Churches ſuch Writings, as might, in all Ages, be the Pillar and Foundation of Truth, their Buſineſs is to ſtudy the Scriptures which they have received, to defend their Authority, and expound their Senſe; *to preach the Word* (as the Apoſtle to *Timothy* ſpecifies their Office) *to be inſtant in Seaſon, out of Seaſon, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all Long-Suffering and Doctrine:* and what Compaſs of Learning and Share of Influence among the People are requiſite to a due Diſcharge of all this (as *a Workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the Word of God*) wants no Detail of Arguments to prove, ſince we find the great Apoſtle St. *Paul,* amidſt all the Gifts that were then diſpenſed to the Church, and the particular Revelations which were vouchſafed him, upon the Conſideration of the Weightineſs of his Office, crying out, and ſaying, *Who is ſufficient for theſe Things?* Upon the Whole, therefore, we may obſerve, that it was highly requiſite, that the Apoſtles, and firſt Publiſhers of the Goſpel, and the preſent Miniſters and Preachers of it, ſhould be Men of different Characters and Abilities; that the former of theſe, for the more effectual Diſcharge of their Office, ſhould have ſeveral Kind of ſupernatural Gifts, the latter no more than is the Product of their own Labour and Acquiſition; or (to ſpeak in the Phraſe of the Scripture) that as, at firſt, our *Saviour gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts,* ſo now he ſhall appoint ſome *Rulers,* ſome *Paſtors,* and ſome *Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of* Chriſt, *till all come, in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of* Chriſt.

Q. *The* Samaritans *refuſed to entertain our Saviour,* becauſe his Face was as though he would go to *Jeruſalem: Was this Reaſon ſufficient for denying him common Hoſpitality?*

A. Though the Difference between the *Jews* and *Samaritans,* in Matters of Religion, was great, and no ſmall Obſtruction to all civil Intercourſe, yet it was not, at all Times, carried to ſuch an Height, as to deny each other the common Rights of Hoſpitality. Our Saviour himſelf, was, once upon a Time, when he met the *Samaritan* Woman at *Jacob*'s Well, kindly received by the People of *Sychar,* for the Space of two Days, but then he was returning out of *Judea,* whereas he was now going up to *Jeruſalem,* with a Purpoſe to celebrate the *Feaſt of Tabernacles.* The *Samaritans* had likewiſe a Feaſt of the ſame Kind, tho' not obſervable at the ſame Time, of as old a Date as the firſt Separation under *Jeroboam,* and inſtituted both in Imitation of, and Oppoſition to the great Feſtival, that our Lord was now going to ſolemnize, and therefore this travelling thro' their Country, with a ſet Purpoſe to do this, was looked upon as an Affront to their Way of Worſhip; for it argued our Lord's Judgment, in this Caſe to be, that *Jeruſalem* was the only Place where theſe Feaſts could be regularly celebrated; and conſequently that the keeping them on Mount *Gerizim,* and the Temple there, was a preſumptuous Innovation, directly contrary to the Will and Law of God.

Q. *But why was our Saviour alone treated in this rude Manner, when every Traveller to* Jeruſalem, *upon the like Occaſion, declared againſt the* Samaritan *Schiſm, as much as he did, and yet, for any Thing we find, met with a better Entertainment?*

A. Now this different Sort of Treatment can be reſolved into nothing, but the different Characters of the Travellers; the *Samaritans* might think, that the Opinions and Practices of common People, was not worth their Regard; but that it would be of mighty Conſequence, if a Perſon, ſo eminent as *Jeſus,* ſhould declare againſt them; and therefore, ſince his going to worſhip at *Jeruſalem,* on this ſolemn Occaſion, would, in all common Acceptation, bear this Meaning; they contrived to prevent, as much as in them lay, the Influence which that ſuppoſed Indignity might have, by revenging it with another, of not receiving him; becauſe ſuch Refuſal, they thought, was a conſtructive diſowning of his Authority, and a plain Declaration to all People, that whatever Eſteem and Veneration others might have for this famed Man, they themſelves took him for no Prophet.

Q. *When* James *and* John *ſaw the Rudeneſs of theſe* Samaritans, *they immediately beg leave to call for Fire from Heaven to conſume them, as* Elias *did: To what Part of the Hiſtory of* Elias *do the Diſciples refer; and what ſpecial Reaſons had they to alledge for ſuch an extraordinary Severity as they intended on this Occaſion?*

A. The Hiſtory of *Elias* (to which the Apoſtles refer us) is doubtleſs that, where, by the Direction of God, he called for *Fire from Heaven* to deſtroy thoſe Captains and their Companies, whom King *Ahaziah* ſent out to apprehend him, 2 *Kings* i. 10, *&c.* And when theſe two Apoſtles deſired the like Judgment upon the Village of *Samaria,* for refuſing to receive their Maſter, they verified the Name of being *Sons of Thunder,* which, upon Account of their fiery Zeal, their Maſter had before given them, *Mark* iii. 17.

What the two Apoſtles had to alledge, in Behalf of their intended Severity againſt theſe *Samaritans* was, that they were Schiſmaticks, and had ſet up another Temple in Oppoſition to that at *Jeruſalem*; that they were Hereticks, and, together with the Worſhip of the God of *Iſrael,* had mixed that of *Pagan* Idols; that the Perſon, whom they had affronted, had a Character much ſuperior to that of *Elias*; and that, by an exemplary Puniſhment, inflicted on this Village, they might convince the reſt of the *Samaritans* of God's Diſpleaſure againſt their Way of Worſhip, and of the divine Miſſion of their Maſter, who was the true *Meſſiah.* But notwithſtanding theſe plauſible Allegations, our Saviour rebuked them; and, in his Rebuke, gave them to underſtand, that a Spirit of Severity towards erroneous Perſons, in whomſoever it is found, is highly oppoſite to the calm Temper of *Chriſtianity*, which is *pure and peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be intreated, full of Mercy, and good Works*, James iii. 17. and that it was repugnant to the End for which he came into the World, which was to Diſcountenance all Fierceneſs and Rage, and furious Zeal, that Occaſion ſo many Miſchiefs among Mankind, and to beget in all his Followers ſuch a Diſpoſion, as exerts itſelf in *Love, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, and Meekneſs*, Gal. v. 22, 23. even to thoſe, of the moſt contrary Tempers and Perſuaſions.

Q. *In the 57th Verſe it is ſaid*, A certain Man ſaid unto him, Lord, I will follow thee, whitherſoever thou goeſt: *Pray what was his Inducement to take this ſtrange Reſolution?*

A. What might poſſibly be the Motive of the *Scribe's* (as St. *Matthew* calls him) offering to attend our Saviour, the Conjectures of Commentators have been different. Some think that he did it with a Deſire to become his Diſciple; others, with a Deſign to turn Spy upon him; ſome out of a Spirit of Vanity to diſtinguiſh himſelf by being a Retainer to a Maſter in ſo great a Reputation among the People; and others, out of a Principle of Self-intereſt, that he might attain ſome Poſt of Honour and Advantage, upon our Lord's Advancement to his Kingdom. This, indeed, ſeems to be the moſt probable Ground of his Reſolution, and accordingly the Deſign of our Saviour's Anſwer is, to diſcourage him from being his Diſciple upon ſuch ſecular Views, *The Foxes have Holes, and the Birds of the Air have Neſts, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his own Head*, Luke ix. 58. And therefore much leſs any Accommodation or Proſpect of Preferment for his Followers.

Q. *Who was the Perſon that deſired to* bury his Father, *before he followed* Chriſt?

A. Some are of Opinion, that he was St. *Philip* who was the firſt that adjoined himſelf to *Jeſus*, and that his Father was not actually dead, but only grown ſo very old, that he could not live long; and therefore the Purport of his Addreſs to *Chriſt* is, "That for the ſmall Remainder of his "Father's Life, he might be permitted to live "with him, but that, after he had paid his laſt "Offices to him, he would not fail to return again, "and devote himſelf entire to his Service." But others underſtand the Words in a litteral Senſe.

Q. *Pray explain our Lord's Anſwer*, Let their Dead bury their Dead?

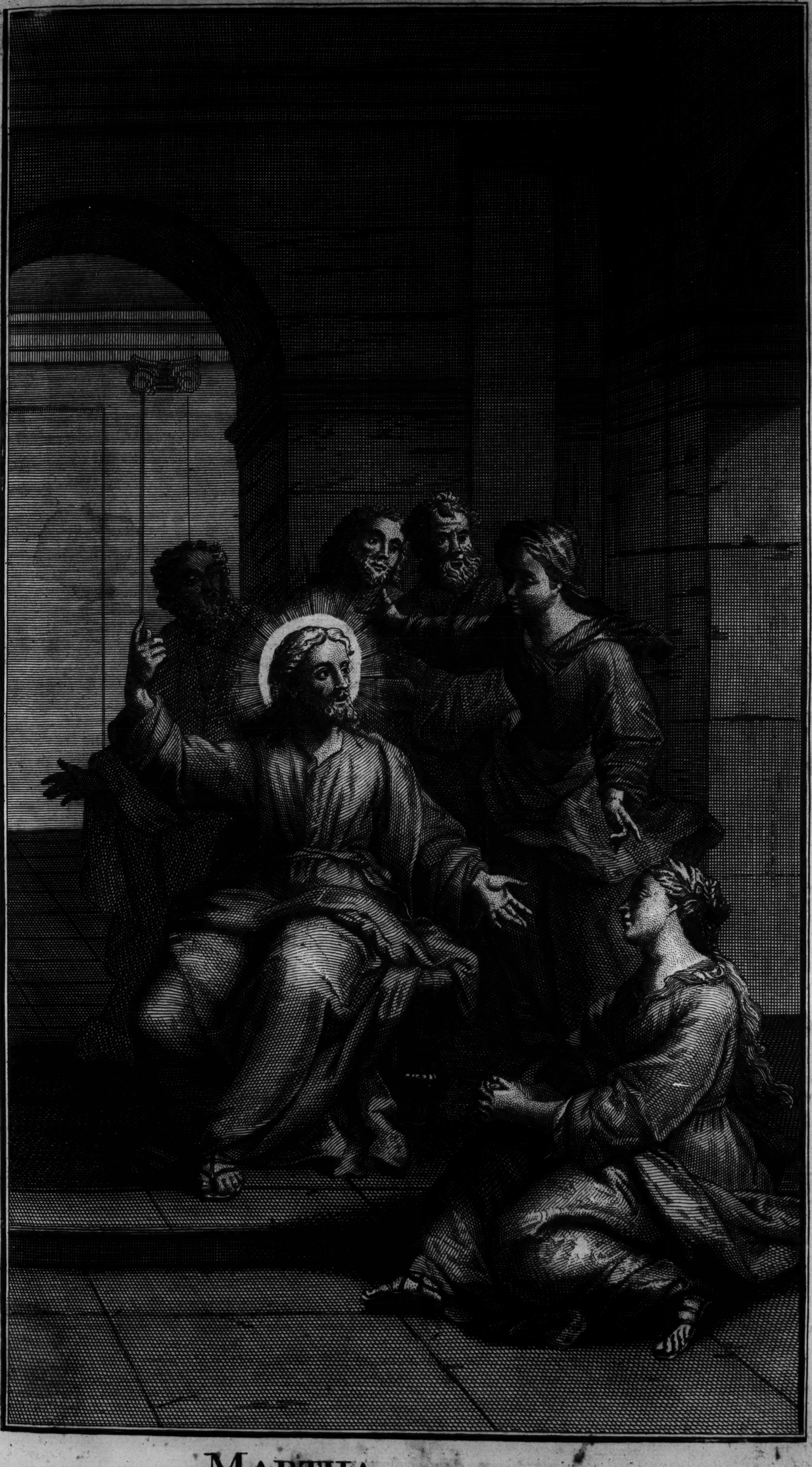
A. This is a Form of Speech common in all Sort of Authors, when, in the ſame Place they uſe the ſame Word twice, though very frequently in different Senſes. Thus the *Pſalmiſt*, ſpeaking of God, ſays, *With the Froward thou ſhalt ſhew thyſelf froward*, Pſal. xviii. 28. even as *Moſes* introduces God ſpeaking of himſelf, *If ye walk contrary to me, I will alſo walk contrary to you*, Lev. xxvii. 24. where the Words *froward* and *contrary*, as they relate to God, denote the Puniſhments which he intended to bring upon the Obſtinate, and are the rather uſed, becauſe the ſame Words went before. And in like Manner, *Let the Dead bury the Dead, but follow thou me*, may ſignify, let others bury the Dead, thou haſt Work of more Conſequence to do. It muſt not be diſſembled, however, that by the Dead both ſacred and profane Authors do frequently mean, not only thoſe, who in a natural Senſe are dead, but thoſe likewiſe, who in a ſpiritual Senſe are ſo, by being alienated from the Life of God and dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins. Thus *Clemens of Alexandria* tells us, that *the Philoſophers of the Barbarians called thoſe* dead, *who deſerted their Doctrines, and ſubjected their Minds to ſenſual Pleaſures*, which *Philo* calls *the Death of the Soul, entombed in Paſſions and all Manner of Wickedneſs*. And therefore the full Import of our Saviour's Words muſt be, *Let thoſe, who are unconcerned for the Things of God, and unfit to engage in promoting them, perform ſuch Offices which they can do, as well as others; but thou, who haſt begun to follow me, and to attend upon the Kingdom of God, go on with Reſolution, and without allowing thyſelf any Avocation from that Work*: Hereby teaching us, that they, who are called to the Preaching of the Goſpel, and the Salvation of Souls, ſhould not ſuffer any earthly Buſineſs, which may be done as well by others, who are unfit to be employed in Spirituals, to give them the leaſt Impediment or Moleſtation.

CHAP. X.

Chriſt *appoints ſeventy Diſciples, and inſtructs them in what they were to do; threatens certain Cities with heavy Judgments for their Impenitence. The Seventy Diſciples return rejoicing. He returns Thanks to his Father; anſwers the Lawyer's Queſtion, and teaches him what he muſt do to inherit eternal Life; tells him who is his Neighbour, by the Example of a Man falling among Thieves, and relieved by a* Samaritan; *being entertained by* Mary *and* Martha, *prefers the Piety of the former to the Carefulneſs of the latter.*

Q. IS *there any myſterious Meaning in our Lord's appointing juſt* ſeventy Diſciples? *And do you find their Names any where recorded?*

Q. Thoſe, who would have it, that the *ſeventy* Diſciples, whom *Chriſt* ſent out, were choſen according to the Number of the *Sanhedrim*, imagine, that they were *ſeventy-two*, though the round Sum only be mentioned; but the general Teſtimony of the Antients is, that they were no more than *ſeventy*. What their Names were, is a Thing unknown, only we have an uncertain Account of twenty-eight of them out of *Euſebius*, *Epiphanius*, and *Papias*, and theſe are, *Matthias*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *Barnabas*, *Stephen*, *Philip*, *Procorus*, *Nicanor*, *Timon*, *Parmenas*, *Nicholas*, *Juſtus*, *Apelles*, *Soſthenes*, *Rufus*, *Niger*, *Cephas*, *Thaddæus*, *Ariſtion*, *John*, *Barſabas*, *Andronicus*, *Junius*, *Silas*, *Lucius*, *Manaen*, *Enaſon*, and *Ananias*. Now, whereas ſome compare the *Biſhops* to the *Apoſtles*, and theſe *ſeventy* to the *Presbyters* of the Church, and thence conclude, that theſe two Orders in the Miniſtry, one inferior to the other, were inſtituted by *Chriſt* himſelf, there is this Difference in the Matter, That the *ſeventy* receive not their Miſſion (as *Presbyters* do) from *Biſhops*, but immediately from our Lord, as the Apoſtles did, and were ſent upon the ſame Errand, and with the ſame Powers. There is, however, I think, this Foundation for that, wherein St. *Chryſoſtom*, and others, place the Superiority of *Biſhops* over *Presbyters*, *viz.* that the Power of Ordination belongs to them alone: For, tho' the Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel belonged to the *ſeventy*, as well as to the *twelve Apoſtles*, yet the Power of conferring the *Holy Ghoſt* by the Impoſition of Hands, was peculiar to the *twelve*, ST. LUKE. CHAP. X.



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Acts viii. 14, *&c.* and this ſeems to be the Reaſon, why the conferring of the *Holy Ghoſt*, for the Uſe of the Miniſtry (which is done by the Impoſition of Hands) has perpetually been eſteemed peculiar to the *Biſhops*, who, in the eccleſiaſtical Stile, are always called the *Succeſſors* of the *Apoſtles*.

Q. *How did* Chriſt *behold* Satan *as* Lightning falling from Heaven, *Verſe* 18?

A. Lightning comes ſuddenly, and with Thunder. The *Thunder of the Goſpel* brought down the Devils as *Lightning*; and indeed, this is obſervable, that the Devil is never ſo buſy as in thoſe Places where the Goſpel prevails, whether we conſider his Power with Reference to the Souls or Bodies of Men. This is one general Advantage of Goſpel-Preaching; the Devil will not endure the Sound of it, ſo as to impoſe on Mankind at that Rate, as he does upon ignorant Heathens, as ſuch as differ from them only in that they are baptized and call themſelves *Chriſtians.* Chriſt *ſaw this*, as God, for the Devil is not viſible to human Senſes, nor indeed are any Spirits; which ſhews the Impudence of that *Popiſh Impoſtor in* Germany, who ſelling Indulgences (by which he pretended Souls were delivered from *Purgatory*) called to the People to look up and ſee them fly away. But *Chriſt* could ſee it as God, for he certainly knew that it would be, and that it already was the bleſſed Effect of the Goſpel.

Q. *Has not ſome other Senſe been put upon theſe Words?*

A. Some look upon them as a ſecret Rebuke given by our Saviour to the ſeventy for that Exceſs of Joy, and Mixture of Vain-glory, which was found with them on Account of thoſe extraordinary Gifts and Abilities of caſting out Devils, and healing Diſeaſes, which were conferred upon them. As if he had ſaid, Take heed of being puft up with Pride on Account of theſe Endowments which I have beſtowed upon you; remember *Lucifer* the Prince of Pride, how he fell from Heaven by his Arrogance, and labour you to aſcend thither by Humility. The Words in this Senſe afford this Inſtruction, That thoſe on whom *Chriſt* has beſtowed the greateſt Meaſures of ſpiritual Graces, miniſterial Gifts, and temporal Bleſſings, ought to be very watchful againſt that hateful Sin of Pride, which has ruined ſo many Thouſands of Angels, and Men. Some underſtand the Fall of *Satan* not literally, but figuratively, and myſtically, of his Ruin, by the Power of preaching of the Goſpel; as if *Chriſt* had ſaid, I know that this is no vain Boaſt of yours, no Vaunt nor Brag of your Valour, that Devils are conquered by your Courage; for which I firſt ſent you forth to preach the Goſpel, and armed you with divine Power, I eaſily foreſaw that the Devil's Kingdom would ſhake, and his Power be ruined by the Power of the Goſpel; and where-ever you preached, *Satan*'s Strength and Power would vaniſh like a Flaſh of Lightning, ſuddenly and irrecoverably.

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words of* Chriſt *to the* ſeventy Diſciples, Rejoice not, that the Spirits are ſubject unto you, but rather rejoice, that your Names are written in Heaven?

A. Our Lord finding his ſeventy Ambaſſadors had managed their former Commiſſion ſo well, enlarges it, and adds thereto a Promiſe of divine Protection, *Behold I give you Power to tread on Serpents, and nothing ſhall hurt you*; as if *Chriſt* had ſaid, Go forth again in this Armour of Power with which I have girt you, and I warrant you Sword and Shot-free, nothing ſhall by any Means hurt you, neither Strength nor Stratagem ſhall overcome you: Neither the Power, the Preſence, nor Protection of God ſhall be wanting to any of *Chriſt*'s Miniſters, or Members, who go forth in his Strength againſt the Enemies of their Salvation. As we have a Promiſe of Power in this Text to enable us to reſiſt the Devil, ſo we have a Promiſe of Succeſs elſewhere, upon our reſiſting him, *Reſiſt the Devil and he will fly from you*, James iv. 7.

Our Saviour a little qualifies their immoderate Joy on this Occaſion, *In this rejoice not*; Chriſt does not forbid, but only moderates their Joy; *Rejoice not that Spirits are ſubject unto you.* Where note, 1. That though the evil Angels, by their Fall, have loſt their happy Condition, yet not their original Conſtitution, they are Spirits ſtill. 2. The Subjection of thoſe evil Spirits to the Power of *Chriſt*, is not free and profeſſed, but involuntary and impoſed, like that of a Slave of his Lord; and it is Matter of great Joy to ſee the evil Spirit of Pride and Contention, of Envy and Malice, Error and Falſhood, Jealouſy and Self-Love, Animoſity and Diviſion, not only chained but changed; to ſee not only an unwilling Subjection, but a Subjection of the Will given to *Chriſt*, is Matter of unſpeakable rejoicing.

Rather rejoice that your Names are written in Heaven. There are no literal Records in the Court of Heaven; but to be written in Heaven, is to have a Title to eternal Life, and to be made meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. He who has the Name of God written on his Heart, has his Name certainly written in Heaven.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Part of our Saviour's Promiſe to his Diſciples, that* they ſhould tread on Serpents and Scorpions without Hurt?

A. This ſeems to have a plain Alluſion to thoſe Words of the *Pſalmiſt*, where, under the Metaphor of *treading on the Scorpion and Baſiliſk*, Pſal. xci. 13. God promiſes the good Man a more than common Protection from all Sorts of Dangers and Enemies. But there is no Reaſon, however, I think, why our Saviour's Words may not here be taken in a literal Senſe, ſince they agree ſo well with what he promiſes all true Believers in another Place, *they ſhall take up Serpents* (as we find one faſtened upon St. *Paul*'s Hand without doing him any Harm, *Acts* xxviii. 3.) *and if they drink any deadly Thing, it ſhall not hurt them*, Mark xvi. 18.

Q. *Our Lord bids his Diſciples rejoice, that* their Names were written in Heaven: *How do you interpret this Paſſage? And may we not from hence conclude, that all the* ſeventy Diſciples *were actually ſaved?*

A. The Words, that *their Names were written in Heaven*, allude to a known Cuſtom in well-governed Cities, where Regiſters are kept of the Names of their Inhabitants, and do plainly denote the Title, which Believers have to eternal Happineſs; but by no Means an abſolute Election to it. For, as a Citizen, when he miſbehaves egregiouſly, and thereupon becomes infamous, has his Name razed out of the City-Regiſter, and is himſelf diſinfranched of all his Privileges; ſo we read of ſome, whom *Chriſt* threatens *to blot their Names out of the Book of Life*, Revel. xxii. 19. For, *as*

Men are written in this Book (ſays St. *Baſil* on Iſaiah iv. 3.) *when they are converted from Vice to Virtue, ſo they are blotted out of it, when they backſlide from Virtue to Vice.* Of the *Twelve* we read that one was certainly a Reprobate, and tho' it becomes us to hope better of the *Seventy*, yet our Saviour's Words give us no room to think, that they were all predeſtinated to eternal Life, ſince his only Meaning is, That he had called, choſen, and ſeparated them, from great Numbers that would periſh; that he had given them the Grace of Faith and Admiſſion to the *Chriſtian* Covenant, but that, on themſelves it was incumbent, by the Preſervation of their Faith, and the Practice of good Works, comporting therewith, *to make their Calling and Election ſure.*

Q. *Does not the Lawyer's Queſtion to* Chriſt, What ſhall I do to inherit eternal Life, *intimate, that it was the general Belief of the* Jews, *that* eternal Life *was attainable by the Works of the Law?*

A. The Law of *Moſes* does no-where expreſly promiſe eternal Life to thoſe that obſerved its Precepts. It is wholly taken up with temporal Bleſſings and Proſperities; and yet the Generality of the *Jews* were not deſtitute of the Hopes of another Life; for their Writers, a little before, and after the Captivity, are full of it, ſo that it became the prevailing Opinion of the whole Nation, and was received by their two principal Sects, the *Phariſees* and *Eſſenes*; as for the *Sadduces*, who had other Notions of the Matter, their Religion was very little, and their Principles purely *Epicurean.*

Q. *What was the* Jews *Notion of a* Neighbour, *that might be the Ground of the Lawyer's Queſtion,* Verſe 8. *and our Saviour's Explanation of it by the Parable of a* Jew *and a* Samaritan?

A. In our Saviour's Time, the *Phariſees* had reſtrained the Word *Neighbour* to ſignify thoſe of their own Nation, their own Religion, and their own Friends only; and all who differed from them in any of theſe Reſpects, they indulged the People the Liberty to hate, nor would they permit them to extend the leaſt Office of common Civility to any ſuch. But our Saviour overthrew theſe falſe Maxims of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, and reduced the Precept of univerſal Charity to its firſt Intention, when, in this Parable of the *Jew* and the *Samaritan*, he plainly demonſtrated that no Difference of Nation or Religion, no Quarrel or Reſentment, no Enmity or Alienation of Affections, can exempt us from owning any Perſon to be our Neighbour.

Q. *Why does our Lord lay the Scene of Action in the Road between* Jeruſalem *and* Jericho?

A. Between *Jeruſalem* and *Jericho* (which were about ſeven Leagues diſtant) the Road was very infamous for Murders and Robberies, for in it was a Place called the Valley of *Adommim*, or of *bloody Men*, becauſe of the great Quantity of Blood that was there ſpilt; and for this Reaſon it is, that our Lord lays the Scene of his Parable in this Place.

Q. *Why does our Saviour introduce a* Prieſt *and a* Levite, *as acting a Part in this Story?*

A. To make the Deſcription more lively, our Saviour inſtances in two Men, a *Prieſt* and a *Levite*, who took no Pity of this *Jew* in Diſtreſs, though they were of the ſame Religion and Country; nay, tho' they were Miniſters and Teachers of the Religion which he profeſſed; and might therefore be preſumed, even in Virtue of their Office and Education, to have more extenſive Notions, and Hearts more capable of tender Impreſſions, than the ruder Vulgar; and, for the ſame Reaſon, he introduces a *Samaritan*, as acting a different Part, and taking all imaginable Care of this wounded *Jew*, tho' between the *Jews* and *Samaritans* there was a moſt inveterate Hatred.

Q. *Can it be ſuppoſed that the* Samaritan *had* Oil *and* Wine *about him upon his Journey; or if he had, what Uſe were they of to the curing of Wounds?*

A. The Words in the Text are, *pouring in Wine and Oil*; Oil, to eaſe and aſſuage the Pain; and Wine, to cleanſe and heal the Wound: And theſe Things the good *Samaritan* had about him, becauſe the Inns in the *Eaſtern* Countries (even as it is ſtill) afforded nothing but barely Houſe-room; and therefore the Cuſtom was, for the Traveller to carry all Kinds of Neceſſaries, both for his Bed and Board, along with him.

Q. *When he departed* he took out two Pence: *How much did that amount to in* Engliſh *Money?*

A. The *Greek* Word which we render a *Penny*, was a kind of *Roman* Coin, much about *ſeven Pence Half-Penny* in our Money. In the *New Teſtament* (for it never occurs in the *Old*) it is uſually put for a Piece of Money in general, *i. e.* for a *Shekel*, which was the moſt common Coin among the *Jews*, before they became ſubject to the *Greek* and *Romans*; ſo that, in this Senſe, what the *Samaritan* gave the Hoſt amounted to *five Shillings*, or thereabout, which is more conſiſtent with the reſt of his Character, than that he ſhould leave ſo ſmall a Matter behind him.

Q. *How does the Argument, couched in this Parable, prove what our Saviour intended by it?*

A. Had our Saviour propounded the Parable in the Manner,——That a certain *Samaritan* fell among Thieves, and that a *Prieſt* and a *Levite* paſſed by, without offering him any Help; this Doctor of the Law might have replied, That he did nothing but right, becauſe the *Samaritan* was no Neighbour of theirs: But now, as he makes a *Jew* the Subject of the Parable, and the Object of the *Samaritan's* Compaſſion, he draws him in to acknowledge the Voice of Nature, which declares, that every Man is Neighbour to his Fellow-creature, and that the Law of *Moſes* has not annulled, but perfected the *Law of Nature*, by commanding us to *love our Neighbour as ourſelves*, Levit. xix. 18.

Q. *What was that* one Thing needful, *which, our Saviour ſays,* Mary *had choſen, Verſe* 42?

A. Interpreters have given themſelves ſome Trouble in determining what that *one thing* is, which our Saviour accounts *needful.* Some of the Antients are of Opinion, that our Lord, in this Expreſſion, told *Martha*, that *one Diſh was enough.* But, beſides the Lowneſs of the Senſe, the great Company that attended our Lord, ſeventy Diſciples, and twelve Apoſtles, to be ſure, if no more, ſhews the Incongruouſneſs of this. Others will have this *one Thing needful* to be a Life of Meditation and Contemplation, which *Mary* had all-along addicted herſelf to; but her chooſing to take the Advantage of our Saviour's Company, to hear him for an Hour or two, rather than prepare a Supper for him, is not Foundation enough for this Conjecture; and therefore we cannot but think, that the moſt general Interpretation, concerning *the Care of the Soul, with Reference to Eternity*, is the beſt.

Chap. XI.

Chriſt, *at the Requeſt of his Diſciples, teaches them how to pray; and by the Similitude of a Friend and a Father, ſhews, that ſuch as pray in Faith, ſhall be heard; caſts out a Devil; and confutes thoſe that ſaid he did ſo by* Beelzebub; *ſhews the wretched Condition of that Man unto whom an unclean Spirit returns. A Woman bleſſes the Womb that bare him; his Anſwer.* Jonas *a Sign of the Son of Man. Shews by the Similitude of a Candle, that the Goſpel muſt flouriſh; reproves the Scribes, Phariſees, and Lawyers, for their Cruelty. For which they lay a Snare againſt him.*

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve concerning the Prayer which Chriſt taught his Diſciples?*

A. Mr. *Mede* obſerves, that it was the Cuſtom of the *Jewiſh* Doctors to deliver ſome certain Form of Prayer to their Diſciples to uſe, at leaſt that *John the Baptiſt* had done ſo to his Diſciples. Thereupon our Saviour's Diſciples beſought him, that he alſo would give them, in like Manner, ſome Form of his own compoſing, that they might pray with their Maſter's Spirit, as *John*'s Diſciples did with his. Accordingly our Saviour here gives them a Form of his own, and commands them when they pray to uſe it. Indeed he had given them this Prayer about a Year and a Half before, in his Sermon upon the Mount, *Matt.* vi. 9. *After this Manner pray ye*; where it is probable, that the Diſciples looked upon it only as a Pattern of Prayer, and not as a Form; for had they thought that Chriſt had given them a Form of Prayer before, they had not asked for one now: Therefore, ſays Chriſt, *When ye pray, ſay*; certainly this gives us to underſtand, that our Saviour intended and commanded it for a ſet Form of Prayer unto his Church.

Q. *All the hiſtorical Paſſages of this Chapter are recorded ſomewhere or other in the Goſpel of St.* Matthew; *and therefore there ſeems no Room to enlarge upon any Thing here; except on the Conference between our Lord, and a certain* Lawyer, *who apprehending he and his Sect were included in the* Woes *denounced againſt the Scribes and Phariſees, our Saviour characterizes that Profeſſion: What he ſays thereupon I deſire you to explain and illuſtrate?*

A. Theſe Lawyers were the Scribes of the Law, and of two Sorts, Civil and Eccleſiaſtical. The Civil Scribe was a publick Notary, or a Regiſter of the Synagogue, employed in writing Bills of Divorce, and Sentences in the Phylacteries. The Eccleſiaſtical Scribe was an Expounder of the Scripture, and Interpreter of the Law; Men of great Learning and Knowledge, whoſe Decrees and Interpretations the Phariſees ſtrictly obſerved. This Lawyer here inſolently calls our Saviour's Reproof a Reproach. However, our Lord, who never feared the Face, nor regarded the Perſon of any Man, gives them their Portion, and lets them know wherein they were faulty as well as the Phariſees, and accordingly pronounces a Woe unto them alſo for a threefold Crime; 1. For laying heavy Burdens upon others Shoulders, which they would not touch with one of their Fingers. Theſe Burdens in general were a rigid Exaction of Obedience to the whole ceremonial Law; and in particular, the Burden of Traditions, certain Auſterities and Severities, which they impoſed on the People, but would not undergo any Part of it themſelves.

The ſecond Crime which Chriſt reproves them for, is their grand Hypocriſy in pretending Honour to the Saints departed, in building Tombs and garniſhing their Sepulchres, and declaiming againſt their Fathers Impiety.

The laſt Woe denounced againſt the Lawyers is, for perverting the Holy Scriptures, and keeping the true Senſe and Knowledge of them from the People. This St. *Luke* calls, *the taking away the Key of Knowledge from Men*, alluding to a Cuſtom among the *Jews*, in Admiſſion of their Doctors: Thoſe that had Authority given them to interpret the Law and the Prophets, were ſolemnly admitted into that Office, by delivering them a Key and a Table-book; ſo that by the Key of Knowledge is meant the Interpretation and underſtanding of the Scriptures; and by taking away the Key, is ſignified, 1. That they arrogate to themſelves the underſtanding and intepreting the Holy Scriptures; 2. That they kept the true Knowledge of the Scriptures from the People, eſpecially the Prophecies which concerned the Kingdom and Coming of the Meſſias; and ſo hindered Men from embracing our Saviour's Doctrine, who were otherwiſe well enough diſpoſed for it.

Hence learn, 1. That the written Word is the Key whereby an Entrance into Heaven is opened unto Men. 2. That the Uſe of this Key, or the Knowledge of the Word of God, is abſolutely and indiſpenſibly neceſſary, in order to Salvation. 3. That great is the Guilt, and inexcuſable the Fault of thoſe who deny the People the uſe of this Key, and deprive them of the Knowledge of the Word of God; which alone can make them Wiſe unto Salvation. 4. That ſuch as do ſo, ſhut the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men, endeavouring what in them lies, to hinder their Salvation: Men may miſcarry with their Knowledge, but they are ſure to periſh in the Lack of Knowledge.

This plain and faithful dealing of our Lord is ſo far from reforming theſe Men, that they are filled with Rage and Indignation; and their Wrath ſets their Wits to Work to enſnare him. Such is the Uſage and Treatment that the faithful Miniſters and Embaſſadors of *Chriſt* meet with from a wicked World. Every thing, they ſay, is watched, in order to find ſome Occaſion againſt them, and to enſnare them.

Chap. XII.

Chriſt *admoniſhes his Diſciples of the Leaven of the Phariſees; tells them whom they ought to fear, and who not; exhorts to truſt in God's Providence, and to confeſs his Name; dehorts againſt blaſpheming the Holy Ghoſt; bids them beware of Covetouſneſs, under the Similitude of a rich Man who enlarged his Barns; exhorts them, by the Example of Ravens and Lillies, to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God; likewiſe to Charity, and Watchfulneſs. He deſcribes the Actions and Rewards of a faithful, and the Puniſhment of an unfaithful Servant; ſays he came to ſend Fire on Earth; exhorts to Reconciliation with our Enemies.*

Q. I*N the firſt Part of this Chapter our Lord inſtructs his Diſciples in ſeveral Things relating to their Faith and Practice; moſt Part of which* *may be found in* Matt. x. *to which we refer: But there is a Difficulty in Ver.* 13, *and* 14. *which I ſhould be glad to have removed; and that is, Why our Lord refuſed to arbitrate the Difference between two Brothers?*

A. This Paſſage teaches us, that Matters of civil Juſtice belong not to thoſe whom Chriſt ſends to preach the Goſpel; that Work is enough for them, ſince *Chriſt* himſelf refuſes the Office even of an Arbitrator. A learned Author tells us, that the Practice of bringing Civil Matters before Eccleſiaſtical Men, as Judges, began in the Captivity of *Babylon*; the *Jews* by that Means avoiding the bringing their Differences before Pagan Judges, which Practice the Apoſtle perſuades the primitive *Chriſtians* to follow, 1 *Cor.* vi. 1, 2, *&c.* But that the Miniſters of the Goſpel ſhould, or might be employed in them, does not appear; nay, 1 *Cor.* vi. 4. the Apoſtle directs the contrary, *Set them to judge who are leaſt eſteemed in the Church*; and theſe ſurely were not the Elders of it. Under the *Romans* the *Jews* had more Liberty, their Civil Courts conſiſting of Men of their own Religion, to whom our Saviour turns over this Man; being unwilling to act out of his Calling, as a Miniſter of the Goſpel. It is very certain, that the Miniſters of the Goſpel, as *Chriſt*'s Commiſſioners, cannot intermeddle in Civil Judgments; whether ſuch as are the Commiſſioners of *Chriſt*, may yet act as the Commiſſioners of Men, let thoſe conſider who are ambitious of ſuch an Employment, and can find Leiſure for it.

With Reſpect to their uſual Methods of Proceedin Caſes of private Difference between Man and Man, it was uſual to make either the Conſiſtory of three, or ſome others, choſen by the contending Parties, Arbitrators. Whether both theſe Brothers had agreed to refer their Difference to our Lord's Determination, or this *one* of them only deſired him to interpoſe his Authority, if not to enjoin, at leaſt to perſuade his Brother to come to an Accommodation it is difficult to ſay, becauſe the Scripture is ſilent: But this we may obſerve, that the ordinary Rule of Inheritance among the *Jews* was, for the eldeſt Son to have a double Portion of his Father's Eſtate, and the reſt to be divided equally among the other Children; but, in what came by the Mother, the eldeſt had no Prerogative above the reſt, the Diviſion among them was equal. Whatever then the Controverſy between theſe Brothers was, our Saviour might very juſtly refuſe to intermeddle in it, and that, not only becauſe it was inconſiſtent with his Deſign of coming into the World, which was to promote Mens ſpiritual, rather than their temporal Intereſts, but becauſe it might probably have drawn upon him the Envy and Calumny of the *Jewiſh* Rulers, who might be apt to ſay, that he took upon him an Office, to which he had no Call, in Prejudice to them who were legally appointed to it.

Q. *Our bleſſed Lord, in expoſing the Sin of Covetouſneſs, introduces a Parable of a rich Man conſulting with himſelf how to diſpoſe of his Goods, his Gratulation to his Soul thereupon, and his Condemnation for a Fool, Ver.* 16 *to* 21. *Pray what Inſtructions are convey'd to us in this Parable?*

A. The Parable does not intimate any indirect or unjuſt Ways of Gain which this Man uſed to increaſe his Eſtate, but condemns his inſatiable Thirſt after more. So that an eager and inordinate Deſire after the Things of this World, though it be free from Injuſtice, is one ſpecies of the Sin of Covetouſneſs.

Again, this Man did not look on himſelf as God's Steward, but his own Carver, *What ſhall I do, becauſe I have no Room to lay my Fruits?* not conſidering that the Houſes of the Poor ſhould have been his Ganaries for the Abundance of his Increaſe.

The Brand of Infamy which the wiſe God fixes on this covetous rich Man, *Thou Fool.* It is an Act of the moſt egregious Folly, for Perſons to ſpend their Time and Strength in getting and laying up Treaſure upon Earth, in the mean while neglecting to be rich towards God in Faith and good Works.

The doleful Tidings and Threatning News brought him, *This Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee.* Wealth will not preſerve a Man's Life, much leſs ſave his Soul; why then ſhould Men endanger their Lives, nay, hazard their Souls to get or increaſe their Wealth? Man's Life is often ſhortned when he leaſt ſuſpects it; *This Night*, ſays God; *many Years*, ſays he; God will not have us think of Reſt in a Place of Diſquiet, nor of Certainty in a Condition of Inconſtancy; we are dependant Creatures, and our Lives are in God's Hand; *This Night ſhall thy Soul be taken from thee.* The Souls of ungodly Men are taken from them by Force and Compulſion, *Thy Soul ſhall be taken from thee*; good Men have the ſame Reluctances of Nature which others have, yet they ſweetly reſign their Souls into the Hands of God in a dying Hour; whereas, a wicked Man, though he dies ſometimes by his own Hand, yet never dies with the Conſent of his own Will.

The expoſtulary Queſtion, *Whoſe then ſhall thoſe Things be thou haſt provided?* Intimating, 1. That they ſhould not be his: A Man's Wealth laſts no longer than his Life; *Lay up Gold, and it periſhes with thee; but treaſure up Grace, and it ſhall accompany thee.* 2. As theſe Things ſhall not be thine when thou art gone, ſo thou knoweſt not whoſe they ſhall be when thou art here no more, whether they ſhall fall into the Hands of thy Child, or a Stranger, of a wiſe Man, or a Fool.

The Application our Saviour makes of this Parable, *So is every one who layeth up Treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich towards God.* Hence learn, That ſuch as are not rich in Grace and good Works, ſhall find no Benefit by, nor Comfort from all their worldly Riches, in time of their greateſt Need, at the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment.

Learn farther, How brutiſh and unworthy of a Man it was, for this Perſon to chear up his Soul with the Hope of worldly Proviſions, to bid his Soul, eat, drink, and be merry: Alas! the Soul can no more eat, drink, and be merry, with carnal Things, than the Body can with Things ſpiritual and immaterial; it cannot feed upon that which periſhes; but bring it to a reconciled God in *Chriſt*, to the Covenant of Grace, and the ſweet Promiſes of the Goſpel; ſet before it the Joy and Comforts of the Spirit; and if it be a ſanctified and renewed Soul, it can make a rich Feaſt upon theſe. Spiritual Things are proper Food for ſpiritual Souls; deſervedly then is this Perſon branded with the Name of Fool, for ſaying, *Soul, thou haſt Goods laid up for many Years, eat, drink, and be merry.*

Q. *Next our Saviour cautions his Diſciples againſt too much Care for a Proviſion in this World; this he enforces from ſeveral Topicks; which ſee explained,* Matt. vi. *The next Duties our Lord exhorts his Diſciples to, are* Alms-giving *and* Watchfulneſs; *which, comprehending a great Part of a* Chriſtian's *Practice, pray explain and illuſtrate?*

A. Firſt our Saviour exhorts his Diſciples to Alms-giving; that is, that they ſhould be ſo far from diſtruſting God's Proviſion for themſelves, that they ſhould be always forward to a ready Diſtribution towards others; and, in Caſes of Neceſſity, to be willing to ſell their Goods for the Relief of ſuch as are in Diſtreſs; yet this Precept is not to be taken as if it concerned all Perſons, at all Times, and in all Places; but expreſſes only Caſes of extreme Neceſſity; or, if it concerns all, it is only as to the Readineſs and Preparation of the Mind, to be willing to part with any Thing we have for the Relief of *Chriſt* in his Members.

The Argument uſed to excite Perſons to this Duty of Alms-giving is, That hereby we lay up our Treaſure in a ſafe Hand, and even in God's, who will reward it openly. The Bellies of the Poor are Bags that wax not old; what is lodged there is laid up ſecurely, and out of the Reach of any Danger. We imitate the wiſe Merchant in tranſmitting our Eſtates into another World, by Bills of Exchange, where we are ſure to receive our own again with Uſury.

The next duty *Chriſt* enjoins his Diſciples is, that of Watchfulneſs, with Reference to his ſecond Coming; *Let your Loins be girded, and your Lights burning.* The Words may be underſtood two Ways, ſpoken in a martial Phraſe, as to Soldiers, or in a domeſtick, as to Servants. If as to Soldiers, then let your Loins be girded, and your Lights burning, in as much as that we ſhould always be ready to give Fire at the firſt Alarm of Temptation. If the Words are ſpoken as to Servants, then our Maſter bids us carefully expect his ſecond Coming, like a Lord's returning from a Wedding-Supper, (which was uſed to be celebrated in the Night) that they ſhould not put off their Cloaths, nor extinguiſh their Lights, but ſtand ready to open, though at Midnight. When Chriſt comes, that Soul only ſhall have his Bleſſing, whom he finds watchful.

The Duty of Watchfulneſs is farther urged from ſeveral Arguments; the firſt is drawn from the tranſcendent Reward which *Chriſt* will beſtow upon his watchful Servants; *He will gird himſelf, and and make them ſit down to meat, and will come forth and ſerve them*; a very high metaphorical Expreſſion; as if a Man ſhould be tranſported with the Diligence and Faithfulneſs of his Servant, as to vouchſafe not only to let him ſit down to meat in his Preſence, but to take the Napkin on his Arm, and wait upon him himſelf at the Table. Lord! how poor and inconſiderable is that Service, which the beſt of us can do for thee, and yet thou ſpeakeſt of it, as if thou wert beholden to us for it.

The next Argument is drawn from the Benefit we ſhall receive from watching in this Life; that, let the Lord come when he will, whether in the ſecond or third Watch, they ſhall be found ready, and in a bleſſed Condition, who are found diligent in his Service, and waiting for his Appearance.

CHAP. XIII.

By the Example of the Galileans, *and thoſe on whom the Tower of* Siloam *fell,* Chriſt *exhorts to Repentance; which he enforces by the Allegory of a barren Fig-tree. He heals a Woman on the Sabbath-Day of an Infirmity of eighteen Years ſtanding. Juſtifies himſelf before the Ruler of the Synagogue; compares the Kingdom of Heaven to Muſtard-Seed and Leaven; and exhorts to enter in at the ſtrait Gate; is warned to depart becauſe of* Herod's *Deſign; he complains of their Cruelty, and foretels their Ruin.*

Q. WHEN, *where, and on what Occaſion, was that Maſſacre committed, mentioned Verſe* 1.?

A. The general Opinion is, that the Maſſacre which *Pilate* had cauſed of ſome *Galileans*, relates to the Sedition which *Judas Gaulonites* raiſed againſt the *Roman* Government in *Judea*, when he, and one *Sadducas*, a *Phariſee*, poſſeſſed the People with a Notion, "That Taxes were a Badge of "their Slavery; that they ought to acknowledge "no Sovereign, but God himſelf; nor pay any "Tribute, but to his Temple." It was in *Galilee*, very probably, where this *Judas* firſt broached theſe Sentiments, and there acquired ſuch a Multitude of Followers and Abettors, as made *Joſephus* call him *Galileus*, as well as *Gaulonites*. Nay, all his Followers in general, though they were of different Provinces by Birth, obtained the ſame Name. But when they came to *Jeruſalem*, at one of the great Feſtivals, and began to ſpread theſe ſeditious Notions againſt *Cæſar*; *Pilate*, who was then the *Roman* Governor, having had Intelligence of it, cauſed a conſiderable Number of them to be ſlain in the Temple, while they were ſacrificing.

Q. *In what Part of the City of* Jeruſalem *was the Tower of* Siloam *built; and how came it to fall?*

A. The Fountain of *Siloam* roſe at the Foot of the Wall of the Eaſt Part of the City of *Jeruſalem*. The Tower, called after its Name, was doubtleſs built upon the Wall, not far from it; and, being now become antient, might fall upon ſuch a Number of People, either paſſing by, or ſtanding under it. But how this Accident came to paſs we have no manner of Certainty, becauſe this Paſſage in St. *Luke* is the only Place, where we find any Mention made of this Piece of Hiſtory.

Q. *What is meant by the* three Years Barenneſs *of the* Fig-tree, *Ver.* 7.?

A. Some of the Antients are of Opinion, that, by the three Years Unfruitfulneſs of the Fig-Tree, we are to underſtand the three Diſpenſations under which Mankind have lived, *viz.* under the *natural* Law, from the Beginning of the World, to the Time of *Moſes*; under the written Law, from *Moſes* to *Jeſus Chriſt*; and under the evangelical Law, from *Jeſus Chriſt* to the End of the World. Others rather mean by them the three Kinds of Government under which the *Jews* had lived, *viz.* the Government of *Judges*, from *Joſhua* to *Saul*; the Government of *Kings*, from *Saul* to the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; and the Government of *High-prieſts*, from the Captivity of the Time of *Jeſus Chriſt*. But theſe Explications are a little too arbitrary; nor will the three Years of our Saviour's Preaching among the *Jews* come up to the Point, becauſe the *Jews* were not deſtroyed the next Year (as the barren Fig-Tree was to be cut down) but forty Years after our Lord's Aſcenſion. All that is meant by the Expreſſion therefore is, that God gave them all the Time, and all the Means, that could be deſired, to make them inexcuſable; and the Term of three Years ſeems rather to be mentioned, becauſe the Fruit of ſome Fig-trees come not to Maturity till the third Year.

Q. *In the 11th, 12th, and 13th Verſes, we have an Account of a miraculous Cure performed by our Saviour on a Woman who had been afflicted with a* Spirit of Infirmity *for eighteen Years: Pray what is meant by a* Spirit of Infirmity?

A. Whether this was only a *very great Infirmity*, or an Infirmity, in the bringing and continuing of which upon her, the *Devil* had greatly aſſiſted, would not be very eaſily determined, were it not for Verſe 16. where ſhe is ſaid to be one *whom* Satan *had bound*; ſhe was a Cripple, and ſo bowed down, that ſhe could not lift herſelf up; in which ſad Condition ſhe had remained for eighteen Years, inſomuch that the Diſtemper was inveterate, and out of the Courſe of ordinary Remedies; and the Inveteracy of the Diſeaſe, and the Inſtantaneouſneſs of Cure, without the Uſe of viſible Means, made the Miracle evident.

Q. *Why does our Lord call the* Ruler of the Synagogue a Hypocrite, *only for aſſerting the Sacredneſs of the* Sabbath, *Ver.* 15?

A. Our Saviour declared this Ruler of the *Synagogue* to be an Hypocrite, partly, becauſe he placed his Holineſs in the Obſervation of the ritual Precepts of the Law (ſuch as bodily Reſt on the Sabbath-day) to the Diſparagement of the Works of Mercy, and other great Matters of eternal Obligations; and partly, becauſe he pretended to a great Zeal for the Performance of God's Commands, when, all the while, he was rather actuated by a malevolent Envy to the Glory of *Chriſt*, which he, to whom his Heart was open, perfectly knew.

Q. *A certain Perſon asked our Lord, Verſe* 23. *whether there be* few that ſhall be ſaved: *Did he ground this Queſtion on any Opinion then prevailing among the* Jews?

A. The Man who propoſed the Queſtion to our Saviour, concerning the Number of thoſe who ſhould be ſaved, had doubtleſs, in his Thoughts, the common Opinion of the *Jews*, that all *Iſraelites* (how much ſo ever they may ſuffer in this) *ſhould have their Portion in the World to come*; but this was a Queſtion of too much needleſs Curioſity for our Saviour to anſwer, becauſe it is no Part of our Concern, how many ſhall be ſaved, but only how, and by what Means we are to work out our own Salvation: And therefore he took Occaſion from hence to inſtruct the Man (and in him all others) in what might be of much more ſubſtantial Benefit to him.

Q. *When our Lord bids his Hearers* enter in at the ſtrait Gate, *Ver.* 24. *does he allude to any Maxims among the antient Philoſophers?*

A. This Expreſſion of the *ſtrait Gate*, whether it was borrowed from the Heathen Sages, or no, is extreamly like them: For *Cebes* tells us, that at the firſt Entrance upon a Courſe of Virtue, *there is a little Gate*; that after we have paſſed this Gate, *there is a narrow Aſcent*; and that the Way following is *rough and rugged*, becauſe it is not much frequented; but that, *after we have got up to the Top of the Hill, the reſt is ſmooth and eaſy, free from all Obſtructions, and leading to the Regions of Felicity.*

And hence we may perceive, to our Comfort, that tho' the Ways of Virtue and Religion are not, at their firſt Entrance, ſo very agreeable, yet, in Proceſs of Time, they will be found to be *Ways of Pleaſantneſs*, Chriſt's *Yoke is eaſy, and his Commandments not grievous.*

Q. *How came the* Phariſees *to warn* Chriſt *of his Danger from* Herod, *Ver.* 31?

A. Whether the *Phariſees*, who ſuggeſted to him the Danger he was in from *Herod Antipas*, came upon their own Account, or by the Inſtigation of *Herod*, is the Queſtion. If they came upon their own Account, it is certain that they came not out of any Kindneſs to our Saviour; becauſe the whole Hiſtory of the Goſpel informs us, that they were far from having any Affection for him, and therefore they muſt come with a Deſign either to ſcare him out of *Galilee*, where he had been too popular for them, or to drive him into a Trap, which they had laid for him in *Judea*. This ſeems to be a genuine Interpretation enough of the Senſe of the *Evangliſt*; and therefore, in our Hiſtory we have followed it: But ſtill it ſeems not improbable, that, conſidering the preſent Circumſtances that *Herod* was under, he might ſend theſe Meſſengers to our Saviour. He had but lately gained no good Reputation among the *Jews*, by murthering *John*, whom all the World looked upon as a Prophet: And therefore, ſeeing that our Saviour excelled *John*, eſpecially in the Fame and Renown of his Miracles, he was unwilling to augment the Odium which already lay upon him, by any freſh Acts of Violence, to a Perſon that was reputed a Prophet, much ſuperior to the *Baptiſt*, whom he had ſlain. He had got a Notion too, that the *Baptiſt*, at leaſt the Soul of the *Baptiſt*, in another Body, was riſen from the Dead, and what the Effect of his Ghoſt's haunting his Dominions might be, he could not tell; and therefore he might think it convenient to put theſe *Phariſees* upon ſome Expedient to get our Saviour (whom poſſibly he might take for *John* revived) removed farther from him. However this be, it is certain, that he, or the *Phariſees*, or both, had a Mind to have him gone ſomewhere elſe; and that, for this Purpoſe the Meſſage was brought him.

Q. *What does* Chriſt's *Anſwer to the* Phariſees, Go tell that Fox, *import?*

A. The Subtilty of that Prince is implied in the Anſwer which our Saviour makes to the *Phariſees*, and which looks, indeed, as if they had been ſent from him, *Go tell that Fox:* The Expreſſion, however, may be taken, either in a mild or an harſher Senſe. If in a mild, it may denote that exquiſite Policy, wherewith this Prince conducted his Affairs all his Life-time, ſiding ſometimes with the *Jews*, ſometimes with the *Romans*, ſometimes with the *Phariſees*, and ſometimes with the *Sadducees*, juſt as it ſuited his Intereſt: But, ſuppoſing it be taken in an harſh Senſe, it will no Ways affect our Saviour's Character, nor infringe the Command of not *ſpeaking Evil of the Ruler of the People*, ſince our Lord was a Prophet ſent from God, and the Office of a Prophet is, not to ſpare Kings, when they reprove their Offences.

Q. *What does our Saviour mean, when he ſays, Verſe* 33. It cannot be that a Prophet periſh out of *Jeruſalem?*

A. Some are of Opinion, becauſe the *Jews* had referred to the *Sanhedrim*, which ſat at *Jeruſalem*, the whole Cognizance and Trial of Prophets, therefore

fore a Prophet was not to ſuffer out of that City; but this Interpretation ſeems to enervate our Saviour's Sentiment, whoſe Deſign certainly was to repreſent the City of *Jeruſalem*, ſo accuſtomed to ſhed the Blood of the Prophets, that there was ſcarce a Poſſibility of a Prophet's dying out of it.

CHAP. XIV.

Our bleſſed Saviour heals one ſick of the Dropſy on the Sabbath-Day; reproves the Pride of the Phariſees, *and exhorts them to Humility and Hoſpitality. The Parable of a great Supper, from which the Invited excuſe themſelves; upbraids the* Jews *with their Ingratitude, and tells them their Rejection, and the Calling of the* Gentiles; *ſhews them what they muſt do, that will be his Diſciples; the Unprofitableneſs of unſavoury Salt.*

Q. UPON *our Saviour's asking the Lawyers and* Phariſees, *Ver.* 3. *whether* it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-Day, *it is ſaid,* They held their Peace: *What do you imagine were their Thoughts on this Occaſion?*

A. The Preſence of the dropſical Man, and its being the Sabbath-day, would involve our Saviour, as they thought, in this Difficulty, that either, by forbearing to heal, at that Time, he would betray his Fear, and ſtrengthen their Superſtitions with Regard to ſuch ritual Obſervations; or elſe, that by doing it, he muſt incur the Cenſure and Odium of a Sabbath-breaker, and a Contemner of the Law: But he, who was well aware what Spies he had upon him, ſo ordered the Matter, as to accompliſh what he ſaw fit, without any Opportunity given for his Enemies to compaſs their Ends by it.

Q. *Is that Command of our Saviour, Verſe* 13. When thou makeſt a Feaſt, call the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, the Blind, *to be underſtood litterally?*

A. Whether the Precept of inviting the Poor, *&c.* is to be underſtood in a literal Senſe, or no, may, in ſome Meaſure, admit of a Debate. Our Saviour, when he acted the Part of a rich Man, in feeding the Multitude, had People of the meaneſt Rank; and among theſe, the Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, and the Blind (who daily reſorted to him for Cure) for the Chief of his Gueſts: But moſt Men think, that theſe extraordinary Actions of his were no proper Pattern for us, in the Diſpenſation of our Charity, but that we anſwer the Intent of the Precept, if we do what is equivalent in the reſpect of Charge, and more advantagious to them and their Families, by ſending them Meat or Money to refreſh them at Home.

Q. *But why are we not to invite our* Relations *and* rich Neighbours *to our Feaſts?*

A. The Words in the Text are, *When thou makeſt a Dinner, or a Supper, call not thy Friends, nor thy Brethren, neither thy Kinſmen, nor thy rich Neighbours.* It is to be obſerved, in our expounding of Scripture, that as comparative Particles are ſometimes uſed in a negative Senſe, (for ſo we find the chief Prieſts moving the People, that *Pilate* ſhould rather releaſe *Barrabas* to them, *i. e.* that he ſhould releaſe *Barrabas*, and not *Jeſus*) ſo negative Particles are oft uſed in a Senſe comparative, as when we read in *Proverbs* viii. 10. *Receive my Inſtructions, and not Silver,* and in *Joel* ii. 13. *Rend your Hearts, and not your Garments,* the Meaning is rather than Silver, or your Garments; in like Manner as here, *Call not thy Friends, nor Brethren,* i. e. be not ſo much concerned to call them, as the Poor. For it can hardly be thought, that our Saviour's Intent in this Precept was abſolutely to forbid all Invitations of our Neighbours and Acquaintance; but his only Meaning is, that we ſhould not invite them, out of a Proſpect of a Compenſation from them again, which is, making a Kind of Traffick with our Generoſity; but, inſtead of this, that we ſhould expend our Money in the Exerciſe of Charity to ſuch as are in no Condition to make us a Retribution.

Q. *From the 16th to the 24th Verſe is related the Parable of a Feaſt, the inviting of the Gueſts, and other Circumſtances; which pray explain and illuſtrate?*

A. From the enſuing Parable it appears, that the Kingdom of God, here, does not ſignify the Kingdom of Heaven, in its moſt exalted Senſe; but only the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, whereof this carnal *Jew* here ſpeaks, according to the received Senſe of his Nation, as of a glorious temporal Kingdom, in which the *Jews* ſhould lord it over the *Gentile* World, enjoy their Wealth, and be provided with all thoſe earthly Bleſſings and Delights, in which they placed their Felicity.

If we compare the Emblem of a Feaſt, repreſenting the Rejecting of the *Jews*, and the Call of the *Gentiles*, with the Paſſages in *Matt.* xxii. 2. we may be ſatisfied, that by the Kingdom of Heaven is here repreſented the Goſpel Diſpenſation; and this, as it miniſters true Plenty and Pleaſure, all that Men can want, and all they can wiſh, to render them perfectly happy, is compared to a Feaſt. The Bounty and infinite Love of Almighty God are ſignified by the Greatneſs of that Supper; and the Multitudes bidden to it. The firſt Bidding implies all the previous Notices of the *Meſſiah*, which by the Law and the Prophets were intended, to prepare the *Jews* for the Reception of him and his Doctrine. The ſecond Bidding, when all Things were ready, ſeems to import all that *Jeſus* did, and taught, and ſuffered for their Converſion and Salvation, and all the Teſtimonies and Exhortations of his Apoſtles and other Preachers of the Goſpel, to the ſame Purpoſe. The Excuſes ſent for their Abſence, are the Prejudices, and Paſſions, and worldly Intereſt, which did not only hinder thoſe *Jews* from coming into the Faith, but diſpoſed them likewiſe to treat all Attempts to win them over, with the utmoſt Obſtinacy and Contempt. The Gueſts brought in from abroad to ſupply their Places, are the *Gentile* World, to whom (after that the *Jews had thruſt it from them*) the ſubſequent Tenders of this Grace and Salvation were made: And the declaring that none of thoſe, who were bidden, ſhould take of this Supper, denote the giving thoſe *Jews* over to a reprobate Senſe, and leaving them under that Infidelity and Perverſeneſs, in which they continue hardned to this very Day.

Q. *In the 26th Verſe we are, in Effect, commanded to* hate our neareſt Relations; *how is this conſiſtent with the Precept of* loving one another?

A. The Meaning of the Words in the Text, *If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Siſters, yea, and his own Life alſo, he cannot be my Diſciple,* in this Place is not, that a Man ſhould, properly ſpeaking, hate his Father and his Mother: For certainly our bleſſed Lord, who enjoins us to love our Enemies, would never make it our Duty to hate our Parents: And therefore the Word *Miſein* (which is an *Hebraiſm*) muſt neceſſarily here be taken in a lower Senſe, *viz.* *to Love or Eſteem leſs*, in the ſame Manner as it is ſaid of *Leah*, that *Jacob hated her*, *Gen.* xxix. 31. *i. e.* did not love her ſo well as he did *Rachel:* For that *this* and no *more*, is here the Import of the Expreſſion is plain from a parallel Text, *He that loveth Father and Mother, more than me, is not worthy of me.*

Q. *What do we learn from the Parables of the* wiſe Builder, *and the* politick King?

A. By theſe two Parables of the wiſe Builder, and and the politick King, our Lord adviſes all his Followers to ſit down and conſider to weigh well, and caſt up before-hand, what it is like to coſt them to go thro' with their Profeſſion of Religion: This, he tells us, common Prudence will direct us to do in other Caſes; particularly, when we either go to build or to fight; as a Man who intends to build, will conſult whether he is able to defray the Expence; and as a King who goes to war, will conſider what Strength he has to make Oppoſition; ſo ſhould Perſons engage in Religion; not raſhly, but adviſedly, with Conſideration and Judgment. Before we engage in the ſpiritual Combat, it will be proper for us to conſider the Difficulty of the Battle; what proud *Leviathans* we have to ſtruggle with, what mighty Giants to encounter, even the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. But then we muſt be careful, that our Deliberations and Conſideration of Difficulties and Dangers may not deter us from, but work in us a ſteady Reſolution for the Combat, looking up to *Chriſt* for his Auxiliary Aid, and Strength, to render us victorious; who, though of ourſelves we can do nothing, yet *yet may do all Things through* Chriſt *that ſtrengthens us?*

Hence learn, That thoſe who take up the Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*, without conſidering the Dangers and Difficulties, the Trials and Troubles, the Afflictions and Temptations, that may accompany it, will never hold out in the ſpiritual Warfare, but either fall in it, or run from it.

Chap. XV.

The Phariſees *murmur againſt* Chriſt, *becauſe he receives Sinners; he juſtifies himſelf by the Parable of the loſt Sheep, of the Piece of Silver, and prodigal Son, whom his Father receives with Joy, and defends againſt his murmuring Brother.*

Q. WHO *are meant by the* Sinners, *Ver.* 1. *and why were the* Scribes *and* Phariſees *offended with* Chriſt *for converſing with ſuch?*

A. They, whom the Scripture generally, and the *New Teſtament* in particular, characterized by the Name of *Sinners*, are the habitual and obdurate, the great and eminent Offenders.

The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* looked upon the Publicans as unfit to be converſed with upon any Account, even though it was to reclaim them from their evil Courſes. Our Saviour had told them, that he converſed among ſuch People, as their Phyſician, and not as their Companion; and that, therefore, his proper Buſineſs was among ſuch Patients: But this Apology would not ſilence their Murmuring, becauſe their Opinion was, that God had caſt off all Care of them, and never intended to grant them Repentance unto Life.

Q. *Pray ſhew the Conſiſtency of the Parable of the* loſt Sheep, *with the Thing intended to be repreſented by it?*

A. Here *Chriſt* ſets ninety and nine juſt Perſons, in Oppoſition to one Sinner; not that it is ſo in Proprotion; for there are very few who live according to the Rule that is preſcribed them; but becauſe, even upon a Suppoſition that it were ſo, ſuch is the Value of our immortal Souls, that great Care and Pains ought to be taken even for the Sake of one.

A Sheep, when once it has ſtray'd away, is a Creature remarkably ſtupid and heedleſs: It goes wandering on, without either Power or Inclination to return back, though each Moment it is in Danger of becoming a Sacrifice to every Beaſt of Prey that meets it. And ſuch, in Truth, is the Condition of People addicted to Vice, when they have broken out of God's Fold, and forſaken the pleaſant Paſtures which he provides for them. They grow careleſs and inconſiderate, and are expoſed to Snares and Temptations every Moment. They are hardened by Cuſtom; are depraved in their Affections and Judgments; are neither diſpoſed to grow wiſer, nor of themſelves capable of conquering inveterate Habits of Vice, though they, now and then, ſhew ſome good Inclination to attempt it.

Q. *What Inſtructions did* Chriſt *deſign to convey to us by the Parable of the* loſt Piece of Money?

A. By the Comparion of a *loſt Piece of Money*, we are given to underſtand, that God eſteems the Souls of Men precious, and reckons them among his Wealth, and his Treaſures: And this, indeed, they are, made and formed by his own Hand, impreſſed with his own Image and Superſcription, and from that Stamp, which carries a Reſemblance to the great King of the whole World, deriving all their Currency and Values. But when they abandon God's Laws, and forſake the divine and rational Life; a Life of Goodneſs and Wiſdom, renounced for any Senſuality and Madneſs, and Miſchief, then they are loſt; loſt to themſelves, and loſt to God. Then this Coin is debaſed, the Impreſſion obliterated and gone, and that Piece of Money, as to the Worth and Uſe of it, is, in a Manner, as if it were no longer in being.

Q. *What do you remark upon the Parable of the* Prodigal Son?

A. The Parable of the *Prodigal Son* is deſervedly reckoned a Maſter-piece, and what cannot be paralell'd by any of the Apologues or allegorical Writings of Heathen Authors. It is carried on and conducted with admirable Wiſdom and Proportion in the Parts, as well as in the Whole, and there is ſo exact a Relation, between the Things preſented, and the Repreſentation of them, that the moſt elevated Underſtanding will admire, and the loweſt Capacity diſcover the excellent and moſt uſeful Moral that lies under ſo thin a Veil.

Chap. XVI.

By the Similitude of an unjuſt Steward, Chriſt *exhorts them to make Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs; ſhews that no Man can ſerve two Maſters; reproves the covetous* Phariſees; *teaches, that the Law muſt be fulfilled to a Tittle. The Parable of the rich Man and poor* Lazarus.

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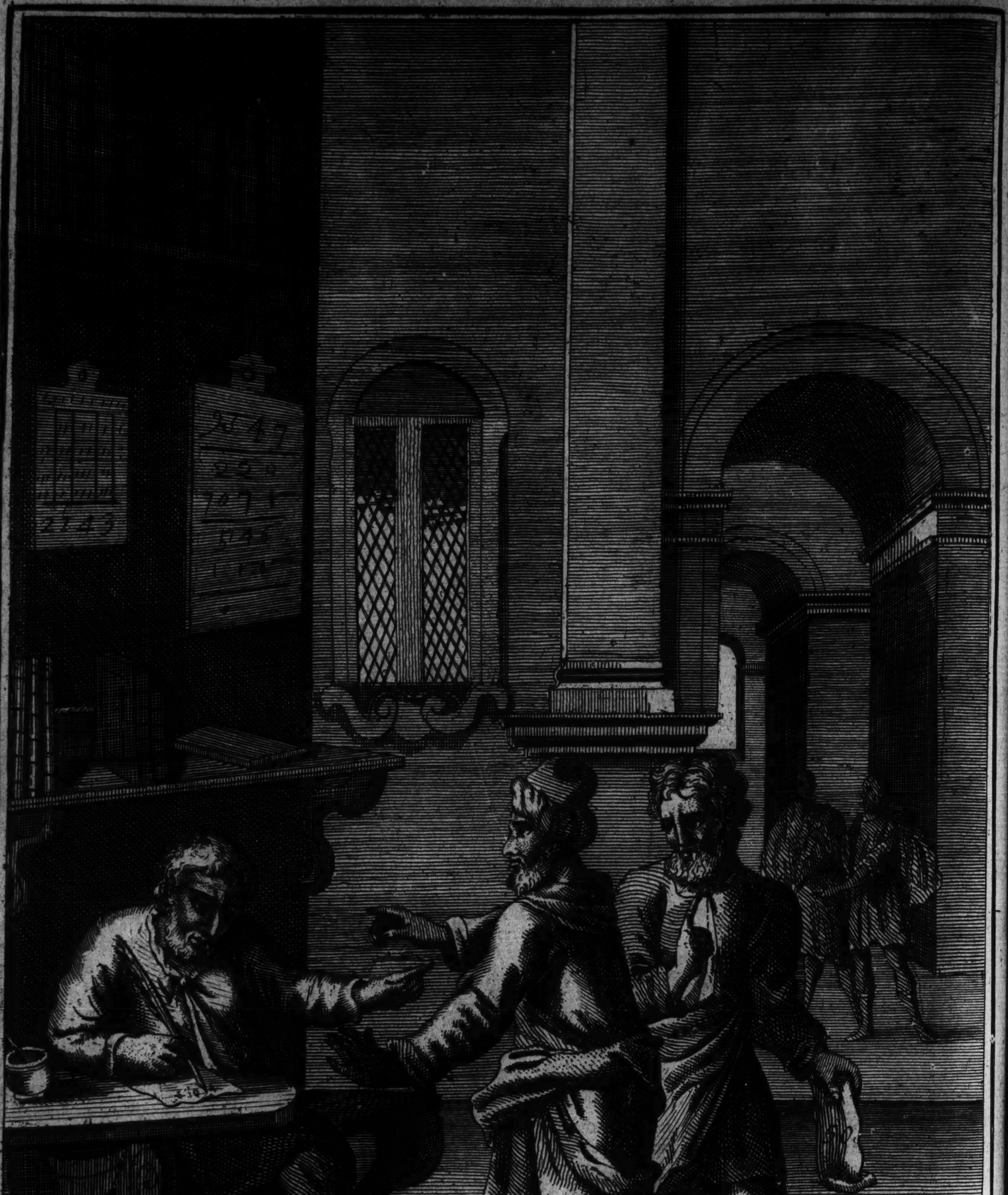
St. LUKE CHAP. XVI. v. 5.



The unjust Steward.

Q. *WHAT is the Import of the Parable of the unjuſt Steward?*

A. There is a good deal in this and the following Parable, that alludes to the Notions of the *Jewiſh Rabbins*, and their Manner of expreſſing them. "The Fruits of the Earth (ſays one of their Doctors) are like a Table in an Houſe; the Owner "of this is God: Man, in this World, is as it "were, the the Steward of this Houſe; if he be"haves himſelf well, he will find favour in the "Eyes of his Lord, if otherwiſe, he will be re"moved from his Stewardſhip," *Kimchi* on *Iſaiah* xl. And ſo the Scope of this following Parable ſeems to be this, ——— That we look on ourſelves, not as Lords of the good Things of this Life, as tho' we might uſe them at our Pleaſure, but only as Stewards, who muſt be Faithful in the Adminiſtration of them. The Parables, indeed, make mention of no other Goods but thoſe of Riches; but we muſt not therefore imagine, that rich Men only ſtand in the Capacity of Stewards, ſince every Advantage of Nature, or of Grace, as well as thoſe of Fortune, our Life, our Health, our Strength, our Wit and Parts, our Knowledge natural and acquired, our Time, our Leiſure, our every Ability, our every Opportunity, our every Inclination to do well, are all our Maſter's Goods, all intruſted with us; all capable of benefiting others, and will all, at laſt, be brought to our Account.

Q. *Why does our Saviour* commend the unjuſt Steward?

A. The *unjuſt Steward* is commended for acting thus wiſely, that is, diſcreetly, according to the Wiſdom of the Men of this World, whoſe Concern is only for the Things of this Life. *Chriſt* commends him, not abſolutely as a fit Example to be follow'd in waſting his Maſter's Goods, but comparatively, as being worthy to be ſo far imitated by the Children of Light, as to take the ſame Care to ſecure Heaven, as others do to get the World. *Chriſt* commends him no farther than we do a Perſon, when we ſay, ſuch an one is a ſhrewd Man for the World. The Steward is here applauded, not for his Diſhoneſty, but for his Policy, Shrewdneſs, and Sagacity, having done cunningly for himſelf, tho' knaviſhly for his Maſter; from whence our Saviour draws this Concluſion; *That the Children of this World are, in their Generation, wiſer than the Children of Light.*

Q. *In what Senſe do you take that Command of our Saviour,* Make yourſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs, *Ver.* ix?

A. Mammon, or *Mammona,* is a *Syriac* Word, and properly denotes Riches, or a Treaſure. It comes from a *Hebrew* Root, which ſignifies *to be hid*; and is therefore thought to comprehend, not only Gold, Silver, and other Metals that are hid in the Bowels of the Earth; but likewiſe Stores of Corn, Wine, and Oil, (a great Part of the Riches of the *Eaſtern* People) which they often buried in ſubterraneous Caverns, to conceal them from their Enemies. Theſe are called the *Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs,* becauſe they frequently occaſion much Iniquity in the World, and are often acquired by very indirect Means; but our Lord, by this Expreſſion, muſt not be ſuppoſed to command Alms to be given of that which is gotten by Fraud or Injuſtice; becauſe ſuch Charity can never be acceptable to God. No, the Duty of thoſe who have acquired Wealth unrighteouſly, is to make Reſtitution to the Perſons they have injured; if theſe be dead, then to their Heirs or Executors; and the Poor are only then the Receivers of the Fruits of Injuſtice, when a Perſon is conſcious that he has been unjuſt, but does not particularly know the Perſons to whom he has been ſo.

Q. *How do you underſtand the latter Part of the ſame Verſe,* That when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting Habitations?

A. That is, when you die, and your Riches fail you, *they may receive you:* What they? Some underſtand it of the Holy Trinity, others of the Bleſſed Angels, whoſe Office it is to convoy the charitable and good Man's Soul to Heaven, its eternal Habitation. Some underſtand it of Riches themſelves, *they may receive you*; that is, your Eſtates, laid out for God in Works of Piety and Charity, may enter before you into Heaven, and open the Gates of eternal Life for you, not in the way of Merit, but in a way of Means. *They may receive you.* Some underſtand this of the Poor themſelves, whoſe Bowels our Charity have refreſh'd, that they will welcome us to Heaven, and receive us with joyful Acclamations into the eternal Manſions, which are prepared for the Merciful. Others ſay, the Words are imperſonally put for, that you may be received into Heaven when you die.

Q. *The* Phariſees, *hearing theſe Parables, which inculcated the Duties of Charity and Benevolence,* derided *him; but for what Reaſon? And what is the Import of our Lord's Anſwer to them thereupon?*

A. The *Phariſees* were notoriouſly covetous, accounting no Man happy but the rich; and becauſe the Promiſes made to the *Jews* were generally (tho' not only) of temporal Bleſſings, they reckon Poverty a Curſe, and the Poor accurſed, *John* vii. 49. Theſe *Phariſees* hearing their Covetouſneſs reprov'd, and the Doctrine of Charity inculcated, they derided him with Scorn and Contempt, turning up the Noſe, and making Mouths at him, as the original Word ſeems to import. Hereupon our Saviour ſharply reproved them for their horrible Pride, Self-juſtification, and vain Affectation of the Opinion and Eſteem of others. As if he had ſaid, You think, that becauſe you glory in your Excellencies, God glories in you too; but he who is highly eſteemed by you, is abominated by God.

Our Lord tells the *Phariſees,* that their Contempt of his Perſon and Doctrine was the more inexcuſable, becauſe they lived under the cleareſt Light of the Goſpel; for the Preaching of the Law and the Prophets continued but till *John the Baptiſt* came amongſt you; ſince which Time the Goſpel has been clearly preached, both by him and myſelf, to you; and though you *Phariſees* reject it, yet every one, that is, very many preſs into it; ſo that the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which you deride, others will embrace. He ſhews, that the Obligation of the Law was of eternal Force, and that Heaven and Earth ſhall ſooner paſs away, than the Obligation of that Law ceaſe; which yet the *Phariſees* moſt ſhamefully violated, particularly the ſeventh Commandment, which they broke, by permitting and practiſing Divorces, upon unjuſtifiable Grounds.

Q. *Is the Hiſtory of the* rich Man *and* Lazarus, *real, or parabolical?*

A. Whether this Repreſentation, which our Saviour here makes of the different Fates of the rich and poor Man, be a Parable or a real Hiſtory, is a Matter, wherein ſeveral Commentators are not agreed. We are told, however, that in ſeveral Manuſcripts, both *Greek* and *Latin*, there are theſe Words in the Beginning of the 19th Verſe, *He ſpake to them another Parable*; and that this very Parable is in the *Gemara Babylonicum*, from whence it is cited by the learned *Sheringham*, in his Preface to his *Ioma*; as indeed, if we look into the Circumſtances of it, ſuch as the rich Man's *lifting up his Eyes in Hell*, and ſeeing *Lazarus* in *Abraham*'s Boſom; his Diſcourſe to *Abraham*; his Complaint, of being tormented with Flames, and his Deſire that *Lazarus* might be ſent to cool his Tongue, or at leaſt to convert his ſurviving Brethren: If (together with the great Gulph that is fixed between the two Places of Bliſs and Torment) we do but conſider theſe Particulars, I ſay, we muſt needs conclude, that, as they cannot be underſtood of any departed Soul, in a literal Senſe, they muſt be an allegorical Repreſentation of Things inviſible, by Terms, in ſome Meaſure, ſuitable to the Opinion of the *Jews*, concerning the State of Souls after Death.

Q. *What is the Signification of the Word* Lazarus?

A. Lazer, which, according to moſt, is but a Contraction from *Eleazer*, is the very ſame with *Aniachad*, a poor Man, in the *Gemara*, and properly ſignifies *one without Help*, or rather *one that has God for his Help*: But, in the Times of our bleſſed Saviour, we may obſerve, that it was a common Name among the *Jews*, and given to Men of ſome Diſtinction; as we find it was to the Brother of *Martha* and *Mary*.

Q. *What is meant by* Abraham's Boſom, *whither* Lazarus *was carried by Angels, Ver.* 22.?

A. The *Garden of* Eden *and* Paradiſe, the *Throne of Glory*, and *Abraham's Boſom*, were common Expreſſions among the *Jewiſh* Doctors, to denote a future State of Felicity; for ſo *Joſephus*, in the Diſcourſe of the *Maccabees*, ſays of good Men, that *they are gathered to the Region of the Patriarchs, and that* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob, *do receive their Souls*: And they tell us farther, that the Souls of ſuch Men are carried thither by Angels; for ſo the *Targum* on *Cant.* iv. 12. ſays, that *no Man hath Power to enter into the Garden of* Eden, *but the Juſt, whoſe Souls are carried thither by the Hands of good Angels.* Our Commentators, however, have perceived ſomething peculiar in the Phraſe of *Abraham*'s *Boſom*. They imagine, that the *Jewiſh* Notion of Paradiſe was, a Place abounding with Delights, and perpetual Feaſtings, where *Abraham*, the great Founder of their Nation, enjoys the uppermoſt Place at the Table; and while all his Children ſit down with him, ſome at a nearer, and ſome at a farther Diſtance from him, he who has the Honour to recline upon his Boſom, (as *Lazarus* is here repreſented) is in a higher Degree of Felicity than ordinary. But others deride all this Notion, and aſſert, that *Abraham*'s *Boſom* was ſo called, not from any Poſture of Gueſts at Table, but from little Children, whom their tender Parents do ſometimes take in their Boſom, and ſometimes cauſe them to ſleep there. For ſince, *thoſe that die in the Lord*, ſay they, are ſaid to ſleep or *reſt from their Labours*, where can they be ſaid to enjoy reſt or Sleep better, than in the Boſom of the Father of the Faithful?

Q. *The rich Man's Torments are very particularly deſcribed: Are we to take this Deſcription as a real Repreſentation of Hell-Torments, or only figuratively?*

A. A great deal of this, concerning the Torments of the rich Man, is to be taken in a figurative Senſe; but our Saviour might poſſibly inſert this Paſſage in the Parable, on purpoſe to ſtrike at a vain Imagination, which ſome of the *Jews* were apt to entertain, *viz. That Hell-Fire had no Power over the Sinners of* Iſrael, *becauſe* Abraham *and* Iſaac *came down thither to fetch them from thence*; which could not fail of being effectually confuted, when they heard *Abraham*, as it were, with his own Mouth, declaring that no Help was to be expected from him, when once they were got into that Place.

Q. Abraham *refers the rich Man's Friends to* Moſes, *and* the Prophets, *Ver.* 29. *What does he intimate thereby?*

A. Moſes and the Prophets comprehend all the ſeveral Diſpenſations of God's Mercy, as expreſſed either in the *Old* or *New Teſtament*. They ſignify the whole revealed Will of God, and whatever he hath ſet down therein, as neceſſary to our attaining eternal Life and Happineſs. Whatever Doctrine can be proved out of them, we are bound to embrace it, without a new Miracle; as on the other Hand, whatever Doctrine is inconſiſtent with them, we muſt reject, though an *Angel from Heaven*, or one from the Dead ſhould come and preach it to us.

Q. *But why ſhould* Abraham *ſuppoſe, that they would* not repent though one roſe from the Dead?

A. Becauſe ſuch a one could come with no greater Authority, deliver no better Motives to Repentance, nor give them any greater Aſſurance of the Truth of what he ſaid, than what they had already. That a Reſurrection from the Dead was not ſufficient to convince them, is plain from hence, that our Saviour had raiſed *Lazarus*, and yet the Phariſees were not the more obedient to his Doctrine. Nay, tho' they had the moſt clear Proofs of his own Reſurrection, from the Teſtimony of their own Prophets, and their Guards that kept the Sepulcher; from the Teſtimony of their own Senſes, of the Apoſtles, and five hundred Witneſſes at once; yet all this was inſufficient to reclaim that wicked Generation for their Iniquity, or to move them to Repentance.

Chap. XVII.

Chriſt *dehorts from giving Offence, and admoniſhes them to forgive one another. The Diſciples pray for Increaſe of Faith, and deſcribes his Power; tells them in what Manner his Kingdom ſhall come. Ten Lepers cleanſed, but one only thankful. A Deſcription of the laſt Times, compared with thoſe of* Noah *and* Lot.

Q. WHAT *does our Saviour teach us by the Parable of the* unprofitable Servant?

A. By this Parable is ſhewn, that God neither is, nor can be a Debtor to any of his Creatures for the beſt Service they are able to perform; and that they are ſo far from meriting a Reward of Juſtice, that they do not deſerve a Return of Thanks:

Three Arguments our Saviour makes uſe of to prove this.

1. In Reſpect to God, who is our abſolute Lord and Maſter; and the Argument lies thus, If earthly Maſters do not owe ſo much as Thanks to their Servants, for doing that which is commanded them, how much leſs can God owe the Reward of eternal Life to his Servants, when they are never able to do all that is commanded them, in a perfect and ſinleſs Manner?

2. In Reſpect to ourſelves, who are his Bond-Servants, his ranſomed Slaves, and conſequently we are not our own Men, but his who redeemed us; and accordingly do we owe him all that Service, yea more than all that we are able to perform; and therefore whatever Reward is promiſed, or given, it is wholly to be aſcribed to the Maſter's Bounty, and not to the Servant's Merit.

3. To merit any Thing by good Works is impoſſible, in Regard of the Works themſelves; becauſe all that we can do, although we do all that is commanded us, is but our Duty. The Argument runs thus; To bounden Duty belongs no Reward of Juſtice; but all we do, or are capable of to God, is bounden Duty; therefore there is due to us no Reward of Juſtice, but of free Mercy. From the whole we learn, 1. That we are wholly the Lord's, both by a Right of Creation, and Redemption alſo. 2. That as his we are, ſo him we ought to ſerve, by doing all thoſe Things he hath commanded us. 3. That when we have done all, we are to look for a Reward, not of Debt, but of Grace. 4. That were our Service abſolutely perfect, yet could it not merit any Thing at the Hand of Juſtice; *When you have done all, ſay, we are unprofitable Servants.*

Q. *What is obſervable in our Saviour's Cure of the ten Lepers?*

A. Though the *Samaritans* were bitter Enemies to the *Jews*, and had been guilty of great Incivility towards himſelf in particular, yet he beſtows the Favour of a Miracle upon them. Though the Lepers by the Law were reſtrained from all other Society, yet the Law did not reſtrain them from converſing with one another: Accordingly theſe ten Lepers get together, and are Company for themſelves. Though *Jews* and *Samaritans* could not endure one another, yet here in Leproſy they accord; here was one *Samaritan* Leper with the *Jewiſh*. Common ſuffering had made them Friends, whom Religion had disjoined. Theſe Lepers jointly apply themſelves to *Chriſt* the great Phyſician; teaching us our Duty, to join our ſpiritual Forces together, in our Addreſſes to the Throne of Grace.

Obſerve the Attention *Chriſt* lends to their Cry; their Diſeaſe is cured e'er it can be complained of; *Go ſhew yourſelves unto the Prieſts*, ſays *Chriſt*, and in their going they are cleanſed; to ſhew, that as the Power that healed them was wholly *Chriſt*'s, ſo ſhould the Praiſe be alſo.

Chriſt gives two Reaſons for commanding them to go to the Prieſts. 1. In Compliance with the ceremonial Law, which required the Leper to be brought to him, to judge whether he was healed or not; and if ſo, to receive the Offering preſcribed in Token of Thankfulneſs. 2. For the Trial of their Obedience. Had they ſtood upon Terms with *Chriſt*, and ſaid, Alas! to what Purpoſe is it to ſhew ourſelves to the Prieſts; what Good can their Eyes do us? Had they thus expoſtulated, they had not been cured. What Command ſoever we receive from *Chriſt*, we muſt rather conſider the Authority of the Commander, than the Weight of the Thing commanded; for God delights to try Obedience by ſmall Precepts.

All were healed, but only one was thankful; and he was a *Samaritan*; none of the *Jewiſh* Nation, but a Stranger. He ſingly returns Thanks; he gets away from his Fellows, to make his Acknowledgement; it is much better to go the right Way alone, than to err with Company.

In the Face of theſe ten Lepers, we may, as in a Glaſs, behold the Face and Complexion of Mankind. How few are there, ſcarce one in ten, who, after ſignal Mercies, return ſuitable Thanks? Men howl to God upon their Beds, but run from him as ſoon as they are raiſed up by him.

What an exact Account does *Chriſt* keep of his diſpenſed Favours? Were there not Ten cleanſed? He forgets our Sins, but records his own Mercies. The thankful Leper was a *Samaritan*; the nine unthankful were *Iſraelites*. Hence learn, that the more we are bound to God, the more ſhameful is our Ingratitude towards him.

Q. *How do you underſtand the laſt Clauſe of the laſt Verſe,* Whereſoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gather'd together?

A. Theſe Words, which our Saviour here makes proverbial, ſeem to have been borrowed from that Paſſage in *Job*, where he ſpeaks of the Eagle in theſe Words; *She dwelleth, and abideth on the Rock, upon the Crag of the Rock, and the ſtrong Place, from thence ſhe ſeeketh the Prey, and her Eyes behold afar off. Her young ones alſo ſuck up Blood, and where the Slain are, there is ſhe,* Job xxxix. 28, *&c.* Upon the Account of the Swiftneſs, the Strength and Invincibleneſs of this Bird, no doubt it was, that the *Romans* made the Eagle their Enſign in War; and therefore our Saviour, by making uſe of this Expreſſion, gives us to underſtand, that the *Romans* would come upon the *Jews* with a ſudden Deſtruction; ſurround them ſo, that there ſhould be no eſcaping their Hands; and in whatſoever Country they found them, there put them all to the Sword. For the Eagle mentioned in *Job*, is by Tranſlators rendered by a Word, which ſignifies a Vulture; a Bird conſecrated to *Mars*, becauſe it loves to feed upon Man's Fleſh, and therefore, by a Kind of natural Inſtinct, *travels along with Armies, in Expectation of the Carcaſſes that fall there.* Nor is it an uncommon Thing for the Prophets to expreſs the *Day of God's Vengeance* under the Idea of a *Feaſt*, which he hath prepared for the ravenous Birds and Beaſts of the Field; for thus ſaith the Lord, *Speak unto every feathered Fowl, and to every Beaſt of the Field, aſſemble yourſelves and come gather yourſelves on every Side to my Sacrifice, that I do ſacrifice for you, even a great Sacrifice upon the Mountains of* Iſrael, *that ye may eat Fleſh, and drink Blood, even the Fleſh of the Mighty, and the Blood of the Princes of the Earth,* Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18. *Vid.* Iſa. xxxiv. 6. and Jer. xlvi. 10.

Chap. XVIII.

Chriſt *exhorts them to be conſtant in Prayer, by the Similitude of an importunate Widow; declares that he hears and juſtifies penitent Sinners, by the Similitude of a Phariſee and a Publican. Little Children brought to* Chriſt. *He teaches the Ruler* *what he muſt do to inherit eternal Life, and that the Rich are ſcarcely ſaved; promiſes great Recompence to thoſe that forſake all and follow him; foretels his Sufferings and Reſurrection; and, near* Jericho, *opens the Eyes of a blind Man.*

Q. WHAT *do we learn from the Parable* of the unjuſt Judge?

A. Tho' it were Blaſphemy to think, that God acts upon the ſame Motives with the unjuſt Judge, in the Parable, yet this we may learn from the Nature of the Parable, that, if a Perſon, who neither has any Senſe of Religion or Humanity, may be ſuppoſed to be ſo far prevailed upon by the earneſt Prayer of a miſerable neceſſitous Creature, as to grant the Requeſt made to him, and to adminiſter Relief to the Supplicant, meerly upon the Continuance and Importunity of the Petitions, that are put up; how much more ought we to think, that God, who is infinite Goodneſs itſelf, who is always kind and bountiful to his Creatures, who delights to do them Good, even without their deſiring it, and who is able to do them Good, with much leſs Pains, than they can requeſt it; how much more ought we to think, I ſay, that this God, upon our earneſt and hearty Prayer to him, (eſpecially if we be importunate, and perſevering in our Devotions) will return us a kind Anſwer, and grant us ſuch Supplies, ſuch Protection, or Aſſiſtance, as ſhall be needful for us.

Q. Chriſt *exhorting Men to perſevere in Prayer, Verſe* 1. *adds,* and not to faint; *which pray explain?*

A. Dr. *Hammond* ſays, That by the Explanation which *Heſychius* and *Phavorinus* gives of the *Greek Word*, it ſignifies Negligence or Careleſſneſs. The other Rendrings of the Word by *not to faint*, ſeems grounded on a Conjecture of a different Reading of the *Greek* Word; whereas the Manuſcripts agree in this other Reading, and the Importance of the Parable very well ſuits with it, which is to ſtir us up to Diligence and Importance in Prayer, *to pray at all Times*; anſwerable to which is the Parable, Verſe 5. that is, *coming perpetually, conſtantly*, according to the Importance of the *Hebrew* Word; and therefore the *Syriac* here reads, *coming at all Times*, that is, never to omit the conſtant, frequent, ſet Hours of performing this Duty. So likewiſe 2 *Cor.* iv. 1. *Having this Miniſtry*, this Office intruſted to us, *We are ſlothful, or negligent in it.* So *Gal.* vi. 9. *When we are doing Good let us not be ſlothful*, but as Men that have a ſure Reward in their Eye. And in the ſame Manner, 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 13. *Be ye not negligent in doing Good.* Only it is to be obſerved, that the *Greek* Word ſometimes ſignifying an idle, ſluggiſh, baſe Perſon, ſo alſo a fearful puſillanimous, cowardly Perſon; ſo the *Greek* Word here render'd *to faint*, in ſome Places, being by the Context, concerning Afflictions, determined to it, ſignifies, *to be diſcouraged, to play the Coward.* So 2 *Cor.* iv. 16. when upon the Conſideration of the Afflictions which attend the Preaching of the Goſpel, he yet reſolves that the Gain which they are to receive by it, is more than the Loſs of Life itſelf to him, and thereupon contrary to all Diſcouragements, he ſays, *We are not afraid or diſcouraged*; or, *if our outward Man be deſtroy'd*, if we ſhould ſuffer Affliction, even to death itſelf, yet, &c. So *Epheſ.* iii. 13. *Wherefore I beſeech you not to be diſcouraged*, or afraid or diſheartened, in your *Chriſtian* Courſe, on Occaſion of my Afflictions ſuffered for you, for this (that I ſuffer for you) is your Glory, Matter of Incitement, not of Diſcouragement to you. And theſe are all the Places where the Word is uſed in the *New Teſtament.*

Q. *Our bleſſed Lord, in order to explain and illuſtrate the Duty of Prayer, introduces a* Phariſee *and a* Publican *praying in the Temple: What does this Parable teach us?*

A. Our Lord illuſtrates this Doctrine of conſtant and importunate Prayers by the Parable of the *Phariſee* and *Publican* praying in the Temple; the Scope of which is to reprove and condemn the *Phariſees*, and in them all other Self-juſticiaries, who valuing and truſting to their own Righteouſneſs, deſpiſed others, as vile Perſons, whoſe Religion is not accompanied with Oſtentation, and who pretend not to ſuch extraordinary Degrees of Sanctity as themſelves.

This Parable likewiſe ſhews, That an humble ſelf-condemned Sinner, who, though he has been wicked, is not ſenſible of it, and with Shame and Sorrow confeſſes it before God, is more acceptable than he that vaunts of his Virtue, and reſts in the outward Duties of Religion; his Pride and Exaltation of himſelf, ſhall abaſe him; whilſt the other's Humility ſhall exalt him. This is the general Scope of the Parable. The Obſervations that naturally ariſe from it are theſe.

1. The *Phariſee* and the *Publican* both pray together in the Place of Prayer, the Temple, and they both pray with and within themſelves: Where the Duty and Action are the ſame; there may be a vaſt Difference in the Purpoſe and Intention: Doth an humble Saint pray? So may a haughty Hypocrite; *Two Men went into the Temple to pray, the one a* Phariſee, *the other a* Publican.

2. The *Phariſee*'s Prayer, *He ſtood and pray'd with himſelf, God I thank thee*, &c. Where note his Geſture, *He ſtood and pray'd*: Standing and kneeling are praying Poſtures, but ſitting is a rude Indecency, except in Caſes of neceſſity. In Prayer, ſays pious Biſhop *Hall*, I will either ſtand as a Servant to my Maſter, or kneel as a Subject to my Prince. It is ſaid *He pray'd*; but here is not one Petition but Thankſgiving, *God I thank thee, &c.* Hence learn, that Thankſgiving is a Part of Prayer; *Hannah*'s Prayer, as it is called, 1 *Sam.* ii. is a Canticle or Song of Praiſe; we then pray beſt, when we praiſe God moſt. Again, ſee the *Phariſee*'s Pride; he ſhews not his Miſery, but his Bravery; he brings God Almighty in a Reckoning of his Services; *I faſt twice a Week, I give Alms of that I poſſeſs*, and thanks God more that others were bad, than that himſelf was good; had he, with an humble Mind, thanked God for his reſtraining Grace, that though he was not ſo good as he ſhould be, yet that he was not ſo bad as ſome others, this had been no Fault; but when he comes before God with a proud and ſcornful Mind, inwardly pleaſed that others were ſo bad, and worſe than himſelf; this is a Wickedneſs incident to none but deviliſh Diſpoſitions. This Hypocrite triumphs over and inſults the poor *Publican*; he would ſeem to thank God, that he was not ſo bad as the *Publican* when indeed he was glad that the *Publican* was not ſo good as himſelf.

3. The *Publican*'s Behaviour, in a humble Sight and Senſe of his own Sinfulneſs and Unworthineſs,

He ſtood a far off, probably in the Court of the *Gentiles*, where all Sorts of Sinners might come; acknowledging thereby, that he was unworthy to come near the holy Majeſty of God, not preſuming to lift up his Eyes to Heaven, that Place of perfect Holineſs and Purity; but like a true ſelf-condemned Penitent, ſmote upon his Breaſt, and in bitter Remorſe of Soul, ſaid, *God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

Laſtly, the *Publican* being thus condemned of himſelf, departs juſtified by God; *He went down to his Houſe juſtified rather than the Phariſee.* Hence learn, that a penitent Sinner, who is, indeed, poor in Spirit, is far more eſteemed of God, than he that makes long Prayers, faſts often, tythes all his Subſtance, and prides himſelf in this. Without Humility all is Vain-glory, and Hypocriſy; and the ſeeming moſt ſanctified Perſon that has it not, is like a painted Sepulcher, beautiful without, but all Rottenneſs within.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words in the 8th Verſe*, When the Son of Man cometh, ſhall he find Faith in the Earth?

A. If by the Son of Man's coming, we underſtand *Chriſt*'s coming to Judgment againſt *Jeruſalem*, then the Senſe is this; that when he comes to take Vengeance on the obſtinate *Jews*, and to deſtroy their City, he will find but little Faith, and patient waiting for Help from God in the Land of *Judea*, and, conſequently, little importuning him with inceſſant Cries and Supplications, as the poor Widow did the unjuſt Judge.

If by the Son of Man's coming, we underſtand *Chriſt*'s coming to judge the World at the laſt Day; then the Senſe is, When he comes, he will find but few faithful ones, comparatively ſpeaking; but few ſincere and ſerious *Chriſtians*, in whom the genuine Effects and Fruits are found.

The bringing of Children to *Chriſt*; the Ruler's Queſtion to our Saviour, *what he ſhould do to inherit eternal Life*, with *Chriſt*'s Anſwer; alſo *Peter*'s Declaration, that *they had left all to follow* Chriſt, and our Lord's Reply to him, we find recorded by St. *Matthew*, to which we refer.

CHAP. XIX.

Zaccheus, *deſirous of ſeeing* Chriſt, *climbs up into a Tree; entertains him at his Houſe. A Parable of the Ten Pieces of Silver.* Chriſt *rides to* Jeruſalem. *The Multitude Praiſe him with Songs. He weeps over* Jeruſalem, *and foretels its Ruin. Purges the Temple. The chief* Prieſts *and* Scribes *lay a Snare for his Life.*

Q. I *Deſire you to give a Deſcription of* Jericho, *through which our Lord paſſed in his Way to* Jeruſalem?

A. Jericho was a wealthy City, in the Tribe of *Benjamin*, the firſt which *Joſhua* took from the *Canaanites*, and utterly deſtroy'd, with a Curſe upon him who ſhould rebuild it, *Joſhua* vi. 26. In the Days of *Ahab*, however, *Hiel*, a *Bethelite*, did rebuild it, and had the Curſe, pronounced by *Joſhua*, fully inflicted upon him, 1 *Kings* xvi. 34. After its Reſtoration, this City was ennobled by the Schools of the Prophets, for its Situation ſeems to have been pleaſant; only the Misfortune was, that the Waters of a large Spring, which aroſe not far from it, were very unwholeſome, and deſtroy'd the Fruitfulneſs of the Soil, until *Eliſha* cured it, 2 *Kings* v. 21. From which Time the Country, being well watered, became extreamly fruitful. It abounded with Gardens, and thick Groves of Palm-trees, and afforded great Quantities of Balſam, which was the beſt Commodity of the Place. The Country (according to *Joſephus*) is ſeated in a Plain, narrow, but long; for it runs out Northward to the Country of *Scythopolis*, and Southward to the Land of *Sodom*, being an hundred and fifty Miles in Length, and fifteen in Breadth, and ſeems to be the Place, which is called by St. *Matthew*, *the Region about* Jordan. As to the City itſelf, in the Time of the ſecond Temple, it yielded to none in all *Judea*, except *Jeruſalem* (from which it was diſtant about nineteen Miles) for it had a royal Palace in it, where *Herod the Great* ended his Days; an *Hyppodrome*, where the *Jewiſh* Nobility were ſhut up, on purpoſe to be ſlain, after his Death; and an *Amphitheatre*, where his Will was publickly opened and read, with other ſtately Buildings; but, at preſent, it is only a poor naſty Village of the *Arabs*.

Q. *Who and what was this* Zaccheus, *of whom ſuch honourable Things are reported in this Chapter?*

A. Whether *Zaccheus* was a *Jew* or a *Gentile*, our Commentators are not agreed. The Majority of them account him a *Jew*, but the Words of our bleſſed Saviour, *This Day Salvation is come to this Houſe, foraſmuch as he alſo is the Son of* Abraham, do very much incline us to think the contrary. Abraham *believed*, we are told, *and it was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs:* And therefore *Zaccheus* is here called his Son, becauſe he readily believed in the divine Miſſion of our Saviour *Chriſt*: *For the Seed of* Abraham *was not that only, which is of the Law, but that alſo, which is of the Faith of* Abraham, *who is the Father of us all.* It is not to be doubted therefore, but that *this Day*, in purſuance of our Lord's Declaration, *Zaccheus* was fully converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith; but whether he was afterwards ordained by St. *Peter* to be Biſhop of *Cæſarea* in *Paleſtine*, is not ſo very clear from Church-hiſtory; but that they, who advanced this Notion, may be ſuppoſed to have confounded him with another *Zaccheus*, Biſhop of that Church, who lived in the ſecond Century.

Q. *Pray interpret the Parable of a certain Nobleman going into a foreign Country, to take Poſſeſſion of his Kingdom?*

A. This Parable conſiſts of two Parts. The former of which relates to the rebellious Subjects of this Prince, who *went into a far Country to receive a Kingdom*; the latter relates to this Prince's Servants, to whom he had committed his Money for them to improve in his Abſence; and the Explication of the whole is generally ſuppoſed to be this,——The Nobleman, or Prince here, is our Lord himſelf, the eternal Son of God; his *going into a far Country to receive a Kingdom*, is his *Aſcenſion into Heaven*, to ſit down at the Right-hand of the divine Majeſty, and take Poſſeſſion of his mediatorial Kingdom; his Servants may be either his Apoſtles and Diſciples, who, upon his Return, were to give an Account of the Progreſs of his Goſpel; or *Chriſtians* in general, who, for every Talent, whether natural or acquired, are accountable. His Citizens, are queſtionleſs the *Jews*, who, not only rejected him with Scorn, but put him to an ignominious Death; and his Return is the Day of his fierce Wrath, and Vengeance upon the *Jewiſh* Nation, which came upon them, about forty Years after this Time, and was indeed ſo very terrible, as to be a kind of Emblem and Repreſentation of that great Day of Accounts, when he will render *to every one according to his Works.* It is obſerved, however, by ſome Commentators, farther, that our Lord took the Riſe of this Parable from the Cuſtoms of the Kings of *Judea* (ſuch as *Herod the Great*, and *Archelaus* his Son) who uſually went to *Rome* to receive their Kingdom from *Cæſar*, without whoſe Permiſſion and Appointment they durſt not take the Government into their Hands. In the Caſe of *Archelaus* indeed, the Reſemblance is ſo great, that almoſt every Circumſtance of the Parable concurs in him. He was this *Eugenes*, or Man of great Parentage, as being the Son of *Herod the Great*: He was obliged to go into a far Country, *i. e.* to *Rome*, to receive his Kingdom of the Emperor *Auguſtus*. The *Jews*, who hated him becauſe of his cruel and tyrannical Reign, ſent their Meſſengers after him, deſiring to be freed from the Yoke of Kings, and reduced to a Province of *Rome*: Their Complaint, however, was not heard: He was confirmed, with this remarkable Difference between his Caſe, and that in the Parable, that the *Jews*, upon their ſecond Complaint to *Cæſar*, prevailed againſt him, and procured his Baniſhment to *Vienna*.

Q. *The peeviſh* Phariſees *envying our Saviour loud the Praiſes that were given him by the Multitude, deſired him to rebuke them: But our Saviour anſwers, If thoſe ſhould hold their Peace,* The Stones would immediately cry out: *How do you underſtand theſe laſt Words?*

A. *The very Stones would proclaim his Praiſe,* is a proverbial Expreſſion, and ſignifies no more, than that God was determined to glorify our Saviour that Day; and therefore, if theſe Followers ſhould be prevailed upon to hold their Peace, and ſay nothing in his Praiſe, God would find out ſome other Means (tho' not ſo competent, perhaps) to make it effectually be known.

Q. *As he drew nearer the City,* he wept over it, *and foretels the ſad Calamities that were to befal it: But why did our Saviour weep for the Fate of this impious City; and in what Manner was his Prediction accompliſhed?*

Q. The Tears which our Saviour ſhed, upon his viewing the City and Temple, were ſuch as proceeded from a profound Charity, and deep Commiſeration of the Evils that were coming upon *Jeruſalem*; in both which Virtues he came to be an Example to us, and therefore his Behaviour, in this Reſpect, could not be unworthy of himſelf. They farther ſhew, that the Calamities which befel that impious City, might have been avoided, had they made a right Uſe of the Time of their Viſitation, otherwiſe his Tears might rather be looked upon as the Tears of a Crocodile, than thoſe of true Charity and Commiſeration.

How exactly this Prediction, concerning the Miſeries that ſhould befal *Jeruſalem*, was fulfilled by the *Romans*, we may learn by the *Jewiſh* Hiſtorian; who not only tells us, that on this very Mount *Olivet*, where our Lord ſpake theſe Words, the *Romans* firſt pitched their Tents, when they came to the final Overthrow of *Jeruſalem*; but that, when *Veſpaſian* began the Siege of it, he encompaſſed the City round about, and kept them in on every Side; that to this Purpoſe (how impracticable ſoever the Enterprize might ſeem) *Titus* prevailed with the Soldiers to build a Wall of thirty nine Furlongs, quite round the City, with thirteen Turrets on it, which, to the Wonder of the World, was compleated in three Days; and that, when this was done, all Poſſibility of eſcaping was cut off, and the greateſt Diſtreſs that ever befel a City, enſued, whereof that Author gives us a very lively, but more tragical Account.

How exactly this likewiſe was fulfilled, that *one Stone ſhould not be left on another*, the ſame Hiſtorian relates, *viz.* that *Titus* having ordered the Soldiers to lay the City level with the Ground, and to leave nothing ſtanding, but three of the moſt famous Turrets, that over-topped the reſt, as Monuments to Poſterity, of the *Roman* Power and Conduct in taking the Place, his Orders were ſo punctually executed, and all the reſt laid ſo flat, that the Place looked as if it had never been inhabited.

Q. *What is the Signification of the Word* Viſitation, *Ver.* 44?

A. The Word *Viſitation* may be taken either in a good or bad Senſe; for either the Mercies or Judgments of God; but here it denotes the former, and particularly the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, firſt by the Miniſtry of *John*, then by the Preaching of *Chriſt* himſelf, and afterwards by the Labours of his Apoſtles and Diſciples.

CHAP. XX.

The Phariſees *demand of* Chriſt *his Authority for doing thoſe Things; which he anſwers by another Queſtion concerning the Baptiſm of* John; *threatens them with heavy Judgments, by a Parable of a Vineyard. Of giving Tribute to* Cæſar. *The Reſurrection proved out of the Law of* Moſes. *He anſwers, whether* Chriſt *be the Son of* David, *and dehorts from Ambition and Hypocriſy.*

Q. WHAT *have we in this Chapter worthy Obſervation?*

A. Every Paſſage and Article of Hiſtory in this Chapter, is recorded either by St. *Matthew* or St. *Mark*, or both; and as it is not our Deſign to ſwell our Book with Notes and Obſervations we have already made, we ſhall carefully avoid, as much as poſſible, Repetitions of the ſame Things; and therefore our Notes on this Chapter, will conſequently be very ſhort.

The *Phariſees* queſtioning our Saviour's Authority, together with his Reply, we find in *Matthew*, Chap. xxi. The Parable of the Huſbandman planting a Vineyard in the ſame Chapter, and in *Mark*, Chap. xii.

The *Phariſees* ſending out their Spies, to watch and enſnare our Lord in his Words, is recorded in *Matth.* xxi. 45, 46. and in *Mark* xii. 12, 13. Whereby we ſee, as in a Glaſs, the Spirit and Genius of wicked Men filled with Malice againſt the Goſpel. They are continually ſeeking to deſtroy ſuch as have any Relation to *Chriſt*; and to effect their Ends, will judge no Means unfair; and their great Art is to repreſent them as dangerous Perſons to the civil Government; and if good Men find the ſame Treatment ſtill, they have this Comfort, *That the Diſciple is not above his Maſter, nor the*

the Servant above his Lord; for in the ſame Manner was our bleſſed Saviour himſelf uſed.

Their Attempt to enſnare our Lord about paying Tribute to *Cæſar*, we meet with, *Matt.* xxii. 16. and *Mark* xii. 13.

Our Lord having ſilenced the *Phariſees* and *Herodians*, in his Anſwer to their Queſtion about paying Tribute to *Cæſar*, he is new attacked by the *Sadducees*, who, denying the Immortality of the Soul, and the Reſurrection, put a Caſe of a Woman and her ſeven Huſbands, who were Brethren. This is likewiſe fully explained in our Notes on *Matth.* xxii. To which we ſhall here add a Remark on a Clauſe in Verſe 36. *For they are equal unto Angels.* The glorified Saints, in the Morning of the Reſurrection, ſhall be like unto the glorious Angels; not like them in Eſſence and Nature, but like them in their Properties and Qualities, namely, in Holineſs and Purity, Immortality and Incorruptibility; and alſo like them in their Way and Manner of living. They ſhall no more ſtand in need of Meat or Drink, than the Angels do; but ſhall live the ſame heavenly and immortal lives as the Angels live. There ſhall be no more Marriages among Men, than amongſt Angels. *All live unto God.* Tho' *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* were dead when theſe Words were ſpoken, yet they were not ſo in God's Eye, who was determined to raiſe them up at the laſt Day, and who, with the ſame Eye, beholds Things paſt, preſent and to come.

Our Saviour's Queſtion, How *Chriſt* could be *David*'s Son, when *David*, by Inſpiration called him Lord? is likewiſe propounded, *Matth.* xxii. To which we ſhall here add, that the Anſwer to this Queſtion had been eaſy, if the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who, *Matthew* ſays, were there alſo, had owned *Chriſt* to be the Son of God. But this they did not own, and ſo, as *Matthew* tells us, Chap. xxii. 46. *No Man was able to anſwer him a Word, neither durſt any Man from that Day forth ask him any more Queſtions.* Thus *Chriſt* nonpluſs'd all his Adverſaries.

Chriſt's Cenſure of the *Scribes* for their Pride, Vanity and Ambition, we frequently meet with in all the Evangeliſts, particularly in *Matth.* xxiii. 6, 7. and *Mark* xii. 38, 39, 40.

CHAP. XXI.

Chriſt *commends the ſmall Gift of the poor Widow; foretels the Deſtruction of the Temple, and the Deſolation of* Jeruſalem; *rehearſes the Signs that will uſher in the laſt Days. The Tribulation and Sorrow that would come on his Diſciples; promiſes his Aſſiſtance and Protection; ſhews them what to do in that Time; foretels the Signs of his laſt Coming; and exhorts to obſerve them by the Similitude of the budding Tree, and to expect his Coming with Watchfulneſs and Prayer.*

Q. THE *greateſt Part of this Chapter we find in* Matthew xxiv. *and* xxvi. *I ſhall therefore ask you but one Queſtion here, and that is, How you interpret the laſt Clauſe of Ver.* 24. *And* Jeruſalem *ſhall be trodden down of the* Gentiles, until the Times of the *Gentiles* be fulfilled?

A. Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, that the Meaning of theſe Words may be gueſſed, partly, by the Importance of the Word, *Times* or *Seaſons*, partly of the Word *fulfilled*, and partly of the Word *until.* The *Greek* Word vulgarly ſignifies *a Seaſon*, a Time deſigned and appointed (according to the Notion of the *Hebrew* Word) or elſe expected, and looked for, and in both Reſpects belongs fitly to the preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, that being a Thing that God had ſo long determined, and ſo oft foretold; and tho' the *Gentiles* foreſaw not, yet is ſaid to be expected by them, (becauſe all they could expect or deſire was really ſummed up in this) not only in that Prediction of *Jacob*, where *Chriſt* is ſtiled the *Expectation of the* Gentiles, but in St. *Paul*'s Diſcourſe of it, *Rom.* viii. 13. where *the earneſt Expectation of the Creature*, that is, the *Gentile* World, is faſtened upon this. Parallel to this is *Rom.* xi. 25. *Until the Time that the Fulneſs of the* Gentiles *enter*; which is there explained to ſignify the Multitude of *Gentiles* receiving the Faith, coming into the Church, and ſo *Fulneſs*, Ver. 12. of *Rom.* xi. and proportionably to that, their Seaſons being fulfilled, will be the preaching that Goſpel to them, which they ſhall thus receive, and which was ſo deſigned and expected for them.

Now for the *until*, where it is ſaid, *Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the* Gentiles *until theſe Seaſons of the* Gentiles *be fulfilled*, the explaining of that will be the farther clearing of the whole Matter. The treading down *Jeruſalem* by the *Gentiles* is not particularly their Victory over it by *Titus*, but their conſequent poſſeſſing of it, even till *Adrian*'s rebuilding it, and calling it by his own Name, *Silia*, and inhabited it with *Gentiles*, which ſeems to be deſcribed, *Rev.* xi. 2. By *the outer Court of the Temple being given to the* Gentiles, and ſo left out of the Meaſuring. Upon doing of this it followed, that as all the *Jews* (remaining ſuch in Oppoſition to *Chriſtians*) were utterly baniſhed the City, and a Swine's Head ſet at the Gates, to baniſh even their Eyes from it, ſo the believing *Chriſtian Jews* returned thither again from their Diſperſions, and inhabited it again, joined and made one Congregation, one Church with the *Gentiles*, which had there, by that Time, received the Faith alſo, and till then continued a diſtinct Church from the *Jews*. By which it appears, how punctually this Prediction, in our Notion, was fulfilled, that *Jeruſalem* ſhould be inhabited by the *Gentiles*, all the *Jews* in a Manner excluded, till the Time that the Goſpel had been freely preached unto the *Gentiles*, and by them, in ſome eminent Manner, been received, and then it ſhould be re-inhabited by *Jews* again, namely, the *Chriſtian Jews*, who being wrought on by Emulation of the *Gentles*, were many of them now brought to receive the Faith. See *Rom.* xi. 11, 13.

CHAP. XXII.

The Rulers conſpire to kill Chriſt. Satan *tempts* Judas *to betray him.* Chriſt *commands* Peter *and* John *to prepare the Paſſover; eats it with his Diſciples; warns them all, eſpecially* Peter, *of* Satan's *Temptation. Praying on the Mount, is ſtrengthened by an Angel. Exhorts his Diſciples to watch and pray. He is betray'd by* Judas. *One of them cuts off the Ear of a Servant to the High-Prieſt, and is cured by* Chriſt. Peter *denies him thrice; he laments his Fall.* Chriſt, *before the* Jewiſh *Council, confeſſes he is the Son of God.*

Q. THE *Hiſtory of the Chief-prieſts and* Phariſees *conſpiring againſt the Life of* Chriſt; Judas's *Contract with them to betray him; his eating the* Paſſover, *and inſtituting the* Lord's Supper; *and other Paſſages related in this Chapter, are recorded and explained in* Matt. xxvi. *and* Mark xiv. *I ſhall here mention only ſuch Things as are not before taken Notice of. What do you apprehend to be the Meaning of thoſe Words,* Ver. 44. And his Sweat was as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground?

A. The Words in the original Text, concerning our Lord's ſweating large Drops of Blood, ſignify, not that it was real Blood; but only that it was thick and viſcous, like Blood falling from the Noſe, in a ſmall Clot at the End of any one's Bleeding; but, ſince in ſome Diſtempers (as *Ariſtotle* tells us) it is no uncommon Thing for People to ſweat Blood; and, when Men are bitten with a certain Kind of Serpents in *India* (according to the Account of *Diodorus Siculus*) they are tormented with exceſſive Pains, and generally ſeized with a bloody Sweat, we cannot ſee, why this Agony of our Saviour's might not be ſo violent, as to force Blood out of his Capillary Veſſels, and mix it with Sweat.

Q. *What Occaſion had our Saviour for the Aſſiſtance of an Angel, ſince the divine Nature might have ſufficiently ſupported him?*

A. St. *Luke* is the only *Evangeliſt* that makes mention of the Attendance of an Angel upon our Saviour, in this Time of his Agony; and as there were ſeveral, both *Latin* and *Greek* Copies, that, in St. *Jerom*'s Time wanted this Part of the Hiſtory, *Epiphanius* imagines, that this was a Correction of ſome ignorant, though, perhaps, well-meaning *Chriſtians*, who, being offended at the ſuppoſed Weakneſs that appears in our Saviour, upon this Occaſion, left it out of their Copies; never conſidering that the Divinity which dwelt in him, had at this Time, ſubſtracted its Influence ſo, that being left to his human Nature only, he needed the Comfort of an Angel: Otherwiſe, as with a Word, he made the whole Band of Soldiers fall to the Ground, and with a Touch healed the Ear of *Malchus*, he even now gave ſufficient Indications of the Divinity reſiding in him.

Q. *Before our Saviour left the Houſe where he ſupped, he ſaid to his Apoſtles,* He that hath no Sword, let him ſell his Garment and buy one: *In what Senſe do you underſtand this?*

A. That this is no Command to them to buy Swords, or to uſe them in Defence of their Maſter, when he ſhould be apprehended, is apparent from his ſaying, that two Swords were enough, Verſe 38. which certainly could never be ſufficient to repel that Band of armed Men, which he foreknew would come againſt him; and from his reprehending *Peter* for uſing one in this Manner, *Matt.* xxvi. 52. which, if he intended his Words to be underſtood literally, was no diſcommendable Thing. They therefore are only an Admonition to his Apoſtles, that Times were now become ſo perilous, that if Things were to be acted by human Power, there would be more need for Swords than ever; for ſuch ſymbolical Ways of Expreſſion were very common among the *Eaſtern* People. Some Annotators, however have obſerved, that the Reaſon why any Swords (as we read but of two) were found in our Saviour's Family, was, that thereby they might ſecure themſelves from Beaſts of Prey, which, in thoſe Parts were very frequent, and dangerous in the Night-time.

CHAP. XXIII.

Chriſt *accuſed before* Pilate, *is found guiltleſs; is ſent to* Herod; *is mocked and ſent back again.* Pilate, *by the Importunity of the* Jews, *delivers him to be crucified, and in his ſtead releaſes* Barabbas. *They compel* Simon *a* Cyrenian *to bear his Croſs. He is crucified between two Thieves, and prays for them. He is reviled on the Croſs. The Superſcription over him. One of the Thieves revile him, the other is converted, and comforted by him.* Chriſt's *Death and Burial.*

Q. THE *Hiſtory of our Saviour's Examination and Trial before* Pilate, *is recorded by all four* Evangeliſts, *nor can it be diſtinctly and perfectly underſtood, without comparing one with the other. What Circumſtances are here added, we ſhall take Notice of. Had the Chief-prieſts any particular Reaſon for their mentioning* Galilee, *when they accuſed* Chriſt *to* Pilate?

A. They artfully make mention of *Galilee*, to incite *Pilate* againſt him, as a ſeditious Perſon; and to confirm their own Suggeſtion, that he was ſo, they give him Reaſon to think, that, as he was a *Galilean*, he might probably embrace the Opinion of *Judas Gaulonites*, who had held it not lawful to pay Tribute to *Cæſar*; a Notion, which the Inhabitants of *Galilee* had generally imbibed, and, upon that Account, were always prone to Sedition and Rebellion; for which ſome of them, not long before, had been ſet upon, and ſlain by *Pilate*.

Q. *Why did* Pilate *ſend* Chriſt *to* Herod?

A. *Pilate*'s Government did not extend to *Galilee*; it included *Judea* only. *Herod Antipas*, the Son of *Herod the Great*, was, at this Time, King, or *Tetrarch* of *Galilee*; *Jeſus*, conſequently was his his Subject; and therefore, according to the *Roman* Laws, it was *Pilate*'s Duty to ſend him to his proper Sovereign, eſpecially as he was accuſed of Rebellion, and a Deſign to make himſelf a King.

Q. *What do you ſuppoſe was the Quarrel between* Pilate *and* Herod?

A. It is generally thought, that the Cauſe of the Difference between *Herod* and *Pilate*, was the Maſſacre that *Pilate* made of the *Galileans*, at *Jeſalem*, in the Time of the *Paſſover*, *Luke* xiii. 1. which *Herod* reſented, as an Indignity put upon him, and an Invaſion of his Authority, who was, at that Time *Tetrarch* of *Galilee*.

Q. *Why does* Pilate *adviſe them to chaſtiſe* Chriſt, *and ſo releaſe him?*

A. The Chaſtiſement (which *Pilate* adviſed by ſcourging,) was not in order to his Crucifixion, and therefore was not that Puniſhment, which the *Romans* uſed to inflict upon Malefactors as preparative to their Execution, for *Pilate* intended it as a Means to procure his Releaſe; and therefore he ſeemed willing to conſent to it as a Puniſhment, which the *Jews* ſo commonly incticted upon thoſe, who had acted perverſly againſt their Law, and their Traditions, that he might exempt him from that Sentence, which they were ſo urgent with him to pronounce. But the Reſult of this his

Compliance was, that he neither ſaved our Lord, nor preſerved Juſtice. Inſtead of one Puniſhment, the Innocent was made to ſuffer two, being at laſt both ſcourged and crucified.

Q. Chriſt, *in the Way to Execution, obſerving ſome Women weeping for him,* Weep not for me, *ſaid he,* but weep for yourſelves and your Children: *But why ſo?*

A. The Saying of our Saviour to the Women, who lamented him as he went to Crucifixion, *Weep not for me, but for yourſelves, and your Children,* they undoubtedly had Occaſion to think of at the Siege of *Jeruſalem,* and during the War againſt the *Romans,* not only on Account of the Loſs of their Children, and the Sale of them who were under ſeventeen for Bond-ſlaves; but chiefly on the Account of that Famine in *Jeruſalem,* which forced *Mary,* the Daughter of *Eleazar,* a Woman of ſome Figure and Quality, to eat her own ſucking Child: Upon which (ſays *Joſephus*) *the Dread of Famine made Men weary of their Lives, and the Living envied the Dead, that they were taken away before the Extremity came to this Height.*

Q. *What is the Import of thoſe Words,* Ver. 30. Then ſhall they begin to ſay to the Mountains, Fall on us; and to the Hills, cover us?

A. That theſe Words are a proverbial Expreſſion, which the Prophet *Hoſea,* Chap. x. 8. makes uſe of, to denote the utter Deſpair of a People, when they ſee unavoidable Calamities coming upon them, cannot be doubted; for ſo the *Targum* upon *Hoſea* explains it, "He will bring ſuch Judgments "upon them, as will render their Condition as miſe-"rable, as if the Mountains ſhould cover them, "and the Hills fall upon them." *Iſaiah* ſpeaks of the Wicked, that *they ſhould go into the Holes of the Rocks, and into the Caves of the Earth, for Fear of the Lord,* Chap. ii. 19. And, accordingly, *Joſephus* relates of the *Jews,* that, after the taking of *Jeruſalem,* many of them hid themſelves in Vaults and Sepulchres, and there periſhed, rather than ſurrender to the *Romans.*

Q. *Does it not ſeem very ſtrange, that one of the Thieves that were crucified with our Lord, ſhould make ſo glorious a Confeſſion of his Faith in* Chriſt, *almoſt at the laſt Gaſp; unleſs we ſuppoſe he was before ſecretly one of his Diſciples?*

A. 'Tis highly probable, that this Man never knew any Thing of *Jeſus* before, otherwiſe than by common Fame; nay, that he was prepoſſeſſed againſt him as an Impoſtor, and joined with his Companion in reviling him at firſt; and therefore the greater was his Virtue in overcoming theſe Prejudices ſo ſoon, and in ſuffering the Meekneſs and Patience, the Charity and Piety of our Lord's miraculous Death to diſabuſe him. This is ſo far from making him a late Penitent, that it gives him the Glory of an early Convert; one, whoſe Heart was open to the firſt Impreſſion of Grace, and wanted not ſo much the Inclination, as the Opportunity of embracing the Truth before.

But admitting that he had ſeen and heard of *Chriſt* before, yet that he ſhould now come in to the Acknowledgement of him, and believe in him to be the *Saviour of the World,* when one of his Diſciples had betrayed, another had denied, and all of them had forſaken him; and to be *the Son of God,* and *Lord of Life,* when he was hanging on the Croſs, ſuffering the Pangs of Death, and ſeemingly deſerted by his Father; That he ſhould take Sanctuary in a dying and univerſally deſpiſed Man, publiſh his Innocence in the Face of triumphant Malice, and through the thickeſt Cloud of Shame and Suffering, that ever intercepted the Glories of the Son of God, diſcovered his divine Power, acknowledge his celeſtial Kingdom, throw himſelf upon his Protection, and call upon him, as the great Diſpoſer of Rewards and Happineſs after Death. This was a Confeſſion ſo reſolute, ſo ſingular, ſo illuſtrious, as never was out-done, as never can, in all Reſpects, be equalled, except the ſame *Jeſus* were again to be crucified: For no Man's Converſion ever had, or ever can have, upon other Terms, ſuch diſadvantageous and diſcouraging Circumſtances, as this Man laboured under, and yet ſo generouſly overcame.

Well therefore might St. *Chryſoſtom* (as he does with great Force and Eloquence) rebuke the Impudence of thoſe late Penitents, who preſume to take Sanctuary in this Example: For what Affinity, what Shadow of Reſemblance is there, between a Man ſubmitting to the firſt Impreſſion, and accepting of Offers as ſoon as made; and one, who has lived under the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, and enjoyed both the outward Calls of God's Word, and the inward Sollicitations of his Spirit, but turned the deaf Ear continually to both? Between a Man, who to our Lord paid the higheſt Degree of Homage and Reſpect, even when he had made himſelf of no Reputation, and appeared in the Guiſe of the vileſt Malefactor; and one, who, notwithſtanding his Reſurrection from the Dead, and Exaltation to Glory; notwithſtanding the Conqueſt made by the Goſpel, and the Infamy of denying him now, continues ſtill to injure and affront, to deſpiſe and defy him, in his moſt proſperous and triumphant Condition?

In a Word, no *Chriſtian,* who hath lived under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, can, at the End of his Days, plead the ſame ready Compliance to the Calls of Grace, and no Man whatever can have the Opportunity of exerting the ſame vigorous Faith; becauſe *Chriſt* could not die but once, and it was his Shame and Suffering alone, that made the Confeſſion of this Penitent ſo peculiarly glorious, and ſuch as the whole Series of a pious Life, in other Men, can hardly parallel. So that, if we are allowed to make any Uſe, or to draw any Conſolation from this Example, they muſt be no more than theſe,——That it ſupports Men with an Inſtance of a great and grievous Malefactor, received into Grace, juſt at his leaving the World, and thereupon teaches us, that no Impurities of Life, though never ſo foul; no Crimes, though never ſo black, never ſo numerous, ſhut us out from Mercy, provided we ſincerely repent; that the Grace of God can recover Wretches, even when they are at the laſt Gaſp, and juſt dropping into Perdition: But as to actual Repentance itſelf, and ſuch Grace being extended to thoſe who have been habitual, profligate Sinners, all their Lives long, the moſt that can be inferred from hence is, that ſuch a Thing may be, but it gives us no manner of Security, nor ſo much as one probable Argument, that it certainly ſhall be. This therefore is the Concluſion of the whole,——Repentance, when true, is never too late, and therefore the Thief upon the Croſs is a ſovereign Antidote againſt Deſpair: But Men may out-ſtay the Day of Grace; they may not go about the Work until it is too late, until they have loſt both the Will and the Power to repent; and therefore this Example, when truly conſidered, is an Excellent Preſervative likewiſe againſt Preſumption.

Chap. XXIV.

The Reſurrection of Chriſt declared to Mary Magdelen *and* Joanna, *by two Angels. They tell the Apoſtles, who believe not.* Chriſt *ſhews himſelf to two of his Diſciples, in their Journey to* Emmaus, *and in breaking of Bread. They return to* Jeruſalem, *and acquaint the Diſciples therewith.* Chriſt *appears to all his Diſciples, ſhews them his Hands and Feet, and eats in their Preſence; explains the Scripture to them, and promiſes his Spirit to comfort them. Having bleſſed and taken his Leave of them, aſcends into Heaven.*

Q. *Concerning what happened at the Sepulcher on the Morning of the Reſurrection, and the ſeeming Difference between the Evangeliſts, in their Account thereof, we read* Matthew. xxviii. *where every Thing is particularly explained and reconciled. We ſhall therefore proceed to other Parts of this Chapter not before taken Notice of. After our Lord was riſen, we find him diſcourſing with two Diſciples going to* Emmaus: *Pray where was this Place ſituated?*

A. Emmaus (which was afterwards made a City, and called *Nicopolis*) was, at this Time, a ſmall Village, about ſeven Miles diſtant from *Jeruſalem*, to the *Weſt*, where it is ſuppoſed, by *Bede* and others, that either *Cleophas*, or his Companion, had an Houſe; which, by their importuning *Jeſus* to go with them, ſeems not improbable, becauſe they could not propoſe to entertain him ſo commodiouſly, or hoſpitably in an Inn.

Q. *Why could not theſe Men diſcern, that the Perſon who talked with them, was Chriſt?*

A. Whether it was, that after his Reſurrection, his Perſon was ſo conſiderably changed, that thoſe who knew him before, could not eaſily diſtinguiſh him; or that he appeared in an Habit quite different from what he uſed to wear, which, for ſome Time, might hinder them from recollecting who he was, or that he ſuſpended the Operation of their Senſes, that he might have a better Opportunity to inſtruct their Underſtandings; or that, by an extraordinary Power he with-held their Eyes from perceiving him; upon which, by removing of that Impediment, they immediately knew him: Any of theſe Cauſes will anſwer the Purpoſe better, than that we ſhould impute (as ſome do) their not knowing their Maſter, to their exceſſive Grief and Sorrow.

Q. *One of theſe two Diſciples was* Cleophas; *pray who was he?*

A. Cleophas was the Brother of *Joſeph*, the Huſband of the *Virgin Mary*, and ſo the reputed Uncle of *Chriſt*, whoſe Son *Simeon*, by the joint Conſent of the Apoſtles then living, was made Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, after St. *James*, as being the neareſt of Kin to our Saviour.

Q. *Did not* Chriſt *diſſemble when he offered to go farther, and yet was prevailed on to ſtay?*

A. Jeſus ſeemed willing to go farther; and ſo very probably would have done, had not the Diſciples preſſed him to ſtay with them. But, ſuppoſing he had been reſolved to abide with them, and was minded to try the Temper of his Fellow-Travellers, we cannot from hence charge him either with Diſſimulation or Deceit; becauſe, though our Words ought to be the certain Interpreters of our Thoughts, and are therefore not to be employed ſo, as to deceive any, yet walking hath no certain Signification, nor was it ever inſtituted to be an Indication of the Mind.

Q. *What is the proper Signification of the Expreſſion,* they conſtrained him?

A. The original Word in St. *Luke*, which our Tranſlation has rendered *they conſtrained him*, in Terms, literal indeed, ſeems in this Place a little too harſh; becauſe it is very improbable (eſpecially if we conſider the Context) that theſe two Diſciples ſhould offer any Force or Violence to *Jeſus* to make him go with them.

Q. *How was it poſſible, that* Chriſt *could make his natural Body, that was lately dead and buried, viſible or inviſible as he pleaſed?*

A. Origen is of Opinion, that our bleſſed Lord, for the forty Days, that he was upon Earth after his Reſurrection, could make himſelf viſible or inviſible, when and to whom he pleaſed. It is not to be doubted, indeed but that he had the ſame Body that was depoſited in the Grave; but then, what the Powers of a raiſed and glorified Body (eſpecially when in Conjunction with the Deity) are, we cannot tell; only we may infer, that our Saviour could, at leaſt with the ſame Facility, diſappear to his Diſciples now, as he did to the *Jews*, when they were about to ſtone him, *John* viii. 53. which, it is generally ſuppoſed he did, by the Medium of a Cloud caſt over his Body.

Q. *When it is ſaid* Chriſt eat a Piece of a broiled Fiſh, *did he really eat it, or did he only ſeem to do ſo?*

A. He eat a Piece of broiled Fiſh, not to ſatiſfy any Hungar, that his Body could ſuffer after its Reſurrection, but to prove to them, that his Body was truly raiſed, and himſelf was really preſent. And, ſince it cannot be ſuppoſed, that *Chriſt*, in this Action, deſigned any Illuſion, it follows from his very eating, that his Body had thoſe Parts by which we chew our Meat, and withal a Stomach to receive it.

Q. *How did Chriſt* open their Underſtanding?

A. Our Saviour gave his Diſciples a Power to underſtand the Scriptures more perfectly; this the *Evangeliſt* tells us, *Chriſt* did by *opening their Minds, Ver.* 45. for, it is one Thing, to open the Scriptures themſelves, or to explain them; and another to open their Underſtanding, to perceive them; and *Chriſt*, very probably, did the latter, by giving them now ſome firſt Fruits of that Spirit of Prophecy, which fell more plentifully on them at the Day of *Pentecoſt*.

Q. *After Chriſt had told his Diſciples, that they ſhould be Witneſſes to all Nations of his Doctrine, Sufferings, and Reſurrection, he bids them ſtay at* Jeruſalem, until they be endued with Power from on high: *But for what Reaſon?*

A. As *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection was a Matter of Fact, it muſt be proved by the Teſtimony of Eye-witneſſes, who, if they be honeſt Men, and ſuffer the greateſt Prejudices in their Fortunes, Reputation and Life, for this Teſtimony, give us the geeater Reaſon to believe it. For their Honeſty will not ſuffer them, upon any Account whatever, to deviate from the Truth; their Intereſt and Prudence will not permit them (without any Neceſſity laid upon them) to teſtify a Falſhood, much more the groſſeſt Falſhood, to their utmoſt Damage, and without any Proſpect of Advantage; and then, if they confirm this their Teſtimony, by all Kinds of Signs, Miracles and wonderous Powers, exerciſed by themſelves, and others who embraced their Teſtimony; and if this be done in all Places, and on all Perſons, for a whole Age or Ages; this makes it a Thing impoſſible, that they ſhould thus atteſt a Lye: And therefore our Lord bids the Apoſtles ſtay at *Jeruſalem*, till they were thus empowered, by Virtue from on High, to confirm this Teſtimony.

Q. *Is the Reſurrection of our Saviour from the Dead on the firſt Day of the Week, a ſufficient Reaſon for the changing the* Jewiſh *Sabbath into that Day?*

A. The *Jewiſh* Sabbath was, at firſt, inſtituted, not barely in Commemoration of God's creating the World, but (as there is another Reaſon ſubjoined) in Memory of their Deliverance from the *Egyptian* Bondage; *For remember that thou waſt a Servant in the Land of* Egypt, *therefore the Lord thy God commandeth thee to keep the Sabbath-day*, Deut. v. 15. Now this Bondage of theirs was an Emblem of our Captivity under Sin, and their Deliverance a Type of our ſpiritual Redemption. When therefore our Redemption was accompliſhed, it became proper that the old *Jewiſh* Sabbath, that is, the Seventh-day, ſhould be paſſed over, and the firſt made Choice of, to be honoured with two ſuch glorious Miracles, as the Reſurrection of our bleſſed Lord from the Dead, and the Coming of the *Holy Ghoſt* from Heaven. After this, indeed, we find the Apoſtles frequenting the Synagogue on the *Jewiſh* Sabbath; but from the Time of their Lord's Reſurrection, they never did it (as before) according to the Commandment, but according to Cuſtom, or as the Manner was, *Acts* xvii. 6. and therefore we have no Reaſon to believe, that from the very firſt, they looked upon the antient Sabbath ſuperſeded by this other, which from the Beginning they called *the Lord's Day*; and from the Beginning employed in Acts of religious Worſhip: To which Purpoſe we find *Ignatius* exhorting *Chriſtians* not to baptize with the *Jews*, but to live according to the Lord's Day, in which our Life aroſe with him.

Q. Chriſt *tells them*, he would ſend the Promiſe of the Father upon them, *by which is to be underſtood, the Effuſion of the Spirit: But for what Purpoſe?*

A. The Reaſons, aſſignable for this wonderful Diſpenſation, the Effuſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, are, *1ſt*, To enable them to be powerful Witneſſes of our Lord's Reſurrection, *Ver.* 49. and conſequently, that he was the true *Meſſiah*, or the Prophet, who was to come into the World, and was to be the Saviour of it: And therefore St. *Peter* ſpeaks thus to the *Jews*, *Ye have killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raiſed from the Dead, of which we are Witneſſes*, Acts iii. 15. *2dly*, To enable them to give an exact Account (as far as divine Wiſdom ſaw it neceſſary) of what our Saviour did, and taught; and therefore himſelf tells them, that *the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, ſhould teſtify of him, and bring all thoſe Things to their Remembrance, which he had ſaid unto them*, John xv. 26. xiv. 26. And, *3dly*, To make them *able Miniſters of the New Teſtament*, that is, able to acquaint *Chriſtians* with all ſaving Truths, and to teach them all Things, that he commanded to be obſerved, throughout all the Ages of the Church; and upon the Strength of this Promiſe, all *Chriſtians*, in all Ages, have believed, that the Apoſtles and the Writers of the *New Teſtament*, both ſpake and wrote as they were moved, or directed by the Spirit of God, and received thoſe Doctrines they taught, or indited, *not as the Word of Men, but, as they were in Truth, the Word of God*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 13.

Q. *In what Manner did the Apoſtles witneſs to theſe Things?*

A. The Apoſtles preached in the moſt conſiderable Cities of the then-know World; as at *Antioch*, *Alexandria*, and even at *Rome* itſelf, as well as at *Jeruſalem* and *Samaria*. They taught at *Athens*, and *Corinth*, and throughout all *Greece*, in ſuch Towns as were moſt learned, moſt corrupt, and moſt idolatrous. It was in the Preſence of all Nations, of *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, of the Learned and the Ignorant, of *Jews* and *Romans*, of Princes and their People, that the Diſciples of *Jeſus Chriſt* gave Witneſs of the Wonders they had *ſeen with their Eyes, heard with their Ears, and touched with their Hands*, and particularly of their Lord's Reſurrection: Which Teſtimony they ſupported, without any Intereſt, and againſt all the Reaſons of human Prudence, even to their laſt Breath, and ſealed it with their Blood. Such was the Eſtabliſhment of *Chriſtianity*!

Q. *When* Chriſt *was about to part from his Diſciples, in order to aſcend into Heaven*, he lift up his Hands, and bleſſed them: *Does this intimate any Manner of Benediction then in Uſe among the* Jews?

A. By *Chriſt*'s lifting up his Hands, and giving them his Benediction, we learn, that the Cuſtom among the *Jews* was, to give the Benediction to a great Number, or Congregation of People, with an Elevation, and Extention of the Hands, as appears from the Practice of *Aaron*, *Lev.* ix. 22. But to any particular Perſon, the Bleſſing was given with the Impoſition of Hands, as the Example of *Jacob*, with regard to *Ephraim* and *Manaſſeh*, plainly ſhews, *Gen.* xlviii. 14.

Q. *Did the real Human Nature of* Chriſt *aſcend into Heaven?*

A. The Aſcenſion of *Chriſt* into Heaven muſt be underſtood of his Human Nature only, becauſe the Divine Nature fills all Places, both in Heaven and Earth, and is, at all Times, incapable of that, which we properly call Motion. The ſame Body of *Chriſt*, therefore, which was born, and ſuffered, and died, was actually carried up thither; and ſo our Saviour's Aſcenſion was no imaginary and figurative, but a real, proper, and bodily Aſcent into Heaven, and that, in the moſt elevated Part, and nobleſt Signification, that this Word, at any Time does, or can poſſibly admit.

Q. *Having examined whatever we found difficult in the Goſpel of St.* Luke, *let us now enquire into the Hiſtory of the* Evangeliſt *himſelf. Of what Country was St.* Luke, *and what was the Place of his Nativity?*

A. St. *Luke*, who, by ſome antient Authors is called *Lucius* and *Lucanus*, was a *Syrian* by Birth, a Native of *Antioch*, and by Profeſſion a Phyſician. *Antioch*, the Metropolis of *Syria*, was at this Time a City celebrated for the Pleaſantneſs of its Situation, the Fertility of its Soil, the Riches of its Traffick, the Wiſdom of its Senate, the Learning of its Profeſſors, and the Civility and Politeneſs of its Inhabitants, by the Pens of ſome of the greateſt Orators of their Times; and yet, above all theſe, it was renowed for this one peculiar Honour, that in this Place it was, where the Diſciples were firſt named *Chriſtians*.

In *Antioch* there was a famous Univerſity, well repleniſhed with learned Profeſſors of all Arts and Sciences, where St. *Luke* could not miſs of a liberal Education; however, he did not only ſtudy in *Antioch*, but in all the Schools of *Greece* and *Egypt*, whereby he became accompliſhed in every Part of human Literature; and as the *Greek* Academies were then more eſpecially famous for the Study of Phyſick, our Evangeliſt, for ſome Time, applied himſelf to the Practice of that; and after his Converſion, continued, very likely, in the ſame Profeſſion, which was far from being inconſiſtent, but rather ſubſervient to the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, or the Cure of Souls.

Q. *Was St.* Luke *a Painter, as he is generally repreſented?*

A. As to his other Accompliſhment, the Art of Painting, the Antients knew nothing of it. *Nicephorus* is the firſt Author that mentions it, and tho' a great deal of Pains has been taken to prove, that ſome Pieces, ſtill extant, were drawn by his own Hand; yet the antient Inſcription found in a Vault near St. *Mary*'s Church, in the *Via Lata* at *Rome* (the Place where St. *Paul*'s Houſe is ſaid to have ſtood) where Mention is made of a Picture of the bleſſed Virgin, as one of the Seven painted by St. *Luke*, is an Argument of better Authority for his Skill in that Art, than any that the Jeſuit *Gretſer*, in his laborious Treatiſe has produced. But whether ever our Evangeliſt painted the bleſſed Virgin, or not, it is certain, that he has left us ſo many Particulars, omitted by others, relating to the Conception, Birth and Infancy of her Son, that he ſeems to have been acquainted with her, and to have had ſome Share in her Confidence.

Q. *Was our Evangeliſt one of* Chriſt's *Diſciples, that attended immediately on his Perſon?*

A. That he was one of the Seventy Diſciples, is a Notion inconſiſtent with his own Declaration in the Preface to his Goſpel; wherein he informs us, that the Facts, therein contained, were communicated to him by others, who had been Eye-Witneſſes, and Miniſters of the Word from the Beginning: And therefore the moſt probable Opinion is, that as the *Jews* lived in great Numbers, and had their Synagogues, and Schools of Education at *Antioch*, St. *Luke* was at firſt a *Jewiſh* Proſelyte, but afterwards, by St. *Paul* (while he abode in this City) converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith. A Companion of his Travels and Sufferings, he plainly appears to have been, if not from his firſt Converſion, at leaſt from the Time of St. *Paul*'s firſt going into *Macedonia*; for there, in his Account of the Apoſtle's Actions, he changes his Stile, and includes himſelf, ever after, as a Party concerned in the Narrative.

The Truth is, he followed him in all his Dangers, was with him at ſeveral Arraignments at *Jeruſalem*, and accompanied him in his deſperate Voyage to *Rome*; where he ſtill attended on him, to ſerve his Neceſſities, and ſupply thoſe miniſterial Offices which the Apoſtle's Confinement would not ſuffer him to undergo: Nay, it appears from a Paſſage of St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, that he returned with him to *Rome* the ſecond Time, waiting on him in the ſame Capacity, and eſpecially in carrying Meſſages to thoſe Churches where they had planted Chriſtianity: Nor can we well forbear thinking, that he continued his Attendance on him, until the Apoſtle had finiſhed his Courſe, and crowned his Miniſtry with his Matyrdom; by which kind Offices he infinitely endeared himſelf to St. *Paul*, who owned him for a Fellow-labourer, and called him the *beloved Phyſician*, and *the Brother, whoſe Praiſe is in the Goſpel, throughout all the Churches.*

After the Death of St. *Paul*, how he diſpoſed of himſelf, is not ſo certain. Some are of Opinion that he returned into the *Eaſt*, and in *Egypt* and *Lydia* preached the Goſpel, wrought Miracles, converted Multitudes, and conſtituted Guides and Miniſters in Religion; but others rather think that he travelled into *Dalmatia*, *Gallia*, *Italy* and *Macedonia*, where he ſpared no Pains, nor declined any Dangers, that he might faithfully diſcharge the Truſt committed to him. Upon his coming into *Greece*, thoſe who make him die a violent Death, (for ſome are of a contrary Opinion) tell us, that he preached with great Succeſs, and baptized many Converts into the Chriſtian Faith, till a Party of Infidels, making head againſt him, drew him to Execution, and for want of a Croſs, whereon to diſpatch him, hanged him upon an Olive-Tree, in the eightieth Year of his Age.

Q. *What were the Works which this Sacred Writer left behind him?*

A. We have two Pieces of his, *viz.* his *Goſpel*, and the *Hiſtory of the Apoſtolick Acts*, wrote for the Uſe of the Churches, and both dedicated to *Theophilus*; but who this *Theophilus* was, it is not ſo eaſy a Matter to determine, ſince many of the Antients themſelves have taken this Name in a general appellative Senſe, for a Lover of God, a Title common to every good *Chriſtian*; but others, with better Reaſon, have thought that it is the proper Name of ſome Perſon of Diſtinction, ſince the Title *of moſt excellent* is annexed to it, which is the uſual Form of Addreſs to Princes and great Men. But who this Perſon of Diſtinction was, it is impoſſible to tell, only we may ſuppoſe, that it was ſome conſiderable Magiſtrate, whom St. *Luke* had converted, and to whom he now dedicated his Books, not only as a Teſtimony of honourable Reſpect, but as a Means of giving him a farther Information of thoſe Things wherein he had inſtructed him.

The Occaſion of his writing his Goſpel was, as himſelf intimates, the raſh and wrong Accounts given to the World by ſome, who either out of Ignorance or Deſign, had miſrepreſented the Actions and Doctrines of *Chriſt*, and ſowed the Seeds of Error in the Church. It is certain, that this *Evangeliſt* is more circumſtantial in relating the Facts, and more exact in the Method and Order of them, than either of the two who wrote before him. The Hiſtory of *Zacharias*, the Generation of *John the Baptiſt*, the Angel's coming to the bleſſed Virgin, *Elizabeth*'s Salutation of her, at their firſt Interview; the Occaſion of *Joſeph* and *Mary*'s going to *Bethlehem*; the Circumſtances of our Saviour's Birth there; the Publication of it to the Shepherds; and the Teſtimony which *Simeon* and *Anna* gave to him in the Temple; theſe and ſeveral other Pieces of Hiſtory, as well as the Parables of the loſt Sheep, loſt Piece of Money, and returning Prodigal Son, &c. are not related by any other *Evangeliſt*. His Hiſtory therefore is an excellent Supplement of what they have omitted: Nor does it in the leaſt detract from the Authority of his Relations, that he himſelf was not preſent at the doing them; for if we conſider who were the Perſons from whom he derived his Account of Things, he had a Stock of Intelligence ſufficiently authentick to proceed upon; and, when he had finiſh'd it, had the Sanction and Approbation of an Apoſtle divinely inſpired (as himſelf likewiſe was) even of the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles* to confirm it.

Whoever looks into the Beginning of St. *Luke*'s Hiſtory of the *Apoſtolick Acts*, may eaſily perceive that it is a Continuation of what he had related in his *Goſpel*; for it takes up the Story at our Saviour's Aſcenſion, and continues it to St. *Paul*'s Arrival at *Rome*, after his Appeal to *Cæſar*; and ſo, properly ſpeaking, is but one Hiſtory divided into two Parts. The main Difference, between the *Goſpel* and the *Acts* is, that in the former he writes from the Information he had from others, but ſuch as were true and authentick Witneſſes; in the latter, from his own Knowledge, and perſonal Concern in the Things he relates.

His chief Deſign in the Compoſition of this Work, was, to write a true Hiſtory of the Apoſtles, and of the Foundation of the *Chriſtian* Church, in Oppoſition to the *falſe Acts*, and *falſe Hiſtories*, which began then to be diſperſed about the World. This Hiſtory, however, does not comprize the *Acts* of *all* the Apoſtles, but confines itſelf chiefly to the moſt remarkable Paſſages of two, St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*; and even of thoſe two, it gives us but a ſhort and ſummary Account. St. *Peter*'s Story carries it down no lower than his Deliverance from *Herod*'s impriſoning him, and the Death of his Perſecutor, which happened in the Year of our Lord 44; and yet the Apoſtle lived Twenty-four Years after this. And, in like Manner, the Hiſtory of St. *Paul* is far from being compleat. For, as from the Time of his Converſion, there is very little ſaid of him, to his coming to *Iconium*, which was twelve Years after, ſo his Story proceeds no farther than to his firſt coming to *Rome*, in the Year of our Lord 58; and yet, after this, he lived ten Years, and, having preached the Goſpel in *Spain*, and other Parts of the *Weſt*, at laſt return'd to *Rome*, and there ſuffered Martyrdom.

It muſt be owned, however, that the *Evangeliſt* is more particular in his Account of St. *Paul* than of any other of the Apoſtles, and that not only, becauſe he was more ſignally active in the Cauſe of *Chriſtianity*, but becauſe St. *Luke* was his conſtant Attendant, an Eye-witneſs of the whole Carriage of his Life, and privy to his moſt intimate Tranſactions, and therefore capable of giving a more full and ſatisfactory Relation of them.

The *Evangeliſt*'s Deſign, in ſhort, was not to compoſe a large Volume, but only to ſingle out ſome few Things, which he thought neceſſary for the Inſtruction of the Faithful; and, in this reſpect, his Work may be called an *Hiſtorical Demonſtration* of the Truth of the *Chriſtian* Religion; ſince therein we perceive our Lord's Promiſes fulfill'd, in his Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, in his Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion into Heaven, in the ſovereign Power he exerciſes there, in the Miracles he enabled his Followers to work, in the Riſe and wonderful Progreſs of his Religion; and, in a Word, in the *Chriſtian* Church becoming univerſal, by the Call of the *Gentiles*.

We have only one Thing more to remark concerning this Hiſtory, *viz.* that, as St. *Luke* wrote it at *Rome*, and at the End of St. *Paul*'s two Years Impriſonment there, with which he concludes his Story; ſo his Way and Manner of Writing is exact and accurate; his Stile polite and elegant, ſublime and noble, and yet eaſy and perſpicuous; flowing with a natural Grace and Sweetneſs, admirably adapted to an hiſtorical Deſign; and, all along, expreſs'd in a Vein of purer and more refin'd Language, than is to be found in the other Writers of the ſacred Story.

THE GOSPEL

ACCORDING TO

St. JOHN.

THE Penman of this Goſpel is generally ſuppoſed to have been John *the Son of* Zebedee, *not either* John the Baptiſt, *or* John *ſirnamed* Mark, Acts xv. 37. *He was a Perſon greatly honoured by* Chriſt, *who diſtinguiſhed him with many peculiar Favours, and was therefore called the* beloved Diſciple. *He is thought to have travelled into, and continued in* Aſia, *till the third of the ten Perſecutions in the Time of* Trajan; *he was baniſhed by* Domitian *into the Iſle of* Patmos, *where he wrote the* Revelations.

The Time when he penned this Goſpel, is uncertain; ſome think about the latter Part of his Life. He died the laſt of all the Apoſtles, and about one hundred Years after the Birth of Chriſt. *It is ſaid that the Hereſies of* Ebion *and* Cerinthus, *who denied* Chriſt's *Divinity, and of the* Nicholaitans, *who held many abſurd Things about the Perſon of our Saviour, gave Occaſion to the Writing of this Goſpel; himſelf mentions the Doctrine of the* Nicholaitans, Rev. ii. 6. *and* Ebion *and* Cerinthius, *ſome think, were thoſe Antichriſts which he reflects upon in his Epiſtles.*

The Deſign and Scope of this Goſpel, is to deſcribe the Perſon of Chriſt, *in his two Natures, divine and human, as the Object of our Faith. This he does in a ſublime and lofty Manner; on which account he was compared by the Antients to the Eagle that ſoars aloft, and makes her Neſt on high; and was alſo called* John the Divine. *The other Evangeliſts inſiſt chiefly on the Humanity of* Chriſt, *and proves him to be truly Man, the Son of the Virgin* Mary; *this Evangeliſt proves him to be God as well as* Man; God *from Eternity, and* Man *in the Fulneſs of Time. The other three Writers relate what* Chriſt did; *St.* John *reports what* Chriſt *ſaid; they recount his* Miracles, *he records his* Sermons *and* Prayers. *In ſhort, the profound Myſteries of our holy Religion are here unfolded by the beloved Diſciple; and particularly the Divinity and Incarnation of our bleſſed Lord.*

CHAP. I.

John *proves the Dignity of* Chriſt, *by his Attributes, and by the Teſtimony of* John the Baptiſt. *His Incarnation and Converſe upon Earth; the Glory and Qualifications of his Perſon. His farther Teſtimony of the Excellency, and Dignity of his Perſon. Meſſengers ſent from* Jeruſalem *to aſk* John *who he was? His Anſwer. He declares* Chriſt *to be the Lamb of God. The Diſciples of* John *follow* Jeſus. Andrew *invites* Simon *to* Chriſt; *who calls him* Cephas. Jeſus *calls* Philip, *and invites* Nathaniel, *who acknowledges him to be the Son of God.*

Q. I*N the firſt Part of this Chapter, St.* John's *Deſign ſeems to be to aſſert the Divinity of* Chriſt: *Pray explain the ſeveral Arguments he makes uſe of to that Purpoſe?*

A. St. *John* introduces his Goſpel with a Declaration of the Divinity of *Jeſus Chriſt*; *In the Beginning was the Word*, that is, *Jeſus Chriſt*, by whom God ſpeaks to us, and makes known his Will, as we make known our Minds to one another, by our Words. Farther; as our Words are the Conception and Image of our Minds, ſo *Chriſt* is the expreſs Image of his Father's Perſon, and was begotten of the Father, even as our Words are begotten of our Minds; for theſe Reaſons he is ſo often ſtiled the Word.

In the *Evangeliſt's* Aſſertion concerning the *Word, Chriſt Jeſus*, three Particulars are obſervable; 1. His eternal Exiſtence; *In the Beginning was the Word*; in the Beginning, when all Things received their Being, then the Word was, and did actually ſubſiſt, even from all Eternity. Not in the Beginning of the Goſpel-State, but in the Beginning of the Creation, as it appears from the following Words, *All Things were made by him, &c.* 2. His perſonal Co-exiſtence with the Father, *The Word was with God*; that is, eternally and inſeparably with him, the ſame Eſſence and Nature being in the Father, as well as with him; ſo that

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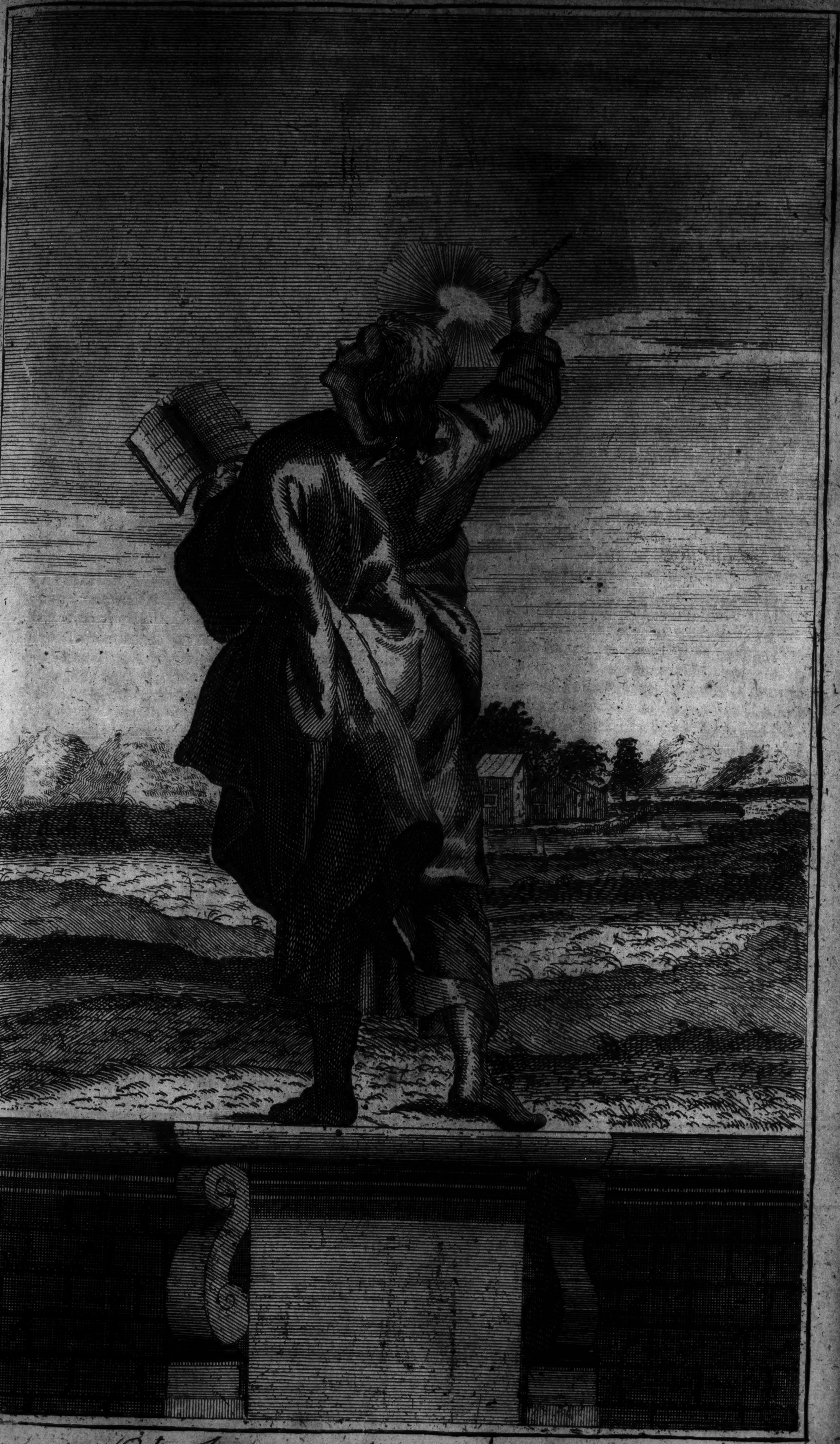

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the Father never was without him, *Prov.* viii. 22. *I was by him, as one brought up with him.* I was by his Side, ſays the *Chaldee* Interpreter. 3. His divine Eſſence, *The Word was God.* He was with God, and exiſted in him; therefore he muſt be God, and a Perſon diſtinct from the Father. The Word was God, ſays the *Socinians*; that is, a God by Office, not by Nature, as being God's Ambaſſador: But the Word God is uſed eleven Times in this Chapter, in its proper Senſe; and it is unreaſonable to conceive that it ſhould be here uſed in an improper Senſe; in which, ſays Dr. *Whitby*, this Word, in the ſingular Number, is never uſed throughout the whole *New Teſtament*.

Hence learn, that the Eternity, Perſonality, and Divinity of *Chriſt*, are of Neceſſity to be believed if we would worſhip him aright. *Chriſt* tells us, *John* v. 23. That *we muſt worſhip the Son, even as we worſhip the Father*. Now, Says Mr. *Burkitt*, unleſs we acknowledge the Eternity and Divinity of *Chriſt*, the ſecond Perſon, as well as of God the Father, the firſt Perſon, we honour neither the Father nor the Son. There is this Difference between natural Things and ſupernatural. Natural Things are firſt underſtood, and then believed, but ſupernatural Things muſt firſt be believed, and then will be better underſtood. If we will firſt ſet Reaſon on work, and believe no more than we can comprehend, this will hinder Faith; but if after we have aſſented to Goſpel-Myſteries, we ſet Reaſon on work, this will help Faith.

The Argument which St. *John* uſes to prove *Chriſt* to be God, is taken from the Work of Creation. He that made all Things, is truly and really God; but *Chriſt* made all Things, and nothing was made without him; therefore is *Chriſt* truly and really God. To prevent the leaſt Imagination of any Thing's having another Author than *Chriſt*, here is the moſt poſitive and particular Negation that can be; that *without him was not any Thing made, that was made*; not without him as an Inſtrument, but without him as an Agent, *Chriſt* being a Co-worker with the Father, and the Spirit, in the Work of Creation.

We have here yet a farther Proof of *Chriſt*'s Divinity, and of his being as God, before his Incarnation, for as much as all Life is centred in him, communicated by him, and received from him. *In him was Life*, formally and cauſally. Life was formally in *Chriſt*, as the Subject of it; and alſo cauſally in him, as the Fountain of it. He is original Life in the Order of Nature, becauſe by him Man was created, *Gen.* i. 26. He is ſpiritual Life, in the Order of Grace, *John* xiv. 9. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* He is eternal Life in the Order of Glory, 1 *John* v. 20. *This is the true God and eternal Life.*

The *Evangeliſt* proceeds to declare *Chriſt* to be really God, becauſe he was that Original, that eſſential Light, which had no Beginning, ſuffers no Decay, but is ſo diffuſive, as in ſome Kind, and in ſome Meaſure or other, to enlighten every Man that comes into the World. Some of the *Jews* had a Conceit, that *John Baptiſt* was the promiſed *Meſſias*, as *Luke* iii. 15. To undeceive them the Evangeliſt adds, That *John* was not that Light, though a burning and ſhining Light, yet not ſuch a Light as the *Meſſias* was to be. *John* was a Light enlightening; *John*'s Light was by Derivation and Participation, *Chriſt*'s Eſſential and Original. *This is the true Light that lightens every Man that comes into the World*; that is, he enlightens every Man with the Light of Reaſon, and is the Author of all ſpiritual Illumination in them that receive it. *Chriſt* is called a Light in Regard of his Office, which is to manifeſt and declare that Salvation to his Church, which lay him before in the Purpoſe of God; and he is called the *true Light*, as oppoſed to the Types and Shadows of the *Moſaical* Diſpenſation.

He was in the World; that is, he that was God from Eternity, made himſelf viſible to the World, in the Fulneſs of The *Evangeliſt* repeats it again, *That the World was made by him*, to ſhew his Omnipotency and Divinity; and then adds, *That the World knew him not*, as an Evidence of the World's Blindneſs and Ingratitude. The World did not own or acknowledge him, did not receive and obey him; they neither knew him as Creator, nor accepted him as Mediator. *Though he came to his own*, his own Kindred and Country, the Church and People of the *Jews*, yet the Generality of them gave him cold Entertainment. It was the Sin of the *Jewiſh* Nation, that though they were *Chriſt*'s own peculiar People; his own by Choice, his Purchaſe, his Covenant, and by Kindred; yet the Generality of them rejected him, and would not own him for the true and promiſed *Meſſias*.

But though Multitudes rejected him, yet ſome owned and received him for the true *Meſſiah*; and thoſe that did ſo, he advanced to the high Dignity of Adoption and Sonſhip, giving them Power, that is, Right or Privilege to become the Sons of God; a Privilege that calls for all poſſible Returns of Gratitude and Thankfulneſs, of Love and Service, of Duty and Obedience, of Submiſſion and Self-Reſignation.

As the bragging *Jews* boaſted much of their natural Birth and Deſcent from *Abraham*, therefore it is here aſſerted, that Men became not the Children of God by natural Propagation, but by ſpiritual Regeneration; *They are not born of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh*, nor of the Will of Man; that is, no Man, by the utmoſt Improvement of Nature can raiſe himſelf to this Privilege of Adoption, and be the Author and efficient Cauſe of his own Regeneration. They, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, who, by the Influence of the higheſt rational Principles, live moſt exactly according to the Rules of rational Nature, that is, of unregenerate Morality, are the Perſons here deſcribed.

Q. John *having thus declared the Divinity of* Chriſt, *next proceeds to ſpeak of his Humanity and Manifeſtation in our Nature: How does he treat of this Point?*

A. *The Word was made Fleſh.* Where Note, 1. Our Saviour's Incarnation for us. 2. His Life and Converſation here among us. But why is it not ſaid, *The Word was made Man?* But, *The Word was made Fleſh.* *Anſ.* To denote and ſet frtoh the wonderful Abaſement and Condeſcenſion of *Chriſt*, there being more Vileneſs and Weakneſs, and Oppoſition to Spirit, in the Word *Fleſh*, than in the Word *Man*. *Chriſt* did not only take upon him the human Nature, but the Weakneſſes and Infirmities of that Nature alſo (ſinful and perſonal Infirmities excepted) he had nothing to do with our ſinful Fleſh.

Again; *He was made Fleſh*; that is, he aſſumed the human Nature into an Union with his God-

Head, and ſo became a true Man, in one Perſon for ever. As Man, *Chriſt* has an experimental Senſe of our Wants and Infirmities; as God he can ſupport and ſupply them all.

He dwelt, or tabernacled *among us*. The Tabernacle was a Type of *Chriſt*'s human Nature. As God's ſpecial Preſence was in the Tabernacle, ſo dwelt all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily in *Chriſt*; and the Glory of his Divinity ſhone forth to the Eye and View of his Diſciples; for *they beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only begottten of the Father*; that is, whilſt *Chriſt* appeared as a Man amongſt us, he gave great and glorious Teſtimonies of his being the Son of God.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* John the Baptiſt's *Teſtimony of* Chriſt?

A. This conſiſts of four Parts; 1. *John* prefers *Chriſt* before himſelf, that is in the Dignity of his Perſon, and Eminence of his Office, as being the Eternal God. *He that cometh after me*, in Point of Time, *is preferred before me* in Dignity; *for he was before me*, even from all Eternity.

John prefers *Chriſt* before all Believers, in Point of Fulneſs and Sufficiency of divine Grace; *of his Fulneſs do they receive*. Theirs is the Fulneſs of a Veſſel, his is the Fulneſs of a Fountation; their Fulneſs is derivative, his is original, yet alſo miniſterial, on purpoſe in him to give out to us that we may receive *Grace for Grace*; that is, Grace anſwerable for Kind and Quality, though not for Meaſure and Degree. As the Paper in the Printing-Preſs receives Letter for Letter, and the Wax under the Seal receives Print for Print; ſo in the Work of Regeneration, whatever Grace is in *Chriſt*, there is the like Kind inſtamped on the Chriſtian's Soul.

John prefers *Chriſt* before *Moſes*, on whom the *Jews* ſo much doted. *Moſes* was God's Miniſter, by whom the Law, which reveals Wrath, was given to the *Jews*; *but Grace and Truth came by* Jeſus Chriſt. Grace, in Oppoſition to the Condemnation, Curſe, and Sentence of the Law; and Truth, in Oppoſition to the Types, Shadows, and Ceremonies of the legal Adminiſtration.

Again; *John* prefers *Chriſt* before all Perſons whatſoever, in Point of Knowledge, and revealing the Mind and Will of God. *No Man hath ſeen God at any Time*; that is, no mere Man hath ſeen God in his Eſſence, whilſt he was in this mortal State. Here God's Inviſibility is aſſered; next *Chriſt's* Intimacy with the Father is declared; *The only begotten Son, that is in the Boſom of the Father*; which implies, 1. Unity of Natures; the Boſom is the Child's Place, who is Part of, and of the ſame Nature with ourſelves. 2. Dearneſs of Affection. A Boſom-Friend is the deareſt of Friends, 3. Communication of Secrets. Thus *Chriſt* knew all his Father's Counſels, and underſtood his whole Will and Pleaſure. This teaches us to apply ourſelves to *Chriſt*, to his Word and Spirit for Illumination. Whether ſhould we go for Inſtruction, but to this great Prophet? For Direction, but to this wonderful Counſellor? We can never be made wiſe unto Salvation, if *Chriſt*, the Wiſdom of the Father, doth not make us ſo.

The ſecond Teſtimony which *John* gives of *Chriſt* in his Anſwer to the Meſſage ſent him from the great Council of *Jeruſalem*, to know whether he was the *Meſſias* or not. *John* refuſes to take this Honour upon himſelf, but tells them plainly, he was his Harbinger and Fore-runner, and that the *Meſſias* himſelf was juſt at Hand. Here note, how exceeding cautious *John* was, and all Miniſters ought to be, that they do not arrogate to themſelves any Part of that Honour which is due to *Chriſt*.

In this Teſtimony of *John* we may obſerve two Things; 1. A negative Declaration, who he was not; *I am not*, ſays he, the *Meſſiah* whom ye look for, nor *Elias*, nor that Prophet whom you expect; not *Elias*, that is, in your Senſe, not *Elias* the *Tiſhbite*; not *Elias* for Identity of Perſon, but *Elias* for Similitude of Gifts, Office, and Calling. *John* came, tho' not in the Perſon, yet in the Power and Spirit of *Elias*. He denies farther that he was *that Prophet*; that Prophet of whom *Moſes* ſpake, *Deut.* xviii. 15. nor any of the old Prophets riſen from the Dead; nay, ſtrictly ſpeaking, he was no Prophet at all; *but more than a Prophet*: The *Old Teſtament* Prophets propheſied of *Chriſt* to come; but *John* pointed at, ſhewed, and declared a *Chriſt* already come; and in this Senſe he was no mere Prophet, but more than a Prophet.

We have here, 2. The Prophet's poſitive Affirmation who he was; namely, *Chriſt*'s Herald in the Wilderneſs, his Uſher, his Forerunner, to prepare the People for the receiving the *Meſſias*, and to make them ready for the Entertainment of the Goſpel, by preaching to them the Doctrine of Repentance.

Laſtly obſerve, the great and exemplary Humility of the holy *Baptiſt*, who, altho' he was the greateſt among them that were born of a Woman, ſo much eſteemed by the *Jews*, and had the Honour to go before *Chriſt* in the Exerciſe of his Office and Miniſtry, yet he judges himſelf unworthy to unlooſe *Chriſt*'s Shoes.

The third Teſtimony *John* gives to *Chriſt*, is his pointing him out as the true Sacrifice for the Expiation of Sin; *Behold the Lamb of God*: The Lamb of God's appointing to be an expiatory Sacrifice; of God's Election; of God's Affection; of God's Acceptation; of God's Exaltation; who by the Sacrifice of his Death, *hath taken away the Sin of the World*. The Sin; not the Sins, in the plural Number; to denote as ſome think, original Sin; or, as others, to ſhew that *Chriſt* hath univerſally taken upon himſelf the whole Burden of our Sin and Guilt. And there ſeems a ſecret Antitheſis in the Word *World*. In the *Levitical* Sacrifices, only the Sins of the *Jews* were laid upon the ſacrificed Beaſt; but this Lamb takes away the Sin both of the *Jew* and the *Gentile*. *The Lord hath cauſed to meet on him the Iniquity of us all*. And the Words, *taketh away*, being in the preſent Tenſe, denote a continued Act, and intimate, that it is the daily Office of *Chriſt* to take away our Sin, by repreſenting to the Father the Memorials of his Death. *Chriſt* takes from all believers the Guilt and Puniſhment of their Sins, the Filth and Pollution of them, the Power and Dominion that is in them; and as St. *John* called upon the *Jews* to behold the Lamb of God, with an Eye of Obſervation; ſo it is our Duty to behold him now with an Eye of Admiration, with an Eye of Gratulation; but eſpecially with an Eye of Faith and Dependance, improving the Fruit of his Death to our own Conſolation and Salvation, *Iſa.* xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ſaved*, &c.

Though *John the Baptiſt* was a near Kinſman of *Chriſt*'s, according to the Fleſh, yet Providence ſo ordered it, that for thirty Years together they did not know one another, nor converſe, nor probably, ever ſaw each others Face, to be ſure he did not know him to be the *Meſſiah*. This, no doubt, was ſo ordered by God, to prevent all Suſpicion of clandeſtine Management betwixt them, as though *John* and *Chriſt* had agreed to give one another Credit; therefore *John* repeats it a ſecond Time, *I knew him not*.

The Means by which *John* came to know *Chriſt*, was by a Sign from Heaven, namely, the Holy Ghoſt deſcending like a Dove upon our Saviour.

Such was the Sincerity of *John the Baptiſt*, that he takes every Opportunity to draw off the Eyes of his own Diſciples from himſelf, and to fix them upon *Chriſt*; he ſaith to two of his Diſciples, *Behold the Lamb of God*.

Q. *Why were thoſe who were ſent to examine* John, *choſen from among the Sect of the* Phariſees?

A. The *Sanhedrim* thought proper, out of their Body, to depute ſuch as were of the Sect of the *Phariſees*, becauſe, as they were Perſons who believed the Immortality of the Soul, and the Reſurrection of the Body; they were better qualified than the *Sadducees*, who believed neither, to enquire of *John*, whether he was *Elias?* being, in this Particular, mere *Pythagoreans*, and fancying that the Soul of one great Man might frequently paſs into another's Body; and as they were the Patrons of Tradition, and exact in all the ordinary Rules and Cuſtoms that were to be obſerved, they were the properer Perſons to examine into this new Rite of Baptiſm, by way of Preparation for the *Meſſiah*, of which their Traditions were wholly ſilent, and therefore they aſk him, *Why baptizeſt thou?* i. e. *Why uſurpeſt thou an Authority which belongs to none, but either to the* Meſſiah, Elias, *or ſome other Prophet*; *by initiating us, who are already under the Covenant, into a new Doctrine, by Baptiſm, which is uſually adminiſtred to none but heathen Proſelytes?* And from hence it appears, that the *Phariſees* were the propereſt Men to ſend to the *Baptiſt* upon this Meſſage.

Q. *Does it not ſeem a little incongruous, that the* Baptiſt *ſhould deny what our* Saviour *affirms concerning him, namely, That he was the* Elias, *who who was to be ſent before, to make Preparations for his Coming?*

A. In this there will be no Manner of Contradiction, if it does but appear that the Affirmation of the one, and the Negation of the other proceed upon different Conſiderations. Now the State of the Matter is this, The *Jews*, at this Time, were in full Expectation of the *Meſſiah*, but then it was an univerſal Belief among them, that *Elias* ſhould appear before him, and that this Appearance ſhould be a certain Token of his Coming: This Belief they founded upon the Prophecy of *Malachi*, *Behold I will ſend you* Elijah *the Prophet, before the Coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord*; but then they imagined, either that the Body of *Elijah* was preſerved in *Paradiſe*, and ſhould again appear upon the Earth, at the Seaſon appointed for it, or that his Body being diſſolved, God would infuſe the Spirit of *Elijah* into a new one, created for that Purpoſe. When therefore the great Council at *Jeruſalem* ſent to enquire, whether he was either the *Chriſt* or *Elias* now returned from Heaven? (as they imagined he was to do upon *Chriſt*'s Appearance) to this their Senſe of the Queſtion he replies, in expreſs Terms, that he was neither the one, nor the other. But this does not at all interfere with our Lord's affirming, that he was the Perſon foretold under the Name and Character of *Elias*, in the true Signification of *Malachi*'s Prophecy. He was not, indeed, the very *Elias*, who had lived in King *Ahab*'s Time, of whoſe ſecond Coming into the World, the *Sanhedrim* now enquired, according to their Miſconſtruction of that Prophecy; but, according to the true Conſtruction thereof, he was the Perſon who came in the *Spirit and Power of* Elias, of whom *Elias* was a Type, and whoſe Temper and Manner of Life *Elias* much reſembled.

Q. *But why then ſhould our Saviour call* John *by the Name of* Elias, *when he was not the ſame Perſon?*

A. How uſual a Thing it is for Perſons who reſembled others in Qualities, Offices or Actions, to be deſcribed by the Names of thoſe whom they reſemble, no one can be ignorant, who is the leaſt acquainted, either with the Phraſe of Scripture, or with the common Forms of Speech. Thus the *Meſſias* is promiſed by the Name of *David*, becauſe he was to be King; *Zadoc* the High-prieſt, and his Sons, recorded by the Name of *Aaron*, and his Sons, by Reaſon of their Office; and among us, 'tis no uncommon Thing to call the *rich* Man a *Cræſus*, the *wiſe* Man a *Solomon*, the *Warrior*, a *Cæſar*, an *Alexander*, or the like; and where then, I pray, can be the Miſapplication in our Saviour's calling the *Baptiſt* by the Name of *Elias*, when, in the Severity of his Life, his Zeal for God's Glory, his ſuffering Perſecution, his bold rebuking of Vice, his Reproofs of *Herod*, and the Hatred of his inceſtuous Queen, anſwerable to the Prophet's Chidings of *Ahab*, and the Malice of *Jezebel*, he ſo ſo nearly reſembled the *Tiſhbite*? He was not, indeed, the real *Tiſhbite*, but, by the Anſwer which he returns to theſe *Delegates* from the *Sanhedrim*, *I am the Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs, Make ſtrait the Way of the Lord*, &c. he plainly intimates, that he was the very Meſſenger promiſed in *Malachi*, and came to diſcharge the Office aſſigned to him in that Prophet. So far is *John*'s Anſwer from contradicting what our Lord aſſerts of him, that it is indeed a Confirmation of it.

Q. *Pray give a more particular Deſcription of the* Sacrifice of the Lamb, *hinted at in that Declaration of* John, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the Word?

A. Under the *Jewiſh* Law, when any Sacrifice was offered for Sin, he that brought it, laid his Hands upon it, according to the Commandment of God, *Levit*. i. 4. iii. 2. iv. 4. and by that Rite, transferred his Sins upon the Victim, which, after ſuch Act, is ſaid *to take and carry them away*. Accordingly, in the daily Sacrifices of the Lamb, the *ſtationary* Men, who were the Repreſentatives of the People, and laid their Hands upon the Lambs that were to be offered, are ſaid to make an *Attonement for their Souls*, Exod. xxx 15, 16. and, in Analogy hereunto, *Chriſt* is here called, by way of Eminence, *the Lamb of God*, becauſe he intended to *lay upon him, who was manifeſted to take away our Sins*, 1 John iii. 5. and came to ſuffer in our Stead, the Puniſhment due to the *Iniquities of us all.*

Q. *Why did* John *rather chuſe to preach in the Wilderneſs, than in the Temple?*

A. It is the Opinion of ſome, that *John* choſe rather to preach, and to fulfil his Miniſtry in the Wilderneſs, than in the Temple, in order to make a moſt illuſtrious Difference between himſelf and *Chriſt*, of whom it was propheſied, that he ſhould frequently appear and teach in the Temple, *Mal.* iii. 1.

Q. *Towards the Concluſion of this Chapter, we meet with a Call of five of our Lord's Diſciples; yet about a Year afterwards we find three of them called again,* Matth. iv. 8. Mark i. 16, 17. *What became of them between the Time of the two Calls?*

A. By the Account of the other *Evangeliſts*, it appears that they did not, at this Time, become our Saviour's conſtant Attendants, becauſe it is preſumable that, though he took this Opportunity to make himſelf known to them, yet he had not as yet any immediate Occaſion for them, and therefore remitted them to their reſpective Trades. Only *Philip* is ſuppoſed to have retained to him from the very firſt, becauſe he ſeems to have called him in a formal Manner, as he did not, at that Time, the reſt, Verſe 43. and becauſe we find no farther Interview between him and *Philip* upon this Score, as there was between him and three, at leaſt, of the reſt, *Luke* v. 10, 11. Theſe three Diſciples therefore, *viz. Andrew, Peter*, and *John*, were twice called, but the former Calling was rather a Warning to hold themſelves in Readineſs for it, than an actual engaging them in his Service; but now in *Philip* we meet with no other Call, than what he had at firſt, and therefore, though the Fathers, and ſome antient Writers, have given the Honour to St. *Andrew*, of being the firſt called Diſciple; yet that Prerogative is evidently St. *Philip's*. For, though *Andrew* and *Peter* were the firſt that came and converſed with our Lord, yet we find them returning to their Trades again, and not ordained to their Diſcipleſhip, till after the Time that the *Baptiſt* was caſt into Priſon.

Q. *What is meant by the Angels* aſcending and deſcending *on the Son of Man, Ver.* 51?

A. To aſcend and deſcend, to come and go, according to the *Hebrew* Manner of Expreſſion, denotes a free and familiar Commerce, and ſuch, no doubt, was the Miniſtry of Angels, at our Saviour's Temptation and Agony, at his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion. The Words however, muſt be owned to be a plain Alluſion to *Jacob's* Ladder, *Gen.* xxviii. 12, 13. on the Top of which was the divine Majeſty, and the Angels aſcending to receive his Commands, and deſcending to execute them: And therefore others have thought that *Chriſt*, by theſe Words, intended to inform his Apoſtles, *That the Miracles which they ſhould ſoon ſee him perform, would declare his Divine Majeſty preſent with him, and giving him ſuch Commands, as he was to execute in this prophetic Office, as clearly, and manifeſtly as if they had ſeen the Angels of God* aſcending and deſcending on him.

Q. *Why does our Saviour call himſelf* the Son of Man?

A. It is obſerved by ſeveral, that only *Ezekiel* in the *Old Teſtament*, and our Saviour in the *New*, are called by the Name of *the Son of Man*; that our Saviour is never ſo called but by himſelf; and that this is the common Appellation that he gives himſelf. *Ezekiel* was doubtleſs ſo called, to diſtinguiſh him from that Title, not only to diſtinguiſh his human from his divine Nature, but to expreſs his Humility likewiſe, and want of Reputation, while he continued in the Form of a Servant. *Chemminius*, however, puts another Conſtruction upon this Title: He thinks, that as the Term *Meſſiah* (which is commonly called *Chriſt*) was taken out of *Daniel*, ſo that other of the *Son of Man* is taken from thence likewiſe; for behold one *like the Son of Man* (ſays the Prophet) *came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Antient of Days*, Dan. vii. 13. and that therefore our Saviour did uſually call himſelf ſo, in compliance to the Prophecy, as well as to aſſert his Humanity, and declare himſelf his Father's Servant, according to the Character given of him by *Iſaiah* xlii. 1.

CHAP. II.

Chriſt *being at a Marriage in* Cana *of* Galilee, *changes Water into Wine; departs unto* Capernaum; *at the Paſſover goes up to* Jeruſalem, *and purges the Temple. The* Jews *aſk his Authority; he ſhews his Death and Reſurrection. Many at the Paſſover believe in him.*

Q. AT *whoſe Houſe was this Marriage Feaſt celebrated?*

A. In all Probability it was at ſome Relation's Houſe, that the Marriage of *Cana* in *Galilee* was kept, becauſe *Mary* was ſo ſollicitous for the Supply of Wine; and the Opinion of the Antients is, that it was at the Houſe of *Alphæus* or *Cleopas*, who, at this Time married his Son *Simon* the *Canaanite, Matth.* x. 4. tho' others will have it, that the Bridegroom was *Nathanael.*

Q. *The firſt Miracle our Saviour did, was his turning Water into Wine at a Marriage-Feaſt; but was not it below the Dignity of ſo grave a Perſon as our Lord was, to vouchſafe his Preſence at a Wedding, which is uſually a Scene of Levities and Exceſs?*

A. Our bleſſed Saviour, indeed, was a Perſon of ſo grave and ſerious a Deportment, that whatever Inſtances we find of his Piety and Compaſſion to Mankind, of his grieving and being troubled, and even weeping upon ſome Occaſions, we can meet with none of his Laughing, nor any Token of Mirth or Joy extraordinary, in the whole Hiſtory of his Life: But we muſt not from thence infer, that he was of a ſtiff and preciſe Temper, or in any Degree an Enemy to ſuch Forms of Civility or ſocial Uſages, as were then in Practice. If therefore we may be allowed to ſuppoſe (what ſeems, indeed, highly probable) that this Marriage at *Cana* was between Perſons of his own Kindred and Acquaintance; and that, by the very Rules of celebrating ſuch Feſtivals among the *Jews*, all Exceſs and Intemperance was excluded, then it will follow, that it could be no Diſparagement to our Saviour's Character to accept of the Invitation that was made him, and to be preſent at ſuch a Meeting.

Among us, indeed, (eſpecially among the vulgar Sort) there are ſometimes, on theſe Occaſions, Liberties taken, that are not ſo juſtifiable; but among the *Jews*, there was always the greateſt Decency and Sobriety imaginable, obſerved in the Celebration of their Marriages. To this Purpoſe, a Govera Governor of a Feaſt (as ſome ſay, of the ſacerdotal Race) was always choſen, whoſe Office it was, to have the Superintendency of the Diſhes and Wine, and to oblige the Gueſts to obſerve all the Decorums, that Religion required; and, not only ſo, but other Perſons, at this Time, were likewiſe appointed to break Glaſs Veſſels, as a common Signal, to give the Company Notice that they had drank enough, and were not permitted to run to Exceſs. Under this Regulation, it is ſcarce imaginable, that the Gueſts, at a *Jewiſh* Marriage, could be guilty of any Intemperance, and leaſt of all at this in *Galilee*, where our Saviour's Preſence and Obſervation, the Gravity of his Behaviour, and the Seaſonableneſs of his Diſcourſe, may well be preſumed to heighten the Decorum, and to keep all the Company under a proper Reſtraint.

What the Governor of the Feaſt ſays to the Bridegroom, in Relation to the Water that was turned into Wine, is to be underſtood only as a general Repreſentation of a Cuſtom, uſual at other Feſtivals, which was to bring the *beſt Wine at firſt*, and towards the Concluſion, that which *was worſe*; which Cuſtom (as the Governor tells him) was not obſerved here: For the Difference between this Entertainment, and others is, that *thou haſt kept the Good Wine until now.* So that, *when Men have well drank*, is only a Circumſtance thrown in to illuſtrate the Compariſon, or deſcribe the latter End of a Feaſt, and has no Manner of Reference to the Condition of the Company then preſent. But allowing the Words in the *Greek* to be a Deſcription of the Condition that the Company was then in, yet it will by no Means follow, that they had proceeded to any Intemperance, becauſe the Words are equally capable of an innocent, as well as a vicious Meaning. The *Greek* Word, indeed, in its primitive Signification, means no more than *drinking after the Sacrifice*; and, as there is nothing in Etymology, that determines this to be done to Exceſs, or beyond the proper Bounds of Joy in a Feſtival; ſo there are ſeveral Inſtances in Scripture, wherein it was done according to the Rules of Sobriety and Moderation. Thus (to mention one out of many) in the LXX's Verſion of *Geneſis*, where it is ſaid, that Joſeph'*s Brethren drank and were merry with him*; and yet no one can imagine, but that, in the preſent Circumſtances, thinking no other, than that he was the Governor of *Egypt*, and being apprehenſive that he had no good Deſign againſt them, they were too much upon their Guard, and ſollicitous about their own Safety, to give any Way to Intemperance in his Preſence: And, if the Expreſſion here, and in ſeveral other Paſſages, may be taken in a virtuous Senſe, we cannot but conclude (unleſs we can ſuppoſe that St. *John* deſigned to expoſe his Maſter's Behaviour upon this Occaſion) that he intended we ſhould underſtand him in the moſt favourable Acceptation.

We, indeed, in our Tranſlation ſay, that the Water-pots, wherein the Wine was created, *John* ii. 6. *contained two or three Firkins a piece*; but ſome, who have looked more nicely into the original Word, tranſlated *Meaſure*, here ſpoken of, have brought it ſo low, as to make the whole ſix Pots hold no more than about fourteen or fifteen Gallons of our *Engliſh* Meaſure. But not to deſcend ſo low, we will ſuppoſe, at preſent, that the Quantity of Wine, made by our Saviour at this Feaſt, was as large as our Tranſlation repreſents it, yet, whoever conſiders the Nature of *Jewiſh* Marriages, how they were celebrated with Feaſting and Rejoicings, not only on the Day of Solemnity (as it is with us) but for ſix or ſeven Days after, and that, at theſe Feaſts, not only all their Relations and Neighbours, and Acquaintance were invited, but that it was well taken likewiſe, if any others (though not invited) would come to partake of the Entertainment, and bear a Share in the Joy: Whoever conſiders this, I ſay, cannot but imagine, that a very large Quantity of Wine muſt needs be requiſite at ſuch a Time, ſince it was to be a Supply, not for that Day only, but for all the ſucceeding Days, until the Time of the Feaſting was expired.

Nay, even ſuppoſing farther, that our Lord, upon this Occaſion, did not confine himſelf to a preciſe Quantity, proportionate to the Company, or Period of the Feſtival, and (what is more) that ſome of the Company might abuſe his Liberality, by their Intemperance, (which is a Conceſſion not to be gathered from the Text) yet he cannot therefore be charged with adminiſtring to their Exceſs, by making ſuch an ample Proviſion, any more than we can charge the Providence of God with being inſtrumental to all the Gluttony and Drunkenneſs which is committed in the World, merely becauſe he affords that Meat and Drink which Men of inordinate Appetites abuſe to Exceſs. The Truth is, as it is an high Commendation of Providence, that it crowns us with Plenty, (whatever Uſe we make of it) and beſtows upon us all Things richly to enjoy; ſo was it not unbecoming a Perſon, inveſted with a divine Commiſſion, to give, on this Occaſion, an eminent Inſtance of his flowing Liberality, and, by his generous Proviſion for the Family, to leave a grateful Memorial of his benevolent Regard to two Perſons, that very likely were his Relations, and had juſt entered into the honourable State of Matrimony.

Q. *Does not our Lord treat his Mother in too rough and undutiful a Manner?*

A. Since our Lord anſwered in ſo free and plentiful a Manner, his Mother's Requeſt at laſt, there ſeems to be ſomething in their Suppoſition, who, from the Propriety of the *Greek* Expreſſion, think that his Mother ſpake to him, before the Wine was out, but when it grew ſo low, that ſhe plainly perceived, there whould not be enough for the Company; and that our Saviour's Reply to her will very juſtly bear this Senſe. "*What is it to you or me? i. e.* the Care of providing Wine, upon this Occaſion, does not properly belong to you or me; but admitted it did, *My Hour is not yet come.* It is too ſoon, as yet, to ſet about it; becauſe it is highly fitting, that the Neceſſity of that ſuper-natural Supply, which I intend them, ſhould be a little more felt, in order to recommend the Benefit itſelf, and to give the Manner of attaining it, a deeper Impreſſion on their Minds.

This ſeems to be no unnatural Conſtruction of the Words, and removes all the ſeeming Harſhneſs of our Saviour's Anſwer, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* We miſtake the Matter, however, very much, if we think that the Word which we render *Woman*, was any Title of Diſreſpect or Indifference, (as it ſeems to be in our Tranſlation) ſince it is frequently uſed by the beſt Authors, when the higheſt Marks of Eſteem are intended. The polite *Xenophon* himſelf puts it in the Mouth of one of his *Perſian* Chiefs, when he was addreſſing himſelf to a captive Lady, and comforting her under her unfortunate Circumſtances; and certainly a Time there was, that our Lord called his Mother by this Appellation, when he was far from being harſh or undutiful to her, even when he was hanging on the Croſs, and tenderly recommending his Mother to both his beloved Apoſtle, and that Apoſtle to his Mother's Love and Affection, *Woman behold thy Son.* So little does our Saviour's Conduct, in this whole Tranſaction, deſerve thoſe horrid and impious Cenſures, which of late have been thrown upon it!

Q. *Where was ſituated the City* Capernaum, *whither our Lord went, after he had been at the Marriage-Feaſt?*

A. The City *Capernaum* is no where mentioned in the *Old Teſtament*, either under this, or any Name like it; and therefore it is not improbable, that it was one of thoſe Towns which the *Jews* built after their Return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. It ſtood on the Sea-Coaſt, *i. e.* on the Coaſt of the *Sea of* Galilee, *in the Borders of* Zebulun and Nepthalim, *Matth.* iv. 15, 16. and conſequently towards the upper Part thereof. It took its Name, no doubt, from an adjacent Spring, of great Repute for its clear and limpid Waters, and which, according to *Joſephus*, is by the Natives called *Capernaum.* As this Spring might be ſome Inducement for the Building of the Town in the Place where it ſtood, ſo its being a convenient Waſting-place, from *Galilee* to any Parts on the other Side of the Sea, might be ſome Motive to our Lord, for his moving from *Nazareth*, and making this the Place of his moſt conſtant Reſidence. Upon this Account *Capernaum* was highly honoured, and is called, by our Lord himſelf, *exalted unto Heaven*, but becauſe it made no right Uſe of this ſignal Favour, it drew from him the ſevere Denunciation, that it ſhould *be brought down to Hell*, Matt. xi. 23. which has abundantly been verified; for ſo far is it from being the Metropolis of all *Galilee*, (as it was once) that it conſiſted, long ſince, of no more than ſix poor Fiſhermen's Cottages, and may, perhaps, be now totally deſolate.

Q. *How could our bleſſed Lord, with only a Whip in his Hand, drive a Multitude of People out of the Temple, ſince thereby their Wares might ſuffer Damage, and conſequently he might meet with Reſiſtance?*

A. Whoever conſiders that our Saviour had done enough already to prove himſelf a Prophet ſent from God, and that the general Conceſſion was, that a Prophet thus ſent, had ſufficient Authority to rectify Diſorders; and if he remembers, at the ſame Time, the great Reverence that was conſtantly paid to the Temple, and what Titles of Honour and Reſpect were given it by God himſelf, cannot but allow, that the preſent Abuſe of of it was abominable, our and Saviour's Zeal in redreſſing it commendable; and that, from all thinking and diſintereſted Perſons, it would, conſequently meet with Countenance and Approbation: Nor is it to be doubted, but that a Conſciouſneſs of Guilt, in the Profaners themſelves, might, in ſome Meaſure, contribute to their Submiſſion and Acquieſcence; even in the ſame Manner as his Enemies were ſtruck backwards, with a Senſe of their own Guilt, as well as the Majeſty of his Appearance, and fell down to the Ground, when they came to apprehend him in the Garden, *John* xviii. 6.

Q. *Why was that Queſtion put to our Saviour,* Ver. 18. What Sign ſheweſt thou unto us, ſeeing that thou doeſt theſe Things?

A. Whether it were the Prieſts, the Magiſtrates, or the common People, that put this Queſtion to our Saviour, it is certain that they do not in the leaſt pretend to juſtify the Profanation which he had thus reformed; and therefore their Principle ſeems to have been, "That let Corruptions, and "Abuſes in a Church be never ſo great, yet they "were not to be reformed, but either by the ordinary Authority of the Magiſtrate, or by an "extraordinary Authority from God. Such an "Authority they were ready to acknowledge in "Prophets; but then they inſiſted that thoſe, "who pretended to this, and to have their Miſſion ſhould be able to prove that Miſſion by ſome miraculous Operations." But how they came to put this Queſtion to our Lord, after they had ſeen his Miracles, and knew that he claimed a divine Commiſſion, and had been told, *that the Works he had done in his Father's Name bore Witneſs of him*, John v. 36. can be imputed to nothing but their Perverſeneſs and obſtinate Infidelity.

Q. *Were the* Jews *right in their Calculation, when they told our Saviour, that the Temple had been* forty and ſix Years in building?

A. From *Herod*'s beginning to rebuild the Temple, to the firſt Paſſover after our Saviour's Baptiſm, 'tis agreed, that the Time was exactly ſix and forty Years; but then *Joſephus* tells us, that the whole was finiſhed in nine Years and an Half. But this is to be underſtood of the grand Building only, ſince (according to the ſame Author) ſeveral new Works and Decorations were ſtill carrying on, and a matter of eighteen Thouſand Men employ'd therein, even to the Time that young *Agrippa* was made King of *Judea*, which was about the ſixtieth Year of the *Chriſtian Æra.*

Q. *Does not our Saviour ſpeak improperly, when he calls* his Body *a* Temple?

A. The *Jews* had a Maxim, or proverbial Speech among them, that the *Sanctuary of Sanctuaries was the Meſſiah*; and therefore there could be no Impropriety in our Saviour's calling his Body a Temple: For, if the Apoſtle calls our Bodies *the Temple of God*, as he does, 1 *Cor.* iii. 16. and 2 *Cor.* vi. 1, 6. how much more does that Title belong to the Body of *Chriſt*, in which *the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt* always, and inſeparably?

CHAP. III.

Chriſt *ſhews* Nicodemus *the Neceſſity of Regeneration. The great Love of God to the World, in giving his Son to die for it. The Condemnation of thoſe that do not believe.* Chriſt *baptizeth in* Judea, *and* John *in* Ænon. *The* Jews *diſpute with* John's *Diſciples about Purifying.* John *ſhews the Excellency and Dignities of* Chriſt *above himſelf.*

Q. WHAT *is obſervable in* Nicodemus's *Addreſs to* Chriſt, *and our Saviour's Anſwer?*

A. Some have imagined, from the ſeeming Abruptneſs of the Anſwer, which our Lord gives *Nicodemus*, that *Nicodemus* might have put ſome previous Queſtion to him (not recorded by the *Evangeliſt*) concerning the Means of attaining the Kingdom of God, *i. e.* eternal Happineſs, or of qualifying himſelf to be a Diſciple of the *Meſſiah*; for, in that Senſe the Kingdom of God is likewiſe taken. But (beſides that the Word *anſwered* does not always, in the *New Teſtament*, ſignify a Reply to a Queſtion already propounded; but very frequently no more, than the Beginning of a new Speech) the Connection, between the Compliment which *Nicodemus* makes our Lord, and our Lord's Reply to it, will not be amiſs, if we can but ſuppoſe, in the Words, this Implication:—— "Thy " Acknowledgment of my divine Miſſion and Authority, free and generous though it be, will " not be ſufficient to render thee a Member of " that Kingdom which I am going to ſet up; for, " *except a Man be born again*, *i. e.* renewed in his " Mind, Will, and Affections, by the Operation " of the Holy Ghoſt, and ſo become a new Creature, *he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God*, *i. e.* he " cannot be a *Chriſtian* here, or a Saint hereafter."

Q. *Are Miracles alone a Demonſtration of a Perſon's being ſent by God, as* Nicodemus *ſeems to intimate, Verſe* 2?

A. *Nicodemus* was not ignorant of the Caution which *Moſes* had given the *Jews* againſt falſe Prophets, *Deut.* xiii. 1, *&c.* nor does he here ſpeak of Miracles in general, but of thoſe particular ones which *Jeſus* had done in the Time of the Paſſover; and theſe were ſo great in their Nature, ſo ſolid in their Proof, ſo beneficial in their Effects, and in their End ſo well deſigned to confirm a Doctrine, every way ſuitable to the divine Attributes, and to fulfil the Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah, the Son of Righteouſneſs, who was to riſe with healing in his Wings*, Mal. iv. 2. that there was the greateſt Aſſurance, that none, without an omnipotent Hand, could do them. Not to ſay, that *Nicodemus* might have both examined the Doctrine, and enquired into the Life of *Jeſus*, before he made that Inference from his Miracles.

Q. *How are we to underſtand the Saying of our Saviour, Verſe* 5. Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God?

A. Thoſe who make the Water and the Spirit, here mentioned by our Saviour, one and the ſame Thing (which, to every common Reader, muſt, at firſt Sight, appear to be diſtinct) ſhould do well to conſider, that the Queſtion between *Chriſt* and *Nicodemus* was, about what was requiſite to prepare a Man for *the Kingdom, i. e.* God's Church, and make him Partaker of the Goſpel Bleſſings. Certain it is, that Baptiſm by Water was not only the common Method of receiving Proſelytes into the *Jewiſh* Church, but is declared likewiſe, by our Lord himſelf, to be the ordinary Way of entering into his Kingdom, for, *he that believes and is baptized*, ſays he, *ſhall be ſaved*, Mark xvi. 16. and therefore he gave Commiſſion to his Apoſtles *to make Diſciples in all Nations, by baptizing them*, Matthew xxviii. 19. Nay, ſo far are the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit from ſuperſeding the Neceſſity of this Ordinance, that, in the Apoſtolick Age, we find them rather eſteemed a proper Prediſpoſition for it. For, when the Holy Ghoſt fell upon *Cornelius* and his Company, in the ſame Manner that it fell upon the Apoſtles, in the Day of *Pentecoſt*, Acts xxxiv. 44. What is St. *Peter's* Inference from theſe miraculous Gifts? Is it that the Perſons, on whom they reſted, had no need of Baptiſm? No, but rather that theſe extraordinary Gifts were a full Evidence, that they were the proper Objects of it; for, *Can any one*, ſays he, *forbid Water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized?* So far is the *Baptiſm of the Spirit* (even where it is undeniable) from excluding the *Baptiſm of Water*; and ſo ſtrong a Proof is the Inſtance before us, that the Graces of the Spirit may be the Foundation of a juſt Claim to Baptiſm, but never (where the Sacrament can be had) a lawful Diſpenſation to any Man, for the Refuſal or Neglect of it.

Q. *How could our Saviour wonder, that a Maſter of* Iſrael *ſhould be ignorant of the Doctrine of the* New Birth, *ſince it ſeems to have been firſt taught by himſelf?*

A. Our bleſſed Saviour might well wonder at *Nicodemus's* Ignorance in the Point of Regeneration, when this was the common Notion of Proſelytiſm among the *Jews*, that he who was waſhed and circumciſed, was looked upon as a *recens natus*, an *Infant new born:* And when there were ſo many Paſſages in the Law and the Prophets, relating to this very Doctrine; for what elſe can the Meaning be of the *Circumciſion of the Heart*, commanded by *Moſes*, Deut. x. 16. of the *Renewal of a clean and right Spirit*, prayed for by *David*, Pſal. li. 10. of the *putting God's Law in the inward Parts*, mentioned by *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxxi. 33. and the giving his People a new Heart, and a new Spirit, promiſed by God, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26. Theſe, and many more, were Intimations of the Doctrine of Regeneration; but the *Phariſees* were ſo taken up with their Rites and Traditions, that they gave ſmall Attention to the ſpiritual Things of nearer and much greater Concernment to their Souls.

Q. *Pray explain our Lord's Compariſon of the* Spirit *to the* Wind?

A. Nicodemus excepting to our Saviour's Notion of Regeneration, from the Abſurdity and Impoſſibility of it (as he thought) our Lord proceeds to clear the Matter by a Similitude taken from the Wind, which at once declares the Author, and deſcribes the Matter of Spiritual Regeneration. The Author of it is the Holy Spirit of God, compared to the Wind: 1 That the Quality of its Motion, *It blows when and where it liſteth*. 2. From the Senſibleneſs of its Effects, *Thou heareſt the Sound thereof*. 3. From the Intricacy and Myſteriouſneſs of its Proceedings, *Thou knoweſt not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth*.

As the Natural Wind is not in the Power of Man, either to ſend it out, or reſtrain it; ſo the Holy Spirit is as Wind in the Freeneſs of its Motion, and in its Variableneſs alſo; its Operation is various as to the Time; ſome are wrought upon in their Youth, others in old Age; various in his Methods of Working; ſome are wrought upon by the Corroſives of the Law, others by the Lenitives of the Goſpel; various in the Manner, and in the Means by which he works; on ſome by a powerful Ordinance, as on others by an awakening Providence. But though there be ſuch a Variety in the Method of the Spirit's working, yet is the Work in all ſtill the ſame; namely, Likeneſs to God, a

Conformity in our Natures to his Holy Nature, and a Conformity in our Lives to his Will.

Again, It is a very ſecret Work, and therefore compared to the Wind. We hear the Wind, we feel it blow, we obſerve its Force, and admire its ſtrange Effects; but we cannot deſcribe its Nature, nor declare its Original. Thus the Holy Spirit, in a ſecret and hidden Manner, quickens and influences our Souls; the Effects of its Operation we ſenſibly diſcern; but how, and in what Manner he does it, we know no more than how the Bones grow in the Womb of her that is with Child. Therefore it is called, a hidden Life, *Coloſ.* iii. 3. It is not only totally hidden from carnal Men, but in Part hidden and unknown to ſpiritual Men, though they themſelves are the Subjects of it.

Q. *How do you interpret the 12th Verſe,* And no Man hath aſcended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven?

A. Our Saviour farther declares to *Nicodemus,* that none ever aſcended up into Heaven, to fetch down from thence the Knowledge of divine Myſteries, and to reveal Life and Salvation to Mankind by a Mediator, but only *Chriſt* himſelf; who, though he took upon him the Human Nature, and was then Man upon Earth, yet was he at the ſame Time, in his Divine Nature, actually in Heaven, as God. This Text evidently proves two diſtinct Natures in *Chriſt*; namely, a Divine Nature as he was God, and an Human Nature as Man, yet but one Perſon. *The Son of Man which is in Heaven.* The *Socinians* produce this Text to prove that *Chriſt,* after his Baptiſm, was taken up into Heaven, there to be made acquainted with the Will of God, to fit him for the Execution of his Prophetical Office here on Earth, and that for this Reaſon he was ſaid to be *in the Beginning with God,* as *Moſes,* before him, was taken up into the Mount, and Taught by God. But, 1. We have not the leaſt Word of any ſuch Thing in Scripture, though we have a particular Account of our Saviour's Birth, Circumciſion, Baptiſm, Doctrine, Miracles, Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion; yea, of ſmall Things compared with this; as his Flight into *Egyyt,* his ſitting on the Pinnacle of the Temple; yet not a Word of his Aſſumption into Heaven. 2. There was no need of it, becauſe Almighty God could reveal himſelf to *Chriſt* as well as to other Prophets, out of Heaven as well as in it: Beſides, *Chriſt* was fitted for his Prophetick Office by the Unction of the Spirit he received here on Earth; and therefore his Aſcent was altogether needleſs.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in* Chriſt's *Inſtruction to* Nicodemus?

A. Chriſt having ſet *Nicodemus* right in his Notions of Regeneration, proceeds to inſtruct him in the Death of the *Meſſiah,* and the Neceſſity of Faith in his Death. *The Son of Man muſt be lifted up,* That is, upon the Croſs, and die; that, *whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh.* This our Lord illuſtrates by the Type and Antitype of the Brazen Serpent's being lifted up upon a Pole, prefiguring *Chriſt's* Exaltation, or lifting upon the Croſs; the Antitype agrees in this, that both muſt be lifted up before the Cure could be obtained; both looked unto before the Patient could be healed. Did the Brazen Serpent heal all that looked to it, though all Eyes were not equally ſtrong? So does *Chriſt* juſtify and ſave all, that with a ſincere, though weak Faith, rely upon him for Salvation.

The Source and Fountain of Man's Salvation, is God's free and undeſerved, his great and wonderful Love. *God ſo loved the World*; he does not ſay how much, but leaves it to our moſt ſolemn and raiſed Thoughts; it's rather to be conceived than declared; admired than conceived.

Obſerve the Greatneſs of this Love; *He gave his only begotten Son*; that is, he delivered him out of his own Boſom, and everlaſting Embraces. This will appear a ſtupendous Expreſſion of God's Love, if we conſider that God gave him, who was not only the greateſt, but the deareſt Perſon to him in the World, even *his own Son,* even him he gave for Sinners, a World of Sinners.

The gracious End for which God gave his Son, was, *That whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.* Faith is the Way God has appointed, and the Condition he requires, in order to obtain Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt.* This Faith conſiſts in the Aſſent of the Underſtanding, that *Jeſus* is the Saviour of the World; in the Conſent of the Will, to accept of *Jeſus* freely and voluntarily, deliberately, adviſedly, and reſolvedly, in accepting the Merit of his Blood, and ſubmitting to the Authority of his Laws: He that thus ſubmits to *Chriſt, ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.*

The Salvation of Sinners was the intentional End, and the Condemnation of them only the accidental Event of *Chriſt's* coming into the World. Unbelief is the formal Cauſe of the Sinner's Damnation; it is that Sin which faſtens alſo the Sins upon the Sinner, and conſigns him over to Damnation. *This is the Condemnation*; that is, 'tis a juſt and righteous Condemnation, 'tis an inevitable, aggravated, and eternal Condemnation, *that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkneſs rather than Light.* Sinners naturally hate the Light, becauſe it diſcovers to them the Evil of their Ways, or condemns them for it; whereas holy and gracious Perſons love the Light; that is, they love to have their Thoughts, Words and Actions, tried by the Light of the World, becauſe they are wrought in God; that is, performed as in the Sight of God, according to the Direction of his Word, and with a ſingle Eye, and ſincere Aim at his Glory.

Q. *At what Place did our Saviour firſt baptize?*

A. The *Evangeliſt* does no-where mention the particular Place where our Saviour began his Baptiſm; but there is Reaſon to preſume, that it was ſomewhere about *Jericho,* becauſe there it was that *John the Baptiſt* firſt entered upon his Miniſtry; and becauſe it ſeems expedient, that he ſhould open the firſt Scene of his Office, where his faithful Fore-runner had given ſuch glorious and advantageous Teſtimonies of him; and, in one and the ſame Place, compleat *John's* Baptiſm of *Repentance for Sins* (which was preparatory to his Coming) by the Baptiſm of *Remiſſion of Sins,* which he alone had proper Power to give.

Chap. IV.

Jeſus *departs from* Judea *to* Gallilee; *meets with a Woman of* Samaria, *with whom he talks of living Water, and tells her the Actions of her paſt Life; from whence She concludes he is a Prophet; he inſtructs*

ſtructs her in the true worſhip; and tells her he is that promiſed Meſiah; *wherewith ſhe acquainted her Fellow-Citizens. He informs his Diſciples what is his principal Food. Many of the* Samaritans *believe d in him. He comes into* Cana *of* Galilee, *heals a Nobleman's Son.*

Q. H*OW was* Samaria *ſituated?*

A. Samaria is a Province of *Paleſtine* (ſo called from its City of the ſame Name, which was once the Capital of the Kingdom of *Iſrael*) which lies exactly between *Judea* to the *South*, and *Galilee* to the *North*, and extends itſelf from the *Mediterranean* Sea *Weſtward*, to the River *Jordan Eaſtward*, taking up the moſt conſiderable Part of what formerly belonged to the Tribe of *Ephraim*, and the Half-tribe of *Manaſſeh*, on the *Weſt-ſide* of *Jordan*.

Q. *Was the City* Sychar *remarkable for any extraordinary Occurrences or Events?*

A. Sychar is only a corrupt Pronunciation of *Sychem* or *Shechem*, which is the Capital of the Country that was once called *Samaria*. At preſent it is called *Naploſa*, and ſtands in a narrow Valley, between Mount *Gerizim* on the *South* (at the Foot of which it is ſituate) and *Ebal* on the *North*. On Mount *Gerizim* they had once a Temple which ſeemed to rival that of *Jeruſalem*, but in the Time of the *Maccabees* it was deſtroyed by *Hyrcanus*, and what they have now is only a little Place of Worſhip, to which, at certain Seaſons, they nevertheleſs repair for the Performance of the Rites of their Religion; but what thoſe Rites are, 'tis not eaſy to ſay. The whole Place, in ſhort, is ſtrangely decayed from what it was antiently; for it conſiſts now only of two Streets, that lie parallel under Mount *Gerizim*, but is full of Inhabitants, and the Seat of a *Baſſa*.

Q. *Is the Well, that is now ſhewn to Travellers for* Jacob's *Well, the ſame where our Saviour diſcourſed with the* Samaritan *Woman?*

A. This is much to be queſtioned, becauſe it ſeems to be too remote from the Town for Women to come thither to draw Water; unleſs we may ſuppoſe that the City did formerly extend itſelf farther that Way, than it does now. However this be, the Well is covered with a ſmall Vault, into which you get down through a very ſtreight Hole, and then, removing a broad flat Stone, you diſcover the Mouth of the Well itſelf. It is dug in a firm Rock, about three Yards in Diameter, and thirty-five in Depth; and, to confute the Story which is commonly told to Travellers (that it is all the Year dry, except on the *Anniverſary*, when our Saviour ſat upon it, but that then it bubbles up with Abundance of Water) Mr. *Maundrel* tells us, that when they came to ſound it, they found no leſs than five Yards of Water in it.

Q. *What was the Ground of the mutual Enmity between the* Jews *and the* Samaritans?

A. The chief Reaſons of the *Jewiſh* Hatred againſt the *Samaritans* were theſe three, 1. The foreign Extraction of the *Samaritans*, they being moſt of them Deſcendants from the *Cutheans*, whom *Salmanezar* ſent to *Samaria*, when he carried away the Ten Tribes into Captivity, 2 *Kings* xviii. 9. 2. The Difference of their Religion and Worſhip, foraſmuch as that of the *Samaritans* was a Kind of Mixture of *Jewiſh* and *Pagan* Rites together; and, 3. The *Rival* Temple which the *Samaritans* had built on Mount *Gerizim*, and conſecrated to *Jupiter Olympus*, in order to avoid the Perſecution of *Antiochus*. *Joſeph. Antiq.* l. xii. c. 7. Theſe were the chief Cauſes of the Animoſities between them; the *Jews* however did not carry their Reſentments ſo high, but that, in ſome Caſes, they would traffick or buy any Thing of them, but then the *Phariſees* came in with a Tradition, that they were not to borrow any Thing of them, or receive any Kindneſs from them, nor drink of their Water, or eat of their Morſels. This however our Lord deſpiſed, as having no Foundation either in the Law of God or Equity, and as tending to impair the Law of common Friendſhip and Humanity, and therefore we find him asking to drink with the *Samaritan* Woman, and afterwards going into the City and eating with the *Sichemites*.

Q. *Which Way do you ſuppoſe that this Woman had had five Huſvands, as Chriſt tells her,* Ver. 18?

A. The Words, *thou haſt had five Huſbands*; but whether five ſucceſſively, and after the Death of one another, or five from whom ſhe had been divorced for Adultery, is not agreed. The beſt modern Interpreters however judge, that ſhe had been married to five ſeveral Men, but ſo behaved herſelf towards them, that, for her Adultery, or ſome other froward Behaviour, they had given her a Bill of Divorce. This ſeems more like to be the true Senſe, than that, after the Death of five legal Huſbands, ſhe ſhould live in Whoredom with a ſixth Perſon.

Q. *In what Manner did the* Samaritans *perform their Worſhip; and wherein differ from the* Jews?

A. The *Jews* gave it out, that the *Samaritans* worſhipped God in the Image of a Dove, but this ſeems to be a mere Forgery upon them, 1. Becauſe among all the Idols which they worſhipped, when they came from *Aſſyria*, there is not the leaſt Hint of the Image of a Dove. 2. *Becauſe Joſephus*, who, in ſeveral Places of his Hiſtory, inveighs againſt them bitterly, does no where charge them with this Crime: And, 3. Becauſe it is a Thing utterly inconſiſtent with the Law of *Moſes*, which they embraced; for, as it forbids all Images, ſo it requires Men to ſacrifice the Dove to God; and ſurely nothing can be more abſurd, than to worſhip that which we are bound to ſacrifice. 'Tis very likely therefore, that the *Samaritans* had no falſe Objects of Worſhip among them, and yet they, as well as the *Jews*, might not be furniſhed with right Apprehenſions of the true One. They both were to blame, no doubt, in confining the Worſhip of God to any particular Place, and thinking that he could not be rightly adored, but either at *Gerazim*, according to the one, or at *Jeruſalem*, according to the other, when his Preſence is certainly every where, and in every Nation *he, that feareth him, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted with him*, Acts x. 35. They, as well as the *Jews*, might think, that God was pleaſed with outward Ordinances, with Sacrifices and Expiations, which *ſanctified only to the purifying of the Fleſh*; but perhaps they never ſuppoſed, that theſe Things were but Types and Figures of what was to ſucceed, and therefore to be of no longer Continuance than until the *Subſtance of the Things themſelves were come*. They, doubtleſs, both had ſome Expectations of a *Meſſiah*, but perhaps it never entered into their Heads, that he ſhould be the Angel of the Covenant, who, with the Incenſe of his Blood, *ſhould offer up the Prayers of all the Saints upon the Altar, that is before the Throne*, Rev. viii. So that our Saviour, by this Part of his Diſcourſe with the Woman, plainly intimates, that, after his Reſurrection, and the Promulgation of his Goſpel, not only the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, but People of all Nations whatever, ſhould have righter Notions of God, the only Object of religious Worſhip, of the Extent and Univerſality of his Church, of the Qualifications requiſite in true Worſhippers, and of the Mediator, appointed by God to introduce and enforce their Prayers.

Q. *But what Reaſon can you give, why our Lord ſhould diſcover his Character to this* Samaritan *Woman, when he ſo often enjoins his Diſciples to conceal it?*

A. Our Saviour, it is true, was ſo far from making any unneceſſary Declarations of himſelf, that, both upon St. *Peter*'s confeſſing him to be the *Chriſt*, and after his Transfiguration, wherein he was declared to be *the Son of God*, we find him charging his Diſciples to ſay nothing of this, until his Reſurrection: Becauſe their Teſtimony, in theſe Points, might not only look like a Matter concerted between him and them, but becauſe indeed they were not qualified to be his Witneſſes in theſe Things, until they had *received Power from on High* by the coming *down of the Holy Ghoſt*. 'Tis to be obſerved however, he never once conceals his Divine Nature and Commiſſion.

When, *John* x. 24. *the* Jews *came round him in* Solomon's *Porch, and ſaid unto him, How long doſt thou make us doubt? If thou be the* Chriſt, *tell us plainly*; his Anſwer is expreſs, *I told ye, and ye believed not, the Works, that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witneſs of me, for I and my Father are one.* When he ſtood before the Judgment-Seat, and the High-Prieſt demanded of him, *Matt.* xxvi. 63, 64. *I adjure thee by the living Goo, that thou tell us, whether thou be the* Chriſt, *the Son of God*; his Anſwer is, *Thou haſt ſaid*: Or (as St. *Mark* expreſſes it, Chap. xiv. 62.) *I am, and ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the Right-hand of Power, and coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Nay, there are ſome Inſtances, wherein, of his own Accord, and without any Provocation of this Kind, he freely diſcovers who he was: For, having cured the Man that was born blind, and afterwards meeting him accidentally, *John* ix. 35, *&c.* *Doſt thou believe on the Son of God?* ſays he; whereupon the Man asking, *Who is the Son of God, that I may believe on him?* Our Saviour replies, *Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he, who talketh with thee*: And therefore we need leſs wonder, that, when this *Samaritan* Woman had firſt of all confeſſed him to be a Prophet, and (as her Words ſeem to imply) was a little dubious, whether he was not the *Meſſiah*, our Saviour ſhould prevent her Enquiry, and tell her voluntarily, that he was he. Eſpecially conſidering, that ſuch a Declaration might be a Means to prepare her, and the reſt of the *Samaritans*, whenever his Apoſtles ſhould come, and preach the Goſpel unto them, to receive their Teſtimony, as we find by the Hiſtory of the *Apoſtolick Acts*, that they did with great Gladneſs.

Q. *What is obſervable in the Nobleman's Application to* Chriſt *for the Cure of his Son?*

A. The Nobleman apprehended *Chriſt* to be a Prophet, and that if he were bodily preſent with his Son, he might poſſibly cure him; but did not believe him to be the *Meſſias*, who was true God, and every-where preſent: Therefore, to give him an infallible Proof that he was ſo, he tells him his Son was cured by the Word of his Mouth, even at that Diſtance. By which Miracle he not only cured the Child of his Fever, but the Father of Unbelief. It was a low Degree of Faith that brought the Father to *Chriſt*; it was an higher Degree that ſent him back to his Son; but higheſt of all, when finding his Son healed, he himſelf believed, and his whole houſe. Hence learn, that a weak Faith may be true, but a true Faith is always growing and increaſing; *It is like the Path of the Juſt, that ſhineth more and more until the perfect Day.*

CHAP. V.

Chriſt *goes to* Jeruſalem, *where, on the Sabbath-Day, he cures a Man who had been diſeaſed thirty eight Years, at the Pool of* Betheſda; *for which the* Jews *lay Snares to kill* Chriſt *as a Sabbath-breaker.* Chriſt *juſtifies himſelf, and teſtifies that he is like his Father in all his Actions, which are particularly ſet down; and exhorts to ſearch the Scripture, even the Books of* Moſes.

Q. W*HAT is the Signification of the Word* Pool; *and what was the Uſe of* Pools *among the* Jews?

A. The Word tranſlated *Pool*, ſignifies any Pool or Head of Water, that is deep enough for a Man to ſwim in: But as, in hot Countries more eſpecially, the Uſe of conſtant Bathing was highly neceſſary, for which Purpoſe it was uſual, in every great City, to have publick Baths erected, ſome have imagined that this Pool was a large Baſon of Water of this Kind; and that the Porticoes about it were Places made for the Conveniency of Dreſſing or Undreſſing, in the Shade, for thoſe that were minded to bathe. However this be, it is certain, that in antient Times there were two Pools within the Compaſs of the Mount on which the Temple ſtood, the one called the *Upper-Pool*, 2 Kings viii. 17. and the other the *Pool of* Siloam, *by the King's Garden*, Nehem. iii. 15. That St. *Jerom* (who himſelf had been at *Jeruſalem*) makes mention of two Reſervoirs, one filled with the Rains that fall in Winter, and the other with Water of a deep red Colour, as if it ſtill contained a Tinge of the Victims that formerly were waſhed in it; and that Mr. *Maundrel*, in his Travels, *Page* 107. tells us, that when he was there, he ſaw ſtill remaining, what was reputed the Pool of *Betheſda*, whereof he gives us the particular Dimenſions.

Q. *Has the Word* Betheſda *any peculiar Meaning?*

A. Some will have the Word *Betheſda* to ſignify a *Drain* or *Sink-houſe*, becauſe the Water which came from the Temple, and the Place where the Victims were waſhed, by ſubterraneous Paſſages ran into it; but moſt interpreters expound it an *Houſe of Mercy*, ſo called, ſay ſome, becauſe the erecting of Baths was an Act of great Kindneſs to the common People, whoſe Indiſpoſitions, in hot Countries, required frequent Bathing, though the Generality rather think, that it more properly had that Name, from God's great Goodneſs ſhewn to his People, by giving this healing Virtue to theſe Waters.

Q. *What was the Man's* Infirmity *which was cured by our Saviour?*

A. The *Greek* Word which we render *Infirmity* or *Weakneſs*, is, indeed, a general Name for almoſt all Diſtempers; but here it is ſo limited in its Signification, by the Circumſtances occurring in the Man's Hiſtory, that it can properly denote no other Diſeaſe than what we call a confirmed Palſey: Bor, beſides that, the Symptoms of no other Diſtemper do ſo exactly agree with the Deſcription given of this Infirmity, both in Point of its long Continuance, and extreme Weakneſs; the very Word Weakneſs, in its moſt obvious Senſe, anſwers exactly to ſuch a Relaxation of the nervous Syſtem, as the Palſey is known to be, and (what is no mean Circumſtance) our Saviour makes uſe of the ſame Form and Method of Cure to this very Man, that he applies to another Paralytick, *Riſe, take up thy Bed and walk*, Matt. ix. 6.

Q. *But how happened it, that of the Multitude of infirm People, who lay at this Pool, our Saviour cured but one?*

A. The Anſwer is obvious, becauſe he was an Object moſt to be compaſſionated of any in the Place, not only becauſe he was too feeble to ſtep into the Water himſelf, and too poor to have any to aſſiſt him; but, more eſpecially, becauſe he had been now a long while in this Condition, and yet ſtill depended upon the good Providence of God for an Opportunity to be cured at one Time or other. To cure at once whole Multitudes, indeed, ſounds more popular, and carries the Face of more extenſive Goodneſs; but beſides that, our Saviour might, in this Caſe, very probably, conform to the Rule of Cure eſtabliſhed providentially at *Betheſda*, which was to heal but one Perſon at one Time; his great Deſign, in every Action of this Kind, was to prove his Character and Commiſſion from God; to which End one ſingle and inconteſtible Miracle was as ſufficient an Evidence as a Thouſand. The ſhort is, ſince our Lord was at Liberty to do what he would with his own, or to beſtow his Favours where he pleaſed, his Goodneſs was conſpicuous, in chuſing the moſt helpleſs Object, and his Wiſdom no leſs manifeſt, in leaving the reſt to the ſtanding Miracle of the Pool.

Q. *Had our Lord any particular Reaſon for bidding the Man to* take up his Bed and walk?

A. It is very obſervable, that whenever our Lord did any Miracle, he generally adjoined ſome Circumſtance or other to denote the Truth and Reality of it. Thus, after his Multiplication of the Loaves and Fiſhes, he ordered his Diſciples to gather up the Fragments, which amounted to twelve Baskets full. Upon his changing the Water into Wine, at *Cana*, he commanded the Servants to carry it to the Ruler of the Feaſt, for him to taſte it. When he had healed the Leper near *Capernaum*, he ſent him to preſent his Oblation, in Teſtimony of his Cure; and here, for the ſame Reaſon, *viz.* the Demonſtration of the Compleatneſs of his Cure, he bids the Paralytick *take up his Bed and go Home*. But why did he this on the Sabbath-Day? Even to make his divine Power and Miſſion more univerſally known, eſpecially in *Jeruſalem*, the Capital of the Nation, and Center of the *Jewiſh* Church, by firſt working this Miracle on the Sabbath-Day, when there were more People at Liberty to view and conſider it; and then ſending his Patient along the Streets, in a very uncommon Manner, and to make the People more inquiſitive, with his Bed upon his Back.

Q. *Since this Pool of* Betheſda *was ſo remarkable for the Wonderful Cures performed by it; how comes it, that none of the other* three Evangeliſts, *takes any Notice of it?*

A. In Anſwer to this, we muſt conſider, that St. *John*, according to the general Senſe of Antiquity, having peruſed the other *Evangeliſts*, and obſerved in what Particulars they were defective, at the Perſuaſion of the other Biſhops of *Aſia*, was prevailed upon to write his Goſpel, as a Supplement to their Omiſſions. Whoever will give himſelf the Trouble to compare his Hiſtory with that of the other *Evangeliſts*, will find this Notion, in a great Meaſure verified. For (not to mention other Particulars) our Saviour's Miracles, antecedent to his Reſurrection, as they are recorded by St. *John*, are no more than eight. *1ſt*, His turning Water into Wine at the Marriage of *Cana* in *Galilee*. *2d*, His telling the *Samaritan* Woman the Secrets of her Life. *3d*, His healing the Nobleman's Son at *Capernaum*. *4th*, His curing the lame Man at the Pool of *Betheſda*. *5th*, His feeding five thouſand Men with five Barley-Loaves and two Fiſhes. *6th*, His walking upon the Surface of the Water, and calming the Storm at Sea. *7th*, His giving Sight to a blind Man, by anointing his Eyes with Clay. And *8th*, his raiſing *Lazarus* from the Dead. Now all theſe are omitted by the former Evangeliſts, except the *5th* and *6th*, which St. *John* ſeems to have recorded, chiefly to introduce a moral Diſcourſe, which our Saviour took Occaſion to make to the People, and which the other ſacred Penman hath omitted; which is a plain Argument, that the Intent of St. *John*'s Goſſel was to ſupply the Defects of the other three; and that therefore their Silence is no Manner of Argument againſt St. *John*'s Account of the Pool of *Betheſda*.

Q. *When, and on what Occaſion, did this Pool receive its ſanative Quality; and was it loſt on the Death of* Chriſt?

A. This is no improbable Conjecture, becauſe the *Jews* no longer deſerved ſuch a peculiar Bleſſing; but when at firſt it came to be impregnated with it, is not a Matter of ſo eaſy Solution. The Words in the Text are, that *an Angel went down at a certain Seaſon*, which a learned Author chooſes rather to render *at the Seaſon* (*i. e.* of the Paſſover) *and troubled the Water*; from whence he infers, that the firſt Time of his ſupernatural Moving of the Water, and conſequently, of the Pool's receiving a miraculous healing Quality, was at this Paſſover; which was the ſecond after the Commencement of our Saviour's publick Miniſtry, and the Reaſon he aſſigns for its being this, rather than any other Paſſover, is, *That our Saviour having gone through all the Cities of* Galilee, *and moſt of the other Parts of the Country of* Judea, *preaching and healing Diſeaſes, came up to* Jeruſalem, *at the Paſſoveer, with an Intent to fix his Abode there; that to prepare his Way before him, God might give this Pool an healing Quality, thereby to ſhew the* Jews *(in a tipical Manner) that the* Meſſenger *of the Covenant* was coming them, to *open a Fountain to the Houſe of* David, *and to the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, for Sin and for Uncleanneſs; *but that, inſtead of giving him a kind Reception, they took*

Counſel together, how they might drive him from them, *and, upon his Departure, the miraculous Virtue of the Water ceaſed.* The only Objection againſt this Hypotheſis is, it makes the Miracle no more than a Week or ten Days Continuance, which is too ſhort a Space for ſo great a Company, as is here repreſented, to be gathered together, to have taken up their Abode, as it were, in the Apartments of this Hoſpital, and to be acquainted ſo perfectly (as the Paralytick, in his Diſcourſe with our Saviour, ſeems to be) with the Nature of the Pool, and the Manner of its preter-natural Preturbation: And therefore (to follow the Generality of Commentators) though we ſhould ſuppoſe that its medicinal Virtue began at the Time of the ſecond Paſſover, yet we ſtill adhere to the Opinion of *Tertullian*, and ſay, that at certain Times, at leaſt, it continued with the *Jews* (and a ſingular Bleſſing it was) until they had filled the Meaſure of their Iniquity, *By denying the Holy One, and the Juſt, and by killing the Prince of Life.*

Q. *Can any phyſical Account be given, how theſe Waters of* Betheſda *came by their ſanative Quality?*

A. Our learned Dr. *Hammond* (who ſometimes affects a Singularity of Interpretation) ſuppoſes that the Waters became medicinal, by being impregnated with a healing Warmth from the Blood and Entrails of the ſacrificed Beaſts that were waſhed there; and that the Angel, in the Text, is not to be underſtood of any of thoſe celeſtial Beings, that are uſually diſtinguiſhed by that Name, but only of a common Meſſenger, *viz.* an Officer or Servant of the Prieſt, who, at a proper Seaſon, was ſent by him to ſtir the Pool. The great *Bartholine* ſuppoſes, that theſe Waters were naturally medicinal, and that their Commotion was occaſioned by an extraordinary Fermentation of ſome Minerals in them; and thererefore he makes the *Angel* no more than a divine Power, which originally gave this Efficacy, though it was exerted in a natural Way. But, beſides, that the Word *angelos* ſeldom occurs in the former, and never in this Senſe, in any hiſtorical Narrative in Scripture, there are theſe plain Objections againſt both Hypotheſes, *viz.* That, be the Waters impregnated with what Ingredient we pleaſe (had their Operation been mechanical) they muſt neceſſarily have cured more than one Perſon, at every Commotion or Fermentation; and yet they never can be ſuppoſed of Efficacy enough to cure all Manner of Diſeaſes in an Inſtant, and at one ſingle Immerſion, as the Waters of *Betheſda*, are repreſented to do: And therefore, waving all ſuch groundleſs Suppoſitions, we may be allowed to ſet the Authority of an antient Father of the Church againſt theſe modern Names, and ſay, *That the Angel, that deſcended at a certain Seaſon, gave the Waters its medicinal Virtue; for the Nature of the Water was not ſanative in itſelf, (if it had, Cures would have always happened) but the whole depended on the Virtue communicated to it by the Angel.*

Q. *But why was this Virtue thus communicated to the Water, effectual for the curing but of one Perſon at a Time?*

A. The true Reaſon was, to evince the Miraculouſneſs of the Cure. Had many been cured at once, the Sceptick might have imputed their Cures to the natural Virtue of the Water, and, upon this Suppoſition, been imboldened to aſk, "Where is the Wonder of this? Do not many medicinal Baths cure various Kinds of Diſeaſes, and Multitudes of ſuch as labour under each Diſeaſe, provided their Cure be curable? Had one only, indeed, been cured, the firſt, that could get in after the Troubling of the Water, there would have been then a great and real Miracle? To make it appear a Miracle, indeed, its Effects ſhould have been confined and limited to particular Times and Perſons, and otherwiſe ſo circumſtantiated, as that the Power of God, and not of blind Nature, might have been apparent in it." But all this Language is effectually ſilenced by the Method which the wiſe Providence of God took in this Caſe, and the Miracle eſtabliſhed upon ſuch evident Conviction, as the Mouth of Infidelity itſelf cannot gainſay.

Q. *When our Lord bid the Man, who was healed,* take up his Bed and walk, *did he not command him to do a Thing that was prohibited by the* Jewiſh *Law?*

A. The Prohibition relating to the Obſervation of the Sabbath, runs thus: *Thus ſaith the Lord, Take heed to yourſelves, and bear no Burthen on the Sabbath-Day, nor bring it in by the Gates of* Jeruſalem, *neither carry forth a Burthen out of your Houſes on the Sabbath-Day, neither do ye any Work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-Day, as I commanded your Fathers,* Jer. xvii. 21, 22. and, according to the *Jewiſh* Canons, thoſe who did this, were puniſhable either by Death or Scourging. It muſt be acknowledged therefore, that our Saviour's Injunction to the impotent Man, was contrary to the Letter of the Law; but then it may be juſtly ſaid, that it was not contrary to the Senſe and Intention of it. The Law only prohibited civil Labour, and reſtrained Men from carrying ſuch Burthens as they were wont to do in the Way of their Trade; but it did not forbid the doing of any Thing that might be a Teſtimony of God's Mercy or Goodneſs to Mankind. As therefore the Sabbath was made for the Honour of God, and this Action was a publick Monument of his Mercy and Power, the Man, properly ſpeaking, did not break the Sabbath; neither did our Lord deſerve any Cenſure from the *Jews*, eſpecially conſidering that as he was a Prophet, even by their own Rules, he had Power to require what was contrary to the ceremonial Reſt of the Sabbath.

Q. *Our bleſſed Lord having affirm'd that* God was his Father, *the* Jews *immediately accuſed him of Blaſphemy: May we not conclude from hence, that they did not think, that even the* Meſſiah *himſelf ought to claim ſo near a Relation to God?*

A. From the *Jews* accuſing our Saviour of Blaſphemy, it ſeems to follow, that though the *Jews* had very high Conceptions of the *Meſſiah*, and were confident, that when he came he would be a mighty Prince, and ſubdue all other Nations under his Feet; yet they never once imagined that he would be God, or in the ſtrict and ſublime Senſe of the Word, the Son God, though, in the very Prophecies, which, as they themſelves acknowledge, relate to the *Meſſiah*, he is called *Immanuel*, Iſa. vii. 14. and elſewere *the Mighty God, the Everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace*, Iſa. ix. 6.

CHAP. VI.

Chriſt *feeds five hundred Men with five Loaves and two Fiſhes. Perceiving that they would force him to* *to be their King, he departs into a Mountain. In the Night he walks on the Sea. The Multitude ſeek* Jeſus, *and find him at* Capernaum. Chriſt's *Exhortation to ſeek incorruptible Food; whereat the* Jews *murmur. He tells them, that his Body is Meat, and his Blood Drink indeed; which he interprets; upon which many of his Diſciples forſake him.*

Q. THE *Miracle of the Loaves and Fiſhes is recorded by the three other* Evangeliſts, *who, however, take no Notice of the People's Attempt, thereupon, to force* Chriſt *to be their King, from a Perſuaſion that he was the* Meſſias: *Pray, in what Manner did the* Jews *ſuppoſe that the* Meſſias *would appear to them?*

A. The Notion they had of the *Meſſias* was this, that he would be a temporal Prince, who ſhould ſubdue all Nations under his Feet, particularly free the *Jews* from the Slavery of the *Roman* Yoke, then on their Necks; forgetting what our Saviour had often told them, that his Kingdom was not of this World, but *within Men*; and that his Buſineſs was to free Men from Soul-ſlavery, not from civil Subjection: However, upon this Miſtake, the *Jews* here, in a furious Zeal, deſigned to take *Chriſt* by Force, and make him their King; but he (who came not into the World to diſturb the Order of civil Government) underſtanding their Intentions, withdraws into a Mountain, to avoid giving the leaſt Umbrage.

Q. *In what Reſpects was the* Manna, *with which* Moſes *fed the* Iſraelites *in the Wilderneſs, a Type of* Chriſt?

A. Our Saviour takes Occaſion, from the *Jews* mentioning *Manna*, to make a Compariſon betwixt himſelf, the Bread of Life, and Manna, the Bread of *Moſes*; and that in three Particulars. 1. It was not *Moſes* that gave the *Iſraelites* that Manna, it was God, at the Prayer of *Moſes*; but it was God that now offered them the Bread of Life, were they ready to accept it. 2. The Manna was not given from Heaven; that is, from the celeſtial Heaven, but only from the Air and Clouds, which frequently in Scripture are called Heaven: But *Chriſt* the Bread of Life was given, and ſent by the Father from the higheſt Heaven, the Heaven of Glory. 3. Manna was not true ſpiritual Food effectively and of itſelf, but bodily Food only; but *Chriſt* is real and ſpiritual Bread, which gives Life to loſt and dead Man; which Manna neither did, nor could do. 4. Manna was peculiar to *Iſrael*, *Chriſt* gives Life to all Sorts of Perſons, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*.

Hence learn, that as *Chriſt* is the Truth and Subſtance of all Types in the *Old Teſtament*, ſo Manna in particular, was an illuſtrious Type of him. In many Things they agree, in ſome they differ. They agree in their original; Manna came down from above, ſo did *Chriſt*; Manna was freely given, ſo is *Jeſus Chriſt* the free Gift of God; Manna was not fit to be eaten as it lay in the Field, but muſt be ground in a Mill, beaten in a Mortar, and baked in an Oven, before it was fit for Food; *Chriſt* was ground by Sufferings, bruiſed on the Croſs, ſcorched in the fiery Oven of his Father's Wrath, that he might become a fit Saviour for us. As Manna was gathered by the *Iſraelites* daily and equally, was every Night rained down about their Tents, and every Man had his Omer; ſo *Chriſt*, in the Miniſtry of the Word, is daily offered to a loſt World, and all that believe in him ſhall ſhare alike in the Benefit of the Juſtification, Sanctification, and Glorification from him. But now the Manna and *Chriſt* differ in this; and the Truth excels the Type thus: There is a quickening, enlivening Virtue, and a life-giving, and a life-upholding Power, in *Chriſt* the Bread of Life, which was never found in Manna, the Bread of *Iſrael*; and whereas Manna only fed the Body of an *Iſraelite*, and that only for a little Time, in the Wilderneſs; *Chriſt* nouriſhes the Souls of all Believers, *Jew* or *Gentile*, bond or free; and this not for a Time, but for Eternity.

Q. *But the greateſt Difficulty in this Chapter, and which occaſioned many of his own Diſciples to leave him, was that Saying of our Saviour,* Ver. 53. Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.

A. That which has made this Paſſage a Matter of ſo much Perplexity, is the want of attending to the Occaſion of his Diſcourſe, and the figurative Forms of Expreſſion, that were then in Uſe in the *Eaſtern* Nations. Our Lord, it ſeems, but the Day before, had fed a great Number of People with a very ſmall Matter of Proviſions. The Day following, they reſort to him, in hopes of the ſame bounteous Supply. Our Lord, who knew their Deſign, rebuked their greedy Appetite. They, in return, reminded him of *Moſes*'s Liberality (much ſuperior to his) in providing them Manna for the Space of forty Years. Hereupon our Lord took Occaſion to acquaint them, *that he was the Bread of God, which came down from Heaven*; highly preferable to Manna, foraſmuch as that gave only their Forefathers a *tranſitory*, but this an *everlaſting Life to the whole World*: For *he that cometh to me*, (continues he) *ſhall never hunger, and he that believeth in me, ſhall never thirſt*; and again, *I am the living* (or rather *Life-giving*) *Bread, which came down from Heaven; if any Man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live for ever, and the Bread that I will give him is my Fleſh, which I will give for the Life of the World: For my Fleſh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed. He that eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day.*

Now, whoſoever conſiders the Genius of the *Eaſtern* Languages, abounding in lofty, and ſometimes abſtruſe Figures, and how common a Thing it was among the *Jews*, eſpecially, to uſe the Metaphors of eating and drinking in a ſpiritual Senſe, *viz.* to denote the Exerciſe, or Improvement of any of the intellective Faculties of the Soul, will not be much ſurprized at our Saviour's expreſſing himſelf in this Manner. *Ho, every one that thirſteth* (ſays the Prophet, exhorting the People to hear his Inſtructions) *come ye to the Waters; and he that hath no Money, come ye buy and eat; yea, come buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price; and eat ye that which is good, and let your Soul delight itſelf in Fatneſs.* To the ſame Purpoſe we frequently find *Philo* calling Wiſdom and Virtue the Food of the Soul, which nouriſhes it to eternal Life; and the *Talmudiſts* tell us that *all the Eating and Drinking, which is mentioned in the Book of* Eccleſiaſtes, *relates to the Obſervation of the Law, and good Works*: Nay, Manna in particular (according to the Senſe of ſome *Jewiſh* Authors) was an eminent Type of *Chriſt*; and there-ſore, the *good Man* (ſays *Philo*) *lifts up his Eyes to Heaven, looking to the* Manna, *the divine and heavenly* Logos, *the incorruptible Food of the Soul that loves God*; and if this was the Senſe of Things, our Saviour was guilty of no Preſumption in ſtiling himſelf the *true Bread that came down from Heaven*; nor of any Abſurdity, in inſiſting upon a Metaphor which ſo frequently occurred in the beſt of their Authors: The only Queſtion is, Whether our Saviour's Words, in this Place, are to be taken in a literal or metaphorical Senſe, *i. e.* Whether they relate to a corporeal or ſpiritual eating his Fleſh?

There is ſomething ſo ſhocking in the very Notion of one Man's eating the Fleſh of another, that, when the *Jews* heard our Saviour (as they imagined) diſcourſe at this Rate, they might well ſay, *How can this Man give us his Fleſh to eat?* “ Will he cut it in Pieces, and diſtribute to every “ one of us a Share? 'Tis no agreeable Thought “ to eat human Fleſh, but (ſuppoſing we could “ bring ourſelves to that) how could he multiply “ himſelf in ſo many Parts, as that each of us “ might have one? Or how could himſelf ſub- “ ſiſt, if he ſhould, in this barbarous and inhu- “ man Manner, cut and mangle his own Body?” This ſeems to be the Reaſoning of the *Jews* upon the Caſe: But, on all Hands, it is agreed, that they miſtook the Senſe of our Saviour's Words, and fancied ſuch a Meaning in them, as he never intended; whereas, had the literal Senſe been the proper and intended Meaning, it is certain, that they impoſed no falſe Conſtruction upon what he ſaid, ſince, upon this Suppoſition, he intended that this human Fleſh ſhould properly be eaten, and they, in their queſtioning the Truth of what he ſaid, meant no more.

We may obſerve farther, that when our Saviour knew within himſelf, that the Abſtruſeneſs of his Diſcourſe upon this Subject, had given ſome Diſguſt to his Diſciples, *He ſaid unto them, Does this offend you? What, and if you ſhould ſee the Son of Man aſcend up where he was before?* The only Senſe of which Words can be, “ Are you “ offended, that I thus ſpeak of giving you my “ *Fleſh to eat?* Do you look on this Expreſſion “ *now*, as a Thing ſo very abſurd and unintelligi- “ ble? What then will you think of it, when *this* “ Body is removed hence into Heaven? *i. e.* how “ will you then be daunted, and think it ſtill more “ difficult, and more impoſſible to apprehend, “ how ye ſhall then eat my Fleſh, and drink my “ Blood, provided ye go on to underſtand my “ Words in a groſs and carnal Manner?” For *Athanaſius* has well obſerved, that our Saviour here mentions his Aſcent into Heaven, that he might divert his Diſciples from entertaining a carnal Senſe of his Words: And therefore his Argument is, “ Since it will be then impoſſible for you “ to eat my Fleſh corporeally, when it is ſo far “ removed from you, by this you may perceive, “ that my Purpoſe is, that you ſhould underſtand “ my Words in a ſpiritual Senſe.

We may obſerve again, that when ſeveral Diſciples revolted upon the Account of this *hard Saying*, (as it is called) and our Saviour was apprehenſive that his Apoſtles might do the like, St. *Peter*, in the Name of the reſt, anſwers him, *Lord, to whom ſhall we go? Thou haſt the Words of eternal Life*: Whereas, had he underſtood our Saviour, as ſpeaking here of *oral Manducation*, his Anſwer, very probably, would have been to this Effect; “ Whatſoever Appearance there may “ be of Inhumanity, Abſurdity, and Impoſſibility “ in eating thy natural Fleſh, and drinking thy “ Blood, yet we believe it, becauſe thou haſt ſaid “ it, who art Truth itſelf, and able to make good “ thy Words.” But ſince we hear nothing from him of this Tendency, we may reaſonably conclude, that he had no ſuch Notion of our Saviour's Words. And indeed our Saviour, one would think, had done enough to explain his own Meaning, when he tells us, that the *eating*, which he intends, is *believing on him*, and that it was ſuch an Eating as would make a Man *live for ever*; that *Fleſh* (if we could eat it) *profiteth nothing*, ſince the Soul can only be nouriſhed by ſpiritual Food, and that therefore *the Words, which he ſpake unto them, were Spiritual*, *i. e.* were to be underſtood in a ſpiritual Senſe, otherwiſe they would not be conducive to eternal Life; And therefore *Euſebius* introduces our Saviour as thus addreſſing his Diſciples, “ Do not think that I ſpeak of that Fleſh, “ wherewith I am compaſſed, as if you muſt eat “ of that; neither imagine, that I command you “ to drink my *bodily* Blood; but underſtand well, “ that the Words which I have ſpoken unto you “ *they are Spirit and Life*.” For (as St. *Auſtin* lays down this Rule for the Expoſition of Scripture Phraſes) “ If the Saying be preceptive, either for- “ bidding a wicked Action, or injoining a good “ one, it is no figurative Speech; but if it ſeems “ to command any Wickedneſs, or to forbid what “ is profitable and good, it is figurative.” Accordingly this Saying. *Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood*, ſeems to command a Wicked Thing, and is therefore a Figure enjoining us to communicate in the Paſſion of our Lord, and ſweetly and profitably remember, that his Fleſh was wounded and crucified for us. In this Senſe his Fleſh and Blood are *truly Meat and Drink*; becauſe the eating of this Fleſh by Faith, in his ſalutary Paſſion doth nouriſh the Soul to Life eternal; and the drinking of his Blood by Faith, as that which was *ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins*, does refreſh the Perſon, thirſting after Righteouſneſs, and convey into him a Principle of living *well*, and of living *for ever*.

Q. *But why does our Lord inſiſt ſo much upon the Metaphor of* Bread?

A. Our bleſſed Saviour, through the greateſt Part of St. *John*'s Goſpel, takes an Occaſion, from the Multitudes coming after him, out of a greedy Deſire to be fed, to diſcourſe to them of ſpiritual Bleſſings under the Metaphors of Meat and Drink; and, for his Apology in ſo doing, we may obſerve, that, among the *Oriental* and *Jewiſh* Writers, no Metaphor was more common than this; that to this Purpoſe, *Solomon*, in his Book of *Proverbs*, introduces Wiſdom crying in the Streets, *Come eat of my Bread, and drink of my Wine, which I have mingled*, Prov. ix. 5. for *they that eat me, ſhall yet be hungry, and they that drink me, ſhall yet be thirſty*, ſays the wiſe Son of *Sirach*; *for the Soul* (as *Plato* expreſſes it) *is nouriſhed by receiving and practiſing good Things, and Wiſdom Temperance and Piety, are the Food of a Soul, that can ſuck them in.* That, as our Saviour calls himſelf *the Bread that came down from Heaven*, Philo, upon the Words of *Moſes* deſcants, *What Food can*

God rain down from Heaven, but that heavenly Wiſdom which he ſends down upon the Soul, that deſires it? That, as he exhorts People to labour for Meat, that *periſhes not*; *Philo* declares, that the Wiſdom of God is the *Nurſe*, and *Nouriſher of thoſe that deſire incorruptible Diet*; and that, as he compares himſelf to the *Manna*, which fell in the Wilderneſs; *the good Man* (ſays *Philo* again) *lifts up his Eyes to Heaven, looking to the Manna, the divine and heavenly Word, the incoruptible Food of the Soul, that loves God*: And from hence we may perceive, why our Saviour inſiſts ſo much upon this Metaphor, even becauſe it was ſo fomiliar to the *Jews*, and uſed by their moſt celebrated Writers.

CHAP. VII.

Jeſus *walks in* Galilee; *his Brethren ask him to go to the Feaſt; which he refuſes, but afterwards goes privately, and teaches in the Temple, juſtifying his Doctrine, and the Miracle he had wrought on the Sabbath-Day. Several Opinions of the People concerning* Chriſt. *The Chief-Prieſts and* Phariſees *attempt to kill him.* Chriſt *promiſes the* Holy Ghoſt *to Believers. The Meſſengers ſent to take* Chriſt, *return without him, with their Reaſon; which occaſions a Variance among the* Phariſees.

Q. A*T what Time, and on what Occaſion, was the* Feaſt of Tabernacles *held, and to which our Lord's Relations here asked him to go?*

A. There were three great Feaſts which the *Jews* celebrated Yearly; namely, that of the *Paſſover*, of *Pentecoſt*, and of *Tabernacles*: This laſt was obſerved in the Month of *September*, after they had gathered in the Fruits of the Earth; whence it was alſo called the Feaſt of *Ingathering*. At this Feaſt they went out of their Houſes, and dwelt in Booths ſeven Days, in remembrance of their living in Tents and Booths in the Wilderneſs for forty Years ſucceſſively, before they came into *Canaan*. To this Feaſt the Kindred of our Saviour adviſe him to go, in order to render himſelf more famous and known to the World, and to ſtay no longer in *Galilee*, an obſcure Place, but to go into the more noble and populous Country of *Judea*, and work his Miracles there. But what high Preſumption was this in them, to direct our bleſſed Lord whither to go and what to do?

The Reaſon they give for their Advice is, *For no Man who ſeeketh to be known openly, will do any Thing in ſecret*; that is, if thou wouldeſt be thought to be the *Meſſias* by thy working Miracles, do them not in a Corner; but go up to *Jeruſalem* with us at this next Feaſt, that the great Men may take Notice of thee. Such as are ambitious of Vain-glory, and Commendation from Men themſelves, wonder that others do not follow their Meaſures for gaining Reputation and Reſpect. Thus did our Lord's Brethren here; but the Wonder ceaſes, if we conſider the next Words, *Neither did his Brethren believe in him. Chriſt* tells them, that they might go up to the Feaſt at *Jeruſalem*, when, and as publickly as they pleaſed; but it was not proper for him to appear ſo publickly, becauſe the Doctrine he taught was odious to the *Phariſees*, and the prevailing Power at *Jeruſalem*; he therefore reſolves to go up privately, that he might not ſtir up the Jealouſy of the *Sanhedrim*: But for them, they were out of danger of the World's Hatred, for being the Children of it, the World would love it's own; but him it hated, becauſe he reproved its Sins.

Q. *Is it not a little Strange, that when the* Jews *charge our Saviour with having a* Devil, *he makes no Reply in his Juſtification?*

A. Wonderful was the Meekneſs of *Chriſt*, in paſſing over this Calumny, without a Word of Reply. Guilt commonly is Clamorous and Impatient; but Innocence is Silent, and regardleſs of Reproach. Thus our Lord minds not their Impotent Cenſure, but goes on with his Diſcourſe, and juſtifies his own Action, in healing a Man on the Sabbath-Day, from the *Jews* own Practice, in circumciſing their Children on that Day, if it happen to be the eighth Day: And the Argument runs thus; If Circumciſion may be adminiſtred to a Child on the Sabbath-Day, which is a ſervile kind of Exerciſe, without Blame or Cenſure; why muſt I be cenſured for healing a Man on the Sabbath-Day, thoroughly and perfectly, only by a Word ſpeaking? As if our Lord had ſaid, If you may wound a Man by Circumciſion on the Sabbath-Day, may not I heal one?

From the foregoing Argument *Chriſt* infers, that there is no making a Judgment according to the firſt Appearance of Things; and that Suddenneſs and Raſhneſs, Prejudice or Partiality in Judging, overthrows righteous Judgment. As if *Chriſt* had ſaid, lay aſide your Prejudices againſt my Perſon, and compare thoſe Caſes attentively and impartially with one another; and then ſee whether you can juſtly condemn me as a Sabbath-breaker, and acquit yourſelves.

Q. *The* Jews *would not believe* Chriſt *to be the* Meſſiah, *becauſe they knew* whence he was; *whereas Nobody knew the Original of the* Meſſiah: *Is there any Truth, or Force in this Argument?*

A. Obſerve here the Argument the *Jews* urged againſt our Saviour's being *Chriſt* the promiſed *Meſſiah*, namely, that *they knew whence he was*; whereas, *when the* Meſſiah *cometh, no Man ſhall know whence he is*; wherein they aſſert a manifeſt Untruth; for though *Chriſt*, in reſpect of his Godhead, was prefigured by *Melchiſedec*, who was without Father or Mother, without Deſcent; (that is, without any that the Scripture mentions) yet, in reſpect of his human Nature, the *Jews* might know *whence he was*; for the Scripture plainly pointed out the Tribe, Family, Lineage, and Place of his Birth.

Chriſt being grieved with this impudent Cavil, boldly replies, *Ye both know me, and whence I am; but the Father that ſent me ye know not*; that is, ye know me as a Man, where I was born, and of what Family I am; but you know not my Divine Nature, nor the Father from whom I am by eternal Generation, and who hath ſent me into the World.

Q. *We read, Verſe* 37. In the laſt Day, that great Day of the Feaſt, *Jeſus* ſtood and cried, If any Man Thirſt, let him come unto me and Drink. *And again, Verſe* 38. He that believeth on me, out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water: *To what Cuſtoms then in Uſe among the* Jews, *does our Saviour allude in these Paſſages?*

A. The Feaſt of *Tabernacles* laſted eight Days; the firſt and laſt of which were to be kept Holy with religious Aſſemblies and Sacrifices; and it was a Cuſtom among the *Jews*, upon that ſolemn Day, to offer up a Pot of Water unto God, which they drew out of the Fountain of *Siloam*; with reference to this Cuſtom, *Chriſt* here cries with a loud Voice, inviting the People to fetch and draw from him, as from a living Fountain, all the ſanctifying Gifts and ſaving Graces of his Holy Spirit.

Chriſt alſo alludes to another *Jewiſh* Cuſtom, when he ſays, *Out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water*. The *Jews* were wont, at Fountains, to build great Veſſels of Stone, and in the Midſt, or Belly of them, to have Pipes, through which the Water paſſed. Now, ſays *Chriſt*, thus ſhall it be with every one that believes in me; he ſhall be abundantly filled with the Spirit of God, in all the ſanctifying and ſaving Graces of it. *Chriſt* and his Spirit are a living Fountain, whoſe Waters never fail; they are not a Water-brook, but a Spring of Waters, of which we ſhall never miſs, if we ſeek to *Chriſt* for them.

St. *John*'s Comment upon theſe Words is this; he tells us, that *Chriſt* ſpoke of the miraculous Gifts of the Spirit, which accompanied the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*. *For the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given*; that is, not ſo plentifully, *becauſe that* Jeſus *was not yet glorified*.

Q. *In the latter Part of the Chapter we have an Account of a Deſign, and an Attempt made by the Rulers of the* Jews, *to apprehend* Chriſt, *and of their Failure therein: What Obſervations do you make upon this Part of the Hiſtory?*

A. Obſerve how God reſtrained the Rage and Malice of *Chriſt*'s Enemies till his Hour was come; the Officers of the Chief Prieſts, who were ſent with a Commiſſion to apprehend him, return without him; but with this honourable mention of him, *Never Man ſpoke like this Man.* The preaching of the Goſpel ſometimes reſtrains the Violence of the Hand, when it works no change upon the Heart.

The *Phariſees* being more enraged at the Reaſon given by the Officers for neglecting their Office, than for the Neglect itſelf, upbraid them, that they ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be ſo deceived, whereas the Grandees, and learned Rabbies, had not owned him; only an accurſed Crew of ignorant People followed him. *Have any of the Rulers followed him?* O no, they were too wiſe to believe! Faith is left to Fools, and accounted Folly by thoſe wiſe Men. Prodigious Stupidity! to pronounce them accurſed, who receive *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the chiefeſt Bleſſing.

God ſtirs up *Nicodemus*, tho' he durſt not openly own *Chriſt*, yet to plead for him, that he might not be condemned before-hand, this was a common rule of Juſtice, and nothing but what might have been ſaid in behalf of the greateſt Malefactor; he could not have ſaid leſs; but God ſo ordered it, that it was enough to divert the Storm, from falling on *Chriſt* at that Time.

They anſwer *Nicodemus* with a Taunt, a Mock, and a Scorn, that no Prophet ever roſe out of *Galilee*, nor ever ſhould. But though they were more and more enraged, yet they diſperſe without concluding any Thing againſt *Chriſt*, every one going to his own Houſe. There is no Wiſdom, nor Underſtanding, nor Counſel, againſt the Lord.

CHAP. VIII.

Chriſt *teaches in the Temple, where the* Scribes *bring to him a Woman taken in Adultery; but he fruſtrateth their Intention; and lets the Woman go. He tells them, he is* the Light of the World, *and juſtifies himſelf by his own and his Father's Teſtimony; ſhews them who he is, and by whom ſent. His Promiſe to Believers; and teſtifies, that* Abraham *ſaw his Day, and was glad; whereupon they are ready to ſtone him.*

Q. THE *firſt Part of this Chapter contains the Story of a Woman taken in Adultery, and brought by the* Phariſees *to our Lord, and deſiring his Opinion, whether ſhe ſhould be puniſhed according to the* Moſaic *Law by* Stoning. *To this* Jeſus *made no Reply; but ſtooping down, wrote ſomething with his Finger on the Pavement: Pray what was it he then wrote?*

A. It is generally agreed, that, when our Saviour ſtooped down to write with his Finger in the Duſt, he wrote ſome memorable Sentence or other, but what that Sentence was, the Conjectures of learned Men have been various. Some have imagined, that it was the Reproof againſt a rigid and uncharitable Temper, which occurs in his Sermon on the Mount, *Why beholdeſt thou the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, but conſidereſt not the Beam that is in thine own Eye?* Matthew vii. 3. Others, that it was the very Words, which, upon his raiſing himſelf up, he pronounced to the Woman's Accuſers, *He that is without Sin among you, let him firſt caſt a Stone at her*, John viii. 7. And others again, that it might rather be that Paſſage in the *Pſalmiſt*, *Unto the Ungodly ſaith God, Why doſt thou preach my Laws, and takeſt my Covenant in thy thy Mouth? Whereas thou hateſt to be reformed, and and haſt caſt my Words behind thee. When thou ſaweſt a Thief, thou conſentedſt unto him, and haſt been Partaker with the Adulterers*, Pſalm l. 16. *&c.* But all this is meer Gueſs-work: And it ſeems more prudent to ſay nothing of the Actions of our Saviour, when we are not admitted to the Reaſons of them.

Q. *In what Manner was the Execution by* Stoning *performed?*

A. The *Rabbinical* Writers tell us, that, when a Man or Woman was convicted of Adultery, they were led out to the Brow of an Hill, with their Hands tied behind their Backs, where their Accuſers puſhed them down headlong; that, if with the Fall they were killed, there was no more done to them; but if they were ſtill alive, the ſame Accuſers were to roll great Stones upon them, and if they did not diſpatch them, the Company then all took up Stones, and quite overwhelmed them with them. But we have nothing of all this in the Law of *Moſes*. In all the Places where he makes mention of this Puniſhment, we only find, that the Criminal was to be led out of the City *and ſtoned with Stones till he died*; and that, *the Hands of the Witneſſes ſhould be firſt upon him, to put him to Death, and afterwards the Hands of all the People*, Deut. xvii. 7. 'Tis in Alluſion to this Paſſage that our Saviour ſays, *Let him that is without Sin among you, caſt the firſt Stone*, becauſe it badly becomes thoſe, who are guilty, either of the ſame, or greater Crimes, to be ſo zealous for the Puniſhment of others. This however hinders not, but that Magiſtrates, who are intruſted with the Execution of the Laws, ſhould put them in Force againſt Malefactors, even though themſelves are not intirely exempt from Sin; but ſtill it reminds them, that they ſhould execute Judgment with Compaſſion and Tenderneſs, and as much Moderation as the Law will allow them; conſidering that they themſelves are not free from Guilt, but as obnoxious to Puniſhment for other Sins, as thoſe poor Creatures are, who have fallen into Crimes that are puniſhable by human Judicatures.

Q. *The Woman's Accuſers being withdrawn, it is ſaid,* Jeſus *was left alone,* and the Woman ſtanding in the Midſt; *which laſt Words pray explain?*

A. Our Lord's Apoſtles, who were his conſtant Attendants, were doubtleſs not far from him; the Meaning therefore of the Expreſſion muſt be, that ſhe was left without any of her Accuſers, who, out of Shame, ſneaked away, being convicted in their Conſciences, that whatever the Woman was, they were no proper Evidences againſt her: Nor is it to be wondered, that, upon this Occaſion, all the Woman's Accuſers departed from her, ſince the *Jews* themſelves own, that Adulteries did *multiply under the ſecond Temple,* when their *Rabbins* permitted every one *to have four or five Wives, and ſaid, that they ſinned not, if, after the Example of the Patriarchs, when they ſaw a beautiful Woman, they deſired to have her.*

Q. *In what Part of the* Moſaic *Law may we find this Woman's Caſe deſcribed?*

A. Both *Selden* and *Fagius* are of Opinion, that this Woman might come under the Number of them, whoſe Caſe is thus repreſented in the Words of *Deuteronomy. If a Damſel, that is a Virgin, be betrothed to an Husband, and a Man find her in the City, and he lie with her, then ye ſhall bring them both out into the Gate of the City, and ye ſhall ſtone them with Stones, that they die; the Damſel, becauſe ſhe cried not, being in the City; and the Man, becauſe he hath humbled his Neighbour's Wife,* Deut. xxii. 23, 24. The Puniſhment of *ſtoning,* which this Law mentions, and the Accuſers of this Woman here inſiſt on, ſeems to favour this Notion; and the Indulgence which our Saviour ſhewed her, looks as if ſhe had ſuffered ſome Kind of Violence, though ſhe was not intirely innocent. Our Saviour, however, could not act in the Capacity of a Judge, becauſe that was no Part of his preſent Miniſtry: Tho' therefore he was ſo far from approving her Conduct, that he ſufficiently blamed her, in bidding her *ſin no more,* yet was he reſtrained from pronouncing any Sentence of Condemnation upon her, becauſe the End of his Coming, at this Time, into the World, was *not to judge the World, but to ſave it,* John xii. 47.

Q. *Were not ſome of the antient Fathers of Opinion, that the Story of* the Woman taken in Adultery, *was ſpurious, and therefore refuſed to admit it into the Canon of Scripture?*

A. Some of the antient Fathers were ſo rigid, in their Cenſures againſt Adultery, that they would not admit any Perſons, convicted thereof, into the Communion of the Church, even after the longeſt Penance; and carried their Zeal and Reſentment to ſuch an Height, as to think it no great harm to kill them. No wonder then, if Men of ſuch ſevere Opinions, were unwilling to admit into the Canon of Scripture, the Hiſtory of the Woman taken in this Crime, becauſe, as they imagined, it gave Permiſſion to Lewdneſs; ſince our Saviour ſent her away without condemning her; whereas *Chriſt,* in his preſent Circumſtances, had no Commiſſion to paſs Sentence upon her, though in bidding her go, and for Fear of the divine Judgment, repent and ſin no more, he ſufficiently declared himſelf againſt all ſuch Practices.

Upon a different Perſuaſion, however, it was, that this Paſſage came, at firſt, to be marked as dubious, and in Time quite thrown out as ſpurious, in many antient, but eſpecially *Greek* Copies: But in Oppoſition to this, we need only obſerve, that this Part of Hiſtory was found in the ſixteen Manuſcripts, which *Stephanus,* in all the ſeven (ſave one) which *Beza,* and in that infinite Number, which our learned *Mills* has made uſe of; that *Tatian,* 160, *i. e.* ſixty Years after the Death of St. *John,* and *Ammianus* of *Alexandria,* who flouriſhed about the Year 220, and made their ſeveral Harmonies of the Goſpel out of the Copies then in Uſe, do not (as appears from the *Canons* of *Euſebius*) relate it; that moſt of the Copies of the *Eaſt* (according to *Selden*'s Report) retain it; and though it be not found in ſome Manuſcripts (as the *Greek Code,* cited by *Cotelerius,* expreſſes the Matter, yet it is intire in the antient Manuſcripts, and all the Apoſtles make mention of it, in the Conſtitutions which they ſet forth for the Edification of the Church.

This is enough to vindicate the Truth and Sincerity of this Part of St. *John*'s Hiſtory from the Cenſures of Criticks, who ſuſpected it; and, to reſcue his Doctrine from ſuch falſe Conſtructions, as the Adverſaries of our Lord's Divinity would put upon it, we need only be mindful to diſtinguiſh between his divine and human Nature, and not to apply ſuch Words and Actions of his, as relate to the one, to the Prejudice of the other. Thoſe who deny the Deity of *Chriſt,* do, nevertheleſs acknowledge, that he was a Prophet ſent from God, and inveſted with an high Commiſſion. Now, under this Character he could only appear and act, in virtue of his human Nature, and muſt, thereupon, be deemed ſubſervient to the Orders and Commands of his heavenly Fathers: And therefore, as the very Office of a Prophet requires, that he ſhould ſpeak nothing of himſelf, nor deliver his own Mind or Doctrine, nor ſeek his own Glory, but ſpeak all Things in the Name, and do all Things for the Glory, of him that ſent him; ſo are we not to wonder, that we find our bleſſed Lord, though he had in him *the Fullneſs of the Godhead,* yet, in his prophetical Capacity, ſpeaking and acting, as if he had no Power, but what was given him from above (even as Ambaſſadors, here on Earth, are obliged to purſue their Maſter's Inſtructions) and therefore, profeſſing ſo frequently, that he delivered no Doctrine of his own Invention, nor did any Thing but what he had a Commiſſion to do.

Q. *In what Senſe does* Chriſt *call* God his Father?

A. The *Socinians,* indeed allow, that the Commiſſion wherewith our Saviour was ſent into the World, to do and reveal God's Will, was Reaſon enough to entitle him to the Appellation of the *Son of God,* and that is all that he pretends to, when he vindicates himſelf to the *Jews,* from any higher Imputation. But now it appears, from a due Inſpection of the Context, that *Chriſt* did not intend to ſay, or prove, that he was the Son of God, as being his Ambaſſador Extraordinary, inſtructed and ſo ſent into the World, but on a far more excellent Account, *viz.* that, before he came into the World, he was with God the Father, and ſo was his true and eſſential Son, as being *God of God,* and partaking of the ſame Nature, as a Son does with his Father. From the 25th to the 30th Verſe incluſively, it is manifeſt that our Lord diſcourſed to the *Jews*, in ſuch a Manner, that they ſtill thought he was aſſerting his Godhead, and therefore *we ſtone thee*, ſays they, *becauſe thou being a Man, makeſt thyſelf a God, viz.* by calling God ſo emphatically, and with ſuch Peculiarity, his Father, as that he was ſo to him alone, and ſo, that *he and his Father were one.* But to this *Chriſt* does not anſwer, by denying, either that he was God, or that he had ever challenged to himſelf that Dignity, which (had he been only Man) had been the propereſt Thing he could have ſaid, to take off the Objection of his Blaſphemy; but, inſtead of that, he ſeems rather to argue, that he was ſo the Son of God, as to have the divine Nature in him: For if Judges "and Magiſtrates, *ſays he*, are called Gods, from an imperfect Reſemblance, and Participation of the divine Authority, how much more may I be called God, who am both by Nature the Son of God, and, in the moſt excellent Manner, authorized by him?" This, indeed, our Saviour does not ſpeak in expreſs Words, but he not obſcurely ſignifies it, by ſaying, that *his Father had ſanctified him, and ſent him into the World*; for therein he ſtill declares God to be his Father, and that he was firſt ſanctified, and then ſent, which plainly implies, that he was the Son of God, in Heaven, before his Miſſion into the World; and, for a farther Proof of his divine Original, he appeals to the divine Operations he performed, *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.*

When therefore our bleſſed Saviour ſays of himſelf, that *All Power is given unto him, both in Heaven and Earth*; and that unto his Diſciples *he had appointed a Kingdom, even as his Father had appointed to him*; when St. *Paul* ſtiles him the *righteous Judge*, who *ſhall give a Crown of Righteouſneſs to all that love his Appearance*; and St. *Matthew*, that *King*, who ſhall *ſeparate the Sheep from the Goats*, and *reward every one according to his Works*; it can hardly be thought, that to diſtribute Rewards in the Kingdom of Glory, is a Prerogative peculiar to the Father alone, and ſuch as no way belongs to the Son; becauſe our Saviour, in Reply to *Zebedee*'s Children, tells us, *That to ſit on his Right-hand, and on his Left, was not his to give, but it ſhall be given to them, for whom it was prepared of his Father*; ſince the whole Deſign of that Paſſage is to ſhew, that thoſe Rewards ſhall not be diſtributed, upon ſuch Conditions, and in ſuch a Manner, as theſe Petitioners vainly imagined. To this Purpoſe we may obſerve, that the Words, *ſhall be given to them*, are only a Supplement made by the Tranſlators, for they are not in the Original, which is literally thus, —— *To ſit on my Right-hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but*, or *except*, to them alone, *for whom it is prepared of my Father:* And this means no more, than that the Honours and Degrees of Happineſs, in the other World, are not the Son's to give, in the Senſe that theſe Apoſtles fancied, *i. e.* he does not give them abſolutely and arbitrarily; he is not led by Partiality and Fondneſs, and Reſpect of Perſons; he is not carried by Humour, or vanquiſhed by the Importunity of Friends or Suitors, as earthly Princes are, but is limited by the Conſiderations of Equity and ſtrict Juſtice, from which it can never be conſiſtent with the Perfections of his Nature to depart: For, that the whole Proceſs of the final Judgment, and conſequently the Diſpenſations of future Rewards and Puniſhments, are to be tranſacted by our bleſſed Saviour, we have this expreſs Teſtimony in Scripture, *The Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son, that all Men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*

CHAP. IX.

Chriſt *opens the Eyes of one that was born blind, who is brought before the* Phariſees, *to whom he relates the Manner of his Cure; for which they reproach* Chriſt *as a Sabbath-breaker. They ſend for the Parents of the blind Man, who refer them to their Son's Teſtimony; he is again called and examined; his Anſwer; for which they excommunicate him.* Chriſt *inſtructs the blind Man, who believes in him. He ſhews the* Phariſees *their ſpiritual Blindneſs.*

Q. *As our Saviour was walking along, probably in the Highway, he ſees a* blind Man; *the Diſciples ask him*, who did ſin, this Man, or his Parents, that he was born blind? *What Sin did the Diſciples ſuppoſe his Parents were guilty of to bring this Misfortune on their Son?*

A. What the Diſciples might mean, by the Sin of the blind Man's Parents, is no hard Matter to ſolve, conſidering the ſtrict Prohibition in the Law, *Levit.* xx. 18. of not coming near a menſtruous Woman, which was thought to have ſo ill an Influence upon the Child, as to make it obnoxious to Leproſy or Mutilation, and might conſequently be the Cauſe of this Perſon's Blindneſs: But what we are to underſtand by his own Sin, before he was born, is not ſo eaſy to be determined. That it cannot relate to the original Sin, which he brought into the World with him, is evident, becauſe all Mankind (our Lord excepted) are equally guilty of this; nor does this entail upon them any corporeal Imperfection: And therefore the Sin here intended, muſt be ſomething ſpecial and perſonal. Now, whoever conſiders that the Opinion of the *Platoniſts* and *Pythagoreans*, concerning the Pre-exiſtence of Souls, their Tranſmigration from one Body to another, and being ſent into Bodies better or worſe, according to their Merit or Demerit, had obtained among the *Jews*, and more eſpecially among the *Phariſees*, need not much wonder, to find our Lord's Diſciples infected with it, or at leaſt deſirous to know their Maſter's Sentiments about it. The Author of the *Book of Wiſdom*, where, ſpeaking of himſelf, he tells us, *that, being good, he came into a Body undefiled*, i. e. free from any notable Infirmity, Chap. viii. 20. gives Countenance to this Doctrine; and in the Writings of *Philo*, and *Joſephus*, we have it confirmed to us: And therefore the Diſciples may well be ſuppoſed to enquire here, whether our Lord allowed of the prevailing Notion, *viz.* That the Soul of this Man might be put into his imperfect Body, for the Puniſhment of what he had done, either in or out of the Body, in a preexiſtent State.

Q. *Our Saviour's Anſwer imports, that this Blindneſs was inflicted on the poor Man*, that the Work of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him: *Was then*

then this Man made blind, on purpoſe that Chriſt *might work a Cure upon him?*

A. It muſt not be thought, that God did any ways actively occur to make this Man blind, tho' in his Wiſdom, he thought fit to leave this Imperfection in the plaſtick Matter, whereof he was formed, unrectified, that thereby he might ſhew, by his miraculous Cure, a powerful Motive to believe in him.

Q. *When the* Phariſees *reproached our Lord with breaking the Sabbath, for having healed the blind Man on that Day, did they act conſiſtently with their own Opinion concerning the Sabbath?*

A. Our Saviour's healing the blind Man on the Sabbath-day, occaſioned the *Phariſees* to ſay, that *Jeſus* could not be a Prophet ſent from God, becauſe he violated the Sabbath: And yet they themſelves acknowledge, that a Prophet might do, and command Things contrary to the Reſt required by the Sabbath, which they alſo prove by the Example of *Joſhua*; who commanded, that *the Ark ſhould be carried round* Jericho, *the armed Men going before, and after it, ſeven Days*, one of which muſt be the Sabbath, *Joſh.* vi. How then could that, which Prophets, by the known Principles of the *Jews*, were allowed to do, prove that *Jeſus* was no Prophet, eſpecially if we conſider, that by theſe Actions of Mercy and Goodneſs he did not indeed violate the Reſt of the Sabbath, but only their corrupt Traditions concerning it.

Q. *What Kind of Excommunications were in Uſe among the* Jews?

A. The general Opinion is, that among the *Jews* there were three Kinds of Excommunication; that the firſt was called *Niddui*, that is to ſay, *Separation*, which laſted for thirty Days, and ſeparated the Perſon from the Uſe of all Things holy: The ſecond was called *Cherem* or *Execration*, which excluded the Perſon from the *Synagogue*, and deprived him of all civil Commerce: And the third *Shamatha*, or *Exciſion*, which removed him from all Hopes of returning to the *Synagogue* any more. But *Selden* maintains, that theſe three Terms, *Niddui*, *Cherem* and *Shammatha*, are oftentimes ſynonymous, and that the *Jews*, properly ſpeaking, never had more than two Sorts of Excommunication, the greater and the leſs; though moſt are agreed, that it was the greater Sort of Excommunication, which the *Sanhedrim* threatened to any one, that ſhould confeſs that *Jeſus* was the *Chriſt*; becauſe the Parents of the blind Man were ſo fearful of it, that they durſt not ſpeak out.

Q. *Was it always judged impoſſible to reſtore Sight to a Perſon born blind?*

A. They who loſe their Sight by a Diſeaſe, may be cured; but no Man, no not *Moſes*, or any of the Prophets, ever did, or ever could, without the Aſſiſtance of a divine Power, give Sight to one born blind; for which Reaſon the *Jews* reckon this among the Signs of the *Meſſiah*, that he ſhould open the Eyes of the Blind.

Q. *If God* does not hear Sinners, *according to the Saying of the poor Man, Verſe* 31. *then whom can he hear, ſince no Man lives without offending God?*

A. This is true, indeed: But then the Sinners, which the poor Man may be ſuppoſed here to mean, are not thoſe who are ſuch thro' Ignorance, Weakneſs, or human Infirmity, but ſuch notorious and preſumptuous Sinners, as go on in their Impieties, with an high Hand, and an hardened Heart, of whom the Spirit of God declares; *when they ſpread forth their Hands, I will hide myſelf from them; and when they make many Prayers, I will not hear*, Iſa. i. 15. This Maxim, however, is here to be underſtood, not in a general, but a reſtrained Senſe; *viz.* that God uſeth not to honour notorious and flagitious Sinners (eſpecially when they pretend to come with a Meſſage from him) by giving them a Power to work Miracles, in order to confirm the Truth of what they ſay. For this is the Force of the poor Man's Argument, that *Chriſt* could not be ſuch a notorious Sinner, as he was repreſented to him; becauſe it was inconſiſtent with the Attributes of God, to honour ſuch Perſons with his Preſence and Aſſiſtance, in doing ſuch Works as none could do, without a divine Power committed to them.

Q. *What other Reflections ariſe from the miraculous Cure of this blind Man?*

A. Of all the wonderful Deeds, that we find recorded of him, there is none, I think, that is related ſo fully, and ſet off with ſo many Circumſtances, to prevent the leaſt Suſpicion of Fraud, as that of his Curing the Man who was born blind. The *Evangeliſt* has expended a whole Chapter upon it, and therein acquainted us with ſome previous Queſtions of his Diſciples, which led to it, the Surprize and Aſtoniſhment of the blind Man's Neighbours, when they ſaw ſuch an Alteration wrought in him; the Man's open and undiſguiſed Relation of the Matter, and repeated Atteſtation of the Greatneſs and Reality of the Cure; the great Diſturbance and Perplexity which he gave the *Jews*, their examining, and croſs-examining the Man, who ſtill continued firm and uniform in his Account; their tampering with his Parents, who avowed the Truth of his being born blind: and at laſt (when they ſaw that they could prevail nothing, but the more they examined, the more Evidence they found) their Rage and Malice carried them to ſuch a Degree, as to excommunicate the poor Man, and caſt him out of their Synagogue. Theſe and ſome more Circumſtances are told in ſuch a plain, convincing Manner, as ſhews the whole Story to be too well founded, for any Cavils or Fictions to weaken or impair it.

Q. *But when our Lord anointed the Eyes of the blind Man, with the Clay which he had made with his Spittle, might he not have had ſome ſanative Balſam in Reſerve that might perfect the Cure?*

A. Not all the Balſam in the World would have availed towards the Cure of the Diſtemper we are now conſidering. Phyſicians and Surgeons, that have ſtudied the Texture of the Eye, and made the Cure of its Maladies their chief Employ, may give us indeed, ſomething that will ſtrengthen the optic Nerves, when weakned or relaxed, or by ſome outward Operation, may remove ſuch Obſtructions, as would otherwiſe impede the Sight: *But, ſince the World begun* (as the poor Man here excellently argues) *was it ever heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of one, that was born blind?* and (as he might have added) by a Medicine ſo incongruous, as a Plaiſter of Clay, becauſe the Uncommonneſs of the Application is ſo far from diminiſhing, that it rather raiſes the Credit and Reputation of the Miracle; at leaſt it muſt be allowed to be as great and triumphant a Diſplay of a ſupernatural Power, to work a Cure, by Means that have no Fitneſs to that End, as it is to do it without any Means at all. In the former Caſe, the Perſon who undertakes the Cure, has only the the Diſtemper to contend with; but here he has a ble Difficulty to conquer, and muſt not only controul the Power of the Diſeaſe, but change the repugnant Qualities of Bodies, and make them productive of quite contrary Effects. Though therefore the Method, which our Saviour made Uſe of, upon this Occaſion, was of no Significance, as to the Cure of the Man's Blindneſs; yet, was it nevertheleſs highly pertinent, in order to convince the Spectators, as well as the Patient himſelf, of his Almighty Power, which could produce ſuch wonderful Effects, by no other Application, but what was indifferent, if not obſtructive to the Cure.

Q. *Were the Waters of* Siloam *medicinal?*

A. We read of nothing medicinal in this Water of *Siloam*, only our Lord was pleaſed to ſend the blind Man to waſh his Eyes here as a Probation of his Faith and Obedience; in the ſame Manner as of old, *Naaman* the *Syrian* was ſent to waſh in the River *Jordan*.

CHAP. X.

Chriſt *tells them that he is the true Shepherd of his Sheep, and the Door, and that he is no Hireling, being willing to lay down his Life for his Sheep. The* Jews *ask him whether he is* Chriſt, *which he teſtifies by his Actions. He ſhews them who are his Sheep, and who not. The* Jews *attempt to ſtone him; but he juſtifies himſelf, eſcapes from them, and goes beyond* Jordan.

Q. WHY *does our Saviour, in this Diſcourſe to the* Jews, *allude all along to the Profeſſion of a Shepherd?*

A. That the Alluſion of a Shepherd was very proper and pertinent, with Regard to the Perſons to whom our Saviour addreſſed his Diſcourſe, the Condition and Cuſtom of that Country may convince us. For the greateſt Part of the Wealth and Improvement there conſiſted in Sheep; and the Examples of *Jacob* and *David*, in particular, are Proofs, that the keeping of theſe were not uſually committed to Servants and Strangers, (as it is among us) but to Men of the greateſt Quality, and Subſtance. The Children of the Family, nay, the Maſters and Owners themſelves made it their Buſineſs; and eſteemed the looking to their Flocks a Care and Employment, in no wiſe below them. Hence, probably, came the frequent Metaphor of ſtiling Kings the Shepherds of their People. Hence the antient Prophets deſcribe the *Meſſiah* in the Character of a Shepherd; and our bleſſed Saviour, to ſhew that he was the Perſon intended by the Prophets, applies the ſame Character to himſelf; thereby to repreſent his Government of the Church, and tender Concern for Mankind. *He ſhall feed his Flock like a Shepherd; he ſhall gather the Lambs with his Arms, and carry them in his Boſom; and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with Young*, Iſai. xl. 11. *Shall ſeek that which was loſt, and bring again that which was driven away; ſhall bind up that which was broken, and ſtrengthen that which was ſick*, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. all lively emblems of our Lord's paſtoral Care, and of the various Methods which he hath employed to accommodate his Diſpenſations to our Wants, in order to promote our eternal Salvation. And, as the Character of a Shepherd did well become our gracious Saviour, ſo there is ſomething in the very Nature and Diſpoſition of Sheep (which appears ſo innocent and inoffenſive, ſo peaceful and gentle, ſo patient and ſubmiſſive, ſo honeſt and undeſigning) as carries a near Reſemblance to that Plainneſs and Probity, that Modeſty and Humility, that Quietneſs and Submiſſion, which are, indeed, the firſt Elements of the *Chriſtian* Religion, as well as the Qualifications requiſite to the Reception of it. It is to be obſerved, however, that as the Shepherd's Art in managing his Sheep, in the *Eaſtern* Countries, was different to what is among us, (to which Purpoſe we read of his going before, leading and calling his Sheep, and of their following and knowing his Voice; whereas our Shepherds go after and drive their Sheep) ſo theſe ſeveral Expreſſions do, in the Moral, denote our Lord's receiving into the Number of *Chriſtians* all thoſe humble and obedient Souls, that come to him in the Spirit of Meekneſs, not in the Cloathing, but in the real Qualities of his Sheep, and making Proviſion for their Growth in Grace, and Improvement in all Virtue and Godlineſs of Living.

Q. *Why does our Saviour call all thoſe that came* before him, Thieves and Robbers, *Ver.* 1.

A. According to the primary Inſtitution of God, it was the proper Province of the Sons of *Levi to teach the Children of* Iſrael *all the Statutes, which the Lord had ſpoken unto them, by the Hand of* Moſes, *Levit.* v. 11. and therefore it was required, that *the Prieſts Lips ſhould preſerve Knowledge, and the People ſeek his Law at their Mouths*, Mal. ii. 4, 7. but (however it came about) no ſooner did their Traditions grow in Eſteem, than the Scribes and Phariſees, not only took upon them to be the Guides and Teachers of the People, but maintained likewiſe, that others were to receive Authority to teach, from their Commiſſions and Ordination to that Office, though we no where find that they received ſuch Authority from God; for which Reaſon our Saviour repreſents them as *a Plantation which the Father had not planted*, Mat. xv. 13. and bids his Diſciples *beware of their Doctrine*, Mat. xvi. 12. becauſe *they taught for Doctrines of God the Commandments of Men, and made void the Commandments of God by their Traditions*, Matt. xv. 6, 9.

In ſeveral of the *Greek* Copies, as well as the *Syriac*, *Perſian* and *Gothic*, the Words *before me*, *Verſe* 8. (for our Saviour ſpeaks in his own Perſon) are omitted; and ſome Criticks are of Opinion, that this Omiſſion was early, becauſe the *Manichees* (according to *Theophylact*) made no Scruple to infer from hence, that the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament*, had not their Miſſion from God. Our Saviour has ſufficiently eſtabliſhed the Authority of the Prophets; and by this Paſſage means no more, than that all thoſe, who, before him, had taken upon them the Title and Quality of *Meſſiah* (ſuch as *Theudas* and *Judas Galilæus*, mentioned *Acts* v. 36, 37.) were Thieves and Robbers, becauſe they uſurped a Character which they had no Right to; and that all before him, who either had not their Commiſſion from God, or could not prove it by extraordinary Miracles (ſuch as the Author of the *Rabbinical Traditions*, and of all the other reigning Sects among the *Jews* were far from being the true Shepherds of God's People.

Q. *Who are to be to be underſtood by thoſe whom* Chriſt *calls* his Sheep?

A. His Sheep are here ſuppoſed by ſome to be his elect and peculiar Friends; and thence they infer, that *Chriſt* laid down his Life for them only. Now, if we reſpect the Council of God, and the Deſign of *Jeſus Chriſt*, nothing is more certain, than that he gave himſelf *a Ranſom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. and *taſted Death for every Man*, Heb. ii. 9. and *was a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World*, 1 *John* ii. but then, becauſe the World can no otherwiſe lay hold on the Benefits of this Propitiation, than by believing, and being obedient to the Voice of this Shepherd, he therefore is ſaid to know theſe more eminently for his Sheep. The Apoſtle, I think, has determined the whole Controverſy in a few Words, *He died for all, that they who live, might not live unto themſelves, but unto him who died for them.*

The *Gentiles* our Saviour calls his other Sheep, by way of Anticipation, becauſe he foreknew that many of them (when once his Goſpel came to be tendered to them) would give it a ready Reception, and be converted and baptized; and becauſe the ceremonial Law (which was the Partition-wall between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*) was ſhortly to be broken down, and the *Gentiles* admitted to the ſame Privileges with the *Jews* that believed in his Name.

Q. *Why was that Place, where* Chriſt *was walking, called* Solomon's Porch?

A. Solomon's Porch conſiſted of ſome ſtately Cloiſters on the *Eaſt* Side of the Temple, and not far from the *Court of the Gentiles*. It was called *Solomon*'s either to preſerve the Memory of that great Prince, or becauſe it was built according to the Model of that which he erected, 1 *Kings* vi. 3. for both in the Temple, which *Zorobabel*, and in that which *Herod* rebuilt, the Plan of *Solomon*'s was chiefly obſerved, tho' ſome Variations might be allowed of: And in this Porch our Saviour was walking; becauſe at this Time it was Winter, and there he found a Cover from the Injuries of the Weather; whereas, in the Summer Seaſon, it was cuſtomary with the *Jews* to walk in the open Courts of the Temple.

Q. *How do you expound that Clauſe of* Ver. 26. Ye believe not, *becauſe* ye are not of my Sheep?

A. Some are of Opinion, that the Words in the Text, which we render *becauſe*, are not rational, or do not render a Reaſon for theſe People's Infidelity, but only intimate, that their Infidelity was conſequential to their not being his Sheep; or, in other Words, that they could not believe, becauſe they were not elected. But, to obviate this, we muſt obſerve, that the Reaſon which our Lord here aſſigns for this Defect of Faith, is doubtleſs ſuch, as made it a great Crime in them; for ſure that muſt be ſuch, for which they were to *die in their Sins*, *John* viii. 24. It is therefore certain, that this Unbelief cannot be reſolved into any natural Defect of Knowledge on their Parts, nor any Act of Reprobation ou God's Part, but purely to the Want of a teachable and well-diſpoſed Mind. For, were it the ſame Thing, to be one of *Chriſt*'s Sheep, and to be predeſtinate to Faith and Salvation, the Import of our Saviour's Words muſt be this, *Ye therefore believe not, becauſe ye are not of the Number of the Elect, but of thoſe whom God hath, from all Eternity, rejected.* Now, by this Account of the Matter, our Saviour would not have accuſed, but excuſed the Infidelity of the *Jews*, and they, with as good Reaſon, might have replied to him, “We therefore believe “not, becauſe God, by his Act of Reprobation, “hath ſhut the Door of Faith againſt us, and “ſo our Infidelity is not to be imputed to us, “but God.”

Q. Chriſt *ſays*, *Verſe* 30. I and my Father are one: *In what Senſe does our Saviour ſay this?*

A. That is, one in Eſſence and Nature, one in Authority and Power, and not barely one in Will and Conſent: And that this is the genuine Signification of the Words appears, 1ſt, From the original Text, where it is not ſaid, I and my Father are one Perſon, in the Maſculine Gender, but one Thing in the Neuter. Now if that Thing be not the Divine Being, they cannot be one; for ſince the Father is confeſſed to be God, the Son cannot be one Thing with the Father, if he be not God too. 2dly, It appears from the Context, where our Saviour, having, in the preceding Verſes, aſcribed the Preſervation of his Sheep to the Power of his Father, *None is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hands*, aſcribes the ſame alſo to his own Power, *Neither ſhall any pluck them out of my Hand*; plainly intimating that his Sheep were equally ſafe in his own Hand, as in his Father's, becauſe, ſays he, *I and my Father are one*. And 3dly, It appears from the Verſes which immediately follow; for when the *Jews* took up Stones to ſtone him, as guilty of Blaſphemy, becauſe he made himſelf God; he does not evade the Charge, by ſaying that he only concurred with the Will of God, as all true Prophets did; but appealed to the Works, which he performed by the Power of the Father reſiding in him, which plainly carries it to an Unity of Power, and not of Will only; and then St. *Chryſoſtom*'s Inference is undeniable, that *if the Power be the ſame, the Eſſence alſo is the ſame.*

CHAP. XI.

Lazarus *being ſick at* Bethany, *his Siſters ſend for* Chriſt; *who travels towards* Judea. *In the mean while* Lazarus *died.* *Chriſt goes to* Bethany; Martha *meets him, and talks of the Reſurrection.* Chriſt *comes weeping to the Grave; where he is informed that* Lazarus *had been buried four Days, and raiſes him; many believe in him, and others take Counſel againſt him. He departs to* Ephraim. *The Chief Prieſts give Order concerning* Chriſt.

Q. WHERE *was ſituated* Bethany, *the Town where* Lazarus *and his Siſters lived?*

A. Bethany took its Name from the Tract of Ground wherein it ſtands, ſo called from the *Greek* Word which ſignifies the *Dates of Palm-trees*, that grew there in great Plenty. It was a conſiderable Place, ſituated at the Foot of the *Mount of Olives*, about fifteen Furlongs, or near two Miles, *Eaſtward* from *Jeruſalem*; but at preſent it is but a very ſmall Village. One of our modern Travellers acquaints us, that, at the Entrance into it, there is an old Ruin, which they call *Lazarus*'s-*Caſtle*, ſuppoſed to have been the Manſion-houſe, where he and his Siſters lived, At the Bottom of a ſmall Deſcent, not far from the Caſtle, you ſee his Sepulcher, which the *Turks* hold in great Veneration, and uſe it for an Oratory, or Place of Prayer. Here, going down by twenty-five ſteep Steps, you come, at firſt, into a ſmall ſquare Room, and from thence creep into another that is leſs, about a Yard and a half deep, in which the Body is ſaid to have been laid. About a Bow-ſhot from hence, you paſs by the Place, which, they ſay, was *Mary Magdalen*'s Habitation; and then, deſcending a ſteep Hill, you come to the *Fountain of the Apoſtles*, which is ſo called, becauſe (as the Tradition goes) theſe holy Perſons were wont to refreſh themſelves here, between *Jeruſalem* and *Jericho*, as 'tis very probable they might; becauſe the Fountain is both cloſe to the Road's Side, and very inviting to the thirſty Traveller.

Q. *Since* Lazarus *was ſo beloved by* Chriſt, *how came he to ſtay two Days longer in the ſame Place, after the Meſſage was brought him, that his Friend was ſick?*

A. Our Saviour's Stay for two Days after the Meſſage, and modeſt Addreſs of the two mournful Siſters, kept them, indeed, a little longer in Suſpence and Grief; but it ſhewed his perfect Wiſdom and Goodneſs, as it made the wonderful Work more remarkable, and conducive to the fuller Conviction of the Spectators. Had he gone before *Lazarus* was dead, they might have attributed his Recovery, rather to the Strength of Nature, than to *Chriſt*'s miraculous Power; or had he raiſed him as ſoon as he was dead, they might peradventure have thought it, rather ſome Trance or Extaſy, than a Death or Diſſolution: But now, to raiſe a Perſon four Days dead, offenſive, and reduced to Corruption, was a Surprize of unutterable Joy to his Friends; removed all poſſible Suſpicion of Confederacy; ſilenced the peeviſh Cavilling, and triumphed over all the Obſtinacy of Prejudice and Infidelity.

Q. *When* Mary *roſe up to go and meet* Chriſt, *how came the* Jews, *who were with her, to ſuppoſe that ſhe was going to the Grave of her Brother, to weep there?*

A. It was cuſtomary among the *Jews*, (as Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us from *Maimonides*, and others) to go to the Sepulchres of their deceaſed Friends, and viſit them for three Days, for ſo long they ſuppoſed that their Spirits hovered about them; but when once they perceived that their Viſage began to change, as it would in three Days, in thoſe Countries, all Hopes of a Return to Life were at an End. After a Revolution of Humours, which, in ſeventy two Hours, is compleated, their Bodies tend naturally to Putrefaction, and therefore *Martha* had Reaſon to ſay, that her Brother's Body (which appears by the Context to have been laid in the Sepulchre the ſame Day that he died) would now, on the fourth Day, begin to ſtink.

Q. *What was the uſual Time of Mourning for the Dead among the* Jews?

A. The Time of Mourning for departed Friends was antiently, among the *Jews*, of longer Continuance than four Days. For *Jacob* they mourned forty Days, and for *Aaron* and *Moſes* thirty: For Perſons of an inferior Quality, the Days, very probably, were fewer, but ſome they had for all; and the general Term, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, was ſeven. During this Time, their Neighbours and Friends came to viſit them, and to alleviate their Sorrows with the beſt Arguments they could; they pray with them, they read with them the forty-ninth *Pſalm*, pray for the Soul of the Dead, and diſtribute their Comforts in Proportion to their Loſs; but No-body opened his Mouth until the afflicted Perſon had firſt ſpoke, becauſe *Job*'s three Friends, who came to comfort him, we find did the ſame, *Job* vii. 13. All which Ceremonies made the Concourſe to *Martha*'s Houſe, at this Time, the greater, and gave more *Jews* an Opportunity to be the Eye-witneſſes of her Brother's Reſurrection.

Q. *Why did our Saviour aſk them where they had laid the Body of* Lazarus?

A. Our Saviour could not but know, who knew all Things, where they had laid the Body, yet he thought proper thus to aſk, that being conducted by them to the Sepulcher, there might be no Reſemblance of any Fraud or Confederacy.

Q. *Pray explain the 37th Verſe?*

A. The Words in the Text are, *Some of them ſaid, Could not this Man who opened the Eyes of the Blind, have cauſed, that even this Man ſhould not have died?* Some imagine were ſpoken only in Admiration, that having given Sight to a blind Man, that was a mere Stranger to him, he did not cure his ſick Friend: But others conceive a vile *Sarcaſm* in the Words, and, as if they went about to weaken his Reputation, in a Miracle, wherein he had manifeſtly ſhewn his divine Power, becauſe he did not preſerve his Friend from dying.

Q. *In what Form was the* Jewiſh *Burying-Place?*

A. The common Form of a Burial-place, among the antient *Jews*, was a Vault hewn out of a Rock, ſix Cubits long and four broad, in which eight other little Cells or Niches (or, as ſome ſay, thirteen) were uſually made, as ſo many diſtinct Receptacles for the Bodies that were to be laid in them. The Mouth or Entrance of this Vault, was cloſed with a large Stone, which, whenever they buried any, was removed; and our Saviour here ordered the Removal of that which lay upon *Lazarus*, to make the Miracle appear more evident, becauſe it would have looked more like an Apparition than a Reſurrection, had *Lazarus* come forth when the Door of his Sepulcher was ſo firmly ſhut.

Q. *As our bleſſed Saviour was God, as well as Man, what Neceſſity was there for his praying to his Father, to aſſiſt him on this Occaſion?*

A. 'Tis true, as our bleſſed Saviour, in Virtue of his Union with God the Father, had naturally, and in himſelf, a Power of working Miracles, there was no Need for his addreſſing himſelf to Heaven, every Time that he did any: However, upon this, and ſome other Occaſions, we find him praying to God, under the Title of his *Father*, that all the Company might know, that what he did was by a *divine*, not a *diabolical* Power; and that God, in granting his Petition, acknowledged him to be his Son.

Q. *Why did the* Jewiſh *Rulers imagine, that the Conſequence of the People's believing* Chriſt *to be the* Meſſiah, *ſhould be, that the* Romans *ſhould come and take away their Place and Nation, Verſe* 48?

A. The *Jews* ſeeing the Miracles which *Jeſus* did (this eſpecially of raiſing *Lazarus*) did greatly fear, leſt taking upon him the publick Character of the *Meſſiah*, he would attempt to make himſelf King, and, by the Admiration which he had gained among the People, be quickly enabled to accompliſh his Ends, unleſs he was timely prevented. If then he was permitted to go on in his Pretenſions, the Conſequence ſeemed viſible to them, that the *Romans*, to whom they were already ſubject, would look upon this as a Rebellion, and ſo be provoked to come with an Army, and deſtroy them utterly. That this was their Fear, is evident from the many groundleſs Objections which they made againſt our Saviour, as that, *He forbad to give Tribute to* Cæſar, *and that he made himſelf a King*, and ſo oppoſed the Title of *Tiberius*. Not that they deſired the Continuance of *Cæſar*'s Dominion over them, but the Apprehenſion of a ſtill farther Conqueſt from the *Romans*, made them unwilling to provoke them, and that more eſpecially, becauſe they had an ancient Tradition, that one *Armolus* (which is, by an eaſy Change, *Romulus*) before the End of the World, would come, and deſtroy them. This ſeems to be but the Depravation of ſome Prophecy from God, which foretold the Coming of the *Romans* in the laſt Days (meaning thereby the Days of the *Meſſiah*) to deſtroy them. It demonſtrates however, that they both believed, and expected that the *Romans* were the People, from whom the Change of their Religion, and the Total Subverſion of their Government, were to come; and for this Reaſon they were, upon all Occaſions, ſo very fearful to offend them. But herein they were ſadly miſtaken; for the Prophecy of the *Romans* coming to deſtroy their Temple and Nation was fulfilled; not by their letting *Chriſt* alone, or believing in him, but by their thus oppoſing, and conſpiring againſt him.

Q. *What Reaſons have learned Men aſſigned, why the other three* Evangeliſts *have taken no Notice of the raiſing of* Lazarus *from the Dead? And how was it conſiſtent with* Chriſt's *Divine Nature, to weep over a dead Perſon?*

A. They tell us, that, according to an antient Tradition, *Lazarus* lived thirty Years after his being raiſed from the Dead; and that, as the lateſt of theſe three *Evangeliſts* wrote but fifteen Years after our Lord's Aſcenſion, they might think it a needleſs Matter, to mention a Miracle concerning a Perſon living ſo near *Jeruſalem*, when the Fame of it was ſo great, and ſo many Witneſſes living to atteſt it: Nor can they ſuppoſe, but that, in Point of Prudence, the *Evangeliſts* declined mentioning this Story, for fear of exaſperating the *Jews*, and giving their Rage and Malice a freſh Provocation to cut off *Lazarus*, and moſt of the Witneſſes, who were preſent at his Reſurrection; but when St. *John* wrote his Goſpel, the Fame of it might be much impaired, wherefore he had good Reaſon to perpetuate its Memory by a full and particular Rehearſal.

He had not, however, given us ſo fair and unexceptionable an Account of the Matter, had he not repreſented our bleſſed Saviour compaſſionating the Circumſtances of his Friends, and weeping upon ſo ſad an Occaſion; for *There is ſomething in human Nature* (as an ingenious Author elegantly expreſſes it) *reſulting from our very Make and Conſtitution, while it retains its genuine Form, and is not altered by vicious Habits, or oppreſſed by Stupidity, which renders us obnoxious to the Pains of others, cauſes us to ſympathize with them, and almoſt comprehends us in their Caſe. This Compaſſion appears eminently in thoſe, who, upon other Accounts are juſtly reckoned among the beſt of Men. They, who of all Writers, undertake to imitate Nature moſt, often introduce, even their Heroes weeping. The Tears of Men are, in Truth, very different from the Cries and Ejulations of Children; they are ſilent Streams, and flow from other Cauſes; commonly ſome tender, and, perhaps, philoſophical Reflections.* And in the Caſe now before us, there might be other Conſiderations, beſides the Loſs of *Lazarus*, and the Lamentation of his Friends, that might draw from our Saviour theſe Tears of Compaſſion.

He might, at that Time, be affected with the Thought of the many Afflictions to which human Nature is liable, in this imperfect State, and his Groans and inward Grief, might proceed from the Want of Faith, obſervable in the Siſters, and Company attending them, and a Diffidence of his Ability to raiſe the Dead, notwithſtanding they had ſeen ſo many, and ſo frequent Manifeſtations of a Divine and omnipotent Power reſiding in him. He knew that the Obſtinacy and inveterate Prejudices of ſome of the Spectators, and of the Generality of the *Jewiſh* People was ſuch, that the aſtoniſhing Miracle, he was going to work, would not have its due Effect upon them. This recalled to his Mind that Scene of Miſery and Deſolation, which he foreſaw would overtake them, and therefore he grieved, and ſighed deeply at the Proſpect of the Calamities which that perverſe People were bringing upon themſelves, and which all his Endeavours, his Miracles, and Sufferings could not prevent. So that, upon the Whole, the Concern which our Lord expreſſed upon this Occaſion, proceeded from the nobleſt Motives, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Friendſhip, Compaſſion, and every View that is juſt and laudable; when he ſympathized with his Friends, and grieved for his Enemies.

Q. *But how was it poſſible for* Lazarus, *whoſe Body was bound Hand and Foot in his Burial-dreſs, to come forth of the Tomb, without being firſt looſed from his Incumbrance?*

A. With theſe genuine Expreſſions of ſolemn Grief and Sorrow, our Saviour drew near to his Friends Sepulcher, which, as we may conjecture, was an hollow Place hewn in a Rock, whoſe Entrance (which was cloſed with a Stone) lay level with the Surface of the Earth. But then we have ſo imperfect an Account of the Funeral Habits, that were in Uſe among the *Jews*, that we can form no Notion, how far *Lazarus*, when revived and ſet upon his Feet, might be able, of himſelf, to walk out of the Tomb. In this, however, we may ſatisfy ourſelves, that our Saviour, who was able to recall his Soul from its ſeparate State, and convey freſh Life into his Body almoſt putrified, could give that Body, though bound Hand and Foot, a Power of moving forward, even though we ſuppoſe (as moſt of the Antients do) that herein he put himſelf to the Expence of a ſecond Miracle, becauſe the proper Demonſtration of the Reality of the Reſurrection was, not to ſend any Body into the Tomb, to unbind him, which might occaſion a Suſpicion of a clandeſtine Practice, but to have him come forth alive, in the Preſence of all the Spectators, fairly and without any Change or Alteration in his Funeral Dreſs, but what was made before the People themſelves, by our Saviour's ſaying, *Looſe him, and let him go.*

That ſome or other in the Company was ready enough, upon this Occaſion, to obey our Lord's Commands, can hardly be doubted; and therefore it is very wonderful that (had there been any Colluſion in the Matter) among ſo great a Multitude, no one ſhould have had Sagacity enough to find it out. But the Truth is, they none of them ſuſpected any ſuch Thing; they none of them thought, that when a Man had been four Days buried, there wanted any Proof of his being dead; they none of them thought that *Chriſt* was only a pretended Worker of Miracles; for how unwillingly ſoever they were to own him for their *Meſſiah*, by long Experience they were convinced, that he was a Perſon *mighty in Word and Deed.*

CHAP. XII.

Chriſt *being at* Bethany, *is anointed by* Martha, *for which ſhe is reproved by* Judas, *and defended by* Chriſt. *Many* Jews *go to ſee* Lazarus, *whom the Chief Prieſts ſeek to put to Death.* Chriſt *rides to* Jeruſalem, *and is received with Joy by the Multitude. Some* Greeks *deſire to ſee* Chriſt; *and diſcourſe with* Philip *about it.* Chriſt *is glorified with a Voice from Heaven. He tells the Multitude the Manner and Fruit of his Death; and exhorts them to walk in his Light. Many of the* Jews *believe in him; he exhorts them to Faith.*

Q. WHEN, *and on what Occaſion was this Supper, mentioned Verſe* 2. *prepared for our Saviour by* Mary *and* Martha?

A. Some Interpreters are of Opinion, that the Supper at which our Saviour was entertained by *Martha* and *Mary*, was the ſame which he was invited to in the Houſe of *Simon the Leper*; that St. *John* has related it in its proper Place, as a Thing which happened ſix Days before the *Paſſover*; but that the other *Evangeliſts* have mentioned it by way of Recapitulation, to ſhew what might be the probable Occaſion of *Judas*'s Treachery, even his Vexation for being diſappointed of the Money that might have been made of this precious Ointment, had it been ſold, and put in the Bag for him to purloin: But others ſuppoſe. that this Supper was different from that which is mentioned *Matthew* xxvi. 6. and *Mark* xiv. 3. *1ſt*, Becauſe this was in the Houſe of *Lazarus*, *John* xii. 2. that in the Houſe of *Simon the Leper*, *Matth.* xxvi. 6. *2dly*, Here *Mary* anoints the Feet of *Chriſt*, verſe 3. there a Woman, not named, pours Ointment, on his Head, *Matth.* xxvi. 7. *3dly*, This Supper was ſix Days before the *Paſſover*, ver. 1. that, only two, *Matth.* xxvi. 2. *Mark* xiv. 1. and, if the Suppers were not the ſame, the *Mary* that anointed *Chriſt*'s Feet here, and the Woman that anointed his Head there, were not the ſame.

Q. *What kind of Plant, or Root, was the* Spikenard, *Verſe* 3?

A. Nard, or *Spikenard*, is a Plant that grows in the *Indies*, with a very ſlender Root, a Stalk ſmall and long, and ſeveral Ears, or Spikes, even with the Ground, from whence it has the Name of *Spikenard*. The *Italian Nard* (if it be right) muſt be of a yellowiſh Colour, inclining towards Purple, with long Spikes, and the Briſtles of its Spikes large and odoriferous. Of the Blade, or Spike of this *Nard*, the Antients were uſed to make a Perfume of great Eſteem, and, when genuine, very precious. *Pliny* tells us, there were nine ſeveral Herbs which imitated *Nard*, and that the great Price it carried, tempted many to adulterate it; but where it was found pure and unſophiſticated, there it obtained the Name of *Nardus piſtica*, which is the Epithet that occurs in *Mark* xiv. 3. and *John* xii. 3. unleſs, as ſome think, it's miſtaken in the Copiers for *Spicata*.

Q. *How much would three hundred Pence, the Value which* Judas *ſet on this* Pound *of Ointment, make in our Money?*

A. As the *Roman* Penny was ſeven Pence Halfpenny of our Money, ſo three hundred Pence muſt amount to nine Pounds ſeven Shillings and Sixpence, the Value of this precious Box of Ointment.

Q. *Why does our Saviour ſay, that* Mary *had* kept this againſt the Day of his burying?

A. It was a Cuſtom, in thoſe *Eaſtern* Countries, for Kings and great Perſons, to have their Bodies, at their Funerals, embalmed with Odours, and ſweet Perfumes; and, in Alluſion hereunto, our Saviour here declares of *Mary*, that ſhe, to teſtify her Faith in him, as her King, and Lord, had, as it were before-hand, embalmed his Body with precious Ointment for his Burial.

Q. *Could the* Jews *charge* Lazarus *with any Crime or Miſdemeanour, that they ſhould want to deſtroy him too?*

A. Never was there Rage and Malice more unreaſonable than that which prompted the Rulers to deſtroy *Lazarus*; for admitting that *Chriſt* had broke the *Sabbath*, and ſpoken Blaſphemy, yet what had *Lazarus* done? No Crime was ever alledged againſt him, and yet theſe Rulers of the People conſpire to put him to Death, merely to preſerve their own Honour and Reputation. But ſee the Providence of God, which, notwithſtanding all their Contrivances, was pleaſed to preſerve him, as a Monument of his Glory, and a Teſtimony of the Miracle which *Jeſus* performed on him, thirty Years after our Saviour's Death.

Q. *Who were thoſe* Greeks *that reſorted to* Jeruſalem *to worſhip?*

A. Who theſe *Grecians* were, the beſt of our Commentators are not agreed. Some are of Opinion, that they were mere *Gentiles*, who, either out of Curioſity, *viz.* to ſee the Magnificence of the Temple, the Solemnities of the Feaſt, or the Perſon of *Jeſus*, of whoſe Fame they had heard ſo much; or perhaps out of a Principle of Devotion, and to worſhip the God of *Iſrael*, might, at this Time, reſort to *Jeruſalem*: For the *Pagan* Religion, which admitted a Plurality of Gods, reſtrained none from worſhipping the Gods of other Nations, ſo long as they were not thereby tempted to abandon thoſe of their own. Others imagine, that they were real *Jews*, who being ſcattered in *Grecian* Provinces, after the Conqueſts, which *Alexander the Great*, and his Succeſſors, made of the *Jews*, ſtill continued in thoſe Countries, but kept ſo cloſe to their antient Religion, as to come, in great Numbers to *Jeruſalem*, upon the Return of every *Paſſover*. Theſe were generally called *Helleniſts*: And, that there was great Plenty of them in ſeveral Provinces of *Aſia*, is manifeſt from St. *Peter*'s Addreſs of his firſt Epiſtle to the *Strangers*, as he calls them, who were ſcattered through *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Aſia Minor*, and *Bithynia*, 1 Pet. i. 1. but the moſt general Opinion is, that theſe *Greeks* were *Proſelytes of the Gate*, who worſhipped the God of Heaven and Earth, lived among the *Jews*, and conformed to their political Laws, but would not engage in Circumciſion, or the Obſervance of their Ceremonies; and they were permitted to celebrate the Feaſt along with the *Jews*, but becauſe they were indulged the Privilege to behold their Solemnities, and to pay their Adorations to the Creator of the Univerſe (even while the *Jews* were in the Height of their publick Worſhip) in the Court of the *Gentiles*, as appears from the Caſe of the Eunuch of Queen *Candace*, Acts viii. 27.

Theſe *Greeks*, ſays *Grotius*, ſeem to have been *Syrophœnicians*, who dwelt, perhaps, about *Tyre* and *Sidon*, and ſo might eaſily be acquainted with the *Galileans*, with whom they had Commerce, and with *Philip* of *Bethſaida*, to whom they made Application for Acceſs to *Chriſt*.

Q. *Pray illuſtrate the Compariſon which* Chriſt *makes of* his Death, *to Corn ſown in the Ground?*

A. Our Saviour's Words, comparing his Death to Corn ſown in the Ground, are not amiſs, paraphraſed in this Manner, "Look, as you ſee in your "ordinary Husbandry, the Grains of Wheat are "firſt buried in the Earth, and loſe their Form, "before they ſpring and ſhoot up again, and "bring forth Fruit; ſo it muſt be with me. I "muſt be firſt lifted up, before I ſhall draw Men "after me; I muſt firſt be crucified, before my "Goſpel ſhall be preached to all Nations, and the "Fulneſs of the *Gentiles* ſhall come in: But when "I am once dead and have Riſen, then ſhall ye "ſee the abundant Fruit."

Q. *What do thoſe Words of our Saviour, Verſe* 25. *teach us,* He that loveth his Life, ſhall loſe it; and he that hateth his Life in this World, ſhall keep it unto Life eternal?

A. That Men might not have it to ſay, that our bleſſed Saviour, in point of Suffering, was no proper Example for our Imitation, becauſe he had no Dread of Death, or Senſe of Pain, to make Sufferings diſtaſteful to him, whereas we are moſt tenderly affected with theſe Things, he herein ſhews us, that he had the ſame natural Concern for Life, and Dread of Death, that we have, only that he over-ruled them by a Deſire of promoting his Father's Glory.

Q. *In what Manner came* the Voice from Heaven, *Verſe* 28?

A. The only Way of Revelation, which the *Jews*, ſince the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and Extinction of their Prophets, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*, pretend to, is that of *Bath-Koll*, or the *Daughter of a Voice*, ſo called, becauſe it has ſome Reſemblance (though as to Diſtinctneſs, but an imperfect one) of that Voice, which was uttered from the *Holy of Holies*, when the Lord ſpake to *Moſes*; and, according to them, it is the Will of God revealed in Thunder from Heaven; and therefore, when our Saviour was anſwered by a Voice from Heaven, ſome of the Company thought it thundered, and others, that an Angel ſpake, yet neither of them were miſtaken, becauſe in this *Bath-Koll*, there was alſo Thunder joined with an articulate Voice.

Q. *What was it which that Voice declared to be gloried?*

A. *I have glorified it* (meaning his Name) by cauſing my Glory to be publiſhed and proclaimed in the World, by thy Preaching, and by the Miracles which I have given in Teſtimony of thy Miſſion; *and I will glorify it again*, by thy Reſurrection and Exaltation to the *Right-Hand of Glory*, by the Miſſion of the *Holy Ghoſt* upon thy Apoſtles, and by their carrying the *Sound of the Goſpel even unto the Ends of the Earth*.

Q. *Where did the* Jews *find thoſe Prophecies which ſay, that* Chriſt abideth for ever?

A. The Prophecies, from whence the *Jews* may be ſuppoſed to have drawn the Concluſion, *that the* Meſſiah *was to live for ever*, are, 2 *Sam.* vii. 16. where God, by the Mouth of *Nathan*, promiſes *David*, *Thine Houſe, and thy Kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever before thee, thy Throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever*, ; in much the ſame Words, wherein he had ſworn unto *David* himſelf, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 30. *His Seed will I make to endure for ever, and his Throne as the Days of Heaven.* To the ſame Purpoſe they found the Prophet *Iſaiah* promiſing, Chap. ix. 7. *My Servant* David *ſhall be their King for ever, and of his Government there ſhall be no End:* But what ſeemed to expreſs the Matter in the cleareſt Terms, was this Paſſage in *Daniel*, chap. vii. 13, 14. *and behold one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Antient of Days*, &c. *and there was given him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom*, &c. *his Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his Kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed.* Thus the *Jews* wrongfully applied to the Perſon of the *Meſſiah*, the Things, which related to his Kingdom; but then they gave little or no heed to what the ſame Prophets ſaid of the Body, wherein the *Meſſiah* was to ſuffer, and of his Hands and Feet, which were to be pierced, *Pſal.* xxii. 18. xl. 6. of his giving up his Life a Sacrifice for Sin, *Iſaiah* liii. 12. and of his being cut off, but not for himſelf, *Dan.* ix. 26. all which was not incompatible with his abiding for ever, ſeeing that, after his Sufferings, he was to riſe again, *Pſal.* xli. 10. and enter into Glory, 1 *Pet.* i. 11. So that, by comparing theſe Things together, they might have eaſily removed this Scruple, eſpecially when he had told them ſo often, and they ſo well remembered, that he had told them, that *after three Days, he would riſe again.*

Chap. XIII.

Chriſt *waſhes his Diſciples Feet*; Peter *refuſes, but afterwards ſuffers him.* Chriſt *exhorts them to Humility and Charity; tells them, that one of them ſhould betray him, and comforts 'em againſt it; ſhews the Traytor, by giving him a Sop; ſpeaks to his Diſciples about his Glorification; exnorts them to mutual Love; and tells* Peter *he would deny him thrice.*

Q. WHAT *do you remark upon* Chriſt's *waſhing his Diſciples Feet?*

A. This Chapter records the Hiſtory of our Saviour's waſhing his Diſciples Feet, an Action full of Humility and Condeſcenſion, and written for our Imitation. It's noted when this Action was done, namely, at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, when the People were aſſembled, and the Time of our Saviour's Departure was at Hand; and having conſtantly and immutably loved his own, he expreſſes the Permanency of his Love towards them to the End, by this Action of waſhing their Feet. *Chriſt* choſe this Time of the *Jewiſh* Paſſover to ſuffer in, that he might prove himſelf the Subſtance of that Type; that he was the true paſchal Lamb, who, by the Sacrifice of his Death, attoned divine Diſpleaſure, and took away the Sins of the World.

Q. *In what Matter did the Devil put it into the Heart of* Judas *to betray his Maſter?*

A. The Means which the Wiſdom of God permitted, to bring the Lord of Life to his ignominious Death, was the Treaſon and Perfidiouſneſs of one of his Diſciples; *Judas Iſcariot*, a Profeſſor and Preacher, an Apoſtle; one of the Twelve, whom *Chriſt* had choſen out of all the World, to be his deareſt Friends; this was he who betray'd *Chriſt Jeſus*, a Man, his Maſter, his Maker. To this traiterous Action *Judas* was incited by the Devil. The *Devil*, being a Spirit, has a quick Acceſs to our Spirit, and can inſtil his Suggeſtions into them. As *Chriſt* breathed upon the Diſciples, and they received the Holy Ghoſt, and were filled with the Spirits; ſo *Satan* breathes filthy Suggeſtions into the Spirits of Men, and fills them with all Manner of Wickedneſs, even the Spirit of Hell itſelf; *The Devil put it into the Heart of* Judas *to betray him.*

Q. *What is farther obſervable in our Lord's Action of waſhing the Feet of his Diſciples?*

A. In this Action we may obſerve the admirable Humility, and great Self-Denial of our Lord and Maſter; he riſes from Supper while his Diſciples ſat ſtill; and he that came in the Form of a Maſter, performs all the Offices of the meaneſt Servant to his Diſciples. He lays aſide his upper Garment, he girds himſelf with a Towel, pours Water into a Baſon, and begins to waſh and wipe their Feet, which lay out behind them, as they leaned at the Table; all which was a moſt ſervile Employment; hereby inſtructing us, that it is our Duty, in whatever Station Providence may place us in the World, to ſtoop to the loweſt Offices of Love and Service towards our Fellow-Brethren.

Q. *But how far does this Example bind us?*

A. It does not oblige us to the invidual Act, but to follow the Reaſon of the Example; that is, as *Chriſt* was, ſo we ought to be ready to perform the meaneſt Offices of Love and Service to one another.

Q. Peter, *however, refuſes to be waſhed, till* Chriſt *ſhews him the Neceſſity of it: What Leſſons of Inſtruction does this friendly Contention betwixt* Peter *and his Maſter teach us?*

A. Obſerve the Behaviour of *Simon Peter*; he refuſes to admit of ſuch a condeſcending Act from *Chriſt* his Lord and Maſter, as the waſhing his Feet; *Lord! thou ſhalt never waſh my Feet.* It is a ſinful Humility to refuſe the offer'd Favours of *Chriſt*, becauſe we are unworthy to receive them. Though we are not worthy of *Chriſt* and his Love, yet *Chriſt* is worthy of us, and of our Faith.

Note our Saviour's Reply to *Peter*'s Refuſal. He tells him, that there was more in it than the bare Act of waſhing ſeemed to import, and what that was, he ſhould know hereafter. Again; *If I waſh thee not*, ſays our Saviour, *thou haſt no Part with me*; as if *Chriſt* had ſaid, *Peter*, this external Act of mine, in waſhing thy Feet, ſignifies ſomething farther, and imports my waſhing of thy Soul from the Guilt and Defilement of Sin, without which thou canſt neither have Intereſt in me, nor Communion with me.

St. *Peter* being now better informed, is ſo far from refuſing that *Chriſt* ſhould waſh his Feet, that he offers Hands and Head, and all to be waſhed by him; *Lord, not my Feet only, &c.* So throughly ſenſible are the Saints of the Filthineſs and Pollution of Sin, that they deſire nothing more than an inward, thorough, and prevailing Purification of their whole Man, by the Blood and Spirit of the Lord *Jeſus.*

Obſerve farther our Saviour's Reply to *Peter*'s Requeſt; *He that is waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh his Feet*; plainly alluding to the Cuſtom of of thoſe Countries, where going abroad bare-foot, or with thin Sandals, covering only a ſmall Part of their Feet, they had frequent Occaſion to waſh their Feet, but not their whole Bodies; in like Manner, the Saints and Servants of God, who are already waſhed and cleaſed by the Blood of *Chriſt*, from the Guilt of their Sins, and have a real Work of Regeneration and Sanctification begun in them by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, ought to be daily purging and purifying their Affections and Actions, and labouring daily after greater Meaſures of Sanctification. *Ye are clean, but not all*; that is, you are juſtified and pardoned, ſanctified and cleanſed all of you, except *Judas*, whoſe Heart was known to *Chriſt*, though his Hypocriſy was hid from the Diſciples.

A. *What do we learn from* Chriſt's *Explanation of his Deſign in waſhing his Diſciples Feet?*

A. Our Lord having done waſhing his Diſciples Feet, declares to them his Deſign in that Action; namely, to teach them Humility; that as he had performed that Act of Abaſement towards them, ſo ſhould they be ready to perform all Offices of Love, and humble Condeſcenſion towards one another; and the Argument he uſes to preſs an Imitation of his Example, is drawn from the Titles given him by his Diſciples; *Ye call me Maſter and Lord, and ſo I am.* Now Servants ought to imitate their Maſter, and Subjects to obey their Lord and King. *Chriſt* is Maſter to teach and direct; a Lord to govern and protect. As he is a Maſter, we are to learn in his School; as he is a Lord, we are to ſerve in his Houſe: He muſt be ſubmitted to as a Prince, as well as relied on as a Saviour. It is in vain to expect Salvation from him, if we do not yield Subjection to him.

Another Argument for this Purpoſe, is drawn from his Dignity and Superiority over them; *The Servant is not greater than his Lord.* As if *Chriſt* had ſaid, Though you my Diſciples are to have a very high and honourable Station in the Goſpel-Church, yet let not this ſwell you with Pride, but be you mutually condeſcending to each other, remembering you are yet but Servants to myſelf, and ought to be ſo to one another; *As the Servant is not greater than his Lord.*

Theſe Arguments our Lord enforces from the Conſideration, 1. Of the Neceſſity of Knowledge, in order unto Practice; *If ye know theſe Things.* 2. Of the Neceſſity of Practice, in order unto Happineſs; *Happy are ye if ye do them.* A Man may know the Will of God, and not do it; but he can never do the Will of God, acceptably, and not know it. *Chriſt* does not approve of a blind Obedience in his People, but requires that Practice and Obedience be founded on Underſtanding and Knowledge.

Q. Chriſt *having done ſpeaking to* Peter, *directs his Diſcourſe to them all; but Ver.* 18. *makes an Exception,* I ſpeak not of you all, I know whom I have choſen: *How do you underſtand theſe Words?*

A. If the chuſing here ſpoken of, be underſtood of eternal Election, or a chuſing to everlaſting Life, then it affords a ſtrong Argument to prove *Chriſt* to be God; but *Chriſt* is ſuch. *I know whom I have choſen.* Conſider *Chriſt* as God, ſo we are choſen by him; as a Mediator, we are choſen in him.

If the chuſing here be meant of chuſing to the Work of the Apoſtleſhip, then he tells his Diſciples, that it need not ſeem ſtrange to them, that he choſe one to be an Apoſtle, whom he knew would prove a Traitor; for hereby that Scripture-Prophecy, *Pſ.* li. 9. would be fulfilled; *He that eateth Bread with me, hath lift up his Heel againſt me;* which, though it was literally ſpoken of *Ahitophel*'s Treachery againſt *David,* yet was it prophetically ſpoken of *Judas*'s Treaſon againſt *Chriſt;* and the metaphorical Expreſſion of *lifting up the Heel,* is taken from a fed Beaſt, that kicks againſt his Maſter.

Another Argument to prove the Divinity of our Saviour, is taken from his Fore-knowledge of *Judas*'s Treaſon; the Perſon who, the Time when, the Place where, were all known to *Chriſt; I tell you before it come to paſs.* The Argument runs thus: He that foreſaw the future Events and Iſſues of Things, is certainly God. And it was for this very Reaſon he foretold the Treaſon of *Judas. Now I tell you before, that when it comes to paſs, ye may believe that I am he.* What! could he foretel ſo many Things to come, which did not depend upon neceſſary, but contingent Cauſes only? Thus he muſt be the real God, becauſe he knew all Things, not by Revelation, as the Prophets knew Things to come, but by immediate Inſpection, and ſimple Intuition.

But leſt his Apoſtles ſhould imagine, that for the Treachery of one of them, they ſhould be all become odious to the whole World, our Saviour encourages them with his Aſſurances, that there ſhould be thoſe who would receive them, and that he would take it as kindly as they received himſelf. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me.*

Q. *Why does our Saviour diſcover* Judas *by giving him a Sop, rather than by naming him?*

A. The Diſciples being very deſirous to know which of them this Traitor ſhould be, beckon'd to *John,* who leaned on *Chriſt*'s Boſom, to aſk him who it was. *John,* it ſeems, was favoured with a more peculiar Freedom and Familiarity than the reſt, and one who knew more of his Heart than they did. At his Requeſt *Chriſt* diſcovers *Judas* to the reſt of his Diſciples, not by naming him, but by giving him a Sop; partly, becauſe he would not provoke *Judas* by mentioning his Name, and partly, becauſe the Sign of eating a Sop was moſt agreeable to the prophetical Prediction, *Pſal.* xl. 9. *Mine own particular Friend, who did eat of my Bread, hath lift up his Heel againſt me.*

Q. *Is there any Thing remarkable in the Time and Place, when and where* Judas *firſt reſolved on betraying his Maſter?*

A. The Time when *Judas* received the Sop was, when he had, with an unbelieving Heart, and an unthankful Spirit, been eating the Paſſover, which was a Type of *Chriſt. Now* Satan *enters into him;* that is, takes fuller Poſſeſſion of him, and he gives himſelf up more fully and freely to the Devil's Conduct and Suggeſtion.

Again; obſerve the Place where *Judas* now was, namely, *Bethany,* ſome Miles from *Jeruſalem;* and it was now Night; yet ſo intent was he upon the *Devil's* Work, that away he trudges to *Jeruſalem,* and at that Time of Night repairs to the High-prieſts, and ſells his Lord into their Hands.

Q. Judas *having left them, our Lord diſcourſes with his Diſciples about his approaching Paſſion: What do you obſerve thereupon?*

A. Obſerve the endearing Compellation *Chriſt* uſes to his Diſciples, *Little Children,* intimating the tender Affection which he bears them, though now on the Point of departing from them. Obſerve farther the plain Intimation our Saviour gives of his Death being very nigh, for it was the next Day; he tells them he was going to Heaven, *and whither he went, they could not come;* that is, not preſently; they ſhould follow him their Forerunner, afterwards; but at preſent he had a great deal of Work for them to do, though his own was done; and till they had finiſhed their Work, *Whither he went they could not come.*

Chriſt having mentioned his Departure, charges his Diſciples, that in his Abſence they ſhould love one another. This he calls a *new Commandment,* not that it was new in regard of the Subſtance of it, for it was a Branch of the Law of Nature, and a known Precept of the *Jewiſh* Religion; but 1. Becauſe purged from the falſe Gloſſes of the *Phariſees,* who had limited this Duty of Love, and confined it to their own Countrymen; whereas *Chriſt* enlarges the Object, and obliges his Diſciples to love all Mankind, even their very Enemies. 2. Becauſe the Duty of Love was ſo greatly advanced and heightened by our Saviour, as to the Meaſure and Degrees of it, even to the laying down our Lives one for another. 3. Becauſe urged from a new Motive, and enforced by a new Example. *As I have loved you, that ye love alſo one another.*

To enforce this Duty of mutual Love, our Lord tells us, that it will be the beſt Evidence of our Relation to him; *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples.* The Diſciples of *John* were known by the Auſterity of their Lives; thoſe of the *Phariſees* by their Habit and Separation from other Men; but thoſe of *Chriſt* he would have known by their ſincere Affection one to another, which, in the primitive Times was ſo conſpicuous, that the very Heathens cried out, See how the *Chriſtians* love one another!

Peter reflecting on what our Saviour had ſaid juſt before, *Whither I go ye cannot come;* he is inquiſitive to know of *Chriſt* whither he went. Our Lord tells him, that for the preſent he could not follow him, but ſhould hereafter; he was not yet ſtrong enough to ſuffer for him, as he ſhould, and did afterwards. St. *Peter,* grieved at this, raſhly reſolves to follow him, though he ſhould die for his Sake. *Chriſt* adviſes him, not to be over-confident of his own Strength and ſtanding, for he ſhould deny him thrice, within the Time of the Cock-crowing.

CHAP. XIV.

Chriſt *comforts his Diſciples with the Hope of Heaven; promiſes to give them Power to work Mira-*

cles; tells them they ſhould be denied nothing aſked in his Name; promiſes them the Holy Ghoſt; exhorts them to love and obey his Commands. The Benefit of the Holy Spirit. Chriſt *leaves his Peace with them, and ſhews his Readineſs to obey his Father's Will.*

Q. I*N this Chapter our Lord Lord continues his Diſcourſe; pray what is the Purport of it?*

A. Our Lord having acquained his Diſciples with his approaching Death, they are over-whelmed with Grief; to obviate which, and to ſtrengthen and comfort them againſt the Perplexity of their Fears and Sorrows, he uſes ſundry Arguments. He addreſſes them in a moſt endearing and affectionate Manner, *Let not your Heart be troubled*; and to calm their Fears, and arm them againſt future Troubles, gives them this Remedy, *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* Hence learn, that God is the Supreme Object of Faith; his unchangeable Love and Faithfulneſs, with his infinite Power in accompliſhing his Promiſes, is the Security of Believers; and that *Chriſt*, as Mediator between God and guilty Creatures, is the immediate Object of our Faith. *Chriſt* here aſſerts his own Deity, in the Subſtance of the Command, in making himſelf an Object of Faith, in Conjunction with God the Father; *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.*"

For the farther Comfort and Support of the diſconſolate Diſciples, *Chriſt* tells them, that Heaven, whither he is going, was his Father's houſe, a Place of Happineſs, not deſigned for himſelf alone, but for many more, to make their perpetual Reſt and Abode; *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions.* Heaven is God's Houſe, in which he will freely converſe with his Domeſticks, his Children and Servants, there they ſhall enjoy full Glory, as in a quiet and capacious Habitation.

His aſſuring them that he will come again and receive them to himſelf, that they may live together in heavenly Manſions, is another Ground of Comfort. This Promiſe *Chriſt* makes good to his Saints, partly at the Day of their Death, and perfectly at the Day of Judgment, when he ſhall take up all his Children to himſelf, and make them completely happy, both in Soul and Body.

Another Argument for their Conſolation is, that though *Chriſt* was to leave them, yet that they knew whither he went; namely, to Heaven, and which was the Way thither; *Whither I go, ye know, and the Way ye know.* Great is the Comfort of Believers, that they not only know there is a God and Heaven, but that they alſo know the Way thither.

Q. *How, do you ſuppoſe, did* Thomas *underſtand our Saviour, ſpeaking of his* going to prepare a Place for them?

A. Thomas, and poſſibly others of the Apoſtles, notwithſtanding all *Chriſt* had ſaid to the contrary, ſtill dreamt of a temporal Kingdom, and ſuppoſed him to ſpeak of ſome earthly Palace he was going to, and therefore tells our Saviour he knew not whither he was going. But *Chriſt*, to convince him and them of their Error, and that he meant a heavenly Kingdom, tells them, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; that is, I am the true and living Way to the Father, and *no Man cometh to the Father but by me*; that is, no Man can have Acceſs to God by Prayer, or any other Act of religious Worſhip here on Earth, or Acceſs to God in Heaven, but by me as Mediator. As if *Chriſt* had ſaid, I am the Author of the Way that leadeth unto Life, the Teacher of the Truth that directs to it, and the Giver of that Life which is to be obtained by walking in it.

Q. *Did not St.* Philip *betray a great deal of Ignorance, when he ſaid to* Chriſt, Lord ſhew us the Father?

A. It deſerves Notice, what a groſs Conception the Apoſtles had, and St. *Philip* in particular, of the Divine Nature and Being, as if God the Father could be ſeen with bodily Eyes; *Shew us the Father, and it ſuffices us.* It is not eaſy to determine what Degrees of Ignorance are conſiſtent with ſaving Grace; doubtleſs, as the Degrees of Revelation, and the Means of Knowledge are more or leſs, ſo a Perſon's Ignorance is more or leſs excuſable before God.

But how meekly our Lord reproves their Ignorance? *Have I been ſo long Time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me,* Philip? and then inſtructs them farther in the perſonal Union of the divine and human Nature in himſelf. The Father was ſeen in his Son, who was the expreſs Image of his Father, being one in Eſſence with him, and one Operation alſo; *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father alſo.*

Q. Chriſt *promiſes to inveſt his Diſciples with a Power of working the ſame, or greater* Miracles *than he did: In what Manner did he fulfil this Promiſe?*

A. Not greater in regard of the Manner, for he wrought by his own Power, and they in his Name, but greater in regard of the Matter of them; particularly their ſpeaking with ſtrange Tongues, their giving the Holy Ghoſt, by laying on of Hands, their healing Diſeaſes by the very Shadow of their Bodies, but eſpecially by the wonderful Converſion of the *Gentiles* from Idolatry to ſerve the Living God. When St. *Peter* converted three Thouſand at one Sermon, then *Chriſt* made good his Promiſe; the Diſciple, at that Time, appeared to be above his Maſter; *Chriſt* all his Time was angling for a few Fiſhes, whilſt *Peter* comes with his Drag-net, and catches three thouſand at one Draught. The Reaſon might be, becauſe *Chriſt* was not properly to be the Builder, but the Foundation itſelf. He ſubjoins the Reaſon of all this: *Becauſe I go to the Father*; that is, to ſend down and pour forth upon you, my Apoſtles, the Holy Ghoſt, on the Day of *Pentecoſt*; which was the great Cauſe of the Apoſtles miraculous Operations.

Q. *What is the Import of that Promiſe, Verſe* 14. If ye ſhall aſk any Thing in my Name, I will do it?

A. Another Argument offered by our Saviour to quiet his Diſciples under their Perplexity for the Loſs of his body Preſence, is his aſſuring them that whatever Comforts they enjoy'd by his Preſence, they ſhould obtain by their Prayers. The Qualification requiſite in Prayer is, that we muſt Pray in *Chriſt*'s Name; that is, for the Sake of his Merits and Mediation, in Obedience to God's Command, and with an Eye to his Glory, and for Things areeable to his Will. To pray in *Chriſt*'s Name, is more than to name *Chriſt* in Prayer. It implies three Things. 1. To look up unto *Chriſt*, as having purchaſed for us this Privilege, that we may pray; for it is by the Blood of *Chriſt* that we draw near to God, and that a Way to the Throne of Grace is open for us. 2. To pray in the Name of *Chriſt*, is to pray in the Strength of *Chriſt*, and by the Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit. 3. To pray in the Name of *Chriſt*, is believing that what we aſk on Earth, *Chriſt* obtains in Heaven; unleſs we pray thus, we pray not at all.

Q. *What is intimated in thoſe Words, Verſe* 15. If ye love me, keep my Commandments?

A. In thoſe Words our Saviour implicitly reproves his Diſciples for their fond Way of expreſſing their Love to him, by doting on his bodily Preſence, and ſorrowing immoderately for his Abſence, and expreſly requires them to evidence their Love to him, by their Obedience to his Commands. All other Motives, without Love, are ſervile and baſe, and beget in us the Drudgery of a Slave, but not the Duty of a Son; he that only fears God, is afraid of ſmarting; but he who loves God, is afraid of offending. *Keep my Commandments. Moſes*'s Law was an inſupportable Burthen; the Law from *Sinai* was dreadful, but the Law from *Sion* gracious; it pardons Weakneſs, and accepts Sincerity.

Q. Chriſt, *to comfort his Diſciples, promiſes to ſend them* the Comforter: *What Instructions does this afford?*

A. Here note the Procurer of this Bleſſing; namely *Chriſt*, by his prevailing Prayer, and powerful Interceſſion, *I will pray.* It runs in the future Tenſe, and is a Promiſe of *Chriſt*'s continual Interceſſion. As long as *Chriſt* is in Heaven, a *Chriſtian* ſhall not want a Supply of Comfort and Conſolation here on Earth.

Q. *What other Topicks of Conſolation does our Lord argue from, to comfort his Diſciples?*

A. One is his Promiſe, Verſe 19. *Ye ſhall ſee me; becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.* Becauſe when I am raiſed from the Grave, I will quicken your dead Bodies in the Grave, and ye ſhall live alſo; and as I live by my Aſcenſion into Heaven, ſo ſhall you, my Diſciples, live a Life of Grace here, and of Glory with myſelf hereafter.

A farther Privilege inſured to Believers, after *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion, and the Spirit's Miſſion, is, they ſhould more perfectly underſtand the eſſential Union betwixt *Chriſt* and his Father, and the myſtical Union betwixt *Chriſt* and his Members; *At that Day ye ſhall know that I am in my Father*, &c. The Knowledge which the Saints now have of the myſterious and myſtical Union is but dark and imperfect; but in Heaven they ſhall underſtand theſe Things clearly.

Another gracious Promiſe *Chriſt* gives thoſe that love him, is, *He ſhall be loved of my Father, and of myſelf.* And ſhall he not be loved of the Holy Ghoſt too? Yes, no doubt; but he is not here named, becauſe the Son dwells in us by the Holy Spirit, and ſheds abroad his Love in our Hearts, by the Holy Ghoſt.

But this is not all, *Chriſt will manifeſt himſelf unto him*; that is, ſuch obedient *Chriſtians* ſhall not only enjoy the Fruit and Benefit of his Love, but alſo the Senſe of it, and experience the ſenſible Manifeſtation and inward Diffuſions of his Love in their Souls.

Q. Judas *asks our Lord, Verſe* 22. Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thyſelf unto us, and not unto the World? *What Manifeſtation does he here ſpeak of?*

A. Some underſtand it of a temporal Manifeſtation, and think that *Judas* ſtill expected that *Chriſt* ſhould be a temporal Prince, and have ſuch a Kingdom as ſhould be conſpicuous to all the World, and therefore puts the Queſtion, how he could poſſibly ſhew himſelf to his Diſciples, and the World not ſee him? Others underſtand it of a ſpiritual Manifeſtation; as if he had ſaid, Lord, who, or what are we thy Diſciples, that we ſhould enjoy more ſpecial Manifeſtations of thy Love to us, than to the reſt of the World? Why ſhould we be dignified by ſuch diſtinguiſhing Favours above others?

Q. *What does our Saviour's Anſwer to* Judas *import?*

A. Our Saviour, in his Anſwer to *Judas*'s Queſtion, again directs and encourages his Diſciples, to evidence the Sincerity of their Love to his Perſon, by the Univerſality of their Obedience to his Commands; and tells them how great their Advantage would be in ſo doing. For, 1. *The Father would love them*; that is, manifeſt his Favour to them in farther Diſpenſations of Grace and Comfort. And, 2. *We will make our Abode with him.* He ſhall have the Father's and Son's Company. An Alluſion to a Parent who has many Children, he will be ſure to live with them who are moſt dutiful to him, and moſt obſervant of him. The Expreſſion of *making their Abode with us*, denotes that ſweet and intimate Fellowſhip which ſhall be betwixt God and us, and the Perpetuity and Conſtancy of it; till we are taken up by him into Heaven, he will make his Abode with us, by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit, the Graces and Comforts whereof ſhall abide with us for ever.

Q. *What kind of Peace was that which* Chriſt *promiſes to give his Diſciples, Verſe* 27?

A. Chriſt being about to depart, gives his Diſciples one noble and laſt Bequeſt; *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you.* As if he had ſaid, Whatſoever outward Trouble the World gives you, be not afraid of it before it comes, for I will give you inward Peace in the midſt of all your Troubles; yet, *not as the World gives*; the World may wiſh Peace, but never intend it; or may wiſh it, yet not be able to give it; but *Chriſt*'s Peace is real and ſubſtantial; the World's Peace is only a Freedom from outward Trouble, but *Chriſt*'s Peace is a Deliverance from inward Guilt.

Q. *In what Senſe do you take thoſe Words of our Lord, Verſe* 28. My Father is greater than I?

A. Thoſe Words muſt be underſtood with Reference to his Human Nature as Mediator; for ſo he was the Father's Servant, and the Father, as God, was greater than he as Man. Again, the Father may be ſaid to be greater than *Chriſt*, in regard of his Paternity, as being the Fountain of the Deity; the Father is of himſelf, but the Son is begotten of the Father; but being of the ſame Subſtance with the Father, he is conſequently God, as the Father is God; for the Inequality ariſes not from the Eſſence, but from the Order and Manner of Subſiſtence.

CHAP. XV.

The Union of Chriſt *and his Members deſcribed, under the Parable of a Vine, he exhorts them to keep his Commandments; ſhews his Love to them by laying down his Life; tells them they are his Friends and Choſen; comforts them againſt the*

Hatred of the World; and leaves the Jews *without Excuſe; and that the Holy Ghoſt bears Witneſs of him.*

Q. I*N what Senſe is* Chriſt *a* Vine, *and his Father a* Husbandman?

A. Our Lord, under the Metaphor of a Vine, elegantly ſets forth himſelf in his Relation to his viſible Church, ſhewing under that Similitude, what his Father meant to do with *Judas*, and all unfruitful Branches like to him, even take them away, cut them off, and throw them into the Fire; but ſuch as are Fruitful he purges by his Word and Spirit, by Ordinances and Providences, by Mercies and Afflictions, that they may be more abundantly and conſtantly Fruitful. *Chriſt* very fitly reſembles a Vine; as a Vine is weak, mean, and ſmall in outward Appearance, not like the Cedar for Height, or the Oak for Strength; ſo was *Chriſt* in his ſtate of Humiliation; *there was no Beauty in him*, Iſa. liii. As the Vine is a Fruitful Plant, tho' it has little Pomp, yet it has much Plenty, and is only uſeful for its Fruit, and brings forth both Variety and Plenty of ſweet Fruit to make glad the Heart of Man. Thus the Fruits of *Chriſt*'s Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, and Interceſſion are many and great, delightful and ſweet. In a Word, as the Fruit of the Vine muſt be preſſed, that it may be Drink to Men, ſo *Chriſt* ſubmitted to be trod in the Wine-preſs of his Father's Wrath, that thereby the ſweet Fruit and Benefit might redound to his People.

Finally, as the Vine is the Root from which all the Branches derive their Nouriſhment and Fruitfulneſs; in like Mannner is *Chriſt* the Stock into which all his Members are ingrafted, the Root in which they all ſubſiſt, and the Fountain from whence their ſpiritual Life and Fruitfulneſs doth flow and proceed.

As *Chriſt* is the Vine, ſo his Father is the Huſbandman; he ingrafts and implants all the Branches into this Vine; the Plants of Righteouſneſs are of his own planting; he takes Notice what ſtore of Fruit every Branch brings forth; and it is his daily Care to dreſs and dung, to purge and prune, to ſupport and ſhelter his Vineyard, that it may bring forth Fruit abundantly.

Q. *Pray explain the Metaphor of the different Kinds of* Branches *that proceeded from this* Vine?

A. In this Vine are two ſorts of Branches, ſome Fruitful, others Unfruitful; ſome have the Viſibility, but not the Reality of Branches; ſome are Branches only by external Profeſſion, others are ſo by real Implantation. The true Touchſtone of one from the other, is not by the Leaves of Profeſſion, but by the ſubſtantial Proofs of a Holy and Righteous Converſation.

In the moſt fruitful Branches, in the beſt and holieſt of *Chriſtians* there remains much Filth and Corruption to be purged out, in order to future and farther Fruitfulneſs. Therefore the Huſbandman's Hand (God the Father's) manages the pruning Knife of Affliction, in order to his Peoples Improvement in Grace and Holineſs; he had rather ſee his Vine bleed, than ſee it barren.

Such Branches, as after all the Huſbandman's Care and Coſt, remain Unfruitful, ſhall be finally cut off and caſt away, as was *Judas* here, who in this Diſcourſe of our Saviour, ſeems principally aimed at; he was a Branch in him that bare no Fruit, who was ſhortly after taken away, and went to his own Place.

Q. *Pray what Application does* Chriſt *make of the Parable of the* Vine, *and its different Sorts of* Branches?

A. Our Saviour having thus diſtinguiſhed his Diſciples in general into two Sorts, now tells them of which Number they were: *Now*, ſaith he, *ye are clean, through the Word which I have ſpoken to you*; that is, now that *Judas* the Traitor, that dead, rotten, fruitleſs Branch, is cut off, and caſt out, ye are all clean through the cleanſing Power and Virtue of my Word and Doctrine.

In the next Place, we have the deplorable Condition of hypocritical, fruitleſs Profeſſors, they are wither'd Branches, fit only for the Fire; as alſo a glorious Privilege declared; *Ask what you will, and it ſhall be done unto you.* Not that we are hereby warranted to ask what we pleaſe at God's Hand, but our Will muſt be limited by the Word and Will of God; we muſt pray in Faith, and in the Name and Mediation of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and with a ſingle Eye to the Glory of God. The Condition on which this Privilege is attainable, is, *If ye abide in me, and my Words abide in you*; that is, Practically and Experimentally. If my Doctrine and Commands abide in your Hearts, and diſpoſe you to an holy Faithfulneſs in your Lives, then ſhall all your Requeſts be granted.

Q. *What farther Inſtructions does our Lord here give his Diſciples?*

A. Our Lord exhorts his Followers to an holy Fruitfulneſs in good Works by a double Argument; one drawn from the Glory of God; *Herein is my Father glorified.* The other from their own Advantage; *ſo ſhall ye be my Diſciples*; that is, hereby you ſhall evidence and prove yourſelves to be my Diſciples.

But obſerve, what a wonderful Compariſon does *Chriſt* here make! *As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you.* He does not ſay, As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved him; but, ſo have I loved you. Nor does he ſay, the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you. This imports the Priority of *Chriſt*'s Love, that he loved us firſt, and alſo denotes the invincible Conſtancy, and the indubitable certainty of it: Follow me from Heaven to Earth, and from Earth to Heaven, and you will find that every Step I have taken has been in Love.

Next he directs them how they may continue in his Love; namely, by a conſtant Obedience to his Commands, as his Obedience to his Father's Commands had ſecured him a Continuance in his Father's Love; *If ye keep my Commandments, ye ſhall abide in my Love*; that is, in a Senſe of my Love, and under the ſweet Apprehenſions of it.

Our Lord farther declares the Ground and Reaſon why he ſo earneſtly preſſed the Duty of being univerſally Fruitful; namely, 1. *That his Joy might remain in them*; that is, that the Joy which he had in their Holineſs and Obedience, might remain with them; nothing is more deſired by *Chriſt*, than that he may have Cauſe continually to rejoice in the Faith and Fruitfulneſs of his People. 2. *That their Joy in him might be full.* This latter ariſes from the former; our Joy in *Chriſt*, reſults from his Joy in us, his Delight in us, cauſes us abundantly to delight in him.

Our Lord again preſſes on his Diſciples the Duty of loving one another, and here enforces it from his own Example; *As I have loved you, ſo love ye one another*; that is, as truly and and ſincerely for the Manner, though not to the ſame Proportion and Degree.

An Evidence of the Greatneſs of *Chriſt*'s love to his Diſciples, was his Readineſs to lay down his Life for them, which is the higheſt Expreſſion of Love to our deareſt Friends, becauſe Life is the greateſt earthly Bleſſing. *Chriſt*'s Love in laying down his Life for his People, was a matchleſs Love; for whilſt they were Enemies to him, he had a friendly Reſpect for them; and never ceaſed till he had brought them into a Covenant of Friendſhip with himſelf.

Q. *Among other tender Expreſſions which* Chriſt *uſes to encourage his deſponding Diſciples, he calls them* his Friends: *In what Reſpect were they ſo?*

A. 1 Actively; you will declare and manifeſt yourſelves to be my Friends. 2. Paſſively, I will declare myſelf to be your Friend.

How condeſcending is the Love of *Chriſt* in calling his Servants by the Name of Friends? And how grateful is Obedience to him, ſince it dignifies the Practicers of it with the Title of his Friends. Yet obſerve, that nothing ſhort of an humble, uniform, cheerful, and conſtant Obedience to the Commands of *Chriſt*, will evidence the Truth of our Relation to him, and the Sincerity of our Friendſhip with him. *Then only are you my Friends, when you do whatever I command you.*

Next, *Chriſt* declares the Reaſon why he was pleaſed to change his Stile, and call his Diſciples Friends inſtead of Servants; namely, becauſe of his Communication of Secrets to them, which Servants are not admitted to the Knowledge of, *Henceforth I call you not Servants*; that is, not mere Servants; not that they were to be exempted from Obedience; but *Chriſt* treated them now with the Kindneſs of familiar Friends; being about to leave them, he unboſoms himſelf unto them, ſaying, *All Things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Not that *Chriſt* had communicated the infinite Treaſures of Knowledge to them, which the Father had imparted to him; but he ſpeaks here as the Prophet of his Church, that as ſuch he had revealed all Things needful for them to know in order to Salvation, and belonging to their Caſe and State; as a Counſellor does not impart all his Knowledge to his Clients, but only ſo much as is neceſſary for his Client to underſtand and know, in relation to his Caſe.

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Expreſſions of our Lord,* Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you?

A. Another Inſtance and Evidence our Lord gives of his Love to his Diſciples, is, that his Mercy and free Goodneſs had prevented them in their Election to eternal Salvation, and in their Vocation to the Office of Apoſtleſhip; ye have not choſen *me*, to be your Maſter and Lord, *but I have choſen you*, to be my Diſciples, Friends, and Servants.

He likewiſe acquaints them with his End and Deſign in chuſing them; namely, *that they ſhould bring forth Fruit*, and perſevere therein, even in all the Fruits of Holineſs and Obedience, which are the Praiſe and Glory of God by *Jeſus Chriſt*. *I have ordained you, that you ſhould bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit ſhould remain.* And for their farther Direction herein, he promiſes them, that they ſhould have Acceſs to the Father through him, for whatever they ſtood in need of, *whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my Name, he will give it you.*

Q. Chriſt *likewiſe preſſes upon them the Duty of mutual Love*, I command you to love one another, *Verſe* 17. *What does this teach us?*

A. It denotes the great Importance of the Duty, and the great Averſeneſs of our Hearts to the Performance of it. And if we conſider the Diſciples as Apoſtles and Miniſters of the Goſpel, it intimates the Neceſſity of mutual Love among the Diſpenſers of the Goſpel, as exceedingly conducing to the Peace and Welfare of the Church of God, over which he hath ſet them. And the Argument he uſes to preſs this Duty of mutual Love, is, that we are ſure to meet with the World's Hatred.

Againſt the World's Hatred *Chriſt* propounds ſeveral Arguments by way of Comfort and Encouragement; as 1. That it was the ſame Lot and Uſage *Chriſt* himſelf met with, *The World hated me before it hated you.* 2. The Hatred of the World will evidence that they are not of the World, but choſen out of it; *I have choſen you out of the World.* The third Argument for Conſolation under the World's Hatred, is taken from our Relation to *Chriſt*, as Servants to a Maſter; *Remember that the Servant is not greater than his Lord*; as if *Chriſt* had ſaid, Is it equal, that you ſhould expect better Treatment than myſelf, either as to your Perſons or Miniſtry, or that you ſhould expect that the World ſhould better receive your Doctrine than it did mine before you? A fourth Argument to ſupport them under the Burden of the World's Hatred is taken from the Goodneſs of the Cauſe for which they were to ſuffer; namely, for *Chriſt*'s Name's ſake. This is the great Quarrel of the World againſt the Diſciples of *Chriſt*; and whatever may be pretended, this is the Ground of it.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of Verſe* 22. If I had not come, and ſpoken unto them, they had not had Sin: But now they have no Cloak for their Sin?

A. As if he had ſaid, Had not I come amongſt them in my Incarnation, and preached Perſonally to them the Doctrine of Salvation, and confirmed that Doctrine by miraculous Operations, they might, in ſome Meaſure, have pleaded Ignorance, *and they had not had Sin*; that is, they had not had the Sin of Unbelief, and Goſpel-contempt to anſwer for, or ſo great a Meaſure of any kind of Sin, as now they have; but would have more to ſay in Excuſe, or for a Cover to their Sins, than now they can; *But now they have no Cloak for their Sin*; they are totally Inexcuſable, and have not the leaſt Colour, or Pretence, for their obſtinate Unbelief.

Q. *What is the Import of the* 23, 24, *and* 25*th Verſes?*

A. Theſe Verſes declare the heinous Nature of the *Phariſees* Sin, in hating and perſecuting *Chriſt*, who had done, before their Eyes, ſuch Works as never Man beſides him, or before him, ever did; he acting by his own Power. Yet did they hate both him and his Father, according to the Prediction, *Pſal.* xxxv. 19. *They hated me without a Cauſe.* Which being ſpoken by *David* in Type, received a more eminent Accompliſhment in *Chriſt* the Son of *David*. Thus was their Sin aggravated, who, having ſeen *Chriſt*'s Doctrine confirmed by unparaſell'd Miracles, yet continued Haters of his Perſon, Deſpiſers of his Doctrine, and Reproachers of his Miracles.

Our Lord concludes with comforting himſelf, that though he had laid under many Aſperſions and Scandals in the World, yet all theſe ſhould be done away by the Coming of the Holy Spirit, who ſhould teſtify of him, and make his Perſon and Doctrine to be acknowledged in the World; and that they themſelves ſhould bear Witneſs of him who had been with him from the Beginning.

Q. *What general Remarks do you make upon the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. Obſerve here, That the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three diſtinct Perſons in the Godhead; that the Holy Ghoſt proceedeth from the Father and Son: Here the Son is ſaid to ſend him; and as to the Father, he is ſaid to proceed from him. If the Holy Ghoſt doth not proceed from the Son, why is he called *the Spirit of the Son*, Gal. iv. 6. Why is he ſaid here to be ſent by the Son? The Comforter, whom *I will ſend unto you from the Father*. And if the Spirit doth not proceed from the Son, what perſonal Relation can we conceive betwixt the Son and the Spirit?

It is the higheſt Dignity and Honour of the Apoſtles and Miniſters of *Chriſt*, that the Spirit bears no Teſtimony unto *Chriſt*, but with and according to the Teſtimony given by them; for here it is conjoined, *He ſhall teſtify of me; and ye ſhall bear Witneſs, who have been with me from the Beginning.*

CHAP. XVI.

Chriſt *comforts his Diſciples againſt Perſecution, by the Promiſes of the Holy Spirit; tells them he ſhall be taken from them, and again be ſeen by them; that their Sorrow ſhould be turned into Joy; exhorts them to Prayer, and gives them his Promiſe; tells them he ſhould leave the World, and encourages them in the Faith.*

Q. OUR *Saviour proceeds, in this Chapter, to acquaint his Diſciples with, and encourage them under the Sufferings and ill Treatment they ſhould meet with after his Departure from them: How does* Chriſt *explain himſelf on this Head?*

A. Two Sorts, or Kinds of Sufferings, the Diſciples were to expect in and from the World, namely, Excommunication and Martyrdom; *They ſhall put you out of their Synagogues*; that is, exclude them from all their Aſſemblies, both Civil and Religious; and ſhall not only think it Lawful, but a Service very acceptable to God, to put them to Death, *Whoſoever killeth you, will think he does God Service.*

Note, How *Chriſt* diſcovers to his dear Diſciples the Cauſe and Ground of the World's Hatred againſt them, and Enmity towards them; namely, their Ignorance of the Father and of himſelf; *Theſe Things will they do, becauſe they have not known the Father nor me.* Thus all Perſecutions ſpring from Ignorance, or from Malice.

Our Lord again forewarns his Diſciples of their approaching Sufferings, to the Intent that they might remember that he had foretold them of 'em, and would not fail to ſupport them under 'em. He had often told them in general, of Perſecutions and Troubles which they muſt expect to meet with, but did not, till now, intimate the Kinds and Degrees of thoſe Sufferings, with reſpect to their Weakneſs; and becauſe, whilſt he was with them, he himſelf bore the Brunt of all, the World's Rage falling upon him, letting them alone; but after his Aſcenſion, when the Malice of Satan, and wicked Men, could not reach him, then ſhould the Storm fall upon them. So tender is *Chriſt* of his Diſciples Weakneſs, that he will not put them upon the hardſhip of Sufferings, till they are trained up, and prepared for them; and for their Encouragement, *Chriſt* himſelf is the great Object of Perſecutors Malice, and they only for his Sake.

Q. *What Arguments does* Chriſt *uſe to comfort his Diſciples, under the Apprehenſion of his ſpeedy Departure from them?*

A. Our Saviour again intimates to his Diſciples his ſpeedy Departure from them, and reproves them for being grieved at it, without conſidering the End and Deſign of it, and the Benefit and Advantage they were to receive from it. Their Thoughts were wholly taken up about themſelves, what they ſhould do for want of *Chriſt*'s bodily Preſence, without being Inſtant with him, to know whither he was going, what Benefit they ſhould reap, or they expect, from his Departure.

Again, our Saviour urges his Diſciples to ſubmit to his Departure, as that which would make Way for his ſending the Comforter to them; which he aſſures them would be of more Advantage to them than his own Stay and Continuance amongſt them. Now for the Spirit to dwell in us, is more advantageous than to have *Chriſt* dwell in the Fleſh amongſt us. Therefore well might *Chriſt* ſay, *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will ſend him to you.* Hence learn, That *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion was indiſpenſibly neceſſary, in order to the Spirit's Miſſion. The ſending of the Spirit being a Part of *Chriſt*'s Royalty, as Mediator, it was not convenient that the Spirit ſhould be ſent, till *Chriſt* was crowned, and ſat down on his Throne in his Kingdom; then the Spirit was to make Explication to us, of the Redemption purchaſed for us.

Q. *What Advantages were to be expected by the* Coming of the Comforter?

A. The Benefits that would redound by the *Coming of the Comforter*, would be, 1. To the World. 2. To the Apoſtles. 3. To himſelf. As to the World, *He ſhall convince them of Sin, Righteouſneſs, and Judgment.* Of Sin; that is, of their ſinful State and Nature, of the large Extent of Sin, and particularly of that of Unbelief. Of Righteouſneſs, that is, of the Inſufficiency of all human Righteouſneſs, and of the Righteouſneſs of a Mediator; by which alone we are to expect Acceptance with God; or of a compleat and perfect Righteouſneſs in me, imputable to Sinners for their perfect Juſtification; and that it is ſo, appears, *becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more.* As if *Chriſt* had ſaid, Hereby you may be ſatisfied, that by my active and paſſive Obedience, I have fully ſatisfied my Father's Juſtice for you, and you ſhall never be charged or condemned; becauſe when I go to Heaven, I ſhall abide there in Glory with my Father, and never be ſent back again; ye ſhall ſee me no more, as it muſt have been, if any Thing had been omitted by me. Of Judgment; the Spirit ſhall convince the World, that *Jeſus* is both *Lord* and *Chriſt*, that he had Power to judge Satan the Prince of the World, and that he did by his Death put down the Kingdom of Darkneſs. *The*

Spirit ſhall convince of Judgment; that is, *that Satan, the Prince of this World, is judged.*

The ſecond Benefit to be expected by the Coming of the Holy Spirit, relates to the Apoſtles themſelves; *He ſhall guide you into all Truth.* This is a principal Text which the *Papiſts* bring for their Doctrine of Infallibility, but groundleſly; for this Promiſe was made to all the Apoſtles, as well as *Peter*; nay, not only to the Apoſtles, but to all their Succeſſors; and not only to them, but to all Believers alſo; for they are led by the Spirit of God, and that into all Truth too; not abſolutely, but into all neceſſary Truth; and ſo long as a private *Chriſtian* follows the Conduct and Guidance of the Divine Spirit, he is more Infallible than either Pope or Council, who follow the Dictates and Direction of their own Spirits only.

Again, the Spirit ſhall not teach you a private Doctrine, or contrary to that which ye have learned of me; but whatſoever he ſhall hear of, and receive from me, that ſhall he ſpeak; *And he will ſhew you Things to come.* This affords an Argument to prove the Holy Spirit to be God. He that can ſhew us Things to come, he that clearly foreſees, and infallibly foretels what ſhall be, before it is, is certainly God. This the Holy Spirit doth. Men and Devils may gueſs at Things to come, but none can ſhew Things to come, but he who is truly and really God; therefore the Spirit is ſo.

Chriſt goes on to ſhew the Advantage which would redound to himſelf by the coming of the Comforter; he declares that the Spirit ſhould glorify him by his Teſtimony, Gifts, and Miracles, and ſhall, in all Things, accord with him, and thereby evidence that he hath his Miſſion from him; *He ſhall receive of mine and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* And *all Things that the Father hath are mine*; which ſhews, that though the Union in Eſſence, amongſt the Perſons in the Trinity, is the ſame, yet the Order of their Subſiſtence and Operation is diſtinct; the Son being from the Father, and the Holy Ghoſt from the Father and the Son. *For all Things that the Father hath are mine; and the Spirit ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* Theſe Words afford a ſtrong Argument to prove the Divinity of *Chriſt*; *All Things which the Father hath are mine.* Where *Chriſt* challenges to himſelf the incommunicable Attributes of God, and conſequently that Eſſence which is inſeparable from them. Doth the Father know the Secrets of all Hearts? So does *Chriſt*, Revel. ii. 23. *All the Churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the Reins and Hearts.* Is the Father Eternal? So is *Chriſt*, Prov. viii. 23. *I was ſet up from everlaſting*, &c.

Q. *Proceed to the next Head of Encouragement, which* Chriſt *gives his Diſciples, to comfort them in their preſent Sorrow?*

A. He comforts them with a Promiſe, that however he was to be removed from them, yet they ſhould ſhortly ſee him again; namely, after his Reſurrection. His Diſciples not underſtanding what he meant, but labouring under the Prejudices of their national Errors, concerning the temporal Kingdom of the *Meſſias*, knew not what to make of theſe Words, *a little while and ye ſhall not ſee me.* Our Lord therefore explains himſelf, and tells them, that they ſhould have a Time of ſad Sorrow and Grief of Heart, during his Suffering and Abſence from them; but their Sadneſs ſhould ſoon be turned into Joy, when they ſhall ſee him alive again, after his Reſurrection. This he illuſtrates by the Similitude of a travailing Woman, who ſoon forgets her Sorrow after ſhe has brought forth a Child. Thus will their Hearts revive on the Sight of him, riſen from the Grave; and no Man ſhall be able to take their Joy away from them, becauſe he ſhall die no more, but go to Heaven, and there live for ever, to make Interceſſion for them.

Chriſt tells them likewiſe, the different Effects which his Abſence would have upon the World, and upon them. *The World ſhall rejoice, but ye ſhall weep and lament.* This is the wretched Diſpoſition of the World, to rejoice in the Abſence and want of *Chriſt* out of the World. Nothing occaſions ſo much Sorrow and Sadneſs to ſincere Diſciples, as *Chriſt's* Abſence, and Removal from them. Such is their Eſtimation of his Worth, ſo great their Apprehenſion of the Want of him, that no Loſs is comparable to his Abſence, and Removal from them; ye ſhall weep and lament at my Departure, though the World will rejoice. But though Believers Sorrow for *Chriſt's* Abſence be very great, yet ſhall it not be perpetual; *Ye have now Sorrow: But I will ſee you again, and your Heart ſhall rejoice, and your Joy ſhall no Man take from you.* The Joy of the Saints may be interrupted, it ſhall never be totally extinguiſhed; it is a permanent Joy, of which they ſhall never be totally deprived, till they enter into the Ocean of eternal Joy: *Your Joy no Man taketh from you.*

Q. *In the 23d Verſe, there ſeems to me a palpable Contradiction. In the firſt Part of the Verſe,* Chriſt *tells them,* In that Day ye ſhall aſk me nothing; *and yet, in the laſt Clauſe, promiſes,* Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my Name, he ſhall give it you. *How do you reconcile this?*

A. To reſolve this, know that there is a twofold aſking, one by way of Queſtion, the other by way of Petition. The former is aſking that we may know, or be informed of what we doubt; the latter is aſking that we may receive, and be ſupplied with what we want. Now when *Chriſt* ſays, *In that Day ye ſhall aſk me nothing*; it is as much as if he had ſaid, At preſent you underſtand but little of the Myſteries of Religion, and therefore you put Queſtions about many Things; but in that Day, when the Comforter comes, you ſhall be ſo clearly enlightened by him, that you ſhall not need to aſk me any more Queſtions. But when *Chriſt* ſaith, *Whatever ye aſk the Father in my Name, he will give it you*; the Meaning is, in that Day when I have left the World, and aſcended to my Father, ye ſhall not need to addreſs your Prayers to me, but to my Father in my Name.

Hitherto have ye aſked nothing in my Name; that is, explicitly and expreſly, or by me, as Mediator betwixt God and Man, and with reſpect to my Merits. Do this after my Reſurrection, and Interceſſion at the Right-hand of God, and you ſhall receive ſuch Anſwers as will fill you with Joy; for the Saints of God under the *Old Teſtament*, and the Apoſtles themſelves under the *New*, had, hitherto, put up all their Petitions in the Name of the *Meſſiah*; though not in the Name of *Jeſus*. But now he exhorts them to eye his mediatory Office in all their Addreſſes to God, and promiſes them, whatſoever he had purchaſed of the Father, by his Sufferings and Satisfaction, they ſhould obtain it for the ſake of his prevailing Interceſſion.

Q. *What other Inſtructions do we learn from the latter Part of this Chapter?*

A. Our Lord farther tells his Diſciples, that although he had ſpoken many Things to them in dark Parables and figurative Expreſſions, yet now the Time was approaching, namely, the Comforter's coming, when he would, by the Holy Ghoſt, clearly enlighten their Underſtandings in the Knowledge of Divine Myſteries, and the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, and particularly in the Knowledge of God as his Father, and their Father in him.

At that Day ye ſhall aſk in my Name; that is, after I am aſcended into Heaven, and have ſent down the Holy Ghoſt upon you, you ſhall put up all your Prayers and Requeſts to God in my Name; *And I ſay not that I will pray the Father for you*; the Meaning of which is, not that he will lay aſide his mediatorial Office, as Interceſſor for Believers; but that they ſhould have not only his Interceſſion, but his Father's Love, upon which, to ground their Hope of Audience.

The Evangeliſt gives us another Proof of our Saviour's Godhead; *He came forth from the Father into the World.* He came out from his Father in his Incarnation, and came into the World to accompliſh the Work of our Redemption. It pleaſed *Chriſt*, out of Love to his People, to leave the Father, and come into the World; not by being ſeparated from the Deity, but by obſcuring the Deity with the Veil of our Fleſh, in order to the finiſhing the great and glorious Work of our Redemption; and having finiſhed his Suffering-work here on Earth, aſcended into Heaven, and ſent down his Holy Spirit, to apply unto the Church the Redemption purchaſed by his Blood.

The Apoſtles, in their Reply, argue from their Knowledge of *Chriſt*'s Omniſcience to the Certainty of his Divinity; *Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all Things; by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God.*

The Apoſtles having made this full Profeſſion of their Faith in *Chriſt*'s Divinity, and Omniſcience, he intimates to them, that ſhortly their Faith ſhould be put to a great Trial, namely, when his Sufferings came on, and that then they ſhould all forſake him, and take care of themſelves; but though they ſhould leave him alone, yet God would be with him, and will be with *Chriſtians* in a Suffering-hour, in his eſſential Preſence, and in his gracious and ſupporting Preſence.

In the Concluſion of this farewel Sermon of *Chriſt* to his Diſciples, he declares to them the inevitable Neceſſity of the World's Trouble; *In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation*; that is, while ye have to do with the Men of the World, while you have any Thing to do with the Things of the World; nay, while you have a Being in the World, you muſt look for Trouble, both from within and from without, from Friends and Foes, in Body, Soul, Name, Eſtate, Heart-breaking, Soul-rending Troubles; ſuch you, my Diſciples, muſt expect, as well as others.

The Remedy provided by *Chriſt* againſt this Malady, is, *In me ye ſhall have Peace*; that is, Serenity of Mind, a quiet and calm Temper of Spirit within, when the World, like a tempeſtuous Air, is full of Storms.

The Cordial *Chriſt* adminiſters for the Support of his People's Spirits, under the ſinking Burden of the World's Tribulations and Troubles, is, *But be of good cheer, I have overcome the World.* I have taken the Sting out of every Croſs, and the Venom out of every Arrow. Hence learn, that it is a great Comfort to a Chriſtian, under all the Troubles of this World, to conſider that *Chriſt* has overcome the World, that is, all Things in the World, which may hinder his People's Comfort and Conſolation here, and their eternal Happineſs and Salvation hereafter; namely, the Prince of the World, the Rulers, the wicked Men, the Troubles, the Temptations, the Corruptions of the World. Now *Chriſt* having overcome the World, all Perſons and Things are at his Diſpoſal, and can do nothing but by his Permiſſion; and as he overcame the World himſelf, ſo will he enable us, through Faith in him, to overcome it alſo, 1 John v. 4. *This is the Victory over the World, even our Faith.*

CHAP. XVII.

Chriſt *preparing himſelf for Death, prays his Father to glorify him, and to give eternal Life to Believers; ſhews how faithfully he accompliſhed his Work; and prays the Father that he would preſerve his Diſciples in Love and Charity, and keep them from the Evil of the World; prays for all that ſhould believe on him through their Word; and that they might be with him to behold his Glory.*

Q. WHAT *general Obſervations do you make upon this Chapter?*

A. Our Lord having finiſhed his conſolatory and valedictory Sermon, contained in the three foregoing Chapters, in this we have recorded his laſt Prayer, with and for his Diſciples, in which *Chriſt* has left us a Copy of what he now interceeds for, as our Advocate in Heaven. It is true, all Scripture is written by the Inſpiration of God, and therefore equally to be eſteemed; yet if one Part of Scripture was to be magnified above another, this Chapter would claim the Pre-eminence; it contains the Breathings out of *Chriſt*'s Soul for his Church and Children, before his Departure; not for his Diſciples only, but for the ſucceeding Church to the End of the World.

Q. *Pray what does the firſt Verſe afford worthy of Remark?*

A. In the firſt Verſe, we have the Order of our Saviour's Prayer; *Theſe Words ſpake Jeſus*; that is, after he had finiſhed his excellent Sermon, he cloſes the Exerciſe with a moſt fervent and affectionate Prayer; teaching Miniſters, by his Example, to add ſolemn Prayer and Supplication to all their Inſtructions and Exhortations. If every Creature of God be to be ſanctified by Prayer, much more the Word of God, which works not as a natural Agent, but as a moral Inſtrument in God's Hand.

Obſerve next the Geſture in which *Chriſt* prayed; *He lifted up his Eyes to Heaven*, as an Indication of his Soul's being lifted up to God; to ſignify his Reverence of God, whoſe Throne is in Heaven; and to denote his Confidence in God, and a raiſed Expectation of Aid and Help from God, and not from any Creature.

The Perſon he prayed to, was God, under the Appellation of Father; it intimates a ſweet Relation, it is a Word of endearing Affection, and implies great Reverence towards God, and Confidence in him.

Note alſo the Mercy pray'd for; *The Hour is come*; that is, the Hour of my Sufferings and Satiſfaction; the Hour of my Victory, and of thy Glory; the Hour, the ſad Hour, determined in thy Decree and Purpoſe. *Glorify thy Son*; glorify him at his Death, by manifeſting him to have been the Son of God, and by accepting his Death as a Satiſfaction for the Sins of the World; glorify him after Death, by a ſpeedy Reſurrection from the Grave, and a triumphant Exaltation at thy Right-Hand.

Q. *If* Chriſt *received all his Power from God, as is affirmed, Verſe* 2. *how could he be equal with God?*

A. Obſerve here, the Dignity with which *Chriſt* was inveſted; *He hath Power given him over all Fleſh*; that is, Authority to judge and ſentence all Mankind. This *Power was given him by the Father*. Hence the *Socinians* infer, that he was not God, becauſe he received all from God: But the Text ſpeaks not of his divine Power as God, but of his Power as Mediator. *Chriſt* has a legiſlative Power, or a Power to give Laws to all Mankind; and a judiciary Power, or a Power to execute the Laws he has given.

Q. *In what Senſe may true Believers be ſaid to be given to* Chriſt by *God?*

A. The End for which *Chriſt* was inveſted with this Power, was that he might give eternal Life to as many as God had given him. All ſincere and ſerious *Chriſtians* are given to him as his Reward, *Iſa.* liii. 10. All that are given to *Chriſt*, have Life from him; a Life of Juſtification and Sanctification on Earth, and a Life of Glory in Heaven. Eternal Life is a Free-Gift from *Chriſt* to his People, though they do not work for Wages, yet they ſhall not work for Nothing; *I give unto them eternal Life.*

Q. *But by what Means do Believers obtain eternal Life?*

A. The true Way and Means to obtain eternal Life, *Chriſt* declares, is the true Knowledge of God, and of himſelf the Mediator, who was commiſſioned and ſent by the Father to accompliſh the Work of Redemption for a loſt World. There is a great Difference betwixt theſe two Propoſitions; The Father is the only true God, and the Father only is true God; *Chriſt* ſaith the former; *This is Life eternal, to know thee and* Jeſus Chriſt. The *Socinian* ſays the latter; This is Life eternal, to know only thee to be the true God, and that neither *Jeſus Chriſt*, nor the Spirit, are God, but the Father only. But how comes eternal Life to depend as well upon the Knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as of God the Father, if *Jeſus Chriſt* be only Man, and not truly and really God? Who can conceive that the Knowledge of a mere Creature ſhould be accounted equally neceſſary to Salvation, with the Knowledge of the great and mighty God? Surely, if our Happineſs conſiſts equally in the Knowledge of God and *Chriſt*, then God and *Chriſt* are of the ſame Nature, equal in Power and Glory. The comprehenſive Senſe of the Words ſeems to be this; that the Knowledge of the only true God, (in Oppoſition to Idols and falſe Gods) and of *Jeſus Chriſt* the Mediator, is the Life of Grace, and the neceſſary Way to the Life of Glory.

Q. *How did* Chriſt *glorify God on Earth? And what was that Glory he enjoy'd before the World began?*

A. Chriſt, through the whole Courſe of his Life on Earth, glorified his Father; he glorified him by his Doctrine, his Miracles, the unſpotted Purity and Innocence of his Life, and his unparallel'd Sufferings at his Death: This Work he was about to finiſh: He ſpeaks of what he was reſolved to do, as already done.

Glorify thou me with the Glory I had with thee before the World was. Chriſt, as God, had an eſſential Glory with the Father, before the World was. He had this Glory not in the Purpoſe and Decree of God only, as the *Socinians* would have it; for he does not ſay, Glorify me with the Glory which thou didſt propoſe and prepare for me before the World was, but which I had and enjoy'd with thee before the World was; by which Words our Lord plainly aſſerts his own Exiſtence and Being from Eternity, and prays for a Re-exaltation to that Glory which he enjoy'd with his Father before his Incarnation.

Q. *How do you underſtand the firſt and laſt Clauſes of Verſe 6?*

A. *I have manifeſted thy Name,* &c. By the Name of God we are here to underſtand his Nature, his Properties and Attributes, his Deſigns and Counſels for the Salvation of Mankind; *Chriſt*, as the Prophet of his Church, made all theſe known unto his People. Note farther, that all thoſe that are given to *Chriſt*, keep his Word; they keep it in their Underſtandings; they hide it in their Hearts; they feel the Force of it in their Souls; they expreſs the Power of it in their Lives; *They have kept thy Word.*

Q. *Pray explain the Diſtinction which* Chriſt *makes between true* Believers, *and the* World, *Ver. 9?*

A. *I pray for them; I pray not for the World,* &c. That is, I now offer up a Prayer particularly, 1. For my Apoſtles, deſigned to ſo great a Work as the Preaching of the everlaſting Goſpel, to the obſtinate *Jews*, and obdurate *Gentiles.* 2. I intercede alſo for all Believers at this Time, for their Perſeverance in the Faith, and Conſtancy in Perſecution, but I do not intercede for the wicked and impenitent World, they not being capable (whilſt ſuch) of theſe Mercies and Bleſſings; tho' at other Times we find him praying for the World, yea, for his very Crucifiers; *Father forgive them, &c.* Nay, in this very Prayer, at the 20th Verſe, he prays for the World; that is, for the Gentile World, and all thoſe that by the Preaching of the Apoſtles his Succeſſors, ſhould be brought to believe on him to the End of the World.

Q. *What is* Chriſt's *Meaning, when he ſays, Ver.* 10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them?

A. This may be underſtood two Ways; 1. Of all Perſons, all my Friends, all my Diſciples are thine as well as mine. The Father and Son have a like Property and Share in Believers. 2. The Words in the Original being of the neuter Gender, ſignify, all Things are mine, and all my Things are thine; *Chriſt* and his Father are one, and they agree in one; they have the ſame Eſſence and Nature, the ſame Attributes and Will; *Chriſt* hath all Things that the Father hath, wills all Things that the Father wills, and doth all Things that the Father doth; he is therefore really and eſſentially God: It follows, *And I am glorified in them*; that is, I am made more glorious by their owning and receiving me, by their believing in me and accepting of me for their Lord and Saviour.

Q. *How do you explain the laſt Clauſe of the 11th Verſe,* That they may be one as we are?

A. That they may be one, one in Body, and one in Spirit; that they may own *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm,* &c. that they may be *one* in Love and Affection, as *we are,* in ſome Proportion to that Union which is betwixt Thee and Me, tho' not Equality. This Prayer of our Saviour's, obliges all thoſe, who in any Sincerity own *Chriſt,* to ſtudy Union both in Opinion and Affection; and alſo gives us Ground to hope, that the Time is coming, when there ſhall be a greater Meaſure of it, than we have ſeen of it in theſe miſerably divided Times.

Q. *Thoſe that thou gaveſt me, ſays* Chriſt, *Ver. 12. I have kept, and none of them is loſt,* but the Son of Perdition: *In what Senſe may a Perſon be called the Son of Perdition?*

A. A Perſon may be ſaid to be a Son of Perdition two Ways; actively and paſſively. Actively he is ſo, who makes it his Buſineſs to deſtroy others. Paſſively, when for his Wickedneſs in deſtroying others, he is deſtroyed himſelf. *Judas* was a Son of Perdition in both theſe Senſes; his Heart was maliciouſly ſet on deſtroying *Chriſt,* and wilfully ſet on his own Deſtruction. His Covetouſneſs and Hypocriſy prompted him to betray our Saviour, his Deſpair provoked him to deſtroy himſelf.

Q. *Our Lord ſpeaking of his Apoſtles, Ver. 14. ſays,* I have given them thy Word; *but ſo he had done to many others who never believed on him; wherein then conſiſted the Difference?*

A. Here is ſomething more to be underſtood, than his bare preaching of the Goſpel. The Senſe therefore is, I have not only preached thy Words in their Ears, but I have opened their Hearts to receive, and believe it, and inclined their Wills to comply with it; inſomuch that the Word dwels in their Hearts, is ingraffed in them, and they are turned into the Likeneſs of it. And here it's obſervable, that when any Soul is given to *Chriſt* by his Father, *Chriſt* will moſt certainly, firſt or laſt, give unto that Soul *his Word* in that Senſe; that is, ſo as it ſhall receive, believe it, and be turned into the Likeneſs of it.

Q. *Were it not better for the Saints of God to be in Heaven, than to live in this vain ſinful World? Why then does* Chriſt *pray, Verſe* 15, Not that God would take them out of the World, but that He would keep them from the Evil?

A. The Wiſdom of *Chriſt* ſees fit to continue his Children in the World, notwithſtanding all the Perils and Dangers they are to encounter in it. He has Work for them; and till their Work be done, *Chriſt's* Love will not, and the World's Malice cannot remove them from hence. Yet *Chriſt* prays that his Father would keep them from the Evil; that is, from the Sins, Temptations, and Snares of this wicked World. Hence note, that a ſpiritual Victory over Evil, is to be preferred before a total Exemption from Evil; it is a greater Mercy to be kept from Sin in our Afflictions, than from the Afflictions themſelves.

Q. *Were not the Apoſtles already ſanctified? Why then does* Chriſt *pray, Verſe* 17. *that God would* ſanctify them?

A. It is doubted by Interpreters, whether *Sanctifying,* in this Place, ſignifies the conſecrating, deputing, or ſetting the Apoſtles apart, and preparing them for the Work of the Miniſtry in which they were to be employed; as the Word ſignifies, *Jer.* i. 5. or the ſtrengthening and confirming their Habits of Grace, ſo as they might be able to encounter the Temptations they ſhould meet with from the Hatred or Oppoſition of the World; or it may ſignify the perfecting them in Holineſs. *Calvin* ſays, our Saviour here prays, that God would appropriate them unto himſelf.

Q. *In what Manner did* Chriſt ſanctify himſelf for the Sake of his Diſciples, *Verſe* 19?

A. This means no more, than that I ſet myſelf apart, as a Sacrifice acceptable, and well-pleaſing in the Sight of God. And, indeed, *ſanctifying,* in the antient Notion of it, under the Law, did uſually ſignify the ſetting the Perſons and Things apart to the ſpecial Service of God; this was done *legally,* by certain ritual Performances and Ceremonies; and is ſtill done *inwardly* and *ſpiritually* by Regeneration, and renewing the Heart by the efficacious Working of the Holy Ghoſt. *Chriſt* ſays, that for his Diſciples Sake, he ſanctified himſelf, being both the *Prieſt* and *Sacrifice.*

Q. *What do you infer from that Part of* Chriſt's *Prayer, Ver. 20. where he thus expreſſes himſelf,* Neither pray I for theſe alone; but for them alſo which ſhall believe in me through their Word?

A. 1. That *Chriſt* did not pray for any Reprobates, nor for any that were, or ſhould die Unbelievers; he pray'd before for thoſe who actually did believe; here he prays *for them that ſhould believe;* but we never read that he pray'd for any others. Now, whether he laid down his Life for thoſe for whom he would not pray, let ſuch conſider, who affirm, that he died for all, and every individual Man. 2. That by Perſons *given to* Chriſt, cannot be underſtood Believers as ſuch; for *Chriſt* here prays for thoſe who were no actual Believers, but ſuch as ſhould believe. 3. That Faith comes by hearing: *Chriſt* here prays for them that ſhould believe through *their Word;* that is, the Apoſtles preaching of the Goſpel.

Q. *What is that Union which* Chriſt *prays for, Verſe 21. and what that Glory which the Father had given him, Ver. 22?*

A. The ſpecial Mercy, and peculiar Bleſſing, which *Chriſt* prays for on Behalf of Believers, is a cloſe and intimate Union betwixt one another; ſuch an Union as in ſome Sort reſembles that Unity which is betwixt God and *Chriſt;* not of Eſſence and Nature, but of Wills and Affections, of Practice and Converſation. One ſpecial Advantage that will redound to the World by this deſirable Union betwixt the Miniſters and Members of *Chriſt* is, it will, if not convert, yet at leaſt convince the World, that *Chriſt* and his Doctrine came from God.

Chriſt communicates of that Glory to Believers, which he received of the Father; that is, not his eſſential, but his mediatorial Glory; *The Glory which thou gaveſt me.* Now *Chriſt* hath no Glory given him as God, but much Glory beſtowed on him as Mediator,

The End of his giving his Diſciples that Glory which the Father had given him, was, that *they might be one;* that is, to oblige and enable his People to maintain a ſtrict Union among themſelves.

Chap. XVIII.

Chriſt *goes into a Garden with his Diſciples, where* Judas *comes to betray him. The Soldiers, at* Chriſt's *Word, fall to the Earth.* Peter *cuts off* Malchus's *Ear.* Chriſt *is brought before the Chief-prieſts; two Diſciples follow him;* Peter *denies him.* Caiaphas *examines* Chriſt *concerning his Doctrine. One of the Officers ſmites him.* Peter *denies him twice more.* Chriſt *is brought before* Pilate, *who enquires after his Accuſation, declares him innocent, and would have releaſed him, but the* Jews *require* Barabbas.

Q. THE *firſt Part of this Chapter is more largely recorded by the other Evangeliſts; which therefore we ſhall paſs over, and only mention ſuch Things as we have not before touched upon. Our Lord having been examined by the Grand Council of the* Sanhedrim, *they ſent him to the Judgment Hall; but refuſed to come there themſelves; but why?*

A. The *Sanhedrim* refuſed to go into the Judgment-hall, becauſe in the Governor's Palace there was a Guard of *Roman* Soldiers, and a great Company of Servants; and, as they were Heathens, they thought that, by touching any of them, they ſhould be defiled, and conſequently made incapable of eating the *Paſſavor*, of which no unclean Perſon was to partake. By the *Paſſover*, however, here in *John*, Chap. xviii. 28. we are not to underſtand the *Paſchal Lamb*, which the reſt of the *Jews*, as well as our Saviour, had eaten the Night before, but the *Chagigah*, or Peace-Offering, *i. e.* the Sheep and Oxen that were offered all the ſeven Days of the Feaſt, and are expreſly called the *Paſſover*, Luke xxii. 1. Thus the *Jewiſh* Doctors remark upon *Deut.* xvi. 2. *Thou ſhall ſacrifice the* Paſſover *to the Lord, of the Flock, and of the Herd*; that the *Flock* ſignifies the *Lambs*, which were eaten on the 14th, and the *Herd* the Offerings of the *Chagigah*, which were conſumed on the 15th Day of the Month *Niſan*. The *Jewiſh* Rulers therefore would not go into the Judgment-Hall, that they might not be unfit to eat the *Paſſover*, *i. e.* thoſe *Paſchal* Offerings of the *Herd*, which were holy Things, and of which none might eat in their Defilement.

Q. *Did the Rulers imagine that* Pilate *would paſs Sentence on* Chriſt, *merely on their Allegation that he was a Criminal?*

A. By the Anſwer of the *Sanhedrem*, *If he were not a Criminal, they would not have brought him to him*, they ſeem willing to make *Pilate*, not ſo much a Judge of the Cauſe, as an Executioner of their Sentence: But there cannot poſſibly be an higher Act of Injuſtice, than to deſire, that a Judge ſhould ſuppoſe the accuſed Perſon guilty of the Crime, without any farther Examination. It is no ſtrange and extraordinary Thing, to ſee innocent Perſons oppreſſed by arbitrary Proceedings, without any legal Proceſs; but for a Man to be brought before a Judge, in order to be delivered up directly to Execution, without any Proof of his Crime, or any Examination concerning it, is a new Way of Oppreſſion, firſt invented and contrived againſt the Saviour of the World.

Q. *Had not the* Jews *a Power of judging in capital Caſes, as ſeems intimated by their ſaying,* It is not lawful for us to put any Man to death?

A. Whether the *Jews* had, at this Time, the *Power of Life and Death*, is a Point much controverted among the Learned. The Anſwer which the *Jewiſh* Rulers here give to *Pilate*, and the general Opinion of their *Rabbins*, who ſuppoſe, that their Rulers loſt that Power about forty Years before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, ſeem to incline us to the Negative, but thoſe, who take the other ſide of the Queſtion, argue thus, —— That the *Jews*, when reduced to a *Roman* Province, had ſtill the Privilege granted them, *to uſe the ſacred Inſtitutions and Cuſtoms, that were derived to them from their Fathers*; Joſeph. Antiq. l. c. 17. that it was granted to *Hyrcanus* the High-prieſt, that if any Controverſy ſhould ariſe concerning their Diſcipline, that the Judgment of it ſhould be referred to him; that purſuant to this Grant, we find the High-prieſt and his Council ſtoning *Stephen*, not by the Rage of Zealots (as ſome conceive) but according to the Law, which requires that the Blaſphemer ſhould be ſtoned, *Lev.* xxiv. 16. that *Saul*, armed with the Power of the High-prieſt and Elders, perſecuted the *Jewiſh* Chriſtians unto Death, and led them bound to *Jeruſalem* to be puniſhed, *Acts* xxiii. 4, 5. that the *Jews* would have judged Paul *after their own Laws*, Acts. xxiv. 6. and have put him to Death, *Acts* xxiii. 37. had not *Lyſias*, the chief Captain, reſcued him from their Hands, which they ſay he did by Violence, *i. e.* by an Invaſion of their Rights; but he, becauſe he underſtood that *Paul* was a *Roman*; and from hence they conclude, that they ſtill retained the Power of judging, and condemning thoſe to Death, who were *Jews* by Nature and Deſcent, and by their Laws deſerved to die, though, as to ſome Perſons, and in ſome Caſes, they had not that Power. Thus when *Annas*, or *Ananus* the High-Prieſt, killed *James*, the Brother of our Lord, and *ſtoned many other Chriſtians, as Tranſgreſſors of the Law*, the wiſeſt Part of the Nation diſliked his Proceedings, becauſe he ſhould not have called a Council concerning Life and Death, without a Licence from *Albanus*, the *Roman* Preſident. From whence we may infer, that the Power of inflicting capital Puniſhment, even upon the *Jews* converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith, was then ſo far taken from them, that they could not regularly do it, without firſt obtaining Leave from the *Roman* Governor; and, in the Caſe of our bleſſed Saviour, the *Jews* had debarred themſelves from the Power of putting him to death, after they had accuſed him before *Pilate*, not of Crimes committed againſt their Law, but of Sedition, and aſpiring at a Kingdom, to the Prejudice of *Cæſar* and the *Roman* Government, whereof it belonged to *Pilate*, and not to them to judge and determine. And therefore their ſaying to him; *It is not lawful for us to put any Man to Death*, Verſe 31. is looked upon, either as a Kind of Complaint of the Encroachments which the *Romans* had made upon their civil Conſtitution, or as a mere Pretence, ſince *Pilate* gave them Power enough, when he bad them *take him, and judge him according to the Law*; and that the true Reaſons of their bringing him before *Roman* Tribunal, were, that he might be condemned for Sedition, which would be a means to ſecure them from the Rage of the People, and that he might be crucified, which was a *Roman* Death, and generally inflicted on thoſe that were found tampering againſt the Government.

Q. *Why did not the Rulers accuſe* Chriſt *before* Pilate, *with the ſame Crimes, that they charged him with in their own Council?*

A. When our Lord's Accuſers came before *Pilate*, they ſaid nothing of his pretended Blaſphemy, his Deſtruction of the Temple, or Violation of the Law of *Moſes*; becauſe they were Queſtions that the Governor they knew, would not concern himſelf with; and therefore they forged ſuch Accuſations againſt him, as they thought might make him odious and ſuſpected to the *Roman* Government, and oblige *Pilate* to be ſevere againſt him.

Q. *What does* Chriſt *intimate by his Anſwer, that his Kingdom was not of this World?*

A. He means, that it was not of human Original, but from Heaven, and ſo meddled not with the Affairs of this World; that it had none of the Pomp and Splendor of the World annexed to it; none to fight for it with carnal Weapons, and exerciſed no Dominion over Mens Bodies, but over their Souls only; that its Government was ſpiritual, and its Judicatories the Courts of *Conſcience*; its Tribute a Conformity to the great Laws of Faith, Hope and Charity; and its only Impoſts, the Duties of an holy Spirit, and the Expreſſions of a religious Worſhip, a reſigning Will, and a conſenting Underſtanding, in which *Pilate* ſoon perceived that the Intereſt of *Cæſar* could not be invaded.

Chap. XIX.

Chriſt *is ſcourged, mock'd, and abuſed by the Soldiers. The Rulers would have him crucified, but* Pilate *ſtrives to releaſe him. The* Jews *appeal to their Law; wherefore* Pilate *examines him more ſtrictly, and ſeeking to releaſe him, is threatened with* Cæſar's *Diſpleaſure. Wherefore he delivers* Chriſt *to be crucified.* Chriſt *bears his Croſs, and is crucified between Thieves. The Superſcription of the Croſs. The Soldiers part his Garments. He commends his Mother to the Diſciple whom he loved. Gives up the Ghoſt. They break the Legs of the Thieves, but pierce the Side of* Chriſt. *He is buried by* Joſeph *of* Arimathea.

Q. WHEN *the* Jews *found that* Pilate *would not be prevail'd upon, for any Reaſons they had yet alledged, to deliver* Chriſt *into their Power, what other Accuſations do they bring againſt him?*

A. When the *Jews* perceived that *Pilate* looked upon the Accuſations, which they brought againſt *Jeſus*, of his being a ſeditious Perſon, and one who aimed at a Kingdom, as idle Suggeſtions, and which had no Shadow of Probability in them, they had Recourſe to another Allegation, *viz.* his being a Violator of the Laws of their Nations, and guilty of Blaſphemy; which (as they were allowed to be governed by their own Laws) they had a Right to demand of their Governor to ſee puniſhed, and accordingly, did it with Arrogance enough.

Q. *Was the Sin of* Judas, *in betraying our Saviour, greater than that of* Pilate *in condemning him, as ſeems intimated Verſe* 11?

Q. *Pilate* indeed ſinned heinouſly, in abuſing his Power, to the Condemnation of the Innocent; but *Judas* ſinned more, in delivering him up to the Chief-prieſts, and the Chief-prieſts in delivering him up to *Pilate*, than *Pilate* himſelf, whom they made a Tool to ſerve their Malice and Revenge. They had better Means of Knowledge than he, and ſo ſinned againſt more Light; and conſequently their Guilt was greater, and their Condemnation heavier than his.

Q. *What is the Signification of the Word* Gabatha?

A. The Word *Gabatha* in the *Syriac* (for that is the Language which was then commonly ſpoken, and which the Writers of the *New Teſtament* do therefore call the *Hebrew*) ſignifies an *Elevation*; and therefore the Place where *Pilate* had his Tribunal erected, was probably a Terraſs, a Gallery, or Balcony belonging to his Palace, and paved with Stone or Marble, as the *Greek* Word *Lithoſtrotos* imports.

Q. *It is ſaid, Verſe* 17. *that* Chriſt *bore his own Croſs; but the other* Evangeliſts *ſay, it was carried by another Perſon: Pray reconcile this?*

A. It was the Cuſtom, that he who was to be crucified ſhould bear his own Croſs to the Place of Execution: But, whereas it is generally ſuppoſed, that our Lord bore the whole Croſs, *i. e.* the long and tranſverſe Part both, this ſeems to be a Thing impoſſible; and therefore *Lipſius*, in his Treatiſe *De Supplicio Crucis*, has ſet this Matter in a true Light, when he tells us, that *Jeſus* only carried the tranſverſe Beam, becauſe the long Piece of Timber, or Body of the Croſs, was either fixed in the Ground before, or made ready to be ſet up, as ſoon as the Priſoner came; and from hence he obſerved, that Painters are very much miſtaken in their Deſcription of our Saviour carrying the whole Croſs.

Q. *While* Chriſt *was on the Croſs, the Soldiers were dividing his Cloaths among them; but his Coat was woven, and without a Seam, and therefore they would not ſpoil it by taring it into Parts: Pray in what Faſhion or Form was the Coat made?*

A. Some of the Fathers are of Opinion, that our Saviour's Coat, for which the four Soldiers caſt Lots, was made of two Pieces of Woollen Stuff, wove in a Loom, and ſo fine drawn, that the Joining could not be perceived. Others will have it, that it was all Needle-work, *i. e.* knit, not wove from Top to Bottom: But *Braunius*, in his Treatiſe *De Veſtitu Sacerdotum Hebræorum*, has plainly proved, that the Antients had the Art of weaving any Habit, of what Make or Size ſoever, all of one Piece in a Loom; that, in ſeveral *Eaſtern* Countries the Art is ſtill preſerved and practiſed; and that himſelf made a Machine (which *Calmet*, in his *Dictionary* under the Word *Veſtments*, has given us) wherein ſuch an Habit might be wrought. As it was cuſtomary formerly for Women to weave Stuffs and Cloath, not for their own wearing only, but for their Huſbands and Childrens Uſe (for ſo the Character of the virtuous Woman in *Solomon*, Prov. xxxi. 13. and the Practice of *Penelope*, the Wife of *Ulyſſes*, ſhew) it was an antient Tradition, that the *bleſſed Virgin* herſelf wove her Son's Coat; but that ſhe made it for him when he was young; that it grew with him as he increaſed in Stature; and continued always freſh, without Decay, is a mere Fiction, in order to aſſimulate it to the Habits which the *Iſraelites* wore in the Wilderneſs: Nor can it be eaſily credited, that the *holy Coat*, which is kept in the Cathedral Church at *Treves*, is the very

very ſame that our Saviour had on before his Crucifixion.

Q. *At the Foot of the Croſs ſtood ſeveral Women, among whom was* Mary *the Wife of* Cleophas; *pray who was he?*

A. That *Alphæus* and *Cleophas* were one and the ſame Perſon, is plain from hence, —— That *James*, who is called the Son of *Mary*, the Wife of *Cleophas*, is the ſame with *James* the Son of *Alphæus*; as indeed, in the *Hebrew* Tongue, *Alphæus* and *Cleophas* differ only in the Manner in which the *Greeks* have written or pronounced theſe two Names. It is thought that ſhe was the Siſter of the Holy Virgin, and the Mother of *James the Leſs*, of *Joſes*, of *Simeon*, and of *Judas*, who, in the Goſpel, are called the Brethren of our Lord, *i. e.* his Couſin-germans. When or where ſhe died, is a Matter of much Uncertainty: But the *Greeks* keep the eighth of *April* in Memory of the holy Women, who brought Perfumes to embalm the Body of *Chriſt*, and pretend, at this Time, to have their Bodies at *Conſtantinople*, in the Church of the holy Virgin, built by *Juſtin* II. tho' others talk of the Tranſlation of her Body, in particular, into the City of *Veroli*, near *Rome*; while others again pretend, that it is in a little City of *Province*, called the *Three Marys*, on the Banks of the *Rhone*, and of the Sea. All Fictions equally credible!

Q. *When our bleſſed Lord was in his laſt Agonies, he recommended his Mother to the Care of his beloved Diſciple: Why did our Saviour do this? And did this Diſciple accept of the Charge?*

A. The Generality of Commentators do infer from our Lord's recommending his Mother to his beloved Diſciple, that her Huſband *Joſeph* was at that Time dead; and therefore our Lord took Care that ſhe ſhould not be deſtitute, by charging his beloved Diſciple to treat her as his Mother; and he, accordingly, not only received her into his own Houſe, as long he continued in *Paleſtine*, but when he removed to *Epheſus*, took her along with him, where, (according to the Account of the Fathers of the Council held there) ſhe is ſaid to have died, and been buried in a very old Age. Others, however, maintain, that ſhe died and was buried at *Jeruſalem*; and they farther add, that the Apoſtles being diſperſed in different Parts of the World, to labour in the Preaching of the Goſpel, all on a ſudden were miraculouſly tranſported to *Jeruſalem*, that they might be preſent at the Deceaſe of the bleſſed Virgin; that after her Death, they buried her in the Valley of *Gethſemane*, where, for three whole Days, were heard Concerts of heavenly Singers; and that, at the End of the three Days, when the Concert ceaſed, and St. *Thomas*, who had not been preſent at the Burial, was deſirous to ſee her Corpſe, they opened her Tomb again; but not finding the Body there, they thence concluded, that God had been pleaſed to honour it with Immortality, by a Reſurrection previous to that of other Men. But theſe are Traditions that (to ſpeak the ſofteſt Things of them) deſerve no Regard at all.

Q. *Had the* Jews *any Law to direct them, when they ordered the dead Bodies to be taken from the Croſs, becauſe of the approaching Sabbath?*

A. The *Jews* had a ſtrict Injunction in their Law, that the dead Bodies of thoſe who were executed, ſhould not hang all Night, but, by all Means, be buried that Day, *Deut.* xxi. 22, 23. But the *Romans* uſed to do otherwiſe. They ſuffered the Bodies to hang upon the Croſs, always, until they were dead; and in ſome Caſes, a conſiderable Time longer. On this Occaſion it ſeems, as if the *Jews* had left the *Romans* to follow their own Cuſtoms, in Relation to the crucified Perſons, and were in no Concern to have them taken down, had it not been for the near Approach of their Paſſover, whoſe Joy and Feſtivity, they thought, might be dampt by ſo melancholy a Sight. Upon this Account they petition *Pilate* to have them removed: And the Reaſon why *Pilate* might be rather induced to grant their Requeſt was, that the *Romans* themſelves had ſuch a Reſpect for the Feaſts of their Emperors, that on thoſe Days they always took down the Bodies from the Croſs, and gave them to their Relations.

Q. *What Scripture is that which ſays,* A Bone of him ſhall not be broken?

A. The Prophecy, which foretold, *That a Bone of him ſhall not be broken*, is uſually referred to the Command concerning the Paſchal-Lamb, *Thou ſhalt not break a Bone of it*, Exod. xii. 26. But, as *David* was likewiſe a Type of *Chriſt*, we cannot ſee, why it may not refer to theſe Words of his, *He keepeth all his Bones, ſo that none of them is broken*, Pſal. xxxiv. 19. or why the Promiſe, which reſpects all righteous Perſons, might not more particularly be fulfilled in the juſt one.

Q. *Can you ſay which of the Soldiers pierced the Side of our Lord?*

A. The Man who pierced his Side with a Spear, was not one of the Horſe (as is uſually painted) but of the Foot Soldiers; becauſe a Spear, or ſhort Pike, was one Part of the Armour belonging to the *Roman* Infantry; and the Reaſon why this was done, was, not only that a Prediction concerning him might be fulfilled, (*Zach.* xii. 10, 12, which the *Jews* applied to the *Meſſiah*) but that his Death might be put beyond all Diſpute, which, had it been doubtful, muſt have made his Reſurrection (which is the greateſt Aſſurance we have of our own Reſurrection, and Glory with him) remain doubtful likewiſe.

Q. *Why does our* Evangeliſt *lay ſo ſtrong an Emphaſis on that Paſſage of* Water *and* Blood *coming out of the pierced Side of our Saviour?*

A. St. *John the Evangeliſt*, who was an Eyewitneſs of this Paſſage, affirms it in a particular Manner, Verſe 35. and, in his firſt Epiſtle, Chap. v. 6. makes it matter of great Moment, when he tells us, *This is he that came by Water and Blood; not by Water only, but by Water and Blood.* The Force of whoſe Reaſoning (according to the learned *Hammond*) is this, *That as Water was the Emblem of our Saviour's Purity, and Blood the Evidence of his Fortitude and Patience, and both of theſe proceeded from his Side, they jointly evince the Neceſſity of ſuch Purity and Patience, in every one that believes aright in* Chriſt. The *Jewiſh* Doctors have a Tradition (as Dr. *Lightfoot* acquaints us) that when *Moſes* ſmote the Rock, there firſt came forth Blood, and then Water. Whether the Apoſtles might have Reſpect to that Tradition when he calls *Chriſt* that Rock, 1 *Cor.* x. 4. is uncertain; but, among the many other important Deſigns of this Water and Blood, the Antients have well obſerved, that by a ſpecial Act of God's Providence, there flowed, at this Time, from our Saviour's

Side, the two Sacraments of his Church, *Baptiſm* and the *Supper of the Lord.* As to the natural Reaſon of this Flux of Water and Blood, from our Lord's Body, *Anatomiſts* tell us, that there is a *Capſula* near the Heart, called the *Pericardium*, which hath Water in it, of continual Uſe to cool the Heart; and that the coming out of Water here with the Blood, was a ſure Evidence of the wounding his very Heart, and conſequently of the Certainty of his Death.

Q. *What is reported by Hiſtorians concerning this* Nicodemus, *who, Verſe 39. is ſaid to have brought a Compound of Spices to put to the Body of our Saviour, in order for his Burial?*

A. This *Nicodemus* above-mentioned, is the ſame Ruler of the *Jews*, and Maſter of *Iſrael*, as the *Evangeliſts* calls him, *John* iii. 1, 10. who, at our Lord's firſt coming to *Jeruſalem*, after he had entered upon his Miniſtry, held a private Conference with him, and for ever after was his Diſciple, tho' he made no open Profeſſion of it 'till after his Paſſion. Whether it was before or after this Time, that he received Baptiſm from ſome of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples, is a Thing uncertain; but there is Reaſon to believe, that the *Jews*, when they came to be informed of it, depoſed him from the Dignity of a Senator, excommunicated him, and drove him out of *Jeruſalem.* Nay, it is farther ſaid, that they would have put him to Death, but that, in Conſideration to *Gamaliel*, who was his Uncle or Couſin-German, they contented themſelves with beating him almoſt to death, and plundering his Goods. 'Tis added likewiſe, that *Gamaliel* conveyed him to his Country-houſe, where he provided him with Things neceſſary for his Support, and when he died, buried him honourably by St. *Stephen.*

Chap. XX.

Mary Magdalen *goes to the Sepulcher, which ſhe finds empty.* Mary *ſees three Angels in the Sepulcher.* Chriſt *appears to her, and commands her to tell his Diſciples of his Reſurrection. He appears to his Diſciples at Evening; gives them Power to forgive Sins, and to retain them.* Thomas *believes not till himſelf had ſeen him, and then confeſſes him.* John *gives a Reaſon why theſe Signs are written.*

Q. MARY, *on diſcovering that the Perſon ſhe ſpoke to was* Chriſt, *goes to embrace him, which he refuſes and gives a Reaſon; which pray explain?*

A. Various are the Senſes which Interpreters have been pleaſed to affix to the Reaſon, which our Lord aſſigns, for his rejecting this Woman's Homage and Embraces, *I am not yet aſcended to my Father.* Some imagine that *Mary* ſtill retaining her Notions of a temporal Kingdom, concluded that our Lord was now riſen, on purpoſe to aſſume it, and therefore fell down to adore him; but that he, willing to raiſe her Mind to ſpiritual and celeſtial Thoughts, gave her to underſtand, that as yet it was not a proper Time for her to make her Addreſſes to him; becauſe he was not yet aſcended into Heaven, from whence he was to miniſter his Kingdom, and to ſend down the Holy Ghoſt, in order to form a ſpiritual Communion between himſelf and his true Diſciples. Others ſuppoſe, that this Woman imagined, that our Lord was riſen again, in the Manner that *Lazarus* did, *viz.* to live upon Earth, as he had done before; and that therefore, to convince her of the contrary, he bid her not touch him, as a mortal Man, becauſe *I am not yet aſcended into Heaven,* but in a ſhort Time ſhall; and that is the Place where you are to pay me your Homage and Adorations. Others again ſay, that by a Figure, common enough among Grammarians, who frequently change one Tenſe for another, our Saviour's Words may denote, that he was not then about to aſcend, but to ſtay many Days upon Earth; ſo that *Mary* might have Space and Opportunity enough to pay her Adorations, and to ſatisfy herſelf in the Truth of his Reſurrection. But theſe, and ſeveral other Interpretations of the like kind, are far from being natural, and ſeem calculated on purpoſe to exclude the Notion of our Saviour's frequent Aſcenſions, during his Stay upon Earth, after his Reſurrection, which, in the Courſe of the ſubſequent Anſwers, we hope to evince to be true.

Q. *What do you ſuppoſe might be the Occaſion of the Apoſtle* Thomas's *Abſence, when the reſt of them were met together?*

A. This is variouſly conjectured. Some are of Opinion, that as they fled from their Maſter, when he was apprehended in the Garden, they did not ſo ſoon aſſemble again, but by Degrees dropped in, one by one, as they recovered from their Fright; and that therefore, at this Time, *Thomas* was not returned to the Company. But others, from the natural Temper of this Apoſtle (as he appears from the Scripture Paſſages, wherein he is concerned, to be very ſcrupulous and hard of Belief) rather think, that taking Offence at the Apoſtles eaſy Credulity, (as he deemed it) and looking upon all that the Women from the Sepulcher, and the two Diſciples from *Emmaus* had ſaid, as ſo many idle Tales, he left the Company, in pure Diſguſt, not long before our Saviour came in.

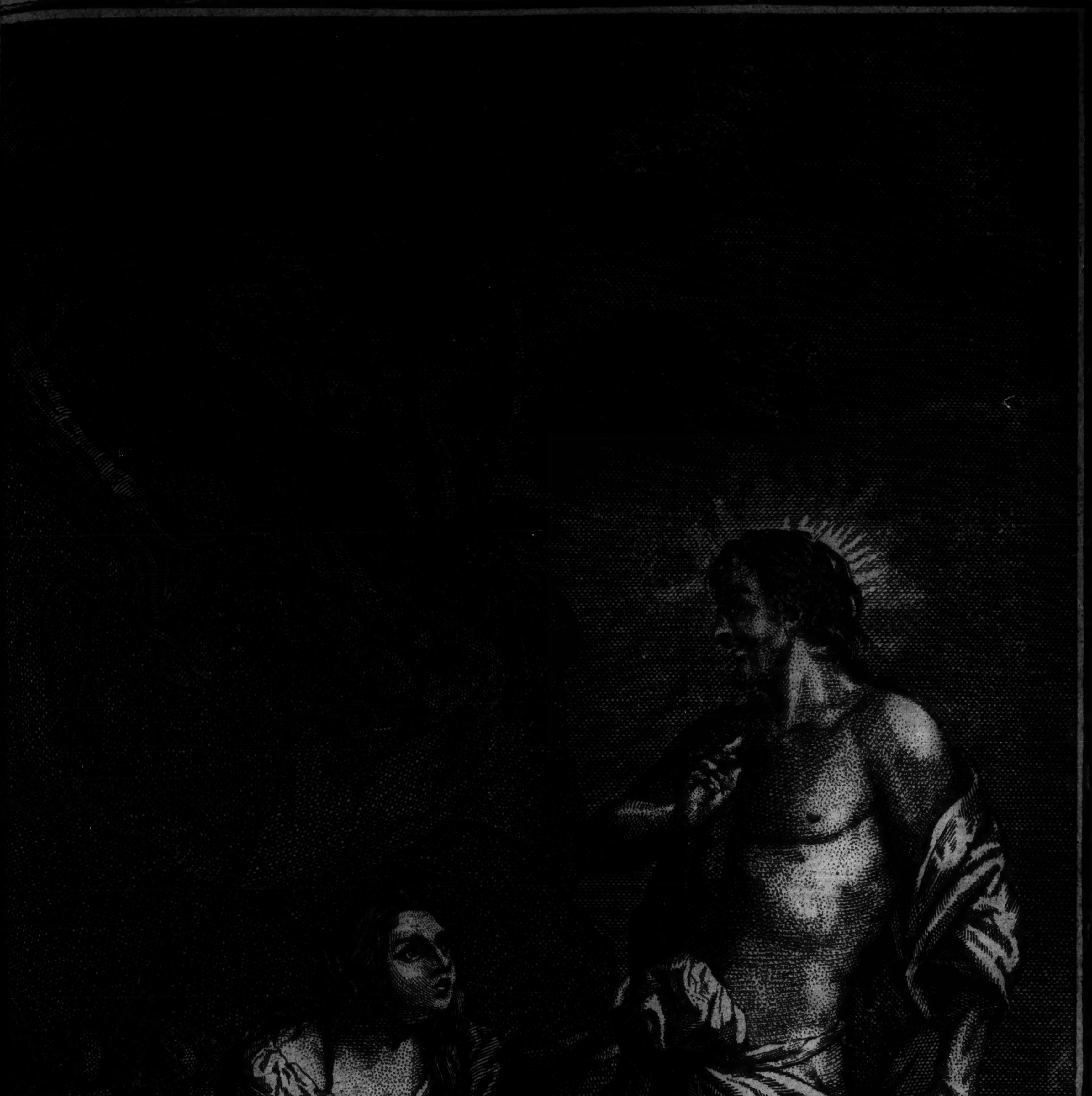
Q. *Was not* Thomas *guilty of a very raſh Action, when he reſolved not to believe without ocular Demonſtration?*

A. The Manner by which the Apoſtle *Thomas* might bring himſelf to the Reſolution, that he would believe nothing but from the Evidence of his Senſes, might poſſibly be by ſome ſuch Argu- as theſe, —— Jeſus *of* Nazareth *was put to death upon the Croſs; and being dead, was laid and ſealed up in a Sepulcher, which was ſtrictly watched by a Guard of Soldiers: But I am told, and required to believe, that notwithſtanding all this, he is riſen, and is indeed alive. Now ſurely, Things ſuitable to the ſtated Courſe of Nature, ſhould be believed, before ſuch as are quite beſide it; and for a Man to return to Life, is preter-natural, but that thoſe, who report this, may be miſtaken, is very natural and uſual. Dead I ſaw him; but that he is riſen, I only hear. In what I ſee with mine own Eyes, I cannot eaſily be deceived; but in what I only hear, I may, and often am. Here being two Things then propoſed to my Belief, my Reaſon ſuggeſts to me, that I ought to chuſe that which is moſt credible; and it ſeems more credible, that a ſmall Number of Witneſſes (frighted and diſtrubed as they are) ſhould be deceived or (as honeſt as once they were) may conſpire to deceive me, than than one ſhould riſe from the Dead*; and therefore except, &c.

Q. *What is the Import of* Thomas's *Exclamation,* My Lord and my God!

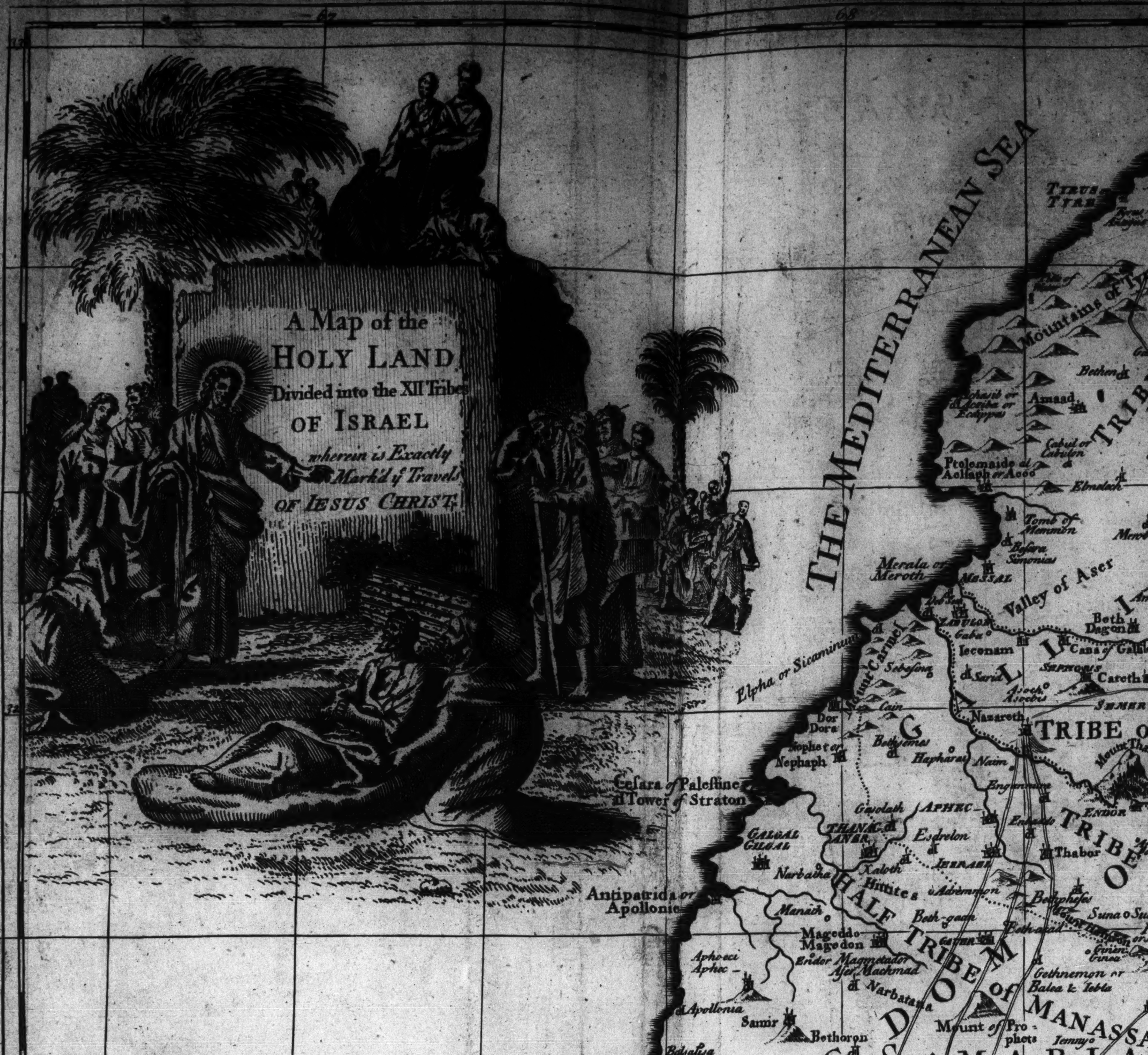
A. This

St. JOHN, CHAP: XX.

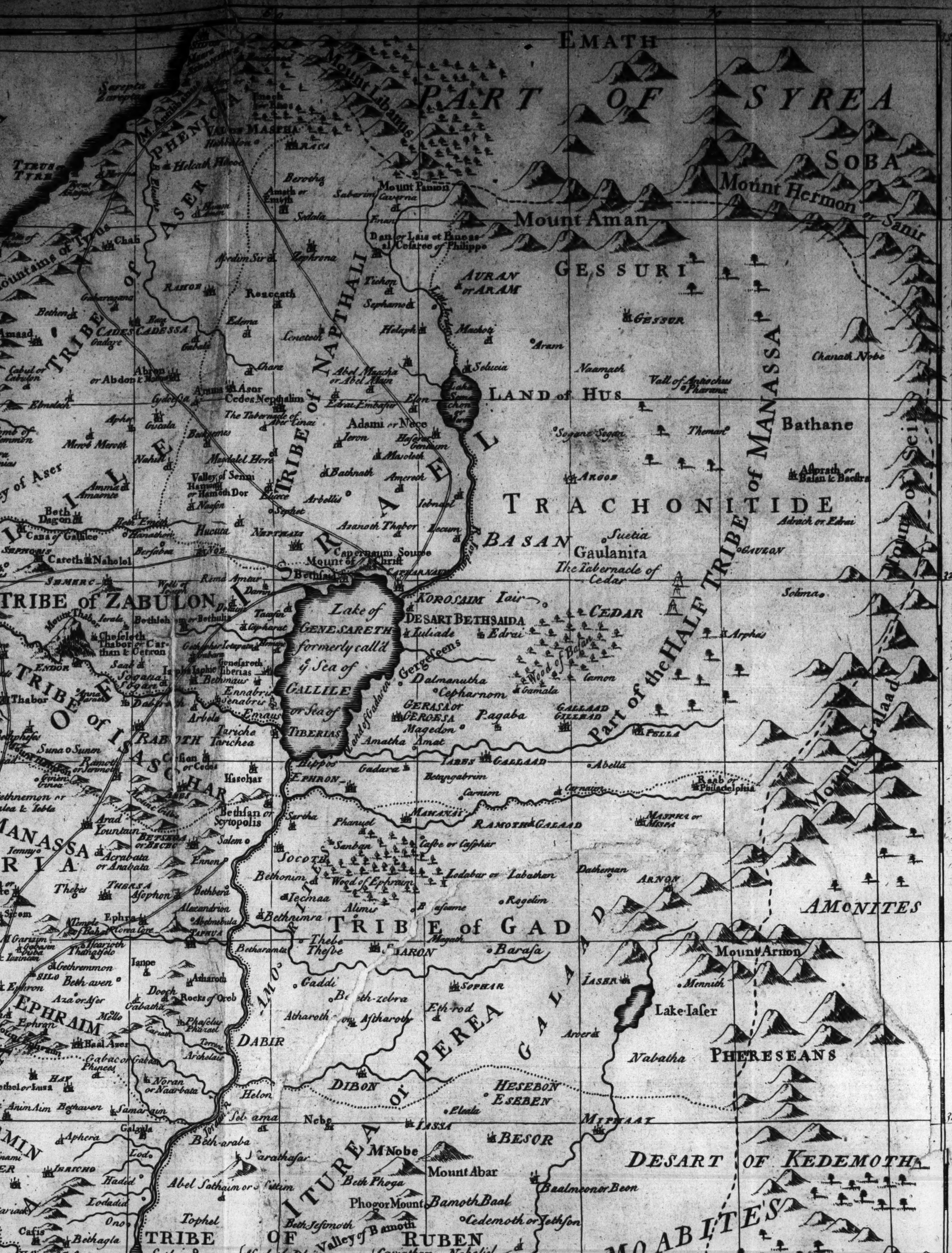


Rt. Smith sculp.

Christ *appears to* Mary Magdalene *after his Resurrection*


A Map of the
HOLY LAND
Divided into the XII Tribes
OF ISRAEL
wherein is Exactly
Mark'd ye Travels
OF IESUS CHRIST.
THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Remarques
Royal Citys
Citys of ye Levites
Citys of Refuge
DESART
PART of IDUMEA or EDOM
KINGDOM of SAMARIA
HALF TRIBE of MANASSA
TRIBE of EPHRAIM
TRIBE of BENIAMIN
TRIBE of DAN
TRIBE of SIMEON
TRIBE of JUDA
KINGDOM of JUDEA
Cesara of Palestine or Tower of Straton
Antipatrida or Apollonia
Ptolemaide or Acon
Nazareth
Samaria or Sebaste
Ierusalem
Ascalon
Azot Azotus
Gaza
Iamnia
Lidda
Ramatha
Bethel
Herodion
Thecoa
Lake Asphat
Valley of Salt
Desart Ziph
Ziph
Carmel
Desart Maon
Maon
Gomorra
Dimona
Cades Barnea
Desart of Sin or Iudea
Ardiens
Tirus Tyre
Mountains of
Valley of Aser
Mount Carmel
Elpha or Sicaminum
Dor Dora
Magedo Magedon
Bethoron
Gophna
Thabor
Endor
Esdrelon
Lake Asphaltites or Lake of Sodom or Dead Sea
67
68

ST. JOHN


EMATH
PART OF SYREA
SOBA
Mount Hermon or Sanir
Mount Libanus
Mount Aman
GESSURI
Gessur
PHENICIA
Sarepta
Tirus Tyre
Mountains of Tyrus
TRIBE of ASER
TRIBE of NAPTHALI
Cades Cadessa
Dan or Lais et Paneas al. Cesaree of Philippo
Auran or Aram
Mount Panion
Selucia
Aram
Naamath
Vall of Antiochus
LAND of HUS
Bathane
Chanath Nobe
TRACHONITIDE
BASAN
Gaulanita
The Tabernacle of Cedar
Suetia
Adraa or Edrai
Gauzon
Solima
TRIBE of MANASSA
Part of the HALF TRIBE of MANASSA
Mount Seir
ISRAEL
Capernaum
Bethsaida
Corosaim
Iair
DESART BETHSAIDA
CEDAR
Edrai
Wood of Basan
Gamala
Camon
Lake of GENESARETH formerly call'd ye Sea of GALLILE or Sea of TIBERIAS
Gergeseens
Land of Gadara
Dalmanutha
Copharnom
Gerasa or Gerassa
Pagaba
Galaad Gillead
Pella
Magedon
Amatha Amat
Jabes Gallaad
Abella
Gadara
Hippos
Ephron
Rabba or Philadelphia
Mount Galaad
Mahanaim
Ramoth Galaad
Maspha or Mispa
Amonites
TRIBE of ZABULON
Mount Thabor
GALILEE
Tiberias
Emaus
Tarichea
TRIBE of ISSACHAR
Bethsan or Scytopolis
Salem
Ennon
MANASSA
SAMARIA
Succoth
Wood of Ephraim
Bethnimra
TRIBE of GAD
Jaser
Lake Iaser
Mount Arnon
Arnon
Minnith
Aroer
Nabatha
PHERESEANS
EPHRAIM
Dabir
Dibon
Hesebon Eseben
Elealy
Iassa
Besor
Mephaat
DESART OF KEDEMOTH
AMORITES
ITUREA or PEREA
GALAAD
Jordan
Jericho
M. Nebo
Mount Abar
Beth Phoga
Phogor Mount
Bamoth Baal
Bealmeon or Beon
Cedemoth or Jethson
TRIBE OF RUBEN
Valley of Bamoth
Cariathaim
Nahaliel
Asedoth Phasga
Mount Phasga
Medaba
Matthana
Valley of Bara
DESART MATHANA
Arakiens
Beer or Wells
Arnon Torrent
COUNTRY of the MOABITES
Helmon Deblathaim or Almon Diblathaim
Madian
MADIAN
Deblathaim
Dibongad
DESART
Sodom
Valley of Salt
Lake Asphaltides Lake of Sodom or Dead Sea
Ascent of Luith
The Scale
5 10 15 20 25 30
British Miles 60 to a Degree
69
70
32
31

HN . XXI.

A. This is a noble Confeſſion of the Apoſtle's Faith; wherein he not only recognizes *Jeſus* for the *Meſſiah*, the very ſame Lord to whom he had been a Servant and Companion, during the Space of his Miniſtry, but owns likewiſe, and proclaims his divine Nature. For the Original here is in Terms ſo ſtrict, and with ſuch an Addition of the *Greek* Article, as the very *Hereticks* and Enemies to Truth confeſs to be the Character of the Word *God*, when taken in its moſt proper Senſe, and intended of the true God only. Nor can the Words (if put for a Note of Admiration only) be of Force ſufficient to expreſs any Conviction in *Thomas*; becauſe Expreſſions of Wonder, though they properly ſpeak Aſtoniſhment and Surprize, do not always imply Belief, and may therefore import the Strangeneſs, without the Truth of the Thing; whereas, our Saviour, in his Anſwer to *Thomas*, *becauſe thou haſt ſeen, thou haſt believed*, John xx. 29. accepts this as a full and ſufficient Declaration of his Aſſent; and therefore to make it ſuch, we muſt allow that. Paraphraſe, which ſome antient Tranſlations ſupply it with, by reading, *Thou art my Lord, thou art my God.*

Chap. XXI.

Chriſt *appears to his Diſciples when they were fiſhing. By a large Draught of Fiſhes they know him. Three Times he asks* Peter *whether he loved him. Tells him the Manner of his Death.* Chriſt *reproves his Queſtion concerning* John. *The Concluſion of* John's *Evangelical Hiſtory.*

Q. DID *the Apoſtles, in the intermediate Space between* Chriſt's *Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, return to their old Trade of Fiſhing?*

A. The Apoſtles as ſuch, had nothing to do, until the *Holy Ghoſt* ſhould deſcend upon them, and among the *Jews* it was accounted a Diſgrace to be idle: Since fiſhing therefore was the ordinarg Occupation of ſeveral of them, in this intermediate Time, they thought it the beſt Way to betake themſelves to it; and that not only to keep themſelves employ'd, but to ſupply their own Want of Neceſſaries likewiſe, until they ſhould have a proper Call to the Miniſtry; when, in all Probability, they gave over the Labours of their ſecular Employs, and devoted themſelves intirely to that Work.

Q. *When our Lord appeared to his Diſciples, as they were fiſhing, they did not know him; pray did he aſſume any Diſguiſe to conceal himſelf?*

A. By the Apoſtles not knowing our Saviour, one would think, that our bleſſed Lord, after his Reſurrection, was not a little changed in his outward Appearance, ſince his Apoſtles (notwithſtanding more Interviews than one) could not ſo readily diſtinguiſh him, either by his Voice or Looks. Upon this Occaſion, however, he ſeems, by this Queſtion, *John* xxi. 5. to perſonate one, who might be come to buy ſome Fiſh of them, and under that Guiſe (whilſt they were buſy and employed) might more eaſily paſs upon them for a Stranger.

Q. *What ſort of Coat did* Peter *put on to go to* Chriſt, *when he heard he was aſhore?*

A. Peter hearing that the Lord was on Shore, throws on his Coat, and jumps into the Sea, to get the ſooner to him. The Text tells us, that he was naked before, but what is called naked, ſignifies only to have Part of of the Body uncovered, or to be without a Gown or upper Garment, according to the Cuſtom of the *Eaſtern* People, and of the *Romans*, who, when they went Abroad, or made any public Appearance, wore a long upper Garment, called in *Latin*, *Toga*. Of this Kind was what the Evangeliſt calls a Fiſher's Coat: And from hence it ſeems pretty plain, that *Peter* did not ſwim (as it is uſually thought) but wade to Land; ſince, if Decency was the Motive of putting on his Coat, he could not have preſerved that Decency, had he come dripping wet (as he muſt have been, upon the Suppoſition of his ſwimming) into his Maſter's Preſence.

Q. *When the Diſciples came aſhore,* they ſaw a Fire of Coals and Fiſh thereon, and Bread: *But how came theſe Things there?*

A. The Fire, Fiſh and Bread on the Shore were all created, and produced by *Chriſt* out of nothing, to evidence, at this Time, his divine Power; but leſt there ſhould be thought any Deluſion in theſe, he ordered likewiſe ſome of the other, that were juſt then taken, to be dreſſed; and that they might not take him for an Apparition only, he invited them to dine with him. As therefore, by the Miracle of creating, and miraculouſly catching the Fiſhes, he proved himſelf to be God, ſo by his preſent eating of the Fiſh, he evidenced himſelf to be a Man, and conſequently teaches us, that our exalted High-Prieſt continues our Kinſman in Heaven.

Q. *Did Chriſt eat with them at this Time?*

A. 'Tis not, indeed, ſaid expreſly, that at this Time he did eat; but ſince St. *Peter* tells us, that *they did eat and drink with him, after he roſe from the Dead*, Acts x. 41. and St. *Luke* teſtifies, that on another Occaſion, *he did eat before them*, Chap. xxiv. 42, 43. as he did then for the Confirmation of his Reſurrection, 'tis hardly to be doubted, but that he did now for the ſame End.

Q. *Our Lord queſtions* Peter *three Times, whether he loved him* more than theſe; *more than theſe what?*

A. Our Saviour's Words to St. *Peter* are, Simon, *Son of* Jonas, *loveſt thou me more than theſe*, John xxi. 15. More than theſe what? Some will tell us, that our Saviour here pointing at the Nets and Fiſhing-boats, demanded of *Peter* whether he loved him, and his Service, better than his ordinary Employment and Occupation; but this is a forced and jejune Expoſition. The Apoſtle, to be ſure, before our Lord's being taken into Cuſtody, had been very liberal in his Profeſſions of Love to him. He had promiſed to go with him to Priſon and to Death; and to ſhew how much he ſurpaſſed the Reſt of his Brethren, *tho' all ſhould be offended becauſe of thee*, ſays he, *yet will not I*, Matt. xxvi. 33, and yet, upon the Approach of the firſt Danger, he forgot all his Promiſes, and behaved more ingloriouſly than the Reſt. 'Tis in Alluſion therefore to this, that our Lord begins this Diſcourſe with *Peter*; that he calls to his Mind his former Speeches, and contrary Performances; and, by thrice repeating this Queſtion, Peter *loveſt thou me?* in reſpect of his three Denials; and, at firſt, adding the Words, *more than theſe*, in regard to his magnifying his Love, above all others, he now engages him, by the Senſe and Conſideration of his Fall, to a better Diſcharge, and a more conſtant Expreſſion of his Love, in converting Men to the Faith of *Chriſt*.

Q. *In what Manner did* Peter *die, which* Chriſt *ſignified to him, when he told him,* another ſhall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not?

A. The Occaſion of St. *Peter*'s being put to Death, according to the Prediction of our Saviour, is generally reported to be,—That he, aſſiſted by St. *Paul*, had here alſo confounded the diabolical Illuſions of *Simon Magus:* Whereupon *Nero*, who was a Favourer of Magicians, being provoked (or as others think, to ingratiate himſelf with the People of *Rome*, after firing their City) gave Orders for his Execution, which the *Prefects* (in the Emperor's Abſence) took Care to ſee executed upon him and St. *Paul*, at the ſame Time. The latter, as a Denizon, was beheaded with a Sword, but St. *Peter*, who had no Claim to the like Privilege, was ſentenced to Crucifixion. This, and the Torments preparatory to it, he underwent with marvellous Patience; and, as a Mark of his Humility, requeſted, and obtained to have his Body faſten'd to the Croſs, with his Head downward, judging it too great an Honour to ſuffer in the ſame Manner and Poſture that his Lord had done.

Q. *What is the Import of our Saviour's Anſwer to* Peter, *concerning* St. John, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

A. That is, come in Judgment, to take Vengeance on the *Jews*. For tho' there are but two perſonal Advents, mentioned in Scripture; the firſt, when our Lord came into the World to redeem it, and the ſecond, when he ſhall return again to judge it; yet this is no Objection againſt his intermediate Advent, which was not perſonal by any viſible Deſcent of his from Heaven, but virtual, and effected by his ſending the *Roman* Army againſt the *Jews*, and giving Signs from Heaven, and in the Clouds, of their approaching Ruin. So that the Senſe of our Saviour's Words is,——*If my Pleaſure is, that he live till the Diſſolution of the* Jewiſh *State:* And accordingly we find, that tho' *Peter* was put to Death under *Nero*, yet St. *John* continued even to the Time of *Trajan*'s Reign, above an hundred Years after our Saviour's Birth, and ſo thirty Years after that this Coming of his was paſt.

This Anſwer of our Saviour occaſioned a Report among the Diſciples, that *John* ſhould never die, becauſe the *Chriſtians*, at that Time, by the coming of *Chriſt*, underſtood the laſt Judgment; whereas our Saviour intended it of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which, in effect, was a full Emblem of the final Diſſolution of all Things.

Q. *Pray give ſome Expoſition of the two laſt Verſes?*

A. Dr. *Hammond*, in his Remarks on Verſe xxv. ſays, that St. *John* wrote his Goſpel at the Entreaty of the Biſhops of *Aſia*, conſtituted by him; this, ſays he, is affirmed by *Euſebius*; to which it is agreeable they ſhould ſet their Signal or Teſtimony, to recommend it to the Reception of other Churches. And accordingly the Atteſtation is given in the plural Number, Verſe 24.' *We know that his Teſtimony is true.* And then this laſt Verſe, though it may be a Concluſion of St. *John*'s (the former Atteſtation being included as in a Parentheſis) yet may it alſo well be a Part of that Atteſtation, cauſed by the Conſideration of the Fabrick of this Goſpel, on purpoſe deſigned, not to ſet down all the Paſſages of *Chriſt*'s Story, but ſome eminent ones omitted by the other Evangeliſts: The Reaſon of which is here rendered, becauſe it would be too long to ſet down all. One only Objection there is againſt the Biſhops of *Aſia* being the Authors of this laſt Verſe, is, becauſe the Word, *I ſuppoſe*, is here in the ſingular Number; but that is anſwered by obſerving, that that Word is a Form uſed in Hyperbole's, which, as it keeps this, and the like Speeches from being falſe, as they would be, were they by way of poſitive Affirmation, ſo is it uſed indifferently whether it be one or more that ſpeak it.

Q. *Being now come to the End of St.* John's *Goſpel, let me aſk you ſome Queſtions in Relation to the* Evangeliſt *himſelf: Pray of what Family and Country was he?*

A. St. *John*, though the laſt in Order, yet firſt in Quality among the *Evangeliſts*, was by Birth a *Galilean*, the Son of *Zebedee* and *Salome* (one of thoſe devout Women, who conſtantly attended our Lord in his Miniſtry) and Brother to *James*, who, to diſtinguiſh him from the other Apoſtle of the ſame Name, is generally called *James the Great*. Before his adjoining himſelf to *Chriſt*, he ſeems to have been a Diſciple to *John the Baptiſt*, and is thought to have been that *other Diſciple*, who, in the firſt Chapter of his *Goſpel*, is ſaid to have been preſent with *Andrew*, when *John* declared *Jeſus* to be *the Lamb of God*, and thereupon to have followed him to the Place of his Abode.

Q. *Did our Lord favour him with any Diſtinction or Pre-eminence above the reſt of his other Apoſtles?*

A. He was by much the youngeſt of the Apoſtles, yet he was admitted into as great a Share of Maſter's Confidence as any. He was one of thoſe, to whom he communicated the moſt private Paſſages of his Life; one of thoſe whom he took with him, when he went and reſtored *Jairus*'s Daughter to Life; one of thoſe, to whom he exhibited a Specimen of his Divinity, in his Transfiguration on the Mount; one of thoſe who were preſent at the Conference with *Moſes* and *Elias*, and heard that Voice, which declared him *the beloved Son of God*; and one of thoſe who were Companions of his Solitude, and moſt retired Devotions, and bitter Agonies in the Garden. Thus, of the three, who were made the Witneſſes of their Maſter's Actions, which he ſaw convenient to conceal, St. *John* had conſtantly the Privilege to make one. Nay, even of theſe three, he ſeems, in ſome Reſpects, to have the Preference; to be known by the moſt deſirable of all Titles, *the Diſciple whom* Jeſus *loved*; to have the Honour of leaning upon his Lord's Boſom at Meat; to have the Intimacy with him, to aſk him a Queſtion, *viz. Who in the Company was the Traitor?* which, even St. *Peter* himſelf had not Courage to do; and (what is the higheſt Inſtance of his Affection) to have his Mother, his ſorrowful and diſconſolate Mother, with his laſt dying Breath, committed to his Care and Comfort: Which peculiar Tokens of his Maſter's Favour and Eſteem, ſome have aſcribed to the Apoſtle's eminent Modeſty, others to his unſpotted Charity; others think it an Indulgence due to his Youth, but they ſeem to have the righteſt Notion, who impute it to a Nearneſs of Relation, and a peculiar Sweetneſs of Diſpoſition, conſpiring to recommend him.

Q. *In what Parts of the World did he preach the Goſpel after our Lord's Deceaſe?*

A. Upon the Diviſion of the Provinces, which the Apoſtles made among themſelves, *Aſia* fell to St. *John*'s Share, tho' he did not immediately enter upon his Charge, but ſtaid at *Jeruſalem*, at leaſt till the Death of the bleſſed Virgin, which was about fifteen Years after our Lord's Aſcenſion. After he was thus releaſed from his Truſt, he took his Journey into *Aſia*, and induſtriouſly applied himſelf to propagate *Chriſtianity*, preaching where the Goſpel had not yet taken place, and confirming it where it had been already planted. Many Churches of Note and Eminence were of his Foundation; but the chief Place of his Reſidence was at *Epheſus*, where, tho' St. *Paul* had, many Years before ſettled a Church, and conſtituted *Timothy* Biſhop of it, yet, conſidering that it was a City of exceeding great Reſort, both upon the Account of its Traffick, and the Conveniency of its Port, the Apoſtle thought he could not be ſeated more commodiouſly than there, for diſperſing the Knowledge of his Doctrines, to Natives of ſeveral Nations and Quarters at once.

Q. *What befel him afterwards?*

A. After ſeveral Years (ſome ſay twenty-ſeven) ſpent there, he was accuſed to *Domitian* (who had then begun a ſevere Perſecution) a great Aſſerter of *Atheiſm* and Impiety, and a publick Subverter of the Religion of the Empire; ſo that, by his Command, the Proconſul of *Aſia* ſent him bound to *Rome*, where, as *Tertullian* relates (in a Manner importing the Fact abundantly notorious) he was plunged into a Cauldron of Oil ſet on fire; but God, who had reſerved him for farther Services to the Truth, reſtrained the Heat of it (as he did in the fiery Furnace of old) and ſo preſerved him from this ſeemingly unavoidable Deſtruction. The Emperor, however, unmoved with his miraculous Deliverance, ordered him to be baniſhed to *Patmos*, a ſmall diſconſolate Iſland in the *Archipelago*, where he remained ſeveral Years, inſtructing the Inhabitants in the Faith of *Chriſt*; and where he was vouchſafed thoſe Viſions, and prophetical Repreſentations, which he then recorded in his Book of *Revelation*, reaping this great Advantage from his Exile, that though he was cut off from the Society of Men, he was entertained with the more immediate Converſe of Heaven.

Q. *How long did he continue in Exile?*

A. Upon the Death of *Domitian*, and the Succeſſion of *Nerva*, who reſcinded all the odious Acts of his Predeceſſor, and, by publick Edict, recalled thoſe, whom his Fury had baniſhed, St. *John* took the Opportunity to return into *Aſia*, and fixed his Seat again at *Epheſus*; the rather, becauſe the People of that Place had lately martyr'd their Biſhop *Timothy*. Here, with the Aſſiſtance of ſeven other Biſhops, he took upon him the Government of the large Dioceſs of *Aſia-minor*, erected *Oratories*, and diſpoſed of the Clergy in the beſt Manner that the Circumſtances of thoſe Times would permit; and having ſpent his Time in an indefatigable Execution of his Charge, travelling from *Eaſt* to *Weſt* to inſtruct the World in the Principles of the Holy Religion, which he was ſent to propagate; and ſhunning no Difficulties or Dangers, to redeem Mens Minds from Vice, Error, or Idolatry, he finiſhed his Courſe, in a good old Age, and, in the Beginning of *Trajan*'s Reign, in the ninety-ninth Year of his Life died a natural Death, and was buried near *Epheſus*; a Martyr in Diſpoſition, and ſo far in Fact, as his Impriſonment from the *Jews*, and his boiling Cauldron, and Baniſhment by the *Romans*, could make him; a wonderful Pattern of Holineſs and Charity, and a Writer ſo profound, as to deſerve, by way of Eminence, the Character of St. *John the Divine*.

Q. *Can you relate any Inſtance of his Zeal and Courage in his Maſter's Service?*

A. In his Viſitation of the Churches near *Epheſus*, he was much taken with a beautiful young Man, whom he took, and, with a ſpecial Charge, committed him to the Education and Inſtruction of the Biſhop of the Place, who undertook the Charge, inſtructed, and baptized him. After this he thought he might a little relax the Reins of Diſcipline; but the Youth made a bad Uſe of his Liberty, and, being debauched by evil Company, made himſelf Captain of a Gang of Highway-men, the moſt looſe, cruel, and profligate Wretches of the Country. St. *John*, at his Return, underſtanding this, and, having ſharply reproved the Negligence of his Tutor, reſolved to find him out, and without any Conſideration of what Danger he entered upon, in venturing himſelf among Perſons of deſperate Fortunes and abandoned Conſciences, he went to the Mountains, where their uſual Haunt was; and, being there taken up by the *Centinel*, he deſired to be brought before their Commander, who no ſooner eſpied him coming towards him, but he immediately fled. The aged *Apoſtle* followed after, but not being able to overtake him, he paſſionately intreated him to ſtay, promiſing to undertake with God for his Peace and Pardon. He did ſo, and both melted into Tears; and the Apoſtles having pray'd with, and for him, returned him a true Penitent, and Convert to the Church.

Q. *What Works was St.* John *the Author of, beſides his* Goſpel?

A. The firſt in Time, tho' placed laſt, is his *Apocalypſe*, or Book of *Revelation*, which he wrote in his Confinement at *Patmos*. After the *Preface*, and Admonition given to the Biſhops of the *ſeven Churches* of *Aſia*, it contains the Perſecutions which the Faithful had ſuffered from the *Jews*, *Hereticks*, and *Roman* Emperors, down as far as *Julian* the *Apoſtate*. After this, we have a View of that Vengeance which God has exerciſed againſt the Perſons of Perſecutors, againſt the *Roman* Empire, and the City of *Rome*, which is deſcribed under the Name of *Babylon*, the great Proſtitute, ſeated upon *ſeven Hills*; then we have a Deſcription of the peaceable and flouriſhing State of the Church for a thouſand Years, and, after ſome Moleſtation from the *Turk*, (as is ſuppoſed) the Happineſs of the Church Triumphant, is ſet off with all the imaginable Beauties of Rhetorick; and, at laſt, we come to a formal Concluſion of the whole Matter, and a ſevere Commination to all thoſe, who ſhall preſume either to add to or diminiſh any Thing from this Prophecy.

Q. *Was it not queſtioned by the Antients whether St.* John *was the Author of the Book of* Revelations?

A. That St. *John* the *Evangeliſt* was the Author of the Book of *Revelation*, all the moſt antient Eccleſiaſtical Writers were agreed; until *Dionyſius* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, (in his Anſwer to one *Nepos*, another *Egyptian* Biſhop, who had revived the groſs Notion of *Cerinthus*, concerning the *Millennium*, in order to evade the Uſe which this *Nepos*

pos had made of the *Apocalypſe*) called in Queſtion its Authority, by aſſerting, "That ſeveral of the Antients had diſowned this Book to have been wrote by any apoſtolick Man; that *Cerinthus* had prefixed *John's* Name to it, to give the better Countenance to his Dream of *Chriſt's* Reign upon Earth; and that (though it might be the Work of ſome inſpired Perſon) it could not poſſibly be St. *John's*, becauſe its Stile, Matter, and Method, did by no Means agree with his other Writings." Now, whoever looks into the antient Writers of the Church, will find, that *Polycarp*, Biſhop of *Smyrna*, who (according to St. *Chryſoſtom*) was converſant with the Apoſtles, *Juſtin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, and *Tertullian*; Authors all of the ſecond Century, are unanimous, in aſcribing the Work to the ſame Hand, from whence the Goſpel and Epiſtles did proceed; and that therefore the Opinion of one private Doctor ſhould not prevail againſt the Authority of ſo many Writers, who were either contemporary, or nearly ſubſequent to the Apoſtles. For, be it allowed, that there is a Diverſity of Stile, yet does not every able Writer vary that, according to the Nature of the Subject he is upon? In *Hiſtory*, the Stile ſhould be *ſimple*; in *Epiſtles*, *familiar*; and in *Propheſies*, *majeſtick* and *ſublime*; and therefore, what Wonder is it, if in Arguments ſo vaſtly different, the ſame Perſons did not always obſerve the ſame Tenor and Way of Writing? Nothing can be more different in their Method and Diction, than the Book of *Proverbs*, and the Book of *Canticles*, and yet few have doubted but that *Solomon* was the Writer of both: But now, that *Cerinthus* ſhould be the Author of a Book which contains Doctrines directly oppoſite to the Errors which he broached, is a Thing incredible. For, whereas *Cerinthus* did not believe that God made the World, or that *Chriſt* died and roſe again; the Author of the *Revelation* aſcribes to God the Work of the Creation, and calls our bleſſed Saviour *The Firſt-begotten of the Dead*; and whereas *Cerinthus* made *Jeſus* merely the Son of *Joſeph*, and a Being different from that of *Chriſt*; the Author of the *Revelations* calls him expreſly the Son of God, and makes him one and the ſame Perſon with *Chriſt*. Though therefore there may be ſome Similitude between St. *John*'s Expreſſions, and the Notions of *Cerinthus*, in Regard to *Chriſt*'s Reign of a Thouſand Years, yet it had been much more prudent in *Dionyſius*, to have given a ſpiritual Senſe and Interpretation of theſe Expreſſions, than to aſcribe to a wicked and ſenſual Man (as *Cerinthus* was) a Book, which breathes nothing but Piety and Holineſs, an awful Dread of God, and a Devotion ſuch as the Angels perform in Heaven.

The Truth is, all Circumſtances concur to intitle our Apoſtle to be the Author of this Book: His Name frequently expreſſed in it; his writing it in the Iſland of *Patmos*, whither none but he was baniſhed; his writing particular Epiſtles to the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*, which had either been planted or cultivated by him; and his ſtiling himſelf *their Brother and Companion in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of* Jeſus Chriſt; theſe, and many more Circumſtances that might be mentioned, added to the Doctrine contained in it, which is highly ſuitable to the apoſtolick Spirit and Temper, do evidently bear Witneſs, that this Book was the Work of St. *John*, and conſequently of divine canonical Authority.

Next to the *Apocalypſe*, in Order of Time, are the three Epiſtles which St. *John* wrote. The firſt of theſe is *Catholick*, calculated for all Times and Places, and containing moſt excellent Rules for the Conduct of the *Chriſtian* Life, and for Preſervation againſt the crafty Inſinuations of Seducers. The other two are but ſhort, and directed to particular Perſons; the one to a Lady of honourable Quality; and the other to the charitable and hoſpitable *Gaius*, ſo kind a Friend, and ſo courteous an Entertainer of indigent *Chriſtians*.

Euſebius, and after him St. *Jerom* informs us, that St. *John* having peruſed the other three Goſpels, approved and confirmed them by his Authority; but obſerving withal, that theſe *Evangeliſts* had omitted ſeveral of our Saviour's Actions, ſuch, eſpecially as were done before the *Baptiſt*'s Impriſonment, he wrote his Goſpel in order to ſupply what was wanting in them: And becauſe, at this Time, there were ſeveral Hereticks (ſuch as *Cerinthus*, *Ebion*, and their Followers) ſprung up in the Church, who denied the divine Nature of *Jeſus Chriſt*: Another End of his Writing, was to arm the World againſt the Poiſon of theſe Hereſies, by making it appear, that our bleſſed Saviour was God from all Eternity, and before his Incarnation; and that as other *Evangeliſts* had written the Series of his Generation, according to the Fleſh, he might write a ſpiritual Goſpel, beginning from the Divinity of *Chriſt*: Which was a Subject reſerved for him (as the moſt excellent Perſon) by the Holy Ghoſt.

When therefore the Biſhops of *Aſia*, and ſeveral Ambaſſadors from other Churches, had been, for ſome Time, ſolliciting him, he cauſed them to proclaim a general Faſt, to ſeek the Bleſſing of Heaven on ſo great and momentous an Undertaking; and when this was done, he ſet about the Work, and compleated it in ſo excellent and ſublime a Manner, that the Antients generally reſembled him to an Eagle, ſoaring aloft within the Clouds, whither the weak Eye of Man was not able to follow him: For, *As the evangelical Writings* (ſays St. *Baſil*) *tranſcend all the other Parts of the Holy Scripture; becauſe, in other Parts, God ſpeaks to us by his Servants the Prophets, but in the Goſpels our Lord*, who is God *bleſſed for evermore, ſpeaks to us himſelf: So among all the evangelical Preachers, none is like St.* John, *the Son of Thunder, for the Sublimity of his Diſcourſes, beyond any Man's Capacity duly to reach and comprehend.*

His Goſpel was originally wrote in *Greek*, but in a *Greek* that abounds wilh *Hebraiſms*, as do the other *Evangeliſts*. His Diſcourſes are many Times abrupt, ſet off with frequent Antitheſes, and connected with many Copulatives; Paſſages often repeated, and Things, at firſt, as obſcurely propounded: His Words are peculiar to himſelf, and Phraſes uſed in an uncommon Senſe, which may poſſibly make his Way of Writing not ſo grateful to ſome nice Maſters of Eloquence. In citing Places from the *Old Teſtament*, tho' he ſometimes makes uſe of the *Septuagint*, yet he generally tranſlates from the *Hebrew* Original, and generally renders them Word for Word. For being an *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, and admirably made him leſs exact in his *Greek* Compoſures, wherein

wherein he had no Advantage, beſides what was immediately communicated from above. But, what he wanted in the Politeneſs of his Stile, was abundantly made up in the Excellence and Sublimity of his Matter.

Q. *Having now examined, explained and reconciled the moſt difficult Paſſages and ſeeming Contradictions that occur in the Hiſtory of our bleſſed Saviour, as recorded by the four* Evangeliſts; *there yet remain ſome Things which I ſhall be glad to have your more explicit Opinion upon, touching the Birth, Prophecies, Miracles, and Conduct of our Saviour upon Earth, which I have not yet had an Opportunity to propoſe, as proper Subjects for our Enquiry. St.* Matthew *recites a Paſſage out of the Prophecy of* Iſaiah, *and applies it to the Birth of* Chriſt, *yet, according to the Context, it has a plain Reference to another Event: Is not therefore St.* Matthew's *Application of it wrong and forced?*

A. But let us examine the Hiſtory from whence it is taken. In the Days of *Ahaz* King of *Judah*, (and probably in the ſecond or third Year of his Reign) *Rezin*, King of *Syria*, and *Pekah* King of *Iſrael*, united their Forces to come againſt *Jeruſalem*, which put the King and his People in ſuch Conſternation, *that their Hearts were moved* (according to the Scripture Expreſſion) *as the Trees of the Wood are moved with the Wind.* Hereupon *Iſaiah* is commanded to take his little Son, *Shearjaſhub*, with him, and to go and meet *Ahaz*, in in order to aſſure him, that the Deſign formed againſt him, by the two confederate Kings, ſhould not proſper. But, finding no Credence with the King, the Prophet undertakes to perform whatever Miracle he ſhould aſk, in Confirmation of the Truth of what he had promiſed him; but *Ahaz* ſtill refuſing out of a ſpecious Pretence of not being willing to tempt God, the Prophet turns from him, and addreſſing himſelf to the Nobles of the Royal Blood, *Hear ye now, O Houſe of* David, ſays he, *the Lord himſelf ſhall give you a Sign. Behold, a Virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a Son, and they ſhall call his Name* Immanuel.

Now, not to inſiſt upon the original Word *Alma*, which (as learned Men have obſerved) ſignifies almoſt always, *a Virgin untainted by Man*, and which the *Greek* Tranſlators before *Chriſt* (who were not intereſted in the Controverſy, and yet knew the Signification of *Hebrew* Words much better than any Moderns can pretend to) have ſo rendered this Place; and not to inſiſt on the Tradition which prevailed among the *Jews*, not long before our Saviour's Appearing, *viz.* That the *Meſſiah* ſhould come into the World in ſuch an extraordinary Manner, that *no Man ſhould know whence he was*, and (as the *Talmud* expreſſes it) *that his Birth ſhould be as the Dew of the Lord, as Drops from the Graſs, expecting not the Labour*, or Action *of Men*; not to inſiſt on theſe Things, I ſay (though they make very much for *Chriſt*'s Title to the Prophecy) how can we imagine, that after ſo pompous on Introduction, and ſo important a Name, the Prophet ſhould mean no more at laſt, by a Virgin's conceiving, than that a young Woman ſhould be with Child? What, does *Iſaiah* offer *Ahaz* a Miracle, *either in the Depth, or the Height above*, and when he ſeems to tell the Houſe of *David*, that God, of his own Accord, would perform a greater Work than they could aſk, does he ſink to a Sign, that Nature produces every Day? Is that to be called a Wonder (which Word implies an uncommon, ſurprizing, and ſupernatural Event) which happens conſtantly by the ordinary Laws of Generation? How little does ſuch a Birth anſwer the ſolemn *Apparatus*, which the Prophet uſes, to raiſe their Expectation of ſome great Matter? *Hear ye, O Houſe of* David, —— *Behold, the Lord himſelf will give you a Sign*, worthy of himſelf, and what is it? Why, *a young married Woman ſhall be with Child.* How ridiculous muſt ſuch a Diſcovery make the Prophet, and how highly muſt it enrage the Audience, to hear a Man, at ſuch a Juncture as this, begin an idle and impertinent Tale, which ſeems to banter and inſult their Miſery, rather than adminiſter any Conſolation under it.

Alma comes from an *Hebrew* Word, which ſignifies *to hide*, and very fitly agrees with the Cuſtom of the *Eaſtern* Countries, who were wont to keep their Daughters, while they were in their Virginity, from all Company and publick Converſation and Interviews. Thus it ſaid, upon a publick and extraordinary Conſternation, that *the Virgins, who were kept in, ran ſome to the Gates, and ſome to the Walls, and others looked out of the Windows*, 2 *Maccab.* iii. 19. But there is another and more proper Signification, which, from the ſame Word, that ſignifies to *hide* or *cover*, this *Alma* will bear, *viz.* as it denotes one, who has not known Man, or, according to the Scripture Phraſe, one whoſe *Nakedneſs* has not been *uncovered.* The Knowledge of a Woman is expreſſed in the Law of *Moſes* by *uncovering her Nakedneſs*; and, agreeably hereunto, *Alma* is a moſt proper Word for a Virgin, who is covered, and whoſe Nakedneſs was never uncovered, or revealed by the Knowledge of Man. This Account is perfectly agreeable to the *Hebrew* Manner of Speech, and to the Style of the Law of *Moſes.* But this is not all, as ſeveral learned Men have ſhewn, that there is a great Affinity between the *Hebrew* and *Punick* Language, this makes the Words of St. *Jerome* more remarkable: *In the* Punick *Language, which is ſaid to be derived from the* Hebrew, *ſhe, who is properly a Virgin, is called* Alma: Eſpecially conſidering, that St. *Matthew* renders it by the Word *Parthenes*, which ſignifies a *Virgin* properly ſo called, the very ſame Word that the *Septuagint* Interpreters made uſe of, about three hundred Years before St. *Matthew* wrote his Goſpel, and conſequently, long enough before this Controverſy aroſe between *Jews* and *Chriſtians.*

Q. *But of what Uſe or Conſolation could the future Birth of the* Meſſiah *be to the Houſe of* David *at that Time?*

A. Of very great Uſe, without all Doubt; for it aſſured them of the Truth of God's Promiſe, in that he would not ſuffer them to be deſtroyed, nor *the Scepter to depart from* Judah, until the *Meſſiah* came. It aſſured them of his Almighty Power, in that he could create a new Thing in the Earth, by making a Virgin conceive, and thereby ſhew himſelf able to deliver them from their moſt potent Enemies; and it aſſured them likewiſe of his peculiar Favour, in that he had decreed the *Meſſiah* ſhould deſcend from their Family; ſo that the People, to whom he had vouchſafed ſo high a Dignity, might depend upon his Protection, and, under the Shadow of his Wings, think themſelves ſecure. In ſhort, God had promiſed the *Meſſiah* ſhould ſpring from the Tribe of

Judah, and from the Family of *David*, even while that Tribe, and that Family continued a Polity undeſtroyed; and therefore, ſince that Promiſe was not yet abſolved, nor the *Meſſiah* as yet come, there was no fear of the Extinction of *Judah*, and the *Houſe of David*, at that Time, whatever their preſent Diſtreſs might be; but as God's Promiſes were immutable, they had all Manner of Reaſon to believe, that the Enemies now combined againſt them, would, by ſome Turn of Providence or other, be diſappointed in their Deſign.

Thus one great Prophecy, at leaſt, in the *Old*, as well as ſundry Promiſes in the *New Teſtament*, made it a Thing neceſſary, that when the Son of God came to be incarnate, he ſhould be born of a pure and immaculate Virgin; and it is impious to diſpute the Poſſibility of the Thing, when God Almighty was the Agent of it.

Q. *But why ſhould this Virgin be married, rather than a ſingle Woman?*

A. In order to reſolve this, we muſt obſerve, that by this Means, *Mary*'s Genealogy, not only by her Father's Side, (which St. *Luke* has recorded) but by her Huſband's likewiſe (which St. *Matthew* has done) came to be deduced; and ſo we have a double Teſtimony, that ſhe ſprung from the Seed of *David*, and, according to the Promiſes of old, was the true Mother of the *Meſſiah*; that, by this Means, our Lord's Birth was ſecured againſt all Imputation of Spuriouſneſs, and his Mother's Character protected from the Perſecution of opprobious Tongues, which ſhe muſt have endured, (if not the Cenſure of the Law) and brought, withal, a perpetual Scandal upon her Family, had not her Pregnancy, by the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt, been concealed under the Umbrage of a common Huſband; and that, by this Means, our Lord was provided with a Guardian in his Childhood and Minority, and his Mother with a Companion in her Journey, ſhe was ſhortly to take, from *Nazareth* to *Bethany*, and from thence into *Egypt*, and both of them with a Supporter, who, by honeſt Labour in his proper Occupation, might provide them with the Neceſſaries of Life.

Q. *But granting your Reaſons to be juſt; was it alſo neceſſary, that he ſhould be a Man of Poverty and Affliction, that he ſhould live meanly and die ignominiouſly, when (had he been the true* Meſſiah*) he muſt, according to the Repreſentations made of him in the Prophets, have appeared as one of the greateſt Monarchs of the World?*

A. This is the grand Objection of the *Jews*, and therefore, to give it a proper Solution, it ought to be conſidered that the *Meſſiah*, in order to accompliſh the Prophecies concerning him, was to ſuſtain three different Characters; for he was to be a Prophet and a Prieſt, as well as a King. The Predictions, indeed, which refer to his kingly Office, are more in Number, and enlarged upon more copiouſly, than either of the other; yet both the others are ſo eſſential to the Character of the *Meſſiah*, that, had any one of theſe been wanting in him, the Scheme of Man's Redemption had been broken and imperfect: And yet it is certain that theſe three Offices require Operations, not only diſtinct, and peculiar to each, but ſuch as could not equally be one and the ſame Perſon.

As a Prophet the *Meſſiah* was not only to teach and inſtruct his People, but to undergo the common Fate of Prophets, in being deſpiſed, contradicted, perſecuted, and bearing Teſtimony of the Truth of his Doctrine, by the Example of his ſuffering for it. As a Prieſt, he was to make Sacrifice for the Sins of his People, which, in this Caſe, could not be otherwiſe done, than by offering his own Blood, and conſequently dying in their Stead. Now, both theſe, in the Courſe of Things appointed by God, were to go before the Prophecies mention the laſt, as a Recompence for the faithful Diſcharge of the other two. This is a Matter that both the royal and evangelical Prophet expreſs ſo very plainly, that St. *Paul*, in Effect, does but expound thoſe Paſſages, when he tells the *Hebrews*, that *Jeſus, for the ſuffering of Death, was crowned with Glory and Honour*; and the *Philippians*, that *for his taking upon him the Form of a Servant, and becoming obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs, God had highly exalted him, and given him a Name, which is above every Name*, &c. Since, therefore, his regal Office was not to commence, till after he had accompliſhed his other two, to complain that his kingly Power was not exerciſed at his firſt coming, is to miſunderſtand the Prophecies, and confound the Order of *Events*: 'Tis to expect a full Accompliſhment of Predictions, within a very narrow Space, that ſtrictly belong to an Office, ſtill in exerciſe, and to which the Scripture ſays, *there ſhall be no End.*

2. It is to be obſerved farther, that the Stile and Manner of Prophets, eſpecially when they treat of Subjects uncommon, ſublime and ſpiritual, abound with figurative Schemes of Speech, and ſuch pompous and bold Metaphors and Deſcriptions, taken from ſenſible Objects, as awaken in our Minds, the moſt lofty Imaginations we are capable of. This the *Jews* themſelves make no Difficulty to allow, and ſome of their greateſt Doctors have laid it down for a Rule, in the Interpretation of the Prophets, that in many Places they are not literally to be underſtood, by Reaſon of thoſe metaphorical Expreſſions, whoſe true Intent is to repreſent Things according to our Capacity, by Images familiar to our Senſes. If therefore moſt of the great and pompous Things, that are ſaid in the Prophets, concerning the glorious Reign of the *Meſſiah*, may be underſtood of the ſpiritual Benefits which we have received by his coming, ſuch as the Graces of our Regeneration and Sanctification, the Wiſdom of his Laws, the Comforts of his Ordinances, the holy and peaceable Temper, which his Goſpel inſpires, the large Extent of its Propagation, and the bleſſed Effects, which, in all Places, where it is ſincerely believed and practiced, it produces: If Things be reduced to this Senſe, I ſay, I cannot ſee, but that the Character of a powerful Prince has been fulfilled in our Saviour already; for what King was ever ſo proſperous as he, who by the Propagation of his Goſpel, has enlarged his Dominions ſo wonderfully over the moſt diſtant Regions of the habitable World? Or what Conqueſt was ever ſo glorious as that which he hath gained over the Errors and Prejudices, the Luſts and Paſſions of wicked and miſtaken Men, nay, even over all the Powers of Darkneſs and Sin, and Death and Hell?

But be it granted (as ſeems, indeed, very probable) that ſeveral Paſſages in the Prophets relate to the temporal Greatneſs, Proſperity and Peace that ſhall attend the Government of the *Meſſiah*, yet we are to conſider,

3. That, before the Conſummation of all Things, there will be an Enlargement of *Chriſt*'s Kingdom, even here upon Earth. For though he has all Power, *both in Heaven and Earth*, already veſted in the human Nature, united with his own divine Perſon, yet is not that Power ſo viſibly and fully executed, as it ſhall one Day be; nor are all thoſe glorious Effects as yet accompliſhed, which the Prophets foretold, when deſcribing the victorious and peaceable, the unlimitted and everlaſting Dominion of the *Meſſiah*. The enlightning of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by bringing ſuch Multitudes of the one, and ſo many Nations of the other Sort, to the Acknowledgment of the Truth, are already a partial Completion of the Prophecies; but there is ſtill a nobler in Reſerve, when the Fulneſs of both ſhall come in. He reigns now actually in the Hearts of Men, and ſubdues the moſt formidable of our Enemies, by the Holineſs of his Laws, and the mighty Operations of his Grace; but that his Dominion and Conqueſt will be much more abſolute, when the Time comes for every Enemy to be utterly deſtroyed. Though therefore the whole be not, yet abundantly enough has already been fulfilled, to make us acquieſce in a ſtedfaſt Aſſurance, that what is ſtill behind will moſt certainly come to paſs. For, ſurely, how meanly ſoever they, that conſider Things imperfectly, may think of a deſpiſed and crucified Man, yet there is nothing ſo gloriouſly great, that may not reaſonably be expected, from that very Man, when *declared to be the* Son of God *with Power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs, by the Reſurrection from the Dead.*

Q. *It is made a ſtrong Objection, by the* Socinians, *againſt our Saviour's being the Son of God, that at the Time of his Baptiſm, the Holy Ghoſt deſcended upon him, for which there had been no manner of Occaſion, ſay they, had the Divinity* (*which was certainly no leſs Powerful than the Holy Ghoſt*) *been perſonally united to him?*

A. While our bleſſed Saviour was diſcourſing concerning his approaching Death, a Voice from Heaven was heard ſpeaking unto him, he told the People (who ſeemed to be divided in their Opinions of it) *John* xii. 30. *This Voice came not becauſe of me*, i. e. to ſatisfy me of the divine Favour, or to comfort me againſt the Agonies of Death, *but for your Sake*, that ye might believe in me: And, in like Manner, it might be a ſufficient Anſwer to this Objection, that this viſible Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, upon our Saviour, *was not for his Sake*, or to convey any Virtue or Power; that he was not equally poſſeſſed of by the divine Nature that reſided in him, but for the ſake of the *Baptiſt*, and thoſe that were then preſent with him, even to inform them of the Excellency of his Perſon, and his divine Miſſion: For ſo the Voice, which immediately follows the Prodigy, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, Matthew iii. 17. *Hear ye him*, Chap. xvii. 5. plainly ſhews, that this whole Tranſaction was deſigned for the Inſtruction of all the Company. Our Saviour, indeed, was now entering upon his prophetick Office, and fit it was, that the World ſhould have ſome previous Notice of it, before he came to open his Commiſſion. When he came to offer himſelf to *John*, for Baptiſm, *John*, indeed, by ſome ſudden Inſpiration, knew him, but he had not, as yet, made any publick Declaration of that Knowledge; and therefore God took Care to give the Company this glorious Manifeſtation of his being his Son, a Perſon ſanctified by this Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, to declare his Will to the World, according to the Prophecy concerning him, and whoſe Words and Doctrine it therefore concerned all Men to hear and obey. Our bleſſed Saviour, indeed, as he was God, had no need of this Unction of the Holy Spirit, but as he was to execute the prophetick Office, it was expedient for him to have it: For, as a Prophet is not to ſpeak in his own Name, but in the Name of God, and what he has ſuggeſted to him, by the Spirit of God; ſo this prophetical Office was to be performed, not by the divine Nature of our Lord, but by the Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit. *We muſt therefore* (as Dr. *Lightfoot* ſays) *diſtinguiſh between the Excellencies and Perfections of* Chriſt, *which flowed from the Donation and Anointing of the Holy Spirit. From the hypoſtatical Union of the Natures flowed the infinite Dignity of his Perſon, his Self-ſufficiency to fulfil the Law, and ſatisfy the divine Juſtice; as from the Anointing of the Spirit flowed his Knowledge of all evangelical Myſteries, the Doctrines and Precepts which he delivered in his Father's Name, and the many miraculous Works which he did, in Confirmation of his Miſſion and Doctrines.* For this is plain to every one, that looks into the Goſpels, that almoſt in every Page, our Saviour owns his Miſſion from God; that the Doctrines which he taught were not his own, but God's; that they were all dictated by the Spirit of God; and that the Miracles which he exhibited, in Teſtimony of theſe, proceeded from the Spirit of God. Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that *Jeſus Chriſt* being now in a State of Humiliation, and emptied of the Form of God, acted, in Things relating immediately to his prophetick Office, not as God, but only as a Prophet ſent from God; not by the Power of his divine Nature, but of that Spirit by which he was anointed and ſanctified to that Office; though (notwithſtanding this Quieſcence in the Deity) being ſtill God, of the ſame Eſſence derived from the Father, he might do many other Things by Virtue of his Divinity; ſuch as diſcerning the Hearts of Men, walking upon the Sea, and ſtilling the ſtormy Winds with a Word, *&c.* And as this Divinity was Part of the Doctrine he was to publiſh, he might, without any Contradiction to himſelf, aſſert that God was *properly his Father*, and he *properly* his Son; that *he and his Father was one*, and *that all Men were to worſhip the Son, even as they worſhipped the Father.*

Something of the like Nature is to be ſaid in Relation to our Saviour's being tempted by the Devil, *viz.* that, though his Divinity did ſet him far above the utmoſt Oppoſition of any created Being, yet did not that Divinity exert itſelf upon all Occaſions, but ſometimes ſuſpended its Operations, and was quieſcent, as we ſaid before. That the Divinity was thus quieſcent in *Chriſt*, until he entered upon the publick Exerciſe of his prophetick Office, is generally thought by moſt Orthodox Divines; that, in all the Actions, relating to the Execution of that Office, it ceaſed in the like Manner to act, we have juſt now endeavoured to prove; and it is generally thought, that this was the Caſe of his Temptation by the Devil, in which his divine Perfections lying by, as it were, and forbearing to engage, he is to be conſidered abſtractedly, as a Man. For fit it was, that he (who, for this very ry Reaſon, perhaps, is called the *ſecond Adam*) ſhould overcome the great Enemy of Mankind, in that very Nature alone and unaſſiſted, wherein the *firſt Adam* was ſo miſerably foiled.

Q. *Did not the Devil know our* Saviour *to be the* Son of God, *when he tempted him in the Wilderneſs?*

A. Whether the Devil might know, that our Saviour was in Reality the *Son of God*, or only ſome peculiar Favourite of his, Divines are at a ſtand to determine. 'Tis the Obſervation of *Origen*, that, *All the while our Saviour was under the Temptation, he never confeſſed himſelf to be the Son of God:* And, *Therefore, ſince the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel* (ſays our Dr. *Jenkin*) *was not fully and perfectly underſtood by good Angels, but gradually manifeſted to them; it is no Wonder, that the Devil ſhould be ignorant of the Myſteries of the Goſpel, particularly that great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God's Manifeſtation in the Fleſh:* And therefore ſeeing our Saviour, after he had been declared the Son of God, in the Wilderneſs, for ſo long a Time, with wild Beaſts, and hungry without any Food to ſuſtain him, he might begin to doubt, whether he was, indeed, the Son of God, in the moſt proper and higheſt Senſe of the Words, and thereupon be incited to aſſail him. But if even he knew never ſo well, as we can hardly ſuſpect him guilty of too much Modeſty, and, upon that Score, of any great Shyneſs to attack a God incarnate. Such is his inveterate Malice, we know, that it hath often prevailed with him to attempt Things very fooliſh and impoſſible. For what could be more ſo, than for a Creature to attempt to be like God, or to annul the Truth of the Prophecies concerning *Chriſt?* What could be more pernicious to him, than the Death of the *Lord of Life*, for the Redemption of Mankind, and yet this he attempted with the utmoſt Eagerneſs, and by ſetting all his Inſtruments to work, though it was impoſſible for our Lord to be held under the Power of Death? Whatever *Satan* therefore might conceive of *Chriſt*, (as *Petavius* retorts the Argument upon the Head of *Crellius*) he could not but certainly know, from the Scriptures, that he was to be the Redeemer of Mankind, and the Author of their Salvation; that he was *the Seed of the Woman, who was to bruiſe his Head, and ſit on the Throne of his Father* David, *and there rule for ever:* And therefore, knowing all this, he could believe that he was able to reverſe both the Decrees and Oath of God. Whether therefore the Devil knew, or knew not our Saviour, it may well be deemed an Infatuation in him, to think of being able to pervert him, as he had done our firſt Parents, in their Obedience to God; but then it was far from being a fooliſh or unneceſſary Thing, for our Lord thus to ſuffer himſelf to be tempted, ſince thereby he hath inſtructed us that not any, the beſt and moſt exalted Degree of Virtue, ſets Men above Temptations; and ſince thereby he has encouraged us to hope for his Aſſiſtance and Support under the like Circumſtances; both becauſe, *Heb.* 11. 18. *himſelf hath ſuffered being tempted*, and becauſe Chap. iv. 15. *he was, in all Points, tempted, like as we are, he cannot but be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities.* Theſe were the true Ends and Reaſons why our Saviour ſuffered Temptation; and the proper and natural Inference from hence is, that which the ſame Author to the *Hebrews* makes, *Let us therefore come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we way obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us, in the Time of Need.*

Q. *Among the many Miracles which our Saviour wrought, were not ſome more difficult to be performed than others?*

A. There are few Things wherein Mankind ſeem to be more agreed, than in the Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Miracles, as en authentick and indiſputable Teſtimony, that the Perſons entruſted with ſuch Power, were employed by God; becauſe the conſtant Apprehenſions, which both Reaſon and Revelation have given us of God, are, that he will not employ his Power (as no true Miracles can be done without the Concurrence of his Power) to deceive his Creatures; and therefore the Reaſoning of *Nicodemus*, when he came to viſit our Saviour was right, *We know that thou art a Teacher come from God, becauſe no Man can do thoſe Miracles that thou doeſt, except God be with him.* Some Miracles then are the avowed Effects of a divine Power, we muſt certainly be miſtaken in our Judgment of them, when, with Regard to their Author, we eſteem one greater than another. In Effects, indeed, that are produced by human Power, we are apt to ſay, that ſome of them are greater than others, *i. e.* that they require more and greater Degrees of Power for the Production of them; but this Diſtinction vaniſhes in our Conſideration of the ſupreme Being, to whoſe Omnipotence, the greateſt Effect we can imagine, gives no Limitation, but is equally with the ſmalleſt, under the Compaſs of his Acting. To us, perhaps, it may ſeem a greater Cure to diſpoſſeſs a Demon, than to drive away a Fever, but in the Hand of the Son of God, while he dwelt among us, they were Operations equally eaſy; and yet, a Miſconception in this Matter has certainly led ſome into an Opinion, that the ſeveral Demoniacks, mentioned in the Goſpels, were only ſo many Perſons afflicted with ſome ſtrange and uncommon Diſeaſes.

Q. *Has it not been the Opinion of ſome, that the Devils, which our Saviour caſt out of Perſons, were but Diſeaſes?*

A. That theſe Demons, or evil Spirits, which our Saviour, his Apoſtles, and the primitive Chriſtians, expelled out of the Bodies of Men, could not be Diſeaſes, is plain both from the Scriptures, and eccleſiaſtical Writers, who make a conſtant and manifeſt Diſtinction between the curing Diſeaſes, and caſting out of Devils; for when the *Evangeliſt* tells us, *Matthew* iv. 24. *They brought unto* Chriſt *all ſick People, that were taken with diverſe Diſeaſes, and thoſe which were poſſeſſed with Devils, and thoſe that were Lunatick, and had the Palſey, and he healed them*; when, Chap. x. 1. *He gave to the Apoſtles Power againſt evil Spirits, to caſt them out, and to heal all Manner of Sickneſſes and Diſeaſes*; and accordingly, Mark i. 34. *They healed many that were ſick of diverſe Diſeaſes, and caſt out many Devils*; when *Ireneus* informs us, that the *Chriſtians*, in his Days, *did truly caſt out Devils, and heal the Sick by Impoſition of Hands*; and *Origen*, that *they caſt out Devils, and healed many Diſeaſes*; can any one, of tolerable Underſtanding, think that the Diſeaſes healed, and the Devils caſt out, were one and the ſame Thing?

That there were evil Spirits of this Kind, the Holy Scriptures have taken ſuch abundant Care to acquaint us with their Origen and Fall, their Names and Numbers, their Government and Orders, their malicious Deſigns and Employments, &c. that no one can doubt of their Exiſtence, who believed believes thoſe holy Oracles to be true. That both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, before our Saviour's Coming, Men were poſſeſſed with theſe evil Spirits, is evident from the Teſtimony of *Joſephus*, who tells us of a very powerful Form of Exorciſm, which deſcended from *Solomon*, who learned it of God; and from the Teſtimony of *Plutarch*, who acquaints us, that the Exorciſts of moſt Nations adviſed thoſe that were poſſeſſed, to repeat the *Epheſian* Letters. And, that theſe evils Spirits, in our Saviour's Time, were diſtinct Subſtances, and not the Diſeaſes of Mankind, is evident from the Circumſtances of their Ejection, from their expoſtulating with him, *What have we to do with thee? Art thou come to deſtroy us? Art thou come to torment us before the Time?* And from his commanding them ſometimes *to be ſilent*, and ſometimes *to come out of the Man, and to enter into him no more*, &c.

The Truth is, theſe apoſtate Spirits had gotten ſo far Poſſeſſion of the World, that they began to rival God in his Worſhip, and therefore one End of his Son's Incarnation is ſaid to be this, *John* iii. 8. *That he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil*, and Luke xi. 21, 22. *overcome the ſtrong one, and divide his Spoils*. And this, by the Way may ſuggeſt a Reaſon, why at, or about the Time of our Saviour's Coming, and perhaps more eſpecially in the Places which he frequented, God might permit the Devil to exert himſelf in an unuſual Manner, in order to be the more ſignally triumphed over by the Saviour of the World, and thoſe that were delegated by him to convert Mankind to his Religion. Nay, had I Leiſure to proceed to eccleſiaſtical Writers, I might eaſily ſhew, how victorious the Name of *Chriſt* was over theſe Principalities and Powers of Darkneſs, even after his Departure out of this World, for, 'That our Lord was ſent for the Deſtruction of theſe evil Spirits, you may now learn, (ſays *Juſtin Martyr*) from what is done before your Eyes; for many *Chriſtians* throughout all the World, in every City of your Empire, have healed many that were poſſeſſed of the Devil, and ſtill do eject them, by the Invocation of the Name of *Jeſus*, whom none of your Inchanters, Conjurors, or Sorcerers are able to expel. And give me a Man, (ſays *Tertullian*, in that noble Challenge of his to the heathen Powers,) give me a Man here before your Tribunals, that is viſibly poſſeſſed by the Devil; and if, when he is commanded by any *Chriſtian*, to declare what he is, he don't immediately confeſs himſelf to be a Devil, not daring to lye to a *Chriſtian*, then let the Blood of *Chriſtian* be ſhed before you in that very Place.'

Q. *In the Hiſtory of the Four* Evangeliſts, *many Prophecies are quoted from the Old Teſtament, and applied to* Chriſt; *but very wrongly, ſay the Oppoſers of the* Chriſtian *Faith: How do you anſwer this?*

A. Whatever ſome modern *Jews* and *Infidels* may alledge againſt the Abuſe, which (as they pretend) the Writers of the *New Teſtament* have put upon the Prophecies of the *Old*, by applying them to a wrong Senſe, no Man need be told, that an Attempt of this Nature had been as impertinent, the Affront to Man's Reaſon as inſolent, and the Event as fruitleſs, (nay, as fatal to their Cauſe, had they impoſed a falſe, or even controverted Senſe, upon the Predictions relating to the *Meſſiah*,) as it would have been, had they urged ſuch Predictions as were not acknowledged to belong to him at all. The Truth is, if the *Jews* underſtood the Prophecies, relating to the *Meſſiah*, in one Senſe, and the Apoſtles, in their Addreſs to them, applied them in another, we cannot ſee how they could ever have made one Proſelyte, being in the ſame Condition with what St. *Paul* deſcribes, when he tells us, that *he who ſpeaketh in an unknown Tongue* (and why not he that ſpeaketh in an unknown Meaning?) *ſpeaketh to the Air, and becometh a* Barbarian *to him that heareth but underſtandeth him not*. So that every *Jew*, converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith, is an implicit Proof of the Apoſtles applying the antient Prophecies in a Senſe that was then current and familiar to them.

That the famous Prophecy in *Iſaiah*, Chap. vii. 14. is thus applied by St. *Matthew*, Chap. i. 23. to prove that *Chriſt*, was born of an immaculate Virgin, we took Occaſion, in our Anſwer to one of theſe great Objections, to ſhew. The remaining Allegation is, that the Name of the Perſon, of whom the Prophet ſpeaks, was to be *Immanuel*; whereas the Name of that Son of *Mary*, of whom St. *Matthew* ſpeaks, by God's expreſs Command, was *Jeſus*, and therefore the Words of the Prophet are miſapplied by the Evangeliſt.

Now nothing is more common in Scripture, than, by the calling or naming of a Perſon or Thing, not to mean that Perſon or Thing ſhould be commonly diſtinguiſhed by that Name, but only, that it ſhould have ſuch Properties and Qualities in it, as that Name did denote; or, in other Words, that it ſhould really be what the full Senſe of that Word imported. Thus, of the City of *Jeruſalem*, it is foretold by the Prophet *Iſaiah* i. 26. that it ſhould be called *the City of Righteouſneſs*, when it really was to be ſuch a City; for, in the foregoing Words, it is promiſed, *that God would reſtore her Judges, as at the firſt, and her Counſellors, as at the Beginning*. And, in like manner, tho' it be declared by this Prophet, that the wonderful Child, which God promiſed to the Houſe of *David* ſhould be called *Immanuel*, yet, if he was but what that Name properly imports, *God with us*, in a moſt eminent and peculiar Manner, it is not to be doubted, but that the Prophecy received its full Completion in the Perſon of our Saviour *Chriſt*.

For, beſides God's univerſal Preſence, there is a Preſence of Favour and Diſtinction, whereby he is ſaid to be, in a more peculiar Manner, with thoſe whom he loves and bleſſes above others. And, in this Regard, the Child here ſpoken, of is juſtly called *Immanuel*, becauſe (as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, 2 Cor. v. 19.) *God was in him, reconciling the World to himſelf*, for his Sake and Sufferings *not imputing their Treſpaſſes unto them*; ſo that by him (*Eph.* ii. 13, 18.) *they, who were ſometime afar off, are made nigh, have Acceſs to the Father*, (Chap. i. 6.) *are accepted in the Beloved*, and become, of Enemies and Strangers, Friends and Children, inſomuch that God vouchſafes to dwell in them, and to be one with them. And, as he unites us to himſelf by Grace, ſo did he, in this Child, condeſcend, by an ineffable Generation, to unite our Subſtance and Nature to himſelf, *to be perfect God, and perfect Man*, (Chap viii. 29. Heb. ii. 14.) *that ſo he might be the Firſt-born among many Brethren, and redeem the Children from Death,* *who are Partakers of Fleſh and Blood, himſelf taking part of the ſame.* Let it not then be any more objected, that the Child in the Prophecy could not be called *Immanuel*, whom we confeſs to have been called *Jeſus*; for he is therefore our *Immanuel*, becauſe our *Jeſus*; therefore, moſt eminently, moſt literally, *God with us*, becauſe, by ſo miraculous an Union, a *Saviour of his People from their Sins.*

It may ſeem perhaps ſurprizing to ſome, that St. *Matthew* ſhould ſo frequently introduce his Citations with a *this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the Prophet:* But whoever conſiders the *Idiom* of the *Hebrew* Tongue, cannot but know, that the Phraſe, anſwering to the Expreſſions, *that it might be fulfilled*, means no more, than that *hereby was verified*, or that *this Event anſwered to the Prediction*, or the like. Nay, the *Jews* were accuſtomed to ſay, that a Paſſage of Scripture was then fulfilled, when any Thing happened that was applicable to it; and therefore it is no Wonder, that St. *Matthew*, who himſelf was a *Jew*, and very probably wrote his Goſpel in the *Hebrew* Tongue, for the Benefit of his Countrymen, ſhould naturally fall into their Style and Manner of Expreſſion.

Now whoever conſiders the State of the *Jews* in *Egypt*, their Bondage, and Danger of utter Extinction, by reaſon of the Decree which paſſed for the Deſtruction of their male Children (had not the Providence of God prevented the Execution of it) will ſoon perceive the Cauſe, why *Egypt* is made, in Scripture, the common Figure and Emblem of extreme Danger, and imminent Death; and why a Deliverance out of *Egypt* ſhould be applied to every great Act of Preſervation, where there ſeemed to be no viſible Means of Eſcape, inſomuch that, whenever any Inſtance of ſuch a watchful and protecting Providence happened, it was an uſual and proverbial Speech among the *Jews* (who were wont then, as they are ſtill, to apply Sentences out of Holy Writ to the common Occurrences of Life) to ſay, in Scripture-phraſe, *Out of* Egypt *have I called my Son*, or *he hath called him out of* Egypt, that is, he hath reſcued him from the Jaws of Death, or from the like Danger, that the *Iſraelites* were in, when he brought them out of *Egypt* with a *mighty Hand and a ſtretched out Arm.* Since *Joſeph* then was ordered to flee into *Egypt*, and to tarry there until *Herod* was dead, for this Reaſon, becauſe *Herod ſought the young Child's Life*: This diſtinguiſhing Preſervation of *Jeſus*, by Means of this Retreat, till the Danger was over, will juſtify the *Evangeliſt* (even tho' it had been any other Country, as well as *Egypt*, whereunto he retired) in applying to him the proverbial Saying, upon that Occaſion, *Out of* Egypt, that is, out of manifeſt Danger, *have I called my Son.*

The Removal of the Ten Tribes from their native Country, into a foreign Land, there to die, or live in Slavery, was ſo grievous a Calamity, that the Prophet *Jeremiah* (by way of *Proſopopœia*) introduces *Rachel*, the favourite Wife of *Jacob*, that great Progenitor of the *Iſraelites*, making bitter Lamentation for their Loſs and refuſing all Conſolation, becauſe there was no Hopes of their Recovery. And the Murder of ſo many innocent Babes at *Bethlehem*, by the bloody Decree of *Herod*, was an Event ſo dolorous to their tender Parents, that the Evangeliſt, when he came to relate it, thought he might juſtly (by way of Accommodation) apply the Words of the Prophet and, in the Name of all the miſerable Mothers, that had loſt their Children, make *Rachel*, upon this Occaſion, (and as a farther Accompliſhment of the Prophecy) return to her Weeping again. The rather becauſe *Rachael*, having been long dead before the Captivity, may, with equal Propriety, by the Evangeliſt, as ſhe is by the Prophet, be introduced weeping; the rather alſo becauſe ſhe was ſo fond a Lover of Children, that ſhe is fitly enough brought in here in the Room of the tender Mothers, who wept for the Loſs of theirs; and the rather, becauſe the Slaughter of the *Bethlemites* might be called that of her Children, becauſe among them was the Place of her Sepulture, after that ſhe had loſt her Life in the bitter Pangs of Child-birth.

There is no Prophet, we own, wherein it is expreſly ſaid, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be called a *Nazarene*, but the Obſervation of St. *Jerom*, in his Comment upon this Place, is not amiſs, *viz.* that when St. *Matthew* mentions the Word Prophets in the plural Number, (whereas in other Places he had always cited ſome particular Prophet) he thereby ſhews, that he did not take the Words from the Prophets, but only the Senſe.

Since then the Title of *Nazarene*, both *Jews* and other Enemies of *Chriſtianity* have always, by way of Contempt, given to our bleſſed Saviour, becauſe he was ſuppoſed to come out of that very City, from whence it was thought impoſſible, that any good Thing ſhould come; and ſince moſt of the Prophets ſpeak of *Chriſt*, as a Perſon that was to be reputed vile and abject, *a Stranger to his Brethren, and even an Alien to his Mother's Son's, deſpiſed and rejected of Men, deſpiſed and eſteemed not*, here is the plain Senſe of the Words, *he ſhall be a* Nazarene; and the Angel, by God's Appointment, no doubt, ſent him to this contemptible Place, that he might from thence have a Name of Infamy and Contempt put upon him, according to the frequent Intimations by the Prophets.

Q. *Was the* Star, *which appeared to the* Eaſtern *Sages, to direct them to* Judæa, *in order to pay their Homage to our new-born Saviour, one of theſe Celeſtial Bodies that conſtantly appear in the Firmament; or was it ſome luminous Subſtance created on purpoſe for that Occaſion?*

A. That this Star was no Cœleſtial one, and ſuch as might be ſeen at a vaſt Diſtance, its Motion, contrary to the ordinary Courſe of Stars, its performing the Part of a Guide to the Travellers, and that by Day, very probably, as well as Night, its accommodating itſelf to their Neceſſities, and diſappearing and returning, as they could beſt, or leaſt be without it, and (what is a Circumſtance, as remarkable as any) its pointing out, and ſtanding over the very Place, where the Child was. (which the Height and Diſtance of common Stars makes it impoſſible for them to do) are a ſufficient Demonſtration. It ſeems not improbable therefore, that what the Evangeliſt calls a Star, was only that glorious Light, which ſhone upon the *Bethlehem* Shepherds, when the Angel came to impart unto them the Tidings of our *Saviour*'s Birth; for that this Light was exceeding great is clear from that Expreſſion, which ſtiles it the Glory of the

Lord, and that it was a Light from Heaven hanging over their Heads, the Words in the *Greek*, as well as *Latin* Verſion ſufficiently inform us.

Now every one knows, that ſuch a Light, at a great Diſtance, appears like a Star; or, at leaſt, after it had thus ſhone about the Shepherds, it might be lifted up on high, and then formed into the Likeneſs of a Star; where ſtanding vertically over *Judea* for ſome Time, it might direct the *Arabian* Aſtrologers (whom ſo ſtrange a PHÆNOMENON could hardly eſcape) to the capital City, as the likelieſt Place to gain Intelligence of the new-born King, whoſe Star they had ſeen in the Eaſt, *i. e.* from the Place of their Abode, which was in the *Eaſt*: For, ſhould we ſuppoſe, that this Light was placed in any Part of the Eaſtern Hemiſphere, it would have denoted ſomething extraordinary among the *Indians*, or other Eaſtern Nations, rather than among the People of the *Jews*.

Q. *But how came theſe* Wiſemen *to know, that this Star, or luminous Appearance in the Heavens, denoted the Birth of a King?*

A. For the Reſolution of this Queſtion, it muſt be obſerved, what ſome Heathen Hiſtorians tell us, *viz. that through the whole* Eaſt, *it was expected, that about that Time, a King was to ariſe out of* Judea, *who ſhould rule over all the World.* Nor could it well be otherwiſe, ſince, from the Time of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, we find the *Jews* diſperſed through all the Provinces of the *Perſian* Monarchy, and that in great Numbers, and many People of the Land becoming *Jews*; and, after their Return home, increaſed ſo mightily, that they were diſperſed through *Africa*, *Aſia*, and many Cities and Iſlands of *Europe*, and, (as *Joſephus* tells us) wherever they dwelt, making many Proſelytes to their Religion. Now theſe *Wiſemen*, living ſo near to *Judea*, the Seat of this Prophecy, and converſing with *Jews*, *i. e.* with thoſe, who every where expected the Completion of it at that Time, as ſoon as they came to ſee this extraordinary Star, or Body of Light, hovering over *Judea*, they might rationally conjecture, that it ſignified the Completion of that celebrated Prophecy, concerning the King of *Jewry*, over the Center of which Land, they, being then in the *Eaſt*, might ſee this Meteor hang.

Q. *How do you vindicate the Providence of God from Injuſtice, in ſuffering ſuch a Number of innocent Babes to fall a Sacrifice to the Jealouſy of a barbarous Tyrant?*

A. Not long after the Departure of theſe *Eaſtern* Sages from *Bethlehem*, we find a prodigious Multitude of innocent Babes inhumanly put to Death, upon the account of him, whom theſe Wiſemen came to adore. But, to vindicate the Juſtice and Goodneſs of Providence in this Proceeding, we need not only appeal to God's univerſal Dominion over all his Creatures, and the Right he has to take away, in what Manner he pleaſes, the Being which he gave us; we need only conſider the preſent Life, not as our laſt and final State, but as one, whoſe principal Tendency is to another; and then it will appear, that there is no certain Meaſure to be taken of the divine Juſtice or Goodneſs towards us, without taking in the Diſtributions of that other Life, which, indeed, is the main End of our living at all. What *Solomon*, therefore, in his *Wiſdom*, ſays of the Righteous in general, is much more verified in the Caſe of theſe harmleſs Babes, *Wiſd.* iii. 2, *&c.* *In the Sight of the Unwiſe they ſeemed to die, and their Departure is taken for Miſery, but they are in Peace: For, tho' they were puniſhed in the Sight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Immortality.* For a frail, a ſhort, a troubleſome, a dangerous Life, God gives them the Recompence of an immortal, a ſecurely happy, a compleatly glorious one; which not only vindicates, but magnifies his Goodneſs and Liberality to them. He conſiders their Infancy, and the noble Fruit which might have ſprung from theſe tender Plants, had they been allowed to grow to full Maturity, and accordingly rewards them: For though they wanted the Will of Martyrdom, which riper Years may have, yet it muſt allowed, that they were clear of that voluntary and actual Sin, which thoſe riper Years would have contracted: And therefore, as (in the moſt literal Senſe) they were not defiled with ſenſual Pleaſures, but left the World in Virgin-Innocence; as they were truly redeemed from among Men, whoſe early Tranſlation to a State of Bliſs prevented the Hazards and Temptations of a wicked World; and, as they were (ſtrictly ſpeaking) *the Firſt-Fruits unto God and the Lamb*, who began to ſhed their Blood in the Cauſe of a new-born Saviour; ſo God hath been pleaſed to to vouchſafe them a peculiar Honour, *Rev.* xiv. 3, 4, 5. *To ſing as it were a new Song before the Throne, and to follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth, becauſe in their Mouth was found no Guile, for they were without Fault before the Throne of God.*

Q. *Our bleſſed Saviour, we read, wrought many Miracles in Confirmation of his Doctrine and Divine Miſſion: Now I ſhould be glad if you would explain the Nature of a Miracle; and how far the Evidence of the Miracles which* Chriſt *wrought, were available to thoſe great Ends?*

A. A true Miracle is properly ſuch an Operation as exceeds the ordinary Courſe of Things, and is repugnant to the known Laws of Nature, as to its ſubject Matter, or the Manner of its Performance. For though we readily acknowledge, that there are Beings in the ſpiritual World, which are able to perform Things far exceeding the Power of Men, and therefore apt to beget Wonder and Amazement in us; yet, that any created Beings, and conſequently Agents of a limited Power, are capable of working ſuch Miracles as our Saviour did; are capable of controuling the Courſe of Nature, of ſupplying Men's natural Defects, of giving Sight to the Blind, Speech to the Dumb, and Life to the Dead, (which are Miracles relating to the Subject-Matter) or of doing any of theſe Things in an Inſtant, by a Touch, by a Word, at a Diſtance, and without any kind of outward Means, (which are Miracles regarding the Manner of their Performance) is a Thing impoſſible; unleſs we can ſuppoſe, that limited, inferior and created Beings have an equal Power of creating, controuling and reſtoring, with Almighty God, which is Contradiction enough in all Conſcience.

It was upon this Perſuaſion, therefore, *viz.* that *true Miracles are the ſole Operation of God*; that the World has, all along, agreed to acknowledge and accept of Miracles, as an authentick and indiſputable Teſtimony, that the Perſons entruſted with ſuch Power, were certainly ſent and commiſſioned from God. To this Purpoſe we find *Pharaoh's* raoh's Magicians confeſſing, that the Miracles which *Moſes* and *Aaron* exhibited, were the *Finger of God*; and, in the Controverſy between *Elijah* and the Prieſts of *Baal*, it was readily accepted, as a fair Propoſal, that he, *who anſwered by Fire from Heaven*, ſhould be unanimouſly ſerved and worſhipped as God. The leſs Reaſon have we then to wonder, that we hear a learned Ruler of the *Jews* accoſting our Lord in theſe Words, *Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher ſent from God, for no Man can do thoſe Miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him*; or that a mean Man, who had been born blind, ſhould confound the whole Aſſembly of the *Phariſees*, with this one Argument, *Since the World began, was it not heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of the Blind; if this Man were not of God, he could do nothing*; or that our bleſſed Saviour himſelf ſhould ſo frequently appeal to the Miracles he wrought, as proper Teſtimonies of his divine Miſſion, *The Works which my Father hath ſent me to finiſh; the Works which I do in my Father's Name, the ſame bear Witneſs of me, that my Father ſent me.*

Our Saviour, indeed, and his Apoſtles both, do often appeal to the Predictions of the Prophets, relating to the promiſed *Meſſiah*, as fulfilled and accompliſhed in him; and the Truth is, unleſs the Validity of this Appeal can be ſupported, Miracles alone, or excluſive of this Teſtimony, would not be ſufficient Evidence of our Lord's Miſſion: But then, it ought to be conſidered, that when, among the particular Predictions of a Perſon promiſed to the *Jews*, as their *Meſſiah*, it was foretold, that he ſhould *be like unto* Moſes; that *the Spirit of the Lord ſhould reſt upon him*; that *he ſhould open the Eyes of the Blind, and unſtop the Ears of the Deaf*; and that he *ſhould make the Lame to leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb to ſing.* Miracles become then an eſſential Part of his Character, and ſure Teſt of his being a Prophet ſent from God.

Some modern *Jews*, indeed, when preſſed with the Evidence of our Saviour's Miracles, make this their Subterfuge, — That the *Meſſiah*, at his Coming, was not to *perform any Wonders of this kind, but only to manage the Lord's Battles, and to overcome the People that were round about him.* But that this was not the Senſe of the *Jewiſh* Nation is evident from the Words of that People in our Saviour's Time; *When* Chriſt *cometh, will he do more Miracles than theſe, which this Man hath done?* Nay, an Author of theirs, of no great Antiquity (after his having mentioned the three glorious Gifts, *viz.* Prophecy, Miracles, and the Knowledge of God, which the *Iſraelites*, in the Time of their Captivity, had loſt) gives us to underſtand, that upon the Appearance of the *Meſſiah*, the return of Miracles was juſtly to be expected, in Completion of this Prophecy, *I will pour out my Spirit upon all Fleſh, and your Sons and your Daughters ſhall propheſy, your old Men ſhall dream Dreams, and your young Men ſhall ſee Viſions.*

Since the *Meſſiah* then was to work Miracles, when he came into the World, if we conſider the Deſign of our Bleſſed *Saviour*'s Miſſion, *viz.* that he was a *Teacher ſent from God*, to aboliſh a Form of Worſhip, which had inconteſtibly been eſtabliſhed by the Power of Miracles in *Moſes*, and to introduce a new Religion, repugnant to the Wiſdom of the World, in many myſterious Doctrines, and abhorrent to the vicious Inclinations of Men, in all its righteous Laws and Precepts; that he was appointed, in ſhort, to deſtroy the Kingdom of the Devil, and, upon its Ruins, to erect a Kingdom of Righteouſneſs, there was an abſolute Neceſſity for him to be inveſted with a Power of working Miracles, otherwiſe his Pretenſions to this high Character had been ridiculous, and the *Jews*, with good Reaſon, might have demanded of him, *Maſter, we ſeek a Sign from thee, what Sign therefore doſt thou do, that we may ſee and believe?* But this Demand is effectually ſilenced by our *Saviour*'s being able to make the Reply, *If I had not done among you the Works which none other Man did, ye had not had Sin; but now ye have both ſeen, and hated both me and my Father.*

Q. *Wherein did our Bleſſed* Lord *excell* John *the* Baptiſt, *and other Prophets that were before him?*

A. *John the Baptiſt*, who was born a little before our *Saviour*, was his Fore-runner. He appeared at the Time when the *Meſſiah* was expected; and being much famed for his Virtue and Sanctity of Life, was followed by the People, who were prone to take him for the Prophet who was to come, as there was not, indeed, at that Time, a greater *Perſon born among Women*; and yet, the divine Providence ſo ordered the Matter, that, as great as he was, he wanted this Character of the true *Meſſiah*, *viz.* the working of Miracles; and our *Saviour*, comparing himſelf with the *Baptiſt*, calls him a burning and a ſhining Light, indeed, but who himſelf did no Miracles; *I have a greater Witneſs*, ſays he, *than that of* John, *for the Works which my Father hath given me to finiſh; the ſame Works that I do bear Witneſs of me, that I am the* Meſſiah, *or,* (which is all one) *that my Father hath ſent me.*

And well, indeed, might our Lord be allowed to claim a Pre-eminence, not above the *Baptiſt* only, but above every Prophet that went before him; when, upon ſo many Occaſions, he exerciſed a Power and Authority, not inferior to that of God; when, by the ſame Omnipotence wherewith he created all Things at firſt, he multiplied a few Loaves, and two Fiſhes, into a Sufficiency to feed five Thouſand; when, at his Command, the Wind and the Sea grew ſtill, and unclean Spirits departed from Men's Bodies, confeſſing him to be the Son of God; when acute Diſeaſes, and chronical Griefs, ſuch as no length of Time, no Skill, no Remedies, no Expence could aſſuage, were equally cured with a Touch of his Garment, or with a Word; nay, with a Word that operated effectually upon the Abſent, and at a Diſtance; when Perſons at Death's Door, nay, actually dead, and dead for ſome Time, were commanded back to Life and Health; and himſelf, when ſlain by the *Jews*, and committed to the Grave, was, according to his own Prediction, raiſed from the Dead, by the ſame divine Spirit, whereby *He quickeneth and enliveneth all Things.*

Theſe, and many more Actions of the like Nature, recorded in the Goſpel, are plain Demonſtrations of a divine Power reſiding in our bleſſed Saviour; but then there is ſomething farther to be ſaid, concerning theſe miraculous Acts of his, *viz.* that they were exceedingly well choſen to characterize the *Meſſiah*, in regard of their Suitableneſs to the End and Deſign of his Coming.

Q. *What was the Difference between thoſe Miracles*

cles wrought by Moſes *and the Prophets, under the Law, and thoſe performed by* Jeſus Chriſt?

A The Law was enacted with a very terrible Pomp, ſuch as ſpoke it to be (what indeed it was) a Diſpenſation of Servitude and great Severity. But the Goſpel is a Covenant of Reconciliation and Peace, of Friendſhip, nay, of Sonſhip with God, intended, not ſo much to ſtrike Awe upon Men's Minds, as to charm and win them over by all the endearing Methods of Gentleneſs and Love; and therefore the Wonders, that bore Teſtimony to its Truth, were Works of Mercy and Kindneſs, ſuch as never wrought any Harm, but always brought Comfort and Advantage to the diſtreſſed. Suſtenance to the Hungry, Supplies to thoſe in Want, Safety to them that were ready to periſh, Speech to the Dumb, Hearing to the Deaf, Eyes to the Blind, Underſtanding to the Diſtracted, Strength to the Impotent, Limbs to the Maimed, Health to the Sick, Life to the Dead, and Releaſe to Souls and Bodies held in Bondage by the Devil; theſe, theſe are the Wonders by which our *Jeſus* proved proved his Miſſion, Wonders of Gentleneſs and Piety, of Beneficence and Love, wherein he manifeſtly excels, and, as it were, triumphs over all the Prophets that went before him. They proved their Commiſſion by Acts of divine Vengeance, and ſore Plagues, as well as by Cures, and all corporal Deliverances; whereas our bleſſed Lord went about always doing Good; healing Diſeaſes and Infirmities, but inflicting none; and releaſing from Death, but never haſtening it; inſomuch that through the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, we have not one Inſtance of his Power exerted in the Suffering and Annoyance even of his bittereſt Enemies.

When *John the Baptiſt* had heard of the Works which *Chriſt* did, he ſent two of his Diſciples with this Meſſage to him, *Art thou he that ſhould come* (*i. e.* the promiſed *Meſſiah*) *or look we for another?* To whom our Lord returned this Anſwer, *Go, and ſhew* John *again theſe Things, which ye do hear and ſee, the Blind receive their Sight, and the Lame walk; the Lepers are cleanſed, and the Deaf hear, and the Dead are raiſed up.* The Anſwer is, in a great Meaſure, taken from the Prophet *Iſaiah*, deſcribing the great Operations of the *Meſſiah*; and, by remitting the *Baptiſt* to them, our Saviour intended to ſhew, that he muſt of Neceſſity be the Perſon he ſent to enquire after, becauſe he had not only the Power of doing Miracles, but even of doing the ſelf ſame Miracles that the evangelical Prophet had predicted of the *Meſſiah*.

Q. *But don't we read of Miracles performed by other Perſons, who, we are well aſſured, never had the Divine Aſſiſtance; unleſs we could ſuppoſe that God would aſſiſt Impoſtors?*

A. Of all the great Attributes of God, there is none that ſhine brighter, and more amiable in our Eyes, than his Truth and Goodneſs: The former cannot atteſt a Lye, nor the latter ſeduce Men into dangerous and deſtructive Miſtakes. And yet, if God ſhould communicate any Part of his Power to an Impoſtor, to enable him to work Miracles, and ſuch Miracles in kind, as were foretold of the true *Meſſiah*, in Confirmation of his Pretences, what would become of theſe two ſacred Attributes! To ſuſpect, I ſay, that Almighty God is capable of employing his infinite Power, with a Deſign to miſlead and delude Mankind, in what relates to their eternal Concerns, is to deſtroy and ſubvert his very Nature, and to leave ourſelves no Notion at all of ſuch a Being. Nay, for him to permit the ſame Evidences to be produced for Errors, as for Truth, is, in Effect, to cancel his own Credentials, and to make Miracles of no Significance at all. And therefore, how artfully ſoever ſome Impoſtors may contrive their Deluſions, yet we are not to doubt, but that, if we examine, *1ſt*, the Works themſelves, and their Manner of being done; and *2dly*, The Perſons themſelves, and the Ends for which they do them, we ſhall be able to diſcern the Difference between real Miracles and lying Wonders.

Firſt then, In relation to the Works themſelves, it is required, that they be Poſſible, ſince no Power whatever can effect that which is ſtrictly Impoſſible; that they be Probable, ſince the Divine Power will hardly concern itſelf in what ſavours of Fable and Romance; that they be not below the Majeſty of God, as he is the Ruler and Governor of the World; nor inconſiſtent with his Character, as he is a good and gracious Being; that they be done openly, before a ſufficient Number of Witneſſes; readily, without any previous Forms or Ceremonies, which may make them look like Incantation; and upon all proper and important Occaſions, to denote the Permanency of that divine Power, by which they are effected.

Secondly, In relation to the Perſon pretending to a divine Miſſion, it is required that he be a Man of good Report, for his unblamable Converſation; that he be in the perfect Exerciſe of his Reaſon and Senſes, and conſtant and uniform in the Meſſage he delivers; that the Doctrine, which he endeavours to eſtabliſh by his Miracles, be conſiſtent with the Principles of true Reaſon, and natural Religion; conſiſtent with the right Notions and Worſhip of God; and conſiſtent with the former Revelations he hath made of his Will; of a Tendency to deſtroy the *Devil's* Power in the World; to recover Men from their Ignorance; to reform them from their Vices; to lead them into the Practice of Virtue and true Godlineſs, by proper Motives and Arguments; and, in ſhort, to advance the general Welfare of Societies, as well as every Man's particular Happineſs in this Life, and in his Preparation for a better. And now to obſerve how all theſe Characters meet in the bleſſed *Jeſus*.

That *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* was a Perſon of great Virtue and Goodneſs, in full Poſſeſſion of his Reaſon and Senſes, and conſtant and uniform in the Meſſage he delivered to Mankind, not only the whole Tenour of his Conduct, as it is recorded by the *Evangeliſts*; but the Nature of his Doctrine, and the Excellency of his Precepts, the Manner of his Diſcourſes to the People, and the Wiſdom of his Replies to the inſiduous Queſtions of his Adverſaries, are a plain Demonſtration: And that *this* Jeſus *was a Man approved of God, by Miracles, Wonders, and Signs, which God did by him in the Midſt of all the People*, is manifeſt, not only from the Teſtimony of his Friends and Diſciples, but from the Confeſſion of *Heathen Hiſtorians*, as well as the Traditions of the *Jewiſh Talmud*, wherein the Memory of them is preſerved.

Theſe Miracles, indeed, were above the Skill of Men or Angels to effect; but they were not therefore Impoſſible, becauſe ſubject to the Power of Almighty God; for the ſame Agent who formed the Eye, could reſtore the Blind to Sight; he, who wrought the whole Frame of our Bodies, could as eaſily cure the Maimed, or heal the Diſeaſed; and he, who cauſes the Rain to deſcend, and to water the Earth, *that it may miniſter Bread to the Eater, and Seed to the Sower*) could be at no Loſs, to change Water into Wine, or to multiply the Loaves and Fiſhes for the Relief of the Hungry.

Theſe Miracles again, being Acts of Mercy, as well as Power, were not conſiſtent with the Character of an Impoſtor, or the Agency of any wicked Spirit; but that God ſhould have Compaſſion on his Creatures, and exerciſe his tender Mercies over the Works of his own Hands; that he ſhould give Bread to the Hungry, and Limbs to the Maimed, and Releaſe to ſuch as were under the Captivity of *Satan*, is no improbable Thing at all. Theſe were Actions ſuitable to his Majeſty, and highly comporting with his Wiſdom and Goodneſs; ſince they naturally tended, both to beget Reverence in the Minds of Men towards his Meſſenger, and to reconcile them to the Belief and Obedience of his heavenly Will.

Now theſe Miracles our Saviour did openly in the Temple, in the Synagogues, and on the Feſtivals, when the Concourſe of People was greateſt, when the Doctors of the Law, who came on purpoſe to enſnare him, were ſitting by, and *beholding what was done*. Theſe he did readily, and with a Word's ſpeaking: For *Peace, be ſtill* quelled the Raging of the Winds and Waves; *Young Man ariſe*, revived the Widow's Son; *Ephphatha, be opened*, gave the deaf Man hearing; and *Lazarus, come forth*, raiſed him from the Grave, who had been four Days dead. Theſe he did frequently, and upon all proper Occaſions; for from the Time he entered upon his Miniſtry, ſcarce a Day paſſed, without ſome freſh Inſtance of his Power and Goodneſs; inſomuch, that if all his Actions of this kind, had been particularly recorded, *the World itſelf* (as St. *John*, by an elegant *Hyperbole*, declares) *would not contain the Books, which ſhould be written*: And (what crowns all) theſe he did with a Deſign to eſtabliſh a Religion, whoſe Buſineſs it is, to give Men the moſt exalted Thoughts of God and his Providence, and the greateſt Certainty of future Rewards and Puniſhments; to oblige them, by the ſtrongeſt Motives, to obſerve and practice whatſoever Things are true, and honeſt, and juſt, and pure, and lovely, and of good Report; to perſuade them to mortify every inordinate Affection, and to attain thoſe excellent Diſpoſitions of Mind, which will make them reſemble God, and beſt prepare them for future Happineſs: In a Word, to eſtabliſh the Practice of the two great Virtues, *the Love of God*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*, upon theſe two excellent Principles, *of Faith in God*, as the Rewarder of thoſe that ſeek him, and *Faith in* Jeſus Chriſt, as the Saviour and Judge of Mankind.

And, if ſuch be the End and Deſign of the *Chriſtian* Religion, there is little Reaſon to ſuppoſe (as the *Jews* are very willing to object) that the *Devil* could have any Hand in aſſiſting our Saviour to effect ſuch Miracles, as gave Credit to the firſt Appearance and Strength, and Succeſs to the Propagation of thoſe Doctrines which were calculated on Purpoſe to deſtroy his Dominion in the World, and, upon its Ruins to erect the Kingdom of God, and his *Chriſt*. The *Devil* is not ſo ſilly a Being, as to join Forces with his avowed Enemy, in order to ruin and depoſe himſelf: And, if our Saviour could hope for no Aſſiſtance from that Quarter, the Pretence of his doing his Miracles, by Virtue of the Name *Jehovah*, ſtolen out of the *Sanctuary*, and uſed as a Charm, is a Fiction too groſs and palpable, to ſtand in need of any Confutation.

Philoſtratus, indeed, in his Hiſtory of the Life of *Apollonius*, ſets him up for a great Worker of Miracles; and ſome, of late Times, have been bold enough to name him in Competition with our bleſſed Saviour. But, beſides, that the Hiſtory of *Apollonius* has no other Voucher than his Servant *Damis*, (who was confeſſedly a weak and ignorant Perſon, and conſequently very capable of being impoſed upon by the artful Juggles of his Maſter) the very Miracles, related therein, are, for the moſt Part ridiculous, unworthy the Character of a Prophet, and (as the learned *Photius* ſays) *full of Follies and monſtrous Tales*. Nay, in the higheſt Inſtances of his miraculous Power, *viz.* his raiſing a dead Woman to Life again, *Philoſtratus* himſelf ſuſpects (as he ſays the Company did) that there was ſome Colluſion in the Matter; but, if even it were not ſo, the Doctrines which *Apollonius* taught, and the Zeal he profeſſed for the *Pagan* Idolatry, together with his exceſſive Pride, Ambition, and vain Affectation of divine Honours, are a plain Indication, that his Miracles were falſe, and his moſt ſurprizing Performances, either the Effects of Magick, or down right Cheat and Impoſture.

Tacitus, indeed, tells us of two Cures, one of a blind, and the other of a lame Perſon, which *Veſpaſian* pretended to work at *Alexandria*; but whoever reflects on the Situation of his Affairs, at that Time, will perceive ſome Reaſon to ſuſpect a Colluſion. He was now in a Diſpute with himſelf what to do, whether to aſſume the *Roman* Empire, or reſtore the antient Form of Government, a *Commonwealth*. The Reſtoration of the latter was what *Dion* and *Euphrates*, two eminent Philoſophers, adviſed; but *Apollonius* (whom he likewiſe conſulted upon this Occaſion) with great Vehemence perſuaded the contrary, and (being himſelf accuſtomed to ſuch Artifices) might, not improbably, ſuggeſt to *Veſpaſian*, the Neceſſity of ſome Miracle or other, in order to recommend him to the People, as a Perſon highly favour'd by the Gods.

And, indeed, if we conſider what an obſcure Perſon, and of what mean Original *Veſpaſian* was, there ſeems to be the greater Reaſon, why *Apollonius*, and others of that Party, ſhould think of ſome Expedient or other, to raiſe him a Reputation in the World, anſwerable to the new Station of Life they had adviſed him to accept: And, whoever conſiders farther, what various Artifices were, at that Time, made uſe of to procure an Opinion of Divinity in the Emperors, will not much wonder, that ſuch Reports ſhould be ſpread by them, or that certain Perſons ſhould be ſuborned to feign ſuch Diſtempers, and then to give it out, that the Touch of the Emperor's Hand had cured them; tho' it muſt be confeſſed, ſome are of Opinion, that what is reported by *Veſpaſian*, to this Purpoſe, cannot fairly be denied, and might, perperhaps, be providentially intended, to give ſome Dignity and ſuperior Character to a Perſon, who (in Conjunction with his Son *Titus*) was appointed by God to be a ſignal Inſtrument of the divine Vengeance on the *Jewiſh* Nation.

Allowing then, that God, for wiſe Ends of his Providence, might now and then permit ſome eminent Perſon to do a real Miracle; yet what is this to that vaſt Number, and great Variety, recorded of our Saviour, who, in the ſmall Space of his Miniſtry, did more wonderful Works of this Kind, than what *Moſes*, and all the Prophets put together, from the earlieſt Account of Time, that we read of, are known to have done?

The *Jews*, indeed, to ſwell the Account of *Moſes*'s Miracles, reckon each of thoſe that he did in *Egypt*, double; one as a Miracle of Juſtice, in puniſhing *Pharaoh* and his People, and another as a Miracle of Mercy, in preſerving the *Iſraelites* from the like Deſtruction. But, after all their Pains and Contrivance, the Sum amounts to very little, in Compariſon to the many that are recorded of our bleſſed Saviour. The Miracles of all the Prophets put together, by the *Jews* own Computation, do not equal thoſe of *Moſes*; and yet we muſt remember, that *Moſes* lived an hundred and twenty Years, forty of which were one continued Scene of Action; and that the Compaſs of the Prophets, from the Creation of the World, to the Deſtruction of the ſecond Temple, includes three thouſand and ſome hundreds. Lay this together, and it evidently follows, that ſuch extraordinary Demonſtrations of the divine Preſence and Power, were very thin and ſparingly exhibited, when ſet againſt the innumerable Inſtances of them, in the three, or (at moſt) four Years preaching of the bleſſed *Jeſus*. And if the Wonders related by the *Evangeliſts*, as done by himſelf, in ſo ſhort a Time, do far exceed what both *Moſes* and all the Prophets did, what ſhall we ſay to thoſe many more, that are not related? What to thoſe many more ſtill, that were done by the Apoſtles and Diſciples, in Confirmation of the Doctrine he had taught?

To ſum up what hath been ſaid on this Subject. Since a real Miracle is ſuch an Operation, as can be done by none but God, or ſuch as are appointed by him, and was therefore, in all Ages, acknowledged as an authentick Proof of a divine Miſſion; ſince the Prophets, in their Predictions of the *Meſſiah*, repreſent him, as working Miracles of a kind and merciful Nature; and our *Saviour*, when he entered upon his Miniſtry, and aſſumed that Character, diſplay'd a wonderful Power in Works of the ſame Kind; ſince that Power could proceed from no other Cauſe, but a Communication from God, and yet to imagine that God would communicate any Part of his Power to give Sanction to an Impoſtor, is a Thing repugnant to his ſacred Attributes; ſince, upon Examination, it appears, that all the Marks and Characters of true Miracles concur in the Works of *Jeſus*, but violent Suſpicions of Trick and Artifice in thoſe that are named in Competition with him; beſides theſe Characters of their Truth, the Number of thoſe which he did (beſides thoſe that were done by Perſons, acting in his Name, and by his Authority) was greater than what all the the true Workers of Miracles, *viz. Moſes* and the Prophets had done, through the whole Compaſs of the *Old Teſtament*: Since theſe Things appear to be ſuch, I ſay, we are under a Neceſſity to conclude, that our bleſſed Saviour muſt have been the true *Meſſiah* promiſed to the *Jews*, and characterized in the Writings of their Prophets; that he was the great *Meſſenger of the Covenant*, ſent from God, for *if he had not been of God, he could have done nothing*; and, conſequently, that the Meſſage which he delivered to us, containing this Covenant, or, what is all one, that the Religion which he hath ſettled in the World, and confirmed by ſo many inconteſtable Proofs (ſo far as the Teſtimony of Miracles is available) cannot but be true.

Q. *Why did our Saviour generally deliver his Inſtructions in Parables, rather than in plain and intelligible Diſcourſes?*

A. The frequent Uſe of Parables and Emblems, in the Diſcourſes and Writings of the oriental Sages, and eſpecially of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, is ſo very well known, that a Man muſt diſcover his Ignorance, who pretends to aſſert, that our bleſſed Saviour attempted any Innovation, when he firſt began to inſtruct the People in a parabolical Way, ſince ſeveral of his Diſcourſes of this kind, particularly that of the rich Glutton, and of the fooliſh Virgins, are acknowledged to be borrowed from the Writings of the *Rabbins*.

The *Jews*, above all Nations, delighted in this way of Reaſoning. Their Books, at this Day, are full of ſuch Parables as our Saviour uſed, and are generally introduced in a Form of Speech, not unlike his; *Whereunto ſhall I liken ſuch, or ſuch a Thing?* Nay, in the *Talmudical* Treatiſes, ſuch as the Treatiſe *Killaim*, there is a Diſpute *of ſowing upon the Rocks and Stones*, and of *mixing Wheat and Tares together*; and in *Peah* (a Tract in the *Jeruſalem Talmud*) there is mention made of a *Tree of Muſtard-Seed, which one might climb up into*, like other Trees. So that our Saviour was by no means to blame, but highly to be commended, for purſuing this parabolical Way of teaching Morality, which was the moſt celebrated Method among the *Jews*. For his farther Vindication, however, ſome have obſerved, that what our Saviour delivered in this Manner, did not contain the fundamental Precepts and Doctrines of the Goſpel (for theſe were taught with ſuch ſufficient Clearneſs, in the fifth, ſixth and ſeventh Chapters of St. *Matthew*) but only the Myſteries relating to the Progreſs of the Goſpel, and the Event of it among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and the *Jews* themſelves acknowledge, that the Predictions of this Nature, were uſually taught in allegorical and emblematical Expreſſions, being not ſo neceſſary to be known, as were the fundamental Rules of Faith and Manners.

The Truth is, the *Eaſtern* Way of Reaſoning was ſo different from that of the *Weſtern*, that the ſoundeſt Philoſophy of *Greece* or *Rome* would have been mere Jargon and Cant at *Jeruſalem*. The only Method of reaſoning which was agreeable to the *Jewiſh* Taſte, was to uſher in an handſome Simile or Story, appoſite to the Matter in Hand; to apply a ſmart Saying of ſome antient Worthy, or to bring good Proof from their Law or antient Tradition; but to go to prove Morality to them (as *Plato* or *Tully* do) from the eternal Rules of Juſtice, from the Rectitude and Honourableneſs of Virtue, and the Pravity and Turpitude of Vice, would have been ſuch a Way of talking, as the wiſeſt Man of their Education would have greatly deſpiſed; and therefore our bleſſed Saviour, (who was well acquainted with the Temper and Cuſtoms of the People, with whom he converſed) took care that his Way of inſtructing them ſhould be ſuch, as was moſt agreeable to their Education, and conſequently ſuch as would tend more to their Edification, than if he had introduced the philoſophic Method of Morality, which was only in uſe in ſuch Nations, as were deſtitute of the Benefits of a divine Revelatiod.

The *Heathens*, indeed, couched their religious Myſteries under Fables and Allegories, out of a Principle both of Fear and Policy, to conceal them from the Contempt of the Vulgar, and to excite the Study and Curioſity of the Learned: But in this latter Deſign they ſeem to be miſtaken, becauſe the Learned could no ſooner look into the Matters hid under theſe Fables, but they muſt have diſcovered their Shame, Abſurdity, and Ridiculouſneſs. The Deſign of our Lord's ſpeaking to the People in Parables was quite contrary to this, as himſelf declares, *viz. Becauſe they ſeeing ſee not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they underſtand*; which Words, both in ſacred and profane Authors, are a proverbial Expreſſion, concerning Men wicked and ſo ſlothful, that either they attend not to, or will not follow the cleareſt Intimations, and Convictions of their Duty; and therefore, to awaken their Attention, and make the ſtronger Impreſſion upon them, our Saviour was forced to have Recourſe to Parables.

This Paſſage, indeed, in the other *Evangeliſts*, that mention it, ſeems to bear a different Senſe, *unto them that are without, all theſe Things are done in Parables, that ſeeing they may ſee, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not underſtand*: Or, as it is in St. *Luke, that ſeeing they might not ſee, and hearing they might not underſtand*: As if our Lord had ſpoken to the Multitudes in Parables, *i. e.* in a plain aud familiar Way, on purpoſe that they might not underſtand him; which, beſides the Contradiction, ſeems to include a Spice of Malevolence, where there never was any. But all this is occaſioned by the Miſtake of our Tranſlators, who, both in St. *Mark* and St. *Luke*, have rendered the *Greek* Word *Ina*, by *that*, which ſhould have been *becauſe*; for this gives the Words a quite different Turn: In St. *Mark, becauſe ſeeing they do ſee, and not perceive*; and, in St. *Luke, becauſe ſeeing they ſee not, and hearing they underſtand not*. The natural Import of which is this, —— That the *Jews*, by reaſon of their Prejudices, not being able to underſtand the great Myſteries of the Goſpel, our Saviour, out of Love to their Souls, accommodated himſelf to their Capacities, by ſpeaking to them in Parables, *i. e.* in Metaphors and Similitudes, borrowed from Things temporal and corporeal, in order to bring them to a more competent Underſtanding of his Doctrine.

To you it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but not to them, does not therefore imply, that our Saviour's Parables were dark and obſcure; and that, by ſpeaking to the People in this Manner, he had a Deſign to conceal any Truth that was requiſite for them to know, but only that he made a fuller Diſcovery of his Doctrine to his Diſciples, than it was neceſſary, at that Time, to make to the Multitude; that he inſtructed them in Private, and inlarged upon the Senſe of his Parables, and let them into the Knowledge of ſeveral Things that were not yet proper to be communicated to all, becauſe they were his peculiar Friends, and his conſtant Companions; were more diſpoſed to receive his Doctrine; were afterwards to be the Preachers of it; and, at length, to ſeal the Truth of it with their Blood.

Q. *Was it conſiſtent with our Saviour's ſacred Character to be* angry, *as we read he was with the* Phariſees, Mark iii. 5?

A. That *Anger*, conſidered in itſelf, and upon all Occaſions whatever, is unlawful, neither the moſt rigid Philoſophers, nor the moſt ſevere *Chriſtians* have been able to prove. It is one of thoſe Paſſions that are implanted in us by the God of Nature. The firſt Motions of it ſeem to be mechanical, and the Haſtineſes or Slowneſs of it depends, in a great meaſure upon the Temper of the Body, and the animal Spirits: So far then as it is natural, we dare not account it criminal, for fear of making God, who hath implanted it in us, the Author of Sin. Thoſe who define it *a Deſire of Revenge*, or of doing Evil to another, purely becauſe he has done ſo to us, make it indeed a ſinful Paſſion, and a plain Violation of that Command, which requires us *not to avenge ourſelves, but rather to give Place unto Wrath*; but if it be conſidered, as proceeding upon a Deſire of obtaining Satisfaction for ſome Injury done to us, or to thoſe for whom we are concerned, the Honour of God, the Reverence due to the Laws, the Love of Virtue, and the Protection of good Men, may make this not only an Innocent, but highly neceſſary and commendable. There is a Tameneſs of Spirit, that juſtly deſerves Cenſure; and, in ſome Caſes, we even do not well unleſs we are angry: And for this Reaſon, I make no doubt, it was that our bleſſed Saviour, on ſome Occaſions, ſuffered himſelf to be ſeen in ſome Degrees of this Paſſion; namely, to evince the Lawfulneſs of it, and, by his Example, to confute the Doctrine of thoſe heathen Stoicks, who condemned the Uſe of all Paſſions, and were making thoſe natural Tendencies, which God has given us, altogether ſuperfluous.

For Religion admits of no ſuch paradoxical Notions: When it requires us to be *ſlow to Wrath*, and only blames him, *who is angry with his Brother without a Cauſe*; and when it gives us this Caution, *Be angry, and ſin not, let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath*, it ſuppoſes the Thing itſelf warrantable, and only prohibits the Exceſs or long Duration of it. 'Tis the raſh, cauſeleſs, and continued Anger, that our holy Religion condemns; but who ſhall ſay, that our Saviour's Reſentment to the *Phariſees* was not upon good Grounds, when they, by their Traditions, had made void the moral Law, excuſed Men from doing what God had commanded, and laid upon them other unneceſſary Burthens, which he had no-where injoined? When the Pride and Arrogance of their Sect, and their Contempt and Hatred of all that contradicted them, made it neceſſary for him to uſe ſome Smartneſs in his Reprehenſions, thereby to excite them to a Senſibility of their Errors? They *had conſulted with the* Herodians *how they might deſtroy him*.

The Works which he did *by the Finger of God*, they had aſcribed to a *diabolical Power*, and therefore no Wonder *that he ſhould look upon them with Indignation, becauſe of the Hardneſs of their Hearts*. But when there was no ſuch Cauſe for any Degree of Anger, and where the Glory of God was not immediately concerned, his whole Life was the moſt perfect Pattern of Meekneſs and Patience, according to that Prediction concerning him, *He ſhall not try nor lift up, nor cauſe his Voice to be heard in the Streets; a bruiſed Reed ſhall he not break, and a ſmoaking Flax ſhall he not quench.*

Q. *How were the Completion of the antient Prophecies concerning* Chriſt, *a Proof of the Truth of* Chriſtian *Religion?*

A. One great Evidence of our Saviour's divine Miſſion, and, conſequently, of the Truth of his Religion, is the Completion of the antient Prophecies, relating to the *Meſſiah*, in his Perſon, Doctrine, and Miracles. He, indeed makes more frequent appeal to his Miracles; John v. 36. *The Works which the Father hath given me to finiſh*, ſays he, *the ſame Words, that I do, bear Witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me:* But ſince, at the ſame Time, he lays Claim to the Character of being the Perſon ſpoken of by *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, when he bids the People, Ver. 39. *ſearch the Scriptures, becauſe they teſtify of him*; 'tis certain, that his Title to the *Meſſiahſhip* muſt be tried by the Teſtimony of the Prophets; and that all the miraculous Works which he did, will not prove him to be the *Meſſenger of the Covenant*, whom God was to ſend, unleſs the ſeveral Predictions, which his Servants the Prophets gave of that renowned Perſon, are found to unite and agree in him. It can harldy be thought, but that God Almighty, who deſigned ſuch an ineſtimable Benefit for Mankind, as the ſending his own Son into the World for the Redemption of it, ſhould give ſome previous Notice of his Coming, and draw his Picture (as it were) ſo much to the Life and Likeneſs, that when the Original ſhould be brought to View, it might be known and diſtinguiſhed by it. It is acknowledged, I think, on all Hands, that the Prophets, *at ſundry Times, and in diverſe Manners*, have done this; that each of them, in his Turn, has drawn a Feature (if I may ſo ſay) and left ſome maſterly Stroke behind him of this great Perſonage, that was to come from Heaven; that one has deſcribed his *Parentage*, another the *Time*, another the *Place*, and another the *uncommon Manner of his Birth*; that ſome have taken notice of the moſt remarkable Actions and Events of his *Life*; and ſeveral of the moſt minute, and altogether ſingular Circumſtances of his *Death*; that by ſome his *Reſurrection* is foretold, by others the *Aſcent* to the Throne of God, and by others the perpetual *Duration* of his Kingdom: And if the Prophets are allowed to have done this, our only Enquiry is, whether the Lineaments, which they, in their ſeveral Capacities, have drawn of the promiſed *Meſſiah* (when all brought together) be anſwerable to the Account which the *Evangeliſts* have given us in their Hiſtory of the bleſſed *Jeſus*.

We readily own, indeed, that there is a great Obſcurity in the antient Prophecies. They are generally penned in a very exalted Stile, and abound with ſo many bold Metaphors, and hyperbolical Expreſſions; ſo many Allegories and Parables, and other abſtruſe Forms of Speech, as make it very difficult for the Interpreters of Scripture to diſcover their true Scope or Meaning. The Prophecies relating to the *Meſſiah* are ſtill more obſcure, becauſe, as they conſider him in the different Capacities of his Humiliation and Exaltation, unleſs this Diſtinction is taken along with us, when we apply them to one and the ſame Perſon, they will ſeem to load his Character with Contradictions. But ſtill, ſince it is acknowledged, that the great Deſign of Prophecy was to acquaint the World with the *Meſſiah*, and that, upon whatever particular Occaſions God ſent his Meſſengers, he always made this one Part of his Errand, we can hardly believe, that he would multiply theſe Meſſages to no Purpoſe; or, when he pretended to reveal this Matter to them, mock them with unintelligible Words, and leave them as much in the Dark as he found them. He might, indeed, for wiſe Purpoſes, *multiply Viſions, and uſe Similitudes, and dark Speeches, by the Miniſtry of the Prophets*; but in this grand Diſcovery of all, he certainly left ſuch Indications, as enabled thoſe who *looked for the Redemption of* Iſrael, and accordingly made it their Buſineſs to ſearch the Scriptures, and enquire into the Marks of the *Meſſiah*, to attain a competent Knowledge of them; nor can it well be doubted, but, that the *Jews* had ſome fixed and well-known Rules (though they have not deſcended to us) whereby they diſtinguiſhed the Paſſages in the prophetick Writings, which related to this important Subject, from any others, becauſe we find, that when *Herod* ſummoned the *Sanhedrim* together, and demanded of them, *where* Chriſt *was to be born*, they readily replied, at *Bethlehem* in *Judah*; having the Prophecy of *Micah*, to that Purpoſe, ready to produce.

We acknowledge again, that the Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah* were delivered, not only in an obſcure Manner, but in different Proportions, and at very diſtant Times. Thus to *Adam* and *Eve* he was promiſed in general, as a *Man*; to *Abraham*, as his *Poſterity*; to *Jacob*, as deſcending from the Tribe of *Judah* in Particular; to *David*, that he ſhould be of his Family, and the *Fruit of his Body*; to *Micah*, that he ſhould be born at *Bethlehem*; to *Iſaiah*, that his Birth ſhould be miraculous, and his Mother a *Virgin*; to the ſame Prophet, that his Death ſhould be for the Redemption of Mankind; to *Daniel*, when the preciſe Time of his Suffering ſhould be; to *Haggai*, laſtly, and *Zechariah* and *Malachi*, that all theſe Events ſhould be accompliſhed before the Deſtruction of the *ſecond Temple*. Now (not to mention any more) if we compute the Seaſons of theſe few, the general Prediction of a *Saviour* in *human Nature* will be found to bear Date, before that of his being *Abraham*'s Seed, about two thouſand and fourſcore Years; from this, to the Declaration of his particular Tribe, were two hundred and fourſcore Years; thence to the Prophecy of his particular Family, above ſix hundred Years; after that, to the Signification of his Miraculous Nativity, more than three hundred Years; and from thence, to the Time of his publick Appearance in the World, three hundred and fifty Years, or thereabouts. Now ſince theſe Prophecies were thus delivered by Degrees, and at ſuch diſtant and different Times, it may eaſily ſo happen, that, conſidering them ſingly and apart, we may find ſome Perſon and Event, to which they may be adapted, without any great Violence to the Text; but then the right Way, in this Caſe, to make a right Judgment, is, not by ſeparate and particular Paſſages, but by the Connection of the Whole, by the exact Coincidence and intire Agreement of all the Prophecies which, at ſeveral Times, denoted the *Meſſiah*, brought into one Point of Light, and laid together. This is the only Method we have to determine the Matter: And accordingly, let us now look into ſome of the principal Paſſages of our Saviour's Life, as it is recorded by the *Evangeliſts*, and ſo ſee whether they do not exactly agree with the ſeveral Characters which the Prophets have given of the *Meſſiah*.

Our Lord Jeſus, we are told, was conceived, and born of a pure Virgin, without the Concurrence of any Man, for ſo the Prophecy had foretold, that the *Seed of the Woman ſhould bruiſe the Serpent's Head*, and that *a Virgin ſhould conceive, and bear a Son, and call his Name* Immanuel. He was deſcended of the Family of *David*, and born at the Town of *Bethlehem*; becauſe, in Favour to that King, God had promiſed that *he would eſtabliſh his Seed for ever*; and that *out of* Bethlehem *a Ruler* of Iſrael *ſhould come, whoſe Goings-forth had been from Everlaſting*: And he was born in the Reign of King *Herod*, *i. e.* before the total Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* Government, and during the ſtanding of the ſecond Temple, becauſe the Prophecy ſays, that *the Scepter ſhould not depart from* Judah *until* Shiloh *come*; and another, that *the Deſire of all Nations ſhould come*; and, by his Preſence, make the *Glory of* God's *latter Houſe greater than that of the former*.

Well; But before his Appearance in the World, *John the Baptiſt* was appointed his Forerunner, and came to bear Witneſs of him, becauſe the Lord, by the Mouth of his Prophets had ſaid, *Behold I ſend my Meſſenger, and he ſhall prepare the Way before me*, he ſhall *cry in the Wilderneſs, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make ſtraight an Highway for our God*. When he made his Appearance in the World, he took up his chief Reſidence in the Province of *Galilee*, becauſe the Prophet, ſpeaking of the Inhabitants of that Country, tells us, that *upon them, who dwelt before in the Land of the Shadow of Death, did a great Light ſhine*, when they had it to ſay, *unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government ſhall be upon his Shoulder*, &c. When he came to converſe in it, ſuch was his quiet and inoffenſive Temper and Behaviour, that the Prophet did not miſrepreſent him, when he ſtiled him *the Prince of Peace*, and one who *would not cry, nor cauſe a Voice to be heard in the Streets*. When he entered upon his publick Miniſtry, the very Actions, which the Evangelical Prophet had foretold of the *Meſſiah*, he performed to a Tittle; *for he preached good Tidings to the Meek, and proclaimed Liberty to the Captives; he opened the Eyes of the Blind, and unſtopped the Ears of the Deaf; he made the lame Man to leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb to ſing*.

But, during the Courſe of his Miniſtry, our Saviour, we read, lived in a very mean, obſcure Condition, and ſuffered at laſt a violent Death: And why ſo? Becauſe of the *Meſſiah* it was foretold, that he *ſhould be deſpiſed, and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief, who ſhould be cut off from the Land of the Living, and pour out his Soul unto Death*. But, for whom ſhould he ſuffer all this? For us Men, and our Salvation: For ſo it was appointed, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould *bear our Griefs, and carry our Sorrows; that he ſhould be wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for our Iniquities*, becauſe the *Lord would lay upon him the Iniquities of us all*. And in what Manner was he to ſuffer? With a Patience and Meekneſs anſwerable to the Prophecy, *He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth; he he was brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearer is dumb, ſo he opened not his Mouth*.

It might ſeem a little ſtrange, that our Lord, who, all his Life-time, affected no Popularity, ſhould, a little before his Death, make his publick Entry into *Jeruſalem*, and in a Manner ſo very ſingular, had not the Prophet called upon the *Daughter of* Zion *to rejoice greatly, becauſe her King was coming unto her, bringing Salvation, lowly, and riding upon an Aſs, and a Colt, the Foal of an Aſs*. Strange, that he ſhould be betrayed by his own Diſciple, to whom he had been ſo very kind, had not the *Pſalmiſt* foretold it in theſe Words, *Mine own familiar Friend in whom I truſted; which did eat of my Bread, hath lift up his Heel againſt me*: And ſtrange, that, of all other Deaths, he ſhould be ſentenced to Crucifixion, which was neither a *Jewiſh* Puniſhment, nor proper to be inflicted for the Crime of Blaſphemy, that was alledged againſt him, had not the ſame royal Prophet determined the Manner in theſe Words, *They pierced my Hands and my Feet, they ſtand ſtaring, and looking upon me*.

Such then was the Will of God, that the Saviour of the World ſhould be crucified; but in what Company did he ſuffer? The Goſpel tells us, *between two Thieves*; becauſe the Prophecy had declared, that he ſhould *be numbered with the Tranſgreſſors*. But how did the Spectators behave while he was hanging upon the Croſs? Juſt in the ſame Manner that the *Pſalmiſt* deſcribed; *All they that ſee me, laugh me to ſcorn, they ſhoot out the Lip, and ſhake their Head, ſaying, He truſted in the Lord, that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he would have him*. What did they give him to drink in the mean Time? A *narcotick* Potion was generally allowed in ſuch Caſes, to ſtupify the Senſe of Pain; but in his, nothing but *Vinegar*, becauſe the Prophecy before had ſpecified the Liquor; *They gave me Gaul to eat, and when I was thirſty, they gave me Vinegar to drink*. (For this Cuſtom of giving Drink to Malefactors going to Execution, the *Jews* ground themſelves upon the Words of *Solomon*, *Give ſtrong Drink to him that is ready to periſh, and Wine to thoſe that are of an heavy Heart: Let him drink, and forget his Poverty, and remember his Miſery no more*, Proverbs xxxi. 7. The uſual Potion of this Kind was Frankincenſe in a Glaſs of wine; and there is a Tradition among them, that the Ladies of the City of *Jeruſalem* were at the Charge, of their own Good-will, for the Eaſe of the poor Sufferers: But notwithſtanding this Cuſtom, what God foretold was fulfilled.) And what became of his Cloaths? All diſpoſed of according to the Prophecy; *They parted my Garments among them, and upon my Veſture did they caſt Lots*.

But under all theſe Provocations and Indignities, what did he do? Why he prayed to God for the Forgiveneſs of his Crucifiers; becauſe the Prophet had foretold, that *while he poured out his Soul unto Death, he ſhould alſo make Interceſſion for the Tranſgreſſors*. In his greater Agonies, What were his Ejaculations to God? The very ſame that the royal *Pſalmiſt*, perſonating the *Meſſiah* in his Extremity, has left upon Record: *My God, my God,* *look upon me; why haſt thou forſaken me, and art ſo far from my Help, and from the Words of my Complaint.* What were the Words, wherein he gave up the *Ghoſt*? The very ſame that the *Pſalmiſt*, in another Place, had deſcribed, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.* But, after after our Saviour's Death, in what Manner was his Body diſpoſed of? Contrary to the Cuſtom of the *Romans*, who left thoſe that ſuffered in this manner hanging upon the Croſs, until they were conſumed; and contrary to the Intention of his Enemies, who wiſhed him no better than a Malefactor's Funeral, he was honourably and nobly interred, becauſe it was pre-ordained, that *he ſhould make his Grave with the Rich in his Death.* After his Burial, what became of his Body? It was raiſed again, and reſtored from the State of the Dead; becauſe, in Confidence of this he laid down his Life, that *God would not leave his Soul in Hell, nor ſuffer his Holy One to ſee Corruption.* After his Reſurrection, and Continuance for ſome Time upon the Earth, what did he do next? In the Sight of his Diſciples and ſeveral other Spectators, aſcend triumphantly into Heaven; for ſo the divine Order was; *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlaſting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in.* After his Aſcenſion into Heaven what did he finally do? Send down the *Holy Ghoſt* upon his Apoſtles, to enable them to propagate his Religion all the World over; for ſuch is the Purport of the Prophecy, *Thou art gone up on high, thou haſt led Captivity captive, and received Gifts for Men, that the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe might be eſtabliſhed on the Top of the Mountains, and exalted above the Hills, and that all Nations ſhould flow unto it.*

Upon the Whole then we may perceive, that the ſeveral Things which the Prophets had foretold of the promiſed *Meſſiah*, were fulfilled in the Perſon and Actions of our bleſſed Saviour; but then there is ſomething farther to be conſidered in this Matter, and that is, the viſible Interpoſition of an over-ruling Providence, in the Completion of theſe Predictions. For that our Lord ſhould be born of a Virgin, contrary to the known Laws of Nature; at the City of *Bethlehem*, when he was conceived at *Nazareth*; and under the Declenſion of the *Jewiſh* Polity, as it was predicted; that upon the Cruelty of *Herod*, he ſhould be carried into *Egypt*; upon the Succeſſion of *Archelaus*, return into *Judæa*, and ſettle his Abode in the obſcure Country of *Galilee*, whence no good Thing; much leſs ſo eminent a Prophet could have ever been expected to come: That the Judge, who pronounced him innocent, ſhould deliver him to Death; and to the Death of the Croſs, who (had he been guilty) muſt, by the Law of the Land, have been ſtoned: That he, who had ſo many Enemies, ſhould be betrayed by one of his Diſciples, and by a Diſciple who carried the Bag, and conſequently all his Maſter's Riches, for a vile Sum of Money; and that this Money, the *Price of Blood*, ſhould be employed in a Work of Charity, to *buy a Field to bury Strangers in*: That he, who ſpent all his Time in doing Good, ſhould be doomed to ſuffer among Thieves and Malefactors; and the Multitude, who were want to pity dying Criminals, ſhould inſult and deride him in his greateſt Miſery; but he held his Peace and ſaid nothing, when not only his Enemies were ſo clamorous againſt him, but the whole Creation groaned and was diſordered: That in the Diviſion of his Cloaths they ſhould caſt Lots for his Coat, and contrary to the Uſage of the Country, in the Midſt of his Agonies, give him Vinegar to drink: That, contrary to the Practice of the *Romans*, he that was crucified, ſhould be permitted to be buried; and although he died among Malefactors, have Perſons of the firſt Rank and Character joining together in his honourable Interment: Theſe and ſeveral other Particulars, that might be produced, are ſo very ſtrange and ſurprizing, that they muſt need ſtrike every pious and devout Soul with a profound Senſe of the unſpeakable Wiſdom, as well as Goodneſs of God, in accompliſhing in *Jeſus*, what he had promiſed and foretold of the *Meſſiah*, by Ways and Means, to human Wiſdom very unlikely, and very diſproportionate. And if the Predictions relating to the *Meſſiah*, have in this wonderful Manner, and by the particular Direction and Appointment of Providence, thus met in the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, like Lines in one common Centre, the natural Reſult of this Contemplation is, *that* Jeſus *is the* Chriſt, *the Son of the living God.*

For can it be imagined, with any worthy Conception of God, that a Work of Love and Wonder, ſo great as the ſending his Son to redeem the World, ſhould be in Agitation for full four thouſand Years; that each ſucceeding Age in this long Space, ſhould have ſome Notices of it; that the ſeveral Characters he was to ſuſtain, ſhould be deſcribed by different Prophets, living at Times and Places ſo remote, that no Confederacy ſhould be ſuſpected; that each of theſe Prophets ſhould draw ſome one Line of him, and ſome another, and point him out, ſome in one Capacity, and ſome in another; and, above all, that every one of theſe Strokes or Lineaments ſhould be directed by the unerring Hand of God, to make at laſt one finiſhed Picture, on Purpoſe that the Original, when it appeared, might be found out and diſtinguiſhed by it; can it be imagined, I ſay, that a God of infinite Truth, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, would have ever permitted, much leſs appointed, that our bleſſed Lord ſhould, in every Part and Lineament, be ſo exactly like that Piece, unleſs he intended, that we ſhould receive him, as the true Original? Unleſs we can entertain a Thought ſo unworthy of God, I ſay, as that he deſigned to impoſe upon us, in the whole Diſpenſation, we cannot but conclude, that he would never have permitted all the Marks belonging to the *Meſſiah*, to have concurred in the Life of our bleſſed Saviour, by theſe Marks have ſuffered ſo many Millions of Souls to have been miſtaken in the Object of their Faith and Worſhip; and thereupon, without any Fault of theirs, be deluded into the heinous Sin of Idolatry, had he not appointed the Man *Chriſt Jeſus* to be the great Saviour of the World, and the *Lord of Life and Glory.*

Q. *But you are frequently miſtaken (ſay the* Jews, *to avoid the Force of this) in your Application of theſe prophetical Paſſages to your* Jeſus, *which properly belonged to another Perſon, and in him received their utmoſt Accompliſhment. The twenty-third* Pſalm, *for Inſtance, which complains of the Sufferings and Indignities, which its Author endured, you refer to the* Meſſiah, *and thence appropriate to your* Jeſus; *whereas it relates intirely* to David, *and the Troubles he underwent, under the Perſecution of* Saul. *The Prophecy of* Micah, *which makes mention of a* Ruler, whoſe Going-forth had been from everlaſting, (*whatever Uſe you make of it*) *was only intended of* Zerubbabel, *who was ſprung from the antient Houſe of* David; *and that famous fifty-third Chapter of* Iſaiah, *which is ſo frequently cited by the Apoſtles, when rightly enquired into, is nothing elſe but a lively Deſcription of the Sufferings of the* Jews, *under the* Babiloniſh, *or ſome other Captivity. Thus by miſapplying and miſinterpreting ſeveral Texts in ſuch a Senſe as the* Jewiſh *Church never intended, you bedeck your* Jeſus *with Feathers that are none of his own, and then cry out, How well he becomes them, and how exactly they befit him!*

A. The Completion of Prophecies, in the Perſon of our Saviour *Chriſt*, is one of the moſt general Arguments that the firſt *Chriſtians* made Uſe of, in order to convert ſuch as were perſuaded of their divine Authority. St. *Peter*, in his firſt publick Sermon that he made, out of the ſixteenth and hundred and tenth *Pſalms*, cites two Paſſages, which he plainly ſhews could not be intended of the Patriarch *David*, to prove our *Lord's* Reſurrection, and Exaltation to Glory. St. *Paul*, who, by being brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, underſtood the Force of this Argument, uſed more Proofs of this Kind, than any other Writer of the *New Teſtament*, as the leaſt Caſt of an Eye into his Epiſtles to the *Romans*, *Galatians*, and *Hebrews* will ſhow; and St. *Matthew*, who wrote his Goſpel for the Uſe of the *Jews* more particularly, and for that Reaſon wrote it (as ſome imagine) in the *Hebrew* Tongue, is more expreſs and copious in his Application of the Prophecies to our bleſſed Saviour, than any of the other *Evangeliſts*.

Now (to mention no more than theſe) how abſurd would it have been for theſe Apoſtles, who were no Strangers to the *Jewiſh* Way of arguing, to alledge any Paſſage in the Prophets, as relating to the *Meſſiah*, which properly belonged to another Perſon, in whom it had its Accompliſhment? Such a Method of Proceeding could not fail of diſcovering their Confidence and Folly, of expoſing them to the Scorn and Ridicule of their Adverſaries, and, inſtead of gaining Proſelites, of ruining the Cauſe, which, by ſuch unfair Practices, they endeavoured to maintain. It is but ſuppoſing then, that theſe Apoſtles were Men of common Senſe, and deſirous to promote the Cauſe they had taken in Hand; and then we can hardly think, that they argued from any Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah*, but ſuch as really belonged to him, and ſuch as the whole *Jewiſh* Church acknowledged ſo to do.

St. *Peter*, by Virtue of the Sermon, which he preached on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, made about three thouſand Converts to the *Chriſtian* Faith, and yet it is obvious, that the whole Hinge of his Diſcourſe turns upon the Teſtimony of the Prophets; had he therefore applied this Teſtimony, either to Perſons to whom it did not belong, or in a Senſe contrary to its true Intendment, his Doctrine muſt have been exploded at once, and could never have met with ſuch uncommon Succeſs. And in like manner, as to the ſubſequent Converſions which the Apoſtles made, how can he imagine that ſuch a Number of *Jews*, of all Degrees, Rulers, Prieſts, and *Scribes* of all Sects, Men of Learning, and who, by their Stations and Profeſſions, were obliged to know the Scriptures, ſhould forſake the Religion they were accuſtomed to, upon the Authority of Paſſages, which, in their proper Meaning and Intendment, were ſo far from countenancing, that they openly confronted the new Religion they were to embrace, and all this without View of worldly Intereſt, with the certain Hazard of their Lives here, and the Loſs of God's Favour hereafter, in caſe of Inſincerity?

Upon the Whole, therefore, we may conclude, that every *Jew*, converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith, is an implicit Proof that the Apoſtles Allegations of the antient Prophecies, both as to the Ground and Senſe of them, were agreeable to their received Notions of them, inſomuch, that were we at Leiſure to enter into Particulars, we might ſhew that it is hardly poſſible to name one ſingle Prediction of the many applied to the bleſſed *Jeſus*, which one or other of their moſt celebrated Writers do not acknowledge to belong to the *Meſſiah*.

The modern *Jews*, it muſt be owned, have fallen off from the Notions of their more ingenuous Anceſtors, and to deny the Prophecies, quoted in the *New Teſtament*, thoſe Views that we would aſcribe to them: But whoever conſiders the Deſtruction of their City and Polity, which confounded all their Expectations of a glorious *Meſſiah*, and put them upon new Meaſures in the Application of ſuch Predictions as they ſaw muſt needs have been fulfilled, while their State and Temple ſtood: Whoever conſiders the Darkneſs and Ignorance, that would neceſſarily enſue upon their long Diſperſion, and many ſad Calamities, when they fell into the Hands of perſecuting Powers, who hated them and their Religion moſt implacably: Whoever conſiders their Neglect of applying themſelves to the Study of the written Law, and attending wholly to their Oral Law, and affecting to be curious in Ceremonies, while they continued careleſs of their Doctrines: Whoever conſiders their violent Prejudices againſt *Jeſus* and his Diſciples, which, as it ſtuck at nothing, tho' never ſo falſe or wicked, to oppoſe them, might eaſily put them upon tampering with the Scriptures, and by Interpolations or Defalcations labouring to make them look another Way: And laſtly, whoever conſiders that judicial Blindneſs and Hardneſs of Heart, ſo often and expreſly threatned, and ſo viſibly and lamentably inflicted upon this once elect People of God: [May he, in his infinite Mercy, ſo open their Eyes, that they may ſee the wonderful Things of the Law, and its Agreement with the bleſſed Goſpel!] Whoever conſiders theſe Things, I ſay, will not be at Loſs for a Reaſon, why the preſent *Synagogue* have departed from the Sentiments of the antient, and are ſo earneſt to apply to *David*, *Solomon*, *Hezekiah*, *Zorobabel*, or any other Perſon of Note, what their Anceſtors never thought of attributing to any other than the promiſed *Meſſiah*.

One of their famous Interpreters, in his Comment upon the twenty-third *Pſalm*, after ſome feeble Efforts to wreſt that Evidence out of our Hands, makes at length this ample Confeſſion: *Our great Maſters*, ſays he, *have interpreted it of* David *himſelf, that we may have wherewith to anſwer the*

Hereticks. But, with all his Art and Subtility he can never make it out, how *David*, with any Propriety, can ſay of himſelf, *As for me, I am a Worm, and no Man, the very Scorn of Men, and the Out-caſt of the People*, Pſal. xxii. 6. The greateſt Affliction that ever befel that Prince, was his Expulſion from his capital City, upon the Rebellion of his Son *Abſalom*, and *Shimei*'s Curſing and Upbraiding may ſeem, perhaps, to countenance this Complaint, *All they that ſee me, laugh me to Scorn, they ſhoot out their Lips, and ſhake their Heads*, Pſal. xxii. 7. but we no where read, in his Hiſtory, that his Enemies ever *pierced his Hands or his Feet*, much leſs, that after they had made an End of him, *they parted his Garments among them, and caſt Lots upon his Veſture.* It was our bleſſed Saviour alone, in whom this Prediction was verified; of him alone, that his Enemies took up this taunting Proverb, and ſaid, *He truſted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he would have him*; to him alone, that theſe Words can, with any tolerable Conſtruction, belong; *Many Oxen are come about me, fat Bulls of* Baſan *cloſe me on every Side, they gape upon me with their Mouths, as it were a rampant and roaring Lion*; as he, indeed, appropriates the whole *Pſalm* to himſelf, when, in his dying Minutes he utters this Citation, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

David, indeed, in all his Troubles, had no Occaſion to make this Lamentation, for tho' the Malice and Perſecutions of *Saul* were upon him, yet he had always abundant Reaſon to ſay of God, *Thou art my ſtony Rock, and my Defence, my Saviour, my God, and my King; my Buckler, the Horn alſo my Salvation, and my Refuge:* Therefore *will I follow upon mine Enemies, and overtake them, neither will I turn again till I have deſtroyed them*, Pſal. xviii. 1, 37. His Splendor and Greatneſs, his Victories and Conqueſts, the Reduction of his Foes, and the Enlargement of his Kingdom, made him a proper Emblem of our Saviour's Exaltation and Triumph over our ſpiritual Enemies; but there are few Paſſages in his Life reſemblant of his Sufferings, and none at all that will juſtify this Complaint, *I am poured out like Water, and all my Bones are out of Joint; my Strength is dried up like a Potſherd, and my Tongue cleaveth to my Gums:* So true is that Obſervation of *Grotius*, "That Partiality was the Cauſe of theſe new Ex-"plications among the *Jews*, and that thoſe, which "they formerly received, agreed very well with the Senſe of *Chriſtians*."

Upon the Decree of *Cyrus*, for the Reſtoration of the *Jews*, we find *Zorobabel*, among other Princes of the People, ſuperintending Matters, and taking upon him the Government of the Tribe to which he belonged; but that he ſhould be the Perſon intended by *Micah*'s Prophecy, is a Thing impoſſible, becauſe he was not born in *Bethlehem*, which is the Place aſſigned for the Birth of a Ruler, that the Prophet mentions, but in *Babylon*, as his Name imports. That it was eſſentially neceſſary for the *Meſſiah* to be born in *Bethlehem*, and no where elſe, is plain from the Anſwer which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* make *Herod*, upon his conſulting them, and their Quotation of *Micah* for the Proof of it; is plain from the general Notion, which not only the Learned, but the Vulgar, at that Time had imbibed, *viz. That* Chriſt *was to come of the Seed of* David, *and out of the Town of* Bethlehem, *where* David *was born*; and it is plain, from the Petition in their Liturgy, wherein they ſtill pray for the Advent of the *Meſſiah*, in theſe Terms: *Shake thyſelf from the Duſt, ariſe, put on thy beautiful Garments, O my People, by the Hand of* Benjeſſe, *the* Bethlemite, *bring Redemption near to my Soul:* So that the Prophecy, in all Reaſon, muſt be applied to the Perſon that was born there, and not to one whoſe Place of Nativity was in a diſtant Country. It is to be obſerved farther, that *Zorobabel* was never any Ruler of *Iſrael*; for tho' he might be at the Head of the Captivity, for ſome Years, yet it was without the Title and Authority of a Governor, and when he had executed his Commiſſion, he returned to *Babylon*, and there died. But even ſuppoſing he were never ſo much a Governor, it is certainly carrying the Matter too far, to ſay of him, that he *ſhould ſtand and rule in the Strength of the* Lord, *and in the Majeſty of the Lord his God*, Micah. iv. 4. much more is it ſo, to ſay, that *the Going-forth*, or Birth of *this Ruler was of old*, and from the *Days of Eternity* (as the marginal Note has it) which is only applicable to the *Meſſiah*, and in a proper Senſe, only verified in our bleſſed *Saviour, who in the Beginning was with God.*

And, in like Manner, if we conſider the Words of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, in the fifty-third Chapter, and compare them with our Lord's Hiſtory, as the *Evangeliſts* have recorded it, we ſhall ſoon perceive, that they are applicable to none but our bleſſed Saviour only, for (to wave other Arguments that might be drawn from them) with what Propriety of Conſtruction can any of theſe Paſſages, *He was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our Iniquities, the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed*, Iſaiah liii. 4, 5. be applied to the *Jewiſh* Nation? Whenever did we hear that the *Jews* bore the Griefs, and carried the Sorrows of others; that they were wounded for other Men's Tranſgreſſions, and bruiſed for Iniquities not their own? The public Calamities which God, at that Time, ſent upon them, are, by all the Prophets, imputed to their own Sins; but the Perſon here afflicted, is ſaid to have done *no Violence, neither was any Deceit found in his Mouth*, and does this Character ſuit them under any Capacity, or other Sort of Calamity, that the Prophet might have in View? If we will believe him, it is plain that he had another Opinion of them, when, in the very Beginning of his Prophecy, we find him lamenting them, and their Captivity in theſe Words, *Ah ſinful Nation! A People laden with Iniquity, a Seed of Evil-doers, Children that are Corrupters; they have forſaken the Lord, they are gone backwards, wherefore your Country is deſolate, your Cities are burnt with Fire, your Land Strangers devour in your Preſence, and it is deſolate, as overthrown by Strangers.*

The Sum of our Anſwer is this. If our Saviour and his Apoſtles cannot be ſuppoſed, with any Juſtneſs of Reaſoning, or Proſpect of Succeſs, to alledge Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah*, which the *Jewiſh* Church, at that Time, did not acknowledge to be intended of him; if all the Prophecies, thus alledged, do even yet appear, by ſeveral of their moſt renowned Doctors, to be interpreted of the *Meſſiah*; if the twenty-ſecond

Pſalm cannot, with any Propriety of Conſtruction, be applied to *David*; nor the fourth Chapter of *Micah* to *Zorobabel*; nor the fifty-third of *Iſaiah*, to the *Jewiſh* Nation in general; and if good Reaſons may be aſſigned, why the preſent and antient Doctors of the *Jewiſh* Church do differ in the Manner of applying the Predictions of the Prophets; then is the *Chriſtian* Interpretation of them, which appears to be plain and natural, and has Antiquity on its Side, not to be leſs eſteemed, becauſe ſome, out of Partiality and Prejudice, have forced their Wits to invent another.

Nay, even ſuppoſing that there were more Grounds than what hitherto have appeared, to diſpute the Juſtneſs of the Allegation of any Prophecy, yet ſtill we *Chriſtians* muſt aver, that the Application of *Chriſt*, and his Apoſtles, is to be preferred before that of any other, becauſe it was attended with ſuch irreſiſtable Proof of its Truth and Fidelity, and over-bore all Objections to the Contrary. For upon a Diſpute of the Application of ſome Paſſage, or a Competition of two different Senſes of the ſame Paſſage, can any Thing in Nature be more deciſive, than the Teſtimony of God? And, can the Teſtimony of God appear by any ſtronger Evidence than by the Power of Miracles, ſupporting the Allegation? God certainly knew the Intention of every Prophecy delivered by his Spirit; and therefore, if *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, when they applied any Prophecy to the *Meſſiah*, gave the beſt Proof that could be given of their being ſent by God, and of their ſpeaking and acting by his Commiſſion, God himſelf muſt be underſtood as confirming their Application. The Authority of the Application, or of the Expoſition, muſt, in ſuch a Caſe, be equal to that of the Prophecy; for there cannot be a better Proof, that the Prophet was ſent from God, than, that the Expoſitor gives of his Miſſion, and the Reaſon, of his aſſenting to the one, as well as the other, is on both Sides the ſame.

The Reſult of this whole Enquiry is this, That, ſince our bleſſed Saviour appeals to the Writings of the Prophets, for the Proof of his being the *Meſſiah*, or Meſſenger ſent from God, to deliver his Will to Mankind; and ſince the Marks and Characters which the Prophets give of the *Meſſiah*, are found all to agree and unite in him, according to the Account which the *Evangeliſts* give us of his Life, we have all the Reaſon in the World to believe, that he was really the Perſon he pretended to be, that his Doctrine conſequently is the Word of God, and his Religion; *The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, and hath appeared unto all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World; looking for that bleſſed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great* God, *and our Saviour* Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *Is the Joy of Angels capable of being increaſed, as ſeems intimated from that Paſſage, where it is ſaid*, More Joy is in Heaven over one Sinner that repents, *Luke* xv. 7.

A. Though we are not much acquainted with the Condition of Angels, or the Ingredients of their Happineſs, yet thus much the Scripture has informed us, concerning them, that *they are miniſtring Spirits, ſent out to miniſter for them, that ſhall be Heirs of Salvation*; and, therefore, we may reaſonably preſume, that they are full of Tenderneſs for their Charge, ſollicitous for their particular Safety, and extreamly glad of any Good that befals them. How theſe heavenly Hoſts were affected with the Salvation of Mankind in general, is evident from the Hymn with which they attended at the Birth of *Chriſt*, to welcome him into the World; and though their Nature be far diſtant from us Mortals, and their Bliſs exquiſite, beyond what we are able to conceive; yet, in regard that both their Nature and their Bliſs are finite, their Joy may certainly admit of an Increaſe; and as often as a Sinner is converted from the Evil of his Ways, there may ſpring up a freſh Object, and a large and literal Addition to it.

Q. *But can this properly be ſaid of* God *too, whoſe Perfection of Happineſs allows no ſuch Accumulation?*

A. No, doubtleſs; and therefore, with reſpect to him, we muſt interpret this, as Reaſon and Religion obliges us to underſtand many ſuch like Paſſages, where human Parts and Paſſions are attributed to him. As therefore the *Holy Ghoſt*, meaning to repreſent his Diſpleaſure, and our Baſeneſs, does it, by ſaying, that *we provoke him to Anger, kindle his Fury, grieve, and weary his Spirit*, and the like; ſo here, by ſaying, that God rejoiceth over a repenting Sinner, is intended, that ſuch Repentance is highly agreeable to him; and that, were his Nature capable of the ſame unequal Motions with ours, the Joy of a Father or a Friend, for retrieving the Perſon he loves beſt, and had been moſt in Pain for, would be but a feeble and a very faint Image of that Satisfaction, which this excites in him, who loves us better than the tendereſt Parent, or moſt affectionate Friend upon Earth does, or can do.

Q. *But why ſhould the Degree of Joy be ſo intenſe upon this Occaſion? Why ſhould the Reformation of one Sinner raiſe it above the Safety of many Souls, who never fell from their Integrity? And the ninety-nine Sheep, which never ſtrayed, excite leſs of it, than one poor ſilly Wanderer?*

A. In order to reſolve this Difficulty we muſt obſerve, that in the Parables of the Goſpel, it is uſual to repreſent all of the ſame Kind, though they be ſometimes the greater Number, by one Man: Thus, in the Parable of the *Marriage Supper*, the Man who had not on his wedding Garment, according to the Senſe of moſt Interpreters, repreſents all wicked Men; and, in that of the ſeveral Talents, the ſlothful Servant, who hid his Talent in a Napkin, is ſaid to be one, whereas they, who improved theirs, are three; and yet it can hardly be doubted, but that there are fewer, who receive the Grace of God, to any good Purpoſe, than they who receive it in vain; and, in like Manner, though in the preceding Parables, there is mention made but of one loſt Piece of Silver, and of one ſtrayed Sheep, yet is that one the Repreſentative of the whole Tribe of Sinners, which do certainly outnumber the few that are Righteous; and therefore, according to this Acceptation, the Joy in Heaven may be allowed to be greater, because the Objects that give Occaſion to it, are more.

But even, if this were not, as theſe Words were ſpoken of God, after the Manner of Men, ſo are they to be underſtood in a Senſe agreeable to human Paſſions. Now in ourſelves, we perceive, that in obtaining what we paſſionately deſired, in regaining what we looked upon as loſt, and in ſecuring

ring what was in great and imminent Danger, our Joy is ſtrong, and our Delight tranſporting. The Surprize of an Eſcape, which we did not expect, and the regaining of a Treaſure we had given for loſt, is entertained with Rapture, becauſe it is a Kind of new Acceſſion to our Fortunes, and like a Thing we never enjoyed before. A loving Father, no doubt, finds great Comfort in ſeeing all his Children in a perfect State of Health; but if one of them chance to fall ſick, and, beyond Expectation of Recovery, to ſee him out of Danger, adminiſters more preſent Joy, than does the conſtant Health of all the reſt; and, in like Manner, though a continued Courſe of Goodneſs, be in itſelf moſt valuable, yet the Recovery of a loſt Sinner, the reviving one dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, the ſeeing him ſnatched as a Firebrand out of the Fire, when he was juſt going to fall into it, gives a more freſh and lively Joy; and therefore *it is meet*, ſays the Father, in the Parable, that, upon this Occaſion, *we ſhould make merry and be glad, for this thy Brother was dead, and is alive again; was loſt, and is found.*

Q. *Does not our Saviour ſeem to recommend Injuſtice in his Parable of* the Lord of the Vineyard, *Matth.* xx?

A. Some Interpreters are of Opinion, that the Parable of the *Lord of the Vineyard*, paying all his Labourers alike, is to be underſtood of the *Gift of Grace*, or firſt Admiſſion to the Privileges of the Goſpel, and not of the Fruition of Glory; becauſe the Wages, here mentioned, are given to the Envious and Unthankful. But allowing this to be no more than a Paſſage inſerted for Ornament and Illuſtration only, or that it may mean a Reward ſo ſurprizingly great, as, among Men, would provoke the Envy of others, yet, if we ſtate the Caſes of ſeveral Labourers, in the the Parable, as it includes the *Jews* and *Gentiles* in general, and private *Chriſtians* in particular, we ſhall find no Injuſtice in what the *Lord of the Vineyard* did unto them.

To the *Jews* God was pleaſed to make the firſt expreſs Diſcoveries of his Will, by a written Law: In Proceſs of Time the like Benefit was extended to the *Gentiles.* They readily accepted it, and, by ſo doing, became Partakers of the ſame Grace and precious Promiſes with thoſe who had long been brought up under the legal, and from that, removed ſooner under the evangelical Diſpenſation. The Apoſtles left all and followed *Chriſt.* The primitive *Chriſtians* gave in their Names to his Doctrine, and continued ſtedfaſt in it, at the certain Peril of their Liberties, their Friendſhips, their Fortunes, nay, their Lives; and yet, in any after Ages of *Chriſtianity*, they who live and die, though quietly and peaceably, in the ſincere Profeſſion of this Religion, are promiſed the Kingdom of Heaven, as a Reward for their Faith and Obedience.

In like Manner, ſome have the Happineſs of a pious Education, and carry on their early Virtue through the ſeveral Stages of Life; others, who either wanted that Advantage, or have neglected to improve it, run into the ſame Exceſs of Riot, with the unthinking Part of the World; and yet, if theſe, though late, ſee their Follies, and effectually forſake them, the Promiſe of God ſtandeth ſure, *that, at what Time ſoever the wicked Man turneth away from the Wickedneſs he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his Soul alive.* This is the whole Senſe of the Parable, and theſe are the common Caſes, to which it is applied; but we miſtake the Meaning of it widely, if we think that it denotes an Equality of Rewards in the Kingdom of Heaven, ſince we have this Aſſurance given us, that as there *is one Glory of the Sun, another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars, ſo is alſo the Reſurrection of the Dead.* Thoſe that are raiſed to everlaſting Life, ſhall indeed be all glorious; but ſtill the Glory of ſome ſhall be greater than that of others. Every good *Chriſtian* ſhall, no doubt, be admitted to a State of Felicity; but when we conſider theſe Words of our Saviour, *I have appointed unto you a Kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my Table, in my Kingdom, and ſit on Thrones judging the twelve Tribes of* Iſrael, we cannot but infer, that there are ſome particular Marks and Inſtances of Glory, wherewith the Apoſtles of our Lord will be honoured above other *Chriſtians*: And, in like Manner, though a late Penitent (if he be ſincere) ſhall be received to Mercy at laſt, yet he has not ordinarily any Reaſon to expect a Degree of Glory equal to his, who has never ſwerved from his Duty, or quickly returned to it. His Bliſs ſhall be perfect, indeed, though it be not the moſt exalted; and though he be leſs happy than ſome other *Chriſtians*, yet he ſhall be much happier than he deſerves.

Q. *In the Hiſtory of our bleſſed Lord, when his Death drew near, we read, that he ſeemed greatly ſhocked and ſurprized: But how was this conſiſtent with his Divine Nature, which was incapable of any human Weakneſs or Paſſion whatever?*

A. It is certain, that the divine Nature is not capable of any Grief or Sorrow, or other Perturbation of Mind, ariſing from an Apprehenſion of ſome important Danger, or a Senſe of ſome incumbent Calamity; and therefore, when our Saviour complains of the vaſt Load of Sorrow, that lay heavy upon his Spirits, and almoſt quite ſunk them down, this he muſt be ſuppoſed to ſay with regard to his human Nature only, becauſe his Divine was exempt from all ſuch Suffering. But then, the Queſtion is, from what particular Cauſe it was, that all this Sorrow, and Fear, and Conſternation of Mind (for ſo the original Words import) could poſſibly ariſe?

Thoſe, who impute all this to nothing more than a natural Dread of Pain and Death, have this Difficulty to contend with, that how grievous ſoever theſe Things may be, eſpecially to ſinful Fleſh and Blood, yet they are ſuch as have been corrected by Reaſon; and, in their moſt tremendous Shapes, borne with great Patience and Reſignation of Mind; and therefore it can hardly be imagined, that the Proſpect of Crucifixion could have raiſed ſuch Commotions in a Soul, which had the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience to ſupport it, and a glorious Reward ſet before it, to make a full Recompence for what it ſuffered.

Others are of Opinion therefore, that this exceſſive Sorrow and Dejectiou of Mind, were occaſioned by a perfect and penetrating Light, which then diffuſed itſelf in our Saviour's Mind, all at once, concerning the Guilt of Sin, and the Wrath of an incenſed God; that the Horror of theſe filled and amazed his vaſt apprehenſive Soul; and that theſe Apprehenſions could not but affect his tender Heart, full of the higheſt Zeal for God's Glory, and the moſt relenting Compaſſion for the Souls of Men: *For, if the true Contrition of one ſingle Sinner*, ſay they, *bleeding under the Sting of the Law, only for his own Iniquities, cannot be performed, without great Bitterneſs of Sorrow and Remorſe, what Bounds can be ſet to that Grief, what Meaſures to that Anguiſh, which proceeded from a full Apprehenſion of all the Tranſgreſſions of ſo many Millions of Sinners?*

This is the common Solution: And yet there is ſomething in the Context, which has induced others to think, that, on this Occaſion, the Devil and his Angels had collected all their Force, in order to fill our Saviour's Mind with the moſt diſmal terrifying Scenes of Horror, thereby to divert him from his intended Enterprize. For, *firſt*, we may obſerve, that, before he entered the Garden, where this Agony ſeized him, he expected ſome terrible Aſſault from the infernal Powers, and therefore he tells his Diſciples, *the Prince of this World cometh*, *i. e.* is now muſtering up his Legions, to make his laſt Effort upon me; but this is my Comfort, that *he will find nothing in me*, no ſinful Inclination to take Part with him, no guilty Reflection to expoſe me to his Tyranny. *2dly*, That, when the Diſciples entered the Garden with our Lord, he gave them a ſtrict Charge *to watch and pray, that they they might not enter into Temptation*; which plainly implies, that, in that Time and Place, there was ſome Occaſion for a more than ordinary Application to theſe Duties; and this cannot ſo well be imputed to any Thing elſe, as thoſe Numbers of evil Spirits who were going furiouſly to aſſault their Maſter, and would not altogether ſpare them. And, *3dly*, That when the three elect Apoſtles were a little advanced with him into the Garden, he earneſtly intreated them *to watch with him*, and yet we find them ſuddenly aſleep, and, no ſooner awoke, but aſleep again, and again, for the Text tells us, *that their Eyes were heavy*; which prodigious Drowſineſs of theirs, upon ſo momentous an Occaſion, cannot be aſcribed to any Thing ſo well, as to a preternatural Stupefaction of their Senſes, by ſome of theſe infernal Spirits now conflicting with their Maſter; and who, perhaps, to deprive him of the Solace of their Company, did, by their diabolical Arts, produce that extraordinary *Stupor*, which oppreſſed them, that ſo, having him alone. they might have the greater Advantage to tempt and terrify him.

Theſe Obſervations make it highly probable, that this his laſt Agony, was occaſioned by a mighty Struggle and Conflict with the *Powers of Darkneſs*; who having, by God's Permiſſion, muſtered up all their Strength, intended once more to try their Fortune againſt him, and to this Purpoſe ſurrounding him, very probably, with a mighty Hoſt, exerted all their Power and Malice, in perſecuting his innocent Soul; in diſtracting it with horrid Phantaſms; in afflicting it with diſmal Suggeſtions; in vexing and tormenting it with dire Imaginations, and dreadful Spectacles; and, in ſhort, in practiſing all the Arts and Machinations that their Malice and Subtilty could invent, to tempt, and deter him, if poſſible, from his gracious Deſign of redeeming Mankind.

Had our Lord, indeed, in this Conflict, been aſſiſted with any Succour from his Divinity, this would have ſet him far above the Oppoſition of any created Power; but (that the *ſecond Adam* might make a Reparation for the Fall of the *firſt*, and in that very Nature, let to itſelf, and unaſſiſted by any foreign Aid, vanquiſh the Enemy that had given it ſo grievous a Foil before) the divine Perfections lay by, as it were, and forebore to engage: They withdrew their Influence for that Time, and, ſuſpending their Operation, left him to encounter as a Man, tho' much more perfect than any other Man.

Putting all theſe diſmal and diſtracting Things together, then the Apprehenſion of a cruel and ignominious Death, the Senſe of the Guilt and heinous Nature of Sin, the Proſpect of God's Wrath, the Combination of Devils, and the Suſpenſion of the divine Power and Protection, we need not much wonder, that we find our bleſſed Saviour in the Garden, complaining, that *his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death*; or, on the Croſs, crying out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* That we find him, in the midſt of his *Agony, ſweating out Blood* in great Abundance; deprecating Death with more Vehemence than ſome *Heathen* Sages, and many *Chriſtian* Martyrs did; and, when his Spirits were thus depreſſed, his *human* Nature quite exhauſted, and no Relief from the *divine* afforded him: That an Angel ſhould be ſent *from Heaven to revive and ſtrengthen him*. For, when the Divinity, which reſided in him, had either ſuſpended, or ſubſtracted its Influence, he, who, in reſpect of his Manhood, *was made a little while inferior to the Angels*, and, in reſpect of his Sufferings, was now in a more diſtreſſed Condition than ever Man knew, being left to his human Nature alone, could not but ſtand in need of the Comfort and Conſolation of an Angel.

All this while the divine Nature of *Chriſt*, tho' it did not think fit to exert itſelf, was inſeparably united to the human, nor can we conceive, why it ſhould not ſtill continue, even after Death, in the ſame Manner united, ſince no Power has any Force againſt *Omnipotence*, nor could any finite Agent work any Alteration in that Union. For though *Chriſt's* Soul and Body were disjoined from one another by Death, yet were they not disjoined from him, who took them both together, but rather, by Virtue of that remaining Conjunction, were united again after their Separation. In this intermediate Time, however, what ſeems to ſolve all Difficulties beſt, is the antient Notion of the *Godhead's being quieſcent*, and not exerting its Power and Efficacy, in ſuch Inſtances, where the *Humanity* is known to have ſuffered. In this Manner it confeſſedly withdrew at his Death, otherwiſe we cannot ſee how he could have died at all; and in this Manner, by Parity of Reaſon, it might continue its Quieſcence, during the whole Space of his Interment, and until its Power and Operation were requiſite, in order to effect his Reſurrection.

As our bleſſed Saviour was then *God* and *Man* in one Perſon, and the Efficacy and Myſtery of Man's Redemption conſiſted in this Union, it was neceſſary, that there ſhould be a clear and undoubted Demonſtration given of the Reality of both theſe Natures. But, ſince the diſtinguiſhing Marks of of human Nature lie chiefly in the Soul, there had not been that Demonſtration given of our Saviour's perfect Humanity, unleſs he had diſcovered

covered in his Conduct, an exact Reſemblance to us, in all the natural Paſſions and Inclinations of our Souls. Now in this Soul of ours, there is a twofold Principle, *Senſe* and *Reaſon*. *Senſe* catches at the preſent, purſues Eaſe and Safety, and induſtriouſly conſults the Preſervation and Advantage of the Body; whereas *Reaſon* enlarges our Proſpect, takes into Conſideration diſtant and future Objects; and perſuades the foregoing ſome Satisfactions, the running ſome Hazards, and enduring ſome Difficulties, in the Diſcharge of our Duty, and the Expectation of a greater Good in Reverſion. Under the former of theſe are are comprehended all our natural Paſſions, which are the ſecret Springs that move us to whatevere we do; under the latter are the Underſtanding and Judgment, which direct, and regulate, and bound, and over-rule theſe Paſſions. But ſtill both theſe are conſtituent Parts, and as neceſſary to make a perfect Soul, as a rational Soul and human Body are to make one perfect Man; and from hence it follows, that the Weakneſs and Corruption of our Nature (as it ſtands depraved by Sin) does not conſiſt in our being tenderly touched with the Fear of preſent Evil, or the Deſire of preſent Good, but only in ſuffering theſe Fears and Deſires to prevail and take Place, againſt the Dictates of Reaſon and Duty.

Averſion to Pain and Conflict, to Sorrow and Death, and whatever is ſhocking and frightful to human Nature, are Affections interwoven with our original Frame and Conſtitution. *Adam*, in his State of Innocence felt them; and therefore it is no juſt Reflection upon the *ſecond Adam*, that he, in like Manner, felt them too. *Infirmities*, indeed, theſe Averſions may be called, in Compariſon of thoſe *Perfections*, which belong to God and unbodied Spirits; but then they are ſuch Infirmities, as all, who partake of Bodies, muſt have; and which, if our Saviour had been deſtitute of, he could not have been truly Man.

Now, if *Chriſt*, as *Man*, could not be altogether indifferent and unconcerned at ſuch ſevere Trials, as the Impoſition of the Burden of our Sins, the Infliction of Pain and Torment, his approaching Conflict with the Powers of Darkneſs, and the utter Subduction of all divine Aid and Aſſiſtance, muſt neceſſarily bring upon him; then ſurely it could not misbecome him, to uſe all poſſible Means for declining them, and conſequently to expreſs his Concern, by praying againſt them, but with this modeſt Reſerve and Limitation, *Nevertheleſs not my Will, but thine be done.* For it was no Diſparagement either of his Obedience to God, or Love to Mankind, to deteſt Death, and Pain, and Sufferings, but, in Truth, an higher Commendation on both; ſince, notwithſtanding ſo tender a Senſe of what he was to ſuffer, he offered himſelf to undergo whatever God, for their Benefit and Salvation, ſhould think proper to lay before him. So that the more paſſionate his Wiſhes were for a Releaſe, the more meritorious was his Submiſſion; and the ſtronger his Averſions were, the more was the Reſignation of his own Will, and conſequently, the more acceptable was his Compliance with that of his heavenly Father.

Q. *Since it was no more than the human Nature of* Chriſt *that ſuffered and died, how could that which was only temporary be an adequate Satiſfaction to divine Juſtice for the Sins of the World.*

A. His heavenly Father, no doubt, could have exempted Mankind from Puniſhment, without an equivalent Compenſation for their Guilt. As an all-wiſe Being, he could have invented many Methods of Salvation, without the Sacrifice of his beloved Son; and, as a ſupreme Lawgiver, he might have extended Mercy to whom, and upon what Terms he thought fit: But then, as he was the ſupreme Lawgiver, and Governor of the World, it was conſiſtent with his Juſtice, and his infinite Wiſdom, we may ſay, required it of him, to vindicate the Authority of his Laws, and to ſee Sin puniſhed, in ſuch an exemplary Manner, as to deter, if poſſible, his Subjects from it for the future.

Now this was the State and Condition of Mankind, when God's infinite Wiſdom contrived the Scheme of their Redemption. They had alienated themſelves from him; were under Sin, under Condemnation, under the Curſe of the Law, under the Sentence of Death. In this Condition, however, they were not to be left to periſh; God's infinite Goodneſs would not permit *that*: But then, how to accompliſh their Recovery, and preſerve his Attributes inviolate, this was the Difficulty. For how, in Conſiſtence with the Glory, and Juſtice, and Sanctity of God, could ſuch Enemies be reconciled, and ſuch Offenders pardoned? Would *Omnipotent Majeſty* think of any Treaty, without an Advocate and Interceſſor? Would the ſovereign *Ruler* of the World ſuffer his Honour to be ſlighted, without a proper Vindication? Would the great *Patron* of Juſtice relax the Terms of it, and permit Wickedneſs to paſs unpuniſhed? Would the God of *Truth* reverſe his Decree, and ſtop the Sentence of Death from falling upon Sinners? Or would the God of *Righteouſneſs* omit any Opportunity of expreſſing the Love he bore to Innocence, and Abhorrence to Iniquity? How then could we well be cleared from our Guilt, without an Expiation; or reinſtated in Freedom, without a Ranſom; or exempted from Condemnation, without ſome vicarious Puniſhment? No, God was pleaſed ſo to proſecute his Deſigns of Goodneſs and Mercy, as not, in the leaſt to impair and obſcure, but rather advance and illuſtrate the Glories of his ſovereign Dignity, of his ſevere Juſtice, of his immaculate Holineſs, and Immutability both in Word and Purpoſe.

He was willing to liſten to a *Treaty*, but from the Mouth of no *Mediator*, but ſuch as was of *equal Dignity* with himſelf. He was willing to remit the Puniſhment due to our Sins, but not without a Sacrifice, that would make full Attonement for them. He was willing to give us back our Lives again, but not without a Subſtitution of another Life equivalent to them all. But now, how could theſe Things be done? Where could we find a *Mediator*, proper and worthy to intercede for us, and to negotiate a new Covenant, whereby God might be ſatisfied. and we ſaved? Who could offer for us a Sacrifice of Value ſufficient to attone for Sins, ſo vaſtly numerous, and all committed againſt infinite Majeſty? Or who could find out the everlaſting Redemption of all the Souls, ſince the firſt Creation, and lay down a competent Price for them? Nothing on Earth, nothing in Heaven was found able to do this.

Man, the moſt innocent and upright Man, could by no Means redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ranſom for him. Angels have Obligations enough of their own to diſcharge, and cannot be ſolvent for any more than the Debt of their own Gratitude and Praiſe. The brighteſt of that heavenly Hoſt cannot, over and above this, make Compenſation for one human Sin; but, for the Sins of the whole World united, there was no Propitiation to be found, until *the Son of God* offered himſelf, and was accepted by the Father. Our Humanity he aſſumed, to enable him to ſuffer, and intereſt us in what he did; but the Divinity, which he had with the Father from the Beginning, this he brought with him, to derive an infinite Value upon his Sufferings, and to make the Ranſom and Oblation, which he paid down for us, a full Satisfaction for Sins innumerable, and infinitely heinous.

In the Expiation of theſe Sins we own, that the Puniſhment, which our Saviour ſubmitted to, was but temporal, whereas that, to which Sinners are obnoxious, is eternal; but for that ſeveral good Reaſons may be alledged. The Author to the *Hebrews*, in his Compariſon between the *Levitical* and *Chriſtian* Diſpenſations, tells us, that *ſuch an High-prieſt became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners, and who needeth not daily (as the High-prieſts under the Law) to offer up Sacrifices, firſt for his own Sins, and then for thoſe of the People*; ſo that what qualified him to offer a Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind was his perfect Innocence; for had he been, in any Degree, a Sinner himſelf, he muſt have ſuffered for his own Offences, and conſequently, been incapable of effecting an Expiation for ours.

Now, if our bleſſed Saviour was intirely innocent and holy, it was impoſſible that he ſhould ſuffer the ſame Puniſhments, which, by the juſt Decree of God, are due to wilful and impenitent Sinners. He could not do it in his Body; for that could only die by what he ſuffered on the Croſs; and he could not do it in his Soul; for how could that Soul, which knew no Sin, be under a Remorſe of Conſcience for any Thing, that he had done? How could the Worm that *never dies* lodge in his ſacred Breaſt? Or he, *who, for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs*, lie under any Senſe of God's unchangeable Diſpleaſure? or he, who knew that *his Soul ſhould not be left in Hell, nor his Body ſee Corruption*, be ſeized with an abſolute Deſpair of any better State, or an uneaſy Apprehenſion of no Releaſe from what he was to ſuffer? The Puniſhments of the Damned are without End, and without Hope: But everlaſting Miſery and Deſpair could never be conſiſtent with the Condition of one, who had not deſerved them, and whoſe Innocence ſecured and preſerved him from them. Theſe are the Conſequences of Diſobedience and Rebellion againſt God: But the Sufferings of *Jeſus* were the greateſt Proof of an entire Obedience, in the moſt difficult Inſtance of Submiſſion, and ſo far from incurring the divine Diſpleaſure, that, for this very Cauſe, *God hath highly exalted him*.

But though, from the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing it appears, that our Lord neither did, nor could ſuffer ſuch Puniſhments, in Kind and Meaſure as were due to Sinners; yet it muſt be obſerved, that he underwent ſuch Things as bore ſome Analogy to what Sinners are to ſuffer, and what he would not have ſuffered had he not been puniſhed for our Tranſgreſſions.

For, whereas Sinners lie under the Sentence of Condemnation, and are ſure to find a publick exemplary Jugdment; ſo was our Saviour ſolemnly condemned, and ſentenced as a Malefactor, a ſeditious Perſon, a Perverter of the Nation, a Rebel againſt *Cæſar*, and a Blaſphemer againſt God. Whereas Sinners will be expoſed to Shame, and Ignominy, at the great Day of Judgment, before Men and Angels; ſo our Lord ſuffered a very ſhameful and ignominious Death, and that attended with all the Mockeries, Affronts, and Obliquies, that the Malice of his Enemies could caſt upon him. And whereas Sinners are obnoxious to very grievous Torments both of Body and Soul, and theſe inflicted by the Hand of an enraged God; ſo, in his Perſon, our Lord ſuffered a Death, painful to ſuch a Degree, as to make the moſt exquiſite Tortures be called *Cruciatus*, from the *Croſs*; and, in his Mind, ſuch a Load of Grief and Anguiſh, as might well juſtify the mournful Complaint of the Prophet, *All ye that paſs by, behold and ſee if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the Day of his fierce Anger*.

Nor from this fair Reſemblance between what our Lord actually ſuffered, and what Sinners had deſerved to ſuffer, there ſeems to be ſufficient ground to ſay, that he bore the Puniſhment of our Iniquities, and ſuffered in our Stead; though what he underwent was not, in every Point, the ſame that we (had it not been for his Interpoſition) muſt have been obliged to ſuffer.

All that was requiſite, indeed, in his Sufferings was, that the Injuries and Affronts offered to the divine Juſtice, by the Provocation of wicked Men, ſhould receive a ſufficient Compenſation; that the Honour of God and his Laws ſhould be vindicated; and Sin made as terrible and full of Diſcouragement, as it could poſſibly be, though no ſuch Method of Mercy had ever been deviſed. Now all theſe Ends were fully ſatisfied by the Son of God condeſcending to ſuffer in our Stead; and, if there was any Thing wanting in the Duration, or Extremity of his Sufferings, that was abundantly made up by the Dignity of the Perſon, *who through the eternal Spirit* (*i. e.* the *divine* united to our human Nature) *offered him without Spot to God*; and, in virtue of that Union, exalted the Value of his Oblation to an infinite Degree, and paid a Ranſom to offended Juſtice of more worth than an hundred thouſand Worlds.

Q. *Wherein was* Judas *more culpable in betraying our Saviour, than* Peter *in denying him; ſince both repented with great Contrition and Sorrow?*

A. How great ſoever the Benefit was, which accrued to Mankind from the Death of our Saviour *Chriſt*, there is no apologizing for thoſe that were the bloody Inſtruments of it, and leaſt of all for *Judas*. For, beſides the Aggravation of his being a Diſciple, a Friend, a conſtant Companion one that had been taught and ſuſtained by him, and not only an Hearer of his Doctrine, and Eyewitneſs of his Miracles, but, in virtue of the Commiſſion received from him, a Preacher of the Goſpel, and a Worker of Miracles himſelf; beſides all this, I ſay, 'tis evident, that his Wickedneſs was not the Effect of a ſudden Surprize, or want of Recollection, but the Work of Deliberation, and long Contrivance and, and ſolemn Debate: For he conſulted with the High-prieſts and Elders, concerning the Time, the Place, and every Circumſtance, for the moſt convenient Execution of his Villainy: After ſuch Conſultation, he continued his Attendance upon his Maſter, that, under the Diſguiſe of Friendſhip, and by much laboured Hypocriſy, he might better carry on his Deſign to deſtroy him; and, as his Deſign was advancing to Maturity, he had all along had broad Hints and Monitions given him, that his Plot was diſcovered, and many Warnings of the Sin and Danger he was running into, but none of theſe altered his Purpoſe. So that, in this Act of his, there is a Complication of Ingratitude and Perfidy, Hypocriſy and Malice, and a ſettled inflexible Reſolution to do wickedly, beyond the Power of Advice and Warning, and the moſt awful Menaces to controul it: And this might be ſome Reaſon why his Repentance met not with Succeſs, as it is evident it did not, from our Lord's calling him *the Son of Perdition*, and declaring that *it had been better for him, if he had never been born.*

The *Evangeliſts*, indeed, tell us, *that he repented himſelf*, but then it is evident, that by *repenting* is not every where intended a Change of Heart and Life; nor the Whole of that, which Repentance ſtrictly ſignifies, when made the Condition of Pardon and Salvation, but only ſome Part and imperfect Degree of it. *Judas* found that Matters were grown to ſo deſperate an Height; that there was no probable Appearance of his Maſter's eſcaping the Malice of the *Jews*; and recollected, very likely, the Predictions of our Lord, concerning the dreadful Vengeance which ſhould overtake the Perſon that betray'd him to Death. Theſe, and probably many other dreadful Reflections, working together with all that Confuſion, which Fear and Guilt are known to create in Mens Minds, ſeem to have made up that Concern, which the Text hath expreſſed by *repenting himſelf*; a Concern reſulting from a Principle of Self-preſervation, in the moſt carnal Senſe of the Word: But we find not in him any due Senſe of the Villainy of the Fact, nor any condemning himſelf as the baſeſt, the moſt ungrateful, the moſt abandoned Wretch alive; one, that had violated the Laws of God, and Society, and Nature, and caſt all Fidelity and Gratitude, and common Humanity behind his Back. All which, and a great deal more, were not only Aggravations due to his Crime, but the very propereſt Occaſions of Remorſe.

He felt, indeed, ſome Regret for what he had done (as an awakened Conſcience cannot fence off ſuch Reflections) and he wiſhed, perhaps, he had never done it: But the Regret which he felt, ſeems rather to have been the Effect of Confuſion and Rage, than any godly Relenting; the Agonies of Frenzy, and Amazement, and Deſpair, which are the moſt diſtant Things in the World from that ſober and regular Sorrow, *which worketh Repentance unto Salvation, not to be repented of.*

Herein then lay the Defect of *Judas*'s Repentance, that the Horror of his Sin led him into Deſpair. For Repentance, we muſt know, does not barely conſiſt in Sorrow for Sin, but in ſuch a Sorrow, as is tempered and ſupported with Hope; not in a mere Confeſſion of our Tranſgreſſions, but in ſuch a Confeſſion, as truſts and depends on Forgiveneſs; and, as it imports a Change of Manners, unleſs we are firſt perſuaded that our ſincere Endeavours, for the future, will be kindly received, and our former Tranſgreſſions generouſly paſſed over, all Ground and Encouragement for ſuch a Change is utterly taken away.

Reaſon, indeed, cannot lead us to infer, that Sorrow for the paſt, or Amendment for the Time to come, can be any equivalent Satisfaction for our Offences; but Revelation aſſures us, that God may be appeaſed, and it hath told us withal in what Manner he is appeaſed, even by the precious Blood of his Son, *who came to give his Life a Ranſom for many.* In this Matter God hath declared himſelf ſo fully, that the very Heinouſneſs of our Sins is not a greater Provocation, than the Diſtruſt of Mercy (which, in Effect, is making God a Liar, and diſparaging the Merits of *Chriſt*'s Sacrifice) after we have committed them. So that, Hope of Mercy, and Faith in the Promiſes and Satiſfaction of *Chriſt*, are the very Life and Spirit of true Repentance, eſſentially, and indiſpenſably requiſite, to quicken and recommend every Part of it. And therefore no Wonder, if *Judas*'s Repentance proved ſo ineffectual, which was plainly deſtitute of theſe neceſſary Qualifications.

If it be enquired, how *Judas* came to be wanting in this Point? The immediate Cauſe, no Queſtion, was, that God had forſaken him, and withdrawn his Grace from him. But then, if we purſue this Enquiry ſtill farther, and follow it up to its true Fountain-head, the Matter will fall at laſt upon *Judas* himſelf, as the proper and original Cauſe of his own Miſery and Deſtruction.

For, whatever we may think of the Doctrine of *Predeſtination*, 'tis certain, that the miſerable *Judas* was not aware of any Power in it to ſuſtain his Mind, when he came to reflect on what he had done. He could not interpret, that the Foreknowledge of God had any Cauſalty, or Influence upon his Sins, becauſe he found Cauſe enough for that ariſing from his own Deportment: For, having given way to a covetous Deſire, and hardened his Heart by a ſinful Indulgence of it, againſt all Impreſſions of wholeſome Counſel, he was convinced, that the Prophecy of his Treaſon could not fail of its Event, becauſe, when the Temptation offered, he could not chuſe but do what he did. He had indeed loſt all his Power and Liberty to do better, though ſtill the Neceſſity, which he then lay under, was not fatal, but natural, not of God's decreeing, but of his own procuring. Under theſe juſter Apprehenſions of his Crime, he is ſaid to have repented, in the worſt Senſe of the Word, *i. e.* he grieved, he deſpaired, and then he hanged himſelf: And though we allow that his Paſſions tranſported him too extravagantly in theſe latter Violences, yet, even from what was rational in his Grief, we may learn this Leſſon, ——— That, when an awakened Conſcience comes to eſtimate the Nature of its Guilt, there will be found but poor Shelter in all thoſe Palliations, that can be formed by human Subtilty, and licentious Wit.

The Aggravations of St. *Peter*'s Offence in denying our Lord, are much of the ſame Kind with that of *Judas* in betraying him. That a Perſon, who, for the ſpace of three Years and more, had the Honour of our Lord's Converſation, the Conviction of his Miracles, and the Inſtruction of his Doctrine; who had been let into the Knowledge of thoſe Myſteries which, for wiſe Reaſons, were de-

deliverd in Prrables, and concealed from others; admitted to his Transfiguration upon the Mount, his Converſe with *Moſes* and *Elias*, and to hear that Voice from God's excellent Glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, as himſelf teſtifies; that a Perſon, who, hereupon, had made Confeſſion of his Maſter's Divinity, and received his Commendations for it; had been choſen a Companion of his Agonies, and forwarned frequently of the great Danger of denying him; and hereupon grown ſo very reſolute, that he offered *to go with him into Priſon, and to Death*, and to diſtinguiſh himſelf above any of his Brethren, *Though all ſhould be offended*, ſays he, *becauſe of thee, yet will I not be offended, and though I were to die with thee,, yet would not I deny thee:* That a Perſon, we ſay, placed in this Rank and Elevation, ſhould fall off in the Time of Trial; ſhould deny and abjure his Maſter, whoſe greateſt Honour it was to own, implies a Guilt ſtill more heinous, the more his Knowledge and former Conviction, the more his Warning ond long Experience, the more his Profeſſions, and boaſted Firmneſs of Mind were conſpicuous.

This, however, may be ſaid, with Relation to the Difference between the Crime of *Judas*, and that of St. *Peter*, that the former proceeded from a Spirit of Malice, and fixed Reſolution to do evil, occaſioned by a ſordid and covetous Temper; that it was nouriſhed up by long Contrivance and Deliberation, was carried on by Hypocriſy and deep Diſſimulation, was executed with Perfidy and great Violence, and ended, at laſt, in the Agonies of Horror and Deſpair; whereas St. *Peter*'s Crime, (though a very great one) was but of a ſhort Continuance, and never in his Intention at firſt; was indeed the Effect of Fear, and human Infirmity, occaſioned, in a great Meaſure, by Surprize, and want of Recollection; not ſo much the Act of the Man, as it was the Force of the Temptation he was under; and therefore, when he *came to remember the Words, which* Jeſus *had ſaid unto him*, and thereupon to conſider, how ſhamefully he had fallen from his Courage and Conſtancy; how eaſily he had been betrayed into a Crime, he thought himſelf not capable of; how baſe he had been to ſo kind a Maſter, how falſe to his Promiſes, how regardleſs of Truth, how peremptory in a moſt notorious Falſhood, and how prophane and profligate in his Oaths and Curſes; when he came to conſider all this, we ſay, a godly Sorrow ſwelled his Heart, and Tears guſhed out of his Eyes: *He went out and wept bitterly.*

Judas, in like Manner, might weep for his Tranſgreſſion perhaps, but his Tears muſt have been ineffectual, becauſe the Seaſon of that Grace, which he had long reſiſted and defeated, was departed from him, and God provoked to give him over to his own Perverſeneſs; whereas our Saviour, who foreſaw from what Principle St. *Peter*'s Offence would ariſe, and how ſudden his Converſion would be, *had prayed for him, that his Faith might not fail*, and thence his Recovery did proceed. We ſhould be injurious, however, to the Memory of the Apoſtle, if we ſhould neglect to Account how his After-behaviour ſhewed the Sincerity of his Repentance, and made an ample Amends for the Scandal of his Offence.

Itwas the ſame St. *Peter*, that, after our Lord's Reſurrection, returned to the ſame Fervour of Affection, for which he was remarkable before; that ſo exerted himſelf at the Day of *Pentecoſt*, and proved, by irrefragable Arguments, *that* Jeſus Chriſt *was the Son of God*; that maintained his Point againſt the *Jewiſh Rulers*, deſpiſing their Rebukes and angry Menaces, and telling them plainly, that *God was to be obeyed rather than Man*; that confirmed his Brethren by his reſolute Behaviour, and made it a *Matter of rejoycing*, that he was *accounted worthy to ſuffer Shame* for the once abjured Name of *Chriſt*. In a Word, 'twas he, who, after a long labour of Preaching and Perſecutions of all kinds, at length finiſhed his Courſe, and glorified God by the ſame ſort of Death that his bleſſed Son condeſcended to undergo for our ſakes. So that St. *Peter* was not more different from himſelf, when trembling at the Voice of a ſilly Damſel, than the ſame *Peter*, afterwards, the glorious and invincible Apoſtle, before the Council, in Priſon, and upon the Croſs, was from the cowardly and infamous Renegade, in the High-prieſt's Palace. This ſettled and deliberate Fidelity was a noble Compenſation for the Infirmity and Tranſports of this Fall. This ſhewed what the Man was when perfectly himſelf, and ſupported by the Grace of God; as the other did what he was, when naked and deſtitute of heavenly Succours, depending upon his own Strength, and left in the Hand of his own Paſſions.

Q. *What does the Hiſtory of* Thomas's *Unbelief, and our Saviour's Readineſs to convince him, and the reſt of the Diſciples, by the Trial of their Senſes upon him, teach us?*

A. The Story of *Thomas*, and the Means, which (as we therein read) our Saviour made uſe of to convince him, will inſtruct us in this.—— That whatever Changes our Saviour's glorified Body might undergo, after his Reſurrection, it was not altered, as to the Properties of a Body, whereof our outward Senſes are competent Judges: To theſe it is that out Lord appealed; by theſe he compoſed the Diſciples, ſuſpecting him to be a Phantom; by theſe he ſatisfied the Doubtful and Incredulous; and by theſe the Apoſtles made it their Buſineſs to perſuade the World, when they ſo frequently teſtify, that they *had ſeen and heard him*, had *eaten and drunk with him*. But now, if our Saviour's Body was not ſubject to the ſame Laws with other corporeal Subſtances; if it could then paſs through the Doors in the Manner of a Spirit, and may at this Time be, where our Senſes can diſcern nothing of it, though no other Body can be ſo; then what Satisfaction could *Thomas* receive, in feeling his Hands and Side? Or wherein would the Strength of St. *John*'s Argument lie, when he declares to his Proſelytes, *That which he had ſeen and heard, and his Hands had handled of the Word of Life?*

The Indulgence, indeed, which our Saviour gave his Apoſtles, to try all their Senſes upon him, gave them full Satisfaction, both as to the Materiality and Indentity of the Body. But then, as all Philoſophy informs us, that no Body can penetrate through another, we may reaſonably infer, that when our Lord came to his Apoſtles, on purpoſe, as it were, to convince them of the Reality of his Reſurrection Body, he did not glide into the Room, like a Spirit, or Phantom, but by his ſovereign Power; open the Door himſelf (even as the Angel did the Priſon-gates to releaſe *Peter*) ſecretly, and without the Perception of any in the Company, who might all then be at the upper End of the Room, perhaps, and employed in ſome Buſineſs, as took up their whole Attention. For, unleſs we can ſuppoſe that our Saviour deſigned to invalidate the Strength of what he ſaid and did, to convince his Apoſtles of ths Truth of his Reſurrection, we cannot believe, that at the ſame Time he would do a Thing (known and obſerved by them) which would, in Effect, deſtroy the Force of all his Proofs.

Q. *'Tis Difficult, however, to imagine the Reaſon why our Saviour ſhould ſo far condeſcend to his Apoſtles, as to ſhew his Hands and his Feet, deſiring them to handle them, when, not long before, he forbad* Mary Magdalen *to touch him, becauſe he* was not yet aſcended; *unleſs we may ſuppoſe, that after his Reſurrection, he might aſcend ſeveral Times; and that his firſt Aſcenſion follow'd immediately upon it?*

A. Now, to make this more obvious, we muſt remember, that a little before his Paſſion, our Saviour foretold to his Apoſtles, his ſudden Aſcent to his Father, and as ſudden a Deſcent to them again: *Yet a little while,* ſays he, *and ye ſhall ſee me, and again a little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me, becauſe I go to my Father,* and that afterwards, upon their Surprize, and Diſpute about the Meaning of the Expreſſion, *Jeſus ſaid unto them, do you enquire among yourſelves of what I ſaid, A little while and ye ſhall ſee me, and again, a little while and ye ſhall not ſee me: Verily, I ſay unto you, that ye ſhall weep and lament, but the World ſhall rejoice, and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your Sorrow ſhall be turned into Joy,* &c. Now, if we compare this Prediction with the Event, how ſad and diſconſolate the Apoſtles were, upon our Saviour's Death, and how refreſhed and joyful they were, ſoon after his Reſurrection; and conſider withal, that this Sorrow was to laſt 'till *Chriſt* had been with his Father, and then their Joy to commence; we ſhall be inclined to believe, that what our Lord would be underſtood to ſay, is, that he was to go to his Father immediately after his Reſurrection, and then very ſoon to return to his Apoſtles again, even the very ſame Day in the Evening.

And, indeed, conſidering that *Chriſt* was our High-prieſt, 'twas neceſſary for him to aſcend into Heaven, as ſoon as his Sufferings were finiſhed. For, as the High-prieſt, under the Law, was not only to ſlay the Sacrifice, but to carry the Blood, that Moment, within the Sanctuary, and there preſent it before God, to compleat the Attonement, and make Interceſſion for the People; ſo *Chriſt* having ſhed his Blood, and offered his Body on the Altar of the Croſs, was immediately to aſcend into the heavenly Sanctuary, and there obtain for us the Remiſſion of our Sins, and all the other Benefits of his Paſſion.

But this is not all. In ſeveral Parts of Scripture, our Saviour is inveſted with a regal, as well as ſacerdotal Character; but now, if according to the Teſtimony of the ſame Scripture, he could not exerciſe any ſupreme Authority, until he was exalted to his heavenly Kingdom; if he could not *give Gifts unto Men,* until he was *aſcended up on high*; nor *ſend his holy Spirit* upon his Diſciples, *until he was glorified,* and had, by his Interceſſion, *obtained that great Promiſe of the Father*; if he could not, we ſay, adminiſter the Affairs of his mediatorial Kingdom, before he had conquered Death by his Reſurrection, and had preſented himſelf as a ſlain Sacrifice and Propitiation for the Sins of the World, before the Preſence of the Divine Majeſty; this makes it evident, that on the very Day of his Reſurrection, he muſt have aſcended to Heaven, becauſe, in the Evening of that Day, we find him giving a Commiſſion and Inſtructions to his Apoſtles, promiſing them the *Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt*; bleſſing them in a ſolemn Manner; ſending them, as his Father had ſent him; giving them the Power of remitting and retaining Sins; and therefore commanding them to go and teach, and baptize all Nations, and promiſing his powerful Preſence with them, even until the End of the World.

Now if the Exerciſes both of the ſacerdotal Office, and regal Power, could not properly belong to our Saviour, until his Exaltation, then we have Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that in the Morning of his Reſurrection, he privately aſcended into Heaven, to receive the Reward of his Humiliation in our Fleſh; and that the Reaſon for his forbidding *Mary* to touch him, was, that by her officious Embraces and Importunity, ſhe might not hinder him from aſcending that Moment, and (what was the Crown of all his Labour) carrying our glorified Nature, as ſoon as poſſibly he could, into that bleſſed Place, where God's majeſtick Preſence appears, and where Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Powers, Angels, and Arch-angels have their Abode.

Q. *What other Evidences are there of the Goodneſs and Perfection of the* Chriſtian *Religion?*

A. The Completion of the Prophecies, relating to the promiſed *Meſſiah,* in the Perſon and Actions of our Saviour *Chriſt,* and the Miracles which he wrought in Teſtimony of his Divine Miſſion, and in Conformity to what the *Meſſiah* was to do, were the Subjects of the preceding Diſcourſes, as the great external Evidences of the Truth of our holy Religion; and the internal Evidence is, of the Goodneſs and Perfection of thoſe Precepts, relating to Practice, which he hath enjoined; and of thoſe Doctrines relating to Faith, which he hath taught us in the Courſe of his Goſpel, and which, when duly conſidered, will manifeſt the Excellency of the *Chriſtian* Religion, above all others.

Now the practical Part of our holy Religion, or thoſe Precepts, which were intended to direct us in our Duty towards God and Man, are ſuch, as either tend to the Perfection of human Nature, or to the Peace and Happineſs of human Society. Of thoſe, which tend to the Perfection of human Nature, ſome enjoin Piety towards God, and others require the good Government of ourſelves, with reſpect to the Pleaſures of this Life; and our Buſineſs is to ſhew that all, and every of theſe, are both conformable to the Dictates of right Reaſon in their Practice, and declarative of the Wiſdom of God in their Appointment.

1. That we ſhould inwardly reverence and love God, and expreſs that Reverence by external Worſhip and Adoration, and by our Readineſs to receive and obey all the Revelations of his Will; that we ſhould teſtify our Dependance upon him, and our Confidence in his Goodneſs, by conſtant Prayers and Supplications to him for Mercy and Help, both for ourſelves and others; that we ſhould acknowledge our Obligations to him for the many Favours and Benefits which, every Day, every Moment, we receive from him, by continual Praiſes and Thankſgivings; and that, on the Contrary,

we ſhould not entertain any unworthy Thoughts of God, nor give that Honour and Reverence, which is due to him, to any other; that we ſhould not worſhip him in any Manner that is either unſuitable to the Perfections of his Nature, or repugnant to his revealed Will; that we ſhould carefully avoid the Profanation of his Name by cuſtomary ſwearing or curſing; and take great heed, that we be not guilty of the Neglect or Contempt of his Worſhip, or of any other Thing that belongs to him: In ſhort, that we ſhould poſſeſs our Minds with ſuch a due Senſe of the Majeſty, and Holineſs, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs of God, as may make us, upon Occaſion, thoroughly fearful to offend him; of his Majeſty, leſt we affront it by being irreverent; of his Holineſs, leſt we offend it by being carnal; of his Juſtice, leſt we provoke it by being preſumptuous; and of his Goodneſs, leſt we forfeit it by being unthankful. Theſe are the general Heads of thoſe Duties, which every Man's Reaſon tells him he owes to God, and yet theſe are the very Things which the *Chriſtian* Religion expreſly requires of us, ſo that, in this Part of *Chriſtianity*, there is nothing but what exactly agrees with the Reaſon of Mankind.

In reſpect to the good Government of ourſelves, amidſt the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of this Life, St. *John*, when he tells us, that *all, that is in the World, is the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*, diſtributes the irregular Appetites of Men into three Kinds: *Voluptuouſneſs, Covetouſneſs*, and *Ambition*, which are anſwerable to three Sorts of tempting Objects, that are in the World, *Pleaſures, Riches*, and *Honours*: But, when our holy Religion requires of us, that *we ſhould not walk after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*; that we ſhould, in ſhort, *walk decently as in the Day, not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, not in Chambering and Wantonneſs*; but, *being holy in all Manner of Converſation, abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, which war againſt the Soul*; when it gives us this ſtrict Caution, *to take heed and beware of Covetouſneſs, becauſe a Man's Life*, or the Happineſs of his Life, *conſiſteth not in the Things, which he poſſeſſeth*; and calls upon us ſo frequently *to be meek and lowly in Spirit*, and not *mind high Things*; to *let nothing be done through vain Glory, but, in Lowlineſs of Mind, to let each eſteem others better than themſelves*; 'tis plain that it lays a Prohibition upon all ſuch irregular Appetites and Paſſions, as are the Bane of human Eaſe and Happineſs, and enjoins ſuch Virtues and good Diſpoſitions, as are not only highly reaſonable, ſuitable to our Nature, and every way for our temporal Convenience, and Advantage, but ſuch, as diſpoſe us likewiſe to the Practice of Piety and Religion, by purifying our Souls from the Droſs and Filth of ſenſual Delights.

2. In relation to the other Sorts of Precepts, which (as we ſaid) tend to the Peace and Happineſs of human Society, they are ſuch, as enjoin all thoſe Virtues, that are apt to ſweeten the Spirits, and allay the Paſſions and Animoſities, which ſometimes happen among Men. For when our moſt holy Religion requires us, *to love our Neighbours* (i. e. every Man in the World, even our greateſt Enemies) *as ourſelves*, and, in Purſuance of this general Precept, *if it be poſſible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men*, to be *kind to one another*, ready to gratify and oblige thoſe that we converſe with, to be tender-hearted and compaſſionate, to thoſe that are in Want and Miſery, and ready, upon all Occaſions, to ſupply and relieve them; to ſympathize with one another in our Joys and Sorrows, *to mourn with thoſe that mourn, and to rejoice with them that rejoice*; *to bear one another's Burdens*; *and to forbear one another in Love*; *to be eaſily reconciled to them that have offended us*; it diſcovers itſelf not only to be the moſt innocent and harmleſs, but the moſt generous and beſt-natured Inſtitution, that ever was in the World.

In like Manner, when our holy Religion endeavours to ſecure the private Intereſts of Men, as well as the publick Peace, by confirming and enforcing all the Dictates of Nature, concerning Juſtice and Equity; by recommending the great Rule of doing to others what we would have them do to us, as the Sum and Subſtance *of the Law and the Prophets*; by commanding Obedience to human Laws, which decide Mens Rights, and Submiſſion to Government, under pain of Damnation; and by forbidding whatever is contrary to theſe, *viz.* Violence and Oppreſſion, Fraud and Over-reaching, Perfidiouſneſs and Treachery, Breach of Truſts, Oaths, or Promiſes, Undutifulneſs to Superiors, Sedition and Rebellion againſt Magiſtracy and Authority; and if there be any Thing elſe, that is apt to diſturb the Peace of the World, and to alienate the Affections of Men from one another, ſuch a Sourneſs of Diſpoſition, and Rudeneſs of Behaviour, Cenſoriouſneſs, and ſiniſter interpretation of Things; in ſhort, all croſs and diſtaſteful Humours, and whatever elſe may render Converſation uneaſy and unſociable. When the Laws of *Chriſtianity*, we ſay, forbid theſe Vices and evil Diſpoſition, and, upon every Occaſion, command the contrary Virtues, *Whatſoever Things are true, whatſoever Things are honeſt, whatſoever Things are juſt, whatſoever Things are lovely, whatſoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praiſe*, requiring us *to think of theſe Things*; we cannot but allow, that nothing can be deviſed more proper and effectual to advance the Nature of Man to its higheſt Perfection, to procure the Tranquillity of Mens Minds, to eſtabliſh the Peace and Happineſs of the World, and (if they were daily practiſed) to make it, as it were, an Heaven upon Earth, than the Precepts which we find recorded in the Goſpel: And (what is no ſmall Commendation of them) there is nothing in all theſe Precepts, but what, if we were to conſult our own Intereſt and Happineſs, we ſhould think ouſelves obliged to do, even though it were never enjoined us; nothing, in ſhort, but what is eaſy to be underſtood, and as eaſy to be practiſed by every honeſt and well-meaning Mind.

Some, indeed, have repreſented even the moral Part of the *Chriſtian* Religion, as an *heavy Burden, and grievous to be born*, difficult to be kept, and yet dangerous to be broken; that it requires us to govern, and keep under our Paſſions, to contradict our ſtrongeſt Inclinations, and, many times, to deny ourſelves even lawful Enjoyments; that it injoins us to forgive and *love our Enemies, to bleſs them that curſe us, to do good to them that hate and perſecute us*; and (what is more) that it commands us to part with all the Advantages of this World, and even to lay down Life itſelf, in the Cauſe of God, and the Diſcharge of a good Conſcience. *Hard Sayings theſe*, in ſome Mens Opinion, and ſuch as our Nature, in its State of Degeneracy, is not able to perform: But this is for want of duly conſidering the Obligation, and Tendency of ſuch Duties.

Some of the wiſeſt *Heathens*, even by the Strength of Reaſon, were able to diſcover the general Corruption of human Nature, but then they were ignorant both of the Riſe and Progreſs of it; whereas, by the *Chriſtian* Revelation, we are ſufficiently inſtructed in both. Here we find the baleful Venom of our firſt Anceſtors Tranſgreſſion, entailed on their Poſterity; here the perpetual Strugglings of Fleſh and Spirit, and that Violence of Paſſions and Deſires, that ſo often carries us into Exceſſes, which our ſober and better Senſe cannot but diſapprove; and here the general Bent to Evil, and Backwardneſs to Good, which every one (but ſuch as are obdurate and inſenſible) is forced both to feel and lament; and therefore, ſince the Goſpel does not only ſhew us our Diſeaſe, but the Malignity and true Original of it, there is good Reaſon why it ſhould be allowed to preſs upon us the great Duties of Mortification and Self-denial, as the beſt Means, within the Compaſs of human Power to cure us of it.

The antient Moraliſts, though they ſometimes decry an Inſenſibility of juſt Provocations, as a Mark of an abject and little Soul; yet, upon no Occaſion are they ſo profuſe in their Praiſes, as where they ſpeak of Perſons, touched with a Senſe of Injuries and Indignities, and yet able, with a generous Contempt, to overlook, and ſhew themſelves above them; for the paſſing by, and forgetting ſuch Things, the being very hardly incenſed, and very readily appeaſed again, is conſtantly ſet forth, as one of the brighteſt Virtues, that give Luſtre to a brave and truly noble Mind. And if ſuch were the Notions of *Heathens*, who profeſſed to follow no other Guide but the Light of Reaſon, ſurely the Duty of loving and forgiving thoſe that have injured and offended us, cannot be a Taſk ſo very difficult to *Chriſtians* who in Matters capable of any tolerable Conſtruction, are required to put on that Charity, *which believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things*, and, in the worſt that can be, ſuch Greatneſs of Mind, as *puts away from us all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking, with all Malice; ſuch as ſhould make us kind and tender-hearted, reſtoring thoſe, that are overtaken in a Fault, in the Spirit of Meekneſe; and ſuch, as ſhould prevail with us, to forbear one another, even as God, for Chriſt's Sake, hath forgiven us.*

And indeed, he who conſiders, that the very Foundation of our Religion is laid in the Belief, and Profeſſion of a Pardon extended to the higheſt of all Provocations, of Love inconceivable to the worſt of all Enemies, and both theſe expreſſed and effected by a Perſon, the moſt highly injured, and in a Method, the moſt beneficial, the moſt amazingly kind, inſomuch that no Inſtance of Generoſity, or Goodneſs, beſides, preſents us with any Thing like it, with any Thing near it, with any Thing fit to be named with it: He who conſiders this, we ſay, cannot but acknowledge, that the precept of loving and forgiving our Enemies is peculiarly ſuited to the Condition of *Chriſtians*, who owe all their Hopes and Happineſs to it; and that it would have been abſurd not to have obliged thoſe Men to a Virtue, which they confeſs themſelves ſo infinitely beholden to, and which no Man can think a grievous Command, who conſiders the Pleaſure and Sweetneſs of Love, the glorious Victory of overcoming *Evil with Good*, and then compares theſe with the reſtleſs Torments, and perpetual Tumults of a malicious and revengeful Spirit.

The Stoicks of old repreſented their Wiſeman, as no more concerned at the Loſs of his Eſtate, his Liberty, or Life, than if they were the Rattles, or Gewgaws of a Child, which might afford him ſome little Eaſe, and preſent Diverſion indeed, but were by no means eſſential, or in any Degree neceſſary to his real Happineſs. This, however is a Flight too romantick to be credited. To lay down this Life, and all the Comforts of it, while Men were ſo much in the Dark about another; and to expoſe the Body to Sufferings, when doubtful, and in Diſtruſt about the Soul, is too great an Infraction upon *Self-preſervation*; becauſe it is to part with one's All, at leaſt, our All in Certainty and Opinion: But to do this, when Men know the Reality of a future State, and the Value of their immortal Souls; *To fear him, who when he hath killed, can caſt Body and Soul into Hell*, rather than them, *who can only kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do*; to receive, embrace, rejoice in *the light Affliction which is but for a Moment*, when thoroughly perſuaded, that *it worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*; that is, not to deſtroy, but to ſave and profit ourſelves, and what, in the Affairs of this World, we eſteem it our Wiſdom to do every Day.

If, by any ſad Accident, our Houſe happens to be ſet on Fire, no man is to be blamed for doing his beſt to ſave his Goods; but when that is found impracticable, every wiſe Man will chuſe to leave all, and eſcape naked, rather than, out of a fooliſh Fondneſs for any Furniture of Value or Curioſity, there ſtay, and periſh with it. Now, this is no improper Emblem of the Caſe before us. When the Fire of Perſecution breaks out among us, we have our Lord's Permiſſion, by all prudent and honourable Methods to decline it; but when it comes at laſt to catch upon theſe earthly Tabernacles, *i. e.* when our Circumſtances admit of no other Choice, but either *ſinning* or *ſuffering*, the Loſs of our *Lives*, or the Loſs of our *Virtue*, we owe it then, not only to God, but to ourſelves, rather to quit this Houſe of Fleſh, than bring the glorious Inhabitant in it into Danger of being buried in its Ruins.

2. The other Part of the *Chriſtian* Religion is, (as we ſaid before) theſe Doctrines, which were deſigned for the Direction of our Faith in Matters that were not ſufficiently revealed before.

That there is one ſupreme, abſolute, and independent *Cauſe*, and Original of all Things, eternal, infinite, all-powerful, all-ſufficient, the Maker and Lord of all Things, himſelf derived from none, made of none, begotten of none, proceeding from none; that by him all Creatures, material and immaterial, viſible, and inviſible, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, mortal and immortal, in Heaven and in Earth, were made, or created out of nothing; that having made the World at firſt, he ſtill governs it by his perpetual Providence, inſomuch that the moſt fortuitous Accident does not happen, *a Sparrow does not fall to the Ground, nor an Hair from our Heads*, without his Permiſſion or Direction; that, in the Exerciſe of this his Providence, every Thing is ſubmitted to his Will; no Strength can reſiſt his Power, no Swiftneſs can flee his Preſence, no Secrecy can conceal from his Knowledge, no Art can evade his Juſtice, and every Creature participates of his Goodneſs; that this Infinite and Almighty Being did, from all Eternity, and long before any Ages commenced, in an ineffable Manner, (which the Scriptures call *Generation*) communicate the Eſſence of the Godhead ſo intirely to his Son, as to make him the ſame with himſelf, *very God of very God*; that this eternal Son of God, having a Being in the *Boſom of his Father*, was Partaker of his Glory and Power in the Creation and Government of the World; and, by the divine Appointment, is our *Saviour*, *Mediator*, *Interceſſor*, and *Judge*; that, having a tender Compaſſion for ſinful Man, and willing to procure for him the Grace of *Repentance*, he voluntarily condeſcended to take our Nature, with all its innocent Infirmities upon him; that, in this Nature (miraculouſly conceived, and born of a Virgin) he lived a Life as we do, and was affected as we are, but without Sin; revealed unto us his Father's Will, and did many wonderful Works, in Confirmation of his own divine Miſſion; that, after a Life ſpent in doing good, he ſubmitted, in his human Nature, to a painful and ignominious Death, that thereby he might make an Attonement to God, and Reconciliation for our Sins; that, after a Stay of three Days in the Grave, by his Almighty Power, he raiſed himſelf to Life again, converſed upon Earth for the Space of forty Days, inſtructed his Diſciples in Matters relating to his Kingdom; and, at length, in the Sight of a great Number of Spectators, aſcended viſibly into Heaven; that, upon his Aſcenſion, he was exalted to the Right hand of God, where he now makes Interceſſion for us, and was inveſted with all Power and Authority, wherewith he governs the whole Church, and is hereafter to judge the whole World; that upon his Inveſtiture, he ſoon ſent down the *Holy Ghoſt* (the Third Perſon in the ever bleſſed Trinity) to be the immediate Comforter, and Director of his Apoſtles, to *lead them into all Truth*, to inſpire them with the Gift of Tongues, and to impart to their Followers ſuch other Gifts, as might beſt ſerve the End of their Miniſtry; that this bleſſed Spirit ſtill continues with all good Men, and by illuminating their Underſtandings, rectifying their Wills and Affections, renewing their Natures, uniting their Perſons to *Chriſt*, and helping the Infirmities of their Prayers with his own Interceſſion, is the great Sanctifier of their Souls and Bodies, to their full and eternal Acceptation in the Sight of God: Theſe (together with the Doctrines of the Immortality of the Soul, the Reſurrection of the Body, and, after their Re-union, an eternal State of Miſery or Happineſs in the other World) are the great and fundamental Principles of the *Chriſtian* Religion, and Myſteries (as the Apoſtle calls them) *which have been hid from Ages, and from Generations, but are now made manifeſt to the Saints.*

Q. *But how are theſe Things made manifeſt, when, notwithſtanding all the pretended Light of Revelation, they ſtill remain Obſcure and Unintelligible? Some Articles of the* Chriſtian *Faith, ſuch as the Exiſtence of a God, the Diſpenſations of Providence, the Spirituality of our Souls, a future State, and future Judgment, we readily allow, becauſe theſe are founded on the Nature of Things, and riſe in the Mind upon the Diſquiſitions of Reaſon; but, as for the Stories of a Trinity in Unity, a Co-equality in the Son, the Incarnation of a God, and the Propitiation made by the Man* Chriſt Jeſus; *of theſe we can frame no manner of Conception*; and therefore you muſt excuſe us, if we do not believe them: for Where is the Crime of not performing Impoſſibilities, or of not believing what does not appear to be true?

A. It cannot be denied, indeed, but that, in the *Chriſtian* Religion, there are many great Myſteries, or Doctrines of too much Sublimity for the Powers of Reaſon, unaſſiſted by Revelation, to find out, or, when diſcovered, fully to comprehend; but this is no more than what we might reaſonably expect, conſidering the Nature and Quality of the Things it treats of. In its main Intention, it is a kind of Comment upon the divine Nature, or an Inſtrument to convey right Conceptions to the Soul of Man, as far as it is capable of receiving them. But now God, we know, is an infinite Being, without any Bounds or Limitations of his Eſſence; wonderful in his Actions, inconceivable in his Purpoſes, and inexpreſſible in his Attributes; and how can ſuch vaſt and mighty Things be crowded in a little finite Underſtanding? How ſhall our poor, ſhort Faculties, be able to meaſure the Lengths of his Eternity, the Breadth and Expanſions of his Immenſity, the Heights of his Preſcience, the Depth of his Decrees, and leaſt of all, the unutterable incomprehenſible Myſtery of two Natures united into one Perſon, and again of one and the ſame Nature diffuſed into a triple Perſonality? When a Man, that is born blind (as one expreſſes it) ſhall be able, on Hear-ſay, to conceive in his Mind all the Varieties and Curioſities of Colours, or to draw an exact Scheme of ſome fine City, or Map of ſome large Province, then may we expect, in this degenerate State of our Underſtanding, to comprehend the Ways of the Almighty, and *by ſearching to find out God*: But (to do Juſtice to the Argument on the other Side) as it would be extreamly fooliſh and irrational, for a blind Man to affirm, that there is no ſuch Thing as Colours, or Lines, or Pictures, becauſe he finds that he cannot form in his Mind any true Perception of them; ſo would it be equally, if not ſuperlatively more unreaſonable, for us to deny the great Myſteries of our Faith, becauſe the Plummet of our Reaſon will not reach them.

Wiſh therefore we may, that Religion were leſs difficult to us, but, at the ſame Time, we ought to remember, that we wiſh away that, which, in reality, is Religion's preſent Commendation, as well as an Ingredient of our future Happineſs. For, as it is Eaſineſs of Acceſs that many Times lays a Man open to Contempt, and a thorough Inſpection into the Secrets of any Object, that is apt to make us neglect it; ſo, to protect our Religion from rude Encroachments, by impreſſing an Awe and reverential Fear upon our Minds, God has thought proper to hedge it in (as it were) with a ſacred and majeſtick Obſcurity; and, in ſome Parts of it, to exhibit ſuch ſublime Truths as tranſcend the Reach of human Wiſdom; thereby to humble the Pride and Haughtineſs of our Reaſon; and thereby to engage us in a cloſer and more diligent Search into ſuch Subjects, as will, every Moment, furniſh us with new Matter to entertain the buſieſt

Contemplation, even to the utmoſt Period of human Life.

While therefore we continue in this State, we muſt be content *to know in Part*: A full and adequate Perception of the Myſteries of our Religion is reſerved, as a principal Ingredient of our Felicity and Happineſs above, when all the Heights and Depths, which we now ſtand amazed at, ſhall be made clear and familiar to us; when God ſhall diſplay the hidden Glories of his Nature, the Wonders of his Providence, and the Wiſdom of his Counſels; and, with-all, fortify the Eye of the Soul to ſuch a Degree, as to make it able (as far as the Capacities of an human Intellect can be able) to behold, and take them in.

To have a right Notion of the Doctrines of our Religion however, we are to diſtinguiſh between thoſe Things that are *above Reaſon*, and incomprehenſible, and thoſe that are *againſt Reaſon*, and utterly inconceivable. Some Things are above Reaſon, becauſe of their tranſcendent Excellency and Diſtance from us; whereas thoſe that are againſt Reaſon, involve a Contradiction, and have a natural Repugnancy to our Underſtandings, which cannot conceive any Thing that is formally impoſſible. And from hence it will follow, that though we neither can, nor ſhould believe thoſe Things that are contrary to our Reaſon, yet we both may, and ought to believe thoſe, that are above it: And the Reaſon is, becauſe the only Evidence we can give of our acknowledging the infallible Truth of God, is by aſſenting to what he affirms upon his own Authority.

In aſſenting to a Propoſition, whoſe Truth we perceive from the Reaſon of the Thing, we do not aſſent unto any Authority at all. To ſuch a Propoſition we ſhould aſſent, though it were affirmed by the moſt fallible Man, nay, though it were affirmed by the moſt notorious Liar; and, conſequently, our aſſenting to ſuch a a Propoſition is no manner of Proof, that we acknowledge the infallible Veracity of God. This can only appear by our aſſenting to a Propoſition, whoſe Truth we do not perceive by any Evidence from the Nature of the Thing; for here we aſſent upon the ſimple Authority of God's Affirmation, and our Aſſent is an explicit Acknowledgment of his abſolute Veracity. If then it be reaſonable to expect, in a Divine Revelation, that God ſhould require our Acknowledgment of this Attribute eſpecially (and without ſuch Acknowledgment no Revelation would be of any uſe) and if this Acknowledgment can appear only by our Aſſenting, upon the Authority of God, to ſuch Propoſitions as we cannot perceive the Truth of by any internal Evidence, it certainly cannot be incongruous to expect ſuch Propoſitions in a divine Revelation: Nay, much more incongruous would it be, and a probable Objection againſt the Divinity of any Revelation, if we ſhould not find ſome Propoſitions of this kind in it, becauſe it is hardly conceivable, why God ſhould make an external Revelation of thoſe Things only, which, by a due Exerciſe of Reaſon, he has enabled us to find out.

Seeing it is ſo far from being unreaſonable then, that it is highly expedient, and in ſome ſort neceſſary, that there ſhould be ſome Propoſitions above the Reach of human Underſtanding, in every Relation, that comes from God; if we can but ſhew, that in the *Chriſtian* Syſtem there are no Doctrines, but ſuch as ſtand clear of all Abſurdity and Contradiction, the more abſtruſe and myſterious they are, the more they deſerve our Belief, for this very Reaſon; becauſe, if what is revealed concerning God were every way eaſy, and adapted to our Comprehenſions, it could never reach, nor, with any Fitneſs, repreſent that Nature, which we all allow to be incomprehenſible.

The holy Scriptures, for Inſtance, teach us, that in the Divine Nature (which can be but *one*) there are *three* diſtinct Perſons, to whom we aſcribe the ſame Attributes and Perfections, the ſame Worſhip and Adoration. This indeed is a Doctrine above our Comprehenſion, as to the Manner, how *three* ſhould be *one*, and *one three*; but ſtill we affirm, that there is no Contradiction in it, if we will but diſtinguiſh between *Numbers*, and the *Nature* of Things. For *three* to be *one* indeed, is a Contradiction in Numbers, but whether an infinite Nature can communicate itſelf to three different *Subſiſtences*, without ſuch a Diviſion, as is among created Beings, muſt not be determined by bare Numbers, but by the abſolute Perfections of the Divine Nature, which muſt be owned to be above our Comprehenſion. The holy Scriptures teach us, that the Son of God was *made Fleſh and dwelt amongſt us*, and that therefore our Redeemer was both God and Man in one Perſon. This, we own, is, in its Nature, one of the great *Miſteries of Godlineſs*, as St. *Paul* calls it; but then we muſt remember, that, in Reality, it is not much more difficult than the Union of the Soul and Body in all Mankind; which, however unaccountable it may be to our Reaſon and Imagination, it is too certain in Fact to be called in Queſtion. Once more, the holy Scriptures teach us, that our Saviour *Chriſt*, who was both God and Man in one Perſon, became the Redeemer of the World, by offering himſelf *a Propitiation to God for Sinners*. This, in many reſpects, is a Myſtery too, and what we could not have known, had it not been revealed to us; but now, that it is revealed, it is far from deſerving the Imputation of being abſurd. That all Mankind are Sinners, and fallen from their primitive Integrity, not only the Scriptures, but the conſtant Experience of our own irregular Appetites, is but too convincing a Demonſtration. Now, ſince this was our Condition, and God was minded to reſcue us from it, but entirely at Liberty in what Method to effect it; ſince the Soul of our Saviour *Chriſt* was a free immaculate Being, that might voluntarily ſuffer for us, if he pleaſed; and, by the Dignity of his Nature, inhance the Value of his Sufferings to the full Pardon of our Sins, upon his Father's Acceptance of a vicarious Sacrifice; there appears nothing in this Doctrine of *Chriſt's* Satiſfaction (now that we have it fully revealed to us) but what correſponds with common Reaſon, and all judicial Proceedings among Mankind.

Theſe are ſome of the principal Doctrines, that we (as *Chriſtians*) profeſs; and ſeeing they are free (when rightly conſidered) from all Appearance of Contradiction, we may appeal to the Judgment of any conſiderate Perſon, whether it be not for the Dignity and Advantage of Religion, that ſome Articles of it ſhould exceed the largeſt human Comprehenſion: Whether we ſhould entertain the ſame awful Impreſſions of the Divine Majeſty, if the Perfections of his Nature and Operations were only ſuch as we could ſee to the End of: Whether it does not raiſe the Value of Man's Redemption, to have it brought about by Miracles of Mercy, not only without Example, but even beyond our preſent Underſtanding. Had all theſe Things been leſs, we ſhould, indeed, have known them better; but then ſo much as we abate of their Myſteriouſneſs, to bring them down to our Capacity, ſo much we impair of their Dignity, and weaken the Power of them upon our Affections. It is therefore the very Commendation (as we ſaid before) and Excellency of theſe Doctrines, that they are ſo far above us; and we ought to eſteem it an Inſtance of the divine Goodneſs, no leſs than Wiſdom, ſo to have tempered his Revelations, that we want not Knowledge enough to engage our Piety and holy Wonder, and yet have not ſo much as ſhould deſtroy our Humility and godly Reverence; and, upon the whole have Reaſon to believe, that it could not have been better, nay, probably not near ſo well, if either leſs had been diſcovered to us, or leſs concealed from us.

The other Doctrines, which, in ſome meaſure, were diſcoverable by the Strength of Reaſon, but have been ſet in a full Light, and clear'd of all their Ambiguity and Doubtfulneſs by the Revelation of the Goſpel, ſuch as that of the Being of a God, the Inſpection of his Providence, the ſupreme End of Man, the Immortality of his Soul, the Reſurrection of his Body, a future Judgment, and an eternal State of Happineſs or Miſery hereafter, are ſo rational in themſelves, and have ſo natural a Tendency to what is the great End of all Religion, the Reformation of Men's Lives and Tempers, that a very ſmall Illuſtration will ſuffice to recommend them. For,

What can be a more neceſſary and excellent Foundation of true Religion, than that Doctrine which the *Chriſtian* Religion clearly and diſtinctly teaches us, concerning the Nature and Attributes of *the only true God, who inhabits Eternity, and yet humbleth himſelf to behold the Things that are in Heaven and Earth?* What can afford more Comfort and Security in all Conditions of Life, than the Senſe of a *Providence* (by which the very *Hairs of our Head are numbered*) concerning itſelf for our Welfare, and, for that Reaſon, bidding us *to be careful for nothing, but in every Thing, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, to make our Requeſts known unto God?* What can be a more effectual Means to wean us from the Love of the World, and the Allurements of Sin, than to conſider, that the proper and ultimate End of Man is the Fruition of God; and that, tho' it does *not yet appear what we ſhall be, yet this we know, that when he ſhall appear we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is?* What greater Inticement to Purity and Holineſs, to Love and Hope, and Heavenly-mindedneſs, than the Aſſurance given us in the Goſpel, that when we are *diſſolved*, we ſhall immediately be with *Chriſt*; that *this Corruptible ſhall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal put on Immortality*, that our Souls, when they go hence, *return to the God that gave them*; and our Bodies, when laid in the Duſt, after a ſhort Repoſe, are to be *raiſed in Power, and faſhioned like unto* Chriſt's *glorious Body?* In fine, what ſtronger and more powerful Motive to deter us from Vice, and allure us to all kind of Virtue, than the Diſcovery we have of God's having *appointed a Day, wherein he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, and render unto every Man according to his Works; to them, who by patient Continuance in well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life; but upon them that are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man, that doeth Evil.* So that the Articles of our *Chriſtian* Faith, you ſee, are far from being arbitrary Impoſitions, calculated for the Exerciſe of our Credulity, or the Gratification of our idle Curioſity, but have an immediate Relation to Practice. They are, indeed, the genuine Principles and Foundations of all human and divine Virtues; and, taken altogether, make a far more rational and conſiſtent Scheme of Belief, than what the wiſeſt antient Philoſopher ever thought of, or the moſt opinionative modern Unbeliever ever yet contrived.

But, beſides theſe Doctrines, there are two Ordinances peculiar to the *Chriſtian* Religion, which have an equal Tendency to Practice, and are ſo far from being vain and ſuperſtitious (as ſome are pleaſed to call them) that they carry their own Plea and Juſtification along with him. For, what reaſonable Man can pretend to ſay, that it is any way ſuperſtitious for every Member of the Society, which *Chriſt* has inſtituted, to be ſolmnely admitted into the Profeſſion of his Religion, by a plain and ſignificant Rite, intitling him to all the Privileges, and charging him with all the Obligations, which belong to the Members of that Society, as ſuch; which is the Deſign of one of the Sacraments; or that it is unreaſonable, or ſuperſtitious, for Men frequently to commemorate, with all due Thankfulneſs, the Love of their greateſt Benefactor, and humbly and ſolemnly to renew their Obligations and Promiſes of Obedience to him which is the Deſign of the other? But then, if we conſider farther the manifold Benefits which we receive from theſe ſacramental Ordinances; that, by the former, we are admitted to the Pardon of all our Sins, the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace, the Adoption of Sons, and a Title to a glorious Inheritance; and that, by the latter, we have the Covenant of Mercy renewed, our Breaches repaired, and our Right to eternal Happineſs confirmed; that in both, in ſhort, we are made and recognized to be the *Children of God,* and *if Children, then* (according to that happy *Climax*) *are we Heirs, Heirs with God, and joint Heirs with* Chriſt, *to the Intent, that we may be glorified with him*; if we conſider theſe great Privileges, I ſay, we ſhall ſoon perceive the Wiſdom and Love of our Maſter and only Saviour, in thus *opening to us a Fountain for Sin and for Uncleanneſs*, and in thus giving to us the *Medicine of Immortality*, (as the Antients ſtile the *Euchariſt*) *an Antidote to preſerve Men from dying, and to give them a Life that is everlaſting.*

But, whatever inherent Efficacy ſome may think fit to aſcribe, or deny to theſe ſacred Ordinances, it can hardly be thought, but that, ſince (when they are duly obſerved) they are productive of many Virtues and good Diſpoſitions; ſince, in the Sacrament of Baptiſm, we profeſs our ſincere Belief in the Truth of that Doctrine, which God the Father revealed by his bleſſed Son, and confirmed by the miraculous Operations of the *Holy Ghoſt*; in it acknowledge our Obligations to all Piety, Righteouſneſs, and Sobriety, as loyal Subjects, faithful Servants, and dutiful Children to God; and in it devote ourſelves to the Faith and Obedience of God the Father, our great and glorious Maker; of God the Son, our great and gracious Redeemer; and of God the Holy Ghoſt, our bleſſed Guide and Comforter: And, in like Manner, ſince a devout Reception of the Supper of our Lord, exerciſes and excites in us an awful Senſe of Mind, anſwerable to the Greatneſs and Holineſs of him, whom, at that Time, we approach; an hearty Contrition for our Sins, which expoſed our Saviour to ſuch Pains and Agonies, as are therein remembered; a fervent Love and Gratitude to him, for his wonderful Goodneſs and Love to us; a deep Humility, upon the Senſe of our Unworthineſs to receive ſuch Teſtimonies of his Favour; a pious Joy, in conſideration of the excellent Fruits accruing to us from his Performances; a comfortable Hope of obtaining the Benefits of his Paſſion, by the Aſſiſtance of his Grace; and laſtly, an enlarged Good-will and Charity to all our Brethren, as being made Heirs of the ſame Hope, and not only waſhed in the ſame Baptiſm, but fed at the ſame Table with ourſelves; ſince theſe, I ſay, are the Graces and Benefits which accrue to us by theſe holy Ordinances, we cannot but applaud the Wiſdom of their Inſtitution, which affords ſuch mighty Helps to our *Chriſtian* Progreſs; and, by the Bleſſing of God, are the happy Inſtruments both of our living well, and our living for ever.

From this brief Review of the *Chriſtian* Religion, it appears, that the Purity and Practicableneſs of its Precepts, the Truth and Sublimity of its Doctrines, and the Wiſdom and Piety of its ſacramental Inſtitutions, cannot but recommend it to every Man's Conſcience, that is neither bribed with Vice, nor tinctured with Infidelity; for, *if our Goſpel be hid*, if the Beauty and Excellency of our holy Religion be hid, *it is hid to them that are loſt, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them who believe not, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of* Chriſt (who is the Image of God) *ſhould ſhine unto them.*

And now, methinks we may, with ſome Confidence, challenge any Religion in the World, to ſhew us ſuch a compleat Body and Collection of Doctrines, both ſpeculative and practical; of Myſteries more ſublime, and rational withal; more agreeable to the divine Nature, and more perfective of human Underſtanding; and of Rules and Precepts, that would make Men more pious and devout, more holy and ſober, more juſt and fair in their Dealings, better Friends, and better Neighbours, better Magiſtrates, better Subjects, and better in all Relations, than what we find recorded in the Goſpel.

Were there no other Argument of the Divinity of the *Chriſtian* Religion, but only the Excellency of the Doctrines which it teaches, this would be enough to convince any conſidering Man, that it came from God. For, if it were nothing elſe but the Reſult of natural Reaſoning, why ſhould not other Religions in the World, and other Syſtems of Morality be as good as this? How comes the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt* to excel thoſe of all the famous Legiſlators and Philoſophers in the World? How comes an obſcure Perſon in *Judea* to draw up ſuch an admirable Scheme of *Ethicks*, that all that is laid down by the *Lycurgus's*, and *Numa's*, and *Plato's*, and *Ariſtotle's*, ſhould not be comparable to it? How ſhould he, in one or two Years Preaching, nay, in one ſhort Sermon, advance the practical Doctrines to a greater Height and Perfection, than ever they were brought to by any of the Sects of Philoſophers, who had made it their Buſineſs to ſtudy them for ſome Ages? Moſt certainly, unleſs God had been aſſiſting in contriving this new Model of the Morality of *Jeſus Chriſt*, it is impoſſible that it could ever have equalled, much leſs ſo far exceeded, that of the *Grecian* Schools, which had all the human Advantages, that he wanted, on their Side.

It cannot be denied, indeed, but that almoſt in every Age, there have been, in the Heathen World, ſome wiſe, brave, and good Men, who have carried human Reaſon to a very great Height, and in the Study and Diſquiſition of natural Religion, have made no mean Diſcoveries; but then there is room to ſuſpect, that their Diſcoveries of this Kind were not ſo much owing to the Strength and Sagacity of their own Reaſon, as to the many Traditions they might receive from their Anceſtors, or the Converſation they might have with the *Hebrews*, who had all their Inſtructions from Revelations.

That there were certain Principles delivered by God to *Noah*, and by him propagated among his Poſterity, through all Ages and Nations, is what we may eaſily conceive; and thence we may ſuppoſe, that many Points, which ſeem now to be Deductions from natural Reaſon, might have their Original from Revelation, becauſe Things once diſcovered, may ſeem eaſy and obvious to Men, which they, notwithſtanding, would never of themſelves have been able to find out.

However this be, 'tis certain, that as the antient Philoſophers might borrow many Helps from their Knowledge of the *Jewiſh* Religion, which was the only Revelation they pretended to; ſo whoever compares the Writings of later Philoſophers, of *Epictetus*, *Antoninus*, and ſome others, who lived ſince the Goſpel got Footing in the World, with theirs who went before them, will find ſo manifeſt a Difference, ſo much more unaffected Solidity, and ſo near a Reſemblance to ſome of the moſt exalted *Chriſtian* Precepts, as cannot well be accounted for, without ſuppoſing ſome Acquaintance with a Set of Principles, which they could not but approve and admire, and affected to engraft into their own Syſtems of Morality, tho' they never expreſly avow'd the Authority on which they ſtand. Theſe were great Helps; and it is no Wonder, that under the Influence of theſe they wrote ſo well: But if we look into the Tracts of thoſe that went before them, and were unaſſiſted by Revelation, we ſhall find them miſerably ignorant of many important Points that are delivered to us with the greateſt Perſpicuity.

And, if the *Pagan* Religion, when ſupported with the higheſt Improvements of human Underſtanding, fell ſo far ſhort of being a rational Service, what ſhall we ſay to the *Mahometan*, which invelops itſelf in Ignorance, and makes its main Foundation the Gratification of Men's brutal Luſts and Appetites? One would really wonder how ſo corrupt an Inſtitution came to ſpread ſo wide in the World, but that there was a Concurrence of Circumſtances, at that Time, which did not a little contribute to its Propagation.

This we muſt obſerve, however, that God does not always approve thoſe Actions and Deſigns, which, to demonſtrate the Wiſdom of his Providence, he is ſometimes pleaſed to permit and proſper; that a Religion propagated by Force, and ſupported by Methods of external Strength, is ſo far deſtitute of any Proof, that its Original is from Heaven; and that, when it contains ſuch Doctrines as are repugnant to the Dictates of right Reaſon, or the known Properties and Attributes of God, it can be the Product of nothing elſe but human Invention.

When therefore we find *Mahomet* eſtabliſhing his Religion by the Dint of the Sword, perſecuting with War, all that would not ſubmit to it, and threatening, with no leſs than Death, all that pretended to diſpute the leaſt Article of it; whereas the *Chriſtian*, quite otherwiſe, was planted in Weakneſs and Diſgrace, in Tears and Prayers, and Patience, and watered with the Blood of many thouſands of its Profeſſors: When we find him allowing of Fornication, juſtifying Adultery, and talking of War, Rapine and Slaughter, as Things enjoined and commanded by Almighty God; whereas, what we have learnt from *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, is, *to poſſeſs every one his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour, not in the Luſt of Concupiſcence*; *to live peaceably with all Men*; and inſtead of invading any other's Property, *to take joyfully the Spoiling of our Goods, knowing, that we have in Heaven, a better and more enduring Subſtance*: When we find him, the better to allure his Followers, telling them of pleaſant Gardens, curious Fountains, delicate Beds, and beautiful Women with black Eyes and fair Complexions, in Paradiſe, with whom they ſhall enjoy continual Pleaſures, and ſolace themſelves with amorous Delights to all Eternity; whereas we are told, that in the Reſurrection, we *neither marry, nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels of God in Heaven*, where we ſhall come to Company, ſuitable to our glorified Natures, *To the general Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born, to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, to an innumerable Company of Angels, to God the Judge of all, and to* Jeſus *the Mediator of the new Covenant*, Heb. xii. 23, 24. When we compare theſe Things together, I ſay, we ſhall find the one, abhorrent to the Nature of God, injurious to the Dignity of the human, and a Contradiction to that eternal Law of Righteouſneſs, which is written in every Man's Breaſt; but the other agreeable to the Notions we have of the ſupreme Being, and conſonant to the rational Dictates of our Nature.

If we proceed to compare the Tranſactions of *Chriſt*'s Life, with thoſe that are related of *Mahomet*; how our *Saviour went about doing Good, healing all Manner of Diſeaſe among the People, giving Sight to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, and Life to the Dead*; how the Miracles, which he wrought, were ſolemn and grave; Acts of his Love to Mankind, and Demonſtrations of his Omnipotence; and how thoſe, who embraced his Religion, in virtue of thoſe Miracles, were Men of Innocence and Simplicity, who lived good Lives, and feared God, and were therefore, under the divine Protection, ſecured from the Deceivableneſs of Error; whereas the Followers of *Mahomet* were a Gang of Robbers and Plunderers, void of all Piety, and all Humanity; himſelf a bold ambitious Man, greedy of Empire, and reſolved to raiſe himſelf, even at the Deſtruction of his Fellow-creatures; and the Miracles reported of him, (ſuch as his cleaving the Moon in two; the Trees going out to meet him; the Stones ſaluting him; the *Camel* and the *Shoulder of Mutton* ſpeaking to him; and his wonderful Journey to Heaven, with all the ſtrange Sights he there beheld) are to the higheſt Degree abſurd and ridiculous: If we compare theſe Things together, I ſay we ſhould ſoon perceive, in whom the Characters of a true Prophet meet, and who is to be deemed the wicked Impoſtor, whoſe Religion was intended to civilize and ſanctify human Nature, and conſequently is the Gift of God; and whoſe calculated to gratify the cruel and carnal Appetites of rude Barbarians, and conſequently, was the Forgery of Man.

The *Jewiſh* Religion, indeed, derived its Origin from Heaven, and *Moſes* ſeems to glory in the Excellence of its Inſtitutes, when he asks the People, *What Nation is there ſo great, that has Statutes and Judgments ſo righteous, as all this Law which I ſet before you this Day?* And yet, if we were to deſcend to an Examination, we ſhould ſoon perceive, in many great Diſcoveries, the Preeminence of the Goſpel above the Law.

1. That there is a God, and that there is but one God; that the only one God is incorporeal, inviſible, immortal, eternal, omnipotent, omniſcient, of infinite Juſtice, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, the ſupreme Governor of the World, and of all Things therein, and a gracious Rewarder of thoſe that ſeek him, is abſolutely neceſſary to be known by all, who would attain eternal Life; and it cannot be doubted, but that the Faithful, from the Beginning, had this Knowledge of God: But then, before the Coming of *Chriſt*, they had not ſo certain, ſo clear, and ſo diſtinct a Knowledge of theſe Things, as we have now under the Goſpel. For over and above the Knowledge of theſe Things, which the Pious, before *Moſes* had, either from a ſerious Contemplation of the Works of God, or from the Tardition and Inſtruction of the Patriarchs, and which the *Jews*, in ſucceeding Ages, had from the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets; we *Chriſtians* have a more diſtinct and evident Manifeſtation therefore, from the Books of the *Evangeſts* and *Apoſtles*.

The Faithful under the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, did, without doubt, believe God to be an inviſible and omnipreſent Spirit; and yet his frequent Appearance, ſometimes under one Reſemblance, and ſometimes under another, the Building of an Ark, a Tabernacle and Temple, whither he was pleaſed to call his People together into his immediate Preſence, and to talk with them (as *Moſes* expreſſes it) Face to Face, muſt neceſſarily turn their Eyes and Minds towards the Mercy-Seat; make them apprehend God ſhut up, as it were, within the *Holy of Holies*, and conſequently perplex and obſcure their Notions of his Spirituality and Omnipreſence: Whereas there is no room now, under the Goſpel, for any groſs Conceptions of the Deity, when we are called upon not to turn our Eyes towards a viſible Tabernacle, but *to pray every where*, in any Place, *lifting up holy hands*; and are taught by *Chriſt*, *that God is a Spirit, and that they, who worſhip him, worſhip him in Spirit and Truth.*

The Believers under the Law, were perſuaded that all Things were ordered and governed by an all-wiſe and all-powerful Being; and yet the moſt ſagacious of them were not able to account for the Juſtice of divine Providence, in ſuffering the Wicked to proſper, and the Righteous to be afflicted. But now this Difficulty every common *Chriſtian* is able to ſolve, by the Help of what he has learned from the Goſpel, concerning the Retributions of a future State, and can apply to all ſuch Caſes the Reflection made by *Abraham* on the rich Man's Deſire of ſome Relief from *Lazarus*; *remember that thou, in thy Life-Time, receivedſt thy good Things, and likewiſe* Lazarus *evil Things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

2. The natural Obliquity of Sin is, what Men, in all Ages, could not but perceive; but how to account for his Cauſe and Origen, they were at a ſtrange Loſs: And therefore ſome imagined a pre-exiſtent State, from whence they brought Depravity along with them, while others deviſed two contrary Principles, equally actuating the World, the one the Author of all the Good, the other of all the Evil they did. *The Wickedneſs of Man,* (as *Moſes* tells us) *was great in the Earth, and every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was evil continually*; but whether theſe Expreſſions are to be extended to the whole Race of Mankind, and ſo are a Proof of the general Depravation, has been doubted by ſome: Whereas, all ſuch Doubts muſt now be ſilenced by the plain Aſſertions in the *New-Teſtament*, that *by one Man Sin entered in the World, and Death by Sin,* Rom. v. 21. ſo that *by the Offence of One, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation,* Ver. 18. that all who are of the Race of Mankind, *are Sinners, nngodly, Enemies of God, Children of the Devil, and by Nature the Children of Wrath,* Eph. ii. 3. that *when they would do good, evil is preſent with them, having a Law in their Members warring againſt the Law of their Mind, and bringing them into Captivity to the Law of Sin,* Rom. vii. 21, 23. and that this is the State of depraved Nature, wherein Men are born, wherein thoſe that live and die, ſhall *be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.*

3. And as the Goſpel gives us a moſt diſtinct Account of the Origin and Demerit of Sin, ſo does it furniſh us with a clearer Diſcovery of the Method, whereby the Guilt of it is attoned. Thoſe whoſe live under the *Moſaic* Diſpenſation, were ſaved by the ſame Means of Redemption, as we who live under the *Evangelical*; but the Myſtery of our common Redemption was not, in any Degree, ſo fully manifeſted to them, as it is to us: And hence it is that the Apoſtle compares the Writings of the *Old-Teſtament*, to a Light, or (as the Original is) to a *Candle ſhining in a dark Place*, but the Revelation, which was made by *Chriſt* in the Goſpel, to the Day-dawn, and the *Day-ſtar ariſing in our Hearts.* The Revelation made to the *Jews*, was to them a Light, but a faint one; it ſhone, but in a dark Place. The Nativity, Life and Death of *Chriſt*, the ſeveral Offices of his Mediatorſhip, the Remiſſion of our Sins thro' his Blood, and Sanctification of our Hearts by his Spirit, and the Glories of the World to come, were taught them, not in Words at length, but in Figures, and a dark Veil was over the Writings as well as over *the Face of* Moſes, *ſo that the Children of* Iſrael *could not ſtedfaſtly behold* his Doctrine, any more than they could his Countenance. In a Word, they were ſaved, as well as we, by the Blood of *Chriſt*; but there was as great a Difference between their Knowledge of the Myſtery of our Redemption, by the Sacrifices of the Death of *Chriſt*, and ours, as there was between that dark Cloud, wherewith God led the Peple at one Time, and that Pillar of Light wherewith he guided them at another.

And as the Goſpel gives us clearer Notions of the Expiation of Sin, ſo does it exhibit a fuller Aſſurance of our being juſtified, or having our Sins pardoned thereby. Religious Perſons, who lived before the Coming of *Chriſt*, knew that they were Sinners, and that they therefore had need of the Mercy and Favour of God, for the Remiſſion of their Sins; but then, being not ſufficiently inſtructed in the Method of obtaining God's Favour, they could not but groan ſorely under the Weight of them. Severe Curſes were denounced in the Law, againſt all who ſhould in any Caſe tranſgreſs it; theſe Curſes were plain and eaſy to be underſtood; but the Promiſes of a Pardon, through the Merits of a Saviour, were more intricate and involved: When therefore the Danger, which threatened them, was ſo apparent, and the Methods of their Eſcape ſo obſcurely notified to them, it is no Wonder if their Fears did very much over-balance their Hopes. Hence it is that the Spirit, by which they were governed, is in the Goſpel repreſented as a Spirit of Bondage, but the Spirit, by which we *Chriſtians* are influenced, is a Spirit of Adoption: *Ye have not now,* ſays the Apoſtle *Paul, received the Spirit of Bondage again unto Fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption; whereby we cry* Abba, Father, *i. e.* whereby we are as well aſſured of the Love of God, as a Child is of the Affection of an indulgent Father; as ſurely intitled to the Joys of Heaven, as an adopted Son is to the Inheritance of him, who therefore adopted him, that he might make him his Heir; for (as the Apoſtle goes on to diſplay the Privileges of the Chriſtian) *the Spirit itſelf beareth Witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God, and if Children, then Heirs; Heirs of God, and joint heirs with* Chriſt.

5. And as the Aſſurances given us of this Inheritance, are greater; ſo, laſtly, is the Inheritance itſelf much more plainly revealed to us in the Goſpel, than ever it was before. Whatever could be learned of a future State, from the Light of Reaſon, that and as much more was known to the *Jews*: What by Reaſon and Revelation was made known to the *Jews*, concerning an immortal Life, that and much more is manifeſt to us *Chriſtians.* The Texts, in which a future State is revealed to the *Jews*, are few, and hear and there thinly ſcattered, in ſome particular Books of the *Old-Teſtament*; but there is no one Book, ſcarce one Chapter, in which this Doctrine is not taught in the *New.* Thoſe in the *Old-Teſtament*, are not ſo clear of Ambiguity, but that they are capable of another Interpretation, and even are actually interpreted of temporal Promiſes by ſome pious and learned *Chriſtians*; thoſe in the *New*, are ſo clear, that there is no Room for the

moſt Ignorant to miſapprehend, or the moſt Impious to pervert them. Some, in the *Old Teſtament*, ſeem not more clearly to aſſert an immortal Life, than others do to deny it; and even the ſame Writers ſometimes deliver Things, upon this Head, which, at firſt View, appear to be inconſiſtent; but as a future State of Happineſs and Miſery is ſupported by more Texts in the Goſpel, and thoſe much more clear than in the Law; ſo can it not be pretended, that it is in the leaſt impugned by any ſuſpicious Paſſage, thro' the whole *New Teſtament*: And therefore it is with great Juſtice, that the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* (who himſelf was excellently verſed in the Knowledge of the *Jewiſh* Law) hath obſerved, that *the Law had only a Shadow of good Things to come, but not the very Image of the Things, i. e.* it did but obſcurely and faintly typify the Glories of Heaven; not give us ſo bright an Image, and ſo lively a Repreſentation of the Rewards of another World, as is pictured out to us, and in all its full Proportion and Lineaments accurately deſcribed in the Goſpel.

From all which it appears, how incomparably happy we *Chriſtians* are under the Goſpel, above what the *Jews* were in the Law; God having placed us under the beſt, the cleareſt Diſcoveries and Revelations, and given us the moſt noble, rational and maſculine Religion, a Religion the moſt perfective of our Natures, and moſt conducive to our Happineſs. And what, indeed, can be a nobler Privilege, what a more generous and delightful Pleaſure, what a more powerful Incentive to Obedience, than for a rational Creature clearly to diſcern the Equity, the Neceſſity, the Benefit, the Decency, the Beauty of every Action he is called upon to do; and thence to be duly ſenſible how gracious a Maſter he ſerves; one that is ſo far from loading him with fruitleſs and arbitrary Impoſitions, that each Command, abſtracted from his Authority, who gives it, is able to recommend itſelf, and nothing required, but what every wiſe Man would chuſe of his own Accord, and cannot, without being his own Enemy, ſo much as wiſh to be exempted from? *Bleſſed are the Eyes which ſee the Things that ye ſee* ſays our Saviour to his Diſciples, and in them, to all Profeſſors of his Religion, in ſucceeding Generations) *for I tell you, that many Prophets and Kings have deſired to ſee thoſe Things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen them, and to hear thoſe Things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* But in vain were theſe great Privileges conferred on us, unleſs we make an anſwerable Improvement of them; and far from bleſſed ſhall we be, when we come to appear before the dreadful Tribunal, unleſs we endeavour *in all Things to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.*

To conclude; nothing is ſo proper to form us to Holineſs, as the Example of our Mediator, it being abſolutely perfect, and thoroughly accommodated to our preſent State; there is no Example of any mere Man that is to be followed without Limitation; but the Life of *Chriſt* was as the pureſt Gold without the leaſt Allay. His Converſation was a living Law, and Chriſtianity, which is the beſt and holieſt Inſtitution in the World, is nothing elſe but a Conformity to his Precepts and Patern. The univerſal Command of the whole Goſpel is this, *To walk as* Chriſt *walked.* This denotes a ſincere Intention, Deſign, and Endeavour to imitate and follow him in the Paths of Holineſs and Obedience.

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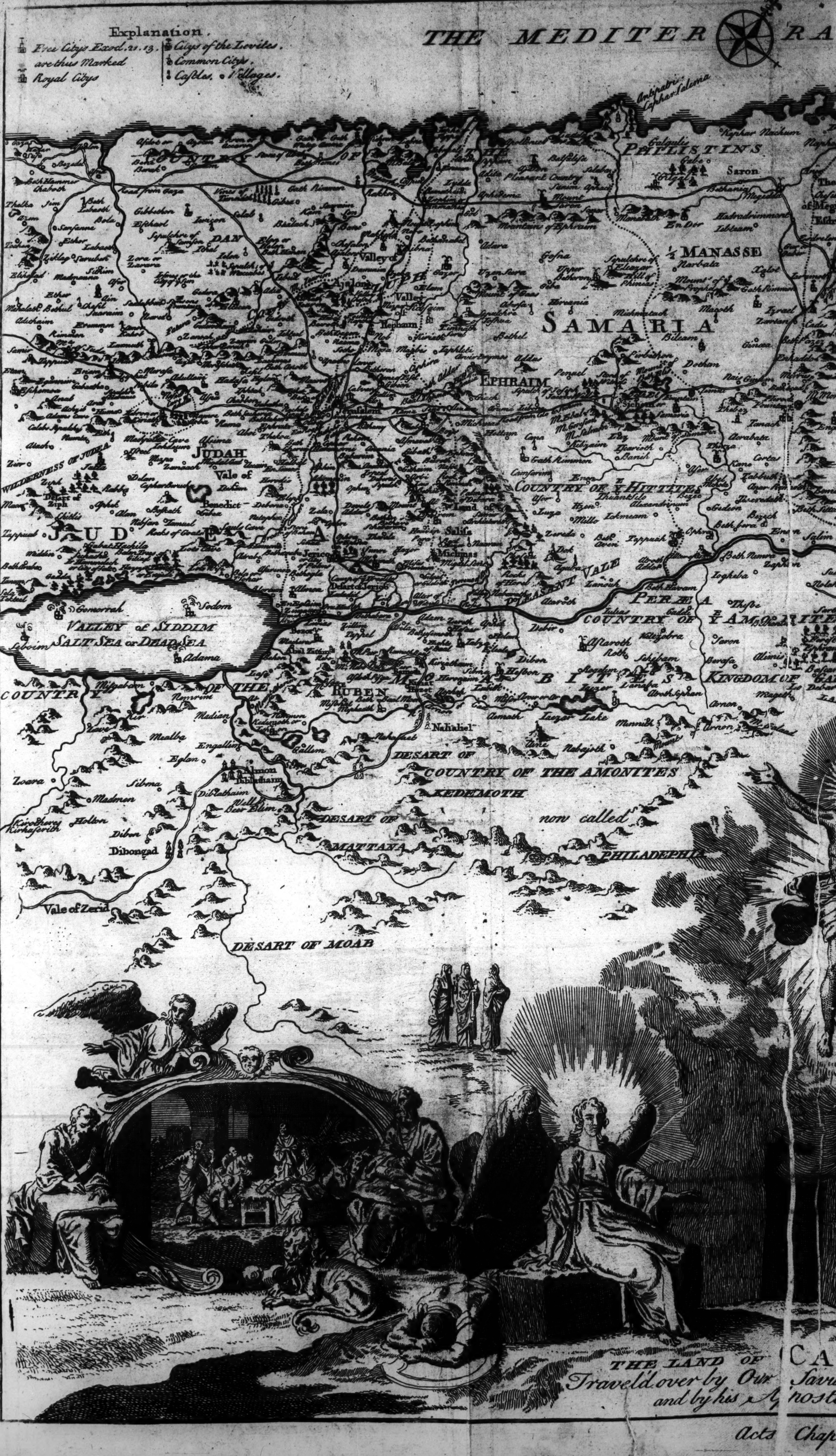
Explanation.
Free Citys Exod. 21.13. are thus Marked
Royal Citys
Citys of the Levites.
Common Citys.
Castles. Villages.
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Antipatris Caphar Salema
PHILISTINS
Saron
MANASSE
SAMARIA
EPHRAIM
DAN
JUDAH
Vale of
Benedict
JUD E A
WILDERNESS OF JUDEA
Mountains of Ephraim
COUNTRY OF Y HITTITES
PLEASANT VALE
PERÆA
COUNTRY OF Y AMORITES
KINGDOM OF
BITIES
RUBEN
Gomorrah
Sedom
VALLEY of SIDDIM
SALT SEA or DEAD SEA
Seboim
Adama
COUNTRY OF THE
Nahaliel
DESART OF
COUNTRY OF THE AMONITES
KEDEMOTH
now called
PHILADELPHIA
DESART OF
MATTANA
Dibongad
Vale of Zerid
DESART OF MOAB
Zoara
Kirhareseth
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THE LAND OF CA
Travel'd over by Our Savi
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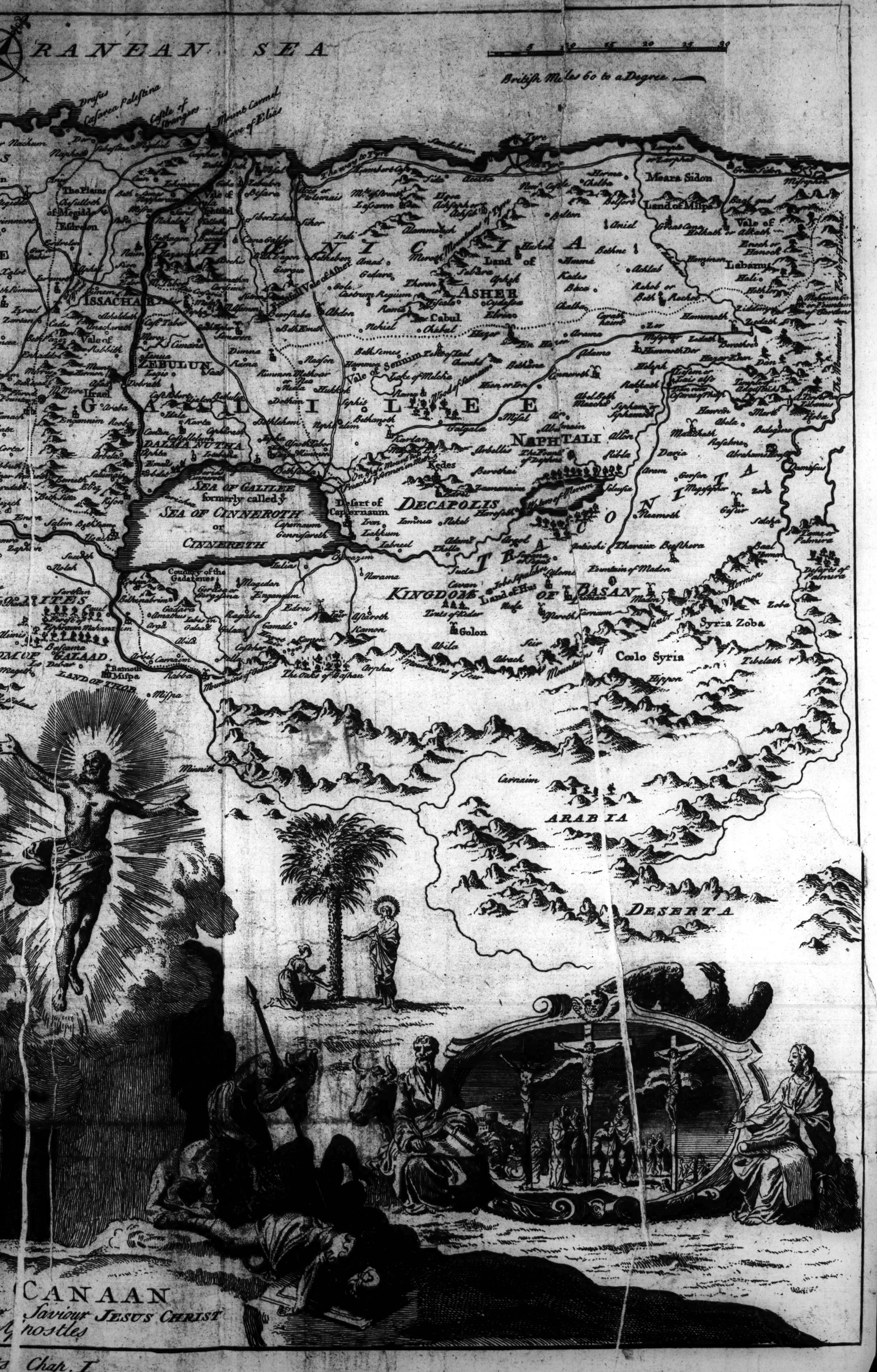

RANEAN SEA
British Miles 60 to a Degree
5 10 15 20 25 30
Caesarea Palestina
Castle of Strangers
Mount Carmel
Cave of Elias
Tyre
Great Sidon
Meara Sidon
Land of Mispa
Vale of Alkath
Libanus
The Plains of Megidd
Esdrelon
ISSACHAR
Vale of Jezrael
ZEBULUN
PHOENICIA
Land of ASHER
Cabul
Vale of Sennim
Lake of Melcha
Wood of Samaria
GALILEE
NAPHTALI
Kedes
Waters of Merom
DALMANUTHA
SEA OF GALILEE formerly called ye SEA OF CINNEROTH or CINNERETH
Capernaum
Genesareth
Desert of Capernaum
DECAPOLIS
TRACHONITIS
KINGDOM OF BASAN
Land of Hus
Golon
Astaroth
Hermon
Syria Zoba
Coelo Syria
Tibelath
Damascus
Deserts of Palmira
Country of the Gadarenes
Gadara
Mountains of Gilead
The Oaks of Bashan
Mountains of Seir
GALAAD
Ramoth Mispa
LAND OF TOB
Minnith
Carnaim
ARABIA DESERTA

CANAAN
Saviour JESUS CHRIST
Apostles

Chap. I

THE ACTS

OF THE

APOSTLES.

THIS Book has been always received, by all Chriſtians, *as* Canonical; *and eſteemed, though amongſt the hardeſt, yet amongſt the brighteſt Jewels that ſhine in the Word of* God. *It is an Hiſtory concerning the Church of* Chriſt, *in its Infancy; and ſhews God's wonderful Care of it, and powerful Providence over it. It begins where the Goſpel ends, which the ſame Author* (*St.* Luke) *had wrote; and is of great Uſe to prevent and confute all feigned Stories concerning the Lives and Doctrines of the Holy Apoſtles.*

St. Luke *having accompanied St.* Paul, *and been an Eye and Ear-witneſs of what he relates, was certainly the fitteſt Perſon to record what that great Apoſtle did and ſaid; and if moſt of this Book be taken up concerning him, it is becauſe (ſpeaking of the reſt of the Apoſtles,* 1 Cor. xv. 10.) He laboured more than they all.

In this Book there is an Account of many Sermons, preached by Apoſtles and apoſtolical Men, on the moſt neceſſary Part of our holy Religion, as the Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of our bleſſed Lord; of God's Mercy through him, and of the Life to come, &c. *as alſo, how holy Men lived anſwerably to their Profeſſion and Hope. When we read theſe Things, we ſhould imagine the Writers as ſpeaking to us, and telling us (what they ſay was inſcribed on the Statue of ſome deify'd Hero.)* If ye ſhall do as we have done, or ſuffer as we have ſuffered, then ye ſhall be (Glorious and Happy) as we are.

CHAP. I.

An Account of what the Author's former Treatiſe contained; that is, what Jeſus *did and taught; how he appeared, by infallible Proofs, after his Paſſion; how he charged his Diſciples to wait in* Jeruſalem, *for the Father's Promiſe. They aſk of him the Time of* Iſrael's *Reſtoration; he rebukes their Curioſity; and promiſes them the* Holy Ghoſt, *that they might be Witneſſes for him in the World. After his Aſcenſion, Angels appear, and inform the Diſciples of his ſecond Coming. They return to* Jeruſalem, *and continue in Prayer and Supplication.* Peter's *Exhortation to elect an Apoſtle to ſupply the Vacancy made by the Defection of* Judas. *Two appointed. They pray for Direction;* Matthias *choſen by Lot.*

Q. *WHAT is obſervable concerning the Penman of this Book?*

A. The firſt Verſe of this Chapter gives us an Account of the Penman of this Sacred Hiſtory; namely, that it was St. *Luke* who wrote the Goſpel. As to the Time when he wrote this Hiſtory, it was while he accompanied St. *Paul*; and, as ſome affirm, during the Impriſonment of that Apoſtle at *Rome*.

We may farther remark the Impartiality and Integrity of St. *Luke*, in that he hath written of *all Things that* Jeſus *both did and taught*, and deſign'd to have a ſtrict Regard to Truth in the Narrative he was about to give of what the Apoſtles did and taught; not that this is to be underſtood Strictly and Abſolutely, but Comparatively only; not as if St. *Luke* recorded every Action that *Jeſus* did, or every Expreſſion he ſaid; for St. *John* ſays, they were ſo many, that they could not be written, *Chap.* xxi. 25. But by all Things, we are to underſtand very many Things; the principal and chiefeſt Things; the moſt neceſſary and uſeful; every Thing that the *Holy Ghoſt* thought fit to dictate to him, and enjoin him to publiſh for the Churches Uſe and Service.

Q. *What next is to be taken Notice of in this Chapter?*

A. Very particular was the Concern of our Lord for his Church on Earth, before his Aſcenſion into Heaven. The very firſt Night that he appeared to his Diſciples, after his Reſurrection, he breathed on them, and diſtributed the *Holy Ghoſt* among them, *John* xx. 22. both to inform their Judgments of what they were yet ignorant, and to direct their Practice in what he would have them do; *He, through the Holy Ghoſt, gave Commandment unto the Apoſtles*; that is, he diſtributed the Holy Ghoſt amongſt them, to be their conſtant Inſtructor and Director, in order to the right Execution of their Office and Employment. Thus, as the Apoſtles had, ſo the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, in their Meaſure, ſhall have the gracious and ſpecial Influences of the Holy Spirit, to direct and inſtruct, to quicken and ſupport them in the faithful Diſcharge of their miniſterial Office, to the End of the World.

Q. *How did our Saviour employ himſelf the forty Days he continued upon Earth, after his Reſurrection?*

A. The Time our Lord ſpent here on Earth, between his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, St. *Luke* tells us, was forty Days; our Saviour thought proper to make this Stay among his Diſciples, to confirm their Faith in the Belief of his Reſurrection, and to give them entire Satisfaction with reſpect to the Reality and Sameneſs of his Perſon, that it was no other than their Lord and Maſter, who died for them, was riſen again, and now actually appeared to them. In this Interval he likewiſe gave them many infallible and demonſtrative Proofs of the Reality of his Reſurrection, by eating, drinking, talking, and converſing with them, by ſhewing his Wounds to them, and ſubmitting himſelf to be touched and handled by them. Not that *Chriſt*'s Converſation with his Diſciples, in this his exalted State, after his Reſurrection, was ſo frequent and familiar, as it was before his Death, in his State of Humiliation; and accordingly, we no-where find that *Chriſt* lodged or continued with his Diſciples a whole Night together, after he was riſen from the Grave. He employed theſe forty Days *in ſpeaking to his Diſciples of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.* That is, 1. Of the Things pertaining to his Church Militant, or the Kingdom of Grace here on Earth, how he would have his Church planted and propagated by the Apoſtles Doctrine, and guided and governed by their Diſcipline. Or, 2. By the Kingdom of God, may be underſtood the Church Triumphant, or the Kingdom of Glory in Heaven; what perfect Bliſs and Happineſs he was now going to prepare for them in the Kingdom of his Father.

Q. *Why did our Lord order his Diſciples to continue at* Jeruſalem *till they ſhould receive the* Holy Ghoſt?

A. He orders them to wait at *Jeruſalem* for the Performance of his Promiſe in the Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt*; a Place they would the laſt have choſen for that Purpoſe, had not *Chriſt* commanded them to wait there. This Place our Lord, very properly, appointed for the following Reaſons; 1. Becauſe there had been his greateſt Humiliation. There *Chriſt* had ſuffered the greateſt Ignominy, therefore there would he manifeſt his Power and Glory. 2. Becauſe at *Jeruſalem* was the greateſt Company of Spectators to behold this noble Work, and to be wrought upon by it. Such as would not be convinced by our Saviour's Death and Reſurrection, might probably be convinced, by this miraculous Effuſion of the Holy Spirit deſcending upon the Apoſtles in fiery cloven Tongues.

Q. *The Diſciples demand of our Saviour,* When he would reſtore the Kingdom of *Iſrael? How are we to underſtand this?*

A. The Diſciples having now their Lord among them, think it a proper Opportunity to aſk him this Queſtion, *Wilt thou, at this Time, reſtore again the Kingdom to* Iſrael? That is, wilt thou repair the ruinous Condition of the *Jewiſh* State, and reſtore it to that Dignity and Splendor which has been the general Expectation will be done by the *Meſſiah?* So that although *Chriſt* had ſo frequently rebuked the *Jews* in general, and his Diſciples in particular, for their Conceit of a temporal Kingdom; yet, it's evident, that this Notion ſtill ran in their Heads, and their Maſter being now riſen from the Dead, they thought this a proper Juncture for his and their Dignity and Advancement. Though our Lord was juſt on the the Point of aſcending into Heaven, yet ſtill they aſked him, *Wilt thou now reſtore the Kingdom?* That is, ſettle upon us, thy Followers, ſecular Power, and temporal Dominion here on Earth.

But obſerve our Lord's Anſwer; *It is not for you to know the Times and the Seaſons, which the Father hath put only in his own Power.* This does not in the leaſt imply, that any ſuch Kingdom ſhould ever be eſtabliſhed, as they dreamt of; but checks their Curioſity in enquiring into the Times and Seaſons, and Nature of God's Secrets, which it no way concerned them to pry into.

In this Anſwer of our Saviour we may obſerve, 1. Something implied; namely, that there are certain Times and Seaſons, the Knowledge of which belongs only to God, which yet the Curioſity of Man has an itching Deſire to ſearch into. Nothing is more natural to Man, than the Deſire of knowing both what ſhall be hereafter, and when that Hereafter ſhall be. 2. Something expreſſed; namely, that God has Times and Seaſons for executing his own Purpoſes, which it is neither proper, profitable, or poſſible for us to know.

But though it is not for us to know the Times and Seaſons which God hath reſerved to himſelf, yet it is for us to know the Times and Seaſons which God has put in our Power; namely, the preſent Time, to improve it; and the Time paſt, to bewail our Miſimprovement of it. To improve the Time of Affliction, for Conſideration and Humiliation; and the Time of Proſperity, Mercy, and Deliverance, for Gratulation and Thankfulneſs; and to improve both in farther Meaſures, and Increaſe of Holineſs and Sanctification, both of Heart and Life.

Our Lord therefore, inſtead of gratifying his Diſciples Curioſity, acquaints them with their own Duty; he tells them, that although they had before received his Spirit, in ſome Meaſure, yet very ſhortly, it ſhould be poured forth upon them more plentifully, for the great Purpoſes of their future Service, namely, to enable them to preach the Goſpel to all Nations, and to bear Witneſs to the Truth of what *Chriſt* did and ſaid in *Samaria*, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, even to the utmoſt Parts of the Earth.

Here we have ſet before us, the ſpecial Work of the Miniſters of the Goſpel; namely, to bear

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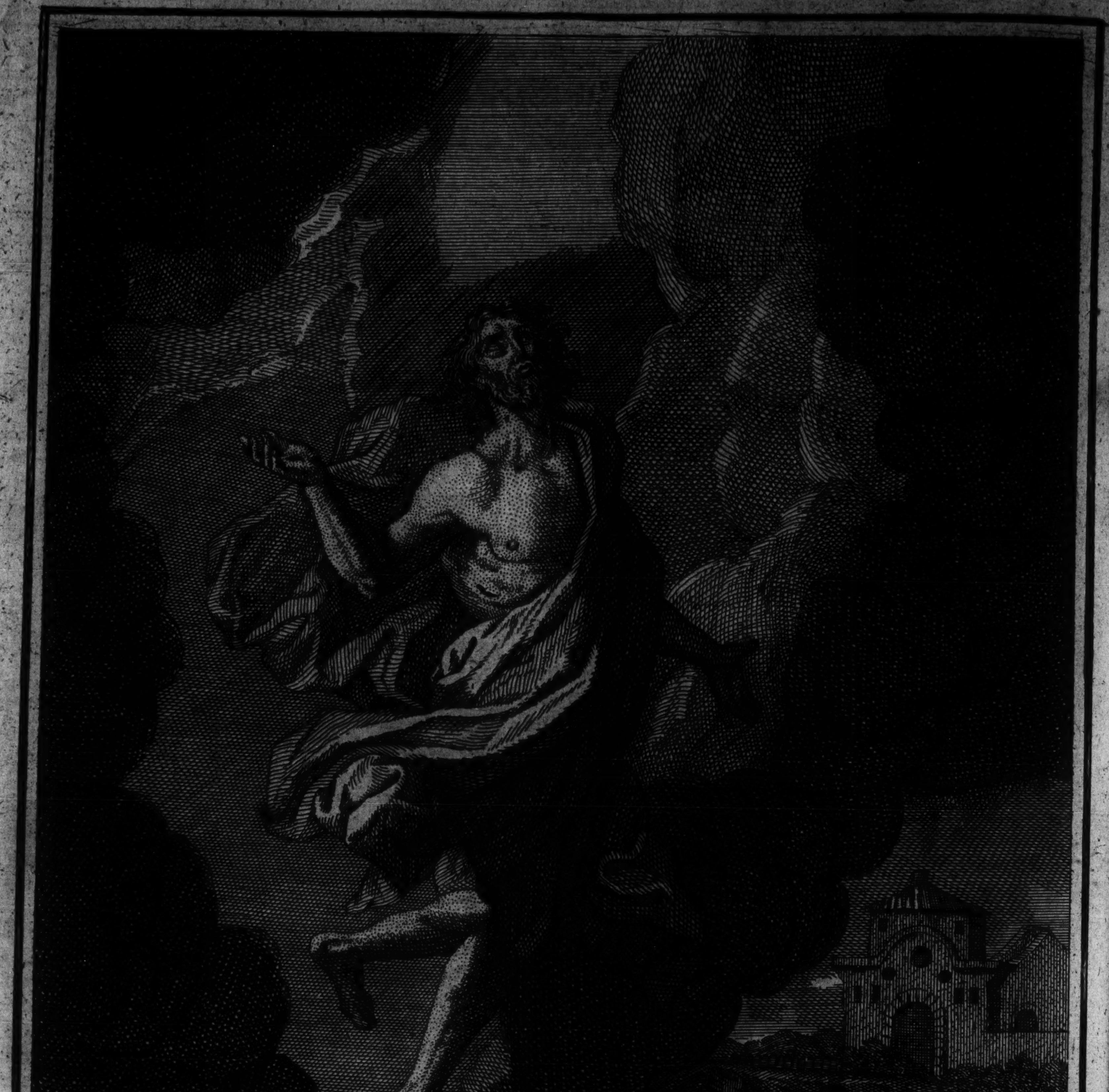
ACTS CHAP. I. v. 9.



CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

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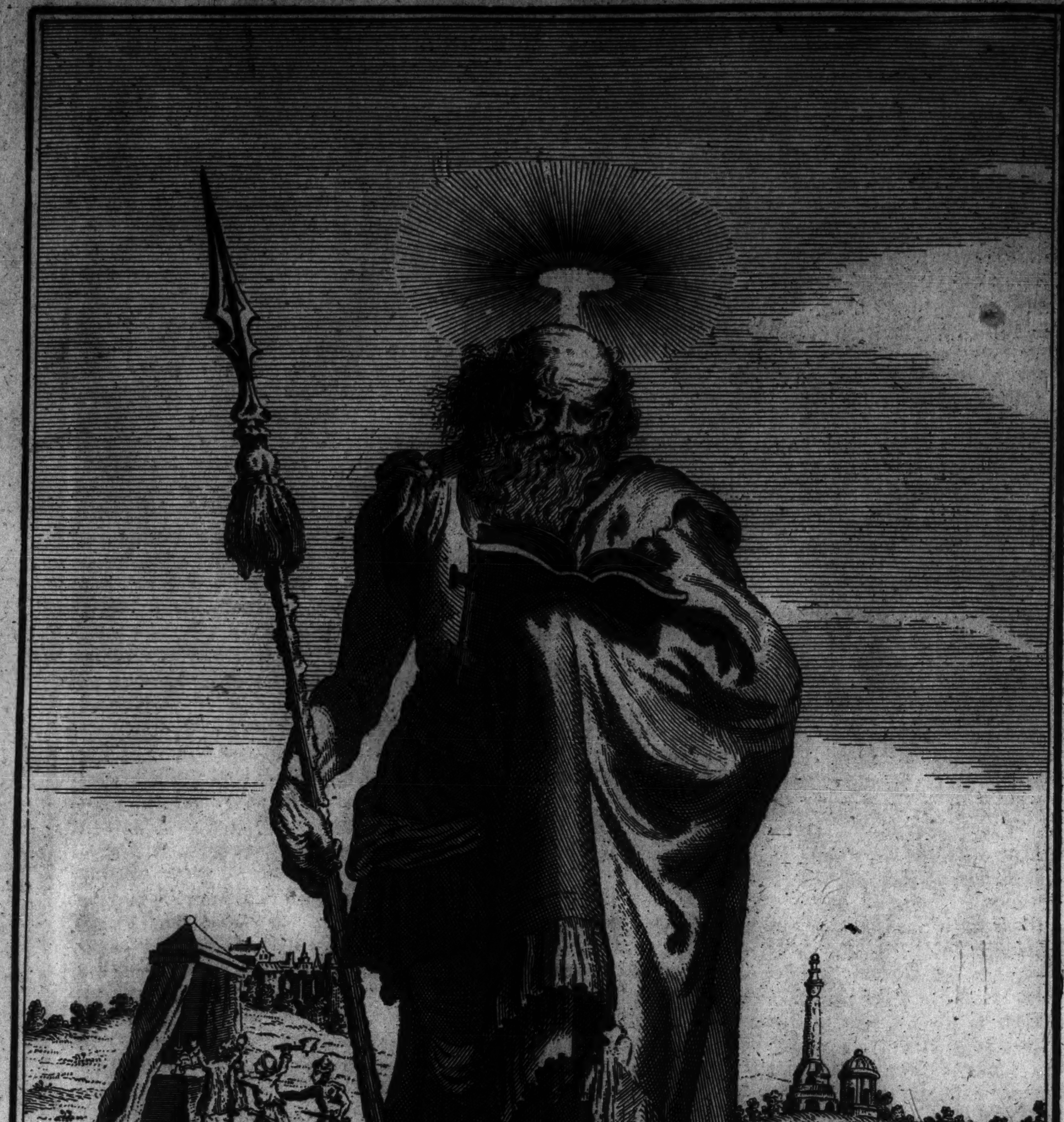

S.t Matthias the Apostle.

Witneſs unto *Chriſt*; *Ye ſhall be Witneſs unto me.* This they do by the Piety of their Lives, the Purity of their Doctrine, and by their Patience under Sufferings, both for and from *Chriſt*.

Here is likewiſe noted, what it was that enabled the Apoſtles thus to bear Witneſs unto *Chriſt*; namely, the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon them, *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon you, and ye ſhall be Witneſs unto me.* Learn hence, that ſome meaſure of miniſterial Gifts, and ſanctifying Graces from the Holy Spirit, is abſolutely neceſſary to enable the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to bear their Teſtimony unto *Chriſt* with Faithfulneſs, and Succeſs.

Q. *What is obſervable in our Saviour's triumphant Aſcenſion into Heaven?*

A. The Perſon who aſcended, was *Jeſus Chriſt*, in his divine Nature, as God, and in his human Nature, as Man, his Perſon conſiſting of his Soul and Body, he now aſcended in both.

The Place he aſcended from, was, this World in General, and from Mount *Olivet* in Particular, that very Place where he begun his laſt ſorrowful Tragedy. And the Place he aſcended to was Heaven; that is, the third Heaven, the Throne of God, the Seat of the bleſſed. Hence he is ſaid, *to aſcend far above all Heavens*; that is, above the aerial or ſtarry Heavens, which we ſee, into the higheſt Heavens, unto that Place where he was before, *John* vi. 62.

The Time of our Lord's Aſcenſion was forty Days after his Reſurrection. He would not take Poſſeſſion of that unſpeakable Glory, which now waited for him, till he had ſettled all Things for the Good of his Church; and when he had ſet his Family in Order, and fully inſtructed his Diſciples in the Diſcipline he would have obſerved in his Houſe, he would ſtay no longer, leaſt he ſhould ſeem to affect a terrene Life; he ſtaid no longer than he had Work to do for God, and Souls.

Obſerve farther, the Manner in which *Chriſt* aſcended into Heaven; namely, by his own Power; *Whilſt they looked ſtedfaſtly, he went up*; that is, by his own divine Power. The Angels, indeed, attended him, but did not aſſiſt him. *Elias* went to Heaven in a Chariot of Fire, but he was fetch'd, he could not carry himſelf up; but our bleſſed Lord needed no ſuch Conveyance, being the Author of Life and Motion.

Magnificently Triumphant was his Aſcenſion. A Cloud was prepared, as a royal Chariot, to carry up this King of Glory to his Royal Pavillion; *A Cloud received him out of their Sight.* And O! what Jubilations of the bleſſed Angels were heard in Heaven! Triumphs and Acclamations that will never have an end!

He aſcended alſo magnificently, ſhedding forth innumerable and ineſtimable Gifts upon his Church; *When he aſcended upon High, he gave Gifts to Men, Prophets, Apoſtles, Evangeliſts, Paſtors and Teachers.* And how many thouſands in Heaven, and upon Earth too, are ever now bleſſing and praiſing *Chriſt* for theſe Aſcenſion-Gifts!

Note alſo the Witneſſes of our Saviour's Aſcenſion. *Elias* had but one to witneſs his Rapture into Heaven. St. *Paul* not one; but *Chriſt* will neither have all Eye-witneſſes of his Aſcenſion, nor yet too few; he did not lead all *Jeruſalem* forth to ſee his Glorious Departure, but the ſelect Company of his Diſciples only: The Number of the Witneſſes was about one hundred and twenty. Such as had partook in his Humiliation, now witneſs his Glorious Aſſenſion. If we will converſe with *Chriſt* in his lowly Eſtate here on Earth, we ſhall be made happy with the Sight of his tranſcendent Glory e're long above.

The Cauſes and Reaſons of his Aſcenſion were, that, without it he could not have been inaugurated and inſtalled in the Glory he enjoys above. Had he not aſcended, he could not have interceeded, as now he does, for us here below; nor could we have enter'd Heaven: He entered as our Forerunner, as our Head and Repreſentative, as we aſcend after him in the Virtue of his Aſcenſion before us; we ſhould never have enjoyed the Holy Ghoſt, as a Sanctifier and Comforter, at leaſt, not in that Meaſure in which he has ſince been enjoyed by the Church, *If* Chriſt *had not gone, the Comforter had not come.* He begins where *Chriſt* ended. How careful ſhould we be then, that we do not *grieve* by our Unkindneſs, nor *vex* by our Diſobedience, nor *quench* by our Neglects of Duty, the ſacred Motions and Influences of this Holy Spirit, whom *Chriſt* ſent down from Heaven, at his aſcending thither.

Thoſe who were honoured with a Sight of our Lord's Aſcenſion, were tranſported with Joy and Wonder. *Chriſt* aſcended gradually and leiſurely, that he might at once confirm the Faith, and delight the Eyes and Minds of his Beholders. In the midſt of their Extaſy, two Angels, in human Shape, appear in White, and call to the Apoſtles (who were ſome of them Men of *Galilee*) to take Notice, that this *Jeſus*, whom they now beheld aſcending up into Heaven, ſhould, in like Manner, come again; that is, viſible, in a Cloud, by his own Power, with the like Majeſty, and with the ſame Soul and Body, to judge the World at the laſt Day. But not a Word of the Time when, that, not knowing the Hour, we may be continually on our Watch.

Q. *What became of the Apoſtles after our Lord's Aſcenſion?*

A. The Apoſtles having been Spectators of our Saviour's glorious Aſcenſion, return to *Jeruſalem*, which is called a Sabbath-day's Journey, that is, two Miles (*Bethany*, in which was the Mount of *Olives*, being fifteen Furlongs from *Jeruſalem.*) This was the common Walk which the *Jews* uſed on the Sabbath-day, but rather for Meditation, than for the ſake of Recreation.

The Apoſtles being thus returned, aſſemble themſelves at *Jeruſalem*, where they lay the Foundation of the firſt Goſpel-Church. The Names of the eleven Apoſtles are here particularly recounted, to ſhew, that although they had fallen from their Profeſſion, and forſaken *Chriſt*, yet they had recovered themſelves by Repentance, and were continued in their former Office and Dignity.

The Effect which the Sight of *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion produced in the Apoſtles, was, they were confirmed in their Faith, they adore and worſhip, and aſſemble together to perform their joint Devotions to him. Before his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, we ſcarce read of an Act of Adoration that the Diſciples paid unto him. They, indeed, eſteem'd him as a Perſon ſent from God, a great Prophet, and the Son of *David*. But his Deity being evinced, and now made evident by his Reſurrection from the Grace, and Aſcenſion into Heaven, they worſhip him as the Son of God.

Q. *Where was that* Upper Room *in which the Apoſtles aſſembled, after their Return to* Jeruſalem?

A. The Place where this *Chriſtian* Congregation firſt aſſembled, was, *in an Upper-room*; that is, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, in one of the Chambers belonging to the Temple; in the large Upper-room, ſay others, where *Chriſt* had lately eaten the Paſſover with his Diſciples; it was, no doubt, the fitteſt Place they could find for that Solemnity; an Upper-room being remote from Noiſe and Company, and capacious enough to receive the Primo-primitive Church, conſiſting of an Hundred and twenty Perſons.

Q. *In the fourteenth Verſe we read, that beſides the Diſciples, were ſome Women, and among them* Mary, the Mother of Jeſus, *who came together to pray: But what became of her afterwards?*

A. In the conſtituting this firſt *Chriſtian* Church, together with the Apoſtles, mention is made of Women in general, and of the Virgin *Mary* in particular; and this is the firſt and laſt Time after *Chriſt's* Death, ſhe is taken notice of in Scripture. None of the Evangeliſts mention our Lord's Appearing to her, during his forty Days Continuance upon Earth, after his Reſurrection. The Deſign of the Spirit of God, in ſpeaking ſo ſparingly of her Life, and nothing of her Death, doubtleſs was, that all thoſe fabulous Reports of her Aſſumption, which have ſince been propagated, might have no Ground from the Word of God. God dealt with her, as with *Moſes*, of whoſe Sepulchre none knows, leſt it ſhould be abuſed to Idolatry. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, ſhe continued under the Care of the beloved Diſciple, unto whom *Chriſt* committed her for ſome Time, and at laſt was taken away by Martyrdom, according to *Simeon's* Prophecy, *Luke* ii. 35. *A Sword ſhall paſs through thine own Soul alſo.* Which Prophecy, he thinks, points at the Manner of her Death. But, notwithſtanding the Silence of the Scriptures, the Church of *Rome* confidently affirms, that the Virgin lived ſixty-three Years, and that all the Apoſtles attended her Funeral, except *Thomas*, who deſiring afterwards to ſee her holy Corps, the Sepulchre being opened the third Day, the Body was gone, being aſſumed and taken up into Heaven.

Q. *While the Apoſtles continued aſſembled together,* Peter *makes a Motion to fill up the Vacancy made by the Defection of* Judas: *Does not this argue a Superiority in* Peter, *above the reſt of the Apoſtles?*

A. From this Paſſage the Church of *Rome* would infer his Supremacy, but without Ground. For his being the Chief, and ſometimes the ſole Speaker, is not to be attributed to his Superiority; but, 1. To his Seniority, he being probably older than the reſt. 2. To his apoſtolical Office; he was appointed to be the firſt and chief Miniſter of the Circumciſion, to preach among the *Jews*; and therefore no wonder *Peter* is firſt mentioned, when any Thing relating to the *Jewiſh* Affairs is recited. His Forwardneſs to ſpeak and act for *Chriſt*, and his Intereſt, may be imputed to his Repentance, it being but neceſſary that he, who had ſo ſcandalouſly fallen, ſhould, by his future Zeal, convince the World both of his Repentance and Recovery. Accordingly he ſpeaks, acts, and labours more abundantly than all the Apoſtles; not that the reſt were idle and inſignificant; for they were equal with him, having equal Authority, an equal Gift of Miracles, an equal Number of Tongues, equal Power to preach the Goſpel, and equal Wiſdom in preaching it.

Q. *Here is deſcribed the Manner of* Judas's *Death, which differs from the Account given by St.* Matthew: *Pray ſet me right in this Matter?*

A. Judas's Death, Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, was occaſioned by a Suffocation of Grief, not by Hanging. His Opinion is, that *Judas* fell into a violent Fit of Sadneſs, or Melancholy, and grieved ſo exceſſively as to wiſh himſelf dead, and then ſuddenly fell flat on his Face, and then burſt. He ſuppoſes, that by this Fit of extreme Melancholy he was ſo ſwol'n that he burſt aſunder, and his Bowels guſhed out. To ſtrengthen this Opinion, he gives the original Signification of the *Hebrew* and *Syriack* Word tranſlated in *Matthew*, *hanging*; namely, to be choaked or ſuffocated, not only with an Halter, but with an exceſſive Grief or Trouble on the Soul.

Falling headlong, he further Obſerves, imports no more than falling forward on the Face, contrary to falling or lying on the Back; but it may poſſibly alſo denote the throwing himſelf down a Precipice, which, among human Authors, is frequently mentioned of thoſe, who, through Exceſs of Melancholy, or Oppreſſion of Conſcience, eſpecially upon Guilt of Blood, are weary of their Lives, and have this ready Way to deliver themſelves from that Burden. But whether this was the Manner of his Death, or no, the Context doth not mention.

Q. *How do you interpret thoſe Words,* his own Place, *Verſe* 25?

A. The ſame learned Author obſerves on theſe Words, that they properly ſignify Lot, or Portion of Miniſtry and Apoſtleſhip, that is, of apoſtolical Miniſtry, in the Beginning of the Verſe, the taking of which is preparative here, to his going to this. That certainly ſignifies a Part, or Portion that falls to any, particularly a Province that belongs to any Governor, and (if that be a Biſhop or Governor of the Church, then) ſuch a Province, (ſtiled *Verſe* 20. out of the *Pſalmiſt*, Biſhoprick) which he that ſucceeds in, is ſaid to take there, to take the Portion of Miniſtry, *&c.* And then that which is thus become any Man's aſſigned Province, cannot more fitly be expreſſed, than by the Place, or Province, proper to that Man, aſſigned to him. This, therefore, regularly belonging to *Judas*, if he had not, by his Treaſon againſt his Maſter, forfeited it (which is here ſaid, as in a *Parentheſis*, being incloſed with two *Comma's*, *from which* Judas *by Tranſgreſſion fell.*) *Matthias* now ſucceeds him in it, takes his Lot, or Portion, and ſo is now to go to this, as his own Place, or Province, which had elſe belonged to another.

Many Prejudices, adds the ſame learned Writer, there are againſt underſtanding this Phraſe, (*his own Place*) of Hell, as ſome have underſtood it; as the Place whither *Judas* was to go. For,

1. That was not the proper Place, or Aſſignation of *Judas*, but common to all other damn'd Spirits.
2. It was not St. *Luke's* Office to paſs Sentence on *Judas*, any farther than by ſetting down the Heinouſneſs

ouſneſs of his Crime; which he had done, Ver. 16, 17, 18, 19. and was not to proceed to judge or affirm ought of Gods Secrets, ſuch is his going to Hell. And in St. *Chryſoſtom*'s Obſervation on Ver. 16. e *Behold*, (ſays he) *the Wiſdom of St.* Luke, *how h does not reproach, or inſult on* Judas; *but ſimply ſets down the matter of Fact, without any Deſcant on it; and what he adds, he diſcourſes of the preſent Vengeance*, belongs evidently to what befell him in this preſent World, and ſo excludes all enlarging to his future Damnation. 3. There is no Propriety in ſaying of the one, that he ſinned to go to Hell, but of the other 'tis moſt proper to ſay, that he was elected to ſuch a Portion, to go, or that he might go, to it. To this *Theophylact*; *He calls that his own Place which Matthias ſhould obtain.* So *Oecumenius*: *It may be interpreted of* Matthias, *that* Judas *being fallen, he ſhould have his Place for his own, receiving his Biſhoprick*, making Place and Biſhoprick ſynonimous Terms.

Q. Matthias *is choſen to the Apoſtleſhip, by* Lot: *But why was his Election to that Office made in this Manner?*

In the Election of *Matthias* to the Apoſtleſhip, it is obſervable, that the Apoſtles did not preſume to ordain him by Impoſition of Hands; but the other Apoſtles being choſen of God immediately, it was neceſſary, that he who was to act in the ſame Office, ſhould be choſen after the ſame Manner. Accordingly they caſt Lots, and leave the Determination to God, who devolving it upon *Matthias*, he was thereupon numbred with the eleven Apoſtles. Lots were uſed among the *Jews* for dividing Inheritances, for compoſing Differences, for determining Elections; and how caſual ſoever it ſeemed, *God* was the undoubted Determiner of it. Therefore, to caſt Lots upon trivial Occaſions, and ſolemnly to appeal to *God*'s Determination in ludicrous Matters, is to take the Name of *God* in vain.

CHAP. II.

The Apoſtles, on the Day of Pentecoſt, are filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and ſpeak with other Tongues; are admired by ſome, and ſcoffed at by others. Peter *confutes the Mockers out of the Prophet* Joel; *proves that* Jeſus *was riſen from the Dead, and exalted at the Right Hand of* God. *The Hearers being convicted,* Peter *bids them repent and be baptized. They ſtedfaſtly continue in the Apoſtles Doctrine, in breaking of Bread and Prayer, and having all in common. Three thouſand are added to the Church by* Peter's *Preaching.*

Q. WHAT *firſt occurs to our Obſervation in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter gives us an Account of the miraculous Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, upon the Apoſtles, at the feaſt of *Pentecoſt*. In this great Tranſaction we have obſervable, firſt, the Time, namely, *When the Day of Pentecoſt was fully come*; that is, fifty Days after Chriſt's reſurrection. The Day of Pentecoſt is probably believed to have then fallen upon the Lord's Day; it is certain from the preceeding Chapter, that the Spirit deſcended when the Apoſtles were unanimouſly aſſembled for his Worſhip, and continued with one Accord in Prayer and Supplication.

Jeruſalem, the Place where our Lord ſuffered his Ignominy and Reproach, there he manifeſts his Glory and Dignity; firſt by his triumphant Aſcenſion, and afterwards by his miraculous Miſſion of the Holy Spirit, and Effuſion of it upon the Apoſtles; not that they were entirely deſtitute of the Holy Spirit till now; they had before felt his Influences in their Sanctification; here here they receive him in his extraordinary Gifts, to fit them for extraordinary Services. Thus will he, if we are not wanting to ourſelves, in ſome Meaſure, deſcend upon us in inviſible Favours every Day, making our Souls and Bodies a Temple, and fit Habitation for himſelf to dwell in, by his ſanctifying impreſſions, his powerful Aſſiſtances, his quickening Influences; pouring into our Souls both the Oil of Joy and Gladneſs.

Obſerve farther, the Manner of this Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Apoſtles. 1. Suddenly, like the Wind; *A mighty ruſhing Wind from Heaven*; intimating, that it was not the Apoſtles Prayer that brought, but Chriſt's Promiſe and Power that thus miraculouſly ſent the Holy Ghoſt down upon them. By the ruſhing Wind was alſo repreſented the mighty Efficacy of the Holy Spirit now deſcending. 2. In the Appearance of fiery cloven Tongues; cloven, to ſignify the Variety of Languages which the Apoſtles ſhould be enabled to ſpeak, and to qualify them to preach the Goſpel to all Nations; and fiery, to intimate that fervent Zeal they ſhould be endued with themſelves; that divine Light they ſhould impart to others; as alſo that Purity and Holineſs, whcih they and all ſucceeding Miniſters of the Goſpel ought to appear beautified and adorned with.

As Fire diſſipates and diſperſes, multiplies and increaſes, even ſo the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, the more they are diffuſed and well-employed, the more will they be increaſed; by imparting to our People, we ſhall gather to ourſelves. Thus was our Lord's Promiſe fulfilled to his Apoſtles, in ſending down the Holy Ghoſt not only upon them, but no doubt the private Chriſtian, received a Portion of it according to his Meaſure, to enlighten as a Spirit of Knowledge; to enliven, as a Spirit of Life; to warm and heat as a Spirit of Zeal; to mollify and ſoften, as a Spirit of Holy Fear; to quicken and ſtrengthen, as a Spirit of Power; to guide and direct, as a Spirit of Wiſdom and Counſel; to unite and knit their Hearts together, as a Spirit of Love. Nor was this Promiſe of the Holy Spirit confined, except in its miraculous Gifts, to the Apoſtles only, but was given to Believers in general to the End of the World.

Q. *Did any thing particularly remarkable follow upon this extraordinary Occaſion?*

A. This miraculous Operation of the Holy Spirit, being immediately reported and ſpread abroad in *Jeruſalem*, where at that Time were great Multitudes of *Jews*, who had come from all Parts of *Judea*, to the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, and alſo many other *Jews* and Proſelytes of other Nations, of *Meſopotamia*, *Cappadocia*, *Phrygia*, and *Pamphylia*, who were now come up to worſhip the true God at *Jeruſalem*; theſe hearing the Apoſtles ſpeak in their own Language, which they had never learnt, the wonderful Works of God, in the Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; ſome wondered to hear illiterate Men ſpeaking all Languages; others derided the Miracles, and imputed it to Drunkenneſs.

Q. *What Inſtructions does this wonderful Event afford us?*

A. Obſerve here the Wiſdom and Providence of

God, in directing the firſt Publication of the Goſpel, that the Fame thereof, and of that convincing Miracle, which gave Authority thereunto, might be carried into all Nations by ſo many Eye and Ear Witneſſes, as were worſhiping at *Jeruſalem* at that Time; namely, *Men out of every Nation under Heaven*; that is, of every Nation where any *Jews* were ſcatter'd, at this Time, throughout the World, ſome particular Perſons were now at *Jeruſalem* to worſhip God: They are therefore ſtiled *devout Men*, and they received from God the Reward of their Piety and Devotion. Had they ſtaid in their own Country, they had not been Witneſſes of this ſurprizing Miracle, for the Confirmation of their Faith.

But obſerve the different Influence and Effect of this miraculous Deſcent of the Holy Spirit, on the Minds of the People in *Jeruſalem*. Some were ſtruck with an Extacy of Admiration and awful Wonder; others (probably the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*) ſcornfully deride, and impute the Miracle to Drunkenneſs, ſaying, *Theſe Men are full of new Wine*. A ſenſleſs Slander; for tho' Exceſs of Wine may give more Tongue, yet not more Tongues.

Q. *In what Manner does St.* Peter *refute this Calumny?*

A. St. *Peter* hearing himſelf and the reſt of the Apoſtles aſpers'd with this Calumny of Drunkenneſs, boldly vindicates his and their Innocence. *Theſe Men*, ſays he, *are not drunken, as ye ſuppoſe, ſeeing it is but the third Hour of the Day*. He argues firſt, negatively, from the Time of the Day; it was but the third Hour, that is, Nine o'Clock in the Morning, the Hour for Morning Sacrifice and Prayer, and the Worſhippers of God (at the great Feaſts eſpecially) were never wont to eat nor drink before thoſe holy Services were performed. In thoſe Times they went to their publick Devotions faſting; they ſerved God, before they ſerved their Bellies. The firſt Fruits of the Day were offered in the Temple then; now in the Tavern.

Next he argues poſitively; he aſſures them, that the Apoſtles were not full of Wine, but of the Holy Ghoſt; and that what they now ſaw, was the Completion of a Prophecy utter'd by *Joel*; *That in the laſt Days*, that is, in the Days of the *Meſſias*, *there ſhould be a moſt plentiful Effuſion of the Holy Spirit upon all Fleſh*; that is, upon *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and upon all Sorts of Perſons, without Diſtinction, Old and Young, Sons and Daughters, Bond and Free.

Hence learn, that the Spirit of God is a free Spirit, not confined to any Sect or Party, but plentifully and abundantly pour'd forth under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation upon all Believers. It is one of the *Pope*'s notorious Impoſitions on the World, to perſuade Men to believe the Spirit of God is tied to the Pomel of his Chair; that he, and his Cardinals, have monopolized the Holy Ghoſt. But bleſſed be God, he has promiſed to pour out his Spirit upon all Fleſh without Diſtinction, Servants and Handmaids, to ſhew, he does not deſpiſe Perſons of the loweſt Rank and Condition in Life.

Q. *What is the Import of that Prophecy, which* St. Peter *quotes from* Joel, *at the 17th and four following Verſes?*

A. Here is foretold what ſhould happen after this great Effuſion of the Holy Spirit; namely, *Wonders in the Heaven, and Signs in the Earth, the Sun turned into Darkneſs, and the Moon into Blood*. Theſe Expreſſions ſignify the great Miſeries and Troubles, the Calamities and Deſolations which ſhould befal the *Jews* before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, for their crucifying the Lord of Life and Glory. To which is ſubjoined the only way to eſcape them; namely, by Prayer and Supplication; *Whoſoever ſhall call on the Name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved*. Intimating that Prayer is a ſure Defence in all Storms, that no Evil ſhall fatally touch our Perſons, or come near our Dwellings, whilſt we take hold of God by Faith, and approach him by Prayer.

Q. St. Peter *having thus refuted this ſenſleſs Slander, proceeds to ſpeak of the horrid Crime of putting our Saviour to Death: How does he treat this Subject?*

A. St. *Peter* having thus vindicated himſelf and the Apoſtles from the Charge of Drunkenneſs, recriminates upon them, and charges them with being the Murderers of the beſt Man that ever lived in the World, even *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, the promiſed *Meſſiah*. To convince them of the Foulneſs of this horrid Crime, he treats, 1. Of the Perſon and Life of *Chriſt*. 2. Of his Death and Sufferings. 3. Of his Reſurrection from the Grave.

With Regard to the Perſon of our Lord, the Apoſtle ſhews, that he was evidently ſent from God, and approved of by him, by the many Miracles, Wonders, and Signs that were wrought by him. His Miracles, for the Nature of them, were beneficial to Mankind; for the Number of them, they were many; for the Manner of their Operation, they were publick and open, in the Sight and View of the People; and even before his Enemies; and for the Quality of them, they were of the greateſt Magnitude, cleanſing the Lepers, raiſing the Dead, giving Sight to the Blind; and this with a Word, with a Touch.

The Sufferings and Death of *Chriſt* make the ſecond Part of St. *Peter*'s Sermon. *By wicked Hands ye have crucified and ſlain him who was delivered by the determinate Counſel of God*. Thus was the Death of *Chriſt* violent and ignominious. The Death of the Croſs was a violent, painful, ſhameful, lingering, ſuccourleſs, and an accurſed Death.

The Cauſes of *Chriſt*'s Death are here expreſſed. The principal Cauſe, permitting and ordering, was the determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledge of *God*. The inſtrumental Cauſe effecting, was, the wicked Hands of the *Jews*, *Him*, &c. *by wicked Hands ye have crucified*. Here note, that this Fore-knowledge and Counſel of *God*, as it did not neceſſitate and force them to it, ſo neither doth it excuſe them in it; it no more compell'd or forced their wicked Hands to do what they did, than the Mariner's hoiſting up his Sails to take the Wind to ſerve his Deſign, can be ſaid to compel the Wind to blow. God's End in acting was one, their End in acting was another; his moſt Pure and Holy; theirs moſt Malicious, and daringly wicked. In reſpect of God, Chriſt's Death was Juſtice and Mercy; in reſpect of Man, it was Murder and Cruelty; in reſpect to himſelf, it was Obedience and Humility.

The Apoſtle, in the third Part of his Sermon, regards the Reſurrection of *Chriſt* from the Grave; *Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the Pains of Death; becauſe it was not poſſible he ſhould be holden of it*. Although God is here ſaid to raiſe him, and the Spirit elſewhere; yet we are not to underſtand it ſo as if they raiſed him by their Power without his own; for he declares it expreſsly, *John* ii. *in three Days I will raiſe up the Temple of my Body.* And if he had not raiſed himſelf by his own Power, how could he be ſaid, *Rom.* i. 4. *to be declared to be the Son of God by the Reſurrection from the Dead?* What more had appear'd in *Chriſt*'s Reſurraction than in any other, if that were all? For others were raiſed by the Power of God as well as he. Now as the *Jews*, to whom St. *Peter* here preaches, were prejudiced againſt *Chriſt*, therefore he tells them that God had raiſed him from the Dead; yet, by Conſequence, it ſufficiently appears in the following Diſcourſe, that *Chriſt* raiſed himſelf from the Dead. This is the Sum, the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, by the omnipotent Power of the Godhead, the Father's, the Spirit's, and his own Godhead, revived, and roſe again from the Dead, to the Terror and Conſternation of his Enemies, and the unſpeakable Conſolation of all Believers.

The Reaſon given, why God raiſed up *Jeſus Chriſt*, is, becauſe it was impoſſible that Death ſhould hold him. It was naturally impoſſible, on Account of that Divine Power inherent in his Perſon as God. It was legally impoſſible, becauſe Divine Juſtice being fully ſatisfied by his Sufferings, required, that he ſhould be raiſed to Life; as when a Debt is paid, the Priſoner is diſcharged, and the Priſon-Door opened. The Words here tranſlated *Pains of Death*, Dr. *Hammond* ſays, in their Original, ſignify *Cords*, or *Bonds*.

Q. *What is the Import of the remaining Part of St.* Peter's *Sermon?*

A. St. *Peter* proceeds to convince the *Jews*, that *Jeſus* whom they had crucified, was undoubtedly the promiſed *Meſſias*, becauſe he was raiſed from the Grave according to the prophetick Prediction, *Pſ.* xvi. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou leave thine Holy One to ſee Corruption.* From the natural import of theſe Words, St. *Peter* ſtrongly argues, that they could not, literally, be ſpoken of *David*, becauſe he was left in the Grave, and ſaw Corruption; but muſt be applied to *Chriſt*, who, tho' he was laid, yet was not loſt in the Grave, nor ſaw Corruption, being raiſed the third Day.

It was impoſſible for *Chriſt* to continue Death's Priſoner longer than three Days; 1. becauſe he was Lord of Life and Death; he was the Reſurrection and the Life. Life, to quicken himſelf; and the Reſurrection, to raiſe us; he was the Reſurrection effectively, the Life eſſentially and formally. Now it was impoſſible for Death to hold him that was Life itſelf under its Power any longer than he who was Life pleaſed; and for this Reaſon he is ſaid *to ſwallow up Death in Victory*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. 2. Becauſe of his Undertaking for us; for if *Chriſt* had been held by corporal Death, we muſt have continued for ever under the Power of ſpiritual Death; therefore the Holy One was not ſuffered to ſee Corruption. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*; that is, my dead Body in the Grave; (for *David* was left in that Hell, from which *Chriſt* was raiſed; but the Hell which *David* was in was not beyond the Grave) *nor ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee Corruption*; that is, I ſhall neither ſee, nor feel, nor lie under the Power of Corruption; but ſhall ſuddenly riſe again, and then my Father will ſhew me the Path of Life, and make me full of Joy with his Countenance; that is, after my Reſurrection, I ſhall live for ever in Glory in the Preſence of my Father, where I ſhall have *Fulneſs of Joy, and Rivers of Pleaſure for evermore.*

St. *Peter* in the laſt Part of his Sermon, treats of *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion; *Therefore being by the Right-Hand of God exalted*, &c. intimating, that when the Lord *Jeſus* had finiſhed his Work on Earth, he was placed in the higheſt Honour and Authority, at the Right-Hand of God in Heaven. And to convince the *Jews* thereof, St. *Peter* applies to *Chriſt* that Promiſe, *Pſal.* cx. 1. *Sit thou on my Right-Hand till I make thy Foes thy Footſtool*; and ſhews that thoſe Words are not applicable to *David*, who is not aſcended into Heaven in his own Perſon, ſince his Body remained in a Sepulchre amongſt them; but *Chriſt* was aſcended, and at the Right-Hand of God exalted, and, purſuant to his Promiſe, had then ſent down the Holy Ghoſt in fiery cloven Tongues, and divers Languages upon them.

This ſame *Jeſus*, adds *Peter*, whom you have crucified, God the Father hath appointed to be the Head and Saviour of his Church, he being the true and promiſed Meſſiah. The Apoſtle makes his Application very home; *ye are the Men*; that ſame *Jeſus* whom ye have crucified, whom ye with wicked Hands have ſlain: Had not the Application been ſo cloſe, the Succeſs of the Sermon had not probably been ſo conſiderable.

Q. *Was St.* Peter's *Sermon attended with any remarkable Succeſs?*

A. The Succeſs of St. *Peter*'s Sermon was, the Auditors were not only affected, but their Hearts were touched wiih a kindly Remorſe; they mourn for Sin, and enquire, what they ſhould do to be ſaved? Some in our Days would have been offended at ſuch an Enquiry, and told them, it was not doing, but believing only that God expected; that *Chriſt* had done all for them, and that they had nothing to do, but to believe ſtrongly that all was done to their Hands; but *Peter* reproves them not for their Iniquity, but puts them upon doing; *Repent and be baptized.* But did not they repent already? Were they not pricked at Heart? But the Repentance the Apoſtle adviſes them to, is Evangelical, ſuch as is attended with owning *Chriſt* to be the Meſſias, with believing in him, with Deſire and Hope of Pardon from him. *Peter* preſcribes the ſame Thing to them which he had lately practiſed himſelf with good Succeſs, when, upon his hearty Sorrow, he obtained Pardon for denying his Lord and Maſter.

Upon this their Evangelical Repentance, he directs them to be baptized in the Name of *Chriſt*, and then they ſhould be capable of the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt; even of thoſe miraculous Gifts which they now ſaw and admired in the Goſpel. Hence we are taught, that Baptiſm is a ſolemn Ordinance, a ſacred Inſtitution of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and not to be adminiſtered to any out of the *Chriſtian* Church, till they profeſs Faith and Repentance in *Chriſt*, and ſincere Obedience to him; *Repent, and be baptized every one of you.*

The Apoſtle, for their Encouragement, tells them, *The Promiſe is to you and your Children*, to you *Jews* of the Seed of *Abraham*, and to your Seed, and to as many of the *Gentiles*, and their Seed, as ſhall be called by the Preaching of the Goſpel to profeſs Faith in *Chriſt*, and Subjection to him. Where, by the Promiſe, is meant the gracious Covenant of God, whereby he offers Pardon and Peace, to ſuch as will aceept them.

Here note, that when God takes believing Parents into Covenant with himſelf, he takes their Children or Seed into Covenant with himſelf likewiſe. It is evident, that under the Old Teſtament, Children were in Covenant with God as well as their Parents. And we do not find they are any where rejected under the Goſpel; and the Privileges of the Goſpel ſurely are not leſs than thoſe of the Law.

St. *Peter* cloſes all with an Exhortation to his Auditors, *to ſave themſelves from that untoward Generation*; that is from the Scribes and Phariſees, that ſour Sort of Men, who deſperately and maliciouſly oppoſed *Chriſt* and his Goſpel, and by their Example and Authority, kept People from embracing the only Way of Salvation revealed by *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Behold the wonderful Succeſs of this Sermon of St. *Peter*; about three thouſand Souls were converted to the *Chriſtian* Faith; this *All Saints Day* was a Feſtival of great Solemnity in Heaven, where there is Joy over one Sinner that repenteth.

Q. *What, do you ſuppoſe, was the immediate Cauſe of this ſurprizing Succeſs of* Peter's *Sermon?*

A. The Circumſtances that concurr'd to render St. *Peter*'s Sermon more effectual, where, 1. The Sufferings of our Lord were ſo near in Place, and ſo late in Time, that his Wounds were ſtill freſh, bleeding in the guilty Memories of this People now aſſembled. 2. The preſent Miracle of the Tongues beſtowed on St. *Peter*, and his unlearned Companions. 3. His Auditors were devout Men, who tho' ignorant enough, yet had Minds fairly diſpoſed for Information and Conviction. 4. The Holy Spirit wrought now extraordinarily by and with the Word, and cauſed this miraculous Improvement. Now did our Saviour fulfil his Promiſe to his Diſciples, *John* xiv. 12. *Greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do, when I go to my Father.*

Theſe three Thouſand were baptized the ſame Day in which they were converted, and probably in the ſame Place, either in the Temple, or in ſome Houſe where the Sermon was preached. It is unneceſſary to enquire, whether the Apoſtles did it by Dipping or Sprinkling, both being lawful; yet it is hard to conjecture how ſuch a Quantity of Water could be brought to the Place, as might be ſufficient for the decent Dipping ſuch a Number of Perſons in ſo ſhort a Time. And ſuppoſing the Water was not brought to them, but they went down to that; baptizing ſo many by Dipping, would require a Week rather than a Day to diſpatch it in.

Q. *What Effects did this wonderful and ſudden Converſion produce in the Behaviour and Practice of the Converts?*

A. They continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine and Fellowſhip, &c. They adhered to the Doctrine of the Apoſtles, delivered to them by *Chriſt*, and contained in the Holy Scriptures.

Obſerve farther, the ſteady Adherence of the firſt *Chriſtians* to the Doctrine of the Apoſtles; *They continued ſtedfaſtly in it.* That is, they were conſtant Hearers of it, and Attendants upon it; they received it not upon Truſt, but due Examination.

They continued ſtedfaſt in Fellowſhip; which may import, 1. Their Communion with the Apoſtles, their keeping cloſe to their own Teachers in Oppoſition to Schiſm, which is a cauſeleſs, and therefore a culpable Separation; they were obedient to their ſpiritual Governors and Inſtructors. 2. Their Society among themſelves, and Communion one with another. The primitive Saints were all of one Mind, and therefore fit to make one Body. 3. The Mutual Aſſiſtance which they gave and received, a free Diſtribution to the Neceſſities of each other. This musual Banevolence plainly ſhewed that they eſteemed themſelves as Fellow-Members of the ſame Body; and that they were perfectly united in Heart and Affection.

Another religious Office, in which they were conſtant, was breaking of Bread; that is, receiving the Sacrament; ſo fervent were the Devotions of the firſt *Chriſtians*, that none of their religious Aſſemblies paſſed, in which they did not make this ſolemn Commemoration of our Saviour, and ſhew forth his Death, looking on their other religious Services as defective without this; this put Life into every Act of Religion; this fitted them both for doing and dying; and affords us excellent Leſſons for our Conduct in this Reſpect.

The laſt Thing they continued conſtant and ſtedfaſt in, was Prayer; that is, in their publick and ſolemn Addreſſes made to God in religious Aſſemblies, where they poured out their Souls to God in Prayer and Supplication, in Praiſe and Thankſgiving. This is the Way to keep up a Senſe of God and Religion in the World; and nothing delights God more than the joint Prayers and Praiſes of his People.

In the latter Part of this Chapter we have an extraordinary Inſtance of a noble Charity among theſe primitive *Chriſtians*; *They had all Things common*; that is, they choſe rather to part with their Eſtates, than that any of their Brethren ſhould want; the Rich very readily ſold their Poſſeſſions and Goods to help the Poor. By *all Things*, we are to underſtand ſuch Things as every one laid aſide for the Service of the Poor; not all their Goods and Poſſeſſions at large. This Practice was only uſed in *Jeruſalem*, in the Beginning of *Chriſtianity*, without being a Precedent for After-times and Places.

The Chapter concludes with an Account how the primitive *Chriſtians* ſpent their Time together in the Service of God; and in great Simplicity and Sincerity amongſt themſelves. *They continued daily in the Temple*; that is, at the uſual Time of Prayer, they joined with the *Jews* in their Prayers in the Temple: We muſt not think that they preached Sermons, and adminiſtered the Sacraments in the Temple; that would not have been ſuffered: But, having performed their publick Devotions in the Temple at the uſual Hours of Prayer, they retired to a private and particular Place to celebrate the Lord's Supper; and afterwards took their ordinary and neceſſary Repaſt with Gladneſs and Singleneſs of Heart.

CHAP. III.

Peter *and* John, *going up to the Temple, cure a lame Man; he walks, and praiſes God, and the People are filled with Wonder and Amazement.* Peter *profeſſes, that this Work was not done by their Power and Holineſs, but by Faith, in the Name of* Jeſus, *whom they had denied, and crucified, and* *whom God raiſed from the Dead. He exhorts them to Repentance, that their Sins might be blotted out, by* Jeſus Chriſt, *who was ſent to turn them from their Iniquities.*

Q. WHAT *is chiefly obſervable in the firſt Part of this Chapter?*

A. No ſooner was the primitive Church planted, though miraculouſly, but a Perſecution is raiſed againſt it, at once to root it up, and lay it deſolate.

At the third Hour, that is, at Nine o'Clock in the Morning, *Peter* preached the foregoing Sermon; and at the ninth Hour, or Three in the Afternoon of the ſame Day (as Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves) he preached a ſecond Sermon, which converts five Thouſand more.

The Place the Apoſtles choſe to preach in was the Temple; thither they went, not to offer Sacrifice, but to inform the *Jews*, that the Law of Sacrifices was now aboliſhed by the Death of *Chriſt*; not to communicate with them in their antiquated Worſhip, but that they might have a larger Field to ſow the Seed of the Goſpel in.

Note alſo the Circumſtance of Time, *At the Hour of Prayer.* Ever ſince God has had a Church in the World, there have been ſtated Times and Places of publick Worſhip; by Means whereof a Senſe of God and Religion has been kept up in the World, which otherwiſe would have been in Danger of being loſt.

Q. *What is chiefly remarkable in the Cure of the lame Man?*

A. This poor Man only begg'd an Alms, God gives him his Limbs, and Salvation into the Bargain. Thus we receive of God daily more than we can either aſk, or think.

Obſerve *Peter*'s Diſcourſe to this lame Man; *Look on us*; he does not ſay, believe on us; but look on us, and believe on *Chriſt*. The Man accordingly faſtened his Eyes on the Apoſtles, as expecting Relief from them. Whereupon *Peter* addreſſes himſelf to the Cure, and firſt tells him what he could not give him, namely, Silver and Gold; and then what he had he would beſtow upon him, namely, a Power of curing his Diſeaſe; *In the Name of* Jeſus *of* Nazareth, *riſe up, and walk.*

This Miracle was performed openly, inſtantaneouſly, and ſuddenly; *Immediately his Feet and Ankle-bones received Strength.* All Things are eaſy, equally eaſy to an Almighty Power.

Here is farther obſervable the Humility and Faith of this great Apoſtle; his Humility, in not diſdaining to lift up this poor Cripple from the Ground; and his Faith, in being fully perſuaded of *Chriſt*'s Preſence, relying on his Power, and depending on his Promiſe, *Mark* xvi. 18.

Note the Piety of this poor Cripple, in aſcribing the Praiſe of this Miracle to God only; *he leaped, and praiſed God*, not the Apoſtles. To conceal God's Mercies is Ingratitude; to attribute them to ſecond Cauſes is Sacrilege.

No ſooner had the Fame of the Cure of this poor Cripple reached the People, but they ran together, and are aſtoniſhed at the Strangeneſs of the Thing. But, leſt they ſhould imagine, that the Apoſtles, by their own Power, or Holineſs, had wrought this Miracle, and ſo rob *Chriſt* of his Glory, *Peter* declares the true Cauſe, namely, Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *Does St.* Peter *make any Uſe of this miraculous Cure for the Inſtruction of the People?*

A. Peter lays Hold on this Occaſion, to preach a ſecond awakening Sermon to the *Jews*; in which he ſharply rebukes them, for their Contempt of *Chriſt*, and the horrible Indignities offered to him. Note, that though, poſſibly, none of the *Jews* then and there preſent, did actually nail *Chriſt* to his Croſs, yet, having conſented to it, they are charged with *killing the Lord of Life.*

Peter aſcribes the whole of this Miracle to Faith. Faith is twice mentioned in this one Verſe, becauſe of the Apoſtle's Faith in working this Miracle, and the Cripple's Faith in receiving it, ſays Dr. *Lightfoot*; but, doubtleſs, it was the Apoſtle's Faith, for the lame Man ſhewed none before he was healed; he expected an Alms, and little thought of being cured.

The Apoſtle, not willing to drive theſe Murderers of *Chriſt* to Deſpair, but to draw them to Repentance, mitigates their Sin, by imputing it to Ignorance and blind Zeal, rather than to Malice. He calls them Brethren, though guilty of ſo great a Miſtake in their Judgment, and Fault in their Practice. He encourages them farther, by acquainting them, that God had decreed the Sufferings of *Chriſt* for Man, and by his Prophets foretold them, who all ſpake the ſame Things, as out of one Mouth. So that what the *Jews* did, was (tho' unknown to them) a fulfilling of the antient Prophecies and Promiſes for Man's Redemption.

The Apoſtle having diſcovered to the *Jews* the Danger of their Diſeaſe, now directs them to the only effectual Remedy, namely, Repentance; *Repent and be converted*; that is, repent of your rejecting *Jeſus Chriſt*, and be converted to true *Chriſtianity*. This the Apoſtle urges from the Effect and profitable Conſequences of it; *Your Sins ſhall be blotted out*; a Metaphor, taken from Creditors, who have their Books of Accompt, in which all Debts and Reckonings are ſet down.

The Times of Refreſhing ſhall come from the Preſence of the Lord; by which ſome underſtand more generally, the Time of *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction; and that he adviſes them to repent, that thoſe Days which would be dreadful to the Enemies of *Chriſt*, might be Days of Refreſhing to them. But the Days of Refreſhing, are thought by moſt to ſignify the Day of Judgment, which will be a Day of Refreſhing to all penitent Sinners; becauſe they ſhall then enjoy a compleat Abſolution from all their Sins.

St. *Peter* enforces this Exhortation to Repentance with a ſtrong Motive, namely, the Certainty of *Chriſt*'s Coming to judge the World, when the whole Creation, which now groaneth, ſhall be delivered, and Man particularly reſtored to *God*, to himſelf, and to a bleſſed Immortality.

St. *Peter*, to convince the unbelieving *Jews* that *Chriſt* is the true and only *Meſſiah*, applies to him thoſe Words, recorded *Deut.* xviii. 15. from whence it is evident, that *Chriſt* is the great Prophet and Teacher of the Church there ſpoken of, whoſe Doctrine it was highly dangerous to condemn, though out of the Mouth of ſuch contemptible Perſons as he and *John* appeared to be.

Obſerve, how ſweetly *Peter* invites and encourages theſe Murderers of *Chriſt* to Repentance; he tells them, they were the Poſterity of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, with whom God firſt entered into

Covenant, and alſo Children of the Prophets; that is, the People to whom *God* primarily and chiefly ſent the Prophets.

Laſtly, he tells them, that the Offer of *Chriſt Jeſus*, and eternal Salvation by him, was firſt made to the People of the *Jews*, becauſe they were the Children of the Covenant; that is, the only People in Communion with *God* throughout the whole World.

Chap. IV.

The Rulers being offended at Peter's *Sermon, apprehend* Peter *and* John, *and examine their Authority.* Peter *filled with the* Holy Ghoſt, *teſtifies, that the lame Man was healed by the Power of* Jeſus, *who is the Stone rejected by the Builders, and by whom alone there is Salvation. The Rulers are convinced by this Miracle, yet ſtraitly forbid them to preach in the Name of* Jeſus; *they refuſe to comply, and return to their Country. They jointly pray to* God *for Boldneſs, and for his Bleſſing on their Preaching.* God *teſtifies, that their Prayers are heard, by an Earthquake, and by filling them with the* Holy Ghoſt. *Their mutual Love and Concord. They ſell their Goods to ſupply the Poor.*

Q. T*HE laſt Chapter gave an Acccount of the miraculous Cure of a poor Cripple, and* Peter's *Sermon thereupon; in this we read of a Perſecution that was raiſed againſt the Apoſtles, and their Behaviour under it: What Obſervations do you make upon it?*

A. We have here an Account who thoſe Perſecutors were, and the Cauſe that induced them to commit this Violence. *As they ſpake, the Captain of the Temple, the Prieſts, and* Sadducees *came upon them.* Theſe were diſtinct Perſons, and differently diſtaſted; the Captain, who was poſted with his Guard about the Temple, for its Protection and Defence, apprehended a Tumult, from ſuch a vaſt Concourſe of People as came to ſee the recover'd Cripple: The Prieſts were offended, becauſe the Apoſtles, being but private Men, invaded their Province of inſtructing the People; or perhaps, becauſe their Doctrine ſeemed derogatory to the eſtabliſhed worſhip inſtituted by *Moſes*: The *Sadducees* were diſpleaſed, becauſe they preached the Reſurrection from the Dead, which they denied, and aſſerted *Chriſt* to be both the efficient, and alſo the exemplary Cauſe of the Reſurrection; inferring from *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, that all his Followers ſhould riſe with him, and like unto him.

God, however, ſuffered not the Rage of theſe Perſecutors to proceed, at that Time, farther than the Impriſonment of the Apoſtles; *They laid their Hands upon them, and put them in Hold.* The Soldiers might as eaſily have taken away their Lives, as impriſoned their Perſons; but God reſtrained them, and led on the Apoſtles gradually to their Sufferings; they were yet but young Pupils in *Chriſt*'s School; therefore they ſhall not have Trials beyond their Strength.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of this Perſecution?*

A. The Event of this Violence to the Apoſtles was, an Addition to the Church of five thouſand Perſons. This infant Church flouriſhed the more by the Frownings of Men upon her; like a green Meadow, which, the oftner it is mow'd, ſprings the faſter, and comes the thicker.

Q. *What general Obſervations do you make upon the Whole?*

A. Obſerve what a ſtrong Combination here was united againſt the Apoſtles, of Rulers, Scribes Elders, High-prieſts, High-prieſt's Kindred, and what not? Though all theſe were of different Intereſts and Principles, yet they held together as one, to extinguiſh the Light of the Goſpel, as ſoon as it began to ſhine forth. Strange! that a Meſſage of ſuch glad Tidings, as the Goſpel brought, ſhould meet with ſo unwelcome an Entertainment.

The Apoſtles are arraigned, and queſtioned, by what Name and Authority, that is, by what Power or Virtue, they had done this? Some think, that they ſuſpected the Apoſtles had wrought by the Black-art, and were aſſiſted by the Devil. But ſurely this Miracle carried ſufficient Evidence with it, that it was wrought by a ſupernatural Divine Power. What Reaſon was there for their asking, by what Power? when the Thing itſelf proclaimed it the Effect of the Almighty Power of God?

But obſerve the bold and reſolute Anſwer of St. *Peter*, to this malicious and frivolous Queſtion. Here was a full Bench of profeſſed Enemies, aſſembled to be his Judges, enough to have daſhed ten Priſoners out of Countenance. St. *Peter*, who was formerly frighted into a Denial of *Chriſt*, by a ſilly Wench; now, being *filled with Holy Ghoſt*, ſilences and confounds his moſt powerful and malicious Accuſers.

We have farther a ſingular Inſtance of the Apoſtles Boldneſs; namely, in preaching *Jeſus Chriſt* to thoſe who had impriſon'd them; *Be it known unto you, that this* Jeſus *whom ye crucified, is the Stone which was ſet at nought of you Builders, and is become the Head of the Corner, neither is there Salvation in any other*, &c. He calls the *Jewiſh* Teachers Builders, to remind them of their Duty; namely, to increaſe, ſtrengthen, and beautify the Building of the Church of *God*; not to demoliſh, weaken, or deface it; and to convince them of the Contempt with which they had treated *Chriſt* the chief Corner-Stone; they refuſed and ſet him at nought, according to the Prophecy, *Pſ.* cxviii. *Ver.* 22. which was a Prophecy of the Rejection of the *Meſſiah*, tho' the *Jews* would not ſo underſtand it; for they dreamt of ſuch a pompous Coming of the *Meſſiah* according to their Hearts Deſire, that it was incredible that any *Jews* ſhould ever reject or deſpiſe him.

Q. *In what Senſe does* Peter *call* Chriſt, *the chief corner Stone?*

A. Chriſt is called the Corner-ſtone, becauſe he ſupports and ſuſtains the whole Building; and as Corner-ſtone is equally neceſſary for both Sides of the Building, which are united to it, and born up by it, ſo both *Jews* and *Gentiles* are united in *Chriſt* and ſaved by him.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in St.* Peter's *Diſcourſe?*

A. The Apoſtle poſitively aſſerts, that there is no Salvation but by *Chriſt*; or, that beſides, or without him there is no Poſſibility of Salvation, either for *Jews* or *Gentiles*; thoſe under the Old Teſtament had, and we under the New, have one and the ſame Saviour. The Reaſon he gives for his confident Aſſertion, is, becauſe *there is no other Name given under Heaven by which we muſt be ſaved.*

That is, no other Perſon deſigned or appointed by God, to be the Author of Redemption to, and Procurer of Salvation for, a loſt and miſerable World, but only *Chriſt*. It behoves us then to be very careful how we reject him; for, in rejecting *Chriſt*, we reject the Wiſdom, Authority, Love, and Salvation of God.

The Council obſerving the Boldneſs of the Apoſtles, and the undeniable Evidence of the Miracle wrought by them, as likewiſe that the Apoſtles were unlearned Men, they marvelled; they were convinced, but not converted; ſilenced, but not ſatiſfied; they were full of Admiration, but far from Faith; their Mouths were ſtopped, but their hard Hearts were not cured.

But ſee how non-pluſ'd the Council are, to know what to do with the Apoſtles; they confeſs the Miracle, but conſult how to conceal it; and at laſt concluded upon threatening them, that for the Time to come they ſhould not ſpeak in the Name of *Jeſus*; that is, not to preach in his Name, nor work Miracles by a Power and Authority derived manifeſtly from him.

Q. *Did the Apoſtles comply with this Order of the Council?*

A. The Apoſtles, in their Reply, with great Prudence and Integrity, refer themſelves to the Judgment of their very Adverſaries, whether it was reaſonable to obey their Commands, when they charged them to preach no more in the Name of the Lord *Jeſus*: As if the Apoſtles had ſaid, We have received a Command from God to preach; *Go teach all Natious*, Matthew xxviii. 18. and we have received a Command from you not to preach: Now judge you whether it is moſt reaſonable to obey God, or you. It is a ſtrong Way of Conviction, to refer a Matter to their Judgment, againſt whom we make Oppoſition.

But notwithſtanding this rational Plea of the Apoſtles, the Council added farther Threatnings and ſo diſmiſſed them, *becauſe of the People*, who glorified God for the great Miracle that had been wrought by the Hands of the Apoſtles. It was not the Senſe of Sin, nor any Apprehenſion of God's Diſpleaſure, that influenced the Council to ſet the Apoſtles at Liberty, but either the Fear or Favour of the People: Thus God made the People a Reſtraint to the Rulers Rage.

Q. *The Apoſtles being thus happily delivered, and retired to their Company, did they take any Meaſures for their Future Safety?*

A. The Church, underſtanding that their Enemies were taking Meaſures to proſecute and deſtroy them, apply themſelves to God by joint and fervent Prayer. They begin their Prayer with Invocation and a reverend Compellation, ſuitable to their preſent State and Condition; adoring God's Omnipotency in treating and governing the World. *Lord! thou art God, who haſt made Heaven and Earth and the Sea, and all that is therein.* He that made all Things by his Power, will over-rule all Things by his Providence for his own Glory and his Church's Good.

It deſerves Remark, that the Apoſtles in their Prayer, uſed Scripture-Languuge and Expreſſions; they allude to to *Pſ.* ii. and confeſs, that all that enraged Malice of Men and Devils againſt the *Meſſias*, which was foretold long ago by the Prophet *David*, was now come to paſs; for now both the *Jewiſh* Council, and the *Roman* Governors had combined together againſt *Chriſt*, and in oppoſing him, had oppoſed the Father who ſent him. *Of a Truth, againſt this holy Child* Jeſus *are they gathered together, to do what thy Hand and Counſel had determined before to be done.* So that all the Sufferings of *Chriſt* were fore-ordained and determined by God the Father; but this did not neceſſitate the *Jews* to Sin, they acted freely, and voluntarily, according to the Determinations of their own Wills. God foreſaw and permitted, but no Ways compelled them to it.

They cloſe their Prayer with an earneſt Petition, that God would ſtrengthen them, and glorify his Son. That God would ſtrengthen them againſt their Fears; ſteel them with Courage, and fortify them with impregnable Reſolution; *grant that with all Boldneſs we may preach thy Word.* Boldneſs to preach the Goſpel (when unjuſtly forbidden) is a ſpecial Gift of God, and a peculiar Effect of God's Grace to his Servants. They requeſt alſo that God would magnify (not them) but his Son by them, in giving them Power to work miraculous Cures in the Name of *Jeſus*, for confirming of the Goſpel; *grant that Signs and Wonders may be done by the Name of thy holy Child* Jeſus. Here note, that though the of Miracles was promiſed by *Chriſt*, yet it is prayed for by the Apoſtles. God will have the Performance of his Promiſes to be the Anſwer of our Prayers.

Q. *In what Manner did God anſwer their Prayer?*

A. The Anſwer was ſpeedy; the Place where they prayed is miraculouſly ſhaken, and many eminent Graces and ſpecial Gifts of the Holy Spirit were poured out upon the Apoſtles, particularly a greater Meaſure of Boldneſs to preach the Goſpel; and ſome think, the wonderful Gift of conferring the Holy Ghoſt was now conferred on the Twelve; of which Opinion is Dr. *Lightfoot*. The Holy Spirit which cauſed them thus to pray, gave them that holy Boldneſs which they prayed for, with a ſignal ſhaking of the Place they prayed in. How ready is God to hear and anſwer the Prayers and Pleadings of his righteous Servants, eſpecially when ſuffering for his Cauſe and Name.

Q. *What is there more that deſerves our Conſideration in this Chapter?*

A. Remarkable is the Unity, and happy Unanimity, among the Miniſters and Members of this infant Church, this pureſt and moſt primitive Chriſtian Church; *they were of one Heart, and one Soul*; that is, they were of one Heart and one Opinion. A ſingular Pattern for ſucceeding *Chriſtians* to the End of the World, ſo to behave one towards another, as Members of the ſame Body, and influenced by the ſame Head.

As their Unanimity, ſo was their Liberality remarkable in relieving the Neceſſities of each other. *They called nothing their own*, when the Wants of their Brethren required it; the Rich readily ſold their Goods and Poſſeſſions, to help and aſſiſt the Poor. This Example, however, is not to be drawn into a Precedent, for the Imitation and Practice of future Times; ſince ſuch was the State of the Church at that Time, as never was afterwards; it was but newly born; it was all in one City; all in a Poſſibility to be ſoon ſcattered by Perſecution.

We are inſtructed from this Inſtance, that thoſe who are of Ability, ought always to abound in ordinary, and ſometimes in extraordinary Acts of Charity. We muſt always relieve the Saints Wants, as we are able, and even above what we are able upon extraordinary Occaſions.

Obſerve again, with what Authority and Aſſurance the Apoſtles gave Teſtimony to the Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, and how readily the People received their Doctrine; *With great Power gave the Apoſtles Witneſs of the Reſurrection of the Lord* Jeſus, *and great Grace was upon them all.* The Reſurrection of *Chriſt* from the Dead, was the great Point now in Controverſy, therefore with evident Miracles and wonderful Gifts of the Holy Spirit, did the Apoſtles corroborate their Teſtimony of his Reſurrection. So that as *Chriſt* was declared to the Apoſtles to be the Son of God with Power, by the Reſurrection from the Dead; in like Manner the Apoſtles by wonderful Gifts did bear Witneſs to the Reſurrection, and their Doctrine found Acceptance with the People.

Hence learn, that the Doctrine of *Chriſt's* Reſurrection, being not only atteſted by the preaching, but confirmed by the Miracles of the Apoſtles, deſervedly found Belief in the World, and is a Point of infallible Certainty amongſt all thoſe, whom wilful Obſtinacy has not blinded.

CHAP. V.

Ananias *and* Sapphira *his Wife, ſelling their Poſſeſſions, lay Part of it at the Apoſtles Feet, yet for Lying and Hypocriſy are puniſhed with ſudden Death. Fear falls upon all. The Apoſtles work many Wonders, to the Increaſe of the Church. The High Prieſt apprehends and impriſons the Apoſtles, who are delivered by an Angel. They are brought before the Council and examined; their Defence. They are delivered from the Council by* Gamaliel; *are beaten, rejoice, and daily preach* Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *THIS Chapter opens with the Story of* Ananias *and his Wife: What Leſſons of Inſtruction does this afford us?*

A. Towards the Cloſe of the laſt Chapter, we are informed of the Practice of the Primitive *Chriſtians*, at the firſt Plantation of the Goſpel, in ſelling their Poſſeſſions for charitable Uſes, and depoſiting the Money with the Apoſtles, for Relief of their poor Brethren in *Chriſt*. Among theſe charitably diſpoſed Perſons, we have here an Account of a Tranſaction of this Kind, of *Ananias*, and his Wife *Sapphira*, who conſecrated a Poſſeſſion to God, and ſold the ſame for that Purpoſe; but fraudulently kept back Part of the Price; and thus, as St. *Chryſoſtom* Remarks, he was found ſtealing his own Goods; he had the Formality to ſell his Lands; but had not the Sincerity to part with his Money as others had.

If we examine into the true Nature of *Ananias*'s Sin, we ſhall find it was Sacrilege, that is, a Purloining and Stealing of that which was conſecrated to God; not by actual Performance, but by Vow and inward Purpoſe of Heart: Covetouſneſs and Vain-Glory, Lying and Hypocriſy, all accompanied this Sin, but the Sin itſelf was Sacrilege. Hence learn, that an Alienation of what is conſecrated to God, is Sacrilege againſt God, being a Breach of Vow or Promiſe made to him, a Lying unto God, as the Text calls it; and a Sin which God will ſeverely puniſh.

Obſerve farther, how this ſecret Sin, Lying in the Intention of the Heart, was known to God, and by Divine Revelation made known to St. *Peter*. Not only outward Actions are made known to God, but even the Purpoſes and Intents of our Hearts are all manifeſt and open to him, and perfectly underſtood by him.

Q. *But why is* Ananias *ſaid to lie unto the Holy Ghoſt, rather than to* God *the Father, or* Jeſus Chriſt *the Son?*

A. It was becauſe, 1. That it is either the proper Work of the Spirit to ſearch the Heart, and to know the Thoughts and Purpoſes thereof. Or, 2. Becauſe the Wealth brought to the Apoſtles, and laid at their Feet, was an Effect of the Holy Spirit's inclining the Hearts of Believers ſo to do.

Hence we are taught the Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt, that he is truly and really God; he whom the Scripture calls the Holy Ghoſt, is the great and true *God*: Either the Holy Ghoſt is Man and God's Meſſenger, or God himſelf; but the Antitheſis or Oppoſite ſhews, that he is not Man; for, ſays the Apoſtle, *Thou haſt not lied unto Man*; and if the Holy Ghoſt had been only God's Meſſenger, it had been as great a Sin to lie to *Peter* (he being God's extraordinary Meſſenger) as to lie to the Holy Ghoſt; therefore the Apoſtle in the Fourth Verſe explains what he meant by lying to the Holy Ghoſt, namely, lying unto God; *Thou haſt not lied unto Man*, a Creature like thy ſelf, *but unto God*, even to the Holy Ghoſt who is God.

Q. *What were the Aggravations of* Ananias's *Sin, that he ſhould be ſo ſeverely puniſh'd?*

A. Doubtleſs his Sin was very odious, that God ſhould ſo ſeverely puniſh it, and it was the firſt of this Kind under the New Teſtament. This was the firſt Conſecration of Goods that ever was made to *Chriſt* our Lord, after he was exalted at the Right Hand of *God* in Heaven, and this was the firſt Sacrilege; and therefore the Perſons guilty of it met with this Severity, to terrify others from the like Tranſgreſſion. The firſt Tranſgreſſions of any Kind have been made Publick Examples. Thus *Nadab* and *Abihu* at the Beginning of the *Jewiſh* Church; and here *Ananias* and *Sapphira* at the beginning of the Chriſtian Church.

Q. *But as* Sapphira *was the Wife of* Ananias, *and therefore may be ſuppoſed to follow his Directions, ſhe was not, one would think, equally culpable with him; and therefore, deſerv'd not the ſame Puniſhment.*

A. As *Sapphira* was involved in the Sin, ſo does ſhe ſhare in the Puniſhment of her Husband; her Subjection as a Wife, does not excuſe her from partaking in her Husband's Guilt, nor exempt her from the Severity of the Puniſhment. God's Authority in Commanding or Forbidding muſt be firſt obſerved and obeyed; otherwiſe we put the Creature in God's Place, diſhonour him, and ſet up an Idol, which the Jealouſy and Holineſs of God will never endure.

Note farther, that the ſame Sin meets with the ſame Puniſhment. Husband and Wife had here agreed both what to do and what to ſay, and as they ſinned together, ſo they ſuffer'd. God is no Reſpecter of Perſons, Male or Female, Jew or Gentile, Prince or Subject, Husband or Wife; that Soul that ſinneth ſhall die; *Then fell ſhe down ſtraightway at his Feet, and yielded up the Ghoſt.*

Q. *Did not the Apoſtles exceed their Commiſſion in puniſhing Offenders with Death?*

A. This miraculous Way of puniſhing Offenders with immediate Death by the Apoſtles, was not

Common; this is the only Inſtance in the New Teſtament of a Puniſhment inflicted by the Mouth of the Apoſtles for any Sin whatſoever, and ſeems accommodated to that particular Time, in which Magiſtrates were ſo far from defending the Church, that they furthered the Perſecution, and endeavoured the Extirpation of it.

Q. *What Effect had this tremendous Miracle upon the Church?*

A. It awfully affected them with Fear and Trembling; *Great Fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard theſe Things.* God's extraordinary Providences, either Judgments or Mercies, towards our ſelves or others, ought to affect us with Holy Fear, and that Fear which works Righteouſneſs. *Iſa.* xxvi. 9. *When his Judgments are abroad in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteouſneſs*; that is, they ought to do ſo; and if ever they will do it, they will do it then: Judgments work Fear, and Fear works Righteouſneſs.

Q. *After the Death of* Ananias *and* Sapphira, *what other remarkable Actions did the Apoſtles perform?*

A. To this Act of Severity on *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, for their Hypocriſy and Sacriledge, inſtantly ſucceed Acts of Clemency and Mercy upon others. The former Act of Severity in the Apoſtles was neceſſary, to prevent the Intruſion of Hypocrites into the *Chriſtian* Church; theſe ſubſequent Acts of Mercy were as neceſſary for the propagating of the Goſpel, and to invite People to the Love of *Chriſtianity*. Accordingly the Apoſtles, after the Death of *Ananias*, exerciſe the Power that had been given them of working Signs and wonders; of healing Diſeaſes, and of caſting out Devils, inſomuch that the People brought out their Sick into the Streets, laying them on Beds and Couches, hoping that the Shadow of *Peter*, as he paſs'd by, might reach and recover ſome of them. This Text is a great Favourite with the *Romaniſts*, which they produce to prove *Peter*'s Supremacy over the reſt of the Apoſtles, becauſe his very Shadow cured the Diſeaſed. But very groundleſly; for, 1. By the ſame Argument they might prove St. *Peter* Superior to *Chriſt* himſelf, who never wrought in this Manner, according to what he foretold, *John* xiv. 12. *Greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do*, &c. 2. If the *Papiſts* were not wilfully blind, they might obſerve, that the Napkins and Handkerchiefs which were carried from St. *Paul*'s Body, cured Diſeaſes alſo, and diſpoſſeſſed Devils, *Acts* xix. 12. 3. Beſides all this, it is not expreſly ſaid here that any Sick were actually healed by St. *Peter*'s Shadow; but the Diſeaſed were brought in Hopes that his Shadow might produce ſuch Effects; and if it did ſo, Almighty God thereby put Honour on the Goſpel, and upon all the Apoſtles, without any particular Reſpect, or ſpecial Regard to the Perſon of St. *Peter*.

Q. *What is next to be conſidered in the Hiſtory of this Chapter?*

A. The next Thing obſervable, is the Place, where the Apoſtles aſſembled to preach the Goſpel, and work Miracles for the Confirmation of the ſame; *They were all with one accord in* Solomon's *Porch.* They were unanimous; there were none among them guilty of ſchiſmatical Separation from the publick Aſſembly; but with one Mouth, as well as with one Mind, and Heart they glorified God.

Farther; with what prudential Boldneſs and holy Courage do the Apoſtles venture to preach to the People in *Solomon*'s Porch? For the *Sanhedrim* or great Council which, in the former Chapter impriſoned them, and in this beat them, ſat in, or very near that Place. Nothing better becomes the Miniſters and Meſſengers of *Jeſus Chriſt*, than an holy and humble, a wiſe and meek, a zealous and convincing Boldneſs, in aſſerting the Truths of the Goſpel, in reproving Sin, and denouncing Judgments againſt impenitent Sinners. Thus bold and zealous was our Lord and Maſter in his Miniſtry; and of the ſame Spirit were his Apoſtles.

It deſerves our Notice, how God over-ruled the Judgment inflicted on *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and cauſed it to work for ſpecial Good. Thus, ſuch of the Apoſtles Hearers as were unſound and inſincere, durſt not join themſelves to them, having ſeen a great Inſtance of Severity upon concealed Hypocriſy: They were afraid to come among them any more, or to make a Shew of ſuch Piety and Zeal as *Ananias* did, for fear of the ſame or like Puniſhments as he had. But however, the People extoll'd and magnified, admired and applauded them, and Multitudes were added to the Church. This ſeems to be the Senſe of Ver. 13. *And of the reſt durſt no Man join himſelf to them, but the People magnified them, and Believers were added to the Lord, Multitudes both of Men and Women.* Nothing more afflicts unſound and droſſy Hypocrites, than the Sight of God's Judgments inflicted upon others in this World, and the fear of the righteous Judgment of God upon themſelves in the World to come.

Q. *In the 17th and following Verſes, we have an Account of another Perſecution raiſed againſt the Apoſtles; what Remarks do you make thereon?*

A. We now come to the ſecond Perſecution raiſed againſt the Apoſtles, which was more ſevere than the firſt. In the former Chapter the Apoſtles were only ſecured, kept in Hold for a Night, and diſmiſſed with a Threatning next Day: But now being filled a ſecond Time with the Holy Spirit, they are better enabled to grapple with Sufferings, and glorify God under them; accordingly here they are committed to the common Priſon amongſt Malefactors, and afterwards beaten and expoſed to common Shame. O the Tenderneſs of God towards his tender Servants! Whilſt theſe Apoſtles were Striplings, their Faith feeble, and their Grace weak, God ſtayeth the rough Wind, keeps off the Storm of Perſecution from them. God will always ſuit the Stroke to his Peoples Strength, proportion their Burden to their Back, and never ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able.

The Apoſtles being Priſoners for *Chriſt* and his Goſpel, have an Angel for their Keeper and Deliverer, who opens the Priſon Door. God could otherwiſe have delivered them, but he makes Uſe of the Miniſtry of Angels for the confirming of their Faith, and to let them ſee by Experience that he had given his Angels Charge over them. Since the Eſtabliſhment of the Goſpel-Church, God will have us live more by Faith, and to walk leſs by Senſe, and therefore we muſt not now (ordinarily) ſee thoſe miniſtring and beneficent Spirits; but altho' their viſible Appearances are ceaſed, yet their inviſible Operations for the Heirs of Salvation ſhall never ceaſe. Heb. i. ult. *Are they not all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation?*

The Apoſtles being thus releaſed from Priſon by the Aſſiſtance of an Angel, are commanded to preach; *Go, ſpeak unto the People all the Words of this Life.* That is, of the Life for which you was impriſoned, this Life which the *Sadducees*, who impriſoned you, deny; namely, the Reſurrection of the Body, and eternal Life; the Goſpel, which is the Word of Life, and directs them how to obtain eternal Life and Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt*.

No ſooner were the Apoſtles at Liberty, but they repair to the Temple, and preach with a redoubled Zeal and Diligence; *Satan* had better never meddled with theſe Men, than have caſt them into Priſon; for the cold Blaſts of Perſecution and Impriſonment, beating upon their outward Man, by a ſpiritual *Antiperiſtaſis*, augmented the Heat of Grace within. There is no better Way, to be even with the Devil and his Inſtruments, for all their Spite and Malice againſt us, than by doing all the Good we can to the Souls of Men.

Obſerve the Confuſion the Council are in, at the News of this extraordinary Deliverance of the Apoſtles from Priſon, by the Aſſiſtance of an Angel: They were horribly confounded and perplexed at it; *They doubted whereunto this would grow.* They ſtood aſtoniſh'd, and at a Loſs what Meaſures to take. It is the Conſequence of Sin, to bring Men into Streights and Difficulties, but Streights and Difficulties do not always bring Men off from Sin. So here, notwithſtanding their Confuſion and Perplexity, they puſh on, and bring them again before the Council; *Then went the Captain, with the Officers of the Temple, and brought them without Violence.*

The Apoſtles being accordingly brought in, are charged with the Crimes of Obſtinacy and Sedition. With Obſtinacy, for perſiſting to preach the Goſpel, when they had ſtrictly (but very wickedly) forbidden them; and of Sedition, as if they endeavoured to ſtir up the People to avenge the Blood of *Chriſt* upon the Rulers, as being unjuſtly ſhed by them. The greateſt Innocence cannot protect the holieſt Perſons from Slander and falſe Accuſation. The beſt of Men have been ſometimes charged with the blackeſt Crimes. No Wonder that the great Council, or *Sanhedrim*, which charg'd *Chriſt* himſelf with Impoſture and Blaſphemy, ſhould accuſe the Apoſtles of Sedition and Contumacy: *The Diſciple is not above his Maſter.*

Note the contumelious Reflection they caſt upon *Chriſt* himſelf; *You intend*, ſays the Council, *to bring this Man's Blood upon us:* As if the holy *Jeſus* had not been worthy the naming by them. *Chriſt* told his Diſciples, *Luke* vi. 22. that the World ſhould caſt out their Names as Evil. Behold, his own is uſed no better! This Man, this Fellow, this Deceiver, were the opprobrious Titles which the learned Rabbies thought fit to beſtow on the beſt Man the World ever knew. Lord, how can we be abaſed enough for thee, who wert ſo degraded and debaſed for us.

Q. *How does St.* Peter *clear himſelf, and the reſt of the Apoſtles, of this Charge?*

A. St. *Peter*, in the Name of himſelf, and the reſt of the Apoſtles, replies to the Charge thus; That in Reſpect to the Obſtinacy of which they were accuſed, he owns, that they had not obey'd the Injunction, becauſe they required that which was contrary to the Name of *God*. The Apoſtles aſſert the Prerogative of *Chriſt*, as their Apology, for their Diſobedience to human Commands; *We ought to obey* God *rather than Man.*

The ſecond Part of the Charge, was Sedition: This, ever ſince, has been the Practice of Perſecutors, when they would ſtop the Mouths of the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, and not ſuffer them to preach at all, to tax them with preaching Sedition. But to obviate this Part of the Charge, the Apoſtle tells them, That this *Jeſus*, whom ye ignominiouſly ſlew on Earth, is now an exalted Prince in Heaven, able to give Repentance, and Remiſſion of Sin, to the worſt of his Murderers, if they unfeignedly deſired it; *Him hath* God *exalted, to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give Repentance*, &c.

From hence we are taught, that *Jeſus* will be a Saviour to none to whom he is not a Prince. We muſt ſubmit to his Laws, as well as commit our ſelves to his Mercy. Hence we alſo learn, that Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins are the ſpecial Fruits and Advantages of *Chriſt*'s Exaltation; *Him hath* God *exalted to give Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins.* It is the ſole Prerogative of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to give Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins.

Here note, the Encouragement which the Apoſtle gives the Murderers of *Chriſt* to hope for Pardon; he preaches the Duty of Repentance, and the Privilege of Remiſſion of Sins, and aſſures them for their Comfort, that *Chriſt* ſtands ready to diſpenſe both.

But obſerve the ſad Effects which this Sermon had upon theſe Hearers; the Sermon was of the ſame Import with that which this Apoſtle preach'd, *Chap.* ii. when ſo many Thouſands were prick'd to the Heart with Sorrow and Compunction; but theſe Men, theſe Rulers, theſe Doctors, and Rabbies, are cut to the Heart with Anger and Indignation.

Hence learn, that the moſt ſound and ſacred Doctrine is an intolerable Torment to an unſound and unholy Heart. That the Word of *God*, diſpenſed by the ſame Miniſter, and in the ſame Manner, has not always the ſame Effect. The Subſtance of both theſe Sermons was the ſame, (*Jeſus* and the Reſurrection) and the Preacher (St. *Peter*) was the ſame; yet how different the Succeſs? to convince the Apoſtle, that the Excellency of the Power was of *God*, and not of himſelf, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks.

Q. *In what Manner did* God *deliver the Apoſtles from the imminent Danger they were in?*

A. The Council were juſt on the Point of coming to a Reſolution of putting them to Death, when *God* raiſed up *Gamaliel*, a Man of great Authority amongſt them, to protect the Apoſtles from the malicious Intentions of the Council, as *Nicodemus* had done before, in Behalf of *Chriſt*. Without Doubt *Gamaliel*'s Spirit was actuated and influenced by the Spirit of God, to give ſuch Council as is here given.

Q. *What Arguments did* Gamaliel *make uſe of, to divert them from their bloody Purpoſe?*

A. This Council of *Gamaliel* conſiſted of ſeveral Parts; Firſt, he adviſes them to take heed what they did to theſe Men; implying, that Men ought to be very cautious how they engage themſelves in ſuppreſſing or deſtroying any Sort of Men whatever, till they have a clear and expreſs Warrant from Heaven for the Execution.

Again, he aſſures them, that if this Work be of Men, it will certainly come to nought; which he proves by two Inſtances, namely, of *Theudas*, and *Judas* of *Galilee*, who both pretended to be ſent of *God*, as Saviours of their Country, and gathered many Followers, but miſcarried in their Enterprize; intimating, that every Invention, Contrivance, or Device of Man, eſpecially in Things pertaining to *God* and Religion, will in Time be blaſted by *God*, and come to nothing.

Gamaliel adds, that if this Work be of *God*, it can never be overthrown; but the Attempt will be deem'd fighting againſt *God*. Signifying to us, that for any Perſon to attempt the Suppreſſion of any Doctrine, or Practice, that is from *God*, is to fight againſt *God* himſelf.

He intimates the great Danger of fighting againſt *God*, in the Word *even*, leſt ye be found even fighting againſt *God*; which indeed is a moſt dangerous Enterprize for any Perſon, at any Time, to be found engaged or concerned in.

This Advice of *Gamaliel*, appearing wiſe and rational, it prevailed with the Rulers to deſiſt their former Intention of putting the Apoſtles to Death; but they come not off without Blows, though without Bloodſhed; they are ſcourged, as their Maſter was before them, which was both a painful and reproachful Puniſhment: Yet were they ſo far from being diſhearten'd, that their Reſolution was ſtrengthen'd. They rejoiced in their Diſgrace, and reckon'd it their higheſt Honour to be thus diſhonour'd for *Chriſt*, eſteeming the Reproach they bore for him their greateſt Happineſs.

Q. *The Apoſtles being thus deliver'd from this Danger, how did they improve their regain'd Liberty?*

A. They redouble their Aſſiduity in preaching the Goſpel, and are unwearied in the Way of their Duty, and in the Work of their *God*. *Daily in the Temple, and in every Houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and to preach* Jeſus Chriſt. That is, they laid hold on every Opportunity, in Seaſon and out of Seaſon, publickly and privately, to preach the Goſpel to thoſe who had not received it, and farther to inſtruct thoſe that had already received the Faith of *Chriſt*. Thus the more outragious their Adverſaries were, the more courageous were the holy Apoſtles. They religiouſly profeſs the Name of *Chriſt*, and reſolutely abide by their Profeſſion, though they were derided, impriſoned, perſecuted, and beaten for the ſame.

CHAP. VI.

By reaſon of the Murmuring of the Grecians *againſt the* Hebrews, *ſeven Men are choſen and ordained Deacons;* Stephen, *one of them, full of Faith and Power, works Miracles. The Synagogue of the Libertines riſe up againſt, but cannot reſiſt the Wiſdom and Spirit by which he ſpake. Falſe Witneſſes are ſuborned to teſtify againſt, and accuſe him of Blaſphemy againſt the Law and Temple. His Face, in the Council, ſhines like that of an Angel.*

Q. W*HAT does the Hiſtory of this Chapter relate?*

A. The laſt Chapter gives Account of the two firſt Perſecutions that befel the Church after *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion: This and the next Chapter acquaint us with a third Blow, blacker and bloodier than the former, in the Death of the holy Martyr St. *Stephen*; the Accuſation of whom is related in this Chapter; in the Beginning of which we may obſerve, how the Number of *Chriſtians* increaſed on the foregoing Perſecution: As the *Jewiſh* Church in *Egypt*, the more it was oppreſſed the more it multiplied; ſo the *Chriſtian* Church here got Ground by Oppoſition; *In thoſe Days the Number of Diſciples was multiplied.*

Upon this Increaſe of the Church, there aroſe (as it too frequently happens among the Multitude) a Murmuring among them. The *Grecians* (that is, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, thoſe *Jews* who underſtood *Greek*, and uſed the *Greek* Bible, or Verſion of the *Septuagint*, in Contradiction to thoſe *Hebrews* who uſed the *Jeruſalem* Paraphraſe) complain'd that their Widows were neglected, and received leſs than the Widows of the *Hebrews*, in the daily Diſtribution of the Church's Money for charitable Uſes.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of this Diſpute?*

A. The Apoſtles deſiring to have the Poor well provided for, and not having Leiſure themſelves perſonally to attend the Care of them, adviſe the Church to chuſe ſeven Perſons out of the Number of the Diſciples (probably, the One hundred and twenty, mention'd Chap i.) to be Stewards and Diſpenſers of the publick Stock, to diſtribute the ſame equitably and impartially, to all proper Objects of Charity, without Exception.

Hence learn, that a general and tender Regard to the Neceſſities of the Poor, is a Duty well becoming the Miniſters and Embaſſadors of *God*. *God*'s Poor are his Treaſure, his Jewels, the Signet upon his Arm; and ſince they are ſo dear to *God*, they are certainly intitled to the Care of his Miniſters.

It deſerves our ſpecial Notice, how reſolute the Apoſtles were in performing their Duty both to *God* and their People, how zealous and aſſiduous, as became Perſons of their holy Character and Profeſſion; *We will give ourſelves continually unto Prayer, and to the Miniſtry of the Word.* A ſuitable Example to thoſe, who are called by *God* to the Miniſtry of his Word; and hence alſo appears, that a Miniſter's giving himſelf unto Prayer, is as much, if not more his Duty, than giving himſelf to the preaching of the Word; to the one he muſt apply himſelf as the End, to the other as the Means; is is *God* that ſets the Word on work, but it is Prayer that ſets *God* on work; that Miniſter who is not fervent in Prayer, cannot expect Succeſs in Preaching. Pray for us, ſays the Apoſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, that the Word may run and be glorified; he that begged Prayer of others, did not neglect it himſelf, but prayed without ceaſing.

Q. *What Method did the Apoſtles take to remove this Murmuring from among the Brethren?*

A. In order to remove the fore-mentioned Murmuring at the Inequality of the Poor's Relief, ſeven Deacons are choſen to aſſiſt the Apoſtles, and diſpoſe of that Treaſure which had been laid at the Apoſtles Feet, with greater Equality to all fit Objects of Charity, without Exception.

Here note the Qualification of the Perſons choſen; *Men full of the Holy Ghoſt*; that is, Perſons extraordinarily aſſiſted by the Spirit, to perform the Dutſes required of them; for the Office of a Deacon was, beſides the taking Care of the Poor, to preach the Goſpel, and to baptize; as it appears *Philip* did. Had it been only to take Care of the Poor, they needed not to have been ſo inquiſitive in finding out Men full of the Holy Ghoſt for that Service.

Obſerve, the Scripture mentions a threefold Fulneſs of the Holy Ghoſt, according to a threefold Capacity of the Receivers. There is the Plenitude of Sufficiency, the Fulneſs of a Veſſel, this very Believer hath; the Plenitude of Abundance, the Fulneſs of a Stream, this the Apoſtles had when extraordinary inſpired; and filled with the Spirit at the firſt Plantation of the Goſpel; and there is the Plenitude of Super-abundance, the Fulneſs of the Fountain, and this *Chriſt* had, *Col.* i. 19. *It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell.*

Q. *In what Manner were theſe Deacons choſen into their Office?*

A. It was by Prayer and Impoſition of Hands; *They prayed and laid Hands on them.* This Rite of Laying on of Hands was antiently uſed on a threefold Occaſion in the *Jewiſh* Church, namely, in their Sacrifices, *Exod.* xxix. 15; in their Bleſſing, *Gen.* xlviii. 14; and in their Deſignation unto a Charge or Office, *Numb.* xxvii. 18. Thus *Moſes* laid his Hands on *Joſhua*; and it was from hence it was derived and brought into the Goſpel-Church; when Miniſters were ordained by the Apoſtles in the primitive Times, they laid their Hands on them, 1 Tim. v. 25.

Q. *What is next to be conſidered?*

A. Note farther, the mighty Succeſs of the Goſpel, notwithſtanding all the violent Oppoſition it met with; *The Word of God*, that is, the Doctrine and Goſpel *increaſed, the Number of Believers multiplied*; yea, ſome even of the Prieſts themſelves, though formerly bitter Enemies to *Chriſt*, now embraced the Faith, and were joined to the Church; great is Truth, eſpecially the Spirit of Truth, and will prevail. Naked Truth is too hard for armed Error. Truth has the Strength of God in it, and therefore human Power can never prevail againſt it. *So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed.*

Q. *We come now to the Story of St.* Stephen; *pray what was his Character?*

A. He was a Man full of the Grace of God, full of Faith, of Power to work Miracles, mighty in Word and Deed; able to do all Things, and to ſuffer all Things through that *Chriſt* who ſtrengthened him.

But the more eminent the Gifts and Graces of this great and good Man were, the greater Oppoſition he met with in the Way of his Duty. He is firſt encountered by Diſputation with the Heads of five Colleges in *Jeruſalem*, namely, *Libertines*, *Cyrenians*, *Alexandrians*, *Cilicians*, and *Aſiaticks*. Behold here an admirable Act kept, wherein St. *Stephen* was the Reſpondent, againſt whom Opponents appeared from all Parts of the known World; but all too few to reſiſt the Wiſdom and Spirit by which he ſpake. He aſſerted the Truth ſo convincingly, that all his Oppoſites had no Power to oppoſe him. See here how faithful *Chriſt* was in fulfilling his Promiſe, *Luke* xxi. 15. *I will give you a Mouth and Wiſdom which all your Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay or oppoſe.*

Q. *In Anſwer to ſuch powerful Reaſoning, what did his Adverſaries reply?*

A. His Adverſaries being baffled in their Diſputes, they burn with Revenge; they hire Men to accuſe him falſely, that they might take away his Life. The beſt Arguments of a baffled Adverſary are ever found to be Craft and Cruelty; it has been an old Practice of the Devil, to ſwear innocent Men out of their Lives. And therefore it is next to a Miracle, that no greater Number of innocent Perſons have been murder'd in the World, by Perjury and falſe Accuſation, when ſo many Thouſands hate them, who make no Conſcience of falſe Oaths.

Q. *Of what Crimes did theſe Perſecutors of St.* Stephen *accuſe him?*

A. The Charge and Accuſation brought againſt *Stephen* was, that he ſpoke diſhonourably of the *Jewiſh* Religion, that he was continually foretelling Deſtruction to the Temple, and threatning a Change of the *Moſaic* Rites. It is very probable he told them, that the Shadows and Ceremonies were to vaniſh now, ſince the Subſtance was come; and that the *Moſaic* Rites were to give Place, that a more excellent and ſpiritual Worſhip might ſucceed. For as God was worſhipped aright four hundred Years before either Tabernacle or Temple was built, or the *Jewiſh* Rites inſtituted; ſo he might again be truly worſhipped after they were aboliſhed.

Q. *Did Almighty God, on this Occaſion, give any Teſtimonial of the Innocence of his Servant* Stephen?

A. To convince his Accuſers that he had done *Moſes* no Wrong; God makes his Face to ſhine now as *Moſes*'s Face ſhone of old, and gave him an angelical Countenance, in which appeared an extraordinary Luſtre, or Radiance; not that an Angel has a Face, or ſhines viſibly; but it intimates that amazing Brightneſs of Beauty inſtamp'd on the Face of *Stephen*. He now began to border on Heaven, and had received ſome Beams of Glory approaching. It pleaſes God, ſometimes, to give his Children and Servants ſome Prelibations and Foretaſtes of Heaven before they arrive there, eſpecially holy Martyrs and Confeſſors, who love not their Lives unto Death; God bears an honourable Reſpect to them that bear Witneſs to his Name and Truth, and as they ſhall ſhine forth in the Kingdom of their Father, ſo God will, ſometimes, put a Luſtre upon their Faces here. *All in the Council ſaw St.* Stephen's *Face, as it had been the Face of an Angel.*

Chap. VII.

St. Stephen's *Defence; in which he ſhews the Dealings of God with* Abraham *and his Seed; the Occaſion of* Iſrael's *going into* Egypt; *their cruel Uſage there; the Manner of their Delivery from thence, and Progreſs through the Wilderneſs; the Tabernacle ſet up, which remained till* Solomon *built the Temple.* St. Stephen *farther declares their repeated Obſtinacy in reſiſting the Holy Ghoſt; at the hearing of which they are enraged, and ſtone him to Death; he recommends his Soul to* Jeſus; *kneels down, prays for them, and falls aſleep.*

Q. THIS *Chapter contains St.* Stephen's *Defence: What Obſervations do you make upon it?*

A. As this Chapter is chiefly hiſtorical, we ſhall give the Senſe and Explanation of it in Dr. *Hammond*'s Paraphraſe upon it; thus,

And the chief Prieſt asked him, whether this whereof he was accuſed, *Chap.* vi. 14. of foretelling the Deſtruction of this People, and Religion of the *Jews*, were true or no? He, fitting his Speech to the Point in Hand (that is, to prove the approaching Deſtruction of the Temple, by ſhewing the little Merit, and great Provocations of that People, and the little Reaſon why they ſhould be preferred before other Nations, the free Choice, and thereupon free Promiſe of God, being the only Ground of all the Mercy that befel them) he ſaid, I beſeech you to give Audience; the one eternal God of Heaven and Earth appeared, and ſpake to our Father *Abraham*, whilſt he was in *Meſopotamia* (as that, ſee *Judith* v. 3. in a wider Notion contains that whole Region on the other ſide of *Euphrates* from *Canaan*, Ver. 2. *Syria*, *Chaldea*, *Meſopotamia*, and *Babylonia*) that is, whilſt he was in the Place of his Birth, *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, Gen. xv. 7. and xi. 31. before the Time that his Father *Terah*, and he dwelt in *Haran*, *Gen.* xi. 31. where in the Way from *Ur* to *Canaan*, they ſtayed ſome Years, till *Terah*'s Death, *Ver.* 32.

And when he appeared, he commanded him, ſaying, The Country where thou art, is over-run with all Villainy, and therefore that thou may'ſt keep thyſelf free from their Idolatries, and other Vices accompanying them, I command thee to forſake this Place, and thy Father's Houſe, *Gen.* xii. 1. and remove into another Land which I ſhall appoint, and direct to thee, *viz.* the Land of *Canaan*, which though now poſſeſſed by others, yet I will give unto thee, and to thy Seed entirely, *Gen.* xiii. 14. and by thy Readineſs to take this Journey on this Command, I ſhall diſcern thy Obedience to me.

Then in Obedience to this Command, he went out of that Country of his, (and his Father *Terah* with him, as far as *Haran*, *Gen.* xi. 31.) and after he had dwelt in *Haran* ſome Years, according to God's Command, he removed into *Canaan*, Gen. xii. 5.

And there he pitched his Tent, and built an Altar, v. 7, 8. (but was ſoon fain to remove into *Egypt*, Ver. 10. and there ſojourn) having received a Promiſe of God, that he would give him the whole Land of *Canaan*, Chap. xii. 7. for him and his Seed to poſſeſs, when as yet he had no Child, nor likelihood to have any, nor any Kind of Eſtate in the Land, but was a Stranger, or Sojourner there, *Gen.* xviii. 18. and xx. 1. and xxi. 34. and xxiii. 4.

And *Gen.* xv. 13. God ſpake to him again concerning this Matter, that before this Promiſe ſhould be performed to him, his Poſterity ſhould firſt ſojourn in *Canaan*, and then go down to ſojourn in *Egypt*, and there ſhould ſuffer, and be for ſome Time oppreſſed, like Slaves, till the End of four hundred Years from the Time of the Birth of *Iſaac* (not from the Time of going into *Egypt*) until the Time that the Iniquity of the ſeven Nations, all included there (as *Amos* ii. 9. 10.) under the general Name of the *Amorites*, which inhabited this promiſed Land, ſhould be filled up, and ſo they fit for God in Juſtice to deſtroy them, and give away their Land from them, *Gen.* xv. 10.

And when in the fourth Generation, *Gen.* xv. 16. after *Jacob*, *Moſes* and *Aaron* brought them out, being the Sons of *Amram*, the Son of *Cohath*, the Son of *Levi*, one of *Jacob*'s Sons that went down with him into *Egypt*, when the Time comes of bringing them out of their *Egyptian* Slavery, and giving them this Land, I will, ſaith God, *Gen.* xv. 14. lay heavy Puniſhments on the *Egyptians*, and by that Means, make them releaſe thy Poſterity, and ſo ſhall they come and poſſeſs this Land and ſerve me in it.

And God made a Covenant with him, and appointed Circumciſion as a Seal of it; and accordingly *Abraham*, when *Iſaac* was born, circumciſed him the eighth Day; and *Iſaac* begat and circumciſed *Jacob*, and *Jacob* his twelve Sons, the Heads of the twelve Tribes, of which that People conſiſted.

And thoſe Sons of *Jacob* were much diſpleaſed with one of their Brethren, namely, *Joſeph*, and ſold him into *Egypt*; but when he was there, God protected, and provided for, and advanced him miraculouſly.

And when he was caſt into Priſon there, God brought him out; and at the ſame Time brought him into Favour and Eſtimation for deep Wiſdom with *Pharaoh* the King of *Egypt*; and he entruſted the Affairs of his whole Houſhould, yea, and the whole Kingdom to his Management.

At this Time of *Joſeph*'s Power with *Pharaoh*, there came a terrible Famine upon *Egypt*, and *Canaan*, for ſeven Years Space, and our Father *Jacob* and his Children being then in *Canaan*, were like to have periſhed for want of Food.

And *Jacob* underſtanding, that, though the Famine was as great at preſent in *Egypt* as in *Canaan*, yet there was a Magazine of Corn reſerved from the former Year's Plenty, and ſo there was now ſufficient for themſelves and to ſell to others, ſent his Sons twice into *Egypt* to buy Corn. And tho' the firſt Time *Joſeph* dealt a little harſhly with them, yet the ſecond Time he made himſelf known to their Brother, aud made it known alſo to *Pharaoh*.

And by *Pharaoh*'s Aappointment, *Joſeph* ſent for his Father and Brethren, and their Wives and Children, who, reckoning in ſome of their Children born in *Egypt*, together with *Joſeph* and his Sons, and Son's Sons, made up ſeventy five Perſons. Accordingly *Jacob* went down to him with his whole Family; and he and all his Sons died there.

And *Joſeph*, and ſome (ſay the Antients) of his Brethren, being firſt buried in *Egypt*, were after, at the *Iſraelites* going out, removed to *Sichem*, *Joſ.* xxiv. 32. and buried in the Field bought by *Jacob* of the Children of *Hamor*; and *Jabob* himſelf never buried in *Egypt*; but by his Sons carried, and buried, *Gen.* l. 13. in the Field of *Machpelah*, bought by *Abraham* of *Ephron* Son of *Zoar*, Gen. xxiii. or of the Sons of *Heth*, Gen. xlix. and 32. and ſo, ſaith *Joſephus*, ſome of his Sons alſo.

And when the four hundred Years began to be expired, after which the Performance of the Promiſe to *Abraham*'s Seed; of giving them the Land of *Canaan*, was to commence, the People grew to a great Number, and another King came to reign in *Egypt*, that forgat the Merits of *Joſeph*, he therefore did all he could to keep the *Iſraelites* from flouriſhing or increaſing, and among other Things, commanded all their male Children to be put to Death, *Exod.* i.

At this Point of Time *Moſes* was born, and being a very beautiful Child be was firſt kept cloſe in his Father's Houſe three Months, *Exod.* ii. but when that could no longer be done, he was put in a Cradle of Bull-ruſhes by a River's Brink; and being there left and expoſed, the Providence of God preſerved him. For it happened that *Pharaoh's* *raoh's* Daughter found him there, and took him, and put him him to Nurſe to his own Mother, *Exod.* ii. 9. and ſo afterwards educated and brought him up as her own Son. By which Means he was inſtructed in all the Learning of the *Egyptians*, in Mathematicks, Phyſick, &c. and was thereby a Perſon of great Abilities above other Men, both for ſpeaking (*viz.* in reſpect of Eloquence and Power of Speech, though for the Manner of Utterance he had ſome ſtammering in his Speech) and alſo for Management of Buſineſs, very able both to give Counſel, and to act any great Affair.

And when he was forty Years old, God having ſome Way revealed unto him his Purpoſe of delivering the *Iſraelites* out of their Slavery by his Hands, and making him their Leader and Inſtrument of his Vengeance on their Oppreſſors the *Egyptians*, therefore he reſolved to viſit them, and ſee how it was with them. And ſeeing an *Egyptian* do Injury to an *Iſraelite*, he took the *Iſraelite*'s Part againſt him, and in Defence of the *Iſraelite* killed the *Egyptian*.

This he did as an Act of that Office, to which God had deſigned him, that of a Saviour or Deliverer of his Country-men; and altho' he had not yet received his Commiſſion to that Office, but only ſome Notice of God's Deſignation, yet thinking that the *Iſraelites* did alſo know that he was thus deſigned, he thought fit to do this (which lawfully he might, in the Defence of an innocent Perſon's Life againſt an unjuſt Aſſault or Violence, which could not be averted but by this Means) *viz.* in Defence of the one to kill the other, as a firſt Eſſay or Exerciſe of that Office. But in this he was miſtaken, for the *Iſraelites* knew nothing of his Purpoſe of God to employ him, and from this Act of his had not Sagacity to diſcern it.

The next Day he interpoſed himſelf as a Pacifier or Compoſer of Controverſies among them, to ſee how that would be accepted by them, whether they would be likely to receive him as Judge, to go in and out before them, which was another Part of the Office to which he was deſigned.

But *Moſes* ſeeing himſelf repulſed, and on the other Side fearing that what he had done already, might, by being known, bring Hazard on him, (as it did, *Exod.* ii. 15. when *Pharaoh* heard of it, he ſought to kill him) he fled from thence to *Midian*, and there ſojourned with *Revel*, Exod. ii. 18. or, which is all one, with *Jethro*, Exod. iii. 1. the Prieſt or Prince of *Midian*, Exod. ii. 16. and he kept his Sheep, and married his Daughter *Zipporah*, by whom he had two Children, *Gerſhom*, ſo named from his being a Stranger or Sojourner there; and *Eleazer*, from God's helping him, or delivering him from the Hand of *Pharaoh* that ſought his Life, *Exod.* viii. 2, 3, 4.

And at the End of a ſecond Part of three of his Life, namely, of a ſecond Forty Years, which was alſo the Period of the four Hundred Years prefix'd, *Verſe* 6, as *Moſes* was feeding his Sheep about *Horeb*, or *Sinai*, that Mount after ſo famous for God's delivering the Law out of it, and therefore call'd the flaming Mountain of God, *Exod.* iii. 2. He ſaw a Flame of Fire in a Buſh, but the Buſh was not hurt, nor conſumed by it, which was the appearing of an Angel, according as it was uſual for Angels to appear.

And this Voice of God, by an Angel ſpeaking, (and, perhaps, as it was uſual, Thunder join'd with it) was ſo terrible to him, and the Flame that appeared in the Buſh ſo glorious and illuſtrious, that he durſt not look upon it, but hid his Face, *Exod.* iii. 6.

This Appearance of an Angel, is an Argument and Evidence of God's peculiar Preſence, from which any Place is call'd holy; and therefore in Reverence to ſuch a Preſence, put off thy Shoes, *&c.*

Now is the Time come, wherein I will certainly viſit and relieve that People of mine, the Children of *Abraham*, which according to what I foretold him, Ver. 6. have been uſed like Slaves in *Egypt* a long time; and to this Purpoſe now I have ſent down my Angel, the only way of my peculiar Preſence in any one Place, that I may commune with thee, and ſend thee on this Meſſage, as my Commiſſioner, to bring them out thence. And ſo that *Moſes*, whom they would not receive to avenge their Injuries, or compoſe their Quarrels, Ver. 27, 28. was now ſent by God to lead them, and bring them out of *Egypt*; and to this End, an Angel was ſent to talk with him, and give him his Commiſſion, which was done in a glorious Manner, by a Flame in (but not conſuming) the Buſh.

And at laſt, after working many terrible Prodigies, firſt in *Egypt*, then, at their Departure in the Red-Sea, he reſcued them out of *Pharaoh's* Hands; and after Forty Years ſpent in the Wilderneſs, to puniſh their Murmuring, and to ſhew forth more of God's Power and Miracles, in ſuſtaining them there, they were at laſt brought by *Joſhua* into *Canaan*.

Now what was this *Moſes* all this while, but a Prophet foretelling the Purpoſe of God to ſend another great Prophet to you in theſe latter Days, the Meſſias, who (tho' he were God from Heaven, yet) ſhould here be born in an ordinary Condition, of a Daughter of *Abraham*, and warning you to be ſure to receive and entertain him when he ſhould come, aſſuring you, that if you hear not (receive not) him, you ſhall (which was the Point in Hand, which *Stephen* was all this while demonſtrating, in Anſwer to what was laid to his Charge, Chap. vi. 14.) be utterly deſtroyed. *Acts* iii. 32.

This *Moſes* afterward, when the People were encamped, in the Wilderneſs, was called up to Mount *Sinai*, where an Angel ſpake to him and the *Iſraelites*, and delivered the law to them.

And after all theſe Prodigies and Miracles uſed by God to give him Authority among them, the *Iſraelites* murmured, and rebelled againſt him ſtill, and had more Mind to be in *Egypt* again, than under his Government, and to that Purpoſe made them Pictures of the *Egyptians* Gods to go before and lead them, as *Moſes* did, namely, a Calf, Verſe 41. only upon Pretence that *Moſes* had forſaken them, and was gone they knew not whither, when indeed he was only called by God unto the Mount, to receive Commandments to give unto them. And when they had made this Calf, they very ſolemnly worſhipped it, and by Sacrifices and Feſtivals celebrated that Idol (which they themſelves made) in the ſame Manner, as God himſelf is wont to be worſhipped.

This provoked God to forſake them, to leave them to themſelves, to permit them to follow their own Hearts Deſires in all the Madneſs they led them to, and ſo by not reſtraining, to deliver them up to worſhip the Stars of Heaven, inſtead of God, upon which it is that God expoſtulates with them, *Amos* v. 25. *Were the Sacrifices which you offered up in the Wilderneſs all theſe forty Years, offered to me, O ye Houſe of* Iſrael?

Nay, as the groſſeſt Idolatry, ye ſet up a Chaplet or Shrine with an Image in it, and that Image the Image of one of the *Egyptian* Kings, under the Title of *Mars*; and again the Picture of *Saturn*, another Planet denoting another *Egyptian* God: And theſe Images have been made by you on Purpoſe to be worſhipped by you. Which Idolatry, together with your conſequent Sins, hath brought that Captivity upon you, *Amos* v. 26.

Theſe Fathers of ours in the Wilderneſs had the Tabernacle of the Teſtimony, (becauſe of the Tables of the law put there, which were the Teſtimonies and Evidences of God's Will, how he would be ſerved) or elſe the Tabernacle where God promiſed to meet them, the Place where he would record his Name, *Exod.* xx. 24. where they were to commemorate his Name to them, and where he would anſwer their Prayers, beſtow Bleſſings on them; and this built exactly according to the Pattern ſhewed to *Moſes* by God. This their Succeſſors under *Joſhua* brought into *Canaan* with them, and ſo it continued till *David*'s Time; who having received ſpecial Favour from God, deſired earneſtly to build a ſtanding Temple for his Service. But this Temple was not thought fit to be built by him, becauſe, tho' he was a very excellent Perſon, yet he had had great Wars, and ſhed much Blood, 1 *Chron.* xxii. 8. and xxviii. 3. in which reſpect God would not permit him to have this Honour of building the Temple, a Place deſtin'd to all Peaceableneſs, Purity and Holineſs; this, therefore, was reſerved for *Solomon*, who accordingly built it in a ſumptuous Manner.

But ſurely God doth not ſo dwell in this Temple (who hath the whole World for his Palace) as that he ſhould be bound to preſerve this for ever from being deſtroy'd, when you have by thus crucifying his Son, provoked his Vengeance againſt you, (and this brings home *Stephen*'s Diſcourſe in this Chapter to the Point which he had in Hand, Chap. vi. 14. and continue in the Rebellions of your Fathers: For ſure, if *David*'s Blood-guiltineſs made him uncapable of building it, yours will render you uncapable of having it continued to you.

For as your Fathers perſecuted and ſlew all the old Prophets who foretold the coming of the Meſſias; ſo ye, now he is actually come, have betrayed and murthered him. A Sin ſet out and heightened with the greateſt Aggravations imaginable, whether we conſider the Perſon thus uſed by you, or you that uſed him: He the holieſt Perſon in the World, that came to be your Saviour; and you the People of God, the very Men for whoſe Sakes the Law was delivered by God to Hoſts of Angels, and by them delivered to you, and yet you have not obeyed it, nor embraced him who came to perfect that Law, but abſolutely rebelled againſt all.

This whole Sermon, but eſpecially the Cloſe of it, foretelling their Deſtruction for their bloody Sins, wounded them deep, but inſtead of producing Contrition, exaſperated them the more, and put them into an horrible Rage againſt *Stephen*, and that inflamed their Zeal to ſet upon him. But he full of Courage looked up, far above all Fears of their Fury, and doing ſo, he ſaw an Appearance of Angels about God, and Jeſus Godman ſtanding (or in a Poſture of Readineſs to aſſiſt and help) cloſe by, or at the Right-hand of God.

And he proclaimed his Viſion, ſaying, *Behold, I ſee the Heaven opened, &c.* And they dealt with him by the Judgment of Zeal, uſed among the *Jews* againſt thoſe that departed from the *Jewiſh* and ſet up any new Worſhip; and firſt caſt him out of the Gates of the City, then ſtoned him; and they that brought Evidence againſt him, Ch. vi. 13. and were therefore by Law to throw the firſt Stone at him, and therefore called Executioners, Chap. xxii. 2. put off their Cloaths to fit themſelves for their Work; and a young Man called *Saul*, undertook to look to their Cloaths, who conſequently had a Hand in the ſtoning of him, Chap. viii. 1.

And all the Time that they caſt Stones, he continued in Prayer to God, and at laſt concluded in theſe Word, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*, and then gave up the Ghoſt.

The ſame learned Author, from whom we have taken the foregoing Paraphraſe, has the following Remarks on the Words *Moloch* and *Remphan*, mentioned Ver. 3. *Moloch*, he ſays, is originally in the *Hebrew*, a King. And ſo here it denotes ſome Deified King of the *Egyptians*; that is, an Idol, or falſe God, worſhipped and placed among the Stars; and accordingly an old *Egyptian* Alphabet, that ſets down the Names of the Planets, hath for *Mars*, *Moloch*. The Tabernacle of *Moloch* muſt be ſome little Cabinet, wherein the Image of this falſe God was kept, ſuch as the ſilver Chapels of *Diana*.

Remphan. *Diodorus Siculus* mentions *Remphis* Son of *Cephna* as King of *Egypt*, about the Time that *Jacob* went down thither; and ſaith of him that he gathered an infinite Maſs of Wealth, and left behind him at his Death Four Millions of Talents; which makes it probable, that he was that Prince, who in the Famine, by *Joſeph*'s Advice, got all the Wealth of *Egypt* and the Neighbour-Countries. This Perſon was afterwards worſhipped as a God for having preſerved *Egypt*, and accordingly placed among the Stars, and ſo the Image of one of the Planets, here called a Star, is ſet to ſignify him. This Star, it ſeems, was *Saturn*, according to the *Egyptian* Alphabet. Of this Perſon, that Tradition in *Suidas* is very unintelligible, where, of *Apis*, the *Egyptian* God, it is ſaid, that he was *a certain rich Man, to whom at his Death they erected a Temple, in which an Ox was fed, as being the Hieroglyphick of an Husbandman*. By which alſo it appears, that this was that Calf or Bullock was worſhipped by the *Iſraelites*; *Saturn* being among the *Gentiles* Preſident of Husbandry, and therefore ſometimes worſhipped in the Shape of that Beaſt (under the Name of *Apis*) as being the chief Inſtrument in ploughing the Ground; but withal faſtened among the Stars in Heaven, and the Image of him here called a Star, or, as it ſeems to be beſt render'd, *Amos* v. 26. *the Star Images of your God, &c.* referring to both the Images precedent (to which alſo the Figures in the Plural, that follow, do belong.) For that *Chiun*, which is there in *Amos* put inſtead of *Remphis*, or *Cevan*, or *Caivan*, was amongſt the *Perſians* and *Arabians* another Name of their *Saturn*, as has been obſerved by others. Now that they are here ſaid for this Sin to be carried into *Baby-*

lon, is agreeable with that Notion which the *Jews* generally had, who were wont to ſay, that in every Plague and Captivity that befel them, there was an Ounce of the Calf, God continuing to puniſh this Sin in all their Poſterity, that continued to provoke him with the like.

CHAP. VIII.

The Church at Jeruſalem *being perſecuted, is ſcattered abroad.* Stephen *is buried with great Lamentation.* Saul *troubles and impriſons ſome of the Church.* Philip *preaches at* Samaria, *and works Miracles, to the Joy of the People.* Simon, *the Sorcerer, believes, and, with others, is baptized; they receive the Holy Ghoſt, by the Impoſition of the Hands of the Apoſtles.* Simon *offers Money to have the like Power; but is reproved by* Peter. *The Apoſtles returning to* Jeruſalem, *preach the Goſpel to the* Samaritans. Philip, *in his Way to* Gaza, *meets an Eunuch of* Æthiopia *reading the Prophecy of* Iſaiah, *and preaches* Jeſus *to him; he is baptiz'd;* Philip *is ſeparated from him by an Angel, and is found at* Azotus.

Q. HOW *did* Saul *conſent to the Death of St.* Stephen, *as is ſaid, Ver.* 1?

A. At the Martyrdom of St. *Stephen*, recorded in the Cloſe of the laſt Chapter, we find *Saul* very officiouſly holding the Cloaths of the Executioners; in this we ſhall find him very active in perſecuting the Church. In the firſt Verſe it's ſaid, Saul *was conſenting to his Death.* It's true, he did not throw one Stone at the holy Martyr's Head, but his Will concurr'd in that bloody Act; and this denominated him guilty. In all moral Actions, God values the Will for the Deed, and reckons that Man an Actor, that is an Applauder.

Q. *Were the Enemies of the Church ſatisfied with the Death of* Stephen; *or did they proceed to other Violences?*

A. Stephen's Blood, inſtead of quenching, inflam'd the Cruelty of the Church's Adverſaries; a bitter Perſecution immediately aroſe at *Jeruſalem*, and the Multitudes of Believers fled. But this ſcattering Perſecution at *Jeruſalem*, God over-ruled to the farther Propagation of the Goſpel. But tho' the Believers were ſcatter'd, yet the Apoſtles continued in the City. They ſtay in the midſt of the fiery Furnace of Perſecution, to comfort and cheriſh the Church in that ſad and doleful Day, maugre the Malice of angry Men, and enraged Devils; and thoſe who were thus diſperſed, carried the Light of the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*. Thus out of the Darkneſs of Perſecution, God brings forth the Light of the Goſpel, providing at once for the Safety of ſome by their Flight, and for the calling home of others by their Diſperſion.

Q. *What became of the Body of St.* Stephen *after his Death?*

A. Though St. *Stephen* was ſtoned to Death by his bloody Perſecutors, yet are they not ſo inhuman as to deny him Burial; it is a Mercy to have a Grave, and a decent Burial is a Bleſſing. The Body is the Garment of the Soul; we lay up this Garment in the Wardrobe of the Grave, with Aſſurance that we ſhall put it on again (when made ſpiritual and incorruptible) in the Morning of the Reſurrection, and wear it to all Eternity.

The Perſon who perform'd this laſt Office to the bruiſed Remains of this holy Martyr, were *devout Men*, religious, eminent for Piety, and holy Courage alſo. A noble Inſtance of a generous and Chriſtian Reſolution, that they durſt among ſuch a Multitude of furious and bloody Zealots, own their Eſteem of, and pay their laſt Reſpects to their departed Brother. And a doleful Funeral this was, *they made great Lamentation over him*; and Reaſon enough they had, conſidering the great Loſs the Church ſuſtain'd by his Death at that Time.

Q. *Next follows an Account of the cruel Zeal of* Saul, *who is ſaid* to have made Havock of the Church: *In what Manner did he exerciſe his Cruelties?*

A. Behold the fiery Zeal of this furious Perſecutor; he ſpares neither Age nor Sex, Men nor Women, Young nor Old, but indiſcriminately hales all to Priſon. Women in all Ages have generally been exempted from the Inſults of Tyranny, but not always freed from the Perſecutor's Fury: And bleſs'd be God for that maſculine Courage and Conſtancy, which the feebler Sex have ſhewn, when they have been called to bear their Teſtimony to *Chriſt*: With what Wiſdom and Courage have they anſwer'd their Examiners, convicted their Accuſers, confuted their Oppoſers, kiſſing the Stake, hugging the Faggots, and embracing the Flame? Thus God can help the weak Things of the World to confound the ſtrong; and teach the Fooliſh to confute the Wiſe.

Q. *What was the Conſequence of this terrible Perſecution?*

A. The ſevere Perſecution at *Jeruſalem* diſperſed the whole Body of the Church, and ſcatter'd both Members and Teachers, except the Apoſtles. Some went to *Damaſcus*, ſome to *Samaria*, others to *Phenice*, *Cyprus*, and *Antioch*; yet, this, which was intended for the utter Deſtruction of the Church, had a very different Event, and ſucceeded to the great Increaſe of it. 'Tis a great and certain Truth, that the holy God would ſuffer no Sort of Evil to be, did he not know how to bring ſome excellent Good out of that Evil.

Amongſt thoſe who fled to *Samaria*, *Philip* was one; not *Philip* the Apoſtle (for all of them remain'd at *Jeruſalem*) but the Deacon, who was the ſecond in Order after *Stephen*, amongſt the ſeven Deacons. The Doctrines he preach'd here, were *Chriſt*, his Incarnation, holy Life and Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, with Remiſſion of Sins through Faith in his Name. And great was his Succeſs; the People, with one Accord, embrace the Goſpel, *giving heed to the Things which he ſpake.* The Preſence of the Holy Spirit accompanying his Miniſtry, united his Hearers Hearts as well as their Ears, to attend diligently to the Doctrine of *Chriſt* delivered to them.

The external Reaſon of *Philip*'s great Succeſs in his Miniſtry at *Samaria*, was, the Miracles he wrought. Theſe were undeniable Evidences of the Truth of what he ſpake, and by which he ſhew'd God's Authority for what he did and ſaid. The Miracles which *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles wrought, were Heaven's Broad Seal to confirm the Truth of what they taught.

Obſerve what Joy and Rejoicing there was among the *Samaritans*, at their receiving and entertaining the Goſpel; *there was great Joy in the City*; not only for the Cures wrought on their Bodies, but for the Doctrine of Reconciliation and Salvation preached to their Souls. As the Goſpel is in itſelf a Meſſage of Joy and glad Tidings, ſo it fills that Soul with Joy unſpeakable, that cordially receives and entertains it. Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, is one of the ſweet Effects of the Kingdom of God; that is, the Goſpel, *Rom.* xiv. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

Q. *We have next an Account of* Simon Magus, *or the Sorcerer, one of* Philip's *Auditors: What Character has he in Hiſtory?*

A. Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory informs us of the Hereſies he broach'd, of the Divine Honours he aſſum'd, of the Statues and Images built to him and his Strumpet *Hellen*, who lewdly accompanied with him; of an Altar erected to him with this blaſphemous Inſcription, *To* Simon *the Holy God*; and of his tragical End, by breaking his Neck, when attempting to fly up to Heaven, becauſe the People would no longer be cheated with his Impoſtures here below.

From this Example learn, the greateſt Impoſtors, and vileſt Seducers, have many Followers. The ſilly Multitude is ſoon deluded; *to him they all gave heed, from the leaſt to the greateſt.* Such vile Deceivers will confidently brag, and the credulous Multitude have the Weakneſs to believe, that they are very extraordinary Perſons, and can do wonderful things. *Simon* gave it out himſelf, that he was *ſome great one*; and the People cry him up as the *great Power of God.*

Long had this vile Sorcerer, by God's Permiſſion, and Satan's Power, wrought theſe lying Wonders among the People. Deceivers are not always ſuddenly detected, nor Hypocrites preſently diſcovered; but the Vizard will drop off ſooner or later. But where the true Knowledge of God comes, and the clear Light of the Goſpel ſhines, there groſs Impieties and Impoſtures, there Cheats and Deluſions will be found out, detected and abhorr'd; *when they believed* Philip's *Preaching, they were baptized, both Men and Women.*

Q. *What do you remark upon thoſe laſt Words?*

A. They believed, and then *were baptized*; theſe were adult, or grown Perſons, not Infants, and they were heatheniſh Idolators, Strangers to the Covenant; and therefore muſt believe the Goſpel, and profeſs their Faith in *Chriſt*, before their Baptiſm. Baptiſm is not to be adminiſter'd to any out of the viſible Church, till they profeſs their Faith in *Chriſt*, and Obedience to him.

Q. Simon *alſo believed and was baptiz'd; and yet, we find, he was no ſincere Convert: Wherein then conſiſted his Deficiency?*

A. The Goſpel preached, may have a common Operation upon a Soul, where it never produced inward Sanctification. All that are, by the Goſpel, proſelyted, are not ſavingly converted. All are not good Fiſh that are incloſed in the Goſpel's Net; but ſome Fiſh, ſome Traſh. As there will be Wheat and Tares in the ſame Field, Chaff and Corn in the ſame Floor; ſo will there be ſome Saints and ſome Sinners, in the pureſt Church upon the Earth.

Simon, on the bare Profeſſion of his Faith, is baptized. By this we are taught, that outward Profeſſion juſtly gains Admiſſion into the *Chriſtian* Congregation, and gives a Perſon Right to external Ordinances. The Church's Judgment, is a Judgment of Charity, not of Certainty; of the outward, not of the inward Man; of the Life, not of the Heart. *Simon's* Faith was no other than temporary, hiſtorical, yea, hypocritical Faith; however, *Philip* baptized him on his making Profeſſion of it.

Q. *How did the Apoſtles at* Jeruſalem *behave, when they heard of* Philip's *Succeſs at* Samaria?

A. They thought proper to ſend down two of the twelve, to confirm the new Converts in the Faith, and to conſtitute a Church there, by their Apoſtolical Authority. The Perſons they ſent, were *Peter* and *John*; which proves, that *Peter* had no Primacy or Superiority over the reſt of the Apoſtles; or, if in this Employment there was any Sign of Supremacy, *John* and *Peter* were equal Sharers in it.

Peter and *John*, on their Arrival at *Samaria, pray'd, and laid their Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.* Where, by the Holy Ghoſt, is not to be underſtood the ſanctifying Graces of the Holy Ghoſt, which the Apoſtles never did, nor could diſpenſe, but the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, the Gifts of Tongues and Prophecy, and a Power to work Miracles.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Simon'i *Motion, in offering Money for the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt?*

A. How infinitely miſtaken was the Wretch, in thinking, that the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt could be purchaſed with Money; or that the Apoſtles had Power to diſpenſe theſe Gifts, when, where, and to whom they pleaſed; or that they could enable others to impart this alſo? From this Deed of *Simon*, the endeavouring to buy ſpiritual Gifts or Offices, is call'd *Simony.*

The Motive that puſh'd *Simon* on purchaſing this Power, doubtleſs, was Covetouſneſs and Vain-Glory. He hoped to make a Penny of this Privilege, and to render himſelf famous among his Followers by this Prerogative. He had never bid ſo freely for the Holy Ghoſt, if he had not expected to receive as freely of many others for the Holy Ghoſt.

But obſerve, with what Scorn and Deteſtation *Peter* rejects this vile Motion of *Simon*; *thy Money periſh with thee.* Our Hearts can never riſe too high in a juſt Indignation againſt Sin, and againſt all Temptation to it; *thou and thy Money periſh together.* St. *Peter* deals very plainly with him; he ſearches him to the Quick, to the Heart, ſounds the Depths of Sin; lays open the Core of his Hypocriſy before his Face, and tells him to his Teeth, *thy Heart is not right in the Sight of God.* All the Obliquity of our Lives proceeds from the Impurity of our Hearts and Nature, as Muddineſs of the Stream from the Foulneſs of the Fountain.

Next, we have the odious Brand fix'd on Sin in general, and Hypocriſy in particular; namely, Bitterneſs and Bondage; 'tis the Gall of Bitterneſs, and the Bond of Iniquity. Sin is an exceeding bitter thing; it provokes God to bitter Anger; it laid *Chriſt* under the bitter Wrath of God, it is bitter to good Men, it coſts them bitter Repentance; and it will be eternally bitter to a wicked and impenitent World.

But not only Bitterneſs, but Bondage attends the Service and Servants of Sin; it is a ſhameful and ignominious, a ſtupifying and ſenſeleſs, a reſtleſs and weariſome, an endleſs and eternal Bondage; and every Soul, before Converſion, is in this deplorable Bondage; and the only Means to be deliver'd from it, is Repentance and Prayer; *Repent of thy*

Wickedneſs and pray to God. As bad as *Simon* was, St. *Peter* does not drive him to deſpair, but directs him to his Duty. Prayer is a Part of natural Worſhip and the Soul's Motion God-ward; therefore to ſay, a wicked Man ſhould not pray, is to ſay, he ſhould not turn to God. But all the Prayers in the World, without a Man's own Prayer to God for Pardon, will be ineffectual; therefore St. *Peter* directs him to perform this Duty himſelf, which he encourages him to do, from a Probability of Forgiveneſs and Acceptance with God.

Q. *What is the next Part of the Hiſtory of this Chapter, and your Obſervations thereupon?*

A. In the next Place is recorded the remarkable Converſion of the Eunuch by the Preaching of *Philip*, who was commanded by an Angel in a Viſion to go to *Gaza*, not the common Road, but through a Deſart. *Philip* knew not whither he was going, but God knew, and wherefore he ſent him.

Philip being on his Journey, was commanded, by the immediate Impulſe of the Spirit, to join himſelf to this Eunuch, who was then reading the Prophet *Eſaias*, as he ſat in his Chariot. The particular Text which God directed the Eunuch to read, was, Iſa. liii. *He was led as a Sheep to the Slaughter, and as a Lamb dumb before the Shearers*, pointing out the Innocence, Meekneſs, and Patience of the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, in and under all his ſatisfactory Sufferings for our Sins, *His Judgment was taken away*; that is, his Right was taken away by the unrighteous Judgment of the *Jewiſh* Sanhedrim, and no Right or Juſtice done him; and who can ſufficiently declare the Wickedneſs of that Generation which cut off ſo innocent a Perſon from the Land of the living? This Text, *Philip* informs the Eunuch, was only applicable to the Meſſias, who was certainly come into the World, and both did and ſuffered all that was propheſied of him.

The Eunuch being thus inſtructed by *Philip*, deſires to be baptized. This *Philip* grants, on Condition *he believed on* Chriſt *with all his Heart.* When the Eunuch had profeſſed his Faith accordingly, they went down into the Water, and he was baptized.

The Eunuch being baptized, the Spirit of the Lord caught away *Philip*, by the Miniſtry of an Angel, who carried him out of Sight, that the Eunuch might be the more aſſured of the Truth of thoſe Things which were taught him by *Philip*; and that he was a Perſon ſent of God to direct him in the Way to true Happineſs.

The Eunuch went on his Way rejoicing, as well he might, it was the happieſt Journey he ever took, to meet with *Chriſt* and Converſion in his Way, and Heaven and Salvation at his Journey's End. *Philip* was found at *Azotus*, or *Aſhdod*, thirty four Miles from *Gaza*, ſo far had the Miniſtry of Angels carried him, and there ſafely ſet him down.

Chap. IX.

Saul *goes, with Authority, to* Damaſcus, *to perſecute the Diſciples. The Manner of his Converſion. The Lord ſends* Ananias *to him, who heals him of his Blindneſs; is baptized, and preaches* Chriſt. *The Council intending to kill him, he eſcapes to* Jeruſalem; *with ſome Difficulty is received by the Diſciples, and ſent to* Tarſus. *Peter heals* Æneas *a* Paralitic; *he is ſent for to* Joppa, *and raiſes* Tabitha *from the Dead. Many are converted.*

Q. PRAY *what Reflexions occur to you on reading the Hiſtory of St.* Paul's *Converſion, recorded in the firſt Part of this Chapter?*

A. In the Character of *Saul* before his Converſion, we have a lively Image of a bloody Perſecutor; *He breathes out Threatnings and Slaughter againſt the Miniſters of* Chriſt. His very Breath ſmells of Fire; Threatnings and Slaughter, like Lightnings and Thunder, proceed out of his Mouth. An indiſcreet and ungovernable Zeal ſoon degenerates into Fury and Madneſs. *Saul* was now Inquiſitor of heretical Pravity; and away he trots to the High-Prieſt for a Commiſſion to bind Hereticks, who believed on *Chriſt*, and oppoſed the Tradition of the Fathers; and having, as he thought, ſwept *Jeruſalem* of Saints, he reſolved next to ranſack *Damaſcus*, though it was five or ſix Days Journey from *Jeruſalem*: However he ſpurs on to wreak his Malice on the poor Members of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Saul was now on his Journey, which, though moſt maliciouſly propoſed by him, was moſt mercifully diſpoſed by God. Heaven had deſigned him for better Service, and a Work of another Nature; accordingly he is ſtopt in his Way, knocked off his Horſe, a ſudden Beam of Light beyond the Brightneſs of the Sun darts upon him, dazzles him, and he hears a Voice, ſaying, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* That is, me, in my Members. Whatever is done againſt *Chriſtians* for any Thing that *Chriſt* commands them, he takes it as done againſt himſelf. As the Honour of *Chriſt* the Head redounds to the Members, ſo the Sorrows of the Members are reſented by the Head. *Chriſt* was more ſenſible of, and more highly reſented the Sufferings of his Members, than his own.

Behold the wonderful Power of the heart-changing Grace of God! *Saul* cries out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me do?* *Saul* is no longer a Lyon, but a Lamb; the Wolf that hunted before for his Prey, now gently couches like a Sheep; hears and obeys the Voice of *Chriſt* the great Shepherd; and of a Perſecutor of the Church, becomes the great Doctor of the Gentiles. The Tare is become Wheat; the Child of Wrath, a choſen Veſſel; the Prodigy of Nature, the Miracle of Grace. Converſation is a Work of Wonder in all Men, but a Miracle in this Man, extraordinary ſtrange, and inſtantaneouſly ſudden; and therefore is by no Means to be made the Meaſure and common Standard of every Man's Converſation. If the Fruits of our Converſation be viſible, the Certainty of it is unqueſtionable, and the Advantage unſpeakable, altho' we cannot tell the Time when, or the Manner how the Holy Spirit wrought it in us.

How eaſily can God make the fierceſt Perſecutor to quake and tremble; but it is in order to his Raiſing and Rejoicing. Humiliation for Sin, generally goes before a Soul's Acceptance of *Chriſt*, and Subjection to him.

Saul had no ſooner received this ſtrong Repulſe from God, but he immediately enquires into his Duty; *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* It is not, Lord, what wilt thou have me to ſay? but, what wilt thou have me to do? The Anſwer is, *Ariſe, go into the City, and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do.* He was going before to *Da-*

maſcus on the Devil's Errand; now God bids him go; now he had a better Authority than what he received from the High-Prieſt; he went before for the Deſtruction of others; now he goes for his own Inſtruction in order to Salvation.

Q. *How could* Paul's *Companions be ſaid* to hear a Voice, but ſee no Man? *ſince, if their Eyes were open, they muſt ſee* Paul, *who was with them?*

A. What is here ſaid of thoſe that were with *Paul,* that *they heard the Voice,* ſeems directly contrary to what is affirmed, Chap. xxii. 9. *they heard not the Voice.* Dr. *Hammond* takes this Method of reconciling it, *viz.* by ſaying, the former belongs to *Paul's* Voice, the latter to the Voice of him that ſpake to him, there is little Ground in the Text for that Nicety; but on the contrary, the *ſeeing no Man,* which follows in this Place, belongs ſurely not to their not ſeeing of *Paul,* but of him that ſpake to him. The only Way of reconciling the Difficulty is, by obſerving the Notion of the *Hebrew* Word, which ſignifies *Voice* and *Thunder,* and thoſe promiſcuouſly taken one for the other. So *Heb.* xii. 26. *Whoſe Voice ſhook the Earth;* that is, whoſe Thunder and Lightnings, and *Voice of a Trumpet exceeding loud, Exod.* xix. 16. and ſo *Luke* ix. 35. *The Voice out of a Cloud, ſaying,* was the Thunder with the Voice in it, a Revelation from Heaven given in Thunder. So *John* xii. 20. *A Voice from Heaven,* is expreſs'd by the By-ſtanders, *that it thundered,* and *an Angel ſpake to him,* which is explained diſtinctly, *Rev.* iv. 5. where Voice and Thunder are both named: *The ſeven Thunders deliver'd their Voices.* By this the Difficulties will be clear'd: For here the Voice ought to be render'd (according to the Notion of the *Hebrew* Word) Thunder, which was here joined with Lightning, which here ſhone or flaſh'd about him. As for the *Voice of him that ſpake to me,* Ch. xxii. 9. that was the Voice of the Angel ſpeaking out of Heaven, or out of the Cloud: Both which put together, ſignifies no more than this, that St. *Paul's* Companions at that Time ſaw the Light or the Lightning, and heard the Noiſe of the Thunder, (which is the Importance of the Place here) but heard not the articulate Voice that came out of the Thunder; that is, the *Saul, Saul,* &c. the Voice of the Angel ſpeaking to him.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Paul's *loſing his Sight on this Occaſion, and the extraordinary Means by which he recover'd it?*

A. Saul being raiſed from the Ground, and opening his Eyes, finds he has loſt his Sight. As *Saul* was, ſo all Men naturally are, ſpiritually blind, before Regeneration and Converſion: True, he was brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel,* and was a great Proficient in human Learning; but after his Converſion, he counted that Knowledge no better than Blindneſs, *Phil.* iii. 7, 8.

They led him by the Hand into Damaſcus. His Leaders were no doubt his Companions that came with him upon his bloody Deſign from *Jeruſalem.* But *Saul* had a better Leader than theſe, even *Chriſt* himſelf: He led thee by the Hand into the City, in order to compleat thy Converſion.

Three Days *Saul* continued in this Blindneſs; a juſt Time for him to be in Darkneſs, who ſo implacably attempted to blow out the Light of the Goſpel: And perhaps no leſs Time would have been ſufficient, to humble him for his Rage and Madneſs againſt *Chriſt* and his Members. Beſides, ſome imagine, that in theſe three Days of continued Blindneſs, he had that Rapture into the third Heaven, mention'd 2 *Cor.* xii. 2. However, in this Time his Mind was undoubtedly filled with Divine Contemplation; and that glorious Goſpel was taught him in three Days, which he taught to others all his Days after. Thoſe three Days, we may believe, he ſpent in Faſting and Prayer, and extraordinary Humiliation before God, for his former wicked Life, and particularly for his violent Perſecution of the Church of *Chriſt:* He faſted to make him more fervent in Prayer; for Faſting prepares for, and gives Wings to Prayer.

Tho' *Chriſt* converted *Saul* himſelf, yet *Ananias* his Miniſter muſt inſtruct him. Such is the Honour *Chriſt* puts on his Miniſters of the Goſpel, that he ordinarily makes uſe of their Endeavours, both for the Production and Augmentation of Grace in the Hearts of his People.

That *Ananias* might be thoroughly informed, before he went on his Meſſage, the Perſon of *Saul* is deſcribed to him, the Street and Houſe where he lodg'd, and the Action he was employ'd in. *Behold, he prayeth.* But did *Saul* never pray till now? Yes, doubtleſs, when he was a ſtrict *Phariſee,* he prayed after a looſe and cuſtomary Manner; but never ſo ſenſibly and feelingly, ſo ſpiritually and affectionately, as he did after his Converſion.

Ananias having heard of the violent Proceedings of *Saul,* ſhews ſome Reluctancy in going to him; but the Lord graciouſly condeſcends to remove the Stumbling-block out of the Way of his Servant's Obedience; *Go thy Way; for he is a choſen Veſſel unto me,* to convey the divine Treaſure of the Goſpel, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles,* even to the Greateſt and Higheſt amongſt them.

Ananias, tho' no Apoſtle, no Deacon, nor Miniſter, that we read of, but an ordinary and private Chriſtian only, has Power to heal *Saul* of his Blindneſs, and to confer the Holy Ghoſt: If ſo, he had an extraordinary Warrant for this extraordinary Work; for none but the Apoſtles had Power to confer the Holy Ghoſt. No ordinary Perſon ought to undertake the Miniſterial Function, without an extraordinary Call and Commiſſion.

Ananias ſalutes him by the Title of Brother; *Brother* Saul; they were now Brethren by Faith and Profeſſion, owning the ſame God, united to the ſame Saviour, animated by the ſame Spirit, encouraged by the ſame Promiſes, Partakers of the ſame Hope, and Heirs of the ſame Glory.

Q. *How did* Saul *behave himſelf after he had recover'd his Sight?*

A. Saul having received his Sight, *aroſe and was baptized,* thereby liſting himſelf a Soldier under *Chriſt's* exalted Banner, and entering himſelf a Member of that Church, which a little before he had made Havock of. This done, he took Refreſhment in order to ſtrengthen himſelf for the Service of his great Maſter, wherever he ſhould pleaſe to ſend him; and immediately ſets about his Work; changes his Company and Acquaintance, and makes himſelf a Companion of them that feared God.

Saul preſently enters on his miniſterial Office, and preaches *Chriſt* in the Synagogues: He ſtood not to conſult Fleſh and Blood about the Difficulties and Dangers that might attend him; but performs his Duty with ſuch Zeal and Application, as became a Man of his holy Character and Profeſſion; he preached that Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of God, the promiſed and expected Meſſias. The Effect of his Preaching was amazing, that ſo peſtilent a Perſecutor was become a powerful Preacher; others were confounded, and unable to withſtand the Force of his Arguments, by which he proved, that this is the very *Chriſt*.

Q. *Did the* Jews *ſuffer* Paul *without Interruption?*

A. This new-turn'd Zeal of *Saul* ſoon brought on him the Malice and Rage of his Enemies, who finding themſelves confuted by his Arguments, reſolve he ſhall feel the Weight of their Reſentment; and to accompliſh their wicked Purpoſe, ſeek all Opportunities to get him into their Hands; which he being aware of, eſcapes, by the Aſſiſtance of the Brethren, over the City-Wall, and goes to *Jeruſalem*; where, attempting to join himſelf to the Diſciples, they are afraid of him, knowing how bloody a Perſecutor he had been. But *Barnabas* ſoon undeceives them, acquaints them with *Paul's* Converſion, and that now he was a zealous Profeſſor, and Preacher of that Goſpel he had perſecuted. This Teſtimony of *Barnabas* was full and ſatisfactory, both to the Church at *Jeruſalem*, and alſo to *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, who gave him the Right-hand of Fellowſhip, and went with him to the Work.

Here againſt the Enemies of the Goſpel conſpire againſt *Paul's* Life, as they did before at *Damaſcus*, for preaching *Chriſt*, and diſputing with the *Grecians* in Defence of the Goſpel. But why did they rather ſeek to kill *Saul*, than any of the Apoſtles? Becauſe he was formerly one of their Company, of their College, a Perſecutor like themſelves. This enraged them; they look'd not upon him as an Apoſtle, but as an Apoſtate, a Revolter, a Renegado, and as ſuch meditate his Deſtruction Night and Day.

Saul therefore being obliged to depart, the Churches planted by *Philip* and others throughout *Judea*, *Samaria*, add *Galilee*, had much Reſt and Peace, and were greatly edified in Knowledge and Faith; and the Graces and Comforts of the Holy Spirit daily increaſing in them, the Number of Believers daily multiplied.

Chap. X.

Cornelius *is commanded by an Angel to ſend for* Peter, *to inſtruct him.* Peter's *Viſion of Beaſts. He goes with* Cornelius's *Servants to* Ceſarea; *tells the Occaſion of his Coming, and preaches* Chriſt *to* Cornelius *and his Family, who receive the Holy Ghoſt; ſpeak with ſtrange Tongues, and are baptized by him.*

Q. OF *what Religion was* Cornelius *before he ſent for* Peter *to inſtruct him?*

A. This Chapter acquaints us with the firſt Fruits of the *Gentiles* to Chriſtianity, in the Perſon of *Cornelius*, by the preaching of *Peter*. *Cornelius* was a Soldier, and by Religion, a Proſelyte, or converted Gentile, of which there were two Sects; ſome were Proſelytes of the Covenant; that is, ſuch as ſubmitted to Circumciſion and the whole *Moſaical* Pædagogy: Theſe were counted as *Jews*, and freely converſed with as ſuch. Others were called Proſelytes of the Gate: Theſe were not circumciſed, nor did they conform to the *Moſaic* Rites; but were obliged only to obſerve the ſeven Precepts of *Noah*; namely, to worſhip the true God, and not Idols; to abſtain from Blood, from Fornication, from Robbery; to adminiſter Juſtice impartially, and to do as they would be done unto. Such a Proſelyte the *Jews* would not converſe with, but counted unclean, being a Gentile, ſuch an one was this *Cornelius*; but tho' a *Gentile*, a Soldier, a Commiſſion-Officer, yet a pious, charitable, good Man; *He feared God with all his Houſe*, &c.

Nor did this good Man ſeek God in vain: God ſends an Angel firſt to comfort him, then an Apoſtle to inſtruct him. This Viſion made him afraid: Where-ever there is Guilt, there will be Fear upon an extraordinary Appearance of God to us, tho' it be but mediately by an Angel.

But to relieve *Cornelius* from his Apprehenſions, the Angel tells him, that *his Prayers and his Alms are come up for Memorial before God.* God records as well the Prayers, as the Acts of Mercy, which any of his People exerciſe towards his Members.

But tho' God ſent an Angel to *Cornelius*, to acquaint him with his Will, yet the Angel was to direct him to the Apoſtle, who was to inſtruct him in the Faith.

Q. *What is there in* Peter's *Viſion deſerving Remark?*

A. As *Cornelius* had a Viſion from God to encourage him to ſend for *Peter*, ſo the Apoſtle was encourag'd by a Viſion to go to *Cornelius*. This Viſion to *Peter* happen'd at the 6th Hour, or High-Noon, which was one of the three Hours of Prayer; *Peter* was then at Prayer upon the Houſe-top. The *Jewiſh* Houſes being flat-roofed, with Battlements upon them, *Peter* thought it a Place the moſt proper for Prayer, as being private and retired.

Peter, when he had this Viſion, was exceeding hungry; for ſo God order'd it, the better to fit him for this Viſion of dainty Meat. When *Peter* ſaw this Viſion, he was in a divine Rapture or Extacy, *he fell into a Trance*, his Soul was, as it were, abſtracted from his Body, and abſent from it; that is, drawn off from the Perception of all earthly and ſenſible Objects, and enabled unto a more entire Attendance upon ſpiritual and heavenly Matters and Myſteries.

The Viſion itſelf, or what was repreſented to St. *Peter*, was firſt to his Eye, then to his Ear; *He ſaw Heaven opened*, then a great Veſſel deſcending, like a large Sheet, with all Sorts of Meat in it, clean and unclean; and he hears a Voice from God, giving him a Commiſſion (tho' a *Jew*) to feed freely, without Diſtinction, of clean and unclean; ſignifying to him thereby, that he might indifferently converſe with *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, and to preach the Goſpel to one as well as the other.

But obſerve how St. *Peter's* *Jewiſh* Principles ſtartled at this large Commiſſion, looking on the Command as unlawful and impious; *Not ſo, Lord; for I have never eaten any Thing common or unclean:* But mark the divine Correction; *What God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common.* By which God clearly intimated to him, that the Diſtinction of Meats was now taken away, and the Difference between Nation and Nation was now removed by the Death of *Chriſt*, and conſequently, that he might go and preach the Goſpel to *Cornelius*, a *Gentile*, without any Scruple; the Partition-Wall betwixt *Jew* and *Gentile* being now broken down, Thanks be to God, *that the Bleſſing of* Abraham *is come upon us through* Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *In what Manner was* Peter *reſolv'd of his Doubts, concerning the Nature and End of this Viſion?*

A. While *Peter* was meditating upon what he had ſeen and heard, the Holy Spirit reſolves him ſatisfactorily the inward Doubtings and Reaſonings he had in his Mind concerning this Matter; *I have ſent them,* &c. Where note, both the Divinity and Perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt: He that knows the Thoughts, the Doubtings and Reaſonings of Man's Heart, as the Holy Ghoſt here did St. *Peter*'s, is truly and really God; and he that commands and forbids, is really a Perſon. So does the Holy Spirit here; he commands St. *Peter* to go to *Cornelius,* and forbids his doubting of the Lawfulneſs or Succeſs of his Journey: *Go with them, doubting nothing; for I have ſent them.*

The Meſſengers from *Cornelius* being now arrived and admitted, they deliver their Meſſage, which they introduce with the Character of their Maſter *Cornelius,* whom they reported to be *a juſt Man, one that feared God, and one of good Report among all the Nations of the* Jews. It is both the Duty and Commendation of Servants, to give their Maſters due Honour, and their deſerved Character.

Q. Peter *being reſolved of his Doubts, addreſſes himſelf for the Journey; and being arrived, is met by* Cornelius, who falls at his Feet, and worſhips him: *Does not this intimate more than a common Salutation?*

A. This ſeems more than a civil Reverence; it looks as if *Cornelius* took him for an Angel in human Shape, or a Perſon ſent immediately from Heaven to him, and accordingly he proſtrates himſelf before the Apoſtle. But St. *Peter* would by no Means receive any undue Honour from him, aſſuring him that he was but a Man, and God's Meſſenger ſent unto him. Whatever *Peter*'s pretended Succeſſor challenges as his due Reverence and Homage, St. *Peter* himſelf would not ſuffer *Cornelius* to lie at his Feet, much leſs to kiſs them: The Ambaſſador would not run away with the Honour of the Prince that ſent him, but immediately enquires into the Buſineſs for which he was wanted, telling him at the ſame Time, that his being a *Gentile* ſhould be no Obſtruction to a free Converſe with him.

Q. *What was the Converſation that follow'd between* Peter *and* Cornelius?

A. Cornelius then declares at large the Reaſons of his ſending for him, and the Intent of thoſe who were then preſent, namely, to hear all Things which God ſhould command the Apoſtle to ſpeak.

Whereupon *Peter* begins his Sermon, with obſerving, that he had now a plain Evidence that the Partition-Wall was broken down, and that national Prerogatives, or perſonal Excellencies, find no Acceptance with God, who never receives or rejects Men barely for outward Reſpects; but any Man, of what Nation or Family ſoever he be, if he fears God, and works Righteouſneſs, will be accepted by God.

Peter proceeds to inform his Audience of the Antiquity of the Goſpel, or the Doctrine of Reconciliation by *Jeſus Chriſt*; namely, that it was preached to the Patriarchs, and by the Prophets to the antient *Iſraelites*; *The Word which God ſent unto the Children of* Iſrael, *preaching Peace by* Jeſus Chriſt. The Saints of old went to Heaven the ſame Way as we do now; namely, by Faith in the Lamb of God, who was to be ſlain; we by Faith in him as already ſlain.

Obſerve here the dignifying Title given to *Chriſt*; *He is Lord of all.* As God, and equal with the Father, he is ſupreme Lord of the whole Creation, and to whom all Creatures are ſubject. He is Lord of all as Mediator; Lord of all Men, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*; he is Lord of his Church, Lord over Saints and Sinners.

The Argument the Apoſtle uſes to prove this, is from *Chriſt*'s divine Unction; *How God anointed* Jeſus *of* Nazareth *with the* Holy Ghoſt, *and with Power*; that is, endued the human Nature of *Chriſt* with the Fulneſs of the Graces of his Holy Spirit, and conſecrated him to the Work and Office of a Mediator. This Office our Saviour faithfully executed, God being with him in the Fulneſs of the Deity, as he was his eternal Son; and in Power, Grace, and Favour, as he was Man and Mediator.

As a Confirmation of the Truth of what the Apoſtle had aſſerted concerning *Chriſt,* he adds, *We are Witneſſes of all Things which he did in the Land of* Judea *and* Jeruſalem. *Chriſt* took the twelve Apoſtles, as it were, into his Family, that by their familiar Converſation, and conſtantly aſſociating with him, they might be ſufficiently enabled to give ample Teſtimony of all he ſaid and did.

Q. *Was this Sermon of St.* Peter's *attended with any remarkable Succeſs?*

A. While *Peter* was thus preaching to *Cornelius,* and his Friends, the Holy Ghoſt by his wonderful Gift of Tongues deſcends on them, tho' *Gentiles*; at which the *Jews* were aſtoniſhed, who thought that the ſending down the Holy Ghoſt belonged only to the Houſe of *Iſrael.* The Concluſion which the Apoſtle draws from this is, that as the *Gentiles* were baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, they ought to be baptized with Water. The Argument runs thus: They that have the Grace ſignified by, and promiſed in Baptiſm, have the inward Part or Thing ſignified; why then ſhould the outward Sign be denied them? He that has the Inheritance may claim the Writings, Seals, *&c.* belonging to it. The Apoſtle therefore without Scruple baptized theſe *Gentile* Converts; *He commanded them to be baptized:* He either performed it himſelf, or order'd others to do it; and tho' only the Name of the *Lord Jeſus* be mentioned, yet this does not imply, but that they were baptized according to our Saviour's Preſcription, *Matt.* xxviii. *In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* This done, they deſired him to ſtay ſome Days with them, that they might be farther inſtructed, confirmed, and comforted by his Authority.

CHAP. XI.

Peter, *returning to* Jeruſalem, *is accuſed of having accompanied with the Uncircumciſed. His Defence is approved. The diſperſed Believers preach the Goſpel at* Phenice, Cyprus, *and* Antioch. *The Church at* Jeruſalem *ſends* Barnabas *to* Antioch, *to confirm them that believed. He departs to* Tarſus *to ſeek* Saul; *both return to* Antioch, *where*

where the Diſciples are firſt called Chriſtians. Agabus *foretels a Famine. The Diſciples ſend Relief to the Brethren in* Judea, *by* Barnabas *and* Saul.

Q. WAS *it ever forbidden the* Jews *to hold Correſpondence with the* Gentiles, *as ſeems intimated in the Accuſation brought againſt St.* Peter *by the Diſciples?*

A. The *Jews* apprehending that *Chriſt* and his Grace had been promiſed and confined wholly to themſelves, the Call and Converſion of the *Gentiles* became a dreadful Stumbling-block to them, to the believing, as well as unbelieving *Jews*. Hereupon we find them contending with *Peter* for eating and converſing with the *Gentiles*, and eſpecially for admitting them into Goſpel Communion without Circumciſion. Whereas, although God forbad Marriages with the Gentiles, he never prohibited Commerce or Converſation with them: No Converſation with the *Gentiles*, in order to the gaining of them to God, was ever forbidden; but only ſuch as might help to withdraw the *Jews* from God, and corrupt them by Idolatry.

Q. *How does* Peter *clear himſelf of this Charge?*

A. St. *Peter*, in anſwer to the Charge brought againſt him for converſing with *Gentiles*, recapitulates the whole Affair in order as it was tranſacted betwixt him and *Cornelius*. This affords an Obſervation, that *Peter* was far from pretending to a Superiority over the reſt of the Apoſtles; ſo far was he from thinking himſelf above them, that he diſdains not to render them an Account of his Actions, but with great Sincerity and Humility, rehearſed and related the whole Matter of Fact, to their entire and joint Satisfaction. From the whole learn, that it is a downright Oppoſition to the Will of God, to ſhut thoſe out of the Church, or debar them from the Communion of it, who have received the ſanctifying Graces of God's Spirit; but differ from us in external Rites and Ceremonies only.

Q. *What is next to be conſidered in this Chapter?*

A. As *Jeruſalem*, before the Diſperſion by Perſecution, was the principal Reſidence of *Jew-Chriſtians*, ſo now *Antioch* becomes the chief Place of Reſort for the *Gentile* Converts. Thus God over-ruled the Diſperſion and Perſecution that followed the Martyrdom of St. *Stephen*, to the Diſſemination and ſcattering the Goſpel far and near. Thus has the Blood of the Martyrs ever been the Seed of the Church; and what the Devil and his Inſtruments have deſigned for the Extirpation, God has conſtantly over-ruled for the Propagation of the Goſpel.

Great was the Succeſs the Miniſters of the Goſpel met with at *Antioch*; *The Hand of the Lord was with them, and a great Number believed.* By the Hand of the Lord is meant the Power and Aſſiſtance of the Lord, which accompanied and aſſiſted them in diſpenſing his Word, and enabled them to work Miracles in Confirmation of it. The Hand is the Inſtrument of working in Man. When it is attributed to God, it denotes his Power and Help. The Hand of God was manifeſted in the Miracles they wrought, and in Faith and Converſion, which the Sight of thoſe Miracles produced.

Hence learn, that Faith and Converſion are wrought by the Hand of the Lord; they are his Work; Study and Endeavour is the Miniſter's, the Bleſſing and Succeſs God's; when he takes the Sword of the Spirit into the Hand of the Spirit, then ſhall it work Wonders.

Q. *When the Apoſtles at* Jeruſalem *heard of the Succeſs of the Goſpel at* Antioch, *what Courſe did they take to encourage its Progreſs?*

A. They ſend thither *Barnabas* to confirm the new Converts there in the *Chriſtian* Faith. The News of the Converſion of any Sinner, much more, of many, unto God, always affords Delight and Pleaſure to the Miniſters of *Chriſt*.

Q. *What was the Character of* Barnabas, *and how did he fulfil the Work he was ſent upon?*

A. He was a good Man, and full of the Holy Ghoſt, and of Faith. By a good Man, is meant a kind charitable Man, he having ſold his Eſtate, and laid it at the Apoſtles Feet, for the Benefit of the Poor, *Acts* iv. 36, 37. and his good Works accompanying his good Preaching; his good Life ſeconding his ſound Doctrine, was a great Means of the Converſion of ſo many, and that much People were added to the Lord.

Obſerve farther, how piouſly *Barnabas* exhorts the new Converts, *that with Purpoſe of Heart they would cleave unto the Lord*; that is, with a firm and fixed Reſolution to keep cloſe to the Profeſſion of *Chriſt*, whatever Troubles or Diſtreſs they might meet with. Young Converts need Exhortation and Counſel, to eſtabliſh and confirm them in the Faith of the Goſpel, and to encourrge them to hold faſt to *Chriſt*.

Another Inſtance of the Piety of this good Man was, the great Zeal and fervent Deſire he ſhewed, that the Goſpel might be more and more propagated. To this End he went to *Tarſus* to ſeek out *Saul*, that they might join their Forces in the Work of *Chriſt*: And having found him, he brought him to *Antioch*; where for a whole Year they inſtructed the Church in that City, and taught much People. How happy is it for the Church of *Chriſt*, when her Miniſters, laying aſide all private Intereſt, unitedly apply themſelves to promote the common Intereſt of *Chriſtianity*, by propagating the Goſpel far and near!

Q. *At* Antioch *the Diſciples were firſt called* Chriſtians: *What do you obſerve thereupon?*

A. Believers, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were united in one common Name at *Antioch*; the *Jews* had hitherto called them *Nazarenes* and *Galileans*, and they called themſelves Diſciples, Believers, Brethren, and thoſe of the Church; but now in *Antioch*, they firſt obtain the Appellation of *Chriſtians*: A very great Honour conferred on this *Gentile* City, which now exalted her above *Jeruſalem* itſelf. At *Antioch*, a *Gentile* City, *Chriſt* ſet up his Standard for the *Gentiles*. They who before were counted Dogs, and the Off-ſcouring of all Things, have now the venerable Name of *Chriſt* impoſed on them.

Here note, that the Diſciples did not call themſelves *Chriſtians* firſt at *Antioch*; much leſs did their Enemies give them that Name; but it was given them by divine Authority: God would have *Chriſt*'s Diſciples called *Chriſtians*. 1. As Scholars, who receive their Denomination from their Maſter, they are taught to learn of, imitate *Chriſt*, whoſe Name they bear. 2. As the Word, *Chriſtians*, ſignified anointed Ones, it puts them in mind of their divine Unction, which they have received from them the Holy One, whereby they are made Kings and Prieſts unto God. We are at this Day called *Reformed Chriſtians*, God grant that we may not cheat our ſelves with an empty and inſignificant Name; but let us fill up that glorious Title, and be reformed in our Lives, as well as in our Religion; beautifying our holy Profeſſion by an Holy and becoming Converſation; otherwiſe an unbaptized Heathen, at the great Day, will not change Eſtate with many baptized *Chriſtians*.

Q. *What other remarkable Occurrence fell out at* Antioch?

A. While theſe two great Apoſtles were thus piouſly employ'd at *Antioch*, certain Prophets came to them among whom was one *Agabus*. Here note how the Wiſdom of God, at the firſt planting of the Goſpel, conferred on ſome of its Profeſſors extraordinary Gifts; as the Gift of Tongues, of Miracles, and Prophecy, and the like. *Agabus*, now come to *Antioch*, foretold, by a Revelation from the Spirit of God, that there would ſhortly be a Famine over all *Judea*, and ſeveral other Parts of the World; which exactly came to paſs in the Reign of the Emperor *Claudius*.

Obſerve here, that as it is God's Prerogative to know future Things, ſo it is his Prerogative to enable others to foretel future Things. This Famine was here foretold, not by judicial Aſtrology, but by divine Revelation. That God, who provided for the Patriarchs, by the Means of *Joſeph*'s foreſeeing the Famine in *Egypt*, provided now for the *Chriſtians*, by *Agabus*'s foretelling the Famine which was to come upon *Judea*; Agabus *ſtood up, and ſignified by the Spirit, that there ſhould be a great Dearth throughout* Judea. As God's Omnipotence is exerted for his Church's Protection, ſo is his Omniſcience employ'd for its Suſtenance and Preſervation.

Q. *The new Converts at* Antioch *gave Proofs of their Sincerity by their Charity to their Brethren; how did they govern themſelves in the Diſpoſal of their Benevolence?*

A. Every Man gave according to his Ability. This is the true Standard of Charity. We are to give Alms of ſuch Things as we have, and according to what we have. *Chriſtian* Prudence muſt direct us in the Exerciſe of *Chriſtian* Charity; that muſt guide us in our Enquiries after fit and proper Objects, that we may give moſt to thoſe that have moſt Need. Prudence muſt alſo inſtruct us in the ſuiting of our Charity, that we do not put our poor Brethren off with frivolous Excuſes and tedious Delays. And it muſt teach us the Meaſure of our Charity, that it exceed not the Bounds of our Eſtates. Few indeed are guilty of erring on that Hand; but an Error in the Exceſs is poſſible, as well as in the Defect of our *Chriſtian* Charity. To prevent both Evils, let the Practice of theſe primitive *Chriſtians* be a Pattern for our Imitation.

Q. *Of what Order were the* Elders, *mentioned, Ver.* 30. *and what was their Office in the* Chriſtian *Church?*

A. Dr. *Hammond* ſays, the Word is here firſt met with in the *Chriſtian* Church, and therefore deſerves to be explained. And firſt it will not be amiſs to ſee the Uſe of it among the *Greeks* and *Hebrews*. Among the *Greeks*, and *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſius* notes, that *the Antients uſed the Word Elders both for Rulers and old Men*; and accordingly it is now in uſe among all Nations, *Italians*, *French*, *Spaniards*, *Engliſh*, to call their Rulers, Seniors, Mayors, Aldermen, &c. which are the literally rendring the *Greek* Word for Elders.

Among the *Hebrews* the ſame is acknowledged, that the *Hebrew* Word for Old Men (which with them that want Degrees of Compariſon, is all one with Elders) denotes Dignity and Prefecture in the Old Teſtament. So the Steward of *Abraham*'s Houſe, *Eliezer, who was placed over all his Servants and Goods*, Gen. xxiv. 2. is called *the Elder of his Houſe*, and *Ruler of all he had*. So *the Elders of* Pharaoh's *Houſe, and of all* Egypt, Gen. l. 7. are the Prefects and Adminiſtrators of the King's Houſe, and of all *Egypt*. So the *Elders of the* Moabites, *Numb.* xxii. 7. are Princes of *Moab*, Ver. 8. So when all Dominion was founded in the Privileges of the Firſt-born (and there is *Reuben*, as firſt born, Gen. xlix. 3. called *the Excellency of Principality, and the Excellency of Power*, that is, the excellent Principality, or ſupreme Power, the Magiſtrate, ſo called, *Rom.* iii. 1.) the Princes of Families, or Kindreds, are, called indifferently, Patriarchs, and Elders. Such were *Elders of* Iſrael, *Exod.* iii. 16, 18. and iv. 29. the Heads or Rulers of the Families, or Kindred, Chap. vi. 14. *Rulers of the Congregation*, Chap. xvi. 22. who are again called the *Elders of* Iſrael, Chap. xvii. 5, 6. *and Elders of the Tribes*, Deut. xxxi. 28. And when *Moſes* appointed Judges for lighter Cauſes, *Exod.* xviii. 22. who ſhould have *Power over Thouſands, and Hundreds, and Fifties, and Tens*, that is, firſt, over ſo many Families, after, over greater or leſſer Cities (for ſo the Thouſand ſignifies a City, *Judg.* vi. 15. *Mic.* v. 2. and the Ruler thereof is Prince, *Matt.* ii. 6.) theſe were by them called Elders, Rulers, Judges, Rulers of the Synagogues, and the like. And thereupon in the *Theodoſian Codex*, where the ſecond Law concerning the *Jews*, uſes the Word Elders, another Law hath Fathers, or Rulers, of the Conſiſtories. And ſo when the Seventy Elders were taken in to aſſiſt *Moſes*, Num. xi. 16. (to whom the great *Sanhedrim* at *Jeruſalem* ſucceeded) it's evident, that theſe were ſo called becauſe they were Princes or Prefects, or Rulers of the People, before they were thus choſen by *Moſes*. *Gather unto me* (ſaith God) *ſeventy Men of the Elders of* Iſrael, *whom thou knoweſt to be the Elders of the People, and Officers over them, and bring them to the Congregation, that they may ſtand there with thee.* And ſo the Word Elder was not a Denotation of one of the *Sanhedrim*, any otherwiſe, than as ſome of thoſe that were in the *Sanhedrim* had formerly been Elders or Rulers, of the People, and accordingly of three Sorts of Men, of which the *Sanhedrim* conſiſted, but one is called Elders, the other Scribes, and chief Prieſts, Matt. xvi. 20.

By all which it appears how fitly this Word Elders, being made uſe of by the Apoſtles, and Writers of the *New Teſtament*, is affixed to the Governors of the *Chriſtian* Church, the Biſhops of ſeveral Cities, anſwerable to *Ruler of Thouſands*, or *Patriarchs*, which being among the *Jews*, are in the *Chriſtian* Church the ordinary Title of Biſhops. And although this Title of Elders has been alſo extended to a ſecond Order in the Church, and is now only in uſe for them, under the Name of *Preſbyters*, yet in the Scripture-times it belonged principally, if not alone, to the Biſhops, there being no Evidence that any of that ſecond Order were then in-

inſtituted, though ſoon after, before the Writing of *Ignatius*'s Epiſtles, there were ſuch inſtituted in all Churches. Of thoſe firſt Apoſtolical Times the Teſtimony of *Clemens Romanus* in epiſt. 1. to the *Corinthians* is obſervable, *Chriſt was ſent from God, and the Apoſtles from Chriſt, and they went out preaching the Goſpel* —— And then, *They therefore preaching thro' Regions and Cities conſtituted* (*or ordained*) *their firſt Fruits,* (*firſt Converts*) *into Biſhops and Deacons of thoſe that ſhould afterwards believe.* Where it appears that when the Goſpel was firſt preached by the Apoſtles, and but few converted, they ordained in every City and Region no more than a Biſhop, and one or more Deacons to attend him, there being at that Time ſo ſmall need of ordaining more, that this Biſhop was conſtituted more for the ſake of thoſe who ſhould after believe, than of thoſe who did already.

Agreeable is that of *Epiphanius*, which he ſays, he had from the moſt profound and antient Hiſtories: At the Beginning of the Apoſtles Preaching, when there was none fit or worthy to be a Biſhop, the Place remained void without any, but where Need required, and there were thoſe that were fit for it, Biſhops were conſtituted; but while there was no Multitude of Chriſtians, there were found none among them to be conſtituted Presbyters (in our modern Uſe of that Word) and they contented themſelves with a Biſhop alone in every Place: But without a Deacon it was impoſſible for a Biſhop to be, and therefore the Apoſtle took Care that the Biſhop ſhould have his Deacons to miniſter to him. And accordingly, when St. *Paul* gives Directions to Biſhop *Timothy*, for ordaining the Officers in the Church, he names Biſhops and Deacons, but no ſecond Order between them. 1 *Tim.* iii. 2, 8. and ſo to *Titus*, Chap. i. 7. and ii. 1. And ſo in the Church of *Jeruſalem*, it is clear by the Story, that *James* the Brother of our Lord, being ſoon after *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion conſtituted their Biſhop, the Deacons are the firſt that are added to him, *Acts* vi. and no Mention as yet of any middle Order. From whence it will be ſufficiently cleared, who are the Elders here, namely, the Biſhops of the ſeveral Cities, or of the Brethren that dwelt in *Judea*, Ver. 29. to whom this Alms were deſigned; for the Famine being in all *Judea*, and not only at *Jeruſalem*, and there being Brethren, that is, Chriſtians, through ſeveral Parts of *Judea*, there could be no Reaſon to imagine that *Jeruſalem* only ſhould have the Benefit of the Collection, or conſequently that the Elders, to whom it was deliver'd, ſhould belong only to that City. And thus it is known in the Primitive Church, that Alms and Collections, whether in the ſame Church brought by the Communicants in the Offertory, or by Officers ſent by one Church to another, were ſolemnly intruſted to the Biſhop, as the Steward of the Houſe of God, as the Oblations were brought to the High-Prieſt under the Law, and the Liberality of the Faithful to the Apoſtles Feet, *Acts* iv. 34.

This learned Author proceeds, by inconteſtable Arguments produced from Scripture, antient Canons, and Primitive Writers, to prove, that by Elders was meant no other Order in the Church than that of Biſhops, in thoſe firſt Times of Chriſtianity.

CHAP. XII.

Herod *vexes the Church, kills* James, *and impriſons* Peter. *The Church prays for him; he is deliver'd by an Angel; comes to the Houſe of* Mary, *and relates to thoſe who were there aſſembled, what the Lord had done.* Herod, *for his Pride, is ſmitten by an Angel. The Word of God multiplies.* Barnabas *and* Saul *return from* Jeruſalem.

Q. THE *Beginning of this Chapter acquaints us with a freſh Perſecution againſt the Church by King* Herod: *What are the Particulars of it, and your Obſervations upon it?*

A. St. *Luke* having related the Succeſs of the Apoſtles at *Antioch*, now returns to *Judea*, and declares what Perſecution the Church met with at *Jeruſalem*. *Satan*, the grand Enemy of the Church of God, never wants Inſtruments to carry on his perſecuting Deſigns againſt the Church. He had many *Pharaohs* in the Old Teſtament Times, bitter Oppreſſors of the *Jewiſh* Church, and ſeveral *Herods* under the New Teſtament, as *Herod Antipas* and *Herod Agrippa*, who were very warm in the worſt Work, that of Perſecution; *Herod ſtretched forth his Hand to vex certain of the Church*; that is, to kill ſome, and impriſon others. *Satan*'s Blood-hounds have ſuch an inſatiable Thirſt after the Blood of the Saints, that they cannot be ſatiated with it, nor ſatisfied without it: A tyrannical Perſecutor is like an hydropick Perſon, the more he drinks, the more he thirſts.

Herod kills *James* the Brother of *John* with the Sword. We read in the Goſpel, that he was one of the Sons of *Zebedee*, that deſired of *Chriſt* to ſit at the Right-hand in his Kingdom; and now he is the firſt of the Apoſtles that ſuffer'd Martyrdom, who drank of *Chriſt*'s Cup, and was baptized with his Baptiſm. He was called *Boanerges*, or a Son of Thunder, for his zealous and earneſt Preaching: No Wonder then, that *Herod* and the enraged *Jews* hated him, and were inſtigated by *Satan* to deſtroy him. For ſuch as are moſt uſeful to, and moſt eminent in the Church, are always the Subjects of the Devil's Malice, and of the Perſecutor's Rage and Fury.

James being ſlain, *Peter* is to follow; *He proceeds farther to take* Peter *alſo*. The Rage of Perſecutors is not eaſily ſatisfied, and the Blood which they ſhed, is but Oil to feed the Flames of their Revenge. But mark the over-ruling Providence of God; tho' *James* was murder'd, *Peter* ſhall only be impriſon'd. Perſecutors cannot do all the Miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can. The Husbandman does not commit all his Corn to the Oven, ſome he reſerves for Seed.

Peter being impriſon'd, obſerve the wonderful Precaution *Herod* takes to ſecure his Priſoner: Sixteen Soldiers are ſet to guard him; four at a Time, and to take their Turns at the four Watches of the Night. Hence learn, that the Enemies of the Church make the ſureſt Work they can, whenever God permits any of his Servants to fall into their Hands. Thus they dealt with the Head, when they had apprehended him; the Watch-word was, *Hold him faſt*, *Matt.* xxvi. 48. when they crucified him, they nail'd him to the Croſs; when he was buried, they made the Sepulchre ſure, ſealing the Stone, and ſetting a Watch: And thus they deal with the Members: St. *Peter* has Guard upon Guard ſet over him, ſome Soldiers chained to him, and others always ſtanding at the Door to obſerve him. But all this Care and Circumſpection to ſecure the Priſoner, ſerv'd only to illuſtrate the Glory of the Miracle in his wonderful Deliverance.

Q. *While* Peter *was in Priſon, what Methods did the Church uſe for his Releaſement?*

A. During *Peter*'s Impriſonment, fervent and importunate Prayer was put up to God by the Church on his Behalf: With the united Strength of their whole Souls they ſtormed Heaven, and took him by Force out of *Herod*'s Hands. This inſtructs us, 1. That when the Church is plunged into deep Perplexities, the only Help ſhe can hope for, muſt come in the way of Prayer. 2. That when God ſuffers his Miniſters to fall under the Rage of Perſecutors, it's the Church's Duty to wreſtle with God by Prayer in an extraordinary manner on their behalf; *Prayer was made without ceaſing of the Church.* 3. That when God is about to beſtow ſome diſtinguiſhing Favour on his Church, he ſtirs up the Hearts of his People to pray for it in a very extraordinary Manner.

Q. *How long did* Peter *continue in Priſon, and how did he behave under his Confinement?*

A. Peter's Impriſonment continued till the very Night before *Herod* deſigned to bring him forth to the People; and no doubt his Intent was, if the People deſired it, to put him to Death the next Day. Here note, that God frequently permits his Children to come to the very Brink of the Pit, and then delivers them, that they may be the more ſenſibly affected with his Mercy, and have the greater Cauſe to magnify his Power. *Peter* was now come to his laſt Night; the Tyrant *Herod* probably intended his Execution the next Morning. Now was the Time for God to ſtep in: Our Extremity is his Opportunity.

But notwithſtanding *Peter*'s imminent and impending Danger, he ſleeps very ſoundly, reſigning himſelf to the care of *Chriſt*, and reſolving that if he can live no longer *Chriſt*'s Servant, he will die his Sacrifice. It is a Queſtion, whether *Herod* who impriſon'd him, ſlept half ſo ſoundly. How ſoft and ſecure a Pillow is a good Conſcience, even in the Confines of Death, and in the very Jaws of Danger.

Here obſerve, God takes the moſt Care of *Peter*, when he was leaſt able to take Care of himſelf: When he was aſleep, and altogether inſenſible of his Danger, God was acting effectually for his Deliverance. Happy Priſoners! Who have God with them in Priſon! Such are Priſoners of Hope indeed, and ſhall certainly experience divine Help.

Q. *By what Means did he regain his Liberty?*

A. That God has ſometimes made uſe of the Miniſtry of his Angels to effect Deliverance for his People, is undoubtedly true; an Inſtance of which we have here in the ſeveral good Offices which an Angel does for *Peter*, in order to his Enlargement. *Peter* is aſleep, the Angel awakes him; he is laid, the Angel raiſes him; he is amazed, the Angel directs him; he is bound, the Angel unties him; he knows not where he is, the Angel goes before him, and guides him; he is to go through many Difficulties, the Angel conducts him. Innumerable are the good Offices which at God's Command the Angels do for us, tho' they are not apprehended by us. What Love and Service do we owe to them? What Honour and Reſpect ſhould we pay to them, for their Care over us, and Attendance upon us?

Peter muſt riſe, gird himſelf, bind on his Sandals, caſt his Garment about him, follow the Angel, and uſe his own Endeavour in order to his own Deliverance. God will have him uſe the Means, even then when he was about to work a Miracle for him. It is tempting God to neglect the Means when we cannot expect Miracles; as to truſt to Means is to neglect God; ſo to neglect the Means is to tempt God. We muſt always aſſiſt the Providence of God in the uſe of ſuch Means as his Wiſdom has directed us to.

So amazing and ſurprizing was this Deliverance, that *Peter* thought he was only in a Dream, *He wiſt not that it was true, but thought he ſaw a Viſion.* Hence learn, that the Deliverances of the Godly from imminent and apparent Dangers, are ſo very wonderful, and attended with ſuch a Number of improbable Circumſtances, that they can ſcarce be perſuaded they are true, tho' they ſee them with their own Eyes. When God turned the Captivity of *Peter*, he was like unto them that dream, *Pſ.* cxxvi. 1.

How great is the Power and Prevalency of the conjoined Prayers of good Men? The Church, in order to obtain *Peter*'s Enlargement, keep a Day of Prayer; the Enemies plot, the Church prays; they ſhut the Priſon-Doors, the Church opens Heaven's Gates, and *Peter* is given in, as an Anſwer of Prayer, before they roſe off their Knees. How good it is to draw near to God! What a Prayer-hearing God is our God! Whilſt theſe pious Souls are in the very Act of calling upon God for *Peter*'s releaſe, *Peter* is Releaſed to them.

Q. Peter *being releaſed, what Courſe does he take next?*

A. St. *Peter* finding himſelf actually at Liberty, as he was walking the Streets by himſelf, meditates on the Greatneſs of his Danger, and the Graciouſneſs of his Deliverance. Holy and ſuitable Thoughts, pious Meditations and Ejaculations, well become us in any Place, at all Times and upon all Occaſions, but eſpecially after ſingular Deliverances from ſingular Dangers. We can never enough ruminate upon them, or be ſufficiently thankful for them.

Obſerve the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of divine Providence, in directing *Peter* in the dead of the Night, to the Houſe where the Saints are praying for him. This is the more remarkable, becauſe the Angel having done his Work which God had ſent him upon, and deliver'd *Peter* from his Chains and Impriſonment, left him to ſhift for himſelf, and to take care of his own Safety; but tho' an Angel left him, yet the Providence of God conducted him to a Place where he was both Safe and Welcome.

Q. *How do you underſtand theſe Words, v.* 15. It is his Angel?

A. Dr. *Hammond* ſays, the Word *Angel*, which by way of Excellency is ſet to denote the Immortal Spirits attendant on God and miniſtring to him, does primarily and originally, and in vulgar uſe ſignify a Meſſenger, and from thence only comes to denote thoſe Spirits, becauſe they are Meſſengers of God, employ'd by him, there is little Doubt or Queſtion; and conſequently it is certain, that it may ſignify here no more than a Meſſenger from St. *Peter*; ſo *Matt.* xi. 10. *Mark* i. 2. *Luke* vii. 27. *My Meſſenger*, being ſpoken of *John Baptiſt*; ſo *Luke* vii. 24. the *Meſſengers of John*, and *Luke* ix. 32. *he ſent Meſſengers, and ſo ſure the Angels of the Churches*, were not thoſe immortal Spirits, *Rev.* i. 19. but as the Apoſtles ſent Meſſengers to ſeveral Churches who were to do according to their Appointment, and ſome in their ſtead to rule and govern there, ſo were theſe the Rulers of the Churches, appointed by the Apoſtles. So the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies indifferently any one, *who hath any Command or Meſſage from a Maſter*, and is render'd, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 42. a Servant, a Meſſenger, or Embaſſador, *Numb.* xxi. 21. and is render'd, 2 *Sam.* xv. 13. from the *Hebrew* Word, *to tell*, and another Word, which ſignifies a Servant, Miniſter, is render'd Angel, *Iſa.* xxxvii. 24. from an old *Hebrew* Word retained ſtill in the *Arabick* Dialect for a Meſſenger or Legate. The only Queſtion therefore will be, of theſe two poſſible Notions of the Word, which is the fitter and more probable for this Place; and for the rendring it Meſſenger, and not Angel, I ſhall only ſay, that the Story will thereby be very clear and intelligible, thus, That *Peter* knocked at the Door, and *Rhoda* asking, who was there, he anſwered *Peter*; thereupon ſhe knew his Voice, and aſſured them within, *Peter* was there; they not having heard the Voice, but only hearing her affirm confidently that he was there, thought that ſome Meſſenger had come from *Peter*, and made uſe of his Name; and that ſhe had, by Miſtake, believed it to be *Peter* himſelf, and ſo they thought they muſt reconcile the Difficulty betwixt the conceived Impoſſibility of *Peter*'s being there, on the one ſide, and the Maid affirming confidently that he was there, on the other ſide, namely, by this Medium betwixt both, that a Meſſenger ſent from *Peter* was at the Door, who made uſe of his Name to obtain Admiſſion. Whatſoever can be ſaid for the other Rendring, will, I conceive, have more Difficulty it. And it is not impoſſible or improbable, that the Angel, *John* v. 4. that *went at a certain Seaſon to move the Water of* Betheſda, may be ſo render'd alſo, not for an Angel of God in a viſible Shape, but for an Officer, Servant, Meſſenger, that was wont to be ſent at certain Seaſons of the Year, probably at the Feaſts, to move the Water, upon which it became Medicinal. See Note on *John* v. 2. So far Dr. *Hammond.*

Q. *How does* Peter *expreſs his Gratitude for his Deliverance?*

A. He returns Thanks to God, and not to the Angel, and aſcribes his Deliverance to the ſole Author of it; *He declared how the Lord had brought out of the Priſon.* The Angel was but the Inſtrument, God was the Principal Agent; 'tis God alone commands Deliverance for his People.

Q. Peter *being delivered in ſo wonderful a Manner, what Precautions does he take for his future Safety?*

A. *He departed, and went to another Place*; he could not think himſelf ſafe whilſt *Herod* was ſo near, any more than a Lamb could be ſafe near a Lion's Den. He knew he ſhould be hunted for, and therefore eſcapes for his Life! And beſides his own Danger, he was not willing to endanger his Friends, who then harbour'd and entertain'd him; but for his own and their Safety, he departs to another Place. A prudential uſe of all lawful Means for our own and others Preſervation, in Subſerviency to the divine Providence, is our Duty, our Wiſdom and Intereſt, both as Men and Chriſtians.

Q. *Was not* Herod *greatly enraged, when he found that the Apoſtles had eſcaped him thus?*

A. *Herod* having miſs'd his Prize, and being diſappointed of his bloody Purpoſe, is ſo incenſed, that he cauſed the Keepers firſt to be examined (poſſibly by Tortures) and then to be put to Death: Here obſerve the Juſtice of God, and Injuſtice of *Herod*: It was juſt in God to ſuffer the Soldiers who were *Herod*'s Inſtruments in Perſecution, to die by the bloody Hand of *Herod*, whoſe Tools they were; Inſtruments in Perſecution are often puniſhed in this World, and ſometimes they fall by the Hands of Perſecutors themſelves; yet was it notorious Injuſtice in *Herod*, to put to Death thoſe innocent Soldiers, who could not help what was done, and were no ways acceſſary to the Priſoner's Eſcape.

Q. *What Account is given of* Herod *afterwards?*

A. *Herod*, on St. *Peter*'s Eſcape out of his Houſe, leaves *Jeruſalem*, and goes to dwell at *Caſaria*, where being highly diſpleaſed with the rich Citizens of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, he intends to make War upon them. But they were ſenſible, that their Cities lying upon the Sea-Coaſts, and having little Land belonging to them, muſt be beholden to *Judea* and *Galilee*, (which were under *Herod*'s Juriſdiction) for a great Part of their Proviſions; therefore it was good Policy to compound the Matter with him, knowing that to fight with him that fed them, was the ready way to be famiſhed. They thought it therefore the moſt prudent Meaſure they could take, to open the Breaſt of *Blaſtus* the King's Chamberlain, with a Golden Key; and this they did ſo effectually, that they made a Paſſage for Acceſs to pacify the King. Intereſt is a great Inducement for us to pay Homage to thoſe on whom is our chief Dependance; yet tho' Men depend upon God for all, for Life, and for all the Comforts and Supports of Life they enjoy; (our Country being nouriſhed by the King of Heaven's Country) how few by Prayer confeſs or acknowledge their Dependance upon him, or by Praiſe and Thankſgiving own the Hand that ſupplies them?

Herod, on a Set-day, that is, as ſome ſuppoſe, on his Birth-day, was arrayed in Royal Apparel, in a Robe of Cloth of Silver, (but ſtained with St. *James*'s Blood) which by the Reflection of the Sun-Beams beating upon it, wonderfully dazzled the Eyes of the Spectators; he makes an eloquent Oration, more gaudy than his Apparel, to the People, which made ſuch an Impreſſion on them, that they cry out in Approbation of it, *the Voice of a God, and not of a Man!* *Herod*, inſtead of diſapproving this impious Flattery, is pleaſed with it, and embraces it as his proper Due; and thereupon an Angel, the beſt, and Wroms, the baſeſt of Creatures, join in his Puniſhment: The Angel ſmites him, and the Worms eat him up; and no wonder that Worms ſo quickly devoured him, whom

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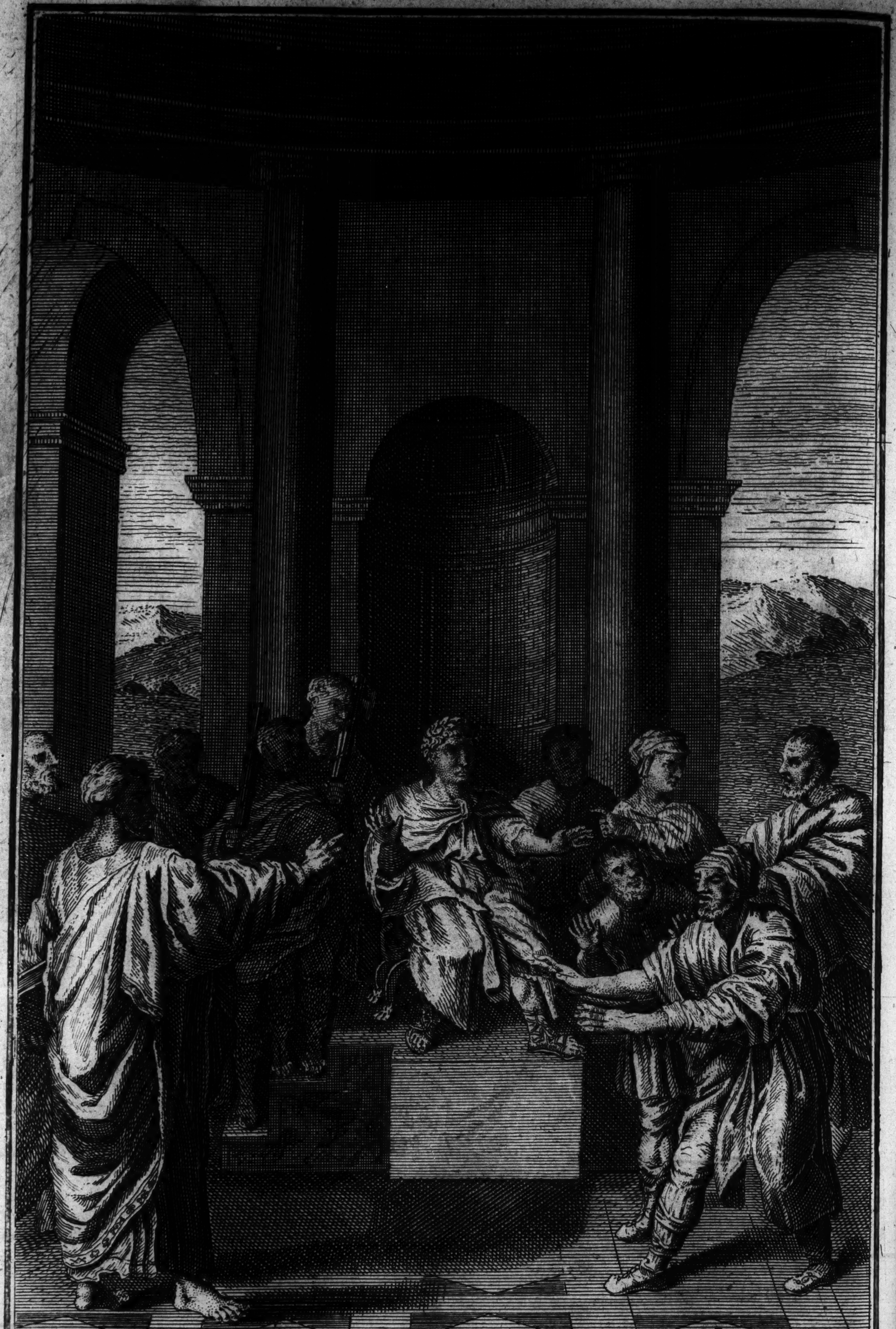
ACTS. CHAP. XIII.



Elymas the Sorcerer struck with Blindneſs.

whom theſe Fleſh-flies, his Paraſites, had ſo lately blown up; no wonder he is eaten with Worms, who forgot that himſelf was but a Worm!

Q. *But why were not the People puniſhed as well as the Prince, ſince they were equally guilty of robbing God of his Honour?* Herod, *indeed, was the Receiver, but they were the Thieves; why then fell not the Puniſhment on the whole Multitude?*

A. Becauſe more Diſcretion is expected from a Prince, than from a Rabble: Beſides, what in them was but a blaſphemous Compliment, by his Acceptance of it was made a Reality, was uſurped by, and aſſumed to him as if due to his Deſerts.

Upon the whole we may remark, that Flattery, either given or taken, is a very dangerous Sin, provoking God, and procuring his Wrath. If we flatter Men, God will not flatter us; but deal plainly, yea, ſeverely with us. One of the Antients ſaid, he was afraid of Praiſe and Commendation, as much as of a Crack of Thunder. When Men aſcribe much Glory to Men, they find it very difficult to give that Glory back again to God. *Herod* was ſo pleaſed and tickled with the Glory which the People gave him, that he could not part with it; but by keeping that, loſt his Life.

Though God bears long with many Sorts of Sinners, yet not with Sinners of this Sort. *Immediately the Angel of the Lord ſmote him:* Agreeable to that of *Job*, Chap. xxxii. 22. *I know not how to give flattering Titles, for in ſo doing my Maker would ſoon take me away.* The great God will admit of no Co-rivals; he will not ſuffer his Glory to be given to another; he will be a ſwift Witneſs againſt the Flatterer, as well as againſt the falſe Swearer, *Malach.* iii. 5. He can deſtroy both Flatterer and Flattered in an Inſtant, with the twinkling of an Eye, or with the urning of an Hand, and thoſe that are cried up as Gods to Day, are as Dung for Worms to burrough in to Morrow.

Q. *Had the Church any Reſpite from Perſecution after* Herod's *Death?*

A. Herod the Tyrant and Perſecutor being dead, the Goſpel proſpered, and was preached up and down with great Succeſs. Perſecutors, by all their Endeavours to deſtroy the Church, only contribute to its ſtanding the faſter. The Church in *Egypt* never grew ſo high, as when *Pharaoh* laboured to keep it low; the more he moleſted them, the more he multiplied them. Thus here, after *Herod*'s Death, and *Peter*'s Deliverance, the Word of God grew and multiplied; that is, the Number of Believers increaſed through the Preaching of the Word, as Seed is multiplied by the Scattering of the Hand; the Word preached is the Seed ſown in the Furrows of the Field. The Ground was harrowed by the Hand of the Perſecutors, and the Seed grew the better, and the Fruits of Faith and Obedience did by every Shower of Perſecution more and more abound. The Truth of God may for a Time be oppreſſed, but it ſhall never be abſolutely and finally ſuppreſſed; *ſtill the Word of God grew and multiplied.*

Chap. XIII.

Paul *and* Barnabas *are ſent to the* Gentiles; *they preach at* Salamis; Sergius Paulus *deſires to hear the Word of God, and* Elymas, *the Sorcerer, ſeeks to turn him from the Faith.* Paul *rebukes and ſmites him with Blindneſs; the Deputy believes the Doctrine of the Lord.* Paul *and his Company return to* Perga, *and from thence to* Antioch, *and preaches* Chriſt *in the Synagogue. Some of the* Jews *oppoſe him, and he turns to the* Gentiles. *The* Jews *raiſe a Perſecution againſt* Paul *and* Barnabas, *who ſhake the Duſt off their Feet againſt them, and depart to* Iconium.

Q. WHAT *Subjects art treated of in this Chapter?*

A. St. *Luke* having very particularly related, in the Twelve firſt Chapters, in what Manner the *Chriſtian* Church was firſt planted among the *Jews*, by the Miniſtry of St. *Peter*, proceeds, to the End of this Book, to acquaint us how it was planted and propagated among the *Gentiles* by the Miniſtry and Labour of St. *Paul*.

Q. *In the firſt Verſe are mentioned ſeveral Prophets and Teachers who were at* Antioch; *among the reſt is named* Menaen, *of whom it is noted, that* he was brought up with *Herod* the Tetrach: *What is your Remark thereupon?*

A. Manenn was a Perſon eminently diſtinguiſhed for his high Rank and Quality, being brought up with *Herod* at Court; and as the learned *Lightfoot* thinks, was converted there by the Preaching of *John Baptiſt*; yet this Man, contemning with *Moſes*, the Pleaſures of a Court, thinks it no Diſparagement to be a Teacher at *Antioch*. Thus God is pleaſed to manifeſt the Freeneſs of his Grace in effectually calling ſome of all Sorts and Ranks of Men to the Knowledge and Obedience of the Goſpel, and to a Participation of the Benefits offered in and by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. Menaen, *who had been brought up with* Herod *the* Tetrarch.

Q. *The Holy Ghoſt intending to appoint* Barnabas *and* Saul *for the Miniſtry, directs the Church to ſeparate them for that Purpoſe, Ver.* 2. *How do you underſtand this Paſſage, and what Inſtructions does it afford us?*

A. When the Teachers of the Church at *Antioch* were aſſembled together in God's Preſence, the *Holy Ghoſt* takes that Occaſion to give them particular Inſtructions and Directions concerning his Will and their Duty, with Reſpect to their ſetting a-part *Barnabas* and *Saul* to the Miniſtry. This was a great Work, and not to be undertaken without a ſpecial Call from God; therefore, ſays the *Holy Ghoſt, Separate me* Barnabas *and* Saul *to the Work whereunto I have called them:* Which Words prove both the Deity and Perſonality of the *Holy Ghoſt:* He who calls Miniſters to the Office, and unto whoſe Service they are ſeparated, is both *God*, and a diſtinct Perſon in the God-head; but this the *Holy Ghoſt* did: *Separate me* Barnabas *and* Saul.

Hereby we are taught, that Miniſters muſt be ſet apart for the Work of the Miniſtry before they undertake it; a Call from God is not ſufficient, without a Separation by Man. This Separation ought to be performed by the chief Miniſters of the Church, who have Authority from *Chriſt* to ſeparate and ſet others apart for the Work of the Miniſtry. The *Holy Ghoſt* ſaid to the Teachers at *Antioch, Separate me,* &c.

Note alſo, that this ſolemn Act and Ordinance ought to be performed in a very ſolemn Manner, by Faſting, Prayer, and Impoſition of Hands;

and when thus performed, it is agreeable to the Mind, and according to the Appointment, and Inſtitution of the *Holy Ghoſt*.

Laſtly obſerve, that though the Employment of a Miniſter is an honourable, yet it is a laborious Office. 'Tis a Work that requires Attendance, and zealous Application, both in Seaſon and out of Seaſon; praying, preaching, adminiſtring Sacraments; guiding and governing the Flock by private Admonition, and publick Cenſure: Theſe are weighty Works, found ſo now by thoſe that perform them faithfully, and will be found ſo at the great Day by the Slothful and Negligent. How can that be eſteemed a ſlight and inconſiderable Work, unto the faithful Performance whereof, ſo great a Reward is promiſed, and to the Omiſſion whereof ſo great a Woe is denounced? If *Satan* deſtroy Mens Souls, he ſhall anſwer for them as a Murderer only, not as an Officer intruſted with the Care of them; but if the Watchman warns not, if the Shepherd feeds not, if the Prophet inſtructs not, if the Steward provides not, he ſhall not only anſwer for the Souls that have miſcarried, but for an Office neglected, for a Talent hidden, and for a Stewardſhip unfaithfully adminiſtered. Lord! how unable ſhall we be at the making up of our Accounts to endure the hideous Outcries of diſtreſſed Souls, ſaying, Our Guides have miſled us, our Watchmen have betray'd us, our Stewards have defrauded us, and the following of their evil Example has undone us?

Q. Barnabas *and* Saul *having received their Commiſſion, ſet forward to the Work to which they were appointed: In what Manner did they proceed?*

A. Their firſt Journey was from *Antioch* to *Cyprus*, an Iſland of the *Gentiles*, leud and wicked; where *Venus* was worſhipped: And much Filthineſs committed by them in that abominable *Pagan* Worſhip. Yet the free Grace of God caſts a Look of Pity and Love upon ſinful *Cyprus*, the *Holy Ghoſt* directs theſe Apoſtles thither, to reclaim them from Sin, and reduce them to the Obedience of the Goſpel.

But though *Saul* and *Barnabas* were ſent forth to preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, yet they made the firſt Tender of it to the *Jews* where-ever they came; accordingly there being a great Number of *Jews* in *Cyprus*, the Apoſtles went into the Synagogues, and preached to them. *Chriſt* was the Miniſter of Circumciſion, who was himſelf *ſent to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Iſrael, and accordingly commiſſioned firſt to feed and gather thoſe poor ſcattered Sheep; theſe Sheep are accounted the Children of the Houſe, the *Gentiles* reckoned as Dogs; but when thoſe wanton full-fed Children began to waſte their Meat, and caſt it under the Table, then did the *Gentile* Dogs gather up their Leavings, Ver. 46. *It was neceſſary* (both by Virtue of *Chriſt*'s Command and Example alſo) *that the Word of God ſhould be firſt ſpoken to you: But ſeeing ye put it from you, and judge yourſelves unworthy of eternal Life, lo, we turn to the* Gentiles.

Q. *When the Apoſtles had preached the Goſpel throughout the Iſland of* Cyprus, *and were come to* Paphos, *which lies at the Weſt-End of it, a remarkable Tranſaction happened between on* Elymas, *a Sorcerer, and* Sergius Paulus, *the deputy Governor of the Iſland: Pray explain and illuſtrate this Paſſage?*

A. Obſerve what an early Oppoſition the Devil made againſt the Apoſtles in their preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*; he imagined that the Walls of his Kingdom were about to be battered down, and therefore ſtired up his Inſtrument *Elymas* the Sorcerer, to withſtand the Aſſault, and particularly to divert *Sergius Paulus*, Governor of that Iſland, from the Faith.

The Character of this vile Sorcerer, when St. *Paul* confronts him, is, *O full of Subtilty and Miſchief; a Child of the Devil; an Enemy of all Righteouſneſs*; intimating, that to be ſubtil to do Miſchief, is the Genius or Diſpoſition of the Devil's Children; that to be an Oppoſer, is to be conformable to the Devil: Is is the Height of Wickedneſs, not only to do Evil, but to oppoſe Good.

But behold the Judgment inflicted by God on this wicked Inſtrument of the Devil, and the Suitableneſs of his Puniſhment; he wickedly ſhut the Eyes of his Underſtanding againſt the Light of the Goſpel, and God deprives him of his bodily Sight. Thus the Wiſdom of God ſuits his Judgment to the Sin committed in ſuch a Manner, that one may read the Puniſhment: Yet how did God temper Mercy with the Judgment, inflicting Blindneſs on this vile Wretch only for a Seaſon; even the very Judgments of God are medicinal and in Mercy, and are intended rather to reform, than to ruin the guilty Offender.

And now ſee the Succeſs of St. *Paul*'s Miniſtry, and the Sight of this Miracle, on *Sergius Paulus* the Governor; he was thereby converted to the Faith; *When he ſaw what was done, he believed; being aſtoniſhed at the Doctrine of the Lord.* The Word never works ſo kindly, as when received with Admiration. Yet ſometimes the Word works Admiration, where it does not produce Faith. Many marvelled, who never believed; but this Governor was aſtoniſhed, and believed alſo.

Q. Paul *and* Barnabas *having finiſhed their Work in* Cyprus, *whither did they go next?*

A. To *Perga* in *Pamphilia*, and from thence to *Antioch* and *Piſidia*, ſo called to diſtinguiſh it from the other *Antioch* in *Syria*, from whence they were ſent forth, Ver. 1, 2, 3. where their Colleague and Companion *John Mark* withdrew from them, and went no farther with them in the Work. This *Paul* took very ill, as well he might if he left them on Account of the Troubles and Dangers he ſaw attend them in planting and propagating the Goſpel; for he that putteth his hand to the Plough, and then draweth back, juſtly deſerves Cenſure and Reproof.

However, ſuch was the Zeal of the two Apoſtles, that they travel on to *Antioch* with out their Companion, where, entering in one of the Synagogues of the *Jews* on the Sabbath-Day, after reading ſome Sections in the Law and Prophets, as their Manner was, the Rulers of the Synagogue deſired a Word of Exhortation from them; hereupon St. *Paul* makes a moſt excellent Sermon to the People. So ready were the Apoſtles to embrace this Opportunity of preaching the Goſpel, that the Rulers need not aſk them twice: Little Importunity will ſerve to perſuade an holy Heart to undertake the Word of God.

Q. *What was the Purport of St.* Paul's *Sermon at this Time?*

A. This Sermon is partly hiſtorical, and partly practical; in the Prologue or Preface to which St. *Paul* craves the ſerious Attention of his Audience;

withal intimating, that none of them would attend, but only ſuch as truly feared God; *Men of* Iſrael, *ye that fear God, give Audience.* This is the proper Character of a right attentive Hearer.

The Apoſtle begins with a Narrative of the many divine Favours, Benefits and Bleſſings, which the Lord beſtowed of Old upon his People *Iſrael*; namely, his free Choice of them before all other Nations, his wonderful Deliverance of them out of *Egypt*, his great Indulgence towards them for forty Years in the Wilderneſs, as a Mother bears with a Child's Frowardneſs and Stubbornneſs, and his conſtituting a Form of Government for them, under the Judges firſt, and King's afterwards; particularly *Saul*, and *David*, who is firſt deſcribed by his Conformity to the Will of God, he was *a Man after his own Heart*; *he ſhall fulfil all my Will.*

After this general Introduction, the Apoſtle lays down this grand Propoſition, That *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt* and Saviour of the World. This Aſſertion he defends, and proves, 1. From his Stock and Family, according to the Fleſh, foretold by God. 2. From the Teſtimony of *John Baptiſt*, his Forerunner; *Of* David's *Seed hath God, according to his Promiſe, raiſed unto* Iſrael *a Saviour, when* John *had firſt preached the Baptiſm of Repentance.* After this, he makes a cloſe Application of the whole to them; *Men and Brethren, to you is the Word of this Salvation ſent.*

Q. *Pray what do we chiefly learn from theſe laſt Words?*

A. We are here ſhewn a threefold Method, by which the Goſpel was made known to a loſt World. 1. By way of Patefaction and Diſcovery; the Goſpel makes a Diſcovery of Salvation excluſive of every other Way; no Angel in Heaven could have diſcover'd it, if God had not firſt declared it in the Goſpel. 2. By way of Tender and Offer. This joyful Meſſage of Salvation is ſent to every Man's Door, free Grace begs of every Man to accept it. 3. By way of Efficacy and Power; the Goſpel brings with it a convincing and converting Power to put Men into a State of Salvation, and hath alſo an eſtabliſhing and confirming Power to preſerve them in that State. Bleſſed be God, that to every one of us is the Word of this Salvation ſent. What Monſters then are they who profeſſedly oppoſe the preaching the Goſpel? They are Enemies to our Salvation; the only Way to Heaven is by *Chriſt*, the only Way to *Chriſt* is by Faith, and the only Way to Faith is by the Word. It cometh by hearing.

Q. *Pray proceed to explain the following Part of this Sermon?*

A. The Apoſtle goes on to declare the ignominious Death, and glorious Reſurrection of the Lord *Jeſus*, whom he proves to be the true and promiſed *Meſſias*. With reſpect to the Ignominy of his Death, *the* Jews *hanged him upon a Tree.* The Son of God was put to the worſt of Deaths, even that of the Croſs, by the wicked *Jews*: Yet the Apoſtle confeſſes, that neither of the *Jewiſh* Rulers nor People underſtood him to be the *Meſſias*, as they might have done, had they conſidered the Predictions of the Prophets; and therefore their Ignorance would not excuſe them; for the Ignorance or Heedleſsneſs of Men, enjoying the Means and Opportunities of Knowledge, will certainly bring Deſtruction upon them; *the Rulers, becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the Voice of the Prophets, have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

But the Apoſtle, to take away the Scandal of the Croſs, ſhews, that our Saviour's Reſurrection was as glorious, as his Death was ignominious. God wiped away the Reproach of the Croſs by raiſing *Chriſt* from the Grave, and declared him to be his Son with Power, by the Reſurrection from the Dead, *Pſ.* vii. *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee.* As if the Father had ſaid, now thou haſt again recover'd thy Glory, and the Reſurrection-day is to thee a new Birth-Day.

Q. *How is* Chriſt *ſaid to be begotten?*

A. Three ways. 1. Of the Eſſence of the Father from all Eternity. 2. When his Body was formed of the Subſtance of the Virgin's Fleſh. 3. When God raiſed him from the Dead; *This Day have I begotten thee*; that is, declaratively, for he was the Son of God before, even from Eternity; but while he was in a ſuffering Condition, his Divinity was veiled; but after his Reſurrection it was more apparent, and he was then declared to be the Son of God, not then made the Son of God, but then manifeſted to be ſuch by his Reſurrection from the Dead; *This Day have I begotten thee.*

Hence we learn, that *Jeſus Chriſt* was the Son of God, antecedent to his Reſurrection, even from all Eternity; he was declared and manifeſted to be the Son of God, but not made or conſtituted ſuch by the Reſurrection. Then it was his Divinity brake forth as the Sun, after it had been ſhut up under a dark and thick Cloud.

Q. *St.* Luke *next gives us a compendious Account of* David's *Life and Death: Of his Life,* He ſerved his Generation according to the Will of God. *Of his Death,* He fell aſleep, and was gathered to his Fathers, and ſaw Corruption. *How was this applicable to* Chriſt?

A. In the Account of *David*'s Life, is declared his Activity and Zeal for God, he ſerved as well as reigned. This ſerving implies not a ſingle or individual Act, but a Series and Succeſſion of good Actions, through the whole Courſe of his Life; not a confined or ſelf-intereſted Service; he ſerved not himſelf, but his Generation.

The Rule of his Activity was, the Will of God. As he ſerved his Generation, ſo he ſerved God in his Generation faithfully, according to his Will. Thus ſhould all our Service for God and our Generation, be directed by the Word and Will of God.

The Account we have of *David*'s Death is, *He fell aſleep, was gathered to his Fathers, and ſaw Corruption. He fell aſleep.* Death, to the Servants of God, is as Sleep, and no more. As Sleep, it gives Reſt and Ceſſation from, Refreſhment after Labour; and they who ſleep ſhall certainly awake in the Morning of the Reſurrection, to ſee their glorified Redeemer Face to Face.

It is a happy Thing for us to fall aſleep with our Work in our Hand; when Death meets us after a Life ſpent in the Service of *Chriſt*. After *David* had ſerved his Generation, he fell aſleep; it follows, he was gathered to his Fathers; that is, he was buried among his Anceſtors; and ſaw Corruption; that is, his Body corrupted in the Grave, like other Men: But *Jeſus Chriſt*, whom God the Father raiſed to Life the third Day; he ſaw a Diſſolution, but no Corruption; Sin had no Inheritance in him;

therefore Death could have no Dominion over him; but he overcame Death in its own Territories the Grave. Thus the Apoſtle draws his Argument home, that the foregoing Words could not be meant of *David*'s Perſon, but of the *Meſſias*, whom *David* typified and repreſented.

Q. *St.* Paul *having proved his Point, that* Jeſus *was the true, promiſed, and expected* Meſſias, *by his Reſurrection from the Dead, proceeds to tell his Audience, that by the meritorious Satisfaction, and prevailing Interceſſion of this* Jeſus, *Remiſſion of Sins is to be obtained, and Deliverance from the Wrath of God, from which the Law of* Moſes *could not, with all its ceremonial Waſhings and Sacrifices, cleanſe and free them: What Leſſons of Inſtruction does this afford us?*

A. Note here the Impoſſibility of being juſtified by the Law, and the Certainty of our Juſtification by Faith in *Chriſt*; *By him all that believe are juſtified. Chriſt* is the procurer of this Juſtification for them that believe; and the Extent and Meaſure of this Juſtification is very large, even *from all Things, from which we could not be juſtified by the Law of* Moſes.

Q. *What other Topic does the Apoſtle preach upon?*

A. He next exhorts his Hearers to beware, leſt by their obſtinate Rejection of the Way of Salvation now preached to them, they bring ſuch a remarkable Deſtruction upon themſelves now, as God threatned to bring upon their Forefathers of old. The Senſe is, if ye reject this *Jeſus*, and the Way to Life and Salvation by him, ye ſhall be deſtroyed by the *Romans*, as your Anceſtors were by the *Chaldeans*. Sin is as odious to God at one Time as another, and in one People as another; and particularly, the Sin of obſtinate Infidelity is highly provoking to God, and brings down his Wrath; *Behold ye Deſpiſers, and wonder and periſh.*

Q. *What was the Succeſs of this Sermon?*

A. St. *Paul* having concluded his Sermon to the *Jews*, the *Gentile* Proſelytes deſired to hear more of this Subject the next Sabbath-Day. Such as have once had a true Reliſh of the Word of God, are not preſently ſatiated with it, but their Thirſt after it is rather increaſed; neither do they loath the heavenly Manna, becauſe it is frequently rained down about their Tents.

The Apoſtles readily comply with their Requeſt; the Conſequence of which was, the next Sabbath-Day almoſt the whole City got together to hear the Goſpel. But this occaſioned great Envy and Perſecution to the Apoſtles. Hence learn, that a Croud of Hearers, eſpecially of young Converts, commonly ſets the Inſtruments of Satan in a Rage againſt the Miniſters of the Goſpel: *When the* Jews *ſaw the Multitudes, they were filled with Envy.*

The Inſtruments Satan makes uſe of, to carry on this fierce Perſecution againſt the Apoſtles, are thus deſcribed, *Devout and honourable Women, and chief of the City.* Hence learn, that devout Women, and great Men, brought up in Ignorance, are often great Oppoſers of the Truth, and Inſtruments of Perſecution.

Q. *How did the Apoſtles behave, when they ſaw ſo ſtrong an Oppoſition raiſed againſt them?*

A. They, with great Boldneſs and Intrepidity, acquaint them with their Sin and Danger; *Ye judge yourſelves unworthy of Eternal Life.* How ſo? Not directly and formally, but interpretatively, practically, and conſequentially; no doubt but they thought very well of themſelves, and judged themſelves worthy of Eternal Life; but their Practice pronounced them unworthy, and paſſed Sentence upon them, whilſt they acquitted themſelves; for this their Contempt of the Goſpel of Grace, did virtually declare them unworthy of Eternal Life.

Q. *What did the Apoſtles mean to ſignify by their ſhaking off the Duſt of their Feet againſt them?*

A. This ſignified, 1. That the very Earth was polluted where ſuch Refuſers of the precious Goſpel did inhabit, and was therefore to be ſhaken off as a filthy Thing. 2. That they were a baſe People, vile as the Duſt, and that as ſuch, God had now ſhaken them off. 3. That the Duſt of the Apoſtles Feet there left, might be as a Witneſs againſt them, that the Goſpel had been preached to them. This Action of ſhaking off the Duſt of their Feet, was a diſmal Signification of a People rejected by God.

Q. *What it meant by theſe Words,* v. 48. as many as were ordained to eternal Life?

A. Dr. *Hammond*, upon this Place, obſerves, that by the Word *ordained*, is not meant Predeſtination, or God's eternal Decree; for which he produces ſeveral learned Arguments; one of which is, that it is not to be thought that *Luke*, who wrote this, knew of that whole Aſſembly of *Gentiles*, how many were predeſtin'd to Salvation, nor conſequently could he affirm it of them in that Senſe, or that none ſhould ever believe, who this Day did not; whereas on the other ſide he might by the Effect conclude, that all that were rightly qualified at that Time, did receive and believe the Goſpel preached to them, and all that did then truly believe, were ſo qualified, the obſtinate and contumacious *Jews* and Proſelytes oppoſing and perſecuting it. Mean while it muſt be remember'd that theſe Qualifications are not pretended to have been originally from themſelves, but from the preventing Graces of God, to which it is to be acknowledged due, that they ever are pliable or willing to follow *Chriſt*, though not to his abſolute Decree of diſtinguiſhing them, whatſoever they do, unto Salvation.

Chap. XIV.

Paul *and* Barnabas *preach at* Iconium; *many believe; a Diviſion ariſes, they fly into* Lyſtra, *and preach the Goſpel.* Paul *heals a Cripple, for which* Barnabas *and he are counted Gods;* Paul *rebukes and directs them to worſhip the true and living God. The* Jews *ſtir the People to ſtone* Paul; *he with* Barnabas *depart to* Derbe, *and afterwards return to* Lyſtra, Iconium, *and* Antioch; *and having ordained Elders, and recommended the Diſciples to the Lord, they come to* Pamphilia *and* Attalia, *and relate to the Church what God had done by them.*

Q. WHAT *Account does this Chapter give of the Labours and Travels of* Paul *and* Barnabas?

A. In this Chapter we find *Paul* and *Barnabas* in their fourth Journey to plant and propagate the Chriſtian Faith, and are here arrived at *Iconium.*

nium. Theſe two great Apoſtles were united in their Friendſhip, and in the Work of God; *They went both together into the Synagogue.* And as their Unity, ſo was their conſtancy remarkable, in performing their Duty, notwithſtanding all the Oppoſition they met with from their furious Perſecutors; tho' the unbelieving *Jews* ſtirred up the *Gentiles* againſt the Apoſtles, yet they continued preaching in the Synagogues.

Great was the Succeſs with which it pleaſed God to crown the Apoſtles Labours; *a great Multitude both of* Jews *and* Greeks *believed*; and that which conſtantly attends the Succeſs of the Miniſtry of the Word, namely, the Envy and Oppoſition of wicked Men, exaſperated the *Gentiles* againſt the Brethren.

Q. *In what Manner did the Apoſtles preach the Goſpel?*

A. They ſpake boldly; that is, openly in the Synagogues, where with great Freedom and Plainneſs of Speech they aſſerted Truth, condemned Error, reproved Sin, and denounced Judgments againſt impenitent Sinners; with a meek, but zealous Boldneſs; knowing that if they had not been bold for *Chriſt*, they could not at the great Day be bold before him.

Note alſo the Time of their preaching at *Iconium*; it was not one or two, or a few Sermons preach'd there, but *a long time they abode ſpeaking boldly to the Lord.* A conſtant Courſe of preaching is neceſſary, to root that Word, which a Sermon or two often leave looſe and unfixed; the end of the Miniſtry is to build up, as well as to bring in, and this is done by Conſtancy in preaching, and an exemplary Life.

Q. *What was the Succeſs of their Miniſtry?*

A. God was pleaſed greatly to honour the Word in the Mouth of his Miniſters; confirming their Doctrine by Miracles; *he gave Teſtimony by the Word of his Grace, and granted Signs and Wonders to be done by their Hands.* The Miracles the Apoſtles wrought, were the convincing Cauſe, of the Credibility of the Apoſtles Doctrine and Teſtimony.

On the Apoſtles ſo ſtrenuouſly preaching the Goſpel, follow great Diviſions; *the Multitude was divided.* Not that the Goſpel is the Cauſe of Diviſion, but accidentally the Occaſion of it. The ſacred Inſtitutions and Ordinances of *Chriſt*, are not to be quarelled with, or objected to, becauſe through Man's Corruptions they breed Differences, Diſcords, and Diviſions.

Q. *Was this Diviſion attended with any ill Conſequences with reſpect to the Apoſtles?*

A. This Diviſion of the Multitude, was the Cauſe of a Perſecution to the Apoſtles; *the City was divided, and an Attempt was made to uſe the Apoſtles deſpitefully, and to ſtone them.* What ill Uſage did the Embaſſadors of *Chriſt* meet with, at the firſt Publication of the Goſpel! The unkind World treated them as if they were not fit to live, driving them from Place to Place, and perſecuting them from City to City. The Apoſtles however take a prudential Care of themſelves; *they were aware of it, and fled* Lyſtra *and* Derbe; according to *Chriſt's* Command, *when they perſecute you in one Cty, flee unto another. Chriſt* allows his Miniſters a Liberty of Flight in time of Perſecution, and that they may preſerve their Lives for future Service. We muſt not expect our Safety by a Miracle, when we may have it by the uſe of Means; yet probably it might not be Fear, or Deſire to ſave their Lives, which made the Apoſtles flee; but becauſe they were unwilling to loſe time there, when their Miniſtry was obſtructed, and when they ſaw the Goſpel rejected. God knows how to order thoſe Things which are intended for its Prejudice, to tend to the Furtherance of the Goſpel. Thouſands had never heard of *Jeſus Chriſt*, if Perſecution had not driven the Miniſters of the Goſpel to them.

Q. *Upon this Perſecution the Apoſtles thought proper to flee; where do we find them next, and how employ'd?*

A. The fifth Journey the Apoſtles took, in the Service of their Maſter, was to *Lyſtra* and *Derbe.* Here their work was to preach the Goſpel; which done, God honoured *Paul* with the working of a glorious Miracle, for the Confirmation of what he preached.

The Subject of this Miracle, was a Man who had been a Cripple from his Mother's Womb, and conſequently *had never walked.* Such Defects as are from Nature, can only be relieved by the God of Nature.

It deſerves our Notice here, what an extraordinary Spirit of diſcerning was at ſome Times, and upon certain Occaſions, found with the Apoſtles: St. *Paul* enjoy'd that extraordinary Gift of diſcerning Spirits, which at this Time the Apoſtles had. The like had St. *Peter*, when he diſcerned the Falſhood and Hypocriſy of *Ananias*, and *Simon Magus.*

The Gift of working Miracles, and diſcerning Spirits, were for a Time conferred on the Apoſtles for confirming their Teſtimony, but are long ſince ceaſed in the Church; the Reaſon of which is, the Goſpel being ſufficiently eſtabliſhed and confirmed, there is no longer need of ſuch extraordinary Teſtimonies of the Truth of it.

This Miracle was real; it was no lying Wonder; the Man not only walked, but leaped for joy, to ſhew that he was perfectly cured, and thoroughly recover'd: All God's Works are perfect; they whom he cures, are effectually cured.

Q. *What Influence had the light of this Miracle on the Minds of the People of* Lyſtra?

A. They aſcribe the Honour of this Miracle to their Dunghill-deities, not to the true God. Such was the blind Superſtition of theſe poor Pagans, that believing the Gods were come down to them in the Likeneſs of Men, they called *Barnabas Jupiter*, who was their chief God; and *Paul Mercurius*, whom they accounted the Meſſenger and Interpreter of the Gods. How blind are the Principles of corrupt Reaſon in fallen Mankind! How forcible is an evil Cuſtom, received by Tradition from our Forefathers! And how hard a Matter is it, to rectify ſuch Miſtakes in Religion, as Time and general Conſent have rooted and riveted in the Minds of Men?

Again; obſerve how far Pagan Superſtition tranſported theſe Men; they come to the Gates of the Houſe, where the Apoſtles had lodged, bringing Oxen, trimmed with Garlands of Flowers, according to their heatheniſh Rites; with a real Intention to offer Sacrifices to them. This afforded no ſmall Diverſion to *Satan*, who laughed to ſee the ſuperſtitious *Lyſtrians* adore the Apoſtles, and adorn them with the Names of their heathen Gods, expecting from this Action ſome great Advantage to himſelf.

Q. *How did the Apoſtles behave on this extraordinary Occaſion?*

A. Obſerve with what Indignation and Diſdain, Deteſtation and Abhorrence the Apoſtles reject this vile Idolatry! They tell them they were Men of like Paſſions, and in the ſame Condition of Mortality with themſelves, and that their Buſineſs was to turn them from their Idols, which were mere Vanities and nothing, compared with the living and true God, who made them and all the World.

Obſerve farther in what Manner the Apoſtle deſcribes the true God; he ſtiles him the living God, that made the glorious Fabrick of Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all Things therein; a good God, that giveth Rain and fruitful Seaſons, filling his Creatures Hearts with Food and Gladneſs; intimating, that whatever concerns the Happineſs and Felicity of Man's Life, is wholly derived from God; and that there is no Nation, or Perſon under Heaven, to whom God exhibits not evident Tokens of his Goodneſs.

Note alſo the Character the Apoſtles give of former Times in which the Heathen-World lived; *In Times paſt they were ſuffered to live in their own Ways*; that is, of old God ſuffered all Nations (except that of the *Jews*) to walk in their own Ways. The Meaning is, he did not check nor ſtop them in their ſinful Courſes, as he did his own People the *Jews*. Yet we muſt not underſtand the Apoſtle abſolutely, but comparatively only; for every Perſon, and every Nation have, at leaſt, had the Stop of the Light of Nature; but every Nation has not had the Stop of the Light of the Goſpel, of Ordinances, the Preaching the Word, the Motions of the Holy Spirit; theſe the *Jews* had; but the *Gentiles* had not; in this Senſe God ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own Ways; he did not give them his Word, his Statutes, &c. and this was a ſore Judgment.

CHAP. XV.

Difference about Circumciſion. Paul *and* Barnabas *go to* Jeruſalem *about this Queſtion, where it is debated and decided, and a Letter written to the converted* Gentiles *at* Antioch. Paul *and* Barnabas *being at Variance, depart one from the other*; Barnabas *with* Mark *to* Cyprus, *and* Paul *and* Silas *to* Syria *and* Cicilia.

Q. *WHAT is chiefly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. In this Chapter we have an Account of the firſt and moſt famous general Council held at *Jeruſalem* for the Deciſion of this Queſtion, Whether the *Gentiles* converted to *Chriſtianity,* and living among the *Jews,* ſhould be compelled to be circumciſed, and obſerved the ceremonial Law. Which was determined in the Negative.

This Diſpute took its Riſe from *certain Men who came down from* Judea *to* Antioch, and urged the Neceſſity of Circumciſion to the converted *Gentiles,* excluding them from eternal Salvation, unleſs they ſubmitted to it; although Circumciſion was not commanded but only to the Poſterity of *Abraham,* and as to them alſo, was aboliſhed at the Death of *Chriſt.*

But how zealouſly does the meek Apoſtle St. *Paul,* oppoſe this antichriſtian Deſign of introducing Circumciſion into the *Chriſtian* Church? Paul *and* Barnabas *had no ſmall Diſputation with them*; he that could *become all Things to all Men,* could not become Sin to any Man; he therefore enters the Liſt with them, and earneſtly contends for the Faith of the Goſpel, urging that by the Death of *Chriſt* we are freed from the whole Ceremonial Law; and that if Circumciſion was retained, for the ſame Reaſon all the other Ceremonies ought to be obſerved; for the circumciſed Perſon was obliged to obſerve the whole Ceremonial Law.

Q. *What Courſe do the Diſciples take to put an End to this Controverſy?*

A. They very prudentially reſolved to ſend *Paul* and *Barnabas* to *Jeruſalem,* where, in a full and free Synod, the Matter might be debated, and finally decided.

Here note, that the uſe of Synods, or general Aſſemblies of the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Chuch, for deciding of Controverſies, for determining Matters of Faith, and directing to Matters of Practice, as it has been of antient Authority in the Church of *Chriſt,* ſo it is of ſingular Benefit and Advantage both to Miniſters and People.

In the next Place we are told, how that great, but humble Apoſtle St. *Paul,* though nothing inferior to the chiefeſt of the Apoſtles, was content to be a Servant and Meſſenger of the Church to the Apoſtles. The more Holineſs a *Chriſtian* has, the greater is his Humility; it is the great Deſign of the Goſpel to make us and keep us humble.

Q. *Theſe two Apoſtles being arrived at* Jeruſalem, *and a Synod convened, how did they behave themſelves before that venerable Aſſembly, and what was their Reception?*

A. Obſerve with what Pleaſure and Satisfaction *Paul* and *Barnabas* make Report of the Succeſs of their Miniſtry, in the Converſion of the poor *Gentiles,* and with what Joy the Report was received and entertained; *It cauſed great Joy among the Brethren.* Nothing more rejoices the Hearts of Believers than to hear of the Converſion of Souls to *Chriſt.*

With great Reverence and Reſpect the Church received and entertained thoſe laborious Apoſtles *Paul* and *Barnabas*; they had great Veneration and Regard paid them for their indefatigable Labours in the Converſion of the *Gentiles.* Hence learn, that double Honour is due to thoſe Miniſters of *Chriſt* who labour in the Word and Doctrine, and perform their Duty to God and their People, with Zeal and Application, as becomes Perſons of their holy Character and Profeſſion.

Q. *Is it not ſurprizing that ſuch groſs Errors ſhould ariſe in the Church, at a Time when the Apoſtles were directed by the unerring Dictates of the Holy Ghoſt?*

A. The Spirit of Infallibility, with which the Apoſtles were certainly endued at that Time, did not prevent the riſe of Diſputes and Controverſies in the firſt Ages of the Church, nor yet ſilence ſuch Diſputes when riſen; much leſs can a pretended infallible head of the Church now do it.

Q. *What Meaſures did the Apoſtles take to ſuppreſs this Error?*

A. *The Apoſtles and Elders came together to conſider of this Matter,* to conſult about it, and debate upon it. For though the Apoſtles were inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, yet they made uſe of their own Reaſon and Judgment for the Deciſion of this Controverſy. God's Inſpirations did not make the Apoſtles Conſultation needleſs, either for ſatisfying themſelves, or ſilencing Gain-ſayers.

Q. *The Council being met, what was the Point controverted; who were the Managers of the Debate; and what were the Arguments uſed on this ſolemn Occaſion?*

A. This firſt and moſt famous Council being aſſembled, the Matter in Controverſy came to be debated, namely, Whether Faith in *Chriſt* was not ſufficient to Juſtification, unleſs Circumciſion, and an Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, were joined together.

The Perſons who managed this Debate, were the three great Apoſtles, St. *Peter*, St. *Paul*, and St. *James*. The firſt whoſe Speech is recorded, is St. *Peter*; from whence the Papiſts infer, that he, as Head of the Church, ſpake firſt, and conſequently the Pope, whom they will have to be St. *Peter*'s Succeſſor, ought to have the firſt and chief Voice in all General Councils: But all this is but Preſumption; for we find at Ver. 13. St. *James* then Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, ſays, *Hearken unto me*; and at Ver. 19. gives the definitive Sentence, ſaying, *My Sentence is*, or, *thus I judge and determine*. Had St. *Peter* ſaid this, it had been a better Proof of his Pre-eminency, and made a much louder Noiſe, than *Feed my Sheep*.

The Argument St. *Peter* brings to prove that the believing *Gentiles* might be juſtified without Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, runs thus; The Way of Juſtification for all Men, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, is one and the ſame; but *Cornelius*, a *Gentile*, with his whole Family, by the Bleſſing of God upon my Miniſtry, was converted and juſtified without being circumciſed; therefore Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, ought not to be impoſed as neceſſary to Juſtification and Salvation.

This Argument the Apoſtle illuſtrates, by declaring that what was done to *Cornelius* and his Family, was by the ſpecial Command of God, who gave Teſtimony of his Approbation of what was then done, by ſending down the Holy Ghoſt upon him and his, as well as upon us and ours, by purifying their Hearts with Faith.

Note here, the Character St. *Peter* gives of the Ceremonial Law, he calls it a Yoke, too heavy to be borne even by the *Jews* themſelves, much more the *Gentiles*, whoſe Necks God never deſigned ſhould bear this Yoke, and which was intended for the Seed of *Abraham* only.

Q. *Why was the Law of Ceremonies called a Yoke?*

A. Becauſe, 1. Of their Number and Variety. 2. Their Burthen and Difficulty. 3. Their Charge and Expence; ſo many Bullocks, Rams, and Lambs, for a Sacrifice, that the Miſers of this Age would think themſelves undone with the Expence. 4. Their Inſufficiency; they were only Shadows of good Things to come, and could not make the Obſervers of them perfect.

God never intended that his People ſhould be juſtified by their Obedience to the Ceremonial Law; but that being preſſed by the Weight, and pinched with the Uneaſineſs of the Yoke, they ſhould ſeek unto *Chriſt* for Righteouſneſs and Life, who alone was the Fulfiller of it. There was this Difference between the Ceremonial and Moral Law; the Ceremonial was therefore good, becauſe God commanded it; the Moral was therefore commanded, becauſe good. *Chriſt*, by his Death, abrogated the former, but, by the Obedience of his Life, fulfilled the latter.

Q. St. Peter *having thus opened the Nature of the Queſtion in Debate, who ſpoke next to it?*

A. The ſecond Speech made in this Council, was that of *Barnabas* and *Paul*, who declared the Miracles God had enabled them to work among the *Gentiles*, whom therefore, though uncircumciſed, God approved; hence they conclude very well, that the Miracles, wrought among, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcending upon, the *Gentiles*, was God's approving Teſtimony, that the believing *Gentiles*, without Circumciſion, ſhould find as leſs Acceptance with God, than the believing *Jews*, who were of the Circumciſion.

Q. *In what Manner was this great Controverſy decided?*

A. Theſe Apoſtles having delivered their Opinions, St. *James* makes the third and laſt Speech in this General Council. Where we may obſerve, how he puts the Council in Mind of the ſpecial Favour and Grace of God in ſending the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, which he calls his viſiting of them, and the Deſign of God in that gracious Viſitation, namely, *to take out of the* Gentile *World People for his Name*; that is, a People to honour and glorify, to advance and magnify his his holy Name.

With what Wiſdom and Caution does St. *James*, Preſident of the Council, proceed to the final Deciſion of this Controverſy! He propoſes a Mean betwixt the two Extremes, between thoſe who would have the *Moſaic* Rites impoſed, and thoſe who would have none at all; deſigning thereby, that neither the *Jews* ſhould be too much offended, nor the *Gentiles* too heavily burdened; but that brotherly Love be maintained between both.

St. *James*, in deciding this Controverſy, appeals to Scripture; *To this agree the Words of the Prophets, as it is written*: Not to the Authority of the Council; the holy Canon of Scripture ought to over-rule all Debates; this is the infallible Judge, to which all Councils muſt appeal, and from which lies no Appeal.

The Sum of the Council's Determination was this, That Circumciſion ſhould not be impoſed on the *Gentiles*, that the *Gentiles* however ſhould ſo far *Judaize*, or comply with the *Jews*, as to abſtain from Meats offered to Idols, from Things ſtrangled, from Blood, and from Fornication: All which are called indifferent Things, becauſe the three firſt were made ſo by the Death of *Chriſt*, and the fourth, namely, Fornication, was ſo reckoned among the *Gentiles*.

But though the Apoſtles were the infallible Deciders, yet the Elders, and the whole Church, unanimouſly conſented; there was a general Acquieſcence in this apoſtolical Deciſion; *It pleaſed the Elders, and the whole Church*. Then the Determinations of the Council are committed to writing, and diſpatched by the Members of their own Church to that at *Antioch*.

Q. *The Council having thus determined the Diſpute, order their Opinion to be drawn up in Writing to be incloſed in an Epiſtle directed to the converted* Gentiles *at* Antioch: *What were the Points chiefly inſiſted on in this Epiſtle?*

A. In this decretal Epiſtle is obſervable, 1. A ſharp Reproof of thoſe falſe Apoſtles, who firſt ſtarted this Controverſy. 2. The Courage and Conſtancy of *Paul* and *Barnabas* are highly commended. 3. *Judas* and *Silas* are mentioned to teſtify, that thoſe Decrees were not forged or counterfeited. 4. That a due Obſervation of them conduce much to their Advantage.

Obſerve farther, the divine Authority of theſe Decrees, they were dictated and directed by the Holy Ghoſt; *It ſeemed good unto the Holy Ghoſt, and to us*; that is, it ſeemed good unto us, being directed and aſſiſted by the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe Inſpiration and Conduct we have followed, not to impoſe unneceſſary Things upon you. Where note, that the Holy Ghoſt is againſt impoſing unneceſſary Things as neceſſary, and making them the Terms of Church Communion. The four Things here called *neceſſary*, were ſo, becauſe two of them, namely, Fornication, and abſtaining from things offered to Idols, were of a ſimple and abſolute Neceſſity: The other two, the abſtaining from Things ſtrangled, and from Blood, were of an accidental and temporary Neceſſity for the preſent Time, and to avoid giving Scandal to the weak *Jews*, till they ſhould better underſtand their Liberty in *Chriſt*; for afterwards St. *Paul* ſhews, that *no Creature of God is unclean, but that unto the pure, all things are pure*, 1 Tim. iv. 4.

Q. *In the latter Part of this Chapter is related the memorable Difference between* Paul *and* Barnabas, *which had its Riſe, from the Motion of the former to the other, to viſit the Churches they had planted. What Reflections occur to you on this remarkable Paſſage?*

A. This Motion of St. *Paul*, *Barnabas* readily complied with; but deſire he might take his Nephew *John Mark* along with them. This St. *Paul* refuſes, becauſe he abruptly left them at *Pamphylia*, and did not accompany them in their hazardous Journey to preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*; this weighed more than his Conſanguinity or Nearneſs of Blood to *Barnabas*, hereupon a ſharp Conteſt roſe between them; inſomuch that thoſe two great and good Men parted, *Barnabas* going to *Cyprus*, and St. *Paul* to *Cilicia*; but God ſo over-ruled this Evil, that their Separation tended to the Publication, and farther ſpreading of the Goſpel.

Hence learn, that the holieſt and wiſeſt of Men, are but Men; Men of like Paſſions with other Men, and whilſt on this ſide Heaven, not wholly free from paſſionate Infirmities. Theſe two great Apoſtles here verified by their Actions, what they affirmed before in their Words, *Acts*. xiv. 15. *We are Men of like Paſſions with you.*

Laſtly obſerve, how this Reflection upon *Mark's* Faint-heartedneſs in declining the Hardſhips and Hazards of the Miniſtry, made him for the future more vigilant and valiant in the Cauſe of the Goſpel, which occaſions that kind Salutation which St. *Paul* gave him, *Coloſſ.* iv. 10. *Mark* was humbled for his Sin, and afterwards became profitable to St. *Paul* for the Miniſtry, was his Fellow-labourer; and the Apoſtle gives a ſpecial Charge to the *Coloſſians* to entertain him kindly whenever he ſhould come to them; *Marcus, Siſter's Son to* Barnabas, *when he comes unto you, receive him.*

CHAP. XVI.

Paul *circumciſes* Timothy, *and takes him in his Journey with him; gives the Church the Decrees of the Elders of* Jeruſalem; *is forbidden to preach the Word in* Aſia. Paul, *by a Viſion, is invited into* Macedonia. Lydia's *Heart opened; ſhe and her Family are baptized.* Paul *diſpoſſeſſes a Damſel, for which he and* Silas *are ſcourged and impriſoned. They ſing praiſes to God in Priſon; the Doors opened by an Earthquake; the Jailor intending to kill himſelf, is prevented by* Paul; *he believes, and, with his Houſe, is baptized. The Magiſtrates ſend to let them go;* Paul *pleads his Privilege of a* Roman, *and will be releaſed by themſelves only, which they comply with.*

Q. WHAT *was* Paul's *Reaſon for circumciſing* Timothy; *ſince but a little before, he gave his Opinion againſt that Ceremony?*

A. St. *Paul* intending to take *Timothy* along with him, as his Companion in preaching the Goſpel, that his Miniſtry might be more acceptable to the *Jews*, who knew him to be uncircumciſed, takes and circumciſes him; but at the ſame time, *Titus*, who was a *Gentile* both by Father and Mother, him he would not circumciſe, nor ſuffer the Yoke of Circumciſion to be laid on the *Gentiles*, which God had never impoſed, nor would he ſeem to countenance thoſe, who held Circumciſion neceſſary to Salvation. What an admirable Pattern has this great and humble Apoſtle left to Poſterity! He became all Things to all Men, and either uſed or refuſed indifferent Things according as the Uſe or Diſuſe of them tended to the Church's Edification, and Mens Salvation.

Q. *How do we find* Paul *and* Silas *employed afterwards?*

A. As *Paul* and *Silas* paſſed through the Cities in *Syria* and *Cilicia*, they delivered to the ſeveral Churches as they went along, thoſe Decrees to obſerve, which were ordained by the Apoſtles and Elders in Council at *Jeruſalem*.

Theſe Decrees they delivered to the ſeveral Churches in the ſeveral Cities through which they paſſed; ſo many Cities, ſo many Churches: The whole Company of Chriſtians within a City, and the adjacent Territories, were wont to be framed into a Chriſtian Society or Church, and ſeveral Congregations made but one Church. To ſet up Churches againſt Churches, and to gather Churches out of Churches, has no Precedent, Warrant, or Countenance from any Phraſe of Scripture, or Practice of the Primitive Times.

The Deſign of the Apoſtle in delivering theſe Decrees, was, to bring all the Churches to an Unity in Judgment, and Uniformity of Practice, that they might be all of one Heart and one Way.

Here is likewiſe mentioned the Succeſs of delivering theſe Decrees to the Churches; *ſo were the Churches eſtabliſhed in the Faith, and increaſed in Number daily*; thus a double Bleſſing accrued to the Churches, the one of Confirmation, *they were eſtabliſhed*; the other of Augmentation, *they increaſed in Number daily*. As Diviſions ſhake and unſettle, ſo Unity and Uniformity eſtabliſh and confirm the Church of *Chriſt*, *ſo were the Churches eſtabliſhed*.

Q. *In the Sequel of this Chapter we find the Apoſtles directed by the Spirit, where, and in what manner to employ their Labours: But why had the Holy Ghoſt a greater Regard for one Place than another?*

A. The Apoſtle and his Companions being deſirous of planting the Goſpel in ſeveral Provinces are forbidden by a ſecret Impulſe of the Holy Spirit. The very Journeyings of the Apoſtle, and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, as well as their divine Exerciſes, were all ordered by the Wiſdom and Will of God; they might neither ſpeak nor act, nor walk, but according to divine Direction.

While the Apoſtles were thus travelling from from Place to Place, St. *Paul* is directed by a Viſion, or Meſſage from Heaven to the preaching and publiſhing the Goſpel, both as to the Place where, and the Perſons to whom he was to deliver it. This Viſion appeared to him in the Night? the Subject of it is a Meſſenger and Meſſage from *Macedonia*, requeſting Help for the *Macedonians*.

Hence learn, that of all Diſtreſſes, the want of the Goſpel calls loudeſt for Relief and Help; for thoſe who want the Goſpel, want every thing that is worth having; they want *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is revealed only by the Goſpel; they want Communion with God; they want the Comfort and Refreſhment of Ordinances, and they will at laſt want Heaven and Salvation; and, what is worſt of all, they are not ſenſible they want any thing.

Hence learn, that the ſending the Goſpel to one Nation, Place, or People, and not to another, proceeds from the determinate Pleaſure and Will of God, and is the Effect of his own free Grace; *Stay not in* Aſia, *go not into* Bithynia, *but come over into* Macedonia: *Even ſo Father, for thus it ſeemeth good in thy ſight.*

Q. *What is there remarkable in the Converſion of* Lydia?

A. In the Relation of this Converſion, the Holy Ghoſt is very particular in acquainting us with the ſeveral Circumſtances of it. She is deſcribed by her Perſon and Sex, a certain Woman; by her Name *Lydia*; by her Calling and Employment, a Seller of Purple; by her City, *Thyatira*; by her pious Diſpoſition, ſhe worſhipped God.

Her Converſion is deſcribed; 1. By the efficient Cauſe of it; *The Lord opened her Heart.* 2. By the inſtrumental Cauſe of it, her *attending to the Things that were ſpoken by* Paul. 'Till God opens the Heart of a Sinner, the preaching of the Goſpel little affecteth, though never ſo plainly and perſuaſively preached. But when once the Heart is opened, the Ear will not be ſhut, but the Perſon is truly attentive to the preaching of the Goſpel. *The Lord opened* Lydia's *Heart, and ſhe attended.*

Lydia being converted, receives the Seal of her Converſion and Salvation, *She was baptized, and her whole Houſe.* It was the uſual Method of the Apoſtles to baptize Houſholds; not that they were ſure that they were all Believers, or that the Governors of the Family could make them ſo; but it was their Duty to devote all their Power to God, and to do their utmoſt by Perſuaſion; and God uſually ſucceeded their Endeavours.

Here note, that the Church of God, for above ſeventeen hundred Years, never refuſed to baptize the Infants of believing Parents, as being taken into Covenant with themſelves. We may therefore more reaſonably require the *Anabaptiſts* to prove, by expreſs Scripture, that Children were not baptized by the Apoſtles (when they baptzied whole Families, yea whole Nations, according to their Commiſſion, *Matthew* xxviii. 19.) than they can require us to prove that they were. *Lydia* and her Houſe were baptized, ſays the Text; that is, ſays the *Syriac*, *Lydia*, and her Children. *Lydia*, by Reaſon of her Faith in *Chriſt*, having a Right to Baptiſm, all her Family, on her undertaking to bring them up in the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, were admitted to the Ordinance with her.

We have here likewiſe a ſpecial Evidence of the Sincerity of *Lydia*'s Converſion, ſhe conſtrained the Apoſtles, with an amiable Violence, by fervent Intreaties and polite Importunities, to receive the Civilities of her Houſe. Sincere Converts have ſo great a Veneration for the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, that they expreſs it by all poſſible Acts of Reſpect and Kindneſs; *If ye have judged me faithful, come into my Houſe, and abide there; and ſhe conſtrained us.*

Q. *In the ſixteenth aud following Verſes, we have an Account of a Damſel that was poſſeſſed, and of* St. Paul's *delivering her from the Power of the Devil; in which are ſome Difficulties that want explaining?*

A. As the Apoſtles went towards the forementioned Place of Prayer, a Damſel poſſeſſed with the Devil, by whoſe Inſpiration ſhe foretold future Things, and revealed many Secrets to thoſe who conſulted her, followed them, crying out, *Theſe are the Servants of the moſt high God, who declare unto us the Way of Salvation.* The Father of Lies ſometimes ſpeaks the Truth, though never for Truth's ſake, but to promote his own Ends, and to draw Men on to believe him.

But obſerve how St. *Paul* rejects this Teſtimony of the Devil concerning himſelf, even though he ſpake the Truth. A Teſtimony to Truth from the Father of Lies, is enough to render Truth itſelf ſuſpected. Wherefore St. *Paul* exerts the Power he received from *Chriſt*, and in his Name ejects the Devil from his Tenement, and diſpoſſeſſed the Damſel; *Paul* ſaid, *I command thee, in the Name of* Jeſus, *to come out of her.* Theſe Words St. *Paul* uttered by the Motion of the Holy Spirit, and relying, by Faith, on the Promiſe of *Chriſt* made to his Apoſtles, *Mark* xvi. 17. That, *in his Name they ſhould caſt out Devils.*

Satan being thus diſpoſſeſſed, reſolves to be revenged on *Paul*; to that End he raiſes a hot Perſecution againſt him, and quickly gets him in Priſon. Whenever we trouble and diſturb Satan, he will be ſure to trouble and diſturb us; whoever oppoſes him, muſt expect to be oppoſed by him.

The Inſtruments the Devil uſes on this Occaſion, are the Rulers and the Rabble; *The Multitude roſe up, and the Magiſtrates rent their Cloaths, caſt them into the inner Priſon, and made their Feet faſt in the Stocks.* Then were the holy Apoſtles, and innocent Servants of *Jeſus Chriſt*, impriſoned, and treated as the vileſt Malefactors, only for oppoſing Satan, and ſeeking the welfare of Mankind.

Note here, that the Cauſe and Ground of all this Perſecution, was the Love of Money. The Maſters of the Damſel perceiving their Gain was gone, and that ſhe could get them no more Money by telling People their Fortunes, they ſtir up a Perſecution againſt the Apoſtles, caſt them into the ſtrongeſt Part of the Priſon, and, to make all ſure, ſet them in the Stocks.

Q. *How did the Apoſtles employ themſelves in Priſon?*

A. The Apoſtles being thus impriſoned, yet have their Priſon-comforts; though their Bodies were in Priſon, and their Feet faſt in the Stocks, even then they ſang Praiſes to God; theſe holy Servants of God were not only meek and patient, but joyous and cheerful under their Perſecution; they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame for him who had undergone all manner of Indignities and Reproach for them.

They enjoy ſweet Communion with God in Prayer; *At Midnight they prayed, and the Priſoners heard them.* No Place can be improper, no Time unſeaſonable for Prayer. No Priſon can bolt out God, nor deprive us of our Communion with him. Prayer will ſcale the Walls of Heaven, in ſpight of all the Oppoſition both of Earth and Hell.

Q. *In what Manner were their Prayers anſwered?*

A. The Return to their Prayer is ſudden and ſenſible; *Suddenly there was a great Earthquake.* This was an infallible Sign of God's Audience; that he heard them, and would ſtand by them. Behold the powerful Efficacy of St. *Paul's* Prayer! it ſhook the Heavens, the Heavens ſhook the Earth, and the Earth ſhook the Priſon, even to the Foundations of it. *Prayer,* ſays one, *overcomes God with his own Strength.*

Q. *What Effect had this Earthquake upon the Gaoler?*

A. It occaſioned ſuch an Heart-quake in him, that to be rid of it, he reſolves to murder himſelf. What miſerable Conſolations the carnal and unregenerate World have recourſe to, when Trouble and Diſtreſs overtake them? Having no God to fly to, a Halter is their Remedy, and ſo plunge themſelves into endleſs Troubles, and eternal Torments.

But how kind was the Apoſtle to his cruel Keeper! He who hurt the Apoſtles Feet in the Stocks, hears him crying out to him, in the Midſt of the Earthquake, *Do thyſelf no Harm.* Good Men have ever been Men of tender and compaſſionate Diſpoſitions; not ſo ſollicitous for their own Liberties, as others Lives. The Apoſtles might have been ſilent, and ſuffered the Gaoler to have killed himſelf, and ſo have made their own Eſcape: But they preferr'd his eternal Salvation, before their own temporal Liberty and Happineſs; Paul *cried with a loud Voice,* ſaying, *Do thyſelf no Harm.*

The Gaoler, on this friendly Admonition, and being convinced by this miraculous Earthquake, that the Supreme Being was concerned for the Apoſtles Defence, comes trembling into the Priſon, falls at the Apoſtles Feet, and begs to know, *What he muſt do to be ſaved?* As if he had ſaid, Now I ſee and acknowledge, that the Doctrine taught by you, is the Truth of the eternal God, and that you are his true and faithful Servants, tell me therefore, what I muſt do to attain Salvation? They anſwer, *Believe on the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *&c.* That is, if you and your Family receive the Doctrine of *Jeſus Chriſt,* and regulate your Lives according to it, you ſhall be ſaved.

Here note, that Scorners and Perſecutors will become Tremblers when once God hath touched their Hearts, and wounded their Conſciences with Remorſe for Sin. The Gaoler here came trembling, and fell down before *Paul* and *Silas*; trembling under a Senſe of his Guilt, and falling on his Knees, to aſk them Forgiveneſs.

Q. *What do we learn from this ſudden Converſion of the Gaoler?*

A. The trembling Sinner is always inquiſitive; an awaken'd Conſcience will put a Man upon enquiry what he ſhould do; and the Subject of his Enquiry is, the Buſineſs of his Salvation; *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Such trembling and troubled Souls muſt be directed to *Chriſt,* and to Faith in him, as the only Way to obtain Salvation; *Believe on the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *and thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

What a ſudden and wonderful Change was wrought in this Gaoler? Before his Converſion he was cruel, barbarous, and hard-hearted; now he is meek, merciful, and compaſſionate. He who before had beat, impriſon'd, and hurt the holy Apoſtles Feet in the Stocks, now pities them, mourns over them, and waſhes their Stripes. Religion, and the Grace of God, will mollify the hardeſt Hearts, and change the moſt barbarous and bloody Diſpoſitions. This ſavage Perſecutor, this Tyger of a Gaoler, is diſpoſſeſſed of his Fury, and, by Grace, turned into a Lamb for Meekneſs, and a Dove for Innocence.

Q. *The Gaoler having received the Faith himſelf,* he and all his Houſe are baptized: *Was this done by Dipping or Sprinkling?*

A. It is very improbable that the Gaoler, and his Houſhold, were baptized by Dipping: We do not deny the Lawfulneſs of baptizing by Immerſion; but we cannot aſſert the abſolute and indiſpenſible Neceſſity of it. St. *Paul,* who was newly waſh'd, and his Sores dreſs'd (occaſioned by Stripes) cannot be ſuppoſed either to go out himſelf, or to carry the Gaoler and all his Family, in the dead of the Night, to the River, or Pond, to baptize them; neither is it at all probable, that St. *Paul* himſelf was baptized by Dipping; ſee *Act* ix. 18, 11. *He aroſe, and was baptized; and when he had meat, he was ſtrengthened.* The Context may convince us, that he was baptized in his Lodging, being ſick and weak, having faſted three Days, and being in a very low Condition; it is improbable that *Ananias* ſhould carry him out to a River in that Condition, to plunge him in cold Water. Dipping then, ſurely, cannot be ſo eſſential to Baptiſm, as, for want of it, to pronounce the Baptiſm of all the reformed Churches throughout the World, to be null and void, as ſome amongſt us do.

Q. *What other Evidence does the Gaoler give of his ſincere Converſion?*

A. One ſpecial Evidence of the Gaoler's Converſion was, he brings the Apoſtles, who were the Inſtruments of his Converſion, into his Houſe, and having waſhed their Stripes, refreſhes their Nature with Meat and Suſtenance. True Converſion changes Mens Thoughts of God's Miniſters, and cauſes them to love and honour, to ſuccour and ſupport thoſe who before were the Subjects of their Scorn and Ridicule, their Hate and Oppreſſion.

How happy did this new Convert now think himſelf? He was full of Joy and ſpiritual Rejoicing; *He rejoiced.* Sweet are the Fruits of Faith in *Chriſt!* Peace with God, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. *How happen'd it that the Magiſtrates were ſo willing to releaſe them?*

A. The probable Occaſion of this their Goodwill, was, 1. The Terror of the Earthquake, which had frighten'd them into a Senſe of their Duty. Or, 2. The Conſciouſneſs of their own Guilt, from their injurious Treatment of the Apoſtles, in ſcourging them, and throwing them into Priſon, only for caſting a Devil out of a poſſeſſed Servant. The Conſciences of the worſt of Men, at one Time or other, make furious Reflections upon them for their Cruelty and Injuſtice towards the Miniſters and Members of *Jeſus Chriſt*. The Apoſtles, conſcious of their own Innocence, refuſe to be releaſed in a private and clandeſtine Manner: They were unjuſtly laid in Priſon, and without any legal Trial ſcourged and bound, contrary to the Law and Privileges of the *Romans*; and therefore the Apoſtles inſiſt on their Privilege, and would not accept of a clandeſtine Diſmiſſion, after their publick, ignominious and unjuſt Puniſhment.

By this we are taught, that it is allowable to plead our Right by Law, againſt unjuſt Magiſtrates; and though we muſt not return Evil for Evil, yet we may uſe all lawful Means to redreſs or remove our own Grievances.

Thus did St. *Paul* here, yet more for the Goſpel's ſake than his own; leſt the Word of God ſhould be deſpiſed with their Perſons.

What an Awe God has over the Conſciences of Men in general, and of Magiſtrates in particular? They ſtoop to their Priſoners, and beſeech them to come out of Priſon, and depart from the City. Thus can God do for all his Servants who have been baſely and deſpitefully uſed. He can make their Enemies their Friends and Benefactors, and their very Perſecutors their Deliverers.

But, as deſirable as Liberty was, ſuch was their honeſt Reſolution, and bold Integrity, that they choſe rather to go without it, than to accept it upon diſhonourable Terms, ſuch as might caſt a Slur on their Innocence, or an Aſperſion on the Goſpel. Had they been privately releaſed, they might have been publickly ſlandered, for making their Eſcape by Compact with the Gaoler, whom they had now made their Friend; therefore they ſtay in Priſon till publickly diſcharged, and then they go forth; *The Magiſtrates beſought them, and brought them forth.* The Uſe theſe good Men made of their reſtored Liberty was, They *viſit the Brethren and comfort them,* confirm and ſtrengthen them in the Faith of *Chriſt*.

CHAP. XVII.

Paul, *at* Theſſalonica, *preaches* Chriſt; *ſome believe; others raiſe an Uproar, and draw* Jaſon *before the Governor.* Paul *and* Silas *preach with Succeſs at* Berea. *The* Jews *ſtir up the People againſt them.* Paul *conducted to* Athens; *is grieved to ſee their Idolatry; diſputes with the* Jews. *The* Epicureans *and* Stoicks *mock him; he is brought before the* Areopagus, *and examined; he ſhews their Superſtition and Idolatry; inſtructs them in the true Worſhip; and exhorts them to Faith and Repentance: Some mocked, and others believed.*

Q. HOW *do we find St.* Paul *employing himſelf in this Chapter?*

A. In this Chapter we find St. *Paul*, in proſecuting his Travels, comes to *Theſſalonica*, the chief City of *Macedonia*, where he gathered a Church, afterwards known for thoſe two excellent Epiſtles he wrote to them. Being arrived at *Theſſalonica*, he goes into a Synagogue, not into a private Houſe. As *Chriſt* taught daily in the Temple, ſo did his Apoſtles in the Synagogues; it was the falſe Apoſtles that crept into Houſes, and led captive ſilly Women, as St. *Paul* complains, 2 *Tim.* iii. 6. Truth ſeeks no Corners, but rejoices to be publickly ſeen; beſides, the Goſpel was firſt to be preached to the *Jews*, and upon their Rejection to the *Gentiles*. Accordingly, the Apoſtle takes the Advantage of the Synagogue where all the *Jews* met, and preaches to them *Jeſus*, and the Reſurrection.

Q. *What was the Subject of this Diſcourſe?*

A. The firſt great Point the Apoſtle inſiſted on, was, to prove that this *Jeſus* whom he preached, was the long expected *Meſſias*; in order to which he quotes the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, and compares them with what was done and ſuffered by *Chriſt*, explaining every Thing to their Underſtanding; ſatisfactorily demonſtrating to their Judgments, that *Jeſus* was the *Chriſt*.

Q. *Was this Sermon attended with any remarkable Succeſs?*

A. Some believed, others were blinded; ſome converted, others enraged. Some, though but a few of the *Jews*, were converted; but many Proſelytes, and not a few of the *Gentiles*, and a conſiderable Number of devout Women, and honourable Matrons of the City. But the unbelieving *Jews* confederate with the lewd Fellows of the City, and raiſe a Perſecution againſt the Apoſtles.

Here note, that the worſt Enemies the Goſpel ever met with in the World, were the unbelieving *Jews*. Here the *Jews*, who believed not, engaged the Rabble on their Side, who are the fitteſt Tools to raiſe Perſecution againſt the Miniſters of *Chriſt*.

Note farther, that the Devil's Method to raiſe Perſecution againſt the Miniſters and Members of *Chriſt*' ever was, is, and will be, falſly to charge them with the moſt enormous Crimes. Here the Apoſtles are charged with Innovation and Sedition, with *turning the World upſide down*. Thus afterwards, in the primitive Times, whatever Calamities befel the States and Kingdoms; whatever Commotions and Tumults aroſe in Nations, *Chriſtianity* was always charged with them, and the *Chriſtians* were inſtantly caſt to the Lions; but it is not the Goſpel, but corrupt Nature, and Mens ungoverned Paſſions, which breed all the Diſturbances in the World.

Q. *Did the Apoſtles eſcape at this Time?*

A. Obſerve how mercifully the Lord delivers the Apoſtles, at this Time, out of the Hands of their Perſecutors; *They ſought them in the Houſe of* Jaſon, *but found them not.* The Devil now miſs'd of his Prey, for the Lord hid the Apoſtles here, as he did the Prophets, *Jeremiah* and *Baruch*, Jer. xxxvi. 25. having farther Service for them.

Q. *How did their Perſecutors behave, when they found the Apoſtles had eſcap'd out of their Hands?*

A. When theſe enraged Perſecutors perceived that the Apoſtles had eſcaped their Hands, they fell foul on *Jaſon*, who had entertained them, and dragged him before the Rulers and Magiſtrates; charging him as an Abetter of Treaſon; yet God ſo over-ruled the Hearts of theſe Magiſtrates, that they offer'd no Violence to *Jaſon*, but only took Security of him, for his own and others Appearance before them, when call'd for.

Q. *What became of the Apoſtles afterwards?*

A. The Brethren having ſecured the Apoſtles from the Rage of their Enemies, *ſend them away by Night unto Berea.* There St. *Paul* makes the *Jews* Synagogue his preaching Place, as he had done before at *Theſſalonica*, and did afterwards at *Athens*. Thus the Apoſtle kept cloſe to his Commiſſion, in preaching *Jeſus Chriſt*, firſt to the *Jews*, to wait upon them with the repeated Tender of the Goſpel, till they put it far from them, and judged themſelves unworthy of eternal Life, before he addreſſed himſelf to the *Gentiles*.

Q. *What is the Character given of theſe* Bereans?

A. *They were more Noble than thoſe of* Theſſalonica; that is, of a more ingenuous, and mild, and pliable Diſpoſition; not ſo prejudiced againſt the Goſpel, but thought it worthy their Examination and ſerious Enquiry. To be of a teachable Temper, and tractable towards the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, is the beſt Sort of Gentility and Nobleneſs. The *Bereans* were better bred, and better deſcended, than the *Theſſalonians*, not by civil human Dignity, but by ſpiritual and divine Deſignation; God gave them this Preparation of the Heart, and made them to differ from their Neighbours.

But for what were theſe *Bereans* ſo highly commended? Why, for *ſearching the Scriptures*, which were then in the vulgar Tongue, and the Laity had them in their own Hands; the common People read them, and heard them read, and ſearched and examined them themſelves, yet were ſo far from incurring Cenſure, that God himſelf commended them for it. Thus theſe *Berean Chriſtians*, who are ſo honourably mentioned for their diligent ſearching the Scriptures, ſtand a noble Pattern for the Imitation of all ſucceeding *Chriſtians*.

Q. *Did the Apoſtles Enemies let them remain unmoleſted at* Berea?

A. The inveterate Malice of the unbelieving *Jews* follows the Apoſtles wherever they go. No ſooner did theſe malicious Perſecutors hear of the Apoſtles being at *Berea*, but they hurry after them from *Theſſalonica*, and again ſtir up the People againſt them. As the Miniſters of *Chriſt* are never weary in the Service of Souls; ſo Perſecutors are reſtleſs, and will compaſs Sea and Land, to harraſs and drive the Ambaſſadors of *Chriſt* from City to City, and, if it were in their Power, extirpate them from the Earth.

Q. *To what Place did* Paul *next retire from his Perſecutors?*

A. St. *Paul* being thus purſued to *Berea*, and his Life in great Danger, from his enraged Perſecutors, the Brethren ſend him to *Athens*, and detain *Silas* and *Timotheus*: Not that St. *Paul* had leſs Courage to ſtand the Shock of Perſecution than the other two; but he was more uſeful, and conſequently more obnoxious to the unbelieving *Jews*, and his Life more ſought after. To preſerve which, his Friends uſe an innocent Policy; they pretend to ſend him away by Sea; but really he goes on Foot to *Athens*. Human Policy and Prudence may lawfully be practiced, in Subſerviency to divine Providence.

Q. *St.* Paul *being come to* Athens, *what does he firſt ſet himſelf about?*

A. The great Wickedneſs and Idolatry of the *Athenians* did vehemently affect this great Apoſtle; *His Spirit was ſtirred*, when he ſaw the City full of Idols, and wholly given to Idolatry. Their Idolatry put them into a Paroxiſm, as the Word ſignifies; his Mind was in a Concuſſion by contrary Paſſions: He was affected firſt with Sorrow and Grief, that a City ſhould be ſo learned, and yet ſo blind; next with Indignation and Anger, at the ſuper-abounding Idolatry of that learned People; and laſtly with a fervent Zeal, and an ardent Deſire to undeceive them, and to inform them better. In Order to which he takes all Opportunities, both in the City, in the Synagogue, and in the Market-Place, to preach to the People, and to diſpute with the Philoſophers; particularly the *Epicureans*, who denied the Providedce of God, and the Immortality of the Soul; who placed all their Happineſs in Pleaſure, and held nothing to be deſirable but what delighted their Senſes; a Doctrine which made them rather Swine than Men.

He oppoſed alſo the Stoicks, who placed all Happineſs in the Want of Paſſion, denied all Freedom of Will, and aſcribed all Events to an abſolute and irrevocable Fate; and having diſputed with them, he preaches *Chriſt* crucified, riſen, and glorified, to them. But theſe Things were in their Eſteem, mere Whims and Novelties of his own Invention; and therefore he is reckoned no other than a Babler and a Setter-forth of ſtrange Gods.

Hence learn, that *Chriſt* and his Doctrine, the Goſpel, was the grand Stumbling-Block both to the *Jew* and *Gentile*, Learned and Unlearned. St. *Paul* took great Pains to convert *Athens*, yet here his Succeſs was leaſt; though it was a learned Univerſity, where no doubt were Men of excellent natural Accompliſhments; and if moral Diſpoſitions and Improvements of natural Abilities had fitted Men for Grace, we might have expected a great Number of Converts of *Athens*; but inſtead of that, we find many mocking, but very few believing.

Obſerve here how wonderfully Providence interpoſed for the Apoſtle's Preſervation. They hauled him away to the *Areopagus*, which, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, was their Senate or ſtanding Court of Judicature, by whoſe Laws and Orders any new Gods were received among them; and therefoae as ſoon as they conceived that *Paul* was a *Promulger of new and ſtrange Deities*, they bring him to the *Areopagus* to have him examined, what Gods they were that he thus preached.

Q. *What Treatment did the Apoſtle meet with foom the* Areopagus?

A. It deſerves Remark, how tenderly *Paul* was treated in this high Court; although this Court had condemned *Diagoras*, *Protagoras*, and *Socrates* himſelf, for undervaluing their Gods, and bringing their Deities into Contempt; yet the Apoſtle's Life is not only ſpared by theſe Judges, but they ſpeak candidly and kindly to him, and requeſt him to gratify their Curioſity, by informing them of this Novelty, which they were ſo inquiſitive after, and deſire to hear more of his divine Diſcourſe.

St. *Paul* having this Encouragement, begins his excellent Sermon after this Manner; 'Ye Men of 'Athens have a great Number of Gods whom ye 'ignorantly worſhip: The God therefore whom 'ye acknowledge not to know, and yet profeſs 'to worſhip, is he whom I preach unto you; for 'as I paſſed up and down in your City, viewing 'your Altars and Images, I found an Altar with 'this Inſcription, TO THE UNKNOWN 'GOD.' Some Diſcoveries may be made of God, even by the Light of Nature; theſe Heathens had no other Guide or Director, yet own a God, and that a Worſhip is due to him by the Erection of an Altar.

Here is the Darkneſs of Nature declared; the Altar, though erected to God, yet it is to a God unknown. So that natural Light in its moſt elevated and raiſed Improvements, can make no full and ſaving Diſcoveries of God.

Q. *To what Deity do you ſuppoſe that Altar was erected, which, as St.* Paul *took Notice, was inſcribed* To the unknown God?

A. Dr. *Hammond* ſays, there is a famous Story in *Laertius*, that in a Time of Peſtilence at *Athens*, *Epimenides* being accounted by them one moſt beloved of God, was conſulted by them, who appointed this Luſtration for the City. Taking many Sheep, black and white, he brought them into the *Areopagus*, and permitted them to go whither they would, appointing ſome to follow each, and whereever they lay down, there to kill and ſacrifice them, *to a fit God*, or to a God to whom Sacrifices were due, and ſo the Plague ceaſed. ‘ Whence, *ſaith he*, it is, that among the *Athenians* in publick Places there are Altars that have no Names on them:’ *Lucian* in his *Philopater*, ſays, ‘ By the unknown God at *Athens*.’ And, ‘ We have found and worſhipped the unknown God at *Athens*, and will ſtretch out our Hands to Heaven, and give Thanks to him.’ *Pauſanias* ſays, that there were at *Athens*, ‘ Altars to unknown Gods.’ The ſame Author mentions among the *Lydians* or *Perſians* ſome Sacrifices, that by Invocation of an unknown God, and a Form which he calls barbarous, becauſe not underſtood by the *Grecians, the God of* Abraham, *&c.* brought Fire down and burnt the Wood upon the Altar, which is a Deſcription of, and may intimate that Fact of *Elias* in *Ahab*'s Time, who, by invoking the Name of God, brought down Fire upon the Altar.

Q. *St.* Paul *takes this Occaſion to prove to them the Exiſtence of a Supreme Being: What are his Arguments for that Purpoſe?*

A. St. *Paul* admirably adapts his Diſcourſe to the Capacities, Sentiments, and Opinions of his Hearers, who where Philoſophers, particularly the *Epicureans*, and *Stoicks*: The former, inſtead of a God, and a wiſe Providence to make and govern the World, brought in Fortune or blind Chance, to bear all the Sway. The latter, though they acknowledged God, yet introduced a rigid Fatality as ſuperior to the Deity, denying to Men all Freedom and Liberty of Choice. St. *Paul* therefore ſets himſelf to prove a God and Providence, to the Excluſion both of Fate and Fortune: And then from the very Nature and Notion of God, he infers the Folly and Abſurdity of the Pagan Superſtition.

The Apoſtle's Argument to prove the Being of God, and Providence, is drawn, firſt, from the Works of Creation; *He hath made the World, &c.* The inviſible God is made viſible in his Creatures, and the Being of God demonſtrated in the Formation of a World of Creatures; particularly of Man; *In him we live and move,* &c. Here are three great Benefits enjoy'd by human Natnre, Life, Motion, and Being, all derived from God, and demonſtrative of his Being. Life is a moſt valuable Bleſſing, Motion, that is, to move, as we do, at Pleaſure, with Choice and Eaſe, to help ourſelves, and to aſſiſt others, is at once an Evidence of God's Being, and of his Bounty. Being is a Mercy; but to be as we are, is a double Mercy; that we do not creep and crawl, as Worms and Toads, but are built high upon the Earth, with wonderful Wiſdom and Care; and that a Soul, which is an immortal and eternal Being, inhabits within us.

Next the Aopſtle demonſtrates the Certainty of a Divine Providence; *He hath determined the Times that are fore-appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitations.* That is, God has as it were chalked, and drawn a Line, where the Bounds and Habitations, whither the Dominions or Poſſeſſions of Men ſhould be extended, and were confined. The common Bleſſings of God are not diſpenſed without a ſpecial Providence, and the ſpecial Providence of God in upholding, diſpoſing, and governing of the World, as much proves the Being of a God, as the general Creation of it: Every Hour's Preſervation is virtually a new Creation, and both of them ſufficient Demonſtrations of his Being and Bounty.

The Duty which the Apoſtle infers on Man's Part; *That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, and find him, who is not far from every one of us.* To follow God in his way, and to propoſe God as our End, contains the Sum of all Duty.

The Apoſtle, in his Diſcourſe, quotes one of the Heathen Poets. This Poet was *Aratus*; what he attributes to *Jupiter*, St. *Paul* applies to the true God; *We are his Offſpring*; it deſerves Remark, that, for the Honour of human Learning, and the Lawfulneſs of making uſe of it in Sermons, the Holy Ghoſt is pleaſed three Times to mention the Heathen Poets; of *Aratus* here; of *Menander*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 33. of *Epimenides*, *Tit.* i. 12. Truth is God's, where-ever it is found; as a Mine of Gold is the King's, in whoſe Ground ſoever it is diſcover'd.

The Force of the Apoſtle's Argument, *foraſmuch then as we are the Offſpring of God*, &c. is this, ſeeing God is our Creator, we cannot ſuppoſe him to be the Workmanſhip of our Hands, as an Image of Gold, Silver, or Stone is; and conſequently it is moſt irrational for Man, to adore an Image made by his own Hands, for, and inſtead of God.

The Times of this Ignorance God winked at; that is, tho' God in his infinite Patience hath long born with the World's lying in Darkneſs and Ignorance; yet now by cauſing his Goſpel to be preached to all Nations, he calls and invites them to Repentance, to forſake their Idols, and ſerve the true God. The Motive the Apoſtle urges to enforce this Duty is, that God hath appointed a Day wherein he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs by his Son Jeſus *Chriſt*, of which he had had already given aſſurance, by raiſing him from the Dead.

Q. *What was the Succeſs of this Sermon?*

A. It was various and different, ſome of his Hearers derided, others doubted, and ſome few believed. Of the laſt were *Dionyſius* and *Damaris*, and ſome others. *Dionyſius* was one of the great Council of the *Areopagus*, whoſe Converſion might probably have an Influence on others, and it was no ſmall Honour and Advantage to the Goſpel to be owned by ſuch an honourable Perſon as this *Dionyſius* was.

Thus ends the Apoſtle's divine Sermon before the great Council at *Athens*, which yielded St. *Paul* very few Converts; for which, what other Reaſon can be aſſigned, than that theſe grave Philoſophers, profound Scholars, venerable Senators and Citizens, who had a Name of Wiſdom throughout the World, were too wiſe to be ſaved by the Fooliſhneſs of Preaching?

CHAP. XVIII.

Paul *comes to* Corinth, *and works with* Aquila *and* Priſcilla; *preaches and teſtifies to the* Jews, *that* Jeſus *is* Chriſt; *ſhakes the Duſt from his Garment againſt the Blaſphemers, and departs. Coming to the Houſe of* Juſtus, *he baptizes* Criſpus, *and all his Houſe, with many of the* Corinthians. Paul, *in a Viſion, is encouraged to preach in that City a Year and ſix Months. The* Jews *accuſe him to* Gallio, *who refuſes their Accuſation. They beat* Soſthenes. Paul *with* Aquila *and* Priſcilla, *ſail to* Epheſus; *he leaves them there, and lands at* Cæſarea; *from thence travels to* Antioch. Apollos, *preaching at* Epheſus *the Baptiſm of* John, *is more perfectly inſtructed in the way of God, by* Aquila *and* Priſcilla; *paſſes into* Achaia; *helps them that believe, and mightily convinces the* Jews, *that* Jeſus *is the* Chriſt.

Q. ST. Paul *finding but ſmall Encouragement at* Athens, *departs to* Corinth: *How did he employ himſelf there at his firſt Coming.*

A. St. Paul being now at *Corinth*, an utter Stranger, and wanting Money to ſubſiſt himſelf, Providence directs him to the Houſe of *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*; who being of the ſame Trade with him, Tent-makers, he works with his own Hands to maintain himſelf, that he might not be troubleſome to others.

We are alſo told of the Occaſion that brought *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* to *Corinth*, namely, that *Claudius* the *Roman* Emperor, had baniſhed them from *Rome* and *Italy*.

Note here, that the Apoſtle had learned a Trade (Tent-making) before he was called to the Miniſtry. The moſt learned Education among the *Jews*, never exempted them from being inſtructed in ſome Handicraft Trade, it being a traditional Proverb amongſt them, that he who does not learn his Child a Trade, teaches him to be a Thief. Accordingly St. *Paul* having learned to make Tents (much in uſe in thoſe hot Countries) he works upon it at *Corinth* for his Subſiſtence. Men ſeparated to the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, may, and ought upon an Exigency to labour for their Living; not but that the Apoſtle had power and ſufficient Warrant to challenge Maintenance for his Preaching (as he often intimates in his Epiſtles) but there was no ſuch Church at *Corinth* to maintain him; and when there was, they were moſtly of the poorer ſort of People, and he would give them a ſufficient Demonſtration, that he ſought not theirs, but them; therefore he requires no Maintenance, leſt it ſhould hinder the Succeſs of his Miniſtry, but works at his Trade with *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*.

Q. *What Method did he take to eſtabliſh a Chriſtian Church there?*

A. It is ſaid, *he was preſſed in Spirit and teſtified*, that is, reaſoned with them, namely, the *Jews* with great Vehemency and Earneſtneſs of Affection, as well as with great Judgment concerning the *Meſſias*.

The Apoſtle here, as in other Places, makes the Synagogue his preaching Place, hoping to gather the Beginning of his Chriſtian Church out of converted *Jews*. Still the Apoſtle kept to his Commiſſion; to preach the Goſpel, firſt to the *Jews*, and afterwards, upon their rejecting it, to the *Gentiles*.

Q. *Did he meet with any Obſtruction from the* Jews?

A. Yes; *they oppoſed themſelves*, and blaſphemed, they oppoſed his Doctrine, reviled his Perſon, and blaſphemed *Chriſt*, whom the Apoſtle preach'd.

But the Apoſtle clears himſelf of the Blood of thoſe *Jews*, who had thus obſtinately rejected the Goſpel which he had been preaching to them; *he ſaid, your Blood be upon your own Heads; I am clean.* The faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* ſhall never have the Blood of a periſhing People laid to their Charge; they having warned them of their damnable State, and diſcover'd the way of Life and Salvation to them, deliver their own Souls; whilſt the People they preached to, periſh in, and for their Sins.

The Oppoſition St. *Paul* met with, while he lodged at the Houſe of *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, obliged him to change his Quarters, and take a new Lodging in the Houſe of *Juſtus*, a *Gentile*, but a Proſelyte, and near to the Synagogue, where St *Paul*'s preaching Work lay.

Q. *What was the Succeſs of* Paul's *Miniſtry at* Corinth?

A. Criſpus the Chief Ruler of the Synagogue, and his Houſhold are brought to believe, and were Baptized: After whoſe Example, many of the *Corinthians* believed alſo. Rulers and great Men are like Looking-glaſſes in the Places where they live, by which many dreſs themſelves. But, notwithſtanding the good Succeſs St. *Paul* met with, he ſeems through human Frailty, to be poſſeſs'd with Fear, and under an Apprehenſion of Danger from the *Jews*, and accordingly had Thoughts of leaving the City; but God diſſipates his Fears with a gracious Promiſe of his Preſence with him; *be not afraid, for I am with thee, and no Man ſhall ſet on thee, to hurt thee.* When the Miniſters of *Chriſt* are aſſured of his Preſence with them, this will raiſe them above all their Fears, and encourage them to abide in any Place, and amongſt any People, be the Difficulty or Danger what it will.

Another Encouragement God gives the Apoſtle to continue at *Corinth*, is, *I have much People in this City*; that is, here are many Souls whom I deſign effectually to call and bring home by thy Miniſtry; accordingly the Apoſtle continued amongſt them a Year and ſix Months. *Chriſt* had a great Harveſt ripening in that City, to be reaped by the Apoſtle's Miniſtry; and being encouraged with the Promiſe of his protecting Preſence, he commits himſelf to the divine Care, and the Lord both preſerved and proſpered him. Thus, no Oppoſition muſt diſcourage Miniſters in their Duty; they muſt not tamely ſubmit to be the Devil's Slaves, but patiently and chearfully meet all Oppoſition that is made againſt them.

Q. *How did the* Jews *reſent the Apoſtle's great Succeſs in converting the chief Men of the City?*

A. They accuſe the Apoſtle before *Gallio* the Deputy, for perſuading Men to worſhip God contrary to the Law of *Moſes*. Who would think that theſe Men were truly pious, and zealouſly concern'd for the worſhip of God according to the Law? Yet were they wicked Men, and fiery Perſecutors. There is a noiſy Religion in the World; ſome Men think by crying the Church, the Church, and by pleading loud for the worſhip of God, as eſtabliſhed by Law, to attone for all their Immoralities: Praying is good, and ſo is Hearing and receiving the Sacrament, if joined with a conformable Practice; but otherwiſe the Howling of Wolves is as acceptable to Almighty God, as the Prayers of thoſe Men, who call *Chriſt* Maſter, and the Church Mother, but do not the Things they have commanded. It is no matter what Church a wicked Man is of, for it is certain he can be ſaved in none.

Obſerve, what mean and low Thoughts *Gallio* had, and all Perſons prejudiced againſt Religion and the power of Godlineſs have, of ſincere Chriſtianity; *If it be a Queſtion of Words and Names*, ſays *Gallio*. As if he had ſaid, do not trouble me about the Niceties of your Religion, decide ſuch Queſtions among your ſelves; for I will be no Judge in ſuch Matters. The great Men of the World don't much care to trouble their Heads about the Matters of Religion.

But altho' *Gallio* had no Kindneſs for Chriſtianity; yet God at this Juncture made uſe of him as an Inſtrument to ſcreen the Apoſtle from the Rage of his Enemies, inſomuch that he drove his Accuſers from the Judgment Seat. Thus God performed his Promiſe to *Paul, ſuffering no Man to hurt him*; but cauſing *Gallio* the Governor to defend him, who, his Enemies were in Hopes, would have deſtroyed him. If we with a Parity of Intention, concern ourſelves for the Glory of God, he will certainly take care of our Safety, or if any Danger ſhould come, Danger itſelf ſhall do us no Harm.

Q. *What other Works and Travels do we find the Apoſtle engaged in?*

A. St. *Paul* having tarried at *Corinth* a conſiderable Time, at length ſets out from thence, on his farther Labours and Travels; namely, from *Corinth* to *Epheſus*, from *Epheſus* to *Ceſarea*, from *Ceſarea* to *Antioch*, &c. Firſt, he determines to ſail to *Epheſus*; and accordingly at *Cenchrea* (an Haven near to that City) *he ſhaved his Head, for he had a Vow*; that is, the Vow of a *Nazarite*, which he (that is, *Aquila*, ſay ſome, St. *Paul*, ſay others) had before taken upon him (for a Time) whereby he was obliged to abſtain from Wine, ſhaving his Head, and touching of the Dead: but having accompliſh'd his Vow, he ſhaved his Head; and returned to the common way of living: Thus he willingly complied with their Weakneſs, to ſhew that he did not deſpiſe their Law; for which Reaſon he cauſed *Timothy* to be circumciſed, and purified himſelf in the Temple of *Jeruſalem*. Thus by gratifying the *Jews* in complying with the Preſcriptions of the Law, he brought over many of them to the Faith of *Chriſt*. Let not any imagine that this was a ſinful Compliance with the *Jews*, in obſerving a Ceremony which was aboliſhed by the Goſpel; nor cenſure it as a mean and low Stoop in ſo great a Man, to the Humour of the People; for tho' the Ceremonial Rites died with *Chriſt*, yet were they a long Time in burying, and the *Jews* were indulged in the Obſervation of them, till they came to a clearer Sight of their Chriſtian Liberty; accordingly the Apoſtle yielded to them for the preſent in indifferent Things, without Diſſimulation or Blame.

Q. *How did the Apoſtle employ his Miniſtry at* Epheſus?

A. The Apoſtle being arrived at *Epheſus*, taught in the *Jews* Synagogue and reaſoned with them, ſtill having his firſt Regard to his own Countrymen, and tho' he ſuffer'd all manner of Indignities from them, yet he gives them Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line; and with unwearied Diligence, diſpenſes the Word of Life and Salvation to them.

Q. *When St.* Paul *left* Epheſus, *whither did he go next?*

A. Our Apoſtle makes no long Stay at *Epheſus*, but haſtens to *Jeruſalem* to keep the Feaſt there, that is, the Feaſt of the Paſſover; not that he held himſelf obliged to obſerve the Feaſts, or any of the antiquated Ceremonies; but becauſe of the vaſt Concourſe which he knew would be at *Jeruſalem* at the Time of the Feaſt from all Quarters, and which would give him an Opportunity to make *Chriſt* known to great Multitudes.

Here likewiſe is obſervable, the inceſſant Care, Diligence, and unwearied Pains, of this great Apoſtle in travelling from Place to Place, and at ſuch great Diſtance, to preach the everlaſting Goſpel to Sinners. What a Pattern has he left for miniſterial Diligence and Faithfulneſs: What Pains did St. *Paul* take! What Hazards did he run, in planting and propagating the Goſpel of *Chriſt*! In Labours more abundant, in Sufferings above Meaſure! Well might he ſay, *I am able to do all Things thro'* Chriſt *that ſtrengthens me*. And bleſſed be God, the ſame Power which ſtrengtheued him, ſtands ready to ſuccour us; and if ever he calls us to extraordinary Service, he will give extraosdinary Strength.

Q. *The Apoſtle being gone, how were the Churches ſupplied in his Abſence?*

A. It is very remarkable, how the Wiſdom of God provided for the ſeveral Churches, and in the Abſence of our powerful Preacher, ſupplied them with another; when the Providence of God called St. *Paul* from *Epheſus* and *Corinth*, it brought *Apollos* thither; thus what *Paul* planted, *Apollos* watered. The judicious *Calvin* upon this Place, piouſly admires the Providence of God over the Church, in not ſuffering it to be without a ſettle Miniſter; but upon the Removal of one, to raiſe up another.

Q. *What were the Qualifications of* Apollos?

A. It is very obſervable how admirably *Apollos* was qualified for the Work of the Goſpel, and how excellently fitted and furniſhed for the Places he was called to, *Epheſus* and *Corinth*, famous for Philoſophers and Orators; accordingly he is a Man of wonderful Eloquence, and by his profound Knowledge in the ſacred Scriptures, was capacitated both to teach the Truth, and to maintain it.

From hence it appears, that Scripture Knowlege is the choiceſt Qualification, and higheſt Commendation of a Goſpel-Miniſter; *Apollos, an eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures*; without this, he can never truly and ſavingly make known and diſcover Jeſus *Chriſt*; never rightly divide the Word of Truth; never convince Gainſayers either in Opinion or Practice; without this, he can never inſtruct the People fully in their Duty, nor declare to them the whole Counſel of God.

Note here, the great Humility of *Apollos*, altho' he was an Eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures, yet he did not diſdain farther Inſtruction. Thoſe who are moſt knowing, if humble,

ble, are moſt ſenſible of their Ignorance. The Knowledge of the beſt, while on this ſide Heaven is capable of Improvements; *Apollos* knew much, yet *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* enlightened him, ſo that he came to know more. An humble Man will be content to learn of the Women. Theſe poor Tent-makers, *Aquila* and his Wife *Priſcilla*, catechiſe the great *Apollos*, and add ſomething to the Treaſure of his Knowledge.

Q. *In what Manner did* Apollos *apply himſelf to the Work of the Miniſtry?*

A. The Place *Apollos* choſe to ſpeak in, was the *Jewiſh* Synagogue, *he began to ſpeak boldly in the Synagogue.* It was a Cuſtom among the *Jews* to allow a Liberty for learned Men, though no Prieſts, to teach in their Synagogues. Thus *Paul*, tho' of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, and not of *Levi*, was permitted to preach in their Synagogues, as we read every where in this Book. In like manner we read *Apollos* here preaching in the Synagogue; taking Advantage of that Indulgence, which the *Jews* gave him in their Synagogues to preach, and ſpread the Doctrine of *Chriſt*.

CHAP. XIX.

Paul *coming to* Epheſus, *lays his Hands on twelve Diſciples, who receive the Holy Ghoſt. He teaches in the Synagogue, and in the School of* Tyrannus *two Years. The ſeven Sons of* Sceva, *adjuring the unclean Spirit, by the Name of* Jeſus, *are overcome and wouned. Many confeſs their Deeds, and burn their Books of vain Arts.* Paul *purpoſes to go to* Jeruſalem, *and then to* Rome. Demetrius *raiſes an Uproar.* Paul *diſſuaded from entring the Theatre.* Alexander *hinder'd from making his Apology. The Town-Clerk appeaſes the Uproar.*

Q. WHAT *is the Import of that Queſtion, which St.* Paul *put to the twelve Diſciples?* Have ye received the Hoy Ghoſt ſince ye believed? *and of their Anſwer,* We have not ſo much as heard whether there be an Holy Ghoſt?

A. He does not mean in its ſanctifying Operations, but in its miraculous Gifts, as ſpeaking with Tongues, the Gifts of Prophecy and Healing.

To this Queſtion the Diſciples Anſwer. *We have not ſo much as heard whether there be an Holy Ghoſt.* Not that they were ignorant of theEſſence, or Perſon of the Holy Ghoſt; but they had not heard of the Effuſion of the extraordinary and miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, for it was a received Opinion among the *Jews*, that after the Death of *Haggai*, *Zachariah*, and *Malachi*, the Holy Ghoſt, or the Spirit of Prophecy, departed from *Iſrael*. And they never heard that he was returned, or of his being given a-new with his miraculous Gifts.

The Apoſtle ſets them right: They tell him they were baptized unto *John*'s Baptiſm: The Apoſtle tells them, that *John*'s Baptiſm and *Chriſt's* were the ſame for Subſtance, and had both the ſame End, tho' they differ'd in ſome Circumſtances. The Diſciples of *John* believed in *Chriſt* to come; the Diſciples of *Jeſus* believed in *Chriſt* as already come, and were baptized in that Faith: And the Ordinance ſealed unto both the Remiſſion of Sins: Yet it being eſſential unto Chriſtian Baptiſm, to baptize in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, thereby profeſſing ourſelves to be buried and riſen with *Chriſt*, and *John*'s Baptiſm not having this, when the Diſciples heard that, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord *Jeſus*; that is, in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, which is the Eſſence of Chriſtian Baptiſm.

St. *Paul* having baptized theſe Diſciples, lays his Hands on them to confirm them in their Faith; whereupon the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were immediately conferr'd upon them, and they ſpake divers Tongues, which before they underſtood not, and were endued with the Gift of Propheſying; that is, of declaring Things to come, and interpreting the Writings of the Prophets, that they might be fit to teach and inſtruct others.

Q. *What is there particularly obſervable in St.* Paul's *Miniſtry at* Epheſus?

A. St. *Paul* having preached *Chriſt* for the Space of three Months, in the *Jewiſh* Synagogue at *Epheſus*, and the *Jews*, inſtead of embracing the Goſpel, oppoſing it, and blaſpheming *Chriſt* the Author, and contending with him for preaching it, he leaves the *Jews* and their Synagogue, and ſeparates the *Chriſtians* that were at *Epheſus* from them, and inſtructed them daily in a certain Place called, *The School of* Tyrannus. St. *Paul's* Contention here with the *Jews*, ſome conceive, he calls *fighting with Beaſts at* Epheſus, 1 Cor. xv. 32.

Here it is obſervable how it pleaſed God to confirm St. *Paul's* Miniſtry at *Epheſus* by his working Miracles, ſpecial and extraordinary Miracles, inſomuch that Handkerchiefs or Aprons having but touched St. *Paul*'s Body, and being brought unto the Diſeaſed, became a miraculous Means both to cure Diſeaſes and caſt out Devils. Thus, according to our Saviour's Promiſe, his Apoſtles did greater Miracles than himſelf, *John* xiv. 12. not greater in Regard of the Manner, but of the Matter of them: *Chriſt* wrought his Miracles in his own Name, and by his own Power; but the Apoſtles wrought them in the Name, and by the Power of *Chriſt*.

Q. *Is the Gift of Miracles an indubitable Mark of a Church of* Chriſt?

A. It deſerves Conſideration, that although it pleaſed God at the firſt Plantation of the Goſpel by the Miniſtry of the Apoſtles, to confirm *Chriſtianity* by many ſpecial Miracles (as new-ſet Plants are well watered, till they have taken faſt rooting) yet that Church which wants Miracles may be a true Church: Becauſe, 1. There is no Promiſe in Scripture that the Church ſhall perpetually enjoy the Gift of Miracles. That Promiſe, *Mark* xvi. 17. *Theſe Signs ſhall follow them that believe*, &c. was only a temporary Promiſe. 2. We are forbidden to expect Miracles, *John* iv. 48. and forbidden to truſt to Miracles without Scripture, or to regard any Miracle wrought to confirm any Doctrine that is contrary to Scripture, *Deut.* xiii. 3. Becauſe the Miracles of the laſt Times are declared to be the Signs of *Antichriſt*, 2 *Theſſ.* 9, 10.

From all which it follows, that Miracles are no infallible Note of the true Church, as the Papiſts would make it; who alſo produce St. *Paul's* Handkerchiefs, and St. *Peter's* Shadow, Chap. v. 15. as a Warrant for their ſuperſtitious Reliques; but the Text aſſures us, it was God that wrought the Miracles, not St. *Paul*, nor the Handkerchiefs, but God by his Hand. The Miracles of the Church of *Rome*, pretended to be wrought by the Reliques of Saints and Martyrs, are no better than lying Wonders.

It is obſervable, that we read not in any of the *Old Teſtament* that were bodily poſſeſſed with the Devils and evil Spirits; but in the *New Teſtament* we meet with many, both in our Saviour's Time, and in that of the Apoſtles, to the intent that the Power of *Chriſt* might more ſignally appear in their Ejection and Caſting-out.

Q. *We have next the Story of certain Exorciſts, who, attempting to caſt an unclean Spirit out of a Man, in the Name of* Jeſus, *the Man who was poſſeſſed, fell upon, and beat them: What does this teach us?*

A. Hence learn, that Satan defies all human Attempts, and is only conquered by a divine Power. *Jeſus I know, but who are ye?* The Devil would gladly be God's Ape: The *Jewiſh* Jugglers would very willingly have imitated the Apoſtles in caſting out Devils; and accordingly uſed the Name of *Jeſus* as a Charm; but ſaying the ſame Words with the Apoſtle, was of ſmall Import without exerciſing the ſame Faith and Grace; *Chriſt* would not give Power to his Name, when uſed as a Charm.

Here note, that the Devil has, by God's Permiſſion, a Power over thoſe who profane the Name of *Chriſt*: Satan, we ſee, was too hard for theſe Conjurers, he ruſhes upon them, and maſters them, tears their Cloaths, wounds their Bodies, and had not God reſtrained him, had unavoidably deſtroyed them. Satan's Malice is infinite, bnt his Power is bounded.

Q. *Had this ſignal Event any remarkable Effect on the Minds of the People?*

A. Obſerve, how this Execution of divine Vengeance wrought for the Conviction and Converſion both of *Jews* and *Greeks*, *Many believed, and came and confeſſed their ſinful Deeds.* And as an Evidence of their Deteſtation of their former Faults and Follies, they make a Bonfire of all their magical Books, which, as the learned ſay, were valued at eight hundred Pounds. There is no better Evidence of the Truth of a Perſon's Converſion, than cheerfully to part with a very profitable and pleaſing Luſt.

Q. *What other Conſequences followed upon this Defeat of the Powers of Darkneſs?*

A. Satan is highly incenſed at this Succeſs of the Goſpel, and at ſeeing the whole College of diabolical Conjurers by the Apoſtle's preaching at *Epheſus*, brought over, burning their Books, and leaving their wicked Courſe of Life. Hereupon the Devil raiſes a Perſecution againſt the Apoſtle. Let none of the Servants, or faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt*, expect any long Continuance of their Tranquillity in this World, where they are every Day up in Arms againſt Satan, and meditating the Ruin of him and his Kingdom; for which he will ſeek Revenge.

The Inſtruments which the Devil employs on this Occaſion, are *Demetrius* the Silver-Smith, and his Craftſmen: They looked on St. *Paul* as one who impaired their Profit, and greatly ſpoiled their Trade.

Q. *What Trade was it which the Silverſmiths carried on about the Temple of* Diana?

A. The Temple of *Diana* was then one of the Seven famous Structures of the World; and the gold and ſilver Shrines made by theſe Silverſmiths, were certain Models, or Images of this Temple, wherein their Idol-Goddeſs *Diana* was ſet forth; which Shrines, or portable Temp'es, all the People of *Aſia* carried about with them, to ſtir up the more their Devotions towards this Idol. So that this Shrine-making muſt be a very profitable Trade, when all *Aſia* was addicted to Superſtition. No wonder then that *Demetrius*, on ſeeing the Loſs of his Gain, makes an horrible Outcry, and ſets the City in an Uproar: For carnal Men, whoſe Gain is their God and their Godlineſs, reckon themſelves undone when their God Mammon is in Danger: If you take away their Gods, what have they more?

Q. *What Arguments did* Demetrius *make uſe of to ſtir up the People againſt the Apoſtles?*

A. His Arguments were, 1. The Plea of Profit; *By this Craft we get our Gain*; as if he had ſaid, if this Man's Doctrine prevail, our Trade will ſoon fail and come to nothing. This was the ſtrongeſt and moſt cogent argument he could uſe; for tho' an Argument drawn from our own Intereſt is not the moſt weighty, yet it is uſually the moſt perſuaſive. 2. The Pretence of Piety; we are not only in Danger of loſing our Livelihood, but our Religion too; our Goddeſs *Diana* will be deſpiſed, her Temple prophaned, and the Worſhippers ridiculed. This ſoon heated the Rabble, put the Multitude in a Ferment, and cauſed an hideous Outcry for two Hours together. *Great is* Diana *of the* Epheſians! 3. The Plea of Antiquity and Univerſality, and the common Conſent of all Worſhippers; *Diana, whom all* Aſia *and the World worſhipped.* As if *Demetrius* had ſaid, What! ſhall we ſuffer the Temple of *Diana* to be brought into Contempt by the Preachments of this Babbler *Paul*; a Place ſo Magnificent for Structure, being, as ſome ſay, one hundred and twenty Years a building; ſo renowned for the Oracles of the Gods; ſo magnified for the Image that fell down from *Jupiter*; ſo honoured by the Oblations of the Sovereigns of *Aſia*, crouded with the Devotions of the *Epheſians*, and admired throughout the World.

Q. *Had theſe Arguments any Weight with the People?*

A. Great was the Danger our Apoſtle was now in; both his own and the Lives of his Companions ſeemed to be threatened with immediate Deſtruction. This is ſuppoſed to be the Time the Apoſtle hints at, where he ſays, *That after the Manner of Men he had fought with Beaſts at* Epheſus; and this is probably the Deliverance he gratefully commemorates, 2 *Cor.* i. 10. *Who hath delivered us from ſo great a Death, and doth deliver*; *in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver us.*

Q. *Did not the Apoſtle's Courage fail him in this imminent Danger?*

A. Obſervable is St. *Paul's* Courage in the Cauſe of *Chriſt*; he reſolves to adventure his Life by going into the Theatre, there to make an Apology for himſelf and his Companions, and in Defence of the *Chriſtian* Religion: He ſet no Value on his Life, if the Goſpel could receive any Advantage, or the Name of *Chriſt* be glorified by his Death.

Q. *How did he eſcape the Danger?*

A. How is the Wiſdom of Divine Providence to be admired, and adored in directing Methods for the Preſervation of St. *Paul* in the Time of this imminent Danger? God now made not Uſe of the Advice of St. *Paul's* faſt Friends, the Diſciples:

But of thoſe who, very poſſibly, were Enemies to the Goſpel, but on this Occaſion became his Friends, and diſſuade him from entering into the Theatre. Theſe new Friends are called, *certain of the chief of* Aſia; theſe (ſays Dr. *Hammond*) where not Rulers, Governors, Proconſuls, or Procurators, but are ſuppoſed to be Popular Officers or Miniſters, who had the Care of the, Games that were celebrated in Honour of their Gods; and the Office was ſacerdotal.

It is all one with God to ſave by many or by few, by Friends or Foes: For he can make Enemies become Benefactors at his Pleaſure, and command Deliverance for his People without Means, ſometimes by weak and contemptible, by improbable and unlikely, by oppoſite and quite contrary Means.

Who then would not truſt God in a Time of imminent and impendent Danger, whoſe Beck all Nature obeys, and in whoſe Hand are the Hearts, Tongues, and Power of the moſt outragious of his People's Enemies, and who will deliver his Children from all their Troubles?

Q. Alexander *was not ſuffered to defend himſelf, Ver.* 34. *Pray who was he?*

A. Many ſuppoſe *Alexander* to be the ſame who did afterwards much Evil to *Paul*, and to *Timothy*; if ſo, we find here, he was firſt a Proſelyte, then a Profeſſor, next a Confeſſor, almoſt a Martyr; yet, after all an Apoſtate; making Shipwreck of the Faith, for which he was excommunicated by the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* xix. 20. *Of whom is* Hymeneus *and* Alexander, *whom I have delivered unto Satan.* This Excommunication by the Apoſtle, was probably the Provocation that occaſioned him to do the Apoſtle ſo much Miſchief, of which he complains, 2 *Tim.* iv. 14. *Alexander the Copper-Smith did me much Evil; of whom be thou aware alſo.*

Hence learn, that it is poſſible for a glorious Profeſſor to turn a furious Perſecutor. This *Alexander* did not only withſtand the Apoſtle's Perſon, but his Doctrine alſo; for which being excommunicated, he ſought Revenge. Excommunication not only angereth, but enrages wicked and impenitent Men, ſo that inſtead of being reformed, they ſeek Revenge; yet muſt the Cenſures of the Church be executed and inflicted, without either Fear or Favour.

Q. *How was this Uproar quelled?*

A. The Inſtrument which God ſtirs up to ſtem the Tide, and ſtop the Fury of this hair-brain'd Aſſembly, is, the Town-Clerk; who was always preſent at their publick Meetings, and regiſtered all their City Acts. Dr. *Hammond* quotes an Author, who ſays, that this Officer was one who preſided over the ſacred Games, exhibited in the Theatre; that ‘he was honoured and adored as ‘*Apollo*, wearing a white Robe, and a Crown of ‘pure Gold; and being choſen by the Senate and People, he was the better qualified to do what is here affirmed of him, *to appeaſe the People.*

Q. *Is there any Thing in the Town-Clerk's Oration deſerving Remark?*

A. The Oration which the Town-Clerk made on this Occaſion, is full of Craft and Policy, of Fraud and Fallacy; he tells the Multitude that St. *Paul* and his Friends preached againſt Images only that were made by Hands; whereas theirs was not ſuch, but one that fell down from *Jupiter.* It was his Duty, his Office, to oppoſe the Rage of the Rabble, with Reaſon and Authority; he ought not to have done it fallaciouſly. But we muſt conſider he was a *Pagan*, and that his Buſineſs was to quiet the People; accordingly he encourages the credulous Multitude to believe what the crafty Prieſts had inſinuated into them, that the Image which they worſhipped was not made with Hands, but fell immediately from Heaven; hoping thereby to gain more Veneration to their Idols, and get more Money into his Pocket. Thus God made uſe of the worldly and ſomewhat wicked Eloquence of this Heathen, to preſerve St. *Paul.*

Obſerve farther, how God opens the Mouth of this Man to vindicate the Innocence of the Apoſtle and his Companions; *Theſe Men,* (ſays he,) *are neither Robbers of Churches, nor yet Blaſphemers of your Goddeſs.*

It is very probable that the Apoſtle, and the *Chriſtians* in *Epheſus*, had wiſely aſſerted *Chriſtianity*, without much reflecting on *Diana*, which would but have enraged the Multitude; much leſs did they offer any Violence to her Temple or her Image.

Q. *Do you imagine then, that the Apoſtles did not preach againſt Idol-Worſhip?*

A. It deſerves Remark, that though the Apoſtles were great Enemies to theſe Mens Idolatry, yet they offer no Violence to their Idol Temples, becauſe ſuch a publick Reformation was not their Buſineſs, but the Magiſtrates; therefore they endeavour by preaching to caſt Idols out of the People's Heart, but not by Violence to throw them out of the Temple.

Q. *What Inſtructions do we learn from the Event of this Affair?*

A. From this Inſtance of the wonderful Preſervation of St. *Paul* and his Companions at *Epheſus*, we learn that Safety ever-more accompanies Duty; and that we ſhall certainly be preſerved and protected, if God thereby may be the more glorified; but ſometimes Danger is better than Safety; and a Storm more uſeful than a Calm: And bleſſed be God for the Aſſurance of his Promiſe, that all Things, be they Mercies or Afflictions, Comforts or Corrections, Dangers or Deliverances, Life or Death, all ſhall work together for Good to them that love God, and are found ſtedfaſt in their Obedience to him.

CHAP. XX.

Paul *departs to* Macedonia, *thence to* Greece, *and by* Philippi *to* Troas; *preaches till Midnight.* Eutychus, *being a-ſleep, falls out of a Window, dead;* Paul *raiſes him to Life. Coming to* Miletus, *he calls the Elders of the Church, ſhews his Care and Faithfulneſs in the Miniſtry, foretels what ſhould befal him at* Jeruſalem, *and declares he had publiſhed to them the whole Counſel of God; exhorts them to watch over God's Flock; takes his Leave of them, and ſhews that his own Hands miniſtred to his Neceſſities; kneels down and prays with them, who accompany him with great Sorrow to the Ship.*

Q. DID St. Paul *continue long at* Epheſus *after his Eſcape from ſo imminent a Danger, as is related at large in the foregoing Chapter?*

A. St. *Paul*, we find here, yields to the Advice given him by his Friends in the foregoing Chapter, and not only refuſes, at their Entreaties, to appear publickly in the Theatre, but withdraws himſelf from the Fury of his Perſecutors, leaves *Epheſus*, and retires into *Macedonia*; yet not ſo much for his own Safety (for he was willing to die *Chriſt*'s Sacrifice, if he might live no longer *Chriſt*'s Servant) as for the Church's future Advantage, that the Diſciples might be no farther perſecuted at *Epheſus* on his Account.

Hence learn, that the Miniſters of the Goſpel may depart from a Place and People, where their Miniſtry has been very ſucceſsful, when driven from thence by the Fury of Perſecution.

Q. *Where do we hear of St.* Paul *after this?*

A. Though St. *Paul*, for theſe Reaſons, withdrew from *Epheſus*, he is again in Danger of his Life from his own Countrymen in *Macedonia*; *The* Jews *laid wait for him.* The wicked *Jews*, when they could not prevail on St. *Paul* by open Force, contrive his Ruin by ſecret Treachery; but God gave him Knowledge of their Deſign, which he avoided, by turning another Way.

Hence we are taught, that it is high Preſumption, and a bold tempting of God, to run headlong upon evident and imminent Dangers, and not to improve all Opportunities and lawful Means to avoid and decline them.

Q. *Who were his Companions?*

A. The Perſons who accompanied St. *Paul*, and miniſtered to him, are here mentioned by Name, that is, *Sopater*, *Ariſtarchus* and *Secundus*, *Gaius* and *Timotheus*, *Tychicus* and *Trophimus*; theſe bore him Company, not out of State, but for neceſſary Service. To theſe may added St. *Luke*; but he being the Penman of this Book, forbears mentioning himſelf by Name, though his Praiſe will for ever be in the Goſpel, and eccleſiaſtical Story.

Q. *How and where do find our Apoſtle next employ'd?*

A. The next Journey St. *Paul* takes, is from *Macedonia* in *Greece*, to *Troas* in *Aſia*, where he abode ſeven Days. During his Stay there, ſeveral Things occurred which deſerve our Notice.

And firſt we may obſerve how the Apoſtle becomes all Things to all Men; *To the* Jews *he became a* Jew, for he ſtopped his Journey all the ſeven Days of the *Jewiſh* Paſſover, becauſe he would not offend the weak *Jews*, but rather gain them over by an inoffenſive Compliance with their Rites.

Again: Obſerve here the Change of the Sabbath, from the ſeventh to the firſt Day of the Week, by Apoſtolical Obſervation now, as it was before of *Chriſt*'s Inſtitution; on this Day the Lord aroſe, on this Day the Diſciples met, and *Chriſt honoured them with his Preſence*, John xx. *On this Day the Collection was made for the poor Saints*, 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

Q. *How does this infer an Abrogation of the* Jewiſh *Sabbath?*

A. Six Days they were commanded to labour; and if they reſted the ſeventh Day and the firſt Day too, they violated the Law of God, which is not to be ſuppoſed: And conſequently the Apoſtles and primitive *Chriſtians* obſerved the firſt Day of the Week, in remembrance of the Work of Redemption, as the *Jews* of old obſerved the ſeventh, in Remembrance of the Work of Creation.

Q. *What comes next under our Conſideration?*

A. The next Thing deſerving our Regard, is, the pious and prudential Care the Apoſtle and his Auditors took, that their Midnight-meetings ſhould not fall under any Calumny, or themſelves be reproached for doing any Thing indecently in the Dead of the Night; to prevent which, *there were many Lights in the upper-Chamber, where they were gathered together*; thus expoſing themſelves, and what they did, to publick View.

Religious Meetings in the Night-ſeaſon, are not only lawful in Times of Perſecution, but neceſſary: Yet a ſpecial Care ought to be taken to avoid all Occaſion of Calumny, that the leaſt Suſpicion may not ariſe concerning the Honeſty or Holineſs of thoſe who aſſemble at ſuch unſeaſonable Times.

Q. *While St.* Paul *was preaching, an unhappy Accident befel* Eutychus, *one of his Auditors: What are your Remarks on this Occurrence?*

A. What a Warning has the Holy Ghoſt here left upon Record, for ſuch as ſleep under the preaching of the Word? *Eutychus*, when aſleep under St. *Paul*'s long Sermon, falls down from the third Loft, and is taken up dead.

Obſerve, that the Time when he was overtaken with Sleep, was not at Noon-day, but at Midnight; and it was not a Sermon of an Hour long that he fell aſleep under, but after St. *Paul* had preached ſeveral Hours. This is not the Caſe of our common Sermon-ſleepers; who at Noon-day ſleep under the Word; nay, ſettle and compoſe themſelves to Sleep, and endeavour all they can to invite Sleep to them. What if with *Eutychus* any of them ſhould fall down dead, here is no *Paul* to raiſe them up? Or, what if this wretched Contempt of the Word provoke God to ſay, *ſleep on,* till Hell-flames awake you?

Eutychus is raiſed to Life by a miraculous Power communicated to St. *Paul*, which affords great Conſolation to the Spirits, and Confirmation to the Faith of the Diſciples; *They brought the young Man alive, and were not a little comforted*; not only for the young Man's Sake, but for their own; for hereby God gave a convincing Teſtimony *to the Word of his Grace*, many were confirmed in the Belief of it.

Q. *We have next an Account of ſeveral of the Apoſtle's Travels, from* Troas *to* Aſſos, *and ſo on, but paſſing* Epheſus, *becauſe he had reſolved, if poſſible, to be at* Jeruſalem *at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt, of which he might have been prevented, had he been delay'd by the Brethren, as probably he would, at* Epheſus: *What Leſſons of Inſtruction are given us from hence?*

A. Here note, the indefatigable Diligence of this great Apoſtle in the Service of the everlaſting Goſpel; he travels a-foot from *Troas* to *Aſſos*, alone by Land; he did not affect to ride with a pompous Train and Retinue, but goes on Foot; expecting to meet with freſh Opportunities of ſpreading the Goſpel as he paſſed through Towns and Villages by Land: So intent was this holy Man upon winning Souls; whereas had he gone by Sea, this Opportunity had been loſt. An happy Example for all the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, to prefer the Opportunity of doing good to the Souls of others, before their own Eaſe and Profit.

Q. *Why did St.* Paul *ſo earneſtly deſire to be at* Jeruſalem *at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt?*

A. The true Reaſon why St. *Paul* was ſo deſirous of being at *Jeruſalem* at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt, was, not that he placed any Religion in obſerving this abrogated Feaſt; but becauſe the vaſt

Concourſe of People at that Time would give him the fairer Opportunity of glorifying *Chriſt*, and propagating the Goſpel among his Countrymen the *Jews*. For this Reaſon he ſlips by *Epheſus*; yet could not ſatisfy himſelf without ſpeaking with the Miniſters there; accordingly he ſends for them to *Miletus*, and there in a grave and pious Diſcourſe, which warmed their Hearts and melted them into Tears, he takes his Farewel of them.

Q. *In this Diſcourſe St.* Paul *ſpeaks much in his own Commendation; was this right?*

A. When the Apoſtle ſpeaks in his own Commendation, it is in Truth to propound himſelf as a Mirror for Goſpel-Miniſters, and a Pattern for all pious Paſtors, that whenever they leave their People, they may go off with a clear Conſcience, and be able to appeal to their Conſciences, for their Behaviour, Conduct, and Converſation amongſt them.

Q. *In what Manner does the Apoſtle here ſpeak of himſelf?*

A. The Apoſtle firſt clears himſelf of any Charge or Surmiſe of miniſterial Miſcarriages, and then propounds himſelf as a Pattern of miniſterial Faithfulneſs to the Elders of the Church at *Epheſus*. He inſtances in his holy and heroic Reſolution, and Activity for God; *I know that Bonds and Afflictions abide me; nevertheleſs I go bound in the Spirit to* Jeruſalem, *and nothing moves me.* As if he had ſaid, I am fully reſolved (by the Grace of God enabling me) that nothing ſhall divert me from my Duty, neither the Fear or Favour of Men ſhall ever affect me; but I will go out, and go on in the Strength of *Chriſt*, running my Race with Patience, and finiſhing my Courſe with Joy. This Example of the Apoſtle is well worthy the Imitation of every Chriſtian Miniſter.

Next the Apoſtle declares his Impartiality in preaching the Goſpel; *I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the Counſel of God*; that is, he had not concealed any Truth neceſſary to Salvation; and this freed him from the Blood of Souls; if any periſhed, it was not long of him; their Blood was upon themſelves; *I take you to record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men.* It is happy when the Miniſters of God can ſummon their People as Witneſſes to bear Record for them at the Bar of *Chriſt*.

Q. *What are the other Topicks of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe?*

A. The Apoſtle having thus cleared himſelf of all poſſible Charges againſt him, both as to his Doctrine and Practice, and cleared himſelf by cloſe Addreſſes, and ſmart Appeals to their Conſciences he now urges them, in a very affecting Exhortation to the utmoſt Care and Diligence, in the Exerciſe of their paſtoral Charge.

They are firſt to take heed to themſelves; he that neglects his own Soul, will never take a faithful Care of the Souls of others. We are to take heed that our Qualifications are equal to the Weight and Importance of the Work we engage in; this is not a Burthen for a Child's Shoulder; he that is himſelf a Babe in Knowledge, is wholly unfit to teach Men the Myſteries of Salvation; we muſt alſo take heed that our Practice do not give our Profeſſion the lie; that we do not preach angelical Sermons, and lead diabolical Lives; but ſecure that Grace to ourſelves, which we offer to others.

He next exhorts them to take heed *to all the Flock.* That is, with a conſtant Care, and laborious Diligence, to acquaint them with their Duty, inform them of their Danger, ſhew them their Happineſs, and the Means of attaining it: In order to which, all the Flock muſt be known, and we muſt labour to be acquainted with the State of all our People, as well as we can; we muſt know their Perſons, their Inclinations, and manner of their Converſation, what Sins they are in moſt Danger of, what Temptations moſt liable to, and what Duties they neglect, and to give them the beſt Encouragement, Directions, and Aſſiſtance we are able.

On the whole we may obſerve, that the Church is *Chriſt*'s Flock, conſiſting of Sheep and Lambs; *Chriſt* himſelf is the great and good Shepherd; his Miniſters are Under-ſhepherds and Overſeers; bloody Perſecutors, heretical Seducers, and falſe Teachers, are Wolves which worry and divide the Flock.

Q. *The Apoſtle having finiſhed his Exhortation, proceeds to take his final Farewel of them: In what Manner does he do this?*

A. He commends them to God; that is, he commits them to God's Care and Keeping, his Conduct and Guidance; and this is a Teſtimony of our Faithfulneſs to God, whoſe our People are, and for whom we muſt become accountable; and alſo as a Teſtimony of our Love to our People, and of our fervent Deſires for their Salvation.

As the Apoſtle commends them to God, ſo likewiſe to the Word of his Grace. The Goſpel is called the Word of God's Grace, becauſe it is the Effect, the Fruit, and Product, of rich Mercy and free Grace; becauſe it reveals the free Grace of God in *Chriſt* to poor Sinners; becauſe it works inherent Grace and Holineſs in the Hearts of Sinners, and becauſe it carries on, and perfects the Work of Grace unto Glory.

Note here, a ſuperadded Commendation given of the Word of God's Grace; it is not only to build us up, but to give us an Inheritance amongſt thoſe who are ſanctified; that is, the word of God, if we follow the Dictates and Directions of it; will infallibly bring us to the glorious Inheritance which God hath provided for all his Saints, or ſanctified Ones.

Obſerve further, that this Inheritance is all of Grace, our Right and Title to it, our fitting and preparing for it, is all of Grace, nothing of Merit; all of God, nothing of our ſelves. And the Knowledge of this Inheritance is revealed to us in the Word of God; which offers it to every one of us, calls us to accept, and invites us to partake of it, and makes us fit for it.

The Apoſtle, in the Concluſion of his Diſcourſe, vindicates himſelf from the ſordid Sin of Covetouſneſs, affirming, that he had coveted no Man's Silver or Gold, but with his own Hands had maintained himſelf, and them that were with him; and directs theſe Elders to labour as he did, if the Caſe required it of them, as it did of him; that ſo they might be in a Capacity to ſupport the Weak, and relieve the Poor. Yet note, he does not propoſe this his Practice as a Precept, Precedent or Rule for all Miniſters; for he was in a manner neceſſitated to it; and becauſe falſe Teachers were watching all Advantages againſt him: But in another Place he aſſerts it to be the Appointment and Ordination of God, that *they who preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel.*

Obſerve here, a remarkable Saying of our Saviour, not recorded by the Evangeliſts, namely, that *it is more bleſſed to give than to receive*; that is, the Condition of the Giver is more deſirable than that of the Receiver, and giving is more commendable than receiving. The Condition of the Giver implies an honourable Truſt committed to him by God Almighty. Givers are God's Almoners and Stewards, the Poor's Guardians and Patrons. An honourable Truſt this is, by which the Lives and Livelihood of the Poor are in a manner committed to us. By which it appears that the Condition of the Giver is more deſirable than that of the Receiver.

Laſtly, let us obſerve the ſolemn and ſacred farewel St. *Paul* and the Elders of *Epheſus* take of each other; *they kneeled down and prayed* together; and *they all wept ſore.* How very loth were they to part with the Apoſtle, who had ſo exceedingly endeared himſelf to them by his Holineſs, Humility, and univerſal Uſefulneſs? Accordingly they accompany him to the Ship, and when gone off to Sea, ſend a Longing look after him; being more eſpecially grieved at the Words, *that they ſhould ſee his Face no more.*

Hence learn, that a faithful Miniſter of *Chriſt* is enjoyed with much Love, and finally parted from with much Sorrow, by thoſe who believe and obey the Goſpel. When Miniſters and People have lived together, in mutual Endearments, to the Glory of God, and ſingular Comfort of each other; if they are pulled aſunder by cruel Perſecutors, or by that King of Terrors, Death, the Parting is ſad; but bleſſed be God, the next Meeting will know no parting.

Chap. XXI.

Paul *ſails towards* Syria, *and comes to* Tyre. *The Diſciples, in vain, diſſuade him from going to* Jeruſalem. *He comes to* Ptolemais, *then to* Ceſarea, *and abides at* Philip's *Houſe, whoſe four Daughters propheſied.* Agabus *foretels* Paul's *Bonds at* Jeruſalem. *He is joyfully received there, and relates what God had done by his Miniſtry among the* Gentiles. Paul *having purified himſelf and four more, enters the Temple. The* Jews *of* Aſia *raiſe an Uproar; he is apprehended, and in danger of his Life. He is reſcued, and carried into the Caſtle.* Paul, *having obtained Leave, addreſſes himſelf to the People in the* Hebrew *Tongue.*

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Thing remarkable in this Chapter?*

A. The firſt Verſe of this Chapter informs us, that the Parting of the Elders and Church at *Epheſus*, with St. *Paul* and his Companion, was not only very ſorrowful, but violent; *after we were gotten from them*; that is, after we were torn from, and pull'd as it were Limb by Limb from each other, as that Word imports, intimating the mutual Endearments between them while together, and their inexpreſſible Sorrow at parting.

By the Hiſtory of what befel St. *Paul* in his Travels towards *Jeruſalem*, it appears, that the Miniſters of *Chriſt* cannot chuſe their own Stations, nor govern their own Motions, but muſt go when and whither the Providence of God directs them; tho' St. *Paul*'s Journey was full of Danger, yet his Spirit was reſolutely bent upon going.

Q. *What Difficulties did St.* Paul *meet with in his Journey towards* Jeruſalem?

A. The firſt he met with in his Way, was from the Diſciples of *Tyre*, *who ſpake by the Spirit*, that he ſhould not go up to *Jeruſalem*. But did not the Spirit of God then contradict itſelf, in bidding the *Apoſtle* go, and then ſpeaking by thoſe Diſciples not to go? Not at all. St. *Paul*, by extraordinary Revelations, was commanded to go up to *Jeruſalem*; theſe Diſciples, by a Propheſy only foretold the Difficulties and Dangers that would attend him in his Journey; and ſo thro' Kindneſs and human Affection, they diſſuade him from it. We muſt diſtinguiſh between the Prediction of Trouble, and the Counſel of Safety.

St. *Paul* being reſolved, at all Hazards, to proceed on his Journey, the Diſciples and Brethren at *Tyre*, with their Wives and Children, to teſtify their great Reſpect and Affection to him, accompany him out of the City; and he and they kneeling down on the Shore, pray together, and take their Farewel of each other. The loving Communion of Saints, and Prayer, are the Marks of *Chriſt*'s true Diſciples.

Q. *Whither did St.* Paul *next direct his Courſe?*

A. Going from *Tyre* St. *Paul* ſails to *Ceſarea*, where he lodges with *Philip* the Evangeliſt; that is, one of thoſe who were ſent forth as itinerary Preachers, here and there to diſpenſe the Goſpel, and to confirm the Churches; and one of the ſeven Deacons, Chap. vi.

This *Philip*, at whoſe Houſe St. *Paul* now lodged, was before driven out of his Houſe by *Paul*'s Perſecution, Chap. viii. 1, &c. but is now gladly received by him, as *Paul*, a Convert.

Q. *What befel St.* Paul *while he was at* Philip's *Houſe?*

A. During the Apoſtle's Stay at *Philip*'s Houſe, *Agabus*, a Prophet, comes thither, and propheſies of St. *Paul*'s Bonds at *Jeruſalem*. Altho' this *Agabus* always propheſied evil Things and bad Tidings, as Chap. xi. where he foretold the Famine, and now St. *Paul*'s Bonds, yet ſuch Meſſengers who give Warnings of Judgments to come, ſhould be accepted, as well as thoſe who bring in Hopes of Mercy and Deliverance; that Meſſage may be true, which yet is diſpleaſing. *Agabus* uſes a Sign, after the manner of the old Prophets, who often propheſied by Signs and ſignificant Expreſſions, that they might the better imprint their Predictions on the Hearts of Men. So here *Agabus*, by binding himſelf with *Paul*'s Girdle, ſignifies after what Manner the *Jews* at *Jeruſalem* would bind the Apoſtle, and deliver him to the *Gentiles*; firſt to the *Roman* Governor of *Judea*, and afterwards to *Nero* the *Roman* Emperor. St. *Paul* therefore was not ſurprized, but had Warning given him of his Danger; and being fore-warn'd, was fore-arm'd.

Q. *But were not the Diſciples ſenſibly affected with this Prophecy?*

A. The Diſciples hearing of this Prophecy of *Agabus*, affectionately diſſuade the Apoſtle from his intended Journey to *Jeruſalem*. The Lives and Liberties of thoſe, who are eminent Inſtruments of God's Glory, are very precious to the faithful Servants of God. Who can blame either St. *Paul*'s Companions, or the Diſciples, for endeavouring the Preſervation, of ſo valuable a Perſon as St. *Paul* was? But we muſt not meaſure our

Friends Counſel by their good Meaning; but by the Word of God; thus the Apoſtle *would not be perſuaded*, but expoſtulates with them, *what mean you to weep, and break mine Heart?*

Q. *But did the Apoſtle do well to withſtand the Importunities, and reject the unanimous Advice of all his Friends? How does this Carriage agree with the Character given of heavenly Wiſdom*, James iii. 17. that it is eaſy to be intreated?

A. To this 'tis anſwer'd, that St. *Paul* knew his Duty, and underſtood the Will of God, and therefore his Friends might ſooner break his Heart, than alter his Purpoſe.

Obſerve here, how lovingly and gently the Apoſtle rebukes their fond and inordinate Sorrow for his Departure; *what mean you to weep and break mine Heart?* As if he had ſaid, what mean theſe paſſionate Tears and Intreaties? Alas! Whether you think it ſo or not, they are but ſo many Snares and Temptations of *Satan*, to turn my Feet out of the way of Obedience; you do as much as in you lies to break my Heart; but by the Grace of God nothing ſhall ſhake my Reſolution, nor weaken my Courage in the Cauſe of *Chriſt*.

Q. *What Arguments did the Apoſtle uſe to calm their paſſionate Concern for him?*

A. He uſes the moſt quieting and calming Arguments he could think of to charm their unruly and tumultuous Paſſions; *I am ready, both to be bound, and to die for* Chriſt. I am prepared for whatever God pleaſeth, be it a Priſon, a Scaffold, Life, or Death. Life and Liberty are both dear, but *Chriſt* is dearer than either; therefore what mean you to oppoſe the Deſign of God, who has fitted and prepared my Heart for Sufferings and Service?

I am ready; that is, my Will and Reſolution ſtand full Bent, my Heart is fixed; do not therefore diſcompoſe my Spirits, by caſting ſuch Temptations and Stumbling-Blocks in my Way; for I am come to a Point, nothing ſhall divert me from this noble Enterprize for God; my Captain that leads me on, I am ſure will bring me off ſafe, either dead or alive; therefore all your Tears and Intreaties are but caſt away upon me; you had better chearfully reſign me me up to the Will of God; for I am ready both to be bound, and to die.

Q. *Had theſe Arguments the deſired Effect upon the Diſciples?*

A. Theſe Reaſons prevailed with the Diſciples to ceaſe from their Importunities, *when he would not be perſuaded, they ceaſed*; acquieſcing in the Divine Will; *the Will of the Lord be done.* They refer the Event to God's Determination, and ſubmit all to his Sovereign Pleaſure; teaching us that it is our Duty, and ought to be our Endeavour, to ſubmit ourſelves and ours to the Diſpenſations of God's Providence, in Humility and Patience. For ſuch is his Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, that he can do his Children no wrong; and ſuch is his tender Mercy and loving Kindneſs, that he will do them no harm. The abſolute Sovereignty of God over us, and the Sight of God in all his Providential Diſpenſations towards us, influences at once our Judgments, our Wills and our Affections, our Expreſſions and Actions, that we neither dare to think, ſpeak, or act any thing in Contradiction to the Wiſdom and Will of God.

Q. *The Apoſtle having taken his Leave of the Brethren, addreſſes himſelf for his Journey, and comes to* Jeruſalem: *What is the firſt Thing he does on his Arrival there?*

A. The Apoſtle being arrived at *Jeruſalem* is kindly received of the Church, he goes to the Houſe of St. *James*, Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, where the Elders congratulated his Arrival, and he gives them a full Relation of the wonderful Things God had wrought by his Miniſtry, and they all give Praiſe to God for the great and glorious Succeſs of the Goſpel; and exalt God for receiving the *Gentiles* into the Faith and Fellowſhip of the Goſpel.

Q. *What Anſwer did the Church make to this Relation of the Apoſtle?*

A. St. *Paul* having finiſhed his Report of the great Succeſs he had met with in ſpreading the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, the Church reply, and acquaint him with the like Succeſs, which the preaching of the Goſpel had amongſt the *Jews*; *thou ſeeſt, Brother, how many Thouſands of* Jews *there are, which do believe*; the Original runs thus, *how many Tens of Thouſands do believe.* Well might our Saviour compare the Goſpel to a Grain of Muſtard-ſeed, ſeeing it had ſpread itſelf for and near in ſo ſhort a Time. And we need not wonder that St. *Paul*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. reckons it as one of the greateſt Myſteries of Godlineſs, that *Jeſus Chriſt* was preached to the *Gentiles*, and believed on in the World; that is, that ſo many Thouſands both of *Jews* and *Gentiles* were brought to own him, and ſubmit to him as their Lord and Saviour.

Q. *What is the next Thing to be conſider'd?*

A. We have next the Church's Advice to the Apoſtle. It ſeems the *Jews*, though they had received the Goſpel, yet thought that the Ceremonial Law muſt be obſerved; therefore in Condeſcenſion to their Weakneſs, and to prevent their taking Offence, they adviſe the Apoſtle, not as a Thing neceſſary in itſelf, but as a Thing expedient, to conform himſelf to ſome of the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies and Purifications; for though they were not then needful, yet they were not unlawful, and might be uſed, if conducing to gain over the *Jews* to a Love of Chriſtianity.

The Law of *Moſes*, as to its moral Part, *Chriſt* continued as his Law; the Ceremonial Part, as to the uſe of Types and Ceremonies, ſignifying him that was to come, was abrogated at *Chriſt*'s coming; and the political part ceaſed, when the *Jewiſh* Polity was diſſolv'd; but the Abrogation of the whole was not fully made known at the firſt, but by Degrees; and the Exerciſe of it long tolerated among the *Jews*.

Q. *How did they counſel the Apoſtle to behave on this Occaſion?*

A. The particular Advice they gave the Apoſtle was to go into the Temple, and perform the legal Ceremony of Purification; *We have four Men which have a Vow*, &c. that is a *Nazarite*'s Vow; the Time of which Vow is now expired, and they are to ſhave themſelves ceremoniouſly in the Temple; go thou with them, and perform the legal Ceremony of Purification there, that the People may know, the Report of thee is not true; but that thou being a *Jew*, doſt thy ſelf keep the Law.

Q. *Did St.* Paul *comply with this Advice?*

A. He yields to the Perſuaſion of his Friends to purify himſelf in the Temple. But notwithſtanding

ſtanding this Compliance of the Apoſtle, ſo blind was the Zeal, ſo furious the Rage of the unbelieving *Jews*, that they put the whole City of *Jeruſalem* in an Uproar, on Pretence, that he had brought *Trophimus* a *Gentile* into the Temple to prophane and pollute it; and in their Rage drag the Apoſtle out of the Temple, as a Prophaner of it.

Q. *How did the Apoſtles eſcape the Danger?*

A. In the midſt of this Tumult, and when the Apoſtle was in danger of being torn in Pieces, it deſerves our Notice, how graciouſly God provides for his Reſcue, and raiſes him up a Deliverer, namely, the *Roman* Governor, who being informed of the Tumult, brings down a Band of Soldiers, reſcues him, and commands him to be bound with two Chains (as *Agabus* had foretold) and the Soldiers bear him up in their Arms from the Violence of the People. Thus God raiſes up what Inſtruments he pleaſes to accompliſh his own gracious Purpoſes in the Preſervation of his People.

Obſerve next the Juſtice of the chief Captain, though an Heathen Soldier; he firſt demands of St. *Paul* what he had done before he puniſhes him; this is a Piece of Juſtice which the Law of Nature requires and obliges us to.

Note here likewiſe how St. *Paul* is unjuſtly ſuſpected of being a Rebel, a Seducer, and a Murderer. *Art not thou,* ſays the Captain, *that* Ægyptian *which madeſt an Uproar, and leddeſt out four Thouſand Men that were Murderers?* Upon this Accuſation St. *Paul* makes a juſt and neceſſary Apology for himſelf; *I am a* Jew *of* Tarſus, *a Citizen of no mean City:* I am a *Jew*, not that *Ægyptian* whom thou ſuſpecteſt me to be, but of *Cilicia*, a rich and fruitful Country in *Aſia*, and born in *Tarſus* the Metropolis, or chief City, of all *Cilicia*.

Q. *But then how could he ſay, as he does in the next Chapter, he was a* Roman?

A. So, indeed, he was, though not by Birth, yet by Immunity and Privilege. *Tarſus* was inveſted with the *Roman* Privileges, and made free of *Rome* by *M. Antonius*. Thus *Paul* was Free-born, and as ſuch, inſiſted, that they ought not to ſcourge him a *Roman* Citizen. His Apology and Plea for himſelf to the *Jews* follow in the next Chapter.

CHAP. XXII.

St. Paul's *Defence, in which he gives a ſummary Account of himſelf and Converſation, and likewiſe of the Manner of his Converſion; which laſt the* Jews *hearing, exclaim aloud againſt him. The Captain commands him to be bound, and ſcourged; he pleading the Privilege of a* Roman *eſcapes, and is brought before the Council.*

Q. THE *firſt Part of this Chapter contains St.* Paul's *Defence: What are the Particulars thereof and how did he manage it?*

A. The Apoſtle begins his Apology, or defenſive Plea, with beſpeaking the Attention of his cruel Perſecutors, the People of the *Jews*, with Lenity and Mildneſs; he accoſts them with Titles of Reſpect and Honour; *Men, Brethren and Fathers*; not with opprobious Invectives for their ill Uſage of him; he had not ſo learned *Chriſt*, but he knew how to ſuffer Reproach for the Goſpel.

Note how the Apoſtle inſinuates himſelf into his Auditors to gain their Attention: *Men, Brethren, and Fathers, hear ye my Defence which I make unto you.*

In his Apology he ſets forth, 1. His Extraction, *I am a* Jew, *born in* Tarſus. 2. His Education, *brought up at the Feet of* Gamaliel. 3. His Profeſſion, *he was zealous towards God*; that is, He was of that Sect among the *Jews* called *Zealots*; very exact in obſerving the Law, a bitter Enemy to *Chriſtianity*, and a bloody Perſecutor of all that owned themſelves the Diſciples of *Jeſus*, as the High-Prieſt very well knows, ſays he, *from whom I received a Commiſſion, That if I found any of this Way, I ſhould bring them bound unto* Jeruſalem.

The Apoſtle having related what he was before his Converſion; next declares the Manner of his Converſion.

St. *Paul* having thus declared to the *Jews*, the wonderful Manner of his Converſion, proceeds next to acquaint them how deſirous he was to have preached to the *Jews* rather than to the *Gentiles*, if the Will of God had ſeen fit; but it proved otherwiſe; for as he was praying in the Temple, he had a Viſion, in which he was commanded to haſten out of the City; becauſe his former Zeal, in oppoſing the Goſpel, would hinder his future preaching it from being ſucceſsful: Againſt this he humbly argued, that his former Zeal againſt *Chriſtianity*, he hoped, would be an Inducement to the *Jews*, his Countrymen, to embrace *Chriſtianity*. But this Argument did not prevail for his ſtaying at *Jeruſalem*; for he was commanded to depart from thence to preach the Goſpel to the deſpiſed *Gentiles*, who had not ſuch ſtrong Exceptions againſt him, but would more readily embrace his Doctrine.

Q. *What Impreſſion did this Defence of St.* Paul *make upon his Adverſaries?*

A. It is obſervable, that the *Jews* attend to the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe very quietly, till he mentioned the *Gentiles*, and of his being appointed to preach to them; but on hearing that, they break out into the utmoſt Fury and Paſſion, which they expreſs by throwing Duſt in the Air, and caſting off their Cloaths as if they would immediately ſtone him; looking on him as the worſt of Villains, and unworthy to live.

Here we may remark, what a vile Opinion the *Jews* had of the *Gentiles*, whom they called and accounted as Dogs; and the high Value and Eſteem they had for themſelves, and the proud Conceit of their own Deſerts; as if the Favours of Heaven belonged to none but themſelves, who yet trampled on them, when tender'd to them.

Obſerve farther, what a vile and contemptible Opinion theſe wicked *Jews* had of the innocent Apoſtle, who moſt earneſtly deſired to preach the glad Tidings of the Goſpel to them, and moſt affectionately longed for the Salvation of their Souls: They account him the worſt Scoundrel upon Earth, and unworthy to live upon it. But the good Man had learned (and his Example deſerves the Imitation of all the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt*) to take Pleaſure in Reproaches, Perſecutions, Neceſſities and Diſtreſſes for *Chriſt*'s ſake. *Away with ſuch a Fellow from the Earth, it is not meet that he ſhould live.*

Q. *How did the Apoſtle eſcape the imminent Danger that ſo apparently threaten'd him?*

A. The Apoſtle being thus hard beſet on all

Sides, uſes a very innocent Piece of Policy for his own Preſervation; for, juſt as they were about to bind him to a Poſt, in order to ſcourge him, the Apoſtle declares himſelf a free Denizon of *Rome*, by being born in one of the Cities which the *Roman* Emperor had made free; accordingly, he pleads the Privilege of a *Roman* Citizen, who neither ought to be bound or beaten, according to the *Roman* Laws.

Thus though we may not render Evil for Evil, yet we may right ourſelves by lawful Means. *Chriſt* allows as much of the Serpent as the Dove in his faithful Servants, provided the Subtilty of the one does not deſtroy the Simplicity of the other: The Head of the Serpent, and the Heart of the Dove do beſt together.

Q. *Did this Stratagem take Effect?*

A. The chief Captain hereupon, feared he had done more than he could anſwer; becauſe it was Death to any one in Authority to violate the *Roman* Privileges; therefore more out of Fear than Love, or more out of Love to himſelf than to the Apoſtle, he looſes St. *Paul* from his Bonds. Hence we may learn, that when at any Time the Perſecutors of the Saints deſiſt from their bloody Purpoſes, it is only out of Love to themſelves.

Q. *What Reflections do you make upon this Behaviour of the* Roman *Captain?*

A. Obſerve, that the Saints Deliverances from Affliction and Perſecution, whilſt on this Side Heaven, are not total or final, but momentary and partial. The Apoſtle was delivered from his Chains, not from his Confinement; though unbound, was not ſet at Liberty. Next day we find him before the great Council or Sanhedrim, and freſh Bonds and Afflictions abide him.

Little Reſt is to be expected by the Members of *Chriſt* in this World; bleſſed be the Lord for the Believers Hopes of an everlaſting Reſt, where the Fury of the Perſecutor, the Injuries of the Oppreſſor, ſhall ceaſe for ever; where no Sin ſhall affect us, no Sorrow affright us, but we ſhall be perfectly like unto God, as well in Purity as Immortality.

In the mean Time, let the Miniſters of God, who are ſet for the Defence of the Goſpel, bear the Heat and Burthen of the Day with Patience and Courage, Reſolution and Conſtancy; let us gird up the Loins of our Minds, not accounting our Labours, or our Lives dear unto us, ſo we may finiſh our Courſe with Joy, and fulfil the Miniſtry we have received of the Lord, glorying in our Reproaches for well-doing; even though we are accounted the Filth of the World, and the Offſcouring of all Things: For when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, we ſhall receive a Crown of Glory, which fadeth not away.

CHAP. XXIII.

Paul *defending himſelf, is ſmitten by the High-prieſt's Commandment; for which he ſharply reproves him. He, to divide his Enemies, profeſſes himſelf a Phariſee. A Diſſention ariſes, and* Paul *is cleared. He is comforted by the Lord, and promiſed he ſhould teſtify of him at* Rome. *Forty Men of the* Jews *vow to kill him; of which* Paul *having Notice, makes it known to the chief Captain, who ſends him by Night, under a Guard, to* Felix; *with a Letter, which, when* Felix *had read, he commands him to be kept in* Herod's *Judgment-Hall.*

Q. WHAT *is there in this Chapter that firſt demands our Attention?*

A. The firſt Thing obſerveable in this Chapter, is the Apoſtle's ſober and ingenuous Profeſſion and Proteſtation; the inſolent and injurious Injunction of *Ananias*, and St. *Paul's* zealous Anſwer and Conteſtation.

Firſt we have the Apoſtle's ſober and ingenuous Profeſſion and Proteſtation; *I have lived in good Conſcience unto this Day*; that is, during his Continuance in the *Jewiſh* Religion, and ſince his Converſion to *Chriſtianity*, he had walked uprightly, according to his Knowledge, and the Light of his Conſcience.

Q. *But had* Paul *a good Conſcience when he perſecuted the Chriſtians?*

A. No doubt but he acted according to his Conſcience, when he perſecuted; he verily thought he did God Service in ſo doing; he had no ſelfiſh End, no ſiniſter Deſign in View, but Zeal for Religion provoked him to Perſecution, *Phil.* iii. 6. *Concerning Zeal, perſecuting the Church*; it is certainly a Man's Duty to follow his Conſcience; but then it is as much his Duty to inform his Conſcience, as it is to follow it; *I have lived in all good Conſcience until this Day.*

The Apoſtle ſets forth the Goodneſs of his Conſcience four ſeveral Ways. 1. From the Goodneſs of his Converſation, *I have lived.* A good Converſation is the beſt Evidence of a good Conſcience. God does not meaſure Men's Sincerity by the Ties of their Affections, but by the conſtant Bent of their Reſolutions, and the general Courſe and Tenor of their Converſation. 2. From the Generality of his Care and Obedience; *I have lived in all good Conſcience*; if it be not a Conſcience all good, it is no good Conſcience at all. *Herod* had ſome good Conſcience; *he did many Things*; but the Apoſtle went farther, he lived in all good Conſcience.

3. The Apoſtle ſets forth the Goodneſs of his Conſcience from the Integrity of it towards God; *I have lived in all good Conſcience before God.* Many a Man's Conſcience paſſes for good before Men, and perhaps before himſelf, which yet is not good before God, the Judge of Conſcience. 4. From his Continuance and Conſtancy, *until this Day.* It is not ſufficient to begin a good Life, and to have a good Conſcience, unleſs we keep it too, and that all our Days.

Q. *Does not St.* Paul *exceed his Commiſſion when he returns that reviling Anſwer to the High-Prieſt,* God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited Wall?

A. St. *Paul* does not ſay, God ſhall judge thee, or God ſhall plague thee; but God ſhall ſmite thee; denoting, that as there is always Equity, ſo ſometimes there is a Retaliation in Executions of Divine Juſtice, or a Recompencing like for like. God ſometimes returns Smiting for Smiting, ſo that the Sinner is forced to cry out, *As I have done, ſo hath God requited me.* Righteous art thou, O Lord, and juſt are thy Judgments.

Ananias the High-Prieſt having commanded the Apoſtle unheard and uncondemned to be ſmitten, the Apoſtle denounces the juſt Judgment of God upon him for it; yet not in a Way of Imprecation, but Prediction; rather foretelling what would come, than wiſhing or deſiring that it ſhould come;

and in a Way of miniſterial Reproof, which the Standers by called; *Revileſt thou God's High-Prieſt?* Thus profane Sinners look on the faithful Reproofs which Miniſters give them for their Lewdneſs, to be no better than Revilings; they think we revile them, when we rebuke them; whereas, tho' we chaſten Sinners with the Rod of Reproof, we dare not ſting them with the Rod of Reproach.

Q. *But what is your Opinion of St.* Paul's *Excuſe, I wiſt not, Brethren, that he was the High-Prieſt? &c.*

A. This Text Expoſitors have differently interpreted. Some think that *Paul* did not really know the High-Prieſt, having been gone ſo long from *Jeruſalem*, and as the High-Prieſt was made yearly. Others ſay, there being a great Throng about him, the Apoſtle could not diſtinctly hear who it was ſpoke to him: Some underſtand it of abſolute denial, that any ſuch Office as that of High-Prieſt ought to be in being. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I do not own any Man to be High-Prieſt now, that Function being aboliſhed and diſannulled at the Coming of the Meſſiah. Others underſtand the Words, as if the Apoſtle denied him to be the lawful High-Prieſt, one of God's appointing, he being one of Man's making, having purchaſed the Place with Money; for the Power and Covetouſneſs of the *Romans* put a new High-Prieſt in every Year to officiate; accordingly St. *Paul* knowing the Man to be none of the Poſterity of *Aaron*, but brought in illegally, might juſtly diſown him to be the High-Prieſt.

But there are others who affirm, that the Apoſtle did certainly ſee and know the High-Prieſt; and that his Meaning is, that having received ſuch unjuſt Uſage in the Court, as to be openly ſmitten in the Time of Hearing, he did not know, that is, he did not conſider who it was that ſpake to him, and therefore he ſpake haſtily, and unadviſedly. The Scripture will not bear us out to uſe ill Words to Magiſtrates, ſhould we be (as St. *Paul* was) ill uſed by them; yet are Magiſtrates no more to be reproached than they are to be flattered.

The greateſt may be reproved, and with a mannerly Severity told their Faults, and St. *Paul* did no more. It is no Sin to tell the Judgments of God, which will certainly come upon cruel and unjuſt Oppreſſors.

Dr. *Hammond* thus paraphraſes the Words; I did not know that to be true which thou telleſt me, that *Ananias* was an High-Prieſt by God's Appointment (that he was not ſo, nor yet the High-Prieſt put in by the *Roman* Procurator as this Time, will appear by the Note ſubjoined) however, knowing him to be a Perſon in Authority, placed in a Court of Judicature, I acknowledge I did amiſs, and am ſorry I did revile him, for that is unlawful by that Place of Scripture, *Exod.* xxii. 28.

Dr. *Hammond*'s Note upon this Place is this; It is rightly wondered, ſays he, how *Paul* ſhould be able truly to ſay; that he did not *know him to be High-Prieſt*, being ſo well acquainted with the *Jewiſh* Nation, and the Cuſtoms of their Judicature: But if we take Notice of the Words of the By-ſtanders, *Revileſt thou God's High-Prieſt?* It is certain that *Ananias* was not the High-Prieſt of God, nor indeed any Man elſe at that Time among them, the lineal Succeſſion having been a long while interrupted. And to that in thoſe Words St. *Paul* anſwers, that he did not know that he was; meaning thereby, I ſuppoſe, the lineal Deſcendant from *Aaron*.

Secondly, there being at this Time another High-Prieſt, or he that was put in the Place of the *Aaronical* Prieſthood by the *Roman* Prefect, this might truly be ſaid by him again, *I knew not that he was High-Prieſt*. However, knowing him to be at that Time a Ruler, that is, one, who by the Indulgence of their Conquerors the *Romans*, had a judicial Authority of deciding Controverſies ariſing from, and determinable by their Law, though generally without Power of Life or Death, St. *Paul* therefore retracts his haſty and ſharp Speech, as having ſaid ſomewhat againſt the Ruler of the People, who was not by God's Law to be evil ſpoken of.

Q. *What Means did St.* Paul *uſe to extricate himſelf out the Danger he was now in?*

A. St. *Paul* perceiving the Council before whom he ſtood, conſiſted of Men of different Profeſſions, namely, of *Phariſees* and *Saducees*, he politickly and publickly profeſſes himſelf a *Phariſee* by Education, and of that Perſuaſion now in Point of the Reſurrection. Thus he throws in a Bone of Contention between the *Saducees* who denied the Reſurrection, and the *Phariſees* who owned it; and obliged the *Phariſees* (at leaſt as to that Opinion) to take his Part, and ſo he prudentially turned their Oppoſition againſt him, upon one another, that by ſetting them at Variance he might the better eſcape.

Q. *What Obſervations do you make on this Difference of Opinions in the Jewiſh Council?*

A. How ſad and deplorable a Condition was the *Jewiſh* Church in at this Time, when in the Sanhedrim or great Council, Men had Power and Authority, who believed no Life but this; and what Hypocrites were the *Phariſees* who could thus inincorporate with damnable Hereticks, the *Saducees*, yet perſecute *Chriſtians?*

The *Saducees* were ſo far from believing that there was any Spirit, that they blaſphemouſly maintained, that God himſelf was no ſpiritual, but a corporeal Being. When Men obſtinately ſin againſt ſupernatural Light, God juſtly withdraws from them even natural Light, and ſuffers them to fall from one Degree of Error to another.

Obſerve here, how Partiality and Prejudice will alter Mens Judgment, according to the Intereſt of a Party or Faction. The *Phariſees* were the Apoſtle's bitter Enemies; but he having owned himſelf of their Sect, they inſtantly take his Part, and cry, *We find no Fault in him.* The Feuds about Religion are generally the ſharpeſt of any.

Note further, how the Diſſenſions of God's Adverſaries, often become the Deliverance of his Servants. Thus here, the *Phariſees* and *Saducees* quarrel about the Reſurrection; the *Phariſees* juſtify St. *Paul*, and tell thoſe that oppoſe him, they are in Danger of fighting againſt God. Thus God, when he pleaſes, can find, or make Patrons for his People, and raiſe up Friends among his very Enemies, to defend his Cauſe.

Q. *How did St.* Paul *at laſt eſcape out of the Hands of his Enemies?*

A. St. *Paul* ſeemed now in as great Danger as ever, from the Contention of theſe two Sects; yet obſerve how ſeaſonably God ſteps in for his Succour and Deliverance: Firſt, he ſtirs up that heathen Tribune, the chief Captain *Lyſias*, who was preſent at the Trial, to ſee his Priſoner have fair play; he accordingly reſcues the Apoſtle from the Hands of Violence, by which he was in danger of being pull'd in Pieces, and ſends him back ſafe to the Caſtle.

But *Paul* had a more powerful Friend to ſtand by him; God himſelf comforts him with his own Preſence, and with the gracious Manifeſtation of his ſpecial Favour. *The Lord ſtood by him, and ſaid, Be of good cheer,* Paul. If the Lord ſtands by, and is graciouſly preſent with his ſuffering Servants, 'tis no matter how many they are that appear againſt them. No doubt theſe Words, *Be of good cheer,* Paul, turned the Apoſtle's Priſon into a Palace, yea, into a Paradiſe, and enabled him to make a bold Defiance to all the deviliſh Deſigns of the *Jews* againſt him; he had got the beſt Security for his Safety, even God himſelf, in the Faith of which our Apoſtle hourly triumphs, *If God be for us, who can be againſt us?* Rom. xi. 31. The Preſence of God, with his ſuffering Servants, outweighs all their Diſcouragements.

Q. *The next Thing that falls under our Obſervation, is the curſed Combination and Conſpiracy form'd againſt the Life of this innocent Apoſtle: What was the Nature of this Conſpiracy; who were the Conſpirators; how was it managed; and what are your Thoughts upon the Whole?*

A. No ſooner was it Day-light, but the wicked and blood-thirſty *Jews* bind themſelves by an Oath, never to eat or drink more, till they have his Life.

Obſerve next the Number of the Conſpirators, more than Forty, and probably, the *Saducees,* they all agreed as one Man. How numerous, how unanimous, how reſolute and outragious are the Enemies of Religion, to carry on their accurſed Contrivances for the Extirpation of it! The Devil's Deſigns never miſcarry for want of fit Inſtruments; he has a Party always ready to oppoſe the Goſpel in every Place.

As they were murderous, ſo were they unanimous; they combined together in one curſed Bond. They were likewiſe reſolute and courageous; *They bound themſelves under a Curſe,* under a bloody Vow, to purſue their Purpoſe of murdering the Apoſtle. It has been the old Policy of the Enemies of the Church, to oblige and bind themſelves by Oaths and Execrations, by Leagues and Aſſociations, to carry on their wicked and bloody Deſigns againſt the Church.

What Craft and Cruelty, what Fraud and Force are here combin'd in the Church's Enemies! The Council muſt court the Captain, that he bring down his Priſoner, *as though they would enquire ſomething more perfectly concerning him.* Thus was the Plot craftily, as cruelly laid; under a Pretence of having the Priſoner re-examined, they contrive to have him brought down from the Caſtle, and in his Way to the Council, they agree to deſtroy him.

Q. *How was this helliſh Conſpiracy detected and defeated?*

A. By a remarkable Providence of God, who brought it to the Knowledge of *Paul's* Siſter's Son, who, probably, was by when the Conſpirators were contriving the Miſchief, and overheard them. It is happy for the Innocent, that the Malicious cannot keep their own Counſel.

Here note, that the Hearts of all Men are in the Hand of the Lord, who turns them as he pleaſeth. This is evident from the chief Captain's great Humanity towards St. *Paul,* and his courteous Humility to his Siſter's Son, taking the Youth by the Hand, and as readily giving him both Audience and Diſpatch; ſuch is the Sovereignty God has over the Hearts of Men. The Captain took care both of *Paul* and the young Man; he bids the young Man depart, and enjoins him Silence; for had it been known that he had diſcovered the Conſpiracy, they had conſpired againſt his Life; and had not the Captain conveyed away the Apoſtle, his Enemies, who had been diſappointed in this, would have made farther Attempts on his Life.

Q. *What Meaſures did the Captain take for the Safety of his Priſoner?*

A. He provides a ſtrong Guard to convey *Paul* to *Ceſarea,* to ſecure him from the *Jewiſh* Rage; namely, two hundred Soldiers, threeſcore and ten Horſe-men, and Spear-men two Hundred. What a royal Life-guard was here raiſed for the Apoſtle's Safe-conduct!

The chief Captain, *Lyſias,* having ſent St. *Paul* under a ſtrong Guard to *Ceſarea,* by Night, where *Felix,* the *Roman* Governor, reſided; he writes a Letter to acquaint *Felix* with the Accuſation laid to the Priſoner's Charge.

In which Letter we may remark the Title given to the *Roman* Governor, *Moſt Excellent.* Titles of civil Honour and Reſpect, given to Perſons in Place and Authority, are agreeable to the Mind and Will of God; though he that is very Honourable, as to his Place, may deſerve no Honour as to his real Worth; yet ought he to be honoured according to the Station he is in.

Q. *What is the Import of the Letter?*

A. In this Letter, *Lyſias* repreſents *Paul's* Caſe very fairly and impartially: He ſays, he did not find him charged with any Thing, that by the *Roman* Law was puniſhable, either with Death or Bonds.

But obſerve how ſlightly and diſreſpectfully *Lyſias* ſpeaks of the great Things in Queſtion concerning our Saviour's Death and Reſurrection, as alſo of the whole Goſpel, calling them *Queſtions of their Law.* As the Wiſdom of the World is Fooliſhneſs with God, ſo the manifold Wiſdom of God is eſteemed Folly, by the ignorant and blind World.

Q. *What kind of Reception did the Apoſtle meet with from* Felix?

A. The Apoſtle being brought before *Felix,* the *Roman* Governor, he, though an Heathen, ſhewed him more Favour than his Country-men the *Jews.* Here note the Governor's Affability to St. *Paul, in asking him of his Country;* and his Juſtice; he would not judge him till he had his Accuſers Face to Face. If it be enough to accuſe, who can be Innocent? And if it be ſufficient to deny, who will be found Guilty? Magiſtrates muſt know a Cauſe before they give Sentence or Judgment upon it; otherwiſe, though they pronounce a right Sentence, yet it is not in Judgment, but by Accident.

Laſtly, obſerve the great Favour *Felix* ſhews the Apoſtle, in committing him Priſoner; not to the common Gaol, but to *Herod's* Palace. A fair Priſon, if a Place of Confinement may be ſo call'd! The *Sanhedrims* at *Jeruſalem,* though of his own Country, and of his own Religion, yet were not ſo kind as *Felix* the Heathen Governor.

Chap. XXIV.

Paul *accuſed of Sedition and Hereſy before* Felix, *by* Ananias *the Ruler, and* Tertullus *the Orator; againſt whom he defends his Faith and Doctrine.* Felix *defers the Matter till* Lyſias *ſhould come down, and gives* Paul *more Liberty; he inſtructs* Felix *and his Wife in the Faith of* Chriſt, *whereat* Felix *trembles, yet ſends for him often, in hopes to get Money, and leaves him bound in Priſon to to pleaſe the* Jews.

Q. I*N the Beginning of this Chapter, we find St.* Paul's *reſtleſs Enemies following him to* Cæſarea, *and by their Orator* Tertullus, *impleading him of High Crimes: How does this Advocate manage his bad Cauſe?*

A. St. *Paul* being ſet to the Bar, this Orator *Tertullus* begins with a rhetorical Flouriſh, full of flattering Inſinuations, to engage the Favour of the Judge. There is no Cauſe ſo foul and baſe, but ſome will be found to plead it; nay, to juſtify and defend it. Judges therefore need be wiſe as the Angels of God, to diſcern between Truth and Falſhood.

To win Judges by Flattery, is an old piece of Policy uſed by falſe Accuſers; and the ſureſt Way to ſucceed, they imagine, is, by this Means, to prepoſſeſs the Judge, and to engage him on their Side: But it is hard to ſay, which is moſt dangerous, to receive Flattery, or to give it.

Tertullus having thus prepared the Judge, preſently falls upon the Matter, and charges St. *Paul* with being a peſtilent Fellow, a ſeditious Perſon, and Diſturber of the Nation, a Profaner of the Temple, and a Ring-leader of the Sect of *Nazarenes.* And adds, that out of meer Zeal to the *Jewiſh* Religion, they had themſelves, before now, diſpatch'd him out of the Way, but that he was violently reſcued out of their Hands by *Lyſias* the chief Captain, and brought thither to be tried. Concluding, that the Things he had affirmed, were ready to be atteſted by thoſe who came with him as Witneſſes. *The* Jews *alſo aſſented*, and ſaid, *that theſe Things were ſo.*

What an heavy Load of Reproaches and falſe Accuſations was here thrown upon our innocent Apoſtle! He is accounted and called a walking Peſtilence. Thus the holy and faithful Servants of God are eſteemed, the Plague and Bane of the Nation where they live; yet it is really for their Sakes, that God ſtaves off Plagues and Judgments from falling upon the wicked World. Holineſs and Righteouſneſs will not defend a Saint from Cenſure and Slander, from Calumny and falſe Accuſations.

Beſides the general Charge, that the Apoſtle was the very Peſt and Plague of Mankind, we have a threefold Accuſation brought againſt him, that he was a Mover of Sedition, a Profaner of the Temple, and a Ring-leader of the Sect of *Nazarenes.* How ſhould the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* prepare themſelves for, and comfort themſelves under the moſt helliſh Reproaches, ſince this great Apoſtle (whom St. *Chryſoſtome* honours with this Character, *That the Earth never bore a better Man, ſince it bare our Redeemer, was miſcalled and accounted a Peſt, the Filth of the World, and the Offſcouring of all Things.*

Q. *How does the Apoſtle clear himſelf of theſe heavy Accuſations?*

A. Paul being accuſed of three notorious Crimes, Sedition, Hereſy, and Profanation of the Temple, anſwers diſtinctly to every one of them. Here ſee St. *Paul's* undaunted Behaviour; he neither fears the Greatneſs or Number of his Enemies, nor the Vehemency or Violence of their Accuſation, but tells the Governor, he did, *with all Cheerfulneſs*, undertake his Defence.

The firſt Crime he is charged with, is Sedition. What Schiſm is in Matters Eccleſiaſtical, that is Sedition in matters Temporal and Civil. As the one violates the Peace of the Church, ſo does the other the Peace of Society. Sedition is committed three Ways; by the Head, the Tongue, and the Hand. The firſt plots and contrives the Miſchief, the ſecond vents it, and the third executes it. But neither of theſe Ways the Apoſtle was guilty of Sedition; yet, ſay his Accuſers, *We have found this Fellow a Mover of Sedition.*

It is an old Stratagem, to repreſent the faithful Servants of God, as Enemies to States and Kingdoms, Diſturbers of the Peace, Troublers of *Iſrael*, Trumpeters of Rebellion, and Movers of Sedition, on Purpoſe to bring them into Hatred with Princes, that they may fall under the Sword of Magiſtrates as Malefactors.

But obſerve how St. *Paul* frees himſelf from this criminal Imputation. He firſt demonſtrates the Improbability of it; how unlikely it was, that he who came up to the Temple to worſhip God, and bring Alms to the Poor, and was in *Jeruſalem* but a very few Days, and did not ſo much as diſpute either in the Temple, or in the Synagogues, ſhould yet ſtir up the People to Sedition.

Again, he puts his Adverſaries upon Proof of this Article; *Neither can they prove the Things whereof they accuſe me.* From the Apoſtle's Practice in clearing his own Innocence, we learn, that it is a Piece of Juſtice which every Man owes to himſelf, to vindicate his Reputation from all Guilt falſely imputed to him, and eſpecially from Sedition.

The Apoſtle next anſwers the ſecond Part of the Charge, namely, that of Hereſy, and being the Ring-leader of the Sect of *Nazarenes.* Though the Apoſtle would not, out of Modeſty, acknowledge himſelf one of the Heads, or Chiefs, amongſt them, or a Ring-leader, as they ſtyl'd him; yet as to the owning that Way, notwithſtanding all the Imputations they had caſt upon it, he does it with the greateſt Freedom and Courage in the Preſence of his Judge and Accuſers; *This I confeſs, that after the Way they call Hereſy, ſo worſhip I,* &c. Thus *Chriſtianity* ſuffered a falſe Imputation, even in its firſt Appearance.

The Method St. *Paul* takes to remove this falſe Imputation, is, by appealing to Scripture and Authority; *So worſhip I the God of my Fathers, believing all Things that are written in the Law and the Prophets.*

He appeals to Scripture, as the Ground and Rule of his Faith; to the Law and the Prophets; and then he appeals to the beſt and pureſt Antiquity. *So worſhip I the God of my Fathers.*

It deſerves our Regard, with what Freedom and Courage the Apoſtle owns his Religion, notwithſtanding theſe falſe Imputations, even in the Preſence of his greateſt Enemies, and when they were in great Hopes to deſtroy him for it; *this I confeſs unto thee.* The Apoſtle abhorred that mean and baſe ſpirited Principle, which gives Men a Latitude to deny their Religion when it brings them into Danger: No; he valued his above, and preferred it to his perſonal Safety. God Almighty inſpires us with the ſame Courage and holy Religion, that tho' the Adverſaries of the Church of *Rome* pronounce us Hereticks, and call our Religon Hereſy, we may anſwer them as the Apoſtle anſwered their Forefathers, the ſubtil *Phariſees, after the way which you call Hereſy, ſo worſhip we the God of our Fathers, believing all Things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.*

The Apoſtle next aſſerts the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, which was a principal Article of both the *Jewiſh* and *Chriſtian* Religion; *I have hope towards God, that there ſhall be a Reſurrection both of the Juſt and Unjuſt.* And having made this Declaration of his Faith, he next gives an account of his Life; *Herein do I exerciſe myſelf to have always a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man.*

Here we may obſerve, what is the Principle and Guide of a good Man's Actions, and that is Conſcience. The Word and Law of God is the Rule of our Actions, but Conſcience is the immediate Guide and Director of them.

Here is alſo ſhewn the Extent of a good Man's pious Practice, *to keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and Man.* To exerciſe a faithful Care in performing the Duties of both Tables, is both an Argument of our Sincerity, and an Ornament to our Profeſſion. we muſt not make Conſcience of our Duties by Fits and Starts, but in the whole Tenor of our Lives and Actions, Religion ſhould be a conſtant frame and temper of Mind.

Herein (*ſays the Apoſtle*) *do I exerciſe myſelf*; which ſhews his earneſt Care and Endeavour to this Purpoſe. The Original Word is of an intenſe Signification, and denotes the Apoſtle's applying his Mind in good earneſt, to be thoroughly inſtructed in all the Parts and Points of his Duty, and his conſcientious Diſcharge of it.

The Apoſtle's Motive and Encouragement to do all this was, the Belief of the Reſurrection, and the future State of Rewards and Puniſhments conſequent upon it. If we believe the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Judgment to come, we ſhall be very careful to diſcharge a good Conſcience now, in order to the rendring a good Account of ourſelves then. Happy is that Man, who carries with him into the other World a Conſcience clear of all Guilt. At the Hour of Death to be free from Stings and Upbraidings, from the Terrors and Tortures, from the Confuſion and Amazement of a guilty Conſcience, is a Happineſs ſo deſirable, that it's well worth the Care and beſt Endeavour of our whole Life. May the Apoſtle's Exerciſe be our daily Practice, *to keep a Conſcience void of Offence toward God and Man.*

The Apoſtle now comes to clear himſelf of the third Charge, namely, Prophanation of the Temple; in order to which he declares that he had not been long at *Jeruſalem*, before this Journey; and that now he came to bring Alms to the poor *Jews* that were converted to Chriſtianity. He owns that at this Time he went into the Temple, yet not to prophane it, but to purſue thoſe Rites in it, which the Law of the *Jews* required of thoſe who had a Vow of *Nazarites* upon them. Thus the Apoſtle clear'd himſelf of all that was objected againſt him, and made it evident to the Face of his Enemies, that all the Accuſations brought againſt him were falſe and ſcandalous.

Q. *Does the Apoſtle uſe any other Means to clear his Innocence?*

A. Having thus vindicated himſelf and ſilenced his Adverſaries, he next appeals to the Conſciences of his Accuſers; whether there was any thing of Moment charged upon him more than this, that he profeſſed and believed the Reſurrection of the dead? Thus bravely did the Apoſtle plead his own Cauſe here, or rather the Spirit of God that ſpoke in him, tho' Satan had got *Ananias* the High-Prieſt, and *Tertullus* his Orator, to implead and impeach him: Yet with what a Flood of Truth and Eloquence does the Apoſtle vindicate his own Innocence. Great is Truth, and will finally prevail.

Q. Felix *having heard the Charge and Defence, what Judgment does he paſs upon the Whole?*

A. *Felix* from hence judging the true Nature of the Caſe, would not paſs final Sentence at preſent; but put them off, ſaying, *when I have got a more perfect knowledge of this* Chriſtianity; and when I have ſpoken with *Lyſias*, and know the Truth concerning the Tumult, I will then determine the Difference between you. In the mean Time the Captain of the Guard ſhall have the Priſoner in Cuſtody, to gratify the *Jews*.

Here obſerve both the Equity and Clemency of *Felix* the Judge. His Equity, in that he would not pronounce Sentence, before he had thoroughly examin'd, and fully underſtood the Matter of Fact. His Clemency in ſuffering the Apoſtle to be a Priſoner at large, and allowing his Friends and Acquaintance Liberty to come and viſit him. The former Rigour with which he was uſed is mercifully relaxed; he is no more confined to a cloſe Dungeon, but goes Abroad with a Chain and a Keeper. Thus God unexpectedly gives ſuch outward Comfort, to his Saints and Servants, as he ſees will do them moſt good; and even cauſes his and their Enemies to contribute thereunto.

Q. *Some few Days after this Trial of St.* Paul, Felix *ſends for him, and deſired to be further informed concerning the Faith in* Chriſt: *What Obſervations does this furniſh us with?*

A. The Apoſtle, tho' in Bonds, has Liberty to preach, and he preaches with Liberty, with great Boldneſs and Freedom of Speech, tho' under great Diſadvantages; his Perſon impriſon'd, his Reputation blotted and defamed, loaded with Calumnies and odious Imputations; yet under all theſe Diſadvantages the Apoſtle preaches.

His Hearers were *Felix*, and his Wife *Druſilla*; *Felix* a bad Man, guilty of Bribery, &c. *Druſilla* a vile Woman, who forſook her own Huſband, and lived in Adultery with *Felix*, as *Joſephus* affirms. Here were a Pair of notable Hearers; yet, as bad as they were, St. *Paul* makes no Scruple to preach to them, in hopes to make them better.

The Text or ſubject Matter preach'd upon, was, Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come: Where the Wiſdom of the Preacher appears from the Suitableneſs of the Subject. *Felix* had a corrupt Principle; for it is ſaid, he hoped to have Money given him by *Paul* to releaſe him, therefore to him he preaches of Righteouſneſs. *Druſilla* was guilty of Incontinence and Adultery, to her he preaches of Temperance, and to both of a Judgment to come; happy were it if great Offenders had ſuch wiſe Admoniſhers near them;

inſtead of which they are generally ſurrounded with flattering Paraſites.

Q. *What Impreſſion did this Sermon make on his Audience?*

A. The Succeſs or Effect of this Sermon was. *Felix trembled.* The Ground of *Felix*'s trembling, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, at this Diſcourſe of *Paul's*, of Juſtice and Charity, and Continence, will be beſt fetch'd from the Character of the Man, both in *Tacitus* and *Joſephus*. *Tacitus* mentions him as a *Roman* Knight, to whom *Claudius* the Emperor had intruſted that Province; where, ſays he, *he practiſed all Cruelty and Injuſtice in his Government, and that he took to Wife the Niece of* Anthony *and* Cleopatra. Of this Marriage of his, *Joſephus* enlarges, and ſays, that his Brother *Agrippa* had given her firſt to *Azis* the King of the *Emiſſeni*; and whilſt ſhe was his Wife, *Felix* falls in Love with her, and by the help of one *Simon* a Magician (not he of *Samaria*, but another of *Cyprus*) obtained her from her Husband's Bed.

From theſe two Parts of his Character, an unjuſt Governor (of which his expecting Bribes here, is an Evidence alſo) and one that lived with ano- Man's Wife, ariſes the Fitneſs and Propriety of St. *Paul*'s Diſcourſe before him, of Juſtice aud Continence; and the Guilt of his Conſcience, hearing that there was a Judgment to come for ſuch Sins as theſe, might very well ſet him a trembling.

Q. *Did this Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle leave any laſting Impreſſion on* Felix?

A. This trembling Fit, this ſick Qualm of Conſcience, however, was ſoon over; he diſmiſſes the Preacher for that Time, and tells him he will call for him at a more convenient Seaſon. But we don't read of any ſuch Opportunity taken afterwards for that Purpoſe; ſo dangerous is it to ſtop our Ear at the preſent Call and Command of God; if To-day we will not, To-morrow, God may ſay, you ſhall not hear my Voice.

Small therefore was the Succeſs of St. *Paul*'s Sermon; it left, as it found, *Felix* a bad Man; Covetouſneſs and Bribery were his Sins before, and ſo they are ſtill; *he hoped that Money ſhould have been given him of* Paul; that is, he expected a Bribe for ſetting the Apoſtle at Liberty, contrary to the Law both of God and Man.

To this Covetouſneſs he added Cruelty; for tho' he had nothing to charge *Paul* with, yet to gratify the *Jews*, *he left* Paul *bound*; having a regard to the pleaſing of Men, more than the Diſpleaſure of God. An Hypocrite can conform himſelf to any Thing for his own Intereſt; but ſee the Reward *Felix* met with for all his corrupt Practices; he who had ſo unjuſtly kept *Paul* bound for two Years, and cruelly left him bound at laſt, to humour the *Jews*, is himſelf ſent a Priſoner in Bonds to *Rome*, to anſwer before *Nero*, for the Miſdemeanors in the Management of his Government.

Chap. XXV.

Feſtus *comes into the Province, and goes up to* Jeruſalem. *The* Jews *accuſing* Paul, *deſire he may be ſent to* Jeruſalem. Feſtus *will have him appear at* Cæſarea. *The* Jews *accuſe him; he defends himſelf; and appeals to* Cæſar. Feſtus *declares* Paul's *Cauſe to King* Agrippa *and* Berenice. Agrippa *deſires to hear him.* Paul *brought forth.* Feſtus *relates his Cauſe, and his own Opinion of it.*

Q. WHAT *is chiefly obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter acquaints us, that *Feſtus* being come to the Government, and going up to *Jeruſalem*, the High-Prieſt and Rulers of the *Jews* quickly inform him againſt *Paul*, and requeſt that he might be ſent for to *Jeruſalem*, reſolving to place ſome Ruffians in Ambuſh to kill him as he came; but Providence ſo over-ruled the Matter, that *Feſtus* would not conſent to it, but order'd his Accuſers to come to *Cæſarea*, and implead him there.

How reſtleſs is the Rage, how unwearied the Malice and Enmity of Perſecutors againſt the Profeſſors of the Truth! The High-Prieſt and Chief of the *Sanhedrim* or Eccleſiaſtical Court, continue their murderous Deſigns againſt the Innocent Apoſtle; and are ſorry, they can't get a Heathen Governor as mad and cruel as themſelves, to join in their barbarous Purpoſes. Heathens have ſometimes bluſh'd at the Mention of theſe Crimes, which the Profeſſors of Religion have committed without either Shame or Remorſe.

What Prieſts and Church-Governors were here; who call it a Favour to have an Opportunity granted them to murder an Innocent Man in cool Blood, contrary to the Law of Nature, and of Nations? But behold the Juſtice of God upon them; they were now given up to a reprobate Senſe, and are hurried headlong by a diabolical Spirit, a little before their final Deſtruction.

Feſtus, however, could not be prevailed on, either by Flatteries or Perſuaſions, to remove the Apoſtle from *Cæſarea* to *Jeruſalem*. This quite broke the Prieſts Meaſures, who deſign'd to have kill'd him by the Way; no, ſays *Feſtus*, the Priſoner ſhall not come to you, but you ſhall go to him. Thus wonderfully did Providence interpoſe for the Preſervation of the Apoſtle. How eaſy is it for the moſt high God to baffle and blaſt the moſt cunning Contrivances of the Devil, to befool and infatuate the Enemies of his Church, by making the Counſels of the Wicked to be of no Effect? God looks and laughs at all the Plots of wicked Men againſt the Righteous; Fruſtration and Diſappointment attend all their Deſigns. *Pſ.* ii. 5. *he that ſitteth in Heaven laughs them to ſcorn; the Lord has them in Deriſion.*

Q. *What kind of Charge did the* Jews *bring againſt the Apoſtle?*

A. The Indictment, or Charge, which the *Jews* brought againſt the Apoſtle was, that he had offended againſt the Law, prophaned the Temple, and raiſed Sedition againſt the *Roman* Government. Here the Devil is at his old Trade; namely, ſtirring up the Rage and Malice of the World againſt the Saints of God, under Pretence of being Enemies to the State, and Subverters of Civil Government.

The Jews *laid many and grievous Things againſt* Paul, *which they could not prove.* Reproach has been the Reward of Religion and Righteouſneſs from the Beginning of Chriſtianity; but St. *Paul* wipes off the ſeveral Reproaches caſt upon him; affirming himſelf to have been always a religious Obſerver of the Law; that he went to the Temple on a religious Account; and that he had never taught or practiſed any Rebellion againſt *Cæſar*. The Servants of *Chriſt* are happy in their own Innocence, and their Adverſaries render themſelves odious by belying them, and laying that to their charge which every one can diſprove.

Q. *How came* Feſtus *ſo readily to admit of St.* Paul*'s Appeal to* Cæſar ?

A. The Politicians of the World don't ſo much conſider what is juſt and righteous in its own Nature, as what is of Uſe and Advantage to themſelves, be it right or wrong. The Apoſtle had cleared himſelf from all ſlanderous Accuſations; and yet Feſtus, *willing to do the* Jews *a Pleaſure*, would not ſet him at Liberty. It's too often the Practice of corrupt Judges, for the ſake of humouring a People, to deliver up Truth itſelf to be crucified; having a greater regard to Popularity and Self-intereſt, than the Priſoner's Innocence and Oppreſſion.

Q. *But why did the Apoſtle rather appeal to the Juſtice of* Cæſar, *a Foreigner, than be judged by his own Countrymen the* Jews?

A. St. *Paul* rightly judging what would be the Conſequence of his returning to *Jeruſalem*, aſſerts his Privilege as a *Roman*, and appeals to *Cæſar*; from his Countrymen to Heathens; from the High-Prieſt to the Emperor *Nero*; expecting more Juſtice at the Hands of Infidels, than from the *Jewiſh* Sanhedrim: And to this the Apoſtle was in ſome ſort divinely admoniſh'd, Chap. xxiii. 11. *Be of good cheer*, Paul, *thou ſhalt bear Witneſs of me at* Rome. Doubtleſs this was a mighty Support and ſtrong Conſolation to him, to know that he appeal'd and deſired to go to *Rome*, where God had appointed to have him go.

Q. *What farther Obſervations have you to make upon St.* Paul's *Caſe at this Juncture?*

A. We have next a freſh Inſtance of that Protection and Aſſiſtance which God affords his Servants in their greateſt Straits and Difficulties, and that he Providentially diſpoſes of all Matters in order to their Deliverance, when it may moſt conduce to his own Glory, and their real Advantage.

Thus here, King *Agrippa* comes to congratulate *Feſtus*; *Feſtus* declares the Cauſe of God's oppreſſed Servants to the King, and God makes uſe both of *Feſtus* and *Agrippa*, to ſkreen the Apoſtle from the Violence and Outrage of his Enemies. *In the Mount will the Lord be ſeen*, his People's Extremities are the Seaſons of his Succour.

Obſerve here, how the very Light of Nature in and among the Heathens, condemns it as a manifeſt and notorious act of Injuſtice in a Judge to paſs Sentence on a Perſon unheard, and unallow'd to make his Defence. This Baſeneſs was beneath the *Roman* Honour, whilſt Pagans; *Feſtus* demands the Accuſers and the Accuſed to appear Face to Face, and yet ſuch a diabolical Spirit of Malice had blinded the *Jews*, that contrary to the Law of Nature, and the Law of all Nations, they would have had St. *Paul* condemned without knowing the Cauſe, or hearing his Defence.

Again, what baſe and vile, what low and undervaluing Thoughts and Apprehenſions have carnal Men of the high and holy Things of God? *Feſtus* here calls the Religion and Worſhip which was of God's own Inſtitution, moſt profanely and contemptuouſly by the Name of Superſtition; *they had certain Queſtions againſt him of their own Superſtitions.* And how ſlightly does he ſpeak of our glorified Redeemer, ſtiling him *One Jeſus*.

Q. *The next Thing that occurs to our Obſervation, is King* Agrippa*'s Curioſity to be informed of St.* Paul's *Affair: But why was he thus inquiſitive?*

King *Agrippa* was born and educated amongſt the *Jews*, and probably underſtood ſomething of the Chriſtian Religion; he had heard too, very poſſibly, much of St. *Paul*, and therefore deſired to ſee him, as *Herod* deſired to ſee *Chriſt*, and to hear *John the Baptiſt*, only to gratify his Curioſity, not to be advantaged by his Miniſty.

Q. *But why does the Scripture take Notice of the Splendor and Magnificence, with which* Agrippa *and* Berenice *came into Court?*

A. It deſerves our Notice, with what Contempt the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaks of all the Pomp, Retinue, aud State, which *Feſtus*, *Agrippa*, and *Bernice*, appeared in at the Time and Place of hearing; he calls it Fancy, ſo the Original Word ſignifies; intimating, that all the Pomp, Gayety, and Glory of the World, is nothing but Fancy, a Dream, and a Shadow, having no real Exiſtence, but a being in Imagination only.

Q. *Did the ſtrenuous Endeavours of the* Jews *to get* Paul *condemned, make no Impreſſion on his Judges?*

A. Truth and Innocence ſhine the more illuſtrious, by the greater Oppoſition that is made to them. The more malicious the *Jews* were in accuſing *Paul*, the more did his Innocence appear, and the more readily acquitted and diſcharged by his Judges. Thus we ſee the Providence of God wrought every thing for St. *Paul's* Juſtification, and for the *Jews* Reprehenſion. *Feſtus* had nothing to write to *Cæſar*, no Crime to inform him of againſt the Apoſtle.

Hence learn, that altho' God ſometimes permits his Servants to be loaded with Slanders and Reproaches; yet he will find a Time to clear their Innocence, and cauſe their very Judges, if not Accuſers, to proclaim them guiltleſs. *I find, (ſaith* Feſtus, *he hath committed nothing worthy of Death.* It is no ſmall Mercy to have our Innocence vindicated, for God to clear up our Righteouſneſs as the Light, and our juſt Dealing as the Noon-day, and to free our Reputation from thoſe Blemiſhes which the uncharitable Suſpicions, or raſh Cenſures of Men, have caſt upon us. There is no Spot ſo unbeautiful as that upon our Conſciences: God made the Apoſtle's Enemies here do him right, and his Name was cloathed with Honour in the Eſtimation of his very Adverſaries.

CHAP. XXVI.

Agrippa *permits* Paul *to ſpeak for himſelf; he relates his Life before his Converſion, how he was converted, and called to the Apoſtleſhip, and how he taught and ſuffer'd.* Feſtus *charges him with Madneſs through too much Learning; he modeſtly defends himſelf, turns his Diſcourſe to* Agrippa, *who is almoſt perſuaded to be a Chriſtian. The Council judge him Innocent.*

Q. ST. Paul *is here brought to his third Trial, namely, before King* Agrippa, *of whom he entreats a patient Hearing: What Arguments does he make uſe of in his Juſtifictaion?*

A. The Apoſtle begins his Defence with relating the Innocence and Strictneſs of his Life before his Converſion; he did and could appeal to all that knew him concerning the Unblameableneſs of his Converſation. Happy is that Perſon, and great is his Support and Comfort in a ſuffering Hour, who can appeal to Friend and Foe, for the Innocence of his Life from his Youth up.

As an Inſtance of the Apoſtle's Strictneſs in Religion, he affirms, that *after the moſt ſtrait Sect of their Religion, he lived a Phariſee.* Of all the Sects among the *Jews*, there was none that profeſſed ſo ſtrict a Way of Religion as the Phariſees; of this Sect was St. *Paul*, before converted to Chriſtianity, and in this he reſted for Salvation. Thus many may reſt on a ſtrict Way of Religion, which yet comes not up to, but is often beſides the Appointment of the Word of God, the Phariſees for their unuſual and ſupererogating Exactneſs in Religion, concluded that they ſhould certainly go to Heaven if any did; when, alas! many of the Things they practiſed with extraordinary Exactneſs, were never required by God at their Hands.

Q. *The Apoſtle next proceeds to vindicate his Doctrine: How does he do thus?*

A. He tells *Agrippa*, that for believing, expecting, and preaching the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, he was queſtioned of the *Jews*; this he calls the *Hope of the Promiſe made by God unto the Fathers*: Others underſtand it of the Promiſe of the *Meſſias*, which was made unto the Fathers, and was generally depended upon by the moſt Pious among the twelve Tribes ſcatter'd Abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth; and in the Faith and Expectation whereof they fervently ſerved God Night and Day.

Hence learn, that the Pious and Godly among the *Jews*, lived in Hopes of the Appearance of the *Meſſias*, of a glorious Reſurrection by him, and of eternal Life and Salvation with him; which Hope of this promiſed Mercy cauſed them to ſerve God inſtantly Day and Night. Hope is the great Exciter of Induſtry and Endeavour; Expectation puts us upon Action, Hope of attaining is the Motive to every Undertaking; the Chriſtians Hope (or what they hope for) is great and excellent in their Eſteem (namely eternal Life) and where the Eſteem is high, the Endeavour will be ſtrong; that Chriſtian who has a well-grounded Belief and Hope of a Life to come, will ſerve God with an unwearied Diligence and Induſtry; if by any Means he may attain the Fruition and Enjoyment of it, *unto which Promiſe our twelve Tribes inſtantly ſerveing God Day and Night, hope to come.*

With Reſpect to the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, the Apoſtle thus reaſons; the great Point in Controverſy between me and you, is this, Whether the Dead in general ſhall ariſe? And whether *Chriſt* in particular be riſen from the Dead? Now why ſhould either ſeem incredible to you? Is it too hard for God who made the World, and upholds it, and gives Life to every living Creature to raiſe the Dead? If not, why ſhould it be thought incredible or impoſſible?

Q. *What is there farther obſervable in the Apoſtle's Defence?*

A. The Apoſtle frankly declares, that he was once as ſharp and bitter an Enemy to *Chriſt*, and to all that believed in him, as any one whatever, and thought himſelf bound in Conſcience to perſecute all that owned him; and with Threatnings and Tortures compelled them to deny *Chriſt*; and being exceedingly fierce, he forced them to fly to Heathen Cities to eſcape his Fury.

This teaches us that we ſhould be upon very good and ſure Grounds before we oppoſe or perſecute any; and that there are ſome who perſecute others, and at the ſame time think they are doing there Duty in it; *I verily thought that I ought to do many Things contrary to the Name of* Jeſus. He ſpeaks as if his Conſcience would have troubled him, unleſs he had troubled others for what was indeed their Conſcience.

Q. *St.* Paul, *ſpeaking of his mad Rage againſt the* Chriſtians, *ſays, he* compelled them to blaſpheme, *Ver.* 11. *which Way did he do this?*

A. This he probably did theſe two Ways, 1. By his Example; they imitated him in blaſpheming, or ſpeaking Evil of *Chriſt* and the Goſpel. 2. By his Cruelty, vexing them ſo in the Profeſſion of *Chriſt*, that ſome of them, who were unſettled, probably fell away, and blaſphemed the Name of *Chriſt* which they had profeſſed. *He compelled them to blaſpheme.* There is a compelling Power and conſtraining Force in Example, eſpecially in the Example of Perſons in Power and Authority.

Q. *In the Account which the Apoſtle here gives of his Converſion, ſome Things are mentioned which were not before taken Notice of; pray what are theſe?*

A. He tells King *Agrippa*, that when he received his extraordinary Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel; that *Chriſt*, who appeared to him from Heaven, choſe him to be a Preacher, as well as a Profeſſor of the Goſpel; aſſuring him that he would ſtand by him, and deliver him from the Perſecutions both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to whom he ſhould ſend him, and would bleſs his Endeavours to the opening the Eyes of their Underſtanding, and to the turning them from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they might receive by Faith in *Chriſt*, Remiſſion of Sins, and a Portion of the heavenly Inheritance among ſuch as are regenerated by his Holy Spirit.

Q. *What Remarks do you make upon this additional Account of St.* Paul's *Converſion?*

A. Obſerve here, the Honour which God is pleaſed to put upon the Miniſtry of the Word, his own Ordinance; St. *Paul*, who was only the Inſtrument, is ſaid to open the Eyes of the Blind, and turn Sinners from Darkneſs to light, and from the Power of Satan unto God; all which is properly and principally the Work of *Chriſt*; yet he was pleaſed to put that Honour upon his Miniſtry, by whom he works all this, and for which Reaſon they are called Co-workers, or Workers together with *Chriſt*.

Here is likewiſe the Apoſtle's Miſſion, *I ſend thee.* Great is the Dignity of Goſpel-Miniſters; their Commiſſion is ſealed by the whole Trinity, and intimates both their Dignity and Duty: For their Holineſs they are called Men of God; for their Vigilancy, Watchmen; for their Courage, Soldiers; for their Powerfulneſs, Harveſt-Labourers; for their Care of the Flock, Shepherds; for their Wiſdom, Overſeers; fot their Induſtry, Huſbandmen; for their Affectionateneſs, Fathers and Mothers; for their Faithfulneſs, Stewards. A very high and honourable Calling, which the Son of God deſpiſed not.

Q. *Pray what were the Particulars of St.* Paul's *Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel?*

A. St. *Paul's* Commiſſion is deſcribed in the ſeveral Branches of it, 1. *To open their Eyes*; that is, to enlighten their Underſtandings, that they may know God and their Duty to him; in Order to which there is required, 1. Ability in the Preachers: How can they open the Eyes of others, who are blind and ignorant themſelves? Ought not they who undertake to be Guides and Leaders, to be perfectly acquainted with the Way themſelves? 2. Perſpicuity in the Sermon; what Hope can there be in opening Mens Underſtandings, when the Matter deliver'd is cloſed up from them? It was St. *Paul's* Aim to ſpeak intelligibly; it is the ſame Thing to ſpeak in an unknown Tongue, as in a Style, above the Reach and Capacity of our Hearers. Painted Glaſs is more coſtly, but plain Glaſs is the more clear and uſeful. Yet we muſt be cautious, that though we come in Plainneſs, yet not in Rudeneſs of Speech.

The ſecond Part of St. *Paul's* Commiſſion was, *to turn Men from Darkneſs to Light*, and from the Power of Satan unto God; in Order to which he was firſt turned from theſe himſelf. Little Reaſon has that Miniſter to expect, that God will honour his Miniſtry for the Converſion of others from Sin and Satan, who is himſelf under the Dominion of both. A Miniſter's Life is the People's Looking-Glaſs, by which they uſually dreſs themſelves.

The happy Fruit both of St. *Paul's* Miſſion and Commiſſion was, *That they may receive Forgiveneſs of Sin, and an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified.* Where-ever true Repentance is wrought by the Miniſtry of the Word, there is Forgiveneſs attained, and a Title to the Inheritance of Heaven with it.

Q. *What is there farther obſervable in St.* Paul's *Commiſſion?*

A. We have likewiſe a threefold metaphorical Deſcription of the ſinful State of Nature before Converſion. The State of Nature is a State of Blindneſs, *to open their Eyes*; a State of Darkneſs, *to turn them from Darkneſs to Light*; a State of Slavery, *and from the Power of Satan unto God.* The State of Grace after Converſion is ſet forth by Sight, Light, and Liberty. All this is *Chriſt's* Work originally, but his Miniſters Work inſtrumentally; *I have ſent thee to open their Eyes, to turn them from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God.*

To the Call of *Chriſt*, in this glorious Viſion, the Apoſtle paid a ready Obedience; he did not, he durſt not rebel againſt it; but went forth and preached, firſt at *Damaſcus*, and then at *Jeruſalem*, then throughout all *Judea*, and at laſt among the *Gentiles*, the Doctrine of Repentance, and the Neceſſity of good Works.

But obſerve the Requital the Apoſtle met with for his Diligence and Faithfulneſs in preaching the Goſpel; for this he had like to have been killed by the *Jews* in the Temple. So that to preach the Goſpel is the ready Way to bring the Wrath and Fury of the World upon ourſelves.

Q. *Proceed to explain ſome other Particulars of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe.*

A. How thankfully does the Apoſtle acknowledge the merciful Providence of God in preſerving him, both from the Fraud and Force of his Enemies, *having obtained Help of God, I continue unto this Day?* Here we may behold how wonderfully the Senſe of Divine Goodneſs upon his Soul incited him to go on in his Work, declaring no other Thing concerning *Chriſt*, but what *Moſes* and the Prophets often foretold of him; namely, that ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe again by his own Power, and be the Author of our Reſurrection.

Here Note, that the Sufferings of *Chriſt* were taught by *Moſes*, in all the Commands given about Sacrifices; and not *Moſes* only, but by the Prophets alſo, particularly the Prophet *Iſaiah*, Chap. liii. that evangelical Prophet, and prophetical Evangeliſt, who wrote as clearly of *Chriſt's* Coming, as if he had been then come: From whence the Apoſtle argues, how black the Wickedneſs of the *Jews* was, who went about to kill him for the ſame Doctrine, which *Moſes* and the Prophets had long before taught.

Q. *Did* Feſtus *make any Anſwer to the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe?*

A. *Feſtus* had heard the Apoſtle hitherto with a great deal of Patience, but at laſt interrupts him, and tells him he talked like a Madman. Carnal Minds uncharitably cenſure ſpiritual Perſons and ſpiritual Things. *Chriſt's* Kindred ſaid, *He was beſide himſelf*, Mark ii. 39. *Feſtus* here judg'd *Paul* to be mad, thinking that he had over-ſtudied himſelf; and that by meddling with Matters too high for his Capacity, and too deep for his Underſtanding, he had turned his Brain; Paul, *thou art beſide thyſelf, much Learning hath made thee mad.*

Q. *What Anſwer did St.* Paul *make to theſe harſh Reflections of* Feſtus?

A. Obſerve with what Calmneſs and due Terms of Reſpect the Apoſtle replies to this ill-judging Governor! *I am not mad, moſt noble* Feſtus. He gives *Feſtus* his Title of Honour, not ſo much in Reſpect to his Perſon, for that was unworthy; as to his Office, which was truly honourable. Titles of Honour and Reſpect given to Perſons in Place and Power, are agreeable to the Mind of God, and contenanced by *Chriſtianity*.

What an happy Command the Apoſtle had over his Paſſions! He waves the Reflections *Feſtus* made upon him, having learned of his Maſter, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. It is an happy Attainment for a Man to be Maſter of himſelf under a Provocation, to be governed by right Reaſon, and not hurried by blind Paſſion.

Q. *The Apoſtle having made this Reply to* Feſtus, *turns himſelf to* Agrippa, *and appeals to his Knowledge for the Truth and Certainty of thoſe Things of which he had been diſcourſing: But why did he ſuppoſe that* Agrippa *knew more of this Matter than* Feſtus?

A. The Apoſtle knowing *Agrippa* had his Education among the *Jews*, tells him, that he could not but hear of the Life, Doctrine, Miracles, and Reſurrection of *Chriſt*; all which were done openly, and not in Corners, and he could not but believe the Prophets, and what they had foretold concerning the *Meſſias*; and if the Power of worldly Intereſt did not overcome him, his Life and Practice would be conformable to his Belief.

Q. *What Effect had St.* Paul's *Doctrine upon* Agrippa?

A. Probably, he was not converted by it, yet he could not but be convinced; his Conſcience was touched, though his Heart was not renewed. There is undoubtedly that in Religion that carries its own Evidence along with it, even to the Conſciences of ungodly Men.

How melancholy is the Conſideration, that when

Perſons have enjoy'd the Scriptures, the Preaching of the Word, and all Means of Salvation, and yet are but almoſt *Chriſtians*, and ſhall never enjoy the leaſt Salvation; they are within Sight of Heaven, and yet ſhall never have a Sight of God.

Q. *Did St.* Paul's *Judges clear him of the Crimes laid to his Charge?*

A. St. *Paul* having finiſhed his Defence, *Agrippa, Feſtus,* and the whole Company acquit him in their Judgments and Conſciences, and declare that he deſerved neither Death, nor Bonds; but tho' they acquit him, they diſcharge him not, but he is left in his Enemies Hands, and at laſt put to death by the *Gentiles*.

Q. *But how then, may it be ſaid, was God's Promiſe fulfilled, Ver.* 16, 17. *of this Chapter,* I have appeared unto thee, to make thee a Miniſter and a Witneſs, and will deliver thee from the People, and from the *Gentiles,* unto whom I now ſend thee. *How did God deliver him from the* Gentiles, *when he was at laſt delivered into their Hands, and put to death by them?*

A. It is anſwered, ſo long as the Wiſdom of God ſaw it convenient for the Purpoſes of his Glory, as a real Mercy conducing to the Apoſtle's Good: as long as it was a true and beneficial Deliverance, ſo long God wrought Deliverance for him; nay, rather than fail, in a miraculous Manner, no Chains could bind him, no Iron-gates, nor Priſon-walls confine him: But when he had finiſhed his Courſe, run his Race, fought the good Fight of Faith, and done the Work which God had ſet him about, it would not then have been a Deliverance, or a Benefit, but a real Detriment to have been kept longer, from his Reward. Now, might the Apoſtle ſay, give me my Robes and my Crown. God now made his Word good to the Apoſtle, to deliver him from the People and the *Gentiles,* by making Death his Deliverer and Deliverance; all are ours, if we be *Chriſt*'s, whether Life or Death, 1 *Cor.* iii. 22.

Q. *Had the* Romans, *at that Time, no Laws in force againſt the* Chriſtians; *as ſeems intimated by that Declaration of* Paul's *Judges, Ver.* 31. *that he* had done nothing worthy of Death or of Bonds?

A. The Truth of this Speech of King *Agrippa* and his Company, that *Paul had done nothing worthy of Death or of Bonds,* Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, depends on the Conſideration of the Time wherein it was ſpoken. For the *Roman* Magiſtrates judging by the *Roman* Laws, that which was not againſt any Law of the Emperors, was not cognizable, eſpecially by Death or Impriſonment, Deprivation of Life or Liberty by them. Thus when *Paul* is accuſed by the *Jews,* and brought before the Proconſul of *Achaia, Gallio,* Chap. xviii. he tells them, that he *will not be Judge of ſuch Matters,* which the *Roman* Law, then in *Claudian's* Reign, had nothing of. For though (Chap. xviii. 2.) an Edict had been ſet out by *Claudius,* towards the End of his Reign, againſt the *Jews,* to baniſh them out of *Italy, &c.* and by that, the *Chriſtian Jews,* as *Jews,* not as *Chriſtians,* fell under that Interdict, ſo did *Priſcilla* and *Aquila* there, (and *John* the Apoſtle, baniſhed into the Iſle of *Patmos,* in *Claudian*'s, ſaith *Epiphanus*) yet as to the Difference betwixt *Jews* and *Chriſtians,* there referred to by *Gallio,* there was then no Law ſet out by the Emperor at *Rome,* and therefore no Rule for the Pro-Conſul to go by, in taking Cognizance of them. And thus it continued till *Nero*'s Rage againſt the *Chriſtians* began; for "*Nero* (ſays *Tertullian*) was the firſt that made any capital Law againſt them." Now this Appearance of *Paul* before *Agrippa,* was in the ſecond of *Nero*'s Reign, *A. C.* 57. long before this Rage of his broke out; and accordingly *Paul* had made his Appeal to *Cæſar*'s Tribunal, knowing that this Difference being betwixt him and the *Jews,* enraging and importuning the Magiſtrates againſt him, the beſt Way of ſecuring himſelf, was a Trial by the *Roman* Laws, to which he prudently appeals, Chap. xxv. 11. making it his Plea, that he had done nothing againſt *Cæſar,* Ver. 8. and as a *Roman,* claiming the Privilege of being judged by the imperial Laws, and not to be delivered up to the *Jews,* Ver. 10. which Plea of his would have been of no Signification, if *Chriſtianity* had been under any imperial Interdict, and by being accepted for him, demonſtrates that at that Time it was not.

Chap. XXVII.

Paul *and other Priſoners, in their Voyage to* Rome, *come to the* Fair-Havens. Paul *foretels the great Damage of their Voyage. The Centurion believes the Maſter and Owner of the Ship before* Paul, *and ſail by* Crete. *A great Tempeſt riſing, they caſt out their Goods.* Paul *comforts them by telling his Viſion. They caſt out their Anchors; the Seamen, attempting to leave the Ship, are hindred by* Paul. *The People, after a long Faſt, on* Paul's *Advice, throw the Corn into the Sea, and ſuffer Shipwreck. They all eſcape ſafe to Land.*

Q. SAINT Paul, *with other Priſoners, in order to their being ſent to* Rome, *are committed to the Cuſtody of* Julius: *What Reflections does this afford us?*

A. The firſt Thing that occurs to our Obſervation here is, the Perſon to whom the Apoſtle is delivered; namely, *Julius,* a Man very civil to the Apoſtle, ſuffering him to ſee and receive the Civilities of his Friends. Thus God raiſes up Friends to his People in the midſt of their Sufferings, and when Perſecutors ſend his Saints to Priſon, he will provide Keepers for their turn; *Julius,* a Heathen Soldier, was kinder to him than his own Countrymen.

Here is alſo mentioned the villainous Company of Malefactors and Priſoners that innocent Apoſtle was packed with, *They delivered* Paul *and ſeveral other Priſoners to* Julius. Saints and Sinners, good and bad, ſhare together in the ſame outward Miſeries; but though they are thus jumbled together in this World, where Things come alike to all, yet the righteous Judge will make a Difference between them in the other World, according to their Works.

But though the Apoſtle was thus yoked with Criminals and Malefactors in the Ship, yet God favour'd him with ſome Companions who were according to his own Heart's Deſire; namely, his dear Aſſociates, St. *Luke, Timothy,* and *Ariſtarchus.* It's no ſmall Satisfaction to the afflicted, to have agreeable Companions; but it was St. *Paul*'s peculiar Happineſs, that he enjoy'd the Preſence of God in ſo comfortable a Manner; in, and under all his Sufferings, according to his Promiſe, Chap. xviii. *I am with thee, and no Man ſhall ſet on thee to hurt thee.*

thee. The gracious and ſpecial preſence of God with his Children and People, is their ſure and ſufficient Support, in and under all their Difficulties and Trials.

Q. *What was the firſt remarkable Thing that happened in their Voyage?*

A. It was a ſingular Favour which God was pleaſ-to grant to St. *Paul*, that at *Sidon*, he found Friends, ſuch Spirits as he could comfortably converſe with, and receive Refreſhments from, and needful Accommodations for his tedious Voyage. God's Care and Compaſſion for his Children and People, is univerſal and perpetual, at all Times, and in all Places.

Q. *What other Occurrences does St.* Paul *meet with in his Voyage?*

A. We come now to the Account, given of St. *Paul's* hazardous Voyage, from *Cæſarea* to *Rome*. He ſails firſt to *Cyprus*; from *Cyprus* to *Cilicia*; from thence to *Crete*; having been long at Sea, the Summer almoſt gone, and the great Faſt over; that is, the Anniverſary Faſt of Expiation, which was on the tenth of *September*. After which the Sea growing tempeſtuous, the Antients forbore ſailing till *March*, becauſe of the Shortneſs of the Days.

Q. *On this Occaſion we find St.* Paul *giving his Advice: Upon what Reaſons did he ground it; and why was it rejected?*

A. St. *Paul* foreſeeing the Danger of the Seaſon, being divinely inſpired, admoniſhed them of the great Hazard of the Voyage, both to the Ship, and and alſo to the Lives of thoſe that were in it, and adviſed them to proceed no farther till the Sea was calmer; but the Maſter of the Ship, (who was ſuppos'd to he better ſkilled in his own Art) adviſing otherwiſe, the Centurion prefers his Judgment before *Paul's*, and ſo ſets forward; and with great Hazard and conſiderable Loſs, as the Event declared.

From the whole we learn, that the fitteſt Seaſons ought to be obſerv'd and taken for every Enterprize both Sacred and Peculiar: Winter Journeys by Land, or Voyages by Sea, are unſafe, as well as uncomfortable. A Seaſon is beautiful for all Things. This Winter Voyage about our *October*, was very hazardous and unſeaſonable; for the Winds were boiſterous and contrary, the Days ſhort, the Light little, the Nights long, the Clouds thick, the Weather dark, the Storms raging; therefore the Apoſtle adviſed to Winter in the fair Haven, knowing that the Seaſon for ſailing was now paſt.

Q. *Here are likewiſe deſcribed the farther Difficulties and Dangers to which St.* Paul *and his Company were expoſed: How do you improve this Story for our Inſtruction?*

A. Thus; the Ship in which he ſailed, is an Emblem of the Church, in her militant State here upon Earth; ſhe is afflicted, toſſed with all Tempeſts, and in Danger of being Shipwreck'd every Moment. Many tempeſtuous *Euroclydons*s ariſe ſuddenly, and threaten her totally; but her wiſe Pilot ſits at the Helm, ſteers her with a fixed Eye and ſteady Hand, between Rocks and Shelves, undergirding her with his everlaſting Arms of Power and Love, which are underneath her; and when in our Apprehenſions ſhe is brought to a hopeleſs and helpleſs State, without the Light of the Sun or Stars to comfort her; then does the Lord enlighten our Darkneſs, and at Midnight there ſhall be Light.

Again, this Voyage, neglected in the Summer, and undertaken in the Winter, to the Peril of the Paſſengers, and Loſs of the Ship, repreſents, in a very lively Manner, both the Folly and Danger of thoſe who ſuffer the Spring of Youth, and the Summer of ripe Age to ſlide away; and when the Winter of old Age comes upon them, then they think to launch forth, toward the fair Haven of eternal Happineſs, and not before. Set we forth never ſo ſoon, the Winds will be contrary, the Weather tempeſtuous, the Rocks many, the Difficulties great: And yet how is our precious Time ſpent? When Age comes upon us, we complain we want Time, which we have already fooliſhly waſted. How miſerable are thoſe Souls who ſet out late for Heaven (when they can ſerve Sin no longer) benighted, bewilder'd, ſhipwreck'd, eternally and irrecoverably loſt? Behold, now only is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation.

Hopeleſs, Helpleſs, and Comfortleſs was the State to which St. *Paul* and the Ship's Company were now reduced; neither Sun nor Stars appeared, and the Weather exceeding tempeſtuous; now when Deſpair might be read in every one's Face, except St. *Paul's*, he comfortably aſſures them from God, that nothing but the Veſſel ſhould be loſt. Thus God delights to deliver thoſe who are forſaken of their Hopes; he is a preſent help to the Helpleſs; and he reſerves his Aſſiſtance for his People's greateſt Diſtreſs.

Here obſerve the great and ſpecial Favours in which God indulged the holy Apoſtle, even to ſend an Angel to him to comfort him; *The Angel of God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve, ſaid, Fear not.* What an encouraging Motive is it to us, cheerfully to engage in the Service of God, ſince his holy Angels are, on all Occaſions, employ'd to ſerve us! When viſible Dangers are before us, God has inviſible Servants round about us, both to ſuccour and ſecure us.

Obſerve how ſtedfaſt the Apoſtle was, in the Belief of God's Promiſe and Providence, for his own and his Company's Preſervation. *I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it was told me.* We honour God beſt, when we depend moſt on his Promiſes, rely on his Power, and believe his Word, though what he ſays ſhould ſeem improbable, and very unlikely to come to paſs.

Q. *St.* Paul *perceiving that the Mariners were about to eſcape out of the Ship, perſuades the Centurion and Soldiers to ſtop them: What do you obſerve hereupon?*

A. It deſerves Remark, that although the Apoſtle was a poor Priſoner in Chains, yet God makes him the only Counſellor and Comforter to all that were in the Ship. Firſt he adviſes them to eat, becauſe that through Conſternation of Mind, and Horror of Death, they had made no ſet Meal for fourteen Days; not that they ſubſiſted miraculouſly, without any Nouriſhment at all; but eat ſo little that it was, in a Manner, a continual Faſting.

Q. *Did the Apoſtle take any other Part upon him, on this Occaſion?*

A. Next he becomes the Chaplain of the Ship, *He gave Thanks to God in Preſence of them all*; that is, he deſired God's Bleſſing upon what they eat, and praiſed him for it.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the concluding Part of this Chapter?*

A. St. *Paul* having thus refreſhed himſelf, and by his Words and Example encouraged all the Reſt, to do the like, an Account is taken of the exact Number of Perſons in the Ship; which probably was done at St. *Paul*'s Motion, that, after their Deliverance, it might appear how exactly his Prediction, *ver.* 22. was verify'd and fulfill'd.

Three Times did theſe Sea-faring Men lighten their Ship, of her Lading and Burthen; firſt, the Merchandize was caſt over-board, *ver.* 18. next, all the Ship's Furniture, *ver.* 19. and now goes over the Wheat, provided for their daily Bread; future Proviſion is thrown away, to ſave Life at preſent.

Obſerve here, the wonderful Work of God upon theſe poor *Pagans*, thus to part with their Food, on St. *Paul*'s bare Word, that they ſhould want no more Wheat in the Ship.

Again; ſee how glorioſly God manifeſted his delivering Power in this their Extremity; when the Ship was fallen into a Place where two Seas met, when ſhe was run a-ground, and broken with the Violence of the Waves, this was the Seaſon of God's Succour.

But what barbarous Ingratitude was found with theſe wretched Soldiers, towards the Apoſtle? They would take away his Life, who had taken ſuch Care of them, and for whoſe Sake all their Lives were preſerved. To do Good, and ſuffer Evil, is the *Chriſtian* Exerciſe at preſent.

But God here interpoſed, and put it into the Centurion's Heart to defeat their barbarous Intention, and to ſave the Apoſtle, and all that were with him. Thus God performed his Promiſe to the Apoſtle to a Tittle; they were all ſaved, even the bloody-minded Soldiers, who counſelled to kill *Paul*. How good is God to the Unthankful, and to the Unholy! His tender Mercies are over all his Works; and how well do Sinners ſometimes fare, for the Saints ſake!

CHAP. XXVIII.

Paul *and the Reſt, landing at* Melita, *are kindly entertained by the* Barbarians; *a Viper ſticks to* Paul's *Hand, but he receives no Damage. He heals* Publius's *Father of a Fever. He and his Company, after three Months, ſailing by* Syracuſe *and* Rhegium, *come towards* Rome. *They travel forward; which the Brethren hearing, came out to meet them.* Paul *is kept by a Soldier. He calls together the* Jews, *and tells them his Cauſe. They clear him, and deſire to hear him again; which he readily complies with.*

Q. W*HAT is the Hiſtory of this Chapter?*

A. After a long and dangerous Voyage, the Providence of God at length brought St. *Paul*, with the Reſt of the Paſſengers, ſafe to Shore, on an Iſland called *Melita* (now *Malta*) where they were courteouſly received by the Iſlanders, who finding them wet and cold, made a Fire to warm and refreſh them: When behold, a Viper that lay among the Wood, feeling the Heat of the Fire, leap'd out upon St. *Paul*, and faſten'd on his Hand; which the Iſlanders ſeeing, inſtantly concluded, that the Apoſtle was ſome notorious Malefactor, whom divine Vengeance follow'd: But the Apoſtle (according to our Saviour's Promiſe, *Mark* xvi. 18. *If ye touch any deadly Thing, it ſhall not hurt you*) ſhaking it off into the Fire without Harm, the People preſently changed their Opinion, and took him for a God, appearing to them in the Shape of a Man.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon this extraordinary Occurrence?*

A. Here obſerve, how it pleaſed God, by a Miracle to confirm the Apoſtle's Authority, and thereby to prepare the Hearts of thoſe barbarous People, for the receiving of the Goſpel.

Note here, that the very Light of Nature ſuggeſts even to the moſt barbarous Heathens, that Wickedneſs ſhall not go unpuniſh'd.

Alſo, that natural Agents cannot act or exert their natural Powers, if with-held by a ſupernatural Providence. Thus this Viper did not, nor could, according to its Nature, ſting the Apoſtle, being reſtrained by the over-ruling Providence or Power of God.

The Humanity of theſe barbarous Heathens towards thoſe that ſuffer'd a Shipwrack, may juſtly condemn the Inhumanity of thoſe who are called Chriſtians, even in our Times, towards thoſe that are ſhipwreck'd. How do many who live on our Sea-coaſts, watch for, and rejoice at a Wreck at Sea, in hopes of enriching themſelves with the Spoils of others?

How ready Men are to draw ſinful Inferences from ſorrowful Premiſſes? To conclude that ſuch a Man, or ſuch a People are wicked, becauſe they are wretched; great Sinners, becauſe great Sufferers? This was the barbarous Logick of theſe Iſlanders; and it had been well, had it been confined to that Iſland; *When the Barbarians ſaw the venomous Beaſt on the Apoſtle's Hand, they ſaid, no doubt this Man is a Murderer.*

How mutable is the Mind of Man, how inconſtant are Men in their Opinions of Men? The Apoſtle had no ſooner ſhook off the Viper into the Fire; but the Barbarians run into the other Extreme; and him whom before they accounted a Murtherer, they now eſteem a God They are now as extravagant in their Applauſe, as they were before raſh and ſevere in their Cenſures. Thus upon a Change of Providence, Men change their Opinions, without conſidering the Views of Providence in ſuch Changes.

Q. *But why did not St.* Paul, *who ſhook the Viper from his Hand, ſhake off the Chain from his Arm, and ſet himſelf at Liberty?*

A. 'Tis anſwer'd, St. *Paul* was not the Author, but a Miniſter or Inſtrument in this Miracle; it was not St. *Paul*, but God by him, who wrought this Miracle, Chap. xix. 11. *God wrought ſpecial Miracles by the Hand of* Paul. When the Deliverance of the Apoſtle made moſt for the Glory of God, he was deliver'd; but while his Bonds would more advance the Goſpel, God kept him in Bonds.

Q. *What Work did St.* Paul *perform in this Iſland worthy his Apoſtleſhip?*

A. God is pleaſed further to honour the Perſon and Miniſtry of St. *Paul* in this Iſland. The Father of *Publius* the Governor, and other diſeaſed Perſons in the Iſland, were healed.

Note here, the great Civility of the Governor towards St. *Paul*, entertaining him and his large Company at his own Charge; and how well the Governor was rewarded for his hoſpitable Charity; his Father lying ſick of a Fever and a Bloody-flux, is miraculouſly recover'd. As there is no Duty more certainly rewarded in another World than Charity, ſo is it frequently rewarded in this.

The Means St. *Paul* uſed for recovering this ſick Perſon, was Prayer and Impoſition of Hands; Paul *prayed, and laid his Hands on him and healed him*; whereby the Apoſtle ſhew'd that he could do nothing of himſelf; and therefore he applies to that God who killeth and maketh alive, and the Lord heard him; St. *Paul* had honour'd God, and now God Honours him. How griev'd was the Apoſtle when God's honour was ſacrilegiouſly given to him? No doubt but it griev'd him more, when they called him a God, than when they accounted him a Murderer; and now God honours him, by making him the Inſtrument of this miraculous Cure.

Here it deſerves our Regard how God made all Things work together for his own Glory; the Apoſtle's Shipwreck, and the other Incidents after his Arrival in the Iſland, tended to open an effectual Door for the Converſion of many Souls; for, during the three Months of the Apoſtle's Stay there, he planted a Chriſtian Church in the Iſland, which became famous for its Stedfaſtneſs in the Truth.

Note farther, the Evidence which the Iſlanders gave of the Truth of their Converſion; namely, they loaded St. *Paul's* Ship with Neceſſaries for their Voyage when they went away from them. The beſt Evidence of ſincere Faith, is an holy Fruitfulneſs in good Works.

Q. *After three Months Stay in the Iſland, St.* Paul *ſets Sail for* Rome: *What are the Particulars of this ſecond Voyage?*

A. A Ship of *Alexandria* being at *Malta* to carry them to *Rome*, St. *Paul* and his Company go on Board, and ſail from thence to *Syracuſe* in *Sicily*, from thence to *Rhegium* in *Italy*, from thence to *Puteoli*, where they found ſome Chriſtians, and abode with them ſeven Days; and from *Puteoli* St. *Paul* paſſes to *Rome*, more like a Conqueror than a Priſoner; he is met on the Road by many eminent Perſons, Chriſtians, who were not aſhamed of St. *Paul's* Chain, but came to meet him, ſome fifty Miles, others thirty, ſome one Day's Journey, others two, to congratulate his Coming, and pay their Reſpects: For which Favour the Apoſtle *thanks God, and took Courage.*

Q. *But how came Chriſtians ſo early at* Rome? *Who converted them? St.* Paul *had never been there till now; nor do we read that St.* Peter, *or any of his Apoſtles had been there before; yet St.* Paul *finds many Chriſtians at and about* Rome?

A. 'Tis reported, that theſe Brethren are thought to be converted by ſuch as were preſent at *Jeruſalem* at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt. Chap. ii. 10. where it's expreſly ſaid, that there were *Strangers of* Rome *then preſent*, when theſe mighty Miracles were wrought there; and they becoming true Converts at that Time, very probably propagated the Goſpel in and about *Rome*, and God ſo bleſſed their Endeavours, that the Apoſtle now found ſome Saints, even in *Nero's* Houſe.

Q. *What Entertainment did the Apoſtle meet with at* Rome?

A. The Apoſtle is now lodged a Priſoner at *Rome*, where God gave him gteat Favour in the ſight of his Enemies; he is not clapp'd up in the common Jail, but dwells by himſelf in his own hired Houſe, having a Keeper with him; by which means he had an Opportunity of going abroad, and preaching the Word of God in every Place, as Providence gave him Opportunity.

Q. *How did the Apoſtle beſtow his Time, while he was a Priſoner at* Rome?

A. Obſerve the ſpecial Favour indulged St. *Paul* a Priſoner at *Rome*, where, unmoleſted, he is ſuffered to preach the Goſpel in his own hired Houſe for two Years together, *to all that came to him.* He ſet open the Doors of his Houſe to all Comers, excluding none from the gracious Offers of Salvation by a Redeemer, on the Condition of Faith and Obedience.

The Subject-Matter of his Preaching was, *the Kingdom of God and Things concerning the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt; not vain Janglings and envious Railings; but *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Way to Salvation by him.

Here note, that *Rome*, when heathen, was far leſs cruel, and much more civil and courteous to the Preachers of the Goſpel, than *Rome Antichriſtian* ſince has been. Then an Apoſtle might preach two Years ſucceſſively, without Interruption; but now a Miniſter of God has there no publick or private Place of meeting to worſhip God according to his Word and Will, without the Danger of an Inquiſition.

Q. *What Places were thoſe called* Appii Forum, *and the* Three Taverns? *Ver.* 15.

A. Appii Forum, and the *Three Taverns*, Ver. 15. Dr. *Hammond* thus explains; ſays, *Cicerco*, in an Epiſtle to *Atticus*, has theſe Words, 'This Epiſtle was dated from *Appii Forum*, at four of the 'Clock; I had written another a little before, from 'the *Three Taverns*.' The latter of which was thirty three Miles from *Rome*; the former fifty one.

The *Three Taverns* is the proper Name of a Town or City, and ſo not to be rendered with *Iſidore*, Inns and Victualling-Houſes (as he will alſo have *Appii-Forum* to be a Place which had *an Image of* Appius) but (as all other proper Names) is in Reaſon to continue the ſame, without Tranſlation, or conſiderable Alteration of Sound, in all Languages. Thus the Example of *Areopagus*, Chap. xvii. 19. and *Appii Forum* in this very Verſe demonſtrates. So here St. *Luke* in the *Greek* Words, retains, not tranſlates, nor interprets the *Latin*. And this the rather, if we conſider what the antient Signification of *Tabernæ* or *Taverns*, was. *Scaliger* ſays, it was the Name of the frontier Towns, which were built againſt the Inrodes and Inſolencies of the *Barbarians*. That there were ſuch every where erected by *Diocleſian* in the Borders of the *Romans*, we are aſſured by *Zoſimus*; and ſo no doubt it was in theſe former Times. That this Place, here called the *Three Taverns*, was an epiſcopal See, and ſo eminent a City in *Conſtantine's* Time, appears by *Optatus*, B. 1. where amongſt the nineteen Biſhops, delegated by *Conſtantine* to decide the Controverſy betwixt *Donatus* and *Cæcilianus* is reckoned, Felix *Biſhop of that City* called *Tres Tabernæ*, or *Three Taverns*.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO THE

ROMANS.

THE Pen-man of this Epiſtle, Paul, *took his Name, as ſome imagine, from the Littleneſs, or Lowneſs of his Stature: Others ſuppoſe he had his Name firſt given him on the Converſion of* Sergius Paulus *the Deputy; of which ſee* Acts xiii. *But others are of Opinion, he did not change his Name at all, and that he had two Names, as all thoſe* Jews *had, who were Free-men of* Rome, Acts xiii. 9. *favours this Opinion; where we read of* Saul, *who was alſo called* Paul *(ſo* John *was ſirnamed* Mark.) *And as he was the Apoſtle to the* Gentiles, *he was at laſt called wholly by his Sir-name, or* Roman *Title,* Paul.

This Epiſtle to the Romans *has always been in the higheſt eſteem in the Church of* Chriſt, *and one of the chiefeſt and moſt excellent Portions of Scripture, whether we conſider the Sublimity of the Matter, or the Excellency of the Doctrine it contains; with reſpect to which, ſome have called it,* The Marrow of Divinity; the Key of the New Teſtament; the *Chriſtian* Church's Confeſſion of Faith; and the moſt divine Epiſtle of the moſt holy Apoſtle. Chryſoſtom *ſo highly eſteemed it, that he cauſed it to be read to him twice every Week.* Melanchton *called it the* Confeſſion of the Churches, *and is ſaid to have gone over it ten ſeveral Times in his ordinary Lectures.* Mr. Perkins *adviſes, in reading the Scriptures, to begin with the Goſpel of St.* John, *and this Epiſtle to the* Romans, *as being the Keys of the* Teſtament.

CHAP. I.

St. Paul *commendeth his Calling to the* Romans, *and his Deſire of coming to them. What his Goſpel is, and the Righteouſneſs which it ſheweth. God is angry with all manner of Sin. What were the Sins of the* Gentiles.

Q. *WHAT firſt comes under Obſervation in this Chapter?*

A. In the firſt Verſe is deſcribed the Pen-man of this Epiſtle; 1. By his Name, *Paul*; before his Converſion, he was called *Saul*; then *Saul* the Perſecutor; after his Converſion, he was *Paul* the Profeſſor, the Preacher, the great Doctor of the *Gentiles.* 2. By his general Office, *A Servant of* Jeſus Chriſt. To ſerve *Chriſt*, eſpecially in the Office of an Embaſſador, is a greater Honour than to have the greateſt Monarchs of the World to ſerve us, and bow the Knee before us. 3. By his particular Office; *Called to be an Apoſtle*; that is, conſtituted and appointed, by *Chriſt*, to that holy Function, without any Merit or Deſert of his own.

As he was called to, ſo he was ſeparated for the great Work of preaching the Goſpel, *ſeparated unto the Goſpel of God*; that is, ſet apart in the Purpoſe and Decree of God; *ſeparated from his Mother's Womb*, Gal. i. 15. Immediately and Extraordinarily called by *Chriſt* himſelf to this great Work, *Acts* ix. 25. &c. And mediately by the Officers of the Church, *Acts* xii. 23. &c. Let the Herd of Lay-preachers, the Uſurpers of the ſacred Function at this Day, conſider this; and read with trembling what God ſays, *Jer.* xxiii. 32. *I ſent them not, neither commanded them; therefore ſhall they not profit the People at all.* It is not ſaid, their Doctrine is unſound, but they preach unſent, therefore they ſhall not profit this People at all.

Q. *In the firſt Verſe, the Apoſtle calls the Doctrine he taught,* the Goſpel of God; *and, ver.* 16. the Goſpel of *Chriſt*: *Pray what is the Ground for this Diſtinction?*

A. It is the Goſpel of God, as he was the Author and Contriver of it; it is the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, as he is the Subject-matter and Scope of it; as *Jeſus Chriſt* was the Sum of the Law, ſo is he the Subſtance of the Goſpel. Indeed St. *Paul* ſometimes calls it his Goſpel, *Rom.* xvi. becauſe he was the Diſpencer and Promulger of it; it was a Divine Treaſure, committed to his Care and Truſt.

Which Goſpel God had before promiſed by his holy Prophets ſpeaking, in the Scriptures. This ſhews the Antiquity of the Goſpel, how ancient that Doctrine is, even as old as the old Prophets themſelves; nay, as old as *Adam*, Gen. iii. 15. Here note the Harmony between the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, between the Prophets and Apoſtles; though great Difference in the Manner and Meaſure

ſure of Revelation For, as one ſays, the *Old Teſtament* is the hiding of the *New*; the *New Teſtament* is the opening of the *Old*. The *New Teſtament* in the *Old Teſtament* veiled; the *Old Teſtament* in the *New*, revealed.

Note here, the venerable Title given to the Scriptures; they are called, the *Holy Scriptures, which he had promiſed before, by his Prophets, ſpeaking in the Holy Scriptures.* The Scriptures are Holy in regard of their Author and Inditer, the holy Spirit of God; in regard of what they contain, the holy Will of God; and in regard that they make us Holy, both in Heart and Life.

Q. *What was the Chief Doctrine of the Goſpel which St.* Paul *taught?*

A. The Apoſtle next declares that *Jeſus Chriſt* was the main Subject of the Goſpel which he preached, and deſcribes him by his two Natures, Human and Divine. According to the firſt, he was *made of the Seed of* David; that is, deſcended from *David*, and one of his Poſterity by the Mother's Side. *Chriſt* was the Son of God, before he was the Son of Man; ſince he is ſaid to be made of the Seed of *David*; intimating that he was then made what he was not before: In regard of his divine Nature he was begotten, not made; but in regard of his human Nature, he was made, not begotten.

Again; *Jeſus Chriſt*, the eternal Son of God, did, in the Fulneſs of Time, aſſume the true and perfect Nature of Man, into a perſonal Union with the Godhead. The human Nature was united to the divine Nature miraculouſly and extraordinarily, by the overſhadowing Power of the Holy Ghoſt, *Luke* i. 34, 35. and alſo integrally and completely; that is, *Chriſt* took a perfect and complete human Soul and Body, with all the Faculties of the one, and all the Members of the other, that thereby he might heal the whole Nature of that Leproſy of Sin, which had ſeized upon, and diffuſed its Malignity into every Member, and every Faculty.

Q. *What other Deſcription does the Apoſtle give of* Chriſt?

A. Next, we have a Demonſtration of *Chriſt's* divine Nature, *verſe* 4. *declared to be the Son of God with Power*, &c. that is, mightily and powerfully demonſtrated ſo to be.

Hence learn, that the Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt* from the Dead, is a convincing Demonſtration that he was the Son of God. *Chriſt, as Man*, is no-where, in Scripture, ſaid to be the Son of God, but with relation to the divine Power of the Holy Ghoſt, by whom he had Life communicated to him from the Father, both at his Conception, and at his Reſurrection. At his Conception he was the Son of God, by being conceived by the Holy Ghoſt; but this was Secret and Inviſible, known only to the Mother of our Lord. Therefore at his Reſurrection, *by the Spirit of Holineſs*, that is, by the immediate Power of the Holy Ghoſt, God thought fit to give a publick and viſible Demonſtration to the whole World, that *Jeſus* was his own Son, the promiſed and true *Meſſias*, and conſequently, thereby teſtified to the Truth and Divinity of our Saviour's Doctrine and Miracles.

Q. *If* Chriſt, *by his own Power, raiſed himſelf from the Grave, why is it ſaid,* Acts ii. 24. *that he was raiſed by the Father?*

A. Though *Chriſt* was raiſed from the Dead by the Power of God's holy Spirit, yet did he certainly raiſe himſelf by his own Power, as God, according to his own Prediction, *John* ii. 18. *Deſtroy ye this Temple (of my Body) and in three Days I will raiſe it up*; according to St. *Peter's* Aſſertion, 2 *Pet.* iii. 18. *Being put to death in the Fleſh*; that is, in the human Nature, *but quickned in the Spirit*; that is, by the Power of his Godhead, or divine Nature quickning himſelf: For had he only been raiſed by the Power of God, and not by his own Power, how could this Reſurrection have been a Declaration that he was the Son of God? What had appeared in *Chriſt's* Reſurrection more than in other Mens? For they were raiſed by the Power of God as well as he: This is the Difference; *Chriſt* roſe by a ſelf-quickning Principle; otherwiſe by a quickning Principle derived from *Chriſt*, with reſpect to which, he is called the Reſurrection and the Life; that is, the Principle of quickning Life, by which the Saints are raiſed.

Note, the Apoſtle does not ſay, *Chriſt* was made or conſtituted the Son of God by his Reſurrection from the Dead, but declared ſo to be; according to the Phraſe of Scripture, Things are then ſaid to be, when they conſpicuouſly appear. Nothing can be more evident, than that *Chriſt* was the Son of God before the Reſurrection; yea, before his Incarnation, being the Father of Eternity, *Iſa.* ix. 6. But the Glory of his Divinity was much clouded, darkned, and eclipſed by the Frailty of his Humanity, the Miſeries of his Life, and the Ignominy of his Death. But by his Reſurrection God rolled away his Reproach, and cleared him from all the Aſperſions of his Enemies, who charged him with Blaſphemy, for affirming that he was the Son of God; and thus our *Jeſus*, in whom we truſt, was *declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs, by the Reſurrection from the Dead.*

Q. *In what Senſe, and by what Means did St.* Paul *receive the Apoſtleſhip, as is hinted,* ver. 5?

A. That is, by *Jeſus Chriſt*, who called him immediately, and furniſhed him with Authority and Ability for a Goſpel-preacher, even then, when he had been a furious and fiery Perſecutor.

He declares, how free and undeſerved a Favour this was; he acknowledges, he had received Grace to be an Apoſtle; intimating, that to be rightly called to be an Apoſtle, or Meſſenger of the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, is a ſpecial Act and Inſtance of divine Grace and Favour; *By whom we have received Grace and Apoſtleſhip.*

Note here, the ſpecial Office and Duty of an Apoſtle, and the great End and Deſign of that honourable Function; namely, to call all Perſons to believe and obey the Goſpel.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle treat the* Romans?

A. He puts them in mind of their Condition by Nature, before the Goſpel was revealed to them, and received by them; they were then *Pagans*, and heatheniſh Idolaters, but now *Chriſtians, among whom* (that is, among the *Gentile* Nations) *ye are alſo the Called of* Jeſus Chriſt. Let the Remembrance of what you, *Romans*, once were, keep you continually Humble, and the Knowledge of what now, by Grace, you are, render you for ever Thankful.

Q. *What comes next under Conſideration?*

A. The next Thing that offers, is, the general Inſcription of this Epiſtle, and the particular Salutation therein given. In the Inſcription are deſcribed the Perſons to whom the Epiſtle is directed; and that, 1. By the Place of their Abode; *To all that be at* Rome. *Rome*, though now a Grove of Idols, a Neſt of unclean Birds, yet was once an Habitation of Holineſs, a Receptacle for Saints, and the Children of God. *Rome*, that now is a lewd and impudent Strumpet, was once the chaſte and holy Spouſe of *Chriſt*.

2. They are deſcribed by their Titles; *Beloved of God, Saints, and Called:* Where note the Order of their Titles; firſt, Beloved of God, then Called, then Sanctified; intimating, that the Love and Grace, the Favour and free Good-will of God, are the Source and Spring, the Root and original Cauſes of all Bleſſings and Benefits; namely, of Vocation, Sanctification and Remiſſion, *&c.* We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us, 1 *John* ix. 16.

Q. *But how could the Apoſtle call the whole Church at* Rome *Saints, when, doubtleſs, there were many Hypocrites among them?*

A. 'Tis anſwered, they were all Saints by Profeſſion and external Communion. They were ſeparated from the World, and conſecrated to the Service of *Chriſt*, and ſo lay under a Neceſſary Obligation to be true and real Saints, or they were denominated Saints from the better, and we ſhould hope, from the greater Part amongſt them; doubtleſs there were many that deſerved that Character.

Q. *What is obſervable in his Salutation to the* Romans?

A. His Salutation is, *Grace to you, and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt. Grace and Peace comprehends all Bleſſings Temporal and Spiritual; Grace implies and includes both the Spring and Fountain of all divine Favour, and likewiſe the ſeveral Streams which flow from that Fountain; all the Effects and Fruits of Grace and Peace, according to the *Hebrew* Manner of ſpeaking, implies all good Things for Soul and Body, for Time and Eternity.

Note, from whom theſe Bleſſings are derived; namely, from God the Father, and from our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt:* From God, as the ſovereign and fontal Cauſe; and from *Chriſt*, as the Mediator of all, without whom we have no Right to any of the divine Favours; for Grace and Peace came by *Jeſus Chriſt*. The ſame Bleſſings are here ſaid to flow from *Chriſt*, as from God the Father; therefore he is equal with the Father.

Q. *But why is the Holy Ghoſt here excluded?*

A. He is not excluded, though not named, but neceſſarily implied in the forementioned Gifts; becauſe Grace and Peace are Fruits of the Spirit; they came from God the Father, through the Mediation of his Son, and are wrought in us through the Operation of the Holy Spirit. Beſides, in other Salutations, though not this, the Holy Ghoſt is expreſsly mentioned, as 2 *Cor.* xiii. 13, 14. *The Grace of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghoſt be with you.*

Q. *What Succeſs had the Goſpel among the* Romans?

A. It had produced Faith and Obedience in the *Romans*, ſo as to make them Famous, and to be *ſpoken of throughout the whole World*; that is, thro' all the *Roman* Empire, which at that Time ruled over a great Part of the known World.

This their renowned Faith was an Occaſion of great Rejoicing to the Apoſtle. Firſt, *I thank my God, that your Faith is ſpoken of*, &c. This is the Diſpoſition of the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt*, to be thankful to God above all Things, for the powerful Succeſs of the Goſpel, in bringing Sinners to the Faith and Obedience of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *How does he expreſs his Concern for the Welfare of their Souls?*

A. We have his ſolemn Proteſtation of his affectionate Love to, and Concern for theſe *Roman* Converts, although he had yet never ſeen them. A faithful Miniſter continually bears his People on his Heart, in all his Addreſſes to God, *Without ceaſing, I make mention of you always in my Prayers.* For this he calls God to Witneſs, *God is my Witneſs.* The Words have the Force, if not the Form of an Oath, and teach us, that it is unqueſtionably lawful in important Affairs to ſwear, to appeal to God, and call him to be a Witneſs of what we ſay or do.

St. *Paul* appeals to God, *whom he ſerved in or with the Spirit*; that is, unfeignedly with his Heart. No Service will be acceptable to God, except the Heart and Spirit be engaged in it.

Q. *Why does he ſo earneſtly deſire to ſee them?*

A. For the Furtherance of his own Joy, and their Eſtabliſhment. God has joined the Duties of publick Preaching and private Inſpection together, and Woe to thoſe, who by their Non-reſidence, and not Dwelling among their People, or, if living with them, haughtily refuſe, or ſlothfully neglect perſonally to converſe with them, and ſo denying them one ſpecial Means for their Edification and Eſtabliſhment.

He deſires to be among them for his own Benefit as well as theirs. The Miniſters of *Chriſt* improve themſelves, as well as edify and eſtabliſh their People, by their conferring with them. *Verily* (ſays one) *I have ſometimes gained more Knowledge by an Hour's Conference with a private and experienced* Chriſtian, *than by half a Day's Study.*

Q. *In what Senſe was the Apoſtle a Debtor to them?*

A. Here obſerve the Modeſty and Humility of our Apoſtle; although he earneſtly deſired to preach the Goſpel to them; yet this was rather a Debt than a Gift, it was a bounden Duty which he owed them; *I am a Debtor both to* Jew *and* Greek, *and ready to preach the Goſpel to you at* Rome *alſo.* St. *Paul* contracted his Debt, and laid himſelf under an Obligation to pay it them (as every Miniſter does now) at his firſt Entrance on the Office of the Miniſtry; by Virtue of which, it was his Duty to preach the Goſpel to all.

Q. *How was the Goſpel* the Power of God unto Salvation, *Ver.* 16?

A. That is, the Power of God renders it effectual to Salvation, if we do not ſhut our Ears and Hearts againſt it; Preachers are but the Inſtruments in God's Hand, their Words are the Vehicle, or Organ, thro' which the violent Power of the Spirit is conveyed.

Obſerve here, the ſolemn Profeſſion the Apoſtle makes of his not being aſhamed of the Goſpel of *Chriſt*; he does not ſay, I am not afraid to preach the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, but I am not aſhamed; becauſe Shame hinders our Readineſs more than Fear; a Man may be fit and ready to preach the Goſpel, yet afraid to undertake it; but he that is aſhamed of the Works can never be fit for it. But more is here intended than is expreſſed; 'tis as if he had ſaid, I am ſo far from being aſhamed, that I account

count it my Glory; I eſteem it the higheſt Honour, to preach the Goſpel at *Rome*, though it ſhould coſt me my Life.

Q. *Pray how is the Goſpel the* Righteouſneſs of God?

A. To prove that the Goſpel is the Righteouſneſs of God unto Salvation, the Apoſtle argues, *Becauſe it is the Righteouſneſs of God revealed from Faith to Faith.* That is, the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, called the Righteouſneſs of God, becauſe it is of his providing, approving, and accepting, and for the Sake of which Gd pardons our Unrighteouſneſs, and receives us graciouſly.

This Righteouſneſs is, by the Goſpel, revealed to beget Faith in Men, even ſuch a Faith as goes from Faith to Faith; that is, grows and increaſes from one Degree and Meaſure to another; and thus the Apoſtle falls upon his main Propoſition (which is the Scope and Deſign of this Epiſtle) namely, that there is no poſſible Way for the Juſtification of a Sinner, *Jew* or *Gentile*, but by Faith in the Mediator.

To prove this, the Apoſtle quotes the Prophet *Habakkuk*, *The Juſt ſhall live by Faith*; that is, as the pious *Jews*, in the Time of the *Babylonian* Captivity, lived and found Comfort in their Troubles, by Faith and Affiance in God; ſo he who is evangelically Juſt and Religious, ſhall live a Life of Grace on Earth, and Glory in Heaven, by Faith in *Chriſt*; that is, depending on the Merits and Righteouſneſs of a Mediator, in a Way of Holineſs, and ſtrict Obedience to his Commands.

Q. *What is the next Doctrine in the* Chriſtian *Faith, which the Apoſtle endeavours to ſettle?*

A. The next Thing the Apoſtle undertakes to prove, is, that neither *Gentiles* nor *Jews* could ever find that Righteouſneſs they ſought after; not the firſt, by the dim Light of Nature, or the Law written in their Hearts; nor the Latter, by the Works of the Law, that is, by their eternal Conformity to what the Law of *Moſes* exacted and required of them.

He begins with the *Gentiles*, and ſhews, that indeed they had inbred Notions of a God, imprinted on their Minds by Nature, and had alſo the Book of the Creatures before their Eyes, in which they might diſcover much of God; yet theſe common Notices of God, and of Good and Evil, they regarded not, but rebelled againſt the Dictates of their natural Conſciences; for which Cauſe the Wrath of God was revealed from Heaven againſt them.

Q. *In what Manner was* the Wrath of God *revealed* from Heaven?

A. This Wrath is ſaid to be *revealed from Heaven*, becauſe it was made manifeſt by the God of Heaven; partly by the Light of Nature, their own Conſciences giving them Warning of it; and partly by the Examples of others, puniſh'd by the Hand of an incenſed God.

The Object, or impulſive Cauſe of his revealed and inflicted Wrath was, *all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of Men.* Ungodlineſs comprizeth all Sins againſt God, or Neglect of the Duties of the firſt Table. Unrighteouſneſs comprehends all Sins againſt our Neighbour, or the Breaches of the ſecond Table. Sins are put for the Sinners that commit them; and the Meaning is, that God will certainly puniſh theſe Sins or the Perſon of the Sinner.

The ſpecial Aggravation of theſe Sins was, that *they held the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs*; that is, their natural Convictions were ſuppreſſed by the Power and Dominion of their Corruptions.

Q. *Wherein conſiſted that Knowledge which the* Heathens *had of a Supreme Being?*

A. The Apoſtle acquaints us with that Knowledge of God which the *Heathens* had by the light of Nature, which was in their Hearts, and increaſed by what they ſaw in the Book of the Creatures, the Works of Creation and Providence; *The inviſible Things of God, from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen*, &c. The Senſe of which ſeems to be this, that the wiſe and wonderful Frame of the World, which cannot reaſonably be aſcribed to any other Cauſe but God, is a ſenſible Demonſtration to all Mankind of an eternal and powerful Being, who was the Author and Contriver of it. The Strokes of the Creator's Hand are engraven on all Parts of the Univerſe; the Heaven, the Earth, and the capacious Sea, with all Things contained in them, are evident Teſtimonies of the Excellence of their original Cauſe; and thoſe of the *Heathens* of old, who ſhut their Eyes, and the *Atheiſts* at this Day, who wink as hard, and will not ſee the Foot-ſteps of a Deity, in the Works of the Creation and Providence, are, and will be, everlaſtingly left without Excuſe.

How endearing are our Obligations to Almighty God, for the Favour and Benefit of divine Revelation; that, together with the Light of Nature, we have the Super-added light of Scripture, the Law to convince us of our Sin, the Goſpel to diſcover a Saviour! For though there is a Knowledge of God by the Light of Nature, there is no Knowledge of *Jeſus* the Mediator, without the Light of Scripture.

Q. *From Verſe* 20, *to the End of the Chapter, is a large and black Catalogue of Sins, which the old* Heathens *were guilty of; ſome of which were Voluntarily, and others they were judicially delivered up unto; for God, without any Impeachment of his Holineſs, often puniſhed Sin with Sin. What were thoſe Sins?*

A. Their voluntary Sins are here recited; the firſt of which is, their ſinning againſt Light and Knowledge, againſt thoſe natural Notices which God had imprinted on their Minds, and ſuch other Knowledge as they might acquire, of his Being and Attributes, from the Book of Nature.

The next Sin charged upon them was, that they did not glorify that God whom they had the Knowledge of; they did not eſteem ſo high of him as they ought, nor pay him that Honour and Homage they ſhould.

Another Sin of the *Heathens* was, their Unthankfulneſs. They had not a due Senſe of the Benefits which God conferred upon them, but aſcribed the Bleſſings of Heaven to Chance and Fortune, to Fate and Deſtiny, to the Influence of the Stars and Planets, to their own Prudence and Providence. It is impoſſible that God ſhould receive the Tribute of Thankfulneſs, if we do not ſee all our Mercies flowing from him.

Thus *they became vain in their Imaginations*; that is, they had various Opinions, and vain Conceptions of the Godhead. Some of them denied there was a God; others doubted whether there was a God or no; ſome affirmed there was but one God; others owned a Plurality, yea, a Multiplicity of Gods. Some acknowledged a divine Being, but denied a Providence; others owned a Providence, but confined it in its Exerciſe to ſecondary Cauſes. Such were the abſurd Notions, and ſottiſh Reaſonings of the *Heathens* concerning God, his Nature and Worſhip; and their natural Reaſon was obſcured, becauſe not improved.

The next Sin charged on the *Gentiles*, is Idolatry. They changed the Glory of the ever-living God, into the Likeneſs of lifeleſs Things.

Another infamous Sin they are charged with, is Uncleanneſs, baſe unnatural Uncleanneſs, and Pollutions of the moſt odious Kinds. *Wherefore God gave them up to Uncleanneſs*; that is judicially.

Q. *But how is this conſiſtent with God's Holineſs and Hatred of Sin?*

A. Thus: God neither infuſes Sin into their Hearts, nor excites them to ſin in their Lives, but leaves Sinners to themſelves, to act without reſtraint, according to the Inclination of their own Luſts and Corruptions; and alſo gives them up to Satan, who will provoke them to ſuch Uncleanneſs as he knows their Inclinations ſtand ready to comply with.

Hence learn, that when Men provoke God finally to forſake them, and judicially to give them up to their own Hearts Luſts, they will not ſtick to commit ſuch monſtrous and unnatural Uncleanneſs, as the very Brutes abhor.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle conclude this Chapter?*

A. He ſums up the Sins, which the *Heathens* committed againſt the ſecond Table, or againſt their Neighbour; and a black Catalogue it is. Yet, whatever Abominations were found in the Hearts and Lives of theſe *Heathens*, or of the moſt profligate Wretches under Heaven, are radically and ſeminally in our own corrupt and degenerate Nature.

The Chapter cloſes with the blackeſt Character that could be given of the *Gentiles* Sins; namely, that although by the Light of Nature, and the Dictates of natural Conſcience, they knew that their Adulteries and unnatural Luſts deſerved Death, and expoſed them to the Wrath of God, yet they not only committed thoſe Sins themſelves, but took a real Pleaſure in thoſe that committed them. This was the Top and Height of their Wickedneſs.

CHAP. II.

God's Goodneſs to us, does not leſſen but aggravate our Sins, and future Miſery. The righteous Judgment of God to come on the Gentiles; *and on the* Jews *who hoped to be juſtified by the Law, and by inſtructing others in the ſame, which they themſelves kept not; or by Circumciſion, and other Advantages. Who is a right* Jew, *and what the true Circumciſion.*

Q. IN *the foregoing Chapter, the Apoſtle ſeverely reproved the* Gentiles; *in this he addreſſes himſelf to the* Jews: *How does he treat them?*

A. The Apoſtle, in order to check the Pride and Vanity of the *Jews*, upon hearing what he ſaid in the preceding Chapter, of the abominable Wickedneſs of the *Gentiles*, and the heavy Diſpleaſure of God againſt them for the ſame, he here pronounces them guilty of the ſame Sins of which he had accuſed the *Gentiles*; affirming, the *Jews* had offended as much againſt the Law of *Moſes*, as the *Gentiles* had offended againſt the Law of Nature; and conſequently their cenſuring, or judging others, when they did the ſame Thing themſelves, would render them totally inexcuſable at God's Tribunal.

The Apoſtle goes on; We that are *Jews*, know by the Light of Scripture, what the *Gentiles* know imperfectly by the Light of Nature, that the juſt God judges uprightly, *according to Truth*, and not according to Appearance. Think not then, O *Jew!* who judgeſt the *Gentiles* for doing ſuch Things againſt the Law of *Moſes*, that thou ſhalt eſcape the juſt Judgment of God, which they have ſo ſeverely felt. No Affection, or Nearneſs of Relation can blind God, or put out the Eye of his Juſtice; if *Gentile or Jew* ſin together, for there is no Reſpect of Perſons with God; God will judge Men in Truth and Righteouſneſs, and condemn every Sinner, whatever his Knowledge or Profeſſion may be. Nor will a Man's Zeal in condemning Sin in others, juſtify or ſave him, if he lives in Sin himſelf. *Think not, O Man, that thou ſhalt eſcape the Judgment of God.*

Q. *What is the next Thing to be obſerved in this Chapter?*

A. The Indulgence of Almighty God to poor Sinners, diſcover'd in the vaſt Expence, of the Riches of his Goodneſs and Bounty upon them, and in the patient Exerciſe of his Forbearance and Long-ſuffering towards them. Likewiſe, the gracious Deſign of God, in this Expence of his Goodneſs and Forbearance; namely, *to lead Sinners to Repentance.* The End of Goodneſs is to oblige and engage Perſons to love and ſerve their Benefactor; this is the moſt natural and unconſtrained Conſequence, that the Mind of Man can infer from God's Bounty and ſparing Mercy; *the Goodneſs of God leadeth to repentance.*

But what undue Returns do Sinners make to God for the Expence of ſo much Goodneſs and Forbearance towards them! They *deſpiſe the Riches of his Goodneſs and Long-ſuffering.* They deſpiſe it by being unthankful for it, by not improving it, or by miſimproving or ſinning againſt it.

But what is the Conſequence of theſe undue Returns to God? Why, hereby *they treaſure up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, the more Patience God expends upon thee, if perverted and abuſed, the greater Wrath is treaſured up for thee; which the longer it has been treaſured up, will break forth the more fiercely and violently to conſume thee.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon St.* Paul's *Deſcription of the Day of Judgment, and the Perſons to be then judged?*

A. He calls it *a Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* The Judgment of God is Righteous now, but it is not always here revealed and manifeſt; therefore a Time ſhall come, when there ſhall be a Revelation of his righteous Judgment fully. At the Day of Judgment all God's Proceedings ſhall be univerſally manifeſted and magnified; his divine Attributes conſpicuouſly glorified; his wonderful Clemency ſweetly diſplayed; his exact Juſtice terribly demonſtrated; his perfect Wiſdom clearly unfolded; all the knotty Intricacies of Providence wiſely reſolved; all the myſterious Depths of divine Counſels fully diſcovered, and the injured Honour and Glory of Almighty God viſibly clear'd and repair'd, to the joyful Satisfaction of all good Men, and to the dreadful Conſternation and

Confuſion of the wicked and impenitent World. Well might the Apoſtle call this Day, the *Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.*

The Apoſtle next acquaints us with the Impartiality and Uprightneſs of God, in the Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments at the Day of Judgment; *who will render to every Man according to his Deeds*; that is, according to the Kind and Quality, the Meaſure and Degrees of every Man's Work. He doth not ſay, God will render to every Man a Reward for his Works, but according to his Works: Our Works are the Rule of God's Proceedings, but not the Cauſe of his Rewards.

Next he declares the Univerſality of the Perſons to be judg'd; namely, the Righteous and the Wicked, who ſhall both have their diſtinct Rewards aſſigned them, according to the Quality of their Works.

The righteous Perſons are deſcribed, and their Reward declared; they are deſcribed by their *patient Continuance in well-doing*; they are not weary in well-doing; they can undergo Sufferings for the ſake of well-doing, and patiently wait for the Reward of well-doing till hereafter; while others ſnatch at their Reward here: Yet in the mean Time they are ſeeking after, and ſecuring of this their Reward; *they ſeek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality*; that is, they ſeek for a Portion of Glory and Immortality in the World to come, they leave the World to the Men of the World, and whilſt they are ſcrambling for Earth, theſe are making ſure of Heaven.

Their Reward is declared, *eternal Life*, an Eternity of Glory and Happineſs in a future State, ſhall certainly be the Reward of Well-doers, and of patient Continuers in well-doing.

The Wicked are alſo characteriz'd and their Reward aſſigned, *they are contentious, and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs*; that is, they contend with God, and reſiſt the Light of his revealed Truth; they refuſe the Offers of his Grace, and kick againſt his Word, diſobeying the Goſpel of Truth, but obeying Unrighteouſneſs. God will pour forth upon ſuch, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh; which God will diſpenſe equitably and impartially; *upon every Soul that doth evil*; but upon *the Jew firſt, and then the* Gentile. The *Jew firſt*, that is, principally and eſpecially; becauſe the Light and Mercy which the *Jews* abus'd, was far greater than that beſtow'd on the *Gentiles*. The *Gentiles* will be condemn'd for diſobeying the Light of Nature, the Law of God written on their Hearts; but much greater Wrath is reſerv'd for the *Jews*, unto whom were committed the Oracles of God: But the greateſt of all is reſerv'd for Chriſtians, who obey not the Goſpel of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *How does he prove this?*

A. To prove this the Apoſtle thus argues: As many as have ſinn'd without the written Law, which is the Caſe of the *Gentiles* or Heathens, ſhall alſo periſh without that Law; being judg'd and condemn'd by the Law of Nature written in their Hearts, but as many as ſinned in, or under the Law of *Moſes*, which is the Caſe of the *Jews*, ſhall be judg'd and condemn'd by that Law.

Here note a plain Truth implied and neceſſarily ſuppos'd; namely, that as ſome Sinners periſh having the written Word, and all external means of Salvation; ſo others periſh, having not the written Word or Law of God, and the ordinary means of Salvation.

Q. *What Order will be obſerved in the Day of Judgment, in determining the Fate of Mankind?*

A. All Men ſhall not be proceeded againſt in the ſame Manner; but every Man according to the Demerits of his Sin, and the Capacity and Relation in which he ſtood in this Life. The *Gentiles*, who had only the Law of Nature, ſhall not be judged by the Law of *Moſes*; the *Jews*, who have both the Law of Nature and the Law of *Moſes*, ſhall be judged by both: And conſequently Chriſtians, who have the Law of Nature unwritten, the *Moſaical* Law written, and the Evangelical Law both written and preach'd, contract greater Guilt, and will receive a more aggravating Condemnation; the greater Light we have quench'd, the greater Darkneſs will be inflicted, *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* Heb. ii. 3.

Q. *Pray explain that Verſe,* Not the Hearers of the Law ſhall be juſt before God, but the Doers, *v.* 13.

A. It's notorious that the *Jews* gloried in, and reſted on their external Privileges for Salvation; becauſe they were *Abraham*'s Seed, were circumcis'd, were employ'd in reading and hearing the Law; this they concluded was ſufficient to render them acceptable to God; therefore, ſays the Apoſtle, not the Hearers, but Doers of the Law ſhall be juſtified; that is, thoſe whom God will accept and account righteous for the ſake of *Chriſt*.

Q. *What was the Law by which the* Gentiles *walked?*

A. The Apoſtle tells them, that the *Gentiles*, who have not the Law of *Moſes*, are not without a Law ingrafted in their Conſciences; they have a Rule of living to themſelves; doing thoſe things, which ſhew the Work of the Law written on their Hearts, their Conſciences bearing Witneſs to it, and their natural Reaſon either accuſing or defending them from it.

Hence it appears, that altho' many of the *Gentiles* gave themſelves over to all manner of Uncleanneſs, yet others *ſhew'd the Works of the Law written on their Hearts*: They ſhew'd it two Ways; 1. By their Temperance, Righteouſneſs, and moral Honeſty; wherein (to our Shame) they excell'd many of Us, who are called *Chriſtians*. 2. In the Efficacy of their Conſcience; which as it clear'd and comforted them for Things well done, ſo it witneſſed againſt them; yea, judg'd and condemn'd them for doing evil: And theſe Evidences of a Law written on the Heart are every where to be found, where-ever Men are found.

Q. *But when will there be a Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments to* Jews *and* Gentiles?

A. *In that Day when God ſhall judge the Secrets of Mens Hearts by* Jeſus Chriſt, *according to my Goſpel*; that is, as my Goſpel teſtifies he will do.

Here is a fundamental Doctrine aſſerted, That there will be a Day of Judgment, in which the Secrets of all Mens Hearts ſhall be judged by *Jeſus Chriſt*, as Mediator. All the Thoughts, Words, and Works of all Men, that ever were or will be, will then be produced in Judgment; if ſo, may we not infer, that the Day of Judgment muſt neceſſarily take up a vaſt ſpace of Time?

For if all Records and Regiſters now made, ſhall then be open'd and read, and all the Witneſſes for and againſt a Man, ſhall then be examin'd and heard, the Day of Judgment, if the Opinion of ſome Divines has any Foundation, may laſt as long as the World hath exiſted: This we may be aſſured, that Things will not be huddled up, or ſhuffled over in haſte; but as Sinners have taken their Time for ſinning, ſo God will take his Time for Judgment.

Q. *What Argument do's the Apoſtle uſe to prove his Doctrine of a future Judgment?*

A. His Argument is, the Goſpel; *according to my Goſpel*; that is, as certainly as I have foretold you of it in the Doctrine which I have preached, as certainly ſhall all Men be judg'd by *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *But was not* St. Paul *ſomewhat preſumptuous in calling the Goſpel* his Goſpel?

A. He means only that he was the Publiſher, not the Author of it; it was God's in reſpect of Revelation; his only in reſpect of Diſpenſation.

Q. *What point of Doctrine does he next proceed to prove?*

A. The Apoſtle now reſumes his former Argument, namely, to prove, that the *Jews* could no more rationally expect to be juſtified before God by the Law of *Moſes*, than the *Gentiles* by the Law of Nature; he allows them all the Privileges they ſo much doated on, boaſted of, aud glory'd in; but withal, aſſures them, that all, or even more than theſe, were inſufficient to juſtify them before God. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Thou thinkeſt that thou haſt ſuch a Degree of Knowledge of God's Word and Will, that thou canſt clearly diſcern between Sin and Duty, and compare one Duty with another, preferring that which is moſt excellent; *And art confident that thou thyſelf art a Guide of the Blind, and a Light of them that are in Darkneſs*; that is, thou haſt a ſtrong Conceit, that ſuch are the Meaſures of thy Knowledge, that thou art able to be a Guide to the blind *Gentiles*, who ſit in Darkneſs, and to be *a teacher of Babes*; that is, ſuch as have little or no Knowledge in the Matters of Religion, concerning, *that thou haſt the Form of Knowledge and of the Truth in the Law*; that is, ſuch a Method and Meaſure of divine Knowledge as may enable thee, to inſtruct others, whether *Gentiles* or *Jews*, which never reach'd to thy Attainments. Theſe external Privileges the preſumptuous *Jew* reſted upon, and thought them ſufficient to Salvation, tho' he lived looſely, and his Practice gave his Profeſſion the Lie.

Hence we are taught, 1. That Perſons are exceeding prone to be proud of, and puffed up with Church Privileges, glorying in the Letter of the Law, whilſt neither in Heart or Life they conform to the Spirituality of it. 2. That Gifts, Duties, and ſuppoſed Graces are the Support and Confidence of Hypocrites; *thou art called a* Jew, *and reſteſt in the Law*; that is, in the outward Profeſſion of the Law, in an external Obedience to the Law; the Apoſtle ſpeaks of this their *reſting in the Law*, not meerly by way of Narration, but Reproof, not only informing us what they did, but how ill they did in ſo doing. The Duties which *Chriſt* has appointed are the Truſt and Reſt of the Hypocrites; but *Chriſt* himſelf is the Reſt and Truſt of the Upright; their conſtant deſire is to be acting Graces, never truſting to them; to be much in Duty, and yet much above Duty; much in it in point of Performance, much above it in regard of Dependance.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's next Topic of Inſtruction?*

A. The Apoſtle proceeds to convince the *Jews*, that they were equally in a ſinful and wretched Condition with the deſpiſed *Gentiles*, and therefore ſtood in need of *Jeſus Chriſt* to juſtify them by his Grace as well as they. And becauſe the *Jews* were ſo apt to be vain of their external Privileges, the Apoſtle reckons up ſeveral of thoſe Privileges, *thou art called a* Jew, *thou makeſt thy Boaſt of God*, &c. and from thence takes Occaſion to aggravate their Sins committed; becauſe they ſinned againſt Light and Knowledge, againſt the Convictions of their own Conſciences, and contradicted the Dictates of their Minds as the *Gentiles* did: But beſides all that, rebelling againſt the Precepts of the written Word, which was always in their Hands. The Law of *Moſes* was near in their Mouths, but far from their Hearts; for thus the Apoſtle expoſtulates the Caſe with them, *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt not thou thy ſelf?* Thou that undertakeſt to be a Guide to the Blind *Gentilts*, wilt thou not practice thy own Inſtructions, but condemn thy ſelf out of thy own Mouth? Wilt thou, O *Jew*, be guilty of Theft, Adultery, Sacrilege, Rapine, and Murder? Sins which the very Heathen condemn? And all this while call yourſelves the People of God? Verily *the Name of God is blaſphemed among the* Gentiles *through you* Jews, who pretend to be the Favourites of Heaven, whilſt you do the Works of Hell.

From hence we are inſtructed, that it is much eaſier to inſtruct and teach others, than to receive Inſtruction of ourſelves; that it is both ſinful and ſhameful to teach others the right Way, and to go in the wrong ourſelves. It is a double Fault in a private Perſon when his Actions run counter to his Profeſſion; but it's inexcuſable, if not an unpardonable Fault in a Teacher, when the Crimes he condemns in others, are chargeable on himſelf; *thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf?* The Name of God ſuffers from none ſo much as thoſe who preach and preſs the Duties of *Chriſtianity* on others, but practiſe them not themſelves; the wicked profane World make this a Handle to wound the Name of God with the poiſon'd Arrows and Darts of Reproach.

Q. *But do you imagine, that the Honour of God of eſſentially hurt by the Wickedneſs of Prophane Men?*

A. 'Tis true, God is above the Reach of any Miſchief that Sin can do him; his eſſential Glory is perfect, and can neither be increas'd or diminiſh'd by the Creatures; he can no more be hurt by our Sins, than the Sun can be hurt by throwing Stones into the Air, or the Moon by the barking of Dogs. But his manifeſtative Glory, or the preſent Manifeſtations of his Glory, theſe are clouded and eclips'd by Sin, and therefore God will deal with knowing Sinners, eſpecially with ſuch as undertake to be Teachers of others, as with thoſe that have *blaſphemed his Name*, wounded his Glory, trampled on his Honour, and expos'd his holy Ways to be evil-ſpoken of, by Reaſon of their wicked and unholy Lives. Thoſe therefore who miniſter in holy Things, ſhould conſider, that they have not only their own Sins to account for, but alſo the Sins of their People, if committed by their profligate Example.

Q. *Explain* St. Paul's *Argument about Circumciſion?*

A. It's ſufficiently known what Streſs the *Jews* laid on Circumciſion; they taught, that this alone was ſufficient to obtain the favour of God, and to free them from Hell; God having, as they ſaid, promiſed *Abraham*, that if his Children tranſgreſſed, he would remember the Odour of the Foreskins, and deliver them for the Merit of Circumciſion; but all this was a falſe and vain glorious Buſtle. Our Apoſtle therefore aſſures the *Jews*, that Circumciſion without Holineſs of Converſation, would never acquit them before God; that a circumciſed *Jew*, who is diſobedient to the Law of God, is in as bad, or a worſe Condition, than any uncircumciſed Heathen; yea, the *Uncircumciſion*, that is, the uncircumciſed Perſon that *keeps the Law*, ſhall be accepted of God, as well as if he had been circumciſed, and be preferr'd by God before the circumciſed *Jew* who tranſgreſſes the Law.

The Sum is, that the obedient *Gentile* ſhall condemn the diſobedient *Jew*, and be ſooner accepted by God, who is no Reſpecter of Perſons, but with reſpect to their Qualifications; that no Church-Privileges, no external Prerogatives, not the higheſt Profeſſion of Holineſs and Piety, without an humble, uniform, and ſincere Obedience, will be any thing available to Salvation. And as then an Uncircumciſed *Gentile* found better Acceptance with God than many circumciſed *Jews*; even ſo an unbaptized Heathen at the great Day will not change Place with many a baptized Chriſtian. The Heathens have abuſed but one Talent, even the Light of Nature; but we Thouſands, even as many Thouſands as we have ſlighted the tenders of offer'd Grace.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle apply his Argument about Circumciſion?*

A. The Apoſtle cloſes the Chapter with an Application to the ſelf-confident *Jews*; it was the hardeſt Saying that could ſound in a *Jewiſh* Ear, to affirm, that *Circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh profiteth nothing*; now St. *Paul* takes away the Foundation of this their Boaſting, by a plain and true Diſtinction. *There is*, ſays he, *a* Jew *outwardly*, that has only the badge of Circumciſion in the Fleſh; now he is not a *Jew* in God's Account; but then there is *a* Jew *who is one inwardly*, namely, by the Purification of his Heart from all filthy Luſts, evil Affections, and ſinful Diſpoſitions, and *a Circumciſion of the Heart, and in the Spirit*; that is, a Circumciſion wrought in us by the Spirit of God, and not barely by the Letter of the Law: And *the Praiſe of this is not of Men*, who can't diſcern the Heart, *but of God, who is the Searcher of the Heart, and Trier of the Reins.*

Thus what Circumciſion, Sacrifices, and the Temple were to the *Jews* of old, the ſame are Baptiſm, the Lord's Supper, and publick Aſſemblies to profeſſing Chriſtians at this Day. And as the *Jews* reſted in thoſe Externals without reſpecting *Chriſt* in them, without deſiring to derive Holineſs and Sanctification from them; in like manner, Multitudes of Profeſſors ſet up their Reſt in outward Duties, and confide in Ordinances, without either deſiring of, or endeavouring after any likely Communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the Exerciſe of Faith and Love, without regard to ſpiritual Warmth in religious Duties, and being by Ordinances render'd more like to the God of the Ordinances; the Things moſt deſirable next to Heaven itſelf.

CHAP. III.

The Jews *Prerogative; Man's Infidelity and Unrighteouſneſs, no Obſtruction to God's Faithfulneſs and Righteouſneſs; but yet is our Sin. The* Jews *proved from the Old Teſtament, Tranſgreſſors of the Law; therefore no Juſtification by it; therefore was* Chriſt *revealed, in whom we are juſtified; Boaſting excluded. God has an equal Reſpect for* Jew *and* Gentile, *and by the ſame Way juſtifies both. By Faith the Law is eſtabliſhed.*

Q. WHAT *is the main Point purſued in this Chapter?*

A. In this Chapter the Apoſtle proceeds in his main Deſign of writing this Epiſtle; namely, to prove all Perſons, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to be under Sin, and conſequently under an Impoſſibility of being juſtified by Works, but only in Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*. In the firſt Part of the Chapter he anſwers the Objections of the *Jews* againſt what he had advanced in the foregoing; and the firſt Objection runs thus;

If outward Circumciſion avails nothing, but the inward Circumciſion is wholly to be regarded; and if the uncircumciſed Perſon who keeps the Law, is to be reckon'd as circumciſed, *what advantage then has the* Jews *above the* Gentile, or what Profit is there of Circumciſion above Uncircumciſion? He anſwers, the Advantage *is much every way*; but chiefly, becauſe unto them were *committed the Oracles of God*; that is, the holy Scriptures contained in the Old Teſtament, the Sacraments, and Seals of the Covenant, the Prophecies and Promiſes of the *Meſſiah*, and the whole Revelation of the Word and Will of God, was in their Hands only.

Great is that People's Privilege and Mercy, who enjoy the Word of God, the audible Word in the Holy Scriptures, the viſible Word in the Holy Sacraments. How many Souls are bleſſing God eternally for the Benefit of Divine Revelation! The *Jews* had this ſpecial Favour, that is, of the Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets. But Chriſtians have a Privilege beyond them, the Doctrine of Jeſus deliver'd to us by the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles; not like the killing Letter of the Law, but a Goſpel bringing Life and Immortality to Light.

Q. *In what Senſe are the Scriptures* the Oracles of God?

A. The Apoſtle calls the holy Scriptures, *the Oracles of God.* St. *Stephen* calls them *the lively Oracles*, Acts vii. 38. partly, becauſe delivered by a lively Voice from God, partly, becauſe they ſhould be to us as Oracles; that is, conſulted on all Occaſions, for reſolving Doubts, and determining all Controverſies. Had the Church of *Rome* conſulted theſe Oracles more, and Councils, *&c.* leſs, ſhe had kept the Doctrine of Faith much freer from Corruption than ſhe has done.

The original Word, here rendered *Oracles*, is the ſame which the profane Heathens uſed for the dark and doubtful *Oracles* of the Devil; yet the Holy Ghoſt diſdains not to make uſe of this Word (as of ſeveral others) though abuſed to heatheniſh Superſtition; which may ſerve to rectify their Miſtake who ſcruple to make uſe of Words, much more of Things, which have been abuſed to Superſtition.

There may be Superſtition in avoiding Superſtition; and though we cannot be too circumſpect in our Words and Actions, yet we may be too nice and preciſe in both. Yet note, that though the ſame Word ſignifies God's Oracles and Satan's, yet were they not delivered in the ſame Manner. Satan delivered his Oracles ambiguouſly and doubtfully, keeping his blind Votaries as much as he could in the Dark; what he uttered might bear ſeveral Conſtructions, ſo that whatever was the Event or Iſſue, this Father of Lies might have the Reputation of ſpeaking the Truth: But God's Oracles are plain and clear, free from Ambiguity and Darkneſs; the Scriptures are not dark, tho' in ſome Places difficult, which proceeds from the Sublimity of the Matter, not from the Intention of the Writer.

Q. *May it not be objected, that although the* Jews *had the Oracles of God, yet ſome of them never believed them; nor gave any Credit to the Promiſe of the* Meſſias *made in them; therefore they had no Advantage by them?*

A. Grant this, ſays the Apoſtle; ſhall the Unbelief of ſome, make the Fidelity of God in his Promiſes, of no Effect to others? *God forbid* we ſhould entertain ſuch a Thought! On the contrary, let God be acknowledged true and faithful to his Word, tho' all Men ſhould prove Liars: Or, as Dr. *Hammond* paraphraſes the Words, For whatſoever Falſeneſs or Unfaithfulneſs there may be in Man, it were Blaſphemy to think there were any in God; he is moſt faithful in performing what he hath promiſ'd, altho' every Man ſhould be unfaithful, and fail to perform his Duty in making uſe of it; nay the greater and more provoking the Sins of Men are, the the more illuſtrious is his Fidelity in making good his Part toward thoſe that are ſo unworthy, according to that Scripture, *Pſal.* li. 4. to this Senſe, ſpoken of God by *David*, *that thou may'ſt be juſtified*, &c. that is, that thou may'ſt appear juſt and faithful in performing all thou ſay'ſt, and overcome whenſoever thou art impleaded or queſtioned by any. A Child of God, under his Rod, deſires nothing more than to juſtify him in all his ſevereſt Dealings with, and Diſpenſations towards him.

Q. *But, if the Unrighteouſneſs of Men, that is, both of* Jews *and* Gentiles, *tends ſo viſibly to commend, that is, to illuſtrate and recommend the Righteouſneſs of God, namely, his Wiſdom,* Grace, *and Favour, in appointing this Way of Juſtification by Faith in* Chriſt; *how can it be right in God to puniſh them for this Unrighteouſneſs, which tends ſo highly to illuſtrate the Glory of his Goſpel-grace?*

A. The Apoſtle tells us, that in making this Objection, he ſpeaks as a Man; that is, as natural and carnal Men are ready to think and ſpeak: But, adds he, God forbid we ſhould think, as if God either was, or could be unrighteous; *for then how could God judge the World* for their Unrighteouſneſs? The Univerſality of his Power puts him above the Poſſibility of Error; he can do whatſoever he will do; and whatſoever he will do, is, for that Reaſon, juſt. *Shall not the Judge of all the World do right?*

Q. *The 7th and 8th Verſes being ſomewhat obſcure, I deſire you would explain them?*

A. Dr. *Hammond* paraphraſes them, thus; For, ſay they, if the Faithfulneſs and Mercifulneſs of God in performing his Promiſes to *Abraham*, that is, of giving the *Meſſias*, hath appeared more abundantly, and hath tended more to his Glory, by, or through Occaſion of the *Jews* Sins or Infidelities, there will then be no Reaſon, why they that are guilty of ſuch Sins, ſo much tending to God's Honour, ſhould ſtill be impleaded, or complained of, or proceeded with in Judgment, arraigned and puniſhed as Sinners, that is: That God ſhould ſo complain, and avenge that in the *Jews*, which tends to his Honour; but, on the other Side, Men might do well to commit ſuch Sins, from which ſo much Good, or Glory to God, might come. This indeed by ſome, is thought an Objection of great Force againſt me, who am accuſed to have delivered this very Saying, in the Caſe of the Heathens having the Goſpel preached to them, namely, that the Greatneſs of the Heathens Sins makes God's Mercy appear the more illuſtriouſly great, in vouchſafing to call them by the preaching of the Goſpel, and that therefore it is lawful to live heatheniſh ſinful Lives, by that Means the more to illuſtrate and ſet out God's Mercy to us in pardoning ſuch great Sins. In a Word, it is a Calumny, a Conſequence by Miſtakers falſely laid to my Charge; and all that I ſhall reply to it at preſent, is, to expreſs a Deteſtation of it, and my Opinion, that 'tis a damnable Doctrine in any that ſhould teach it, and ſuch as will render the Deſtruction of thoſe *Jews* moſt juſt, who thus object. In Oppoſition to which I diſtinctly affirm that no one Sin is to be committed, though it be in Order to, and in Contemplation of the greateſt Good, even the illuſtrating the Glory of God.

Q. *But might not ſome of the* Jews *ſay, Are we not better than the* Gentiles? *Do we not excel them them in outward Privileges?*

A. True, ſays the Apoſtle, in this Reſpect the *Jews* are better than the *Gentiles*, but not in Reſpect of inward Qualifications. *Jews* and *Gentiles* are alike by natural Corruption; alike under Sin by actual Tranſgreſſion, and ſo ſtand in Need both alike of Juſtification by Faith; and the Goſpel-Righteouſneſs is no leſs neceſſary for the one than for the other.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle prove the Corruption of human Nature?*

A. To prove the whole Race of Mankind under Sin, and ſtand equally in Need of Juſtification by *Chriſt*, the Apoſtle produces ſeveral Texts out of the *Old Teſtament*, particularly out of *Pſal.* xiv. where the State of corrupt Nature is deſcribed; *there is none righteous, no not one.* Which Words are true in ſeveral Reſpects.

There is none originally righteous, till tranſplanted into the Church, and wrought and faſhioned by the Holy Spirit. None efficiently righteous; the Righteouſneſs of Juſtification and Sanctification both are from *Chriſt*. None meritoriouſly righteous; for the moſt righteous and holy Saints are but unprofitable Servants. None perfectly and compleatly righteous; but inchoatively only; not in a ſtrict and legal Senſe, but in a Goſpel and qualified Senſe only; *he that doth Righteouſneſs, is righte-*

ous, in the Account of God; and as ſuch, ſhall be accepted and rewarded by him.

Obſerve how the Apoſtle proves the Corruption of Mankind in general, by an Induction of Particulars. He ſurveys him in all the principal Faculties of the Soul, and Members of his Body; his Underſtanding, Will, and Affections, his Eyes, Hands, Tongue, and Feet, all corrupted and depraved; and ſhuts up all with this, *there is no Fear of God before there Eyes*, as the Fountain from which all others flow. The Fear of God is the Bridle and Curb which reſtrains the Soul from Sin; where that is wanting, all Iniquity abounds; where that is preſent and prevalent, it keeps the Soul cloſe to God, becauſe Love is intermixed with it, and renders it a delightful Fear.

Q. *What Argument does the Apoſtle uſe to convince the* Jews *of this Depravation of Nature?*

A. To prevent the *Jews* from evading the foregoing Teſtimonies concerning Man's Corruption and Depravation, as not belonging to them, but to the *Gentiles* only; St. *Paul* tells them, that what the Law, that is, the Books of the *Old Teſtament*, do thus ſay, it ſays, *to thoſe under the Law*; that is, to thoſe that are Subjects of it, and obliged by it; to ſuch as are under the Inſtruction and Direction of it, as the *Jews* are known to be; and if ſo, then *every Mouth muſt be ſtopped*, *Jew* and *Gentile* both muſt own themſelves obnoxious to the Wrath of God, without being able to ſay any thing in their own Defence. When God ſpreads before Men the Purity of his Laws, and the Impiety of their Lives, none can object why Sentence ſhould not be executed, ſince all have tranſgreſſed.

Q. *What is the Inference St.* Paul *makes from his Arguments?*

A. The Concluſion St. *Paul* draws from the Premiſes is this; that as all Mankind ſince the Fall, are diſabled by their innate Corruption, and actual Tranſgreſſion to fulfil the Law, either natural or written, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that *by the Works of the Law can no Fleſh*, that is, no Perſon, *be juſtified before God.* All the Efficacy of the Law now, is to diſcover Sin, and to condemn for ſinning; *by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*; by the Law we apprehend our Malady, but by the Goſpel we underſtand our Remedy. By the Law here, and the Deeds of the Law, we are to underſtand the ceremonial and moral Law, eſpecially the latter; for by the moral Law is the Knowledge of Sin; the moral Law forbids Theft, Adultery, *&c.* The Oppoſition is not between ceremonial and moral Works, but between Works in general and Faith.

Q. *But why* can no Fleſh be juſtified by the Deeds of the Law?

A. 1. Becauſe the Obedience to the Law is imperfect; and if he mixes but one Sin with a Thouſand good Words, he can never be juſtified by his Works; for that one Sin will lay him under the condemnatory Sentence of the Law. 2. Becauſe all that we can poſſibly do, is a Debt we owe to the Law. But now our Surety *Jeſus Chriſt*, who ſatisfied the Law for our Violation of it, was under no Obligation, but what he voluntarily laid himſelf under on our count.

Q. *What is the next Point the Apoſtle treats of?*

A. The Apoſtle now comes to the affirmative Part of his Aſſertion; namely, that God hath manifeſted another Way of Juſtification of the Goſpel, that is, by Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*: For ſince the Coming of *Chriſt*, and the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, *the Righteouſneſs of God*, that is, the Righteouſneſs which God appoints, approves, and accepts, for a Sinner's Juſtification, *is without the Law*, that is, without performing the Works of the Law, either natural, ceremonial, or moral; and is manifeſted to be the Righteouſneſs that is by Faith in *Chriſt*; which all that believe and obey the Goſpel, ſhall partake of, both *Jew* and *Gentile*; *for there is no Difference*; that is, between *Jew* and *Gentile*, as to the Way and Means of their Juſtification. The Reaſon the Apoſtle aſſigns for this, is, *becauſe all have ſinned*, the whole Race of Mankind, not one mere Man excepted, and ſo will fall ſhort of obtaining the Glory of God and eternal Life, if they ſeek it not in his Way, that is, by Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Hence learn the Neceſſity and Excellency of Faith; *The Righteouſneſs of God is manifeſted, even the Righteouſneſs of God which is by Faith in* Chriſt. Faith is the Bond of Union, the Inſtrument of our Juſtification, the Spring of our Conſolation; *being juſtified by Faith, we have Peace with God*, Chap. v. 1.

Q. *Pray explain a little more theſe Words*, there is no Difference, *Ver.* 22.

A. That is, as to the Way of Juſtification, between *Jew* and *Gentile*; all without Righteouſneſs by Faith in *Chriſt*, muſt die and be damned to all Eternity. True, there is now a Difference amongſt Believers, with Reſpect to the Degrees of Sanctification and Conſolation, and of Glorification hereafter; but the Juſtification of all Believers is alike; there is the ſame Sin in all, not for Meaſure and Degree, but in Reſpect of Guilt and Obligation to Puniſhment; the ſame Price is paid for all by Way of Satiſfaction to divine Juſtice, namely, the Name of *Chriſt*; and the ſame Manſions of Glory are deſigned for all. And if there be no Difference amongſt Believers (as ſuch) before God, why ſhould there be ſo much Difference amongſt themſelves, as often there is in this World? You are all dear to God, why ſhould you not be ſo to one another? Why ſhould one Church, one Communion hold you now, e're long perhaps one Priſon may, one Heaven ſhall certainly hold you all.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle deſcribe the Nature of Juſtication?*

A. 1. By its efficient Cauſe; namely, thus *it is God that juſtifieth*: Who can forgive the Crime, but the Perſon againſt whom we have done the Wrong?

2. The moving or impulſive Cauſe of this Juſtification, is the free Grace of God; *being juſtified freely by his Grace.* The meritorious Cauſe, the Bloodſhedding and Death of *Chriſt*; *through the Redemption that is in* Jeſus Chriſt. The final Cauſe; *to declare his Righteouſneſs*; not his Clemency and Mercy only, but his Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, eſpecially that Attribute which inclines him to puniſh Sin and Sinners. The inſtrumental Cauſe of Juſtification, Faith; *whom God hath ſet forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood*, &c. The Word Propitiation alludes to the Mercy-ſeat, which covered the Ark wherein was the Law; this typified *Chriſt*, who fully covers our Sins, the Tranſgreſſions of the Law, out of God's Sight. When therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, that God hath ſet forth *Chriſt* to be a Mercy-ſeat unto us, *through Faith in his Blood*, we have Reaſon to believe the Blood of *Chriſt*, as our Sin-offering, makes an Attonement for us, and renders God propitious to us.

Again; in the Juſtification of a believing Sinner, God is juſt and righteous in the moſt exalted Degree; *to declare his Righteouſneſs for the Remiſſion of Sins.* The Apoſtle would have us take Notice, that our Juſtification is an Act of Juſtice as well as Mercy, and that God, as he is juſt, cannot condemn the Believer, ſince *Chriſt* has made Satisfaction for his Sins. Bleſſed be God! that the Pardon of Sin is built upon that very Attribute (the Juſtice of God) which is ſo affrighting and dreadful to the offending Sinner. Hence, ſaith St. *John*, *God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins:* Faithful with Reſpect to his own Promiſe, and juſt with Reſpect to his Son's Satisfaction. Who then can lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect, when Juſtice itſelf doth juſtify them? Behold here! the ſweet Harmony of the Divine Attributes in juſtifying and pardoning the Believer; one Attribute is not raiſed on the Ruin of another, but Juſtice and Mercy both triumph. Glorious and all-wiſe Contrivance! whereby God made ſufficient Proviſion for the Reparation of his Honour, the Vindication of his Holineſs, and the Manifeſtation of his Truth and Faithfulneſs, and for the preſent Conſolation and eternal Salvation of all repenting and believing Sinners, to the End of the World.

In the next Place, the Apoſtle declares the Conſequent of this Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith; namely, the excluding of all Self-Confidence; *Where is Boaſting now?* The Method which the Wiſdom of God has taken to check the Pride of Man, and to cut off all Occaſion of boaſting, is by denying him Juſtification by his own Works, and that the meritorious Cauſe of Juſtification ſhould lye in another; Grace muſt have all the Glory; not the Law of Works, but of Faith, juſtifieth and ſaveth all Believers.

The Concluſion the Apoſtle draws from the forgoing Diſcourſe, is, that God's Way of juſtifying a guilty Sinner is, not by Works done by him, but by Faith in the Mediator, who hath ſatisfied the Juſtice of God for him; *therefore we conclude, that a Man is juſtified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law.*

Obſerve how the Apoſtle extends his Propoſition univerſally to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the whole Race of Mankind, all Believers ſhall be juſtified one and the ſame Way, even by Grace and Faith; *it is one God which juſtifieth the Circumciſion by Faith, and Uncircumciſion through Faith.* The Argument is drawn from the Unity of God, which is not to be underſtood ſo much of the Unity of his Eſſence and Nature, as of his Will and Purpoſe; yet as God is unchangeable in his Nature, ſo is he as immutable in his Will and Purpoſe. Having therefore determined and declared his Way of juſtifying Sinners to be one and the ſame to all Nations, *Jew* and *Gentile*, even by Faith alone in his Son *Chriſt Jeſus*; no other Way is to be expected from that God who is unchangeable in his Purpoſe.

The Apoſtle, to take away the Calumny, which the Adverſaries of the Doctrine of free Juſtification by Faith, might caſt upon him, gives this wiſe Caution; *do we not then make void the Law of God?* As if he had ſaid, There may be thoſe that will ſay ſo, but untruly; for we eſtabliſh the Law; becauſe we acknowledge, that without exact Obedience and Conformity to the Law both in our Natures and in our Lives, as a Rule of living, there can be no Salvation.

Obſerve here, that it's the moral Law the Apoſtle treats of; not the ceremonial; for that was utterly aboliſhed by the Goſpel; but the moral Law is eſtabliſhed by it; or, if aboliſhed, it is only as a Covenant, not as a Rule. *Chriſt* has relaxed the Law in Point of Danger, but not in Point of Duty; for the Law is holy, juſt, and good, and is not diſannulled, but eſtabliſhed by the Goſpel.

CHAP. IV.

Abraham's *Faith imputed to him for Righteouſneſs.* David's *Teſtimony for the ſame. Circumciſion a Seal of Righteouſneſs by Faith;* and Abraham *the Father of Believers; and Heir of the World. The Power and Properties of his Faith; by which Righteouſneſs was imputed to him, and ſhall be to all who believe in God through* Chriſt.

Q. WHAT *is the particular Point of Doctrine inculcated in this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle, in this Chapter, undertakes to confirm the Truth of that Concluſion he had made in the Cloſe of the preceding Chapter, that *a Man is juſtified by Faith without the Works of the Law*, by inſtancing in the Patriarch *Abraham*, who was not juſtified nor accepted with God, by Virtue of his Circumciſion in the Fleſh, or any other Works of Obedience performed by him to the Law, but by Virtue of his Faith, which was imputed and accounted to him for Righteouſneſs. From which Inſtance of *Abraham's* Juſtification by Faith, the Apoſtle infers the Juſtification of all Believers with him. For no doubt but the Children are juſtified after the ſame Manner the Father was. Let us now ſee the Force of the Apoſtle's Argument in the firſt Verſe; where he reaſons after this Manner.

What ſhall we ſay? Will any one affirm, that *Abraham* found or obtained Righteouſneſs by, or according to the Fleſh; that is, by being circumciſed in the Fleſh, or by Works of Righteouſneſs that he had done? Surely no: For, if *Abraham* was juſtified by Circumciſion, or by his Works, he hath whereof to glory; that is, Ground of boaſting by the Works, in which he was juſtified. But it is apparent he had not whereof to boaſt and glory before God; therefore he was not juſtified by Circumciſion, nor any Works of his own. For, whatever Privilege or Prerogative was, or could be conceived to belong to him or his Poſterity, it was from the free Mercy of God, a Fruit of undeſerved Promiſe, and that excludes all Boaſting; for what haſt thou in this Caſe which thou haſt not received? And why then boaſteſt thou, as if thou hadſt not? That is, as if it were not a meer Act of Bounty and Mercy to thee.

Hence learn, that no Righteouſneſs of our own, no Services we can perform, are ſufficient to procure our Juſtification in the Sight of God: For if we be juſtified by our Works, it muſt be by Works either before, or after Faith; not before, for the Corruption of Nature, and Man's impotent Condition thereby, check any ſuch Thought.

Nor do Works after Faith juſtify; for then a Believer is not juſtified on his believing, but by Works afterwards; and Faith is not the juſtifying Grace, but only a Preparation to thoſe Works which juſtify; which is contrary to the whole Strain of the Apoſtle throughout his Epiſtle, who aſcribes Juſtification to Faith in the Blood of *Chriſt* without Works.

In ſhort, no Righteouſneſs of Man is in perfect, therefore no Righteouſneſs of Man can be juſtifying; that which falls ſhort of the Holineſs of the Law, can never free us from the condemnatory Sentence and Curſe of the Law.

Q. *How was* Abraham *juſtified?*

A. The Scripture Account of *Abraham*'s Juſtification is, that it was by Faith alone; *he believed God, and it was counted to him for Righteouſneſs*; that is, he firmly believed the Promiſe of God, that he would give him a Son, in whom all the Families of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed. And by means of this Faith he was reckoned or eſteemed righteous before God, and not by means of his Works.

Obſerve next St. *Paul*'s Argument to prove that *Abraham* was juſtified by Faith, and not by Works; had he had Works of perfect Holineſs, then in ſtrict Juſtice a Reward might have been expected by him as a due Debt, and not given him in a way of Grace and Favour. For *to him that worketh*; that is, with a Deſign and Intent to obtain Juſtification by his Works, *is the Reward reckoned, not of Grace, but of Debt*, he having performed all that was required, in order to his being righteous before God. *But to him that worketh not*, that is, who worketh not to the Intent, and End forementioned; namely, to procure Juſtification by working, but ſeeks that in a Way of believing, *his Faith is counted for Righteouſneſs To him that worketh not, but believeth*, &c.

We are not to underſtand this abſolutely; for he that believeth, worketh; but, after a ſort, he is ſaid not to Work, becauſe he worketh not with a Deſign to ſtand righteous before God by his Works.

Again; by him *that worketh not*, we are not to derſtand an idle, lazy Believer, that takes no care of the Duties of Obedience; but the Meaning is, he Works not in a Law Senſe, to the Ends and Intentions of the firſt Covenant, to make up Righteouſneſs to cover himſelf by his own Working. Being convinced of his utter Inability to work out his own Righteouſneſs by the Law; ſeeing all his Endeavours to obey the Law, fall ſhort of Righteouſneſs; he is therefore ſaid in a Law Senſe not to work, becauſe he doth not ſo work, as to this Purpoſe and End of the Law, which accepts of nothing ſhort of perfect and complete Obedience.

Q. *In what Senſe does St.* Paul *ſay,* God juſtified the Ungodly, Ver. 5?

A. It means ſuch as have been ungodly, not thoſe that continue ſo. The Apoſtle deſcribes the Frame and Temper of their Hearts and Lives before Juſtification, not after it; as it found them, not as it leaves them. We muſt bring Credentials from our Sanctification, to bear Witneſs of the Truth of our Juſtification.

Q. *What other Inſtance does the Apoſtle bring to prove his Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith alone?*

A. To the Example of *Abraham*, the Apoſtle ſubjoins the Teſtimony of *David*, *Pſ.* xxxii. who deſcribes the Bleſſedneſs of that Man to whom the Lord imputeth Righteouſneſs, namely, the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, without any Works to be brought before God, to be juſtified, by ſaying, *Bleſſed is the Man whoſe Tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe Sin is covered, and iniquity not Imput d.* Sin, in reſpect of Offence, is remitted, in reſpect of the Filth and Turpitude of it, is covered; in reſpect of the Puniſhment, not imputed. This Heap of Words ſerves only to amplify the abundant Grace of God in the Act of pardoning Sin.

Q. *What other Argument does the Apoſtle bring to prove the Point in Queſtion?*

A. The Apoſtle next moves a Queſtion; namely, whether the forementioned Bleſſedneſs of Pardon of Sin, and Juſtification by Faith, belongs to the circumciſed *Jews* only, or to the Uncircumciſed *Gentiles* alſo? Which Queſtion carries with it the force of a ſtrong Affirmation; that ſeeing Faith was imputed to *Abraham* for Righteouſneſs many Years before he was circumciſed; therefore the uncircumciſed *Gentiles*, as well as the circumciſed *Jews*, ſhall by Faith be made Partakers of the Bleſſedneſs, to which *Abraham* was entitled before he was circumciſed.

This inſtructs us, that God has appointed one and the ſame Way and Method for the Juſtification and Salvation of all Perſons, circumciſed and uncircumciſed. *Jew* and *Gentile*; namely, Juſtification by Faith in the Blood of his Son, without which no Church-Privileges or Spiritual Prerogatives will entitle them to real bleſſedneſs. *Cometh the Bleſſedneſs on the Circumciſion only, or upon the Uncircumciſion alſo? Abraham* believed unto Righteouſneſs before he was circumciſed; therefore the *Gentiles* by Faith ſhall be accounted righteous, tho' never circumciſed.

Q. *What does St.* Paul *ſay, was* Abraham's *Deſign in being circumciſed.*

A. It was, that it might be *a Sign and Seal of the Covenant* made with him, and to his Seed, *Gen.* xvii. and, as an Obligation that the Righteouſneſs by Faith was the true Way for a Sinner to become righteous; which righteouſneſs *Abraham* had obtained whilſt uncircumciſed, that ſo he might be the Father, in a Spiritual Senſe, of all Believers both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who imitated him in his Faith, and in the Holineſs and Obedience of his Life.

Here note the Perſon inſtituting the Sacrament of Circumciſion, not *Abraham*; *He received Circumciſion*; that is, by the Appointment of God he was circumciſed; Sacraments muſt be of Divine Inſtitution, not of Human Invention. The Church can make no Sacraments; her Duty is with Care and Attention to adminiſter them.

Note alſo, the Nature of Sacraments in general, and of Circumciſion in particular. They are Signs and Seals; *He received the Sign of Circumciſion. A Seal of the righteouſneſs by Faith.*

Q. *Pray explain the Nature of the Covenant of Circumciſion?*

A. Circumciſion was a Sign and Token of the Covenant which God made with *Abraham* and the *Jews*. It was a Commemorative Sign of God's Covenant with *Abraham*; and a Repreſentative of his Faith and Obedience towards God. A demonſtrative Sign of Original Sin, and the Depravity of human Nature. A Sign to diſtinguiſh the Church and People of God from the Reſt of the World; a Sign by which all Strangers that were admitted into the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*; were received into the *Jewiſh* Church. And a prefigurative Sign of Baptiſm, which in the Chriſtian Church was ſubſtituted in the Room of Circumciſion.

Circumciſion was likewiſe a Seal; *a Seal of the Righteouſneſs by Faith*; it was a Seal both of God's Part, and for *Abraham's* alſo. On God's Part to confirm all the Promiſes made to *Abraham* and his Seed; and on his and their Parts, to bind them to renounce the Service of all other Gods, and to oblige them to the Obſervation of the whole Law.

Q. *What other Uſe does the Apoſtle make of the Example of* Abraham?

A. The Apoſtle likewiſe deſcribes the Character of true Believers; they are ſuch as *walk in the Steps of faithful* Abraham. As *Abraham* readily obeyed the Call of God, ſo do they; they tread in the Faith of their Father *Abraham*, ſurmount all Difficulties, defy all Dangers, that they may yield a ready, cheerful, and perſevering Obedience to the Commands of the God of *Abraham*.

The great Promiſe of God to *Abraham* and his Seed, that they ſhould poſſeſs that rich and pleaſant Part of the World, the Land of *Canaan*, (under which alſo Heaven itſelf was typically promiſed and comprehended) was not made upon Condition of their performing perfect Obedience to the Law, but they were to obtain it by Faith; that is, by truſting to, and depending upon the gracious Promiſe of a faithful God.

Q *Pray ſtate the Apoſtle's Argument for Juſtification without Works?*

A. It runs thus; If the Promiſe made to the Father of the Faithful was accompliſhed, not by legal Obedience, but by the Righteouſneſs of Faith, then it follows, that all his Children are juſtified by Faith, as *Abraham* their Father was: But the Promiſe of the earthly Inheritance, and under it the heavenly one was accompliſhed, not by the Law, but by the Righteouſneſs of *Abraham's* Faith, therefore Juſtification is not to be expected by Works of the Law, but by Faith alone.

Again; if they who ſeek to be juſtified by the Works of the Law, be Heirs of this promiſed Inheritance, then Faith, that is, the Way of Juſtification by Faith, preſcribed by God, is to no purpoſe; for to what End ſhould we ſeek Righteouſneſs by Faith in another, if we by legal Obedience can find it ourſelves? This then is another Argument to confirm the Apoſtle's Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith; as thus, that only juſtifies to which a gracious Promiſe of Juſtification is made; but no ſuch Promiſe is made to any Man for his weak and imperfect keeping of the Law, but for his believing, there is; therefore by the Law there can be no Juſtification, but by Faith only.

Another Reaſon the Apoſtle ſuggeſts, why no Juſtification can be expected by the Law, is, bebecauſe it condemns rather than it juſtifies. *The Law worketh Wrath*; it diſcovers the Divine Wrath due to our Tranſgreſſion, and then pronounces Condemnation on the Tranſgreſſor. Now, that which condemns, cannot juſtify; but the Law of God condemns the Sinner for his Tranſgreſſion; therefore it can never be the Inſtrument and Means of his Juſtification.

Q. *But why has the Wiſdom of God order'd Juſtification and Salvation only to be obtained by Faith?*

A. For theſe two Cauſes. 1. That it might be of free and undeſerved Grace and Favour; for, to be juſtified by Faith and Grace is all one with the Apoſtle. 2. *That the Promiſe might be ſure to all the Seed*, that is, that God's Promiſe might ſtand firm and ſure to all the believing Seed of *Abraham*, even *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, he being the Father of all that believe.

Hence learn, that if our Juſtification and Salvation depended on our perfect Obedience to the Law of God, it would never be ſure, becauſe of our Inability to perform and obſerve it.

Q. *What Character does the the Apoſtle give of* Abraham's *Faith?*

A. He believed in God who quickneth the Dead, and *calleth thoſe Things that are not, as tho' they were*; that is, God having promiſed to make *Abraham* the Father of many Nations, when he had no Seed, and was never likely to have any; he believeth the Thing to be both credible and poſſible, becauſe God had ſpoken it, how improbable ſoever it might ſeem.

As whatever God doth is good, becauſe he doth it; ſo, whatever God ſays, is true, becauſe he ſpeaks it; accordingly Faith, which is an Aſſent of the Underſtanding to what God reveals, depends on the Veracity of God, for making good his own Word, and fulfilling his own Promiſe.

Faith has a threefold Excellency; it aſſents to the Truths of God, tho' never ſo improbable; it puts Men upon Duties ſeemingly unreaſonable, (witneſs Abraham's *offering up* Iſaac) and enables to Sufferings never ſo afflictive; but to plain Contradictions, Faith cannot give its Aſſent.

As *Abraham's* Faith exceedingly honoured God, ſo God highly honoured *Abraham's* Faith, making him like himſelf, *a Father of many Nations.* As God is an univerſal Father, not of one, but of all Nations, ſo was *Abraham*; as God is their ſpiritual Father, ſo was *Abraham*, with Reſpect to carnal Generation; that is, he was the Father of all Believers, among all Nations believing after his Example.

A farther Commendation of *Abraham's* Faith, is, *that againſt Hope he believed in Hope*; that is, he had a Hope, a firm Faith and Truſt in the Promiſe and Power of God, againſt all natural Grounds of Hope; namely, that he ſhould certainly have a Son, and Seed like the Stars of Heaven for Multitude.

He adds, *that he conſidered not the Deadneſs of his own Body, nor the Barrenneſs of* Sarah's *Womb; neither ſtaggered at the Promiſe through Unbelief*; that is, he regarded not any Difficulties that lay in the Way of his Faith, he admitted no Doubt or Queſtions touching the Promiſe or Power of God; without diſputing he wholly depended on God for the Performance of his Promiſe, and ſo gave God the Glory of his Omnipotence and Faithfulneſs.

Q. *But how could* Abraham's *Body be ſaid to be dead, when he had ſeral Children afterwards by* Keturah; *even ſix and forty Years after* Sarah's *Death?*

A. 'Tis anſwered, *Abraham's* and *Sarah's* Bodies received now a Bleſſing, or new generative Faculty from God, which rendered them capable of begetting and bearing Children, when by Nature they were not ſo.

Q. *But was* Abraham's *Faith clear of all doubting? Did he not diſtruſt when he ſaid,* Shall a Child be born to *Abraham* that is an hundred Years old; and *Sarah*, that is ninety Years old, bear? *Gen.* xxi.

A. Theſe are not Words of doubting, but enquiring; they proceeded from a Deſire of being farther informed how theſe Things could be. But

Abraham as well as *Sarah*, laughed at the Mention of a Son; but here we muſt diſtinguiſh, *Abraham*'s Laughter proceeded from Admiration and Joy; *Sarah*'s from Diffidence and Diſtruſt. *Sarah* is accordingly reprimanded, but not *Abraham*, for laughing.

Q. *But of what Uſe is* Abraham's *Faith to us?*

A. Leſt we ſhould imagine that Juſtification by Faith was *Abraham*'s peculiar Privilege, and did not concern us, the Apoſtle applies *Abraham*'s Example to us; aſſuring us, that as Abraham's *Faith was imputed to him as Righteouſneſs*, becauſe he depended on the Almighty Power of God in the Promiſe; and alſo looked by Faith to the *Meſſiah* promiſed, who was to come of his Seed; ſo, ſays St. *Paul*, was this written for our Sakes, as well as *Abraham*'s, for our Comfort and Encouragement, to aſſure us, that Faith ſhall be imputed to us alſo for Righteouſneſs, if we firmly truſt in God through the Merits and Mediation of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

This Argument of the Apoſtle abſolutely confutes the *Socinian* Doctrine, That the Godly, under the *Old Teſtament*, were not juſtified the ſame Way under the *New*; whereas he proves, that *Abraham*, and they who tread in their Father's Steps, are juſtified alike: And accordingly it was not thus written of him for his Sake alone, that *his Faith was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs*, but for the Benefit of us alſo, to whom the like Faith ſhall be imputed for Juſtification, if we believe on him who raiſed up *Jeſus* from the Dead.

Hence we are taught, that the Doctrine of Juſtification by faith, is not new, but as old as *Abraham*.

Q. *How is the Righteouſneſs of* Chriſt *imputed to Believers?*

A. Some are offended at the Word *imputed*; but as the pious Biſhops, *Downham* and *Davenant*, on Juſtification well obſerve, it is no leſs than ten Times mentioned (either in the Form or Signification of it) in this Chapter: Their Argument for, and Anſwers to *Bellarmin*'s Objections againſt the imputed Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, run thus: If *Chriſt*'s Righteouſneſs be not imputed, it is not accepted, it is not performed; and ſo there will be no Redemption of *Jeſus Chriſt*; without this we ſhall make *Chriſt* little in juſtifying Sinners.

And why is *Chriſt* called the Lord our Righteouſneſs of God in him? And why is Faith infinitely pleaſing to God, but becauſe it brings to God a Righteouſneſs which is highly pleaſing to him, even that of a Mediator? For there is no ſtanding before God for any Creature in a Creature-Righteouſneſs.

Q. *What is the laſt Thing obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. In the laſt Verſe we have an Abridgment of the whole Goſpel; the Death and Reſurrection of *Chriſt* declared, and the Benefit and Advantages of both aſſigned. *Chriſt*, as our Surety, was under the Arreſt of Death; but having given Satisfaction by his Sufferings, our Diſcharge was publiſhed to the World by his Reſurrection; *He was raiſed again for our Juſtification*. Had he not been raiſed from the Dead, Faith in his Death would have had no Foundation, for it would have been very unaccountable to believe in one who lay under the Power of Death. By *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection the Efficacy of his Death was declared to all the World; therefore, ſays the Apoſtle, Chap. viii. *Who ſhall condemn us, when* Chriſt *has died for us?* Yea, rather, is riſen again. As our Redemption was not in its Glory till *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, ſo neither is our Faith in its full Strength and Vigour, till it eyes him, *who was delivered for our Offences, and raiſed again for our Juſtification.*

Chap. V.

The Fruits of Juſtification by Faith; Peace with God, Patience, Hope, and Aſſurance of God's Love: The Love of God exceeds that of Men, and is an Aſſurance of our Salvation, and pronounces Joy to thoſe who have received the Atonement. A Parallel between Chriſt *and* Adam; *Condemnation by the Sin of the one, and Juſtification from many Offences by the other. The End and Uſe of the Law.*

Q. W*HAT Points of Doctrine does the Apoſtle treat of in this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle, in the foregoing Chapter, having treated at large of Juſtification by Faith in *Chriſt*, in this declares the Benefits and Bleſſings that redound to thoſe that are in a juſtified Condition.

Q. *What are thoſe Benefits and Bleſſings which a Believer is entitled to, in Conſequence of his Juſtification by Faith?*

A. The firſt Fruit of our Juſtification by Faith, is Peace and Reconciliation with God. Pardon and Peace are proclaimed in the Sinner's Conſcience. *Being juſtified by Faith, we have Peace with God*; God has no more hoſtile Enmity againſt us, and will not ſatisfy his Juſtice upon us, by puniſhing of us; but if we offend him, we ſhall certainly fall under his Frowns and Chaſtiſements, and feel the Effects of his Diſpleaſure as of an angry Father. With this agrees that of Biſhop *Davenant*, 'God abſolves the 'juſtified Perſon from all ſatisfactory Puniſhment, 'but not from all healing and chaſtening Puniſh-'ment.

A ſecond Benefit of Juſtification by Faith, is, our Admiſſion to Grace and Favour with God: This is a Privilege beyond the former; a Traytor may be pardoned by his Prince, yet not admitted to his Preſence; *Abſalom*'s Crime was forgiven, but he muſt not ſee his Father's Face. But by *Chriſt*'s Mediation every juſtified Perſon meets with Divine Acceptance, yea more, he ſtands and abides in it. True, the Believer may fall under his Father's Love; *Through* Chriſt *we have Acceſs by Faith unto his Grace wherein we ſtand.*

A third Benefit follows, *We rejoice in the Hope of the Glory of God.* Here obſerve the happy Union and Connexion between Grace and Glory; Grace is Glory begun, and Glory is Grace conſummated.

A juſtified Perſon has the Hope of future Glory, and *rejoices in the Hope of the Glory of God*; he hopes for the Glory of God, and well he may, for it is purchaſed for him; it is promiſed to him, he has it already in the firſt Fruits and Earneſt of it, and believes it to be great and glorious, ſure and certain, never decaying, everlaſting.

A fourth Benefit accruing to Believers from their Juſtification by Faith is, glorying in their preſent Sufferings; that is, ſuch Trials and Perſecutions as befal them for the Profeſſion of the Goſpel. In theſe a Child of God may rejoice, yea, boaſt and glory as a Soldier does in his Marks, Wounds and Scars; but in thoſe Sufferings, Afflictions, and Trials we bring upon ourſelves as Puniſhments for our Sins; theſe we have no more Reaſon to glory in, than a Child has to glory in his Whipping.

It is not in Tribulations themſelves that Believers glory, but in the ſweet Iſſue and happy Effects of them, finding, that by the ſanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit, *Tribulation worketh Patience*; that is, exerciſes and increaſes Patience; and Patience begetteth and giveth Experience of God's gracious Preſence with us, of his Aſſiſtance, and of his Faithfulneſs towards us, in and under all our Afflictions; and Experience of theſe Things worketh in us Hope of Reward.

Q. *What Reflections ariſe from this Deſcription of the Benefits of Juſtification?*

A. Obſerve here, how one Grace generates and gets another. Alſo, that it is not Tribulation in its own Nature, but when ſanctified by the bleſſed Spirit, that, by a happy Gradation, works Patience, Patience Experience, and Experience Hope. But when Affliction meets with a ſtubborn Spirit, what ſad Work does it make! Then Tribulation excites Impatience, Impatience cauſes Perplexity, Perplexity Deſpair, and Deſpair Confuſion.

Q. *What are the Effects of a Believer's Hope?*

A. The Effect and Property of a Believer's Hope, is, *It maketh not aſhamed.* The juſtified Perſon ſhall not find his Hopes of Glory fruſtrated, but exceeded; and the Reaſon is added, why the *Chriſtian*'s Hope will not deceive him; namely, *Becauſe the Love of God is ſhed abroad in his Heart by the Holy Ghoſt*; that is, the Holy Spirit doth, in Time of Tribulation, teſtify his Love to the Hearts of his People, which cauſes them to glory in Tribulation.

Q. *St.* Paul *ſpeaks very much upon* Chriſt's *Love to Sinners: What do we learn from thence?*

A. The Apoſtle expatiates on the Efficacy of *Chriſt*'s Love towards us, when we were Sinners; which prevailed with him to die for Sinners; *When we were yet without Strength,* Chriſt *died for the Ungodly.*

The natural Condition of Man, is a State of Enmity (*Ungodly*) and of Impotency (*without Strength.*) Man is an impotent and obſtinate Creature; without Power to reſiſt Juſtice, and without Affection to deſire Mercy; ſo weak, that he trembles at the Appearance of a Worm, and yet ſo wicked, that he lifts up his Head againſt Heaven.

Note farther, the Way and Means found out for our Recovery, the Death of *Chriſt*; *When we were without Strength,* Chriſt *died for us.* Tho' he found Mankind buried in the Ruins of their lapſed State, yet he did not leave them ſo, but died for them.

Again; obſerve the Seaſonableneſs of our Recovery, *It was in due Time,* that *Chriſt* died; that is, in the Fulneſs of Time appointed by God the Father, and determined in his Decree and Purpoſe.

Remark, that *Jeſus Chriſt* came not in the Beginning of Time, in the Infancy and Morning of the World (tho' it was then promiſed he ſhould come) nor yet did he ſtay till the laſt Period of Time, but came, as it were, in the Middle of Time, which is called *the Fulneſs of Time,* Gal. iv. 4. and here *due Time*; *Chriſt* came not for our Recovery ſo ſoon as we were fallen, that Mankind might be the more ſenſible of the Badneſs of their Condition; neither did he ſtay till the End of Time, that the Faith and Expectation of his Church might not be put upon too long and ſevere an Exerciſe. The Patriarchs believed in *Chriſt* that was to come; the Apoſtles in *Chriſt* then preſent; and *Chriſtians* now, in *Chriſt* long ſince come. Thus, *in due Time* Chriſt *died.*

The Apoſtle amplifies and extols the Love of *Chriſt*, in dying for us when we were Enemies to him; by comparing his Love to us, with our Love to one another. Amongſt Men it is rarely known, that a Perſon will lay down his Life for another; but if ſo, it muſt be an extraordinary Friend, a Perſon of uncommon Goodneſs, and of eminent Worth; *For ſcarcely for a righteous Man will one die.* As if he had ſaid, ſuch a Thing may be, but ſcarce ever known, that a Perſon will lay down his Life for another, tho' he be a righteous, innocent, and truly honeſt Man. Perhaps for a good Man, that is, for a very kind and bountiful Benefactor; for ſome Perſon of rare Charity, and extraordinary Goodneſs, who is a publick Bleſſing and common Good to the whole Community; for ſuch a Perſon, perhaps, one would dare to die.

But God's Expreſſion of Mercy was infinitely above this Proportion of any the moſt friendly Man; for he, when he had nothing in the Object to move him to it, when we were ſo far from being juſt or good Men, from being merciful or pious in the higheſt Degree, that we were profane cuſtomary Sinners, he then ſent his Son, *Chriſt*, to die for us, to obtain, by the ſhedding his own Blood, Pardon of Sins for us, on our Reformation and Amendment.

He then that loved us while we were Enemies, will not damn us now we are his Children. He that reconciled us to himſelf, by the Death of his Son, for the ſake of his Sufferings and Satisfaction, will certainly ſave us from Wrath to come, by his Life, or for the ſake of his prevailing Interceſſion; *If when Enemies, we were reconciled to God thro' the Death of his Son.* The Word (*if*) is not a Word of Doubting, but Argumentation. St. *Paul* ſuppoſes it a known Truth, or a Principle yielded by all *Chriſtians*, that the Death of *Chriſt* was to reconcile Sinners unto God. We dare not ſay, that God could not have reconciled us any other Way but this; but we may ſafely ſay, that no Way was like this, ſo expreſſive of his Love; it was the moſt obliging and endearing Way imaginable to reconcile us to himſelf by the Death of his Son.

Q. *How are we ſaid* to joy in God, through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, by whom *we have* received the Atonement?

A. Our Rejoicing, as to Reconciliation with God, depends on our believing; it is none, if our Faith be none; little, if our Faith be little; great, if our Faith be great. No Man can rejoice in an unknown Good; it behoves us therefore to clear up to ourſelves our Intereſt in this Attonement: *Chriſt* thought it worth his Blood to purchaſe it, ſurely it is worth our Pains to clear it, in order to our Rejoicing. He that ſeeks not Reconciliation with God, is an Enemy to his own Comfort.

Q. *Pray explain the Doctrine of original Sin, which the Apoſtle ſeems here to inſiſt upon with ſome Earneſtneſs?*

A.

A. The Doctrine of original Sin is not more difficult to be underſtood, than neceſſary to be known; the Apoſtle deſcribes it thus: *By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin.* The mournful Truth which this Scripture contains, is this, that our firſt Parent, by his Tranſgreſſion, hath intailed a miſerable Inheritance, an unhappy Portion of Sin and Death, on all his Poſterity.

Adam's Sin becomes ours; 1. By meritorious Imputation; God treated with him not as a private Perſon, but as the Root and Parent of all Mankind. Hence a Compariſon is often made between the firſt and ſecond *Adam*; the Grace of the one, with the Sin of the other; the Life conveyed by the one, and the Death tranſmitted by the other. By *Adam* we were caſt, by *Chriſt* we are clear'd; curſed in *Adam*, crowned in *Chriſt*. Now this Compariſon would be inſignificant, if *Adam* had not been look'd on as our Repreſentative.

2. The Sin of *Adam* is derived to us by way of Inheſion; we have received from him a Depravity of Nature, an Evil Diſpoſition, an Averſion to all Good; it not only cauſes Guilt in our Perſons, but Filth in our Natures.

3. We make *Adam*'s Sin our own by Imitation, by treading in the Steps of his Diſobedience. Every Sin we commit, in defiance of the Threatnings of God, is a juſtifying of *Adam*'s Rebellion againſt God, and accordingly, we die by our own Folly, as well as by our Fall. Our Deſtruction is of ourſelves, by our actual Rebellions, and we ſhall, at the great Day, charge our Sin and Miſery, not on God, on Satan, on Inſtruments, on our firſt Parents, but on ourſelves.

The Apoſtle farther aſſerts, that it is evident all have ſinned, becauſe Sin was always in the World; not only after giving the Law by *Moſes*, but alſo before, even from the Beginning of the World to that Time. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, There was certainly a Law given, before a Law written; a Law given to *Adam*, before a Law written by *Moſes*; now this was either the Law of Nature written in *Adam*'s Heart, or the poſitive Law of God given to *Adam*; againſt which Law Men were capable of offending, before the Law of *Moſes* was written; otherwiſe Sin would not have been imputed to them; for Sin is not imputed where there is no Law.

That Sin was in the World before the written Law of *Moſes*, the Apoſtle proves thus; Death, the Wages of Sin, reigned in the World, and had Power over all Mankind, from *Adam* to *Moſes*; therefore Sin was in the World from *Adam* to *Moſes*: *By them that have not ſinned after the Similitude of* Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion*; Infants are here generally underſtood; the Guilt of *Adam*'s Sin is imputed to them, elſe Death could have no Power over them. The Argument runs thus: Death is a Puniſhment of Sins; but Infants die who never ſinned actually, therefore they die for *Adam*'s Sin. Sin brought Mortality into their Nature, and the Wages of Sin is Death; they brought a ſinful Nature into the World, which God intimated to the *Jews*, by appointing the Sacrament of Circumciſion, ſignifying, that Infants brought ſomething into the World, which was early to be cut off: He alſo ſignifies the ſame to us *Chriſtians*, by appointing the Ordinance of Baptiſm for Children, which he calls the Laver of Regeneration; now a Laver ſuppoſes Uncleanneſs; what is Pure needs no Laver.

Q. *In what did* Adam *reſemble* Chriſt?

A. The Apoſtle next enters on a Compariſon betwixt *Adam* and *Chriſt*, whom he here calls a Figure, or Reſemblance of him that was to come, that is, *Chriſt*. As *Adam* was the Root of Sin and Death to all his natural Seed, ſo *Chriſt* is the Root of Holineſs and Life to all his ſpiritual Seed. As by the firſt *Adam*, Sin, and by Sin, Death came upon all Men, ſo by the ſecond *Adam* came Righteouſneſs, and by Righteouſneſs Life to all Believers. As the firſt *Adam* merited Death, ſo the ſecond *Adam* Life for all his Offspring; *This* Adam *was the Figure of him that was to come.*

In the next Place, the Apoſtle ſhews the Diſparity and Difference between *Chriſt* and *Adam*. 1. He compares the Sin of *Adam* with the Obedience of *Chriſt*; and ſhews, that the Sin of the one was not ſo pernicious, as the Obedience of the other was beneficial: *Chriſt*'s Obedience being more efficacious to Juſtification and Salvation, than *Adam*'s Sin was to Death and Condemnation; for if the Tranſgreſſion of *Adam*, a mere Man, was able to pull down Death and Wrath on all his natural Seed; then the Obedience of *Chriſt*, who is God as well as Man, will be much more available, to procure Pardon and Life to all his ſpiritual Seed.

Another Difference betwixt *Adam* and *Chriſt*, is, with regard to the Extenſiveneſs of their reſpective Acts. *Adam*, by one Act, brought Death; that is, the Sentence of Death upon the World: But it is many Sins of Men that *Chriſt* delivers from, in the free Gift of our Juſtification.

Another Difference betwixt the firſt and ſecond *Adam*, is, in reſpect of the Effects and Conſequences of their Acts; if by Means of one Man, and by one Offence of that Man, the whole Race of Mankind became ſubject to Death, then much more ſhall they who are redeemed by *Jeſus Chriſt*, be made Partakers of everlaſting Life, wherein they ſhall reign with him in Glory.

Q. *What Concluſion is to be drawn from the Apoſtle's Argument?*

A. From theſe Premiſes the Apoſtle concludes, that, as by one *Adam*'s Offence, Death, *verſe* 12. and 16. Sentence came on all Offenders, that is, upon all the mere Sons of *Adam*, to Condemnation; ſo by the Righteouſneſs of one, God's Gift of Mercy in *Chriſt*, *verſe* 17. is come on all Men, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, to Juſtification, that is, to the accepting them as Juſt (though formerly they lived in never ſo ſinful a Courſe) if they imitate the Righteouſneſs of *Chriſt*, by ſincere Renovation.

For, as by *Adam*'s one Act of eating the forbidden Fruit, againſt which Death was threatned, all his Poſterity, as ſuch, and (much more) all that ſinned in any other kind, that is, all mere Men in the World, were ſubjected to that Puniſhment, Death, which then was pronounced only for the eating of that; ſo *Chriſt*'s having performed an exact perfect Obedience, and then ſuffered Death in our ſtead, or to make Satiſfaction for us, all Men, even the *Gentiles* themſelves, that ſhall come into *Chriſt*, and perform a ſincere faithful Obedience to him, ſhall be juſtified (though they be not perfectly juſt) and accepted by him.

Q. *Of what Uſe is the Law under the Goſpel?*

A. As for the Law (that was given by *Moſes*) that came in by the by, as it were, to give Men the more clear convincing Knowledge of Duty and Sin; and ſo though it were not deſigned for that

End, yet by Conſequence it became a Means to aggravate and enhance it, to render it more exceeding criminal, by being againſt a promulgate Law; and that again is a Means of making the Mercy now in the Goſpel to be a far greater Mercy to the *Jews*, to whom *Chriſt* and the Goſpel were firſt ſent.

That, as we viſibly ſee the great Power and Authority of Sins over Men, by the Puniſhment it hath brought on them, as is evident by Death's ſeizing on all; ſo it may be as viſible, what a royal illuſtrious Power there is in the Mercy of *Chriſt* over Sin, in reſpect of this new Way of Juſtification by *Chriſt*, even to take away all its condemning and reigning Power from it, by granting Pardon and Forgiveneſs of, and Victory over it, thro' *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord, and all this to the *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*.

CHAP. VI.

Sanctification by Faith in Chriſt; *Death and Reſurrection; and our Baptiſm in his Death, and Likeneſs to him in his Reſurrection. Death to Sin, and Life to God. Death the Wages of Sin; Eternal Life the End of Holineſs, through the Grace of* Chriſt.

Q. WHAT *are the Doctrines particularly inculcated in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter begins with an Objection that ſome licentious Perſons might be apt to make to the Doctrine of Pardoning-Grace and Mercy: If, ſay they, the Riches of Grace be thus manifeſted in the Pardon of Sin, then let us take the more Liberty to ſin, becauſe Grace ſo exceedingly abounds in the Pardon of it. Such an Inference the Apoſtle rejects with Deteſtation and Abhorrence; *God forbid*, &c. As if he had ſaid, O vile Abuſe of the moſt excellent Thing in the World! What! did *Chriſt* ſhed his Blood to expiate our Guilt! And ſhall we make that a Plea to add to our Guilt? *God forbid!*

Obſerve the Confutation of this bold and impudent Aſſertion! *How ſhall we that are dead to Sin, live any longer therein?* Dead to Sin, that is, by our baptiſmal Engagement, Vow, and Obligation; every *Chriſtian*, on his firſt Entrance into his Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*, takes upon himſelf a ſolemn Vow to die to Sin, and to live no longer therein.

Hence learn, That to take any Encouragement to live in Sin, from the Conſideration of God's rich Mercy and free Grace towards Sinners, is an abſurd, abominable, and blaſphemous Impiety, contrary to all Ingenuity, Gratitude, and Love, both to God the Father, and our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* his Son.

Q. *How are we* baptized into *Chriſt*, ver. 3?

A. It is by Baptiſm we take the Name of *Chriſt* upon us, to be incorporated, ingrafted, and implanted into the Church of *Chriſt*, and to be made myſtical Members of his Body; it imports our being conformed to him in the Likeneſs of his Death; our being engaged to die unto Sin, as *Chriſt* died for Sin.

The Death of *Chriſt* was a lively Repreſentation of the Death of Sin; his Death was Painful, Shameful, and Accurſed; and ſuch a Death muſt Sin die in us. Was his Death for Sin free and voluntary? So muſt we die to Sin. Was his Death an univerſal Crucifixion? Did no Life, Senſe, or Motion remain in him? Thus muſt we mortify every known Sin in us, which occaſioned his dying. Did *Chriſt* die and riſe again, never to die more? So muſt we die unto Sin, and walk in Newneſs of Life. Thus it is the indiſpenſible Duty of all *Chriſtians* to tranſcribe the Copy of *Chriſt*'s Death in their Hearts and Lives.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle apply this Compariſon of the Death of* Chriſt, *and the Death of Sin?*

A. To urge *Chriſtians* to farther Degrees of Mortification to Sin, the Apoſtle draws an Argument from our Baptiſm; *we are buried with him, by Baptiſm, unto Death.* The Apoſtle alludes, no doubt, to the Manner of Baptiſm in thoſe hot Countries, which was Immerſion, or putting them under Water, and raiſing them again out of it; which Rite had alſo a myſtical Signification, and repreſented the Burial of our old Man, Sin, in us, and our Reſurrection to Newneſs of Life. Burial implies a continuing under Death; thus is Mortification a continuing Act, a daily dying unto Sin; and riſing again ſuppoſes an Exemption from the Power of Death.

Q. *What other Argument does the Apoſtle uſe, to perſuade us to mortify Sin?*

A. Another forcible Argument to induce us to mortify Sin, and walk in Newneſs of Life, is drawn from the Reſurrection of *Chriſt*; *as he was raiſed from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, ſo ſhould we alſo walk in Newneſs of Life. Chriſt*'s Reſurrection is both a Pattern and a Pledge of our Reſurrection; a Pattern to which we are to conform in our riſing from the Grave of Sin: Did *Chriſt* riſe early and ſpeedily? So ſhould we, in the Morning of our Youth; he roſe voluntary and cheerfully, ſo ſhould we, rejoicing at our ſpiritual Liberty, and Freedom from Sin's Bondage and Thraldom; he roſe with a Reſolution never to die more; ſo ſhould we ariſe with Deſires and Endeavours that ſpiritual Death may no more have Dominion over us. And if *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection be thus a Pattern of our Reſurrection now, it will be a Pledge of a bleſſed Reſurrection at the laſt Day.

Q. *Pray what is this* New Life, *which the Apoſtle ſo earneſtly perſuades us to enter into?*

A. A new Life is recommended to us from the Properties of it; it is the moſt noble, the moſt delectable, profitable, holy and heavenly Life; holy in its Principle and Motive, in its Aim and End, in its Rule and Actings. In a Word, Newneſs of Life is a Preparation for, and an Introduction into eternal Life, and therefore muſt be a Dife moſt excellent; for it is a Life from, and laid down for God, it is even the Life which God himſelf lives; and none muſt expect to live with him in Heaven hereafter, who doth not walk in Newneſs of Life here; but if we live a Life unto Holineſs, our End will be everlaſting Life.

Q. *What other Uſe does the Apoſtle make of the Figure of Baptiſm into the Death of* Chriſt?

A. St. Paul makes a Suppoſition, *If we have been planted together in the Likeneſs of his Death*; namely, his dying unto Sin: If as *Chriſt* died, we die, he a natural, we a ſpiritual Death; he for Sin, and we to Sin; we, by Way of Mortification, killing and crucifying of Sin.

The Inference he draws from the foregoing Propoſition, is, *If we have been planted together in the Likeneſs of his Death, we ſhall be alſo in the*

Likeneſs of his Reſurrection; that is, we are under an Obligation to imitate his Reſurrection, by riſing from the Death of Sin, unto Newneſs of Life.

If we have been planted together, &c. As the Graft lives, grows, and fructifies by the Juice drawn from the Stock into which it is planted; ſo *Chriſtians* being taken out of the old rotten Stock (*degenerate Adam*) and planted into the noble Stock (*Chriſt Jeſus*) are by a Virtue derived from him, raiſed to a Newneſs of Life, in whom they are ingrafted.

Q. *What is meant by the* Old Man, *ver.* 6?

A. By the *old Man*, underſtand our corrupt and depraved Nature, ſo called, becauſe it is as old as *Adam*, and derived from him, and born and bred with us. This old Man, or our corrupt and vicious Nature, muſt be crucified, to ſhew our Conformity and Likeneſs to *Chriſt*'s Crucifixion. The Croſs brings Pain, Shame and Death; the like muſt Sin undergo in the work of Mortification.

Q. *What is that which the the Apoſtle calls the* Body of Sin, *in the ſame Verſe?*

A. By the *Body of Sin*, underſtand the whole Stock and Maſs of Corruption, compacted as it were into one monſtrous Body, prepared with all its Members to commit actual Sins. Called a Body, becauſe compoſed of many ſinful Luſts and Paſſions, as the Body is of many Members, and alſo becauſe they are acted by the Body; this Body of Sin we muſt endeavour to kill and deſtroy. *That henceforth we may not ſerve Sin*; that is, that we ſhould renounce the Service of, and all Relation to Sin.

For as a Man truly dead, is freed from the Authority of all thoſe that in his life Time had Power over him; ſo he that is dead in Sin (in this figurative Senſe) is freed from the Power of Sin acting formerly in him, and conſequently he that hath, by being baptized into *Chriſt*, ſo far undertaken to accompany *Chriſt* in his Death, as really to die unto Sin, muſt demonſtrate himſelf to be really freed from the Power of it, muſt not permit it to live in him, that is, himſelf to be actuated by it, or elſe he doth quite contrary to his Undertaking.

And we ſincerely perform our Part in this, if we imitate *Chriſt* in his Death, that is, die to Sin, forſake and never return to it again; then we muſt alſo remember, that it is another Part of our Chriſtian Faith, and Undertaking of our Baptiſm, to imitate *Chriſt* in his Reſurrection, to riſe to new and holy, and godly Lives, and then we have Grounds of believing, that we ſhall live together with him, or after his Example, have a joyful Reſurrection to eternal Life. But upon no other Terms but theſe, do we expect to receive any Good from *Chriſt*.

This being it for which we have a Copy in *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection alſo, as well as his Death, namely, ſo to riſe to new Life, as never to return to our old Sins again; as his was a Reſurrection that inſtated him in an eternal Life, never to come under the Power of Death again.

For, as when he died for our Sins, he died once, never to undergo that Death again, but when he roſe from Death he was immediately inſtated, not into one ſingle act of Life (ſo only, as it might be ſaid, he was once alive after Death) but no more; but into an immortal endleſs Life, a Life co-immortal with the Father, God eternal; ſo muſt we, after that double Example of his Death and Reſurrection, account ourſelves obliged by our Baptiſm, (which accordingly is not wont to be reiterated) ſo to die, to forſake Sin, as that we need never die any more, die one final Death, never to reſume our former Courſes again; and on the other ſide, for our new Chriſtian life, to take care, that that be eternal, no more to return to our Sins again, than we think *Chriſt* or God can die again, but perſevere in all righteous and godly Living, according to the Example and Precept of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who died and roſe again on Purpoſe to raiſe us up to this new kind of Life, never to die again.

Q. *In the* 12*th Verſe, St.* Paul *admoniſhes the* Romans, not to let Sin reign in their mortal Bodies: *But when is Sin ſaid to reign?*

A. Then when the Tendency of the Heart is towards Sin, and all the Faculties of the Soul are on Sin's Side, and wholly take up its Part; when it is not at all, or but ſlightly oppoſed, when it's committed induſtriouſly, and Temptations to it eaſily prevail.

Q. *But why does the Apoſtle ſay, Let not Sin* reign in your Body, *rather than* in your Soul?

A. Becauſe Sin and Luſts do exceedingly gratify the Body, that is, the ſenſual Appetites, the brutiſh part of Man; and becauſe they are perpetrated by the Body, or outward Man, called therefore *the Deeds of the Body.*

Q. *But why is it called* a mortal Body?

A. To remind us, that the Mortality of our Bodies, is the Fruit of the Puniſhment of our Sins. Alſo, to ſhew us the Vanity and Tranſitorineſs of the delights of Sin, that gratify a Body, which after all its Pamperings, muſt periſh. And likewiſe to ſhew, that our Conflict with Sin ſhall endure but a little while; e're long this Mortal ſhall put on Immortality.

Hence learn, that Sin, as a commanding King, has the Sinner's Heart for its Throne; the Members of the Body for its Servants; the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil for its grand Council; Luſts and Temptations for its Weapons and Armory, and its chief Fortifications are Ignorance and Senſuality, and fleſhly Reaſonings.

Q. *Give a ſhort View of the Apoſtle's Argument to prove the reigning Power of Sin in us?*

A. The Apoſtle purſues his Reaſoning thus; Sin, which has ſuch a regal and commanding Power, will be calling upon you to give up the Members of your Bodies, and the Faculties of your Souls as Inſtruments or Weapons for its Service: But conſent not, nor turn a deaf Ear to the Voice of Sin, and hearken to the call of God, who commands you to yield your Bodies unto him, and your Members as Inſtruments for his Service.

Here are two oppoſite Maſters, God and Sin; the one a Tyrant and Uſurper, the other a rightful Lord and Maſter; here are alſo two oppoſite Employments, Unrighteouſneſs, by which it means all Sin, whereby we deal unrighteouſly with God, our Neighbour, and ourſelves; and Righteouſneſs, whereby we give to God, to others, and ourſelves the reſpective Dues. Now the Apoſtle calls loudly upon us to render to God the Things that are God's; to yield every Member of the Body to him, and employ it for him; for the Members of the Body were all created by him and redeemed for him, and ſhall be glorified by him.

The Apoſtle proceeds, ver. 14. to an Encouragement, and reaſons thus; it were the vileſt Thing in the World for Sin to have Dominion over you, who are now no longer under the weak inefficacious Pædagogy of the Law (which could only forbid Sin, and denounce Judgment, but never yield any Man that hope of Mercy on Amendment, which is neceſſary to the working a Reformation in him, or checking any Sin that Men are tempted to) but under a Kingdom of Grace, where there is Pardon for Sin upon Repentance, and Strength from Heaven to repent, and ſo no Want of Ability or Encouragement to amend our Lives.

From hence again ſome carnal Men are ready to collect Matter of Security in Sin: For, ſay they, if now under the Goſpel there be Pardon allowed for Sin, and not Condemnation (as it was under the Law) for every wilful Sin we have committed, why may we not ſecurely ſin? This is a moſt unreaſonable Concluſion, and Wreſting of this Doctrine very different from the Truth of it; which is, that this Pardon for Sin belongs not to them that ſecurely go on in Sin, but only to the Penitent, and is offer'd to Men that are Sinners, on purpoſe, that in hope of Pardon upon returning, they may timely do ſo, and not that they may the longer continue in their Courſe, which is the moſt abhorr'd Uſe of God's Mercy imaginable.

Q. *Pray explain theſe Words,* Whom ye obey, his Servants ye are, *v.* 16?

The Maſter we ſerve, *Chriſt* or Satan, may infallibly be known by enquiring whoſe Commands we obey.

The Apoſtle farther intimates, that every Perſon or Servant ſhall receive a Reward ſuitable to the Maſter he ſerveth, and proportionable to the Work he does. If Satan be our Maſter, Sin is our Work, and Death our Wages; if we be the Servants of God, Obedience will be our Work, and eternal Life our Reward; a Reward of Mercy, not of Merit; of Grace, not of Debt.

But, adds the Apoſtle, 'tis a great Mercy of God to you (*Romans*) that having been formerly the Servants of Sin, having lived and gone on ſo long in the Courſe of Sin, ye have now cordially obey'd that Summons of Chriſtian Doctrine, to the Belief and Practice of which ye were deliver'd up, and ſolemnly conſecrated in your Baptiſm.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle apply his Arguments to the Inſtruction of the* Romans?

A. He reminds the *Romans* of their paſt State by Nature, and of their preſent State by Grace; they were once the Servants of Sin, but now free from Sin, and made by *Chriſt* Servants of Righteouſneſs; all Believers are made free by *Chriſt* for Service, not one free from ſerving; to be free to ſerve, is infinitely better than to be free from Service; ſuch as are by *Chriſt* freed from ſinful Servitude, are beſt fitted for, and moſt obliged to ſpiritual Service.

But the Apoſtle does not barely urge the Neceſſity of ſerving *Chriſt* in our regenerate State, but enforces the Proportion which our Service now ought to bear to the Diſſervice formerly done in our carnal State; *As ye have yielded your Members Servants to Iniquity, even ſo now, yield your Members Servants to Righteouſneſs.*

Q. *But how do we apply this to our Uſe and Inſtruction?*

A. How gracious is the Condeſcenſion of *Chriſt*, to accept thoſe Members of ours as Inſtruments of his Service, which have been employ'd in the Devil's Drudgery! We might rather have expected that *Chriſt* ſhould have ſaid, Vile Wretch! Has Satan had the Uſe and Service of this Body and all its Members from thy Childhood and Youth unto this Day; has thy Will been his Throne, thy Memory his Storehouſe, and all thy Members as Tools and Inſtruments to Sin againſt me? Thou didſt indeed dedicate all theſe to my Service and Glory in thy Baptiſm; but thou haſt employ'd all theſe in Satan's Service for many Years; however, if now thou art willing to yield thoſe very Members unto Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, which were formerly Servants to Uncleanneſs, I will both accept them, and reward thee for them.

Q. *What other Exhortation does the Apoſtle give them?*

A. The Apoſtle further urges Exhortation to Believers to yield themſelves wholly to Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, from the Conſideration that when they were the Servants of Sin they were utterly void of all Righteouſneſs, and therefore, Sin ſhould not have one jot of their Service now; which will appear the more reaſonable, if we conſider the great and good Maſter whom we now ſerve, the Nature of our preſent Work, the Certainty and Tranſcendency of our future Reward, the Obligations we lie under as Creatures, as new Creatures, by the Law of Creation, by the Favour of Redemption, by the Promiſe and Hopes of Glorification; all this ſhould engage us to the Love and Practice of univerſal Holineſs.

And this, O ye *Romans*, and all you that are Profeſſors of the Name of *Chriſt*, will be much more reaſonable, if ye conſider the Nature of your former Sins, in your own Experience of them, how little Fruit, or Benefit, or Satisfaction they brought you at the very Time of enjoying them, and how nothing but Shame at the preſent Remembrance of them, and how certain the Concluſion is, that they will bring Death upon you, whereas the ſerving of *Chriſt* on the other Side will be Matter of Joy and Pleaſure at preſent; Matter of Comfort and Confidence hereafter, and will bring Salvation at the End.

But now having given over the Service of Sin (vowed your ſelves never to go on in that Courſe) and undertaken the Service of God, bring forth Fruit, ſuch as by which Sanctification may daily increaſe in you, and as may reap, for its own Crown, eternal Life.

For according to the Law, and ſo ſtill to every Impenitent, the Reward or Payment of every deliberate Sin, all that it brings in to him by way of Stipend, is Death; but the Mercy that is in the Goſpel reach'd out to all Penitents, is eternal Life, as it is now purchaſed and contrived, by what *Chriſt Jeſus* our Lord hath done and ſuffer'd for us in the Goſpel.

CHAP. VII.

No Law has power over us any longer than we live; but a Wife is free from the Dominion of her dead Husband. We are dead to the Law, and married to Chriſt. *The Law is not Sin, but diſcovers it; and is holy, juſt, and good; but through our Corruption works Sin and Death. The Combat between*

between Fleſh and Spirit. He gives Thanks to God for the Deliverance already obtained.

Q. I*N what Manner does the Apoſtle treat of the Law in this Chapter?*

A. St. *Paul*, in the beginning of this Chapter, addreſſes the Chriſtian *Jews* at *Rome* after this manner: You *Jews*, who ſtudy the Law, and are well acquainted with it, cannot but know that the Law of God hath power over a Man, to require of him exact, perfect, and perpetual Obedience, and to accuſe, and bind him over to the Curſe for the leaſt Breach and Violation of it; and this as long as he lives under the Law, and is not freed from the Malediction of it by Faith in *Chriſt*. But bleſſed be God we are by *Chriſt* freed from, and dead to the Law as a Covenant of Life; but we are under it, and we may all our Days ſit under the Shadow of it with great delight, as an *eternal Rule of holy living.*

Q. *How does he prove, that Believers are exempted from the Law?*

A. That Believers are freed from the Law, the Apoſtle exemplifies and illuſtrates, by a Similitude taken from the Law of Marriage; as Death frees the Husband and Wife from the Law which bound them to each other, and impowers the Survivor to marry another Perſon; ſo the Death of *Chriſt* was the Death of the Law as a Covenant of Works holding us under the Bond of the Curſe of it, and by his dying gave us a Manumiſſion or Freedom from that Bond, and a Capacity of Eſpouſal unto *Chriſt*; that ſo living in conjugal Affection and Obedience to him, we may be fruitful by his Spirit, doing ſuch Things as are agreeable to the Will of God, and tending to his Glory; *Ye are dead to the Law by the Body of* Chriſt; that is, through the Offering up of *Chriſt's* Body upon the Croſs.

Q. *Since then Believers are exempted from the Penalties of the* Moſaic *Law, are they ſubject to no other?*

A. Tho' Believers are free from the Rigour and Curſe of the Law by the Death of *Chriſt*, yet have they not an uncontroulable Liberty, but are ſtil under Government, under an Head and Guide. As a Wife is under Government of her Husband, ſo are Believers under the Guidance and Government of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who in a ſpecial Manner guides them by his Word and Spirit; and their being ſaid to be dead to the Law, ſignifies no more than the Law's not having Dominion over them, in regard of the Curſe and Condemnation of it.

For, adds the Apoſtle, when we lived under the Diſpenſation of the Law, and were married to the Law, we brought forth Fruit ſuitable to that State and Condition. But now being freed from the Law, and married unto *Chriſt*, it is but juſt, we ſhould bring forth Fruit anſwerable to our moſt excellent State and Condition; that now we ſerve God with new Hearts and Lives by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, according to the Law of Grace, and not carnally in the Bondage and Terror of the old Law, called here *the Oldneſs of the Letter*, written of old by God's Appointment.

And whereas the *Newneſs of the Spirit* is oppoſed to the *Oldneſs of the Letter*; that is, the Miniſtry of the Law, which of itſelf is a dead Letter, diſcovering Sin, but not diſcovering how Sin may be either pardoned or ſubdued, we may gather that the Law of God, and indeed the whole Word of God, without the Spirit, is unable to work Grace and Holineſs in us, or to excite and quicken us to a Newneſs of Life.

Q. *May it not be concluded from St.* Paul's *Manner of reaſoning, v. 5. that the Law was the Cauſe of Sin?*

A. The Apoſtle had affirm'd, verſe 5, that *the Motions of Sin were ſtirred up by the Law*. If ſo, ſome will object, then the Law may ſeem to be the Cauſe of Sin. *God forbid*, ſays the Apoſtle. The thought of ſuch a Concluſion ought to be abhorred; and to confute ſuch a wicked Notion he adds, *I had not known Sin but by the Law*. As if he had ſaid, that which forbids Sin, diſcovers and condemns Sin, cannot be the Cauſe of Sin; but ſo does the holy Law of God; it makes Sin manifeſt in and to the Conſcience of a Sinner, therefore the Law is not Sin, no Exciter to it, nor Cauſe of it. The Light of Nature ſhews a Difference between Good and Evil; but the Law of God preſents Sin as the Evil of Evils.

To illuſtrate this, the Apoſtle gives a particular Inſtance in himſelf, that he *had not known Luſt, except the Law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet*; that is, he ſhould not have underſtood that the firſt irregular Motions of the Heart, the firſt Inclination and Deſires of the Soul towards Sin, (tho' not conſented to by the Will) were Evil, had he not by a more attentive Conſideration of the tenth Commandment found that they were ſo.

Obſerve next a Conceſſion or Grant made by the Apoſtle, that altho' the Law was not the formal Cauſe of Sin, that yet Sin was an accidental Event of the Law, through the Depravity and Corruption of our Nature. Luſt or Concupiſcence in us ſtirred up more ſtrongly, and breaking forth more violently in us, by being prohibited and reſtrained by the Law; as the more you damm up a Torrent, the higher it ſwells; and conſequently, it is not from ourſelves, but from God's reſtraining Grace, that thoſe evil Inclinations in our Hearts do not break forth in our Lives.

Q. *What was the proper Uſe of the Law?*

A. St. *Paul* ſays *without the Law, Sin was dead*; that is, without the Knowledge and due Conſideration of the Law, Sin is comparatively dead; that is, the Corruption of Nature lies hid, and is not ſo much as known to be Sin; nor had it ſo much Power to terrify the Conſcience, and ſtir up inordinate Affections, as after the Law is known and duly conſidered. Sin in the Conſcience, is like a Lion aſleep in his Den, it awakes not, terrifies not, and accuſes not, till the Law of God rouzes it, and then the Sinner ſees himſelf under the Curſe, and liable to Perdition.

For (continues the Apoſtle) *I was alive without the Law once*; when I liv'd a *Phariſee*, and had the Law in my Hand, but did not conſider in my Heart what Exactneſs and Perfection it required of me; I contented myſelf with an external Obſervation of it, and concluded my State to be very good and ſafe; but when I came rightly to underſtand the Law, and Word of God, and to be convinced by it, that the inward Luſtings and inordinate Deſires of the Heart were Sins, then I found myſelf a guilty Creature, obnoxious to Wrath, and in a State of Death.

I was alive once; by which underſtand a Livelineſs, Confidence, Aſſuarnce of his good Eſtate and Condition, before his Converſion he was full of vain Hope, ſalſe Joy, and preſumptuous Confidence; and this is the natural Diſpoſition of all unregenerate Perſons.

When the Commandment came, I died. Death here is oppoſite to Life before, and denotes the Sorrows, Fears, and Tremblings that ſeiz'd his Soul when he was convinc'd of the Badneſs of his Condition; it ſtabb'd all his carnal Mirth, Joy, and Jollity, to the very Heart; *I died.*

The Cauſe of this wonderful Alteration in the Apoſtle's Judgment was, the Commandment or Law of God; *when the Commandment came*; that is, cloſe and home to my Heart and Conſcience, with a divine Efficacy. The Commandment was come before to him in the way of Promulgation, and he had the literal Knowledge of it; but now it came in the convincing Power and ſpiritual Application of it. Accordingly *Sin revived*, the Senſe of Sin was more lively imprinted upon his Soul, and now he died, all his vain Hopes gave up the Ghoſt, and Sin and Guilt ſtared in the Face of his Conſcience.

Farther; the natural End and Uſe of the Law of God is declared, *it was ordained unto Life*; that is, it was given for a Rule of Life, and promiſed eternal Salvation to the perfect fulfilling of it. But no Man ſince the Fall being able perfectle to fulfil the Law in his own Perſon, can be juſtified by the Law in the Sight of God. However, the proper End for which the Law was ordained, was to give Life to them that ſhould perfectly keep it.

Here note, the contrary Uſe the Apoſtle found the Law to be of, with reference to himſelf; what *was ordained to Life, he found to be unto Death*; that is, through his own Corruption and Tranſgreſſion it became an Occaſion of Death to him, by binding him over to Puniſhment, and rendring him obnoxious to the Law of God. Thus the Word of God, which he ordained to bring Men to Life and Salvation, is found to ſome the Savour of Death unto Death; but the Fault is not in the Word, but in themſelves.

For which Operation of the Law the Apoſtle gives this Reaſon: Sin, or the Corruption of my Heart and Nature, being ſtirred up by the Commandment which forbids Luſt, and condemns it, enticed, perſuaded, and prevailed over me, to yield to the Luſts of my own Heart, and then condemned, and ſlew me for yielding to them.

See here the genuine and true Nature of Sin; it firſt deceives and then deſtroys. Sin beſots the Creature, and renders it injudicious. It befools and deceives us, pollutes and defiles, bebaſes and degrades us, and without Repentance, damns and deſtroys us.

Obſerve the Care and holy Caution the Apoſtle uſes to vindicate and clear the Law of God; he charges his Guilt not on the Commandment, but Corruption of his own Heart, which took Occaſion to be ſtirring up Sin in him, and by the Commandment ſlew him; affirming nevertheleſs, that the Law of God in itſelf, and in its own Nature, is holy, juſt, and good.

Q. *Seeing the Law was holy, juſt, and good, how comes it to be unto Death?* Was that which was good, made Death unto me?

A. To this he replies both by Way of Negation, *God forbid*; for to find Fault with the Law, is to find Fault with God himſelf; and alſo by Way of Affirmation, aſſerting that Sin is the true Cauſe of Death. The Commandment indeed condemns, or is Death to the Sinner, yet not of itſelf, but becauſe of Sin; as we ſay of a condemned Malefactor, it is not the Judge, but the Law condemns him; or, ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is not the Law, but his own Guilt that condemns him; the Judge is but the Mouth of the Law to denounce the Sentence that Guilt deſerves. And hereby Sin appears to be, what it really is, exceeding ſinful.

Hence it follows, that Sin is therefore exceedingly, unmeaſurably ſinful, poiſonous and pernicious, becauſe it kills Men by that which is good, namely, the Law. That which was appointed for Life, becomes the Occaſion of Death.

Q. *What other Properties had the Law?*

A. The Apoſtle aſſerts the Purity and Spirituality of the Law of God; *the Law is ſpiritual*; in the Author of it, God; in the Matter of it, requiring ſpiritual Obedience, and perfect Purity, both of Heart and Life. Hence ſome derive the Word which we tranſlate Law, from a Root ſignifying to behold and conſider, to contemplate and look about; intimating thereby, that the holy and ſpiritual Law of God is diligently to be obſerved and conſidered, looked into, and meditated upon.

But I am carnal: Sin having a Regency and Donion over me; acting in a willing, ready, and full Subjection to Sin, and Compliance with it, and under the Power and unbroken Strength of carnal Luſts and ſenſual Propenſities.

I am carnal, may alſo a regenerate Perſon truly ſay, 1. With Reſpect to that exact Purity and Spirituality both of Heart and Life, which the holy Law of God requires. 2. A regenerate Perſon may truly ſay he is carnal, that is, in Part ſo, having too much Carnality in his Affections, and carnal Infirmities cleaving to him. But does the Believer groan under the Burden of in-dwelling Corruption? Know, that the whole ſpiritual Creation groaneth and travelleth in Pain together with thee until now: But bleſſed be God for the Hopes of a Deliverance.

Sold under Sin. This Phraſe is borrowed from Bondmen or Captives, ſome of whom are ſold, others ſell themſelves into Captivity. The unregenerate Man, with *Ahab*, ſells himſelf to work Wickedneſs. It denotes Wilfulneſs and Obſtinacy.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle prove the prevalent Power of Sin?*

A. In the following Manner, that is, that it held him under the Power of Sin unwillingly, becauſe he did not allow or approve of any Evil which he did contrary to the holy Law of God, but was diſpleaſed with it, and with himſelf for it.

How readily the Apoſtle conſents to the Equity and Holineſs of God's Law? *I conſent to the Law, that it is good*; he aſſented to it in his Judgment, ſubmits to it with his Will; and clave to it with his inward Affections. So far as a Perſon is regenerate, his Heart correſponds with God's Law.

Q. *But may not unregenerate Perſons conſent in their Judgments to the Law of God, own it to be good, and approve it to be holy?*

A. They may in their Judgments approve, yet not in their Hearts like or love the Law of God; they commend it, at the ſame Time they reject it.

Note, the Apoſtle diſclaims, though not diſowns, the Evil done by him; *It is no more I, but Sin that that dwelleth in me.* My corrupt Affections ſometimes overpower me againſt the Approbation of my Judgment, and the Inclination of my Will. *But it is not I,* according to my better Part from which I am denominated, *but Sin dwelling in me.* Thus, if we diſclaim the Evil we do, as contrary to the habitual Frame and Diſpoſition of our Hearts, and the deliberate Purpoſe of our Will, Almighty God will not condemn us for our Failings, but mercifully diſtinguiſh between the Weakneſs of the Fleſh, and the Willingneſs of the Spirit; between us, and Sin that dwelleth in us.

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words,* I know that in me, *that is my Fleſh,* dwelleth no good Thing, *Ver.* 18.

A. That is, in my corrupt and unregenerate Nature is nothing truly and ſpiritually good. This he confirms by adding, *To will is preſent with me;* I deſire that which is good, but find not Ability to perform it. A real *Chriſtian* is continually labouring after that which he knows he ſhall not in this Life attain to, namely, Perfection in Grace: In Heaven we ſhall have no Occaſion to complain, that how to *perform that which is good I find not.*

I find then (continues the Apoſtle) *a Law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* I find Sin, having an impelling Power and impulſive Virtue in it, like a Law in my Members, thwarting the Inclinations of my Mind, and the Reſolutions of my Will.

For I Delight in the Law of God, after the inward Man. If by the inward Man we underſtand the Mind and Underſtanding only, then unregenerate Perſons may delight and ſatisfy themſelves with barely hearing the Word, and with a notional and ſpeculative Knowledge of their Duty: But this is no ſpiritual, no abiding Delight that ſuch Men take in the Law of God.

But if by the inward Man, was underſtood that which St. *Peter* calls the hidden Man of the Heart, and the New Man, the regenerate Part in Man, as being ſeated in the Powers and Faculties of the Soul; then to delight in the Law of God, is to love it for its Purity and Spirituality; becauſe it makes Holineſs our Duty. Thus *David* delighted to do the Will of God, becauſe the Law of God was within his Heart.

Q. *What were thoſe Laws which the Apoſtle found warring within him?*

A. The Apoſtle mentions four Laws that are contending one againſt another, whereof two are on one Side, and two on the other; namely, the Law of God, and the Law of the Mind; the Law of the Members, and the Law of Sin. By the Law of God is underſtood the Word of God; by the Law of the Mind in the Regenerate, is meant Grace in the Heart; in the Unregenerate, Right in the Conſcience; by the Law of the Members, original Luſt and Concupiſcence; by the Law of Sin, thoſe corrupt Principles according to which Luſt governs.

There is a Conflict, or Combat, between the Law of the Mind, and the Law of the Members; and this both in Regenerate and Unregenerate Perſons. This appears, 1. By the Teſtimony of Nature, ſpeaking in the *Heathen*; thus *Medea, I ſee and approve better Things, but follow worſe.* 2. By the Teſtimony of Scripture. Thus unregenerate *Herod*, had a Conflict between Luſt and Conſcience, *Mark* vi. 26. as had alſo *Pilate*, on occaſion of our Saviour's Death: Conſcience bid him ſpare, Popularity bid him kill. And even the Regenerate find the Fleſh luſting againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh, *Gal.* v. 37. 3. By the Teſtimony of Experience: Who finds not within himſelf, daily, a Conteſt of contrary Motions and Inclinations.

The Difference of the Conflict that is found in the regenerate and unregenerate Man, is this: 1. The Conflict in an unregenerate Perſon, is not between Grace and Sin, but betwixt one Luſt and another. Every Luſt is ambitious of Superiority, and uſurps a Regency in the Soul; ſo that though the Sinner oft changes his Maſter, yet not his Servitude. From which contrariety of Luſts, he is neceſſitated to oppoſe the Luſt he favours leſs, to gratify another he favours more. 2. As the ungenerate Man's Combat is between one Luſt and another, ſo it is only betwixt one Faculty and another. Thus Light in the Underſtanding, oppoſes Luſt in the Will. The Judgment and Conſcience of a Sinner ſays, Do not that abominable Thing which God hates. But then Luſt votes for it, and is angry with Conſcience for being ſo bold to oppoſe it. Whereas the Conflict in a regenerate Perſon is betwixt Grace and Sin, not betwixt Sin and Sin; not betwixt the Underſtanding and the Will, but betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate Part in the ſame Will. And although Grace be foil'd in a particular Combat, yet it keeps the Field, and the *Chriſtian* will not throw down his Weapons till he lays down his Life.

Q. *Laſtly, we have the Apoſtle's Complaint of the great Prevalence of in-dwelling Sin, and unſubdued Corruption that he found in himſelf: What does he mean by this?*

A. It is as if he had ſaid, O how am I wearied with continual Conflicts, and ſtriving with in-dwelling Sin? How do the Remains of unſubdued Sin, and (as yet) unmortified Corruption, affect and afflict me! Who will deliver me? When ſhall I enjoy Deliverance?

Yet, bleſſed be God, by the Grace and Strength of *Jeſus Chriſt*, Chap. vi. 23. there is a Way to get out of this curſed Eſtate; 1. Pardon to every penitent Sinner, which may encourage any to break off from this Eſtate of Sin. And, 2. Grace and Strength in *Chriſt*, to perform what God, in *Chriſt*, will accept; that is, ſincere, though not perfect Obedience (the Thing affirmed, *verſe* 6. and reſumed at the Beginning of *Chap.* viii.) ſo then the Concluſion of this Digreſſion, from *verſe* 7. to this Place, is, that the bare Knowledge of the Law of *Moſes* doth only direct the Underſtanding what is the Duty; which notwithſtanding the carnal Man, accuſtomed to his own ways of Sin, may think fit ſtill to go on in them, and ſo (though one and the ſame Perſon) doth two Things at once; with his Underſtanding he ſerveth the Law of God, is delighted and pleaſed with thoſe Things wherewith that is delighted, and yet, at the ſame Time, with the Fleſh, ſubmits to the Suggeſtions of his Conſcience, and the Law in it, and this is juſtly rewarded with Death, *Chap.* vi. 23.

CHAP. VIII.

The Apoſtle's Inference, that there is no Condemnation to thoſe who are in Chriſt, *who live according to the Spirit. Believers are united to* Chriſt; *are Sons of God, and joint Heirs with* Chriſt, *and alſo are glorified with him; which glorious Deliverance the whole Creation longeth for, and they* *themſelves have the Hope thereof. Hope deſcribed. The Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt in Prayer. The End of Believers, and all the Means thereto decreed by God. Our Glorying in God, through* Chriſt, *by whom we ſhall overcome all Things.*

Q. WHAT *general Obſervations do you make upon the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. Mr. *Burkit* obſerves of this Chapter, That it is a Summary of evangelical Duty, and a Magazine of *Chriſtian* Comfort: We cannot wiſh to be more Holy, than to do what is here enjoined, nor more Happy than to poſſeſs what is here promiſed. For Sublimity of Matter, for Variety of evangelical Truths, for admirable Support and Comfort to Believers, this Chapter is not inferior to any Part of the Holy Scriptures. Here the Believer's Union with *Chriſt*, and Exemption from Condemnation, the Spirit's Agency in freeing from the Dominion of Sin, the Law's Inability to juſtify and ſave, the Incarnation and Sanctification of *Chriſt*, are ſet forth and declared. In ſhort, the whole Chapter is conſolatory; there is a Vein of heavenly Comfort running through the whole Body of it. With this it begins, and with this it ends. It begins with no Condemnation to Believers, it ends with no Separation from the Love of God. Let the ſincere and ſerious *Chriſtian* ſtudy, weigh, digeſt, believe, and apply what is laid down in this Chapter, and let him walk dejectedly if he can.

Q. *What Application does the Apoſtle make of his Diſcourſe, in the foregoing Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle, in the fourth and ſixth Verſes of the laſt Chapter, having affirmed that there is no Obligation lying on a *Chriſtian*, to obſerve the Ceremonies of *Moſes*'s Law (from whence to the End of that Chapter he had made a Digreſſion to anſwer an Objection) now makes this Inference, that there is no Danger of Damnation to him for that Neglect, ſuppoſing that he forſakes thoſe carnal Sins that the circumciſed *Jews* yet indulged themſelves in, and performs the evangelical Obedience (in doing what the Mind, illuminated by *Chriſt*, directs us to) that inward true Purity (which that Circumciſion of the Fleſh was ſet to ſignify) that is now required, by *Chriſt*, under the Goſpel.

For the Goſpel, which deals not in commanding of carnal outward Performances, but of ſpiritual inward Purity, the Subſtance of thoſe legal Shadows, and that which was meant by them, and ſo is proper to quicken us to new Life, in and thro' the Grace and Aſſiſtance of *Chriſt*, who brought this new Law into the World, hath freed us *Chriſtians* from the Power and Captivity of Sin, and ſo alſo from Death, the Wages of Sin; from neither of which the Law of *Moſes* was able to deliver any Man.

Q. *The Apoſtle goes on; When Mankind could by no means be freed from Sin and Death, God ſent his own and only Son to be a Sacrifice for Sin, that our Liberty might be fully accompliſhed: What is the Doctrine he would inculcate from hence?*

A. Here is the Impotence and Weakneſs of the Law declared; there is ſomething which the Law cannot do, it cannot juſtify, nor ſave; becauſe it requires that which the fallen Creature can never perform, and cannot make Reparation for what the fallen Creature has done.

The Reaſon of the Law's Impotence and Weakneſs is aſſign'd; *it is weak through the Fleſh*; that is, through our weak and depraved Natures. Its Weakneſs doth not ariſe from itſelf, but from us. The Law retains its Power of commanding, but we have loſt the Power of obeying: None ever could keep the Law of God perfectly, but the firſt *Adam*; none ever did keep it perfectly, but the ſecond *Adam*.

Q. *Pray how was the Weakneſs of the Law ſupplied?*

A. The Method which the Wiſdom of God found out to relieve the Law's Impotence, and facilitate the fallen Sinner's Recovery, was, *he ſent his own Son in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, and for Sin condemned Sin in the Fleſh.* *Chriſt* was ſent, therefore he had a Being before his Incarnation; for that which was not, could not be ſent; he was ſent by the Father, therefore he was and is a Perſon, and a Perſon really diſtinct from the Father; the one ſends, and the other is ſent.

Q. *But what does God's ſending* Chriſt *imply?*

A. It implies his appointing and ordaining him before all Time, to the Work and Office of a Mediator; his qualifying and fitting him, in Time, for that great Work and Office; and his authoritative Injunction of him to take upon him our Nature, and, in that Nature, to make Satisfaction for our Sins.

Chriſt, God's own Son, was ſent in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh; not in the Likeneſs of Fleſh; it was real Fleſh that *Chriſt* aſſumed, not like unto ſinful Fleſh; he was dealt with and handled, treated and us'd, juſt as ſinful Men are; accus'd of Gluttony, Wine-bibbing, Sorcery, Blaſphemy, and what not; arraign'd, condemn'd, and executed, for an Impoſtor, Deceiver, Blaſphemer, and Breaker of the Law. Thus, though no Sinner, yet was he reputed a Sinner, and appeared in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh.

Q. *What was God's chief Deſign in ſending* Jeſus Chriſt *into the World?*

A. It was, through his Death, to condemn Sin; that is, to expiate and take away the Guilt of Sin, ſo that it ſhould never be charged on Believers, to their eternal Condemnation.

Another End and Cauſe for which God ſent his Son into World, was, to do what the Law commanded, as well as to ſuffer what it threatened, perfectly to fulfil the Righteouſneſs of the Law for us, which it was impoſſible for us to do for ourſelves; for the ſake of which we are accounted righteous in the Sight of God.

Q. *The Apoſtle declares a Difference of Perſons; namely, of thoſe that are after the Fleſh, and thoſe that are after the Spirit. Pray explain this Difference a little?*

A. As the Goſpel is of force to free from Sin, more than the Law was, ſo to free from Death too. For that Study, Appetite, or Deſire of the carnal Man, bringeth Death; but that Will, or Deſire, which the Goſpel infuſes into us, or the Deſire and Purſuit of ſpiritual Things, brings Life and Peace, that is, a vital State of Soul under God here, and eternal Salvation hereafter.

By *the carnal Man*, verſe 7. is meant the rational Powers corrupted by our ſenſitive Appetite, or a Mind enſlaved by ſenſual Luſts. Such a Temper of Mind is oppoſite to, and at Enmity againſt God, and Goodneſs.

Whilſt Men remain thus carnally minded, there is no breaking off the Enmity between God and them,

them; *the carnal Mind is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* Not that this Inability will excuſe from Guilt, becauſe it is not created, but is a ſelf-contracted Impotence; not a natural, but a moral Impotence, ariſing from a perverſe Diſpoſition of Will, as joined with the Delight in Sin, and a ſtrong Averſion to the holy Commands of God.

To be in the Fleſh, is to be wholly poſſeſſed by the Fleſh, to be wholly involved in Sin; inſtead of fighting under *Chriſt*'s Banner againſt Sin, to fight under the Banner of corrupt Nature againſt *Chriſt.* Such *cannot pleaſe God*; for none can pleaſe him, that are unſuitable and unlike to him, becauſe all Liking is founded in Likeneſs, and all Complacency in Correſpondency.

But you (converted Romans) *are not in the Fleſh,* ſo as to be actuated and influenced, guided and governed, miſled and carried away by us: Sincere and ſerious *Chriſtians,* although they live in the Fleſh, yet do not they live after the Fleſh: *But ye are in the Spirit*; that is, illuminated, inclined, and enabled, by the Spirit, to do the Will of God: *And the Spirit of God dwelleth in you,* as a Spirit of Truth to enlighten your Underſtandings, as a Spirit of Love to inſpire the Soul with divine and unutterable Deſires, after the Favour and Grace of God; and the Phraſe *dwelling* imports Preſence and Propriety, Fellowſhip and Intimacy, Operation and Activity, Reſidence, and Conſtancy of Abode.

Q. *Pray what does St.* Paul *mean by the* Spirit of Chriſt, *Ver.* 9?

A. The Holy Ghoſt is here called *the Spirit of* Chriſt poſitively, and by way of Reception, as being beſtow'd upon him, and here received by him; alſo actively, and by way of Collation, as being beſtow'd by him, and convey'd from him.

Note, All ſincere *Chriſtians* have the Spirit of *Chriſt*, they have him for the Bleſſing of Converſion, and for the Benefit of Communion. He dwells in them by his ſanctifying Impreſſions, powerful Aſſiſtances, quickening and comforting Influences. He pours in both the Oil of Joy and Gladneſs into their Hearts.

Again; there are ſome who have not the Spirit of *Chriſt*; ſuch as are carnal and ſenſual, cenſorious and envious, malicious and revengeful, implacable and irreconcileable, have not the Spirit of *Chriſt*: Such, adds the Apoſtle, *are none of* Chriſt's; they have no ſpiritual Relation to him, no ſpecial Intereſt in him, can expect no preſent Conſolation, or future Happineſs from him; the Propoſition is indefinite, *If any Man,* Prince or Peaſant, Rich or Poor, Bond or Free, *have not the Spirit of* Chriſt, *he is none of* Chriſt's.

Q. *In what Senſe is* Chriſt *ſaid to be in Believers,* Verſe 10?

A. That is, by his holy Spirit, *the Body is dead,* ſtill ſubject to Death, *becauſe of Sin,* which will never ceaſe to be in us till we die; *but the Spirit of Life,* will give Life to it again, *becauſe of Righteouſneſs,* or of that Juſtification which is unto Life.

Chriſt is in Believers two ways; 1. Objectively, as the Object is in the Faculty, or the Things we think of, love and delight in, are in our Hearts and Minds; thus *Chriſt* is ſaid to dwell in our Hearts by Faith. 2. Effectively; ſo *Chriſt* is in Believers by his Spirit, whoſe gracious Influence produces Life for them, and Likeneſs to him.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words in the ſame Text,* The Spirit is Life, becauſe of Righteouſneſs?

A. *The Spirit of Life*; that is, the Spirit of a Believer is immortal; yet not excluſively, but emphatically; not as if other Mens Souls did not live after Death, but becauſe ſuch a Life is worſe than Death; 'tis a ſpecial Immortality that the Believer is Partaker of.

The Spirit is Life, becauſe of Righteouſneſs. If we underſtand this of *Chriſt*'s Righteouſneſs, that gives us a Right and Title to Salvation; if of our own inherent Righteouſneſs, that is, a Qualification to fit and prepare us for eternal Life and Salvation; we can neither be fit for the Employment nor Enjoyment of Heaven without it.

And then, adds the Apoſtle, even for your dead Bodies, they ſhall not finally periſh neither, they ſhall be ſure to be rais'd again: For the Spirit of God, by which you are to be guided and led, is that divine omnipotent Spirit that rais'd *Chriſt*'s dead Body out of the Grave, and if ye be guided by that, animated and quickened by that, live a pious and holy Life, there is no Doubt but God will raiſe your mortal Bodies out of the Grave alſo, by the Power of that ſame Spirit that rais'd *Chriſt*'s.

By theſe ſo many Obligations, therefore, and Intereſts of yours, the eternal Well-being both of Souls and Bodies, ye are engaged to give over all Care of ſatisfying and gratifying your Fleſh in prohibited Demands, to live no longer in your former Habits of Sin, now ye have received the Faith of *Chriſt.*

For, if contenting yourſelves with an external Performance of the *Moſaical* Law, Circumciſion, &c. Ye ſtill continue to commit thoſe Sins which that was ſet to prohibit; this will bring all Deſtruction upon you; 'tis not the *Moſaical* Law will keep you from Ruin. But if by the Faith and Example, and withal the Grace and Aſſiſtance of *Chriſt*, ye ſhall actively mortify all the polluted Deſires of the Fleſh, and live ſpiritually, according to what *Chriſt* now requires, ye ſhall certainly riſe to Life immortal, or live eternally.

For thus being led by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, living after *Chriſt*'s Example, and doing what he commands, and enables us to do, is an Evidence that we, and not only the *Jews,* who challenge it as their Peculiar, are (not only the Servants but) the Children of God, and conſequently, that God will deal with us as with Children, and beſtow the Inheritance upon us.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle mean by* the Spirit of Bondage, *Ver.* 15?

A. The Apoſtle proceeds in his Diſcourſe thus; There is a Spirit of Bondage, which the Children of God do for ſome time receive, working Fear in them. By the Spirit of Bondage we are to underſtand thoſe Convictions and Terrors of Conſcience which awakened Perſons labour under, when the Law of God charges them home with the Guilt of Sin, and lays them under direful Apprehenſions of the Wrath of God. The Spirit of Bondage is neither to be ſlighted, nor reſted in; not to be ſlighted, becauſe it is preparatory to Conviction; and not to be reſted in, becauſe it is a Spark of Hell kindled in the Conſcience; it is a bearded Arrow ſhot into the Conſcience, which none but the Hand of God can pluck out.

The Spirit of Bondage is ſucceeded by the Spirit of Adoption; the Signs of ſuch a Spirit are a child-like Fear, Hope, Truſt, and Dependance, and a child-like Obedience to his Commands.

God's Holy Spirit, having once been a Spirit of Adoption, never more becomes a Spirit of Bondage to the ſame Soul; *ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear.* The principal Work of the Spirit of Adoption is to enliven and embolden the Soul in Prayer, *whereby we cry,* Abba, *Father.*

And this Condition and Manner of God's dealing with us under the Goſpel, is, on God's Part, a ſure Evidence to our Conſciences, if our filial Obedience, and being wrought on by theſe Means, be the like Evidence on our Parts that we are more than Servants, which was the higheſt that that Kind of legal Obedience could pretend to, even Sons of God.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle deſcribe the Happineſs of Believers?*

A. *And if Sons,* then (according to the Cuſtoms of all Nations) Heirs of Heaven, Heirs indeed of God the Father, and Co-heirs with *Chriſt,* coming to the Inheritance after the ſame Manner that *Chriſt* did; namely, by Sufferings, which are proper for Sons alſo, to ſuffer firſt with *Chriſt,* and then to reign with him. O happy Condition of God's adopted and afflicted Children! The Supports they have under, the Comforts in, the Benefits from, and the Glory that will follow their Sufferings, render them not only tolerable, but deſirable; well may they glory in Tribulation, who expect ſuch a Glory after it

Q. *But though the Happineſs of Believers is ſo great, is it not much diminiſhed by the Greatneſs of their Sufferings?*

A. The Sufferings of the Saints are ſhort and momentary; *the Sufferings of this preſent Time.* Their Afflictions, though never ſo ſevere, cannot laſt longer than their Lives; the Grave will ſet them beyond the Reach of Trouble.

Obſerve the Nature and Property of the Saints future Glory; 'tis hidden, 'tis *a Glory that ſhall be revealed.* It's hidden from the Eye of the World, and, in a great Meaſure, from the Saints themſelves; it is now the Object of their Faith, but e're long it ſhall be the Object of their Sight.

Q. St. Paul *proceeds; There is a Time coming, when all the Sons of God, all his adopted Children, ſhall be made manifeſt: How?*

A. 1. In their Perſons; it ſhall then appear who are God's Sons, and who are Satan's Servants; they ſhall then be made manifeſt to themſelves, to one another; yea, to the very Conſciences of the Wicked. 2. In their Actions, 1 *Cor.* iii. 13. Every Man's Work ſhall be made manifeſt of what Nature it is, what they have done, whoſe Intereſt they were in. 3. In their Condition, their Glory and Happineſs ſhall be made manifeſt. *When* Chriſt *their Life ſhall appear with him in Glory.*

Q. *Pray explain the 19th Verſe,* For the earneſt Expectation of the Creature waiteth for the Manifeſtation of the Sons of God?

A. Some by the Creature, and the whole Creation here, underſtand the *Gentile* World; if ſo, the Senſe is, That the *Heathens* ſhall, by the preaching of the Goſpel, be reſcued from their Idolatry, unto which they have been ſo long enſlaved, and be brought into the glorious Condition of *Chriſt*'s redeemed Ones, to whom the glorious Inheritance of Heaven belongs. But others, by the Creature and whole Creation, underſtand this viſible World, ſenſible and rational, animate and inanimate; and then the Senſe is, That the whole Frame and Courſe of the Creation is ſo ordered and diſpoſed by God, as that it carries in it a vehement Deſire, and earneſt Longing for the full Manifeſtation of God's Glory in and towards his Children.

Q. *Pray how is* the Creation made ſubject to Vanity?

A. That is, to Corruption, Mortality, and Servitude; Sin not only ſtain'd the Glory of Man, but marr'd and ſpoil'd the Beauty of the whole Creation; all Creatures are fallen from their firſt Perfection, by the Fall of our firſt Parents.

Under this Burden of Vanity and Servility the Creature groans, is reſtleſs and uneaſy; it's in continual Labour to ſerve Man's Neceſſity; it is often puniſhed together with Man for the Sin of Man, witneſs the old World, and *Sodom.* The Creatures are often compelled to ſerve the Luſts of Man, and ſo are made to groan, when he himſelf groans not; their Groans upbraid our Stupidity and Unthankfulneſs, they will accuſe and witneſs againſt us at the Bar of God; and ſhould excite and ſtir us up to long for a better State.

From this State of Bondage to Vanity and Corruption, the Creature has an earneſt Expectation of being delivered. But how can the ſenſeleſs and inanimate Part of the Creation be ſaid to have an *earneſt Expectation?* Not properly; for that would be to ſuppoſe Rationality in them; but there is a vehement Inclination in the Creature, to be reſtor'd to that firſt Condition which it was in before the Fall; and accordingly it is ſaid to *wait for the Manifeſtation of the Sons of God;* that is, for that Liberty and Freedom from Servility and Corruption, which, according to their Capacity, the Creatures hope for and expect, when the full Privileges and Dignities of the Sons of God ſhall be manifeſted.

Dr. *Hammond* has given another Turn to this Paſſage; he ſays, that the Word Creation, or Creature, being a general Word, without a Reſtraint, is here ſet to comprehend all Mankind, the *Gentiles* as well as the *Jews;* and accordingly Paraphraſes the 19th and 20th Verſes thus; For all the *Gentile* World are now attending, or waiting, as it were, to ſee what you *Jews* will do, who of you will be true Sons of God, and who not, that is, who will now accept and embrace the Faith of *Chriſt,* and who will not, their Happineſs depending punctually upon the Iſſue of this.

For the *Heathen* World hath, for theſe many Years been (for the Generality of them) enſlaved to Satan, and, by him, to that wretched miſerable State of Ignorance and Idolatry, and all thoſe vain and unclean beſtial Worſhips; and ſo as many as have gone on in thoſe vile Courſes, have been involved alſo under that deſperate Impoſſibility (as to the Eye of Man) of recovering to the leaſt Degree of Bliſs: And all this not (abſolutely) willingly, or upon their own free choice, but by the Devil's impoſing it on them as an Act of Religion, a Concomitant and Effect of their Idol-worſhips, in which he commanded all theſe Villanies. This makes it reaſonable to ſuppoſe of theſe *Heathens,* that they are willing to be reſcu'd from lying any longer under theſe Slaveries, and the Goſpel was the only Means to do that.

In this Senſe the ſame Author paraphraſes, *ver.* 23. thus; and as the *Gentile* World do earneſtly expect this Diſcovery (*ver.* 19.) who of you *Jews* will receive *Chriſt*, and who not, that they may reap their Advantage by it, and have the Goſpel preached to to them; ſo they that have received the Faith, that are already converted, and ſo have not that want of the Preaching or Revealing it, have yet another Advantage of this Revelation, namely, to have their Perſecutions at an End, which ſhall be, according to *Chriſt*'s Promiſe, as ſoon as *Chriſt* has been preached over all the Cities of *Jewry*, Matth. x. 23. And ſo even we ourſelves wait for this Seaſon, and groan, in the mean while, under the Perſecutions, expecting one kind of Adoption, Deliverance from Servitude and Oppreſſion, the reſcuing our outward Man out of the Afflictions which encompaſs us at the Preſent (and Deliverance from which it's clear we have not yet attained to) and alſo from Death itſelf, by the Reſurrection of the Body.

Q. *How are* we ſaved by Hope, *ver.* 24?

A. That is, our preſent Expectation of our future glorious Condition, bears up our Spirits under Sufferings, and carries us joyfully through all Difficulties. Or thus; All the Salvation we have at preſent, is in Hope, not in Hand; Heaven in Hope is more worth than the whole World in Hand.

Q. *What is the Nature of* Hope?

A. It is an Expectation of good Things promiſed, but not enjoyed; Viſion and Fruition put an End to Hope; Hope is converſant about Things unſeen as well as Faith; Faith is the Evidence of Things not ſeen, and Hope is the Expectation of thoſe Things.

Q. *What are the other Properties of* Hope, *and what is its Support?*

A. The inſeparable Companion of Hope, is Patience, waiting for the Good hoped for, with Patience and Perſeverance.

And for the fortifying and confirming this Hope and Patience in us, even in the Time of our greateſt preſent Preſſures, we have this Advantage from *Chriſt* now in the Goſpels his Spirit that raiſed him from the Dead, and will raiſe us, intercedes, and prays for us at the Right-hand of his Father, where he always makes Interceſſion for us, that, not what is moſt eaſy, but what is moſt advantageous, may be ſent us. And ſo, according to the Notion of things under the Law, temporal Felicity was a very conſiderable Thing, and Affliction in this World an Expreſſion of God's Wrath; now under the Goſpel there is a ſpecial Kind of Proviſion made, by aſſuring us that God knows beſt what is for our Turns, and conſequently, what to pray for particularly, Health, or Wealth, or Honour; then *Chriſt* joins his helping Hand to ours, joins his All-wiſe and Divine Prayers (for that which he knows we moſt want) to our Prayers, and ſo helps to relieve us in our particular Requeſts, and inforcing them upon his Father, but (which is far more for our Turns) preſenting to him our general Wants, interceding for us, even powerfully beſtowing thoſe Things which are truly beſt for us, though often they be leaſt for our Palates at preſent.

And then God, who, by being a Searcher of Hearts, knows our Wants exactly, underſtands alſo the Deſire and Intention of the Spirit of *Chriſt*, without any need of its being formed articulately in Words, namely, that interceding for all holy Men, it asks for them all thoſe Things that tend to the making them better, whatſoever God likes, and thinks beſt for them, not what they like themſelves; and this God immediately grants to us, whatſoever it is, ſometimes Tribulations and Afflictions, as the moſt proper and agreeable for us.

And accordingly this we know and find, that all Things that come paſs, or befal them that ſincerely love God, thoſe that cordially adhere to him, or that according to the Purport of the Goſpel are received and favoured by him, do by the gracious Diſpoſition of God concur and co-operate to their Advantage, which ſure is a Sign that the Spirit of *Chriſt* by its Interceſſion obtains for all ſuch thoſe Things that are beſt for them, though not at preſent ſo pleaſing for themſelves.

For indeed whatever thus befals us is not to be looked on as the Act of Man, by ſome general Permiſſion only of God, but as his ſpecial Decree and and Choice for us. For all whom God hath fore-approved and acknowledg'd for his, according to the Purport of the Goſpel, whom he knew as a Shepherd doth his Flock, *John* x. 14. (that is, the Lovers of God ſo favoured by him) thoſe he hath alſo fore-appointed to ſuffer, 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 3. after the Manner of *Chriſt*, *Phil.* iii. 10. that they might be like unto him as younger Brothers to the Elder, *Heb.* ii. 10. that he might have a Church of perſecuted *Chriſtians* attaining to Deliverances, and to glory, juſt as he himſelf hath done before them.

And thoſe whom he hath thus pre-determined to Sufferings, thoſe he hath accordingly called to ſuffer actually, 1 *Pet.* 21. and thoſe whom he hath thus called to ſuffer, thoſe upon ſuch Trials ſincerely paſt, he juſtifieth, or approves of, commends, and pronounces them ſincere; and thoſe again he hath, or certainly will reward with eternal Glory.

What Difficulty then can there be in all this? What Matter of Doubt but that it will go well with us? For if God be a Friend, all tends to our Good, which was the Thing to be proved convincingly, *Ver.* 29, 30. by an Argument called by Logician *Sorites.*

For he that parted with his own Son from his Boſom, and delivered him up to die for our Sakes, how it is poſſible that he ſhould not complete that Gift by beſtowing all other Things that are profitable for us? And either Afflictions or Deliverances from preſent Preſſures, as he ſees them moſt for our Advantage.

Who ſhall produce any Accuſation againſt thoſe whom God approves? (this the *Jews* did moſt bitterly againſt the *Chriſtians*; and eſpecially againſt St. *Paul* the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, judging them Breakers of the Law, *&c.* Chap. ii. 1.) it is certain that God has acquitted them. And then who dares be ſo bold as to condemn them? As for us, whatever we ſuffer here, our Comfort and ſure Ground of Hope and Rejoicing is, that *Chriſt* our Lord and Captain hath ſuffered before us, and which is more for our Advantage, to aſſure us of Delivery either here or hereafter, our crucified Lord is riſen again, is aſcended to the greateſt Dignity, and now reigns in heaven, and is perfectly able to protect and defend his, and hath that Advantage to intercede for us to his Father (which he really does, Ver. 26.) to help us to that conſtantly, which is moſt for the Supply of our Wants.

Again; 'tis not in the Power of any Perſecutor upon Earth to put us out of God, or to deprive us of the Benefits of his Love to us, when *Chriſt* hath thus fortified us, and ordered even Afflictions themſelves to tend to our Good; we may now challenge all preſent or poſſible Evils to do their worſt, all Preſſures, Diſtreſſes, Perſecutions, Wants, Shame, Fear, and Force, the ſharpeſt Encounters.

As indeed it is the Portion of a *Chriſtian* to meet with all theſe Things in the Diſcharge of his Duty, and to have never a Part of his Life free from them, our Chriſtianity being but as it were the Paſſage to our Slaughter, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xliv. 22. ſpoken of himſelf, but moſt punctually applicable to us at this Time, *for thy Sake are we killed all the Day long, we are accuſtomed as Sheep for the Slaughter.*

No certainly; we have had Experience of all theſe, and find theſe have no Power to put us out of God's Favour, they are on the contrary the ſureſt Means to ſecure us in it, to exerciſe our *Chriſtian* Virtues, and to increaſe our Reward, and ſo the moſt fatherly Acts of Grace that could be beſtowed on us, through the Aſſiſtance of that Strength of *Chriſt* enabling us to bear all theſe, and be the better for them.

For, concludes the Apoſtle, I am reſolved that neither Fear of Death, nor Hope of Life, nor evil Angels, nor perſecuting Princes or Potentates, nor the Preſſures that are already upon us, nor thoſe that are ready to come, nor Sublimity of Honours, nor Depth of Ignominy, nor any Thing elſe ſhall be able to annul, or make void, the Promiſes of the Goſpel, or deprive us of thoſe Advantages which belong to *Chriſtians* (according to God's faithful Promiſes) immutably and irreverſibly.

Thus our Apoſtle concludes this excellent Chapter with triumphant Expreſſions, as he had begun it; in the firſt Verſe he proclaims that there is no Condemnation to them that are in *Chriſt Jeſus*; in the laſt Verſe he pronounces, that nothing ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of God, which is in *Chriſt Jeſus.*

Chap. IX.

The Apoſtle's Sorrow for the Jews; *their Privileges. God's Promiſe ſtands good, notwithſtanding the Rejection of the* Jews, *it being not made to the Children of the Fleſh, but of the Promiſe*; *this is proved in* Iſaac *and* Jacob. *God is vindicated in his Rejection of* Eſau, *by the Example of* Pharaoh, *and Similitude of a Potter, for the Manifeſtation of his Juſtice and Power on Reprobates*; *and Mercy on the Elect, both* Jews *and* Gentiles; *the Calling of the one and the Rejection of the other, foretold in Scripture. The Reaſon why the* Gentiles *obtained Righteouſneſs by the* Meſſiah, *and the* Jews *eſtranged from it, ſhewn from the Prophets.*

Q. T*HE Apoſtle begins this Chapter with a ſolemn Aſſeveration or Oath*; *he calls* Chriſt *and the Holy Ghoſt to witneſs for the Truth of what he ſays, which is the very Formality of an Oath. The Perſons he ſwears by, are* Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt; *he calls them to be Witneſſes of the Sincerity of his Conſcience in what he aſſerts: But why does he not rather ſwear by the Name of God than of* Chriſt, *eſpecially as the* Jews *did not believe his Divinity, and therefore were not like to give a Jot the more Credit to what he aſſerted?*

A. 'Tis anſwered, It was probably to aſſert the God-head of *Chriſt*, which the *Jews* generally denied. None but God was to be ſworn by; the Apoſtle ſwearing by *Chriſt*, proves him to be truly and really God; as alſo the Holy Ghoſt; for an Oath being an Act of religious Worſhip, and the Apoſtle ſwearing by *Chriſt* and the Holy Ghoſt, acknowledges their Divinity, according to the Words of *Moſes*, *Deut.* vi. 13. *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his Name.*

Q. *What is farther obſervable in this Oath?*

A. As the Apoſtle appeals to *Chriſt* and the Holy Ghoſt, ſo alſo to his own Conſcience, as the Avoucher and Witneſs of this Truth, *my Conſcience alſo bearing me Witneſs that I lie not.*

The Subject-matter of his Oath is, a ſolemn Teſtification of his great Concern for his Countrymen the *Jews*; *I have great Heavineſs, and continual Sorrow of Heart.* The original Word ſignifies ſuch a Sorrow as have Women in Travail; a Sorrow continually affecting his Heart, and afflicting his Spirit, on Account of the obſtinate Infidelity, and Obduration of Heart, which was fallen upon the *Jews*, which had provoked God to reſolve to caſt them off, and to ſcatter them throughout the World.

Q. *How do yo underſtand the third Verſe,* For I could wiſh that myſelf were accurſed of *Chriſt*, for my Brethren according to the Fleſh?

A. That is; ſo great is my Concern for the Salvation of my Brethren the *Jews*, that I could undergo the greateſt Miſery and Evil that can befal me, to prevent their Deſtruction. This Wiſh of St. *Paul* is plainly an hyperbolical Expreſſion of his great Affection for his Country-men the *Jews*, and his Zeal for their Salvation, which was ſo intenſe and vehement, that, were it a Thing reaſonable and lawful, were it proper, and could it avail to the procuring their Salvation, he could have wiſhed the greateſt Evil to himſelf; for their Sakes not only to be excommunicated from Communion with the Church of *Chriſt*, but to be ſeparated from *Chriſt* himſelf.

Q. *It will be objected, that ſuch a wiſh is ſinful and unnatural, to deſire the Salvation of others at the Expence and Forfeiture of our own.*

A. 'Tis anſwer'd, this is very true; and therefore the Apoſtle's Words are not an abſolute and poſitive Wiſh; he does not ſay, *I wiſh*; but *I could wiſh*: Juſt like that common Saying with us, when we would expreſs a Thing to the Height, *I could wiſh ſo or ſo*; *I could even be content to do this or that*: Such kind of Expreſſions no Body takes for a ſtrict and preciſe Declaration of our Minds, but for a figurative Expreſſion of a very great and vehement Paſſion. Thus the Apoſtle; were it proper to make ſuch a wiſh, I could even wiſh ſo great a Bleſſing to my Brethren, tho' with the Loſs of my own Happineſs.

For any Man to renounce his Eternal Salvation, and to be willing to be damned, tho' for the Good of his Brethren, or even for the Glory of God, is a Thought that makes human Nature tremble from its very Foundation; for the Deſire of our own Happineſs is the deepeſt Principle that God has planted in our Natures; and to pretend a Reaſon from the Glory of God, is impoſſible; becauſe our Damnation cannot ſerve that End, unleſs by our Impenitency, and wilful Obſtinacy, we have incurred that Severity of Juſtice.

Q. *But what Reaſon had the Apoſtle for this affectionate*

affectionate Wiſh for the welfare of the Jews, *who undoubtedly were a very wicked People?*

A. Our Apoſtle, to vindicate his paſſionate Affection to the *Jews*, ſums up the high Privileges and Prerogatives belonging to the *Jews* above any other Nation; namely, theſe they were *Iſraelites*, the Poſterity of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*: *To whom pertaineth the Adoption*; that is, national Adoption, not perſonal; God adopted the *Jews* to be an holy People to himſelf, calling them his Sons and his firſt-born: *And the Glory*; that is, the glorious Preſence of God among them, the Temple, the Ark, but particularly the *Shechinah* or divine Preſence, from between the Cherubims: *And the Covenants*; that is, the Covenant made made with *Abraham* and *Moſes*, the old and new Covenant, *Jer.* xxxi. 32. *And the giving of the Law*; it was the Prerogative of this People, that all their Laws, Ceremonial, Judicial, and Moral, were delivered to them by God himſelf: *And the Service of God*; they alone had the true worſhip of God among them, nor could any other Nation have any thing like it, but by being indebted to them for it: *And the Promiſe*; in general all Bleſſings promiſed them in the Land of *Canaan*, particularly the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*: *Whoſe are the Fathers*; the beloved Fathers, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, were their Anceſtors: *Of whom, as concerning the Fleſh, Chriſt came*; of which *Iſraelites* Chriſt came; the promiſed *Meſſias* according to the Fleſh or human Nature was the Offspring, even he who, according to his divine Nature, *was over all, God bleſſed for ever more.* Which glorious Title given to *Chriſt*, as it highly exalts the Prerogative of the *Jews*, as from whom ſo great a Perſon deſcended, ſo on the other Hand it aggravates their Sin and Condemnation, in rejecting a Perſon of ſuch infinite Worth and Dignity, notwithſtanding he deſcended from them.

The *Socinians*, to avoid the Force of this Text, which fully proves the Divinity of *Chriſt*, turn the Words into Thankſgiving for *Chriſt*, and read them thus; of whom *Chriſt* was according to the Fleſh; *God, who is over all, be bleſſed for ever.* A manifeſt Perverſion of the Senſe of the Apoſtle's Words, which was to ſhew, that according to the Fleſh he deſcended frow *Abraham*, but that he had another Nature not derived from *Abraham*, even a divine Nature, according to which he was, *over all, God bleſſed for ever more*,

Q. *The Apoſtle next raiſes an Objection againſt the Rejection of the* Jews; If they be caſt off by God, what will become of the Promiſe of God made to *Abraham*, ſaying, I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed: *How does he anſwer this?*

A. He anſwers it by diſtinguiſhing a Twofold Seed that *Abraham* had; ſome were only his carnal Seed, or the Children of his Fleſh; others were his ſpiritual Seed, or the Children of his Faith. Now the carnal Seed of *Abraham*, born according to the Courſe of Nature, were not the Children of God, to whom the Promiſe was made, but the Children repreſented by *Iſaac*, born by the ſupernatural Power of the Spirit of God, theſe are to be accounted the true Seed of *Abraham*, mentioned in the Covenant, when God ſays, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed.* So that the force of the Apoſtle's Argument ſtands thus; the Rejection of ſuch *Jews*, or ſuch of *Abraham*'s Seed only, who were ſo according to the Fleſh, cannot make the Promiſe of God to *Abraham* and his Seed of no Effect, becauſe he made no abſolute Promiſe to them as ſuch. But none of thoſe *Jews*, of whom St. *Paul* here ſpeaks, had any ſuch Promiſe made to them, therefore the Rejection of ſome of *Abraham*'s natural Seed doth not, cannot make void the Word and Promiſe of God.

Q. *By what other Argumentss does the Apoſtle prove his Propoſition, that in the Seed of* Abraham *are comprehended all Believers?*

A. Our Apoſtle having proved, that it was the Purpoſe and Pleaſure of God, to account only thoſe for *Abraham*'s Seed who were the Children of his Faith, and to reject the reſt for their Unbelief, proſecutes the ſame Argument, by another ſpecial Diſpenſation of God in the Family of *Iſaac*, whoſe Wife *Rebecca* had Twins, *Jacob* and *Eſau*, and as neither of them had any thing in them to move God to love the one, and diſlike the other; ſo that the Apoſtle's Argument runs thus; As *Jacob* and *Eſau* were begotten of the ſame Father, born of the ſame Mother, lay together in the ſame Womb, and had neither of them done any thing to oblige or diſoblige Almighty God; yet he was pleaſed to make a Difference between them, and their Poſterity after them, giving fertile *Canaan* to *Jacob* and his Seed, which by Birthright belonged to *Eſau* and his Offspring: So it is the Will and Pleaſure of God, that the believing *Gentiles* ſhould become Heirs of the Promiſe by Faith in *Chriſt*; and that the unbelieving *Jews* ſhould be rejected for their Infidelity.

As this Preference of *Jacob* to *Eſau* before they either had done Good or Evil, is uſed as an Argument to prove that this Choice or Preference could not be of Works; ſo it is a ſtrong Argument againſt the Pre-exiſtence of Souls, and their being ſent into Bodies by way of Puniſhment for former Sins; for upon that Suppoſition it could not be true, that the Children had done neither Good nor Evil before they were born, ſince they might both have ſinned in that State of Pre-exiſtence.

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words in the* 13th *Verſe,* *Jacob* have I loved, but *Eſau* have I hated?

A. Dr. *Hammond* thus paraphraſes them: According to the Prediction of the Elder's ſerving the Younger, *Mal.* i. 2, 3. which though it had been true in their Perſons, *Jacob* getting away the Birthright firſt, then the prime Bleſſing from *Eſau*, yet had not its primary Completion in their Perſons (it no way appearing prodable, that *Eſau* did in his Perſon forſake the true God, and fell off to Idols) but had its principal and full Accompliſhment in their Poſterities, of which *Malachi* hath delivered it from God, long after the Death of both their Perſons, that God preferred the *Iſaelites* before the *Edomites*, though indeed their Progenitors *Jacob* and *Eſau* were Brothers, and *Eſau* the Elder of them. By both which typical Stories it is plain, that as God binds not himſelf to obſerve the Privileges, to give *Iſmael* Inheritance with *Iſaac*, only becauſe he was born of *Abraham* as well as he, nor to prefer *Eſau* before *Jacob*, and the *Idumeans* before the *Iſraelites*, only becauſe they were of the elder Houſe or Line; ſo neither doth he beſtow the Promiſes made in *Chriſt* either as a Prerogative of *Iſraelites*, or a Reward of legal Obedience, but leaves himſelf free to receive *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, and to accept the *Chriſtian* Faith inſtead of *Moſaical* Obſervances,

ſervances, the internal, ſincere, evangelical, inſtead of the external, legal Obedience.

Q. *What is the next Point the Apoſtle diſcourſes upon?*

A. The Apoſtle proceeds to demonſtrate the Righteouſneſs of God, in the Execution of his Purpoſe; *Is there then Unrighteouſneſs or Injuſtice with God? God forbid.* Is there any Cauſe to ſay, that God who preferred the Poſterity of *Iſaac* before that of *Iſhmael*, and the Seed of *Jacob* before the numerous Offspring of *Eſau*, is unjuſt? Can it be reaſonably objected, that God is now unjuſt in calling the *Gentiles*, and owning them on their Faith for his People, the ſpiritual Seed of *Abraham*, and rejecting the *Jews*, becauſe of their Unbelief? God forbid that we ſhould accuſe him of unrighteous Dealing on this Account.

Farther, the Apoſtle proves that there is no Unrighteouſneſs in rejecting the *Jews* and calling the *Gentiles*, becauſe he ſaid to *Moſes*, he would ſhew Mercy where, when, and to whom, or to what People he pleaſed. If therefore on the Infidelity of the *Jews*, he will call the idolatrous *Gentiles*, and receive them to be his People, how is he chargeable with Injuſtice on that Account? Shall not God diſpenſe his Favours where and upon whom he pleaſes? May he not confer his Kindneſs on ſome, which he owes to none?

Theſe Inſtances ſufficiently ſhew, *That it is not of him that willeth*; for *Abraham* willed, that *Iſhmael* might live to be Partaker of the Bleſſing promiſed to his Seed, when he ſaid, *Gen.* xvii. 18. *O that* Iſhmael *might live before thee!* Nor is it of him that runneth; for when *Eſau* ran to fetch Veniſon for his Father, that he might receive the Bleſſing, *Gen.* xxi. God in his Wiſdom ſaw fit to fruſtrate his Deſign, and to confer the Bleſſing on *Jacob*, but it is of God who ſheweth Mercy, that any are choſen to be the Seed to which the Promiſe made to *Abraham* belongs, and ſo to be his Church and People.

Q. *But may it not be objected, that God was guilty of Injuſtice and Severity in rejecting the* Jews, *and reſerving them to Wrath, giving them up to an obdurate Heart, becauſe they would not accept of Juſtification by Faith in* Chriſt?

A. This he clears by another Inſtance, that of *Pharaoh*, who ſo often had obſtinately hardened his own Heart, and at laſt provoked God to harden him judicially. *For this Cauſe* (*ſays God*) *have I raiſed thee up.* In the Original it is, I have made thee to ſtand; that is, I have ſuſtained thee, and kept thee alive, when thou deſerveſt, and mighteſt juſtly have expected to be cut off by the ſeveral Plagues inflicted on thee for thy obſtinate Hardneſs of Heart.

That I may ſhew my Power in thee, &c. Or, I have patiently borne thy Stubborneſs for a long Time, that my Power and Juſtice might more illuſtriouſly appear at laſt in that conſpicuous Judgment, which I will execute upon thee in the Sight of all the Nations upon Earth.

From theſe Inſtances we may conclude, that God may, without the leaſt Imputation of Injuſtice, magnify his Mercy, in ſparing and pardoning ſome Sinners, and render his Juſtice glorious in puniſhing others; yea, in puniſhing Sin with Sin, hardening them judicially, who had hardened themſelves obſtinately.

But obſerve God did not harden *Pharaoh*'s Heart by any poſitive Act or Influence upon it, by infuſing any Evil into it; for this would make God the Author of Sin; but he was hardened by way of judiciary Tradition, after he had long hardened himſelf. As thus:

1. He was delivered up into the Power of Satan, who deluded him by the Magicians, counterfeiting the ſame Miracles that *Moſes* wrought; and that hardened him againſt the Belief of any Thing that *Moſes* did or ſaid.

2. He was delivered up to his own Luſts, particularly Idolatry, Ambition, and Covetouſneſs, and theſe hardened *Pharaoh*'s Heart. As an Idolater, he was loth to receive a Meſſage from the God of *Iſrael*, whom he knew not; *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey him? I know not the Lord.* As an ambitious Prince, it cut him to the Heart, that ſo mean a Perſon as *Moſes* ſhould controul him in his own Dominions; and as a covetous Man he was unwilling to part with a People who were ſo profitable to him.

Q. *If the Caſe be thus, will ſome unbelieving and rejected* Jews *object, that God ſometimes, and that juſtly, leaves obdurate Sinners to harden themſelves, why is he offended at it? How is it in our Power to avoid being hardened, if it be his Will that we ſhould be hardened?* Why doth he find Fault? Who hath reſiſted his Will?

A. The Anſwer St. *Paul* returns to this, contains a vehement Objurgation or Reproof by way of Interrogation, *Nay but, O Man, who art thou?* What bold Preſumption is this, that Man, blind, ignorant, ſinful, guilty Man, obnoxious to Wrath and Eternal Death, ſhould undertake to cenſure, to judge and condemn the Actions and Diſpenſations of the moſt high and holy God, as if they were crooked or perverſe, or defective either in Wiſdom or Juſtice!

In this Anſwer of the Apoſtle we have likewiſe a ſubſtantial Vindication of the Righteouſneſs and Wiſdom of God in his Proceedings with Men, ſhewing that there is no more Cauſe to make this Objection againſt God for rejecting the unbelieving *Jews*, and ſhewing Favour to the believing *Gentiles*, than for a Pitcher to contend with him that formed it, why he made it of ſuch, and ſuch, and not of another Figure; or for the Clay, when it is marred and broken, to complain of the Potter for making one Part of it a Veſſel unto Honour, and the other to Diſhonour. Thus, what juſt Cauſe had the *Jews*, rejected for their own Unbelief and Hardneſs of Heart, to murmur againſt God for ſhewing Mercy to the *Gentiles*, who ſubmitted to the Terms of Mercy?

The Apoſtle goes on, What tho' God doth not preſently puniſh the obſtinate and unbelieving *Jews* according to their Deſert, but is pleaſed with great Gentleneſs and Patience to bear with them, as he did with *Pharaoh*; and if after all they be more hardened (as he was) by God's Forbearance; what Shew of Injuſtice I pray is it, if he puniſhes them at laſt with great Severity, as he did him? If he ſwallow up their Nation, deſtroy their Temple, ruin their City, is it unjuſt to deſtroy thoſe who, by making themſelves Objects of God's Wrath, are fitted for Deſtruction?

The Veſſels of Wrath fitted for Deſtruction, are ſuch as the Apoſtle ſays, *God endured with much long Suffering*; and therefore they were not made Veſſels of Wrath by God, but by themſelves;

after they had filled up the Meaſure of their Sins, and ſo fitted themſelves for Veſſels of Deſtruction, God endured them with much long Suffering, tho' Judgment at laſt took hold of them to the uttermoſt.

The Lenity of God towards the *Gentiles* is next expreſs'd, *That he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Veſſels of his Mercy.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Can God be taxed with Unrighteouſneſs, in ſhewing the Riches of his glorious Grace and Mercy towards the deſpiſed *Gentiles*, and thereby fitting and preparing them to be Veſſels of Mercy? Hath he not a juſt Right to ſhew his Mercy to ſuch Perſons who have ſubmitted to the Terms upon which he hath promiſed Favour and Acceptance, and to own them as his peculiar People, altho' they are not the natural Seed of *Abraham*, ſince they are his ſpiritual Offſpring?

Q. *But how does he prove that God had this peculiar Regard for the* Gentiles?

A. Leſt the *Jews* ſhould take Offence at what the Apoſtle had advanced concerning the Vocation of the *Gentiles*, he proceeds to prove that this was long ſince foretold by the Prophets *Hoſea* and *Iſaiah*; by the firſt, chap. ii. 22. *I will call them my People, which were not my People.* And Chap. i. 10. Inſtead of, Ye are not my People, it ſhall be ſaid, *Ye are the Sons of the living God.* Expreſſions importing God's receiving the *Gentiles* into his Church as an Act of free and undeſerved Mercy, whom the *Jews* reckoned as Caſt-aways, Strangers, Dogs; accounting themſelves only to be of his Family and Houſhold.

Iſaiah alſo prophecies, and proclaims concerning the *Jews*, *Iſa.* x. 22, 23. thus, Tho' the Number of the People of the *Jews* be as the Sand of the Sea, the Number of Carnal *Iſraelites* never ſo great, yet a very few of them ſhall believe in *Chriſt*; or, as it is in the Original, return, that is, be converted from their Rebellions to *Chriſt*.

For the Lord ſhall deal in Juſtice with, or upon the Land of *Judea*, as one that perfects or makes up an Account, and caſts off; that is, who in making up an Account of a Stewardſhip, having ballanced the Diſburſements with the Receipts, leaves ſome ſmall Sum behind; be there never ſo many of that People, there ſhall but a few be left the far greater Part being involved in Infidelity firſt, and then in Deſtruction.

And as *Iſaiah* ſaith again of the ſame People, Unleſs the Lord of the Hoſts of Angels and Stars in Heaven, and of the whole Frame of the World, had left to us *Jews* a Seed (in which, as other Things when they are dead uſe to revive, ſo that People, almoſt utterly deſtroyed, might have ſome Poſſibility of ſpringing up again) or, as the Original in *Iſaiah* hath it, a very ſmall Remnant, we had been as utterly deſtroyed, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were.

To conclude therefore, that which the Apoſtle all this while hath been a proving is this, That the *Gentiles* that ſtrove not for Juſtification, that did not ſo zealouſly pretend that they were the Favourites of God, did attain to it by receiving the Faith of *Chriſt*, upon which, tho' they had been formerly Idolaters, they were juſtified.

But the *Jews*, who moſt diligently ſtrove to be juſtified by the Law, did not out-run the *Gentiles*, attain the Goal, or Juſtification before them, but on the contrary, the *Gentiles* have got the Advantage of them very much.

And why not? Becauſe they ſought it not by *Chriſt*, or by the Evangelical Way, nay, could not endure it when revealed to them, but only by the Privilege of being *Jews*, and Performance of external Obſervances, and ſo fell down in the midſt of their Race, being not patient to believe that their Law ſhould be aboliſhed, (or that *Chriſt* who was born, lived, and died in a mean Condition, ſhould be the *Meſſias* of the World, 1 *Cor.* i. 23.) but upon that one Prejudice, caſting off all *Chriſtianity*.

According to that which is written, *Iſa.* xxviii. 16. *Behold I lay in* Sion *a Stone tried and precious*, but ſuch an one as the *Jews* ſhould ſtumble at, thinking it contrary to the *Moſaical* Way, and ſo falling off from, and perſecuting *Chriſtianity*; which notwithſtanding the true Orthodox faithful Chriſtian will ſtill adhere to, and hold faſt, and never forſake, or deny *Chriſt*, nor conſequently will ever be denied, or forſaken.

The Sum then of this Chapter will be reduced to theſe five Heads; 1. The Privilege of the *Jews*, and among them eſpecially that of *Chriſt* being born of their Stock. 2. That thoſe of them who reſiſted and believed not in *Chriſt*, were delivered up to obduration by God, and the *Gentiles* taken in their ſtead. 3. That it was moſt juſt in God to deal thus with them. 4. That ſome of the *Jews* at that Time believed in *Chriſt*. 5. That the Cauſe why the reſt believed not, was, that after a Phariſaical Manner they ſought Juſtification by the Works of the Law, Circumciſion, &c. deſpiſing the Faith and Doctrine of *Chriſt*, and that Evangelical Way of Juſtification, and ſo ſtumbled at the Chriſtian Doctrine which they ſhould have believed, were the worſe for him, and the preaching of the Apoſtles, by whom they ſhould have been ſo much the the better.

CHAP. X.

The Jews *miſtaken Zeal, they are addicted to the Law; but ignorant of the End of it, and the Righteouſneſs of Faith to be confeſſed and believed for Salvation; both* Jews *and* Gentiles, *therefore muſt have the Goſpel preached to them, as it was foretold by the Prophet, and* David.

Q. W*HAT is chiefly obſervable in the firſt Part of this Chapter?*

A. Our Apoſtle begins this Chapter, as he did the preceding, with a ſolemn Proteſtation of his unfeigned Love to them, and moſt fervent Deſire of their Salvation, which he was afraid they would miſs by building their Hopes of it on a Bottom that would never bear the Fabrick, but utterly fail them, namely, Juſtification by Works.

Obſerve farther, how deſirous the Apoſtle is to ſay the beſt he could of his Countrymen the *Jews*; he commends the good Meaning of their Zeal, but blames their ill Conduct of it. It was a miſguided and miſtaken Zeal, and not directed as it ought. Zeal is one of the beſt, or worſt Things in the World. The Object of our Zeal muſt be good, or we are zealous for we know not what. To be unreaſonably zealous for the Obſervation of a Ceremony or Cuſtom, as ſome were in the Chriſtian Church of old about the Obſervation of *Eaſter*, is certainly a Zeal not according to Knowledge.

Again; Zeal muſt be proſecuted by lawful and warrantable means; thus, we muſt not do any Evil that Good may come. But there is a Zeal among the *Romaniſts* which certainly cannot be according to Knowledge, that is a Zeal of Ignorance. This is a Zeal peculiar to themſelves; they will not allow the People to underſtand what they do in the Service of God; they require them to pray, but will not let them know what they pray for; and all this under a Pretence that Ignorance (which makes a Man a Block) is the Mother of Devotion. As if the leſs Men underſtand the Service of God, the better he was pleaſed with it, and the more they were edified by it.

The Apoſtle goes on; The *Jews* being ignorant of God's Way of Juſtification by Faith in *Chriſt*, diſcovered in the Goſpel, and relying upon, and truſting to their Works, their Obedience to the ceremonial and moral Law, to juſtify and ſave them, they have not ſubmitted themſelves to the Righteouſneſs of God; that is, to the Way and Method which the Wiſdom of God has diſcover'd for the Juſtification of a Sinner by the Blood of his Son.

From hence we learn, that at the firſt opening the Goſpel, no evangelical Doctrine was more diſreliſhed by the *Jews*, than Juſtification by the Merits of *Chriſt*. They were then poſſeſſed of this Principle, that eternal Life was attainable only by the Law; according to their Example, moſt Perſons ever ſince, have been fond of that Way of Juſtification. The natural Man is a proud Man, he likes to live upon his own Stock; he cannot ſtoop to a ſincere and univerſal Renunciation of his own Righteouſneſs, and to depend wholly on the Righteouſneſs of another.

Q. *How is Chriſt* the End of the Law for Righteouſneſs?

A. There was a threefold Law of God which *Chriſt* may be ſaid to be ſaid to be the End of; namely, judicial, ceremonial, and moral. The judicial Law was that which God by *Moſes* delivered to the *Jews*, containing Directions for adminiſtring the civil Government; *Chriſt* was the End of this Law as he aboliſhed it; for the *Jewiſh* Polity was to continue till the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, and no longer. *Gen.* xlix. *Dan.* ix.

The ceremonial Law was that which preſcribed certain ſacred Rites and Ceremonies to be obſerved in the external Worſhip of God by the People of *Iſrael*. The former Law related to them as a Nation, this, as they were a Church; and this ceremonial Law was likewiſe abrogated by *Chriſt*, who was the Subſtance, that only the Shadow.

The moral Law is that holy and eternal Rule of Righteouſneſs given by God to Men, for the right ordering their Thoughts, Words, and Actions, relating to their Neighbour, and themſelves. This Law is comprehended in the Ten Commandments, and is called the Law of Righteouſneſs, *Rom.* ix. 31. the royal Law by St. *James*, Chap. ii. 8. Now *Chriſt* may be ſaid to be End of this Law, 1. As he is the Accompliſhment of it. The Precepts of the Law point at *Chriſt*, as he by whom they are accompliſhed; the Promiſes of the Law point at him, as he by whom they are ratified; and the Threatnings of the Law may be ſaid to point at him, as he, by whom they are eſcaped. *Chriſt* was the Sum of the Law, as well as the Subſtance of the Goſpel.

2. *Chriſt* is the End of the Law, in as much as he, is to a Believer, what the Law would have been to him, if he could have perfectly kept it; namely, Righteouſneſs, to be imputed to every one that believes in him, the Law being our School-maſter to bring us to *Chriſt*, that we might be juſtified by Faith, *Gal.* iii. 5.

Righteouſneſs by Faith, ſays the Apoſtle, can never be obtained by Works of the Law, becauſe *Moſes* deſcribes the Righteouſneſs of the Law thus; that the Man that doth theſe Things, ſhall live by them; that is, a proſperous and happy Life in the Land of *Canaan*, ſay ſome; and eternal Life in Heaven, ſay others. But then by this Law muſt be underſtood the moral, not the ceremonial Law, according to that of our Saviour, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments*; that is, the moral Law. This do, and thou ſhalt live. Where note, that ſuch as ſeek Juſtification and Salvation by the Works of the Law, muſt keep the moral Law perfectly and exactly; which being impoſſible to Man in his fallen Eſtate, *Chriſt* has obtained of his Father, that for the Sake of his Righteouſneſs, our ſincere, though imperfect Obedience, ſhould find Acceptance with God, and be available to Salvation.

Q. *What is the next Thing the Apoſtle ſpeaks of?*

A. The Apoſtle proceeds to ſet forth the great Anxiety and Trouble of Mind found with an awakened Sinner; he is at a Loſs how to ſtand juſtified in the Sight of God. The Law propounds to him Life; but the Goſpel reveals to him, that *Chriſt* has performed what is neceſſary for his Juſtification, and that by a practical and lively Faith, he ſhall have an Intereſt in it. We may therefore ſay, *Who ſhall aſcend into Heaven for us?* For *Chriſt* being aſcended, hath given us a convincing Proof that the Propitiation for our Sins is perfect; for otherwiſe our Security had not been received into God's Sanctuary; therefore to lie under Perplexities how we may be juſtified, is to deny the Value of his Righteouſneſs, and the Truth of his Aſcenſion.

And ſay not, *Who ſhall deſcend into the Deep?* that is, to bear the Torments of Hell, and expiate Sin; for this is to deny the Virtues of his Death; whereby he appeaſed the Wrath of God, and redeemed us from the Wrath to come. In the *Jew*, the redeeming Righteouſneſs of God is made viſible; in the Goſpel his juſtifying Righteouſneſs is reveal-from Faith to Faith. Thus the Way of Acceptance with God is ſo clearly ſtated and diſcovered in the Goſpel, that we need be in no Suſpence where to find it, or any other Satisfaction than what God hath given us in his Word.

Q. *What other Point of Doctrine does the Apoſtle here handle?*

A. We have next explained the two great Things the Goſpel requires in our Juſtification and Salvation. The firſt is, *Confeſſion of* Chriſt *with our Mouth*; that is, in all Times of Danger, particularly in a Time of Perſecution, to own *Chriſt Jeſus* our Lord, and to declare that we will ſerve him, and expect Salvation only from him.

The ſecond is, *To believe in our Hearts, that God hath raiſed* Chriſt *from the Dead*. But why is the Article of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection only named, ſeeing Faith reſpects his Birth, Life, Death, *&c*? Becauſe this Article of the Reſurrection preſuppoſeth all the reſt of the Antecedents to it, and Conſequents of it; namely, his Incarnation, Death, Paſſion, Aſcenſion, and Interceſſion. This Article therefore of the Reſurrection is put for, and includes all the reſt; for as he could not have riſen had he not firſt died; ſo his Death had availed us nothing, unleſs he had riſen again.

Obſerve here, that the principal Seat and Subject of Faith, is not barely the Underſtanding, but the Will, called here, the Heart; *with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs*; not the Head. Although Knowledge is ſo exceeding neceſſary unto Faith, that it is ſometimes put for it, *Iſai.* liii. *By his Knowledge, or by the Knowledge of him, ſhall my righteous Servant juſtify many*; yet there may be much Light in the Underſtanding, where there is no Life in the Will; much Knowledge in the Head, where there is no Faith in the Heart, nor Obedience in Life. Therefore, ſays the Apoſtle here, *with the Heart Man believeth*, &c.

Q. *In what Senſe is* Chriſt *a common and univerſal Saviour to all Mankind?*

A. He is ſo to all thoſe who believe in him, without any Diſcrimination or Difference between *Jew* and *Gentile*; *whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed; and whoſoever ſhall call on his Name, ſhall be ſaved.* Where, by believing on him, and calling upon him, muſt be underſtood ſuch a Faith in him, as is the Parent and Principle of Obedience to him. For the Devil himſelf may as well paſs for a Believer as a diſobedient *Saul*.

Q. *The Apoſtle next undertakes to prove, that there was a Neceſſity of preaching the Goſpel to the* Gentiles, *as well as to the* Jews, *in order to their believing on* Chriſt; *but how is his Way of Arguing forcible, demonſtrative, and convincing.*

A. Thus; God has promiſed Salvation to the *Gentiles*; but without calling on him there is no Salvation; and without Faith there is no calling upon him by Prayer; and without hearing there is no Faith; and without a Preacher there is no hearing; and without a ſolemn Miſſion, or ſending by *Chriſt* and his Miniſters, there can be no Preacher. And the Apoſtle's Manner of ſpeaking, is by Way of Interrogation, which is equivalent to a Negative; *How ſhall they call on him whom they have not believed?* that is, it is impoſſible, it would be impious and wicked to do it. None but God muſt be the Object of our Faith and Truſt, therefore he alone muſt be prayed to. And if ſo, then the Practice of praying to Angels and Saints departed, is wicked, and abominable in the Sight of God. How can they pray to them, unleſs they believe in them, and truſt in them? And if they truſt in them, a Curſe falls upon them; *curſed is that Man that truſteth in Man*; that is, in any Creature.

The only Way to Heaven is by *Chriſt*; the only Way to *Chriſt*, is by Faith; the only to Faith, is by the Word, it cometh by hearing. What becomes of thoſe who never heard of *Chriſt* in the preaching of the Goſpel, God only is fit to judge. This is certain, that all Men at the great Day ſhall be judged according to the Law they were under, and obliged by, and no other. Now Promulgation being the Eſſence of a Law, the Law cannot be a Law to them to whom it was not promulged, and made known; but a practical Belief of the Goſpel is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the Salvation of them to whom it is revealed.

Obſerve here the high Eſteem due to the Preachers of the Goſpel, and that by the Approbation of God himſelf; *how beautiful are the Feet of them*, &c. And for great Reaſon ſhould it be thus, becauſe the Miniſters of the Goſpel are Meſſengers of *Chriſt*; they receive both their Miſſion and Commiſſion from him; they are inſtructed by him, they negotiate for him, they ſpeak in his Name, they act in his ſtead; and whatſoever they promiſe or threaten in God's Name, he is ready to perform it. *Iſa.* xliv. 26. *He confirmeth the Word of his Servants, and performeth the Counſel of his Meſſenger.*

Q. *But, ſome might ſay, If the Goſpel be thus excellent, and the Seat of them that preach it, is ſo beautiful, whence was it that the* Jews, *to whom it was firſt preached, did not receive, and yield Obedience to it?*

A. The Apoſtle anſwers, that this Infidelity and Obſtinacy of the *Jews* was foretold by the Prophets of old, particularly by *Iſaiah*, who complains, Chap. liii. 1. *Lord! who hath believed our Report?* Thus, the Faith of the Goſpel is not common to all that hear the Goſpel. The hearing of the Word is neceſſary to Faith, but Faith doth not neceſſarily follow the hearing the Word.

From whence it is evident, that Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the preaching the Word of God. The Grace of Faith is wrought by the Spirit in the Act of Hearing; and the Matter heard by which this Faith is wrought, is the Word of God preached. A non-preaching Miniſter then, is no Miniſter; he is like a Bell without a Clapper, or a Cryer without a Voice; he neither anſwers the Deſign of his Commiſſion, nor the End of the Goſpel Inſtitution, which was to be be the inſtrumental Means of Faith, *Faith cometh by hearing.*

It was no leſs than a Miracle, that the Goſpel, in the Space of a few Years, ſhould be preached to all Nations, and planted in the remoteſt Parts of the World; and yet thus it was; which makes St. *Paul* here apply that to the preaching of the Apoſtles, which *David* applies to the preaching of the Heavens, *Pſal.* xix. 4. The Goſpel of *Chriſt*, like the Sun in the Firmament, caſts its beautiful and glorious Beams all the World over. For on the Commiſſion given out by *Chriſt* to his Apoſtles, to go into all the World, for the ſpeedy Performance of this Service, namely, the carrying the Light of the Goſpel, as the Sun doth his Light, unto all Nations of the Earth. Some obſerve, that there was hardly any one conſiderable Nation in the World, but within forty Years after *Chriſt*'s Aſcenſion, had the glad Tidings of the Goſpel preached to it. Hence the Apoſtle tells us, *Tit.* ii. 11. *That the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men*; that is, the Goſpel, without Reſtriction, was tendered unto all Nations, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to all Perſons, bond and free, honourable and ignoble. Behold an Example of laborious Diligence and Induſtry in the miniſterial Service! How badly now imitated! when Miniſters think it an intolerable Fatigue to viſit the People of their own Pariſh, though of a ſmall Circuit, when the Apoſtles travers'd Sea and Land to preach *Jeſus Chriſt*, and propagate the everlaſting Goſpel!

Did not Iſrael know; that is, of the preaching of Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and of their own Infidelity in rejecting it? This they might have known, both from his Teſtimony, who ſays, *Deut.* xxxii. *I will provoke you* (*Jews* refuſing to believe) *unto Jealouſy by them that are* (yet) *no People* (of God) *and by a fooliſh Nation* (ſo the *Gentiles* were ac-

counted by the conceited Jews) *I will anger you.* When God preferr'd the *Gentiles* before the *Jews*, the Hearts of the latter were vexed with Jealouſy and Anger, to behold all their Privileges taken from them, and given to the former, whom they had in the utmoſt Contempt.

The ſecond Teſtimony is that of *Haiah*, who, the Apoſtle, ſays, was very bold. that is, very plain and expreſs, in foretelling God's Calling of the *Gentiles*, and Rejecting the *Jews*; who firſt ſought him not; and caſting off the *Jews*, who, after his Long-ſuffering, continued obſtinately to reject the Offers of his Grace, and Tenders of his Mercy.

What little Reaſon then have the Miniſters of God to deſpond, after many unwearied Attempts to reclaim Sinners, when they conſider the infinite Patience of God towards them, *who ſtretches forth his Hands all the Day long to a diſobedient and gainſaying People*; that is, patiently contends with their Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs. Lord! why ſhould we that are Sinners ourſelves, think much to bear with Sinners? Let us rather imitate thy Example in waiting upon them with the Offers of Grace and Mercy, and follow them with our melting Entreaties and paſſionate Importunities, 'till we either overcome their Obſtinacy, or leave them totally inexcuſable.

CHAP. XI.

The Jews *not wholly rejected, proved by his own Example, God's Election, and the Times of* Elias. *Some ſaved by Grace, the others periſh by their own Hardneſs, as was foretold. Their Fall was the Riches of the* Gentiles, *much more will their Recovery be ſo. This ſhould provoke the* Jews *to a like Faith, and make the* Gentiles *not to inſult, but to fear a like Judgment. The* Jews, *on the Fulneſs of the* Gentiles, *ſhall be converted; God is able. They are the natural Branches, elected, and beloved of God, who is unchangeable. God's Dealing with the* Gentiles, *is an Example and Proof of this. All left under Sin, that they may be Objects of Mercy. The Concluſion is, to adore the Wiſdom, Knowledge, Juſtice, and Sovereignty of God.*

Q. ST. Paul *having, towards the cloſe of the laſt Chapter, ſhewn that the* Jews *would be rejected, and the* Gentiles *called, begins this by anſwering a great and popular Objection. If this be ſo, ſome would be ready to ſay, then God has caſt away his Covenant People, violated his Covenant-promiſe, forgot the Seed of* Abraham *his Friend: How does he anſwer this?*

A. He anſwers by his uſual Form of Denial, *God forbid*; and then proceeds to ſhew, that the Rejection of the *Jews* was not total; only the unbelieving Part of them was caſt off. This he proves by producing himſelf as an Inſtance in the Caſe; *I myſelf am an* Iſraelite, *of the Seed of* Abraham, *of the Tribe of* Benjamin; I am a *Jew* by lineal Deſcent, not a Proſelyte, yet am not I caſt off by God; therefore God has not caſt away all his People. God will not caſt away one Soul that ſincerely believes in his Son. Believers are God's Jewels, his Children, his Portion, his Inheritance; he will never caſt them off. They are united to him by the Bond of the Holy Spirit, and he has engaged himſelf to them by the Bond of an everlaſting Covenant. *God has not caſt away his People.*

God would not wholly caſt off the *Jewiſh* Church and People, becauſe he hath foreknown them; that is, had choſen the Body of them to be a ſpecial and peculiar People to himſelf, above and before all the People of the Earth: And alſo has foreknown, that is, foreſeen that many of them would, through the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, ſavingly believe on the promiſed *Meſſiah.*

Another Inſtance produced to prove that God had not ſuffered the *Jews* to apoſtatize and fall away, is that of *Elias*, in whoſe Time there was ſuch a Revolt among the *Jews* from the true God to *Jeroboam*'s Idolatry, that he thought himſelf alone. But God aſſures him of the contrary, he having reſerved to himſelf ſeven thouſand true and faithful Worſhippers of himſelf, who had never bowed the Knee to the Image of *Baal.*

This Example St. *Paul* applies to the preſent Caſe. As *Elias* was not alone in the corrupt State of *Iſrael* then, ſo neither was the Apoſtle alone now in this Time of general Rejection of the *Jewiſh* Church. God had a Number then, he has a Remnant now, which according to his free and and gracious Purpoſe are brought to believe in his Son.

Q. *What Concluſion does the Apoſtle draw from the forementioned Aſſertion?*

A. His Inference is this: If a Remnant be ſaved according to the free Purpoſe and gracious Election of God, then it is not upon the Conſideration of the Merit of their own Works; they are not juſtified and accepted for the Works of the Law, otherwiſe *Grace is no more Grace*; for what need is there of Grace, where Men have continued in all Things written in the Law, to do them? For the Man that doth theſe Things, ſhall live in them. But on the other Hand, if it be of Works that we are juſtified and accepted, then *it is no more of Grace, otherwiſe Work is no more Work.* Grace ſupplies the defect of our Works, and procures Pardon for our Non-performance of them, according to the Tenor of the Law.

Q. *But how was this applicable to the* Jews?

A. With reſpect to the body of the *Jewiſh* Nation, the Apoſtle affirms, that they had not obtained what they ſought after; that is, Deliverance by the *Meſſiah*, Juſtification and Righteouſneſs by the Works of the Law. This they ſought, but found not; yet *the Election hath obtained it*, the choſen Generation of Believers, ſeeking Righteouſneſs in a Goſpel-way, namely, by Faith in *Chriſt* the Mediator, have obtained it.

Q. And the reſt were blinded; *but by whom?*

A. Why, by their own Sin and Prejudice; and by the juſt Judgment of God, leaving them to their own Ignorance and Obſtinacy, for ſhutting their Eyes againſt the clear Light of the Goſpel: And by giving them over to Satan, the God of this World, who blindeth the Eyes of them that believe not, 2 *Cor.* iv. 4.

Obſerve the direful Judgment that followed upon this dreadful Sin; they ſhut their Eyes, and ſaid they would not ſee; God cloſed their Eyes, and ſaid, they ſhall not ſee; becauſe they would not obey the Spirit of God, which would have awakened and enligtned them. God gave them up to a Spirit of Slumber, and Stupidity, and Blindneſs; that is, he permitted them to continue and lie under thoſe prejudices againſt the true *Meſſiah*, which they had taken up, and retained in their Minds.

Q. *What other Points does he treat of in relation to the* Jews?

A. The Apoſtle proceeds to declare, that the general Unbelief and Hardneſs of Heart, found amongſt the rejected *Jews*, was not to be wondered at, ſince it was foretold by Type, that his own People the *Jews* ſhould extremely injure and wrong him, oppreſs and afflict him: For which Wickedneſs he foretels what dreadful and tremendous Judgments ſhould befall the *Jews*; namely, *That their Table ſhould be made to them a Snare, a Trap, and a Stumbling-Block*; that is, that all their pleaſant and delightful Things ſhould become the Inſtruments of their Deſtruction, *That their Eyes be darkened, and that they may not ſee.* The Darkneſs of their Eyes, ſignifies the taking away the Judgment and Underſtanding from a People. And *the bowing down of the Back*, always implies their groveling upon this Earth; their reliſhing nothing but earthly Things, lifting up neither Head nor Heart to God.

Now all this, which *David* ſpake of the wicked *Jews* in his Time, the Apoſtle applies and adapts to the unbelieving *Jews* in his Days, to whom the very preaching of the Goſpel was an Occaſion of Obduration and Hardneſs of Heart.

But obſerve, that Imprecations are to be uſed very warily, and only in weighty Matters. Theſe and other Expreſſions of *David*, which look like Imprecations, may as well be accounted prophetical Predictions, foretelling what will befal obſtinate Sinners, rather than praying that Evil may come. Great is the Sin of uſing Imprecations lightly, either upon ourſelves or others. Some Perſons uſe them to gain Credit, to what they ſay; but this will not do with wiſe Men, who frequently obſerve, that Perſons moſt guilty, are moſt apt to call for Vengeance upon themſelves, that they may be thought guiltleſs. How do ſome Wretches call for that, at which the Devils tremble, their own Damnation! Alas! it ſlumbers not; in a few Moments thou ſhalt feel what thou wilt not fear.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle farther ſay concerning the Rejection of the* Jews?

A. As the Rejection of the *Jews* was not to be total, ſo neither ſhould it be final, but they ſhall be generally called before the End of the World. *Have they ſtumbled that they ſhould fall?* That is, have they ſo ſtumbled and fallen, ſo as never to riſe more? Are they utterly forſaken and caſt off? No ſuch thing; but God in his righteous Judgment hath permitted them to fall, that they having obſtinately refuſed the Goſpel, it might be preached to the *Gentiles*; whoſe receiving of the Goſpel, God will, in his infinite Wiſdom, make uſe of, to provoke the *Jews* to Jealouſy and Emulation, ſeeing themſelves ſo far outſtript by thoſe whom they contemned and deſpiſed, and in the Cloſe make this Jealouſy and Emulation a Means and Occaſion of the *Jews* Converſion. What! ſay the *Jews*, ſhall the *Gentiles* go away with Heaven alone, whom we thought the vileſt People upon Earth? Come let us put in for a Part and Share in the Goſpel-mercies and Privileges with them.

If then the caſting off the *Jews* was ſo profitable to the *Gentile* World, how much more, when they ſhall become Chriſtians, will they add to the Fulneſs, the Glory, and Greatneſs of the Chriſtian Church?

Behold the wonderful Wiſdom of the aſtoniſhing Goodneſs, the over-ruling Providence and Power of God, in cauſing the Fall of the *Jews* to be the Cauſe of his manifeſting his abundant Grace in the Converſion of the *Gentiles*; and ſpreading the plentiful Knowledge of *Chriſt* over all the World; and in cauſing the general Converſion of the *Jews*, towards the End of the World, to confirm the Faith of the believing *Gentiles*.

Q. *Why does St.* Paul *glory in his being made the Miniſter of the* Gentiles?

A. I magnify mine Office, &c. as well in reſpect of being made the Inſtrument of converting the blind *Gentiles* to the belief of *Chriſt*; as in provoking his own Countrymen the *Jews*, not to ſuffer the *Gentiles* ſolely to enjoy the Privileges of the Goſpel; *If by any Means I may provoke to Emulation.* As if he had ſaid, O that I could once ſee an holy Emulation take hold of my Countrymen! That rather than not believe at all, and be ſaved, I might ſee them believe at laſt for very Anger, or even Shame, and go to Heaven in a holy Chaſe.

For, adds the Apoſtle, if the caſting off the contumacious *Jews* be a Means of ſending and ſpreading the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and ſo of bringing them into the Church, and of obtaining Pardon for them upon their Repentance, what a Miracle of Mercy will it be for theſe *Jews* now to repent, and to be actually re-aſſumed into God's Favour, and to receive the Faith of *Chriſt*? Even as great a Miracle, as fit to work upon the *Gentiles*, (both to make them all to believe on *Chriſt*, when his Crucifiers do ſo, and rejoice at the happy Turn) as if they ſhould ſee them raiſed from the dead again.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle prove the univerſal Reſtoration of the* Jews *before the End of the World?*

A. His Argument to prove this, is taken from the Covenant that God made with *Abraham* (as the Root of the *Jewiſh* Nation) *I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed.* The Argument runs thus: As the Branches follow the Nature of the Root, ſo do the *Jews* the Condition of *Abraham*, and the holy Patriarchs, with Reſpect to the outward Privileges of the Covenant. Was the Root holy? So are the Branches, not inherently, but federally holy, being called, conſecrated, and ſeparated from the World unto the Service of God. If then Almighty God, by entring into Covenant with *Abraham*, hallowed to himſelf all his Poſterity, even as the firſt Fruits hallowed the whole Lump; ſo will God, in his own good Time, be ſo mindful of the *Jews*, the Poſterity of *Abraham*, as to bring them again nigh unto himſelf, in remembrance of his holy Covenant.

Hence it appears, that the *Jews*, tho' at preſent caſt off by God, are ſtill an holy People; they are under an hereditary dedication to God, they have a federal Holineſs, as deſcending from holy Progenitors; with reſpect to whom the Love and Compaſſion of God are towards them, and they ſhall in his own good Time be called and converted by him: And, therefore, in the mean Time, the *Jews* are not to look upon themſelves with Deſperation, nor ſhould the *Gentiles* look upon them with diſdain.

Q. *What Advice does he give to the* Gentiles?

A. The Apoſtle next exhorts the believing *Gentiles* not to deſpiſe and reproach the rejected *Jews*; and this he urges from the Condition of *Gentiles*, both paſt and preſent; in their preſent Condition they were grafted into the true Olive.

Q. *What is ſignified by the* Olive-Tree?

A. By the *Olive-Tree* we are to underſtand the viſible Church of God; by the Root he means *Abraham*; he was the Root of the Olive-Tree, the *Jewiſh* Church. But how ſo? Not by Way of Communication, but by Way of Adminiſtration. Not as if either *Jew* or *Gentile* did receive any Sap of ſpiritual Life from him, as Branches receive a natural Life from the Root; for thus *Chriſt* alone is the Root of the Church: But *Abraham* was the Root of the Olive-Tree, as being the firſt Man with whom God was pleaſed to treat, and enter into that Covenant with.

Again; by the Fatneſs of the Olive-Tree, we are to underſtand all external Privileges and Ordinances, all ſpiritual Benefits and Bleſſings which belong to the *Jews*. By the Branches we are to underſtand the Members of the *Jewiſh* Church; and by the wild Olive, the *Gentile* World. Now though the *Gentiles*, through rich Grace, were inſtated in the Privileges of the *Jews*, yet the Apoſtle foreſaw, that inſtead of Thankfulneſs to God, for the Favours received from him, they would be puffed up with Pride, accordingly he adviſes them not to be high-minded, but fear; as if he had ſaid, O ye *Gentiles*, your State is high, let your Hearts be humble. The *Jews* are fallen, and unleſs you walk in holy Fear, you cannot ſtand: Unbelief ruined them; take heed that Pride doth not ruin you; for the holy and juſt God is no Reſpecter of Perſons. He that ſpareth not the natural Branches, will not ſpare you.

Q. *In what Manner does the Apoſtle counſel the* Gentiles *to behave towards the* Jews.

A. He exhorts them not to inſult the rejected *Jews*; to which Purpoſe he makes uſe of ſeveral Motives. The two firſt are drawn from the Severity of God in cutting off the *Jews*, and from his Goodneſs and Bounty in calling the *Gentiles*, *Behold the Goodneſs and Severity of God*, &c. Juſtice and Mercy, Goodneſs and Severity, are Attributes, or Qualities eminently found in God; and contrary only in their Effects upon Men. The ſame God is merciful and ſevere, with Reſpect to different Perſons, and different Qualifications. All Mercy is not a Virtue, but that which is conſiſtent with the other Perfections of Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs.

The next Argument is taken from the Condition upon which the *Gentiles* hold their preſent Standing in the Favour and Grace of God; namely, *If they continue in his Goodneſs*; if they walk worthy of this Favour from God, and ſuitably to ſuch a kind and gracious Diſpenſation; otherwiſe they ſhall be cut off and caſt away, as well as the ſtubborn and unbelieving *Jews*.

Q. *What other Argument does the Apoſtle uſe to prove the Converſion of the* Jews?

A. He ſhews the Probability and Poſſibility of the *Jews* Converſion, from what he had already done in graffing in the *Gentiles*, who were wild Olives, into the true Olive, which was more difficult and unlikely, than to graff in the *Jews* again, who were natural Branches.

Farther; the Apoſtle proves, that the Rejection of the *Jews* was neither Total nor Final; not Total, becauſe *Blindneſs in Part* (only) *happened unto* Iſrael; that is, Part of the *Jews* only are left in Unbelief, and under the Power of ſpiritual Blindneſs: Nor is their Rejection final, but for a Time only; namely, till the Fulneſs of the *Gentiles* be come in; that is, till the *Gentile* Churches be advanced to an honourable State and Fulneſs. And then all the *Iſrael* of God, the faithful Seed of *Abraham*, and the main Body of the *Jews*, ſhall make up the Catholick Church, and be ſaved from their Unbelief, according to that gracious Promiſe, *Iſa.* lix. 20, 21.

Hence learn, that there ſhall be a General Calling of the *Jews* to the State of the Goſpel, before *Chriſt*'s Second Coming; as not only poſſible and probable, but infallible, ſure, and certain; and that from the Prophecies and Predictions of the Prophets of God; let us therefore believe it firmly, pray for it fervently, and live in Expectation of it continually.

Two farther Arguments are produced to prove the general Converſion of the *Jews*. The firſt is taken from the Dignity of the *Jews*, being the antient People of God, whoſe Father *Abraham* he choſe, and made his firſt Covenant with him and his Seed; and therefore are they beloved by God, as to the Election of that Nation, for their Father's ſake, who had the Honour to be called the Friend of God.

The ſecond Argument is drawn from the Immutability and unchangeable Nature of God; *His Gifts and Calling are without Repentance*; that is, although the *Jews* have rendered themſelves unworthy of the Favour of God, yet the Covenant having been once made with their Fathers, and they having had the Honour to be his ſpecial and peculiar People, God will never repent of his Kindneſs to them, nor of his Covenant made with them, but will certainly reſtore them to their former Privileges and happy State; *For the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance*. Take the Words relatively, and the Note is this; That the Gifts and Calling of God, whereby he was pleaſed to adopt the Poſterity of *Abraham*, and to engage himſelf by Covenant to them, are inviolable, and ſuch as never ſhall be reverſed or repented of.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle deſcribe the deplorable Condition of the* Jews?

A. *As concerning the Goſpel, they are Enemies for your ſake*; that is, becauſe you *Gentiles* receive the Goſpel, therefore the *Jews* reject it, and, for that Reaſon, are rejected by God. But this happened well to the poor *Gentiles*; for upon the *Jews* Refuſal, the Goſpel was brought the ſooner to the *Gentiles*, and they were converted by it.

Q. *What does he farther ſay, concerning the Converſion of the* Jews?

A. The Concluſion of the Apoſtle's Argument, to prove the Converſion and calling of the *Jews* towards the End of the World, is drawn from a Compariſon of Equals: If God, after a long Time of Diſobedience, received the *Gentiles* to Mercy, he will alſo, after a long Time of Infidelity, receive the *Jews* to Mercy. If God hath called the *Gentiles* to his Grace, after long Idolatry, though God never promiſed to be their God, how much more will he recall his Covenant-People from their Infidelity, in his own appointed Time? So that the Argument is drawn from the Leſs to the Greater:

If the Infidelity of the *Jews* was an Occaſion of Mercy to the *Gentiles*, much more ſhall the Mercy ſhewed to the *Gentiles*, be an Occaſion of Mercy to the *Jews*; and conſequently, their preſent Infidelity ſhall be no Obſtacle to their Converſion afterwards.

For Almighty God, in his Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs, ſuffer'd both *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſucceſſively, for ſome Time, to remain under the Power of Unbelief and Diſobedience, that ſo, in his own Time, he might fulfil the great Counſel of his Goodneſs, in ſhewing undeſerved Mercy unto all, both *Jew* and *Gentile*. Hence we may gather, that the Converſion of the *Jewiſh* Nation to the *Chriſtian* Faith, has good Foundation in the holy Scriptures, and has been the received Doctrine of the Church of *Chriſt* in all Ages.

Q. *How does St.* Paul *conclude his Diſcourſe?*

A. The Apoſtle concludes the Chapter with an awful Admiration at the Depth of the abundant Grace and Goodneſs of God, in bearing with the Infidelity of the *Jews*, and Obſtinacy of the *Gentiles*; as alſo of his unſearchable Wiſdom in making firſt the Rejection of the *Jews* a Means of calling the *Gentiles*, and then working upon the obſtinate *Jews*, by his Mercy ſhewn unto the *Gentiles*.

By *Judgment* here, ſome underſtand the Decrees and Determinations of God's Will; by *Ways*, the Adminiſtration of his Providence, in order to the Execution of thoſe Decrees: Both which are ſecret, unſearchable, and unfathomable. There are Myſteries of Providence as well as Myſteries of Faith, and both of them tranſcend human Underſtanding.

For who hath known the Mind of the Lord? No Creature ever did, or ever can, nor was ever call'd to be of his Council. No Creature ever did, or can adviſe him, nor can challenge God as if indebted to him. Who ever gave any thing to God, that he did not firſt receive from him? Or, who can merit any thing at his Hands, ſince he owes us nothing? And if ſo, who hath Reaſon to complain that God deals hardly with the *Jews*, in rejecting them, and preferring the *Gentiles* before them? Hence learn, that in thoſe diſcriminating Favours that God diſpenſes towards ſome of the Children of Men, no other Reaſon can be aſſign'd but his own good Will and Pleaſure.

God is the Author, the efficient Cauſe of all Things; all Things are through him, as the providential Director, and preſerving Cauſe; and all Things tend to him, as the ultimate End and final Cauſe; therefore to him all Praiſe, Honour and Glory, ought for ever to be aſcribed.

And if God be the firſt Cauſe, let us, with Humility and Thankfulneſs, acknowledge and admire him, adore, love, and ſerve him, who is the Author of our Being, and the Cauſe of all other Beings. And if he be the laſt End, let us refer all our Actions to his Glory; in all our natural, our civil, but eſpecially in all our religious Actions, let the Glory of God be our ſupreme Aim and ultimate End. For if we do not now live unto him, we can never hereafter expect to live with him.

Chap. XII.

Exhortations to an holy Life; to offer up ourſelves to God, and not to be like to the World; not to be proud of any Office or Gift, but to uſe it to Edification. Miniſters and Deacons; brotherly Love; fervent Zeal; Hope, Patience, Prayer, Meekneſs, Compaſſion, Unity, Humility, Forbearance, Peaceableneſs, Love for Enemies, recommended and enforced.

Q. WHAT *general Obſervations do you make upon this, and the following Chapters?*

A. Our Apoſtle having finiſh'd the Doctrinal Part of his Epiſtle, begins in this Chapter to apply it. From hence, to the End of the Epiſtle, we have an Exhortation to religious and moral Duties, as an Argument of their Sincerity, and as an Ornament to their Profeſſion.

Q. *What is the firſt Point of his Exhortation?*

A. The Apoſtle begins his Exhortation by Way of Obſervation or Intreaty; *I beſeech you, Brethren.* It imports great Lenity and Meekneſs; and teaches Miniſters, that they are not only to propound the Doctrines of the Goſpel to their People's Underſtanding, but muſt endeavour to work upon their Wills and Affections to embrace and entertain it.

Preſent your Bodies a living Sacrifice. Dedicate your Bodies, devote yourſelves, your whole Man, Soul and Body, to the Service of God and his Glory.

The Properties of this *Chriſtian* Sacrifice are, it muſt be voluntary, *preſent yourſelves*; it muſt be a living Sacrifice, a holy, reaſonable Sacrifice; otherwiſe it will find no Acceptance with God.

The Argument or Motive the Apoſtle uſes, to perſuade Perſons to this voluntary Sacrifice, is drawn from the Mercies of God; *I beſeech you Brethren, by the Mercies of God.*

We have next the Apoſtle's Dehortation; *be not conformed to this World*; do not accommodate yourſelves to the corrupt Principles and Cuſtoms, the ſinful Courſes and Practices of the Men of the World. The *Chriſtian* muſt not cut the Coat of his Profeſſion according to the Faſhion of the Times, or the Humour of the Company he falls into.

Again; here's an Apoſtolical Exhortation, *be ye transformed by the renewing of your Mind*; be ye regeneratted and changed in your whole Man, beginning at the Mind or Underſtanding, by which the Spirit of God works on the inferior Faculties of the Soul. Every converted Perſon is truly and really changed, throughly ſanctified and renewed, endowed with new Diſpoſitions and Affections; yet this Converſion and Renovation is not a ſubſtantial, but a qualitative Change, not in the Subſtance or Faculties of the Soul, but in the Quality of thoſe Faculties. The renewed *Chriſtian* is ſanctified throughly in all Faculties, but not perfectly in all Degrees. There remains in his Underſtanding too much Blindneſs and Ignorance; in his Will too much Irregularity and Senſuality. Yet ſuch is the Indulgence of the Goſpel, as to call him an holy Perſon transformed by the Renewedneſs of his Mind.

The Reaſon of the Apoſtle's Exhortation is, *That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God*; that ye may diſcern and approve what the Will of God is under the Goſpel, which requires not what is ritually, but what is ſubſtantially good, and conſequently what is always acceptable to him.

Q. *What are the particular Duties which the Apoſtle recommends to their Practice?*

A. Having given this general Exhortation, he comes more cloſely to point out ſome particular Duties;

ties; the firſt of which is Modeſty and true Humility of Mind. This he eſpecially recommends to thoſe who bear any publick Office in the Church, and have received ſome peculiar and ſpecial Gifts to furniſh them for the Diſcharge of that Office. St. *Paul* therefore enjoins them to watch againſt Pride and Haughtineſs of Mind; not to think themſelves wiſer or better than they were, but to think ſoberly and modeſtly of themſelves, according to the Truth, and to the degree of Faith and Wiſdom given unto them by God; plainly intimating, that ſuch as are exalted to a degree of Eminency in Church above others, are in great danger of the Sin of Pride, which is their Duty to watch and pray againſt, and to exerciſe that Humility and Lowlineſs of Mind, ſo greatly ornamental to to their Perſon and Profeſſion. *Let not any think of himſelf more highly than he ought to think, but let him think ſoberly.*

Q. *What Argument does he uſe to preſs this Duty of Humility upon the Officers of the Church?*

A. From a Compariſon between the natural and myſtical Body. As in the natural Body, there are many Members, and every Member hath its diſtinct Office; the Eye to ſee, the Ear to hear, the Hand to work, and the Foot to walk; ſo in the myſtical Body, the Church of *Chriſt*, there are many Members, but each Member muſt keep his own Place, and not invade the Duty, or uſurp the Office of another, but every one employ his proper Gift to the Benefit and Comfort of the whole, without diſdaining or envying one another. God is a God of Order, and hates Diſorder in his Church.

Thus then, ſeeing it hath pleaſed God to appoint diſtinct Officers in his Church, and to furniſh thoſe Officers with various degrees of Gifts, let every one in general faithfully diſcharge his Office, and keep within the Limits of his Calling, neither neglecting his own Duty, nor invading another's: In particular, *let him that propheſieth*, that is expounds the Scriptures in the Church, do it *according to the Proportion of Faith*, or according to what is taught plainly and uniformly in the whole Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament, as the Rule of our Faith. We muſt not force nor wreſt the Scriptures to make them ſpeak what we pleaſe, but what the Prophets and Apoſtles taught, whom we interpret; otherwiſe we do not expound according to the Analogy and Proportion of Faith. Let him that miniſtreth, teaches, exhorts, attend on that Work with all Diligence, and he that performs the Office of a Deacon (who are called Helps, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28.) and is employed to relieve the Poor out of the Church's Stock, and to take care of Strangers, Orphans, aged, ſick, and impotent Perſons, *let him do it with Simplity*, that is, without Partiality, or reſpect of Perſons: And *with Cheerfulneſs*, that is, with Alacrity of Heart, with Gentleneſs in Words, with Pleaſantneſs in Countenance, bearing with the Infirmities of the Aged, with the Loathſomneſs of the Sick and Diſeaſed, and adminiſtring with Delight to the Neceſſities of all that want.

Q. *What Inſtructions does St.* Paul *give to Chriſtians in general?*

A. He acquaints them with their Duties in common Converſe with one another. He begins with the Grace and Duty of Love, that being a radical Grace, the Root from which all other Graces and Duties flow and ſpring. This mutual Love the Holy Ghoſt requires ſhould be *without Diſſimulation*, ſincere and unfeigned, not in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth. Alſo, that it be an affectionate and tender, as well as an unfeigned and ſincere Love; *be kindly affectionate one to another.* The Word ſignifies ſuch an affectionate Tenderneſs as the Mother bears to the Fruit of her Womb, and as Creatures bear to their Young; and no wonder that a fervent Love is required when laying down our Lives for the Brethren is commanded, 1 *John* iii. 10. Likewiſe that our Love to others; do incline and prevail with us to give Preference to others; really to conceive others to be more worthy of Honour than our ſelves, and rejoicing to ſee them placed in a more uſeful and honourable Poſt than our ſelves. Yet the Love of our Friends muſt not make us in love with their Faults; nor muſt our Hatred of Vice draw us off from delighting in, and cleaving to, that which is good in Man. *Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good.*

The next Duty exhorted to, is Diligence and Aſſiduity in all our Duties both to God and Man, but particularly in the Duties of our Calling. We muſt avoid the two Extremes of Slothfulneſs on the one Hand, and exceſſive Drudgery on the other, in the Management of our ſecular Affairs. But in the Service of God we muſt *be fervent.* What is done for the World, is beſt done with Indifference; but what is done for God, is beſt done with Zeal and Fervency, or not at all; for to be cold and careleſs in the Service of God, diſparages his Excellency, and will defeat our Expectation.

Q. *What are his particular Directions to the* Romans?

A. He tells them how they ſhould conduct themſelves under Afflictions; namely, to endure them patiently; to rejoice in Hope of preſent Deliverance, or future Happineſs; and in order to both, to be much in the Duty of Prayer. Hope, Patience and Prayer, are powerful Supports under Afflictions, and will make them not only tolerable but joyous.

Charity and Almſgiving to the poor Members of *Chriſt*, eſpecially under Perſecution, is another Duty recommended to our Practice. Hoſpitality is an eminent Part of Chriſtian Charity; that is, ſuch an Hoſpitality as is accompanied with Prudence and Sobriety. There is a wide Difference between riotous Houſe-keeping, and true Hoſpitality; the latter is always deſigned for the Help of the Poor, and particularly for thoſe that are Godly. As to the Spirituals, God fills the Hungry with good Things, but ſends the Rich empty away; whereas moſt Men, as to Corporals, fill the Rich with their good Things, but ſend the Poor, if not empty away, yet relieved only with the Sweepings of their Table. This is not according to the Apoſtle's Precept, to *diſtribute to the Neceſſity of the Saints, and to be given to Hoſpitality.*

Q. *What other Duties does the Apoſtle exhort them to put in Practice?*

A. Our Duty to our Enemies is here likewiſe declared, *bleſs them that perſecute you*; pray for, and wiſh them well, whatever Provocation you may have to the contrary.

Note, the Apoſtle doubles the Exhortation; *bleſs your Perſecutors*; *bleſs and curſe no:* This ſhews both the Difficulty of the Duty, how contrary it is to corrupt Nature; alſo the Conſtancy of the Duty, we muſt ever bleſs, and curſe not; always wiſh well, never ill to the worſt of Men. Why ſhould we hurt ourſelves by ſinful Paſſion, becauſe others hurt us by Slander and falſe Accuſation.

The next Duty required, is Chriſtian Sympathy and mutual Affection between Brethren, both in Proſperity and Adverſity; to rejoice in the one, and to mourn together in the other, as being Members of the ſame Body: But how far are they from this Duty, who, inſtead of mourning for the Affliction of others, are glad at their Calamity, and rejoice in their Downfal!

Be ye of the ſame Mind one toward another; which Words are an Exhortation to Unity among Chriſtians; this is threefold; an Unity of the Head, or of Judgment and Opinion; of the Heart, or of Love and Affection; of the Tongue, which is an Unity of Expreſſion. Happy we! when in all theſe Reſpects *we are of the ſame Mind one towards another*.

Two Hindrances of Unity and Concord among Chriſtians are here mentioned, 1. Pride; *mind not high Things*. 2. Arrogancy; *be not wiſe in your own Conceits*; *mind not high Things*; mind not Preferment, nor Riches, nor vain Glory, but be contented with, and thankful for a middle Station and Condition in the World; which is far more eligible than a State of Riches, Plenty, and Abundance, as being leſs liable to Temptations.

And *be not wiſe in your own Conceits*; entertain humble Thoughts of your own Knowledge; think not that your Wiſdom is ſo clear and full, as if you needed neither divine Aſſiſtance and Guidance, nor yet the Advice and Counſel of your Brethren.

Q. *How do you explain, ver.* 15. Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep?

A. Dr. *Hammond* has this Note; This Verſe, ſays he, ſeems to refer to the two Gates of the Temple, one called *the Gate of the Bridegroom*; and the other of the *Mourners*, into which two ſorts of Men all kind of Perſons are divided. Under the firſt are contained all thoſe that continue unblemiſh'd Members of the Church, under no kind of Cenſure; under the other are the Excommunicate of the loweſt kind, and thoſe under Cenſure, who, tho' they might come into the Temple, yet were to come in at the Door of Mourners, with ſome Differenre upon them, and Diſcrimination from other Men, that they who ſaw them, might pray for them in this Form, *He that dwells in this Houſe comfort thee, and give thee a Heart to obey*. See 1 *Cor.* v. 2. And accordingly the Exhortation is, to have Affections Chriſtianly diſpos'd towards all Men, to be very much afflicted, which 2 *Cor.* xii. is called Mourning, or bewailing ſuch as are (for their Faults) juſtly fallen under the Cenſure of the Church; and to do the utmoſt we can toward their Recovery; and on the other ſide, to rejoice at the ſpiritual Good and Proficiency of all others.

Q. *Explain the firſt Part of, ver.* 17. Recompence to no Man Evil for Evil?

A. By Evil here we are to underſtand Wrongs and private Injuries; by not recompencing them, is meant not revenging them. Corrupt Nature is very apt to return Wrong for Wrong, one Ill turn for another; but Chriſtianity ſets a noble Pattern before us, even the Example of him, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he ſuffered, threatned not*.

Q. *Expound the laſt Clauſe of the ſame Verſe*, Provide Things honeſt in the Sight of all Men.

A. By Honeſty and an irreproachable Life, cut off all Occaſion from the Enemies of Religion to ſpeak evil of them and their holy Profeſſion; that all your Words and Actions be juſtifiable and unexceptionable to that Degree, that the Heathens may be in love with Chriſtianity, by obſerving their Lives to be holy and honeſt. The World cannot diſcern our Hearts, but they ſoon diſcover an Error in our Lives, and will throw the Dirt of our Sins on the Face of our Religion; therefore we had need *provide Things honeſt in the Sight of all Men*.

The Peaceableneſs; *Live peaceably*; be of a peaceable Temper, and practiſe ſuch Things as make for Peace, and that *with all Men*; not with Friends only, and with thoſe of your own Judgment and Perſuaſion, but with Men of diſagreeing Humours and Intereſts, of different Principles and Apprehenſions from you.

But obſerve the double Reſtriction and Limitation with which the Duty is bounded; firſt, *if it be poſſible*; implying, that there is a ſort of Men in the World that make Peace impracticable; but for others, if it may be enjoy'd upon honeſt, tho' upon hard Terms, we muſt remember that Peace and Truth are two valuable Things, which can never be bought too dear, if they be not purchas'd with Sin and Baſeneſs.

The ſecond Reſtriction is, *as much as in you lieth*; now this reſpects our Endeavours, not our Succeſs; if we follow Peace with all Men, tho' we cannot overtake it, yet we ſhall not miſs our Reward in purſuing it. Peace is a moſt important Duty, a ſingular Benefit and Bleſſing, which every Chriſtian is bound to purſue and promote, and that with all Men. *If it be poſſible*, &c.

Again; the Apoſtle renews his Exhortation to all Chriſtians to watch againſt the Sin of private and perſonal Revenge; he urged it before, ver. 17. he enforces it here, ver. 19. thereby ſhewing how prone our corrupt Natures are to commit this Sin, and how hard the contrary Duty is to Fleſh and Blood. The Heathens reckon'd Revenge a Part of Juſtice, and rank'd it amongſt their Virtues; but the Scriptures require, that inſtead of revenging an Injury, we remit and forgive it.

Q. Rather give place uuto Wrath. *What Wrath? or whoſe?*

A. Why, ſay ſome, give place to your own Wrath, give way a little, and turn aſide from the Perſon you are angry with, and do not ſuffer your Anger to hurry you away to Revenge. Give Place to the Wrath of thoſe that wrong you, ſay others, decline their Wrath, aud give not Word for Word, which will but add Fuel to the Fire, and Oil to the Flame.

But it ſeems beſt to underſtand it of God's Wrath; leave the Matter to God, he will right your Cauſe; do not take God's Work out of his Hand; rather give place to the Wrath of God againſt them, for Vengeance is his, and he will repay it.

Inſtead therefore, of Revenge, return Courteſies for Injuries, Affability for Affronts; *if thine Enemy hunger, feed him.* The Word, as ſome Criticks obſerve, ſignifies to feed cheerfully and tenderly, as Birds feed their young Ones.

In ſo doing, thou ſhalt heap Coals of Fire upon his Head. By Coals of Fire ſome underſtand, an heart-melting Fire; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, By thy Kindneſs thou wilt melt and mollify his Spirits towards thee, as hardeſt Metals are melted by Coals of Fire; it muſt be a very ſtony Heart indeed that this Kindneſs will not melt, a very diſingenuous Nature that Meekneſs will not mollify; Clemency will melt an Enemy, and even force him by ſweet Compulſion to become a Friend, though of a rugged and rough Diſpoſition.

By Coals of Fire heaped on the Head, others underſtand a ſin-puniſhing Fire. Thou ſhalt heap the Fire of Divine Vengeance upon his Head, by making his Hatred and Malice againſt thee inexcuſable.

Q. *What other* Chriſtian *Duty does the Apoſtle recommend?*

A. The laſt Admonition is, that a *Chriſtian* ſhould not only take heed that he *be not overcome of Evil,* but alſo endeavour all he can, *to overcome Evil with Good.* By Evil here we are to underſtand, any unkind or injurious Treatment from others, any Miſchief or ill Turn our Neighbour has done us. To be overcome of Evil is, when we dwell in our Thoughts too much, too often, and too long upon the Injuries and Unkindneſſes we have met with. Or thus; when we are prevailed on to commit the ſame Evil, by ſtudying to make ſpiteful Returns in a Way of Revenge, for the Injuries we have received.

Q. *Wherein conſiſts the Duty and Excellency* of overcoming of Evil with Good?

A. It is anſwered, it renders us like to God, who does Good to us daily, though we do Evil againſt him continually; hereby we imitate God in one of the choiceſt Perfections of his Divine Nature; hereby we over-come ourſelves; we ſubdue our Enemies, and make them become our Friends. This Victory we obtain, by returning Courteſies for Injuries, ſpeaking well of others, altho they ſpeak hardly and ſpitefully of us.

CHAP. XIII.

Our Duty to Magiſtrates, and the Grounds thereof. The Commands of the Second Table rehearſed; Love fulfils them all. Their Night of Ignorance being paſſed away, and they enjoying Goſpel-Light, they muſt caſt off the Deeds of Darkneſs, Drunkenneſs, Whoredom, Hatred, Strife, Envy; and put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *and the Armour of Light.*

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects treated of in this Chapter?*

A. In the foregoing Chapter the Apoſtle treated of moral Duties; in this he treats of political Duties, proving that Magiſtracy is God's Ordinance, for the Good of Human Society, and enforcing the Duty of Subjection unto Magiſtrates, in Obedience to the Commandment of God.

In the firſt Verſe we have the Title given to Magiſtrates, they are *Powers, the higher Powers*; that is, Perſons inveſted with Power, and placed in ſupreme Authority over us.

The original Fountain from whence all Power is derived, is here declared to be from God himſelf; *there is no Power but of God*; that is, all Power is derived from God, and is to be uſed for God; the Magiſtrate acts by his Authority, and, conſequently, is to act for his Intereſt, Honour and Glory. It is agreeable to the Will of God, that there ſhould be ſuch a Thing as Magiſtracy and Government in the World; and it is his Appointment that Men ſhould be governed by Men, deriving their Power and Authority from him; *The Powers that be are ordained of* God.

Obſerve the Apoſtle's ſtrict Injunction for Subjection to Magiſtracy, as a divine Ordinance: *Let every Soul be ſubject*; that is, every Perſon, be he of what Rank, or in what Station he will, High or Low, Honourable or Ignoble, Rich or Poor, Clergy or Laity, he muſt be ſubject to God's Ordinance.

Here note, *Chriſt* is a Friend to *Cæſar*, and *Chriſtianity* no Enemy to Loyalty; the beſt *Chriſtians* are always the beſt Subjects; none ſo true to their Prince, as they that are moſt faithful to their God: Obedience to Magiſtrates is both the Duty of *Chriſtians*, and Intereſt of *Chriſtianity*.

Q. *By what Arguments does the Apoſtle enforce the Duty to Magiſtrates.*

A. 1. From the Sinfulneſs of Reſiſtance, *They reſiſt the Ordinance of God*; they make War upon God himſelf; he that rebelleth againſt his Prince, is a Rebel to his God. 2. From the Danger of Reſiſtance, *They ſhall receive to themſelves Damnation.* That is, 1. Temporal Judgment from the Hand of the Magiſtrate, to whom the Sword is committed, as *Korah, Abſalom*, and others experienced. 2. Eternal Puniſhment from the Hand of God, who will plead the Cauſe, and vindicate the Honour of his Vice-gerents and Repreſentatives here upon Earth, and caſt thoſe into Hell, who put Contempt upon them, if ſincere Repentance, by a timely Interpoſure, prevent not.

Another Argument for Subjection to Governors, is drawn from the End of the Magiſtrate's Office, which is to puniſh Vice, and to promote Virtue; *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works*; that is, they ought not, and they ordinarily are not; they were not ordained for that End; for God gives no Authority againſt himſelf, on his own righteous Laws, which require the puniſhing the Bad, and the rewarding the Good.

Q. *How does he deſcribe the Office of a Magiſtrate?*

A. A Magiſtrate, by his Inſtitution, *is the Miniſter to thee for Good,* if thou art a Doer of that which is Good; he is a Shield to the Godly, a Huſband to the Widow, a Father to the Orphan, a Patron to the Poor, and a Refuge to the Oppreſſed.

Farther; the Magiſtrate is ſet forth with the Enſign of Terror to the Evil-doers, he has a Sword put into into his Hand by God himſelf, a Sword to wound, not a wooden Dagger, barely to ſcare Offenders; and a Sword not ruſting in the Scabbard, but drawn and whetted; he muſt ſhew it, and ſtrike with it upon a juſt Occaſion, and make thoſe feel it who are not awed with a Sight of it; *he beareth not the Sword in vain.*

But though the Magiſtrate is ſaid to bear a Sword, yet he is never, in any Part of Scripture, called a Sword, but a Shield often; a Shield is for Defence, a Sword for Deſtruction, intimating that the Magiſtrate's Power ſhould be rather executed in

Protecting than in puniſhing, rather in ſaving than in deſtroying; they have a Sword to cut off Evil-doers; God helps them to draw it upon Atheiſm and Blaſphemy, upon Vice and Immorality: One hearty Stroke of the Magiſtrate's Sword would ſtun Vice and Error more than a thouſand Sermons.

The Magiſtrate is ſaid *to bear the Sword*; he does not wreſt it out of another's Hand, but it is put into his own by God himſelf; from him derives his Commiſſion; he does not hold his Authority by Virtue of the Sword, but holds the Sword by Virtue of his Authority.

Q. *To what other Point does he next proceed?*

A. The Apoſtle repeats the Neceſſity of Subjection to the civil Magiſtrate, ſeeing that Magiſtracy is God's Ordinance, for the Good of human Society, ſeeing that the Sword in the Magiſtrate's Hand is backed and edged with God's Authority, therefore there is a Neceſſity of Subjection to Magiſtracy and Magiſtrates, and that for a Double Reaſon, for fear of Wrath and Puniſhment from Man, and from a Principle of Conſcience in Obedience to the Law of God; *We muſt be ſubject, not only for Wrath,* not only for fear of Man's Wrath, *but for Conſcience ſake,* with Reſpect to the Command of God, which has made Subjection our indiſpenſible Duty.

Q. *As we are to ſubmit to Magiſtrates, muſt we not likewiſe contribute to their Support and Maintenance?*

A. From the Duty of Subjection to Magiſtrates, the Apoſtle proceeds to urge and enforce the Duty and Neceſſity of paying Tribute to them, or allowing them an honourable Maintenance for Support of the Government they ſuſtain and bear.

Q. *But what Reaſons can be alledged for us to part with our Subſtance to ſupport our Magiſtrates and Rulers?*

A. The Payment of Taxes and Tribute to the ſupreme Magiſtrate, is neceſſary on ſeveral Accounts. 1. As it is an Acknowledgment of the Power which God has ſet over us. 2. As it tends to the Support of the Government we live under. 3. As it is a Recompence of the Governor's Care and Induſtry; he attending, that is, watchlng perpetullay, and takiug Pains to procure and maintain the Good and Happineſs of his Subjects; and therefore both Duty and Obligation, Religion and Gratitude, engage us to aſſiſt him, and, according to our Ability, to requite and reward him for his Care of the common Safety, and Regard to the publick Good.

Q. *What is the Duty to Magiſtrates?*

A. The Apoſtle lays down a twofold Duty to Magiſtrates; namely, Maintenance and Reverence. Maintenance is their due, Taxes, Tribute and Cuſtom, are not ſo much Gifts, as due Debts to Princes, which, by the Command of God, are to be juſtly and chearfully paid them, and which, without Sin and Injuſtice, cannot be denied them; or purloined from them. To cheat our Prince is as great a Sin, in the Sight of God, as to rob our Father, though few think it ſo. *Render Tribute to whom Tribute is due.*

Reverence is likewiſe due to Magiſtrates; *Render Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour is due.* Fear denotes inward Reverence, and Honour outward Reſpect. Fear is the Magiſtrates due, by reaſon of his Authority; and Honour, by reaſon of his Dignity.

Q. *But why is the Apoſtle ſo particular and expreſs in aſſerting the Rights of Princes, and aſſigning the proper Duties of Subjects?*

A. The Apoſtle is thus particular and expreſs in aſſerting the Rights of Princes, and aſſigning the proper Duties of Subjects, becauſe the *Jews* held Opinions deſtructive of all civil Government; namely, that they being the only People of God, God alone was to be acknowledged as their Lord and Governor, and none under him, but ſuch as ſhould be immediately choſen by him; and, as a Conſequence of this, they refuſed to pay Tribute to *Cæſar*, imagining it as a Token of Subjection to him: Therefore the Apoſtle here preſſes the *Chriſtians* at *Rome*, to ſhew their Freedom from, and Oppoſition to all ſuch pernicious Principles, and to give the World a convincing Proof that *Chriſtianity* makes the beſt Men, the beſt Magiſtrates, the beſt Subjects of any Religion in the World.

Q. *Pray what is the next Point St.* Paul *treats of?*

A. Our Apoſtle comes next to enforce the Duties we owe our Neighbours; the firſt of which is, to render and pay every one what is due unto him. Moral Duties are mutual Debts which we owe one another; one of which, that of Love, we can never fully diſcharge, but muſt be ever paying, yet always owing. *Owe nothing to any Man, but Love;* implying, that that muſt be always owing. This Debt of Love is ſo far from a Poſſibility of being fully paid on Earth; that it is due in Heaven to God, Angels and Saints; *there abideth Charity,* 1 Cor. xiii. 13. All other Debts may be paid while we live, except this of Love.

The Reaſon, or Motive, to excite to this Duty, is drawn from the Excellency of this Grace of Love. *He that loveth hath fulfilled the Law;* that is, the Law relating to his Neighbour, the Duties of the ſecond Table.

Next obſerve a Propoſition aſſerted; *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* This is proved by an Induction and Enumeration of particular Duties, belonging to the ſecond Table.

Q. *But can the Law be fulfilled by us? If ſo, in what Senſe?*

A. It is anſwered, By the Law here we are certainly to underſtand that Branch of the moral Law which reſpect our Duty to our Neighbour. All our Duty to Men is virtually comprehended in loving them as ourſelves: As no Man will hurt himſelf, ſo neither will he hurt his Neighbour, if he loves him. Thus Love is the Completion or fulfilling of the Law of God perfectly, and without the leaſt Deficiency. But obſerve, he that loveth, keepeth the Law; how keepeth it? Even as he loveth: If he loves perfectly, he keeps the Law perfectly; but if his Love be imperfect (as is the beſt on this Side Heaven) then is his fulfilling of the Law imperfect alſo. A perfect fulfilling of the Law, we ſhould labour after; but which, while in an imperfect State we cannot attain unto; yet ſuch is the Goodneſs of God, as to account Sincerity, inſtead of Perfection, and to eſteem unfeigned Love to our Neighbour the fulfilling of the Law, or all the Duties of the ſecond Table.

This Propoſition is proved by an Induction and Enumeration of particular Duties belonging to the ſecond Table; *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery; thou ſhalt not ſteal, nor bear falſe Witneſs, nor covet.* Here is forbidden all Injury to our Neighbour, in his Name, Eſtate, Marriage-right, *&c.* and this is called the fulfilling of the Law.

Q. *But how is the Law fulfilled by mere Negatives, by doing no Hurt to our Neighbours? Is not doing them all the Good we can required alſo?*

A. Yes, no doubt; when the Apoſtle ſays, Love worketh no Ill to his Neighbour, it is implied, Love doth all poſſible Good to his Neighbour, as well as worketh no Ill; though the Negatives are only mentioned, yet the Affirmatives are alſo included.

Q. *The Apoſtle having thus ſettled the reciprocal Duties of Magiſtrates and Subjects, what is the next Point he ſpeaks to?*

A. The laſt Part of the Chapter treats of the Duties towards ourſelves, namely, Temperance, Sobriety, Mortification of Sin, and all the Works of Darkneſs, ſuch as Rioting and Drunkenneſs, Chambering and Wantonneſs, and the like; and the Argument to enforce theſe Duties, is drawn from the Conſideration of their preſent State and Condition; they were Believers, the Goſpel-Light was riſen upon them, *and they were nearer Salvation then, than when they firſt believed.* This, by the Way, is a Meditation full of Comfort to a gracious Perſon, every Breath he draws, brings him a Degree nearer to perfect Happineſs. But Oh! what a Meditation of Terror is it to a wicked Perſon! his Damnation is nearer, every Hour nearer and nearer; there is but a Puff of Breath betwixt him and Hell; e'er long his laſt Breath and his laſt Hope will expire together. The State he was born in was ſad, the State he is now in is worſe, but the State he will be ſhortly in, without Converſion, will be unſpeakably worſt of all; his Damnation is near, it ſlumbereth not.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle recommend to the Conſideration of the* Romans?

A. He reminds them of their former State before Converſion, when they were bewilder'd in the Night of heatheniſh Ignorance and Darkneſs, when they ſpent their Time in *Rioting and Drunkenneſs, Laſciviouſneſs and Wantonneſs.*

He alſo puts them in Mind of their preſent State and Condition ſince the Day-ſtar of the Goſpel dawned upon them; *The Night is far ſpent, and the Day is at Hand*; the Night of heatheniſh Ignorance, Blindneſs and Darkneſs, is in a great Meaſure paſt over, and the Day of Grace and Salvation is come unto you; Goſpel-Light is among you, illuminating Grace, and ſaving Knowledge is now found with you.

The Duties enjoined, are anſwerable to the Privileges enjoyed; walk as Children of the Day, ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; abſtaining from all Intemperance and Exceſs of every Kind, and being clothed all with *Chriſtian* Virtues, which are called the *Armour of Light*; Armour, becauſe they defend us againſt the Aſſaults of Sin, Satan, and the World, and all our ſpiritual Enemies whatſoever; and the Armour of Light, becauſe ſuch *Chriſtian* Graces are bright and ſhining in the Eyes of the World.

Laſtly, the Apoſtle exhorts them to put on the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, to ſeek by Faith Union with him, that ſo they may derive Virtue from him, to enable them to a holy Walking before him. Set his Doctrine and Life continually before you; follow every Inſtruction, and imitate all the Parts of his holy Converſation; even as the Garment is commenſurate to the Body; *Put ye on the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt; it follows, *and make no Proviſion for the Fleſh to fulfil the Luſt thereof.* He does not ſay, *Make no Proviſion for the Fleſh to fulfil* the Neceſſities, and neceſſary Deſires thereof; but, *to fulfil the Luſts* or inordinate Deſires thereof. Then only is Proviſion for the Fleſh unlawful, when it is ſought more to ſatisfy its Appetite, and gratify inordinate Deſires, than to ſtrengthen and fit us for our Duty to God and Man.

CHAP. XIV.

The Duties of the Strong and Weak towards each other, with reſpect to Chriſtian *Liberty, and the Difference of Meats and Days. Both muſt aim to ſerve God our Lord, whoſe Glory we are to promote in Life and Death. For which End* Chriſt *died, and roſe again, and by whom we muſt be judged. We muſt not therefore offend, grieve, or deſtroy him for whom* Chriſt *died. Wherein the Kingdom of God conſiſts. In other Things we muſt not offend the Weak; nor act ourſelves with a doubting Conſcience.*

Q. WHAT *particular Points of Doctrine does the Apoſtle inculcate in this Chapter?*

A. He treats of Things of an indifferent Nature, neither commanded nor forbidden by any Divine Law; and ſpeaks of the right Uſe of our *Chriſtian* Liberty. It ſeems, ſome of the believing *Jews* at *Rome* apprehended that the Obſervation of the ceremonial Law, as to Meats and Days, was ſtill to be continued; but the believing *Gentiles*, being fully perſuaded of their Freedom by *Chriſt*, refus'd Communion with the *Jews*, that lived after that Manner. This Difference in their Judgments occaſioned a great Diſſenſion among them, the *Gentiles* looking on the *Jews* as ſuperſtitious, and the *Jews* cenſuring the *Gentiles* as profane. Now, in order to ſuppreſs theſe unchriſtian Diſputes between them, St. Paul admoniſhes the believing *Jews* not to condemn the believing *Gentiles*, and exhorts the believing *Gentiles*, not to refuſe Communion with the believing *Jews*, and thus by a mutual Forbearance, to hold the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.

Q. *What is the firſt Thing here diſcuſſed.*

A. In the firſt Verſe the Apoſtle recommends Charity and Forbearance. *Him that is weak in the Faith receive:* Not him that is ſick unto Death through fundamental Error, but one that is ſound in the Faith, though weak in Judgment; Men of honeſt Hearts, but weak Heads: *Receive them*; take them into your Houſes, into your Hearts, receive them into your Society, into your Communion, and let not Difference in Judgment cauſe any Diſtance in Affection.

This Injunction however, is limited; *receive him, but not to doubtful Diſputations*; do not quarrel or contend with him about his Opinions, or fill his Head with curious and intricate Queſtions, or trouble him with doubtful Diſputes. Weak *Chriſtians* are ſeldom Maſters of Argument; and practical Piety, and *Chriſtian* Love, will much ſooner rectify the Judgment of the Weak, than fierce Argumentation.

Q. *What was the Occaſion of this Variance between them?*

A. The Ground of this Difference between them, the Goſpel declares, was the Difference of Meats. One thought that under the Goſpel all Meats were lawful; another, rather than eat any Meat forbidden by the *Moſaical* Law, will eat only Herbs. Thus we ſee the Church of God in all Ages has been divided about indifferent Things. What Jars and Stirs were there between the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Churches about the Obſervation of *Eaſter?* About celebrating the Lord's Supper with leavened or unleavened Bread? And really, the fatal Evils which our hot Contentions have occaſioned amongſt ourſelves, only about indifferent Rites and Ceremonies, Tears of Blood are not ſufficient to bewail.

Q. *What Means does St.* Paul *uſe to put an End to theſe Diſputes?*

A. The Apoſtle exhorts the contending Parties not to vilify nor traduce, not to condemn each other as humorous and ſcrupulous, much leſs obſtinate and wilful; but eſpecially, not to ſeparate on this Occaſion, or break Communion with each other. Let not him that eateth all Kinds of Meats, deſpiſe him that through Weakneſs durſt not eat of any. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Whilſt there is Error in our Judgments, Differences will ariſe in the Church of God: But take care that where there is no Compliance, there yet may be Peace: Deſpiſe not one another.

Q. *But what Reaſons does St.* Paul *give; why they ſhould receive their weak Brother?*

A. Becauſe *God hath received him.* God moſt holy receiveth ſuch; therefore ſo muſt you, if you would pleaſe God. Why ſhould you refuſe Communion with thoſe who hold Communion with God?

Another Reaſon why we ſhould not raſhly cenſure or judge our Brother, differing in Opinion from us about leſſer Things, is, becauſe he is God's Servant, and it is God's Sentence by which he muſt ſtand or fall, not ours. To love, is our Duty, to judge, is God's Prerogative; let us exerciſe more Charity and leſs Cenſure.

Q. *But what was the Apoſtle's Opinion about the Obſervation of Days, which was another Point of Contention among the believing* Jews?

A. Many of the believing *Jews* could not be perſuaded to deſiſt from ſolemnizing thoſe Feaſts which were of God's inſtituting amongſt them. Others look'd on them as abſolutely abrogated by *Chriſt*. Now the Apoſtle adviſes, that neither the one nor the other, neither he that regards, nor he that diſregards thoſe Days, ſhould be judg'd, or hardly cenſur'd for ſo doing, becauſe he acts therein according to Conſcience. He that according to his Apprehenſion either eats, or refuſes to eat ſuch Meats, keeps or neglects ſuch Days, intends or deſigns it as an act of Obedience to God, praying for, or giving Thanks unto Almighty God for his Acceptance. So then, if they both aim at the ſame End, they ought not to condemn one another for each other's Act.

Hence we are inſtructed, that Perſons diſagreeing with us in leſſer Things, from a real Principle of Conſcience, firmly perſuaded that what they do or refuſe to do, is for the Glory of God, and out of a ſincere Deſire to pleaſe him, ought not to be judg'd by us, but left to the Judgment of the Heart ſearching God.

Q. *What are the Apoſtle's Inſtructions to Chriſtians in general?*

A. Paul proceeds to prove his Aſſertion, that Chriſtians, in their particular Actions, have a ſpecial Regard to the Lord and his Honour, becauſe they devote themſelves, living and dying, to the Service of him and his Glory; *none of us* Chriſtians, *lives unto himſelf*, but we ſpend our lives in his Service; neither do *we die unto ourſelves*, not when we pleaſe, but when he appoints; therefore living or dying we are his.

Q. *But when may we be ſaid to live unto the Lord, and to die unto the Lord?*

A. 'Tis anſwer'd, When we do not frame our Lives after our own Wills, but according to the Word and Will of God, making that the Rule and Ground of all our Actions. When the great End why we deſire Life, is to do Service for *Chriſt* on Earth, and to be fitted by him for the Fruition of him in Heaven. Finally, then we live and die unto the Lord, when we are willing to be at the Diſpoſal of God, both for Life and Death; and this as to Time and Manner, and Means; yea, all Circumſtances whatever both of Life and Death. When a Man is willing to lay down his Life for, or at the Call of the Lord, it's a certain ſign that he lives and dies to the Lord.

Q. *What other Obſervations do you make upon the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe?*

A. From the Ninth to the Twelfth Verſe, theſe Obſervations occur; namely, that *Jeſus Chriſt* by virtue of his meritorious Paſſion, and glorious Reſurrection, was conſtituted Lord of all Things, and has Power to judge all Perſons.

Again; that to this ſupreme and abſolute Lord every one of us muſt give an Account of our Actions, and from him receive our final Doom; *we ſhall ſtand before the Judgment Seat of* Chriſt.

Obſerve farther, the Argument the Apoſtle draws from hence to diſſuade us from judging one another; and that is from the Conſideration of the laſt Judgment, which we are all haſtening unto. *Why doſt thou judge thy Brother? We ſhall all ſtand before the Judgment-Seat of* Chriſt. What, tho' your Brother cannot in Conſcience comply with your Opinion and Practice, muſt you preſently accuſe him of being Stomachful, and condemn him for Stubborneſs, calling his Non-compliance, Obſtinacy and Humour, Pride and Singularity, which he calls Conſcience towards God? Remember the Judge ſtands at the Door, and you muſt ſuddenly ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of *Chriſt*; *where every one of us, muſt give an Account of himſelf to God.* This Account muſt be render'd to the all-ſeeing and heart-ſearching God; to God the Creator; but eſpecially to *Chriſt* the Lord, the Redeemer, who is ſuch a Judge as is not to be daunted at the Power of the Mighty; ſuch a Judge as the Wealth of the whole World cannot bribe; as the wiſeſt cannot impoſe upon; a Judge from whoſe Sentence there is no appealing.

Q. *How do you explain the Apoſtle's Judgment concerning* unclean Meats?

A. He expreſſes himſelf thus; *I am perſuaded by the Lord Jeſus, that there is nothing unclean of itſelf.* The Difference and Diſtinction of Meats, as clean and unclean, was taken away by our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

But tho' the Apoſtle pronounces no Meat unclean in itſelf, yet to him that eſteemeth any thing unclean, to him, as to the Uſe of it, it is unclean.

Note, how affectionately St. *Paul* directs all Chriſtans to conduct themſelves towards their weaker Brethren, even to the abridging themſelves of their lawful Liberty, in the Uſe of indifferent Things, rather than give the Weak an occaſion of Offence.

If thy Brother be grieved with thy Meat (tho' no Meat be unclean of itſelf) yet in eating thou doſt amiſs, for theſe Reaſons, 1. Becauſe it is againſt the Laws of Charity ſo to act in Things indifferent; *If thy Brother be grieved, now walkeſt thou uncharitably.* 2. Becauſe it is the Way to occaſion him to ſin, and conſequently to do what in us lies, to bring Deſtruction upon him, for whom *Chriſt* died; *deſtroy not him with thy Meat for whom* Chriſt *died.* 3. Becauſe eating thus, is an Offence to the weak, and cauſeth Chriſtian Liberty, purchas'd by *Chriſt*, to be evil-ſpoken of before the World; *let not then your Good be evil ſpoken of.* The Sum of the whole is this, to ſhew how uncharitably, unſafe, and unchriſtian a Thing it is to make ſuch an undue Uſe of our Chriſtian Liberty, as may occaſion our weak Brother to fall or ſtumble.

He that in theſe Things, in Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, *ſerveth* Chriſt, *is acceptable to God:* This evidences that he is a Perſon accepted with God, and approved of Men; of wiſe, charitable, and good Men; yea, the natural Conſciences of Men in general, will applaud and approve what is done by him, notwithſtanding the forementioned Difference in leſſer Things, concerning Meats and Days.

Seeing then that the Kingdom of God, or our common Chriſtianity, conſiſts not either in doing or not doing theſe little Things, let us by no means hazard the Peace of the Church, or break Communion with ſuch as differ in Opinion from us; much leſs ſhould we deſpiſe each other on account of theſe ſmall, but unhappy Differences; but let us earneſtly purſue the Things that make for the common Peace of all Chriſtians, and the Things by which we may further each other's Edification and Salvation.

For Meats deſtroy not the Work of God; do not thou, for ſo ſmall a Matter as eating is, endanger the Chriſtianity of thy Brother, or hazard the Peace of the Church, or cauſe any thro' Scandal to fall from their Chriſtian Profeſſion. If any of you ſay, that all Meats are clean, and therefore lawful, 'tis anſwer'd, they are certainly ſo in themſelves, yet it is your Sin, if you uſe them to the Scandal or Offence of thoſe that are not ſatisfied in the Lawfulneſs of them. It is moſt certainly the Duty of Chriſtians to deny themſelves the Uſe of their Chriſtian Liberty in ſome Things, when by making Uſe of it, they may endanger any of their Brethren, by cauſing them to fall from their own Stedfaſtneſs.

It is not good, that is, it is not Charitable, to uſe any Part of Chriſtian Liberty, when by ſo doing any weak Chriſtian is offended, diſcouraged, and driven from his Profeſſion, and brought to any kind of Sin. And if it be a Chriſtian's bounden Duty to forbear the Uſe of indifferent Things, when it becomes a Scandal to the Weak, how much more is it a Duty to avoid obtruding and impoſing ſuch Things to the Scandal, Offence, and Hurt of others.

Q. *But ſome might be ready to ſay, that they had Faith, that is, a firm and full Perſuaſion, that it is lawful for them to eat thoſe Meats, which in the Opinion of others were ſinful; and therefore it is neceſſary that they profeſs it, own it, and aſſert their Liberty?*

A. St. *Paul* anſwers, haſt thou more Knowledge than he to believe thoſe Things to be lawful, which he apprehends to be ſinful? Keep thy Knowledge and Belief to thy ſelf, to juſtify thy Actions before God, but uſe it not to the Hurt or Prejudice of others; for he is a happy Man, who, when he knows a Thing to be lawful, ſo uſes his Liberty about it, not to offend others, or condemn himſelf; for that is a kind of Knowledge, which is employ'd to deſtroy others, and condemn ourſelves. *Haſt thou Faith? have it to thy ſelf.*

Q. *Pray interpret thoſe Words in the 23d Verſe* and he that doubteth, is damned if he eat, becauſe he eateth not of Faith?

A. Dr. *Hammond* paraphraſeth it thus; And indeed, for the *Judaizer*, there is little Reaſon he ſhould be ſo ill-uſed for his not daring to eat, when he thinks himſelf obliged; for it were a damning Sin, for which his own Conſcience already condemns him, ſhould he eat, or do any indifferent Thing as long as he thinks in Conſcience that it is not ſo, becauſe it is contrary to a Perſuaſion or Aſſurance of the Lawfulneſs of his Action: And whoſoever doth any thing without Perſuaſion (call'd *Faith* here. and *Knowledge*, 1 *Cor.* vii. 7.) ſo far at leaſt as to judge that which he doth lawful for him, he certainly ſins in ſo doing.

CHAP. XV.

The Strong are exhorted to bear with the Weak, from the Example of Chriſt; *which he confirms out of the Scriptures. He prays for, and exhorts them.* Chriſt *ſerved the* Jew, *and alſo the* Gentile, *as is proved by the Scripture. His Wiſh for, and Hopes of them. His Miniſtry, God's Bleſſing with him; and his Faithfulneſs in it. He muſt go up to* Jeruſalem, *to carry thither the Alms of the Churches of* Macedonia *and* Achaia; *he would then ſee them in his Journey into* Spain. *He requeſts their Prayers for him and his Miniſtry, and wiſhes them all Good from God.*

Q. WHAT *are the Subjects handled in this Chapter?*

A. In the beginning of this Chapter, the Apoſtle proceeds on the ſame Argument, and proſecutes the ſame Deſign, as in the foregoing, exhorting the ſtrong Chriſtians to bear with the Infirmities of the weaker Brethren; and this from the example of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *What is the firſt Point which the Apoſtle ſpeaks to?*

In the firſt Place we have a great Doctrine aſſerted, and a ſpecial Duty declared, namely, that the Strong, thoſe who throughly underſtand their Chriſtian Liberty, ſhould bear with the Infirmities, Frowardneſs and Scrupulouſneſs of the Weak, and alſo forbear the doing of that which may ſcandalize, and hurt the Souls of Men, who have not the ſame Meaſures of Knowledge with themſelves. *The Strong ought to bear the Infirmities of the Weak.*

The Duty enjoined is Univerſal; *We*, that is, not only all private Chriſtians, but all Church-Governors; he puts himſelf in to the Number, that he may propoſe himſelf as an Example of the following Duty. We, that are the Officers, the Paſtors, and Governors of the Church, like Parents, who bear with Children in their Waywardneſs, ſo muſt we bear, tho' not with Hereſies in Doctrine, or Enormities in Practice, yet with Errors and Miſtakes in both, as proceed from Ignorance, or common Infirmities.

Q. *What is the next Duty enjoined?*

A. Not to pleaſe ourſelves, but others; we muſt not pleaſe ourſelves by inſiſting on our lawful Liberty, but rather, for the ſake of others, depart a little from our own Right.

Yet obſerve, the Limitation and Reſtriction of this Duty, *for his good Edification*; thus far may we pleaſe them, but not farther. It is not ſimply and abſolutely ſaid, Let every one pleaſe his Neighbour; the Heretick, the Drunkard, *&c.* would like that well, to have every one ſpeak and act as they do; but the Rule is, *to pleaſe every Man for his good to Edification*; that is the Rule, the Scope and Boundary of all Complacency and Compliance with others.

This Duty the Apoſtle farther urges from the Example of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who *pleaſed not himſelf*. *Chriſt*, while on the Earth, did not conſult his own Eaſe or Satiſfaction, but rather the Benefit of others; he freely expoſed himſelf to all the Reproaches and Contumelies of Men in Obedience to his Father's Will, to whoſe Honour he had the moſt tender Regard; *the Reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell upon me.*

Q. *What other Points of Inſtruction does the Apoſtle ſpeak to?*

A. We are informed of the general Uſe of the holy Scriptures, and the particular Reaſon of their being written, namely, 1. For Inſtruction; all the Precepts, Promiſes, Threatnings, Rewards, and Puniſhments recorded in Scripture, are for our Information, Conviction, and Direction. 2. For our Comfort and Conſolation, *that we thro' Patience and Comfort of them, might have Hope*; that we through Patience in bearing the like Cenſures and Reproaches, which the Saints in Scripture have borne before us, might have Hope of being rewarded as they were for it.

Q. *What do you remark upon St.* Paul's *Prayer, in the 5th and 6th Verſes?*

A. Obſerve here the Prayer and votive Supplication of the Apoſtle, for Unity and Concord among the *Chriſtians, That they may with one Mind, and one Mouth, glorify God*; that in their *Chriſtian* Aſſemblies they may all worſhip God after the ſame Manner, and not one this Way, and another that. Unity among *Chriſtians* in common Converſation, but eſpecially in Church-communion, is a very deſirable Mercy, and much to be prayed for by the Miniſters of God.

The God of Patience grant you to be like minded; intimating, 1. What great need there is of Patience, in order to maintain Love and Unity among *Chriſtians*. 2. God muſt be applied to in Prayer, to work and produce this Grace of Patience, in order to Peace and Unity among *Chriſtians*.

Our Apoſtle joins this with another Title, namely, *the God of Conſolation*; wherein he points them to their abundant Comfort, which would reſult from ſuch a bleſſed Unity, continued and maintained by the mutual Exerciſes of Patience and Forbearance one towards another.

The Pattern and Example he ſets before them to excite and quicken them to this Duty, is that of *Chriſt* himſelf. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Let us conſider how the Lord *Jeſus* bears with us, how many thouſand Infirmities and Failings doth he find in the beſt of us, yet is he pleaſed to maintain Communion with us; and ſhall not we, after his Example, do the like, that thereby God may be eminently glorify'd by us?

God is called the Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. 1. As he begat him by an eternal and an ineffable Generation. 2. As he was Man, ſo he created him, *Luke* i. 35. 3. As Mediator, ſo he appointed him to, and qualified him for that Office. And eternally magnified be omnipotent Love, that the Comfort of this Compellation redounds to us, for as he is the Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſo he is, in him, our Father alſo.

Q. *What is the next Topic the Apoſtle diſcourſes upon?*

A. Next, the Apoſtle concludes the Argument he had been inſiſting on in this and the preceding Chapter; namely, that all *Chriſtians*, both ſtrong and weak, ſhould mutually bear with one another; and that both *Jew* and *Gentile* ſhould receive each other into Fellowſhip, and Communion, without Contention about Things of an indifferent Nature; *Wherefore, receive ye one another*; and to enforce his Exhortation, propounds the Example of *Chriſt*, *as* Chriſt *alſo received us*, who makes no Difference betwixt *Jew* and *Gentile*, who receives both, and bears with the Infirmities of both; thus the Glory of God is promoted by this Union and Concord among all Members, of what Denomination ſoever they are, whether believing *Jews*, or *Gentiles*.

Q. *In what Manner does the Apoſtle declare, that* Chriſt *received both* Jews *and* Gentiles?

A. As for the *Jews*, whom he calls *the Circumciſion*; he tells us, that *Jeſus was their Miniſter*; that is, he was circumciſed like them, converſed generally with them, and exerciſed his Miniſtry among them, according to the many Promiſes God had made to the *Jewiſh* Patriarchs; and thus he ſhewed his Mercy towards the *Jews*, in the Day of his Fleſh.

As to the *Gentiles*, he affirms, that according to the ſeveral Prophecies and Promiſes made in the *Old Teſtament*, they were called and received to mercy by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Partition-wall being by him broke down, and *Jew* and *Gentile* become one Sheepfold under one Shepherd.

Now, from the Truth and Faithfulneſs of *Chriſt* towards the *Jews*, and from his Love and Tenderneſs, Mercy and Compaſſion towards the *Gentiles*; and from his divine Indulgence towards both, the Apoſtle very aptly draws this Concluſion: That all *Chriſtians*, however different in Judgment and Opinion as to leſſer Matters, ought to receive one another into *Chriſtian* Communion; and, inſtead of biting and devouring one another, be at length ſo wiſe and happy, as to hold the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Apoſtle's Prayer in the 13th Verſe?*

A. He cloſes his Exhortation to brotherly Love and Unity, with a pathetick Prayer; in which obſerve the Title, or Appellation he gives to God, *The God of Hope*; ſometimes he ſtiles him the God of Grace, the God of Patience, and here the God of Hope, he being ſo objectively, the only God of our common Hope; and alſo effectively, as he is the Author and Producer of Hope in us.

The Mercies he prays for, are, 1. That *they may be filled with all Joy and Peace in believing*, that their Hearts may overflow with Peace from God, and one towards another, and with all that reſults from both. 2. That *they may abound in Hope, through the Power of the Holy Ghoſt*; where, by Hope, we muſt underſtand, the Good hoped for; namely, Heaven and eternal Life; a firm Expectation of which is wrought in us by the Holy Ghoſt.

Hence it appears, that Deſpair is a moſt unreaſonable Sin; for why ſhould any deſpair in his Mercy, who is the God of Hope, who commands us to hope in his Mercy, and takes Pleaſure in them that do ſo, *Pſ.* cxlvii. 11.

Q. *In the 15th and following Verſes, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of himſelf and his Miniſtry; but in what Manner, and to what Purpoſe?*

A. Being about to conclude his Epiſtle to the Church at *Rome*, he excuſes himſelf that he had written ſo largely, and with ſuch freedom to them, eſpecially as they abounded in Grace and Knowledge, and were able to inſtruct one another; however he thought fit to write to them, having the Honour conferred on him by *Chriſt*, to be called to the apoſtolical Office, and particularly to be the Ambaſſador of *Chriſt* to the *Gentiles*; moſt paſſionately deſiring he might preſent and offer them up to God, as an acceptable Sacrifice, through the Power and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt; and that his Succeſs in the Converſion of the *Gentiles* might be matter of abundant Glorying to him.

Although their Induſtry was great, yet their Succeſs was greater than their Induſtry, and beyond all human Expectation. This appears by the vaſt ſpreading of the Goſpel in ſo ſhort a ſpace of Time. Within thirty Years after our Saviour's Death, the Goſpel was not only diffuſed through the greateſt Part of the *Roman* Empire, but had reached as far as *Parthia* and *India*.

The Goſpel, or Doctrine of *Jeſus* had likewiſe a wonderful Power and Efficacy on the Lives and Manners of Men; the Apoſtle tells us, that the *Gentiles* who were converted to Chriſtianity, *were obedient by Word and Deed*; on the Change of their Religion, followed a change of their Converſation, and whole Courſe of Life.

The Apoſtle having excuſed himſelf for dealing ſo plainly in his Writings with them, affirming, that the true Reaſon why he did not viſit *Rome*, was this; he thought that the planting of Churches was more neceſſary than watering them, and the Preaching of *Chriſt* where he had never been named, the more needful Work. Now at *Rome* there had been a Church planted, and Elders ordained to build on that Foundation; therefore he had hitherto declined coming to *Rome*: But now, *having no more Place in theſe Parts*, that is, having no more Churches to plant thereabouts, he intimates his Inclination and firm Reſolution to viſit *Rome*, as he took his Journey into *Spain*, and to ſtay ſome time with them, that they might be mutually filled, ſatisfied, and refreſhed by each other's Company.

The Apoſtle next acquaints them with his preſent intended Journey to *Jeruſalem*, as alſo with the Occaſion of it; namely, to carry the Contribution of the *Greek* Churches in *Macedonia* and *Achaia*, to the poor Saints at *Jeruſalem*, whoſe Neceſſities required it, and to whom they were, in a Sort, indebted for it; *The* Gentiles *having been made Partakers of their ſpiritual Things*, (receiving the Goſpel from *Judea*) they were obliged to aſſiſt them in carnal Things. He farther aſſures them, that as ſoon as he had finiſhed his Journey, and performed his charitable Office, he would come to them, and that in the Fulneſs of the Bleſſings of the Goſpel of Peace.

When I have ſealed this Fruit; it was the Fruit of their Faith, Liberty, and Love; becauſe as Fruit it would redound to the Benefit both of the Giver and Receiver. By Sealing, underſtand Securing, *when I have ſealed*, or ſecured, *unto them this Fruit.* The Church's Charity is a ſealed Treaſure, and not to be diminiſhed or embezzled, but applied to the Uſes to which it is devoted.

In the Cloſe of this Epiſtle, our Apoſtle moſt affectionately recommends himſelf to the Prayers of the *Chriſtian Romans* unto whom he wrote; *I beſeech you Brethren ſtrive, &c.* where note the Apoſtle's courteous Compellation, Brethren. There is a threefold Brotherhood taken Notice of in Scripture, 1. Betwixt *Chriſt* and Believers, *Heb.* ii. 11. *He is not aſhamed to call them Brethren.* 2. Betwixt Believers themſelves, they are Brethren by Grace, 1 *Pet.* ii. 17. *Love the Brotherhood.* 3. Betwixt Miniſters and their People, *Rev.* i. 9. *I* John *your Brother*; teaching Miniſters to carry it towards their People with Love and Gentleneſs, and the People to make ſuitable Returns of Love and Affection.

The Requeſt the Apoſtle makes, is, that they ſtrive together in their Prayers for him. The original Word ſignifies, to ſtrive together as Wreſtlers do, to exert all their Strength and Power in that bodily Exerciſe. Note, the Apoſtle deſires them *to ſtrive with him* in their Prayers to God for him; he does not, with ſome, beg the Prayers of others, and neglect to pray for himſelf, but is willing to draw with him in the ſame Yoke.

The Apoſtle enforces his Requeſt by a double Argument: 1. For the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*'s Sake, for his Sake who is ſo dear both to you and me. 2. For the Love of the Spirit of God, ſhew it by your Prayer for all Saints in general, and for myſelf in particular, that I may be preſerved in my Journey into *Judea*, from the unbelieving *Jews* who are prejudiced againſt me; that my Perſon and Performance *for the poor Saints at* Jeruſalem, who are acceptable to the *Chriſtian Jews*; and that I may have a proſperous Journey to you *by the Will of God, and may with you be refreſhed.*

The Apoſtle having exhorted the believing *Romans* to be at Peace among themſelves, and not to contend about indifferent Things, implores the Diſpenſer of this Grace, to dwell among them, and to pour out the great and valuable Bleſſings of Peace and Unity, of Love and Concord upon them: *The God of Peace be with you all*, Amen. As we honour the God of Peace whom we ſerve; as we love the Prince of Peace in whom we believe; as we hope for the Comfort of the Spirit of Peace; and as we tender the Succeſs of the Goſpel of Peace; let us preſerve it where it is, and purſue it when it flies from us.

CHAP. XVI.

St. Paul's *Recommendations and Salutations; his Admonitions againſt the Authors of Diſcord and Offence; a Motive thereto, and Promiſe. He ſalutes them in the Name of the Brethren with him; he bleſſes them; and praiſes God for the Revelation of his Goſpel.*

Q. THIS *Chapter, which concludes the Epiſtle to the* Romans, *conſiſts chiefly of Salutations and of Commendations to ſeveral particular Perſons: What Obſervations do we learn from hence?*

A. The firſt Perſon here mentioned, is *Phœbe*, who going on ſome Occaſion to *Rome*, ſhe is ſuppoſed to be the Bearer of this Epiſtle to the *Romans*. *I commend to your Care and affectionate Regard* Phœbe *our Siſter in the Faith, who ſerved the Church of* Cenchrea, *in the Quality of a Deaconneſs*, as ſome think, or as others, who ſpent her Time in receiving and harbouring poor fugitive *Chriſtians*, and was even a Succourer and Supporter of *Paul* himſelf. He exhorts them to receive her in the Lord, and to aſſiſt her in her ſecular Affairs and Concerns at *Rome*.

The firſt Perſons at *Rome*, whom St. *Paul* himſelf ſaluteth by Name, are *Priſcilla* and *Aquila*. The Woman is named before the Huſband, which ſhews they were all one in *Chriſt Jeſus*, in whom is neither Male nor Female. Note here by the Way, how weakly the *Papiſts* argue for St. *Peter*'s Primacy, and for placing him the firſt in the Catalogue of the Apoſtles. By the ſame Argument the Woman is the Head of the Man, becauſe here named before him.

St. *Paul* highly honours theſe two Perſons, and calls them his Helpers in *Chriſt Jeſus*. They were his Aſſiſtants in propagating the Goſpel by private Inſtruction, though not by publick Preaching, *Acts* xviii. 26.

Remarkable is the Courage, here related, of *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*; *they laid down their own Necks* for the Apoſtle; they expoſed themſelves to the Hazard of their own Lives for his Preſervation; which great and noble Service the Apoſtle and all the Churches of the *Gentiles* thankfully acknowledged; and good Reaſon; for as St. *Paul* was the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, his Preſervation redounded to the Benefit of them all.

St. *Paul* likewiſe ſalutes *the Church that was in their Houſe*. By which ſome underſtand their Houſhold, their *Chriſtian* Family, which he calls a Church, becauſe of the pious Order, and religious Worſhip therein obſerved. Others by the Church in their Houſe, underſtand the Number of *Chriſtians*, who uſed there to aſſemble for religious Worſhip. Be it one or the other, St. *Paul* forgets not to ſend kind and friendly Salutations to them.

The four next Perſons are ſaluted by Name; the firſt is *Epenetus*, whom he calls the Firſt-fruits of *Achaia*; that is, the firſt Perſon who cordially embraced *Chriſtianity*, or the Faith of *Chriſt*, in the Region of *Achaia*. The ſecond is *Mary*, a common Name; but the Perſon here intended was of ſpecial Note, having beſtowed much Pains, and been very ſerviceable to the Preachers of the Goſpel. The third and fourth are *Andronicus* and *Junia*, noted for their Sufferings and Services among the Apoſtles, as alſo for their early embracing the *Chriſtian* Faith. *Who were in* Chriſt *before me*; that is, converted to *Chriſtianity* before myſelf.

Hence we learn, that it is the Pleaſure of God to have the good Works of all his Saints, and eſpecially the Services done to his Ambaſſadors and Miniſters by any of his People, to be applauded, valued, and recorded.

Obſerve here, how particularly, and by Name, the Apoſtle ſalutes the *Chriſtians* at *Rome*, to convince them how particularly mindful he was of them. No doubt but he bore them, and alſo all that were converted by him, in his Heart, whenever he went in his private Addreſſes to God.

Note farther, the Perſons whom the Apoſtle ſalutes, are not Men of great Fame at *Rome*, diſtinguiſhed for their Dignity and Greatneſs, their Wealth and Riches, but for their Piety and Goodneſs, for their Labours in the Goſpel, for their being in *Chriſt*, approved, and Helpers in *Chriſt*; that is, Aſſiſtants in propagating the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, and ſerviceable to thoſe whoſe Work and Office it was ſo to do. None ſo well deſerve our Remembrance, as thoſe who are moſt perſevering and laborious in the Service of God.

Here are alſo ſeveral Women remembered and ſaluted, and their Services for *Chriſt* and his Miniſters recorded. God will have none of his faithful Servants forgotten, nor any of their good Deeds buried in Oblivion.

But it is obſervable, that in all this Roll of Salutations, no Mention is made of St. *Peter*'s Name. Had he now been at *Rome*, as the *Papiſts* affirm, and Biſhop of that See, it had been morally impoſſible for our Apoſtle to have forgot him in his Salutations, when ſo many of his Inferiors are remembered by him.

Q. *From greeting the Saints at* Rome *himſelf, the Apoſtle proceeds to perſuade them to ſalute one another: But does not this Admonition ſeem ſuperfluous and unneceſſary?*

A. There had been much Diſſenſion amongſt them about Meats and Days; he therefore intreats them for the future to embrace each other with cordial Love, and affectionate Kindneſs; and as a Token or Symbol of it, to ſalute one another with an holy Kiſs, the uſual Expreſſion of Friendſhip in thoſe Times. The primitive *Chriſtians*, at the End of their Prayers before the Celebration of the Sacrament, ſaluted one another with a Kiſs, and then the Bread and Cup were brought forth; and ſome obſerve it was done by the Men a-part, and the Women a-part. But this Cuſtom being afterwards abuſed, was gradually laid aſide.

Q. *How does he take his Leave of them?*

A. With an Admonition to beware of Perſons erroneous in Doctrine, and ſcandalous in Practice: It is probable he means either thoſe *Jews*, who pleaded the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the *Gentiles*; or the *Gnoſticks*, to whom the following Characters do well agree. Whoever they were, they were to be avoided as dangerous Seducers.

The Character here given of them is, *They ſerve not the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *but their own Belly*. Seducers are always Self-ſeekers; they are deſigning Men; they aim at themſelves, under a Pretence of acting for *Chriſt* and his Glory.

Obſerve likewiſe the Arts and Methods which they uſe to delude; *By good Words, and fair Speeches, they deceive the Hearts of the Simple*. Seducers have ſmooth and gloſſing Tongues, with which they impoſe on innocent and harmleſs Men.

In order to prevent the Contagion of theſe Seducers, the Apoſtle adviſes to mark, and avoid them. 1 To mark them. The Word ſignifies ſuch a Marking as a Watchman uſes when he ſtands on a Tower to deſcry an Enemy, which he does with great Accuracy. 2. To avoid them as a ſound Perſon would one that is infected with the Plague.

Q. *But who were the Perſons whom the Apoſtle exhorts to mark theſe Seducers?*

A. The Perſons to whom this Exhortation is given, and who are allowed to judge of the Doctrine of Seducers, are the common People, the *Romans*, the Saints or *Chriſtians* at *Rome*, to whom he was then writing; to them the Apoſtle allows a Judgment of Diſcretion, a Power to try and examine the Doctrines delivered by Perſons pretending to infallible Inſpiration. *I beſeech you Brethren, mark them which cauſe Diviſions contrary to the Doctrines which ye have learned.* *Chriſtians* are not to be led blindfold by Teachers, but ought to ſee with their own eyes; to take nothing upon Truſt, but all upon Trial; to examine the Doctrines they are taught, and to obſerve and mark the Teachers of them.

Q. *The Apoſtle congratulates them on the Report that was ſpread of the Stability of their Faith*; For your Obedience is come abroad unto all Men: *What is the true Import of theſe Words?*

A. I acknowledge that you *Roman Chriſtians* are famous for your Obedience to the Apoſtolical Doctrine, and that you walk in Faith and Love, Unity and Concord, to the Credit of the Goſpel, and the Honour of your holy Religion. But I would have you know that you are not wholly out of Danger of being infected by theſe *Judaizers*: I wiſh you therefore Wiſdom to eſcape their Snares; the Lord make you wiſe as well as zealous, that you may diſcern that which is Good, and decline that which is Evil, *And the God of Peace ſhall bruiſe* Satan *under your Feet ſhortly*; which Words may be conſidered either relatively, or abſolutely; if relatively, or with Relation to the Context, then by *Satan* is to be underſtood Seducers, and falſe Teachers, whom he had warned the *Romans* of in the preceeding Verſes; *Mark them which cauſe Diviſions.* The Corrupters of Divine Truths, and Troublers of the Church's Peace, are *Satan*'s Inſtruments; *God ſhall bruiſe* Satan, that is, Satan in his Inſtruments.

Hence learn, that Divine Evangelical Truth ſhall be finally victorious; no Weapon formed againſt it ſhall proſper; the Head of Error ſhall at length be laid at the Feet of Truth. Seducers may bluſter for a Time, but ſhall be bruiſed at laſt.

Conſider the Words abſolutely, and we have a Victory proclaimed; the Author of that Victory declared, the God of Peace; the Enemy conquered, *Satan*; the Conqueſt, or Manner of Conquering, by bruiſing; the Time of the Conqueſt, not preſently, but ſhortly.

Q. *What Leſſons of Inſtruction does this Paſſage convey to us?*

A. Hence learn, that it is by Virtue of *Chriſt*'s Conqueſt over *Satan*, that Believers become Conquerors; for the Promiſe here refers to the original Promiſe, *Gen.* iii. 15. that *Chriſt*, the Seed of the Woman, ſhall break the Serpent's Head: So then it is by Virtue of that Act of *Chriſt* bruiſing the Serpent's Head, and your breaking it, that *Satan* is bruiſed under our Feet. As *Chriſt* bruiſed him under his own Feet, ſo in his own Time will he bruiſe him under our Feet. The perſonal, as well as the repreſentative Seed of the Woman, ſhall break the Serpent's Head. Let the poor tempted *Chriſtian* remember, that in a ſhort Time he ſhall ſet his Foot on the Neck of his Enemy; and that when once his Foot is over the Threſhold of Glory, he ſhall caſt back a ſmiling Look, and ſay, Now *Satan*, do thy worſt; through Grace I am where thou ſhalt never come.

Q. *What is the other Part of his Salutation?*

A. As before St. *Paul* had ſaluted divers Perſons himſelf, ſo now he ſends the Salutations of others to the Church at *Rome*. This he does to ſhew the mutual Love and Amity that is and ought to be betwixt *Chriſtians*, though divided in Reſpect of Place, yet not in Reſpect of Affection and Good-will.

He begins with *Timotheus* or *Timothy*, whom he calls *his Work-fellow, or Fellow-helper*, namely, *in preaching and propagating the Goſpel of* Chriſt. This ſhews the Humility of the Apoſtle, that he dignifies young a Man with this Title. This is he to whom he afterwards wrote two Epiſtles.

Lucius is, by *Origen* and ſome others, thought to be *Luke* the Evangeliſt, who was the inſeparable Companion of the Apoſtle *Paul*, and was with him about this very Time, as appears from *Acts* xx. 5. and here is called *Lucius* according to the *Roman* Termination. Others think this was *Lucius* of *Cyrene*, of whom you read, *Acts* xiii. 1.

Jaſon was *Paul*'s Hoſt at *Theſſalonica*, *Acts* xvii. 5. 7. the ſame as ſome think that is called *Secundus*, *Acts* xx. 4. the one being his *Hebrew*, the other his *Roman* Name. *Soſipater* is the ſame who, *Acts* xx. 4. is called *Sopater* of *Berea*.

Tertius was the Apoſtle's Scribe or Amanuenſis, who wrote this Epiſtle, either from his Mouth, or elſe took it from a Copy given him by the Apoſtle for that Purpoſe; he put in this Salutation by St. *Paul*'s Permiſſion.

There were ſeveral of the Name of *Gaius*; one of *Macedonia*, *Acts* xix. 29. one of *Derbe*, of whom we read, *Acts* xx. 4. he is moſt likely the Perſon here meant. There was one of this Name whom St. *Paul* baptized at *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* i. 14. And there was another *Gaius*, to whom St. *John* wrote his third Epiſtle. Whether all of thoſe were different Perſons, is uncertain. Whoever he was, he entertained the Apoſtle, and all *Chriſtian* Strangers that paſſed that Way. That *Gaius* to whom the Apoſtle *John* wrote, is commended for the like Hoſpitality.

Eraſtus, the Chamberlain, the Receiver or Steward of the City; one who had the Care and Management of the City's Stock or publick Treaſure. The City was *Corinth* from whence the Apoſtle wrote this Epiſtle. There *Eraſtus* is ſaid to abide, 2 *Tim.* iv. 20. poſſibly to attend on his Office. Yet we find, *Acts* xix. 22. that he was one of them that miniſtred to the Apoſtle, and was ſent by him hither and thither, as he had Occaſion; which could not well conſiſt with his being Chamberlain or Steward of ſo great a City. Therefore ſome are of Opinion, that he is ſo called, becauſe that had been his Office in Time paſt.

Our Apoſtle, out of his abundant Affection towards them, repeats his Benediction of them, that the Mercy, Grace, and Goodneſs of the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* might abide upon them, and evermore continue with them.

Q. *How does St.* Paul *conclude his Epiſtle?*

A. The Apoſtle concludes his Epiſtle with a Solemn Doxology or Thanſgiving to God: In which he firſt deſcribes God, and then aſcribes eternal Glory to him. He deſcribes him both by his Power and Wiſdom. By his Power firſt, *to him that is able to eſtabliſh you according to my Goſpel*; that is, to eſtabliſh you in Grace and Truth, in Faith and Holineſs, and to keep you from falling into Sin and Error. Such is our Weakneſs and *Satan*'s Power, that unleſs God confirm and eſtabliſh us, we ſhall ſoon run into Sin and Danger.

The inſtrumental Means which God makes uſe of for his People's Eſtabliſhment, is the Goſpel, and the Preaching of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles taught and delivered. This is called a Myſtery, kept ſecret ſince the World began, and now made manifeſt for the Obedience of the Faith; that is, that it may be believed and obeyed.

The ſecond Attribute in the Deſcription of God, is, his Wiſdom: He is called the only wiſe God; not to exclude the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, but the Wiſdom of the Creature only, he is only wiſe originally, his Wiſdom is of himſelf; it is his Eſſence and Nature. He is only wiſe, becauſe he is incomparably ſo; there is none that for Wiſdom can compare with him. He has Wiſdom in ſuch a Degree and Eminency, that the very Angels are chargeable with Folly before him. In a Word, he is only Wiſe, becauſe all Wiſdom is derived from him, all the Wiſdom of Angels and Men is but a Ray from his Light, a Drop from his Ocean. And if ſo, then let the Wiſdom of God, in all his Dealings with us and ours, be admired and adored by us, for all his Works of Providence are as orderly and perfect as the Works of Creation, though we perceive it not.

To him who is the wiſe Diſpoſer of all this, and hath managed all by his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*'s aſſuming of our Nature, &c. be all Honour and Praiſe thro' *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord.

Q. *What is the true Signification of the Word* Amen, *added at the End of this Epiſtle?*

A. The Word *Amen*, is ſix Times uſed in this Epiſtle, *chap.* i. 25. ix. 5. xi. 36. xv. 33. xvi. 20, 27. It is an *Hebrew* Word; but retained in all Languages. It cannot be tranſlated without loſing much of its Significance. It may be taken three Ways, 1. As a Name, and ſo it is a Name of *Chriſt*, Rev. iii. 14. 2. As an Adverb, ſo it is uſed in the Beginning of Speech, and ſignifies Verily; or in the End of Speech, and ſo it denotes Aſſent: Therefore it was uſed of Old by the *Jews*, not only at Prayer, but all the Sermons and Expoſitions of the Rabbins, to teſtify that they aſſented and agreed to all they taught, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 16. 3. As a Verb, and ſo it is as much as *ſo be it*, having the Nature of a Prayer. Hence *Jeremiah* ſaid *Amen* to the Prophecy of *Hananiah*; though falſe, concerning the ſudden Return of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, to ſhew how earneſtly he deſired it might be ſo, *Jer.* xxviii. 6.

Q. *Was the concluding Sentence of the Chapter written by St. St.* Paul, *or by ſome other Hand?*

A. The laſt Clauſe of the Chapter, *Written to the* Romans *from* Corinthus, *and ſent by* Phœbe, *Servant of the Church at* Cenchrea, was not added by the Apoſtle *Paul*, nor by *Tertius* his *Amanuenſis*; but by a latter and unknown Hand; yet there is nothing in the Epiſtle itſelf, nor in any antient or modern Writer, that may induce us to queſtion the Truth of it.

Q. *Have you any Thing more to remark on the Contents of this Chapter?*

A. I ſhall conclude with a Note of Dr. *Hammond* on Verſe 16. *An holy Kiſs.* He ſays, 'The Cloſe of the *Chriſtians* Prayer was wont to be in Form of Benediction, and that Benediction the wiſhing all Charity and Unity amongſt them (after the Example of the Love of God towards them) in the known Form, *The Grace, or Charity of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *and the Love of God, and the Communication, or Bounty, of the Holy Ghoſt, be with, or among you always*; that is, be continued among you, as it is from every Perſon of the Trinity toward you. And this being the Form of diſmiſſing the Aſſembly, it was ceremoniouſly obſerved among them, to part with the kiſſing one another. So, ſaith *Juſtin Martyr*, deſcribing the Church-Meetings, *When we make an End of Prayers, we ſalute one another with a Kiſs*, which is therefore called *the Kiſs of Peace. Tertullian* alſo thus has it, *The Kiſs of Peace is the Seal of Prayer.* This therefore is here called *the holy Kiſs*; and St. *Paul's* bidding them ſalute one another with it, is, in effect, all one as his pronouncing that Benediction which was wont to be attended with it.

Now to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us Faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy; to the only wiſe God our Saviour, be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion on and Power, now and ever. *Amen.*

The

The firſt Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

IT was never queſtioned by the primitive Church, nor in the leaſt doubted ever ſince, but this Epiſtle was wrote by St. Paul *to the Church at* Corinth. *In this City St.* Paul *continued preaching a Year and ſix Months, and was ſo ſucceſsful therein, that notwithſtanding the Inhabitants were in a Manner wholly abandoned to all Kind of Wickedneſs, this new planted Church became the moſt eminently diſtinguiſhed for all Manner of ſpiritual Gifts, of all the Churches throughout the* Chriſtian *World.*

The Reaſon that induced the Apoſtle to write this Epiſtle, was an unhappy Schiſm that aroſe in the Church of Corinth, *by the People's preferring one Preacher before another. Inſtead of being thankful to God for the Endowment of all his Miniſters; and endeavouring to reap the Benefit of all their mutual Labours, they vainly gloried in Men, ſome crying up* Paul, *others* Apollos, *&c. In Order therefore to heal theſe Diviſions, which threatned the Ruin of this Epiſtle written.*

CHAP. I.

The Apoſtle's Salutation and Thanſgiving for God's Grace in Chriſt's *Faithfulneſs. He reproves them for their Diviſions. Baptiſm only in the Name of Chriſt, a Motive to Unity. God, by the Preaching of the Croſs, confounds the Wiſdom of the Wiſe; and calls not many of the Wiſe, Mighty, and Noble, but the Weak and Fooliſh, and Men of no Account.*

Q. WHAT *do you remark on St.* Paul's *Introduction to his Epiſtle in the firſt Verſe?*

A. The Apoſtle begins his Epiſtle with aſſerting his Commiſſion for the Work of his Miniſtry to be from God, he was *called to be an Apoſtle by the Will of God*; he did not thruſt himſelf into that high and honourable Employment, but was choſen, called, and ſent by God.

Q. *In the 2d Verſe the Apoſtle gives his Salutation: What is obſervable therein?*

A. St. *Paul*, in his Salutation, firſt ſalutes the Church of *Corinth* in particular, and then all the Churches of *Chriſt* in general: *To all that in every Place call on the Name of* Chriſt Jeſus *our Lord.* Where note, that thoſe whom he thus ſalutes were not all real Saints, no, nor all viſible Saints (though they were called to be both) whom he calls the Church. Many ſecretly vile and ſcandalouſly profane Perſons were amongſt them, yet the Apoſtle ſalutes them as the Church of God. There may be a Mixture of profane and ſcandalous Perſons with real Saints in the Church of God here on Earth, yet this does not unchurch the Aſſembly where they are; they are the Diſeaſe of a Church, but not its Death.

The Salutation itſelf is, *Grace and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt. Where note a double Bleſſing deſired, *Grace and Peace*; Grace is of all Bleſſings the richeſt; and Peace is of all Comforts the ſweeteſt. We have likewiſe diſcovered to us a double Spring of this double Bleſſing, God and *Chriſt*: God, as the original Source and Fountain of all Good in himſelf; and *Chriſt*, as the Donor and Diſpenſer of all Good to us.

Note alſo the Order of the Words: Firſt Grace, and then Peace; there can be no Peace without Grace, and no Grace but there will be Peace; there can be no Peace but from God, no Peace from God but as a Father; and he cannot be comfortably ſaid to be our Father, but thro' our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *After this general Salutation, what follows?*

A. The Apoſtle goes on; I am very thankful to God for his Grace and Favour beſtowed upon you through *Jeſus Chriſt*, in and by the Preaching of the Goſpel, and particularly for the Gift of Tongues, and other miriculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit beſtowed upon you, whereby the Divinity of the Goſpel (called here *the Teſtimony of* Chriſt, becauſe it teſtifies of *Chriſt*) was atteſted and confirmed. He farther tells them, that he is firmly perſuaded that God would confirm them to the End, cauſing them to perſevere unblameable in Holineſs till the Coming of *Chriſt* to deliver his faithful Servants, and remarkably to deſtroy his Crucifiers; becauſe of the Faithfulneſs of God, who having *called them to the Fellowſhip of his Son*, and to partake of his invaluable Benefits, will never leave them, but accompliſh the whole Pleaſure of his Will to them.

Obſerve here to whom the Apoſtle returns Thanks for all that Grace the *Corinthians* had received, even to the God of all Grace, *I thank my God, for the Grace which is given you.* All Grace depends on God, as to its Being and Production, its Exerciſe and Operation, its Growth and Augmentation, its Evidence and Manifeſtation, its Perſeverance and Preſervation; he is both the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, but by and through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who by his Blood purchaſed Grace for us, and by his Spirit produceth it in us.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle proceed to the Buſineſs of his Epiſtle?*

A. We have next a pathetical Exhortation to a moſt important Duty. In which obſerve the Duty itſelf exhorted to, namely, Unity and Unanimity amongſt all Chriſtians; this is threefold; the Unity of the Head, of the Heart, and of the Tongue; of the Head, in Judgment and Opinion; of the Heart, in Love and Affection; and of the Tongue, in Language and Expreſſion, when we all ſpeak the ſame Things, and with one Mouth as well as with one Mind glorify God.

The Arguments uſed to enforce this Duty, are, firſt, an apoſtolical Exhortation, *I beſeech you:* He who had Authority to command, has the Meekneſs to entreat, and in a ſupplicatory Way to beſeech. The ſecond is, the Nearneſs of the Relation, *I beſeech you, Brethren*; an endearing Expreſſion, and full of Affection: They were Brethren by Nature, but eſpecially by Faith and Profeſſion, owning the ſame Father, God; profeſſing the ſame Religion; animated by the ſame Spirit; encouraged by the ſame Promiſes, Partakers of the ſame Hope, and Heirs of the ſame Glory. The third Argument is, the Name he beſeeches in, and that is *Chriſt's*, *I beſeech you by the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; I adjure you for his Sake, and his Authority, by all that he has done, ſuffered, and purchaſed for you. If you have any Reverence for his Authority as a Sovereign; if you have any Regard for his Undertaking, as a Saviour, look that there be no Diviſions amongſt you, *but that ye be perfectly joined together in the ſame Mind, and in the ſame Judgment.*

So exceedingly was the Apoſtle's Heart ſet upon this Duty, that in both his Epiſtles to the *Corinthians*, he earneſtly exhorts them to the Practice of it. 'Tis the firſt Duty he commends to their Conſideration in the former, and the laſt he recommends to their Care and Practice in the latter Epiſtle, thereby intimating, that this Unity in Judgment and Affection is the firſt and laſt Thing to be reſpected among Chriſtians, as being both the Beginning and Perfection of Chriſtianity.

The Reaſon why the Apoſtle preſſes this Duty of Love and Unity ſo vehemently, is, becauſe he was inform'd there were Contentions, Diviſions, and Parties among them, to the great Scandal of Chriſtianity, ſo lately planted amongſt them.

Q. *What might be the Cauſe of thoſe Diviſions, and Diſſenſions among them?*

A. It was the having Men's Perſons in Admiration, factiouſly crying up one Miniſter above another, naming themſelves the Followers of this and that Man, ſetting up Teachers, one againſt another, and even *Chriſt* againſt his Miniſters.

Hence learn, that it is not barely unlawful, but very dangerous and exceeding ſinful for Perſons to call themſelves by the Name of any Man, tho' never ſo eminent, ſo as to build or pin up their Faith upon him; we are not Believers in *Paul* or *Peter*, but in *Chriſt*; there is but one Head of the Church, namely, *Chriſt*, and he is not divided: His Diſciples we are in whoſe Name we are baptized, and that is not in the Name of Man, but in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; to build therefore on the Faith of any Man, is to make him our Saviour, and to put him in *Chriſt's* Room and Place.

Q. *As Baptiſm is a Chriſtian Ordinance, why is the Apoſtle thankful, that he baptized ſo few?*

A. Altho' baptizing was God's Ordinance, and St. *Paul*, as *Chriſt's* Miniſter, had a Commiſſion and ſufficient Authority to baptize, yet the Providence of God ſo ordered it, that he baptized very few, leſt any ſhould ſay he baptized in his own Name; and among thoſe few is a whole Houſhold mentioned, *the Houſhold of* Stephanus.

Hence we learn, that as *Abraham* and others under the Old Teſtament were wont to bring their Houſhold into Covenant with God by Circumciſion; ſo did thoſe that had Houſholds under the New Teſtament endeavour to bring their whole Families into God's Covenant by Baptiſm. The Jaylor and his Houſe, *Lydia* and her Houſe, *Stephanus* and his Houſhold, are all baptized.

Q. *In what Senſe does the Apoſtle ſay, ver.* 17. Chriſt ſent me not to baptize, but to preach the Goſpel?

A. That is, rather to preach than baptize, this was the great Buſineſs, his principal Work; tho' baptizing was within his Commiſſion, yet it was was not that, but preaching the Goſpel to convert Souls to *Chriſt*, that he was ſo wonderfully called, and ſo extraordinarily gifted for the Performance of. It is neither wiſe nor ſafe to cry up one Ordinance of God above another, but to reverence and eſteem them all, and none more than the preaching of the Goſpel.

Q. *But in what Manner was St.* Paul *directed to preach the Goſpel?*

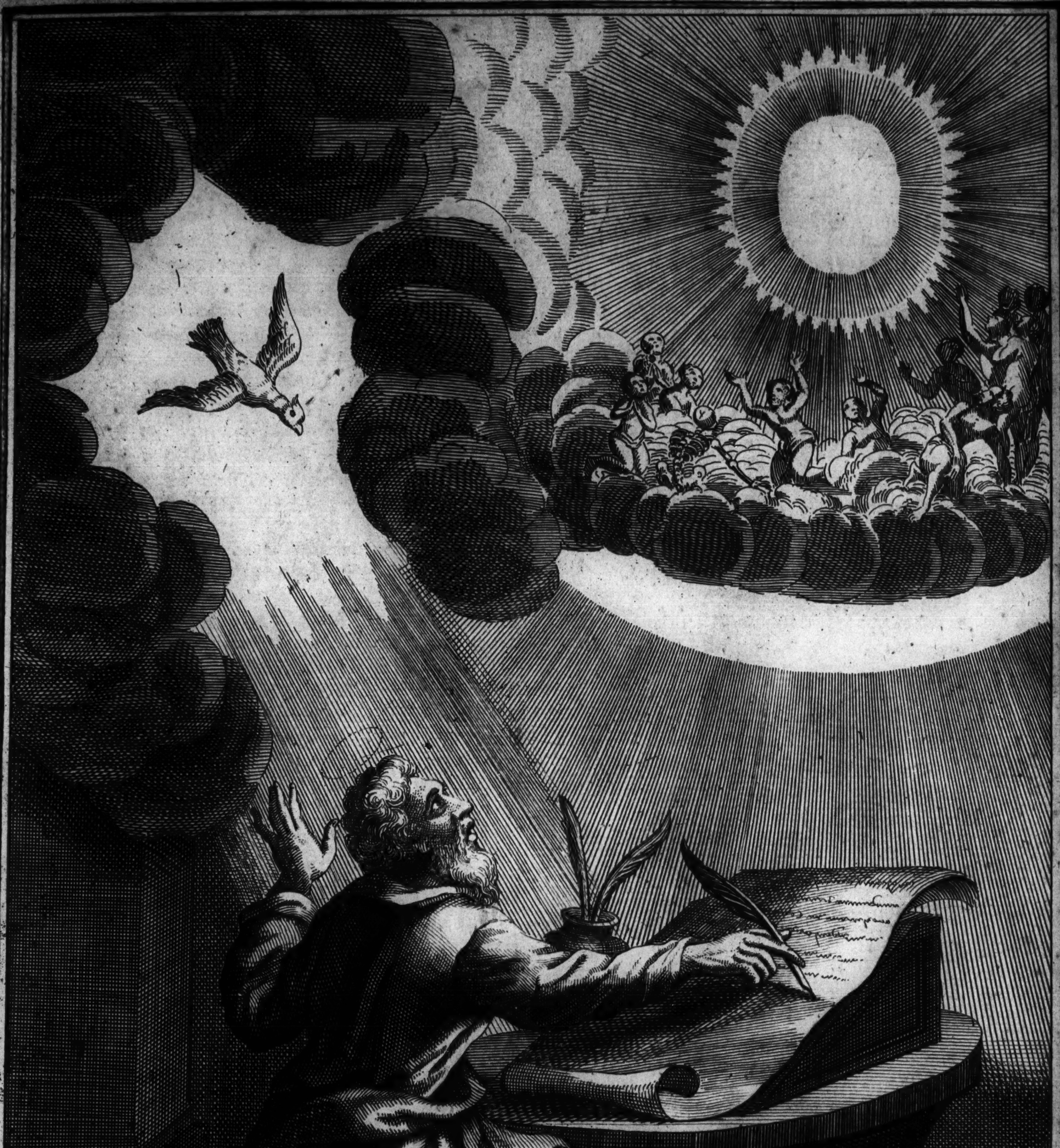
A. *Not with Wiſdom of Words, leſt the Croſs of* Chriſt *ſhould be of no Effect*; that is, not attracting and drawing Men to the Faith by the Power of human Eloquence, leſt the Doctrine of *Chriſt* ſhould be render'd ſuſpected by ſuch a pompous Way of preaching plain Truths, which without Art and Varniſh may be conveyed with more Warmth and Vigour to the Conſcience, than by all the Charms of human Eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular Tongue. The Way and Manner of St. *Paul's* preaching was grave and ſerious, pious and ardent, plain and profitable. With what Brevity, without Obſcurity, with what Gravity, without Affectation; with what Eloquence, without meretricious Ornament, were St. *Paul's* Diſcourſes? Solidly inſtructing Men in the great and neceſſary Duties of the Goſpel, and furniſhing them with Arguments and Motives for a good Life; and this in ſo plain and familiar a Manner, that the Succeſs and Prevalency of his preaching was evidently of God, God, and not from the Power of human Abilities.

Q. *What is meant by preaching the Goſpel?*

A. It is here deſcribed, by *the preaching of the Croſs*; that is, of a crucified Saviour; it repreſents him who died upon the Croſs; as the proper Object of our Faith and Hope, of our Affiance and Fruit.

Note here, the mean Opinion the Philoſophers and wiſe Men among the Heathens entertained of the Doctrine of the Croſs, and of the preaching of the Goſpel; they eſteemed it Fooliſhneſs. *The preaching of the Goſpel is to them that periſh, Fooliſhneſs; but unto us which are ſaved, it is the Power of God*; that is, a powerful Inſtrument in God's Hand for Men's Converſion and Salvation. The Word, preached, is the Organ or Inſtument through which the vital power of the Spirit is conveyed into the Souls of Sinners, how much

The First Epiſtle of Paul the Apoſtle to the CORINTHIANS



The Certainty of a Reſurrection Proved, & Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith Recomended.

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MUSEUM

ſoever it is contemned and deſpiſed in the World.

Obſerve how the Apoſtle upbraids the Pride and Folly of the learned Philoſophers, and the reputed wiſe Men among the Heathens, who, tho' they excelled in natural Wiſdom, yet deſpiſed Evangelical Truths, making Reaſon their ſupreme Rule, and Philoſophy their higheſt Principle. *Where is the Wiſe? where is the Scribe? where is the Diſputer of the World?* Where now is the Wiſdom of the wiſeſt Philoſophers among the *Gentiles*? When is the Wiſdom of the Scribe, or Interpreter of the Law among the *Jews*? *Where is the Diſputer of this World*, or the curious Enquirer into the Depths and Secrets of Nature? Let 'em ſhew ſo many brought, by all their Wiſdom, Learning, Eloquence, to the knowledge of God, and to the Practice of their Duty, as the preaching of a crucified *Chriſt* hath done; yea, all their natural Wiſdom is mere Folly in Compariſon of the glorious Effects which the preaching of the Goſpel has produced.

Q. *Why is the Frame of the World here called,* the Wiſdom of God, *v.* 21?

A. The Name of the Cauſe is given to the Effect, becauſe divine Wiſdom appears ſo illuſtrious in the work of Creation; the beautiful Frame of Heaven and Earth diſcovers the ſeveral Perfections of the divine Being; and amongſt the reſt his admirable and unerring Wiſdom.

Q. *In what Senſe does the Apoſtle ſay, that the Heathens* with all their Wiſdom knew not God?

A. The Heathens, ſays the Apoſtle, with all their *Wiſdom knew not God*; that is, did not own and acknowledge him, ſerve and glorify him as they ſhould and ought to have done. *The World by Wiſdom knew not God*; that is, not diſtinctly; they knew in general that there was a God, but not particularly who the true God was; they knew him notionally, but not practically; their Knowledge had no Influence on their Morals; they knew him as eſſentially conſidered in himſelf, but not relatively, as conſider'd in *Chriſt*.

The greateſt Wits of the World, having no more but the common Light of Nature, and the Advantage of human Accompliſhments, are often greatly to ſeek as to the ſaving Knowledge of God and *Chriſt*, human Wiſdom and divine Knowledge as they are diſtinct in their Nature, ſo are they ſeparable in their Subject; Let thoſe that have both bleſs God with eternal Thankſgiving.

When the great elevated Genius's of the World by all their Wiſdom and Knowledge collected from the Book of Nature, could not arrive at the Knowledge of the true God, then *it pleaſed God by the* Fooliſhneſs *of preaching, to ſave them that believe.* Where note, that the Perſons to be ſaved, are thoſe that believe them excluſively, none but them: The Means ordained for the Salvation of Believers, namely, the preaching of the Goſpel; *It pleaſed God by preaching to ſave them that believe*; the low Opinion the World has of this venerable Ordinance of God, the preaching of the Goſpel, they ſtile it the *Fooliſhneſs of preaching*; laſtly, the moving, impelling, and impulſive Cauſe of their gracious Diſpenſation, the preaching of the Goſpel in order to Mens Salvation, as that is the good Will and Pleaſure of a gracious God; *It pleaſed God by the Fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe.*

Q. *What is the next Point diſcuſſed?*

A. The Apoſtle next charges both *Jews* and *Gentiles* with a Conſpiracy in rejecting the Goſpel; *the* Jews *require a Sign*; beſides all the Miracles and the Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, the *Jews* require ſome Sign from Heaven, to prove that *Chriſt* was ſent from God; ſo unreaſonable and obſtinate was their Infidelity, that all the Miracles of our Saviour's Life, Death, and Reſurrection could not remove it; *and the* Greeks *ſeek after Wiſdom*, that is, they look for profound Wiſdom, eminent Learning, and deep Philoſophy in the Goſpel, and ſcorn it becauſe they find not there what they expected.

But tho' the Apoſtle's Doctrine was to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* fooliſhneſs; yet he is abſolutely reſolv'd to preach *Chriſt* crucified.

Q. *But how was* Chriſt *a Stumbling-block to the* Jews?

A. In regard of his Poverty and Sufferings, the Meanneſs and Miſery of his Condition in the World; they expected that their *Meſſias* would be a victorious Prince, one who ſhould reſcue them from their Enemies: Inſtead of which they find this *Jeſus* overcome by his Enemies, that he had no power to defend himſelf, much leſs to deliver them; that he was deſerted by God, ſcourged with Rods, crowned with Thorns, ignominiouſly treated, ſhamefully crucified, this was to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and continues ſo to be.

Q. *But how was* Chriſt *to the* Greeks *Fooliſhneſs?*

A. Thus; the *Gentiles* deſpiſed the Goſpel of *Chriſt* as an abſurd, ridiculous, and ill contrived Fable; for what, in Appearance, could be more unbecoming to God, and injurious to his Perfections, than to take the frail Garment of Fleſh, to be torn and trampled upon? They concluded the Incarnation impoſſible, that a Being infinitely perfect ſhould unite with a Nature ſo inferior to itſelf; and rejected the Doctrine of our Saviour's Death, as an Impiety contumelious to God; they could not reconcile Servitude with Sovereignty; Puniſhment with Innocence; the loweſt of human Miſeries, with the higheſt of human Honours, and accordingly they eſteemed it Fooliſhneſs to expect Eternal Life from him who was put to Death, and that he ſhould bring them to the higheſt Glory who himſelf ſuffered the greateſt Contempt.

But it was not thus, unto all, there was a Number of both converted and ſaved by the Doctrine of the Croſs, unto whom *Chriſt was the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.*

Q. *In what was Chriſt* the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God, *v.* 24.

A. *Chriſt* was the Power of God, by the Works of Creation, which were performed by him, *Col.* i. 16. *By him were all Things created in Heaven and in Earth*; by the Works of Providence, *Heb.* i. 3. *He upholdeth all Things by the Word of his Power*; by the Work of Redemption, *Gal.* iii. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us.* The Curſe and Wrath of God was a Burden that would have broke the Back of Angels, none could ſtand under it but *Chriſt*, neither could he as mere Man, but as ſupported by the infinite Power of his Godhead.

Chriſt is the Wiſdom of God; his divine Nature had a Fulneſs of infinite and uncreated Wiſdom found with it; his human Nature had a Fulneſs of infuſed and created Wiſdom found with it; and the Redemption of Man by Jeſus *Chriſt* was a Deſign of admirable Wiſdom: He that turns his Back upon *Chriſt*, rejects the Wiſdom of God, and renders his Ruin both dreadful and certain; they muſt Periſh eternally by the Hand of ſtrict Juſtice, who will not be ſaved according to the Methods of divine Wiſdom, which is, to ſave us from Hell, by ſaving us from our Sins.

Q. *How did the Preaching of* Chriſt *become the* Power of God unto Salvattion?

A. The Reaſon St. *Paul* aſſigns why the Preaching of *Chriſt* crucified, became the Power of God unto Salvation, is, becauſe the Weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Men; that is, the Ordinance and Inſtruction of God, tho' they ſeem weak and fooliſh in the Eye of the World, yet are made more efficacious and powerful than all the Wiſdom of worldly Men; not that there is either Fooliſhneſs or Weakneſs in God, but that which Men account and deride as ſuch, is yet too powerful for all their boaſted Wiſdom and Strength.

Q. *What comes next under our Obſervation?*

A. Note how the Apoſtle calls upon the *Corinthians* to eye and view the ſingular Favour of being effectually called out of Heatheniſm to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity; *you ſee your Calling, Brethren.* Thoſe who are exalted ought to be mindful of their former Meanneſs; but ſuch as are perſuaſively called out of a State of Nature, ought often to contemplate the Worth and Weight of that Mercy, and the Freeneſs of that divine Favour.

God has in all Ages called ſome of all Ranks and Degrees of Men, of the Wiſe and Great, the Rich and Noble, to the Knowledge of himſelf, and his Son; not many indeed, yet ſome, leſt the World ſhould think that Chriſtians were deceived through their Simplicity and Weakneſs; one rich *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*; one honourable *Nicodemus*; one *Criſpus* a Ruler of the Synagogue. Men of ſtrong Reaſon and Sharpneſs of Wit are too proud and ſtout to ſtoop to the Simplicity of the Goſpel, and the humbling ſelf-denying Terms of it; yet ſome of the Wiſe and Mighty are called, leſt any thing in Man ſhould ſeem too hard for the Grace of God; but not many, leſt Worth and Worthineſs in us ſhould be thought a Motive that rules God.

Men of the greateſt Fame and Renown in the World have been the fierceſt Enemies to *Chriſt* and Criſtinity. *Galen*, the chief Phyſician, *Porphyry* a famous Philoſopher, *Lucian* a noted Orator, and many others, were profeſſed Enemies to the Chriſtian Religion.

But altho' ſome of the Wiſe, Rich and Noble among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were called to eſpouſe Chriſtainity, but the far greater Number of thoſe that were called, were Poor and Mean, and in the World's Eſteem, Weak and Fooliſh, Baſe and Deſpicable; *God hath choſen the fooliſh Things to confound the Wiſe.* This was verified in the Choice God made of the Apoſtles, who, tho' illiterate Fiſhermen confuted and confounded the wiſeſt among the Philoſophers; and alſo in the Choice God made of the Primitive Chriſtians, who were a poor deſpiſed Company, *James* ii. 5. *Hath not God choſen the Poor of this World, rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom?* This Choice *Chriſt* thanks his Father for, *Matt.* xi. 25. and the Wiſdom therein deſerves our higheſt Admiration; becauſe hereby God plainly ſhewed that Chriſtianity needed not worldly Props to ſupport it; alſo, by this Means to pour Contempt upon thoſe Things that are moſt admired among Men, namely, the internal Endowments of the Mind, Strength of Reaſon, and Acuteneſs of Wit, and the external Gifts of Providence, Nobility of Birth, Riches and Honours. As here, God has more Rent, and better paid (as the great Landlord of the World) from many ſmoaky Cottages, than from divers great Palaces, ſo, at the great Day, God will own his faithful, tho' deſpiſed Servants, and make it evident to Men and Angels, that he *accepts not the Perſon of Princes, nor regards the Rich more than the Poor.*

Q. *How does the Apoſtle conclude his Diſcourſe?*

A. In the laſt two Verſes of this Chapter is an Enumeration of the Believer's Privileges, received by virtue of his Intereſt in *Chriſt*, and Union with him; and they are Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption. To relieve us againſt our Ignorance and Blindneſs, he is our Wiſdom, the divine Illumination, enabling us to ſee both our Sin and Danger; he is our Righteouſneſs to diſcharge us from the Burden of our Guilt, and Obnoxiouſneſs to divine Wrath, and procures for us Remiſſion of Sin, and Acceptance with God, free us from the Pollution and Power of Sining, he is our Sanctification, purging us by his Spirit, as well as pardoning us by his Blood; and to free us from the Captivity of Sin and Satan, and the Law, he is made our Redemption. Thus is *Chriſt* our all in all, and our all in the want of all, by God's ſpecial and effectual Application; *Of God he is made unto us*, &c.

Laſtly, obſerve the Reaſon aſſigned why the whole Economy of Grace is put into the Hand of *Chriſt*, and by him communicated to us, namely, that all the Saints glorying may be in him, and not in themſelves; *that no Fleſh ſhould glory in his Preſence.* Infinite Wiſdom and Sovereign Pleaſure has enter'd all Grace in *Chriſt*; it has pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all Fulneſs dwell, and ſo the Fulneſs that is in him, is a Miniſterisal Fulneſs; it dwells in him on purpoſe to be diſpenſed to us, as our Exigencies require, and our Faith deſerves.

CHAP. II.

The Goſpel is preached, not with human Excellence, but in Simplicity and Spiritual Power. Heavenly Wiſdom revealed herein by the Spirit, above human Senſe and Wiſdom, which cannot be uttered by Words, nor judged nor diſcerned by the natural Man.

Q. WHAT *comes firſt under Obſervation in this Chapter?*

A. In the 17th Verſe of the foregoing Chapter, the Apoſtle declared how *Chriſt* had ſent him to preach the Goſpel in the Plainneſs and Simplicity of it, *not in the Wiſdom of Words.* In the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, he tells them, that when, purſuant to his Commiſſion, *he came and preached to them at Corinth, he came not with Excellency of Speech*; he ſtudied not to gratify their Curioſity with the Flouriſhes of Rhetorick, or the Niceties of Philoſophy, to humour their wanton Wit, but ſolidly to inform their Judgments of the great and neceſſary Duties of the Goſpel, and to furniſh them with the ſtrongeſt Arguments and Motives for a good Life: This is Preaching; but had he come with human Wiſdom, this would have detracted from the Excellency of the Goſpel, which, like the Sun, ſhines beſt with its own Beams; Scripture-eloquence is moſt piercing and demonſtrative, and convinces the Underſtanding by its own Evidence; human Wiſdom charms the Ear; this ſtrikes the Conſcience.

It would likewiſe have detracted from the Glory of God, which is more honoured by the Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel, than by the Luxuriance of Wit, or the moſt admired Oratory in the World; all human Wiſdom is eclipſed, when ſet in Oppoſition to the Doctrine of the Goſpel.

This Goſpel, which the Apoſtle preached in ſo much Plainneſs and Simplicity, he ſtiles the *Teſtimony of God*, becauſe God teſtified and bare Witneſs of the Truth of its Doctrine by Signs and Wonders, Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.

For I, adds the Apoſtle, determined not to diſcover to you the Eloquence and Wiſdom of the *Greeks*, or to give any other Knowledge but that of a crucified Saviour, which, alas! is to them Fooliſhneſs. Yet muſt not this be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively; not as if the Apoſtle did abſolutely contemn all other Study and Knowledge, much leſs undervalue true Philoſophy, Logick, or Oratory; for all Knowledge is uſeful to him who knows how to refer it to right Ends, and God has made nothing knowable in vain; but that all other Knowledge, without the Knowledge of Jeſus *Chriſt*, is inſignificant and ineffectual.

Note here, the Subject-Matter of St. *Paul*'s Preaching and Study, was *Jeſus Chriſt*; not the *Jewiſh* Tradition, or the Heathen Philoſophy, but him *in whom are found all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*.

Q. *What was the Point which the Apoſtle chiefly inſiſted on in his Preaching?*

A. The Relation in which the Apoſtle choſe to ſtudy and preach Jeſus *Chriſt*, was, *as crucified*; *Chriſt* above all other Subjects, and *Chriſt* crucified above all other Conſiderations, becauſe *Chriſt* crucified was to the *Jews* a Stumbling-Block, and to the *Greeks* Fooliſhneſs.

As there is no Doctrine in itſelf ſo excellent, ſo none more neceſſary to be preached than the Doctrine of Jeſus *Chriſt*, and him crucified. Let Miniſters then preach, and by preaching prepare the People to receive the Knowledge of Jeſus *Chriſt*, and him crucified. And let both Miniſters and People count all Things but Droſs in Compariſon of that Excellency which is in the Knowledge of *Chriſt Jeſus* our Lord.

Q, *In what Manner does the Apoſtle ſpeak of himſelf?*

A. It deſerves Obſervation, how the Apoſtle declares, that his Perſon was ſuitable to his Preaching, plain and eaſy, and not pompous. Tradition tells us, that *Paul* (according as his Name ſignifies) was a Man of a very little Stature, his Voice ſmall, and wanting that Preſence which ſome others had.

Farther; the Apoſtle was in Pain, leſt the Infirmity of his Fleſh ſhould render him deſpicable as a Miniſter, or the Courſe of the Goſpel be hindered and obſtructed by his bodily Infirmities; thus was he with them *in Fear, and much Trembling*. Nothing ſo much affects the Miniſters of *Chriſt* as an Apprehenſion and Fear, leſt any Thing in and from themſelves ſhould obſtruct or hinder the Succeſs of the Goſpel which they teach. It's a melancholy Conſideration, when People take Occaſion, from the Poverty or mean Appearance of Miniſters, to deſpiſe their Meſſage; but much more, when ſuch moral Blemiſhes are found with them, as render them the Occaſion of their own Contempt, and the Cauſe that their Miniſtry is unſucceſsful.

Q. *What Method did the Apoſtle uſe in preaching the Goſpel?*

A. He tells us, *his preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom*; that is, his preaching was not garniſhed with human Eloquence, did not conſiſt in rhetorical Proofs, was not accompanied with the ingenious Conſtruction of artificial Learning, which pleaſes the Ear, but affects not the Heart. But tho' the Apoſtle came in Plainneſs, yet he did not come in Rudeneſs of Speech.

The manner of St. *Paul*'s preaching to the *Corinthians* is here alſo deſcribed, namely, *in the Demonſtration of the Spirit, and by Power*; that is, the Doctrine he preached was accompanied with and confirmed by the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, to convince them that Jeſus was riſen from the Dead, and was made Lord of all, whom therefore they ought to believe and obey; he ſought not to bewitch them with Eloquence, nor entangle their Minds with ſubtil Reaſonings, but he offered to them as Men, a rational Proof and Demonſtration of the Truth of what he deliver'd and conſider'd, by thoſe ſtrange and miraculous Operations, which by the Holy Ghoſt he was enabled to perform. This Demonſtration of the Spirit accompanying the Preaching of the Word, we are not now to expect, but the Miniſtry of the Word is ſtill attended with a divine Power of the Spirit, enlightening the Underſtanding, and perſuading the Conſcience; which may be called a Demonſtration of the Spirit, becauſe the Evidence of Fulneſs is no longer diſputed or contradicted, but the Underſtanding aſſents to the Word as true, and the Will embraces it as good.

The Reaſon aſſigned by the Apoſtle why he preached the Goſpel in ſo plain and inartificial a Manner, is, *that their Faith ſhould not ſtand in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the Power of God*; that is, that your Faith may be aſcribed to a divine Power, influencing ſuch weak and unlikely Means, as any plain Preaching was amongſt you; it is the praiſe of Omnipotency to work by Improbabilities. Human Faith is an Aſſent to any thing credible, as credible upon the infallible Teſtimony of God, and is grounded on, and reſolv'd into the Evidence of divine Revelation. Upon this Foot ſtood the *Corinthians* Faith, *not in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the Power of God*.

Q. *What does he ſay farther in behalf of his Miniſtry?*

A. Our Apoſtle proceeds in aſſerting the Excellency of his Miniſtry, to obviate the Contempt which ſome caſt upon it for want of human Eloquence, Depth of Learning, and Accuracy of Speech; as if he had ſaid, tho' the wiſe Men of the World account me a Fool, and my Preaching

Fooliſhneſs, yet I ſpeak the higheſt *Wiſdom among them that are perfect*, or fully inſtructed in the Principles of the Chriſtian Faith. The Diſcourſes of the ableſt Miniſters of the Goſpel may ſeem jejune and dry to a carnal and unenlightned Underſtanding, yet they have an Excellency of Wiſdom and Depth of Judgment, which ſpiritual and judicious Chriſtians acknowledge and confeſs.

Q. *How does he deſcribe the Goſpel which he preaches?*

A. He ſtiles it *the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery, the hidden Wiſdom which God ordained before the World was.* It is *the Wiſdom of God*, becauſe it makes a Man truly wiſe, wiſe to Salvation, directing us to uſe the beſt Means in order to the beſt and higheſt Ends; and *the hidden myſterious Wiſdom of God*, becauſe it lay hid in the ſecret Counſels of God from all Eternity, and afterwards lay hid under *Jewiſh* Types, but is now revealed in due Time *to our Glory*, that is, to be the Means of our Happineſs and Glory. The gracious Deſign and Purpoſe of God in the Recovery of a loſt World to Happineſs and Glory by the Death and Sufferings of his only Son, was ſo myſterious and ſurprizing, that it could never have enter'd the Thoughts of Men or Angels, had not God himſelf diſcover'd it by the Revelation of the Goſpel.

Q. *How does he illuſtrate the Excellence of the Goſpel?*

A. By making a Compariſon betwixt the Wiſdom of the Goſpel and the Wiſdom of the World; *the Wiſdom of this World, and of the Princes of this World come to nought.* By the Wiſdom of the World underſtand the Learning of the moſt famous Philoſophers among the Heathen, all which *comes to nought*, and is of no Significance to that great and ultimate End, the Salvation of the Soul: Whereas, the Knowledge of the Goſpel is the trueſt and higheſt Wiſdom; it contains the Knowledge of God and our Duty, which is the moſt excellent, the moſt neceſſary, and the moſt uſeful Knowledge; it is the trueſt Wiſdom, becauſe by it we are wiſe to our chief Intereſt; it propounds to us the nobleſt End, the Glory of God, and our Soul's Salvation; and it directs us to the ſureſt and wiſeſt Means for the obtaining of that End.

Which divine Wiſdom, neither *Caiaphas*, nor *Herod*, nor any of the *Jewiſh* or *Gentile* Rulers, underſtood; *for had they known it*, that is, practically, ſo as to believe it, to be influenced and perſuaded by it, *they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*

Q. *In what Senſe does St.* Paul *ſtile* Chriſt the Lord of Glory, *v.* 8.

A. There belongs to him, 1. An eſſential Glory, as God, which is unſpeakable, inconceivable, *Phil.* ii. 6. *He thought it no Robbery to be equal with God*; that is, to have a Peerage or Equality with his Father in Glory. 2. A Mediatorial Glory, as Head of the Church which conſiſts in that Fulneſs of Grace which is inherent in him, and in that Dignity and Authority which is veſted in him. 3. A paſſive Glory (as ſome Divines call it) or a Glory which ſhall to Eternity be given to him by his redeemed ones, by Saints and Angels on account of his Mediatorial Work, *Rev.* v. *Worthy is the Lamb to receive Glory and Honour, and Worſhip*, for he hath redeemed us, *&c.*

This glorious Perſon *they crucified*, nailed him to an ignominious Croſs, and put him to Death as the vileſt Criminal, and greateſt Malefactor.

Q. *What Cauſe does the Apoſtle aſſign for this injurious and ignominious Treatment of the Lord of Life?*

A. The Cauſe of this Indignity, was Ignorance; *had they known, they would not have crucified*; had the Princes of the World known, either who *Chriſt* was, or the Work he came about, they would not have crucified, but adored him. But was their Ignorance of *Chriſt* a ſufficient Excuſe for crucifying him? By no Means, becauſe it was not an invincible, but a wilful Ignorance, they had ſufficient means of Inſtruction, by which they might have known him, and their Duty to him; but they cloſed their Eyes, and would not ſee.

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words in the 9th Verſe*, Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard?

A. Theſe Words do not immediately reſpect the Happineſs of Heaven, and a future State, tho' they are very often ſo applied, but they are primarily ſpoken of the Goſpel-State, and the Bleſſings to be enjoyed by thoſe that love God here; from whence may be drawn a good Argument to prove the inconceivable Happineſs of the Saints hereafter. Though they have felt and taſted joys unſpeakable and full of Glory, in the Actings of their Faith and Love upon God at preſent; yet all that they have ſeen and heard, all that they have taſted and felt in the way to Heaven, falls infinitely ſhort of the Perfection and Bleſſedneſs of that Place and State.

Q. *Wherein conſiſts the Revelation which God makes to Believers of their future State?*

A. There is a twofold Revelation of the Happineſs of a future State, a Revelation by Faith, and a Revelation by Viſion and Sight; the former Believers have by the Help of the Holy Spirit in this Life as Paſſengers; the latter they ſhall e're long enjoy in Heaven, as Poſſeſſors, where they ſhall ſee as they are ſeen, and know as they are known.

The Holy Spirit who thus reveals hidden Counſels to Man, and ſearches the deep Things of God, is omniſcient, and therefore really God. He not only ſearches the deep Things of Man, as of Kings and Princes, whoſe Hearts are a great Deep, but the deep Things of God; therefore the Spirit is God. If the Spirit that is in Man were not Man, it could never know the deep Things of Man; and if the Spirit of God were not God, he could never ſearch and know the deepeſt Things of God.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words in the 12th Verſe*, We have not received the Spirit of the World?

A. That is, the Spirit which ſuggeſts worldly Wiſdom, and favours only worldly Men. This worldly Spirit is a low, mean, narrow Spirit; it gapes after Things preſent and viſible; but future and inviſible Things it neither believes nor ſeeks after.

Q. *But what kind of Spirit had they received?*

A. The Apoſtle declares, they had received, *the Spirit which is of God*; and of what Uſe that Holy Spirit was unto them; it taught them to *know the Things which are freely given them of God*; it ſhews us both what God is, and what the Things of God are; we are enlightned with the Knowledge of that Grace and Goodneſs of God which is diſcovered to us in the Goſpel, we know both divine Myſteries and divine Mercies, both what God hath done for us, and wrought in us, which are the Things *that are freely given us of God*.

Theſe ſpiritual Things the Apoſtle declares, he preached after a ſpiritual Manner, *not in the Words of Man's Wiſdom*; not in the Words, and after the Manner then counted by the *Gentile* Philoſophers, to be learned and wiſe, but in the very Words, and after the very Manner which the Spirit of God teacheth us; *comparing ſpiritual Things with the Spirit*; that is, ſay ſome, comparing the Things which were writ by the Spirit in and under the *Old Teſtament*, with what is now revealed to us under the *New*.

Q. *Pray explain the Definition the Apoſtle gives of a natural Man?*

A. The next Thing ſpoken of, is the natural Man, or the animal Man, as the *Greek* Word ſignifies, who acts only by the Principles of human Reaſon, and worldly Wiſdom; who, though well furniſhed with intellectual and moral Improvements, is yet deſtitute of the enlightening Spirit, and the renewing Grace of God.

He receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; and he cannot know them. It is not ſaid, he knoweth not the Things of God, but *the Things of the Spirit of God*, as Truths purely Evangelical, theſe he receives not, neither in his Underſtanding, nor his Will.

He cannot know them. Natural Reaſon, by whatſoever aſſiſted and improved, is altogether inſufficient, without ſpiritual Illumination to apprehend ſupernatural and evangelical Truth. Not that *Chriſtianity* obliges us to lay aſide our Reaſon, but only captivates it to the Obedience of Faith. The Senſe of the Apoſtle is, that a Perſon of the moſt exquiſite natural and improved Accompliſhments, cannot behold evangelical Myſteries in their proper Light, or embrace them in their proper Verity and Beauty, without the ſuperadded Aids and Aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit.

One Reaſon why the natural Man receives not the Spirit, is, *becauſe they are Fooliſhneſs unto him*; that is, he accounts them Fooliſhneſs when propounded to him, becauſe he doth not ſee them proved from Principles of natural Reaſon, and by philoſophical Deductions, which is the only Wiſdom he ſeeks after.

Again; *He cannot know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*; he cannot know divine Things by that Wiſdom which he alone will be conducted by; and ſpiritual Things being Myſteries, are not knowable by human Reaſon, but by ſpiritual Revelation.

But although the natural Man, who acts merely from Principles of Reaſon, receives not the Things of the Spirit, nor can know them by any Study of his own, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned; yet *he that is Spiritual*, who hath the Revelation and Illumination of the Spirit of God, judges, or diſcerns, or tries all Things, that is, ſpiritual Matters, yet he himſelf is judged of no Man; that is, is diſcerned by none who hath no higher Principle than that of Reaſon to diſcern Things by.

For, what Man, without divine Revelation, and ſpiritual Illumination, ever knew, or underſtood the Mind of God ſo well as to be able to inſtruct, direct and inform the ſpiritual Man about it? But we who are Spiritual have the Mind of *Chriſt*, and ſo are able to diſcern and direct, to guide and inſtruct others about it. None are fit to interpret the Mind of God unto others, who are unacquainted with it themſelves.

Chap. III.

Milk for Children; Strife and Diviſion an Argument of a carnal Mind. Miniſters are nothing of themſelves, but Fellow-workers with God. Chriſt *the Foundation of a* Chriſtian's *Hope. The* Corinthians *were the Temple of God, which ought not to be violated with Diviſions. The Wiſdom of Man, Fooliſhneſs before God.*

Q. PRAY *what kind of Inſtructions does the Apoſtle give the* Corinthians, *in this Chapter?*

A. Our Apoſtle, in the firſt Chapter, reproved the Diviſions and Diſſentions among the *Corinthians*; in this he reſumes the ſame Argument, and ſhews what a Scandal their Diſſentions were to Religion, as well as a Reproach to themſelves.

He begins after this Manner, My Brethren, although I ſpeak the higheſt Wiſdom amongſt them that are perfect, yet could not I ſpeak to you as to ſpiritual Perſons, but as unto Carnal, becauſe the Works of the Fleſh are found with you, and at beſt you are but Babes in *Chriſt*. The Apoſtle does not abſolutely call them Carnal, as if they were wholly given up to the Works of the Fleſh; but comparatively ſo, having too much Corruption and Carnality in them, and ſavouring too much of the Fleſh, though in the main truly pious; and therefore he uſes the Word *as*, for Mitigation ſake; I would not ſpeak unto you but, *as*, unto Carnal.

I have fed you with Milk, with eaſy and common Truths, not with the myſterious Parts of Goſpel-Knowledge; with the firſt Principles of the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, and not with the higher Doctrines of *Chriſtianity*, which neither then nor now are ye able to bear.

For ye are yet Carnal; your Envy, Strife, Diviſions, prove you to be ſo, and that you live according to the corrupt Nature of Men: They had the Seed and Root of Grace abiding, and yet the Relicks of Corruption remaining in them. There is a vaſt Difference between a weak Grace and no Grace, between the Preſence of Sin, and the Power of Sin.

Q. *But how could the Apoſtle here call the* Corinthians *carnal, and Babes in* Chriſt, *when he affirmed, that they were* Rich in all Knowledge and Utterance?

A. 'Tis anſwered, that might be true as to ſome particular Perſons amongſt them, who had thoſe extraordinary Gifts of Tongues and Miracles given them, for the Confirmation of the Goſpel; and yet what is here ſaid might be true, as to the Generality of them, that they had too much Carnality, and unmortified Corruption remaining in them; *Ye are yet carnal.*

This he proves by ocular Demonſtration; for, ſays he, there are among you *Envying, Strife, and Diviſion.* Envy, as the Root, bears Strife, and Strife breeds Diviſions and Factions. Envy is a peſtilent Luſt; it makes another's Good our Grief. The Devil envies God and Man their Happineſs; he rejoices at the Deſtruction of Sinners, though he has no Advantage by it; nay, though it increaſes his Torment, becauſe they were ſeduced to ſin by him. There is nothing ſo like the Devil as an envious Man, with his cloven Foot, to make Diviſions where-ever he comes.

For, adds the Apoſtle, one ſaith, I am the Diſciple of *Paul*; another, I follow *Apollos*; and thus, probably, they called themſelves after the Names of their favourite Preachers, factiouſly crying up one Miniſter above another; which is highly ſinful and dangerous, tending to create Diviſions between Miniſters and their People, and Enmity amongſt Miniſters themſelves.

Who then is Paul, *and who is* Apollos? They were neither of them Authors of your Faith, but only Miniſters and Helpers of it, as God is pleaſed to furniſh them with Gifts, and to give a Bleſſing to their Miniſterial Endeavours. Your Miniſters give out to you, as God gives in to them; and therefore you ought not factiouſly to boaſt of their Gifts, nor to make Parties on their Account. The Miniſters of *Chriſt* ought neither to be deified nor nullified, neither to be cried up, nor trodden down; they are not efficient Cauſes, but only inſtrumental Means of Faith. Render therefore unto God the Glory of the Author, and unto Miniſters the Honour of the Inſtrument. *Who are* Paul *and* Apollos, *but Miniſters?*

I planted; I firſt preached the Goſpel among you, and firſt inſtructed you in the Principles of *Chriſt*. After me, *Apollos* watered the Seed which I had ſown; but God alone cauſed the Seed which I had ſown, and *Apollos* watered, to fructify and increaſe. All that Miniſters can do, is but to plant and water; they cannot give Increaſe, nor produce the Succeſs of their miniſterial Endeavours. Diligence and Endeavour is ours, the Bleſſing and Succeſs is God's.

So then, neither he that planteth is to be eſteemed as any Thing, nor he that watereth as any Thing, but the Glory of all muſt be aſcribed to God who gives the Increaſe: Yet muſt we not, in this Caſe, underſtand the Apoſtle abſolutely, but comparatively; *They are not any Thing*; that is, not any Thing of themſelves alone, without the Concurrence of the Spirit; what excellent Gifts ſoever they have, they cannot, of themſelves, make the Word they preach effectual.

He that planteth, and he that watereth are one; that is, in their Deſign and Scope, in the Aim and End of their Miniſtry; therefore they ſhould not be factiouſly divided, either among themſelves, or by their Hearers. Although there is a Variety and Diverſity in the Gifts of *Chriſt*'s Miniſters, yet the Intent and Deſign of their Miniſtry being one, they ought all to agree as one. They ſhould be one in Doctrine, and one in Affection; all aiming at the Glory of God, and Men's Salvation, as they are one in their Office, Inſtitution and End.

It follows, *Every Man ſhall receive his own Reward, according to his own Labour. His own Reward*; implying, that there are Degrees of Reward and Glory in Heaven, according as Men have laboured, more or leſs, for God here on Earth. The Meaſure and Degree of his Reward ſhall be according to his Labour, not according to his Succeſs: If he Labours faithfully, God will reward him proportionobly, though few or none have believed his Report.

Q. *Obſerve here the honourable Title put upon the Miniſters of God, they are Labourers, or Workers together with God; But how?*

A. Not by any Power of their own to produce any ſpiritual Effect, as if they, without God, could work Faith and Repentance in the Hearts of Sinners: But they work only by an external Application of the Miniſtry of the Word, and the Means of Grace to the Souls of Men. They are Underlabourers to God, and God honours them by working by them, and with them for the Converſion of Men.

Q. *In what Senſe is the Church* God's Husbandry, *Verſe* 9?

A. It implies. 1. Power and Goodneſs in making them ſo: A Building is not of itſelf, nor is a Field cloathed with goodly Corn of itſelf. 2. Dominion, and abſolute Sovereignty: The Maſter is the Orderer of the Houſe, and the Husbandman the Diſpoſer of his Ground. 3. Propriety and Intereſt, that we are not our own, but God's.

Q. *St.* Paul *calls himſelf* a wiſe Maſter-Builder: *But was it not vain-glorious thus to deſcribe himſelf? Is not* Chriſt *the great Maſter-Builder of the Church?*

A. Yes, undoubtedly: But the Apoſtles were Inſtruments in his Hand, which he honoured with Succeſs; for which Reaſon St. *Paul* thus ſpeaks, *I have laid the Foundation*; that is, he firſt acquainted them with the Rudiments and fundamental Principles of the *Chriſtian* Religion, which they had never heard of before; yet he is very careful to aſcribe all his Strength, his Aſſiſtance, and Succeſs, as a Maſter-Builder, to the Grace of God, *according to the Grace of God given to me.*

Let every Man take heed how he buildeth thereon. The Miniſters of *Chriſt* are to take eſpecial Care that they preach no other Doctrine than what *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles preached, and laid as the Foundation of *Chriſtianity*; and that they do not build upon that Foundation any Doctrine which may endanger their own, or their People's Salvation.

For, adds he, no other true Foundation can any Man lay, than that which is already laid by me; namely, the Knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and Faith in him. The Miniſters of *Chriſt* ought to lay no other Foundation than *Chriſt* in reſpect of Knowledge, of Faith, of Juſtification, of Interceſſion and Acceptance with God. The Miniſter's great Work, is to ſet *Chriſt* forth in all his glorious Fulneſs, to repreſent him in all his Offices, as a glorious Object for the Eye of our Faith, to look unto and fix upon.

Q. *The Apoſtle next acquaints us with two Sorts of Preachers, under the Metaphor of Builders: How does he explain himſelf on this Head?*

A. 1. Some that are ſound and orthodox, who hold the Foundation, and build upon it Gold, Silver, and precious Stones; that is, ſuch ſincere and wholeſome Doctrines as will bear the Touch-Stone and Trial. 2. Others that are unſound and erroneous, who hold indeed the Fundamentals of *Chriſtianity*, but build thereon ſuch Doctrines as will not bear the Trial, expreſs'd by Wood, Hay, and Stubble, vain and unprofitable, vile and contemptible.

As a twofold Builder is deſcribed, ſo a twofold Event is declared. Some Men's Works, that is, their Doctrines and Practices, will abide the Fire; others will be burnt up, and ſuffer loſs: By the Fire underſtand the Word and Spirit of God. A probatory, not a purgatory Fire is here intended; becauſe it is ſaid to burn not the Perſon but the Action, and every Action too of every Man. Now the *Popiſh* Purgatory-Fire tries not all Perſons, Martyrs are exempted; nor all Actions, but wicked ones only; whereas this Fire ſhall try every Man's Work. The Meaning is, that the Light of God's Word and Spirit will manifeſt the Verity or Vanity, the Soundneſs or Falſeneſs of Doctrines delivered by all Preachers. Sound Doctrines, that, like good Metal, will endure the Furnace, ſhall be rewarded; but ſuch Doctrines as will not ſtand the Trial, ſhall miſs of the Reward.

Q. *What do you infer from hence?*

A. Hence learn, that Men may hold the Fundamentals of *Chriſtianity*, yet may ſo ſuperſtruct upon it, and ſuperadd ſo many Things to it, whereby they may greatly endanger their own and others Salvation. *They ſhall be ſaved, yet ſo as by Fire*; that is, with great Difficulty, having expoſed themſelves to the utmoſt Hazard and Danger. The Phraſe is Proverbial, and ſignifies the Geatneſs of the Danger, and the Difficulty of eſcaping it; intimating, that Errors in Judgment endanger a Perſon's Salvation, as well as Ungodlineſs in Practice. He that has a due Care of his Soul's Salvation, will be as well afraid of erroneous Principles as debauch'd Practices; for Error is as damnable as Vice; the one is an open Road, the other a by Path to Hell and Deſtruction.

Q. *What is the next Subject here treated of?*

A. In the 10th and 17th Verſes, our Apoſtle, in the Opinion of ſome Interpreters, makes uſe of a farther Argument, to convince the *Corinthians* of the Evil of their Diviſions. They are the Church and Temple of God, therefore not to be profaned by Diviſions. *Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God.* You *Corinthians*, by being converted to *Chriſtianity*, are become a *Chriſtian* Church, and an holy Temple, in which the Spirit of God dwells and where the Spirit of Diviſion ought not to inhabit. For if any Man defile the Temple of God, by dividing the Church into Factions and Parties, him will God deſtroy; for the Temple of the Lord is Holy, and not to be profaned by your dividing Luſts, *which Temple ye are.*

Q. *What other Inſtructions does the Apoſtle give the* Corinthians?

A. He next gives a Word of Caution; *Let no Man deceive himſelf.* Self Deceit is the Ground of all other Deceit. Whatever Deceit is abroad, it begins at home. A deceitful Heart will not ſo much as ſpare itſelf; although this ſelf Deceit be moſt unnatural and monſtrous, moſt fatal and pernicious, yet it is but too common.

Here is alſo a Word of Exhortation; *If any Man ſeem to be Wiſe let him become a Foolr that he may be wiſe*; that is, If any Man ſeem to be wiſe in the Wiſdom and Learning of this World, let him embrace the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, which the World calls Fooliſhneſs, and ſo become a Fool to them, that he may be wiſe, according to the Wiſdom of God.

Q. *How is the Wiſdom of the World Fooliſhneſs with God, verſe* 19?

A. 'Tis ſo in God's Opinion and Eſtimation. If we compare Wit with Grace, Learning with Religion, a rational Head with a gracious Heart, the Latter infinitely tranſcends the Former, in God's Account. All the admired Wiſdom of worldly Men is nothing but contemptible Folly in the Eſteem of God.

To prove this, the Apoſtle cites two Texts out of the *Old Teſtament*. Job. v. 13. *He taketh the Wiſe in their own Craftineſs.* No Wiſdom, or Craftineſs, can ſtand before the Wiſdom and Power of God. *Pſal.* xciv. 11. *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Man, that they are vain*; that is, the choiceſt and beſt Thoughts of the wiſeſt Man are vain, yea, Vanity.

Q. *What Uſe does the Apoſtle make of the Doctrines and Inſtructions he had hitherto been inculcating?*

A. The Apoſtle cloſes his Diſcourſe with an Inference, not to glory in any Teacher whatſoever, either in *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, ſeeing they were all theirs; that is, all the Apoſtles or Miniſters of *Chriſt*, from the Higheſt to the Loweſt, from the Greateſt to the Leaſt, and all their miniſterial Gifts and Labours are all ordained and appointed by God for their Uſe and Service; that is, for the Uſe and Service of the Church.

Alſo the Things of the World are ours; that is, all the good Things in the World, Houſes, lands, Honours, Friends, Relations are ours, ſo far as God ſees them good for us. But don't many true *Chriſtians* want theſe Comforts; how then can they be ſaid to have them? 'Tis anſwer'd, 1. They have all Things eminently and tranſcendently in God and *Chriſt*, by whom they have a Title to all Things, *Revel.* xxi. 7. 2. They have all Things virtually in the Contentment and Satisfaction of Mind which they do enjoy. 3. They have all Things eventually; they have the Good of all Things, when they have not the uſual Poſſeſſion of all Things; their very Wants, in the End, work for Good.

Or Life: This is ours two Ways; the Comfort, and the End of Life are both ours, together with the true Uſe of it; for it is only the ſincere *Chriſtian* who lives to Purpoſe, and anſwers the great End of Life, the promoting God's Glory, and ſecuring his own Salvation.

Or Death; that which is in itſelf ſo terrible, is for the Believer's Advantage, their Friend, their Privilege, their Paſſage to Heaven, their Deliverer from Sin, the Perfecter of their Grace; when we come at Heaven, and not till then, we ſhall fully underſtand what this Means, *Death is ours.*

Or Things preſent, or Things to come. All the Events of Providence, Proſperity, or Adverſity, Health or Sickneſs, Riches or Poverty, they are all ſanctified to us, and are inſtrumental for the Sanctifying of us. They are Covenant-bleſſings, and are diſpenſed in Love to us. All future Things that may befall us in this World, or that to come, ſhall be to our abundant Advantage; whether they be merciful or good Things, or grievous and ſad Things, even Death itſelf, which before was in the Number of Curſes threatned, is now within the Compaſs of the Goſpel-Promiſes.

And ye are Chriſt's; not *Paul's*, or *Apollos*'s Diſciples, or Servants, but only *Chriſt*'s; therefore glory only in him; ye are his by Donation, his by Redemption, his by Conqueſt; therefore glory in him, and in him only.

And Chriſt *is God*'s. As you are *Chriſt*'s, and for his Glory; ſo *Chriſt*, as Mediator, is God's, and for his Glory. He is God's Servant, to do his Will, to execute his Pleaſure. He was begotten of the Father before all Time. He received his Doctrine from the Father in the Fulneſs of Time. He ſought not his own, but his Father's Glory, in the Doctrine he preached, in the Miracles he wrought, in living in entire Submiſſion to his Father's Pleaſure.

Lord! how will it ſhame us thy ſervants, to follow thy Servant *Chriſt*; and to be called by his Name, if we ſeek not his Glory, and exalt not his Will; and live not to his Praiſe, who died for us and roſe again?

CHAP. IV.

Miniſters, what they are and ſhould be. The Judgment of Men, not to be regarded. Miniſters and all Believers muſt have a modeſt Opinion of themſelves; for God's Gifts alone make the Difference. The Corinthians *high in their own Eſteem. The Apoſtles, Spectacles to the World, Angels, and Men. He was their ſpiritual Father in* Chriſt, *whom they ought to follow. He ſent* Timothy *to them, and would come himſelf. Wherein the Kingdom of God conſiſts.*

Q. WHAT *is the general Point inſiſted on in this Chapter?*

A. In this Chapter the Apoſtle aſſerts the Honour due to Miniſters, and deſires the *Corinthians* to account them no otherwiſe, than as Miniſters of *Chriſt*, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God.

Here is a double Character given of an evangelical Paſtor. He is, 1. " *A Miniſter of* Chriſt; that is, a Perſon deputed by the Command, and inveſted with the Authority of *Chriſt* to adminiſter in holy Things; to preach the Word, adminiſter the Sacraments, execute Church-Cenſures; being in all Things an Example to the Flock. And the People are to account the Office and Work of the Miniſtry, as a divine Inſtitution and Appointment of *Chriſt* in in his Church.

He is, 2. *A Steward of the Myſteries of God.* He is a Steward of the Truths of God, to open and explain them for the ſpiritual Edification of all *Chriſtians*, and to defend and maintain them againſt the Oppoſition of Adverſaries; God's Steward muſt not ſuffer Vermin to deſtroy the Proviſion of God's Houſhold. He is a Steward of the Ordinances of God, which he is obliged to diſpenſe in all Faithfulneſs to his Congregation.

It is required in Stewards, that a Man be found faithful. What Ground is there for Truſt, where there is no Truth? Now this Faithfulneſs in our Stewardſhip includes, 1. Purity of Intention; a pure End in all our Services will give Abundance of Comfort at the End of our Services. 2. Sincerity and Integrity of Heart. 3. Miniſterial Diligence; a ſlothful Miniſter can never be a faithful Steward. 4. Impartiality; we muſt take the ſame Care of, manifeſt the ſame Love to, attend with the ſame Diligence upon the pooreſt and meaneſt in our Congregations, as we do the Rich, the Great, and the Honourable; for all our Souls are of one Price, and rated at one Value in our Lord's Book.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle ſay,* Ver. 3. I judge not my own ſelf?

A. The Apoſtle did not much value himſelf on the Opinion and Judgment others might have of him; knowing that his Caſe would not be finally determined by any Man's Judgment, nor yet by his own. Therefore, ſays he, *I judge not myſelf*; that is, definitively, ſo as to acquieſce in that Judgment; I may be deceived, and therefore I leave myſelf to the Judgment of God. It is a ſingular Support to all the Members, but eſpecially the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, that they and their Actions have a more righteous Judge to be examin'd and try'd by, than either the World or themſelves; the World's Judgment may falſely condemn them; their own Judgment may flatter and deceive them, but the Judgment of God will deal impartially with them.

For I know nothing of myſelf; not as if the Apoſtle knew no Sin in himſelf (for he went groaning under a Body of Sin to his Grave) but with Reſpect to his Miniſtry; his Conſcience cleared him of all Unfaithfulneſs and Neglect of Duty. *Yet* (ſays he) *am not I hereby juſtified*; his Sincerity comforted, but could not juſtify him; and his Reaſon why he pleads not his own Righteouſneſs for Juſtification before God, is, *for he that judgeth me is the Lord*; as if he had ſaid, Were I to appear at Man's Bar, I doubt not but to come well off; for none knows me ſo well as my ſelf; but I have to do with a Heart-ſearching God, who knows me better than I do myſelf; and when God comes to look over my Work, he will ſee that which the ſharpeſt Eye could never diſcern. Therefore there is no ſtanding for me, a Creature, before God, in any Creature-purity.

Q. *In the 5th Verſe, we are forbid to judge others: How is this to be underſtood?*

A. For the foregoing Reaſons the Apoſtle forbids raſh cenſuring, unadviſed, uncertain, unſeaſonable judging of the Hearts, and final States of men. We may judge what appears manifeſt to our Senſes, but not what is hidden and unſeen; for the judging of hidden Things is reſerved to him from whom nothing is hidden; therefore to take upon us to judge the Heart, or to judge that which doth not appear, is to aſſume the Office, and to take upon us the Place of God.

The Perſon ſpoken of, *who makes manifeſt the Counſels of the Heart, and brings to Light the hidden Things of Darkneſs*, is *Chriſt*; *judge nothing till the Lord come.* A ſtrong Argument to prove the Divinity of our bleſſed Saviour; he that has Knowledge of the Secrets of the Hearts of all Men, and has all theſe ſubject to his Judgment, is undoubtedly God. But *Chriſt* aſcribes all this Knowledge to himſelf, *Rev.* ii. 23.

The Iſſue or Conſequence of *Chriſt* knowing and judging the Secrets of Men, will be, *Then ſhall every Man have Praiſe of God*; that is, every Man ſhall have Praiſe that is praiſe-worthy; every good Man, though now diſpraiſed and deſpiſed, though cenſured and condemned, though loaded with Scandals and falſe Reports, yet then ſhall have Praiſe from *Chriſt* the righteous Judge.

Q. *What is the next Point to be conſidered?*

A. The Apoſtle next reſumes his former Argument, that neither the *Corinthians*, nor any other *Chriſtian*, ſhould ſo overvalue and magnify ſome Miniſters of the Goſpel, as to undervalue and deſpiſe others, making Men of Eminence the Heads of Factions and Parties; but that we eſteem all Miniſters as Inſtruments only in *Chriſt*'s Hand, doing nothing of themſelves, but aſſiſted by the Grace and Strength of God to whom therefore the Succeſs, and entire Praiſe of all their Labour is due.

For who maketh thee to differ from another? Who is it that makes one Miniſter excel another? Is it not God? If ſo, then let thoſe Miniſters that have the greateſt Gifts from God, whom the Inſpiration of the Almighty made more wiſe and intelligent,

telligent, be moſt humble themſelves; and let none take Occaſion from thence, to deſpiſe others who have received leſs. There is a Temptation even in good Things to Pride; the beſt Men on Earth may be over-heated by what they have received from Heaven; and *Satan* may take Occaſion from our Raptures in Spirit, to puff us up with Pride; therefore our Apoſtle puts forth this Soul-humbling and Pride-mortifying Expoſtulation, *What haſt thou which thou haſt not received? Who made thee to differ?* There is nothing where one Miniſter, or indeed one Man differs, or is diſtinguiſhed from, or excels another, but it is given him from God.

Q. *What other Inſtructions does the Apoſtle here give the* Corinthians?

A. The 8th, 9th, and 10th Verſes are looked upon by Interpreters as an ironical Reproof given by St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, in which with an holy Deriſion he rebukes the high Conceit they had of their Attainments and ſpiritual Perfections. *Now ye are full*, &c. Now you think yourſelves ſo full and rich in all Kinds of Knowledge, that you deſpiſe your ſpiritual Fathers, myſelf and *Apollos*, who firſt converted you to the Faith; we are not worthy to be named with your new-admired Teachers. You advance yourſelves as much above us, as a King is above his Subjects. I wiſh with all my Heart your Happineſs were real, that we might be Sharers in it; but really, I fear you are only puffed up with Notions; that you have little except in Conceit, and there you have a great deal too much.

Q. *But how does St.* Paul *deſcribe the Condition of himſelf and the reſt of the Apoſtles?*

A. As the flouriſhing Condition of the *Corinthians* is ironically deſcribed, ſo the afflicted Condition of the Apoſtles is plainly declared. *We are are a Spectacle to the World, and appointed to death.* The orginal Word is, we are ſet as upon a Theatre or Stage, in publick View; Heaven, Earth, and Hell are Spectators; God, Angels, and Men, wait to ſee the glorious Triumphs of our Faith and Fortitude. What Solemnity is there at the Sufferings of a Saint! Bloody Perſecutors are for making all the Members, eſpecially all the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, a Spectacle to the World; an Alluſion to the *Roman* Spectacles, who carried thoſe Perſons about for a Sight that were to fight with wild Beaſts; and if they eſcaped, were only reſerved for Slaughter againſt another Day.

We are Fools for Chriſt's *Sake, but ye are Wiſe in* Chriſt; that is, in your Account we are Fools, becauſe we run ſo many Hazards for the Sake of *Chriſt*; but you are wiſe in your Profeſſion of *Chriſt*, becauſe you have an Art to profeſs him, and yet enjoy outward Proſperity with him.

The Apoſtle enumerates the ſeveral Kinds of Sufferings the Apoſtles were expoſed to, and exerciſed with; namely, Hunger and Want, Poverty and Reproach, Perſecution and Death. They ſuffered in their Bodies by Hunger and Nakedneſs, and Stripes; in their Names by Scandals and Reproaches, being accounted *the Filth of the World, and Off-Scouring of all Things.* The World, ſay ſome, ſignifies that Dirt and Filth which Scavengers rake together in the Streets, and carry to the Dunghill. Others think it an Alluſion to the Heathen Sacrifices in the Luſtration of a City; as thus, when a City was under any great Calamity, the Inhabitants picked out ſome very baſe, vile, and naſty Perſon, and burnt him in a Ditch, and caſt his Aſhes into the Sea, as a Sacrifice unto *Neptune*, ſaying, Be thou a Purgation for us. Such a baſe and vile Eſteem had the World of the holy Apoſtles and Meſſengers of *Chriſt*. When we behold ſuch a Man as St. *Paul* going up and down the World with a naked Back, and empty Belly, without an Houſe of ſettled Abode to hide his Head in, one who did more for the Service of God in one Day, than we perhaps have done in all our Days; when we conſider this, can we complain of hard Uſage from the World. Does not this Example deſerve the Contemplation of ſome of our Luxurious, Sine-Cure, Diſpenſation-Clergy at this Day?

Obſerve farther, the Duration of the Apoſtle's Sufferings; *even to this Day, and unto this preſent Hour:* It was not only at their firſt Entrance upon the Apoſtolical Office, when all the World was againſt *Chriſtianity*, that they met with Perſecution. As long as there is a Devil in Hell, and wicked Men upon Earth, all that will live godly in *Chriſt Jeſus* ſhall ſuffer Perſecution: But ſurely the Dregs of this Cup have in all Ages been reſerved for the Miniſters of *Chriſt Jeſus.*

Q. *But what was the Behaviour of the Apoſtles under this Load of Troubles and Afflictious?*

A. It is thus expreſſed, *Being reviled, we bleſs.* We are ſo far from rendering Evil for Evil, or Railing for Reviling, that we ſpeak well of, and wiſh well to the Perſons that are thus injurious to us. Being perſecuted by them, we ſuffer it patiently from them. Being defamed by any of them, we intreat God for them, to pity and pardon them; and we intreat them to pity themſelves.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle treat the* Corinthians?

A. Obſervable is the holy Ingenuity of the Apoſtle diſcovered in that ſharp Reproof given to the *Corinthians*; it was to warn them of their Duty, not to reproach them for their Crimes; *I write not theſe Things to ſhame you, but to warn you.* The Miniſters of God take far greater Pleaſure in exhorting People to be good, than in Complaints of their Badneſs.

Farther, St. *Paul* inſiſts on the Relation he ſtood in to them; he was their ſpiritual Father, and they his Children. *In* Chriſt Jeſus *have I begotten you through the Goſpel.* By the gracious Influence of the Spirit of *Chriſt* accompanying my Preaching, I have turned you from Idols to ſerve the living and true God. Hence it is that I have ſo endeared an Affection for you, aud challenge a deſerved Reſpect from you. Miniſters, who are the Inſtruments of our Converſion, are in a proper Senſe our ſpiritual Fathers; and there is no greater Love, no ſtronger Affection betwixt any Relations upon Earth, than between the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, and ſuch of their beloved People, as they have been happily inſtrumental in bringing home to God.

Wherefore I beſeech you be ye Followers of me. What Holineſs of Life, and Exactneſs of Converſation, ought to be found with the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, ſeeing they are to be Patterns as well as Preachers; and the People not only to be their Hearers, but their Followers! Happy thoſe Miniſters who can ſafely ſay to their People, *be ye Followers of us.*

Q. *What other Means did the Apoſtle uſe to impreſs theſe Exhortations on the Minds of the* Corinthians?

A. That this Epiſtle of St. *Paul* might have its due Weight and Influence in reforming the Abuſes which were crept into the Church of *Corinth*, he ſends *Timotheus* to them, to excite and perſuade them to their Duty, by bringing to their Remembrance his Ways which were in *Chriſt*, both what he had formerly taught, and what he continued to teach in every Church.

The Meſſenger ſent to them is deſcribed by his Name, *Timotheus*, or *Timothy*; by his Relation, his *beloved Son*, his Son in the Faith, poſſibly converted, and undoubtedly inſtructed by him in the Principles of Chriſtianity. He is farther deſcribed by his Zeal and Diligence in the Work of the Goſpel; *faithful in the Lord*; that is, in the Work of the Lord. A noble Character of a Goſpel-Miniſter, faithful to God, to Souls, in his Intentions, in his Endeavours, in all the Adminiſtration of *Chriſt*'s Houſhold, faithful and affectionate towards the Poor of the Flock, in publick Preaching, in private Inſpection. Happy are the People who have ſuch faithful Perſons for their Guides and Paſtors.

Q. *What were the reigning Sins among them, which the Apoſtle ſets himſelf to reprove?*

A. Among others we may note the Pride and Haughtineſs of ſome envious Teachers in St. *Paul*'s Abſence from *Corinth*, they entertained low and contemptible Thoughts of him, and vaunted that he durſt not come before them, nor ſtand among them. But obſerve St. *Paul*'s Reſolution, with God's Permiſſion, to come again to *Corinth*, with the Reaſon for that Reſolution; *I will come, and know, not the Speech of them that are puffed up, but the Power*; I will certainly come and try your boaſting envying Teachers, not by their plauſible Words, and fine Talk; but I will examine the Power; that is, firſt their Authority to preach; and next, what Power and Efficacy there is in their Preaching; and laſtly, what Power and Influence their Preaching has upon their own Practiee: I will find out what real good they have done among you, after all their oſtentatious Braggings.

See here the true and great End of epiſcopal Viſitation; *For the Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power*; that is, Chriſtianity does not conſiſt in talking, but in doing; not in vaunting, but in performing great Things.

But by *Power*, here may be underſtood a Power of working Miracles, for propagating and confirming the Goſpel which the Apoſtle had, but theſe Teachers at *Corinth* had not. The Kingdom of God, or the Goſpel-Church, was not raiſed at firſt, or carried on ſince by the Wiſdom of Words, by the Charms of popular Eloquence, but by a plain and familiar way of preaching the Doctrines of the Goſpel atteſted by Miracles, and accompanied with Works of divine Efficacy and Power.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle at laſt reſolve upon?*

A. He concludes, Come I will among you, to regulate Diſorders, and to rectify Abuſes; now chuſe you how I ſhall come; whether in the milder way of Kindneſs, Love and Meeekneſs, or exerciſing the Power which God has given me, of inflicting corporal Puniſhments on Offenders, by delivering them to Satan as God's Executioner upon their Bodies.

Note here the Power which the Apoſtle intimates he had in the Chriſtian Church, namely, that of the Rod, a Power of inflicting the ſevereſt of corporal Puniſhments, even Death itſelf, on notorious Offenders. Thus *Elymas* the Sorcerer was ſmitten with Blindneſs by St. *Paul*, *Acts* xii. *Ananias* and *Sappphira* ſtruck dead by St. *Peter*, *Acts* v. *Hymenæus* and *Philetus* delivered unto Satan, 1 *Tim.* i. 29. It was uſual with God, in the earlier Days of the Goſpel, to give Satan leave to ſeize the Bodies of ſuch as were, for their obſtinate Perſeverance in Sin, cut off from the Communion of the Church; who plagued them with Diſeaſes, and ſometimes with Death, which is called the Deſtruction of the Fleſh, 1 *Cor.* v. 5.

Q. *But did not the Apoſtle aſſume a greater Power herein, than properly belong'd to him?*

A. The neceſſary Reaſon for inveſting ſo great a Power in the Apoſtle was, becauſe then there was no civil Power of the Magiſtrate on his Side; and therefore, had he been deſtitute of this extraordinary Power to puniſh bold and hardened Tranſgreſſors, he could never have vindicated Chriſtianity from Contempt, much leſs have conciliated any tolerable Reſpect either to himſelf or it.

But how unwilling was the Apoſtle to exerciſe this Power of his, and to *come unto him with a Rod?* His Paternal Tenderneſs and Affection, prompted him to threaten Puniſhment, but only to the End that he might not execute and inflict it, provided they would be but obliged by Kindneſs, and reclaimed by candid Uſage. In like manner muſt Eccleſiaſtical Rulers do to the End of the World, in order to maintain the Church's Purity and Peace, by Church-cenſures chaſtiſe that Vice which defaces the one, and thoſe Diviſions which diſturb the other.

CHAP. V.

The Corinthians *had more Cauſe to be humble, than to be lifted up, becauſe of the Defects in their Church; and firſt, their ſuffering Inceſt among them. He exhorts them to caſt out the inceſtuous Perſon, and deliver him over to Satan; the old Leaven to be purged out. Who are the Objects of this Diſcipline; and what our Duty towards thoſe others without.*

Q. I*N this Chapter the Apoſtle is very particular in his Cenſures of ſome enormous Crimes then reigning among the* Corinthians: *What is the firſt Crime he charges them with?*

A. The firſt Crime he charges them with is, Inceſt; ſuch an Inceſt *as was not named amongſt the* Gentiles. Not but that many of the more brutiſh *Gentiles* were guilty of this Sin, but the more civilized amongſt them did, by the Light of Nature, deteſt and abhor it, condemn and forbid it.

Note alſo the Notoriety of the Crime; *it is commonly reported*, the Infamy of the Fact ſpread far and near, the Sin became ſo publick that it could not be concealed.

Q. *But wherein was the Church blameable?*

A. The Fault charged upon the Church is, that they did not cenſure this Offender. The tolerating of ſcandalons Sins in particular Members of Churches, is a thing very diſpleaſing to *Chriſt*, and offenſive to his Miniſters.

As they did not cenſure the Offender, ſo neither did they mourn for the Offence, as they ſhould and ought to have done. The Falls of particular Members of Churches are a juſt Cauſe of mourning to the whole Church; as Members of the ſame Body, we ſhould ſympathize with one another; what the natural Members do, the myſtical Members ought to do.

Q. *But how came they to ſuffer ſuch notorious Offenders among them?*

A. The Cauſe why they neither cenſur'd the Offenders, was, *They were puffed up*; partly with Vain-glory, an Account of their admired Teachers. Pride hindered their Sorrow; true Humility will teach us to bewail the Frailty of others, *Ye are puffed up, and have not mourned*; the original Word, *to mourn*, ſeems to refer to a Cuſtom in the Primitive Times, when Chriſtians put on ſolemnly mourning Attire, and bewailed excommunicate Perſons as thoſe that are dead. Theſe *Corinthians* being puffed up with Pride, were ſo far from mourning over this inceſtuous Perſon, that they rather rejoiced at, and inſulted over that Party to whom this Perſon belonged.

Q. *What Method does the Apoſtle preſcribe to the* Corinthians *to obſerve in ejecting the inceſtuous Perſon out of the Church?*

A. The Apoſtle goes on; Altho' I am abſent from you in Body, yet in Mind and Conſent I am preſent with you, and alſo by my diſcerning Spirit, by which I am able to diſcern Things at a Diſtance; and accordingly by the Power and Authority given me by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, I have already determin'd that when you are ſolemnly gathered together in the Name of *Chriſt*, and ſuppoſing me virtually preſent among you, that you deliver this inceſtuous Perſon unto Satan, by caſting him out of the Church, and leaving him to God's Executioner to inflict deſtructive Puniſhment on his Body, to bring him to Repentance for the ſaving of his Soul.

This is the Method of Excommunication, which conſiſts of two Parts, 1. Privative, in a Separation from the Communion of Saints. 2. Poſitive, expreſſed by delivering him unto Satan, who had then a Power over the Excommunicated Perſon's Body to torment it with Diſeaſes; which Power, tho' now ceaſed, yet the Chriſtian Church has ſtill a Power to exclude enormous Offenders from the ordinary Means of Grace and Salvation, and to expoſe them to the Malice and Temptations of their grand Adverſary the Devil, by depriving them of Church-Communion, which is a more dreadful Puniſhment than Perſons are ſenſible of. St. *Auguſtin* declared, that it was thought more grievous to be excommunicated, than to be beheaded.

I have adjudged already; He did not determine raſhly or ſuddenly, but adviſedly, as became a Judge. And what he had thus determin'd judicially, they muſt denounce ſolemnly, and in the Face of the whole Church; yet obſerve, the Congregation or Church were Witneſſes of the Cenſure, but they did not judge or determine. The Apoſtle did that. The Power of the Keys is in the Hand of the Church in ſo far only that the Church may have the Benefit, not the managing of them, for that is committed to the Paſtors only, as appears *Matt.* xvi. *John* xx.

Note farther, the ſolemn and awful Manner in which the Cenſure and Excommunication was, and ought to be pronounced, *In the Name of the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt; that is, having firſt in a ſolemn Manner called upon the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* for his Direction and Benediction; or, according to the command of *Chriſt*, by his Power and Authority, and with an Eye to his Glory; this ſhould be Manner, and thoſe the Ends in denouncing Church Cenſures, and then *Chriſt* will be at the Conſiſtory, and his Co-operation will make good the Cenſure, as his Commiſſion was our Warrant to pronounce it; and then the Penitent may and ought to dread the Sentence, as coming out of *Chriſt's* own Mouth, and to be inflicted by *Chriſt's* own Hand.

Q. *In what Caſes is this Sentence of Excommunication to be pronounced?*

A. This awful Sentence is not to be denounced on every ſlight and trivial Occaſion; this would be to proſtitute one of the moſt venerable Ordinances of *Chriſt* to Contempt and Scorn. And it muſt be remembred that this Ordinance was inſtituted by *Chriſt* in his Church, and executed by his Apoſtles, to recover the fallen Perſon by Repentance, and to be a Warning to others; the reforming, not the ruinning of Men, was the Intention of this Ordinance; the Cenſure is not Mortal, but Medicinal.

Q. *But when will the Penitent receive the Benefit that is propoſed by this terrible Sentence of Excommunication?*

A. The Time when the Penitent ſhall find the Benefit of this painful Ordinance will be, *in the Day of our Lord Jeſus*; not but that in his Life he ſhall find ſome Eaſe in his Conſcience, and Satisfaction in his Spirit; but the full Benefit of Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure is reſerved to the Day of Judgment; then will God manifeſt to the Church triumphant the good Effect of the Power of the Keys which he committed to his Miniſters to be publickly exerciſed in the Church Militant; how all ſtand bound in Heaven, whom his Church never looſed on Earth; and all whom his Church looſed on Earth, ſhall then appear to be looſed in Heaven.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle reprove the* Corinthians?

A. He reaſons with them after this Manner; you *Corinthians* are apt to pride yourſelves in your external Privileges and temporal Advantages; but with little Reaſon, if you conſider what a Blot and Blemiſh you have brought upon your Society, by continuing the inceſtuous Perſon among you. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth and ſours the whole Lump? So ſuch a Member, continued among you, will defile the whole Body or Society of Chriſtians with you. *Therefore purge out the old Leaven* (caſt this ſcandalous Perſon out of your Communion) *that ye may be a new Leaven* (your whole Church an holy Society) *as ye are unleavened*; that is, as you are oblig'd by your Chriſtianity to be unleavened, ſeparated from Sin and Sinners.

The Apoſtle purſues this Similitude of Leaven in Alluſion to the *Jewiſh* Cuſtom, before the Celebration of the Paſſover, of caſting all Leaven out of their Houſes, with Deteſtation and Curſing, on Penalty of being cut off from the Congregation of *Iſrael*. Thus the holy Profeſſion of Chriſtianity obliges every one of us to cut off every notorious

Sinner from our Society, every Luſt from our Hearts, every Member of the old *Adam*, that we may be a new Lump, anſwering our holy and heavenly Calling.

Therefore let us keep the Feaſt; not an Anniverſary, but a daily Feaſt, even all the Days of our Chriſtian Life, free from the Leaven of Malice and Wickedneſs, and full of Sincerity and Uprightneſs, both towards God and Man.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Injunction of the Apoſtle, v.* 9. Not to company with Fornicators?

A. That is, to ſhun all Intimacy and Familiarity with Infidels; but he did not mean or intend that they ſhould have no Converſe or Commerce with them, becauſe they lived among Unbelievers, which render'd it unavoidable. But ſince he heard of the Affair of the inceſtuous Perſon, who was certainly a Chriſtian, and probably a Teacher; he warns them to avoid all brotherly Intimacy and Familiarity with ſcandalous Chriſtians, leſt the Church be thought to favour ſuch; *with ſuch a one, no not to eat*; admit not ſuch to your own Table, much leſs to *Chriſt's*.

Q. *What is the laſt Thing obſervable in this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle declares he had nothing to do to judge and cenſure thoſe that are without the Church; but ſuch as are within the Pale of the Church, your own Members, who own your juriſdiction, theſe you have an undoubted Right and Power to judge, leaving the others to the Judgment of God; therefore I adviſe, nay, charge you, *to put away from your ſelves that wicked, inceſtuous Perſon*, by excommunicating and baniſhing him from your Communion. Theſe Words help us to underſtand the former Precept, verſe 7. *Purge out the old Leaven*, &c. that they are not in their firſt and proper Senſe to be interpreted a particular Perſon's purging out their Luſts, and mortifying their Corruptions, tho' that be a very neceſſary Duty, but to be underſtood of every Chriſtian Church's Duty to purge out from among them all flagitious and enormous Offenders.

CHAP. VI.

More Sins of the Corinthians. *Going to Law with Brethren, before Unbelievers reproved. Saints ſhall judge Angels and Men, much more worldly Matters. The Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Such they had been, but were not now. Scandal and Fornication. The Body is for the Lord, which ſhall be raiſed as a Member of* Chriſt, *and therefore muſt not be joined to an Harlot. Fornication is a Sin againſt the Body, which is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt; not our own; but bought with a Price. With our Bodies and Spirits we muſt glorify God.*

Q. WHAT *are the Sins which the Apole reproves in this Chapter?*

A. In this Chapter St. *Paul* reproves the *Corinthians* for going to Law with, and impleading one another before Heathen Judges; not but *the Law is good, if uſed lawfully*, but the beſt thing may be abuſed; and it's evident, that the Apoſtle who was offended at their uſing the Law before Infidels, allows it before Chriſtians, as is plainly implied in the firſt Verſe.

The *Corinthian* Converts are called Saints, becauſe they were all ſo by outward Profeſſion, and many of them were ſo by inward Sanctification. The true Chriſtian is a real Saint; his Heart is renew'd and ſanctified, his Life thoroughly reformed and changed.

Q. *Wherein were the* Corinthians *blameable?*

A. They were blameable in going to Law, 1. In regard of the Adverſary, *Brother goeth to Law with Brother*; Chriſtian with Chriſtian; which was both unnatural and unchriſtian. 2. In regard of the Judges choſen to try and decide their Controverſies, they were Infidels and Unbelievers: If Brother will go to Law with Brother, let them chuſe Chriſtian Judges; but for Chriſtians to chuſe to be judged by Infidels, was highly ſcandalous! What will Heathens ſay, when Chriſtians are together by the Ears, and Infidels live in Unity.

To diſſuade them from this Practice, the Apoſtle argues from the greater to the leſs. The Saints ſhall judge the World, the wicked World; yea, the Apoſtate Angels in another World; are they not fit then to judge and determine trivial Matters between Man and Man, between one Chriſtian and another, here in this World?

More particularly, the Apoſtle reproves them, firſt, for going to Law about Trifles and ſmall Matters. Thus we find it has been an antient, and too common a Complaint, that every petty Difference has peſtered the Tribunal. Secondly, For the Manner of impleading and proſecuting one another, it was with Heat and Paſſion, with Impatience and impetuous Anger. Going to Law is one of thoſe Duties that is hardly to be managed without Sin; it is difficult for a Man to right his Eſtate, and not wrong his Soul. Thirdly, He rebukes them, becauſe they did not chuſe rather to put up ſome Wrongs, than right themſelves by going to Law. *Why do ye not rather take Wrong? Why do ye not ſuffer yourſelves to be defrauded?* teaching us, that ſomething ſhould not only be hazarded, but parted with, for Peace-ſake. Peace is a Jewel worth our buying at a dearer Rate than moſt Men are willing to give for it; and a peaceable *Chriſtian* will put up many Injuries patiently rather than uſe Extremity, referring his cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly; who frequently, even in this Life, repays us double what we part with for Peace-ſake.

Again; the Apoſtle blames them for their Haſte in going to Law; the Law ſhould have been their laſt Refuge after Trial of all other Means; they ſhould firſt have referred it to their Brethren; if they could not end it, then the Law was open; but inſtead of this, upon any Difference, they preſently ſent for a Writ to the heatheniſh Courts of Judicature.

Farther; he blames their Ignorance, that there was not a wiſe Perſon among them to compoſe Differences before they went too far; *I ſpeak it to your Shame*.

He alſo rebukes their Slothfulneſs, that they were lazy as well as unſkilful, and unwilling to interpoſe in adjuſting their Brethrens Differences; a little Pains timely taken by us, may prevent abundance of Strife and Diſſenſion between contending Brethren.

Q. *How do you underſtand the firſt Clauſe of the 9th Verſe,* Know ye not that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God?

A. By Unrighteouſneſs is meant Injuſtice towards our Neighbour, as appears by the Context, which ſpeaks of defrauding. Unrighteouſneſs will as ſurely ſhut out of Heaven as Ungodlineſs.

Q. *What is next obſervable?*

A. Note next, the large Catalogue of Sins the Apoſtle reckons up that will exclude Perſons from Heaven; Uncleanneſs, Idolatry, *&c.* He that lives in any one of theſe Sins unrepented of; whoever allows and tolerates himſelf in any one Sin, is certainly in a State of Damnation. How many Thouſand vain Hopes are laid in the Duſt; and how many Thouſand of impenitently wicked Souls are ſentenced to Hell by this one Scripture?

Q. *What other Inſtructions does the Apoſtle give the* Corinthians*?*

A. Remark the cautionary Direction given by St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians,* not to deceive themſelves with a contrary Expectation, as if their bare Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity* would ſave them, whilſt they bound it not to Faith and Repentance, and an holy Life; never conſidering whether they are unqualified Subjects, or no, for that Grace and Mercy. God is a merciful God, ſays the wicked Man, therefore I ſhall not go to Hell; God is a merciful God, ſaith the Devil, therefore I hope to come out of Hell: No, ſay you, for God has declared and decreed the contrary. And has he not decreed and determined, has he not ſaid and ſworn, That the impenitent Sinner ſhall never enter into his Reſt? Be not then deceived, O Sinner, whilſt thou continueſt unreformed, thou canſt not *inherit the Kingdom of God.*

Another Argument the Apoſtle uſes to diſſuade them from all groſs Wickedneſs in general, and from ſuch unchriſtian Behaviour one towards another in particular, is, that great and mighty Change which had been wrought on ſeveral of them by Means of their Converſion to the *Chriſtian* Religion, or the Faith of *Chriſt*; *ſuch were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed*; you are no longer Swine, but Sheep, and therefore muſt not wallow in the Mire of Sin, as you formerly did. *Such were ſome of you.* The original Word is in the neuter, not in the maſculine Gender; not ſuch Perſons, but ſuch Sins; as emphatically demonſtrating their Wickedneſs, that they were not ſo much Sinners, as the very Sins themſelves.

But ye are waſhed, ſacramentally waſhed in Baptiſm; *ye are ſanctified,* purified in your Hearts and Natures, by the ſanctifying Influences of divine Grace; *ye are juſtified,* acquitted of Guilt, and approved as righteous.

Q. *By what Means was this Change wrought in their Hearts?*

A. This was effected *in the Name of the Lord* Jeſus; that is, through the Merits and Mediation of the Lord *Jeſus,* and by Faith therein: *And by the Spirit of God*; that is, through the ſanctifying Influences of the Holy Spirit. *Chriſt* juſtifies none by his Blood whom he does not ſanctify by his Spirit.

Q. *What other Sins does he reprove them of?*

A. The Apoſtle next reprehends the growing Hereſy of the *Gnoſticks* and *Nicolaitans* among them, who allowed of eating *Things ſacrificed to Idols, and Fornication,* as Things indecent. The Apoſtle grants, that all indifferent Things are lawful, and may be uſed. 1. When they are expedient, that is, when they may be uſed without hurting ourſelves or others; And, 2. When they do not get ſuch a Dominion over us, as to enſlave us to an intemperate and immoderate Uſe of them; he inſtances Particulars in Meats, and grants that it is lawful to uſe any Kind of Meats, becauſe God hath appointed it for the Support of Man's Nature; Meats are ordained for the Belly, and the Belly ordained for the Reception of Meats; but as God will deſtroy Meats, ſo will he deſtroy the Belly alſo, as to the Uſe it now hath; for in the Reſurrection Men ſhall neither hunger nor thirſt any more.

Q. *Why does he ſo earneſtly warn them againſt the Sin of Fornication?*

A. From the 13th Verſe to the End of the Chapter, our Apoſtle labours, by ſundry Arguments, to convince the *Corinthians* of the exceeding Sinfulneſs of Fornication, partly, becauſe they reckon'd it among the Number of Indifferent Things; and alſo becauſe the *Corinthians,* before their Converſion, were ſo notoriouſly addicted to this Sin, that they conſecrated a Temple to *Venus,* at which a Multitude of Virgins proſtituted themſelves; therefore St. *Paul* uſes divers Arguments to prevent the *Corinthians* relapſing into the Sin of Fornication after their Converſion, which before they had been ſo notoriouſly guilty of.

His firſt Argument is, *Now the Body is not for Fornication, but for the Lord*; that is, for the Lord's Uſe and Service; and the Lord is for the Body, that is, for the Good and Salvation of the Body, and therefore our Bodies ought to be employed for his Glory in every Thing.

A ſecond Argument againſt Fornication is taken from the Reſurrection of the Body: Our Bodies are to be raiſed, therefore not to be defiled; to be faſhioned like unto *Chriſt's* glorious Body in Heaven; therefore not to be defiled with Luſts here upon Earth. As if he had ſaid, Were your Bodies to be finally loſt in the Duſt, then were it no great Matter how you uſed them, or abuſed them; but as God hath raiſed up *Chriſt's* Body, ſo he will raiſe up your Body, which, as it is the Garment your Soul will wear to all Eternity in Heaven, keep it pure and undefiled here on Earth.

A third Argument is, Our Bodies are the Members of *Chriſt,* as well as our Souls; that is, the Union made between *Chriſt* and us, conſiſts of Soul and Body both. How ſhall we diſpoſe of our Bodies, the Members of *Chriſt,* to ſo baſe an Uſe? Shall our Bodies, which are joined to *Chriſt,* ever condeſcend to ſo baſe a Conjunction, as that of being joined to a Harlot? God forbid we ſhould be guilty of ſuch an Indignity.

For, as Wedlock makes Man and Wife one Body lawfully, ſo Fornication makes the Man and the Harlot one Body ſinfully: All the Difference is in the Morality of the Act, but the Species or Kind of Act is the ſame; thus the Fornicator and the Harlot are one Fleſh; but he that is joined to the Lord, namely, by Faith and Love, hath a nearer and more noble Union, than that of Fleſh; for he is one Spirit with *Chriſt,* not eſſentially and ſubſtantially one, but myſtically and ſpiritually: *Chriſt,* and the ſincere Believer, are led and guided, acted and influenced by the ſame Spirit, therefore take heed what you do, for in making your Bodies the Members of an Harlot, you diſſolve the Union betwixt *Chriſt* and them.

Q. *What Inſtructions does this Reaſoning of the Apoſtle afford?*

A. Hence learn, how intimately Believers are united to *Chriſt*, they are nearer than one Fleſh, they are one Spirit with him, they have one Father, one Houſe, one Home, one Heart, one Intereſt, one Acquaintance: Happy they who are thus joined to the Lord.

Flie Fornication; ſhun all Occaſions of it, all Temptations to it, all Incentives and Provocations of it; ſuffer not your Eye to wander, your Thoughts to muſe, much leſs to dwell on any unlawful and enſnaring Object.

The Apoſtle's Reaſon for this is, becauſe other Sins are without the Body, but this againſt the Body. But why does he ſay, all other Sins are without the Body? Becauſe other outward Sins, as Murder, Drunkenneſs, Theft, *&c.* have the Body as an Inſtrument for committing them; but in this Sin of Uncleanneſs, the Body is not only the Inſtrument, but the Object alſo, for the unclean Perſon not only ſins with, but againſt his Body, and degrades it from that excellent Honour whereunto God advanced it in its natural Condition, by making it the Member of an Harlot.

The fifth Argument againſt Fornication and Uncleanneſs runs thus; Temples which are peculiarly conſecrated to God, and his Service, ought not to be profaned and polluted; but the Bodies of *Chriſtians* are the Temples of God, the Holy Spirit dwelling in them.

This furniſhes an Argument for the Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt; a Temple ſuppoſes ſome Deity dwelling in it; the Tabernacle and Temple are called *God's Habitation*: Now if the Holy Ghoſt dwells in good Men as a Temple, he is truly and really God.

The laſt Argument the Apoſtle uſes to induce us to flee Fornication, is, our Bodies are not our own, but God's; they are his by Creation and Preſervation, his by Purchaſe and Redemption: We are bought out of our own Hands, as well as out of the Hands of Divine Juſtice; therefore we ſacrilegiouſly rob and wrong God when we alienate any Part of his own from him, and glorify him not, whoſe we wholly are, by the faithful Service both of our Souls and Bodies, which are his. Thus if we glorify him in our Body, and in our Spirits, in a Way of Obedience, he will, at laſt, faſhion our vile Bodies like unto his glorious Body, and make our Spirits as the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, in that great Day, when he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe.

CHAP. VII.

The Queſtion, Whether it be good to marry? anſwered. The Duty of married Perſons to each other. Every one muſt be Content with his Eſtate. It's better not to marry; but to marry is no Sin. How Marriage, and all other Things, are to be uſed. The Preference of a ſingle to a married State. The Marriage-Bond laſts till Death.

Q. WHAT *particular Points does the Apoſtle diſcourſe upon in this Chapter?*

A. He here reſolves ſeveral Caſes of Conſcience, which, it ſeems, the *Corinthians* had propoſed to him by Letter. The firſt is concerning Marriage.

Amongſt many other wicked Opinions which the *Gnoſticks*, thoſe antient *Hereticks*, maintained, this was one, that Marriage was from the Devil. Our Apoſtle, *Heb.* xiii. 4. aſſerts Marriage to be Holy, and Honourable. Here he determines firſt in General, that ſuch as have the Gift of Continence, and can live chaſte in a ſingle State, do well; and in particular, that a ſingle Life, at that Time, was moſt adviſeable, and moſt agreeable to the calamitous State of the Church; ſo that the Apoſtle ſays, *It is good for a Man not to touch a Woman*; he means, it is more agreeable to the preſent Neceſſity, more convenient in regard of the perſecuted State of the Church, as being a Condition leſs diſtracted with Cares; for Marriage multiplies Cares and Buſineſs, and uſually Wants, which it's more difficult to ſupply and ſupport in a married than in an unmarried Life; it is much eaſier bear perſonal than Family-Wants; the Apoſtle argues from the Inexpediency, not the Unlawfulneſs of the Thing.

However, ſuch are the Inclinations of Human Nature, that every Man cannot always do that which is moſt for his own Quiet and Eaſe, but Men find the Strength of Luſt, and the Power of Concupiſcence ſo ſtrong in themſelves, that Marriage, which is God's Ordinance for avoiding Fornication, and for the Propagation of Mankind, is of abſolute Neceſſity to ſome Perſons; therefore for avoiding Fornication, and all Sorts of Uncleanneſs (ſo common at *Corinth*) let every Man retain his own Wife, and every Woman her own Huſband.

Note here the Apoſtle's Expreſſion, Let every Man and every Woman marry; not ſome Men and ſome Women only; he excepts none, neither Prieſt nor Layman, but every one is here permitted, yea, for avoiding Fornication, commanded to marry.

Q. *What particular Directions does the Apoſtle give, in relation to the married State?*

A. He directs every Man to have his own Wife, and every Woman her own Huſband; more than one is forbidden, and Polygamy, or the Sin of having more Wives, or more Huſbands at a Time than one, is here condemned. To bridle Mens extravagant Luſts, the Wiſdom of God has directed every Man to enjoy his own Wife, and every Woman her own Huſband. Let the Church of *Rome* conſider how ſhe will anſwer, at the Bar of God, the Denying, in Contempt of this Ordinance, the Lawfulneſs of Marriage to her Prieſts and Nuns, when ſhe is told, *Heb.* xiii. 4. *That Marriage is honourable in all, and that all unclean Perſons God will judge*; and ſuch too often have their Prieſts and Nuns been with one another.

Q. *Pray what is the true Meaning of thoſe Words, v.* 3. Let the Huſband render unto the Wife due Benevolence?

A. Matrimonial Converſation, or the Huſband and the Wife performing towards each other all the Duties of Marriage which they promiſed, is an Act of Juſtice which they owe one to another; this is intimated in the Word *render*, and conſequently to deny the ſame is Injuſtice and Fraud; *defraud not one another.* Marriage takes away from Perſons that Power which they had over themſelves and their own Bodies, and transfer it in ſome ſort to the Perſon they are married to.

Dr. *Hammond*'s Note upon the Words *due Benevolence*, is this: What the *Greek* Word here ſignifies, will be beſt conjectured by the Uſe of the *Hebrew* Word, *Exod.* xxi. 10. (mentioned after Food and Cloathing) that muſt not be denied the Wife. The *Septuagint* render it *accompanying with her*; the *Hebrew* alſo ſignifies *Benevolence*, which therefore is here uſed as a more moderate Word, inſtead of the other; the *Syriack* reads, *the Love which he owes*; and ſome other *Greek* Copies *due Honour, or Worſhip*, which perhaps is the Ground of the Word Worſhip retained by our Church, in the Form of Marriage, meaning the Kindneſs, which is here ſaid to be due unto her.

Q. *What Directions does the Apoſtle give to married People?*

A. That is, Perſons in a married State may, and in ſome Caſes ought (namely, for religious Ends and Purpoſes) by mutual Conſent to abſtain from a conjugal Duty for ſome Time.

The Apoſtle lays no Injunction on any ſingle Perſons, to take upon them a Vow for a ſingle Life, nor directs married Perſons to thoſe perpetual Divorces from the Marriage-Bed, which the *Papiſts* practice, under pretence of Religion: For the Apoſtle admits of no perpetual Separation between Husband and Wife, on any Pretence whatſoever; no, not that they may give themſelves to Prayer and Faſting, but only permits it for a Time, on Condition that they come together again. So far was the Apoſtle from laying a Snare for the Conſciences of any Perſons, either in a ſingle or a married State.

And to prevent any miſinterpretation of his Meaning, the Apoſtle adds, *I ſpeak this by Permiſſion*; miſtake me not, as if I impoſed Marriage on all Perſons as a Duty; no, but I declare it is permitted to all as a Remedy againſt Fornication; for ſo far am I from that, that I could wiſh all Men unmarried, even as I am, and that they had the Gift of Continence with myſelf; but God, who will have the World yet farther continued and encreaſed, hath not given this Gift to all, nor to all alike in the ſame Meaſure. Therefore to the unmarried I ſay, that ſo many are the Advantages of a ſingle Life, that if they can abide chaſt and ſingle, as I do, it will be, many Ways, to their Advantage; but if they cannot, let them uſe God's Remedy, which is Marriage; for it is better to marry than to burn in Luſt; to be perpetually aſſaulted with unclean Deſires, and ſubject to the Ravings and Inſults of Luſt.

From hence we are taught two Leſſons, 1. That marrying or not marrying is, according to ſeveral Circumſtances, Matter of Advice and Counſel, but neither of them abſolutely of Precept. 2. That ſecond Marriages are not only lawful, but an innocent Duty, if Perſons cannot contain themſelves within the Bounds and Rules of Chaſtity: *To the Widows, I ſay, if they cannot contain, let them marry.*

Q. *What Directions does the Apoſtle give to married People?*

A. Although it be no Sin to marry, yet it is a Sin to depart when married; herein I lay the Authority of God's Command upon you, that you agree together, and that no Difference which may ariſe between you, cauſe you to ſeparate and live aſunder. But to marry upon Departure is a double Sin.

Therefore, if any Diſagreements, or Diſcontents between Husband and Wife, cauſe you to live aſunder for ſome Time, you muſt not, either of you, think of marrying to another Perſon; but be reconciled to each other, and live together in Love, as becomes Perſons profeſſing Godlineſs. If Contention ſhould happen to ariſe to that Height as to cauſe a Separation betwixt them two, who are one Fleſh, yet, nothing of that Nature can warrant a Divorce; nothing but Death or Adultery can untie the Marriage-knot, and releaſe them from their nuptial Obligations to each other.

Q. *What other Difficulties does the Apoſtle reſolve, in relation to marriage?*

A. Another Caſe of Conſcience which St. *Paul* reſolves the *Corinthians*, is, whether ſuch Husbands as had Heathen and Infidel Wives, might put them away? And whether ſuch Wives as had infidel Husbands, might not, and ought not to depart from them? The Apoſtle reſolves the Caſe, That they ought, according to the Intent and End of Marriage, to co-habit and dwell together, for this Reaſon, namely, that the Unbelieving or Infidel Wife is ſanctified to the Believing or *Chriſtian* Husband. How ſanctified? Not in her Name, but in her Uſe; ſo that they might lawfully co-habit and converſe together, being, by Marriage, made one Fleſh with him, or her, that is holy; and for your Children, they are not ſeminally unclean, like the Children of *Heathens*, but federally holy.

Q. *How are they holy?*

A. Not with an inherent, internal and perſonal Holineſs; for the holieſt Man's Child is born in Sin, and, by Nature, a Child of Wrath; but with an external, relative, and federal Holineſs; they are not Common nor Unclean, like the Children of Infidels, but fit to be Partakers of the Priviledges of the Church, to be admitted into Covenant with God; *Elſe were your Children Unclean, but now are they Holy.*

Note, he does not ſay, elſe were your Children Baſtards, but now they are Legitimate, as the Enemies of Infant-Baptiſm would make him ſpeak; but *elſe were they Unclean*; that is, Heathen-Children, not to be own'd as an holy Seed, and therefore not to be admitted into Covenant with God, as belonging to his holy People.

If by Holineſs the Apoſtle means a Matrimonial Holineſs, as the *Anabaptiſts* dream, then according to their Interpretation of the Word *Holy*, the Apoſtle ſpeaks neither pertinently, nor truly. Not pertinently, becauſe the Anſwer had been nothing to the Purpoſe. The Caſe put was concerning Husbands and Wives, not concerning Men and Whores; and the Queſtion propounded by the *Corinthians*, was, not whether a believing Husband, and an unbelieving Wife, were lawful Man and Wife together? No body queſtion'd that; but whether the *Chriſtian* Husband might put away his unbelieving Wife? The Apoſtle anſwers, he ought not, if ſhe were willing to dwell with him, for ſhe is ſanctified to him; not ſanctified in reſpect of her conjugal Relation, otherwiſe their Children would be look'd upon as unclean, like the Children of Heathens, but now are they holy, that is, to be accounted viſible Saints; and as ſuch, to be admitted to Church-privileges.

Again; according to this Interpretation of this Word *Holy*, the Apoſtle had not ſpoken truly; for the Children of Heathens born in lawful Wedlock, are no more Baſtards than the Children of *Chriſtians*; for their Parents Marriage frees them from the Charge of Illegitimacy as well as others: Add to this, that in all the *New Teſtament*, though the Word *Holy* be uſed above five hundred Times, yet it never once ſignifies Legitimacy, but is always uſed for a State of Separation to God: Therefore, to make it ſignify ſo here, is a bold practiſing upon Scripture, a forcing and wreſting the Word of God, to maintain a private Opinion, to make the Text ſpeak what they would have, not what the Apoſtle intends.

Q. *How does this Text make for Infant Baptiſm?*

A. Thus: If the holy Seed among the *Jews* were therefore to be circumciſed, and made federally holy, by receiving the Sign of the Covenant, and being admitted into the Number of God's holy People, becauſe they were ſeminally holy; *for the Root being holy, the Branches are alſo holy*, by Parity of Reaſon, the holy Seed of *Chriſtians* ought to be admitted to Baptiſm, and receive the Sign of the *Chriſtian* Covenant, the Laver of Regeneration, ſo to be enter'd into the Society of the *Chriſtian* Church.

Q. *What other Doubt does the Apoſtle undertake to reſolve concerning the married Sſate?*

A. This; that in Caſe the unbelieving Party, either Husband or Wife, depart, that is, refuſe to co-habit with their believing Yoke-Fellow, and ſo make void, as much as in him or her lieth, the Marriage-band, out of Hatred to the Faith: In that Caſe, if they will, let them go; you are not bound to leave your Family to follow them. However, let every *Chriſtian*, Husband or Wife, omit nothing, but endeavour every thing to the utmoſt, to oblige and win, to include and engage their unbelieving Yoke-Fellows, to live quietly with them; for God hath called us to Peace; and therefore we muſt give no Occaſion of quarrelling with, or Separation from ſo near a Relation: And beſides, by dwelling peaceably together, there is Hope of, and a fair Opportunity for the gaining and bringing over the Unbelievers to the Faith of *Chriſt*, and of being the Inſtrument of his or her Salvation: But however that may be, let every *Chriſtian* diſcharge his Duty in every Relation in which God has ſet him. This order I appoint in all Churches converted to Chriſtianity, knowing it to be agreeable to the Mind of God, *that no* Chriſtian *ſhould pretend his Profeſſion of Religion to excuſe him from the Duties of any Relation.*

Q. *What other Admonitions does the Apoſtle give them?*

A. He next exhorts the *Corinthians* to be content with the Lot and Condition which God had diſtributed to them, and to frame themſelves to walk Chriſtianly in it. Particularly he ſhews, that if any Perſon amongſt them were a native *Jew*, and ſo circumciſed, and afterwards converted to Chriſtianity, he ſhould neither trouble himſelf to get off that Mark from his Fleſh, nor affect the State of him who, being a *Gentile*, had never been circumciſed.

Again; if any of them were native *Gentiles*, and never circumciſed, but then converted to Chriſtianity, let him not affect the State of one who was a Native *Jew*, and circumciſed; *for Circumciſion is nothing, and Uncircumciſion is nothing*; that is, nothing is now available to Salvation, nothing that renders Perſons more or leſs acceptable in the ſight of God; but the keeping the Commandment of God, is now the only Thing required. Chriſtianity conſiſts not in a warm Zeal, either for or againſt outward Ceremonies, but in poſitive Holineſs, and in a ſtrict Conformity to divine Precepts.

Q. *What other Points does he inſtruct them in?*

A. From the 20th Verſe to the 24th, the Apoſtle ſeems to intimate, that ſome Perſons converted to Chriſtianity in the primitive Times, apprehended, that thereupon they muſt leave their worldly Callings and Employments, as if they were unneceſſary Diverſions from better Things! No, ſays the Apoſtle, *let every one in his Calling, wherein he is called, therein abide with God*; that is, whatever honeſt civil Calling they were found in when they became *Chriſtians*, let them keep to that Calling ſtill: For God does not call us from our worldly Employments and Buſineſs, but calls us to be holy in them; our ſerving God does not diſcharge us from ſerving one another.

It was particularly the Opinion of ſome Servants converted to Chriſtianity, that their ſpiritual Freedom by *Chriſt*, exempted them from all civil Service to their Maſters. The Apoſtle therefore tells them, they are freed by *Chriſt* from ſinful Slavery, but not from *Chriſtian* Obedience. Our Advantages by *Chriſt* are ſpiritual, not ſecular.

Q. *What Directions does the Apoſtle give to Virgins?*

A. Another Caſe our Apoſtle reſolves is, concerning Virgins; whether they, being at their own Diſpoſal, ſhould marry, or keep themſelves ſingle. He tells them firſt, that he had no ſpecial Command whereby the State of Virginity was either enjoined or prohibited, but he would faithfully give his Advice according to the beſt of his Judgment. This he does in two Particulars.

Firſt, that by Reaſon of the then Diſtreſs, and danger of Perſecution, which threatened the Church, it was moſt convenient that ſuch as were ſingle ſhould continue ſo, if it might lawfully be done; yet if they marry they do not Sin, only they will be expoſed to more Troubles, as the Troubles of the Church increaſe.

The Apoſtle's Sentiments therefore plainly are, that the Troubles of a married Life are more than thoſe of a ſingle State; *ſuch ſhall have trouble in the Fleſh. Such ſhall*, in Times of Perſecution, *have trouble*, more Trouble *in the Fleſh*; *but I ſpare you*; that is, I forbear to ſpeak any more of that Matter, leſt I ſhould ſeem to diſſuade you from Marriage, which is the Ordinance of God, more than is fit, and be thought by any, to lay the Yoke of Celibacy, or a ſingle Life upon you. I only tell you, that when *Chriſtians* are under Perſecution and Diſtreſs, it is much more for their Eaſe and Quiet to be ſingle, than to have a Wife and Children to care for in Poverty or Flight.

The Apoſtle goes on. Let all Perſons married and unmarried, conſider, that the Time of this Life is ſhort, and tranſitory; it is but a Point of Time we have to live, and ſhortly it will not be a Pin to chuſe, whether we have Wives or Children, or not; for before the expected Fruits of the Comforts be ripe, we ourſelves may be rotten. It is therefore true ſpiritual Wiſdom to look upon theſe Things now, as they will ſhortly be; to be very moderate in the Enjoyment of them; not to be too much affected when we have them, or too much afflicted when we want them.

The Time is ſhort. This is true in all the Notions of it. Take it for the whole Duration of this World; compare it with its Succeſſor, Eternity, and it exceeds not the Length of a Moment. Again; take it for the whole Duration of any one Man's Life, 'tis much ſhorter, even nothing. Take it for the ſpecial Seaſon; either of doing or enjoying Good in this Life; ſo 'tis ſhorteſt of all.

Q. *What Uſe does he make of his Argument?*

A. The Inference the Apoſtle draws from the Propoſition is, *Let them that have Wives, be as if they had none*, &c. The Conſideration of the Shortneſs of Time, and the Uncertainty of human Life, ſhould keep our Hearts in a great deal of Moderation towards the beſt and ſweeteſt of our outward Comforts and Enjoyments; that we neither inordinately love any Mercy when we enjoy it, nor mourn immoderately if deprived of it.

Note alſo the Apoſtle's Advice to the Rich, 1. To beware, that tho' they poſſeſs Riches, that they are not poſſeſſed by them. 2. That they ſo uſe them, as not to abuſe them, nor be abuſed by them. There is much Evil in the World, yet we may, we muſt uſe it, and it will be true Wiſdom to make a good Uſe of it while we are in it; otherwiſe we neither anſwer the End of God in ſending us into the World, nor in truſting us with the good Things of the World.

Q. *What Reaſon does he aſſign for our moderate Uſe of the World?*

A. Becauſe *the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away.* The Things of this World are here compared to a ſcene which is preſently changed, and vaniſhes almoſt as ſoon as it appears. There is a World to come, the Faſhion of which will never be altered, but the Faſhion or Scheme of this World paſſes away continually. This World is like a Stage, Perſons interchangeably act their Parts upon it, but they ſoon diſappear, and the Stage itſelf will e'er long be pulled down.

Q. *Does he give any other Reaſon why a ſingle Life is preferable to a married State?*

A. Yes; becauſe ſingle Perſons are freer from Cares and Diſtractions, and have commonly more leiſure to attend on the Lord in religious Duties. For the unmarried Man has but one Care upon him, namely, how he may ſerve and pleaſe God; but the married Man has another Care, namely, how to pleaſe his Wife. Thus alſo a married Woman is incumber'd with Houſhold Affairs, and concerned in lawful Things to pleaſe her Huſband, and conſequently has not ſo much Time or Freedom for holy Exerciſes: But the Virgin that has no Family to care for, no Huſband to pleaſe, has much more Leiſure to attend on God in holy Duties; therefore he adviſes them to chuſe that State of Life in which they *may attend on the Lord without Diſtraction.*

Q. *What does he mean by Diſtraction?*

A. Diſtractions are the Wanderings of the Heart, Mind and Thoughts from God in religious Duties. The Nature of God requires, that we watch and ſtrive againſt them; his Majeſty and Greatneſs, his Purity and Holineſs, his Omniſcience and All-ſeeing Eye upon us, and with us, obliges us to this careful Endeavour; and the Nature of this Worſhip calls for it, which is a reaſonable and ſpiritual Service; and the Nature of Diſtractions ſhould make us dread them. They divide the Heart, deaden the Duty, contract Guilt, and provoke Diſpleaſure.

Q. *But ſuppoſe a Virgin is under the Power of Parents and Guardians; what is the Apoſtle's Advice in this Caſe?*

A. He anſwers, that in this Caſe particular Reſpect muſt be had to particular Circumſtances; namely, if ſhe be of marriageable Years; if ſhe incline to, and be deſirous of Marriage, his Advice is, that ſhe may be diſpoſed of; but if a Parent be fully ſatisfied that he wrongs not his Daughter in declining to marry her, if he has a perfect Freedom in his own Will, and his Will be not contradicted by his Daughter's Deſire, he doth well, yea, he doth beſt not to marry her; beſt with Reſpect to the diſtreſs'd Condition of the Church, and with Reſpect to the Troubles of the World which he will be more free from; and beſt with Reſpect to her own Liberty and Freedom for the Service of God, and the Exerciſes of Religion.

Whence learn, That altho' Children are to be diſpoſed of in Marriage by their Parents, yet Parents have no ſuch abſolute Power over their Children, as to hinder them from Marriage, or compel them to it; to do either is both ſinful and unnatural.

Q. *Are the ſecond Marriages of Widows lawful?*

A. The Apoſtle anſwers, they are. After the firſt Huſband was dead, the Widow might marry again, provided that ſhe married in the Lord; that is, with a Believer, not with an Infidel; with one of the ſame Faith with herſelf. It is both dangerous and ſinful for Perſons confeſſing the true Faith to match with Idolaters. There is far greater Ground of Fear that they will pervert you, than there is Ground of Hope, that you will convert them.

But when the Apoſtle aſſerts the Lawfulneſs of a Widow's ſecond Marriage, yet he declares, that in regard of the Danger the Church was in of being perſecuted, ſhe would be more happy in her Widowhood.

So that the Apoſtle's determination, as to the caſe of Marriage and a ſingle Life, is this; that ordinarily, where there is no Neceſſity, a ſingle Life is more for a Perſon's Peace, more free from Diſtraction in God's Service, and therefore beſt.

CHAP. VIII.

Another Queſtion anſwer'd concerning the eating of Things offer'd to Idols. It's not enough that we know that the Idol is nothing; and that we have but one God and one Lord. For every one has not this Knowledge; for many would eat with an evil Conſcience, and periſh. To offend a Brother for Meat, is a Sin againſt Chriſt.

Q. WHAT *new Arguments does the Apoſtle inſiſt on in this Chapter?*

A. St. *Paul* in this Chapter, reſolves that grand Caſe touching the Lawfulneſs of eating Things offered to Idols. The Occaſion of which Scruple was this; The Heathens uſed to ſacrifice to their Idols, Oxen, Sheep, and other Cattle, and to feaſt upon their Sacrifices; part whereof the Prieſt burnt on the Altar as a Sacrifice to the Idol, and the other Part he either took to himſelf, and made a Feaſt in the Idol's Temple, and invited his Friend's to it, or elſe he reſtored it to the Offerer, who carried it Home, and either feaſted his Neighbours with it, or carried it into the Market, and ſold it in the Shambles as other Meat.

Now the Queſtion, which the *Corinthians* put to the Apoſtle, was this, Whether Chriſtians, if invited to theſe Feaſts, might go and eat of theſe Meats either in Idol-Temples, or in the Pagan-Houſes, or might buy and eat of any ſuch Meats, if it were ſold in the Shambles? A Reſolution of which Queſtion we have in this and the 10th Chapter.

It was the Opinion of the *Gnoſticks* and *Nicolaitans*, that from the Knowledge they had of their *Chriſtian* Liberty, they might either be preſent in the Idol-Temples, or eat of the Idol-Sacrifices as they pleaſed. The Apoſtle here tells them, that he knew many of them had a good Degree of Knowledge, but would not have them be puffed up with it, but to let their Knowledge be accompanied with Charity, which reſpects the Edification of others, and puts Men upon conſidering not only what is lawful in itſelf, and with Reſpect to themſelves, but what is expedient or inexpedient with regard to others.

Q. *What ſort of Knowledge is that which the Apoſtle ſays*, v. 1. puffs up?

A. This is to be underſtood of a notional, literal and ſpeculative Knowledge only; not of a ſpiritual, practical, and experimental Knowledge. The more a gracious Man knows, the more humble he is, becauſe his Knowledge ſhews him his own Vileneſs and Emptineſs; but the more a carnal Man knows, the more proud he is, becauſe he knoweth not himſelf; his Knowledge is not only a Temptation to Pride, but the very Matter of his Pride. Such Knowledge builds not up, but puffs up; whereas *Charity edifieth*; that is, applies itſelf to the Inſtruction and Edification of others, and conſiders not only what may lawfully be done, but what is fit and expedient; as in the Caſe of Things offered to Idols.

If any Man have ever ſo much Knowledge, yet if it be not accompanied by Charity and Humility, if he improves it not to the Glory of God, and the Good of others, he knows nothing to any ſaving Purpoſe, or as he ought to know.

He that thinketh that he knows any thing, that is, he that is conceited of his own Knowledge, that thinks of it with Inſolence and Pride, and ſpeaks of it with Oſtentation and Vain-glory, knows not himſelf; yea, he knows nothing as he ought to know.

But if any Man love God, the ſame is known, that is, allowed, accepted, approved of him; a Man knows much of God in this World, and yet God may diſown him in another World; but the Soul that ſincerely loves God, is certainly beloved of him, and ſhall be owned and acknowledged by him. Now true Love to our Neighbour is a good Evidence of our ſincere Love to God; and if we love our Neighbour truly, we dare not ſcandalize him ſinfully, nor offend our Brethren.

Q. *Pray explain the Apoſtle's Argument about eating Things offer'd to Idols?*

A. One Argument which the *Gnoſticks* uſed to prove the Lawfulneſs of Things offered to Idols was this, That an Idol was nothing in the World. It was not materially Nothing, for it was Wood or Stone; but formally it was Nothing; there was nothing of a Deity in it, and nothing of a Deity could be repreſented by it; an Idol is the vaineſt thing in the World, it is mere Vanity, a perfect Nothing, of no Value, has no Power or Virtue.

Some obſerve, that the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies both an Idol, and Sorrow, and Labour, partly, becauſe Idols are formed with much Labour and Exactneſs; partly, becauſe Idols are worſhipped with much Pain and Labour; falſe Worſhip is more painful than the true; the Service of the true God is holy and honourable, noble and ingenuous, eaſy and delightful; but the Service of Idols is ſlaviſh Toil rather than Worſhip.

Moreover, tho' the Heathens acknowledged a Plurality of Gods, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, Men and Beaſts; but theſe were only *called Gods*, Gods in Name, not in Nature, nor Reality; yet, ſays the Apoſtle, we *Chriſtians* acknowledge but one living and true God, to whom all our Prayers muſt be directed.

Q. *Has not this Paſſage given Ground for the broaching ſome heretical Notions?*

A. This Text the *Arians*, *Socinians*, and *Trinitarians* exceedingly boaſt of, as if it expreſsly confined the Deity to the Father, as diſtinct from *Chriſt* and the *Holy Ghoſt*. Thus they argue: He who ſaith, there is one Emperor; namely, *Cæſar*, ſays in effect there is only one Emperor, and he who ſays there is one God the Father, he in effect declares there is no God beſides the Father.

To this the Orthodox anſwer, That God the Father is often put in Scripture for the whole Deity, comprehending the three Perſons, he being the Fountain of the Deity, and Foundation of the Trinity, as the School-men ſpeak; ſo that the Application of the Word, *God*, here to the Father, does not exclude the Son from God, but only from being the Fountain of the Deity, as the Father, *Rev.* i. 17. *Chriſt* ſays, I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Firſt and the Laſt: Will any conclude thence that God the Father is not *Alpha* and *Omega?* Is he not the Firſt and the Laſt as well as *Chriſt*.

Again; we call our *Lord Jeſus* the only Saviour; do we therefore exclude God the Father from being a Saviour? Is he not ſtiled the Saviour of all Men? 1 *Tim.* iv. 10.

Farther; God the Father is called the Creator of all Things, yet it's aſſerted that all Things were created by *Chriſt*, *John* i. 2. In ſhort we, as well as they, aſſert the Unity of the Godhead, and that *Chriſt* is not another God, but only another Perſon from the Father.

It's anſwer'd, Their Argument may be thus retorted upon themſelves; as the Apoſtle ſays here, *there is but one Lord* Jeſus Chriſt; now, if the ſaying that there is but one God, excludes *Chriſt* from being God, then the ſaying that there is but one Lord, excludes God the Father from being Lord; and if it be Blaſphemy to exclude God the Father from being Lord, it is no leſs to exclude *Chriſt* the Son from being God.

Know then, that as *Chriſtians* have in all Ages of the Church acknowledged one God only, even God the Father, ſo have they alſo owned that *Jeſus Chriſt* was truly God, of the Subſtance of the Father, God of very God. The Lord keep us ſtedfaſt in this Faith, ſeeing he that honours the Son, honours the Father who ſent him; but he that denies the Son, denies the Father alſo.

Q. *What other Arguments does the Apoſtle bring to dehort* Chriſtians *from eating Things offer'd to Idols?*

A. The 7th Verſe is added as a Reaſon why ſtrong *Chriſtians* ſhould not eat Meat offered to Idols with Reſpect to thoſe that are weak; as if he had ſaid, tho' many of you know that an Idol is nothing, and that Meat is neither ſanctified nor polluted which is ſet before it, and therefore you can eat, or not eat, without any Scruple as to yourſelves, yet you ſhould conſider what is ſafeſt to be done with Reſpect to others, for ſome Perſons fancy that an Idol is Something, eat what is offer'd to it, not as common Meat, but as a ſacred Banquet in honour of the Idol; and ſo their Conſcience being weak, that is, erroneous, is defiled.

Thus, an Action that is lawful in Reſpect of ourſelves, may yet be a Sin if done by us with Reſpect to others; another, encouraged by our Example may do the ſame Act, though not with the ſame Intent, as in this Caſe; the Sight of a *Chriſtian's* eating Things offered to Idols, who knows that an Idol is nothing in the World, may embolden others to do the ſame, who really intend ſome Honour by it to the Idol; the outward Action is the ſame, but the Opinion and Intention widely different.

It is not the eating, or forbearing to eat, abſolutely conſidered, that makes a Man better or worſe, more or leſs acceptable in the Sight of God; but we muſt take great Heed, leſt by our Example, others take Occaſion to worſhip the Idol; you therefore ought not ſo to eat, as to give Occaſion to the Fall of your weak Brother.

Q. *Pray ſhew the Force of the Apoſtle's Argument in this Point?*

A. If any Man, with an erroneous Conſcience, goes to theſe Feaſts, and there ſees thee, who he believes has more Knowledge than himſelf, ſit at Meat in the Idol's Temple, will not his Conſcience be more emboldened by thy Example, to eat Things offered to Idols in Honour to the Idol, or, as thinking it no Hurt, to worſhip the Idol? And thus by Occaſion of thy Knowledge a weak Brother is in Danger of periſhing, for whom *Chriſt* died: By all which the Apoſtle inſtructs us, how cautious every *Chriſtian* ſhould be not to uſe his Liberty to the Prejudice of others Souls, by doing any Action which may be let alone, but if done, may really become a Snare to others.

The Apoſtle next ſhews, that ſuch an Uſe of our *Chriſtian* Liberty, as encourages others to do that which is Evil, is both An act of Uncharitableneſs towards our Brother, and Sin againſt our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, in betraying, as much as in us lies, a Soul to Ruin, and hindering his Salvation for whom *Chriſt* died.

Q. *How do you underſtand the laſt Verſe of this Chapter, and* therefore, if Meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Fleſh while the World ſtandeth, leſt I make my Brother to offend?

A. A twofold Senſe is given to this Paſſage; ſome underſtand it thus: If my eating Meat offer'd to Idols, be a Stumbling-block to any Perſon, and confirms them in their ſinful Practice, or be an occaſion of Sin to them, I will certainly deny myſelf the Uſe of that Liberty which may prove of ſuch a dangerous Conſequence to my Fellow *Chriſtians*.

Others carry the Thing higher, and underſtand it of all Fleſh in general; that, rather than the Apoſtle would offend his weak Brother, he would not eat any Fleſh to his dying-day; an hyperbolical Expreſſion, by which he declares, how far one *Chriſtian* ſhould condeſcend to another, to prevent each other's ſinning againſt God: As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, really I do not make ſo light of another's Sin, nor ſet ſo little value on the Soul of my weak Brother, nor on the Blood of my bleſſed Saviour, as for Fleſh, that is, for an unneceſſary Thing, to uſe my Liberty, when it may prove a Temptation to ſin.

To conclude, It is the Duty of *Chriſtians*, in Matters, wherein they are ſet at Liberty by the Law of God to do a Thing, or not to do it, to take that Part which, they ſee, will give leaſt Occaſion of Sin to their Brethren, and to avoid that Part which, if taken, will certainly miniſter Occaſion to others to ſin. Altho' we are in ourſelves never ſo well ſatisfied as to the Lawfulneſs of the Action, yet we ought to deny ourſelves in ſome Things, rather than be an Occaſion to others to fall into Sin; he forfeits the Name of a *Chriſtian*, who will not abridge himſelf of his *Chriſtian* Liberty, to preſerve his Brother from Sin and Temptation.

CHAP. IX.

The Characteriſticks of an Apoſtle. St. Paul's Example might teach them the Uſe of indifferent Things. He might expect Maintenance from them; proved by thoſe who ſerve in War, plant a Vineyard, feed a Flock, and of an Ox that treads out the Corn; of a Sower; and of them who ſerve in the Temple; and this our Lord ordained; and therefore he might require it, but voluntarily forbore it, as not judging it for their Edification, in which Caſe, it would be an Abuſe of his Power, which was deſigned to gain both Jew *and* Gentile, *and help the Weak. Sobriety and diligent Progreſs in Godlineſs, neceſſary to all, both Miniſter and People.*

Q. WHAT *Subject does the Apoſtle propoſe to treat of in this Chapter?*

A. St. *Paul* propoſes his own Example for their Encouragement and Imitation, who, tho' an Apoſtle, and had as great Freedom and Liberty as any Man in Things undetermined by the Law of God, yet reſtrained himſelf in ſeveral Caſes there recorded.

Q. *In what did the Apoſtle's Liberty conſiſt?*

A. The firſt Inſtance he gives of his Liberty, was this, That when he preach'd the Goſpel among them at *Corinth*, he had the Liberty either to live on the Goſpel, and to take Maintenance of them for preaching, or to live upon his Labour, following his Trade of Tent-making, according as he ſaw it beſt for the Furtherance of the Goſpel. *Am I not free?* Have I not as good a Claim to Freedom and *Chriſtian* Liberty as any Man? For, *Am not I an Apoſtle*, or an extraordinary Meſſenger of *Jeſus Chriſt?* And tho' I never ſaw the Face of *Chriſt* upon Earth, yet *have I not ſeen* him, and heard him ſpeaking to me from Heaven? And is not the Converſion of you the *Corinthians* to the *Chriſtian* Faith by my Miniſtry, a Fruit and Seal of my Apoſtleſhip? Now, if I am all this, certainly I have as great a Right to the uſe of *Chriſtian* Liberty as any of you can pretend to; yet will I only make uſe of it for the Benefit of others, and for the Furtherance of the Goſpel.

Again; whatever others do, you, of all Men, ſhould not queſtion my Apoſtleſhip, for you were converted by it; you confirm and ratify my Miniſtry that it is of God, and that God is in it of a Truth. The Converſion of Sinners, and the building up of Saints, is God's Seal to our Miniſtry. Happy thoſe

Miniſters who can ſay to their People, *Ye are our Work, and the Seal of our Apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord.*

Q. *Are none true Miniſters of* Chriſt *but ſuch who can produce theſe or the like Seals of their Miniſtry?*

A. It muſt not from hence be concluded, that a Perſon is not a true Miniſter of *Chriſt*, becauſe he cannot produce this Seal; more Good is many Times done by by a Miniſter than he knows of, the Seed ſometimes lies under the Clods before it fructifies; what is ſown in one Miniſter's Time, comes up in another's; ſo one ſoweth, and another reapeth, but both ſhall rejoice together. But where the Seal can be produced, it is a certain Sign that that ſuch a Miniſter is ſent of God, and that God is with him, and owns him; yet it is the Efficacy of the Word upon our Heart, and Lives, that is the Witneſs of our Sanctification, and the Seal of our Salvation.

Q. *What other Part of* Chriſtian *Liberty does the Apoſtle lay Claim to?*

A. Another Branch of *Chriſtian* Liberty which the Apoſtle aſſerts his Right to, is Marriage; he could have taken a Wife, as *Peter*, and other Apoſtles did, had he pleaſed, and put the Church to farther Charges in maintaining him, a Wife, and Family, as did others without blame; and he and *Barnabas* had Power to forbear working for their Living; they might, if they had pleaſed, have inſiſted on a Maintenance from the *Corinthians*. But they conſider'd the low Circumſtances the Church was then under, and therefore both of them choſe a ſingle State, and wrought with their Hands to maintain themſelves.

Have we not Power to lead about a Siſter, or a Wife? that is, to marry, if we ſaw fit? Here is a full Proof of the Lawfulneſs of, and Permiſſion given to Miniſters to marry as well as other Men; neither the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, nor the Apoſtles of the New, abſtained from the Marriage-bed, nor judg'd themſelves too pure for the Inſtitution of their Maker; the Doctrine forbidding Marriage to any, (which the Apoſtle ſays, is honourable in all) is called a Doctrine of Devils.

Hence learn, that Husband and Wife ought to be undivided Companions; *Have we not Power to lead about a Wife?* That is, to take her with us in our Travels and Journeys for our Comfort and Aſſiſtance. Husbands and Wives are to be mutual Companions, Sharers in each other's Sorrows, and Partakers in each other's Comforts.

Q. *How does he prove his Right to a Maintenance for his Labours in the Miniſtry?*

A. As Soldiers are paid by thoſe that employ them, and as Husbandmen and Shepherds live on the Fruit of their Labours, ſo may I, and all the Miniſters of the Goſpel with me. The Miniſters of *Chriſt* are ſpiritual Soldiers, Planters, Vine-dreſſers, Husbandmen, Shepherds, to intimate the Care and Painfulneſs, the Diligence and Watchfulneſs that ſhould be found in them.

Here note, that a Maintenance, a comfortable and honourable Maintenance, where it may be had, is a Debt due from the People to their Miniſters. This is a Duty taken from the Law of Nations, Equity and Cuſtom, which allow Soldiers, Vine-dreſſers and Shepherds, all that labour for the Uſe of others in their reſpective Callings, a due Reward of Wages.

A ſecond Argument for the Maintenance of the Miniſters of the Goſpel is taken from the Levitical Law: *Say I theſe Things as a Man? or ſaith not the Law the ſame alſo?* I do not ſpeak this only rationally, as a Thing agreeable to the Light of Nature, and the Law of Nations, but the Levitical Law ſays the ſame: For when God, *Deut.* xxv. 4. forbids to *muzzle the Mouth of an Ox*, which by hard labour treads out the Corn with his Feet, he deſign'd therein more than the bare taking care of the Ox; for thereby he ſhews in general what Equity there ſhould be uſed in the juſt rewarding of all Men that labour for us; and in particular, the ſpiritual Labourers, ſuch as plow, ſow, and and threſh in the ſpiritual Husbandry, ſhould labour in hope of a Livelihood and Subſiſtence, and eat the Bread they have earn'd. If all Men are encouraged to work from a juſt Expectation of enjoying the Fruit of their Labour, why ſhould not the Miniſters of the Word meet with the like Encouragement which all Mankind look upon as their juſt Due?

A third Argument for Miniſters Maintenance is taken from common Juſtice; they *ſow ſpiritual Things*; they diſpenſe the Word and Sacraments, and endeavour to make Men ſpiritual and holy here, and happy hereafter; and therefore they ought to reap ſome of their *carnal Things* for the Support of their Lives, a Subſiſtence for themſelves and Families. So that the Miniſters of God are not indebted to their People, but their People are indebted both to God and them; they give their People Things of a much greater Value, and more excellent Uſe, for Things of a much leſſer Value, and more inferior Uſe; for their carnal Things they give them ſpiritual Things.

A fourth Argument St. *Paul* uſes with the *Corinthians*, to allow him, and other Apoſtles a ſufficient Maintenance, is taken from their own Example to other Teachers at *Corinth*. As if he had ſaid; You maintain others, why not us? Do you not owe more to us, who firſt laid the Foundation of a *Chriſtian* Church amongſt you, and have begotten you thro' the Goſpel, than you do to others? Nevertheleſs he tells them, that himſelf and *Barnabas*, altho' they had this unqueſtionable Liberty, yet they never made uſe of it, but ſuffer'd Hunger and Thirſt, Wearineſs and Want, leſt it ſhould obſtruct the Progreſs of the Goſpel; whilſt ſome might, (tho' very unjuſtly) charge them with Covetouſneſs; and others, to ſave Charges, might decline hearing them.

A fifth Argument for Miniſters Maintenance, is taken from the Example of the *Levites*, who lived on the Things offered in the Temple, and at the Altar, and had a conſiderable part of the Sacrifices allowed them by God himſelf for their Miniſtration under the Law: So ſays the Apoſtle, it is the Lord's Pleaſure and Appointment now under the Goſpel (*Mat.* x. 10. *Luke* x. 7.) that they who preach the Goſpel ſhould be maintained for it, and not diverted from it, by the Cares and Buſineſs of the World, but have a Livelihood from their Labour.

Hence it is evident, that a Maintenance for the Miniſtry under the Goſpel, is of divine Right; if it was ſo under the Law, it holds under the Goſpel; for ſo, ſays the Apoſtle, *God hath ordained.* God's Will in this Matter is the ſame under the *New Teſtament* as it was under the *Old*; and as a Maintenance in general is of divine Right, ſo Tithes are thus far a Claim of that Nature, that it is believed the Wiſdom of Man cannot find a better Expedient, than by them, to ſupport a miniſterial Maintenance for the Preachers of the Goſpel to the End of the World.

Q. *How did the Apoſtle uſe that Liberty, which he affirms he has a Right to?*

A. St. *Paul* having thus aſſerted his Liberty, next ſhews his great Moderation in the uſe of it; altho' he had a Liberty to marry, and to demand Maintenance for his Miniſtry as well as others, yet he denied himſelf in both. The Apoſtle was charg'd by falſe Teachers, that he preached the Goſpel for his own Profit and Advantage; whereas it was his peculiar Glory, that he rendered the Goſpel without Charge.

The Inference the Apoſtle draws from all this Diſcourſe about his declining the Uſe of his lawful Liberty, is this, If I your Miniſter for your Profit, and the Advantage of the Goſpel, abate of my own juſt Right, and unqueſtionable Liberty, why ſhould not you abate of yours, in the Caſe of eating Things offer'd to Idols, to keep your weak Brother from deſtroying his own Soul by ſinning againſt God?

Q. *Was there any Thing extraordinary in the Apoſtle's Preaching, that he inſiſts ſo much upon it?*

A. My Preaching the Goſpel, ſays he, has nothing ſingular in it, for others do it as well as myſelf, and I am bound to do it as well as others; for Neceſſity is laid upon me, by a ſpecial Call and Command from *Chriſt* ſo to do; yea, woe is to me for my Diſobedience to *Chriſt* in the heavenly Viſion, (*Acts* xxvi.) if I preach not the Goſpel. Now if I do this willingly, that is freely, without expecting or demanding any thing of you for my Pains, which I might do, *I have a Reward*, that is, a ſpecial Reward from God, and may glory in it; but if I preach unwillingly, (demanding a Maintenance for my Pains, and refuſing to preach without it) all that can be ſaid is this, that a Diſpenſation of the Goſpel is committed to me; and ſo in Preaching I only diſcharge a Truſt, of which I cannot boaſt or glory.

The Strength of the Argument lies thus: No Man can boaſt of, or expect an extraordinary Reward for the doing of that, which he is under a Command from his Superior to do, and that under a Penalty too. This was his Caſe; a Neceſſity was laid upon him to preach the Goſpel; but no Neceſſity but what he laid himſelf under, to preach it freely; therefore for him to do it, without demanding any Reward from them for the doing of it; this made it Matter of glorying to him, which he declares he had rather die than any ſhould take from him. But was it the Apoſtle's own Glory that he was thus fond of, and concerned for? No, it was the Glory of God, the Honour of the Goſpel, that was ſo inexpreſſibly dear to him.

The Grounds of my Hopes of a Reward, ſays he, are, that I have preached the Goſpel to you, without being chargeable to any of you; for had I received Maintenance from you, I found my Reproachers would have brought an ill Report upon me; to prevent which I made no uſe of my *Chriſtian* Liberty, and took nothing of you, which he calls *his not abuſing the Power in the Goſpel.*

Q. *But is it not a Miniſter's Duty to preach, altho' he ſhould not be rewarded for it?*

A. Altho' Miniſters may demand a Maintenance, yet if their People are too poor, or Enemies ſo malicious, as to open their Mouths againſt them for it, or if it will hinder the Progreſs of the Goſpel, if in ſuch Circumſtances the Miniſter can ſubſiſt without it, 'tis his certain Duty to preach freely, and for ſuch extraordinary Services he may expect a more than ordinary Reward.

Q. *Wherein did the Apoſtle abridge himſelf of his Chriſtian Liberty?*

A. Of this he produces ſeveral Inſtances; as thus: *Tho' I be free from all Men*, as being a Servant to none, yet *have I made my ſelf as a Servant to all, that I might gain the more*, to embrace the Goſpel.

To the unconverted *Jew he became as a* Jew, circumciſing *Timothy* for their ſakes, *Acts* xvi. 3. *that he might gain the* Jews.

To them who in their own Opinion were yet under the Obligation of the Ceremonial Law, he carried himſelf as a Perſon *under the Law*; and accordingly he purified himſelf, *Acts* xxi.

To them that were without Law, that is, the *Gentiles*, who were without the Ceremonial Law, he became as a Perſon *without Law*; abſtaining from the uſe of all Ceremonies as they did: *But yet, not being without Law to God, but under the Law to* Chriſt, that is, as to the moral Law of God, which was not aboliſhed, but ſtrengthened by *Chriſt*, he never reckon'd himſelf free from that, nor durſt act contrary to that eternal Rule of Righteouſneſs; and all this, *that he might gain them that are under the Law.*

To the weak Converts, either among *Jews* or *Gentiles, he became as weak*, by abſtaining from what might hurt their weak Conſciences, *that ſo he might gain the weak.*

In ſhort; *he became all Things to all Men*, by a Compliance in all lawful and indifferent Things, that he might gain as many as poſſibly he could. *All this he did for the Goſpel's ſake*, to bring it into Eſteem and Repute, and propagate it more effectually. A rare Example for the Imitation of all Miniſters and private *Chriſtians*?

Q. *May it not be gathered from hence, that our Apoſtle was a Time ſerver?*

A. Tho' our Apoſtle thus condeſcended to their Weakneſs and Infirmities, he did not turn with the Tide and Times, nor conform to them in what was ſinful. He did not ſymbolize with all Colours; nor was a Man for all Hours and Humours; for, ſays he, *If I pleaſe Men, in any Thing that is ſinful, I am not the Servant of* Chriſt, *Gal.* i. 10. But wiſely conſidering the Caſe and State of all Men, he accommodated his Miniſtry for the gaining of as many as he could.

This I do for the Goſpel's ſake. Though I thus ſtoop to all Men, it is to ſerve my Maſter, not myſelf; it is that *Chriſt* may be preferred in the Hearts and Acceptations of all Men. His principal View was the Salvation of Souls; to this End he wiſely obſerved the Temper and State of his People, ſtriving to render himſelf agreeable and acceptable unto all, that by any Means he might ſave ſome; yet had he an Eye to himſelf, to the Recompence or Reward, as lawfully he might; *This I do for the Goſpel's ſake, that I may be Partaker thereof with you.* The Glory of God, and our Happineſs, are ſo inſeparably connected, that by promoting the Former, we effectually ſecure the Latter.

Q. *How does he conclude his Diſcourſe?*

A. In the Cloſe of the Chapter, the Apoſtle makes uſe of Terms borrowed from the *Olympick*, and other *Græcian* Games, celebrated near *Corinth*, in which the contending Parties exerted all their Strength to excell one another. Theſe Games were Running, Cuffing, and Wreſtling. *They which run a Race, run all, yet but one receiveth the Prize. So run the* Chriſtian *Race, that ye may obtain the Prize.*

The Race of *Chriſtianity* vaſtly differs from all other Races, thus: This is a ſpiritual Race, it ſtrains not Legs and Lungs, but Faith and Patience. Other Races are perform'd by natural Abilities, but this by a ſupernatural Power and Strength. Thoſe Races might be run without Diſturbance, not this; their Reward was but a Garland of Bays, ours is a Crown of Immortality.

But what is it to run this Race? It ſuppoſes a Motion vehement and intenſe, it implies Progreſs and Proficiency; every Step brings the Racer nearer the Goal; alſo Perſeverance; the Racer muſt hold out to the Laſt, or he loſes his Labour and Reward. Every one that runs ſhall obtain the Prize, whereas in other Races, but one receives the Prize.

It was a Cuſtom among the Competitors in thoſe *Olympick* Games, to tie themſelves to a ſtrict preſcribed Diet, both for Quality and Quantity, by way of Preparation; they obſerved a ſtrict Temperance, that they might the more eaſily win the Crown, which was nothing but a Garland of Leaves and Flowers. In Imitation of whom, he adviſes the *Corinthians* to be very moderate in the Uſe of all worldly Things, and to abſtain from whatever might hinder their *Chriſtian* Race, and their receiving the incorruptible Crown.

I therefore ſo run. I run this Race of *Chriſtianity* myſelf, which I adviſe you unto: But my Care is to run ſure, to make ſure of the Crown at the End of the Race. And I not only run, but fight; I oppoſe whatever oppoſes me; I fight, not like one that beats the Air, but never hurts his Adverſary: No, I fight in good earneſt with all my ſpiritual Adverſaries, the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil.

But I keep under my Body. The original Word may be fitly render'd, I give myſelf blue Eyes, alluding to the *Olympick* Game of Cuffing, in which the Combatants beat one another till they made each other livid, their Eyes black and blue. Thus he ſeverely uſed himſelf by Mortification, contending againſt, and combating with that Body of Sin and Death, which obſtructed him in running the *Chriſtian* Race.

And bring it into Subjection. The Word in the *Greek* is an Alluſion to the other Exerciſe of Wreſtling, wherein the Antagoniſts ſtrove to throw each other to the Ground, and to keep them under. So he, to ſubdue the Body of Sin, was careful to keep down the Body of Fleſh, which, if pamper'd, is apt to rebel; leſt, when he had acquainted them with the Laws and Rules of *Chriſtianity*, and propoſed to them the certain Way of getting the Crown, he himſelf ſhould, at laſt, be a Caſt-away, or unworthy the promiſed Reward.

Hence learn, that ſuch Miniſters as indulge their unruly Appetites, and pamper the Body to the Prejudice of the Soul, walk not in St. *Paul*'s Road to Heaven, but on the contrary, they gratify what he mortified, they indulge what he ſubdued.

CHAP. X.

The Jewiſh *Sacraments had the ſame Senſe with, and were Types of ours. Their Puniſhment for Idolatry, and other Sins, a Warning to us, and a Motive to Watchfulneſs. God's Faithfulneſs under Temptations. He exhorts them to flee from Idolatry. They who come to* Chriſt's *Table, ought not to be preſent at Idol-Feaſts; yet they might eat what was publickly ſold. A general Exhortation to do all Things for the Glory of God, and the Edification of our Neighbour.*

Q. PRAY *what Point of Inſtruction is purſued in this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle purſues the ſame Argument he had been labouring in the two preceding Chapters; namely, to diſſuade *Chriſtians* from eating Things offered to Idols, either publickly in the Idol-Temples, which was abſolutely ſinful, or privately in the Houſes of any, to the Offence and Scandal of weak Brethren.

The firſt Argument the Apoſtle here makes uſe of to this Purpoſe, is drawn from the Danger of this ſinful Communion; it would endanger their falling into ſuch kind of Sins as the *Iſraelites*, on that Occaſion, fell into, and conſequently expoſe them to ſuch Puniſhments as they ſuffered.

He firſt acquaints them with the great Favours and Privileges which Almighty God had vouchſafed to the *Iſraelites*, who came out of *Egypt* with *Moſes* into the Wilderneſs, who had a Pillar of Fire, and a Cloud, to guide and protect them, and the Manna from Heaven to ſuſtain and uphold them. *All our Fathers were under the Cloud*; that is, under the Conduct and Protection of the Cloud; *and all paſſed through the Red Sea,* as on dry Ground.

Q. *What was the Uſe of the Cloud, that accompanied the* Iſraelites *in the Wilderneſs?*

A. This Cloud, that accompanied the *Iſraelites* in their Journeyings, had a threefold Uſe. 1. In reſpect of God; it was a Sign and Symbol of the Preſence of God with them, and of his Care and Protection over them; for it encompaſſed their Camp, as a Wall does a City. 2. In Reſpect of the *Iſraelites*, the Cloud guided them in their Journeyings, *Pſal.* lxxxviii. 14. And as the Cloud was their Guide, ſo was it a Refreſhment to them in the Wilderneſs, preſerving them from the Heat of the Sun. 3. In Reſpect of their Enemies; it was Darkneſs to the *Egyptians*, and conſequently protected the *Iſraelites* from their Enemies. It had a bright Side to the *Iſraelites*, and a dark Side to the *Egyptians*. How eaſily can God make the ſame Creature a comfort to his Children, and a Terror to his Enemies?

Q. *In what Senſe are the* Iſraelites *ſaid to be* baptized *in this Cloud?*

A. That is, the Cloud which overſhadowed them, did ſometimes bedew and ſprinkle them; and the *Red Sea*, thro' which they paſſed, had its Waters gathered into Heaps, one on their Right-hand, and the other on the Left, betwixt which the *Iſraelites* paſſed, and in their Paſſage ſeem'd to be bury'd in the Waters; as Perſons in that Age were put under the Water when they were baptized, and thus were the *Iſraelites* baptized in the Cloud and in the Sea.

Again; they are ſaid to be baptized *unto Moſes*, in the Cloud, and in the Sea: *Unto Moſes*: That
is,

is, into the Doctrine taught by *Moſes*; they believed *Moſes*, follow'd his Conduct thro' the Sea, and were confirmed in their Belief of *Moſes*, (the typical Mediator) as a Perſon employed by God, and were obliged under the Miniſtry and Guidance of *Moſes* to follow God whitherſoever he led them.

All this was a Figure to which our Baptiſm anſwers; both the Cloud and the Sea had ſome Reſemblance of our being cover'd with Water Baptiſm, by which we are confirmed in the Faith of *Chriſt*, and obliged to profeſs and own him, to truſt and depend upon him; to ſerve and obey him, and this to our Death.

Behold how much of *Chriſt* and his Goſpel was ſhadowed and held forth to the *Jews* under the Diſpenſation of the ceremonial Law; they had *Chriſt* in their Sacrifices, and we have all the Sacrifices in *Chriſt*. The Cloud, the Sea, the Manna, the Rock, all typified *Chriſt*, and were Reſemblances and Repreſentations of him, *Chriſt* was as truly repreſented to the *Jews*, as to us, though not ſo clearly.

The Fathers in the Wilderneſs did all eat of the Manna which came down from Heaven, which is the Habitation of ſpiritual Beings; or becauſe it was Food given out by the Miniſtry of Angels, thoſe ſpiritual Agents; or elſe it is called ſpiritual, that is, ſacramental Meat, becauſe it typified *Chriſt*, who is the Bread of Life, the true Bread which came down from Heaven.

Q. *Wherein was* Manna *a Type of* Chriſt?

A. That Manna was *a* Type of *Chriſt*, thus appears; Was Manna provided by God for the *Iſraelites* without their Labour and Induſtry? So is *Chriſt* given unto Men without any Merit or Work of theirs, being of the free Gift and Goodneſs of God. Did Manna deſcend from Heaven out of the ordinary Courſe of Nature? So the Birth of *Chriſt* was not as the Birth of other Men; not begotten of mortal Seed, but by the Influence of the Holy Ghoſt. Was Manna diſtributed to all alike? So *Chriſt* communicates himſelf to all alike, without Acceptance of Perſons. Manna was Food plentiful, ſweet, and agreeable; ſo is *Chriſt*, the Food of Life, very ſweet to ſuch a Soul as can truly reliſh him. Manna, before it was fit for Food, was bruiſed in a Mortar, or broken in a Mill, and baked in an oven. So *Chriſt*, our heavenly Manna, was broken on the Croſs, and ſcorched in the Fire of his Father's Wrath, that he might become the ſpiritual Food wherewith our Souls are nouriſhed to everlaſting Life. As Manna was given only in the Wilderneſs, and ceaſed when the *Iſraelites* came to *Canaan*; ſo is *Chriſt* our ſpiritual Meat, our ſacramental Food, whilſt we are in the Wilderneſs of this World; but when we ſhall come to the heavenly *Canaan*, we ſhall have no more Occaſion of ſacramental Supports, but ſhall behold him Face to Face, and be ſatisfied with his Likeneſs.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 4th Verſe?*

A. The Words are, *And they did all drink of that ſpiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was* Chriſt. Here the Water out of the Rock, is alſo called ſpiritual Drink, it being typically and ſacramentally ſo. *That Rock was* Chriſt; that is, it typified *Chriſt*. The Word, *is*, imports as much as ſignifies or repreſents. Thus, as the Rock gave no Water before it was ſmitten by *Moſes*'s Rod; ſo was *Chriſt* ſmitten on the Croſs, and out of his Side came forth Water: And as it was the Rod in *Moſes*'s Hand, that ſmote and broke the Rock; ſo was *Chriſt* ſmitten with the Curſe of the Law, in the Day when his Soul was made an Offering for Sin. As the Rock yielded Water not only to thoſe that were preſent at the firſt Broaching of it, but followed them with its Streams, in their Stations through the Wilderneſs; in like Manner the Water which guſhed out from our ſmitten Saviour, the ſweet Fruits and Benefits of his Death, belonged not only to thoſe who were preſent at the Time and Place of his Sufferings, but will accompany Believers to the End of the World. The Virtue and Efficacy of *Chriſt*'s Blood is now as great, as efficacious and effectual, as it was the firſt Hour it was ſhed; the Divinity of his Perſon adds an eternal Efficacy to his Paſſion.

But though the *Iſraelites* partook of ſuch high Privileges and ſpiritual Favours, yet this did not ſet them out of Danger of God's Diſpleaſure; for they were overthrown, their Carcaſſes fell in the Wilderneſs. The bare receiving of Sacraments, without walking ſuitably afterwards, will incur God's heavy Diſpleaſure, even to the cutting off ſuch Perſons by untimely Death.

Q. *What was the particular Sin which the* Iſraelties *were guilty of?*

A. The Sin charged upon the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, is, *they luſted*; that is, after the Fleſh-Pots of *Egypt*, and to return thither again. They had Manna forty Years ſucceſſively, but being tied to it (though Angels Food, that is, moſt excellent Food) they grew weary of it. How liberal is God to us! The Beaſts of the Field, the Fowls of the Air, the Fiſhes of the Sea, are freely given to us, not barely for Neceſſity, but Delight.

Theſe Things, that is, their Sufferings, *were our Examples*; for our Caution, to warn us not to walk in thoſe Soul-defiling Ways in which they walked, fell, and periſhed. A wiſe *Chriſtian* may receive much Benefit, by obſerving the Dealings of God with the Wicked; for God is unchangeable, juſt, and holy; and will not favour that in one Perſon, which he puniſhes in another.

To diſſuade the *Corinthians* from eating Things offered to Idols, the Apoſtle ſets before them the Idolatry of the *Jews*, who ſat down to eat and drink of the Sacrifices offered to the golden Calf, and roſe up to play; that is, to dance before it, after the Manner of the Heathen, this being one of their Rites by which they honoured their Gods.

He farther adviſes them to beware how they mix with Idolaters in their Feaſts, leſt they be given up to Fornication, as the *Iſraelites* were in the Wilderneſs with the Daughters of *Moab*, *Numb.* xxv. whoſe Puniſhment is left on Record to deter others from the Commiſſion of the like Sins.

Q. *What Sins does the Apoſtle more eſpecially caution the* Corinthians *againſt?*

A. Two Sins the *Corinthians* are particularly warned againſt, tempting and murmuring; *neither tempt ye* Chriſt, by trying how long his Patience will laſt, as the *Iſraelites* did, when (as the Angel of the Covenant) he went before them in the Wilderneſs, *Numb.* xxi. 5, 6.

Obſerve here, the Object or Perſon whom the *Iſraelites* are ſaid to tempt, *Chriſt*; which proves, 1. His Pre-exiſtence before his Incarnation; the *Iſraelites* could not then have tempted him, had he not been then exiſtent. His Divinity; who is here called *Chriſt*, is by the *Pſalmiſt* called God, *Pſal.*

cvi. 14. *They tempted God in the Deſart.* Chriſt had not then an human Nature to be tempted in, they tempted him therefore, as he was God; this Argument the Antients made uſe of to prove the Divinity of our Saviour.

The other Sin of which they are cautioned, is Murmuring; *neither murmur ye*; do not repine, becauſe you are forbidden to be preſent at theſe idolatrous Feaſts of the *Gentiles*; nor murmur, by Reaſon of the Perſecutions you do, or may endure for the Sake of Chriſtianity, and the Cauſe of *Chriſt*.

To murmur at, or be impatient under, any of the providential Diſpenſations of God, is both a Sin and a Folly. It is as high Preſumption and Wickedneſs to be diſſatisfied with the Works of Providence, as with the Works of the Creation.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in the Puniſhment of the rebellious* Iſraelites.

A. Note the Puniſhment inflicted on the *Iſraelites* for their double Sin; ſuch as tempted, were deſtroyed of fiery Serpents, *Numb.* xxi. 6, 7. The Sting and Venom of theſe Serpents was inflaming, ſpreading, and mortal. And ſuch as murmured were deſtroyed of the Deſtroyer, that is, of the deſtroying Angel in that Plague mentioned, *Numb.* xiv. 57. Such Variety of Judgments has God in Store to puniſh and plague an incorrigible and irreclaimable People.

The Hiſtory of the Sins and Puniſhments of the *Iſraelites,* was written and recorded for the Uſe and Benefit of all ſucceeding Generations, eſpecially for us who live in the laſt Ages of the World, to warn us to avoid the like Sin, that we may eſcape the like Puniſhments.

The Apoſtle here ſums up the moſt remarkable Judgments which befel the *Jews* in their Paſſage from *Egypt* to *Canaan,* and cloſes all with this Application to *Chriſtians, theſe Things happened to them for Enſamples*; in the Original it is, *as Types*; they befel them typically, that in them we may ſee how God will deal with us if we take their Courſe; thoſe Calamities which deſtroy ſome, ſhould inſtruct others; ſuch as will not improve by Examples, ſhall certainly be made Examples.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle apply this Diſcourſe?*

A. The Inference he draws from the foregoing Diſcourſe is, ſeeing ſo many who enjoyed great Privileges, were yet ſeverely puniſhed for their Sins; ſince the Sacraments are no Privileges, either for Sin, or from Plagues; therefore *let him that thinks he ſtandeth, take heed,* &c.

Where note, the Mutability to which human Nature is ſubject; he that thinks he ſtandeth, may fall: Man's Condition is according to his Place and Station; this is threefold. The firſt Place is Heaven, this is fixed and confirmed, a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken; the Saints there are ſtanding Pillars, free from a Poſſibility of falling. The ſecond Place is Hell, where Sinners are bound; and being fallen, are without a Poſſibility of riſing. The third Place is this Earth on which we live, where Men both ſtand and fall; the beſt are ſubjuect to falling, being Sons of *Adam,* as well as Sons of God; partly Fleſh, and partly Spirit.

Take heed: How many Thouſands have fell through a preſumptuous Confidence of their own Strength in ſtanding! they fell by thinking it impoſſible to fall. Let a *Chriſtian* always keep a jealous Eye on the Weakneſs and Inconſtancy of his Nature, and with a believing Eye look up to the Promiſe and Power of God, and he ſhall be both preſerved from falling, and preſented faultleſs and unblameable in the Day of *Chriſt*; if ever we ſtand in the Day of *Chriſt*, 'tis Fear and Faith muſt enable us to ſtand.

Q. *What other Points of Inſtruction does the Apoſtle here ſpeak to?*

A. He next anſwers a Plea the *Corinthians* might make for their Compliance with their Fellow-Citizens, in eating Things offered to Idols in their Temples with them; namely, that thereby they ſhould avoid Perſecution. Fear not that, ſays he, you have hitherto been preſerved, that *no Temptation has taken you, but ſuch as is common to Man*; you have yet been exerciſed with no Trial, but what is human and common, what the ordinary Strength and Reſolution of human Nature is able to bear; but ſhould you be tried with Extremity of Suffering, and that you muſt comply with the heathen Idolatry, or endure Suffering to Extremity, yet you have the Promiſe of a faithful God for your Sopport; *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able; but will with the Temptation make a Way ſo far to eſcape, that ye may be able to be bear it.* The Aſſiſtance of God makes Sufferings eaſy.

Q. *What comes next under the Apoſtle's Conſideration?*

A. Our Apoſtle, Ver. 14. re-aſſumes his Exhortation to the *Corinthians,* not to meddle with the Myſteries of Paganiſm, nor to eat of Things offered to Idols; aſſuring them, that in God's Account, ſuch Practices were no leſs than Idolatry.

Farther; the Apoſtle leaves it to their own Judgment whether they did not do very ill to be preſent at the Feaſts of the heathen Sacrifices, and eat of Things offered to Idols. There is a Judgment of Diſcretion which Perſons ought to uſe in Matters of Religion, and not to deliver themſelves up blindfold to the Conduct of their Teachers.

The 16th Verſe is a ſpecial Argument to diſſuade *Chriſtians* from joining with Heathens in their impure Feaſts in Idol-Temples; the *Gentiles* have Fellowſhip with Idols in thoſe Feaſts, as *Chriſtians* have Communion with *Chriſt* at his Holy Table. The Argumant runs thus, If Believers by Communication with *Chriſt* at his Holy Table have real Communion with him, then thoſe who communicate with Idolaters are Partakers in Communion in their impure Feaſts; but Believers do the firſt, namely, at the Lord's Table communicate with *Chriſt*: This he proves from the Words, *the Cup of Bleſſing,* &c.

Q. *He comes next to the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper: How does he treat this Subject?*

A. Here we have a Deſcription of the Lord's Supper in both Parts of it, the external and viſible, Bread and Wine; the internal and ſpiritual, the Body and Blood of *Chriſt*.

The miniſterial Actions performed in this Ordinance, are, the Bleſſing of the Cup, and the Breaking of the Bread.

The End and Deſign of this Inſtitution, is, that Believers might thereby enjoy a ſpiritual Fellowſhip and Communion of the *Body of* Chriſt?

Thus, all *Chriſtians,* though they are many, yet by Virtue of their Society in the ſame Worſhip, are compacted together into one Loaf or Lump; that is, into one myſtical Body, in that they partake of one and the ſame ſacramental Bread; ſo thoſe that communicate with Idolaters, are compacted as it were into one Body, as they communicate in one and the ſame Sacrifice.

Q. *What other Argument does he uſe to diſſuade them from eating Things offer'd to Idols?*

A. Another Argument to this purpoſe, is, that as in the *Jewiſh* Church, all Perſons who eat of the Peace-Offerings laid upon the Altar, by that Act declared themſelves Members af the *Jewiſh* Church; ſo the converted *Corinthians*, by eating Part of thoſe Beaſts ſacrificed in the Idol's Temple, owned that Idol, and were really Partakers of that idolatrous Worſhip. Not that an Idol, of its own Nature can pollute and defile; but the Truth was, the Heathens were ſeduced by the Devil to offer thoſe Sacrifices, and they were Devils whom they worſhipped; tho' not in their own Intentions, yet in God's Eſtimation; and conſequently thoſe that did eat of thoſe Feaſts, are ſuppoſed to join in thoſe Sacrifices, and thereby to hold Communion with Devils.

The Sacraments of the Body and Blood of *Chriſt*, wherein we communicate with, and partake of the Benefits of the Death of *Chriſt*, will not agree with communicating of, and rejoicing with Devils, *Rev.* viii.

Do we join Devils in Competition or Rivalſhip with God? Shall we give ourſelves up to all Idolatry and Heathen Sin, and yet think that God will not puniſh us? When in the ſecond Commandment he has expreſſed his Jealouſy againſt thoſe that take in any other Rival into their Worſhip, and threaten'd to viſit, and puniſh for it.

Q. *How does he farther explain his Argument, as it relates to Chriſtian Liberty?*

A. Many Things, adds the Apoſtle, there are which I might lawfully do, but that they are hurtful and diſadvantageous to others, tend not to their Edification, but to the ſcandalizing, either bringing them to, or confirming them in ſome Sin.

Neither is it fit that any ſhould be ſo intent on what is lawful for him in reſpect of himſelf, or what is for his own Advantage, as to neglect the Benefit, and Advantage, and Edification of others.

And whereas you object that ſome Portion of the Heathen Sacrifices is ſold in the Markets among the other Meat; and that therefore, if it be not lawful to eat what is offer'd to Idols, you muſt not eat what you buy in the Shambles, becauſe that may be ſuch, which would be a great Retrenchment of your *Chriſtian* Liberty, which entitles you to the Enjoyment of any of God's Creatures; I anſwer, that I may lawfully eat whatſoever is there ſold, and not think myſelf bound in Conſcience to enquire and examine, whether what I meet with there was a Portion of a Heathen Sacrifice or no: For if no Man be preſent to ſee and know that what I eat is ſuch a Portion, or if I know it not myſelf, then ſure I am guilty of nothing myſelf, nor can any other come to any Hurt by this means.

Nay, farther, if it be an Heathen's own Table, where 'tis more probable that ſuch Portions of their Sacrifices are to be met with, than it was in the Shambles; yet there alſo you may eat freely of all, and never think yourſelves bound in Conſcience to to enquire, whether there be any Portions of their Sacrifices there.

But in Caſe any Man takes Notice, that what is before you, was Portion of an Idol Sacrifice, and punctually tell you of it, then you are not to eat of that, leſt you confirm that Man in, or betray him to the Sin of Idolatry by your Example not rightly underſtood by him, and to offend againſt a Conſcience.

Q. *What does he mean by offending againſt Conſcience?*

When I ſay a Conſcience, I mean not thine own, but the other Man's Conſcience; that is, that in this Caſe thou art to abſtain for the ſake of that other Man's Conſcience, leſt he be betray'd to Sin by that Means, ver. 28. and not for thy own; for there is no Reaſon that the other Man's Conſcience would make that ſimply unlawful to me, which I receive as a Gift of God, and acknowledge it from him; that is, render it altogether unlawful, abſtracting from the Scandal annexed, which were otherwiſe (by the Liberty which *Chriſt* hath given) perfectly lawful to me.

And certainly; abſtract it from that Cauſe of Scandal, and there will be no Reaſon to find fault with, or accuſe me for eating of that before which I ſay Grace, bleſs God for it, and eat it merely as a Bleſſing of his, without any reſpect to any Idol-god whatſoever.

Q. *What is principally to be regarded in this Caſe?*

A. The only thing to be conſider'd, is the Scandal which tends to the Diſhonour of God, and betraying Men to, or confirming them in Sin, and that muſt be provided againſt, and Care be taken, that in every Bit I eat, or Action I do, I may not diſhonour God, or do Hurt to my Brother.

Let nothing you do, be apt to betray any Man to Sin, whether it be a *Jew* or *Heathen*, on one ſide, or *Chriſtian* on the other.

Even as in my Miniſtry, I conform myſelf to all Men, ſo as may be moſt for their Advantage, not for my own, that by ſome Means or other, I may bring them to embrace the Goſpel.

CHAP. XI.

He exhorts them to follow him, and praiſes them for keeping his Inſtitutions. Chriſt *the Head of every Man, and the Man of the Woman; therefore a Man muſt not pray or prophecy with his Head cover'd; nor a Woman be in an Aſſembly with her Head covered. He reproves them for Contentions in the Church; alſo for Irreverence at the Lord's Supper; its Inſtitution; our previous Examination; its Abuſe puniſhed in the* Corinthians.

Q. WHAT *Duty does the Apoſtle here firſt preſs upon the* Corinthians?

A. The Apoſtle in the foregoing Chapter, having exhorted the *Corinthians* to deny themſelves the lawful Uſe of their *Chriſtian* Liberty for the Benefit of their Brethren, here urges them to practice the ſame Duty from his own Example, *Be ye Followers of me.* It is the ſtanding Duty of a People, who have faithful ſpiritual Guides, to follow their Faith, and to imitate their exemplary Converſation.

Obſerve in what a cautious, modeſt, and limited Manner the Apoſtle propounds his own Example to the *Corinthians* View; *Be ye Followers of me, as I alſo am of* Chriſt; as if he had ſaid, If at any Time you find me, your ſpiritual Guide, walking unanſwerably to that uniform Pattern of holy and humble Obedience, which the Lord Jeſus ſet before both you and me, in his own exemplary Life, be ſure you decline my Example, and follow not my Foot-ſteps.

Q. *In the ſecond Verſe he praiſes them for keeping the Ordinances he had delivered to them; yet afterwards reproaches them for their Hereſies and other Diſorders: How is this conſiſtent?*

A. The Commendation in the 2d Verſe is to be reſtrained to the ſounder Part of the Church at *Corinth*, who were mindful of his Precepts and Inſtructions, which he hath given them concerning the Worſhip of God; which Precepts and Rules he calls Traditions, becauſe they were immediately deliver'd to the Church, either from the Apoſtle's Mouth or by Writing.

Upon this Place the *Romiſh* Church ground their unwritten Traditions; but let them prove by Authentick Teſtimony, that their Fardles of Traditions were delivered to the Church from the Mouth of the Apoſtles, and we will receive them.

Now, I praiſe you Brethren. The Apoſtle being about to reprove ſome Diſorders in the Church at *Corinth*, uſhers in his Reproof for what was amiſs, with a Commendation of what was praiſe-worthy among them. It is Wiſdom to intermix Commendations with Reproofs, that the latter may have the better Effect when accompanied with the former?

Q. *The Apoſtle next reſolves a Caſe, put to him by the* Corinthians, *concerning Church-orders, and the decent Behaviour of Men and Women in Church-Aſſemblies; what do you obſerve thereupon?*

A. Firſt, he reminds them, that a Subordination of the Perſons in the Church of God ought to be obſerved; that as *Chriſt*, as Mediator, is inferior to God the Father, but is the Head and Lord of all Men, as Creator and Redeemer; ſo the Man is the Head of the Woman, and as ſuch ſhe muſt ſhew her Subjection to the Man.

The *Socinians* would wreſt this Text to confirm them in their blaſphemous Denial of the Divinity of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. The Apoſtle, ſay they, declares that the Head of *Chriſt* is God; now the moſt High God can have no Head above him; therefore *Chriſt*, who hath an Head above him, cannot be the moſt High God.

The Anſwer is, that God is here called the Head of *Chriſt* as Mediator, in which Relation he received his Kingdom from him, and exerciſes it for him, and therefore is elſewhere ſtiled the Father's Servant, *Behold my Servant*, &c. becauſe he doth all Things according to his Father's Will; and with a fixed Eye to his Glory.

The Reply which the Antients make to this Objection is, that God is ſaid to be the Head of *Chriſt*, as he is the Father of his Son, and ſo the Cauſe of him; and as the Woman is of the ſame Nature with God the Father, who is here called his Head.

Q. *What is meant by* praying and prophecying uncovered *Ver.* 4.

A. By this underſtand his performing any divine Offices in the Church, as Prayer, expounding the Scripture, ſinging of Pſalms, and the like. By doing this covered, is meant not the natural covering of he Hair, but an artificial covering by a Veil, after the manner of Women, which is a token of Subjection.

Q. *How is a Man's* Head diſhonoured *by having it covered when he prays or prophecies?*

A. By *diſhonouring his Head*, underſtand either, 1. *Chriſt*, who in the former Verſe was called *the Head of every Man*; he who miniſters in the Church in holy Things, repreſents *Chriſt*, who is the Head of the Church; therefore by covering the Head he declares a Subjection in his Adminiſtration, and does, as it were, make the Church the Head of *Chriſt*, inſtead of *Chriſt*'s being the Head of the Church. Or, 2. By diſhonouring the Head may be underſtood the Miniſter's own Head; he betrays his Superiority, and leſſens the Honour and Dignity of his Sex, by uſing ſuch a Geſture in divine Offices, as is a Token of Inferiority and Subjection; for it was then the Faſhion of that Country to have, as a Token of Subjection, the Head covered; but a Sign of Power and Dominion, to have the Head uncovered. The contrary Cuſtom prevails with us; for now Superiors are covered, and Inferiors uncovered.

Q. *Was it uſual for the Women to pray or prophecy, as is hinted, v.* 5?

A. By a Woman's praying and prophecying, is underſtood either prophecying extraordinarily, which the Women ſometimes did, both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, and were called Propheteſſes, *Luke* ii. 30. *Acts* xxi. 9. Or, Praiſing God in Hymns and Pſalms, 1 *Chron.* xxv. 1, 2, 3. *They prophecied with Harps, Pſalteries and Cymbals, giving Thanks and praiſing the Lord*; where prophecying and praiſing the Lord are the ſame Thing.

By the Woman's prophecying with her Head uncovered, to the Diſhonour of her Head or Huſband, is meant her appearing unveil'd in the Church, open and barefac'd in publick, which was accounted an immodeſt and unſeemly Guiſe; alſo arrogant, as uſurping an undue Authority over the Man, and caſting off that Subjection which ſhe is under to him by the Law of Creation. Likewiſe ſuperſtitious; it being a fantaſtical Imitation of the She-Prieſts and Propheteſſes of the *Gentiles*, when they ſerved their Idols, and particularly when they ſacrificed to *Bacchus*, who uſed to have their Faces uncovered, their Hair diſhevelled, hanging at its full Length about their Ears.

In Imitation of theſe Heathens, the *Corinthian* Women caſt off their Veils, diſcovered their Faces, diſhonoured even their natural Heads, (as well as their Œconomical Heads, their Husbands) it being then as immodeſt for a Woman to appear in Publick uncovered, as with her Head ſhaven. God requires of all Perſons who either adminiſter to him, or ſtand before him, a decent Behaviour and a comely Accommodation in his Houſe, eſpecially in the Acts and Exerciſes of his Worſhip and Service.

The Uſe that is made of the not cutting a Woman's Hair, of letting it be worn at length, is, that it may be a kind of Veil or Covering to her, verſe 15. which is an Argument, that as it is uncomely or unfaſhionable for her to have her Hair cut after the manner of Men, ſo it is uncomely to have her Head uncovered after the manner of Men the Diſtinction of Sexes being to be maintained in the one as well the other.

For the Man is indeed to be uncovered, that being a Sign of Power and Majeſty; and Man (being the Image of God, and a Beam and Irradiation, as it were, of God) is an Image of his Power and Majeſty, and therefore ought ſo to appear; that the Woman is but a Beam of the Man, having no Power but from him, and ſo her Subjection to her Husband being her Duty, ſhe therefore is to be covered, which is a Sign of that Subjection.

Q. *In what Senſe is the Man the Head of the Woman?*

A. As in the forming of the Man and Woman, the Woman is made of the Rib of Man, and ſo is to be reſolved inferior to him.

The Intent of the Woman's Creation was, that ſhe might be the Helper of, and miniſterial and uſeful to the Man; not ſo the Man to the Woman; which is another Proof of her being inferior to him; and that a Reaſon ſtill why ſhe ſhould wear a covering on her Head, eſpecially in Time of divine Service, where her Behaviour ought to be moſt decent, and agreeable to her Condition.

And eſpecially, as the Angels are generally believed to be preſent in the Places of God's publick Worſhip, this Piece of Decency in the Woman, her being covered, ought moſt ſtrictly to be obſerved, as we would be moſt careful of doing no indecent Thing in the Preſence of ſuch pure divine Spirits.

But this Inferiority of the Wife to the Husband muſt not be ſo urged, that the Man being independant from her, ſhould be thought to have more Reſpect from her, (which might be ſeaſonable to tell the *Gnoſticks*, who were great Deſpiſers of Marriage) any more than the Woman ſhould be from the Man.

For as the Woman was formed out of *Adam*'s Rib, ſo all the Sons of *Adam* were born, conceived, and propagated by Women, and Man and Woman united by God, from whom all Things are.

But for that of Woman's Behaviour in the Place of publick Service, judge you, by what is decent among you; is this decent for her to have her Head uncovered in Time of divine Service?

Doth not the univerſal Cuſtom of all Nations make this Diſtinction among Sexes, that Men wear their Hair cut, and that is decent in them?

Women wear their Hair at length, as is decent in them; and to what purpoſe do they this, but that the Hair may be a kind of Veil or Covering to them?

But if after this any Man will farther contend in this Matter, all that I ſhall add is, the conſtant Cuſtom of all the Apoſtolical Churches, that Women in the Churches ſhould be conſtantly veiled, and that this may be of ſufficient Authority with you.

Q. *What does he blame them for?*

A. Firſt, ſays he, I am told, and I have ſome Reaſon to believe it, that there are Diviſions and and Factions among you, which expreſs themſelves in your Aſſemblies. And indeed there is ſome Uſe to be made of Diviſions among *Chriſtians*, that ſo the honeſt and orthodox may the better be diſtinguiſhed and taken notice of.

What you are blamable for, is, that when you come together in one Place, you pretend to eat the Lord's Supper; but tho' you eat it, yet ye do not eat it as you ought to do; you perſorm the material Part of the Action, but you do not partake of it ſolemnly and religiouſly, according to the divine Inſtitution; this therefore is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

Q. *The Apoſtle next reproves them for the Abuſes found in their* Love-Feaſts: *Pray what ſort of Feaſts was theſe?*

A. Theſe Love-feaſts were founded on no expreſs Command in holy Writ; but only on the Cuſtom of the Church, who immediately before the receiving the Sacrament, uſed to have a great Feaſt, to which all the Poor were invited at the Charges of the Rich, as an Expreſſion of their perfect Love and Charity one towards another.

Now in theſe Feaſts of Charity they did not obſerve due Order and Decency; for *every one*, that is, every Party and Faction, being come to the Place of the Aſſembly, preſently ſet down to eat what they had brought, in the Company of their own Party, without regard to others; this holy Feaſt of Charity therefore, was neither celebrated by all at the ſame Time, nor with that Unanimity and Concord which it was deſigned to repreſent; whilſt the Poor were excluded, and ſent home hungry, the Rich were feaſted, and drank to ſome degree of Exceſs, which is here called Drunkenneſs.

This, adds the Apoſtle, certainly is to repeat what you do at Home; and you may as well ſtay there and do thus; this is quite contrary to the Inſtitution of Church-Meetings; and the not only ſending away hungry, but even reproaching and putting to Shame thoſe that are in Want, and not able to bring any great Offering with them ſure is a great Fault among you.

Q. *What do you remark upon St.* Paul's *Inſtitution of the Sacrament, ver.* 23, &c.

A. From *Chriſt* it was ſays, St. *Paul*, that I received (tho' I was not preſent there) what I delivered in my Preaching among you, that *Chriſt*, when he inſtituted his laſt Supper, took and bleſſed the Bread, and then eat it; not all himſelf, nor preferred any one before another by a more liberal Portion, but gave it in an equal Diſtribution to every one at the Table, and that as an Expreſſion and Token of his giving his Life for all of them, without preferring one before another, and then appointed all his Diſciples to imitate this Action of his, to meet and eat as at a common Table, not one to engroſs all, or deprive others of an equal Portion, and ſo to commemorate the Death of *Chriſt*, and the unconfined Mercy of that, by this ſignificative typical Charity of others.

The Sacramental Elements are Bread and Wine. It deſerves Remark, that St. *Paul* calls that Bread five Times over, which *Chriſt* calls his Body, becauſe it was a Sign and Repreſentation of his Body, not his real Body; for then *Chriſt* eat his own Body whilſt he was alive; his Diſciples devouring that Body over Night which hung on the Croſs the next Morning, with a thouſand Abſurdities which the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation carries along with it.

The miniſterial Actions are, *the breaking of the Bread, and the Bleſſing of the Cup.* The Bread muſt be broken, to repreſent the breaking of *Chriſt*'s Body on the Croſs, which comprehended all the Sufferings of his human Nature, all which were conſummated in his Crucifixion; and this broken Bread muſt be taken and eaten by us, to intimate that all his Breakings, Bruiſings, and Woundings, both in Soul and Body, were for our Benefit. Wine alſo is poured forth, becauſe as no Liquor, like Wine, clears a ſad and drooping Spirit, ſo nothing

thing ſo clears the Soul as Faith in a crucified Saviour.

Do this in Remembrance of me, or for a Memorial of me. *Chriſt* knew how apt our baſe Hearts would be to forget him amidſt ſuch a Crowd of ſenſible Objects as we are converſant with; and how much our Forgetfulneſs of him would tend to our Prejudice and Diſadvantage; and therefore appoints this Ordinance to bring him to Remembrance.

Do this; it is a ſovereign and ſupreme, a poſitive and expreſs, a permanent and laſting Command; 'tis ſuch a Command, as, if duly obſerved, will be a bleſſed Means to enable us to obſerve all the Commands of God better. 'Tis ſuch a Command, as whoever lives in the wilful Neglect of it, cannot be called a *Chriſtian*, but will be treated by *Chriſt*, at the great Day, as an Enemy and Deſpiſer of his dying Love.

Q. *What other Directions does he give the* Corinthians *about this Matter?*

A. The Apoſtle inſtructs the *Corinthians* in the right Uſe of the Lord's Supper; to which Purpoſe he acquaints them with the great Danger of receiving it unworthily. To receive this Sacrament unworthily, is, 1. To receive it out of Cuſtom, not out of Conſcience; for Company's ſake, not for the Command's ſake; becauſe the Law of Man enjoins it, not becauſe the Law of *Chriſt* requires it. 2. It is to receive, without ſuch a Diſpoſition of Mind, ſuch a Preparation of Heart, ſuch Reverence and Devotion, as ought therein to be exerciſed; to receive without Knowledge, Faith, Repentance, Reſolution for a ſincere Obedience, and without ſincere Reconciliation to our Neighbour, this is to receive it unworthily.

Q. *In what Senſe may a Man be ſaid to be* guilty of the Body and Blood of *Chriſt*, *when he receives the Lord's Supper unworthily, as is affirmed, Verſe* 27?

A. 1. 'Tis an implicit Approbation of the *Jews* Act in crucifying *Chriſt*. 2. 'Tis implicitly a jeſting with the Body and Blood of *Chriſt*, a playing with the moſt tremendous Things in the World. 3. 'Tis a crucifying the Son of God afreſh; 'tis to ſtab the Maſter of the Feaſt at his own Table, whilſt he is treating us with the richeſt Dainties.

It is therefore fit that every Man examine himſelf throughly, whether he be rightly grounded in the Faith of *Chriſt*, of which the Sacrament is an Emblem; and accordingly, when, upon Examination, he hath approved himſelf, when he is fitly prepared, let him come to that Table, and partake of it in a *Chriſtian* Manner.

For he that comes without that Preparation, and ſo underſtands not the Truth of *Chriſt*'s univerſal Mercy in his Death, ſignified by this Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, or conſequently receives it not in an holy Manner, incurs Damnation, inſtead of receiving Benefit by ſuch eating and drinking of it.

The Want of this due Preparation to, and Performance of this Duty, ſays the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians*, together with the Factions and Diviſions that are among you, have brought many Puniſhments upon ſome of you, Afflictions, Diſeaſes, and Death itſelf, as was threatened to thoſe who, at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, put not all Leaven out of their Houſes, *Exod.* xii. 13.

Which never had befallen you, if by ſuch Faults you had not needed Admonition and Diſcipline, God never puniſhing thoſe, who do not ſtand in ſome need of being thus awakened, and ſtirred up by his Puniſhments.

When we are puniſhed, it is for our Good, that being reformed by Stripes, we may be freed from thoſe Puniſhments, which fall on the unreformed to all Eternity.

To conclude then, when you meet at one of thoſe *Chriſtian* Feſtivals, have that Care and Charity to all others, as well as yourſelves, that all partake together equally, as having a common Right to a Feaſt of Charity, that ſo you may celebrate it as you ought to do.

He that cannot do this, let him ſtay at home, and eat there, for he may there diſpoſe of himſelf as he pleaſes, which here he cannot do; and his making no Difference betwixt a Meal at home, and this *Chriſtian* Feſtival in the Aſſembly, is a great Sin in him, and he may expect Puniſhment accordingly.

CHAP. XII.

Of ſpiritual Gifts; one Spirit wrought in them divers Gifts, for the common Uſe and Profit of the whole Church, which is the Body; as in the natural Body there are many Members, but none uſeleſs; all tending to the mutual Decency, Service and Succour of the ſame Body; ſo were they the Body of Chriſt, *for which God gave different Gifts, and alſo Miniſtries, but yet every one muſt ſeek after the beſt Gifts.*

Q. WHAT *Subject of Inſtruction does the Apoſtle purſue in this Chapter?*

A. He begins with the Reſolution of another Caſe, concerning the Nature and right Uſe of ſpiritual Gifts. Some, who excelled in them, were oſtentatiouſly vain of them; the Apoſtle therefore tells them, he would not have them Ignorant as concerning ſpiritual Gifts; not ignorant of their Author from whence they came, the Holy Spirit of God; nor of their End and Uſe, which is for the Benefit and Edification of others. Lord! how many have gone laden with Gifts to Hell? How many have propheſied in thy Name, and yet periſhed in thy Wrath? Gifts may make me glorious in the Eyes of Men, but Grace renders me precious in the Sight of God.

Q. *In what Manner does he enforce his Exhortations?*

A. The Apoſtle reminds the *Corinthians* of what they were in their *Heatheniſh* State; namely, idolatrous *Gentiles*, ſerving *dumb Idols*; they were carried away unto theſe *dumb Idols, even as they were led*; that is, as they were led by their idolatrous Prieſts, who had nothing of this divine Spirit among them, which, ſince their Converſion from *Gentiliſm* to *Chriſtianity*, they had been made Partakers of.

Q. *What was then the chief Subject of Debate between* Heathens *and* Chriſtians?

A. The great Difference then in the World, was about *Jeſus*. Thoſe who were led away by dumb Idols, were taught by *Satan* to blaſpheme, and ſay, upon the Mention of our Saviour's Name, *Jeſus anathema, Jeſus anathema*; that is, let *Jeſus* be *anathema*, accurſed, deteſted, and deſtroyed, as the common Odium of their Gods. Now, when the Apoſtle ſays, Such ſpeak not by the Spirit of God, he means, that they did it by the Impulſe and Inſtinct of the Devil, who ruled in thoſe Children of Diſobedience; on the other ſide, every one who believes, calls *Jeſus* Lord, and profeſſes Faith in him. Now none, ſays the Apoſtle, can do this, but by the Holy Ghoſt; that is, by his Help and Aſſiſtance.

Q. *But it may be objected, We read of many who were actuated by the unclean Spirit, who yet called Jeſus Lord,* Mark i. 23. Acts xvi. 17?

A. 'Tis anſwered, 1. Theſe Acknowledgments of *Chriſt* to be the Lord, were either wreſted from the Devil, and were a conſiderable Part of his Torment, or were over-ruled by God to advance the Glory of *Chriſt*. But 2. The Apoſtle here ſpeaks of ſuch calling *Jeſus* Lord, as was accompanied with Faith in him, and in Subjection to him.

There is a double ſaying, that *Jeſus* is Lord; the one verbal, with Lip and Tongue only, without the Conſent of the Heart, or Obedience of the Life; the other actual, with our whole Soul we own and acknowledge, love and embrace, obey and ſerve him as Lord, and vote for his Government and Dominion over us: No Man thus calls *Jeſus* Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt, renewing and ſanctifying him, aſſiſting and enabling him ſo to do.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle explain the Nature of ſpiritual Gifts?*

A. There is a great Variety and Diverſity of ſpiritual Gifts, but it is the ſame Spirit from whence they all proceed; and there are different Adminiſtrations and Offices in the Church, but it is the ſame Lord, who hath appointed them all. There are alſo Diverſities of Operations performed by theſe Officers in the Church, but it is the ſame God who worketh in them all.

Here Gifts are aſcribed to the Holy Ghoſt, Adminiſtrations to the Lord *Chriſt*, and Operations to God the Father; but in all theſe there are great Diverſities, both of Kinds and Degrees; they differ in the Nature, Extent and Uſe of them.

Thus it is with reſpect to ſpiritual Gifts; but in the Caſe of ſanctifying Graces it is far otherwiſe; theſe are all beſtowed jointly, or not at all; God cannot give Humility to one, Purity to another, Charity alone to a third, becauſe there is ſuch an inſeparable Union and Alliance among the Graces of the Spirit, that where one really is, there all the reſt muſt be. Hence probably it is, why the whole of Religion is ſometimes expreſſed by one particular Duty of it, ſometimes by Faith, ſometimes by Hope, Repentance, Charity; becauſe the Combination of theſe ſaving Graces is ſuch, that the mentioning of one, implies and includes all the reſt.

Q. *How many Kinds of ſpiritual Gifts were found in the Church in the Apoſtle's Time?*

A. He reckons up nine. One had *the Word of Wiſdom*; that is, the Revelation of the Goſpel, which is called the manifold Wiſdom of God; this was the Gift of the Apoſtles; to whom extraordinary Meaſures of divine Wiſdom were firſt given, to reveal the Myſteries of the Goſpel to the Pagan World.

Another had *the Word of Knowledge*; that is, a ſpecial Ability to interpret the myſtical Senſes and veiled Meanings of the Scripture, and alſo to foretel remote and future Events. Thus St. *Paul* told the Centurion before the Shipwreck, that no Man in the Ship ſhould be loſt, *Acts* xxvii. And *Agabus* foretold the Famine, and St. *Paul*'s Impriſonment, *Acts* xi.

To another *Faith*; by which ſome underſtand ſupernatural Courage and Confidence with which God endowed them, when called to extraordinary Sufferings and Services; accordingly we read in the *Acts*, with what invincible Courage and Reſolution poor Men appeared before the *Jewiſh* and Heathen Tribunals, and with what aſtoniſhing Preſence both of Body and Mind they bore the Name of *Jeſus* before the Princes and People of the Earth.

Others underſtand by a miraculous Faith, a ſupernatural Confidence and firm Aſſurance, wrought by the Holy Spirit in the Minds of ſome in the Apoſtles Time, by which they were certain they could do ſuch or ſuch a Miracle before they undertook it; and the greateſt Apoſtle durſt never undertake to do a Miracle, but when he was aſſured by the Spirit that he could do it; and therefore it's obſervable, that *the Gift of Faith* here, is ſet immediately before the Gift of Healing, and working Miracles, becauſe it conſiſted of an antecedent Impulſe to both.

The next miraculous Gift, is that of Healing; or, a Power of curing all Diſeaſes, both of Body and Mind, without the Help of Phyſick, through the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt* alone.

Alſo, the Gift of Miracles, under which is comprehended the Power of ſilencing and caſting out Devils, inflicting Diſeaſes and Death on notorious and incorrigible Sinners, as on *Elymas* and *Ananias*; alſo the more wonderful Power of raiſing the Dead.

The Gift of Prophecy was another; that is, 1. The Prediction, or Foreknowledge of Things to come, *Acts* xi. And this Gift was, ſometimes, exerciſed, by foretelling who would be fit Perſons to do God Service in the Church; thus, 1 *Tim.* i. 11. and iv. 14. *According to the foregoing Prophecies concerning thee, neglect not the Gift that was given thee by Prophecy.* 2. Others, by Prophecy, underſtand preaching and expounding Scriptures by divine Inſpiration, praiſing God by inſpired Hymns and Pſalms, and alſo praying to him in publick Aſſemblies by inſpired Prayers; for in the Apoſtles Time there was a miraculous Gift of Preaching, Praying, and Singing, in which the Spirit did, in an extraordinary Manner, aſſiſt ſome Perſons, which, with other extraordinary Gifts, is long ſince ceaſed.

The Gift of diſcerning Spirits; that is, either, 1. A Power of quick and ſure Diſcerning, whether Men, pretending to the Spirit, ſpake from God, or not; or a ſupernatural Sagacity to diſcern between the impulſes of ſatanical Spirits, and Perſons divinely Inſpired. Or, 2. A Spirit of diſcerning whether ſuch or ſuch Perſons be beſt qualified for ſuch an Office in the Church, and accordingly chuſing them out for that Work, *Acts* xiii. 2, 3. Or, 3. By this the Apoſtles could tell very much of the inward Purpoſes of Mens Hearts and Thoughts; ſo *Peter* diſcerned the Heart of *Ananias*, and of *Simon Magus*.

Alſo, the Gift of Tongues; that is, an Ability of ſpeaking divers Kinds of Languages unlearned and untaught.

Laſtly, The Gift of interpreting thoſe Languages; for theſe two Gifts did not always accompany

pany one another; ſome could ſpeak divers Languages that could not interpret them; and others could interpret them that could not ſpeak them; for, ſay ſome, the Gift of Tongues was uſually accompanied with ſuch ſtrong Raptures, that the Perſon affected could not uſe his Underſtanding in an ordinary Way, ſo as to interpret and explain his own Inſpirations in the Audience to which he ſpoke; which was the Reaſon why the Spirit did uſually reveal to others, who ſtood by, and underſtood not the inſpired Languages, the Matter which was ſpoken.

Theſe are the miraculous Gifts that were beſtowed on the Church in its primitive and infant State; but as the Church grew up, Almighty God, like a wiſe Nurſe, weaned her from them by Degrees, till at length arriving at her full Stature, he left her, as Parents leave their Children when grown to Men, to ſubſiſt without theſe extraordinary Helps and Supplies.

Q. *What might be God's Deſign in beſtowing ſuch a Variety of Gifts on his Church?*

A. The Deſign of God in beſtowing theſe various Gifts, the Apoſtle tells us, was the Edification of his Church, which he compares to a Body that has many Members; for though that one Spirit which diſtributes the Gifts, could have given them all to one Perſon, yet to maintain a mutual Dependance, and a charitable Serviceableneſs of the Members, one among another, he gave to each a different Gift; by which one Member of the Church ſhould be obliged to take care of the reſt. Thus has God ordered the State of the Church, like that of the natural Body, to which the Apoſtle elegantly compares the Body of *Chriſt*, *as the body hath many Members, ſo alſo hath* Chriſt, that is, the Church of *Chriſt*.

Q. *How were they Members of one Body?*

A. This he tells them Ver. 13. *For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body*, &c. that is, by being baptized we are all made Members of the Body of *Chriſt*, and united one to another under him the Head; and thus, whether we be *Jews* or *Gentiles*, bond or free, we are all one in *Chriſt*, who by Baptiſm were admitted into his Church; which Union is teſtified by our Communion at the the Lord's Table, which is here called *a Drinking into one Spirit*.

Q. *Pray illuſtrate the Apoſtle's Compariſon between the myſtical Body, the Church, and the natural Body?*

A. As the natural Body is informed and animated with one Spirit or Soul, ſo the miſtycal Body, the Church, is animated by one and the ſame Spirit, received from our ſpiritual Head *Chriſt Jeſus*, and communicated to all the Members of his Body, to give them Life and Motion. As the Members of the Body are not alike, but ſome ſuperior, and others inferior in Excellency, yet all of indiſpenſible Uſe, ſo it is in the Church; there are different Gifts, different Offices; ſome are ſuperior, and more excelling in Gifts; others are of meaner Abilities, yet all conduce to the Good of the Whole.

And whereas our wiſe Creator, who made the Body of Man, has appointed all the Members of that Body for divers Uſes and Offices, and the Order in which every Member ſhall ſtand; ſo our gracious Redeemer has appointed to the ſeveral Members of his Church, diſtinct Offices in his Church. And as the principal Members of the Body, the Eye and Hand, ſtand in need of the leſs principal; ſo the Rulers, Paſtors, and wiſeſt Members of the Church, may need even thoſe weak and inferior *Chriſtians* whom the World makes ſmall Account of. Therefore the ſuperior Members of the Church muſt not lord it over the Inferior, or deſpiſe them as unuſeful and unprofitable, but, as Fellow-members, jointly endeavour the mutual Advantage of one another.

The Apoſtle goes on with his Compariſon, and ſhews, that as there are ſome Members in the natural Body that are leſs honourable, and ſome that are more ſo; and as we put more Honour on the leſs honourable Members by a decent Covering, and modeſtly adorning them; but on our comely Parts, ſuch as the Face, we put no Covering, being comely enough of itſelf, and lacking no artificial Beauty; ſo all the Members of the myſtical Body ought to be inſtructed, that the meaneſt Officers and Members of the Church, are as well of that ſpiritual Body, the Church, as thoſe that have more excellent Gifts and Offices.

Two Reaſons are added to enforce this Duty: 1. That there may be no Schiſm in the Body, but the Members have the ſame Care for, and Regard to one another. 2. Becauſe there ought to be a Sympathy between the Members of the myſtical Body, as well as there is betwixt the Members of the natural Body. The natural Members all rejoice or mourn together; ſo the myſtical Members of *Chriſt*'s Body, the Church, ought to have the ſame common Intereſt, and the ſame mutual Sympathy with each other, both in Weal and Woe.

The Apoſtle next applies the Compariſon to the Caſe of the believing *Corinthians*, whom he owns to be a Part of the myſtical Body of *Chriſt*; and that it is their Duty to carry themſelves towards their Fellow-Members, as the Members of the Body Natural do towards each other, who are ſtill ſollicitous for the good of each other.

Q. *Towards the Cloſe of the Chapter the Apoſtle reckons up the particular Officers whom God thought fit to place in his Church; pray what were their reſpective Duties and Functions?*

A. Theſe were, 1. *Apoſtles*; Perſons ſent forth immediately by *Chriſt*, to lay the Foundation of a *Chriſtian* Church, and on whom the Care of all the Churches lay. 2. *Prophets*; Perſons immediately inſpired with the Knowledge of future Things. 3. *Teachers*; ſuch as laboured in the Word and Doctrine. 4. *Miracles*; Perſons endued with an extraordinary Power to work Miracles for convincing Infidels, and confirming Believers. 5. *Gift of Healing*; that is, without the Help of Phyſick. 6. *Helps*; Deacons, who took Care of the Poor, and aſſiſted in the Church in the Diſtribution of her Charity, &c. 7. *Government*; Rulers of the Church and ſpiritual Guides. 8. *Diverſities of Tongues*; Perſons enabled to ſpeak divers Languages, in order to the farther ſpreading the Goſpel without the Help of Study.

As the natural Body (to which he had before alluded) cannot be all Eye, nor all Ear; all Hand, nor all Foot; ſo in the myſtical Body the Church, all cannot govern, prophecy, teach, work Miracles, and heal Diſeaſes; but one has this Gift, another that; one this Office, another that; all which are to be employed for the common Good of the Church, and of each other.

Q. *How does he conclude his Diſcourſe?*

A. He concludes with this Advice, that they covet and deſire *the beſt*; that is, the moſt uſeful and excellent Gifts, ſuch as may moſt edify, and be of the greateſt Service to the Church: Yet intimating, that there is a greater Excellency in Grace than in Gifts, particularly in that of Love.

Yet I ſhew unto you a more excellent way; that is, of miniſtring to the Welfare of the Church, and of edifying your own Souls, even by true *Chriſtian* Love one towards another.

CHAP. XIII.

All Gifts, how excellent ſoever, are nothing without Charity. Its Character and Excellencies; it never faileth, and therefore is preferred before Hope and Faith.

Q. WHAT *Point has the Apoſtle chiefly in view in this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle in this Chapter ſets forth the tranſcendent Excellency of the Graces of the Holy Spirit, above the moſt admired Gifts; and in particular, the ſuperlative Excellence of the Grace of Charity.

He begins with ſhewing how much more excellent and deſirable the ſaving Graces of the Spirit are, than all thoſe pompous and miraculous Gifts, which have no real Excellency, except on the Score of Uſefulneſs and Service to the Church.

Tho' I ſpeak with the Tongue of Men, and Angels; tho' I ſpeak divers Languages in the moſt exalted Degree; could I preach and pray like an Angel, diſcourſe and talk beyond the rate of any mortal Man, and have not the Grace of Love and Charity; what is all this to God, who is not taken with Noiſe and Sound? Gifts are like the Gold that adorn the Temple, but Grace is like the Altar which ſanctifies the Gold.

Again; ſuppoſe I had the Spirit of Prophecy, and could ſpeak by Inſpiration of Things preſent and to come, and could underſtand deep and difficult Points in God's Word and Works, what is this more than *Balaam* had? Suppoſe I had the higheſt Degree of miraculous Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains, yet this, ſevered from Charity, or the predominant Love of God and our Neighbour, is all nothing. And *I am nothing*, that is, nothing worth in the Sight of God.

But tho' miraculous Faith may be ſevered from Charity, yet ſo cannot juſtifying Faith, which always works by Love; and where-ever it is found, it ſtamps a Value and Acceptance on all other Graces.

And though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, *&c.* Here obſerve that Alms may be given without true Love to God, or our Neighbour, for God's ſake; they may be given out of mere natural Pity to the Poor, out of a Deſire to be well thought of, and well ſpoken of by Men, out of an Opinion of Merit, and obliging God, or from ſome other Cauſe, which includes not Love either to God or Man; and where-ever they are thus given, they profit nothing to Salvation. The *Greek* Word here for feeding the Poor, ſignifies to divide Victuals in ſeveral Pieces, and to diſtribute it amongſt the Poor.

If I give my Body to be burned; If I have ſo much Fortitude and Courage as to lay down my Life for *Chriſt* and his Truth, which is ſuch an high Expreſſion of my Obedience to him, as Angels are not capable of performing, yet without Charity, Burning is but a vain-glorious Blaze; and inſtead of ſealing the Truth with our Blood, we ſeal but our Shame and Folly; if it be not from a right Principle and to a ſincere End, if all this be without true Love to God and his Glory, Church and Truth, ſuch a voluntary Sacrifice of our ſelves will avail nothing to Salvation. It is indeed a great Matter to ſuffer for *Chriſt*; but it is much greater to ſuffer with ſuch a Diſpoſition of Heart as *Chriſt* requires.

Q. *How does he deſcribe the Grace of* Chriſt?

A. Charity is deſcribed by the ſeveral excellent Effects and Properties of it: *It ſuffereth long, and is kind*; the charitable Man is kind to all, patient towards all, bears Injuries and Reproaches very long, neither deſiring nor endeavouring to revenge them.

It envieth not; he neither envieth the Power, Profit, Preferment, Applauſe, or Precedency of any Man; but is well-pleaſed with the Happineſs of every Man, and laments their Misfortunes.

Charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up; it ſuppreſſeth all ſelf-applauding and ſelf-admiring Thoughts, all Arrogancy in aſſuming to ourſelves, and undervaluing of others.

Charity, or true Love to our Neighbour, will reſtrain us from all uncomely Deportment towards him; it will not ſuffer us to do an uncivil or indecent thing to any Man; it lays a Reſtraint on the Paſſions under Provocations, how juſt or great ſoever.

Seeketh not her own; that is, her own Praiſe, Profit, or Pleaſure. Charity is not ſelfiſh, but generous. *It is not eaſily provoked*, not ready to think, ſpeak, or act unduly, by ſmall Injuries or Occaſions, but bears, forbears, and forgives.

Thinketh no evil; that is, of any Perſon groundleſly, but conſtrues and interprets every thing in the beſt Senſe; for lightly to take up an evil Report of our Neighbour, to think or ſuſpect, much more to believe and report any evil of him, without any ſufficient Evidence againſt him, is a Violation of the divine Law of Charity.

Charity rejoices not in any evil done: Either, 1. By ourſelves in the Commiſſion, or after Contemplation of it; or, 2. By others. How ſad is it, when it becomes Matter of Mirth and Sport, to ſee another Stab at once the *Chriſtian* Name, and his own Soul! 3. It rejoices not in any Evil done to others. Charity ſuffers no Man to be pleaſed at the Expence of another's Eaſe or Reputation.

But rejoiceth in the Truth; Charity is ſo far from rejoicing in the Falls or Misfortunes of others, that it rejoices when the Truth and Innocence, the Righteouſneſs and Equity of any Perſon or Cauſe, is made evident. It rejoices when Men love the Truth, do juſtly, and live righteouſly, according to that Rule of Truth, the Goſpel.

Charity, or Love, patiently bears Wrongs and Injuries, without returning Evil for Evil, and is kind notwithſtanding Provocations.

Believeth all Things; Charity inclines a Man to believe the beſt of his Neighbour, till the contrary appears; it interprets every thing in the beſt Senſe, and makes the faireſt Conſtruction of every Man's Caſe and Condition: Not that the charitable Man is a credulous Man; but he believeth all Things ſo far as either Reality or Probability, Truth or Appearance of Truth, gives him any Encouragement ſo to do. A Charitable Man is very willing to believe that Things are meant as they are ſpoken, and intended as they are done. It is an injurious and unworthy Jealouſy, when a Perſon's Actions are fair, to ſuſpect his Intentions.

Hopeth all Things. It is the genius of Charity, and the Character of Love to hope the beſt of Perſons and Things, ſo far as there is any ground of Hope; yea, tho' they carry in them ſome Cauſe or Ground of Suſpicion; if our Brother be bad at preſent, not to deſpair of his Amendment, but endeavour his Reformation by all proper Means.

Endureth all Things; it puts up Wrongs and Injuries, without deſiring, much leſs endeavouring to revenge them; it cauſes us to endure Provocation with much Patience, and extinguiſhes all Inclinations to Revenge. Some will conceal their Anger, yet ſeek Revenge; their Malice is like ſlow Poiſon, that diſcovers no violent Symptoms, but deſtroys Life inſenſibly; others have ſuch fierce Paſſions, that they ſtrike Fire out of the leaſt Provocation; they inflame their Reſentments by conſidering every Circumſtance that will exaſperate their Spirits; but *Charity beareth all Things, endureth all Things.*

Charity never faileth. Holy Love is an everlaſting Quality and Employment; it ſhall not fail at Death, as other Graces do, but be then perfected. Repentance ſhould accompany us to the Gates of Heaven; but there Repentance ceaſes for ever in Heaven, for there is no need of Repentance where there is entire Innocence: Faith is ſwallowed up in Viſion, and Hope in Fruition; but Love is there in its Exaltation.

Prophecying, Languages, Sciences, and all artificial Knowledge, will ceaſe for ever; Knowledge itſelf in Heaven will vaniſh away: But how? Why, all the Knowledge is attained with much Labour and Study, but it ſhall be no more difficult to know in Heaven, than it is for the Eye to open and ſee: The beautiful Face of Truth ſhall in a Moment be unveiled to us in Heaven, and the Curtain drawn away by the Hand of God, which interpoſed betwixt us and the Light.

Q. *What will be the real Difference between a* Chriſtian's *preſent and future State?*

A. As the imperfect twilight vaniſhes by the opening of the perfect Day; ſo at Death, when that which is perfect takes Place, then that which is imperfect ſhall be done away.

Happy and great is the Difference between the *Chriſtian's* preſent and future State! He now, indeed, begins to know in Part here; but what he knows here is little of that he ſhould know, little of that he might know, little of that others know, little of that he deſires to know, little of that he ſhall know, when he comes to Heaven; then all Imperfections, *ſhall be done away, when that which is perfect is come.*

Q. *Will a* Chriſtian's *Knowledge, when he comes to Heaven, be the ſame as he now has upon Earth?*

A. The Apoſtle compares the *Chriſtian*'s imperfect State of Knowledge and Holineſs in this Life to a State of Childhood, his perfect State of Holineſs and Happineſs in Heaven to a State of Manhood. As a Child conceives, thinks, and ſpeaks of Things ſuitably to his childiſh State; but when he comes to manly Perfection, and to the full Uſe and Exerciſe of his Reaſon, he then baniſhes childiſh Conceptions and Things; thus it is with the beſt of us in this Life; like Children we conceive and think, we diſcourſe and ſpeak of ſpiritual Things in a confuſed and imperfect Manner; but when we ſhall have Knowledge and all other Graces perfected, then the Saints, in natural Things ſhall be perfect Philoſophers, in ſpiritual Things complete Divines; all dark Scriptures ſhall be clear to them; all the knotty Intrigues of Providence wiſely reſolved; in a Word, there they ſhall know God perfectly, tho' they ſhall never know him to Perfection.

Now, indeed, in our Minority we ſee divine Revelations, as the Prophets did of old, in a dark enigmatical Manner, and by Symbolical Repreſentations of Things upon the Fancy, as in a Glaſs; but then in the adult State of the Church, we ſhall ſee them in a Way more accommodated to human Nature, and as it were, Face to Face; we ſhall ſee clearly, immediately; and not by Reflection, but by Intuition.

Thoſe Adverbs, *Now*, and *Then*, diſtinguiſh the twofold State of gracious Souls; and ſhew what they are while confin'd to the Body, and what they ſhall be when emancipated and freed from that clog of Mortality which now hangs upon them.

Our imperfect Knowledge of God is ſet forth by ſeeing in a Glaſs, becauſe it is a weak and imperfect, vaniſhing and tranſient Viſion; it is no immediate Sight, but by the Glaſs of his Word and Ordinances, we ſee and underſtand ſomething of God's Nature and Will.

Such as have ſeen God here, as in a Glaſs, in the Glaſs of his Ordinances and Providences, of his Word and Works, ſhall ſee him Face to Face, and fix their Eye upon him in Heaven to all Eternity: When once the pious Soul is unſheathed from the Body, it gliſters gloriouſly; as ſoon as the Cage is open, the Bird ſoars aloft, and ſings melodiouſly; it's Death's Office to beat down the Partition-Wall, a groſs earthly Body; and then the glorified Soul ſhall have a clear and perfect, an immediate and poſſeſſive, a ſatisfying and eternal Viſion of the holy and bleſſed God, which the Apoſtle here calls *ſeeing Face to Face.*

Now I know in part, but then I ſhall know even as I am known. When ſo great an Apoſtle confeſſes the Imperfection of his Knowledge, who can, who dare boaſt of the Largeneſs of his Underſtanding?

Now I know: This intimates, that he had begun his Acquaintance with God here, which he expected ſhould be improved and perfected in Heaven; he that knows not God in Part here, ſhall never know him Face to Face in Glory: Heaven indeed is a Place of Perfection; but nothing is perfected there that was not begun here; no Knowledge, no Holineſs will be conſummated there, which did not begin and commence here.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle mean when he ſays, v.* 12. Then ſhall I know, even as I am known?

A. He means, that we ſhall know God as really and truly, tho' not ſo fully and comprehenſively, as he knows us; we ſhall know him in his Nature and Attributes; then and there will his wonderful Clemency be ſweetly diſplay'd, his exact Juſtice demonſtrated, his perfect Wiſdom clearly unfolded, all the myſterious Depths of divine

Counſels fully diſcovered, to the delightful Satiſfaction of the admiring and adoring Soul, who ſhall then ſee as it is ſeen, and know as it is known.

Q. *What is the Import of the laſt Verſe of the Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle here ſets Faith, Hope, and Charity in Competition, and prefers the laſt, partly with Reſpect to its preſent Excellency; for Charity is the End, to which Faith and Hope are but the Means; and partly with Reſpect to its future Duration; Faith and Hope will vaniſh with this Life; Faith will end in Sight, and Hope in Enjoyment; but Charity will flouriſh when we come to Heaven, and be a conſiderable Part of our Happineſs there, which will conſiſt in the rapturous Contemplation of divine Love, in loving, praiſing, admiring, and adoring God, our great Creator. in loving all whom he loves, and that eternally.

Charity excels Faith and Hope, 1 In regard of its Extent, reaching to God, Angels, and Men. 2. In regard of its Uſe, extending to the Good of others. 3. In regard of Perfection, is rendring us more like to God. 4. In regard of Duration; farewel Faith and Hope when we come to Heaven; but welcome Love; therefore *the greateſt of theſe is Charity.*

CHAP. XIV.

Prophecy is commended and preferred before ſpeaking with Tongues, proved by a Compariſon from a Pipe, Harp, and Trumpet. The one is a Barbarian, unleſs underſtood, the other edifieth. We muſt pray in Spirit, and alſo with Uuderſtanding, otherwiſe others cannot ſay Amen to it. The Apoſtle's Example to be imitated. The Uſe of ſtrange Tongues, vain without Interpretation. The Excellency of Prophecy; Directions about it. Women muſt be ſilent in the Church. Theſe Ordinances the Commandments of Chriſt. *All Things muſt be done in Order.*

Q. WHAT *is the firſt Subject which the Apoſtle propoſes to ſpeak of in this Chapter?*

A. In the firſt Verſe the Apoſtle propounds to the *Corinthians* a threefold Object, *Charity, publick Gifts and Prophecy*; Charity has the Precedence; it's preferred not only before all other Gifts, but before the moſt uſeful and excellent Graces, even Faith and Hope; for Service and Benefit to the Church of God it exceeds them all.

Next he mentions ſpiritual Gifts, ſuch were the Gifts of Tongues, Miracles, Healing, and *laſtly, Prophecy*: By which we are to underſtand an ordinary ſet Courſe of Preaching, interpreting and opening the holy Scriptures, which contain a Revelation of God's Mind and Will.

Q. *What is chiefly obſervable in the firſt Verſe?*

A. Here we have a threefold Act recommended, anſwerable to a threefold Object propounded. An Act of Proſecution; *follow after Charity* as cloſe as your Proſecutors follow and purſue you. An Act of Emulation; *deſire earneſtly ſpiritual Gifts.* An Act of Election and Choice; *chuſe rather that ye may prophecy*, or clearly underſtand the Mind of God yourſelves, and have an Ability to expound and explain it to others; this will bring more Glory to God, moſt Profit to the Church, and moſt Comfort to yourſelves.

Obſerve here, the Gift of Tongues, or ſpeaking divers Languages, was greatly deſired by ſome in the Church at that Time; probably becauſe the Apoſtles were eminently endowed with that Gift; yet the Gift of Prophecy, the Underſtanding and Interpreting the Will of God, was clearly the more valuable and deſirable Accompliſhment; for tho' ſpeaking with Tongues created more Admiration, and conciliated greater Veneration to the Speaker, yet Prophecying was by far the more excellent Gift, and tended moſt to the Edification of the Church; it is far better to do Good, than to appear Great.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle explain himſelf about* prophecying, and ſpeaking in an unknown Tongue?

A. Note the Diſtinction the Apoſtle makes between the Gift of ſpeaking plainly to the Church's Benefit and Comfort, *he that ſpeaketh in an unkoown Tongue*, that is, in a Language not underſtood, not explained or interpreted, *ſpeaking not unto Men*; that is, not to the Underſtanding of Men; *but to God only*, who alone underſtands him; and tho' in the Spirit he ſpeaks Myſteries, or the deep Things of God, yet all this is not to Edification, becauſe not underſtood by the Church. Whereas, *he that prophecieth*, that is, intelligibly opens and applies the Word of God to his Auditors in the Congregation, what he ſpeaks conduces exceedingly to their Inſtruction and Conſolation.

Obſerve, the Apoſtle not only diſlikes, but plainly forbids Preaching, Praying, and all other Offices, being performed in the Church in a Language not underſtood; ſo that the Practice of the Church of *Rome* in their *Latin* Prayers is a flat Contradiction to this whole Chapter, and to the Practice of the Primitive Church, *Acts* iv. 24. Who lift up their Voice with one Accord, and offered up a reaſonable Service to God; the Prayers of the *Jewiſh* Church were made in the *Hebrew* Tongue; and God gave the Gift of Tongues to the Chriſtian Church, that the Apoſtle might eſtabliſh the Worſhip of God in every Nation in their own Language.

Another Argument, to prove that the Gift of Prophecying is more excellent than the Gift of Tongues, is, he that ſpeaks in an unknown Tongue, edifies none but himſelf, becauſe none but himſelf underſtands it; but he that teaches, inſtructs, and exhorts others, edifies the Church, or the whole Aſſembly he ſpeaks in.

Q. *How does he farther illuſtrate this Argument?*

A. The Apoſtle wiſhes they had all the Gift of Tongues, becauſe they ſeemed ſo deſirous of them, tho' rather for Oſtentation than the Church's Edification; yet he rather deſires with *Moſes, that all the Lord's People were Prophets*; that is, directed and aſſiſted by the Spirit of God, to deliver plainly and perſuaſively the Will of God; to Men; for he is greateſt in the Church who is moſt edifying.

This he amplifies by inſtancing in his own Perſon; *if I come to you ſpeaking with Tongues*; as if he had ſaid, I wonder whether what you ſo much admire in others would pleaſe you in me. What would you be the wiſer or better, if I ſhould diſcourſe to you in the *Arabian* Tongue of ſome Revelation I received immediately from God, or ſhould open to you ſome Truth which you knew not before, or urge ſome needful Duty, or doctrinally expounded to you the Matters of Faith and Obedience recorded in the Goſpel, if either myſelf, or ſome Interpreter, did not make what I ſay intelligible to you, what will it profit you?

Our Apoſtle illuſtrates his former Argument by a Similitude taken from muſical Inſtruments, the one uſed in Peace, namely, the Harp, the other in War, to wit, the Trumpet; as they are uſeleſs, if by Diſtinction their Signification is not perceived; for if a Man hears not, or underſtands not the ſound of the Harp or Trumpet, he cannot prepare himſelf either for the Dance or the Battle, ſo if Perſons in the Church ſpeak not intelligibly, he will nothing ediſy; it is like beating the Air all in vain.

The Apoſtle tells them, there may probably be as many Voices and Languages in the World, as there are Nations; and every Nation underſtands its own Language, and commonly no other: Now, ſays he, if he that has the Gift of Tongues ſpeak to you in a Language which you underſtand not, will he not be a *Barbarian* to you? And if you talk to him in a Language he underſtands not, will you not be a *Barbarian* to him? It will be juſt as if two Men of two different Countries ſhould talk to one another, and neither underſtand a Word of each other. He adds, that ſince they were ſo very deſirous of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, they ſhould ſeek thoſe Gifts eſpecially by which the Church may receive Edification and Advantage.

Q *What ſhould be a Miniſter's principal View in preaching?*

A, The Church's Edification ſhould be the Scope of all her Members, eſpecially of all her Miniſters Wiſhes and Prayers, Enterprizes and Endeavours; our firſt Care ſhould be to lay a right Foundation, namely, the Doctrine of Redemption and Salvation, by the meritorious Untaking of *Chriſt Jeſus* our Lord, the eternal Son of the Father; our next Care is, that our Superſtructure be anſwerable to our Foundation; this being ſolid and ſubſtantial, that muſt be ſo too; acquainting Perſons with the whole Will of God, and the whole Duty of Man.

Seek that you may excel; paſſionately deſire and endeavour that you may, by the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, be eminently qualified for building and edifying the Church of God.

Q. *What Inference may be drawn from the Apoſtle's urging ſo ſtrongly the Neceſſity of performing publick Worſhip in a Language known and underſtood by all the Congregation?*

A. This may convince us of the Impiety and Abſurdity of the Church of *Rome*, in appointing their publick Offices to be performed in *Latin*; a Language which the common People in *France*, *Spain*, *Germany*, yea, in *Italy* it ſelf, do not underſtand; for the *Latin* is not now the Mother-Tongue of any Nation whatever; and the Council of *Trent* thunders out her *Anathema* againſt thoſe who ſay that the Maſs ought to be celebrated only in the Vulgar Tongue. What is this but to offer the Sacrifice of Fools? How can this be reaſonable Service, which is no better than a ſinful taking God's Name in vain? They neither know the God they pray to, nor the Mercies they pray for.

Q. *Our Apoſtle next urges the Duty of praying in a known Tongue: How does he reaſon upon this Point?*

A. His Argument runs thus: The Heart ought to join the Supplications and Prayers made to God, and to teſtify its Conſent by ſaying *Amen*; which, adds the Apoſtle, no Man can ſay to that which he does not underſtand, nor be edified by that which cannot be underſtood.

For a Cloſe he tells them, that Almighty God had furniſh'd him with the Gift of ſpeaking more Languages than all them put together, that ſo as an Apoſtle he might plant and propagate the *Chriſtian* Faith in and throughout all Nations; yet he declares he had rather ſpeak a few Words to the Inſtruction and Edification of his Hearers, than a Multitude of Languages not underſtood.

Q. *How do you underſtand the firſt Clauſe of, v.* 20. Brethren, be not Children in Underſtanding?

A. That is, do not prefer gay and gaudy Things (as was the Gift of Tongues) before Things more uſeful. Thus your Choice muſt not be according to your Fancy, but in ſome Reſpects, to be as Children, namely, in Innocence, Harmleſſneſs, and in Freedom from Malice; but in Underſtanding be, and act as Men, as Perſons of mature Judgment, who know what is fitteſt to be ſpoken, and beſt to be done.

Q. *Does he uſe any other Argument to diſſuade them from deſiring the Gift of Tongues?*

A. The Apoſtle, to take the *Corinthians* off from their Fondneſs of the Gift of Tongues, tells them, *that in the Law*, that is, in the Writings of the *Old Teſtament*, particularly in *Iſa.* xxviii. 11. it is declared, that becauſe the People of *Judah* would not be inſtructed by the plain Preaching of the Lord's Prophets, therefore he would cauſe them to be ſpoken to in an unknown Language; namely, by Foreign Enemies and Armies, whoſe Language they ſhould not underſtand: From whence he infers, that ſtrange Tongues were not given for a Sign of any Good to Believers, but rather as a Token of God's Diſpleaſure to Unbelievers; inſomuch that by the juſt Judgment of God, their Ignorance by this Means would be the more increaſed: But the Gift of Prophecy ſerves not only for the Converſion of Unbelievers, but for the Edification of Believers alſo; therefore Prophecying or Preaching intelligibly is to be preferr'd in the Church before ſpeaking with Tongues.

Farther; the Apoſtle argues from the Abſurdity of ſpeaking in a ſtrange Language unexplained; *will they not ſay you are mad?* If all that ſpeak in the Church, ſpeak in a ſtrange Tongue, what will an ignorant or unbelieving Perſon coming into the Congregation think or ſay? Will he not apprehend you to be mad Men? Whereas if thoſe who ſpeak at the ſame Time, prophecy and interpret Scripture to the Edification of the Church, then if an Unbeliever comes in, he is convinc'd, diſcover'd, judg'd by all them that prophecy, and the Secrets of his Heart are made manifeſt to himſelf; and ſo falling down he would adore God, the Searcher of the Heart, and report from his own Experience, that God is in or among you of a Truth. What is it that works this ſudden Change? Not the Preaching of Men, but the Power of God; the Arm of Grace in the Miniſtry of the Word is victorious and invincible; the Efficacy and Succeſs of the Word depends not on the Parts of a Man, but on the Power of God.

Q. *What other Rules and Directions does he give for the Government of the Church?*

A. The Apoſtle next lays down ſeveral Precepts for the Preſervation of Decency and good Order in the Church: Firſt he adviſes, that in their publick Aſſemblies, *if any of them had a Pſalm*, or Hymn ſuggeſted to them by the Spirit of God, to his Glory, and the Church's Edification, or *had a Doctrine*, either for Inſtruction or Conſolation, or had a ſtrange Tongue, or the Gift of interpreting Tongues; let it be how it will, he exhorts that all be done ſo as may beſt tend to the Benefit and Edification of the Church, which is the true End of Church-Aſſemblies. The great End and Aim of all thoſe who miniſter in holy Things ſhould be, the Church's Edification, and the People's Growth and Improvement in Knowledge, Faith, and Holineſs.

Our Apoſtle's next Advice for the Church's Edification, is, That ſuch as had the Gift of Tongues ſhould not ſpeak all together, but two or three ſucceſſively one after another; and that one interpret what was ſo ſpoken, to the Benefit and Edifying of the Church. But if there was no Interpreter, let him that only ſpeaks with Tongues, keep ſilence in the Church; and let him only ſpeak mentally to himſelf, and to God in Prayer and Thankſgiving.

The ſame Advice he gives to them that propheſied; namely, that only two or three of them ſhould prophecy ſucceſſively, and the reſt of the Prophets to ſit ſtill and judge, examining their Doctrine by the Rule of the Word; for *the Spirits of the Prophets are ſubject to the Prophets*; that is, the Doctrines which the Prophets deliver ſhould be judg'd and examin'd by other Prophets, whether they be agreeable to the Word of God or not; for the Inſtinct by which the Prophets pretend to be moved at that Time to prophecy, is ſubject to the Judgment and Cenſure of other Prophets, who are endowed with the ſame Gifts.

Thus he declares, that all that are Prophets, and prophetically inſpired, may prophecy, provided it be done orderly and ſucceſſively, without occaſioning Confuſion in the Church; and ſo managed, as to anſwer the great End of the Inſtitution; namely, the Inſtruction, and Conſolation of the Church; *for God is not the Author of Confuſion, but of Peace.*

Q. *What Inference may be drawn from this Diſcourſe?*

A. That ſpeaking and preaching in the publick Aſſemblies is all along limited to the Prophets; *let the Prophets ſpeak*; not the common People, they were to ſit by, and examine what was ſpoken by the Rule of the Word. The authoritative preaching of the gifted Brethren, at the Call of a private Congregation, was no more permitted by St. *Paul*, than his ſuffering Women to ſpeak in the Church; none but Prophets, or Perſons in Office appointed for the Work of Preaching, were ever ſuffered to undertake it in the Primitive Times, and downwards, till very lately.

Q. *What are his Directions in Relation to Women?*

A. A farther Rule for maintaining Order and Decency in the Church, is, that Women ſhould not preſume to ſpeak or utter any thing as publick Teachers in the Congregation, no, nor ſo much as aſk any Queſtions publickly: Almighty God, having made Subjection (not publick Inſtruction) their Duty, of which Silence is a Token.

Note, that it is not the Woman's ſpeaking in publick Aſſemblies, when they join with the Congregation in ſinging Pſalms, and in Prayer, but their ſpeaking by way of teaching and prophecying, that is here forbidden.

But note, That all Means of Inſtruction are not denied the Women; at Home they might put Queſtions to their Husbands for their own Information and Satisfaction; but to do any thing like this publickly, was a Shame, or indecent Thing, both to the Church, her Husband, and herſelf. Thus the God of Order calls for Order, and delights in Decency, eſpecially where his religious Worſhip is celebrated.

Q. *How do you interpret the 36th, 37th and 38th Verſes?*

A. Theſe Verſes are look'd upon by Interpreters as a ſmart Reflection on ſome of the Miniſters and Members of the Church of *Corinth*; who from an Opinion which they had of themſelves and their own Management, would not ſubmit to the foregoing Precepts, Canons, and Rules, for Order and Decency in the Church of God. What, ſays the Ayoſtle, do you think that you have all the Word and Will of God? Doth all Knowledge of Scripture and Reſolution of Doubts, reſt in your Breaſts, and flow out of your Lips? Conſider, you are not the firſt Church that was planted (*Jeruſalem* was before you) the Goſpel was ſent to you, it did not firſt come from you. When Men are thus conceited of their own Knowledge and Abilities, we may, without Breach of Charity, or Blemiſh of Holineſs, check Pride with Deriſion, and ſpeak them below Men, who would exalt themſelves above them.

Theſe Rules for Order and Decency which he had given them, he affirms, were from the Lord; and he expected and required, that thoſe who eſteemed themſelves Prophets, would obſerve and obey them as ſuch: But if Men will be obſtinately ignorant, be it at their Peril, let them look to it, do not regard them; *if any be ignorant, let him be ignorant.*

Q. *What is his Concluſion upon the Whole?*

A. The Apoſtle cloſes the Chapter with exhorting them to endeavour earneſtly after the Gift of prophecying, and not to depiſe the Uſe of the Gift of Tongues, provided theſe and tbe Directions he had before given them be obſerved; that ſo in their publick Aſſemblies all Things relating to religious Worſhip be performed with that becoming Gravity and Dependency which may moſt and beſt conduce to the Glory of God and the Church's Edification.

Hence learn, that they only have Authority to make Church Orders, whom the Lord had made Church-Governors; and that ſuch Orders as relate to real Decency in the Worſhip of God, made and confirmed by the Governors of the Church, ought to be obey'd and conformed to by the Members of the Church for Conſcience ſake, that all Things may be done decently and in Order.

CHAP. XV.

The Reſurrection of the Dead proved from Chriſt's *Reſurrection. If* Chriſt *was not riſen, their Preaching was falſe, and the Faith of the* Corinthians *vain, the Dead in* Chriſt *periſhed, and Believers were of all Men moſt miſerable.* Chriſt *the Firſt-fruits of thoſe who riſe; and as by one Man came Death; ſo by one Man came the Reſurrection. Death the laſt Enemy which* Chriſt *ſhall deſtroy; elſe was Baptiſm for the Dead uſed in vain, and the* Epicureans *would be in the right. Believers ſhall riſe with the ſame Bodies, but with ſpiritual Qualities, proved by the Similitude of Corn ſown. He reveals a Myſtery; his Song of Triumph; and Exhortation to continue ſtedfaſt in the Faith.*

Q. W*HAT particular Doctrine does the Apoſtle inculcate in this Chapter?*

A. The Deſign and Scope in this Chapter, is, to eſtabliſh the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, which was then denied by ſome in the Church of *Corinth.*

Q. *In what Manner does he handle it?*

A. He begins with telling them what was the ſubject Matter of his Preaching, it was the Goſpel, and particularly the Doctrine of the Reſurrection.

He acquaints them likewiſe with the Reception the Goſpel had met with amongſt them; they heard it, believed it, and embrac'd it as the Truth of God, and in the Profeſſion of which the beſt and greateſt Part of them were ſtill firm, tho' ſome were fallen away.

He ſhews them alſo the bleſſed Effect which the Goſpel had upon thoſe that did believe and receive it: *By it they were ſaved*; that is, put into a ſalvable State, brought into the right and only Way to arrive at it, aſſures them that it is attainable, and inclines and encourages them ſeriouſly to endeavour after the Attainment of it.

The Condition annexed and required on our Part, in order to obtain that Salvation which the Goſpel diſcovers to us is, Perſeverance; for that is implied in *our keeping in Memory what we have received.* If we do not ſtedfaſtly cleave to the Goſpel, and to this grand Doctrine of it, the Reſurrection, our Hearing is vain, our Believing, our Hopes of Salvation are vain.

Q. *What comes next under Obſervation?*

A. The next Thing obſervable is, the Apoſtle's Fidelity, in delivering nothing to the Church but what he had received, either mediately by *Ananias,* or by immediate Revelation from *Chriſt* himſelf.

Q. *What were thoſe Doctrines which the Apoſtle chiefly inculcated in his Preaching?*

A. The principal and fundamental Doctrines or Articles of Faith, which the Apoſtle in his Preaching had inſiſted upon among them, were, the Death, Burial, and Reſurrection of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*; *That he died for our Sins,* to attone for Sin, as the Prophets *Iſaiah* and *Daniel* had long ſince foretold.

And that he was buried. The dead Body of our dear Redeemer was decently buried by a ſmall Number of his own Diſciples, and continued in the State of the Dead, and under the Power of Death for a Time. That he was buried, is a Demonſtration of the Certainty that he was dead.

And that he roſe again the third Day according to the Scriptures. Chriſt, tho' laid, was not loſt, in the Grave, but by the omnipotent Power of his Godhead revived, and roſe again from the Dead the third Day, to the Conſternation of his Enemies, and the Conſolation of all Believers.

Q. *How does he prove the Truth of* Chriſt's *Reſurrection?*

A. By ocular Demonſtration: He is riſen, becauſe he was ſeen alive after his Paſſion; firſt of *Peter,* next of the whole College of the Apoſtles, which formerly conſiſted of twelve; then of five hundred Brethren at once in *Galilee,* of whom ſome were then alive; after which he was ſeen of *James,* and then of all the Apoſtles.

Theſe were all holy Perſons, who durſt not deceive, and who confirmed their Teſtimony with their Blood; ſo that no Article of Faith, no Point of Religion, is of more confeſſed Truth, and infallible Certainty than this of our Lord's Reſurrection; and bleſſed be God it is ſo, ſeeing the whole Weight of Faith, Hope, and Salvation, depends upon *Chriſt* as riſen from the Dead.

As *Chriſt* was ſeen by St. *Paul,* the laſt of all the Apoſtles, ſo it is probable he was ſeen laſt by him of all Perſons: We read not of any that ſaw *Chriſt* after St. *Stephen,* and *Paul,* who reckons himſelf among thoſe who were Eye-witneſſes of the riſen *Jeſus*; *laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo.*

Q. *Why does St.* Paul *compare himſelf to a Perſon born out of due Time, ver.* 8?

A. Why, 1. Negatively; not that he was, as to his ſpiritual Birth born too ſoon, but rather too late. Alas! he had been too long a proud *Phariſee,* a formal Profeſſor, a fiery Perſecutor: But, 2. Poſitively; he calls himſelf an Abortive, 1. Becauſe he was the laſt of the Apoſtles that was called; the reſt were called by *Chriſt* whilſt here on Earth. *Paul* was called by *Chriſt* from Heaven, after his Daparture from Earth to Heaven. 2. Becauſe of the Suddenneſs and Violence of his Converſion: An Abortion is occaſioned by ſome ſudden Surprize, Strain, or violent Motion. St. *Paul's* Converſion was out of the ordinary Courſe; he was ſmitten from his Horſe to the Ground, and lay as one dead in his Paſſage to his new Life. 3. Becauſe abortive Children are leſſer, weaker, and more imperfect Children, than thoſe of full Growth. Thus St. *Paul* reckons himſelf the leaſt of the Apoſtles.

For I am the leaſt of the Apoſtles, &c. where note his profound Humility, how low he was in his own Thoughts; he ſays, he was *not meet*; not worthy to be called an Apoſtle, becauſe he perſecuted the Church of *Chriſt* with ſo much Fury and Fierceneſs. Elſewhere he ſtiles himſelf *leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*; that he was as little as could be. A good Man's Thoughts are always loweſt of himſelf; the more a Man's Holineſs is, the greater is his Humility.

By the Grace of God I am what I am. As we receive our natural Being from the Power of God, ſo we derive our ſpiritual Being from the Grace of God; if I forbear what is evil, it is from reſtraining Grace; if I follow what is ſpiritually good, it is from ſanctifying Grace; therefore *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Grace be the Praiſe.*

The bleſſed Fruit of this Grace given to St. *Paul,* was, it cauſed him to labour abundantly, more than all the Apoſtles; not more than all of them put together, but more than any one of them that were his Fellow Apoſtles, ſeparately conſider'd. Such as receive moſt Grace and Favour from God, are holily ambitious to do the utmoſt Services for God.

But leſt he ſhould ſeem too aſſuming, and to arrogate to himſelf more than he ought, he adds, *Yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.*

Behold now, the holy Apoſtle aſcribes the Fruit of all his Endeavours to the Grace of God, to the Influences and Aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit, or Grace, exciting, aſſiſting, working in him and with him, and giving him Succeſs in all his Enterprizes and Undertakings for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls.

Q. *What Inference does the Apoſtle draw from the Whole?*

A. It is this: *Therefore, whether it were I, or they, ſo we preached, and ſo ye believed.* Whether it were *Paul*, or any other of the Apoſtles, who labour'd moſt in the preaching of the Goſpel, the Doctrine is the ſame; namely, that *Chriſt* died for our Sins, roſe again, and will raiſe us. This is the Doctrine which we Apoſtles preached, and which you, *Corinthians*, believed and received; therefore why ſhould any of you ſtagger in the Faith, and diſbelieve the Reſurrection of the Body, which is a Blow made at the Root of *Chriſtianity*? Alas! what have we to bear up our Spirits through the rugged Paſſages and croſs Diſpenſations of this Life, but only our Hopes in Reverſion, our Hopes of a glorious Reſurrection, and bleſſed Immortality?

Q. *But inaſmuch as ſome in the Church of* Corinth *held with the Opinion of the* Sadducees, *who ſaid there was no Reſurrection; therefore to cruſh this monſtrous Opinion amongſt the* Corintians *in its Birth, he ſhews the Abſurdity of it: But how?*

A. His firſt Argument runs thus: If there be no Reſurrection from the Dead, then *Chriſt*, the Head, is not riſen; for if the Head be riſen, he will certcinly raiſe up the Members. *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection is the Cauſe, the Pattern, and Arch-type of ours; he not only raiſed his Body from the Grave, but his Church with him. For indeed, *Chriſt* is not perfectly riſen, till all his Members are riſen with him, and raiſed by him. True, *Chriſt*'s perſonal Reſurrection was perfect when he aroſe, and it is as true, that all Believers aroſe Repreſentatively, when *Chriſt* aroſe. But till all Believers ariſe Perſonally, the Reſurrection of *Chriſt* has not received its utmoſt Perfection.

Q. *How does he proceed in his Argument?*

A. His next Work is to prove the Certainty of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, from the manifold Abſurdities which would follow upon the Denial of it; as firſt, If *Chriſt* be not riſen, then the Apoſtle's Preaching was vain, and their Belief of it was alſo vain.

Again; If *Chriſt* be not riſen, then *We are found falſe Witneſſes of God*; that is, then St. *Paul* himſelf, and the other Apoſtles, had given a falſe Teſtimony of God to the World, in affirming that God the Father had raiſed up *Chriſt* his Son from the Dead; which he did not do, if there be no Reſurrection of the Dead. To be falſe Witneſſes for a Man, is a Sin of no common Guilt; but to bely God, and be falſe Witneſſes for God, is a Sin of an aggravated Guilt, which the holy Apoſtles cannot be ſuppoſed to be chargeable with.

Farther; If *Chriſt* be not raiſed from the Dead, *then we are yet in our Sins, and liable to Condemnation for them*; we are not abſolved from them, unleſs *Chriſt* has expiated the Guilt of them; and this he has not done, if he be not riſen, but remains himſelf under the Power of Death; for he was raiſed again for our Juſtification.

Again; If *Chriſt* be not riſen, then *they which are fallen aſleep in* Chriſt, *are periſhed*; that is, the dead Saints in general, and the holy Martyrs and Sufferers for *Chriſt* in Particular, who are fallen aſleep in *Chriſt*, are periſhed utterly.

Laſtly, Then *Chriſtians are of all Men moſt miſerable.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, as thoſe Martyrs are errant Fools, and periſhed as ſuch, who laid down their Lives for *Chriſt*, if they have no Hopes of a Reſurrection, when they ſhall take them up again: So we *Chriſtians* who ſurvive, are the wretchedeſt Creatures upon Earth, who ſuffer all the Hardſhips of this Life, and deny ourſelves many Comforts and Advantages which we might enjoy. If, after this mortal Life, we have no Hope, who would care to do well, or who fear to do ill?

Q. *In what Senſe is* Chriſt's *Reſurrection called* the Firſt-Fruits of them that ſlept, *Verſe* 23?

A. The Term *Firſt-Fruits* is metaphorical, alluding to the Oblation of the Firſt-Fruits in the *Levitical* Law, *Lev.* xxiii. 9. which were offered both as an Acknowledgment that the whole Crop was God's, and as a Pledge, and Aſſurance of their enjoying the whole Crop from God, and as a Means by which the whole Crop was conſecrated and ſanctified to their Uſe.

Thus, ſo ſure as the whole Harveſt follows the Firſt-Fruits, ſo ſhall the Saints Reſurrection follow the Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, as an Effect follows its proper Cauſe; for *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection is the meritorious, the efficient, and exemplary Cauſe of our Reſurrection; and as it is the Cauſe, ſo it is the Pledge, the Earneſt, and full Aſſurance of ours.

Again; *Chriſt* is called the Firſt-Fruits of them that ſlept, not as if he was abſolutely the firſt raiſed from the Dead; for for we read of one raiſed by *Elijah*, another by *Eliſha*, and of *Lazarus* by *Chriſt*; but thoſe were ſo raiſed as to die again; they were not raiſed to a Life of Immortality; but now *Chriſt* was the firſt who was raiſed never to die more; the firſt who roſe to give others a Pledge and Aſſurance of their riſing after him, and like unto him.

Q. *What other Argument does he make uſe of, to prove* Chriſt's *Reſurrection to be the Cauſe of ours?*

A. To prove this, he makes a Compariſon betwixt *Adam* and *Chriſt*, whom he repreſents as two Originals and Fountains; the one of Death, the other of Life. As by *Adam*'s Sin all that are Partakers of his Nature die a natural Death, ſo all that are Partakers of *Chriſt*'s divine Nature, all his ſpiritual Seed and Offſpring ſhall be raiſed and made alive by him; for the Expreſſions, *in Adam*, and *in Chriſt*, denote a Cauſality in both; the one of Death, the other of Life. As the Death of all Mankind came by *Adam*, ſo the Reſurrection of all Men came by *Chriſt*; the Wicked ſhall be raiſed by him, as their Lord and Judge; and the Righteous, by virtue of their Union with him, as their Head.

Q. *But ſome perhaps might object, If* Chriſt's *Reſurrection be the Cauſe of that of the Believer, then why did not all Believers riſe with him?*

A. St. *Paul* anſwers; No, God had appointed an Order, which muſt be obſerved; and this Order was, that *Chriſt* ſhould be the Firſt-Fruits of the Harveſt; that he ſhould firſt riſe from the Dead, and then they that are *Chriſt's*, at his coming to Judgment, ſhould riſe after him.

Q. *What will follow upon this?*

A. And *then cometh the End*; that is, the End of the World, when *Chriſt will deliver up his Kingdom to God the Father*. What Kingdom? His mediatory Kingdom, which, as Mediator, he received from the Father; not his natural and eſſential Kingdom, which, as God, he had with his Father from all Eternity; this ſhall never be delivered up, for of this his Kingdom there ſhall be no End; but at the End of the World, *Chriſt* having ſubdued all his Enemies, and put down all Rule, Authority, and Power, both in the World and in the Church, he ſhall deliver up his mediatorial Kingdom to his Father, and reign no longer as Mediator, and as deputed by his Father: For his Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, and his Dominion endureth to eternal Ages.

Q. *What is particularly obſervable in this Diſcourſe upon the Reſurrection?*

A. Note here, that when our Apoſtle is ſetting forth the Order in which the Saints ſhall ariſe, he ſays nothing of a firſt and ſecond Reſurrection; not a Word of *Chriſt's* firſt and ſecond Coming to Judgment; one to reign on Earth a thouſand Years, and a ſecond, to judge all the World. Mention is here made of a general Reſurrection, when all the Saints ſhall be raiſed together; but not a Syllable of ſome being raiſed before the reſt, to reign with *Chriſt* a thouſand Years.

Q. *In what Senſe is Death the Enemy of Mankind, as Verſe 26?*

A. Death is an Enemy to Humanity, to the whole Race of Mankind, to Body and Soul, to the Righteous and the Wicked; to the Body, by the turning of that which is the Glory of the Creation, in a Moment, into Rottenneſs and Putrefaction; to the Soul, by occaſioning its Separation from the Body, towards which it has ſo ſtrong and affectionate an Inclination, as its old Companion.

Death is alſo an Enemy to the Righteous, as it blunts the Edge of his Deſires after Heaven, and abates that Joy which he ſhould have in the believing Thoughts and Apprehenſions of Heaven.

It is an Enemy to the Wicked, as it is a Paſſage to everlaſting Miſery, by their falling immediately into the Hands of the Living God, from whoſe Mouth they receive a final Sentence, to depart accurſed into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

This Enemy is the laſt the Children of God have to ſtruggle with; when they have overcome Death, they have overcome all their Enemies at once, and eſpecially their worſt Enemy, Sin, which they never could before. The Concluſion is this, Death muſt be deſtroyed, which can be done no other Way, but by a Reſurrection from the Dead; which is the Point the Apoſtle ſtrongly proves throughout this Chapter.

Q. *What Inference is to be drawn from hence?*

A. The Evidence being clear, for all Enemies, all Things, no one excepted, that God will ſubdue them all under *Chriſt*; always ſuppoſing that God himſelf is excepted, of whom 'tis affirmed, that he will put all Things under *Chriſt*; and when all is ſubdued under *Chriſt*, then ſhall *Chriſt* lay down that Office which, till then, he exerciſeth, and in which he is conſpicuous in his Church (which till then he is to adminiſter) and then ſhall God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt fill all the Elect with Glory and Bliſs eternally. As *Chriſt* is now all in all, with relation to his Church, the Godhead then will be all in all; and *Chriſt* himſelf as Man, will be ſubject to his Father, as well as Saints and Angels are ſubject to him.

Q. *Pray how does he prove the Reſurrection from hence?*

A. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, for them among you who deny the Reſurrection, and, conſequently, that the Dead ſhall not be raiſed at the Coming of *Chriſt* (which was the Point in Hand, *ver.* 33. and from that Verſe to the 29th, all betwixt to be read as in a *Parentheſis*, ſetting down the State of all Things at and after that Reſurrection) I ſhall make only this Demand, Why then have they, in their Baptiſm, made Profeſſion of their Belief of it (ver. 14, 17.) it being certain that the Dead, or the Reſurrection of the Dead, expreſſed here under the Words *the Dead*, is one of the Articles, and a principal one, to the Belief of which they were baptized, and to which Baptiſm (being the putting in and taking out of the Water) doth refer, as a ſignificant Emblem, firſt of *Chriſt's*, then of our Reſurrection from the Grave? And therefore, to what End did theſe Men, in their Baptiſm, profeſs their Belief of this Article, if they believe it not? To be a baptized *Chriſtian*, and not believe the Reſurrection, is a ſtrange ridiculous Thing, an Hypocriſy which they will never be able to anſwer to God, or Men, and that which actually deprives them of all Benefits of Baptiſm; and yet ſuch are they, if they make Doubt of this.

And why ſhould we *Chriſtians* hazard our Lives, if we were not aſſured that there was another Life, wherein all our Patience and Valour for *Chriſt* will be rewarded by him?

Q. *What Application does he make to himſelf of theſe Things?*

A. I, for my Part, adds the Apoſtle, proteſt, by that which I take moſt Joy in of any Thing in the World, my Fidelity to *Chriſt*, that I daily run the Hazard of Death, which ſure I ſhould not do, if I had not Confidence of another Life after this.

Certainly all the Hazards I ran at *Epheſus*, Acts xix. being as to Man, as to the Eye of Man, or, as far as Men's Purpoſe could go, ſet to combat with wild Beaſts, that is, ſentenced and condemned (2 *Cor.* i. 9.) to that kind of bloody Execution on their Theatres (though, by the Providence of God, I was delivered) can bring me no Advantage, unleſs there be another Life after this: And were it ſo, there was ſome Room for that Saying of ſome among you, Let us enjoy the good Things of this World at preſent, for in a little while Death comes, and there is an End of all.

And it will concern you, who are not yet thus reduced, to take heed that ſuch Speeches and Diſcourſes as theſe, ſuch atheiſtical Temptations to Senſuality, on the Pretence of the no-future State, no Being after that of this Life, do not work upon you: The very converſing with ſuch Diſputers as theſe, may corrupt ſuch eaſy, ſeducible, and credulous People as it ſeems ſome of you are.

'Tis but Reaſon, and more than Time, that you ſhould truly and throughly rouze yourſelves out of that drowſy Condition of Sin that you have gone on in; at leaſt ſome of you, verſe 12. that, by their Behaviour and their Diſcourſes, ſhew themſelves to be mere *Heathens* ſtill; of whom I tell you, that it may work Shame in you, that you have ſuch Men among you, rather than that you permit yourſelves to be tempted to imitate them.

Q. *What other Points does he ſpeak to?*

A. The Apoſtle next anſwers ſome Objections that were made to the Body's Reſurrection. The firſt is, that it ſeems impoſſible that the Dead ſhould riſe. To this he anſwers, That it is as poſſible for the Dead to riſe, as for Corn ſown in the Earth to be quickened after it dies in the Earth; Corn ſoon rots and dies, and yet does not periſh by dying, but riſes up green and freſh. Thus the Body ſown in the Grave is not loſt; though the Parts of the Body are diſſolved by Death, yet they are not annihilated; they are ſcattered, but not periſhed; they loſe not their Entity when they part with their Relation to Humanity; whatſoever we loſe at Death, is not loſt to God; his Knowledge is infinite, and his Power unlimited; it is as eaſy for God to raiſe our Bodies out of the Duſt, as to make them out of Nothing.

The next Objection againſt the Body's Reſurrection is, Who, ſay the Objectors, can deſcribe with what Bodies the Dead ſhall ariſe? The Apoſtle anſwers, That our Bodies ſhall ariſe the ſame in Subſtance, though not in Qualities; as Corn ſown is raiſed in Subſtance and Kind the ſame, but different in Qualities, coming up with Blade and Ear, and Corn in it; it does not riſe in the ſame Figure in which it was ſown, yet in the ſame Nature; that which was ſown Wheat, ariſes Wheat. Thus our Bodies, ſown in the Grave, ſhall raiſe ſubſtantially the ſame, but different in Qualities.

Q. *What is obſervable in the Apoſtle's manner of Reaſoning upon this Subject?*

A. Note here, that thoſe who did not believe the Reſurrection of the Body, judged it not only an impoſſible Thing, but unworthy of God to raiſe the Dead; they looked on the Body as the Sepulchre and Priſon of the Soul, and accounted it the Soul's chiefeſt Happineſs to be delivered from the Body; eſteeming it a real Puniſhment to the Soul to be again re-united to ſo great a Clog as the Body is. Therefore, to this Objection the Apoſtle returns a ſatisfactory Anſwer, by ſhewing the happy Change which ſhall paſs upon the raiſed Body; declaring, that tho' it ſhall ariſe the ſame Body in Subſtance, yet ſhall be vaſtly different in Qualities; of a mortal Body ſown, it ſhall riſe a ſpiritual Body; of a vile Body, be made a glorious Body.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle prove the different Qualities of Bodies at the Reſurrection?*

A. He illuſtrates this by a Similitude, thus: As there is Difference in Bodies here below, ſome more Excellent, as the Fleſh of Men; others leſs, as the Fleſh of Beaſts and Birds; and as there is a Difference between celeſtial and terreſtrial Bodies; yea, a Difference between celeſtial Bodies among themſelves, one excelling another in Glory, as the Sun excels the Moon, and one Star excels another; ſo will it be in the Reſurrection, the Bodies that riſe will vaſtly differ from thoſe that died; this is to be underſtood only of the Righteous.

The Body here hath ſome diſhonourable deformed Parts, others weak and feeble, ſubject to, or decayed by Diſeaſes and Age, but the future Body is quite contrary, glorious and ſtrong.

The Body here is ſuſtained by Meat and Drink, but in the future State it will be a Body immortal, that wants nothing to ſuſtain it. Such Bodies indeed, there are of both theſe Sorts.

One ſuch, as *Adam* is mentioned to have had, *Gen.* ii. 7. and ſuch as we had from *Adam*, who communicated Life to his Poſterity; the other we ſhall receive from *Chriſt*, that reſtores them from the Grave when they have been dead.

The immortal Body was not firſt formed, but that which needed Suſtenance; ſo as without that it was to periſh, and after that the Immortal Body is to be returned to us inſtead of that Mortal.

The Stock of the Animal Life was *Adam*, ſo called as an earthy Man, made out of the Earth; the Stock of the Immortal, *Chriſt* the Lord, who came down from Heaven.

Such a Body as *Adam* himſelf had, ſuch have all we mortal Men; and ſuch a Body as *Chriſt* now hath, ſuch ſhall we, who live like him, according to his Example and Precept, have at the Reſurrection.

And as we have been made like the mortal *Adam*, ſo ſhall we be made like the immortal *Chriſt*, when we come to Heaven.

One thing only I ſhall add, ſays the Apoſtle, that 'tis not poſſible that theſe earthy, corruptible, weak, ignominious Bodies of ours ſhould come to Heaven, unleſs they ſhall be firſt changed, purified, and immortalized.

And therefore for thoſe that are found alive at the Day of Doom, I ſhall tell you a Secret not yet diſcovered to you, that though they do not die at all, yet muſt they be all changed before they go to Heaven.

And this Change ſhall be wrought in them in a Minute, at the Point of Time when all are ſummoned to Judgment; for God ſhall make the Angels ſound a Trumpet, or make a Noiſe like that of a Trumpet, to call the whole World of Men, that ever were, or ſhall be, to Judgment; at that Inſtant all that were formerly Dead, ſhall ariſe in immortal Bodies, and thoſe that are then alive, from their Mortal, be changed into ſuch.

For 'tis moſt certain and neceſſary, that our mortal Bodies muſt be changed into Immortal. And when that is done, then ſhall that ſaying of *Hoſea*, chap. xiii. 14. be made good, That Death ſhall be deſtroyed for ever, never to recover any Strength again over any Thing; nothing from thenceforth ſhall ever die.

In Contemplation of which, a *Chriſtian* may look on Death as a harmleſs Thing, the Sting or wounding Power of which is taken away by *Chriſt*; and ſo on the State of Separation of Soul from Body, that it is ſuch as ſhall not laſt for ever.

The only thing that makes Death like a Serpent, able to do us any Hurt (without which it differs nothing from a calm Sleep) is Sin; as that which gives Sin any Strength to miſchief us is the Law, which prohibits it, and conſequently brings Guilt upon us.

But Thanks be to God, who by what *Chriſt* hath done for us, hath given us Victory over Sin and Death; and by the Conqueſt of Sin, getting out of the Power of that, hath made Death but an Entrance into Immortality.

Theſe are Arguments ſufficient to teach any *Chriſtian* Conſtancy and Perſeverance in doing and ſuffering God's Will, and to oblige him to the utmoſt Induſtry and Diligence in the Service of God, knowing that nothing that we undergo ſhall fail of receiving a Reward.

CHAP. XVI.

He exhorts them to make a Collection for the Poor Brethren at Jeruſalem, *by the Example of the Churches of* Galatia; *how it may be done, and by whom ſent. Recommends* Titus *to them. A general Exhortation to Stedfaſtneſs in Faith and Love. Divers Salutations. He denounces a Curſe on all who do not truly love* Chriſt; *wiſhes them the Grace of God; and promiſes them his Love.*

Q. *WHAT is the Subject Matter of this Chapter?*

A. In this concluding Chapter of this excellent Epiſtle, the Apoſtle gives the *Corinthians* ſeveral uſeful Directions about ſome neceſſary Duties; and cloſes the whole with particular Salutations to them, and his hearty Wiſhes for the Increaſe of all ſpiritual and temporal Bleſſings upon them.

Q. *What is his firſt Injunction?*

A. The firſt Duty the Apoſtle recommends to their Practice, is the making a Collection for the Poor; and particularly for them at *Jeruſalem*, who were then in great Straits, by reaſon of a Famine then amongſt them, as ſome Expoſitors affirm.

Q. *What Directions does he give them about the Obſervation of the Lord's Day?*

A. He adviſes, that on the Lord's Day every one would lay ſomething by, as God had proſper'd him, that there might be no need of farther Collections when he came: And that the Charity might be diſtributed according to their pious Intentions, he tells them, they ſhall ſend it by Meſſengers of their own; and that if they judg'd it meet and needful, he would accompany the Bearers of their Charity, and aſſiſt in the Diſtribution of it. The charitable Contributions of ſuch Churches as are in better Circumſtances, towards thoſe that are in worſe, eſpecially if in want, *is an Odour of a ſweet Smell, a Sacrifice acceptable and well-pleaſing to God*, Phil. iv. 8.

Q. *In the 2d Verſe, the Apoſtle orders them,* on the firſt Day of the Week, *to lay by ſomethiug to aſſiſt the Neceſſities of the Saints: Was this a ſufficient Ground for altering the Sabbath from the Seventh, to the firſt Day of the Week.*

A. The firſt was the Day of their publick Aſſemblies, the Day on which our Lord roſe again from the Dead. Divines, both Antient and Modern, from hence argue for the Change of the *Sabbath* from the ſeventh to the firſt Day of the Week. It's evident, that this was the Day, on which the Churches conſtantly aſſembled to perform their religious Worſhip, to read the Scriptures, to preach the Word, and celebrate the Lord's Supper; and it was called by them the Lord's Day. Upon this Day the Apoſtle orders the Collections to be made for the Poor; and all *Chriſtians*, in Compliance with this Precept, did offer their Alms upon that Day.

Hence learn, that Works of Charity and Mercy, tho' needful and acceptable every Day, yet are the proper Duties of the Lord's Day; that being a Day ſeparated and ſet apart for ſacred Works, of which Charity is a ſpecial Motive in it to excite and enlarge our Charity, it being the Day in which we were begotten to a lively Hope, thro' the Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt* from the Dead, of an Inheritance incorruptible, and the Day upon which we partake of our Lord's moſt precious Body and Blood. We having therefore received ſpiritual Things ſo plentifully from *Chriſt*, ought to be the more ready to impart of our temporal Things to diſtreſſed *Chriſtians*.

Q. *What Leſſon of Inſtruction does this convey to us?*

A. The Apoſtle bidding every one to lay up ſomething of his Store for the Relief of others, intimates to us, that God has given every one of us a ſpecial, proper, and perſonal Right to what we enjoy. To have all Things common, would be to run all Things into Confuſion. The Apoſtle's Direction to the *Corinthians* to a conſtant Uſe of their Charity every Lord's Day, in making Collections for the Poor, ſuppoſes that they had ſomething of their own to give. Almighty God keeps the eighth Commandment in full Force, as a Fence about the worldly Eſtates of Men; and he that attempts to break this Hedge, a Serpent ſhall bite him. If there be no Property, how ſhall we exerciſe Charity?

Again; according to the Apoſtle's Rule, the Good we do, muſt be proportioned to what we receive. God will not accept of a little, when he has given us Ability to do much. Such as have a Sufficiency ought to abound in all Kinds of Charity; otherwiſe, tho' they may do a good Work, yet they are not rich in good Works; let every one lay by in Store, *as God has proſpered them*.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle ſay in Relation to himſelf?*

A. St. *Paul* next acquaints them how he had contrived his Buſineſs, ordered his Stay and Station, where he was, and that he deſigned afterwards to come and winter with them, and not to ſee them in Paſſage only; but adds, *if the Lord permit*. All was with Submiſſion to the Wiſdom and Will of God.

Farther; he informs them of his Intention to ſtay at *Epheſus* till Pentecoſt, becauſe God had there opened to him a Door for the propagation of the Goſpel, and had abundantly bleſſed his Labours to the Good of many. But there were many Adverſaries of the Truth there, which made his Stay longer at *Epheſus* both neceſſary and unavoidable.

Q. *In what Manner does he recommend* Timothy *to them?*

A. Timothy, tho' a young Miniſter, yet St. *Paul*, an aged Apoſtle, beſpeaks the Church to pay him the ſame Reſpect they would to himſelf, tho' he was far his inferior in Years and Abilities. None of the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* are ambitious of engroſſing all Reſpect from the People to themſelves, but are content, and even deſirous that all their Fellow-Miniſters ſhould ſhare with them therein; for all Men pretend to ſhare in Reputation, and don't love to ſee it monopolized by any ſingle Perſon; and every wiſe and good Man rejoices when that Reſpect is given to others, which is juſtly due to their Worth and Merit.

See that he may be without Fear; that is, without fear of Diſturbance from the Factious that were at *Corinth*; ſee that he be not expoſed to any Trouble or Dangers from any Party whatever.

Let no Man deſpiſe him; either becauſe of his Weakneſſes or bodily Infirmities, or for any Cauſe whatſoever.

But conduct him forth in Peace; bring him on his Way towards me, and provide for the Neceſſities of his Journey. How happy is it, when the Miniſters of *Chriſt* are thus ſollicitous for the Welfare of each other, as St. *Paul* here was for *Timothy*!

Q. *How does he ſpeak of* Apollos?

A. It deſerves Remark, how reſpectful the good Apoſtle here ſpeaks of *Apollos*, an inferior Miniſter in the Church of *Corinth*, *our Brother* Apollos Nothing better becomes the Governors and Paſtors of a Church than Humility and Condeſcenſion, ſincere Love and Affection, a due Deference and Regard towards thoſe who are Under-labourers in our Lord's Vineyard, to own and treat them as Brethren, Co-workers, and Fellow-helpers with them. God has not made his Miniſters Lions to tear one another, nor Bulls to goar each other; but Shepherds to watch over, and Nurſes to cheriſh one another.

Note, how St. *Paul*, tho' a dignified Perſon, a great Apoſtle, left *Apollos*, an inferior Miniſter of the Goſpel, to judge for himſelf, whether he had beſt go to *Corinth* or forbear; *I deſired him to come to you, but his Will was not to come*: The Apoſtle did not ſuſpend or ſilence him for not obeying his Order, but lets him take his Choice. There may be, and ſometimes are, particular Caſes and Circumſtances relating to ourſelves and our People (as about going from, or continuing with them) which none can adjuſt and determine ſo well as ourſelves. Perhaps *Apollos* had ſtronger Reaſons for refuſing, than St. *Paul* had for requeſting him to go to *Corinth*; however the Apoſtle only deſired him to go to *Corinth*; but did not cenſure him for his Denial.

Q. *What might be the Grounds of* Apollos's *Unwillingneſs to go to* Corinth?

A. The probable Reaſon why *Apollos* had no Inclination to go to *Corinth* at this Time, was, perhaps, becauſe he would not encourage or give the leaſt Countenance to a Faction which was there begun under the Authority of his Name, 1 *Cor.* i. 12. *Some ſaid, I am of* Apollos. A pious and prudent Miniſter ſeeks not his own Applauſe or Popularity, but what he does, is with a ſpecial Reſpect to their Edification in Holineſs, for preſerving Unity, and promoting Love among each other. Afterwards, when theſe Heats and Diviſions among the *Corinthians* had been a little allayed by this Epiſtle, we find *Apollos* did return to *Corinth*, and no doubt was very acceptable to them.

Q. *Next the Apoſtle exhorts them to ſeveral Duties, namely, Watchfulneſs, Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith, and holy Fortitude and Courage: Pray explain theſe Particulars?*

A. Watchfulneſs is a neceſſary and daily Duty; we cannot be ſafe one Moment without it: We have ſomething to watch over, to watch againſt, and watch for. We muſt watch over our Thoughts, Words, and Actions; we muſt watch againſt Sin, every Temptation to, and Occaſion of ſinning; we muſt watch for all Opportunities of glorifying God, of doing Good to, and receiving Good from others.

Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith of *Chriſt*, and Perſeverance in his holy Religion, is the great and indiſpenſible Duty of every *Chriſtian*, who has a due Regard to the eternal Welfare of his Soul; *watch ye, ſtand faſt in the Faith*.

The third Duty, is *Chriſtian* Fortitude, and holy Courage; *quit yourſelves like Men, be ſtrong*: Where we have ſuppoſed and implied the *Chriſtian's* ſpiritual Enemies, Sin, Satan, and the World; and his Duty declared, and himſelf encouraged to play the Man, in oppoſing them. It requires much more Courage to be a *Chriſtian* than a Captain. How many of the valiant Swordſmen of the World have ſhewn themſelves mere Cowards, who have triumph'd in the Field; but lived and died Slaves to their own baſe Luſts? It requires more Bravery and Greatneſs of Spirit to conquer ourſelves, than to command an Army.

Q. *What other Duties does he recommend to this Practice?*

A. The Apoſtle concludes his Epiſtle with this excellent Advice, To do all Things in Love, one for, and one towards another. Where a true Principle of *Chriſtian* Charity prevails, it will caſt out Selfiſhneſs, Pride, Envy and Diviſion, and keep them from raſhly cenſuring, deſpiſing, and abuſing one another, and ſeparating Communion with each other. The Sum of all the Commandments, both towards God and our Neighbour, is Love; it is not Praying, Hearing, or receiving at the Lord's Table, which is the fulfilling of the Commandment, but when theſe Duties are done in Love; and we do many Things commanded towards Men, yet if we do them not in Love to Men, we muſt do nothing as the Lord commanded; therefore *let all Things be done with Charity*.

Q. *What do you obſerve in the Characters he gives of ſeveral Perſons here?*

A. Obſerve the honourable Mention St. *Paul* makes of *Stephanus*, and his Houſe; they were the Firſt-Fruits of *Achaia*; that is, the firſt there converted to Chriſtianity. Happy they that come in at the Call of *Chriſt*, even at the laſt Hour; but thrice happy thoſe who come in at the firſt, who are the firſt ripe Fruits unto God.

Note alſo, the Proof *Stephanus* gave of the Sincerity of his early Converſion; *he addicted himſelf to the Miniſtry of the Saints*; he was very forward to aſſiſt the poor Saints with his Eſtate and his Labour. There is no better Evidence of our Intereſt in *Chriſt*, than an entire Affection for, and operative Compaſſion on all our Fellow-Members of *Chriſt*.

A great Deference and Regard is likewiſe commanded to be paid to *Stephanus* for his Care of the Saints; *ſubmit yourſelves unto ſuch*; that is, reverence and honour them, and all ſuch as are like unto them, who laboured with the Apoſtle in furthering the Goſpel.

It's highly probable that the Faithful in the Church of *Corinth* ſent the three Perſons here mentioned, namely, *Stephanas*, *Fortunatus*, and *Achaicus*, to St. *Paul* who was then at *Epheſus*, to inform him of the State of the Church, and of the Rents and Schiſms that were among them; and to requeſt the Interpoſition of his Authority, to heal thoſe unhappy Breaches.

Now, ſays the Apoſtle, I was glad of the Coming of theſe Men, whom you ſent to me with Letters of Enquiry; for they have ſupplied what was deficient in your Account of your Affairs: They have refreſhed my Spirit with their Preſence and Diſcourſe, and will at their Return refreſh yours alſo; and therefore *acknowledge ye them that are ſuch*, own their Services, and honour them for the ſame.

Q. *What do you note concerning the ſeveral Salutations here given?*

A. The Apoſtle cloſes his Epiſtle with ſeveral Salutations to the *Corinthians*, from the Churches of *Aſia*, from *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, and from the the Church in their Houſe; that is, from their *Chriſtian* Family, or from the *Chriſtian* Aſſembly which uſed to meet in their Houſe to worſhip God.

Happy that Family-Governor who has a Church in his Houſe, who worſhips God, with all his Houſe!

The Nature and Manner of this Salutation is, *they Salute in the Lord*; that is, with a ſpiritual Affection, for the Grace of God that is in you, and wiſhing you an overflowing Stream of ſpiritual Bleſſings from *Chriſt*, the Fountain.

Next, he wills them to ſalute one another with an holy Kiſs of Peace and Charity; with which *Chriſtians* in thoſe Times, and according to the Cuſtom of thoſe Countries, uſed to ſalute one another. This was not then a wanton, but an holy Kiſs, in which they had chaſte and holy Thoughts; yet afterwards, the Piety and Purity of the Church degenerating, it was thought proper to lay aſide this Kiſs of Charity, which was uſed at the Celebration of the Holy Communion.

He adds his own Salutation with his own Hand. It's generally thought, he employed Perſons to write his Epiſtles over, which he ſent abroad to the Churches; but to prevent Frauds and Forgery, and that they might know which were his own, he uſed to ſubſcribe his Salutation, and apoſtolical Benediction, with his own Hand, which was well known unto them.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 22d Verſe,* If any Man love not the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, let him be *Anathema, Maranatha?*

A. The Ground, or Cauſe of this Curſe, is, the not loving *Jeſus Chriſt*; he does not ſay, If any Man hate *Chriſt*, or reproach and blaſpheme him, perſecute and injure him: But if he does not love him. The bare Want of this Affection to *Chriſt*, is enough eternally to ſeparate us from *Chriſt*.

Note the Nature of the Curſe; *let him be* Anathema, Maran-atha. The Apoſtle pronounces the Curſe in two Languages, *Greek* and *Syriac*, to denote both the Vehemency of his own Spirit in ſpeaking, and the Certainty of the Thing ſpoken; or perhaps to ſhew, that Men of all Nations and Languages, who love not *Chriſt*, are under a Curſe, and that they are deſervedly curſed among all Nations. The *Greek* Word *Anathema*, ſignifies Execrable; the *Syriac* Word, *Maran-atha*, is a Compound of *Maran*, Lord, and, *atha*, he cometh. Theſe Words were antiently uſed in the moſt dreadful Sentence of Excommunication; as if they had cited the Perſon to the tribunal of *Chriſt*, at his coming to Judge the World, or left him bound under the Curſe of that Sentence till the Coming of *Chriſt*.

Note the Extent of this Curſe, *if any Man*; as if he had ſaid, Let him be who he will that loves not *Chriſt*, *Jew* or *Gentile*, Bond or Free, Male or Female, Rich or Poor, Young or Old, Prince or Peaſant, King or Beggar, who have Opportunities to know *Chriſt*, and do not love him, let him be accurſed by him to eternal Ages: let him be fully ſeparated from the Society of *Chriſtians* here in this World, and from all Communion and Fellowſhip with Chriſt finally in the World to come.

The Sum is this, That thoſe who love not the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, much more then thoſe who wilfully hate and oppoſe him, and his holy Laws, are accurſed Perſons in this Life, and devoted to Deſtruction here; but when our Lord ſhall come to Judge the World at the laſt and great Day, they ſhall be more openly and ſolemnly accurſed; when they ſhall ſtand before that impartial Judge of the World, they ſhall receive from his Mouth a final Malediction, an irreverſible Execration, which ſhall be immediately ſucceeded with the Anguiſh and Torments of Eternity.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon our Apoſtle's Valediction?*

A. It is a Benediction. He takes his Farewel of them with a Prayer for them; *the Grace*, or gracious Favour, *of* Chriſt *be with you*, and multiply all Bleſſings, both Spiritual ond Temporal, upon you; I am ſure I love you all in *Chriſt Jeſus*, and for his Sake. Happy is it when Miniſters can take their Farewel of their Flocks in this Manner, with frequent Supplications for them, and with ſolemn, yet ſerious Proteſtations of the Fervour of their Love, and the Ardency of their Affection towards them.

The Second Epiſtle of Paul the Apoſtle,

TO THE

CORINTHIANS.

THE Reaſons that induced the Apoſtle to write this ſecond Epiſtle to the Corinthians, *were, to vindicate himſelf from ſeveral Imputations which the falſe Apoſtles had laid to his Charge; and likewiſe to deſend his Miniſtry and Apoſtleſtip againſt others who endeavoured to bring both him and that into Contempt Diſgrace.*

The Charges againſt our Apoſtle, were ſuch as theſe, Inconſtancy, *in promiſing to come to* Corinth, *and not coming,* Pride *and* Imperiouſneſs, Vanity *aud* Vain-glory; *with reſpect to the inceſtuous Perſon; theſe falſe Apoſtles repreſented him as contemptible in his Perſon, as deſpicable in his Miniſtry. He therefore confutes, yea confounds his Adverſaries by a new and unuſual way of arguing; namely, by boaſting of his Sufferings, glorying in them, and giving a large Catalogue, a long Inventory of them; he diſplays his Calamities, blazons his Croſſes, vindicates his Perſon and Authority from Contempt, clears himſelf from the Charge and Imputation of Levity and Vain-glory, by rehearſing the good Services he had done, and the great Sufferings he had undergone, for the ſake of* Chriſt, *and his holy Religion.*

Whence we learn, that it is neither Unchriſtian nor unſeemly to enlarge upon our own Actions and Sufferings, when there is a great and neceſſary Occaſion ſo to do, namely, when the Glory of God, the Credit of our holy Religion, and a juſt Vindication of our own Integrity and Innocence, require and call for it.

CHAP. I.

The uſual Superſcription. The Apoſtle encourages them againſt Troubles, by the Comforts and Deliverances God had given him, as in all his Afflictions, ſo particularly in his late Danger in Aſia, *through their Prayers. His boaſting towards them, and ſincere Intentions to come to them. Our Obligation to ſpeak the Truth. If he delayed his Coming, it was, that he might ſpare them.*

Q. H*OW does our Apoſtle begin this Second Epiſtle?*

A. This Chapter is introduced with a Deſcription of the Writer of this Epiſtle, by his Name, *Paul*; by his Office, *an Apoſtle of* Jeſus Chriſt, with the Manner how he obtained this Office, namely, *by the Will of God*; it was not Man, but God, who called him to the Apoſtleſhip. It is a Matter of great Importance both to Miniſters and People, to be fully informed, and fully ſatisfied, of that Divine Call, which their ſpiritual Guides have to come amongſt them; that the Miniſters may be able to ſay, We come to you in the Name of the Lord; and the People may be able to reply, We receive you as Ambaſſadors from the Lord unto us.

Q. *What is the next Thing to be taken Notice of?*

A. The next Thing obſervable is, the Perſon conjoined with St. *Paul* in writing this Epiſtle, deſcribed by his Name, *Timothy*; by his Relation, *our Brother*. Where note this great Apoſtle's Condeſcenſion in aſſociating the young *Timothy* in the writing and inditing this Epiſtle.

Q. *What is obſervable in the Directions of this Epiſtle?*

A. It is directed *to the Church of God, which is at* Corinth. This City was famous for Trade and and Wealth, but as infamous for Lewdneſs and all Kinds of Debauchery; yet here God had much People, and here St. *Paul* ſpent a Year and a half in preaching the Goſpel.

Q. *The ſecond and third Verſes contain his Salutation and Prayer: What do you remark upon it?*

A. The Words are theſe, *Grace be to yon, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt. The Bleſſings prayed for are Grace and Peace, ſpiritual, and comprehenſive Bleſſings, The original Cauſe and Spring from whence theſe flow, is God the Father, and *Jeſus Chriſt*; from the Father as the fontal Cauſe, and from *Chriſt* as the procuring Cauſe, and the diſpenſer of theſe Bleſſings.

Obſerve next, the ſeveral gracious and comfortable Titles the Apoſtle gives to Almighty God; he ſtiles him *the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo he is by Nature; and *Chriſt* his Son by eternal and ineffable Generation; for, as the Words, *our Lord*, here aſcribed to *Chriſt*, do not exclude the Father from being Lord; ſo the Word, *God*, aſcribed here to God the Father, excludes not *Chriſt* from being our God; and as God is the Father of *Chriſt*, ſo he is a Father in him to all that have Union with him.

The Father of Mercies; a moſt amiable, comfortable Relation! Not only a Father of Mercy, or barely a merciful Father, but the Father of Mercies in the plural Number, to denote the Greatneſs and Multitude of his Mercies; and that all Mercies flow from him only and freely, as Streams from an overflowing, and never failing Fountain.

The God of all Comfort; becauſe by giving us his holy Spirit, the Comforter, he is the Author of all that Conſolation which is conferred upon us.

Note here the Duty performed by the Apoſtle, that of bleſſing God, or Thankſgiving; *bleſſed be God*, &c. This is a Duty which all the People of God ought eſpecially to be careful of, and abound in; the more you bleſs God, the more you will have cauſe to bleſs him; he will multiply Bleſſings upon you for your Thankfulneſs to him.

The particular Favour for which the Apoſtle praiſes God, is, for comforting his Children in all their Tribulations. As God is the only Comforter of his People, ſo he is their beſt Comforter in the worſt of Times.

God's gracious Deſign in comforting his Children in and under all their Preſſures, Tribulations, and Afflictions, is, *that they may may be able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themſelves have been comforted by God*; that they may be experimentally able to inſtruct and comfort ſuch who either are or may hereafter fall into the ſame diſconſolate Condition with themſelves; none ſo fit to adviſe and counſel, to inſtruct and comfort, a ſuffering Saint, as an afflicted Miniſter or *Chriſtian*, who have together with their Afflictions, experienced the Favour of divine Conſolations.

Q. *Why are the Sufferings of the Saints called* the Sufferings of *Chriſt*, *ver.* 5?

A. The Head ſuffers in the Members, becauſe the Members Suffer for the ſake of the Head. As a *Chriſtian's* ſufferings are for *Chriſt*, ſo are their Comforts and Conſolations from him; even their Comforts bear ſome Proportion to their Sufferings. As our Sufferings abound in us, *ſo our Conſolations abound by* Chriſt.

What Sufferings ſoever, adds the Apoſtle, I have met with in my miniſterial Office, you have the Benefit of them, and ſpecial Advantage by them; and therefore you ought not to deſpiſe me on account of my Sufferings, (as do the falſe Apoſtles, and as they would have you do) but you ought to honour me the more for them, and be encouraged yourſelves by them; and when I am comforted, it is beneficial for your Conſolation, in as much as you may confidently expect the ſame Relief. *If we be afflicted, it is for your Conſolation and Salvation.* He adds, *if we be comforted, it is for your Conſolation alſo*; plainly intimating that Almighty God, by all his Diſpenſations, both of Mercy and Correction, promotes and carries on the Salvation of his own Children and People.

Q. *How does he comfort the* Corinthians *under their Sufferings?*

A. St. *Paul* tells the Body of the *Corinthians*, that he had a good Hope concerning them, that as they had endured Sufferings for *Chriſt*, ſo they would ſtill endure them; aſſuring them, that they would ſhare no leſs in Conſolation, than they did in Affliction.

It is of excellent Uſe to us, to know what are the Troubles and Afflictions which befal the Servants of God for Righteouſneſs ſake; *we would not have you ignorant of our Trouble.*

Q. *How does he deſcribe his own Sufferings?*

A. How exceſſive were the Troubles of this great Apoſtle! *They were out of Meaſure, above Strength, and even to deſpairing of Life.* Thus God ſometimes exerciſes his Servants with ſuch extreme and preſſing Trials, that all their Strength is unable to ſupport them under 'em, or to carry them through them.

Great and imminent was the Danger the Apoſtle was in; his very Life was in Hazard, and even deſpaired of; he look'd on himſelf as a dead Man: But when he had thus ſentenc'd himſelf, a divine Power, which wrought above all his Thoughts and rational Conjectures, repriev'd and reviv'd him. God wrought a Deliverance for him, and the reſt of the Saints that were in *Aſia*, from this ſo great a Death.

In whom we truſt, that he will yet deliver us. The paſt and preſent Experience of God's Power and Goodneſs towards his People, may and ought to encourage them to truſt in him for the Time to come; when we can ſay, God hath delivered, and doth deliver, let our Faith add, in him we truſt that he will yet deliver.

The Apoſtle next exhorts the Faithful at *Corinth*, to help and further him with their Prayers; *You alſo helping together by Prayer for us.* Where obſerve the Humility of the Apoſtle in requeſtring the People's Prayers for himſelf. Such as are moſt eminent in Gifts and Office, and Grace too, do really want, and heartily deſire the Help and Benefit of their Prayers, who are much their Inferiors in the Church.

Q. *Why did he ſo earneſtly deſire their Prayers?*

A. The great Reaſon why St. *Paul* was ſo deſirous of the *Corinthians* Prayers, was, that Deliverance and Mercy being obtained thereby, Praiſe and Thankſgiving might be render'd to God on his behalf.

Altho' St. *Paul* put no Confidence or Truſt in his Sincerity and *Chriſtian* Grace, yet he rejoiced in their Evidence of his Grace, as the Teſtimony of a ſincere and upright Conſcience.

Q. *What was the Particular Grace which St.* Paul *had ſuch Comfort in?*

A. It was his Sincerity, and godly Simplicity; his Uprightneſs both of Heart and Life, his Freedom from Guile and Hypocriſy. The Conſcience of Sincerity is ſuch a Crown of rejoicing, as will ſupport a *Chriſtian* Spirit under and againſt the greateſt Difficulties which may ariſe in any Condition. Sincerity diſcovers itſelf in its acting by a right Rule, from a right Principle, and to a right End; it ſupports the Spirit in the Duty of Prayer, under the Burden of Slander and Reproach, in the dark Night of Affliction, in the diſconſolate Hour of Death, and of the dreadful Day of Judgment.

It was not a ſingle act of Sincerity, but a conſtant Courſe of upright Walking, that our Apoſtle rejoiced and took Comfort in; *We have had our* Converſation in the World *in all Simplicity and godly Sincerity.*

The Apoſtle appeals, for the Truth of his Sincerity and upright Walking, to the Conſciences of the *Corinthians*. This is a good Demonſtration of our Uprightneſs; for if, thro' Prejudice, Men will not with their Mouths vouch our Integrity, yet ſecretly with their Conſciences they cannot help bearing Witneſs to it.

The Apoſtle having declared, that he had his Teſtimonials not only from his own, but from their Conſciences, adds, that he truſted that this would continue even to the End both of his and their Lives. As if he had ſaid, You have hitherto acknowledged my Converſation to be ſincere and upright; and I hope, as you ſhall never ſee it otherwiſe by me, ſo you will continue your good Opinion of me to the End of your and my Life.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in the Apoſtle's Conduct towards the* Corinthians?

A. Note, the great Trial St. *Paul* met with from the *Corinthians*, whoſe ſpiritual Father he was; though he had ſerved them with great Faithfulneſs, yet they did *acknowledge him but in part*. There was a Time when he was high in their Eſteem; who but St. *Paul*? But how a great Part leave him, and admire others. Although with a laborious Diligence, and divine Succeſs, he had planted and propagated the *Chriſtian* Faith amongſt them, yet now not only his Perſon, but his very Office falls under Contempt by many of them. None more than Miniſters experience this Truth, that nothing is ſo mutable as the Mind of Man.

But notwithſtanding the Contempt caſt upon St. *Paul* by ſome in the Church of *Corinth*, yet there were others among them who greatly rejoiced, and bleſſed God for him, and he for them; *We are your rejoicing, and you are ours*, as being converted by us; and I truſt we ſhall be a farther Joy and mutual rejoicing to each other in the Day of our Lord *Jeſus*.

Q. *What uſeful Inſtructions does this afford us?*

A. Unſpeakable will be the Rejoicings and joyful Congratulations in the Day of *Chriſt*, between laborious faithful Miniſters and their believing obedient Hearers. But if Miniſters are ignorant, unſkilful, or unfaithful in their Office, their People will come againſt them as ſwift Witneſſes in the Day of *Chriſt*. What an intolerable Aggravation will it be of their Miſery in Hell to have their People upbraiding them thus? O cruel Man! that ſaweſt my Soul in Danger, but never dealt faithfully and plainly with me; the ſame Time that we ſpent together in Sin and Vanity, in ſenſual Mirth and Jollity, might have been employed to ſave us both from this Place of Torment. Let Miniſters conſider themſelves as Miniſters for God, and their People as Witneſſes for or againſt them; and under that Conſideration, ſtudy, preach, pray, live, walk, and act, that they may, with this great Apoſtle, take God to Record, that they are free from the Blood of all Men.

Q. *The Apoſtle declares his Intention of making them a Viſit; but with what View?*

A. The End St. *Paul* propoſed to himſelf in his Coming was, *that they might have a ſecond Benefit*. The firſt Benefit was their Converſion; the ſecond their Confirmation in the Faith, and Reformation in their Morals.

Obſerve how wiſely the Apoſtle converts all his Meaſures for the Service of God and the Good of Souls; in Purſuance whereof he projects and forecaſts all his Journeys, and his Continuance in every Place; *I deſign to paſs by you into* Macedonia, *&c.*

Q. *Was the Apoſtle's Practice in this Reſpect, a Pattern for Miniſters to follow now?*

A. There is a Difference between this extraordinary Apoſtle then, and ordinary Paſtors of the Church now. The Apoſtles had an univerſal Commiſſion to plant Churches in all Places; they were to be in conſtant Travels up and down the World, itinerary Preachers from Place to Place; but the Office of a Paſtor now is, to watch over a particular Flock, and to keep conſtant reſidence amongſt them. Yet, though by actual Relation he is tied and bound to a particular Flock, he is by habitual and aptitudinal Diſpoſition a Miniſter in the univerſal Church, and a Debtor to the publick Good thereof. He is firſt made a Miniſter in the univerſal Church, and then a Paſtor of a particular Congregation; and accordingly, though he ſeeks to ſerve the Intereſt of his own Flock firſt, yet it is his Duty, by Prayer, Study, Preaching, Writing, and by all other edifying Ways and Methods, to promote the univerſal Good and Benefit of the whole Church of *Chriſt*, to the beſt of his Power, both far and near.

Q. *He next defends himſelf againſt the Charge of Levity, Inconſtancy, and Falſhood, in promiſing to come to* Corinth, *and not performing it: How does he clear himſelf?*

A. Our Apoſtle anſwers, *the Thing which I purpoſe, did I propoſe according to the Fleſh? i. e.* for carnal Ends and ſecular Intereſts, that with me there ſhould be now yea, yea, and anon nay, nay; his Words and Intentions, his Tongue and Heart, his Pen and Purpoſe were one, namely, really to come to them, though he was providentially prevented.

Here we may obſerve the ill Nature of the World which will make a Handle of every Occaſion, to vilify and leſſen the Reputation of God's faithful Servants, eſpecially his Miniſters, and make that criminal in them which would have been charitably excuſed in others.

But as God is true, our Word toward you was not yea and nay. By the *Word* here, ſome underſtand St. *Paul*'s Promiſe to come to *Corinth*, that he ſincerely intended to come to them; as if he had ſaid, As God is true to his Promiſe, ſo has he taught me to be true to mine. Others by the *Word* underſtand St. *Paul's* Preaching, that his Doctrine was not mutable and changeable, but always the ſame.

There is a mighty Propenſity in bad Men, to caſt all the Imperfections of the Miniſters of the Goſpel upon their Miniſtry and Doctrine; and to Charge them with Mutability and Unſteadineſs in their Principles whether they are guilty of it or not.

Q. *How does he farther prove the Immutability of his Doctrine?*

A. The 19th Verſe contains a new Argument of the Conſtancy and Immutability of St. *Paul's* Doctrine, drawn from the ſubject Matter of his Preaching, namely, *Jeſus Chriſt*. As *Chriſt* is always one and the ſame whom St. *Paul* and others preached, ſo was their Doctrine the ſame alſo.

Note the happy Unity and Concord between theſe Miniſters (St. *Paul*, *Sylvanus*, and *Timotheus*,) in preaching *Chriſt*. The Courſe of their Preaching was, like the great Subject of it, *Chriſt Jeſus*, fixedly and unchangeably the ſame; not yea at one Time, and nay at another.

Q. *What other Point does he endeavour to ſettle?*

A. The Apoſtle having proved the Conſtancy of his Doctrine, from the Immutability and Conſtancy of *Chriſt*, the Subject of it, next proves *Chriſt* himſelf unchangeable; all the Promiſes which God hath made to us, are fulfilled both in him, and by him; *All the Promiſes of God in him are Yea and* Amen; that is, verified and fulfilled in him, and confirmed by him to us. *Chriſt* acts the Part and Office of a Surety; he undertakes and engages for God, that all which he hath promiſed, ſhall be made good to us.

Q. *What were the particular Privileges which God conferred on the* Corinthians?

A. 1. Their Eſtabliſhment; *he which eſtabliſheth us with you, is God.* A People's Eſtabliſhment in the Doctrines of the Goſpel, and in the Faith of the Promiſes, is alone the gracious Work of God.

2. Their Anointing, this is from God; the ſanctifying Grace of God is often in Scripture compared to Oil, in Regard of its Effects. It refreſhes the Weary, heals the Wounded, comforts the Heart, beautifies the Face, ſtrengthens the Limbs. Such internal Virtues and Excellencies hath the ſanctifying Grace of God in the Hearts of his People.

3. Their Sealing; *who hath alſo ſealed us.* God's Sealing his Children implies an high Valuation and Eſteem of them; what is ſealed, is eſteemed very precious; it implies their Safety and Security; what is under Seal, is not in Danger of being loſt. Again, that which is ſealed is ſecret and hidden; it is the new Name which none know but he that receives it. Sealing is a Confirmation; Bargains and Contracts among Men are confirmed by Hand and Seal. Thus the Graces of the Spirit, which ſanctify us, witneſs and ſeal to us the Aſſurance of God's Love and ſpecial Favour in *Jeſus Chriſt.*

4. *His giving the Earneſt of his Spirit* in their Hearts. Grace wrought in the Heart here, is a ſure Earneſt of Glory hereafter; there is a great deal of Difference between a Shilling, as a ſingle Piece of Money, and a Shilling given as an Earneſt of a greater Sum. It is Joy to find Grace in the Soul; but it rejoices much more, to look upon Grace as an Earneſt of Glory, as the firſt Fruits inſure the Crop.

Q. *But why did not St.* Paul *go to them in Perſon?*

A. In the 24th Verſe the Apoſtle ſolemnly aſſures the *Corinthians,* that it was not any Inconſtancy and carnal Reſpect to himſelf that made him delay his viſiting them; but it was purely to ſpare them, as being unwilling to come with his Rod among them, or to uſe them with Severity.

I call God to record upon my Soul; which Words are an aſſertory and execratory Oath, wherein God is called to witneſs the Truth of what he ſaid. Hence it appears that it is lawful to ſwear upon a neceſſary and great Occaſion.

Q. *But what great Occaſion was here for St.* Paul *to do it?*

A. A very great one; the falſe Apoſtles accuſed him of being a vain-glorious and inconſtant Man. This Accuſation was to the Diſcredit of his Miniſtry, the Diſhonour of the Goſpel, the Deſtruction of the Church; therefore he ſolemnly proteſts, that no Inconſtancy or worldly Motives cauſed him to delay his Promiſe; but a wiſe and ſpiritual Conſideration of their Good, a Willingneſs to ſpare them, and Unwillingneſs to exerciſe Severity upon them. Hence learn, that the miniſterial Power which God gives the Officers of the Church, ought to be managed with much holy Prudence, and *Chriſtian* Commiſeration; the End of their Power ſhould always be in their Mind, which is Edification, and not Deſtruction.

Though we, concludes the Apoſtle, have a miniſterial Power, yet we have not a magiſterial Dominion over you, to treat as we pleaſe the Profeſſors of the Goſpel, or to puniſh thoſe who walk not according thereto. *Not that we have Dominion over your Faith, but are Helpers of your Joy.* He does not ſay, We are Helpers of your Grace, Faith, Holineſs, though this is neceſſarily implied; but Helpers of your Joy and Comfort. The Spirit of God is firſt a Sanctifier, and then a Comforter: Joy is not the firſt Stone in God's Building: Grace and Holineſs are firſt, Comfort and Conſolation next.

For by Faith ye ſtand; ye have and do ſtand ſtedfaſt in the Faith. Our Apoſtle doth not unchurch them, becauſe of ſome Diſorders and Hereſies among them, but endeavours to reform their Diſorders, that ſo when he came unto them, he might not come with his Rod, but in the Spirit of Meekneſs.

CHAP. II.

The Reaſon why he came not to them, repeated. His deep Concern about the inceſtuous Perſon, with Directions how they ſhould behave towards him. he bleſſes God for his Succeſs in the Goſpel; and declares that his Preaching was an acceptable Savour in them that periſh.

Q. THE *Apoſtle in this Chapter, vindicates himſelf from the Aſperſion of too much Rigour and Severity towards the inceſtuous Perſon: How does he do this?*

A. In the two firſt Verſes the Apoſtle intimates the Reaſon of his deferring, for the preſent, to come unto them. There was in the Church of *Corinrh* an inceſtuous Perſon, who had married his Father's Wife; if ſhe was his own natural Mother, the Sin was moſt prodigious and unnatural, that the Child of her Womb ſhould be the Husband of her Bed; if ſhe was his Mother-in-law, it was againſt the Law of Reverence, and an heinous Sin for the Son to uncover the Father's Nakedneſs: And it was an Aggravation of the Sin, that the Perſon committing it was a *Chriſtian,* a Member, and, as ſome think, a Miniſter of the Church of *Corinth.*

St. *Paul* in his former Epiſtle, Chap. v. commands them to excommunicate this inceſtuous Perſon, which accordingly they did, and this ſpiritual Phyſick, applied to the Offender, had a good Effect upon him; for being puniſhed by the Church, he puniſhes himſelf; and being caſt out of the Church, he caſts away his Sin. Happy is it, when Church-cenſures are ſo executed, as to bring Offenders to a Sight and Senſe of their Sins, in order to a deep Humiliation, and thorough Reformation.

Now, ſays the Apoſtle, *I determin'd not to come to you in Heavineſs*; that is, one great Reaſon why I put off my Journey to you was this, that my coming amongſt you might neither occaſion Sorrow, or create Heavineſs, either to yourſelves or me; for I delight not in cenſuring and chiding, if I can by any Means avoid it.

For if I make you ſorry, (and myſelf with you) who is it can make me glad, but he that is made ſorry by me? That is, nothing can make me glad but the Reformation of the fallen Perſon. Nothing yields ſo much real Satisfaction to the Miniſters of *Chriſt,* as the Recovery of revolted Souls from under the Dominion of Sin and Satan.

I gave you a ſharp Reproof in my former Epiſtle, but it was in much Love, and on a good Deſign; namely, to procure ſuch a Reformation of Life and Manners among you, as might prevent my Sorrow when I come unto you; for as your Grief is mine, ſo my Joy is the Joy of you all. As the Miniſters of *Chriſt* and their beloved People are one, ſo their Grief and their Joy are one; they rejoice and mourn together; their Griefs and Sorrows are mutual, and their Joy and Comforts are reciprocal.

Our Apoſtle compaſſionately tells them, that what he had wrote in his former Epiſtle with ſome Severity, concerning the inceſtuous Perſon, was ſo far from an Intention of grieving them, that it was a real Affliction to him, and had fetch'd abundance of Tears from his Eyes; and conſequently was the Effect of the greateſt Love imaginable.

When the Miniſters of *Chriſt* execute Church-Cenſures, if they would have the Offenders benefited and reclaimed by them, they muſt convince them, that what is done againſt them, is done out of an abundant Love and Compaſſion to their Souls. Does a civil Judge weep when he paſſes Sentence on a Malefactor? Much more ſhould an eccleſiaſtical Judge mourn, when he pronounces the Cenſures of the Church on notorious Offenders; *Out of much Affliction and Anguiſh of Heart, I wrote unto you with many Tears*; that is, to have the Sentence of Excommunication executed and inflicted on the inceſtuous *Corinthian*.

This inceſtuous Perſon, adds the Apoſtle, who, by his Sin hath cauſed me ſo much Grief, hath cauſed no little Grief to you alſo, to the ſounder Part of you; even to all, but thoſe who were Partakers with him in his Sin; he hath grieved me but in Part only; you, as well as my ſelf, have been grieved by, and afflicted for him.

Or, thus, the Grief and Sorrow I have had for the Sin and Scandal of this notorious Offender, I am far from charging on the whole Church, as if you were all involved in the Guilt of it. It is both unjuſt and injurious, to caſt the Dirt of Profeſſors Sins on the Face of their Profeſſion, or to charge the Guilt of a particular Perſon's Miſcarriages on the whole Church or *Chriſtian* Society to which he belongs.

The Puniſhment which the Apoſtle judged ſufficient for the guilty Perſon's Sin, was, Exciſion, not Deſtruction; Excommunication, not Death: The Rejection of ſuch a Sinner from the Communion of the Church, by Church-Cenſure and Diſcipline was the Puniſhment pronounced.

Q. *In what Manner was a Perſon excommunicated in the Primitive Church?*

A. The Puniſhment of Excommunication was to be executed and inflicted, namely by the Officers and Governors of the Church, in the Preſence and with the Conſent of the whole Church. In the primitive Church, it is probable, when any Offender was to be excommunicated, the People were acquainted with the Crime; the guilty Perſon pleaded in their Preſence; they judged, as Jurymen do, of the Matter of Fact; they conſented to the Condemnation; but the Sentence was not pronounced by them, but by the Governor and Officers of the Church before them, and in their Preſence; and as the Church or Body of the People conſented to the Offender's Rejection, ſo likewiſe to his Re-admiſſion to the Communion of the Church; but their actual Admiſſion was by the Paſtor or Governor of the Church, and not by the People. Contrary is the modern Practice of thoſe who have ſnatched the Keys out of the Hands of the Paſtors, (where *Chriſt* placed them) and put them into the Hands of the People.

Q. *After the inceſtuous Perſon was made ſenſible of Sin, by the Puniſhment, in what Manner does the Apoſtle direct the* Corinthians *to behave towards him?*

A. This Offender having teſtified his Repentance by his Sorrow, the Apoſtle directs the *Corinthians to forgive him, to comfort him, to confirm him*; that is, to abſolve him from the Sentence and Cenſure of the Church; not longer to continue their Averſion to him, but to reſtore him to the Church's Communion, to re-admit him to their Fellowſhip and Society, to comfort him with the Notices of God's pardoning Mercy, and to confirm their Love to him, by ſhewing that the excommunicating him, was with Deſign to reform, not to ruin him; to recover him by Repentance, and not to drive him to Deſpair.

Hence learn, that in notorious Crimes which give great Cauſe of Scandal to the Church, the Comfort of the Offender depends not only on his Peace and Reconciliation with God, but alſo on the Relaxation of the Cenſures of the Church, and his Re-admiſſion to the Church's Fellowſhip and Communion; forgive him, and confirm your Love towards him.

Q. *What Reaſon does the Apoſtle aſſign, why they ſhould forgive the inceſtuous Perſon?*

A. His Reaſon why this Offender ſhould be forgiven and comforted, is, *leſt he ſhould be ſwallowed up with over-much Sorrow*; that is, leſt he ſhould be ſwallowed up in the Gulph of Deſpair, and as a Conſequence of it, in the Gulph of Death. Sorrow is not of any Worth in itſelf, but only as it ſerves to a ſpiritual End and Purpoſe; and when it is exceſſive, not only the Comforts, but the Gifts and Uſefulneſs of the Perſon ſorrowing, are in Danger to be ſwallowed up by it.

Sorrow becomes exceſſive when it obſtructs the Exerciſe of our Graces, hinders the Performance of our Duties, hurts our Health, overwhelms Nature, perverts Reaſon, ſwallows up Faith, hinders our Hope, prejudices our Joy, and unfits us both for the doing and ſuffering the Will of God; in a Word, that Sorrow for Sin which keeps the Soul from looking towards the Mercy-Seat, that keeps *Chriſt* and the Soul aſunder, and renders a Perſon unfit for the Service of God, and the Communion of Saints, is a ſinful Sorrow.

Q. *How does he expreſs himſelf with Regard to his own Conduct towards them?*

A. Our Apoſtle next declares the View he had in writing his former Epiſtle to them; namely, this amongſt others, to exerciſe their Obedience, and to try what Regard they had to his apoſtolical Authority; whether they would be obedient to his Directions both in abſolving Penitents, and in inflicting Church-Cenſures upon bold Offenders; *For this End I write that I might have a Proof of you.*

He alſo declares his own Readineſs to forgive Offenders, as well as his Deſires that that they ſhould do it: *Whom ye forgive, I forgive alſo in the Perſon of* Chriſt. As you forgive him, ſo do I; and I abſolve him by *Chriſt*'s Name, 1 *Cor.* v. 4. *In the Name of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *&c.* As he delivered the inceſtuous Perſon to *Satan* in the Name and

Perſon of *Chriſt*, ſo in the Name and Perſon of *Chriſt* he releaſes him, and relaxes the Sentence againſt him.

Q. *What are the Apoſtle's Reaſons for deſiring that the inceſtuous Perſon might be re-admitted into the Church?*

A. The Arguments with which, and the Motive by which, he preſſes the Church of *Corinth* to forgive the inceſtuous Perſon, and to re-admit him into their Society, *leſt Satan get an Advantage of us*; the Advantage was to lead them into Sin, by their abuſing that Power which God had given them for Edification, to the Deſtruction of a Perſon, by making them guilty of ſpiritual Murder by their too rigorous Proceedings againſt him, by driving him to Deſpair, by tempting him to Apoſtacy.

The Force of the Apoſtle's Words lies thus, I adviſe you to continue the Severity of Diſcipline no longer towards this penitent Offender, but receive him again into your Communion with all Speed and Tenderneſs, leſt Satan ſhould circumvent you, and make uſe of your Rigour to your own Ruin, by rendring your Doctrine hateful, and your Diſcipline deteſtable; *For we are not ignorant of his Devices, his Contrivances, Plots, and Stratagems laid againſt us.*

Satan has a Multitude of Devices, by which he ruins, entangles, and deceives Souls; and no *Chriſtian* ought to be ignorant of them, leſt he be circumvented and undone by them: our Wiſdom will be, not to diſpute, but to reſiſt, for ſo our Temptations will be fewer, and our Strength greater, *James* iv. 7. *Reſiſt the Devil, and he will fly.* To parly with Satan, is the ready way to be overcome by Sin.

Q. *What Account does St.* Paul *give of his Travels and Preaching?*

A. We have a farther Inſtance of this great Apoſtle's unwearied Diligence in travelling from Place to Place, and carrying the Goſpel with him from one City and Nation to another; *I came from* Troas, *and from thence into* Macedonia.

His Succeſs was equal to his Aſſiduity; *A Door was opened to me of the Lord.* This may ſignify the free Liberty he had of preaching the Goſpel in thoſe Places; the Door of his Mouth was ſhut by Perſecutors, the Enemies and Oppoſers of the Goſpel, but the Word of the Lord had a free Courſe in the Labours of his Miniſters.

Or this opened Door may ſignify and import the great and gracious Succeſs which God gave the Apoſtle in his Work; as God by his Providence opened the Apoſtle's Mouth to preach and publiſh the glad Tidings of the Goſpel, ſo by his Holy Spirit he opened the People's Hearts to receive and entertain the glad Tidings of Salvation which the Goſpel brought.

How careful is the Apoſtle to aſcribe the entire Praiſe to Almighty God, for all the gracious Aſſiſtance and Succeſs he had received in his miniſterial Service? *Thanks be to God which cauſeth us to triumph in* Chriſt, *and maketh manifeſt the Savour of his Knowledge by us in every Place.* As if he had ſaid, Bleſſed be God, altho' our Enemies have been many, and our Difficulties great, yet God has given me and my Fellow-Apoſtles ſuch Reſolution of Mind, that we have not only encounter'd with them, but triumph'd over them, in a powerful Converſion of ſo many from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity; and has an enabled us to ſpread the Odour of the Goſpel far and near, by our laborious preaching of it from Place to Place.

Note, the Title given to the Goſpel, and to the Preachers and Diſpenſers of it; they are a Savour, alluding probably to the Ointment of ſweet Perfume, with which the high Prieſts under the Law were anointed. The Breath of the Goſpel is a ſweet Odour or Smell, and God's faithful Miniſters are they that carry it, and blow it abroad to perfume Sinners who lie ſtinking in their Sins.

Obſerve alſo the contrary Effects which the Preaching of the Goſpel has upon thoſe that ſit under it; it is the Savour of Life unto ſome, of Death unto others; Here it was ſo; the Apoſtle's Miniſtry was a Savour of Life to the Unbelieving *Gentiles*, of Death to the Unbelieving *Jews*: All Men are in a State of Life or Death, of periſhing, or being ſaved, according as they do, or do not receive the Savour, and reliſh the Doctrines of the Goſpel.

Q. *But how does the Goſpel become the Savour of* Death *unto ſome?*

A. Partly, through Prejudice againſt the Miniſters of it; partly, through Slothfulneſs, neglecting to come under the Sound of the Goſpel; and partly, through curſed Infidelity, in not believing the Meſſage the Goſpel brings. Thus the Goſpel, which was ordained for Life, is the Savour of Death unto Death.

Again; faithful Miniſters *are a ſweet Savour unto God, as well in them that periſh, as in them that are ſaved.* How miſerable of all Men would Miniſters be, ſhould God require the Succeſs of their Labours at their Hands; ſhould God ſay, either reconcile my People unto me, or I will never be reconciled unto you? But they ſhall be rewarded according to their Faithfulneſs, not according to their People's Fruitfulneſs.

Q. *Wherein conſiſted the mighty Work of Preaching the Goſpel?*

A. The Apoſtle adds, So great, ſo weighty is the Work of Preaching the everlaſting Goſpel to a loſt World, that neither myſelf, nor any of my Fellow Apoſtles, are of ourſelves ſufficient for it: *Who is ſufficient?* That is, none are, without proportionable Strength and Help from God, neither Man nor Angel. Is it an eaſy Matter to ſearch into the deep Things of God; is it eaſy to fathom the deep Myſteries of the Goſpel, which have an unfathomable depth? Is it eaſy to inſtruct the Ignorant, to convince the Obſtinate, to reſolve the Doubting, to reduce the Wandering, to know the State of the Sick, to viſit the Sick as we ought, to ſpeak to them, and pray for them, as Perſons upon the Confines of Eternity? Is all this a trivial Work, or a common Performance? No, as there is no Service more honourable, ſo there is none more arduous and laborious than that of the Miniſtry; and therefore the greateſt Men that God ever employed in this Work, have been ready to ſink under the Apprehenſion of the inſuperable Difficulties that attend it. If we conſider how a Goſpel-Miniſter ought to excel in Knowledge, in Utterance, in Prudence and Conduct in exemplary Piety, in patient contending with a People's Frowardneſs and Perverſeneſs, we need not wonder at our Apoſtle's Exclamation or Expoſtulatory Queſtion, *Who is ſufficient for theſe Things?*

Q. *What Character does he give the falſe Apoſtles, who crept in among the* Corinthians?

A. They ſophiſticated and adulterated the ſincere Word of God, by intermixing their own Inventions and Imaginations, with the Doctrine which they delivered. Falſe Teachers deal with the Word, as ſome Vintners deal with their Wines, they imbaſe them in their Nature, that they may advance them in their Price, and thereby increaſe their own Profit; they deliver the Word of God in Subtilty, but not in Sincerity.

Q. *What was our Apoſtle's Manner in preaching the Goſpel?*

A. He declares, that *as of Sincerity, as of God, and in the Sight of God, ſpeak we in* Chriſt; that is, we act as Men of Sincerity in what we do, as Men taught of God, and ſent by him; as Men acted by the Power, and guided by the Spirit of *Chriſt*; and all this in the Sight of God; we ſpeak as from God, of God, in Obedience to God, and with an Eye to his Glory. He is a better Preacher that ſpeaks with an upright Heart, than he that ſpeaks with an eloquent Tongue; he that acts from religious Principles, for holy Ends, as in the Preſence of the All-ſeeing God, and with a fixed Eye to his Glory in what he preaches, is an Interpreter, one of a thouſand.

Chap. III.

The Corinthians *a ſufficient Commendation of his Miniſtry, and Proof of God's Power. The Difference between the Miniſtry of* Moſes, *and that of the Apoſtle. The Veil on* Moſes's *Face, removed from thoſe who are converted unto* God. *The Miniſtry of the* New Teſtament, *a clear and powerful Means for our Renovation by the Spirit.*

Q. WHAT *Point of Inſtruction does the Apoſtle purſue in this Chapter?*

A. St. *Paul*, in this Chapter, expoſtulates the Caſe with the *Corinthians*, why they would at all hearken to the falſe Apoſtles, who by reflecting on his Perſon and Miniſtry, made it neceſſary for him to vindicate both from Contempt. Why need I begin again, ſays he, in this ſecond Epiſtle, as as I find in the firſt, to commend myſelf and the Effects of my Miniſtry? Or need I commendatory Letters either to you, or from you, as the falſe Teachers among you have? No, your Converſion and embracing of the Goſpel, are a better Teſtimonial to the World of the Succeſs of my Miniſtry, than any written Epiſtle is, or can be; for you are *an Epiſtle written in my Heart*; that is, your Converſion by my Miniſtry, is the Joy and Rejoicing of my Heart; there it is I continually carry a thankful and honourable Remembrance of you in all my Addreſſes to God.

And as my Epiſtle, *you are known and read of all Men*; that is, all *Chriſtians* far and near take Notice of you as a Church which God has eminently bleſſed by my Miniſtry.

Q. *But does not the Apoſtle arrogate too much to himſelf, in calling them* his Epiſtle?

A. Leſt the Apoſtle ſhould ſeem too aſſuming in calling the *Corinthians* his Epiſtle, in the next Words he calls them the Epiſtle of *Chriſt*, *ye are the Epiſtle of* Chriſt *miniſtred by us*; that is, your Faith and Converſion was the Work of *Chriſt's* Spirit, tho' wrought by my Miniſtry; he having wrought his Law in your Heart after a more excellent Manner than any thing that can be written with Ink and Paper; not as the Ten Commandments of old were written, *in Tables of Stone, but in fleſhly Tables of the Heart*; that is, in your Hearts made ſoft and pliable, and ready to obey the Word and Will of God, by the Operations of the Holy Spirit, uſing my Miniſtry as the Pen or Inſtrument in his Hand in order thereunto.

Nothing ſo highly recommends the labours of Miniſters, as their Peoples Proficiency; their Improvement in Knowledge, Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith, growth in Grace and Holineſs, are beyond all Acknowledgments whatſoever,

Sermons fetch not Applauſe from Men's Renown;
The People's Practice is the Preacher's Crown.

Whatever Succeſs the Miniſters of *Chriſt* meet with in their Labours in the Goſpel, they attribute the whole Efficacy to God, aſcribing nothing more than a bare Inſtrumentality to themſelves; *ye are the Epiſtles of* Chriſt *miniſtred by us*; Chriſt has written his Law in your Hearts by my Miniſtry; *Chriſt* is the Writer; the Miniſter, the Pen; the Ink, the Spirit; the Paper or Table that receives the Impreſſion in the Heart, and the Law of God, the Writing written therein and thereupon.

And ſuch Truſt have we thro' Chriſt *to God-ward.* Such Confidence have we, thro' the Grace of *Chriſt*, of the conſtant Efficacy of our Miniſtry, that he will ſtill own and honour it, ſucceed and bleſs it.

Q. *How does he deſcribe his own Capacity for this Work?*

A. The Apoſtle next acknowledges his Inability for this great Work, and that his whole Sufficiency for Service was from God. This he mentions, not only out of Humility, but out of Prudence alſo, in order to ſtop the Mouths of thoſe who might imagine he had too high an Eſteem of himſelf; as if he had ſaid, Far be it from me to think that I could procure the Succeſs of my Miniſtry, that I have any Sufficiency of myſelf to convert Souls; no, my Sufficiency and Succeſs is all from God; for there is no Proportion between ſuch a ſublime and ſupernatural Service as that of the Goſpel-Miniſtry, and the Impotence and Weakneſs of Man; *not that we are are ſufficient of ourſelves, but our Sufficiency is of God.*

Note, the free and full Acknowledgment the Apoſtle makes of the great Things which God had done for him, and by him; he did not find, but made him a Miniſter, an able Miniſter of the *New Teſtament*; not a Preacher of the Law of *Moſes*, but of *Jeſus*, *who hath made us able Miniſters of the* New Teſtament. It is a greater Honour to be, and a greater Favour to hear, the meaneſt Goſpel-Preacher, than to hear all *Moſes*'s Lectures.

Q. *What is the next Thing that comes under our Obſervation?*

A. Obſerve how inſenſibly the Apoſtle ſlides into a Compariſon between the Law of *Moſes*, and the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, in which he magnifies and prefers the latter above the former; the Law he calls *the Letter*, the Goſpel *the Spirit*; that is, a Miniſtration of the Spirit. *The Letter killeth*; that is, the Law condemns and curſes Sinners, the Tranſgreſſors of it; but the Spirit of *Chriſt* revealed in the Goſpel enables, as well as directs to obey, and ſo *gives Life*.

Here note, how falſe the Gloſs of the Quakers and others is upon theſe Words; they, by the letter, will underſtand the whole written Law of God contained in the Scriptures of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, the Law and Goſpel both; and by the Spirit, will have to be meant the inward and immediate Teachings of the Light within them. Others by the letter underſtand, the literal and hiſtorical Senſe of Scripture in general; and by the Spirit giving Life, they underſtand the myſtical and ſpiritual Senſe of Scripture; but it's evident from Ver. 3. that by the letter he underſtands the Law given on Stone, as delivered by *Moſes* with an Appearance of the Glory of the Lord, and by the Spirit is meant, the bleſſed Spirit of *Chriſt* given to the Apoſtles to enable them to preach the Goſpel, and conferred on all Believers that obediently heard and received it.

Q. *How does he ſet forth the Difference betwixt the Law and the Goſpel?*

A. He call the Law a Miniſtration of Death; becauſe it condemns Men for the Breach of it to temporal and eternal Death, without opening to them any Door of Hope.

This Law was only written upon, and engraven in Stone; whereas the Goſpel is written in the fleſhly Tables of Men's Hearts.

The Miniſtration of the Law was likewiſe glorious; glorious in the Miniſtry of *Moſes*, who had ſuch a Luſtre on his Face, that the Children of *Iſrael* could not bear the Sight of it; and glorious in the Manner of giving it; there was a great deal of the Glory and Majeſty of God attended the giving the Law of *Moſes*; thus was the Miniſtration of the Law glorious.

Q. *But in what Senſe was the Goſpel preferable to the Law?*

A. Note now the Preference the Apoſtle gives to the Goſpel above the Law. 1. As the Glory of *Moſes*'s Face ceaſed after awhile, ſo the Glory of the Law ceaſed at the coming of the Goſpel. 2. The Law was delivered by Angels to *Moſes*, but the Goſpel was delivered to the Apoſtles by the Son of God, who is the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon. 3. Whereas the Glory of *Moſes* did more and more decreaſe, the Glory put upon the Apoſtles and derived from *Chriſt*, was ſtill more and more increaſing upon them. But, 4. The chief Glory of the Goſpel which the Apoſtle here inſiſts on, is the *Miniſtration of the Spirit*, in the large Infuſions of it under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, giving ſpiritual and eternal Life to Believers, inſtead of Death ſpiritual and eternal coming by the Law. Well therefore might out Apoſtle here ſay, the Miniſtration of the Spirit, or the Goſpel, is much glorious, and conſequently a greater Reverence and Honour is due to it, and to the Miniſtes of it.

Obſerve the different Titles given to the Law, and to the Goſpel; the former is called the Miniſtration of Condemnation; becauſe it condemns Men eternally for the Violation of it; the latter is called the Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs or Juſtification, becauſe it diſcovers to us the only Way for a Sinner's Juſtification before God; namely, by the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator.

The Apoſtle comparing the Law and the Goſpel together, acknowledges the ſurpaſſing Glory of the latter above the former. God's inſtitution indeed, ſtamp'd an Excellency on the *Jewiſh* Worſhip, and the Law given them had both an intrinſick Glory in it, as it was a Revelation of the Will of God; and alſo an accidental and adventitious Glory, as it was attended with the Solemnity of Thunder and Lightning, Fire and Smoak, and a Voice like the Sound of a Trumpet at the Promulgation of it; yet, ſays the Apoſtle, compared with the Goſpel, the Glory of the Law or *Jewiſh* Worſhip, had no Glory in it at all, by Reaſon of the Glory that doth excel. The Law indeed was a Revelation of God's Will, as well as the Goſpel; but with this happy Advantage on the Side of the Goſpel; the Law was a Revelation of God's Will, as a Duty, and as to Condemnation, in caſe of Non-Performance of that Duty; but the Goſpel is a Revelation of God's Will, as to Grace and Mercy, as to Remiſſion of Sin, and eternal Life.

Another Argument the Apoſtle uſes to prove the Miniſtration of the Goſpel to be more glorious than that of the Law, is, becauſe it is more durable and abiding; *if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.* The Force of this Argument lies thus; that which is durable and permanent, is far more excellent than that which is temporary and tranſient. Now the Law, or *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, is vaniſhed; its Miniſtration is ceaſed, and all its legal Ordinances aboliſhed; but the Goſpel-State remains to the End of the World. It is called a Kingdom which cannot be moved. *Heb.* xii. 28. therefore the Goſpel-Miniſtration, which is eternal, fixed, and binding, muſt neceſſarily be more excellent and glorious than the legal Diſpenſation, which was temporary, tranſient, and vaniſhing.

Q. *What Application does the Apoſtle make of his Reaſoning about the ſuperior Excellence of the Goſpel to the Law?*

A. From the foregoing Diſcourſe the Apoſtle infers, that ſeeing himſelf and the other Apoſtles had ſuch Hope, that their Miniſtry was thus glorious, and that they had ſuch Confidence and Aſſurance of the Perfection and Perpetuity of their Miniſtry, therefore they now uſed great Plainneſs, Freedom, and Boldneſs of Speech, in preaching and publiſhing the Goſpel; and did not imitate *Moſes*, the Miniſter of the Law, who put a Veil over his Face, which was a Sign of the legal Diſpenſation, and of the Blindneſs of the *Jews*, who could not ſee the End and Accompliſhment of that Ceremonial and Typical Adminiſtrrtion, which was to be aboliſhed by *Chriſt* and his Goſpel; but their Minds were then, and ſtill are, blinded by Prejudice and Unbelief; and the ſame remains to this Day ſpread over *Moſes*'s Writings, and not taken away in the reading of the *Old Teſtament*; which Veil is now done away by the Doctrine of *Chriſt* contained in the *New Teſtament*: Nevertheleſs, when the Hearts of the *Jews* ſhall be turned to the Lord, and they own and acknowledge *Jeſus Chriſt*, then their Veil ſhall be taken away, and they ſhall clearly ſee what is now hidden from them.

When the *Jews* ſhall be called home, and converted to Chriſtianity, the Veil ſhall be removed from their Hearts, and they ſhall then underſtand the Tendency and Meaning of the whole Ceremonial Law, and obſerve its Fulfilling and Accompliſhment in our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. *When they turn to the Lord, the Veil ſhall be taken away.*

Chriſt is that quickening and Life-giving Spirit, who takes away the Veil from off our Hearts; and where that Spirit, that all-glorious and all-powerful Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty; that is, Clearneſs, and no more Veil; Freedom from the Yoke of the legal Adminiſtration, a Liberty and Freedom from Sin, a Liberty unto Righteouſneſs, a Freedom and Readineſs of Spirit to do Good, a Liberty of Addreſs and Approach to God, of Speech in Prayer before God. Thus the Spirit of the Lord is a free Spirit.

Q. *How does he conclude this Diſcourſe?*

A. The Apoſtle concludes in this Manner; We who live under the Light, and enjoy the Liberty of the Goſpel, with open Faces beholding, as in a clear Glaſs the Glory of the Lord *Jeſus*, as *Moſes* did the Glory of God in the Mount, and by degrees changed into the ſame Image with him, from Glory to Glory, even as the Spirit of the Lord worketh in us, and transformeth us into his own Likeneſs.

Viſion, or the Sight of God here, in his Ordinances, aſſimilates as well as in Heaven; perfect Viſion produces perfect Aſſimilation; but the Soul's preſent Aſſimilation, or imperfect Conformity to God here, is gradually carried on by daily Communion with him. All ſorts of Communion among Men have an aſſimilating Power and Efficacy: He that converſes with vain Company, grows more vain; and he that delights in holy and ſpiritual Company, grows more ſerious than he was before; but nothing ſo transforms the Spirit of a Man, as Communion with God in his Ordinances; none ſo like him as thoſe that converſe moſt frequently with him.

If then the Sight of God in the Glaſs of an Ordinance be ſo aſſimilating, how transforming will the Sight of God be in Heaven, when we ſhall there behold him Face to Face? If the Viſion of *Chriſt* here be ſo influential upon Believers, what an illuſtrious and infallible Efficacy will the immediate, clear, and perfect Sight of his Glory have in Heaven? 1 *John*. iii. 2. We ſhall be perfectly like him, when we ſhall ſee him as he is.

CHAP. IV.

His Sincerity and Diligence in his Miniſtry. From whom the Goſpel is hid, and by whom known. The Apoſtles encouraged in their Afflictions from the Example of David. *The bleſſed Reſurrection; God's Providence in them; and their End. The Renewal of the inward Man; and the Greatneſs of eternal Glory.*

Q. WHAT *new Topic does St.* Paul *argue upon in this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle here vindicates his Office and Dignity, from the Prejudices, which his Sufferings which attended him in the Diſpenſation thereof, or the Suggeſtions of falſe Apoſtles, and deceitful Workers, might have raiſed up againſt him.

Therefore ſeeing, ſays he, we have ſuch a glorious Miniſtry, far more excellent than that of *Moſes*, as we are eſpecially favoured of God in his committing it to us, ſo we faint not under the Difficulties and Preſſures to which it it doth expoſe us.

Having received Mercy we faint not; but have renounced the hidden Works of Diſhoneſty, all Fornication and Uncleanneſs, all Ambition and Covetouſneſs, which the falſe Apoſtles allowed themſelves in; *not walking in Craftineſs*, &c.

Q. *What other Argument does he bring to vindicate himſelf?*

A. He next aſſerts his Fidelity in the Diſcharge of it. The Apoſtles delivered the Goſpel in Things neceſſary to be known, believed and practiſed, with great Plainneſs and ſufficient Perſpicuity; otherwiſe they could not be ſaid *to manifeſt the Truth to every Man's Conſcience.*

But though, adds the Apoſtle, we preach the Goſpel plainly, yet if Men do not underſtand and believe it, will not embrace and obey it, it is not an Argument of the Goſpel's Obſcurity, but of our Hearers Incredulity. The Goſpel is not hid from Men for want of Clearneſs, but only through their own voluntary and wilful Blindneſs.

Q. *What Obſervation do you make on this Defence of* St. Paul?

A. Note here St. *Paul*'s Intereſt and claim in the Goſpel; he calls it his, not as if he was the Author of it, but becauſe of his Inſtrumentality in the Promulgation of it, it was a divine Charge committed to his Truſt.

Note alſo the *Corinthians* Non-proficiency under the Goſpel ſpecified, or at leaſt ſuppoſed. *If our Goſpel be hid*; that is, if the Word which we preach with the greateſt Simplicity and Sincerity, if it be hidden from the Minds and Underſtandings of Men, ſo as to miſs its convincing Power, and converting Efficacy, the Fault is not in the Goſpel, but in them that ſit under it.

Q. *In what Senſe is the Goſpel hid to them that are loſt?*

A. This is a heavy Doom and Judgment on all ſuch Perſons as ſit under the external Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and yet are no Ways enlightened or improved by it, but remain blind and ignorant, obſtinate and unreformed! The Goſpel being hid from a People, is a ſad Symptom, a foreboding Sign of a loſt People. Such a Blindneſs under the cleareſt Light, is like the Covering of the Face, in Order to the turning the obſtinate Sinner off into Hell.

Q. *How is* Satan *the God of this World Ver.* 4?

A. Not properly, but becauſe the Honour and Homage of a God is challenged by him, and by a Multitude of Sinners given to him. Our Saviour calls him the *Prince of this World*; and the Apoſtle, the *Ruler of the Darkneſs of this World*, becauſe he rules over a great Part of it, and they are his Subjects, or rather his Slaves.

Q. *What other Parts of* Satan's *Character are here deſcribed?*

A. We are likewiſe told the Courſe *Satan* takes to ſecure his Subjects Obedience; *he blinds their Minds*, that they never know a better Prince, or a better Way, or underſtand a better State, than he hath drawn them into. The Means *Satan* uſes to blind the Underſtandings of Men, are, divers Luſts, bred and nouriſhed in their Hearts, ſo that a Sinner can neither ſee nor know the Excellency of ſpiritual Objects.

Here alſo we have a Character of one ſort of Perſons whom *Satan* hath blinded; *Such as believe not*; that is, both ſuch as want the Means of Faith, and ſuch as enjoy the Means, but want the Grace of Faith; the former is the Caſe of the *Pagan*, the latter of the *Chriſtian* World. How great a Part of the chriſtianized World, though called by the Name of *Chriſt*, yet will not own his Authority, or ſubmit to his Goverment? The Nobles of the World think themſelves diſhonured by ſubmitting their Necks to *Chriſt*'s Yoke; the Senſualiſts will not renounce a Luſt for him, who laid down his Life for them; the Worldlings of the Earth prefer their Dirt to the Dunghil before the Pearl of great Price.

The great Deſign of the Devil's Agency, in blinding Men with Ignorance and Error, with Paſſion and Prejudice is, *Leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of* Chriſt *ſhould ſhine in their Hearts*, to the Ruin of him and his Kingdom. As blind Men receive no Benefit from the Light of the Sun; ſo thoſe whom the God of this World hath blinded with the Hopes and Deſires, the Poſſeſſions and Enjoyments of this World, receive not the Light of *Chriſt*'s glorious Goſpel ſhining upon them.

Q. *How is* Chriſt *the Image of God, Ver.* 4?

A. That is, 1. His ſubſtantial and eſſential Image, being God of God, very God of very God. *Chriſt*, conſidered with Reſpect to his divine Nature, is the expreſs Image of his Father's Perſon. 2. Chriſt is his Image as Mediator, and with Reference to the Goſpel, in which he has given us glorious Demonſtrations of the Power and Wiſdom, the Grace and Holineſs, the Mercy and Goodneſs of God towards us; all which, as in a Glaſs, are repreſented to us, and preſented before us.

Q. *What was the Apoſtle's principal View in preaching the Goſpel?*

A. Our Apoſtle, to evince his Fidelity and Integrity in preaching the Goſpel, ſhews that he thought to advance *Chriſt*, and not himſelf, by preaching it.

We preach: How deſpicably ſoever ſome People may of Preaching, yet will the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* magnify this Part of their Office, not by Pomp and State, nor by Scorn and Superciliouſneſs, as thinking it beneath them to preach, but by an humble and painful Attendance on the Miniſtry, which they have received of the Lord; and will diſpenſe the Word with Evidence and Perſpicuity, with Faithfulneſs and Sincerity, with Power and Authority, with Courage and Boldneſs, and with Exemplarineſs of Converſation; not preaching angelical Sermons, and leading diabolical Lives.

The ſubject Matter of the Apoſtle's preaching was, *not ourſelves, but* Chriſt Jeſus *our Lord*.

But how may Perſons be ſaid to preach themſelves? Thus; when they make themſelves Authors of their own Miniſtry, running before they are ſent, and are ſelf-created Preachers; when they make themſelves the Matter of their Preaching, venting their own Paſſions, Prejudices, and private Opinions, inſtead of the Doctrine of *Chriſt*; and when they make themſelves the End of their Preaching, aiming rather at pleaſing others, and profiting themſelves, than at the Glory of God, and the good of Souls.

Q. *But what is it to preach* Chriſt? We preach not ourſelves, but *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord.

A. Thus; when he is the Author of our Miniſtry, and we receive our Miſſion from him; when we we make him the Object of our Preaching, when he is the ſubject Matter and Subſtance of it, either explicitly or reductively; and when we make him the End of our Preaching, deſigning to promote the Honour and Intereſt of *Chriſt* by our Miniſtry, that his People may be gathered, his Body edified, his Saints perfected, his Enemies ſubdued, his Goſpel propagated, and he finally admired in all them that believe.

Ourſelves your Servants. There is an Honour due to *Chriſt's* Miniſters; but really that Honour conſiſts in the Service which they owe to the Church of *Chriſt*: Servants they are to the Souls of Men, though not to their Humours; at the ſame Time they are their Servants, they are their Rulers; they are to obey and ſubmit to them as thoſe who watch for their Souls. Therefore 'tis added, *Servants for* Jeſus's *Sake*; Servants in order to the promoting of his Honour, and his Church's Intereſt; *We preach not ourſelves, but* Jeſus Chriſt *the Lord, and ourſelves your Servants for* Jeſus *Sake*.

Q. *What elſe was the Subject of the Apoſtle's Preaching?*

A. Next obſerve, the faithful and humble Acknowledgement the Apoſtle makes, how himſelf, and his fellow Apoſtles came to preach *Jeſus Chriſt* ſo convincingly to others; namely, that Almighty God, who at firſt by his Word produced Light out of Darkneſs, by the ſame Efficacy and Power, brought him, a loſt Sinner, out of the Darkneſs of Phariſaiſm and Sin, and ſhined into his and their Hearts with a glorious Light, to the Intent that he and they ſhould communicate and impart the divine Light of the Knowledge of God, which ſhines in the Face of *Chriſt*, unto others.

Hence learn, that Miniſters muſt know *Chriſt* themſelves, before they can make him known to others; he muſt ſhine in their Hearts by his Holy Spirit, and give them experimental Acquaintance in their own Souls, with what they deliver and make known to others. Every Truth ought to be the Tranſcript of their own Experience, and be firſt preached to their own Hearts, and then to their Hearers. Who can ſavingly enlighten others, who is in the Darkneſs of Ignorance, or Sin, himſelf?

Q. *The Apoſtle, in the preceding Part of the Chapter, having magnified his Office, extolled his Miniſtry, and vindicated his Fidelity in the Diſcharge of his Duty; in the 7th Verſe he compares the Goſpel to a Treaſure*; We have this Treaſure: *But in what Senſe is it a Treaſure?*

A. The Goſpel is a Treaſure for its Worth and Dignity, for its Abundance and Variety, for its Cloſeneſs and Secrecy. This Treaſure *Chriſt* keeps under Lock and Key, and only entruſts it with thoſe with whom he calls to it, and furniſhes for it. They are no better than Thieves and ſacrilegious Robbers, who without an immediate Call or Warrant from *Chriſt*, aſſume this Truſt, and break open this Treaſure.

Note alſo the Repoſitory in which this Treaſure is laid up, *in earthen Veſſels*; ſo the Apoſtles and Miniſters of the Goſpel are called. They are Veſſels; and diminitively ſo, they are earthen Veſſels. Thus Veſſels are not natural, but artificial Inſtruments. So no Man is born a *Chriſtian*, much leſs a Miniſter, but made ſuch.

Again; Veſſels are not of an equal Capacity; thus the Miniſters of the Goſpel have Gifts and Graces of different Degrees and Excellencies.

Farther; Veſſels are not for Reception only, but for Effuſion alſo; as they receive and retain, ſo they let out what is put into them: The Miniſters of *Chriſt* are not only to receive and lay up, but to lay out this heavenly Treaſure, which is not impaired by imparting.

Finally, Veſſels aae not the Originals of what they have, but all they contain, is poured into them and received by them. A Mine has a Treaſure in its own Bowels, but it is put into the Cheſt. Thus the Miniſters of *Chriſt* are not the Authors, but the Receivers only, of thoſe Truths they publiſh, 1 *Cor.* xi. 23.

Note farther, the Word of Diminution, they are earthen Veſſels. The Preachers of the Goſpel are divine in Reſpect to the Sublimity of their Doctrine, but human and earthen in Regard of the Frailty of their Condition.

Their being called earthen Veſſels may denote the Meanneſs of their Condition, which for the moſt Part is little and low in the World: As the Poor receive the Goſpel, ſo are they very often poor and low that publiſh it, neceſſitous and indigent, *earthen Veſſels.*

Again; it may denote the Frailty of their Perſons, and their Contemptibleneſs. Earthen Veſſels are little valued, ſtand in open Places, are uſed by every Hand, and, at every Turn; while Plate, gold and ſilver Veſſels, are locked up with great Carefulneſs. Thus it frequently happens with the Miniſters of the Goſpel, they are Objects baſe and vile, contemptible and deſpiſed in the Eyes of the World, Veſſels wherein there is no Pleaſure; and not only their Perſons, but even their Office and Function is undervalued and deſpiſed by ſome.

In a word, as our mean Condition and baſe Eſtimation, ſo our bodily Conſtitution proclaims us as earthen: Our Bodies are earthen, becauſe formed of the Duſt of the Earth, becauſe ſubject to Flaws and Cracks, and to be broken in Pieces; we that preach eternal Life to others, are dying Men ourſelves; and whilſt the Word of Life is in our Mouths, many Times Death is in our Faces.

The Reaſon aſſign'd for committing this Treaſure of the Goſpel to earthen Veſſels, Men; not to heavenly Veſſels, Angels, is, *that the Excellency of the Power might be of God, and not of us*; from the Weakneſs of Man, the Inſtrument, there redounds great Honour to God the Agent.

Q. *In what Manner does the Apoſtle ſpeak of his own Sufferings?*

A. The falſe Apoſtles and ſome weak *Chriſtians* having taken Offence at the manifold and great Sufferings which St. *Paul*, with his fellow Apoſtles, had met with in the Courſe of their Miniſtry, St. *Paul*, from the the 8th to the 13th Verſe, ſhews the Church of *Corinth*, that there was no Reaſon why any ſhould be offended at his Sufferings, nor that the falſe Apoſtles ſhould object, that if he has preached the Goſpel ſincerely, Almighty God would never have ſuffered him to be perſecuted; becauſe all his Afflictions were ſo graciouſly moderated, and himſelf ſo powerfully upheld by God, that he ſunk not under the Burthen and Weight of them.

We are troubled, ſays he, on every Side, but not overwhelmed with our Troubles; we are often perplexed, but not ſo as to deſpair of God's Help and Succour; we are perſecuted by Men, but not forſaken of God; caſt down indeed, but not killed by the Fall. So that there is in our Sufferings a Reſemblance and Repreſentation of the Death and Sufferings of *Chriſt Jeſus*. We bear in our Body a memorative Conformity to our dying Lord, that it may appear how mightily we are ſupported by the quickening Power of the Spirit of *Chriſt*, under all our Afflictions. Behold and admire in us the Almighty Power of *Chriſt* exerted, in ſuſtaining theſe earthen Veſſels (our frail Bodies) notwithſtanding the many thouſand Knocks they have met with in carrying about that heavenly Treaſure, the holy Goſpel, with which God has entruſted us.

He rejoices in the Cauſe of his Sufferings; *We are delivered unto Death for* Jeſus's *Sake*; for our owning, preaching, and practiſing the Doctrine of *Jeſus*; we ſuffer not as Evil-doers, but for the Sake of the beſt Perſon, and in the beſt Cauſe that was ever brought upon the Stage of the World.

And the infinitely wiſe God ſuffers us to be thus afflicted, that ſo he might make it evident that *Chriſt* is riſen from the Dead; and as a living Head conveys the neceſſary Influences of Strength, Support and Comfort, as to all his Members, ſo more particularly to us his Miniſters; by which we are enabled without fainting, to ſuffer the hardeſt Things with Patience, Courage, and Conſtancy.

Q. *Pray expound the 12th Verſe*, Death worketh in us, but Life in you?

A. That is, the Preaching of the Goſpel expoſes us to Death, but unto you it brings eternal Life. Our Death is your Life, our Sufferings your Advantage; we having the ſame faithful Spirit which was in the Saints under the Old Teſtament, particularly in holy *David*, Pſ. cxvi. 10. *I believed, and therefore ſpoke; I was ſore afflicted.* Now as he believed and truſted in God for Deliverance out of his many and great Troubles, in like Manner do we believe and truſt.

We that live, are always delivered unto Death. Moſt of the Apoſtles were, by the Rage of Tyrants, put to cruel Deaths, and offered up a bloody Sacrifice.

The People of God, however, have this Comfort, that though he brings them into a Suffering, he does not there leave them; when they ſuffer for him, they are not forſaken by him; God has either his Caſtle of Providence, or his Ark of Promiſe; the All-Sufficiency of his Power, or the Abundance of his Grace for their Comfort and Security.

Q. *What was the Apoſtle's chief Support undre his Sufferings?*

A. A double Reaſon is aſſigned why the Apoſtle bore his Sufferings with ſuch invincible Courage and *Chriſtian* Patience. The firſt is drawn from the Advantage which would redound to the Church by his Sufferings. *All Things are for your ſakes*; all the Straits we are put to, turn to your Advantage, if we die it is to confirm you by our Sufferings; if we be delivered, it is for God's Glory, and your Good, *that by the abundant Grace might, by the Thankſgiving of many, redound to the Glory of God.*

A ſecond Reaſon is drawn from the happy Iſſue of his Sufferings: He and his Fellow-Apoſtles ſtedfaſtly believed that Almighty God, who raiſed up *Chriſt* from the Dead, would, in like Manner, raiſe them from the Grave of their Sufferings, yea, from the Grave of Death; and both Soul and Body ſhall be preſented with them, to be eternally glorified together.

For which Cauſe we faint not. The original Word for *fainting*, ſignifies to ſhrink back, as Cowards in War, or ſink down as a Porter, under the Preſſure of ſome heavy Burden.

The Cauſe of their not fainting was, that tho' their Bodies were daily weakened by Affliction, and daily decaying, yet, as to the inward Man, the Strength and Vigour of their Minds and Spirits,

rits were daily renewed. O happy Apoſtle! every Stone thrown at thee, drove thee nearer to *Chriſt*, the chief Corner-Stone, under all the Storms and Billows of Affliction, thou, like *Noah*'s Ark, wert lift up nearer to Heaven; and after every Encounter, thy Salvation was nearer than before.

Q. *But why were his Afflictions not only tolerable, but* joyous?

A. Becauſe, 1. They were light. 2. Becauſe they were ſhort.

They were light, not conſidered in themſelves, for ſo they were heavy; but compared with the Glory expected.

Again; they were ſhort and momentary, compared with Eternity. Mark the Gradation; for Affliction, there is Glory; for light Affliction, a Weight of Glory; and for light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, an eternal Weight of Glory.

The Apoſtle does not barely ſay, that Glory will be the Conſequence of Affliction; but this Affliction will be the Cauſe of Glory; *it worketh for us.* How? Not as a meritorious Cauſe; for what Proportion is there betwixt light, momentary Afflictions, and an eternal Weight of Glory? But they work for us, as they are ſanctified by God to us. His infinite Mercy and Goodneſs, his Covenant, Truth, and Faithfulneſs, makes his Saints Afflictions a Whipping-Poſt to their Corruptions; they purge out Iniquity, and take away our Sin, if we belong to God as his Covenant-Children.

Q. *What other Reaſon does he aſſign, why he did not faint under the Preſſure of his Troubles?*

A. His laſt Reaſon is, he look'd not at the preſent, but future Things; not at Things ſeen, but unſeen; not at things temporal, but eternal.

Here we have declared the main Scope, Aim and View of the Apoſtle, while he was upon Earth. This is ſignified to us in the original Word for *look*, which ſignifies to look as the Archer does, at the Mark he ſhoots at.

This is ſpecified, firſt negatively, *we look not at Things ſeen*; at the Things of this Life, at ſenſible Objects, be they bitter or ſweet; Comforts or Croſſes; no, we leave the World to the Men of the World.

But Secondly, This is ſpecified affirmatively, *we look at the Things which are not ſeen*; the Things of another Life, Things which are Objects of Faith, and not viſible to fleſhly Eyes; theſe are our Aim and Scope. And therefore the Reaſon of this Choice is ſubjoin'd; *for the Things that are ſeen are Temporal*; that is, all the viſible Things of this Life, Comforts or Croſſes, Health or Sickneſs, Poverty or Riches, Honour or Diſgrace, Life or Death; they are all but for a ſhort Seaſon, therefore we do not much trouble our Heads about them; they are Things of a higher Nature we look at, ſuch as neither Eye hath ſeen, nor Ear heard, and theſe are the durable Things, *for the Things that are not ſeen are eternal.*

This Meditation, well digeſted, would work in us a holy Indifferency towards all temporal Things; it would moderate our Eſteem of them, and ſweeten all thoſe Troubles and Trials we meet with in our Paſſage through Time to Eternity.

CHAP. V.

His Aſſurance of, and Deſires after immortal Glory; he expects a future Judgment; wherefore he labours after a good Conſcience; not that he may therein boaſt of himſelf; but that he may live to his Lord, and as a new Creature, and by his Miniſtry of Reconciliation, may reconcile others alſo in Chriſt *to God.*

Q. WHAT *Subject does the Apoſtle treat of in this Chapter?*

A. He here acquaints us with the Reaſon why he ſo couragiouſly and perſeveringly laboured in the Work of the Miniſtry, notwithſtanding the many Difficulties and Dangers he met with on every Side; and this, he tells us, was the well-grounded Hopes of a future Immortality, which ſupported his Spirit under all the Preſſures of human Life.

Q. *In the firſt Verſe, the Apoſtle compares the Body of a Believer to* an Houſe of an earthly Tabernacle: *But wherein conſiſts the Juſtneſs of his Compariſon?*

A. He compares it to an Houſe, becauſe of its curious Workmanſhip and Compoſure, as alſo in regard of its Inhabitant, the Soul; to an earthly Houſe, in regard of the Matter of which it is compoſed, and of the Means by which it is ſuſtained; and to an Houſe of a Tabernacle, becauſe ſuch Buildings conſiſt of mean and ſlight Materials; they are ſoon ſet up, and ſoon taken down.

The earthly Tabernacle, the Body, muſt be diſſolved; *we have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.* Happy is it for that *Chriſtian* who can get an Aſſurance of this glorious Priviledge, and be able to ſay, *We know*, &c.

For in this, this ruinous earthly Tabernacle, *we groan*; the Word ſignifies ſuch a Groaning as of a Man that has a Load, or Burden, upon him, which makes him fetch his Wind from his very Bowels: As there are Groans which proceed from Sorrow, ſo there are Groans which ariſe from Deſire and Hope. Thus here, *we groan, earneſtly deſiring.*

Q. *What was the Subject of the Apoſtle's groaning Deſires?*

A. It was, to be cloathed with a celeſtial Body, inſtead of that clogging Body of earthly Corruption which here they carried about with them, earneſtly deſiring to be cloathed upon, *&c.*

If ſo be at our Paſſage hence, we ſhall be found among the Number of thoſe who ſhall be cloathed with Glory, or with Holineſs and good Works, to fit us for our cloathing in Glory; that we may not be *found naked*, in our natural Turpitude of Sin, and ſpiritual Nakedneſs, which will render us abominable in the Sight of God.

This groaning Deſire of the Apoſtle, is mentioned again in the fourth Verſe, with reſpect to the Burden of the Body, to get rid of it; it is not either an unnatural, or diſcontented Deſire, or a Deſire of Death as Death, or to be unhouſed, or without cloathing for the Soul; but he would be better cloathed with a celeſtial Body, that his mortal Part might be ſwallowed up with immortal Glory. As if he had ſaid, As weary as I am of Life, by means of Sin and Sorrow, Corruption and Affliction; yet I would not barely, on this Account, deſire a Diſſolution, but for the Sake of my Hope of eternal and immortal Life. In that Life we ſhall be cloathed again with our own Bodies, glorious and heavenly; *we groan, not to be uncloathed, but to be cloathed upon.*

He who hath wrought and appointed us, he who hath prepared and fitted us for this glorious Change, and ſet our Souls a longing for this immortal State, is God; who hath alſo *given us, by his Spirit,* thoſe holy Affections, fervent Deſires, and faithful Endeavours, which are the Earneſt of Heaven, before we enjoy it.

Q. *In what Senſe does he ſay, verſe* 6. We are confident?

A. That is, by the Holy Spirit, comfortably aſſured of a better State. They who have the Earneſt of the Spirit, may be confident of their future glorious State: Or, we are confident, that is, we are of good Courage, fearing neither Death nor Danger in the Way of our Duty, *knowing, whilſt we are at home here in the Body*; that is, whilſt ſojourning in the Body as Pilgrims and Strangers, *we are abſent from the Lord*; we are detained from the bleſſed Sight and Enjoyment of God, and kept out of the Poſſeſſion of that Happineſs which makes Heaven.

A *Chriſtian*, while he ſojourns in the Body, is not in his proper Home. His Birth and Parentage is from Heaven, his Treaſure and Inheritance, his Kindred and Relations, and his beſt Friends are in Heaven, and there he ſhall longeſt abide.

Q. *What ſort of a Life is a Believer's, while on this Side Heaven?*

A. Our Condition in this World, ſays the Apoſtle, is ſuch, that we cannot ſee God Face to Face, but by Faith only. Faith is the Thing in Expectation, Sight is the Thing in Fruition; Faith is a cloudy Diſcovery of Things at a Diſtance, Sight is a clear View and Apprehenſion of Things that are preſent. Faith is for Earth, and Sight for Heaven; till we have that Sight, Faith is of great Advantage to us, and aſſures us of that Sight.

Q. *What is the Import of thoſe Words, Ver.* 8. We are confident and willing?

A. Theſe Words denote Courage and undaunted Boldneſs with Reſpect to Death, and Complacency and Satisfaction in it. *We are willing*; the Tranſlation is too flat; we are well-pleaſed: It's a grateful and deſirable thing to us to leave the Body, yet not in an abſolute, but comparative Conſideration. We are willing rather; that is, rather than not ſee and enjoy the Lord, rather than be here always ſinning and groaning, *we had rather be abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord.*

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words, Ver* 9. Wherefore we labour?

A. The Word ſignifies to labour ambitiouſly, as an ambitious Courtier labours for his Prince's Favour. We labour, whether preſent in the Body, or abſent from the Body; whether living or dying, that our Perſons and Services may be accepted by him, whenever we appear before him.

Q. *In the* 10*th Verſe, we have a Deſcription of a future Judgment: What are your Obſervations upon it?*

A. In the Words are ſet forth, 1. The Neceſſity of a future Judgment, *we muſt*, willing, or unwilling. 2. The Univerſality of this Judgment, *we muſt all.* 3. The Perſon by, and before whom, we muſt be judged, *Chriſt.* 4. The Manner of this Judgment, *all muſt appear*, and be made manifeſt, both Perſons and Actions. 5. The Matter about which we ſhall be judged, *the Things done in the Body.* 6. The End of all this Inquiſition, to be puniſhed or rewarded according to our Actions. So that at the great Day, every Man's Judgment or Sentence ſhall proceed and be pronounced according to what has been done in the Fleſh, be it good or bad.

Knowing, therefore, the Terror and Dread of that tremendous Day, in which *Chriſt* will judge the whole Race of Mankind; and being perſuaded of the Truth and Certainty of ourſelves, we endeavour to perſuade all Men by all Means to fly from the Wrath to come, by Repentance and Faith, that they may be found of God in Peace in that ſolemn Hour.

Q. *Does not this afford ſome Leſſons of Inſtruction to Miniſters now?*

A. Such Miniſters as know and conſider the Terrors of the Lord, will both perſuade others, and be perſuaded themſelves, to look after Reconciliation and Acceptance with God; that when *Chriſt* comes terribly, they may appear comfortably; *knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we perſuade Men.* It follows, *but we are made manifeſt unto God, and I truſt alſo are made manifeſt in your Conſcience.* As if he had ſaid, We hope God has diſcover'd our Sincerity unto you in ſome Meaſure, as he is an Obſerver of it. A Miniſter has then the full Aſſurance of his Sincerity, when by the Purity of his Doctrine, the Piety of his Life, and the Prudence of his Conduct, he has the Approbation of God, and his own Conſcience, and alſo a Teſtimony in the Conſciences of his People.

Q. *What Reaſon does he give for commending himſelf and the other Apoſtles?*

A. The Apoſtle adds, We commend not ourſelves to you upon our own Account, as if there were any need of it, with Reſpect to us; but only to give you Occaſion to vindicate us, and to glory to others on our behalf, when Need requires, that you have wherewith to anſwer the Calumnies of the falſe Apoſtles, who glory much in outward Appearances of Zeal and Piety, but not in Purity of Heart and upright Intentions.

Hence learn, that Self-vindication in a Miniſter of *Chriſt*, is not only lawful, but a Duty; becauſe Scandals caſt upon a good Man reach farther than himſelf, they reflect on others, yea, upon God himſelf, therefore they are to be wiped off.

Q. *How does he vindicate himſelf from the Charge, of his being beſides himſelf, Ver.* 13?

A. This holy Apoſtle was ſometimes ſo zealouſly tranſported and carried forth in his high Actings for *Jeſus Chriſt*, that the falſe Apoſtles repreſented him as a frantick Perſon, crazy, mad, and what not; be it ſo, ſays the holy Man, it is unto God, in his Cauſe, and to propagate his Glory, and not my own: Or if I be ſober in my Words and Actions, it is for your Benefit, not my own.

This has been the Practice of the wicked and prophane World ever ſince, to repreſent the holy Servants of God as a ſort of Mad-men. Workings of Grace are ſometimes ſo far above the Reaſon, that they ſeem to be without Reaſon. There are ſeveral Acts of Holineſs, which the prophane World would eſteem as Madneſs; as eminent Self-denial, great Seriouſneſs in Religion, fervent Zeal, holy Singularity, Fervour of Devotion, Patience and Meekneſs under Sufferings and Reproaches.

Q. *How do you underſtand the firſt Clauſe of, Ver.* 14. For the Love of *Chriſt* conſtraineth us?

A. Some underſtand theſe Words paſſively, for the Love that *Chriſt* beareth us; others take them actively, for that love we bear to him.

Now this Love is ſaid *to conſtrain*; this, ſome think, is a Metaphor taken from a Woman in travail, who ſtrives to be deliver'd of her Burthen; others, that it ſignifies to have one bound, and ſo much under Power, that he cannot move without Leave. The Expreſſion denotes the abſolute Empire which the Love of *Chriſt* had over him, ruling all the Inclinations of his Heart, and the Actions of his Life. It ſignifies the ſweet Violence and Force of our Love, by which the Soul is overpower'd; it does wholly poſſeſs, rule, and command us, keeps us in its Power, and makes us do whatever it would have us do; it inclines us to a willing Performance of all Duties, tho' attended with the greateſt Hazards and Difficulties.

Q. *Pray explain the laſt Clauſe of the ſame Verſe,* If one died for all, then were all dead?

A. Some underſtand theſe Words of a Death in Sin; all were in a State of Sin and Death, when *Chriſt* died for them. Others underſtand them myſtically; when *Chriſt* died for all, then were all dead, that is, dead in *Chriſt* unto Sin; intimating, that when *Chriſt* died, all Believers were dead in him to Sin and the World. As *Chriſt* died for Sin, ſo ought all to die unto Sin.

Farther; *Chriſt* dying for all, proves the Verity and Sufficiency of his Satisfaction. What Virtue was there in that Death, which merited Life for all! And what love was there in our God to appoint one for all, and to accept one for all! That one ſo worthy in himſelf, one ſo dear to God, ſhould die ſo willingly, ſo painfully, ſo ſhamefully, ſhould die under a Curſe, to abſolve us from Guilt and diſcharge us from Condemnation.

Q. *In the 15th Verſe, the great Deſign and End of* Chriſt *in his Death is declared: But in what Manner?*

A. 1. Negatively, that we ſhould not *live unto ourſelves*, to our own Eaſe, Profit, or Humour; gratifying our own Wills, Inclinations, and corrupt Deſires, ſerving our own Intereſt and Ends. But, 2. Poſitively, *to live unto him*, according to his Word and Will, in Obedience to his Commands, and with an Eye to his Glory, *who died* for our Sins, *and roſe again for our Juſtification.* Had *Chriſt* only died for us, the favour had been inexpreſſible and unrequitable, and would have been an Obligation upon us to live to his Honour and Glory; but when he not only died for us, but roſe again, and lives for ever in Heaven, to pour down freſh Benefits upon us, and to do good Offices daily and hourly for us, how endearing are our Obligations to love him, and to live unto him!

It is the Duty therefore, and will be the Endeavour, of all thoſe that are quickned, by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, unto Newneſs of Life, to refer all their Actions, not to themſelves, but unto him: None can do both, live to *Chriſt* and Self together. His we are already; by Creation, by Redemption, by Sanctification, by voluntary Reſignation, we live by him. Our ſpiritual Uſe is from him, we expect hereafter to live with him; let us therefore now live unto him, who died for us, and roſe again.

Q. *There ſeems ſome Difficulty in underſtanding the true Meaning of the 16th Verſe; which therefore pray explain?*

A. This Verſe was probably written to rebuke the carnal Boaſting of ſome *Jews*, who gloried in their having ſeen *Chriſt* in the Fleſh before he died; the Apoſtle directs them to a more ſpiritual Knowledge of him, now ſince his Reſurrection, as more ſuitable to his glorified State. As if he had ſaid, What tho' you have eat and drank in *Chriſt*'s Preſence, when on Earth, all that corporeal Familiarity is ceaſed; 'tis a ſpiritual gracious Preſence which now you are to depend upon, and value yourſelves by. For *henceforth know we no Man after the Fleſh*; we value no Man for his outward Advantages, his Wiſdom, Riches, or Learning. Yea, *tho' we have known* Chriſt *after the Fleſh*, ſeeing and converſing with him while upon Earth, yet muſt *we know him ſo*, and enjoy him as ſuch, *no more.* Our carnal Affections and Relations to him muſt ever ceaſe, now he is exalted into a ſpiritual and glorious Condition.

Q. *What do you infer from hence?*

A. Hence learn, that a bare Knowledge of *Chriſt* after the Fleſh ought to ceaſe among *Chriſtians.* There is a Knowledge of *Chriſt* ſince his Aſcenſion into Heaven; namely, by a bare Profeſſion of his Name, without a Conformity to his Laws, and by Acts of ſenſitive Affection: Some by reading the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Paſſion, others by ſeeing in the Sacramental Elements a tragical Repreſentation of his Crucifixion, find their human Paſſions ſtirred; but it reſts there, without drawing forth their Love to his Perſon, as quickening our Obedience to his Commands; all this is but knowing *Chriſt* after the Fleſh to no ſpiritual or ſaving purpoſe.

It's obſervable, that an outward ceremonious Reſpect to our Saviour's Perſon, was very little regarded by him when he was upon Earth; he preferr'd a ſerious Attention to his Doctrine before that. Our Love to *Chriſt* is better ſhewn by religious Services, than by paſſionate Affections. We find, *John* xx. when *Mary* fell at *Chriſt's* Feet, after he was riſen, and embraced him, while ſhe held him by the Feet and worſhipped him, when in an humble and affectionate Devotion ſhe lies proſtrate before him, *Chriſt* forbids it, *touch me not.* He rejects all theſe external Teſtimonies of her Love, which proceeded only from human Affection; but directs her to a more acceptable Service, to run and carry Tidings of his Reſurrection to his diſconſolate Diſciples.

If therefore any one amongſt you pretends to be a *Chriſtian* indeed, and being engrafted into *Chriſt* by Baptiſm and Regeneration, is a Member of his Body, he is by Regeneration made a new Man, all the Faculties of his Soul are renewed, his Principles, Affections, and Practices, are all new; old Things are paſſed, or paſſing away daily, the old carnal Inclinations are wearing off, the old Will is changed, the old Life are reformed; in a Word, whatever was old and carnal, is now become new and ſpiritual.

Q. *What is it to be a new Creature?*

A. To be a new Creature implies a real and inward, a thorough and prevailing Change both in Heart and Life; not a civil Change, barely from Prophaneſs to Sobriety; not a ſudden Change, only under ſome great Affliction or awakening Providence; not a Change from one Sect or Party of Profeſſors to another; but in a new Mind, a new Will, a new Judgment, new Affections, and a new Converſation: Such a Change in a Man in an unqueſtionable Evidence of his Intereſt in *Chriſt*, and Title to Salvation.

Q. *In what Senſe does the Apoſtle ſay, Ver.* 18. all Things are of God?

A. And all Things are of God; that is, all thoſe Things beforementioned belonging to this new ſpiritual Creation, are of God, as the Author and efficient Cauſe of them. This appears partly from the Nature of the Work, 'tis a new Creation; and partly from the Objects of this Work, the Perſons wrought upon; they are averſe from God, in Enmity to him, and Rebellion againſt him, dead in Sin, and under the Dominion of Satan.

Q. *How are we reconciled to God by* Jeſus Chriſt, *as the Apoſtle expreſſes himſelf, Ver.* 18?

A. We have here a ſhort, but full Account of the grand Doctrine of a Sinner's Reconciliation unto God by the Death of *Chriſt*, which is the principal Subject and ſubſtantial Part of the Goſpel.

Here obſerve the Privilege itſelf, *Reconciliation*; this is twofold; 1. Fundamental in the Death of *Chriſt*, he is our Peace; God laid the Foundation of our Peace and Reconciliation with himſelf in the Death of his Son. 2. Actual, in the Application of it, on our Part, by Faith. The Death of *Chriſt* render'd God reconcilable. Faith renders him actually reconciled.

The Author of this Reconciliation is God the Father, he was the Perſon wronged by Sin, declaring his Anger againſt the Sinner: Hence we are ſaid to have Acceſs to the Father thro' *Chriſt*, and by the Spirit. The Son brings us to the Father, and the Spirit directs us to the Son; *Chriſt* takes away God's Enmity againſt us, and the Spirit takes away our Enmity againſt God.

The Medium or Means by which we become reconciled to God, is, *Jeſus Chriſt*; he is the meritorious Cauſe of this Privilege; the Gentre of that Agreement between the Juſtice and Mercy God.

The Parties at Variance, and made one by Reconciliation, are, God and the World. Almighty God, in Conſideration of *Chriſt*'s Death, did ſo far reconcile and forgive the offending World, as to offer them Pardon of Sin and Salvation by a Redeemer, on Condition of their believing Acceptance: But none are actually reconciled but Believers, who cordially accept the Terms and Conditions of Peace and Reconciliation by Faith, which is a neceſſary receptive Qualification.

The Reconciliation is mutual, the Enmity is ſuch; yet the Scripture ſpeaks more of our being reconciled to God, than of God's being reconciled to us, becauſe we are in the Fault; not God, we the Cauſe of the Breach; we offended God, and not God us; and becauſe we have the Benefit of this Reconciliation, and not God; 'tis no Profit to him that we are at Peace with him; and becauſe all the Difficulty of being reconciled lies on our Part, and not on God's,

Q. *How does he explain the Office and Employment of Miniſters?*

A. He ſays, they *are Ambaſſadors for* Chriſt; Ambaſſadors from God to Man, and as Ambaſſadors they have their Miſſion, their Commiſſion, from a great Prince, about great Concerns; they muſt be faithful to their Inſtructions, they are inviolable by the Law of Nations, and their Embaſſy muſt be received on pain of Diſpleaſure.

Here let us remark the wonderful Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God, in appointing Men on the ſame Level with us, and not Angels our Superiors, to diſpenſe the Myſtery of Reconciliation to us.

Here we have alſo the Miniſter's Duty diſcover'd, in God's Name, and *Chriſt's* Stead, to intreat, beſeech, and perſuade Sinners to become reconciled to God.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the laſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. The laſt Verſe declares the ſpotleſs Innocence of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt, he knew no Sin*; that is practicaly and experimentally; he knew it not ſo as to commit it in the leaſt Degree; but rhetorically and ſpeculatively he did know Sin. He well underſtood its Nature, Effects, and Fruits. None knew the bitter Fruits of Sin ſo well as our our bleſſed Saviour.

Obſerve farther, God's Ordination of *Chriſt* with Reference to Sin, *he hath made him to be Sin*; he hath not made him a Sinner, but a Sin-Offering, a Sacrifice for Sin. *Made*; that is, ordained a Sacrifice to expiate Sin, and to bear the Puniſhment due to Sinners.

The End of this Ordination, with Reſpect to, us, *that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.* The Righteouſneſs of the Mediator is called the Righteouſneſs of God; becauſe, 1. It was the Righteouſneſs of that Perſon who was God. 2. Becauſe the only wiſe God found out and approved it. 3. Becauſe it is accepted by God, and the penitent Believer, for the ſake of it, look'd upon as righteous and juſtified. This Imputation of Guilt to our Saviour, made *Luther* call *Chriſt* the greateſt Sinner in the World; not that he had any Sin in his Nature, or in his Life, but becauſe the Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all. Surely then God may be as juſt in pardoning us, who have no Righteouſneſs of our own; as in condemning his own Son, who had no Sin of his own. Have we ſinned againſt Mercy? Yet *Chriſt* has ſuffer'd without Mercy; and all this by the Ordination and Appointment of God the Father, who made his own and only Son to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteouſneſs of God in him.

Dr. *Hammond* has this Note on the Words *Sin for us*, ver. 21. What is here meant by the Word *Sin* will beſt appear by the Notion of it in the *Old Teſtament* ſometimes, and by the Oppoſition to *Rigteouſneſs*, here. *Lev.* ix. 3, 29. ver. 6. *Pſ.* xl. 7. it's taken for *a Sacrifice for Sin.* The *Hebrew* Word ſignifies Sin and legal Uncleanneſs; alſo a a Sacrifice of Propitiation, and Purification for Uncleanneſs; and conſequently, being render'd ſometimes both in the Notion of Sin, and alſo of Uncleanneſs, *Lev.* xii. 6. *Numb.* vi. 2. Sometimes Propitiation, *Ezek.* xliv. 27. and xlv. 19. and ſometimes purifying, *Numb.* xix. 19. and Purification, viii. 7. Hence the *Greek* Word uſed by the Septuagint, as if it were of the ſame Latitude with the *Hebrew*, is made to ſignify all theſe Severals. See *Numb.* vi. 2. *Lev.* iv. 25. So in the *New Teſtament*, *Rom.* viii. 3. *for Sin*, is the Sacrifice of Propitiation. So *Heb.* x. 6. and xiii. 11. So here in the Text, it is *Sin* abſolutely. Then for the Oppoſition wherein *Sin* is here ſet to *Righteouſneſs*, Chriſt *made Sin, that we might be made Righteouſneſs*, that is an Argument, that as our being Righteouſneſs ſignifies our being ſanctified firſt, and then accepted by God, and juſtified; ſo his being made Sin, ſignifies his being condemned, that is, conſecrated, as a Sacrifice is wont to be devoted for the Sins of the People.

CHAP. VI.

An Exhortation how to receive the Grace miniſtred by the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt; *enforced by the Integrity of his Life and Sufferings. His great Affection for them, requires the ſame from them. He admoniſhes them not to be yoked with Unbelievers, nor to have Communion with Idols, ſince they were God's Temple; for God was their Father, and they his Childrrn.*

Q. PRAY *what are the Subjects here treated of?*

A. In the Beginning of this Chapter, the Apoſtle draws Inferences, from the great Doctrine of Reconciliation, of which he had been treating in the foregoing Chapter!

In the firſt Verſe is declared the Nature of the miniſterial Function: The Miniſtry is a Work, an arduous and laborious Work; neither Angels nor Men are ſufficient for it, without proportionable Aſſiſtance from God.

Miniſters are Workers together, they join together with one Voice, with one Cry, beſeeching Sinners to be reconciled to God. All the Miniſters of *Chriſt* are Fellow-Labourers, Workers together in God's Harveſt-Field; that which is the Work of one, is the Work of all; they ſhall all join in it, avd rejoice together in the Succeſs of it; not only labour with, but bleſs God for the Services and Succeſſes of each other.

Miniſters are Workers together with God, as well as with one another; they are ſubordinate Inſtruments which God is pleaſed to work by; but not co-ordinate Cauſes, producing, with him, the Work of Converſion in the Souls of Men; not as if they could communicate any Power or Strength to the Working of Grace, by the Preaching of the Word, 1 *Cor.* iii. 5. *Who is* Paul; *and who is* Apollos, *but Miniſters by whom ye have believed?*

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words in the firſt Verſe,* We beſeech you receive not the Grace of God in vain?

A. By the *Grace of God,* is meant the Doctrine of the Goſpel; becauſe it is freely and graciouſly beſtowed upon a People; and becauſe the Matter and Meſſage it brings is Grace. The Law diſcovers God's Will, the Goſpel diſcovers his Goodwill.

By *receiving this Grace in vain,* is meant the receiving the Goſpel unfruitfully, unprofitably, and ineffectually, when we do not receive it with a due Eſtimation, with Fervency of Affection, with a fiducial Application; when it does not purify the Heart, reform the Life, and ſave the Soul.

Q. *The ſecond Verſe is taken from* Iſa. xlix. 1. *and is a Promiſe which God the Father made to* Chriſt *as Mediator, that in the great Work of ſaving his Church, the Father would accept and ſuccour him as the Head of the Church;* I have heard thee in an accepted Time, in the Day of Salvation. *Pray what is meant by* the Day of Salvation?

A. There is a twofold Day of Salvation. 1. *Chriſt* had a Seaſon aſſigned him for the Purchaſe of Salvation; he ſet it, and complied with that Seaſon, and it became an acceptable Time with reſpect to him. 2. We have alſo our Seaſon allotted us by God, for the Application of *Chriſt,* and his Benefits to our Souls. Behold, now is our accepted Time, now is our Day of Salvation; let us prize it highly, and improve it faithfully. 'Tis a Day, and therefore a ſhort ſpace of Time; 'tis a Day, and therefore continually ſpending; 'tis a Day, therefore when once gone, is irrecoverably gone; 'tis a Day which will be followed by a Night, a Night, in which none can work, but only lament their Folly in not working.

Q. *What Directions does he give to Miniſters?*

A. The third Verſe ſpecifies the Nature and Quality of the Work the Ambaſſadors of *Chriſt* are called to, and labour in, *a Miniſtry;* alſo that the Deſire and Aim, the Care and Endeavour of the Apoſtle then, ought to be the Study of every Miniſter now, both as to Perſons and Things, *giving no Offence in any Thing.*

The Ground and Reaſon of this Care and Endeavour to give no Offence, is, *that the Miniſtry be not blamed.* We muſt give no Offence by our Words and Speeches in common Converſation, by unſound Doctrine, perſonal Reflections, by groſs, careleſs, and negligent Omiſſions, rude and irreverent Indecencies, or by any affected Singularities in our Adminiſtrations; but eſpecially that we give no Offence by a bad Life and ſcandalous Converſation.

In all Things approving ourſelves as the Miniſters of God. Here we have the Duty of a Miniſter declared in ſeveral Particulars; if called to it, he muſt bear up againſt all Diſcouragements, and encounter all Oppoſitions; let the Way be what it will, rough or ſmooth, he muſt ſtick at nothing, but go through thick or thin, patiently enduring Afflictions of all Sorts, and Sufferings of all Kinds, and exerciſing all manner of Self-denial for the Goſpel's ſake.

The Miniſters of *Chriſt,* who will approve themſelves to God, muſt work in Heat and Cold, run all Hazards, and venture all Extremities, endure all Sorts of Providences from God, all Sorts of Aſpects from Men, fearing neither the Face or Frowns of any: For though every Goſpel-Miniſter attains not to St. *Paul's* Zeal, his holy Fortitude and Courage, yet he has a Truth of Zeal, a Firmneſs of Reſolution, as will, according to his Meaſure, carry him through a World of Evils and Incumbrances, in the doing of that Good, which Duty and Conſcience oblige him to.

Q. *By what Methods are Miniſters to promote their Work?*

A. As the Apoſtle was, by a Variety of Trials and Troubles, to approve himſelf to God in Integrity and Uprightneſs, he proceeds to ſhew by how many Ways and Means the Work of the Miniſtry is promoted, and how the Miniſters of the Goſpel muſt be qualified for it; namely, by Pureneſs of Converſation; by the Knowledge of Divine Myſteries, and Study of the Holy Scriptures; by long Suffering under all Provocations; by Kindneſs towards all Men; by the Gifts and Aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt; by the Word of Truth clearly preached, and *by the Power of God,* confirming it; *by the Armour of Righteouſneſs,* which compleatly covers and protects us *on the right Hand, and on the Left,* both in Proſperity and Adverſity; by paſſing through *Honour and Diſhonour;* by going through *evil Report and good Report.*

The good Report we meet with in the World, is certainly as great, yea, a more dangerous Temptation, than the ill Reports we paſs under.

'Tis a great Trial to a Miniſter to be diſpraiſed, to have Dirt thrown undeſervedly in his Face; but it is as great a Trial to be praiſed, commended, and applauded. *Solomon* has an excellent Proverb to this Purpoſe, *Prov.* xxvii. 21. *As the Fineing-Pot for Silver, and the Furnace for Gold, ſo is a Man to his Praiſe*; that is, A Man is tried by his Praiſe, as really as Silver is tried in the Fining-Pot, or Gold in the Furnace. Whenever a Miniſter is praiſed, he is tried; his Humility, his Self-denial is tried. When People cry up a Preacher, they put him in the Fining-Pot; and he that is but Droſs, conſumes.

Verily, ſays the Apoſtle, our Life is made up of ſeeming, but not real Contradictions. The wiſe Men of the World look on us as Deceivers; but we are the true Diſpenſers of the Word of Life unto them; the World deems us as unknown obſcure Perſons; but we are well known to God, and good Men, by our Doctrine and Miracles; we are as dying Perſons daily, by our paſſing through ſo many Perils, and by being expoſed to continual Perſecutions, and yet, you ſee, we are ſtill alive; and we are ſometimes chaſtened by God, as well as perſecuted by Men; but we are not killed, nor given up unto Death. Outwardly we are ſorrowful, but inwardly always rejoicing in God, and in the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience; in worldly Goods, and outward Circumſtances, we are very poor, yet making many, ſpiritually, rich in Grace and good Works. We have nothing we can call our own; yet, in *Chriſt*, all Things are ours.

Hence learn, what has been the Lot and Portion of the faithful Ambaſſadors and Miniſters of *Chriſt*, from the Beginning of *Chriſtianity*; the Dirt of a thouſand Scandals has been thrown on their Faces, which, in the Day of *Chriſt*'s Appearance, will be as Crowns on their Heads.

Q. *How is a Miniſter to behave under theſe Trials?*

A. All outward Evils are to be received with the ſame Temper of Mind as good Things, becauſe God is the ſame in all Variety of Eſtates. Though Men change their Opinions of us, yet God changes not his Judgment of us; he loves his Miniſters and Members when poor, as well as when rich; when the World ſmites us, as well as when it ſmiles upon us; therefore, if God be the ſame to us at all Times, it is our Wiſdom and Duty to keep the Temper of our Minds even, and to be always the ſame to him, and to ourſelves. Whatever we meet with from the World, we have no Reaſon to be diſſatisfied, if our Integrity be ſafe.

Q. *But in what Senſe was it, that the Apoſtle,* having nothing, yet poſſeſſed all Things?

A. Thus; He and they poſſeſſed all Things: 1. In *Chriſt*, by whom they had a Title to all Things. 2. They had all Things in the Covenant, Favour and Grace of God: He hath all Things, who hath him that hath all Things. 3. They had all Things in that Contentment of Mind which they enjoy'd: In poſſeſſing themſelves they poſſeſſed all Things. The contented Man is only Rich; not he that has much, but he that has enough, is Rich; that Man is Poor who covets more. 4. They poſſeſs all Things eventually; their Wants, in the Event, worked for their Good. 5. They poſſeſſed all Things in future Expectation; they look'd and long'd for Heaven, and everlaſting Happineſs, which would ſwallow up their Deſires with Fruition; for he that overcomes, ſhall inherit all Things. True Faith apprehends and enjoys all Things in God, which it wants in the Creature.

Q. *In the 21ſt Verſe the Apoſtle tells the* Corinthians, Our Mouth is open unto you, our Heart is enlarged! *What is the Import of theſe Expreſſions?*

A. We have here a moſt pathetick Declaration of St. *Paul*'s moſt affectionate and ardent Love towards the *Corinthians.* He tells them, *his Mouth was opened to them,* not to receive, but to beſtow; his Mouth was open, to fill them with the Treaſures of Goſpel-Knowledge; *and his Heart,* as well as his Mouth, was open to them, and at their Service: If therefore they were ſtraitned in Affection towards him, who was thus enlarged in Heart and Mouth, by Tongue and Pen towards them, it muſt be through Miſtakes and Miſapprehenſions on their Part; therefore he challenges it as an Act of Juſtice, that the ſame reciprocal Love be beſtowed upon him, their ſpiritual Father, as he had manifeſted towards them, his beloved Children.

Q. *We have next his Exhortation to avoid all Intimacy with Idolaters; which he enforces by ſeveral Queſtions: Pray ſhew the Force of his Reaſoning herein?*

A. The Form of Queſtions the Apoſtle uſes, argues the abſolute Inconſiſtency between Believers and Idolaters, and the Danger from Communion with them; and his calling Believers the Temple of the living God, repreſents both their Dignity and Duty; their Dignity, in having the Spirit of God to dwell in them, and walk in them; their Duty, to be purified and adorned for his Habitation. The in-dwelling Preſence of the Holy Spirit, in good Men, as in a Temple, being the higheſt Honour, and moſt perfect Felicity of the reaſonable Nature, ſhould oblige them to univerſal Holineſs, and to avoid all Communion with Idolaters.

Q. *What is the Import of the 17th Verſe*; Therefore, come out from among them, *&c?*

A. Go not then to the Idol-Temples, join not in Communion with Idolaters, to avoid Perſecution; but as you are a People ſeparated to the Lord, defile not yourſelves with any unclean Thing; while you are pure, and cleave to God, he will own you for his Sons and Daughters. The Words are quoted from *Iſa.* lii. 11. where the Prophet exhorts the Remnant of *Iſrael* to come fully out of unclean *Babylon.*

Q. *Pray interpret the laſt Clauſe of Verſe 17. and the next,* And I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye ſhall be my Sons and Daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty?

A. Almighty God will, as a Father, undoubtedly receive all thoſe into his Family and Favour who renounce Communion with all Impurity; he will abundantly recompence all the Services and Sufferings of his Children, for the Honour and Intereſt of his Name and Truth.

This Text has been miſapplied by Separatiſts to very bad Purpoſes: From hence they juſtify their Separation from the pureſt of the reformed Churches, under Pretence of greater Purity amongſt themſelves: Whereas nothing will juſtify a Separation from a Church, but that which makes a Separation betwixt God and that Church. If the Church's way of Worſhip (in their Opinion) be faulty, they preſently pronounce it falſe, and they muſt not join Worſhip; whereas no Man offers any Worſhip to Almighty God, that is not falſe Worſhip, if all that is faulty be falſe Worſhip; If *Chriſt* does not diſown his Church for that Faultineſs, we ought not to deſert her for it.

Others, from theſe Words, would juſtify their Practice, in refuſing to come to the Lord's Table, where ſome vicious Perſons are apprehended to be, leſt they ſhould pollute the Ordinances, and theſe touch the unclean Thing; whereas the preſence of a bad Man at the Sacrament pollutes the Ordinance only to himſelf; for unto the pure, all Things are pure; and who will neglect a certain Duty, to eſcape an uncertain Danger? True, we muſt not own ſuch Worſhip as God rejects: But as God pardons the Imperfections of other Men's Worſhip, and of our own alſo, thus muſt we bear with our own and one another's Failings that are tolerable, ſo far as we cannot cure them. Woe unto us, if Almighty God had no more Charity for us than we have for one another!

Chap. VII.

The foregoing Promiſes a Motive to Sanctification. His Integrity and Affection to them in the midſt of Tribulation; he aſſures himſelf of theirs towards him, confirmed to him by the Report of Titus; *and their Kindneſs and Obedience to* Titus, *anſwerable to his former Boaſtings of them.*

Q. P*RAY give the Senſe of the firſt Verſe?*

A. The Words in the firſt Verſe are argumentative, and infer the indiſpenſible Duty of *Chriſtians* to preſerve themſelves untainted from the idolatrous impure World, by the Conſideration of the Promiſes ſpecified in Verſe 16. of the precedent Chapter; from whence the Apoſtle infers, that *Chriſtians* having ſuch Promiſes, ſuch Helps and Aſſiſtances, ſhould cleanſe themſelves from all ſinful Pollution, and endeavour Perfection and Purity in Holineſs.

Note here the Apoſtle's Manner of addreſſing them, *dearly beloved*; this expreſſes both the Truth and Strength of his Affection towards them, and recommends his Counſel to their Acceptance; for as Light opens the Mind by clear Conviction, ſo Love opens the Heart by perſuaſive Inſinuation.

The Matter of this Addreſs is, to cleanſe ourſelves from all Pollution both of Fleſh and Spirit, and of changing us into the unſpotted Image of God's Holineſs. The Pollution of the human Nature is intimate and radical, diffuſed thro' all the Faculties of the Soul, and Members of the Body; we are therefore to pray for, and endeavour after renewing Grace, and to be always advancing in Holineſs on Earth, till we arrive at Perfection in Heaven.

The Motive exciting hereunto, is, the exceeding great and precious Promiſes aſſured to us, *having theſe Promiſes, let us cleanſe ourſelves.*

Our Aſſiſtance herein is, *the Fear of God.* This Grace has an excellent Cauſality and Influence in a *Chriſtian's* Sanctification; it is a powerful Reſtraint from Sin both in Thought and Act, by conſidering that God's pure and flaming Eye ſees Sin whereever it is, in order to Judgment. An holy Fear of God, and an humble Fear of ourſelves, will both reſtrain us from Sin, and engage us to Obedience.

Thus then, the Promiſes of the Goſpel lay the moſt powerful Obligations upon *Chriſtians* to endeavour after, and ſtrive for the Attainment of pure and perfect Holineſs. As the Pollution is univerſal, ſo muſt the Cleanſing be; and tho' we muſt be thankful for the leaſt Meaſure of ſanctifying Grace received, yet not ſatisfied with the greateſt, ſhort of our Perfection, *perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God.*

Q. *What is the next Thing which the Apoſtle recommends to them?*

A. The next Duty St. *Paul* exhorts the *Corinthians* to, is, to receive him, their Apoſtle, into their kind Affections, into the Boſom of their Love, *receive us*; that is, into their beſt Affections. If a People be prejudiced againſt the Perſon of their Miniſter, they will receive no Benefit by his Doctrine.

Q. *What is obſervable in St.* Paul's *Juſtification of his Conduct, ver.* 2, &c.

A. Note, the ſolemn Proteſtation the Apoſtle makes of his Integrity and Uprightneſs towards the *Corinthians, We have wronged no Man, corrupted no Man, defrauded no Man*; we have wronged none in their Reputation by Slander; we have corrupted no Man's Judgment by Error and falſe Doctrine; we have defrauded none of any Part of their Eſtates, either by Force or Deceit.

You are in our Hearts to live and die with you; that is, you are lodged ſo near our Heart, that we could live with you, and die for you, to promote your ſpiritual and eternal Welfare. So paſſionately deſirous are Miniſters of their People's Salvation, that they could even lay down their Lives to promote their temporal and eternal Advantage?

Great is my Gloryiug in you; I am filled with Comfort, &c. As if he had ſaid, The Report I have had of your Repentance and Reformation, on the receiving my former Epiſtle, has filled me with ſo much Joy, as over-balances all the Afflictions and Troubles I meet with for the Goſpel.

Q. *In what Manner does he ſpeak of his Sufferings?*

A. The Apoſtle being arrived in *Macedonia*, from *Epheſus*, great was his Conflict, both from within and without; from without, by Perſecutions and Oppoſition both from *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and from within, by Fears leſt the falſe Apoſtles ſhould have perverted any of his young Converts from the Simplicity which is in *Chriſt*: Or fearing, leſt the *Corinthians*, being tender and weak in Faith, the Violence of Perſecution and Strength of Temptation, ſhould cauſe them to apoſtatize from their holy Religion, and backſlide from their holy Profeſſion.

Q. *What was the Apoſtle's Support under theſe heavy Afflictions?*

A. This he tells us, ver. 9, *was God, who comforts all thoſe that are caſt down.* God eſteems himſelf more honoured by this endearing and amiable Title of a Father and a Comforter, than with the glorious Title of a Creator and Sovereign. He is more pleaſed in doing us Good, than we can be in receiving it; and can as ſoon forget himſelf as his Children.

The inſtrumental Means of the Apoſtle's Comfort, Support, and Relief, were, the coming of *Titus*. He does not entitle *Titus*, but God, by *Titus*, to the Comfort he received. Whoever is the inſtrumental, God is the principal and efficient Cauſe of our Comfort and Conſolation.

The good News which *Titus* brought, and which afforded the Apoſtle ſo much Comfort, was, the *Corinthians* earneſt Deſire of having all Things amiſs rectified; their Sorrow expreſſed for the Sin reproved; their fervent Affection towards the Apoſtle, their Grief for offending him; their Zeal to vindicate him. It's Matter of unſpeakable Conſolation to Miniſters under all their Afflictions and Diſquietudes, to ſee the Succeſs of their Labours in the Lives of their People.

Q. *What is the nex Topic he proceeds to ſpeak to?*

A. The Apoſtle goes on thus; Altho' in the former Epiſtle I wrote to you ſomewhat ſharply, by Reaſon of the many Abuſes that were crept in amongſt you; I don't now repent of that Severity; becauſe it produced a thorough and effectual Reformation: Tho' at firſt I did repent of it, becauſe I was unwilling to grieve you; for I was troubled myſelf, becauſe I was neceſſitated to afflict you.

However, now I rejoice, not in your Grief, as ſuch, but becauſe your Sorrow was a godly Sorrow, and wrought Repentance, which is ſo neceſſary to Forgiveneſs; ſo that Plain-dealing with you has evidently been no Damage, but an Advantage to you.

Hence it appears, that the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* muſt by no Means omit the Duty of ſharp Reproof, nor neglect to lay the Cenſures of the Church upon notorious Offenders, how ungrateful ſoever the Work is, either to themſelves or others.

Sorrow for Sin will avail us nothing, if it be not a godly Sorrow, or a Sorrow according to God, as it runs in the Original. Now it may be called a Sorrow according to God, when it is wrought in us by his Spirit, in Obedience to his Command and with an Eye to his Glory, when it had Sin, and not Wrath for its Object; Sin, as a Wrong to God, as a Contempt of his Sovereignty, and a Contrariety to his Holineſs. It is then a godly Sorrow, when it puts us upon highly prizing of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who became a Sacrifice for Sin; and prompts us to a cordial and unfeigned forſaking of all Sin, to ſuch a turning from it, as never to return to it.

Q. *In what Senſe is it ſaid, ver.* 10. But the Sorrow of the World worketh Death?

A. The Sorrow of the World may be taken two Ways, 1. For the Sorrow of worldly Men, whoſe Sorrow for Sin is only a vexing, not a breaking or humbling of their Hearts; which being ſeparate from true Faith, and without any Purpoſe to leave Sin, worketh Death, by wearing out the natural Life lingeringly, and ſometimes deſtroying it violently, as in the Caſe of Judge. 2. By the Sorrow of the World, may be underſtood a Sorrow for worldy Things, for wordly Loſſes and Diſappointments. This is uſual, when it is exceſſive, and as it is prejudicial to the Soul, ſo it hurts the Body and haſtens Death.

Q. *In the 12th Verſe the Apoſtle proves the* Corinthians *Sorrow for the inceſtuous Perſon's Sin was a godly Sorrow; becauſe it produced ſuch excellent Effects and Fruits as godly Sorrow is wont to do What were theſe Effects?*

A. Seven of theſe Effects he here reckons up. 1. An holy Carefulneſs to amend what is amiſs for the Time to come, by ſhunning all Occaſions and Temptations to Sin. 2. *Clearing of themſelves*, that they did not approve the Deed of the inceſtuous Perſon, but inflicted the Church's Cenſures upon him, and ſo put away the Evil from amongſt them. 3. *Indignation* againſt Sin; this always accompanies godly Sorrow; when we are angry at Sin, and with ourſelves for ſinning, then we are angry and ſin not. 4. *Fear*, a true Penitent fears to offend; and that he may not offend, nouriſhes in himſelf an holy Fear of God, and an humble Fear of himſelf; he has a Fear of Reverence, from an awful Apprehenſion of the Holineſs and Majeſty of God, and alſo a Fear of Diligence and Vigilance, watching and warring againſt Sin, that it may not Surprize him for the Time to come. 5. *Vehement Deſire* after a thorough Reformation, and to rectify what is amiſs. 6. *Zeal*; this Affection in a true Penitent is compounded of Love and Anger. Zeal will make a Penitent perſiſt in the Exerciſe and Expreſſion of his godly Sorrow for Sin; and perſevere in his Courſe of Mortification, in Defiance of all Oppoſition. 7. *Revenge*; this is the Reſult of Zeal, when it boils into Revenge, and puts us upon Self-caſtigations; not upon our Bodies with Whips and Scourges, but by keeping our Luſts, which buffet the Fleſh, and bring it into Subjection. This Revenge leads the Penitent to make Satisfaction for Wrongs done, either by open Confeſſion, or by ſecret Reſtitution.

In all Things you have approved yourſelves to be clear of this Matter. As if he had ſaid, By theſe, forementioned Acts of yours, the Body of you hath ſhewn that you did not approve of the inceſtuous Perſon's Sin, but evidenced by your Sorrow for it, that you are clear of it.

Hence learn, that true Repentance for Sin, clears us from the Guilt of it, both in the Sight of God and Man; how uncharitable and unchriſtian is it then to ſtigmatize or reproach any Perſon for the Sin, which we either know or believe he hath truly repented of?

Q. *Does he give any other Reaſon why he wrote to them in ſuch ſevere Terms?*

A. The Apoſtle farther tells them, that he did not write ſo paſſionately and ſeverely to them, principally for the ſake of the inceſtuous Perſon who had done the Wrong, that he might be puniſhed; nor for his ſake that ſuffered the Wrong, namely, the injured Father, out of a particular Kindneſs to have him righted; but to demonſtrate his general Care and Concern to remove Sin and Scandal from them, the whole Church of *Corinth*.

Therefore we are comforted in your Comfort; in all the forementioned Effects and Evidences of your true Repentance, as they are Matter of great Comfort to you, ſo they are to us alſo; to which was added the Joy of *Titus*, on his being informed of the Truth of your Affairs; alſo your ready Compliance with the Duties and Directions given you in my former Epiſtle, did wonderfully refreſh and rejoice his Spirit; and in all theſe Conſolations and Comfotrs am I comforted.

The Apoſtle had formerly; it ſeems, taken an Occaſion to ſpeak boaſtingly, and not without Aſſurance, concerning the Church of *Corinth*. Now, ſays,he,whatever I have formerly ſaid in your Commendation you have proved true and confirmed.

Q. *In the 15th Verſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Love of* Titus *for them, and their kind Treatment of him: What Remark does this afford?*

A. Note, how affectionately *Titus* embraced the *Corinthians*, remembring with what Reſpect and Deference they had received him; *that he is greatly affected towards you,* on his finding you ſo obedient to me. Nothing more endears a People to the Miniſters of *Chriſt,* than to find them obedient to their ſpiritual Guides in Things pertaining to Godlineſs and Religion; *the Affection of* Titus *is more abundant towards you, whilſt he remembreth the Obedience of you all.*

The Apoſtle expreſſes great Confidence in the Church of *Corinth*, that they would hearken to and comply with his future Admonitions, Exhortations and Reproofs; *I have Confidence in you in all Things.* Happy is it, when Miniſters and People have a mutual Confidence in each other; and when that Confidence is preſerved and increaſed between them all their Days.

CHAP. VIII.

He ſtirs them up to a liberal Contribution for the poor Saints at Jeruſalem, *by the Example of the* Macedonians; *their former Forwardneſs. The Example of* Chriſt. *This they had begun a Year ago, and it need not be to their own Diſtreſs; but they might out of their Abundanee, ſupply the Want of others, as was done in the Gathering of* Manna. *He commends* Titus, *and thoſe other Brethren, who were purpoſely come to them on this Buſineſs.*

Q. I*N this and the following Chapter, the Apoſtle excites the* Corinthians *to make a Collection for the poor Saints at* Jeruſalem: *What Argument does he make uſe of for that Purpoſe?*

A. The firſt Argument he uſes to this Purpoſe, is drawn from the Example of the *Macedonians*, into whoſe Hearts God had poured that excellent Grace of Charity; inſomuch that the Churches of *Philippi*, *Theſſalonica*, *Berea*, and other Churches in the Region of *Macedonia*, tho' under great Trials and Afflictions themſelves, yet ſuch was their Joy in, and Affection to the *Chriſtian* Profeſſion, that they abounded in their Liberality towards the Neceſſities of the poor Saints in *Jeruſalem* and *Judea.*

Yhe Root from whence all acceptable Charity muſt ſpring, is, from the *Grace of God*, from an inward Principle of Love to God,in Obedience to his Command, and with a pure and fixed Eye to his Glory. Liberality to the poor diſtreſſed Members of *Chriſt* (as ſuch) muſt flow from that Habit of divine Love, by which Men are taught of God to love one another; for tho', from a natural Sympathy and Compaſſion a Man may relieve the Afflicted, as Men, yet without a gracious Inclination they cannot do Good to them, as Members of the Houſhold of Faith.

The Liberality of the poor Churches of *Macedonia*, inſtructs us, that Poverty excuſes not from Charity; if we have nothing actually to give,God accepts the Inclination, and a willing Deſire. If we have but a little to give, God accepts of our Mite, and rewards us for that little, if given for his Sake. It is not the Quantity of the Gift, but the good Affections of the Giver, that God egards.

Q. *How does he deſcribe the Charity of the* Macedonians?

A. We have here three Things recorded to the honour of the *Macedonians.* 1. Their Charity was profuſely liberal, beyond their Ability. Tho', generally ſpeaking, in all our charitable Diſtributions, we are to conſult our preſent Circumſtances, yet there may be ſuch emergent Occaſions as as may make it a neceſſary Duty, to relieve the Neceſſities of others beyond our own Ability. 2. Their Charity was purely voluntary; *They are willing of themſelves*; unſollicited by the Apoſtle, unaſk'd by any other, and prompted to it by the Grace of God. 3. Their Charity was accompanied with Importunity to the Apoſtle to receive and diſtribute it. He was ſo far from intreating them to give, that they intreated him to receive their Collection, and take the Charge of its Conveyance and Diſtribution of it amongſt thoſe for whom it was deſign'd.

Q. *The Apoſtle adds, Theſe* Macedonians *in their liberal Contributions to the poor* Chriſtians, *have exceeded our Hopes and Expectations. Wherein?*

A. Firſt, *they gave themſelves to the Lord, and then unto us by the Will of God.* For a Man to give himſelf to the Lord, is more than if he gave him all his Eſtate, tho' ſtrictly ſpeaking, it is rather a Debt than a Gift; for we owe ourſelves to the Lord. And infinite is his Advantage by this giving. He gains all, who gives all to God.

Next, the *Macedonians*, ſays the Apoſtle, *gave themſelves to us by the Will of God*; that is, they reſigned themſelves up to us to be employed by us in ſuch Services as we thought meet. It ſeems they were as ready to aſſiſt the poor *Chriſtians* with their Perſons as their Purſes.

Hence we learn, that he who does not firſt dedicate himſelf, will never dedicate his Eſtate to God, but he who by a deliberate and voluntary Dedication gives himſelf to God, will keep back nothing that he requires from him, but will look on all he has to be the Lord's; he eſteems God as the Owner and Proprietor of all, and himſelf as the Steward and Diſpenſer only.

Several other Arguments the Apoſtle uſes to perſuade the *Corinthians* to the Exerciſe of this Duty of Charity; namely, he had deſired *Titus* to go to them, and as he had in his laſt Viſit begun to ſtir them up to their Duty, and to exerciſe this Grace, ſo he would farther promote and bring it to Perfection.

Another Motive was, becauſe they abounded in other Graces and Gifts, as in Faith, Utterance, Knowledge, *&c.* therefore they ought to abonnd in this Grace alſo, otherwiſe they would not complete the whole Will of God.

Becauſe alſo they would hereby teſtify the Sincerity of their Love to the Saints. 'Tis not good Words, but charitable Deeds, that evidence the Truth of our Love to our Fellow-Members in *Chriſt.*

Q. *Does not he preſcribe a certain Meaſure to their Charity?*

A. The Apoſtle does not command their Purſes; he mentions no particular Sum, much leſs does he require them to give away all their Eſtates, and live upon a common Stock, and leave nothing to themſelves which they could call their own; for if a Man has nothing of his own, there is no Room for Liberality. There muſt be great Prudence therefore in the Exerciſe of our Charity, in finding out proper Objects for it, in timing it, in the Meaſure of it, and in the End we propound to ourſelves in the Exerciſe of it.

Q. *Does he ſet before them any Example, whereby to excite them to practice this Duty of Charity?*

A. The grand Motive the Apoſtle uſes to excite their Charity is, the Example of *Chriſt*, who impoveriſhed himſelf to enrich us; therefore ſhould we be ready to aſſiſt others.

Here we have a Deſcription of *Chriſt* in his divine Nature, as God; he was originally, eſſentially, and eternally rich; that is, in his Godhead. All the Riches that *Chriſt* now has in his State of Exaltation, he had from all Eternity; before his Humiliation, with reſpect to his Divine Nature, he was rich.

Chriſt's human Nature is here alſo deſcribed, he became poor; that is, in the Day of his Incarnation when he aſſumed our Fleſh, and was made manifeſt in our Nature, he impoveriſhed himſelf; tho' he was rich, yet for our Sakes he became poor.

Hence learn, that the extenſive Charity, and wonderful Compaſſion of *Chriſt* towards Sinners, has both the Force of an Argument to excite us to, and alſo the Nature of a Rule to direct us in the Exerciſe of our Charity to all our Brethren and Members of *Chriſt*.

Q. *What other Argument does St.* Paul *uſe to quicken their Charity?*

A. The Argument is drawn from their own Reputaton. He had heard that a Year ago, upon writing his former Epiſtle, they had made ſeveral Collections, at ſeveral Times, as their Gains came in, his Advice therefore is, that they perfect and compleat the good Work they had undertaken, and that as they were then willing, ſo now they would perform their good Reſolution; for whatever is given to God, is accepted according to what a Man has, and it's not expected he ſhould give according to what he has not. What is due to another, either by Debt or Duty, in making Proviſion for our own Family, cannot be charitably given, as being not our own.

Q. *What is obſervable in the Apoſtle's Manner of directing their Charity.*

A. The Modeſty and Prudence of the Apoſtle deſerve regard; he tells the *Corinthians*, he did not deſign to lay a load on them to eaſe others, or to make others rich by making them poor; but that there might be an Equality in ſupplying the Wants of one another, that out of your preſent Abundance you may ſupply them; and when they abound they may ſupply you; yet mark, we muſt not by the Equality here mentioned, underſtand it ſo, as if the Wiſdom of divine Providence had ordained *Levelling*, or making all Men equal in their Portion of the good Things of this Life: But ſo far Chriſtianity ſeems to require this Equality, that we ſhould not ſuffer others to lack the neceſſary Comforts of this Life, whilſt we abound with them, and can ſpare them, and ſuffer them to ſink in their Sorrows, whilſt we ſwim in Fulneſs.

There is a Debt of Mercy and Pity, of Charity and Compaſſion, of Relief and Succour, due to human Nature, and payable one Man to another; and ſuch as deny to pay it to the Diſtreſſed, in the Time of their Abundance, may juſtly expect it will be denied themſelves in a Time of Want. To confirm this the Apoſtle draws an Alluſion from the Gatherers of *Manna* in the Wilderneſs; ſome gathering more, others leſs, but they that had more were to give unto them that had leſs. In like manner Almighty God requires the Rich to impart of their Abundance to thoſe that are in Want; otherwiſe God will ſhrink their Heap into ſome Equality with them whom they refuſe to relieve. With what Meaſure we mete in acts of Charity, as well as in Acts of Juſtice, it ſhall be meaſured to us again.

Q. *Wherein did St.* Paul *manifeſt his particular Care, that this propoſed Collection ſhould be managed in a proper Manner?*

A. The Apoſtle goes on; I thank God that *Titus* was as forward to move you to this good Work as myſelf; for he did not barely yield to it at my Requeſt, but of his own Accord was willing to come to you about it. And with him we ſent *Luke*, a beloved Brother, whoſe Service for the Goſpel has made him honoured in all Churches, and who was choſen by the Church to go with us in this Diaconory Service, namely, the Miniſtration of your Charity, to the Glory of God, and evidencing the Readineſs of your Mind to ſo good a Work.

Here note, that a Miniſter of the Goſpel, who declines being chargeable to his People himſelf, may yet be bold and importunate in urging them to Charity for the Service and Supply of others.

St. *Paul*'s Importunity with the *Corinthians*, to collect this Charity, ſhews how much the Caſe was altered ſince at *Jeruſalem*, *Acts* iv. where we find they ſold All, and laid it at the Apoſtles Feet: And as that was not intended for an univerſal Practice, ſo we ſee how ſoon the Love of *Chriſtians* grew more cold. To procure this Charity, St. *Paul* writes, *Titus* is ſent, Exhortation is given, Arguments urged, to accompliſh this Collection for the poor diſtreſſed *Chriſtians*.

The Apoſtle wiſely joins others with him, as *Titus*, *Luke*, &c. in the Diſtribution of this Charity; leſt evil-minded Men ſhould ſuſpect him of Diſhoneſty, he cuts off all occaſion of Suſpicion, that he neither kept any Part of this large Contribution to himſelf, or diſtributed it unfaithfully to others; *Avoiding this, that no Man ſhould blame us.*

The Reaſon the Apoſtle aſſigns for this prudential Management, is, becauſe as a Miniſter and a *Chriſtian*, he was oblig'd to take care that all Things be done blameleſly in the Sight of God.

Q. *What are we taught by this Inſtance of the Apoſtle's Care?*

A. By his Example, he recommends to all Miniſters and private *Chriſtians*, a prudential Foreſight of ſuch ſcandalous Imputations as they may be expoſed to by the World, let their Sincerity in their Actions be what it will. Thus here; any one of theſe upright Perſons alone, either St. *Paul*, *Titus*, or *Luke*, was ſufficient to be entruſted with the Diſtribution of this Charity; but the Apoſtle did not know what a cenſorious World might ſay, and therefore to cut off all Occaſion, and to prevent all

Suſpicion; he wiſely appoints ſeveral Perſons to be Witneſſes of this action,

What Pains the Apoſtle takes to anſwer all Cavils and Objections that might prevent the free Collection and regular Diſtribution of this Charity? Some might pretend (as it is a common Pretence amongſt us now) we know not into whoſe Hands this Charity-Money may fall; we know not whether ever they will be the better for it for whom it was intended: Therefore St. *Paul* ſays, if any object that they do not know *Titus*, and enquire after him, or his Truſtineſs, tell them he is my Co-ad-jutor, Partner, and Fellow-helper in converting you to Chriſtianity; and if the other two be enquired after, they are our Brethren, the Meſſengers of the Churches, and the Glory of *Chriſt*; that is, the Inſtruments of his Glory: Therefore let theſe Meſſengers, and the Churches which deputed them, ſee the Proof of your Love to me, and to the Saints, and that I did not boaſt of your Liberality without good Grounds.

Q. *Why does he call Miniſters* the Glory of *Chriſt, ver.* 23?

A. This honourable Title ſhews their Dignity and Duty; their Dignity, in that *Chriſt* counts them his Glory when they are found faithful to him; as the Faithfulneſs of an Ambaſſador redounds to the Glory and Honour of the Prince that ſends him: And it points out their Duty to promote the Glory of *Chriſt*, to pray and endeavour that he would uſe them as Inſtruments for the Advancement of his Glory; that as they glorify him on Earth, that he may glorify them, and be glorified by them, before his Father in Heaven, and they be preſented faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy.

CHAP. IX.

The Reaſons why he ſent Titus *and other Brethren beforehand; and divers Reaſons taken from God's liberal Bleſſing, Love and Grace upon them that ſow liberally, he exhorts them to give liberally; as alſo from the Thankſgiving that will be made for it to God, and the Prayers that will be put up for them.*

Q. WHAT *are the particular Things that call for our Obſervations in this Chapter?*

A. In the firſt Verſes of this Chapter we may obſerve the holy Art and Skill of this wiſe and great Apoſtle, in ſpurring on theſe *Corinthians* to this pious Work of Charity; he inſinuates their preſent, to provoke them to farther Forwardneſs; he tells them, it was ſuperfluous for him to uſe farther Arguments with them; for their Forwardneſs was known unto him, and of which he had boaſted to the *Macedonians*. That the *Chriſtians* in *Achaia* (of which *Corinth* was the chief City) had made a Propoſal to ſupply the poor Saints in *Judea* a Year before; and that their Zeal therein had provoked many to the like Forwardneſs.

But as confident as the Apoſtle was of the Readineſs and Willingneſs of the *Corinthians* towards the charitable Contribution, yet he judged it proper to ſend the Brethren before to them, to get all Things ready, and to compleat their Collection; that ſo, when he and the *Macedonians* ſhould come to *Corinth*, he might not be put to the Bluſh for them, having made great Boaſts of their Charity, but finding no Deeds; and alſo he deſires their Collection may be ready, with reſpect to themſelves, that ſo their Beneficence may appear to be their own free Bounty, and not a Collection with Difficulty extorted from them, as from covetous Men, who give grudgingly.

Thus the bleſſed Apoſtle conſulted the Honour and Reputation of the *Corinthians* equally with his own; and was as deſirous to prevent Reflection upon them, as upon himſelf; he would not have them aſhamed, no more than himſelf, at his coming among them.

Q. *What is the true Import of the Word Bounty?*

A. The liberal Free-giving to the Saints in Diſtreſs, in the Original, is Grace and Bleſſing; we tranſlate it Bounty: It is called Grace, becauſe an Heart to give liberally is wrought in us by the Grace of God; the World ſhuts up our Hearts till God opens them; and if the Heart be open, the Hands will not be ſhut. Works of Charity are alſo a Bleſſing of God with our Subſtance, and the Way and Means to procure his Bleſſing upon our Subſtance; and whoever thus bleſſes God ſhall be bleſſed by him.

Q. *What Rule were they to obſerve in giving their Alms?*

A. The Apoſtle directs them to give their Alms deliberately. *As he purpoſeth in his Heart, ſo let him give*; as he determined and reſolved within himſelf. When a *Chriſtian* gives, he muſt take Care that it be his own Act as much as he can. Importunity extorts Charity from ſome; they give to get rid of the Noiſe, and purchaſe their Quiet with their Alms; whereas the liberal Man deviſes liberal Things, the good Man lays by in Store, what he intends to beſtow in Alms.

Again; he muſt give freely and bountifully; for *he that ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully*; that is, he that giveth liberally to the Poor, ſhall be liberally rewarded by God; no wiſe Man will pinch his Ground of the Seed. The Proportion, as how much every one ſhould give, cannot be determined, becauſe that muſt be meaſured according to the Ability of him that giveth, and according to the Neceſſity of him that receives.

Farther; he muſt give cheerfully, not *grudgingly, or of Neceſſity; for the Lord loveth a cheerful Giver*. In all thy Gifts ſhew a cheerful Countenance, ſays the wiſe Man; let us give with the ſame Cheerfulneſs we would receive, and be as willing, to give as the Needy are to receive; nay, it is our Duty to ſeek out Objects; for ſome of *Chriſt*'s Members have as great Modeſty as they have Neceſſity, and cannot ſpeak for themſelves: And let none think that this Liberality will prejudice their Eſtates; no, 'tis Men's Luſts that ruin them, not their Charity.

Q. *But may it not be objected againſt liberal Alms-giving, that we may poſſibly want that ourſelves, which we give away to others?*

A. To this Objection the Apoſtle anſwers, God is able to make all Grace and Mercy ſhewn by you, to abound the more towards you; that you having a Sufficiency of the Comforts of this Life, may abound in every good Work of Charity towards others. As if he had ſaid, Be not afraid to give, nor ſparing in giving; for hereby you make God your Debtor, and you will find him an all-ſufficient Pay-Maſter; he will repay you both in Temporals and Spirituals.

The 10th and 11th Verſes ſome look upon as a

Prayer, others as a Promiſe, that as God bleſſeth the Increaſe of the Earth ſo largely, that it ſuffices for the Nouriſhment of Men, and for Seed to ſow again, ſo would he ſupply all their Wants, and grant them Ability to ſupply the Wants of others, and plentifully reward them for all the Fruits of their Righteouſneſs and Mercy; and they being thus enriched by the Goodneſs of God, and being bountiful to their Brethren, much Thankſgiving and Praiſe, upon that Occaſion, is given to God. Here we have couched a farther Argument to preſs the *Corinthians* to this Liberality; namely, that it would cauſe the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, the Diſpenſers of this Charity, and alſo the poor Saints, the Receivers of it, to offer up inceſſant Praiſes and Thankſgiving to God for the ſame.

Q. *What other Motives and Conſiderations does the Apoſtle uſe, to ſtir up the* Corinthians *to this charitable Contribution?*

A. His firſt Motive is, that it would be a very ſeaſonable Supply to the Church's Wants. The Seaſonableneſs of any Mercy, adds greatly to the Worth and Value, Pleaſure and Sweetneſs of it.

His ſecond Motive is, that it would occaſion repeated Praiſes, and inceſſant Thankſgivings from many Perſons, and on many Accounts.

Again; this Diſtribution would be a Demonſtration of their profeſſed Subjection to the Goſpel, and that their Faith was not barren and ineffectual. There's no better Evidence of our Subjection to the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, than a cheerful Compliance, not with the cheap, but with the coſtly Duties of *Chriſtianity*.

Laſtly, For your Alms, ſays the Apoſtle, you will engage a Stock of Prayers going for you: This will procure, yea, provoke them to pray, Night and Day, for you; and not only this, but it will engage their Love and fervent Affection towards you, and make them very deſirous of your Acquaintance, having ſuch evident Tokens of the Grace of God that is in you.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle conclude his Diſcourſe?*

A. With a Doxology, praiſing and bleſſing God, for putting it in their Hearts, ſo liberally to relieve the Neceſſities of the Saints, by which ſo much Glory redounded to God, and ſo much Honour to the *Chriſtian* Religion. This he calls an *unſpeakable Gift*; becauſe it was a Gift by which God was ſo much glorified, the Goſpel adorned, the poor Saints ſo much comforted, and they themſelves ſo plentifully rewarded; *Thanks be to God for his unſpeakable Gift.*

But if the *Corinthians* Charity was an unſpeakable Gift, What was the Gift of *Chriſt?* The Gift of God to a loſt World, to whom the Title of *unſpeakable* does beſt agree; who is the Author and Finiſher of all Grace, and particularly of this noble Grace of Charity in the Hearts of his People? For he ſends his Holy Spirit, and pours into their Hearts this moſt excellent Grace of Charity, the very Bond of Peace, and of all Virtues, without which, whoſoever lives, is counted dead before him. Eternal Thanks then be to *Chriſt*, for this admirable Gift of Charity; and Thanks be to God for the unſpeakable Gift of *Chriſt*.

CHAP. X.

Againſt falſe Apoſtles, who diſparaged his Perſon and bodily Preſence; he declares his ſpiritual Authority for Edification. They vaunted themſelves in other Mens Labours; but he, by his Power, had ſpread the Goſpel even unto that Place, where others had not laboured before; and he hoped to do it farther; this he ſays, not to glory in himſelf, but in the Grace of God among them.

Q. OUR *Apoſtle, in this Chapter, vindicates his Authority from the Contempt which the falſe Apoſtles caſt upon it, who baſely interpreted his Gentleneſs, Condeſcenſion, and winning Affability, when among them, to be no better than fawning upon them for falſe Ends; and that when he was abſent, he exerciſed an Authority with Pride and Imperiouſneſs over them: How does he vindicate himſelf from theſe Aſperſions?*

A. The pious and prudent Courſe the Apoſtle takes for his own neceſſary and juſt Vindication, is, he beſeeches them by all that Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, which, according to the Command and Example of *Chriſt*, he deſired to expreſs towards them, firmly to believe that he deſired nothing more, than not to be forced to uſe his Power with that Boldneſs towards them, which he feared he muſt uſe againſt the falſe Apoſtles; who accuſed him of too much Severity and Meanneſs in his Behaviour amongſt them, and reproached his Miniſtry as carnal and Self-ſeeking.

Although, adds he, I yet dwell in the Body, and conſequently am not free from human Weakneſſes and Infirmities; yet neither my Miniſtry, nor my Life, are from fleſhly Principles, by fleſhly Means, or for fleſhly Ends. The Holieſt of Men in this Life walk in the Fleſh, are cloathed with a mortal Body; but they do not *war after the Fleſh*, they do not fight under the Banner of corrupt Nature.

Q. *In what Senſe is the* Chriſtian's *Life a Warfare, and what are his Weapons?*

A. The *Chriſtian* has many Enemies to conflict with, both outward and inward; in a paſſive Senſe he is a Man of Strife and Contention, his Hand is againſt many, and many Hands againſt him; he does not manage a War for the Fleſh, but againſt it; and in the fourth Verſe he tells us, with what Weapons he managed this War.

The Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, &c. Every *Chriſtian*, but eſpecially the Miniſters of the Goſpel, are Men of War; they fight againſt *Principalities and Powers*; and the Devil draws up his full Strength to pull down the Office of the Miniſtry, which is erected for pulling down the ſtrong Holds of him, and his Kingdom.

The Weapons which theſe ſpiritual Warriors, the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, uſe in their Combat with Sin and Satan, *are not Carnal, but Spiritual.* The Weapons we uſe are not carnal or fleſhly, neither Fraud, Flattery, nor Force; but ſpiritual, namely, the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, the plain and perſuaſive Preaching of the Goſpel; Miracles, Wiſdom and Patience, Zeal and Courage in inflicting the Cenſures of the Church upon the Diſobedient.

Theſe Weapons are called Mighty, but mighty through God. The Spirits of Darkneſs cannot be conquered but by ſpiritual Weapons. It is as poſſible to make an Impreſſion with your Finger in a Wall of Braſs, as for the beſt Sermon in the World to make an effectual Impreſſion upon a Sinner's Will, without the Co-operation and concurring Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit. There is a real ſpiritual Power and energetical Preſence of *Chriſt* in his own Inſtitutions and Appointments. When the Sword of his Spirit is taken into the Hand of the Spirit, it works Wonders.

Q. *What Exploits may a* Chriſtian *perform with theſe Weapons?*

A. Theſe ſpiritual Weapons are mighty, to the *pulling down of ſtrong Holds.* By which ſome underſtand a particular beloved Luſt; a ſpecial Sin, by which Satan keeps and holds Poſſeſſion of the Sinner's Heart. Others underſtand it more generally, of every Thing that oppoſes, reſiſts, and hinders the Succeſs of the Goſpel; and particularly the ſtubborn Will of the Sinner, which is ſo ſtrong an Hold, that no leſs than an Almighty Power can influence it to ſurrender.

Caſting down Imaginations, or Reaſoning and proud Conceits, and particularly Unbelief, in which Sinners fortify themſelves againſt the Conviction of the Word, diſdaining to ſubmit themſelves to the abaſing, ſelf-denying Way of the Goſpel. But behold the glorious Conqueſt which the Goſpel of *Chriſt* obtains over Sinners thus fortified againſt it; *It caſts down Imaginations, and pulls down every ſtrong Hold.* Thus the Miniſtry of the Goſpel ſpoils Satan of his Armour, in which he truſted, by ſhewing the Sinner, that all this can be no Defence to his Soul againſt the Wrath of God.

But the Goſpel not only ſubdues and leads away theſe Enemies ſpoil'd, but brings them into Captivity and Obedience to itſelf. O happy and bleſſed Conqueſt! Sinners not only lay down their Arms and fight no more againſt *Chriſt*, but they repair to his Camp and fight for him with thoſe Reaſonings of theirs which were before employed againſt him. O bleſſed Victory, where the Conqueror and Conquered both triumph together!

Q. *What Power had the Apoſtle to puniſh incorririble Offenders?*

A. In the next Place, he had in Readineſs that which will revenge all Diſobedience upon refractory and ſtubborn Offenders (namely, the power of Excommunication) and both Authority and Ability to inflict ſuch corporal Puniſhment, as he judged fit, by delivering them unto Satan; which Power he reſolved tu make uſe of, when the greater Part of them were, by their Obedience to his Admonitions, reduced to good Order again. There is no Room for ſevere Remedies, when the Diſeaſe has infected the whole Church.

The Apoſtle's Practice in this Caſe is a good Pattern for our Imitation, not to be too forward, raſh, or haſty in denouncing the Cenſures of the Church, but to proceed prudently and gradually; firſt, uſing all fair Means and gentle Methods, patiently waiting for reducing them to their Duty who will be reduced, and then revenging the Glory and Honour of God only upn ſuch as will by no other Means be reclaimed or reduced.

Q. *What other Admonitions does the Apoſtle give the* Corinthians?

A. He farther expoſtulates with them, and deſires to know whether they would judge of Men by outward Appearances, or by inward Worth? As if he had ſaid, are you ſo weak as to judge of me by my perſonal Appearance, my bodily Preſence, the Meanneſs of my Garb, the Smallneſs of my Stature, my outward Aſpect and Countenance? For if ye will judge of me, and he pretended Apoſtles, by miniſterial Gifts and Authority received from *Chriſt*, ſurely I have as much to ſhew of theſe, as they can pretend; for in nothing was I behind the very chief Apoſtles.

For I have not only an equal Power and Authority with thoſe that deſpiſe me, (the falſe Teachers) but I have that Authority and Power which they cannot, dare not, will not pretend to; namely, the Power to inflict corporal Puniſhment on obſtinate and contumacious Offenders, and delivering them up to Satan; which Power, whenever I exert it, it is for Edification, and not for Deſtruction.

Q. *Pray what Sort of a Man was St.* Paul, *as his to Stature and external Appearance.*

A. Tradition informs us, that *Paul* (according to his Name) was a Man of a very little Stature, and his Voice anſwerably ſmall; whence, probably, the falſe Apoſtles took Occaſion to ſlander him him for the Weakneſs of his bodily Preſence, and the Contemptibleneſs of his Speech.

St. *Chryſoſtom* ſaith, that St. *Paul*'s Stature was low, his Body crooked, his Head bald; and when it is added, that *his Speech was contemptible*, it cannot be underſtood as if it were ſo for Want of Eloquence; but it is thought, this refers rather to ſome Infirmity, or natural Impediment, which the Apoſtle might have in his Speech. The Gifts of Knowledge and Learning, and of Utterance and Elocution, as they are diſtinct in their Nature, ſo are they ſeparable in their Subject, and do not always go together; a Perſon of the profoundeſt Knowledge is not always happy in Elocution and Utterance. However, in theſe falſe Teachers, we ſee the conſtant Method and Practice of Impoſtors and Seducers; namely, to aſperſe and leſſen all that ſtand in their Light.

Q. *What induc'd the falſe Apoſtles, to calumniate and abuſe this holy Man in his Abſence?*

A. They fear'd they ſhould never reign at *Corinth*, but by bringing St. *Paul* into Diſeſteem with the *Corinthians*, therefore ſay they, *his Letters are weighty, but his bodily Preſence weak.* But the Apoſtle lets them know, that they ſhould find him the ſame both abſent and preſent; and that his Deeds then ſhould appear as awful as his Words now.

St. *Paul* charges the falſe Apoſtles with Pride and Vanity in commending themſelves; *They meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves amongſt themſelves, are not wiſe.* The Reaſon why many think themſelves wiſer than they are, is, becauſe they compare themſelves with thoſe that are their Inferiors, and not with thoſe above them in Underſtanding and Knowledge. It is an excellent Means to keep us from Pride, to conſider how many exceed us in Underſtanding, in Compariſon of whom our Knowledge is but Ignorance, our Strength but Weakneſs, our Faith but Unbelief, our Fruitfulneſs but Barrenneſs.

Q. *What is there farther to be obſerved concerning St.* Paul?

A. Here likewiſe is diſplay'd St. *Paul*'s great Modeſty and Humanity: *But we will not boaſt of Things without Meaſure, but according to the Meaſure which God hath diſtributed to us.* Where note, the Apoſtle thinks his preaching the Goſpel, to be, as it were, his ſpiritual Exerciſe, or running a Race, to which he here alludes; declaring that he kept his Province, his Stage, his Compaſs,

paſs, his Ground which God had marked out to him; beyond or out of which Line, who ever pretends to run, over-ſhoots himſelf and boaſts without Meaſure.

Q. *Wherein conſiſted the Difference between the Conduct of St.* Paul, *and that of the falſe Apoſtles?*

A. The Apoſtle's Line or Meaſure reached as far as *Corinth*, where *Chriſt* never had been preached; thither he came, and there he firſt planted the *Chriſtian* Faith, and from thence takes Occaſion, to advance himſelf above the falſe Apoſtles.

He could likewiſe ſhew a Commiſſion to preach to the *Corinthians*; a Meaſure by which God had aſſigned the *Corinthians* to him as his proper Province, which none of them could pretend to.

And whereas they went out of their Line, leaping from one Church to another, he went on orderly in the Converſion of the Churches to the Faith, from *Judea*, through all interjacent Provinces, till he came to *Corinth*.

They alſo came to thoſe Churches where the Goſpel had been already preached, and ſo could boaſt only of Things made ready to their Hands; he preached the Goſpel where *Chriſt* was not named before.

Again; St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians* that he would not boaſt of other Men's Labours, nor pretend any Title to thoſe *Chriſtians* at *Corinth*, nor any where elſe, whom others had converted, as the falſe Apoſtles did: Notwithſtanding he declares his Hope, that when the Goſpel ſhould have an eminent Succeſs amongſt them, and thereby their Faith be increaſed; that the Increaſe of their Faith would increaſe his Joy and Comfort, his preſent Advantage and future Reward; becauſe it was the Fruit and Increaſe of the Seed he himſelf had ſown amongſt them. He hopes alſo, that he ſhall ſpread the Goſpel beyond *Corinth*, in the Regions of *Achaia*, where it had not been preach'd before; he being unwilling to enter upon other Mens Labours.

It is a ſpecial Favour now vouchſafed by God to his Miniſters, if he makes them Inſtrumenrs in his Hands, either for Converſion or Edification, either for bringing home, or building up a People.

Q. *What is the Import of theſe Words, Ver.* 17. He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord?

A. Theſe Words are a ſeaſonable Exhortation to all the Miniſters of the Goſpel; 1. To take heed that they glory not in themſelves, or in any Services or Performances of their own. Alas! what have we, that we have not received? Or what do we, wherein we have not been divinely aſſiſted? And, if ſo, why ſhould we glory? God ſeldom ſuffers a proud aſſuming Miniſter, to be either ſerviceable or ſucceſsful in his Work. 2. Though Miniſters are not to glory in themſelves, yet are they to glory in the Lord.

They are, 1. to glory in the Work of the Lord, that they promote his Kingdom, his Honour, and Intereſt in the World. 2. To glory in the Help of the Lord, the Lord is a Maſter in Covenant with us, and that a Covenant of Grace, in which every Command has a Promiſe annexed to it, both in Aſſiſtance and Acceptance. To glory in the Reward of the Lord, expected by us, and ſecured to us, by Purchaſe and Promiſe, the private *Chriſtians* Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord, much leſs faithful Miniſters, who have borne the Burthen and Heat of the Day; let them glory in the Lord, and not in themſelves, ſeeing all the Good that is in them and their Actions comes from him, and their Recompence of Reward is ſecured by him.

Q. *Pray explain the concluding Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. In the laſt Verſe ſeveral Things are obſervable; as firſt, the Proneneſs of human Nature, to admire, applaud, and commend itſelf. Man is a proud Piece of Fleſh, and a little apprehended Excellency in himſelf puffs him up, and he looks big with Conceit: 'Tis rare to ſee a Man rich in Gifts, and poor in Spirit; Poverty of Spirit is better than all the richeſt Gifts; yea, it is the trueſt Riches of Grace.

Again; Self-commendation is no juſt Praiſe, but rather Diſparagement, a ſhameful Indication both of Pride and Folly. He that commends himſelf, is not approved either of God or wiſe Men; the ſame Word in *Hebrew*, ſignifies to praiſe ourſelves, and to be fooliſh, becauſe there is no greater Evidence of Folly, than Self-commendation; yet a wiſe Man is ſometimes forced in his own vindication, to commend himſelf and ſet forth his own Merits.

Laſtly, it is God's Approbation, not our own Commendation, which is Matter of true Praiſe and Honour. When God and our Conſcience bears witneſs to our Sincerity, we need neither our own nor other's Commendations; the open Teſtimony of God, and the ſilent Applauſe of our own Conſcience, is above all Commendations whatſoever.

CHAP. XI.

The Apoſtle's Zeal for the Corinthians. *His Behaviour towards them irreproachable, he received no Maintenance from them as he had of other Churches. He was not inferior to the falſe Apoſtles, in any legal Prerogative; but in the Service of* Chriſt, *and all kinds of Suffering, far Superior; had on him the Care of all the Churches; beſides his Troubles at* Damaſcus.

Q. OUR *Apoſtle, to vindicate himſelf and his Apoſtleſhip from Contempt, here gives us a large Catalogue of his Sufferings and Services, not to grace himſelf, but to glorify God thereby: How does he proceed herein.*

A. That which the Apoſtle, in the firſt Verſe, calls his Folly, is his ſpeaking ſo much in his own Commendation and Praiſe, becauſe, ordinarily, Self-commendation is a Sign of Folly, though not always. As if he had ſaid, I wiſh you would bear with me a little, in that which looks like a fooliſh Boaſting in me; namely, my glorying in my Performances, in my Services and Sufferings amongſt you, you muſt bear with me herein.

Q. *What Reaſon does he aſſign for his Boaſting?*

A. The Reaſon which conſtrained the Apoſtle to this, was his holy Jealouſy for them. He had, by his preaching the Goſpel, brought them to know and believe in *Chriſt*, and ſo by converting them to the *Chriſtian* Faith, had eſpouſed them to *Chriſt*: He therefore earneſtly deſired, he might preſent them a pure and chaſte Virgin; that is, a ſpotleſs Church unto *Chriſt*. As the *Jews* ſay, that *Moſes* eſpouſed *Iſrael* to God in mount *Sinai*, when he made them enter into Covenant with him there; ſo ſays the Apoſtle here, by converting you to the *Chriſtian* Faith, I have eſpouſed you to one Huſband, even *Chriſt*; therefore he was really afraid, leſt, as *Eve* was ſeduced by the Subtilty of the Devil, ſo their Minds ſhould be corrupted by falſe Apoſtle, and ſeduced from the pure Doctrine of the Goſpels: For as the nobleſt and moſt generous Wine is adulterated by mingling it with Water, ſo is the Doctrine of the Goſpel corrupted by mixing with it either Philoſophical Speculations, *Jewiſh* Traditions, or any Sort of human Inventions. Well therefore might the Apoſtle ſay, *I fear, leſt your Minds ſhould be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in* Chriſt.

Q. *How does he farther explain himſelf upon this Head?*

A. The Apoſtle adds, It is *Chriſt*, one Spirit, one Goſpel, and not many, which we have preached, and you have received; now if your new Teachers, the falſe Apoſtles, have another *Chriſt* to ſet forth, more excellent Gifts of the Spirit to boaſt of, another Goſpel to preach to you which I never preached amongſt you, let them be heard and received: But this being impoſſible, they might well bear with him in his modeſt boaſting in what he had done and ſuffered amongſt them, by whoſe Miniſtry they were at firſt converted to Chriſtianity.

Q. *Does not the Apoſtle exceed the Truth, when he ſays, ver.* 5. I ſuppoſe I was not a whit behind the very chiefeſt of the Apoſtles?

A. He might have ſaid he was equal with them, and in ſome Senſe ſuperior to them, even the moſt eminent of them, *Peter*, *James* and *John*. Indeed the Apoſtleſhip, as an Office, was of equal Dignity among all the Apoſtles; but even amongſt them ſome had more excellent Gifts. and greater Enlargements, and did more ſignal Services than others. Thus one of thoſe Stars differ'd from another in Brightneſs and Glory.

But obſerve, before whom it is ſaid St. *Paul* thus compares himſelf with the chiefeſt Apoſtles; it was not before the true, but before the falſe Apoſtles, that he makes this modeſt Boaſt. He did not contend with any of the Apoſtles of *Chriſt* for the Upper-hand, nor ſay, I am not behind any of you, or I am better than any of you; he only checks thoſe falſe Apoſtles who undervalued and deſpiſed him. He, who at another Time ſaid, *I am not worthy to be called an Apoſtle*, ſays here, *I am not behind the chiefeſt Apoſtles*.

Hence it appears, that the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, may ſtand upon Terms of Credit with thoſe that villify their Perſons, diſparage their Function, and diſcredit that honourable Work which God had called them unto. Tho' all ambitious contending with others as odious, yet no Man ought to betray the Truth of God or his own Integrity, leſt he ſhould be counted contentious. He purchaſes the Opinion of an humble and peaceable Miniſter at too dear a Rate, who either pays his Faith in *Chriſt*, or his own Credit.

Q. *What was it the falſe Apoſtles objected againſt St.* Paul?

A. The Objection which the falſe Apoſtles (thoſe proud Boaſters of their Eloquence) made againſt St. *Paul*, was, that he was *rude in Speech*.

Some imagine that St. *Paul* had an Imperfection in his Speech or Utterance. Others affirm, that he was an eloquent Preacher, from *Acts* xix. 12. where, on that account, he is called *Mercurius*; but he did not think fit, in his Miniſtry, to uſe the *Grecian* oſtentatious Oratory, that ſo the Power of the Goſpel might not ſeem to be placed in human Wiſdom.

However, adds the Apoſtle, *though I be rude in Speech, yet not in Knowledge*: If my Language has nothing extraordinary in it, yet ſure nothing can be objected againſt my Skill in Myſteries of Salvation. But I need not tell you this, who have had the Proof of it in my Miniſtry among yourſelves.

St. *Paul*, no doubt, could have acted the Orator in the Pulpit as well as moſt; but he choſe rather to ſpeak cloſe and home to the Conſciences of Men in a plain and familiar Stile, delivering all his Evangelical and Apoſtolical Precepts ſo plainly that the weakeſt Capacities might underſtand and receive them. Plain Truths, without Art or Varniſh, may be conveyed with more Warmth and Vigour to the Conſcience, than by all the Charms of human Eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular Tongue.

Q. *Why did the Apoſtle receive Maintenance from the* Macedonians, *and not from the* Corinthians?

A. The Reaſon why St. *Paul* preached the Goſpel, without receiving any thing for it, at *Corinth*, was, to cut off all Occaſion from the falſe Apoſtles, who ſought Occaſion to traduce and ſlander him, as a poor indigent Fellow who preached for Bread.

It is very probable, that theſe falſe Apoſtles were ſome rich Men, who took no Pay of the Church for what they did; but preached, or rather deceived freely, and would have reproached the Apoſtle as a mercenary Preacher, had he taken any Thing.

Hence it appears, that a Maintenance for Miniſters is agreeable to the Mind of *Chriſt*. The Apoſtles themſelves did not work, at leaſt, not at all Times, for their Livelihood, but generally ſpeaking, received Maintenance from the Churches; *I robbed other Churches, taking Wages of them*. We don't find that the eleven Apoſtles, after the Holy Ghoſt came upon them, wrought afterwards for their Livelihood, but gave themſelves continually to Prayer, and to the Miniſtry of the Word, *Acts*, vi. 4.

But though St. *Paul* labour'd with his Hands at *Corinth*, and refuſed Maintenance, for the Reaſons aforeſaid, yet his Example lays no Injunction on us to work for our Subſiſtence, nor forbids us to take Maintenance, when the Churches we ſerve are able to maintain us. St. *Paul* tells us, that when he wrought with his Hands, he had then a Power to leave working, 1 *Cor.* ix. 6. He had a Right to Maintenance from the Church at *Corinth*, though on prudential Conſiderations he forbore it, and no Law of *Chriſt* reſtrained him from it.

Hence learn, that there have been Perſons, from the firſt preaching and planting of the Goſpel, who have ſought, and took all Occaſions, though very unjuſtly, to charge the Miniſters of *Chriſt* with Covetouſneſs, Worldly-mindedneſs, and with preaching for the Sake of filthy Lucre. It was St. *Paul's* own Caſe; and therefore, ſays he, *will I glory in this*, that at *Corinth*, and in all *Achaia*, I have preached freely, to cut off occaſion from them that ſeek to charge me with Covetouſneſs. And thus it is at this Day: Let a Miniſter be never ſo laborious in his Office, or inoffenſive in his Life, if he expects but a moderate Part of what is his juſt Due, there are thoſe who will cheat him of one-Half of his Right, and then charge him with Covetouſneſs for demanding the other.

Q. *What Character does he give of the falſe Apoſtles?*

A. St. *Paul* thus deſcribes them; *They transformed themſelves into the Apoſtles of* Chriſt; that is, they pretend to be *Chriſt's* Apoſtles, and act as if they were ſuch indeed; they take up the Doctrine of *Chriſt* in ſome Things which the Apoſtles taught; but it was to weaken the Eſtimation of the true Apoſtles in the Hearts of the *Corinthians*, and ſet themſelves up there.

Theſe falſe Apoſtles were *Judaizing Chriſtians*, who mingled *Judaiſm* with *Chriſtianity*, and endeavoured to bring the *Corinthians* under the Bondage of the ceremonial Law.

Q. *What uſeful Inſtructions does this afford us?*

A. Behold here the firſt Hereſy that the Wiſdom of God ſuffered to be broached in the Church, even in the Apoſtles Days; what Wonder then, that no Age of the Church ſince, has been exempted from Trials of the ſame Kind? *They transform themſelves into the Apoſtles of* Chriſt, *even as* Satan *himſelf was transformed into an Angel of Light.* Satan then is an Angel of Light, when he ſuggeſts good for evil Ends, and under ſpecious Pretences of bringing Glory to God, tempts Perſons to tranſgreſs his Will. Thus the falſe Apoſtles would preach Error with as great Zeal, Perſuaſions and Motives, as the holy Apoſtles did for the Entertainment of Truth, ſeeming to do the ſame Things as the Miniſters of *Chriſt* did.

Hence it appears, that the higheſt Pretences to Truth, Orthodoxneſs, free Grace, Purity, and Unity, are no ſufficient Evidences of a true Miniſtry. *Satan*, and his Miniſters, who love, ſometimes, to transform themſelves into Angels of Light, may pretend to all theſe, and are, notwithſtanding, the ſworn Enemies to *Chriſt*, and his Kingdom.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle farther ſay, in Vindication of his Boaſting?*

A. In the 16th and 17th Verſes, the Apoſtle returns again to his own juſt and neceſſary Vindication of himſelf; he acknowledges it unbecoming and unſeemly to boaſt much; and that Boaſting is the uſual Mark of a Fool; but it's no Folly when the Intereſt of God, and Souls, require it: It was only ſeemingly, and not really, his Folly; it was even Neceſſary, if we reſpect the Scope, Aim, and Deſign of it. Yet he tells them, that what he had before ſpoken, and was now about to ſpeak, *He ſpake not after the Lord*; that is, as if the Lord commanded any ſuch boaſting or glorying in ourſelves, or of ourſelves. He did not pretend to have any ſpecial Command from God to enlarge ſo copiouſly in his own Commendation; for the Spirit of God no-where adviſes us to commend ourſelves, or to glory, either in the Sufferings we have undergone, or the Services we have done: Yet, though the Apoſtle's Boaſting was not after the Lord, yet was it not contrary to the Lord, or to the Directions of his Word; which no-where commands us to conceal what Grace God has wrought in us, or the Good done by us, upon a fitting Occaſion, and with a ſincere Deſign, that he, and not ourſelves, may have the Praiſe and Glory of it.

Q. *But had the Apoſtle nothing to charge the* Corinthians *with, for giving Countenance to theſe falſe Teachers?*

A. From the 11th to the 21ſt Verſe, the Apoſtle reflects with ſome Smartneſs on the *Corinthians* (whom he ironically calls *Wiſe Men*) for ſuffering themſelves to be impoſed upon by falſe Teachers, to be tyrannized over, to be ſpunged upon and exhauſted, to be brought again into Bondage to *Jewiſh* Ceremonies, to be *ſmitten on the Face*; that is, to be upbraided to their very Faces, becauſe they had ſubjected themſelves to ſo mean and inconſiderable a Perſon, as *Paul*, a Tent-maker.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle mean by* glorying after the Fleſh?

A. By this he means, glorying in any external Privileges and Advantages; particularly, that they were the Seed of *Abraham*, and the only People of God, by viſible Profeſſion, at that Time in the World. Now the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians* plainly, that although there is nothing, after the Fleſh, which deſerves to be greatly gloried in, yet, ſince the falſe Apoſtles prided themſelves in theſe Things, he had as good Ground for boaſting, even on that Account, as themſelves.

This he makes appear in the 22d and 23d Verſes. I, ſays he, have ſuffered more for *Chriſt*, by Stripes, Impriſonment, by daily dying, than any of them have done.

Here note, that theſe falſe Teachers, the *Judea* Doctors, were moſt certainly of the *Jewiſh* Race; and that they were not only converted to, but did preach up the Faith of *Chriſt*; but, withal, the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the *Jewiſh* Rites. Theſe Teachers went from *Judea*, and gave great Diſturbance to all *Chriſtian* Churches; as *Corinth*, *Galatia*, and *Philippi*: And we often find St. *Paul* complaining of them, by the Name of *thoſe of the Circumciſion*; becauſe they required thoſe who embraced *Chriſtianity*, to ſubmit to Circumciſion and the *Jewiſh* Law.

Q. *What other Proof does the Apoſtle bring of the Truth of his Miniſtry?*

A. He farther proves the Truth of his Miniſtry and Apoſtleſhip; not as elſewhere, from the Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, which accompanied his Preaching, but from his Sufferings; a Proof which the falſe Apoſtles could not alledge for themſelves, and ſo could not glory in any Compariſon with him, in that reſpect.

Five Times received I forty Stripes, ſave one. The Law, *Deut.* xxv. 3. allowed forty Stripes to be given to thoſe that were ſentenced to be beaten, but forbad to exceed that Number: But it being cuſtomary to beat Delinquents with a Whip that had three Cords, they muſt either ſtop at Thirty-nine, or exceed, and go to Forty-two.

Q. *What Kind of Sufferings did he undergo?*

A. In the 25th, 26th, and 27th Verſes, the Apoſtle gives us a black Catalogue of his Sufferings: He was ſcourged by the *Jews*, with Whips; beaten by the *Gentiles* with Rods; ſtoned by the Rabble; thrice ſuffered Shipwreck; a Night and a Day toſſed to and fro upon the Sea, and in great Danger of periſhing; in Journeyings often, from one Country to another, to preach, plant, and

Propagate the Goſpel; in Perils at Sea and Land, by Pirates and Robbers; in Perils by his Countrymen, the *Jews*; in Perils in the Cities of *Damaſcus*, *Epheſus*, and *Jeruſalem*; in Perils in Wilderneſſes and Deſarts; in Perils amongſt falſe Brethren, Men of the *Chriſtian* Profeſſion; in Wearineſs and Painfulneſs, by travelling from Place to place; in Hunger and Thirſt, in Faſtings often; that is, in neceſſitated Hunger often, and in voluntary Faſtings frequent for ſpiritual Purpoſes; in Cold and Nakedneſs; that is, very poor and thin in Cloathing.

Lord! what Tongue can utter, what Heart conceive the Pains the Apoſtle took, or the Hazards he run, in preaching the Goſpel to a loſt World? And yet the good Man heartily thanks our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who had counted him faithful, and put him into the Miniſtry. None of the Miniſters of *Chriſt* have Reaſon to repent of the Choice of their Office, however difficult their Services may be, or whatever Sufferings or Reproaches they may be expoſed to.

Q. *Had the Apoſtle any other Trouble upon him beſide the Afflictions before recited?*

A. He had, beſide theſe, the Care and Buſineſs of all the new planted Churches, which was daily upon his Heart and Hand; his ſollicitous Care for the Proſperity and Happineſs of all the Churches of *Chriſt*, both near and afar off, was great and preſſing.

Who is weak, and I am not weak? What particular Church, or Chriſtian, is weak in Faith, or wavering in their Profeſſion? Who is he that is aſſaulted with inward Temptation, or outward Troubles, and I do not ſympathize with him, yea, burn with holy Zeal, and fervent Deſire, for his Settlement and Eſtabliſhing?

Sympathy among all the Members, eſpecially the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, is a great *Chriſtian* Duty: They ought to have a tender Compaſſion for the whole Flock, and alſo a quick Senſe both of the Sins and Sufferings of every particular and individual Member and Patt thereof. As *Chriſt*, our Head, is afflicted in all his Church's Afflictionss; ſo ought we, his Miniſters and Members, to be afflicted in the Afflictions of our Fellow-Brethren. He that has no Croſs of his own, muſt take a Share of his Brother's; yea, he that has many of his own, muſt bear a Part of all his Brethren's Croſſes. Good Men ever have been, and are Men of tender and compaſſionate Diſpoſitions, ready to mourn over, and lament for, both the Sins and Sufferings of others, from the Overflowings of a *Chriſt*-like Spirit in them. True Goodneſs ever promotes Compaſſion.

Q. *What were thoſe Infirmities the Apoſtle glories in?*

A. By *Infirmities*, are meant Sufferings, Reproaches and Diſgraces, Afflictions and Perſecutions, for the Sake of the Goſpel. Thus the Apoſtle choſe rather to glory in what *Chriſt* enabled him to ſuffer, than in what he enabled him to do for him; he had wrought divers Miracles, could ſpeak various Languages, had done great and eminent Services for *Chriſt*; but not a Word of theſe, becauſe, though theſe were Evidences of the Power of God in him, and of the Divine Favour towards him; yet were they no Demonſtrations of any inherent Grace or Goodneſs in him; whereas his patient bearing ſuch long, ſharp, and continual Sufferings for the ſake of the Goſpel, was an undeniable Proof of the extraordinary Meaſures of his Faith and Patience, of holy Self-denial, and eminent Love to God; and conſequently were a truer and greater Cauſe of Boaſting, than extraordinary Gifts, and miraculous Operations.

Q. *Do you believe that the Apoſtle did not deviate from the Truth, in the Account he gives of his Sufferings?*

A. That this Account of his Sufferings for *Chriſt* and his Goſpel, was the exact Truth, and no Lie, the Apoſtle appeals in a moſt awful and ſolemn Manner, to the All-knowing and Heart-ſearching God, whom he calls the *Father of our Lord* Jeſus, who is *bleſſed for evermore*, being a Term of Honour uſually annexed by the *Jews*, at the naming of God.

Q. *How does he conclude this diſmal Narrative of his Sufferings?*

A. The Apoſtle concludes the Relation of his Sufferings with a remarkable Deliverance from Danger and Death, at the City of *Damaſcus*, ſoon after his Converſion; ſee *Acts* ix. 24, 25.

The *Jews*, whom be confuted at *Damaſcus*, ſought to kill him; to which End, they had brought over to their Party, *Aretas*, who was King under the *Roman* Emperor, at *Damaſcus*, and he engages with the *Jews*, in perſecuting the Apoſtle. He ſhuts up the City Gates, keeps his Soldiers in Arms, and uſes all poſſible Means to prevent the Apoſtle's Eſcape, which yet God permitted him to make, being let down the Wall in a Basket.

Neither was it any Evidence or Cowardice that the Apoſtle fled, nor in the leaſt Degree ſinful; ſince our Lord has given us a Licence in this Caſe, *When they perſecute you in one City, fly to another.* Beſides, this Perſecution was directly levell'd againſt the Apoſtle in Particular; it was therefore piouſly done in the Diſciples, and prudent in the Apoſtle, to attend to the Means of his own Preſervation. All are not Martyrs; and none ſhall be ſo preſently; they muſt firſt finiſh their Courſe of Obedience, before they finiſh their Courſe with Joy.

CHAP. XII.

He might glory of his wonderful Revelations; but chuſes to glory in his Infirmities, and how he was buffeted; his Prayer, and God's Anſwer; they could not but be ſenſible of the true Evidence of his Apoſtleſhip. He teſtifies, that now the third Time he would come to them, but not to be burthenſome; nor were thoſe ſo who were ſent by him; and warns them to amend their Faults, that he, to his Sorrow, may not be forced to uſe his apoſtolical Power.

Q. PRAY *what particular Subject does the Apoſtle treat of in this Chapter?*

A. In the preceeding Chapter the Apoſtle gloried in his Infirmities; in this he glories in thoſe extraordinary Viſions and Revelations he was favoured with by God; concerning which he ſpeaks thus:

I acknowledge it neither decent nor advantageous, with reſpect to myſelf, to proceed in boaſting and glorying; but ſince it may be neceſſary, with reſpect to you, I will declare what Viſions and Revelations I have received from the Lord; in which I ſhall give ſuch an Evidence of the Favours of *Chriſt* to me, and ſuch a Teſtimony of my Miſſion from Heaven, as none of theſe Apoſtles or deceitful Workers can pretend to.

Hence learn, that divine Revelations, acquainting the Soul with Heaven, and the Myſteries of an inviſible World, are Matters moſt worthy of modeſt and humble glorying. Would God be pleaſed to favour us with a Sight of what St. *Paul* ſaw, what Trifles would Crowns and Scepters, Empires and Kingdoms ſeem to us? How ſhould we long to be with *Chriſt*? But though we are not to expect ſuch Raptures and Extacies as St. *Paul* had, yet bleſſed be God we have a clear Revelation of this heavenly Glory made known in the Goſpel, and an Aſſurance that *Chriſt*, as our Forerunner is enter'd into it, in the Name and Stead of all Believers: He has prepared it for us, and is daily preparing us for that, and in his own appointed Time will put us into the actual Poſſeſſion of it: Not for a few Hours, (which was all the Apoſtle enjoyed) but for eternal Ages.

Q. *In the 2d and following Verſes the Apoſtle gives us an Account of an extraordinary Revelation, in there are ſome Things not very eaſy to be underſtood; which therefore pray explain?*

A. *I knew a Man in* Chriſt, *&c.* The Perſon here ſpoken of was doubtleſs the Apoſtle himſelf, otherwiſe it had been no Cauſe or Ground of glorying to him at all, yet he ſpeaks it in the Name of a third Perſon.

A Man in Chriſt; that is, a Man actuated by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, above himſelf; the Place he was caught up to, was Paradiſe, the Seat and Reſidence of the Bleſſed.

Here note, that Souls are not ſo cloſely tied to the Body, but they may, when ever God pleaſes, be wrapt up into Paradiſe or the third Heaven. The Apoſtle not being able to tell, whether he was in, or out of the Body, ſhews that ſome-how the Soul was there, though he could not declare nor diſcover the Manner how.

When St. *Paul* was thus caught into Paradiſe, he there heard *unſpeakable* Words, ſuch as cannot be uttered; or if uttered, cannot be underſtood.

Hence learn, that the Things of heavenly Paradiſe are to mortal Men unſpeakable; there is no human Language that hath ſufficient Energy or Power to expreſs that Part of Heavenly Things which God hath concealed as ſecret from us.

Note alſo St. *Paul's* great Humility, both in concealing formerly this extraordinary Favour, and now not without ſome Difficulty or Diſguiſe mentioning it, though for Defence of the Goſpel; contenting himſelf with ſuch a Frame as his Deportment and outward Actions, in ſerving the Intereſt of *Chriſt*, could procure, and no way avoid.

Q. *What are the Apoſtle's Reflections upon this extraordinary Viſion?*

A. The Apoſtle, however, declares, that although this Fore-taſte of the Heavenly Glory was worthy to be gloried in; and tho' he might boaſt of himſelf as thus exalted, yet he being purely paſſive in it, and advanced by God to it, he choſe rather to aſcribe the Glory to God, and content himſelf in glorying in ſuch Infirmities, and debaſing Sufferings, as he could ſtrictly call his own. However, he aſſures them, that if he had Mind to the Glory of this Rapture and Revelation, he might do it without Folly or Vanity, it being moſt certainly true; but he choſe rather to forbear, leſt he ſhould thereby give Occaſion to any to overvalue him, and to think more highly of him, than his common Behaviour, his ordinary Words and Actions, gave them Reaſon to do. A wiſe and good Man is not ambitious of more Applauſe than his perſonal Worth or Merits deſervedly challenge; he deſires no Man to think or ſpeak of him above that which he appears to be, which is always as he really is, being that in Reality, which he is in Appearance.

What Effect had this wonderful Revelation upon the Apoſtle?

A. By the Abundance of Revelations St. *Paul* was brought into great Danger of ſpiritual Pride. Pride is ſuch a Sin as the holieſt Saint is not fully ſecured from; no, not when he has been hearing unutterable Words, and ſeeing the heavenly Paradiſe itſelf; no, not if he came down from the Third Heaven, newly from converſing with Angels, yet bringing an imperfect Nature with him, he is not out of Danger of this Sin, much leſs is he ſo when he comes off his Knees from Prayers, *&c.*

Q. *By what Means was the Apoſtle humbled on this Occaſion?*

A. The Way and Means which the Wiſdom of God took to prevent St. *Paul's* falling into the dangerous Sin of ſpiritual Pride, was, the giving him a Thorn in the Fleſh; a bodily Pain, ſay ſome; a bitter Perſecution, ſay others; ſomething very afflictive to the Fleſh, ſay all. It is an happy Thorn in the Fleſh, which lets out the peſtilent and corrupt Blood of ſpiritual Pride in the Soul. Why then would any contend or quarrel with God for every Sickneſs, bodily Pain, or afflictive Croſs? Can Sin be prevented or killed at too dear a Rate?

Q. *Why is this* Thorn in the Fleſh *called* the Meſſenger of Satan?

A. St. *Chryſoſtom* concludes that it was ſome evil Angel that was permitted and empower'd by God to ſcourge and buffet him. It is no Proof that a Man is not a Child of God, becauſe Satan has a Permiſſion to torment his Fleſh. The Meſſenger of Satan, ſays St. *Paul*, was ſent to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted.

Q. *In the 7th Verſe we have the Apoſtle's Prayer on this Occaſion: To whom does he addreſs his Prayer, and for what?*

A. The Words are, *For this Thing I beſought the Lord thrice*, &c. *The Lord*; that is, the Lord Jeſus, as appears from the Words in Verſe 9, that *the power of* Chriſt *may reſt upon me.* Here is an Inſtance of Prayer made to *Chriſt*, therefore a Proof of his Divinity; Prayer made to *Chriſt* at all Times, in all Places, and for all Things, is an Evidence of his Omniſcience, Omnipotence, and Omnipreſence, and conſequently of his being truly and eſſentially God.

The Subject Matter of this Prayer was, for the Removal of the Affliction, *I prayed that it might depart from me*; together with the reiterated Frequency of it, *I beſought the Lord thrice.* Where mark St. *Paul's* Conformity to his Saviour, who in his Agony pray'd thrice that the Cup might paſs away, both of them with profound Submiſſion.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Anſwer given to St.* Paul's *Prayer.*

A. In the Anſwer given to St. *Paul's* Prayer, it is obſervable that the Mercy prayed for, is not given him in Kind, but Grace and Strength promiſed, which is better. We are not Lords, but Beggars, and muſt leave it to God to determine the Matter, Manner, Meaſure, and Time of our Afflictions.

As in the Prayer, ſo in the Anſwer, St. *Paul* was conformable to *Chriſt*; the one was heard, but not by removing the Thorn in the Fleſh, but both were heard by Aſſurance and Supply of divine Strength and Grace ſufficient to their Need; *He ſaid unto me, my Grace is ſufficient for thee.*

Hence learn, that the Grace of *Chriſt* is ſufficient for his People in all their Afflictions; ſufficient for their Preſervation, to keep them from falling away from God, and Godlineſs, by the Temptations which always attends Affliction; ſufficient for their Suſtentation, to uphold and ſupport them in and under their heavieſt Preſſures and Afflictions; and ſufficient to render their Afflictions truly advantagious and ſerviceable to them, to make them more holy, humble, heavenly, conformable to *Chriſt*, &c.

For my Strength is made perfect in Weakneſs. This is not to be underſtood, as if our Weakneſs added to, or could make the Power of God perfect; but our Weakneſs renders God's power more illuſtrious; he delights by our Weakneſs to manifeſt his helping Power; as the Stars never ſhine ſo gloriouſly as in the ſharpeſt froſty Night, ſo the Power of God never appears ſo conſpicuouſly as in our Weakneſs.

We never thought how much, or how long we could bear and hold out, till God manifeſted his power in our Weakneſs. More of the Power of Grace is ſeen in the Sufferings of Believers, than ever was ſeen in their Proſperity. How much more importunate ſhould a *Chriſtian* then be for divine Strength, than for the departing of the Thorn: Grace is better than Eaſe or Health; the one is peculiar to Saints, the other common to wicked Men and Brutes.

Q. *What Temper did St.* Paul *preſerve under theſe diſtinguiſhing Favours from Heaven?*

A. In thh 9th Verſe, the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians*, that moſt gladly he choſe rather to glory in his Affliction and Tribulation, than in his Viſions and Revelations, becauſe by them he had greater Experience of the Power and Preſence of *Chriſt* with him, and ſupporting of him under all his Preſſures. The People of God in all their Troubles, and Trials, experience the ſame divine Power, aſſiſting, ſupporting, and bearing them triumphantly through all.

To glory in Tribulation is a very high Pitch of Holineſs and Grace, but attainable. Many of the Martyrs were ſo far from changing Countenance at the Stake, that they ſung and triumph'd in the midſt of the Flames.

Q. *But can any Comfort be derived from this Text, for ſinful Infirmities?*

A. From the Power of *Chriſt*, in this Text, there may. Thus the powerful Mediation and Interceſſion of *Chriſt* is magnified, in procuring the Acceptance of our Perſons and Services, notwithſtanding the ſinful Infirmities cleaving to them; alſo the Power of his Grace will at Death be magnified, in purging and purifying his People from all their Droſs and Dregs. There is nothing uneaſy to a Child of God, but there is ſomething in *Chriſt* to alleviate it; Affliction, Temptation, Death, the Wrath of God, the Law, all is uneaſy and diſpleaſing; but *Chriſt* has delivered us from the Curſe of the Law, ſatisfied the Juſtice of God, ſanctified the Croſs, ſweetened Death. How adorable is the Power! How deſirable the Grace of *Chriſt*!

Behold the high and heroick Pitch to which St. *Paul*'s Spirit was raiſed! *I take Pleaſure in Infirmities, &c.* Pleaſure is a Degree beyond Joy, though thoſe Sufferings were painful to the Fleſh, yet were they pleaſing to the Spirit: A *Chriſtian* may not love that which he bears, yet he may love to bear; to bear, is the Patience of Neceſſity; to love to bear, is the Patience of Virtue; to delight to bear Reproach or Perſecution for *Chriſt*, is expreſſive of the higheſt Affection towards *Chriſt*, and loweſt Subjection to him. If Nature ſuffers not a Saint to take pleaſure in Reproaches, as ſuch, yet Grace enables him to take Pleaſure in what he is reproached for.

Q. *But how could the Apoſtle take Pleaſure in Things which other Men account real Evils?*

A. The Cauſe which he aſſigns for his taking Pleaſure in Sufferings and Abaſements, is, becauſe they gave him ſuch Experience of the Power of *Chriſt*; inſomuch that when he was moſt weak in himſelf, he was then moſt ſtrong in him; *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong*; whicn Words are a divine Paradox or Riddle. The Meaning is, that when a *Chriſtian* is moſt ſenſible of his own Weakneſs, and moſt diffident and diſtruſtful of his own Strength, then the Power of *Chriſt* reſts upon him, and he experiences divine Strength aſſiſting him. *Chriſt* fills none but the Hungry; nor ſtrengthens any but the Weak; when in an humble Senſe of our Weakneſſes we reſt upon *Chriſt*, the power of *Chriſt* reſts upon us.

Q. *But does he make no Excuſe or Apology for his Boaſting?*

A. He tells the *Corinthians* they had compelled him to it, and ought to have ſaved him the Labour of it, by defending him themſelves: For he has done and ſuffered as much as any of the moſt eminent Apoſtles, tho' he look'd upon all as nothing; and conſequently his Services and Sufferings his Miracles, Signs and Wonders were undeniable Demonſtrations that he was an Apoſtle of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

He adds, that the Church of *Corinth* had as great and excellent Gifts of the Spirit beſtowed upon them, by his Miniſtry, as any Church whatever; all the Difference was, that what ever was done for them, was done freely; he put them to no Charge: Now, ſays he, if that be a Wrong, I hope you can eaſily forgive it; *Corinth* was a very rich and wealthy City, but they loved a cheap Goſpel; the Apoſtle ſpared their Purſes, not becauſe they were unable, but unwilling to draw them.

Q. *Does he ſay any Thing about his coming to them again?*

A. The Apoſtle next acquaints the *Corinthians*, that he was preparing himſelf a third Time to come to them, being twice providentially hindered before, yet with a firm Reſolution to be no ways burthenſome to them; for he coveted not their Poſſeſſions, but was deſirous of their Salvation: And as a Parent lays up for his Children, and takes not from them; ſo he deſired, as their ſpiritual Father, to enrich them with ſpiritual good Things, and not to take from them any of their temporal Riches. Nay, he was willing to ſpend and be ſpent, that is, to ſpend his Strength, his Time, his Life; although he met with very undue Returns from ſome of them who loved him ſo little, becauſe he loved them ſo much; ſhewing more Kindneſs to their falſe Apoſtles, than to their ſpiritual Father.

Behold here an imitable Pattern of miniſterial Diligence and Faithfulneſs, Love and Affectionateneſs; the Apoſtle was willing to ſpend and be ſpent. How tender are ſome of their Carcaſſes now, how fearful of their Skins, how ſparing of their Pains, for fear of ſhortening their Days, and haſtening their End! Whereas the Lamp of our Lives can never burn out better than in lighting others to Heaven; is it not better that our Fleſh conſume with Induſtry and Uſefulneſs, than wear out with Ruſt and Idleneſs? As it it the Duty, ſo 'tis the Diſpoſition of the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt*, to ſpend and be ſpent for Souls.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle anſwer the Objection, which ſome had unjuſtly alledg'd againſt him; namely, that tho' he was not burthenſome to the* Corinthians *himſelf, nor took any thing of them for preaching the Goſpel, yet that he cunningly and craftily ſent others to them; and ſet them at work to take Money for him?*

A. To wipe off this Aſperſion, the Apoſtle appeals to themſelves, whether any Perſon he ever ſent to them, received any thing of them for his Uſe? Neither *Titus*, nor *Luke*, made a Gain of them, but with the ſame Generoſity and Freedom preached the Goſpel, and communicated the Riches of Grace to their Souls. When the Miniſters of the Goſpel at any Time call in the Aſſiſtance of others to help them in their Work, their Care is to employ ſuch, as near as they can judge, who are of the ſame Spirit, and walk in the ſame Steps with themſelves, St. *Paul*, *Titus*, and *Luke*, unanimouſly agree in carrying on a generous Deſign for the preaching the Goſpel to the *Corinthians* freely, and are of the ſame Mind and Practice in every thing.

Q. *How does he apply the foregoing Diſcourſe?*

A. The Apoſtle concludes the Chapter in this Manner, Think not that for any ſiniſter or By-ends of my own I excuſe myſelf ſo often to you, for deferring ſo long my promiſed and intended Journey; for all I do is with a View to your Advantage; 'tis your Benefit and Reformation I aim at; for indeed I fear, whenever I come, I ſhall find thoſe Sins unrepented of, by many of you, which will be Matter of Humiliation and Sorrow to me; and that I muſt be obliged, contrary to my Inclination and Deſires, to inflict Cenſures and corporal Puniſhments upon many among you, for the Schiſms, Debates, and Strifes of ſome; for the Uncleanneſs, Fornication, and Laſciviouſneſs of others.

Here note, what great Diſorders, and ſcandalous Crimes were found in the Church of *Corinth*; and yet ſhe retained the Denomination and Character of a true Church.

But notwithſtanding all theſe Corruptions and ſcandalous Abuſes, St. *Paul* neither ſeparates himſelf, nor perſuades any to ſeparate from them. Nothing will will juſtify a Separation from a Church, but that which makes a Separation from betwixt God and that Church, namely, hereſy in Doctrine, or Idolatry in Worſhip.

CHAP. XIII.

He threatens to come and puniſh ſome Offenders, if they did not amend their Lives. Wiſhes they would try themſelves, and prevent the Puniſhment by Well-doing, that he may rejoice over them, and his Power tend to Edification, and not to Puniſhment. He concludes the Epiſtle with an Exhortation to divers Chriſtian *Virtues. The accuſtomed Salutation; and a Prayer for them unto God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt.*

Q. WHAT *is chiefly obſervable in this concluding Chapter?*

A. St. *Paul*, in both his Epiſtles, having blamed the *Corinthians* for ſeveral groſs Enormities, and, underſtanding that ſome ſtill continued in them, he tells them in plain Terms, that he was reſolv'd to come to them with his Rod of eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline and Church-cenſures, and would not ſpare a Man of them, but execute that Power on the impenitent, that *Chriſt* had given him, by excluding ſuch irreclaimable Offenders from Church-Communion.

Obſerve, how wiſely and cautiouſly the Apoſtle proceeds in executing the ſevere Cenſures of the Church: He admoniſhes them a firſt, ſecond, and third time, before he proceeds to the awful Sentence of Excommunication; *I told you before, I foretel you now, and being abſent, I write to you, that when I come I will not ſpare.*

Q. *What Reaſon does he give for threatning this Severity?*

A. He tells them that they had obliged him to take this Courſe, in that they had required a Proof of him, whether *Chriſt* had own'd him as an Apoſtle or not, and would ratify his Cenſures by Judgments following them. He ſhews that *Chriſt* had own'd him, and manifeſted his Power in his Miniſtry among them, by converting many of them to the *Chriſtian* Faith, by beſtowing the Gifts of his Spirit upon them, and by many Signs and Miracles which he was enabled to do among them.

When God calls his Servants to the Work of the Miniſtry, he leaves not either himſelf to them without Witneſs; he bears Teſtimony to their Sincerity, by giving them, in ſome Degree, the Seal of their Miniſtry, in the Converſion or Edification of thoſe they are ſent unto; *ſince you ſeek a Proof of* Chriſt *ſpeaking in me to you-ward he is not weak, but is mighty in and amongſt you.*

Q. *Next, the Apoſtle draws a Parallel between* Chriſt *and himſelf? What is his Application of it?*

A. As *Chriſt*, in his State of Humiliation, appear'd a weak and frail Man, by being crucified; yet was evidenced to be the Great and Mighty God, by his riſing from the Dead; ſo the Apoſtle, conſider'd in himſelf, and in reſpect of his Afflictions, appears a weak and contemptible Man; but they had found, and ſhould further find, a Reſemblance of the Power and Strength of *Chriſt*, in his Life and Miniſtry; that they ſhould find him arm'd with Authority from *Chriſt*, to execute Cenſures on the contumacious and impenitent.

Though the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, like their Maſter, when here on Earth, are in a State of Weakneſs, Poverty, and Contempt, yet are they cloathed with divine Power in the Execution of their Office, and their Miniſtry is a living, powerful, and efficacious Miniſtry, in the vigorous Effects of it upon the Hearts of their People; *we are weak in him but we ſhall live with him by the Power of God towards you?*

Q. *What is the next Point of Inſtruction the Apoſtle ſpeaks to?*

A. In the 5th Verſe, the Apoſtle adviſes the *Corinthians*, that inſtead of enquiring after the Proof of *Chriſt* in him, to examine whether they were in *Chriſt* themſelves; intimating, that thoſe who are ſo inquiſitive after the ſpiritual State and Condition of others, are generally moſt backward to examine the State of their own Souls.

Prove your own Souls. The Word is a Metaphor taken from Gold-Smiths, who with great Exactneſs try their Gold, the Truth of it by the Touch-Stone, its Weight by the Scale, and its Purity by the Fire. And the Repetition of the Command, *Examine yourſelves; prove yourſelves,* implies the Backwardneſs in Men's Natures to perform this Duty, the great Neceſſity of the Duty, and the Diligence and Frequency to be uſed in performing it.

Hence learn, that Self-examination is an excellent and important Duty. 'Tis neceſſary, in regard of our Comforts, and alſo in regard of our Graces, for there are counterfeit Graces, as well as real; common, as well as ſaving; and 'tis a Duty that requires Diligence and Frequency, becauſe the work is difficult, the Heart backward, and ourſelves apt, and willing to be deceived; and becauſe many have miſcarry'd without, or periſh'd by a negligent Performance of it.

The Subject-Matter of our Examination muſt be, *whether we be in the Faith*; that is, whether the Principle of Faith be in our Hearts, the Power of Faith in our Conſciences, the Practice of Faith in our Lives, whether our Faith be the Parent and Principle of Obedience, working by Love,

The Motive to this Duty is, *except ye be Reprobates*; that is, counterfeit, adulterate, unſound, and inſincere *Chriſtians*, unaccepted of God, and not own'd by him. As Reprobate Silver has no Worth or Fitneſs in it for trading, ſo ſuch *Chriſtians*, as upon Examination, are not found to have the Grace of Faith in them, more precious than Gold, are unapprov'd of God, and rejected by him.

Know ye not your own ſelves? This implies both the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs of the Neglect of this Duty, and alſo the Poſſibility and Eaſineſs of knowing whether *Chriſt* be in us or not, upon a due and diligent Enquiry, whether we have experienc'd the quickening and transforming Power of *Chriſt* in our Hearts and Lives.

But, adds the Apoſtle, whatever you, upon Examination, ſhall be found to be, I truſt you ſhall know, and be convinc'd that we have not diſhonoured *Chriſt*, nor ſhall be diſown'd of him. But you ſhall find, when I come, that I am not deſtitute of the Grace and Power of *Chriſt*; whether for advancing your Faith, improving your Holineſs, or correcting your Miſcariages. The Miniſters of *Chriſt*, who perform their Duty faithfully, ſhall be own'd and approv'd of God, when the Reprobate World ſhall be condemn'd by him.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle farther expreſs his Concern for the* Corinthians?

A. In the 7th Verſe, the Apoſtle implores Almighty God, that the *Corinthians* might be found doing no Evil, which might expoſe them to his Cenſure, and force him to exerciſe his apoſtolical Power, in puniſhing ſuch Offenders as he ſhould find among them. And he prays thus for them, becauſe he had rather have them good, than by puniſhing their evil Manners, have an Occaſion to teſtify himſelf an approved and faithful Apoſtle: For he did not ſo much regard his own Reputation, as their Salvation.

For we can do nothing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth; that is, we may not, being under the Reſtraint of a divine Command; ſincere *Chriſtians* will not, being reſtrain'd by an inward Principle; neither the Conviction of their Underſtandings, the Clearneſs of their Judgments, nor the Holineſs of their Hearts, will ſuffer them to oppoſe the Truth.

Again; they cannot attempt it; or if they do, they cannot effect it; they cannot do it ſafely, or ſucceſsfully. We can do nothing againſt the Truth by way of Diſcouragement, nothing in a way of Diſparagement: But all our Endeavours are for the Truth; we embrace it in our Judgments, we hide it in our Hearts, and practiſe it in our Lives; every Talent a Miniſter is intruſted with muſt be employ'd in the Service of Truth.

Q. *In what Senſe do you take the Words in the 8th Verſe?*

A. The Text runs thus: *For we are glad when we are weak, and ye are ſtrong.* Theſe Words may be underſtood two Ways; 1. *We are glad*; that is, when I have no Occaſion to maniſeſt my apoſtolical Power, in cenſuring any of you as Offenders: *And ye are ſtrong*; ſtrong in Faith, and fruitful in good Works. 2. We are glad, though we are weaken'd by many Sufferings and Infirmities, if thereby you are made ſtrong. For this is the principal Object of our Wiſh and Endeavour even your Perfection in Knowledge, Faith and Holineſs.

Q. *Does the Apoſtle give any Reaſon for his writing this Epiſtle to them?*

A. He adds, I write this to you, being abſent, purpoſely to reclaim you, leſt being preſent, I ſhould be forced to uſe ſome Sharpneſs towards you, according to the Power which the Lord hath given me, tending always to your Edification, never to your Deſtruction.

How tenderly the Apoſtle treats theſe Offenders? He tells them the Sharpneſs and Severity in his Letters, was kindly intended to prevent Sharpneſs and Severity in his Dealings with them, when he came amongſt them; yet withal aſſures them, that if Matters ſhould come to an Extremity, that he muſt be forced to uſe his apoſtolical Authority, in cutting the contumacious off from the Church's Communion; he would exerciſe it with a tender Regard to their Good, not to their Hurt; for their Edification, and not willingly to their Deſtruction.

Q. *What do you obſerve npon the Concluſion of this Epiſtle?*

A. The Apoſtle cloſes his Epiſtle with a pathetical Option and affectionate Wiſh of all Perfection, Conſolation, Concord, and Communion, to his beloved *Corinthians*.

Here note, that the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* have a fervent and unfeign'd love for the People committed to their Charge, and are deſirous, when they

they are taking their Leave of them, to leave God with them; *the God of Love and Peace* ſhall be *with you.* God's being with a People imports, that his Love, his Help, his Preſence is with them, and that ſhortly they ſhall be with God.

Note farther, the particular Graces and Bleſſings which the Apoſtle wiſhes his beloved *Corinthians*: He does not wiſh them temporal Honour, worldly Riches, ſenſual Pleaſures; but Perfection of Grace, ſpiritual Conſolation, mutual Love, ſweet Communion with God, Unanimity and Concord amongſt themſelves: Sanctifying and ſaving Graces are the beſt Legacies a Miniſter can leave to his People.

Be perfect, be knit together, let the Schiſms and Breaches which have been amongſt you be heal'd. *Be of good Comfort*; rejoice in all your Sufferings for *Chriſt*, and the Profeſſion of his holy Religion. *Be of one Mind*, of the ſame Judgment, if poſſible, in all Things; or if otherwiſe, let not Difference in Judgment cauſe Diſunion in Affection. *Live in Peace*; for the Lord's ſake, live no longer in Diviſion and Strife, in Contention and Wrath, let me hear no more of thoſe Debates, Envyings, Back-bitings, Whiſperings, which I have reproved you for; but eſpecially live in Peace with your Teachers and ſpiritual Guides; cauſe them not to complain to God of you for your factious Preference of one Miniſter to another. Thus doing, *the God of Peace and Love ſhall be with you.*

Q. *What other Duty does he exhort them to practice?*

A. He exhorts them, according to the Cuſtom of thoſe Eaſtern Countries, to ſalute one another with a Kiſs, as a Token of mutual and ſincere Love: And ſince it was become a Practice in Church-Aſſemblies, particularly before their receiving the holy Communion, to kiſs each other, he adviſes them to uſe it innocently, and chaſtly; let it not be a wanton, but an holy Kiſs. This Cuſtom, when the Church degenerated from its Purity, was laid aſide.

Q. *Is there any Thing particularly remarkable in the laſt Verſe?*

A. In the laſt Verſe the Apoſtle prays for the higheſt Bleſſings and Benefits to be beſtow'd on the *Corinthians*; namely, all that Love which does or can flow from the Father; all that Grace which we purchas'd by the Son, and all that Fellowſhip and Communion with, and from the Holy Spirit, which might render them meet for the Service of *Chriſt* on Earth, and for the full Fruition, and final Enjoyment of him in Heaven.

This is a full Text for the Holy Trinity; the Name of the Three Perſons, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, is here diſtinctly mentioned, as in the Commiſſion for, and Form of Baptiſm, *Mat.* xxviii. 19. Hence the Apoſtle calls the Father God, the Son Lord, and the Spirit rhe Holy Ghoſt; ſo that we have no Reaſon to doubt of the Perſonality of either, or any of them.

Q. *Was the Subſcription to this Epiſtle written by the Apoſtle, or ſome other Hand?*

A. If the Subſcriptions to the Apoſtolical Epiſtles were Parts of the Text and Holy Writ, we have it here determined, who that other Brother was, mentioned Chap. viii. 22. ſent along with *Titus* to carry this Letter, and the Benevolence of the Churches of *Macedonia.*

But it is obſerved, that even in this Subſcription, there is a certain Evidence that the Subſcriptions of the Epiſtles are no Part of Canonical Writ; for in ſome *Greek* Copies it is ſaid to be ſent by *Paul* and *Timothy*; whereas *Paul* was the Inditer of it, and not the Meſſenger, and was in *Macedonia* when it was ſent, and *Timothy* is joined with him in the Writing, Chap. i. 1.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle
TO THE
GALATIANS.

THE Galatians *very readily embraced the Goſpel, upon the preaching of St.* Paul. *and at firſt expreſs'd Abundance of Affection for him, and were zealous in the Profeſſion of what he taught. But St.* Paul *had left them but a ſhort Time, before ſome falſe Apoſtles from* Judea *crept in amongſt them, perverted ſome, and ſtaggered others; teaching that* Chriſtians *muſt ſubmit to Circumciſion, and obſerve the* Moſaical *Inſtitutions.*

To countenance this their Inſinuation they affirmed, that St. Peter, James, *and* John, *had ſent them thither, and that they were of the ſame Mind in this Matter; and particularly, that St.* Peter *was againſt the rejecting of Circumciſion, and did himſelf practice the ceremonial Law, and obſerve the Rites of it in common Converſation, by ſeparating himſelf from the* Gentiles. *Thus theſe* Judaizers *oppoſed the Doctrine and Practice of St.* Peter *to that of St.* Paul; *and to carry on their Deſign with greater Succeſs, they magnified other Apoſtles, and vilified St.* Paul, *not allowing him the Name or Right of an Apoſtle, having not ſeen* Chriſt *in the Fleſh, as the reſt had done, affirming that he was never called by* Chriſt, *nor ever own'd as an Apoſtle by the reſt of the Apoſtles.*

This Epiſtle therefore St. Paul *writes to vindicate himſelf and his Doctrine from all thoſe vile Inſinuations and Aſperſions, and concludes it with a ſolemn Proteſtation of his ſincere Affection for them, and aſſures them, as an Evidence thereof, he had written the whole Epiſtle with his own Hand, wiſhing them abundant Conſolation from* Chriſt, *both in Life and Death.*

CHAP. I.

The Superſcription of the Epiſtle; the uſual Salutarion; and a Thankſgiving to God. The Apoſtle reproves the Churches of Galatia *for turning away from the Apoſtolick Doctrine, which he learned not from Men, but from* Chriſt Jeſus *himſelf, which he proves by his firſt Zeal in* Judaiſm, *by his wonderful Converſion and Call to the Apoſtleſhip; and by his not conferring with other Apoſtles, immediately journeying to* Arabia, *and was not for many Years known, except by Report in* Judea.

Q. H*OW does the Apoſtle begin this Epiſtle?*

A. Paul is declared in the firſt Verſe to be the Penman of this Epiſtle, who is likewiſe deſcribed by his Office, *an Apoſtle*, and by his Commiſſion to that Office, from *God the Father by Jeſus Chriſt.*

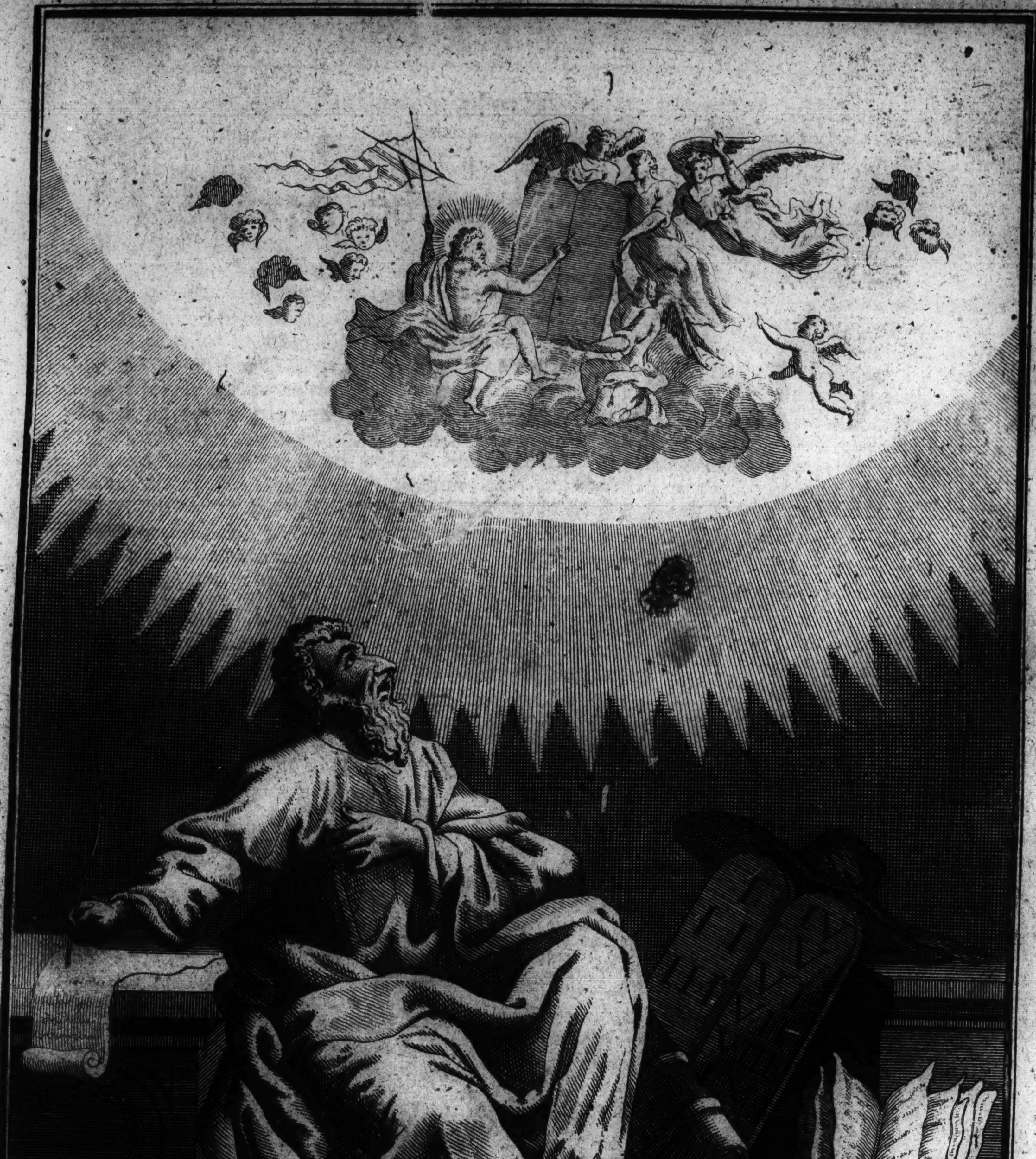
Here we may obſerve the great Modeſty of this Apoſtle in the ſetting forth his Authority as an Apoſtle; in the Front of thoſe Epiſtles, where he names any others in the Salutation with himſelf, (as *Sylvanus* and *Timotheus*) he mentions not himſelf as an Apoſtle, when named with them, leſt he ſhould be thought to magnify himſelf above them. But here, becauſe his Apoſtolical Office was called in Queſtion, he is neceſſitated to vindicate his Authority, and accordingly declares himſelf *an Apoſtle, not of Men, nor by Man*; that is, Men were neither the Authors nor Chuſers to his Office: He was not called, as *Matthias* was, *Acts* i. by the the Suffrage of the reſt of the Apoſtles; but was appointed by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and God the Father, who raiſed him from the Dead.

Thus far St. *Paul* ſtands upon equal Terms with the reſt of the Apoſtles; they did not call themſelves, nor were they called by *Chriſt* for any Worthineſs in themſelves above others, but behold the peculiar Prerogative of St. *Paul* above the reſt of the Apoſtles, in this particular; they were called by *Chriſt* in the Day of his Humiliation; but he was called by *Chriſt* in the Day of his Reſurrection; yea, in his higheſt State of Exaltation, when ſitting at his Father's right Hand in Heaven. The Goſpel he preached, he received by inward and immediate Revelation, which made him excel all the other Apoſtles; inſomuch, that though in his own Opinion he was the leaſt of Saints when here upon Earth, yet in the Opinion of others he was the holieſt Man upon Earth, and is the higheſt now in Heaven, next the Man *Chriſt Jeſus.*

And all the Brethren which are with me, that is, the Brethren here with me, and who own the Doctrine which I preach, ſend greeting to the Church of *Galatia.*

Here St. *Paul's* Doctrine is juſtified from the Charge of Singularity, which the Judaiſing falſe Teachers objected againſt it. What he wrote and

The Epistle of St. PAUL to the GALATIANS.



St. PAUL dehorts the GALATIANS from observing the Mosaical Institutions

taught, he tells them, was owned by all the Brethren.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in the Superſcription of this Epiſtle?*

A. It is not directed to a ſingle Perſon, nor to a particular Church, but to all the Churches in the Provinces of *Galatia*. There were ſeveral *Chriſtian* Congregations, called *Churches*, in that Country, and all them being infected with Judaiſm, that is, of ſuper-adding the Ceremonial Law of *Moſes* to the Goſpel of *Chriſt*; the Apoſtle, and the Brethren with him, direct this Epiſtle, not to any ſingle Church, but to them all in general, they being all equally concerned.

Note farther, that the Apoſtle does not ſay here, as elſewhere, To the Saints of God which are in *Galatia*; or, To them that are ſanctified by God the Father; but barely ſays, To the Churches of *Galatia*; thereby declaring his holy Indignation againſt the *Galatians*, as unworthy of thoſe gracious Appellations, becauſe they had ſadly corrupted the Doctrines of the Goſpel, begun in the Spirit, and ended in the Fleſh; firſt owning *Chriſt* and the Liberty of the Goſpel, and afterwards pleading for the Bondage of the Ceremonial Law.

But as corrupt as theſe *Galatian* Churches were, our Apoſtle acknowledges them to be true Churches; they retained the Eſſentials of Chriſtianity, and were not guilty either of Idolatry, or a total Apoſtaſy; therefore though ſtained with divers Corruptions, both in Doctrine and Morals, for which he ſharply rebukes them, yet he does not deny them the Name of Churches.

Q. *In what Manner does he give them his Salutation?*

A. The 3d Verſe is both a *Chriſtian* Salutation, and an Apoſtolical Benediction: As it is a Salutation, it expreſſes a Deſire of the beſt Bleſſings on them who are ſaluted. Thus Religion does not deſtroy, but ſpiritualizes, and improves Civility, Humanity, and common Courteſy. The Heathens wiſhed Health to their ſaluted Friends; the *Jews* Peace; but *Chriſtians*, Grace and Peace.

The Words may alſo be underſtood as an Apoſtolical Miniſterial Benediction: The Apoſtles were the Patriarchs of the Church of the *New Teſtament*; and as a ſpiritual Father, St. *Paul* here bleſſes his Children, wiſhing them firſt Grace, then Peace; Peace, without Grace, is no Peace. There can be no Peace with the Creator, no ſanctified Peace with the Creatures, except through *Jeſus Chriſt* we are firſt made Partakers of the gracious Love and Favours of Almighty God. Accordingly, ſays the Apoſtle here, *Grace be to you, and Peace from God the Father, and from our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *How did* Chriſt *give himſelf for our Sins, ver.* 4?

A. Jeſus Chriſt gave himſelf unto Death for Remiſſion of our Sins, that he might deliver us from the evil World; namely, to ſeparate and bring us off from the evil Cuſtoms and Practices of the wicked Men in the World, and engage us to live a Life of ſtrict Holineſs, according to the Will and Command of God our Father.

Here the Prieſtly Office of *Chriſt* is declared and aſſerted; *he gave himſelf for our Sins*; that is, an expiatory Sacrifice for our Sins. So deadly was the Guilt of Sin, ſo exact was the Juſtice of God, and ſo unalterable his Will, in executing the Judgment denounced againſt Sinners, that there was no Hope for Pardon, without Satiſfaction given to God's offended Juſtice; and nothing leſs could ſatiſfy that, than the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is truly and eſſentially God.

Another End that *Chriſt* had in giving himſelf for us, was to deliver us from the Rage of our Luſts, as well as from the Wrath of God, to ſanctify our Natures for us, and to mortify our Corruptions in us, to redeem us from our vain Converſation, and *deliver us from this preſent evil World*; not totally to deliver us out of the World, but morally to oblige us to abandon the wicked Courſes, the ſinful Practices, of the evil Men of the World. *Chriſt* is as willing to free us from the Dominion, as from the Danger of our Sins; *He gave himſelf for us, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil World.*

Q. *What was the principal Cauſe of* Chriſt's *Death?*

A. The efficient Cauſe of *Chriſt*'s Death, was the Will of his Father, *He gave himſelf for us, according to the Will of God*, that is, according to the Purpoſe and Appointment of God. *Chriſt*, as Mediator, was the Father's Servant, and what he did in the Work of Mediation for us, was by the Appointment, and with the ſpecial Approbation of God the Father. Thus the Son's Purchaſe was the Father's Pleaſure.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in the* 4th *Verſe?*

A. Note alſo, the comfortable Relation God ſtands in to us, ſince *Chriſt* gave himſelf for us, namely, that of a Father; our Father by Adoption, who before was only our Father by Creation.

To whom be Glory for ever and and ever, Amen. That is, to God the Father, and *Chriſt Jeſus* our Redeemer, be given the higheſt Degrees of Honour and Glory, throughout the preſent and eternal Ages; to God the Father as the Accompliſher of the Work of Redemption.

The Duty of aſcribing Honour and Homage, Glory and Praiſe to the Father, and Mediator, for the glorious Work of Man's Redemption is ſuch, that it can never be ſufficiently diſcharged, but requires a Poſſeſſion of Ages to perform it in; yea, Eternity itſelf is too ſhort for the Performance of it; a Work begun on Earth, never finiſhed in Heaven.

Q. *What was the Charge which the Apoſtle had againſt thoſe who perverted the Goſpel?*

A. The heavy Charge St. *Paul* alledges, againſt the falſe Apoſtles, or Judaizing Teachers, was they perverted the Goſpel which he preached, and taught a new Goſpel of their own; yet not abſolutely ſo, but by compounding and mangling the Goſpel with the Ceremonial Law, and by making Circumciſion and other Things, neceſſary to Salvation, which our Saviour never made ſo; this he calls *another Goſpel*. No wonder then, that we who are fallen into the very Dregs of Time and Error, ſee new Goſpels and new Doctrines broach'd ſince the Church in its primitive Purity was not free from them.

Hence learn, that the Addition of any thing to the *Chriſtian* Religion, as neceſſary to be believ'd and practic'd in order to Salvation, is a perverting the Goſpel of *Chriſt*. Theſe *Galatians* did not renounce Chriſtianity, and embrace another Religion, but they received Circumciſion, and obſerv'd *Moſes's* Law, as an eſſential Part of the *Chriſtian* Religion, and as a Condition of eternal Salvation: Whereas the Death of *Chriſt* having put an End to the *Jewiſh* Diſpenſation, there remains no Obligation upon *Chriſtians* to obſerve the Law of *Moſes*; therefore any Addition to the *Chriſtian* Doctrine, is to preach another Goſpel, and a manifeſt Perverſion of the Goſpel of *Chriſt*.

Learn alſo, that there is no Authority in the *Chriſtian* Church, or in all the Guides of it, to impoſe any thing upon *Chriſtians*, as of Neceſſity to Salvation, which the Goſpel has not made neceſſary; even the Apoſtles had no Authority to add any thing to the Goſpel, much leſs have any that come after them, *Matt.* xxviii.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's Meaning, when he ſays, verſe* 6. I marvel that ye are ſo ſoon removed?

A. Seducers are for clapping up a haſty Match between the Mind and Error, and preſs the ſeduced to quick Reſolutions; an haſty Diſpatch being their Advantage, before they conſult their ſpiritual Guides, or weigh Matters in the Ballance of impartial Judgment.

Q. *What other Argument does the Apoſtle uſe in Confirmation of his Doctrine?*

A. Our Apoſtle, to confirm what he before affirmed, ſuppoſes an Impoſſibility. He does not ſuppoſe it poſſible for an Angel in Heaven, or an Apoſtle upon Earth, to contradict the Doctrine of the Goſpel which he had delivered, making that neceſſary to be believed and practiſed, which *Chriſt*, and his Apoſtles, never made neceſſary.

Q. *What do we learn from the Curſe which the Apoſtle denounc'd againſt thoſe who perverted the Goſpel, verſe* 8?

A. Let the Church of *Rome* in general, and the Council of *Trent* in particular, dread the Efficacy of this Curſes who have added ſo many new Articles to the *Chriſtian* Faith, and enforced them as neceſſary to be believed by all *Chriſtians*; ſo neceſſary, that Salvation cannot be obtained without them; and denounce their Anathema's againſt us who cannot believe them.

The Apoſtle, to ſhew that what he ſaid was not without due Conſideration, he repeats it in Verſe 9. He is poſitive and peremptory; and doubtleſs this one Anathema of his was more dreadful than all the *Bruta Fulmina* the freakiſh Anathemas of an Enthuſiaſtick Church, which, in a manifeſt Affront to the Authority of St. *Panl*, has preſum'd to add ſo many new Articles to the Chriſtian Religion, for which there is not the leaſt Warrant either from Holy Scriptures, or the antient Creed.

The Apoſtle puts himſelf into the Number, if I, or any Man, or any Angel, preach otherwiſe, let him be accurſed. As if he had ſaid, Not only the the falſe Apoſtles are to be rejected, but I myſelf deſerve to be anathematiz'd ſhould I preach any other Doctrine than what you have received from *Chriſt* by me.

Q. *What Method did St.* Paul *take in preaching the Goſpel to the* Galatians?

A. The Apoſtle next diſcovers his great Sincerity in preaching the pure and unmixed Doctrine of the Goſpel to the *Galatians*; for he did not perſuade that Men, but God, ſhould be heard and obeyed, that ſo their Faith might be founded upon Divine, and not human Authority; nor did he in his Miniſtry aim at pleaſing Men, but *Chriſt*: For ſhould he pleaſe Men, being an Apoſtle, as he tha done in Times paſt, being a *Phariſee*, he would not have been *the Servant of Chriſt*. Miniſters muſt not pleaſe Men, either by Flattery or Falſhood, nor accommodate their Doctrine to the Humours and Diſpoſitions of Men; to pleaſe God is their main Buſineſs; and to pleaſe Men for their Good to Edification.

Q. *What kind of Doctrine did St.* Paul *preach?*

A. The Apoſtle, to ſatisfy them in the Divinity of his Doctrine, tells them, it was not after Man; that is, it was not Human, but Divine: And as for his Authority to preach it, he anſwers them, he had a Revelation and Commiſſion from *Jeſus Chriſt* ſo to do; he learnt not his Doctrine from any human Teacher, nor undertook to preach it by any human Authority, but from *Chriſt's* immediate Revelation.

Q. *What do we learn from the Apoſtle's Manner in diſcourſing of* Chriſt?

A. From *Chriſt*'s being ſo often oppoſed to Man in the 1ſt, 11th and 12th Verſes, there is a Proof, he is not mere Man, but God as well as Man.

Q. *How does he prove his Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel?*

A. In the 13th and 14th Verſes the Apoſtle offers ſeveral Arguments to ſatisfy the *Galatians*, that both his Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel, and alſo the Goſpel which he preached, were not from Man, but from *Chriſt*.

His firſt Argument to prove it, is, his former bitter Enmity againſt the *Chriſtians*, and his mighty Zeal for the *Jewiſh* Religion, in which he was brought up; all which being publickly known, he leaves them to infer, that ſo great and ſudden a Change could not be the Effect of human Perſuaſion, but divine Revelation; *In Time paſt I perſecuted the Church of God, and waſted it.*

A ſecond Proof of St. *Paul*'s extraordinary Call to the Miniſterial Office, is, that the Doctrine he deliver'd, was not immediately from the Mouths of the Apoſtles, but by immediate Revelation from *Jeſus Chriſt*; When, ſays he, it pleaſed God, who decreed to ſet me apart for the Work of an Apoſtle, even from my Infancy, and afterwards of his mere Grace and Good-will, called me to preach the Goſpel to the *Gentile* World, having firſt revealed his Son in me, and to me, and then by me, immediately I ſet about the Work, neither conſulting my own carnal Reaſon, nor asking the Advice of any Man; neither went I preſently to *Jeruſalem* to confer with, or to receive Authority or Inſtruction from them who were Apoſtles before me, but I went immediately from *Damaſcus*, the Place of my Converſion, into *Arabia*, and preached three Years among thoſe wild and barbarous Heathens, and then returned to *Damaſcus*. Hence it evidently appears, that I neither had Inſtruction or Commiſſion from any of the Apoſtles who were before me, having then never ſeen any of them, but both my Miſſion and my Meſſage were immediately received from *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *What was the Apoſtle's Intent in going up to* Jeruſalem, *and viſiting the Apoſtles?*

A. St. *Paul* being return'd from *Arabia*, went up to *Jeruſalem*, and ſaw *Peter* and *James*, and converſed with them fifteen days: But the Shortneſs of his Stay with them, is an Evidence that he went not to *Jeruſalem* to learn the Goſpel from them, much leſs to pay Homage to St. *Peter* as Prince of the Apoſtles; but it was only a familiar and friendly Viſit made by one Miniſter of *Chriſt*

to

another, in token of mutual Agreement to the ſame Truth preach'd by both.

Q. *What Method does he take to convince the* Galatians, *that what he deliver'd to them, was nothing but the Truth?*

A. St. *Paul* having to do with the falſe Apoſtles, and the ſeduced *Galatians*, whom he juſtly ſuſpected would not (as they ought) give much credit to his Word, he aſſerts the Truth of what he affirmed upon Oath, appealing to the all-knowing and heart-ſearching God, as the Witneſs and Judge of the Truth of what he ſaid; *Behold, before God I lie not.* Thus it is no new Thing for the moſt faithful and able Miniſters of *Chriſt* to be look'd on as Liars, unworthy to be truſted, and the Truth of what they deliver, tho' in God's Name, queſtioned and ſuſpected.

Q. *What other Proof does he give of his Miniſtry?*

A. The laſt Evidence St. *Paul* produces to prove, that his Miniſtry, his Office, and his Doctrine, were all Divine, is, that he was ſo far from learning the *Chriſtian* Religion from the *Chriſtian* Churches in *Judea*, that he was not, by Face, ſo much as known to them, or they to him; they had heard, indeed, that one *Paul* a Perſecutor, was become a Preacher, but they had never ſeen him; and accordingly magnified the Grace of God in his Converſion.

Obſerve here the mighty Power of the Heart-changing Grace of God, which turns the profeſſed Enemies of Religion into Friends, and the moſt bloody Perſecutors into bold and painful Preachers of the Goſpel.

Paul, before his Converſion, is ſaid, *to deſtroy the Faith*, becauſe he intended and endeavoured it, tho' he could not actually accompliſh it; his deliberate Reſolution was in God's Account the ſame as if he had actually accompliſh'd it.

CHAP. II.

The Apoſtle proves his Miſſion and Doctrine by the Approbation of the chief Apoſtles at Jeruſalem, *who admitted* Titus *into their Fellowſhip, without being circumciſed, and gave to* Paul *and* Barnabas *the Right Hand of Fellowſhip, with Agreement, that they ſhould preach among the* Gentiles, *and the other Apoſtles among the* Jews; *only that they ſhould alſo take Care for the poor* Jews. *He declares how he reproved* Peter, *and for what.*

Q. PRAY *what Subject does St.* Paul *handle in this Chapter?*

A. The Argument which the Apoſtle began in the preceeding Chapter, he proſecutes in this; namely, to prove that both his Miniſtry and Meſſage, his Office and Doctrine were Divine, neither of them receiv'd from Man, but immediately from *Jeſus Chriſt*.

In the firſt Verſe we have an Account, that after fourteen Years, St. *Paul* went up to *Jeruſalem*; that is, fourteen Years after his Converſion; ſoon after which, he went about preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentile* World. Bleſſed be God, who is often pleaſed, in mercy to his Church, to preſerve the Lives of his laborious Miniſters, and their Liberties alſo, for the free Exerciſe of the Miniſtry, notwithſtanding the joint Endeavours of Men and Devils to the contrary. This good Man, whoſe Blood was thirſted after, having obtained Help of God, continued fourteen Years together, preaching the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *What was his View in going up to* Jeruſalem?

A. St. *Paul*'s Deſign in going up to *Jeruſalem*, and appearing before St. *Peter* there, was not to acknowledge St. *Peter*'s Supremacy over him, or to appeal to him as an infallible Judge in Matters of Religion; but it was in a friendly and brotherly Manner, to acquaint St. *Peter*, and the Reſt of the Apoſtles, with the Doctrine he preached; that their concurring Approbation being given to it, the Mouths of his Adverſaries the falſe Prophets, might be ſtopped, who accuſed him of preaching contrary to what the Reſt of the Apoſtles both believ'd and practiſ'd.

Q. *But on what Ground did St.* Paul *undertake this Journey?*

A. It is ſaid, *he went up by Revelation*; he adviſed with God about the Matter, whoſe Direction he received to undertake the Journey. Now, indeed, we ought to regulate all our Actions by the Word of God, ſince we are not to expect immediate divine Informations, to direct us in all our Enterprizes, and to judge of the Lawfulneſs and Expediency of all our Undertakings thereby.

Q. *How did the Apoſtle conduct himſelf at* Jeruſalem?

A. He proceeded cautiouſly, and communicated his Sentiments and Doctrine to the Reſt of the Apoſtles privately, for Fear of exaſperating their zealous *judaizing Chriſtians*, and to the moſt eminent of the Apoſtles, *to them which were of Reputation*; leſt, if there ſhould be any Oppoſition made to his Doctrine, *he ſhould* hereafter *run, or had run in vain.*

Nothing more obſtructs the Efficacy and Succeſs of the Goſpel, than Differences of Judgment, and Strife and Debate about thoſe Differences, amongſt the moſt eminent Preachers of it. Hence it was, that St. *Paul* endeavoured ſo much to get the joint Conſent of the moſt eminent Apoſtles, to the Doctrine delivered by him, leſt, by the Calumnies of his Adverſaries, his Preaching ſhould have been render'd unſucceſsful.

Q. *Were the Apoſtles at* Jeruſalem *of the ſame Opinion, in all Things, with St.* Paul.

A. That the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* agreed with St. *Paul*, both in Doctrine and Practice, he proves from the Inſtance of *Titus*, who being a *Gentile*, born a *Greek*, and then a Preacher of the Goſpel, and never circumciſed; the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* would no more compel him to be circumciſed, than St. *Paul* had done, but received him into their Fellowſhip, though he was an uncircumciſed *Greek*. This was a plain Evidence, that they did not judge Circumciſion a Part of God's commanded Worſhip; for if ſo, they would have compelled *Titus* to it.

The Reaſon which the Apoſtle aſſigns why he would not circumciſe *Titus*, though he had before circumciſed *Timothy*, is, becauſe ſome falſe Brethren would have taken Advantage from it, to bring Perſons into Bondage of the Law of Ceremonies, and have pleaded Conformity to Circumciſion, as an obliged Duty.

Hence it appears, that although the ceremonial Law was certainly aboliſhed at the Death of *Chriſt*, yet almighty God, partly in Reſpect to it as his own Ordinance, and partly in Condeſcenſion to the Weakneſs of the *Jews*, was pleaſed to tolerate the Obſervation of ſome Part of it, particularly Circumciſion, as an indifferent Action, though not as a Part of Religion, for ſome Time; the ceremonial Rites being dead, they were to be decently, not over-haſtily buried.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in St.* Paul's *Behaviour on this Occaſion?*

A. Note farther, the Apoſtle's undaunted Courage, and heroick Reſolution; he would never, notwithſtanding the falſe Apoſtles Importunity, ſubmit to their Commands in the leaſt Meaſure, by conſenting to circumciſe *Titus*; that ſo the Truth and Liberty of the Goſpel might continue ſincere and unſhaken.

Hence learn, that an outward Act of Compliance muſt not be conſented to, which, in ſome Caſes, might be complied with, when, by making it neceſſary, we turn *Chriſtian* Liberty into Servitude and Bondage, when Things in their own Natureind ifferent, are urged and inforced as neceſſary; in which Caſe, the Practice of a Thing indifferent is to be abſtained from.

Thus here, when falſe Brethren urged the Circumciſion of *Titus*, as an Evidence of St. *Paul's* receding from the Doctrine of *Chriſtian* Liberty, he would not obey them, nor conſent unto them; *to whom we gave Place, no not for an Hour*; that is, we refuſed to uſe Circumciſion, though but that once; we would not give the Adverſaries the leaſt Advantage over us, or over the Truth delivered and defended by us.

Thus, adds the Apoſtle, I behaved myſelf towards the falſe Brethren at *Jeruſalem*; but now for thoſe *who ſeemed to be ſomewhat*, that is, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, who were of chief Reputation among the Apoſtles, and more than ordinary Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt*, being the Foundation of the *Chriſtian* Church, laid by *Chriſt* himſelf; although they had ſome external Advantages above us, as being Apoſtles before me, and having ſeen and converſed with *Chriſt*, which I never did; yet *this maketh no Matter to me*, (for God values no Man for theſe outward Favours and Benefits) neither in that Conference about Circumciſion did they add any Thing to me, either by their Authority or Inſtruction; they added nothing, they corrected nothing, but approved all Things, both what I did and ſaid: Hence it is plain, that my Authority was equal with theirs, and my Doctrine the ſame with theirs.

The Appointment of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, to the Office and Work of Apoſtles, was alike Divine. St. *Peter* was to be the Miniſter of the Circumciſion; that is, to exerciſe his Miniſtry among the *Jews*; and St. *Paul*, by virtue of the ſame Divine Ordinance, was to exerciſe his Office among the *Gentiles*, called the Uncircumciſion; yet this muſt not be ſo underſtood, as if St. *Paul* might not preach to the *Jews*, nor St. *Peter* to the *Gentiles*, which they both did, upon Occaſion, but becauſe their more eſpecial and particular Province was thus allotted to them.

Note how this great Apoſtle aſcribes the Succeſs and Efficacy of his own Miniſtry among the *Gentiles*, and of St. *Peter's* among the *Jews*, alike to God; *he that wrought effectually in* Peter, *was alſo mighty in me.* It is neither the Perſon nor Pains of the Miniſter, nor any other natural Efficacy or Energy in the Word preached, on which the Succeſs of the Goſpel depends, but upon the effectual working of the Holy Spirit which accompanied it.

Q. *Does not this afford ſome Inſtructions to Miniſters?*

A. The Duty of the Miniſters of *Chriſt* is here implicitly declared; namely, to *be Pillars*; not ſeeming, but really ſuch: As Pillars they are to uphold the Truth, by their Doctrine and Diligence; as Pillars to be conſtant in defending the Truth againſt all the Blaſts and Storms of Error and falſe Doctrine; as Pillars to adorn the Truth, by an innocent Life, and inſtructive Examples; *when* James, Cephas, *and* John *ſeemed to be Pillars.* Theſe three Apoſtles were the great Supporters of the Church, by their Diligence and Faithfulneſs; yet obſerve, *James* is here named before *Peter*; which ſhews the Weakneſs of the *Papiſts* Argument for St. *Peter's* Primacy, becauſe ſometimes firſt named; but it's plain he is not always ſo; St. *James* is here mentioned before him, becauſe, ſay ſome, he was Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, and our Lord's Brother, or near Kinſman; but it's certain, that St. *Paul* here paid no Deference to *Peter* on Account of his Primacy or Supremacy, becauſe it is the Apoſtle's chief Deſign, to ſhew that he was, in every Reſpect, equal with *Peter*, and the Reſt of the Apoſtles, and in no Reſpect inferior to any of them; and conſequently that the falſe Apoſtles, had miſrepreſented him.

Q. *How did the Apoſtles at* Jeruſalem *behave towards St.* Paul?

A. Note, the Integrity of *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, in this Matter, they being ſatisfied that Almighty God had called *Paul* as well as themſelves, to the Apoſtleſhip; this they acknowledge, to the great Mortification, no doubt, of the falſe Apoſtles, who had villify'd his Perſon, leſſen'd his Authority, and diſparaged his Doctrine.

When James, Cephas, *and* John, *perceived the Grace that was given unto me*; that is, the Grace of Apoſtleſhip, they, in the Name of all the Apoſtles, and the whole Church, gave unto me, and *Barnabas*, my Fellow-labourer, *the Right-Hand of Fellowſhip*; that is, they owned us to be Apoſtles no leſs than themſelves; and it was agreed that we ſhould preach chiefly to the *Gentiles*, and they to the *Jews*.

It is an Evidence of the happy Agreement of St. *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, with *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and of their owning them as Apoſtles and Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt*, that they recommended to St. *Paul's* charitable Conſideration, the Poverty of the *Jewiſh* Converts, deſiring him to make Collections in the Churches of the *Gentiles*, for the *Chriſtian Jews*.

Hence learn, that the Care of God's Poor, tho' they ſhould not be within our own Bounds and Diſtricts, is an Employment not unworthy the higheſt Apoſtle, much leſs unbecoming the ordinary Miniſters of *Chriſt*.

Q. *What do you obſerve by St.* Paul's *reproving St.* Peter?

A. In the 11th Verſe, we find St. *Peter* in an Offence, and St. *Paul's* Rebuke for it: His Offence was, he declined from the Doctrine taught by himſelf, concerning the Abrogation of Circumciſion, and the ceremonial Law; he had formerly converſed freely with the *Chriſtian Gentiles*, without objecting to their not being circumciſed: But at *Antioch* he withdrew himſelf from them, refuſing to eat with them, becauſe they were not circumciſed; as if, for want of Circumciſion, they had been unclean, and therefore unfit to be converſed with. This was his Fault; which ſhews, that St. *Peter* was not infallible, whatever his pretended Succeſſors, the Biſhops, are ſuppoſed to be. How readily the beſt and holieſt Men run into Error and Sin, if they are not upheld and preſerved by the ſpecial Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit.

I withſtood him to his Face; that is, I rebuked him publickly, becauſe he was blame-worthy, and not ſecretly, or behind his Back. Here note, that if St. *Paul* had in the leaſt dreamed of St. *Peter*'s Supremacy, he would have been more modeſt than to have reproved him thus openly.

As no Bands of Friendſhip muſt keep the Miniſters of God from reproving Sin and Vice; ſo when they find the Fault to be notorious, they muſt reprove it where-ever they find it, boldly and reſolutely. St. *Paul*, in reproving St. *Peter*, *withſtood him*: It is, in the Original, a military Word, ſignifying, *to ſtand againſt*, either by Force of Arms, as among Soldiers; or by Dint of Argument, as among Diſputants: It is a Word of Defiance, and ſignifies an Oppoſition Hand to Hand, Face to Face, Foot to Foot, not yielding an Hair's breadth to the Adverſary. And as St. *Paul*'s Courage, ſo his Candour appeared in this publick Reproof of St. *Peter*, he did not reproach him behind his Back. Nor is the Submiſſion of the great Apoſtle St. *Peter* leſs manifeſt; for we don't read that he either reflected on St. *Paul*, juſtified his own Action, or even replied again.

In the 12th, 13th, and 14th Verſes, we have a farther Account of St. *Peter*'s Offence at *Antioch*. St. *Paul* calls it *Fear, Diſſimulation, and not walking uprightly.* He refuſed to converſe with the believing *Gentiles*, being uncircumciſed, for Fear of offending the believing *Jews*, who were ſo tenacious of the Circumciſion and the ceremonial Law; he was afraid he ſhould loſe his Reputation among the believing *Jews*, and ſo fell into a Sin againſt God.

This Sin of his had a fatal Influence in drawing others into a Partnerſhip with him therein; *Barnabas* himſelf was led away with the Diſſimulation, and the other *Jews* diſſembled with him. Such as are eminent in the Church ought to walk very cautiouſly; for if they fall, many fall with them.

With what Openneſs and Freedom, Courage and Reſolution, St. *Paul* reproves *Peter* for his Cowardice, in refuſing to converſe with the believing *Gentiles*, for Fear of gaining the Diſpleaſure of the circumciſed *Jews*? *I ſaid unto* Peter *before them all, If thou, being a* Jew, *liveſt* in thy ordinary Converſation, *after the Manner of the* Gentiles, *why compelleſt thou the* Gentiles, by thy Example, *to live as do the* Jews?

Q. *What is the next Thing to be remarked in the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe?*

A. St. *Paul* having vindicated his Authority, next maintains his Doctrine; namely, the evangelical Doctrine of Juſtification, by Faith in *Chriſt*, which he had formerly preached to the *Galatians*, and which the falſe Apoſtles, in his Abſence, had endeavoured to overthrow, urging the ſtrict Obſervation of the ceremonial Law, as neceſſary to Juſtification and Salvation. Our Apoſtle, therefore, to ſtrike at the very Root of this dangerous Error, excludes all Works of our own from having any Influence in our Juſtification.

Q. *What are his Arguments to prove this?*

A. To prove this, he thus argues; Such as were *Jews* by Birth, and ſo fœderally the People of God, found it neceſſary to renounce the Works of the Law in point of Juſtification, and to ſeek Righteouſneſs only through Faith in *Chriſt*, as well as the prophane Idolatrous Sinners of the *Gentiles*, who were Strangers to the Covenant of God; for *by the Works of the Law ſhall no Fleſh, Jew* nor *Gentile, be juſtified*; that is, acquitted from the Guilt of Sin, and diſcharged from Obnoxiouſneſs to the Wrath of God. Now no Obedience of ours can obtain this, becauſe of the Imperfections that attend it, becauſe God will have all Boaſting excluded, and that he that glorieth, ſhould glory in the Lord.

Q. *Pray give the true Senſe of the* 17th *and* 18th *Verſes?*

A. Theſe Verſes are generally looked upon as an Objection, which the Adverſaries of the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith, have been always ready to make againſt it; namely, that if Perſons be not juſtified by their Obedience to the Law, then they may live as they liſt, in the Breach and Violation of the Law, indulge themſelves in Sin, and conſequently make *Chriſt* the Miniſter of Sin, as if he had relaxed the Duty.

This Inference the Apoſtle rejects with Indignation, ſaying, *God forbid.*

Another Objection here ſuggeſted is, ſome might pretend that he built up, by his Practice, what he had deſtroy'd: No, ſays the Apoſtle, I have, together with the Doctrine of free Juſtification, preached to you, and preſſed upon you the Duty of Mortification, as a Duty to be indiſpenſably practiſed by you; ſhould therefore my Preaching, or my Practice, be otherwiſe than it has been, I ſhould build again what I have deſtroyed, and deſtroy what I have already built; and thus, by encouraging Sin, and diſcouraging Holineſs and Obedience, I ſhould be a Tranſgreſſor againſt the Law of Righteouſneſs; for the ſame Faith that depends upon *Chriſt* for Pardon of Sin, looks on him for Power and Strength to ſubdue Sin; if we do not the Latter, *Chriſt* will never do the Former.

Q. *How are Believers freed from Obedience to the Law?*

A. Believers are ſo far from being juſtified by the Law, that they are delivered from the rigorous Exactneſs of it by *Chriſt* their Surety, who yielded as abſolute and compleat Obedience to the Law, as it could require.

Q. *How are Believers* dead to the Law, *as it is ſaid, Verſe* 19?

A. The Law is dead to Believers, and they to that, in regard to the condemnatory Curſe and Sentence of it, from which *Chriſt* redeemed them, being made a Curſe for them, *Gal.* iii. 12.

The Law is dead to Believers, as to its Authority, to juſtify and ſave them, it has not, indeed, loſt its Authority to command, but we our Ability to obey; it is as impoſſible for a fallen Sinner to keep the Law of God perfectly, as for a Cripple to run a Race ſwiftly.

Yet Believers are not dead, but alive to the Law, as a Rule of Life and Holy Living; the Law binds the Believer (in *Chriſt*'s Hand) as ſtrictly to endeavour Obedience to it, as it did *Adam* in Innocency: But here is the Believers Privilege, that God the Father, on the Score of the Covenant of Grace, which the Blood of *Chriſt* has ratiſy'd and confirm'd, graciouſly accepts the faithful Endeavours of his Children, inſtead of perfect Obedience. Thus may every true Believer ſay, with the Apoſtle, *I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God*, namely, a Life of Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.

Q. *In what Senſe does the Apoſtle ſay, ver.* 20. *I am crucified with* Chriſt?

A That is, with *Chriſt* I am dead to the Law, dead to Sin, and dead to the World. Believers have Fellowſhip with *Chriſt*. 1. In the Merit and Value of his Death; they are ranſom'd by it, as a Price paid down to the Juſtice of God for them. 2. In the Virtue and Efficacy of his Death, which not only merits Pardon for us, but mortifies Sin in us. 3. In the Likeneſs or Similitude of his Death, and that is a Crucifixion; *they that are* Chriſt's *have crucified the Fleſh with the Affections and Luſts. Gal.* v. 24.

I live ; yet not I, but Chriſt *in me. Chriſt* is both the Author and efficient Cauſe, the exemplary Cauſe, the End and final Cauſe of a *Chriſtian* Life.

I live by Faith in the Son of God; my Life of Juſtification, is by Faith in his Blood; my Life of Sanctification and Conſolation, is through Faith, in and by Influences deriv'd from his Holy Spirit.

Q. *How does he prove Juſtification by Faith?*

A. The Apoſtle concludes with a double Argument to prove the *Chriſtian's* Juſtification by Faith, without the Works of the Law. 1. Were it otherwiſe, we ſhould fruſtrate and make void the Grace of God: For if Juſtification be by Works, it can no more be by Grace, *Rom.* xi. 6. 2. *Chriſt's* Death had been in vain, without any neceſſary Cauſe or Reaſon at all, if the Juſtification of a Sinner could have been obtain'd by our own Works.

CHAP. III.

He ſharply reproves, and expoſtulates with the Galatians. Abraham's *Righteouſneſs by Faith, and hereby we are Children*; *the* Gentiles *ſuch by the Scripture. All others under the Curſe of the Law, from which* Chriſt *hath delivered Believers. Man's Covenant once confirmed, muſt not be annulled. The Promiſe made to* Abraham *and his Seed, and confirmed in* Chriſt; *thus the Law coming afterwards cannot diſannul, but it may diſcover Sin*; *and be the Schoolmaſter to lead to* Chriſt, *in whom is the Inheritance*; *and is not contrary to the Promiſe*; *and Sinners convinced by it, go to* Chriſt, *and are juſtified by Faith, and freed from the Power of the Law.*

Q. H*OW does the Apoſtle treat the* Galatians *in this Chapter?*

A. Our Apoſtle, in this and the following Chapters, expoſtulates with the *Galatians* on the Reaſon of their being ſo ſoon ſeduced to relinquiſh the Liberty of the Goſpel for the Yoke of the *Moſaical* Law.

In the firſt Verſe the Apoſtle ſharply reprehends them for their Defection from the Truth, into a very great Error, namely, their holding of Circumciſion, and the Obſervations of the Ceremonial Law, as neceſſary to Salvation; which was making the Croſs of *Chriſt* of no Effect, and a virtual Denial of his being come in the Fleſh.

Hence learn, that the beſt and pureſt Churches may err. The Church of *Rome*, indeed, boaſts of her Infallibility, but could never yet agree where it is lodged, whether in the Pope, or a General Council; however, they are ſure they have it. Well, if ſo, the more inexcuſable are they, in not improving their Talent of Infallibility for the Service of the *Chriſtian* Church, namely, by writing one infallible Comment upon the whole Bible. What a ſerviceable Performance would it have been, to pin the Pope in his Chair, and hold down his Hands to write, as *Aaron* and *Hur* held up *Moſes's* Hands to pray, till all the *Amalekites*, Errors and Hereſies, ſo much complained of, were routed and deſtroyed!

Q. *What was the peculiar Aggravation of the Fault of the* Galatians?

A. He declares the heinous Aggravation of this Fault of the *Galatians, before whoſe Eyes* Jeſus Chriſt *had been evidently ſet forth, crucified among them*; that is, *Chriſt*, and their Freedom by him, from the Bondage of the Ceremonial Law, had been preached to them; and his Death and Sufferings, with the great End and Deſign of them, as plainly laid before them, as if *Chriſt* himſelf had been crucified in the midſt of them.

Q. *What is farther to be noted in this Defection of the* Galatians?

A. Note alſo, the Brand and Infamy St. *Paul* ſets upon theſe judaizing Doctors, heretical Teachers; he calls them ſpititual Sorcerers, and their Doctrines ſpiritual Witchcraft; O Galatians, *who hath bewitched you?*

He calls them Sorcerers, becauſe ſuch delude the Senſes, and make Perſons apprehend they ſee what they ſee not; ſo Hereticks, by caſting a Miſt of ſeeming Reaſon before the Underſtanding, ſo delude it, and make the deluded Perſons believe that to be Truth, which indeed is not.

Again; Sorcerers are aſſiſted by the Help of Satan; ſo Heretical Spirits are often, by Satan's Concurrence with them, more than ordinarily aſſiſted by him, in drawing Multitudes after them.

Q. *What is the Import of the Apoſtle's Queſtion, ver.* 2. Received ye the Spirit, by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?

A. It is as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, I appeal to your own Experience; you have received the Spirit your ſelves, ſome of you for Sanctification, others for miraculous Operations; now I would know by what Means you received it? Was it by hearing the Law of *Moſes* preached? You cannot ſay it; for you were Heathens, and without the written Law; it muſt then be by hearing the Goſpel, the Doctrine of Faith, which I preached to you.

Here is firſt a Truth expreſſed, namely, that the Hearing of the Goſpel, faithfully preached, is the inſtrumental Means by which Perſons receive the Holy Spirit in the ſanctifying Gifts and Graces of it, to enable them to live an holy and ſpiritual Life; *Received ye not the Spirit by the hearing of Faith?* Yes, ye did.

A Truth is likewiſe implied; namely, that a People ſhould take heed, that they never undervalue, much leſs deſpiſe and villify that Miniſtry, or that Doctrine, which God at firſt bleſſed for their Converſion. How many are there, that like Vipers, gnaw out the Bowels of her who ſuckled them at her Breaſt?

Q. *Pray interpret the 3d Verſe,* Are ye ſo fooliſh? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the Fleſh?

A. The Apoſtle calls the Doctrine of the Goſpel, Spirit; becauſe by hearing the Goſpel preached, they had received the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit. The Law, with all its Rites and Ceremonies, he calls Fleſh; becauſe they were now weak, and being but temporary Inſtitutions, were aboliſhed by the Coming of *Chriſt* and the Goſpel.

Are ye ſo fooliſh, that, having by your Entrance into Chriſtianity begun an holy Life, by and according to the Holy Spirit conferred upon you, that you ſhould now think to be made more perfect by the Fleſh, by the external Commandments and Obſervances of the Law? How unreaſonable is it to ſuppoſe that your Juſtification ſhould be begun by a more noble, and be perfected by a leſs noble Cauſe?

Q. *Pray explain his Reaſoning in the 4th verſe,* Have ye ſuffered ſo many Things in vain? If it be yet in vain?

A. To what Purpoſe have you ſuffer'd ſo many Perſecutions from the *Jews,* for the Cauſe of Chriſtianity? All which Sufferings will be vain, if, after all, you bring yourſelves under the Bondage of the *Jewiſh* Yoke; for theſe might have been eſcaped, had you owned the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and other legal Obſervances: But I hope you will recollect yourſelves, and perſevere in your firſt Profeſſion, without which all your former Labours, your paſt and preſent Sufferings, will avail you nothing; intimating that all the good Actions we have done, and all the hard Things we have ſuffered, will yield us no Benefit, if we do not perſevere in well-doing, and patient Suffering unto the End. *Have ye ſuffered ſo many Things in vain? if it be yet in vain.*

Q. *What is the Senſe of the firſt Clauſe of the 5th Verſe,* He that miniſtreth to you the Spirit, and worketh Miracles?

A. Theſe Words imply, that Almighty God had given to them his Holy Spirit, both in the ſanctifying Graces, and miraculous Gifts of it.

Q. *How are Believers juſtified after the Example of* Abraham?

A. Another Argument to prove that Perſons are juſtified by Faith, and not by Works, is drawn from the Example of *Abraham,* thus; as *Abraham,* the Father of the Faithful, was juſtified, ſo muſt all Believers, the Children of faithful *Abraham,* be juſtified alſo. But tho' *Abraham* abounded in eminent Virtues and good Works, yet was he not juſtified by theſe, but by Faith only; therefore by Faith muſt all his Children be juſtified alſo.

Abraham believed God; that is, aſſented to, and relied upon the Promiſe of God, made to him concerning the *Meſſias*; and this Faith of his was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs; that is, was accepted of God for his Juſtification. From whence the Apoſtle infers, that ſuch as ſeek Juſtification by Faith, as *Abraham* did, *are the Children of* Abraham, as the *Gentiles* were; that is, the Children of his Faith; a far greater Privilege than what the *Jews* glorified in, namely, they were the Children of his Fleſh.

Thus the pious *Jews* in the *Old Teſtamrnt,* and *Chriſtians* now under the *New Teſtament,* are juſtified alike, freely, and fully; they were, and are to be cloathed with the ſame Righteouſneſs, and juſtified by the ſame Faith.

Q. *This might be true with reſpect to the believing* Jews; *but how can it benefit the believing* Gentiles, *who were not included in the Covenant which God made with* Abraham?

A. As the former Conſequence from *Abraham's* Faith to ours, might be queſtioned whether it holds in the *Gentiles,* who were not of *Abraham's* Poſterity; therefore the Apoſtle declares, that the greateſt Promiſe made to him, *that in him,* that is, in the *Meſſias Chriſt Jeſus,* who was to come of him, *all Nations, Gentiles* as well as *Jews, ſhould be bleſſed*; God having determin'd that all Believers indefinitely, of what Nation or Kindred ſoever, ſhould be all juſtified one and the ſame Way, namely, by Faith in *Chriſt,* without the Works of the Law.

Hence learn, that the Goſpel is no new Doctrine, but the ſame for Subſtance (tho' not for Clearneſs) with that which was preach'd to *Abraham* and to the Church under the *Old Teſtament.* The Scripture preached before the Goſpel *unto Abraham*; that the Bleſſing of Juſtification by Faith, and of other ſpiritual Favours promiſed to the Nations, in *Abraham,* was ſuch as *Abraham* himſelf was a Sharer in, and Partaker of; *they were bleſſed* with faithful *Abraham.*

Q. *What other Argument does the Apoſtle uſe to prove Juſtification by Faith?*

A. A third Argument here offer'd to prove that we are juſtified by Faith, and not by Works, is, becauſe they who ſeek to be juſtified by the Works of the Law, are under the Curſe; and if ſo, cannot be juſtified. The Argument runs thus: Our Obſervance of the Law, at beſt, is but imperfect; now, every imperfect Performance lays us under the Curſe, therefore no Performance of ours can juſtify us. They that cannot fulfil the Law can never be juſtified by it, but no fallen Man can fulfil the Law, therefore none can be juſtified by the Law. This the Apoſtle proves from *Deut.* xxvsi. 26. *Curſed is he that confirmeth not all the Words of this Law to do them.*

Sin and the Deſert of are inſeparable; Sin is an infinite Evil, objectively conſider'd; it is a Contempt of infinite Holineſs, a Provocation of infinite Juſtice, and an Abuſe of infinite Mercy; and conſequently the Deſert of Sin is Death and the Curſe.

Q. *Does he bring any other Proof of Juſtification by Faith?*

A. A fourth Argument is taken from *Hab.* ii. 1. *The Juſt ſhall live by Faith*; that is, live his ſpiritual Life by Faith, his Life of Juſtification and Sanctification alſo; the Life of his Rigteouſneſs before God, of his Holineſs before Men, and his Life of Glory with God in Heaven, are all by Faith.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle mean by ſaying, ver.* 12. The Law is not of Faith?

A. That is, the Law ſays nothing of Faith in a Mediator, or promiſes Life to any Perſon, ſave only to him who by a ſinleſs Obedience performs exactly what it preſcribes; but the Voice of the Law is, *do, or die.*

Hence it appears, that the *Law of Faith,* that is, the Law and the Goſpel, are not contrary to each other, but are mutually ſubſervient to one another in many Things; thus, when the Law makes

makes known Sin, the Goſpel holds forth the Remedies for Sin; the Law diſcovers our need of *Chriſt*, the Goſpel makes a gracious Tender of him; the Law acquaints us with our whole Duty, the Goſpel enables us to perform it.

Learn alſo, that though the Law of Faith, that is, the Goſpel, which is the Doctrine of Faith, be not contrary to each other, yet in Point of Juſtification they are mutually inconſiſtent; ſo that if Juſtification be by the Works of the Law, it cannot be had by Faith; if it be had by Faith, it cannot be attained by the Works of the Law. There can be no Mixture of Law and Goſpel, of Faith and Works in this Matter.

Q. *Has he any Proof of Juſtification by Faith?*

A. The fifth and laſt Argument the Apoſtle induces to prove that we are juſtified by Faith, is, that *Chriſt* had freed us from the Curſe and Malediction of the Law; *Chriſt had redeemed us*, &c. None but *Chriſt* can deliver a Sinner from his Obnoxiouſneſs to Wrath, diſſolve the Obligation to Puniſhment, or looſe the Chains of Guilt; ſo that the Curſe of the Law has nothing, and ſhall have nothing to do with him for ever.

Q. *By what Means did* Chriſt *bring this to paſs?*

A. This *Chriſt* has effected by *being made a Curſe for us*; not that *Chriſt* was made the very Curſe itſelf, or changed into a Curſe, but he took the Curſe upon himſelf; our Sin became his, by a voluntary Suſception of the Puniſhment; and *Chriſt* underwent that Death, the Death of the Croſs, which by the Law was accurſed, to free us from the Curſe of the Law; as *Chriſt* was made Sin for us, ſo was he made a Curſe for us. As he was made Sin, not by contracting the Guilt of Sin, but by ſuffering the Puniſhment due to it; ſo he was made a Curſe, by undergoing that Death which the Law ſtiles accurſed.

Q. *What was the Fruit of* Chriſt's *Sufferings?*

A. One ſpecial Fruit of *Chriſt*'s Sufferings, and of his being *made a Curſe for us*, that the Curſe being aboliſhed, the Bleſſing of *Abraham*, that is, the Bleſſing of Juſtification, Reconciliation, and Adoption, promiſed to *Abraham* upon his believing, might come upon all the believing *Gentiles*, through *Chriſt*, the promiſed Seed; and that the *Gentiles* might receive the Promiſes made by *Chriſt*, of the Holy Spirit, both in its miraculous Gifts and ſanctifying Graces, through their Submiſſion to the Faith of *Chriſt*?

Q. *How does the Apoſtle prove the Stability of the Covenant which God makes with Believers?*

A. St. *Paul*, to prove the Stability of the Covenant, made by God, argues from Contracts made amongſt Men; if one Man makes a Covenant with another, ſigns, ſeals, and delivers it before Witneſſes, it becomes effectual and irreſiſtable; much more then muſt the Covenant of Grace and Mercy, made with us by God, be perpetual and immutable, ſince it is a Convenant eſtabliſh'd by Oath; and of which God ſwears he cannot repent.

Again; the Apoſtle proves, that the Covenant of God can never fail, in regard of the Wiſdom and Unvariableneſs of him that made it; ſo it can never expire for want of Parties, that have Intereſt in it, and Advantage by it, for want of Seed to whom it is made; for as long as *Chriſt* hath a Church upon Earth, ſo long ſhall the Promiſe be of Force; not only *to* Abraham, *but to his Seed, were the Promiſes made; not to the Seeds, as of many; but as of one, to thy Seed, which is* Chriſt; where, by *one*, we underſtand one myſtically; not only perſonally and individually, but in the Aggregate; and by *Chriſt* the whole Church, conſiſting of Head and Members, believing *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*.

Q. *The Apoſtle next anſwers the Objections that ſome might make againſt his Doctrine. The firſt is, Verſe 17. the Subſtance and Force of which is this: Some might ſay, when two Laws are made, whereof the one expreſly contradicts the other, the latter doth, in common Preſumption, abrogate and diſanul the former: But here we find, that four Hundred and Thirty Years after the Promiſe made to* Abraham, *there was a Law publiſhed, extremely contrary to that Promiſe, a Law without Mercy and Compaſſion, a Law both impoſſible and inexorable, which can neither be obey'd nor endured; which denounces a terrible and ſevere Curſe to the Tranſgreſſors of it; therefore it ſhould ſeem as if ſome Cauſe had happen'd, to make God repent and revoke his former Covenant-Promiſe make to* Abraham?

A. To obviate this Objection, our Apoſtle ſhews firſt, what the Purpoſe of the Covenant-Promiſe to *Abraham* was; namely, to give Life and Salvation by Grace and Promiſe.

Secondly, What the Purpoſe of the latter Covenant by *Moſes* was not; namely, to give the ſame Life by working, ſince in thoſe Reſpects there would be a Contradiction or Inconſiſtency in the Covenants, and ſo, by Conſequence, Inſtability and Unfaithfulneſs in him that made them; and therefore what the Apoſtle here drives at, is, that the coming of the Law hath not voided the Promiſe, and that the Law is not of force towards the Seed to whom the Promiſe is made, in any Senſe as carries Contradiction to, or implies Abrogation of the Promiſe before made; from whence it follows, if it be not to ſtand in Contradiction to, it muſt ſtand in Subordination to the Goſpel, and ſo tend to Evangelical Purpoſes.

Hence learn, 1. That after the Covenant of Works made with Man, before the Fall, was broken by *Adam*, God was pleaſed to enter into a Covenant of Grace with fallen Man, to deliver him out of an Eſtate of Sin and Miſery, and to bring him into a State of Salvation by a Redeemer.

2. That though the former and latter Covenant did differ in ſome conſiderable Circumſtances, yet they are one and the ſame in Subſtance, and fully agree in all the eſſential Parts of both.

3. That God's Intent in giving the Law, and urging exact Obedience to it, under the Penalty of the Curſe, was not to take us off from ſeeking Righteouſneſs and Life only by the Promiſe, but to encourage us to ſeek it; for, ſays the Apoſtle here, *The Law could not diſannul the Covenant made with* Abraham, *nor make the Promiſe of no Effect?*

Q. *But ſome might be ready to ſay, if the Law, that is, Works done in Obedience to the Law, do not juſtify, then the Law given by* Moſes *upon Mount* Sinai *is vain, and to no Purpoſe; for why was the Law given, enjoining ſo many Duties, promiſing Life to the Obedient, and threatning Wrath and a Curſe to the Diſobedient, if the Inheritance come not by the Law.*

A. The Apoſtle anſwers, that one great End for which the Law was given, was to diſcover Sin, and a Sinner's undone Condition by reaſon of Sin, and to lead him to ſeek out for a Remedy.

The Law was added by reaſon of Tranſgreſſions; that is, to make Tranſgreſſions appear, to diſcover the Pollutions of Men's Hearts and Natures, and make them ſenſible of the Condemnation they are under; *till the Seed ſhould come*; that is, *Chriſt* and his Church.

Note here, that the legal Diſpenſations were not to continue always in the Church, but only till the Coming of our Lord *Jeſus*; at whoſe Death the Partition-Wall was broken down, and the *Gentiles* called into the Fellowſhip of the Church, as well as the *Jews*.

Obſerve farther, the glorious and amazing Manner, in which the Law was given on Mount *Sinai*, in Thunder and Lightning, by the Miniſtry of Angels, in ſuch a terrible Manner, that there was no Acceſs for ſinful Man to God, but by *Moſes*, a Mediator, ſtanding betwixt God and them, who in that Action, was a Type of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, the only Mediator betwixt God and us.

As *Moſes* was a typical, national, and repreſentative Mediator, ſtanding betwixt the Lord and the People of the *Jews*, ſo *Chriſt* was a ſubſtantial and univerſal Mediator between God and Mankind.

Where note, that the Law was publiſhed in Mercy and Pacification, not in Fury and Revenge; for had the Lord intended Death in the publiſhing of the Law, he would not have proclaimed it in the Hand of a Mediator, but of an Executioner.

He adds, that a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, that is, of one Party, but diſagreeing Parties; God and Man were once Friends; they were one, and needed no Mediator: But God and Man, by Sin, fell at Variance, and now need a Mediator. The very Notion of a Mediator ſuppoſes, that Men, by Sin, are at odds with God, and that God, by Grace, is willing to be one with Man. However, though a Mediator is not a Mediator of one, yet *God is one*; that is, though there be two Covenants, and two Mediators, yet God is one and the ſame in both Covenants; he carries on one and the ſame Purpoſe and Intention, both in the Law, and in the Goſpel; namely, a Benevolence and Goodwill towards, and an hearty Deſire of Reconciliation with Mankind.

Q. *Another Objection here made by the Apoſtle, is, the* Jew *might poſſibly ſay, that the Law given by* Moſes, *was againſt the Promiſe of God made to* Abraham?

A. The Apoſtle anſwers, No; that the Law is not contrary, but ſubſervient to the Promiſe; for the Law was not given on Mount *Sinai*, to afford Life and Juſtification by Obedience to it (ſince it could not, by a fallen Creature, be ever perfectly kept) but to convince of Sin, and to condemn for Sin; and that Men deſpairing of Salvation in and of themſelves, might ſpeedily betake themſelves to *Chriſt* for it: For God, in the Scripture, hath concluded, that is, declared all Men to be under Sin, and under the Curſe due to it; that renouncing all Confidence in themſelves, they ſhould, by Faith, have Recourſe to the only Mediator for Righteouſneſs and Life, for Juſtification and Salvation.

Let us illuſtrate this Matter by a Similitude; ſuppoſe a Prince ſhould proclaim a Pardon to all Traytors, if they would come in and plead it, and after this ſhould ſend forth an Officer to attach and arraign them, to threaten and condemn them: Is the Prince contrary to himſelf? Hath he repented of his Mercy? No ſure! But he is unwilling to loſe the Glory of his Mercy, and deſires the Honour of it to be acknowledged; and therefore he brings theſe Criminals into Extremities, that when their Guilt is made evident, they may acknowledge the Juſtice of the Law that would condemn them, and the great Mercy of the Prince in offering a Pardon to them. The Caſe is alike between God and us; firſt to *Abraham*, and in him to us: God God made Promiſe of Mercy and Bleſſedneſs, even to all that would plead an Intereſt in it, for Remiſſion of Sins, and Acceptance with God: But the World grew ſecure, and though Sin was in them, and Death reigned over them, they regarded not their miſerable Condition; being without a Law, to evidence Sin and Death unto their Conſciences, they ſaw no Neceſſity of pleading the Promiſe of Pardon. Hereupon, Almighty God publiſhes, by *Moſes*, a ſevere and terrible Law, and in an aſtoniſhing Manner; yet in all this God did but purſue the firſt Purpoſe of his Mercy, and take a Courſe to make his Goſpel accounted worthy of all Acceptation, that Men being, by this Law, rouz'd from their Security, and made ſenſible of the Curſe and Malediction they lay under, they might run from *Sinai* to *Sion*, from *Moſes* to *Chriſt*, and, by Faith, plead that Pardon and Remiſſion which, in *Chriſt*, was promiſed, when God told *Abraham*, that in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's Meaning, when he ſays, ver.* 23. Before Faith came?

A. That is, before *Chriſt* came, and the Doctrine of Faith was preached, we were in Bondage under the Law; the ceremonial Law was a very great Bondage, yet was it very uſeful to the *Jews*, that ſo they might be prepared by it, to receive the Doctrine of *Chriſt* and Salvation, by Faith in him.

Hence it is, that he calls the Law their *School-Maſter, to bring them to* Chriſt; the School-Maſter exerciſes Authority over Minors only; he teaches only Rudiments, and firſt Principles, for Beginners; not ſuch Things as require Judgment and prrfect Age. Such was the Law in Compariſon of the Goſpel, and *Moſes* with reſpect to *Chriſt*.

Moſes, and the Law, are ſevere and rigid School-Maſters, who, by Whips and Threats, require an hard Leſſon of their Scholars, whether able to learn it or not: But *Chriſt*, and the Goſpel, are mild and gentle Teachers, who, by ſweet and good Rewards, invite their Scholars to their Duty, and guide and help them to do what, of themſelves, they cannot do; by which Means, they love both their Maſters and their Leſſons, and rejoice when they are neareſt to them, to direct them in their Studies. As the Law is our School-Maſter to bring us to *Chriſt*, ſo *Chriſt* is our Prophet to bring us to God.

Note farther, that the Goſpel-Church, that is, both believing *Jews* and *Gentiles*, being like a Son come to Age, believing in *Chriſt* already come, are no longer to be treated as Children under the Diſcipline of the Law as a School-Maſter; for they are now under the Evangelical, not Moſaical Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace.

Q. *Have not Believers ſome peculiar Privilege, to which they have a Right, by Virtue of their Faith* Chriſt?

A.

A. In Verſe 26. we have a glorious Goſpel-Privilege diſcovered; namely, Adoption; *Ye are the Children of God.* The Church, under the *New Teſtament*, is in a ſpecial State of Son-ſhip and Adoption, to whom the Privileges and Immunities of Sons and Heirs, grown up to Maturity, do belong.

Note alſo, the Univerſality of this Privilege; *Ye are all Children of God*; all, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, both weak and ſtrong Believers; a Father, in reality, cannot be more a Father to one Child than to another.

The inſtrumental Cauſe of this bleſſed Privilege is, *Faith in* Chriſt Jeſus; *Chriſt* inveſts every Believer in this glorious Privilege of Adoption. Faith in *Chriſt* to come, entitled Believers under the *Old Teſtament*, to the Dignity of Sons and Daughters; and Faith in *Chriſt* now already come, adds ſome peculiar Dignity and Son-ſhip to Believers under the *New Teſtament.* They with us, and we with them, are all the Children of God, through Faith in *Chriſt Jeſus. Chriſt*, of a Son became a Servant, that we, of Slaves, might become Sons.

This the Apoſtle thus proves; namely, becauſe they are thus baptized into *Chriſt*; that is, they are admitted into the *Chriſtian* Church by Baptiſm, they profeſs *Chriſt*'s holy Religion; and if they are as they profeſs, *they put on* Chriſt; that is, they are made Partakers of his Spirit, and do copy forth the Excellencies of his Life.

The Apoſtle concludes, If ye be *Chriſt*'s, and by Baptiſm ingrafted into him, you are the true Children of *Abraham*, though ye be not circumciſed; yea, you are Heirs apparent of the heavenly Inheritance, given unto *Abraham* by Promiſe.

Chap. IV.

As the Law is a School-Maſter, ſo the Jews *were under its Bondage, or as Heirs under Guardians; but ſince the Fulneſs of Time, and fulfilling of the Promiſe, all in* Chriſt *are redeemed from the Law, receive the Adoption and Spirit, and are Heirs. He reproves them for taking on them the Yoke of outward Ceremonies and legal Obſervances. He argues with them out of the Law; by the Types of* Iſaac *and* Iſhmael, *and their Mothers* Sarah *and* Hagar; *as alſo out of Mount* Sinai, *and the City* Jeruſalem, *whereby the two Covenants are ſignified. The Inheritance to be obtained by Promiſe, though with Perſecution.*

Q. ST. Paul *proceeds to clear the Freedom of* Chriſtians, *under the Goſpel, from the Servitude of the* Moſaic *Law: How does he do this?*

A. In the firſt Verſe he compares the Church of God, under the *Old Teſtament*, to a Child in its Nonage; partly, with reſpect to their Weakneſs of Underſtanding, and want of the Means of Knowledge, comparatively to what we enjoy; and partly, with reſpect to the Diſcipline they were under from their rigid School-Maſter, the ceremonial Law.

Now, ſays the Apoſtle, as a Child, though he be Heir to, and Owner of all his Father's Inheritance in Hope, yet ſo long as he is a Minor, and under Age, he differs nothing from a Servant, in point of Subjection, but is under the Management of Tutors and Directors: In like manner the Church, when in its infant State under the Old Teſtament, was kept in Bondage and Subjection under the rigid Adminiſtration, and rigorous Exaction of the Law, and tied almoſt to an infinite Number of ceremonial Obſervances, by which it pleaſed Almighty God to inſtruct the former Ages of the Church. Thus the bodily Performances of the ceremonial Law, were but Rudiments, in reſpect of that Heavenly Doctrine concerning ſpiritual Life, reveal'd in the Goſpel; "when we were Children, "we were in Bondage under the Elements of the "World."

But when the Fulneſs of Time was come, which God the Father had appointed for finiſhing the legal Diſpenſation, and for aboliſhing the Ceremonial Rites, God ſent forth from himſelf the Son of himſelf, his only begotten Son, made, that is, born of a Woman, made under and obedient of the Law, ſubjecting himſelf both to its Precepts and Curſes, to redeem them who are under the Law, and to diſcharge them from the Curſe and Malediction of it; that we Believers, we the Members of the *Chriſtian* Church, might receive the Adoption of Sons, without any Obſervance of Circumciſion, or other Ceremonial Rites.

From hence we learn, that *Chriſt* was God's Son, not barely in regard of his miraculous Conception, his Sanctification and Miſſion, his Reſurrection and Exaltation, and of the endeared Affection the Father bare to him, but in regard of his Eſſence and Nature, as begotten by him; *Chriſt* was his by eternal and ineffable Generation; being for Generation Co-eſſential, for Dignity Co-equal, and for Duration Co-eternal with the Father.

Q. *What do we learn from thoſe Words, v.* 4. God ſent forth his Son?

A. This pre-ſuppoſes his Pre-exiſtence before his Incarnation; for if he had not had a Being he could not have been ſent; it ſuppoſes alſo his Perſonality, that he was a Perſon; not an Operation or Manifeſtation only, for that could not be ſent; and that he was a Perſon really diſtinct from the Father; for how elſe could one ſend the other?

God's ſending of *Chriſt*, implies his ordaining, conſtituting, and appointing *Chriſt* from all Eternity to come into the World; alſo his fitting and qualifying him from his Incarnation, and his authorizing and commiſſioning *Chriſt* to take our Nature upon him, and in that Nature to do and ſuffer for us, as our Pattern, and as our Surety.

Chriſt, being thus ſent, was made of a Woman, aſſum'd our Fleſh, and was made manifeſt in our Nature, had an organiz'd and perfect Body, proportion'd like ours; St. *Paul, Coloſſ.* i. 22. calls it, *the Body of his Fleſh*; a Body, to ſhew the Organization of it; and a Body of Fleſh, to ſhew the Reality of it.

Q. *In what Senſe does the Apoſtle aſſert, that* Chriſt *was ſent in the Fulneſs of Time?*

A. *Chriſt* was ſent, *in the Fulneſs of Time*, not in the Beginning of Time, that ſo he might excite his People's Affections, and longing Deſires for his Coming, and to teach them to prize him the more when he came; he ſtaid not till the End of Time, leſt the Faith of his Church and People ſhould have fail'd; the Patriarchs believed in *Chriſt* to come, the Apoſtles in *Chriſt* then preſent, and We in *Chriſt* as come, and gone again to Heaven. Thus in all Differences of Time paſt, preſent, and to come, Faith had, has, and will continue to have in ſuitable Work, and proper Employment.

Q. *What was the Intention of God in ſending Chriſt?*

A. The great End of God in ſending *Chriſt* unto us, and the gracious Deſign of *Chriſt* in his undertaking for us, was our Redemption from the Bondage and Curſe of the Law, and our Adoption into the Number of God's Children.

Q. *How does he prove that Believers under the Goſpel, are the Sons of God?*

A. The Apoſtle goes on thus; That you are now, under the Goſpel, become and made the Sons of God, appears by this, that God hath ſent the Spirit of his natural Son into your Hearts, to authorize and enable you to call upon him, not only as your God, but as your Father; the Goſpel aſſuring you that you are no longer in that ſervile Condition you were in whilſt under the Law; but God will deal with you now upon Goſpel-terms, and juſtify you by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law. Now God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts.

Q. *In what Senſe is the Holy Spirit here called the Spirit of God's Son?*

A. Becauſe it is the ſame Spirit which abode upon him that reſts upon us, and becauſe the Spirit is purchaſed and procured for us by the Blood of the Son. Thoſe *Rivers of living Water*, by which the Effuſion of the Spirit is expreſſed, do flow out of *Chriſt's* pierced Side; *Chriſt* purchaſed the Spirit for us, before he ſent him from Heaven to us.

God hath ſent forth; this imports not any Change of Place, as if he were more diſtant from the Father when he was thus ſent, than he was before; but it denotes his Commiſſion for ſome ſpecial Work in and upon the Creature.

God hath ſent the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts; that is, into the Hearts of Believers; ſignifying, that the Work here intended, is an inward, a ſaving Work, *Ezek.* xxxvii. 14. *I will put my Spirit in them*; not into the Brain, to dwell there by common unſanctified Gifts, but into the Heart, where all the Habits of Grace are planted, and from whence all the Iſſues of Life proceed.

Q. *What is the Office of the Holy Spirit in the Believer's Heart?*

A. It enables him to cry *Abba, Father*; the Repetition made, and the Word redoubled, denotes the Strength and Vehemency of the Deſire, and ſpeaks a paſſionate and extraordinary Concernment of the Soul, for obtaining the Mercy deſired, and the Bleſſings prayed for.

In this Verſe the Three ſacred Perſons in the God-head, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are declared; *God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son.*

Note alſo, that the Spirit is not a Quality or Operation, but a Perſon that has a real Being and Subſiſtence; elſe the Phraſe of being ſent, could not be properly uſed of him.

Hence it likewiſe appears, that the Holy Spirit proceeds both from the Father and the Son; for he is the Spirit of the Son, and is ſent by the Father: There is an Order among the divine Perſons, tho no Priority of Being.

Q. *What is farther to be obſerved concerning the Office of the Holy Spirit?*

A. Farther; the Spirit of Adoption is a Spirit of Supplication; and the Spirit of Supplication, is the the great Privilege and Advantage of Believers under the Goſpel; for it teaches us what to pray for, and the Manner how we are to pray; it joins his own effectual Interceſſion with our Prayers; it gives us a Right and Privilege of coming to God as unto a Father, and gives us Confidence and Aſſurance as Sons to be accepted with him.

Q. *What is the Import of thoſe Words, ver. 7. Wherefore thou art no more a Servant, but a Son?*

A. The Spirit of the firſt Covenant was a ſervile Spirit, a Spirit of Fear and Bondage, and they that were under that Covenant were rather Servants than Sons; not but that true Believers, in and under the *Old Teſtament*, were the Sons and Daughters of the moſt high God, and we find them challenging their Privilege, *Iſa.* lxiii. 16. *Doubtleſs thou art our Father*: But yet it was in ſo defective a Degree, that they ſeemed more like to Servants, than to Sons, and were trained up under a ſuitable Diſcipline: Hence ſays the Apoſtle, *thou art now no more a Servant*, (implying they were once ſo) *but a Son*; and if Sons, *then are you Heirs of God*, and have a Right to the Inheritance of Heaven when you die, and to the bleſſed Privileges, and royal Immunities contained in that great Charter, the Covenant of Grace, whilſt you live; *if a Son, then an Heir of God through* Chriſt.

Q. *What is the next Point the Apoſtle ſpeaks to?*

A. Having proved the *Chriſtians* Freedom from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, he next endeavours to convince the *Galatians* how abſurdly they they acted in putting themſelves under the Obligation and Obedience of it, and to look upon it as neceſſary to Juſtification. He tells them, that when they were *Gentiles* they were the worſt of Slaves, ſerving them that were no Gods at all; whereas the *Jews* ſerved the true God, though in a ſervile Manner; and ſo they were in a much worſe Condition than that of the *Jews*. The Apoſtle therefore juſtly blames them, that they being naturally *Gentiles*, and never under the Ceremonial Law, ſhould now chooſe that Bondage, which was apparently to go backward in Religion, or to return to thoſe Principles which they had already overpaſt.

Q. *Why does he call the legal Rites and Ceremonies of the Law* weak and beggarly Elements?

A. He calls them Elements or Rudiments, becauſe they were God's firſt Inſtructions to his Church for his Worſhip, to which he intended afterwards a more perfect way of Worſhip.

He calls them *weak Elements*, becauſe the Law made nothing perfect, and the Obſervance of it was impotent and unavailable to a Sinner's Juſtification before God.

He calls them *beggarly Elements*, in Compariſon with that more rational and ſpiritual way of Worſhip under the Goſpel. The Levitical Ceremonies were, indeed, appointed by God himſelf, as a Part of divine Worſhip leading to *Chriſt*, and as ſuch to be religiouſly obſerved: But when the falſe Apoſtles urged the Obſervation of them under the Goſpel, as a Part of neceſſary commanded Worſhip, and as a Part of the *Galatians* Righteouſneſs before God, St. *Paul*, in that Caſe, is bold to call them *weak and beggarly Elements*.

Q. *In the 10th Verſe he reproves them for obſerving Days, Months, Times, and Years: But why does he do ſo, ſince they were commanded?*

A. Becauſe hereby they brought themſelves under an unneceſſary Bondage to the Rites of the Ceremonial Law; he tells them plainly, that they kept the Ceremonial Sabbaths, Feaſts and Faſts, as if that Law was Obligatory.

Ye obſerve Days, that is, the *Jewiſh* Sabbath-Days, and New Moons; *and Moons,* as the Feaſt of the firſt Month, and of the ſeventh Month; *and Times,* that is, the Times of their ſolemn Feſtivals for going up to *Jeruſalem,* as the Paſſover, Pentecoſt, and Feaſt of Tabernacles; *and Years;* as the Sabbatical Years, and Years of *Jubilee.*

This, ſays the Apoſtle, makes me afraid of you, that I have preached the Goſpel, and the Doctrine of free Juſtification, in vain to you; becauſe you leave the Doctrine I taught you, and put your Confidence in obſerving thoſe Ceremonial Rites.

Q. *After the Apoſtle had ſharply reproved them for their Folly, he mildly beſeeches them to be as he was: Does he not hereby ſeem to leſſen his own Authority, and weaken the Force of his Reproof?*

A. He knew that theſe *Galatians* were alienated in their Affections from him; and fearing leſt by his Severity and Sharpneſs towards them, they ſhould apprehend he was alienated from them alſo, he thus lovingly beſpeaks them. I pray you be affected towards me, as I really am towards you; count me not your Enemy becauſe I tell you the Truth; for I am the ſame to you that I ever was; my Love is not alienated from you, for any Injury you have done me; for, alas! it is yourſelves, not me, you injure, by bringing yourſelves into this Bondage to the Ceremonial Law, to the Loſs of your Chriſtian Liberty; *be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.* St. *Paul's* Example deſerves the Imitation of all the Miniſters of *Chriſt,* with reſpect to their Treatment of their People.

Q. *Wherein did the Apoſtle ſhew his peculiar Affection to the* Galatians?

A. It is ſaid, *he preached the Goſpel to them at firſt,* both with Difficulty and Danger, thro' the Infirmity of the Fleſh; that is, through much Weakneſs and Imperfection. Theſe bodily Infirmities he calls a Temptation; intimating, that the Afflictions of the Body, are great Temptations to the Soul. And beſides theſe bodily Infirmities, he encounter'd with Perſecution, in preaching the Goſpel to them; which were convincing Evidences of his tender Regard for them.

Q. *But had not the* Galatians *likewiſe an Eſteem for him?*

A. The *Galatians* were not backward in their reciprocal Returns of Love, Eſteem, and Affection towards him; they received him as an Angel of God, or as a Meſſenger ſent by God to them, yea, as *Jeſus Chriſt,* as if *Chriſt* himſelf had been there in Perſon, and preached to them: Nay, ſo warm were their Affections to St. *Paul,* at his firſt coming amongſt them, that, had it been poſſible, or would it have been done him any Service, they could have pluck'd out their very Eyes for him.

Hence learn, that the firſt Years of a Miniſter's preaching to a People, are generally moſt ſucceſsful; then their People's Affections are warmeſt, and perhaps their own too; their People then hear them without any Kind of Prejudice, with great Deſire and Delight; afterwards their Affections cool, either through their own Inconſtancy, or their Miniſter's Inadvertency, or by the Malice of Satan, or by the miſchievous Deſigns and Miſrepreſentations of ſome of his Inſtruments.

Learn alſo, that it is a high Commendation of a People, when neither Poverty nor Deformity, nor any Deficiency, which may render a Miniſter of the Goſpel baſe and contemptible in the Eſtimation of the World, can poſſibly diminiſh any thing of that Reſpect which they know to be due to him: Nothwithſtanding the *Galatians* knew the Infirmity and Temptation of the Apoſtle, yet they received him (at firſt) as an Angel of God.

Q. *What Uſe does he make of this reciprocal Love betwixt them?*

A. Whence is it then, adds the Apoſtle, that I, who was formerly ſo precious in your Eſteem, am now look'd upon as your Enemy, only becauſe I declare to you the Truth of God? Can any Reaſon be given on my Part, for this ſudden Change of Affection in yours? No, unleſs you count my Candour and Ingenuity in telling you the Truth, a Crimes *am I your Enemy, becauſe I tell you the Truth?*

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words, ver. 17.* They zealouſly affect you, but not well?

A. That is, the falſe Apoſtles pretend great Love to you, *but not well,* not upon honeſt and juſt Grounds. Nothing is more common, and conſequently more dangerous, than for heretical Teachers to pretend great zeal for the Glory of God, and great Love and Affection to his People, whilſt they are about to perſuade them to embrace their pernicious Errors and damnable Hereſies.

Q. *How do you underſtand the next Words in the ſame Verſe,* yea, they would exclude you, that you might affect them?

A. They would exclude you from the Privileges of the Goſpel, ſay ſome; from depending on me, or any faithful Paſtor, ſay others; they would ingratiate themſelves, that they may engroſs you, and that you may affect them only. This was the old Practice of Seducers, firſt to alienate the People's Minds from their own Teachers, and next to get themſelves to be eſteemed as only worthy to have Room, in the People's Hearts and Affections; *they would exclude you* from us, and us from you, only *that you might affect them.*

But although there is a Zeal in a bad Cauſe, which is to be condemned, yet there is a Zeal in a juſt and righteous Cauſe, which is laudable, and deſerves to be practiſed; when it is a Zeal guided by Religion, governed by Prudence, attended with Perſeverance; when in a good Thing we are zealouſly, and always affected. This the Apoſtle deſires the *Galatians* ſhould be, and that as well in his Abſence from, as when preſent with them.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle give the apoſtatizing* Galatians *the Title of* little Children?

A. He calls them *Children* becauſe converted to Chriſtianity by the preaching of the Goſpel; and being thus regenerate and born again, they were to be as Children, innocent and inoffenſive.

He calls them *little Children,* to denote the Tenderneſs of their Growth in Chriſtianity, the Smallneſs of their Proficiency in Religion; they were not come to that Conſiſtency in Grace, to that

Maturity in Goodneſs, to that Perfection in Knowledge, which he deſired.

Farther; he calls them his little Children, to denote that ſpiritual Relation which was between them; he having been the undoubted Inſtrument of their Converſion, and ſo was their ſpiritual Father; and alſo to denote the Endearedneſs of his Affection towards them, and his tender Care and Concern for them.

Q. *In what Senſe do you take thoſe Words, ver.* 19. I travail in Birth, till *Chriſt* is formed in you?

A. There is no ſtronger Love, nor more endeared Affection, between any Relation upon Earth, than between Miniſters of the Goſpel and their beloved People, whom they have been happily inſtrumental to convert and bring Home to *Chriſt*; there is nothing the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* ſo paſſionately deſire as to ſee *Jeſus Chriſt formed*, and faſhioned in the Hearts and Lives of their beloved People; *my Children, of whom I travail in Birth*; &c.

As a farther Evidence of the Intenſeneſs of the Apoſtle's Affection towards the *Galatians*, he declares his earneſt Deſire to have been with them, that being more fully acquainted with their Caſe he might know how to ſuit his Diſcourſes to them, and might have more Cauſe of rejoicing with them, than of complaining of them. He wiſhes to be preſent with them, *that he might change his Voice*; that is, know the better how to ſpeak moſt ſuitably and ſeaſonably to their Condition.

Q. *What is the true Import of the Apoſtle's Queſtion, ver.* 20. Ye that be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law?

A. That is, ye that deſire to be juſtified by your legal Performances, of Circumciſion, *&c.* don't you obſerve how the Law itſelf ſentences, curſes, and condemns you? And do you not find in the *Old Teſtament* the Story of *Sarah* and *Hagar*, of *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac?* Are you ignorant that *Abraham* had two Sons, *Iſhmael* by *Hagar* the Bond-woman, and *Iſaac* by *Sarah* the Free-woman? *Iſhmael* was born after the Fleſh, that is, by the ordinary Strength of Nature in Generation, *Hagar* being young, and *Abraham* ſtrong: But *Iſaac* was the Son of the Promiſe; God gave him, by Virtue of his Promiſe made to *Abraham* when his Body was dead, unfit for Generation, and *Sarah* paſt Conception.

Q. *How does he apply the Story of* Sarah *and* Hagar, Iſaac *and* Iſhmael?

A. The Apoſtle makes an allegorical and ſpiritual Application of this Hiſtory of *Sarah* and *Hagar*, of *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*; and the Myſtery he tells us is this, The two Mothers, *Sarah* and *Hagar*, are Types of the two Covenants, the one of Works, the other of Grace; the two Sons, *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, are Types of two ſorts of Men living in the Church, the one proceeding from the firſt, the other from the ſecond Covenant; the one regenerate, the other unregenerate Men; the firſt are under the Covenant of Grace, and Free-men; for every Man's Freedom depends upon the Covenant under which it ſtands.

Iſhmael is the Son of the Bond-woman, and points at *Jeruſalem* which then was, the People f the *Jews*, as they then ſtood affected, ſeeking Juſtification, and expecting eternal Salvation by the Works of the Law; but now behold in *Iſaac*, the Son of the Free-woman, an Emblem of the Goſpel-Church, which dares not depend on the Righteouſneſs of the Law for Juſtification, but depends on the meritorious Righteouſneſs of the Mediator for Juſtification; and this points out *Jeruſalem* above, *which is free, and the Mother of all.*

Hence learn, that all unregenerate Men, who continue in the Sate of Nature, are under the firſt Covenant, or Covenant of Works. *Iſhmael* is by double Bond: 1. By a Bond of Creation: 2. By a Bond of Stipulation: The one is a natural; and the other is a voluntary Obligation; by the former we are bound to God, by the latter he is bound to us.

Q. *What were the two Covenants which God made with Man?*

A. The Covenant made with Man in his State of Innocency, was a Covenant of Friendſhip; the Covenant made with us ſince the Fall, is a Covenant of Reconciliation; the former made with the firſt *Adam*, the latter with *Chriſt* the ſecond *Adam*. The firſt Covenant was made not only with the Perſon, but with the Nature of *Adam*, with the whole Race of Mankind; for God dealt with *Adam*, not as a ſingle Perſon, but as the Root and Repreſentative of Mankind; and conſequently, this Covenant was not aboliſhed by the Fall, but is ſtill in Force; not to give Life, becauſe it is become weak, through the Fleſh; we are become weak to that, not that to us; but it commands Duty as it did before, namely, perfect, perſonal, and perpetual Obedience; and in Caſe of Failure, denounces the Curſe.

Let us not reſt, till by Grace we are delivered from this Bondage, by being tranſlated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, and heartily ſubmit to the Terms and Conditions of the ſecond Covenant, which propoſes Repentance, and promiſes Pardon and Acceptance thereupon.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle farther illuſtrate this Matter?*

A. He proceeds in his former Allegory; the Church of the *Gentiles* he compares to *Sarah*, who was a long Time barren, but at laſt brought forth a Child of the Promiſe, a Seed in which all the Families of the Earth were bleſſed.

The Church of the *Jews* is repreſented under the Notion of a Woman that had an Husband and many Children; but the barren *Gentiles* are by a Spirit of Prophecy called upon to rejoice, becauſe there ſhould be more Children brought forth to God amongſt them, than were among the *Jews*.

St. *Paul* applies the foregoing typical Hiſtory of *Sarah* and *Hagar*, thus; as *Iſaac*, by Virtue of the Promiſe, being born of the Free-Woman, was Heir to all his Father's Eſtate; in like Manner, they who ſeek Salvation not by the Law, but by Faith in *Chriſt*, are the free Children of God, and Heirs of the Promiſe of Life Eternal; *We, Brethren, as* Iſaac *was, are the Children of the Promiſe.*

Again; we have an Account of the perſecuting Enmity that was in the Heart and Tongue of *Iſhmael* againſt *Iſaac*; where we may obſerve the Root from whence *Iſhmael*'s perſecuting Malice proceeded, namely, an inward Antipathy to the Work of Grace in *Iſaac*, who was born after the Spirit, and doubtleſs ſhewed ſome Fruits of it, which *Iſhmael* could not reliſh, and therefore mock ed and derided him. Mocking, or Scoffing, either at the Word, Ways, or People of God, is a Sin of unſpeakable Prophaneneſs, a

Blaſpheming of *Chriſt*, and a Perſecution of his Members.

As it was then, even ſo it is now; Afflictions are the Donatives of the Goſpel, and Perſecutions the Church's Patrimony.

From *Iſhmael's* being Brother to *Iſaac*, yet his bitter Perſecutor, learn, that the ſoreſt Trials, and ſharpeſt Perſecutions, which the Saints endure, are very often from the neareſt Relations who are tied to them by the ſtrongeſt Obligations either of Kindred or Friendſhip; *the Brother ſhall betray the Brother to Death, and the Father the Son.*

The Apoſtle farther explains this Typical Hiſtory of *Iſhmael* and *Iſaac*, and tells us, that the caſting out of *Iſhmael* the Son of *Hagar*, the Bondwoman, typified the Exclusion of the Law from a Partnerſhip with the Goſpel, in the Juſtification of a Sinner before God: As *Iſhmael* was caſt out of *Abraham's* Family, and none but *Iſaac* muſt inherit; ſo they, that depend on the Law for Juſtification, ſhall be caſt out of the Church of God, and never attain the heavenly Inheritance: But they who depend on the Promiſe of God, and expect to be juſtified by Faith, without legal Performances, they only ſhall be Heirs of Grace and Mercy.

Q. *What Inference does he draw from this Diſcourſe?*

A. From the foregoing Diſcourſe the Apoſtle concludes, that as *Sarah* caſt out *Hagar* and *Iſhmael*, ſo muſt the Children of the new *Jeruſalem* caſt out the Law, and all the legal Rites, thenceforth to be obſerved no more, either alone, without, or in Conjunction with *Chriſt*. And as the Church of the *Gentiles* was not typified in *Hagar*, but in *Sarah*, ſo we *Chriſtian Gentiles* are not obliged to Judaical Obſervances, but are entirely freed from them by *Chriſt*, and juſtified by Goſpel Grace without them.

The Sum of all this is, to bring off the *Galatians* from ſeeking Juſtification by the Works of the Law, and to apprehend themſelves no longer in Bondage to Circumciſion, and the Moſaical Rites, but to ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith *Chriſt* had made them free.

Chap. V.

He exhorts them to maintain their Chriſtian *Liberty, elſe* Chriſt *will be to them of none Effect. Heaven is obtained only by the Righteouſneſs of Faith, working by Love. He tenderly expoſtulates with them; exhorts them not to uſe their Liberty to Licentiouſneſs or Contention, but to Love and Holineſs; and deſcribes the contrary Works of the Fleſh and Spirit, that they may mortify the Fleſh and walk in the Spirit.*

Q. H*OW do you explain the firſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. Since *Chriſt*, by his Death, has purchaſed Freedom from the Yoke and Bondage of the Ceremonial Law, let us, ſays the Apoſtle, reſolutely ſtand faſt in this our *Chriſtian* Liberty, without ſubjecting ourſelves again to Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Moſaical Rites, which were ſo numerous. Well might the Apoſtle here call it *a Yoke of Bondage*, and *Acts* xv. 10. *a Yoke which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear.*

Q. *How has* Chriſt *made us free?*

A. He by his Obedience and Death, has purchaſed this happy Freedom for us, a Freedom from Ceremonial Bondage, from ſinful Servitude and Slavery, not from civil Subjection, not from the Yoke of new Obedience, but from the obliging Force of the Ceremonial Law, and the Curſe and the irritating Power of the moral Law. In this Liberty, every *Chriſtian* is exhorted to ſtand faſt, that is, to maintain and defend it, both in Judgment and Practice.

Q. *Pray explain his Meaning in the ſecond and third Verſes?*

A. *Behold,* I Paul *ſay unto you*; I *Paul* your Apoſtle, do poſitively declare to you *Galatians*, and all other *Chriſtians*, that *if ye be circumciſed*; that is, join Circumciſion with the Goſpel, as a Thing neceſſary to Juſtification and Salvation, *Chriſt's* Undertaking will *profit you nothing*; for in ſo doing, you virtually diſown that he is come, and in Effect renounce and diſclaim him, becauſe at his Coming the Promiſe was fulfilled, and Circumciſion in courſe ceaſed.

He who urges the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, *is a Debtor to the Law*, in a double Reſpect, namely, in regard of Duty, and in regard of Penalty. As to the firſt, he is a Debtor, becauſe he that thinks himſelf bound to keep one Part of the Ceremonial Law, Circumciſion, thereby obliges himſelf to keep the whole Ceremonial Law, yea, and the whole Moral Law too, without Deficiency, and that under the Penalty of Condemnation.

Again; as he is a Debtor in point of Duty, ſo he muſt needs be a Debtor in regard of Penalty, becauſe he is not able to keep any Part of it perfectly.

Hence we are taught, that we are under the moſt endearing Obligations to *Chriſt*, who, as our Surety, paid thoſe Debts, both of Duty and Penalty, for us, to the Law of God, by fulfilling all Righteouſneſs, and by ſuffering the Puniſhment due to Tranſgreſſors.

Again; as he that is circumciſed, is bound to keep the whole Law, ſo he, that is baptized, is oblig'd to obey all the Commands of the Goſpel, and to make Conſcience of the Duties of both Tables, as an Argument of his Sincerity, and as an Ornament to his Profeſſion.

Q. *How may a Perſon be ſaid to be juſtified by the Law, as it ſeems intimated, ver. 4?*

A. The Words are, *whomſoever of you is juſtified by the Law*, that is, whoever endeavours to be ſo juſtified (for in Reality no Man can be juſtified in that Manner) *Chriſt is become of no Effect*, to ſuch Perſons; that is, they renounce *Chriſt*, and diſdain Benefit by his Death.

Q. *How were they fallen from Grace, as the Apoſtle tells them in the ſame Verſe?*

A. That is, fallen from Chriſtianity, and the Covenant of Grace; you have forfeited the Grace of the Goſpel, by cleaving to the Ceremonial Law, you are fallen from the Doctrine of Grace, delivered in the Goſpel, and *Chriſt* is become of no Effect to you.

Q. *Pray intepret the Apoſtle's Meaning in the 5th Verſe, where he ſays,* For we through the Spirit, wait for the Hope of Righteouſneſs by Faith?

A. We *Chriſtians*, we Believers, through the Spirit we have received, not by legal Obſervance, hope for ſuch a Righteouſneſs, as will denominate and conſtitute as righteous in the Sight of God, and alſo fit for the Crown of Righteouſneſs in Heaven, which we wait and hope for here on Earth.

Note, none have either a Right to Heaven, or can warrantably expect the Employments of Heaven, who are deſtitute of Righteouſneſs. Heaven is here called the *Hope of Righteouſneſs*, that is, the rational Hope and Expectation of righteous Perſons only.

It is a Righteouſneſs, made ours by Faith, even the Righteouſneſs of a Mediator, which gives us the beſt Title to, and gives us the firmeſt Ground to hope and wait for the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal Life.

It is the ſpecial work of the Holy Spirit to produce in us the Graces of the Spirit, both Faith and Hope: Faith, to enable us to apprehend; and Hope, to ſtrengthen us to wait for the Crown of Righteouſneſs, even eternal Glory. *We through the Spirit do wait for the Hope of Righteouſneſs by Faith.*

Q. *Pray explain the firſt Part of, ver* 6. For in *Jeſus Chriſt* neither Circumciſion availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumciſion, but Faith, which worketh by Love?

A. In Chriſt Jeſus; that is, in the OEconomy of *Chriſt Jeſus*, under the Goſpel-Diſpenſation in our State of Chriſtianity, ſince *Chriſt*'s Manifeſtation in the Fleſh, *neither Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion availeth any thing* with God, as to our Acceptance with him, or Reward from him: But the Qualification now neceſſary for Salvation under the Goſpel, is Faith working by Love; that is, ſuch an effectual Belief of future Happineſs purchaſed for us, and promiſed to us by *Chriſt*, as cauſes us to love and ſerve him, to truſt in and depend upon him for the ſame.

So that though the Ceremonial Law be aboliſhed, yet a Believer under the Goſpel has Work to do, a Work of Faith, and Labour of Love; for though Faith alone juſtifies us before God, yet it is not alone in the Heart when it does juſtify, but is always accompanied with the Grace of Love to God, and our Neighbour; *For in* Chr Jeſus no Faith avails any thing, but that *which works by Love.*

Q. *The 7th Verſe ſeems likewiſe to require ſome Explanation.*

A. Ye did run well; that is, in the Race of Chriſtianity, you ſet out well, and received the Goſpel, in the Plainneſs and Simplicity of it, without any Mixture of *Jewiſh* Ceremonies: *What hinder'd you?* What obſtructed your Belief of, and Obedience to the Truth of the Goſpel, which you then received from me?

Here note, that when a Perſon's or Apoſtle's Progreſs in Chriſtianity is not anſwerable to their promiſing Beginnings, it is Matter of Regret and Grief to all good *Chriſtians*, as well as of Reproach and Shame to the Perſons themſelves; *Ye did run well; who did hinder you?* Intimating, that this their Defection and Apoſtacy was no leſs Matter of Aſtoniſhment to St. *Paul*, than it was of Rebuke and Reproach to them.

Q. *What does he intimate by thoſe Words in the 9th Verſe*, A little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump?

A. This judaizing Opinion and Practice of yours, adds the Apoſtle, this Perſuaſion of the Neceſſity of being circumciſed, and obeying the Law of *Moſes*, this new Doctrine, ſo contrary to the Spirit of the Goſpel, and the Deſign of Chriſtianity, was never taught you either by God, or myſelf, or any other faithful Miniſter of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who firſt converted you to the Faith; but it is a mere Deluſion of Satan, and his Emiſſaries the falſe Apoſtles; and do not think this a ſmall Matter; let not Circumciſion ſeem a trifling Thing to you; nor let theſe judaizing Teachers be diſregarded by you as inconſiderable, becauſe but few; but they are like to Leaven, *a little of which leaveneth the whole Lump*; intimating that a few falſe Teachers, and a little of Error and falſe Doctrine, crept into the Congregation and Church of *Chriſt*, may do unſpeakable Miſchief, by a ſpeedy infection of the whole Church.

Q. *How do you underſtand the firſt Clauſe of ver.* 10. I have Confidence in you through the Lord?

A. That is, through the Lord's aſſiſting his Endeavours, and through the Lord's Bleſſing on their ſerious Conſideration of what he had written to them, they would be reclaimed from their Errors, and brought to be of the ſame Mind with himſelf.

Q. *How does he farther expreſs his Affection for them?*

A. Note, how the zealous Apoſtle was divided betwixt Hope and Fear concerning this People; he feared the worſt of them, yet hoped the beſt. It is a Fault in Miniſters to deſpair of Men too ſoon, and ſlacken their Endeavours for their People's Good, looking on them as reſolutely bent upon, and judicially given up to all Evil. Tho' our Apoſtle here had not a Confidence yet he has a Charity, which cauſed him to hope that they would be like-minded with himſelf.

With what Caution, Prudence, and Charity does our Apoſtle addreſs them? He declares, that he hoped they might be reclaimed from their Error, yet leſt they ſhould conclude their Error not dangerous, he ſhews them his juſt Indignation againſt it, and denounces deſerv'd Puniſhments againſt thoſe that ſeduced them into it; *He that troubleth you, ſhall bear his own Judgment*, his Condemnation due to him in Hell, without Repentance, which is ſuppoſed in all Threatnings; tho' not always expreſſed, yet it is underſtood.

He ſhall bear his own Judgment, *whatſoever he be*; be he who, or what he will, for Parts or Abilities, for Power or Reputation, he ſhall bear his Judgment. Such is the exact Juſtice of God, and ſuch his Impartiality in the Execution of it, that he will ſuffer no impenitent Tranſgreſſor to eſcape his Indignation.

Q. *Our Apoſtle intimates, ver.* 11. *that ſome of the judaizing Teachers had ſuggeſted to the* Galatians, *as if he himſelf had elſewhere preached the Doctrine of Circumciſion* (*by circumciſing* Timothy) *which he here oppoſes.*

A. True, he did circumciſe *Timothy*, but it was only to avoid offending the weak *Jews*, not out of any Opinion he had touching the Neceſſity of Circumciſion; therefore to diſcover to them the Falſhood of that Suggeſtion, he declares, that if he would have preached Circumciſion, he might have eſcaped Perſecution; the *Jews* were his Perſecutors, and look'd upon him as an Apoſtate from their holy Religion, for preaching up the Aboliſhment of the Moſaical Law.

Here note, that the *Jews* who looked on themſelves as the peculiar People of God, and accounted all others contemptible and profane, were yet far greater Perſecutors of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles than the blind and barbarous Heathens, and all this out of Zeal for God and his Law; *Why do I yet ſuffer Perſecution?* implying, that the *Jews* did perſecute him, and that his not preaching Circumciſion, was the Cauſe why they did ſo.

He adds, *Then is the Offence of the Croſs ceaſed:* By the Croſs may be underſtood the Doctrine of the Croſs, the Doctrine of the Goſpel; and then the Senſe is, the *Jews* would not have taken ſuch Offence at my preaching the Doctrine of the Goſpel, as they do, were it not becauſe by it Circumciſion, and the whole Frame of the legal Adminiſtration, are laid aſide.

Or, *by the Croſs* may beund erſtood the Afflictions and Sufferings he underwent, for the ſake of *Chriſt* and his holy Religion; and the Senſe then is this, Verily, all my Sufferings had long ſince been at an End, would I but have yielded the *Jews* this Point, that *Chriſtians are obliged to Circumciſion, and to yield Obedience to the Law of* Moſes; would I grant them this, my Sufferings would ſoon be at an End; but my daily Perſecutions are evident Demonſtrations that I do not preach up Circumciſion; for had I ſo done, *the Offence of the Croſs had long ſince ceaſed.*

Q. *What is his Meaning in thoſe Words in the 12th Verſe,* I would they were even cut off that trouble you?

A. The Meaning of which is, That it were very fit, were it ſeaſonable, that thoſe who had thus ſeduced them, ſhould be excommunicated and cut off from the Church's Communion.

Here note, how implicitly and interpretatively, St. *Paul* compares theſe Seducers to rotten Members, which are and oughtt to be cut off, leſt the Gangrene overſpread the whole Body; *I would they were cut off*; implying, that like rotten Members, they deſerved it, and the Church's Safety called for it, would her Circumſtances have admitted it.

The Expreſſion, *cutting off*, ſeems an Alluſion to the practice of Circumciſion, which is cutting off the Fore-skin of the Fleſh, and throwing it away. Now ſays the Apoſtle, I wiſh that theſe judaizing Teachers, that urge you to be circumciſed, that is, to cut off and caſt away the Fore-skin of your Fleſh, I wiſh that they might be cut off as ſuperfluous Fleſh, and caſt out of the Communion of the Church.

Yet note, the Apoſtle rather declares what ſuch Seducers deſerve, than actually inflicts the Cenſure itſelf; he ſatisfied himſelf with an affectionate Wiſh, leſt the Number of the Seduced being great, and perhaps the Seducers not a few, they ſhould be harden'd; rather than reformed, and the Ordinance itſelf expoſed.

Q. *What is the next Point he proceeds to ſpeak of?*

A. Our Apoſtle next cautions them againſt abuſing their Chriſtian Liberty, and by no Means to apprehend or ſuppoſe that they were thereby freed from all Obligations to ſerve God or Man in the Duties particularly required of them.

Q. *What was that Liberty, to which he tells them, they were called, ver. 13?*

A. It was to the Enjoyment of evangelical Liberty, which conſiſts in a Freedom from the Obligation of the Ceremonial Law, and the Curſe of the Moral Law; uſe it then ſo as not to abuſe it; uſe it ſo, as not to allow yourſelves in indulging any carnal Luſt, nor yet to ſcandalize the Weak, who at preſent ſcruple to forſake Circumciſion, and the reſt of the Ceremonial Rites. The too free Uſe of our *Chriſtian* Liberty is one great Occaſion of the Sins we commit in the Courſe of our Lives. Religion unqueſtionably allows us in the Gratification of our natural Paſſions and Appetites; but all Exceſſes and immoderate Liberties it diſallows. Therefore, in Matters of Duty, we ſhould rather do too much than too little; but in Matters of indifferency, we ſhould rather take too little of our Liberty than too much. Thus, Prayer and Almſgiving are indiſpenſible Duties; but how often we ſhould pray, and how much we ſhould give, is not poſitively declared, yet no Damage will come by practiſing too much of either; but Damage and Danger will accrue from doing too little.

It is not ſufficient that, from our *Chriſtian* Liberty, we take no Occaſion to Sin our ſelves, but we ought to be careful, leſt by any indiſcreet Uſe of our own Liberty, we miniſter Occaſion of Sin and Stumbling to others; this is implied in the Injunction, *by Love ſerve one another.*

The Apoſtle enforces his Exhortation to love and ſerve one another, with this forcible Argument, becauſe Love is the fulfilling of the Law; that is, that Part of it which relates to our Neighbour, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.*

Love may be alſo ſaid to be the fulfilling of the Law in general; for true and regular Love to our Neighbour, ſuppoſes that our Love to God ſprings from it, and is an evidence of it, 1 *John* iv. 12. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us.*

Love is a very comprehenſive Duty, comprizing the inward Affection, as well as the outward Action; and the Word Neighbour is of a very extenſive Conſideration, and includes all Perſons, Friend and Foe, Rich and Poor, near and far off; all that are Partakers of Humanity, muſt be Sharers of our Charity: Our inward Affection and Good-will muſt extend to all, though the outward Expreſſions of it can reach but a very few. Thus the Law is fulfilled in one Word, when we love our Neighbour as our ſelves; not as we do (often) love ourſelves, but as we ſhould loveour ſelves; namely, with a wiſe and well-guided Love.

Q. *What Arguments does he uſe to enforce the Duty of Love?*

A. To enforce the foregoing Exhortation to mutual Love, the Apoſtle urges the dangerous Effects which their Animoſities and Strife, their Controverſies and Contentions, would moſt certainly produce: By biting one another; where it is obſervable, that St. *Paul* compares the Enmities and Animoſities amongſt them, on the Score of their Differences in Religion, to the Bitings, Rendings, and Devourings of wild Beaſts, and gives them timely Notice of the fatal Conſequence that would follow thereupon, namely a total Devaſtation and inevitable Deſtruction of the whole Church. It is a true Obſervation that there is no ſuch bitter Hatred amongſt Men, as on the Score of Religion: As the Zeal of the *Jews* would not ſuffer an uncircumciſed Perſon to live amongſt them, ſo probably thoſe jealous Judaizers in *Galatia*, would not ſuffer thoſe who had caſt off legal Obſervance, to live quietſy and peaceably by them, which might give Occaſion to theſe Words of the Apoſtle, *Ye bite and devour one another; take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another.*

Q. *But how were they to prevent the fore-mentioned Evils?*

A. To this End the Apoſtle exhorts them to walk in the Spirit, that is, according to the Guidance and Direction, the Influence and Motion of the Holy Spirit ſpeaking to them in his Word, and then they won'd never fulfil the Luſts of the Fleſh; they wou'd never, deliberately, accompliſh the inordinate Motions of corrupt Nature.

This Expreſſion, *Ye ſhall not fulfil the Luſts of the Fleſh*, may import theſe two Things, 1. That an inward Principle of Grace in the Heart, will give a Check to Sin in its firſt Motions, like an untimely Birth, before it comes to its Maturity; it ſhall never gain the full Conſent of a gracious Perſon's Will, as it does of an ungenerate Perſon. 2. But if notwithſtanding all the Oppoſition Grace makes to hinder the Production of Sin, yet it breaks forth into Act, ſuch Acts of Sin are not committed without Reluctance and Regret, and are followed with Shame and Sorrow, and are Warnings to prevent the like Surprizals in us for the future.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's Scope and Deſign in the 17th Verſe?*

A. This Verſe is brought in as a ſpecial Reaſon why *Chriſtians* ſhould walk in the Spirit, that is, after the Motion and Guidance of God's Holy Spirit; becauſe otherwiſe the Fleſh will quickly prevail over them; for the Fleſh is continually luſting againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh; that is, the evil Inclinations of corrupt Nature are continually ſtruggling with, and ſtriving againſt the good Motions which the Holy Spirit of God ſtirs up in us: And in the like manner the Spirit ,or renewed Nature, oppoſes the Motions of corrupt Nature; for theſe two Principles are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye who are led by the Spirit, cannot act, deliberately, accordingly to the Fleſh; nor can they who are led by the Fleſh, do the Things which delight the Spirit.

In a *Chriſtian* there is a Diverſity of Principles, Fleſh and Spirit; there is a good Principle called Spirit, becauſe the Spirit of God is the Author of it; and a bad Principle, called Fleſh, by which we are inclined to that which is Evil. This is called Fleſh, to denote its Intimacy with us; it is as dear to us as our Fleſh, as a right Hand, or a right Eye.

We cannot do the Things we would; we cannot perform any holy Duty perfectly in this Life. As ſoon may an imperfect Father beget a perfect Child, as we in our State of Imperfection perform any Duty free from Sin. What need then have the beſt of Saints of the Mediation and Interceſſion of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, when they preſent any performed Duty unto God? And what need have we to watch our own Hearts when we are upon our Knees, to fortify them againſt the Incurſions and Diſturbances of the Fleſh; ſeeing that after all our Care and Vigilance in Duty, none of us can do the Things we would!

Q. *How is a Chriſtian* led by the Spirit, *as the Apoſtle expreſſes it?*

A. That is, if ye be under the Guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, and that renewing Principle of Grace which he has produced in you, you are no longer under the Law; that is, under the moral Law, as a Covenant of Life for our Juſtification, but under it as an eternal Rule of Living; not under the vindicative, though under the directive Power of the Law; that is, You are by the Spirit, by the ſpiritual Diſpenſation of this Goſpel, freed from the Curſe and Terror of the Moral Law; how unreaſonable then it is to ſuppoſe, that you ſhould be ſtill ſubject to the Ceremonial Law? No, if ye be led by the Spirit, neither the Moral Law ſhall condemn you, nor the Ceremonial Law oblige and bind you.

Q. *What other Inſtructions does the Apoſtle give them?*

A. The Apoſtle proceeds to ſhew how they might aſſuredly know whether they were ſpiritual or carnal, whether the Spirit or the Fleſh had the Prevalency in them, or Dominion over them. Accordingly he particularly deſcribes the Fleſh and the Spirit, by their various and different Effects, and gives a Catalogue of one and the other; he reckons up no leſs than ſeventeen Works of the Fleſh; all of which yea, any of which continued in, and unrepented of, are damnable; after this, he enumerates nine ſpecial and gracious Fruits of the Spirit which qualify us for, and entitle us to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Works of the Fleſh are manifeſt, &c. Sin is called a Work, intimating the Labour and Toil, the Drudgery and Pains, Sinners meet with in a ſinful Courſe.

Sin is called Works, in the plural Number; becauſe Sin ſeldom goes ſingle, but has a dangerous Train and Retinue; he that yields himſelf a Slave to one Sin, ſhall ſoon find himſelf a Slave to many.

Q. *Why is Sin called* the Work of the Fleſh?

A. Becauſe Sins are committed by the Fleſh; the Soul's Inſtrument, as well in the Work of Sin, as in the Service of *Chriſt*; and the Fleſh is the Object, about which Works are converſant, as well as the Organ and Inſtrument by which they are committed.

Q. *How are they ſaid to be* manifeſt?

A. Theſe Works of the Fleſh are ſaid to be manifeſt, becauſe they are manifeſtly condemned by the Light of Nature; a natural Conſcience in Men ſtartles them at firſt, till by Cuſtom, and frequent Practice, they become habitual and natural to them.

They are all manifeſt by the Light of Scripture; the Word of God, which is in all our Hands, condemns all theſe Works to the Pit of Hell; and ſolemnly warns the *Galatians* to watch againſt them, and not indulge or allow themſelves in the wilful Commiſſion of any of them: I tell you, ſays he, that *ſuch ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, but be eternally baniſhed from him.

Q. *What is the Difference between the* Works of the Fleſh, *and* the Fruit of the Spirit?

A. The Apoſtle, who called Sin the Work of the Fleſh, calls Grace the Fruit of the Spirit. Sin is a Work of our own; the Spirit can neither be the Author, nor Abettor of any Thing that is Evil; but all Graces accompanying Salvation, are the Fruit of God's Spirit, both becauſe he is the Author of them, and becauſe they are ſo acceptable and pleaſing to him, even as Fruit is to our Taſte, and likewiſe ſo profitable and advantageous to ourſelves. Where the Fleſh rules, there the Work exceeds the Fruit; and accordingly, without mentioning the Fruit, they are called Works of the Fleſh; but where the Spirit of God rules, there the Fruit exceeds the Work; and therefore without mentioning the Work, it is called the Fruit of the Spirit.

The Works of the Fleſh are ſpoken of as many; but the Fruit of the Spirit is mentioned as one; many Works, but one Fruit. There is ſuch a Connexion and Concatenation of Graces, that although they are diſtinct in their Natures, yet are they inſeparable in their Subject; he that has one ſpiritual Grace in Reality, or at leaſt in Eminency, cannot be utterly deſtitute of any other; for where the Holy Spirit is, there cannot be a total Defect of any Holy Grace.

The Works of the Fleſh are ſaid to be manifeſt; but this is not affirmed of the Fruit of the Spirit. Alas! God knows, the Works of the Fleſh are but every-where too manifeſt; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, Drunkenneſs, ſo univerſally abound, that you can ſcarce look beſide them: But the Fruits of the Spirit are not ſo; Love, Peace, Gentleneſs, Meekneſs, theſe are very thin in the World; Nips and Haws grow in every Hedge, when choicer Fruits are but in ſome few Gardens.

Q. *Why are thoſe who are poſſeſſed of the Graces, mentioned Verſe 22, 23. ſaid to be exempt from the Law*; Againſt ſuch there is no Law?

A. That is, no Law to compel, no Law to accuſe or condemn them; for the Law enjoins the Practice and Performance of them.

Q. *How may we obtain* the Fruits of the Spirit?

A. The beſt Way then to have the Fruits of the Spirit thrive in our Hearts, is firſt, to mortify the Works of the Fleſh; Weeds and Thiſtles muſt be rooted up before Grain can grow or thrive. As the Corruption of one Form is the Production of another, ſo the Mortification of Sin makes Way for the Plantation of the Fruits of the Spirit.

Moral Virtues are the Fruits of the Spirit, and commence *Chriſtian* Graces, when they are actuated by Faith in *Chriſt*, influenced by Love unto him, and aiming at the higheſt Ends, the Glory of God, and our own Salvation.

If we compare the Fruits of the Spirit with the Works of the Fleſh, there will appear ſo much Beauty in the one, and ſuch real Deformity in the other; ſo much Satisfaction in the one, and ſuch Diſquiet and Vexation in the other, that beſides the Difference between them, in their Original and Event, the former Conſiderations are abundantly ſufficient to engage our Love to the Fruits of the Spirit, and excite our Hatred to the Works of the Fleſh.

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words, ver.* 24. They that are *Chriſt*'s?

A. That is, they that are truly his Followers, and ſincere Diſciples, they have crucified, that is, ſubdued, and, in ſome Degree, mortified and put to Death their fleſhly Corruptions, their carnal Luſts, and ſinful Affections and Paſſions. By Baptiſm they engaged themſelves to die unto Sin; and the Regenerate have done it in ſome Meaſure; they *have crucified the Fleſh:* Yet we muſt not underſtand this of a total, plenary, and final Crucifixion, but inchoative only; and they are ſaid to have done it, becauſe they are daily doing of it, in Reſolution, in Deſire, and Endeavour.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by* Affections, *in the ſame Verſe?*

A. By *Affections*, we are not to underſtand natural, but inordinate Affections; and by Crucifixion is not to be underſtood a total Extinction of Sin, but depriving it of its Regency and Dominion in the Soul of the Sinner; yet as Death ſurely, though ſlowly, follows Crucifixion, ſo likewiſe doth Sin live in a Believer a dying Life, and dies a lingring but a certain Death: *They that are* Chriſt's *have crucified the Fleſh, with the Affections and Luſts.*

Q. *How may we be ſaid to* live in the Spirit, *Verſe* 25?

A. That is, if the Spirit lives in us; if the Holy Spirit of Grace be the Principle of our Life, *Let us walk in the Spirit*; that is, let us live and act under the Conduct and Guidance, the Direction and Influence of the Holy Spirit; let us do the Works of the Spirit, let us bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit, and let us live a ſpiritual Life; let our Dealings be about ſpiritual and heavenly Things, and our chiefeſt Delight be in ſuch Things; and, by theſe ſpiritual Delights and Exerciſes, we ſhall become every Day more and more Spiritual, and, in God's Account, be eſteemed amongſt the Number of thoſe that walk in the Spirit. This ſeems to be the Importance of this remarkable Place. *If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit.* An holy Heart will be attended with a holy Life, and a good Conſcience accompanied with a good Converſation; ſpiritual Life will produce ſpiritual Motion.

Q. *How does he conclude this Diſcourſe?*

A. Our Apoſtle cloſes this excellent Chapter with an Exhortation to avoid all Pride and Ambition, all vain-glorious Boaſtings and Oſtentations, not provoking one another by their Contention, not envying either the Gifts or Graces beſtowed by God on others.

Hence learn, that a vain-glorious Deſire of Applauſe and Reputation, is ſinful, when we ſeek for what we do not deſerve, or for more than we deſerve, or ſeek more to be applauded by Men, than to be approved by God.

Alſo, that Ambition is uſually attended with Envy and Contention; no Sin goes ſingle, but has a Train of Followers; *Let us not be deſirous of Vain-Glory, provoking one another, or envying one another.*

CHAP. VI.

An Exhortation to divers Chriſtian *Virtues. To maintain their Miniſters; to Liberality towards the Poor. He teſtifies his Love and Eſteem for them; and warns them of falſe Apoſtles, to whom he oppoſes his own Example. True Chriſtianity, its Hope and Example. Admoniſhes, that no Man be farther troubleſome to him, ſince his Sufferings clearly evinced the Truth of his Doctrine, and Conſtancy therein. The Apoſtolical Benediction.*

Q. W*HAT are the Points diſcourſed of in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter conſiſts of Exhortations to ſeveral important Duties; the firſt is, how they ſhould behave one towards another, upon Suppoſition of their falling into Error or Sin; namely, not with Rigour and Severity, but with Mildneſs and Lenity, *if any be overtaken in a Fault*, &c. which implies, that any may be ſo: That Sin, or that Miſery, which befals ſome Men, may befal any, yea, all others; for they are Partakers of the ſame frail Nature, ſubject to the ſame Corruptions, and liable to the ſame Temptations.

The Duty exhorted to, with reſpect to the Perſon ſo fallen, is, *reſtore him*, ſet him Right, put him in Joint again; a Metaphor taken from Boneſetters, who replace diſlocated Bones, and ſet broken ones, with great Tenderneſs: Thoſe three Things, which we ſay are neceſſary in a Bone-ſetter, are abſolutely needful in a Reprover; namely, an *Eagle's* Eye, to diſcern where the Fault lies; a *Lion's* Heart, to deal faithfully with the Faults; and a *Lady's* Hand, to uſe them gently and tenderly.

The Perſons particularly named, to manage this Duty of brotherly Reproof, are, *ye that are ſpiritual*; you that are the Governors of the Church, ſay ſome; you that are endowed with ſpiritual Gifts, ſay others; the Prophets among you, who perform all ſpiritual Offices for you, let them rebuke Offenders. Others, by ſpiritual Gifts, underſtand ſuch as had received larger Meaſures of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, than others; *Let ſuch as are Strong bear with the Infirmities of the Weak*.

Q. *In what Manner ought this Duty to be performed?*

A. This Duty of paternal Correction ought to be managed with Patience and Meekneſs, *reſtore him in the Spirit of Meekneſs*; if the Reproach you give others, be imbitter'd with your own Paſſions, they will rather harden than reclaim the Offender.

Conſidering thyſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted: Who knows what a Feather the ſtrongeſt Saint, and ſtouteſt Chriſtian may prove in the Wind of Temptation? Therefore, *let him that thinks he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall*, and exerciſe great Candour and *Chriſtian* Tenderneſs towards them that are fallen before him.

Q. *How were they to* bear one another's Burdens?

A. This is a general Precept, and requires us to ſympathize with our Brethren in all their Sorrows and Sufferings, to bear a Part with them under the Burthen of oppreſſive Wants and Neceſſities; particularly, the Weakneſſes and Infirmities of our Brethren, ſeem here more eſpecially recommended to our Care and Practice.

So ſhall we fulfill the Law of Chriſt; that is, the Law of Love, the moral Law, which enjoins us to love our Neighbour as ourſelves.

Q. *But why is this called the Law of* Chriſt, *when it was long before him, and even* Moſes *himſelf, and as old as* Adam, *being Part of the Law of Nature, written on* Adam's *Heart before there was any written Bible?*

A. 'Tis anſwer'd, The Law of Love is very properly called the Law of *Chriſt*, becauſe he revived, reſcued, recommended, and enforced it, frequently urged it to his Followers, and exemplified it in his own Life and Converſation, therefore called it *a Nw Commandment*, and *his Commandment*, John xiii. 34.

Q. *What is the next Duty exhorted to?*

A. The Apoſtle next cautions the *Galatians* againſt the Sin of Pride and Self-conceit, and to abound in the Grace of Humility and Modeſty; intimating, that Pride, and an high Opinion of ourſelves, are the certain Cauſes of Cenſoriouſneſs, and raſh judging of others, and the true Reaſon why we deſpiſe and glory over an offending Brother, inſtead of ſympathizing with him, and endeavouring to reſtore him.

Q. *Who is he that* thinks himſelf Something, *Verſe* 3?

A. He is one that has proud Thoughts of himſelf; who thinks himſelf more righteous and holy, more ſtedfaſt than his brother *Chriſtian*, and conceits he has more Power to preſerve himſelf than others; ſuch an one thinks himſelf to be ſome great Thing; when, alas! every Man is nothing; and the beſt of Men have nothing but what the Grace of God confers upon them, 2 *Cor*. xii. 12.

Q. *What Rules does he give them to correct their Sin of Pride and Self-conceit?*

A. To cure them of this Sin of Pride and Self-conceit, the Apoſtle directs them to compare themſelves with thoſe who are worſe than themſelves, and to try and prove their own Works by the Rule of the Word of God, and by the Example and Practice of others; and ſo ſhall they find Matter of Rejoicing in themſelves, in the Teſtimony of God, and the ſilent Applauſe of their own Conſciences, without borrowing Matter of Rejoicing from the Frailties and Infirmities of other Perſons.

Q. *How does he enforce the Duty of a Man's* proving his own Work?

A. The Argument the Apoſtle uſes to enforce this Duty on every Man, of trying his own Work, rather than be prying into the Infirmities of others, is, becauſe when he comes to Judgment, every Man muſt bear *his own Burthen*, or give an Account of himſelf, and his own Actions, to God, who will then abſolve or condemn Men, not as they have done better or worſe than others, but as they ſhall be then found in themſelves, abſolutely conſidered.

The righteous God, in the great Judgment, will call no Man to account for the Sins of others, unleſs he has been ſome ways acceſſory to them; but every one ſhall *bear his own Burthen*, both of Guilt and Shame.

Q. *What other Duties does the Apoſtle exhort the* Galatians *to put in Practice?*

A. The Apoſtle's next Exhortation is, to ſtir up the *Galatians* to Liberality and Beneficence, upon every fitting Occaſion, to be ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, and to do good unto all Men. And becauſe it's highly probable, that by Reaſon of the Prevalency of Error amongſt them, and the Number of falſe Teachers found with them, that the *Galatians* Love to the Word, and to the Miniſters and Diſpenſers of it, was grown cold, he firſt begins to ſtir up their Liberality towards their Teachers, *let him that is taught in the Word* of the Goſpel, *communicate unto him that teacheth*, in all ſuch *good Things* as he needeth.

The Wiſdom of God hath appointed ſome to teach, and others to be taught; but the Pride of Man is grown to that Height in our Days, that almoſt every one thinks himſelf ſufficient to teach, and few have Humility enough to be taught.

Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate, &c. The Buſineſs of a Miniſter is not to read a Lecture to his People out of *Ariſtotle's* Ethicks, or

Seneca's Morals, much leſs to load them with the Burthen of unwritten Traditions, but to declare to them a crucified Saviour, and the Way to eternal Salvation by him.

Q. *Does not this afford ſome ſpecial Inſtructions frr our Behaviour towards our Miniſters?*

A. Hence is proved the Miniſter's Right to Maintenance; the People whom he teaches, are obliged, by common Equity, to allow him a comfortable, and if able, an honourable Subſiſtence; *Let him that is taught, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good Things.*

Learn alſo, that the Church's Maintenance is only due to ſuch Miniſters as are apt to teach, who labour in the Word themſelves; none have a Right to the Church's Salary, who do not the Church's Service. Let ſuch Laymen as, by their Impropriations, take away the Vicar's Bread, and ſuch Clergy-Men as eat the Sweat of the Curate's Brow, conſider how they will anſwer it at the Bar of God.

Q. *Does he bring any other Arguments to enforce the Duty of Liberality?*

A. The Apoſtle next offers ſeveral Motives to the forementioned Duty of Liberality and *Chriſtian* Beneficence in general, and to the Miniſters of the Word in particular; and the firſt is taken from God's Omniſcience, who takes Notice of all the petty and pitiful Pretences, Pleas and Excuſes which Men make, why they cannot be ſo kind as they would be to the Miniſters and Members of *Jeſus Chriſt.* Alas! their own Wants are many, but 'tis their Luſts that make them ſo; their Burthens are great upon them, and they muſt take care for themſelves: But, ſays the Apoſtle, though you may with theſe lying Pretences cheat yourſelves, and mock your Miniſters and your Neighbours, yet God is not, will not, cannot be mocked. There is no juggling with God, no deceiving his Eye, Man never deceives himſelf ſo much, as when he thinks to deceive God in the leaſt.

Q. *How does he farther illuſtrate the Duty of Charity?*

A. St. *Paul* compares Charity and *Chriſtian* Bounty, to Seed ſown, and aſſures us, that the Crop we reap ſhall be anſwerable, both in Quality, and Kind, in Meaſure and Degree, to the Seed we now ſow; *whatſoever Man ſoweth, that alſo ſhall he reap.*

Again, every Man's Harveſt hereafter, ſhall be according to his Seed-time. The Actions of this Life are the Seed ſown for the Time to come; if the Husband-man ſow Tares, he muſt not expect to reap Wheat.

He that ſoweth to the Fleſh; that is, he that ſpends his Subſtance upon his Luſts. and is ſatisfied with the Gratification of his ſenſual Deſires, *ſhall reap Corruption*; that is, periſhing Satisfaction only at preſent, and eternal Perdition afterwards: But he that *ſows to the Spitit*; he that improves his Eſtate for God, for the Support of the Goſpel, for the Suſtenance of his Members, *ſhall of the Spirit reap Life Everlaſting.* The Spirit of him who raiſed up *Jeſus* from the Dead, will alſo raiſeus up at the great Day, and reward our Readineſs to part with the Things of this World which we cannot keep, with eternal Life which we ſhall never loſe.

Q. *Are the* Galatians *exhorted to the Practice of any any other Duties?*

A. The Apoſtle next exhorts the *Galatians*, and in them all *Chriſtians*, to the Practice of one of the moſt important Duties of the *Chriſtian* Religion; namely, that of doing good one to another, in which he preſſes them to be unweariedly diligent, according to their Ability and Opportunity.

The grand comprehenſive Duty we are exhorted to, is, *well-doing*, and *an unwearied Diligence* therein. This comprehends all thoſe Ways and Means whereby we may be beneficial and Uſeful one to another, both to Soul and Body, in ſpiritual and temporal good Things, and promote both the preſent Comfort and future Happineſs of each other.

This Duty is extended to all Mankind; *let us do Good unto all.* The *Galatians* werein Danger of judaizing in their Practice, as well as in their Doctrines; that is of loving none but themſelves, and their own Countrymen: For the *Jews* were grown ſo ſour and churliſh in their Temper, that they would not do the leaſt Office of Kindneſs to any that was not of their own Nation: Therefore St. *Paul* here exhorts them to extend their Charity univerſally to all and every one of the ſame Nature with themſelves.

The ſpecial and particular Object of our Charity, is, *the Houſhold of Faith*; by which is meant primarily the Miniſters of God, the Teachers of the Word, theſe are God's domeſtick Servants. Where-ever there has been a People, there has been a Religion profeſſed, ſuch as it was, where-ever there has been a Religion profeſſed, there have been Perſons conſecrated and ſet apart to attend the Service of that Religion, and Maintenance provided for thoſe Attendants: It was ſo by God's Appointment under the Law, and by *Chriſt*'s under the Goſpel, 1 *Cor.* ix. 14.

Q. *Whom does he mean by the* Houſhold of Faith?

A. By *the Houſhold of Faith*, we are to underſtand the whole collective Body of believing *Chriſtians*, all the Members of *Chriſt*'s myſtical Body, ſuch as are very dear to God, and ought to be ſo to us.

Q. *Pray explain the firſt Clauſe of the ſame Verſe*, As we have Opportunity let us do good to all Men?

A. *As we*, that is, every one of us; for there is no Condition in the World ſo mean and deſpicable, but it yields Perſons an Opportunity one Way or other of doing, if not by their Purſe, at leaſt by ther Prayers and Example.

As we have an Opportunity; as often as Occaſions of doing good are preſent to us, and according to our Ability. Some Men defer doing good till they come to die, till they make their Will, that unwilling Will in which they give God a ſmall Pittance of his own, becauſe they can keep it no longer; they will repent when they are dying and be charitable after they are dead. But a Death-bed Charity may be as unavailable as a Deathb-ed Repentance.

Let us do good unto all: God could eaſily level the World, and give every Man alike, but he is pleaſed to give ſome more than others, on purpoſe to try their Graces, the Charity and Bounty of the Rich, the Faith and Patience of the Poor. An Eſtate that is more than ſufficient for our occaſions is no farther a Bleſſing to us, than as it gives a greater Opportunity of doing good than others.

Let us not be weary in Well-doing; though we have done much Good, there is room for more; new Objects will appear, new Occaſions will ariſe, new Opportunities preſent themſelves. Let us never think we can do enough, much leſs too much Good; the beſt of Beings are moſt unwearied in Well-doing. God, *Chriſt*, the holy Angels, are never wearied of this bleſſed Work; let us never be weary in imitating them in that which is their higheſt, their cheſeſt Excellence and Perfection.

The Argument and Encouragement to the chearful Diſcharge of the Duty, is, *in the Seaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not*; that is, ſooner or later either in this World, or the next, or in both, we ſhall receive the Reward of well-doing.

Q. *We ſhall reap, but what?*

A. We ſhall reap the Bleſſing of God upon all we have, are, and do; we ſhall reap the Benefit and Bleſſing of their Prayers to whom we extend our Charity; we ſhall teap the higheſt Pleaſure and Satisfaction in our own Minds of doing Good, with which no ſenſual Pleaſure can be compared. But how vaſt and unſpeakable a Reward will an unwearied Diligence in Well-doing meet with in the other World! It will plead for us at the Day of Judgment, and procure at the Hands of a merciful God, through the Merits of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, a glorious Recompence at the Reſurrection of the Juſt; and proportionable to the Degrees of our Charity, will be the Diſpenſations of this Reward.

Q. *In the 18th Verſe he ſays,* Ye ſee how large a Letter I have written to you with mine own Hand: *What do you obſerve upon this?*

A. It is highly probable that St. *Paul* dictated his Epiſtles, and that ſome other Perſons wrote them; as that to the *Romans* wrote by *Tertius*, *Rom.* xvi. 22. Sometimes he only wrote the Salutation, and ſubſcribed the Epiſtle with his own Hand, and as 1 *Cor.* xvi. 22. But here he tells the the *Galatians*, that he wrote this Epiſtle to them, having never wrote ſuch a large one with his own Hand wholly, to any Church, as he did to them.

Dr. *Hammond* has the following Note upon theſe Words in Verſe 14. *how large a Letter. Theophylact*, ſays he, has given this as his Opinion. St. *Paul* was accuſed of preaching up in other Places the Obſervation of the *Moſaical* Law, contrary to what this Epiſtle contains. This forced him to teſtify, what he here ſaith, under his own Hand, that he did no where preach for the Law, Chap. v. 2. vi. 24. And therefore, whereas his other Epiſtles were often written by an Amanuenſis, and only the Salutation with his own Hand, yet here he ſaith, he was forced to write all himſelf, and that, as he will conjecture, though he was *not very well ſkill'd in writing*; and this he thinks is noted by *how large an Epiſtle*, not how long, or how great, but of what manner, what ſort, noting the Quality rather than Quantity. And the Word tranſlated Letter, ſhould be rendered Letters, meaning the Letters of the Alphabet, and not ſo properly an Epiſtle. And accordingly, ſays *Theophylact*, it is not to denote the Length or Magnitude, but the deformity of the Letters, or Characters, in which this Epiſtle was written.

But now granting, as we have Reaſon, this to be the right Notion of the ſingle Words, there is no Neceſſity either that this ſhould be thus applied to the Badneſs of the Character, or enlarged to the writing the whole Epiſtle with his own Hand, that is not ſo much as intimated in any other Place, or in any antient Record, and this one Place cannot conclude it; for the Word *large* originally ſignifies the ſort or kind of Hand indefinitely, not defining what it was, ſave only that it was ſuch as was known to be his. For ſo 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 17. the writing the Salutation (ſome few Words in the cloſe) with his own Hand, was, ſaith he, *the Token in every Epiſtle*, that by which it was known to be his. And ſo if here it be ſuppoſed, that the whole Epiſtle was written by an Amanuenſis, as far as to Chap. vi. 11. and then the Pen taken into the Apoſtle's own Hand, and uſed by him to the End of the Epiſtle, he may well begin thus, *You ſee and know with what Kind of Letters I have written*; you know the Character that it is my own Hand, under which it is that I teſtify all that is before written in the Epiſtle, particularly that which is in Anſwer to he Calumny againſt me, as if I preached Circumciſion, &c. in other Places, which I have aſſured you, and demonſtrated from my Perſecutions from the *Jews*, that I do not; and to this I here add again, under my own Hand, a Character of your *Gnoſtick* Seducers, ver. 12, 13. and the Profeſſion of my own Opinion and Practice, ver. 16, 18. and again, an Evidence of my Doctrine and Practice from my Service. And thus the whole Difficulty is ſufficiently explicated without imagining any more.

Or if the Words *I, have written*, be thought to conclude, that he had written that which went before, and ſo the whole Epiſtle, I anſwer, that it is poſſible he might, but not neceſſarily to be concluded by the Form of that Word; becauſe if we ſtill reſtrain it to theſe laſt Verſes, this will have perfect Truth in it. For when he ſaith, *ye ſee*, he muſt needs refer to that Point of Time wherein his Epiſtle ſhould be received and read by the *Galatians*, and then 'tis certain that, *I have written*, will be as true of the laſt Verſes, as of the former part of the Epiſtle, and ſo that Difficulty is removed alſo.

This he did for two Reaſons, 1. To teſtify the Fervency of his Affections towards them, and to inſinuate how much he loved them. 2. To evidence the Sincerity of his Endeavours for their preſent and future Happineſs.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the 12th Verſe?*

A. The Apoſtle returns, in this Verſe, to the Deſcription he had before given of the falſe Apoſtles, who, though they urged the neceſſity of Circumciſion, yet it was not with a ſincere Intention; it was, firſt, *to make a fair Shew in the Fleſh*; that is, to make a fair outward Shew of Religion, an high Pretence to Holineſs, by obſerving Circumciſion, and the abrogated Rites of the ceremonial Law: And, Secondly, this their pretended Zeal proceeded from Puſillanimity and Fear, leſt they ſhould ſuffer Perſecution from the *Jews*, for preaching the Doctrine of the Goſpel, called here, *the Croſs of* Chriſt, becauſe it treats of a crucified *Chriſt*.

This Charge he makes good againſt theſe *Judaizing* Doctors, from their making no Conſcience to keep the Law themſelves, and could diſpenſe with Circumciſion well enough, if they were a-

through

mongſt their Friends, but pleaded for it when in fear of their Perſecutors.

Q. *How do you underſtand the laſt Clauſe of ver.* 13. That they may glory in your Fleſh?

A. That is might pride themſelves that they were become their Converts, by being circumciſed at their Perſuaſion, and be able to boaſt of the Multitude of their Proſelytes to Circumciſion. *They deſire to have you circumciſed, that they may glory in your Fleſh.*

Q. St. Paul *having ſhewn what the falſe Apoſtles gloried in, next tells them what was his own Boaſt; namely,* the Croſs of *Chriſt*: *What does he mean by the* Croſs of *Chriſt?*

A. The Croſs of *Chriſt* is taken three Ways in Scripture, Materially, Metaphorically, and Metonymically. The material Croſs of *Chriſt* is that he died upon at *Jeruſalem*. This the Church of *Rome* glories in greatly. The metaphorical Croſs of *Chriſt* is Afflictions, *Luke* ix. 28. *Let him take up the Croſs,* that is, ſubmit to any Affliction: God often ſanctifies the Croſs, for the crucifying the Hearts of his People to the World. The Croſs of *Chriſt* is alſo taken metonymically for the Goſpel, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, or of him that died upon the Croſs.

Now Chriſtianity, or the Doctrine of the Goſpel, crucifies us to the World, 1. By diſcovering to us the Vanity and Emptineſs of the World, and all the periſhing Satiſfactions of it. 2. By propounding ſuch Arguments to crucify the World, as were never heard of from all the Philoſophers and wiſe Men that ever lived in the World; Arguments taken rom the Glory of God, the Death of *Chriſt*, the Dignity of the Soul, *&c.*

Q. *But wherein does a Crucifixion to the World conſiſt?*

A. It conſiſts not in a Contempt of the World, as uſeleſs and hurtful, or in caſting off all Care and Concern for the Things of it, as ſinful and unneceſſary; nor is every Degree of Deſire after, Love unto, or Delight in the Things of the World, inconſiſtent with our being crucified to it; nor does it oblige us to withdraw ourſelves from the Converſation with the Men of the World: But poſitively, it conſiſts in a crucified Judgment or Opinion of the World, in crucifying our Affections to it, our Hopes and Expectations from it, our Care and Concern for it, our Delight and Endeavours after it.

Q. *How does a* Chriſtian's *being crucified to the World, afford him Cauſe for unſpeakable Rejoicing?*

A. Thus; we may, and ought to glory in the bleſſed Effects of *Chriſt*'s Death, in re-inſtamping the Image of God upon the Soul, in the certain Tokens of the Love of God. Now Crucifixion to the World, by the Croſs of *Chriſt*, is all this, and therefore warranted to be boaſted of, and gloried in.

The Reaſon the Apoſtle aſſigns, why he gloried only in the Croſs of *Chriſt*, and not in thoſe carnal Ordinances of Circumciſion, *&c.* was, becauſe neither Circumciſion nor Uncircumciſion, neither the Preſence of that Ordinance, nor the Want of it, avails any Thing, as to our Accepance with *Chriſt*, and Intereſt in him, but the *New Creature* is all in all; a circumciſed Heart, not a circumciſed Fore-Skin; a renewed Nature, a divine Temper of Mind, rendering us like to *Chriſt*. This will enable us to love him; that which was ſignified by Circumciſion, is the Thing that pleaſes God; namely, the Renovation of our Natures, and becoming new Creatures, both in Heart and Life.

Q. *How may a* Chriſtian's *Life be compared to* a Walk, *as it is, Verſe 16?*

A. In this Verſe, the Nature of *Chriſtianity* is deſcribed; it is a Walk; now a Walk is a Motionn, a free and voluntary, an uniform and even, a proprogreſſive and conſtant Motion.

This Walk is likewiſe regular, a Walk by Rule; a *Chriſtian* is not a lawleſs Perſon, to range and ramble as Fancy leads him; but he walks by the Rule of Scripture, by the Rule of Charity.

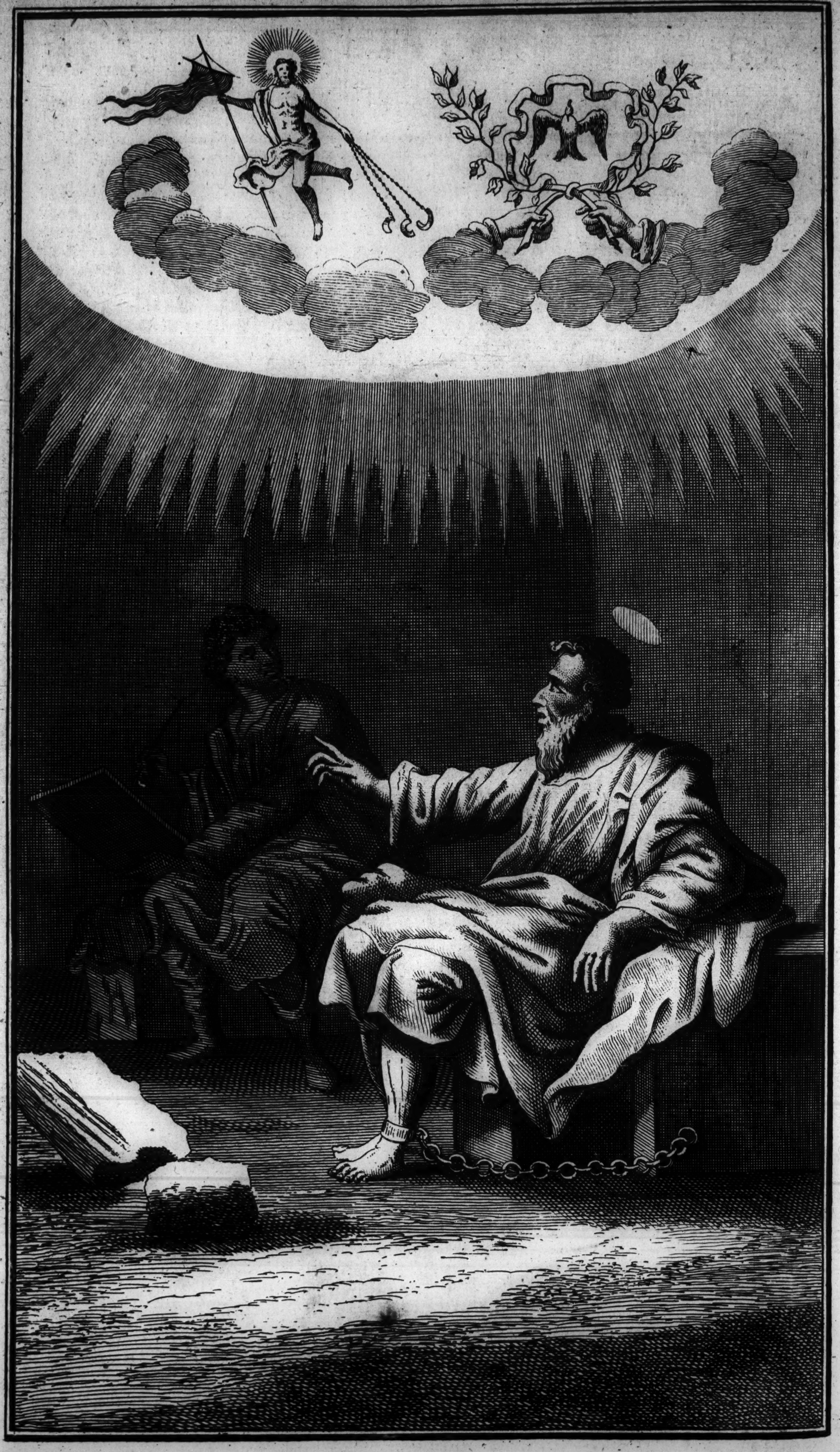
According to this Rule. What Rule? The foregoing Verſe declares it to be Regeneration, and the Law of the new Creature; *as many as walk according to this Rule,* when the Creature, in the Principles and Workings of it, is made the Ground, Pattern, and Director of our Obedience, and we frame and ſquare all the Actions of our Lives according thereunto.

Q. *How does he conclude this Epiſtle?*

A. Our Apoſtle cloſes his Epiſtle with his uſual Valediction, moſt affectionately praying, that the Grace and Favour of *Chriſt*, in the ſweet Effects of it, and in the ſenſible Apprehenſions of it, might remain in their Soul, to enlighten, ſanctify, confirm, and quicken them more and more, that from thence they might derive and draw abiding Conſolation in Life and Death. *Amen.*

BRITISH 5 DE 60 MUSEUM

The Epistle of St. PAUL *to the* EPHESIANS.



St. PAUL *being a Prisoner at* ROME *writes this Epistle to the* EPHESIANS *to confirm them in their Faith*

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO THE

EPHESIANS.

St. Paul. *having planted a famous Church at* Epheſus, *the Metropolis of* Aſia, *where he had preached the Goſpel for three Years, with eminent Succeſs, and being now a Priſoner at* Rome, *juſtly feared leſt they ſhould faint in their Chriſtian Courſe; to prevent which, he writes this Epiſtle to the Churches of* Chriſt *in and about* Epheſus, *to eſtabliſh them in the Faith he had preached to them, which he was now a Priſoner for, and ſtood ready to ſeal with his own Blood.*

This Excellent Epiſtle divinely ſets forth the great and aſtoniſhing Myſteries of our Redemption and Reconciliation by Jeſus Chriſt; *the Freeneſs and Riches of God's Grace; the admirable Benefits and Privileges of the Goſpel; and the marvellous Diſpenſation of God to the* Gentiles, *in revealing* Chriſt *to them.*

The principal Parts of this Epiſtle are two, Doctrinal and Practical. The former is Contained in the three firſt Chapters, in which he treats of the ſublime Privileges of our Election, Vocation, Juſtification and Adoption. The Latter, in the three laſt Chapters, in which he exhorts them to conſtancy in the Faith, to Preparation for, and Patience under Sufferings and ſo to live religiouſly in every Relation, by making Conſcience of relative Duties one towards another, as Husbands and Wives, Parents and Children, Maſters and Servants, in which the Life and Beauty of Religion lies; and Concludes, with wiſhing them all Peace and Proſperity, and a mutual Increaſe of Love and Charity; and adviſing them to manifeſt the Sincerity of their Love to Chriſt, by the Purity and Incorruptneſs of their Lives and Converſations.

CHAP. I.

The uſual Salutation, and Thankſgiving for ſpiritual Bleſſings in Chriſt; *for Election from Eternity; Adoption; Reconciliation unto God, through the Blood of* Chriſt. *Vocation by the Goſpel. The Elect are gathered together into one; and Believers obtain the Inheritance. Such were the* Epheſians, *who were ſealed by the Spirit, for which he thanks God, and prays, that they may come to the full Knowledge and Poſſeſſion of this Grace in* Chriſt, *who is the Head of the Church.*

Q. HOW *does St.* Paul *begin this Epiſtle?*

A. In the firſt Verſe, the Pen-Man of this Epiſtle is deſcribed by his Name, *Paul*; by his Office, *an Apoſtle*; by his Commiſſion to that Office, *the Will of God*; that is, by the Divine Command and Appointment.

We have here alſo the Superſcription of this Epiſtle, the Perſons to whom it was directed and ſent, *To the Saints at* Epheſus: So they were all at *Epheſus* by viſible Profeſſion, and many of them, no doubt, by real Sanctification. All the Members of the viſible Church are obliged to be Saints, and the true and real *Chriſtian*, is a true and real Saint.

He adds, *and to the Faithful in* Chriſt Jeſus, throughout all *Aſia*. This pointed out their Duty to them, to be not only holy in Profeſſion, but faithful in Converſation. Theſe two Words, *Saints*, and *Faithful*, conjoined, denote both their Dignity and Duty; their Dignity, in ſtanding near to God, as his Children; their Duty, in being Faithful to him as his Servants.

He ſtiles them Saints and Faithful *in* Chriſt Jeſus; intimating, that all our Grace and Holineſs, muſt be Holineſs in *Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, actuated and exerciſed by Strength fetch'd from *Chriſt Jeſus*, and that all our Holineſs muſt be accepted in *Chriſt Jeſus*.

Q. *What do thoſe Words import, Verſe* 2. Grace be to you, and Peace from our God, our Father, and from the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. Theſe Words, *Grace be to you*, may be conſidered two Ways, 1. As a religious Salutation, taken from the Manner of the *Jews*, who expreſſed their Deſires for one another's Well-doing, by wiſhing Peace; that is, all kind of Happineſs and Proſperity to each other; *Chriſtianity* neither forbids nor aboliſhes, but ſpiritualizes and improves Civility, Humanity, and common Courteſy. 2. The Words may be conſidered as an apoſtolical Benediction, in Imitation of the Prieſt's Bleſſing, *Numb.* vi. The Apoſtles were the Patriarchs, or ſpiritual Fathers of the Church of the *New Teſtament*, as the Sons of *Jacob* were of the *Old*; accordingly, they bleſs their Children, wiſhing *Grace from God the Father*, or, as a Father; thereby denoting, that God beſtows not his Grace as a Creator, but as a Father in *Chriſt*, in a diſcriminating Way, and peculiar Manner.

Peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; he being the Purchaſer of our Peace, he upon whom the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was laid, and he that made Peace for us by the Blood of his Croſs; and thereupon God, of his free Grace, accepts us; juſtifies, and is at Peace with us.

Q. *The Apoſtle proceeds, in the third Verſe, to* bleſs God: *How may we be ſaid to do this?*

A. The Work which the Apoſtle's Heart was ſet upon, was, the Work of bleſſing God; we bleſs God one Way, he bleſſes us another; he bleſſes us imperatively, by commanding his Bleſſings upon us; we bleſs him optatively, when with thankful Hearts we praiſe him, and ſpeak well of him.

Lord! what an infinite Favour and Privilege is this vouchſafed to us, not only to pray to God, and receive Bleſſings from him, but to admit us to bleſs him, and to count himſelf honoured by us, when we acknowledge him the Fountain of all Bleſſings, and Bleſſedneſs to us, his Creatures!

The Apoſtle bleſſes God, as the *God and Father of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt; not as under the Law, they bleſſed the God of *Abraham, Iſaac,* and *Jacob*, or, bleſſed be the God of *Iſrael*; but, *bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *In what Senſe may the Almighty be ſaid to be* the God, and Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. He is a God to *Chriſt*, in relation to his being Man; *Chriſt* being fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World, to the Work and Office of a Mediator, 1 *Pet.* i. 20. and the Father making a Covenant or fœderal Tranſaction with him from all Eternity as Mediator.

He is Father to *Chriſt*, and that both as God and Man; a Father to him as God, by eternal and ineffable Generation; thus he was the only begotten Son of the Father; and a Father to him as Man, by virtue of the perſonal Union of the two Natures in *Chriſt*, *Luke* i. 32. Therefore *that holy Thing ſhall be called the Son of God.*

The Reaſon why under theſe Relations he ſo affectionately bleſſes God, is for beſtowing all ſpiritual Bleſſings; and this is in or concerning Heavenly Things, which tend to fit us for Heaven and eternal Glory; and laſtly, all theſe Bleſſings are conferred upon us in *Chriſt*; he, by his Merit, hath purchaſed them; he, as our Head and Advocate, in our Name, has received them, by Virtue of our Union with whom we have a Right unto them, and ſhall e're long fully and finally be poſſeſſed of them.

Behold here the tranſcendent Bounty and Liberality of our Heavenly Father: He has more than one Bleſſing for his Children; he has all ſpiritual and heavenly Bleſſings for them, Grace on Earth, and Glory in Heaven; Grace, to enable them to glorify him on Earth, and Glory, as the Reward of Grace, with himſelf in Heaven. Rejoice, O *Chriſtian*, in thy Lot and Portion; God himſelf hath but all Things, and ſo haſt thou! Thou haſt them alſo in Right and Title at preſent, and e're long ſhalt enjoy them in full Fruition. *Eternally bleſſed be the God the Father of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *who hath bleſſed us with his ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Places, or in heavenly Things, in* Chriſt.

Q. *But from whence did all theſe ſpiritual Bleſſings proceed?*

A. From God's gracious Purpoſe in our Election before all Time; *he hath choſen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we ſhould be holy*, &c.

Where note, the Favour vouchſafed, Election; and the Fruit and Product of that Favour, Holineſs of Life and Converſation. *He hath choſen*; this denotes the Freeneſs of the Favour; he choſe when he might have refuſed: His Book of Life is a Book of Love; the Cauſe of our Love, is in the Object; the Reaſon of God's Love, is in himſelf.

He hath choſen us, us Gentiles: The *Jews* much gloried in their being a *choſen Generation*, a peculiar People; we *Gentiles* are a choſen Generation alſo; they were beloved for their Father *Abraham*'s Sake, we for *Chriſt*'s Sake.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words, ver.* 4. He hath choſen us before the Foundation of the World?

A. That is, from all Eternity. The Apoſtle, to take the *Jews* off from boaſting (as they did) that the World was made for their Sake, and that the *Meſſiah*, from the Beginning of the World, did enter into a Covenant with God to redeem them eſpecially, declares, that the deſpiſed *Gentiles* were choſen by God to be an holy People to himſelf; and all this, in the Purpoſe of God; before the Foundations of the World were laid.

Q. *How are we ſaid to be choſen by God in* Chriſt?

A. Conſider *Chriſt* as God, ſo we are choſen by him. I know whom I have choſen, ſays *Chriſt*. Conſider him as a Mediator; ſo we are choſen in him, not for him; becauſe, not *Chriſt*'s Undertaking for us, but the Father's good Pleaſure towards us, was the Spring and final Cauſe of our Election.

The Truth is, God was ſo far from chuſing the *Gentiles* out of Faith unforeſeen, that he did not chuſe them for the Sake and Obedience of *Chriſt* foreſeen: God did not love us from Eternity, becauſe *Chriſt* was to die for us in Time, but bebecauſe he loved us with an everlaſting Love; therefore in the Fulneſs of Time, he was ſent to die for us: So that the Death of *Chriſt* was the Fruit and Effect, not the Cauſe of our Election: No other Reaſon, ſays Biſhop *Fell* on this Place, can be aſſigned of this Privilege, but the good Pleaſure of God; and if *Chriſt*'s Sufferings were not the Cauſe of our Elections, much leſs our own Deſervings, as he adds there; Almighty God chuſing us, not becauſe worthy, but to make us worthy by chuſing us.

Q. *What Inſtructions are convey'd to us in the laſt Clauſe, ver. 4.* That we ſhould be holy, without Blame before him in Love?

A. Holineſs is here declared not to be the Cauſe, but the Effect of our Election: God choſe the *Gentiles* from Eternity to be his People, not becauſe they were holy, (no, they were afar off from God) but deſigning that they thus graciouſly choſen, ſhould be wholly, initially, progreſſively, and perſeveringly holy in this Life, and perfectly holy in the next: Yet arriving at ſuch Perfection here in Holineſs, as to denominate us Blameleſs in the Account of God, by Virtue of our Faith in *Chriſt*, and Love to one another.

Having predeſtinated us *Gentiles*, who in the Eſteem of the *Jews* were accounted Dogs, to be his adopted Sons and Daughters, in and by *Jeſus Chriſt*, in whom he hath made us accepted, to the abundant Praiſe and Glory of his Grace and Mercy.

Note, none are the Children of God by Nature; none are born Sons, nor of their own, but God's making; and in order to this glorious Privilege, we were *predeſtinated unto the Adoption of Children by* Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *What was the Inducement which moved God to this particular Election?*

A. The Attribute which moved God to predeſtinate us to the Adoption of Children, was the Glory of his Grace, which he no where ſhews ſo much as in the Predeſtination of his Children, and in what he hath predeſtinated them unto; he ſhews indeed all his Attributes herein, but Grace over and above all the Reſt.

Q. *What is the happy Effect of this Adoption?*

A. It is, our being made accepted in *Chriſt* the beloved; the Word, properly render'd, is, he hath made us precious, dear, and delightful to himſelf; or, in a Word, he hath ingratiated us.

Q. *What other Privileges does this Adoption entitle us to?*

A. Redemption: *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood.* The Privilege here declared, is Redemption; the Redeemer *Jeſus Chriſt*, (in whom) the Price of this Redemption paid down, (his Blood) one Fruit of this Redemption, inſtanced in for all the reſt, (the Forgiveneſs of Sin) and laſtly, the Spring or Source of all this, the Riches of his Grace.

Wherein he hath abounded towards us in all Wiſdom and Prudence; in which Diſpenſation of his, namely, our Redemption from Sin and Wrath by the Blood of his Son, God the Father hath diſcovered abundant Wiſdom to the Children of Men.

If we take the Words in this Senſe, the Obſervation is, that God's ſending his Son into the World to ſuffer in our ſtead, and to ſatisfy for our Sin, was not only an Act of ſpecial Wiſdom and peculiar Favour, but alſo a Demonſtration of wonderful Wiſdom in God.

How wonderful was the Wiſdom that appeared in the Contrivance of the Work of Redemption, and in the Accompliſhment of it? What Wiſdom, in appointing ſuch a Mediator as was fit to reconcile God to Man, and Man to God! What Wiſdom, in laying the Platform and Deſign of the Goſpel in ſuch a Way and Manner, as at once to advance the Honour and ſecure the Glory of God, and promote the Holineſs and Comfort of Man.

Q. *What other Points does the Apoſtle treat of?*

A. Next we have a Deſcription of the Goſpel, and the Preaching of it; it is the Myſtery of God's Will revealed and made known to a loſt World. This Myſtery was hid, where all the World could never have found it; it was hid in God, in his Breaſt and Boſom, in his Heart and Thoughts; it was hid from Angels; nay, the Churches knew it before the Angels; yea the Angels learnt it from the Churches, *Epheſ.* iii. 20. *Unto Principalities and Powers is known by the Church the manifold Wiſdom of God*; and as it was hid from the Angels, ſo from the wiſe Men of the World, 1 *Cor.* ii. 8. We preach the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery; even the hidden Wiſdom, which none of the Princes of the World knew; nay, the Goſpel was hid from all the Saints of the *Old Teſtament*, comparatively, not abſolutely; with reſpect to that clear Revelation, we have of the Goſpel now, it might be ſaid to be hidden to them. This Myſtery concerning the Redemption and Salvation of poor loſt Sinners, by a Mediator, God has now revealed, and he deſires all may know and receive the Revelation of it.

The Cauſe which moved God to make known the Myſteries of his Will to a loſt World, was his own *good Pleaſure*, which he had purpoſed in himſelf.

Q. *But what was God's Deſign in diſcovering the Myſteries of his Will in the Goſpel?*

A. The 10th Verſe diſcovers to us the End and Deſign of God, in making known the Myſteries of his Will, that is, in revealing the Goſpel: It was, to gather into one univerſal Church both Angels and Men, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under *Chriſt* their Head, and by Virtue of that Union to become one with the Father, as he and *Chriſt* are one.

Chriſt is the Head both of Angels and Men; an Head of Confirmation to the Angels of Redemption, to fallen Man; Angels and Saints in Heaven and on Earth make one Family, of which *Chriſt* is the Head; the Angels are Worſhippers of *Chriſt* as the Head as well as we; they are a Part of his Family and Houſhold; the Angels fill our Churches as Men, and are preſent in our Congregations and Aſſemblies, 1 *Cor.* xi. 80.

All Mankind by Nature, and as conſider'd in themſelves, are under a fearful Diſſipation or Scattering: Sin hath rent and ſeparated them from God, from Man, and from the bleſſed Angels; this is preſuppoſed in the Words *gathering together.*

The Purpoſe and Deſign of God, in diſcovering the Truths of the Goſpel to Men, was this, that he might gather them together into Union with *Jeſus Chriſt*; that by Virtue of that Union, they might be one with the Father, as he and *Chriſt* are one; *that in the Fulneſs of Time he might gather together in one* Body in *Chriſt all Things* capable of eternal Happineſs, *both in Heaven and Earth*; even in him who is the Head of that Body, whereof Angels as well as Men are Members.

Q. *But what Privileges had the* Jews *a Right to by the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel?*

A. The Apoſtle next applies his Diſcourſe, firſt to the *Jews*, and then to the *Gentiles* in particular. As to the *Jews*, who were firſt called by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, and who were the firſt who truſted or hoped in him for Salvation, before there were any conſiderable Number of Converts, among the *Gentiles*, he declares, that theſe *Jewiſh* Believers (whereof himſelf was one) had, in and through *Chriſt*, obtained a Right to be God's Portion and peculiar People; and that they ſhould not, by embracing the Goſpel, loſe that antient Privilege [of which their Fore-fathers boaſted; namely, to be a choſen Generation, and a peculiar People, but together with their being God's Portion, they ſhould have Right to an Inheritance.

In whom we have obtained an Inheritance; namely, an Inheritance in the heavenly *Canaan*, the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; and to this Inheritance, ſays he, you have been appointed, God having fore-ordained that this Inheritance ſhould be the Portion of all Believers, and the Conſequent of Faith in *Chriſt*; by Virtue of which, we become the Sons of God, and all this *to the Praiſe of his Glory*; that is, to the Intent that his glorious Attributes of Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Mercy might be acknowledged, and highly praiſed.

That we ſhould be to the Praiſe of his Glory. The Words may be underſtood, 1. Paſſively; the Praiſe of his Glory was to be manifeſted in them. 2. Actively; that the high Praiſes of God were to be ſet forth by them.

Q. *But had the* Gentiles *an equal Right to the Privileges of the Goſpel with the* Jews?

A. The Apoſtle next recounts the Favours and Privileges which the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews*, on their believing in *Chriſt*, were admitted to the Participation of; he aſſures them, that in and through *Chriſt* they obtained a Right to the heavenly Inheritance as well as the *Jews*, having been brought to truſt and believe in him, by hearing the Word of Truth, the Doctrine of the Goſpel preached to them: And next, that they were ſealed for the Children of God, by the ſanctifying Spirit promiſed to the Sons of God, which produced a real renovating Change in their Hearts and Lives, and ſo was a Pledge and Earneſt of, as well as made them meet and fit for the heavenly Inheritance; the full Enjoyment of which is not to be expected till the laſt Day, when, and not before, all Believers ſhall obtain compleat Redemption, and their Bodies being raiſed, ſhall be reunited to their Souls, and both rendered perfectly and everlaſtingly happy: The End of God, in the Diſpenſation of all Grace and Mercy to the *Gentiles*, being the ſame with the before-mentioned to the *Jews*; namely, the Praiſe of his own glorious Grace.

Both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were ſaved by the ſame Faith; *in whom ye alſo truſted*; as they have the ſame common Inheritance, ſo have they the ſame common Affiance and Faith in *Chriſt*. *After ye heard the Word*; that is, preſently after they heard, they believed and obeyed.

Q. *In the 13th Verſe the Apoſtle calls the Goſpel the* Word of Truth, and the Goſpel of Salvation: *In what Senſe do you take theſe Words?*

A. It is the Word of Truth; God never ſwore to any Truth but that of the Goſpel. The Law is Truth as well as the Goſpel, but the Law was made without an Oath; had it been with an Oath, it had never been recalled; the Goſpel is ſealed with an Oath, and therefore ſhall never be reverſed.

It is called a Goſpel of Salvation, becauſe the Matter of it is Salvation, and ſo is the Offer of it; it declares the only Way and Means by which loſt Sinners may obtain Salvation.

Q. *Pray explain the laſt Clauſe of the 13th Verſe,* after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that Spirit of Promiſe?

A. The Privilege of ſealing always follows the Duty of believing, never goes before it. Sealing implies that precious and excellent Eſteem they have with God: Nothing but what is precious is ſealed by us. Sealing is alſo for Safety and Security, for Diſcrimination and Confirmation: The Holy Spirit, by ſanctifying us, diſcriminates and diſtinguiſhes us from the fatal Danger of Apoſtaſy, and confirms our Hopes of the glorious Inheritance.

Which is the Earneſt of our Inheritance. An Earneſt binds the Bargain, and is a Part of it. Believers are to conſider Grace, not barely as Grace, but as an Earneſt of Glory. It is a great Comfort to find Grace in the Soul, as ſanctifying, as quickening and renewing, but a great Matter of rejoicing to find it alſo there as witneſſing, as ſealing and confirming, as Part of our Inheritance in Glory, and as a Pledge and Earneſt of the Whole.

Q. *What Point of Doctrine does this prove?*

A. Hence is prov'd the Deity of the Holy Spirit. To ſanctify, ſeal, and confirm our Hearts, are divine Operations; he that doth theſe, muſt be a divine Perſon. But how the Spirit of God is God, how he proceeds from the Father and the Son, is incomprehenſible by Reaſon and our ſhallow Underſtandings. No wonder that the Doctrine of the Trinity is inexplicable, ſeeing the Nature of God is incomprehenſible; our Faith then muſt aſſent to what our Reaſon cannot comprehend, otherwiſe we can never be *Chriſtians*.

Q. *What comes next under the Apoſtle's Conſideration?*

A. St. *Paul* next mentions ſome ſpecial Duties he perform'd in behalf of theſe *Epheſians*; he gave Thanks for them, and he prayed for them, and both without ceaſing. Thus was the Apoſtle's Heart enlarged in Thankfulneſs to God for the Salvation of others, as well as unwearied in his Endeavours in order to their Salvation.

The Occaſion of St. *Paul*'s Prayers and Praiſes on the *Epheſians* Behalf, was, his having heard of their Faith in *Chriſt*, and of their Love to all Saints. He joins Faith and Love together, as the two moſt eminent Graces, and as the two evangelical Commands, Faith in *Chriſt*, and Love to Saints.

Q. *But why dont he mention their Love to God?*

A. Becauſe Love to God, is ſuppoſed and neceſſarily included in our Love to Saints, as Saints; for he that loves them that are begotten, much more loves him that begetteth. There are froward and fretful Saints, paſſionate and peeviſh *Chriſtians*; yet even theſe are belov'd, and to be lovod by us; even as a Brother loves all his Brothers for his Father's Sake that begat them all, though one be little, another lame, a third crooked, a fourth ſickly. *Chriſt* hath received us, why ſhould we reject one another? One Heaven will hold us hereafter, why ſhould not one Communion hold us here?

Q. *What is obſervable in the Apoſtle's Prayer for the* Epheſians, *ver.* 27?

A. Here we may obſerve the Perſon whom he prays to God, under a very endearing Title, *the God of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *the Father of Glory.*

The God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; as he is Man and Mediator, commiſſion'd of him, and ſent by him; and *the Father of Glory*, as being in himſelf infinitely glorious; to whom all Glory is and ought to be aſcribed, and from whom alone it is communicated. Thus, it is our Duty to apply to God as a Father in *Chriſt*, and under this Apprehenſion to ſtrengthen our Faith, for the obtaining of what we ask in Prayer.

Note, the great and comprehenſive Bleſſing pray'd for; namely, divine Illumination, and ſpiritual Knowledge, that is, a farther increaſe of that Wiſdom and ſaving Knowledge of divine Myſteries, whereof the Spirit of God is the Author.

Q. *What are the particular Bleſſings he prays for?*

A. Our Apoſtle proceeds in the 18th Verſe to the End of the Chapter, in a very affectionate and fervent Prayer, on behalf the *Epheſians*; namely, that the bleſſed of God, the Author of all divine Illumination, would farther open the Eyes of their Underſtandings, formerly ſhut up in heatheniſh Blindneſs and Darkneſs, that ſo they might know, *what is the Hope of his Calling*; that is, what high and glorious Hopes he had call'd them unto; for here Hope is taken for the Object of Hope, or the great and good Things hoped for, which at their Converſion they were intitled to, and called to the Expectation of.

The ſecond Bleſſing he prays for, is, *that they may know what are the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints*; that is, ſay ſome, what an exceeding glorious thing it is to be a *Chriſtian*! Or, what an exceeding Glory redounds to God, by his People, which are his Inheritance, ſay others; but moſt underſtand the Words as a Deſcription of Heaven, here called an Inheritance, a rich and glorious Inheritance, in, or among the Saints; that is, the Saints in Heaven, who hold that in Poſſeſſion, which the Saints on Earth have in Hope and Expectation.

Almighty God is ſaid in Scripture to make Heaven as ſure to his Saints, by as many Ways, as a Man ean make an Inheritance ſure to his Child. 'Tis theirs by Promiſe, by Purchaſe, by Gift, Bequeſt, it is given them them by Will, *Luke* xxii. 29. *I appoint by Will unto you a Kingdom.*

'Tis a very rich and exceeding glorious Inheritance; ſuch Riches, and ſuch Glory, as overwhelm the Mind of Man who enters upon a cloſe Contemplation of it: It is glorious, if we conſider the Glory of the Place, of the Company, of the Employment, and the Glory that will be then and there put upon our Souls and Bodies.

The next Particular the Apoſtle prays for, is, that they might know, or ſenſibly apprehend, the Greatneſs of that divine Power which God had exerted, firſt, in their Converſion; next in carrying on that Work Step by Step, in ſpite of all Oppoſition; then in giving them the extraordinary Gifts, and ſanctifying Graces of the Spirit; and laſtly, that they might know the exceeding Greatneſs of that Power which God will farther exert towards them as Believers, in raiſing up their dead Bodies, to enter upon that glorious Inheritance which God by Promiſe inſured to them; which Power, he aſſures them, would bear ſome Likeneſs to, and Correſpondence with that omnipotent Power which God put forth, in raiſing *Chriſt* from the Dead, and advancing him to the heavenly Glory, where he is Lord of all.

Q. *What is the next Point he ſpeaks of?*

A. He next diſcovers to us *Chriſt*'s Exaltation, or that Glory and Dignity which after his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, the Father put upon him as God-Man, or Mediator, far ſurpaſſing the Glory of all created Beings.

Now this is repreſented to us under the Metaphor of *Chriſt's ſitting at God's Right-hand*, which imports Fulneſs of Reſt and Pleaſure; that he quietly, ſecurely, and everlaſtingly poſſeſſes all that Happineſs and Satisfaction in Heaven, which God himſelf is poſſeſſed of, far above all the Pleaſures and delightful Satisfactions which all the glorified Saints and glorious Angels do or can poſſibly enjoy.

It implies a Fulneſs of Honour and Glory, of Dignity and Reſpect. It imports his having all Rule, Dominion and Power put into his Hand, to govern all Things both in Heaven and in Earth. It implies Ability to execute that Power, all thoſe Royal Endowments with which God filled the human Nature of *Chriſt*, to make him fit to be the ſupream Head of the Church, and the great and wiſe Governor of the World; all this is imply'd in God's ſetting *Chriſt* at his Right-hand.

God hath exalted *Chriſt far above all Principalities and Powers*, &c. Where note, the Eminency and Univerſality of *Chriſt*'s Exaltation. Its Eminency appears in his being exalted not only above, but *far above* all Principalities and Powers, Might, Dominion; and in the Lowneſs of Subjection of all Things to him, *having put all Things under his Feet.*

Q. *How does the Univerſaliry of his Exaltation appear?*

A. The Univerſality of his Exaltation appears, by inſtancing in *Principalities and Powers, and Might, and Dominion*; under which he comprehends all Things that are excellent in Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, *&c.* all Creatures whatſoever being placed in a Degree of Inferiority beneath him, and in the loweſt State of Subjection under him. That Body which hung on an ignominious Croſs in Blood and Gore, now ſhines brighter than ten thouſand Suns in the Kingdom of his Father.

Q. *But how long was this univerſal Dominion of* Chriſt *to laſt?*

A. The Words, *not only in this World, but in the World to come*, ſhew the Duration of *Chriſt's* Kingly Government, and that he is King for ever and ever, that his Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, and his Dominion endureth through eternal Ages.

Q. *How does he conclude this Chapter?*

A. In the two laſt Verſes the Apoſtle declares, that as *Chriſt* is an Head of Dominion and Authority to the whole Creation in general, ſo he is an Influence to his Church in particular.

Q. *What does this Metaphor of an Head imply?*

A. It implies ſeveral Things; as, 1. Eminency above the Church, as the Head is above the Members. 2. Authority over the Church; the Head governs all the Members. 3. Oneneſs of Nature between him and the Church: An Head of one Nature, and Members of another, is monſtrous. 4. It implies a ſtrict, intimate, and cloſe Union betwixt him and his Church, as betwixt Head and Members; which Union, as to the Members of the viſible Church, is a political Union; but as to the inviſible Members real Believers) the Union betwixt *Chriſt* and them, is myſtical, ſpiritual, ſupernatural, and indiſſoluble.

Laſtly, it implies a Communication of Influence from himſelf unto all his Members; an Influence of common Gifts to the viſible Members of his Body, and an Influence of ſpiritual Life and Motion to the inviſible Members, true Believers.

Chriſt, indeed, is the Head of Angels as well as Saints, but in different Reſpects; to Angels he is an Head of Dominion and Government, an Head of Authority and Superiority; but to his Church he is an Head of Dominion and Direction alſo; not only of Authority, but of vital Influence too: Angels are *Chriſt*'s honourable Subjects, but Saints are the myſtical Members of his Body; the former are his Nobles in his Kingdom that attend upon his Perſon, but the latter are the endeared Spouſe that lies in his Boſom.

The Church which is his Body, the Fulneſs of him. This is a great Honour put upon the Church; yet note, the Church is not the Fulneſs of *Chriſt* Perſonal, but of *Chriſt* myſtical; every Saint, and every Degree of Grace in a Saint, is is Part of *Chriſt*'s Fulneſs.

Q. *What do you infer from the Whole?*

A. That the Work of the Miniſtry is the beſt and nobleſt in the World, becauſe it is an adding to *Chriſt*'s Fulneſs. God had but one Son, and he made him a Miniſter; and if increaſing the Number of Converts, and adding to Perſons Growth in Grace be an Addition to *Chriſt*'s Fulneſs, how glorious a Sight will that great Day afford, when *Chriſt* ſhall have all his Fulneſs; when there ſhall not one Saint, not one Degree of Grace in any Saint be wanting; when Head and Members ſhall be both full of Grace, Joy, and Glory; when *Chriſt* ſhall be fully glorified in his Saints, and they everlaſtingly filled with the Fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.

CHAP. II.

Their former Miſery, from which they were recover'd by Faith in Chriſt, *and not by Works. They were no longer* Gentiles, *uncircumciſed, out of Covenant, and without Hope of Salvation; but in* Chriſt *Copartners of his Grace. Both* Jew *and* Gentile *are called by the Apoſtle, and by one and the ſame Spirit, have Acceſs to God; and are built together upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles, whoſe Corner Stone is* Chriſt, *unto a Temple of God.*

Q. *HOW does the Apoſtle begin this Chapter?*

A. In the firſt Verſe we are ſhewn the deplorable Condition the *Epheſians* were in by Nature, and all Perſons with them, before their Converſion to God, it is a State of ſpiritual Death; the natural and unregenerate Man is a dead Man, ſpiritually dead in Sin. But how is he dead? Not as to natural, rational, and civil Actions; nor even to moral Actions; but as to Spirituality, to be ſpiritually performed; he is dead, till quicken'd by a vital Act of the Holy Spirit, whoſe Office it is to enlighten blind Eyes, and whoſe Delight it is to quicken and enliven dead Souls.

This State of ſpiritual Death implies a State of Separation from God, Inſenſibility of that diſmal State, and Inability to recover ourſelves out of it, and our Loathſomeneſs, and Offenſiveneſs to Almighty God while we continue in it.

In ſhort, every unregenerate Man is dead, in a double Senſe; he is, 1. Legally dead, being under the condemnatory Sentence of the Law. 2. Spiritually dead, being deſtitute of a Principle of ſpiritual Life, a quickening Principle to enable the Soul to perform ſpiritual Operations.

Thus before Regeneration are we dead, in Oppoſition to Juſtification; and dead in Oppoſition to Sanctification alſo; and the fatal Inſtrument by which our Souls die, is here diſcover'd; dead in or by *Treſpaſſes and Sins.*

Q. *As this is the deplorable Condition of every unregenerated Man, pray what is the State of a Perſon who is regenerated?*

A. You hath he quickened. A regenerate Man is a living Man; he lives a Life of Juſtification, which conſiſts of Pardon of Sin, and a Life of Sanctification, having received from the Spirit a a vital Principle of Grace in all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul.

As there is an univerſal Pollution in every Faculty, ſo muſt there be an univerſal Renovation; for no ſpiritual Duty can be performed without it, nor any ſpiritual Privilege enjoyed, and we can never be ſaved hereafter, if not ſpiritually quickened here.

You hath he quickened. Man in his natural State is unable to quicken himſelf; he does not ſo much as deſire the quickening Grace of God, till God gives the Grace of Deſire. The Underſtanding is naturally ſo blind, the Heart ſo hard, and the Will ſo ſtubborn, that none but a divine Power can enlighten the one; and efficaciouſly incline the other.

Q. *In the 2d Verſe the Apoſtle deſcribes their Courſe of Life before their Converſion: What Inſtructions does this afford us?*

A. The whole Verſe runs; thus *Wherein in Time paſt ye walked, according to the Courſe of this World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Diſobedience* Here note, their conſtant and continued Courſe of Life, ſet forth by their walking.

The Path in which they walked was, in Sin and Treſpaſses; this denotes the Predominancy of Sin in them; they committed Sin with Facility and Eaſe, with Satisfaction and Delight; which diſenoted by Walking.

The Guides they followed, *the World and Satan*; the World is the corrupt Courſe and ſinful Cuſtoms of the Men of the World, according to the Time and Place in which they live; for though the World alters in the Courſe and Faſhion of it, yet it is, and ever will be the World ſtill, and the unregenerate Part of Mankind will always walk according to the Courſe of this World.

Their ſecond Guide was Satan, here ſtiled a Prince, in regard of that mighty Power he has in and over the World; and *the Prince of the Power of the Air*, becauſe he exerciſes his Power (by God's Permiſſion) in the lower Regions of the Air: All the Elements and Meteors ſtoop to his Direction: When God gives him leave he can command the Fire, the Water, the Winds, the Thunders; all theſe Powers that are in the Air he can command, therefore he is called their Prince; however, Satan is the Prince of the Air only; and when the Air ſhall ceaſe, his Kingdom ſhall ceaſe.

'Tis Matter of Comfort, that though Satan is a Prince of the Air; yet *Chriſt* is Prince in Heaven, Earth, and Air; both our Prayers whilſt we live, and our Souls when we die, paſs through the Air; but Satan can neither intercept the one, nor ſtop the other, in their Paſſage thither. *Chriſt* when he aſcended into Heaven, went through the Air, this Kingdom of Devils, and ſpoiled their Principalities and Powers; he enter'd Heaven in Sight of them all, and led them all Captives in Triumph at his Chariot, ſo that he ſhall never hurt the Souls of his People, nor keep them from Heaven.

Q. *In the 3d Verſe he proceeds to ſpeak of the Condition of the* Jews *by Nature: What Account does he give of this Matter?*

A. The Apoſtle here ſets forth the Condition of the *Jews* by Nature, as he had before that of the *Gentiles*; that even they had their Converſation among the Number of diſobedient Perſons, and were no leſs obſtinately rebellious againſt God, than the diſobedient *Gentiles*, following the Motions of their corrupt Luſts and vile Affections; and as to their State, they *were, by Nature, the Children of Wrath, as much as others*, as much as the deſpiſed *Gentiles* themſelves; they were both alike the Children of Wrath; that is, our Eſtate and Courſe is ſuch by Nature as deſerves Deſtruction, as tends to, and will end in Deſtruction, without the renewing Grace of God.

Q. *What does this State of their Caſe, expreſſed by Nature, imply?*

A. It implies, 1. the Term from whence it commences; namely, from the firſt receiving of our Beings and Natures from our immediate Parents; and, together with the Depravation of our Natures, we received an Obnoxiouſneſs to the Wrath and Curſe of God. 2. It implies the Ground for which this Wrath doth impend and hang over us; namely, for that Depravity of Nature, which, ſince the Fall, is found with us; *We are, by Nature, the Children of Wrath, even as others.*

Q. *St.* Paul *having declared both* Jew *and* Gentile *to be* dead in Sin, *and the* Children of Wrath, *next ſets forth their Deliverance, by the rich Mercy and free Grace of God*; God, who is rich in Mercy, *&c. What Inſtruction does this afford?*

A. Note here, the Author of our Deliverance, God; and the moving and impulſive Cauſe of it, rich Mercy, and great Love. God hath done infinitely more for us, than he did for the Angels; he ſhewed Love to them, but Mercy to us; they are Veſſels of Honour, but we of Mercy; the Object of Mercy is a Creature in Diſtreſs and Miſery.

All the Attributes in God are ſubjected to his Love; this is the great prevailing Attribute which ſways all the Reſt; Mercy, Power, Juſtice, Wiſdom, all act in Subordination to Love; Love ſets them all at work for the Benefit of the Object beloved.

The Love which God bears to the Children of Men, is *great Love*, and his Mercy, which was ſet on work by it, is *rich Mercy*; his Love ſo great, that it can never be conceived.

Q. *What were the Effects and Fruits of the great Love and rich Mercy of God towards the* Epheſians?

A. They appeared in quickening them when dead, in ſaving them when loſt, in doing all Things for them, when they had undone themſelves.

The Dependency our Salvation has in the Whole, and in all the Parts of it, upon the free Grace of God, is the great Thing which St. *Paul* delighted to diſcover to us here; *By Grace ye are ſaved.*

Q. *Does he inſtance in any other Benefits accruing by Grace?*

A. The Apoſtle inſtances in two Branches more of that Salvation, which he had affirmed to be of Grace; namely, that of our Reſurrection and Glorification, both yet to come, and yet they are ſpoken of as already paſt; when the Father raiſed and glorified *Chriſt*, all Believers were raiſed and glorified in him; for in his Reſurrection and Glorification he ſuſtained the Quality of a publick Perſon, repreſenting his whole Church, as their Head and Huſband; and accordingly, Believers may be ſaid to be raiſed already, not in their own Perſon, but in *Chriſt*, their Head; the Apoſtle ſays, *God has raiſed us up, and has made us ſit together*; not, he ſhall raiſe us, and will make us ſit, to denote the Dependency which our Reſurrection, and Glorification, has upon *Chriſt's*, as the Effects depend upon the Cauſe, and alſo the undoubted Certainty that they ſhall come to paſs; *Chriſt's* Reſurrection being a Pledge of ours.

From the Phraſe here uſed of *ſitting together in Chriſt*, we learn, that Believers ſhall certainly partake of the ſame kingly State and Dignity, of the ſame Honour and Glory, of the ſame Delight and Pleaſure, of the ſame Reſt and Tranquillity, Safety and Security, with *Chriſt* in Heaven; *Hath made us ſit together in heavenly Places in* Chriſt Jeſus.

That in Ages to come he might ſhew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, &c. Which Words are expreſſive of the final Cauſe, or ſpecial End of that Salvation which God propounded in his gracious Workings upon the Hearts of theſe *Epheſians*, namely, that in all preſent and ſucceeding Ages, to the End of the World, he might give a convincing Proof and Example of *the exceeding Riches of his Grace*, for the Encouragement of the greateſt Sinners to hope for Mercy, in and through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *But what Foundation has a Believer to hope for this complete Salvation?*

A. The Apoſtle, in the 8th *Verſe*, informs the *Epheſians*, and in them all ſucceeding *Chriſtians*, that their complete Salvation from firſt to laſt, from the loweſt to the higheſt Step, depends upon God's free Favour and Grace in *Chriſt*, and not upon any Merit, or Deſert in ourſelves; Works have no meritorious or cauſal Influence upon our Salvation (for they are not Cauſes, but Effects of that Grace by which we are ſaved) to the Intent that all Boaſtings may be excluded, and that all the

Saints glorying may be in God, and not in themſelves.

Q. *How does a* Chriſtian *come by his Faith?*

A. Faith is the *Gift of God*, as well as *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the one as neceſſary as the other; for, as the only Way to Heaven is by *Chriſt*, ſo the only Way to *Chriſt*, is by Faith; as Sin has put a Vanity in the Creature, ſo Unbelief puts a Vanity in *Chriſt*, that he ſhould profit us nothing; let us then wreſtle with God, in Prayer, for a believing Heart.

In the tenth *Verſe* the Apoſtle declares, that *Chriſtians* are ordained to good Works, created and prepared for them, and conſequently they are Effects flowing from Grace, though not Cauſes producing it.

We are his Workmanſhip; 1. In our natural Capacity, as Men. 2. In our civil Capacity, as ſuch or ſuch Men, High or Low, Rich or Poor. 3. In our ſpiritual Capacity, as Saints; this is intended here: Believers are God's Workmanſhip, as ſuch, by ſupernatural Renovation and ſpiritual Regeneration; they are not only once made, as other Perſons, but they are new made, as Saints, not by receiving new Faculties, but new Qualities; for Grace is not a ſubſtantial, but a qualitative Change, *created in* Chriſt Jeſus *unto good Works.*

The Word *created*, denotes two Things, 1. That in their new making, they were intended to good Works: This was God's Mind and Meaning, in fore-ordaining that they *ſhould walk in them.* 2. That in their new making they were fitted and prepared for good Works, therefore did they rereceive a new Nature from God, new Principles, new Affections, new Diſpoſitions and Inclinations, on purpoſe to fit them for a holy Life, fruitful in good Works.

Created in Chriſt Jeſus; that is, through the intervening Mediation of *Chriſt Jeſus.* The Life which we lead in this new-created State, namely, a Life of Holineſs, is purchaſed by his Death, produced by his Spirit; all ſpiritual Life comes from God, through *Chriſt*, as a Mediator; he is a quickening Head and life-giving Spirit; 1 *John* iv. 9. *God ſent his Son, that we might live by him*; *Chriſt* is firſt our Ranſom, and then the Fountain of Life unto our Souls.

The Conſtancy of a *Chriſtian*'s Duty is here declared; with reference to good Works, *he is to walk in them.* Now walking implies both a Way, and an Action.

It implies a Way; and plainly intimates, that good Works are the Ways and Means to obtain Salvation; we can never come at Heaven as the End, but by walking in the Path of good Works, as the Way and Means.

It alſo implies an Action: Walking denotes Spontaneity in the Principle, Progreſs, and Perſeverance in the Motion; he that walks goes forward, gets Ground, gives not over till he comes to his Journey's End. A good Man is as diligent and zealous, as conſtant and perſevering in good Works, as if he were to be ſaved for them, and by them; and at the ſame Time relies, by Faith, on the Merits of a Mediator, for his Acceptance with God, renouncing all Confidence in his own good Works; he knows they cannot juſtify themſelves, much leſs him, who has a better Righteouſneſs than that of his beſt Obedience, to denominate him Righteous in the Sight of God.

Q. *What was the Condition of the* Epheſians, *while in their unconverted State?*

A. In the 11th and 12th Verſes, the Apoſtle calls on the *Epheſians* to remember their former Miſerable Condition before Converſion, when they were in their *Heathen* and unregenerate State, when they were *Gentiles*, and reproached by the *Jews*, for being uncircumciſed; he calls upon them to remember their Obligations to God, for bringing them out of this deplorable Condition; *Remember, that in Times paſt ye were* Gentiles *in the Fleſh.*

This miſerable Condition of the *Epheſians*, before their Converſion, the Apoſtle branches forth into ſeveral Parts.

1. *They were without* Chriſt; that is, without the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, without any Relation to him, or Intereſt in him; without any Communion with him; without any Communications of Life and Light, of Grace and Holineſs, of Joy and Comfort, of Pardon and Protection, received from him: They did not diſcern any Excellency, nor taſte any Sweetneſs in *Chriſt*; and conſequently, had no Love for him, no Languiſhing for him, no Delight or Satiſfaction in him.

2. *They were Aliens from the Common-wealth of* Iſrael; that is, they were no Members of *Chriſt*'s Church, either Viſible or Inviſible; they did not ſo much as profeſs themſelves to be a People who ſtood in any Relation to God; they were unchurched *Gentiles*, for in *Jury* only was God known, and his Name great in *Iſrael*, Pſalm lxxxvi. 1. Whatever the World thinks of it, it is certainly a great Favour of God, to be born within the Pale of the viſible Church, and to have Communion with her; for thereby we partake of many excellent Privileges; namely, the Word and Sacraments, the Communion of Saints, together with the Offers of *Chriſt*, and Salvation by him.

3. *They were Strangers to the Covenants of Promiſe*; that is, to the Covenant of Grace, firſt made with *Adam* after the Faith; then with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; afterwards with *Iſrael*, upon Mount *Sinai*; for which Reaſon it is here called, by the Apoſtle, Covenants, in the plural Number, though it was always one and the ſame Covenant in Subſtance, and its being called the *Covenant of Promiſe*, ſeems to point at the Promiſe made to *Adam*, Gen iii. 15. that firſt grand original Promiſe, of which all the other Promiſes were but Branches, or more full Explanations. Now the *Epheſians* are here ſaid to be Strangers to the Covenant of Promiſe; becauſe, as *Gentiles*, this Covenant was never revealed to them, nor any Offer of it made by the Miniſtry of the Word, and ſo, conſequently, they could have no actual Intereſt in the Bleſſings and Privileges of it.

This intimates to us, that for Men to live and die without an Offer of the Covenant of Grace made unto them, is a woeful, ſad, and dangerous Condition; becauſe their Salvation is rendered, in an ordinary Way, Impoſſible, ſince the Terms of Salvation are hid from them.

They were *without Hope*; that is, without the Grace of Hope, and the Means of it; they were without Hopes of Redemption, of Pardon and Reconciliation, and conſequently without any well-grounded Hope of eternal Salvation: Such as are *Chriſt*-leſs, muſt be Hopeleſs; ſuch as are without

Faith, muſt needs be without Hope; and ſuch as are without the Promiſe, muſt neceſſarily be without Faith; for the Promiſe is the Ground of Faith, and Faith is the Ground of Hope.

They were *without God in the World*; that is, without the Knowledge of the true God, without any Affiance or Truſt in him, without performing any Obedience to him: Not that the *Epheſians*, and other *Heathens*, lived without all Senſe of a Deity; but they lived without any ſenſible Apprehenſion of the Majeſty and Holineſs of the true God; this is to live without God in the World; and really ſuch a Life is worſe than Death.

The Apoſtle calls all the *Gentiles*, not only the barbarous and ſavage, but the beſt poliſh'd and civilized Nations, *Atheiſts*; becauſe they wanted the right Knowledge of God, by and through a Mediator; there is no knowing God acceptably, except we know him in *Chriſt*, and approach unto him by *Chriſt*.

In this affecting Manner does the Apoſtle ſet before the *Epheſians* their dark and diſmal State whilſt *Gentiles*; and before brought into the *Chriſtian* Church, by preaching the Goſpel of *Chriſt* unto them, they were without *Chriſt*, Aliens from the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*, Strangers from the Covenants of Promiſe, having no Hope, and without God in the World.

Q. *But what State were they in after their Converſion?*

A. The Apoſtle next acquaints them with the bleſſed Change that was made in their State, and by whom. Now, ſays he, in, or by *Chriſt Jeſus*, *Ye, who were ſometimes afar off*; namely, from *Chriſt*, his Church, his Covenant, from ſaving Hope, and from God himſelf, are made as nigh as the *Jews*, and have as much Right to expect the aforeſaid Benefits as they, the Blood of *Chriſt* having purchaſed them for you, and ſealed them for you; *Ye are made nigh by the Blood of* Chriſt.

Q. *How is* Chriſt *our Peace?*

A. *He is our Peace*; that is, the Mediator of our Peace, the great Peace-maker betwixt God and Man; he is the Purchaſer of our Peace, and the Eſtabliſher of it. All which is to be underſtood, not only of Peace between God and Man, but alſo betwixt Man and Man, *who hath made both one*; that is, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* one Church.

There was an inveterate Enmity betwixt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, until *Chriſt* purchaſed their Peace and Reconciliation. The *Jews* derided, ſcorned, and hated the *Gentiles*; and the *Gentiles* reproached the *Jews* for circumciſing their Fleſh, eſteemed them of all Nations the worſt, and would hold their Noſe at the *Jews* when they met them, and cry, O ye ſtinking *Jews*! and turn away their Eyes from them. But theſe mutual Enmities and Animoſities were effectually removed by the Death and Sacrifice of our bleſſed Saviour.

Q. *How did* Chriſt *make this Peace between* Jew *and* Gentile?

A. In order to make this Peace betwixt *Jew* and *Gentile*, *Chriſt* aboliſhed the ceremonial Law, called here a Partition-Wall between the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*; in Alluſion, no doubt, to that Wall of *Solomon*'s Temple, which ſeparated the Court of the *Jews* from that of the *Gentiles*, that they could neither come at, nor look at one another. So that this Partition-Wall being ſaid to be broken down, intimates, that *Jew* and *Gentile*, who before had two manner of Religions, the one under a Covenant with God, the other afar off, and without God; yet now, by *Chriſt*, are both adopted into the ſame Church, Partakers of the ſame Covenants, incorporated into the ſame Faith, and entitled to the ſame Glory.

He has aboliſhed the Enmity; that is, the ceremonial Law, which made the Enmity between them.

Q. *Why does he call this Enmity between them,* the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances?

A. Becauſe Almighty God did actually ſeparate the *Jews* from the World, by giving them Ordinances and Commandments, judicial and ceremonial Laws, containing many viſible and external Obſervances, which forbad them to communicate with the *Gentile* World. Now *Chriſt* being come in the Fleſh, all thoſe Obſervations ceaſed, and thoſe legal Ordinances vaniſhed. But the moral Law, comprized in the ten Commandments, was no Part of the Partition-Wall, and therefore not abrogated by the Death of *Chriſt*.

A ſecond End of the Death of *Chriſt*, was, to make Peace between God of Man, that he might reconcile both *Jew* and *Gentile*, thus united, to an offended God. This he did by the Sacrifice of himſelf upon the Croſs, whereby he deſtroyed that Enmity which was between God and Man; by undergoing the Puniſhment of Sin, the Cauſe of that Enmity.

Q. Chriſt *having purchaſed Peace, came and preached it to both* Jews *and* Gentiles. *But how did* Chriſt *preach to the* Gentiles?

A. Though he did not in his own Perſon preach to the *Gentiles*, yet he commiſſioned the Apoſtles th preach to them, *Matthew* xxviii. and they and their Succeſſors, according to that Commiſſion, preached Peace unto them, even to them that were *afar off*, *and to them that are nigh*.

Q. *How does he prove the Call of the* Gentiles *as well as of the* Jews?

A. The Apoſtle's Argument, to prove that the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews*, were effectually called, by the preaching of the Goſpel, to partake of Peace and Reconciliation with God, is, becauſe they had both equal Acceſs and Liberty to approach unto God in all holy Duties; as alſo a Father by the *Manuduction* of the Spirit; through him, that is, through *Jeſus Chriſt*, we both *Jews* and *Gentiles* have Acceſs, that is Liberty of Approach by one and the ſame Spirit and the Father.

Q. *What does this* Acceſs *imply?*

A. This *Acceſs* denotes a Diſtance from God, both as Creatures and Sinners; and likewiſe a Nearneſs to God, in Oppoſition to this Diſtance; and that our Approach to God is free and voluntary, friendly and complacential, peculiar and advantagious.

Believers have Acceſs to God, as to a Father; that is, to his Love, his Ear and Audience, to his Care and Protection through *Jeſus Chriſt*; his Mediation and Manuduction; by the Influence of his Holy Spirit, who firſt brings them home to, and prepares them for this Acceſs to the Father.

Q. *What is the Import of thoſe Words in the 19th Verſe,* Now are ye no more Strangers but Fellow-Citizens, *&c.*

A. Here it muſt be remember'd, that all the Nations of the World, except the *Jews*, were called Strangers to the God of *Iſrael*; but, ſays the Apoſtle, there is now no ſuch Difference, for the believing *Gentiles* are equally admitted with the believing *Jews* to the Privileges of the new *Jeruſalem*, and are Fellow-Citizens with one another.

Q. *The Apoſtle compares the Church to a* City, *a Edifice, and an Houſhold: Pray ſhew the Fitneſs of theſe ſeveral Compariſons?*

A. He compares the *Chriſtian* Church to a City, and ſhews, that themſelves, as believing *Gentiles*, had a Right to all the Privileges and Immunities of that City, as well as the *Jews*; yet are all Members of the holy Catholick Church.

Farther; he compares the Church to an Houſhold or Family; intimating a greater Degree of Nearneſs to, and Communion with the Church, than what the former Metaphor implied, there being a ſtricter Tie of Familiarity and Friendſhip between the Members of a Family, than between the Members of a City.

A third Compariſon of the Church, is, to an Edifice or ſtately Building, *Ye are built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets.* Now, what can be more cloſely united than Stones in a Building? *An holy Temple*, alluding to *Solomon's*, which was a Type of the *Chriſtian* Church, as the Tabernacle was of the *Jewiſh*; the latter was ambulatory and changeable; the former durable and made of rich Materials.

This ſtately Edifice is founded on the Apoſtles and Prophets, on their Doctrine, not on their Perſons. *Chriſt* himſelf being the perſonal Foundation; the chief Corner-ſtone.

In whom all the Building fitly framed together; that all the Members of the Church, are by Faith joined to *Chriſt*, as the Foundation, and to one another by Love; and their Unity is both their Strength and their Beauty.

It groweth unto an holy Temple. The Church grows by an Addition of Converts, and by an Addition of Graces in every Convert.

This Building of the *Chriſtian* Church grows to be an *holy Temple* unto God, wherein now, (as in the material Temple of old) he may manifeſt his gracious Preſence, and be perpetually worſhipped, glorified and ſerved: The whole Church, or collective body of Believers jointly, and each Believer ſeverally; are a ſpiritual and holy Temple unto the Lord, in and by whom all ſpiritual Sacrifices of Prayer and Praiſe are offered up, and all Duties of new and ſincere Ohedience acceptably performed.

CHAP. III.

The hidden Myſtery, that the Gentiles *ſhould be called and ſaved, was made known to* Paul *by Revelation, with Commiſſion to publiſh this Doctrine, to declare the Fellowſhip of this Myſtery, and the manifold Wiſdom of God according to his eternal Decree. He exhorts them not to grow remiſs during his Afflictions; prays that* Chriſt *may dwell in their Hearts by Faith, and they perceive the great Love by* Chriſt *towards them; with a Thankſgiving.*

Q. THE *Apoſtle begins the firſt Verſe with theſe Words*, For this Cauſe: *For what Cauſe?*

A. For preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles* in the general; and in particular, for aſſerting, that the Privileges of Juſtification and Salvation, belong'd equally to the *Gentiles* as well as the *Jews*, though they were circumciſed; for this Cauſe I was perſecuted and impriſon'd by the *Jews*

Q. *How was* Paul, the Priſoner of *Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. He was at once the Priſoner of *Chriſt*, the *Jews*, the *Romans*, and the *Gentiles*; he was *Chriſt's* Priſoner, as ſuffering for his Goſpel; the *Jews*, as ſuffering by their Accuſation; the *Romans*, as ſuffering by their Sentence; the *Gentiles*, as ſuffering for their Labours, in order to their Salvation.

Q. *Why is the Diſpenſation called, ver.* 2. the Grace of God?

A. Partly, becauſe the glad Tidings which the Goſpel brings, are the Effect and Product of God's Grace and Favour, and partly becauſe it is the Inſtrument and Means of working Grace in the Souls of Perſons.

It is called *the Diſpenſation of the Grace of God*, becauſe God had commiſſion'd him to declare and diſpenſe the Goſpel of Grace to them.

Q. *Why does he ſtile the Calling of the* Gentiles *a Myſtery, and how came he know the Myſtery?*

A. The Calling of the *Gentiles* he ſtiles a Myſtery. That the *Gentiles* ſhould ever be intitled to Salvation by Faith in *Chriſt*, without the Works of the Law, was a Myſtery hid for Ages.

The Way St. *Paul* came by the Knowledge of this Myſtery, was, by divine Revelation from Heaven. The Myſtery of Man's Redemption in general, and of the Calling of the *Gentiles* in particular, to the Participation of that Grace, was made known to the Apoſtle immediately by God himſelf. The Truth is, the Redemption of a loſt World, by the Incarnation, Death, and Paſſion of the Son of God, is ſo ſtupendous and ſurprizing, ſo wonderful and amazing, that the very Thought of it had been the higheſt Blaſphemy, if God himſelf had not revealed it.

Q. *How does he explain and illuſtrate this Myſtery?*

A. Our Apoſtle proceeds to ſet forth this great Myſtery of Man's Redemption in general, and the Calling of the *Gentiles* in particular; he calls it a Myſtery. Now, a Myſtery is a Purpoſe and Decree of God, unknown to and unſearchable by Man, unleſs firſt by Revelation diſcover'd and known by God himſelf; ſuch a Myſtery was the whole Goſpel in general, and this Article concerning the Calling of the *Gentiles* in particular.

Which in other Ages of the Church was not made known, that is, not ſo plainly and clearly to the Sons of Men, *Jews* or *Gentiles*; for the Calling of the *Gentiles* was propheſied in the *Old Teſtament*, but obſcurely; the Time when, the Manner how, and the Means by which, were not underſtood, till now the Holy Spirit reveal'd it to the Apoſtles and evangelical Prophets under the *New Teſtament*.

The Apoſtle amplifies and illuſtrates the glorious Excellency of that Myſtery he had here mentioned; namely, that the *Gentiles* ſhould have Acceſs unto the Church, without an Entrance by the Door of Circumciſion, be Joint-heirs of the heavenly Inheritance with all Believers and together with the *Jews* taken into the Bond of the Covenant,

nant; and finally, that they were brought unto this happy Eſtate by the Preaching of the Goſpel, and by believing and obeying it.

Q. *In what Manner does the Apoſtle ſpeak of himſelf as the Preacher and Publiſher of this Goſpel?*

A. Of this Goſpel, ſays the Apoſtle, it pleaſed God to make me a ſucceſsful Miniſter or Diſpenſer, furniſhing me with ordinary and extraordinary Gifts and Graces from his Holy Spirit, for that weighty Work and Service; even to me was this ſpecial Favour granted, though unworthily, (being leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, becauſe once a great Perſecutor) yet to me was the Apoſtolick Office committed, to preach to the *Gentiles* the incomparable and incomprehenſible Riches of God's Mercy towards them in *Chriſt*, in receiving them fully, freely, and finally, into Covenant with himſelf, and to make known unto all Men, what is the Communion or Fellowſhip of this Myſtery; namely, that the *Gentiles* with the *Jews* ſhould have one Faith, one Lord, one Hope, one heavenly Inheritance; which was a Myſtery hidden in the ſecret Intention and Decree of God, till diſcover'd by divine Revelation.

Note, how careful the Apoſtle was to aſſert his Authority and Apoſtolical Commiſſion, I was made a Miniſter; and how he refers his Calling immediately to the Grace of God, *unto me was this Grace given.* 'Twas the Grace of God that converted him, that reveal'd the Goſpel to him, and that called him to reveal it unto others.

By the effectual working of his Power. The Grace of God in him, and the divine Power accompanying him, was effectual to the Converſion of very many Sinners, and to the producing of great Signs and Miracles which were wrought by him.

Q. *What was the general Subject of St.* Paul's *Sermons to the* Gentiles?

A. The noble Subject of St. *Paul*'s Sermons to the *Gentiles*, was, *the unſearchable Riches of* Chriſt: Riches imply Abundance, and Abundance of ſuch Things as are of Value; in *Chriſt* are Riches eminently and tranſcendently found, unſearchable; not as if it were unlawful to ſearch after them, but becauſe after our utmoſt Search, we can never fully diſcover them.

Q. *Does not the Apoſtle debaſe himſelf too much when he calls himſelf*, leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, *ver.* 8?

A. Note here, the humble and low Opinion which this great Apoſtle had of himſelf; he ſtiles himſelf, not barely the leaſt, but *leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*; he was in his own Eſteem, as little as could be, and therefore he puts himſelf down, as little as could be, *leſs than the leaſt*; a double Diminutive; a Comparative made of a Superlative. Thus he debaſes himſelf on Account of his former Enmity againſt *Chriſt* and his Church.

Q. *Why does he ſtile the holy Angels Principalities and Powers, ver.* 10?

A. Becauſe God makes uſe of their powerful Miniſtry in governing the Kingdoms and Principalities of the World; and they are ſaid to be in *heavenly Places*; not as if they were never here upon Earth, but becauſe their ordinary Place of Reſidence is in Heaven.

Q. *How were the Angels made acquainted with the Redemption of Mankind?*

A. The Wiſdom of God in the Redemption of Mankind, was a Secret unknown to the glorious Angels; they did not know it till God made it known to them; nor was it made known to them, but occaſionally, by Revelation of it firſt to the Church, and by the Church to them; as if the Apoſtle [had ſaid, Had it not been for the Light given to, and ſpread abroad in the Church, the Angels had been in the dark about the Myſteries of the Goſpel to this Day. *By the Church, is made known unto the Angels the manifold Wiſdom of God.*

Q. *But how could the Church communicate this Knowledge to the Angels?*

A. Either the Angels gathered their Knowledge of theſe Myſteries, by the Miniſtry of the Apoſtle's preaching them to the World in a way of Information; or elſe they ſaw, as in a Glaſs, the manifold Wiſdom of God, and the Diſpenſations of his Grace, Mercy, and Goodneſs towards his Church in a way of Contemplation.

Q. *Why is the of Redemption ſtiled the* [manifold Wiſdom of God?

A. It is manifold in Kinds, in Degrees, in Adminiſtrations; there are manifold Secrets in this Wiſdom, ſome leſs perfectly ſeen, ſome more perfectly underſtood, and ſome perhaps that will never be comprehended thoroughly. Doubtleſs thrre are Secrets in the Wiſdom of God, which belong only to God to underſtand and know.

Q. *What is the next Point the Apoſtle ſpeaks to?*

A. He next ſhews, that whatever the Wiſdom of God has done in the Work of Redemption, was from all Eternity purpoſed to be done, and that our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* was the Perſon by whom God would in Time execute his eternal Purpoſe.

Next he ſhews the great and gracious Privileges which all Believers are admitted to a Participation of, by and through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; namely, Boldneſs, Acceſo, and Confidence.

Q. *What does he mean by Acceſs?*

A. Acceſs is a Liberty of Approach to God as a Father; Boldneſs is a Freedom of Speech in delivering our Heart to him, in the Duty of Prayer aod Thankſgiving; Confidence is a well-grounded Perſuaſion that both our Perſons and Performances ſhall find Acceptance with God; all which Privileges hre enjoy'd by the Exerciſe of Faith in *Chriſt*.

Q. *What other Admonitions does he give them?*

A. He exhorts them not to faint under, or be diſcouraged at his preſent Suffering, much leſs to backſlide from Chriſtianity on that Account; ſeeing that his Tribulations were both profitable, glorious and honourable.

Perſecution for the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, is a Trial, not only to thoſe who are under it, but to thoſe who hear of it. St. *Paul* was more afraid of the *Epheſians* fainting under his Sufferings, than he was of his own Fainting; and therefore thus cautions them, *I deſire ye not to faint at my Tribulations.*

The Perſecutions and Afflictions of the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, are generally for the Sake of their People; they might ſhun the Croſs as well as other Men, did not love to the Souls of their People engage them to ſuffer for them.

My Tribulation is your Glory: So honourable it is to ſuffer for *Chriſt*, that not only the Miniſters of *Chriſt* themſelves, who ſuffer, but the People under their Charge are greatly honoured thereby. God teſtifies his Eſteem of them, not only by ſending his Miniſters to teach and inſtruct them, but to ſuffer with them, yea, even to die for them.

The Apoſtle adds a moſt affectionate Prayer for theſe *Epheſians*, that they might not faint at his Tribulations for the Goſpel. *For this Cauſe I bow my Knees*, &ca.

Q. *What is chiefly obſervable in this excellent Prayer?*

A. We may remark, the humble Geſture which the Apoſtle uſed in his Prayers, *I bow my Knees*; thereby expreſſing the reverend Frame of his Heart in Prayer.

He prays to God as the Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. Bleſſed be God, that Believers and *Chriſt* have one and the ſame Father; he by Nature, we by Grace; he by eternal Generation, we by gracious Adoption. By Virtue of this Relation we may expect to be heard in Prayer, as *Chriſt* was, to be helped in our Diſtreſſes, as *Chriſt* was, and in God's Time to be poſſeſſed of the Inheritance of Children as *Chriſt* is.

The Church is here ſtiled God's Family, his Houſhold; all the Saints on Earth, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, and all the glorified Angels and Saints in Heaven, make but one Family. There is but one Catholick or Univerſal Church, comprehending all its Members both in Heaven and Earh; and all within the Church are of one Kindred and Line, deſcending of one common Father; and this Family is nam'd, that is, united under *Chriſt*, he being the Head of all.

That he would grant you according to the Riches of his Glory, to be ſtrengthened with Might, by his Spirit in the inner Man, to enable them to bear Afflictions, to endure Perſecutions, to reſiſt Temptations, to grapple with all their ſpiritual Enemies in the Progreſs of their *Chriſtian* Courſe.

Q. *But whence have we Strength to do all theſe great Things?*

A. This ſpiritual Strength is deriv'd from the Holy Spirit, who conſtantly renews Believers Strength by upholding and actuating their Graces, which otherwiſe would languiſh and die. So many and ſo mighty are our ſpiritual Enemies we have to wreſtle with, and ſtrive againſt, that unleſs we are ſtrengthen'd by the Almighty Power of the Holy Spirit in the inner Man, we ſhall become an eaſy Prey to every Temptation.

Q. *What is the Subject of the Apoſtle's Prayer?*

A. He prays very affectionately, that *Chriſt* may dwell in their Hearts by his moſt holy Faith. The Phraſe, dwelling in us, imports a very cloſe and intimate Union between *Chriſt* and Believers; he dwells in them ſubjectively and effectually by his gracious Influences, his powerful Aſſiſtances, his quickening Impreſſion. The Holy Spirit is the Bond of Union on *Chriſt*'s Part, and of Faith on ours.

He prays that they may be *rooted and grounded in Love*; that is, that they may be ſo deeply poſſeſſed with the Senſe of God's Love, that they might find their Hearts inflam'd with Love to God, and one towards another; and that Love might be the Habit of their Souls.

He prays that the *Epheſians* may comprehend what is the *Breadth, Length, Depth, and Height* of the Love of God, and the Myſteries of the Goſpel; intimating, that we are not to reſt contented with a ſuperficial View of God's free Love in *Chriſt*; but to make an accurate Inſpection into all the Dimenſions of it, to view it in its Length, as reaching from Eternity to Eternity; in its Depth, as it ſtoops down to ſuccour and relieve, the vileſt and the greateſt, if penitent, Sinners; in its Height, whereby it reaches up to Heaven, and intitles us to the Joy and Felicity of the Saints above.

The Love of *Chriſt* to a loſt World, is ſo vaſt and boundleſs, ſo rich and matchleſs, exceeding not only our Comprehenſion, but even our Conceptions, that not only the natural Man cannot underſtand it, but even the renew'd Man is unable to fathom it, but muſt be daily endeavouring to take Dimenſions of it; for the Love of *Chriſt* ſurpaſſingly tranſcends the Knowledge of the moſt illuminated Believer; it ſurpaſſes Natural, Apoſtolical, yea, Angelical Knowledge.

He prays that they may know the ſuperlative Love of *Chriſt*, which ſurpaſſes all human Underſtanding and Knowledge implying, that although the Knowledge of it be tranſcendent, yet it may be attain'd in ſome Meaſure, and that it is our Duty to ſeek after it, and ſearch into it, but after all, we can never fully comprehend it: What created Underſtanding can know what is unknown, or comprehend what is incomprehenſible?

He prays, that they may be filled with all the Fulneſs of God; that is, with ſuch Meaſures of Grace, Knowledge; Faith, Holineſs, and Love, as God hath appointed Believers unto, and they are capable of in this Life. God is not ſtraitned towards us, let not us be ſtraitned in ourſelves; *Open thy Mouth wide* (ſays God) *and I will fill it*. Bleſſed be God, for a preſent Fulneſs or Sufficiency,, and for the Hopes of a Fulneſs of Satiety.

Our Apoſtle cloſes his Prayer with Thankſgiving and Praiſe; intimating that Praiſe ſhould ever-more conclude that Work which Prayer began, and that ſpiritual Bleſſings principally deſerve our Praiſe.

Q. *In what Manner does the Apoſtle make his Addreſſes to God?*

A. St. *Paul*, in his Approaches to God, ſtiles him Almighty or Omnipotent, *who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk or think.* Where note, the comprehenſive Fulneſs of this Expreſſion. How ſhort, narrow, and poor are our Prayers, compared with the Power of God? 'Tis much that the Tongue can aſk, more that the Mind can think: But the Lord is able to do for us, not only above what we can aſk, but abundantly above what we can think. Lord, what an everlaſting Spring of Comfort is this! What Encouragement does it adminiſter to thy People! What an Incitement to Prayer!

It is not God's abſolute Power, that St. *Paul* bottoms his Faith in Prayer upon (for God can do many Things that he never will do) but it is his operative, promiſed, and formerly experienced Power, *according to the Power that worketh in us*; that is, according to that infinite and almighty

Power which God had exerted in their firſt Converſion; this Power was, and is a main Prop for Confidence in Prayer.

To whom be Glory in the Church by Chriſt Jeſus, *throughout all Ages, World without End, Amen.* In which Doxology obſerve, the divine Praiſe given to the Almighty God, namely, that of Glory; *To him be Glory.* Glory is the Fountain of Excellency in the Creatures; they all ſhine with Beams borrowed from God's Excellencies, as Stars ſhine with Light from the Body of the Sun: Almighty God is that infinitely glorious Being, in whom all the Excellencies and Perfections of the Creatures are eminently and tranſcendently found.

This Glory is given to God by the Church, *to him be Glory in the Church.* It is, indeed, the Duty of all rational Creatures to ſet forth God's Glory; but only the Church (holy and gracious Perſons alone) can perform it in an active and acceptable Manner.

By Chriſt Jeſus. The Duty of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, is what we owe to God for Favours receiv'd, and is indeed all we can pay him, but neither this, nor any other Duty, can find Acceptance with God, but by and through the Mediation of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt.*

Throughout all Ages, World without end; as God ſhall never want Glory from his Church, ſo there ſhall all always be a Church to the End of the World, to give Glory unto God, againſt which the Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail.

Amen. This is a Note of Aſſent, and as ſuch uſed by the *Jews* and *Chriſtians* in all Ages, at the End of their Prayers, to teſtify that they agreed to what was put up to God in their Name, and on their Behalf.

Farther; it imports earneſt Deſire. Hence *Jeremiah*, Ch. xxviii. 6. ſaid *Amen* to the Prophecy of *Hananiah*, concerning the Captives returning to their Land, to ſhow how earneſtly he deſir'd that it might be ſo.

Laſtly, It imports ſtedfaſt Faith, that the Thing we pray for, ſhall be granted; and accordingly, in Teſtimony of our Deſire and Aſſurance to be heard, we ſay, *Amen*, ſo be it; or, ſo let it be, O Lord, for ever.

CHAP. IV.

He exhorts them to a Converſation becoming their Calling, to Forbearance, Peace and Unity. Chriſt *being aſcended gave divers Gifts, and ordained divers Offices for the Juſtification of the Church: He calls them from the Impurity of the* Gentiles, *and of Nature. Exhorts them to forgive one another as God in* Chriſt *hath forgiven them.*

Q. WHAT *are the Topics which St.* Paul *diſcourſes upon in this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle having gone through the doctrinal Part of his Diſcourſe, comes in this Chap- to the practical Part of it; and in the firſt Verſe addreſſes them: I *Paul*, who am a Priſoner for preaching the Goſpel, and for declaring this Grace to you, do moſt affectionately exhort you, that ye live anſwerably to your Profeſſion, and according to the great Obligation, of your high and holy Vocation from Heatheniſm to Chriſtianity; that is, that you walk according to the Precepts and Command of the Goſpel, anſwerable to the Privileges and Prerogatives of it; anſwerable to the grand Pattern of Holineſs which the Goſpel ſets before us, the Example of *Jeſus Chriſt*, anſwerable to the Help and Supplies of Grace which the Goſpel affords; anſwerable to thoſe high and glorious Hopes which the Goſpel raiſes the *Chriſtian* to the Expectation of.

Q. *What particular Duties does he admoniſh them to put in Practice?*

A. In the 2d and 3d Verſes, the Apoſtle preſſes upon them more particular Duties, the chief of which is *Chriſtian* Unity and Concord, *endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit.* The Word ſignifies a diligent, induſtrious, and united Endeavour to preſerve and keep, to ſupport and maintain the Unity of the Spirit, that is, an Union of Heart and Spirit, an unity of Faith and Doctrine, of Judgment and Affection amongſt all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity.

Q. *By what Means were they to preſerve this Unity of Peace?*

A. The Means by which this Duty may be performed, is, in or by *the Bond of Peace*; a peaceable Deportment and Behaviour, is that which binds *Chriſtians* together; whereas Diſcord and Diviſion cuts that Bond aſunder.

The ſpecial Graces which the Apoſtle recommends as excellent Helps for preſerving Unity and Peace, are Humility, Meekneſs, and mutual Forbearance.

With all Lowlineſs, that is, with all Submiſſiveneſs of Mind and humble Apprehenſion of ourſelves.

And Meekneſs; this conſiſts in a Backwardneſs, to provoke others, or to be provoked by others; it is oppoſed to Peeviſhneſs.

Long Sufferings and mutual Forbearance; when *Chriſtians* are ſo far from reſenting any Wrong, that they can bear with one another's Weakneſſes, cover each other's Infirmities, pity one another's Failings, and pardon each other's Provocations. And this Duty of mutual Forbearance ſhould proceed from a Principle of Love to each other; *forbearing one another in love.*

Q. *What Arguments does he uſe to enforce this Duty of Unity and Concord?*

A. 1. Says he, there is *one Body*, that is, one univerſal Church, whereof ye are all Members.

2. *There is one Spirit*, by which ye are all animated and enlivened, and therefore keep the Unity of the Spirit.

3. There is *one Hope*, of eternal Life, by which we are all excited; Our Inheritance in Heaven is the ſame; God doth not give one a double Portion, above another; but it is called *an Inheritance in Light*, becauſe all alike are Partakers of it, and Sharers in it; the Saints have all one Hope, therefore ſhould all have but one Heart.

4. *One Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the Head of his Church, the Saviour of the Body, one whom we all profeſs to ſerve and obey: Be therefore one, for your Lord is one.

5. *One Faith*, that is, either one Grace of Faith whereby we believe, or one Doctrine of Faith which is believed; ye all believe in one and the ſame Saviour, and are all juſtified by him after one and the ſame Manner; therefore be ye alſo one; one in Action, as well as one in Belief.

6. *One Baptiſm*, one Door by which we all enter into the Church, we are all one in *Chriſt Jeſus* and by one Spirit baptized into one Body.

7. *One God and Father of all Things*; and of all Perſons in *Chriſt*, from whom we all expect one and the ſame Salvation; and this God is tranſcendently above, and over all; his Eye pierces through you all, and he is in and among you all, as in his holy Temple; therefore ſuch as endeavour to divide you, do what in them lies to divide God himſelf who dwells in you.

Seeing then that you are one in all theſe Particulars, be one among yourſelves, and *endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

Q. *What do we learn from hence?*

A. From hence we are inſtructed, that ſo many are the Obligations, ſo ſtrong the Bonds and Ties, which lie upon all Members of *Chriſt*, to be at Unity among themſelves, of one Judgment, and of one Heart; that ſuch as violate theſe Bonds, and culpably divide and ſeparate themſelves from Communion with their Brethren, *Chriſt* looks upon them no longer as Members of his Body, but as having rent and torn themſelves from it.

Q. *Does he uſe any other Argument to enforce this Duty?*

A. Our Apoſtle, from the 7th to the 13th Verſe, uſes another weighty Argument to perſuade us *to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*; namely, that it was one chief End which *Chriſt* aimed at, in inſtituting the Miniſtry of the Word, in appointing ſeveral Officers in his Church, of Apoſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts, Paſtors and Teachers, and alſo in the ſeveral Gifts which he beſtowed upon theſe Officers; he aſſures us it was *Chriſt*'s great Deſign, in and by all theſe, to bring his People, not only to Faith and Knowledge, but *to Unity in the Faith, and in the Knowledge of the Son of God.*

Q. *What was* Chriſt's *View in giving different Graces to his Church?*

A. The Deſign of *Chriſt*, in diſpenſing his Grace in different Meaſures and Degrees, is the general Good of the Church, and particularly for promoting Unity and Love among his Members; for ſeeing every one has his Graces from God, and no one has all; if one has that Grace which another wants, and if one wants that Grace which another has, it ſhews that we need the Help of each other, and therefore we ought to love one another; this is the Apoſtle's Argument.

Q. *What is the Import of thoſe Words in the 8th Verſe,* He led Captivity captive, and gave Gifts unto Men?

A. This manifeſtly alludes to the *Roman* Conquerors, who in the Days of their Triumphs ſcattered their Largeſſes and Donatives among their Soldiers and Subjects. Thus *Chriſt*, after he had triumph'd over his own and his Church's Enemies upon the Croſs, rode in the triumphal Chariot of Aſcenſion into Heaven, where he received Gifts as the Purchaſe of his Blood, and ſhed forth thoſe Gifts of his Spirit in various Kinds upon his Members in general, and on his Miniſters in particular; which Gifts in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, were exttrordinary, as of Tongues and Miracles; but now ordinary, and to continue to the End of the World.

It is evident that the Apoſtle's Scope in this Argument, is to urge and enforce Unity, from the Diverſity of Gifts and Graces which are among the Members of the Church; God forbid then that they ſhould occaſion Strifes aud Animoſities, Rents and Diviſions.

Q. *What other Argument does he bring to enforce his Exhortation to Unity?*

A. Our Apoſtle's next Argument for Unity, is, that as Unity and the Edification of the Church, was the Deſign of *Chriſt* in diſpenſing Diverſity of Gifts and Graces amongſt the Members of his Church, ſo likewiſe was his Aim and End in inſtituting ſuch Variety of Offices and Officers in his Church; for this End he gave his Church, firſt Apoſtles, ſent forth firſt by his own Mouth, to be Witneſſes of his Doctrine and Miracles; and then to preach that Doctrine throughout all the World, having received the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary Manner, at the Feaſt of Pentecoſt, to fit them for that Service, *Acts* ii. 1, 2. Next Prophets, who explained the Myſteries of Faith, foretold Things to come, and expounded the Writings of the old Prophets; then Evangeliſts, who were ſent out by the Apoſtles, ſome to plant, others to water the Churches which they had planted, without being fixed to any particular Place: Laſtly, Paſtors and Teachers, called alſo Biſhops and Elders, who were ſet over the Churches as Guides or Inſtructors.

Q. *How long was this Order in the Miniſtry to continue?*

A. The Continuance of this Miniſtry, appointed by *Chriſt*, was to be to the End of the World, to the Day of Judgment, *till all come*, by Means of the ſame Faith in *Chriſt*, and Knowledge of him, *unto a perfect Man, and unto the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of* Chriſt; that is, till the Church, which is *Chriſt*'s myſtical Body, ſhall be compleat and perfect, and attain its full Stature from Infancy to full Manhood.

Hence learn, that the Church of *Chriſt* here on Earth is labouring for, and endeavouring after Perfection in Grace and Knowledge, to come unto a perfect Man, and to attain to the Meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of *Chriſt*.

None of the Saints on Earth, though the moſt eminent for Piety and Knowledge, are above Ordinances, above the Miniſtry of the Word, above receiving Benefit and Advantage by the plain and practical Preaching of it; even St. *Paul* reckons himſelf with thoſe who ſtood in need of the Miniſtry of God's Word, to bring him to a perfect Man; none think they need Ordinances ſo much as thoſe that want them leaſt.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's next Topic of Inſtruction?*

A. St. *Paul* declares one ſpecial End for which the Miniſtry of the Word was inſtituted; namely, to preſerve them from Error and Seduction; to prevent Inſtability of Mind, and Unſettledneſs of Judgment, and to confirm Perſons in Fundamental Truths, *that we henceforth be no more Children, toſſed to and fro*, &c.

Unſtable and unſettled Profeſſors, St. *Paul* calls Children; not in regard of Age, but of Knowledge and Underſtanding.

The Unſteadineſs of thoſe Profeſſors is expreſs'd by a double Metaphor; the former is drawn from a Wave in the Sea, *toſſed to and fro*; the latter from a light Cloud hovering in the Air, *carried about* from Place to Place; neither Wave nor Cloud have any Conſiſtency, but are moving if any Wind be ſtirring.

Q. *From whence proceeds this Inſtability?*

A. The Cauſe of this Inſtability, is, *every Wind of Doctrine*; Profeſſors who have no ſolid Principles, every Wind of Doctrine has Power over them to drive them to and fro, every Teacher can caſt them into what Mould he pleaſes, and blow them, like Glaſſes, into this or that Shape, at the pleaſure of his Breath.

Q. *But why* Wind of Doctrine?

A. Becauſe there is no Solidity in it, being but Wind in the Preacher, it breeds but Wind in the Hearer, becauſe of its Variety and Novelty, and becauſe of its Prevalency over unſtaid Men. How ſuddenly, ſome Times, is a Family, a Town, a Country, leavened with a particular Error?

Note alſo the Character of thoſe who thus unſettle and unhinge Men, they uſe Sleight; a Metaphor taken from Gameſters, who with Art and Sleight of Hand can cog the Dice, and win the Game. Seducers cheat with falſe Doctrines, as Gameſters do with falſe Dice.

Q. *What is the Signification of thoſe Words in the 14th Verſe,* Cunning Craftineſs?

A. The Word ſignifies the Subtilty and deep Policy of the old Serpent; implying, that Seducers are old and cunning Gameſters, ſkilful to deceive; *they lie in wait to deceive*; the Word ſignifies *an Ambuſcade*, or Stratagem of War, implying, that all the Sleight and Craftineſs of Seducers, is, to entrap and catch Men within the Ambuſh of their Impoſtures; they wreſt and wind the Scriptures to make them ſpeak what they pleaſe, not what the Holy Ghoſt intended. If all this Art fails, their laſt Device is, to recommend their Doctrines on ſome private pretended Revelation, and uncommon Impulſe of the Holy Spirit; by all which Methods they lie in wait to deceive.

Q. *How does he deſcribe the admirable Fitneſs of the Miniſtry for helping forward our Growth in Grace?*

A. This he ſets forth in the 15th Verſe, *ſpeaking the Truth in Love*; that is, cleaving to the Truth of *Chriſt's* Doctrine, and living in Love with one another, we may grow up in *Chriſt*, by making Progreſs in all *Chriſtian* Graces, being united to him as Members to the Head.

The Apoſtle here draws a Compariſon between the natural and myſtical Body, and the Increaſe of both; as there muſt be a Fellowſhip betwixt the natural and Head and Members, ſo muſt there be an Union between *Chriſt*, the ſpiritual Head, and Believers his myſtical Members, and as it is farther required that there be a mutual Communion and Fellowſhip of the Members within, and amongſt themſelves, in Order to Growth and Increaſe; ſo muſt there be Concord, Love, and Unity amongſt Believers, if they expect to ſee Grace growing in themſelves, or in one another.

As there is a Supply of Nouriſhment from one Member to another, according to the Meaſure of every Part in the natural Body, ſo is there a Supply from Head to Members in the myſtical Body, and from one myſtical Member to another; one is ready to teach, another to comfort, a third able to convince, a fourth willing to exhort; a fifth to adviſe and counſel; and all and every one of theſe, contributing all they can to the Welfare and Growth of the Whole. Happy is it; both are ſubſervient to each other, and contribute all they can to the mutual Growth, and Improvement of one another, and eſpecially for the Benefit and Advantage of the Whole.

Q. *What other Duties does he admoniſh them to the Practice of?*

A. The Apoſtle next preſſes the *Epheſians* to the Practice of particular Duties. The firſt of which is, to take ſpecial Care, that being now converted *Chriſtians*, they walk no more like ignorant and unconverted People as the Heathens; *Walk not as other* Gentiles *walk*.

In the Vanity of their Minds, following their own Imaginations, and not any Revelation from God, in the Matters of his Worſhip.

Having their Underſtandings darkened, their Minds void of ſaving Knowledge. They were alienated from the Life of God; that is, from a godly Life; they were Strangers to the Life of God commanded and approved.

Q. *Why does he call Holineſs* the Life of God?

A. Holineſs is called the Life of God, becauſe it is the Life which God requires of us, which he Works in us, and whereby God liveth in us; the Life whereby we live unto God; it is an everlaſting Life; not obnoxious to Death, as the *Epheſians* were; ſo every carnal Man, before Converſion, is alienated from this Life of God; he prefers a Life of Sin before it.

Q. *How were they* paſt feeling?

A. Their ſottiſh Stupidity had benumbed them; the Flames of their Luſts had ſeared their Conſciences to a deſperate Degree of Hardneſs and Inſenſibility; they were at once inſenſible of their Sin, and of their Danger, by Reaſon of Sin. A dead Conſcience, and a diſſolute Life are inſeparable Companions.

They gave themſelves over unto Laſciviouſneſs, &c. Here ſee how Inſenſibility of Sin begets Inſatiableneſs in ſinning; they work Uncleanneſs with inſatiable Greedineſs, who have once abandoned themſelves to Sin, eſpecially to the Sin of Uncleanneſs. This was the deplorable State of the Heathen World, before the Light of the Goſpel aroſe and ſhone upon them; but let them be aſſured, that though they live like Beaſts, yet they ſhall not die like them, nor ſhall their latter End be like theirs; the Soul being under a divine Ordination to an everlaſting Exiſtence in a future Eſtate, in which it ſhall be eternally happy, or intolerably miſerable, according as we regulate our Conduct in this World.

Q. *What other Inſtructions does he give them?*

A. Our Apoſtle next acquaints the converted *Epheſians*, that the ſaving Knowledge of *Chriſt*, which they had received, inſtructed them better than to practice ſuch Licentiouſneſs and Wickedneſs as the unconverted *Gentiles* wallowed in. *But ye have not ſo learned* Chriſt, that is, the Goſpel of *Chriſt*.

Nothing curbs, or cures Sin, in a licentious Sinner, like the Doctrine of *Chriſt* revealed in the Goſpel; no moral Precepts from the Schools of the Heathen, which ſome ſo much magnify and applaud, can compare with this, which lays open the Root of this accurſed Diſeaſe, and leads us to the Remedy which the Wiſdom of God has appointed for its Cure, even the Blood of his own Son; then bleſſed be God for revealed Religion.

Q. *What is the Truth, as it is in* Jeſus, *Verſe* 21?

A. That is, what the Doctrine of the Goſpel directs them to, and requires of them; namely, to *put off the old Man*; that is, their former *Heathen* Converſation and Manner of Life, ſay ſome; but this they had already put off on their *Converſion to Chriſtianity:* By the *old Man* then underſtand, the old corrupt Nature, ſo called, becauſe as old as *Adam*, and derived from him, and which daily corrupts and depraves us by its deceitful Luſts, if it be not reſiſted and ſubdued.

But the putting off the old Man, is inſufficient, unleſs we put on the New, and be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds after God; that is, after the Image of God, which conſiſts in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs; the Perſon regenerated has a new Principle infuſed into him, which enables him to lead a new Life; he has a renewed and enlightened Underſtanding, a renewed and ſanctified Will, renewed Affections and Deſires, old Things are paſſing away, and all Things becoming new.

Which, after God, is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs, What is Godlineſs, but Godlikeneſs? What is Holineſs, but Conformity of our Natures to the holy Nature of God? And the Conformity of our Lives to the Will of God? *Acts* xiii. 22. I have found *David* a Man after *my own Heart*, who ſhall perform *all my Will*.

Q. *He exhorts them, Verſe* 23. to be renewed in the Spirit of their Mind: *What is his Meaning in the laſt Words?*

A. By *the Spirit of the Mind*, underſtand the higheſt and moſt refined Faculties of the Mind, that Part which is moſt free from the Dregs of Sin, and which comes up neareſt to God, as the Spirit of the Mind and Underſtanding doth; even this needs renewing, becauſe Corruption is got into the higheſt Powers and ſuperior Faculties of the Soul, and becauſe we muſt ſerve God with all our Mind.

Q. *What other Admontions does he give them?*

A. Our Apoſtle cloſes this Chapter with an Exhortation to ſeveral Duties belonging to the ſecond Table; namely, to abſtain from Lying, Anger, Stealing, corrupt Communication, Bitterneſs of Spirit, Malice and Revenge, and to exerciſe brotherly Kindneſs, and mutual Forgiveneſs.

Hence note, that *Chriſtians* muſt perform their Duty towards their Neighbour, as well as towards God, for the Law is one Copulative, *God ſpoke all theſe Words*, &c. The Authority of the Law-giver is deſpiſed in the Violation of the leaſt Command; when therefore ſecond Table Duties are performed by us, by Arguments and Motives drawn from the firſt Table; that is, when in Obedience to God's Command, and with an Eye to his Glory, we perform our Duty to our Neighbour, this is both an Argument of our Sincerity, and alſo an Ornament of our Profeſſion.

Wherefore put away Lying, &c. Lying was a Vice very common among the *Heathens*. Probably the *Epheſians*, in their *Heathen* State, had been very guilty of it; for they thought it lawful, when it was beneficial, to lie; and affirmed, that a Lie was better than a hurtful Truth. Our Apoſtle therefore exhorts them, now converted to *Chriſtianity*, to ſpeak exact Truth one to another, and adds this forcible Reaſon, that they were Members one of another; that is, of human Society, which by Lying is deſtroyed; Falſhood diſſolves the Bond of human Society.

There is no Sin more unſeemly in a *Chriſtian*, more inconſiſtent with Grace, more abominable to God, more reſembling the Devil, more injurious and prejudicial to human Society, than the Sin of Lying; Fidelity and mutual Confidence is that which makes Society both ſafe and eaſy.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words, Verſe* 26. Be ye Angry and Sin not?

A. Theſe Words ſome underſtand only as a cautionary Direction, as thus: If ye be angry at any Time, beware that ye Sin not, by exceeding its due Bounds; and if that ſhould happen, ſuppreſs it ſpeedily, before the Sun go down; this was practiſed even by the *Heathens*, before the Sun went down, they would ſhake Hands and embrace one another; to the Shame of *Chriſtians*, who gave place to the Devil, according to the known Proverb, He that goes angry to Bed, has the Devil for his Chamber-fellow, yea for his Bedfellow.

Others underſtand the Words as a Precept and Command, *Be angry*, but take heed of ſinful Anger: Now the Way to be angry and not Sin, is to be angry at nothing but Sin; it is our Duty to be angry when we ſee others depart from their Duty. Meek *Moſes*, who was cool enough in his own Cauſe, was hot in God's; he has no Zeal for God, that is not moved, when he ſees or hears God diſhonoured.

Q. *But what Rules can you preſcribe to prevent Exceſſes in Anger?*

A. To prevent the Sin of immoderate Anger, theſe Rules will be uſeful. 1. Deſire not to hear what others ſay of thee, leſt you want Patience to bear what you hear; many tear themſelves with Anger, when they hear themſelves ſlandered; we had better be ignorant of our Wrongs, than by knowing them, injure ourſelves by Paſſion, or Deſire of Revenge. 2. What you hear ſaid of you, interpret always in the moſt favourable Senſe; call it an Infirmity, and diſtinguiſh between the Action and Intention; between what is ſpoken and the Intent of the Speaker. 3. In and under all Provocations caſt your Eye upwards; look to God; and caſt your Eye inward, and ſee what you have deſerved, though not at your Neighbour's, yet at God's Hand.

Q. *What is the next Sin he diſſuades us from?*

A. Theft and Stealing. This the *Heathens* counted no Crime; therefore, ſays the Apoſtle, let thoſe of you, who, in the Time of your *Paganiſm* and Infidelity, were given to ſtealing, now being converted to *Chriſtianity*, do ſo no more.

The Remedy preſcribed for the Prevention of this Sin, is, *Let him labour, working with his Hands:* Idleneſs occaſions Poverty, brings Men to Want, increaſes their Neceſſities, which puſhes them to indirect and unlawful Means to ſupply them.

One ſpecial Reaſon why Perſons ſhould labour in their Calling, is, that they might have *to give to him that needeth*; Day-Labourers, and ſuch whoſe whole Subſiſtence is by their Work, muſt yet give their Mite, their Alms for the Help of the Indigent.

Working the Thing which is good, that he may give to him that needeth; to relieve others with the Gain of Oppreſſion, or with the Hire of an Harlot, is unacceptable; the Matter of our Alms muſt be Goods righteouſly gotten, otherwiſe it is a Robbery, not Righteouſneſs.

Q. *What Rules does he give us for the Management of the Tongue?*

A. The Apoſtle directs us how to manage our Tongues; *Let no corrupt Communication proceed out of your Mouth*; filthy Diſcourſe argues a polluted Heart, and is offenſive and contagious to common and ordinary Hearers.

Next he tells them, they ſhould ſpeak that which is Profitable and Edifying, which may miniſter Increaſe of Grace to the Hearers. *Chriſtians* muſt not ſuffer their Tongues to run at random in their ordinary Diſcourſe; it is not ſufficient that they do not ſpeak to evil Purpoſe, but they muſt ſpeak to an edifying Purpoſe; that which has a Tendency to make the Hearers, ſome Way or other, wiſer or better; this the Apoſtle calls, *That which is good to the Uſe of Edifying.*

A. In what Senſe is the Holy Spirit of God ſaid to be grieved, *Verſe* 30?

A. The Affection of Grief is here attributed to the Spirit, not properly, but improperly; when we do that which would moſt certainly afflict him, were he capable of Grief; and when, upon Provocations given on our Parts, he carries himſelf towards us after the Manner of a Perſon grieved; namely, when we provoke him to ſuſpend his Influences, to withdraw his Comforts, leaving us without any preſent Senſe of feeling his Aſſiſtances; he is alſo then grieved when he is oppoſed, interrupted, controuled, and diſturbed in his Operations of Grace and Comfort unto our Souls.

Q. *How does the Holy Spirit of God* Seal Believers to the Day of Redemption?

A. God's ſealing his People by the Holy Spirit, intimates, 1. That God has diſtinguiſhed them from others. 2. That he has appropriated them to himſelf. 3. That he has put a Value upon them, and that they are highly in his Eſteem. And, 4. It imports the irrecoverable Purpoſe of God for their Salvation. Seals are for Diſtinction, Approbation, Confirmation, and argues a high Valuation of the Perſon or Thing, which the Seal is put upon.

Q. *In the 31ſt Verſe, he bids them* put away all Bitterneſs, Wrath, Anger, Clamour, Evil-ſpeaking, and Malice: *Pray define theſe ſeveral Words?*

A. Bitterneſs is a ſecret Grudge, and a ſmother'd Diſpleaſure againſt our Brother; Wrath is an impetuous Fierceneſs of Spirit, on ſome real or ſuppoſed Injury; Anger is an eager Deſire of Revenge; Clamour, loud Threatnings or Revilings; Evil-ſpeaking, either, of or to others; Malice, a rooted Enmity, the Rage of the Devil, and renders a Man as like the Devil as any Sin on this ſide Hell: All theſe Sins exceedingly grieve the Holy Spirit.

Q. *In the laſt Verſe he exhorts to the reciprocal Duties of Love and Kindneſs: To what Extent may theſe mutual Offices be carried?*

A. Be ye kind one to another; Be of a ſweet and loving Diſpoſition, affable and courteous to each other; neither carrying it loftily nor moroſely, but affably and humbly; *tender-hearted*, having a compaſſionate Senſe of the Miſeries and Infirmities of another; *forgiving* one another whatever has been matter of Provocation in each other, according to the Example of God, who, for *Chriſt's* ſake, has forgiven us. As God forgives us univerſally, freely, heartily, and ſincerely, even when he has Power to revenge; ſo ſhould we forgive one another, even as God, for *Chriſt's* ſake, hath forgiven us.

Chap. V.

He exhorts them to mutual Love, after the Example of God and Chriſt; *to depart from all Uncleanneſs, Covetouſneſs, and fooliſh Talking; to walk as Children of Light; to be wiſe, redeeming the Time; not to be drunk, but to be full of the Spirit, ſinging Pſalms and Hymns to the Lord. He exhorts all in general to be ſubject one to another in the Fear of God; Wives to be ſubject to their Husbands, as the Church is to* Chriſt; *Husbands to love their Wives, even as* Chriſt *loved the Church, and as a Man loves his own Body. As the Husband and Wife, by God's Inſtitution, are one Fleſh, ſo is* Chriſt *and the Church.*

Q. PRAY *what Subject does the Apoſtle treat of in this Chapter?*

A. Our Apoſtle begins this Chapter with ſeveral cogent Arguments to excite and quicken them to the Duty of mutual Love and Kindneſs. His firſt Motive is taken from the Example of God, as he has been kind to us, and, for *Chriſt's* ſake, forgiven us; let us therefore be Followers of him; not as our God only, but as our Father; *Be ye Followers of God, as dear Children.*

Be ye followers of God; that is, in all the Excellencies of his communicable Attributes; particularly in the exerciſe of univerſal Goodneſs and Kindneſs, Mercy and Forgiveneſs.

As dear Children; ye are Children, and whom ſhould Children imitate but their Father: Such as claim a Relation to God, without Imitation of him, are not Children, but Baſtards; they may be of his Family, but not of his Houſhold; of his Family by Inſtruction, but not by Deſcent; there is no Implantation into *Chriſt*, without an Imitation both of the Creator and Redeemer. *Heb.* iii. 6. *Chriſt as a Son over his own Houſe, whoſe Houſe are we, if we hold faſt*, &c.

Q. *By what other Argument does he enforce this Duty of mutual Love?*

A. A ſecond Argument to walk in Love one with another, is drawn from the Example of *Chriſt*; he alſo, as well as God the Father, hath loved us; and as an Inſtance, the higheſt that could be given, of his Love, he gave himſelf for us an Offering and a Sacrifice of a *ſweet-ſmelling Savour.*

As Chriſt *alſo hath loved us.* The Particle, *as*, hath the Tone of an Argument, and it is as much as *becauſe* Chriſt hath loved us; and it has alſo the Force of a Rule, to direct us in the Manner how we ſhould love one another, with an *as*, of Identity but not of Equality; not with the ſame Kind of Love wherewith *Chriſt* hath loved us.

But why, *hath*, rather than, *doth*, love us? To denote both the Priority of *Chriſt'* Love, that he loved us before we loved him; yea, before we loved ourſelves; nay, before we had any Being in the World; we had a Being in his Love from all Eternity; and alſo to denote the unqueſtionable Certainty of his Love; he hath loved you; you need not doubt it; he has given undeniable Proofs of it; follow him from Heaven to Earth, and from Earth to Heaven again, and you will find every Step he took to have been in Love; *walk then in Love, as* Chriſt *hath loved us.*

He gave himſelf, a Gift greater than if he had given all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Treaſures on Earth for us; more than the whole World, yea, than ten thouſand Worlds; he gave himſelf *an Offering and a Sacrifice*, a voluntary, meritorious, efficacious, expiatory, and a propitiatory Sacrifice to an injur'd and offended God; to God as the Revenger of Sin, as the Guardian and Giver of the Law, as the Aſſertor of his Truth in his Threatnings; he appeared before God, as ſitting upon a Seat of Juſtice, that he might open to us a Throne of Grace.

For a ſweet-ſmelling Savour; that is, he gave himſelf with an Intention to be accepted, and God received him with a choice Acceptation. Our Sin had ſent up a very ill Savour to Heaven; *Chriſt* expels it by the Perfume of his precious Blood.

Q. *What is the next Duty he exhorts them to practice?*

A. The Apoſtle next exhorts the *Epheſians* to ſhun ſeveral Sins which were frequently practiſed among the *Gentiles*, before their Converſion to *Chriſtianity*; as firſt, *Fornication*, and all Sorts and Degrees of Uncleanneſs; this the *Pagan* World looked upon as an indifferent Action, and no Sin at all.

Next he warns them againſt Covetouſneſs; that is, all irregular and inordinate Deſires after Things forbidden in the General; and particularly all inſatiable Love of Riches, which in trading Cities, ſuch as *Epheſus*, uſually abounds; which Sins he earneſtly deſires may not be named amongſt them, with Approbation, nor without Reprehenſion; not committed by any of them, nor ſo much as named without Deteſtation.

As becometh Saints; converted *Chriſtians*, who profeſs a Separation from the World, and a ſolemn Dedication to God and *Chriſt*, and therefore ought to be holy in Heart, chaſte in Mind, heavenly in Deſire, undefil'd in Body.

Q. *What Inſtructions does he give them in Relation to the Government of the Tongue?*

A. The Apoſtle next exhorts *Chriſtians* to guard againſt the Sins of the Tongue, to avoid all filthy and fooliſh Diſcourſe, all ſcurrilous and obſcene Jeſting, all Exceſs in Drollery, which is nothing but the Foam of a frothy Wit: Moderate Mirth, by innocent and inoffenſive Jeſting, is not here forbidden; but when we jeſt by tart Reflections on the Way, Geſture, natural Imperfections of others, eſpecially when we furniſh out a Jeſt in Scripture-attire, and in a jocular Humour make light and irreverent Applications of Scripture-Phraſes.

Which are not convenient, neither in themſelves, nor for the Speaker, nor Hearer; for the Poiſon, inſtead of profitting the Company, pollutes both the Minds and Manners of the Hearers.

The Tongue of a good Man is his Glory, the Tongue of a Sinner is his Shame; no Member of the Body does the Devil ſo much Service as the Tongue, eſpecially in common Converſation; then it is that Men let their Tongues run Riot, then they utter Oaths and Blaſphemies againſt God, cenſorious, opprobrious, Slanderous Words againſt their Neighbours; to prevent all which, the Apoſtle exhorts, that when we meet together, we ſhould bleſs God for his Favours. Thankſgiving is a Duty we ought to take all Opportunities to practiſe, and the rather, becauſe we are naturally averſe to it.

So eaſy is the Paſſage from what is lawful and allow'd, to what is ſinful and forbidden, that it is a Task of no ſmall Difficulty to keep within the bounds of lawful and allow'd Mirth; eſpecially in recreating our Spirits by pleaſant and delightful Diſcourſe, ſo that we exceed not in Matter, Manner, or Meaſure.

The Sins aforemention'd being very common among the *Gentiles*, the Apoſtle adviſes the *Epheſians* not to entertain light Thoughts of them as Things of ſmall Conſequence; for how can a little Sin be committed againſt a great God? Or, that Sin be accounted light, which brings down the heavy Wrath of God on the Perſon, and ſhuts him out of the Kingdom of God?

Q. *How is Heaven a* Kingdom?

A. It is ſo called for its Eminency and Glory, its Fulneſs and Sufficiency, its Safety and Security, its Duration and Perpetuity. And it is *the Kingdom of* Chriſt *and of God*; that is, either the Kingdom of *Chriſt* who is God; or the Kingdom of *Chriſt* by Purchaſe, and the Kingdom of God by free Donation. *Chriſt* is firſt nam'd, becauſe we enter by him into the Kingdom, and in his Right.

Q. *What are thoſe Sins which exclude Perſons from his Kingdom?*

A. They are not external and corporal Sins only, as Whoredom and Uncleanneſs, but internal and ſpiritual, *Covetouſneſs which is Idolatry*; as a Man may be guilty of Adultery, and never touch a Woman; of Murther, and not ſtrike his Neighbour; ſo he may be guilty of Idolatry, yet never bow his Knee to an Idol; ſecret, Soul-Idolatry, will ſhut out of Heaven, as well as open Idolatry. Any thing that has our higheſt Eſteem and Regard, our extreme Love and Delight, and is the ſpecial Object of our Hope, our Affiance and Truſt, our Fear and Care, this we make our God; and thus the covetous Man is an Idolater; either the World, or ſome worldly Luſt, is his God; and no Idolater can have (while ſuch) any Inheritance in the Kingdom of *Chriſt* and of God.

Q. *How do we partake of other Mens Sins?*

A. This we do when we conſent to them, connive at them, rejoice in them, counſel or direct them, by not hindering them, by not publiſhing and admoniſhing of them, but eſpecially by joining in the Commiſſion of them; all theſe Ways we are Partakers of other Men's Sins.

Q. *How does he farther deſcribe the State of the* Epheſians?

A. The *Epheſians* are reminded of their former Darkneſs and Blindneſs; before the Light of the Goſpel ſhone upon them, they were not only Dark, but Darkneſs itſelf; but now, ſays the Apoſtle, *ye are Light in the Lord*, they were ſavingly enlighten'd by the Word and Spirit of God; accordingly he urges them to walk anſwerably to their *Chriſtian* Profeſſion, *walk as Children of Light*; that is, bodily, humbly, cheerfully, and thankfully before God; exemplarily and unblameably before the World.

Q. *But why does he command them to walk as Children of the Light, ver.* 8.

A. The Reaſon why the *Epheſians*, who were in Darkneſs, but now enlighten'd by the Holy Spirit, ſhould walk as Children of the Light, is, becauſe the Fruits of that Light, or of the Holy Spirit, the Author of it, *is in all Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs and Truth*; that is, it conſiſts in theſe Things, theſe are the Fruits of the enlightning and enlivening Spirit of God. The Force of the Argument lies thus; ſuch a walking as is here directed to, namely, in the Love and Practice of univerſal Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs, is the genuine Fruit and natural Reſult of the Holy Spirit; and accordingly as ſuch they were obliged to it; none can walk as the Children of the Light, but ſuch as are renew'd and quicken'd by the Holy Spirit of God, and made Children of Light, and ſuch will be found in the Practice of thoſe Duties, wherein that Walk conſiſts.

Q. *Explain thoſe Words in the* 10*th Verſe*, Proving what is acceptable to the Lord?

A. That is, 1. To ſtudy the Word, and find what is pleaſing to God. 2. To embrace with our Hearts what we find to be ſo. 3. To practiſe in our Lives what we embrace with our Hearts. To ſerve *Chriſt* with a pure Intention, with a willing Mind, and to ſuffer patiently for the well-doing, this is highly pleaſing and acceptable unto God, 1 *Pet.* ii. 29.

Q. *Why is Sin called the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, Ver.* 11.

A. Sin is ſtil'd Darkneſs, becauſe it originally ſprings from Darkneſs, delights in it, and ultimately leads to it. It implies the Drudgery and Toil that a Sinner undergoes in the Service of Sin.

Sin is an unfruitful Work, not materially and ſubjectively unfruitful; for a corrupt Nature is a rank Soil in which Sin thrives apace; but terminately and ultimately, it is unfruitful in the Concluſion, in the Event and Iſſue, *Rom.* vi. 21.

Again; it is both the Duty and Intereſt of every *Chriſtian*, to have nothing to do with any ſinful Work; the preceptive Will of God requires this, Sin being contrary to the Holineſs of his Nature and Will; and the Dignity and Purity of the Goſpel calls for this, which is a Law of Holineſs, and a Rule of holy Living.

Q. *How are we to reprove them?*

A. Two Ways; 1. By our Lips; with Plainneſs, but yet with Prudence, with Faithfulneſs, but yet with Meekneſs; never uſe ſharp Words, if ſoft will do as well. 2. With our Lives; thus *Nehemiah*, by his princely Demeanor, reprov'd the Covetouſneſs of former Governors, *Neh.* v. 15. *So did not I, becauſe of the Fear of the Lord.* A holy Life is a viſible and daily Reproof given both to Sin and Sinners.

Q. *But what Reaſons does the Apoſtle aſſign why the* Epheſians *ſhou'd have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but reprove them?*

A. 1. Becauſe the abominable Filthineſs of thoſe Sins which the wicked Pagans committed, eſpecially in their Heathen Myſteries preſcrib'd by the Devil, as Parts of his Worſhip.

2. Becauſe Admonition and Reproof make the Works of Darkneſs manifeſt to the Sinner's Conſcience, and ſets forth Sin in its black and ugly Colours. A Diſcovery of Sin in its Vileneſs, Odiouſneſs, and Uglineſs, is neceſſary to a Sinner's Conviction of it, and Converſion from it; and God not only bleſſes the Miniſtry of the Word from the Pulpit; but ſometimes from the Mouth of a private *Chriſtian*, and the Light of his holy Example, for this great End.

Q. *Does he uſe any other Argument to enforce the Duty of Reproof?*

A. Our Apoſtle's laſt Argument, is drawn from the Example of God himſelf, whoſe great Deſign it is, by his holy Word, to awaken Men out of the Sleep of Sin and Death, that *Chriſt* may give them Light. Every Man by Nature is in a dead Sleep, till the renovating Change; he apprehends Things as a Man aſleep; all his Thoughts of God and *Chriſt*, of Heaven and Hell, of Sin and Holineſs, are ſlight and flitting Notions, not real Apprehenſions. Imaginary Dangers ſtartle them, like Men in a Dream; but real Dangers though never ſo near, do not affect them. As in natural Sleep all the Senſes of the Body, ſo in ſpiritual Sleep are all the Powers of the Soul are bound up; and accordingly this Sleep is not caſual, but con-natural to our preſent ſinful State; a Soul drench'd in Senſuality ſleeps as it were by Choice, and not by Chance; but his Damnation ſlumbers not, if he does not ſpeedily awake, and *ariſe from the Dead, that* Chriſt *may give him Light.*

Q. *Pray explain the* 15*th Verſe*, See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as Fools but as Wiſe?

A. Theſe Words may be conſider'd two Ways; 1. As a Direction to thoſe, who, according to the foregoing Exhortation, reprove Sinners for their unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, namely, to walk very circumſpectly themſelves; ſee then how circumſpectly you walk, ſo the Words may be render'd; and it intimates, that thoſe only are fit to reprove Sin in others, who walk very circumſpectly and unblameably themſelves; ſuch only have Authority to reprove, or hope for Succeſs in reproving.

2. The Words may be conſider'd as a new Precept, added to that which directs the *Epheſians* to an holy Life; he aſſures them, that if they will walk holily, they muſt walk circumſpectly, and that circumſpect Walking is wiſe Walking.

Such is the Weakneſs and Inconſtancy of our Nature, ſo many and ſo ſubtil are our ſpiritual Adverſaries, and ſo intimate with us; ſo ſtrict and exact is the Law of God we are to walk by, and ſo holy and jealous is that God before whom we muſt walk, that it's impoſſible to walk before him acceptably, if we do not walk circumſpectly.

Note farther, both the Neceſſity, and Excellency of circumſpect Walking; it is not fooliſh, unadviſed, and unaccountable Walking; but it is ſuch a Walking as the Wiſdom of God recommends to us, and ſuch as beſpeaks us truly and really wiſe; ſuch as walk looſely, walk fooliſhly; circumſpect Walking, is wiſe Walking; for it is to be wiſe for ourſelves, and wiſe as to our beſt and true Intereſt; it is to be wiſe for Time, and to Eternity, wiſe both for this, and the future World.

Q. *What other Duty does he exhort them to put in Practice?*

A. To *redeem the Time.* This cannot be done in a natural or literal Senſe; Time once paſt is irrecoverably loſt; but in a moral Senſe, Time may be ſaid to be redeem'd, when our Diligence to improve it is doubled when we do much Work in a little Time; to redeem Time, ſuppoſes a right Uſe and Knowledge of the End of Time, and an high eſteem of its Worth and Excellency, and Reſolution to reſcue it out of the Hands of thoſe that would devour it. Idleneſs, Exceſs of Sleep, inordinate adorning of the Body, immoderate Recreations, vain Company, an Exceſs of worldly Buſineſs, all theſe are Robbers of our Time.

The Perſons more eſpecially concern'd to redeem Time, are the Young; ſuch as have idly waſted a great Part of their Time; the Ignorant and Graceleſs; the Weak and Aged, who have but a few Sands in their Glaſs; thoſe that are recover'd from Sickneſs; and ſuch as through Poverty, Reſtraint, or Service, are ſcanted of their Time, ſhould wiſely redeem, and induſtriouſly improve their Time for God and their Souls; becauſe upon this Moment depends Eternity, and according to our preſent Choice will be our Eternal Lot.

Q. *But what Reaſon does he aſſign for our redeeming the Time?*

A. Becauſe the Days are evil; full of Sin, by the ſcandalous Lives of Profeſſors; full of Error, by the Subtilty of heretical Seducers; full of Affliction and Miſery from ſharp Perſecutions; when Days are moſt evil, ſinful or calamitous, then ought a *Chriſtian* to improve his Time well and wiſely, for God and his Soul.

Since then the Times are ſo perillous, and your Opportunities of doing Good, ſo uncertain, be wiſe, underſtand what are the Duties of your Place and Station, and know how to manage yourſelves in every Relation, with reſpect to the Duties, Dangers, Snares, and Temptations which may aſſail you, and this according to the Will of God reveal'd in his Word.

Q. *Why does he particularly caution them againſt Drunkenneſs, ver.* 18?

A. Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs were Sins which the *Epheſians* and unconverted Pagans were generally guilty of; St. *Paul* therefore cautions theſe new Converts againſt their old Sin, which provokes Men to inſolent and outragious Practices, as the next Words, *wherein is Exceſs*, intimate. The Original Word may be render'd Lewdneſs and Luſt; to denote, that when Perſons are inflam'd with Wine, they are liable to all manner of exceſſive Wickedneſs, and particularly to the Sin of Uncleanneſs.

But be filled with the Spirit. Let no *Chriſtian* allow himſelf in ſinful Exceſſes; but let his Deſires and Endeavours be carried out after the Grace and Spirit of God, let him be fill'd therewith; for that Fulneſs will keep the Soul holy, the Body chaſte, and render the *Chriſtian* fit for the Service of God on Earth, and meet for the Fruition and Enjoyment of God in Heaven.

Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs commonly attended the Solemnities of the Heathen Gods; their *Bacchanalia*, or Feaſts dedicated to *Bacchus*, were uſually concluded with exceſſive Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs. In theſe drunken Feaſts they had their drunken Hymns, which they ſung to their drunken Deity, in Praiſe of him they call'd the God of Wine: In Oppoſition to theſe drunken impure Songs, the Apoſtle exhorts the *Chriſtian Epheſians* to ſing the Pſalms of *David*, or the Hymns compoſed by ſpiritual Men, ſuch as *Zacharias* and *Simeon*, or by the Inſpiration of the Holy Spirit, which in thoſe Times inſpir'd Perſons both to pray and ſing in their Aſſemblies, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 15. ſinging theſe with the Mouth, and alſo *making Melody in your Hearts to the Lord.*

Q. *Pray explain the Apoſtle's Directions in the 20th Verſe,* Giving Thanks always for all Things, unto God and the Father, in the Name of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*?

A. Giving Thanks always; that is, at leaſt every Day, and upon every ſolemn Occaſion, keeping the Heart always in a praiſing, as well as a praying Frame.

For all Things; that is, for all Providences, whether proſperous or averſe; for Sickneſs as well as Health, God intending our Good by both; for all Mercies, for ſparing, prevailing, recovering Mercy, for common Benefits, for peculiar and diſtinguiſhing Favours, for Mercies receiv'd and expected, for what we have both in Hand and Hope.

Unto God and the Father, to God our Creator, to God as the Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and our Faith in him.

In the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; as all ſpiritual Addreſſes, both of Praiſe and Thankſgiving, muſt be offer'd up to God, ſince their Acceptance with God, is only to be expected by, or through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of Ver.* 21. Submitting yourſelves one to another in the Fear of God?

A. That is, let there be a mutual Condeſcenſion to each other, ſtooping to the meaneſt Offices of Love and Kindneſs one towards another, and this, *in the Fear of God*; that is, either in Obedience to the Command of God, which enjoins this Submiſſion; or elſe, by making the Fear of God the Rule and Meaſure of our Submiſſion one to another; for we are by no Means bound to ſubmit ourſelves, in order to pleaſe our Neighbour, farther than is conſiſtent with that Subjection, and Obedience we owe to God.

Q. *In deſcribing the reciprocal Duties between the Huſband and Wife, why does he mention that of the Wife firſt?*

A. Probably becauſe her Duty of entire Subjection is the moſt difficult Duty, and that being conſcientiouſly diſcharged, is a compelling Motive to the Huſband to do his Duty in like manner. This Submiſſion ſuppoſes the Wife's due Eſteem of, and her affectionate Love to her Huſband, as the Ground of her Submiſſion.

The Command is univerſal, it is to all Wives; no Honour, Superiority, or antecedent Dignity in the Wife, no perſonal, no moral Infirmity, no Error in Religion can diſcharge from the Obligation; for the Law of Nature, the Ordinance of God, and her own voluntary Covenant and Promiſe in Marriage, oblige her to it.

Q. *The Subjection muſt be*, as unto the Lord, *Ver.* 22. *Pray how is that?*

A. That is, in Obedience to the Command of the Lord, who has given the Huſband Power over the Wife, and requires, and will reward her Obedience to him; or elſe, *as unto the Lord*, points out a Similitude, a Likeneſs, and Reſemblance in the Wife's Subjection to the Huſband, with that which they owe to *Chriſt* the Lord; that is, it muſt not be feign'd, but ſincere and willing, from a Complacency, taken in doing this Duty.

As unto the Lord, may alſo ſignify, in all lawful Things; the Wife is not to obey the Husband in any Command contrary to that ſubmiſſive Obedience, ſhe owes to *Chriſt*, her ſupreme Lord.

For the Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Chriſt *is the Head of the Church*, &c. that is, the Wife ought to ſubmit herſelf to her Husband, becauſe, 1. He is her Head; and, 2. He therein reſembles *Chriſt*'s Headſhip over the Church.

Q. *What is implied in the Metaphor of an Head, applied to a Husband.*

A. It denotes both the Dignity and Duty of the Husband, his Eminency by reaſon of his Sex; his Authority to govern and direct; and it points out his Duty, as well as his Dignity; as the Head is the Seat of Wiſdom and Knowledge, ſo Husbands ſhould be endow'd with greater Meaſures of Knowledge and Prudence, to guide and govern in the Place God has ſet them.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in the Apoſtle's Directions to Wives?*

A. Obſerve, that God will have ſome Reſemblance of *Chriſt*'s Authority over the Church, held forth in the Husband's Authority over the Wife. Is *Chriſt* an Head of Dominion and Direction alſo to his Church? So ſhould the Husband be to the Wife. Doth *Chriſt* exerciſe Dominion over the Church, not rigidly or tyrannically, but with Meekneſs and Gentleneſs? So ſhould the Husband rule. Is *Chriſt* the Saviour of the Body meritoriouſly? So ſhould the Husband be miniſterially, to defend the Wife from Injuries, to ſupply her Neceſſities, and to improve his whole Power and Authority over her for her Good.

Again; as the Church is ſubject, ſo let the Wife be ſubject; that is, willingly, cheerfully, dutifully, delightfully, univerſally; nothing is excepted out of the Wife's Subjection to her Husband, but that which is contrary to her Duty to him who commands the Subjection.

Q. *How are Husbands to love their Wives?*

A. With a ſpecial, peculiar, conjugal Love, ſuch as no other muſt ſhare in.

The Duty of Love is very comprehenſive; it includes an affectionate Regard to her, a tender Care over her, Co-habitation with her, Contentment and Satisfaction in her alone, a patient bearing with her Weakneſſes, a prudential hiding her Infirmities, a providing a Supply of her Wants ſuitable to her Station, a Readineſs to inſtruct or direct her, a Willingneſs to pray for her, and with her; where true conjugal Love is found, theſe Duties included will be performed.

Even as Chriſt *alſo loved the Church*; that is, with an active and operative, a real and ſincere an entire and undivided, a laſting and conſtant Love, notwithſtanding all his Church's Weakneſſes and Infirmities. Such ought to be every Husband's Love to his Wife.

That he might ſanctify and cleanſe, and preſent her to himſelf a glorious Church, without Spot or Blemiſh. The Church before *Chriſt* gave himſelf for her, was in a polluted and impure Condition, from which *Chriſt* took care to cleanſe and purify her with *the waſhing of Water by the Word*; the Word and Sacraments are the inſtrumental Means in the Bond of *Chriſt*, by which he applies the Virtue and Efficacy of his Death for the ſanctifying and cleanſing of his Church and Children.

Q. *In what Senſe is the Church ſaid to be* without Spot or Wrinkle?

A. The Blood of *Chriſt* has already perfectly juſtified and thoroughly cleanſed Sinners from Sin's Guilt; e'er long the Spirit of *Chriſt* will perfectly cleanſe them from all Sin's Filth. How pure and ſpotleſs, how perfect and beautiful will the Church come out of *Chriſt*'s Hands, and be preſent- to the Father, at the great Day, in the ſhining Beauty of perfect Holineſs.

Q. *The Apoſtle, to enforce the Duty of Love from the Husband to the Wife, argues from their being* one Fleſh: *How are they ſo?*

A. Not in a natural but a relative Senſe; and accordingly a Man ſhould ſo love his Wife as himſelf, that is, ſuperlatively, cordially, tenderly, induſtriouſly, perſeveringly; in Imitation likewiſe of *Chriſt*'s Example, who nouriſhes and cheriſhes his Church, as being *Fleſh of his own Fleſh, and Bone of his own Bone*; that is, as near to one another by a myſtical and ſpiritual Union, as *Adam* and *Eve* were by a natural Union.

A farther Argument to excite the Husband to love his Wife, is taken fnom the Law of Marriage, which makes them two one Fleſh in a civil Senſe: Therefore the Man ſhould leave Father and Mother, and cleave unto his Wife; not that their Obligation to their Parents ceaſe, or that natural Affection ſhould be caſt off; but he ſhews that there is a nearer Union betwixt Husband and Wife, than betwixt Parents and Children, and that the Bonds of matrimonial Love are ſtronger than that of Nature.

Their being *one Fleſh* implies a moſt ſtrict Union, and intimate Communion, one Intereſt, common Good, common Friends, as if they were but one Perſon.

The matrimonial Union repreſents the myſtical Union betwixt *Chriſt* and his Church; all that *Chriſt* is, and has is his Saints, by Communication to them, or Improvement for them: Well therefore might the Apoſtle ſay; *This is a great myſtery.*

CHAP. VI.

The reciprocal Duties between Father and Children; Servants and Maſters. Our Life a Warfare. The complete Armour of a Chriſtian. *Supplication for Saints required, as alſo for himſelf in the Works of the Goſpel.* Tychicus *commended. His Apoſtolical Benediction.*

Q. HOW *does the Apoſtle begin this Chapter?*

A. In the Beginning of this Chapter, Children are directed to the imporrant Duty of Obedience and Honour; *Children obey*; *honour your Father and Mother.* This Duty implies inward Reverence, and an awful Eſtimation of their Perſons, to honour them in Heart, Speech, and Behaviour; it implies alſo an outward Obſervance a pious Regard to their Inſtructions, executing all their Commands which are not ſinful, depending on their Counſels, and following their good Examples, owning, with Thankfulneſs, their paternal Care and Concern for them, and concealing what Frailties and Infirmities they ſee in them.

Both Father and Mother are the Objects of this Duty; and as the Mother, in old Age, is liable to be deſpiſed, God has particularly guarded about her, by his poſitive and expreſs Command, to free her for Contempt, *Proverbs* xxiii. 22. *Hearken to thy Father which begat thee, and deſpiſe not thy Mother when ſhe is old.*

Q. *On what Principle is this Obedience grounded?*

A. The noble Principle from whence this Obedience ought to flow, is from the Fear of God; *Obey them in the Lord*; that is, in Obedience to his Command, and in all Things agreeable to his Will, fearing his Diſpleaſure in caſe of Diſobedience; let not your Obedience be barely natural and prudential, but *Chriſtian* and religious.

Q. *What Arguments does he uſe to excite them to this Duty?*

A. To excite them to this Duty, the Apoſtle argues with them the Equity of it, *This is Right*; that is, the Law of God and Nature requires it.

Another Motive to enforce this Duty, is, becauſe it is the firſt Commandment of the ſecond Table, which has a particular Promiſe annexed to it expreſsly. Every Commandment, indeed, hath both a Promiſe and a Threatning implied in it, and annexed to it; but this is the firſt Commandment with a Promiſe expreſſed, and that is a Promiſe of long Life, *That thy Days may be long*; and this Promiſe is always fulfilled, either in Kind or Equivalency, either by enjoying a long Life on Earth, or a better Life in Heaven.

Q. *What is the next Duty recommended?*

A. The Apoſtle, in the next Place, lays down the neceſſary Duty of both Parents to their Children; *Provoke not your Children to Wrath*; that is, Be not too ſevere towards them, abuſe not your parental Power over them, provoke them not, nor imbitter their Spirits againſt you by denying what is convenient for them, by inveighing with bitter Words againſt them, by unjuſt, unſeaſonable, or immoderate Correction of them. To provoke any to Sin, eſpecially young ones, particularly our Children, renders us guilty of all that Sin which they commit through our Provocation.

Bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; that is, Give them good Inſtruction, with-hold not early Correction, ſet before them good Examples, begin with them betimes, and ſuffer not the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, to beſpeak them for their Service, before you engage them for God's; and remember there is a Tie of Nature, of Intereſt, and Religion, which Parents are under thus to do.

Q. *How does he deſcribe the Duty of Servants?*

A The general Duty incumbent on Servants, is; that of Obedience *to their Maſters, according to the Fleſh*; that is, in temporal Things only; Obey your earthly Maſters in Things pertaining to the World, leaving the Soul and Conſcience to God only, who is the ſovereign Lord of it. *Chriſtian* Liberty is not inconſiſtent with civil Subjection; ſuch as are God's Freemen, may be Servants to, though not of Men; and, as Servants, Obedience is their Duty, in all lawful Things.

The Service muſt be with *Fear and Trembling*; that is, with Fear of diſpleaſing them; yet they muſt not act barely from Fear, but out of Love, both to God and their Maſter.

Iu Singleneſs of Heart, in great Simplicity and Sincerity of Spirit, without Guile, Hypocriſy, and Diſſimulation.

They muſt eye their great Maſter in Heaven, in all their Services to their Maſters here upon Earth, *not with Eye-ſervice*. They muſt have an Eye to the Preſence, the Glory, the Command, and the Aſſiſtance of their great Maſter in Heaven.

This Service muſt be performed with *Good-will*; that is, with Chearfulneſs and Delight, not grudgingly, unpleaſantly, or for fear of Puniſhment only; eyeing the Lord *Chriſt* in all their Service for Man.

The Reward propounded as an Encouragement to poor Servants, in their Obedience to their Maſters, is, the Aſſurance of a Reward from God, whatever Diſappointment they meet with from Men, *knowing that whatever a Man* doth out of Obedience to the Lord, a Reward of the ſame ſhall he receive, whether he be a poor Bond-ſervant, or a Freeman and Maſter.

Q. *But what is the Duty of a Maſter to his Servant?*

A. The Apoſtle alſo directs the Maſter in his Duty to his Servant; namely, *to do the ſame Things*; not the ſame Things for Kind, but for the Manner of doing them; that is, in Obedience to the ſame Command of God, with the ſame Eye to his Glory, with the ſame Singleneſs of Heart, with the ſame Love and Good-will. It ought to be as much the Care of Maſters, though in ever ſo exalted a Rank and Station, to diſcharge their Duty ſincerely, chearfully, with Good-will, eyeing their great Maſter in Heaven, as it concerns the pooreſt Servant to obey them after the ſame Manner.

Forbear Threatnings; that is, let not them exerciſe their Authority over them imperiouſly, and with Rigour, but mildly and with Gentleneſs; no tyrannically, but with Moderation and Temper. Men in Place and Power are apt to forget there is one above them, to whom they themſelves muſt be accountable; *Forbearing Threatnings*; *knowing that your Maſter alſo is in Heaven*, with whom there is *no reſpect of Perſons.*

Q. *After the Apoſtle has recommended theſe relative Duties, he proceeds to deſcribe the* Cnriſtian *Warfare: But in what Manner?*

A. In the 10th Verſe, the Apoſtle calls us forth to the *Chriſtian* Warfare, and gives the firſt Word of Encouragement to Battle; *Be Strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.* A *Chriſtian*, above all Men, needs Reſolution, and a daring Courage; if fearful, he is unfit to go into the Field, and to encounter Danger. Cowards win neither Earth nor Heaven.

But where lies a *Chriſtian*'s Strength? Verily, in the Lord, and not in himſelf; the Strength of the whole Hoſt of Saints lies in the Lord of Hoſts; and accordingly it ought to be the *Chriſtian*'s great Care, in all Difficulties and great Dangers, to ſtrengthen his Faith in the almighty Power of God.

Put on the whole Armour of God; that is, be colathed with the Graces hereafter mentioned in this Chapter; which Graces are called the *Armour of God*, becauſe they are of his Appointment and Inſtitution; and this Armour muſt be put on; that is, our Grace kept in continual Exerciſe; it is not ſufficient to have Grace in the Habit and Principle, but it is Grace in the Habit and Exerciſe that muſt conquer ſpiritual Enemies.

That ye may be able to ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil; intimating, that the Devil is one chief Enemy we have to combat with in the *Chriſtian* Warfare, and that he is a ſubtil politick Enemy; but with all his Wits and Wiles he ſhall never finally vanquiſh (though he may, in a particular Battle, overcome) a Soul cloathed with ſpiritual Armour; nay, he that hath this Armour of God on, ſhall certainly vanquiſh and overcome him.

Q. *The Apoſtle next deſcribes the Combat*; We wreſtle. *A* Chriſtian'*s Life is a perpetual Warfare, a continual Wreſtling: But with What? and with Whom?*

A. Not with Fleſh and Blood; that is, not only and chiefly with Fleſh and Blood, with human Enemies, but we muſt grapple and contend with angelical Powers, with Devils, who are Principalities and Powers, *&c.* intimating, that the Devil is a mighty Prince; he rules in this World, not in the other; the higheſt the Devil can go, is, the Air; Heaven fears him not; and he is *a Ruler of the Darkneſs of this World*; that is, in ſuch Sinners as labour under the Darkneſs of Sin and and Ignorance.

Spiritual Wickedneſs; that is, wicked Spirits; intimating, that the Devils are Spirits extremely wicked; and that they chiefly annoy *Chriſtians* with, and provoke them to ſpiritual Wickedneſſes.

In high Places; that is, in the Air, the Place of their Reſidence, and of which Satan is called the Prince.

Note, how plainly *Chriſt*, our Captain, deals with his Soldiers, and the Difference betwixt his Dealings with his Followers, and Satan with his; Satan dares not let Sinners know who that God is againſt whom they fight; but *Chriſt* is not afraid to ſhew his Saints their Enemy in all his Strength and Power; well he might, becauſe the Weakneſſes of God are ſtronger than the Powers of Hell.

Take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand in the evil Day. The ſanctifying Graces of God's Holy Spirit, are this Armour; if theſe are wanting, common Gifts, tho' ever ſo gay and glorious, will never hold out to fight the laſt Battle, but fall into the Enemy's Hand, and be taken Captive by him, at his Will.

Q. *Proceed to his Deſcription of this Armour of God?*

A. Here is the Soldier's Girdle, his Breaſt-Plate, his Shoe, his Shield, his Helmet, and his Sword, all deſcribed; his offenſive and defenſive Weapons. Now to particular Graces the Apoſtle aſſigns a Uſe and Excellency anſwerable to theſe Pieces of Armour; but obſerve, that although there are Pieces of Armour for all other Parts of the Body, here is none aſſigned for the Back, nor Back-Parts, becauſe there muſt be no running away, no Hope of eſcaping by Flight; we muſt appear in the Field armed with the ſeveral Pieces of Armour here recommended.

Q. *Pray deſcribe and explain diſtinctly the ſeveral Pieces of Armour here mentioned?*

A. The firſt is the Girdle of Truth, *Having your Loins girt about with Truth*; that is, Sincerity of Heart. Doth the Girdle, or Belt, adorn the Soldier? So does Sincerity a *Chriſtian.* Does the Girdle ſtrengthen the Soldier's Loins? So does Sincerity the Soul, and every Grace in it; it is ſincere Faith that is ſtrong, ſincere Love that is mighty.

The Breaſt-Plate of Righteouſneſs; by which underſtand the Love and Practice of univerſal Holineſs. As the Breaſt-Plate defends the principal Parts of the Body, where the Heart and other Vitals are couched together; thus Holineſs preſerves the Conſcience, the principal Part of a *Chriſtian*, from the Wounds and Harms of Sin, which is the Weapon Satan uſes to ſtab the Conſcience with.

The third Piece of *Chriſtian* Armour is, the *ſpiritual Shoe*, fitted to the Soldier's Foot, and worn ſo long as he keeps the Field againſt Sin and Satan; the Soldier's Way is ſometimes full of ſharp Stones, and ſometimes ſtrewed by the Enemy with ſharp Iron Pikes ſtruck into the Ground, the Soldier will ſoon be wounded, or founder'd, if not well ſhod; therefore the Direction here is, *Let your Feet be ſhod with the Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace*; that is, maintaining a holy Readineſs of Spirit, and a reſolute Frame of Heart, to undergo any Suffering, any Hardſhip in your *Chriſtian* Warfare; which Frame of Spirit being wrought in us by the Doctrine of the Goſpel, is therefore called the *Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace.*

The fourth Piece of Armour is, the *Shield of Faith*; this is that Grace by which we believe the Truth of God's Word in general, and depend on *Chriſt* in particular, as crucified, for Pardon and Life, and this upon the Warrant of the Promiſe.

Q. *But why is Faith compared to a Shield?*

A. Becauſe as a Shield defends the whole Body, ſo Faith defends the whole Man; the Underſtanding from Error, the Conſcience from Searedneſs, the Will from Rebellion, againſt the Will and Command of God: And as the Shield defends the whole Armour, as well as the whole Body; ſo Faith is our Armour upon Armour, a Grace that preſerves all other Graces whatſoever.

Q. *Pray proceed to the other Pieces of the* Chriſtian *Armour?*

A. The fifth Piece of Armour is, *the Helmet of Salvation*, by which the Grace of Hope is underſtood, which has for its Object Salvation, called therefore the Hope of Salvation; Salvation is the ultimate and comprehenſive Object of the *Chriſtian*'s Expectation; and it is compared to an Helmet, becauſe as the Helmet defends the Head, ſo does the Hope of Salvation defend the Soul; it keeps the Head above Water, and makes the *Chriſtian* bold and brave. Hope puts the *Chriſtian* upon noble Service, keeps him patient under the greateſt Sufferings, and enables the Soul to wait long for the Performance of divine Promiſes.

The ſixth Piece of ſpiritual Armour, is the *Sword.* The former were Defenſive, this is both an offenſive and defenſive Weapon, ſuch is the Word of God, by which the *Chriſtian* defends himſelf, and offends his Enemies.

Q. *But why is it called the* Sword of the Spirit?

A. Becauſe the Spirit was both the Author and Interpreter of it; it is the Spirit which gives the Word its Efficacy and Power in the Soul; the Word of God is the Sword by which the Spirit of God enables his Saints to overcome and vanquiſh all their Enemies.

Q. *What is the laſt Piece of the* Chriſtian'*s Armour?*

A.

A. The laſt Piece of ſpiritual Armour mentioned, is *Prayer, praying always with all Prayer,* &c. Here note the Time for Prayer, *always*; the Sorts and Kinds of Prayer, *with all Prayer*; the inward Principle from whence Prayer flows, *is the Spirit*; the Guard ſet about this Duty, *watching thereunto*; the Conſtancy of it, *with all Perſeverance*; the Comprehenſiveneſs of this Duty, *for all Saints.*

To make known the Myſtery of the Goſpel. The Work of a Miniſter is to make known the Goſpel-Myſtery, to aſſert the Truth of it, and reprove Sin, with a wiſe and prudent, a meek and humble, an active and zealous Boldneſs.

For which I am an Ambaſſador in Bonds; his Zeal for God, and his Truth, had confined him to a Priſon; he preached himſelf into a Goal; well therefore might they pray for him who had loſt his Liberty, and ſoon after was to loſe his Life for them. No Prayers can be too much to ſtrengthen the Hands and encourage the Hearts of ſuch as ſuffer Tribulation and Perſecution for the ſake of *Chriſt.*

Q. *How does the Apoſtle farther expreſs his tender and affectionate Concern for theſe* Epheſians?

A. He not only wrote, but ſent to them; tho' he had but few Attendants, he ſends one of his moſt beloved Friends to them, chuſing rather himſelf to want an Attendant, than that they want a Comforter.

St. *Paul* ſends to them *Tychicus, a faithful Miniſter in the Lord*; that is, in the Work of the Lord, that he might acquaint them with the State and Condition of his Affairs, and that he might comfort their Hearts. 1. By making known to them the true Cauſe of his Sufferings. St. *Paul*'s Enemies had laid heavy Things to his Charge; theſe might have reach'd *Epheſus*; therefore to ſet him right in the Opinion of the Churches, he ſends *Tychicus* to inform them of the Cauſe of his Impriſonment. 2. To keep them from Diſcouragement, and being immoderately dejected at the Report of his Sufferings. 3. To comfort their Hearts with that holy Joy and Chearfulneſs of Spirit which he poſſeſs'd in and under all his Sufferings. 4. Might not St. *Paul* ſend to the Church of *Epheſus*, to engage the Churches to pray with Earneſtneſs for himſelf, as well as to comfort them? St. *Paul* was in Priſon, and a Priſon has its Temptation as well as a Palace; when Man acts the Perſecutor, the Devil forgets not to be a Tempter; ſometimes he will attempt to ſoften them with Fears, at other Times to weaken their Courage, by the Tears and Entreaties of their Friends; ſometimes he imbitters a ſuffering Saint's Spirit againſt his Perſecutors, and ſo ſours him with the Leaven of Malice and Wrath. It is no eaſy Matter to receive Evil, and yet wiſh none to him from whoſe Hands we received it; to reſerve Love for him that ſhews us his Hatred, is a glorious, but a difficult Work.

But if all this fails, the Devil hopes to blow him up with Pride, and a high Conceit of himſelf, who dare ſuffer, when others ſhrink, and is ready to lay down his Head, when others ſeek to ſave themſelves in a whole Skin.

Pride is a Salamander that can live in the very Flames of Martyrdom; if any Saint need the Humility of many Saints, it is he that is called to ſuffer for *Chriſt.* St. *Paul* was very ſenſible of this, and that a ſuffering Condition is full of Temptation; that a *Chriſtian*'s Strength to carry him through it, is not in his own keeping; God muſt help, or the ſtouteſt Champion will ſhrink. He alſo knew, that Prayer is the beſt Means to procure that Help, and accordingly St. *Paul* here ſends *Tychicus* to *Epheſus*, to engage the auxiliary Forces of the Saints Prayers on Earth, and the Power of Heaven, that he might glorify God in a ſuffering Hour.

Q. *In what Manner does he expreſs his Wiſhes for their Welfare?*

A. Our Apoſtle cloſes this excellent Epiſtle with his fervent and affectionate Wiſhes and Prayers for them. He wiſhes the Brethren, the converted *Chriſtians* in and about *Epheſus*, Peace; Peace with God, Peace with Conſcience, Peace eſpecially one with another, and all Manner of outward Proſperity, comprehended in the word Peace; alſo mutual Love amongſt themſelves; and the Grace of Faith, the Fountain of the former; all which he wiſhes from God the Father, including the Holy Ghoſt, and from *Jeſus Chriſt* the Mediator, through the Virtue of whoſe Merit and Interceſſion all ſaving Benefits are conveyed unto Believers.

The Bleſſings prayed for, are Grace and Peace; Peace, in the former Verſe, comprehending all temporal Felicity; and Grace, in this, comprehending the ſpecial Favour and loving Kindneſs of God; this he prays may be the Portion of all thoſe that love our Lord s *Jeſus Chriſt* in Sincerity, or Incorruption, as the Word ſignifies; that is, not for Time only, but for Eternity; not in Shew and Appearance only, but in Reality. Sincere Love to our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; is a ſure Character and undoubted mark of ſuch a Perſon as has found Grace in God's Sight, and is very high in the divine Favour. *Grace be with all them that love our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *in Sincerity:* He doth not ſay with a Seraphim's, but a ſincere Love.

A. If *Chriſt* be enthroned in thy Heart as the chief Commander; if he be eſteemed by thee as thy chiefeſt Excellency, and thy choiceſt Treaſure; if he be thy chiefeſt Refuge, unto which thou flieſt in all Dangers and Diſtreſſes; thou mayeſt conclude, thy ſupreme Love is placed upon him; that thou loveſt him in Sincerity: and the more thou loveſt him, the more lovely wilt thou be unto him, and the more will thy Heart be let out in Deſires after him, and in fervent Longings for the full Fruition and final Enjoyment of him; for thoſe whom we love we long to be with.

Come then, Lord! down to me,
Or take me up to thee.

Q. *What is meant by the Words* High Places, *Ver.* 11.

A. Dr. *Hammond* explains it thus: What the *Greek* Word here ſignifies may ſoon be diſcerned, firſt, by remembring that the ſeveral Regions of the Air, and all above the Globe of the Earth, is in the *Hebrew*, and the *Greek* of theſe Books, ſtiled *Heavens*; and ſo the *Greek* Word, here tranſlated *High Places, will ſignify thoſe Places, the ſeveral Regions of the Air.*

Again; the *Syriack* reading for *ſpiritual Parts*, *Spirits*, and the Phraſe *Spirits of Wickedneſs*, ſignifying wicked Spirits, and thoſe oft uſed to denote Devils, *the Spirits of Wickedneſs, in heavenly Places*, will be no more than the Powers of the Air under their Prince; that is, Devils under *Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*. Theſe are here diſtinguiſhed from *the worldly Rulers of the Darkneſs of this Age*. Noting ſeveral Sorts of Devils, either in reſpect of their Manſions, ſaith *Ignatius*, *aerial, or earthly Spirits*; or elſe of the Inclinations which they ſuggeſt. The earthly Devils ſuggeſting groſſer carnal Appetites, Filthineſs of the Fleſh, &c. the Aerial, Pride, Vain-Glory, Malice, &c. the Filthineſs of the Spirit. And the *Gnoſtick Hereticks*, by the Power of Sorcery, ſeducing Men to both Sorts of theſe Filthineſſes, all fleſhly abominable Luſts, and all Rancour and Malice againſt the Orthodox *Chriſtians*; it is hereby truly ſaid, that they were to contend with both Sorts of evil Spirits, Terreſtrial and Aerial; the Terreſtrial that ruled among the *Heathen* dark Parts of the Age, and the Aerial, wicked Spirits.

Q. *In the 15th Verſe, the Apoſtle exhorts them to have their* Feet *ſhod* with the Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace: *Pray what does the Word* ſhod *ſignify?*

A. The Uſe of Shoes, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, in the Celebration of the Paſſover, as hath been formerly obſerved, was this: The *Iſraelites* were commanded, at their eating of it, that they might be ready for their Journey, to have each of them their *Shoes on their Feet*; ſo when the Apoſtles, *Mark* vi. 8. were commanded to be *ſhod with Sandals*, the Meaning is, that they ſhould be ready to take their Journey. So in *Plautus*, *calceati dentes*, ſhod Teeth; that is, ready to devour the Feaſt. So the *Egyptian* Virgins were not permitted to wear Shoes; that is, to be ready to go Abroad. All this belongs to the Explication of this Phraſe; as it is joined with, *in Readineſs*, denoting the Preparation or Readineſs for the Journey, the whole *Chriſtian* Courſe, for which the Doctrine of Peace and Charity does provide and furniſh them. But then this is not all, for the Shoes are here mentioned among the Armour (and ſo *Strabo*, ſpeaking of the *Cretan* Youths, ſaith of them, that they did uſe military Attire and Shoes) and ſo they really were, and were ordinarily made of Braſs. A Mention we have of them in the Story of *Goliah*, *his Greaves of Braſs*; and ſo among the *Græcians* they were ſo ordinary, that they were known in *Homer* by the Title of *the Brazen-ſhoed* Græcians, ſaith *Phavorinus*, *who had Greaves of Braſs, or Iron*, as alſo of Silver; in *Virgil*, *They cover their Boots with Silver*. The Uſe of theſe was to defend them againſt the Caltrops, which were wont to be thrown in the Fields, or Ways, to ſtop their Marches, ſharp Stakes ſticking up to wound or gall their Feet, and make them that had fallen upon them unable to go afterward. This Uſe then, of the Shoes in marching, is here referred to, and *the Goſpel of Peace*, the Obligation to Peace and Charity (that lies upon *Chriſtians*, by the Goſpel, and which is here ſet before Faith and Hope of Salvation) is the Furniture or Preparation for the Feet, ſupplies the Place of thoſe Greaves, fits us for our *Chriſtian* Courſe, which, beyond all Things, conſiſts in preſerving of Peace with all, and eſpecially then, in Oppoſition to thoſe Hereticks that broke the Unity of the Church, and breathed out nothing but Malice and Perſecution againſt all the orthodox *Chriſtians*, and laboured all they could to draw others to partake with them.

Q. *What are the particular Hereſies which the Apoſtle fortifies the* Epheſians *againſt in this Epiſtle?*

A. In this *Epiſtle* (as afterwards in *Chriſt's Epiſtle* to them, *Rev.* 2.) the Doctrines, but eſpecially the Practices of the *Gnoſticks*, are inveighed againſt; which, if permitted, would ſoon bring them all back to *Heatheniſm* again. In which Reſpect it is, he labours ſo magnificently to ſet out the Mercies of God, in receiving the *Gentiles* to the Faith, and their glorious Advantages thereby; which therefore they are not to betray, or loſe, for all the flattering Shews of either the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies, or the *Gentile* Philoſophy, of which the *Gnoſticks* Divinity was compounded, and their Lives filled with all Villany.

The Epiſtle of Paul the Apoſtle,

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS.

St. Paul *being warned by the Holy Ghoſt to go into* Macedonia *and preach the Goſpel,* Acts xvi. *He firſt plants a Church at* Philippi, *a principal City in* Macedonia, *ſo called from* Philip, *King of* Macedonia, *who beautified and enlarged it.*

But St. Paul's *Charge being to preach the Goſpel to all the* Gentiles, *he travels from Place to Place till he came to* Rome, *where he was in Bonds, and conſequently in Neceſſity and Straits; which the* Philippians *underſtanding, they ſent* Epaphroditus, *their Biſhop or Chief Miniſter to him, with a liberal Contribution, to ſupply his Wants: By whom St.* Paul *ſends to them this affectionate Letter, partly to teſtify his Thankfulneſs for the Relief received from them in the Faith, to prevent their being offended at his Sufferings for the Goſpel, to encourage them to walk worthy of their Profeſſion, to warn them againſt Seducers and Judaizing Teachers, and to quicken them to divers Chriſtian Duties. He concludes his Epiſtle with particular Salutations, and an Apoſtolical Benediction.*

Chap. I.

The uſual Salutation and Thankſgiving for their Communion in the Goſpel, his Confidence in, Love to them, and daily Prayer for their Increaſe in Grace. His ſuffering for the Goſpel, and their Fruit Some preached Chriſt *out of Envy; yet he hoped that even this would turn to the magnifying of* Chriſt; *ſhews how ready he was to glorify* Chriſt, *either by his Life or Death. He exhorts them to Unity, Courage, and Patience in Tribulation, according to his Example.*

Q. WHAT *is chiefly obſervable in St.* Paul's *Salutation to the* Philippians?

A. St. *Paul* joins *Timotheus* in his Salutation to the *Philippians*, becauſe he was his Companion and Fellow-Labourer, and had aſſiſted in inſtructing them, and was much valued and eſteemed by them.

Here note St. *Paul*'s Modeſty; he does not ſtile himſelf an Apoſtle, but the Servant of *Jeſus Chriſt*. In his other Epiſtles, which he wrote alone, he ſtiles himſelf an Apoſtle; but here he ſets himſelf on a Level with *Timothy*, Paul *and* Timotheus *the Servants of* Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *What do you remark upon the Superſcription to this Epiſtle?*

A. The Superſcription is, *To all the Saints, &c.* He calls them ſo, becauſe they were all holy by viſible Profeſſion, and many of them, no doubt, by real Sanctification, being inherently, as well as externally holy.

Q. *But why Saints in Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. Becauſe as it is neceſſary to make a Man internally holy, that he be in *Chriſt Jeſus* by real Implantation, ſo to denominate a Man externally and federally holy, requires a viſible Profeſſion, and an external Union with *Chriſt*, *John* xv. 2.

Q. *To whom is this Epiſtle more eſpecially directed?*

A. In particular this Epiſtle is directed to the *Biſhops and Deacons*; they were both the Church's Overſeers; the Biſhops, to overſee and inſpect the Lives and Manners of Perſons; the Deacons, to ſerve the Church in taking care of the Poor.

Q. *What do you obſerve on his Benediction in the 2d Verſe?*

A. Grace from God the Father, or, Grace from God as Father; intimating that God beſtows not his Grace as a Creator, but as a Father, as a Father in *Chriſt*.

And Peace from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; he being the Purchaſer of our Peace; he, upon *whom was laid the Chaſtiſement of our Sins*, in whom and for whoſe ſake God becomes reconciled to us, and at Peace with us.

I remember you always, and in every Prayer. It is a great Part of a Miniſter's Duty to pray for the People; not in his publick Offices only, but in his private Addreſſes alſo, and this continually. Did Miniſter and People more ſtrive together in their Prayers one for another, there would be leſs Strife and Contention between them; Miniſters muſt be their People's Remembrancers.

St. *Paul* remember'd the *Philippians* with Joy; though he was in Sadneſs himſelf in a Priſon, yet he could think of them, as a People converted by his Miniſtry, with Joy, *making Requeſt with Joy.*

Q. *What Reaſon had he for his Joy?*

A. The Ground and Occaſion for this his Joy, *for your Fellowſhip in the Goſpel* at my preaching it to you, for the real Subjection of ſome, and the profeſſed Subjection of all to the Faith of *Chriſt*, whereby you were brought into Fellowſhip with *Chriſt* and his Church; and alſo for your Continuance in the Faith and Profeſſion of the Goſpel, *from the firſt Day until now.*

A farther Cauſe of the Apoſtle's Joy on the *Philippians* behalf, was the full Aſſurance he had of their Perſeverance in Grace unto the End. God, that has begun, will perfect, that is, augment and increaſe it, till it arrive at Perfection in Glory.

Q. *Why is Grace called* a good Work?

A. Becauſe, it is the vital Principle from whence all good Works proceed; the Grace of God in the Heart, is the Root of all true Holineſs in the Life; as good Works are neceſſary to Salvation, ſo renewing Grace is neceſſary to good Works.

Q. *But what Ground had St. Paul for this Confidence, that God would perfect the Grace he had begun in them?*

A. Becauſe Grace is the Care of the whole Trinity; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt concern themſelves, both in the Production, Preſervation, and Perfection of it; the Father decrees it, the Son purchaſes it, the Spirit infuſes it; as they all concur to its Production, ſo they all co-operate and work together for the Preſervation of it.

Such Perſons, in whoſe Souls Almighty God has begun a Work of Grace, may aſſuredly expect, by the Influence of God's Care, and the Exerciſe of their Endeavours, that they ſhall perſevere in a State of Grace unto the End; *until the Day of* Chriſt, that is, the Day of Judgment.

The Apoſtle next aſſigns a Reaſon of his Confidence in the *Philippians* Perſeverance in Grace and Holineſs, namely, becauſe they were Partakers of the ſame Grace with himſelf, and were ready to ſuffer for *Chriſt*, as he was. We may be warrantably perſuaded of their Perſeverance in Grace unto the End, in whom we ſee both Readineſs of Obedience to the Goſpel, and alſo zealous and chearful Suffering for and in Defence of the Goſpel. Thus did St. *Paul* here; where obſerve, the Apoſtle accounted it a Grace and Favour from God, that he was thought worthy to ſuffer for the Goſpel, and the *Philippians* with him; *Ye are Partakers of my Grace.*

A ſecond Ground of his Confidence, was, their Reſpect to him, *I have you in my Heart*, and I find you have me in yours; you are Partakers of the Miſery of my Body; you ſuffer with me in my Sufferings, and Sympathize with me in my Sorrows; they relieved and refreſhed him in his Impriſonment which he underwent for the Sake of *Chriſt* and his Goſpel; and from hence he had a good Confidence that they would perſevere unto the End.

Q. *How does he expreſs his endeared Affection for the* Philippians?

A. In the 8th Verſe St. *Paul* appeals to God, for the Sincerity and Fervency of it, *God is my Record,* I appeal to him, *how greatly I long after you;* that is, how paſſionately and ſincerely I love you, *in the Bowels of* Jeſus Chriſt. This Expreſſion may denote both the efficient and exemplary Cauſe of his love.

The Author of this his Love to them was *Chriſt*, he was the Spring and Procurer of it; and conſequently it was no carnal or ſelfiſh Love, to ſerve his own Ends and Deſigns upon them, but truly ſpiritual.

Chriſt's Love to him was the Pattern and Example, according to which he loved them, not with common Love, but with an entire and intenſe Affection, from the Heart and moſt intimate Bowels, no Words can be more expreſſive of that fervent Love and earneſt Longing which St. *Paul* had for the Welfare of the *Philippians.*

Great is the Affection which the Miniſters of *Chriſt* bear to their beloved People, when preſent with them, they paſſionately love them; when abſent from them, they affectionately long after them; imitating, as much as they can, their Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, both in the Reality and Sincerity, and alſo in the Meaſure and Degree of endearing Affection.

Q. *The 9th Verſe contains the Apoſtle's Prayer, that* their Love may abound yet more and more in Knowledge, and in all Judgment: *Pray explain theſe Words?*

A. Love is the Root-grace from which moſt Graces ſpring; therefore he prays for the ſtrengthening of that Grace in particular, and that they may have Judgment, as well as Affection, in the Exerciſe of it; we ought to love judiciouſly, as well as affectionately. The Underſtanding and Judgment being the guiding Faculties of Man, there can be no more acceptable Holineſs in the Will, than there is Knowledge in the Underſtanding: I can hate Sin and love God, no more than I know of the Evil of Sin, and of the Perfections that are in God. The more judicious then a *Chriſtian* grows, the more his Holineſs grows; and accordingly St. *Paul's* Prayer is, that they *may grow more in Knowledge and in all Judgment.*

Q. *How do you underſtand the next Part of his Prayer in the 10th Verſe,* That ye may approve Things that are excellent?

A. That is, all ſuch Things as the Goſpel requires; implying, that the Things preſcribed in the Goſpel, are Things excellent and good for us, worthy to be preſcribed by God, and reaſonable to be practiſed by us; and that the Approbation of theſe Things, by a Steadineſs in Judgment and Practice, is every *Chriſtian's* Duty, and ought to be his conſtant Endeavour.

He prays alſo that they may not only be inoffenſive Perſons, but fruitful *Chriſtians, being filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are by* Jeſus Chriſt, *to the Glory and Praiſe of God;* that is, that they may abound in good Works undertaken in *Chriſt's* Strength, and with an Eye to God's

Glory. It is not enough that *Chriſtians* be harmleſs and inoffenſive towards others, but they muſt labour after a holy Fruitfulneſs in good Works; they muſt be *filled with all the Fruit of Righteouſneſs.*

Q. *What is the Import of what he ſays in relation to his own Sufferings?*

A. That the *Philippians* might not be ſcandalized at the Apoſtle's preſent Sufferings, he aſſures them, that the Things which happened to him, through the Malice of his Perſecutors, had fallen out rather to the Furtherance of the Goſpel, than to the Hindrance of it, as they feared.

Q. *What were thoſe particular Sufferings of his, which redounded to the ſpecial Advantage of the Goſpel?*

A. *His Bonds in* Chriſt, that is his Impriſonment for the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, were in the Palace; that is, were manifeſtly taken Notice of in *Nero's* Court, and elſewhere in the City; ſo that People enquiring into the Cauſe of his Sufferings, found that it was not for any Miſdemeanour, but that his preaching and practiſing the Doctrine of *Chriſtianity*, was the only Reaſon of them.

Another Advantage which accrued to the Church by his Bonds, was this; namely, that many Miniſters of *Chriſt*, who preached the Word of God far and near, hearing of his Conſtancy under Sufferings, were both encouraged and emboldned thereby; encouraged to ſhake off Fear, and emboldened to preach *Chriſt* with greater Reſolution.

Many of the Brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my Bonds, are much more bold to ſpeak the Word without fear. Here note, the Title given by this great Apoſtle, to the inferior Miniſters of the Goſpel: He calls them Miniſters in the Lord, putting himſelf and them in mind of their mutual and reſpective Duties, which was to live and love as Brethren; to admoniſh, exhort, and encourage one another to ſtand up in Defence of the juſt Credit and Reputation of one another, and jointly to ſet their Shoulders to the Work of *Chriſt*.

Q. *What other Advantages accrued to the* Chriſtian *Cauſe, from the Sufferings of the Apoſtle?*

A. He next diſcovers, that though ſome of his Brethren were emboldened, through his Conſtancy in Sufferings, to preach *Chriſt* alike, with the ſame Mind, from the ſame Motives, for the ſame ſincere Ends. Some, alas! preached *Chriſt out of Envy and Strife*; that is, envying the Succeſs of the Apoſtle's Miniſtry, and endeavouring to draw People off from approving him, to applaud them, hoping to grieve and gall him thereby; but others preached the Goſpel of *Chriſt of Good-will*, with a Purity of Intention, and Sincerity of Affection, both towards *Chriſt* and towards himſelf, who, for the Defence of the Goſpel, now lay in Priſon. However, as *Chriſt* was preached and made known by both, by ſome in Pretence, by others in Truth, the Apoſtle rejoiced at it, and took Comfort in it.

Q. *What other Point does he inſtruct the* Philippians *in?*

A. Our Apoſtle ſtill purſues his former Deſign; namely, to prevent the *Philippians* being offended at his Sufferings, and accordingly he ſhews, that as the Goſpel of *Chriſt* had gained much already, it ſhould gain yet more, by his Impriſonment and Afflictions, which he was very confident would tend to the Furtherance of his Salvation, through the Help of their Prayers, and the Supplies of Grace from the Spirit of *Chriſt*; where, by *Salvation*, is meant Deliverance out of his preſent Sufferings, which he fully expected, by the Help and Benefit of the Church's Prayers.

But if by *Salvation* be meant by eternal Happineſs, then his confident Perſuaſion was this, that all the Deſigns of his Adverſaries againſt him ſhould be ſo over-ruled and ordered by God, that through the Influences and Supplies of the Holy Spirit, all ſhould work together for Good, and his eternal Salvation be advanced thereby, through the Concurrence and Aſſiſtance of their Prayers.

Q. *How does he expreſs his own Reſolution and Firmneſs, in Defence of the Goſpel?*

A. In the 20th Verſe he tells them, that according to his former Expectation of Hope, he was reſolved that no Terror ſhould ever make him aſhamed to own the Truth of *Chriſt*; but that, with a convincing Boldneſs, he would now, as heretofore, appear in the Defence of it, and that *Chriſt* ſhould be *magnified by him in the Body, whether by Life or Death*; that is, whether my Life be further prolonged, or be now, by Martyrdom ended; *Chriſt* will be magnified if I live; the Power of *Chriſt* will be magnified in my Deliverance from Death; if I die, his Power will be magnified, by enabling me to undergo Death for his Name's Sake; ſo that I am at a Point, either to live or die, as the Wiſdom of *Chriſt* ſhall determine; I am, as to myſelf, indifferent for either, well-knowing that *Chriſt* will be glorified in me, and by me, both by Life and Death.

Q. *Pray illuſtrate and explain the 21ſt Verſe*; For me to live is *Chriſt*, and to die is Gain?

A. If I live, *Chriſt* ſhall be the Scope of my Life, and the End of my living; I reſolve to live to his Service; if I die, Death will be a real Gain and Advantage to me; thus Life and Death are Gain to a good Man: The Words are very expreſſive, in them we are taught both how to live, and how to die.

Chriſt is the Believer's Life; both his Life of Grace, and his Life of Glory is reſolved into *Chriſt*. As to the Life of Grace, *Chriſt* is the principal efficient Cauſe of it; he is the Exemplar, Cauſe, or Pattern of it; he is the final Cauſe or Scope of it; and he is the preſerving Cauſe, or Preſerver and Maintainer of it.

So for the Life of Glory, which Believers have in Reverſion, *Chriſt* is alſo the Life of that Life; thus he has purchaſed it for them; given it to them, and taken and kept Poſſeſſion of it in their Names; and will put them in actual Poſſeſſion of it, in his own Time.

Death, whether violent or natural, is the Believer's Gain; it is not only not injurious, but advantageous; no Loſs, but Benefit; not only to die for *Chriſt*, but *to die in* Chriſt *is Gain*; *bleſſed are the Dead that die in the Lord*; as well as thoſe that die for the Lord.

Death is a Gain to a Believer, if we conſider the private Evil it frees him from; namely, from Sin, from all Temptations to Sin, from all Poſſibility of Sinning, from all temporal Afflictions, from all Suffering for God, and from Man for God's Sake; eſpecially if we conſider the poſitive Good the Believer gains by Death, namely, Perfection in Grace, Fulneſs of Joy, the bleſſed Viſion, the Society of glorified Saints and Angels, and the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect.

So then, if a State of perfect Holineſs and Purity be better than a State of Labour and Sorrow; if it be better to be triumphing above, than ſighing and groaning below; then dead Saints are better where they are, than where they were, and Death to them is infinitely gainful.

Q. *How do you interpret the firſt Clauſe of the 22d Verſe,* But if I live in the Fleſh, this is the Fruit of my Labour?

A. That is, if I continue longer in this morral Body, *this is the Fruit of my Labour*; that is, I foreſee what will be the bleſſed Fruit of my Labour, namely, the Converſion and gaining of more Souls unto God and *Chriſt*; as it is worthy my Labour, ſo ſhall it be my Endeavour to glorify *Chriſt*, by my Continuance in the World.

Q. *How do you explain thoſe Words in the next Verſe,* I am in a Strait betwixt two?

A. That is, I am divided in my Thoughts and Deſires, whether to wiſh for Life, or Death; his ardent Love to *Chriſt* and himſelf, inclined him to deſire a Diſſolution, *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with* Chriſt; but his affectionate Regard to his beloved *Philippians*, inclined him to deſire a Continuation of his Time and Talents; *nevertheleſs to abide ſtill in the Fleſh, is more needful for you.*

Thus may theſe Words be conſidered, with relation to St. *Paul* as a Miniſter of the Goſpel; but they may be conſided alſo with Reference to him, as a private *Chriſtian*; *I deſire to depart.* It is not only warrantable, but highly commendable, for a *Chriſtian* to be not only fearleſs, but deſirous of Death.

There are unwarrantable and ſinful Deſires of Death; as when they are raſh and haſty, poſitive and peremptory, directing and preſcribing to God, either as to the Time, Kind, or Manner of our Diſſolution, and when our Deſires are purely ſelfiſh, deſiring Death only as a Releaſe from preſent Evil, or as a Prevention of future Sufferings.

There are warrantable and juſtifiable Deſires of Death and Diſſolution, namely, when we deſire it to free us from the in-dwelling Preſence of Sin, to put us into a State of perfect Holineſs, to bring us to the Sight of *Chriſt*, to give us Poſſeſſion of that Happineſs, which was contrived by infinite Wiſdom, purchaſed by infinite Merit, prepared by infinite Power, and beſtowed by infinite Love.

Q. *What is it* to be with *Chriſt*?

A. It implies Intuition, we ſhall ſee him as he is; Fruition, we ſhall enjoy him to Satiſfaction; Duration, we ſhall be for ever with the Lord.

Q. *But how does it appear that the Souls of good Men, upon their Departure from the Body, are* with *Chriſt*?

A. Thus, they are immediately capable of his Preſence and Enjoyment at their Departure, and are fully prepared for it: If we are unfit for Heaven when we die, we ſhall never be fit; all is done upon us that was ever ientended to be done; and neither *Chriſt's* ardent Deſire to have his Children with him, nor the vehement Longings of their Souls for the Fruition and Enjoyment of him, can or ſhall be delay'd; ſuch Delays would make their Hearts ſick; no, they expected Satiſfaction, and God will not diſappoint their Expectation.

Q. *What other Topics of Comfort does he furniſh them with?*

A. The Apoſtle next gives them a ſort of confident Aſſurance, (which was given him by immediate Revelation) that his Life ſhould at this Time be preſerved for the Benefit of the Church, he and be ſet at Liberty, and that he ſhould come and ſpend a Part of his Time amongſt them, for the Furtherance of their Faith, and the Increaſe of their Joy; that ſo they might have more abundant Matter of rejoicing in *Chriſt Jeſus*, having receiv'd a new Proof of his Power and Goodneſs towards them, in delivering him their Apoſtle from Death, and ſending him to them again.

Q. *Does he give them any Inſtructions for their general Behaviour?*

A. The general Charge which the Apoſtle gives his beloved *Philippians*, is, that their Lives ſhould anſwer their Light, and their Practices correſpond with their Profeſſion. *Let your Converſation be as becometh the Goſpel.* As the Goſpel is a Goſpel of Truth and Plainneſs, of Sincerity and Peace, ſo a *Chriſtian* Converſation is ſincere and upright, calm and peaceable, amicable, loving, and charitable. It's a Goſpel of Meekneſs and Humility, of Holineſs and Purity, ſo a *Chriſtian* Converſation ſhould be meek and humble, pure and holy.

There is a Comelineſs in a Goſpel-Converſation, both as to the inward and outward Man; *walk as becometh the Goſpel of* Chriſt, that is, anſwerable to the Precepts and Commands of the Goſpel, to its Promiſes and Encouragements, to the Helps and Supplies of Grace which the Goſpel affords, to that grand Pattern of Holineſs ſet before us in the Goſpel; and anſwerable to thoſe high and glorious Hopes of, which the Goſpel raiſes us to the Expectation. This is to walk *as becomes the Goſpel.*

Q. *What are his particular Exhortations to them?*

A. *Stand faſt in one Spirit with one Mind.* Thoſe who would walk worthy of the Goſpel, ſhould endeavour after a cloſe, holy, and laſting Union among themſelves.

Striving together for the Faith of the Goſpel. He exhorts them to an united Contention; unite, but ſtrive; yet let your ſtriving be in Communion, not in Contention; ſtrive together in all holy and united Endeavours, to comfort and confirm one another in the Faith of the Goſpel.

In nothing terrified by your Adverſaries; that is, terrified at nothing that they can, or ſhall do; your Adverſaries can never hurt you, if they do not hinder you in your Duty; the leſs they fear God, the leſs you need to fear them.

This will be *to them an evident Token of Perdition*; that is, an united, humble, peaceable boldneſs in your holy Courſe, whereby ye walk in the Spirit and Power of the Goſpel, without Fright or Fear, will be to your Perſecutors *an evident Token of Perdition*; Perſecution is a black Mark of a Son of Perdition.

But to you of Salvation; that is, ſuch as ſuffer patiently, yet reſolutely for the Goſpel, are in the way of Salvation, and their Sufferings ſhall promote their eternal Salvation.

Q. *What is the Senſe of thoſe Words, ver.* 28 Salvation and that of God?

A. This implies two Things, 1. That the Salvation of ſuffering *Chriſtians* ſhall be ſure, for God has undertaken for it. 2. That their Salvation ſhall be great, as well as ſure; he will ſave them with

with a mighty Salvation, from their mighty Sufferings and mighty Fears: Suffer for *Chriſt*, and fear none of thoſe Things which ye ſhall ſuffer.

Q. *What other Arguments does he uſe to encourage them in their Sufferings?*

A. The Apoſtle, by way of Encouragement to a courageous Suffering, next acquaints them, that as Ability to believe on *Chriſt*, ſo a Power to ſuffer for him, were both the Gift of God, and as ſuch purchaſed by *Chriſt* for them, and freely beſtow'd upon them.

Ability to ſuffer is his Gift; it is the Purchaſe of his Merits, and the Fruits of his Mediation, Preparation for, and Patience under Suffering, are the Gifts of *Chriſt*.

As Abilities for, ſo the Comforts of Suffering, are the Gifts of *Chriſt*; through him it is that his Saints glory in Tribulation, and their Trials are not only tolerable, but joyous. This Gift is peculiar to Saints; the Angels glorify *Chriſt* by doing, not by ſuffering.

Faith in *Chriſt* muſt go before Suffering for him; then only are Sufferings truly *Chriſtian*, and an Evidence of Salvation, when the Sufferer is a Believer; *unto you it is given on the behalf of* Chriſt, *not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his Sake.*

The laſt Argument the Apoſtle uſes to encourage them to patient Suffering for the Goſpel, is, that they themſelves were Witneſſes to the many hard Things he ſuffer'd when he was at *Philippi*, and now was prepared to ſuffer at *Rome*, not only Bonds, but Death itſelf.

Q. *Why does St.* Paul *call his Sufferings a Conflict?*

A. We muſt conflict with our Enemies, the Rage of our Perſecutors, with ourſelves, and with our own Spirits, to keep them from fainting under Perſecution; and we muſt conflict with God himſelf, wreſtle with him by Prayer, for extraordinary Meaſures of Strength to ſupport us under Sufferings, and to enable us to glorify God in and by them.

St. *Paul* encourages the *Philippians* to conflict with Sufferings, from his own Example, *having the ſame Conflict which you ſaw in me.* The prudent and patient Sufferings of the Miniſters of *Chriſt* for the Truth of his Goſpel, and ought to be a powerful Encouragement to all their People to conflict with the like Trials and Difficulties for the Teſtimony of *Chriſt*.

CHAP. II.

He exhorts them to Unity, Humility and Serviceableneſs according to the Example of Chriſt; *to Obedience; the Fear of God; and to work out their own Salvation. They are Lights to the wicked World, and Comforts to him their Apoſtle. He commends* Timothy *whom he hopes to ſend to them; and* Epaphroditus, *whom he had now ſent, and exhorts them to receive him joyfully.*

Q. W*HAT is the firſt Duty recommended in this Chapter?*

A. The important Duty which the Apoſtle in the two firſt Verſes of this Chapter, exhorts the *Philippians* to, is Love and Unity; Unity in Judgment and Opinion, in Heart and Affection, in Deſign and Endeavours; and ſo neceſſary and advantageous is the Duty of Unity and Concord among all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, that all the Cautions and Warnings, Intreaties, and paſſionate Importunities of the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, are little enough to excite Perſons to it, and direct them in the Practice of it.

What a Number of Motives the Apoſtle uſes to quicken the *Philippians* to the Exerciſe of this Duty? *If there be any Conſolation in* Chriſt, *any Comfort of Love, any Fellowſhip of the Spirit, any Bowels and Mercies.* As if he had ſaid, if ever you have taſted, by means of my Miniſtry, the Sweetneſs and Conſolation in *Chriſt* and his holy Religion; if ever you have found any Comfort in his Love, or enjoy'd any Communion with his Spirit; if ye be Man, and have any Bowels of Mercy for yourſelves, if ye be *Chriſtians*, and have any Pity for me in my Bonds, *fulfil ye my Joy in this, that ye be like-minded, having the ſame Love, being of one Accord, and of one Mind.*

Fulfil ye my Joy; Sufferings I have enough already; do not you add to them by your Diviſions and Diſſentions; I can rejoice in Perſecution, triumph in Death, if I can but hear you ſtand faſt in one Spirit, ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel; as you have begun, I beſeech you compleat my Joy, by your being of one Heart, of one Mind, entirely one.

Q. *What other Duties does the Apoſtle exhorts them to put in Practice?*

A. He next diſſuades them from Contention and Vain-glory, which are the very Bane of Unity and Unanimity; a vain-glorious Perſon over-rates himſelf, undervalues others, and breaks the Peace with all.

The next Duty directed to, is Humility, here call'd *Lowlineſs of Mind*; a Grace whereby a Man thinks meanly of himſelf, and highly of others, having a better Opinion of others Wiſdom and Piety than his own; this a Man may do, and not ſin, though he be miſtaken; the Publican judg'd the *Phariſee* better than himſelf; and though it was not ſo, God did not diſapprove him for it, but he went away juſtified: But it is Pride to judge another worſe than ourſelves, though he really is ſo.

Q. *Is there any particular Sin which he diſſuades them from?*

A. Yes; that of inordinate Self-love, whereby we regard only our own Honour and Profit, wholly neglecting the Concerns of others; *look not every Man on his own Things*; that is, his own private Advantage only or chiefly, but take Care of theſe Things which tend to the Advantage of others; not but a *Chriſtian* may and ought to look to his own Things, but not wholly; our Regard muſt extend farther than ourſelves, and our own Things; we muſt regard the Things of others alſo, we muſt be as juſt and true to another's Reputation as to our own, and have Reſpect both to the Honour and Profit of our Neighbours as well as our own, ſuch a publick Spirit as this in *Chriſtians*, very much contributes towards the preſerving and maintaining of Unity and Peace among them.

Let this Mind be in you, &c. this humble Mind. The Apoſtle preſſes the Duty of Humility from *Chriſt*'s Example, whoſe Humility was as conſpicuous

cuous as his Innocence; of this the Apoſtle proceeds to give ſeveral Inſtances.

Q. *Pray explain the 6th Verſe,* who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God?

A. Behold here the greateſt Example of Lowlineſs and Abaſement that ever the World was acquainted with; the mighty God becomes leſs than Man: He was in the *Form of God*, and *equal with God*; that is, being the ſubſtantial Form and Eſſence of the Father, enjoying the divine Nature with all its Glory, and all the Enſigns of Majeſty which God himſelf had eternally and invariably. As to be in the Form of a Servant, ſignifies that he was a Servant; ſo to be in the Form of God ſignifies that he was God.

Obſerve, he was in the Form of God, before he was in the Form of a Servant; *and being in the Form of God, he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God*; now, he thought it no Robbery, and if no Robbery, he muſt be equal; and if equal, he muſt be God by Nature, as the Father is.

Hence learn, that our Saviour poſſeſſed that Glory which is truly Divine, before he aſſum'd our Nature as Man; he had a Peerage or Equality with the Father in Glory; the Angels ador'd him in Heaven before his Incarnation on Earth.

Q. *In the 7th and 8th Verſe, is a Deſcription of* Chriſt's *Humiliation; which pray illuſtrate and explain?*

A. *He was found in Faſhion as a Man,* &c. Behold here the Sun of Righteouſneſs under an (almoſt total) Eclipſe: He that was eternally beautiful and glorious, being the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, was ſo veil'd, clouded, and debaſed in the Day of his Humiliation, that he appears not like a God, ſcarce like a Man.

He took upon him the Form of a Servant; this was a lower Degree of Condeſcenſion than the aſſuming the naked human Nature; for a Servant is not ſimply a Man, but a mean Man, a Man in a low Eſtate.

What Abaſement was here! that *Chriſt*, who was in the Form of God, ſhould degrade himſelf into the Form of a Servant, and take the human Nature without Honour, after it had loſt its primitive Innocence, after Sin had had blotted the original Glory of it, and wither'd its Beauty and Excellence! O inconceivable Condeſcenſion!

He made himſelf of no Reputation; that is, in the Day of his Incarnation he laid aſide the Robes of his Glory, he emptied himſelf of that divine Splendor and Majeſty which he had before; not by ceaſing to be what he was, but by aſſuming to himſelf ſomething which before he was not; the Son of God deſcended from his Throne, and put on our vile Mortality, he parted with his Glory, that he might part with his Life for our Salvation.

He was made in the Likeneſs of Men; that is, he was truly and really Man; made in the Likeneſs of other Men, without any viſible outward Difference; *he was in all Things like unto us, Sin only excepted*, Rom. viii. 3.

He is ſaid to appear in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, that is, in Fleſh that had the Marks and miſerable Effects of Sin upon it; not that *Chriſt* aſſum'd Fleſh really defiled with Sin, but he aſſum'd the human Nature, attended with a whole Troop of human Infirmities which Sin firſt let into that Nature, as Hunger and Thirſt, Wearineſs and Pain, Mortality and Death: By reaſon of which, though he was not a Sinner, yet he look'd like one, and they that converſed with him took him for one, ſeeing all theſe Effects of Sin upon him.

He humbled himſelf; the Word imports, both a real and voluntary Abaſement. *Chriſt* did not perſonate an humble Man, or act the Part of one in a debaſed State, but was really humbled, both in the Sight of God and Man; and, as his Humiliation was real, ſo was it alſo voluntary. It is not ſaid he was humbled, but that he humbled himſelf; he was willing to ſtoop to this low and abject State for us; and it was the Voluntarineſs of his Humiliation, that made it ſo acceptable to God, and ſo beneficial and ſerviceable to us.

He became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs. Here we have the Depth of *Chriſt's* Humiliation ſpecified; it was unto Death; and alſo aggravated, *even unto the Death of the Croſs*; he humbled himſelf, not only to become a mortal Man, but alſo a dead Corpſe; and that too hanging on a Tree, dying the Death of a Malefactor: There was Pain, Shame, and a Curſe in the Death of the Croſs; all which *Chriſt* underwent willingly and chearfully, that the Juſtice of God might be ſatisfied, his Wrath pacified, his Majeſty reconcil'd, Death and Hell vanquiſh'd and deſtroy'd. Behold the Tranſcendency of *Chriſt's* Love to the Children of Men. *Greater Love has no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friend*; but greater Love had the Son of God than this, that he laid down his Life for his inveterate Enemies; *he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs.*

Q. *In the 9th Verſe he proceeds to deſcribe* Chriſt's *Exaltation: In what Manner and by what Degrees was this accompliſhed?*

A. *Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him*; that is, exalted him above all Exaltation, as the Word ſignifies *Chriſt* in his Reſurrection, was exalted; in his Aſcenſion, he was highly exalted; in his ſitting at God's Right-hand, he was very highly exalted above all Exaltation.

Obſerve how exactly the Steps of *Chriſt's* Exaltation anſwer'd thoſe of his Humiliation; the firſt Step of his Humiliation was his Incarnation, by which he was made Man, as our Surety, was made Sin. The firſt Step of his Exaltation was his Reſurrection, by which he was declar'd to be the *Son of God with Power*; and as our Surety having paid our Debt, was releaſed from the Priſon of the Grave.

The ſecond Step of his Humiliation was his poor and contemptible Life, and his painful, ſhameful, and accurſed Death, anſwerable thereunto was *Chriſt's* Aſcenſion into Heaven, and ſitting there at God's Right-hand, advancing him above all Principalities and Power; that is, above all the Angels, and placing him next to himſelf in Dignity and Honour.

He humbled himſelf, and became obedient to the Death, wherefore God hath highly exalted him. Where note, that ſome make the Humiliation of *Chriſt* the meritorious Cauſe of his Exaltation; and his Exaltation the Reward of his Humiliation; others make the Humiliation of *Chriſt* only the Antecedent of his Exaltation; he humbled himſelf, and God has exalted him to a Dignity above all

Dignities and Pre-eminency whatſoever, making him King and Head of his Church; and giving him all Power both in Heaven and Earth, requiring that the Divine Honour due to God, ſhould be given to him alſo.

Q. *What are the Particulars of our bleſſed Lord's Exaltation?*

A. They are theſe three; 1. God hath *given him a Name above every Name*; that is, Dignity and Power, Majeſty and Authority, over all Creatures both in Heaven and Earth. 2. *That every Knee, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth, ſhould bow to the Name of* Jeſus; every Knee, that is, every Creature in Heaven, Earth, and Hell, ſhall bow; that is, yield Subjection to the Name of *Chriſt*, ſome voluntarily, others unwillingly; the good Angels, and good Men, pay him chearful Homage; the evil Angels, and bad Men, yielding a forc'd and conſtrain'd Subjection to him. 3. *That every Tongue muſt confeſs that* Jeſus Chriſt *is Lord*; that every Tongue, that is, every Perſon, Men of all Nations and Languages, ſhall confeſs *Chriſt* crucified to be Lord and Judge of the World, acknowledging his royal Sovereignty and Dominion.

Q. *What was the End of* Chriſt's *Exaltation?*

A. It was, *to the Glory of God the Father*; that is, it pleaſed God the Father, for his own Glory, that the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, after he had been deeply humbled, ſhould be highly exalted.

Q. *What was the Apoſtle's View in ſetting before the* Philippians *the Humiliation and Exaltation of* Jeſus Chriſt?

A. It was, to excite them to the Grace and Duty of Humility, that the ſame humble Mind ſhould be in them which was alſo in *Chriſt Jeſus*; as if he had ſaid, Our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* humbled himſelf greatly for us, and afterwards was highly exalted by God, above us; ſo in Proportion may you expect to be exalted by God, if you humble yourſelves, in order to maintain and preſerve the Church's Peace and Unity; for before Honour is Humility.

Q. *What comes next under the Apoſtle's Conſideration?*

A. Obſerve next the great Commendation given by St. *Paul* of his beloved *Philippians*, for their chearful Obedience to the Precepts of the Goſpel, they always obeyed; that is, ever after their Converſion to *Chriſtianity*, not only while the Apoſtle was amongſt them, but after the Providence of God neceſſitated his Abſence from them, not only in my Preſence, but now *much more in my Abſence*.

Q. *But how happen'd it, that their Obedience was greater when they wanted the Apoſtle for their Inſtructer?*

A. Becauſe in the Abſence of one Teacher they had another, a better than the inſpired Apoſtle, even the inſpiring Spirit of God, who, in the Apoſtle's Abſence, was more immediately preſent with them by his inward Motions, to excite and enable them both to will and to do what was well-pleaſing to him.

Q. *What eſpecial Duty does the Apoſtle exhort them to put in Practice?*

A. To work out their Salvation with Fear and Trembling; implying, that it ſhould be every *Chriſtian*'s great Work, to be daily working out his own Salvation; that is, diligently making uſe of all Means and Faithfulneſs, and practiſing all Duties in order thereunto.

Here we have obſervable, 1. The Excellency of the Object propoſed, and that is Salvation. 2. The Difficulty of Salvation, ſuppoſed and implied in the Word *Work*; which ſignifies, the exerting our utmoſt Endeavours, in order to the attaining of it; the Work of Salvation is no lazy Man's Buſineſs, but a Work of Labour and Difficulty, tho' the Difficulties may be overcome by an induſtrious Diligence.

Work out your Salvation; that is, perfect and conſummate the Work which you have happily begun; *with Fear and Trembling*; intimating, that an holy Fear of God, and an humble Fear of ourſelves, will be of ſingular Advantage to us, in the working out of our own Salvation.

Q. *By what Argument does he excite us to Labour and Diligence, in the Work of our Salvation?*

A. Becauſe God works with us, and in us, *Ver.* 13. *For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do:* That God works with us, is great Encouragement to us to work; but we muſt remember, God works arbitrarily, and not neceſſarily; he worketh but of his own *good Pleaſure*, as a free Agent who can ceaſe when he pleaſes; therefore work with Fear and Trembling.

As we can do nothing without God, ſo God will do nothing without us; as we can do nothing without the Concurrence of our Endeavours; he worketh in us both *to will and to do*, and we muſt work with him in order to the working out our Salvation.

Q. *What other Duties does he exhort them to?*

A. The Apoſtle again preſſes his former Argument to Love and Unity amongſt themſelves; *do all Things without Murmurings or Diſputings*, in which the Laws of Charity are commonly violated, the Peace of the Church, and Quietneſs among *Chriſtians* interrupted. And to provoke them thereunto he diſcovers to them the many bleſſed Advantages which, by their Unity and Concord, would redound to them.

1. Hereby they ſhould be blameleſs, and harmleſs, the Sons of God without Rebuke; that is, very inoffenſive Perſons; or, as the *Greek* Word ſignifies, that ye may be the ſpotleſs Sons of God; not abſolutely Spotleſs, pure and perfect, but without ſuch Spots as are inconſiſtent with your Sonſhip; there is a Spot which is, and a Spot which is not the Spot of God's Children, *Deut.* xxxii. 4. Sins of Infirmity are Spots found upon the beſt of his Children; Sins of Preſumption, if at any Time found upon them, yet are not the Spots of his Children.

2. Hereby they ſhould *ſhine as Lights in the World*; that is, in the *Pagan* World, and in the *Chriſtian* Church. This imports both the Dignity and ſpecial Duty of *Chriſtians*, to be as ſo many Suns, to ariſe and ſhine like mighty Luminaries in the Firmament of the World, caſting out their Rays and Beams in a holy and heavenly Converſation.

3. They would thereby *hold forth the Word of Life*; not only hold it faſt for their own Comfort, but hold it forth for others Benefit; that is, in their *Chriſtian* Practice and Profeſſion; the Lives of *Chriſtians* ſhould publiſh the Word of Life, to the Intent that the Enemies of it may fall in Love with it.

4. Thereby he ſhould have Joy and Rejoicing, as well as they reap the Benefit and Advantage; *that*

that I may rejoice in the Day of Chriſt, *that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain*; that is, that I have not preached the Goſpel unprofitably amongſt you.

Behold how St. *Paul*, the Under-ſhepherd, imitates *Chriſt*, that great and good Shepherd, in his Readineſs to lay down his Life for his Sheep; *If I be offered upon the Sacrifice of your Faith*; that is, to eſtabliſh you in the Faith which I have taught you, and to confirm and ſeal the Truth of it with my Blood, I will rejoice therein, for your Sakes, Sakes, and I deſire you to rejoice with me, and to bleſs God with me for ſo doing.

Q. *What is the Import of that Expreſſion, ver.* 17. If I be offered?

A. This is a manifeſt Alluſion to the *Jewiſh* Sacrifices, in which there was Wine to be poured forth as a Libation upon the Sacrifice, and then offered up to God. Thus, ſays he, if my Blood, like Wine, be poured forth, whilſt I am employ'd in preaching of the Goſpel, to render you *Gentiles* an acceptable Sacrifice, and a ſweet-ſmelling Savour unto God, I ſhould rejoice to be even thus in your Service, and for the Confirmation of your Faith.

Q. *What other Means does he uſe to comfort and confirm them in their* Chriſtian *Courſe?*

A. The Apoſtle having finiſhed his Exhortations, proceeds to comfort them; firſt, by promiſing to ſend *Timothy* unto them ſhortly. His pious Zeal puts him upon contriving ſome Way of ſupplying his Abſence from the *Philippians*; what he could not do by himſelf, he endeavours to do by another, even *Timothy*; him he promiſes to ſend, as a living Epiſtle, to inſtruct and exhort, to quicken and comfort the Church at *Philippi*, in his conſtrained Abſence from her.

That the *Philippians* might give *Timothy* a Reception ſuitable to his Merit, St. *Paul* commends him for his affectionate Love to them, and his tender Concern for them; *I have no Man like-minded, who will care for your State.* This Care of *Timothy* is commended by ſeveral Inſtances of it. 1. It was a ſpiritual Care chiefly, he careth for *your State*; that is, for your ſpiritual State, the Proſperity of your Souls. 2. It was a ſollicitous Care; the *Greek* Word ſignifies an anxious Care. 3. It was a ſincere Care, a natural genuine Care, *he naturally careth for your State*; not in Appearance only, but heartily and ſincerely. 4. *Timothy*'s Care for them is commended from the Rarity of it, *I find no Man like-minded.* St. *Paul* had now divers Miniſters with him, but one *Timothy*; others ſought their own Things, but he the Things of *Jeſus Chriſt.* Yet, perhaps, this is not to be underſtood Univerſally, but Synechdochically, and to intimate, that the greateſt Part of them did ſo, refuſing to undertake ſuch a tedious Journey from *Rome* to *Philippi*, as *Timothy* was ready to undertake.

He commends this Care of *Timothy* towards them, by their experimental Knowledge of it; for when old *Paul* was at *Philippi*, young *Timothy* was his Aſſiſtant, as a Son to a Father, obeying his Counſel, following his Directions, imitating his Example, in all Things tending to the Edification of the Church.

St. *Paul* is here a Pattern for all Patrons; he lays before them the Qualifications of him whom they ſhould recommend to the Care of Souls; ſuch as, with *Timoty*, have a Compaſſion for Souls, a truly ſollicitous Care and Concern for the Welfare and Happineſs of Souls, ſuch as the People have had ſome Knowledge of, or at leaſt a Liberty to enquire after; the Man of good miniſterial Abilities, not of great *Symoniacal* Gifts: For if Patrons, in the Execution of that vaſt Truſt (but little conſidered) ſeek only their own Things, no wonder that their Clerks ſeek not the Things of *Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. *Our Apoſtle having declared his Purpoſe to ſend* Timothy *to the* Philippians, *as ſoon as he ſhould ſee how it would go with himſelf at* Rome; *and likewiſe his Intention to come himſelf as ſoon as the Providence of God ſhould ſet him at Liberty; in the mean Time he aſſures them, he would no longer detain their own ſpecial Miniſter,* Epaphroditus, *from them, whom they had ſo kindly ſent to him with a generous Supply: What Character does he give of him?*

A. St. *Paul* is very copious in his Encomiums on *Epaphroditus*, he calls him his Brother, his Brother in *Chriſt*, and in the Miniſtry, his *Companion in Labour*, his Fellow-labourer in *Chriſt*'s Vineyard; his Fellow-ſoldier, his faithful and conſtant Aſſociate in the *Chriſtian* Warfare; their Apoſtle, or Meſſenger, the Biſhop of *Philippi*, ſay the antient Fathers; their Meſſenger to carry the Church's Alms to St. *Paul*, ſay others. Thus this great Apoſtle put *Epaphroditus* almoſt on a Level with himſelf, and highly magnifies the Gifts and Graces of God's Spirit in him, without the leaſt Diminution; teaching thoſe that are dignified in the Church, not to deſpiſe the Perſons, or extenuate the Gifts and Graces, and Uſefulneſs of their inferior Brethren.

Q. *What Reaſons does the Apoſtle aſſign, why he judged it neceſſary to ſend back* Epaphroditus *to his Charge at* Philippi?

A. 1. He long'd after his Flock, his Church and Charge at *Philippi*. 2. This Longing was mutual; the *Philippians* long'd for him, and were full of Heavineſs becauſe of his Sickneſs; this was a certain Evidence of mutual Love one towards another.

St. *Paul* confirms the Report of *Epaphroditus*'s Sickneſs, and celebrates the Mercy and Goodneſs of God in his unexpected Recovery; *Indeed he was ſick nigh unto Death; but God had Mercy on him, &c.*

Q. *But why did not St.* Paul, *who had the Gift of Healing, help* Epaphroditus *while ſick, as well as* Eutychus *when dead,* Acts xx. 9?

A. 'Tis anſwered, The Apoſtles had not the Gift of Healing at their Pleaſure; but God was pleaſed, by a ſpecial Inſtinct and ſtrong Faith, to excite them to it, when it was his Pleaſure to have them uſe it: Theſe Gifts were given for the Sake of Unbelievers, to convince them of the Truth of *Chriſtianity*; but God did not think fit to have them ordinarily exerciſed upon Believers.

But God had Mercy on him; he who is Lord of Life and Death, ſaid in Mercy to him, Return and live. When God preſerves the Lives, and reſtores the Health of his faithful Miniſters, it is an Act of no ſmall Mercy both to their People and themſelves; the longer he lives the more Souls he converts, and every Soul is a Gem new added to that Crown, which ſhall, one Day, be put upon his Head.

God had Mercy not on him only, but on me alſo, leſt I ſhould have Sorrow upon Sorrow; *Paul* had a Load of Sorrow upon him at that Time, he was row among Strangers, among Priſoners in the midſt of Perſecution, and his Mind oppreſſed with Sorrow, partly for the *Philippians* and partly for *Epaphroditus*; therefore the Lord, in tender Pity to him, did not take away by Death his dear and uſeful Companion, leſt he ſhould have Sorrow upon Sorrow, and cauſe his Wounds to bleed afreſh.

Q. *What other Exhortations and Inſtructions does the Apoſtle give them in Relation to* Epaphroditus?

A. St. *Paul* next aſſigns the Reaſon why he was ſo careful to ſend back *Epaphroditus* to the *Philippians*, namely, to aſſuage his Grief, and to increaſe their Joy, *that when ye ſee him, ye might rejoice, and I be leſs ſorrowful.*

The Apoſtle hereupon exhorts them to receive him with all Joy and Gladneſs, and to give him, and all ſuch as he was, due Honour and deſerved Reſpect; and doubtleſs the *Philippians* received him with inexpreſſible Joy, as the Miniſter of *Chriſt* riſen from the dead, recovered from the Grave; received to Life and Service, when all Hopes of enjoying him were now cut off. How natural it is to prize our Mercies more by the Want, than the Worth of them!

Laſtly, he aſſigns a ſpecial Reaſon why he would have them receive him with ſuch Demonſtrations of Joy; namely, becauſe it was in their and his Service that he was brought to the very Brink of the Grave, *for the work of* Chriſt *he was nigh unto Death*; the Work here meant, is probably his Journey to *Rome*, which was long and tedious, his Watchings and Pains-taking with and for the Apoſtle was very fatiguing, he endeavoured to ſupply the Abſence and Want of the whole Church to St. *Paul*; his Zeal for God, and his Affection to St. *Paul*, carried him beyond himſelf, and beyond his Strength, to the apparent Prejudice of his Health, and Danger of his Life.

CHAP. III.

Againſt falſe Teachers, who mingled the Law with the Goſpel. Believers are the ſpiritual Circumciſion, confirmed by his own Example and Faith, who had greater Cauſe than they to truſt in the Righteouſneſs of the Law; which, notwithſtanding he accounts as Dung and Loſs, to gain Chriſt *and his Righteouſneſs: He exhorts them to be thus minded, and decline the Ways of carnal* Chriſtians, *having their Converſation in Heaven, and waiting for our Lord from thence in his Reſurrection.*

Q. *IN the firſt Verſe the Apoſtle bids them rejoice in the Lord: But how were they to expreſs their Joy?*

A. There is no Duty which Believers more willingly hear, and with more Difficulty obſerve, than that of ſpiritual Rejoicing. Had our Apoſtle called upon the bleſſed Angels to rejoice, who have neither Sin, Sorrow, Fear, Sufferings, nor Enemies to annoy them, that might have ſeem'd agreeable. But is it at all congruous to perſuade Sinners loaded with Guilt, defiled with Corruption, cloathed with Infirmities, aſſaulted by Temptations, perſecuted by the World? To bid them rejoice may ſeem ſtrange; but the Wonder will ceaſe, when we conſider the Object he directs them to rejoice in, that is, the Lord; not in themſelves; but the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. Rejoice in his Perſon, in the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge he is poſſeſs'd of, which render him an Object worthy angelical Adoration; rejoice in his Mediation, in the great Things he has done and ſuffer'd for you, in the Grace of his Spirit conferred upon you, and in the Hopes of that Glory to which he has entitled you.

Q. *What is meant by* writing the ſame Things *in the firſt Verſe?*

A. Not the ſame Things I wrote before, but which I preached to you before; tho' I inculcate the ſame Truths unto you, it is neither grievous nor burthenſome to me, nor unneceſſary or unprofitable for you.

We have here St. *Paul's* Judgment againſt oral Tradition, which the *Romiſh* Church prefers before the written Word; ſo did not St. *Paul*, knowing that what is deliver'd by Word of Mouth, might ſoon ſlip out of the Memory, but what is written remains; bleſſed be God for his written Word.

Q. *In the 2d Verſe he cautions the* Philippians *againſt falſe Teachers, whom he calls* Dogs, evil Workers, *and the* Conciſion: *How are theſe Metaphors applicable to the Perſons he expoſes?*

A. They adulterated and corrupted the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, by joining the Works and Obſervances of the Law with the Doctrine of the Goſpel in Point of Juſtification, making them at leaſt the partial Ground of their Confidence and Rejoicing; beware of ſuch, ſays our Apoſtle.

He calls theſe Judaizing Teachers by the odious Appellation of *Dogs*; a Term not of Diminution only, but of utmoſt Diſgrace; *Is thy Servant a Dog?* 2 *Kings* viii. 23. ſuppoſing that nothing could be more vile and baſe.

The *Jews* called all the *Gentiles* Dogs, becauſe unclean. St. *Paul* here very properly calls the falſe Teachers Dogs, becauſe, as Dogs, they did rend and tear the Simplicity of the Goſpel, and divided the Glory of Man's Salvation betwixt Faith and Works; becauſe, as Dogs they bark'd out Reproaches againſt the Apoſtles and their Doctrine, deliver'd in its native Purity and Simplicity; becauſe, as Dogs, they took great Pains to compaſs Abundance of Ground to gain their Game: *They Compaſs Sea and Land to make Proſelytes.*

Beware of evil Workers; becauſe, under a Pretence of labouring in the Goſpel, and of being Fellow-workers with the Apoſtle, they ſubverted the great Deſign of the Goſpel, and pulled down what the Apoſtle built,

Beware of the Conciſion; ſo in Contempt he calls Circumciſions which theſe Judaizing Teachers pleaded the Neceſſity of; as *Hezekiah* called the brazen Serpent *Nehuſhtan*; becauſe Circumciſion, being no longer an Ordinance of God, was no better than cutting off the Fleſh; and they that made it neceſſary to Juſtification, cut themſelves off from *Chriſt*, and from the Church of *Chriſt*; by urging the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, they cut and rent aſunder the Church of God.

How different was the Temper of the Apoſtle in different Caſes? In Things of an indifferent Nature, and leſs neceſſary, who more mild, indulgent, and complying, breathing forth the Spirit of the meek *Jeſus*? But when Opinions were broached, tending to pervert Souls, and ſubvert the Goſpel, then he ſpeaks in Fire and Thunder, and no Terms are bad enough for ſuch Seducers.

Q. *In the 3d Verſe he ſeems to make a Difference between* Circumciſion *and* Conciſion: for we are the Circumciſion; *pray give the Senſe of theſe Words.*

A. For we are the Circumciſion, &c. We *Chriſtians* are of the true and ſpiritual Circumciſion, and accounted circumciſed by God, becauſe we have that which the outward Circumciſion ſignified, namely, the Circumciſion of the Heart, and the Mortification of all carnal Luſts and Deſires; we have the Subſtance of that Ordinance, which is infinitely more pleaſing to God than the Ceremony and Shadow; though you have the Sign, we have the Thing ſignified.

Q. *But how does that appear?*

A. Three Ways; we worſhip God in the Spirit; we rejoice in *Chriſt Jeſus*; we have no Confidence in the Fleſh.

1. We worſhip God in the Spirit, that is, we give him the worſhip of our Souls and Spirits, and do not put him off with mere bodily Worſhip, or with the antiquated *Jewiſh* Worſhip.

Again; we Worſhip God in the Spirit, that is, through the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, he excites and quickens to the Duty, aſſiſts and enables to perform it, and encourages and emboldens the Soul to expect Audience at, and Acceptance after the Duty.

2. *We rejoice in* Chriſt Jeſus. Let them glory in their carnal Ordinance or outward Circumciſion, we will rejoice in *Chriſt Jeſus*, who hath freed us from the Slavery of that Ordinance.

3. *We have no Confidence in the Fleſh*; not in Circumciſion, or any fleſhly Privileges, or carnal Prerogatives; we confide in nothing but *Chriſt*.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by* Fleſh, *ver.* 6.

A. By the *Fleſh* is here meant particularly the Circumciſion of the Fleſh; but more generally all the Externals of Religion, which Men place their Truſt and Confidence in; all outward Privileges and Ordinances are Fleſh: the Righteouſneſs of the Law is Fleſh; nay, Grace itſelf truſted to, and confided in, is Fleſh; The ſincere and ſerious *Chriſtian* rejoices in *Chriſt Jeſus*, confides in him, but dares not place any Confidence in the Fleſh.

However, adds the Apoſtle, let no Man think I undervalue the *Jewiſh* Privileges, becauſe I want them: Shew me any Judaizing Teacher that can pretend to more, or ſo many of them as my ſelf; ſo that were this a Ground of Confidence, I can vie with any of them, in carnal Privileges, *Jewiſh* Prerogatives, and outward Performances; yea, I can boaſt of as much Self-righteouſneſs as the beſt of them, and beyond them all; for I was circumciſed, and had the Seal of the Covenant applied to me, even the eighth Day, the Day preſcribed by the Law; the *Jews* maintaining that Circumciſion before the eighth Day was no Circumciſion, and after it of leſs Value: *Of the Stock of* Iſrael, one of that Nation which God ſet apart for himſelf, when he rejected all the Nations of the Earth beſides: *Of the Tribe of* Benjamin, of a noble Tribe, as well as of an honourable People; a Tribe which kept cloſe to God, when others revolted to *Jeroboam's* Calves; a Tribe honour'd with the firſt of *Iſrael's* Kings, King *Saul*: *An Hebrew* of an *Hebrew*; that is, born a *Jew* both by Father's and Mother's Side: *As touching the Law a Phariſee*; that is, as touching the Interpretation and Obſervation of the Law, a *Phariſee*, one of the ſtricteſt Sects among the *Jews* for the Profeſſion of Religion.

Concerning Zeal, perſecuting the Church. As touching Zeal for the *Jewiſh* Religion, I have ſhewed, that above others, in my furious Perſecution of the Church of *Chriſt*, I was active according to the Direction of my Conſcience and Judgment: *and as touching the Righteouſneſs which is in and by the Law*; that is, as to my perſonal Obedience unto the Law, I was *blameleſs*, without Spot, (as the Original Word ſignifies) that is, in my own Account; and in Man's Eſteem; my Converſation not ſtained with any groſs Sin, but very exact in my Deportment and Behaviour, living up to my Knowledge, my Practice correſponding with my Profeſſion.

All theſe Grounds of Confidence the Apoſtle had before his Converſion; and he might have reſted there, and have gloried and confided therein, as well as the Judaizing Doctors did, who gloried in their external Privileges; but how far St. *Paul* was from the Spirit and Temper of a *Chriſtian*, the next Words declare.

But what Things were Gain to me, thoſe I counted Loſs for Chriſt; that is, the promiſed Privileges which heretofore he thought to gain Juſtification and Salvation by, now ſince this Illumination, he counted them all loſt; he ſaw he had loſt his Soul for ever, had he truſted in theſe; but *Chriſt* being made known to him as the only Way to get Pardon of Sin, and Acceptance with God, he renounces all his former Privileges and legal Righteouſneſs, he durſt not lean upon thoſe broken Reeds, he would have no more Confidence in the Fleſh, but in *Chriſt* only; *What Things were reputed gain to me, thoſe I accounted for* Chriſt's *Sake*. And that he might not be thought to ſpeak in Heat, or unadviſedly, he repeats his Words; *Yea doubtleſs, and I count all Things but Loſs*; he did not only count them Loſs, but actually renounced them as ſuch. But how did St. *Paul ſuffer the Loſs of all Things*? He did not make Shipwreck of all Duties, and caſt off the Performance of them; but he caſt off all Dependence upon them, all Expectation of Happineſs and Salvation from them, which he had before.

He not only counted them Loſs, but caſt them away as Dung, as filthy Carrion, as Garbage caſt to Dogs, as the Word ſignifies. Such Things as thoſe falſe Teachers might delight in; but as for himſelf, he could reliſh nothing in them, in Compariſon of *Chriſt*.

As St. *Paul* did, ſo does every enlighten'd *Chriſtian*, upon the matureſt Deliberation undervalue every thing, for the Sake of *Chriſt* and his Grace.

Q. *Wherein conſiſts* the Excellency of the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, *as its expreſs'd*, *ver.* 8?

A. The Knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Way and Method of Salvation by and through him, is an excelling Knowledge, every thing of *Jeſus Chriſt* is excellent and worthy to be known, the Dignity of his Perſon, as God, as Man, as God-man, or Mediator between God and Man; the Dignity of his Office, as the great King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his Church; the Eminency of his Example, the Depth of his Humiliation, the Height of his Exaltation, the Tranſcendency of his Love in all his Undertaking for us, and the Way and Method of his Juſtification of us by Faith in his Blood, we may conclude of the Act by the Object; *Chriſt* is the moſt excellent Object, therefore the Knowledge of him muſt be the moſt excellent Knowledge, not only all the Excellencies of of the Creature are found in him in the moſt excelling Manner, but all the Excellencies of the Godhead; the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him bodily, that is, perſonally and ſubſtantially.

This Knowledge of *Chriſt* enabled the Apoſtle to *ſuffer the Loſs of all Things*: Such as have attained this excellent Knowledge, will not think much to ſuffer the Loſs of any Thing, for the obtaining him, and Salvation by him.

Q. *What was it that prevailed with the Apoſtle to part with all Things for* Chriſt?

A. The Motive which induced St. *Paul* to part with all Things for *Chriſt*, was, that he *might win* Chriſt; that is, that he might obtain an Intereſt in him, and the Bleſſings purchaſed by him; for this he was willing to part with all his Privileges, his Accompliſhments, his Enjoyments, all his own Righteouſneſs, his Exactneſs in the outward Obſervation of the Law; he renounced all, not in Point of Performance, but Dependance.

Q. *In what Senſe does the Apoſtle deſire to be found in* Chriſt?

A. *Beza*, upon this Place, brings in the Juſtice of God purſuing *Paul* as a Malefactor; and *Chriſt* as the City of Refuge which he deſires to flee unto, and be found in. To be found in *Chriſt* then, is to be ingrafted and incorporated into him by Faith, to find Acceptance with God through him, as our Surety and Repreſentative, and to perſevere in our Obedience to him to the End of our Lives.

Q. *Pray explain the next Clauſe in the ſame Verſe*, Not having mine own Righteouſneſs, which is of the Law?

A. That is, not depending upon any Thing he could call his own; not upon his moſt perfect Righteouſneſs, and beſt Obedience, for his Juſtification before God, knowing that it would be both unwarrantable and unſafe ſo to do; unwarrantable, becauſe our good Works never had the Impreſs of God's Ordination for that End; they were never deſigned to juſtify our Perſons, but to juſtify our Faith; and unſafe it is to truſt in our own Righteouſneſs and beſt Services, becauſe of the many ſinful Imperfections cleaving to them: Alas! they cannot juſtify themſelvs; how then ſhould they juſtify us? Our beſt Duties deſerve to be thrown as ſo much Dung upon our Faces.

Chriſt's perfect Obedience alone entitles us to Heaven; our own imperfect (if ſincere) Obedience will evidence that Title.

Some rely on a natural Righteouſneſs, ſuch as they call Good-nature; others on a negative Righteouſneſs, becauſe they are not ſo unrighteous as ſome; others on a poſitive, a moral Righteouſneſs in obſerving the Duties of the ſecond Table; a religious Righteouſneſs in performing the outward Duties of Prayer, hearing the Word, receiving the Sacraments. But though St. *Paul* was one of the moſt religious Men that ever profeſs'd the *Jewiſh* Religion, yet he durſt not be found in Righteouſneſs alone, but deſires to be *found in* Chriſt, &c.

Q. *But how does he deſire to* be found in *Chriſt*?

A. The Way the Apoſtle deſires to be found in *Chriſt* is, *that which is through the Faith of* Chriſt, *the Righteouſneſs which is of God by Faith*. It is called the Righteouſneſs of God, becauſe he appointed, ordained, and accepts it.

It is the Righteouſneſs of Faith, becauſe it is made ours by Faith; Faith apprehending and applying the Death and Sufferings of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Fruit and Benefit of his Undertaking, becomes the believing Sinner's, and God is at Peace with him; ſuch as will be found in *Chriſt* muſt have a Righteouſneſs, the meritorious Righteouſneſs of *Chriſt*, to anſwer the Demands of the Law, and a perſonal Righteouſneſs of their own, to anſwer the Commands of the Goſpel. St. *Paul* here, though a tranſcendant Saint, an eminent Apoſtle, yet diveſts himſelf of his own Righteouſneſs, that he might be cloathed with the Righteouſneſs of the Mediator, to be found in him as his Surety in the Day of Account, and obtain Pardon for the Sake of his Satisfaction.

Q. *Pray interpret the 10th Verſe*, That I may know him, and the Power of his Reſurrection, and the Fellowſhip of his Sufferings, being made conformable to his Death?

A. He deſires to know *Chriſt*, as the *Meſſiah* and Mediator, that he might Experience *the Power of his Reſurrection*, raiſing him from the Death of Sin, to a Life of Grace and Holineſs, and a Taſte of that Comfort and Satisfaction which is found in Suffering for his Sake; and to be made *conformable to his Death*, by a daily dying unto Sin, knowing that if he was conformable to him in the Likeneſs of his Death, he ſhould be alſo in the Likeneſs of his Reſurrection.

A juſtified Perſon deſires moſt earneſtly to experience that Divine Power in his Soul, quickening his dead Body, when it lay in the Grave. It is as great a Work of the Spirit to from *Chriſt* in the Heart of a Sinner, ſays Biſhop *Reynolds*, as it was to faſhion him in the Womb, or to raiſe him from the Grave.

Such as are juſtified and ſanctified by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, are willing to have Fellowſhip with him in his Sufferings; they are as willing to participate with him in the Benefit, as the Merit of his Sufferings; the Members think it an Honour to be like their Head; their ſuffering, as well as their glorifying Head.

Q. *What is meant by the* Reſurrection of the Dead, *Verſe* 11?

A. This is not to be underſtood of the general Reſurrection, for all Men ſhall attain that, whether they ſtrive for it or no; but he intends that compleat Holineſs, and abſolute Perfection in Grace, which explains it, *not that I have already attained*, &c. or am *already perfect*; and he ſhews how diligent he was in endeavouring, in the Uſe of all poſſible Means, to *attain unto it*.

Q. *Our Apoſtle next compares himſelf to a Perſon running a Race: What was the Prize he had in View, and in what Manner did he run?*

A. The Prize he had in View was, *Perfection in Grace*, the higheſt Degree of which, in this Life, conſiſts in a Deſire and Endeavour to obtain the largeſt Meaſures and fulleſt Degrees of Holineſs, that are here attainable.

The Manner of his running this Race, was, by *looking forward*, not backward; he did not look back to the Things which he left behind, to the Privileges of *Judaiſm*, nor to his paſt Performances; but like a Racer, kept himſelf continually on the Stretch, with his Eyes fix'd on the Prize at the End of the Gaol, that he might lay hold upon it, and be crowned with it.

St. *Paul*'s is the Caſe of every *Chriſtian*; his Life is a Race; in his running he muſt look forward, and not reckon how much of the Way is paſt, but make the beſt of the Way to come: He muſt keep Heaven, as the Mark and Prize he runs for, continually in his Eye, to hearten him on againſt all Hardſhips and Diſcouragements whatſoever; in a Word, he muſt be apprehended before he can apprehend. St. *Paul* was apprehended by *Chriſt*, and caught hold of by him, when he fled from him, otherwiſe he had never been able to apprehend; *Chriſt* takes hold on us before we have any Deſires to lay hold on him.

Q. *Pray ſhew the Senſe of the Apoſtle's concluſive Argument from the Premiſſes, Verſe* 15. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, *&c.*

A. That is, grown *Chriſtians*, throughly inſtructed in their *Chriſtian* Duty (who, compared with others, may be called perfect) *be thus minded*, as I am; namely, to believe the Circumciſion of the Fleſh aboliſhed, and that no Confidence is to be placed in any Righteouſneſs of our own, *but in the Righteouſneſs which is of God, by Faith only*; and if any, ſeduced by the *Judaizing* Teachers, be otherwiſe minded, and think that the ceremonial Law is not abrogated, God, in his due Time, will ſhew them their Error, and convince them, that none of thoſe Things are now neceſſary for the obtaining his Favour. Nevertheleſs, in the mean Time, he exhorts all Perſons, according to the Meaſures of Light and Knowledge they had received, to walk according to the Rule of Scripture; preſerving a mutual Love, and avoiding farther Rents and Diviſions.

Hence learn, that in Caſe of unavoidable Differences among good Men, there ought to be mutual Charity and Meekneſs, Moderation and Forbearance, no cenſorious judging of each other, but look firſt at what is wanting in ourſelves, and next what is uſeful in others; the one will make us humble, the other charitable, and both peaceable.

Q. *How were they to* follow him, *as he exhorts them to do, Verſe* 17?

A. Follow me, who have renounced all my *Jewiſh* Privileges, all Confidence in any Thing of my own; and mark them for your Patterns, who walk after our Example.

Happy is it, when the Miniſters of *Chriſt* go before their People, and tread out the Steps they are to take towards Heaven; when they can unfeignedly ſay to their People, Be Followers of us, and of all ſuch as have us for an Example.

Q. *What other cautionary Inſtructions does he give them?*

A. Next, he warns them againſt following the Doctrines and Practices of thoſe falſe Teachers, the *Judaizing* Doctors, whom he calls the *Enemies of the Croſs of* Chriſt, becauſe they preached up the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the ceremonial Law; and ſo, in effect, denied *Chriſt* to be come in the Fleſh, or affirmed that he died in vain; *whoſe End is Deſtruction*; if they perſiſt in their wicked Doctrines and Practices, their End will be everlaſting Deſtruction; *whoſe God is their Belly*, who chiefly mind the Gratification of a ſenſual Appetite; they who ſerve their Belly before God, or as they ſhould ſerve him, make a God of their Belly; we may provide for the Belly, but not ſerve it; that is to ſerve us, by fitting us to ſerve God, our Neighbour, and ourſelves. *Whoſe Glory is their Shame*, they are puffed up with that which ſhould rather make them bluſh. *They mind earthly Things*; the Riches, Honours, and Pleaſures of the World, are Things wholly upon their Hearts.

If therefore you have any Love for your Souls, follow not thoſe falſe Teachers; but imitate and follow us who are Citizens of Heaven, where our Head, our Heart, and Happineſs is. Here indeed we ſojourn, but we belong to the Corporation and Society above; we have an high Eſteem of that Happineſs, and our chief Concern is to make ſure of it; we delight ourſelves with the Hopes and Expectation of it, and live anſwerable to our Expectation; as we hope, hereafter, to live like the Angels in Glory, we now endeavour to live like them in Holineſs.

Such as have their Converſation in Heaven, look for *Chriſt*'s Coming from thence, not as a terrible Judge, but as a gracious and powerful Saviour. At whoſe Coming they expect the changing *of their vile Body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious Body.*

The preſent Condition of the Body is vile, and vile in its Original; vile in regard of its moral, and of its accidental Vileneſs; it is ſubject to vile Diſeaſes, to vile Abuſes; vile in its Death; how does a Body, as beautiful as ever was *Abſalom*'s, when ſeiz'd by Death, run into Rottenneſs and Putrefaction! Sin makes us vile in the Sight of God while we live, and renders our Bodies viler in the Sight of Men when we die.

But at the Appearance of *Chriſt*, the Body ſhall be rebuilt, formed and faſhioned like unto *Chriſt*'s glorious Body; like his in Incorruptibility and Immortality, in Purity and Spirituality, in Power and Activity, in Happineſs and Felicity.

Q. *But by whom ſhall this wonderful Change be wrought?*

A. This great Change ſhall be wrought by *Chriſt*, to whom it is as eaſy to give a Body to a Soul at the Reſurrection, as to breathe a Soul into a Body every Day in the Work of Creation. *Chriſt* is not only able, but has declared, that he will raiſe and change our vile Bodies; which removes all Difficulties that weak Reaſon may lay in the Way of Faith.

CHAP. IV.

He exhorts them to Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith; and two Women among them to Unity; recommends Chriſtian *Joy, Moderation, Quietneſs of Mind, and other* Chriſtian *Virtues, which they had learned from, and ſeen of him; with a Promiſe of a Bleſſing. He thanks them for their liberal Relief, which he accepted, not out of Covetouſneſ, but, as an Inſtance of their Duty, which God* *would recompence. A Doxology, Salutation, and his Apoſtolical Benediction.*

Q. *HOW does the Apoſtle treat the* Philippians *in this Chapter?*

A. Obſerve in the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, the tender affectionate, and endearing Compellation St. *Paul* beſtows on his beloved *Philippians*; he here calls them his Brethren, *his dearly beloved and longed for, his Joy and Crown*; thereby teſtifying his Affection towards them, his paſſionate Longing for their ſpiritual Welfare, and that their Converſion by his Preaching, was Matter of great Joy and Comfort to him, yea, the Crown and Honour of his Miniſtry, *my Joy and Crown*; that is, my chief Joy and Crown of rejoicing, that which he rejoiced in more than he could in any earthly Crown.

Behold in this Glaſs the Heart of every faithful Ambaſſador of *Jeſus Chriſt*; an imperial Crown ſet on their Heads, and to be made Emperors of the World, would be far leſs agreeable to them, than to ſee Souls brought off from the World, by their Miniſtry, to the Obedience of the Word.

Q. *What is the particular Duty here exhorted to?*

A. The great Duty St. *Paul* here exhorts the *Philippians* to, is, Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith and Doctrine of the Goſpel in general; and in particular, in the Liberty wherewith *Chriſt* had made them free, without obliging themſelves to obſerve Circumciſion, or any Part of the Ceremonial Law.

Q. *In the 2d and 3d verſe, St.* Paul *exhorts two Woweu of eminent Note in the Church, to Unanimity and Concord, Pray what was their Employment in the Church?*

A. Theſe Women had labour'd with him in the Goſpel, that is, in Offices proper to their Sex; not in publick Preaching, but in private Teaching of Youth, and inſtructing other Women in the Principles of Religion: Between theſe two good Women, *Euodias* and *Syntyche*, there ſeems to have been ſome Difference, a Want of Love and Unanimity; it is but too frequent for Perſons truly pious and painful in the Work of the Lord, to be at odds among themſelves; and ſuch are the fatal Conſequences of ſuch Differences, though between two Perſons only, that they are look'd upon as worthy to be taken notice of by a great Apoſtle.

It deſerves Regard how careful the Apoſtle is, timely to compoſe this petty Difference between theſe two Perſons; he writes to an eminent Miniſter in the Church at *Philippi*, to exert his utmoſt Endeavours in reconciling theſe two diſagreeing Parties. Such as are ſenſible of the dangerous Miſchiefs of Strife and Contention, or Diſcord and Diviſion, will account it their Duty to look into Breaches betimes, to quench ſuch Fires at firſt kindling, and will call in all the Help they can, by engaging the Prayers and Tears of God's Miniſters, and the Endeavours of all faithful *Chriſtians* in order thereunto; and all little enough, God knows.

Q. *The Apoſtle in the 3d Verſe, ſpeaking of his Fellow-Labourers, ſays,* their Names are written in the Book of Life: *Pray explain theſe Words?*

A. That is, he adjudged them truly gracious Perſons, and in a State of Salvation; though none can paſs an infallible Judgment upon others, yet ſuch as are holy in Converſation themſelves, and contribute their utmoſt Endeavours to promote Holineſs in others, may, in the Judgment of Charity, be pronounced Perſons whoſe Names are in the Book of Life.

Q. *In the 4th Verſe he commands them to* rejoice in the Lord always: *How do you underſtand theſe Words?*

A. Chriſtian Chearfulneſs and Joy is a Duty which glorifies God, adorns Religion, and is beneficial to ourſelves, by enabling us to bear Afflictions, to glory in them, and to triumph over them.

The Object of this Duty, is *Chriſt* the Lord, *rejoice in the Lord.* Alſo, the Conſtancy of this Duty, *rejoice always*, at all Times, and in all Conditions. Likewiſe the Difficulty of the Duty, implied in the Repetition of the Command, *again, I ſay, rejoice.*

Thus is it the *Chriſtian's* Duty to be always joying in, and rejoicing for *Chriſt*, to rejoice in their Knowledge of him, in his Undertaking for them, in their Intereſt in him, in their Influences of Grace and Comfort derived from him, in their Hopes of Glory to be eternally enjoyed with him.

Q. *The Apoſtle recommends ſome other Things to their Practice; which pray repeat and explain?*

A. Let your Moderation be known unto all Men; let your Mildneſs and Gentleneſs towards others, your Meekneſs and Patience under your Trials, be very conſpicuous, becauſe the Lord is at hand to execute Judgment on his own Crucifiers, and the Perſecutors of his People.

Be careful for nothing; that is, anxiouſly careful; it is an inordinate Care, a diſtracting Solicitude that is here forbidden; there is a providential Care for the Things of this Life, which is an unqueſtionable Duty.

In every Thing by Prayer, with Thankſgiving let your Requeſts be made known. Thankſgiving is a Duty as well as Prayer; when afflicted, we are to be thankful for the expected Benefit of Afflictions; when tempted to be thankful that God will not leave us to be tempted, above what we are able; when we fall into Sin, there is Cauſe of Thankfulneſs, that we are not left to run into all Sin, that we are not cut off in the very Act of Sin, and did not die in our Sins; thus are we in every Thing to give Thanks.

The Advantage which will accrue from the Practice of the fore-mentioned Duties, is, *Peace which paſſeth* all Underſtanding, that is, which none can conceive who have not felt it, and none can expreſs who have not experienced it. This Peace will guard our Hearts and Minds againſt all inward Terrors and outward Troubles; as the Perſons of Princes are ſecured by Guards of armed and valiant Men, who watch while they ſleep, ſo *Chriſtians* are guarded by the Peace of God, better than any Prince ever was by a Guard of forty thouſand Men.

Q. *In the 8th Verſe he propoſes other Duties: What are they, and how underſtood?*

A. Here we have a very comprehenſive Precept, deſcribing the Duties of all *Chriſtians*; *whatſoever Things are true*; Truth is the principal Character of our Profeſſion, and is to be expreſſed in our Words and Actions; *whatſoever Things are honeſt*, venerable or grave, that anſwer the Dignity of our high Calling, and agree with the Gravity and Comelineſs of our *Chriſtian* Profeſſion; *whatſoever Things are juſt*, according to divine and human Laws; *whatſoever Things are pure and chaſte*; the Heart, the Hand, the Tongue, the Eye, muſt be preſerved from all Impurity; *whatſoever Things are lovely and of good Report*; as Eaſineſs to Pardon, Readineſs to oblige, Compaſſion to the Afflicted, Liberality to the Diſtreſſed, Sweetneſs of Converſation, without Gall and Bitterneſs; theſe are of univerſal Eſteem with all Mankind, and ſoften the moſt ſavage Tempers and Diſpoſitions.

Note, that *Chriſtianity* adopts Morality, or Precepts of good Life and Manners, into its Frame and Conſtitution, and it is indeed an integral Part of the *Chriſtian* Religion; not that any moral Precepts, though ever ſo good, can raiſe a Soul from the Death of Sin to a Life of Holineſs, without Faith in *Chriſt*, and the Aſſiſtance of his Spirit; but the Morality which the Scriptures teach, is founded, not barely upon Principles of Reaſon, but divine Revelation, and oblige us to to the Practiſe of moral Duties, in Obedience to *Chriſt*'s Command, in Conformity to his Example, in the Strength of his Aſſiſtance, and with an Eye to his Glory.

Q. *What Part of his own Practice and Example does the Apoſtle recommend to his People's Imitation?*

A. All thoſe Things which by his Life and Doctrine he commended to them, they were carefully to obſerve and imitate. It's a happy thing, when a People's Eye, are taught by their Miniſter's Holineſs of Life, and their Ears by the Soundneſs of his Doctrine.

Thoſe Things do, and the God of Peace ſhall be with you. The Love, the Help, th Pe reſence of God will be with us, to lead and conduct us, to cover and protect us; and if God be with us we ſhall ſhortly be with him. Such as obey the Goſpel, in whatever Circumſtances of Life they are, ſhall ever abide in a peaceable and bleſſed Condition.

Q. *What other Inſtructions does he give them?*

A. Our Apoſtle next acquaints the *Philippians*, how joyfully he received their Charity; and that it came no ſooner, he believed, proceeded not from any Diſreſpect to him, but either from a Want of Ability or Opportunity of ſending to him; yet he lets them know, that he could bear Want; *having learned in whatſoever State he was, therein to be content; he could bear either Plenty or Scarcity, Fulneſs or Want; yea, he could do all Things through* Chriſt *that ſtrengthened him.*

Hence appears the Viciſſitude and great Uncertainty of St. *Paul*'s outward Condition; at one Time he abounds, at another Time he is abaſed; now he is full, anon he is in Want; teaching us, that the deareſt of God's Children, in regard to their outward Condition, are ſubject to variety of Changes.

The two particular Leſſons here taught us, are, *how to abound, and how to be abaſed.* They are both hard Leſſons, but of the two, perhaps, 'tis harder to know how to abound, than how to be abaſed.

Dr. *Hammond* has the following Note upon the Words, *lacked Opportunity*, ver. 10. That the *Greek* Word here ſignifies, as we have render'd it; not *wanted Opportunity*, but *Ability*, is the expreſs Affirmation of St. *Chryſoſtom*, *ye had it not*, ſaith he, *in your Hands, or Power; neither were you in Plenty*, For that is the meaning of this Word. *And this*, ſaith he and *Theophylact*, *is taken from the common Uſe of Speech; as when we ſay, ſome Streights have come on me, it is now an ill Seaſon with me.* So *Gal.* vi. 23. Not, *as we have an Opportunity*, but, *as we have Ability*; For indeed that is an Opportunity when the Want of others; and our Plenty meet together. Of this Uſe of theſe Words we have frequent Examples, among Authors. So *Nazianzen*, *Why do we not help our common Nature*, that is, other Men, *having Ability?* For if we have not Ability, the Opportunity of another's Want lays no Obligation upon us. And accordingly it follows there, *God forbid I ſhould have Wealth and they want*; where to *have Wealth* is all one with *having Opportunity* precedent.

Q. *When may a Perſon be ſaid to know how to abound?*

A. When he has a right Eſtimation of the Things which are of the World, and prizes them neither too high nor too low; when a Man ſo uſes his Abundance as to avoid the Temptations that may accompany that Abundance; when he is willing to part with it at the Call and Command of God; and in a Word, when he attends more to the Duties of his proſperous Eſtate than to the ſenſual Pleaſures and Satisfaction of it.

Q. *What is it to know how to be abaſed?*

A. Not to be diſcouraged, or to ſuffer the Spirit to faint in the Day of Adverſity; to ſuffer what is inflicted without Impatience or Complaint; to be firmly perſuaded that whatever we meet with, is from the Hand of a Father, that whatever we part with is but a periſhing Creature; that God is able to reſtore all loſt Comfort with Advantage to us, and will do it if it be good for us, either in Kind or Equivalency.

Q. *How do you prove, that it is harder to know how to abound, than how to be abaſed?*

A. Thus; there are more and harder Duties required of thoſe that abound, than of them that want. Hence it is, that God gives ſo many ſolemn Charges and Commands to thoſe that abound, to take heed to themſelves, more than to thoſe in Want. *Deut.* vi. 12. *When thou art full, then beware leſt thou forget the Lord thy God, and thy Heart be lifted up.*

Q. *Where did the Apoſtle learn this Leſſon of Contentment; and why was he ſo thankful for the Preſent which the* Philippians *had ſent him?*

A. This great Leſſon of knowing how to abound, and how to be abaſed, St. *Paul* did not learn in the School of *Gamaliel*, but of *Chriſt*, *I can do all Things through* Chriſt *ſtrengthening me*; *Chriſt* was both his Tutor and Strengthener, he taught him his Leſſon, and enabled him to practiſe it.

Although our Apoſtle had declared that he had fully learned the Leſſon of Contentment in all Conditions, yet he aſſures them, that they did well in ſending ſuch Supplies to him in Priſon by *Epaphroditus*, as they had done, and thereby teſtifying that they ſhared with him in his Affliction.

The Apoſtle thankfully acknowledges the *Philippians* preſent Liberality towards him, then in Bonds, for preaching the Goſpel to them; from thence he takes Occaſion to make an honourable Mention of their former Bounty which he had experienced even from his firſt Preaching of the Goſpel to them; nay, when he was at a Diſtance from them at *Theſſalonica*, yet did the *Philippians* ſend their Bounty after him more than once, which no other Church beſides had then done.

Thus, though the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* may challenge a Supply of temporal Things from their People, for their ſpiritual Things as a due Debt, yet they gratefully acknowledge it, to the Honour and Praiſe of their People, with fervent Prayer to God, that they may reap the Advantage of it in the great Day of Account.

Not becauſe I deſire a Gift; that is, any farther Gift for my own private Advantage; I am far from the Thought of ſpunging upon you: But in this I aim at your Advantage, that your Liberality may afford you the Fruits of a plentiful Reward in the Day of *Chriſt*, who *will not forget your Work and Labour of Love in miniſtring to the Saints*.

Q. *How does he farther declare his Satiſfaction in their Benevolence to him?*

A. The Apoſtle next declares how abundantly ſatisfied he was with what he had received; *I have all, and abound, I am full*; as if he had had all the Treaſures of the *Indies* in his Coffers. Grace is content with a Little, and thinks that Little an Abundance; the contented Man is only rich.

Farther; St. *Paul* gives an Acknowledgment under his own Hand, that *Epaphroditus* had faithfully delivered him the whole of their Charity; *I have received of* Epaphoditus *all the Things which were ſent from you. Epaphroditus* was their chief Miniſter or Biſhop, a Perſon of great Reputation, whoſe Fidelity none could ſuſpect, yet St. *Paul* gives it under his Hand that he had faithfully, executed his Truſt.

Q. *The Apoſtle in the 18th Verſe farther teſtifies his Thankfulneſs for their Gratuity, which he calls* an Odour of a ſweet Smell, a Sacrifice acceptable, well-pleaſing to God: *How do you underſtand thoſe Words?*

A. The ſame Words he made Uſe of, *Epheſ.* v. 2. where he calls the Death of *Chriſt* a *Sacrifice, and a ſweet ſmelling Savour*. The Expreſſion is borrowed from the Levitical Sacrifices which were of God's Appointment; and imports that our Charity expreſſed towards the Members, eſpecially the Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt*, now under the Goſpel, is as acceptable and well-pleaſing to God, as the ſweeteſt Incenſe, and the fatteſt Sacrifices were under the Law.

Here the *Socinians*, to leſſen the Merit of *Chriſt*'s Sacrifice, make a Parallel between this Text and that, *Epheſ.* v. 2. Is the Death of *Chriſt*, ſay they, called a Sacrifice and ſweet ſmelling Favour? So is the *Philippians* Charity, but both in a figurative and metaphorical Senſe only. But mark the Difference; St. *Paul*, *Eph.* v. 2. ſays, *Chriſt* gave himſelf a Sacrifice, which being once offered, was ſufficient to take away Sin, *Heb.* x. 30. but the *Philippians* are not ſaid to give themſelves a Sacrifice, but their Alms were as grateful to God as Incenſe.

If it be ſaid, from *Rom.* xii. 1. that Believers are required to preſent themſelves living Sacrifices unto God, and acceptable. 'Tis anſwered, So they are, and ſo they do preſent themſelves gratulatory, but not expiatory Sacrifices unto God, 1 *Pet.* ii. 5. Ye are a royal Prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices unto God, through *Jeſus Chriſt*. *Chriſt's* Oblation and Sacrifice was acceptable for itſelf; Believers, and their euchariſtical Sacrifices are acceptable to God only in, by, and through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, Heb. xiii. *By him let us offer the Sacrifice of Praiſe continually.*

Q. *What do you remark upon the 19th Verſe?*

A. Note, the Aſſurance St. *Paul* gives them, that God would give them an abundant Recompence for their Charity, *My God will ſupply all your Needs*, &c. Do not think you ſhall want, becauſe you have ſo liberally ſupplied me: *According to his Riches in Glory*; that is, according to his rich Mercy and glorious Grace. In the Glory of the next Life, there is no need to be ſupplied; but there is a Glory in rich Grace, which readily and plentifully ſupplies all our Wants in this Life.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Doxology in the 20th Verſe?*

A. It runs thus: *Now unto God and our Father be Glory for Ever and Ever*; where note, the endearing Title given to Almighty God, *God our Father*; the Word, *Father*, is a Title of great Honour; the Word, *our*, is a Word of ſingular Comfort. The appropriating poſſeſſive Terms, *mine, thine, ours*, have a great Sweetneſs in them, and breathe Abundance of Affection. As *Luther* uſed to ſay, the Comfort of the Goſpel lay in Pronouns poſſeſſive, when we can ſay with believing *Thomas, my Lord, and my God*; with bleſſed *Paul, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.*

Hence learn, that God is a Father in a more particular and eſpecial Manner to all that are intereſted in his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*. The Word Father implies ſpiritual Generation, that we are begotten by him, and like unto him; it implies Vehemency of Affection, no Bowels comparable to a Father's; it implies deſigned Benefit, by Correction that he exerciſes unto Profit. And in the Word, *our*, is implied, that God is the Father of every Believer, the weakeſt as well as the ſtrongeſt; we are all the Children of God, through Faith in *Chriſt Jeſus:* And it points out our Duty alſo, that as there is one God and Father of all, ſo all Believers ſhould be of one Heart, and one Mind amongſt themſelves.

Note farther, what it is which our Apoſtle attributes and aſcribes unto God; namely, *Glory*, and that *for Ever and Ever*; Glory; that is, the Manifeſtation of all his glorious Excellencies and Perfections.

Hence learn, that it is the fervent Deſire of all Believers to have the Worth and Excellencies of God everlaſtingly acknowledged, and in a boundleſs Manner diſplay'd; *unto God be Glory, for Ever and Ever*.

Theſe Words, *for Ever and Ever*, are, upon different Accounts, the ſaddeſt and ſweeteſt Words in all the Bible; when applied to the Excellencies of God, and our Intereſt in them, no Words like them for Comfort, this God is our God, *for Ever and Ever*. O raviſhing Conſolation! But when applied to Sinners, and what they ſuffer from God, as the due Deſert of their Sins, then they are Words of the ſaddeſt Weight; *Rev.* xiv. 11. *The Smoak of their Torment aſcended up for ever and ever.*

ever. 2 Theſſ. i. 9. *They ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord.* 'Tis the Words *for Ever and Ever*, that ſets all Hell a Roaring; and 'tis the ſame Words that fill Heaven with Joy and Rejoicing. *To God and our Father be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

Q. *What Remarks do you make on the Salutation, in the latter Part of this Chapter?*

A. Our Apoſtle cloſes his Letter with reſpective Salutations; he ſalutes, in his own Name, all and every Saint in *Chriſt Jeſus*; the Soul of the pooreſt and meaneſt Saint was not neglected by this great Apoſtle; he loved the Brotherhood, the whole Fraternity of Believers, the whole Society of Saints: All Church-members are Saints, by external and viſible Profeſſion, and ought to be ſo by internal Renovation and ſpiritual Regeneration; and one as well as the other are here ſaluted by the Apoſtle; *Salute every Saint in* Chriſt Jeſus.

Next he ſends the Salutations of all the Brethren that were with him, and of all the Saints that were at *Rome*, all thoſe whom he had there converted to *Chriſtianity*, and particularly ſome of thoſe that were in *Nero's* Family, and here called *Cæſar's Houſhold.*

Where note, that ſuch a mighty Efficacy had the preaching of the Goſpel, accompanied with the Influences of the Holy Spirit, that it entered the Houſes of the greateſt Perſecutors, and changed the Hearts of ſome, who were moſt unlikely to receive and entertain it.

Behold, here are ſome in bloody *Nero's* Family converted to *Chriſt*, by the Preaching of the Goſpel, thoſe of *Cæſar's Houſhold.*

Note farther, that God ſometimes endues the Profeſſors of the Goſpel in general, and young Converts in particular, with ſuch a Spirit of Zeal and Courage, Magnanimity, and holy Reſolutions, that they dare lift up a Banner for Truth, and publickly own the deſpiſed Members of *Chriſt*, without either Shame or Fear, *Thoſe of* Cæſar's *Houſhold Greet and Salute you.* More eſpecially they of *Nero* the Emperor's own Family and Court, his Domeſticks, *Chap.* i. 13. It ſhews that even there were ſome truly pious and devout *Chriſtians*; but notwithſtanding the Conjecture of ſome, there is no real Evidence, that *Seneca* was of that Number; ſince it's certain he was not a Courtier, but a Senator, and never left any real Token, that we read of, that he was a *Chriſtian.*

Q. *How does he conclude this Epiſtle?*

A. He ſhuts up all with his uſual Apoſtolical Benediction: *The Grace of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *be with you all. Amen.* By *Grace*, we are to underſtand the free Favour of God, as the Fountain; and all good Things as ſo many Streams from that Fountain; this is called *the Grace of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe purchaſed by his Merit, and applied by his Interceſſion. This Grace he prays may be with them, in the ſweet Effects of it, and in the ſenſible Apprehenſions of it, to enlighten, ſanctify, comfort, and quicken them the more; knowing the exceeding Riches of Grace, which we have in *Chriſt Jeſus* our Lord, let us glorify him, eminently and abundantly; and as we have all Things by him, let us do all Things for him, and to his Glory. Amen.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO THE

COLOSSIANS.

THIS Epiſtle *to the* Coloſſians *was written by St.* Paul *while a Priſoner at* Rome, *about the ſame Time in which he wrote the foregoing* Epiſtle *to the* Philippians.

THE Apoſtle's Deſign in this Epiſtle *is to guard and ſecure the converted* Coloſſians *againſt two Sorts of falſe Teachers; the firſt, thoſe* Judaizing *Doctors, converted from* Judaiſm *to* Chriſtianity, *who thought to impoſe upon them Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, long before aboliſhed by the Death of* Chriſt. *The other Sort of falſe Teachers againſt whom this* Epiſtle *is written, were ſuch Perſons as were converted from* Gentiliſm *to* Chriſtianity, *who obtruded upon the* Coloſſians *their Philoſophical Speculations, and ſome of their* Heatheniſh *Practices, particularly their Worſhipping of Angels under this Notion then, (as the* Romiſh *Church now) that Almighty God is ſuch an infinitely glorious Being, that ſinful Man, muſt not dare to approach him, without the Interpoſition of Angels, as Mediators between God and them.*

NOW, in Oppoſition to both theſe ſorts of falſe Teachers, St. Paul *ſhews the former, that, ſince the Death of* Chriſt, Chriſtians *were under no Obligation to obſerve Circumciſion, or any Part of the Ceremonial Law; and convinces the latter, that* Chriſt, *and not Angels, was appointed the Mediator between God and Man; and that we being reconciled to God by him, have Acceſs through him unto God in all our Neceſſities.*

CHAP. I.

The uſual Salutation, and Thankſgiving for their Faith in Chriſt *and its Fruits.* Epaphras, *a faithful Teacher. His Prayer and Thanks on their Behalf.* Chriſt *the Image of God; all Things created by him; he is Head of the Church, and by his Blood are all Things reconciled, and this in order to their Salvation. He encourages them to receive* Jeſus Chriſt, *and commendeth his own Miniſtry.*

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve generally upon this Epiſtle to the* Coloſſians?

A. This Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians* contains many of the ſame Things, often the ſame Words, with that to the *Epheſians*; particularly the Salutation.

Q. *How does he begin his Addreſs to them?*

A. The Apoſtle, to evidence his Love to the *Coloſſians*, aſſures them, that himſelf and *Timothy*, from the Time they heard of their Converſion, had not ceaſed to give ſolemn Thanks to God for it, and particularly for their Faith in *Chriſt*, and for the Love which they bore to all Saints, to all their Brethren and Fellow-Members in *Chriſt*.

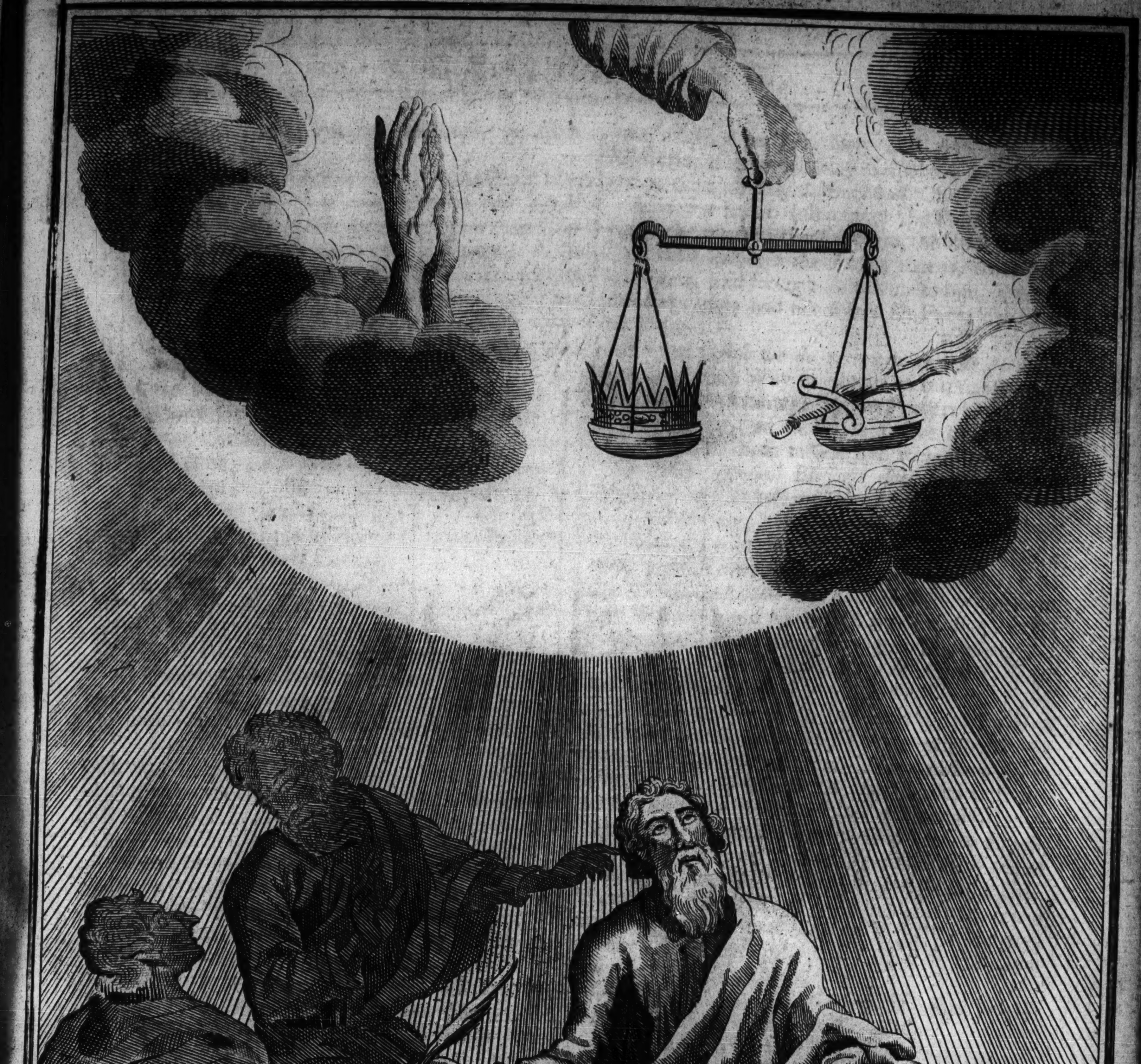
To God St. *Paul* offers up his Prayers and Praiſes; intimating, that religious Invocation and Adoration belong only to God; not to any Creature, who can neither know, nor is able to ſupply our Wants.

Q. *Why does he call God* the Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

A. He is, with reſpect both to his divine and human Nature; in reſpect of his Deity; he is of the ſame Eſſence with the Father, begotten of him from all Eternity; and in reſpect of Humanity, he is his Father, being as Man, conceived by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. *What*

The Epiſtle of Paul the Apoſtle to the COLOSSIANS.



He thanketh God for their faith, prayeth for their Increaſe of grace, and deſcribeth the true Chriſt.

Q. *What does St.* Paul *thank God for in Particular?*

A. 1. For their *Faith in* Jeſus Chriſt; *Chriſt* alone is the proper Object of our Affiance and Truſt; and by Faith we repoſe the entire Truſt and Confidence of our Souls upon the Sufficiency of his Merits. 2. *For their Love to all the Saints.* Faith and Love are inſeparable Companions; there is a neceſſary Connection between them; Faith without Love is no living Grace, and Love without Faith is no ſaving Grace.

Love is that brotherly Affection which every *Chriſtian* bears to all his Fellow-Members in *Chriſt*, for Grace's Sake; now the Love of Grace in another being ſo good an Evidence of the Life of Grace in ourſelves, hence it was that St. *Paul*, hearing of the *Coloſſians* Love to all the Children of God, ceaſes not to give Thanks unto God for it, as the Fruit and Evidence of their Converſion.

Q. *What induced the* Coloſſians *to that Perſeverance and Steadineſs in the Faith for which he commends them?*

A. The Motive which excited the *Coloſſians* to ſuch Steadineſs and Conſtancy in the Faith of *Chriſt*, and in Love one to another, was, *the Hope laid up for them in Heaven*; that is, the great and good Things here hoped for, and there to be enjoy'd. As the Sinner's Miſery conſiſts not in what he feels, but in what he fears, ſo the Believer's Happineſs lies not in what he has in Hand, but in what he has in Hope; the Reward which encourages his Perſeverance in Faith and Love, is *laid up in Heaven*, that is, ſafely and plentifully, as a Parent lays up his Treaſure for the Uſe of his Children.

Q. *By what Means did they come to the Knowledge of this Hope?*

A. The Means was, by *the Word of Truth*, the Preaching the Goſpel to them by the Miniſtry of *Epaphras*; this God ſo exceedingly bleſſed to them, that thereby the ſaving Hope of this Reward was wrought in them. The Goſpel is eminently *the Word of Truth*, having *Chriſt* for its main Subject, who *is the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, and being confirmed by *Chriſt* the Teſtator's Blood.

Q. *What Character does the Apoſtle give of the Goſpel?*

A. The Goſpel, which had begun in theſe *Coloſſians* a lively Hope of the heavenly Reward, is commended for being one and the ſame Goſpel which was preached by the Apoſtles throughout all the World, which is come unto you, *as it is the World*, that is, with incredible Swiftneſs into the moſt eminent Parts and Places of the World then known; an infallible Proof the Divinity of the Goſpel, that it was thus owned and bleſſed of God. The Goſpel, at all Times, and in all Places, is one and the ſame; and *Chriſt*, when he pleaſes, can ſwiftly drive the Chariot of the Goſpel round about the World, and bring in not only Perſons and Families, but Cities, Nations, and Kingdoms to the Obedience of it.

The Goſpel preached to them is commended for its Fruitfulneſs and Charity towards Men.

Q. *By whom was the Goſpel firſt preached to the* Coloſſians?

A. The Perſon who firſt preached the Goſpel to the *Coloſſians*, and converted them to the *Chriſtian* Faith, ſeems to have been *Epaphras*; *as ye learned of* Epaphras. And great is the Character St. *Paul* gives of this Miniſter, he calls him his Fellow-Labourer in Preaching and diſpenſing the Myſteries of the everlaſting Goſpel to a loſt World; and to them *a faithful Miniſter of* Chriſt.

As a particular Inſtance of the Faithfulneſs of *Epaphras* towards the *Coloſſians*, he declares to St. *Paul* their *Love in the Spirit*; that is, their ſpiritual Love, and fervent Affection to him, though, probably, they had never ſeen his Face, nor heard his Voice.

For this Cauſe we do not ceaſe to pray for you; there is no ſuch Way to obtain an Intereſt in, and Benefit and Advantage by the Prayers of the Miniſters of God, as to be expreſſive of our Love and Affection, both to God and them.

Q. *What eſpecial Bleſſings does he pray for in Behalf of the* Coloſſians?

A. Theſe are, that they might be filled with the *Knowledge of his Will*; that is, attain to a more perfect and comprehenſive Knowledge of God's Will, and their Duty, furniſhed with all divine Wiſdom, and ſpiritual Underſtanding, to regulate their Lives according to their Knowledge.

Q. *Why is Divine Knowledge here called* Spiritual Underſtanding?

A. Becauſe it is from the Holy Spirit, and is converſant about ſpiritual Things, which far exceeds the moſt refined Notions concerning other Things; and *Chriſt* tells us, that eternal Life depends upon it, *John* xvii. 3. Spiritual Knowledge fits us for the Service of God here on Earth, and for the Sight of God in Heaven: And *Chriſt* has told us, that he will take a ſecond Journey from Heaven, to render Vengeance to them who know not God, and on them who do know (notionally) but obey not (practically) the Goſpel of our Lord *Jeſus*, 2 Theſſ. i. 1.

Q. *What Reaſon does the Apoſtle aſſign for his praying for their Increaſe of Knowledge?*

A. His Reaſon is, that they might *walk worthy of the Lord unto all Pleaſing, and be fruitful in every good Work*; the true End of Knowledge is practical Obedience. All Knowledge without this, makes a Man like *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Image, with an Head of Gold, and Feet of Clay. Some Perſons ſtudy to know, only to know, that's Curioſity; others endeavour to know, only to make themſelves known; that's Vain-glory; but to know, that we may practiſe what we know, this is Goſpel-Liberty.

Q. *But how can a Perſon be ſaid to* walk worthy of the Lord!

A. Not with a Worthineſs of Merit, but of Meekneſs, when we walk as becomes Perſons profeſſing Godlineſs, *as becomes the Goſpel of* Jeſus Chriſt, in Obedience to his Precepts, in Imitation of his Pattern, anſwerable to the Helps and Supplies of Grace which the Goſpel affords, and anſwerable to the high and glorious Hopes which the Goſpel raiſes us to the Expectation of, that is, *to walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleaſing*.

Q. *Pray explain the ſecond Branch of the Apoſtle's Prayer,* that they might be fruitful in every good Work?

A. That is, labour after an univerſal Fruitfulneſs in good Works.

By *good Works*, he undoubtedly means, Works of Piety towards God, Works of Righteouſneſs towards our Neighbours, of Sobriety towards ourſelves, and of Charity towards all.

By *Fruitfulneſs* in theſe good Works, he means an unwearied Diligence, and perſevering Conſtancy, in the doing of them, that our Fruitfulneſs be an univerſal, an humble, a ſelf-denying, a proportionable, an abounding, and abiding Fruitfulneſs; this is to be *Fruitful in every good Work.*

Q. *What is the Purport of his third Petition?*

A. His third Requeſt is, That they may *increaſe in the Knowledge of God.* As Fruitfulneſs in good Works makes much for the Increaſe of Knowledge, ſo increaſing in Knowledge will very much contribute towards our increaſing in good Works; the Way to grow in Grace, is *to grow in the Knowledge of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Pet.* iii. 11.

Q. *What is the next Thing he prays for on their Account?*

A. The Apoſtle next pleads with God to ſtrengthen them with an Almighty Power, patiently and joyfully to ſuffer the ſharpeſt Afflictions.

The Croſs of *Chriſt*, or Sufferings for *Chriſt*, are unavoidable, but not inſupportable: Though they will ſhock an ordinary Patience, and Conſtancy of Mind, yet *all Might, and glorious Power,* which is here deſired for us, and elſe-where promiſed to us, can and will enable us to ſtand under them.

All Patience is abſolutely and indiſpenſaby neceſſary to enable a *Chriſtian* to bear ſome Trials, and to glorify God in an afflicted Condition. All Patience is neceſſary to the chearful bearing of Afflictions; that is, Patience at all Times, under all Croſſes; Patience, if poſſible, without any Mixture of Impatience; Patience that may give a Man Poſſeſſion of himſelf, and quiet the whole Man, the Tongue, the Hand, and the Heart. Such Meaſures and Degrees of Patience as will keep the Heart from ſinking, the Tongue from complaining, and the Hand from revenging.

The Apoſtle next gives us a Deſcription of Heaven, or the bleſſed State of good Men in another World; 'tis *an Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

Q. *In what Senſe is Heaven* the Inheritance of the Saints in Light?

A. 'Tis *an Inheritance*; now that is a Poſſeſſion only proper to Children. 'Tis an unmerited, undeſerved Poſſeſſion, and 'tis the beſt Donative a Father has to give to his Children. This Inheritance of Heaven which God gives to all, and to every one of his Children, is the freeſt, the moſt delightful, and the moſt durable Inheritance.

Heaven is the Inheritance of Saints, or of holy Perſons only, ſuch as are really, univerſally, and perſeveringly holy; to them only it belongs; 'tis purchaſed for them, 'tis promiſed to them, 'tis given them; they already have the Firſt-fruits of it in the Spirit's inhabitation, which is given them as an Earneſt of Heaven; it is prepared for them, and they are prepared for that, and it ſhall be finally adjudged to them at the great and laſt Day.

'Tis an Inheritance *in Light*; that is, an Inheritance with God; an Inheritance in Joy, in Glory, and a common Inheritance for all the Saints, as if there were but one to poſſeſs and enjoy it.

Q. *What is the Qualification of the Perſons who are to be made Partakers of this glorious Inheritance?*

A. It is, that they are *made meet*; that is, fit, prepared, and ready for this Inheritance while they live. Our Perſons muſt be juſtified by the Blood of *Chriſt*, our Natures renewed by his Grace and Spirit, and our Lives daily more conformable to his Doctrine and Example, or we can never partake of this Inheritance; without Likeneſs to God, we can have no Expectation of living with him.

Q. *What is the Duty of thoſe who are thus qualified for this glorious Inheritance?*

A. It is eternal Thankfulneſs, *Giving Thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet.* As none ſhall enjoy this Inheritance but thoſe that are made meet for it; ſo all thoſe who are made meet for it, muſt aſcribe their Meetneſs to God, and give him Thanks for it. 'Tis a ſpiritual Bleſſing; 'tis a tranſcendent, a diſcriminating, an everlaſting Favour; Eternity will be too ſhort to ſpend in the Admiration of it, and in Gratulations for it; let us now begin to work upon Earth, for his making us *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the* 12th *Verſe,* Who hath delivered us from the Power of Darkneſs, and hath tranſlated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son?

A. Who hath delivered us from the Power of Darkneſs. The Deliverer is God the Father; all that are made meet for the Inheritance in Light, were once under the Power of ſpiritual Darkneſs, from which God hath reſcued us by a ſtrong Hand, as the Word imports, as *Lot* was delivered out of *Sodom.*

Every Soul, by Nature, is in a State of Darkneſs; Sin originally ſprings from Darkneſs, naturally delights in it, and ultimately leads to it; and it is God alone who can deliver a Soul from it. Such is the Ignorance and Blindneſs of the Underſtanding, ſuch the Rebellion that is found in the Sinner's Will, ſo great the Irregularity and Diſorder of the Affections, and indeed of the whole Soul, that the Sinner is not only unable to deliver himſelf, but ſtands in a direct Oppoſition to the Grace of God, which works Deliverance for him, till of unwilling, he is made willing in the Day of *Chriſt's* Power, *Pſal.* cx. 3.

And tranſlated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son; that is, brought us into a Goſpel-ſtate, made us Members and Subjects of his Kingdom of Grace, and Heirs of his Kingdom of Glory.

Chriſt is here called God's Son, being ſo by an eternal and ineffable Generation; not on Account of his miraculous Conception only, nor only in Regard of his Sanctification and Miſſion, nor in Regard of his Reſurrection, the Dignity and Dearneſs of his Perſon chiefly; but he is *very God of very God, begotten of his Father, by whom all Things were made*; for Nature co-eſſential, for Dignity co-equal, and for Duration co-eternal with the Father, and conſequently truly and really God; and he that denies the Divinity of the Son, in God's Account, denies the Father alſo.

Chriſt, as God's dear Son, is a ſpiritual King, and exerciſes a kingly Power in and over the Souls of thoſe whom he hath delivered from the Power of Darkneſs, whom he will at length certainly tranſlate into his Kingdom of Glory.

Q. *What is the Import of thoſe Words, Verſe* 14, In whom we have Redemption?

A. That is, the Fruit and Benefit of *Chriſt's* Redemption, which eminently conſiſts in *Remiſſion of Sin.*

Here note the deplorable State into which Sin brought the whole Race of Mankind; namely, a State of Slavery, a ſpiritual Captivity unto Sin; Redemption ſuppoſes this; Slaves and Captives need a Redeemer, none elſe. From this Slavery there was no Delivery, but by a Peace paid down to the Juſtice of God: Redemption is a Delivery by a Ranſom and Price; which Price was the Blood of *Chriſt*; we have *Redemption through his Blood*.

The Forgiveneſs of Sin, or a full and final Diſcharge from the Guilt of Sin, and Obnoxiouſneſs to the Wrath of God, was one ſpecial Fruit of *Chriſt's* Redemption; he died to deliver us from the Wrath of God, and from the Rage of our Luſts too, otherwiſe he had but ſeal'd us a Patent to ſin with Impunity.

Q. *The Apoſtle next deſcribes the Perſon of the Redeemer in ſuch lofty Characters, as evidently beſpeak him to be a divine Perſon, truly and really God, and conſequently the fitteſt Perſon to undertake ſo great and glorious a Work as the Redemption and Salvation of a loſt and periſhing World: Pray explain the ſeveral Parts of his Character here given?*

A. He is *the Image of the inviſible God*; that is, his natural and eſſential Image; that is, in reſpect of his eternal Generation, as God; as a Child whom we call the expreſs Image of the Father, is of the ſame Nature with his Father, ſo is *Chriſt* of the ſame Eſſence and Nature with God; his Nature is the ſame, his Attributes and Works the ſame, the Worſhip given him the ſame; Faith and Affiance in him the ſame; *John* xi. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.*

Again; *Chriſt* is the Image of the inviſible God, as God-man; by him, as a lively Image, did God the Father ſet forth unto us his glorious Attributes of Wiſdom, Mercy, Righteouſneſs, and Power; the Firſt Perſon in the Godhead is call'd inviſible to the Patriarchs; but the Son was frequently viſible, as a Prelude to his Incarnation, in which he appear'd viſible to all.

He is the firſt-born of every Creature; that is, he was before every Creature, and therefore he himſelf cannot be a Creature. The Apoſtle expreſly ſays, *that he is before all Things*; that is, *Chriſt* had a Being before there was any created; he was before all Creatures, in Point of Dignity as well as Duration. Thus *Revel.* iii. 14. *Chriſt* calls himſelf the *Beginning of the Creation of God*, that is, the principal and efficient Cauſe of the Creation, and ſo could not be a Creature himſelf, but conſequently muſt neceſſarily have been God from all Eternity with the Father.

Or, by *the firſt-born of every Creature*, may be underſtood, that he was the Lord and Heir of all the Creatures; in Alluſion to the firſt-born among the *Jews* of old, who were Lords over their Brethren, *Gen.* xxvii. 37. *Behold, I have made him thy Lord*; the firſt Lord is natural Heir, and Heir antiently ſignified Lord. Now *Chriſt* is ſaid, *Acts* x. 20. *to be Lord of all*; and *Rom.* iv. 14. he is call'd *Heir of all Things*. Well then may *Chriſt* be ſaid to be the Lord and Heir of all Things, when *all Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made that was made!*

The *Socinians* then have no Ground from hence to reckon *Chriſt* among the Number of Creatures, he having a Being antecedent to all Creatures; yea, being Lord of the whole Creation; and accordingly the Apoſtle ſtiling him here *the firſt-born of every Creature*, never deſign'd to inſinuate that the Son of God is a Creature, as is evident from what follows.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon theſe Words*, Verſe 16. For by him were all Things created?

A. Here mark the Connection; the Apoſtle had juſt affirm'd, that *Chriſt* was the firſt-born of Creatures, namely, becauſe *by him were all Things created, and by him all Things conſiſt*; now, if all Things were created by him, ſurely he himſelf cannot be a Creature.

The Senſe of the Apoſtle's Words runs thus: *Chriſt* is the Image of the inviſible God, the Heir and Lord of the whole Creation, *for by him all Things were created*; he that created all Things cannot himſelf be a Creature; for it's impoſſible that a Creature ſhould create itſelf.

Note farther, *Chriſt* is here repreſented as the Creator of the Univerſe; *all Things were made by him in Heaven, and in Earth*, all the Angels in their ſeveral Orders, Degrees, and Dignities.

All Things were created for him, as well as *by him*, for the Manifeſtation of his own Glory, as God; he that was the firſt Cauſe, muſt be the laſt End; and accordingly, all the Creatures throughout the whole Creation give Glory to *Chriſt*, ſome in a paſſive Way, as Devils and damn'd Spirits; ſome in an objective Way, as Sun, Moon, and Stars, giving us Occaſion to glorify the Power and Wiſdom of their great Creator.

Since then the whole Creation was at firſt made, and is ſtill upheld by the Power of *Chriſt*, it proves him to be evidently and undeniably God. Vain here is the *Socinian* Evaſion, who by Creation, underſtand Renovation of the Mind, and a Reformation of Manners under the Goſpel; for *Chriſt* is here ſaid to create all Things in Heaven, that is, particularly the Angels in Heaven; but they having kept their firſt Station, wanted no Renovation, ſo that it muſt be underſtood of the firſt Creation of the natural World, and not of the Renovation of the moral World.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words*, Verſe 18. He is the Head of the Body, the Church?

A. As the Head and the Members make one Body, ſo *Chriſt* and his People conſtitute one Church; he is of the ſame Nature (as Man) with his Church; he pours forth of the ſame Spirit upon his Church; he is both an Head of Authority, and of Influence to his Church; he ſympathizes with her in her Sufferings on Earth, and longs for the full Fruition of final Enjoyment of her in Heaven.

He is the Beginning of the *Chriſtian* Church, the Root, the Fountain, and Foundation of it, the active Beginning, or the firſt Principle and Author of it, and of all thoſe Influences of Grace and ſpiritual Life, which animate and enliven it.

Q. *Why is* Chriſt *call'd, in the ſame Verſe*, the firſt-born from the Dead?

A. He is call'd the firſt-born from the Dead, becauſe he was the firſt that aroſe to an immortal Life, never to die more; others that were raiſed to Life, beſides him, died again, but Death had no more Dominion over him: Becauſe likewiſe he was the principal and efficient Cauſe of the Reſurrection; all that were raiſed before were raiſed by him, by a Power derived from him; and becauſe he is the exemplary Cauſe of the Reſurrection; his Members are not only raiſed by him, but alſo like unto him.

Q. *What other Qualifications had our bleſſed Redeemer?*

A. Another admirable Qualification of our Redeemer for his Work, was, that there was a perfect and complete Fulneſs of all divine Graces and Excellencies dwelling in the Mediator, and that by the Pleaſure and Appointment of God the Father; there is in him a Fulneſs of Merit for our Juſtification, of Wiſdom for our Direction, of Power for our Preſervation, of Mercy, Pity and Compaſſion to relieve and ſuccour us in all our Diſtreſſes.

One ſpecial Reaſon why all Fulneſs dwelt in the Redeemer, was, to fit him for the great Work and Office of a Mediator or Reconciler, that ſo he might happily make up that Breach which Sin had made between God and the World, having remov'd the Enmity which was betwixt them by his Death and Sufferings, call'd here *the Blood of his Croſs*, that is, the Blood which he freely and voluntarily ſhed upon the Croſs.

Q. *What were thoſe Things in Heaven which* Chriſt *is ſaid to recocile, Verſe* 20?

A. By Things in Heaven, ſome unerſtand the bleſſed Angels; but there being no Breach between God and them, *Chriſt* could not be the Author of Reconciliation, though he was an Head of Confirmation to them.

Others underſtand it of a Reconciliation between the Angels and Man, thus; whilſt Man continued in his Obedience to God, Angels and Men were in a State of perfect Friendſhip one with another; but when Man rebelled againſt God, the Angels became averſe to Man for that Rebellion; but God being reconciled to Men, by the Death of his Son, the Angels are become Friends, and miniſtring Spirits to us, and both they and we conſtitute one Church under *Chriſt*, the Head thereof.

But others, by *Things in Heaven,* underſtand not the Angels, but the Saints departed, the Patriarchs, Prophets, and all the Faithful now in Heaven, or here on Earth, they were all reconciled, in order to their being ſaved; intimating, that the Blood of *Chriſt* did expiate the Guilt of thoſe Perſons who lived before him, as well as thoſe that died after him; he reconciled all Things in Heaven, capable of Reconciliation, appointed to it, and that ſtood in need of it.

Q. *By what Means was this Reconciliation effected?*

A. The inſtrumental Means by which all this was effected, was, by the *Blood of the Croſs*; to make up the Breach betwixt God and the fallen Creature, coſt the Mediator no leſs than his precious Blood.

Q. *Pray what is the next Point the Apoſtle ſpeaks to?*

A. I the next Place, the Apoſtle ſets before the *Coloſſians* the deplorable Condition they were in before their Converſion; they were Strangers, nay, Enemies to God; *Enemies in their Minds*, which implies a deep-rooted Enmity, even to hate God, not as Creator, but as Law-giver; not as a Benefactor, but as a Judge and Revenger of Sin.

Iou hath he reconciled; not only purchaſed Reconciliation for them, but, by his Word and Spirit, wrought upon their Hearts, to accept of Terms of Peace and Reconciliation with God.

The Way and Means by which *Chriſt* effected this Work of Reconciliation for them and us, was, by taking upon him a true Body, ſubject to fleſhly Infirmities, though without Sin; and, in that Body, ſuffering Death for us, that we might be preſented, at the laſt Day, perfectly holy unto God.

Q. *What do thoſe Words import, Verſe* 23. If ye continue in Faith, grounded and ſettled?

A. This implies, that the beſt Way for *Chriſtians* to be ſettled in their Faith, is to be well-grounded; if we are not ſettled in Religion, we can never grow in Religion; and if we are not well grounded in the Faith, we can never ſuffer for the Faith; ſuch as are *Scepticks* in Religion, will never be Martyrs for it.

Q. *Pray explain this Clauſe in the ſame Verſe,* which was preached to every Creature under Heaven?

A. That is, to loſt Mankind, to ſome of all Sorts; not in *Judea* only, but amongſt the *Gentiles* alſo; to every human Creature, no Perſon, no Nation being refuſed, or paſſed by; an univerſal Tender of Reconciliation with God, and Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt*, is made to all Perſons, by the preaching of the Goſpel.

The Apoſtle adds, I am not only contented with, but greatly rejoice in my Sufferings for you, converted *Gentiles*, and help, as much as in me lies, to fill up ſome Part of that which is, by God's Decree, behind unfulfilled of the Sufferings of *Chriſt*, in my Fleſh, for his Body's ſake, which is the Church.

Note, that the Sufferings of *Chriſt*'s Members, are the Sufferings of *Chriſt* their Head, being undergone for the ſake of the Head. *Chriſt*, in his natural Body can ſuffer no more; but in his myſtical Body, in his Members, he daily ſuffers, and will ſuffer, till the Meaſure of Sufferings be filled upon which God hath determined; they muſt ſuffer for Example to others, for perfecting their own Graces, and for increaſing of their Glory.

Q. *What Reaſon does the Apoſtle aſſign, why he underwent his Sufferings ſo chearfully?*

A. Becauſe he was a Miniſter of the Church, by the ſpecial Diſpenſation of God, to preach the Myſteries of the Goſpel to the *Gentile* World.

The Doctrine of Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt*, as a Redeemer, was long hid from the Knowledge of the *Gentiles*; and that at laſt they were brought to the Knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Participation of Goſpel Privileges, was a great Myſtery awfully to be admired, and a glorious Mercy moſt thankfully to be acknowledged, *to whom God would make known what is the Riches of the Glory of this Myſtery among the* Gentiles, *which is* Chriſt, *in you the Hope of Glory*; which Goſpel preach'd amongſt you, and entertain'd by you, is an Earneſt and Ground of your Hope of Glory.

Whom we preach. Chriſt was the Manner and great End of his Preaching. The Manner of St. *Paul*'s Preaching, was by informing the Underſtanding and Judgment, by directing the Practice, warning Men of the Evil of Sin, and of the Danger of continuing in it.

The End of his Preaching was, to preſent every Man perfect in *Chriſt Jeſus*; that is, to render them complete both in Knowledge and Obedience, by informing their Judgments, and directing their Practice.

Chap. II.

His Care for them that they might be confirmed in Chriſt, *and not ſeduced by Philoſophy, or the Inſtitutions*

ſtitutions of the Law; for the Godhead dwells bodily in Chriſt, *in whom we are made perfect and ſpiritually circumciſed, of which Baptiſm is a Seal.* Chriſt *has aboliſhed the Ceremonial Law, triumphed over Satan, and taken away the Difference of Meats and Times. Againſt worſhipping of Angels, and all ſelf-will Worſhip.*

Q. H*OW does the Apoſtle begin this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter begins with St. *Paul*'s Declaration of the holy Agony he was in, and the conflict he had with himſelf, on account of the *Coloſſians*; *I would that ye knew what great Conflict I have for you*; namely, by Prayer, Care, Study, and Endeavour to do you good.

The Ground and Occaſion of this paſſionate Concern of the Apoſtle for the *Coloſſians*, is, there was a Number of Men riſen up, who began very early to corrupt the Purity and Simplicity of the Goſpel and the *Chriſtian* Religion: A Sort they were of Judaizing, and partly Paganizing *Chriſtians*; the former joined the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies, the latter the *Gentile* Impurities, even in Worſhip with the *Chriſtian* Religion.

The Urgency of this Caſe put the ſollicitous and concerned Spirit of this great Apoſtle into an inexpreſſible Agony, as well for the *Coloſſians* as for their Neighbours of *Laodicea, and for as many as have not ſeen my Face in the Fleſh.*

The Men of the World little know, and leſs conſider; what Burden of ſollicitous Care lies upon the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, for, and on the behalf of the whole Church of *Chriſt* in general, which is continually in Danger of being corrupted by falſe Teachers, who every-where lie in wait to deceive.

Q. *What Expedient does he propoſe to avoid the Danger threaten'd?*

A. Mutual Love to one another, and a clear and efficacious Faith of the Goſpel; by theſe he reckons they will be ſo cloſely compacted together, as that no Subtilty or Violence could endanger them: If by Faith they kept cloſe to God and *Chriſt*, and by Love, to one another, he firmly believed they would give no Enemies an Opportunity, either to be the ſucceſsful Authors, or the delighted Spectators of their Ruin.

Q. *Pray explain the 3d Verſe,* In whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge.

A. That is, in *Jeſus Chriſt* and in his Goſpel, *all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge* are laid up as in a Store-houſe; and from thence only are they to be expected and derived. The Knowledge of *Chriſt* and his Goſpel is an extenſive and comprehenſive Knowledge, rich and inriching; the richeſt Gain is Loſs, and the richeſt Treaſure Dung, when *Chriſt*'s Riches are diſplay'd; and after all that we have or can attain unto of the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, no human Underſtanding can fathom the Depth of it.

Q. *What is farther to be noted in the Apoſtle's Concern for the* Coloſſians?

A. Farther; it is obſervable, how exceedingly deſirous the Apoſtle was, that the *Coloſſians* might continue ſound in the *Chriſtian* Faith, and be preſerved out of the Hands of falſs Teechers, who by falſe Arguments and enſnaring Peaſuaſions ſought to beguile them.

In Matters of Religion we are in greater Danger from the ſubtil Seducer, than we are from the fiery Perſecutor; ſophiſtical Arguments, and inſinuating Perſuaſions, captivate thoſe Perſons, whom Violenee could never bring over to their Party; therefore is our Apoſtle ſo earneſt with the *Coloſſians*, that none ſhould *beguile them with enticing Words.*

Another Reaſon of the Apoſtle's ſollicitous Care for them, is, his fervent Affection to them, notwithſtanding his great Diſtance from them; for though not in Body, yet in Mind he was preſent with them; and having received from *Epaphras* an Account of the good Order and Government of their Cnurch, and of their Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith in *Chriſt*, the Notices thereof were Matter of exceeding Joy and Rejoicing to him; *Tho' abſent in the Fleſh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying*, &c.

Therefore, as you have received the Doctrine of *Chriſt Jeſus*, by the Preaching of *Epaphras*, and therein have embraced *Chriſt* by Faith, ſo do you conſtantly adhere to that Doctrine, conforming your Lives thereunto; and ſeeing you are thus implanted into *Chriſt*, be like Trees well and deepty rooted in him, or like an Houſe firmly built upon him, as the only ſure and abiding Foundation.

Q. *What other Cautions does he give the* Coloſſians?

A. Our Apoſtle next warns the *Coloſſians* againſt all the Enemies of Chriſtianity, whether *Pagan* or *Jewiſh*, for the Goſpel was oppoſed by both. The Heathen Philoſophers and wiſe Men amuſed the *Chriſtians* with their vain Speculations: The *Jewiſh* Teachers were for impoſing upon them the Levitical Rites, which he calls Rudiments or Elements fitted for the Infancy of the Church; but theſe Things were not now after *Chriſt*, not according to his Mind and Doctrine.

But obſerve, it is not Philoſophy, as ſuch, which St. *Paul* wars them againſt; for true and ſound Philoſophy improves our Reaſon, is the Guide of our Faculties, and teaches us the true Knowledge of God to ourſelves, and is no Hindrance, but a great Help to Religion; but it was the Philoſophy of the *Greeks* at that Day which is here condemned, becauſe it was vain and empty, fallacious and deceitful. It was vain, becauſe it conduced nothing to true Piety or good Morality; it was deceitful, becauſe it hazarded their Souls, and robb'd them of Happineſs.

Note, the *Moſaic* Rites and legal Ceremonies, as they were preſcribed by God, and adapted to the infant State of the *Jewiſh* Church, had an Excellency in them; but ſince the Coming of *Chriſt*, the Obſervation of them is ſinful, as being an implicit Denial that he is come in the Fleſh; accordingly he warns them to beware of the Philoſophy of the *Greeks*, and the Ceremonial Rites of the *Jews*; neither of which he tells them, were after *Chriſt*, that is, not according to his Inſtitution or Injnnction, but drew the Heart from him; therefore they were both unwarrantable and unſafe.

Q. *Pray expound the 9th Verſe:* For in him dwelleth all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily?

A. It is as if he had ſaid, Suffer not yourſelves to be impoſed on by a lame and imperfect Philoſophy, of which there is now no need, ſince there is introduced an abſolute and complete Doctrine, namely, that of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, which has the Fulneſs of divine Wiſdom in it, and the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling bodily in himſelf, that is, perſonally and ſubſtantially.

The Apoſtle does not ſay, that the Godhead is aſſiſtant to *Chriſt*, but that it reſides and dwells in him; as the Deity dwelt in the Ark ſymbolically, ſo it dwelt in *Chriſt* bodily.

Again; *Chriſt* is not ſaid to be filled with the Fulneſs of God, as the Church is ſaid to be, *Epheſ.* i. 23. in regard of the Gifts and Graces ſhe had received from him; but the whole Fulneſs of the Godhead is here ſaid to reſide in him, which can argue him to be no leſs than really and truly God, his complete Eſſence dwelling in him. Well therefore might the Apoſtle add, *Ye arr complete in him*; wanting no Requiſite to Salvation, ye need not go to the Philoſophers for Knowledge, for in *Chriſt* you have complete Wiſdom, he is above all *Pagan* Philoſophers and *Jewiſh* Rabbies; nay, he is the Head of *all Principalities and Powers*, that is, above the higheſt Angel in Heaven.

It was the Opinion of the *Pagans*, as it is now of the Popiſh Part of Mankind, that Almighty God was too high to be immediately approached, and therefore they applied themſelves to Angels as Mediators betwixt God and them; but the Apoſtle acquaints them, that the Angel-Mediatorſhip is vain, ſince *Chriſt* is both their Head and Lord.

Q. *How are we* complete in *Chriſt*.

A. That we are ſo the Apoſtle thus proves: We want no Circumciſion; Why? Becauſe we have in *Chriſt* the Thing ſignified by Circumciſion, namely, the ſpiritual Circumciſion of the Heart, which conſiſts in putting off, by the Power of *Chriſt*'s Spirit, the Body of natural Corruption; which done, there was no need of the outward Circumciſion made with Hands, or the cutting off the Fleſh of the Fore-ſkin.

Original Corruption is a Body, or as a Body to us; it cleaves as cloſe to the Soul, as Fleſh to the Bones. The Body with all its Members we muſt be cutting daily, by ſpiritual Circumciſion or real Mortification; and where that is done, God is well-pleaſed; he regards not that outward Circumciſion of the Heart, and of the Spirit, whoſe Praiſe is not of Man, but of God.

Q. *What Analogy is there betwixt* Chriſtian *Baptiſm and the* Jewiſh *Circumciſion?*

A. The Apoſtle ſhews that the Signification, or ſpiritual Intention of both was one and the ſame, obliging all Perſons who took the outward Sign upon them, to put off the old Man, and put on the new; to die unto Sin, and live unto God. Accordingly the Antients made Uſe of divers Ceremonies in baptizing adult or grown Perſons, thereby to repreſent the Death, Burial and Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*, as Immerſion, or putting the Perſon three Times under Water, either as our Saviour was under the Earth three Days, or in Alluſion to the three Perſons in the Trinity, in whoſe Name we are baptized; and likewiſe Emerſion, their coming up out of the Water, reſembling our Lord's ariſing out of the Grave.

Hence it appears that Baptiſm is *Chriſt*'s Ordinance for Infants of believing *Chriſtians*, as Circumciſion was of old for the Infants of believing *Jews*: For if under the Goſpel Infants be not received, by ſome federal Rite, into Covenant with God, they are in a worſe Condition than the Children under the Law; and the Apoſtle could not truly have ſaid, We are *complete in* Chriſt; that is, complete without Circumciſion, as even the *Jewiſh* Church was with it, if we had not the Ordinance of Baptiſm, as good as their Ordinance of Circumciſion. And the *Jews* would certainly have objected it to the Reproach of Chriſtianity, had not the *Chriſtiant* had a Rite of Imitation for their Children, as they (the *Jews*) had of Circumciſion, which ſealed the Covenant to themſelves, and their little ones, and was the Door by which all Perſons enter'd into the *Jewiſh* Church.

Q. *What Effects does Baptiſm produce?*

A. The ſpiritual Fruits and Effects of Baptiſm are Mortification of Sin, and Vivification in Grace, by Virtue of the Death and Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, apprehended by ſuch a Faith, as is of the Operation of God, that is, produced by the Energy of the Goſpel, and the Efficacy of the Holy Spirit.

Hence learn, that neither Sacraments, nor the Death or Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, in themſelves, will avail to the Mortification of Sin, and the quickening of Grace, if *Chriſt* himſelf be not applied to by ſuch a Faith, as is of the ſpecial Operation of God, the Faith of his working, and of his approving; this alone will enable us to die unto Sin, and live unto God.

You being dead in your Sins, without any Hope of ſpiritual Life, and by Reaſon of *Uncircumciſion in your Fleſh*, Aliens from the Church of God, and Strangers to all the Promiſes made to it, hath he quickened and pardoned, having freely *forgiven you all your Treſpaſſes*.

Q. *What does mean by* the Hand-wgriting of Ordinance, *ver.* 18?

A. This is an Alluſion to a Practice amongſt Men, who cancel Bills, Bonds, and Obligations, wherein they ſtood bound, when once the Debt is ſatisfied. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, your Debt of Sin paid to the Juſtice of God by the Death of *Chriſt*; and ſeeing the Obligation is ſatisfied, it would be Madneſs and Impiety to renew it again, as thoſe do who plead for Circumciſion, and Pratice the legal Ceremonies.

Note, there was an *Hand-writing againſt us*, for violating the Commands of the Law. The Obligation muſt be cancelled before the condemning power of the Law can be aboliſhed, and Sin pardoned; none but *Chriſt* could cancel this Obligation; nor he neither without paying the full Sum payable from us. *Chriſt*, when hanging on the Croſs, *nail'd this Hand-writing* to his Croſs, which ſhall never be produced in Judgment againſt the penitent Believer; but this Obligation remains upon the File uncancelled, with reſpect to all Sinners who live and die in their Sins, and they ſhall always be in Priſon, ever ſatisfying, but never able fully to ſatisfy this Obligation.

Chriſt has not only by his Death cancelled this Hand-writing, and nail'd it to his Croſs, but has vanquiſhed and triumphed over all our ſpiritual Enemies; Satan, and all the Powers of Hell are led as ſo many pinion'd Captives before the triumphant Chariot of his Croſs, making them a Spectacle, Shame and Scorn in the Eyes of God, Angels and Men, *having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a ſhew of them openly*, &c.

When Satan and his Agents were ſpoiling even then was *Chriſt* ſpoiling Principalities and

Powers, and triumphing over them, when they were inſulting him: The Serpent now bruiſed our Lord's Heel, but had his own Head and Power for ever broken.

Q. *What Inference does the Apoſtle draw from the foregoing Argument?*

A. That ſeeing the Ceremonial Law was now aboliſhed, therefore none ſhould take upon them to judge or condemn another for not obſerving any of the legal Ceremonies, either thoſe relating to Meats, or thoſe relating to Days.

Q. *What were the Days obſerved among the* Jews?

A. Theſe were of three Sorts: Anniverſary, which returned every Year, called here an holy Day: Lunary, which returned every Month, the firſt Day of the New Moon; Weekly, which returned every Week, and on the ſeventh Day of the Week: All which are abrogated, even the *Jewiſh* ſeventh-day Sabbath; and the Lord's-day, or the *Chriſtian* firſt-day Sabbath, ſubſtituted in its Place, 1 *Cor.* xvi. 2.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon what the Apoſtle ſays about the Difference of Meats?*

A. There is both a unſinful and lawful Abſtinence from ſome Meats on pretence of Holineſs and Conſcience, as if ſome Meats were unclean, or leſs holy in their own Nature than others, 1 *Tim.* iv. 4. or as if, ſimply, Abſtinence were at any Time acceptable to God in itſelf, without reſpect had to the End for which it is ſometimes required.

But there is a threefold Abſtinence from Meat, which is lawful: Political, enjoined by the Magiſtrate for civil Ends; medicinal, preſcribed by the Phyſician for the Preſervation of Health; eccleſiaſtical, when God by his Providence, and the Voice of his Church calls the People to Faſting.

Q. *But what Reaſon does the Apoſtle alledge, why* Chriſtians *ſhould not judge one another, with reſpect to Meats and Drinks, Times and Seaſons?*

A. It is becauſe thoſe legal Ceremonies were but dark Shadows of Things to come; but the Body and Subſtance, repreſented by thoſe Shadows, is *Chriſt come in the Fleſh*; and conſequently, to obſerve thoſe Ceremonies, and regard thoſe Shadows under the Goſpel, is in effect to ſay, that *Chriſt* the Body is not yet come.

Q. *Why is the Ceremonial Worſhip here ſtiled a* Shadow?

A. Becauſe it was a dark and imperfect Repreſentation of the Truth: What is a Shadow, but the coming of a thick Body between us and the Sun? The legal Ceremonies were interpoſed between *Chriſt the true Light* and us, and ſo caſt a Shadow of him.

Chriſt, with reſpect to the Ceremonial Law, is ſtiled the Body and Subſtance of them; now as the Shadow vaniſhes when the Subſtance is come, ſo theſe Ceremonial Ordinances were to ceaſe on the Coming of *Chriſt*; and to obſerve them now under the Goſpel, is in effect to ſay, that *Chriſt* is not yet come to the Fleſh.

Q. *What Account do you give of the* Jewiſh *Sabbath?*

A. The *Jewiſh* Sabbath was a Ceremonial Ordinance, a Part of that Hand-writing of Ordinances which was to be blotted out by *Chriſt*, and conſequently the *Chriſtian* is not obliged to obſerve it. As the Diſtinction of Meats and Drinks, and the Obſervation of the New-Moons, was confeſſedly Ceremonial, ſo was alſo the *Jewiſh* Sabbath, which with the reſt was equally cancelled by *Chriſt*, as a Part of the Hand-writing of Ordinances; ſo that to obſerve the the *Jewiſh* Sabbath, or to condemn the *Chriſtian* for not obſerving it, is as much as a Denial that *Chriſt was come in the Fleſh*, as to obſerve Circumciſion, or any other Part of the Ceremonial Law.

Q. *What other Caution does he give them?*

A. Our Apoſtle having warned the *Coloſſians* againſt the Errors of the Judaizing Teachers, next warns them againſt the Practice of Paganizing *Chriſtians*, who were directed by their Guides to worſhip the Angels, covering their Error with a plauſible Shew of Humility, pretending it was preſumptuous to go to God immediately, without the Mediation of thoſe excellent Creatures; but this, the Apoſtle tells them, was a bold *intruding into Things* they knew nothing of, God having neither revealed nor taught any ſuch Thing; and argued that they were *vainly puffed up* with fooliſh Imaginations of their own *fleſhly Minds*.

Q. *What other Points does he inſtruct them in?*

A. Next he ſhews that theſe Angel-worſhippers do not acknowledge *Chriſt* for Head of the Church, while they apply themſelves to Angels as Mediators; whereas he alone diſcharges the Office of the Head, completely giving Life and Growth to his whole Church, and to every Member thereof; which Members being furniſhed with ſpiritual Life from him, and knit to him and one another *by the Joints aud Bonds* of Charity and other Graces, they grow and increaſe with ſuch an Increaſe of Holineſs as is from God, and tends to his Glory.

It was a Notion that was early, and indeed univerſally imbibed by Mankind, that God was not to be immediately approached by ſinful Men, but that their Prayers were to be preſented by certain Mediators and Interceſſors, who were to procure for them the Favours of God, and the Acceptance of their Prayers. Hence they worſhipped Angels, and the Souls departed of their Heroes, whom they canonized, and tranſlated into the Number of their inferior Gods, by whom they they addreſſed their Supplications to their ſuperior Gods. With this Notion Almighty God was pleaſed ſo far to to comply, as under the *Jewiſh* Inſtitution to appoint *Moſes* a Mediator betwixt him and them; and now under the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation, to appoint *Jeſus Chriſt* to be the only Mediator betwixt God and Man.

Note farther, that is is uſual for Idolaters, and falſe Worſhippers, to cover themſelves with a more than ordinary Shew of *Humility*. All Duties of Worſhip ought indeed to be voluntary, as voluntary is oppoſed to inſtituted and appointed; God does no more approve of that worſhip we give him according to our Will, than he approves of our Neglect of that which is according to his own Will. But vain Man likes any way of worſhiping God which is of his own Framings much better than that which is of God's Appointment.

Q. *What farther is obſervable in this Diſcourſe?*

A. In the Cloſe of this Chapter our Apoſtle returns to expoſtulate with thoſe that were willing to ſubject themſelves to the Obſervation of the old *Jewiſh* Rites and Ceremonies. He argues thus: If you profeſs yourſelves in your Baptiſm, to be ſpiritually dead with *Chriſt*, and to be freed by his Death from the Levitical Ordinances, why are you ſubject to thoſe Ordinances? Such are, *touch not, taſte not, handle not*; touch not any unclean Thing; taſte not any forbidden Meat; handle not any conſecrated Veſſel; all which Obſervances were to periſh neceſſarily with the very uſing. And whereas they were ſet off with a ſpecious Shew of Wiſdom, a Shew of Humility, of Mortification and Auſterity to the Body, and not ſeeming to give any Honour to the ſatisfying of the Fleſh; but all this had nothing of ſpiritual Devotion and Piety in it.

Hence learn, that ſuch as by Baptiſm profeſs themſelves to be *dead with Chriſt* to the Ceremonial Law, may certainly conclude that the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies have no more any Power over them, or that they ought to yield themſelves to the Obſervation of them; *If ye be dead with* Chriſt, *why are ye ſubject to Ordinances?*

Note alſo, that although God accepts willing Worſhip, yet not *will Worſhip*; whatever fair Shew it may ſeem to have, either of Wiſdom, Humility, or Mortification; whatever is the Product of our Fancies, is a very Fornication in Religion, and an Abomination in the Sight of God, how pleaſing ſoever it might be in the Sight of Men; and yet Man is more forward to that Service of God of his own making, than to worſhip the God that made him, and to worſhip him in a Way of his own framing, rather than in the Way which God has appointed.

CHAP. III.

An Exhortation to ſpiritual Mindedneſs; to mortify the old Man with its Affections and Luſts, and to put on the New-man, created after God's Image. The reciprocal Duties of Wives and Husbands; of Children and Parents, of Servants and Maſters.

Q. W*HAT Duties does the Apoſtle exhort the* Coloſſians *to put in Practice in this Chapter?*

A. The firſt is, that of an heavenly Converſation, expreſſed by *ſeeking of, and ſetting their Affections upon Things above, and not on Things below*: In which Words are comprehended theſe four Things. 1. An Act of our Underſtanding, that we know the Worth of theſe Things. 2. An Act of the Will, to chuſe theſe Things, and with the Ardour and Vehemency of our Affections to love them. 3. An Act of Induſtry and Endeavour in the purſuit of theſe Things, if by any Means we may attain them. Our Affections are ſo many Springs of Motion to ſet our Endeavours at Work, for the obtaining of what we love and deſire. 4. It implies a clear Preference of Things above to Things below, when they come in Competition; ſet your Affections on Things above, and ſhew it by your Readineſs to part with Things below.

Q. *What is meant by* Things above, *ver.* 1?

A. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, together with the bleſſed State and Condition of Heaven, and the Happineſs above; as alſo thoſe Diſpoſitions and Qualifications which are requiſite for the obtaining of the Happineſs, and bringing us to the Fruition of it; all theſe are comprehended in the Latitude of the Object, *the Things which are above.*

Q. *What is the Import of thoſe Words,* ye be riſen with *Chriſt?*

A. That is, if ye believe that *Chriſt* is riſen, and if ye will bear a Conformity and Reſemblance to him in his Reſurrection, and be made Partakers of the Power and Virtue of it; for *Chriſt's* Reſurrection is not only a Pattern, but a Principle; it has a Power and Efficacy in it to raiſe us up to a ſpiritual Life; *if ye then be riſen with Chriſt*, ſeek thoſe Things which are above.

Q. *In what Manner does* Chriſt *ſit at the* Right Hand of God?

A. Theſe Words declare the Exaltations of his human Nature, and his being advanced to be the ſupreme King and Governor of his Church.

Q. *What would the Apoſtle prove from hence?*

A. The Force of the Argument in the Relation that is between the Head and the Members, between *Chriſt* and *Chriſtians*; as the Head has an Influence upon the Members, ſo the Members have an Affection for the Head, which makes them aſpire Heaven-wards where their Head is; becauſe their glorified Saviour, ſitting at the Right-hand of God, by the Power of his Spirit, draws out their Affections towards him; *if ye be riſen with* Chriſt, *ſeek thoſe Things which are above*: As if he had ſaid, is *Chriſt* our Head riſen, and aſcended into Heaven, let us in our Hearts and Affections follow him thither; and patiently wait till he receive our Souls, raiſe our Bodies, and take us wholly to himſelf, that we may be for ever with the Lord.

Q. *What other Argument does he bring for this Purpoſe?*

A. Another Argument to inforce the foregoing Exhortation to ſeek the Things above, is; *for ye are dead*, that is, dead to Sin, dead to the World, therefore be not over-eager in ſeeking the Things below. How affrighting a Sight would it be to ſee a dead Man riſe out of his Grave, converſe with the World, and follow the Things below? As affecting it is to ſee *Chriſtians*, who by baptiſmal Profeſſion own themſelves to be dead to the World, inſtead of ſetting their Affections on Things above, purſuing with the greateſt Eagerneſs the Things below.

Q. *What do you infer from hence?*

A. It follows, *your Life is hid with* Chriſt *in God*; that is, your ſpiritual Life of Grace, and your eternal Life of Glory, they are both hid with with *Chriſt*, now with God in Heaven.

Hid in *Chriſt*, as the Effect is in the Cauſe; as the Life of the Branches is hid in the Root, ſo is the Life of a *Chriſtian* hid in *Chriſt*; he is our Root.

Again; to be hid in *Chriſt*, implies, to be depoſited or laid up with *Chriſt*, committed to his Care and Cuſtody; or, that it is diſpenſed by him, and derived from him at his Pleaſure; of his Fulneſs we receive, when, and in what Meaſure he pleaſes.

Our Life of Grace only deſerves the Name of Life; our natural Life, ſhort and uncertain in itſelf, and common to us with the Brutes, deſerves not, comparatively, the Name of Life.

Q. *How is a* Chriſtian's *Life hid with* Chriſt, *ver.* 3.

A. The Phraſe imports Security and Safety; that which is hidden with *Chriſt*, muſt be out of the Reach of Danger; Grace is an incorruptible Seed that ſhall never die; neither Luſt within, the Devil, nor the World, ſhall be able to vanquiſh that Life which is hid with *Chriſt*.

It alſo imports Obſcurity; what is hidden, is concealed; the Life of Grace is totally hidden from the wicked, and, in ſome Sort, from the Believer himſelf, under ſpiritual Deſertion, the Multiplicity of Temptations, the Prevalency of Corruption; much more is the Life of Glory hidden, it does not yet appear; we can no more conceive of it by all we have heard, than we can conceive what the Sun is, by ſeeing a Glow-Worm.

When *Chriſt*, who is the Author, Purchaſer, and Preſerver of our Life, ſhall appear to judge the World at the great Day, then ſhall all Believers, who have received ſpiritual Life from him, be Sharers in Glory with him.

The Faith of approaching Glory at *Chriſt*'s ſecond Appearance, is a ſtrong Argument to take off our Affections from Things below, and place them on Things above. St. *Paul*'s Argument is, to preſs the *Coloſſians* to ſet their Affections on Things above, becauſe *Chriſt* is above, and when he appears, they ſhall appear with him in Glory.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words, Verſe* 5. Mortify therefore your Members which are upon Earth?

A. Although the Apoſtle had before told them, that they were *dead to Sin*, yet in the fifth Verſe, he bids them *mortify Sin*; intimating, that the Work of Mortification, at the beſt, is but imperfect, and muſt be carried on daily and progreſſively; they were mortified but in Part; the Old Man has a ſtrong Heart, and is a long Time a dying, after it has received its deadly Wound: Sin lives a dying Life, and dies a lingring Death.

Mortify therefore your Members which are upon Earth; by Members, underſtand all the Luſts and Corruptions of our Hearts and Natures, all the Relicks and Remains of Sin unſubdued and unpurged out of the Soul; he inſtances in *Fornication, Uncleanneſs, inordinate Affections and Deſires*, and *Covetouſneſs*, which loveth the World above God, and is therefore no better than Idolatry.

Q. *But why are theſe called* Members, *and* Members upon Earth?

A. They are called Members, in Alluſion to what St. *Paul* had called Sin before, *Chap.* ii. 11. namely, *a Body of Sin*; therefore he calls particular Luſts, Members of that Body; and alſo becauſe they require and call for the Members of the Body, as Inſtruments to bring them into Act; likewiſe becauſe theſe Luſts are as naturally dear to Men, as their bodily Members; they can as ſoon part with a right Hand, or a right Eye, as with a beloved Luſt.

They are alſo called *Members upon the Earth*, becauſe they are converſant about earthly Things; becauſe they will cleave to us as long as we live upon Earth; and to intimate, that none of theſe muſt be carried to Heaven with us, but be mortified on the Earth.

Q. *But what is it to mortify theſe Members?*

A. To mortify Sin, is to refuſe our Conſent to the Sollicitations of Sin, to ſuppreſs its firſt Motions, to enervate its Power and Activity.

But we ſhould be cautious how we conclude that Sin is mortified, becauſe it is reſtrained, becauſe the Acts of Sin are intermitted, or ſome Sins are ſubdued: Is all Sin hated of thee, loathed and left by thee? 'Tis more to loathe a Sin, than it is to leave it; Sin may be left, and yet be loved; but no Man can loathe a Sin, and love it at the ſame Time.

Q. *By what Argument does the Apoſtle enforce his Exhortation to mortify Sin?*

A. The firſt is taken from the Wrath of God, which, in its diſmal Effects, falls upon thoſe who continue in and under the Power of thoſe Sins: *For which Things ſake*; that is, for the committing of which Things, and for continuing impenitent after the Commiſſion of them, *the Wrath of God cometh upon them*.

The ſecond Argument is taken from their former Continuance in theſe Sins; *in which ye alſo walked ſome Time, when ye lived in them*; that is, ye yourſelves alſo walked in thoſe Sins before your Converſion, *when ye lived in them*, and took Delight in the Practice of them.

Q. *What other Exhortations does the Apoſtle give them?*

A. St. *Paul* next exhorts them to mortify internal and ſpiritual Sins, ſuch as Anger, Wrath and Malice, Sins of the Heart; or the ſudden Motions or riſing of Paſſion: Wrath is Anger advanced to a great Height; and Malice is Anger accompanied with Deſires of Revenge, and a rooted Diſpleaſure. As Jealouſy is the Rage of a Man, ſo Malice is the Rage of the Devil; 'tis the very Soul and Spirit of the apoſtate Nature. This Sin indulged, deſtroys the Soul, as well as Murther; yea, it's no leſs than Murther in God's Account, 1 *John* iii. 15. *He that hateth his Brother is a Murderer*.

Put off Blaſphemy, filthy Communication, and Lying; that is, evil, filthy, and falſe ſpeaking. Sins of the Tongue are to be guarded againſt, as well as Sins of the Heart; they are moſt ſcandalous, and very dangerous; they diſhonour God, and diſcredit Religion, and wrong our own Souls; Men muſt account for their open Reproaches, ſecret Back-bitings, Scoffings and Deriſions, whereby they endeavour to fix an Ignominy on their Neighbour; particularly the Sin of Lying; *Lie not one to another*. All Lying is here condemned; the officious Lie, tending to our Neighbour's Profit; the pernicious Lie, tending to our Neighbour's Prejudice; the jocular and jocoſe Lie, tending to Recreation and Sport, *Rev.* xxi. 8. *All Liars ſhall have their Portion in the Lake which burns with Fire and Brimſtone*.

Q. *What Argument does he uſe to enforce his Exhortation?*

A. His Argument for this Purpoſe, is drawn from the Conſideration of their preſent State; in their Baptiſm they had made a Profeſſion to *put off the Old Man, with his Deeds*; that is, their old ſinful Nature, and *put on the new Man in Baptiſm*, which being renewed by Illumination and divine Knowledge, and ſo conformed to the Image of God, rendered them now the Objects of his ſpecial Love.

The Apoſtle here alludes to a Cuſtom in Baptiſm, when they put off their old Cloaths at going into the Water, and put on New at their coming out of it. There is no Argument more effectually exciting to Holineſs of Life, than that taken from our baptiſmal Vow and Profeſſion.

ſpiritually dead with *Chriſt*, and to be freed by his Death from the Levitical Ordinances, why are you ſubject to thoſe Ordinances? Such are, *touch not, taſte not, handle not*; touch not any unclean Thing; taſte not any forbidden Meat; handle not any conſecrated Veſſel; all which Obſervances were to periſh neceſſarily with the very uſing. And whereas they were ſet off with a ſpecious Shew of Wiſdom, a Shew of Humility, of Mortification and Auſterity to the Body, and not ſeeming to give any Honour to the ſatisfying of the Fleſh; but all this had nothing of ſpiritual Devotion and Piety in it.

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The Faith of approaching Glory at *Chriſt*'s ſecond Appearance, is a ſtrong Argument to take off our Affections from Things below, and place them on Things above. St. *Paul*'s Argument is, to preſs the *Coloſſians* to ſet their Affections on Things above, becauſe *Chriſt* is above, and when he appears, they ſhall appear with him in Glory.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words, Verſe* 5. Mortify therefore your Members which are upon Earth?

A. Although the Apoſtle had before told them, that they were *dead to Sin*, yet in the fifth Verſe, he bids them *mortify Sin*; intimating, that the Work of Mortification, at the beſt, is but imperfect, and muſt be carried on daily and progreſſively; they were mortified but in Part; the Old Man has a ſtrong Heart, and is a long Time a dying, after it has received its deadly Wound: Sin lives a dying Life, and dies a lingring Death.

Mortify therefore your Members which are upon Earth; by Members, underſtand all the Luſts and Corruptions of our Hearts and Natures, all the Relicks and Remains of Sin unſubdued and unpurged out of the Soul; he inſtances in *Fornication, Uncleanneſs, inordinate Affections and Deſires*, and *Covetouſneſs*, which loveth the World above God, and is therefore no better than Idolatry.

Q. *But why are theſe called* Members, *and* Members upon Earth?

A. They are called Members, in Alluſion to what St. *Paul* had called Sin before, *Chap.* ii. 11. namely, *a Body of Sin*; therefore he calls particular Luſts, Members of that Body; and alſo becauſe they require and call for the Members of the Body, as Inſtruments to bring them into Act; likewiſe becauſe theſe Luſts are as naturally dear to Men, as their bodily Members; they can as ſoon part with a right Hand, or a right Eye, as with a beloved Luſt.

They are alſo called *Members upon the Earth*, becauſe they are converſant about earthly Things; becauſe they will cleave to us as long as we live upon Earth; and to intimate, that none of theſe muſt be carried to Heaven with us, but be mortified on the Earth.

Q. *But what is it to mortify theſe Members?*

A. To mortify Sin, is to refuſe our Conſent to the Sollicitations of Sin, to ſuppreſs its firſt Motions, to enervate its Power and Activity.

But we ſhould be cautious how we conclude that Sin is mortified, becauſe it is reſtrained, becauſe the Acts of Sin are intermitted, or ſome Sins are ſubdued: Is all Sin hated of thee, loathed and left by thee? 'Tis more to loathe a Sin, than it is to leave it; Sin may be left, and yet be loved; but no Man can loathe a Sin, and love it at the ſame Time.

Q. *By what Argument does the Apoſtle enforce his Exhortation to mortify Sin?*

A. The firſt is taken from the Wrath of God, which, in its diſmal Effects, falls upon thoſe who continue in and under the Power of thoſe Sins: *For which Things ſake*; that is, for the committing of which Things, and for continuing impenitent after the Commiſſion of them, *the Wrath of God cometh upon them.*

The ſecond Argument is taken from their former Continuance in theſe Sins; *in which ye alſo walked ſome Time, when ye lived in them*; that is, ye yourſelves alſo walked in thoſe Sins before your Converſion, *when ye lived in them*, and took Delight in the Practice of them.

Q. *What other Exhortations does the Apoſtle give them?*

A. St. *Paul* next exhorts them to mortify internal and ſpiritual Sins, ſuch as Anger, Wrath and Malice, Sins of the Heart; or the ſudden Motions or riſing of Paſſion: Wrath is Anger advanced to a great Height; and Malice is Anger accompanied with Deſires of Revenge, and a rooted Diſpleaſure. As Jealouſy is the Rage of a Man, ſo Malice is the Rage of the Devil; 'tis the very Soul and Spirit of the apoſtate Nature. This Sin indulged, deſtroys the Soul, as well as Murther; yea, it's no leſs than Murther in God's Account, 1 *John* iii. 15. *He that hateth his Brother is a Murderer.*

Put off Blaſphemy, filthy Communication, and Lying; that is, evil, filthy, and falſe ſpeaking. Sins of the Tongue are to be guarded againſt, as well as Sins of the Heart; they are moſt ſcandalous, and very dangerous; they diſhonour God, and diſcredit Religion, and wrong our own Souls; Men muſt account for their open Reproaches, ſecret Back-bitings, Scoffings and Deriſions, whereby they endeavour to fix an Ignominy on their Neighbour; particularly the Sin of Lying; *Lie not one to another.* All Lying is here condemned; the officious Lie, tending to our Neighbour's Profit; the pernicious Lie, tending to our Neighbour's Prejudice; the jocular and jocoſe Lie, tending to Recreation and Sport, *Rev.* xxi. 8. *All Liars ſhall have their Portion in the Lake which burns with Fire and Brimſtone.*

Q. *What Argument does he uſe to enforce his Exhortation?*

A. His Argument for this Purpoſe, is drawn from the Conſideration of their preſent State; in their Baptiſm they had made a Profeſſion to *put off the Old Man, with his Deeds*; that is, their old ſinful Nature, and *put on the new Man in Baptiſm*, which being renewed by Illumination and divine Knowledge, and ſo conformed to the Image of God, rendered them now the Objects of his ſpecial Love.

The Apoſtle here alludes to a Cuſtom in Baptiſm, when they put off their old Cloaths at going into the Water, and put on New at their coming out of it. There is no Argument more effectually exciting to Holineſs of Life, than that taken from our baptiſmal Vow and Profeſſion.

Q. *Pray explain Verſe* 11. Where there is neither *Greek* nor *Jew*, &c.

A. Where; that is, in which State of Renovation, or under the preſent Goſpel-Diſpenſation, there is found with our God, no Reſpect to any Man's Perſon or Nation, as before there was under the legal Diſpenſation; now *Jew* and *Gentile*, Male and Female, Bond and Free, Circumciſed and Uncircumciſed, every one that *feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs, is accepted of God, through Chriſt*; *who is all, in all Things, to Believers.* His teaching is all in all in the Work of Illumination; his Spirit is all in all in the Work of Juſtification; his Grace is all in all in our Sanctification; his Interceſſion is all in all in our Acceptation; his Peace is all in all in our Conſolation, his Power is all in all in our Reſurrection; his Preſence is all in all in our Glorification; let us therefore conſecrate all we have and do, to the Service of *Chriſt*, and reſign ourſelves wholly to his Will.

Q. *Does he exhort them to the Practice of any other Duties?*

A. The Apoſtle having finiſhed his Exhortation to the Practice of Mortification, next mentions ſeveral Graces and Virtues, which he deſires them to practice; this he ſtiles a putting on *the New Man*; it is not enough that we ceaſe to do evil, but we muſt learn to do well.

Q. *What is the Import of his Exhortation, Verſe* 12. Put on the Bowels of Mercy and Kindneſs, *&c*?

A. That is, a tender Pity towards, and a Sympathy with thoſe who are in Miſery, by relieving and ſuccouring them according to our Ability. There is a natural Pity which Man can hardly put off; and therefore Unmercifulneſs is a Sin againſt the Light of Nature, as well as againſt the Law of God: But there is, beſides this, a ſpiritual Pity, which flows from pure Love, a divine Love; now this is more an Act of Grace than of Nature; and this it is the Apoſtle exhorts the *Coloſſians* to.

Humbleneſs of Mind; whereby a Man, ſenſible of God's Goodneſs, and his own Infirmities, hath a modeſt Eſtimation of himſelf.

Meekneſs and Long-ſuffering, which moderates Anger, and enables us to put up Affronts and Injuries; this is a Temper Divine, and *Chriſt*-like, who being reviled, bleſſed, and committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly.

Forgiving one another. No *Chriſtians* are ſo perfect but they are liable to offend one another, and conſequently they ſtand in need of mutual Forgiveneſs.

Q. *Does he recommend to their Practice any other Graces or Virtues?*

A. The Apoſtle ſtill purſues his former Metaphor, in comparing the Graces of the Holy Spirit to Garments, which he exhorts *Chriſtians* to put on: *Put on Charity*, or the Grace of Love, as the Upper-Garment, above all the reſt; and compares it to a Bond, or Girdle, which ties and knits all the Members of the Church together.

This Grace of Charity is a brotherly Affection, which every true *Chriſtian* truly bears to all his Fellow-members in *Chriſt*, for Grace-ſake; or a gracious Propenſity of Heart towards his Neighbour, whereby he deſires and endeavours all the Good he can for him.

Q. *But why is Charity compared to an Upper Garment*; Above all put on Charity?

A. 1. Becauſe the Upper-Garment is longer and broader than the reſt; ſo ought Charity to extend itſelf to all Perſons, and upon all Occaſions. 2. The Upper-Garment is uſually fairer and richer than the reſt; ſo Charity ſhineth brighteſt of all the Graces. 3. The Upper-Garment diſtinguiſhes the ſeveral Orders and Degrees of Men; thus *Chriſtians* are known as by a Livery; 'tis the Badge that *Chriſt*'s ſincere Diſciples wear.

Q. *But how is Charity* the Bond of Perfection?

A. The Meaning is, that it is the moſt perfect Bond of Union amongſt *Chriſtians*; it knits together all the ſcattered Members of the Church, and makes their Gifts and Graces ſubſervient to the Good of one another; ſo that thereby the Church is made one entire Body.

Q. *How does the Peace of God rule in a* Chriſtian*'s Heart, according to the Apoſtle's Exhortation, Verſe* 15. Let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts?

A. Let that Peace which God has given you within, and calls you to exerciſe without, govern your Lives, and direct you in all your Actions towards Men, and live in continual Thankfulneſs to God. The original Word *Rule* in the Heart, ſignifies to act the Part of an Umpire in appeaſing Strife. Now this inward Peace huſhes and calms all the tumultuous Affections of the Soul, and produces Peaceableneſs in Converſation.

Q. *Explain the firſt Clauſe of Verſe* 16. Let the Word of *Chriſt* dwell richly in you, in all Wiſdom?

A. Seeing it is the Word of *Chriſt*, or the Holy Scriptures, which teach the forementioned Duties, he adviſes, that the Word of God may dwell in, and take up its Abode with them, richly and plentifully, that they may be furniſhed thereby with true and ſound Wiſdom. How dare then the Church of *Rome* forbid the Common People to read the Bible, and call it an Heretical Book? For this very good Reaſon, becauſe it is the moſt dangerous Book againſt Popery that was ever written in the World.

By having *the Word of God dwell richly in them*, would enable them to teach and admoniſh one another, to excite and ſtir up the Affections of each other, by ſinging Pſalms, Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs therein contained; or ſuch others as were compoſed by the Inſpiration and Direction of the Holy Spirit of God; to bleſs and praiſe God, both in publick Aſſemblies, and private Families, is a great and neceſſary, Duty to be jointly performed by all Perſons capable of it.

Q. *Next he exhorts them to ſeveral other Duties; which pray enumerate and explain?*

A. Whatever ye do, do all in the Name of our Lord Jeſus, giving Thanks to God, for all the Mercies you receive by *Jeſus Chriſt*, through whom all our Prayers and Trankſgivings will find Acceptance with God.

Wives, ſubmit yourſelves unto your own Husbands. This implies a reverend Eſteem of them, an affectionate Love to them, ſpeaking reſpectfully of them, and yielding a chearful Obedience to their Commands.

As it is fit in the Lord; that is, in all lawful Things, and in Obedience to the Lord's Commands, and not in any Thing contrary to his Will. Thus obeying, the Woman's Subjection is

Service done to *Chriſt*; which may comfort her, in Caſe of any unkind Returns from her Husband to her.

Husbands, love your Wives; that is, with a ſpecial, peculiar, conjugal Affection, and to diſcover this Love by a tender Care over them, an affectionate Regard to them, Co-habitation with them, Contentment and Satisfaction in them, a patient bearing with their Weakneſs, a prudential hiding of their Infirmities, a chearful ſupplying of their Wants, a Readineſs to inſtruct and direct them, a Willingneſs to pray for and with them; where true Love is, theſe Duties will be performed.

Be not bitter againſt them; not bitter in Expreſſion, nor in your Actions towards them, giving them bitter Blows, which is contrary to the Law of God and Nature.

Children obey your Parents; this implies inward Reverence, outward Obſervance, a pious Regard to their Inſtructions, a following their good Examples.

In all Things; that is, in all lawful Things, and in all indifferent Things; in every Thing not ſinful, (tho' it may ſeem unneceſſary or unreaſonable, yet the Parent's Command is to be obeyed.

For this is well-pleaſing unto the Lord; hereby they do acceptable Service to God, who will reward it with long Life on Earth, and eternal Life in Heaven.

Fathers provoke not your Children to Wrath, that is, abuſe not your Power and Authority over them, by too much Severity; imbitter not their Spirit againſt you, by denying them what is convenient, by inveighing with bitter Words againſt them, giving them no juſt Occaſion to be angry.

Leſt they be diſcouraged, either diſpirited and heartleſs, or deſperate and hardened. A Parent's Conduct muſt be moderated with Prudence, ſhunning the Extremes of too much Indulgence on one Hand, and too great Rigour and Severity on the other.

Servants obey your Maſters in Singleneſs of Heart, in great Simplicity and Sincerity of Spirit, and with an Eye to their great Maker in Heaven.

The mighty Reward propounded as an Encouragement to poor Servants in their Obedience to their Maſters, is, *Of the Lord ye ſhall receive the Reward of the Inheritance*. No Service is ſo mean but ſhall be rewarded, if conſcientiouſly performed; no Diſtinction in Heaven between Servants and Sons, all ſhall receive the Inheritance there, who have done faithful Service here; and as the meaneſt Service done with right Qualifications, is Service done to *Chriſt*, ſo ſhall it be accepted of him, and rewarded by him.

But he that doth Wrong; ſuch Servants as have wronged their Maſters, or ſuch Maſters as have oppreſſed their Servants, God, who reſpects no Man's Perſon, and regards the Rich no more than the Poor, will take his Time to revenge; and return with Intereſt the Injuries and Wrongs done by either to each other.

Here note, the Severity and Impartiality of divine Juſtice; God, the righteous Judge, will revenge their Wrong, when and by whomſoever it is done, he will revenge it impartially and proportionally; a juſt Retribution, according to the Wrong done, ſhall be render'd to every one by the righteous and juſt God.

CHAP. IV.

The Duty of Maſters towards their Servants. Of Continuance in Prayer. He exhorts them to walk and ſpeak wiſely among them who are without. He commended to them Tychicus *and* Oneſimus, *and ſalutes them in the Name of* Ariſtarchus *and others; commands them to ſalute the Brethren in Laodicea, to let them read this Epiſtle, and to bid* Archippus *fulfil his Miniſtry; and concludes with his Salutation.*

Q. THE *Apoſtle begins this Chapter with adviſing Maſters to give their Servants that which is* juſt *and* equal: *How do you underſtand theſe Words?*

A. That which is juſt, or what is according to Compact and Agreement, either explicitly, or implicitly made; as Work, Wages, Food, Cloathing, and proper Accommodations; alſo that which is equal in Reaſon and Charity, as to oblige them to ſerve God faithfully, to ſerve their Maſters chearfully, not exerciſing a Magiſterial much leſs a Tyrannical Power over them; and the Argument to enforce it is ſtrong, *knowing that ye have a Maſter in Heaven*; remembring they have one above them, from whom they muſt expect the like.

We are to look upon them, not merely as Servants, but as Brethren, Partakers of the ſame common Nature, and capable of the ſamo Grace with ourſelves, conſequently not to treat them as vile Perſons. We muſt likewiſe wink at ſome of their Miſcarriages which are not apparently ſinful, and not puniſh every Tranſgreſſion they may bc guilty of: He muſt keep no Servant that will have a Servant without Faults.

Again, we muſt not rule with Rigour, without giving a Reaſon for ſuch Commands as ſeem harſh and difficult; we muſt permit them to plead their Cauſe, and to defend their Right, provided they do it with Humility, not contradicting, or refuſing to execute the Command of their Maſter.

Farther, to well-deſerving Servants we ſhould give ſomething above their Wages, allowing them all fitting Encouragement whilſt they are with us; and when they go away, not to ſuffer them to go empty from us. Thus doing Maſters (will *give unto their Servants that which it juſt and equal*: But common it is for thoſe that are a little above others, to forget that there is one above them.

Q. *Pray explain the 2d Verſe*, Continue in Prayer and watch in the ſame with Thankſgiving.

A. *Continue in Prayer*; that is, continue inſtant in Prayer; not that every other Duty is to be neglected for this, but we are always to keep our Heart in a praying Frame, and be found in the Practice of this Duty at all fitting Seaſons; we are then ſaid to do a Thing continually when we do it ſeaſonably; what a Man does out of Conſcience he will do it with Perſeverance. Nature will have her good Moods, but Grace is ſteady.

Watch in the ſame; particularly we ought to watch for this Duty, in, and after the Duty; to watch for the fitteſt praying Seaſon, to watch our Heart in the Seaſon of Prayer, that our Thoughts do not wander, nor our Affections flag; to watch after the Duty, that our Hearts be not lifted up with the Aſſiſtance that we have received in the Duty; nor to be much dejected on the Score of thoſe Infirmities that mingle themſelves with our Prayers, but direct the Eye of our Faith to *Chriſt* as our Interceſſor, who pleads for the gracious Acceptance both of our Perſons and Services, notwithſtanding the Imperfections of them both.

Watch in the ſame with Thankſgiving. There is no ſuch ſucceſsful way of Begging, as of Thankſgiving; God is offended when we are loud and clamorous in aſking Favours, but dumb and Tongue-tied in returning Thanks: Need will make us Beggars, but Grace only Thankſgivers.

Q. *What does he next deſire of them?*

A. The Apoſtle next requeſts an Intereſt in their Prayers for himſelf, and all the Miniſters of *Chriſt* in particular.

The Mercies he deſires to be prayed for on his Behalf are Utterance and Boldneſs. Miniſters depend upon God, as for other Gifts, ſo particularly for that of Utterance, and that it is their People's Duty to be earneſt and inſtant with God for the ſame.

No Prayers can be too much to ſtrengthen the Hands and encourage the Hearts of the Miniſters of *Chriſt* unto an holy Boldneſs, who ſuffer Perſecation for what they preach; therefore St. *Paul* is ſo earneſt with the *Coloſſians,* as he was before with ths *Epheſians,* Chap. vi. 18. and with the *Romans,* Chap. xv. 30. deſiring them to ſtrive together in their Prayers for him.

Here remark, that though the Apoſtle thus paſſionately intreats the Prayers of living Saints, he never once deſires the Prayers and Interceſſion of the Saints departed, or of the Virgin *Mary*; which is an Evidence that he approved not of their Prayers, nor looked on them as Mediators and Inceſſors with God then, as the Church of *Rome* does now.

Q. *What does he mean by his Exhortation, ver.* 5. *to* walk in Wiſdom toward them that are without redeeming the Time?

A. By *them without,* are meant the Heathen, who are yet without the Pale of the viſible Church; to *walk in Wiſdom toward them,* is a Duty of great Latitude, but here imports particularly an Endeavour to the utmoſt to promote their Converſion and Salvation, by begetting in them a due Veneration for the Goſpel, and a Love and Liking to the *Chriſtian* Religion. The ardent Devotions, and the holy Converſations of private *Chriſtians* are excellent Means to recommend the Goſpel and the *Chriſtian* Religion, and to repreſent them as moſt amiable and deſirable.

Redeeming the Time. A *Chriſtian* that knows the Worth of Time, will redeem it, will improve it for the Benefit of his own Soul, and for the Advantage of others. See *Epheſ.* v. 26.

Q. *What other Duties does he extort them to put in Practice?*

A. Chriſtians are next directed in the right Government of the Tongue; that our Speech be not filthy and frothy, vain and unprofitable, but mild and courteous, ſavoury and gracious, wiſe and diſcreet.

Our Speech muſt be *ſeaſoned with Salt.* 1. With the Salt of Truth; there muſt be an Agreement betwixt the Thing and our Words, without Falſhood; and an Agreement betwixt our Tongue and our Hearts without Diſſimulation. 2. With the Salt of Wiſdom and Prudence; this will teach us the Time when, the Manner how, and the Meaſure how much to ſpeak; thoſe Words muſt needs be unſavoury, that have neither Truth nor Prudence in them. The People once wonder'd at the gracious Words which proceeded out of *Chriſt's* Mouth; and we may now juſtly wonder at the graceleſs Words which come out of the Mouths of many who are called *Chriſtians.*

Q. *What other Means did he uſe to comfort and inſtruct the* Coloſſians?

A. Although St. *Paul* had but few Friends at *Rome* to comfort him in his Bonds, yet he ſpares two of them to viſit and comfort the *Coloſſians.* The Perſons he ſent were *Tychicus* and *Oneſimus,* whom he ſtiles faithful beloved Brethren: The Ties of Religion and Grace are ſtronger than thoſe of Nature: No ſuch Love as Likeneſs occaſions, eſpecially Likeneſs to God.

The Apoſtle's View in ſending theſe two Perſons to them, was, to make known *to them all Things done at* Rome; but his Doings and Sufferings, in publick and private, the Apoſtle was aſhamed of neither. See *Epheſ.* vi. 22. where the like Paſſage occurs.

Q. *What do you remark on the Salutation, ſent by the Apoſtle to the* Coloſſians?

A. Our Apoſtle drawing towards a Concluſion of his Letter, ſends, as uſual, particular Salutations to whom he wrote, as well from others, as himſelf. Here we have three of St. *Paul's* Companions ſending Salutations to the Church of *Coloſſis,* namely, *Ariſtarchus,* a Fellow Priſoner; *Marcus,* Siſter's Son to *Barnabas,* who, though he deſerted *Paul* and *Barnabas,* and went not with them to the Work, yet returning to his Duty, he is recommended to the Church's Reception; and *Jeſus,* who is called *Juſtus,* poſſibly from his juſt Converſation; *Jeſus* is the ſame with *Joſhua,* ſignifying a Saviour.

It may deſerve Remark, that we do not find that any *Chriſtians,* ſince their Lord's Reſurrection, ever gave their Children the Name of *Jeſus,* out of due Reverence to their Lord and Maſter, who is God-man bleſſed for ever more.

Note, that among theſe ſeveral Salutations there is none from *Peter.* How weak then is the Pope's Argument by which he would eſtabliſh his Supremacy and Headſhip, namely: that he is St. *Peter's* Succeſſor, who was Biſhop of *Rome*; though it can never be proved that St. *Peter* exerciſed any Supremacy over the reſt of the Apoſtles; and it can leſs be proved that St. *Peter* was ever Biſhop of *Rome*; nor is there a Word in Scripture to evidence that ever he was at *Rome,* but rather the contrary; it is certain he was not at *Rome* when St. *Paul* wrote this Epiſtle, there being only theſe, he ſays, whom he mentions, who are his Fellow-Labourers to the Kingdom of God.

Our Apoſtle next mentions the particular Salutation ſent by *Epaphras,* who is deſcribed from his Country; *he is one of you,* that is, a Citizen of *Coloſſis*; by his Office, *a Servant of Chriſt,* that is, a Miniſter of the Goſpel; by the Fervour of his Affections towards theſe *Coloſſians,* evidenced by his Prayer for them, he *labours fervently for you in his Prayers.* The Word ſignifies to ſtrive as in an Agony, pointing out our miniſterial Duty to us, not only to preach unto, and pray with, but fervently to pray for our People.

The ſubject Matter of *Epaphras's* Prayer for his People at *Coloſſis*, was, that they might ſtand perfect and complete in the Will of God, in all Things; yet one thing more is obſervable in *Epaphras*, he was not only zealous for his own People at *Coloſſis*, but for them at *Laodicea* and *Hieraplis*, which are neighbouring Churches,

Hence learn, that the Miniſters of *Chriſt* are to look upon themſelves as Miniſters of the whole Church; and although they are appointed to a particular Congregation, yet it is their Duty to deſire and endeavour, that all *Chriſtians* within the Reach of their miniſterial Labours may find ſome ſpecial Benefit and Advantage by thum. *Epaphras* had a fervent Zeal for the Churches in *Laodicea* and *Hierapolis*, as well as at *Coloſſis*, and it was his Commendation that he had ſo.

Luke the beloved Phyſician, and Demas *greet you. Luke* well deſerved the Title here given him of *beloved*, in that he undertook the Miniſtry at a Time when civil Authority allow'd no Matnenance for Miniſters, and when his Employment as a Phyſician would probably have advanced him much more.

Demas alſo, who when Perſecution grew hot, his Affections cool'd; yet now he ſends Salutations with the firſt to the Church at *Coloſſis*. St. *Paul* complains of his forſaking him, 2 *Tim*. iv. 10. for the ſake of this preſent World.

Let no Profeſſor judge of himſelf by his external Profeſſion, by his Performance of outward Duties, by his aſſociating himſelf with the People of God; (*Demas* did all this) but by either ſincere Love to *Chriſt*, and preſevering Faithfulneſs in the hour of Temptation; we know not what we are, 'till Sufferings appear.

Our Apoſtle having given the Salutation of others, next ſends his own. *Salute the brethren in* Laodicea; that is, all the *Chriſtian* Brethren there. No particular People muſt deſire or expect to engroſs the Whole of a Miniſter's Affections to themſelves; but as he is the Miniſter of the Catholick Church, ſo it is his Duty and Deſire, that all particular Churches, yea, individual *Chriſtians*, ſhould ſhare in his affectionate Love towards them, in his Care and Concern for them.

He ſalutes *Nymphas* in particular, a Perſon perhaps very eminent for Piety and Charity, as may be gather'd from the following Words, *and the Church which is in his Houſe*.

Q. *What does he mean by thoſe Words*, and the Church which is in his Houſe?

A. By this underſtand his Family and Houſhold, who were ſo piouſly inſtructed, ſo religiouſly govern'd, ſo devoutly diſpoſed, as if they had been a Church.

Some, by *the Church in his Houſe*, underſtand a material Houſe, or ſome particular Room in his Houſe, which he had given to a certain Number of *Chriſtians* for a Place of publick Worſhip.

Q. *Who is* Archippus *mentioned, ver*. 17?

A. He is with good Reaſon, ſuppoſed to be the Miniſter at *Coloſſis*, in the room of *Epaphras*, now with St. *Paul* at *Rome*. Some think, that in the Abſence of *Epaphras* he was ſomewhat remiſs in his miniſterial Duty; he therefore directs the *Coloſſians* to admoniſh him to exerciſe greater Diligence in diſcharging all the Parts of his Truſt; *Say unto* Archippus, *take heed*.

Obſerve here a double Charge, 1. A Charge of Meſſage, *Say unto Archippus*; the *Coloſſians* muſt ſay it. St. *Paul* could have written a private Letter to him; but they muſt excite him: Yet ſay it to him to his Face, not of him behind his Back: 'Tis the People's Duty to ſtir up their Miniſters to the faithful Performance of their Duty; the Fire of miniſterial Zeal, does not burn ſo bright, but it may need the Breath of their People to inflame it; but this muſt be done with Prudence, in a Way of Exhortation, not in way of Exprobabration, ſo ſtir up your Miniſter to his Duty, that you forget not your own.

1. The Charge of Office, *Take heed to the Miniſtry which thou haſt received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it*. The Duty is enjoined is, *to fulfil the Miniſtry*; by which we are not to underſtand as if Miniſters were oblig'd to ſecure the Succeſs of their Miniſtry; they may deliver their own Souls, though their People's be not deliver'd; the Nurſe is not charged with the Life of the Child, but with the Care of it, ſhe ſhall be paid, whether it live or die; nor is it abſolutely to perform every Part of our Miniſterial Duty, without the leaſt Deficiency: No, Miniſters rejoice in the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, that *in Simplicity and godly Sincerity*, they have done their Duty.

Q. *What is the Duty of a Miniſter?*

A. To fulfil the Miniſtry, is to perform every Part of the Duty with Care and Faithfulneſs, to perſevere in Diligence, particularly publick Preaching and private Inſpection. A Non-preaching Miniſter is no Miniſter, a breaſtleſs Nurſe, a Murtherer of Souls, a Bell without a Clapper, a Crier without a Voice; yet his Work lies not all in the Pulpit, but the greateſt Part of it does. He is ſtiled a Watchman; why! becauſe he is to watch one Hour with his People in a Week? No ſurely, but becauſe he is to watch over them, and converſe with them all the Week upon Occaſion. Is not the Phyſician to viſit his Patient, as well as preſcribe the Phyſick? Does the Husbandman caſt his Seed into the Ground, and never go into the Field to ſee how it grows?

Take heed to the Miniſtry; that is, 1. Take heed to thy Study, to be fitted with proper Abilities for thy Work; the Apoſtles, indeed, did not ſtudy, they had no Time for it, being itinerary Preachers. 2. Take heed to thy Doctrine, that it be the pure Word of God, unmixt with Error, 3. Take heed to thy Life and Practice.

The Motive to ſtir us up to the fulfilling this miniſterial Truth is, We have received it of the Lord; which implies the Importance of it, and likewiſe Aſſiſtance, that God who has called us to to it, will aſſiſt us in it.

Q. *How does he conclude?*

A. The Apoſtle cloſes his Epiſtle with a general Salutation under his own Hand. He begs them to remember his Bonds; to ſympathize with him, to pray for him, to receive the Word of God which he had written to them in his Bonds, to prepare for Sufferings themſelves; his Bonds being but the Forerunners of theirs.

He adds, *Grace be with you*; Increaſe of all Grace to enable them to glorify God on Earth, and to prepare them for Glory with God in Heaven.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

THESSALONICA *was the Metropolis of* Macedonia, *whither* St. Paul, *in a Viſion, was directed to go and preach the Goſpel; accordingly he went,* Acts xvi. *and* 17. *and very early laid the Foundation of a* Chriſtian Church *in the City, which conſiſted partly of* Jews, *and partly of* Gentiles, *they were ſeverely perſecuted by both; of which our Apoſtle being informed, he writes this Epiſtle to confirm them in the Faith, and to prevent their being ſhaken by theſe Perſecutions.*

TO encourage them to perſevere in the Faith, and to be patient under their preſent Perſecutions; firſt he informs them, it was nothing ſtrange that they ſhould thus ſuffer from thoſe Pagans and *Jews,* who had killed the Lord *Jeſus,* and their own Prophets, and were contrary to all Men; *and then reminds them of the tranſcendant Reward laid up for them, and the ſevere Puniſhments that were prepared for their Perſecutors. And laſtly he animates and encourages them, by the Example of his own Conſtancy, to Perſeverance in their holy Profeſſion; and concludes his Epiſtle with Particular Exhortations to Holineſs of Life; and Unblameableneſs in Converſation.*

CHAP. I.

The uſual Salutation, Thankſgiving to God for their Faith, Love, Hope in Chriſt, and their Election, manifeſted by the Power and Spirit of God with the Goſpel unto them, and their Obedience to it; ſo that they were Examples to others, and by their Means the Goſpel was made known in other Places.

Q. HOW *does the Apoſtle begin this Epiſtle to the* Theſſalonians?

A. St. *Paul* begins this Epiſtle, as he does the reſt; with a very kind and gracious Salutation; in which we have obſervable the Perſons ſaluting, the Parties ſaluted, and the Salutation itſelf.

The Perſons ſaluting are *Paul, Sylvanus* and *Timotheus. Paul* only was the inſpired Writer of this Epiſtle; the other two were his Aſſociates and Aſſiſtants in the Converſion of the *Theſſalonians* to *Chriſtianity,* and for whom they deſervedly had a great Affection; he therefore joins them with himſelf as Aſſerters and Approvers of the Truth, contained in this his Epiſtle, in order to procure the greater Regard to the Doctrines it contains; he therefore names them with himſelf, *Paul, Silvanus,* or *Silas,* as he is called, *Acts* xvii. and *Timotheus.*

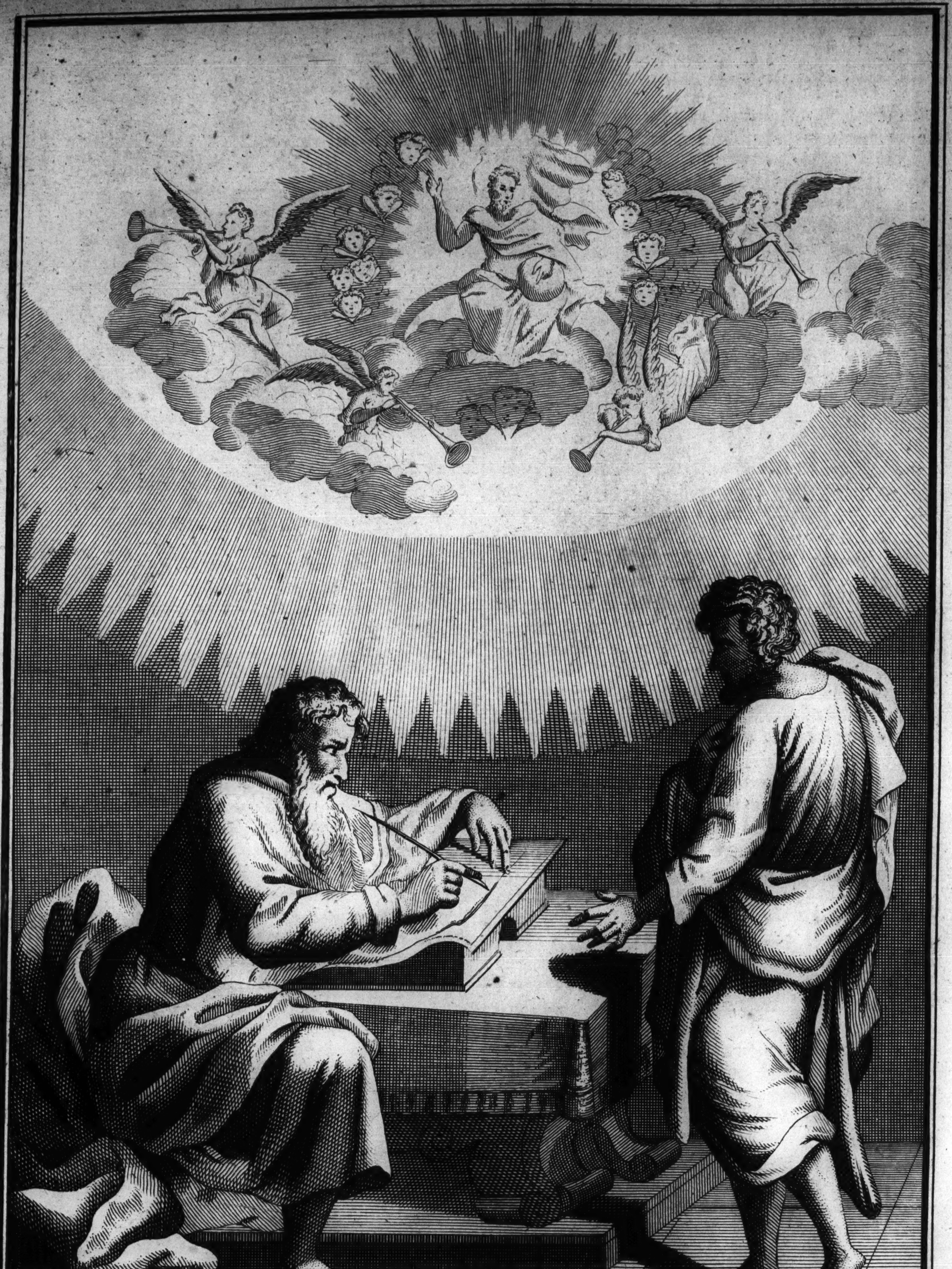
Q. *But why not* Paul an Apoſtle, *or* Paul a Servant of *Jeſus Chriſt, as in other Epiſtles, but* Paul *only?*

A. Becauſe his Apoſtleſhip was not at all queſtion'd by them; the *Theſſalonians* had a Seal of it in their Hearts; and there were no falſe Prophets amongſt them that denied his Apoſtleſhip as the *Galatians* and other Churches had.

Q. *The Perſons ſaluted are,* the Church of the *Theſſalonians, and where was their City?*

A. Theſſalonica was the Metropolis of *Macedonia,* where a Church had been planted by the Miniſtry of *Paul* and *Silas,* but with great Oppoſition from the *Jews,* who forced *Paul* to fly to *Berea* for his own Safety, *Acts* xvii. and *Jaſon* with others that entertained him, had like to have been ſacrificed in their own Houſes; yet there, in ſpite of the Devil's Rage, and Perſecutor's Malice, does God erect a glorious Church in Honour of his Son, who purchaſed it with his own Blood.

The Epistle of S^t. PAUL to the THESALONIANS.



S^T. PAUL hearing how the THESALONIANS were perſecuted writes this Epiſtle to confirm them in the Faith.

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Q. *It follows*, which (*Church*) is in God the Father, and in the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. *How do you underſtand this?*

A. That is, eſtabliſhed in the Knowledge, Faith, Worſhip, and Obedience of God the Father; they were *Gentiles*, called off from their dumb Idols, to ſerve the living and true God, and were diſtinguiſhed from all other Societies and Communions whatſoever, they were in God *the Father, and in the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt; that is, they enjoy'd a bleſſed Union with *Jeſus Chriſt* by Faith, and a ſweet Communion and Fellowſhip both with Father and Son, by the Bond of the Spirit.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Salutation itſelf*, Grace be to you, and Peace from the Father, and the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. Here note, the Bleſſings wiſhed for, *Grace and Peace*; Grace, in Scripture, ſignifies firſt, the gracious Favour of God towards us; and next, all the Gifts of Grace, all Benefits and Bleſſings iſſuing forth and flowing from thence; Peace uſually ſignifies, in Scripture-Language, all Manner of outward Proſperity and Happineſs.

Q. *From whence proceeded theſe mighty Benefits?*

A. The Author and Fountain from whence theſe Bleſſings flow, is, 1. From *God the Father*. 2. From the Mediator, *the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt; intimating, that whatſoever ſpiritual Grace, and temporal Bleſſing we now receive from God, is from him, not barely as a Creator, but as a gracious Father in *Chriſt*, in whom he pours out the Immenſity of his Love upon us, and through whom he conveys all Kind of Bleſſings to us.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle, inſtead of commending them for their* Chriſtian *Virtues, break forth into Thankſgivings to God for them?*

A. It is both our Duty and Wiſdom ſo to ſpeak of the Grace of God, which we obſerve in others, as that they may not be puffed up with Conceit of their own Excellencies, but ſee Matter of Praiſe and Thankſgiving due unto God only, and nothing to themſelves.

The particular Graces which St. *Paul* obſerved in the *Theſſalonians*, were, their Faith, Love, and Hope, together with the Evidence of the Sincerity of thoſe Graces. Their Faith is fruitful in good Works; their Love was laborious, promoting the good of all Saints; and their Hope in the Lord *Jeſus*, rendered them patient in enduring all Tribulation for his Sake.

We give Thanks unto God always for you all. But why, O bleſſed Apoſtle, art thou ſo thankful for the Graces of God, which the Holy Spirit wrought in theſe *Theſſalonians?* For thy own Sake, no doubt, as well as theirs. He ſaw in them an eminent Seal of his Apoſtleſhip, the happy Fruit and bleſſed Effect of his Miniſtry among them. This it was that drew forth his very Soul in Thankſgiving to God.

Q. *If theſe* Theſſalonians *abounded thus in all Graces and good Works, why then did he make them the conſtant Subject of his Prayers?*

A. To let them know that there was ſtill much Grace wanting in them to keep them Humble, as well as great Grace in them to make him thankful: When we pray for more Grace, we muſt even be thankful for what we have received; and when we return Thanks for Grace received, we muſt be earneſt and inſtant with God for farther Supplies of Grace wanted.

Note farther, the comfortable Relation in which the Saints draw near to God in Prayer; they come to him as a Father. The Holy Spirit of God enables Believers to come before him in Prayer, with a full Aſſurance of his fatherly Affection towards them, as being the Sons of God, through Faith in *Chriſt Jeſus*, and it enables them to cry *Abba, Father*; and they are very careful to improve this their Relation to God, and Intereſt in him, as a Father, in Prayer, on Behalf of themſelves, and all their Fellow-Brethren, and Members in *Chriſt*.

Q. *But what particular Reaſon had the Apoſtle for his great Thankfulneſs to God, on their Behalf?*

A. It was the Knowledge of their Election; *knowing your Election of God*; that is, knowing certainly and infallibly, by your proficiency in the forementioned *Chriſtian* Graces of Faith, Love, and Hope, that God hath certainly choſen you out of the *Gentile* World, to be a Church and People to himſelf, and that it was the good Pleaſure of of God to gather a Church of *Theſſalonians*; and alſo he knew and believed, with a Judgment of Charity, that Almighty God had choſen them to eternal Life alſo, to be a Part of his Church Triumphant in Heaven, as well as of his Church Militant upon Earth; the Preaching of the Goſpel having met with ſuch viſible Succeſs amongſt them, the Apoſtle charitably numbers them amongſt God's Choſen, in whom he ſaw the Fruits and Signs of God's Election.

Q. *What was the Extent and Meaſure of the Apoſtle's Charity, with Regard to the* Theſſalonians?

A. Obſerve the Piety and Prudence of St. *Paul's* Charity, it was not weakly grounded, but guided by reaſonable Evidence; *Charity hopeth all Things*; that is, all Things, which it hath good Ground to hope, but nothing more than what probable Evidence may induce it to hope. St. *Paul*, when he ſaw the Apoſtacy of *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* into Error and Vice, without Cenſoriouſneſs and Uncharitableneſs, pronounces, that they had *made Shipwreck of the Faith*, 1 Tim. i. 20. For he had ſufficient Reaſon to believe, there could be no Faith, where there was no Holineſs.

There are Men amongſt us, who brand the Miniſters of God with Cenſoriouſneſs, and raſh judging the preſent State of Men, though they judge by their Lives and Actions; they would have us hope well concerning them, againſt Hope, and judge quite contrary to rational Evidence; we muſt believe them to have Faith, when they have no Knowledge; that they are right Penitents, when they make a Sport of Sin; their Hearts are chaſte, when their Mouths foam out nothing but Filthineſs; but let them know, that the faithful Miniſters of *Chriſt* dare not bring a Curſe upon themſelves, by calling Good Evil, or Evil God; their Charity, though not cauſeleſly Suſpicious, yet neither is it fooliſhly Blind.

Q. *But what Proof had he of their Election?*

A. The ſpecial Evidence St. *Paul* had of the *Theſſalonians* Election, was, the great and gracious Succeſs of his Miniſtry amongſt them.

Our Goſpel come; But how? *Not in Word only*, ſounding in the Ear, or teaching, or reſting in the Underſtanding only, as a Light to gaze upon, *but in Power*; that is, accompanied then with the Power of Miracles, now with a convincing, terrifying, humbling, renewing, and reforming Power.

It follows, *and in the Holy Ghoſt*; that is, the

Preaching of the Word was, at that Time, attended, as with a mighty Power of Miracles, ſo with an extraordinary Effuſion, and pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt upon them that heard it, prevailing upon them to embrace it, and ſo ſubmit themſelves unto it. The Miniſtry of the Word is the great Inſtrument, in the Hand of the Spirit, for the Converſion of Sinners, for the Edification of Saints, and for the Salvation of both.

Again; the Apoſtle's Miniſtration came upon them *in much Aſſurance*; that is, with a full Conviction both to them and him; to them, with an evident Conviction of the Truth of his Doctrine; and to him it was a full Perſuaſion, yea, a firm Aſſurance, that God had choſen them to be a Church and ſpecial People to himſelf.

Another probable Evidence, that the *Theſſalonians* were the Choſen of God, is, becauſe they were active and operative *Chriſtians*; they in Life and Practice conformed themſelves unto that Example held forth unto them by their Preachers, *Ye became Followers of us*, it is added, *and of the Lord*; Followers of *Chriſt* abſolutely, as an unerring Pattern; of his Miniſters conditionally, ſo far as they followed *Chriſt*.

But *Followers of the Lord*, here ſeems to import their following him in his Sufferings and Afflictions, as appears by the next Words, *having received the Word with much Affliction.* Sincere *Chriſtians* are willing to bear his Croſs, as well as wear his Crown; to ſuffer, as well as to be glorified with him.

As the Apoſtles preached the Word to them with great Deſire and Delight, though they encountered a great *Number of Afflictions*; ſo did theſe People *receive the Word with much Affliction*, and adhere to it in the Midſt of Perſecution; and all this accompanied with ſuch inward Joy, as none but the Holy Ghoſt could be the Author of, in them. This was a good Evidence, that the *Theſſalonians* were choſen of God, and had a Title to the everlaſting Inheritance.

Q. *What other Excellencies does he commend in them?*

A. Our Apoſtle, among other Encomiums on theſe *Theſſalonians*, tells them, to their great and ſingular Honour, that as they were Followers of them (the Apoſtles) in Sufferings, in Patience, in Chearfulneſs; ſo they were themſelves living Patterns and Enſamples of Courage and Conſtancy under their Sufferings, to all the neighbouring Churches in *Macedonia* and *Achaia*. Then is the Grace of God which we have received, a Mark and Evidence of our Election, when we have advanced to ſuch a conſiderable Proficiency and Growth in it, as to become Patterns and Examples of Piety to all about us.

The Apoſtle goes on in a copious Commendation of thoſe *Theſſalonians*, or rather in a thankful Admiration of the Grace of God ſhining in them; he tells them, that the Report of their Graces was ſpread far and near, inſomuch that the Foreign Churches, amongſt whom he converſed, were able to give him a perfect Account how the Apoſtle's Entrance at *Theſſalonica* was; though not pompous, yet very proſperous, ſtrangely ſucceſsful, and ſingularly bleſſed, to the turning them from dead Idols, to ſerve the living and true God.

How you turned to God from Idols; how readily and heartily you turned from Idolatry, in which you had been brought up; yet upon the Preaching of our Goſpel, ye turned from it with Indignation, to ſerve *the living God*, ſo called in Oppoſition to their dead and dumb Idols; and *the true God*, in Oppoſition to falſe Gods.

Q. *What Leſſons of Inſtruction are we taught from hence?*

A. By theſe Words we are taught to expound thoſe of our Saviour, *John* xvii. 3. *This is Life Eternal, to know thee, the only true God*; teaching us, that the Father is called *the only true God*; not in Oppoſition to *Jeſus Chriſt*, as the *Socinians* would inſinuate, but in Oppoſition to dumb Idols, and falſe Gods only.

From this Effect of the Goſpel upon the *Theſſalonians*, we learn, that as every Man naturally bears an Idol in his Heart; that is, ſets up ſomething there in God's Stead, which attracts and draws off his beſt Affections from God; ſo, wherever the Goſpel is heartily received and entertained, there will be an abandoning of, and turning from whatever uſurped God's Throne in the Soul, and the Perſon thereafter will only love and ſerve the living and true God.

Q. *Does he mention any other Evidence of their Converſion?*

A. A farther Evidence of theſe *Theſſalonians* Converſion, was, that they not only turned from Idols, to ſerve *God the Father*; but alſo *believed in* Jeſus Chriſt *his only Son.* This Act of Faith is expreſſed by waiting; they *waited for his Son from Heaven*; that is, by Faith they expected that *Chriſt*, whom the Apoſtle had preached to them, and was gone to Heaven, would certainly come again from thence, to deliver his redeemed Ones *from Wrath to come*; that is, from the Puniſhment and Vengeance eternally due unto them for Sin.

The Ground of this their Expectation was, *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection from the Dead; *to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom he raiſed from the Dead.*

The Wrath which awaits every impenitent Sinner, is here deſcribed by a Wrath to come; after Sinners have lain under it millions of Ages, it will ſtill be a *Wrath to come*, and they as far from being delivered from it, as the firſt Hour they fell under it.

From this Wrath, Believers may warrantably expect Deliverance, ſince God hath raiſed *Chriſt* from the Dead; therefore they may and ought to wiſh and wait, to long and look for his coming from Heaven, when Deliverance from Wrath will be perfected and compleated.

CHAP. II.

The Apoſtle declares his Uprightneſs and Conſtancy in preaching the Goſpel amongſt them, ſeeking neither Honour nor Profit, as, conſidering he was an Apoſtle of Chriſt, *he might have done, but carrying it towards them with all Affection and Holineſs; and they had received the Word of God as ſuch, and had ſuffered for it by their Countrymen. He declares his Deſire to ſee them again, ſince they were his Glory and Boaſting in the Coming of* Chriſt.

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve upon the firſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. Here the Apoſtle appeals to the *Theſſalonians*, as touching the Sincerity and Succeſs of his publick Miniſtry among them; *Ye yourſelves know that our Entrance to you was not in vain*; that is, our firſt Preaching amongſt you, *was not in vain*; that is, ſay ſome, it was not in vain in the Matter, we did not preach about vain, uſeleſs, and unprofitable Niceties and Speculations; but our Preaching was ſubſtantial, ſound and ſolid. Others underſtand it thus: That his Preaching to, or Entrance among them, was not without a Call, nor managed in a ſlight and vain Manner.

But the Words *in vain*, here, ſeem to point at theſe two Things: 1. That it did not want Power and Energy, but had the Demonſtration of the divine Aſſiſtance, to confirm them who heard it in the Faith, and thoſe who preached it in expectation of Succeſs. 2. *It was not in vain*; that is, it did not want Fruit, it was not without a great and gracious Succeſs; for the Word *Vain*, when applied to the Meſſage which the Miniſters of God bring, ſignifies, the accompliſhing the great Ends for which it was deſigned, *Iſa.* lv. 11. *The Word that goeth out of my Mouth, ſhall not return unto me in Vain*; but proſper, *&c.*

Q. *What is next to be conſidered in this Diſcourſe?*

A. St. *Paul* next tells them the great Difficulties and Dangers he went through at his firſt Entrance amongſt them to preach, and of the Reproach and Diſgrace he underwent at their neighbouring City *Philippi*, and of his Sufferings there for the Goſpel, recorded, *Acts* xvi. 23. But nothing of that Nature could diſcourage him, but that he waxed bolder in Spirit, reſolving to preach *the Goſpel of God, though with much Contention*, and Oppoſition from the unbelieving *Jews*.

Q. *Why does he call his Boldneſs* a Boldneſs in God, *Verſe* 2?

A. Becauſe it was not barely the Effect of a natural Courage, but it was a zealous Boldneſs in the Cauſe of God, and proved a convincing, as well as courageous Boldneſs. It is one neceſſary Qualification in the Miniſters of God, in order to render their Miniſtry fruitful and ſucceſsful, that a wiſe, humble, zealous, and convincing Boldneſs be found with them, in their delivering the Truths of God unto their People.

A ſubordinate Reaſon aſſigned by the Apoſtle, why his Preaching was ſucceſsful among the *Theſſalonians*, is, becauſe it was very ſincere.

Q. *Why does he call his Preaching an* Exhortation, *Verſe* 3?

A. Doubtleſs, becauſe a great Part of his Preaching was Exhortatory and Applicatory, earneſtly and affectionately exciting the Hearers to cleave unto the Truth, whether Doctrinal or Practical, delivered unto them.

Q. *Why does he ſay, in the ſame Verſe, our Exhortation* was not of Deceit?

A. That is, of enſnaring and ſeducing Error, nor ſuited to the corrupt Opinions and wicked Inclinations of Men; *not of Uncleanneſs*; nothing that he either preached or practiſed, did in the leaſt encourage Men in their filthy Luſts, as did the Preaching of the falſe Apoſtles and the *Gnoſticks*; *in Guile*; this points at the Sincerity of his own Heart in Preaching, his Exhortation was not in Guile; that is, he did not ſeek himſelf, under a Pretence of acting for God, and his Glory, nor propound his own worldly Advantage as his ultimate End.

Q. *What Arguments and Motives induced the Apoſtle to act in this ſincere and upright Manner, and to approve himſelf to God in all his Services?*

A. 1. The Conſideration of that high Favour and honourable Truſt which he had received from God; *we are allowed of God, to be put in Truſt with the Goſpel*; God fitted him for this Truſt, and then intruſted him with it, and he looked upon both as a Favour and an Honour from God. 2. The Conſideration of God's all-ſeeing Eye, *who trieth our Hearts*. The Apoſtle well knew, that Almighty God was both a Witneſs of his Doctrine and Converſation, and alſo privy to his Intentions and Purpoſes, his Aim and End, as being a God that ſearcheth the Heart; therefore he ſo preached, *not as pleaſing Men, but God*. This Example of the Apoſtle, deſerves the Imitation of every Miniſter of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *What is there more in his Example, worthy Imitation?*

A. Our Apoſtle ſtill proceeds in vouching his own Sincerity, in preaching the Goſpel, and diſowning all Flattery, Covetouſneſs, and Vain-glory, to have any Influence upon him, in the Diſcharge of his miniſterial Truſt.

He *uſed not flattering Words*; that is, Speeches fitted to gratify the Luſts and Humours of Men, or for gaining their Favour, or courting their good Opinion.

Flattery in any is odious, in a Miniſter 'tis monſtrous, both becauſe ſpiritual Men ought to be plain-hearted, and alſo becauſe Flattery, about ſpiritual Things, is moſt fatal and pernicious, both to the Giver and Receiver.

He uſed not a *Cloak of Covetouſneſs*; that is, he had no covetous Deſign in his Miniſtry; his great End in that Miniſtration was not worldly, or outward Advantage to himſelf; and becauſe a covetous Deſign is ſecret, and out of the Power of any Man to judge of it, he ſolemnly appeals to God the Searcher of Hearts, as a Witneſs of his Innocence in that Reſpect.

Again; he purges himſelf from all Oſtentation and Vain-glory; he tells them plainly, he did not hunt after Applauſe from others, nor ſought ſo much his due Reſpect in a fitting Maintenance from themſelves, though therein he aſſures them he remitted of his Right, ſeeing, as an Apoſtle of *Chriſt*, he might have been burthenſome, that is, chargeable to them, by exacting Maintenance from them.

Q. *What farther Account does he give of his Conduct towards them?*

A. St. *Paul* having thus cleared himſelf from the Imputation of Flattery, Fraud, and Covetouſneſs, which the falſe Teachers were guilty of, next gives an Account of his own meek and gentle, courteous and affable Behaviour amongſt them, performing his Duty towards them from a Principle of tender Love, even ſuch as of a Nurſe to her Babe, which makes her ſtoop to the meaneſt Offices for it; *we were gentle among you, as a Nurſe*, who beſtows all her Time and Pains in nurſing, who draws forth her Breaſts, and gives her Milk with Pleaſure to her Nurſery, lodging it in her Boſom, and carrying it in her Arms, with all poſſible Demonſtrations of a tender Affection towards it, eſpecially bearing with its Frowardneſs and Infirmities; intimating, with what Tenderneſs of Affection a Miniſter ſhould be devoted to his People, bearing with them, and forbearing of them, and exerciſing all that Indulgence towards them, which may mutually endear them to each other.

The Apoſtle next inſtances, in particular, wherein he ſtood ready to expreſs, like a Nurſe, his indulgent Care over them. Thus, as the nurſing Mother, if but a ſhort Time abſent from her Children, longs to ſee them, and draws forth her Breaſt towards them with the utmoſt Deſire and Delight; ſo was our now abſent Apoſtle moſt affectionately deſirous of ſeeing and enjoying his beloved *Theſſalonians.*

As the nurſing Mother, when ſhe gets to the Child, with unſpeakable Delight feeds it with her own Blood, concocted and turned into Milk, ſo was the Apoſtle deſirous to impart, not the Goſpel only, but *his own Soul,* that is, his Life; implying how ready he was to ſeal the Goſpel with his own Blood, to confirm the *Theſſalonians* in the Faith of *Chriſt.*

As the moving impulſive Cauſe of the Nurſe's indulgent Care and indefatigable Pains, is pure Love, motherly Affection, and no Hope of Gain; ſo was the Caſe of St. *Paul* to the *Theſſalonians*; *we were willing to impart unto you our own Souls, becauſe ye were dear unto us.*

Q. *But why is he ſo particular in telling them that he ſubſiſted himſelf by his own Labour?*

A. Though our Apoſtle was entirely free from the leaſt Appearance of covetouſneſs in the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, yet probably the falſe Apoſtles had charged him with it; to clear himſelf therefore of that Imputation, he tells the *Theſſalonians,* he laboured Night and Day in the Buſineſs of his Calling; making Tents to maintain himſelf, that ſo he might not be chargeable to any of them, or any ways hinder the Succeſs of the Goſpel amongſt them.

Yet obſerve, this was only a Caſe of Neceſſity; for at other Times, and in other Places, we find our Apoſtle aſſerting his own Right and God's Appointment, that every one that preached the Goſpel, ſhould *live of the Goſpel,* 1 Cor. ix. 24.

Q. *What other Things does he put them in Mind of?*

A. Remember our Labour and Travel; that is, his Pains and Diligence in preaching the Goſpel; the Words ſignify labour unto Wearineſs, and labour after Wearineſs, his Painfulneſs both in his preaching, and in his ſecular Calling.

He next reminds them of the Exemplarineſs of his Converſation amongſt them, how *holily, juſtly, and unblameably we behaved ourſelves among you*; that is, performing his Duty with great Integrity and Uprightneſs towards God and Man, ſo that none could juſtly blame him for Neglect; for the Truth of which he appeals to God as Judge, and themſelves as Witneſſes, *ye are Witneſſes and God alſo?*

Q. *What other Part of his Behaviour amongſt them does he call to their Remembrance?*

A. Our Apoſtle again appeals to their Conſciences for his good Behaviour amongſt them; *ye know*; happy is that Miniſter who has a Throne in the Conſciences of his People, unto which he dares at all times to appeal, for the clearing of his Innocence and Integrity, in the Face of the whole World.

We exhorted you, as a Father doth his Children; as a Father directs and inſtructs, counſels and exhorts his Children, ſo the Apoſtle exhorted, comforted, and charged the *Theſſalonians,* that they be ſtrictly conſcientious in the Diſcharge of their Duty, both to God and Man, and patient under all Trials and Afflictions that they might meet with in the Wey of Well-doing.

Q. *What particular Duty does he exhort them to?*

A. The great Duty he directs and exhotts them to, is, *to walk worthy of God, who had called them unto his Kingdom and Glory*; that is anſwerable to to thoſe high and glorious Privileges they had received from God.

He hath called you to his Kingdom and Glory; that is, to Grace here, and Glory hereafter; ſuch as are called to one, are called to both; Grace is a certain Pledge and Earneſt of Glory.

Q. *What other Inſtructions does he give them?*

A. The Apoſtle having aſſigned the Reaſon of the Succeſs of the Goſpel amongſt them, on his own Part, he next ſhews the Reaſon on their Part, with all Thankfulneſs to Almighty God for the ſame. 1. They heard it. 2. They received it. 3. They examined it, and found it no Fable, but the Word of God, and, as ſuch, entertained with a divine Faith. 4. The Word thus received wrought with a mighty Power and Efficacy in them that believed; that is, was accompanied with Miracles, and miraculous Operations of the Holy Spirit, in order to confirm them in the Faith of what they did believe; and the Word has alſo now an efficacious Efficacy accompanying it in the Hearts of Believers, working upon the Will, not in a way of Compulſion, but in a way congruous to the Nature and Liberty of the Will, by a divine Influx.

Q. *Pray explain that Clauſe in the 14th Verſe,* For ye alſo have ſuffered like Things of your own Country?

A. It is as if he had ſaid, You of the *Chriſtian* Church in the Iſland of *Theſſalonica,* have ſhewn yourſelves like to the *Chriſtian* Churches in *Judea,* in patient ſuffering Perſecution from your Friends and Kinſfolks, from your Countrymen and Fellow-Citizens, as they did from the unbelieving *Jews.*

There can be no better Evidence that the Word of God is effectually received, than when it enables *Chriſtians* to bear Afflictions and Perſecutions with *Chriſtian* Courage and holy Reſolution; *ye have ſuffered like Things:* But of whom? *Of your own Countrymen* at *Theſſalonica,* as the Churches of *Judea* did of the *Jews.*

Q. *What Argument does he uſe to encourage them to Conſtancy under their Sufferings?*

A. Our Apoſtle's Deſign being to encourage the *Theſſalonians* to Patience and Conſtancy under their Perſecutions for *Chriſtianity,* he acquaints them, that they did not walk alone in this thorny Path, but that *Jeſus Chriſt,* the Prophets and Apoſtles went before them, and every Step they took in it was up to the Knees in Blood; *they killed the Lord* Jeſus, and before him, their own Prophets; called *their own,* becauſe of their own Nation, and ſent with a peculiar Meſſage to them, and now they perſecuted, baniſh'd, and drove away St. *Paul,* and the reſt of the Apoſtles; *they pleaſed not God,* that is, they highly diſpleaſed and dreadfully provoked him; they were haters of God, hateful to him; *contrary to all Men*; that is, to the common Intereſt of all Men, by endeavouring to obſtruct the Progreſs of the Goſpel, which brings Salvation to all Men; *forbidding us to ſpeak to the* Gentiles; that is, to preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and conſequently preventing, as much as in them lay, the Salvation of almoſt all the World; *filling up the Meaſure of their Sins*, till at laſt the Wrath of God came upon them to the utmoſt, in judicial Obduration, and the final Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*; after which the *Jews* have been no more a People, but ſcattered abroad upon the Face of the whole Earth.

Hence learn, that a Spirit of Perſecution ſeems often to run in a Blood, and paſſes from Parent to Child, through many Generations; Perſecution became, as it were hereditary among the *Jews*; they killed *Chriſt*, ſtoned the Prophets, and perſecuted the Apoſtles.

Q. *But what need of ſo much Preaching amongſt Us, who are converted from Heatheniſm to* Chriſtianity?

A. It is one Thing to be converted from Heatheniſm to *Chriſtianity*, and another Thing to be converted from Sin to God.

Q. *But we have the Bible for that End, and can make uſe of that?*

A. Obſerve it, and you will find, that ſuch as are no Friends to the Pulpit, are uſually none of the beſt Friends to the Bible; follow them to their Families, how does the Bible lye by as a neglected Book amongſt them? And it muſt be a large Charity, that can judge it is conſcientiouſly uſed in the Cloſet, when it is careleſly neglected in the Family.

Q. *What other Proof does he give of his affectionate Concern for them?*

A. St. *Paul* next declares, that his conſtrained Abſence from them, occaſioned him no leſs Grief than a tender Father feels, when bereft of his beloved Children; or that of an indulgent Mother, when the Child whom ſhe loves as her own Soul is taken violently from her.

We, Brethren, being taken from you; the Words intimate ſuch a Separation as Death makes between a Father and Child, which is like cutting off a Member from his Body, exquiſitely painful.

St. *Paul* tells them, that though Perſecutors had deprived him of his bodily Preſence, yet not of his Heart, for in Mind he was preſent with them. It is a ſingular Comfort to *Chriſtians* under Perſecution, that their Enemies can neither deprive them of the Preſence of God, nor the Prayers of their faithful Miniſters.

Q. *How did Satan hinder him from coming to them, as he expreſſes himſelf, ver.* 18?

A. That is, his Inſtruments, Perſecutors, lay in wait for him, on the one Hand, and cauſed Diſſentions in other Churches, which detained him from coming to them, on the other Hand.

Q. *What were the Grounds of this his extraordinary Affection for them?*

A. In the Cloſe of the Chapter, the Apoſtle acquaints the *Theſſalonians* with the true Grounds of his endearing Affection for them, they were his Hope, his Joy, and his Crown of rejoicing. His Hope, that is, the Matter of his Hope, that they ſhould be ſaved; his Joy, the Occaſion of his Joy, in their Converſition by his Miniſtry; and *his Crown of rejoicing in* Chriſt's *Preſence at his Coming*; that is, the Fruit and Succeſs of his Miniſtry amongſt them, would add to his Crown, and redound to his Glory in the Day of *Chriſt*.

Hence learn, that there are Degrees of Glory in Heaven, probably according to the Meaſures and Degrees of Service we have done for God on Earth; there is, no doubt, an Equality of Glory there, as to the Eſſentials, but not with reſpect to the Accidentals; beſides the Joy and Satisfaction which the Miniſters are Partakers of in Heaven, in common with other glorified Saints, they have an additional Joy and Glory from the Succeſs of their pious and painful Labours which God hath crowned with the Converſion and Edification of many Souls.

How tranſcendent will the Joy of a Miniſter be at the laſt Day when he ſhall hear the Voice of his Lord ſaying to him, *well done, good and faithfull Servant, enter into the Joy of your Lord!* I have kept an exact Account of all your Prayers for your People, of all your inſtructive and perſuaſive Sermons, of all your Sighs and Groans pour'd before me, on behalf of thoſe whom you would have perſuaded to be happy, but could not! You ſhall now find me, not *unrighteous to forget your Work of Love.*

CHAP. III.

To Comfort the Theſſalonians *under their Tribulations, and confirm them in the Faith, he had ſent* Timothy *to them; rejoices in their well-doing; prays for the perfecting of their Faith; and that they may be abundant in Love and Sanctification againſt the Coming of* Chriſt *with all his Saints.*

Q. HOW *does the Apoſtle begin the Chapter?*

A. St. *Paul* having acquainted the *Theſſalonians* with his Deſires and Intentions, to come once and again unto them, but was providentially hinder'd, now lets them know, that ſuch was the Fervour of his Affection towards them, that although he could not come, yet he could not forbear ſending to them, though he left himſelf alone, preferring their Neceſſity before his own Conveniency; *when we could not longer forbear*; that is, when I could no longer ſatisfy myſelf without knowing your State and Condition, I choſe, though with much Inconveniency to myſelf, rather to be left at *Athens* alone, in the midſt of my Afflictions and Tribulations, than that you ſhould be any longer deſtitute of one to ſupply my Abſence, in order to your Confirmation and Comfort. *We thought it good to be left at* Athens *alone.*

Q. *Who was the Perſon whom he ſent to them?*

A. The Perſon ſent by him, was *Timothy* with his deſerved Character and Commendations, a *Brother*, that is, a *Chriſtian* and Believer; a Brother in *Chriſt*; *a Miniſter of God*, that is, a Preacher of the Goſpel, his *Fellow-labourer*, or one that joined Heart and Hand with him in Preaching the Goſpel from Place to Place.

Q. *What was his View in ſending him?*

Q. The great End for which he was ſent, was, to confirm, and comfort them; to confirm them in the Faith of *Chriſt*, and to comfort them under all their Sufferings for the Sake of *Chriſt*. The ſtrongeſt Faith needs Confirmation and Eſtabliſhment; and it is the Miniſter's Duty, in trying Times eſpecially, to guard his People's Faith, on the Stability whereof their Strength and Safety depend.

That no Man be moved by theſe Afflictions; as if he had ſaid, one great End of my ſending *Timothy* to you, is, leſt either on the Account of your own Afflictions, or my Sufferings, you ſhould be moved from your Stedfaſtneſs, either drawn away by Fraud and Flattery, or driven away by Force and Terror.

The Argument to confirm them in their Faith, amidſt all their Sufferings and Afflictions, is drawn from the Pleaſure and Purpoſe, the Ordination and Appointment of God, concerning their Afflictions; *Ye yourſelves know that we are thereunto appointed.*

Some render the Word *appointed*, ſet as a Mark to be ſhot at; ſome Saints, with holy *Job*, are ſet on Purpoſe as a Mark for the Arrows of Affliction to be levell'd at, yet are they to keep their Ground, and ſtand immoveable; we honour God abundantly, when we are immoveable in our active Obedience; and we glorify him eminently, when we are immoveable in our paſſive Obedience: This is the Glory of a *Chriſtian*, and his great Duty, and it is the Glory of God and his certain Due.

Since then Afflictions are appointed us by the Decree of God, a Decree as to the Matter, the Meaſure, the Time of them, when they ſhall commence, how far they ſhall advance, how long continue, ſeeing every Thing in Affliction is under Appointment, how meek and humble, patient and ſubmiſſive ought the *Chriſtian* Spirit to be under them? And with what Stedfaſtneſs of Expectation may and ought he to look up to Heaven for a ſanctified Uſe and Improvemement of them? Let no *Man be moved by our Afflictions, knowing we are appointed thereunto.*

Q. *What Evidence does the Apoſtle give of his ſincere Dealing with them?*

A. The Apoſtle next appeals to themſelves, as to his own Sincerity, in acquainting them at their firſt Converſion, that they muſt, through many Tribulations, enter into the Kingdom of God, as it fell out accordingly.

The Sincerity of our Apoſtle is here very remarkable; when he firſt preach'd the Goſpel at *Theſſalonica*, he did not flatter them with the Expectation of an earthly Paradiſe of Pleaſure, but told them plainly, that *Chriſtianity* had a Croſs attending it, that a ſuffering Hour would come, and they muſt expect it; *When we were with you, we told you that we ſhould ſuffer Tribulation?*

Q. *What was the Apoſtle's View in ſending* Timothy *to* Theſſalonica*?*

A. One ſpecial End was to know their Faith; that is, their Conſtancy in the Faith, for he was fearful, leſt Satan, the Tempter had taken Occaſion, from the preſent Perſecution they were under, to turn them from *Chriſtianity*; and that by their yielding to his Temptation, and apoſtatizing from the Faith, his Labour in the Goſpel had been in vain amongſt them.

However, this Fear of the Apoſtle touching the *Theſſalonians* was happily remov'd by the Return of *Timothy*, and the good Tidings he brought with him, of the Stedfaſtneſs of their Faith, the Fervency of their Charity, of their particular Reſpect to himſelf, having always Remembrance of him in their Prayers, and making a reſpectful Mention of his Miniſterial Labours and Diligence, and this always when they had Occaſion to ſpeak of him.

And laſtly, by their paſſionate and impatient Deſire to ſee him, (as the original Word imports) to which he adds, that his Deſire to ſee them was no leſs ardent, tho' the Providence of God had hithero prevented him.

Q. *What do we learn from hence?*

A. This mutual and reciprocal Deſire of St. *Paul* and the *Theſſalonians* of ſeeing each other, teaches us, that *Chriſtian* Love longs to evidence itſelf in *Chriſtian* Fellowſhip, and paſſionately deſires the Communion of Saints for the mutual Comfort, and ſpiritual Advantage of each other; the ſweeteſt Privilege, next to Communion with God, is Communion with Saints. How pleaſant is it to behold the beautiful and bleſſed Graces of the Holy Spirit of God ſparkling and ſhining in each other, exciting and quickening one another, acquainting each other with their Griefs, their Doubts and Fears; no Wonder then that the *Theſſalonians* ſo paſſionately deſired to ſee *Paul*, and he as earneſtly to ſee them.

Q. *What other Proof does he give of his Affection for them?*

A. Our Apoſtle next declares his tranſcendent Joy, and overflowing Comfort, on the Information he received of their Conſtancy and Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith; *We were comforted in our Afflictions by your Faith.* Of all Comforts which the People of God can afford to the Miniſters of the Goſpel, there it none comparable with that which reſults from their unfainting Perſeverance in the Faith, and the unblameable Holineſs of their Life. It was this that put a kind of new Life into St. *Paul*, in the midſt of all his Sorrows and Sufferings. *Now we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord*; that is, in Joy and Comfort; or, *we live*; that is, it will be a Means to prolong our Life, as well as add to the Comfort of it; and the Contrary tends to the ſhortening our Days.

Such as impair the Chearfulneſs of their Miniſters Lives, ſuch as deaden their Spirits, and break their Hearts by their obſtinate Non-compliance with the Rules of the Goſpel, are no better than Murderers in God's Account. If Miniſters may, as other Perſons do, value their Lives by the Joy and Comfort of them, then may they ſay, with the great Apoſtle; *we live*, as we ſee our People *ſtand faſt in the Lord*; and we did as we ſee others ſtick faſt in their Sins.

Note, how thankful the Apoſtle was to God, and what unſpeakable Praiſe he renders him, for adminiſtring to him this Occaſion of Joy by the Conſtancy and Perſeverance of the *Chriſtian* Faith at *Theſſalonica*. *What thanks can we render to God for you, and for all the Joy wherewith we joy for your Sakes.*

Night and Day praying exceedingly; that is, fervently, conſtantly, affectionately; ſpiritual Affections are ſtrong and vehement.

Note here, the admirable Pattern the Apoſtle hath ſet before the Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church to the End of the World, namely, to be very much in Prayer.

Q. *What was the Subject Matter of St.* Paul's *Prayer?*

A. It was *that he might ſee their Face, and perfect what was lacking in their Faith.* St. *Paul's* ſhort Stay among the *Theſſalonians,* when he firſt planted the Goſpel among them, did not permit ſo full and compleat an Explication of the Matters and Myſteries of *Chriſtianity* as the Apoſtle deſired, he therefore prays that God would bring him again amongſt them, that he might ſupply what was wanting in their Faith, increaſe their Knowledge, inflame their Love, excite their Deſire quicken their Endeavours, and carry on that good Work to Perfection in them, of which God had aſſiſted him to lay the Foundation.

Q. *What elſe does he pray for?*

A. St. *Paul* next begs of God to direct his way unto them, that all Obſtacles and Impediments being removed, the Providence of God might direct him, as in a right Line unto them, as the original Word imports.

The Perſon to whom he directs his Prayers for this Mercy, is, to God and *Chriſt*. *Chriſt* is here invocated as well as the Father, he is therefore God as well as the Father; becauſe this Invocation of him by all Perſons, proves him Omniſcient, ſearching the Hearts of Men, and alſo Omnipreſent, being with his People in all Places; and conſequently proves our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* to be truly and undeniably God.

The Apoſtle ſtill perſeveres in his Prayer, and the particular Mercy he prays for, is their abundant Increaſe in the Grace and Duty of Love, firſt among themſelves and their Fellow-Brethren in *Chriſt*, all *Chriſtians* far and near; next towards all Men, Heathens and Infidels, their bitter and bloody Perſecutors not excepted.

Q. *Why does he ſo particularly pray for their Increaſe in Love?*

A. In the laſt Verſe a ſpecial Reaſon is aſſign'd, why he pray'd ſo fervently for their *abounding in Love*; namely, in order to their Eſtabliſhment *in Faith and Holineſs*; teaching us, that as true Love evidences the Co-exiſtence of all Graces, ſo it it giveth Stability to all Graces.

There ſhall be no Poſſibility of appearing unblameable before *Chriſt* at his Coming, without the Love and Practice of univerſal Holineſs in our *Chriſtian* Courſe.

Q. *What farther deſerves Remark in this Chapter?*

A. That the perfecting of a Saint's Graces, and rendring him altogether unblameable, without Imperfection in Grace or Holineſs, is reſerved till the Coming of *Chriſt*. Then, and not till then, ſhall our Holineſs be perfected, our Love improved to a Seraphim's Likeneſs, all burning; then ſhall we obey with Vigour, praiſe with Chearfulneſs, delight in God above Meaſure, fear him without Torment, truſt him without Deſpondency, ſerve him without Laſſitude and Wearineſs, without Interruption and Diſtraction, and be perfectly like unto him, as well in Holineſs as Happineſs, as well in Purity as Immortality.

CHAP. IV.

An Exhortation to a godly Converſation; to Chaſtity, Honeſty, Juſtice in their Dealings, brotherly Love, a quiet Life, and minding their own Buſineſs; to moderate Sorrow for the Dead. A brief Deſcription of the Reſurrection, and ſecond Coming of Chriſt.

Q. PRAY *what is the firſt Thing to be conſidered in this Chapter?*

A. In the firſt Verſe we have a general Exhortation given to the *Theſſalonians*, that, according to the Doctrine and Injunction formerly given them, for an holy Converſation ſuitable to the Goſpel, they would make it their Care and Endeavour to abound more and more in the Exerciſe of Piety, and even exceed themſelves in doing their Duty towards God and one another; *We beſeech you, Brethren, and exhort you by the Lord* Jeſus, *&c.*

Note here, with what Condeſcenſion and Earneſtneſs St. *Paul* applies himſelf to them, he ſtiles them his Brethren, and exhorts and beſeeches them: Yet obſerve, with what Authority he backs his Intreaty, he beſeeches and exhorts them, by the *Lord Jeſus*; that is, in the Name of the Lord *Jeſus*, and by his Authority, and for his Sake; ſo that he who deſpiſes the gentle Exhortation of *Chriſt's* Miniſters, deſpiſes not Men, but God; as the Authority of a Prince is deſpiſed, when his Meſſages, by his Embaſſadors are rejected.

Q. *What is obſervable in the Apoſtle's Manner of inſtructing them?*

A. St. *Paul*, in the Courſe of his Miniſtry, not only explained and unfolded Goſpel-myſteries, but urged and enforced Moral Duties; *as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk.* It ſhould be the Miniſter's Care, to acquaint his People, that as the Privileges of *Chriſtianity* are very great, ſo the Duties it requires are very ſtrict and exact; and thoſe which we call moral Duties are an integral Part of our Religion; he that is not a moral Man, is no *Chriſtian*.

Q. *What particular Duties does he exhort them to?*

A. He exhorts them to abound more and more; that is, in Grace and Holineſs; *Chriſtians* are to be thankful for, but not ſatiſfied with their preſent Meaſures of Grace received; God alloweth us Liberty to enlarge our Deſires after an Abundance of his Grace; and happy is it where there is found an holy Covetouſneſs going with the Grace of God, as there is an inſatiable Covetouſneſs, accompanying the Gold and Treaſure of this World. This, ſays the Apoſtle, will pleaſe God, when *ye abound more and more.*

The Apoſtle adds, that what he now required of them, was nothing but what, at their Converſion to *Chriſtianity*, he had commanded them in the Name, and by the Authority of *Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo that they were not his, but *Chriſt's* Commands by him, and, as ſuch, to be eſteemed by them.

Q. *What is the Senſe of thoſe Words, Verſe* 3. For this is the Will of God, even your Sanctification?

A. That, is the Will of God, eminently and emphatically revealed in his Word, that *Chriſtians* ſhould be holy and pure, chaſte and clean, not indulging themſelves in thoſe filthy Luſts of the Fleſh, Fornication, and all manner of Uncleanneſs, which the *Gentiles*, who knew not the true God ſavingly, were addicted to, but that every one ſhould know how to poſſeſs and make uſe of his Body, and all its Members, as the Veſſel and Inſtrument of the Soul, in Holineſs and Honour.

The particular Duty here exhorted to, is, Sanctification; a comprehenſive Word, and of large Extent; in the general it conſiſts in a Conformity of our Natures to the Nature of God, and of our Lives to his Will. In particular, Sanctification here ſtands in Oppoſition to all bodily Uncleanneſs, as appears by the next Words, *that ye abſtain from Fornication*; that is, from whatever is contrary to Chaſtity; intimating, that as there are no Sins that human Nature is more inclined to, than the Luſts of the Fleſh; ſo there are no Sins a *Chriſtian* ſhould more guard againſt, and ſtrive to mortify and ſubdue, as being contrary to that Purity of Nature and Life which the Goſpel expects, and the Holy Spirit aſſiſts unto.

This is the Will of God; 'tis both the Command of God that we ſhould be holy, and the Will of God to make us holy; now, the Sanctification of God's Will, ought to be a ſufficient Inducement to us, to deſire and endeavour after it. *This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification, that ye ſhould abſtain from Fornication.*

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words*; That ye ſhould abſtain from Fornication, that every one of you ſhould know how to poſſeſs his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour?

A. Here note, the Title given to our Body; it is called a *Veſſel*; it is the Spirit's Veſſel, he reſides in it as his Temple; and accordingly, it ſeems an Alluſion to the conſecrated Veſſels of the Temple, in which a more than ordinary Clearneſs and Purity was found.

Again; it is the Soul's Veſſel or Receptacle, in which, for a Time, it's preſerved; and it is the Inſtrument of the Soul, by which it acts and performs its Office and Function. Now it's every Perſon's Duty, to poſſeſs their Body, to be Maſters of it; not to be poſſeſſed by it, nor enſlaved to it, but to keep it in Subjection to, and as an Inſtrument of the Soul; the Body is God's curious Workmanſhip, it's *Chriſt*'s precious Purchaſe, the Soul's Receptacle, the Holy Ghoſt's Temple; therefore to be kept holy, pure, and clean.

Q. *What does he mean by* the Luſt of Concupiſcence, *Verſe* 5?

A. The Apoſtle exhorts them to mortify the inward *Luſt of Concupiſcence*; or, as the Word ſignifies, the feveriſh Fit, or violent Paſſion of burning Deſire, which boils within through all the Members of the Body without.

There is a divine Art in the Exerciſe of Chaſtity, and no ſmall Skill required to keep a Man's Soul and Body free from fleſhly Uncleanneſs; in order to which, inordinate Deſires muſt be reſiſted, the outward Senſes guarded, enticing and enſnaring Objects avoided, wanton company declined, Meat, Drink and Sleep ſoberly uſed, our lawful Callings diligently followed, the firſt Motion to Uncleanneſs ſuppreſſed, Prayer to God renewed; and, if theſe prevail not, Marriage, God's ſpecial Remedy, holily and religiouſly made uſe of.

Q. *What is the next Duty which he exhorts them to put in Practice?*

A. Another poſitive Duty preſſed upon the *Theſſalonians*, is, Juſtice and Equity in all their Dealings. *Theſſalonica* was a City of great Trade and Merchandize, therefore the Apoſtle directs them in their Traffick and Commerce, neither by Fraud nor Force, to over-reach one another.

The Apoſtle's ſaying, let none *go beyond or defraud his Brother*; that is, his Fellow-*Chriſtian*; doth not ſuppoſe it lawful to defraud thoſe who were not their Brethren, but only lets them ſee, that for *Chriſtians* to defraud and cheat one another, would be a very great Aggravation of their Crime, ſeeing their Religion, as well as the Light of Nature, condemns all ſuch Injuſtice and Diſhoneſty. Accordingly the Apoſtle enforceth his Exhortation from the dreadful Effect of all ſuch Sins; namely, that it expoſeth the guilty Perſon to the direful Vengeance of God; *the Lord is the Avenger of all ſuch.*

Q. *Pray by what Arguments does he enforce this Duty?*

A. The Reaſon urged by St. *Paul* to enforce his foregoing Exhortation to Purity and Juſtice, are taken, 1. From the Deſign of God in their Vocation; when called out of their heatheniſh State to *Chriſtianity* they were called not to Uncleanneſs, but out of it unto Holineſs. 2. From the Heinouſneſs of their Sin, who ſhall deſpiſe or reject the Command here given for Holineſs and Sanctification; *he that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not Man but God*; to deſpiſe the Miniſter of God in a Command which he delivereth from God, is to deſpiſe God himſelf; the Apoſtle gave theſe Commands by the Direction of the Holy Spirit, which was given him for that End, *who hath alſo given us his Holy Spirit; therefore he that deſpiſeth, deſpiſeth not Man, but God.*

Where note, that although the Reaſon here given, why thoſe who deſpiſed, deſpiſed God himſelf, be peculiar to St. *Paul*, who had the Holy Spirit to guide him infallibly; yet ſo far as the ordinary Miniſters of *Chriſt* do follow the Apoſtle's Steps, and deliver nothing but what is agreeable to the Word of God, the Contempt of their Meſſage is a deſpiſing of God himſelf.

Q. *What is his next Exhortation?*

A. The next Duty the Apoſtle exhorts them to, is *brotherly Love*, ſo called, becauſe it has all *Chriſtians*, all our Fellow-Members in *Chriſt* for its Object; this he perſuades them to by a winning Inſinuation, that he need not ſay much upon this Argument, becauſe they are taught of God, that is, by the Goſpel of God, and influenced by his Spirit, to love one another.

Note alſo, the Extenſiveneſs of their Love, it was not confined to a Party, only to them in *Theſſalonica*, but throughout all *Macedonia*; however he deſires them to extend it ſtill farther, *to abound ſtill more and more*; that is, firſt, in the Extent of it; let it reach not only the Saints in *Macedonia*, but even to thoſe at the Ends of the Earth.

Hence learn, that neither *brotherly Love*, nor any other *Chriſtian* Grace, is ſo perfect in any Saint here, but it's capable of Increaſe, both intenſively, by advancing to higher Degrees of Perfection; and extenſively, embracing more Objects, who ought to be Sharers in our Love.

Q. *Why does he ſo earneſtly exhort them to be diligent in their Callings, and to work with their own Hands?*

A. Some imagine, that the Charity and Bounty of theſe *Theſſalonians*, occaſioned ſome to be idle, and carry Tales from Houſe to Houſe, ſeeking by their Flatteries and Inſinuations, to maintain themtain themſelves without working; the Apoſtle therefore commands every perſon to work at ſome Calling, that they neither be a Burthen to the Church, nor give a Scandal to the *Heathen*.

Study to be quiet; that is, to be of a peaceable Temper; the original Word imports an ambitious Study; we ſhould be ambitiouſly deſirous of living peaceably and quietly with all Men; and to live ſo with ſome Men will require Study, and earneſt Endeavour: *If it be poſſible, live peaceably with all Men*, Rom. xii. 18. implying, that there are ſome Men it's impoſſible to live quiet with.

He adds, *doing our own Buſineſs, and working with our own Hands*; every Perſon muſt be well employ'd, and found in the Way of an honeſt and induſtrious Diligence, for no Man is ſent into the World to be idle; and as it is every Man's Duty, ſo it is alſo his Privilege, to have a Calling; the Want of which expoſes him to innumerable Temptations; for the Devil finds an idle Perſon always ready to run of his Errand.

Q. *How does he enforce his Exhortation to Diligence?*

A. This Exhortation to Diligence the Apoſtle preſſes with a double Argument. Hereby they *ſhould walk honeſtly towards them that are without*, that is, in a decent and ſeemly Manner in the Eyes of unconverted *Pagans*, who are ſaid to be without, becauſe without the Pale of the viſible Church. 2. Becauſe by God's Bleſſing upon their Induſtry, they would attain to ſuch a Competency of the Things of this Life, as to lack nothing which the Wiſdom of God ſaw fit and convenient for them; ſo that by an induſtrious Diligence we pleaſe God, profit ourſelves, are ſerviceable to the Publick, ſilence the Enemies of Religion, and beautify our Profeſſion with a becoming Converſation.

Q. *The Apoſtle next exhorts them to moderate their Sorrow for their Friends: What Arguments does he uſe for that Purpoſe?*

A. He lays down many conſolatory Arguments, as ſo many ſovereign Antidotes againſt immoderate Sorrow for the Death of pious Relations; and firſt he acquaints them, that ſuch Sorrow as is exceſſive, would be more like *Pagans* than *Chriſtians*, who mourn without hope of any Life after this; that is, of a Reſurrection from the Grave, and a State of future Immortality.

Our Apoſtle does not abſolutely forbid Sorrow for the Dead, for *Chriſt* ſorrowed for *Lazarus*, and the Church for *Stephen*; but it is exceſſive Sorrow only that is here condemned. The *Chriſtian* Religion does not deſtroy natural Affections, but teacheth us to moderate them.

Q. *What is the Difference between a* Chriſtian's *Sorrow for the Dead, and theirs who are Strangers to* Chriſtianity?

A. The Sorrow of the *Heathen* was extravagant, fooliſh, cruel, and impious; they tore their Hair, beat their Breaſts, cut their Fleſh, and ran howling up and down in the moſt deſperate Manner: But the *Chriſtian*'s Sorrow is ſober, ſilent, free from Oſtentation, under the Government of Reaſon and Religion.

The Belief of a future State, and the Hope of a joyful Reſurrection, is the Cauſe of this great Difference; it is Ignorance of the Happineſs of glorified Saints in Heaven, which is the Cauſe of immoderate Sorrow here on Earth.

Q. *What Arguments does he uſe to diſſuade them from an immoderate Sorrow for the Death of Relations?*

A. The firſt Comfort is, that our Relations, over whom we mourn, are but fallen aſleep; the Grave is a Bed, in which the Saint is laid to Reſt, his Body reſts in a Bed of Duſt, as in a ſafe and conſecrated Dormitory, till the Morning of the Reſurrection; and if the Night be long, the Morning will be the more joyous.

The ſecond Comfort is, they ſleep in *Jeſus*; that is, in Union with *Jeſus*, as Members of his Body; in the Faith of *Jeſus*, in ſuch a Belief of the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, as is accompanied with an Holy Obedience to the Commands of *Chriſt*.

The third conſolatory Word is this, God will come; that is, to Judgment; and when he comes, will bring his ſleeping Saints with him; that is, he will bring their Souls from Heaven, their Bodies from the Grave. Body and Soul united he ſhall take up to himſelf into the Clouds, and then ſhall carry all the Saints back with him into Heaven.

The fourth Word of Comfort is, that our Relations are not alone in Death; *Jeſus died*, the Captain of our Salvation marched before us thro' the black Regions of Death and the Grave, and has perfumed the Bed of the Grave by his own lying in it.

The Apoſtle ſays, *Jeſus died*, the *Saints ſleep*; a Believer's Death is called a Sleep; we don't find that *Chriſt*'s Death is called a Sleep, no, his Death was Death indeed, Death with a Curſe in it: But the Believer's Death is turned by *Chriſt* into a ſweet and ſilent Sleep.

Again; *Jeſus died and roſe again*; which is a comfortable Conſideration, he was laid, but not loſt in the Grave; he roſe by his own Power, as our Head and Repreſentative, and accordingly all his Saints are riſen in him, and ſhall riſe after him; *Becauſe I live, you ſhall live alſo.*

Q. *How do you interpret the 15th Verſe?*

A. In this Verſe St. *Paul* obviates an Objection; they might ſay, that the Saints found alive at the laſt Day might be ſooner happy than the dead Saints; No, ſays the Apoſtle, they that are alive ſhall not prevent them that ſleep, they ſhall not prevent their Riſing, nor ſhall they get the Start of them, or get to Heaven before them, or have any Advantage above them; the living Saints ſhall not be made happy without them, nor one Moment before them.

Q. *Pray illuſtrate the Apoſtle's Deſcription of our Saviour's ſecond Coming, mentioned in the next Verſe?*

A. *The Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from Heaven*; that is, the Lord *Jeſus*, the Mediator; he will not depute an Angel, but deſcend himſelf to finiſh that Part of his Mediatorial Office. He will come perſonally, for the Judgment will be managed viſibly; and for the Recompence of his Abaſement, it is requiſite that he who was judged by the World, ſhould come to judge the World; Reaſon ſays, he may come and judge the World, for he made it; Faith ſays; he muſt and ſhall come and judge the World, for he hath promiſed it, *John* xiv. 2. Let us then keep up our Faith, and that will keep up our Hearts.

Obſerve the awful and ſolemn Manner of the Coming of our Lord. 1. He ſhall deſcend with a Shout; the original Word ſignifies ſuch a Shout as is heard amongſt Seamen when they deſcry the the Haven, and with united Voices cry out, A Shore, a Shore. 2. With the Voice of an Arch-angel; probably *Chriſt* himſelf will give the Word of Command, both to the Quick and Dead, to appear before him, and that this Command will be proclaimed by an Archangel. 3. With the Trump of God; the Angel's Proclamation ſhall be confirmed by the Sound of a Trumpet, which will be heard even by thoſe that are in the Grave, and in the Depth of the Sea.

Such will be the Solemnity of the ſecond Coming of *Chriſt*, that all the Terror, Majeſty and Reverence, which has been ever ſeen upon Earth, ſhall fall infinitely ſhort of it; Great was the Terror on Mount *Sinai* at the giving of the Law, but far greater will the Terror be at the Day of Judgment, when *Chriſt* ſhall come to puniſh the Trangreſſors of that Law, and the Diſobeyers of his Goſpel.

Q. *What do you obſerve on the Reſurrection and triumphant Aſcenſion of the Saints at the laſt Day?*

A. The dead in Chriſt *ſhall riſe firſt*; the Saints ſhall riſe with the ſame Bodies they had laid down in the Grave; they ſhall riſe firſt, that is, before they who are alive ſhall be changed; though it's very probable there be no Difference of Time before the Glorification of the raiſed Saints, and thoſe who are alive at the Coming of *Chriſt*, yet it ſeems evident that the dead Saints ſhall be raiſed, and in their Bodies be glorified, before thoſe who are alive ſhall be changed.

The 17th Verſe declareth the triumphant Aſcenſion both of the living and ſleeping Saints together into the Clouds; *we which are alive ſhall be caught up together with them into the Clouds.* This Aſcenſion ſhall be effected by the Power of *Chriſt*, the Miniſtry of Angels, and by the Spirituality of the Saints own Bodies.

Then will be the bleſſed Meeting of all the Saints together in one Body, to take their Fight to meet the Lord *Jeſus*, who ſhall come from the third Heaven to meet them in the lower Region of the Air, when *Chriſt* will own them in their Perſons in their Services, in their Sufferings, and they ſhall receive their full and final Benediction from the Mouth of *Chriſt*, and take an everlaſting Poſſeſſion of the heavenly Kingdom, together with *Chriſt*.

And ſhall ever be with the Lord; which implies the Saints preſence with *Chriſt*, their Viſions and Sight of him, their Fruition and Enjoyment of him, their Relation and Conformity to him.

Wherefore, comfort one another with theſe Words. Draw Matter of Conſolation to yourſelves from the foregoing Conſideration, againſt the Loſs of your deceaſed Friends, intimating, that the choiceſt Comfort, for ſupporting the Spirits of Men under Afflictions in general, and the Loſs of dear Relations in particular, are drawn from the Holy Scriptures; *comfort one another with theſe Words*: that is, with ſuch Scriptural Words as he had them written.

CHAP. V.

A farther Deſcription of the ſecond Coming of Chriſt. *He exhorts them to have their Rulers in Honour; and to practice divers* Chriſtian *Virtues; prays God to keep them unblameable till the Coming of* Chriſt. *Entreats them to pray for him; and to ſalute one another. Adjures them that this Epiſtle be read before all. The Apoſtle's Benediction.*

Q. *WHAT is the Apoſtle's general Deſign in this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle, probably foreſeeing that ſome curious Perſons would take Occaſion from his having ſo particularly treated of *Chriſt's* ſecond Coming in the foregoing Chapter, to enquire when the general Reſurrection and future Judgment ſhould be, in this Chapter diverts them from ſuch Enquiries, by putting them upon the Practice of ſuch Duties as would prepare and fit them for that ſolemn Time.

In the firſt Verſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks after this manner; although I have told you there will be a general Reſurrection and future Judgment, yet I ſuppoſe you do not expect that I ſhould write to you of the particular Time of his Coming; for you have been told, that his Coming will be like that of a Thief in the Night, without Warning, without Noiſe, when Perſons are moſt ſecure, leaſt ſuſpecting, and wholly unprovided for it; yea, as the Pains of a Woman in Travail, which are unavoidable; the Thief perhaps may not come, but the Pains of Child-birth muſt come, and alſo be painful when they come.

Hence it appears, that the Wiſdom of God has thought fit to conceal the preciſe Time of *Chriſt's* Coming to Judgment, and yet there is an itching Curioſity in Man's Nature to ſearch and pry into that profound Secret, though the Knowledge of it is not only impoſſible, but would prove unprofitable and hurtful to Mankind, making the World ſecure and careleſs; whereas, not knowing the Hour when our Lord cometh, ſhould oblige us to be upon our Watch every Hour.

Q. *What is particularly obſervable in this farther Account of the Day of Judgment?*

A. The Pain and Sorrow, the Trouble and Horror which the Day of the Lord will bring upon ſuch as are unprepared for it, no Tongue ca utter, no Heart conceive; the greateſt of earthly and bodily Torments and Sorrows, ſuch as the Pangs of a Woman in Travail, being but weak Shadows and ſlender Repreſentations of it; the Day of the Lord cometh *as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and they ſhall not eſcape.*

Q. *How does he comfort them under thoſe dreadful Apprehenſions, which the Knowledge of theſe Things might occaſion in their Minds?*

A. Leſt the *Theſſalonians* ſhould be terrified in their Minds, and ſhaken with Apprehenſions of Fear from that ſudden Deſtruction he had juſt mentioned, he caſts in a ſeaſonable Word of Comfort; and aſſures thoſe who were ſincere *Chriſtians* amongſt them, that how ſudden ſoever the Coming and Appearance of *Chriſt* might be, yet it ſhould not find them unready for it, becauſe they were not in Darkneſs, but in the Light, and were not Children of the Night, but of the Day; that is, they were not now in a State of Heatheniſm, but *Chriſtianity*; they were no longer in their groſs and natural Ignorance of God, as they were before Converſion, but they were the Children of the Light and of the Day; living and walking in the Light of the Goſpel, and in all Holineſs of Converſation.

Q. *What Duties does he ſtir them up to from the Conſideration of the ſudden Coming of* Chriſt *to Judgment?*

A. *Therefore let us not ſleep as do others.* Sleep is not proper for the Day: The Sleep here intended

tended is the Sleep of Sin, and of ſinful Security, whereby all the ſpiritual Senſes of a Man are bound up, ſo that he is both unapprehenſive of his Duty, and regardleſs of his Danger.

Let us watch and be ſober; that is, let us always be ready and prepared for *Chriſt*'s Coming; and that we may be ſo, let us be found in the daily Exerciſe of Sobriety, at no Time overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs, and that Day overtake us unawares. The Exerciſe of theſe two Graces, Watchfulneſs and Sobriety, do beſt together, and can hardly be ſeparated from one another; he that is not ſober cannot be watchful, and he that is not watchful can never be ready for *Chriſt*'s Coming.

The Reaſon ſubjoin'd to enforce this Duty of Watchfulneſs and Sobriety, is, becauſe Sleep and Drunkenneſs are Works of Darkneſs, performed in the Night, and not ſuitable for the Children of the Day.

The old Heathens had their *Bacchanalia*, their drunken Feaſts in the Night; and in the Apoſtles Times Drunkenneſs was ſo ſhameful a Vice, that Men were aſhamed to be ſeen drunken in the Day Time; but to what a Height of Impudence is the Intemperance of our Age arrived, when *Chriſtians* bluſh not to do that at Mid-day, which the Heathens were aſhamed of at Mid-night.

Q. *What other Reaſon does he ſuggeſt why we ſhould be thus ſober and watchful?*

A. Becauſe our Life is a ſpiritual Warfare. 'Tis now a Time of fighting, therefore not of ſleeping, nor of intemperate Eating and Drinking; Soldiers muſt be upon their Guard, and well armed; accordingly St. *Paul* directs them to the two principal Pieces of ſpiritual Armour, to guard the moſt noble and vital Parts, namely, the Head and the Heart, the Helmet for the Head, the Breaſt-plate for the Heart; for thoſe two being the Fountains of Life and Senſation, the preſerving them ſafe, is in Effect, the preſerving the whole Man; and accordingly Soldiers that were upon the Watch, always wore their Helmet and Breaſt-plate. In Alluſion to which our Apoſtle here directs us, as *Chriſtian* Soldiers, to put on the Breaſt-Plate of Faith and Love, and for an Helmet, the Hope of Salvation, without which we can never be rightly and ſufficiently prepared for our ſpiritual Warfare.

Note, of what admirable Uſe, Faith, Love and Hope, are to a *Chriſtian*; Faith fortifies againſt deſtructive Temptations; Love will preſerve us from Apoſtaſy and Revolting; and Hope will be of univerſal Uſe to us in the Exerciſe of our *Chriſtian* Courſe; it will be a Cordial to comfort us, a Spur to quicken, a Staff to Support, a Bridle to reſtrain, an Helmet to defend us.

Q. *What do we learn from the 9th Verſe*, For God hath not appointed us to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*?

A. Hence it appears, that the Ordination and Appointment by God of us to Happineſs and Salvation, does not diſcharge us from the Practice of univerſal Holineſs; 'tis the greateſt Piece of Folly imaginable, from the Appointment of the End, to infer the Refuſal or Neglect of the Means.

Q. *What was the chief End of* Chriſt *in dying for us?*

A. The great End of *Chriſt* in dying for us, was our living to him, in order to our living with him; our Life of Grace on Earth, is our Evidence for a Life of Glory in Heaven; *whether we wake or ſleep, we ſhould live together with him.*

The great and important Duty he exhorts the *Theſſalonians* to, is, to comfort themſelves together with this Hope, and to edify and build up one another in Faith and Holineſs.

Q. *What is the reciprocal Duty between Miniſter and People?*

A. The Miniſterial Office is, publickly to labour, privately to admoniſh, miniſterially to Rule.

To admoniſh conſiſts of two Parts; to reprove for Sins committed, and exhort to Duties neglected; rightly to do both, requires that the Miniſter be a Perſon of Knowledge and Underſtanding, of Prudence and Diſcretion, of Courage and Reſolution, of Integrity and Unblameableneſs of Converſation.

He is to rule, not magiſterially, much leſs tyrannically, but in Love, and with a Spirit of Meekneſs, executing that Power which *Chriſt* hath given for Edification, and not for Deſtruction: Such a Power as a Shepherd hath over the Flock to guide and conduct it; as the Head hath over the Members, to influence and quicken them; as the Father of the Family hath over the Houſhold, to take care of, and provide for it.

The Duty of the People to their Paſtors and ſpiritual Guides, is twofold. 1. They are to know them, and with a Knowledge of Obſervation, of Approbation, and of Imitation. 2. They are highly to eſteem them, paying Honour to the Function, Reverence to their Perſons, and all this in Love, for the Sake of their Works.

And be at at Peace among yourſelves; ſuch a People can never join Hearts in Duty, that cannot join Hands in Love; *Chriſtian* Love is a Mother to all Grace, and tends exceedingly to make the Work of the Miniſtry ſucceſsful; but when Strife and Diſſenſion, Diſcord and Diviſion prevail among a People, or betwixt Miniſter and People, farewel all Expectation of Succeſs from the ableſt Miniſtry upon Earth.

The Miniſters of *Chriſt* are alſo exhorted to admoniſh thoſe that are unruly, and walk diſorderly, to *comfort the feeble minded*, ſuch as are diſpirited by, and dejected under their Afflictions, that they ſhould bear with the weak in Faith, and be patient towards all Mankind. The Church of *Chriſt* here on Earth is like an Hoſpital of ſickly and infirm Perſons, labouring under great Variety of ſpiritual Diſeaſes, and conſequently fit Objects for the Miniſters of *Chriſt* to exerciſe their Patience and Pains upon; ſome Weak, and Feeble-minded; every Perſon, and every Member of the Church is a Patient, and every Patient hath his particular Diſtemper, which calls for indefatigable induſtry, and invincible Patience, from ſuch as are ſpiritual Phyſicians?

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the 15th Verſe*, See that none render Evil for Evil; but ever follow that which is good?

A. A malicious Deſire of Revenge is ſo far beneath a *Chriſtian*, that it is the Baſeneſs of a Man; let him that doth Wrong look to it, ſaid an Heathen; not only Revenge in the Action, but in the Affection, is greatly ſinful before God, and deeply penal alſo; as Jealouſy is the Rage of a Man, ſo Malice and Revenge is the Rage of the Devil.

But ever follow that which is good. By Good here, as it ſtands in Oppoſition to rendring Evil, muſt be underſtood Good-will and Beneficence, or doing Good to Enemies; this the Apoſtle will have us follow, or as the Word ſignifies, purſue with Eagerneſs, as the Hunter does his Game, and this continually. Follow Good without Interruption, notwithſtanding a Multiplicity of Injuries; and this not only among themſelves who were *Chriſtians*, but amongſt Heathens (with whom they lived) though bitter Enemies to *Chriſtianity*.

Q. *How are we to* rejoice evermore, *as v.* 16?

A. That is, carry yourſelves ſo holily towards God, and ſo circumſpectly and unblamably before Men, that you may have Cauſe of Rejoicing; and in the midſt of Temptation, Poverty, and Affliction, may actually rejoice in Expectation of preſent Advantage by them, and in the Hope of the Glory of God, as the Reward of them.

Q. *But is there not a Time to mourn, as well as rejoice?*

A. Yes, but it is no where ſaid Mourn evermore; nay, holy Mourning hath the Seed of ſpiritual Joy in it; it directly tends to it, and will certainly end in it; Mourning is but a temporary, Rejoicing is an eternal Duty.

Q. *How do you underſtand his Exhortation, v.* 17. Pray without ceaſing?

A. *Pray without ceaſing.* He that would rejoice evermore, muſt pray evermore; ſeldom praying, and conſtant rejoicing will never ſtand together; according to our Conſtancy in Prayer, ſuch will be the Conſtancy of our Joy.

Hence it appears, that frequent and conſtant Prayer is a Duty required of all *Chriſtians*; we are then ſaid to do a Thing continually, when we do it ſeaſonably, at ſtated Times, Morning and Evening every Day, and upon extraordinary Occaſions, perform the Duty in an extraordinary Manner, and when we perform it with unfainting Perſeverance, frequently and fervently, though we receive no preſent Anſwer to our Prayers; and, in a Word, when the Heart is always kept in a praying Frame; this is to pray continually; and the Reaſon for it is, becauſe we ſtand in continual need of God, we ſin againſt him continually, we are ſurrounded with Temptations continually, we are expoſed continually to Troubles and Afflictions, and we ought to glorify God continually, and if ſo, we muſt pray continually; not that a Man ſhould do nothing elſe but pray; for though we may do nothing without Prayer, yet we muſt do many Things beſides it.

Q. *How are we to underſtand the Apoſtle, when he ſays, Verſe* 18. In every Thing give Thanks?

A. That is, be thankful in every Condition, for every providential Diſpenſation, both proſperous and adverſe; for Afflictions, becauſe they conform us unto *Chriſt*, and are the Fruits of fatherly Love, and purge out Sin, they fit us for, and will add to our Crown of Glory at the laſt Day.

Q. *But ſhould* Chriſtians *be thankful for Sin, or when they fall into it?*

A. By no Means; becauſe what we muſt not pray for, we muſt not give Thanks for; we muſt pray to be kept from Sin, therefore may not give Thanks when we fall into it; Sin diſhonours God, diſrobes ourſelves, expoſes us to the Wrath and Curſe of God, is the Ground of our juſt Deteſtation, therefore cannot be the Ground of Thankſgiving; yet when we obtain Pardon of Sin, or get any Good by Sin, we may and ought to rejoice in it.

Q. *What Reaſon does he aſſign for this Duty?*

A. The Ground and Reaſon of this Duty is, 1. Becauſe it is the *Will of God*, his revealed Will; this the Law of Nature directs us to, and the Light of Scripture calls for; and he that performs it ſpiritually, glorifies God abundantly. 2. *It is the Will of God in* Chriſt Jeſus; that is, this Part of the Will of God is eſpecially revealed to you by the Doctrine of *Chriſt Jeſus*, and by his Example *Chriſt* was both a great Pattern and Precedent of Thankfulneſs all his Life long; he thanked God frequently and fervently, and hath made Thankfulneſs a conſiderable Part of our Goſpel-Service, *Heb.* xiii. 15.

Q. *Explain the Senſe of the 19th Verſe,* Quench not the Spirit?

A. He that would rejoice, pray, and give Thanks continually, muſt evermore keep the Spirit unquenched; the Way to keep ourſelves warm, is to keep the Fire burning; we muſt neither quench the Graces, nor the Motions of the Spirit.

Q. *What other Exhortations does he give them?*

A. *Deſpiſe not Prophecyings*; this Duty is nearly coupled with the former, *Quench not the Spirit*; intimating, that the Spirit is dangerouſly quenched, when Prophecying, or the Preaching of the Word is ſinfully neglected.

Prove all Things. Chriſtians ſhould examine the Grounds of their Faith and Religion, and not take them upon truſt; otherwiſe their embracing the beſt Religion in the World is rather the Reſult of Chance, than of Judgment and Choice: *Try all Things, and hold faſt that which is Good.*

Q. *Does he ſuggeſt to them any Argument of Conſolation?*

A. He next comforts the *Theſſalonians* with the Aſſurance that God, who had called them to the Knowledge of *Chriſtianity*, would do what he had prayed for; namely, ſanctify them wholly, and preſerve them blameleſs, and this becauſe *God is Faithful*; that is, always the ſame, true to his Word.

Bleſſed be God for *Jeſus Chriſt*, that overflowing, that never failing Fountain of Grace and Comfort, in whom all Fulneſs dwells, that of his Fulneſs all his Members may receive Grace for Grace. Amen.

The Second Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO THE

THESSALONIANS.

IN *this Second* Epiſtle to the Theſſalonians *the Apoſtle congratulates them on their Conſtancy in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel, and exhorts them to Growth in Grace, and Perſeverance in Religion.*

NEXT *he rectifies a Miſtake which they lay under, concerning the Coming of* Chriſt *to Judgment, as if that Day were then at Hand, when it was very far off, there being a general and grand Apoſtacy to precede it, comforting the* Theſſalonians *againſt the Dread and Terror of it*

LASTLY, *He recommends divers* Chriſtian *Duties to their Practice, requiring them to admoniſh and Cenſure ſuch idle Perſons amongſt them who did not work, but lived upon other Mens Labours; and concludes his* Epiſtle *with particular Recommendations of them to the ſpecial Favour and Grace of God.*

CHAP. I.

The uſual Salutation and Thankſgiving; St. Paul's *good Opinion of their Faith, Love and Patience. Their Comfort in God; righteous Judgment and the glorious Coming of* Chriſt: *He prays for their further Increaſe and Strength, that the Name of* Chriſt *may be the more glorified in them.*

Q. WHAT *is chiefly obſervable in the firſt Part of the Apoſtle's Addreſs to the* Theſſalonians *in this Epiſtle?*

A. The two firſt Verſes contain the Inſcription of the Epiſtle in the very ſame Words with the former, in the foregoing Epiſtle. See Notes thereon. To which we ſhall only add, that from St. *Paul*'s uſing the ſame Form of Words in both Epiſtles, we learn, that the Holy Spirit of God in inditing the Scriptures, did not regard ſo much Variety of Words and Stile, as the Purpoſe intended by thoſe Words; thus Miniſters, in expounding and explaining the Scriptures ſhould rather ſtudy Solidity of Matter, than Variety of Expreſſion, or Elegance of Stile, and inſtruct the People in the great and neceſſary Duties of the Goſpel, and furniſh them with the ſtrongeſt Arguments and Motives to a good Life. Plain Truths, without any Art or Varniſh, may be convey'd with more Warmth and Vigour, to the Conſcience, than all the Charms of human Eloquence from the moſt fluent and popular Tongue.

Q. *What were thoſe Graces in the* Theſſalonians *which the Apoſtle thanks God for in the third Verſe?*

A. *We are bound to thank God always for you Brethren*; where note the Apoſtle's pious Prudence, who being about to extol the Graces of the Spirit wrought in the *Theſſalonians*, particularly their Faith and Charity, inſtead of commending them for theſe Graces, praiſes God for them.

The ſpecial and particular Graces obſervable in theſe *Theſſalonians*, were Faith and Charity, together with the Evidence of the Sincerity of thoſe Graces, namely, that their Faith was a growing Faith, their Love an abounding, and an overflowing Love; *your Faith groweth exceedingly, and your Love aboundeth*; and the Vigour or Decay of theſe carnal Graces have an anſwerable Influence upon all our other Graces.

Q. *But how did St.* Paul *know that their Faith did thus grow?*

A. He knew the Increaſe of their Faith by their Conſtancy in Sufferings.

Q. *The Apoſtle does not barely commend theſe Graces of Faith and Love, which were found in the* Theſſalonians, *but he makes an holy Boaſt of them, he glories in them, and excites other Churches to a Praiſe-worthy Imitation of them,* we glory in you in the Church of God? But for what?

A. Even for your Courage and Patience under Sufferings, Perſecutions and Tribulations, for the Sake of *Chriſtianity*, and for your Conſtancy in the Faith of *Chriſt*. It is the higheſt Glory of a *Chriſtian* to bear Afflictions, and undergo Perſecution for the Sake of the Goſpel, with an undaunted Courage, and an invincible Patience.

Q. *What is that which he calls, v.* 5. a manifeſt Token of the righteous Judgment of God?

A. Which Tribulation and Perſecution, or which Patience under your preſent Perſecutions, is a Sign and Token, an Evidence and Manifeſtation, that God, the righteous Judge, will reward you with a Part and Share in that Kingdom for which you ſuffer, being in his Account worthy of it; not with a Worthineſs of Merit, but a Worthineſs of Meekneſs, they being made meet and fit for Heaven hereafter by their Patience and Conſtancy under Sufferings and Perſecutions here.

Q. *But what is the Doom which he denounces againſt their Perſecutors?*

A. That the righteous Nature of God obliged him to recompenſe Tribulation, and to repay Trouble to all ſuch as trouble them for Righteouſneſs ſake; *it is a righteous Thing with God to render Tribulation to them that trouble you.*

Q. *Rut what Benefit were the Saints to receive?*

A. *And to you who are troubled, Reſt with us,* that is, as God will certainly puniſh your Perſecutors, ſo he will, e're long, give Reſt to you his Snfferers, together with us who are Companions with you in the ſame Sufferings, you that are troubled ſhall have reſt with us, his perſecuted Apoſtles, you ſhall have Reſt as well as we, and together with us.

Hence learn, that the preſent Time is a Time of Trouble to the People of God; their Time of Reſt is hereafter; that Almighty God allows his troubled Saints a Liberty to comfort themſelves with the Expectation and Hope that their troubles ſhall ſhortly end, and their everlaſting Reſt begin; and that it adds much to the Excellency of that Reſt which the troubled Saints expect, that it ſhall be enjoy'd, not by a few of the moſt eminent Sufferers, but by all of them; *all you that are troubled ſhall reſt with us*; with us Apoſtles, with all the Prophets, and Servants of God.

Hail, happy Day! When all the Saints ſhall ſing and rejoice together; when there ſhall not be one wicked Perſon among them to damp their Mirth, to diminiſh their Joy. How deſirable is the Communion of Saints here! How happy do they eſteem themſelves when they can get together by themſelves! But how joyful will the Time and Place be when they get to Heaven, where none ſhall interrupt their Quiet, nothing diſturb their Reſt?

Q. *In the 7th and following Verſes is a Deſcription of* Chriſt's *ſecond Coming and of the Laſt Judgment: What Leſſons of Inſtruction does this afford us?*

A. *When the Lord* Jeſus *ſhall be revealed from Heaven,* &c. In which Words obſerve deſcribed the Judge, *the Lord Jeſus,* he ſhall be *revealed from Heaven*; ſince his Aſcenſion the Heavens have contrined him, and concealed him from our Sight and Senſes; but he ſhall then viſibly appear, and locally deſcend from the higheſt Heavens, into the Region of the Air, *he ſhall come in the Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him.*

With his mighty Angels, each ſtronger than an Hoſt of armed Men. As the Work *Chriſt* comes about, is a great and mighty Work, ſo he will have Inſtruments ſtrong and mighty, ſufficient for that Work; yet doth not *Chriſt* make Uſe of the Angels out of Neceſſity, but for Majeſty.

Inflaming Fire, by which the Heavens and the Earth ſhall be burnt up, and in which the Damned ſhall be eternally tormented.

Taking Vengeance on them that know not God, nor obey the Goſpel of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. This is the End of his Coming to take Vengeance on the Ignorant and Diſobedient.

Q. *How extenſive will the Puniſhment of the Wicked then be?*

A. Next follows the tremendous Dreadfulneſs of that Wrath and Vengeance which at the great Day will be inflicted on the ignorant and diſobedient Part of Mankind; to denote the Greatneſs of it, 'tis called *Deſtruction*, not as if it were an aboliſhing of their Nature, and an utter Extinction of their Happineſs and Well-being, as the Deſtruction of the fallen Angels was; and to ſet forth the Duration of it, 'tis called *everlaſting Deſtruction*, a dying Life, and a living Death; their Death will never be paid, they ſhall never come out of Priſon; they will be always ſatisfying, but never able fully to ſatisfy Divine Juſtice.

As the Apoſtle deſcribes their Puniſhment of Senſe, ſo he declares their Puniſhment of Loſs, they ſhall be baniſhed from the Preſence of the Lord, that is, for ever excluded from the Sight of his bleſſed Face, and the Enjoyment of his gracious Preſence; the Preſence of his Favour they ſhall never find, but the Preſence of his Fury they ſhall ever feel. *They ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord; and from the Glory of his Power*; that is, Deſtruction ſhall come forth immediately from the Preſence and glorious Power of *Chriſt* upon them, and that without any Meaſure or Mitigation; the Sentence denounced will be inſtantly executed, and the Sinner that is baniſhed from *Chriſt's* Preſence ſhall be everlaſtingly tormented by his Power.

Q. *Wherein will conſiſt the Happineſs of the Saints at that Day?*

A. Next we have aſſigned the gracious Deſign of *Chriſt's* Coming with relation to the Godly, he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints; the Head will not only be glorious in himſelf, but glorified in his Members, the Glory God gave the Son, he hath given the Saints, and will put ſuch glory upon them in Soul and Body, as he himſelf ſhall be thereby glorified.

And admired in all them that believe; that is, he will do ſuch Things for Believers as will be to their own and others Admiration; things that will not only exceed their Unbelief, but their Faith too. At the great Day *Chriſt* will inveſt Believers with ſuch Glory as never was expected either by themſelves or others, and ſuch as will excite Admiration in all.

But, Lord, if the glory put upon thy Saints ſhall be thus admired, how much more ſhall Thy ſelf be admired, the Beſtower of that rich and trancendent Glory? The Glory of thy Juſtice in the Damnation of the Wicked will be admired, but not comparably with the Glory of thy Mercy in the Salvation of Believers. How will this ſtrike the adoring Angels into an Eſtacy of holy Admiration, and tranſport thy admiring Saints into an eternal Rapture, when thou ſhalt come to *be glorified in the Saints, and admired in all them that believe?*

Q. *In the two laſt Verſes we have the Apoſtle's Prayer: What does he pray for in their Behalf?*

A. The Apoſtle here aſſures them, that although he could not crme to them, yet he prayed fervently for them; *we pray always for you*; the faithful Miniſters of God can as ſoon forget themſelves as their People in their Prayers to God.

The ſubject Matter of his Prayer was, that God would count them worthy, that is, fit and meet for *this calling*, namely, the forementioned Glory, which they were called to the Expectation of; for they were already called; and therefore calling here muſt denote that unto which they were called, even the Kingdom of Glory.

In order to which God would fully perform and accompliſh his whole Purpoſe, here called the *Pleaſure of his Goodneſs*, to ſhew that nothing but his own Goodneſs was the Cauſe of his own Purpoſe.

And the Work of Faith with Power. Hence it appears, that we are not only ſaved by God's good Pleaſure, but by Faith; that there is no ſaving Faith but what is a working Faith; and that Faith is wrought by a wonderful Power, which produces wonderful Effects.

In the concluding Verſe the Apoſtle prays, that the Name of *Chriſt* may be glorified in them here. Where note, that ſanctifying Grace makes *Chriſtians* a Glory to the Name of *Chriſt*, not by adding any Glory to him, which before he had not, but by ſetting forth that Glory which he already hath.

Note alſo, that as the Name of *Chriſt* is glorified in the Saints now, ſo they ſhall be glorified in him then, and with him, and by him. The ſame Glory for Kind, ſhall be put on the Head and Members; Grace is the only Way to Glory, and Glory will be the certain Reward of Grace.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of Chriſt *to Judgment not ſo ſoon as ſome perſuaded them; for* Antichriſt *muſt come firſt; his Character, Time, and Deſtruction. The Power of Seduction in them that periſh. He aſſures them of their Election to Salvation in Faith and Sanctificasion. He exhorts them to ſtand firm, and pray to God for them.*

Q. WHAT *is the Subject treated of in this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle here endeavours to rectify their Judgments concerning the Time of *Chriſt*'s ſecond Coming, which they immediately expected.

In the firſt Verſe he addreſſes them after this Manner; Brethren, we beſeech you, as you aſſuredly expect the Coming of *Chriſt*, and love, and look, and long after that Day, when it ſhall go well with you, and *Chriſt* will appear to your Glory, that you be not troubled.

Hence learn, that the Coming of *Chriſt* to Judgment is a Truth well known, firmly believed, and earneſtly deſired by all true *Chriſtians*; well known, becauſe the Apoſtles, when they went abroad to proſelite the World, uſually began with this Point; firmly believed; for a Day of Judgment was never denied by any, but thoſe whoſe Intereſt it was that there ſhould be none; and earneſtly deſired, in reſpect of *Chriſt* our Judge and Saviour, and in reſpect of ourſelves, who ſhall be Sharers in the Happineſs of that Day.

Q. *Why does he call the Coming of* Chriſt, *a gathering together unto him?*

A. He hereby intimares, that when *Chriſt* ſhall come, all the Saints ſhall be gathered together unto him; at the Day of Judgment there ſhall be both a Congregation, and a Segration; a Congregation of all Believers, to make up the Number of *Chriſt*'s Train and Attendants, and that in one Troop they may be brought into his heavenly Kingdom; and a Segration, he ſhall ſeparate the Sheep from the Goats, and ſever the Wicked from among the Juſt.

Q. *But what particular Error does he here endeavour to rectify?*

A. The Error which the Apoſtle diſproves is, that the Day of *Chriſt*, that is, the Day of Judgment, was then at Hand, to come in a few Years, which was very true with Reſpect to his coming to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, but not as to the final Judgment.

Q. *What is intimated by that Caution, ver. 3.* Let no Man deceive you?

A. The Effect which this Error might produce, was, Trouble and Unſettledneſs of Mind; *that ye be not ſoon ſhaken in Mind or troubled*; implying, that Errors breed Troubles and Diſquietude of Mind; and that *Chriſtians* ſhould have ſuch a Conſtancy of Mind as not to be moved from the Truth.

They were not to be moved *by Spirit*; that is, not to be ſhaken in Mind by any Pretence of ſpiritual or divine Revelation; *nor by Word*, by any pretended Meſſage or Word from us, *nor by Letter*; that is, not by any thing contained in our former Epiſtle, or in any ſpurious or counterfeit Writings, paſſing under the Apoſtle's Name, mentioning as if *Chriſt* ſhould come in that Age wherein they lived. This Error the Apoſtle was very careful to obviate, becauſe ſhould the *Theſſalonians* have been confirm'd in it, and found themſelves deceiv'd in their Expectation, it might have cauſed them great Trouble, and even have ſhaken their Stedfaſtneſs in the Faith.

Let therefore no Man deceive you in this Article of your Faith; for before *Chriſt*'s Coming there ſhall come a great Falling away from the catholick Faith, and by that Means, the Man of Sin will be revealed, who is the Son of Perdition.

Q. *What is meant by* the Man of Sin?

A. By *the Man of Sin*, underſtand, not a particular individual Perſon, but a Society and Succeſſion of Men, ſuch as is found in and amongſt the *Papacy*, where the Sodomy, Blaſphemy, Inceſt, Adulteries, Sorceries, Murders, Treaſons; which are not only committed but countenanced, not only acted, but authorizede moſt evidently declare that there never was ſuch an Apoſtaſy from *Chriſtianity* ſince it had a Being in the World, as is found amongſt them.

Q. *Why is this Man of Sin ſtiled* the Son of Perdition?

A. 1. Actively, a deſtroying Son, one that brings others to Deſtruction. 2. Paſſively, a Son that ſhall be deſtroyed: *Antichriſt*, and all his Adherents, ſhall be utterly deſtroyed by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his Kingdom ſhall periſh without Hope of Recovery, firſt deſtroying, and at laſt deſtroyed.

Q. *What other Properties had this* Man of Sin?

A. This Man is farther deſcribed by a twofold Note of Diſtinction, by his Enmity and Oppoſition, and by his Dignity and Exaltation.

He oppoſeth himſelf; that is, againſt *Chriſt*, as his Name *Antichriſt* ſignifies; oppoſing him in his Doctrine, in his Offices, in his Members.

He exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped; that is, he exalteth himſelf above all Magiſtrates, Emperors, Kings, and Princes who are called Gods, becauſe repreſenting his Perſon, as his Vicegerents, uſurping a Power over civil Authority, inthroning and dethroning Princes at his Pleaſure.

His Arrogance is declared in Relation to God himſelf: *As God, he ſits in the Temple of God; ſhewing himſelf that he is God.* By the Temple of God underſtand the Church of God, the external viſible Church, which profeſſes the Faith of *Chriſt*, and bears his Name; in this Temple of God he ſits as an Officer, or Biſhop; and ſits as God; that is, as a God upon Earth, whom all muſt adore; Kings kiſſing his Feet, Emperors holding his Stirrup, and claiming the ſame Power that *Chriſt* hath in and over the Church; namely, an univerſal Supremacy, an abſolute Authority, and an unerring Infallibility.

The uſurped Titles given to him declare, that he *ſheweth himſelf that he is God*; he is called the chief God upon Earth, and from him it is affirmed, no Appeals are to be made; no, not to God himſelf; that he can change the Sacraments deliver'd by *Chriſt*, and decree contrary to Scripture. Now to accept of theſe flattering Titles, and to pretend to ſuch an unlimited Power, is to *ſhew himſelf* that he is God.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Account the Apoſtle here gives of* Antichriſt?

A. The Apoſtle had before taught them the Doctrine of the Riſe and Ruin of *Antichriſt*, and now he repeats it, to faſten it upon their Minds and Memories. It is neceſſary to deliver this Doctrine, both to warn the Faithful againſt Deluſion, and to fortify them againſt Perſecution, and to keep them patient under it.

Our Apoſtle had intimated to them that *Antichriſt* was not then revealed, and conſequently that they were not then to expect the Coming of *Chriſt* to Judgment.

Q. *What hindered his Revelation?*

A. The Impediment that then hindered his Revelation, is alſo noted; *Now ye know what withholdeth*; by which the *Roman* Empire is generally underſtood; the Man of Sin could not riſe to his Greatneſs ſo long as the *Roman* Empire ſtood in its Grandeur; for this Seat could not be filled with two imperial Powers at once; whilſt the *Roman* Emperor poſſeſſed *Rome*, the Seat was full, and till it was vacant it could not be the Seat of *Antichriſt*.

Q. *But why did not the Apoſtle name it then?*

A. That he might not incenſe the *Roman* Emperors againſt the *Chriſtians*, as he muſt have done, had he openly ſaid, *Antichriſt* ſhall not come till the *Roman* Empire is deſtroyed; he therefore covertly ſays, *Ye know what withholdeth.*

Q. *Pray give the true Senſe of the 7th Verſe*, For the Myſtery of Iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the Way.

A. *For the Myſtery of Iniquity doth already work*; that is, the Beginnings of *Anti-Chriſtianity* are ſecretly and myſteriouſly already working, which will bring *Antichriſt* himſelf forth in Time, even to broaching *Antichriſtian* Doctrines, and the affecting of Dominion, only the Empire that now hinders muſt be removed and taken out of the Way.

Antichriſtianiſm is almoſt as old as *Chriſtiatity*; the Myſtery of Iniquity ſoon appeared after the Revelation of the Myſtery of Godlineſs; though Truth be Error's Elder, yet Error is not much Truth's Younger; *The Myſtery of Iniquity doth already work.*

From the Words, *He that letteth will let, till taken out of the way*, learn, that the greateſt Empires and Monarchies upon Earth have their final and fatal Periods determined by God, beyond which they ſhall not ſtand; the *Roman* Empire that letteth ſhall be taken out the way.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle farther declare concerning* Antichriſt?

A. The 8th Verſe declares both the Riſe and Ruin, the Revelation and Deſtruction of *Antichriſt*. The Title given him in the Original, is, the Lawleſs One, he that boaſts himſelf to be above all, and aſſumes to himſelf a Power to diſpenſe with all the Laws of God, as we well know who does.

Then ſhall that wicked be revealed. God has revealed *Antichriſt* to the World; let none wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt him, but let him be ſhunned and abhorred; if his Adherents will not fall off from him, but be Partakers with him in his Sins, they muſt expect to partake in his Plagues; to continue his Adherents is dangerous, but to turn his Diſciples is more ſo, even downright Apoſtacy, and a Revolt from *Chriſt* to *Antichriſt*. How Almighty God may mercifully diſpenſe with Errors imbibed in our Education we know not, but to turn our Back on the Truth wherein we have been educated and inſtructed, makes it more dangerous to Salvation.

Whom the Lord ſhall conſume and deſtroy; the Lord *Jeſus* ſhall deſtroy him gradually, he ſhall waſte away by little and little; as his Riſe was, ſuch ſhall his Ruin be; deſtroyed and conſumed he ſhall be, but not preſently, becauſe God has an Uſe for him, to ſcourge, to try, and to unite his People.

The Ruin of *Antichriſt* is accompliſhed *with the Spirit of his Mouth*, or the Breath of his Mouth.

The Expreſſion denotes, the Facility and Eaſineſs of his Deſtruction; 'tis done with a Breath; the Breath of God will leave him breathleſs; as he hath ſtood by the flattering Breath of Men, ſo he ſhall fall by the conſuming Breath of God.

The Breath of God here denotes the Preaching of the Goſpel, and intimates, that the Deſtruction of *Antichriſt* ſhall be by the Miniſtry of the Word, there will be a providential Word, which God will make uſe of for that End; the former Means we are to uſe, the latter God will make uſe of.

And ſhall deſtroy with the Brightneſs of his Coming; at *Chriſt*'s Coming to Judgment the final Ruin and utter Deſtruction of *Antichriſt* ſhall be accompliſhed; let not the Church then be diſcouraged, tho' *Antichriſt* remains, after all Endeavours uſed for his Ruin; it is ſufficient we are aſſured that *Antichriſtianiſm* ſhall be finally deſtroyed; the Time when, leave to God; if it be not till the Day of Judgment, or *Chriſt*'s real Conqueſt over all his Adverſaries, why ſhould we not be content to tarry for it, ſeeing infinite Wiſdom determines the Time, as well as the Thing itſelf?

Q. *Pray expound the 9th Verſe*, Even him whoſe Coming is after the Working of *Satan*, with all Power, and Signs and lying Wonders?

A. In this Verſe we have an Account how *Antichriſt* acquires and maintains his Power in the World; the firſt and great Inſtrument is *Satan*, *after the Working*, is as much as by the Working of *Satan*, denoting not only his Pattern, but his Influence. The Devil has a great Power over wicked Men in the World; his Way of dealing with them is moſt efficacious and powerful; he is certainly the firſt Founder and main Supporter of the *Antichriſtian* State.

The ſubordinate inſtrumental Means by which *Antichriſt* gained his Power in the World, was, by pretending Miracles, *with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders*; Miracles are called Powers, and Signs from their Uſe, becauſe they ſeal the Doctrine to which they are applied; Wonders, becauſe they breed Aſtoniſhment in the Minds of Beholders: Now *Antichriſt* pretends to all theſe; but his are lying Powers, lying Signs, and lying Wonders, becauſe the greateſt of his pretended Miracles are Fables, Forgeries, Impoſtures, and diabolical Deluſions.

Q. *Who are the Subjects of the Kingdom of* Antichriſt?

A. They are deſcribed, 1. By the Ways and Means they are drawn into this Apoſtaſy; namely, *with all Deceivableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs*; by Unrighteouſneſs underſtand his falſe Doctrine and wicked Laws, which tend to the making his Diſciples and Followers injurious to God, unjuſt to Men, and cruel to themſelves; and by the Deceiveableneſs is meant all Manner of Deceits and Vices, Tricks, and cunning Perſuaſions, to make the World believe his unrighteous Errors to be pure and innocent Truths.

They are deſcribed, 2. By their Doom and Miſery which awaits them; they *are ſuch as periſh*; that is, ſuch as are in an actual State of Perdition, and, without haſtening out of it, are undone for Ever.

They are, 3. deſcribed by their Sin, which is the Cauſe and Reaſon of this Doom; *becauſe they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be ſaved.* Where mark, it is not enough to receive the Truth in the Light of it, but we muſt alſo receive it in the Love of it, or it will do us no Good; to make Truth operative, there is required, beſides Knowledge, Faith, and Love; there may be Knowledge without Faith; that is, without any Affection to the Truth believed; it was therefore a pious Prayer of St. *Auguſtin*, *Lord, make me taſte that by Love, which I taſte by Knowledge.* As the certainty of Truth calls for Truth, ſo the Amiableneſs of Truth calls for Love; if Truth be not received in the Heart as well as the Head, it will not ſecure againſt Apoſtaſy, nor prevent periſhing.

Q. *In the 11th Verſe it is ſaid*, And for this Cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong Deluſions, that they ſhould believe a Lie: *How do you reconcile this to Divine Truth and Juſtice?*

A. As it is a Sin, God has no Hand in it; but as it is a Puniſhment, God has to do in it; there is a judicial Tradition, or delivering them up to a Spirit of Error, who do not receive the Truth in the Love of it, and this without the leaſt Shadow of Unrighteouſneſs, puniſhing Sin with Sin.

The Degree or Nature of their Puniſhment is intimated in the Words *ſtrong Deluſions*; that is, given up to the Efficacy of Error, which is diſcovered by the Abſurdity of thoſe Errors which they cleave unto, and by their Obſtinacy in continuing in them.

Hence learn, that by God's iuſt Judgment there is an Infatuation upon the Followers and Abettors of Antichriſt, that they ſwallow the groſſeſt Errors, and believe the ſtrongeſt Deluſions to their own Deſtruction.

The Iſſue and Reſult of this Puniſhment is, *they ſhall believe a Lie*; falſe Doctrines are often called a Lie in Scripture; all the Doctrine of the Man of Sin, with which he has deceived the World; under the Notion of Truth, is one great Lie; theſe they call *pious Frauds*, but really are diabolical Forgeries.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 12th Verſe*, That they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth, but had Pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs?

A. Here their dreadful Puniſhment in the other World is declared, *that they all might be damned*, &c. The Juſtice and Equity of their Puniſhment is expreſſed negatively; *they believed not the Truth*; that is, received it not with Simplicity of Mind, to be inſtructed and directed by it; and poſitively, *they had a Pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs*, in unrighteous Doctrines and Practices.

Hence it is manifeſt, that Errors in Judgment, as well as Sins in Practice, may bring Damnation upon the Souls of Men; yet ſome Errors are more eſpecially pernicious than others; ſuch are the Errors of *Antichriſt*, the Man of Sin.

Q. *But were the* Theſſalonians *thus erroneous in their Judgment?*

A. The Apoſtle exempts them from this fatal Error of Apoſtaſy, as well as from the Danger of it; this he mentions to their Comfort, and with Thankſgiving to God. *We are bound to give Thanks, becauſe God hath choſen you.*

Their Election is amplified, 1. By the Antiquity of it, *from the Beginning*, that is, from all Eternity, *John* i. 1. *In the Beginning was the Word*, that is, before the Beginning, before the World was, before God began to create any Thing, th Word was. 2. From the Means of its Accomppliſhment; which are two, one on God's Part, *the Sanctification of the Spirit*; the other on theirs, *the Belief of the Truth.*

Where note, that Election is to the Means as well as to the End; and without the Means the End can never be attained: He that hath choſen us to Salvation, hath choſen us to be Holy, and to believe the Truth, in order to Salvation. Sanctification and Holineſs are not the Cauſe, but the Effect and Fruit of our Election, and alſo the Evidence of it.

Note alſo, the neceſſary Connexion between Sanctification and Belief of the Truth, even as between the Cauſe and the Effect, and they do alſo accompany one another; the Goſpel was a ſupernatural Doctrine, and it was fit it ſhould be accompanied with a ſupernatural Operation, how elſe ſhould it be known to be of God? The Goſpel and the Spirit are inſeparable Companions; where the Goſpel is little known, there is little of the Spirit found; *He hath choſen you to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.*

Whereunto he called you; that is, to which Salvation, Sanctification, and Belief of the Goſpel, God hath called you, by our preaching of the Word, to the obtaining of the Glory purchaſed, and conferred by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt.*

None but God hath Authority to call; he only is our proper Lord, and rightful Sovereign, our Creator, and our Owner; therefore he has a Right to call us to our Duty, and to require Duty from us, *James* iv. 12. *There is one Lawgiver, who is able to ſave and deſtroy.*

Again; none but God hath power to call; for to effectual Calling there is required not only the Invitation of the Word, but alſo the effectual Operation of the Spirit; it is a Work of divine Power, to give Grace to graceleſs Souls; and the Inſtrument by which this is effected is, the Miniſtry of the Word; by this a Sinner is brought home to God.

Q. *What Inference does he draw from the Premiſes for the Uſe of the* Theſſalonians.

A. *Therefore, Brethren, ſtand faſt. Therefore,* that is, becauſe God hath choſen and called you, and given you ſuch Aſſurance of his Favour, and ſuch Advantages againſt Error and Seduction, therefore let it be your Care to perſevere: Aſſurance of Salvation doth not encourage Negligence, but encourages to greater Diligence.

The Duty inferred is, *ſtand faſt*; it is a military Word, uſed by Captains to their Soldiers, to prevent a cowardly and treacherous Revolt; he had been deſcribing a great Apoſtaſy that would come, now he bids them be upon their Guard and ſtand faſt.

The Means he directs them to, in order to their Stedfaſtneſs and Perſeverance, are *to hold their Traditions which they had been taught, whether by Word or Epiſtle.*

Q. *What were thoſe* Traditions *which the* Theſſalonians *had been taught?*

A. It deſerves Remark, that all the Apoſtle's Doctrine, whether preached when amongſt them, or written to them in his Abſence from them, he calls Traditions; ſo that holding Traditions here, is nothing elſe but Perſeverance in Apoſtolical Doctrine.

Whilſt the Apoſtles were in being, there were two Ways of delivering the Truth; namely, by Word of Mouth, and by Writing; but now we cannot receive the Doctrine of Life from them by Word of Mouth, therefore we muſt ſtick to the Scriptures and written Word, againſt all Pretences to unwritten Traditions, or pretended Revelations, becauſe the Scriptures are a perfect Rule both for our Faith and Practice.

Q. *What Remarks do you make on the Concluſion of this Chapter?*

A. Our Apoſtle having abundantly comforted, and affectionately exhorted the *Theſſalonians* in the former Verſes, concludes with a fervent Prayer for them.

The Perſons prayed to, are, our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and God our Father. Where note, that Prayer muſt be made to God alone, he only knows all our Wants, and he alone is capable of hearing and helping us.

Note alſo, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is here invocated with God the Father; ſurely his Godhead is hereby proved, for he that is the Object both of internal and external Worſhip is God, *our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *himſelf, and God even our Father,* &c.

The Ground of Audience and Succeſs in Prayer is, *which hath loved us, and given us everlaſting Conſolation, and good Hope through Grace.* Where note, that God's Love to Sinners, manifeſted in their Redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt*, gives great Boldneſs and Encouragement in the Duty of Prayer.

The Apoſtle prays for Increaſe of Comfort. All the true Comfort flows from God, and the Heart is the proper Seat of it, Pray *God comfort your Hearts*; Pſ. xiv. 7. *Thou haſt put Gladneſs into my Heart.*

He prays alſo for their Eſtabliſhment and Perſeverance; *and ſtabliſh you in every good Word and Work*; *by every good Word*, is meant ſound Doctrine; by *every good Work*, Holineſs of Life.

Hence learn, that Eſtabliſhment in Faith and Holineſs is a great and neceſſary Bleſſing, earneſtly to be ſought of God in Prayer; and as this Bleſſing is at all Times to be ſought, ſo eſpecially in unſettled Times, that when we are moſt in Danger of falling, by Temptation, we may be kept by the mighty Power of God through Faith unto Salvation.

CHAP. III.

He exhorts them to pray for him, and teſtifies his Confidence in them, commands them to withdraw from every Brother that walks diſorderly; and that every one labour to maintain himſelf; not to be weary in doing good; and to mark thoſe who are not obedient therein. His Prayer; Salutation and Apoſtolical Benediction.

Q. HOW *does ths Apoſtle begin this Chapter?*

A. In the firſt Verſe the Apoſtle requeſts the *Theſſalonians* to pray for him, and courteouſly ſtiles them *Brethren.* There is a threefold Brotherhood taken notice of in Scripture, betwixt *Chriſt* and Believers, betwixt Believers themſelves, and between the Miniſters of *Chriſt* and their beloved People.

Note St. *Paul's* paſſionate Requeſt and Supplication, *Brethren pray for us.* The Miniſters of

Chriſt earneſtly deſire an Intereſt in the Prayers of all thoſe who have an Intereſt in God. A Miniſter's Work is a Work of the greateſt Weight, Labour, Difficulty, and Oppoſition, and their Shoulders, alas! are no ſtronger that other Mens to bear the Weight of the Burthen.

Q. *What is the Subject-Matter of his Prayer?*

A. It is, that *the Word of the Lord may have a free Courſe, and be glorified*; in the Original it is, that the Word may run and be glorified; a Metaphor taken from a Water-courſe, where the Current flows freely without Interruption or Obſtruction.

The Word may be ſaid to have a free Courſe, when it is freely and ſucceſsfully preached, without external Oppoſition, and accompanied with the Spirit's internal Operation.

The Word may be ſaid to be glorified when God is glorified in and by the Word, by the Converſion of Sinners, by the exemplary Converſion of Believer; then is God glorified when his Word is entertained.

The Argument to excite the *Theſſalonians* to pray for the Succeſs of the Word amongſt others, is, the great and good God had given it among them; that it may be glorified as it is with you.

Q. *To what Intent does the Apoſtle deſire this Prayer?*

A. That his Perſon might be preſerved, as well as his Preaching proſper; that ſo long as God had any Work for him to do; he might be preſerved from the Rage and Fury of the Unbelieving *Jews*, and perſecuting *Gentiles*, who followed him from Place to Place to give him Trouble; *that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked Men*: Men whom no Argument could convince or ſatisfy; *and wicked Men*, of vitious lives and debauched Practices; they are uſually the vileſt and worſt of Men, the very Dregs of Mankind, who ſet themſelves to perſecute the Preachers, and oppoſe the preaching of the Goſpel.

Q. *What is the Import of the laſt Clauſe of* v. 12. For all Men have not Faith?

A. That is, neither Faith, neither Fidelity, nor Faithfulneſs, much leſs ſincere Faith in our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; for then they would not oppoſe his Goſpel, nor perſecute us for the plain and perſuaſive Preaching of it.

Q. *Pray explain theſe Words*; *v.* 3. The Lord ſhall eſtabliſh you and keep you from Evil?

A. That is, from all Evil, particularly from the Evil of Apoſtacy; this he aſſures them of from the Fidelity of God, and his Faithfulneſs in all his Promiſes; *the Lord is faithful who ſhall eſtabliſh you.*

Q. *Whereon did the Apoſtle ground his Confidence in the* Theſſalonians, *that they would be aſſiduous in the Performance of this Duty?*

A. *And we have Confidence in the Lord touching you*, &c. Although I aſſured you of God's faithful Readineſs, according to his Promiſe, to do every Thing requiſite on his Part, in order to your Eſtabliſhment in Holineſs, and Preſervation from Sin, yet you muſt not, you cannot expect that Aſſurance from God, unleſs you add your own Endeavours, as I have commanded; and accordingly I have good Confidence that what I command you in the Lord, as by divine Authority, now and at all Times, you will perform.

And that we may not be miſtaken in this our Confidence, we pray that *the Lord will direct your Hearts unto the Love of God*, which will conſtrain you to this Obedience.

Note, that theſe *Theſſalonians* did love God already, for the Apoſtle had before commended their Work of Faith, and Labour of Love; yet he here prays, that their Hearts may be directed unto the Love of God, *&c.* As the Ships that are the beſt rigg'd need a Pilot, ſo they that love God, moſt need to have their Love order'd and directed to the beſt Advantage of his Glory.

From the Phraſe *direct* here uſed, obſerve, that God works upon Man as a rational Creature; he changes the Heart indeed, but it is by Direction, not by Violence and Compulſion; the Spirit's Conduct is ſweet, yet powerful, it changes the Will, but without offering Violence to the Freedom and Liberty of the Will; we are not forced, but directed, the *Lord direct you better.* This implies, there are many Things that would wreathe and bend, crook and turn our Hearts another way, and divert our Love to a contrary Object, to the World and the Fleſh; therefore we need pray with earneſtneſs, *the Lord directed our Hearts into the Love of God.*

Q. *What is meant by* Patient waiting for *Chriſt*, *Ver.* 5?

A. The true Character of a ſincere *Chriſtian* is; he waits for the Coming of *Chriſt*; ſuch as love *Chriſt* fervently, long greatly for his Coming. But though Love ſets us upon the Wing to be gone, yet Patience commands us to wait *Chriſt*'s own Time for going; vehement Love needs the Allay of Patience; moſt Men want much Patience to die, but ſome need as much Patience to live; therefore, ſays the Apoſtle, *The Lord direct your Hearts unto a patient Waiting for* Chriſt; intimating, that the Saints of God have great need of Patience, to enable them to endure the State of Diſtance and Separation from *Chriſt*, ſo long as they muſt endure it in this World.

Q. *What other Point does the Apoſtle here ſpeak to?*

A. Our Apoſtle next enters upon a new Subject, namely, that of Church Diſcipline, and not only exhorts, but commands to excommunicate from their Society every Brother or *Chriſtian* Profeſſor walking diſorderly, and not after the Tradition or Doctrine delivered by him againſt ſuch Perſons.

This Authority to command, the Apoſtle had not of himſelf, but from *Chriſt*, *We command in the Name of the Lord* Jeſus. A Miniſter muſt be careful that his Commands be grounded on the Authority of *Chriſt*, or elſe they will lie with ſmall Weight on the Conſciences of the People.

Q. *What is the Duty commanded, and how is the Offender characteriz'd?*

A. The Duty commanded, is, *That ye withdraw yourſelves from*, &c. A Man that is guilty of a notorious ſcandalous Sin; ought to be ſuſpended from the familiar Converſe and Society with the Saints, to ſhame him into Repentance, before a publick Excommunication caſts him out of the Church.

The Offender is here ſtiled, *a Brother*; that is, a Profeſſor of *Chriſtianity*, let his Rank or Station be what it will, if he walks diſorderly, like a Soldier diers not after the Tradition he has received of us, that is plainly, according to the Rule and Direction of the Goſpel, let him be avoided.

Q. *Whom does the Apoſtle mean by the diſorderly Brother?*

A. It is the idle Perſon, called diſorderly, becauſe Almighty God having fitted Man for, and ordained him to Labour, he that refuſes to do ſo, deſerts the Order in which God has placed him, and thus renders himſelf diſorderly. St. *Paul*, to cenſure this Practice, propounds his own Example to their Imitation, declaring that he did not eat any Man's Bread before he earned it, but wrought with his own Hands in the Day-time, and ſometimes Part of the Night, at his Trade of Tent-making, that he might not be chargeable to any of them; not but that he had Power to demand Maintenance for his Miniſtry, but he choſe rather to depart from his Right, and to labour in his Calling, to excite others to do the like.

Here note, That if St. *Paul* had not wrought in his Calling, he had not been a diſorderly Perſon; but leſt any ſhould think ſo, he takes away all Occaſion of Suſpicion, by working with his Hands; his miniſterial Office would have freed him from the Charge and Imputation of Idleneſs, and made Maintenance from the Church his Due; but Idleneſs the Apoſtle obſerved was a growing Sin, which needed an Example as well as Doctrine to ſubdue it, and accordingly the Apoſtle ſets one, *I behaved not myſelf diſorderly*, or idle amongſt you, *but wrought with Labour and Travel Night and Day.*

It is commendable to follow good Examples, but much more to ſet one; as Miniſters ought to be Patterns, ſo People ought to be Followers; and their Sin will be much greater, and their Puniſhment much heavier, who do not follow their Miniſters Doctrine, when they ſee it exemplified in their Converſation.

Note farther, That there have been Perſons from the Beginning of *Chriſtianity*, who have accounted the Work of the Miniſtry as a very eaſy, idle Calling; that a little Time, a little Pains is enough for it; whereas the Labour of the Exerciſe of the Mind, may juſtly be eſteemed the greateſt of Labours, as the Miniſters of *Chriſt* really find it.

Q. *What do we learn from the Example of St.* Paul?

A. From the Poverty of St. *Paul*, and his being forced to earn his Bread before he eat it, learn that it pleaſes God ſometimes to meaſure out a very hard Lot to his own Children, and to give but little Earth to thoſe who glorify him moſt upon Earth; and thoſe upon whom he intends to beſtow extraordinary Meaſures of Glory in Heaven, are cut very ſhort of thoſe outward Comforts.

How endearing then are the Obligations of thoſe *Chriſtians* to the Goodneſs of God, who have eaſy and plentiful Circumſtances in the World! What a Favour it is to have Fulneſs upon Earth, and the Aſſurance of everlaſting Happineſs when we die!

Q. *What particular Directions does he give them with Reſpect to employing themſelves in Buſineſs?*

A. He proceeds to give a ſolemn Charge to every Man to follow ſome lawful Calling, and to be found in the Way of an induſtrious Diligence; if any (being able) will not work, let him not eat (any of the Church's Charity.) So that the Sin of Idleneſs was directly contrary to the Apoſtle's Command and Example.

It is not thoſe who cannot, but thoſe who will not work when they can, that forfeit the Bread of Charity from Men; the Rich that live idly, forfeit their Food to God, yea, even their Lives and Souls too; *If any Man would not work, neither ſhould he eat.*

Every man muſt eat his *own Bread*; idle Perſons ſhall be judged as Thieves, though they eat that which is freely given them; Drones deſerve no Honey, what they eat is ſtolen from the induſtrious Bee; that is truly our Bread which we labour for, or recompence thoſe who get it for us by their Labour. God has ſent no Man into the World to be idle; but, as Providence diſpoſes of every Man, though he be never ſo wealthy, he muſt be ſome way uſeful and ſerviceable in his Generation.

Q. *What does he intimate would be the Effect of their Idleneſs?*

A. One of the bad Effects of Idleneſs, here mentioned, is, intermeddling (as Buſy-bodies) in other Men's Affairs; an idle Perſon, that does nothing to any good Purpoſe, yet has a deal of Buſineſs to anſwer for, done to a very bad Purpoſe; not for labouring, but buſy Trifling, his Buſineſs is very unprofitable; the Mind of Man cannot be wholly Idle, it muſt either be employ'd in doing Good, or in continuing Evil; uſually none are ſo buſy in other Mens Matters, as thoſe who neglect their own; theſe were the diſorderly Perſons, the *Buſy-bodies*, whom the Apoſtle here reproves.

Q. *But what Directions does he give to rectify any Diſorders in the Church?*

A. St. *Paul* was far from the Cenſoriouſneſs and Uncharitableneſs of Men, who condemn a whole Society, a Communion, a Church in general, for the Miſcarriages of ſome particular Perſons in it; *I hear there are ſome that walk diſorderly; but ye, Brethren,* are free from theſe Miſdemeanors; you are painful in your Employments, diligent in your Callings, charitable in your Diſtributions, be not weary in theſe Inſtances of your Duty, but perſevere in Well-doing.

He directs them how to manage refractory Perſons, ſuch as remained contumacious and diſobedient to the Admonitions given by this Epiſtle; continuing diſorderly, and refuſing to labour; ſuch Perſons he adviſes, not to cut them off from the Church by Excommunication; extream Rigour is offenſive to God, and injurious to the Church, as well as too much Lenity and Forbearance; but that they conſider them as lapſed Brethren, and treat them accordingly, as thoſe that deſire and endeavour to reduce and reform them; in order to which he directs, to note the diſorderly Perſons, and ſet a Mark of Shame upon them; next to avoid all Intimacy and Familiarity with them; laſtly, to admoniſh them of their Duty.

Q. *In the Cloſe of this Epiſtle we have his Prayer, Salutation, and Valediction; what do you obſerve thereupon?*

A. The Mercy he prays for is, Peace; Peace with God, with Conſcience, Peace and Unity among themſelves, as *Chriſtians*; Peace with the Men of the World, Strangers, yea Enemies to *Chriſtianity*.

The Perſon pray'd to, is, *the Lord of Peace*; underſtand *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Prince of Peace, the Purchaſer, the Procurer, and the Preſerver of Peace.

The Lord give you Peace always, and by all Means;

Means; at all Times, in all Places, and with all Perſons, and this in the Uſe of all lawful and laudable Means.

Our Apoſtle having pray'd for Peace, next prays for the Preſence of God, *the Lord be with you all.* God's gracious Preſence with his People, in any plentiful Meaſure, is annexed to their peaceable Frame of Spirit, and to their ſerious Endeavours after Peace and Love, Unity and Concord amongſt themſelves; and the contrary Temper grieves the good Spirit of God, and provokes him to withdraw his quickning and comforting Preſence from his People; for theſe two Petitions ſeem mutually to depend upon each other, *the Lord give Peace*, and *the Lord be with you all.*

The Salutation of Paul, *with mine own Hand*; this reſpects his own Writing, which ſerved as a Token, or certain Mark, whereby his own Epiſtles were diſtinguiſhed from all Counterfeits. The ſending Salutations to abſent Friends, is not a mere matter of Compliment, but of Duty and Conſcience.

Laſtly, we have his uſual Valedictory, or Farewell-wiſh, *The Grace of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *be with you all. Amen.* As if he had ſaid, May the gracious and undeſerved Favour of God in *Chriſt*, with all the Fruits and Effects, the Benefits and Advantages of it, be conveyed to you all, without Exception, and be the Portion and Privilege of every Soul of you; and in Teſtimony both of my affectionate Deſire, and aſſured Confidence, I ſay *Amen.*

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's Meaning in the laſt Clauſe of Verſe* 17. So I write?

A. This the Apoſtle adds, after he had finiſhed his Epiſtle, and taken his Farewel, as a Proof that the Epiſtle was genuine, and came from himſelf. Becauſe it is probable there were ſome then who counterfeited his Epiſtles, as there have been many ſince who have counterfeited Creeds, Liturgies, Goſpels, Writings of the Fathers, *&c.* and he knew it might be of dangerous Conſequence to the Churches, to have his Writings counterfeited. *Hereticks* in ſeveral Ages, and the Church of *Rome* in particular, have herein been greatly guilty. And though it's probable, the Body of this Epiſtle was written by ſome *Amanuenſis*, as is evident of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, that it was written by one *Tertius*, Rom. xvi. 22. And when he tells the *Galatians*, Gal. vi. 11. he wrote their Epiſtle with his own Hand, ſo *Phil.* i. 9. it implies, ſometimes, that he did not ſo. Yet this Salutation he wrote with his own Hand; which he practiſed not only in this, but in all his other Epiſtles, as he here affirms. And he wrote it in ſuch Characters whereby his own Hand might be known. For, otherwiſe, it was an eaſy Matter for an Impoſtor to write the ſame Words; for which Reaſon he ſets down the Words, which are elſwhere explained, and therefore nothing more need be ſaid of the Matter here.

The Firſt Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO

TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHEUS or TIMOTHY, is the Name of the Perſon to whom St. Paul *directs this and the following Epiſtle; a Name given by his Parents, to teſtify their pious deſire that their Son ſhould fear and honour God according to the ſignification of this Name.*

HIS Grandmother Lois, *and his Mother* Eunice, *bred him up in the Knowledge of the holy Scriptures from a Child; he became firſt the Diſciple, and then the Companion of St.* Paul; *was ordained by him, was very aſſiſting to him, and inexpreſſibly dear to this great Apoſtle, who knew how to value true Worth in what Age ſoever he found it; inſomuch that St.* Paul *ſeldom mentions his Name but with a Mark of Honour and Eſteem, calling him his Son, his* dearly beloved Son, *his* faithful Fellow-Labourer, *&c. He was a Perſon of eminent Gifts, and of a gracious Diſpoſition, but of a ſickly and weakly Conſtitution; and being enter'd very young into the Work of the Miniſtry, St.* Paul *thought fit, in his Abſence from him, to write two Epiſtles to him, and to all ſucceeding Miniſters of the Goſpel after him, directing how to demean and behave themſelves in their miniſterial function.*

IN theſe two Epiſtles, and that to Titus, *we have a Collection of Canons truly Apoſtolical, directing all Biſhops and Paſtors of the Church, how to govern themſelves, and how to guide their People.*

CHAP. I.

The uſual Salutation. St. Paul'*s Reaſons for leaving* Timothy *at* Epheſus. *The right Uſe of the Law, and for whom appointed. The Goſpel committed in Truſt to him, that he might be an Example of Grace to the Chief of Sinners. A Doxology. His Charge to* Timothy. *Of* Hymeneus *and* Alexander.

Q. *HOW does the Apoſtle begin this Epiſtle to* Timothy?

A. In the firſt Verſe St. *Paul* aſſerts his Apoſtolical Authority, calling himſelf *an Apoſtle*; not that *Timothy* queſtion'd it, but he writes it for their Sakes over whom he was now preſiding at *Epheſus*, that neither Miniſters nor People might deſpiſe what *Timothy* did, it being enjoined both him and them by ſo great an Authority as was that of an Apoſtle; *Paul an Apoſtle of* Jeſus Chriſt.

St. Paul alſo declares his Authority for executing the Office of an Apoſtle; *it was by the Commandment of God and our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, that is, by the Appointment, Injunction, Ordination, and immediate Commiſſion of the Father and of *Chriſt*, by his Voice from Heaven, as the Apoſtles were called by a Voice from *Chriſt* on Earth. In 1 *Cor*. i. 1. he is ſaid to be called by the Will of God; not by his permiſſive Will barely, but by his preceptive Will particularly.

Q. *Why is our Bleſſed Saviour called our Hope?*

A. Becauſe he is the Author of our Hope, the Object of it, the Purchaſer of what we hope for, the declarer to us of the Hopes of Glory expected by us.

Our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is therefore undeniably God, becauſe he is our Hope and Truſt; for if he was no more than Man, though never ſo excelling, to make him our Hope would be to make ourſelves miſerable; for *curſed is the Man that truſteth in Man, and maketh Man his Hope*, Jer. xvii. 5.

Q. *What do you note on his affectionate Addreſs to* Timothy?

A. Obſerve the endearing Title St. *Paul* gives to *Timothy*; he calls him his Son, his own Son in the Faith; becauſe, as ſome think, converted by him to the *Chriſtian* Faith; others, that he was more thoroughly inſtructed, edified, and encouraged by St. *Paul*, but converted before; poſſibly alſo he may call him his Son, becauſe he was as aſſiſting to him, as obſequious and obſerving, as a Son is to a Father, he being a young Man, and the Apoſtle now aged; or it may be he calls him his Son, becauſe he reſembled him in Faith and Doctrine, in Preaching and Converſation, as a Son reſembles his Father in Face and Manners.

Q. *What do you Remark on his Charge to* Timothy?

A. So great was the Apoſtle's Concern for the new planted Church at *Epheſus*, that, when his Office called him into *Macedonia*, he leaves *Timothy* at *Epheſus*, to water, what he had planted, and to build upon that Foundation which he had laid.

St. *Paul*'s Charge to *Timothy*, at his Daparture, was, to take care that no new or ſtrange Doctrine be taught, or any other Doctrine received by the Church, than what was delivered by him; *charge ſome that they teach no other Doctrine*. But who were theſe? Very probably the Judaizing Teachers, who ſtrenuouſly endeavour'd to corrupt the Purity, and deprave the Simplicity of the Goſpel.

Q. *What does he mean by* the Fables and endleſs Genealogies, *which he bids* Timothy *beware of*, *v.* 4?

A. By Fables may be underſtood vain and idle Speculations, *Jewiſh* Scruples, frivolous Obſervances; whatever is delivered in Preaching, which does not anſwer the End of Preaching, namely, to build Men up in Faith and Holineſs, is trifling and not Preaching; it ſignifies no more than a Fable, or an imaginary Tale that is told.

The *endleſs Genealogies* here ſpoken of, were not Scripture Genealogies; for thoſe are not vain, but uſeful, not endleſs, but determinate; but theſe were Endeavours of ſome particular Perſons, who, that they might have a pretence to claim Kindred with *Chriſt*, made their Genealogies endleſs, drawing down their Line of Deſcent from *David*, &c. or elſe to prove themſelves Sons of *Abraham* and *Iſaac*, Privileges which they highly valued themſelves upon, and reſted in. Whatever they were, our Apoſtle charges *Timothy*, that the Church of *Epheſus* give no heed to them, nor to the Preachers of them, becauſe they only occaſion Diſputes, and tend not to Edification.

Q. *Does not the Apoſtle ſeem to undervalue the Law by reflecting on thoſe who were Sticklers for it?*

A. He ſmartly reflects on the Judaizing Teachers, who were ſo zealous for the Ceremonial Law, that they mingled Works with Faith in the Point of Juſtification; he tells them, that the End of the Law, and of the Goſpel, is Love; the End, that is, the Aim, Scope, Deſign, Perfection and Conſummation, the perfecting End; the Senſe is, that all the Duties which the Law of God and the Goſpel of *Chriſt* enjoin, are deſigned only as Means to advance and perfect our Love both to God and Man; the End of all *Chriſt*'s Doctrine is Charity, or the bringing of Men to love God and their Neighbour.

This Love muſt ſpring from a pure Heart, or a Heart purified by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, from a *good Conſcience*, or a Conſcience purified by the Blood of *Chriſt*, and from a Faith unfeigned: Implying, that Love either to God or Man is not ſincere, unleſs it proceeds from a clean Heart, accompanied with an holy and innocent Life, and has Faith for the Root and Principle from which it flows.

Note alſo, how he taxes theſe Judaizing and falſe Teachers with ſwerving from Charity, Purity, and Faith, and turning aſide to *vain Janglings*; and that whilſt they affected to be thought learned Teachers and Expounders of the Law, betray'd their own Ignorance, neither underſtanding what they ſaid, nor whereof they affirm'd.

But leſt any ſhould miſtake the Apoſtle's Meaning, and imagine that he undervalued the Law, he declares, that the Law rightly underſtood and preached was very good, given for, and ſerves unto excellent Purpoſes, if we uſe it lawfully, that is, as we ought to uſe, as God intended it, namely, as a perfect Rule of Life, to direct us in our Obedience to God; but not ſo good as to expect Juſtification by it; not good in Oppoſition to the Goſpel, but in Subſerviency to it; *the Law is good, if uſed lawfully.*

Q. *It is here implied that the Law may be uſed unlawfully: When may that be ſaid to happen?*

A. When it is converted to unprofitable Diſputes, as was the Caſe here, when Men oppoſe it to *Chriſt*, when they ſeek Juſtification by it, and the like.

The Law of God, conſider'd in itſelf, tis good and excellent, 'tis good in regard of its Author, it hath God's Authority inſtamp'd upon it; good in regard of the Matter contained in it; good in the End of it, to lead us unto *Chriſt*, *Rom.* xvi. 4; good in regard of the Uſe of it, and that, 1. To the Ungodly, to reſtrain them from Sin. To the Godly, to diſcover Sin more clearly and fully, to drive them out of themſelves, and from all Expectation of Righteouſneſs and Juſtification by any thing in themſelves, or done by themſelves; to cauſe them to put the higher Value, Eſteem and Price upon *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the Benefits received by him.

Thus the Law is good; and if ſo, woe to the *Antinomians* who deny the Uſe and Exeellency of the holy Law of God, who vilify it, trample upon upon it, and becauſe it is not good for Juſtification affirm it is not good at all. But is not Gold good becauſe you cannot eat it? It was never intended for that Purpoſe. Is not Obedience to the Law, as an eternal Rule of holy living, and good Works agreeable to the Demands of the Law, neceſſary and good, though they never had the Impreſs of God's Ordination for our Juſtification in his Sight, he having provided a perfect and ſpotleſs Righteouſneſs for that Purpoſe, which is highly pleaſing to him?

Q. *If the Law was not intended for our Juſtification, for what Purpoſe then was it made?*

A. In the 9th and 15th Verſes the Apoſtle declares the Perſons for whom the Law was, and was not made; it was not made for a righteous Man; that is, ſay ſome, it was not made for him as a Burthen, to be an Uneaſineſs to him, becauſe he has a Love to it, a Delight in it, and voluntarly obeys it. Others ſay thus, the Law was not made for a righteous Man; that is, the righteous Man is not under the coercive and vindictive, but directive Power of the Law only, he is not under the Curſe of the Law actually, though all are under it meritoriouſly; and accordingly the Law was never made to terrify and condemn them.

The Perſons and Purpoſes for whom, and for which the Law was deſigned, were, for reſtraining and condemning, in general all lawleſs Perſons, Sons of *Belial*, as the Scripture calls them, that is, Men without Yoke; the moral Law in general is a Rule of holy living, and the Goſpel in particular is *Chriſt*'s Yoke; now ſuch as will not wear the Yoke of *Chriſt*, muſt expect no Benefit by his Croſs.

But particularly, the Law was made to reſtrain Perſons from all Impiety and Profaneneſs, from all Diſobedience and Stubbornneſs, from Murder, Manſlaughter, Sodomy, Whoredom, and all manner of Uncleanneſs, either Natural or Unnatural; from Theft, Perjury, Lying and Falſhood; and ſummarily, to curb and reſtrain wicked Men from the Practice of every Thing contrary to the pure and holy Nature of God.

Q. *Why is the Goſpel called* the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God, *Verſe* 11?

A. The Goſpel is here called Glorious, partly, becauſe the glorious Attributes and Excellencies of God are more reſplendent in the Goſpel than in the Law of God; as alſo becauſe the Goſpel brings more Honour and Glory to God, than all the Works of Creation together.

He ſtiles it the Goſpel of the *bleſſed God*, to intimate his tranſcendent Mercy and excelling Goodneſs, in that being infinitely Happy in the Enjoyment of himſelf, and his Divine Perfections, and incapable of any Profit from, or Advantage by his Creatures, he was yet pleaſed to give us his Son, his Goſpel, his Holy Spirit, to qualify us for, and bring us to the Enjoyment of himſelf; *according to the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God.*

Note, how thankfully St. *Paul* acknowledges the high Honour, the rich and ſpecial Favour in being called to diſpenſe this glorious Goſpel; *I thank* Chriſt Jeſus *who enabled me, that counted me faithful, putting me into the Miniſtry.*

Q. *In the 12th and four following Verſes, the Apoſtle expreſſes his Thankfulneſs to God for the Work of Converſion which had been wrought in him: What Obſervations does this afford us?*

A. Obſerve, how St. *Paul* aſcribes to *Chriſt*, and not to himſelf, all the Fidelity, Ability, Zeal, and Courage, which he had exerciſed in his Miniſtry; his Faithfulneſs was not the Cauſe or Motive, but the Effect and Fruit of the Grace of God, in calling him to the Miniſtry, 1 *Cor.* vii. 25. *having obtained Mercy to be faithful*; had our Saviour only diſcovered this Faithfulneſs in him, and not conferred it upon him, the Apoſtle would not have had that Reaſon for affectionate Thankſgiving as he here expreſſes.

What a prodigious Sinner the Apoſtle repreſents himſelf before Converſion! *I was a Perſecutor, Blaſphemer, and Injurious*; a Blaſphemer, the higheſt Sin he could commit againſt God; a Perſecutor, the higheſt Sin he could commit againſt the Saints; Injurious, the higheſt Wickedneſs againſt Mankind; Sins of ſuch an aggravated and accumulated Guilt, that they wanted but one Ingredient, namely, ſufficient Knowledge, to render them the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Be aſtoniſhed, O Heavens; at the infinite Mercy of God towards great Sinners! Even Perſecutors and Blaſphemers may be, and ſometimes are converted and brought home to God.

The Reaſon he aſſigns for obtaining ſuch diſtinguiſhing Mercy, is, *becauſe he did it ignorantly, in Unbelief*; the Word, *becauſe*, does not imply, that Ignorance in the Apoſtle was the proper Cauſe of Mercy in God, but that it made St. *Paul* a more capable Subject for receiving Mercy, than he would have been if he had maliciouſly ſinned againſt Knowledge; and that St. *Paul* by leſs ſinning merited the Mercy of God; for his Ignorance and Unbelief being in a ſort invincible, through the Prejudices of Education, they much abated the Malignity of his Sin; for he was bred a *Phariſee*, a Sect that had an implacable Enmity againſt *Chriſt* and his holy Religion.

Q. *To what Purpoſe does the Apoſtle give this Cenſure of himſelf?*

A. St. *Paul*'s Deſign in relating that his bitter Perſecutions of *Chriſtianity* was in the Time of his Ignorance, and not done deliberately, knowingly, and maliciouſly, is, partly to juſtify the Divine Mercy and free Grace of God which pardon'd his Fury, his Rage and Madneſs againſt *Chriſt* and his Saints; for had he done it deliberately and maliciouſly, for ſecular Ends and wordly Advantages, it had been the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt which was unpardonable; and partly to prevent the Abuſe of Divine Mercy in Men, and to let the World know, that none ought to take Encouragement from his Example; to be of a perſecuting Spirit, and yet hope for Mercy, when at the ſame Time they ſin againſt Light and Knowledge.

Q. *What Effects did this wonderful Mercy of God to the Apoſtle produce in him?*

A. Our Apoſtle goes on magnifying the tranſcendent Mercy of God, that firſt called him to be a *Chriſtian*, and then an Apoſtle; and ſhews, that this great Mercy of God produc'd in him Faith and Love, both towards God and his Saints. He abounds in Faith, in Oppoſition to his former Belief; and in Love, in Oppoſition to his former Rage and Cruelty.

Q. *The Apoſtle after magnifying the Grace of God in his Converſion, adds, v.* 15. This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that *Jeſus Chriſt* came into the World to ſave Sinners, of whom I am chief: *Pray explain and illuſtrate this Paſſage?*

Q. It is obſervable, what an humble Apprehenſion this great Apoſtle had of himſelf, though then the greateſt of Saints in the Eſteem of others, yet the chiefeſt of Sinners in his own Account; for he does not ſay, I was the Chief of Sinners, but *I am ſo*; notwithſtanding his Repentance and Remiſſion, ſtill he reflects upon his former unregenerate State and ſinful Condition. This he did to keep him humble, ſenſible of, and thankful for the rich Grace of God diſpens'd to him, and receiv'd by him.

Jeſus Chriſt *came into the World*; therefore he was before he came, his Divine Nature pre-exiſting from all Eternity; and in the Fulneſs of Time he aſſumed Nature into an Union with his Godhead.

The Deſign of *Chriſt*'s Coming was to ſave Sinners; therefore if Man had not ſinn'd, *Chriſt* had not come into the World; but ſuppoſing God's Purpoſe of ſaving Sinners by Way of a Price and Satisfaction, *Chriſt*'s Coming into the World was indiſpenſibly neceſſary, for no mere Creature could lay down a Price ſatisfactory for the Salvation of loſt Man.

This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation; the Goſpel is a Revelation of Pardon to condemn'd Malefactors, a Declaration of Peace to proclaim'd Enemies, a Proclamation of Liberty to enſlaved Captives, an Offer of Cure to diſeaſed Perſons.

Q. *The Apoſtle ſtill proceeds in the glorifying God for his Mercy: Pray explain the Expreſſion he makes uſe for that Purpoſe?*

A. *Howbeit for this Cauſe I obtained Mercy*; God pleaſed ſometimes to magnify his Mercy in the Converſion and Salvation of the moſt notorious Sinners, that ſo the greateſt of Sinners may take Encouragement from thence to hope and truſt in *Chriſt* for pardoning Mercy: Thus here, this great Blaſphemer and Perſecutor was received to Mercy, for a Pattern and Example to all ſuch Sinners as ſhould hereafter forſake their evil Courſes, and ſincerely reſign themſelves to the Obedience of the Goſpel.

Our Apoſtle being raviſh'd with a ſweet Senſe of the Greatneſs of God's pardoning Mercy towards himſelf, breaks out into a pathetical Doxology, and an affectionate Thankſgiving unto God, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever.*

Q. *This Charge I commit unto thee: What Charge?*

A. To ſtay at *Epheſus*, ſay ſome, for the Benefit of the Church there; to charge the falſe Teachers not to give heed to Fables, ſay others; to keep the Doctrine committed to him as a faithful Miniſter, againſt all Oppoſition: Theſe were the Charges given.

Q. *What are the particular Things which he encourages and exhorts* Timothy *to put in Practice?*

A. St. *Paul* next encourages *Timothy* to proceed in his Miniſtry with Courage and Faithfulneſs, according as it had been foretold or propheſied he ſhould do.

Note, that amongſt the Gifts or Prophecy found in the Apoſtle's Time, and the Diſcerning of Spirits, this was one, to foretel and chuſe out Perſons fit for the Miniſtry. *Timothy* was choſen by Prophecy, that is, by the Direction of the Spirit of God, and therefore the Apoſtle bids him, as it had been foretold he ſhould be a faithful Miniſter, to approve himſelf to be ſuch.

Timothy is exhorted to *war a gook Warfare*, to which Purpoſe he is directed to uſe the two Weapons of *Faith and a good Conſcience*; neither will do alone; hold both, Faith in thy Teaching, and a good Conſcience in thy Practice; hold them faſt, for Faith ſtands with a good Conſcience, and falls with a bad one.

The Encouragement given to exerciſe this Care, is, that ſome through the Neglect of it *concerning Faith have made Shipwreck.* Our Life is a Sea-faring Condition; a good Conſcience is the Ark in which we are ſecure; if we let this go, we have ſeen the laſt of Faith, it ſinks, it ſhipwrecks preſently.

Q. *Who are thoſe he mentions to have made Shipwreck of a good Conſcience?*

A. Of the Number of thoſe who had made Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conſcience, were *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*. Not that they had expreſly renounced *Chriſtianity*, but by denying the Reſurrection, and maintaining Doctrines ſubverſive of the Faith, did, in Effect, deny *Chriſt*.

Whom I have delivered unto Satan; on whom I have inflicted the Church's Cenſure of Excommunication, caſt them out of the Church, and delivered to Satan as God's Executioner.

That they might learn not to blaſpheme. It was not Satan, but the Apoſtle's Deſire, that they might learn not to blaſpheme; Satan was then God's Executioner, when the Church wanted the Countenance of the *Chriſtian* Magiſtrate, and his Deſign was Deſtruction, but the Apoſtle's Reformation; not to ruin, but reclaim.

CHAP. II.

A Command to pray for all Men; but eſpecially for Kings and Magiſtrates. How Women ſhould be adorned, and receive Inſtruction; but not to teach or rule; for Man was firſt created, and the Woman firſt fell; their Hope, if faithful in Child-bearing.

Q. WHAT *are the Duties which the Apoſtle here exhorts* Timothy *to put in Practice?*

A. The Apoſtle in this Chapter directs *Timothy* in the Performance of ſeveral Duties; the firſt is, publick Prayer; I exhort thee, that Supplications, Prayers, and Interceſſions with Thankſgivings, be publickly made. Prayer being a ſpecial and principal Part of publick Worſhip, the Miniſter of God muſt be aſſiduous and conſtant in it; deprecating Evils threaten'd, ſupplicating for Mercies wanted, interceeding on the Behalf of others, and give thanks for Bleſſings received.

Q. *But who are the proper Subjects of our Prayer?*

A. *All Men*; becauſe we cannot pray acceptably for ourſelves, if we pray only for ourſelves: This is the noble Exerciſe of Charity, and which God has put in the power of the pooreſt Man upon Earth to exerciſe; let *Supplications and Prayer be made for all Men.*

In the firſt Place we are more eſpecially to pray *for all Kings, and all in Authority*, who then were Pagans and Perſecutors. Note, he does not ſay, for lawful and rightful Kings, but for ſuch as have the Preheminence and Power in their Hands, for all Power is of God, *and the Powers that be are ordained of God*, Rom. xiii. 2.

Q. *But why firſt for Kings?*

A. Becauſe they are ſuch great Inſtruments of good to Mankind; becauſe they moſt want our Prayers, as they encounter with more Difficulties, are expoſed to more Dangers, and are liable to greater Temptations than other Men.

Q. *What Argument does he offer to engage us in this Duty?*

A. It is, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty*; that is, that we may be ſecured in the quiet and peaceable Poſſeſſion of our civil Rights and Intereſts, and that we may be protected in the free Exerciſe of our Religion, and in the Practice of Godlineſs; for though no Prince can take our Religion from us, if we reſolve to keep it, yet they may diſturb us in the peaceable Enjoyment of it, and therefore it is our Intereſt as well as our Duty to pray for *Kings, and all that are in Authority*.

Q. *But why are we to pray for all Men?*

A. The Reaſons aſſigned for our praying for all Men, are, becauſe *Chriſt* came into the World to ſave all Men; it being the Deſire of God, as the Deſign of *Chriſt*, that all Men ſhould be ſaved, ſuch Prayers being good and acceptable in the Sight of God.

Note, it is not only all Sorts of Men that God and *Chriſt* deſire ſhould be ſaved, but our Lord willed, together with his Father, the Salvation of all Men in general; ſo far as to make a Sacrifice ſufficient for all, if they repent and believe, and to offer a general Pardon to all on Condition of Acceptance, and to ſend his Miniſters amongſt all with the Word of Reconciliation, accompanying it with an hearty Deſire that all would accept it; in ſhort, what *Chriſt* offers to all, he undoubtedly purchaſed for all; but he offers to all Pardon and Life upon Condition of Acceptance; therefore he is ſo far willing that all Men ſhould be ſaved.

Q. *By what Means or Methods would God have ll a Men be ſaved?*

A. By coming to the Knowledge of the Truth. It is evidently falſe that a Man may may be ſaved in any Religion; no, he cannot obtain Salvation but by the Knowledge of the Truth; without the Knowledge of God, without Faith in *Chriſt*, where he has been revealed, and without Obedience to the Goſpel, where it has been made known, there is no Poſſibility of Salvation, God would have all Men to be ſaved, by coming to the Knowledge of the Truth.

Q. *What other Argument does the Apoſtle offer for our praying for all Men?*

A. He thus argues: We ought to pray for All, becauſe there is one God who is good to All, and one Mediator between God and Mankind, who took upon him the common Nature of all Men, and gave himſelf a ſatisfactory and ſufficient Ranſom for all, which was in due Time teſtified to us by his Apoſtles.

The only friendly Intercourſe between God and fallen Man, is by and through a Mediator; God cannot look upon fallen Men out of a Mediator, but as Rebels, Traytors, and Objects of vindictive Wrath; nor can fallen Man, without a Mediator, look up to God, but as a provoked Majeſty, an angry Judge, and a conſuming Fire.

Although the Apoſtle calls him, *the Man* Chriſt Jeſus, this is not added to exclude the Divine Nature from Mediatorſhip, but emphatically to declare that Nature in which he gave himſelf a Ranſom for us; the human Nature is the Matter of our Ranſom; the Divine Nature gave Worth and Value to it; *Chriſt* ſuffered, being Man, and ſatisfied being God.

This one Mediator, *Jeſus Chriſt*, gave himſelf a Ranſom for all; whoever periſhes under the Goſpel; it is not becauſe no Ranſom was paid for him, nor becauſe it was not ſufficient for that End; for it's notorious that God has iſſued forth an univerſal Act of Grace, offering Pardon for Sin, and eternal Salvation to all Men without Exception, living under the Goſpel, on Condition of their believing Acceptance; if they reject and refuſe it, 'tis to their unutterable and inevitable Condemnation.

Q. *On what is* Chriſt's *Mediation and Interceſſion founded?*

A. On his Redemption; becauſe he gave himſelf a Ranſom for all, therefore is he, and he only, qualified to interceed for all, in Virtue of that Sacrifice which he offered for the Salvation of Mankind; therefore the Diſtinction of the Church of *Rome*, between a Mediator of Redemption, and a Mediator of Interceſſion, is groundleſs; for who dares to plead with an offended God as an Interceſſor on behalf of Sinners, that has not firſt, as a Redeemer, ſatisfied the Juſtice of God for Sin? As there was no Redemption wrought by any, ſo there is no Interceſſion to be made by any but *Chriſt*; as there is but one God, ſo but one Mediator between God and Man, the Man *Chriſt Jeſus*.

Q. *What do you remark on St.* Paul's *aſſerting his Apoſtleſhip, Verſe 7?*

A. He declares his Authority to publiſh the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and his Integrity in the Publication of it; I was ordained an Apoſtle, a Teacher of the *Gentiles*, in Faith and Verity.

St. *Paul*, according to his Commiſſion, gave Directions to all Sorts of Perſons for the Regular Performance of their Duty. And firſt, concerning the Duty of Prayer; *I will*; that is, God by me declares his Will, that all *Men pray every-where*, in publick Aſſemblies, in their private Families and Apartments; *lifting up holy Hands*, in Token of expecting to receive an Anſwer from Heaven; their Prayers muſt be holy, accompanied with Faith and Charity; *without Wrath and Doubting*; a peaceable Heart is as neceſſary in Prayer as a pure Hand; 'tis in vain to aſk in Prayer the Favour of God with Anger and Revenge in our Hearts againſt any Man; to pray with Doubting, is oppoſed to Faith; to pray in Wrath is oppoſed to Charity; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Pray both in actual Faith and Love; there muſt be Faith in Prayer, otherwiſe we cannot *lift up holy Hands without Doubting*; there muſt be Love, otherwiſe we cannot *lift up holy Hands without Wrath*: He and his Service muſt be holy that will ſerve God acceptably.

Q. *What other Points of Duty does he inſtruct them in?*

A. The next Apoſtolical Precept here given, is to Women, concerning their Apparel and Attire; that at all Times, but eſpecially in publick Worſhip, they uſe ſuch Apparel as becomes modeſt and chaſt Women, expreſſing by their outward Garb, the inward Gravity and Modeſty of their Minds; not like ſome proud and alluring Perſons, with braided Hair, Gold and Pearl, to attract the Eyes and Hearts of the Simple.

Note, that Perſons Attire ſhould be ſuch as may anſwer the End for which Apparel was appointed; namely, to hide and ſhroud our Nakedneſs, for Diſtinction of Sexes, and alſo to diſtinguiſh between the Qualities and Ranks of Perſons. Garments

ments are alſo for Protection and Defence, for Decency and Ornament.

But though Perſons of Quality are not prohibited wearing rich and coſtly Garments, as become their Degree, yet none are to ſtudy the external Ornament of the Body, ſo much as to neglect the Inner-man by good Works.

All ſuch Attire is forbidden which ſuſpected Women uſe, either to provoke Luſt in others, or to ſhew Inclinations to it in themſelves; ſuch as by the Richneſs and Coſtlineſs of it, ſhews Pride and Vanity of Spirit, and an Ambition to exceed others; and ſuch as is unſuitable to the Time or Place of Worſhip.

This Precept ought not to be ſlightly regarded by Women, as of ſmall Moment, becauſe the two great Apoſtles, St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, both inculcate and urge it upon them.

Q. *Does not this Precept, with reſpect to Apparel, regard the Men as well as the Women?*

A. Men are by no Means to think themſelves unconcerned in this Apoſtolical Precept given to Women; it is much more inexcuſable in them to affect Gaiety, and a gaudy Dreſs; for it is vain and fooliſh, troubleſome and uneaſy, the Nurſe of Idleneſs, attended with Luxury and Wantonneſs, and very often with Immodeſty and Lewdneſs, and is the great Bane, very often, of Juſtice and Charity: How many are fine and gay, but at the Expence, and ſometimes the Ruin of the poor Tradeſman; How often is that ſpent in decking themſelves? which ought to be laid out in cloathing the Poor.

Q. *What is the Senſe of thoſe Words, Verſe* 12. I ſuffer not a Woman to teach?

A. That is, in publick Aſſemblies; he does not forbid privately teaching their Children, or Servants, or even their Husbands, on a fit Occaſion, *Acts* xviii. 26. we find *Priſcilla* privately inſtructing *Apollos*.

Note, that none ought to teach but ſuch as have Authority, and Teaching is exerciſing that Authority; when therefore a Woman teaches Publickly, ſhe uſurps an Authority not due to her. There were ſome Women in the *Jewiſh* Church endowed with extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, as *Miriam*, *Deborah*, *Huldah*, and *Anna*; and its probable, that the Speaking of theſe extraordinary Women encouraged others to do the like, whom the Apoſtle here directs his Speech againſt.

Q. *What Arguments does the Apoſtle uſe to enforce the Duty of Subjection upon the Woman?*

A. 1. Becauſe the Man was firſt in the Creation; Adam *was firſt formed, then* Eve; and, 2. Becauſe the Woman was firſt in the Tranſgreſſion. Adam *was not deceived*, that is, firſt and immediately deceived, *but the Woman being deceived, was* firſt *in the Tranſgreſſion*; ſhe was therefore guilty of her own and her Husband's Tranſgreſſion; and accordingly, not only by the Law of her Creation, but as a Puniſhment for her Tranſgreſſion, God has placed her in a State of Subjection, and given the Man Authority over her; which Authority he uſurps, whenever ſhe undertakes publickly to teach him. Thus the Apoſtle would have the Woman keep within the Sphere of her proper Duty.

Q. *But what was her Puniſhment in caſe ſhe failed in her Duty?*

A. The Apoſtle next acquaints the Woman with Part of her Puniſhment for that Tranſgreſſion, and that is, the ſevere Pains, and extreme Peril of Child-bearing; alſo with her Comfort and Support under that Puniſhment, and that is, an Hope of Salvation, *She ſhall be ſaved in Child-bearing*; and with the Conditions on which that Hope of Salvation is grounded, *If ſhe continues in Faith, and Charity, and Holineſs with Sobriety.*

Hence learn, that Pain in Child-bearing is a Part of that Puniſhment which God inflicted on the Woman for her firſt Sin; and accordingly the Woman's Sorrow and ſenſible feeling of the Pains of Child-birth ought to remind her of her original and firſt Tranſgreſſion; as a Child ought to remember his Fault at that very Inſtant when he is under his Father's Rod.

The Infliction of this Puniſhment (the Pains of Child-bearing) even unto Death is not, neither ſhall be any Hindrance of the Woman's eternal Salvation, if there be found with her thoſe Qualifications and gracious Diſpoſitions which the Goſpel requires; partly in Regard of the Relation God ſtands in to her, and partly in Regard of the Covenant God has made with her. A Child is as much a Child under the Rod, as in the Body; neither the Father's Stroke, nor the Child's Grief can diſſolve that Relation.

Faith and Charity, Holineſs and Sobriety, with a Perſeverance therein, are the great Conditions upon which the Woman's eternal Salvation in that hazardous Condition depends; *She ſhall be ſaved in Child-bearing, if ſhe continue in Faith, and Charity, and Holineſs, with Sobriety.* The Words may alſo refer to the Woman's temporal Deliverance in the Time of Travail; and the Senſe runs thus; She ſhall be ſaved in Child-bearing, that is, ſhe ſhall go through the Pains of Child-birth with Safety, if ſhe continue in Faith, putting her Truſt in God for Deliverance, in Charity exerciſing Compaſſion to thoſe in the like Condition, and in the Exerciſe of Temperance, Sobriety, and Chaſtity, according to the matrimonial Vow.

CHAP. III.

The Office and Qualifications of a Teacher. Of Deacons; of their Wives and Families. The Church the Pillar of Truth, which is the Myſtery of Godlineſs.

Q. WHAT *Inſtruction does the Apoſtle give* Timothy *in this Chapter?*

A. Our Apoſtle's Deſign in this Chapter is to inſtruct *Timothy* in the ſeveral Qualifications which ought to be found in the Perſon whom he ordained for Publick Admiſtration in the Church of God.

In the firſt Verſe he acquaints *Timothy* with the Dignity, Honour and Excellency of the Sacred Function; *he that deſireth the Office of a Biſhop*, that is, to rule and teach in the Church of God, *he deſireth a good Work*; that is, an honourable Employment. But obſerve, it's not a bare Name, Title, Dignity, Place of Honour and Command, but a Work of vaſt Importance, Labour and Difficulty; take heed therefore whom thou doſt admit, and of thoſe that are already admitted into the Sacred Function, to conſider the great Weight of that important Service, to undertake it with extraordinary Dread and Caution, looking upon their Office, not with aſpiring but tremendous Thoughts; for who is ſufficient for theſe Things?

We have next St. *Paul*'s poſitive Character of a

Biſhop; he ought to be blameleſs, a Perſon free from Scandal, without juſt Cauſe of Blame; the Life of a Biſhop ſhould ſhine ſo bright, that others only may not behold it, but admire it, and guide their Lives by the Example of it.

Q. *In what Senſe was the Biſhop to be the Huſband of one Wife?*

A. That is, one at a Time; not guilty of the Sin of having many Wives, or of putting away the Wife by Divorce, as the *Jews* frequently did for frivolous Cauſes. But this Command does not oblige him to marry, but it eſtabliſhes the Lawfulneſs of his Marriage, if he ſees ſufficient Reaſon for it. Nor does the Apoſtle here forbid ſucceſſive Marriages, as if he might not marry again after the Burial of the firſt Wife; yet we may ſuppoſe by theſe Words, and many others, that St. *Paul* propoſes a greater Degree of Chaſtity to Church Governors than other Perſons.

Q. *Pray what are the other Parts of a Biſhop's Duty?*

A. A Biſhop muſt alſo be *vigilant*, very diligent and watchful in the Performance of his whole Duty, not long abſent from his Flock, nor negligent when among them. *Sober*, governing his Paſſions and Appetites, reducing theſe rebellious Powers under the Dominion of Reaſon and Religion. *Of good Behaviour*, in his Words, Habit and Garb, in his Deeds and Actions, neither proud nor ſupercilious, moroſe and ſour; but affable, eaſy, kind, courteous, of a compoſed Temper and grave Behaviour. *Given to Hoſpitality*, not to Senſuality; it is not the keeping of a free Table, an open Houſe for all Comers, that St. *Paul* points at; but Charity in entertaining Strangers, poor *Chriſtians* who were forced out of their Country by Perſecution, or ſuch as travelled from Place to Place on their lawful Affairs. *Apt to teach*; both knowing and willing, able to teach, and forward to it, one that is neither ignorant of his Duty, nor negligent in the Performance of it.

Q. *Pray proeed in explaining St.* Paul's *Character of a Biſhop?*

Q. Next the Apoſtle ſhews what a Biſhop muſt not be; *not given to Wine*; that is, to much Wine, no inordinate Lover either of Wine or ſtrong Drink. *No Striker*, either with the Hands or Tongue; no Quarreller, that cannot keep his Hand from hurting; no Striker with his Tongue in Paſſion and Anger: A Word, we ſay, wounds deeper than a Sword; the Miniſters of God may wound the Reputation of Men with their own wrathful Spirits. *Not greedy of filthy Lucre*, no inordinate Lover of Money, which makes a man baſe and ſordid, both in getting, keeping, and ſpending; *but patient*, meek and forbearing, not rigidly exacting his due; but rather, for Peace-ſake, parting with ſomewhat which in Strictneſs may be his Right. *Not a Brawler*, or contentious Perſon, often engaged in Law Suits, but of a mild and peaceable Diſpoſition; *not covetous*, or enſlaved to the Love of Wealth; he may poſſeſs the Things of this Life, but not be poſſeſſed by them.

Q. *Does he mention any other Qualification neceſſary for a Biſhop?*

A. Another Qualification of a Biſhop is, that he be one who *ruleth well his own Houſe*, wiſely govern his own Family, having his Children in due Subjection, and both he and they behaving with becoming Gravity; and St. *Paul* ſubjoins a Reaſon for this Apoſtolical Injunction, and argues from the leſs to the greater, thus, the Church is a large Family, the Biſhop's Houſe a leſs; the former requires greater Skill in governing it than the latter. If he cannot maintain his Authority with Deceney and becoming Gravity in his own Family, how can ſuch an one be entruſted with the care of the Church of God?

Great are the Obligations which Miniſters, of all Men, are under, to guide and govern their own Families, to keep their Children in due Subjection, and their Servants in great Order; becauſe their Family Miſcarriages greatly reflect on their Authority and Prudence, and the World will pronounce them unfit to rule the Church of God, who cannot govern their own Houſe.

He who knows how to rule his own Houſe well, manifeſts his own Capacity for publick Rule; the ſame Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Holineſs for Kind, but more ſextenſive, acts in either Sphere, and well as regularly move in both.

Q. *What does he mean when he ſays a Biſhop muſt not be a* Novice?

A. A *Novice* ſignifies a young Plant, here a young, raw, unexperienced Perſon; yet not ſo much young in Years as in Knowledge, for *Timothy* himſelf was very young; not a *Novice* in Religion, not one that is unexperienced in the Myſteries of the Goſpel, undertaking to teach others before he is learnt himſelf.

Leſt being puft up with Pride, he fall into the Condemnation of the Devil; implying, that young, raw, unexperienced Perſons, when put into publick Office, are in great Danger of falling into the ſin of Pride, the Devil's Sin, and of expoſing themſelves to Condemnation, the Devil's Puniſhment, becauſe their Knowledge is weaker, their Paſſions ſtronger, and their Graces feebler, and they want that Experience which ſhould conſolidate their Judgments, are therefore in great Danger of ſelf-exalting; for none ſo proud and confident as the Ignorant and Injudicious.

Q. *What is intimated in that Expreſſion of the Apoſtle*; Leſt he fall into the Condemnation of the Devil?

A. It is as if he had ſaid, leſt he be condemned for the ſame Sin that the Devil is condemned for, which was Pride; not that the Devil will condemn him for his Pride, for the more proud a Man is, the better the Devil approves him; nor is it the Devil's Office to condemn, but to execute; he is the Executioner, not the Judge; he will not condemn for Sin, but he will eternally torment thoſe whom God condemns.

Q. *What other Qualifications muſt a Biſhop have?*

A. A Biſhop *muſt have a good Report of them which are without*; it is neceſſary for his own Salvation that he be good, and for the Salvation of others that he be counted ſo. He muſt keep his Reputation unſully'd, leſt becoming contemptible, and ſo not able to perform his Duty as he ought, he give Occaſion to the *Heathen*, to blaſpheme *Chriſtianity*, and to reproach him for his former Courſe of Life.

Q. *Pray what was the Office of a Deacon?*

A. There are but two Sorts of Church-Officers mentioned by St. *Paul*, Biſhops and Deacons; as the Church has its own Biſhop, ſo likewiſe their own Deacons: Theſe were at firſt inſtituted for the Service of the Poor; the Alms of the Church were brought to the Altar, the Deacons received and diſtributed them among the Aged and Impotent from Houſe to Houſe; now becauſe they were thus employed, the Apoſtle adviſes them to beware of thoſe Faults that are frequently committed in common Converſation, as light and vain Diſcourſe, ſaying one Thing to one Perſon, and the contrary to another; *Let the Deacons be grave*, ſerious and compoſed, Men of a modeſt and becoming Carriage; *not double-tongued*, ſaying one thing to one Perſon, and the contrary to another, according to the Place or Company they fell into; *not given to much Wine*; not the Thing, but the Exceſs, is forbidden; *not greedy of filthy Lucre*, ſeeking to get Riches by indirect and ſordid Ways and Means.

They muſt likewiſe be ſound Believers, of an upright Life, maintaining Truth of Doctrine, and Soundneſs of Faith, by Sincerity of Heart, and Integrity of Life.

Timothy is directed not to put any Perſons haſtily into the Office of a Deacon, but firſt to prove them for ſome conſiderable Time; and their Sufficiency being approved, to let them be ordained, and uſe the Office of a Deacon.

Q. *How do you underſtand the firſt Clauſe of the 11th Verſe*, Even ſo muſt their Wives be grave?

A. In the Original it is, *let the Woman*; by which is meant either the Deacons Wives, or the Deaconeſſes, who were appointed to take Care of the poor Women, as the Deacons were of the poor Men: Underſtand it of both; theſe Qualifications are excellent and well becoming both; they ought to be grave and ſober, not light and airy; no Slanderers, nor Devils, ſays the Original; the Senſe is, not Railers, not falſe Accuſers, but diligent and faithful in all Buſineſs. It's not enough that the Miniſters of the Goſpel are themſelves of a grave and ſober Converſation, but their Wives alſo muſt and ought to take ſpecial Care that they demean themſelves anſwerable to their Place and Station, and ſuitable to the Character which their Husbands bear; *ſo muſt their Wives be grave.*

Q. *What do you obſerve farther concerning the Office of a Deacon?*

A. Note, that the higher Officers of the Church were uſually choſen out of the inferior, and accordingly the Qualifications for both Offices; namely, thoſe of Biſhops and Deacons, are for the greateſt part the ſame, both in this Epiſtle, and that to *Titus*.

He goes on; although the Deacons be as Servants to the Biſhops, yet ſuch as uſe that Office well, according to the foregoing Rules, purchaſe to themſelves a good Degree above the Vulgar, and alſo have a farther Hope of Advancement in the Church; and when they preach the Word (as did *Philip* and *Stephen*) they ought to do it with great Boldneſs, and with Expectation of Succeſs, living ſuitable to the Qualifications of their Function, and walking according to the Rule of the Goſpel, which they ſpoke and taught.

Q. *In the 14th and 15th Verſes the Apoſtle beſpeaks* Timothy *after this Manner; I hope to come to thee very ſhortly, but if I tarry long, or be prevented at laſt, as I am uncertain, I write theſe things to thee, that thou mayeſt know how thou oughteſt to converſe in the Houſe of God, in which thou art a Pillar, or firm Buttreſs of the Truth: What does he mean by Pillar?*

A. Some, by the Pillar here, will underſtand the Church, as being the Foundation on which Truth is built, and giving it Authority; but ſhe is therefore the Church of *Chriſt*, becauſe ſhe holds the Truth, and it's eſſential to her Being to maintain and teach all neceſſary Truths; ſhe holds it forth, and publiſhes it to the World, ſuſtaining and ſupporting it as a Pillar does the King's Proclamation. The Truth receives not its Authority from the Church, but the Church receives its Authority by adhering to the Truth.

Others, by the Pillar, underſtand *Timothy*, and that St. *Paul* is here exhorting, that according to his Office he ſhould be a Pillar of Truth in the Church. Hence *Gal.* ii. 9. *James*, *Cephas*, and *John*, are ſaid to be Pillars there, as *Timothy* is here; a Pillar of the Church ſignifies a Man that is well rooted, grounded, and ſtrong in the Faith; this he exhorts *Timothy* to be.

Q. *In the laſt Verſe the Apoſtle reckons up ſix principal Heads of Evangelical Truths which* Timothy *was to aſſert and defend; theſe I deſire you to illuſtrate and explain?*

A. *Without Controverſy great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs.* Our holy Faith, our *Chriſtian* Religion is a Myſtery of Godlineſs, a Myſtery hidden in God, *Epheſ.* iii. 9. hidden in *Chriſt*, *Col.* iii. 3. hidden in the Scriptures, *Revel.* iii. 18. hidden in and under the Types and Shadows of the Ceremonial Law; nay, hidden even in the Goſpel itſelf, for we know but in part. And if *Chriſtianity* be a Myſtery, then the Knowledge of it is the Effect of divine Revelation and ſupernatural Diſcovery, not to be known by the Light of Nature, but God reveals it to us by his Spirit.

Farther; if it be a Myſtery, then the Diſpenſation of it is a ſpecial Favour. Again, if it be a Myſtery, then it is to be apprehended by Faith, and not to be fathomed by Reaſon; Faith looks at Revelations, Reaſon calls for a Demonſtration; Faith embraces like *Abraham*, what Reaſon laughs at, like *Sarah*.

God was manifeſted in the Fleſh; that is, the ſecond Perſon in the Godhead appear'd in human Fleſh. Aſtoniſhing Myſtery! that the Creator of the World ſhould become a Creature, lodg'd in a Stable, cradled in a Manger! The infinite Deity and finite Fleſh met in one Perſon, and yet the Godhead not humanized, nor the Humanity deified, but both inviſibly conjoined; the human Nature was united to the Godhead miraculouſly, aſſumed integrally, united inſeparably.

Juſtified in or by the Spirit; that is, the Spirit was *Chriſt's* Witneſs that he was no Impoſtor or Deceiver, but the promiſed and expected *Meſſias*, working all his Miracles by the power of the Spirit, raiſing himſelf from the Dead, and thereby declaring himſelf to be the Son of God with Power, and by ſending his Spirit, after his Aſcenſion, down on his Diſciples here on Earth.

Seen of Angels; they celebrated his Birth, and gave Notice of it to the World, miniſter'd to him in the Wilderneſs, ſuccoured him in the Garden, were preſent at his Reſurrection, and accompanied him in his Aſcenſion.

Preached to the Gentiles; the Wall of Separation between *Jew* and *Gentile* broke down, *Chriſt* was by his commiſſioned Apoſtles preached to the *Gentile* World.

Believed on in the World; *Chriſt* came into the World in ſo deſpicable a Manner that he was diſregarded by the World, who are taken with outward Magnificence; therefore that any ſhould believe on him in the World, is a juſt Wonder, and a Myſtery of Godlineſs.

Received up into Glory, where he ſits in his glorified Humanity, united to his glorious Deity, with all that Blood and Gore wipped off with which he was beſmeared in the Day of his Paſſion, and his Body ſhining brighter than ten thouſand Suns. This Body the Heavens muſt contain till the Reſtitution of all Things, when he ſhall come from Heaven, as he went into it, attended with Angels, and ſummon the whole Body of Saints to meet him in the Air, that ſo they may for ever be with their Lord.

CHAP. IV.

The Apoſtaſy of ſome in the latter Days foretold and deſcribed. He exhorts Timothy *to propound the true Doctrine, reject Fables, and exerciſe himſelf unto Godlineſs, after his Example, to be a Pattern of all Chriſtian Virtues; to continue in Reading; not to neglect the Gift he had received, but to increaſe end perſevere in that which is good; that he may ſave both himſelf and his Hearers.*

Q. WHAT *are the Apoſtle's Inſtructions to* Timothy *in the firſt Part of this Chapter?*

A. In the three firſt Verſes of this Chapter, he expreſſes himſelf after this manner; Although the Myſtery of Godlineſs, the Doctrine of *Chriſtianity*, be ſo clearly reveal'd, and fully confirm'd, yet the Spirit of Prophecy has plainly foretold us, that in the latter Times ſome ſhall depart from the Faith once embraced by them, either in whole or in part; turning Apoſtates, by giving heed to Impoſtures and Doctrines of Men, teaching Errors ſuggeſted by Devils, who cover their Lies with hypocritical Pretences, and are Men of hardned Hearts, ſeared Conſciences, and profligate Lives, forbidding ſome, whom they have ſeduced to marry, and *commanding them to abſtain from Meats, which God had created, to be received with Thankſgiving, who believe and know the Truth.*

Q. *Pray explain what he ſays in Relation to the Apoſtaſy which ſhould happen in the latter Times?*

A. The Apoſtaſy and Defection of a conſiderable Part of the *Chriſtian* Church in the latter Times, was foreſeen and foretold long before it came to paſs, by *Daniel*, ſay ſome, Chap. xi. 37, 38, &c. by St. *Paul*, ſay others, in his Second Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, and in his firſt Epiſtle to *Timothy*, the Spirit expreſly ſpeaks that ſome ſhall depart from the Faith, that is, from the Doctrine of Faith received which it's notorious the Church of *Rome* has done.

The Cauſe of this Apoſtaſy and Defection is deſcribed by, *giving Heed to ſeducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils.*

Q. *But what is here meant by Doctrines of Devils?*

A. Theſe, ſays Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*, can be no other Doctrines than thoſe tending to Idolatry, which the Scripture every-where doth in a particular Manner aſcribe to the Devil, as the Inventor and Promoter of; therefore he tells us, that in ſome antient Copies the Words run thus; *in the latter Times ſome ſhall apoſtatize from the Faith, for they ſhall worſhip the Dead, having regard to the Doctrines of Devils*; ſo that the particular Kind of Idolatry into which ſome Part of the *Chriſtian* Church ſhould apoſtatize, is here pointed at, namely, that they ſhould worſhip Souls departed, or the Spirits of dead Men, which was Part of the Heathen Idolatry, into which the *Iſraelites* ſo frequently relapſed. Theſe departed Souls were called Demons, and were eſteemed a middle Sort of Divine Powers, between the Supreme Gods, and Mortal Men, whoſe Office it was to be Agents and Mediators between the Gods above and Men below; thus is the holy City trodden down by the *Gentiles*, that is overwhelmed with *Gentile* Idolatry.

Obſerve farther, that ſome ſhall depart from the Faith; not the whole viſible Church, but a very conſiderable Part of it. The true Church of *Chriſt*, in the greateſt Darkneſs in which it was ever involved, was never quite extinguiſhed.

Q. *But who were they who were to occaſion the Revolt?*

A. The Perſons occaſioning this Apoſtaſy and Revolt, are ſuch as *ſpeak lies in Hypocriſy*, and have *ſeared Conſciences*; ſuch ſtupid Conſciences as have loſt the Senſe of Good and Evil, and no longer do their Office. Theſe lies which the Apoſtate Church of *Rome* is guilty of, Mr. *Mede* ſtiles *lying Miracles, fabulous Legends of the Acts of Saints and ſuffering Martyrs, cunterfeit Writings under the Name of the firſt and beſt Antiquity.*

Q. *What were the Doctrines to be taught by theſe Apoſtates?*

A. The Doctrines which theſe Apoſtates would teach, are, the forbidding Marriage to ſome, and enjoining Abſtinence from ſome Meats as unlawful and unclean to others, both which are called Doctrines of Devils, that is, wicked and deviliſh Doctrines.

Hence learn the *Popiſh* Doctrine forbidding Marriage, not abſolutely to all, but with Limitation to their Clergy, and all ſuch as ſhall enter into holy Orders, is a wicked and deviliſh Doctrine; for it forbids that which the Word allows, nay, in ſome Caſes Commands, *Heb.* xiii. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled*; if honourable in all, then ſurely lawful for all; the Prophets, Prieſts, and Levites, under the *Old Teſtamtnt*, married; under the New the Miniſters have Liberty to marry, 1 *Cor.* ix. 5. *Have not we Power to lead about a Siſter, a Wife?* And that they made uſe of that Power is certain from the next Words, *as well as other Apoſtles, and* Cephas?

The other wicked Doctrine concerning Meats is alſo practiſ'd by the Church of *Rome*, who, by a Law, oblige ſome Orders of Men, as Monks, to abſtain from certain Meats, thereby reducing them from their *Chriſtian* Liberty to a Conformity to legal Rites, which may well be judg'd a Departure from the *Chriſtian* Faith; for although St. *Paul*, *Rom.* xiv. allows the Forbearance of ſome ſorts of Meats to avoid Scandal, yet he no-where condemns the eating them as unclean: The Doctrine therefore

fore of the Church of *Rome*; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abſtain from Meats, is wicked and deviliſh.

Q. *But why are not* Chriſtians *reſtrain'd from particular Meats?*

A. The Reaſon aſſign'd why *Chriſtians* are not forbidden under the Goſpel, to abſtain from particular Meats, is, that the Diſtinction of Meats (clean and unclean) is taken way, and every Creature of God is good in itſelf, and clean to us, and nothing to be refus'd as unlawful or unclean, if it be receiv'd thankfully from God's Hand; *or it is ſanctified by the Word*, that is, by the Goſpel; it is made clean to us, and lawful for us, that having taken off the Difference of Meats, and *to the pure made all Things pure.*

The Quality of all God's Creatures as they come from him, and are given to us, is here noted, *every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refuſed*, ſo that there is no Sin in the uſe of them, nor no Religion in abſtaining from them; the Liberty was given us by God, and reſtor'd us by *Chriſt*, therefore we muſt not ſuffer our *Chriſtian* Liberty to be impeached by Judaiſm.

If it be received by Thankſgiving; that is the the Condition neceſſary on our Part, leſt the Creature, otherwiſe good and lawful, ſhould become unto us evil and hurtful.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 5th Verſe*, For it is ſanctified by the Word of God, and Prayer?

A. There is a threefold Word of God by which the Creature is ſanctified; namely, the Word of Donation, of Benediction, and of Promiſe. By the firſt he beſtows his Creatures upon us; by the ſecond he bleſſes them to us; and by the third he beſtows his Bleſſing in *Chriſt*, in and by whom we have a Covenant-right unto, and a ſanctified Uſe of all the Mercies which we enjoy.

Another Means by which the Creatures are ſanctified to us, by Prayer, as it obtains from God, 1. A right Improvement; and 2. A comfortable Enjoyment of all that we receive; or thus, the Creature is ſanctified to us by Prayer in the Procurement of it, in the Fruition of it, in the Review and Recognition of it, and God's Mercy in it, with Thankſgiving and Praiſe, loving it after God, for God, and in Subordination to God.

Q. *In what other Parts of the miniſterial Office does the Apoſtle inſtruct* Timothy?

A. The firſt Thing he intimates to him is, to *put the Brethren in Remembrance of thoſe Things* which the Apoſtle had taught him, in order to their Preſervation from the Peril and Poiſon of theſe Impoſtors; thus doing he would approve himſelf a good Miniſter of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and one nouriſhed up with the ſincere Doctrine of the Goſpel.

The Miniſters of the Goſpel are, in the firſt Place, Miniſters or Servants of *Jeſus Chriſt*. Secondarily, and in Subſerviency, they are the Miniſters of the Church; as a Nobleman's Servant, employ'd by him to diſtribute Wages, or appoint Work to the Inferior Servants, is ſecondarily a Miniſter to the Servants, but primarily, a Servant to the Lord.

The ſecond Duty *Timothy* is exhorted to, is, that he muſt *refuſe prophane and old Wives Fables*; if thou wilt not ſwim down the Tide of theſe apoſtatizing Times, take heed of ſteering thy Courſe by prophane, though antient Cuſtoms, refuſe them with Scorn, and reject them with Anger; one Way to prevent Apoſtaſy is to refuſe ungrounded Antiquity.

Timothy is likewiſe exhorted *to exerciſe himſelf rather unto Godlineſs*; this is his Duty, both as a Miniſter, and as a Member of *Jeſus Chriſt*; real Godlineſs ought to be minded as every Man's, eſpecially every Miniſter's chief and principal Buſineſs; Religion muſt be our chief Occupation.

Q. *What does he mean by* bodily Exerciſe, *Verſe* 8?

A. By bodily Exerciſe, he means corporal Auſterities, Abſtinence from Meats and Marriage; all the external Exerciſes of Religion; theſe profit a little, though but a little, in Compariſon of the Profit of Godlineſs.

Hence learn, that Faſtings, Humiliations, and Watchings, with other bodily Exerciſes, which ſerve to bring down the Pride and Wantonneſs of the Body, have their proper and neceſſary Uſe, and are expreſſive of a juſt Revenge which a Sinner takes upon himſelf for former Exceſſes; they are, when wiſely managed, what God accepts, but the leaſt that God expects from us.

Q. *How is* Godlineſs profitable unto all Things, *Verſe* 8?

A. 'Tis profitable to make a Man rich, to help him to get and increaſe an Eſtate, becauſe it makes a Man wiſe and prudent, diligent and induſtrious, thrifty and frugal. 'Tis profitable to make a Man renowned as well as rich; it is the only Way to acquire a good Name and Reputation; the godly Man is a worthy excellent Man, uſeful and ſerviceable, and ſuch ſeldom miſs of a good Reputation in the World; thoſe that want Goodneſs themſelves, yet commend it in others.

'Tis profitable for Pleaſure, as well as for Riches and Honour; for a Life of Religion increaſes and ſweetens the Reliſh of all ſenſible Enjoyments, ſo far is it from abridging us of any earthly Delights; beſides, it brings with it a World of Pleaſure of its own; thus *Godlineſs is profitable to all Things*; having the Promiſes of Happineſs both in this Life, and that which is to come, annexed to it.

Q. *Explain the 9th Verſe*; This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation?

A. Theſe Words were before uſed, *Chap.* i. 15. *that* Chriſt *came into the World to ſave Sinners.* Hence learn, that this Propoſition, that *Jeſus Chriſt* came into the World to ſave Sinners, and this, that ſuch Sinners who of Ungodly will become Godly, and perſevere in the Practice of Godlineſs, ſhall be happy in the Life that now is, and that which is to come; theſe two Propoſitions are faithful and remarkable Sayings, worthy the Acceptation of all reaſonable Creatures.

Farther; the Belief of this Propoſition, that Godlineſs has the Promiſe of this and the next Life, will cauſe all *Chriſtians*, as it did St. *Paul*, to labour in the Work of God, to ſuffer Reproach in his Cauſe, and this without Wearineſs and Fainting.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words, Verſe* 10. God is the Saviour of all Men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe?

A. That is, the Preſerver of all Men, but eſpecially of all good Men, when their temporal Preſervation conduces moſt to the Advantage of his Glory, and their Good. Or, if it be underſtood of eternal Salvation, we muſt take it thus; that he proclaims and tenders Salvation to all Men, altho' Believers only are ſaved, becauſe they only accept the Offers and Conditions of Salvation.

Q. *What other Admonitions does he give* Timothy?

A. The Apoſtle's farther Direction and Advice to *Timothy*, is, *theſe Things command and teach*; that is, theſe Things teach commandingly, and with a neceſſary Authority; the Miniſters of God ſpeak from God, and therefore may command for God.

With reſpect to his Converſation, he exhorts him to exerciſe ſuch a becoming Gravity in his Deportment, that though he was very Young, none might deſpiſe him, or his Function, becauſe of his Youth; where Piety and Modeſty meet in young Miniſters, it will preſerve their Youth from Contempt; and where Levity and Vanity are found, it will expoſe not only Youth, but even grey Hairs, to Contempt and Scorn.

Q. *Whererein was* Timothy *to be an Example to Believers, as the Apoſtle exhorts him, Verſe* 12?

A. 1. *In Word*, or Speech; look that thy Speech be wiſe and inſtructive, not idle and impertinent, much leſs frothy and prophane; but let ſomething for Edification always drop from thy Lips. 2. *In Converſation*; look that thy Gravity be beyond thy Years; make up in thy Deportment what is wanting in thy Age; obſerve a juſt Equality, neither be too aſſuming nor too proſtrate; behave neither above nor below thyſelf. 3. *In Charity*; ſhew Benevolence, and exerciſe Beneficence towards all Mankind, according to thy Ability and Opportunity; a Miniſter's charitable Diſtributions give him a Throne in the Hearts of his People, when wiſely managed. 4. *In Spirit*; that is, in Zeal and Warmth of Spirit, in Fervency of Affection, in active and ſprightly Zeal for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls; ſuch a Zeal as may render thee induſtrious in feeding, and inſtructing thy Flock. 5. *In Faith*; that is, in Fidelity to and Conſtancy in the true Religion, not enduring to be huff'd or wheedled out of the Truth, for it is a ſacred Treaſure which we muſt tranſmit to our Poſterity, as our Forefathers did to us, with their precious Blood. 6. *In Purity, Chaſtity, and Cleanneſs, abſtaining from ſenſual Luſts, from Wantonneſs and Worldly-mindedneſs*; chuſe ſpiritual Delights now, for they are the Entertainments that we are to live upon to eternal Ages.

By all this we ſee how much it is in a Miniſter's own Power to procure a due Eſteem to himſelf; at leaſt to prevent his own Contempt.

Q. *What other Duties of the miniſterial Function does he put* Timothy *in mind of?*

A. St. *Paul* being uncertain when he ſhould ſee this young Labourer again, adds to the Inſtructions he had already given him. He requires him *to give Attendance to Reading*; that is, to be dilidiligent in private reading the Holy Scriptures, to enable him to teach, inſtruct, and exhort others, what they ought to believe and know, and what to practice and do.

He likewiſe exhorts *Timothy*, not to neglect, but to excite; to uſe, and diligently improve thoſe eminent Gifts which were given by Prophecy; that is, according to the foregoing Prophecies concerning him, and by laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, when he was ordained.

Hence it appears, that the Ceremony of laying on of Hands in Ordination is very antient and apoſtolical; not accidental or indifferent, but a very neceſſary Rite in the Performance of that Service; *neglect not the Gift which was given thee, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery.*

Meditate on theſe Things, give thyſelf wholly to them. If thoſe who were inſpired, and divinely qualified, muſt yet read, meditate, ſtudy hard, and employ their whole Time to fit themſelves for the miniſterial Work, what muſt we think of the Ignorance and Impudence of our Lay-Preachers, who, without any ſuch divine Qualifications, without any Call or Commiſſion, without giving themſelves wholly to theſe Things, dare preſume to teach the Scriptures, when they never underſtood them, and can hardly read them!

Give thyſelf wholly to them; be in them, ſays the Original; lay out thy whole Strength and Time in ſtudying God's Will, and making known thy People's Duty. The Apoſtles had no ſettled Maintenance legally ſecured?

If Miniſters muſt give themſelves wholly to theſe Things, what Leiſure can they find for Magiſtracy, for managing Law-Suits, farming of Lands, or for ſecular Concerns? We cannot make a Buſineſs of two Things ſo widely different from each other. Can we be ſpiritual Perſons, and yet mere Seculars in our Thoughts and Cares?

Q. *To what End and Purpoſe was* Timothy *to be mindful of theſe Things?*

A. The Reaſon ſubjoin'd, why *Timothy* ſhould do all this, is, *that his profiting may appear to all Men*; he muſt read, meditate, pray, and ſtudy, that he may improve and profit himſelf; though he was inſpired, yet he muſt not rely upon the Spirit's Aſſiſtance, without his own Endeavours; and his Improvement by Study muſt appear not barely to himſelf, but to others, to his People, to all Perſons, *that thy profiting appear unto all Men.*

Q. *What other Rules does he give him for the Government of his Life and Converſation?*

A. The Apoſtle goes on; *Have a ſpecial Regard to the Piety of thy Life, and to the Purity of thy Doctrine, and this continually, ſo ſhalt thou do what in thee lies, to ſave thy own Soul, and the Souls of all thy People.*

Take heed unto thyſelf; Miniſters ought, in an eſpecial Manner, to be watchful over their Lives; the obſerving Eye of God is upon them, and the cenſorious and inſiduous Eyes of the World watch them, and will charge the Miſcarriages of a ſingle Perſon upon the whole Order, and condemn all for the Faults of one, therefore let every one take Care of himſelf; the Honour of their Profeſſion requires it, the Conſcience of their Duty challenges it, a due Regard to the Glory of God, and their own Reputation, commands it.

Take heed unto thy Doctrine; that it be the pure and uncorrupted Word of God, expounded agreeably to the Senſe of the antient Church, and of our own Church in Particular, which has, with the greateſt Care, followed the antient Pattern; many Errors are abroad in the World which have adulterated the Truths of the Goſpel; it is therefore prudential and neceſſary, that the Miniſters of the Goſpel keep at a great Diſtance from every Opinion which looks like heretical; and come not within the Reach of Suſpicion; 'tis not enough for us to be Innocent, unleſs we appear ſo.

St. *Paul* firſt bids *Timothy* take heed to his Life, and then to his Doctrine; becauſe the Succeſs of our Doctrine depends upon the Goodneſs of our Lives; for who will believe him in the Pulpit, who contradicts himſelf in his Converſation?

The happy Advantages of this Courſe will be, we ſhall *ſave ourſelves*, deliver our own Souls by our Diligence and Care; and not only ourſelves, but our People alſo; *them that hear us*, that is, we ſhall do all in our Power to ſave the Souls committed to us, that they may be our crown of Rejoicing in the Preſence of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* at his coming; God will pronounce us pure and innocent from the Blood of all Men; and if our People periſh, their Blood will be upon their own Heads, which God avert for his Mercy's Sake.

Chap. V.

Rules to be obſerved in reproving both Old and Young. Directions concerning Widows. Of Elders, the Honour due to them; no Accuſations to be received againſt them without Witneſſes. Of publick Reproof. His Charge to Timothy, *to deal impartially therein. Of ordaining Elders. Forbids him to uſe Water without Wine. Some Mens Sins made manifeſt before others.*

Q. WHAT *kind of Inſtructions does the Apoſtle give* Timothy *in this Chapter?*

A. St. *Paul* continues his Directions to *Timothy*, particularly with Relation to that important Part of his Office, miniſterial Reproof; if aged Perſons, Elders in Office, or Elders in Age, tranſgreſs, they muſt be rebuked, not magiſterially, but paternally, with Humility and Gentleneſs, according to their Years; not with Auſterity and Roughneſs; *The elder Men as Fathers, the elder Women as Mothers*, both with juſt Deference and due Reſpect; the Younger alſo muſt not be treated with Contempt, but with Gentleneſs; *the younger Men as Brethren, the younger Women as Siſters*; both without Pride or Fierceneſs, *and with all Purity*; ſhunning all Levity and Wantonneſs, and eſchewing all that ſavours of Immodeſty or Unchaſtity, in Thought, Speech, Look, or Behaviour. This Direction is general, and reſpects the Conduct of all the Miniſters of the Goſpel, in the Performance of this Part of their miniſterial Function.

Q. *What Directions does he give him with reſpect to his Conduct towards Widows?*

A. *Timothy* is directed in his Behaviour to Widows, particularly thoſe who were to be maintained with the Church's Charity, and to live upon it. *Widows indeed*; ſuch Widows as were deſolate, being deprived both of Husband and Maintenance at once, and having neither Children, nor Grandchildren, nor near Relations able to relieve them; and they were alſo ſuch as had reſolved to continue in Widowhood, theſe he requires ſhould be honoured; that is, have Reſpect ſhewn them, Maintenance allowed them, Employment provided for them, to viſit the Sick and Poor, and give notice of their Wants to the Church, and to ſpend their Time in the Exerciſe of Devotion, *truſting in God, and continuing in Supplications Night and Day.*

Such Widows as had near Relations, were to be provided for by them, and not by the Church; *Let them learn to ſhew Piety at home*; that is, to relieve their own Relations, before they ſhew Kindneſs to Strangers, or before the Church be burthen'd with them; where the original Word is very emphatical and ſignificative, let them exerciſe Religion and Goodneſs towards their own Houſe; implying, that to extend our Charity to our near Relations, is a Duty in the firſt Place, and to perform it chearfully, is an Act of Religion and Godlineſs; and that it is in vain to pretend to Religion if we ſee Relations in Want, and are able, but unwilling to relieve them.

Q. *But does he make no Difference in his Deſcription of Widows?*

A. The Character St. *Paul* gives of ſome Widows in his Time, is, they *lived in Pleaſure*; with this particular Cenſure, that they were dead while they lived; ſhe that lives in Pleaſure, that is, licentiouſly, ſportingly, wantonly, profuſely, to the Diſhonour of her Husband's Memory, and her own perſonal Diſgrace, ſhe is dead in Sin, dead to *Chriſt*, and his Religion, whilſt ſhe lives in the World, and ſo is not to be looked upon by the Church as a vital Member of it, much leſs to be maintained by the Church's Charity.

Q. *What are his Inſtructions to thoſe who were Maſters of Families?*

A. If any profeſſing *Chriſtianity*, and having Ability, provides not for his own Kindred, but eſpecially *for thoſe of his own Houſe*, as Parents or Children, he lives ſo contrary to the *Chriſtian* Faith, that in Effect he denies it, and is worſe than an Infidel, who generally takes Care of his Parents, and provides for his poor Relations. This was an univerſal Principle of Nature, among the old *Heathens*, to honour the Gods, and provide for their Parents, affirming, that no Man can do any thing more acceptable to the Gods than by heaping Favours upon their Parents; and that nothing can be a greater Evidence of Atheiſm and Impiety, than to neglect and deſpiſe them.

Q. *What farther Directions does he give concerning Widows?*

A. In the 9th and 10th Verſes, the Apoſtle directs *Timothy* concerning ſuch Widows as were to be admitted into the Church's Service, under the Name of Deaconeſſes, whoſe Office it was to take Care of the Aged and Impotent, to be ſtaid Monitors to the younger Women, to attend poor Women in Labour, and to aſſiſt at the Baptiſm of the Female Sex.

St. *Paul* adviſes, that none be admitted under threeſcore years of Age, and none that were divorced from one Husband and married to another; *Let not a Widow be taken into the Number*; that is, *of Church-widows, or Deaconeſſes, under threeſcore years Old, having been the Wife of one Man* only.

St. *Paul* next lays down the general and particular Qualifications of ſuch Widows as ſhould be elected into the Church's Service; the general Qualification is Fruitfulneſs in good Works; *If ſhe has diligently followed every good Work.* It was not her Age, nor Poverty, but her *Chriſtian* Behaviour before all, that gave her a Right to the Church's Service and Maintenance.

Q. *What were to be the particular Qualifications of ſuch Widows?*

A. The particular Qualifications are, if ſhe has brought up Children religiouſly, lodged Strangers or *Chriſtian* Travellers; if ſhe has condeſcended to the meaneſt Offices, not diſdaining to waſh the very Feet of poor *Chriſtians* in their Journeyings; if ſhe has done all the Good ſhe poſſibly could.

Note, that in thoſe hot Countries Perſons travelled on Foot, and without Shoes, wearing only Sandals, and having few or no Inns of Entertainments, or but little Money to defray travelling Charges, it was a work of pious Charity to entertain *Chriſtian* Strangers, to receive and lodge them in their Houſes, to waſh and cool, refreſh and cleanſe their Feet, and to adminiſter to their Neceſſities; ſuch Widows as are thus qualified, he directs, may be taken into the Church's Service, and partake of her Maintenance.

Q. *But what Sort of Widows were thoſe he would have him refuſe to admit into the Number of Deaconneſſes, or the Church Servants.*

A. The younger Widows, who were not paſt Child-bearing, and therefore waxing Wanton againſt *Chriſt*, would marry, that is, growing weary of the Church's Service; and deſpairing of Marriage in the Church, would revolt from the Faith, and marry ſome Infidel out of the Church; *having Damnation*, that is, committing a Sin worthy of Damnation, and bringing themſelves into a damnable Condition; *becauſe they renounce their firſt Faith*, which they made Profeſſion of when they were baptized, turning Apoſtates to pleaſe ther Infidel Husbands, which, *Verſe* 15. the Apoſtle calls a turning after Satan, tot he great Scandal of *Chriſtianity*.

Q. *What is his Advice to young Widows?*

A. Our Apoſtle nextſhews, that ſuch young Widows are uſually idle, wandering about from Houſe to Houſe, prying into and tatling about other Folks Matters; to avoid all which, he adviſes the youug Women, and particularly the younger Widows, to marry, and ſerve God in a conjugal Relation, bearing and bringing up their Children, guiding their Families, and giving no Occaſion to the Enemies of Religion to reproach either it or them.

From hence we may gather, that Celibacy or a ſingle Life is no ſuch State of Holineſs or Perfection as the Church of *Rome* would perſuade us; we ſee here it has his Temptations and Snares, and thoſe not a few nor ſmall; and that our Apoſtle, in ſome Caſes, and to ſome Perſons, recommends a married Life before it.

Q. *What Directions does he give to Elders?*

A. The next thing the Apoſtle proceeds to, is to direct *Timothy* concerning Elders; not old Men in Years, but Elders in Office, ſuch as were employed in governing the Church, and over and above that Service, labour'd even to Wearineſs in preaching the Word, and expounding the *Chriſtian* Doctrine.

The Elder's Work and Duty is, to *rule well*; wiſely to preſide over, and diſcreetly to govern the Church of *Chriſt*; alſo to *labour in Word and Doctrine*, to take Pains in preaching the Goſpel upon all Occaſions; thoſe that are advanced to the higheſt Eminency in the Church will not think themſelves above this Part of their Duty.

Q. *Does he not require ſome peculiar Reſpect to be paid to Elders?*

A. The Honour and Reſpect challenged on their behalf, is, *double Honour*, namely, an Honour of Reverence, and an Honour of Maintenance, and a double Meaſure of either. Some think it an Alluſion to the Firſt-born, who was the Prieſt of the Family, and had a double Portion among his Brethren; the *Levites* ſucceeded them, and the Miniſters of the Goſpel theſe, who, when laborious in governing and teaching the Church of *Chriſt*, deſerve more Honour and better Maintenance than the unkind World is willing to confer upon them, who inſtead of double Honour, ſometimes deny them civil Reſpect.

The Apoſtle's ſtyling a Miniſter's Maintenance, Honour, ſhews that their Maintenance is not to be eſteemed in the Nature of Alms, but of a Tribute paid by an Inferior to a Superior; neither is his Maintenance mercenary Wages, but ſuch as ought to be given as a Teſtimony of Honour, as well as in the Nature of a Reward.

The next Verſe evidently ſhews, that by Honour is to be underſtood Maintenance; to which purpoſe is cited *Deut.* xxv. where the Law of *Moſes* forbad the muzzling the Ox that treadeth out the Corn, but allows him feeding all the Time of Working; ſo that the Labour of the Church's Guides gives them a Right to the Church's Maintenance and Honour; but ſuch as do not labour, have a Right to neither.

Q. *What Orders and Inſtructions does he give with Reſpect to inflicting Church-Cenſures on Offenders?*

A. Againſt an Elder, Accuſation is not to be admitted without the Atteſtation of two or three Witneſſes; becauſe, 1. It is the intereſt of the Church of *Chriſt* that the Reputation of its Miniſters be ſupported. 2. Becauſe prejudiced Perſons will be ready to accuſe without Reaſon. Conſcientious Miniſters ſhall never want Accuſers, if falſe Accuſers can but find Judges willing to believe them.

St. *Paul* next adviſes him, that when there is a juſt and ſufficient Cauſe for cenſuring an Elder, to do it publickly. *Them that Sin*; that is, ſuch Elders as ſin, and are convicted of it, and ſo are become ſcandalous by it, rebuke before all the Church, before all the Clergy, as in a Synod, putting them to publick Shame, that others may fear to ſin, ſeeing thee to puniſh ſo publickly and impartially.

He concludes his Advice to *Timothy* with a very ſolemn Charge before God and *Chriſt*, and the glorious Angels, to obſerve theſe Rules of Juſtice in eccleſiaſtical Judicature, without preferring one Man before another, doing nothing by a partial Reſpect of Perſons.

Q. *How do you underſtand theſe Words, ver.* 22. Lay Hands ſuddenly on no Man?

A. Theſe Words are differently interpreted. 1. If they refer to Ordination, they are a Caution to the Governors of the Church, to admit none into the ſacred Function haſtily, raſhly, without due Examination and ſufficient Trial; to which are added Words of Terror, *neither be Partakers of other Mens Sins*; which ought to be deeply impreſs'd on the Minds of thoſe in whom the Power of Ordination is lodged, ſince the Words evidently import, that ſuch as ordain any raſhly, entitle themſelves to all the ſcandal they give, and are Partakers of their Guilt. The Welfare of the Church, the Honour of Religion, the Salvation of Mens Souls, depend very much on thoſe who are admitted into holy Orders.

Another Interpretation of theſe Words, is, that *Timothy* is here directed how to behave himſelf in cenſuring and abſolving of Penitents. As if St. *Paul* had ſaid, when thou haſt juſtly cenſur'd an

Offender, be not too haſty in abſolving him, (for this alſo was done by impoſition of Hands) till ſome Trial be made of his Reformation, leſt by ſo doing thou becomeſt guilty of his future Faults; but keep thyſelf pure from all Sin, whoſe Office it is to cenſure and reprove Sin in others. In both theſe Senſes have theſe Words been uſed, *Lay Hands ſuddenly on no Man, keep thyſelf pure.*

Q. *What do you obſerve on the Apoſtle's Advice to* Timothy, *ver.* 23. Drink no longer Water, but uſe a little Wine, for thy Stomach's ſake, and thine own Infirmities?

A. There is a lawful Uſe of Wine to ſupport Nature, not to clog it; to cure Infirmities, not to cauſe them ;] *Timothy* had the Liberty to drink it, medicinally, and no doubt for Refreſhment and Chearfulneſs, that the Body might be more fit for Duty, *Uſe a little Wine for thy Stomach's Sake.*

Meat and Drink ſhould be fitted for the Preſervation of Health, rather than for the Gratification of the Appetite; the former is a *Chriſtian* Duty, the latter a brutiſh Senſuality.

The Apoſtles could not make Uſe of the Gift of Healing when and upon whom they pleaſed; not even upon themſelves, but muſt help their own Infirmities by the Uſe of ordinary Means. Thus *Timothy* is adviſed to drink no longer Water alone, but to uſe a little Wine with it, for his Stomach's Sake, and his often Infirmities thence proceeding.

Q. *What other cautionary Inſtructions does he give* Timothy?

A. With Reference to what St. *Paul* had juſt been exhorting *Timothy* to, he gives him this farther Advice: *Timothy*, if thou art diligent to obſerve, and not over-haſty either in ordaining Candidates, or abſolving Penitents, thou may'ſt in ſome Meaſure perceive, who are, and who are not worthy. If thou layeſt thy Hands on thoſe that are actually faulty, thou partakeſt with them by being an Occaſion of their ſinning; but if thou canſt not diſcover their Faultineſs beforehand, though they afterwards prove wicked, it is not thy Fault; God will at length detect them, yea, they will diſcover themſelves, and when their Faults are manifeſt, deal with them according to the Diſcipline of the Church.

They cannot be hid, how much ſoever Men may labour to hide them. O! Sinner, there is no Way to hide thyſelf from God; thou may'ſt by Repentance hide thyſelf in God, in his Love, Favour, and Mercy; but from God thou canſt not be hid. As the good Works of Saints are manifeſt in the Sight and to the View of God, ſo they who are otherwiſe cannot be hid. Where can a Sinner be hid from him who is every-where? Or what Thing can be a Covering from him in whoſe Sight all Things are open? Lord! What will it avail to hide ourſelves from Men when we lie open and manifeſt to the Eye of God? *They that are otherwiſe, cannot be hid.*

CHAP. VI.

The Duty of Servants. He deſcribes falſe Teachers, and commands to avoid them. He exhorts to Piety, to avoid contentious Diſputes, and Covetouſneſs. He ſets forth the Glory of God. His Charge to the Rich; and to Timothy *to maintain his Truſt, and avoid Contentions. The Apoſtolical Benediction.*

Q. WHAT *Sort of Inſtructions does the Apoſtle give* Timothy *in this Chapter?*

A. In the two firſt Verſes the Apoſtle directs *Timothy* to inſtruct *Chriſtian* Servants in the great Duty of Obedience to their Maſters, whether Infidels or *Chriſtians*. *Chriſtianity* frees Perſons from ſinful Slavery and Bondage, but not from civil Servitude and Subjection. Religion allows an Inequality among Men, Superiors and Inferiors; and as it gives the former Power to command, ſo it lays the latter under an Obligation to obey.

Q. *All Servants owe their Maſters Honour: What Maſters?*

A. 1. Their Infidel and Unbelieving Maſters; to theſe, Servants are requir'd to carry it dutifully and reſpectfully. 2. Their believing or *Chriſtian* Maſters, they ſhould not deſpiſe them becauſe they are Brethren, for *Chriſtian* Brotherhood conſiſts with Inequality of Place and Relation, and with Subjection of one Perſon to another. But they ought to ſerve ſuch Maſters the more readily and chearfully, becauſe Brethren, beloved of God, and Partakers of the Benefit; namely, of Redemption by *Chriſt*, and of the ſanctifying Grace of God.

Q. *How does he enforce this Duty of Obedience on a Servant?*

A. The Argument he uſes to this Purpoſe is this, *that the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blaſphemed*; that is, the Men of the World will reproach Religion, revile *Chriſtianity*, and ſay that teaches, or at leaſt allows, Men in Stubborneſs and Diſobedience.

Q. *But what Credit or Diſcredit, can a poor Servant do to Religion?*

A. Much every way; he may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, *Tit.* ii. 9. by his *Chriſtian* Behaviour, and the Name of God, and his Doctrine may be blaſphemed by him, if he be negligent in his Duty; none are ſo inconſiderable but they are capable of ſerving the great Ends of Religion, and may honour God in ſome Meaſure; and are capable of being honour'd by him upon Earth, and with him in the higheſt Heavens.

Q. *Why does he add, Ver.* 2. Theſe Things teach and exhort?

A. Theſe are Duties of great Moment, therefore earneſtly preſs and inculcate them unto Servants. Doubtleſs, there is much of the Pleaſure and Will of God in theſe Commands, and the Glory and Honour of God is much intereſted in them, otherwiſe the Holy Spirit had not been ſo urgent in preſſing them; the Power of Holineſs in nothing diſcovers itſelf ſo much as in the Performance of relative Duties; we are really no more than what we are relatively; relative Holineſs is the brighteſt Ornament of Religion.

Q. St. Paul *ſtiles the Doctrine, which urges the Practice of relative Duties,* wholeſome Words, even the Words of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*: *But are they not the Apoſtle's Words likewiſe?*

A. The Words of St. *Paul*, in this and his other Epiſtles, are the Words of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; that is, Words agreeable to his Mind and Will, written with an Eye to his Glory, promoting his Honour, correſpondent with, and ſuitable to his Practice when here on Earth.

Q. *But how does he characterize thoſe Teachers who inculcated other Doctrines than what he himſelf taught?*

A. He charges them with Pride, Ignorance, Envy, Strife, Railing, evil Surmiſing, and with ſuppoſing that Gain was Godlineſs; that is, their End in profeſſing Godlineſs was, that they might make a Gain of it, and get Preferment by it, making uſe of Religion only as a Block to take Horſe at; but to make uſe of Religion in Policy, for the Sake of worldly Advantage, is the Way to be damn'd with a Vengeance, for Religion's Sake.

From ſuch withdraw thyſelf; hold no Communication with them, maintain no Diſputes with them; for they doat about Queſtions, and ſtrive about Words.

Q. *But who were theſe falſe Teachers, or under what Denomination did they go?*

A. Theſe Perſons, ſay ſome, were the *Gnoſtick* Hereticks; others, the *judaizing* Teachers, who taught Things which they ought not, for the Sake of filthy Lucre. Whoever they were, St. *Paul* admoniſhes *Timothy* to withdraw himſelf from them; and teaches us, that heretical Seducers are to be ſhunn'd and avoided, rather than diſputed with, as unfit for our *Chriſtian* Communion, and common Converſation.

Q. *What then was the Difference between the Apoſtle's Doctrine and theirs?*

A. Although theſe Seducers are for making a Gain of Godlineſs, yet we, adds the Apoſtle, know that Godlineſs is great Gain, eſpecially Godlineſs with Contentment; *for we brought nothing into the World* with us, and ſhall carry nothing away with us; having therefore *Food and Rayment, let us be therewith content*, and ſatisfied.

Godlineſs is the ſincere Practice of the *Chriſtian* Religion, ſo called, becauſe it directs and preſcribes to us the true and only Way of worſhipping and ſerving God; and Contentment is a quiet and ſedate Temper of Mind about outward Things. It is the Wiſdom and Will of God not to give all alike, but to ſome more, ſome leſs, of theſe outward Comforts; but nothing beſides Food and Raiment are abſolutely neceſſary, a little will ſuffice a contented Mind; he is not Rich that has much, but he that hath enough; that Man is Poor who covets more.

Q. *What Motive does he uſe to excite the* Chriſtian *to this Duty of Contentment?*

A. His Argument is, *For we brought nothing into the World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out:* Where remark, that the Note of Aſſurance is fixed rather to our carrying out than our bringing in; *It is certain we can carry nothing out*; becauſe though all Perſons come naked, and bring nothing into the World, yet abundance is put upon them, and they are born Heirs to vaſt Poſſeſſions; but moſt certain it is, they carry nothing away with them. Death diſrobes the Body of all its gaudy and rich Attire; yea, it uncloaths the Bones; our Fleſh wears off quickly in the Grave. We proverbially ſay of a rich Man, he has left a vaſt Eſtate behind him, carrying neither a Foot of Land, nor a Farthing of Money with him.

But they that will be rich, fall into Temptation and a Snare; they will be rich whether God will or no; their Hearts are ſet upon the World, they feel it coming, and have it they will, right or wrong.

The Danger that ſuch are in, is, *They fall into Temptation and a Snare, and many fooliſh Luſts*, &c. A Will and Reſolution to be rich, is the Occaſion of much Miſchief to thoſe that cheriſh and allow it in themſelves; a Will to be rich, is to make Riches our principal Buſineſs and chief Concern in the World. This is to make a God of the World; for that which is a Man's chief Aim, Deſign and End, is his chief Good, and that which is our chief Good is God.

An over-eager Purſuit of the World, lays a Man open to endleſs Temptations, ſo that it is not only difficult, but impoſſible, to keep his Innocence, which being irrecoverably loſt, drowns a Man in Perdition and Deſtruction.

Q. *Pray wherein conſiſts the Evil of Covetouſneſs?*

A. The Nature, Evil, Sin, and Miſchief of Covetouſneſs is here declared. *Money is the Root of all Evil*; the Fruit of all Sin grows from this Root, diſtruſting Care, tormenting Fear, Anger, Malice, Envy, Deceit, Oppreſſion, Bribery, Perjury, vexatious Law-Suits, and the like; nay farther, Covetouſneſs is the Root of Hereſy in Judgment, as well as of Iniquity in Practice; *they have erred from the Faith*; that is, in Point of Doctrine as well as Practice; it makes a Man believe as well as act againſt the Rule of Faith, for filthy Lucre.

The Miſchief of Covetouſneſs is, *it pierces thro' with many Sorrows.* But whom does it pierce? Firſt, others, it pierceth the Poor, the Needy, the Widow, the Fatherleſs, and all that fall within the Reach of its griping Hand; it does not ſpare its own Maſter; *they pierce themſelves through*, with many more, and much worſe Sorrows than they pierce others.

Q. *Why does St.* Paul *call* Timothy *a Man of* God, *Verſe* 11?

A. This Title given to *Timothy*, is borrow'd from the *Old Teſtament*, where 'tis frequently given to the Prophets, who revealed the Mind and Will of God to the People. Now by giving it to *Timothy*, the Apoſtle intimates his Duty to him, to contemn the World, and flee the eager Purſuit of Riches. As if he had ſaid, O *Timothy!* thou art a Miniſter, and Man of God, ſolemnly dedicated to his Service, and entirely devoted to his Glory, ſee then that thou abhor and avoid that deteſtable Sin of Covetouſneſs. Heavenly Truths are thy daily Study; let not earthly Things be the Object of thy chiefeſt Delight and Love; but follow after ſpiritual Riches, Righteouſneſs and Godlineſs, Faith and Love, Patience and Meekneſs; that Godlineſs which gives Contentment with Food and Raiment; that Faith which aſſures us of a better and more enduring Subſtance; that Righteouſneſs, or Juſtice which requires us to let every Man enjoy his own; that Love which makes us willing to diſtribute; that Patience, which makes us acquieſce with a low Condition; that Meekneſs which ſuppreſſes Wrath againſt thoſe that are injurious to us: All theſe Virtues and Graces are neceſſary to thee as a Miniſter of God, and are certain Indications of a Mind free from Covetouſneſs, and an infallible Preſervative from it.

Q. *Pray explain the Metaphors he makes uſe of in the 12th Verſe?*

A. *Fight the good Fight of Faith, &c.* This whole Verſe is an Alluſion to the *Olympick* Games, particularly to that of Racing, where the Garland, or Crown, being hung up at the End of the Goal, he that came firſt laid hold of it, and took it to himſelf; and becauſe theſe Games were performed in the View of many Spectators, the Apoſtle continues the Alluſion, and ſays, *Timothy* had, before many Witneſſes, profeſſed his Readineſs to ſuffer for the Faith.

The Senſe of the Apoſtle is, Go on, by Faith, to overcome all Temptations and Difficulties; preſs towards the Mark, 'till thou lay hold on the Prize, which is eternal Life: To which ſpiritual Warfare, and *Chriſtian* Race, thou gaveſt in thy Name; when being baptized, and ordained, thou madeſt a publick Profeſſion of thy Faith, before many Witneſſes.

Q. *In the 15th and 16th Verſes, the Apoſtle gives a very grand Deſcription of the Divine Being: What Remark do you make thereupon?*

A. How glorioufly the Apoſtle diſplays the adorable Attributes of God? He ſtiles him the God that quickeneth all Things; that is, all Things that have, or ſhall have Life; *the bleſſed and only Potentate,* becauſe all Power is eſſential in him, and derived from him; *who only hath Immortality;* that is, an original, primitive, ſimple independent, eſſential Immortality; that is, only proper and peculiar to God, he only is eſſentially and neceſſarily Immortal; *dwelling in that Light* which is inacceſſible, and none can approach unto, and *whom no Man hath ſeen, nor can ſee:* God is inviſible in his Eſſence, he is not to be ſeen by any mortal Eye upon Earth, the Eye of Faith only ſees him here; nay, he is not to be ſeen by any glorified Eye in Heaven, in his Divine Eſſence; the Nature and Eſſence of God never was, nor ſhall be ſeen.

By the *Sight of God in Heaven,* we are to underſtand a more clear and full Manifeſtation of God unto us, even ſo far as our glorify'd Natures can bear it; it will be abundantly beyond Expreſſion, and Comprehenſion.

Q. *How did* Chriſt witneſs a good Confeſſion?

A. That is, he did not deny the Truth to ſave his Life, but gave all his Miniſters and People an Example of Courage and Conſtancy in owning the Truth, and ſealing it with his Blood.

Q. *Does not the Apoſtle, in the 17th Verſe, ſeem to forbid the amaſſing of Riches?*

A. No Man is forbidden to be rich, nor yet to uſe ſuch lawful Means, by which, through God's Bleſſing, Men may be rich; yet they have need of a Charge, *that they be not high-minded;* Pride is one ſpecial Sin which great Men are ſubject to: When God lifts them up by his Providence, they lift themſelves up by Pride; there is a ſecret Malignity in Riches, when they meet with Mens Corruptions; to lift them up above their due Region, though they are neither the wiſer, the holier, the nearer Heaven for their Wealth, but, perhaps a great deal nearer Hell for the Abuſe of it; yet ſtill the Rich think high, look big, breath Scorn, talk diſdainfully, forgetting that God gives them Riches to exalt him, and not themſelves.

The next Part of the Charge is, that *they truſt not in uncertain Riches;* intimating, that Creature-Confidence, or making an Idol of Wealth, is the dreadful Bane and Ruin of ſome rich Men; but the Vanity and Sinfulneſs of this appears, from the Apoſtle's calling them *uncertain Riches;* uncertain in their Abode and Continuance with us; uncertain in their Promiſes and Pretences to us; we expect more from them, than ever we find in them.

Q. *But what is the poſitive Part of his Charge to rich Men?*

A. It is, to truſt in God, who giveth Riches; they buy, they do not give; he giveth *all Things;* all the Wealth in the World cannot buy a Mouthful of Air, or a Ray of Light; if God with-holds it. God is the Giver of all, he giveth richly all Things; the moſt Miſerable cannot number the rich Mercies which he receives; and he gives all *Things richly to enjoy;* that is, he gives an Heart to take and taſte the Comfort of what he gives, he gives not only Poſſeſſion but Fruition; Riches can do none of theſe Things: Why then ſhould we truſt in *uncertain Riches,* and not in the *living God?*

Q. *What other Admonitions does he give to rich Men?*

A. Another Duty exhorted to, is, to imitate God in the Works of Bounty, *to do Good;* rich Men are to make their Wealth the Materials of good Works; nay, they muſt not only do good Works, but be *rich in good Works;* as their Eſtate is plentiful, ſo muſt their Charity be proportionable; they muſt do it copiouſly; *be rich in good Works;* they muſt do it chearfully, *ready to diſtribute,* without Grudging, and without Delay; they muſt do it diffuſively; *willing to communicate;* that is, to do as much Good to the Community as poſſibly they they can, upon Principles of Humanity, and upon Principles of *Chriſtianity* alſo.

Q. *What Motives does he propoſe, to encourage them in the chearful Performance of this Duty?*

A. The Encouragements to this Duty are, 1. That thus to lay out our Wealth, is *to lay it up,* and that as in a Treaſury; 'tis like ſcattering of Seed in order to an Increaſe and Harveſt. 2. Thus to lay out upon others, is to lay up *for themſelves;* they have the Comfort here, and the Reward hereafter. 3. It is to lay up for themſelves a Foundation; not by Way of Merit towards God, but by Way of Evidence in regard of ourſelves; a Teſtimony of our Reconciliation to, and Acceptance with God. 4. It is a good Foundation *for Time to come;* all our Glory, Wealth, and Subſtance, is no durable Foundation, being *here to-day, and gone to-morrow;* but good Works are a Bank in Heaven; all is depoſited in a ſafe Hand, that we lay out for God. 5. It ſhall be rewarded with Eternal Life, *laying up for themſelves a good Foundation for the Time to come, that they may lay hold upon Eternal Life.*

From the Whole learn, that the Wiſdom of God has thought fit to make great Dictinction between Men in this World, ſome are Poor, others Rich, as God ſees beſt for both.

Q. *Since we are to ſet ſo ſmall a Value upon the Riches of this World, what does he propoſe beſides as a better Choice?*

A. Some are Rich who are not rich in this World; Rich in Faith, Heirs of a Kingdom, yet wandring in Deſarts, Dens and Caves

There are many who are only *Rich in this World:* Look beyond the Grave, and they are poor Men, Miſerable, having great Poſſeſſions in this World, but no Proviſions for the next.

Hence we are taught, that the great Deſign which all Men, eſpecially rich Men, ſhould purſue in this Life, is, how they may ſecure Eternal Life in the World to come.

Q. *But how ſhould we lay hold on Eternal Life?*

A. This we muſt do, 1. In our Judgments, by having them convinced of the tranſcendent Excellency of it, and by having them approve of the ſtricteſt Condition upon which it is tendered. 2. In our Affections, by ſtrong and vehement Deſires after Eternal Life. 3. In our Endeavours, by a diligent Uſe of all Means in order to the obtaining of it, and particularly by doing Good, by being *rich in good Works*, by being *ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate*; for hereby ſhall we lay up for ourſelves *a good Foundation for the Time to come*, and at length *lay hold of Eternal Life.*

Q. *How does the Apoſtle cloſe this Epiſtle?*

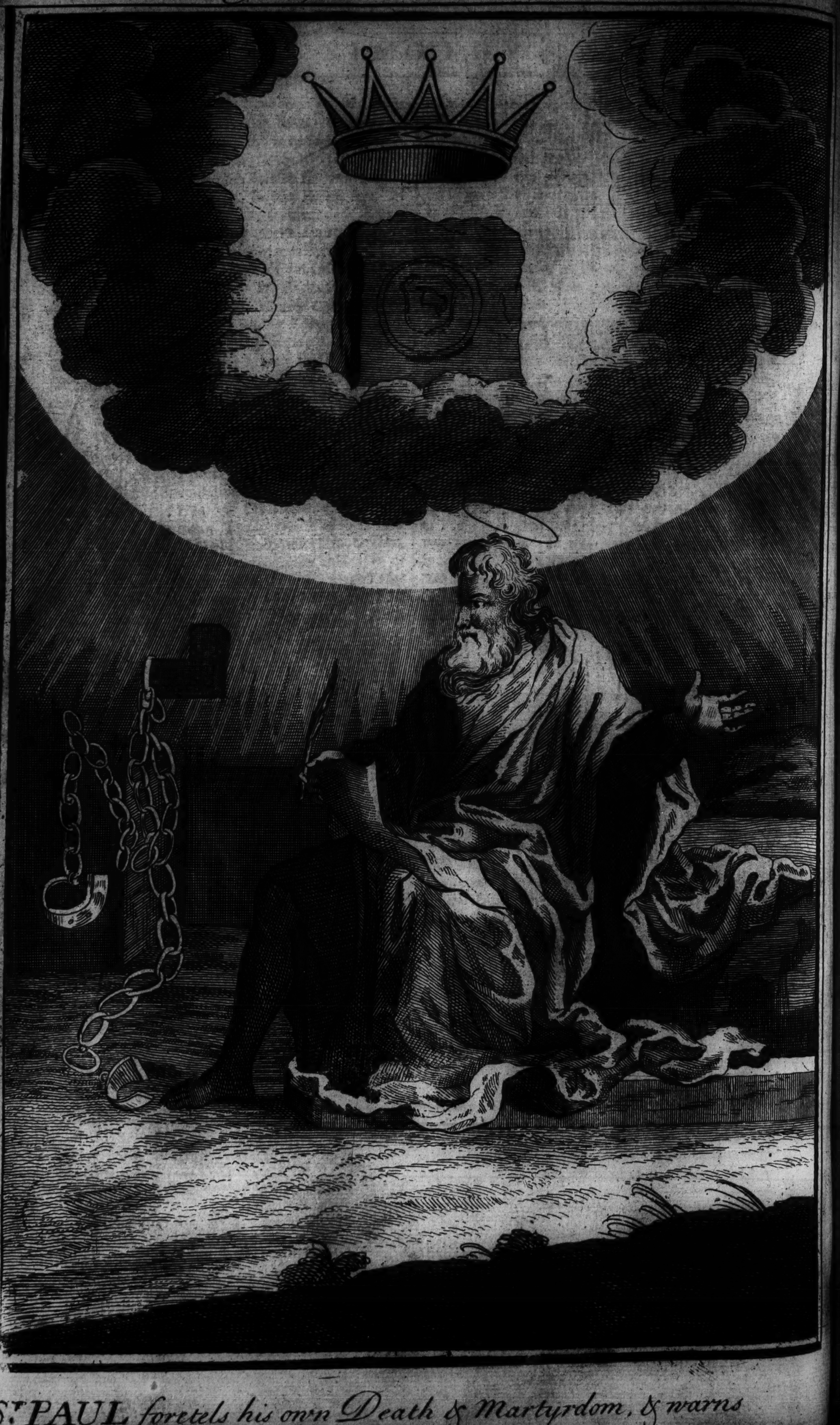
A. With a pathetick Exhortation to *Timothy*, that he would maintain the Purity of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and preach that to his Hearers, avoiding all idle Speculations and philoſophical Niceties, which the *Heathen* Philoſophers admired; deſpiſing, in the mean Time, the Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Goſpel; and tells him farther, that ſome *Chriſtians* being taken with this Sort of Learning, have corrupted *Chriſtianity*, turned *Hereticks*, erring concerning the Faith; to prevent which, he begs for *Timothy* the Grace of God to preſerve, ſanctify, and ſave him.

Hence learn, that the Miniſters of *Chriſt* ought to preach the Goſpel unmixed with philoſophical Niceties, Quibbles about Words, and barren Notions, and to deliver it in the Purity and Plainneſs of it; that the People may receive it with a Simplicity of Mind, to be guided and directed by it.

Q. *What is the proper Signification of the Word* Foundation *in the 17th Verſe?*

A. The *Greek* Word for *Foundation* here ſeems to have a peculiar Signification (different from that other of *Foundation* ſo ordinary in other Places) and coming from a Word which ſignifies *to lay up*, may intimate no more than a *Treaſure*, ſomewhat *laid up*; and ſo both *laying up*, going before, and *for the future*, or *Time to come*, following it, would incline us to render it. So *Tobit* iv. 9. in the ſame Matter of Alms-giving, *For thou layeſt up for thy ſelf a good Treaſure, a good Laying up againſt the Day of Neceſſity.* But further, it is the Obſervation of that learned Critick *Samuel Petit*, that the *Greek* Word tranſlated *Foundation*, may ſignify in the ſame Latitude, as the *Hebrew* Word, which is anſwerable to it, does; that is, not only a *Foundation*, but as the *Rabbins* uſe the Word, *a Bill of Contract, a Bond*, or *Obligation*, which he receives who lends out any Thing, upon which he is aſſured of having it return'd again. For this Reaſon perhaps it is, that the *Hebrew* Word, which is render'd *Foundation*, is alſo render'd *Compact*, *Iſa.* xxx. 1. And then it will have this Weight here, that the Alms-giver, by his Liberality, receives and lays up an Obligation for God, that this Mercy of his ſhall be rewarded. And to this Notion of the Word, that of *Prov.* xix. 7. is very agreeable, *He that hath Pity on the Poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given he will pay him again.* In this Senſe, ſays he, this Word is again found, 2 *Tim.* ii. 19. where God's *Foundation* is ſaid to *have a Seal affixed* to it, which ſeems to refer to a *Bill or Bond*. And becauſe thoſe Seals had their Inſcriptions on both Sides, agreeing to the Conditions of the two Perſons contracting, accordingly it is there added, firſt on God's Part, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*; that is, God will be faithful and conſtant in owning thoſe that are his Servants. Then, Secondly, on Man's Part, *Let every one that nameth the Name of* Chriſt *depart from Iniquity.* So that God's *Foundation* there, may very well ſignify his *Bill*, or *Bond* (and ſo here the Word may have the ſame Senſe) which being left with any Man as a Means to ſecure him, a *Pledge* or *Pawn*, may well be ſtiled *Foundation*, from the Thing delivered to him as his Security.

The II.d Epistle of St. PAUL to TIMOTHY.



St. PAUL foretels his own Death & Martyrdom, & warns TIMOTHY against Hereticks

The Second Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO

TIMOTHY.

THE Deſign of St. Paul *in this Epiſtle is twofold, 1. To forewarn, and thereby forearm his dear Son* Timothy *againſt thoſe Hereticks, Seducers, and falſe Teachers, who were then ariſing and creeping into the Church: And next, to excite him to the utmoſt Care and Diligence in the faithful Diſcharge of his Office, exhorting him to prepare for Sufferings and Perſecutions, from his own Example ſet before him.*

IN this Epiſtle are four general Parts; 1. The Inſcription, which is almoſt in all Particulars the ſame with that in the firſt Epiſtle to Timothy. *2. The Introduction, in which he teſtifies his Love to* Timothy, *his daily Remembrance of him, and his great Deſire to ſee him. 3. The Exhortation, namely, to ſtir up and improve that Grace, which, in relation to his Miniſtry,* Timothy *had received in his firſt Ordination, and to be faithful in the Diſcharge of his Miniſterial Function. 4. The Concluſion in which the Apoſtle gives him an Account of his Tryal before* Nero, *when, at his firſt anſwer, all Men forſook him, but that God ſtood by him, whoſe Goodneſs he declares, and conclude with his Bleſſing on* Timothy.

CHAP. I.

The uſual Salutation and Thankſgiving. Timothy's *godly Diſpoſition from his Infancy. He exhorts him to ſtir up his Gifts, and not to be afraid or aſhamed of the Goſpel, or to ſuffer for it. The Excellency of our Calling a Doctrine of which himſelf was a Preacher, and for which he ſuffer'd, and committed it to* Timothy *to be held faſt by him in Purity. All in Aſia had forſaken the Apoſtle except* Oneſiphorus, *for whom he prays.*

Q. HOW *does the Apoſtle begin this ſecond Epiſtle to* Timothy?

A. The Inſcription of this Epiſtle contain'd in the two firſt Verſes, is near the ſame with that of St. *Paul's* firſt Epiſtle to *Timothy*.

In the third Verſe the Apoſtle thanks God, that with pure Conſcience he had ſerved the God of his Fathers. But how could he ſay this, ſince before his Converſion, he was a Perſecutor, and the chiefeſt of Sinners? The Meaning is, that he worſhipp'd the ſame God, and the only true God whom his Forefathers worſhipp'd, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; and that he worſhipp'd him in Sincerity, according to his Conſcience, and the Meaſure of Light then received.

Hence learn, that the Church before *Chriſt* had the ſame Faith, the ſame Object of Faith, and worſhipp'd the ſame God under the Law, with us under the Goſpel, *I thank God, whom I ſerve from my Forefathers.*

That without ceaſing I have Remembrance of thee in my Prayers. Here we ſee that a Miniſter's Duty conſiſts much in Prayer one for another; they greatly ſtand in need of this mutual Help to ſtrengthen each other's Hands, and encourage one another's Hearts in the Ways of God, they ſhould therefore, without ceaſing, remember one another at the Throne of Grace.

Q. *What other Teſtimony does he give of his Love for* Timothy?

A. He greatly deſir'd to ſee him, and with the Sight of him to be filled with Joy.

The Apoſtle farther declares how mindful he was of *Timothy*'s Tears; perhaps a Flood of Tears were ſhed at their laſt parting. The beſt of Men, upon Occaſion, have ſhed Tears; ſo did *Jacob*, *Joſeph*, *David*, and *Chriſt* himſelf. True Goodneſs promotes Compaſſion; good Men have ever been Men of a tender and compaſſionate Diſpoſition.

Q. *What other Reaſon had St.* Paul *for ſo earneſtly deſiring to ſee his dear Son* Timothy?

A. The Remembrance of his Faith, as well as of his Tears; which Faith is deſcrib'd by the Quality of it, *unfeigned*; by the Effect of it, it *dwelt*; by the Subjects wherein, in *Lois*, *Eunice*, and *Timothy*; by the Order in which, firſt in his Grandmother *Lois*, next in his Mother *Eunice*; and laſtly, in the Child *Timothy*. How happy and deſirable is it, when there is a Succeſſion of Believers in a Family, and to ſee Faith tranſmitted down to Poſterity, when Grandmother, Mother, and Grandchild, all walk in the Truth.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in the Apoſtle's affectionate Regard to* Timothy?

A. Obſerve next St. *Paul*'s Care to put *Timothy* in mind of his Duty, though he very well knew it before; *wherefore I put thee in Remembrance.* The Duty he puts him in mind of, is, *to ſtir up the Gift of God which was in him, by putting on of the Apoſtle's Hands.* The Gift he adviſes him to ſtir up, is the Holy Ghoſt, in its miniſterial and ſanctifying Graces, particularly, a divine Power which diſpos'd him to teach and live, to act and do, anſwerable to the Duties incumbent upon him as a Miniſter of *Jeſus Chriſt*. The Metaphor, to ſtir up, is taken from Fire, which if not ſtirred up grows dead, and gives little Heat: They that have receiv'd much Grace, and many Gifts from the Holy Spirit, may yet be wanting to themſelves in ſtirring them up.

This ſtirring up the Gift of God which was in *Timothy*, reſpects either the Means that are to be us'd in order to the Duty, ſuch are Prayer, Reading, and Meditation; or the Duty itſelf, which conſiſts in feeding the Flock of God, in reforming Abuſes in the Church, and enduring Hardſhips as a good Soldier of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *In what Manner did* Timothy *receive this Gift?*

A. This Gift was beſtow'd upon *Timothy*, by putting on of the Apoſtle's Hands, together with the Hands of the Preſbytery, 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. The Authority and Power was given by the Apoſtle, the Preſbytery, concurring as his Aſſiſtants. St. *Paul* did not lay on Hands without the Preſbytery, much leſs did the Preſbytery lay on Hands without the Apoſtle, but he and they in Conjunction.

Q. *What other Admonitions does he give* Timothy?

A. The Apoſtle goes on encouraging *Timothy* to Reſolution and Courage in the Execution of his Office, and addreſſes him in this Manner; Be not diſcouraged by Perſecution, for he hath not given us his Meſſengers, the Spirit of Fear, but of Courage and Fortitude; alſo the *Spirit of Love*, Love to God, and the Souls of Men, which will make the Miniſters of God indefatigable in their Endeavours for the good of Souls. Likewiſe the Spirit of a ſound Mind, which enables God's Miniſters to correct their Paſſions, inordinate Luſts, Deſires, and Perturbations of Mind; an admirable Spirit; to know when to be angry and ſevere, and when to be mild and gentle.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's next Point of Inſtruction?*

A. Having thus fortified *Timothy* againſt Fear, he next fortifies him againſt Shame; *Be not aſhamed of the Teſtimony of our Lord*; that is of giving Teſtimony to the Goſpel of our Lord, whether by Preaching of it, or Suffering for it: Nor be aſhamed *of me his Priſoner*, for I do not ſuffer as a Malefactor; nay, be thou a chearful Partaker of the ſame Sufferings as myſelf, according to the Power of God; that is, being ſtrengthen'd by the mighty Power of God.

To fortify thee, *Timothy*, againſt the Fear of thoſe Perſecutions, and to arm thee againſt the Shame of thoſe Reproaches, which will probably attend thee in the Work of the Goſpel, conſider that the God whom thou ſerveſt in this Employment, is he that *hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy Calling.* Call'd us firſt to *Chriſtianity*, and then to his holy Function of the Miniſtry; but to neither of them according to the Merit of our Works. As if we had done any thing not to deſerve either of theſe Favours at his Hands, but *according to his own Purpoſe and Grace, given us in* Chriſt *before the World began*; that is, which from all Eternity he decreed and determin'd to accompliſh by *Jeſus Chriſt*, which gracious Purpoſe of his is now moſt evidently diſcover'd by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*'s Coming into the World, *who hath aboliſhed Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light*; that is, made a fuller and clearer Diſcovery of it by the Goſpel, to preach which Goſpel I am a commiſſion'd Apoſtle, and for this I ſuffer, and God help you, when thereunto call'd to ſuffer with me.

Q. *In what Senſe has* Chriſt brought Life and Immortality to Life?

A. That is, Immortal Life is more clearly manifeſt and diſcover'd. Here note, that the Son of Man is Immortal, and there is an Immortal State which remains for Men after this Life; otherwiſe the Juſtice of God's Providence could not be ſufficiently vindicated, but upon the Suppoſal of a future State of Immortality it may. It is eaſy to him that believes the Certainty of another World, to account for the unequal Providence of God in this; as Good and Evil are at preſent different in their Natures, ſo ſhall they be in their Rewards.

Q. *In the 12th Verſe, the Apoſtle ſays,* For which Cauſe; *for what Cauſe?*

A. That is, for the Sake of the Goſpel, I patiently ſuffer all afflictive Evils, without Fear or Shame, well knowing in whom I repoſe my Faith and Hope, my Truſt and Confidence; and firmly believing that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, my temporal, yea, my eternal Life, the Life of my Soul, my Reward in Heaven.

Q. *In the 13th Verſe, he exhorts him to* hold faſt the Form of ſound Words: *What does he mean by this Expreſſion?*

A. By *a form of ſound Words* underſtand the Truths and Doctrine of the Goſpel methodically diſpos'd and digeſted; to *hold it faſt* is, not to ſwerve from it in the Courſe of our Miniſtry, but pertinaciouſly adhere to it, not parting with it our ſelves, nor ſuffering it to be corrupted and adulterated by others.

This Form of ſound Words ſome take to be the Articles of our Creed, in the Words wherein we have them, probably the ſame in Senſe, if not in Words. This is called *That good Thing which was committed to* Timothy *to keep*; meaning that Summary of *Chriſtian* Doctrine which was committed o his care and keeping.

Q. *When the Apoſtle ſays, Ver.* 15. *that* all in *Aſia* had turned away from him, *does he mean that every individual Perſon had left him?*

A. By *All* we are to underſtand very many, almoſt all, not every individual Perſon: Some think they were Teachers in *Aſia*; others that they were private *Chriſtians*; ſome that they were his Companions and Followers, who, when they ſaw him impriſon'd, deſerted him, particularly *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes*,

Yet note, that though he accuſes them of forſaking him, yet he does not tax them with Apoſtaſy from *Chriſt*; it is too harſh to ſay, that thoſe who forſake a particular Ruler or the Church, forſake *Chriſt* himſelf.

But though St. *Paul* complain'd that many forſook him in *Aſia*, yet he gratefully commemorates the Kindneſs of *Oneſiphorus* towards him, who refreſhed him with his Preſence and Relief, and was not *aſhamed of his Chain*, of his Impriſonment, as others were.

It's no new Thing for the moſt innocent Servants of *Chriſt* to ſuffer Hardſhip, Impriſonment, Baniſhment, yea, even Death itſelf for the Sake of *Chriſt*; and when they do ſo, to have Friends forſake and turn their Backs upon them. Proſperity affords many Friends, more Flatterers; but who regards the Priſoner in Bonds? Who cares for looking on the Dial when the Sun is off?

We ſhould not therefore be aſham'd of the Saints in the Day of their Suffering, but own them, and adminiſter to them in ſuch a Condition, this is a certain Sign of a ſound and ſincere *Chriſtian*. Good *Oneſiphorus* had this, amongſt other Evidences of his gracious State, that he was not aſham'd to own a perſecuted *Paul* in Chains. Nay, ſo far was he from hiding his Eyes from him, that he ſearch'd him out with Diligence.

For which great Kindneſs and Civility, St. *Paul* earneſtly begs *the Lord would give Mercy to the Houſe of Oneſiphorus*. Thus do Acts of *Chriſtian* Charity to the ſuffering Servants of *Chriſt*, receive a conſiderable Part of their Reward even here, in the hearty and affectionate Prayers of the People of God on their Behalf. How well did it fare with *Oneſiphorus* and his Houſhold, upon the Score of St. *Paul*'s Prayers!

The merciful *Chriſtian*, who has here ſhewn Mercy to the Miniſters and Members of *Jeſus Chriſt*, may expect and ſhall find Mercy in that Day when he ſtands in need of it; *the Lord grant that he may find Mercy of the Lord in that Day.*

CHAP. II.

He exhorts Timothy *to Conſtancy and Perſeverance; propoſes to him his own Example, and the certain Recompence of Suffering; exhorts him rightly to divide the Word of God, and oppoſe Strife of Words, and the Doctrines of Apoſtates: Though ſome fall away, yet the Election ſtands; and this is ratified by our Sanctification. Exhorts him to flee youthful Luſts, and fooliſh Queſtions, and to endeavour after divers* Chriſtian *and Paſtoral Virtues.*

Q. WHAT *Kind of Admonitions does the Apoſtle here give* Timothy?

A. St. *Paul* having acquainted *Timothy* with the hard Things he had ſuffered for the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, and withal informed him how many had flinched for fear of Suffering; forſaking him, and the Cauſe of God defended by him, comes in this Chapter to exhort *Timothy* to Courage and holy Reſolution for *Chriſt*; *Thou therefore, my Son, be ſtrong in the Grace that is in* Chriſt Jeſus; that is, when others ſhew Puſillanimity and Cowardice, do thou ſhew thyſelf a ſtrong and valiant Man, not being frighted at the Dangers that threaten thee in publiſhing and defending the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which contains a Diſcovery of the Riches of his Grace; or, be ſtrong through the Influences of the Grace of *Chriſt*.

As all *Chriſtians* in general, ſo the Miniſters of *Chriſt* in particular, need Strength and Courage: *Thou, my Son, be ſtrong*; nothing he does, but it is an Act of Valour; all Duties are attended with Difficulties, which put the *Chriſtian* upon diſputing every Inch of his Way; there are only a few gallant Spirits that take Heaven by Storm; and the Miniſters of *Chriſt* meet with more Difficulties than other Men.

Our Strength, both as *Chriſtians* and Miniſters, lies in *Chriſt*, and not in ourſelves; *Be ſtrong in the Grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus*; the Strength of every Saint, yea, of the whole Hoſt of Saints, lies in the Lord of Hoſts.

Q. *What is the next Duty exhorted to?*

A. A Second Charge given to *Timothy*, is, to take ſpecial Care that the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and the Precepts of holy living, which he had heard St. *Paul* deliver in the Preſence of many Witneſſes, ſhould be handed down and tranſmitted to Men of great Fidelity and Ability, whom he was to ordain and impower to teach it unto others.

Here the Guides and Governors of the Church are inſtructed how to manage themſelves in the Ordination of the miniſterial Office; this Office is to be committed to *faithful able Men*; many may be uſeful in the Church that cannot be excellent; but he that is unfaithful, is only fit to make Atheiſts.

Q. *What other Points does he inſtruct him in?*

A. The Apoſtle ſtill urges *Timothy* to a faithful Diſcharge of his Office, as a Miniſter of the Goſpel, particularly to prepare for Sufferings, to inure himſelf to Hardſhips, and to encounter Difficulties and Dangers: Hence he compares him to a Soldier, to a Wreſtler, and an Husbandman.

Endure Hardneſs as a good Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt. Every faithful Miniſter is a ſpiritual Soldier warring under *Jeſus Chriſt*, his Captain and chief Commander. Muſt the Soldier be armed, trained up, diſciplin'd, and made fit for Service? Muſt he ſhun no Danger, ſtick at no Difficulties? Muſt he uſe allowed Weapons, Armour of his General's directing, not of his own inventing? All this muſt the Miniſter be and do. In a Word, muſt not the Soldier *entangle himſelf with the Affairs of this Life?* Such a Life of Freedom from Incumbrance by ſecular Affairs ſhould the Miniſters of God deſire and endeavour after.

Q. *Explain the 5th Verſe,* If a Man ſtrive for Maſteries, yet is not crowned, except he ſtrive lawfully.

A. That is, for the Prize, the Garland the Crown at the end of the Race; he ſhall be crowned, if he ſtrives lawfully, if he runs fairly accordingly to the Rules of the Game, and perſeveres finally till he comes to the End of the Goal. Thus muſt the Miniſters of the Goſpel ſtrive for the Crown of Life, by putting forth all their Strength, and e're long they ſhall be Conquerors.

Q. *Why is* Timothy *compared to a Husbandman?*

A. As the Husbandman muſt firſt labour and toil before he can partake of the Fruits of the Earth, ſo muſt the Miniſter of God by a laborious diligence, cultivate and improve his People, before he can hope to reap Souls for *Chriſt*. God will reward no Miniſter but the laborious, he will never dignify Drones in the Church triumphant.

Thus having laid *Timothy*'s Duty before him under the Metaphor of a Soldier, a Wreſtler, and a Husbandman; he counſels him to conſider what he had ſaid to him, and deſires of God to give him a right Underſtanding and ſound Judgment in all Things.

Q. *What Directions does he give him about his Preaching?*

A. Our Apoſtle comes next to direct *Timothy* as to the Matter and Subject of his Preaching, particularly that he inſiſt upon the Incarnation and Reſurrection of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt. Remember that Jeſus Chriſt* was the promiſed *Meſſias, of the Seed of* David, not of *Joſeph.*

Timothy is here admoniſh'd to aſſert the Incarnation of *Chriſt*, there being ſome Hereticks who very early denied the Truth of his human Nature, as the *Marcionites* and *Manichees*, as there were others that denied the Reality of his divine Nature, particularly *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*.

He alſo calls upon *Timothy* to preach and preſs the Doctrine of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, both becauſe upon that depended the great Evidence of his Divinity; and alſo becauſe upon that depends the Conſolation and Salvation of all Believers.

It follows, *wherein I ſuffer Trouble as an Evildoer, even unto Bonds, but the Word of God is not bound*; that is, for which Goſpel, and for preaching which Reſurrection, I ſuffer as a Criminal, and reputed Malefactor; yea, I am bound in Chains for preaching *Jeſus Chriſt* and the Reſurrection, *but the Word of God is not bound*; though they have reſtrained me, they cannot reſtrain that; that will ſtill have a free Courſe.

Q. *What was the Cauſe, and for whoſe Sake did the Apoſtle ſuffer ſo chearfully.*

A. It was *for the Elect's Sake.* Though the reſt of the World rejected the Goſpel, yet the Elect would be confirmed by his Example, and would obtain that Salvation which in and through *Jeſus Chriſt* was offer'd and tender'd to them.

Q. *What Encouragements does the Apoſtle give him to ſuffer chearfully?*

A. He aſſures *Timothy*, that if we be render'd conformable to *Chriſt* in his Sufferings, we ſhall be alſo in his Glory; *If we ſuffer for him, we ſhall reign with him; if we be dead with him,* dead to Sin and to the World, *we ſhall alſo live with him,* in Conformity to his Reſurrection: But if for Fear of Sufferings we diſown him, he will alſo deny us; *if we believe not*, if we be unfaithful and forſake him, yet he will be true to his Word; he will not forſake his own Cauſe, but make good his Threatnings, his own Veracity ſtands firm, and is as much engaged to execute the Threatnings, as to fulfil the Promiſe.

Q. *What other Inſtructions does he give* Timothy?

A. The Apoſtle farther adviſes *Timothy*, and all the Miniſters of the Church, that they ſpend not their Time in Diſputes, contend not about Words, which have no Tendency to make Men either wiſer or better, but ſerve only to violate the Laws of Charity, and cauſe Men to wrangle eternally, and perſecute one another with hard Names and Characters of Reproach.

The Apoſtle's Argument, why we ſhould not contend about theſe Things, is, becauſe they tend to beget Strife and Contention among *Chriſtians*, by dividing them into Factions and Parties, and alſo tend to the Subverſion of Hearers, cauſing them to doubt of the Truth of the Faith, about which the contending Parties cannot agree; *charge them therefore that they ſtrive not about Words to no Profit, but to the ſubverting of the Hearers.*

Q. *Does he give any Charge to* Timothy *with Reſpect to the Matter, Manner, and Method of his Preaching?*

A. He charges him, that the Matter of it be *the Word of Truth*, the pure Word of God; that it be *divided rightly*, to every one his Portion, methodizing and diſtributing Truth as God would have it, Terror to whom Terror, Comfort to whom Comfort belongs.

The original Word render'd *rightly to divide*, ſome think a ſacrificial Word, alluding to the right dividing of the Sacrifice which was laid upon the Altar, ſeparating the precious from the vile, and ſevering the Parts which were not to be ſacrificed in ſuch manner as all had their Share in them. As if St. *Paul* had ſaid, ſtudy not for the Applauſe of Men, but for the Approbation of God, as becomes a good Workman, who needs not be aſhamed of his Work, whoever looks upon it; but let thy Preaching and Living be conformable to the Goſpel, and thus ſtudy to approve thyſelf to God.

Q. *But what are thoſe Things he would have* Timothy *ſhun and avoid?*

A. Firſt he bids him *ſhun profane and vain Bablings*; the vain Bablings of the Heathen Philoſophers, and the profane Notions of heretical and ſeducing Teachers, particularly the *Gnoſticks*, the Followers of *Simon Magus* and *Menander*, who were Apoſtates from *Chriſtianity*, by turning the Reſurrection into an Allegory; affirming that the Reſurrection of the Soul to Piety and Virtue, was the only Reſurrection to be expected, diſowning the Reſurrection of the Body, and aſſerting the Fleſh was unfit to riſe.

Q. *What is the Nature of thoſe erroneous Doctrines and Hereſies he adviſes* Timothy *to beware of?*

A. *Their Words will eat as doth a Canker*, that is, ſpeedily, incurably, mortally. But what is that which Hereſies eat, but Faith, Peace and Godlineſs.

Q. *But to what Cauſe may be imputed the great Prevalence of Hereſy?*

A. The ſpreading and prevailing of Hereſies may be aſcribed partly to the Subtilty and Activity of Seducers, partly to the Curioſity and Simplicity of the Seduced, and partly to the Juſtice of God, for the Manifeſtation of thoſe that are ſincere, and the Puniſhment of thoſe that received not the Truth in the Love of it.

Q. *But is it not poſſible for the Elect to fall from Grace?*

A. Altho', ſays he, *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, with others, are fallen away, nevertheleſs we know that the Foundation of God, his holy Covenant, ſtands firm and ſure, having a Seal annexed to it, (as uſually Contracts have, whereby two Parties oblige themſelves to each other) which Seal on God's Part has this Impreſs or Inſcription, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*; and on our Part is written, *Let every one that nameth the Name of* Chriſt *depart from Iniquity*.

Q. *But why did God ſuffer ſuch Hereticks as* Hymeneus *and* Philetus *to be in his Church?*

A. Becauſe the viſible Church is God's great Houſe. Now it is no uncommon Thing in great Mens Houſes, to have Veſſels of all ſorts, ſome of Wood and Earth, others of Gold and Silver, ſome to honourable Uſes, and others to diſhonourable. In like manner it is in the Church of *Chriſt*, there will be a Number both of Orthodox and Heterodox *Chriſtians*. He therefore adviſes *Timothy* not to be ſcandaliz'd at them, but to purge himſelf from them, to keep himſelf pure from Hereſy and Impiety, whereby he would manifeſt himſelf to be a Veſſel unto Honour, *ſanctified and meet for the Maſter's Uſe*; that is, for the Service and Glory of God, and diſpoſed for every good Work.

Q. *What other Directions does he give* Timothy *reſpecting his Behaviour?*

A. He next directs him to *flee youthful Luſts*; by which may be underſtood not only the Luſts of the Fleſh, but alſo the Luſts and Vices of the Mind, as Ambition and Pride, Vain-Glory and Oſtentation. The Fleſh, with its Affections and Luſts, are ſuch dangerous Enemies to our Holineſs and Salvation, that the holieſt Miniſters and beſt Men ſtand in need to be warned of them, and cautioned againſt them.

He alſo adviſes *Timothy* to avoid *fooliſh and unlearned Queſtions*; that is, Controverſies and Diſputes, knowing that ſuch contentious Wranglings do but engender Strife. It is not unworthy Obſervation, that no leſs than four Times, in theſe two Epiſtles, we meet with this Precept from the Apoſtle, to avoid theſe Queſtions and Diſputes, and to apply himſelf to that which is practical.

Next he directs *Timothy* what to follow, namely, Righteouſneſs and Faith, Peace and Charity with all Perſons, eſpecially with the Brethren and Fellow *Chriſtians*, calling on the ſame Lord, and profeſſing the ſame Faith with us.

Q. *What does he mean by* the Servant of the Lord, *v.* 24?

A. Underſtand all Biſhops and Governors, the Paſtors and Teachers, of the Church; by *not ſtriving*, that they are not to irritate and provoke ſuch as diſſent and differ from them; not to ſtrive indecently with the Tongue, but by ſoft and gentle Words, by cloſe and ſtrong Arguments, endeavour to convince their Judgments; for no Man that is in an Error thinks he is ſo; therefore, if we attempt by Violence to rend Mens Opinions from them, they will but hold them ſo much the faſter; but if we have but ſo much Patience and Charity as to unrip their Errors by Degrees, they will at laſt fall to pieces of themſelves.

It follows, *In Meekneſs inſtructing, if God peradventure*; where note, that a Miniſter muſt inſtruct the Erroneous, even when they oppoſe the Truth, with great Lenity and Meekneſs, and without Bitterneſs and Paſſion; eſpecially ſuch as do it out of Ignorance, and for want of better Information, are particularly to be pitied, and patiently borne with, together with thoſe who labour under the Prejudice and Prepoſſeſſion of a contrary Education.

Q. *But what Benefit may be expected from ſuch meek and gentle Methods?*

A. Theſe are, 1. That Almighty God may peradventure given them Repentance, bleſſing ſuch prudential and pious Means for their Converſion from Error and Seduction; and, 2. That they may be recover'd out of Satan's Snares and Temptation, they being at preſent captivated by him according to his Will.

CHAP. III.

The Apoſtates of the laſt Times foretold and deſcribed. Their Folly illuſtrated. He propounds his own Example for Doctrine and Sufferings; which all the Godly are to expect. The Perfection, Divinity, and manifold Uſefulneſs of the Scriptures.

Q. WHAT *new Topics of Inſtruction does he treat of in this Chapter?*

A. This Chapter begins with a prophetical Prediction of the great Evils that were to happen towards the End of the World.

In the firſt Verſe the Apoſtle addreſſes his Son *Timothy* after this manner, Be not thou diſcouraged, neither let them be any Ways diſcouraged, neither let any of thy Succeſſors be diſmay'd at the Sects and Schiſms, the Hereſies and Blaſphemies, the Vice and Impiety which will be found in the laſt Days, when, be aſſured, *perillous Times ſhall come*; where, by the *laſt Days*, underſtand all the Times from *Chriſt's* firſt Coming in the Fleſh to his ſecond coming to Judgment; in the Beginning of which Times ſeveral Sorts of Perſons, yea, ſeveral Sects and Parties aroſe, to whom the following Characters belong'd; namely, proud, covetous, Boaſters, and the like; Judaizing Teachers, who urged the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law; alſo the *Gnoſticks*, and Followers of *Simon Magus* have theſe Characters apply'd to them in thoſe early Days, and it were well if the Church of *Rome*, in theſe later Days, could clear herſelf of theſe Characters, which are found upon her, as the Marks and Badges of an apoſtate Church.

Q. *What other Evils are to prevail in the latter Days?*

A. The Apoſtle next reckons up the ſeveral Sins which would abound in theſe laſt Days, and make the Times perillous; Perſons profeſſing *Chriſtianity* ſhall appear inordinate Self-lovers, inſatiably covetous, vain-glorious Boaſters, proud, Deſpiſers of others, Blaſphemers of God and *Chriſt*, and the Holy Spirit, by denying the

Preſcience and Foreknowledge of the Former, the Divinity and Godhead of the Latter.

The laſt, but not the leaſt Sin of theſe perilous Times, is, that theſe Men *have a Form of Godlineſs*; that is, a vain, empty Shew of Piety and Religion, which diſcovers itſelf in external Devotion, in a Profeſſion of the *Chriſtian* Faith, in an external ſhew of Mortification, in a great Zeal for ſome particular Party, or private Opinion.

Q. *Does he give any other Marks of theſe Men?*

A. Another Characteriſtick of theſe Men is, that they want the Power of Godlineſs; that is, the Truth and Sincerity of it, conſiſting in true Love to God and our Neighbour; from all ſuch we are directed to turn away; and to hold no Correſpondence with ſuch as are the avow'd Enemies of *Chriſt* and his Kingdom.

Q. *What Reaſon does he aſſign, why he ſhould avoid the forementioned Sins and Sinners?*

A. Becauſe theſe heretical Teachers are of an inſinuating Temper; they vent not their Errors openly, but in Corners; they creep into Houſes, and there ſet upon Women with their Temptations, who have leſs Ability to detect them; and firſt upon Women, that they may better win their Huſbands over to Compliance with them, and upon filly Women, and ſuch as were laden with Sin, and led away with divers Luſts; they make a Prey of ſuch Women as are weak in their Intellectuals, and corrupt and wicked in their Morals; which Women always pretend to be *learning, but never able to come the Knowledge of the Truth*, and conſequently are an eaſy Prey to Seducers, and very capable and receptive Objects for ſuch Deceivers to draw away. Hence that Sex, ſtil'd the Weaker, ought to be very cautious how they converſe and diſpute with Hereticks and Deceivers.

Q. *Who were* Jannes *and* Jambres?

A. Theſe were two famous Magicians in *Egypt*, who withſtood *Moſes* when he was working Miracles before *Pharaoh*, to hinder him from believing; their Names are not mentioned elſewhere in Scripture, but taken by St. *Paul* either from publick Tradition, or from ſome antient *Jewiſh* Records. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, as the Magicians reſiſted *Moſes*, ſo theſe heretical Seducers reſiſt the Truth.

Q. *What is the Character of thoſe who reſiſt the Truth?*

A. They are *Men of corrupt Minds, and Reprobate concerning the Faith*; they have loſt all ſound Judgment, and made Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conſcience. A corrupt Head, a deprav'd Heart, and a vicious Life, uſually attend one another; looſe Principles diſpoſe men to looſe and licentious Practices; ſuch as are Latitudinarians in Opinion, are often ſo in Practice too. An Heretical Head, and an Upright Heart are incompatible; a good Conſcience, and a true Faith, like *Hyppocrates's* Twins, live and die together.

To encourage *Timothy*, and in him all the ſucceeding Miniſters of the Goſpel, againſt all the Diſcouragements which either he or they might meet with, from the Impoſtors and Seducers of the Times, the Apoſtle aſſures them, that God will put a Bar in their Way, *that they proceed no farther* in their hypocritical and juggling Practices; that God would make their Folly and Madneſs known to their own Confuſion, as was the Folly and Madneſs of *Jannes* and *Jambres*.

Q. *But what Means, or Method, does he propoſe to* Timothy, *and his Succeſſors, to ſecure themſelves from the Seduction of falſe Teachers?*

A. To ſet before themſelves the Example of the great Apoſtle St. *Paul*; we are more eaſily led by Precedents than by Precepts; *thou haſt fully known my Doctrine, my Manner of Life*, and Converſation, my Purpoſe to adhere to my Faith in *Chriſt*, my Long-ſuffering, and Patience in undergoing Perſecution for him at *Antioch*, at *Iconium*, at *Lyſtra*, and how God was graciouſly pleaſed to deliver me out of all.

The Apoſtle argues from his own Perſecutions in particular, to thoſe of the Godly in general; *yea, and all that will live godly in* Chriſt Jeſus, *ſhall ſuffer Perſecution*; every one without Exception, the better the Men, the ſooner perſecuted; the Devil ſhoots his Arrow at the whiteſt and faireſt Mark.

Again; *all that will*; he does not ſay, all that wiſh well to Godlineſs, but all thoſe that are abſolutely reſolved ſo to do; he that will live religiouſly, muſt ſuffer Perſecution.

But evil Men wax worſe and worſe; their Proficiency is meer Apoſtaſy, they actively deceive others, and are paſſively deceived themſelves, by the Devil, that lying Spirit, that grand Impoſtor.

Hence learn, that the proſperous Eſtate of wicked Men, is much more dangerous and miſerable than the afflicted Condition of the Godly; the Good, by Perſecution, grow better, but the Wicked, by living eaſy, *wax worſe and worſe*.

Q. *What Arguments does the Apoſtle uſe, to preſs* Timothy *to the Duty of Perſeverance in the Doctrine of* Chriſt?

A. The firſt is drawn from the Perſon from whom he received that Doctrine; namely, St. *Paul* himſelf.

The ſecond Argument for *Timothy*'s adhering to the Doctrine of the Scriptures, is taken from his long Acquaintance with thoſe ſacred Records, even from his Childhood, *from a Child thou haſt known the Holy Scriptures*. And the Argument lies thus, Thou, O *Timothy*, haſt learnt the Scriptures from thy Infancy; now what a Shame would it be for thee, who haſt been ſo early taught the *Chriſtian* Religion, to turn from it and forſake it? From a Child thou haſt known the Holy Scriptures, from a Suckling, as the Word ſignifies.

Timothy's Example of early Inſtruction in the Holy Scriptures, deſerves Imitation; and Parents, from hence, ſhould learn, to inſtill the Principles of Religion into their Children in their tender Years.

Q. *Why does he call the Word of God the* Holy Scriptures, *Verſe* 15?

A. They are Holy in their Author, in their Matter, in their Penmen, and in their End and Deſign, which is to make us Holy. The Word of God is not only pure, but purifying.

Q. *What other Encomiums does he beſtow on the* Holy Scriptures?

A. Obſerve the high Commendation here given of the Word, *It is able to make thee Wiſe unto Salvation*; no Knowledge can bring us to Salvation without the Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; the Philoſophers will teach you moral Wiſdom, but not a Word of Salvation by a Redeemer, without whom our Salvation is impoſſible; therefore it is here added, *Wiſe unto Salvation, through Faith in our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *In what Manner does he recommend them to the diligent Study of* Timothy?

A. 1. From the Dignity and Authority of the Scriptures. 2. From their Utility. 3. From their Perfection.

1. From their Dignity and Authority, *they are given by Inſpiration of God*; that is, they are not the Contrivance of any Man's Wit or Fancy, but a Revelation of the Mind and Will of God; and thoſe that wrote them were excited to it, and aſſiſted in it by the Spirit of God. No Part of Scripture had either Angels or Men for its Author, but every Part of it is divinely inſpired, or breathed by God, both for Matter and Order, Stile and Words.

2. From the Utility and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures; they are *Profitable for Doctrine and Inſtruction*, teaching us what to know and believe in order to Salvation, concerning God and *Chriſt*, and ourſelves, *&c. for Reproof* of Error, and Confutation of falſe Doctrine; *for Correction* of Sin and evil Manners; *for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs*, directing us how to lead a righteous ſand holy Life, according to the Will of God.

3. From the Perfection of them, they are able to make *the Man of God perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works*; that is, to make the Miniſters of *Chriſt* compleat in Knowledge, Faith and Holineſs, every way fitted for their Work and Duty, as *Chriſtians*, and as Miniſters.

Q. *Does he here mean the Scriptures of the* Old, *or of the* New Teſtament?

A. The Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, and not of the *New*, muſt be here intended, they being the only Scriptures which *Timothy* had known known from a Child. Yet obſerve, the Apoſtle does not ſay that theſe Scriptures were, of themſelves, ſufficient to make *Timothy* Wiſe unto Salvation, but only that, with Faith in *Chriſt Jeſus*, they were ſufficient for that End; much more then muſt the Scriptures both of the *Old* and *New Teſtament* together, when accompanied with Faith in *Chriſt Jeſus*, be ſufficient for that End.

Here the Church of *Rome* diſtinguiſhes, and ſays, the Scriptures are ſufficient to Salvation, but not to Inſtruction; to whom one of the Martyrs reply'd, *If ſo, God ſend me the Salvation, and you the Inſtruction.* It is conceived by ſome, that this is the laſt Epiſtle St. *Paul* ever wrote; if ſo, this is the laſt Charge that ever he gave, and concerns us the more to attend the Solemnity of it.

Chap. IV.

He earneſtly exhorts Timothy *to conſider and diſcharge his Office in all its Parts. He foretels his own approaching Death; his Hope and Comfort therein. Hi wills him to come ſpeedily to him, and bring* Mark *with him, and certain other Things which he wrote for. Warns him of* Alexander *a* Copper-Smith; *and complains of ſome Brethren who had forſaken him; prays for them; as God then was, ſo he would be with him. Concludes with divers Salutations, and the Apoſtolical Benediction.*

Q. PRAY *what chiefly deſerves Remark in the Beginning of this Chapter?*

A. The Apoſtle's ſolemn Adjuration and Charge, *I charge thee before God, and our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *the Judge of Quick and Dead.* Lord! what Opiate can ſtupify the Conſcience of a Miniſter, that he ſhall not feel the awful Authority of ſuch a Charge, or not be awakened with ſuch ardent Expreſſions? How can they appear before the high and everlaſting Judge? What will be a ſufficient Defence before his enlighten'd Tribunal? If ſuch in the laſt Judgment, who neglected to feed the Poor with material Bread, ſhall be placed at *Chriſt*'s left Hand, how can thoſe whoſe Office it is to diſpenſe ſpiritual Bread, if they neglect to do it, eſcape Condemnation?

The ſubject Matter of the Charge is, to preach according to *Chriſt*'s Commiſſion, *Matt.* xxiii. 19. *Go, Preach and Baptize*; to preach the Word, not the Fancies and Inventions of Men, but the wholeſome Word of God, both Law and Goſpel; the one to keep Men from Preſumption, the other from Deſpair; to be inſtant and active, urgent and zealous in the Diſcharge of this Duty, in all the Parts of it, in Inſtruction, Reprehenſion, and Exhortation; and this with *all Long-ſuffering*, Patience and Lenity, meekly undergoing the Contradictions of Sinners, and the Reproaches of Men; and, for the Time, to do it *in Seaſon and out of Seaſon*; that is, to take all Occaſions, and be thankful to God for all Opportunities of preaching his Word. The Lazy may find a thouſand Excuſes, but willing Minds know no Difficulties; they conſider the Price paid for Souls, and the Account that muſt be given of them.

The Reaſon of our Apoſtle's ſolemn Adjuration before mentioned, is expreſſed in the 3d and 4th Verſes; namely, in regard of the Apoſtacy of the Times, in which many would grow weary of ſound Doctine, and follow Fables.

Q. *What do you think is the Grouud of this Apoſtacy?*

A. The Ground of this Apoſtacy is, Men's Hatred of the Truth, *they will not endure ſound Doctrine*; that is, they will reject and abhor it, they love their Luſts above God's Law, and will not endure to hear it.

A ſecond Ground of their Apoſtacy is, their Delight in falſe Teachers; *They heap up to themſelves* ſuch as will claw their itching Ears, and gratify their wanton Deſires, and not diſturb their Luſts.

Q. *What will be the Iſſue and Conſequence of this malicious Contempt of the Truth?*

A. *They ſhall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and be turned unto Fables*; that is, ſay ſome, to the fabulous Divinity of the *Gnoſticks*, made up of *Gentiliſm* and *Judaiſm*; the fabulous Traditions of the *Jewiſh* Doctors, ſay others.

Q. *The 5th Verſe contains Admonitions to* Timothy, *to exert himſelf in his miniſterial Office; which pray explain and illuſtrate?*

A. *Watch thou in all Things*; falſe Teachers will beſet thee round on every Side, therefore be every-where on thy Guard. *Endure Afflictions*; he that fears the Frowns of Men, can never faithfully diſcharge his Duty to God; *Do the Work of an Evangeliſt*, which was an extraordinary, and therefore but a temporary Office, to aſſiſt the Apoſtles in preaching and publiſhing the Goſpel from Place to Place; they watered what the Apoſtles planted; *Make full Proof of thy Miniſtry*; ſo fulfil all the Parts of it, that none may charge thee with the Neglect of any Part of thy Duty; let the World ſee that thou makeſt it thine own and only Work to win Souls.

Q. *What do you obſerve on the Apoſtle's foreſeeing and foretelling his Death?*

A. Our Apoſtle being now come almoſt to the End of his *Chriſtian* and miniſterial Race, he firſt looks down into his Grave with Comfort, Verſe 6. and ſees his Death a pleaſing Sacrifice to God, and a ſweet Departure to him, *I am ready to be offered, and the Time of my Departure is at Hand:* Next he looks backward, and reflects upon his well-ſpent Life with Joy, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed my Courſe.* Laſt of all he looks upward, and there ſees Heaven prepared for him, *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs.*

Here note St. *Paul's* intimation of his Death, *I am ready to be offered up*; a ſacrificial Word; I am ready to be poured out as a Drink-offering; my Death will be a ſweet Sacrifice to God, my Blood being ſhed for *Chriſt*, as the Wine was poured out on the Meat-offering. The Death of God's Miniſters, eſpecially of ſuch as die Martyrs, is a moſt pleaſing Sacrifice to God; precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of all his Saints, eſpecially of ſuch.

Q. *What Remarks does the Apoſtle's Review of his paſt Life afford us?*

A. *I have fought a good Fight, &c.* The Words are Figurative, and are taken from the *Olympick* Games, where was combating, wreſtling, and running, according to the Laws of the Games, and Judges appointed to declare the Victories, and to give the Prize, a Crown of Garlands.

The firſt Metaphor is taken from a Soldier, a Combatant, a Champion; *I have fought a good Fight.* Every ſincere *Chriſtian*, eſpecially every faithful Miniſter, is a ſpiritual Soldier; their Enemies are Spiritual, their Weapons, their Warfare, their Victory is Spiritual; they muſt be Men of Courage, Men of Conduct, that can endure Hardſhip, Men of Unity and Activity among themſelves.

The ſecond Metaphor it taken from a ſtrenuous Runner, *I have finiſhed my Courſe*; I am come to the Period of my Days, and to the End of my Race; alluding, perhaps, to his Courſe of Life after his Converſion, which was wholly ſpent in running from Place to Place to preach the Goſpel: And now he was come to the laſt Stage or Goal, at *Rome*, where he was to receive his Garland, his Crown of Martyrdom.

What a Comfort is it to be an old Soldier of *Jeſus Chriſt!* St. *Paul* is now reckoned to be Sixty-one years of Age, when he ſuffered Martyrdom; he runs his Race patiently, chearfully, reſervedly, and perſeveringly.

The third Metaphor is taken from Depoſitories which keep faithfully Things committed to their Truſt, without Embezzlement: This Depoſitum, the *Chriſtian* Faith, St. *Paul* had kept; *I have kept the Faith*; he kept firſt the Grace of Faith; and, ſecondly, the Doctrine of Faith inviolable, endeavouring to tranſmit it down to Poſterity, in deſpight of the Legal *Jew*, or the Prophane *Gentile.*

Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs; becauſe given only to righteous Men. The Reward which God reſerves for his faithful Servants, is no leſs than a Crown of Glory; this Reward ſhall be finally diſpenſed at the great Day; which Day the Godly earneſtly look for, love and long after.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle ſo earneſtly require* Timothy *to come to him?*

A. Becauſe *Demas*, and others, were abſent from him; Demas *had forſaken him, having loved this preſent World.* When the Love of the World grows inordinate, it will cauſe a Man firſt to forſake his Friend, and then his God.

Creſcens was gone to *Galatia*, *Titus* to *Dalmatia*, *Tychicus* to *Epheſus*; all of them, no doubt, to ſpread the Goſpel, to plant or water the Churches. Good Men will be doing Good where-ever they are. Only *Luke* was with him; nothing could ſeparate that good Man from him; a faithful Friend loves at all Times, true *Chriſtian* Friendſhip is perpetual, the Foundation of it eternal.

Laſtly, he deſires *Timothy* to bring *Mark* with him, not for Reſt or Recreation, becauſe he wanted a Companion for his Diverſion; but to aſſiſt him in his Work; *bring* Mark, *for he is profitable to me for the Miniſtry.*

Q. *What elſe does the Apoſtle deſire of* Timothy?

A. St. *Paul's* next Requeſt to *Timothy* is, that he would bring with him ſuch Things as he wanted; among other Things his Cloak; probably a Garment which in the Winter-ſeaſon, and in a cold Priſon, he might want to keep him warm.

Likewiſe his *Books*, probably the Books of the *Old Teſtament*; but eſpecially the Parchments, theſe are thought to be Note-books of his own collecting, in which he had written ſeveral Things for the Help of his Memory, and the Benefit of the Church.

Here is an eminent Pattern of Studiouſneſs; the aged, dying *Paul* cannot live without his Books; he muſt ſtill be reading, learning, ſtudying the Scriptures, which are ſuch a vaſt Depth, that the Life of an Apoſtle could not fathom; our Apoſtle was not too old to learn, though within a few Months of his Death.

Behold likewiſe an eminent Pattern of pious Humility in *Timothy*, if Biſhop of *Epheſus* now, as ſome affirm; if only Miniſter of a particular Church, as others ſay; yet doubtleſs, he was a very humble Perſon, or he would have diſdain'd to carry St. *Paul's* Luggage with him to *Rome*.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the injurious Treatment which St.* Paul *met with from ſome?*

A. Our Apoſtle next complains of the Injuries and Oppoſitions he had met with from *Alexander* the Copper-ſmith, who before was a great Profeſſor, now a grievous Perſecutor, he had made Shipwreck of his Faith, 1 *Tim.* i. 19. Nay, 'tis thought this Man, *Acts* xix. 33. was near Martyrdom, yet afterwards an Oppoſer of the Truth.

The Lord reward him according to his Works; the Lord will reward him; the Apoſtle foretels his Doom.

Of whom do thou beware alſo, for he is an Oppoſer of the Truth; it is the Light of Truth which Evil-doers hate, becauſe it has a ſearching, diſcovering, condemning Power.

He complains, that at his firſt appearing before *Nero*, or ſome of his Officers, he was deſerted by all: But this was out of Weakneſs and Timorouſneſs, not out of Malice, as *Alexander* had done; therefore St. *Paul* prays for them, that God would not lay it to their Charge, but pity and pardon their Infirmity.

But though Men forſook me; God ſtood by me; the Lord Jeſus ſtrengthen'd me; that by me, thus ſtanding ſor the Defence of the Goſpel; the preaching of it might be fully known, and that all the *Gentiles* might hear the Defence of it; and thus, for that Time, I was deliver'd out of *Nero's* Hands, that bloody Lion's Mouth. This is the Character of the Church's Enemies, they are Lions for Power, for Policy, for Terror, and for Cruelty; from theſe God ſometimes ſaves his People, and ſometimes ſuffers them to fall into their Paws, and their devouring Mouths.

And the Lord ſhall deliver me, though not from every evil Worker, yet from *every evil Work*; though he does not ſave me ſrom my temporal Enemies; bleſſed be God my ſpiritual Enemies ſhall never hurt me, neither Sin nor Satan.

He will preſerve me to his heavenly Kingdom. God has a Kingdom for all his Saints, his ſuffering Saints eſpecially; it is prepared for them, they are preparing for it, and ſhall be put in Poſſeſſion of it in due Time.

To whom be Glory for ever and ever. As God has prepared an eternal Kingdom for his Saints, ſo they deſire that God may have Glory from them to eternal Ages.

The Apoſtle ever mindful of his abſent Friends, and though now in Priſon and at a great diſtance from them, yet ſends pious Salutations to them.

Q. *In the 19th and 20th Verſe he ſalutes his Friends, among whom* were Eraſtus *and* Trophimus; *who were they?*

A. Eraſtus is mentioned, *Rom.* xvi. 22. as Chamberlain of the City of *Corinth*, one that ſhewed Kindneſs to *Paul*; he was a great Man and Treaſurer of *Corinth*, yet neither his Riches, nor his high Station, could keep him from loving the Apoſtle and the afflicted Church.

Trophimus *have I left at* Miletum *ſick.* This Man was a Citizen of *Epheſus*, a Diſciple and Companion of *Paul*, *Acts* xx. whom he was forced to leave ſick at *Miletum*.

Q. *What farther does he requeſt of* Timothy; *and how does he conclude his Epiſtle?*

A. The Apoſtle being very deſirous of ſeeing *Timothy*, renews his Requeſt to him to make haſte and come before Winter; and to encourage him, he names ſeveral Perſons of Note that were then at *Rome*; who ſent him their Salutations, and would be glad to ſee him.

St. *Paul* concludes this like his other Epiſtles, with an Apoſtolical Benediction, *The Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *be with thy Spirit*; as if he had ſaid, Be not ſad at my Departure; for, though I muſt leave thee, yet God will uphold thee by his Grace, and be preſent with thee by the Influence of his Holy Spirit. The inward Preſence of *Chriſt* with the Spirits of his People, directing their Spirits in thinking, judging, chuſing and refuſing, is a ſweet Privilege, and greatly to be deſired. Happy they who have the Spirit of *Chriſt* perpetually preſent with them, who ſo live, that *Chriſt* may delight to dwell by his Spirit in them.

Grace be with you; that is, with all of you; he does not ſay, Riches be with you, Honours be with you, or the Favour of Man be with you; but Grace, and the Favour of God be with you; God's ſpecial Favour, and diſtinguiſhing Grace, is to be ſought by all Men, by all Perſons and before all Things.

Laſtly, our Apoſtle ratifies and ſeals up all with that concluding Particle, *Amen*; teaching us, That whatever we ſhould pray for, ſhould be rightly underſtood, firmly believed, earneſtly deſired, and heartily conſented to. They ſin in Prayer, who underſtand not what they pray for, and who do not earneſtly deſire what they pray for: For, in Teſtimony of our Deſires to be heard, we ſay, *Amen.*

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO

TITUS.

St. Paul's *Epiſtles to* Timothy *and* Titus, *are the Church's Canons, which the Holy Ghoſt indicted, very ſufficient to their Uſe and End; and how happy had the Church in all Ages been, if ſtrict canonical Obedience had been paid, as well as ſworn unto them!*

TITUS *was a* Gentile, *but early converted to* Chriſtianity *by* St. Paul, *who having great Experience of his Piety and Prudence, left him in* Crete, *to govern the Church of that Iſland.*

THE Epiſtle to Titus *is of the ſame Nature, and wrote with the ſame Deſign as thoſe to* Timothy *only ſhorter; becauſe* Titus *ſeems to have been the more antient Perſon, or at leaſt of greater Experience.* St. Paul *briefly inſtructs him in all the Parts of his Duty, in electing Church-Governors, in cenſuring falſe Teachers, in inſtructing both the antient and younger Perſons, in preſſing upon all Perſons Obedience to Magiſtrates, and a Care to maintain good Works.*

CHAP. I.

Paul's *Salutation; the Dignity of his Apoſtleſhip. For what End he left* Titus *in* Crete. *The Gift and Qualifications of a good Paſtor. He exhorts him to ſtop the Mouths of Seducers, who, according to one of their Poets, were ſuch as needed ſharp Reproofs; and to keep the Faith pure from* Jewiſh *Fables and human Inventions: The Character of thoſe Seducers.*

Q. HOW *does the Apoſtle addreſs* Titus *in the Beginning of this Epiſtle?*

A. The four firſt Verſes of this Chapter contain the Apoſtle's Salutation, in which he deſcribes himſelf by his general Office, *a Servant of God*; by his ſpecial Office, *an Apoſtle of* Jeſus Chriſt; by the End of his Office, *to preach the Faith*, and thereby to promote the *Faith of God's Elect*, and to bring Perſons to the Acknowledgment of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which is Truth according to Godlineſs.

Q. *What was the Apoſtle's View in preaching the Goſpel?*

A. The great Deſign of preaching the Goſpel, is, to produce Faith in the Heart, and Holineſs or Godlineſs in the Life of thoſe that live under it; not that common, notional and intellectual Faith, which is often found in unholy Perſons; but that lively Faith, which is elſewhere called the Faith of *the Operation of God*, and here, *the Faith of God's Elect*, even ſuch a Faith as is the Principle of Obedience.

Another End of the Apoſtle's is, to raiſe *Chriſtians* up to a lively Hope and Expectation of that *eternal Life which that God who cannot lie hath promiſed before the World began.*

Q. *But how could God then promiſe when there was none to promiſe to?*

A. The Promiſe was made to *Chriſt*, and in him to all his Members: For there was a federal Agreement between the Father and the Son from all Eternity, the Son promiſed to give his Soul an

Offering for Sin, and the Father engaged that he ſhould ſave his Seed, and the Travail of his Soul.

He hath in due Time manifeſted his Word through preaching; that is, what God ſo long ago purpoſed in himſelf, and promiſed to his Son, he hath, in the fitteſt appointed Seaſon, made manifeſt by the preaching of the Goſpel, which is committed to me by the Appointment of God and *Chriſt*.

Hence learn, that the Doctrine of Salvation is much more clearly revealed to us that live under the Goſpel, than it was to the Fathers in the *Old Teſtament*: Life and Immortality, that is, the clearer Knowledge and more full Aſſurance of of eternal Life is now brought about by the preaching of the Goſpel.

Q. *What is farther obſervable in the Apoſtle's Addreſs to* Timothy?

A. Titus is called St. *Paul's Son after the common Faith.* The Church has but one Faith common to all *Chriſtians*; it has one common Object of Faith, *Chriſt* crucified; it has one common End of Faith, eternal Salvation.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt *our Saviour*; that is, all temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal Bleſſings, I moſt heartily wiſh unto you, from God the Father, and *Jeſus Chriſt* our worthy Mediator. Whatever ſpiritual Grace, or temporal Bleſſings we now receive from God, is from him not barely as a Creator, but as a gracious Father in *Chriſt*, in whom he pours forth the Immenſity of his Love upon us. *Set in order the Things that are wanting*; the Ship of the Church is never ſo well rigged, but ſomething is wanting that might be added. Whilſt the Tabernacle of God ſojourns here below, ſome Pin or other will be lacking in it.

Q. *What Directions does he give* Titus *with Reſpect to his miniſterial Office?*

A. To *ordain Elders in every City*, ſuch as might govern and teach, and adminiſter to God in holy Things. Wherever a Church is planted, there is an abſolute Neceſſity of a ſettled Miniſtry, and a Succeſſion of Miniſters, without which it is impoſſible that Religion ſhould either proſper or long continue; and Care muſt be taken that ſuch Miniſters be duly qualified, and regularly ordained, *I left thee in* Crete *to ordain Elders*.

As I had appointed thee. Titus muſt do nothing but according to Commiſſion, and by ſpecial Directions. The ordering and governing of the Church was not left arbitrarily, no not to *Titus* himſelf; but whatever he did was by Apoſtolical Direction.

St. *Paul* next gives *Titus*, as he had before done *Timothy*, the Character and Qualifications of thoſe who were to be ordained Biſhops; which being but little different, we refer to our Notes on 1 *Tim.* iii.

Q. *But why is the Apoſtle ſo particular in his Directions to* Titus *to fill the Church with able Guides?*

A. Becauſe there was a Multitude of falſe Teachers diſperſed Abroad and ſcatter'd up and down every where, particularly the Judaizing Doctors, thoſe of the Circumciſion, mentioned *Acts* xx. who would make *Chriſtianity* nothing more than a Supplement to the Law of *Moſes*. Theſe he tells *Titus*, muſt have their Mouths ſtopped, not by Force, for *Titus* had no Power of the Sword, but by Confutation; he muſt take Care to ordain ſuch as might ſilence them, though not ſatisfy them. For note the Efficacy of Error, and the Power of Seduction, *they ſubverted whole Houſes*, they make Proſelytes without Number. If the Apoſtle's Converts were thus eaſily and univerſally miſled, no wonder if ours be ſo.

The next Argument St. *Paul* brings to excite *Titus* to take great Care how he behaved himſelf at *Crete*, and what Biſhops he left there, is drawn from the natural Diſpoſition of the People in that Iſland of *Crete*, where God's Providence, and the Apoſtle's Care had placed him: He tells them that one of their own Prophets or Poets, *Epimenides*, had given this Character of them, That the *Cretaus* were a lazy and a lying People, ready enough to be miſled by the falſe Teachers, particularly the Judaizing Doctors, who impoſed Circumciſion and other Ceremonial Rites, which are now old Fables, but tended to pervert Men from the Truth; therefore he charges *Titus* to reprove ſharply and cuttingly, *that they ſhould be ſound in the Faith.* The Word is a Metaphor taken from Chirurgeons, who cut out dead Fleſh to the quick, but it is in order to Healing; cutting Words have done great Cures; many a diſeaſed feſter'd Soul has been made ſound, both in Faith and Manners, by ſevere Reprehenſion. Although, generally ſpeaking, we ought to temper our Reproofs with Gentleneſs and Meekneſs, yet there is a Time when we muſt reprove ſharply, that Men *may be ſound in the Faith.* We may, we muſt ſpeak cutting Words, when kind Words will not do.

Q. *What were theſe* Jewiſh *Traditions and Fables which thoſe judaizing falſe Teachers would obtude upon Perſons at that Time?*

A. Such as theſe; namely, Pretences by not obſerving their Days, and keeping other Ceremonial Rites: But, ſays the Apoſtle, *to the pure are all Things pure*; that is, to Believers who are ſanctified by the *Chriſtian* Faith, and purified from Sin and Guilt, all Meats, and Days, and Things of this Nature, are clean lawful, and may without Sin be uſed, every Creature being ſanctified by the Word of God and Prayer.

Obſerve the honourable Title which a gracious and merciful God puts upon good Men, notwithſtanding they have much Impurity and Sin inherent in them, and many ſinful Weakneſſes, and Infirmities cleaving to them: *Unto the pure, &c.* they are now initially ſo, and ſhall e're long be perfectly ſo.

Note alſo the Privilege purchaſed for them by the Blood of *Chriſt*, and that is the lawful Liberty and Uſe of all Meats, *&c.* under the Goſpel, which were prohibited by, and forbidden under the Ceremonial Law; *Unto the pure all Things are* (*now*) *pure.*

But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. He does not ſay, To the Defiled all Things are unclean, but, *nothing is pure*; they pollute all they touch: To an unſanctified Man nothing is ſanctified; whatever he does is unclean, either in the Matter, in the Manner, or in the End of his doing it; and the Reaſon follows, becauſe *their Mind and Conſcience are defiled.* No wonder the Streams are polluted, when the Fountains are poiſoned. *The Mind and Conſcience are defiled*, partly by Blindneſs, partly by Stupidity and ſenſeleſneſs.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the Character given of Hypocritical Profeſſors in the laſt Verſe?*

A. They profeſſed the Knowledge of the true God, but in their Works, in their Lives and Actions they denied him, and ſo became abominable both to God and Man, diſobedient to the Law, and averſe to every good Work.

Hence it appears, 1. That Hypocrites are generally great Profeſſors; they profeſs great Knowledge of God, and great Zeal for him. 2. That to deny is a very heinous Sin, an abominable Wickedneſs; there is a twofold Denial of God, firſt, in Words expreſsly and openly; ſecondly, in Practice cloſely and conſequently, *They profeſs that they know God, but in Works they deny him.* There may be at once a profeſſing of God, and a Denial of him. Many a Man's Practice ſpeaks loud, that there is no God, when he makes a fair Conceſſion and Profeſſion of him with his Mouth and Tongue.

No ſorts of Perſons are ſo odious to God, and abominable in his Sight, as thoſe who make a Profeſſion of his holy Name and Truth, but walk contrary in their Lives to their Profeſſion.

CHAP. II.

He exhorts Titus *to ſpeak according to ſound Doctrine; how to inſtruct old and young Men and Women; and to be a Pattern of good Works. The Duty of Servants. Holineſs being the End of the Goſpel; the Fruit and Benefit of Redemption, and the Way to Life: This muſt be taught with Authority.*

Q. *What Inſtructions does the Apoſtle here give* Titus *for the Diſcharge of his miniſterial Duty?*

A. In the firſt Verſe the Apoſtle beſpeaks him after this Manner; whatever the Judaizing Doctors preach, though they doat upon Dreams, and feed their Hearers with Fables and Fancies to poiſon and corrupt their Souls, and turn them from the Truth; be ſure thou carry thyſelf as becomes a ſound Preacher of the Goſpel, and ſpeak only *the Things which become ſound Doctrine*; the Body may as well be nouriſh'd with Carrion, as the Soul with rotten and unſound Doctrine.

Q. *How was he to inſtruct the aged Men and Women?*

A. *That the aged Men be ſober*, &c. By *aged Men* underſtand all antient Men in general, and Church-Officers in particular, in whom our Apoſtle requires Gravity and Sobriety in Behaviour, Temperance in all Things, that they may be *ſound in Faith*, ſincere in Charity, and conſtant in Patience. Our Apoſtle exempts none from the Inſtructions, Admonitions, and Exhortations of the Miniſters of God; God's School is as well for the Aged as the Young, not only for initiating Youth, but alſo for edifying the aged, and building them up in their moſt holy Faith; the aged have but a little Time in this World, their Strength declines, they muſt therefore labour to recompence their Decay of Nature with Increaſe of Grace, the Weakneſs of the Body with Strength of Faith, *let the Aged be ſound in Faith.*

The Apoſtle next gives Inſtructions for the aged Women, particularly ſuch as were Deaconeſſes, or Servants to the Church, that they being placed in the Rank of Church Officers, ſhould act and walk as becomes holy Perſons, employ'd about holy Things, particularly with reſpect to their Habit and Geſture; alſo, that they be not *falſe Accuſers*, Devils, as the original Word ſignifies, becauſe falſe accuſing is the Devil's Work; they that do his Work ſhall bear his Name; *not given to much Wine*; Exceſs in drinking is bad in Men, worſe in Women, worſt of all in old Women, who ought to be Patterns of Piety and Prudence, of Sobriety and Temperance to the younger Women; for St. *Paul* here directs them to *teach the younger*; that is, by their private Admonitions and prudent Examples, inſtruct them to be wiſe and ſober, not light and airy; to love their Huſbands in a fit and becoming Manner, and to ſhew it in their Behaviour; diſcreet and chaſte in all their Actions, keeping at Home, and minding the Affairs of the Family, to be kind and obedient to their Huſbands, leſt the Miſcarriages of young Women ſhould bring Reproach upon Religion, and the Goſpel be thought by Men of the World to infuſe any thing into them contrary to moral Virtue.

Miniſters muſt apply themſelves and their Doctrine to the ſeveral Sexes, Ages, and Conditions of their People; that every Perſon, Man and Woman, young and old, ſuperior and inferior, may know not only what is lawful, but what is expedient, moſt beſeeming their Quality, and beſt becoming their Age.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's next Point of Inſtruction?*

A. St. *Paul* having directed *Titus* what Doctrine to preach, next inſtructs him what Example to lead; *in all Things ſhew thyſelf a Pattern of good Works*; in all the Good which thou exhorteſt thy Hearers to, be thyſelf an eminent Pattern of it; that they may ſee that viſibly in thyſelf, which in thy preaching thou urgeſt upon them. Second thy Doctrine by Piety and good Works, there muſt be a ſweet Harmony between a Miniſter's Doctrine and his Converſatiun, otherwiſe he pulls down faſter than he builds up: An heterodox Converſation will carry an orthodox Preacher to Hell.

He cloſes his Admonition to *Titus* concerning Preaching, with this ſolemn Charge, that his Doctrine be ſound and profitable, ſincere without Mixture, grave without Levity, ſound Words, that can never be confuted by Gainſayers; but happy will you be, if they can have nothing juſtly to charge your Doctrine or Converſrtion with.

It is the Duty, and muſt be the Care and Endeavour of all the Miniſters of God to oblige themſelves to ſuch an exemplary Piety of Converſation, as may ſtop the Mouth of Slander, *that the contrary Party may be aſhamed, having no evil Thing to ſay againſt them.*

Q. *What are the Duties which the Apoſtle exhorts* Timothy *to inſtruct Servants in?*

A. The general Duty Servants are exhorted to, is, *Obedience to their own Maſters*, in all honeſt and lawful Things, whether their Maſters were *Pagans* or *Chriſtians*; if *Pagans*, not to imagine that *Chriſtianity* freed them from their juſt Commands; if *Chriſtian* Maſters, not to think that they had therefore a greater Liberty to be ſaucy with them, or leſs obedient to them.

The particular Duties enjoin'd Servants, are 1. *Not anſwering again*; not croſſing or contracting what they are commanded, nor ſaucily replying when they are reprov'd. 2. *Not purloining*, that is, their Maſter's without their Conſent, but ſhewing all conſcionable Truſtineſs and Honeſty.

The Motive to ſtir up Servants to the conſcientiour Diſcharge of their Duty, is, *that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things*; that is, that they may put Honour upon *Chriſt*, and his holy Religion, by beautifying their *Chriſtian* Profeſſion by a ſuitable and becoming Converſation. None are ſo little or inconſiderable, but they are capable of ſerving the great Ends of Religion, of doing good Service for God on Earth, and of being eternally rewarded by him in Heaven.

For the Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men. Let all Sorts of Men, Servants and Maſters, Children and Parents, Old and Young, diſcharge their Duties faithfully to God, and one another; for the Grace of God, diſcovered in the Goſpel, has *appeared to all Men*, teaching them to deny all Doctrines and Practices which are Ungodly, and all worldly Luſts of Senſuality, and that we ſhould live ſoberly, with reſpect to ourſelves, righteouſly and charitably towards our Neighbour, and holily towards God in this preſent World.

Here note, an excellent Deſcription of this Goſpel; it is *the Grace of God*; that is, the Doctrine of God's free Grace and gratuitous Favour declared in *Chriſt* to poor Sinners; the joyful Meſſage which the Goſpel brings, and that is Salvation; the clear Light and Evidence with which it holds forth this Meſſage, it hath appeared, or ſhined forth, like the riſing Sun; the Extent of its glorious Beams, to all indefinitely; without Reſtriction or Limitation, 1. As to Nations, *Jew* or *Gentile*. 2. As to Perſons, Rich or Poor, Bond or Free. 3. Without Reſtriction, in Reference to the Degree of their Graces.

Q. *What is the great Leſſon taught us by the Goſpel?*

A. 1. *To deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts*; where, by Ungodlineſs, underſtand all Sins committed againſt the firſt Table; by worldly Luſts, all Sins committed againſt the ſecond Table; call'd worldly Luſts, becauſe the Object of them is worldly Things, and becauſe they are the Luſts of worldly Men. 2. *To live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly*; he begins with our Duty to ourſelves; then to our Neighbour; and, laſt of all to God; and proceeds from the eaſier to the harder Duties. *Soberly*; that is, in Speech, is Behaviour, in Apparel, in Eating and Drinking, in Recreations, and in the Enjoyment of lawful Satiſfactions.

Righteouſly; exerciſing Juſtice and Charity towards our Neighbour; he that is uncharitable, is unrighteous and unjuſt; and the Unrighteous ſhal no more enter into the Kingdom of God, than the Unholy; and all Pretences to Godlineſs are but Hypocriſy, without Righteouſneſs towards our Neighbour.

Godly; Godlineſs has an internal and an external Part; the internal Part of Godlineſs conſiſts in a right Knowledge of God, in a fervent Love unto him, in an entire Truſt and Confidence in him, in an holy Fear to offend him, in ſubjecting our Wills entirely to him, in holy Longings for the Fruition and Enjoyment of him.

The external Part of Godlineſs conſiſts in Adoration and bodily Worſhip; this is due to God from us; he was the Creator of the Body as well as the Soul, the Redeemer of both; and will glorify one as well as the other, therefore are we *to glorify God with our Bodies, and with our Spirits, which are the Lord's.*

In this preſent World we are to learn this Leſſon of living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly; this is abſolutely neceſſary in order to our obtaining the Happineſs and Glory of the World to come. If ſo, what a Cheat does a Man put upon himſelf in truſting to a Death-bed Repentance? Be it never ſo ſincere, how can it be ſaid to be living ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this World, when juſt ſtepping into Eternity.

Q. *What is the Reward promiſed to thoſe who live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly, in this preſent World?*

A. It is deſcribed, 1. By its Futurity, it is Hope, ſomething expected, and to come. 2. By its Tranſcendency, it is a *bleſſed Hope.*

The *Chriſtian*'s Hope (or the Things hoped for) is laid up, not in this, but in the other World; becauſe this World, and this preſent State, is not capable of that Happineſs which the Chriſtian hopes for. It is too great, too good for Earth, it is laid up in Heaven.

Q. *When will the Chriſtian be put in Poſſeſſion of this glorious Reward; and how ought he to behave himſelf in the mean while?*

A. The Time when this glorious Reward and bleſſed Hope ſhall be diſpens'd and given forth, is, *at the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour* Jeſus Chriſt.

The Chriſtian's Duty, with reſpect to this Reward, and to the Appearance of *Chriſt*, when it ſhall be diſpens'd, is to look and long for that joyful Hour, to hope for and expect the Coming and Appearance of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. *What were thoſe Ends for which* Chriſt *gave himſelf for us?*

A. 1. *To redeem them from Iniquity.* Redemption from Iniquity, ſuppoſes a Thraldom and Bondage to Sin and Iniquity; from which *Jeſus Chriſt* is our Redeemer, and by dying for us did, and only could redeem us. 2. Another End of *Chriſt*'s redeeming us, is, *to purify to himſelf a peculiar People.* As Redemption preſuppos'd a Bondage, ſo Purification ſuppoſes an Uncleanneſs, that is, Sin.

Again; *Chriſt*'s redeem'd People are a purified, a peculiar People, poſſeſs'd by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, with a Zeal for good Works.

It was not only for us that *Chriſt* redeem'd and purified us a peculiar People to himſelf, but ultimately for himſelf, and for his own and his Father's Glory and Complacency; that he might *purify to himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.*

Theſe Things ſpeak and exhort; let theſe neceſſary practical Truths be the Subject-matter of thy Preaching, and according to the Authority of thy Office rebuke Gainſayers, and let thy Doctrine and Behaviour in Wiſdom and Gravity be ſuch, as may keep and preſerve thee from Contempt. The Miniſters of *Chriſt* are to take eſpecial Care, that they neither expoſe their Perſons nor their Office, by any Indecencies, to Contempt; *let no Man deſpiſe thee.*

Chap. III.

Obedience to Magiſtrates; Love and Meekneſs towards all, recommended. The State of Nature, and Deliverance from it by Chriſt. *He earneſtly preſſes them to good Works; to reject fooliſh Queſtions and Contentions, and to ſhun heretical Perſons. He appoints him Time and Place to come to him; and to provide for* Zenas *and* Apollos.

Q. W*HY does the Apoſtle, in the Beginning of this Chapter, ſo earneſtly inculcate the Duty of Obedience to Magiſtrates?*

A. In thoſe early Days of Chriſtianity, great Scandal was brought upon Religion by the undutiful Carriage of Servants and Subjects towards their Maſters and Magiſtrates; and this upon a falſe Notion of Chriſtian Liberty, advanced and propagated by the falſe Apoſtles, judaizing Teachers, and gnoſtick Libertines; whereupon he requires *Titus* to put Chriſtians in mind of their Duty in that Particular, and earneſtly to inculcate it upon them, that the Chriſtian Religion might not be ſlander'd on that Account; *Put them in mind that they be ſubject to Principalities and Powers.*

The Duty of Subjection to Governors and Government, and of Obedience to Magiſtrates and Rulers, is of very great Importance, and ought to be enforced and frequently inculcated upon the People by the Miniſters of God; becauſe, by Nature all Men deſire Liberty, and caſt off the Yoke of God: Every one would rule and govern, altho' the Duty of Subjection be much the eaſier Duty. From St. *Paul's* preſſing *Titus* to preach up the Doctrine of Obedience, and Subjection to Governors and Government, learn that there is no ſuch Way and Method to bring the World to live regularly under Government, like planting the Goſpel among them, and making them ſubject to our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *What other Duties does he enjoin them?*

A. To ſpeak evil of no Man. Calumny, and evil Speaking, has been a reigning Vice in all Ages, and a greater Guilt is contracted by it than Men apprehend; every Man ought to be as juſt to his Neighbour's Reputation as his own. If what we report of others be really true, and we know it to be ſo, yet it is a Defamation, and contrary to that Charity and Goodneſs, which Chriſtianity requires; for to divulge the Faults of others, tho' they be really guilty of them, without Neceſſity, is really a Sin, and included in this apoſtolical Prohibition: To think and ſpeak evil of others, is not only a bad Thing, but a Sign of a bad Man; and in many Caſes, it is as great a Charity to conceal any Evil we hear of our Neighbour, as it is to relieve him in his Diſtreſs.

Q. *What is his next Admonition?*

A. The next Exhortation is, *To be no Brawlers*; in the Original, *no Fighters*; that is, neither with Tongue nor Hand, but meek and gentle, putting up a double Wrong, rather than revenging a ſingle Injury, uſing all Meekneſs towards all Men: Meekneſs pacifies Wrath, and conquers Animoſity to a Wonder, making him tame and gentle, who by Oppoſition is furious and implacable; the hardeſt Flint is ſooner broken upon a Pillow or Cuſhion, that gently yields, than upon a Bar of Iron that furiouſly reſiſts.

Q. *But what Reaſon does the Apoſtle aſſign, why Chriſtians ſhould be found in the Practice of the beforementioned Virtues?*

A. Becauſe, before their Converſion, they themſelves lived in the Practice of the beforemention'd Vices as well as others, *we ourſelves alſo were fooliſh, diſobedient, &c.* that is, the Servants of Sin, and Slaves to our Luſts, ſuffering Wrath to reſt in our Boſoms, till it be boil'd up to Revenge; having formerly therefore been ſuch ourſelves, we ought to pity rather than ſpurn thoſe that are ſo ſtill. No Argument will more effectually incline and diſpoſe us to pity the Miſcarriages of others, than the Conſideration, that we ourſelves are prone unto, and have heretofore been guilty of the ſame, or the like Provocations ourſelves.

But, adds the Apoſtle, tho' in our heatheniſh and unconverted State we were as bad and vile as any, yet after that the loving Kindneſs of God to fallen Man appear'd by the Illumination of the Goſpel, and the Communication of his Grace, not for any good Works or Deſerts of ours, but of his mere Mercy and free Goodneſs, he ſaved us from that State of Sin and Miſery by Regeneration, ſignified and ſeal'd in Baptiſm, and by renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which Holy Spirit was pour'd forth in an extraordinary Meaſure upon us, (according to Promiſe) after *Chriſt's* Reſurrection.

Here obſerve, how every Perſon in the Trinity acts diſtinctly in the Work of our Salvation. 1. The fontal Cauſe, the Spring and Source of our Happineſs, lies in the Kindneſs and Love of God the Father. 2. The meritorious and procuring Cauſe of the Application of his Love, is *Jeſus Chriſt*, in the Work of Redemption and Mediation. 3. The immediate and efficient Cauſe of the Communication of that Love of God the Father, procured through the Mediation of *Chriſt* the Son, is the Holy Spirit, in the Work of Regeneration.

Which Holy Spirit was, in its Gifts and Graces, plentifully poured forth upon upon us, and dwells in us, not eſſentially but energetically, illuminating, guiding, ſtrengthning and confirming us: And the End of God herein is, *That being juſtified by his Grace*; that is, by Faith in his Son, *we ſhould be made Heirs of eternal Life, according to the Hope* which the Promiſes of God have given us thereof.

Q. *What other Inſtructions does he give* Titus?

A. In the 8th Verſe he gives a ſolemn Charge to *Titus*, to preſs the Neceſſity of good Works upon thoſe who did believe and embrace the Goſpel, on purpoſe to prevent all Miſtakes and Abuſes of the Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith, and free Grace and Mercy of God in *Jeſus Chriſt*; intimating, that they who are juſtified by the Faith of the Goſpel, ſhould be far from thinking themſelves hereby excuſed from good Works, that they ought, upon that Account, to be the more careful to maintain and practice them, becauſe, by the very Profeſſion of the *Chriſtian* Faith and Religion, they have ſolemnly engaged themſelves ſo to do.

The

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,

TO

PHILEMON.

THIS Epiſtle was written to a particular Perſon, and upon a particular Occaſion. The Perſon was Philemon, *an eminent Officer in the Church of* Coloſes, *and, as ſome ſay, Succeſſor to* Timothy, *as Biſhop of* Epheſus. *The Occaſion this;* Oneſimus, *a naughty Servant, running away from his Maſter* Philemon, *and, probably, carrying away with him ſome of his Maſter's Subſtance, by the Providence of God came to* Rome, *where St.* Paul *was then a Priſoner and a Preacher in Bonds: God bleſſed the Apoſtle's Miniſtry for the Converſion of this Fugitive, who was brought to a true Knowledge of* Jeſus Chriſt, *and after his Converſion, for a Time, adminiſter'd to* Paul; *but the Apoſtle underſtanding that he was another Man's Servant, and particularly his dear Friend* Philemon's, *ſends him back to his Maſter, earneſtly deſiring him to pardon him, and to receive him into Favour.*

CHAP. I.

He rejoices to hear of the Faith of Philemon, *and deſires him to forgive his Servant* Oneſimus, *and lovingly to receive him.*

Q. WHAT *do you remark on the introductory Part of this Epiſtle?*

A. In the two firſt Verſes the Apoſtle ſtiles himſelf *a Priſoner of* Jeſus, *a Labourer*, *a Soldier*, Titles that he glories in, and not in worldly Dignities. But though *Paul* was a Priſoner, yet he was not ſo cloſely confined, but he had Pen, Ink, and Paper; God gave *Paul* then, as *Joſeph* before, Favour in the ſight of the Keeper of the Priſon. Happy was it for *Oneſimus*, that *Paul* was ſent to Goal; this Impriſonment was the happy Occaſion of his ſpiritual Liberty.

The Perſons to whom this Epiſtle was directed, were, firſt, and particularly to *Philemon* the Maſter, and to *Apphia*, the Miſtreſs of the Family, in which, and with whom *Oneſimus* had dwelt, but was now run from them. St. *Paul* writes to both, judging the Miſtreſs's Conſent neceſſary for taking this Fugitive back into her Family, as well as the Maſter's, intimating, that although the Husband, by the Ordinance and Appointment of God, has the higheſt Place, the firſt and chief Power in the Government of the Family, yet the Wife being given him, as an Aſſiſtant and Fellow-helper in Government, her ſubordinate Authority given her by God, is to be own'd and acknowledg'd.

Next, this Epiſtle is directed to *Archippus*, who dwelt with or near *Philemon*, him he calls his Fellow-Soldier, and *Philemon* his Fellow-labourer.

Laſtly, the Epiſtle is directed *to the Church at* Philemon's *Houſe*; by which ſome underſtand the Company of *Chriſtians* that met at his Houſe to worſhip God; for *Chriſtians* then had not Liberty publickly to perform that Duty; others underſtand it of *Philemon*'s own Family, which ſpeaks at once *Philemon*'s Privilege and Duty, that he had ſuch a well-order'd Family, that it was a little Church; that is, it was a lively Image and Repreſentation of the Church, both in its Doctrine and Worſhip.

Q. *In what Manner does he treat* Philemon *in order to obtain what he deſired of him?*

A. That the Apoſtle might more eaſily make an Impreſſion on *Philemon*, he labours to poſſeſs him with an Opinion of his endeared Affection, and continual Prayers for him, even by Name.

The Apoſtle next mentions the orient and ſhining Graces that were found in *Philemon*; namely, his Faith and Love; his Faith in *Chriſt* produced Love to him and to all Saints; not to a Party of *Chriſtians* only; *hearing of thy Faith and Love towards the Lord* Jeſus, *and*, in him, *towards all the Saints*.

St. *Paul* next prays, that *Philemon*'s Faith and Love might be made effectual for producing all Sorts of good Fruits in him and by him; *that the Communication of thy Faith may become effectual.*

Note alſo, the great Joy and Conſolation which the Apoſtle had in the Operativeneſs of *Philemon*'s Faith and Love, whereby the Bowels of the Saints were greatly refreſhed. There is frozen Charity, and a Lip-love, found among many Profeſſors, but ſuch as by Offices of Kindneſs, are performed with a tender and pitiful Heart, refreſh the Bowels of the Saints. *Chriſt* reckons as done unto himſelf, whatever is done to thoſe his ſuffering Members, *Matt.* xxv. and God himſelf is hereby refreſhed, *Phil.* iv. 18. *An Odour of a ſweet Smell, and a Sacrifice acceptable and pleaſing to God.*

From the 8th to the 11th Verſe, we may obſerve the marvellous condeſcending Humility of the Apoſtle, who, though by his Office he had the fulleſt Power and Authority in the Church of God that a Perſon upon Earth could have, to command, require, and enjoin *Philemon* in the Practice of his Duty; yet tells him, that he rather choſe to beſeech; *for Love ſake I rather beſeech thee.* This ſhould teach Church-Rulers how to conduct themſelves in their Office.

Q. *On what Argument does the Apoſtle ground his Requeſt?*

A. I *Paul* deſire and beſeech thee; *I* Paul *the aged*, *I* Paul *a Priſoner.* If Honour be due to an aged Perſon, walking in the Way of Righteouſneſs, much more is it ſo to an aged Miniſter, grey-headed in the Service of *Chriſt*.

He alſo urges his Sufferings as well as his Years; *I* Paul *a Priſoner*. The Sufferings of *Chriſt*'s Miniſter in the Cauſe of God ſhould by no Means diminiſh, but rather increaſe that Reverence and Reſpect which is deſervedly their Due.

Q. *For whom does he thus affectionately intercede?*

A. For *Oneſimus*, whom he calls his *Son, begotten in his Bonds*; that is, his Spiritual Son, converted to *Chriſtianity*, by his Miniſtry, when he was in Priſon.

Note, how wiſely the Apoſtle anſwers the Objections which *Philemon* might make to his Requeſt of receiving *Oneſimus*, that he had been a Fugitive, a Thief, and what not? St. *Paul* implicitly owns all that; yet with a ſoftening Diſtinction, *He was unprofitable in Times paſt, but now profitable to thee and me.* Now St. *Paul*'s anſwering this Objection before *Philemon* made it, ſhews how hard it is for the beſt Men to forgive and forget Injuries, eſpecially if done by ſome of their own Family.

Note alſo, the Character given of *Oneſimus* before his Converſion, *He was unprofitable.* Lord! what an uſeleſs unprofitable Creature is an unſanctified and unconverted Sinner? Unprofitable to God, to others, and to his own Soul; but by Converſion he became univerſally uſeful and profitable to all about him, but eſpecially to himſelf; others may have the Benefit of our Eſtate, our Parts and Gifts, but we ourſelves ſhall have the chief Benefit, Comfort and Advantage of our own Grace.

The Apoſtle uſes ſeveral other Arguments to induce *Philemon* to receive *Oneſimus* into his Service again, notwithſtanding his paſt Offences. Firſt, becauſe *Paul* had ſent him, for that End, a long and tedious Journey, from *Rome* to *Coloſes*, and becauſe he came with the Apoſtle's recommendatory Letters, and in his Name. We muſt not eaſily reject thoſe that come to us countenanced and encourag'd with the Commendations of the reverend and faithful Miniſters of God.

Q. *What other Reaſon had* Paul *to ſend him to* Philemon?

A. St. *Paul* ſends him, becauſe he was another's Servant, even his Friend *Philemon*'s, and being very ſerviceable to the Apoſtle, he would gladly have detained him; but could not ſatisfy himſelf to do it without *Philemon*'s Conſent. Maſters have ſuch a Right in their Servants, that neither can be diſpoſed of without their Conſent; the *Chriſtian* Religion is no Deſtroyer, but an Eſtabliſher of Civil Rights. The Converſion of *Oneſimus* to *Chriſtianity* gave him no Manumiſſion and Liberty from *Philemon*'s Service, and accordingly the Apoſtle ſends him back to his old Maſter.

Q. *But did not* Oneſimus *run away from his Maſter? What Reaſon had he then to receive him again?*

A. To this St. *Paul* replies, If his departing from thee was ſo managed by the wiſe and merciful Providence of God, that it might be an Occaſion of thy receiving him again for ever, then, notwithſtanding his Departure, thou oughteſt to receive him. But the Wiſdom of God has thus really over-ruled the Matter; he went from thee a Fugitive, thieviſh, and purloining; but he returns a Convert, a *Chriſtian*, a Brother in the Faith; and, as ſuch, to be entertained by thee, being doubly related to thee, both as a Servant, and as a Fellow-Member of *Chriſt*.

Here obſerve, the Privileges of our ſpiritual Conjunction in *Chriſt*, above any other civil Conjunction. The former laſts for ever. the latter but a ſhort Time; the Relation betwixt Huſband and Wife, Parent and Child, Maſter and Servant, alas! is but momentary, Death ſoon diſſolves all civil Relations: But the ſpiritual Relation and Conjunction being effected, by the Bond of the Spirit, is indiſſoluble, it is for ever. Death itſelf cannot diſſolve it, yea, it knits the Knot faſter; *He departed for a Seaſon, that thou ſhouldeſt receive him for ever.*

Though *Chriſtianity* takes not away the Degrees of Perſons, and the civil Differences between Man and Man, yet it makes us all Equal and Fellow-Brethren in *Chriſt*. *Receive him now*, not barely *as a Servant, but above a Servant, as a Brother in* Chriſt; you and he are now Brethren by Grace.

Q. *What other Argument does he uſe to perſuade* Philemon *to receive* Oneſimus?

A. Another Argument drawn from a Partnerſhip, or Communion with him in the Faith; *If thou counteſt me a Partner, receive him as myſelf*; a high Expreſſion, ſtill diſcovering that affectionate Tenderneſs which St. *Paul* bore to this new Convert.

Q. *But might not* Philemon *ſay, How can I receive him that has wrong'd me, robb'd me, and run away from me? Sure, it is enough to pardon him; muſt I receive him too?*

A. Our Apoſtle implicitly grants, that there was a Debt due from *Oneſimus* to *Philemon*; *If he has wronged*; that is, granting that he has done it, *put it on my Account, I will repay it.* It is not then unlawful, in itſelf, for one Perſon to become Bound and Surety for another; yea, it is a Work of Mercy, which not only may, but ought to be done; but always with due Caution and Conſideration.

Q. *How does he farther enforce his Petition to* Philemon?

A. Obſerve, the Apoſtle's wonderful Modeſty in his own Praiſe and Commendation, *I ſay not to thee that thou oweſt to me even thine own ſelf*; implying what great Things he had done for *Philemon* in his Converſion; ſo great as made *Philemon* a Debtor, not only of his own Goods, but of himſelf too: However, the Apoſtle only glances at it modeſtly, and that upon a juſt and great Occaſion too; *I do not ſay* (though I might have ſaid it) *that thou oweſt to me thy own ſelf: Beſides, Brother, let me have Joy in the Lord, refreſh my Bowels in the Lord.* This publick Repetition of our Apoſtle's former Petition, has the Force and Strength of a freſh and additional Argument; as thus; O my Brother, that which revives me in Priſon, and refreſhes my Bowels, now I am in Bonds, that aſſuredly thou oughteſt to do; but thy remitting and receiving *Oneſimus* will thus refreſh me, therefore do it. Whatever *Chriſtians* know, will rejoice the Hearts and revive the Spirits of one another, ought, in mutual Condeſcenſion and Kindneſs to be performed to one another, upon their mutual Requeſts.

Note alſo the Apoſtle's holy Confidence in *Philemon*'s Obedience and Compliance, *I know thou wilt do more than I ſay.* *Philemon*'s good Conſcience occaſioned St. *Paul*'s Confidence.

Q. *Does the Apoſtle aſk any Thing on his own Behalf?*

A. St. *Paul* having finiſhed his Requeſt to *Oneſimus*, ſpeaks a Word for himſelf; namely, that a Lodging may be prepared for him, hoping, it ſeems, for a Deliverance out of Priſon by the Help of the Church's Prayers. Religion is no Enemy to, but rather an Encourager of Hoſpitality; it is a Duty incumbent on all, eſpecially on Miniſter; but an unkind World takes Care that ſome have ſcarce Bread ſufficient for their Families, much leſs have any Ability for Hoſpitality, or indeed for thoſe neceſſary Acts of Charity which are required by God, and expected by Man, to render their Labours, among the People, both Acceptable and Succeſsful. The Miniſters of God, when they aſk Bread of ſome, they give them a Stone, and when they demand their Dues of others, they ſting like a Scorpion; but, bleſſed be God, it is not thus univerſally.

The Ground of St. *Paul*'s Deliverance from Priſon, was, the Help and Benefit of the Church's Prayers, *I truſt, through your Prayers, I ſhall be given to you*; though we obtain Bleſſings by Prayer, yet not by the Merit of Prayer. For, if Mercy were due to us, Thankfulneſs would not be due to God.

He concludes with a Prayer; *The Grace of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *be with thy Spirit*; that is, may the ſpecial Favour of God, both in its Effects and Influence, its Graces and Comforts, reſide in thy Soul and Spirit; may the bleſſed Spirit of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* evermore dwell in thee, by his ſanctifying Impreſſions, by his powerful Aſſiſtances, and quickning Influences.

Note, he doth not pray for *Philemon* ſolely, but for all the Saints at *Coloſes*, who had obtained the like precious Faith with him; the Grace of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* be with you, not with thy, but your Spirit: All the Saints of God in general; yea, the whole Race of Mankind univerſally, muſt be remember'd by us in our Prayers.

Amen, is a Word that denotes our earneſtneſs of Deſire to be heard, and our comfortable Expectation of being anſwer'd; it teaches us, that whatever we pray for ſhould be rightly underſtood, firmly expected, and earneſtly deſired. They ſin in Prayer, who either do not underſtand what they pray for, or do not earneſtly expect an Anſwer to their Prayer, or do not believe God's Readineſs to grant what they pray for: Therefore, in teſtimony of our Deſire and Aſſurance to be heard in Prayer, we ſay, *Amen*.

The Epiſtle of PAUL the Apoſtle,
TO THE
HEBREWS.

THIS Epiſtle *is generally thought to be written by* St. Paul; *and the Reaſon why he did not prefix his Name to it, as he does to others, is, becauſe he was the Apoſtle of the* Gentiles, *and not of the Circumciſion, or of the* Jews, *and his Name not being over-acceptable to them, he ſets it not in the front of this* Epiſtle, *leſt the ſight of it ſhould have prejudiced the* Jews, *and have taken them off from duly weighing and conſidering the weighty Matter which he wrote about.*

THE general Scope and Deſign of this Epiſtle, *is to inform the* Hebrews, *that the Goſpel-miniſtry, or Diſpenſation under the* New Teſtament *of* Jeſus Chriſt, *far ſurpaſſes and tranſcendently excells the Miniſtry of the* Old Teſtament *under* Moſes *and the Prophets*; *and to prove, that* Chriſt *was greater than the Angels, a greater Perſon and Law-giver than* Moſes, *a greater Prieſt than* Aaron, *a greater Prince than* Melchiſedec; *and that the Levitical Prieſthood, and old Covenant, were to give Place to* Chriſt, *our great High-Prieſt, and to the new Covenant, eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes.*

CHAP. I.

Former Manifeſtations, and this laſt by his Son, both aſſerted; and the Excellency of the Son ſet forth by his Perſon and Office; his Glory excelling that of Angels; his Throne divine and eternal; the Heaven and Earth made by him; he only ſits at the Right Hand of the Father; and the Angels are miniſtring Spirits for his Elect.

Q. *OUR Apoſtle in this Chapter, makes a Compariſon between the Law and the Goſpel: Pray what Difference is there betwixt them, and wherein do they agree?*

A. They agree in this, That God was the Author of them both; both Law and Goſpel received their Original from God himſelf; and God the Father by way of Eminency, was the peculiar Author both of Law and Goſpel. *God who ſpake in Times paſt by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt Days ſpoken to us by his Son.*

The Apoſtle next points out the Difference between the Law and the Goſpel, with reſpect to the Manner of their Revelation. The Revelation of the Will of God under the Law was made, 1. *At ſundry Times*, before the Flood, by *Enoch* and *Noah*; after by *Abraham*, by *Jacob*, *Moſes*, and all the Prophets. 2. *In divers Manners*, ſometimes by a lively Voice, at other Times by Dreams and Viſions, by Inſpiration and immediate Revelation, by *Urim* and *Thummim*, by Signs from Heaven. 3. *In Times paſt*; but the Revelation of the Goſpel was made in theſe *laſt Days*. The Revelation of the Law was made to the Fathers, this to us. 4. That Revelation was made by the Prophets, this by the Son *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Thus Almighty God did not leave the World only to the Light of Nature, and to know him barely by his Works of Creation; but beſtowed upon them the invaluable bleſſing of ſupernatural Revelation, thereby to bring Mankind to the clear Knowledge of their Duty.

Q. *In what Manner did he reveal his Will to Man?*

A. The Revelation which God was pleaſed to make of himſelf, his Mind and Will, was gradual, and by Parts, not all at one Time, nor in one manner, but at ſundry Times, and in divers manners.

The Goſpel-diſpenſation is the moſt perfect Revelation of the Will of God, which he ever did, or ever will make to the Sons of Men. A farther Diſcovery of the Mind of God for Man's Salvation is not to be expected; the Goſpel is the laſt Effort which the divine Mercy and Goodneſs will make upon Mankind, in order to eternal Happineſs; herein God has ſpoken to us by his Son, if we will not hear him, he will ſpeak no more, we muſt expect no other. If we deſpiſe him, whom will we reverence?

Q. *How is Chriſt the* Heir of all Things, *v.* 2?

A. The Title of Heir here given to *Chriſt*, ſets out his Dignity and Dominion, together with the Right he has to both; namely, that of his Sonſhip; for what is an Heir, but his Father's Succeſſor? *Chriſt* as a Son being Heir of all Things, imports that he is Lord of all, and has a ſovereign Empire and Dominion over all Perſons and Things, over all Angels and Men, whether living or dead.

Q. *In what Senſe did God, by* Chriſt, *make the World?*

A. By whom, not for whom, as the *Socinians* would ſuggeſt; the Word ſignifies the efficient, not the final Cauſe, according to *Coloſſ.* i. 16, 17. *By whom were all Things created, and by whom all Things conſiſt.* And by him, not as an Inſtrument or creating Cauſe; for then muſt he be created by himſelf, ſeeing *all Things were made by himſelf, and nothing made without him,* John i. 3. But as the principal efficient Cauſe, according to St. *John* v. 19. *Whatſoever the Father doth, that alſo doth the Son likewiſe.* The Father doth all by the Son, and the Son doth all from the Father.

By *making the Worlds,* underſtand his forming the old World, not his reforming of the new; for if ſo, the Apoſtles might be ſaid to make the Worlds as well as *Chriſt*, becauſe they had a principal Hand in converting and reforming the Worlds.

But by the Worlds here underſtand the viſible and material Worlds, all Things in Heaven and Earth, which were made by *Chriſt*, not as a ſubordinate Inſtrument, but as a principal and primary Agent, which ſets forth the Omnipotent Power of *Chriſt*, and conſequently proves him to be truly and really God.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle farther deſcribe the Divinity of* Chriſt's *Perſon?*

A. He deſcribes *Chriſt* as *the Brightneſs of the Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon.* As the Brightneſs of the Sun is of the ſame Nature with the Sun, and of as long Continuance as the Sun, and inſeparable from it; and yet the Sun, and its Brightneſs, are really diſtinct each from the other; in like manner the Father and the Son are of one and the ſame Eſſence, Co-eternal and inſeparable, yet the Perſon of the one is diſtinct from the other. And as the Sun communicates its Light and Influence to us by its Beams, ſo God communicates his Goodneſs, and manifeſts himſelf to us by *Jeſus Chriſt.*

And the expreſs Image of his Perſon; the expreſs Character of God the Father's Perſon, his natural Image, and eſſential Likeneſs; all the Perfections ſhining forth in God the Father are ſubſtantially in *Chriſt* the Son: Is the Father Eternal, Omnipotent, Omniſcient, Omnipreſent? So is the Son, whoſe Character he is, whoſe Reſemblance and Image he bears, *John* x. 38. *The Father is in me, and I in him;* the ſame eſſential Properties and Nature being in each Perſon, by Virtue whereof their Perſons are ſaid to be in each other. All the glorious Perfections of the Nature of God belong unto, and dwell in the Son of God.

Q. *How does he* uphold all Things by the Word of his Power, *v.* 3?

A. That is, he exerts and puts forth the ſame Omnipotent Power in the Work of Preſervation, which he did in the Work of Creation, keeping it from ſinking into its original Chaos of Confuſion. This Work of Conſervation, ſay ſome, is a greater Act of Omnipotence than that of Creation; by the latter, all Things were brought out of nothing; by the former, they are preſerved from falling into nothing, which their own Nature, and their perpetual Conflict by Contrariety of Qualities would neceſſarily precipitate them into.

Our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* has the Weight of the whole Creation upon his Hand, he upholds what himſelf created; and as well his upholding as creating, his Conſervation as well as Creation of all Things by the Word of his Power, prove him truly and really God.

Another Proof the Divinity of *Chriſt* here produced, is, as he made and upholds the World, ſo he redeemed it by his Blood; *He himſelf purged our Sins.* He that made the Heavens, bowed the Heavens, came down, and became a Sacrifice for Sin on Earth, and by himſelf alone, without a Comforter, expiated the Guilt of Sin, and ſatisfied the Juſtice of God for Sin, ſuffering as he was Man, and ſatisfying as he was God.

Q. *How are we to underſtand that Expreſſion,* He ſat down own on the Right Hand of the Majeſty on high?

A. That is, God the Father cloathed him with the higheſt Honour, and inveſted him with the greateſt Power that Heaven itſelf could afford; the Right Hand is the Place both of Dignity and Honour, and alſo of Superiority, and Power; *Chriſt's* ſitting at God's Right Hand, imports his Exaltation to the higheſt Authority and moſt ſupreme Dominion.

Q. *In what Reſpects is* Chriſt *ſuperior to the Angels?*

A. *He hath obtained a more excellent Name than they,* they being called Miniſters or Servants, he ſtiled a Son.

He has likewiſe a more excellent Nature, his being a Divine, theirs an angelical Nature; yea, his human Nature, by Virtue of its Union with the Godhead, has a Dignity ſurpaſſing the Nature of Angels.

His is a more refined Office and Function than theirs, as Mediator between God and Man, which belongs not to an Angel, and conſequently, he has a more excellent Power and Power and Authority, with Adoration and Worſhip, which the Angels have not, but are commanded to Worſhip; *when he brought his Firſt-begotten into the World,* that is, in the Morning of the Reſurrection, when he was in a glorious Manner begotten from the Dead; the Father ſays, *Let all the Angels of God worſhip him.*

Our Apoſtle goes on with his Compariſon betwixt *Chriſt* and the Angels. The Angels are miniſtring Servants, but *Chriſt* a Son; the Angels are the prime Inſtruments of the Father's Providence, moſt zealous and active to accompliſh his Pleaſure, but the Son is God; *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* God, not by Analogy and Deputation, as Princes are; not with a Limitation and Diminution, as *Moſes* was made a God to *Pharaoh*, but abſolutely and really, as ſubſiſting in the divine Nature; to the Son he ſaith, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

Hence learn, that it is the divine Nature of *Jeſus Chriſt* that gives Stability and Fixedneſs, yea, Immutability and Unchangeableneſs to his Throne and Kingdom. And whereas the Scepters of earthly Kings are often unrighteouſly managed, and their Thrones fall to Ruin; the Scepter of Righteouſneſs is the Scepter of *Chriſt's* Kingdom; that is, all the Laws, and the whole Adminiſtration of his Kingdom by his Word and Spirit are all juſt and equal, righteous and holy; *A Scepter of Righteouſneſs is the Scepter of thy Kingdom.*

Q. *What do you farther obſerve upon the Dignity of* Chriſt's *Perſon?*

A. The Apoſtle declares, that the righteous Adminiſtration of *Chriſt* in his Kingdom, proceeds from his own habitual Righteouſneſs and Love thereunto; *Thou haſt loved Righteouſneſs, and hated Iniquity,* and for that Reaſon he was dignified and exalted by God over and above all his Fellows.

What ſtronger Proof can be given or deſired of *Chriſt's* Divinity than what we find in the 10th to the 12th Verſes? The Name and Attributes of God are given to him, as alſo an everlaſting Throne and Kingdom, divine Honour is required to be paid to him: And here ſuch divine Works are aſcribed to him, wherein no Creature can have any Share of Efficiency with him; ſuch is the making of the World, *Thou Lord laidſt the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Works of thy Hands.* Here we have *Chriſt's* Omnipotence declared; as alſo his Eternity and Immutability aſſerted; *When the Heavens periſh, thou remaineſt; when they wax old and are changed, thou art the ſame.*

Hence learn, that the whole World, the Heavens and the Earth being made by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, 'tis an evident Proof that he is exalted above all Creatures, and that he is an Almighty and unchangeable God.

Such is the Frailty of Man's Nature, and ſuch the periſhing Condition of all created Things, that nothing will or can yield us laſting Conſolation, but a firm Belief of the Omnipotence and Immutability of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *Does he give any other Inſtance of* Chriſt's *Superiority to the Angels?*

A. The 13th Verſe contains a farther Proof of *Chriſt's* Preeminence above the Angels, and that he is in Reality the Son of God; namely, becauſe he ſits in the Quality of a Son, at the Right Hand of God the Father; equal to him in Dignity, Power and Glory, commanding all the viſible and inviſible World, moſt eaſily; yet irreſiſtibly, tho' gradually, ſubduing his Enemies to a conſummated and compleat Victory.

To which of the Angels ſaid he at any Time? The Words are an Interrogation, which have the Force of a vehement Negation, and imply, that God the Father did never ſay this to any of the Angels, nor put ſuch Honour upon any of them, as to ſay, Sit on my Right Hand till I make thy Foes thy Footſtool; but to *Chriſt* he ſaid it, *Pſ.* cx. 1.

Hence learn, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is a ſpiritual King; and as ſuch he has many Enemies to his Kingdom and Government. Sin is an Enemy to *Chriſt* and his Kingdom; and makes an univerſal Oppoſition to *Chriſt* and his Government. *Satan* is a ſworn Enemy to *Chriſt* and his Throne, and he exerts Enmity by Temptations and Perſecutions. The World is alſo an Enemy in the Things of it, in the Men of it, in the Rule of it. The Law is an Enemy to *Chriſt* and his Kingdom, not abſolutely but accidentally, by Reaſon of the Conſequences that attend it: It ſlays them, *Rom.* vii. 9, 10, 11. which is the Work of an Enemy. In a Word, Death, the Grave, and Hell, are *Chriſt's* Enemies.

But all theſe Enemies of *Chriſt* ſhall, in his due Time, be made his Footſtool; they are conquering now initially, and gradually, they ſhall be conquer'd e're long finally and perfectly; and all his People ſhall be made compleat Sharers in his Victory and Conqueſt.

The laſt Argument to prove *Chriſt's* Pre-eminency above the Angels, is, He is a Son, they are but Servants; not only Servants to *Chriſt*, but to Believers, to the Church of *Chriſt*, to the Heirs of Salvation.

Q. *What is the Nature of Angels, and how are they employed?*

A. They are Spirits, without any thing material belonging to them, yet have Power to aſſume a Body, and appear in human Shape, when they pleaſe. The Scripture deſcribes them as excelling in Strength, Purity and Holineſs, to be of great Activity and Swiftneſs, gives Intimation of ſeveral Ranks and Orders among them, diſtinguiſhing them, by the Names of Principalities and Powers, Thrones and Dominions; but what is the different import of theſe Names, none can poſitively declare.

They are miniſtring Spirits; they are God's Domeſtick Servants, they attend his Throne, and expect his Commands, execute his Pleaſure, and are the great Inſtruments of Providence in the World; not as though God cannot manage without them; but his Wiſdom and Goodneſs thinks fit to honour his Creatures with his Commands, that ſo they may be capable of his Favours and Rewards.

The Special Office and Employment of good Angels, with Reference to good Men, is, they *are ſent forth to miniſter for the Heirs of Salvation*, that is their peculiar Buſineſs; they have a Charge of the Bodies and Souls of the Saints whilſt alive; a ſpecial Charge of their Souls at Death to conduct them to Bleſſedneſs, and probably a Care and Charge of their Bodies after Death, as may be gathered from St. *Jude*, verſe 9.

Here behold the Impiety of the Church of *Rome*, in worſhipping of Angels: Surely if they are our Fellow-Servants, and miniſter unto us, we by no Means to worſhip them.

CHAP. II.

Greater Reverence due to the Goſpel, than to the Law. Chriſt, *not Angels, conſtituted Head and King of this new World.* Chriſt *Partaker of the ſame Nature and Affections with us; proved from Scripture and Reaſon; that he might be a Captain of Salvation, ſanctify his Brethren, deſtroy their Enemies, deliver them; and be a faithful and merciful High Prieſt for us.*

Q. HOW *does St.* Paul *here farther exalt* Chriſt *in Preference to* Moſes?

A. The Apoſtle having demonſtrably proved, in the foregoing Chapter, that *Chriſt*, the Diſpenſer to the Angels themſelves, comes in the Beginning of this, to draw an Inference from his preceding Diſcourſe, *therefore we ought to give the more earneſt Heed*, &c. as if he had ſaid, Seeing *Chriſt* is ſo excellent in his Perſon, and that the Goſpel has ſuch a glorious Author as the bleſſed *Jeſus*, let us take Heed that we eſteem his Perſon, revere his Authority, reverence his Miniſtry and Meſſage, and that our Memories be not like leaky Veſſels, ſuffering the Word to ſlip from us.

The true and and only Way of honouring our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, as the Son of God, is by diligent Attendance and Obedience to his Word; where there is no Obedience to the Goſpel, there is no Faith in, nor Love unto *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Author and Diſpenſer of the Goſpel.

Q. *What is the Conſequence of letting* the Word ſlip after we have heard it?

A. The Word here is not loſt without great Sin, as well as with the inevitable Ruin of the Souls of Men. If we ſuffer the Word to ſlip out of our Memories that we forget it; out of our Hearts, that we deſpiſe it; out of our Lives, that we are diſobedient to it, it is loſt as to us, and will end in our Loſs, and our Ruin at the laſt.

The only Way to prevent this Sin and Danger, under the Word, is by a very diligent Attendance upon it, and giving an earneſt Heed to the Things contained in it. This Conſideration, that it is the Word of *Chriſt*, the great and mighty God, the Wiſdom of the Father, would engage us to give the more earneſt Heed to the Things we hear, *leſt at any Time we ſhould let them ſlip.*

Q. *How do you underſtand the Apoſtles Argument, ver.* 2. For if the Word ſpoken by Angels, *&c.*

A. That is, If the Law given by the Miniſtry of Angels was firm and inviolable, and all the Tranſgreſſors of it were juſtly and ſeverely puniſh'd; how can we eſcape periſhing, if we neglect the Goſpel which makes a Diſcovery of that Salvation which was purchas'd by *Chriſt* for loſt Sinners: The Apoſtle's Argument is drawn from the leſs to the greater. Thus if Almighty God was ſo ſevere againſt the Violation of a far meaner Inſtitution, namely, the Law given by the Miniſtry and Diſpenſation of Angels, how can we eſcape, if we neglect to hear and obey the Goſpel, which makes the only Tender of Salvation to a loſt World?

Note, that the Salvation tender'd by *Chriſt* to loſt Sinners, is a great Salvation; great in its Author *Chriſt Jeſus*; great in the Price paid for it, the Blood of *Jeſus*; great in the Subject recipient of it, the whole Man, Soul and Body; great in regard of the Evils it ſaves us from, Sin, Satan, the Curſe of the Law, Death and Hell; great in Reſpect of the gracious Privileges it intereſts Believers in.

Q. *But what is that which they ſhall not eſcape who neglect it?*

A. They ſhall not eſcape the Curſe of the Law, the Wrath of God, the Sentence of *Chriſt* denounced, and inflicted.

Q. *But why ſhall they not eſcape?*

A. Becauſe ſuch Perſons ſin againſt the Remedy, the only Remedy which the Wiſdom of God hath found out for Man's Recovery; ſuch as ſin againſt Light, ſhall periſh without a Remedy.

The ſpecial Reaſon aſſigned, why ſuch as reject the Goſpel cannot eſcape divine Wrath, is, becauſe the Goſpel was firſt publiſh'd and deliver'd by *Jeſus Chriſt*; it was clearly plainly, ſweetly, and perſuaſively preached by him firſt. The Law was promulgated by Angels, the Goſpel by the Son of God, and afterwards by his Apoſtles; and God confirmed their Teſtimony by Signs and Wonders, by miraculous Powers, and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and gave the World a Confirmation of the Truth and Excellency of it, and conſequently gave Credibility to it.

But though the Apoſtles had a Power to work Miracles, yet it was *according to God's Will*, and not to their own Pleaſure; they could not work when they pleas'd; when it was evident that not they, but God was the Worker of them. And the more God's over-ruling Will was ſeen in the Miracles then, the greater Confirmation have we of that Doctrine now, *which (Goſpel) was at firſt ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Q. *But why were the* Hebrews *to pay a greater Regard to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, than to the Law deliver'd by Angels?*

A. Becauſe God had given *Chriſt* greater Authority than ever he did to the Angels, as appears by putting the World to come in Subjection to *Chriſt*, and not to Angels; yea, in as much as Angels themſelves are to be in Subjection to *Chriſt*, as a Part of his Kingdom; *unto the Angels hath he not put in Subjection the World to come*; that is, the World of Believers gather'd out of all Nations by the preaching of the Goſpel, is put under *Chriſt's* immediate Power, and ſubject not to Angels, but to *Chriſt* himſelf. And this is the great Privilege of the Goſpel-Church, that it depends upon *Chriſt* as its immediate and only Head, and is not in Subjection to any other, either Angels or Men.

Note farther, the Proof the Apoſtle brings for this from *Pſalm* 8. in which *David* breaks forth into Admiration and Wonder, at that Glory and Honour which God the Father put upon Man at firſt in the Work of Creation, and next to the Work of Redemption; when the Son of God took the Nature of Man upon him, well might it then be ſaid, *Lord! what is Man that thou (wert thus) mindful of him*, and the Sons of Men, that thy dear and only Son did thus viſit them?

Such was the inconceivable Love of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Son of God, towards the Sons of Men, that he was free and willing to condeſcend unto any Condition for their Benefit and Salvation; he that was the Creator of Angels was willing, for our Sakes, to be made lower than the Angels; *a little lower,* that is, for a little Time; namely, during the Time of his Humiliation; this is juſt Matter of great and eternal Admiration.

Q. *How does he deſcribe* Chriſt's *Exaltation?*

A. We had before an Account of the Depth of *Chriſt*'s Humiliation, next is deſcribed the Height of his Exaltation, all Things are and ſhall be put under him; for though God has given *Chriſt* Dominion over all Things, and all Things are ſubject to his Power, yet he hath not as yet exercis'd his compleat Power, in ruining all his Enemies, and reducing all his People to Subjection; and this will not be ſeen till the laſt Saint be converted, and till Death, the laſt Enemy, be deſtroy'd: But yet, in the mean Time, *Chriſt* is exalted with great Triumph to his Kingdom in Heaven, and there crown'd with Dignity and Honour, and Glory in Heaven. 'Tis eaſy to believe, that every thing ſhall be put under him that riſeth up againſt him, in his own appointed Time.

Q. *Wherein conſiſted* Chriſt's *Humiliation?*

A. Obſerve next the wonderful Humiliation of the glorious *Jeſus*; he was made for a little Time *lower than the Angels*; that is, he was made Man, and mortal, and ſuffer'd Death; *he taſted Death*; that is, he really died; his taſting implies that he underwent the Bitterneſs of it.

Again; he did but taſte it, he was not finally overcome and vanquiſh'd by it; he continued but a ſhort Time under it, it was not poſſible he ſhould be holden of it; the Dignity of his Perſon render'd a ſhort Continuance under the Power of Death ſufficient for our Redemption.

He died for others, not for himſelf, that is, in their Room and Stead; he underwent that Death which we ſhould have undergone in our own Perſons.

He taſted Death *for every Man*; *Chriſt* by his Death has made God propitious to every Man, made Sin remiſſible, and every Man ſaveable; the Death of *Chriſt* renders God willing to be reconciled to all Sinners; Faith renders him actually reconciled. The Reaſon why every Man does not obtain Salvation, is not for want of a ſufficient Propitiation.

Q. *But why did God ſuffer his Son to be thus uſed?*

A. The moving Cauſe which inclined God to deliver *Chriſt* to Death, and to transfer our Puniſhment upon him, was his own Grace and free Goodwill, *that he by the Grace of God ſhould taſte Death for every Man*; and the glorious Reward of our Saviour's Sufferings with Reference to himſelf, *we ſee* Jeſus *for ſuffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour.* As *Chriſt's* meritorious Suffering for us, ſo ſhall our patient Sufferings for him, be rewarded with the higheſt Glory in Heaven.

Q. *Why is* Chriſt *called* the Captain of our Salvation?

A. Becauſe the whole Work of Salvation, from firſt to laſt, our Guidance and Conduct through Sin and Suffering unto Glory and Happineſs, is committed to him. As a Captain he conducts with Care, leads on with Power, and diſcharges his Truſt with Tenderneſs and Love; he goes before us in Obedience, in Suffering, through Death, and into Glory.

Q. *How was* Chriſt made perfect through Sufferings?

A. That is, he was conſecrated and ſet apart for the Office of a compleat Prieſt by his own Blood, when he offered himſelf without Spot to God. Every Levitical Prieſt was conſecrated by his own Blood, for no other would be accepted. It is called the Father's Act to conſecrate and make him perfect; but indeed it was the Son's immediate Act; the Father's by Appointment, but his own by actual Performance.

Q. *How does* Chriſt's *being conſecrated and perfected though Sufferings, conſecrate the Way of Sufferings for all his Followers?*

A. Upon this Conſequence of the Way of ſuffering by *Chriſt*, a Believer's Suffering becomes, 1. Neceſſary and unavoidable, the Head and Members muſt be conformable to each other. 2. They are thereby made uſeful and profitable, *Chriſt* has taken the Curſe out of the Croſs, and ſanctified the Croſs to a ſpecial End and Purpoſe. 4. All Sufferings for the Goſpel are hereby made honourable; no greater Honour than to ſuffer for *Chriſt*. Laſtly, Sufferings are hereby made ſafe to the Sons of God, yea, ſafer than Proſperity itſelf. Gold is not conſumed, but improv'd and preſerved in the Furnace.

It became him for whom are all Things; it would have been unbecoming God, the ſupreme Governor of the World, to have paſſed by the Foulneſs of Sin without a Satiſfaction; his Wiſdom contriv'd that Grace ſhould be exercis'd, and juſtify'd, that that Sin ſhould be puniſh'd and Mercy magnify'd; that Sinners ſhould be ſaved, and the Glory of all Attributes ſecur'd.

Q. *What comes next under the Apoſtle's Conſideration?*

A. The Apoſtle next declares the Union of *Chriſt* and us, by his Participation of the ſame Nature with us, he and we *are all of one*; that is, of one and the ſame Nature, of one Stock and Original; it was the Product of the wiſe, righteous and merciful Counſel of God, that the Saviour of Men ſhould have Communion with them in their Nature, that he might have a Right to redeem them by his Propinquity and Alliance with them; *both he that ſanctified, and they that are ſanctified, are all of one.*

Chriſt having taken our Nature upon him, counts it no Diſgrace to acknowledge and own us for his Brethren; but ſuch as are a Shame unto him. Yet note, that though *Chriſt* calls us Brethren, it becomes us to call him Lord; and as ſuch to adore and worſhip him, to glorify and ſerve him, to honour and obey him.

Q. *Why did* Chriſt *condeſcend to take our Nature upon him?*

A. That he might deſtroy the Devil, who had the Power of Death, and deliver his People who were under the ſlaviſh Fear of Death.

The Devil is here deſcribed as having the Power of Death; not the ſupream, but a ſubordinate Power of Death; a Power of Death, as God's Executioner to inflict it; juſt as the Hangman has the Power of the Gallows, to put thoſe to Death whom the Judge condemns only. Him who thus had the Power of Death has *Chriſt* deſtroy'd, not his Being, but deſpoil'd him of his Power and Authority over the Children of God. This *Chriſt* did by his own Death on the Croſs, when he ſpoil'd Principalities and Powers.

2. The ſecond Reaſon of *Chriſt's* appearing in our Nature was, to deliver his People from the Slavery and Bondage of the ſinful and ſervile fears of Death. But note, there is a natural Fear of Death which is not ſinful. He is not a Man who is not afraid of Death. There muſt be in Nature an Averſion to its own Diſſolution; and Nature will always act like itſelf. Yet there is a ſlaviſh Fear of Death which hath both Sin and Torment in it; a Fear of Death as penal, and drawing after it everlaſting Puniſhment. It will daunt the ſtouteſt Man that ever liv'd, to look upon Death when he can ſee nothing but Hell beyond it.

Jeſus Chriſt by dying has taken away the true Reaſon of the Fear of Death, namely, the Curſe and Condemnation of the Law of God; and has aſſured Believers that they ſhall not be Loſers but Gainers by Death, conſidering the private Evils they are freed from, and the poſitive Good they ſhall reſt in.

Q. *How do you you underſtand that Expreſſion, v.* 16. For verily he took not on him the Nature of Angels?

A. The Original may be render'd thus, *he catched not hold on Angels, but on Man he catched hold.* A Metaphor taken from a Perſon that catcheth hold of another who is falling down ſome ſteep and dangerous Precipice, to his inevitable Deſtruction. Such a good and kind Office did the Son of God for us, though he ſuffered Angels to fall head long from that State of Happineſs in which they were created, into that abyſs and gulph of Miſery into which they plunged themſelves by their own voluntary Tranſgreſſion; into the like of which Man had alſo been plunged, had he not been ſeaſonably catch'd by the Son of God in the arms of preventing Grace and Mercy.

Q. *But why would not* Chriſt *take upon him the Nature of Angels?*

A. Probably, becauſe they were the firſt Tranſgreſſors, and God might judge it decent that the firſt Breach of the divine Law ſhould be puniſhed with Death, to ſecure Obedience for the future; or, becauſe the Angels ſinned without a Tempter; or, becauſe they ſinned againſt more clear and convictive Light and Knowledge; there was nothing of Weakneſs, Deceit or Ignorance, to leſſen the Malignity of their Sin; they did not ſin by Miſperſuaſion, but of purpoſed Malice. But after all, the Reaſon why *Chriſt* took not hold on Angels, but on Man, the Seed of *Abraham*, muſt be ultimately reſolved into the Soveiegnty of God's Will, who will be merciful to whom he will be merciful. And we ſhall never fully underſtand the Riches of this diſcriminating Grace, till our Redeemer ſhall appear at the great Day, as their Judge, and our Juſtifier; then ſhall we feel the Comfort of theſe Words, that *Chriſt took not upon him the Nature of Angels; but the Seed of* Abraham.

Q. *What was* Chriſt's *ſpecial Deſign and End in becoming our great High Prieſt?*

A. The *Socinians* therefore, who deny the Satiſfaction of *Chriſt*, and his dying as a propitiatory Sacrifice for Sin, would take from us our Hopes and Happineſs; from *Chriſt*, his Office and Honour; from God, his Grace and Glory; they indeed allow a Reconciliation in Words, but it was of Men to God, and not of God to Men; they plead the Expediency of our being reconciled to God by Faith and Obedience, but deny the Neceſſity of God's being reconciled to us by Sacrifice, Satiſfaction, and Atonement; ſo reſolved are theſe Men to be as little as may be beholden to *Jeſus Chriſt*, that, rather than grant that he has made any Reconciliation for us by his Blood, they deny that there was any need of ſuch a Reconciliation at all, never conſidering the Inflexibility of God's Juſtice, nor the Impartiality of his Indignation againſt ſin.

CHAP. III.

Chriſt *the great Prophet and Doctor of the Church, and infinitely greater than* Moſes. *The* Hebrews *are exhorted to Faith, Obedience, and Perſeverance in the Goſpel of* Chriſt, *that they may enter into the promiſed Reſt.*

Q. WHY *does the Apoſtle call the* Hebrews holy Brethren?

A. So they were all by external Profeſſion and many of them, no doubt, by internal Sanctification. Thus all the Profeſſors of the Goſpel are obliged to be holy.

Q. *And* Partakers of the heavenly Calling?

A. That is, of that Calling from Heaven which makes you Heirs of Heaven; implying, that the only Way to attain the ſaving Knowledge of *Chriſt* in the Goſpel, is by means of an effectual heavenly Calling.

Q. *How were they to* conſider of *Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. That is, rationally attend unto, and with great Attention of Mind ponder upon the Undertaking of the Son of God; for if you conſider him in his Perſon and Offices, you will firmly adhere to him in his moſt holy and excellent Religion, without the Intanglements of Judaiſm.

The Title given to *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Object of this Conſideration, is, *the Apoſtle and High Prieſt of our Profeſſion*; that is, the firſt and chief Apoſtle ſent of God to be the prime Preacher of the Goſpel; the firſt Legate ſent from Heaven, and the great High Prieſt that mediates between God and Man.

The Functions of an Apoſtle and High Prieſt are the greateſt that ever God inſtituted in the Church; none greater than High-Prieſt under the Law, none greater than an Apoſtle under the Goſpel, both of them never conjoined in one Man, but here. So that the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is all unto his Church, the King, Prieſt, Prophet, and Apoſtle of it all in one.

Q. *Why does he make a Compariſon between* Moſes *and* Chriſt?

A. The *Jews* having generally too high an Opinion of *Moſes*, our Apoſtle, Verſe 2. enters upon a Compariſon *Chriſt* and *Moſes*, thus: As *Moſes* was faithful, ſo was *Chriſt* in declaring the whole Will of God unto his Church: Was *Moſes* univerſally faithful in all his Houſe? So did the Faithfulneſs of *Chriſt* extend itſelf to all his Church. Did *Moſes* do every thing according to the Inſtitution and Appointment of God? So was *Chriſt* faithful to him that appointed him, doing all that in and for the Church, which God had commanded him, and nothing elſe.

Thus the Worſhip of God in his Holineſs and Family, the Church, is no leſs perfectly and compleatly ordered and ordained by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, now under the Goſpel, than it was by

Moſes of Old under the Law, as to the Subſtance of it, not as to every particular Circumſtance. As thus, the manner of celebrating the Paſſover in every minute Circumſtance of it is ſet down by *Moſes*, how it muſt be killed, and how eaten; but *Chriſt* has not ſet down ſo for the Sacrament: A general Command we have to do this in Remembrance of him; but neither the Time when, nor the Place where, nor Geſture in which, is particularly and expreſsly mentioned. The Goſpel, which teaches us a more ſpiritual way of ſerving God, is not ſo particular in the Circumſtantials of Worſhip as the Law was, and *yet* Chriſt *was faithful to him that appointed him, as* Moſes *was faithful in all his Houſe.*

Q. *Wherein does he inſtance the Superiority of* Chriſt *to* Moſes?

A. *This Man*, meaning the *Meſſiah*, *was counted worthy of more Glory than* Moſes, &c. As if he had ſaid, *Chriſt* is as much more honourable than *Moſes*, as the Maker and Maſter of the Houſe is more honourable than the Houſe: He that builds the Houſe hath more Honour than the Houſe; but *Chriſt* built the Houſe, and *Moſes* was only of the Houſe, or a Part of it; therefore *Chriſt* ought to have more Honour than *Moſes*, for all Families or Houſes are founded by ſome Man; but he that built the Church is the ſame that made all Things, namely God.

Another Propoſition proving the ſame Concluſion, is, He that is a Son over his own Houſe, is of more Honour than a Servant in the Houſe of another. But *Chriſt* is a Son over his own Houſe: *Moſes* was only a Servant in the Houſe of another; therefore more Honour is due to *Chriſt* than is payable to *Moſes*.

Hence learn, that the Building of the Church is ſo great and glorious a Work, as that it could not be effected by any but him who was truly and really God. Such is the Wiſdom of its Contrivance, that none but a God could build it, and ſuch Omnipotent Power was required in the building of it, that we may admire its Excellency, but cannot comprehend it; therefore is *Chriſt*, the Builder of his Church, worthy of all Honour and Glory on account thereof.

Whoſe Houſe are we; that is, Believers who worſhip him according to the Goſpel, are ſo upon this Condition, *that we hold faſt our Confidence*; that is, the confident Profeſſion of our *Chriſtian* Faith, and the Joy and glorying in our Hopes of the promiſed Bleſſedneſs unto the End.

Q. *What is the next Duty exhorted to?*

A. The Apoſtle next adviſes the *Hebrews*, that they do not imitate the *Iſraelites* in their Unbelief, which would endanger their Revolt from God, now, as it did theirs; *Take Heed leſt there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

Note, Sin is a Departure from God, the Root of all Apoſtiaſy is curſed Infidelity; this ſets all the corrupt Luſts and Affections of the Heart at Liberty, to act according to their perverſe Nature and Inclination; for it makes the Soul negligent, careleſs, and ſlothful in oppoſing Sin

Farther; there is great need of Care and Heedfulneſs, Circumſpection and Watchfulneſs, leſt at any Time, or by any Means, there ſhould be found in us an evil Heart of Unbelief, to occaſion a Backſliding from *Chriſt*, and the Profeſſion of our Faith in him.

Q. *But how are we to guard againſt the Sin of Apoſtaſy?*

A. The Words in the 13th Verſe afford a ſpecial Remedy againſt the forementioned evil of Apoſtaſy, and that is mutual Exhortation to Conſtancy of Religion; *Exhort one another*, Miniſters the People, and themſelves mutually.

The Duty is amplified by the Properties of it, it muſt be frequently, and daily; likewiſe ſeaſonably, *whilſt it is called to-day*. We have but an uncertain Seaſon for the due Performance of moſt certain Duties; how long it will be called To-day we know not; the Day of Life is uncertain, and ſo is the Day of the Goſpel; a Summer's Day for Clearneſs, a Winter's Day for Shortneſs; our Working-day is a Waſting-day.

Note the great Danger attending the Neglect of this Duty; *Leſt any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulneſs of Sin.* There are three eminent Evils in Sin; Pollution, by which it defiles; Baſeneſs by which it diſhonours; Deceitfulneſs, by which it deludes us with a falſe Expectation of what it is never able to perform.

If then we perſevere in the Faith of the Goſpel, we ſhall hereby declare ourſelves to be made Partakers of *Chriſt* and his ſaving Benefits; intimating that ſuch *Chriſtians* as renounce the Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*, either through Fear or Flattery, were never made Partakers of *Chriſt*, not ſavingly united to him; no better Evidence of our Intereſt in *Chriſt*, than what Perſeverance gives.

Q. *What is particularly obſervable in this Exhortation?*

A. The Apoſtle's Intention in the 15th and following Verſes, is to confirm his preceeding Exhortation, to hearken to the Voice of *Chriſt*, ſpeaking in and by the Goſpel; and this he does by propounding the Example of the *Iſraelites* who came forth out of *Egypt* under the Conduct of *Moſes*, and heard the Voice of God in the Wilderneſs; howbeit all did not provoke, but only ſome.

Note farther, the Privilege which the *Iſraelites* of old enjoyed in the Wilderneſs, and which we now enjoy under the Goſpel; both theirs and ours is this, *To hear the Voice of God.* This is a very great Privilege, and Privileges as Men uſe them; in themſelves they are very valuable, but to us they are no more than they are prized and improved by us. Many, yea, moſt of thoſe to whom *Chriſt* preached, finally periſhed, they got nothing by hearing his Doctrine, through their Unbelief, but an Aggravation of their Sins, and haſtening of their Ruin. *Chriſt* in his whole Miniſtry was a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence to both the Houſes of *Iſrael*. Let not Miniſters be diſcouraged at the Smalneſs of their own Succeſs; knowing that they ſhall be a ſweet Savour unto God, as well in them that periſh, as in them that are ſaved.

In the moſt general and viſible Apoſtaſy of the Church, God ever reſerves a Remnant to himſelf, to bear witneſs for himſelf by their Faith and Obedience; *They provoked.*

Q. *But with whom was he grieved forty Years?*

A. Here obſerve the Party grieved, God; the the Parties grieving, the People of *Iſrael*; the Time of both forty Years; the Occaſion of this

Grief, Sin in general, Unbelief in particular, Hardneſs of Heart, and final Apoſtaſy; the Puniſhment of their Sin, *Their Carcaſes fell in the Wilderneſs.*

Publick Sin, or the Sins of Societies, are great Provocations to God; it was not for their private and perſonal Sins that God was ſo provoked, but for their Confederacy in ſinning.

Q. *What is farther to be noted in Relation to God's Dealings with the* Iſraelites?

A. The Reſt ſpoken of, Verſe 18. is in the Land of *Canaan*, to plant and ſettle his Poſterity in it; and becauſe it typified Heaven, that eternal Reſt which God had promiſed to his Saints, into this Reſt the unbelieving *Jews* muſt not enter; God ſware the Contrary, he ſware by himſelf, he ſware in his Wrath, he ſware to make his Sentence irrevocable and immutable.

God's Oath ſtands as a Bar againſt all unbelieving Sinners at this Day, as it did againſt the *Iſraelites* of Old, and cuts off all Hope of future Entrance into his eternal Reſt, which they have eternally forfeited; *To whom ſware he that they ſhould not enter into his Reſt, but to them that believed not?*

Hence learn, that Unbelief is the immediate Root and Cauſe of all provoking Sins. Did Men believe the Happineſs of Heaven, they would not neglect it; did they believe the Torments of Hell, they would avoid them.

Learn alſo, that the Oath of God is engaged againſt all Unbelief, and no Unbeliever ſhall enter into the Reſt of God. *We ſee they could not enter in, becauſe of Unbelief.*

Chap. IV.

There is a Reſt into which Believers enter, and from which others are excluded. This Reſt is not that of the ſeventh Day, nor that in the Land of Canaan, *but in Heaven. The Power of God's Word. By our High-Prieſt we go boldly to the Throne of Grace*

Q. *PRAY give an Expoſition of the firſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. *Let us fear*; it is wiſe and ſafe for the Miniſters of God to include themſelves in the Exhortations and Admonitions which they give to others; for they need Excitement, and the Means of Eſtabliſhment as well as others. By Fear here, the Apoſtle means a Fear of Care, of Diligence, and Circumſpection; *Let us fear leſt we come ſhort and fail.* Fear is a good Monitor, and the beſt Preſervative againſt Sin.

Leſt a Promiſe being left us of entring into his Reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it. It is a Matter of great and tremendous Conſequence, to have the Promiſes of God propounded to us; they are either a Savour of Life unto Life, or of Death unto Death; one of theſe two will certainly be the Conſequence of their Propoſal. God will demand a ſtrict Account of the Sons of Men, of the Entertainment given to his Promiſes and Threatnings.

But the falling of Men, through Unbelief, no way cauſes the Promiſe of God to fail or ceaſe; his Veracity is engaged for the Stability of his Promiſe; ſo that though Men, by their Unbelief, may diſappoint themſelves of their Expectation, yet they cannot bereave God of his Faithfulneſs.

Q. *What do you obſerve from the Words in the ſecond Verſe?*

A. That the Goſpel is no new Doctrine, no new Law, but one and the ſame to all Perſons, and at all Times, ever ſince the firſt Publication of it, in the original Promiſe, *Gen.* iii. 15. It is the ſame in Subſtance, though not for Clearneſs of Revelation; the ſame Goſpel was preached to *Adam*, to *Abraham*, and to the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, which was preached by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, but with clearer Light, Evidence, and Power in the Adminiſtration of it.

Q. *How happened it that* the Word preached did not profit?

A. From the Beginning it has been ſo, partly through Careleſſneſs, and want of due Attention in the Hearers, and partly for want of Meditation upon, and particular Application of the Word unto themſelves, after they have heard it; partly through the Neglect of Prayer for a Bleſſing upon the Word they hear; for theſe and the like Cauſes, the Word preached did not, nor does profit.

Unbelief is the great Cauſe of that Unprofitableneſs which is found in the Word preached, by withholding Men from yielding their Aſſent to the Truths they hear, by hindering them from applying the Word they hear to their own Conſciences.

The Word then only profits when it is a mixed Word. The original Word is a Metaphor taken either from Seed, from Meat, or from Phyſick. As Seed muſt be mixed with the Soil, and with the Dew and Rain of Heaven, or it will never grow; or as Meat, muſt be mixed with the Stomach, or it will not nouriſh; and as Phyſick muſt meet and mix with the Humours, put the Patient to ſome Pain, or it will never cure; ſo muſt the Word be rooted in the Heart, or it will never fructify in the Life; it muſt be mixed with Faith, Love, Humility, and Patience, or it will never bring forth Fruit with Joy.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle enforce his Counſel?*

A. There is a Reſt, ſays he, promiſed to us Believers, as well as the typical Reſt, *Canaan*, was promiſed to the *Iſraelites*. The State of Believers under the Goſpel, is a State of bleſſed Reſt. There is a ſpiritual Reſt which Believers obtain Entrance into by *Jeſus Chriſt*, in the Faith and Worſhip of the Goſpel, beſides their eternal Reſt in Heaven. This ſpiritual Reſt conſiſts of Peace with God, in Satisfaction and Acquieſcence in God, and in the Means of Communion with God.

As I have ſworn in my Wrath, if they ſhall enter into my Reſt. Here is a Threatning, confirmed by an Oath of God, that they who believe not, ſhould never enter into his Reſt; and a Promiſe, that ſuch as do believe ſhall certainly enter.

There is a mutual In-being of Promiſes and Threatnings in the Covenant, which muſt be conſidered together, and cannot be ſeparated each from the other. Where there is a Threatning expreſſed, be it never ſo ſevere, yet there is a gracious Promiſe included; nay, ſometimes God gives out a Threatning for no other End, but that Men may lay hold of the Promiſe.

Q. *Pray explain thoſe Words, Verſe* 3. Although the Works were finiſhed from the Foundation of the World?

A. That is, when God Almighty had finiſhed the Works of Creation in ſix Days, he reſted on ſeventh from his Labour; ſhewing us by his own Example, that Work and Labour muſt precede our Reſt; after God has finiſhed the glorious Work of the Creation, he returns, as it were, into his own eternal Reſt, and directs us to ſeek Reſt in himſelf; and by his own Examples teaches us, that our Days of Labour muſt go before our Days of Reſt.

For the clear underſtanding of what is contained from the 4th to the 8th Verſe, we muſt know, that there is a threefold Reſt ſpoken of in Scripture, all which are called *his*, that is, God's Reſt, being all of his appointing and providing; namely, 1. The Reſt of the Sabbath-day, in Remembrance of God's reſting from the Works of Creation. 2. The typical Reſt in the Land of *Canaan*. 3. An eternal Reſt with God in Heaven, of which the Sabbath, and the Reſt of the *Iſraelites* in *Canaan* were a Type and Figure.

Now the Apoſtle's Deſign is to prove, that the Reſt which God principally intends for his People is this laſt Reſt, namely, an everlaſting Reſt with himſelf in Heaven; and this he evidently proves, becauſe if that Reſt which they had obtained in the Land of *Canaan*, under the Conduct of *Joſhua*, called (in *Syriack*) *Jeſus*, had been all the Reſt which Almighty God ever intended for them, then it had been needleſs for *David*, in *Pſal.* xcv. which was pennned a long time after, to make Mention of any other Reſt. But this does, and therefore infers, that there is a third Reſt yet to come, which by the Preaching of the Goſpel was now propos'd to them, and that under the ſame Promiſes and Threatnings with the former. If *Jeſus* or *Joſhua* had given the true ſpiritual and eternal Reſt here ſpoken of, in *Canaan*, then would not *David* have ſpoken of another Reſt after their Reſt in *Canaan*; which ſeeing he has done, the Apoſtle concludes, there muſt yet remain a farther Reſt to be enjoyed by the People of God.

From the foregoing Premiſſes the Apoſtle concludes that there remains yet a more glorious, perfect and compleat Reſt for the People of God. This ſuppoſes that there is Labour at preſent for them; Chriſt's preſent Call, is to Service and Duty.

Note alſo, that God has already given his People a Foretaſte of, and ſome Entrance into Reſt during their preſent State of Work and Labour, the better to enable them for that, and the better to ſweeten that to them. The State of Sin is a State of Labour, and no Reſt; but the State of Grace is a mixed State, partly of Labour, and partly of Reſt; of Labour in Reſpect of ourſelves, and Reſpect of the World againſt Sin under Affliction an Perſecution; the State of Glory is a State of Reſt, and no Labour; our Reſt here is in *Chriſt*, in his Love, in his Favour and Grace; and this our Labour makes our Reſt ſweet, and our Reſt makes our Labour eaſy.

Q. *How and by what Means is a Believer brought into the Poſſeſſion of this Reſt?*

A. Into the ſpiritual and heavenly Reſt juſt mentioned, the Believer is ſaid to have entered, Ver. 10. and this is done two Ways, initially and imperfectly in this Life; fully, finally, perfectly, and compleatly in the next. They have now a preſent Title and Right to enter into this Reſt, the actual Enjoyment and full Poſſeſſion of it is to come.

Believers initially enter into this Reſt while here on Earth, and accordingly *have ceaſed from their own Works*; that is, the Works of the Fleſh, the Service of Sin; theſe they have diſcarded by Repentance and Mortification.

When Believers have finiſhed all their Works of evangelical Obedience, they ſhall then, and not till then, fully and finally enter into God's Reſt, and be for ever happy in the Enjoyment of it. All Men deſire Reſt, but it is not be found on Earth, but in Heaven; not in the Creatures, but in God.

Let us therefore labour to enter into that Reſt; ſeeing there is ſuch an eternal glorious Reſt prepared for, and promis'd to Believers, then it is the Duty, and ought to be the Endeavour of every one of us, to ſecure our Title to it, and our Intereſt in it, by a ſtedfaſt Faith, and perſevering Obedience, leſt, following the Example of our Fore-fathers in the Wilderneſs, we fall and periſh as they did.

Q. *How is the* Word of God quick and powerful, *Ver.* 12?

A. There is a piercing Power in the Word of God, through the Energy and Operation of the Holy Spirit; it is here compared to a Sword, becauſe it divides Things moſt cloſely united, and diſcovers Things moſt inward and ſecret, or rather God by the Word does this, he pierces, *even to the dividing aſunder of the Soul and Spirit*; that is, the Actings of Underſtanding, and the Motions of the Will and Affections; it cuts aſunder the moſt reſolute and compacted purpoſe of the Will, yea, it pierces to the Marrow, that is, the moſt ſecret and cloſe Contrivance of the Soul, the Thoughts and Intent of the Heart.

There is ſcarce any one Place in Scripture which more fully informs us of the perfect and exact Knowledge of God, as to Perſon and Things, than the the 12th Verſe of this Chapter.

Q. *What is the true Senſe of thoſe Words, ver.* 13. All Things are naked and open to the Eyes of him with whom we have to do?

A. All Things are ſaid to be open, as well as naked unto God; a Metaphor taken, ſays St. *Chryſoſtom*, from the ſacrificed Beaſts, which, when their Skins were pluck'd off, they were cut down from their Neck to their Rump, ſo that all the inwards of the Beaſt lay bare, and every Part might be clearly ſeen.

Others think there is in the Original Word an Alluſion to Anatomiſts, who open and diſſect human Bodies, the Heart, Liver, Lungs and Bowels, all exactly appear, whether ſound or decay'd: Such a kind of Anatomy does God make upon Man's Heart; his piercing Eye ſees and diſcerns what is Fleſh, and what is Spirit in us, what is Faith, and what is Fancy, what is Grace in Reality, and what in Appearance only. Doubtleſs the Phraſe ſignifies a moſt intimate, full, and thorough Knowledge of all Perſons and Things, which is found in that Cod with whom we have to do.

Q. *What is the next Point handled by the Apoſtles?*

A. He next aſſerts the Prieſthood of *Chriſt*, and ſets forth the Dignity and Excellency of his Office, a great High-Prieſt; not barely equal with, but ſuperior to *Aaron*, and infinitely above him, the ſupream Pontiff of Heaven and Earth, in Compariſon of whom all other Prieſts, even the higheſt of them were but Shadows.

Note alſo, his Relation to us, *we have him*; that is, ſpecial Intereſt in him, making Profeſſion of Obedience to him; and is *paſſed into the Heavens*, to open Heaven to us, and make Interceſſion with the Father for us. This Entrance of *Chriſt* into Heaven, was ſhadow'd forth by the High Prieſt's Entrance into the Holy of Holies.

Note farther, the Obligation we are under, *let us hold faſt our Profeſſion*; that is, the Profeſſion of our Faith in him, without wavering, with Conſtancy and Perſeverance, without apoſtatizing in the whole, or declining in any Part of it. The Glory of God is in the higheſt Manner concerned in it, and aſſured Deſtruction attends the Omiſſion of it, and that in a peculiar, terrible, and dreadful Manner, Chap. x. 29.

Q. *What Benefit do Believers receive from* Chriſt's *Prieſthood?*

A. From the Prieſthood of *Jeſus Chriſt* Believers are greatly encouraged and aſſiſted in the Stedfaſtneſs and Conſtancy of their holy Profeſſion; for as he is our High-Prieſt, he knows our Temptations, pities us under them, affords us actual Relief and Help againſt them, he interceeds with the Father, that our Faith may not fail, and that we may be kept by the Almighty Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation.

Hence it likewiſe appears, that *Jeſus Chriſt* our High-Prieſt was the Son of God; and the Neceſſity of his being ſo is evident from the following Conſiderations. Before the Entrance of Sin, there was no Need of the Office of Prieſthood between God and Man; for every one was then in his own Name to go to God with his Worſhip, which would have been accepted according to the Law of Creation.

Again; Sin being enter'd into the World, there was no more Worſhip to be performed immediately unto God; two cannot walk or converſe together unleſs they be agreed.

Farther; that the Worſhip of God might again be reſtored in and to the World, it was indiſpenſibly neceſſary that ſome one ſhould interpoſe between Sinners and the holy God; for, ſhould Sinners approach him immediately in their own Names, he would be unto them a conſuming Fire.

Alſo; no Creature could undertake the Office of being a Prieſt for the Church of God, which now conſiſted of all Sinners; neither the Nature of the Office, which was to interpoſe between God and Sinners, nor the Equality of the Work, which is to make Attonement for Sin, would admit of it.

Jeſus Chriſt therefore undertaking to be an High-Prieſt for Sinners, it was neceſſary he ſhould be what he was, the very Son of God; which denotes his divine Perſon and Nature, and that our great High-Prieſt was eſſentially and truly God.

Q. *What other Properties has* Chriſt *as High-Prieſt, by which Believers are benefitted?*

A. In the 15th Verſe we have a farther Deſcription of *Chriſt* our High-Prieſt, by his merciful Diſpoſition towards his People; he is ſaid to be touch'd, that is, ſenſibly affected, with the Infirmities, the Miſeries, Sufferings and Calamities, which the human Nature is exercis'd with, and expos'd to. Our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, now in Heaven, ſympathizes with his ſuffering People here on Earth; *Chriſt's* is a tender and extenſive Sympathy, it reaches all our Infirmities, it anſwers to every Occaſion, it is perpetual; as long as he continues High-Prieſt, and we remain ſubject to Infirmities, ſo long will he be touch'd with the Feeling of them.

The Reaſon aſſign'd why our great High-Prieſt is ſo ſenſibly affected with our ſuffering Condition, is, becauſe he was tempted in all Points like as we are, Sin excepted. *Chriſt* by aſſuming our Nature became humbly affectionate, and by ſuffering our Infirmities, became experimentally compaſſionate.

Q. *What Inference does the Apoſtle draw from the foregoing Diſcourſe?*

A. Seeing we have ſuch an High-Prieſt as before deſcrib'd, let us come with Boldneſs, with Freedom and Liberty to the Throne of Grace, *&c.*

Here note, that there is a Throne of Grace, which Believers may come unto; God has a Throne of Juſtice, and a Throne of Grace: If he looks upon Man according to the Law of Works, he muſt needs ſit upon a Throne of Juſtice as a ſevere Lord, and ſtrict Judge to condemn us; but being propitiated and atton'd by the Blood of *Chriſt*, his Throne is a Throne of Grace and Mercy, from whence he repreſents himſelf to us as a God in *Chriſt*, as a God of Forgiveneſs, as a God in Covenant, and as a God that will have Communion with us.

Believers may therefore now come boldly, and with Confidence to the Throne of Grace; they have Liberty to do it, they have Authority, and may have Confidence and Aſſurance of Audience of it.

Learn alſo, that all Help, Succour and ſpiritual Aſſiſtance in every Time of Need, is found with God, and proceeds from meer Grace and Mercy in God, *That we may obtain Mercy and find Grace to help in time of Need.*

CHAP. V.

Chriſt *is truly an High-Prieſt, but after the Order of* Melchiſedec; *he fulfilled his Office; and being made perfect, became the Author of eternal Salvation to them that obey him.*

Q. HOW *does the Apoſtle deſcribe the Office of an High-Prieſt.*

A. 1. By his Original, *He is one, taken from among Men*; that is, of the ſame Nature with themſelves, otherwiſe he would not be capable of thoſe compaſſionate Impreſſions which are required for the due Diſcharge of his Office. Thus *Chriſt's* Participation of our Nature was neceſſary for the Diſcharge of his Office as High-Prieſt, and a manifeſt Evidence that he will be tender and compaſſionate towards thoſe whoſe Nature he ſuſtains and bears.

2. He is deſcribed by the general Nature of his Office, he is *ordained for Men in Things pertaining to God*; that is, he was to act and negotiate for the Good of ſinful Men, in Things wherein they have to do more immediately with Almighty God; particularly to offer Gifts, Oblations, and Sacrifices for their Sins.

Here note, that it was the Entrance of Sin, that made the Office of a High-Prieſt neceſſary, had it not been for Sin, every one might have gone to God, in his own Perſon, but now God will not be immediately treated with by any, but through the Interpoſition of a Mediator; and he having firſt made Attonement for ſin.

Note here, that the Light of Nature dictates to us, that ſomething ought to be offer'd to God, in Acknowledgment of his ſupreme Dominion; and becauſe Men are guilty of Sin, and God is eſſentially juſt, Sacrifices muſt be offered, and a Prieſt ordained to offer thoſe Sacrifices for the averting his Wrath, and procuring his Favour: But by what Sacrifices God will be attoned, and by whom, and in what Manner they muſt be offered, not the Law of Nature, but the Light of Scripture, divine Revelation muſt teach us; *Every High-Prieſt taken from among Men, is ordained for Men*; that is, inſtituted and appointed of God for the Service of Men in Things pertaining to God.

The High-Prieſt muſt likewiſe have Compaſſion for ſinful Men, knowing that he himſelf is compaſſed with ſinful Infirmities. He is one who is able with all Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, with all Patience and Forbearance, to bear the Infirmities, Sins and Provocations of Men, even as a Nurſe bears with the Weakneſs and Frowardneſs of an Infant.

The peculiar Object of his compaſſionate Care and Regard, is, thoſe that are *ignorant*, and wander *out of the way*; in which Words the Apoſtle comprizes all Sorts of Sinners, with all Kinds of Sin.

The ſpecial Reaſon render'd why the High-Prieſt was thus compaſſionate, is, becauſe *he himſelf is compaſſed with Infirmities*; his own Condition will remind him of his Duty in this Matter, being beſet on every Hand with Infirmities of his own.

By Reaſon of which Infirmities he ought both by God's Command, and alſo from the Reaſon and Nature of the Thing, as for the People, ſo alſo for himſelf, to offer Sacrifices for Sins.

Note, that this is a Deſcription of the High-Prieſt under the Law, not of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* under the Goſpel, becauſe *Chriſt* hath actually no Sin of his own to offer for, being holy, blameleſs, and undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners. This Expreſſion therefore of offering for his own Sins, belongs to the Weakneſs and Imperfections of the legal High-Prieſt.

Q. *To what does that Expreſſion relate, ver.* 4. No Man taketh this Honour to himſelf?

A. That is, the Honour of Prieſthood to himſelf, but only he that was called of God, as was *Aaron*, and his Poſterity. Note here, that as it is an Act of Sovereignty in God, to call whom he pleaſes to his Work and Service, ſo it is a ſpecial Dignity and Honour to us to be duly called, as well as qualified for his Work and Service.

So alſo Chriſt *our great High-Prieſt, glorified not himſelf to be made an High-Prieſt* uncalled, but he dignified him, who ſaid unto him, *Thou art my Son, and thou art a Prieſt for ever*, without Succeſſion, *after the Order*, Similitude and Manner *of Melchiſedec*.

Hence learn, that the Office of High Prieſthood over the Church, was an Honour and Glory to *Jeſus Chriſt*; it was ſo to his human Nature, even as it was united to his divine Nature, *Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an High-Prieſt*, implying that it was a Glory and Honour, though not aſſumed, but conferred; and that as *Aaron* was called of God, ſo was *Chriſt*, but in a more excellent and glorious Manner.

Q. *What do you farther note concerning* Chriſt's *prieſtly Office?*

A. Obſerve next a ſpecial Act of *Chriſt*'s Prieſthood or Prieſtly Office, *He offered up Supplications and Prayers, with ſtrong Cries and Tears unto him that was able to ſave him from Death*; the Time of his making this Offering was *in the Days of his Fleſh*, in the Time of his Mortal Life, when cloathed with our frail Nature. The Iſſue and Succeſs of all this was, *he was heard in that he feared*.

Hence learn, that the holy *Jeſus* did not only take upon him our human Nature, but the Infirmities of it alſo. True, his Infirmities were finleſs, but ſorrowful and grievous, which expoſed him to all ſorts of Temptations and Sufferings.

Chriſt ſhed Tears, as well as Blood for a loſt World. By this he ſhewed the Truth of his Humanity, and that he did not accept only the human Nature, but did alſo aſſume Human Affections.

Note, farther, that *Chriſt*'s Prayers were always heard, either in Kind or Equivalency; he was not ſpecifically heard as to the paſſing of the Cup from him, when he prayed in the Garden; but he was equivalently heard as to the Support of his Spirit and Supplies of Strength to enable him to drink the bitter Cup with Silence and Submiſſion, *He was heard in that he feared*, by being delivered, not from, but out of Death, as his Followers muſt expect to be delivered.

Q. *How did* Chriſt learn Obedience, *v.* 8?

A. He learned not by perſonal Speculation, but by real Experience, he experimentally underſtood what Obedience was.

There are two Ways of learning Obedience, 1. By the experience of Senſe. *Chriſt* as God was perfect in Knowledge, nothing could be added to him; but when he became Man, then he came to underſtand and learn by Sufferings which was a new Method and Way of knowing.

And the Obedience which *Chriſt* learnt was free and voluntary, univerſal and complete, ſincere and pure, perſevering and conſtant. *Chriſt* learned this Leſſon of Obedience, not barely to know it, but to do it; learn to obey, is to obey in the Things which he ſuffered; he perfectly learnt, and experimentally underſtood what Obedience was. As *Chriſt* did, ſo muſt we learn practical Obedience by the Things which we ſuffer.

Q. *By what Means did* Chriſt *become* the Author of our Salvation?

A. By *being made perfect*. The Original Word is an Alluſion to one that runs a Race, where he that wins receives a Crown. Thus *Chriſt* having finiſhed his Courſe of Sufferings, and received the Reward of them, by being raiſed from the Dead, and exalted to the right Hand of God, he is ſaid to be *made perfect*.

Q. *He became the Author of eternal Salvation to them that obey him: But how?*

A. As a Rule and Pattern, as a Price and Propitiation, and as an Advocate and Patron; by the Purity of his Doctrine, as a Rule; by the Piety of his Example, as a Pattern; by the Merit of his Obedience and Sufferings, as a Propitiation; and by his prevailing Interceſſion, as our Advocate now in Heaven.

Q. *What Obedience does the Goſpel require as a Condition, and accept as a Qualification in thoſe who hope for eternal Salvation?*

A. Not a bare external Profeſſion of Obedience, but an hearty and univerſal Conformity to the Precepts of the Goſpel in Sincerity and Uprightneſs, allowing ourſelves in the Neglect of no known Duty, nor in the Practice of any Sin.

Q. *But is it now poſſible for fallen Man to perform this Obedience?*

A. No; we are no more ſufficient of ourſelves to perform the Conditions of the Goſpel, than we are able to anſwer the Demands of the Law. But the Grace of God is offered to us, and is ready to enable us to perform the conditions which the Goſpel requires. Conſequently what the Grace of God ſtands ready to enable us to do, if we be not wanting to ourſelves, that may properly be ſaid to be poſſible to us, and in ſome Senſe in our Power to perform.

Q. *But is not making our Obedience the Condition of our Salvation, prejudicial to the Freeneſs of God's Grace, and the Law of Faith?*

A. No; ſince it is acknowledged, that Faith is the Root of all true Holineſs and evangelical Obedience; that we ſtand in continual Need of the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace to enable us to perform that Obedience which the Goſpel requires, and is pleaſed to accept, and that confers eternal Life upon us, not for the Merit of our Obedience, but only for the ſake of *Chriſt*.

The Sum of all this is, that it is indiſpenſibly neceſſary for a Man to be a good Man, that he may get to Heaven; and that it is the greateſt Preſumption in the World for any Man to hope to attain it without Obedience and a holy Life; for though our Obedience cannot merit, yet it qualifies and fits us for Heaven; though it makes us not worthy, yet it makes us *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

Q. *Pray explain, the 10th Verſe,* Called of God an High-Prieſt after the Order of *Melchiſedec?*

A. Theſe Words may be look'd on as an Evidence, that the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* was and is the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him, becauſe he is a *Prieſt after the order of* Melchiſedec, that is, becauſe his Prieſthood is eternal.

God was pleaſed to put a ſignal Honour on the Perſon and Office of *Melchiſedec*, that in him there ſhould be an early and excellent Repreſentation made of the Perſon and Prieſthood of *Jeſus Chriſt*. *Melchiſedec* was an illuſtrious Type of *Chriſt*; he was the firſt perſonal Type of *Chriſt* that ever was in the World; after him there were many others; and he was the only Type of the Perſon of *Chriſt* in the Execution of his Office, but none but *Melchiſedec* were ever Types of his Perſon; for being introduced without Father, without Mother, without Beginning of Days, or End of Life; he was made like unto the Son of God, of whom it is ſaid, *who can declare his Generation.*

Farther, *Melchiſedec* was a Type of *Chriſt* in thoſe two good Offices of a King and a Prieſt, which none but he ever was. The Prieſthood of *Chriſt* was not after the Order of *Aaron*, which was to expire, and not to laſt long, but after the Order of *Melchiſedec*, which was to continue for ever, *He ever liveth to make Interceſſion for us.*

Q. *In the 11th Verſe, the Apoſtle tells them he forbears to ſpeak any farther of* Chriſt's *Prieſthood,* becauſe they were dull of hearing: *What does this teach us?*

A. Hence learn, that all Scripture-Truths are not eaſy to be underſtood, but require a peculiar Diligence in our Attendance upon them, that they be underſtood.

It is the Incapacity of Hearers, through Dulneſs and Slothfulneſs, and Want of preparatory Knowledge, which makes Scripture-teaching no more and no better underſtood. All our Miſcarriages under the Word, are to be reſolved into our own Sloth, Negligence, and depraved Affections; we have many Things to ſay, but ye are dull of Hearing.

Q. *In the 12th Verſe the Apoſtle reproves them for their ſmall Growth in ſacred Knowledge: What Inſtructions does does this afford us?*

A. Hence learn, that the Time when, and how long we enjoy the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, is a Circumſtance which muſt in particular be accounted for; whereas *for the Time*, all have Time, but all have not Time alike; the Day of the Goſpel is not of the ſame Light to all Nations, Churches and Perſons.

It is reaſonably expected by God that Perſons ſhould grow and thrive in Knowledge and Holineſs, proportionably to their Time and Means; and not doing ſo, is charged upon them as a great Aggravation of their guilt; *For the Time ye ought to have been Teachers*; that is, of Ability ſufficient for the teaching of others.

Here we are likewiſe taught, that the holy Scriptures ought to be conſider'd, conſulted and ſubmitted to, *as the Oracles of God*; they are ſometimes called the living Oracles of God, becauſe they are the Oracles of the living God, and alſo life-giving Oracles to thoſe that obey them.

Learn alſo, that there are in the Scripture Truths ſuitable to the Inſtruction and Edification of all ſorts of Perſons; there is in it both Milk and ſtrong Meat, plain Doctrines and firſt Principles neceſſary for all, and Truths of a deeper Search that are profitable to ſome. In the Scripture, ſaid one, there are Shallows and Depths; Fords where the Lambs may wade, and Depths where the Elephants may ſwim.

Q. *In the laſt two Verſes the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Difference of Doctrine under the Metaphor of Meats: What do we learn from hence?*

A. 1. That the Word of God in the Diſpenſation of it, is Food provided for the Souls of Men. 2. That the Word, as Food, will not profit the Soul till it be eaten and digeſted; 'tis not Food prepared, but received that nouriſhes. When *Manna* was gathered and eaten, it nouriſhed the *Iſraelites*; but when gathered and laid by, it putrified and bred Worms. 3. That as the Goſpel is the Word of Righteouſneſs, ſo God requires and expects that all thoſe ſhould be ſkilled in the Word of Righteouſneſs, who live under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel. The Goſpel is the Word of Righteouſneſs; it is ſo declaratively, as the Severity of God againſt Sin is thereby more fully revealed, and as the Righteouſneſs which God requires, approves, and accepts for our Juſtification, is therein declared.

It is likewiſe the Word of Righteouſneſs efficiently, our Juſtification is wrought in us thereby, *John* xvii. 17.

To conclude, the ſpiritual Senſes of Believers, well exerciſed in the Word of Righteouſneſs, are the beſt and moſt undeceiving Helps in judging of what is Good and Evil, true or falſe, that is promiſed to them; *Such, by Reaſon, have their Senſes exerciſed to diſcern Good and Evil.*

Chap. VI.

An Exhortation to the full Knowledge of the Chriſtian *Doctrine, and to beware of Apoſtacy; which is illuſtrated by the Similitude of fruitful and barren Ground. He ſtirs them up to Diligence, and firmer Hope in God's Promiſes, which were confirmed by Oath to* Abraham, *and his Seed. Hope the Anchor of the Soul.*

Q. W*HAT does the Apoſtle allude to in the firſt Verſe?*

A. He alludes to the Building of an Houſe; as in that, we firſt lay a good and ſure Foundation, but do not reſt there, but proceed in raiſing up the Fabrick; in like Manner, it is neither ſatisfactory nor ſufficient, to advance any farther in the *Chriſtian* Religion, than the firſt Principles of it, but Endeavours muſt be uſed to attain a more perfect Degree and Meaſure of Knowledge in the Myſteries of the Goſpel.

Q. *What does he mean, by leaving the* Principles of the Doctrine of *Chriſt?*

A. He means, not leaving them ſo as to forget them, and lay them aſide, but to leave them by going beyond them, and advancing farther and higher in the Knowledge of *Chriſtianity.*

Hence learn, that in *Chriſtianity* and other Sciences, there are certain Rudiments and fundamental Principles, which muſt and ought to be carefully taught; that it is an uſeful and neceſſary Practice in the Church of God, to teach the Doctrine of *Chriſtianity* in the firſt Principles of it, plainly and ſummarily, to young Beginners; and that when the Miniſters of the Goſpel have laid a Foundation of Scripture-Knowledge in the Underſtanding of their Hearers, they muſt excite them by all preſſing Conſiderations to make a farther Progreſs in their Knowledge, and leaving the Doctrine of the Beginning of *Chriſt, Go on unto Perfection.*

Q. *What are the fundamental Doctrines, and firſt Principles of the* Chriſtian *Religion?*

A. He names ſix. 1. Repentance, or a turning from all ſinful Works, called *dead Works,* becauſe they will end in Death; they begin from Death ſpiritual, and end in Death Eternal.

2. *Faith towards God;* or in God; that is, in the whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; particularly, Faith in the firſt original Promiſe of God, to ſend *Chriſt* into the World to ſave us from our Sins, and granting Remiſſion of Sins by him.

Note, how cloſely Repentance and Faith are united, and knit together; where one is, there is the other. He repents not who hath not Faith towards God, and he hath no Faith who has no Repentance.

3. *The Doctrine of Baptiſms;* that is, of both the *Chriſtian* Sacraments, as alſo of the Covenant of Grace, of which the Sacraments are Seals.

Perſons admitted into the Church by Baptiſm, ought to be well inſtructed (as ſoon as capable of it) in the Nature, Uſe, and End of the Sacraments, acquainting them not only with the Nature of the outward Sign, but with the Neceſſity of the inward Grace.

5. *The Doctrine of laying on of Hands;* to confirm the baptized Perſons in the Faith, and to oblige and enable them to keep the Covenant they entred into with God, when they were baptized; which was done before their Admiſſion to the Lord's Table. Impoſition, or laying on of Hands, was an antient and venerable Right, uſed in the primitive Church upon ſeveral Occaſions; particularly, in Ordinations, in and Abſolution of Penitents, in healing the Sick, in conferring the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* vii. 17. and in Confirmation, when baptized Perſons were brought before the Church, to acknowledge, confirm, and renew their baptiſmal Covenant with God; and to receive the Benefit of publick Prayer, and epiſcopal Benediction, in order to the farther Endowments of Grace to perform their Vows, adorn their Profeſſion, and be admitted to the Lord's Table, as compleat Members of the viſible Church of *Chriſt.*

5. *The Reſurrection of the Dead;* a Doctrine deny'd by the *Saducees,* derided by the *Athenian* Philoſophers, and perverted by *Hereticks;* but is a fundamental Principle of the Goſpel; the Faith whereof is indiſpenſably neceſſary to our Conſolation, and has a peculiar Influence on our Obedience, becauſe we are aſſured, that our Services ſhall not only be remembered, but rewarded alſo.

6. *The eternal Judgment;* which will doom Men to everlaſting Rewards or Puniſhments in a future State. Miniſters ought to dwell much upon this fundamental Principle of Religion, to repreſent to all Men the Dread and Terror of that great Day, in order to ſtir them up to take effectual Care that they fall not under the Vengeance of that fatal Day.

Theſe ſix Principles being laid down by the Apoſtle, he tells them his Reſolution, to endeavour the carrying them on to a more perfect Degree and Meaſure of Knowledge in the Myſteries of the Goſpel, in order to their becoming ſkilful in the Work of Righteouſneſs; *Leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of* Chriſt, *let us go on unto Perfection; which we will do, if God permit.*

Q. *What does he mean by the Word* inlightened, *Verſe* 4?

A. Underſtand thoſe that were baptized, and embraced *Chriſtianity.* The Antients called Baptiſm Illumination, and baptized Perſons the Inlighten'd, becauſe of that Illumination, which was convey'd into the Minds of Men, by the Knowledge of *Chriſtianity.*

Q. *Explain the following Words;* And have taſted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt?

A. By *taſting the heavenly Gift,* and being *made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt,* underſtand ſuch as had not only heard of the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, but had ſome Experience of them; as alſo of the ſpiritual Benefits conferred upon them in Baptiſm, by the Holy Spirit.

Q. *Give the Senſe of the 5th Verſe,* And have taſted the good Word of God, and the Power of the World to come?

A. By *taſting the good Word of God,* underſtand ſome Reliſh of the Truth and Goodneſs of the Goſpel, ſome Pleaſure in entertaining it, by Reaſon of the gracious Promiſes of Life and eternal Happineſs

neſs contained in it. The Goſpel that proclaimed the Remiſſion of Sins, was a good Word; this good Word they ſaw confirmed by Miracles, Tongues, and Prophecy; and ſo could not but be convinced of the Truth of it, which is here called a taſting it.

And the Powers of the World to come; that is, the Power of the Goſpel-Age, for *the World to come*, in the Language of the Prophets, ſignifies the Times of the *Meſſiah*, and thus *the Powers of the World to come*, are the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt beſtow'd upon Men, in order to the Propagation of the Goſpel. Others, by *taſting of the Powers of the World to come*, underſtand ſome Apprehenſions of the Reſurrection, and future Judgment, with Affections ſuitable thereunto. Now, concerning theſe, ſays our Apoſtle, *if they fall away*; if after all this, they ſhall apoſtatize from that Profeſſion, out of Love to this preſent World, or Fear of Perſecutions and Sufferings, if they ſhall relapſe either to *Heathenism* or *Judaiſm*, *it is impoſſible to renew them again to Repentance*; that is, it is very difficult, hardly to be hoped for, that ſuch wilful Apoſtates ſhould be reſtored again by Repentance.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Clauſe in the 6th Verſe*, Seeing they crucify to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, and put him to open Shame?

A. That is, they virtually, and in Effect, crucify him over again, as much as in them lies; for by denying and renouncing him, they declare him to be an Impoſtor, and conſequently worthy of Death. So that the plain Senſe of the Words ſeems to be this, If thoſe that are baptized, and have received the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and are endued with the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, ſhall yet, after this, apoſtatize from *Chriſtianity*, it is next to an Impoſſibility, to recover ſuch again by Repentance; ſeeing they are as guilty of as great a Crime, as if, in their own Perſons, they had put to Death, and ignominiouſly uſed the Son of God.

Note, it is not a partial Apoſtaſy from the *Chriſtian* Religion, by any particular vicious Practice, but a total Apoſtaſy from *Chriſtianity*, and more eſpecially to the *Heathen* Idolatry, which is here intended.

Q. *But why was it ſo difficult to receive ſuch Apoſtates again by Repentance?*

A. 1. Becauſe of the Greatneſs and heinous Nature of their Sin, it being a downright Apoſtaſy from God, againſt the cleareſt Light and Knowledge, and fulleſt Conviction of a Man's Mind; and the higheſt Affront to the Son of God, who revealed the *Chriſtian* Religion to the World, and ſealed it with his own Blood.

2. Becauſe thoſe who are guilty of this Sin, renounce the Means of their Recovery; they reject *Chriſt* and his holy Goſpel, and ſo refuſe the only Means appointed for their Recovery.

3. Becauſe it is ſo high a Provocation to God, to withdraw his Grace and Holy Spirit from ſuch Perſons, by the Power and Efficacy whereof they ſhould be brought to Repentance, God juſtly leaving thoſe, who ſo unworthily leave him. How fearful a Condition is it, to begin in the Spirit, and end in the Fleſh; to decay in Religion, and apoſtatize from Grace; to have had ſome Work of the Spirit and Word upon our Hearts, ſo as to have had Light and Love, ſome Taſte and Savour of Religion, ſome Deſires after, and Hopes of Heaven, and, after all, to revolt and backſlide, and have our latter End worſe than our Beginning!

Q. *What is the Scope and Deſign of the 7th and 8th Verſes?*

A. It is, 1. To ſet forth the Excellency and Neceſſity of the Goſpel, diſpenſed to us in the Miniſtry of the Word; the Apoſtle compares it to Rain, which ſoftens, refreſhes, and fructifies the Earth.

2. He diſcovers the different Effect which the Word of God, or Doctrine of the Goſpel has upon different Perſons that ſit under the Diſpenſation of it; the ſincere *Chriſtian* becomes fruitful under the Dews and Showers of Divine Grace, and receives a Bleſſing; but the barren and fruitleſs Profeſſor is like a barren Wilderneſs, or dry Deſart, which, after innumerable refreſhing Showers, brings forth nothing but Briars and Thorns.

3. He declares the different State and Condition of ſuch Perſons. A People that anſwers God's Care and Coſt, is like a Field that drinks in the Rain, brings forth Herbs, and receives a Bleſſing. But ſuch a People, as after all the Culture and Labour of God's Huſbandmen on Earth, ſhall remain Buſhes and Briars, barren and unfruitful under all, or worſe than ſuch; they are *nigh unto curſing*, and their *End is to be burned*. Bleſſing attends the one, Burning awaits the other.

Q. *In the 9th Verſe he ſays*, We are perſuaded better Things of you: *But whereon does he ground this Confidence, that they were ſincere and upright?*

A. The Ground of this Confidence is twofold; 1. The Graces of God's Spirit were found operative in them; their Faith in *Chriſt*, and Love to all his Members; *Ye have miniſtred to the Saints, and do miniſter*. Behold the Nature of *Chriſtian* Love! it is an immortal Fire, ever burning, never dying.

2. Another ground of this Perſuaſion was, the Knowledge of God's Faithfulneſs in remembring and rewarding their Labour of Love; *God is not unrighteous, to forget your Work and Labour of Love*; that is, God is righteous, and will certainly remember and reward your Faith, your Charity, and good Works; for he has promiſed ſo to do, and he is faithful that has promiſed. The beſt Evidence we can give of the Sincerity of our Love is, our Readineſs to miniſter to the Saints in all Diſtreſſes.

Q. *What is that* full Aſſurance of Hope, *which he exhorts them to attain, Verſe* 11?

A. Hope is a certain and aſſured Expectation of good Things promiſed, accompanied with Love, and a longing Deſire to enioy them. *A full Aſſurance of Hope*, is ſuch a fixed, conſtant, and prevailing Perſuaſion concerning the good Thinsgs promiſed, and our certain Enjoyment of them, as will ſupport us under, and carry us through all the Difficulties and Troubles that we ſtruggle with.

The original Word ſignifies a full Gale of Hope, and is a Metaphor taken from Sailors, who enter the Harbour with a full Gale of Wind, both with Facility and Safety. The *Chriſtian*'s Soul is a Ship ſailing in a tempeſtuous Sea: Faith repreſents the Pilot, Love the Sail, Hope the Wind that muſt fill the Sail; be the Pilot never ſo confident, tho' the Sail be ſpread to the utmoſt, yet without a Gale of Wind the Ship lies becalmed, and moves not towards the Harbour. A *Chriſtian* on Earth without Hope, is like a Ship at Sea without Wind.

The Meaning of attaining this full Aſſurance is, *to ſhew the ſame Diligence unto the End.* The *Chriſtian* muſt be diligent to the End of his Life, for the heightening his Hope to a full Aſſurance.

Q. *The Apoſtle farther endeavours to excite them to Diligence, by the Examples of the deceaſed Saints, who are now reaping the Reward of their former Pains, and inheriting the Promiſes: How does he argue on this Head?*

A. *That ye be not ſlothful,* either timorous or faint-hearted, or remiſs and negligent. God having engaged ſo firmly on his Part to let nothing be wanting which is required to enable us to perſevere; if we miſs of the Promiſe, that is, of Heaven, we muſt thank our Sloth for It.

Be followers of them; namely, in their Faith and Patience; in their Faith, that is, their firm Truſt in God, and Belief of his Promiſes, relying on his Word under all Tryals; and their Patience, that is, their Perſeverance in Well-doing, and patient Expectation under all Delays, and conſtant Adherence to him under all Difficulties.

The Apoſtle having told us in general, that the Saints, by Faith and Patience, inherit the Promiſes, inſtances, particularly in *Abraham*, to whom God made a Promiſe of greatly multiplying his Seed, and confirmed that Promiſe by an Oath; but *Abraham* waited long, by Faith and Patience, for the compleat fulfilling of the Oath; and ſo muſt we; God delights to be truſted by his People, upon his Word and Oath; and when they do not live to ſee his Promiſe fulfilled, they glorify him exceedingly, by dying in the firm Belief, that it ſhall be fulfilled in God's appointed Time.

Q. *But why did God confirm his Promiſe by an Oath?*

A. To determine a Controverſy depending betwixt himſelf and the fallen Creatures; this is the Deſign of an Oath among Men; *An Oath of Confirmation is an End of all Strife.* There is, as we are in a State of Nature, a Strife and Difference between God and us; the Promiſes of the Goſpel are gracious Propoſals of the only Way and Means for the ending that Strife; the Oath of God interpoſed for the Confirmation of theſe Promiſes, which was ſufficient, on God's Part, to end this Strife, and to eſtabliſh a firm Peace with us, through the Blood of *Chriſt*.

The Apoſtle next acquaints us with God's Deſign in confirming his Promiſe, namely, to manifeſt the Immutability of his Counſel to us, his Decree and Purpoſe for our Salvation, to the Intent, that by his Word and Oath we might have ſtrong Conſolation. So extremely weak is our Faith, that we need the utmoſt Condeſcenſion of God for its Conſolation.

How ought we then to bind ourſelves to God by Oath, ſince he thus condeſcends to bind himſelf to us? How unreaſonable is it for Believers to diſtruſt God upon his Oath? This is not only to accuſe God of a Lie, but to impeach him of Perjury. How abſurd is it for the impenitent Sinner not to tremble at the Threatnings of God, which are confirmed by an Oath, as well as his Promiſes; *I have ſworn in my Wrath, they ſhall never enter into my Reſt.*

Q. *How do you underſtand the laſt Clauſe of Verſe* 18. Who have fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope ſet before us?

A. This is an Alluſion to the Cities of Refuge ſpoken of under the Law; God appointed ſix of them to fly to in caſe of caſual Homicide, or accidental killing of a Man, to avoid the Fury of the Avenger of Blood. Theſe Cities were an illuſtrious Type of *Chriſt*. 1. As he is the Believers City of Refuge, the only Sanctuary for diſtreſſed Souls. 2. Believers, by Faith, fly unto him for Refuge, when the Guilt of Sin, and the Wrath of God for Sin purſues them. Let impenitent Sinners awake to a Senſe of the Danger they are in; the Avenger of Blood is at their Heels, and their Damnation ſlumbers not, if they do not preſently fly from the Wrath to come, to the Sanctuary in *Chriſt*.

Q. *What is the Nature of a* Chriſtian's *Hope?*

A. In the 19th Verſe it is deſcribed, 1. By a metaphorical, 2. By a typical Similitude. The Metaphor is, it is compared to an Anchor, the Uſe of which is, to hold faſt, and to keep the Ship ſteady in Storms and Tempeſts; ſo the Hope of eternal Glory quiets, ſtays, and ſtrengthens the *Chriſtian*'s Spirit, when toſſed upon the Waves of this troubleſome World.

Hope is alſo deſcribed by a typical Similitude, *it entereth into that within the Veil.* The Veil here alludes to that which parted the Holy of Holies from the Body of the Temple, a Type of Heaven. The Heavens are a Veil to the Senſe and Reaſon of Man, there their Sight and Thoughts are bounded, they can neither diſcern nor judge of what is above or within that Veil: But Faith and Hope pierce through it; no created Thing can keep them at a Diſtance from God himſelf. A *Chriſtian*'s Hope *enters into that within the Veil*; it fixes on God as the Author, on *Chriſt* as the Purchaſer, on the Spirit as the Inſurer of the Covenant, as the Conveyer of all Grace, Mercy and Peace; here Hope fixes itſelf to hold the Soul firm and ſtedfaſt in all the Storms that may befal it.

Q. *What is intimated by thoſe Words, Verſe* 19. Whether the Fore-runner is for us entered?

A. This denotes, 1. His publick Capacity, that he entered Heaven in our Name, and to negociate our Affairs.

2. His abſolute Precedency; he is our Fore-runner, though he himſelf had none, none that entered before him in their own Names, but in his, and upon his Account, through the Virtue of his Merits, and by the Prevalence of his Mediation. To enter Heaven, as our Fore-runner, implies, that he entered in our Natures, and keeps Poſſeſſion of it in our Names. As ſure as the Head is gone before the Members, ſo certainly ſhall the Members follow their Head; it implies, that *Chriſt* will put us in the actual Poſſeſſion of Heaven in his own Time. Let our Hearts then be preſent with him; for where ſhould our Hearts be, but where our Head is?

CHAP. VII.

Melchiſedec *a Type of the Son of God. Perfection was not in the Prieſthood of* Levi, *becauſe another Prieſt muſt ariſe, after the Order of* Melchiſedec, *namely, our Lord; who, by the Power and Anointing of the Holy Spirit, ſhould live always, and his Prieſthood endure for ever.*

Q. P*RAY who was* Melchiſedec?

A. Some take him to be *Shem*, the Son of *Noah*; but this cannot be, becauſe his Genealogy is exactly ſet down by *Moſes*. Others take him to be one of the Poſterity of *Japhet*, the Father of the *Gentiles*. In the midſt of theſe Sinners above others, was *Melchiſedec* raiſed up as an illuſtrious Type of *Chriſt*, the promiſed *Meſſiah*.

This ſignal Prefiguration of *Chriſt*, in the Nations of the World, at the ſame Time when *Abraham* received the Promiſes for himſelf and his Poſterity, gave a Pledge and Aſſurance of the certain future Call of the *Gentiles* unto an Intereſt in him, and Participation of him.

Melchiſedec is here deſcribed by his Office; he was King of *Salem*, and a Prieſt of the moſt High God; yea, the firſt that was ſo by ſpecial Inſtitution, and ſeparated to the Office by God's Approbation; none went before him, and none ſucceeded him in his Office.

Q. *How was* Melchiſedec *a Type of* Chriſt?

A. The firſt Perſonal inſtituted Type of *Chriſt*, was *Melchiſedec*, as Prieſt; teaching us, that the Foundation of all that the Lord *Chriſt* had to do in and for the Church was laid in the Prieſtly Office, whereby he made Attonement and Reconciliation for Sin; Melchiſedec *King of* Salem *and Prieſt of the moſt high God*.

He is alſo deſcribed by ſeveral Actions and Circumſtances; *he met* Abraham *returning from the Slaughter of the Kings*; this Meeting of *Abraham* and *Melchiſedec* was a Type and Repreſentation of the glorious Meeting of *Chriſt* and his Church at the laſt Day; then he will bring out of his Stores in Heaven for their eternal Refreſhment, as *Melchiſedec* brought forth Bread and Wine to refreſh *Abraham*, returning from the Slaughter of the Kings.

Melchiſedec bleſſed him, *Gen.* xiv. 10. *Bleſſed be* Abraham *of the moſt high God, Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth*. Sacerdotal Bleſſings were authoritative, and that by ſpecial Inſtitution. In this Bleſſing of *Abraham* by *Melchiſedec* all Believers are virtually bleſſed by *Jeſus Chriſt*. *Melchiſedec* repreſented *Chriſt* in what he then did, and *Abraham* repreſented all his believing Poſterity in what he then received.

Another ſacerdotal Act, or Exerciſe of prieſtly Power aſcribed to *Melchiſedec*, is, that he received from *Abraham* Tithes of all; the one paid them in a Way of Duty, the other received them in a Way of Office.

Note here the Antiquity of Tithes; that they were paid in *Abraham*'s Time, long before the Ceremonial Law, and therefore cannot be ſaid to be *Jewiſh* and Levitical. The Patriarchs before the Law, the *Jews* under the Law, and the *Chriſtians* in Times of the Goſpel, have all paid this Proportion; from whence ſome have concluded, that as the ſeventh Part of our Time, ſo the tenth Part of our Goods and Eſtates were given to God from the Beginning, as Lord of all our Time, and Proprietor of all our Eſtates. Whatever we receive ſignally from God in a Way of Mercy, we ought to return a Portion of it to him in a way of Duty. It is a certain Sign that a Man has not obey'd God in the getting an Eſtate, when he will not entitle him to any Portion of it when gotten.

Another Inſtance wherein *Melchiſedec* was made like the Son of God, was, his being *without Father, without Mother, without Deſcent, having neither Beginning of Days, nor End of Life*; which Expreſſions muſt not be underſtood literally, but tropically; not of *Melchiſedec* as a Man, but as a Prieſt; for as a Man he certainly had both Father and Mother, though not recorded in Scripture; he was aſſuredly born, and did not leſs certainly die than other Men; but neither his Beginning of Day, nor End of Life are regiſter'd or rehearſed, that he might be the fitter Type of *Chriſt*, concerning whom it is ſaid, *Who can declare his Generation?* But though *Melchiſedec*, as Man, had Father and Mother, yet as a Prieſt he had no Predeceſſor nor Succeſſor; no Predeceſſor, from whom he might by Birth receive his Sacerdotal Power; no Succeſſor who derived his Prieſthood from him: Herein alſo was *Melchiſedec* an illuſtrious Type of *Chriſt*, who derived his Prieſthood from no mortal Predeceſſor, but immediately from his heavenly Father; neither will he tranſmit it to any Succeſſor, but when all Enemies are ſubdued, he ſhall reſign his Prieſthood together with his Kingdom, to God the Father, who gave them both.

'Tis affirm'd of *Melchiſedec*, that he abideth *a Prieſt for ever*; that is, Things are ſo related of him in Scripture, as there is no Mention of the ending of the Prieſthood of his Order. We read of no Reſignation of his Office, or of the Succeſſion of any Perſon to him therein; and thus he remains a Prieſt for ever. This was that which our Apoſtle principally deſign'd to confirm from hence, namely, that there was in Scripture, before the Inſtitution of the *Aaronical* Prieſthood, a Repreſentation of an eternal, unchangeable Prieſthood, to be introduced in the Church, which he demonſtrates to be that of *Jeſus Chriſt*, of which *Melchiſedec*'s Prieſthood was a Type.

Q. *Pray explain the 4th Verſe*, Now conſider how great this Man was, unto whom even the Patriarch *Abraham* gave the Tenth of the Spoils?

A. The Words are the Apoſtle's Application of what was before diſcourſed; by comparing *Melchiſedec*'s Excellency with *Abraham*'s, he ſhews *Chriſt*'s Excellency above *Melchiſedec*'s, and he calls upon them to conſider this, *Conſider how great this Man was*. It will be fruitleſs and to no Advantage to propoſe and declare the moſt important Truths of the Goſpel, if thoſe to whom they are propoſed do not diligently enquire into them, and duly ponder and conſider of them.

Melchiſedec is here called a great Man; but not in reſpect of his perſonal Endowments, the Largeneſs of his Dominions, his Riches and Wealth, but with reſpect to his Office, and in regard to his Nearneſs to God on that Account; as alſo in his repreſenting our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

The Proof here given of the Greatneſs of *Melchiſedec*, is, that *Abraham* the Patriarch gave him the tenth Part of the Spoils. Thus *Abraham*, tho' poſſeſſed of the higheſt Privileges, yet complied with the meaneſt Duty. Duty is our Honour and chief Advantage; but Privileges, Promotions, Dignities, and Exaltations may become Snares, and end in the Ruin of Mens Souls. When a Perſon is dignified and advanced in the Church, if thereby he thinks himſelf exempted from the ordinary Service of the Miniſtry, he is guilty of horid Pride and Ingratitude; but if he indulges himſelf in a Courſe of Idleneſs, Sloth, Senſuality, and Worldlineſs, theſe are Crimes, no Words are ſufficient to expreſs.

Q. *What is the Point he endeavours to ſettle by his Argument in the 5th, 6th and 7th Verſes?*

A. The Law allowed *Aaron* and the other Prieſts to take Tithes of their Brethren that ſprung from *Abraham*; but *Melchiſedec* received Tithes of *Abraham*, who was none of his People, yea, and bleſſed *Abraham* alſo, which is a Demonſtration that he was greater than *Abraham*; and conſequently it is evident that *Chriſt* was greater than the *Jewiſh* Prieſts; to bleſs authoritatively is an act of Superiority, and he that bleſſeth, is greater than he that is bleſſed.

Q. *How does he farther ſhew the ſuperior Excellence of* Melchiſedec's *Prieſthood to that of* Aaron.

A. By the Immortality of it; as the leſs is bleſſed of the greater, ſo is that which is Immortal greater and better than that which is Mortal; but ſuch is *Melchiſedec*, and his Order of Prieſthood. Indeed in the Levitical Order of Prieſthood, though the Prieſts be ſuperior to the People, and take Tithes of them, yet do they die as well as the People; but we read not a Word of *Melchiſedec's* Death, he is a Prieſt for ever; that is, he typically prefigured *Chriſt*, who properly and really lives for ever. This great High-Prieſt lives, upon whom the Life and Preſervation, and the Continuance and Salvation of the Church depend.

Here Men die that receive Tithes. In the outward Adminiſtration of God's Worſhip he is pleaſed to make Uſe of the Miniſtry of frail, mortal and dying Man, *Zach.* i. 5. *The Prophets, do they live for ever?* Hereby it appears, that it is the Power of God, and nothing elſe, which gives Efficacy and Succeſs to all Goſpel-Adminiſtrations, 2 *Cor.* iv. 7.

Q. *How did* Levi *pay Tithes in* Abraham; *and what does the Apoſtle prove from thence?*

A. By *Levi*, Verſe 9. we are to underſtand *the Levites*, or the Levitical Prieſthood; they being in *Abraham's* Loins are ſaid to pay Tithes in *Abraham* to *Melchiſedec*: This the Apoſtle produces as an Evidence that *Melchiſedec* is ſuperior to the *Levites*, and greater than they; and conſequently that *Chriſt*, whom *Melchiſedec* typified, muſt needs be more excellent than they alſo. The Argument ſtands thus: They who receive Tithes of others, are certainly ſuperior to them of whom they do receive them; but *Melchiſedec* received Tithes of *Abraham*, and of *Levi* in *Abraham's* Loins; therefore he is ſuperior to them, and of a more excellent Order than they, which is the great Truth he had been ſo induſtriouſly proving.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's Argument in the 11th Verſe,* If therefore Perfection were by the Levitical Prieſthood, *&c?*

A. If a perfect Expiation and Remiſſion of Sin could have been made by the Sacrifice which the legal Prieſts offered, there would then have been no need that God ſhould inſtitute a Prieſt of another and more excellent Order, namely, his own Son, to be a Prieſt after *Melchiſedec's* Order, and not after the Order of *Aaron*.

Where note, that Perfection is denied to the Levitical Prieſthood, and aſcribed to the Prieſthood of *Chriſt*. To perfect ſinful Man, is to free him from the Guilt of Sin, and from the diſmal Conſequences of it; and to make him righteous and holy, capable of Communion with God, both here and hereafter. Now this the Levitical Prieſthood could not do. But *Jeſus Chriſt has by one Offering perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*, Chap. x. 14.

Thus the Apoſtle infers this Neceſſity of changing the Prieſthood, and next he tells us, verſe 22. that the Change of the Levitical Prieſthood neceſſarily draws along with it a Change of the Levitical Law, and the legal Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace; for the Levitical Prieſthood and the Levitical Law both ſtand and fall together; *The Prieſthood being changed, there is made of Neceſſity alſo a Change of the Law.* By the changing of the Prieſthood, underſtand the Abolition of it; by the Change of the Law, underſtand the Abrogation of it; by the Word Neceſſity, underſtand that the Change was not caſual and contingent, but abſolutely needful, in regard of the Imperfections and Inability of the Levitical Prieſthood to effect any ſuch Thing.

Hence learn, that the Promulgation of the Goſpel, and the Inſtitution of *Chriſtianity*, did abrogate the Levitical Law, and made it of no Force. This might be the Reaſon why God did not only by the Death and Sacrifice of *Chriſt*, the great High-Prieſt, aboliſh the Levitical Prieſthood, but alſo deſtroyed the Temple itſelf, where he had put his Name, and never ſuffer'd it to be rebuilt; denoting thereby the utter Abolition of the Levitical Prieſthood, and the total Abrogation of the Ceremonial Law.

Q. *What farther Argument does he bring to prove the Change of the Prieſthood?*

A. The Apoſtle next proves the Change of the Prieſthood by the Tranſlation of it to another Tribe from *Levi* to *Judah*.

The Levitical Prieſthood was confined to one certain Tribe, that of *Levi*, and to one Family, that of *Aaron*; whence it follows, that the Tribe being changed, the Prieſthood muſt be changed alſo.

Note, it was an Effect of the manifold Wiſdom of God, and a very great Mercy and Favour to give the Law, but a far greater to take it away.

If under the Law the whole Worſhip of God ſo depended on the Prieſthood, that that failing, the whole Worſhip was to ceaſe, as being no more acceptable to God, how much will all Worſhip under the *New Teſtament* be rejected, if there be not a due Regard therein to our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, as the great and only High-Prieſt of the Church?

Q. *What particular Point does the Apoſtle endeavour to eſtabliſh by this Diſcourſe on the Prieſthood?*

A. That the *Aaronical* Prieſthood was to be changed, and conſequently the whole Law of Ordinances that depended thereon, and that the Time was now come, wherein this Change was to be made, is the grand Truth the Apoſtle endeavours to eſtabliſh. Accordingly, Verſe 13, 16, 17. he gives a farther Proof of the Change of the Prieſthood from the different Manner of the Prieſt's Conſecration. The Levitical Prieſt was ſet apart for his Office by a Number of carnal Rites and outward Ceremonies, preſcribed by the Law to be uſed at the Conſecration of *Aaron* and his Sons, who were purified with Water, anointed with Oil ſprinkled with Blood, cloathed with prieſtly Veſtments, and initiated with Sacrifices, adminiſter'd in an earthly Tabernacle and Temple. But, ſays our Apoſtle, the Evangelical or Goſpel-High-Prieſt, *Chriſt Jeſus*, was not thus conſtituted, or made a Prieſt with ſuch external Rites and Ceremonies, but *with the* *power of an endleſs Life*; that is, He was conſtituted a Prieſt by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, having an immortal Life, ſuitable to his Prieſthood, and Authority to give eternal Life to as many as depend upon the Benefit of his Sacrifice and Satisfaction.

Q. *Pray explain the 26th Verſe,* Who is made not after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endleſs Life?

A. *Aaron* was made a Prieſt with great outward Solemnity, *Chriſt* with none at all; yet all *Aaron's* Ceremonial Glory was nothing, in Compariſon of that excelling Glory which accompanied thoſe inviſible Acts of divine Authority, Wiſdom, and Grace, which communicated *Chriſt's* Office unto him.

Q. *What does he ſay farther concerning the Abrogation of the Levitical Prieſthood?*

A. The Apoſtle next declares, that the Levitical Prieſthood being aboliſhed, and the Ceremonial Law abrogated, the whole State of the Church, and of the ſolemn Worſhip of God therein, muſt neceſſarily be changed alſo. This he foreſaw would be a mighty ſurprize to the generality of the *Hebrews*, to hear that they muſt quit all their Concern and ſpecial Intereſt in the Law of *Moſes*; and therefore he aſſigns a meritorious Satisfaction, and prevailing Interceſſion, and we receive from thence a ſolid Foundation of Peace and Conſolation.

Q. *In the 22d Verſe it is ſaid,* By ſo much was *Jeſus* made a ſurety of a better *Teſtament*: *Why is he called* a better *Teſtament*; *and how is* Chriſt *a* Surety *of it.*

A. It is called a better *Teſtament*, not for Subſtance, but for Clearneſs, the old Covenant-Diſpenſation, and the new are the ſame; but the latter is made more clear, free, full, and more ſurely ratified, by the Death of *Chriſt*, and accompanied with a more mighty Operation of the Spirit of God.

Chriſt is the *Surety of a better* Teſtament. The *Socinians* own *Chriſt* to be the Surety of the Covenant, in reſpect of his holy Life and exemplary Death, ſealing it as a Teſtimony by his Blood, but deny him to be a Surety in reſpect of his Satisfaction, Merit and Interceſſion. But alas! as our ſinful Condition requires a Mediator of Redemption, ſo our changeable Condition requires a Mediator of Interceſſion; and bleſſed be God he has appointed one for both, even his own Son, who is the Surety of a better *Teſtament*.

Thus *Chriſt* was not only a Surety on God's Part to us, to aſſure us, that the Promiſe of the Covenant on his Part ſhould be performed, but he was alſo a Surety on our Part, that we may enjoy the Benefit of the Covenant, Grace here, and Glory hereafter.

Q. *What other Argument does he uſe to prove the Excellency of* Chriſt's *Prieſthood above that of* Aaron?

A. That the Levitical Prieſts were many and mortal; they were cut off by Death, and ſucceed one another; but *Chriſt* is, and always will he one and the ſame to his Church.

The Multiplication of Prieſts, particularly of High-Prieſts, under the legal Diſpenſation, was a manifeſt Evidence of the Imperfection of it; from *Aaron* the firſt High-Prieſt to *Phineas* the laſt, who was deſtroyed with the Temple, are reckoned fourſcore High-Prieſts, who ſucceeded one another; of theſe, thirteen are ſaid to have lived under the Tabernacle, eighteen under the firſt Temple built by *Solomon*, and all the Reſt under the ſecond Temple; the Ground of which Multiplication of Prieſts was this, becauſe they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of Death.

Q. *But did not* Chriſt, *our High-Prieſt, die as well as* Aaron, *and other High-Prieſts?*

A. Yes, he died as a Prieſt; they died from being Prieſts; he died as a Prieſt, becauſe he was alſo to be a Sacrifice. The Apoſtle does not ſay that he did not die, but that he always abideth; he abode a Prieſt even in the State of Death, and and after his Reſurrection he became Immortal, never to die more, *Revel.* i. 18. *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the Keys of Hell and Death*.

Q. *What Inference does he draw from the Eternity and Immutability of* Chriſt's *Prieſthood?*

A. *Wherefore he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt, &c.* ſeeing he lives for ever. Whatever Difficulties lie in the Way of Salvation, either with reſpect to the Guilt of Sin, or to the Power and Dominion of it, the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is able, by Virtue of his ſacerdotal Office, to carry on the Work through all Oppoſition unto eternal Perfection; ſuch is the Dignity of his Perſon, ſuch the Sufficiency of his Satisfaction, that he expiates the Guilt of Sin univerſally and perpetually.

Q. *Explain the Force of thoſe Words,* Such as come unto God by him?

A. All thoſe, and only thoſe, whom God will ſave, are ſuch as come unto him for Salvation, by and through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* as Mediator. How injurious then are they to their own Souls, who ſit down deſponding, either under the Guilt, or the Power of their Sins, and either conclude they are ſo great that they cannot be pardoned, or ſo ſtrong that they can never be vanquiſhed or overcome!

Q. *In what Manner does* Chriſt *always live to* make Interceſſion for us?

A. Chriſt is always living in Heaven a threefold Life. 1. The eternal Life of God in his own Nature; this he liveth in himſelf. 2. A Life of inconceivable Glory in his own Nature; this is a Life he liveth for himſelf. 3. A Mediatory Life in Heaven; and this he lives for us.

Q. *But how does he* make Interceſſion for us?

A. We are not to conceive of *Chriſt* as an Interceſſor with his Father in Heaven in ſuch an humble and ſupplicating Manner as when here upon Earth, with Knees bended, and Eyes lift up to Heaven; this is inconſiſtent with his glorified State. But his is ſuch a pleading and petitioning with his Father as is in the Nature of a Claim and Demand, accompanied with the preſenting the Memorials of his Death unto him. The Care of ſhewing his wounded Body, pleads prevalently and perpetually; and this Interceſſion of *Chriſt* is a ſtanding Evidence of the Continuance of his Love and Care, his Pity and Compaſſion to us.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the 20th Verſe?*

A. *For ſuch an High-Prieſt becomes us*; implying, that without an High-Prieſt in general we have no way of coming to God. God therefore provided for us ſuch an High-Prieſt as our Condition required; one that has made an Attonement for us, procured Acceptance, gives us Aſſiſtance, preſerved us in Grace, and will preſerve us unto Glory.

This our great High-Prieſt is *Holy, Harmleſs, Undefiled, ſeparate from Sinners.* Thus he was in his Conception, Birth, Life, and Death, never ſtained with the leaſt Sin; but both habitually and actually more holy than any Prieſt on Earth, or Angel in Heaven.

He is made higher than the Heavens; advanced above all the Inhabitants of that glorious Place, where he ever lives, and keeps his Reſidence, remaining a Prieſt for ever, not to ſacrifice, but to apply effectually his former Sacrifice to all Believers.

Q. *What is his Concluſion of his Diſcourſe about the Prieſthood?*

A. The Apoſtle thus concludes: The Levitical Law appointed Men to be High-Prieſts that laboured under Infirmities, were Sinners, and ſubject to Mortality; but the Promiſe made to *Chriſt*, and confirmed by God's Oath, long ſince the Law was given, makes the Son, and none but the Son, (who is perfectly holy), and conſecrated to this everlaſting Office) a Prieſt for evermore.

Hence learn, that there never was more than two Sorts of Prieſts in the Church; the one made by the Law, the other by the Oath of God; that the great Foundation of our Faith, and the main Hinge whereon our Salvation depends, is, that our High-Prieſt is the Son of God, and his everlaſting Continuance in his Office, is ſecured by the Oath of God.

CHAP. VIII.

Our High-Prieſt heavenly; the Levitical *earthly, and a Figure of this. The Old Covenant muſt yield to the New; of which Chriſt is Mediator. The Inſtitution and Promiſes of the New Covenant, rehearſed out of the Scriptures.*

Q. IN *what Senſe is our great High-Prieſt called* a Miniſter of the Sanctuary, *Verſe* 2?

A. That is, not of the literal Sanctuary and Tabernacle here below, for *Chriſt* never entered into that; but of the Sanctuary of Heaven; in which dwells all that was repreſented in the Sactuary here below; *Chriſt* our great High-Prieſt abides in the Sanctuary of Heaven for us continually, always repreſenting the Efficacy of that Blood whereby Attonement was made for our Sins.

Q. *What do you obſerve on that Part of* Chriſt's *Office, as our High-Prieſt,* to offer Gifts and Sacrifices?

A. A Prieſt that has nothing to offer, is no Prieſt at all; *Chriſt* therefore offered as well as other High-Prieſts; but What! Not Bullocks or Rams; but his whole human Nature, Soul and Body. As to the typical Sacrifices, he did not, nor could he offer them, were he upon Earth, becauſe he was not of the Tribe of *Levi*, whoſe proper Office it was; therefore, leaving the Shadow to them, he offered the Subſtance, himſelf, that is, his own Body, ſignified by thoſe Shadows.

Hence learn, that there was no Salvation to be had for us, no, not by *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, without his Sacrifice and Oblation; *It was of Neceſſity that he ſhould have ſomewhat to offer,* as well as thoſe High-Prieſts had of old, according to the Law. No Salvation without an Attonement for Sin; no Attonement for Sin, but by Sacrifice; no Sacrifice ſufficient for Attonement, but the Death of *Chriſt*; and whoever looks for Salvation otherwiſe, than in the Faith and Virtue of that Sacrifice, will be deceived.

But though the Obligation was made by *Chriſt* on Earth, yet the continual Application of its Efficacy to the Souls of Believers is made by *Chriſt*, now in Heaven; without which, neither their Acceſs to God, nor their Peace with him, could be maintained.

Q. *How did the Levitical Prieſts* ſerve unto the Example of heavenly Things, as *Verſe* 5?

A. To ſerve, is to officiate as Prieſts, in offering Gifts and Sacrifices; but this Service was not Spiritual and Heavenly, but Carnal and Earthly, yet a Shadow and Imitation of heavenly Things.

Hence learn, that God alone limits the Uſe and Signification of all his own Inſtitutions. Thus the Miniſtry of the Prieſts of Old was about earthly Things, Shadows and Types only. We muſt not diminiſh from, or add to any of God's Inſtitutions. To expect that from any Ordinance or Inſtitution of God, which he never intended, is to make an Idol of the Ordinance, and the Way to render it uſeleſs, yea, pernicious and perilous to us; to put that into Odedience which God never put into it, and to expect more from Obedience than God ever promiſed, is to overthrow it.

Q. *What is imply'd in thoſe Words,* As *Moſes* was admoniſhed of God, *&c?*

A. The Words imply, that divine Inſtitution is the only pure Rule of religious Worſhip. *Moſes* did nothing of his own Head, when he built the Tabernacle, but was directed in every Thing by God. If Perſons will carve out the Worſhip of God according to their own Fancies, they may pleaſe themſelves, perhaps, but can never pleaſe their Maker; for nothing is pleaſing to God, as to the Subſtance of religious Worſhip, but what is of his own preſcribing; conſequently all that theatrical Pomp which is found in the Church of *Rome*, and makes the Worſhip of God a dead Thing, is a mere Fornication in Religion, and an Abomination in the Sight of God. All their human Inventions are intolerable Preſumptions; for as *Moſes* was bound to give Direction, according to the Pattern given to him, ſo the Prieſts, in their Adminiſtrations, were bound to follow *Moſes*'s Directions.

Q. *How does he farther illuſtrate the Excellency of* Chriſt's *Prieſthood?*

A. Our Apoſtle next proves the Excellency of *Chriſt*'s Miniſtry, or Prieſthood, above that of *Aaron* and his Sons, from the Excellency of the New Covenant (or the new Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace) above the Old, of which he was the Mediator. Now the more excellent the Covenant, the more excellent the Miniſtry.

The Goſpel Covenant is a better Covenant, eſtabliſhed upon better Promiſes; their Promiſes of Old were chiefly, though not only, temporal. Ours are chiefly ſpiritual; yet are temporal Things promiſed us alſo; but more rarely, and with the Exception of the Croſs; or rather, they are thrown in as Additions to ſpiritual Promiſes, *Matt.* vi. 33. But the Promiſes of the Covenant of Grace are therefore better, becauſe Strength and Aſſiſtance is engaged for, and graciouſly offered, in order to enable us to perform the Conditions

tions of them. The Law required ſinleſs Obedience? The Goſpel accepts ſincere Obedience, and offers Grace to perform it.

As there was a Covenant made between God and Man, ſo there was need of a Mediator, that the Covenant might be effectual; for a Mediator is neceſſary, both where there is a Controverſy and Difference, and alſo where there is Diſparity and Diſtance between Perſons; in both Reſpects *Chriſt* is a Mediator; and his Mediation was needful, that he might bring us to God. God ſtood upon Terms before he would pardon Sin. Juſtice muſt be ſatisfied, and that by Blood, and that Blood of infinite Value; therefore *Chriſt* is firſt a Sponſor before a Mediator; he firſt ſatisfies for the Breach, before he goes about to make it up between God and the Sinner.

Q. *Wherein was the firſt Covenant faulty, as is inſinuated, Verſe 7?*

A. Underſtand not a ſinful Faultineſs, but a Defectiveneſs and Imperfection only; for it was not faulty in the Matter and Suſtance of it, as it was inſtituted and ordained by God, but becauſe it was obſcure, was not ſurely ratified, and not attended with that Power, Virtue, and Efficacy, with which the new Covenant is accompany'd.

The Defectiveneſs and Imperfection of this firſt Covenant, conſiſts in its Inability to juſtify and ſave us, becauſe of our Inability, through the Weakneſs of the Fleſh, to anſwer the Demands of it, *Rom.* viii. 3. *What the Law could not do in that it was weak through the Fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the Fleſh,* &c. The Law was not properly weak to us, but we are weak to that.

The legal Covenant required exact Obedience, but afforded no ſpiriturl Aſſiſtance to perform what is required; hut the Covenant of Grace, the New Covenant, is called a *Miniſtration of the Spirit*; and under the Goſpel, we are ſaid not to *ſerve in the Oldneſs of the Letter, but in the Newneſs of the Spirit*. But now, ſays the Apoſtle, Almighty God finding fault with the *Jews*, for the Breach of the former Covenant, declared by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, chap. v. 31. that the Covenant he would make with all true *Iſraelites*, for the Time to come, ſhould not be like that he made with their Fathers in *Egypt*: which they continued not in the Obſervation of (wanting thoſe Aſſiſtances from the Holy Spirit to enable them thereunto, which are procured us by *Chriſt*) and accordingly, *I regarded them not, ſaith the Lord*, but gave them up, for their Sins, anto the Hands of their Enemies.

Obſerve farther, how Almighty God makes the Imperfection of the old Covenant, and the *Iſraelites* Inſtability therein, the Reaſon of his making a new Covenant with us, in which Grace and Aſſiſtance are offered, to enable us to obey, and perſevere in Obedience.

Q. *With whom was this Covenant made; and who was the Author of it?*

A. It was made with the Houſe of *Iſrael*, and the Houſe of *Judah*; not made with them as a political Body, becauſe their Policy was to be diſſolved, but as a Part of the Univerſal Church.

The Author of this Covenant is God himſelf, *I will make it, ſaith the Lord.* The aboliſhing the Old Covenant, and eſtabliſhing the New, is an Act of ſovereign Wiſdom, Grace, and Authority in God.

Q. *What was the Promiſe contained in the Covenant?*

A. It was, *I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts*; that is, I will make a clear and perſpicuous Revelation of my Mind and Will unto them, and give them a thorough Knowledge and Underſtanding of my Laws, ſo that their own Conſcience ſhall condemn them when they tranſgreſs them.

Again; by my Holy Spirit, I will make a deep and efficacious Impreſſion of them upon their Hearts and Spirits. Where note, that the Precepts of the Old Covenant are all of them turned into Promiſes under the New; their perceptive and commanding Power remains, but Grace is promiſed for the Performance of them. Conſequently, to deny the Neceſſity and Efficacy of the ſanctifying and renewing Grace of God, in the Habits and Acts of it, is plainly to overthrow the Evangelical Covenant.

I will be to them a God, and they ſhall be to me a People. I, who am All-ſufficient in myſelf, will be your all-ſufficient Preſerver and Rewarder. *They ſhall be to me a People*; that is, a ſpecial and peculiar People, owning Dependency upon, and profeſſing all Subjection and Obedience to me.

Q. *How do you intepret the 11th Verſe,* And they ſhall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, ſaying, Know the Lord; for all ſhall know him, from the leaſt to the greateſt?

A. Theſe Words are not to be underſtood abſolutely but comparatively; they are a Promiſe that under the new Covenant Diſpenſation the holy Spirit ſhall be ſo ſpiritually poured forth, and the Light of the Goſpel ſhall ſhine ſo illuſtrious, as that there ſhall be no ſuch Need, as was under the Law, to teach Men the Knowledge of God, and their Duty to him; they ſhall not have Need, as formerly, to inſtruct one another in the Meaning of the Types and Shadow of the Law; *they ſhall all know me*; that is, all Ranks and Degrees of Men, all Sorts and Conditions of Perſons, ſhall own me to be the Lord.

Some abuſe this Text, and bring it to ſet aſide the Neceſſity of human Teaching; but it is by ſuch Teaching that God gives Men the Knowledge of himſelf.

Hence learn, that it is a Duty incumbent on every Man, to inſtruct others according to his Ability and Opportunity, in the Knowledge of God. But how many are there that mutually teach one another Sin, Folly, Vanity, Villainy of all Sorts, inſtead of the Knowledge of God, and the Duty we owe him? This is what God here promiſes in a Way of Grace, but what he hath given up careleſs and unbelieving Profeſſors to in a Way of Vengeance.

Q. *Why is Sin called Unrighteouſneſs, Ver. 12?*

A. Becauſe nothing can be more unequal and unjuſt than for Man to ſin againſt God his Creator, his Ruler and Benefactor; and *Iniquity*, or a Tranſgreſſion of the Law, an erring and ſwerving from the Rule of Holineſs, which we are to walk by.

From hence we are taught, that the Aggravations of Sin are great and many; that the Glory and Excellency of pardoning Mercy can never be rightly underſtood, unleſs we are convinced of the Greatneſs and Vileneſs of our Sins; and that by the Covenant of Grace we are fully aſſured of the Abundance of pardoning Mercy in God, which diſpoſes him for Chriſt's Sake to be merciful to Sinners, and to remember their Tranſgreſſions no more, how heinous ſoever they have been.

Q. *How was the firſt Covenant abrogated?*

A. *It is made old*; and with the Abolition of it, *it is ready to vaniſh away.* As all old Things loſe their Power, Strength and Vigour, ſo the Old Covenant loſt its binding Power and obliging Force. And as old Things moulder away by little and little, till at laſt they totally vaniſh, and utterly periſh; thus the legal Diſpenſation by little decay'd, till at length it wholly ceaſed.

Hence learn, that the external Appearance of the legal Adminiſtration was glorious, and very taking to the *Jews*; the Structure of the Temple, the Ornaments of the Prieſts, the Order of their Worſhip, had Glory in them which dazzled the the Eyes, and captivated the Minds and Affections of the People: But this Glory gradually vaniſhed, and at laſt totally diſappear'd at the Sun of Righteouſneſs; *in that he ſaith, A New Covenant, he hath made the firſt Old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vaniſh away.*

CHAP. IX.

The Form of the outward Tabernacle, and what was therein; the Miniſtry of its Prieſts; theſe were Shadows and Types. Chriſt by his Sacrifice and Entrance into the true Sanctuary, has wrought an eternal Redemption. By his Death the Teſtament is confirmed; he is gone into Heaven, from whence he ſhall come to deliver them that wait for him.

Q. WHAT *is the Purport of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe in this Chapter?*

A. He here in general acquaints us that the firſt Covenant had an outward legal Service, with ſundry Rites and Ordinances of divine Worſhip, and a worldly Sanctuary raiſed by Men of earthly materials; a temporary Tabernacle; *Verily the firſt Covenant had Ordinances of divine Service,* &c.

It is to be obſerved, that there never was any Covenant between God and Man, but had ſome Ordinances and Inſtitutions of divine Worſhip annexed to it. The original Covenant of Works had the Ordinance of the Tree of Life, and of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Covenant of *Sinai* (whereof the Apoſtle here ſpeaks) had a Multitude of them, and the Goſpel Covenant is not deſtitute of them; witneſs our Sacraments and publick Worſhip.

Note alſo, that all Ordinances for Worſhip muſt be reſolved into divine Ordination or Inſtitution, as that which renders them acceptable and well-pleaſing to God; a Worſhip not ordained by God, can never be acceptable to him.

Q. *What Account does he give of the publick Worſhip under the Ceremonial Law?*

A. From the ſecond to the ſixth Verſe, he deſcribes the Place which God appointed for his ſolemn Worſhip; this was firſt the Tabernacle, then the Temple; the Tabernacle was an ambulatory Temple; the Temple a ſtanding Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a Type and Figure of *Chriſt's* Incarnation, whereby the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, as it dwelt typically in the Temple. This Tabernacle had two Parts, the Sanctuary or Holy Place, and the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, or Holy of Holies.

We are alſo told what ſacred Utenſils were by God's Appointment in both theſe Places. In the Sanctuary there was the Candleſtick, repreſenting that Fulneſs of Light which is in *Chriſt*, and which he communicates to the whole Church.

The Table whereon ſtood the Shew-bread, typifying the Saints Communion with Chriſt, and with one another; alſo the Shew-bread itſelf, which typified Chriſt, as being the only Bread of Life to his Church, the only ſpiritual Food of the Soul that nouriſhes it unto Life eternal.

In the Holy of Holies, there was the golden Cenſer, which was to hold the Incenſe. This repreſented the Interceſſion of Chriſt, which gives Efficacy to the Prayers of Believers.

Alſo, *the Ark of the Covenant overlaid with Gold*; this, with the Mercy-Seat which covered the Ark, was the moſt glorious and myſterious Utenſil of the Tabernacle, the moſt eminent Pledge of Divine Preſence, called the Ark of the Covenant, becauſe the two Tables, in which the ten Commandments were written with the Finger of God, and were kept in it; next, the Golden Pot, in which the Manna was laid up, and miraculouſly kept from Putrefaction, (which of itſelf would have ſtunk in a few Days) a Type of Chriſt the Bread of Life.

Then Aaron's *Rod that budded*; this originally was the Rod of *Moſes*, wherewith he fed his Sheep in the Wilderneſs, and afterwards wrought his Miracles, and particularly Smote the Rock with it, till it guſhed out Water. When *Aaron* was called to the Office of Prieſthood, it was delivered into his keeping. This Rod of *Moſes*, wherewith he ſmote the Rock, is commanded to be laid up in the Tabernacle, becauſe the ſpiritual Rock that followed them was to be ſmitten with the Rod of the Law, that it might give forth the Waters of Life unto the Church.

Laſtly, *The Tables of the Covenant*; that is, the two Tables of Stone cut by *Moſes*, containing the Ten Commandments, which were the Subſtance of God's Covenant with his People; there was nothing in the *Ark* but theſe two Tables. The Pot of *Manna*, and *Aaron's* Rod were laid near the *Ark*, and were of no actual Uſe in the Service of God, but only kept as ſacred Memorials.

The Apoſtle next tells us what was over the *Ark*, namely, the Cherubims, and the Mercy-Seat. Cherubims were winged Creatures of human Shape, but with Wings to denote their angelical Nature; they were two, one at each End of the *Ark*, ſhadowing the Mercy-Seat; from between theſe Cherubims over the Mercy-Seat it was, that God manifeſted his Majeſtical Preſence, ſpake unto *Moſes*, and gave out his Oracles as a Prince ſpeaks from his Throne.

The Mercy-Seat was of pure beaten Gold, the Meaſure of it exactly anſwering the *Ark*. This cover'd the *Ark*, in which the Law was, being a Type of *Chriſt*, who fully covers our Sins, the Tranſgreſſors of the Law, from God's Sight; and is therefore call'd, *Rom.* iii. 25. our Propitiation, and Mercy-Seat.

Q. *But what were the Services appointed to be performed by the Prieſts in this magnificent Structure?*

A. Theſe Services were either daily or weekly; daily in dreſſing the Lamps, ſupplying them with holy Oil Morning and Evening; alſo the Service of the Golden Altar, on which the Prieſts burnt Incenſe every Day. The weekly Service of the Tabernacle was the changing of the Shew-bread every Sabbath-day in the Morning. All the Service was typical, repreſenting the continual Application of the Benefit of *Chriſt's* Sacrifice unto his Church to the End of the World. The Tabernacle itſelf, and the Inhabitation of God in it, was a Type of the Incarnation of the Son of God; all the Utenſils of it were Repreſentations of his Grace. He is the Light and Life of the Church, the Lamp and Bread thereof. The Incenſe of Interceſſion renders all our Obedience acceptable with God; and accordingly there was continual Application made unto theſe Things without Intermiſſion every Day; intimating, that a continual Application to God by *Chriſt*, and a continual Application of the Mediation of *Chriſt* by Faith, are the Springs of the Light, Life, and Comfort of the Church.

But into the ſecond went the High-Prieſt alone; none of the Prieſts were permitted to be ſo near him as the Sanctuary, when he adminiſtred in the moſt holy Place. Thus the Preſence of God in the Holy of Holies, made it inacceſſible, not only to the People, but even to all the Prieſts themſelves.

The great Truth hereby ſhadow'd forth, was, that there is no Entrance into the gracious Preſence of God, but by our great High-Prieſt, the holy *Jeſus*.

Q. *At what particular Time was this Service to be performed?*

A. *Once every Year*; the preciſe Day of the Year was the tenth of the Month *Tizri*, anſwering to our *September*, call'd the great Day of Atonement, *Levit.* xvi. 29. The *Jews* had a ſaying, That on the Day of Expiation all *Iſrael* was made as innocent as in the Day of Creation.

Q. *What was the Nature of this Service?*

A. It was *not without Blood*; that is, he did it by Blood, ſprinkling it ſeven Times with his Finger towards the Mercy-Seat, *Levit.* xv. 11, 12.

There is an Emphaſis in the Expreſſion, *not without Blood*, to manifeſt the Neceſſity of the Death and Bloodſhedding of *Jeſus Chriſt* our great High-Prieſt, and the Impoſſibility of entering into the gracious Preſence of God without the Blood of the reconciling Sacrifice of *Chriſt Jeſus*.

This Blood he offer'd, firſt, for himſelf, and then for the People, that is, for his own Sins, and the Sins of the People. This argued the great Imperfection of that State; whereas *Chriſt* our great High-Prieſt, was not to offer up any Blood but his own; not for himſelf at all, but for others only; not once a Year, but once for all; *by one Offering he hath for ever perfected them that are ſanctified*.

Q. *What was the ſpiritual Uſe and Signification of the Levitical Service?*

A. That the true and proper Means to enter into Heaven, the Holy of Holies, was not ſo fully and clearly manifeſted; and that Heaven, repreſented by the Holy of Holies, was yet inacceſſible; for *Chriſt* enter'd into Heaven as our Forerunner, with his Blood, to appear before God, and thereby to prepare the Way for our Entrance after him.

Altho' typical Inſtitutions, diligently attended to, were ſufficient to direct the Faith of the *Jews* unto the Expectation of a real Expiation for Sin, and a gracious Acceptance with God thereupon, yet a clear Manifeſtation of the Way of Expiation of Sin by the Blood of *Chriſt*, is the great Privilege and Diſcovery of the Goſpel.

Q. *But why could not theſe legal Rites make them perfect?*

A. Becauſe the Nature of them was ſuch, that they reached only to the outward Man, conſiſting for the moſt Part *in Meats, Drinks, and divers Waſhings*, which did not of themſelves commend any Man to God, and were impoſed upon them as a Yoke, until the Time of Reformation, that is, the Time of the *Meſſiah*, the Time of the *New Teſtament-Diſpenſation*.

Q. *In what Manner did* Chriſt *execute his Office of High-Prieſt?*

A. Thus, as Levitical Prieſts had a Tabernacle, an earthly Sanctuary, to officiate in, ſo *Chriſt* had a greater and more perfect Tabernacle to execute his Office in, namely, that of his own Body, not like theirs, made with Hands, but miraculouſly formed in the Virgin's Womb by the overſhadowing Power of the Holy Ghoſt, in which the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt ſubſtantially. The human Nature of *Chriſt* was that Tabernacle in which the Son of God adminiſter'd his ſacerdotal Office on Earth, and continues ſo to do in Heaven by his Interceſſion.

As *Chriſt* had a more excellent Tabernacle, ſo was he incomparably a more excellent High-Prieſt than ever the legal Diſpenſation had; they enter'd the Holy of Holies, he enter'd Heaven; they enter'd often, he but once; they enter'd with the Blood of Goats and Calves, he in his own Blood. And the Effect, Fruit, and Benefit of it was unſpeakable; thereby *he obtained eternal Redemption for us*.

Q. *How did* Chriſt *enter into Heaven with his own Blood, as is intimated, ver.* 12?

A. This is not to be underſtood as if he carried the Blood which he ſhed with him into Heaven, in a Veſſel or otherwiſe, as the High-Prieſt carried the Blood of the Sacrifice in his Hand into the moſt holy Place; but that *Chriſt* preſented his Body in Heaven, out of which the Blood was ſhed, and by the Merit of his Death made Expiation for Sin, and purchaſed eternal Redemption for Sinners.

Q. *How does he prove that eternal Redemption was the Fruit of* Chriſt's *Sacrifice?*

A. Thus; if the Blood of Bulls and Goats, and the Water that was mixed with the Aſhes of a burnt Heifer, (or red Cow, mentioned *Numb.* xix.) purified from Ceremonial Uncleanneſs, and procured the eternal Sanctification of the Fleſh, or outward Man; how much more ſhall the Blood of *Chriſt*, who by the eternal Spirit (that is, his Godhead, his divine Nature) offered up himſelf (his whole Man, Soul and Body) a Sacrifice without Spot to God the Father, be able to purge our Conſciences from all ſpiritual Impurity and Uncleanneſs of Sin, and render us fit to ſerve the living God in an holy Courſe of *Chriſtian* Obedience?

Note, that it was the Godhead of *Chriſt* that render'd the Suffering of his Manhood infinitely meritorious; or *Chriſt's* Blood was effectual; not ſimply, as it was material Blood, but as offered by the eternal Spirit; his Blood, though not the Blood of God, yet was the Blood of him that was God.

Note alſo, that the beſt Works of Men, antecedently to the purging of their Conſciences by the Blood of *Chriſt*, are but dead Works, unſuitable to the Nature of the living God, who delights not in Services without Life, without Heart, without Spirit.

Q. *What peculiar Benefit reſults from the Death of* Chriſt?

A. The Ratification of the Goſpel-Covenant; for by this Means he took upon him the glorious Office of Mediator of the New Covenant, that by the intervention of his Death he might make Satiſfaction for the Sins of Believers under the *Old Teſtament*, as well as for thoſe under the *New*, that both might by Virtue of his Death obtain the promiſed eternal Inheritance.

Q. *Why is the Covenant of Grace called a* Teſtament?

A. Becauſe it received its Ratification and Confirmation by the Blood of *Chriſt*. All Things required in a *Teſtament* are here found; namely, a Teſtator deceaſed, *Chriſt Jeſus*; Legacies bequeathed, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal Bleſſings; Legacies named, the Heirs of Promiſe; Conditions required, upon which only the Legacies are to be obtained, Faith, Repentance, and ſincere Obedience; Seals annexed, Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper; Witneſſes ſubſcribing, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt.

The Sum is this, that the Death of *Chriſt* is the Foundation, Life and Soul of the New Covenant, which New Covenant is in the Nature of a *Teſtament*; and the Benefit promiſed therein, Remiſſion of Sin, Reconciliation with God, Sanctification on Earth, and Glorification in Heaven, are Legacies freely left us by our deceaſed Teſtator; who *was dead, but is alive again, and lives for evermore* to execute his own Will and Teſtament, of which the Scripture is the Inſtrument, and the Sacraments the Seals. As the Grant or Cauſe of theſe Things is free and gracious, ſo the Enjoyment of them is ſecured againſt Contingencies by the Death of *Jeſus Chriſt* the great Teſtator. *A Teſtament is of force after Men are dead*; but of no Strength at all while the Teſtator liveth.

Q. *But why was Blood neceſſary to ratify this Covenant?*

A. The uſing of Blood for the Sanction of Leagues and Covenants was a very antient Rite, and probably ſignified the Parties confederating did thereby engage Blood and Life for the Obſervation of them. Now that the Covenant between God and *Iſrael* was thus ſolemnized, and received its Confirmation by Blood, the Apoſtle proves from the Hiſtory of *Moſes, Exod.* xxiv. to which he appeals; where we find *Moſes* ſprinkling Blood on the Book wherein the Covenant was written, and on the People who engaged themſelves as Parties to the Covenant.

The Uſe and End of this Sprinkling upon the People, was the Confirmation of the Covenant on their Part, as the Sprinkling it upon the Altar was the Confirmation on God's Part.

Q. *Why did* Moſes, *after he had ſprinkled the Altar with Blood, add theſe Words*, This is the Blood of the Covenant?

A. That is, this is the Blood by which the Covenant is confirmed, and made inviolable betwixt God and you; he calls it *the Blood of the Covenant*, becauſe it was a Sign of it, and a Seal confirming it. Thus the new Covenant was confirmed by Blood, even by the Blood of *Chriſt*, as is evident from his own Words, *Luke* xxii. 20. *This Cup is the* New Teſtament *in my Blood for Remiſſion of Sin.* Remiſſion of Sin is one principal Bleſſing promiſed in the new Covenant; but this Promiſe had been in vain, if *Chriſt's* Blood had not been ſhed to ſatisfy divine Juſtice, and thereby made Sin remiſſible; this is the firm and unmoveable Baſis and Foundation upon which the new Covenant was fixed.

Q. *How does he prove the Efficacy of* Chriſt's *Blood ſufficient to take away Sin?*

A. He tells us, that the Tabernacle, the Veſſels, and all the Utenſils thereunto belonging, yea, all the Things that were purified, were ceremonially purified by Blood; and as then without ſhedding of Blood there could be no Remiſſion, ſo no Acceptance with God now without ſhedding the Blood of *Chriſt*.

Such, we ſee, is the Uncleanneſs of our Nature, of our Perſons, of our Duties, of all our Services, that unleſs they and we are purified by the Blood of *Chriſt*, neither we nor they ſhall be accepted with God.

Q. *What does he mean by* heavenly Things, *ver.* 23?

A. Underſtand Heaven itſelf, of which the Tabernacle was a Type. Now as the Purification of the Tabernacle was only to prepare it to be a Place where their Perſons might be preſented before God; ſo was Heaven itſelf prepared and purified for us by our Lord's Entrance into it, with his own Attonement, or Propitiatory Sacrifice; *Chriſt's* entring into Heaven, and his appearing with his Blood of ſprinkling in the Preſence of God for us, procures the Acceptance of our Prayers and Praiſes whilſt we live, and our Admiſſion into thoſe heavenly Manſions of Bliſs and Glory prepared for us when we die.

Q. *What was the End of our great High-Prieſt's entering into Heaven?*

A. *Now to appear in the Preſence of God for us.* The Prieſts of old, when they enter'd the holy Place, were forced ſoon to go out again to prepare for a new Sacrifice; but this Word *now* is expreſſive of the whole Seaſon and Duration of Time, from the Entrance of *Chriſt* into Heaven, unto the Conſummation of all Things; there is no Moment of Time in which it may not be ſaid, he now appears *in the Preſence of God for us.*

Q. *How does the Apoſtle farther illuſtrate the Excellency of* Chriſt's *Sacrifice?*

A. From its Singularity; it needs no Repetition as the Sacrifices of old did; *Chriſt's* once offering himſelf a Sacrifice was ſufficient, in regard of the infinite Worth and Dignity of his Perſon; *once in the End of the World*; in the Goſpel-age, the laſt Age of the World, *hath he appeared to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf.*

The Virtue of *Chriſt's* Sacrifice, once offered, extended itſelf to all Times, and purchaſed Pardon for Sins committed in all Ages, even long before it was offered. For the Death of *Chriſt* muſt be conſider'd, not as a natural, but as a moral Cauſe; not as a Medicine that heals, but as a Ranſom that frees a Captive. A Captive may be releaſed on Aſſurance given that a Ranſom ſhall be paid. Thus the Death of *Chriſt* was available to purchaſe Pardon for Believers before his Coming, becauſe he interpoſed as their Surety, and therefore he is called *the Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World*, not only in reſpect of God's Decree, but *Chriſt's* Efficacy; the Salvation we derive from him, was ever in him; *Chriſt's* once offering was ſufficient; his Sacrifice may be often commemorated, but only once offered. Though the Sufferings of *Chriſt* were neceſſary to the Expiation of Sin, yet he ſuffer'd neither more nor oftner than was neceſſary; to have ſuffer'd often was altogether needleſs, and would have been uſeleſs.

Q. *What was the great End for which* Chriſt *became a Sacrifice?*

A. *To put away Sin*; plainly implying, that Sin had erected a Dominion, a Tyranny over all Men, as by a Law; that no Power of any mere Creature was able to diſannul or aboliſh this Law of Sin; that the Deſtruction and Diſſolution of this Law of Sin was the great End of *Chriſt*'s Coming to diſcharge his prieſtly Office in the Sacrifice of himſelf.

Q. *What is the Import of the two laſt Verſes?*

A. The Apoſtle here reaſons thus; as God has appointed that all Men ſhould die penally for Sin, and then be judged, ſo did he determine that *Chriſt* ſhould ſuffer once penally, to expiate Sin, and fully take away the Guilt of it. And as, after Death, Men muſt appear the ſecond Time to Judgment, ſo after his once offering to take away Sin and Death, *Chriſt* ſhall appear the ſecond Time to beſtow upon us eternal Salvation.

But obſerve, that *Chriſt's* being offered to take away the Sins of many, cannot be meant of his taking them away in the *Socinian* Senſe, that is, by his holy Doctrine, but of his bearing our Sins by way of Imputation; for this is evident from the Oppoſition here between his firſt Appearance and his ſecond; Chriſt *was once offered to bear our Sins, but he ſhall appear a ſecond Time without Sin.* But did he not appear the firſt Time without Sin? Certainly he did, as to any inherent Guilt; for the Scriptures aſſure us *he had no Sin.* The Words then have no other Senſe but this; that at his firſt Coming he epreſented the Perſon of a Sinner, and died as a Sacrifice; but at his ſecond Coming he ſhall appear as a Judge, to confer eternal Life on thoſe who are made Partakers of the Sacrifice of his Death.

It is appointed for all Men once to die. The ſupreme Lord of Life and Death appoints Man his Time, both for coming into the World and going out of it; we come in at his command, and leave it at his Decree.

And after Death the Judgment. The Word, *after*, ſignifies the order of Time; for Death goes before, and Judgment follows it. This Judgment is both particular of every individual Perſon, and general and univerſal of all; after which follows the final, eternal, and unalterable Condition of Man, either in a State of Miſery or Felicity. The Parties judged will be Angels and Men; the Perſon judging, *Jeſus Chriſt*; he by redeeming Mankind, obtained a Right and Power of judging Mankind; ſuch a Judge as the Power of the mightieſt will not odaunt; ſuch as the ſubtility of the wiſeſt cannot elude; ſuch as the richeſt or the wealthieſt cannot Bribe: In a Word, ſuch a Judge as there is no Appeal from, no repealing of his Sentence. At that great Day the ſtiffeſt Knee ſhall bow at the Tribunal of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the ſtrongeſt Back ſhall break under the inſupportable Burden of a Redeemer's Wrath.

Since then that Judgment is before us, let us ſeriouſly believe it, daily expect it, duly prepare for it; let no Profit tempt us, no Pleaſure entice us, no Power embolden us, no Privacy encourage us, to do that which we cannot account for at the great Tribunal of this impartial Judge.

CHAP. X.

The antient Sacrifices inſufficient to purge the Soul, and reconcile Men to God; therefore Chriſt's *Sacrifice of himſelf was neceſſary, and by this we come to God with Confidence and Faith. The fearful Judgments of God, which Apoſtates are to expect. An Exhortation to hold faſt the Faith, with Patience and Thankſgiving.*

Q. HOW *does the Apoſtle prove the Impotency and Imperfection of the Levitical Sacrifices?*

A. From the Nature of them; they were Shadows; *The Law having a Shadow of good Things to come.* An Alluſion, probably, to the Art of Painting, wherein a Shadow is firſt drawn, and afterwards the very Image itſelf; or a Metaphor taken from the Shadow of a Body in the Light of the Sun. As a Shadow is the Repreſentation of the Body, though an obſcure one; for the Life, Vigour, and Spirit of the Body cannot be repreſented by it, thus was it between the Sacrifices of the Law, and the Sacrifices of *Chriſt*; thoſe Sacrifices were a juſt Repreſentation of *Chriſt*; he was the Idea in the Mind of God, when *Moſes* was charged to make all Things according to the Pattern ſhewn him in the Mount, and they were but an obſcure and dark Repreſentation of him; the Glory and Efficacy of theſe good Things was not viſible in them.

Q. *What other Argument does he uſe to prove the Impotency and Weakneſs of the legal Sacrifices?*

A. The conſtant Repetition of them. Thus thoſe Sacrifices that were repeated Year by Year, could not of themſelves make Satisfaction for Sin, or purge the Conſcience of the Sinner from Guilt. Had Juſtice been ſatisfied, and Conſcience quieted, there had been no Reaſon why thoſe Sacrifices ſhould have been ſo often repeated. But in their moſt ſolemn Sacrifices there was Commemoration and Confeſſion made of their Sins by the High-Prieſt every Year; which intimated that they needed a new and better Sacrifice for the Expiation of Sin, namely, that of the *Meſſiah*, in and by which alone Remiſſion of Sin was to be expected and obtain'd.

Hence it appears, that the Church of *Rome*, by affirming the Sacrifice in the Maſs to be the very ſame which *Chriſt* offer'd on the Croſs, proves an Inſufficiency in the Sacrifice of *Chriſt* for the Expiation of Sin, if the Apoſtle's Argument here be good; for he affirms, that all Sacrifices which muſt be repeated are weak and inſufficient.

But although repeated Sins have need of repeated Confeſſion, and renew'd Pardon, yet they have no need of a Sacrifice, *for he who is once purged, has no more Conſcience of Sin*, that is, though he knows he has many Sins, yet he has not a trembling, tormenting, and accuſing Conſcience, becauſe he is purged; and his Sins pardon'd, through that one Sacrifice of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *Why was it impoſſible that the* Blood of Goats *ſhould take away Sin, ver. 4?*

A. It was impoſſible from divine Inſtitution; they were never deſign'd for that Purpoſe, therefore could never effect it; for the Virtue of every Inſtitution depends upon its Deſignation to its End. Now the Blood of Bulls was only deſign'd to repreſent the taking away Sin, but never by itſelf to effect it.

It was alſo impoſſible from the Nature of the Thing; for how could the Blood of a Beaſt expiate the Sin of a Man? Satisfaction muſt be made for Sin in and by the ſame Nature that ſinn'd.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle prove the Efficacy and Sufficiency of* Chriſt's *Sacrifice for the Performanee of all Things requiſite to our Salvation?*

A. To this purpoſe he quotes *Pſal.* xl. 6, 7, 8. where *Chriſt* is brought in as newly made Man, addreſſing the Father after this Manner; Since thou in thy Wiſdom didſt inſtitute and appoint Sacrifices, as Types, to prefigure the Sacrifice of thy Son; but didſt not intend their long Continuance, when he ſhould once be offered up; purſuant to this thy holy Will and Pleaſure, I am now come into the World; thou haſt prepar'd me a Body, an holy and innocent human Nature, fit to be united to my glorious God-head; in which Nature I will ſuffer, and by my Sufferings ſatisfy thy Juſtice for Sin; and by the Sufficiency of my Sacrifice put a Period to all the Levitical Sacrifices that preceded and prefigured me.

Q. *What other Difference was there between* Chriſt *and the Levitical Prieſts?*

A. The Levitical Prieſthood conſiſted of a Plurality of Perſons; the Prieſts were many; and by Reaſon of Death had many Succeſſors; but the Evangelical Prieſthood conſiſted of only one Perſon, here call'd *this Man*.

Again; the Levitical Prieſthood conſiſted of a Plurality of Sacrifices, and of divers Kinds, Bulls, Lambs, Goats, &c. but the Sacrifice of *Chriſt* was but one, as to the Kind, namely, *that Body which was prepared*.

Farther; the Levitical Sacrifices were often offer'd; but the Sacrifice of *Chriſt* only once. The Levitical Sacrifices could never take away Sin, but *Chriſt*, by the Sacrifice of his Death took away Sin for ever, fully and everlaſtingly.

The Levitical Prieſts ſtood and miniſter'd, *every Prieſt ſtandeth daily*; this is the Poſture of Servants; but *Chriſt* ſits, which is the Poſture of a Lord; *this Man after he had offered, ſat down*.

They ſtood daily miniſtring and offering, becauſe their Sacrifices could not take away Sin; but *Chriſt* did his Work fully by one Offering, and after that ſits or reſts for ever in Heaven.

The Virtue of *Chriſt*'s Sacrifice reacheth backward as far as *Adam*, and forward to the laſt Believer ſpringing from *Adam*; and as it reaches backward and forward to all Believers, in former, preſent, and future Ages, ſo to all the Sins of all Believers, which are fully purged and expiated by it; the Deſign and End of this Obligation being to attone, pacify, and reconcile God, by giving a full and adequate Compenſation to the Juſtice of God, for the wrong done to the Holineſs of his Law. Thus our Lord *Jeſus by one Offering, has perfected for ever them that are ſanctified*.

Q. *How does he farther prove the Perfection of* Chriſt's Sacrifice?

A. By the Teſtimony of the Holy Ghoſt, recorded, *Jer.* xxxi. 31. where after he had promis'd a new Covenant inſtead of the old, and had ſaid, *this is the Covenant I will make with them after thoſe days*, namely, when the Days are expired, then he ſays, *I will put my Law into their Hearts, and their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more*.

Now ſeeing that under the new Covenant God promis'd Sanctification and Remiſſion of Sins to all Believers, of which Covenant *Chriſt* is Mediator, and by whoſe Death the Covenant is ratified and confirmed, therefore this one Sacrifice once offer'd up is abundantly ſufficient.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle apply this Diſcourſe concerning* Chriſt's *Prieſthood?*

A. He comes next to direct their Practice; to *draw near to God*, that is, in general, to worſhip him; in particular, to pray unto him, and ſeek Remiſſion of Sin and eternal Life from him; to come unto God, as cloathed with Majeſty ſitting on a Throne of Grace, and propitiated by the Blood of *Chriſt*.

With a pure Heart, and in full Aſſurance of Faith; it muſt be with the Heart, or we give him the Skin inſtead of a Sacrifice; with Sincerity of Heart, which is the Life and Soul of all acceptable Worſhip; and with a *full Aſſurance of Faith*, grounded upon the Fidelity of God, and the Immutability of the Promiſe.

He that draws nigh to God, muſt, 1. *Have his Heart ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience*. 2. His *Body waſhed with pure Water*, namely, the Laver of Regeneration, which was ſignified by the legal Waſhing.

Q. *What Encouragement have we thus to draw nigh to God?*

A. We have *a new and living Way* unto the Holieſt by the Blood of *Jeſus*; an Alluſion to the legal Diſpenſation, wherein the High-Prieſt had a Way to paſs through the Veil with Blood into the holieſt, to expiate the Sins of the People, and obtain Mercy for them. Ours is call'd a new Way, becauſe newly made manifeſt; and a living Way, becauſe it leads to, and ends in eternal Life; or a living Way, in Oppoſition to the typical Way of going into the Holieſt, which was a dead Way to all but the High-Prieſt, and to him too, if he enter'd above once a Year, and then alſo, if he enter'd without Blood.

Farther; this new and living Way is here ſaid to be *conſecrated through the Veil of* Chriſt's *Fleſh*; that is, made paſſable for penitent Sinners, the Throne of Grace made acceſſible through the Blood of a Mediator. When *Chriſt* died, the Veil of the Temple was rent, to ſignify that our great High-Prieſt was ready to enter the holy Place of Heaven, to procure eternal Redemption for us.

Having therefore Boldneſs; that is, Freedom and Liberty to enter into the Holieſt; a Freedom for our Prayers to enter Heaven while we live, and a Right and Liberty for our Perſons to enter it when we die.

The Means whereby we obtain this Liberty, is, *by the Blood of* Jeſus. We who before could not come nigh him for our Sins, may now come nigh him by Faith in the Blood of his Son; for that Blood ſatisfied Juſtice, merited divine Favour, and made God acceſſible.

Q. *What is the next Duty the* Hebrews *are exhorted to?*

A. Perſeverance in the *Chriſtian* Faith and Hope, in order to the actual Enjoyment of the great Reward; *let us hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith*; not blindly without due Examination, but having examin'd the Grounds and Foundations of our Faith, to maintain the Profeſſion of it againſt all Temptations and Terrors of the World, occaſion'd by Sufferings and Perſecutions, and againſt all the cunning Arts and Inſinuations of buſy and diſputing Men, whoſe Deſign is to unhinge us from our Religion, and make us Proſelytes to their Party and Faction.

Q. *What Argument does he uſe to enforce this Duty?*

A. Becauſe *he is faithful that has promiſed.* Here we have a Promiſe, even of eternal Life, as the Reward of our Perſeverance. This is the Promiſe of God, not of Man, and a faithful God, who neither can, nor will change his Mind; he can as ſoon change his Being as his Word and Promiſe.

Q. *What is the Meaning of that Expreſſion, v.* 24. Let us conſider one another?

A. That is, watch over one another. This Conſideration reſpects the Gifts, the Graces, Temptations, and Dangers of one another, and is the Foundation of all thoſe mutual Duties of warning, exhorting, and admoniſhing one another; Duties too much neglected among us, and with them the Glory of the *Chriſtian* Religion is departed.

Q. *Explain that Expreſſion in the ſame Verſe,* Provoke one another to Love, and to good Works?

A. That is no true Faith which can be ſeparated from Love; and that is no true Love which is ſeparated from good Works. The great End of *Chriſtian* Communion among Believers is, to excite one another to Love, which is the Spring and Fountain of all good Works; and to provoke one another to good Works, is the genuine Effect of a ſincere Love to God and our Neighbour.

Q. *What do you obſerve from the 25th Verſe, where the Apoſtle reproves the Practice of thoſe who forſook the aſſembling of themſelves together?*

A. That there were at that Time *Chriſtian* Aſſemblies, in which *Chriſtians* met together to worſhip and ſerve God, and edify and comfort one another; and in Times of Peace and Liberty, they had convenient Places erected and ſeparated for that Purpoſe. The Light of Nature, as well as of Scripture, dictates that God is to be worſhipp'd ſolemnly and publickly; that publick Worſhip pleaſes him moſt, and he accepts it beſt.

Obſerve alſo, that it was then cuſtomary with ſome to forſake the Publick Aſſemblies; ſome out of Sloth and Negligence; others from fear of Perſecution; this was, and ſtill continues a dangerous Sin. God and *Chriſt* eſteem themſelves forſaken; *Chriſtian* Aſſemblies are the Life, the Food, and Nouriſhment of our Souls, conſequently, the forſaking of Church-Aſſemblies is uſually the fore-runner of Apoſtaſy.

Q. *But what Reaſon had he to preſs this Duty upon them?*

A. *Becauſe the Day approacheth*; that is, the Day of *Jeruſalem*'s approaching Deſtruction to them; the Day of Death and Judgment coming upon and haſtening towards us.

Q. *In the 26th and 27th Verſes the Apoſtle vehemently inforces his preceding Exhortation to an unwearied Perſeverance in the Profeſſion of* Chriſtianity; *and this he urges from the dreadful Conſequences of Apoſtaſy: What is the Nature and Aggravation of this Sin?*

A. *If we Sin wilfully*; that is, by renouncing *Chriſtianity*. Our Apoſtle puts himſelf in the Number, to ſhew there is no Reſpect of Perſons in this Matter, but thoſe who have equally ſinn'd ſhall be equally puniſh'd.

The Apoſtle, by ſinning wilfully, does not mean every wilful Sin, and that there is no Recovery after any voluntary Sin committed; but by wilfully, he means obſtinately, maliciouſly, and with Deſpite.

After we have received the Knowledge of the Truth; that is, after the Goſpel had been preach'd to us, and we, upon Conviction of its Truths, and Senſe of its Power, have taken upon us the publick Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*; after we have dedicated our ſelves to *Chriſt* in Baptiſm, and join'd ourſelves to the Body of his Church; after all this, to renounce and relinquiſh the *Chriſtian* Profeſſion, either for fear of Suffering, or Love of this preſent World, expoſes us to an inevitable and unalterable Condemnation.

The Aggravation of this Sin is, it cannot be expiated, *there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin*; for God has no other Son to offer as a Sacrifice for Sin, if this be rejected; and no other Spirit to make that Sacrifice effectual, if the Holy Spirit be deſpis'd, and finally reſiſted; thereforefore no Ground of Hope can remain for ſuch Apoſtates. The Puniſhment of Sins unpardonable is unavoidable. It is an eternal Decree of Divine Juſtice, that the Sacrifice of *Chriſt* ſhould never benefit that Man, who finally falls away after he has receiv'd the Knowledge of the Truth.

Q. *What is the Judgment here threaten'd againſt Apoſtates?*

A. The fiery Indignation, and fearful Wrath of the holy and juſt God; of this Apoſtates have frequently dreadful Apprehenſions and fearful Expectations.

This ſad and ſudden deſtruction of Apoſtates, the Apoſtle compares with the Puniſhment inflicted on the Breakers of *Moſes*'s Law. If thoſe under the Teſtimony, of two or three Witneſſes, died without Mercy, how much ſorer Puniſhment is due to the Contemners of *Chriſt*, who tread under Foot, that is, vilify and undervalue our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, eſteeming him as one that died a publick Malefactor; counting the Blood of the Covenant as unholy, that is, a common Thing, making nothing of the moſt ſolemn Rite that ever was us'd in the World for the Confirmation of any Covenant; namely, the ſhedding the Blood of the Son of God, *and doing Deſpite unto the Spirit of Grace*; as if we were guilty of Lying and Falſhood, in bearing witneſs of the divine Power of *Chriſt*.

Q. *But who is the Judge to inflict this Puniſhment on Apoſtates?*

A. *Vengeance is mine, ſaith the Lord.* By Vengeance is meant vindictive Juſtice in puniſhing Offenders. The Argument ſtands thus; if God profeſſes himſelf an Avenger of all Sin and Injury done to his People, as he certainly does, *Deut.* xxxii. 36. how much more will he ſhew himſelf an Avenger of ſo horrible an Indignity offer'd to his Son and Holy Spirit.

Hence learn, that the Conſideration of the righteous Nature of God, and that Incloſure he has made of Vengeance to himſelf, under an irrevocable Purpoſe for its Execution, gives undoubted Aſſurance of the unavoidable Deſtruction of all wilful Apoſtates.

Q. *Why is God called here the* living God?

A. As well by Way of Oppoſition to dead and dumb Idols, as with reſpect to his lively Power and Strength, whereby he is able to execute Vengeance on ſinful Men; and likewiſe to ſignify the eternal Duration of his Exiſtence. He ever lives to execute his Wrath, and inflict Vengeance on the apoſtatizing Sinner.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by falling into God's Hands, v. 31?*

A. There is a threefold Hand of God mention'd in Scripture; his protecting, his correcting, his wrathful and revengeful Hand, it is ſafe and comfortable to fall into God's protecting Hand; it is profitable and beneficial, though not pleaſing and delightful, to fall into God's chaſtening and correcting Hand; it is fearful, either to fall under the Sentence of his Wrath in this Life, or under the full and final Execution of that Wrath in the Life to come; it is Wrath inconceivably great, and unavoidably certain, and muſt needs be dreadful, becauſe it is the Wrath of a juſt, almighty, everlaſting and ever-living God.

Q. *To what Intent does he bid them* call to Remembrance their former Sufferings?

A. He does not mean the Remembrance of of what was bitter and afflictive in their Sufferings, but the Cauſe for which they ſuffer'd, and the Preſence of God enjoy'd by them in and under their Sufferings; this would encourage, embolden and ſtrengthen them in their Duty.

Q. *What Kind of Sufferings did the primitive Saints undergo for the Sake of* Chriſtianity?

A. The Apoſtle reduces them to three Heads, Shame, Pain and Loſs. They ſuffer'd in their Names, by being diſgrac'd; in their Perſons by being ſcourged; in their Eſtates, by the ſpoiling of their Goods. We may put a due Value upon our Names and Reputations, but muſt not be overſollicitous about the Preſervation of them. Let us keep in the Way of our Duty, and leave our good Name to God's Care and Keeping. The World firſt thunders out Reproaches, then falls on us in a Storm of Perſecution.

Q. *What do you remark on thoſe Words, ver.* 34. Ye had Compaſſion of me in my Bonds?

A. Theſe Words prove St. *Paul* to be the Author of this Epiſtle; for who elſe could there be, whoſe Bonds for the Goſpel were ſo known among the believing *Jews*? His Bonds were firſt at *Jeruſalem*, afterwards at *Rome*, the two Capital Cities of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Here he declares what a tender Sympathy and Fellow-feeling they had of his Sufferings, how they adminiſter'd to his Relief, and ſuccour'd him in his Diſtreſs.

Q. *What Inference does the Apoſtle draw from the Conſideration of their former Conſtancy in their Sufferings?*

A. Since therefore, ſays he, you have endur'd ſo much, never ſhrink back from a bold and couragious Profeſſion of *Chriſt* and his holy Religion, which will be crown'd with a great Recompence of Reward.

Caſt not away your Conſcience, like cowardly Soldiers, who, in the Heat of Battle caſt down their Shields and Armour, and run away. The *Chriſtian* is a ſpiritual Soldier; he muſt not ſhrink or give back, but die a Conqueror rather than be taken Priſoner.

The Reaſon inforcing the Exhortation, is, that this their Confidence *hath great Recompence of Reward.* The Reward is certain, and is due to ſuch as perſevere. Perſeverance and the Reward are inſeparably connected, and the one ſhall infallibly follow the other.

Q. *Why does he add, ver.* 36. For ye have need of Patience.

A. This, no doubt, they already had, when they endur'd ſuch a great Fight of Afflictions; the Meaning therefore is, Ye have need of the continued Exerciſe of Patience, without which none can paſs through Tribulations to the Glory of God, and their own Advantage. We have need of Patience to perform difficult Duties, to reſiſt ſtrong Temptations, and to wait for an Anſwer of our Prayers, and for the Reward of our Patience.

The Glory of Heaven, firmly believ'd, will powerfully ſuſtain the *Chriſtian* Spirit under Sufferings. Patience is as neceſſary to enable us to expect and wait for the Reward of our Sufferings, as it is needful and neceſſary to ſupport and uphold us under them.

Q. *Explain, ver.* 37. For yet a little while, and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry?

A. The *Chriſtian*'s ſuffering-Seaſon will be ſhort; *Chriſt* will come to call him off; and when he comes, no Difficulties ſhall be able to ſtand before him, but ſuch as have ſuffer'd patiently, ſhall be rewarded gloriouſly.

Q. *How ſhall* the Juſt live by Faith, *as ver.* 38?

A. The Words are taken out of *Habakkuk*, and are three times us'd by St. *Paul*, *Rom.* i. 17. *Gal.* iii. 11. and in this Place. By the juſt Man, underſtand a Life of Sanctification and of Glorification, a Life of Grace and Holineſs, and of Glory and Happineſs. It is by the Help and Aſſiſtance of his Faith, that a Believer is enabled to live after a more excellent Manner, and for more worthy Purpoſes than other Men.

Q. *It follows,* But if any Man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no Pleaſure in him; *which Words pray explain?*

A. If any Man that has embraced *Chriſtianity*, ſhall either for Sufferings fear'd or felt, draw back from his holy Profeſſion, God will be exceedingly diſpleas'd with him, and puniſh him ſeverely.

Note here, that theſe Threatnings imply a Poſſibility of the Saints falling away, conſider'd in themſelves; but not that they are ever totally deſerted by the holy Spirit, and left under the reigning Power of Sin. Theſe Threatnings are intended to awaken their Care, and have a ſingular Influence on their Preſervation.

Q. *What do you obſerve on what the Apoſtle adds in the next Verſe,* But we are not of them who draw back unto Perdition; but of them that believe to the ſaving of the Soul?

A. This intimates, 1. That in the viſible Church there have been, are, and will be, a Number of Hypocrites, who for fear of ſuffering in a Time of Perſecution, will *draw back.* 2. That it is every *Chriſtian*'s Duty to evidence to his own Conſcience, and alſo to give Evidence to others, that he is not of this Number.

Obſerve here, a two-fold oppoſite Event, Perdition on the one Hand, and Salvation on the other.

The firſt of theſe is deny'd, the latter is affirm'd, concerning theſe *Hebrews*; *We are not of them that draw back unto Perdition; but of them that believe, to the ſaving of the Soul.*

Hence learn, that eternal Ruin is the certain Conſequence of Apoſtaſy; and that ſincere Faith will carry Men through all Difficulties, Hazards, and Troubles, unto the certain Enjoyment of eternal Bliſs.

CHAP. XI.

The Nature and Virtues of Faith, illuſtrated by various Examples.

Q. HOw is Faith the Subſtance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not ſeen, *ver.* 1?

A. Faith is a confident and firm Expectation of the good Things which God has promiſed, giving the Things hoped for a real Subſiſtence in our Minds and Souls.

It is the Evidence of Things not ſeen; that is, it evidences the Reality and Certainty of future Things, it realizes the inviſible Realities of another World unto our Minds, and cauſes us to believe them as ſtrongly as what we ſee with our bodily Eyes.

Q. *How does he illuſtrate the Excellency of Faith?*

A. In the ſecond Verſe, he recommends Faith from the Experience of the Elders of the *Old Teſtament* Saints, all true Believers from the Foundation of the World, who by Faith obtained from God a good Teſtimony, recorded in the Scriptures. *By it*, or thro' it, as a Condition appointed and ordained of God; not for it, or by the Worth and Influence of it, as a meritorious Cauſe, the Elders, or Saints of God obtained a good Report.

The *Old Teſtament* Saints had the ſame kind of Faith that we have, were ſaved in the ſame Manner as we are, had the ſame Promiſes, the ſame Terms of Grace, the ſame meritorious Purchaſe of the Blood of *Chriſt*; he is therefore called *the Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World*, ſlain in God's Purpoſe and Decree, ſlain in the Types and Figues of his Death; though his Blood was not ſhed, yet it was decreed to be ſhed, and ſo was as effectual to them as to us.

The Renown of the *Old Teſtament* Saints was their Faith, that made them famous; not their Priority in living before us, not their Longevity in living many Years beyond us, not on Account of their other Graces, which yet render'd them truly excellent, are they ſaid to obtain a good Report, but on Account of their Faith.

Q. *What does he endeavour to prove in the 3d Verſe?*

A. That Faith ſatisfies itſelf in the Word of God concerning the Way and Manner of the World's Creation; for tho' the World be now viſible, and the Things contained in it are ſaid to be ſeen, yet the Original Frame and making of the World has a principal Place among Things not ſeen.

Hence learn, that by Faith aſſenting to divine Revelation, and not by Reaſon, we underſtand the Truth and Wonders, the Seaſons and Cauſes, the Manner and End of the World's Creation. Reaſon indeed tells that there was a Creation, conſequently a Creator; but Reaſon without divine Revelation could never have diſcovered the Circumſtance, and Manner of the Creation, which wholly depended on the Will of God. The old Heathens could never determine who made the World, nor when, nor how it was made, nor whence, nor out of what it was form'd; *Through Faith we underſtand that the Worlds were framed*, it follows, *by the Word of God*; that is, both by his eternal and imperial Word, his Word of Command, ſaying, *Let it be*; he ſpake, it was done, *Pſ.* xxxiii. 9. and alſo by his eſſential and ſubſtantial Word, *Jeſus Chriſt*, by whom God made the World, *Hebr.* i. 2. in that Order which *Moſes* has related.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words in the ſame Verſe,* The Things that are ſeen, were not made of Things that do appear?

A. The Power of God framed many Things out of nothing, as the Heaven of Heavens, the dwelling Place of God and Angels, immediately, other Things mediately out of the *Chaos*; that is, ſuch rude, indiſpoſed, and unfit Matter, as had no Diſpoſition to receive ſuch a Form as it did actually receive from the Power of God, and therefore may be juſtly called a Creation out of nothing.

Q. *Our Apoſtle having declared the Nature of Faith, proceeds to give Inſtances of the Efficacy and Power of it in particular Perſons. He begins with* Abel: *But why not with* Adam?

A. Becauſe *Adam* was the firſt, and greateſt of Sinners; and altho' received to Grace and Mercy, yet after his Fall *Moſes* ſpeaks little of him, and nothing very remarkable; neither did Almighty God put that Honour upon *Adam* as he did upon his Son *Abel*; he had the Honour to ſhed his Blood for *Chriſt*, and for teſtifying his Faith in him; and accordingly is here repreſented as the firſt Evangelical Believer; *By Faith* Abel.

Q. *And offered a Sacrifice to God, a Sacrifice that was moſt excellent; and he offered it by Faith. But did not* Cain *bring his offering of Faith too?*

A. Yes; no doubt, he believed the Being of God, and conſider'd him as a Creator, and Preſerver, and accordingly offer'd the Fruits of the Earth, as an Acknowledgment that all theſe Things were made, preſerved and beſtowed by God on Man. But *Abel*'s Faith was fixed on God, not only as a Creator, but as a Redeemer alſo, accompanied with a Senſe of Sin and Guilt, truſting in the Way of Redemption and Recovery which God had provided.

Q. *How do you underſtand the laſt Clauſe of v.* 4. *where, ſpeaking of* Abel's *Faith, he ſays,* By it he being dead, yet ſpeaketh?

A. Some underſtand the Words in a paſſive Senſe, he is ſpoken of; *he being dead*, there is an honourable mention of him. Religion is the firſt Honour, and the Righteous ſhall be in everlaſting Remembrance. Others in an active Senſe; and ſo the Words import, that the dead Saints do yet ſpeak, and that ſomething which deſerves our Attention; they ſpeak by the precious Graces with which they were enriched; by the holy Life they maintained; by the good Works they wrought; by the eminent Services they did for God and Man; by their ſharp Trials, their bitter Sufferings; by theſe they ſpeak, to the Honour of Religion, and to the Furtherance of the Goſpel.

Q. *How was* Enoch *tranſlated by Faith?*

A. Not efficiently; Faith was not the efficient Cauſe of his Tranſlation, that was an immediate Act of divine Power; not meritoriouſly, for it is recorded as an Act of ſovereign Power; but inſtrumentally only; he was by Faith brought into that State of Favour and Acceptance with God, as to have this peculiar Privilege conferred upon him.

But obſerve, that before his Tranſlation he had this Teſtimony, *that he pleaſed God.* Such as would live with God hereafter, muſt endeavour to pleaſe him, by walking with him here. Would we come where *Enoch* is, we muſt walk as *Enoch* did?

Q. *But why is it impoſſible to pleaſe God without Faith, Verſe* 6?

A. This appears partly from the divine Conſtitution; God has ſo appointed it, partly from the Nature of the Thing itſelf; Faith being the firſt regular Motion of the Soul towards God; no Works, no Duties, no Performances whatever, can pleaſe God without Faith.

Q. *How may a Perſon be ſaid to* come to God?

A. That is, have an Acceſs or Approach to him in a Way of Worſhip, or an Acceſs or Acceptance into his Grace and Favour; he muſt believe, 1. God's Being. 2. His Bounty; *that he is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* If therefore we would find God when we ſeek him; he is a Rewarder of them, of all, and only them that diligently ſeek him.

Q. *What is chiefly remarkable in* Noah's *Faith?*

A. *He was moved with Fear, and prepared the Ark.* Neither the Difficulty of the Work, nor the Length of Time (an Hundred and twenty Years) nor his Want of Succeſs all that Time of preaching, nor the Contempt and Scorn caſt upon him by the whole World, could weaken his Hands, or diſcourage his Heart, in the leaſt, from going on with his Work.

The Conſequence of *Noah*'s Faith and Obedience, with reſpect to the World, was, *he condemned the Old World*; not as a Judge, properly and authoritatively, but as a Witneſs, by Plea and Teſtimony; he condemned it by his Doctrine, by his Example; and left it altogether without Excuſe.

The Fruit and Effect of *Noah*'s Obedience, with reſpect to himſelf, was, *He became Heir of the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith:* That is, of the Happineſs promiſed to thoſe who are juſtified by Faith; he was evidenced and declared to be a righteous Perſon.

Q. *Wherein conſiſted the Excellency of* Abraham's *Faith?*

A. He obeyed the Call and Command of God, in leaving his own Country, to go he knew not whither, and to receive an Inheritance he knew not when.

The Foundation of *Abraham*'s Faith and Obedience was, the Call of God; *Get thee from thy Country,* Parents, Relations, Friends, and all outward Enjoyments, is a Command becoming the Greatneſs of God to give; and Self-denial in complying with ſuch a Command, is the Foundation of all ſincere Profeſſion.

The Principle of *Abraham*'s Obedience, in complying with this Call of God, was his Faith; *By Faith* Abraham, *when he was called, obeyed.* True Faith, where-ever it is, brings forth ſincere Obedience; theſe two can no more be ſeparated than the Light and the Sun, Fire and Heat. Obedience is the Daughter of Faith, and Faith the Parent and and Principle of Obedience.

He obeyed, went out, not knowing whither he went. If Faith be once ſatisfied in the Call and Command of God, it will follow him when it cannot ſee a Step of its Way; over Hills and Mountains, through Dales and Valleys, fearing nothing. He that has the Call of God, need not fear the Divine Conduct.

By Faith he ſojourned in the Land of Promiſe, as in a ſtrange Country; *Abraham* was a Sojourner, not an Inheriter, moving up and down from Place to Place, 'till God thought fit to ſettle him and his Poſterity. *Abraham* was a Sojourner, both in his Condition of Life, and in his Diſpoſition of Heart. *Canaan* was a Type of Heaven; and, accordingly, *Abraham* expected a better Country, with a City which had *Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God.*

The Manner of his ſojourning in this Land was, *Dwelling in Tabernacles.* This was an Act both of Policy and Piety; of Policy, that he might live peaceably, without giving Umbrage to the Natives, or occaſioning any Envy or Grudge from them; and of Piety, to expreſs their Hopes and Deſires of a better Country.

He looked for a City which had Foundations, whoſe Builder and Maker is God. He looked for it, he rationally expected it; it was not a blind Hope, but built on the Power and Promiſe of God.

He looked for a City; not *Jeruſalem*, an earthly City, as ſome imagine, for that was not poſſeſſed till eight Hundred Years after; and then only by his Poſterity for a limited Time; but an heavenly City, a ſettled quiet Habitation, a ſuitable Dwelling for them that have had a Life of Trouble in this World.

It has Foundations, in Oppoſition to Tents and Tabernacles, which had no Foundations, but were moving ambulatory Dwellings, ſupported only by Stakes and Cords; this City is founded upon the eternal Power, the infinite Wiſdom, and immutable Counſel of God.

Whoſe Builder and Maker is God; He is the Contriver, Framer, and Erecter of this City; and as he is the Maker, he is alſo the Diſpoſer of it; pleaſe God, and he will give it to thee; none can give it thee without him, he will never give it thee without pleaſing him.

Q. *How is* Sarah's *Faith deſcribed?*

A. *Through Faith alſo,* Sarah *herſelf received Strength to conceive Seed*; *Sarah* herſelf, a Woman, a barren Woman well ſtricken in Years; a Woman, though weak in Sex, may be ſtrong in Faith. Though *Sarah* at firſt laughed, yet ſhe afterwards firmly believed; and the Apoſtle takes no Notice of the Former, but applauds the Latter. With what Indulgence God covers the Failings of his Children, but proclaims aloud their Graces to the World! Men do not thus; they will overlook all that is Good in others, and report only what is amiſs. Who would not ſerve ſuch a Maſter, that winks at our Failings, but accepts and rewards our weak Services, and ſincere Graces.

The Fruit of *Sarah*'s Faith was, ſhe received Strength and Ability for Conception; probably ſhe recovered her youthful Vigour, and had a general Renovation of Nature, to an Ability for all its primitive Operations, which was decayed by Age. It is the Property of Faith to expect a Bleſſing abſolutely above the Uſe of Means, when we have a particular and ſpecial Warrant from God ſo to do, as *Sarah* had in this Caſe.

The Ground of *Sarah's* Faith was, *Becauſe ſhe had judged him faithful that had promiſed.* She reſolved her Faith into, and reſted upon the Veracity of God, in the Accompliſhment of his Promiſe; which is the proper and immediate Object of Faith. Faith muſt have a Promiſe to exerciſe it upon, otherwiſe it is not Faith, but Fancy; it is not what God can do, but what he will do, and that is the Ground of Faith; he can quench all the Fire in Hell; but where has he ſaid he will do it?

The 12th Verſe acquaints us with the gracious gracious Reward which God gave *Abraham* and *Sarah*, as the Fruit of their Faith; namely, the Bleſſing of a numerous Proſperity; there ſprung of them, and both of them as good as Dead (with Reference to the Procreation of Children) a numerous Iſſue, like the Stars of Heaven, and the Sand of the Sea for Multitude.

Q. *In what Senſe does he ſay, Verſe* 13. Theſe all died in Faith, not having received the Promiſes?

A. *Abel, Noah, Abraham,* and *Sarah*, all died in the Faith of the promiſed *Meſſiah*, believing he ſhould come, and expecting Salvation by his Coming. It is not enough for a *Chriſtian* to live in the Faith, unleſs he die in it too.

Not having received the Promiſes; that is, they went to their Graves, before the great Bleſſings God had promiſed were accompliſhed. Faith is contented with the Promiſe, though it wants actual Poſſeſſion of the good Things promiſed. God would have Believers, in all Ages of the Church, to live by Faith, and Promiſes not actually performed; and God eſteems himſelf greatly honoured, when we go to the Grave with Aſſurance, and profeſs our Confidence, that God will make them good.

Yet obſerve the Actings and Exerciſe of their Faith towards theſe Promiſes, which they had not yet received in their Accompliſhment; *They ſaw them afar off*, at a great Diſtance; it is the Property of Faith, to eye the Bleſſings promiſed at a Diſtance.

Q. *Why does he call them* Strangers, and Pilgrims on the Earth?

A. So they were in their outward Condition, wandring from Place to Place; ſo they were in Affection and Diſpoſition, looking on this World only as their Pilgrimage, and Heaven as their Home and proper Country, becauſe thence they are born, there lies their Inheritance, there are all their Kindred, there is their longeſt Abode. *Chriſtians* ſhould not only account, but confeſs themſelves Pilgrims, and diſcover it by their journeying and mending their Pace Heavenwards.

Q. *How was* Abraham's *Faith tried, when he offered up* Iſaac?

A. His Faith was tried, whether he would yield to God's Command againſt Nature; his Love was tried, whether his Affection was not warmer towards his Son, than towards God; and his Fear was tried, whether he did reverentially acknowledge and ſtand in Awe of God, by adoring his Dominion and Sovereignty over him. Trials are the beſt Touchſtone of Faith; without which Men would want the beſt Evidence of their Sincerity.

He offered up his Son Iſaac; that is, he did in Part, and was ready to have compleated the Sacrifice, had not God countermanded him. Where there is a divine Command, obliging us to Obedience, it is the Wiſdom and Duty of Faith to cloſe its Eye, againſt all inſuperable Difficulties and Dangers. *Abraham* objected not againſt the horrid Nature of the Command to kill his own and only Son, the Son of the Promiſe; but deliberately, and upon due Conſideration, was ready to execute what God required.

What a ſtrong Faith was here, fortified with an impregnable Reſolution, that could make *Abraham* hold out three Days againſt the violent Aſſaults of his own Nature, and the charming Preſence of his Son, enough to melt his Heart? Yet nothing could ſtagger him in his Duty, but he performs a miraculous Act of Obedience, in Defiance of all Difficulties.

Q. *What was the Fruit and Succeſs of* Abraham's *Faith?*

A. He believed God could and would raiſe *Iſaac* from the Grave, and he receives him again in a Figure, as one ſnatched out of the very Jaws of Death. There is no ſuch Way to enjoy the Continuance of an earthly Comfort, as by reſigning it up to God.

Q. *How did* Iſaac, *by Faith, bleſs* Jacob *and* Eſau?

A. There is a Bleſſing by Way of Prayer, and a Bleſſing by Way of Prophecy, foretelling what ſhall befall Perſons in Time to come; of this Kind was *Iſaac's* Bleſſing. The Patriarchs were, in a peculiar Manner, guided and directed by God, and their Bleſſing was, the conferring a Right to the Parties bleſſed. Thus *Iſaac* bleſſed *Jacob* and *Eſau, concerning Things to come*; that is, concerning the great and future Things which ſhould happen to their Poſterity in after Ages.

Here note, that *Eſau*, as well as *Jacob*, has his Portion in outward Bleſſings; partly as they were both the Creatures of God; partly, as they deſcended from Parents in Covenant with God, and partly, as they were both Profeſſors of the ſame Religion; and God will be behind-hand with none; but as far as they do Good, they ſhall ſee Good.

Q. *What do you remark on Verſe* 21. By Faith *Jacob*, when he was a dying, bleſſed both the Sons of *Joſeph*, and worſhipped, leaning on the Top of his Staff?

A. In dying *Jacob* obſerve the Frame and Carriage of Holy Men, in their laſt Moments. *Jacob* bleſſed *Joſeph*, and his two Sons, laying hold on the Covenant made with *Abraham*. It is no ſmall Privilege to be born of Parents taken into a viſible Covenant with God, and no ſmall Comfort to have the Benefit of the Bleſſings and Prayers of ſuch Parents when they die. *Jacob*, when dying, bleſſed both the Sons of *Joſeph*; and as he bleſſed them, ſo he religiouſly worſhipped God, *leaning upon the Top of his Staff.*

Our Addreſſes to God ought to be exceeding reverent, both as to the Frame of our Souls, and alſo of our Bodies; we cannot always be fervent in Prayer, for Devotion depends upon the vigorous Motion of the bodily Spirits; but we ſhould always be reverent and ſerious in Prayer; otherwiſe it is no Worſhip.

Q. *What is chiefly obſervable in* Joſeph's *Faith?*

A. In the 22d Verſe we have a two-fold Inſtance of *Joſeph*'s Faith.

Firſt, *He made mention of the departing of the Children of* Iſrael: Thus he ſaid, *Behold I die; but God ſhall bring you unto the Land which he hath ſworn unto your Fathers.*

The ſecond Inſtance of *Joſeph*'s Faith; is, that *he gave Commandment concerning his Bones*; that is, he took an Oath of his Brethren that they ſhould carry his Bones out of *Egypt*, and bury them in *Canaan*, thereby owning and profeſſing himſelf to be of the Poſterity of *Abraham*; and thereby alſo encouraging the Faith and Expectation of his Brethren and their Poſterity, to hope for their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and be put in Poſſeſſion of the promiſed Land; from hence it is evident that *Joſeph* ſhewed great Faith in diſpoſing of his Bones. The *Papiſts* Plea from hence, for paying Veneration to their Relicks is, weak and contemptible. This was a ſpecial Charge given in Faith to do what was done; and to ſhut them up in a Coffin, and decently bury them, was all that was done. Now to take Example from hence, to dig Mens Bones out of their Graves, to enſhrine them, and place them upon Altars, to carry them in Proceſſion, to adore them, to aſcribe miraculous Operations to them, caſting out of Devils, and the like, is abſurd, ridiculous, and impious.

Q. *The Faith of* Moſes's *Parents is celebrated Verſe* 23. *What do you note thereupon?*

A. The Birth of *Moſes* fell out in the very Height and Fury of *Pharaoh*'s Perſecution, when the King had iſſued his Edict, to deſtroy all the Male Children; but *Moſes* was hid by his Parents, and preſerved as a Deliverer of the Church of God. How blind are the Perſecutors of the Church! When they think their Projects ſo deeply laid, that God himſelf cannot deliver out of their Hands, even that Inſtant the Almighty provides for their Deſtruction, and his Church's Deliverance.

Obſerve here a double Cauſe why *Moſes* was hid; the firſt external; *they ſaw he was a proper Child*; they were perſuaded that God would provide them a Deliverer; and they ſaw ſomething Divine in *Moſes* to ſtir up their Faith, and raiſe their Expectation, that he might be the Perſon.

The ſecond was an internal and moving Cauſe: *They were not afraid of the King's Commandment*, or bloody Decree. Kings and Princes muſt not be obeyed in Things contrary to the Word of God; Obedience, without Reſerve, is to be paid to none but God.

Q. *In the 24th and following Verſes we have ſeveral Inſtances of* Moſes's *Faith; which pray explain and illuſtrate?*

A. *By Faith* Moſes, *when he was come to Years, refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter.* It was no childiſh Act, when he knew not what he did, but when he was come of Age and Underſtanding, in the Prime and Vigour of his Time, when he had juſt begun take the Sweetneſs of youthful Pleaſures. The World appears a dead Thing in the Winter of old Age, but looks green and beautiful in the Spring of Youth; but *Moſes* even then refuſes it.

Note farther the Circumſtances of his Education, he had been from a Child in a Princely Way and Manner, he was unacquainted with a mean Eſtate; thoſe who never had much, forſake but little when they forſake all; but *Moſes* refuſed Honour, and choſe Affliction.

Note alſo, the Circumſtances of his Obligations, *Pharaoh*'s Daughter had ſaved his Life, adopted him for her Son, given him Princely Breeding, *He was learned in all the Wiſdom of the* Egytians, and ſet her Heart upon him as her own. However, *Moſes* breaks through all, and away he goes. But whither? Why, to a Company of poor Bondmen, labouring at the Brick-kilns, to take his Lot of Sufferings with them.

Add to this the Circumſtance of his Expectations; how fair and certain a Proſpect he had of enjoying the Crown of *Egypt*; he did not refuſe it, becauſe he deſpaired of attaining it, for he was an adopted Heir unto it.

Laſtly, this was not a raſh and ſudden Determination, but a deliberate and adviſed Choice, *Acts* vii. 23. St. *Stephen* ſays, he made this Choice *when he was full forty Years old*; that is, when he was of ripeſt Judgment, and in Heighth of Proſperity and Reputation. He did not only, as *Joſephus* ſays, at three Years old caſt a Crown, given him for a Play Thing, to the Ground, and trample upon it; but as the Apoſtle ſays here, when he became a Man, he treated it with no more Reſpect, *but refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter.* Behold here *Moſes*'s Faith, and eminent Self-denial, in chuſing rather to ſuffer Affliction with the Worſhippers of the true God, than to gain a Kingdom by renouncing God and his holy Religion.

From Verſe 25. we are taught, that the uſual Condition of God's People in this World, is Afflictions and Trials. Notwithſtanding which all wiſe and good Men rather chuſe afflicted Godlineſs, than pleaſant and proſperous Wickedneſs. *Moſes* choſe rather to ſuffer Afflictions, than to enjoy the ſhort and ſinful Pleaſures of *Pharaoh*'s Court.

Q. *Whereon did* Moſes *ground his Faith, Self-denial, and Contempt of the World?*

A. He had Reſpect to the Recompence of *the Reward.* Hence it appears there is a Reward laid up for good Men; and it is lawful, yes, laudable, and even neceſſary for a Chriſtian to eye this Reward in the whole Courſe of his Obedience; this will encourage him to undergo all Hardſhips and Difficulties in the way of Religion.

Q. *What other Inſtances does he give of* Moſes's *Faith?*

A. He endured *as ſeeing him who is inviſible*; that is, he ſew him by Faith whom he could not ſee by Senſe; he ſaw him in his Omnipotence, Power and Faithfulneſs, and had a fixed Truſt in him at all Times, and on all Occaſions.

Q. *How did* Rahab *manifeſt her Faith?*

A. Rahab was a *Gentile*, an *Amorite*, an Harlot, who kept a Victualling-houſe in *Jericho*, defiled both in Body and Mind with Idolatry and Adultry; yet ſhe believed. She was converted to God before the Spies came to her, by what ſhe had heard of him and his mighty Works. Behold here a bleſſed Inſtance of the Sovereignty and Freedom, the Power and Efficacy of divine Grace, in calling and converting a Perſon given up by her own Choice to the vileſt of Sins.

Q. *Who were they who through Faith ſubdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteouſneſs, obtained Promiſes?*

A. So did *Abraham* by Faith obtain a promiſed Son; *Joſhua* a promiſed *Canaan*; *David* a promiſed Kingdom; but there was a great ſpace of Time between the Promiſe and the Performance, which ſometimes put their Faith hard to it.

Q. *What other remarkable Effects of Faith does he mention?*

A. *Stopped the Mouths of Lions*; thus *Daniel*, Chap. vi. *quenched the Violence of Fire*; ſo did the Faith of the three Children, *Dan.* iii. *eſcaped the Edge of the Sword*; as did *David* the Sword of *Goliah* and *Saul*; ſo did the *Jews* the Sword of *Haman*, and *Elijah* the Sword of *Jezzabel*. *Out of Weakneſs were made Strong*; ſome apply this to *Gideon* and his three hundred Men, *Judges* vii. 15. others to *Hezekiah*, who, by the Power of Faith, was wonderfully recover'd from a fit of Sickneſs. *Waxed valiant in Fight*; ſo did *Gideon*, *Barak*, *Jepthath*, and *David*. *Turned to Flight the Armies of the* Aliens; thoſe *Aliens* were the Heathens and Idolaters, *Philiſtines* and *Midianites*, who were Enemies to *Iſrael*, and to the God of *Iſrael*, whom they put to flight. *Women received their Dead raiſed to life again*; this is applied to the Women of *Zarephath* and the *Shunamite*, 1 *Kings* xviii. 23. 2 *Kings* iv. 36. They were raiſed by the Prophet's Faith, and receiv'd by the Mother's when rais'd, with Joy and Thankfulneſs.

Q. *Who were they who* were tortur'd, not expecting Deliverance?

A. The Apoſtle is here ſuppos'd to refer to the Story of the *Maccabees*, which though written after the cloſing of the Canon of Scripture, when there was no extraordinary Prophet in the Church, yet the Matters of Fact were then freſh in Memory, and are alluded to, particularly *Eleazar*, 2 *Mac.* vi. 28. who was beaten to Death when he had been perſuaded and deluded to accept Deliverance by tranſgreſſing of the Law.

Q. *Pray give the remaining noble Inſtances of Faith here mentioned?*

A. *Others had trials of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, alſo Bonds and Impriſonment*; as *Micajah*, *Jeremiah*, *Joſeph*, &c. Some were ſton'd as *Zacharias*, 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 21. others ſawn aſunder, as *Iſaiah* under the Tyranny of *Manaſſeh*; others were tempted with fair Promiſes and great Rewards, but reſuſing, they were *ſlain with the Sword*.

They wandred about in Sheep-Skins and Goat-Skins, deſtitute, afflicted, tormented. This ſome refer to *Elijah*, who was deſtitute, and fed by Ravens, 1 *Kings* xvii. 4. But it has been the Portion of many of God's faithful Servants to be driven from their Habitations; ſometimes by the Cruelty of the Laws, and ſometimes by Force and Violence. *Of whom the World is not worthy*; the Men of the World think the Children of God unworthy to live amongſt them, whereas the World is not worthy of ſuch excellent Company; and therefore, as ſoon as their Work is done, God removes them.

They wandered in Deſarts and Mountains, &c. It is much better, and more ſafe for the Saints of God to be in a Wilderneſs among the Beaſts of the Field, than in a Savage World, inflam'd by the Devil into Rage and Perſecution.

All theſe Saints here enumerated, and all others from the Foundation of the World, *obtained a good Report through Faith*; that is a good Teſtimony that they pleas'd God; nevertheleſs they receiv'd not the Promiſe, that is, the actual Exhibition of the Promiſe, *Chriſt*, the promis'd *Meſſiah*; this Promiſe was made by God to the Elders from the Beginning, but not actually accompliſh'd till the Fulneſs of Time; they were perſuaded of the Truth of it, long'd for its Accompliſhment, and thus enjoy'd the Benefit of it as well as we.

Q. *Explain the laſt Verſe?*

A. The *better Things*, here ſpoken of, is the Coming of *Chriſt* in the Fleſh. But how are we better than they, that this better Thing ſhould be reſerv'd for us? They ſaw the Promiſe afar off, we enjoy it at Hand.

That they without us ſhould not be made perfect; without us, is as much as without the Things which are actually exhibited to us. God never intended the Infant Condition of the Church ſhould be made perfect before the Exhibition of *Chriſt*; that is, that they ſhould be juſtify'd and ſav'd by any Sacrifices or Services done in that Time, but by looking to the Sacrifice and Satisfaction of *Chriſt*, whereby both they and we are perfected.

CHAP. XII.

The Examples in the former Chapter ſhould provoke us to Conſtancy in the Chriſtian *Hope, and to Patience in Affliction. Sufferings are fatherly Corrections. A Warning from* Eſau's *Example. The Dignity of the Goſpel above the Law.*

Q. WHY *are the* Old Teſtament *Saints mentioned in the foregoing Chapter, here called* a Cloud of Witneſſes?

A. Partly for their Number, there being Multitudes of them; partly for their Directions, there being a leading Virtue in them; they are Witneſſes of the grand Truth, that Faith will carry Believers ſafely through all, that they may be call'd to do and ſuffer in the Profeſſion of the Goſpel. As there was a Cloud went before the Children of *Iſrael* to lead them into the Wilderneſs, ſo this Cloud of Witneſſes leads us up and down the Wilderneſs of this World in the darkeſt Night of our Sorrows and Sufferings; and they are ſaid *to encompaſs us*, becauſe the Scripture every where incompaſſes us with them, ſo that we can be in no ſuffering State and Condition, be it never ſo ſad, but we may turn our Eye, and behold ſome or other of theſe Worthies looking upon us, and encouraging us to Patience and Perſeverance; therefore, to faint in our Profeſſion, when we are encompaſſed with ſuch a Cloud of Witneſſes, is a great Aggravation of our Sin.

Q. *What does he mean by that Expreſſion*, Let us lay aſide every Weight?

A. By every Weight, is generally underſtood the World, its Riches, Honours, Pleaſures, Preferments, which too often are an Obſtruction to Conſtancy and Perſeverance in the Profeſſion and Practice of *Chriſtianity*; this dead Weight muſt be laid aſide by mortifying our Hearts and Affections towards the World, for it is inordinate Love towards theſe Things which gives them their Weight and Incumbrance; where this Grace is in its due Exerciſe, the World cannot Influence the Mind into any diſorder, nor make it unready for its Race.

Q. *What is the* Sin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us?

A. Some underſtand all Sin in general, others a Boſom beloved Sin in ſpecial; others Timorouſneſs, and Fear in particular; all Softneſs and Tenderneſs with Reſpect to Suffering, according to the Original Word, here render'd *eaſily beſet us.* Some think there is an Alluſion to the long Garments worn in the Eaſtern Countries, which dangling about a Man's Heels, hinder'd him in his Race; thus, as thoſe were altogether unfit to run a Race, ſo unfit are they for the ſpiritual Race, who are intangled with the Love of the World, or with any ſinful Compliance.

Q. *Why does he enjoin us Patience in running the* Chriſtian *Courſe?*

A. So inevitable and unavoidable are a *Chriſtian's* Trial, ſuch the Multiplicity and Variety of them, ſuch their long Duration and Continuance, that there can be no Perſeverance without Patience.

The Way and Means by which we may attain this Grace of Patience, is, by *looking unto Jeſus.* The beholding of *Chriſt* in his Patience, is a notable Means to excite and ſtir us up to the Practice of our Duty.

Q. *Why is* Chriſt *ſtiled* the Author and Finiſher of our Faith?

A. He is deſervedly ſtil'd the Author of our Faith, becauſe his holy Doctrine is the Foundation of our Faith, his holy Ordinances the ſpecial Means; his Holy Spirit the Producer of it in the Soul; and his precious Blood the Purchaſer of it and all Grace for his People.

And he is the Finiſher of our Faith too, as well as the Author of it, in as much as he has by his Promiſe engaged to perform what he has begun. *Phil.* i. 6. *Being confident of the very Thing, that he that hath begun a good Work in you will perform it,* &c. And is as much as he doth by his Interceſſion plead with the Father for the Believer's Preſervation in Faith, and Perſeverance in Holineſs unto the End; *I have prayed that thy Faith fail not,* Luke xxii. 32.

Q. *Why does he, ver. 2. refer them to* Chriſt *as an Example of Sufferings?*

A. It is as if he had ſaid, compare his Sufferings with your own, conſider who he was, and who you are. Was not he the Son of God? Had he not all Glory and Power in his Hand? Yet he *endured the Croſs,* &c. The frequent Conſideration of *Chriſt,* in his Sufferings, is the beſt Means to keep up Faith, and encourage Patience, under our Sufferings.

He *endured the Contradiction of Sinners*; that is, the great Oppoſition made to his Doctrine, the Slander caſt on his Miracles, the Indignities offered to his Perſon, the malicious and unwearied Attempts againſt his Life.

Next, he endured the Pain of the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame of it. Pain and Shame are the conſtituent Parts of all outward Sufferings, and they were both eminent in the Death of the Croſs; yet he patiently endured them with an holy Compoſure of Soul, without reviling the villainous *Jews,* or threatning them with that Vengeance and Deſtruction which it was in his Power to have brought upon them in a Moment.

The great Support of *Chriſt* in his Sufferings was, *the Joy that was ſet before him*; that is, ſay ſome, his glorious Exaltation; rather the Proſpect of that Glory which would redound to God and his Church by his patient Suffering; the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mankind were now ſet before him, and he valued them above Life, Honour, Reputation and Eaſe, and every Thing that was dear to him. Accordingly it was called Pleaſure, *Iſaiah* liii. 10.

Thus was *Chriſt* our great Example, in that he was influenced in all he did and ſuffered by a conſtant Reſpect to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of his People.

The Reward of our Lord's patient Sufferings is here declared, he is therefore *ſet down at the Right-Hand of the Throne of God.* God's Throne implies his Majeſty and Power; the Right-Hand of his Throne, implies the higheſt Honour, Dignity, and Power, next to God. *Chriſt's* Advancement above Angels and all Creatures is hereby intimated; this glorious State was the Reward of his Sufferings; *he became obedient unto Death,* therefore God thus highly exalted him.

The Advantage we ſhall reap by imitating his Patience under our Sufferings, is, it will prevent our being *wearied and faint in our Minds.*

Q. *What other Argument does the Apoſtle uſe to reconcile the* Hebrews *to a ſuffering Condition?*

A. That what they had already ſuffered was but trifling, compared with what *Chriſt,* and the forementioned Cloud of Witneſſes ſuffered; he and they reſiſted unto Blood, which you never did. By Blood, is meant Loſs of Life; though you have reſiſted bravely, and ſuffered manfully, yet your Lives were ſafe. It is highly diſhonourable to faint in the Cauſe of *Chriſt* and the Goſpel under leſſer Sufferings, when we know there are greater to be undergone by our ſelves and others on the ſame Account.

It is a noble Struggle to reſiſt even to Blood in oppoſing Sin, and ſtriving againſt it, both againſt the Sin which others commit, and that which they by Promiſes or Threatnings would tempt us to commit. How honourable a Warfare is it be engaged againſt ſuch an Enemy as Sin is! *Striving againſt Sin.*

Q. *What other Inſtructions does he give them with Regard to their Patience under Sufferings?*

A. Here is a cautionaay Direction given againſt two very dangerous Extreams in the Time of Affliction, deſpiſing Correction, and fainting under it. When God has taken away one of our Comforts, to ſay, Let him take all, if he will; if my Children muſt die, let them die; if my Eſtate muſt go, let it go; this is to deſpiſe: God is not pleaſed to ſee us bear his Hand thus lightly.

The other Extreme is Fainting; If when Goods are taken away, the Heart is taken away; and when Relations die, the Spirit of a Perſon dies with them: *Deſpiſe not thou the Chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint,* &c.

For whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth. No Perſon then has Reaſon to complain of his Portion of fatherly Chaſtiſements, ſince God deals thus with all his Children. To reſign ourſelves entirely to the ſovereign Pleaſure and infinite Wiſdom of God, in all our Chaſtiſements, is the only Means to preſerve us from Fainting and Weakneſs.

If ye endure Chaſtening; if ye endure it with Faith and Patience, with Submiſſion and Perſeverance, ſo as not to faint under it, *God dealeth with you as with Sons.* Afflictions and Chaſtiſements

ments are no Pledges or Aſſurance of our Adoption, but when they are endured with Patience.

Q. *What do we learn from theſe Words, Verſe* 7, What Son is he whom the Father chaſteneth not?

A. 1. That every one of God's Sons, more or leſs, ſtands in Need of his fatherly Correction. 2. That God is very careful, as a wiſe and tender Father, to correct and chaſten all his Children. 3. That God in correcting his Children, deals with them as Sons, he is the World's Sovereign, but the Believer's Father; as he is the Governor of the World, he treats Men righteouſly in his Judgments; as he is the Father of Believers, he treats them graciouſly in Afflictions.

Q. *What do you remark on theſe Words, Verſe* 8, If ye be without Chaſtiſement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Baſtards, and not Sons?

A. God's Family, or viſible Church in this World, has ſome Baſtards in it, Sons that may have Gifts and outward Enjoyments, but are not Heirs, having no Right to the heavenly Inheritance; and this is one Evidence that they are not the genuine Sons of God, becauſe they go unchaſtiſed; not that they are abſolutely free from Afflictions, but rather are improved by them. Affliction, that ſhould refine them from their Droſs, and purify them from their Filth, boils their Scum and Impurites the more into them.

Note, a joyous State of the Freedom from Affliction is ſuch, as we ought to watch over with great Jealouſy and Fear, leſt it ſhould be a Leaving us out of the Family of God; not that we may deſire Afflictions as ſuch, much leſs excruciate and torment ourſelves; but we may pray not to want any Pledge of our Adoption, with a due Submiſſion to the good Pleaſure of God.

Q. *What is the Difference between divine and paternal Chaſtiſements?*

A. 1. In their Author; one, the Father of our Fleſh, the other, of our Souls and Spirits; they are the immediate Product of his Power, which is a fundamental Reaſon for our patient Submiſſion to the Will of God in and under all Afflictions. 2. In their End, the one for their Pleaſure, the other for his Childrens Profit, to make them Partakers of Holineſs, by Renovation, Sanctification, and Mortification; the Advancement of thoſe Graces in us, is the Thing which God deſigns in all Chaſtiſements.

We can have no better Pledge, no greater Aſſurance of divine Love in Afflictions, than this, that by them God brings us nearer to, and makes us more like himſelf; if under divine Chaſtiſements we find no Increaſe of Holineſs, they are utterly loſt, and we have nothing but the Trouble and Sorrow of them.

Q. *What is that* Subjection *which we owe to* the Father of Spirits?

A. This Subjection to God conſiſts in an Acquieſcence in his Right and Sovereignty to do what he will with his own; in an Acknowledgment of his Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs in all his Dealings with us; in a mighty Senſe of his Care and Love, and in an entire Reſignation of ourſelves to his Holy Will in all Things.

Q. *How does Chaſtiſement* yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs?

A. It is a Pledge and Evidence of our Peace with God, and brings Peace into our Minds. By theſe Fruits of Righteouſneſs, namely, patient Submiſſion to the Will of God, Weanedneſs from the World, Mortification of Sin, Purity of Heart, Holineſs of Life, farther Readineſs and greater Fitneſs for Suffering; by theſe our Minds are quieted, all Tumults allay'd, and we enabled to poſſeſs our Souls in Patience.

Q. *Who are they who receive the ſpecial Benefits of Affliction?*

A. Only ſuch as are *exerciſ'd* thereby. The original Word is an Alluſion to thoſe in the publick Games, who ſtrip themſelves naked, and exert all their Strength for Maſtery. To be exerciſ'd by Chaſtiſements, is to have all our ſpiritual Strength put forth, all our Faith and Patience try'd to the utmoſt.

Q. *What Duties does he preſcribe as incumbent on a* Chriſtian, *in his daily Converſation?*

A. Two eſpecially; namely, *Follow Peace and Holineſs*; the former contains our Duty to Man, the latter our Duty to God; both Duties are joined in one and the ſame Precept, and with one and the ſame Penalty, *without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Indeed, if a Perſon follows Holineſs, though he cannot obtain Peace, he may ſee God, provided he purſues Peace, and the Fault none of his, if he does not find it; but if he does not purſue Peace, though he makes never ſo great Pretences to Holineſs, he cannot be happy; for a *Chriſtian* muſt be of a peaceable, as well as of a pious Converſation, or he can never be happy in this, or the next World.

Follow Peace; the original Word imports a vehement Purſuit, a Metaphor taken from Huntſmen; who follow the Chaſe, and purſue their Game, though it flies before them. If Peace may be had, though upon hard Terms, we muſt endeavour to ſecure it, for it can never be bought too dear, if it be not purchaſed with Sin and Baſeneſs. A froward Spirit, ready for Strife and Contention, eaſily provoked, and retaining a long Senſe of Injuries, is directly contrary to the Spirit and Temper of the Goſpel.

Q. *What is implied in the Apoſtle's Caution, Verſe* 15. Leſt any Man fail of the Grace of God?

A. If any Profeſſor of the Goſpel comes ſhort of the Grace of God, it is owing to himſelf, his Unbelief, Negligence, and Sloth; *looking diligently, leſt any Man fail of the Grace of God.*

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle join Fornicators and prophane Perſons together?*

A. Becauſe they uſually go together; Fornicators, eſpecially ſuch as are habitually ſo, always grow Prophane, and ſet light by Fornication, a Sin very ſeldom forſaken; few Fornicators ever repenting.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by Fornication and Prophaneneſs, in this Place?*

A. By Fornication, underſtand all Conjunction with Women out of Wedlock, be it with ſingle or marry'd Perſons. By prophane Perſons are meant, ſuch as mock Religion, who lightly regard its Promiſes and Threatnings, deſpiſe or neglect its Worſhip, and ſpeak irreverently of its Concerns.

Q. *In what Reſpect was* Eſau *a prophane Perſon?*

A. In that *for one Morſel Meat he ſold his Birthright.* Which Birthright had many Privileges annexed to it; namely, a double Portion of the paternal Inheritance, a Right of Rule and Government over the Family, Power and Dominion, Dignity and Superiority, but eſpecially the Honour of Prieſthood, all which belonged to the Firſt-born. Add to theſe the Bleſſing which deſcended from *Abraham*, in the Parriarchal Line, and was communicated from Father to Son, containing an Incloſure of all Church privileges, and Preſervation of the promiſed Seed.

Now *Eſau*, by ſelling his Birthright, virtually renounced his Right unto this Bleſſing, wherein the promiſed Seed, and the Church-ſtate were contained, for ſo trifling a Conſideration as a Meſs of Pottage, or a Morſel of Meat; *thus* Eſau *deſpis'd his Birth-right.*

Q. *We are next acquainted with the Fruitleſſneſs of* Eſau's *Sorrow for the Loſs of his Birth-right, and his unavailing Endeavours to recover it, when he would have inherited the Bleſſing afterwards: How long afterwards?*

A. This *Afterwards*, ſay ſome, was not leſs than forty Years; for he ſold his Birth-right when Young; and when he would have recovered the Bleſſing, *Iſaac* was Old. Thus long did he live in Sin, without the Senſe of it, or Repentance for it; but falling into Diſtreſs, it fills him with Perplexity, and he ſeeks the Recovery of the Bleſſing.

Q. *It follows,* He was rejected; *but by whom?*

A. By his Father *Iſaac*, and found no Place with him for Repentance. *Iſaac* would not change his Mind, nor recall his Bleſſing, which, as a Prophet of God, he had conferred on *Jacob*. Prophane Contemners of the Grace of Gad, ought to fear being excluded the Mercy of God; and as *Iſaac* did not, God will not alter his righteous Sentence upon them.

Q. *The Apoſtle, in deſcribing the two States of* Judaiſm *and* Chriſtianity, *ſhews the Excellency of one above the other: How does he do this?*

A. Firſt, he tells them, their Fore-fathers *came to the Mount that might be touched*; that is, to Mount *Sinai*, in the Deſart of *Arabia*, a barren fruitleſs Place, full of Buſhes and Brambles, but without Water or Food; intimating, that ſuch as are under the Law, in a State of Sin, bring forth no acceptable Fruit unto God; and, as there was no Water in the Deſart, but that which the People liv'd upon which was brought out of the Rock, and that Rock was *Chriſt*; it intimates that from *Chriſt* alone were all their and our Refreſhments; the Law affords none, but thunders out Wrath and a Curſe.

Q. *Why does he ſay, that this Mount* might be touched?

A. To intimate how low and inferior the giving of the Law was, in Compariſon of the Promulgation of the Goſpel, which was from Heaven. The Law was given from a Mount that might be touched by Man or Beaſt, though if either touch'd it they muſt die; to intimate the Bondage and Fear the People were then in, who might not ſo much as touch the Mountain, where were the Signs of God's Preſence. But the Goſpel was promulged from Heaven, and the Son of God ſent down on purpoſe from thence to plant and propagate it here in the World.

Q. *What was ſignified by the Fire on the Mount?*

A. This Fire on the Mount was a Token of God's Preſence, and a diſtinct Means of filling the People with Dread and Fear. This Fire repreſented the Purity and Holineſs of God's Nature, his Jealouſy and Severity againſt Sin. Thus the Law repreſents to us the Holineſs and Severity of God, his Anger and Diſpleaſure againſt Sin and Sinners, but leaves us there conſum'd, without Relief by *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Q. *What was repreſented by the* Blackneſs and Darkneſs *that roſe from the Mount?*

A. This Darkneſs was a Type of the utter Darkneſs of Hell, which the Tranſgreſſors of that Law deſerv'd, and the Tempeſts and terrible Storms were Emblems and Signs of God's fiery Indignation and fearful Vengeance on the wicked Violaters of his holy Law, and might alſo point out and ſignify the Effects of this Law then deliver'd; namely, to bring the Soul into Darkneſs, that it can ſee no Light, either for its Direction or Conſolation; it alſo raiſes a Tempeſt in the Mind, of diſquieting and perplexing Thoughts without encouraging a Sinner to look out after any Relief, till *Chriſt* in his Goſpel ſays, *Behold me.*

Q. *What was meant by* the Sound of a Trumpet?

A. This was not a real Trumpet, but the Sound of a Trumpet form'd by the Miniſtry of Angels waxing louder and louder, to ſignify the nigher Approach of God; this Trumpet likewiſe ſummon'd the People to appear before the Lord, as a legiſlative Trumpet; in like manner there will be a judicial Trumpet to ſummon the World to appear before *Chriſt* at the laſt Day.

Q. *What do you nnderſtand by* the Voice of Words?

A. That is, the Voice of God, in a terrible manner, promulgating the Law out of the midſt of the Fire, in a Language underſtood by that People.

Q. *But why was there ſuch vaſt Solemnity us'd at promulgating the Law?*

A. To ſignify the Majeſty and Authority of Him who was the Supreme Law-giver, even the Lord of Heaven and Earth; and that the greater the outward Solemnity was, the greater the inward Impreſſion might be upon the Minds of the People; and to ſignify, if the Promulgation of the Law was ſo awful, the Tranſgreſſion of it would be fatal, and the Puniſhment of Tranſgreſſors dreadful.

Q. *What was God's Deſign in all this ſolemn Parade?*

A. It was to cauſe them to look after the great Prophet *Chriſt Jeſus*, by whom God would ſpeak unto them more comfortably, and by whom they might have freer Acceſs to the Throne of Grace. *They intreated the Word ſhould not be ſpoken to them any more*, becauſe it ſtruck them with Fear and Dread to the utmoſt.

Q. *How does he deſcribe the State of the Church under the Goſpel?*

A. By the Privileges towhich Believers are call'd by the Goſpel. The Privileges here ſet forth, reſpect partly the Church militant, and partly the Church triumphant.

Thoſe reſpecting the Church militant, are, 1. *Ye are come unto mount* Sion, *the City of the living God, the heavenly* Jeruſalem; not to Mount *Sinai*, which was full of Terror and Diſcomfort, but to Mount to *Sion*, full of the ſpiritual Bleſſings. The Goſpel-Church is call'd the City of the living God. ACty is a Place of Safety, of Honour, of Peace and Reſt. The Souls of Believers can find no

Place of Reſt or Safety under the Law, but under the Goſpel, we have Reſt in *Chriſt*, Peace with God, Safety in divine Protection, *&c.* And as a King dwells in his City, ſo God dwells in the Church of Believers; this is my Reſt for ever; here will I dwell, ſays God, for I delight therein.

2. Believers are ſaid to come to *an innumerable Company of Angels*; to come to theſe, is to be of their Society; they and we are one in *Chriſt*; the Angels above, and Believers below, make up but one Corporation or Family; they are our Fellow-Citizens and our Fellow-Subjects. They, 'tis true, are at a mighty Diſtance from us, yet upon Occaſion are near us; though we do not ſee them, or familiarly converſe with them, yet they love us, have a ſpecial Care of us, and are miniſtring to us as Heirs of the ſame Salvation with themſelves.

3. They are come to the *general Aſſembly and Church of the Firſt-born*; that is, they are of the Number of God's regenerate and adopted ones, of thoſe that are born again, whoſe Names are regiſter'd in Heaven; as the Firſt-born under the Law had a Right to the Inheritance; ſo they who are really intereſted in the Goſpel-Church, have a Right to all that God has provided, and *Chriſt* purchas'd, even to the whole Inheritance of Grace and Glory.

4. They are come *to God the Judge of all*; that is, they have Acceſs to *Jeſus Chriſt*, to his Favour by Juſtification, and into his Preſence by Prayer and Supplication; yea, Acceſs to him as a Judge, without Terror or Conſternation. God will hear the Complaint of Believers, plead their Cauſe, and judge for them, and make their Oppreſſions, unſafe to the Sons of Men.

5. Believers are ſaid to come *to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect*. Come to them, though not in the ſame Place with them, till Death; yet we and they have the ſame God and Sovereign, the ſame Head and Saviour, the ſame Expectation of a glorious Reſurrection.

Note, that all the Spirits of juſt Men departed are made perfect; their Race is finiſh'd, perfect Deliverance from all Sin and Sorrow is compleated, and a full Reward enjoy'd; their Faith is heighten'd into Sight, and all their Graces elevated into Glory; yet they are but Spirits ſtill; and though perfected, yet is wanting the finiſhing Stroke from the Hand of God to render the Bodies as well as the Spirits of juſt Men for ever perfect in the Morning of the Reſurrection.

6. Believers are ſaid to come *to Jeſus the Mediator of the new Covenant*; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Your Fathers came to a Mount of Fire and Smoak, of Darkneſs, Terror and Death, where there was no Mediator to make their Peace with God, no Blood to cry for Mercy, and to cleanſe them from Sin; but you, by forſaking Judaiſm, and embracing *Chriſtianity*, are fully come into that Society, where *Chriſt* is Mediator and Prieſt; where the Blood of *Chriſt* ſprinkled in your Souls cries aloud for Mercy, and cleanſes from all Sin.

7. *And to the Blood of ſprinkling, which ſpeaks better Things than that of* Abel. Thoſe *better Things* are, that God's Juſtice is ſatisfy'd, his Wrath appeas'd, the condemning Guilt of Sin expiated, and the Majeſty of God reconcil'd to all Believers. It ſpeaks better Things to God for us, namely, to be at Peace with us, to reſt in his Love towards us, to furniſh us with all Grace here, and to fit us for Glory hereafter. The Blood of *Chriſt* never cry'd, as *Abel*'s did, for Vengeance on thoſe by whom it was ſhed, but pleaded for, and obtain'd Pardon on the behalf of many of them.

Q. *Pray explain the latter Part of ver.* 26. Yet once more I ſhake not the Earth only, but alſo Heaven?

A. By God's ſhaking not the Earth only, but the Heaven alſo, the Apoſtle means, all the Judaical State; this was ſhaken at the Coming of *Chriſt*, in order to the Introduction of the immoveable Goſpel-State, which was perpetually to remain.

From the Words *once more*, the Apoſtle obſerves, That the former Diſpenſation ſhould be remov'd, to make way for that which ſhould perpetually remain.

Several Things are here aſſerted, 1. That there were ſome Things which God intended ſhould be ſhaken, namely, the Levitical Prieſthood, and all *Jewiſh* Sacrifices and Services; theſe Things were to be ſhaken, yea, wholly remov'd out of the way.

2. There were Things that could not be ſhaken or remov'd, but muſt remain; namely, the Goſpel-State, the *Chriſtian* Religion, which ſhall continue till time ſhall be no more.

3. That the former Things were remov'd, that the latter might be introduc'd and eſtabliſh'd; the Law and Goſpel were inconſiſtent, the legal and evangelical Adminiſtration could not ſtand in force together, therefore it was neceſſary that the one ſhould be annull'd, that the other might be eſtabliſh'd.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle, ver.* 28. *call the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel* a Kingdom which cannot be moved?

A. In Oppoſition to the Law, which was an imperfect and alterable Diſpenſation; the Goſpel-Revelation is full and final, there is no need of any Change of that Religion which was brought by the Son of God from Heaven, in regard of its Perfection, and its admirable Fitneſs to reform the World, and recover Mankind out of their loſt and laps'd Condition, bringing them to eternal Happineſs, and this by the Purity of its Doctrine, and Power of its Arguments, to work upon the Minds of Men by the clear Diſcovery of the Rewards and Puniſhments of another World; we have now receiv'd *a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken*.

Q. *What does the Apoſtle infer from the Perfection and Perpetuity of this Revelation made by* Jeſus Chriſt?

A. His Inference is, *Let us have Grace to ſerve God acceptably*; let us live as becomes thoſe to whom God hath made ſo clear and perfect a Revelation of his Mind and Will; we have all the Advantages of divine Revelation which the World ever had, and the laſt and moſt perfect Revelation that the World ever will have; we have not only *Moſes*, but *Jeſus*; not only the moral Law, but the glorious Goſpel, which the Son of God came down on purpoſe from Heaven to declare to the World.

Q. *How is God to be worſhipped?*

A. *With Reverence and godly Fear.* Reverence in divine Service looks at God's glorious Excellence and Majeſty, and at our own Unworthineſs, together with that infinite Diſtance between God and us; and *godly Fear* is a religious Awe upon the Soul in holy Duties, from the great Danger of ſinful Miſcarriages in his Worſhip.

Q. *Explain the laſt Verſe,* For our God is a conſuming Fire?

A. *Our God* intimates a Covenant-relation; and though the Believers God is a conſuming Fire, yet he is not ſo to Believers, unleſs it be to conſume their Corruptions, or at moſt, their corruptible Comforts. Though God takes us near to, and into Covenant with himſelf, yet he expects that we conſider who he is, and what he is, even a conſuming Fire, and a jealous God.

CHAP. XIII.

He exhorts them to put in Practice ſundry Duties, not to obſerve Difference of Meats; but be eſtabliſhed in Grace, and to participate of Chriſt *and his Bleſſings. Our Sacrifices of Thankfulneſs and Liberality. Obedience to our ſpiritual Rulers. He deſires them to pray for him. His Salutation and Benediction.*

Q. WHAT is brotherly Love, *which the Apoſtle recommends in the firſt Verſe?*

A. Brotherly Love is that brotherly Affection which every *Chriſtian* chiefly bears to all his Fellow-Members in *Chriſt* for Grace's Sake. This brotherly Love muſt *continue* and conſtantly abide, not in the Pretence and Appearance of it only, but in Truth and Reality, for there will be innumerable Occaſions ready to impair and weaken it, if it be not well grounded. Unſuitableneſs of natural Tempers, Differences in Judgment, in Matters of Opinion, inconſiſtent worldly Intereſt, Readineſs to Provocation. Pride on the one Hand, or Envy on the other, will occaſion the temporary Decay, if not the total Loſs of this noble Grace, if it be not deeply rooted.

Q. *What was that Hoſpitality to Strangers which he exhorts them to, ver. 2?*

A. It conſiſted in receiving them into their Houſes, and furniſhing them with all needful Accommodations. In thoſe Eaſtern Countries there were but few Inns, and *Chriſtians* were generally poor, not able to bear their own Charges in their travelling from Place to Place. Strangers, even amongſt Heathens, were accounted ſacred, and under the peculiar Protection of God; and ſuch as uſed them inhoſpitably were puniſhed. But this Kind of Hoſpitality, though in antient Times in ſuch great Eſteem, is now in a manner driven through the World by the Wickedneſs of ſome, and Covetouſneſs of others; few Strangers are worthy to receive Entertainment, and as few have Hearts to give it.

Q. *By what Argument does he enforce this Duty?*

A. *For thereby ſome have entertained Angels unawares*; ſo did *Abraham* and *Lot* entertain three Angels in the Appearance of Men, not knowing who or what they were. By receiving Strangers out of Faith in *Chriſt* and Love to God, we may receive precious Saints, and (which is more) ſome bleſſed Angel ſent to keep them, and (which is moſt of all) *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, who at preſent remarks, and will hereafter acknowledge and reward ſuch Kindneſſes ſhewn to his Members, as done to himſelf, *Mat.* xxv.

Q. *In what Senſe do you take theſe Words, ver.* 3. Remember them which are in Bonds, as bound with them?

A. This implies an Act of Union, as Members of the ſame myſtical Body, and ſuffering for the ſame Cauſe; it follows, *and thoſe that ſuffer Adverſity, as being in the Body.* This implies that there are many Kinds of Afflictions beſides Bonds; that we are apt to forget thoſe that ſuffer lighter and leſſer Afflictions; but the Command is general, we muſt remember all that are in any Kind of Adverſity, whether they ſuffer in Body, Name, or Eſtate, by Sickneſs, Pain, Loſſes, Reproaches, or any kind of Calamity; we muſt ſympathize with them, becauſe we ourſelves are *in the Body with them*; that is, ſay ſome, we are Members of the ſame myſtical Body, and therefore when one Member ſuffers, all the Members are to ſuffer with it. Say others, you are in the ſame State of natural Life, obnoxious to the ſame Sufferings, and within the Reach of the ſame Adverſities.

Q. *In order to prevent the Ravings of unbridled Luſt he preſcribes* Marriage: *Pray explain that Term?*

A. That is, the Conjunction of two individual Perſons, that have Freedom of Choice or Conſent, and Power over themſelves, not being within the Degrees of Affinity or Conſanguinity prohibited, betwixt whom there ſubſiſts ſuch an indiſſoluble Union, that thereby they become one Fleſh; ſuch Marriage he affirms to be honourable, and to be ſo eſteemed in regard of its Author, God himſelf, *Geneſ.* ii. 18. in regard of the Place, Paradiſe, in regard of the Time, in Man's Innocency; in regard of the End and Uſefulneſs of it, the Continuation of the Race of Mankind; thus it is honourable, and ought to be honoured.

Q. *Why does he add concerning Marriage, it is* honourable in all?

A. That is, amongſt all Orders, Ranks, and Degrees of Men that are called thereunto; the Remedy is provided for all; and therefore for the Church of *Rome* to deny it to their Clergy, is to uſurp Authority over the Conſciences of Men, and to judge themſelves too pure for an Inſtitution of their Maker, which our firſt Parents in their Innocency did not think themſelves too pure for.

Next to the State of Marriage, the Apoſtle adds the Duty of that State, *the Bed undefiled,* in Oppoſition to the defiled Bed of Whoremongers and Adulterers, and the Preſervation of Marriage Duties within due Bounds.

Q. *How do you underſtand the following Words,* But Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge?

A. That is, all Perſons in a ſingle State of Life who know one another carnally, without a Marriage Vow or Contract between them; if both Parties are ſingle, their Filthineſs is called Fornication; if either of them be married, Adultery; neither of them ſhall eſcape the Judgment of God; that is, temporal Puniſhment in this Life, and eternal Damnation in the next. However lightly Men may think of the Sin of Uncleanneſs, yet we are aſſured that in its own Nature it deſerves eternal Condemnation, and ſuch as live and die impenitently in it ſhall certainly periſh for it; and it rarely happens that thoſe who have habitually given themſelves up to the Luſts of the Fleſh, are brought to Repentance.

Q. *What is meant by* Converſation *and* Covetouſneſs, *ver.* 5?

A. *By Converſation*, we are firſt to underſtand the Diſpoſition of the Mind, then the Actions of the Life; both ought to be free from all inordinate Luſt, to endeavour after more of the World than God is pleaſed to give us.

By *Covetouſneſs*, we are not to underſtand, as if a provident and prudential Care for the Things of this Life were forbidden, or as if all Endeavours to maintain our Right to what God has given us were unlawful; but by *Covetouſneſs* is meant an eager and inſatiable Deſire after, accompanied with reſtleſs and unwearied Endeavours for the Things of this Life, proceeding from an undue Valuation of them, and an inordinate Love unto them.

As all Sin in general, ſo Covetouſneſs in particular, is inconſiſtent with a *Chriſtian* Converſation according to the Goſpel. No Sin at this Day is a greater Stain on the Glory of *Chriſtianity* than this. The profligate Lives of debauched Perſons, their Blaſphemies, Adulteries, and Drunkenneſs, *&c.* do not half the Miſchief to *Chriſtianity* which this Sin does; becauſe thoſe that are guilty of it, make Pretences to Religion, which the others do not.

Q. *Wherein conſiſts that Contentment which is recommended in the following Words;* Be content with ſuch Things as you have?

A. Contentment is a gracious Diſpoſition of Mind, whereby the *Chriſtian* reſts ſatisfied with that Portion of the good Things of this Life, which the Wiſdom of God aſſigns him, without complaining of the Little which God gives him, or envying the Much which God beſtows on others. However, Contentment with what we have, is not inconſiſtent with, nor excluſive of, an induſtrious Diligence, and an honeſt moderate Care to increaſe what we have, for ourſelves and Families. Honeſt Induſtry is our Duty, and God has given us ſix Days in ſeven for the Exerciſe of it; but it is utterly excluſive of all covetous Deſires, of all anxious Cares, of all priding ourſelves in, and boaſting of what we have received, contemning and deſpiſing others, a Vanity which Men of weak Minds are only guilty of.

Q. *What Argument does he uſe to enforce this Duty?*

A. *For he hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.* The Words are a Promiſe to aſſure us of God's Preſence and Providence; and that he will never leave us. The Repetition of the Negative, gives the utmoſt Security to the Faith of Believers, that God will be preſent with them, and comfortably provide for them; ſo that the Words are a ſtrong Reaſon to dehort from Covetouſneſs, and to exhort to Contentedneſs; for if God be with us, we ſhall want no good Thing that is needful for us; but what, and when, that needful Thing is, we muſt leave to God to judge for us.

Although the foregoing Promiſe was made to *Joſhua*, yet the Apoſtle applies it to all Believers, and draws Comfort from it; *We may boldly ſay, the Lord is my Helper.* Believers have the ſame Grounds that *Joſhua* had, may uſe the ſame Confidence that he did, though our Circumſtances and his are not the ſame. All the Promiſes of God's gracious Preſence made to the Prophets and Apoſtles of Old, all Believers may apply to themſelves, in their ſuffering State.

Q. *How are thoſe Words, Verſe* 8. *to be underſtood;* Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever?

A. Three Ways; with reſpect to the Perſon, the Office, and the Doctrine of *Chriſt*.

With reſpect to the Perſon of *Chriſt*, he is eternal and immutable in every State of the Church, and in every Condition of Believers he is the ſame, and always will be the ſame in his divine Perſon; he is, ever was, and ever will be, all in all unto his Church.

He is always the ſame in regard of his Office. The Virtue of the legal Sacrifice expired with the Offering; but the precious Oblation of *Chriſt* hath an everlaſting Efficacy to obtain full Pardon for Believers. His Blood is as efficacious to propitiate for Sin, as if it was this Day ſhed on the Croſs.

He is alſo eternally the ſame, in regard of his Doctrine. The Goſpel is the laſt Revelation of the Mind of God, made known by *Jeſus Chriſt*, that ever will be laid before the World. Such therefore as reject him, reject the laſt, the only Remedy; and muſt periſh without any Poſſibility of Recovery.

From the Whole learn, that our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* was, from the Beginning of the World, the immutable Object of his Church's Faith; and the Conſideration of *Jeſus Chriſt* in his Eternity, Immutability, and Indeficiency of his Power, as he is always the ſame, is the great Encouragement of Believers in the Profeſſion of their Faith, and a mighty Support under all the Difficulties they meet with on Account thereof.

Q. *What is meant by* Meats, *and* Grace, *Verſe* 9?

A. Underſtand Diſputes and Controverſies about the Difference of Meats; by *Grace*, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and the ſanctifying Grace of the Holy Spirit, which fixes and eſtabliſhes the Heart, and keeps the *Chriſtian* ſteady and ſtedfaſt.

The Reaſon added, is, *They have not profited them that are occupied therein;* that is, to obſerve the Doctrine concerning a religious Diſtinction of Meats, ſince the Goſpel has been entertained, is altogether unprofitable and unavailable; for even while the Inſtitutions concerning Meats were in Force, they profited not thoſe who obſerved them.

Q. *Pray explain the* 10*th Verſe?*

A. This Verſe contains a farther Reaſon why the *Chriſtian Hebrews* ſhould not return to *Judaiſm*, or any other Doctrine different from the Goſpel of *Chriſt*; *We Chriſtians have an Altar;* that is, a Sacrifice, a Prieſt offered upon, and ſanctified by, the Altar of the Croſs. This Altar is every way ſufficient, in itſelf, for the Ends of an Altar; and therefore the Introduction of any other Sacrifice requiring a material Altar, is derogatory to the Sacrifice of *Chriſt*, and excluſive of him from being an Altar.

The Perſons excluded from having any Right unto, or Expectation of the Benefit by this Altar, are, ſuch as *ſerve the Tabernacle;* that is, ſuch as cleave ſtill to the Worſhip appointed for the *Jewiſh* Tabernacle, and adhere to the *Moſaical* Obſervations. They have no Right to this Altar by any divine Inſtitution, no Right by virtue of their Office, or Relation to the Tabernacle.

Q. *Give the Senſe of thoſe Words, Verſe* 13. Let us go forth to him without the Camp?

A. That is, Let us go unto him from the *Jewiſh* State, and ceremonial Law, bearing his Reproach of the Croſs, which we muſt not only expect, but undergo.

Note alſo, the Circumſtance of the Place where our Lord ſuffered; namely, *without the Gate* of the City *Jeruſalem*; intimating, that he had now finally left the City, and the Church of the *Jews*, and, accordingly, he denounced their Deſtruction, *Luke* xxxiii. 28, 29, 30. And by thus turning his Back on the Temple, he plainly ſhewed, that he had now put an End to all ſacrificing in the Temple, with reſpect to divine Acceptation; and by going out of the Gate he declared, that his Sacrifice, and the Benefits of it, were not included in the Church of the *Jews*, but extended equally to all the World; and by going out of the City, as a Malefactor, and dying an accurſed Death, he plainly declared, that he died a Sin-Offering, that his Death was a Puniſhment for Sin. The Sum is this, that we muſt leave all, to go forth to a crucified Saviour; and if we reſolve ſo to do, we muſt expect and prepare to meet with Reproaches of all Sorts.

Q. *In what Senſe do you underſtand the 14th Verſe*, For here we have no continuing City, but ſeek one to come?

A. Theſe Words may be conſidered either relatively or abſolutely. Conſider them with relation to the Context, and their Senſe is this: How chearfully ought Believers *to go forth to* Chriſt *without the Camp, bearing his Reproach*, when they reflect on their preſent State and Condition, that they have no City here below, that is now the Seat of divine Worſhip, whereunto it was confined, as the *Jews* had at *Jeruſalem*, where they ſhall worſhip God in the Temple, Day and Night. Conſider the Words abſolutely in themſelves, and two Things ſeem intended by them. 1. That our Condition in this World is very uncertain and unſettled, *We have no continuing City here.* 2. It implies a Tendency to a future Settlement, and the Hopes and Expectations we have of a happier Condition into which we ſhall enter when we go out of this World. The World never did, nor ever will, give a State of ſatisfactory Reſt to Believers; it will not afford them a City of Reſt, hardly a Place of Refuge; they muſt therefore ariſe and depart, for this is not their Reſt.

Q. *What Kind of Sacrifice is that which the Apoſtle exhorts them to offer, Verſe* 15?

A. The *Chriſtian*'s Sacrifice is not propitiatory, but gratulatory; a Sacrifice of Praiſe. What we offer is the Fruit of our Lips; not the Fruit of our Fields, or of our Flocks, but of ſuch Lips as confeſs his Name.

This Sacrifice of Praiſe is to be offered to God *continually*, conſtantly, Morning and Evening; not putting off Almighty God with leſs under the Goſpel, than the *Jews* offered him under the Law, which was the Morning and Evening Sacrifice; and all this by *Chriſt*: *By him let us offer*, by him who is our Peace may we find Acceſs. It is his Merit and Mediation that crowns our Sacrifice, and obtains Acceptance for it.

Q. *What is the Senſe of thoſe Words, Verſe* 16. But to do Good, and communicate, forget not?

A. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Take heed you do not content yourſelves with the bare Fruit of your Lips, the Prayers and Praiſes which coſt you little; God calls for the Labour of your Hands, and for a Part to be given to his poor Members, of what he has given to you; therefore be ſure forget not to do good and communicate, *for with ſuch Sacrifices God is well pleaſed.*

Q. *What is that Obedience required to our ſpiritual Guides and Rulers, Verſe* 17?

A. We are to obey their Doctrine, and ſubmit to their Diſcipline; yet not with a blind and implicit Obedience, but as they teach you ſuch Things as *Chriſt* has commanded them; ſubmit to their Rule, whilſt it is exerciſed in the Name of *Chriſt*, and according to his Inſtitution.

Q. *In the 18th Verſe the Apoſtle ſays, he truſts he has* a good Conſcience; *pray what is a good Conſcience, and what Proof does he give that his own was ſuch?*

A. A good Conſcience is a Conſcience enlightned by the Word of God, a Conſcience awaken'd by the Spirit, purified and pacified by the Blood of *Chriſt*, univerſally tender of all God's Commands.

The Teſtimony he gives of his having a good Conſcience, is, that he was *willing in all Things to live honeſtly*; a Reſolution and Will, accompanied with conſtant Endeavours to live honeſtly, is a Fruit and Evidence of a good Conſcience; the Word *willing* denotes Readineſs, Reſolution and Endeavour.

Q. *What do you remark on the Apoſtle's Prayer, Verſe* 20?

A. Obſerve here the Title given to God, *the God of Peace.* But why the God of Peace, rather than the God of Power, of Grace, or of Glory? Becauſe the Divine Power was not exerted in raiſing *Chriſt* from the Dead, 'till God was pacified. Juſtice incenſed, expoſed him to death; but Juſtice appeaſed, freed him from the Dead.

The Titles which the Apoſtle gives to *Chriſt* ſeem to expreſs his threefold Office, of a Prophet, in that he ſtiles him *the great Shepherd of the Sheep*; of a Prieſt, that he is ſaid *to be brought again from the Dead, by the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant*; and of a King, in that he is ſtiled *Our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt.

The General Epiſtle of

S^T. JAMES.

The Epiſtle of St. James, *together with the ſix following Epiſtles, have gone under the Name of Catholick Epiſtles for many Ages, becauſe, ſay ſome, they were not written to a particular City or Country, as moſt of St.* Paul's *Epiſtles were, but to all the* Chriſtian Jews *abroad, diſperſed throughout the World, whoſe ſuffering Condition render'd the Conſolation which this Epiſtle affords very neceſſary, as being greatly ſupporting.*

The Author and Penman of it was St. James, *commonly called* James the leſs, *and our Lord's Brother, the Son of* Alpheus, *ſtiled alſo* James the Juſt, *and Biſhop of* Jeruſalem; *conſequently its Authority cannot reaſonably be queſtioned.*

The Deſign of this Epiſtle is, 1. *To eſtabliſh the* Chriſtian Jews *in a well-ordered religious Courſe of Life, and to fortify them againſt Sufferings from the unbelieving* Jews. 2. *To correct a pernicious Error about the Sufficiency of a naked Faith, and empty Profeſſion without Practice, which ſprung from a Miſunderſtanding and Abuſe of the Way of Juſtification by Faith. The Deſign of St.* Paul *in his* Epiſtle to the Romans *(of which we have the ſame in* Acts iv. 12.*) was to manifeſt that* Chriſt *was the only One, and* Chriſtianity *the only Way to ſet us Criminals clear with God, ſo as to bring us to himſelf in Glory. And St.* James *ſhews us, that 'tis not the bare Belief and Profeſſion of the* Chriſtian *Faith, but the Power and practical Improvement of it, that muſt render it ſaving to us.*

CHAP. I.

The Superſcription. He exhorts the believing Jews *patiently to bear their Sufferings. The Lowly comforted, and the Rich taught Humility. God the Author of all Good, eſpecially of Regeneration. He exhorts to Meekneſs. The Exerciſe of true Religion conſiſts in bridling the Tongue; in Charity and Purity of Life.*

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve on the Introduction to this Epiſtle?*

A. In the firſt Verſe we may obſerve, how St. *James* ſtiles himſelf *a Servant of God, and of the Lord* Jeſus Chriſt. Some read the Words conjoin'd thus, James, *a Servant of* Jeſus Chriſt, *who is God and Lord*; and thus the Fathers urged this Text againſt the *Arians*, to prove the Divinity and Godhead of *Chriſt*. Others read the Words disjoin'd, as in the Text. This latter Reading ſeems moſt natural, and leſs ſtrain'd, and affords an Argument for proving the Divinity of *Chriſt* no leſs weighty than the former; for, as the Father is Lord as well as *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſo *Jeſus Chriſt* is God as well as the Father, and God will have all to honour the Son as they honour the Father.]

Q. *What does he mean by the* twelve Tribes ſcattered Abroad?

A. That is, to ſuch and ſo many of the *Jews* as were converted to *Chriſtianity*, and were diſpers'd and ſcattered into ſeveral Countries; to them St. *James* is mov'd and excited by the Spirit of God to write and direct this excellent Epiſtle?

Here note the Severity of God's Juſtice towards the People of the *Jews*; they were a ſinful People, weary of God, ſick of his Worſhip, cruel to his Son; and God grows weary of them, and according to his Threatning, *Deut.* xxvii. 64. ſcatter'd them from one End of the Earth to the other. How dangerous is it to reſt upon, or glory in our outward Privileges! None had more, or greater Privileges than the *Jews*, yet for their Sins the Land ſpew'd them out, and God diſpers'd them, and made them a By-word among all Nations.

But behold the Tenderneſs of God's Love and Care towards the Faithful amongſt them under this Diſperſion; he ſtirs up St. *James* to write to the ſcatter'd Tribes, and to apply ſeaſonable Comforts to them, and to all *Chriſtians* in a ſuffering State with them.

In order to this, he firſt acquaints them with the Nature of thoſe Sufferings which they might expect to fall under for the Sake of *Chriſtianity*; he calls them Temptations, that is, Trials, they are correcting Trials for Sins, and experimental Trials of the Truth, and Strength of Grace.

Q. *In what Senſe were they* to count it all Joy when they fall into divers Temptations?

A. Not that Temptations or Trials are Matter of Joy, but of Sorrow and Heavineſs, conſider'd in themſelves but becauſe of their good Effects and ſweet Fruits in improving our Faith, and increaſing our Patience.

But mark, he ſays, *When ye fall into Temptations*, not when you run yourſelves into them, or draw them upon you; or imprudently bring them upon ourſelves.

The Joy of ſincere *Chriſtians* in Sufferings, reſults from the Conſideration of the Glory that redounds to God, of the Honour done to us, of the Benefits accruing to the Church, and to ourſelves by confirming the Faith of others; evidencing the Sincerity of Grace in ourſelves, preparing us for, and giving us a ſwifter Paſſage to Heaven.

Q. *How does the* trying of our Faith work Patience, *ver.* 3?

A. That is, it adminiſters Matter and Occaſion for Patience, and by the Bleſſing of God, produces and increaſes it; frequent Trials put us upon frequent Exerciſes, and the frequent Exerciſe of Grace ſtrengthens the Habit of it.

But let Patience have her perfect Work; let your Patience and Perſeverance under Sufferings reſolutely continue and hold out to the End; this the Apoſtle urges, becauſe ſome Perſons who had bravely ſuſtain'd the firſt Onſet of Perſecution, but being exercis'd with Diverſity and Length of Trials fainted. Now if we will be compleat *Chriſtians*, our Patience muſt run parallel with our Suffering; thus ſhall we be perfect, not with an abſolute Perfection, but with a Perfection of Duration and Perſeverance.

Q. *But when has Patience its perfect Work?*

A. When there is a ſtrong Faith, as the Foundation of that Patience; when there is a *Chriſtian* Fortitude and Courage, enabling us to ſuſtain Trials; when there is an exact Knowledge of our Duty to bear Afflictions with a meek and quiet, a forbearing and forgiving Spirit, yea, with a praying Spirit, which includes the Heighth of Charity, under the higheſt Provocations; in a Word, when we entirely truſt and depend on God's Power and Promiſe, and chearfully ſubmit our Wills to his moſt wiſe, and righteous Will under the ſharpeſt Trials that can befal us. Then has Patience had its perfect Work, and the ſuffering *Chriſtian* in a Goſpel qualify'd Senſe, may be ſaid *to be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

Q. *Such as want Wiſdom, the Apoſtle bids them ask it of God; but what Encouragement does he give them ſo to do?*

A. The Encouragement here given to ask Wiſdom of God, is drawn, 1. From the beautiful Manner of his giving, *he giveth liberally*, without upbraiding. 2. From the Certainty of the Gift, *it ſhall be given him.* God's Liberality in giving what we ask, often more than we ask, yea, more than we can ask or think, is a mighty Encouragement to Faith, and Fervency in Prayer, eſpecially if we conſider, that as God giveth liberally, ſo he *upbraideth not*; that is, he neither upbraids them for their Frequency and Importunity in asking, nor yet with their Unworthineſs of receiving; but inſtead thereof ſubjoins an Aſſurance of granting; *it ſhall be given him.*

The Condition requir'd on our Part, is, *Let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering.* To ask in Faith requires, that the Petitioner be a Believer, and the Thing ask'd for an Object of Faith, by being the ſubject Matter of ſome Promiſe.

Again; the Manner of asking muſt be faithful, with a pure Intention of God's Glory, with a chearful Submiſſion to the divine Pleaſure, with fiducial Dependance on God's Promiſes, with great Fervency and Warmth of Spirit.

Q. *What is meant by* a double-minded Man, *ver.* 8?

A. Underſtand one that is divided in his own Thoughts between two different Ways and Opinions, as if he had two Minds or two Souls; many ſuch there were in the Apoſtle's Days, *Judaizing* Brethren, that ſometimes would ſort with the *Jews*, and ſometimes with the *Chriſtians*. Many ſuch there are in our Days, divided betwixt God and the World, between Holineſs and Sin; like a Needle between two Loadſtones, always wavering, frequently pointing to both, but never fix'd to either: Such a Man, ſays our Apoſtle, *is unſtable in all his Ways*, or, in all his Actions. Whilſt Mens Minds are divided between God and their Luſts, they muſt neceſſarily lead very anxious, uncertain, and unſtable Lives; for they are always at odds with themſelves and at perpetual Variance with their own Reaſon.

Q. *Pray explain the 9th and 10th Verſes*, Let the Brother of low Degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the Rich in that he is made low, becauſe as the Flower of the Graſs he ſhall paſs away?

A. The Apoſtle now returns to his former Argument, concerning bearing Affliction with Joy, and urges a ſtrong Reaſon to inforce the Duty, *let the Brother of low Degree rejoice*; that is, ſuch a *Chriſtian* as is brought low by Perſecution and Sufferings for *Chriſt*, let him rejoice that God has exalted him, and made him rich in Faith, and an Heir of a Kingdom.

He adds, *But let the Rich rejoice in that he is made low*; that is, when he loſes any Thing for *Chriſt*. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, *Let the poor* Chriſtian *rejoice in that he is ſpiritually exalted, and the rich in that he is ſpiritually humbled*; *a rich Man's Humility is his Glory.*

Tha Reaſon aſſign'd why the rich Man ſhould have a lowly Mind in the midſt of his flouriſhing Condition, is, becauſe all the Pomp and Grandeur of Riches fades like a Flower; and he himſelf alſo is beautiful, but fading; fair, but vaniſhing; and as the Flower is quickly faded by the Heat of the ſcorching Sun, ſo the rich Man fades, and all his Riches are tranſitory and paſſing. Thus the

Chriſtian, by parting with that which he could not keep, makes ſure of that which he can never loſe.

Q. *What Kind of Temptations does the Apoſtle here ſpeak of?*

A. There are three Sorts of Temptations ſpoken of in Scripture, Temptations of Seduction, of Suggeſtion, and of Affliction; the laſt have been juſt mentioned, *bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation.* The ſecond Sort are ſpoken of in theſe Words, *let no Man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man.* If God tempted any Man to Sin, doubtleſs our evil Actions could not be properly Sins, nor juſtly puniſhable by God; for no Man can be juſtly puniſhable for that which he cannot help, and no Man can help that which he is compell'd to; and it is very unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that the ſame Perſon ſhould both tempt and puniſh. To tempt unto Sin, is contrary to the Holineſs of God; and after that to chaſtiſe for complying with the Temptations, is contrary to the Juſtice of God; God then is not the Author of the Sins of Men.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words, ver.* 13. God cannot be tempted with Evil?

A. That is, he cannot be drawn to any thing that is Evil himſelf, and therefore it cannot be imagin'd he ſhould have any Inclination or Deſign to ſeduce others; how can it be ſuppos'd he ſhould intice Men to that which his Nature abominates? No Doctrine then ought to be aſſerted, or can be maintain'd, which is contrary to the natural Notions which Men have of God, as touching his Holineſs, Juſtice, and Goodneſs.

If God tempts not us, let us never tempt him. This we do when we tempt his Providence, expecting his Protection in an unwarrantable way; as when we are negligent in our Callings, and yet depend on God's Providence to provide for our Families, which is to approve our Folly, and to countenance our Sloth.

Q. *What do you obſerve on the 14th Verſe,* Every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Luſt, und enticed?

A. Note, he does not aſcribe it to the Devil; he may, and does preſent the Object, and by his Inſtruments ſollicit our Compliance; but his Temptations can have no prevailing Efficacy but from our own voluntary Conſent; it is our Luſt cloſing with his Temptations which produce the Sin; for God's commanding us to reſiſt the Devil, ſuppoſes that his Temptations are not irreſiſtible.

A Man's Luſt is himſelf, and Nature teaches us to miſtruſt ourſelves: What Reaſon have we then perpetually to pray that God would not lead us into Temptation, but keep us by his good Providence out of the way of Temptation, becauſe we carry about with us ſuch Luſts and Inclinations as will betray us to Sin, when powerful Temptations are preſented to us? The only way to diſarm Temptations, is to mortify our Luſts, and ſubdue our vicious Inclinations.

Q. *In the 15th Verſe the Apoſtle gives us a Deſcription of Sin; what do you obſerve upon it?*

A. We have here the Pedigree, Birth and Growth of Sin. When *Luſt*, that is, our corrupt Inclinations, *have conceived*, that is, gain'd the Conſent and Approbation of the Will, it *bringeth forth*, and engages the Soul in Sin; *and Sin when it it is finiſhed* in the deliberate outward Action, and becomes habitual, *bringing forth Death*, the Wages of Sin; the firſt Approaches of Sin are uſually modeſt, but afterwards makes bolder Attempts; it is therefore our Wiſdom to ſuppreſs Sin in the Thoughts, to mortify Luſt in the Heart, before it breaks forth in the Life, and at laſt terminates in Death.

Q. *What Obſervation do you make on the 18th Verſe?*

A. The Words are expreſſive of four Things, namely, of the efficient, the impulſive, the inſtrumental, and the final Cauſe of our Regeneration.

The Author and efficient Cauſe of our Regeneration, is God, *the Father of Light*, mentioned in the preceding Verſe; the Cauſe is ſubjectively in the Creature, efficiently from God; *Chriſt* appropriates this Work to God, *Mat.* xi. 23. ſo do the Scriptures, *Pſal.* xxxix. 9. and God himſelf appropriates it to himſelf, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 27. *I will put my Spirit within them.*

The impelling and moving Cauſe of Regeneration, is, his own Will, *of his own Will he begat us*; by his mere Motion, induc'd by no Cauſe but his own Goodneſs, his own Will, and not naturally, as he begat his Son from Eternity; not by a Neceſſity of Nature; not by an Obligation from the Creature; not for the Deſert and Merit of Man, but *of his own Will he begat us.*

The inſtrumental Cauſe of our Regeneration, *is the Word of Truth*, that is, the Goſpel, which is the great Inſtrument in God's Hand of producing a new Birth in the Souls of his People.

The Word of God is here call'd Truth, by way of Excellency, *the Word of Truth*, that is, the true Word; and alſo by way of Eminency, as containing a higher and more excellent Truth; the Goſpel declares the Truth of all the *Old Teſtament* Types.

The final Cauſe of our new Birth is, *that we ſhould be a Kind of Firſt Fruits of his Creatures*, that is, of his new Creatures; the firſt Fruits were the beſt of every Kind to be offer'd to God, and were given as God's peculiar Right and Portion; thus the new Creature is God's peculiar Portion taken out of Mankind, which being conſecrated to God by a new begetting, they ought to ſerve him with a new Spirit, and new Thankfulneſs, as lying under the higheſt Obligations, to new Obedience.

Q. *What Inference does he draw from hence?*

A. Since God has put ſuch an Honour upon his Word, the Word of Truth, as by it to beget us to himſelf, be ſwift to hear it, prize it highly, and wait upon the Means of Grace readily and diligently; but *be ſlow to ſpeak*, that is, to utter your Judgment of it, much more ſlow in Undertaking to be a Teacher and Defender of it; alſo *ſlow to Wrath*, or to Contentions about the Words and Points of Divinity. Wrath and Paſſion hinder all Profit by the Word, either preach'd, read, or diſcours'd about; and a forcible Reaſon why all Wrath ſhould be ſuppreſs'd, becauſe the *Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God*; that is, Man's ſinful Anger will never put him upon doing thoſe Things that are juſt and righteous in God's Account; or there is a Figure in the Words; more is intended than expreſs'd; the Meaning is, that the Wrath of Man is ſo far from working the Righteouſneſs of God, that it worketh all Manner of Evil.

Q. *How may the Word become profitable to the ſaving of our Souls?*

A. If we would have the Word profit us, we muſt receive it with all Meekneſs of Spirit; we muſt not diſcover either a wrathful Fierceneſs, a proud Stubbornneſs, or a contentious Wrangling; but Humility and Brokenneſs of Spirit, Docility and Tractableneſs under the Word, otherwiſe all our hearing will be an Addition to our Sin, and an Aggravation to our Condemnation.

Q. *But how may we know that the Word is an ingrafted Word?*

A. When it is fruitful, *Col.* i. 6. *The Word of the Truth of the Goſpel is come unto you, and bringeth forth Fruit.* The bare Hearing of the Word is the leaſt, the lighteſt Part of *Chriſtianity*; altho' we be very diligent and attentive Hearers; yea, though we make great Proficiency in Knowledge by our Hearing; yet all this will deceive us at laſt, if we are not Doers of the Word, as well as Hearers of it. Not to hear at all is Atheiſtical, and produces no Religion; to hear, and not to know, and be affected with what we hear is Stoical, and breeds a blind Religion; to know, and not to do, is Phariſaical, and ſhews a lame Religion; the practical Hearer is the only approv'd Hearer in God's Eſteem; *A good Underſtanding have all they that keep thy Commandments*, Pſal. cxi.

Without this, all our hearing is but Self-deceiving, and this is the moſt ſhameful, the moſt dangerous, and, if not timely prevented, an irreparable and eternal Deceit; *Be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving yourſelves.*

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle compare the Word to a* Glaſs, *Verſe* 23?

A. The Word is a Glaſs in which the Soul's Complexion may be ſeen; in this Glaſs we ſee both God and ourſelves; Chriſt's Beauty and our own Deformity, our Diſeaſe and Remedy.

The Glaſs of the Word muſt not be careleſly and curſorily looked into, with a ſlight and ſuperficial Glance; but if we deſire to have all the Blots and Blemiſhes of our Souls thoroughly diſcovered, we muſt keep it continually before our Eyes, and daily dreſs our Souls by it.

Q. *Why is the Word of God called the* Perfect Law of Liberty, *Verſe* 25?

A. Partly becauſe it calleth us to a State of Liberty and Freedom, and offers us the Aſſiſtance of a Spirit of Liberty; partly becauſe it dealeth with all Perſons freely, without reſpect of any; thus the Goſpel, or Word of God, is a Law of Liberty.

The Duty required, with Reſpect to this Law of Liberty, is, to look into it, and continue therein; to attend to it carefully; to look into it with an accurate and narrow Inſpection; it implies Deepneſs of Meditation, and a lively Impreſſion; and continuing therein, imports Perſeverance in the Knowledge, Faith and Obedience of the Goſpel, in order to our Fruitfulneſs in good Works; *If you abide in me, and my Word abide in you, ye ſhall bring forth much Fruit*, John xv. 5, 7.

To ſuch Lookers into the Goſpel, that Law of Liberty, the Reward promiſed is, *they are bleſſed in their Deed*; there is a Bleſſing annexed to that Work which the Word of God requires; yet mark the Diſtinctneſs of the Scripture-Phraſe; the Apoſtle does not ſay, that the Doers of the Work ſhall be bleſſed *for* their Deed, but *in* their Deed; 'tis an Evidence of our Bleſſedneſs, not the Ground of it; the Way, though not the Cauſe of Bleſſedneſs.

Q. *How is* bridling the Tongue *a Proof of a Man's Religion, Verſe* 26?

A. That Man who pretends to, and ſeems to be Religious, without governing his Tongue, all his Religion is vain, and Self-deceiving; Vain, that is, empty in Shew and Appearance only, nothing in Truth and Reality; or Vain, that is, Ineffectual, it does not perform its Office, nor anſwer its End; their Religion will do them no Good, ſtand them in no Stead; that Faith, that Hope, thoſe Prayers, which will conſiſt with the reigning Evils of the Tongue, are Vain and Self-deceiving; that Religion which cannot drive the the Devil out of the Tongue, will never prove *Chriſt* to be in the Heart; that Religion which cannot tame the Tongue, will never ſave the Soul; though ſome Evils of the Tongue may conſiſt with Grace, yet an unbridled Tongue cannot conſiſt with it.

Q. *Why is* viſiting the Fatherleſs and Widow, called pure Religion, *Verſe* 27?

A. Acts of Charity, when they flow from a religious Principle, commence Acts of Worſhip; to viſit the Widow and Fatherleſs, conſidered in itſelf, may be only an indifferent Act and civil Courteſy; but when it it is performed as an Act of Duty, in Obedience to the Command of God, or as an Act of Mercy and Pity, for the Supply of their Wants, or comforting their Hearts by our Counſel; being thus done out of Conſcience, it is as cceptable to God as an Act of Worſhip.

CHAP. II.

Of Reſpect to Perſons. Faith without Works, no more than what the Devils have; unlike that of Abraham *and* Rahab; *and like to a Body without a Soul.*

Q. PRAY *explain St.* James's *Diſtinction, with Regard to the Reſpect to be paid to Perſons of different Conditions?*

A. For the right underſtanding of the firſt four Verſes, we are to conſider what the Apoſtle does, or does not condemn. He does not condemn the paying of civil Reſpect to all Perſons, according to their Character, and a different Reſpect according to their different Qualities. Honour is to be given to whom Honour is due; and the Rich are entitled to Reſpect, and have it without any Offence to God.

Much leſs does St. *James* ſpeak againſt honouring Magiſtrates, or paying Reſpect to our eccleſiaſtical or civil Rulers, or Governors, in their Courts of Judicature. Civility, yea, Chriſtianity, calls for outward Reſpect and Reverence to them that are above us, eſpecially if in Authority over us.

But poſitively, that which is here condemned, is, in general, Partiality in our Reſpect to Perſons in religious Matters, for in the Things of God all are equal; the Rich and the Poor ſtand on the ſame Terms of Advantage; external Relations and Differences bear no Weight at the Goſpel-Beam; therefore, to diſ-eſteem any of the poor Members of *Chriſt*, as ſuch, is to undervalue *Chriſt* himſelf. Holineſs is not leſs lovely to him becauſe cloathed ed in Rags; nor Unholineſs leſs loathſome becauſe dreſs'd in a gay Coat, with a gold Ring. Wickedneſs is abominable to *Chriſt*, and ought to be ſo to us, though it ſits upon a Throne, and Holineſs ſhines in his Eye, though it lies on a Dunghill.

But particularly, he condemns the accepting Perſons in Judgment on Account of temporal Advantages, and proceeding not according to the Merits in their eccleſiaſtical and civil Judicatories, but according to external Reſpects. Our Apoſtle would not have them pay a Deference to a rich Man in Judgment, becauſe of his Riches, or gay Attire; nor to paſs over the poor Saints, in their Aſſemblies, for want of the gold Ring, which renders them more honourable than any Riches, or any Cloathing could do.

Are ye not partial, and become Judges of evil Thoughts? Are ye not condemned in yourſelves, and convinced in your own Conſciences, that you do Evil? Are ye not become Judges of evil Thoughts? That is, Do you not paſs Judgment from your evil Thoughts, in thinking the Rich worthy of Reſpect in Judgment for his gorgeous Attire, and outward Greatneſs, and the poor fit to be deſpiſed for his outward Meanneſs? Is not this a very evil Thought in you, to think him the beſt Man that wears the beſt Cloaths, and him a vile Perſon that is in vile Apparel? Thus to accept the Perſons of Men, either in ſpiritual or civil Judgment, is a provoking Sin.

To prevent this growing Evil, of undervaluing thoſe that are rich in Grace, becauſe poor in Eſtate, St. *James* declares how God himſelf countenances the contrary Practice; he confers on them a threefold Dignity; they are choſen by him, they are rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven now. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Is it fit that you deſpiſe thoſe who are thus highly dignified and enriched? And to ſtir up their Attention to what he ſpeaks, he uſhers in his Interrogation with, *Hearken, my beloved Brethren, Hath not God choſen the Poor of this World,* &c. He hath, and thereby demonſtrates the Sovereignty and Freeneſs of his Grace, and the Glory of his Wiſdom. The firſt Choice that *Chriſt* made of Perſons, to be his Followers, were poor Men; and ever ſince, generally ſpeaking, they are the Poor that receive the Goſpel.

Q. *How is it a Sin* to deſpiſe the Poor?

A. This is a Sin not only againſt the Word, but againſt the Words of God; it is againſt his Word and expreſs Command, back'd with a very ſevere Threatning, *Enter not into the Vineyard of the Poor*; that is, *Oppreſs them not, for his Avenger is Mighty, and God will plead his Cauſe for him.*

'Tis alſo againſt his Works, and his End in the Creation; for God never made any Creature for Contempt; he then that deſpiſeth the Poor, reproacheth his Maker, and contemns the Wiſdom of God, which is as manifeſt in making Poor, as in making Rich; in making Valleys, as in making Hills.

Farther, the Apoſtle ſhews what little Reaſon they had to vilify the Poor, and idolize the Rich; *Do not rich Men oppreſs you, and draw you before the Judgment-Seat*, like the vileſt Malefactors? Do not they blaſpheme the Name of *Chriſt?* that worthy Name from which you are called *Chriſtians*, and ſpit in the very Face of your holy Religion?

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle entitle the Law of God* a Royal Law, *Verſe* 8?

A. It is royal in its Author, *Jeſus Chriſt*; in its Precepts; the Duty it requires of us is noble and excellent, nothing but what is our Intereſt as Men, our Honour and Happineſs as Chriſtians, and what tends to the ennobling and perfecting our Natures; royal in its Rewards, and tho' our Work can deſerve no Wages, yet our Royal Maſter will not let us work for nothing. How royal is his Reward in making us Kings and Prieſts to God on Earth, and crowned Kings and Princes with God in Heaven.

Q. *What is our Duty to this Royal Law?*

A. It is, to fulfil it; *If ye fulfil the Royal Law according to the Scriptures*; that is, if you come up in your Obedience to that univerſal Love of God and your Neighbour, which the Law requires, ye do well; where by Neighbour underſtand every one to whom we may be helpful; the Command to love him as ourſelves, ſhews the Manner, not the Meaſure, of our Love; the Kind, not the Degree; the Parity and Likeneſs, not the Equality of Proportion; we muſt regard the Good of our Neighbour as really and truly, tho' not ſo earneſtly as our own.

Q. *How does the Law convince us of Sin?*

A. Not only by reproving, but by proving; it ſhews us a Rule, and ſays, there ye have departed from it; here is a Line, and there ye have tranſgreſſed it. The Rule of a Word diſcovers Wickedneſs to the Conſcience of the Sinner, who is loth to be under the Convictions of it.

Q. *How is a Perſon guilty of the whole Law, although he offend but in one Point?*

A. Whoever allows himſelf in any one known Sin, if he does not turn from it, he is certainly in a State of Damnation, becauſe he affronts the Sovereignty, and contemns the Authority of that God that made and enacted the whole Law, and ſtands ready to break any other, whenever Temptation offers. Add to this, that living in the Breach of any one Law, will make a Perſon unmeet for the Enjoyment of God, as much as living in the Breach of all.

St. *James* illuſtrates his Argument thus: He that threatned Adultery with Death, threatned alſo Murder with the ſame; it is the ſame Law-Giver that forbids both, and his Authority is as truly contemned in tranſgreſſing one as both Laws. From whence the Apoſtle infers, that Perſons ſhould ſo ſpeak, and ſo do, ſo order their Speeches and Actions, *as they ſhall be judged by the Law of Liberty.*

Q. *What is the Law of Liberty, mentioned Verſe* 12?

A. The Law of God in the Hand of *Chriſt*, is the Law of Liberty; we are freed from its Covenant, from its condemnatory Curſe, its rigorous Exactions, Bondage and Terrors. The Law to a Believer is the Law of Liberty, and to others a Law of Bondage and Death: And it is agreeable to the Liberty of the Goſpel to believe and remember that all we ſay and do, muſt be judged by the Law of Liberty.

Q. *And how does Mercy* rejoice againſt Judgment?

A. That is, Mercy in ſome Degree of Exaltation; ſuch a Mercy that has Covetouſneſs, Hard-heartedneſs, and Penuriouſneſs, with all its Enemies in Subjection to him; ſuch Mercy qualifies, ſtrengthens, and enables the Perſon in whom it is found, to be confidently ſecure that he ſhall receive no Prejudice by that Judgment, which God ſhall paſs upon the World at the great Day, but ſhall find Favour and Acceptance in the Eyes of the Judge, when all unmerciful, covetous, and hard-hearted Perſons ſhall fall under the Sentence, and for ever periſh; *he ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that ſheweth no Mercy.*

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of thoſe Words, Verſe* 14, What doth it profit tho' a Man ſay he hath Faith, and have not Works?

A. Let not any Man think his Faith ſufficient to juſtify and ſave him, without the Works of Charity and Mercy. Alas! a mere wordy Profeſſion is a poor unprofitable Thing! What will profeſſing Chriſtianity, and ſaying we believe, avail to Salvation, if we obey not *Chriſt*, and live not according to the Goſpel? Will good Works feed the Hungry, or cloathe the Naked? Is it not like mocking of them? Even ſo a notional Knowledge, and a bare Profeſſion of Faith, if it brings not forth the Fruits of Holineſs and Obedience towards God, of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, of Love and Mercy towards our Neighbour, it is an ineffectual Thing; like a dead Corps, without a quickening and enlivening Soul; it is altogether dead as to our Juſtification and Salvation; it is dead, becauſe it unites us not to *Chriſt*; it is lifeleſs, becauſe there is no Livelineſs in ſuch a Perſon's Performances; for tho' Faith be not always alike lively, yet if ſincere, it is always living, and enables the Chriſtian to live unto *Chriſt*, and to bear much Fruit, *John* xv. 5.

In the 10th Verſe, St. *James* makes a Sort of a Dialogue between a ſincere Believer that has true Faith, and a falſe-hearted Hypocrite that only pretends to it, thus: Thou ſayeſt thou haſt true Faith, tho' thou haſt no Works to evidence its Truth; I ſay, I have true Faith, becauſe I have good Works, which are the genuine Fruits and Effects of it. Come to the Trial, and let it appear who ſaith true, you or I; if thou haſt no Works, prove thy Faith to be true ſome other Way; but that is impoſſible; therefore doſt thou vainly boaſt of that which thou haſt not: But, on the other Side, ſays the ſincere Believer, I can make good what I ſay, proving the Truth of my Faith by the Fruits of it in my Works; this is a real Demonſtration that my Faith is no vain Oſtentation as yours is.

Good Words are the Evidences by which *Chriſt* will judge of our Faith now, and according to which *Chriſt* will judge of us and our Faith at the great Day. Theſe two, Faith and good Works, ought to be as inſeparable as Light and the Sun, as Fire and Heat.

Note, a bare and naked Aſſent to the Truths of the Goſpel, yea, to the fundamental Truths and Articles of Religion, is not Faith that will juſtify and ſave; the Devils have it, yet have no Hopes of Salvation with it, that there is a God and a *Chriſt* that died for others, tho' not for them; ſo that an *Atheiſt*, that does not believe a God, is worſe than a Devil. All the Knowledge of God out of *Chriſt*, is uncomfortable; the Divine Attributes, which in themſelves are dreadful and terrible, being beheld by us in *Chriſt*, yield Comfort and Sweetneſs.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle prove, that a Perſon is juſtified by Works, that is, by a working Faith?*

A. From the Example of *Abraham*; and the Argument runs thus: If *Abraham* of old was juſtified by a working Faith, then we now cannot be juſtified without it; but *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, and the Friend of God, was juſtified by a working Faith; his Faith was full of Life, Efficacy, and Power in bringing forth Obedience unto God, witneſs his ready Compliance with that hard and difficult Command, the offering up his Son *Iſaac*; *Seeſt thou how Faith wrought with his Works?*

Hence then it may be concluded, that a barren and empty Faith is a dead Faith; dead, becauſe it may be found in a Perſon dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins; dead, becauſe it receives not the quickening Influence of the Spirit of God; dead, becauſe it wants Operation, which is the Effect of Life; dead, becauſe unavailing to eternal Salvation, and eternal Life.

Q. *Why is* Abraham *here called* the Friend of God?

A. All the Believers are God's Friends; as Friends they are reconciled to him, enjoy Communion with him, and Communications from him; as Friends, there is a Conformity of Wills and Affections between them, they like and love, they will and chuſe the ſame Things; as Friends, they deſire and long for the complete Fruition and Enjoyment of each other.

The Inference St. *James* draws from this Inſtance of *Abraham*, is, *Ye ſee then how that by Works a Man is juſtified, and not by Faith only.* By *Faith only*, he means Faith that is alone, by itſelf, without Works.

Q. *What other Proof does he bring to eſtabliſh this Point, that Faith and good Works muſt go together?*

A. St. *James* farther declares, that *Rahab* was juſtified by a working Faith, as *Abraham* was before her, which appeared in her entertaining the Spies, and diſmiſſing them with all poſſible Privacy, which was a notable Evidence of her Faith in the God of *Iſrael*, her Faith being accompanied with great Self-denial, and expoſing her to a mighty Hazard.

In the laſt Verſe, the Apoſtle ſums up the whole Matter, by comparing a dead Faith to a dead Corps; as that is imperfect, wanting its beſt and nobleſt Part, ſo Faith without Works wants that which dignifies and compleats it.

Again; as a dead Corps is uſeleſs, as well as imperfect; tho' it has Eyes, it ſees not; Feet, it walks not; Mouth, but ſpeaks not; thus it is with a dead Faith unaccompanied with a good Life; no believing, without Obedience, will avail us; for tho' there is no Merit in our Obedience, yet is there ſuch a Neceſſity of it, that we cannot be ſaved without it.

Farther; as a dead Corps is noiſom, ſo is a Profeſſion of Faith without Obedience loathſome to God. *As the Body without the Spirit is dead*; that is, as the Body is known to be dead, if we perceive no vital Actions flowing from the Soul, ſo is Faith dead, if we ſee it not demonſtrated by effectual Operation; and as it is neceſſary to the Being of a living Body that it be united to the Soul, ſo is it neceſſary to the Being of a living Chriſtian's Faith, that it brings forth Works of Obedience.

Chap. III.

Raſh Reproof forbidden. The Difficulty of bridling the Tongue. The different Nature, Properties, and Fruits of earthly and heavenly Wiſdom.

Q. P*RAY explain the firſt Verſe?*

A. The firſt Verſe contains an Admonition, *Be not many Maſters, knowing that we ſhall receive the greater Condemnation.* For the better underſtanding of theſe Words, let us conſider, firſt, what the Apoſtle does not forbid, namely, private and brotherly Admonition, which proceeds from *Chriſtian* Love one towards another, much leſs does he condemn publick and authoriz'd Reproof. God has made it the Duty of all to admoniſh and reprove each other charitably; he has made it the Duty of others, to admoniſh and cenſure Evil-doers authoritatively; this therefore is not forbidden.

But the Thing here forbidden, is, ſuch a reproving of others as is ſupercillious and maſterly, managed with Sharpneſs and Severity, raſhly and rigidly. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Be not magiſterial and cenſorious towards your Brethren, as if any one of you had many Maſters in himſelf. Cenſuring others is an Arrogation of Maſterſhip over others, and aſſuming a Power over them which God never gave us; we may admoniſh, reprove, and warn, but not in a lordly Manner, which is rather reviling than reproving; we muſt conſider what will ſtand with Charity, as well as what will conſiſt with Truth; every Evil muſt not be divulged, but ſome muſt be covered with a Cloak of Love; there is often a deal of Malice in ſpeaking the Truth.

Q. *What Remedy does he preſcribe againſt the cenſuring others?*

A. It is, the conſidering that we ourſelves ſhall thereby *receive greater Condemnation*; ſharp Reprovers, in judging others, pronounce a Doom upon themſelves; ſuch as reprove out of Office, or out of Charity, ought to look to themſelves, leſt, in reproving others, they condemn themſelves.

In many Things we offend all. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, We had need be very candid in cenſuring others, for we all offend in many Things; eſpecially with our Tongues, which is an Engine of more Miſchief, both to ourſelves and others, than any other Member of the Body; and accordingly he is call'd here not a Gracious Man, but a Perfect Man, one that has attained to the fulleſt Meaſures and higheſt Degrees of Grace, that can bridle his Tongue; he that can do this, can bridle his whole Body; that is, can govern all the Actions of his Life; he is a very extraordinary *Chriſtian.*

Q. *Why does he compare the bridling our Tongues to the bridling of Horſes?*

A. As are hot and hard-mouth'd Horſes, ſo is the Tongue of Man is apt to run out, unleſs well bridled; nor is any Thing ſtrong enough to hold it, but the Bridle of Grace; nay, nor that at all Times. The Grace of God is both Spur and Bridle to the Tongue of Man. Grace, like a Spur, provokes us to ſpeak to God, for the Good of others; and Grace, like a Bridle, ſtops us from ſpeaking what may grieve the Spirit of God, and juſtly offend others.

Q. *Why is the Tonge compared to Fire?*

A. In regard of the Danger that attends it. Will a Spark of Fire ſet an Houſe, a Town, a City in a Flame, and lay it in Aſhes? Thus will a fiery Tongue inflame a Family, a Society, a Church, a Kingdom, yea, the whole World, by Strife and Contention, putting all into Combuſtion; ſuch a Tongue, being ſet at Work by the Devil, and kindled by the Fire that came from Hell. Let us therefore abhor Contentions, Revilings, and Reproaches, as we would Hell itſelf.

Q. *Why does he call the Tongue an unruly Evil, full of deadly Poiſon, Verſe* 8?

A. This plainly imports, that a wicked Tongue is venomous and hurtful; a ſlanderous Tongue is a deadly Poiſon, nothing can be ſecure againſt it but Innocence and a good Conſcience; if we fall by it, let this be our Comfort, that there will be a Reſurrection of our Names as well as of our Perſons; let us always then keep in the Way of our Duty, and commit our good Name to God's care and keeping.

Q. *What other Properties has the Tongue?*

A. From the 8th to the 12th Verſe we have ſome uſeful Obſervations concerning the proper Uſe of the Tongue; namely, to bleſs and praiſe God; Speech being the moſt excellent Faculty, is to be conſecrated to divine Uſes; it is both a good Man's Work, and his Recreation, to bleſs and praiſe God.

Here is likewiſe declared, the ſinful Uſe ſome Men make of their Tongue; namely, to curſe, to curſe Men that have the natural Image of God upon them, yea, holy and good Men, that have the divine Image inſtamped upon them, *their Mouth is full of Curſing and Bitterneſs.*

Note alſo, that the ſame Tongue cannot, ſhould not bleſs God, and curſe Men; to pray and brawl with the ſame Tongue is ſhameful Hypocriſy, to go from worſhipping to railing and reviling, to ſpeak to the God of Heaven with a Tongue ſet on Fire by Hell, is a monſtrous Impiety.

Farther; the Apoſtle diſcovers the prodigious Abſurdity of bleſſing and curſing with one and the ſame Tongue, and of putting the beſt Member to the worſt Uſe; the Good aggravates the Evil, and the Evil diſparages and diſproves the Good; to ſuppoſe that the ſame Tongue ſhould acceptably bleſs God, and at the ſame Time ſinfully curſe Man, is as irrational and abſurd, as to imagine that the ſame Fountain ſhould ſend forth ſalt Water and freſh, ſweet and bitter; and, as if a Fig-Tree ſhould bring forth Olives, or a Vine bear Figs. St. *James* argues from what is impoſſible in Nature, to what is abſurd in Practice; a contrary Effect from the ſame Cauſe is againſt the Order of Nature; in like Manner, Grace is uniform, and always acts like itſelf; to bleſs and curſe, to pray and revile, is wholly inconſiſtent with Grace. Though a *Chriſtian* has a double Principle in him, the Fleſh and the Spirit, yet has he not a double Heart; his Spirit is ſingle and ſincere in what he does, both to God and Man.

The Apoſtle goes on, if any among you deſire to approve yourſelves more knowing than others, wiſer and better than others, as you would be thought when you cenſure and deſpiſe others; ſhew it to the World by a better Converſation, by your abounding Fruitfulneſs in good Works, and by ſuch a Meekneſs of Spirit, as will be an Evidence of true Wiſdom.

Q. *Whom does the Apoſtle mean by a* Wiſe Man, *Verſe* 13?

A. The Wiſe Man is Meek and Patient; as Pride and Folly, ſo Wiſdom and Meekneſs, are Companions; the more Wiſdom a Man has, the more he can check himſelf, and curb his Paſſion. *Moſes* is renown'd in Scripture for his Wiſdom and Meekneſs; we all affect the Reputation of Wiſdom, let us diſcover it by Humility, in being lowly within ourſelves; and by our Meekneſs in bearing with, and forbearing one another; yet it muſt be a wiſe Meekneſs, it muſt be oppoſite to Fierceneſs, but not to Zeal; *Moſes* was very meek in his own Cauſe, but hot as Fire in the Cauſe of God; Meekneſs and Zeal are conſiſtent; let us then *ſhew out of a good Converſation our Works with Meekneſs of Wiſdom.*

Q. *Why are* Envy *and* Strife *join'd together, Ver.* 14?

A. When Envy is found in the Heart, Strife will be ſoon found in the Tongue, for Envy is the Mother of Strife; natural Corruption moſt of all betrays itſelf by Envy; it has an early Spring, and late Autumn; we have it as ſoon as we come into the World, and 'tis a hard Matter to leave it before we go out of it again.

The bitter Effects and Fruits of Envy and Strife, are, *Confuſion and evil Work*; an envious Spirit is an unquiet and wicked Spirit; the Devil Works by no Inſtruments more than envious diſcontented, and malicious Perſons. Pride and Envy were the two firſt Sins that crept into the World; the firſt Man was ruin'd by Pride; the ſecond by Envy, the World could not hold two Brothers when the one was envy'd by the other; well therefore may the Apoſtle ſay, where *Envying and Strife is, there is Confuſion and every evil Work: This Wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.*

Q. *What is the Difference between earthly and heavenly Wiſdom?*

A. That Wiſdom which is not from above is earthly; it is ſuited to earthly Minds, and is employ'd about earthly Things. Earthly Wiſdom is mere Folly; it is ſaid to be wiſe only for this World, to have ſuch an unſavoury Spirit as will reliſh nothing but what is earthly.

It is *ſenſual*, as is tendeth only to gratify the Senſes, and is converſant about earthly Pleaſure, ſuch as more properly diſtinguiſh a Beaſt than a Man. Such ſenſual Satisfactions only pleaſe the ſenſitive Appetite, which it is the higheſt rational Pleaſure to mortify and ſubdue.

It is *deviliſh*; becauſe it is ſuch Wiſdom as the Devil is poſſeſſed of; he is only wiſe to do Miſchief. As a Man has a fleſhly part in common with the Beaſts, ſo there are ſome Sins which the Scripture calls fleſhly, and beaſtly Luſts, as Uncleanneſs, Riot, Exceſs, and the like; but as Man has ſomewhat in common with the Angels, namely, his Spirit and Soul, ſo there are ſome Sins which are call'd Satan's Luſts, *John* viii. 44. *His Luſts ye will do.* Thus Envy, Pride, Wrath, Revenge, Malice, Slander, theſe Sins make a Man deviliſh, like unto Satan; hence is St. *Paul*'s Exhortation, 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. *To cleanſe ourſelves from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit.* O deplorable Degradation of Man! He has not only ſomewhat of the Beaſt, but alſo of the Devil in his Nature; and he muſt be reſtored to the divine Likeneſs here, or never enjoy his Maker hereafter.

Q. *How does he deſcribe heavenly Wiſdom?*

A. Firſt, by its Original, 'tis from above. All Wiſdom is known by its Deſcent; carnal Wiſdom is of the Earth earthly; ſpiritual Wiſdom is from above, and has an heavenly Author.

Again; he deſcribes ſpiritual Wiſdom by its Effects and Fruits, its Properties and Qualities, and reckons up eight of them. Spiritual Wiſdom is pure and holy, a ſinleſs Craftineſs; it will not brook the Filthineſs either of Error in Judgment, or Sin in Practice; he that has a due Regard to the Welfare of his Soul, will be as much afraid of erroneous Principles as of debauch'd Practices.

Spiritual Wiſdom is peaceable; it teaches us to avoid all Strife and Contention; there is a ſweet Connection between Wiſdom, and Peace; the wiſeſt are the meekeſt Men; they are peaceable and Peace-makers, not ready to provoke others, nor readily provok'd themſelves. Such as ſee moſt need of Pardon from God, are moſt ready to pardon others, and to live peaceably with all.

Note, Wiſdom is firſt pure, then peaceable. As God is the firſt and beſt of Beings, ſo Purity is the firſt and beſt of Bleſſings; the chief Care then muſt be for Purity and Truth; but next to Purity, we muſt regard Peace; we muſt treat with God by Prayer, and with Man by Condeſcenſion, as far as good Conſcience will permit, for obtaining and preſerving Peace; *the Wiſdom from above is firſt pure, then peaceable.*

True Wiſdom is gentle, in Oppoſition to Strife and Contention; the Word alſo ſignifies moderate and patient, *Phil.* iv. 5. 1 *Tim.* iii. 3. Such a *Chriſtian* is moderate in doubtful Opinions, in his judging of others, moderate and patient in his whole Converſation, receding ſometimes from his own Right for Peace ſake.

Eaſy to be entreated; he that has an inflexible Will, need have an infallible Judgment. There may indeed be an Eaſineſs and Flexibility to a Fault; ſome good Natures (as they are call'd) are eaſily drawn away to Sin by evil Company, and wicked Counſel; in ſuch a Caſe to turn a deaf Ear to all Intreaties, is not Obſtinacy, but religious Reſolution.

Full of Mercy; this has a double Object, ſuch as want, and ſuch as offend; and ſo there is Mercy in giving and forgiving. 'Tis the Glory of a Man to paſs by a Tranſgreſſion, and the Honour of a *Chriſtian* to put on Bowels of Mercy; without this Garment we ſhall appear naked at the Bar of God.

Full of good Works. Religion is a Rod that bloſſoms and brings forth Fruit; Fruits of Humamanity and civil Courteſy, as well as of Piety and pious Charity.

Without Partiality. Wiſdom makes no Difference between Perſons on account of outward Reſpects, which is an high Point of Wiſdom; Folly diſcovers itſelf in nothing more than by doating upon outward Splendor; Fools like Children, count nothing good but what is gay; but Wiſdom teaches us to value and put an Eſtimate upon Perſons and Things according to their intrinſic Worth, and does nothing by Partiality.

Without Hypocriſy. In true Wiſdom there is no prevailing Guile, but a true Simplicity and godly

Sincerity found with it, and this is the higheſt Piece of Wiſdom; the Hypocrite is the greateſt Fool; the ſincere *Chriſtian* is the truly wiſe Man.

CHAP. IV.

Luſt, Covetouſneſs, Wantonneſs, and Envy, breed Strife. Exhortation to ſeveral Duties. He who knowingly ſinneth, is moſt guilty.

Q. WHAT *Ground had the Apoſtle for his Queſtion in the firſt Verſe,* From whence come Wars and Fightings among you?

A. The *Jews*, to whom this Epiſtle is directed, had at that Time Wars and Fightings, not only with their Neighbours, but among themſelves. Now the Apoſtle appeals to their Conſciences to declare the true Cauſe of thoſe Animoſities and Contentions, Wars and Fightings, *come they not hence, even from your Luſts*? Plainly intimating, that the Cauſe of all civil Diſſenſions ariſes from Mens Corruptions. Luſt within is the Make-bate in all Societies and Communities without; Pride and Covetouſneſs, Envy and Ambition, make Men injurious to one another; worldly and ſenſual Luſts firſt war in ourſelves, before they diſturb the publick Peace.

The *Jews*, at this Time, vehemently luſted after Liberty and Freedom from the *Roman* Yoke; and for Dominion and Government over other Nations, believing that their *Meſſiah* was to be a temporal Prince, who ſhould enable them to lord it over the Heathen World! Now, ſays, St. *James*, though you luſt for Liberty and Dominion, yet you have it not; and though in an eager Purſuit after theſe Things ye kill and ſlay, yet ye do but loſe your Blood and Labour, for you cannot obtain what you ſo inordinately ſeek, and irregularly covet; you ſhould go to God in Prayer for what you deſire; but if at any Time you do pray, it is not in a right Manner, with a right Intention, and for a right End; 'tis to conſume it on your Luſts, namely, that having the Liberty you Deſire, you may poſſeſs the good Things of the World you luſt after, and may lord it over the Heathen World.

Hence it appears, that when our Aims and Views are not right, our Prayers will be ſucceſsleſs; what we ask amiſs we are ſure to miſs, if the Almighty has any Kindneſs for us. In Prayer we muſt conſider three Things, the Object, the Manner, and the End; we muſt not only guard our Affections, but ſecure our Intentions; for Prayers that have not a good Aim, will want a happy Iſſue; *Ye ask and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs.*

Q. *What does he mean by* Adultery, *ver.* 4?

A. Not corporal, but ſpiritual; the inordinate Love of this World is called ſpiritual Adultery, becauſe it draws away the Love of the Soul from God, and diſſolves the ſpiritual Marriage between God and the Soul; *Ye Adulterers and Adultereſſes, know ye not that the Friendſhip of the World,* which ſtands in Competition with, and indiſpoſes you for the doing of God's Will, *is Enmity with God?* And that whoſoever will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God? To love the World as God's Competitor, is Enmity to God, and he is God's Enemy that loveth it predominantly; God reckons that we love him not at all, if we love him not above all.

Q. *What do you underſtand by* Spirit, *ver.* 5?

A. Some underſtand the Holy Spirit of God, and make the Words run in the Form of an Interrogation, thus, The Spirit that dwells in *Chriſtians* does *it* luſt to Envy, as yours doth? Nay, rather, is he not the Spirit of Love and Goodneſs? Others underſtand our own Spirit; our corrupt Nature is miſerably carried forth this Way, even to envy the Good of others; it is uſual in Scripture to call the Bent and Propenſity of the Soul, either to Good or Evil, by the Name of the Spirit.

Q. *How does God reſiſt the* Proud, *ver.* 6?

A. It is a military Term, and ſignifies, that he ſets himſelf as in Battle-array againſt the Proud in a direct Oppoſition to him; there are no Sinners whom God ſets himſelf ſo much againſt to puniſh and plague, as proud Sinners.

There are two eminent Works of divine Providence in the World, the one is to exalt the humble, the other to abaſe and pull down the proud. Some pride themſelves in their natural, others in their acquired Parts; ſome in their moral Virtues and evangelical Graces, others in their holy Duties and ſpiritual Performances; we ſeldom do well, but we think too well of ourſelves.

Q. *What kind of* Grace *is that which God gives to the* Humble?

A. 1. Favour; the Humble ſhall have his Favour, and the Proud his Frowns. 2. God giveth Grace; that is, more Grace, greater Meaſure of it to the Humble; as we lay up our richeſt Wines in our loweſt Cellars, ſo does God lodge his choiceſt Graces in humble and lowly Hearts; ſuch as are low in their own Eyes, are under the ſpecial Protection and Direction of the moſt high God.

Q. *How are we* to ſubmit ourſelves to God, *as the Apoſtle commands us, ver.* 6?

A. That is, ſubmit to his Government, and Authority, to his preceptive and commanding, his providential and diſpoſing Will, to the Guidance of his Word, to the Direction of his Spirit, to the Conduct of his Providence; ſubmit yourſelves to the whole Law and Will of God, let all your Thoughts, Affections, Words and Actions be guided by the ſtrict Rules of the Word of God; but *reſiſt the Devil*; by no means yield an Inch to him; the only Way to overcome Satan, is by reſiſting and oppoſing him; *reſiſt him, and he will flee from you*; if we do not reſiſt him, we ſhall be taken Captive by him; if once we parley and treat with him, he will certainly triumph and trample upon us.

Q. *Why will* reſiſting the Devil *make him* fly from us?

A. Every Denial is a Diſcouragement to Satan; the Strength of his Temptations lies in our Treachery and Falſeneſs to ourſelves; otherwiſe all his Power and Malice would not hurt us; however, if we continue our Reſiſtance, the Holy Spirit will come in with his Aſſiſtance; he will be our ſecond in the Field, and we ſhall find that ſtronger is he that is within us, than he that is in World. *The God of Peace will bruiſe Satan under our Feet ſhortly.*

Q. *What is the Senſe of the firſt Clauſe of the 8th Verſe,* Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you?

A. Man by Nature, ſince his Fall is afar off, not barely by natural Diſtance, as a Creature, but by moral Diſtance as a Sinner; God made Man near him, but when Man ſinned he departed from him; now we draw nigh to God by Converſion, and in all the actings of Repentance there is a ſecond Converſion; a firſt Converſion from a ſinful State, a ſecond from ſinful Acts; by both we draw nigh to God. But the drawing nigh to God, here principally intended, is by approaching to him in Prayer, and in the Uſe of every holy Ordinance, and humbling the Soul before God is drawing nigh to him; hence it is that good Men delight ſo much in Prayer, and other holy Duties, they meet with God in them, and conſequently meet all the Delights their Souls can deſire.

And he will draw nigh to you. God will certainly draw nigh to that *Chriſtian* in a Way of Mercy, who prepares his Heart to approach and draw near to him in a Way of Duty; the Lord is nigh to all them that call upon him, nigh to comfort, quicken, guide, and ſupport them.

Q. *In the ſame Verſe the Apoſtle ſays,* Cleanſe your Hands ye Sinners, and purify your Hearts ye double minded: *But why is* cleanſing the Hand, *ſet before* purifying the Heart?

A. It is not unuſual in Scripture to put that firſt which is firſt viſible, as calling before Election, 2 *Pet.* i. 19. and becauſe Grace (having once enter'd the Heart) diſcovers itſelf by an immediate cleanſing of the Hands; ſo that if we would have an holy Life, we muſt get a clean Heart.

Hence learn, that no unclean Perſons can have Communion with God. Commerce with God in an Ordinance is one Thing, and Communion with him in another, a Man may have a Commerce of Trade with an Enemy for the Sake of Profit, whilſt he refuſes to hold Communion with him in a Way of Friendſhip, and Intimacy of Acquaintance.

Note alſo, that double-minded Men have corrupt Hearts. Double-mindedneſs is a dividing of the Heart between God and ſomething elſe; whereas God calls for the whole Heart, the whole Mind, the whole Soul, the whole Strength; a Heart divided between God and the World, between Conſcience and Luſt, between Religion and Self-intereſt, will hinder all Intercourſe and ſweet Communion betwixt God and us in the Duty of Prayer.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle make Uſe of ſo many Words to one Purpoſe,* Be afflicted, mourn, weep, humble yourſelves, &c. *ver.* 9?

A. All theſe Expreſſions imply, 1. The Neceſſity of the Duty. 2. The Difficulty of it. 3. The Continuance of the Duty, for which Enforcement is neceſſary. Fleſh and Blood loves Pleaſure, but declines Sorrow and Heavineſs; Nature loves no bitter Draughts, though bitter Things are ſometimes the beſt Things; therefore the Apoſtle's Call, to afflict our Souls, and humble ourſelves in the Sight of God, is repeated.

The Encouragement to do thus, is, *Humble yourſelves in the Sight of God, and he ſhall lift you up*; Submiſſion and Humility is the true way to Exaltation and Glory; the way to riſe is to fall; *he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.* Wait God's Leiſure, and the Promiſe ſhall ſurely be fulfilled; the World looks on Humility as the Way to Contempt, but God pronounces it the Way to Honour; *before Honour is Humility.*

Q. *Why does he in the* 11*th Verſe, ſo particularly diſſuade them from ſpeaking Evil of their Brethren?*

A. There ſeems here ſomething ſpecial and particular, reſpecting the *Jews,* to whom the Epiſtle is directed; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Give over your Reproaches and Cenſoriouſneſs againſt the *Gentile Chriſtians,* who do not obſerve your Ceremonial Law, your Feaſts, your Sabbaths, your Circumciſion; for both the Law of *Chriſt,* and the Law of *Moſes,* which you profeſs to own, bind you to love your Neighbour as yourſelf, and forbids ſuch uncharitable Cenſures; ſo that by condemning your Brethren, you condemn the Law, and ſet yourſelves above it, and all this in Contempt of the Law and Law-giver, *who is one, and is able both to ſave and to deſtroy.*

There are ſome that are able to deſtroy, but not to ſave. Satan is a deſtroyer, but cannot ſave any, nor can he deſtroy all; if he could, none ſhould be ſaved. But there is a Law-giver who can ſave and deſtroy, who can give Life and take it away, and both as often as he will. He can ſave thoſe that obey his Laws, and deſtroy thoſe that tranſgreſs them. Therefore, ſince *Chriſt,* and none but *Chriſt,* has Authority to give Laws, it is not for you to impoſe Ceremonial Obſervances on your Brethren, and to cenſure and judge them for not obſerving them, when *Chriſt* has diſpens'd with their Obſervation of them.

Q. *In the* 13*th,* 14*th and* 15*th Verſes are ſeveral Directions and Admonitions concerning human Reſolutions; which pray explain?*

A. Conſider, what is the Duty here directed to, namely, 1. That we have no Aſſurance of our Lives, nor of any of the Comforts of Life for one Day, and therefore that we ought to refer all our Actions, our Enterprizes and Undertakings to the Will of God. *What is your Life? It is but a Vapour; therefore ye ought to ſay, If the Lord will, we ſhall do this or that.*

2. That in regard of the great Frailty of our Lives, and the great Uncertainty of Iſſues and Events, it is the Height of Preſumption to promiſe ourſelves great Things without the Leave of God's Providence; as our Times are in God's Hands, ſo are our Actions in God's Power, both as to the Performance of them, and as to the Succeſs of them; *Say not then, To-day, To-morrow, we will go into ſuch a City, for that ye ought to ſay, If the Lord will, we ſhall do this or that.*

CHAP. V.

Dreadful Judgments are denounced againſt thoſe rich Men who are unjuſt, voluptuous, and oppreſſive. The Oppreſſed are admoniſhed to Patience from divers Examples. Againſt Swearing. Our Duty in Adverſity, Proſperity and Sickneſs. The Power, and Duty of reducing thoſe who are gone aſtray.

Q. I*N what Light are to be conſider'd the ſevere Cenſures which the Apoſtle paſſes on unjuſt and wicked rich Men in the Beginning of this Chapter?*

A. The firſt three Verſes are to be conſider'd either relatively or abſolutely. Conſider them as relating to the *Jews,* to whom they were immediately written, and they are a Prediction or Denunciation of that Judgment which was coming on the rich Men in the *Jewiſh* Nation; which Prediction *Joſephus* aſſures us was fulfill'd by the Slaughter and ſpoiling of the rich *Jews* throughout *Galilee* and *Judea*, the Zealots ſparing none but the Poor and Low. Thus did, and ſtill does the Vengeance of God purſue that wicked People who kill'd the Lord of Life, and their own Prophets, who brought Judgment upon themſelves to the utmoſt.

Conſider the Words abſolutely in themſelves, and they are a ſevere cutting Reprehenſion to covetous rich Men, for their ſordid ſparing of that Wealth which God had given them for publick Service; and the Apoſtle gives us a Deſcription of their Sin, and a Declaration of their Puniſhment.

The Sin of covetous Worldlings is thus deſcrib'd; they choſe rather to have their Goods corrupted and ſpoil'd, than to be employ'd in good Uſes; their Victuals might have refreſh'd the Hungry, but they rather ſuffer'd 'em to periſh and ſtink; the Garments which lay uſeleſs in their Wardrobes might have cloath'd the Backs of their naked Brethren, but they rather let 'em be Moth-eaten; their Gold and Silver might have been apply'd to many good Uſes, but they had rather it ſhould be canker'd and ruſt in their Cheſts.

The Judgment denounc'd againſt them for their Sin, is, the reſt of their Gold and Silver *ſhall witneſs againſt them*; that is, their Conſciences ſhall at once convince them of their baſe Covetouſneſs, and torment them for it; and this corroding of their Conſciences ſhall make an Impreſſion on their Bodies, it ſhall eat their Fleſh as it were Fire; and all that Treaſure which they had unjuſtly heap'd together, was but heap'd for the Spoiler, and the violence of the laſt Days. Sore and dreadful will the Judgments be that ſhall befal wicked rich Men, which, if believingly apprehended, would cauſe them to weep and howl.

We do not hurt with our Wealth, ſay ſome; but then what Good do you do with it? Where are the poor Members of *Chriſt*, whom you have reliev'd with the Superfluities of your Table?

But are there many who can truly ſay, they have done no Harm with their Eſtates? What Careleſneſs in Religion, what Contempt of God, what Riot and Exceſs, may be obſerv'd amongſt many that abound in Wealth, who expend more upon a Luſt in one Day than would maintain a Family many Years?

In the Day of Judgment not only our Actions, but all the Circumſtances of our Actions, ſhall be brought forth, and produced as Arguments of Conviction; the ruſty Iron, the canker'd Silver, the Moth-eaten Cloaths, ſhall be produc'd; the Stones of the Wall, built by Oppreſſion, ſhall cry, Lord, we were built by Violence and Oppreſſion, and the Beam out of the Timber ſhall anſwer it, *true, Lord, even ſo it is*, Habbak. ii. xi.

Q. *What other Sin does he charge upon rich Men?*

A. Oppreſſion, and that of the worſt Sort, even of Labourers and Servants; their covetouſneſs was the Cauſe of all this Oppreſſion: No Sin is ſo heinous and baſe, but Covetouſneſs may be the Mother and Nurſe of it: What more ſordid than for the rich Man to detain the Wages of the poor Labourer? Yet *behold the Hire of the Labourers crieth.* Tho' they did not, durſt not complain, yet their Hire kept back complain'd. Remember we then that ſecret Wrongs are known to God; the Poor may not always know who wrongs them, but the Lord knows perfectly, and their Wrongs and Oppreſſions will cry againſt us, when the Poor know not againſt whom to cry.

The Avenger is here call'd *the Lord of* Sabaoth, or the Lord of Hoſts, who has all Power in his Hand, and all Creatures at his Command.

Q. *What are the next Sins he accuſes them with?*

A. Senſuality, Luxury, Laſciviouſneſs, exceſſive Eating and Drinking in their Feaſts, thus pampering themſelves for Slaughter and the Shambles. Theſe are Sins very natural to corrupt Nature, but chiefly incident to the Rich. God allows us to uſe Pleaſure, but not to live in Pleaſure; and by calling it Pleaſure upon Earth, he intimates, 1. That ſenſual Delights are only enjoy'd here in this World. 2. That their Deſires run after theſe earthly Pleaſures only. The Pleaſures of the Beaſt only pleaſed them; whereas the Delights of Senſe are ſo far from being the chief Pleaſure for which God deſign'd us, that on the contrary, he intended we ſhould take our chief Pleaſure, not in gratifying, but reſtraining our ſenſual Appetite, and reducing that rebellious Power under the Government of Reaſon and Religion.

Q. *What is meant by the* Juſt, *ver.* 6?

A. Underſtand *Jeſus Chriſt*, that juſt one, whom the Nation of the *Jews* condemn'd and kill'd; and alſo ſuch of his Members, Orthodox *Chriſtians* whom the *Judaizing Chriſtians* perſecuted.

By their *condemning the Juſt*, underſtand how they proceeded againſt them under a Pretence and Colour of Law; before they actually kill they pretend legally to condemn; it is highly provoking to God, when publick Authority, which ſhould be the Defence and Protection of Innocence, is made the Means of Oppreſſion.

Ye have killed the Juſt; this is added to acquaint us, that Wickedneſs knows no Bounds; good Men are often arraign'd, condemn'd, and kill'd, they fall a Sacrifice to the Rage of their Perſecutors.

It is added, *He doth not reſiſt you*; which, if apply'd to *Chriſt*, points at his Meekneſs; he is ſlain without Reſiſtance; he came to ſuffer, therefore would not reſiſt. If applied to ſuffering *Chriſtians*, it points at their Weakneſs and Inability to make Reſiſtance, as well as at their Meekneſs and Patience under Sufferings.

Q. *In the 6th Verſe, he exhorts them to Patience from the Conſideration, that* the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh: *How do you underſtand theſe Words?*

A. This may be underſtood of *Chriſt*'s particular Coming to judge his Murtherers at *Jeruſalem*, which was then at Hand; or of his general Coming to judge the World at the laſt Day. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, Have a little Patience, and when your Lord cometh, he will put a Period to all your Afflictions; with Deſire, long for his Coming, and yet with Patience wait for it.

The Apoſtle propounds for a Pattern of Patience the Husbandman; he patiently waits for the Time of Harveſt, and alſo for the early and latter Rain to prepare the Corn for that Day. From which Example the *Chriſtian* thus argues with himſelf; if the Husbandman patiently waits for the Coming of Harveſt, ſhall not I ſubmiſſively wait for the Coming of our Lord? The Approach of Harveſt is delightful to him, and ſhall not the Appearance of *Chriſt* be ſo to me? Shall he endure ſo much for a little Corn, and I not much more for an heavenly Kingdom?

To which Purpoſe the Apoſtle gives this Direction, *Eſtabliſh your Hearts*; that is, in a firm Expectation of *Chriſt*'s Coming; believe that he certainly will come, and may ſuddenly, and ſooner, perhaps than you apprehend.

Q. *In the 11th Verſe the Apoſtle pronounces* thoſe happy who endure; *and propounds the Example of* Job: *What do you obſerve hereupon?*

A. All Men pronounce thoſe who have ſuffer'd Death for Righteouſneſs Sake, to be in a very happy Condition; tho' they live perſecuted, yet they die ſainted. Living Saints, by the Strictneſs of their Lives, and the Severity of their Reproofs, vex a wicked World; but dead Saints cannot oppoſe their ſinful Luſts, therefore they will have a good Word for the dead Saints, though they hate and perſecute the living.

Ye have heard how eminent *Job* was, both for his Sufferings and Patience, and you have ſeen, in his Story, what an End the Lord made with him, giving him Double in this World for what he loſt; therefore, though you may be Loſers for God, yet fear not that you ſhall be Loſers by him. We cannot ſuffer a greater Variety of Evils than *Job* did; let us under the Rod wait upon God with *Job*'s Patience, and he will give us *Job*'s End.

The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender Mercy; he is full of Bowels, as the Word ſignifies, truly compaſſionate. As he has Pardon for their Sins, ſo he has Pity for their Afflictions.

Laſtly obſerve, the Book of *Job* is a real Hiſtory, not a Parable. There was ſuch a Man as *Job*, how elſe could his Patience be propounded as a Pattern? And whence is it that he is number'd with *Noah* and *Daniel*? *Ezek.* xiv. 14. As they were real Perſons, and prevalent in Prayer, ſo was *Job*. Chap. xlii. 10.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Prohibition, ver.* 12 Swear not?

A. By theſe Words an Oath is not abſolutely forbidden, but reſtrained; *Above all Things, my Brethren, ſwear not.* That is, ſwear not vainly and raſhly, lightly and prophanely, not unduly by any of the Creatures, which was a Sin the *Jews* were dreadfully guilty of.

But let your Yea, be Yea, and your Nay, Nay; accuſtom yourſelves to a true Simplicity and Plainneſs of Speech, in affirming or denying, letting Oaths alone, *leſt ye fall into Condemnation*; that is, plainly, into the Condemnation of Hell.

Raſh and vain Swearing, or prophane Oaths, are an high Abuſe of the dreadful Name of God, and a mighty Provocation to him; undoubtedly there is no Sin that ſo wearies the divine Patience, becauſe there is no Sin ſo effectually baniſhes the Fear of God from our Hearts, as this of common Swearing.

The great End of Speech is to communicate the Senſe of our Minds, and therefore we ſhould uſe ſuch Plainneſs and Simplicity in Speaking, that we may believe one another without Oaths, or more ſolemn Aſſeverations: Yet, to take an Oath on a ſolemn Occaſion, when thereunto lawfully required, is a *Chriſtian* and neceſſary Duty.

Q. If any Man is Sick, *ſays the Apoſtle, Verſe* 14. let him call for the Elders of the Church: *But why ſo?*

A. St. *James* does not ſay, Is any Man ſick? let him pray; but, let him ſend for others to pray for him; plainly ſuppoſing, that the ſick Man is very unfit to pray himſelf, or for himſelf; in other Afflictions let him pray, but in Sickneſs let others pray for him, he having enough to do to grapple with his Grief, and to conflict with his Afflictions.

Q. *But if the Sick neglect to ſend, may the Miniſter neglect to go, if he knows of the Sickneſs?*

A. Doubtleſs he ought to go, if he knows it, whether he is ſent for or not; for by refuſing to go, he may loſe the laſt, and perhaps the beſt Opportunity of doing them Good; ſo imitating our Lord, who is found of them that ſought him not.

Q. *But why were they to* anoint the ſick Perſon with Oil?

A. Some make this anointing with Oil to be a medicinal Practice among the *Jews*, and that they adminiſter'd it phyſically. But why then muſt the Elders adminiſter it? The Phyſician might have done it as well as they. True, but the Elders are ſent for, that they applying the corporal Remedy, might join with it the ſpiritual Phyſick of Prayer, good Admonition and Comfort.

Others make this anointing with Oil a religious Act. *Chriſt* empower'd his Diſciples to work Miracles, and amongſt others they had the Gift of Healing the Sick, whom they anointed in the Name of the Lord; but the Goſpel being ſufficiently confirmed, this Gift of Healing is ceaſed, and therewith the Rite of Anointing; the Church of *Rome* therefore has kept up an idle Ceremony in their anointing the Sick, unleſs they had a miraculous Power to heal the Sick; to keep up the Rite, unleſs they could produce the Effect, is a mere piece of Pageantry; beſides, they anoint thoſe that are given over for Dead, and the Apoſtle's anointing was for the Benefit of the Living, as appears by the next Verſe.

And the Prayer of Faith ſhall ſave the Sick; where note, that the Apoſtle aſcribes the ſick Perſon's Recovery not to the Oil, but to the Prayer; there was required to the Miracle Faith, both in the Elder and the ſick Perſon; yet obſerve, it is ſaid, *the Lord ſhall raiſe him up*; 'tis not Faith properly, but God call'd upon in Faith, that ſaves the Sick; the Efficacy of Faith is not from its own Merit, but from God's Power and Grace.

Q. And if he have committed Sins: *Is that to be doubted?*

A. No, but if he has, they ſhall be forgiven him upon this Prayer of Faith; if any ſpecial or particular Sin has brought this Diſeaſe upon him, it ſhall be remitted, and the Diſeaſe removed; where the Sickneſs is by way of Chaſtiſement, the the Healing is an Evidence of God's Forgiveneſs.

How abſurd then is the *Popiſh* Sacrament of Extreme Unction; how can they gather a perpetual Ordinance from an Action that was extraordinary and miraculous; or how can they promiſe Forgiveneſs of Sins, to whom they cannot promiſe that Recovery which was a Token of it?

Q. *When, in what Manner, and on what Occaſions are we to* confeſs our Faults one to another, *as the Apoſtle bids us, Verſe* 16?

A. There is a Time and Seaſon when it is our Duty to confeſs our Sins, not only to God, but to one another, to a pious and prudent Miniſter, to an injur'd and wrong'd Neighbour, to thoſe that have been tempted by us, and have conſented with us in ſinning.

Here note, how abſurd the *Papiſts* ground their Practice of Auricular Confeſſion upon this Text; here is not one Word ſpoken of a Prieſt, nor of our confeſſing to him; and if ſo, the Text proves the Prieſt's Duty of confeſſing to the People, as much as the People's to confeſs to the Prieſt, for the Duty required is mutual, *Confeſs one to another*; accordingly, the Words are generally underſtood of confeſſing private Injuries one to another; that the ſick Perſon is to reconcile himſelf to his Neighbour, as well as to God, that he may recover; for it follows; *Pray for one another that ye may be healed*; intimating, that it is the Duty of *Chriſtians* to confeſs their Failings, and private Injuries one to another, and, by their Prayers, to ſuccour, help, and relieve each other.

Q. *Explain thoſe Words in the ſame Verſe,* The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man, availeth much?

A. The Words may be rendered, an inſpired Prayer; the Phraſe properly ſignifies, a Prayer inwardly wrought and excited, and implies the efficacious Influence of the Holy Spirit, and the Force and Vehemence of a *Chriſtian*'s Spirit and Affection exerted in the Duty; ſuch Prayer has always great Prevalence with God.

Of a righteous Man; of a Perſon juſtified by Faith, and whoſe Faith is fruitful in good Works; the Prayer of ſuch a Perſon *availeth much*.

St. *James*, to prove the Truth of his Aſſertion, concerning the Prevalence of a righteous Man's Prayer, inſtances in *Elias*, who ſeem'd to carry the Keys of Heaven at his Girdle, to ſhut and open the Heavens at his Pleaſure, 1 *Kings* xvii. 1. *As the Lord liveth, there ſhall be no Dew nor Rain, but according to my Word*; what that Word was we are here told, namely, a Word of Prayer, not of Command; *Elias prayed, and the Heavens gave* Rain; *he prayed in Prayer*, ſo is the Original; that is, with Faith and Fervency, according to the Will of God revealed to him; and though he was a Man ſubject to the common Infirmities of human Nature, with ourſelves, yet theſe did not hinder the Prevalence of his Prayers. Nothing has wrought ſuch wonderful Effects in the World, as Prayer; it made the Sun ſtand ſtill in Heaven; it brought Fire out of Heaven, 1 *Kings* i. 10. and here it ſhut up the Windows of Heaven, that it rained not for the Space of three Years and ſix Months; it has a Kind of Omnipotency in it.

Q. *It is ſaid indeed, Verſe* 17. *that* it rained not for the Space of three Years and ſix Months: *But how does this agree with* 1 Kings xviii. 1. *where it is ſaid, that* the Word of the Lord came to *Elijah* in the third Year?

A. Moſt probably it was in the Midſt of the third Year from his coming to *Sarepta*; and he was by the Brook *Cherith* a Year, 1 *Kings* xvii. 7. where the Margin reads it, according to the *Hebrew, at the End of Days*; that is, the Days of a Year, as the Phraſe is often uſed, *Gen.* iv. 3. *Judg.* xvii. 10. So that his Time ſpent in both Places, may well make up the Term three Years and ſix Months.

Q. *How does St.* James *conclude this Epiſtle?*

A. With an Exhortation to the Duty of fraternal Correction and *Chriſtian* Admonition; If, ſays he, any one among you, who hath made an outward Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*, ſhall, for Fear of Perſecution, or otherwiſe, turn aſide from the Rule of the Goſpel, ſuch a Perſon, either Miniſter, or private *Chriſtian*, as ſhall be inſtrumental by Prayer, Reproof, or Counſel, to recover him out of that wandering and backſliding Condition, ſhall have the Honour to *ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a Multitude of Sins*; that is, he ſhall be a Means of bringing him to a Sight of his Sins, and to ſeek Pardon for them, which is the only true and happy Way of hiding and covering them.

Learn hence, that it is not ſufficient that every one takes Care of his own Soul, but he muſt alſo watch over the Souls of others; there is no Brother ſo mean in the Chriſtian Church, but the Care of his Salvation belongeth to all the Chriſtian Communion.

Hence we may alſo learn, what great Honour God puts upon the Creature, in calling him a Saviour to a reſtored and converted Brother; he *ſhall ſave a Soul from Death*; but when God puts the Glory of his own Work upon the Head of the Creature, what Cauſe has he to lay the Crown of his Excellency at the Foot of God? When the Honour of the ſupreme Cauſe is put upon the Inſtrument, the Inſtrument ought to aſcribe all the Efficacy and Efficiency to the firſt Cauſe, and ſay, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name be the Praiſe, Amen.*

The

The Firſt Epiſtle General of

S^T. PETER.

THE Writer of this and the following Epiſtle, was St. Peter *who ſtiles himſelf* an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt; *not the univerſal Head of the Church. No-where do we find this holy and humble Apoſtle aſſuming it, tho' the Church of* Rome *often gives him an uncontroulable Monarchy, and ſovereign Dominion over the whole Church of* Chriſt, *and over the Apoſtles, and their Succeſſors; and accordingly to interpret thoſe Words of our* Saviour *to St.* Peter, John xxi. Feed my Sheep, *in ſuch an extravagant Senſe as they have done, could never, with any Confidence, be offer'd to the Reaſon of Mankind, had not theſe Men ſubdued their Reaſon to their own Intereſt, and ſubjected both to an implicit Faith and and blind Obedience.*

St. Peter *being the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, writes this* Epiſtle *to the believing* Jews, *and proſelyte* Gentiles, *who were of the Diſperſion ſcattered Abroad in divers Countries, of whom he had an eſpecial Charge, and of whoſe Converſion, he had been a principal Inſtrument.*

THE Deſign of this Epiſtle *was to confirm them in the* Chriſtian *Religion, to encourage them to Conſtancy under the ſharpeſt Perſecutions and fiery Trials for the ſame, and to excite them to the Practice of particular Duties, incumbent upon them in every Capacity and Relation in which they ſtood, beautifying and adorning their holy Profeſſion by an holy and becoming Converſation.*

CHAP. I.

The Salutation, and Thankſgiving for their Regeneration unto Eternal Life; in Hopes whereof they rejoiced even in Tribulations, and loved him whom they ſaw not. Of his Grace by Chriſt *the Prophets foretold, and the Angels deſire to pry into.* Chriſt *choſen Mediator from Eternity, and now revealed for our Sakes. Our Converſation ſhould be after a godly ſort, becauſe we are born anew by the Word of God.*

Q. WHENCE *did* Peter *derive his Name?*

A. Peter, the Penman of this Epiſtle, had this Name given him by our Saviour, and ſignifies a Stone, a Rock, probably for his Confeſſion and Acknowledgment of *Chriſt*, the Rock upon whom the *Chriſtian* Church was built; his Call to the Office, firſt of a Diſciple, and then of an Apoſtle, was from *Chriſt* himſelf: Peter *an Apoſtle of* Jeſus Chriſt.

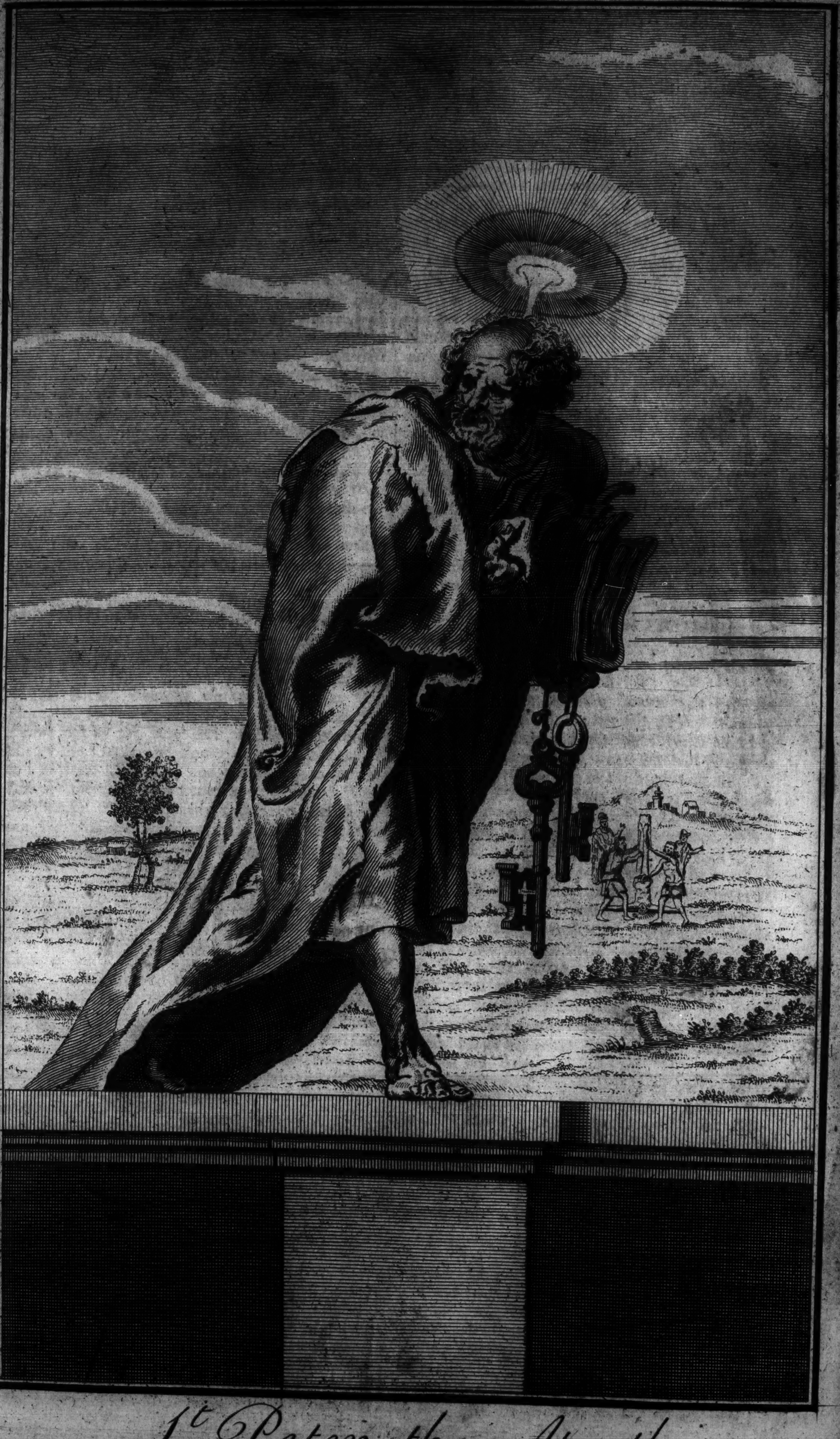
Q. *To whom does he direct his Epiſtle?*

A. *To the Strangers ſcattered Abroad in* Pontus, Galatia, *&c.* that is, to ſuch of the converted *Jews* and proſolyted *Gentiles* as were diſperſed into ſeveral Countries, exil'd and baniſh'd from Houſe and Home for the Sake of *Chriſt* and the holy Religion, which they had faithfully profeſs'd.

Q. *In the 2d Verſe he calls them* Elect through Sanctification of the Spirit, unto Obedience, and Sprinkling of the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt*: *How do you underſtand this?*

A. Sanctification and Juſtification always accompany one another; here Sanctification is joined with the Sprinkling of the Blood of *Chriſt*; the Blood of *Chriſt*, that was ſhed as Mediator, muſt be ſprinkled, and by Faith applied; and we can never diſcern our Intereſt in the Blood of *Chriſt*, till we are ſanctified by the Spirit of *Chriſt*, and our Hearts and Lives wrought unto Obedience.

Q. *What do you obſerve on his Benediction,* Grace and Peace be multiplied?



S^t. Peter the Apostle.

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A. Grace and Peace are the choiceſt, ſweeteſt, and beſt of Bleſſings; theſe the Apoſtle prays that they may be multiplied upon them. There is nothing the Miniſters of *Chriſt* ſo paſſionately deſire, and more earneſtly endeavour, than to ſee their People brought into, and preſerved in a State of Favour and Peace with God, with an Increaſe of all ſpiritual and temporal Bleſſings upon them.

Q. *What Inſtructions does the 3d and 4th Verſes afford us?*

A. The Apoſtle breaks forth into Gratulation and Thankfulneſs to God, for thoſe ſpecial Bleſſings, which by his Miniſtry, were conferred on theſe converted *Chriſtians. Bleſſed be God the Father of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt. Bleſſing and Praiſe are due to God for the leaſt Mercies received from him, becauſe we are leſs than the leaſt; much more for ſpiritual and eternal Bleſſings which are the greateſt Mercies that either God can give, or we receive.

The ſpecial Mercy which he thus ſolemnly bleſſes God for, their Regeneration; for *begetting them to a lively Hope*, &c. By Means of Sin all Influences of Grace were ſuſpended, and all Hopes of Salvation cut off. *Chriſt*'s Interpoſure for us makes our Condition hopeful, and the fallen Angels hopeleſs.

The Qualification of this Hope is, it is a *holy Hope*, in Oppoſition to a dead, languid and languiſhing Hope; it is effectual, proceeding from Faith, and promoting Holineſs; it makes us joyful, lively, and comfortable, and puts Life into us.

The Means whereby we are begotten to this Hope, is, *by the Reſurrection of* Chriſt *from the Dead*; not by the bare Act of his Reſurrection, but by the Virtue and Power of it, we are raiſed to a ſpiritual Life by it, and our Hopes to eternal Life are thereby ſtrengthened and confirmed. The Juſtification of our Perſons, the Regeneration of our Natures, the Reſurrection of our Bodies, the Glorification of our Souls, are ſingular Fruits and Benefits of *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection.

According to his abundant Mercy he has begotten us again. In the Matters of Salvation nothing is owing to our Merit, but all is due to divine Goodneſs, and undeſerved Mercy; this is the fontal Cauſe of our Favours.

To an Inheritance. Heaven is an Inheritance, and as ſuch it is given to the Children of God, and to none but them; 'tis an Inheritance dearly purchaſed of it; yet freely given; *Chriſt* is the ſole Purchaſer of it; yet, though we cannot purchaſe this Inheritance in a way of Merit, we may forfeit it by Demerit, and provoke our heavenly Father to diſinherit us.

This Inheritance is *incorruptible*; an enduring Poſſeſſion, not ſubject to Decay, having nothing in it that can corrupt it, or corrupt us to the Enjoyment of it.

Undefiled. Heaven is an holy Habitation; the Holineſs of Heaven is the moſt conſiderable Part of Happineſs; Sinners therefore that deſpiſe Holineſs, deſpiſe the richeſt Jewels in the Crown of Glory.

It fadeth not away, it withers not; Glory is a Flower which will eternally retain its Freſhneſs and Verdure, *Reſerved in the Heavens for us.* Heaven is the Country where the Saints Inheritance lies; there it is reſerved and laid up ſafe, by the Purpoſe and Pleaſure of God, by the Purchaſe, Poſſeſſion, and Interceſſion of *Chriſt*; and to be able to ſay, *for us*, and be particularly aſſured of Heaven, is a ſpecial Comfort.

Q. *What are your Obſervations on the 5th Verſe?*

A. The Apoſtle ſeems to prevent an Objection. Some might ſay, Though the Inheritance of the Saints be ſafe in Heaven, yet are they in Danger here on Earth; be it ſo, yet they are and ſhall be kept by God's Power, and their own Faith to eternal Salvation.

We are kept; this implies that we are in great Danger of miſſing Salvation, by Reaſon of the Number, Power, and Policy of our ſpiritual Enemies, Corruption and Sin within, the Devil and the World without, but we are kept as in a Garriſon, ſo the Word ſignifies. Saints are preſerved like beſieged Cities; the General whom they fight under, preſerves them, by ſending freſh Recruits, Supplies from the Holy Spirit, and by cutting off ſuch Succours as our Luſts and ſpiritual Enemies would ſend forth againſt us, ſo that they ſhall not vanquiſh us, but we them.

They are kept and preſerved to *Salvation*. He does not ſay they are or ſhall be kept from Trouble and Affliction; he has made no ſuch Promiſe, nor muſt we expect any ſuch Preſervation, but the contrary; *In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation.* But Safety and Reſt, Happineſs and Eaſe ſhall be our Protion in the other World.

Q. *But by what Means are we then kept unto Salvation?*

A. 1. By God's almighty Power. If left one Moment to ourſelves, we become a Prey to every Temptation. How did the Devil baffle and befool *Adam* in Innocency, when he had his Wits about him, by being left in the Hands of his own Counſels? 2. On our Part; *We are kept through Faith.* Our own Endeavour muſt accompany God's Power, in order to our Preſervation. We and our Faith muſt be kept by the Power of God; what God does for us, he does by us; he requires the Uſe of our Faculties, and the Concurrence of our own Endeavours in order to our Salvation.

Q. *Why is the Salvation of the Saints ſaid to be* ready to be revealed in the laſt Time?

A. The Saints Salvation in Heaven is a Myſtery not yet revealed; revealed only to Saints on Earth by Faith, to Saints in Heaven by Sight; but the full Revelation is not to be expected nor enjoyed by glorified Saints before the Day of Judgment, called here, *the laſt Time.*

Wherein ye greatly rejoice; in the Belief and Expectation of which glorious and incorruptible Inheritance in Heaven, ye now rejoice on Earth; plainly intimating, that a Believer may be aſſured of his Title to the glorious Inheritance above, and both may and ought to rejoice in it abundantly below.

Q. *What is intimated by thoſe Words, Ver.* 6. if need be?

A. 1. That we ſhould never feel any Affliction from the Hand of God, never be in Heavineſs, if there was no Need. 2. That there is need that the Children of God in this World ſhould ſometimes be made heavy, and Heavineſs ſhould be upon them for a Seaſon. As we need our daily Bread, ſo ſurely we need a daily Rod; the Rod both of Admonition and Affliction.

The manifold Temptations of the Saints, all work for their Advantage; they receive Good and not Hurt by them, no more Hurt than the Gold receives by the Fire; *that the Trial of your Faith*; that is, that your tried Faith, being more *precious than Gold*. Faith is more precious than Gold, becauſe more pure, more durable, eſpecially when purified in the Furnace of Affliction; he loſes in the Trial nothing but the Droſs and Rubbiſh of his Corruptions, and Grace comes out more glorious.

Faith muſt be tried on Earth, before it be crowned in Heaven; and after it is tried, it ſhall certainly be crowned, *and found unto Praiſe, Honour and Glory, at the Appearing of* Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *What is chiefly obſervable in the 9th and three following Verſes?*

A. 1. The End, that is, the Reward of a *Chriſtian*'s Faith; it is *the Salvation of his Soul*; of his Soul eminently, but not excluſively of his Body. The complete Salvation of Soul and Body both with *Chriſt* in Heaven, ſhall be the Reward and End of a Believer's Faith.

2. The diligent Search into, and Enquiry after the Nature of this Salvation, which was made by the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament*; *of which Salvation the Prophets have enquired and ſearched diligently*; that is, by Prayer, Meditation, and Study; they ſearched after the farther and clearer Knowledge of this great Salvation, and the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, when ſhould be the Time of his Sufferings and Humiliation, which were to precede his Glory and Exaltation.

3. The Succeſs of this their Enquiry and Search was, they were anſwer'd by God, and received this Revelation from him, that they themſelves were not the Men who ſhould ſee the *Meſſiah*, and his Kingdom; and that the Things which they propheſied of were not to be fulfilled in their own Times. And accordingly the Things foretold by the Prophets, he aſſures them, were clearly manifeſted to them by the Apoſtles, who were endowed with an extraordinary meaſure of the Holy Spirit, ſent down upon them at the Day of Pentecoſt; *unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themſelves, but unto us they did miniſter the Things now reported to you.*

Laſtly obſerve, the Sublimity and tranſcendant Excellency of thoſe Goſpel-myſteries which are now revealed; they are ſo raviſhing and tranſporting, that the holy Angels deſire to pry into them.

Hence learn, that the glorious Myſtery of Man's Redemption and Salvation by the Incarnation of *Jeſus Chriſt*, is an Object worthy the Admiration and Contemplation of the adoring Angels. They admire the Perſon of the Redeemer, the Author and Contriver of the Work of Redemption, the glorious State the redeemed are brought into, and poſſeſſed of, and they pry into theſe Things, as the Cherubims look'd upon the Ark, with a curious and accurate, an earneſt and affectionate Inſpection; they holily admire the Wiſdom of this glorious Contrivance, though even their raiſed and enlarged Capacities can never fully comprehend it.

Q. *How is the Holineſs of God to be imitated by Men, as the Apoſtle exhorts, ver. 15?*

A. The Command obliges us to a Conformity, not to an Equality; as God is really, poſitively, ſtrictly, univerſally, unchangeably holy, ſo muſt we labour to be holy both towards God and Man, which is to be *holy in all Manner of Converſation*.

Be ye holy, for I am holy. Since our God is an holy God, therefore we that are his People muſt be holy alſo. St. *Peter* here repreſents the Holineſs of God, both as a Rule and a Motive of that Holineſs which ſhould be acted by us. And whereas the Apoſtle ſays, *It is written, Be ye holy*, it plainly intimates, that God has in all former Ages obliged all Perſons, who pretend any Relation to him as Children, to be holy, as he is holy; tho' not in Meaſure and Degree, yet in Quality and Kind. God is the Original of all Holineſs, and the firſt Man he created was after his own Likeneſs; and every one that is renewed, is ſaid to be *created after God in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*.

Q. *By what Arguments and Motives does he preſs* Chriſtians *to the Love and Practice of Holineſs, and a reverential Fear of God?*

A. From their Redemption, ſaying, that they muſt neceſſarily be ſenſible that they were redeemed with a very coſtly Price, not with Silver and Gold, which yet would ranſom Kings, but by the precious Blood of *Chriſt*, whom the Paſchal Lamb typified, and who was from Eternity fore-ordain'd to the Office of a Mediator, though he was not manifeſted in the Fleſh till theſe laſt Days, for the Good of thoſe who believe in God that raiſed *Chriſt* from the Dead, and gloriouſly exalted him at his Right Hand, on which account their Faith and Hope may ſafely reſt in God.

Note here, that by *Chriſt* the Redeemer we are taught to know God, and to believe in him, who raiſed *Chriſt* from the Dead. This text the *Socinians* miſapply, and argue thus, He by whom we believe in God, is not that God in whom we believe, becauſe the Means of Faith can never be the Object of Faith; but *Chriſt* is he (the Apoſtle ſays) by whom we believe in God; therefore *Chriſt* is not the God.

To which it is anſwer'd, that *Chriſt*, conſider'd in his human Nature, in which he died, and was raiſed for us, is he by whom we believe in God, that is, own to be able to raiſe us from the Dead, *John* x. 18.

Q. *How is* Love to the Brethren *an Evidence of a* Chriſtian*'s Sincerity?*

A. Brotherly Love is a gracious Propenſity of Heart which a *Chriſtian* bears for *Chriſt*'s Sake to his Neighbour, whereby he wills, and to his Power procures all Good for him, a brotherly Affection, which every true *Chriſtian* chiefly bears to all his Fellow-Members in *Chriſt*.

This Duty of brotherly Love is frequently urged and enforced by *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles. St. *Peter* here tells them, that ſeeing by the Power of *Chriſt*'s Spirit, and the Obedience of the Goſpel, they had in ſome Meaſure purified themſelves from Pride and Self-love, they ſhould now labour to grow in the Fervency and Sincerity of their Love one towards another. And the Argument he uſes to perſuade them to this mutual Benevolence, is drawn from their Relation to one another; they are all born again, and born alike; not Brethren by corruptible Generation only, but begotten of incorruptible Seed, the Word of God; therefore ſhould they live in Love together as Children of the ſame Father.

Q. *Pray illuſtrate the Juſtneſs of his Allegory, in comparing* all Fleſh to Graſs, *Verſe* 24?

A. Fleſh, with all its Glory, is a dying periſhing Thing, it flags like the Graſs, and fades like the Flower. In a Flower there are three Excellencies; Sweetneſs, which affects the Smell; Beauty, which pleaſes the Eye; Softneſs and Smoothneſs, which renders it agreeable to the Touch; all theſe our Apoſtle paſſes over, and ſpeaks of the Flower, not as flouriſhing, but as withering; not as ſpringing up, but as falling away; *the Graſs withereth, the Flower falleth away.*

Hence learn, that Man, when moſt flouriſhing, with all the Ornaments of Wit and Wealth, Beauty and Honour, is fading, and near to withering. Thus *David* deſcribes him, *Pſalm* ciii. 15, 16. *As for Man, his Days are Graſs; as the Flower of the Field, ſo he flouriſheth; the Wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone.* Though the Flower be neither cut nor cropp'd, yet a Breath of Wind blaſts it, and blows away its Beauty.

Q. *Explain the following Words;* but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever?

That is, the Word of God, the Mind of *Chriſt*, contained in, and revealed by the Goſpel, ſhall never be abrogated; the Word of God is everlaſting Truth; 'tis ſo in its Nature, and alſo in its Effects upon the Regenerate, it abideth for ever; it is the incorruptible Seed, or Principle of Regeneration; 'tis called the Word of Eternal Life, becauſe it brings thoſe that love and obey it, to that happy State.

Laſtly, the ſame Word of God is now preached to us, which was ſo highly commended by the Prophets, Apoſtles, and by *Chriſt* himſelf; *This is that Word which by the Goſpel is preached unto you.*

CHAP. II.

Several Vices to be laid aſide, that we may grow in Virtue and taſte God's Goodneſs. Chriſt *the living Stone, and Foundation of our Faith. Obedience to Magiſtrates urged. Servants muſt obey their Maſters.*

Q. WHAT *are the Inſtructions given in the firſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. We are directed to lay aſide, in order to the more profitable Entertainment of the Word of God, theſe five Sins, *Malice, Guile, Hypocriſy, and Evil ſpeaking.* If any Sin lies dormant in the Heart, it will hinder the Word from working any Good upon us, particularly Malice, or inveterate Anger harbour'd in the Heart; Guile and Deceit in Words or Actions; Hypocriſy, or an Appearance of Friendſhip, when the Heart is differently affected; Envy, or grieving at another's Good; and Evil-ſpeaking of all Kinds, by lying, ſlandering, backbiting, detracting, all which are contrary to the great Command of Love, and obſtructive of the Word of Truth, by which we are born again.

Lay aſide all Malice and Guile, and Evil-ſpeaking; intimating, that though ſome other Sins will ſtick cloſe to us, yet not a jot of Malice or Guile ſhould be found in us, at leaſt not prevailing in us, of any Kind, or in any Degree, for one Drop of this deadly Poiſon may deſtroy us; therefore *lay aſide all Malice,* &c.

Q. *Verſe* 2. *the Apoſtle ſays,* As new-born Babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby; *pray in what Senſe is a* Chriſtian *to imitate the Child, in coveting its natural Nouriſhment?*

A. 1. The new-born Infant covets it with vehement and impatient Deſires; nothing will ſatisfy a *Chriſtian*, in the Abſence of the Word of God.

2. The new-born Infant deſires the Milk, from a deep Senſe of its inward Wants; it is pinched with Hunger, and parch'd with Thirſt, and therefore cries for the Breaſt; thus is the *Chriſtian* ſenſible of his Wants, of his Want of Knowledge and Grace: 'Tis little, ſays he, that I know of myſelf, leſs of God, leaſt of *Jeſus Chriſt*; therefore I long to converſe with his Word, that I may know him more, and ſerve him better.

3. The Infant deſires its Mother's Milk unmix'd, as Nature has prepared it; thus the new-born *Chriſtian* deſires the ſincere Milk of the Word, without any Compoſition of Error, or any Mixture of Wit and Eloquence, as is inconſiſtent with the Gravity and Simplicity of the Word they hear.

4. This Deſire of the Babe after the ſincere, unmix'd, and uncompounded Milk, is always accompanied with Endeavours, it hunts for the Breaſt, and is impatient till it ſucks and draws, that Nouriſhment may be convey'd, and it grow thereby; thus active and operative are the Deſires and Endeavours of a ſincere *Chriſtian*, after the Word of God; they can never be ſatisfied without it.

Q. *What is the Import of the 3d Verſe,* If ſo be ye have taſted, that the Lord is gracious?

A. In theſe Words St. *Peter* declares the Condition whereon our profiting, growing, and thriving by the Word doth depend; namely, on our taſting and experiencing its Power, as it is the great inſtrumental Cauſe both of our ſpiritual Birth and Growth. This Taſte is a ſpiritual Senſe of the Goodneſs, Power, and Efficacy of the Word, in conveying the Grace of God into our Souls; in a Taſte there is Sweetneſs and Refreſhment, but not Fulneſs and Satisfaction; the Sweetneſs which a *Chriſtian* partakes of God and his Word in this Life, is but a Taſte; Satiety and Satisfaction is reſerved for another State.

Q. *Why is* Chriſt *called* a living Stone, *Verſe* 4?

A. That is, a lively Stone, no dead Foundation, and a Life-giving Stone, having not only Life in himſelf eſſentially, but communicatively, imparting ſpiritual Life to the whole Building. *Chriſt* is not only an Head of Authority, but an Head of vital Influence to all his Members; *becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo.*

He is alſo ſtiled, *the chief Corner-ſtone*, both in regard of Suſtentation; the Corner-ſtone ſupports the whole Building, the Church's Grace, Peace, Conſolation, and Salvation, are all upheld and maintained by him; and in regard of Union, the Corner-ſtone unites, ties, and knits the other Stones together. *Chriſt* alone unites the ſeveral Stones of the ſpiritual Building to himſelf, and one to another. And this Corner-ſtone is of God's own immediate laying, *Behold, I lay in* Sion *a Corner-ſtone. Chriſt* was firſt manifeſted, and offered to the Church of the *Jews*, and then to the reſt of the World.

Q. *How are Believers* lively Stones; *and* an holy Prieſthood, *Verſe* 5?

A. Believers are alſo *an holy Prieſthood*, to offer up ſpiritual Sacrifices, acceptable through *Chriſt*. Every *Chriſtian*, in this Life, is a Prieſt, and ought to offer up himſelf a ſpiritual Sacrifice, or Oblation unto God. In a Sacrifice there was a Separation of the Thing ſacrificed from common Uſe; the Beaſt was ſeparated from the Flock, ſo muſt the *Chriſtian* be ſet apart from the reſt of the World. There was alſo a Dedication, or ſolemn Conſecration, of the Thing ſet apart to ſome holy and ſpecial Uſe and Purpoſe. Thus the *Chriſtian* that preſents himſelf a living Sacrifice to God, not only ſeparates himſelf from Sin, the World, and the Fleſh, but addicts and devotes himſelf to God, to ſerve, pleaſe, honour and glorify him.

Q. *Why is* Chriſt *more precious to Believers than to others?*

A. Whatever mean, low, and undervaluing Thoughts the Wicked may have of *Jeſus Chriſt*, yet he is highly eſteemed by, and deſervedly precious to every believing Soul; he is precious in the ſeveral Relations he ſtands in to them; precious, in regard of the great Things he has done for them; precious in the rich Supplies of Grace he beſtows upon them, and will be eternally precious to them, on the Account of thoſe glorious Manſions he has purchaſed and prepared for them.

Q. *Pray explain the latter Part of the 7th Verſe*, The Stone which the Builders diſallowed, the ſame is made the Head of the Corner.

A. That is, the high Rulers, whoſe Office and Duty it was to build up the Church, having Power in their Hand to do it; but, inſtead of building upon this Corner-ſtone, they ſtumbled and took Offence at him, and accordingly *Chriſt* is called *A Stone of Stumbling, and Rock of Offence*; yet this does not imply that *Chriſt* was the Cauſe of their Stumbling, but only the Occaſion of it, the Object at which they ſtumbled, without any Cauſe but their own Wickedneſs; for though it be ſaid in the next Words, *they were appointed thereunto*, the Meaning is not, that God ordained them to Diſobedience, for then their Obedience had been impoſſible, and their Diſobedience no Sin; but God, in his juſt Decree, appointed, that Deſtruction, and eternal Perditionr ſhould be the Portion of ſuch obſtinate and diſobedient Perſons.

Q. *In the 9th and 10th Verſes the Apoſtle tells them of the many glorious Favours with which God had diſtinguiſh'd them from other People: But to what Purpoſe was God ſo particularly gracious to them?*

A. *That they might ſhew forth their Virtues*; that is, publiſh and proclaim the Wiſdom, Power, Goodneſs, Mercy, and Righteouſneſs of God, who called them out of the Darkneſs of Sin, Ignorance and Miſery, into the marvellous Light of Knowledge, Faith, Holineſs, and Comfort.

To increaſe their Thankfulneſs for all theſe diſtinguiſhing Favours, St. *Peter* puts them in Mind of what they were before their Converſion to *Chriſtianity*; in Times paſt *they were not a People* beloved of God, and in Covenant with him, the Lord having given the *Jews* a Bill of Divorce, and ſaid to them, *Ye are not my People*, Hoſ. i. 9. but now, on their believing in *Chriſt*, they were reſtored to all their Church Privileges by the ſpecial Grace and Mercy of God. Till Perſons ſubject themſelves to the Government of *Chriſt*, and become obedient to the Goſpel, they are in God's Account no People; to live without *Chriſt* in the World, is a Life worſe than Death.

Q. *What are thoſe* fleſhly Luſts *from which he exhorts them to abſtain, Verſe 11?*

A. By Luſt underſtand either habitual or actual Luſt; habitual or original Luſt is the Corruption and Depravation of the Faculties of the Soul, an Averſion to every Thing that is good, and a Proneneſs to all Evil; actual Luſt is original Sin put in Motion.

To abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, implies a total Forbearance of all wilful Sins; there is at all Times a great Difference between Temperance and Abſtinence; the temperate Man eats little, the abſtinent Man nothing at all; every one then that would be eſteem'd a *Chriſtian*, is to account it his great Duty and Intereſt to abſtain from all fleſhly Luſts.

Q. *What Arguments does the Apoſtle uſe to prevail on them to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts?*

A. The firſt is implied in the Compellation, *Dearly Beloved*, not of the Apoſtle only, or chiefly, but of God; the original Word is the ſame which God makes uſe of in expreſſing his Love to his dear Son; as if he had ſaid, You that are ſo dearly beloved of God, ſurely ought to abſtain from what you know will be diſpleaſing to him.

The ſecond Argument is drawn from their preſent State and Condition in the World; ye are *Strangers and Pilgrims in the World*; and therefore ſhould act as Strangers, who are not uſually overmuch affected with the Objects that they ſee abroad in their Travels, no more ſhould you.

The third Argument is taken from the Danger of theſe fleſhly Luſts to our precious Souls, that war *againſt the Soul*, that is, againſt its Purity, Dignity, Peace, Liberty, yea, againſt its very Life.

Q. *What is the Import of the Apoſtle's Exhortation, Ver.* 12. to have their Converſation honeſt?

A. 'Tis not a ſingle Action, but the general Tenour of our Converſation, that denotes us either good or bad; and the Word tranſlated *honeſt*, ſignifies fair and amiable, beautiful and adorning, the doing nothing that is unſeemly, or a Blemiſh either to our Perſon or Profeſſion; *Chriſtians* ſhould not only live free from Evil, but as much as may be from the Suſpicion of Evil.

It is added, *among the Gentiles*; that is, among idolatrous Nations who had not received the *Chriſtian* Faith. The Profeſſors of *Chriſtianity* ſhould be exceeding careful to do nothing to increaſe the Prejudices of the wicked World againſt Religion and the Ways of Godlineſs; but remember that they are our watchful Obſervers and bold Cenſurers, and accordingly endeavour that by a regular Piety, a ſtrict ſobriety, an extenſive Charity, we may render Religion venerable to the World, and ſtop the Mouth of Slander, by cutting off all Occaſion from thoſe that ſeek it.

Note, The Apoſtle does not ſay that their Converſation ſhould be religious, though that be included, but honeſt, outwardly ſquare, ſtrict and juſt, it being that which the World judges us by; vain are all our Pretences to Piety, if we fail in Honeſty.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words in the ſame Verſe*, that ye may by your good Works which they ſhall behold, glorify God in the Day of Viſitation?

A. This may be underſtood two Ways; 1. With reſpect to the Believers, your good Works will cauſe the wicked World to glorify God in the Day of your Viſitation, that is, in the Day of your Perſecution and Affliction; though they afflict and perſecute you, yet ſhall they glorify God when they behold your Faith, Patience, and Conſtancy under Sufferings.

This may alſo be underſtood with reſpect to the Wicked, and ſo the Day of Viſitation is the Day of their Converſion; and then the Exhortation is, to be ſo conſpicuous in good Works, that their Adverſaries may praiſe and glorify God, when he ſhall viſit them with his Grace, and draw them by his Goſpel, to believe in his Son; the Day of ſaving Converſion is a Day of gracious Viſitation.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle call Magiſtracy and civil Government, which are originally of Divine Inſtitution, an* Ordinance of Man?

A. It is ſo, 1. As to the End of it, it being appointed for the Good and Benefit of Man.

2. In reference to the Kind of it, every Nation having a Liberty to chuſe what Kind and Form of Government human Prudence ſhall direct them to, as moſt agreeable and commodious to the People.

This Obedience and Subjection muſt be paid to Magiſtrates *for the Lord's Sake*; that is, in Obedience to the Divine Command, and with an Eye to the Honour and Glory of God; *Chriſtianity* is no Enemy to the civil Rights of Princes, it requires Subjection for Conſcience, *Prov.* viii. 15. *By me Kings reign*; ſome read it, *for me* Kings reign; both are true. Princes then hold not their Crowns, either from the Pope, or from the People, to be kick'd off by the one, or to be pluck'd off by the other, at their Pleaſure.

Q. *What Reaſons does he aſſign for this Submiſſion and Obedience to Magiſtrates?*

A. 1. Becauſe *they are ſent by God for the Puniſhment of Evil-doers, and the Praiſe of them that do well*; the Magiſtrates Office is to puniſh Evildoers; the Fear of the Magiſtrate's Sword awes many Men more than the Fear of God's Hand.

2. Becauſe God will, by this their Subjection to Magiſtrates and Governors, ſilence, or, as the Word ſignifies, put a Muzzle upon the Mouth of fooliſh and unreaſonable Men, who rage againſt his People, as if they were Enemies to Order and Government; but by our Subjection and Obedience to Rulers in the Lord, and for the Lord's Sake, we put to ſilence the Fooliſhneſs of wicked Men.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's particular View in the 16th Verſe, where he exhorts them to make no ill Uſe of their Liberty?*

A. In this Verſe, St. *Peter* anſwers an Objection which he foreſaw the *Chriſtian Jews* would be ready to make againſt the Duty of Subjection; namely, that as *Jews* they were a free People, and ought to preſerve their Liberty, and own no Governors that were not of their own Nation; and as *Chriſtians*, they looked upon themſelves as *Chriſt's* Freemen; whereas, *Chriſtian* Liberty exempts no Man from the Duty of civil Subjection. The Liberty *Chriſt* has purchaſed for Believers is a Freedom from Sin and Satan, and ſinful Servitude; *Chriſt* makes all his Subjects free, but it is a Freedom from ſpiritual Bondage, and not from civil Subjection; conſequently to plead our *Chriſtian* Liberty, in bar to that Obedience we owe to our Superiors and Governors, either Civil or Eccleſiaſtical, is to uſe our Liberty for a Cloak of Malicioufneſs; and is a Covering for that Diſobedience, which is hateful to God, and injurious to Mankind, as being deſtructive of Order and Government, which is the Beauty and Bond of human Society.

Q. *Pray ſhew the Extent of thoſe important Duties recommended in the 17th Verſe?*

A. The firſt is, *To honour* all Men; every Man is to be duly reſpected, according to his Place and Station; ſome Men indeed may forfeit their Reſpect by acting below themſelves; a vile Perſon is contemptible though great; but the Rags of a good Man cannot obſcure his Worth, nor hinder him from true Honour in the Hearts, and from the Tongues of Men.

2. *Love the Brotherhood*, all the Saints, of what Nation and Country ſoever they are, of what Eſtate and Condition, high or low, rich or poor, of what Judgment or Opinion ſoever; therefore the Apoſtle calls upon us to love the Brotherhood, the whole Fraternity and Society of *Chriſtians*, by what unhappy Names or Characters of Reproach ſoever diſtinguiſhed; there is no better Evidence of the Life of Grace in ourſelves, than the Love of Grace in another.

3. *Fear God*; live in a religious Dread of his Name, as a glorious God, and a gracious Father; have a reverential Awe and Fear of his Majeſty immoveably fix'd in your Souls, to the Production of which a double Apprehenſion is neceſſary; namely, the inconceivable Majeſty of God, and the miſerable Vileneſs of the Sinner.

4. *Honour the King*; this Duty conſiſts in reverencing their Perſons, obeying their lawful Commands, a chearful Payment of their Dues, praying affectionately for them, and praiſing God for the Bleſſings of their Government. *Nero*, the worſt of Princes, and the Perſecutor of *Chriſtians*, was then on the Throne, yet the Command is expreſs; and if we conſider the Words in their Connection and Conjunction, one with another, *Fear God*, and *honour the King*, we learn, that Religion, and the Fear of God, qualify Perſons beſt to be good Subjects; this is the true and ſteady Principle of Loyalty, that Obedience to Governors that is laſting, as for Conſcience Sake to the Command of God; where there is no Fear of God in the Heart, there will be no Regard to the Command of God in the Life. Let ſuch as pretend to fear God, ſhew it, by being loyal Subjects; and let ſuch as would be thought moſt loyal Subjects, evidence it by their awful and religious Fear of God.

Q. *The Apoſtle, in admoniſhing Servants to ſuffer unjuſtly, adds,* For even thereunto were ye called: *How do you underſtand this?*

A. That is, by the Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*; Religion obliges you to ſuffer with Patience; you muſt bear the Croſs, before you wear the Crown; to this you are called, and with this you have been acquainted.

Again; you ſhould not grudge to ſuffer patiently, though you ſuffer unjuſtly; becauſe *Chriſt*, your Captain and Guide, did ſo before you; he was the meekeſt and moſt patient Sufferer that ever was.

Q. *Wherein was the Example of* Chriſt, *a Pattern for us to walk by?*

A. The Practice and Example of the Holy *Jeſus*,

Jeſus, in all the ordinary Acts of his Obedience, ought to be propounded by all his Diſciples and Followers, as the grand Pattern of our imitation; it being a ſafe and unerring Example, an eaſy and familiar, a powerful and encouraging, and the moſt inſtructive, and univerſal Example that was ever given to the World, being a moſt abſolute and perfect Pattern of Holineſs.

St. *Peter* ſo recommends our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* as a Mirror and perfect Pattern of Goodneſs, acquaints us with his pure and ſpotleſs Innocence, *who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth*, neither in his Expreſſions or Actions, but was a perfect Pattern of unblameable Holineſs.

He next recommends to us *Chriſt*'s invincible Patience under all his Sufferings, who, though *reviled, reviled not again*; and when he ſuffer'd all manner of Injuries and Indignities at once, though he had Power ſufficient to look them into nothing, to frown them into Hell, yet he threatned them not with the leaſt Revenge, but pray'd for his Murtherers, and committed his Cauſe to a juſt and righteous God.

Bleſſed *Jeſus*, help us to imitate this Patience under Sufferings and Reproaches; may we never render Evil for Evil, Railing for Railing, but contrariwiſe, Bleſſing for Curſing, Courteſies for Injuries, Affability for Affronts; let us at all Times labour to overcome Evil with Good.

Q. *Had the Sufferings of* Chriſt *no other End, but to be a Pattern for us?*

A. They were not only exemplary, but ſatisfactory; *he his own Self bare our own Sins in his own Body upon the Tree.* This intimates the Singularity of his Sufferings, he had no Partner nor Sharer with him in what he bare, *he trod the Wine-Preſs alone.*

It is likewiſe the Sufficiency of his Sufferings, he himſelf bare our Sins, he who was God-man, the Lamb of God, and as ſuch took away the Sins of the World.

He bare it *in his own Body upon the Tree*; that is, in his human Nature upon the Croſs; *Chriſt* ſuffer'd in his Soul as well as his Body, and both were ſatisfactory to Divine Juſtice; but his bodily Sufferings are only mention'd, becauſe more viſible.

The great End of his Sufferings were, the Expiation and Mortification of Sin; our Sins were expiated on the Tree by *Chriſt*'s ſuffering for us; *in his own Body*; and by his Death he alſo purchaſed Virtue for mortifying Sin for us, and for quickening us to Holineſs of Life, that, as he died for Sin, we ſhould die unto Sin; and as he roſe again, and reviv'd, never to die more, ſo ſhould we, being dead unto Sin, live no longer therein.

By whoſe Stripes ye were healed; the Wounds made in our Souls by the Guilt and Poiſon of Sin, are mercifully and meritoriouſly heal'd; the Guilt of Sin is pardon'd, and all the invaluable Fruits and Benefits of our Redeemer's Death obtain'd; Thanks be to God for *Jeſus Chriſt.*

Q. *In what Senſe is* Chriſt *ſtiled the Biſhop of our Souls?*

A. He is the univerſal Biſhop, that hath the Charge of all the Flocks and Shepherds too, and and to whom all Biſhops and Shepherds muſt become accountable. God grant them all ſuch Grace to be faithful, that when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, they may receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.

Chap. III.

The Duties of Wives and Huſbands, an Exhortation to Duty and Love, and to ſuffer Perſecution. The Benefits of Chriſt *towards the old and new World.*

Q. WHAT *Kind of Subjection is that which the Apoſtle recommends to Wives in the firſt Verſe?*

A. The Subjection here intended, is a loving and delightful Obedience to the Huſband, owning of, and ſubmitting to his Authority, in Compliance with the Command of God; it is not lawful for the Wife, upon any Pretence, to caſt off this Duty, which by the Law of her Creation, and the expreſs Command of God, ſhe is bound to, whether her Huſband be a Believer or not.

Q. *In the 3d Verſe he forbids the Uſe of ſeveral Female Ornaments: Is this Prohibition abſolute, and without Exception?*

A. Note, that plaited Hair, Gold-Chains, and coſtly Apparel, were then the Attire of lewd Women; Whores only, or chiefly, were ſo richly decked, and therefore was abſolutely forbidden to the *Chriſtian* Women, by our Apoſtle; but when ſuch Attire ceaſes to be a Mark of ſuch Diſtinction, it may be worn by *Chriſtian* Women, provided it be done without Pride, and without too great Expence of Time and Treaſure; always remembring that Gravity in Apparel, and wearing ſuch a Dreſs as is ſoon put on, is moſt decent and beſt becoming *Chriſtian* Women; I had rather, ſays one, go like the wild *Indians*, than to have thoſe thouſands of Hours to anſwer for, which have been ſpent between the Glaſs and the Comb.

Farther; this Text does not abſolutely forbid the wearing of Ornaments or coſtly Apparel by ſuch Perſons whoſe Quality will anſwer it, but only forbids Pride and Vanity, Affectation and Oſtentation in the wearing of them; *Abraham* had never ſent Ear-rings and Bracelets to *Rebecca*, had they been ſinful in their Uſe; to wear ſuch Things as are above our Purſe and Place, to make ourſelves or others poor by making ourſelves fine, is very ſinful, but otherwiſe lawful.

Q. *What Sort of Ornament does he recommend to them?*

A. The Apoſtle's poſitive Precept for the Woman's adorning, with the Reaſons of it, is, *But let it be the hidden Man of the Heart*; that is, the Soul, which wants both covering and adorning as well as the Body, Sin having made both naked to their Shame.

This hidden Man of the Heart muſt be apparelled with the ſanctifying Graces of the Spirit of God, with Humility and Meekneſs, Piety and Prudence, Ornaments that will never wax old, nor grow out of Faſhion, as others do, and are alſo of precious Eſteem with God himſelf; *they are in the Sight of God of great Price*; theſe Virtues are in themſelves, and render their Poſſeſſors truly valuable in the Sight and Eſteem of God.

Upon the whole it evidently appears, that the Negation here, is not abſolute, but comparative; as if he had ſaid, God will have the hidden Man of your Heart adorned with Grace, and delights more to ſee that, than your Bodies adorned with precious Jewels and coſtly Apparel; and accordingly if Women affect Finery, and would appear beautiful, let 'em chuſe the beſt Ornaments, thoſe of the Mind and Heart, which will attract the Eye of God towards them, rather than thoſe external ones, which ſerve only to draw Man's Eye to an Admiration of them.

Q. *How does he enforce his Advice to Women to attire themſelves modeſtly?*

A. By a twofold Argument; the firſt is drawn from the Example of holy Women in general under the *Old Teſtament*, whoſe Praiſe is in the Scripture, not for the external adorning of the Body, but for their Affiance and Truſt in God, and their Subjection paid to their own Huſbands.

The ſecond Argument is taken from the Example of *Sarah*, who meekly obeyed *Abraham*, acknowledging him to be her Lord, the Daughters of whoſe Faith, and the Heirs of whoſe Bleſſing ſuch Wives will appear and approve themſelves to be who do as *Sarah* did, not ſuffering themſelves by any Fears or Terrors to be diverted from, nor by any Fits of Paſſion or Grief to be diſturbed in the Performance of that Duty, which God requires, and the Huſband expects; *even as* Sarah *obeyed* Abraham, *calling him Lord.*

Q. *How do you underſtand St.* Peter's *Exhortation to Huſbands, to* dwell with their Wives, according to Knowledge, *ver. 7?*

A. That is, as becomes wiſe and underſtanding Men, who know their Duty, and, as the Rule of *Chriſtianity* directs. Give due Honour and Reſpect to your Wives, and uſe them with great Tenderneſs.

The Reaſons ſubjoined to enforce this Duty are, 1. Becauſe Wives are the weaker Veſſels, ſubject to Infirmities, and more liable to Inſults, therefore ſhould Huſbands uſe their Wiſdom and Authority to ſupport their Honour, and preſerve them from being deſpiſed either by Children or Servants. 2. Becauſe Wives are not only Co-partners with their Huſbands in their Temporal Things, but alſo Co-heirs of ſaving Grace with them, *Heirs together of the Grace of Life.* 3. Becauſe their Prayers one with, and one for another, would be obſtructed and diſturbed, *that your Prayers be not hindered.* Diſcord and Diſcontent between Man and Wife, often prevents the very Act of Prayers, or deadens our Spirits, and ſtreightens our Hearts in Prayer, and hinders the Effect, Fruit, and Succeſs of our Prayers; it makes Perſons indifferent of coming before God, and careleſs of lifting up their Faces to him.

Q. *In the 8th Verſe he exhorts them to be all of one Mind: Pray explain the Nature of this Injunction?*

A. That is, Sympathize one with another under Sufferings, and bear with one another's Infirmities, be courteous towards all, ſweet and affable in your Demeanour, provided your Courteſy be neither a Snare to yourſelves, nor an Encouragement to others in their Sins, abſtaining from all Injuries and Provocations, from all Revenge both in Act and Deſire, not reviling them that rail at us, but giving good Words for bad ones; *for we are hereunto called that we ſhould inherit a Bleſſing*; that is, *Chriſt* by his Goſpel hath called, and by his example encouraged us thus to do, that we may be bleſſed.

Q. *In the 9th, 10th, and 11th Verſe the Apoſtle admoniſhes us to conduct ourſlves with Innocence, if we expect Happineſs in this Life: What do you obſerve upon the Whole?*

A. The Sum of all is, that an innocent and harmleſs, a quiet and obliging Deportment naturally tends to preſerve us from Evil, and from evil Men; for who is he that can be ſo unnatural and ungrateful as to *harm us, if we be Followers of that which is good?* If we are civil and obliging, no body will injure us. Not but that good Men are obnoxious to Harm; the moſt unblemiſh'd and ſhining Virtue will not at all Times, and in all Caſes be exempt from Injury and ill Treatment; but the following of that which is good, naturally tends to ſecure us from the Malice and Miſchief of Men; he muſt love Miſchief for Miſchief's Sake that will be miſchievous without Provocation.

But though following that which is good, is, generally a certain Way to keep you from Harm, yet ſhould it ſo happen, that notwithſtanding all your Piety and Prudence you ſhould ſuffer for well doing, ye are happy, and not miſerable; therefore be not afraid of their Terrors and Threatnings, neither be ye troubled for what they can inflict upon you; *If ye ſuffer for Righteouſneſs Sake, happy are you*, for ſo ſuffer'd your Saviour that went before you.

Q. *What is the Import of the Apoſtle's Injunction, ver. 15.* Sanctify the Lord God in your Heart?

A. This Phraſe in Scripture imports. 1. A firm Belief of God's almighty Power, that he can protect from Sufferings; and a full Affiance in his Goodneſs and Providence, that he will do it if it be good for us.

2. It is from the Heart to own and to believe the Truth of all that God delivers in his Word by way of Promiſe to his People, and by way of threatning to his Enemies, that *his Eyes are over the Righteous, and his Face againſt them that do Evil.*

3. To ſanctify the Lord in our Hearts, is always to maintain upon our Minds ſuch an holy Fear and awful Reverence of God, as will effectually prevail upon us to dread more the Diſpleaſure of God, than any thing we can ſuffer at the Hand of Man.

Q. *The Apoſtle goes on in the ſame Verſe, and ſays,* Be ready always to give an Anſwer to every Man that aſketh you a Reaſon of the Hope that is in you with Meekneſs and Fear: *Pray what is the Ground of a* Chriſtian's *Hope?*

A. The *Chriſtian*'s Hope is grounded upon the Promiſe of God, on the Purchaſe of *Chriſt*, the Operations of the Holy Spirit quickening him by his Renovation, leading him by his Influence, animating him in his Devotions by its Aſſiſtance, by being the Author of all that Grace that is in him, and of all that Good that is done by him.

It is a *Chriſtian*'s Duty to be always ready to render a Reaſon of this his Hope, when the Glory of God, the Honour of Religion, and the Good of others require it; not with Vanity and Oſtentation, but with Meekneſs and Fear.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle in the 18th Verſes mention* Chriſt's *Sufferings and the Reaſon of them?*

A. This Verſe is introduc'd as a ſtrong Argument, why *Chriſtians* that ſuffer wrongfully ſhould bear it patiently; 'twas our Saviour's own Caſe: He, that had perfect Innocence and unſpotted, Righteouſneſs, ſuffer'd in the ſevereſt Manner for us that were unrighteous, that he might reconcile us to God, being *put to Death in the Fleſh,* that is, in our human Nature, *but quickened by the Spirit,* or raiſed to Life again by the Power of his Godhead: Well therefore it becomes all his Followers chearfully to ſuſtain all manner of Sufferings for his Sake, which they meet with in their Duty to him: *Chriſt* not only ſuffer'd for us, but for our Sins, that is, the Puniſhment due to our Sins; for no Man was ever ſaid to ſuffer for Sin, that did not undergo the Puniſhment of Sin.

As the Sin Offering under the Law is called an Offering for Sin, becauſe it expiated the Guilt of Sin, by dying in the place and ſtead of the Offender; ſo when the Death of *Chriſt* is called an Offering for Sin, what can it import but that he ſuffered to make an Attonement for Sin in our place and ſtead? *The juſt for the unjuſt:* If theſe Words do not imply the Subſtitution of *Chriſt* as our Surety, and his Suffering for the Puniſhment due to our Sins, what Words can expreſs it?

The great End of *Chriſt*'s bitter Death and bloody Suffering, was, to bring all thoſe for whom he died, unto God: Now *Chriſt*'s bringing us to God imports our Apoſtaſy from him, and our Inability to return to him; that Sin, unſatisfied for, is mercifully removed by him, and that our chief Happineſs conſiſts in the Enjoyment of him.

Q. *Pray interpret the 19th and two following Verſes?*

A. He argues thus: Though *Chriſt* ſuffer'd for your Sins, and was put to Death in his human Nature or Fleſh, yet he was quickned and made alive by the Spirit, in, or by which Spirit *he went and preached to the Spirits in Priſon,* which in the Days of *Noah* were harden'd in Sin and Diſobedience, whilſt the long ſuffering of God endured them, and waited for their Repentance no leſs than one hundred and twenty Years, while the Ark was making and preparing, and *Noah* preaching to them, yet ſo impenitent were they to the very laſt, that only eight were ſaved in the Ark.

The old World before the Flood were in Priſon while here on Earth, being in Bondage and Captivity to Sin and Satan, held in the Chains of their Luſts, and in the Bonds of their Iniquity; the old World was alſo held in Priſon whilſt on Earth, as having received from God the Sentence of Deſtruction, and were reſerved, as in a Priſon, againſt the Day of Slaughter, if they repented not in an hundred and twenty Years.

Chriſt by his Spirit preach'd to the old World in the Miniſtry of his Prophets, *Enoch* and *Noah*, and his Spirit reproved them, in order to bring them to Repentance.

Thoſe refractory and harden'd Sinners, for deſpiſing the Offers of Grace, were for their Diſobedience clapt up into the Priſon of Hell, ſuffering the Vengeance of Eternal Fire; ſuch as were caſt in Priſon in *Noah*'s Time were all faſt in St. *Peter*'s Time; Hell has a Door to let in, but none to let out.

Though *Chriſt* by his Spirit preached to the Spirits in Priſon, yet it was not when they were in the Priſon of Hell, but here on Earth; there are no Sermons in Hell, no Condition of Happineſs propoſed, no Tenders of Salvation propounded there; *Chriſt* preached to theſe Priſoners to prevent their Impriſonment.

Laſtly note, the obſtinate Infidelity and ſottiſh Stupidity of the old World, that after an hundred and twenty Years preaching, no more than eight Perſons were perſuaded into the Belief the World's Deſtruction.

Q. *The Salvation of* Noah *and his Family from the Deluge in the Ark, the Apoſtle tells us, ver.* 21. prefigured our Salvation from the Wrath of God by Baptiſm: *How ſo?*

A. As all that were without the Ark periſhed, and all within ſaved, ſo all that are ingrafted into *Chriſt* by Faith (whereof Baptiſm is a Seal) are ſaved, whilſt the unbelieving and unbaptized Part of the World periſh. Baptiſm is ſuch a ſpiritual Means of Salvation now, as the Ark was of *Noah*'s and his Family's Temporal Salvation then; *the like Figure whereunto Baptiſm, now ſaveth us.*

Q. *But what does* St. Peter *mean by that Baptiſm which is ſaving?*

A. This he explains, 1. Negatively; it is not the outward Ceremony of ſprinkling the Face, or waſhing the Body with Water that is ſaving, or any ways pleaſing to God, except as it is an Act and Exerciſe of our Obedience to his Command and Will; but, 2. Poſitively, it *is the Anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God*; that is, the faithful Anſwer of a reſolved Soul in the Covenant of Baptiſm, who gives up himſelf to the Obedience of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and renounces the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil; this Covenanting is the Condition of Salvation, and Baptiſm but the Sign.

Yet muſt we not conclude with the Anabaptiſts from this Text, that Baptiſm can be of no ſaving Advantage to Infants, becauſe they cannot at preſent make this Anſwer of a good Conſcience: For St. *Paul* ſpeaks in the ſame manner of Circumciſion, that the true Circumciſion before God is that of the Heart and Spirit, and not the outward Circumciſion of the Fleſh. But who dare argue from thence, that the *Jewiſh* Infants, for Want of the inward Circumciſion muſt not be admitted to the outward? The Argument is the very ſame; Will you ſay, that the Anſwer of a good Conſcience is abſolutely neceſſary, and expreſly required, that Baptiſm may be beneficial; therefore they only are to be baptized who can make this Anſwer? The ſame may we ſay, that the inward Circumciſion of the Heart was required as the only acceptable Circumciſion in the Sight of God; therefore they only are to be circumciſed who have this inward Circumciſion of the Heart. But as one was the Will of God, ſo is the other. The *Jews* indeed did not admit Proſelytes to Circumciſion then, no more will we admit adult Perſons to Baptiſm now, without the Anſwer of a good Conſcience, or a ſolemn Promiſe and Engagement to be the Lord's for ever; but they admitted Infants to Circumciſion without it; in like Manner the *Chriſtian* Church now admits the Children of *Chriſtian* Parents to Baptiſm, without any ſuch Anſwer made by them, but for them only.

CHAP. IV.

The Sufferings of Chriſt, *the future Judgment, ſhould teach us to ceaſe from Sin and to live to God. Affliction is the Lot of the Faithful.*

Q. WHAT *is the Force of the Apoſtle's Argument in the two firſt Verſes?*

A. Theſe Verſes may be conſider'd as an Inference drawn from what the Apoſtle had aſſerted in the foregoing Chapter, namely, that *Chriſt Jeſus* ſuffer'd for our Sins, *the juſt for the unjuſt.* Now, ſays the Apoſtle, for as much as *Chriſt* has ſuffer'd thus for us, 1. As our Surety and Repreſentative; 2. As our Pattern and Example, in order to our Imitation; *let us arm ourſelves with the ſame Mind* and Reſolution, to be conform'd to him in his Death, dying to Sin, as he died for Sin; for he that hath crucified the Fleſh, and mortified his corrupt Nature, in Imitation of *Chriſt's* Suffering in our Fleſh and Nature, that Man hath ceas'd from Sin, that is, from living unto Sin, or ſerving Sin any longer, but ſpends the Remainder of his Life wholly according to God's Will, according to his own, or others, luſtful Deſires and Inclinations.

Theſe Words may alſo be conſider'd as an Argument to excite *Chriſtians* to eſchew Evil, and do Good, which he had preſſed upon them in the former Chapter, from the Example of *Chriſt*. And the Force of the Argument lies thus: All *Chriſtians* ſhould be armed with the ſame Mind and Reſolution againſt Sin, and for Holineſs, that *Chriſt* was. But *Chriſt* having ſuffer'd in the Fleſh for Sin, and ceas'd from Sin, liv'd in the Spirit unto God; therefore all *Chriſtians* ſhould endeavour all they can to ceaſe from Sin, and live no more *to the Luſts of Men, but to the Will of God.*

Q. *What is obſervable in the three following Verſes?*

A. That this Epiſtle was written, and directed not only to the *Jewiſh* Natives, but to the *Gentile* Proſelytes and Converts; this is evident from the Apoſtle's putting them in Mind that there was a Time, namely, before their Converſion, *when they wrought the will of the* Gentiles.

Obſerve, the black and diſmal Sins the *Gentiles* were guilty of, and wallow'd in, before their Converſion to *Chriſtianity*, namely, all manner of Senſuality, Uncleanneſs, Exceſs in Drinking, Revelling, Banquetings and Idolatries, join'd with the reſt of their Abominations. Lord! how endearing are our Obligations, *who were Sinners of the* Gentiles, for calling us out of this Darkneſs into marvellous Light by the Goſpel.

For the Time paſt may ſuffice to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles; as if he had ſaid, Surely you have had enough of Sin, and too much of an unregenerate State; your Luſts have taken up too much of your Lives, and had too much of your Love. One Moment's Service of Sin, is more than we owe it; we can never ſerve *Chriſt* too long, and our Luſts too ſhort a Time.

Note alſo the Uſage ſuch *Chriſtians*, as refuſe any longer to run into the ſame Exceſs of Riot with the Men of the World, muſt expect to meet with from them. 1. *They think it ſtrange*; they admire and wonder at them, as we do at Strangers that come from a foreign Country. And, 2. *They ſpeak evil of them*, becauſe they will not be as bad, and as mad as themſelves.

Obſerve laſtly, the Impartiality and Severity of that Account which the wicked Men of the World muſt render to God, the univerſal Judge, for all their hard Speeches which they have utter'd againſt the Righteous; *who ſhall give account to him, that is ready to judge the Quick and the Dead.* There muſt and ſhall be a Day of Account; there muſt be one, becauſe there never yet was one; there ſhall be one, becauſe God has made Man an accountable Creature; he can, and therefore he ſhall give an Account of all his Actions; for he has a Principle of Reaſon to know what he does, and a free Choice to govern himſelf, with a Rule to direct him what to chuſe, and what to refuſe; and conſequently, the Actions proceeding from him, muſt and ſhall be accounted for by him.

Q. *Why has God appointed* Chriſt *to be the ſupreme and univerſal Judge both of* Quick and Dead?

A. Partly as a fitting Reward for his great Humiliation and Sufferings; and partly, that the World may ſee what a great and excellent Perſon he was, who came to viſit them in great Humility; and partly, to give Advantage to the future Judgment, in that God has appointed a Man for our Judge, who is Fleſh of our Fleſh, and Bone of our Bone, one that is ſenſible of the Follies, Temptations, and Infirmities of Mankind, pities them, and will make favourable Allowances for them; nay, one that is God as well as Man, from whom we may expect all the Goodneſs of a God, and all the tender Compaſſion of a Man in their utmoſt Perfection; ſo that no Man, who has not out-ſinn'd the Mercies of a God, and the tender Compaſſion of a Man, need fear ſuch a Judge.

Q. *What is meant by the Dead, ver 6?*

A. Some underſtand the *Gentile* World, dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, to whom the Goſpel was preach'd, when they were thus ſpiritually dead and buried in Senſuality, that they might judge and condemn, oppoſe, mortify, and ſubdue thoſe carnal Appetites which they indulged whilſt they liv'd as natural Men, without the Knowledge of God's Will, and the Aſſiſtance of his Grace and Spirit.

Others underſtand the Words, as of ſuch as are naturally dead, that the Goſpel was preach'd to them as were long ſince dead, even our Fore-Fathers, that lived and died before *Chriſt's* Coming, and that they had the Goſpel preach'd to them while they were alive, that ſo they might mortify their ſinful Luſts and corrupt Affections, and lead new lives, according to the Direction and Command of God in their holy Word.

Hence it appears, that the Condition of Men now living, and of thoſe who have liv'd in all Ages before, is one and the ſame, having the ſame Goſpel preach'd to them for Subſtance, and conſequently the ſame Duties of Mortification and Holineſs required of them.

Q. *I deſire your Interpretation of thoſe Words, ver.* 7. But the End of all Things is at Hand?

A. Theſe Words are brought as a freſh Argument to perſuade the *Chriſtian Jews* to the Practice of ſincere Holineſs. *The End of all Things*, that is, of the *Jewiſh* State and Policy, their City, Temple, and Worſhip, *is at Hand*, the fatal Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* is now very near, therefore be ye ſober and temperate in all Things; watch, that the Day of Vexation overtake you not unawares.

Q. *In what Senſe does* Charity cover a Multitude of Sins, *ver.* 8?

A. This may be underſtood two Ways, 1. With reſpect to our ſelves. Charity, or true Love to our Brother, not ſtrictly to take notice of, but ſilently to to overlook and paſs by the Faults and Failings of others towards and againſt ourſelves. 2. 'Twill cover the Sins of others from the Eye of the World, and keep us from blazing abroad the Infirmities of others, to their Prejudice and Diſgrace; 'tis both unſafe and unwarrantable to cover the Sins of others, either by Flattery or Falſhood; but to cover a Sin by Charity, to conceal it from publick Notice, is certainly a *Chriſtian's* Duty, unleſs when the concealing it will do apparent Miſchief.

Q. *What is that* Hoſpitality *which he recommends in the 9th Verſe?*

A. Hoſpitality is a mutual Duty; whence it appears, that though Hoſpitality towards the Poor be a commanded Duty, yet among the Rich it is no Sin, but a Duty likewiſe, to give reciprocal Entertainments; for though our Saviour ſays, *Luke* xiv. 12. *When thou makeſt a Dinner, or Supper, call not thy Friends, and rich Neighbours*; the Prohibition is not abſolue; he does not forbid the inviting of the Rich, but charges us not to forget the Poor; we may treat both, if we have enough for both; but if not, what we have to ſpare muſt be then for them that have nothing, not for them that have enough already, for we muſt prefer Works of pious Charity before Acts of civil Courteſy.

Q. *What is intimated in theſe Words, ver.* 11. If any Man ſpeak?

A. That is, 1. As a publick Miniſter and Teacher, as he is inſtructed from the Oracles of God. Or, 2. If he ſpeaks as a private *Chriſtian*, let his Diſcourſe be grave and ſerious, for mutual Edification, eſpecially when we ſpeak of divine Things. Speech is a noble and advantageous Benefit to Man, by which he excels the whole Creation; our Tongue is our Glory, the Inſtrument of our Creator's Praiſe; and there is no Subject ſo ſublime and honourable for the Tongue of Man to be employ'd about, as the Word and Oracles of God; but then we muſt never mention them but with Reverence; ſuch as make the Scriptures the Theme of their giddy Mirth and prophane Drollery, forget the Injunction of the Apoſtle, *If any ſpeak, let him ſpeak as of the Oracles of God.*

Q. *What do thoſe Words import,* If any Man Miniſter?

A. That is, to ſupply the Neceſſities of others, either as a Deacon, whoſe Office it was then to take care of the Poor; or as a private *Chriſtian*, by charitable Contribution, let him do it chearfully and readily, *according to the Ability God hath given him*, otherwiſe his Charity will not be acceptable to God, becauſe not proportionable to what God has given him.

Q. *What is God's End in afflicting his People?*

A. It is *to try them*, not to conſume them; to try their Graces, and deſtroy their Corruptions, to give them Opportunity to make Proof of the Truth of their Faith, Sincerity and Conſtancy.

The ſuffering Servants of God are ſaid to be *Partakers of* Chriſt's *Sufferings*, becauſe they ſuffer for him, and he ſuffers with them, and in them, and alſo becauſe he ſuffer'd the ſame Things before them, and much worſe Things for them.

Q. *When will be the Time that* Chriſtians *ſhall rejoice for having been Partakers with* Chriſt *in his Sufferings?*

A. At the great Day, when *Chriſt's* Glory ſhall be reveal'd, then eſpecially will the ſuffering Servants of God rejoice, when they ſhall ſee the Redeemer coming in the Clouds with an human Body glorified in its higheſt Exaltation. O joyful Day of *Chriſt's* Appearance, when this Royal Bridegroom ſhall take his ſuffering Spouſe the Church by the Hand, and preſent her to his Father; own her his in the Preſence of Men and Angels, beſtow a Kingdom upon them that they may be with him where he is eternally to behold his Glory, and to feed upon Happineſs as large as their Capacities, and as laſting as their Beings.

Q. *How does the Spirit of God reſt upon reproached* Chriſtians, *ver.* 4?

A. This implies two Things, 1. Complacency, that he is well pleas'd where he is. 2. Permanency, he abides where he reſts, and dwells there with Delight. Some think the Expreſſion is an Alluſion to *Noah's* Dove, that hover'd about, but could not reſt till ſhe return'd to the Ark. Thus the Spirit of God is here call'd a Spirit of Glory, from its chearing, ſealing and reviving Influences, which make *Chriſtians* glory in Tribulations; the Spirit flies from Place to Place, and from Perſon to Perſon, but reſts and abides only with ſuch *Chriſtians* as ſuffer for the Name of *Chriſt*.

Q. *It follows,* on their Part he is evil ſpoken of but on your Part is glorified: *Pray explain this?*

A. That is, by their Reproaches caſt upon you, they blaſpheme the Holy Spirit, as the Word ſignifies; but he is eminently glorified by your Patience and Conſtancy of Mind under all your Preſſures, which ſhews the Power of the Spirit reſting upon you, and working mightily.

Q. *What is it to glorify God on the Behalf of our Sufferings?*

A. Afflictions and Sufferings, conſider'd barely in themſelves, are far from being glorious; but conſider them in their Cauſe, as Sufferings for Righteouſneſs ſake, and ſo they are glorious.

Q. *How do you underſtand theſe Words, ver.* 17. For the Time is come that Judgment muſt begin at the Houſe of God?

A. God will not ſpare his own Houſe, nor Houſhold, not his own Children, when they ſin againſt him; yea, the Lord will firſt puniſh thoſe who have been forgetful of him, and trifled with him, who have been formal in their Profeſſion, and vain in their Converſation. When with Sorrow we ſee God contending with his own People for their Sins, we may with Aſtoniſhment expect what will be the End of thoſe who obey not the Goſpel; when he brings ſuch Troubles upon his own Houſe, what Trouble may they expect from God who are but a Den of Thieves, and a Cage of unclean Birds?

And if the Righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear? When the Day of Viſitation comes which is really at Hand, and God ſhall begin to puniſh the *Jews*, his own People; if then the righteous among them with great Difficulty eſcape the common Calamity, how ſhall the Sinners and Ungodly think to eſcape unpuniſhed in that Day of Vengeance when *Chriſt* ſhall come to plead with them?

Some have made Uſe of this Text to ſhew the Difficulty of eternal Salvation; and that the beſt and holieſt of Men, the moſt eminent in Grace, are very difficultly ſaved; which, though a Truth in itſelf, yet is ſcarcely deducible from this Text, which certainly ſpeaks of their Temporal Salvation.

Q. *How is it to* ſuffer according to the Will of God, *ver.* 19?

A. That is, for what is according to the Will of God, either to be believed or practiced by us, for aſſerting and maintaining the Purity of the *Chriſtian* Doctrine and Worſhip; and when our Patience under Sufferings is as extenſive and intenſive as God requires, when our Patience is as large and as haſtening as our troubles, then may we be ſaid *to ſuffer according to the Will of God.*

Such Sufferers may *commit the keeping of their Souls to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* When Men really ſuffer for well-doing, they may with great Aſſurance commit their Lives, and all that is dear to them, to the ſpecial Care of divine Providence; either God will keep us from, or ſupport us under Trials, when thus we commit ourſelves to him.

CHAP. V.

The Duty of Elders; the Young to be in Subjection and Humility. The Subtleneſs and Power of Satan. *His Prayer for them; a Doxology; mutual Salutations, and the Apoſtolical Benediction.*

Q. DOES *not St.* Peter *derogate ſomewhat from his Authority and Dignity as an Apoſtle, when he ſtiles himſelf an* Elder, *v.* 1?

A. He does not ſay, I, who am the univerſal Head of the Church, *Chriſt*'s Vicar upon Earth; but I, who am an Elder by Age and Apoſtleſhip, who have been long the Miniſter of the Circumciſion; I exhort, I beſeech, and entreat you as my Brethren, Fellow-Labourers in our Lord's Vineyard.

Again, he does not ſay, I command, who am the Chief of the Apoſtles, with whoſe Confeſſion *Chriſt* was ſo well pleaſed, that he ſaid, Thou art *Peter*, and upon this Rock I will build my Church; but I exhort, *who was a Witneſs of the Sufferings of* Chriſt; an Eye-witneſs of what our Lord and Maſter ſuffered in the faithful Diſcharge of his Office, both in his Life, and at his Death; *and alſo a a Partaker of the Glory that ſhall be revealed*; I was an Eye-witneſs of *Chriſt*'s Glory in his Transfiguration here on Earth, and hope to be Partaker of that Glory which ſhall hereafter be revealed in Heaven.

Q. *In what Senſe is the Church of* Chriſt *a Flock,* Feed the Flock, *Verſe* 2?

A. Denominations are given in Scripture to Perſons and Things, proper to the State of Perſons and Things; thus here the Church is called a Flock, and ſometimes a *little Flock*, in Oppoſition to the Herds, and large Droves of the Men of the World; yet a Flock conſiſts not of a Few abſolutely, but comparatively only; a Flock contains a Multitude.

Again; as the Church is called a Flock for the Number, ſo alſo for their Order; a Flock is under Inſpection and Government continually; *Chriſt Jeſus* is the Overſeer of this Flock.

Farther; it is a Flock in reſpect of the Unity and Love that is amongſt them; tho' the Church be ſcattered over the World; yet there is an holy Communication, and ſweet Communion of the Members amongſt themſelves.

Feed the Flock; feed it with wholeſome Doctrines, guide and govern it by ſtrict Diſcipline, overlooking it continually, watch over it with unwearied Diligence; and that you may do ſo, be perpetually reſident among them. How can the Flock be watch'd over duly, when the Shepherd lives ſeveral Miles from the Fold, and is following his Pleaſure when he ſhould be feeding his Sheep? *Feed the Flock among you.*

Q. *Who are to be underſtood by the* Younger, *Verſe* 5?

A. They were younger, either becauſe they were generally younger in Years than their ſpiritual Guides, or becauſe they ought to ſhew their Reverence and Obedience to them, as was ſuitable in young ones towards their Elders: Theſe young ones he exhorts to *ſubmit themſelves* to the Guidance of their Elders and Teachers. Inſtruction and Juriſdiction belonged to the Elders and Teachers, Subjection and Obedience to the Younger.

He adds, *Yea, all of you be ſubject one to another*; intimating, that there is a Duty of mutual Subjection which all *Chriſtians* owe to one another in Love; they ought to condeſcend to the meaneſt Offices one towards another, to bear with the Infirmities of each other.

Q. *How were they to be* cloathed with Humility?

A. The original Word render'd cloathed, ſignifies, firſt, an upper Garment, a Frock or Cloak put over all the reſt of our Cloaths; and ſo imports that we ſhould be wrap'd all over with this Grace; that this ſhould be moſt viſible in our Converſations, Words and Actions, and conſpicuous beyond all other Virtues.

Farther, it ſignifies a Belt which girds about our Garments, and ſo imports that we ſhould tie it faſt unto us, and have thoſe Conſiderations always fixed upon our Spirits, which may keep us in an humble Frame of Soul.

Humility therefore is a ſpecial Ornament, a beauful Robe, to be daily worn, which greatly commends us both to God and Man. We are never to reckon ourſelves dreſs'd, till we have this Livery of our humble Maſter, *Chriſt Jeſus*, put upon us; *Be cloathed with Humility.*

Q. *Explain the 6th Verſe?*

A. *Humble yourſeles therefore under the mighty Hand of God.* By the Hand of God underſtand his Judgments, his almighty Power, which it is our Duty to ſubmit unto, and to be humble under, in the Day of our Affliction; and this profound Submiſſion, and deep Humiliation, is the Way to Glory and Exaltation. He can exalt us, and will do it here, if it be good for us; but ſometimes God ſees Abaſement better for his People.

Q. *What is that* Care *which the Apoſtle did caſt upon God?*

A. The Nature of this Duty enjoined, is, to caſt our Care upon God; 'tis not a providential, and prudential Care, but an anxious and vexatious Care, that the Scripture forbids; and the Duty here required is, that after we have uſed all prudent Care and Diligence, in Subſerviency to the Providence of God, we ſhould not be over-ſollicitous about the Iſſue and Event of Things; which when we have done all we can, will be out of our Power.

Caſting our Care upon God implies alſo, that we ſhould refer the Iſſue and Event of Things to his wiſe Providence, which is continually watching over us, and knows how to diſpoſe of all Things for the beſt Advantage to us; entirely confiding in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and reſting ſatisfied with the Diſpoſals of his Providence, whatever they be. This is to caſt all our Care upon God.

Q. *What is implied in thoſe Words,* for he careth for us?

A. This implies ingeneral, that the Providence of God governs the World, and concerns itſelf in the Affairs of Men, and diſpoſes of all Events that happen to us. It alſo implies particularly, that Providence is more particularly concerned for good Men; and that he takes a ſpecial Care of them, and their Concerns; the Care that God takes of them is a ſpecial, tender, promiſed and engaging Care, a Care myſteriouſly exerciſed; he then takes moſt Care of them, when they think he takes leaſt, and the World thinks that he takes all.

Q. St. Peter, *after exhorting them to be ſober and vigilant, adds, as a Reaſon,* Becauſe your Adverſary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour: *What Inſtruction does this Character of the Devil convey to us?*

A. Every Word contains a Motive to *Chriſtian* Watchfulneſs. He is *your Adverſary,* who will do you all poſſible Miſchief; he is the Devil, an Accuſer, and one that ſeeks all Advantages againſt you; he is a cruel Adverſary, a roaring Lion; a reſtleſs Adverſary; *He goes about ſeeking whom he may devour;* what Soul he may devour, for that is the Bait he gapes for. It grieves the Devils, thoſe apoſtate Angels, to know that the Souls of Men are appointed to fill up thoſe vacant Places in Heaven, out of which they turn'd themſelves.

Q. *Pray explain the 10th Verſe, which contains the Apoſtle's Prayer for them?*

A. *The God of all Grace;* the Author of all Grace, from whom ye have received what you are already poſſeſs'd of, and from whom you expect Supplies of what is deficient in you. The Seed, Growth, and Perfection of Grace are all from God; reſtraining, renewing, and ſanctifying Grace ſprings from the ſame divine Fountain.

Who hath called us unto eternal Glory; that eternal Glory whereof Believers at the laſt Day ſhall be made Partakers, which is called God's Glory, becauſe it is that which he both promiſed to them, and will at laſt inveſt them with; and becauſe they ſhall after a ſort partake of that divine Glory which they behold; *Chriſtians* are called to the Hope and Expectation of this Glory on Account of the Promiſe of it, which God made to *Chriſt, Tit.* i. 2. and they are brought into a State of Preparation for it; God hath by his Word and Spirit wrought them for the ſame Thing.

By Chriſt Jeſus; he reveals it to them, purchaſes it for them, works that Faith and Repentance in them which qualifies them for, and entitles them unto his eternal Glory; *Chriſt* is the Cauſe of their Glorification as well as Calling.

After that ye have ſuffered a while; this he adds for their Encouragement, that whatever they ſuffer'd would be but ſhort; ſome Afflictions, ſome Troubles muſt be expected and endured by all *Chriſtians,* how dear ſoever to God they are or may be. Was there ever a Patriarch, Prophet, Apoſtle, Primitive or Modern *Chriſtian,* that did not ſuffer awhile? Saints muſt ſuffer a while from the remains of Sin, from the Temptations of *Satan,* from the Enemies of Religion, from the Friends of it, from God himſelf, their beſt Friend.

Make ye perfect; either, 1. perfect that which is begun, *Heb.* xiii. 20, 21. eſtabliſh that which is right, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 16. Strengthen that which is weak, ſettle, by a firm Union and Conjunction unto *Chriſt,* that which is already built, *Eph.* iii. 17, 18. Or, 2. Theſe four Words, *perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengththen, ſettle,* you, may be but different Expreſſions to illuſtrate one and the ſame Thing, namely, God's confirming and eſtabliſhing thoſe Saints unto their final Perſeverance; and his uſing ſuch a Variety of Expreſſions may imply, that it is a Matter of very great Difficulty to hold on our *Chriſtian* Courſe without failing or coming ſhort of the Goal; and therefore we need ſingular Aſſiſtance from God to enable us to do it.

Q. *What do you obſerve on the Doxology, ver.* 8?

A. The Verb *be* in the Text is not in the *Greek,* and ſo it may be read with a Supply of a Verb either of an Imperative Mood, and then it is a Doxology, as we render it; or, of the Indicative Mood, *he hath* Glory and Dominion; or, to him belongs Glory and Dominion, or, glorious Dominion or Power; and then it tends to encourage theſe Saints, in that he, whom the Apoſtle prays to eſtabliſh and ſtrengthen them, has Power ſufficient to do it.

Q. *Who was* Sylvanus *mentioned, ver.* 12?

A. Either *Silas, Acts* xv. and xvi. Chap. whom *Peter* therefore calls a faithful Brother to them, that they might more readily receive him, though a Miniſter of the Uncircumciſion; or elſe this *Sylvanus* was ſome other that had preached to them, and is therefore ſaid to be a faithful Brother to them; the former is more probable.

Q. *Was St.* Peter *at* Babylon *when he wrote this Epiſtle, as ſeems intimated by the Salutation ver.* 13?

A. Say ſome Expoſitors, (though Dr. *Hammond* ſeems of another Mind) the *Jews* being very numerous in thoſe Parts, as having ſettled themſelves there ever ſince the Captivity; and *Peter* being an Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, his Work lay much thereabout. The *Papiſts* would have *Babylon* here to be *Rome,* as *Rev.* xvii. and that *Peter* gives it that Name rather than its own, becauſe being eſcaped out of Priſon at *Jeruſalem, Acts* xii. 12. he would not have it known where he was. But how comes he that was ſo bold before, become ſo timorous now? Did this become the Head of the Church, the Vicar of *Chriſt,* and Prince of the Apoſtles? And is it probable he ſhould live 25 Years at *Rome* (as they pretend he did) and yet not known to be there? Where-ever he was, he had *Mark* now with him, who is ſaid to have died at *Alexandria* the eighth Year of *Nero,* and *Peter* not till ſix Years after.

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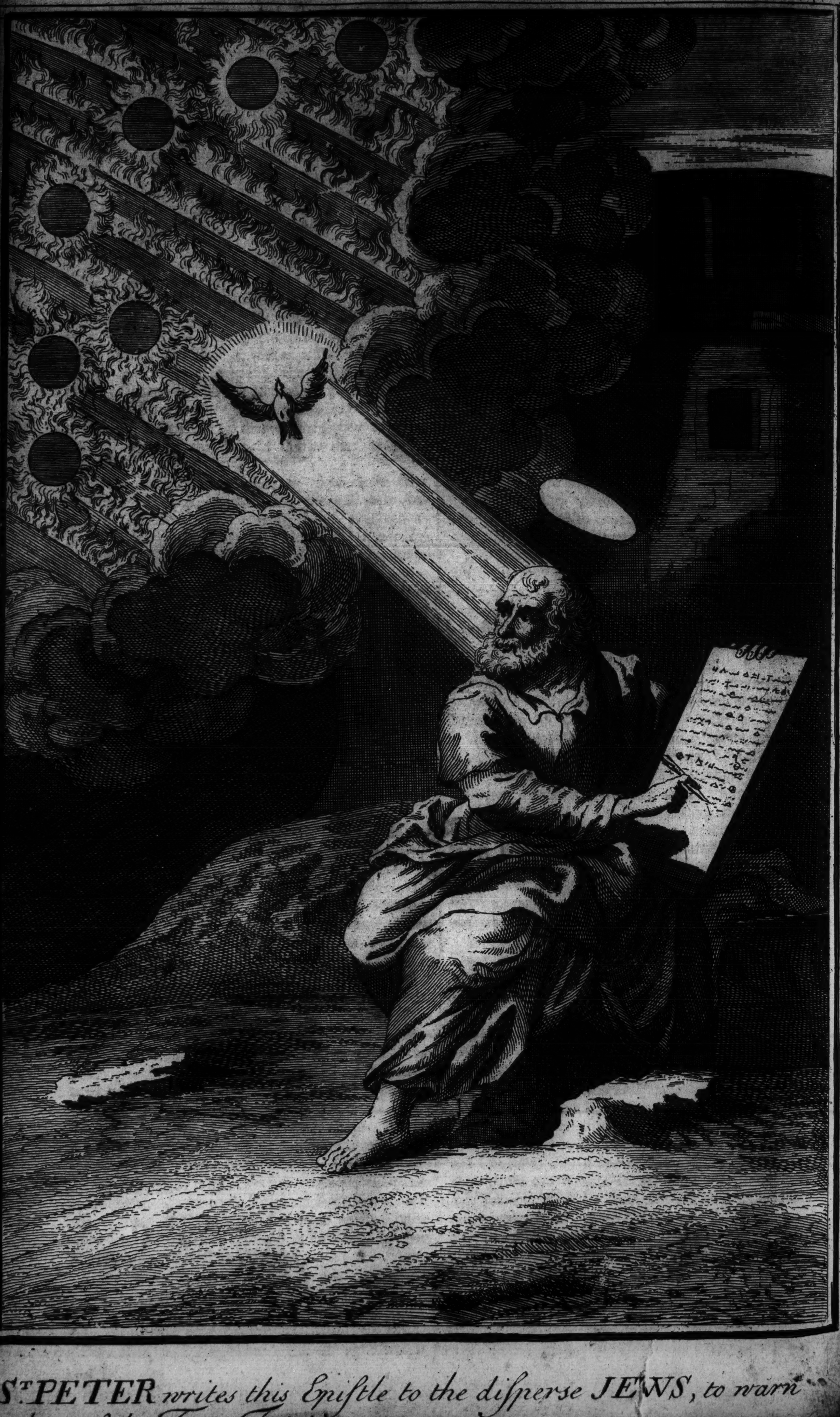
The IId. Epiſtle to St. PETER.



St. PETER *writes this Epiſtle to the diſperse* **JEWS**, *to warn them of the Firey Trial*

The Second Epiſtle General of
St. PETER.

THE ſecond Epiſtle *of St.* Peter *was written by him a little before his Death, he having received a Revelation, probably thereof; he writes this ſecond Letter to the* Jews *of the Diſperſion, ſcattered through* Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, *and* Bithynia, *to warn them of the fiery Tryal, that ſharp and bitter Perſecution which was coming upon them, and to fortify them againſt that Apoſtaſy from the Faith, that Falling from their own Stedfaſtneſs, that Departing from the holy Commandment; which theſe newly converted* Jews *were very prone unto: He ſends therefore this* Epiſtle *to eſtabliſh and ſettle them, to ſtrengthen and confirm them; and this is the laſt Mention we find in Scripture of this great and glorious Apoſtle.*

Chap. I.

The uſual Salutation. Calling and Election to be proved by good Works. The Doctrine of Chriſt *no Fable; for he, and two other Diſciples beheld his Glory on the Mount, and heard a Voice from Heaven, giving Teſtimony to him; the ſame witneſſed by the Prophets.*

Q. THE *Apoſtle ſays, that the Perſons, to whom this Epiſtle is directed,* had obtained like precious Faith with us: *Pray wherein was it alike?*

A. Like, for its Nature and Quality, though not for its Meaſure and Degree, and alike precious in Regard of its Object, *Chriſt*; in Regard of its Subject, the Heart; in Regard of its Act, which is Acceptance and Conſent to the Terms of the Goſpel-Covenant; in Regard of its Effects and precious Fruits, Peace with God, Peace with Conſcience, Victory over the World, and the like. The Faith of the pooreſt Believer is as precious as that of the richeſt; and the weakeſt Believer has the ſame precious Faith with the ſtrongeſt; and if it be alike precious, it ſhall be alike permanent and perſevering.

Q. *Pray explain the following Words,* Through the Righteouſneſs of God, and our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. All Grace is to us through *Chriſt*, for the Sake of his Righteouſneſs, Sufferings, and Satisfaction; and as all Grace is deriv'd from him, and for his Sake conferr'd, ſo all our Good, that little Service we do for God, is accepted through him, and own'd for his Sake. And if ſo, then *Jeſus Chriſt* is really God; for the Righteouſneſs of a Creature cannot juſtify me in the Sight of God. And farther, if ſo, then it is not Faith that juſtifies and ſaves, but the Righteouſneſs of *Chriſt*, upon which Faith is grounded, *Eph.* ii. 8. *By Grace ye are ſaved* effectually, *through Faith* inſtrumentally. The brazen Serpent heal'd not the Eye that look'd on it; yet without looking upon it, there was no Help, nor any Healing to be expected by it.

Q. *What is meant by* Grace *and* Peace *in the Apoſtle's Salutation?*

A. Grace to free us from the Wrath of God, and reinſtate us in his Favour; Peace to quiet our Conſciences, and reconcile us to our ſelves. The Meaſure of it is, Grace and Peace *be multiplied*; they already had both Grace and Peace, yet the Apoſtle prays for a farther Increaſe of them; there is no Perfection of Grace attainable in this Life.

The Means for multiplying Grace and Peace are, *through the Knowledge of God, and of* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.* There is really no comfortable Knowledge but in and through *Chriſt*, *John* xvii. 3.

this is Life Eternal, &c. Out of *Chriſt* God is a Revenger, but in *Chriſt* a reconciled Father.

Q. *The Apoſtle adds, ver.* 4. *that God had given them all Things pertaining to* Life and Godlineſs: *What is meant by that Expreſſion?*

A. By *Life and Godlineſs,* underſtand all Things conducing to the Preſervation of natural Life, likewiſe of Grace here, and Glory hereafter; and whereas it is ſaid they were called to *Glory and Virtue,* by Glory underſtand the Glory of being *Chriſtians*; by Virtue, the good Life that becomes the Profeſſors of the Name of *Chriſt.* To both theſe they were called by a glorious Calling, as being attended with the Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt.

If by Glory and Virtue be underſtood Grace here, and Glory hereafter, it ſhews our Privilege at preſent, and the Conſummation of all our Hopes in the World to come; it alſo inſtructs us, that ſuch as would be glorified, muſt be virtuous.

Q. *In what Reſpect are the* Promiſes *of the Goſpel* exceeding great and precious, *ver.* 4?

A. Greatneſs and Goodneſs are then moſt ſhining when they meet in the ſame Subject; that ſuch a glorious Conjunction is ſeldom found either in Perſons or Things; ſeldom are great Men good, or good Men great; Pebbles are great, but not precious; Pearls are precious, though ſmall; but the Promiſes are both for Quantity exceeding great, for Quality exceeding precious, and that in Reſpect of the Author of them, God; the Foundation of them, the Blood of *Chriſt*; the Manner of their Diſpenſation, they are freely given; the Means whereby they are apprehended and applied, precious Faith; the Promiſes are exceeding precious in in Regard of the End of them, which is to make us Partakers of the Divine Nature, not of the Eſſence, but Qualities of it, which enables us in ſome Meaſure to reſemble God; as the Seal communicates its Signature, but not its Subſtance, ſo in the Work of Regeneration God imparts not his Eſſence, but infuſes holy Principles and gracious Habits into the Soul, whereby the *Chriſtian* reſembles him.

Q. *The Apoſtle having told us what God had done for us, comes in the 6th and 7th Verſes, and tells us what we are to do for ourſelves, and reckons up ſeveral Chriſtian Virtues; which pray explain and illuſtrate?*

A. *Beſides this, giving all Diligence*; beſides what God has given us, and done for us, let us be careful daily to add to our Stock and Store. Adding to our Faith, Virtue; that is, all good Works in general, without which, Faith is dead or dying; and Fortitude, or holy Courage, in doing our duty in particular. To Virtue, Knowledge; that is a more exact Knowledge of our Duty, and a farther Increaſe of it; for Knowledge is the Light, without which the *Chriſtian* cannot ſee to do his Work. To Knowledge, Temperance, which ſubdues the Violence of our unruly Appetites and Paſſions, and reduces thoſe rebellious Powers under the Government and Dominion of Reaſon and Religion. To Temperance, Patience under all Wrongs and Sufferings whatever. To Patience, Godlineſs, a conſcientious Regard to all the Duties of the firſt Table; let the Fear of God reſtrain you from Sin, the Love of God conſtrain you to Duty. To Godlineſs, Brotherly Kindneſs, or a fervent Love to all *Chriſtians*, as being our Brethren, Fellow-Members in *Chriſt*, and this for the Sake of Grace. To Brotherly Kindneſs, Charity; that is, to all Mankind, as proceeding from the ſame Stock, having the ſame Nature, and ſubject to the ſame Neceſſities with ourſelves; let there be found with you a Deſire and Endeavour to do all the poſſible Good you can to every one.

Hence learn, that the ſeveral Graces and Duties of a Chriſtian muſt not be ſeparated; where there is one Grace in Sincerity, there is a conſtant Care to ſecure all the reſt; the Duties of both Tables are religiouſly obſerv'd, both as an Argument of Sincerity, and as an Ornament to his holy Profeſſion.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 12th Verſe,* For ſo an Entrance ſhall be miniſtred to you abundantly to the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. Four ſorts of Perſons are ſpoken of in Scripture; 1. Some are ſaid to be far from the Kingdom of God, afar off from God, as Heathens and Infidels, who know not God. 2. Others are ſaid not to be far from the Kingdom of God, *Mark* xii. 34. 3. Others are ſcarcely ſav'd with with great Difficulty, ſo as by Fire, with much Droſs of Error in Judgment, and Corruption in Life. 4 Others are ſaid to have an abundant Entrance adminiſter'd to them into the everlaſting Kingdom; and theſe are the fruitful *Chriſtians*, and who are daily adding to their Graces, and going from Strength to Strength theſe ſhoot the Gulph of Death in the holy Triumph of Grace, they enter the Harbour of Heaven with a full Sail, with a full Aſſurance of Faith and Hope.

The Perſons to whom St. *Peter* gave the foregoing Exhortation, were knowing, eſtabliſh'd, inform'd, and confirm'd in the Truth; but though knowing, they wanted farther Information; though eſtabliſh'd, they needed farther Confirmation, as Ver. 12. It's a dangerous Notion, that a *Chriſtian* in this Life may live above Ordinances, and outgrow Counſels and Exhortations, as he need not hear, or pray, or the like. St. *Peter* thought otherwiſe; theſe were grown *Chriſtians* to whom he writes; yet he tells them three Times in four Verſes, that he would not be negligent to put them in Remembrance, even of thoſe Things which they knew already.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the ocular Proof which the Apoſtle brings that* Chriſt *was the* Meſſias?

A. There is as much Aſſurance given of the Certainty of *Chriſt*'s being the promis'd *Meſſiah*, and of the evangelical Doctrine, as the World could reaſonably deſire; Men can humanly be certain of nothing more than what they perceive by their Senſes, which are the proper Judges of all ſenſible Objects; now no Satisfaction of this Kind was wanting to the World concerning our bleſſed Saviour and his Miracles; the Apoſtles atteſting what they had heard, what they had ſeen, and their Hands had handled, of the Word of Life, 1 *John* i. 1.

Q. *What do we learn from the 19th Verſe, where the Apoſtle exhorts them to* take heed to the Word of Prophecy, as unto a Light that ſhineth in a dark Place?

A. That the Scriptures, or written Word of God, are a more ſure Word to us, than any Voice from Heaven, or Revelation whatſoever; not that there was any Uncertainty in the Lord's Voice utter'd from Heaven at *Chriſt*'s Transfiguration, but becauſe that tranſient Voice was heard only by Three, and might be miſtaken or forgotten, whereas the holy Scriptures are a ſtanding and authentick Record, and a moſt ſure Ground for Faith to build upon; accordingly the Apoſtle tells them, they would do well to attend to the written Word; that is, the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, as unto a Light that ſhined in that dark Time; till by conſidering thoſe antient Prophecies, and comparing them with what *Chriſt* had done and ſuffer'd, they might find the Day dawning upon them, and the Morning Star, the Holy Spirit, ariſing in their Hearts, ſo enlightning and convincing them, that they would have no more Doubt or Scruples remaining concerning the great Truth, atteſted by a Voice from Heaven, and confirm'd by the Writings of the Prophets, namely, that *Jeſus* is the true and promiſed *Meſſiah*, and really the Son of God.

Q. *How do you underſtand the 20th, and 21ſt Verſes, where the Apoſtle tells them, that no Prophecy of Scripture is of* private Interpretation?

A. Theſe Verſes are variouſly underſtood. Some interpret them thus; That no Part of Scripture was written by private Impulſe, Imitation, or Motion, by no Suggeſtion of Men's own private Spirits, but they gave out to us what the Holy Spirit gave in to them; nor did they prophecy according to the *Will of Man*, that is, when they would, or what they would, but they ſpake by the Inſtigation and Impulſe of the Holy Ghoſt. Theſe Words ſhew what Authority the Pen-Men of the Holy Scriptures had to write what they did, and why we ſhould be ſo careful to take Heed to what they wrote.

Others underſtand the Words thus; That no Prophecy of Scripture is to be expounded, as ſpeaking only of thoſe Perſons as the Speaker firſt intended, according to his own private Thought; for thoſe holy Men were mov'd by God's Spirit to ſpeak thoſe Words, which ſignified more than they deſign'd, or always meant and underſtood themſelves; for Inſtance, *David* often ſpeaks, in the *Pſalms*, Words true of himſelf and *Solomon*; but the Holy Ghoſt pointed at *Chriſt*, who was typified by thoſe Perſons; ſo, if *Joſiah* be meant in *Iſ.* liii. as ſome would have it, it's evident he was but typical, and *Chriſt* and his Sufferings were ultimately deſign'd; ſo that it's plain, the Scripture-Prophecy receives its full Senſe from the Spirit, not from the Speaker.

Others underſtand the Words thus; That no private Perſon muſt take upon him the Interpretation of Scripture, but refer all to the Church. Hence *Eſtius* infers, that the Reformed, and their Paſtors, muſt not interpret the Scriptures, but the Catholick Church only. To which we reply; That as no private Perſons, ſo likewiſe, no Church may preſume to interpret Scripture according to their own Mind, nor make their private Opinion to be the Senſe of Scripture, but to ſeek Underſtanding from God, who ſhews the Meaning of the Word by the Word, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and by his Spirit leads good Men into the Knowledge and Underſtanding of it; *holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.*

Chap. II.

Falſe Teachers ſhall ariſe and ſedute many; their Character and Judgment, confirmed by the Examples of fallen Angels, the old World, and of Sodom *and* Gomorrah.

Q. HOW *is it conſiſtent with the Goodneſs of God to his People, to ſuffer falſe Teachers to introduce damnable Hereſies into his Church?*

A. Almighty God never intended a certain Remedy againſt Hereſy, any more than he did againſt Sin and Vice; God does what he ſees beſt and fitteſt, not what we think to be ſo. Infallibility it ſelf is no effectual Remedy againſt Hereſy; the Apoſtles were certainly infallible, and yet they could neither prevent nor extinguiſh Hereſy, which never abounded more than in the Apoſtles Times. St. *Paul* ſays, *there muſt be Hereſies*, 1 *Cor.* i. 19. St. *Peter here ſays, that there ſhall be falſe Teachers*; conſequently, either the Church is not infallible, or Infallibility is no effectual Remedy againſt Hereſy.

Q. *Why is the* Chriſtian *Religion called the* Way of Faith, *ver.* 2?

A. In Regard of its Original, the God of Truth; of its Efficacy, it works Truth in the inward Parts; and becauſe it brings thoſe that embrace and practice it, to the Enjoyment of him who is the God of Truth.

Q. *How did the Hereticks* make Merchandize of them, *as the Apoſtle tells them, ver.* 3?

A. The Buſineſs of *Hereticks* is to ſell their own Souls, as *Judas* did *Chriſt*, for ſome outward Benefit. The Arts which they uſe to circumvent and deceive, are feigned Words, artificially compoſed to ſeduce, drawing into Error with a deceitful Eloquence. The dreadful Puniſhment which attends their Sin, is ſwift Deſtruction; *their Damnation ſlumbereoh not*, &c.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle prove, that Damnation will be the Portion of theſe Seducers?*

A. By a threefold Inſtance, namely, the Angels, the old World, and the People of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; from whence he infers, that if God ſpared not theſe, he would not long ſpare falſe Prophets, and their Followers.

The fallen Angels ſinned, and fell from that State of Holineſs in which they were originally created; and their Puniſhment was, they were caſt down to Hell, and deliver'd into Chains of Darkneſs, reſerved unto Judgment. But are they not judged and puniſhed already? Yes, doubtleſs, but the full Wrath of God will not be poured out upon them till the Day of Judgment; if they are now as full of Sin as they can be, 'tis certain they are not ſo full of Miſery and Torment as they ſhall be.

The ſecond example is that of the old World, upon whoſe ſinning God brought a Flood, drowning them all; except eight Perſons. The Multitudes of Sinners are no Hindrance to God in executing Judgment upon them for their Sins; God can deſtroy a ſinful World as eaſily as a ſinful Sinner.

The third Inſtance is, the wicked Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, which were conſumed by Fire from Heaven, and render'd a dreadful example to all that ſhould live ungodly. Sin lays the Foundation of Ruin in the moſt flouriſhing Cities and Kingdoms; the ſtrongeſt Walls are no Obſtruction to Judgment, when Sin is within them; *Sodom's* Plenty of Power could not ſecure her Inhabitants, when Sin had once expoſed them to the Wrath of God.

Q. *What Inference does the Apoſtle draw from the particular Example of* Lot, *and his gracious Preſervation?*

A. That Almighty God knows how to preſerve his own faithful Servants from the Evil of Temptations and Trials, which they have met with in the World, and can and will reſerve the Wicked to the Day of Judgment, to be puniſhed. The Wicked may ſometimes eſcape Trouble; but all their Preſervations are but Reſervations for future and further Evil.

God knows many Ways how to deliver the Righteous; but (conſidering the Tenor of his Revealing Will) he knows no Way to deliver the Wicked, they having refuſed all Ways of his Appointment for their Deliverance.

Q. *What are thoſe* Dignities *which the Deſpiſers of Government, Verſe* 10. *were not afraid to ſpeak Evil of?*

A. Some think, the Dignities here intended, were the Angels, others the Apoſtles; but moſt underſtand it of civil Rulers. It is a very heinous Sin in the Sight of God, to deſpiſe Government, and oppoſe Rulers.

The bleſſed Angels, *ver.* 11. who have more Power than Men, when they plead againſt Devils themſelves, do it not by railing Accuſation. This angelical Leſſon we ſhould learn, of forbearing railing Accuſations, not to return Evil for Evil, but being defamed, entreat; we are to be as juſt to another's Reputation as our own.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle compare the heretical Seducers to* brute Beaſts, *Verſe* 12?

A. 1. Becauſe their Minds run after ſenſual Objects, and know no Meaſure in the uſing of them; like Swine, they wallow over Head and Ears in the Mud of ſenſual Luſts.

2. They were alſo as ſecure as the brute Beaſts; they mock at the Denunciation of God's Judgments, ſaying, *Where is the Promiſe of his coming?* It is a righteous Thing to leave them to be governed by Senſe, who will not be guided by Grace; they would not be Saints, and at length they ceaſe to be Men, and, like Brutes, fall into the Ditch of beaſtly Senſuality.

In a Word, they ſhall be deſtroyed *like brute Beaſts in their own Corruption*; in their natural Corruptions; by their Luxury and Intemperance, bringing Diſeaſes and Death upon their Bodies; in their civil Corruptions, overthrowing their Families, by ſwallowing down their Eſtates; yea, they corrupt themſelves eternally, deſtroying Soul and Body by their Exceſs.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle join Covetouſneſs with Uncleanneſs, Verſe* 15?

A. Covetouſneſs is often the Cauſe of Uncleanneſs. How many, for the ſake of Money, have violated their matrimonial Faith, allured more by the Adulterer's Purſe than his Perſon. Scarcely will a Perſon be able to reſiſt any Sin, who embraces this one.

What a mighty Struggle there ſometimes is in a natural Man's Conſcience concerning Sin? The Light of *Balaam's* Conſcience made him refuſe the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs, and ſpeak honourably; *If* Balak *would give me his Houſe full of Silver and Gold, I cannot*, &c. But at the ſame Time Luſt in his Heart led him ſtrongly to deſire it: *He loved the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs*; loved it, yet durſt not touch it.

Q. *How were theſe Seducers like* Wells without Water, *and* Clouds that are carried with a Tempeſt?

A. They pretended indeed to be deep Fountains of Knowledge, but they were like Wells without Water; and to be Clouds, containing Abundance of Rain, for the watering of the Church, whereas they were Clouds carried about with the Tempeſt of Pride and Ambition, from one vicious Doctrine and Practice to another, darkening the Church; for whom, by the juſt Judgment of God, *is reſerved the Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever.*

The Miniſters of the Goſpel ought to be as Wells, for Depth of Knowledge, for Reſidency and Fixedneſs of Abode, for Purity of Doctrine; tho' Miniſters are Wells of Clay, yet ſhould they be always Wells full of the Water of Life; and always at Hand for People to have Recourſe to.

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ample to all that ſhould live ungodly. Sin lays the Foundation of Ruin in the moſt flouriſhing Cities and Kingdoms; the ſtrongeſt Walls are no Obſtruction to Judgment, when Sin is within them; *Sodom*'s Plenty of Power could not ſecure her Inhabitants, when Sin had once expoſed them to the Wrath of God.

Q. *What Inference does the Apoſtle draw from the particular Example of* Lot, *and his gracious Preſervation?*

A. That Almighty God knows how to preſerve his own faithful Servants from the Evil of Temptations and Trials, which they have met with in the World, and can and will reſerve the Wicked to the Day of Judgment, to be puniſhed. The Wicked may ſometimes eſcape Trouble; but all their Preſervations are but Reſervations for future and further Evil.

God knows many Ways how to deliver the Righteous; but (conſidering the Tenor of his Revealing Will) he knows no Way to deliver the Wicked, they having refuſed all Ways of his Appointment for their Deliverance.

Q. *What are thoſe* Dignities *which the Deſpiſers of Government, Verſe* 10. *were not afraid to ſpeak Evil of?*

A. Some think, the Dignities here intended, were the Angels, others the Apoſtles; but moſt underſtand it of civil Rulers. It is a very heinous Sin in the Sight of God, to deſpiſe Government, and oppoſe Rulers.

The bleſſed Angels, *ver.* 11. who have more Power than Men, when they plead againſt Devils themſelves, do it not by railing Accuſation. This angelical Leſſon we ſhould learn, of forbearing railing Accuſations, not to return Evil for Evil, but being defamed, entreat; we are to be as juſt to another's Reputation as our own.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle compare the heretical Seducers to* brute Beaſts, *Verſe* 12?

A. 1. Becauſe their Minds run after ſenſual Objects, and know no Meaſure in the uſing of them; like Swine, they wallow over Head and Ears in the Mud of ſenſual Luſts.

2. They were alſo as ſecure as the brute Beaſts; they mock at the Denunciation of God's Judgments, ſaying, *Where is the Promiſe of his coming?* It is a righteous Thing to leave them to be governed by Senſe, who will not be guided by Grace; they would not be Saints, and at length they ceaſe to be Men, and, like Brutes, fall into the Ditch of beaſtly Senſuality.

In a Word, they ſhall be deſtroyed *like brute Beaſts in their own Corruption*; in their natural Corruptions; by their Luxury and Intemperance, bringing Diſeaſes and Death upon their Bodies; in their civil Corruptions, overthrowing their Families, by ſwallowing down their Eſtates; yea, they corrupt themſelves eternally, deſtroying Soul and Body by their Exceſs.

Q. *Why does the Apoſtle join Covetouſneſs with Uncleanneſs, Verſe* 15?

A. Covetouſneſs is often the Cauſe of Uncleanneſs. How many, for the ſake of Money, have violated their matrimonial Faith, allured more by the Adulterer's Purſe than his Perſon. Scarcely will a Perſon be able to reſiſt any Sin, who embraces this one.

What a mighty Struggle there ſometimes is in a natural Man's Conſcience concerning Sin? The Light of *Balaam*'s Conſcience made him refuſe the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs, and ſpeak honourably; *If* Balak *would give me his Houſe full of Silver and Gold, I cannot*, &c. But at the ſame Time Luſt in his Heart led him ſtrongly to deſire it: *He loved the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs*; loved it, yet durſt not touch it.

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Q. *In the 10th Verſe the Apoſtle declares the vaſt Change which ſhall be made in Nature at the laſt Day;* the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe, the Elements ſhall melt, and the Earth be burnt up; *which Words pray explain?*

A. That is, ſay ſome, totally conſumed, and utterly aboliſhed; for when there is no more Need of Sun and Stars, of Earth and Water, why ſhould they be any more? And when the Saints ſee God Face to Face, what need have we of the Glaſs of the Creatures to behold the Face of God in?

Others conceive, that the Heavens and the Earth ſhall not be annihilated, but better'd and improv'd, their Subſtance continued, but their Qualities changed; that out of this Conflagration God will bring forth a new Edition of Heavens and Earth, and of what is contained in them, to be the everlaſting Monument of his own Power and Goodneſs, and the delightful Object of his Saints Contemplation.

Q. *What Inference does he make from hence?*

A. *Seeing then all theſe Things ſhall be diſſolved, what Manner of Perſons ought ye to be?* Heaven is an holy Place, has holy Company, holy Employments, and holy Enjoyments; we muſt be qualified for it, before we can be admitted into it, and begin that Life of Holineſs on Earth, which will never end in Heaven.

Q. *What other Duty does the Apoſtle exhort them to put in Practice?*

A. The Apoſtle next directs them to expect and look for the Coming of *Chriſt* to Judgment, to deſire and long after it, *looking for, and haſtening to the Coming of the Day of God*, that joyful Day of our perfect Deliverance and Salvation, when the lower Heavens and Earth ſhall be diſſolved, and the Elements melt with fervent Heat.

Verſe 13. the Apoſtle declares what was the ſubject Matter of the *Chriſtian*'s Expectation, he looks for new Heavens, and a new Earth, in which *dwelleth Righteouſneſs*; that is, only righteous Perſons, perfectly Righteous, in whom Sin ſhall no more prevail.

The Ground and Foundation of this Hope, is the Promiſe of God, *We* (according to his Promiſe) *look for new Heavens, and a new Earth.* To hope for any Thing God has not promiſed, is Preſumption. Hope is the Expectation of ſome future Good which God has promiſed, and Faith believed.

Q. *In the Teſtimony which St.* Peter *gives of St.* Paul*'s Epiſtles, he allows there are* ſome Things hard to be underſtood: *What do you obſerve hereupon?*

A. He does not ſay many Things, much leſs all Things, in St. *Paul* were hard to be underſtood, but ſome Things only.

How vainly then does the Church of *Rome* produce this Text to prove the Obſcurity of the whole Scripture? Whereas the great and neceſſary Things to our Salvation are ſo plainly revealed in Scripture, that even Babes in *Chriſt* apprehend and underſtand them. And though there be Difficulties in other Points more remote from Salvation, yet they are ſo for our Exerciſe and Trial, to excite our intenſe Study and Diligence.

Farther, the Perſons to whom the Scriptures are hard to be underſtood, are the unlearned and unſtable, who wreſt and pervert them to their own Deſtruction. The original Word rendered *to wreſt*, is a Metaphor taken from Tortures, inflicted on a Man upon the Rack; they torment him ſo long till they make him ſpeak what he never meant; ſo theſe wreſt a Senſe out of Scripture which the Holy Ghoſt never intended.

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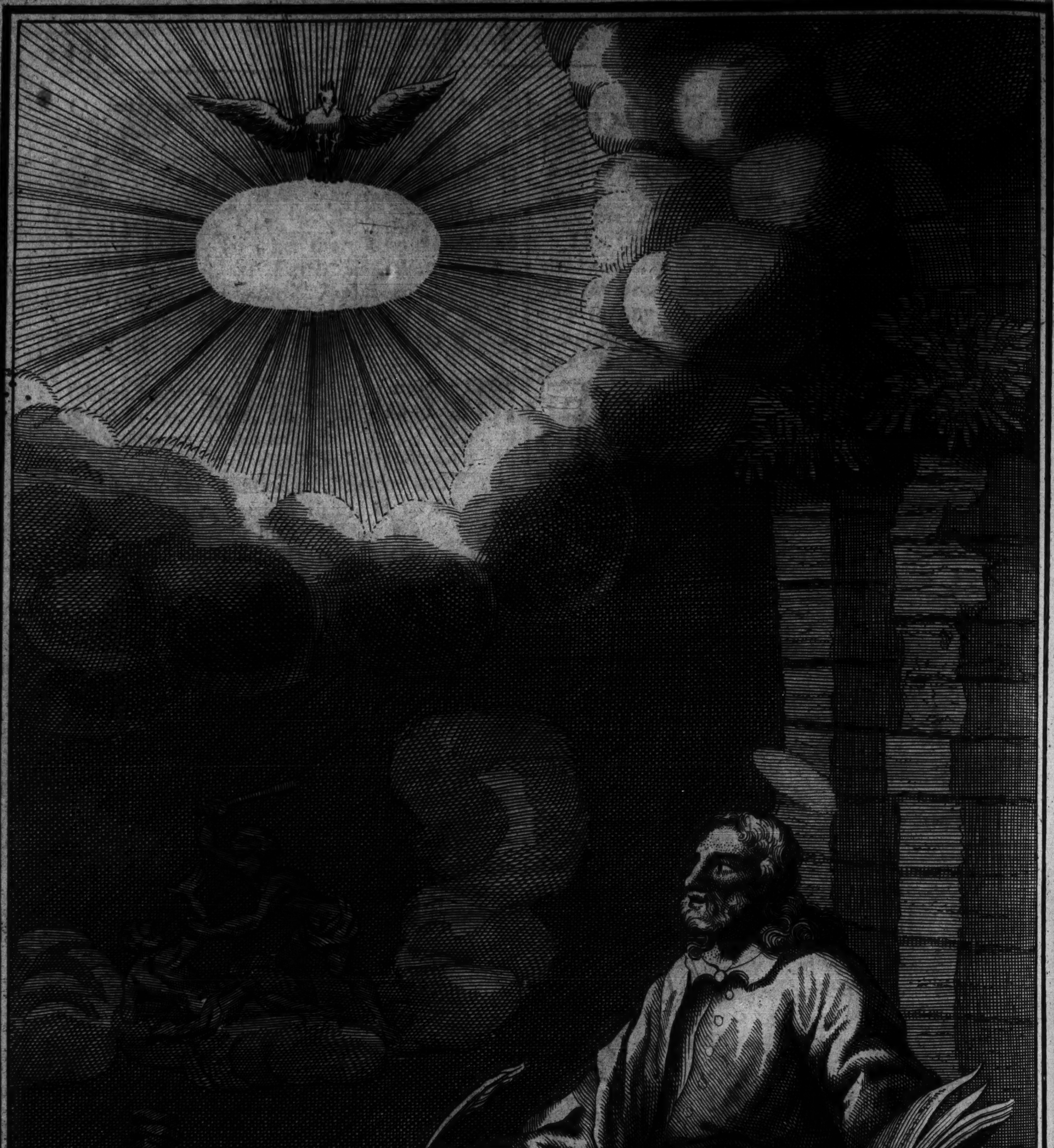
The First Epistle of S^{T}. JOHN.



Men cannot be the Favorites of God without
Obedienc to his Laus, & Love to his Children & Servan

The First Epiſtle General of

S^T. J O H N.

THE Author and Penman of this Epiſtle was undoubtedly St. John, *the* beloved Diſciple. *The Occaſion of writing it ſeems to be twofold, partly; to arm the* Jewiſh *Converts againſt thoſe looſe Doctrines, that Faith without Works, believing without practiſing Righteouſneſs, was ſufficient to Salvation; that Men might be Children of the Light, and yet walk in Darkneſs; the Favourites of God, without Obedience to his Laws, or Love to his Children and Servants; and partly to fortify them againſt the impious Errors of the* Gnoſticks, *who ſprang from* Simon Magus, *and pretended to extraordinary Meaſures of Knowledge and divine Illumination, from whence they had their Name; but notwithſtanding all theſe glittering Appearances, they allowed themſelves in the Practice of all Manner of impious and vicious Practices.*

Now that St. John *particularly aims at theſe Men, is evident from the frequent and plain Alluſions throughout this Epiſtle, to thoſe Names and Titles which the Sect aſſumed to themſelves; thus* Chap. ii. 4. He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him. *This Sect alſo pretended, that whatever they did they could not ſin. Hence is that of the Apoſtle,* Chap. i. 8. If we ſay that we have no Sin, the Truth is not in us. *In a Word, theſe Men not only held it lawful to renounce* Chriſtianity, *that they might avoid Perſecution, but alſo joined with the Heathen in perſecuting the* Chriſtians; *therefore, to ſhew the Inconſiſtency of theſe Practices with* Chriſtianity, *the Apoſtle writes this excellent Epiſtle now before us, aſſerting, that nothing is more eſſential to a true Love than the Practice of univerſal Holineſs; and let Men pretend to what Knowledge and Faith they pleaſe, Wickedneſs is a plain Mark and Character of the Children of the Devil. This is the general Scope and Deſign of St.* John's *Epiſtle.*

CHAP. I.

The Certainty and Excellency of the Doctrine of Chriſt. *Holineſs neceſſary to eternal Life. We muſt confeſs our Sins, if we expect Forgiveneſs.*

Q. W*HAT do you obſerve on the introductory Part of this Epiſtle?*

A. As St. *John* began his Goſpel with a Deſcription of *Chriſt's* Divinity, he begins his Epiſtle with a Demonſtration of the Truth of his human Nature; for the Certainty of which he appeals to the Judgment of Senſe; becauſe the Senſes, when rightly circumſtantiated, are the proper Judges of all human Objects; in Proof whereof St. *John* here introduces three of the five Senſes, *Hearing*, *Seeing*, *Feeling*, the latter ſtill carrying a ſtronger Teſtimony than the former; to ſee is more than to hear; to feel is more than to ſee; *that which we have heard, ſeen, handled.*

To make this Evidence yet ſtronger, St. *John* adds, that *which we have looked upon*; now this is more than to ſee; to ſee may be no more than a tranſient, ſudden Act; but to *look upon* is a fixed and deliberate Act, and uſually pleaſing and delightful.

It is added, as the ſureſt Ground of Certainty, that which *our Hands have handled of the Word of Life*; as they daily converſed with *Chriſt*, ſo they handled and touched him, both before his Reſurrection, and after it; ſo that from hence we may remark, that God has given us the higheſt and fulleſt Aſſurances that can be deſired of his Son's

Manifeſtation in your Fleſh, and of the Truth of the human Nature aſſumed by him.

Q. *In what Senſe is* Chriſt *the Word* which was from the Beginning?

A. In the Beginning, when all Things received their Being, then the Word was, and did actually ſubſiſt, even from all Eternity. *Prov.* viii. 23. 30. *I was ſet up from everlaſting, then was I by him as one brought up with him*; this was this *Jeſus* in whom we truſt, both God and Man, having two diſtinct Natures in one Perſon.

Q. *Why is* Chriſt *called* Life, *ver.* 2?

A. He is ſo in himſelf, and he is the Fountain of Life to us; by him we live a Life of Juſtification; from him we derive a Life of Sanctification, and hope to live with him a Life of Glorification.

He is alſo called eternal Life, as he liv'd from all Eternity with the Father, and diſtinct from him; he was with the Father, not as an Inſtrument, but as an Agent, in making of the World, *Heb.* i. 2, 3. and as his Father's Delight, *Prov.* viii. 30.

Q. *How was this eternal Life manifeſted to the Sons of Men?*

A. It was manifeſted, not as to the Prophets, by Faith, ſo they rejoiced to ſee him, *John* viii. nor in the Similitude and Likeneſs of Fleſh, ſo as he ſometimes manifeſted himſelf to the Patriarchs, *Gen.* xviii. but manifeſted in the Fleſh to his Apoſtles, who eat and drink, diſcourſed and converſed with him.

Q. *What does that Communion with the Father, and with his Son* Chriſt Jeſus *mentioned, Ver.* 3. *include?*

A. 1. Real Union; Believers are united to God morally, conjugally, myſtically. 2. Reciprocal Community of Enjoyment; the Lord is theirs, and they are his; a Community of Affection; there is mutual Love, Delight, Deſires, and mutual Hatred; a Community of Intereſts, they have the ſame Deſigns and Ends, the ſame Enemies and Friends; a Community of Privileges, the Lord viſits them, and they him; the Lord walks with them, and they with him; they impart the Secrets of their Hearts to him, and he imparts the Secrets of his Word, and Providence to them, *Gen.* xviii. 17. *Shall I hide from* Abraham *the Thing that I do?*

The Benefits and Advantages of this Communion are theſe: It aſſures the higheſt Honour, the ſweeteſt Pleaſure, the chiefeſt Happineſs; it is Heaven on this ſide Heaven; our Happineſs and theirs differs only in Degree, not eſſentially, but gradually.

Q. *What was the Apoſtle's principal End in writing the Goſpel?*

A. This, he tells us, *Ver.* 4. was, *that their Joy may be full* who believe and obey it. The Joy which good Men experience in the Word of God, is a ſolid, a ſubſtantial, a full, a laſting Joy. Worldly Joy is nauſeating, but not ſatisfying; glutting, but not filling: But that Joy that is found in the holy Scriptures, in the Word and Promiſe of God is better experienced than expreſſed. *Chriſtianity* does not extirpate our Joy, but regulates and refines it; it ſhews us the proper Object of our Joy; what we rejoice in, and the Manner how; that we may not ſin in rejoicing.

This then, adds the Apoſtle, is the Sum and Subſtance of the Goſpel of *Chriſt*'s Doctrine, and our Meſſage, to teach us to know what God is, namely, Light; that is, a Being of infinite Knowledge, Wiſdom, and Purity; and that there is *no Darkneſs in him*, no Darkneſs of Error, Ignorance, Falſhood, Impurity, and Sin, is found with him, or can be pleaſing to him; *This is the Meſſage that we have heard and declare unto you.*

Q. *Why does St.* John *in his Deſcription of the Nature of God, make Uſe of the Metaphor of* Light, God is Light?

A. His Nature and Attributes are (though darkly and imperfectly) reſembled by it: The Light as it was the firſt of all Creatures, ſhadows forth the Eternity of God's Being, who is the Firſt and Laſt. Light, of all Bodies, is the moſt immaterial and uncompounded, denoting the Spirituality and Simplicity of God's Nature. Light is diffuſive, and imparts itſelf to the Benefit of others. So is God communicative of his Goodneſs to all Perſons, ſhining upon the Juſt and Unjuſt. But, according to the Apoſtle's Intendment here, Light is of a pure and undefiled Nature, it is a bright and ſpotleſs Splendor; though it ſhines upon a Dunghill, it contracts no Pollutions; this repreſents the perfect Purity and unſpotted Holineſs of God.

Again; negatively, *in him is no Darkneſs at all*; that is, God is ſo pure, that not the leaſt Impurity can cleave unto him; ſo holy, that no Sin can be found in him, and conſequently no Darkneſs of Sin or Impurity can proceed from him.

Q. *What do you obſerve on the 6th Verſe, where he ſays,* If we ſay that we have Fellowſhip with him, and walk in Darkneſs, we lie and do not the Truth?

A. He ſays, *if we ſay*, not *if you*; if we Apoſtles and Miniſters, as well as you Diſciples and Members of *Chriſt*, be guilty of this Hypocriſy, *we lie, and do not the Truth*; he does not ſay, *and ſpeak not the Truth*; but *do it not*; there is a twofold Lie, the Lie of the Lip, and the Lie of Life, and the latter is the louder of the two; they lie, becauſe they do not the Truth. The Sum is, that a Profeſſion of Piety and Religion, accompanied with Sin and unſuitable Walking, is odious Hypocriſy, abhorred by God and Man.

The ſincere and ſerious *Chriſtian walks in the Light*; that is, in the clear Knowledge of the Goſpel, and in the exemplary and exact Performance of his Duty. Walking implies a Motion, uniform and even. To talk of Religion is eaſy, but to walk wiſely before God and Man, requires Diligence and Circumſpection.

The Pattern after which the *Chriſtian* walks, is God; he walks in the Light, *as he is the Light*; God is the Light; that is, all his Actions are exactly pure and holy, and our Walking muſt, for the Quality of it, be holy, though for Equality it cannot be as holy as God is holy.

The Privilege ſecured to ſuch as walk in Communion with God, is, *we have Fellowſhip one with another*; Juſtification by *Chriſt*; *the Blood of* Jeſus Chriſt *cleanſeth from all Sin.* Sin is the great Pollution and Defilement of the Soul, an univerſal, an abiding, a mortal, and yet an inſenſible Pollution.

Q. *What Remedy is provided againſt this Pollution of the Soul by Sin?*

A. The Blood of the Son of God, which cleanſeth meritoriouſly from all Sin, and will loſe its Efficacy; it cleanſeth ſtill no leſs than the firſt Moment it was ſhed; all the Patriarchs and Prophets were juſtified and ſaved by Faith in his Blood, who was a Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World, in the Decree and Purpoſe of God.

Q. *What do you remark on thoſe Words in the 8th Verſe,* If we ſay that we have no Sin?

A. If we Apoſtles cannot ſay this, much leſs can the proud *Gnoſticks* ſay ſo, who ſuppoſe and aſſert themſelves to be in a State of Perfection. He does not ſay, If we had no Sin, but if we have none; intimating that *Chriſtians*, as well after, as before Converſion, continue ſinful Perſons; a perfect Freedom from all Sin being wholly unattainable in this Life, not only by ordinary *Chriſtians*, but by the moſt eminent Saints.

The Church of *Rome* will have it that this is ſpoken more humbly than truly. But the Apoſtle does not ſay, Humility is not in us; but, the Truth is not in us; no Truth of Knowledge in our Underſtandings, no real Holineſs in our Hearts. Who can ſay he has made his Heart clean? If ſo, how ſhould we long for the Day of Redemption, when no Sin ſhall affect us, no Sorrow afflict us; when we ſhall be cloathed with unſpotted Purity, perfect Felicity, and that to all Eternity?

Q. If we confeſs our Sins, *the Apoſtle tells us, Ver.* 3. God is faithful and juſt to forgive us: *But why not merciful and gracious?*

A. Though he is ſo in himſelf, whether faithful with reſpect to the Satisfaction given by *Chriſt* for us; he is faithful and juſt, as well as gracious and merciful.

The indiſpenſible Duty on our Part is, Confeſſion of Sin; *If we confeſs.* Confeſſion of Sin is a penitent Sinner's voluntary accuſing himſelf to God, and condemning himſelf before him, with Hatred of, Shame and Sorrow for, and a full Reſolution againſt his Sin, together with an earneſt Deſire of, and ſome good Hope in divine Mercy. Yet obſerve, God will not pardon Sin without Confeſſion; this is an incluſive Condition; God certainly will forgive thoſe that confeſs their Sins.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the laſt Verſe?*

A. Note here, the Impiety and Blaſphemy of thoſe who affirm themſelves in a State of ſinleſs Perfection; they not only lie in themſelves, but interpretatively, and as much as in them is, they make God a Liar, by contradicting what he has aſſerted in his Word, that all are Sinners.

So that upon the whole it appears, that to affirm we have no Sin, is the higheſt Pride, the greateſt Deceit, the loudeſt Lie, the prophaneſt Blaſphemy; it is to make the God of Truth a Liar, and to turn the Truth of God into a Lie, which evidences that his Word is not in us.

Chap. II.

Jeſus Chriſt *our Advocate. To love God rightly, is to keep his Commandments. Exhortation to love our Neighbour, and not to love the World; to beware of* Antichriſt, *from whoſe Deceits the Godly are preſerved by Perſeverance in Faith, and Holineſs of Life.*

Q. WHY *does St.* John *call the* Chriſtians *he writes to* Little Children, *ver.* 1?

A. He call them Children, becauſe converted to *Chriſtianity*; little Children, becauſe young and tender *Chriſtians*, of a low Stature in *Chriſtianity*, and far ſhort of manly Perfections; and his little Children, to denote that ſpiritual Relation which was between him and them, and that indearing Affection which he bore towards them. St. *Joba*, bp a loving Compellation, make way for a faithful Admonition, which follows in the next Words, *Theſe Things I write, that ye ſin not.* This muſt be underſtood in a qualified Senſe thus; 1. *Sin not*, that is, as the Wicked ſin; take heed of ſcandalous Enormities, though you cannot ſhake off daily Infirmities. Sin not, in the ſame Manner that you yourſelves before ſinned; ſin not with that Fulneſs of Deliberation, with that Freedom of Conſent. Sin not with that Strength of Reſolution, with which you ſinn'd before you were called to *Chriſtianity.* 3. Sin not; that is, as far as human Nature will admit, abſtain from all Sin; let it be your Care, Prayer, Study, Endeavour, to keep yourſelves from every evil Thing. Thus *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* were blameleſs, *Luke* i. 6. that is, they liv'd in no Sin known to the World, or to themſelves; ſo it is ſaid of *Job, he ſinned not*, Chap. i. that is, he indulged himſelf in no Sin.

The comfortable Concluſion is, *But if any Man ſin,* that is, through Infirmity and Weakneſs, through the Policy of the Tempter, or by a ſurprize of a Temptation, *we have an Advocate*, a Mediator, an Interceſſor in Heaven, who is abſolutely ſinleſs, even *Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.* It is a Metaphor taken from the Courts of Judicature, where are, the guilty Perſon, the Accuſer, the Judge, and *Chriſt* the Advocate. Thus, here Heaven is the Court, Man is the guilty Perſon, Satan the Accuſer, God the Judge, *Chriſt* the Advocate. The proper Office of an Advocate is, not to deny the Fact, or diſown the Guilt, but to offer ſomething to the Judge, whereby the Law may be ſatisfied, and upon which the Judge may, without any Unrighteouſneſs, diſcharge the accuſed.

Here is alſo an invaluable Privilege diſcover'd, that *Chriſt* our Advocate became a Propitiation for us, and for the whole Race of Mankind; for all that liv'd before us, or ſhall live after us, for *Jews* and *Gentiles*; there is a virtual Sufficiency in the Death of *Chriſt* for all Perſons, and an actual Efficacy as to all Believers. The original Word for Propitiation, ſignifies a propitiatory Covering, an Alluſion to the Mercy-Seat that cover'd the Ark, in which the Law was; in Alluſion to which *Chriſt* is here called our *propitiatory Covering*; becauſe he hides our Sins, the Tranſgreſſions of the Law, from his Father's Sight.

Q. *The Commandment of* Brotherly Love *the Apoſtle calls both* Old and New, *Ver.* 7, 8. *But how could it both?*

A. It was no New Commandment that was enjoin'd them, but that which they were taught, not only in and by the *Old Teſtament*, but at the firſt preaching the Goſpel among them; and in theſe Reſpects the Command of Love might be call'd *an old Commandment*, it being a Branch of the *Jewiſh* Religion; although in other Reſpects it might be call'd *a New Commandment*, being urged from a new Motive, and inforced by a new Example. It is call'd a Commandment, in the ſingular Number, to intimate, that in this one Commandment all the reſt were contain'd; ſo that in keeping this we keep all. What indeed are all the Commandments, but Love enlarged? And what is Love but the Commandments contracted?

This evangelical Command of Love was from the Beginning of the Law, and nothing new enjoined by *Chriſt*, which was not before enjoined by *Moſes*. Yet this Command of Love may, in ſome Reſpect, be called new, not Subſtantially, but Circumſtantially; not in the Eſſence of the Doctrine, but in the Manner of the Diſcovery; not in Reſpect of the Truth delivered, but in the Way of delivering it. New, not in regard of Inſtitution, but Reſtitution, becauſe purged from the old corrupt Gloſſes of the *Phariſees*, who had limited this Duty of Love, and confined it to their own Countrymen; whereas *Chriſt* obliged his Diſciples to love all Mankind. New, becauſe it was never to wax Old, but was always to be freſh in the Memory and Practice of *Chriſt's* Diſciples to the End of the World.

Q. *By what Arguments does he enforce the Duty of* Brotherly Love?

A. 1. In theſe Words, *which Thing is true in him and in you*; that is, as there was in *Chriſt* a true and ſincere Love in you towards him, and one towards another.

2. *Becauſe the Darkneſs is paſt, and the true Light now ſhineth*; that is, the Darkneſs of Ignorance in general, and of the *Moſaic* State in particular, is now paſt, and the true Light of the Goſpel now ſhineth.

Q. *The Perſons to whom the Apoſtle writes are particularly ſpecified in the 13th Verſe; namely,* Fathers, young Men, and Children: *What do we learn from hence?*

A. We may here obſerve in general, the great Wiſdom of this eminent Apoſtle; he contents not himſelf with Generals, but directs his Diſcourſe to Old and Young, plainly intimating, that none are too young to receive Inſtruction, nor any old enough to reject it. And if St. *John* wrote to perſons of all Ages and Conditions, then the ſacred Writings are to be read to, and by, Perſons of every Age and Condition. And if the Scriptures be perverted by ſome, that is not a natural Effect, but only an accidental Conſequence of reading the Scriptures. Now, as Evil muſt not be done that Good may come of it, ſo Good muſt not be left undone, though Evil come of it.

Q. *What are his Reaſons for writing thus generally to all* Chriſtians, *and to each Age in particular?*

A. 1. To Children, *Becauſe your Sins are forgiven you for his Name's Sake.*

2. To Fathers, *Becauſe ye have known him that is from the Beginning*; that is, *Jeſus Chriſt*, who, in Reſpect of his Divine Nature, had an Exiſtence from the Beginning; that is, from all Eternity; if ſo, then our Saviour had a Being antecedent to his Conception, and before he was born of the Virgin *Mary*; he then began to be a Man; but he did not then begin to be; for before *Abraham* was, he was; and he prays to his Father, *John* xvii. 5. to glorify him with the Glory which he had with him before the World was. It is not ſaid, with the Glory which thou preparedſt for me, in thy Decree and Purpoſe, before the World was, as the *Socinians* would have it, but the Glory which I had with thee.

The Reaſon he aſſigns for writing to young Men, is, *Becauſe ye are Strong, and have overcome the wicked One, and the Word of God abideth in you.* The Enemy, here deſcribed by the wicked One, is *Satan*; becauſe the firſt in Wickedneſs; becauſe moſt induſtrious, moſt obſtinate, and perſevering in Wickedneſs.

Ye have overcome the wicked One; there is no accommodating Matters with *Satan*; we muſt either overcome him, or be conquered ourſelves; we are ſaid to overcome him, becauſe we are ſure of doing ſo; or becauſe we have overcome him in God's Account; and becauſe we have begun to overcome him; yield to him, and you will find him an imperious Tyrant, reſiſt him, and he will fly from you.

The Combatants are, *young Men.* Young Men are fit for Action, old Men for Advice; young ones ſhould begin this ſpiritual War betimes, poſſibly they may never live to be old; or if ſo, Victory will be the more difficult, by how much longer it is delay'd; and God may deny them that Grace they now deny themſelves. The Proverb ſays, *A young Saint, but an old Devil*; but it is very hard for a young Devil to become a young Saint.

Ye are Strong; that is, made Partakers of Divine Strength; you have your Second in the Field, the Holy Spirit; you are ſtrong in the Lord, *and the Word of God abideth in you*, by the Aſſiſtance whereof ye overcome the wicked One. God's Word is the richeſt Treaſury to ſupply our Wants, and the ſtrongeſt Armory to oppoſe our Enemies.

Q. *How extenſive is that Injunction, Verſe* 15. Love not the World, nor the Things that are in the World?

A. This Prohibition is not abſolute, but comparative only; we may delight in the World, and in the Enjoyment of it; provided we do not chuſe it for our Portion, or delight in it as our chief Good.

Q. *What Arguments does he uſe to diſſuade us from the Love of the World?*

A. *If any Man love the World* (in an undue Manner and Meaſure) *the Love of the Father is not in him*; the worldly Lover has no Intereſt in the Father's Love; the World's Darlings are none of God's Friends; and the World's Lover has no Love of the Father in him; and if the Love of the Father be not in him, the Hatred of the Father is towards him, *James* iv. 4. *Know ye not that the Friendſhip of the World is Enmity with God?*

Another Argument to diſſuade us from worldly Love, is, *for all that is in the World*; that is, all that is in Eſteem and Vogue with the Men of the World, is either *the Luſt of the Fleſh*, all ſenſual Delights and Enjoyments, which occaſion Intemperance; or *the Luſt of the Eye*, the Deſire of Gold, Silver, ſtately Houſes, and rich Gardens, which tend to gratify the Eye; or the *Pride of Life*, or the Deſires of Honours and Dignities, high Titles, and Places of Advancement, which tend to gratify our Pride; all theſe are *not of the Father*; that is, they are Deſires not excited by him, nor pleaſing to him; but are the Deſires of the Men of the World, and proceed from that Corruption which is in them.

Another Argument is taken from the World itſelf, and its ſhort Continuance; *the World paſſeth away*; that is, all the Things of the World, which worldly Men doat upon, and are in love with, are of a fading tranſitory Nature in themſelves; and they paſs away from their Poſſeſſors and Owners.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words, Verſe* 17. He that doth the Will of God, abideth for ever?

A. Here behold the permanent Felicity, not of the knowing, but obedient *Chriſtian.* He abideth for ever, not in this, but the other World, in a State of endleſs Happineſs. Although Eternity, in its moſt comprehenſive Notion, be peculiar to a Deity, and incommunicable to a Creature, yet it is that which God has made rational Creatures capable of.

Q. *Who were thoſe* Antichriſts, *mentioned in Verſe* 18?

A. They are deſcribed by their being once of the *Chriſtian* Communion; *they went out from us*; from his Apoſtles, from us *Chriſtians*, being falſe Brethren, and unſound *Chriſtians*; for if they had been of us, as Members of the ſame Body, and had joined with us in planting and propagating the ſame *Chriſtian* Faith; *they would, no doubt, have continued with us*, profeſſing the ſame Faith, and preaching the ſame Doctrine which we do; but they left us, that it might be made manifeſt, *that they were not all of us.*

Note here, that theſe Antichriſtian Impoſtors had been in the Boſom of the Church, and Profeſſors of the *Chriſtian* Faith; ſo were the falſe Apoſtles, the Judaizing Teachers, mentioned, *Acts* xv. 24. So did *Simon Magus, Nicholas,* and *Cerinthus.* The Church's ſeeming Members prove her worſt Enemies; the Foxes within do more Miſchief than the wild Boar without.

Q. *But is it not then lawful to depart from the Communion of a Church whereof we have been formerly Members?*

A. Yes, if ſhe departs from herſelf; if ſhe degenerates and grows ſo corrupt a Body, that we cannot communicate with her without Sin; which was the Caſe between us and the Church of *Rome*, whoſe Doctrines were Erroneous, and her Worſhip Idolatrous; we left her, becauſe ſhe departed from the Apoſtolical Church. Not we, but they made the Separation, and conſequently the Schiſm lies at their Door.

Q. *Pray explain the 20th Verſe*; But ye have an Unction from the Holy one, and ye know all Things?

A. Although there are many Antichriſts and Seducers in the World, yet the moſt Holy God hath anointed you with his Holy Spirit, which will preſerve you from pernicious Error, and lead you into all neceſſary Truth, if you obey and follow him.

Here obſerve a *Chriſtian*'s Priviledge; *Ye have an Unction from the Holy One.* By which underſtand the Holy Spirit in its ſanctifying Gifts and Graces, which conſecrates Believers as Kings and Prieſts unto God.

Ye know all Things; not abſolutely, but all Divine Things revealed which are neceſſary to Salvation; all Things needful to be known; all Things relating to God, the Holy Spirit, Ourſelves, Sin, Satan, the Law, the Goſpel, Grace and Glory; ye know all Things by virtue of your Unction.

Q. *What is the* Truth, *mentioned Verſe* 21?

A. The Goſpel is the Truth, the Word of Truth, confirmed by real Miracles. It is Divine Truth, univerſal, effectual Truth, and no Lie; for Almighty God would never have ſet the Seal of his Omnipotency to a Lie, and have confirmed it by Signs and Wonders, Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, had it been falſe.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon thoſe Words, Verſe* 22. He is *Antichriſt* that denieth the Father and the Son?

A. This is a Text wherein every *Socinian* may ſee himſelf an *Atheiſt*; he that denies the Divinity of the Son, denies the Deity of the Father. There is ſuch a Connection between theſe two, the Father and Son, they being Co-eſſential and Co-eternal, that if you deny the Divinity of the one, you deny that of the other; therefore they are *Atheiſts* who deny the Divinity of *Chriſt*, as well as thoſe who deny the Being of God.

Q. *But why is the Son put before the Father, Verſe* 23?

A. Partly, to inſinuate, that the Son is no leſs in Eſſence and Dignity than the Father, but equal in both. Accordingly the Grace of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* in the Apoſtolical Benediction, is mentioned before the Love of God the Father; and partly, becauſe no Man cometh to, nor continueth in the Father, but by the Son; *He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* The Doctrine of the Goſpel comes from *Chriſt*, leads to him, and by him to the Father.

Q. *Why does he call the* Promiſe *of eternal Life, that which had been* promiſed, *Verſe* 25?

A. He does not ſay *Purpoſed*; a Purpoſe is a ſecret and hidden Intention of the Mind; but a Promiſe is a Revelation of that Intention, yea, it is more than a Declaration; a Promiſe makes ſure, as well as manifeſt; eſpecially God's Promiſe, which has an Oath for the Confirmation of it, *Heb.* vi. 17.

This Promiſe he hath made *to us*; not to us as Apoſtles only, but as *Chriſtians*; all that are born of God are begotten to a lively Hope of an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Again; he has promiſed us, not all, but us, who are thus and thus qualified, who keep his Commandments, and walk as he walked.

It is God himſelf that hath made this Promiſe, *Heb.* xi. 16. we are told, that the *Old Teſtament* Saints deſired a better; an heavenly Country; How could they have deſired it, if they had not known it? And could they have known it, if God had not revealed it? *Chriſt* bad the *Jews ſearch the Scriptures, for in them ye think to have eternal Life*; intimating, that in the Writings of *Moſes*, eternal Life was made known typically; not ſo clearly and fully as by the Goſpel, 2 Tim. i. 10. He that is Holy, and cannot lie; Righteous, and cannot deceive; Immutable, and cannot repent; even he has promiſed us eternal Life.

Q. *What Encouragement does St.* John *give them againſt theſe Seducers, and their Seduction?*

A. It is, the Anointing which they had received from *Chriſt*; that is, from the ſpecial Illumination of his Spirit, *This abideth in you, and teacheth you all Things* neceſſary for you to know, ſo that you need not any Man to teach you; that is, any new Doctrine, any new fundamental Principles of Faith.

But though *Chriſtians* ſavingly enlighten'd need no new Goſpel, or Doctrine to be inſtructed in, yet they need farther teaching ſtill to improve them in what they know; vain then are the Arguments of *Quakers*, and other Sectaries, drawn from hence, againſt all miniſterial Teaching; for the Spirit teaches mediately by Man, and not immediately by itſelf; and when the Seducers can ſhew they have ſuch an immediate and extraordinary teaching of the Holy Spirit, as was vouchſafed to the Primitive *Chriſtians*, then let them cry down the neceſſity of Miniſters teaching, and not before.

Q. *How does he enforce his foregoing Exhortation to* abide ſtedfaſtly in Chriſt?

A. From this powerful Argument, *That when* Chriſt *ſhall appear, we may have Confidence at his Coming.* The perſevering *Chriſtian* ſhall have Confidence before *Chriſt* at his Coming; ſhall lift up his Head without ſhame or bluſhing, from the Teſtimony which Conſcience bears of his Sincerity, and from the Intereſt he has in the Judge.

CHAP. III.

The Love of God to Believers in their Adoption, a Motive to Piety. The Children of God, and of Satan are diſtinguiſhed; Love is a true Evidence of divine Life. The Sum of Chriſt's *Commandments, is to believe in him, and love one another.*

Q. HOW *does the Apoſtle begin this Chapter?*

A. With Wonder and Admiration at the aſtoniſhing Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion of Almighty God towards Believers, in taking them into his Family, and adopting them into the Number of his Children; that Strangers and Enemies ſhould be dignified and diſtinguiſhed with the honourable and amiable Title of his Sons; it is the ſame Relation that *Chriſt* has, *I aſcend to my Father, and your Father.* There is, indeed, a Diverſity in the Foundation of it; *Chriſt* is a Son by Nature, we by Favour; he by Generation, we by Adoption. However, not only Crowns and Scepters are beneath this Dignity, but the Honour of our innocent State was not equal with it; well then might the Apoſtle break out with an holy Aſtoniſhment, and ſay, *Behold! what manner of Love is this, that we ſhall be call'd*, accounted and acknowledg'd, *the Children of God?*

Q. *How are Believers the Children of God?*

A. 1. By Regeneration; they are made Partakers of the Divine Nature; not in the Eſſence of it, but in its gracious Qualities, which enables them, in ſome Meaſure, to reſemble God their Father; they receive a Principle of ſpiritual Life from God, and this Principle received in Regeneration is an inward, an univerſal, a God, exalting, an abiding Principle.

2. They are Children by Adoption. Adoption is the Acceptance of a Stranger into the Relation and Privileges of a Son; it was a Condeſcenſion in *Pharaoh*'s Daughter to reſcue *Moſes*, an innocent and forſaken Stranger, from periſhing by the Waters, and adopt him for her Son; but O! how much greater Kindneſs was it for God to ſave guilty and wretched Man from eternal Flames.

Q. *But why does not the World know the Children of God?*

A. *Becauſe it knew not him*; God once made himſelf manifeſt to the World in and by his Son *Chriſt*, in whom dwelt the Fulneſs of the Godhead, and who came and dwelt among us, but *the World knew him not, nor received him not*, and if they ſaw no Beauty in him, who had Strength and Grace, and no Corruption in him, is it any Wonder that they ſee no Excellency in them, in whom is much Weakneſs of Grace, and too great Strength of Corruption.

Q. *What is the Import of the 3d Verſe*, and every Man that hath this Hope, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure?

A. This, that Sin is a Pollution which we muſt be purified from; and that the holieſt of Saints here on Earth are not perfectly purified from their Pollution, but are duly endeavouring to purify themſelves more and more. *Even as he is pure*, *Chriſt* is the *Chriſtian's* Pattern, which it is his Duty to imitate and copy after, by purifying himſelf, even as *Chriſt* is pure.

In the *4th Verſe, it is ſaid,* Whoſoever committeth Sin*: Is there any Man without Sin?*

A. Underſtand it thus; whoever lives in the allowed Commiſſion of it, lives in Rebellion againſt, and in a flat Oppoſition to, the Law of God, and that Perſon, who thus violates the Law of God, fruſtrates the Death of *Chriſt*; for *Chriſt*, in whom was no Sin, was manifeſt in the Fleſh to take away Sin; the Guilt of it by his Blood, the Power of it by his Spirit, and conſequently, we muſt purify ourſelves from it, if we hope to ſee him as he is.

Nothing can be more unreaſonable and abſurd than to expect Salvation with God in Heaven by a ſinleſs Saviour, if we allow ourſelves in a Courſe of Sin; nothing being more contrary than this to the Deſign of *Chriſt*'s Death, which was not only to deliver us from the Danger, but from the Dominion of our Sins.

Q. *What is meant by the Word* Righteouſneſs, *Ver. 7?*

A. Righteouſneſs here may be taken in a twofold Senſe. 1. In a legal Senſe, which ſtands in an exact obeying and fulfilling the Law; and thus there is none righteous, no, not one. 2. In an evangelical Senſe; a walking uprightly, according to the Rule of the Goſpel, conſcientiouſly avoiding every known Sin, and performing every commanded Duty; it is not a ſingle Action, but a conſtant Courſe of holy Actions, that denominates a Perſon holy; a righteous Man makes Righteouſneſs the Buſineſs of his Life; his daily Care is how to pleaſe God in all he does.

Q. *What is meant by* the Works of the Devil, *Ver. 8?*

A. Underſtand all Sin, but particularly thoſe which have moſt of the Devil's Image upon them, and render Perſons moſt like unto him; ſuch are Malice and Envy, rejoicing at the Calamity, and delighting in the Evils that befal others; Rage and Paſſion, bitter Strife and Contention, Schiſm and Faction, Lying and Falſhood, Craft and Treachery; but eſpecially Pride and Haughtineſs, which was the Sin turned Satan out of Heaven, and made him a Devil in Hell.

By *the Works of the Devil,* here are meant in particular, Idolatry, and all idolatrous Worſhip, even to the worſhipping the Devil himſelf; this, and all other kinds of Idolatry, had ſtrangely prevailed and over-run the World before the Coming of *Chriſt*, who came on purpoſe to deliver Mankind from Slavery, and to put down the Kingdom of Satan, and beat him out of thoſe ſtrong Holds which he thought had been impregnable.

Q. *Explain the Apoſtle's Character of a true* Chriſtian, He is born of God?

A. That is, he has in the Work of Regeneration paſſed under a bleſſed Change, by the Operation of the Holy Spirit, renewing his Nature, and reforming his Life; yet this denotes not the ſingle Act of Regeneration, but rather a continued Courſe and permanent State; one that is born of God is the ſame with him that leads a pious and godly Life, and continues ſo do.

Q. He cannot ſin: *But how? has he not a natural Power to Sin? Has he not Corruptions within and Temptations without, and an Inclination and Diſpoſition to ſin as well as other Men?*

A. Yes, doubtleſs; but he has not a Will bent for Sin, nor a Heart and Mind ſet upon it; his Heart and Will are rather oppoſite to it. A gracious Perſon then, though he has not a natural Impoſſibility, yet he has a moral Incapacity to ſin; a Perſon that is born of God has a Power to do that Evil which he has not a Will to do; he conſiders his high Birth, as born of God, and diſdains to trade in ſo baſe a Thing as Sin is.

The Reaſon why a regenerate Perſon cannot ſin as the Wicked do, is, becauſe *his Seed remaineth in him, and becauſe he is born of God*; that is, he has an inward Principle, inclining and diſpoſing him to hate and oppoſe all Sin, namely, *the ſanctifying Grace of God*; and he has that mortifying Spirit, which cauſes him daily more and more to die unto Sin, and enables him to mortify the Deeds of the Body.

Q. *How was the Duty of* mutual Love a Meſſage to us from the Beginning?

A. The Word of God is a Meſſage to us from God, for our Information and Inſtruction, for our Guide and Direction. The Duty of brotherly Love is an antient Meſſage which God has ſent us, and has continued to ſend us, from the Beginning.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the following Words in the* 12*th Verſe*, Not as *Cain*, who was of that wicked one?

A. One Argument to excite brotherly Love, is drawn from the Evil of hating our Brother; which appears in the Perſon and Practice of *Cain*, whom our Apoſtle deſcribes. 1. By his Pedigree; *He was of that wicked one*, that is, *the Devil*; of his diabolical Diſpoſition; of his envious and malicious Inclination; and as ſuch, was not ſo much the Son of *Adam* as of the Devil. 2. By his Practice, he ſlew his Brother; he firſt hated him, and then ſlew him. 3. The Reaſon aſſigned why he ſlew him, is, *becauſe his own Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous*, not for any Harm he had done, or for any Evil he had deſerved, but becauſe *Cain* was bad himſelf, and his Works bad.

The Inference drawn from this Example is, *Marvel not, my Brethren, if the World hate you*; intimating, that the World always did, and ever will, hate God's Children; which the Children of God are not to wonder at, but to prepare for it; though *Cain* is dead, the Spirit of *Cain* is alive.

Q. *What is the Characteriſtick of that Love which will evidence our Tranſlation from Death to Life?*

A. It muſt be a Love of the Brethren; that is, of all *Chriſtians*, as ſuch; particularly, it muſt be an extenſive and univerſal Love, that reaches all the Children of God, all good Men, of what Judgment and Opinion ſoever; otherwiſe it is the Love of a Party only, and a Love for Opinion ſake, not for Grace ſake, *Coloſſ.* i. 3, 4. *We give Thanks, ſince we heard of your Love to all Saints*; that is, all of what Kingdom and Nation ſoever; of what Eſtate and Condition, of what Judgment and Opinion ſoever, though differing from you in ſome leſſer Things.

It muſt alſo be an holy Love that will evidence our *Chriſtianity*; though all Men muſt be loved as Men, yet the Brethren muſt be loved for the Likeneſs of God in them; it is one Thing to love the Brethren, and another Thing to love them as Brethren; a gracious Perſon may be loved only for carnal Reſpects, and ſiniſter Ends.

Again; it muſt be active and operative, a coſtly and expenſive Love; that cheap Love of ſome Men, which will wiſh a poor *Chriſtian* well, but will be at no Pains, no Coſt to help and Succour him, becauſe they love their Money better than they do their Brother, is the Hypocrite's Love; a cold ſort of Love, that will neither profit our Brother, nor ouſelves.

Q. *In what Senſe is he that* hateth his Brother, a Murderer, *though he does not ſmite him, either with his Tongue or Hand?*

A. The Sins of the Heart are damning, as well as the Sins of the Life; a Man may be an Adulterer in the Sight of God, and yet never touch a Woman, *Matt.* v. 28. an Idolater, and yet never bow his Knee to an Image, a Murtherer, and yet never hurt his Brother; if he hates him in his Heart, he is recorded a Murtherer in God's Account. Great Need have we then to put up *David*'s Prayer, *Pſ.* xix. *Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret Sins.*

Q. *The Apoſtle farther exhorts them to compaſſionate a Brother, in his* Need: *What does the Word* Need *intimate?*

A. That is, not only ſuch as are caſt down, but ſuch as are falling, are the proper Objects of our Pity and Help. Our Relief muſt be given when ever we ſee our Brother is in Need. What a Vanity is it to leave our Alms till after our Death, to be beholden to the Juſtice of others for their Diſtribution! Let us give our Charity with our own Hands, and ſee it diſpoſed with our own Eyes, when the Loins of the Poor will bleſs us, but their Prayers will do us no Good when we are dead. The Omiſſion of expreſſing our charitable Benevolence towards our poor and indigent Brethren, when we have an Opportunity, is a certain Evidence that there is nothing of the Love of God reſiding in us.

Q. *What is meant by thoſe Words, Ver.* 20. If our Heart condemn us?

A. By Heart is meant the Conſcience: If our Hearts will tell us that our Love is barren and fruitleſs, and ſo condemn us for our Hypocriſy, God is greater than our Conſciences, both in Holineſs to condemn, and in Knowledge to perceive the Evil of them, for he knoweth all Things; whereas, if we have the Witneſs of our Conſciences touching the Sincerity of our Love by the Fruits of it, then have we an humble Confidence with God in all our Addreſſes to him. According to the Verdict and Teſtimony of Mens Conſciences rightly informed, and truly teſtifying, God will abſolve them at the great Day.

Q. *How are we to underſtand thoſe Words, Ver.* 22. Whatſoever we aſk we receive of him?

A. That is, whatſoever we aſk according to his Will, we are ſure to receive, either in Kind or Equivalency. It ſhall either be given in Mercy, or denied in Love; for God is as kind in denying ſome of our Requeſts, as in anſwering others; we know not what is beſt to beg, but an infinitely wiſe God knows what is fitteſt to give.

Becauſe we keep his Commandments. According to our keeping God's Commandments, ſo he hears and anſwers our Prayers; if God's Commands are trod under our Feet, no wonder that all our Prayers fall to the Ground.

Q. *What do you obſerve on, Ver.* 23?

A. *This is his Commandment, that we ſhould believe;* this Command cuts off the vain Pretence and Plea of Preſumption. What! ſuch a vile Wretch as thou preſume to believe on *Chriſt*? ſays Satan. Yes, ſays the *Chriſtian,* I have a Command from the higheſt Soverignty ſo to do, the Contempt of which I muſt anſwer at my utmoſt Peril.

Obſerve how the Command of Faith and the Command of Love are linked together, as if the weight of our Love hung equally alike upon both: As without Faith is it impoſſible to pleaſe God, ſo is it impoſſible without Love to pleaſe him alſo.

Q. *In what Senſe is it ſaid, Ver.* 24. God dwelleth in us, and we in him?

A. God's dwelling in us implies, 1. Right and Propriety, what a Man dwells in is his own. 2. Command and Authority; the Maſter and Owner is the Commander and Diſpoſer of the Houſe. 3. Reſidence and Continuance, Settlement and Fixedneſs of Abode; there a Man dwells where he conſtantly reſides.

Our dwelling in God imports, 1. Reconciliation to him. Can two dwell together unleſs they are agreed? 2. Affiance and Truſt in him. 3. A conſtant Communion with him; it is one thing to run to God for Refuge in a Storm, and another Thing to make him our Dwelling-place at all Times, and in all Conditions.

It follows, *And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* The Spirit of God beſtowed upon us in his ſanctifying Gifts, and ſaving Graces, is an evident Sign of God's dwelling in us, and we in him.

Chap. IV.

He warns them againſt falſe Teachers. God is Love, and firſt loved us. By Love we abide in God, and ſhall have Boldneſs at the Day of Judgment. The Love of God and of our Neighbour inſeparable.

Q. WHAT *is the Import of thoſe Words, Ver.* 1. Believe not every Spirit?

A. That is, every Teacher, who pretends to be inſpired, and every Doctrine that lays Claim to the Authority of divine Revelation: *But try the Spirits;* that is, examine their Doctrines by the Rule of the Word of God, and try from whom they come, whether from the Spirit of God, or Satan; for *many falſe Prophets,* or Impoſtors, and Deceivers, are gone abroad into the World.

Hence it appears, that Men from the Beginning of *Chriſtianity* have, and ſtill do, falſely pretend to Divine Inſpiration. And *Chriſtians* ought not to believe every one that pretends to be thus divinely inſpired; for any one that has Confidenc enough, and a ſmall Share of Conſcience, may pretend to come from God.

However, we are not to reject every one tha pretends to come from God; for, when the Apoſtl bids us not to believe every Spirit, he ſuppoſes tha we are to believe ſome; and when he bids us t try the Spirits whether they be of God, he ſuppoſes ſome to be of God, and that ſuch as are ſo ought to be believ'd by us.

It is then the Duty of all *Chriſtians,* to examin the Doctrine propounded to them by the Word o God, they having a Judgment of Diſcretion though not of Deciſion; a Power to judge fo themſelves, not to impoſe upon others; nor doe this allow'd Liberty of every one's judging fo himſelf, take away the Uſe and Neceſſity of ſpiritual Guides and Teachers, or exempt us from due Submiſſion and Obedience thereunto, but i Concurrence with them; *We are to try the Spirits whether they be of God.*

Q. *But how was a Teacher, that was not inſpired by the Spirit of God, known from one tha was ſo?*

A. Such a one as durſt truly and openly, in th Face of Danger, own and profeſs, teach an preach, *Jeſus Chriſt* in his Perſon, Nature, an Offices, as the incarnate Word, or Son of God ſent from Heaven; attributing Virtue and Efficac to the Sacrifice of his Death; attributing to hi alone the whole Glory of a perfect Saviour; thi Doctrine is of the Spirit, and this Spirit is of Go But ſuch Teachers as will not hazard themſelves but for Fear of Sufferings and Perſecution will den either the Godhead or Manhood of *Chriſt*; an diſown either his Incarnation, Death, or Reſurrection; ſuch Teachers, and ſuch Doctrines, are no of God, but are the very Spirit of Antichriſt which, ſays he, you have been foretold ſhoul come, and is now already in the World.

Q. *In the 7th and 8th Verſes, the Apoſtle reſume his Exhortation to* brotherly Love: *What freſh Arguments does he uſe to enforce it?*

A. 1. He aſſures us, *that God is Love;* that i the Fruit of his good Spirit in us; common Love i his common Gift, and holy Love is his ſpecia Grace. 2. It is an Evidence that we have a righ Knowledge of God, both of his Nature, and o what he requires; he that has not the Grace of Lov in his Heart, has not the right Knowledge of Go in his Head. 3. Love is not only commande but exemplified by God himſelf; *God is Love;* h is eſſentially Love; Love in the Creature is a accidental Quality, in God an eſſential Propert God is Love cauſally, the efficient Cauſe of whatever is loving or lovely in us; all our Love to him and to one another, is but a Reflection of his Lov to us. God is Love objectively; he is, or ought t be, the ſupream Object of our Love; and we mu Love him above all, or he eſteems our Love a nothing at all. God is Love declaratively; all h Works, as well as his Word, are a Declaration o his Love to us, and ought to engage our Stedfaſtneſs in Love to him. Let us therefore, ſays the beloved Diſciple, Love one another, for Love is o God, and God is Love.

Q. *By what Ways has God manifeſted his Lov towards us?*

A. 1. In our Creation. 2. In our Apoſtaſy an Degeneration; when no Eye pitied us, and whe of *Quakers*, and other Sectaries, drawn from hence, againſt all miniſterial Teaching; for the Spirit teaches mediately by Man, and not immediately by itſelf; and when the Seducers can ſhew they have ſuch an immediate and extraordinary teaching of the Holy Spirit, as was vouchſafed to the Primitive *Chriſtians*, then let them cry down the neceſſity of Miniſters teaching, and not before.

Q. *How does he enforce his foregoing Exhortation to* abide ſtedfaſtly in Chriſt?

A. From this powerful Argument, *That when* Chriſt *ſhall appear, we may have Confidence at his Coming.* The perſevering *Chriſtian* ſhall have Confidence before *Chriſt* at his Coming; ſhall lift up his Head without ſhame or bluſhing, from the Teſtimony which Conſcience bears of his Sincerity, and from the Intereſt he has in the Judge.

CHAP. III.

The Love of God to Believers in their Adoption, a Motive ro Piety. The Children of God, and of Satan are diſtinguiſhed; Love is a true Evidence of divine Life. The Sum of Chriſt's *Commandments, is to believe in him, and love one another.*

Q. HOW *does the Apoſtle begin this Chapter?*

A. With Wonder and Admiration at the aſtoniſhing Goodneſs and Condeſcenſion of Almighty God towards Believers, in taking them into his Family, and adopting them into the Number of his Children; that Strangers and Enemies ſhould be dignified and diſtinguiſhed with the honourable and amiable Title of his Sons; it is the ſame Relation that *Chriſt* has, *I aſcend to my Father, and your Father.* There is, indeed, a Diverſity in the Foundation of it; *Chriſt* is a Son by Nature, we by Favour; he by Generation, we by Adoption. However, not only Crowns and Scepters are beneath this Dignity, but the Honour of our innocent State was not equal with it; well then might the Apoſtle break out with an holy Aſtoniſhment, and ſay, *Behold! what manner of Love is this, that we ſhall be call'd,* accounted and acknowledg'd, *the Children of God?*

Q. *How are Believers the Children of God?*

A. 1. By Regeneration; they are made Partakers of the Divine Nature; not in the Eſſence of it, but in its gracious Qualities, which enables them, in ſome Meaſure, to reſemble God their Father; they receive a Principle of ſpiritual Life from God, and this Principle received in Regeneration is an inward, an univerſal, a God, exalting, an abiding Principle.

2. They are Children by Adoption. Adoption is the Acceptance of a Stranger into the Relation and Privileges of a Son; it was a Condeſcenſion in *Pharaoh*'s Daughter to reſcue *Moſes*, an innocent and forſaken Stranger, from periſhing by the Waters, and adopt him for her Son; but O! how much greater Kindneſs was it for God to ſave guilty and wretched Man from eternal Flames.

Q. *But why does not the World know the Children of God?*

A. *Becauſe it knew not him*; God once made himſelf manifeſt to the World in and by his Son *Chriſt*, in whom dwelt the Fulneſs of the Godhead, and who came and dwelt among us, but *the World knew him not, nor received him not*, and if they ſaw no Beauty in him, who had Strength and Grace, and no Corruption in him, is it any Wonder that they ſee no Excellency in them, in whom is much Weakneſs of Grace, and too great Strength of Corruption.

Q. *What is the Import of the 3d Verſe*, and every Man that hath this Hope, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure?

A. This, that Sin is a Pollution which we muſt be purified from; and that the holieſt of Saints here on Earth are not perfectly purified from their Pollution, but are duly endeavouring to purify themſelves more and more. *Even as he is pure*, *Chriſt* is the *Chriſtian*'s Pattern, which it is his Duty to imitate and copy after, by purifying himſelf, even as *Chriſt* is pure.

In the *4th Verſe, it is ſaid,* Whoſoever committeth Sin: *Is there any Man without Sin?*

A. Underſtand it thus; whoever lives in the allowed Commiſſion of it, lives in Rebellion againſt, and in a flat Oppoſition to, the Law of God, and that Perſon, who thus violates the Law of God, fruſtrates the Death of *Chriſt*; for *Chriſt*, in whom was no Sin, was manifeſt in the Fleſh to take away Sin; the Guilt of it by his Blood, the Power of it by his Spirit, and conſequently, we muſt purify ourſelves from it, if we hope to ſee him as he is.

Nothing can be more unreaſonable and abſurd than to expect Salvation with God in Heaven by a ſinleſs Saviour, if we allow ourſelves in a Courſe of Sin; nothing being more contrary than this to the Deſign of *Chriſt*'s Death, which was not only to deliver us from the Danger, but from the Dominion of our Sins.

Q. *What is meant by the Word* Righteouſneſs, *Ver. 7?*

A. Righteouſneſs here may be taken in a twofold Senſe. 1. In a legal Senſe, which ſtands in an exact obeying and fulfilling the Law; and thus there is none righteous, no, not one. 2. In an evangelical Senſe; a walking uprightly, according to the Rule of the Goſpel, conſcientiouſly avoiding every known Sin, and performing every commanded Duty; it is not a ſingle Action, but a conſtant Courſe of holy Actions, that denominates a Perſon holy; a righteous Man makes Righteouſneſs the Buſineſs of his Life; his daily Care is how to pleaſe God in all he does.

Q. *What is meant by* the Works of the Devil, *Ver. 8?*

A. Underſtand all Sin, but particularly thoſe which have moſt of the Devil's Image upon them, and render Perſons moſt like unto him; ſuch are Malice and Envy, rejoicing at the Calamity, and delighting in the Evils that befal others; Rage and Paſſion, bitter Strife and Contention, Schiſm and Faction, Lying and Falſhood, Craft and Treachery; but eſpecially Pride and Haughtineſs, which was the Sin turned Satan out of Heaven, and made him a Devil in Hell.

By *the Works of the Devil*, here are meant in particular, Idolatry, and all idolatrous Worſhip, even to the worſhipping the Devil himſelf; this, and all other kinds of Idolatry, had ſtrangely prevailed and over-run the World before the Coming of *Chriſt*, who came on purpoſe to deliver Mankind from Slavery, and to put down the Kingdom of Satan, and beat him out of thoſe ſtrong Holds which he thought had been impregnable.

Q. *Explain the Apoſtle's Character of a true* Chriſtian, He is born of God?

A. That is, he has in the Work of Regeneration paſſed under a bleſſed Change, by the Operation of the Holy Spirit, renewing his Nature, and reforming his Life; yet this denotes not the ſingle Act of Regeneration, but rather a continued Courſe and permanent State; one that is born of God is the ſame with him that leads a pious and godly Life, and continues ſo do.

Q. He cannot ſin: *But how? has he not a natural Power to Sin? Has he not Corruptions within and Temptations without, and an Inclination and Diſpoſition to ſin as well as other Men?*

A. Yes, doubtleſs; but he has not a Will bent for Sin, nor a Heart and Mind ſet upon it; his Heart and Will are rather oppoſite to it. A gracious Perſon then, though he has not a natural Impoſſibility, yet he has a moral Incapacity to ſin; a Perſon that is born of God has a Power to do that Evil which he has not a Will to do; he conſiders his high Birth, as born of God, and diſdains to trade in ſo baſe a Thing as Sin is.

The Reaſon why a regenerate Perſon cannot ſin as the Wicked do, is, becauſe *his Seed remaineth in him, and becauſe he is born of God*; that is, he has an inward Principle, inclining and diſpoſing him to hate and oppoſe all Sin, namely, *the ſanctifying Grace of God*; and he has that mortifying Spirit, which cauſes him daily more and more to die unto Sin, and enables him to mortify the Deeds of the Body.

Q. *How was the Duty of* mutual Love a Meſſage to us from the Beginning?

A. The Word of God is a Meſſage to us from God, for our Information and Inſtruction, for our Guide and Direction. The Duty of brotherly Love is an antient Meſſage which God has ſent us, and has continued to ſend us, from the Beginning.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the following Words in the* 12*th Verſe*, Not as *Cain*, who was of that wicked one?

A. One Argument to excite brotherly Love, is drawn from the Evil of hating our Brother; which appears in the Perſon and Practice of *Cain*, whom our Apoſtle deſcribes. 1. By his Pedigree; *He was of that wicked one*, that is, *the Devil*; of his diabolical Diſpoſition; of his envious and malicious Inclination; and as ſuch, was not ſo much the Son of *Adam* as of the Devil. 2. By his Practice, he ſlew his Brother; he firſt hated him, and then ſlew him. 3. The Reaſon aſſigned why he ſlew him, is, *becauſe his own Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous*, not for any Harm he had done, or for any Evil he had deſerved, but becauſe *Cain* was bad himſelf, and his Works bad.

The Inference drawn from this Example is, *Marvel not, my Brethren, if the World hate you*; intimating, that the World always did, and ever will, hate God's Children; which the Children of God are not to wonder at, but to prepare for it; though *Cain* is dead, the Spirit of *Cain* is alive.

Q. *What is the Characteriſtick of that Love which will evidence our Tranſlation from Death to Life?*

A. It muſt be a Love of the Brethren; that is, of all *Chriſtians*, as ſuch; particularly, it muſt be an extenſive and univerſal Love, that reaches all the Children of God, all good Men, of what Judgment and Opinion ſoever; otherwiſe it is the Love of a Party only, and a Love for Opinion ſake, not for Grace ſake, *Coloſſ.* i. 3, 4. *We give Thanks, ſince we heard of your Love to all Saints*; that is, all of what Kingdom and Nation ſoever; of what Eſtate and Condition, of what Judgment and Opinion ſoever, though differing from you in ſome leſſer Things.

It muſt alſo be an holy Love that will evidence our *Chriſtianity*; though all Men muſt be loved as Men, yet the Brethren muſt be loved for the Likeneſs of God in them; it is one Thing to love the Brethren, and another Thing to love them as Brethren; a gracious Perſon may be loved only for carnal Reſpects, and ſiniſter Ends.

Again; it muſt be active and operative, a coſtly and expenſive Love; that cheap Love of ſome Men, which will wiſh a poor *Chriſtian* well, but will be at no Pains, no Coſt to help and Succour him, becauſe they love their Money better than they do their Brother, is the Hypocrite's Love; a cold ſort of Love, that will neither profit our Brother, nor ouſelves.

Q. *In what Senſe is he that* hateth his Brother, a Murderer, *though he does not ſmite him, either with his Tongue or Hand?*

A. The Sins of the Heart are damning, as well as the Sins of the Life; a Man may be an Adulterer in the Sight of God, and yet never touch a Woman, *Matt.* v. 28. an Idolater, and yet never bow his Knee to an Image, a Murtherer, and yet never hurt his Brother; if he hates him in his Heart, he is recorded a Murtherer in God's Account. Great Need have we then to put up *David*'s Prayer, *Pſ.* xix. *Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret Sins.*

Q. *The Apoſtle farther exhorts them to compaſſionate a Brother, in his* Need: *What does the Word* Need *intimate?*

A. That is, not only ſuch as are caſt down, but ſuch as are falling, are the proper Objects of our Pity and Help. Our Relief muſt be given when ever we ſee our Brother is in Need. What a Vanity is it to leave our Alms till after our Death, to be beholden to the Juſtice of others for their Diſtribution! Let us give our Charity with our own Hands, and ſee it diſpoſed with our own Eyes, when the Loins of the Poor will bleſs us, but their Prayers will do us no Good when we are dead. The Omiſſion of expreſſing our charitable Benevolence towards our poor and indigent Brethren, when we have an Opportunity, is a certain Evidence that there is nothing of the Love of God reſiding in us.

Q. *What is meant by thoſe Words, Ver.* 20. If our Heart condemn us?

A. By Heart is meant the Conſcience: If our Hearts will tell us that our Love is barren and fruitleſs, and ſo condemn us for our Hypocriſy, God is greater than our Conſciences, both in Holineſs to condemn, and in Knowledge to perceive the Evil of them, for he knoweth all Things; whereas, if we have the Witneſs of our Conſciences touching the Sincerity of our Love by the Fruits of it, then have we an humble Confidence with God in all our Addreſſes to him. According to the Verdict and Teſtimony of Mens Conſciences rightly informed, and truly teſtifying, God will abſolve them at the great Day.

Q. *How are we to underſtand thoſe Words, Ver.* 22. Whatſoever we aſk we receive of him?

A. That is, whatſoever we aſk according to his Will, we are ſure to receive, either in Kind or Equivalency. It ſhall either be given in Mercy, or denied in Love; for God is as kind in denying ſome of our Requeſts, as in anſwering others; we know not what is beſt to beg, but an infinitely wiſe God knows what is fitteſt to give.

Becauſe we keep his Commandments. According to our keeping God's Commandments, ſo he hears and anſwers our Prayers; if God's Commands are trod under our Feet, no wonder that all our Prayers fall to the Ground.

Q. *What do you obſerve on, Ver.* 23?

A. *This is his Commandment, that we ſhould believe*; this Command cuts off the vain Pretence and Plea of Preſumption. What! ſuch a vile Wretch as thou preſume to believe on *Chriſt*? ſays Satan. Yes, ſays the *Chriſtian*, I have a Command from the higheſt Soverignty ſo to do, the Contempt of which I muſt anſwer at my utmoſt Peril.

Obſerve how the Command of Faith and the Command of Love are linked together, as if the weight of our Love hung equally alike upon both: As without Faith is it impoſſible to pleaſe God, ſo is it impoſſible without Love to pleaſe him alſo.

Q. *In what Senſe is it ſaid, Ver.* 24. God dwelleth in us, and we in him?

A. God's dwelling in us implies, 1. Right and Propriety, what a Man dwells in is his own. 2. Command and Authority; the Maſter and Owner is the Commander and Diſpoſer of the Houſe. 3. Reſidence and Continuance, Settlement and Fixedneſs of Abode; there a Man dwells where he conſtantly reſides.

Our dwelling in God imports, 1. Reconciliation to him. Can two dwell together unleſs they are agreed? 2. Affiance and Truſt in him. 3. A conſtant Communion with him; it is one thing to run to God for Refuge in a Storm, and another Thing to make him our Dwelling-place at all Times, and in all Conditions.

It follows, *And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* The Spirit of God beſtowed upon us in his ſanctifying Gifts, and ſaving Graces, is an evident Sign of God's dwelling in us, and we in him.

CHAP. IV.

He warns them againſt falſe Teachers. God is Love, and firſt loved us. By Love we abide in God, and ſhall have Boldneſs at the Day of Judgment. The Love of God and of our Neighbour inſeparable.

Q. WHAT *is the Import of thoſe Words, Ver.* 1. Believe not every Spirit?

A. That is, every Teacher, who pretends to be inſpired, and every Doctrine that lays Claim to the Authority of divine Revelation: *But try the Spirits*; that is, examine their Doctrines by the Rule of the Word of God, and try from whom they come, whether from the Spirit of God, or Satan; for *many falſe Prophets*, or Impoſtors, and Deceivers, are gone abroad into the World.

Hence it appears, that Men from the Beginning of *Chriſtianity* have, and ſtill do, falſely pretend to Divine Inſpiration. And *Chriſtians* ought not to believe every one that pretends to be thus divinely inſpired; for any one that has Confidence enough, and a ſmall Share of Conſcience, may pretend to come from God.

However, we are not to reject every one that pretends to come from God; for, when the Apoſtle bids us not to believe every Spirit, he ſuppoſes that we are to believe ſome; and when he bids us to try the Spirits whether they be of God, he ſuppoſes ſome to be of God, and that ſuch as are ſo, ought to be believ'd by us.

It is then the Duty of all *Chriſtians*, to examine the Doctrine propounded to them by the Word of God, they having a Judgment of Diſcretion, though not of Deciſion; a Power to judge for themſelves, not to impoſe upon others; nor does this allow'd Liberty of every one's judging for himſelf, take away the Uſe and Neceſſity of ſpiritual Guides and Teachers, or exempt us from a due Submiſſion and Obedience thereunto, but in Concurrence with them; *We are to try the Spirits, whether they be of God.*

Q. *But how was a Teacher, that was not inſpired by the Spirit of God, known from one that was ſo?*

A. Such a one as durſt truly and openly, in the Face of Danger, own and profeſs, teach and preach, *Jeſus Chriſt* in his Perſon, Nature, and Offices, as the incarnate Word, or Son of God, ſent from Heaven; attributing Virtue and Efficacy to the Sacrifice of his Death; attributing to him alone the whole Glory of a perfect Saviour; this Doctrine is of the Spirit, and this Spirit is of God. But ſuch Teachers as will not hazard themſelves, but for Fear of Sufferings and Perſecution will deny either the Godhead or Manhood of *Chriſt*; and diſown either his Incarnation, Death, or Reſurrection; ſuch Teachers, and ſuch Doctrines, are not of God, but are the very Spirit of Antichriſt; which, ſays he, you have been foretold ſhould come, and is now already in the World.

Q. *In the 7th and 8th Verſes, the Apoſtle reſumes his Exhortation to* brotherly Love: *What freſh Arguments does he uſe to enforce it?*

A. 1. He aſſures us, *that God is Love*; that is, the Fruit of his good Spirit in us; common Love is his common Gift, and holy Love is his ſpecial Grace. 2. It is an Evidence that we have a right Knowledge of God, both of his Nature, and of what he requires; he that has not the Grace of Love in his Heart, has not the right Knowledge of God in his Head. 3. Love is not only commanded, but exemplified by God himſelf; *God is Love*; he is eſſentially Love; Love in the Creature is an accidental Quality, in God an eſſential Property. God is Love cauſally, the efficient Cauſe of whatever is loving or lovely in us; all our Love to him, and to one another, is but a Reflection of his Love to us. God is Love objectively; he is, or ought to be, the ſupream Object of our Love; and we muſt Love him above all, or he eſteems our Love as nothing at all. God is Love declaratively; all his Works, as well as his Word, are a Declaration of his Love to us, and ought to engage our Stedfaſtneſs in Love to him. Let us therefore, ſays the beloved Diſciple, Love one another, for Love is of God, and God is Love.

Q. *By what Ways has God manifeſted his Love towards us?*

A. 1. In our Creation. 2. In our Apoſtaſy and Degeneration; when no Eye pitied us, and when we had no Heart to pity ourſelves, then were his Bowels of Love and Compaſſion yearning towards us; then he ſaid unto us; *Live*; when he might have ſaid, *Die, and be damned.* 3. In our Redemption, Recovery, and Reſtitution; in ſending *his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.*

It was a wonderful Inſtance of the Love of God, that he ſhould be pleaſ'd to take our Caſe into Conſideration, and to concern himſelf for our Happineſs; as nothing is more obliging to human Nature than Love, ſo no Love obliges more than that which is exerciſ'd with great Condeſcenſion after a Provocation; ſuch is God's Love to offending Man.

Q. *Pray ſhew the Force of that Expreſſion, Ver.* 10. Herein is Love?

A. That is, the cleareſt, fulleſt, the higheſt Expreſſion of free and undeſerv'd Love that ever the World was acquainted with. The Wiſdom and Power of God did not act to the utmoſt of their Efficacy in the Work of Creation; he could have framed a more glorious World, had it pleaſ'd him; but the Love of God in our Redemption by *Chriſt* could not be expreſs'd, or ſet forth, in a higher Degree. When Almighty God would give the moſt excellent Teſtimony of his Favour to Mankind, he gave them his Eternal Son, the Son of his Love; and really the giving of Heaven itſelf, with all its Joys and Glory, is not ſo full and perfect a Demonſtration of the Love of God, as the giving of his Son to die for us; *herein is Love.*

Obſerve next, the Priority of God's Love to Mankind; he lov'd us, not we him; he lov'd us antecedently to our loving him; and he lov'd us that we might love him, when there was nothing in us to deſerve, or to engage his love.

Q. *But, is there Love in nothing elſe but this?*

A. Yes, ſurely, to have a Being among rational Creatures, therein is Love; to have our Life preſerved ſo many Years in the Hand of Providence, like a burning Taper, in the midſt of Winds and Storms, and not burnt or blown out, this is Love, to have Food and Raiment convenient for us, Relations and Friends to comfort us, in all theſe is great Love; but comparatively none at all, to the giving of *Chriſt* for us; this was Love indeed.

Q. *How is our Love to one another, an Evidence of our Love to God?*

A. God himſelf is to be lov'd by us for his aſtoniſhing love unto us; and, as God is not to be ſeen in his Eſſence, but in Man his Image, his Creatures made after his own Image and Likeneſs, ſo if we love the holy Image of God in each other, it is an Evidence that God dwells in us, and we in him; namely, by the Inhabitation of his holy Spirit, which being a Spirit of Love in us, draws forth our Love towards himſelf, and one towards another.

Q. *When may our Love be ſaid to be made perfect, as Ver.* 11?

A. That is, heighten'd and improv'd by an exact correſponding with the Divine Pattern and Precept; if we love one another in Obedience to God's Command, and in Conformity to *Chriſt*'s Example, it will give us Boldneſs in the Day of Judgment, and we may think and ſpeak of, expect and look for, the Approach of that Day, without Fear and Conſternation of Mind; the Reaſon is added, *Becauſe as* Chriſt *was, ſo are we in the World*; as he was full of Holineſs and Purity, of Love and Charity, ſo have we endeavour'd to imitate his Example, according to our Meaſure in ſome Proportion and Degree.

Q. *What is meant by that Expreſſion, Ver.* 18. There is no Fear in Love?

A. That is, no ſlaviſh or diſtruſtful Fear, whereby we queſtion the Favour of God, but only a filial and reverential Fear, whereby we ſtand in awe of offending him as a Father: But perfect Love caſteth out Fear; that is, either the Actings of our perfect Love to God, or the Apprehenſions of God's perfect Love towards us, caſts out all the Fear that has Torment in it.

But although perfect Love caſts out tormenting Fear, it calls in obeying Fear; *Eccleſ.* 12. *Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man*; an awful Fear of God is all Duty, and every Grace.

The true Reaſon of our diſquieting and tormenting Fear is the Imperfection and Weakneſs of our Love; Fear may ſtand with Faith and Love; but not with perfect Faith, nor perfect Love; *he that feareth, is not made perfect in Love.*

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the 19th Verſe,* We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us?

A. There is a double Reading of theſe Words according to the Original. 1. They may be read, *let us love him,* becauſe he firſt lov'd us, by Way of Motive; denoting, that Believers have great Reaſon to love God with their choiceſt and higheſt Affections, for as much as he lov'd them firſt. 2. They are read by way of Cauſality, *we do love him,* becauſe he firſt lov'd us; intimating that God's Love to us, is the Root and Spring of our Love to him, and to one another; all our Love to Saints, is the Effect of his preventing Love to us, and but a Reflexion of thoſe Beams of Love which God has firſt caſt upon us; if God's Love to us had been a mere dependent Conſequence of our Love to him, how uncertain ſhould we be of its Continuance? But his Love to us was the antecedent Cauſe of our Love to him; we therefore lov'd him, becauſe he firſt lov'd us.

CHAP. V.

He that loves God, keeps his Commandments. Chriſt *proved to be the Son of God and our Redeemer. An Exhortation to Believers to keep themſelves from Idols.*

Q. *WHAT is it to believe that* Jeſus *is the* Chriſt?

A. Not hiſtorically only, to aſſent that *Jeſus* is the predicted and promiſed *Meſſiah*, but to expreſs the Truth of that Faith in a ſuitable Converſation.

Whoever believes that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt, is born of God.* Faith in *Chriſt Jeſus*, as the great King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his Church, accompanied with an holy Life, is a ſure Mark and undoubted Evidence of our new Birth.

The Affection every ſuch Perſon bears to God, is, *He loveth him that begat*; this is the ingratiating and indearing Quality; 'tis that which commends both our Perſons and Performances to God's Acceptation; the Service of Love is therefore moſt acceptable, becauſe moſt honourable to God, and moſt durable and laſting from us; the Obedience of Love will be laſting.

Here note, that the World is a *Chriſtian*'s grand Enemy, over which he is a victorious Conqueror; and the ſpecial Weapon that he uſes in making this Conqueſt, is Faith. Thoſe Warriors who have conquered Kingdoms, whilſt they were prevailing Abroad, were Slaves at Home, and Vaſſals to their own Luſts; but the Conquerors here deſcribed, begin their Victories at Home, and enlarge their Triumphs over all their Enemies abroad.

St. *John* next diſcovers the Object of this all-conquering Faith, in this Propoſition, that *Jeſus is the Son of God*. We overcome the World by believing in him that overcame it, even *Jeſus Chriſt*; who hath purchaſed, promiſed, and prepared a better World than what we do, or can ſee with our bodily Eyes, and made us Heirs of eternal Glory.

Q. *How does the Apoſtle prove that* Jeſus *is the Son of God, the true* Meſſias, *and the Saviour of Mankind?*

A. Becauſe *he came by Water and Blood*; that is, ſay ſome, by the Teſtimony given him when he was in the Water at his Baptiſm, both by *John the Baptiſt*, and the Voice from Heaven: He came by his Spirit, ſay others, *as by Water*, to ſanctify thoſe that believe in him; and by his Blood to make a full Attonement for them; an admirable Symbol of both, was, the flowing of Water and Blood out of *Chriſt*'s Side, when he hung upon the Croſs.

It is a ſweet Meditation, that *Jeſus Chriſt* comes by Water as well as Blood, by Way of Sanctification as well as by Way of Juſtification; his Death not only diſcharges from Guilt, but cleanſes from Pollution alſo.

Again; real Perfections are above relative Perfections; now Juſtification by *Chriſt*'s Blood is only a relative Perfection; it makes us ſtand in a new Relation to the Law, by which we before ſtood guilty and condemned; but Sanctification by the Spirit of *Chriſt* here ſignified, and elſewhere frequently ſet forth by Water, is a real moral Perfection; it changes the Heart and Nature, and makes us like unto God in his higheſt Perfection, that of Holineſs.

Q. *What is meant by that Expreſſion, Verſe* 6. It is the Spirit that beareth Witneſs?

A. By this underſtand, the Teſtimony which the Holy Spirit gave to *Chriſt* here upon Earth, as touching the Truth of his Doctrine, the Reality of his Miracles, and the Certainty of his Miſſion; others underſtand by it the Spirit's Teſtimony in the Holy Scriptures, and in the Conſciences of Believers, that *Jeſus Chriſt* is a Divine Perſon, and came by Water and Blood, both to ſave us at once from the Wrath of God, and the Rage of our Luſts.

Q. *Pray illuſtrate and explain the 7th Verſe?*

A. *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven* to this Truth, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*; namely, the Three Perſons in the bleſſed Trinity, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt*; the Father bore Witneſs at *Chriſt*'s Baptiſm and Transfiguration alſo, when with an audible Voice he declared, *This is my beloved Son*, &c. The Word bore Record of himſelf, affirming frequently, plainly, and directly, that he was the Son of God, and making manifeſt by his Doctrine and Miracles, that he came from the Father. The Spirit bore Witneſs to this, partly, by deſcending on *Chriſt* at his Baptiſm in the Shape of a Dove; and partly, by deſcending on his Apoſtles at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*, in the Figure of fiery Tongues, *Acts* ii. 3, *&c.*

Theſe Three are One; One in Teſtimony, ſay the Adverſaries of the Trinity, but not one in Eſſence; One in both, ſay we; as One in Teſtimony, ſo One in Eſſence. But ſuppoſe we ſhould grant, that the Oneneſs ſpoken of in the Text is to be expounded of Conſent in Teſtimony, Agreement and Will principally, yet will it prove the Godhead of *Chriſt*, and of the Holy Ghoſt; for in free Agents, where there is the ſame Will, there is the ſame Nature; but with God, becauſe there is but one only God, therefore it muſt be the ſame identical Nature.

As there are Three in Heaven who have given us their Teſtimony to the Divinity of *Chriſt*, and his Doctrine, here on Earth; ſo there are three Witneſſes here below, teſtifying the ſame Thing; namely, the Spirit, in the Preaching of the Goſpel, and in the Souls of Believers; the Water, or Sacrament of Baptiſm, wherein we are baptized in the Name of the Son as well as of the Father; and the Blood, that is, the Death of *Chriſt*, and the Sufferings of thoſe who have ſealed this Truth with their Blood; all theſe give Teſtimony on Earth, to *Chriſt*'s Divinity from Heaven.

Here note, that though much of theſe two Verſes be left out in many antient Copies of the Bible, as the learned Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, yet in Copies more antient they are found; and we have more Reaſon to believe that the *Arians* left them out, than that the *Orthodox* put them in, other Texts that aſſert the Truth being ſo abuſed. It has been the common Practice of *Hereticks*, to diſown the Authority of ſuch Texts as gall and pinch them.

Q. *What is* the Sin unto Death, *mentioned Verſe* 16?

A. By this underſtand Apoſtaſy from the *Chriſtian* Religion unto Idolatry, as appears from the following Words, *Keep yourſelves from Idols*; which Caution has no Manner of Dependance upon what went before, unleſs we underſtand the *Sin unto Death* in this Senſe; or if (with others) we call it *the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, it comes to the ſame; for what is that Sin but a renouncing of *Chriſtianity*, denying the Truth of the *Chriſtian* Faith, after Illumination and Conviction of the Holy Ghoſt, and malicious perſecuting the ſincere Profeſſors of it?

Q. *What obſerve you upon the laſt Clauſe of Verſe* 20. This is the true God, and eternal Life?

A. This Text, which undeniably proves the Divinity of *Chriſt*, the *Socinians* pervert by applying theſe Words, *This is the true God*, not to *Chriſt*, but to God the Father. But this makes the Apoſtle guilty of a grand Tautology, by ſaying, The true God is the true God. Beſides, it is here ſaid of the ſame Perſon, That he is the true God and eternal Life. Now, eternal Life is thrice in this Chapter attributed to *Jeſus Chriſt*, as the Author and Diſpoſer of it. If then *Chriſt* be meant by eternal Life, he muſt alſo be meant by the true God, for they are ſpoken of together, when the Apoſtle ſays, *This is the true God and eternal Life.* Amen.

THE

The Second Epiſtle General of

St. JOHN.

THAT St. John *the Apoſtle and Diſciple of our Lord, who wrote the Firſt, did alſo write this* Second Epiſtle, *ſeems very evident from the exact Agreement of ſeveral Paſſages in this with the former* Epiſtle, *even Word for Word; and accordingly it has been agreed, that the ſame Perſon was the Author of both* Epiſtles.

BUT, as touching the Perſon to whom it was wrote, there have been different Opinions. Some think it was a Church he directs it to, under the Title of the Elect Lady; *and that ſome* Jewiſh *Church, particularly that of* Jeruſalem, *the Mother of all, and from whence came forth the Word to all other Churches. The Reaſon upon which this conjecture is founded, is, becauſe all the Reſt of the* Epiſtles, *called* Catholick, *were written to the* Jews, (*excepting that to* Gaius) *and therefore, probably, this was written to ſome* Jewiſh *Church; and becauſe all the* Jewiſh *Churches received their ſpiritual Things from the Church of* Jeruſalem, *ſhe may, therefore, ſay ſome, be fitly ſtiled the* Lady, *as ſhe was the Mother of all other Churches.*

OTHERS conceive this Epiſtle *to be written to a particular Perſon, ſome eminent and religious Matron, of a great Eſtate, and an eminent Reliever and Supporter of the Members of the Church in her days. Which of theſe two Opinions is the moſt probable, is a Matter of no great Importance; let us rather attend to the Subject-matter of this Divine* Epiſtle.

CHAP. I.

He exhorts a certain hononrable Matron, with her Children, to perſevere in Chriſtian *Love and Belief, and to have nothing to do with Seducers.*

Q. WHY *does St.* John *call himſelf the* Elder, *Ver.* 1?

A. Partly, with Reſpect to his Age, he being, as it is thought, the only Perſon then living, who bore the Name of an Apoſtle; and partly, with Reſpect to his Office in the Church; the Word Elder being a Name of Honour and Dignity, and we find both St. *Peter* and St. *John* here, making uſe it.

Q. *Who was that* Elect Lady and her Children, *to whom he wrote this Epiſtle?*

A. Either ſome particular Church, with its religious Members, according to ſome, or an honourable Perſon of eminent Piety and Uſefulneſs in the Church, according to others; and to her Children, whom ſhe had piouſly educated.

Q. *Who were thoſe* Deceivers, *mentioned, Ver.* 7?

A. That is, Impoſtors were gone forth, who denied, ſome the Divinity, others the Humanity of *Chriſt*, and ſo raz'd the very Foundation of *Chriſtianity*, and thus diſcover'd themſelves to be Antichriſts, or Perſons who ſet themſelves to oppoſe *Jeſus Chriſt*.

Hence it appears, that even from the Beginning our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* has had thoſe who have diſown'd his Natures, and deny'd his Offices, the Divinity of his Perſon, and the Meritoriouſneſs of his Satisfaction; theſe are Antichriſts, Perſons maliciouſly ſet againſt *Chriſt*, and they ſhall find him righteouſly ſet againſt them in the Day when they ſhall be ſummoned by him ſolemnly to appear before him.

Q. *What Argument does the Apoſtle uſe to perſuade them to perſevere conſtantly in the Faith and Obedience of the Goſpel?*

A. His Argument is, leſt they ſhould loſe the Fruit of their Faith profeſſed; the Profit of their Afflictions, which for the Sake of *Chriſtianity* they had ſuffered, and their Works of Piety and Charity which they have performed; whereas by continuing faithful to Death, they might receive a full Reward, even a Crown of Life.

Hence it appears, that it is both lawful and needful, even for the beſt of Saints, in what they do in the Service of God, to have an Eye to the promiſed Reward, as an Encouragement to them in the Courſe of their Obedience. We may, with *Moſes*, have Reſpect to the Recompence of Reward, though not only, or chiefly, yet as a Spur to provoke us to Duty. Perſeverance in Goodneſs has its Reward belonging to it; that Reward a Fulneſs of Compenſation and Satisfaction, it being both lawful and laudable to have an Eye in our working to this full Recompence of Reward.

Q. *Why is it ſaid of Apoſtates, Verſe 9. that* They have not God?

A. That is, ſay ſome, they have not God to be their Father, nor the Spirit to be their Guide and Sanctifier; they have, ſay others, no Knowledge of God, no Intereſt in him, no Influences of Grace and Holineſs derived from him.

But obſerve the happy Condition of thoſe who abide in the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, *They have both the Father and the Son*; he that has one, has both; and he that has not both, has neither; and this *having* may admit a three fold Interpretation thus; he has the Father and Son, by way of Abode and Inhabitation; he dwelleth in God, and God in him; they have the Father and Son with them by way of Society and Communion, *We will come unto them, and make our Abode with them.* Laſtly, they have the Father and Son, by way of Aſſiſtance and Approbation; they have God to aſſiſt, accept, and reward them.

Q. *But how were they to behave towards thoſe wicked Apoſtates, and heretical Seducers?*

A. The Apoſtle directs them, by no Means to countenance or encourage them, or hold any Familiarity or Communication with them, not to entertain them, nor ſo much as courteouſly to ſalute them, but by ſhewing them Diſreſpect, manifeſt a Diſlike and Diſapprobation of their Errors.

This Form of Interdict, *Bid him not God ſpeed*, ſeems to be an Imitation of the *Jewiſh* Practice towards excommunicated Perſons, who were not only excluded from all Commerce, but alſo from all kind of common Civilities, and ordinary Salutations.

Hence learn, that even civil Courteſy and common Reſpect, is not, and ought not to be paid to thoſe who ſeduce others, or attempt to ſeduce us, from the *Chriſtian* Faith.

Q. *How does St.* John *conclude his Epiſtle?*

A. With an Apology for the Brevity of it, declaring, that he hoped to come ſhortly to them, and ſee them. And though he had many Things to write, yet all Things were not fit to be written; beſides, a lively Voice affects more than a written Letter; and he hoped they ſhould be filled with a mutual Joy at the Sight of him, and Converſe with each other. Preſence of Friends, and familiar Converſe with each other, is preferable to all Writing to one another.

Q. *Who are meant by* the Children of the elect Siſter, *Verſe* 13?

A. Some underſtand the Members of another Church, who now ſent Salutations to them. They were, 'tis probable, with him at *Epheſus*, and ſo took this Occaſion of his Writing, to commend their Reſpects to them.

The Third Epiſtle General of

ST. JOHN.

CHAP. I.

He recommends Gaius *for hi Piety and Hoſpitality; complains of the unkind Dealing of* Diotrephes, *and gives ſpecial Teſtimony of the good Report of* Demetrius.

Q. WHO *was the Author of this Epiſtle?*

A. The Penman and Writer of this Epiſtle was St. *John* the Apoſtle, though he ſtiles himſelf but an Elder, and the ſame who wrote the two former Epiſtles, as appears by the Agreement between them in Words and Phraſes which are peculiar to this Apoſtle; the Word *Elder* is a Name of Honour and Dignity belonging to the chief of their Tribes, and agrees very well with the Office of the Apoſtles, ſet over the Twelve Tribes of the Houſe of *Iſrael.*

Q. *Who was* Gaius, *to whom this Epiſtle is inſcribed?*

A. We find three Perſons of this Name in the *New Teſtament*, namely, *Gaius* of *Macedonia*, *Acts* xix. *Gaius* of *Derbe*, *Acts* xx. and *Gaius* of *Corinth*, *Rom.* xvi. whom St. *Paul* calls his Hoſt, and of the whole Church, who being eminent for his Hoſpitality, eſpecially to the Miniſters who went out to preach the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, taking nothing of them, this Man ſeems to be the Perſon who had the Honour of an Epiſtle ſent to him from the Pen of an eminent Apoſtle.

Q. *What is farther obſervable of this* Gaius?

A. St. *John* ſtiles him, *the well-beloved* Gaius, and ſhews alſo what was the Motive and Attractive of that his Love; namely, *the Truth*, that is, the Goſpel of *Chriſt* called eminently, *the Truth*, he loved *Gaius* in the Truth, that is in great Sincerity, and for the Truth, for his ſincere profeſſing and preaching the Doctrine of the Goſpel; ſuch as Love the Truth; are, and ought to be, the Objects of our Love.

This holy Man, *Gaius*, who was ſo hoſpitable an Hoſt to the Miniſters and Members of *Chriſt*, had, it ſeems, but a weak and ſickly Body, he wanted Health; Strength of Grace and Dearneſs of Reſpect, even from God himſelf, cannot prevail againſt Diſeaſes.

But though *Gaius* had but a weak and conſumptive Body, yet had he a very daring and vigorous Soul; it is a very common, yet a very ſad and true Obſervation, that Men of ſtrong healthy and active Bodies have weak, lame, ſickly, and ſinful Souls; and though under the higheſt Obligations to ſerve God beſt, yet forget him moſt, and proſtitute their Health to the Service of their Luſts; how does the Health and Eaſe of one Day deſerve the Service and Thankfulneſs of their whole Lives!

Note farther the Apoſtle's Wiſh in behalf of *Gaius*, namely, that his Body were as healthful as his Soul was holy, that he had as much Health in one as he had Grace in the other. Such an improved and well-grown *Chriſtian* was this holy Man *Gaius*, that our Apoſtle makes the proſperous State of his Soul the Meaſure of all that Proſperity which the one could wiſh, or the other deſire; *I wiſh above all Things that thou mayeſt proſper and be in Health, even as thy Soul proſpereth.*

St. *John* next commends the great Charity of *Gaius*, and at the ſame Time excites him to the farther Practice of it. Charity towards *Chriſtians* he ſtiles Fidelity; *Beloved, thou doſt faithfully whatſoever thou doſt to the Brethren.* Acts of Charity are Acts of Righteouſneſs and Fidelity; he that is uncharitable is unjuſt.

Note, the extenſive Nature of *Gaius*'s Charity, it was to Brethren, and even to Strangers; that is, not only to the Brethren of the Church with him, but to Strangers in their Travels to and fro; more particularly to ſuch faithful Miniſters as came out of foreign Parts to preach the Goſpel, whom *Gaius* had hoſpitably and charitably entertained.

Q. *What is imply'd in the Words* went forth, *Verſe* 7?

A. Dr. *Hammond* ſays, that theſe Words are capable of two Notions. Firſt, it may ſignify a voluntary going out; and then the *Greek* Words tranſlated *for his Name's Sake*, muſt ſignify their preaching and propagating the Goſpel, for which they travelled from their own Country. But *they went out* may ſignify alſo a violent Ejection. So *Matth.* xvii. 21. ſpeaking of the *Ejection*, or *caſting out of a Devil*, the like Phraſe is uſed, *this Kind goeth not out*; by *going out* meaning Ejection. Thus the *Hebrew* Word; for it ſignifies in *Syriac*, *to go out*, and *to be caſt out*, alſo; and accordingly, *Matth.* viii. 12. the *Syriac* hath *they ſhall be caſt out*. According to which it is, that the *Greek* Words *to caſt out*, and *to ſend* out, are uſed promiſcuouſly, the one for the other. And then *going out for* Chriſt's *Name*, is being baniſhed or caſt out of their Country for the Profeſſion of the Faith of *Chriſt*, which we know the *Jewiſh Chriſtians* were, *Acts* viii. 1. and xi. 19.

Q. *Pray who was this* Diotrephes, *mentioned in Verſe* 9?

A. *Diotrephes*, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, was a *Chriſtian*, who from *Gentiliſm* received the Faith in that Church to which *Gaius* belonged, and to which the Apoſtle ſeems to have written the former Epiſtle commendatory of the Brethren, *ver.* 9. From hence appears that which was intimated, *Rom.* xiv. 1. that the *Gentile Chriſtians* were, in Part, guilty of the Breach betwixt the *Jewiſh Chriſtians* and them, and not the *Jews* only. There it ſeems, as the *Jewiſh* judged and condemned the *Gentile Chriſtians* for uſing their *Chriſtian* Liberty, ſo the *Gentile Chriſtians* deſpiſed, and ſet at naught the *Jewiſh*. Here it ſeems the Matter was carried higher, that is, they did not ſo freely relieve the *Jewiſh Chriſtians* that were driven out of their Country for the Faith, as they ought in *Chriſtian* Liberality to have done. This ſeems to be the Meaning of *Verſe* 7. that the *Jewiſh Chriſtians* that were driven out of *Judea* for the Profeſſion of the Faith, were not then in this Church of *Aſia* ſo liberally and hoſpitably treated as the Laws of *Chriſtian* Charity obliged, and as belonged to them as Strangers, *ver.* 5. to furniſh them for their Journey, *ver.* 6.

Farther, they were ſome of them ſo far guilty in this Matter, that when St. *John* wrote his Letters of Recommendation for them, theſe were not effectual, *Diotrephes* rejected, or gave no Heed or Reception to his Letters; and by this Means the Reſt of the Church alſo, being otherwiſe willing to have entertained them, were reſtrained from doing it, *ver.* 10.

Again, he not only denied them that hoſpitable Reception and Relief, but utterly rejected them from Communion, *Caſt them out of the Church*, ver. 10.

Whether this *Diotrephes* was a Biſhop in this Church it may be doubted, or whether only one that immoderately affected that Dignity, or aſſumed it, not belonging to him. It is poſſible that he was a Biſhop, and being ſo, did caſt out the *Jewiſh Chriſtians* out of the Church, and that in Spight of St. *John*'s commendatory Letters, who had an apoſtolical Power over him, and all other Biſhops of *Aſia*. But it may alſo be very probable, that as the Hereticks of thoſe Times did condemn and affront the Biſhops and Apoſtles themſelves, ſo this *Diotrephes* might do, without having any Authority in the Church, but only aſſuming it.

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's Advice to* Gaius *on this Occaſion?*

A. St. *John*, ver. 11. adviſes his beloved *Gaius*, and thoſe with him, not to imitate and follow this evil Example of *Diotrephes* (who not only refuſed Charity to the *Chriſtian Jews*, but would not ſuffer the *Gentile Chriſtians* to receive or relieve them) but to follow the Example of God, who is good to all; and accordingly he that is Merciful is born of God, but he that is Malicious has no true Knowledge of God, but is a meer Stranger to him. Behold here the Eulogy and high Commendation which the Spirit of God gives to a charitable and good Man. *He that doeth Good is of God*; he is allied to Heaven, born of God, and his Offspring, but the uncharitable evil Man is a Companion of Spite, Envy and Malice, born from Beneath, and the Devil's Offspring.

Having propounded the Example of God in the foregoing *Verſe*, he propounds in the 12*th* the Example of *Demetrius*, as a Pattern to them for their Imitation in the Works of Piety and Charity; not only common Report, and the Apoſtle's Teſtimony, but his own good Works, did juſtly recommend him as an extraordinary Pattern for their Imitation.

Here note, that the Commendation which our own good Works do give us before the World, are more valuable than all the Praiſes and Applauſe which can be given us by Men; yea, by the beſt of Men; *Demetrius has a good Report of all Men, yea, of the Truth itſelf.*

Q. *Does the Apoſtle act conſiſtently with his Profeſſion, when he threatens to reſent the ill Uſage of* Diotrephes, *Verſe* 10?

A. His Meaning is, I will ſharply rebuke him, and uſe that Severity towards him which his Crime deſerves, according to the Authority which God has given me.

Hence learn, that though private Injuries againſt *Chriſt*'s Miniſters muſt be forgiven and forgotten by them; yet when an Offence is prejudicial to the Church, it muſt be expoſed, and openly cenſured.

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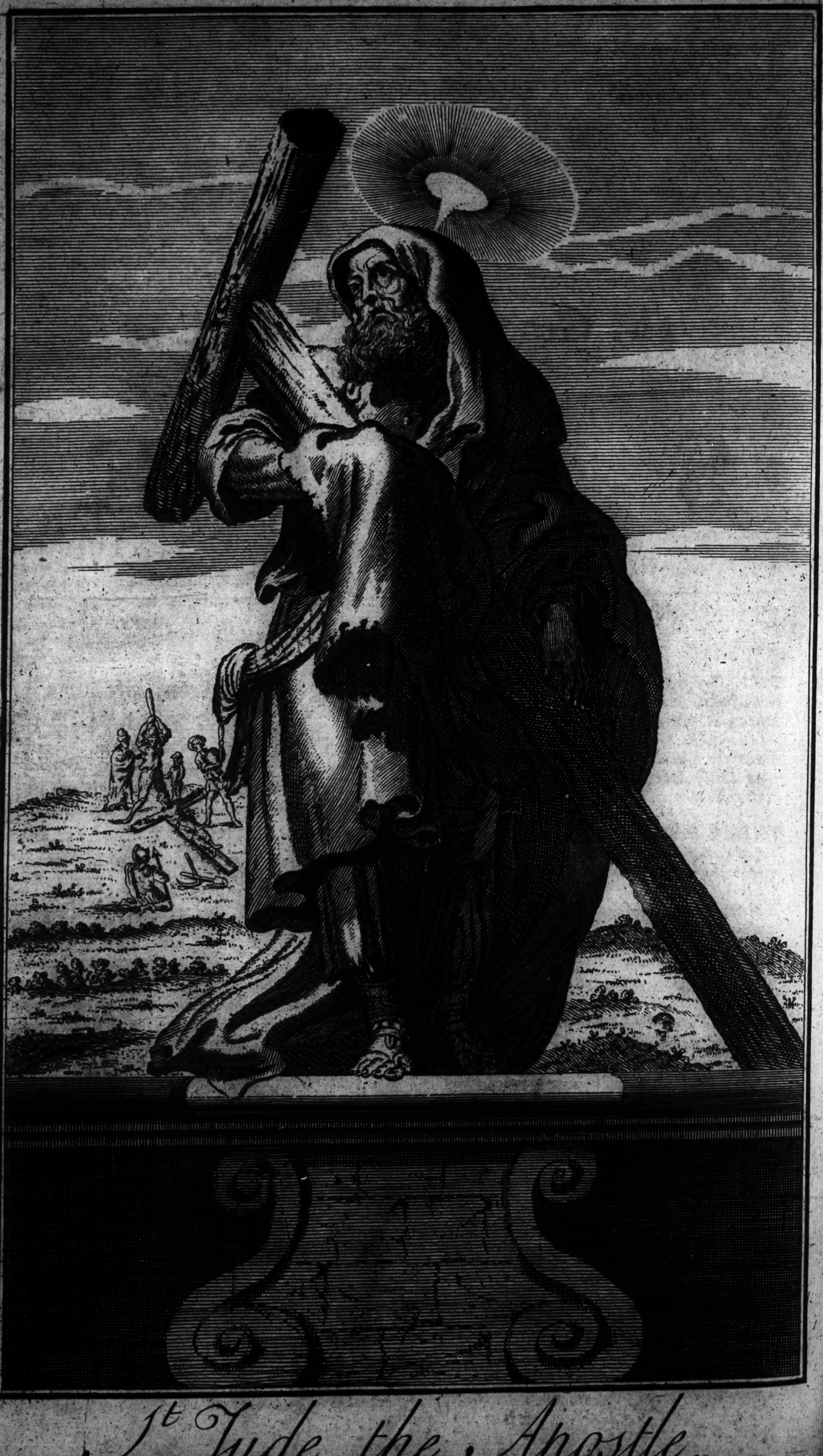


S.^t Jude the Apostle.

The General EPISTLE of

S^T. JUDE.

THE *Deſign and Scope of this* Epiſtle *appears to be much the ſame with that of the* Second *of* St. Peter, *and was written, probably, about the ſame Time. The Deſign of it is, to obviate a Scandal and Danger of certain Hereticks and Seducers, who were even in thoſe Days ſprung up in the Churches, who falſified the true Doctrine concerning* Chriſt's *Perſon, and turned* God's *Grace, and the ſpiritual evangelical Liberty into a certain carnal and diſſolute Licentiouſneſs, to overthrow all Law, Dominion and Subjection to civil Government, making Schiſms and Diviſions in the Churches.*

THE *Apoſtle then, after he hath propounded Examples of the moſt ſevere Judgments of God, which had formerly fallen upon Apoſtates, Schiſmaticks, diſſolute, unchaſte, and profane Perſons, affirms that thoſe were ſuch, and therefore denounceth the like Judgments againſt them; but comforts Believers againſt that Scandal, and exhorts them to perſevere, and increaſe in Faith, and in their ſpiritual Regeneration, and to ſeek by all poſſible and convenient Means the Salvation of thoſe that were gone aſtray.*

CHAP. I.

He exhorts them to Conſtancy in their Profeſſion. Seducers, their dreadful Doom; but the Godly ſhall perſevere and grow in Grace, and recover others out of the Snares of thoſe Deceivers.

Q. WHAT *is obſervable in St.* Jude's *Salutation?*

A. The Perſon ſaluting is deſcribed, 1. By his Name *Jude*, called *Thaddeus* and *Lebbeus*, to diſtinguiſh him from *Judas Iſcariot*; the Apoſtle and the Traitor had both the ſame Name; 'tis not a holy Name, but an holy Nature, commends us to God. 2. By his Office, *a Servant of Jeſus Chriſt*; he might have ſtiled himſelf a near Kinſman to *Chriſt*, or a Brother of the Lord; but he mentions not his natural, but his ſpiritual Relation to *Jeſus Chriſt*. Alliance in Faith, or ſpiritual Relation to *Chriſt* is dearer and nearer than an Alliance of Fleſh; there is a peculiar Honour and Excellency in the Title of *Chriſt*'s Servant, above that of *Chriſt's* Kinſman. 3. By his Kindred and Alliance, *Brother of James*; this is added to diſtinguiſh him from *Judas Iſcariot*; it is the Duty of the Servants, but eſpecially the Miniſters of *Chriſt*, to prevent all ſcandalous Exceptions againſt their Perſons, and to be of untainted Reputations.

The Perſons ſaluted are deſcribed ſeveral Ways. 1. They *are ſanctified by God the Father*; the Apoſtle judges of them by their Profeſſion, and likewiſe by their Obligation; they had, by aſſuming the *Chriſtian* Name, obliged themſelves to be Saints or holy Perſons; and by their Profeſſion did own and declare themſelves ſo to be; and, no doubt, many of them were inwardly ſanctified, as well as outwardly holy. 2. *They are preſerved in* Chriſt Jeſus; that is, in the Faith of *Chriſt Jeſus*, when many for fear of Perſecution had apoſtatized from it; he that will approve himſelf a true *Chriſtian*, muſt ſhew himſelf a ſtedfaſt *Chriſtian*; Inſtability is an Argument of Inſincerity. Again, to be *preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus* ſignifies to be preſerved in a State of Grace and Holineſs, by *Chriſt Jeſus*, by the Merit of his Death and Paſſion, by the Prevalency of his Interceſſion, and by the Holy Spirit's Efficacy and Operation. 3. *They are called* all of them externally by the Miniſtry of the Word; internally, many of them, by the effectual Operation of the Spirit, renewing the Nature, and reforming the Life.

The Salutation itſelf is, *Mercy, Peace, and Love be multiplied*; Mercy from God the Father of Mercies; Peace from *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is our Peace; and Love from the Holy Ghoſt, by whom it is ſhed abroad in our Hearts; and his praying that theſe Graces be not barely given and granted, but be multiplied and increaſed, intimates to us our Duty, which is, not barely to ſeek Grace at the Hands of God, but the Multiplication and Augmentation of it; thankful we may, and ought to be, for the leaſt Meaſures of Grace received, but not ſatisfied with the greateſt Meaſures, ſhort of our heavenly Perfection; he was never ſincerely good that does not deſire daily to grow better.

Q. *What does he mean by the* common Salvation? *Ver.* 3.

A. It is ſo called, not as if it were a Salvation common to all Perſons, good and bad; but becauſe common to all Believers, we have a joint Title to it; yea, a common Intereſt in it. 'Tis common, in regard to the Price paid for it, the precious Blood of *Chriſt*; in regard to the Way and Means by which it is obtained and ſecured, and that is Faith; and in regard of the Earneſt of it, the Holy Spirit is common to all Believers, and gives them a Pledge and Earneſt of, and ſets them a longing for this Salvation.

Q. *In what Senſe were theſe Seducers, mentioned, Ver.* 4. before ordained to Condemnation?

A. Mark, not fore-ordained to Seduction to Sin, but to Condemnation for Sin; the Word fore-ordained, ſignifies before-written, or before-propheſied of, by *Enoch* and others; that they would, by their great Sins and Impieties, fall into that Condemnation which God had ordained as a juſt Reward for their Tranſgreſſions; God never ordains any Man's Sin, but he decrees and foretells their Condemnation for Sin.

Q. *Who were thoſe the Apoſtle ſtiles* wicked, ungodly Men, turning the Grace of God into Laſciviouſneſs?

A. He points at the *Nicolaitans*, *Gnoſticks*, and other impure Hereticks, that ſprang from *Simon Magus*, who made the free Grace of God, diſcover'd in the Goſpel, a Cloak for their Looſeneſs and Laſciviouſneſs. Errors in Doctrine are uſually accompanied with Corruption in Manners, as being moſt ſuitable to corrupt Man's vile Nature, and will be ſure never to want Followers.

Q. *In the 8th Verſe, he calls theſe Seducers,* filthy Dreamers, that defile the Fleſh, deſpiſe Dominion, and ſpeak Evil of Dignities: *How did they deſerve this Character?*

A. He calls them Dreamers, becauſe they vented their own Dreams and Fancies inſtead of God's Truth, defiled themſelves with their filthy Practices, teaching, that by their *Chriſtian* Liberty they were freed from their civil Subjection, ſpeaking Evil of thoſe who were ſet in Authority over them. Luſt loves no Reſtraint; Libertines deſpiſe Dominion; Senſuality make Men unruly; ſuch as are Sons of *Belial*, they caſt off the Yoak. Such as deſpiſe Government, ſpeak evil of Governors; Dignities lie open to the Laſh of the Tongue; neither Power, nor Innocence can protect from Calumny and Imputations, from Slander, and falſe Accuſation; *Theſe filthy Dreamers deſpiſe Dominion, and ſpeak evil of Dignities.*

Q. *What is the Apoſtle's Drift in the 9th Verſe?*

A. He here aggravates the Impudence and Impiety of the contemptuous ſpeaking of Governors and Government, by the Behaviour of *Michael* the Arch-angel towards the Devil. The Argument lies thus: If *Michael* an Arch-angel, ſo excellent in Nature, ſo high in Office, contending with Satan an impure Spirit, yet uſed great Modeſty, without the leaſt Indecency of Expreſſion towards him, who and what are theſe that deſpiſe Dominions, and dare ſpeak evil of Dignities?

By *Michael* the Arch-angel is either underſtood *Chriſt* the Prince of Angels, who often in Scripture is called an Angel, or of a created Angel; and that either, 1. One of the Arch-angels, *Dan.* x. 13. *Michael* is called *one of the chief Princes*, which though the Word Arch-angel be not found in the plural Number in Scripture, may well imply a Plurality of them; for what is one of the chief Princes among the Angels, but an Arch-angel? Or, 2. A principal Angel, or one that is chief among others.

When contending with the Devil. This may be meant either of *Chriſt* contending with the Devil, as *Matt.* iv. in his Temptation, and *Zach.* iii. 1, 2. and *Rev.* xii. 7. or rather of *Michael* a created Angel.

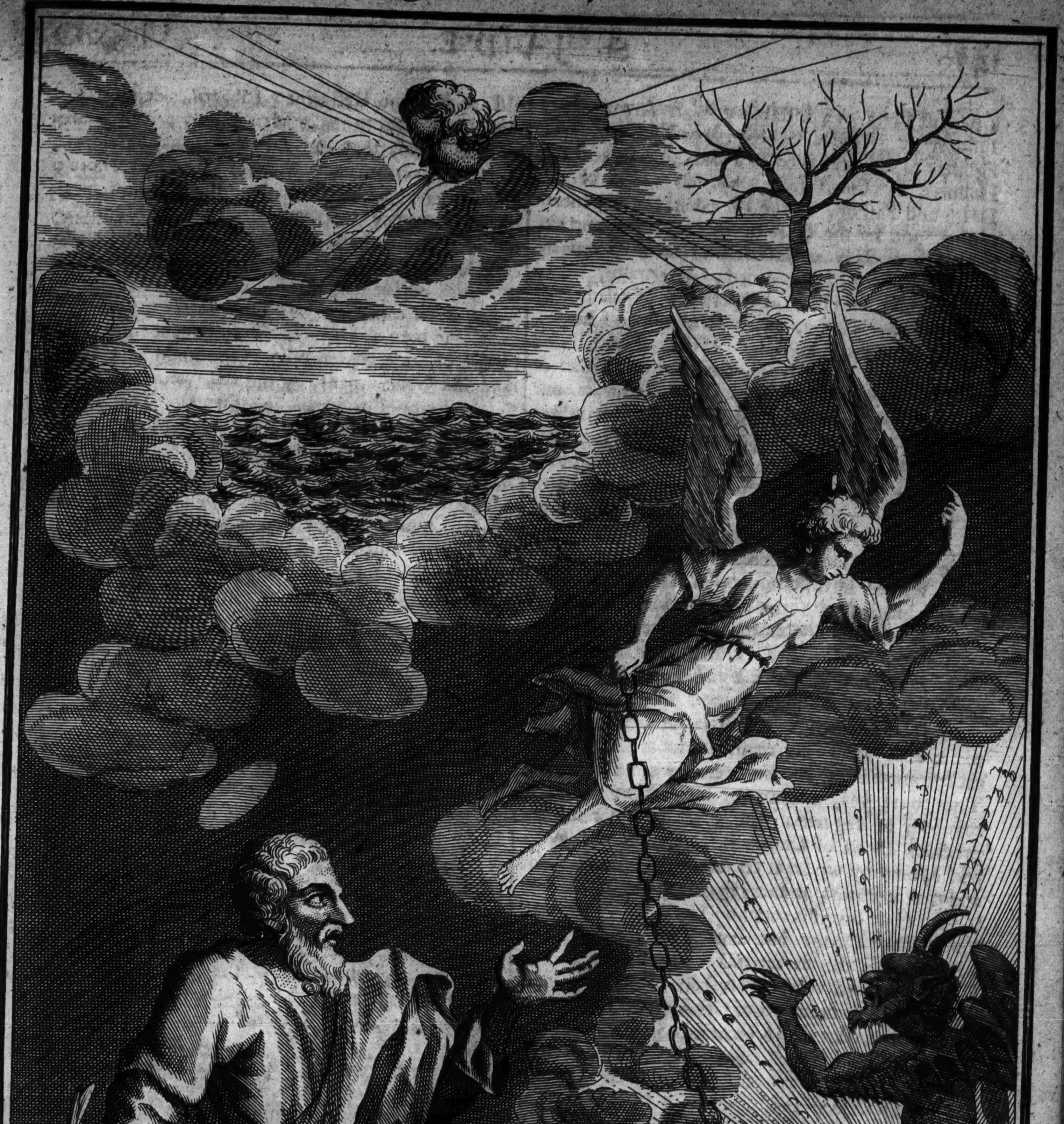
He diſputed about the Body of Moſes. If *Michael* the Arch-angel be meant of *Chriſt*, then the Body of *Moſes* may be taken figuratively for that Body whereof the *Moſaical* Ceremonies were Shadows, *Col.* 17. that is, the Truth and Accompliſhment of the Law given by *Moſes*; that Accompliſhment was to be in *Chriſt*, who is repreſented by *Joſhua*, *Zach.* iii. him Satan reſiſts in the execution of his Office, and by him ſtrikes at *Chriſt*, whoſe Type he was, and whom he afterwards oppoſeth in the execution of his Office, when he was come in the Fleſh. Or,

If we take *Michael* for a created Angel, which agrees beſt with the parallel Place in *Peter*, then the Body of *Moſes* muſt be taken properly, (as moſt take it) and the Diſpute ſeems to be, whether *Moſes*'s Body ſhould be ſo buried as to be concealed from the *Iſraelites*? *Deut.* xxxiv. 6. It is ſaid, *God buried him*, (which might be by the Miniſtry of *Michael* the Arch-angel) and that *no Man knew of his Sepulchre*. The Devil oppoſeth the Angel, deſiring to have the Place of his Burial known, that in After-times it might be a Snare to that People, and a Means to bring them to Idolatry. And this ſeems probable, if we conſider what Work the Devil hath made in the World with the Bodies of Saints and Martyrs, and how much Idolatry he hath brought in thereby. This Paſſage, St. *Jude*, probably, had from ſome known Tradition among the *Jews*, the Truth of which we are now ſure of, becauſe here certified concerning it.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon* Enoch's *Prophecy, Ver.* 10?

A. Enoch *propheſied, ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh*

The Epiſtle of S.t JUDE.



The Apoſtate Angels reſerved as Priſoners in Chains of Darkneſs, to y.e Judgment of the Great Day.

Cometh with ten Thouſand of his Saints. *Chriſt* will be attended with holy Ones at the laſt Day; ſuch as meet him now in Purity, ſhall meet him then in Peace. How chearfully then may Saints think of the laſt Judgment, and obſerve the Number and Quality of his Attendants? *Rev.* v. 11. they are called a Number which no Man can number. God's Family, when it comes together, will be very Numerous, or rather Innumerable.

Q. *Who are the Perſons whom* Chriſt *will judge at the laſt Day?*

A. The Proceſs of the laſt Day lies chiefly, though not only, againſt the Ungodly; theſe ſhall not ſtand in the Judgment, becauſe Ungodlineſs doth chiefly provoke; not but that Unrighteouſneſs ſhall be condemned alſo, *Rom.* i. 8. and Sinners ſent to Hell for neglecting the Duties of the ſecond Table, no leſs than the firſt.

Not only the Deeds of ungodly Men, but their Words, eſpecially their *hard Speeches* againſt God and his Children, ſhall be brought into Judgment.

Our Duty is, wiſely to make as good an Uſe of the reproaching Tongue of an Enemy, as of the reproving Tongue of a Friend; and to take Care that the Sword of the Tongue may let out the Corruption of our Hearts, and do us Good againſt the Will, and contrary to the Intention of our Enemy.

Q. *What Directions does the Apoſtle give them, to preſerve themſelves from Seduction?*

A. He directs them, to *build up themſelves on their moſt holy Faith*; that is, on the Doctrine of the Faith contained in the Goſpel; a Faith that is Holy in its Principles, in its Pattern, in its Encouragements and Rewards.

Praying in the Holy Ghoſt; that is, with holy Reverence, with humble Confidence, with fervent Importunity, with thoſe holy Affections which the Spirit of God excites in us; without the Spirit there is no acceptable Praying, and without Prayer, vain is the Pretence of the Spirit.

Keep yourſelves in the Love of God: Take we Care that there be no Intermiſſion of the Acts of Love, and no Remiſsneſs in the Degrees of it, ſo ſhall we be Proof againſt Seducers and falſe Teachers.

Looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *unto eternal Life.* Heaven, or eternal Life, is called a Mercy; and it is the Mercy of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, becauſe purchaſed by him, and as he is the Giver of it.

Q. *But how were they to behave towards thoſe who were ſeduced, in order to their Recovery?*

A. He ſays, *Of ſome have Compaſſion*; reprehend them with Gentleneſs and Pity; and others ſave with Fear; ſuch as are entangled, corrupted, and hardened in their Errors, terrify with the Fear of God's Judgments and Wrath, and by ſharp Admonitions recover them out of their Errors, as *Lot* was ſnatched out of the Fire of *Sodom*. Lenity muſt be firſt uſed; if that fails, Severity muſt ſucceed.

Q. *How does St.* Jude *conclude his Epiſtle?*

A. With a Doxology, in which is obſervable the Perſon to whom the Praiſe is given: *To the only wiſe God*, ſo called, becauſe he is originally and independently wiſe.

Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour is worthy to be accounted the only wiſe God. As he is God, he is called *the Wiſdom of the Father*. As he was Man, all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge were found in him, together with all other Graces without Meaſure.

The Praiſe given to this Perſon is alſo deſcribed, *Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power*; by which underſtand the Greatneſs and Excellency of the Divine Nature, infinitely exalted above all other Beings.

The Duration is, *now and ever*. Believers have ſuch large and vaſt Deſires for the Exaltation of God's Glory, that they would have him glorified everlaſtingly, and without ceaſing; not only in the preſent, but to eternal Ages. To him be Glory now and for ever. *Amen.*

The

THE
REVELATION
OF
S^T. JOHN
The DIVINE.

THIS Book is entitled the Revelation, *becauſe it contains a general Diſcovery of ſuch Secrets, as the Wiſdom of Man could not have manifeſted or foreſeen; and in particular, reveals ſuch divine Things concerning the State of the Church, which before lay in the Purpoſe and Counſel of God.*

Concerning this Book, obſerve, 1. *The Penman, St.* John, *the Apoſtle and Evangeliſt (as it is believed) the Diſciple whom* Jeſus *loved, to whom the Holy Spirit dictated the myſterious Matter of this Book.* 2. *The Time when, and the Place where he received the Commandment to write what he wrote; the Place was in the Iſle of* Patmos, *into which it is ſaid, that St.* John *was baniſhed by the Emperor* Domitian, *and there received and wrote this* Revelation, *after he had, by a miraculous Providence, eſcaped Death, being there put into a Cauldron of burning Oil.*

The Time when he received his Commandment to write, was on the Lord's Day, Chap. i. 10. *and the Perſons to whom this* Epiſtle *and Prophecy is written, is, to all the Servants of God in general, and the ſeven Churches of* Aſia *in particular, to remain a perfect Record for the Uſe of the Church to all ſucceeding Ages, the State of the Univerſal Church militant being therein laid open.*

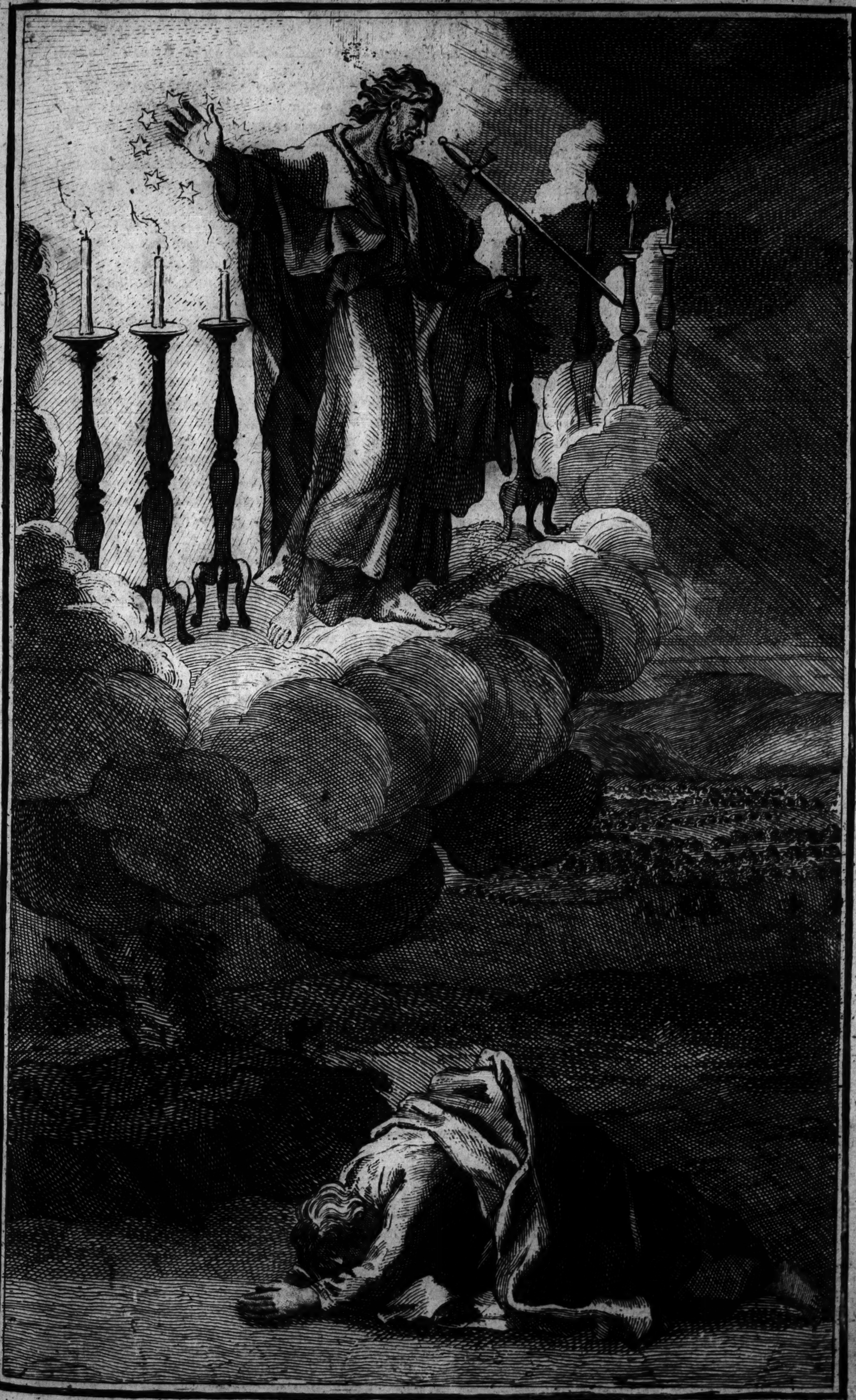
CHAP. I.

John *directs his Revelations to the Seven Churches in* Aſia; *declares his Name, Place where, and Time when he received this Revelation.* Jeſus Chriſt, *his Manner of coming to Judgment. The Viſion of the Seven Candleſticks.*

WHAT *do you obſerve on the Introduction to this Revelation of St.* John.

A. That the Primary Author of this Revelation was God the Father; and the Order in which God gave forth this Revelation, was, it was firſt given to *Chriſt*, *The Revelation of* Jeſus Chriſt, *which God gave unto him*; next unto the Angels; then unto St. *John*, to reveal it unto the Church. *Chriſt*, as God, knew all Things from Eternity; but, as a Man, and Mediator, he receiv'd his Revelation from God the Father, and imparted it by his Angel to his Servant *John:* We ſee then that *Chriſt*, in his State of Exaltation, continues to execute his prophetick Office, by revealing to his Servants the Mind and Will of God.

The Subject-matter of this Revelation is, *Things which ſhortly came to paſs*; not Things which were already paſt (then this Book would have been an Hiſtory, and not a Prophecy) but which ſhould certainly and ſuddenly come to paſs; that is, they ſhould ſhortly begin to be accompliſh'd, and take Effect, not that they ſhould all be immediately performed, but in God's Time, in Reſpect of whoſe Eternity, a thouſand Years are but as one Day.



The Viſion of the Seven Golden Candelsticks.

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Q. *What do you note upon the Salutation?*

A. Obſerve, the Perſons in whoſe Name, or from whom the Salutation is ſent and given; 1. From God the Father, who is deſcribed by his Eternity and Immutability, *which is, which was, and which is to come.* 2. From the ſeven *Spirits which are before the Throne*; that is, from the Holy Ghoſt, who is thus deſcribed, in regard of the Perfection and Variety of his gracious Operations; the Holy Spirit is call'd ſeven, becauſe he is perfect in Working, and he is ſaid to be before the Throne, becauſe continually preſent with God, and ready to perform what is needful for the Church of God. 3. *From Jeſus Chriſt*, who is deſcrib'd according to the threefold Office of a Prophet, Prieſt, and King; his being call'd *the Faithful and true Witneſs*, who reveals the Will of the Father fully and faithfully to the Sons of Men.

Q. *In what Senſe is* Chriſt *ſtiled* the firſt-begotten from the Dead?

A. This points out his Prieſtly Office, and intimates that he died, that he roſe again from the Dead; and that he aroſe, or was the firſt begotten from the Dead; that is, the firſt that aroſe from the Dead by his own Power to a State of Immortality, and never to die more: Some, indeed, roſe from the Dead, but then they were raiſed by him, he being the firſt that ever raiſed himſelf.

Q, *He is alſo ſtiled* the Prince of the Kings of the Earth: *How ſo?*

A. This Phraſe ſhews both his Influence upon them (as giving Laws and Rules unto them) and their Dependance upon him, who receive their Power and Government, their Protection and Dominion, all from his Hand.

Q. *Another Part of* Chriſt's *Character is*, He hath loved us: *Wherein has he ſhewn his Love?*

A. Our bleſſed Redeemer hath given full Demonſtration of his great and wonderful Love to his Church and People, and none ſo properly loves the Church as *Chriſt* himſelf; before Converſion, he loves his People with a Love of Commiſeration and Compaſſion; after Converſion, he loves them with a Love of Complacency and Delight.

Here likewiſe we have the Diſcovery and Manifeſtation which *Chriſt* has made of this Love, particularly towards us, *he hath waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood*; that is, he hath given himſelf a Sacrifice for our Sins, and by the Merit of his Blood freed us from the Guilt of Sin in our Juſtification, and alſo by the Efficacy of that Blood cleanſed us from the Filth of Sin in our Sanctification; the Blood of *Chriſt* has both a pacifying and a purifying Influence it pacifies God's Wrath, and purges the Sinner's Conſcience; the Blood of *Chriſt* merited the Spirit of God for our Sanctification, and ſo reconcil'd us to God, as well as obtain'd Pardon for us, in a way of meritorious Satiſfaction, and ſo reconcil'd God to us; *he waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood.*

Our Sins; that is, every one of our Sins, without any Limitation or Exception whatſoever, as to the Number or heinous Nature of them; the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is, indeed, excepted; but this proceeds from the Incapacity of the Sinner, not from the Inſufficiency of *Chriſt*'s Sacrifice for Sin.

Q. *It is added*, and hath waſhed us with his own Blood: *What does this intimate?*

A. This carries a peculiar Emphaſis with it; the Levitical Prieſts ſprinkled the People with Blood, but it was not their own Blood, but the Blood of Bulls and Goats: *Chriſt* ſpared not his own Blood, and did not barely ſprinkle us with it, but waſh'd us in it; it was not the Blood of his Finger, but the Blood of his Heart; his very Life went with it.

Q. *What was the happy Effect of all this Love for us?*

A. *He hath made us Kings and Prieſts unto God.* 1. Kings, not in a temporal but a ſpiritual Senſe; they rule as Kings over their unruly Luſts and Corruptions, over Satan, the World, and over Death the King of Terrors; they begin their Reign on Earth, without which it is impoſſible to perfect and compleat it in Heaven. 2. Prieſts, conſecrating themſelves a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and offering up, not expiatory, but gratulatory Sacrifices unto him; namely, Prayer and Praiſe, Supplication and Thankſgiving.

Q. *What do you remark on his Deſcription of the Coming of Chriſt?*

A. It is uſher'd in with a note of Attention and Admiration, *Behold!* which denotes at once the Truth and Certainty of his Appearance, and upbraids us for our natural Backwardneſs to believe, mind, or meditate upon the Coming of *Chriſt*; we are too much guided and govern'd by Senſe; what we ſee nothing of, we believe little of.

It follows, *he cometh with Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him, and they which pierced him.* This was fulfill'd, 1. When *Chriſt* came, by the *Roman* Armies, to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*, by taking Vengeance on his Murderers, when his Crucifiers might diſcern that thoſe heavy and dreadful Judgments, were inflicted on them for their crucifying *Chriſt*, and perſecuting the *Chriſtians*.

But 2. I will be more eminently and univerſally fulfill'd at the general Day of Judgment; when *Chriſt* will come riding upon the Clouds, as in a Triumphant Chariot; and all human Eyes ſhall then ſee him, his Perſecutors and Deſpiſers then particularly beholding him, but not all alike, ſuch as pierced him, but repented, whoſe Hearts were afterwards pierced for their piercing of him; theſe, at that Day, ſhall ſee *Chriſt* with aſtoniſhing Joy, though they put him to bitter Sorrow: But ſuch as pierced him, whether in his Perſon, or his Members, and never repented, ſhall ſee him to their Sorrow, and ſhall bitterly mourn, becauſe they muſt be judg'd by him. See him they ſhall, they muſt; but, alas, they had rather be cover'd with Mountains than thus to behold him!

Q. *In the 8th Verſe* Chriſt *calls himſelf* Alpha and Omega the Beginning and the Ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come: *How is he all this?*

A. *Alpha* is the firſt, *Omega* the laſt Letter in the *Greek* Alphabet; and as ſuch, they include all the reſt. *Chriſt* calling himſelf the firſt and the laſt, that is, the firſt Cauſe, and the laſt End (as nothing began before him, ſo nothing can outlaſt him) he thereby diſcovers to us his Divinity, that he is Co-eſſential and Con-ſubſtantial with the Father, the ſame Attributes being given to both; this Text, therefore, makes directly againſt the *Socinians*.

Chriſt calling himſelf *the firſt and the laſt*, aſſumes abſolute Perfection and Power, Sovereignty and Dignity, Eternity and Divinity: He is the Firſt, becauſe he was before all Beginning, and becauſe all Things had their Beginning from him; he is alſo the Laſt, becauſe he ſhall continue for ever, without End, becauſe he is the End of all Things; and becauſe, when we have attain'd him, we are at the higheſt and laſt of our Attainments; we reſt, and have no more to ſeek when we have found *Chriſt*; for he brings us to the Father, in whom we have eternal Reſt, through the Son; and the Title *Chriſt* aſſumes to himſelf, namely, *the Almighty*, beſpeaks his Divinity; he is God Almighty, able to accompliſh all his Promiſes to his People, and to execute all his Threatnings to his Enemies; and if the Adverſaries of our Saviour's Godhead in the Glaſs of this Text do not ſee his Divinity, it is not becauſe they cannot, but becauſe they will not ſee.

Q. *In the 9th Verſe,* John *tells us, he was in the Iſland of* Patmos: *Pray where was that Iſland; and how came he there?*

A. The Iſle of *Patmos*, was not far from the *Aſian* Churches, into which the Emperor *Domitian* baniſh'd him; having, as 'tis ſaid, caſt him firſt into a Cauldron of burning Oil, out of which he miraculouſly eſcaped. *Eccleſiaſtical* Hiſtory ſays St. *John*, was very near an hundred Years old, when he was baniſhed by that bloody Emperor into *Patmos*; for preaching the Word of God, and bearing Teſtimony to this Truth, that *Jeſus* was the Saviour of the World.

Q. *How do you underſtand thoſe Words, Ver.* 10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day?

A. That is, in ſpiritual Meditation, in a ſpiritual Extaſy, in a tranſporting Rapture by the Spirit, under his more immediate Illumination and powerful Influences; *on the Lord's Day*, namely, the firſt Day of the Week, ſo called, becauſe *Chriſt*, at his Reſurrection, took Poſſeſſion of it for his own, and becauſe the End of its Inſtitution was to commemorate *Chriſt*'s Reſurrection, being applied to his ſpecial Worſhip and Service; and, as ſuch, religiouſly obſerved by his Apoſtles, *Acts* xx. 7. and by the univerſal Church ever ſince the Apoſtle Days. St. *John*'s keeping the *Chriſtian* Sabbath in a ſolitary Iſland, teaches us, that we ought religiouſly to obſerve the Lord's Day.

Q. *Pray give the true Senſe of the firſt Clauſe of the 12th Verſe,* And I turned to ſee the Voice that ſpake with me?

A. That is, the Perſon whoſe Voice I heard ſpeaking with me, and I beheld ſeven Golden Candleſticks, repreſenting ſeven *Aſian* Churches, and in the midſt of thoſe Candleſticks I ſaw one in the Shape of a Man, which reminded me of *Chriſt*, the Son of Man, clothed in Garments much like unto *Aaron*'s the High-Prieſt, who was an illuſtrious Type of *Chriſt*, our great and merciful High-Prieſt, who made an Attonement for us on Earth, and now interceeds for us in the higheſt Heavens.

Q. *Why are the Churches of* Chriſt *compared to* Golden Candleſticks?

A. In Regard of the Light they hold forth; the Candleſtick does not give Light of itſelf, but holds it forth to others. It is the Church's Duty to keep within herſelf the pure Word of God, and herſelf pure from Errors in Doctrine, and Vice in Converſation; the pureſt Churches are rather Candleſticks than Candles; *Chriſt* is the Light, the Word is the Lamp, the Church but the Inſtrument to convey the Light unto us.

Again; the Churches are Golden Candleſticks thus; Gold is the moſt precious of Metals, the Church is the moſt excellent of all Societies; for it beatifies all Societies whatſoever, in that they are Members of the Church of *Chriſt*. *Chriſt* may ſeem, by S. *John*, being in the midſt of the Golden Candleſticks, preſent in, and with his Churches; that is, St. *John* had in his Viſion a very lively Repreſentation of *Chriſt* in his human Nature; not that he now really ſaw *Chriſt* in his Manhood, for that was then in Heaven, but he had a Reſemblance of it in the Viſion.

Q. *Why is* Chriſt *deſcribed, Ver.* 13. *as habited in the Garment of the High-Prieſt?*

A. To ſignify, that, as *Aaron* was of the *Old*, ſo *Chriſt* is the High-Prieſt of the *New Teſtament*, preſenting continually to his Father the Memorials of his Death, the Merits of his Sacrifice, and making Interceſſion with the Father, for our gracious Acceptance with him.

Q. *Pray explain the other Parts of the Deſcription of* Chriſt?

A. He is next deſcribed by the Parts and Members of his Body; his *Head and Hair as white as Snow and Wool*, ſignify his Eternity and Purity, that he is *the Antient of Days*, even the Father of Eternity, and perfectly innocent, pure and holy.

His Eyes like flaming Fire, denoting his piercing Knowledge; that, as Head of his Church, he eſpies out all Ways, Words, and Thoughts.

His Feet like burning Braſs, and his Voice like many Waters; theſe Expreſſions repreſent the Dread and Terror of *Chriſt* towards the Enemies of his Church; and that Vengeance he would execute upon his Murderers, in particular, at the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and upon all the impenitent Rejectors of his Goſpel-Grace at the general Judgment; then will they underſtand, what they will not believe, that it is a *fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God.*

He had in his Right Hand Seven Stars, repreſenting the ſeven Angels, Biſhops, or Miniſters of the ſeven Churches. Theſe are called Stars, from their Office and Duty, which is to enlighten the Church, both by the Light of Life and Doctrine, and as Stars are ſeated above, ſo ſhould their Converſation be in Heaven, and their Affections not ſet on Things below. Stars give forth their Light and Influence; thus, Miniſters muſt not ſeek their own, but others Good. Stars are ſwift in their Motion, which is conſtantly in their own Orb and Sphere. Vain is the Pretence of Care and Concern for other Churches, whilſt we neglect our own.

Out of his Mouth went a ſharp two-edged Sword; denoting the piercing Power of the Word of God to conquer Sin, convert Sinners, and to condemn and ſlay the unconverted.

His Countenance was as the Sun that ſhineth in his Strength; that is, very glorious in itſelf, and very comforting and refreſhing to thoſe who are his Members, his ſincere Diſciples and Followers.

Q. *How is* Chriſt *ſaid to have the* Keys of Hell and of Death?

A. That is, a Sovereign Power over the whole inviſible World, to let into Heaven, and to lock into Hell, as he pleaſes. The Keys are an Emblem of Authority and Power; the Steward, who has the Keys of the Houſe, commands it. There are four Keys, which *Chriſt* keeps in his own Hands; the Key of the Womb; the Key of the Clouds; the Key of the Earth, as the Granary of Corn; and the Key of the Grave. When *Chriſt* ſays here, *I have the Keys of Hell and of Death*, the Meaning is, that he has a ſovereign Dominion over both Worlds; over this in which we live, and over that into which we die. The original Word *Hades*, ſignifies the inviſible World, conſiſting both of Heaven and Hell, and he has a Power over both, and alſo over Death, the common Paſſage to both Places.

By *Chriſt*'s keeping the Keys of the Grave in his own Hand, learn, that Men do not die at Random, by Accident and Chance, but by Determination and Judgment; *Chriſt*, by an authoritative Act, turns the Key, and gives Man his Exit out of this World.

How admirable and how amiable ſhould *Chriſt* be in our Eyes, who hath theſe Keys in his own Hand, with ſuch merciful Intentions towards us; and how willingly ſhould we die, when the Keys of Death are in ſo great, ſo kind an Hand as his! Lord, when the Key is turning, and thou art letting in Souls to the inviſible World, let thy Servant depart in Peace, and everlaſtingly ſee thy Salvation.

CHAP. II.

St. John*'s Charge to the Miniſters of the Churches. Glorious Promiſes made to them.*

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve in general upon theſe Epiſtles to the Churches?*

A. Note, that *Chriſt*, in the Beginning of every Epiſtle notifies himſelf by ſome one of thoſe Characters which he gave of himſelf in the former Chapter, either as *the faithful and true Witneſs*, or *as the Firſt and the Laſt*; or *as having the Seven Stars in his right Hand.*

Mark, he holdeth the Stars in his Hand, to ſhew his Tenderneſs; in his right Hand, to ſhew his Power; ſupporting and directing them for the Good of his People.

It is added, that *Chriſt walks in the Midſt of the Seven golden Candleſticks*; denoting *Chriſt*'s gracious Preſence among them, his ſtrict Obſervation of them, his tender Care over them, his protecting and defending them, in their doing their Duty to him; his encouraging or reproving; his rewarding or puniſhing, as there ſhould be Cauſe.

Hence learn, that the Miniſters of *Chriſt* are Stars; they ſhine but with a borrow'd Light, a Light derived from the Sun; they ſhine but for a Time; the Day haſtens when theſe Stars ſhall diſappear for ever.

Theſe Stars are in the right Hand of *Chriſt*, in his Power, at his Diſpoſal; he appoints them their Orbs where they ſhall ſhine, and their Time alſo for ſhining.

Q. *What do you remark on* Chriſt's *Addreſs to the Church of* Epheſus?

A. In the firſt Place, he commends her for her Labour in propagating the Goſpel, for her Patience in bearing Perſecution and Affliction; for the Strictneſs of her Diſcipline, that ſhe did not bear with, nor tolerate ſuch Perſons as were either erroneous in Judgment, or ſcandalous in Practice; for her Faithfulneſs in trying the Authority of thoſe who pretended an immediate Call from God to the Apoſtles, but were found Liars and falſe Apoſtles; ſuch were thoſe two ſeducing Hereticks, *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, and their Followers.

Mark here, how our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* obſerves and approves, commends and praiſes, whatever is praiſe-worthy in the Members of it; yet, at the ſame Time, he reproves them for what is amiſs.

Nevertheleſs, I have found ſomewhat againſt thee, becauſe thou haſt left thy firſt Love. As if *Chriſt* had ſaid, I obſerve amongſt you a great Abatement of your former Zeal and Fervour; you have not that hearty Love to me, and to one another, which you had at firſt; but verily you grow colder when you ſhould grow better.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent. *Chriſt* did not ſurprize this Church at unawares; they were admoniſhed before chaſtiſed, warned before laid waſte. In the minatory, or threatning Part, we have a great Guilt and Sin ſuppoſed, a great Judgment for that Guilt denounced, the Unchurching of them that had committed it, and the Means preſcribed for the averting of that Judgment; namely, Repentance.

Q. *Who were the* Nicolaitans, *mentioned Verſe 6?*

A. They are ſo called, from one *Nicholas*, ſuppoſed to be the Deacon, mentioned *Acts* vi. 5. who having a beautiful Wife, expoſed her as common, to avoid the Imputation of Jealouſy.

Q. *The 8th Verſe begins the Epiſtle which* St. John *wrote to the Church of* Smyrna, *a famous City in one of the Provinces of* Aſia, *where* Polycarp *was Biſhop, and ſuffer'd Martyrdom: What do you obſerve hereupon?*

A. In this Epiſtle is obſervable, 1. The Deſcription *Chriſt* gives of himſelf, *the Firſt and the Laſt, which was dead, and is alive*; and the Suitableneſs of his Deſcription, for the Conſolation of this Church, which was then under great Tribulation. As if he had ſaid, as I died and revived, ſo if you loſe your Lives for my Sake, I will raiſe your Bodies again to everlaſting Life.

2. The Commendation given by *Chriſt* of this Church at *Smyrna*, is large and full; *Chriſt* blames her for nothing; ſhe kept her Purity beſt, becauſe always in Affliction; not but there were, undoubtedly, Failings in this Church, but Almighty God mercifully overlooked them. As in the Caſe of *Job*, his Impatience is not ſo much as mentioned, though he ſhewed much; but we are called upon to behold him as a Pattern of Patience.

Q. *What is there deſerving Remark on St.* John's *Epiſtle to the Church at* Pergamos, *beginning at Verſe 12?*

A. 1. A Deſcription of *Chriſt*, as having a ſharp two-edged Sword in his Mouth; denoting the Word of God, and that piercing Power which accompanies it, to conquer the Luſts and Corruptions of Men.

2. A commendation of what was Good and Excellent in that Church; *I know thy Works*; I know and approve them; I know thee to be good in bad Places, and in the worſt of Times, though thou dwelleſt where *Satan*'s Seat is; that is, in the Midſt of Idolatry and Perſecution, yet doſt thou *hold faſt my Name*; that is, the Doctrine of the

Goſpel preached in my Name, and by which I am made known to the World as a Man by his Name; *and haſt not denied my Faith*, but openly profeſſed it in a Time of Perſecution; even then, when Blood and Slaughter attended the Profeſſors and Profeſſion of it; namely, when *Antipas* was ſlain (who probably was a Biſhop, or ſome Miniſter in *Pergamos*, of extraordinary Piety) who died a faithful Witneſs to the Truth of my Goſpel; even then and there, I ſay, hadſt thou the Courage to profeſs my Name, and bear Witneſs to the Truth.

Q. *What was the Doctrine of* Balaam, *and the* Nicolaitans, *mentioned Ver.* 14, 15?

A. That is, the Doctrine of the impure *Gnoſticks*, who taught Men to eat Things offered to Idols, and commit Fornication, even as *Balaam* of Old directed *Balac* to enſnare the *Iſraelites*, by tempting them to commit Fornication with the *Moabitiſh* Women, and to eat of what they ſacrificed unto Idols.

Obſerve, it was not the Being of thoſe Hereticks and Hereſies among them, that *Chriſt* blames them for, but the tolerating of theſe in their Communion, who made light both of Adultery and Idolatry. They ought to have executed Church Diſcipline upon them, as had been done by the Church of *Epheſus* before them, that *Chriſt* might have ſaid of them as he did of thoſe, *ver.* 6. *Thou hateſt the Deeds of the* Nicolaitans, *which I alſo hate*.

Q. *What is that* hidden Manna *which* Chriſt *promiſed to give to thoſe that overcome, Verſe* 17?

A. By this underſtand *Chriſt* himſelf, and the Joy and Conſolation of the Holy Spirit, which are hidden from the World, and the peculiar Portion of ſuch as ſincerely believe in him, and cheerfully ſuffer for him.

Q. *What is meant by the* White Stone, and on the Stone a new Name, *in the ſame Verſe?*

A. That is, Abſolution and Pardon of Sin, together with the Privilege of Adoption; it being a Cuſtom antiently to give a white Stone in Token of Abſolution, and a black Stone as a Sign of Condemnation, on which Stones were written the Names of the Innocent and Guilty; accordingly, this new Name ſignifies God's pardoned and adopted Ones; the Sweetneſs and Comfort of which Priviledge no Man knows but he that is poſſeſſed of it; the Happineſs of God's Sons both here and hereafter, cannot be expreſſed; only they that are ſo, know what it is to be ſo. This alſo affords a good Argument, to evince and prove his Dignity. Who, but God, can pardon Sin, and ſanctify and ſave Sinners?

Q. *What do you note on the Epiſtle to the Church of* Thyatira?

A. Here obſerve, the Name given to *Chriſt*; he is ſtyled the Son of God; that is, by eternal Generation, being the only begotten of the Father; yet he is the Firſt and the Laſt, which denotes his Eternity; and who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty; which are eſſential Attributes of the Godhead.

His Eyes like flaming Fire, and his Feet like burning Braſs; denoting thereby his piercing and diſcerning Sight to ſee and obſerve his Enemies, his fiery Indignation and fierce Wrath, ready to take hold of them, and his irreſiſtable Power and Strength, to vanquiſh and tread them under his Foot.

This Church is greatly commended for her Charity to *Chriſtians* in Diſtreſs; for her Service in miniſtring to them, and in comforting of them; for her Faith and conſtant Adherence to the Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*; for her Patience under Perſecutions for the ſake of the Goſpel; but her ſpecial Commendation was, that *her laſt Works were more than her firſt*; that is, were better and more excellent than her firſt. *Epheſus* was beſt at firſt, and worſt at laſt; but *Thyatyra*'s laſt Works were beſt.

But as good as *Thyatira* was, ſhe needed to be better. She was remiſs and negligent in her Duty of Reproving, Cenſuring, and Excommunicating vile Seducers, the *Gnoſticks* and *Nicolaitans*, the Diſciples of *Simon Magus*, and his lewd *Helena*, as ſome think, compared to *Jezabel*, becauſe ſhe enticed *Abab* to worſhip *Baal*, as this Woman (whoever ſhe was) called herſelf a Propheteſs, and taught the Lawfulneſs of Fornication, and eating Things offered to Idols. Some obſerve, that there was ſcarce any Hereſy broached, but ſome Women was either the Propagater or Promoter of it, who took upon them the Name of Propheteſſes. *Simon Magus* had his *Helena*, *Montanus* his *Priſcilla* and *Maximilla*, *Carpocrates* his *Marcelina*; concerning this Perſon it is affirmed, that God *gave her Space to repent, but ſhe repented not*. Great is the Sin, Folly and Danger of deferring the Duty of Repentance, when God gives us Time and Space ſufficient for it. By delaying it, a Perſon runs a deſperate Venture, as he knows not whether he ſhall live an Hour longer, and likewiſe forfeits that ſpecial Grace, without the Aſſiſtance whereof we can never repent.

Q. He that overcometh, *ſays* Chriſt, *Verſe* 26, will I give Power over the Nations: *How do you underſtand this?*

A. That is, Power with me, and in Subordination to me, to judge the World, wicked Angels, and wicked Men, at the great Day; then ſhall you rule them with *a Rod of Iron, and daſh them to ſhivers like a Potter's Veſſel, even as I have received of my Father*. As I have received Power, as Mediator, from my Father, effectually to ſubdue and conquer all mine and your Enemies, I will make you Partakers of it in ſome Meaſure; you ſhall exerciſe irreſiſtable power over them, by conſenting to, approving and applauding that righteous Judgment which I ſhall denounce againſt and inflict upon them.

Q. *It is added, Verſe* 28. And I will give him the Morning Star: *What is meant by the* Morning Star?

A. That is, myſelf, and my Spirit to comfort him, and the Light of Glory to ſhine upon him to all Eternity. *Chriſt* is called a Star, becauſe he enlightens all with the Light of natural Knowledge, and his Church with Divine Illumination; and the Morning Star, perhaps, with Reſpect to his Incarnation; becauſe, as that riſes not at the Beginning of the Night, or at the Middle of it, but towards Morning, ſo *Chriſt* came not in the Beginning, or Middle of the dark Time under the Law, but in the laſt Age of the World, in which he hath ſhined forth to the Joy and Comfort of all Nations.

Chap. III.

The fifth Letter to the Angel of the Church of Sardis. *The Sixth, to him of* Philadelphia. *Hypocrites threatned. Promiſes to them that overcome. The Seventh, to him of* Laodicea. *An Exhortation to Repentance.* Chriſt's *Invitation, and Promiſes to the Obedient.*

Q. PRAY *what is meant by the* Seven Spirits of God, *and the* Seven Stars, *Verſe* 1?

A. That is, according to ſome, he hath the Holy Spirit of God proceeding from him as from the Father; and becauſe he had Power to ſend the Holy Ghoſt, together with the Father, he is therefore ſaid to have the Seven Spirits of God; ſo the Holy Ghoſt is called, becauſe of the Perfection and Variety of his Gifts and Graces, Influences and Operations; others, by the Seven Spirits, underſtand created Angels, and the Seven Spirits being joined with ſeven Stars, intimate, according to theſe, that *Chriſt* is the Lord of Angels and Miniſters; he upholds his Miniſters, and has always Angels ready to defend them.

Q. *What is* Chriſt's *Counſel to this languid and languiſhing Church?*

A. 1. *To be watchful,* to ſhake off her Drowſineſs and Formality; no Reformation can be expected, if due Conſideration, Watchfulneſs and Care be not exerciſed.

2. *To ſtrengthen the Things that are ready to die*; that is, blow up every Spark of Grace which lodges under the Aſhes of much Corruption, and keep it from going quite out; Spirituals are to be ſuccoured and ſtrengthened, if languiſhing, leſt they grow quite dead.

3. *To remember what they had received and heard* from *Chriſt*'s Apoſtles and Miniſters, *to hold faſt* the Truths received, and *to repent* of what was Evil, and to reform what had be done amiſs.

Q. *What is* Chriſt's *Complaint againſt this Church of* Sardis?

A. It is, *I have not found thy Works perfect before God*; not full, ſays the Original; that is, not filled up with that Sincerity and Zeal which God requires; it is not common Frailty, but the Want of Sincerity and Soundneſs, Zeal and Seriouſneſs, which *Chriſt* complains of.

Q. *Explain the Promiſe of* Chriſt *to thoſe who kept themſelves Pure in the Church of* Sardis, *Verſe* 4. They ſhall walk with me in White?

A. Like Perſons of Dignity and Honour, like Kings and Conquerors, who, of Old, wore white Garments; they ſhall have the Reward of their Innocence and Uprightneſs, for they are worthy of it, according to the Law of Grace, which promiſes it to them; they have walked worthily, with a Worthineſs of Meekneſs, not of Merit; they are, therefore, meet Receivers, though not meritorious Purchaſers of this Reward.

Q. *Pray interpret the 5th Verſe?*

A. *He that overcometh ſhall be cloathed in white Rayment*; that is, with Robes of Glory, as the Reward of his Innocence and Virtue, and as a Mark of Dignity and Honour; *I will not blot his Name out of the Book of Life*; that is, they ſhall be enrolled in it, and certainly ſaved, and I will preſent them to my Father; yea, I will publickly own them and confeſs them before God, Angels and Men. What an Honour is this to the People of God, for him to call them before his Throne there publickly to acknowledge them, and to proclaim the Good done by them! Let it then be our Care, firſt, to get the white Garment of Grace on Earth, and then we ſhall not miſs of the white Robes of Glory in Heaven.

Q. *What is chiefly obſervable in the Epiſtle to the Church of* Philadelphia?

A. Note, the lofty Deſcription of *Chriſt*, by whoſe Authority it was written, he is *Holy and True*; Holy in himſelf eſſentially, Holy with Reſpect to us communicatively, the Author, Approver, and Diſpenſer of all Holineſs; and True, that is, a Lover and Approver of Truth. Theſe two Titles, Holy and True, are generally aſcribed to God in the *Old Teſtament*; theſe *Chriſt*, in the *New Teſtament*, often attributes to himſelf, which he had never done, had he not been truly and really God.

Chriſt is alſo deſcribed, as *having the Key of David*; that is, of the Church of which *David* was a Type; the Key denotes Power; *Chriſt*, as Mediator, has an abſolute Power over the Church, being Lord and Head of it; and has committed a miniſterial Power of the Keys to the Governors and Paſtors of it; and having this Key in his own Hand, *he opens, and none can ſhut, and ſhutteth, and none can open.*

Q. *What is meant by* an open Door, *Verſe* 8?

A. By the Metaphor of an open Door, is ſhadowed forth the Succeſs and Progreſs of the Goſpel, in the Preaching and Diſpenſation of it; it is a ſpecial Favour from God, when he opens to us an advantageous Door of doing Good, either by convincing and converting Sinners, or by edifying, ſtrengthening, and comforting the Saints; and when God is pleaſed to open ſuch a Door, none ſhall ſhut it.

Q. *What is the Commendation of this Church?*

A. *Thou haſt a little Strength*; a little ſpiritual and inward Strength, and but few external Helps and Advantages; *yet haſt thou kept my Word*, my Doctrine of Faith, and my Precepts for holy Walking; *and haſt not denied my Name*, but adhered conſtantly to the Profeſſion of me and my Goſpel, notwithſtanding all the Temptations thou haſt met with by Sufferings and Reproaches.

Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, who falſely call themſelves *Jews*; I will make them, by the Power of my Grace, to come and Worſhip before thy Feet; they ſhall reverence thee, and pay thee a civil Reſpect, and ſhall know that I loved thee.

Q. *What is meant by* Keeping the Word of *Chriſt*'s Patience, *Verſe* 10?

A. That is, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, which is called the Word of *Chriſt*'s Patience; partly, becauſe it teaches Patience in perſecuting Times; and partly, becauſe it is a Doctrine which cannot be firmly adhered to without Patience.

To keep this Word of *Chriſt*'s Patience, implies not only the keeping his Doctrine pure and uncorrupted with Error, but alſo the obſerving and practiſing all the Duties of a good Life.

Q. *What is intimated by* Chriſt's *Promiſe in the following Words,* I alſo will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation which ſhall come upon all the World?

A. A Time of Affliction, much more of Perſecution, is a Time of Temptation, becauſe an afflicted and perſecuted State hath many Circumſtances attending it, by which all are tried, and ſome enſnared.

Farther; a time of Trial and Temptation will moſt certainly come, ſooner or later, upon all Perſons on the Earth, upon Sinners as well as Saints, Hypocrites as well as ſincere *Chriſtians*, which Trials will infallibly diſcover the Faith and Conſtancy of the one; and the Corruption and Apoſtaſy of the other.

Q. *What Arguments does* Chriſt *uſe to encourage them to hold faſt their Integrity?*

A. 1. From the Shortneſs of their Sufferings, *Behold, I come quickly*, to deliver my faithful People, and to deſtroy their Enemies. 2. From the Hazard they run of loſing the Crown for want of an unfainting Perſeverance; *hold faſt, that no Man take thy Crown.*

Q. *Pray explain the Nature of thoſe Bleſſings, which, Ver.* 12. *are promiſed to thoſe that overcome?*

A. 1. They ſhall *be Pillars in God's Temple*; that is, honourable and glorious Members of the triumphant glorious Church, and ſhall have a fixed Happineſs therein; poſſibly this is an Alluſion to the Pillars in *Solomon*'s Temple, which were very beautiful.

2. *They ſhall go out no more.* The Pillars in *Solomon*'s Porch were removed, and carried away by the *Chaldeans*, but theſe Pillars ſhall be perpetual, their glorious State ſhall be fixed and unchangeable; when the Pillars of the Earth ſhall be ſhaken to Pieces, theſe in the Temple of Heaven ſhall remain immoveable to eternal Ages.

3. As on Pillars erected by Men, their Names are written and engraved, ſo *Chriſt* here promiſes the Inſcription of a threefold Name upon theſe Pillars; the Name of God, the Name of the City of God, and his new Name; the Name of God ſignifies the Perſon to be an adopted Child of God; *the Name of the City of God*, declares ſuch a Perſon to be a Citizen of the *New Jeruſalem*, which is ſaid to *come down out of Heaven*; that is, the Knowledge of it comes to us from God, otherwiſe we had never known it, nor could ever have conceived it; and *Chriſt*'s new Name, is of the glorious Redeemer, and ſignifies, he that overcomes ſhall be honoured as one of *Chriſt*'s redeemed Ones. The whole Name put together, the Name of God, the Name of the City of God, and the new Name, ſignifies an adopted Son of God, Heir of the *New Jeruſalem*, and a living Member of *Chriſt* the glorified Redeemer; thus ſhall it be done to them whom *Chriſt* delighteth to honour in the *New Jeruſalem*; above ſhall they ſpend an Eternity in the rapturous Admiration of that Love, which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit beſtow'd upon them; in making them firſt adopted, and now the glorified Sons of God.

Q. *What do you obſerve on the Epiſtle to the* Laodiceans?

A. Here is a Deſcription of *Chriſt* in his glorious Titles, *Theſe Things ſaith the Amen, the faithful and true Witneſs*; that is, he that is Truth itſelf; who is holy, and cannot lie; righteous and cannot deceive; wiſe, and can never be deceived; therefore *Chriſt* aſſumes the Title of the *faithful and true Witneſs*, to waken theſe drowſy Hypocrites, to ſee and conſider that he knows their State and Condition, and will teſtify and witneſs againſt them. There is no ſuch effectual Remedy againſt Hypocriſy, Lukewarmneſs, and Indifference in Religion, as a firm Belief of *Chriſt*'s Omniſcience and Veracity.

The other Title given to *Chriſt*, is, *the Beginning of the Creation of God*, the Original and firſt Cauſe, by which all the Creatures of God had their Beginning, he by whom both the old and new Creation was begun. This Title *Chriſt* takes upon him to encourage the *Laodiceans* to come unto him, to recover them from their Formalities ſeeing he is Omnipotent, and can give a Being and Beginning to Grace in the new Creation, as he did to Nature in the old and firſt Creation.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Saying of* Chriſt *to this Church, Ver.* 15. Thou art neither hot nor cold?

A. Thou art not for open Hereſy or Infidelity, but likeſt well a Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*; thou receiveſt the Goſpel, and ſo art not quite cold; but thou wanteſt Zeal to ſuffer for it, and ſo art not at all hot: I ſee nothing in thee but a lukewarm Indifference, for which I diſown thee; nay, diſdain thee. Such as have not ſo much Zeal as to prefer *Chriſt* before the World, ſhall be accounted his Enemies.

Q. Behold, *ſays* Chriſt, *Ver.* 20. I ſtand at the Door and knock: *What does this import?*

A. Theſe Words, are very expreſſive of the tender Love and gracious Condeſcenſion of *Chriſt*, full of heavenly Rhetorick, to win and gain their Hearts over to him.

Note, the Heart of Man is *Chriſt*'s Door, which is naturally ſhut, lock'd, and barr'd againſt him by Ignorance and Infidelity; notwithſtanding which, *Chriſt* graciouſly knocks at this Door by his Word, by his Rod, and by his Spirit. Knocking is a vehement, a reiterated, yet a finite Motion; Men may knock often, yet will not always continue knocking; thus *Chriſt*'s Spirit will not always ſtrive with us.

Chriſt *ſtands at the Door, and knocks*, denoting his Aſſiduity and Patience in waiting upon Sinners; ſtanding is a waiting Poſture, denotes an earneſt Deſire and patient Expectation.

But though *Chriſt* knocks at the Door of Man's Heart, he does not break it open; he offers no Violence to the Will, nor ſaves Man whether he will or no, but the Holy Spirit inclines them to hear *Chriſt*'s Voice, and enables them to open the Door to him, cauſing them to approve of and conſent to the Call of *Chriſt*.

No ſooner is the Door open but *Chriſt* comes in, and ſups with the Sinner; his Coming in denotes our Union with him; his Supping our Communion with him, imperfect on Earth, but compleat in Heaven.

Q. *In the* 22*d Verſe the Apoſtle ſeems to make a Diſtinction between his and his Father*'s *Throne: Pray how are they diſtinguiſhed?*

A. The Former ſeems to be his Mediatorial, the Latter his eſſential Throne; and he plainly tells us, that, as he obtained his Glory by overcoming Satan and the World, ſo muſt we, *to him that overcometh will I grant, even as I alſo overcame*; the way to Heaven for *Chriſt* and all his Members is the ſame, as he finally overcame on Earth before he was crown'd in Heaven, ſo muſt they.

CHAP IV.

A Revelation of what ſhall be hereafter. A Throne in Heaven, with the Glory of God ſitting on it; 24 Elders ſinging round it; before it a Sea of Glaſs in the midſt, and round about it four living Creatures, with many Eyes and Wings glorifying God.

Q. WHAT *is meant by thoſe Words, Ver.* 2. I was in the Spirit?

A. That is, in an Extaſy, in a Trance, in a Rapture of Delight and Joy, raviſhed in Spirit. The Viſion was repreſented to his Mind more lively than any corporeal Objects could be to his outward Senſes, which were now all bound up.

Q. *Pray explain the ſeveral Parts of this Viſion?*

A. *A Throne was ſet in Heaven, and one ſat on the Throne*; God the Father in Royal Majeſty, whoſe Power and Glory were repreſented by precious Stones, particularly *Jaſper* and *Sardine* Stone; which Stone, ſay ſome, being of a red and fiery Colour, repreſented how terrible God is in Judgment, cloathed with omnipotent Power and inflexible Juſtice.

But to allay the Terror of this Viſion, St. *John* ſaw *a Rainbow round the Throne, in ſight like an Emerald*, this was very comforting, for the Rainbow of old was a Token of God's Covenant, *Gen.* ix. that he would never more drown the World by Water; here it denotes the Covenant of Grace, whereby the Church is ſecured from the Deluge of God's Wrath by the Blood of a Mediator; and mark, this Rainbow was round about the Throne; let God look which way he will, here is that which reminds him of his Covenant and Promiſe; and the Colour of this Rainbow was like *like an Emerald*; that is, of a moſt pleaſant and delight Greeneſs, ſignifying, that Almighty God, is mindful of his Covenant, takes unſpeakable Delight in the exerciſe of Mercy towards his Children, even then when it appears cloathed with Terror, to judge and ſentence an impenitent World.

St. *John* next declares whom he ſaw about the Throne, namely, *four and twenty Elders*; by which ſome underſtand the Patriarchs and Apoſtles, as Repreſentatives of the *Jewiſh Chriſtian* Church; others underſtand hereby the whole Body of private *Chriſtians*, a certain Number being put for an uncertain, who are repreſented, 1. *As round about the Throne*, to denote their Nearneſs to God, and their Communion with him. 2. As ſitting, to ſignify their State of Reſt and Eaſe, and to denote their ſettled and ſecure Condition of Happineſs which they now enjoy. 3. As *cloathed with white Raiment*, to repreſent their prieſtly Dignity, that they were all Prieſts unto God; as alſo their celeſtial Purity and Glory. 4. As having on *their Heads Crowns of Gold*, as Kings they do, and ſhall reign with *Chriſt* for ever and ever, who, having *loved them and waſhed them from their Sins in his Blood, has made them Kings and Prieſts unto God.* 5. They are called Elders to ſignify their great Wiſdom and Experience; ſuch as with the Patriarchs and Apoſtles have done the greateſt Services to God on Earth, ſhall ſhare with him in the higheſt Dignity and Honour in Heaven, ſitting nearer the Throne than others.

And out of the Throne proceeded Lightnings, &c. By the Throne God is repreſented as a Judge; by the Thunderings and Lightnings, and Voices, is repreſented the Terribleneſs of God in judging Sinners. As the Law deliver'd on Mount *Sinai* in Lightnings and Thunder, ſo will there be the ſame, or rather far greater Dread and Terror, when God comes to judge and plead with Sinners for their wilful and repeated Tranſgreſſions of that Law.

Q. *What was ſignified by the* ſeven Lamps burning before the Throne?

A. Some underſtand the Spirit of God in his manifold Gifts and Graces, enlightning, quickning, warning, and comforting the Church of God. Others underſtand the holy Angels, who are continually waiting upon this Judge, and attending his Judicature; who are his Eyes, and Feet; that is, his ready Inſtruments to execute his Pleaſure. God in the Judgment of the great Day, will be attended by his Saints as Aſſeſſors, and by his Angels as Aſſiſtants.

Q. *What was repreſented by* the Sea of Glaſs, *Ver.* 6?

A. This Sea of Glaſs ſeems to allude to that large Veſſel of Water in the Temple, called the Brazen Sea, in which *Aaron* and his Sons waſh'd themſelves, before they adminiſter'd in holy Things; ſignifying that Purity which is required of all the Worſhippers, but eſpecially in all the Miniſters of God; and becauſe the uſe of this Sea, in the Temple, is made good in *Chriſt*, the Laver of his Blood might be ſignified by this Sea here repreſented, which is compared to Cryſtal; denoting the ſpotleſs Innocence of his Perſon and Sufferings, and the Purity and Clearneſs of his juſtified Members.

Others by this Sea of Glaſs will have the World repreſented, to St. *John*'s viſionary View: The World, ſay they, is compared to a Sea for its Inſtability, Tempeſtuouſneſs and uncertain Motion; to a Sea of Glaſs, for its Slipperineſs, and Brittleneſs; thus the World yields no good Footing to thoſe that would ſtay themſelves upon it; and to *a Sea of Glaſs like Cryſtal*, becauſe of the Clearneſs and Tranſparency of it to God; he ſees quite through it, all the Counſels and Actions of Men being naked and open before God and the Throne.

Q. *What is meant by the* four Beaſts *mentioned in the 6th and two following Verſes?*

A. By theſe underſtand the four Evangeliſts in ſpecial, and all Goſpel-miniſters in general, who went forth to preach the Goſpel in all the four Quarters of the World.

Here we have a noble Emblem of true Goſpel-Miniſters; they have the Courage of the Lion, the Strength of the Ox, the Loftineſs of an Eagle; the Face, that is, the Prudence and Diſcretion of a Man.

Farther, they are deſcribed *as full of Eyes*; they have Eyes looking before them to God for Direction, behind them to the Flocks they lead, and within them to their own Hearts.

They have alſo ſix Wings; with two they cover their Faces, manifeſting their deep Reverence of God; with two they cover their Feet, manifeſting the humble Senſe of their Infirmities; and with two they fly with chearful Expedition to the Service of God.

Q. *In the 24th Verſe it is ſaid,* the four and twenty Elders caſt their Crowns before the Throne: *Pray explain the meaning of this?*

A. They did not, by this Action, ſlight the Glory conferred upon them, but in a Way of humble Gratitude; attributing their Victory and Reward to God, and not to themſelves; and acknowledging that whatſoever Honour they have, they have it from God's Hand, and are willing to lay it at God's Feet, and to direct themſelves with it to honour God; hereby profeſſing, that all Goodneſs wrought in them, or done by them, proceeds from God's free Grace and Mercy, and that the Glory of it is entirely due to him.

CAHP. V.

The Book ſealed with ſeven Seals; no Creature able to open or look on it, except the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. *The Elders, and four living Creatures, worſhip the Lamb.*

Q. *WHAT is meant by* the Book, *Verſe* 1?

A. Mr. *Mead*, and others, underſtand a Roll, containing God's Decrees and Counſels, his Purpoſes and Reſolutions, concerning the future State of the Church, as they were to be fulfilled according to Prophecy, and brought to paſs in ſeveral Ages, as the Providence of God ſhould order and ſee fit.

This Book was in God's right Hand, thereby denoting his Authority to impart and communicate the Knowledge of this ſealed Book to whom he pleaſed; and alſo his Power to execute his Purpoſe, and Counſels when, and as he pleaſes.

This Book was written *within, and on the Backſide*, Inſide and Outſide filled up, ſo that there was no Room left for Addition or Alteration.

It was alſo ſealed with ſeven Seals, denoting the Matters therein contained to be moſt Divine and Excellent, Secret and Myſterious, Certain and Unalterable; and the Knowledge of them impoſſible, without the Help and Favour of ſpecial Revelation.

Q. *Why is* Chriſt *called the* Lion *of the Tribe of* Judah?

A. In Alluſion to *Jacob's* Bleſſing, *Gen.* xlviii. where *Judah* is called a *Lion's Whelp*, denoting the Dignity and Superiority of that Tribe above the Reſt. Of this Tribe *Chriſt* deſcended, and is called a *Lion*, in regard of his Kingly Power and Strength, his Stoutneſs and Courage, his Mildneſs and Clemency, and true Nobleneſs of Spirit to them that ſubmit to him, and in Reſpect of his Vigilance over his Church; all which are the known Properties of the Lion; and as that Creature is the King of Beaſts, ſo is *Chriſt* King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the only Potentate.

Q. *But how could* Chriſt *be called* David's *Root, ſince* David *did not ſpring from him, but he from* David, *according to the Fleſh?*

A. In a natural Senſe, *David* was the Root of *Chriſt*; but, in a ſpiritual Senſe, *Chriſt* was the Root of *David*. Thus he was both *David's* Lord, and *David's* Son, *Pſalm* cx. 1.

Q. *In the latter Part of the 6th Verſe, it is ſaid, there ſtood* a Lamb as it had been ſlain, having ſeven Horns, and ſeven Eyes, which are the ſeven Spirits of God: *Pray what is the Senſe of this Paſſage?*

A. The *ſeven Horns* denote that omnipotent Power which *Chriſt* has in himſelf, and that Fulneſs of Power which he exerts, on all Occaſions, in Defence of his Church.

It follows, *and ſeven Eyes, which are the ſeven Spirits of God*; theſe repreſent the Holy Spirit of God, in its manifold Graces given by *Chriſt* unto the Church, as his Agent and Advocate upon Earth; ſo that here in the Text, and Context, are all the Three Perſons in the Holy Trinity, whoſe Divinity we believe, and in whom we truſt; God the Father upon the Throne, with a Book in his Hand; *Chriſt* the Lamb in the Midſt of the Throne, opening the Book; and the ſeven Spirits, or Holy Ghoſt, diſtinct from the former.

Q. *In what Senſe is it ſaid, Verſe 7. that the Lamb* came and took the Book out of the right Hand of him that ſat on the Throne?

A. That is, he received Power from God to open the Book of Myſteries, and to execute them: *Chriſt* ſat upon the Throne of God, but went to the Throne for the Book, as God-Man.

Q. *In the 8th Verſe is mentioned the Divine Worſhip and Adoration paid to the Lamb: What do you infer from hence?*

A. This proves his Deity; they ſing an Hymn of Divine Praiſe to the bleſſed Redeemer, with Harps and gold Viols in their Hands, *a new Song*; that is, a moſt excellent Song, ſetting forth the Benefits, and extolling the Praiſes of the Lord their Redeemer.

The Subject of this Song was, the Church's Redemption out of every Kindred and Tongue, People and Nation, which ſhews the univerſal Extent of the Goſpel-Church, ſcattered over the Face of the whole Earth.

Farther; they ſung his Praiſe, that they were by him made Kings and Prieſts unto God, to reign on Earth; that is, ſpiritual Kings and Prieſts unto God, to reign over Sin, *Satan*, and the World; trampling their Spiritual Enemies under their Feet, not expecting an earthly Dominion.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the univerſal Adoration paid to* Chriſt *by the Angels, in the* 11th *and three following Verſes?*

A. 1. The Office of the holy Angels in Heaven, they ſtand *round about the Throne of God* continually, as Nobles, and chief Miniſters of State attend upon a Prince, waiting his Pleaſure, and expecting his Commands.

2. The innumerable Company of them, *Thouſands of Thouſands, and ten thouſand Times ten Thouſand*; and as Almighty God is attended by ſuch an innumerable Company of Angels in Heaven, ſo do the holy Angels ſtand ready to accompany and protect his People on Earth, *They encamp round about them.*

3. How readily and chearfully the holy Angels joined with the Elders in bleſſing and praiſing *Chriſt* for the invaluable Fruits and Benefits of Man's Redemption; theſe beneficent Spirits rejoice in our Happineſs; they rejoice at the Converſion of a Sinner, and triumph in the Glorification of a Saint. They are ſaid here to ſing with a loud Voice, to ſhew their Affection and Zeal in the Work of bleſſing and praiſing God for *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is an Head of Confirmation to them, as he was an Head of Redemption to us.

4. How the Angels give the ſame Worſhip, pay the ſame Homage, and aſcribe the ſame Honour

to *Chriſt* which they do to God the Father; this had never been given, had he not been eſſentially God; the Angels pronounce and proclaim *Jeſu Chriſt* worthy of omnipotent Power; and that Honour, Glory, and Bleſſing, do appertain to him for evermore.

Laſtly, That not only all the Angels, but all the Creatures in Heaven, in Earth, under the Earth, and in the Sea, all and every of them, do worſhip *Chriſt* with religious Worſhip, and pay him Divine Honour; adore him that ſits on the Throne, and the Lamb for ever and ever; that is, the rational Part of the World, Angels and Men, actively; the ſenſitive Part of the World, objectively; and the diabolical Part, paſſively; *Chriſt* extorts that Glory from them by their Torments, which they refuſe to give him by voluntary Acknowledgments. What greater Argument than this can we deſire, that *Chriſt* is truly and eſſentially God? He thinks it no Robbery to be equal with God, to ſhare with him in all that Honour and Homage, in all that Adoration and religious Worſhip, which the whole Creation pay to Almighty God; for thus do the Angels and Elders above, and the Church militant here below.

CHAP. VI.

The Seals opened. The White, Red, and Black Horſe. Death comes on a Pale Horſe. The Souls under the Altar cry and are comforted. An Earthquake, and other terrifying Signs.

Q. WHAT *is ſignified by* the White Horſe, and him that ſat thereon?

A. By the White Horſe is generally underſtood the Goſpel, ſo called with regard to the Divinity, and ſpotleſs Purity of its Doctrine. The Rider upon this Horſe is *Chriſt*, who rode ſwiftly in the Miniſtry of the Apoſtles, and other faithful Teachers, in the firſt Ages of *Chriſtianity*; and he rode with a Bow in his Hand, and a Crown on his Head. With a Bow, that is, with Threatnings and Terrors denounced againſt his Enemies before they were inflicted upon them; as the Bow is firſt held in his Hand, then the Arrow prepared upon the String, and at laſt ſhot forth; and with a Crown, denoting that royal State of kingly Dignity and Honour, to which *Chriſt*, the Lamb that was ſlain, was now exalted; and thus he rode on, conquering and to conquer, till he had conſummated his Victories, in a glorious Triumph over his Enemies; namely, in the Converſion of ſome, and Deſtruction of others.

Q. *What is repreſented by* the Red Horſe?

A. This denotes, firſt, the dreadful Executions of God's Wrath upon the *Jews*, embroiling the Land with Wars, Diviſions, Bloodſhed, unpeaceable Tumults, killing and ruining one another; to which Purpoſe he apprehended that he ſaw a Sword in the Hand of him which rode upon this Horſe, ſignifying the great Slaughter which would be committed by the *Jews*, upon one another.

Others, ſecondly, by this Red Horſe, underſtand the bloody *Roman* Emperors, *Nero*, *Trajan*, &c. and the Perſecution which the primitive Church underwent in their Days. *Euſebius* relates, that ſo fierce was their Rage againſt the poor *Chriſtians*, that a Man might ſee Cities be full of dead Bodies, Old and Young, Men and Women, caſt out naked, without any Reverence of Perſons, or Regard to Sex.

Q. *The opening the third Seal ſeems to prognoſticate a Famine; but of what Kind?*

A. A literal Famine in *Judea*, ſeems here prefigured by a Perſon riding on a Black Horſe, with a Balance in his Hand. Famine diſcolours the Face of Men, and makes them look black, ſad, and diſmal; accordingly it is repreſented by a Black Horſe; and the Rider having a Pair of Scales in his Hand, to weigh Corn by the Pound, and not to meaſure it by the Buſhel, imports the great Scarcity there ſhould be of Bread; and St. *John* heard a Voice, ſaying, *a Meaſure of Wheat for a Penny, and three Meaſures of Barley for a Penny.* The *Roman* Penny was the ordinary Wages for a Day's Work to a Labourer, ſo that the Quantity of Bread was but ſufficient to keep Perſons alive for one Day. Famine is a very ſore and terrible Judgment, it conſumes a People by Piecemeal; it is a lingering and languiſhing Death. Lord, help us in the Midſt of our Fulneſs, to remember how righteouſly thou may'ſt cut us ſhort of our abuſed Mercies.

Others underſtand this Viſion to ſignify a ſpiritual Famine, a Scarcity of the Word of God; which fell out in the Time of the Ten Perſecutions, when the Storm fell upon the Biſhops, and moſt uſeful Miniſters of the Church, when many bright and burning Lamps were extinguiſhed, others hid under a Buſhel; a diſmal gloomy Day, when all the ſpiritual Food Men could get to keep their Souls alive, from Day to Day, could be but ſufficient for that End.

Q. *At the opening of the fourth Seal appears* a pale Horſe, with Death riding upon it, and Hell following it: *What is repreſented hereby?*

A. Theſe Emblems, ſay ſome, denote all the Calamities of Sword, Peſtilence and Famine, which *Chriſt, Matth.* xxiv. foretold, ſhould come upon the *Jews*, and cauſe an univerſal Devaſtation of their City and Nation, and as univerſal a Deſtruction of their Perſons.

This Repreſentation of Death, ſitting on a pale Horſe, is very proper; thus, a Horſe is remarkable for his Strength; there is no reſiſting Death; for his Swiftneſs, ſo Death is always poſting towards us; for his Office and Uſe, to carry away; and by a pale Horſe, for its Ghaſtlineſs. Death has a grim and ghaſtly Countenance, that ſtrikes Terror through the boldeſt Hearts, and Paleneſs into all Faces.

But as terrible as Death was, it muſt, and did receive Power before it could deſtroy and kill. Thus all the Executioners of God's Wrath and Vengeance, Sword, Peſtilence, and Famine, Death of all Kinds, act by Commiſſion; yea, by a limited Commiſſion; *Power was given to them.*

Others conceive, that by this pale Horſe, the Perſecution of the primitive Church was repreſented, under the *Pagan* Emperors, who made her Face look pale like Death, by the Loſs of a vaſt Quantity of Blood and Spirits, when the Church was mowed down like a Meadow, and ſprang as faſt.

Q. *The fifth Seal opens with a View of the Souls of them that were ſlain: But how could the Souls of the Martyrs be ſeen?*

A. Not by the external Senſes, being immaterial Beings, but in Spirit they were ſeen by him;

he had a ſpiritual Repreſentation made of them to his Mind.

The Place where he ſaw them, was, *under the Altar*; that is, lying at the Foot of the Altar, as Sacrifices ſlain and preſented unto God. So that however Men look upon the Death of Martyrs, yet in God's Account they die as Sacrifices; and their Blood is no other than a Drink-offering poured out to God, which he graciouſly accepts, and highly eſteems.

Q. *In the 10th Verſe it is ſaid,* They cried with a loud Voice, ſaying, Lord, how long? *Can Souls ſpeak audibly, or have they any Senſe of Sufferings when in Glory?*

A. This Cry ſuppoſes in them a vehement Zeal for the Glory of God, an earneſt Deſire that God would clear their Innocence, and make known his Juſtice among Men; that he would aboliſh the Kingdom of Satan, and conſummate the Kingdom of *Chriſt*, making all his Enemies to become his Footſtool; all the Revenge here deſired was only a Vindication of God's Holineſs and Truth, which he himſelf had promiſed.

In anſwer to the Cry of theſe gracious Souls, God promiſeth them Satisfaction two Ways, 1. By ſomewhat given them for the preſent; namely, white Robes to every one of them; that is, large Meaſures of heavenly Glory, as the Reward of their Sufferings and Services, beyond other Saints; as if God had ſaid, Though the Time be not yet come to ſatisfy your Deſires in the final Ruin of Satan's Kingdom, yet it ſhall be well with you in the mean Time; you ſhall walk with me in White, and enjoy my Glory in Heaven.

But that is not all; for 2. The very Things they cry for, ſhall be given them after a little Seaſon; for God had more to call unto Sufferings beſides them, and they having conquer'd ſhall be crowned together; as if God had ſaid, You my faithful Witneſſes, wait a little while till your Brethren be got through the Red Sea of Suffering as well as you, and then you ſhall ſee the Feet of *Chriſt* upon the Necks of all his Enemies, and Juſtice ſhall avenge the precious innocent Blood of all the Saints, which in all Ages has been ſhed for the Teſtimony of the Goſpel.

Hence learn, that the Souls of Men periſh not with their Bodies; but do certainly exiſiſt in a State of Separation from them; the Souls of theſe Martyrs were out of the reach of Danger, cloathed with their white Robes, when their Bodies were either reduc'd to Aſhes, or torn in Pieces by wild Beaſts.

Again, as the Soul is alive in a State of Separation, ſo is it awake alſo, and does not ſleep with the Body. Theſe Souls cried with a loud Voice, and therefore were not aſleep, though their Bodies were aſleep in the Duſt. The Opinion of the Soul's ſleeping with the Body till the Reſurrection, is a wicked Dream. 'Tis granted that the organical Acts of the Soul, that is, ſuch Acts as depend upon the Members of the Body, muſt ceaſe when the Body ceaſes; but we find when we are aſleep our Soul can act of itſelf, without the Aſſiſtance of the Body; the Soul grieves and rejoices, hopes and fears, chuſes and refuſes, therefore is not only alive, but awake, alſo in its State of Separation from the Body.

There are not only Praiſes, but Prayers alſo in Heaven, and that for Juſtice to be inflicted upon Perſecutors here on Earth. O the miſerable Condition of bloody Perſecutors! when Heaven and Earth both pray againſt them.

Q. *What is ſignified by the Things diſcovered at the Opening of the ſixth Seal?*

A. Theſe ſome apply wholly to the *Jews*, and that their Deſtruction in *Judea* and at *Jeruſalem* was ſo diſmal, that it was repreſented to St. *John* as the darkning of the Sun, and the Moon looking like Blood, and the Stars falling, ſuch Calamities impending as if Heaven and Earth were diſſolving; doubtleſs at and before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* there was a Confluence of ſuch Calamities, ſo diſmal, ſo dreadful, as can hardly be deſcribed.

Others apply it to the Overthrow of Paganiſm; and the Deſtruction of the Heathen Emperors, the Converſion of *Conſtantine* to the *Chriſtian* Faith, was doubtleſs the moſt terrible Judgment that ever fell upon the Devil's Kingdom; and accordingly, by the Earth's quaking, the Sun's becoming dark, the Moon Blood, and the Stars falling from Heaven to Earth, is to be underſtood the great Changes that were made in the *Roman* Empire, by overturning the whole Pagan State, and making *Chriſtianity* the Religion of the greateſt Part of the World.

But others interpret all this of the great and horrible confuſion of the *Chriſtian* World under Antichriſts, when *Chriſt* the Son of Righteouſneſs began to be obſcured; that is, his Doctrine concerning his Offices and Benefits darkned; the Moon, or Church, turned into Blood; the Stars, or Paſtors, fallen from heavenly Offices; the Scriptures (like the Heavens rolled up) forbidden to be read; and the Iſlands brought under the Yoke and Tyranny of Antichriſt.

Laſtly, ſome apply all this to the final Diſſolution of the World, and the laſt Judgment at the great Day; according to what follows in the three next Verſes.

CHAP. VII.

John's *Viſion of Angels. The Number of them that were ſealed. An innumerable Multitude of all Nations ſtand before the Throne, and the Lamb cloathed in white Robes, which were waſhed in the Blood of the Lamb.*

Q. WHAT *is meant by the* four Angels ſtanding at the four Corners of the Earth, holding the four Winds, &c.?

A. This, and the following Chapters give an Account of thoſe Judgments, whether Temporal or Spiritual, that were denounced in the foregoing. If a temporal Judgment on the *Jews* was intended, then this Viſion of the four Angels ſtanding on the four Corners of the Earth holding the four Winds, repreſented to St. *John*, God's Decrees and Purpoſes for ſuſpending the dreadful Execution of the threatned and intended Vengeance upon *Judea* for a Time, namely, till God had ſealed his number; that is, marked them for Preſervation, according to *Ezek.* ix. 4. *Set a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men,* &c. that is, preſerve the penitent Believers from the common Deſtruction, as the *Iſraelites* were preſerved in *Egypt* from the deſtroying Angel.

I beheld four Angels that had Power to inflict Judgments, Famine, Sword and Peſtilence, foretold, Chap. 6. upon *Judea*, I beheld theſe Angels making a Stop before they would ſuffer thoſe Miſchiefs to break forth upon the Earth.

Although it be the Office of holy Angels to inflict temporal Judgments upon obſtinate Sinners, yet glad they are when it pleaſes God to ſtay them from the ſpeedy Execution of his Wrath; for as Judgment is God's ſtrange Work, in which he does not delight, ſo neither is it pleaſing to the Angels, as an Act of Puniſhment, but only in Obedience to the Divine Command, and with a Reſpect to God's Honour and Glory.

If a ſpiritual Judgment be here intended, as others apprehend; namely, the Calamities befalling the Church, by reaſon of an Apoſtaſy under Antichriſt; then, by the Winds, they underſtand Hereſies and falſe Doctrines of all ſorts, which have an impetuous Force and Violence, like Winds, to drive unſtable Souls from their Stedfaſtneſs in the Truths of God, into damnable Errors. Now God takes ſpecial Care that theſe Winds ſhould not blow, theſe Antichriſtian Errors and falſe Doctrines ſhould not overflow the Earth, until he had ſealed his People; that is, ſecured them from Danger, preſerving them from ſpiritual Defilement, as the undoubted Fruit of their Sealing. God has always a ſpecial Regard to his own; here he commands the Angels to hold the Winds from ſmiting the Earth, till the Number of his ſealed Ones was compleated.

Q. *What is meant by* Sealing the Servants of God in the Forehead?

A. Some underſtand it of an external viſible Sealing, by ſetting a Mark upon their Forehead for Preſervation, according to *Ezek.* ix. 2. the *Greek* Letter *Tau*; doubtleſs there was ſome Notification made by Almighty God to the deſtroying Angels of every one whom he would have preſerved.

Others underſtand this Seal to be internal, by Sanctification; and from thence we gather, that inward Holineſs is the beſt Guard againſt temporal or ſpiritual Judgments. But take Sealing in either Senſe, the Notion implies, 1. That the Perſons ſettled are of precious and excellent Eſteem with God. 2. Preſervation and Security from Danger; God ſeals his People, that the Deſtruction coming upon others may eſcape them.

Q. *Why were thoſe that were ſealed taken from among the Tribes of* Iſrael?

A. It is to be obſerved, that the true Church is repreſented in this Book by the Name of the *Jews*, and the falſe one by the *Gentiles*; ſo that by the Tribes of the Children of *Iſrael* is to be underſtood the whole univerſal Church of ſincere and ſerious *Chriſtians*, all that profeſs and practiſe the faith of *Abraham*, and ſo are his ſpiritual Seed.

Theſe hundred and forty four Thouſand, Ver. 4. are particularly mentioned, Chap. xiv. as the pure Virgin Church diſtinguiſhed from the Adulterers; this Number then comprehends all ſuch as, during Antichriſt's Tyranny, ſhould be kept from his Deluſions, of what Nation ſoever they be; all that adhere to *Chriſt* againſt Antichriſt are ſealed, to preſerve them againſt that Defection in which others would be involved.

Q. *Why was the Tribe of* Dan *left out?*

A. The Reaſons aſſigned for this Omiſſion are various; it was, ſay ſome, becauſe Antichriſt was to come of that Tribe; but it does not any where appear that ever Almighty God puniſhed a People before they committed a Sin. Others with more Reaſon conceive, it was the great Idolatry this Tribe fell into, and continued in till the Captivity; ſee *Judg.* xviii. 30. *Amos* viii. 14. Yet we muſt not ſuppoſe that none of this Tribe were ſaved, becauſe not mentioned here; for we find *Sampſon* of this Tribe, and reckoned among thoſe Worthies recorded, *Heb.* xi.

Q. *Who are the Saints before the Throne deſcribed* with Pſalms in their Hands, *Ver.* 2?

A. This denotes their Victory, and their Reward upon it. Palms among the *Romans* were Enſigns of Victory; all the Saints enter Heaven with Palms in their Hands, having conquer'd Sin, Satan, and the World, and the whole Hoſt of ſpiritual Enemies.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon thoſe Words, Ver.* 14. Theſe are they which came out of great Tribulation?

A. The Saints ſharp Sufferings and Perſecutions ſhall have a joyful Iſſue. Yet note, that though the Croſs was the way to the Crown; their Sufferings could not bring them to Heaven, without having their *Souls waſhed in the Blood of the Lamb*; much leſs could their Sufferings purchaſe Heaven; but it pleaſed God, of his free Grace, thus to Reward their Sufferings. They were *waſhed in the Blood of the Lamb*, which Blood paid the Price of their Salvation.

Q. *Why is Heaven called a* Temple?

A. In Alluſion to the *Jewiſh* Temple, in which God dwelt of old; as God by his gracious Preſence dwelleth in his Temple on Earth, ſo by his glorious Preſence he dwells among his glorify'd Saints in Heaven; and accordingly the glorified Saints in Heaven do Temple-Service, they worſhip God continually, and ſerve him by Day and Night, probably, alludes to the Prieſt ſtanding in the material Temple, and ſerving in their Courſes Night and Day, *Pſal.* cxxxiv. 1. Heaven is a Place of Employment and Service, as well as of Pleaſure and Joy; and the greateſt Joy reſults from the greateſt Service.

O happy State and Place! Where no Sin ſhall afflict them; no Sorrow affect them, no Danger affright them, where all Tears ſhall be wiped from their Eyes, all Sorrows baniſh'd from their Hearts, and everlaſting Joys ſhall poſſeſs their Souls; where they ſhall obey their God with Vigour, praiſe him with Chearfulneſs, love him above Meaſure, fear him without Torment, truſt without Deſpondency, and ſerve him without Wearineſs, Interruption or Diſtraction, being perfectly like unto God, as well in Holineſs as Happineſs, as well in Purity as Immortality.

CHAP. VIII.

The ſeventh Seal opened. Seven Angels have ſeven Trumpets given them which they ſound, and great Plagues follow. Another puts Incenſe to the Prayers on the golden Altar.

Q. HOW *do you underſtand that Expreſſion, Ver.* 1. There was Silence in Heaven about the ſpace of half an Hour.

A. This alludes to what was done in the Temple,

ple at the Time of offering Incenſe. The Deſign of which Silence was to give St. *John* an Opportunity to contemplate thoſe high Myſteries which he had revealed to him, and to prepare him for new Viſions, as Silence is cried before the Proclamation of great and weighty Matters.

Q. *Why is the Number of the Angels, who ſtood before God confined to ſeven?*

A. Becauſe it pleaſed not God to pour down his whole Wrath at once upon the rebellious World, but at divers Times, and gradually.

Q. *To what Purpoſe were* ſeven Trumpets *given to theſe ſeven Angels?*

A. To publiſh God's Judgments to the World. The Trumpet ſignified that God would proceed againſt the World in a fearful Hoſtility, and appear againſt it as an Enemy to Battle, proclaiming as it were open War, with ſound of Trumpet. The Angels ſounded the Alarm of approaching Judgments, before he inflicted them upon the World; which ſhews that God warns before he ſtrikes. When God puniſhes for Iniquity, he does it with unſpeakable Reluctance, like a tender-hearted Father, with a Rod in his Hand. and Tears in his Eyes.

Q. *What is particularly obſervable of St.* John's *Viſions?*

A. That he has all along a Repreſentation made to his Mind of Things pertaining to the *Jewiſh* Worſhip; the viſionary Temple, the Altar, the Incenſe, the Fire, the Cenſer, which he ſaw, were in Alluſion to the material Temple, and to the Worſhip and Services performed there at *Jeruſalem*; and accordingly this other Angel, mentioned Verſe 3. repreſented the High-Prieſt, (who was an illuſtrious Type of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*) whoſe Office it was to offer Incenſe at the Altar, and therewith to offer up Prayers for the People.

Chriſt is here repreſented as having a golden Cenſer, whereas the High-Prieſt's was only of Braſs, to denote that he was a more excellent High-Prieſt; and the *much Incenſe* given to him, repreſents his abundant Merits, whereby he renders the Prayers of all the Saints acceptable to his Father.

As *Chriſt* was the only Mediator of Redemption, ſo is he alſo the only Mediator of Interceſſion; his Mediation is founded upon his Satiſfaction: None had to do with the Cenſer to offer Incenſe, but he that had to do with the Altar to offer Sacrifice. Who durſt offer to interceed with God on the behalf of Sinners, but he that has firſt ſatisfied the Juſtice of God for Sin? Now to ſatisfy an offended God is *Chriſt*'s peculiar Office; therefore, to interceed with God authoritatively, on the behalf of Offenders, is *Chriſt*'s ſole Prerogative.

Q. *Pray explain the 4th Verſe?*

A. *The Smoak of the Incenſe which came with the Prayers of the Saints, aſcended up before God, out of the Angel's Hand*; that is, the Virtue and Efficacy of the Mediator's Merits, which came up with the Prayers of the Saints, and perfumed them, did both plead for, and procure Acceptance with God. Here behold the true Reaſon why our poor and broken Supplications do find Acceptance with God; namely, becauſe perfumed with the Odours of *Chriſt*'s Merits, and preſented to the Father by his own Mediation and Interceſſion.

Q. *In the 5th Verſe are mentioned* Voices, Thunderings, Lightnings, and Earthquakes: *What is ſignified thereby?*

A. The wonderful Effects of Prayer, or the terrible Things that would follow after their Prayers, even dreadful Judgments upon the Earth; that is, upon the Land of *Judea*, ſay ſome; upon the *Roman* Empire, ſay others. This however is certain, that, in Crimes of national Provocation, the fervent Prayers of God's faithful Servants have a mighty Prevalence with him, for ſtaving off for a Time national Ruin and Deſtruction.

Q. *What is denoted by* the Hail and Fire mingled with Blood, *Ver.* 7?

A. The direful temporal Judgments which God would bring upon *Judea*, in general, and *Galilee* in particular, by Inſurrections and Bloodſhed.

Others, by this Storm of Hail and Blood underſtand a ſpiritual Judgment; namely, an Inundation of Hereſy upon the *Chriſtian* Church, which is of a bloody and fiery Nature where-ever it prevails; it is a dreadful Plague, and a conſuming Storm, juſtly inflicted by God upon a People, for their contempt of the Goſpel.

And the third part of Trees was burnt up, and all green Graſs was burnt up. The Trees, ſays Dr. *More*, ſignify the great Men; and the Graſs the common People.

Q. *What does St.* John *intend to repreſent by* the great Mountain burning with Fire, that was caſt into the Sea?

A. The former was a Judgment inflicted upon the Earth; both ſignifying increaſed Wars and Bloodſhed by Sea and Land, according to ſome. The mighty Prevalency of Error and Hereſy; ſay others, and particularly of the Alarm of Hereſy, which puffs up and ſwells with Pride, and is the forerunner of Ruin and Deſtruction.

Q. *Pray explain the Alluſion of the* bitter Star falling from Heaven, and infecting the Rivers?

A. This, ſay ſome, denotes the Fall of a great Captain amongſt the *Jews* in *Judea*. Others underſtand it of Hereſy in general; and of the *Arian* Hereſy in particular, and ſome apply it to the fall of *Rome*, and the Seat of the Weſtern Empire. So Mr. *Mead*: If it be underſtood of Hereſy, it ſhews us of what a poiſonous, bitter and deadly Nature Hereſy and Errors are. Error is as damnable as Vice; the one is an open Road, the other a By-path to Hell and Deſtruction.

Q. *What is ſignified by the darkening of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, Ver.* 10?

A. By Sun, Moon, and Stars, in Scripture-Prophecies, the Potentates and Powers of a State are underſtood; accordingly the darkning of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, verſe 12, 13. ſignifies generally the Fall of ſome great Powers, either Eccleſiaſtical or Civil. Others, who interpret theſe Judgments ſpiritually, by the darkning of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, underſtand the Prevalency of Ignorance, and Error in the Church, occaſioning a fearful Eclipſe of that ſaving and comforting Light which ſhould illuminate our Eyes, and direct our Steps in the way to eternal Happineſs.

Q. *Why is this and other Judgments, ſaid to take Effect only in* a Third Part?

A. This ſhews that the Lord corrects in Meaſure, and delights more in Mercy than Juſtice, and deſires rather the Converſion than Confuſion of Sinners, by making the Puniſhments of ſome, inſtructive Warnings to others.

Laſtly, God's Way of dealing with his People is, by giving them Warning of future and ſevere

Judgments, before they come; *I heard an Angel flying through the midſt of Heaven, ſaying, Woe, woe, woe, to the Inhabitants of the Earth*; thus God warns of approaching Judgments, before they come, that Sinners may repent, and his own People, being forewarned, may be fore-arm'd, e'er the Judgment comes upon them.

CHAP. IX.

A Star falls from Heaven, to whom is given the Key of the bottomleſs Pit, from whence come forth Locuſts like Scorpions. At the ſounding of the ſixth Trumpet four Angels, that were bound in the Euphrates, *are looſed.*

Q. WHAT *is the Meaning of the firſt Judgment?*

A. This ſome conceive, denotes a temporal Judgment, and apply it to the *Jewiſh* Seducer; who headed the turbulent Zealots; he was a Ringleader of the moſt helliſh Villainies, and the Zealots under him did all the Miſchief imaginable, marching up to *Jeruſalem*, plundering the City, ſeizing the Temple, and killing the High-Prieſt, with the reſt of the Prieſts; but it providentially happen'd that this Judgment of the Zealots fell not upon the *Chriſtians*, ſignified by the Trees and green Things, but upon the *Jews* themſelves only, becauſe they were not of the Faction of the Zealots.

Some underſtand this woe to intimate a ſpiritual Judgment; others apply it to the firſt Riſing of the *Turks* and *Mahometans*, others to Papacy, and the papal Clergy. Mr. *Mead* applies it to the former, King *James* to the latter, and ſays, By Locuſts and Graſhoppers underſtand Monks and Friars, who ſeem to fly a little from the Earth, but indeed are gorbellied Devourers; in Locuſts you ſee little but a Mouth and a Belly; in Monks you ſee a Mouth to mumble over Maſſes, and a Belly to conſume; they ſeiz'd (when Time was) upon the Meadows, the fat and pleaſant Parts of the Land, and, like Graſhoppers, conſum'd every Green, that is, every good Thing.

The Commiſſion and Command given to them was, not to hurt the Trees; ſuch as are fruitful *Chriſtians*, are preſerved; and the Storm falls upon droſſy Hypocrites. Whence we remark, that in Times of Error and Seduction, as well as in Times of Judgment and Calamity, God takes a ſpecial Care of his faithful ones for their Preſervation; and has a ſpecial regard to the Fruits of Righteouſneſs; *It was commanded them, that they ſhould not hurt any Tree.*

Q. *What kind of Judgments were threatned by the Locuſts?*

A. That the Deſcription of the Locuſts from the 7th to the 11th Verſe, is figurative of a terrible Army of cruel Men, is very plain; ſome underſtand it of the *Jewiſh* Zealots, who appeared as Warriors, and were devouring Waſters; they looked like Men, kind and friendly, and pretended to be Redeemers of the People, Patriots, and Benefactors to their Country; but at the ſame Time plunder'd, and carry'd away the Spoils of their Brethren, without any Tenderneſs or Compaſſion.

Others apply this to the Papal Clergy, numerous like Locuſts; well-fed, like Horſes for Battle; mighty, for earthly Poſſeſſions; crowned, like petty Princes; and alluring, like Women with their Hair, and other Ornaments, *&c.*

Others again, make the Application to belong to the *Turks* and *Saracens*, who are repreſented as having many Crowns on their Heads; and moving with Wings, in regard of the many and vaſt Conqueſts, ſays Mr. *Mead*, which they made in a ſhort Time; namely, *Paleſtine*, *Syria*, *Armenia*, *Aſia* the leſs, and many others; as to the King named here *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, ſome underſtand it to be the *Devil*, others *Mahomet*, others the Pope; to every of whom, the Name of a Deſtroyer too fitly belongs, as ſeeking and endeavouring to deſtroy Mens Souls; and by Blood and Perſecution to lay waſte and deſtroy the Church of *Chriſt*.

Q. *What is repreſented by the* Golden Altar, *ſaid to be before God, Ver. 13?*

A. This ſignifies our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, his Purity and Excellency, and his appearing continually before his Father for us, as our Interceſſor and Mediator.

Q. *In the 13th and 14th Verſes is mention of four Angels bound in the great River* Euphrates, *and were looſed for certain ſet Times: How is this to be underſtood?*

A. Hence learn, that the Lord has Satan, and all his Inſtruments, in his Power, to looſe them for our Sins, and to bind them again for our Repentance; though their Malice be infinite, their Power is bounded; they cannot do all the Miſchief they would, and they ſhall not do all they can.

Note, when theſe deſtroying Angels were looſed, their Time of hurting was limited *to a Year, and a Month, and a Day*; ſhewing that the ſet and determinate Time of the Inſolence of the wicked is appointed by God to be either ſhorter or longer, as he thinks fit; yea, they execute nothing but by Divine Commiſſion; nothing without a ſpecial Warrant and Commiſſion from God.

Q. *In the 17th Verſe is deſcribed the terrible Appearance of a vaſt Army of Horſes and Horſemen; which pray explain?*

A. All theſe Expreſſions of Fire, and Brimſtone, and Smoke, denote that cruel Devaſtation and Deſtruction which was occaſioned by the *Turks* and *Mahometans*.

CHAP. X.

A ſtrong Angel ſent from Heaven with a little Book, opened. He ſwears that Time ſhall be no longer. John *is commanded to eat the little Book, which he does, and finds it ſweet in his Mouth, but bitter in his Belly.*

Q. WHO *is the Angel mentioned, Ver. 1?*

A. He is generally ſuppoſed to repreſent our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Angel of the Covenant; he is called a mighty Angel, in Oppoſition to the mighty Enemies of the Church, mention'd in the preceding Chapter; he is ſaid *to come down from Heaven*, to intimate his ſignal and ſeaſonable appearing for the Relief of his Church; *cloathed with a Cloud*, at the final Judgment, with a *Rainbow on his Head*, ſignifying that Covenant of Peace which he had made with his Church, and his continual Mindfulneſs of that Covenant; *his Face as the Sun*, to denote that Light of Comfort and Deliverance which he would bring to his

Church in his own Time; *his Feet to Pillars*, to ſignify the Steadineſs and Stability of his Purpoſes and Actions, that where he ſets his Feet, none can remove him; and as *Pillars of Fire*, denoting his Ability to tread down his Enemies under him, and alſo to conſume them; this is according to the Deſcription given of him, Chap. i. 15, 16. The Emblem and Figures by which he is repreſented here, are the ſame, by which he is deſcribed there; conſequently he was the ſame Perſon.

Q. *What is meant by the* little Book *which the Angel held in his Hand* open?

A. It was open, to diſtinguiſh it from the former Book ſealed; a Book in which the Purpoſe and Decree of God was made known, concerning what ſhould happen to the Church; a Book ſealed and ſhut to us, but obvious and open to *Chriſt*; he who lay in the Boſom of the Father, reveals his Father's Secrets to us, ſo far as it is neceſſary for us to know them.

Q. *The Angel is repreſented as* ſetting his right Foot upon the Sea, and his left on the Earth: *What is deſign'd by this Poſture?*

A. To let us know his Sovereignty and Dominion over the whole World; as well over the turbulent and unquiet, as over the more peaceable and quiet Part of it; and alſo to ſignify his Ability to tread down his Enemies where-ever they are; a Conſideration that adminiſters Comfort and Conſolation to his Church; his Dominion being equally over the Earth and Sea; none can diſpoſſeſs him of his Power, and none can eſcape his Preſence.

Q. *Why is the Voice of the Angel ſaid to be like* the Roaring of a Lion, *Ver. 3?*

A. This, ſome conceive, ſhadowed forth the efficacious and ſucceſsful preaching of the Goſpel, and that the ſeven Thunders ſignified the ſame; but others hereby apprehend the thundering Judgments of God, which were ſhortly to be inflicted on the wicked World, particularly on *Jeruſalem* by *Titus*, ſay ſome; upon Antichriſt and his Adherents, ſay others. The Judgments of God are fitly ſet forth by Thunder, becauſe they do not fly at Random, and by divine Direction; the Loudneſs, the Swiftneſs, the Forceableneſs of Thunders is known, and the Terribleneſs of God in his Doings towards the Children of Men, has been ſufficiently underſtood.

Q. *Why is* John *forbid to write what he heard uttered by the ſeven Thunders, Ver. 4?*

A. God foreſeeing that the Oppoſers would not hear, but deſpiſe; therefore, theſe Judgments ſhall be known by Experience, not by Words.

Others ſay, this Inhibition was only temporary, not perpetual; *Write them not*; that is, Conceal them for the preſent, till thou haſt thoſe Things repreſented to thee in other Types, and till they are nearer in their Accompliſhment; hereafter he might write them. For what God revealed to *John*, was to be ſhewn to his Servants, *Chap.* i. 1.

Q. *Pray in what Senſe do you underſtand the Angel's Oath, Verſe 6.* That there ſhould be Time no longer?

A. That is, that there ſhall be no further Delay of Time, for the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the obdurate *Jews*, ſay ſome; for the Ruin of the *Roman* Empire; and for the Deſtruction of *Antichriſt*, ſay others; the Performance of God's Word, both in his Promiſes of Deliverance to his Church, and in the Execution of Judgment on her Enemies, is now at Hand.

Q. *It is ſaid, Verſe 7. that when the ſeventh Angel ſhall begin to ſound,* the Myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed: *How do you underſtand this?*

A. That is, the Deliverance of the Church ſhould be compleated, and the final Confuſion of her Enemies accompliſhed; which is called, *a Myſtery*, becauſe the World underſtands it not, nor will believe it; as Myſteries have their certain Times to be manifeſted in, ſo to the Comfort of the Faithful, and Terror of the Wicked, a Day was then approaching, in which the happy Condition of the Afflicted ſhould appear, and the calamitous State of the Ungodly be diſcovered.

Q. *In the 9th Verſe,* John *is bid to* take and eat the little Book: *What does this teach us?*

A. Expoſitors generally make this little Book the Emblem of the Holy Scriptures; and the Command given by the Angel to St. *John* to eat this Book, the great Duty of ſtudying diligently the Holy Scriptures, inwardly digeſting them, and making them our own by particular Application; what we eat is turned into Nouriſhment, and becomes one Subſtance with ourſelves; thus the Myſteries of the Goſpel muſt be eaten by the Interpreters of Goſpel-Myſteries. It is not enough that we know Divine Things, but we muſt know them Divinely; we muſt have a ſavoury Knowledge of them, and an experimental Acquaintance with them.

Q. John *having eaten the Book, found it* ſweet in his Mouth, and bitter in his Belly: *What Inſtruction does this convey to us?*

A. That the Knowledge he had of divine Myſteries, was, in itſelf, very pleaſant; but the Knowledge of Perſecutions and Cruelties, which the *Chriſtians* were to ſuffer, was very bitter to his Soul.

Chap. XI.

The two Witneſſes prophecy; have Power to inflict Plagues upon their Enemies. The Beaſt ſhall fight againſt them, and kill them; they lie unburied. The Nations rejoice hereat. After three Days and half they riſe again, and are called up to Heaven. A great Earthquake. The ſeconk Woe is paſt; the ſeventh Angel ſoundeth.

Q. WHAT *do you remark on the Beginning of this Chapter?*

A. In the firſt Verſe is obſervable, the Command given by God to St. *John*, to take a Survey of his Church, his ſpiritual Temple, conſiſting of living Stones, and built upon the chief Corner-ſtone, *Jeſus Chriſt*; God's faithful and true Worſhippers are only thoſe whom God will have to be meaſured, and taken Notice of as being his Part and Portion, his Tabernacle in which he will dwell; and, bleſſed be God, in the worſt of Times they are meaſurable; even in the Times of epidemical Degeneracy, and univerſal Apoſtaſy, God has a Number to ſtand up for his Name, and to bear Witneſs to the Truth.

Note, that the Temple, the Altar, and the Worſhippers therein, are here all joined together; and the Command given is, to meaſure them together: *Ariſe, and meaſure the Temple, the Altar, and them that worſhip therein*; intimating, that the true Church, and the true Worſhippers are found together; ſo that, if the Queſtion be asked, *Where* *is the true Worſhip?* The Anſwer is, Where the true Altar is; where the true Worſhip is, there is the true Church; that Worſhip which will bear God's meaſuring Reed, the Scrutiny of the Scriptures, and the Examination of his holy Word; where that Worſhip is, there the Church of God is found.

Q. *What is meant by* the Court without the Temple, *which St.* John *is forbidden to meaſure?*

A. That is, that Part of the viſible Church, which is over-run with Idolatry, and *Antichriſtian* Worſhip, as bad as *Gentiliſm*; and accordingly ſhall be treated as *Gentiles*, and trodden down under Foot, as droſſy Hypocrites. *Meaſure the Temple*, ſays God, *but not the outward Court*; the Temple had but few Worſhippers (the Prieſts only) in Compariſon of the outward Court, where the People were; whence we ſee the True Church is but ſmall, in Compariſon of the Falſe and *Antichriſtian* Church; and conſequently, Multitude can be no right Note of the true Church.

Q. *What is intimated by thoſe Words, Verſe* 2. And the Holy City ſhall they tread under Foot forty and two Months?

A. That the *Gentiles* ſhould kill and perſecute the true Spouſe and Church of *Chriſt* (called the holy City, in Alluſion to the earthly *Jeruſalem*) during the Prevalency of *Antichriſt*; yet here we have the Ground of the Church's Comfort and Support, that her Preſſures, and *Antichiſtian* Prevalency, ſhall be but for a limited Time.

Q. *Who are the two Witneſſes, mentioned in the 3d Verſe?*

A. The whole Succeſſion of faithful Miniſters, Martyrs and Confeſſors, whom Almighty God, from Time to Time, has raiſed up in his Church to be the Aſſertors and Maintainers of Divine Truth, and to bear their Teſtimony of *Chriſt*, againſt all Hereſies, Blaſphemies, Idolatries, and Uſurpations in the Time of *Antichriſt*'s Reign.

Q. *Theſe Witneſſes were to prophecy* a Thouſand two hundred and threeſcore Days: *Pray how long was that?*

A. During the Time of *Antichriſt*'s Reign, ſo long the Witneſſes ſhall have a mournful Time of it; yet during that Time, God will have a true Church, a true Miniſtry, and faithful Witneſſes; and though *Antichriſt* will fight with them, yet he ſhall never prevail againſt them.

Q. *Why are theſe Witneſſes ſtiled* Olive-Trees, *and* Candleſticks, *Verſe* 4?

A. As the *Olive-Tree* is always green, ſo the Miniſtry of theſe Witneſſes is lively and efficacious; as the *Olive* is a Sign of Peace, and the Oil that drops from the *Olive*, an Emblem of Grace; ſo the Miniſtry of theſe Witneſſes was a Miniſtry both of Grace and Peace. They are alſo called *Olive-Trees*, becauſe they miniſter Oil to the Candleſticks, which are to hold out Light unto others.

The Title of Candleſtick given to the Churches, *Chap.* i. is here given to the Miniſters of the Church; partly, to ſhew the near Relation there is between them; and partly, to point out the Duty that is mutually incumbent upon them; namely, to hold out the Line of Truth unto others.

Farther, theſe Candleſticks are ſaid to *ſtand before the God of the whole Earth*; ſignifying, their Fidelity in the Diſcharge of their Duty, as in the Preſence of God, before whom they ſtand.

Q. *And what is farther obſervable of theſe Witneſſes?*

A. The Efficacy and Power of theſe Witneſſes is here declared. What is ſaid of *Elijah* and *Eliſha*, literally, is applied to them ſpiritually. Thus, as *Elijah* brought Fire down from Heaven, which devoured the Enemy, ſo Fire proceeds out of the Witneſſes Mouths, not by way of Imprecation, but by way of Denunciation, pronouncing the Judgment of God againſt them, and continuing ſtill in a State of Impenitency.

As *Elijah* had Power to ſhut Heaven, ſo have theſe Witneſſes alſo to do the like, in the Time whilſt they propheſy; that is, God is provoked at the World's ill Uſage to his faithful Witneſſes, to with-hold the heavenly Rain of the Word, and the comfortable Doctrine of the Goſpel from them.

Again; when it is ſaid, that theſe Witneſſes have Power *to turn the Waters into Blood*, and to ſmite the Earth with all Plagues, there is a manifeſt Alluſion to *Moſes* and *Aaron*, who exerciſed ſuch a Power, *Exod.* vii. Thus, God being provoked by the Indignities offered to his faithful Witneſſes, permits the pure Doctrine of the Goſpel to be corrupted, and avenges their Cauſe, by bringing Judgments on the World (as *Moſes* did upon *Egypt*) according to the Threatnings denounced by them.

Q. *In what Manner were theſe Witneſſes to be ſlain, as it is ſaid they ſhould be, Verſe* 7?

A. Politically, and civilly (ſay ſome) depos'd, ſilenc'd, impriſon'd, and laid aſide as uſeleſs and Dead. Literally (ſay others) they ſhall be put to death, for the Teſtimony of *Jeſus*, by Bloodſhed, Fire and Faggot. *They ſhall overcome them*; that is, in their Perſons, but not in their Cauſe.

Bat mark the Time ſpecified, when the Witneſſes were ſlain; it was *when they had finiſhed their Teſtimony*.

Beſides the *Antichriſtian* Cruelty in killing theſe Witneſſes, we may obſerve their barbarous Inhumanity in denying them Burial, not ſuffering ſome to be bury'd at all, and even digging up the Bones of others that had been long bury'd.

Q. *The Place where this was done is called* Sodom *and* Egypt, *and the great City where* Chriſt *was crucified: What was this City, and why is it ſo deſcribed?*

A. This, if literally underſtood, ſignifies *Jeruſalem*, compared to *Sodom*, for the abominable Sins of the *Gnoſticks* committed in her; and to *Egypt* for Oppreſſion. But if myſtically underſtood, *Rome*, or the *Roman* Empire, is conceived by moſt Proteſtants, to be here intended by *Egypt* and *Sodom*; like *Egypt* for Idolatry, Tyranny, ſpiritual Darkneſs, Obſtinacy and Obduracy; like *Sodom* for Uncleanneſs, which is not only practiſed there, but publickly allowed; Licenſes being given to ſuch publick Houſes, and Books written in Defence of Sodomy at *Rome*; where *Chriſt* may be ſaid to be crucified in his Members, as long as this Apoſtate Power holds.

Q. *Great Joy was diſcovered upon the Slaughter of the two Witneſſes: What was the Reaſon of this malicious Triumph?*

A. Becauſe the two *tormented them that dwell on the Earth*; that is, by their publick Preaching, private Reproving, and denouncing of God's Judgments againſt them, for not allowing them to go on quietly, and without Moleſtation, in the Ways of Sin, they grew uneaſy with them, and rejoiced when they thought the World fully rid of them;

they rejoice becauſe theſe two Prophets that tormented them were ſlain.

Q. *The* 11*th and* 12*th Verſes give an Account of the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes: What Event or Tranſaction is foretold from hence?*

A. Dr. *More*, commenting on this Place, thus Writes; I doubt not (ſays he) but this Viſion of the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes, was a Prediction of our Proteſtant Reformation, begun at *Spires* in *Germany*, *Anno* 1529. when ſeveral *German* Princes, and Imperial Cities, made a ſolemn Proteſtation againſt the Innovations and Uſurpations of the Church of *Rome*; from whence came the Name of *Proteſtants*, which continues to this Day. This, therefore, ſhould make our Reformation the more ſacred, and keep all the Perſons that wiſh well to our Holy Religion, from caſting any Dirt upon our firſt Reformers, whoſe Names ought to be had in Honour, and will be ſo in the Church of God throughout all Generations.

CHAP. XII.

A Woman, cloathed with the Sun, is in Travail. A great red Dragon ſtands before her, ready to devour her Child, which, being born, is caught up to God. The Woman fleeth into the Wilderneſs. War in Heaven. The Dragon perſecutes the Woman; the Earth helps her. The Dragon makes War with the Remnant of her Seed.

Q. P*RAY who is meant by the* Woman, *mentioned Verſe* 1?

A. The *Chriſtian* Church, in her militant State, called a Woman in regard of her Weakneſs and Dependency; as alſo in reſpect of her Fruitfulneſs, ſhe brings forth many Children unto God, which are borne upon her Knees. This Woman is ſaid to appear in Heaven, becauſe her original is from thence; her Converſation is there, her Tendency is towards, and her Dependence upon Heaven.

The Woman is deſcribed by her rare Perfections, which are three, 1. *Cloathed with the Sun*; that is, adorned with thoſe Graces which *Chriſt* the Son of Righteouſneſs has put upon her, and environ'd with the pure Light of the Goſpel ſhining about her.

2. Having *the Moon under her Feet*; that is, the legal Worſhip, according to ſome; the *Chriſtian* outſhining now the *Jewiſh* State of Imperfection, caſting off, and trampling under the Yoke of the *Moſaic* Diſpenſation. Others by the Moon underſtand the World, which is like the Moon, full of Spots, defiling and polluting, full of Changes and Alterations: *The Faſhion of this World paſſeth away*, 1 *Cor.* vii. 31. It is never long in one Garb; and her having the Moon under her Feet implies, the Church's being enabled by *Chriſt* to overcome and trample upon the Enjoyments and Pleaſures of the World, and to deſpiſe all its Inſults and Affronts.

3. *Upon her Head a Crown of twelve Stars*; that is, holding faſt the pure Doctrine of the Goſpel, firſt preached by the twelve Apoſtles, and after them by ſucceeding Miniſters, which is as a Crown upon the Church's Head.

Q. *Why is the Church typified by a* Woman *in Travail?*

A. The plain Senſe is this, that the *Chriſtian* Church was poſſeſs'd with an earneſt Deſire to propagate the *Chriſtian* Religion throughout the World, and ſhe earneſtly cried to God to aſſiſt her therein, and ſtrove to accompliſh this her Deſign, and was very ſollicitous to ſee the Succeſs of her Labours in the Lives of her Miniſters. Many and ſore have been the ſick and breeding fits with which the Church has conflicted by means of Hereticks and Perſecutions, which made her ſometimes apprehend ſhe ſhould miſcarry; but, at laſt, God ſent her Help from Heaven by the Birth of a Child, which cauſed the Woman to forget all her Sorrows; and her Prayer of Faith was then in the greateſt Activity, when ſhe was in the greateſt Extremity.

Q. *Pray explain the Deſcription of the Woman's Enemy, Ver.* 3, 4?

A. He is called *a red Dragon*, for his Subtilty, his Power, and his fiery Cruelty. His ſeven Heads denote his manifold Subtilties and miſchievous Contrivances, his Devices and wicked Imaginations againſt the Church. His ten Horns denote his vaſt Power and great Strength, both in himſelf and his Members; alſo the Number and Power of his Agents, who ſerve as Horns to puſh and hurt the Church. His ſeven Crowns upon his Head, denote his Regal Power which he holds by Uſurpation; and his many Victories and Conqueſts which he obtains in the World, yet over none but thoſe that are willingly overcome by him.

And the Dragon ſtood before the Woman, &c. As *Herod* watched to deſtroy *Chriſt* aſſoon as he was born, *Matt.* ii. ſo while the Church was endeavouring to propagate *Chriſtianity*, and make Converts to *Chriſt*, the Dragon watched, intending to devour them; the Devil's great Deſign is, to cruſh every good thing in the Beginning, to nip Grace in the Bud, to kill the Infant Church in the Cradle; he is therefore ſaid to *ſtand before the Woman*, to prevent all Poſſibility of her Child's Eſcape. But though he ſtood before her, he had no Power to hurt or touch Mother or Child.

Q. *After the Woman's Delivery*, ſhe fled into the Wilderneſs, where ſhe had a Place prepared of God: *To what does this allude?*

A. To *Elijah*'s flying into the Wilderneſs from the Rage of idolatrous and bloody *Jezebel*, and God's feeding him extraordinarily at the Brook *Cherith*. From the Woman's, that is, the Church's flying into the Wilderneſs for a while, we learn, that the Viſibility of the Church is not always conſpicuous, to her Enemies eſpecially.

In that, the Woman had a Place, and Food provided for her, we learn God's provident Care for his Church in the Day and Hour of her Extremities, when ſhe lurks and hides herſelf in Obſcurity. During the Time of Antichriſt's Reign, God will take Care that ſome ſhall feed her with wholeſome Food, the Doctrine of the Goſpel, that ſincere Milk of the Word, to the Intent that ſhe may grow thereby.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by* Michael *and his Angels, and the Combat betwixt them and the Dragon's Angels, Ver.* 7?

A. Underſtand *Chriſt*, whoſe the Angels are; and ſo much the Name imports. St. *John* in a Viſion beholds *Michael* and his Angels, combating with the Dragon, and his Angels; yea, vanquiſhing and overcoming them. This may comfort the Church under all her Conflicts, that at length her

Michael will finally prevail, and ſhe in him. Our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, by the powerful preaching of the Goſpel, has weaken'd the Kingdom of Sin, Satan, and Antichriſt. His Angels are his Miniſters, Martyrs, and Confeſſors; thoſe particularly of the firſt Ages, who by their Cries to God, and Apologies to their Rulers, by their holy Lives and patient Deaths, overcame their Enemies. Thus *Michael* and his Angels, *Chriſt* and his Miniſters, fought againſt the Dragon and his Angels, againſt Satan and his cruel Inſtruments, who were ſo far from prevailing, that they loſt Ground continually; the *Chriſtians* overcome them by their Faith and Patience.

Q. *By what Means were the Dragon and his Angels caſt out?*

A. By the preaching of the Goſpel he was depoſed from being worſhipped as a God, and his Power was taken away. If *Michael* our Prince be with us, *Chriſt Jeſus*, the Captain of our Salvation, our Leader, then, though the Combat may be ſharp, yet the Victory is ſure; for if he be for us, who can (ſucceſsfully) be againſt us?

Note, Satan and his Angels were caſt out together; for of the Devil and his Inſtruments the Lot ſhall be alike; they ſin together, and they ſhall ſuffer together; and they ſhall never pe parted. How dreadful will an Impriſonment with Devils and damned Spirits be to eternal Ages? To lie for ever with Satan in that myſterious Fire, whoſe ſtrange Property it is always to torture, but never to kill; or always to kill, but never to conſume.

Q. *The Dragon being enraged at his Defeat, perſecutes the Woman afreſh; but ſhe has given her the Wings of an Eagle, that ſhe might fly into the Wilderneſs: What does this import?*

A. Here obſerve the Care God took of his Church in this Danger; *to the Woman were given Wings of a great Eagle, for flight into the Wilderneſs*; that is, all Means and Ways of Evaſion which God out of his Care for his Church, provides for her Safety and Protection in the Time of Trouble.

The Place ſhe flies to is the Wilderneſs, called *the Place*, becauſe prepared by God for her Safety; *here ſhe is nouriſhed*; that is, hath ſpiritual Food provided for her by God, and a Number of faithful Miniſters are qualified for the feeding of her; *for a Time, Times, and a half Time*; that is, for a certain Time determined by God, but altogether unknown to us; thus when the Church meets with new Diſtreſſes, God provides for her new Deliverance.

Q. *What are we to underſtand by the Serpent's* caſting out of his Mouth Water as a Flood after the Woman, *Ver.* 15?

A. That is, a Flood of Errors, Hereſies, falſe Doctrines, and corrupt Opinions, caſt out of the Mouth of corrupting Seducers, endangering the very Being of the Church of *Chriſt*, particularly the *Arian* Hereſy, which prodigiouſly overſpread the World in its Time. Hereſy may fitly be compared to a Flood; it is a corrupting and defiling, a ſwelling and increaſing, a drowning and overwhelming Flood.

Q. *What is meant by the Earth helping the Woman, by* ſwallowing up the Flood which the Dragon caſt out of his Mouth?

A. By the Earth, ſome underſtand earthly ones, wicked Men, who are ſaid to help the Woman, not intentionally, but eventually, by their greedily ſwallowing down thoſe Errors which came out of the Dragon's Mouth, hearkening to his Lies, and believing his Errors for Truths. Others by the Earth underſtand the Kings and Rulers of the Earth, helping the Woman, by calling Synods and Councils to ſtem the Tide, to damm this Flood, and condemn theſe Errors and Hereſies, which by their overflowing endanger'd the Church's Ruin; the Devil raiſed four abominable Errors preſently after the Church had obtained Peace, and there was a great Concurrence of Magiſtrates and Miniſters in conſulting, cenſuring, and condemning the ſame in and by their Councils and Synods.

Q. *What are thoſe Hereſies?*

A. 1. The Hereſy of *Arius*, who denied the Divinity of *Chriſt*; this was condemned by the Council of *Nice*, called by *Conſtantine*. 2. The Hereſy of *Macedonius*, who denied the Perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt; condemned by a Council at *Conſtantinople*, called by *Theodoſius* the firſt. 3. The Hereſy of *Neſtorius*, who aſſerted that *Chriſt* had two Perſons, as well as two Natures; condemn'd by a Council at *Epheſus*, called by *Theodoſius* the ſecond. 4. The Hereſy of *Eurychus*, who confounded *Chriſt's* Natures, making him to have but one Nature, as well as to be but one Perſon; this was condemn'd by the Council of *Chalcedon*. Thus the Earth help'd the Woman. Theſe four Councils tended very much to the maintaining the Truth, and preſerving the Church from the Flood of Error and Hereſy, which the Dragon caſts out of his Mouth.

Q. *Pray explain the firſt Clauſe of the laſt Verſe?*

A. *And the Dragon was wroth with the Woman, and made War with the Remnant of her Seed*; that is, he was greatly enrag'd, becauſe the Woman was extraordinarily ſuccour'd, and his Deſigns wonderfully diſappointed; and when he ſaw he could not ruin the whole Church, he reſolves to attack ſome particular Members of it; even ſuch *as kept the Commandment of God, and had the Teſtimony of* Chriſt; that is, thoſe that kept cloſe to the Scriptures, which contain the Doctrine of Faith, and teſtify that *Chriſt* is the only Saviour of the World.

Hence learn, how inſatiable the Blood-thirſtineſs of Satan and his Inſtruments is, who, when they had killed the Witneſſes before, and many others, yet can they not reſt till they have killed the little Remnant, and made themſelves drunk with the Blood of the Saints; nor are Proteſtants to expect better Uſage at the Hands of *Romaniſts*, with whom this is a certain Principle, that Hereticks in a Nation are to be extirpated Root and Branch, where it may be ſafely done; that is, when they are not too numerous, and the Loſs of one of our Lives may not coſt two of their own. If it is ſaid Papiſts are now become better natur'd, by being under the Reſtraint of our Laws; I wiſh they may never be tempted out of their Humanity by Advantages of Power; and as Almighty God has deliver'd the Neck of this Nation from the pinching of the Antichriſtian Yoke, may our Sins never more provoke him to deliver us into the Hands of thoſe Men whoſe tender Mercies are cruel!

CHAP. XIII.

A Beaſt ariſes out of the Sea, with ſeven Heads and ten Horns, to whom the Dragon gives his Power. Another Beaſt comes out of the Earth, and doth Wonders.

Q. PRAY *who, or what is repreſented by the monſtrous* Beaſt, *deſcribed in the Beginning of this Chapter?*

A. It had *ſeven Heads*, denoting ſay ſome, the ſeven Hills upon which *Rome* ſtands; or the ſeven ſorts of Government ſucceſſively in the *Roman* State, ſay others; *and ten Horns*; that is, ten Kings under *Rome*, and confederate with her. Perſecutors are in God's Account no better than the Horns of a bloody Beaſt, which he will in the End either blunt or break.

And upon the Horns ten Crowns; which Crowns they hold of God, who is the King of Kings. Sovereignty is from Heaven, however Men come by it, or however they abuſe it; which ſhews the horrid Ingratitude of thoſe Princes, who having received their Power from God, employ it againſt him by whom they reign.

And upon his Heads the Name of Blaſphemy Thoſe who apply this Deſcription of the Beaſt to *Rome* Pagan, hereby underſtand their Pagan Idol-worſhip in general; and their deifying their *Roman* Emperors in particular. Others (as moſt Proteſtants) who apply it to *Rome* Papal, by this Name of Blaſphemy under thoſe blaſphemous Titles which are given to the Pope, as *Lord God, the univerſal Head, the Husband of the Church, the Light which came into the World*, &c. which the incommunicable Attributes of *Chriſt*; and by Flatterers and Admirers frequently given to the papal Antichriſt, *upon whoſe Head is the Name of Blaſphemy*.

St. *John* proceeds, Verſe 2. to give a farther Deſcription of this monſtrous Beaſt; it was in Appearance like a Leopard, ſpotted with divers Kinds of Idolatry, with Variety of Idol-gods; with Feet like a Bear, denoting its Strength and Fierceneſs; its Mouth like a Lion, that is cruel and ravenous.

Next we have an Account from whom this Beaſt received its Power and Authority; the Dragon, that is, the Devil, by God's Permiſſion, gave to this Beaſt Power and great Authority, to deceive by ſtrong Deluſions and hurt the Soul, as alſo to kill and deſtroy the Body.

Note by the Dragon's giving the Beaſt his Seat and Power, we muſt not underſtand it by Right, (for all Power is from God) but, as by Uſurpation, belonging to him. That Authority which is claim'd to depoſe Kings, to diſpoſe of Kingdoms, and to diſpenſe with the Laws of God, all this is from the Dragon, and in no wiſe from God.

And I ſaw one of his Heads as it were wounded to Death. By which many underſtand the Fall of the antient and imperial Powers, the Decay of its wonted Glory; and that ample Juriſdiction which *Rome* formerly had under the Pagan Emperors; and by the wounding of this Head, they underſtand the aboliſhing of Paganiſm and Idolatry, and putting a Stop to Perſecution by the *Chriſtian* Emperors.

It is ſaid, *his deadly Wound was healed*; namely, when Idolatry, the ſame for Subſtance with the Pagan and old heatheniſh Idolatry, but in a new Dreſs, was gradually reſtored by the papal Power.

The Effect of this Healing was, *all the World wondered after the Beaſt*; that is, followed him in blind Devotion.

Note, the *whole World* wondered after the Beaſt; how falſe is it then, that Multitude is a Note of the true Church? Behold the ſeveral Inſtances of the World's wondering after the Beaſt at *Rome*; they receive their Doctrine and Worſhip from him; they make all their Appeals to him; all Church-Officers receive Ordination from him, and are inſtalled by him.

From Admiration they proceed to Adoration, they worſhip both the Dragon and the Beaſt; that is, they worſhipped Idols, which in Scripture are often callen Devils; like the *Gentiles* of old, who are ſaid to ſacrifice unto Devils, and not unto God, 1 *Cor.* x. 20. See here the vaſt Difference between God's Judgment and the Opinion of the ſeduced World. They think the Worſhip which they give to a Creature, is given to God; but God accounts it as given to the Devil, who is the Author of all Idolatry.

As the ſeduced World worſhipped the Beaſt, ſo do they extol his earthly Grandeur and ſurpaſſing Power, ſaying, *Who is like unto the Beaſt? Who is able to make War againſt him?* Who can reſiſt his Power and Greatneſs? The greateſt Princes are not able to withſtand him. See how Pomp and Grandeur dazzle the Eyes of the unthinking Multitude.

And there was given to him a Mouth ſpeaking great Things and Blaſphemies. The blaſphemous Mouth of the Beaſt is opened againſt the Name of God, that is, againſt his Word, by which God makes himſelf known, as a Man is known by his Name. Now the Word of God is blaſphemed by the Beaſt and his Worſhippers, when it is charged with Obſcurity, with Imperfection, and called a dead Letter, a Noſe of Wax, &c. The Spirit of God is then blaſphemed, when his divinely Writings are thus vilified and undervalued.

This blaſphemous Mouth is likewiſe opened againſt God's Tabernacle, the Place of his inſtituted Worſhip, meaning by his Tabernacle, the true Church, wherein God is worſhipped according to his Word. God accounts himſelf blaſphemed, when his true Worſhippers are called Hereticks, Schiſmaticks, and the Synagogue of Satan.

And them that dwell in Heaven; by which ſome underſtand the holy Martyrs, now in Heaven, whom they frequently called damn'd Hereticks, blackening their Names, and blaſting their Reputations; others underſtand it of ſome Saints in Heaven, whom they pretend to Honour, as the Virgin *Mary*, &c. They blaſpheme them by ſpeaking of them, and praying to them blaſphemouſly, as when they bid the holy Virgin, *in the right of a Mother, command her Son*. The giving that Honour and Worſhip to Saints and Angels, which is only due to God, is an idolatrous and impious blaſpheming of thoſe who are in Heaven; and were the Virgin *Mary* ſenſible in Heaven of that idolatrous Adoration which is given here on Earth, with what Indignation and Diſdain would ſhe look down on this ſacrilegious Violence offered to her only Son, in robbing him of that Divine Honour which is peculiarly due to his Divine Nature? For religious Adoration is peculiar to a Deity.

Q. *In the 7th Verſe, the Power of the Beaſt is extended* over all Kindreds, Tongues and Nations: *What is meant by this?*

A. This muſt be underſtood of individual Perſons, not univerſally of all Nations, but of the Nations belonging to the *Roman* Empire; whole Nations were carried away by Idolatry, though not all of every Nation.

Q. *Why is* Chriſt *ſtiled* the Lamb ſlain from the Fouudation of the World, *Ver.* 8?

A. He is ſo in ſeveral Reſpects. 1. In the Purpoſe and Decree of God. 2. In the Promiſe of God made from the Beginning; *Gen.* iii. 15. 3. In Reſpect of the Types, Shadows, and Sacrifices, whereby his Death was prefigured and repreſented. 4. In Reſpect of the Virtue and Efficacy of his Death, which is effectual to all that truly believe in him, from the firſt Promiſe made of him.

Q. *In the* 11*th and three following Verſes is a Deſcription of another Beaſt; which pray explain?*

A. He is deſcribed ſeveral Ways. 1. By his Original, he *aſcended out of the Earth*, which denotes his Riſe from a ſmall Beginning to a mighty Height, as thoſe Things that from ſmall Seed grow out of the Earth to be tall Trees.

2. He is ſaid to have *two Horns*, whereas the former Beaſt had ten; ſignifying ten Kingdoms, into which the *Roman* Empire, after its Diſſolution, ſhould be divided. Accordingly, by the two Horns here, in all Probability, may be underſtood two of thoſe Kingdoms of which this Beaſt (whoever he be) ſhall be poſſeſſed.

3. He is ſaid to look like a Lamb, but to ſpeak like a Dragon; that is, to pretend to great Meekneſs, and make a Shew of much Lenity and Mildneſs in his Proceedings, but ſhould really be very cruel, pretending to all without Violence, but doing indeed all by Force, aſſiſted by armed Dragoons, and booted Apoſtles, with Javelins in their Hands.

4. It is affirmed, that *he ſhall exerciſe all the Power of the firſt Beaſt*, engage in his Cauſe, and aſſume to himſelf as great, or greater Power than any Emperors did before him; and cauſe the Earth, that is, all earthly minded Men who are ſubject to him, to worſhip the firſt Beaſt; that is, to yield as great Reverence and Obedience to his Decrees for eſtabliſhing Idolatry, as ever the People did under the *Pagan* Emperors.

5. He is remarkable for working Wonders, and particularly for cauſing Fire to come down from Heaven in the Sight of Men; he ſeems, to the deluded Multitude, to do as great Miracles as *Elias* did, who brought down Fire from Heaven to confirm the Religion he profeſſed; in like Manner, the Beaſt here works Wonders ſeemingly great; lying Wonders, falſe Miracles, ſuch as falſe Prophets may work, and have wrought for confirming their falſe Doctrines; accordingly we find this Beaſt called the falſe Prophet, *Chap.* xvi. 13.

6. He requires the Inhabitants of the Earth to make an Image of the Beaſt; that is, he perſuades them, now profeſſing *Chriſtianity*, to introduce ſuch a kind of Idolatry; that the Old heatheniſh Idolatry may ſeem to revive again.

The Idolatry of the Church of *Rome* is a living Image of the old Heatheniſh Idolatry. *Popery* (ſays the learned Dr. *More*) is ſuch a *Chriſtianity*, as in all Points anſwers the Model of the old execrable Heatheniſm, that the *Gentiles* were enamour'd with then, as the *Papiſts* are now; thus the wounded and dead Image of *Pagan* Idolatry revived, and lives again in *Papal* Idolatry.

In the four laſt *Verſes*, we have a farther Character and Deſcription of the Beaſt. 1. His bloody Cruelty is ſet forth; *He cauſeth them to be killed that would not worſhip the Image of the Beaſt.* It is not ſaid, that he killed them himſelf, but cauſed them to be killed; namely, by the ſecular Power, by Kings and Princes, who are the Horns of the Beaſt; and who give their Power and Strength to the Beaſt, and war againſt the Lamb.

2. After his Cruelty follows his Compulſion, he cauſes all Sorts of Men, High and Low, Bond and Free, to receive a Mark in their Right-hand, and in their Forehead, in Alluſion to an antient Cuſtom, of marking Servants and Soldiers on the Arm, to know what Maſter or Captain they belonged to; in like Manner, the Beaſt is here ſaid to have a Mark for thoſe that are his, which Mark ſeems, probably, to have been an open owning of him, an active Engagement for him, a profeſſed Subjection to him.

3. The Beaſt is here ſaid to interdict and forbid all Trade and Commerce with thoſe that had not this Mark. Several Bulls and Decrees have been ſent forth from *Rome*, commanding, that no Traffick or Commerce be had with any *Heretick* in Buying or Selling, but only with thoſe who profeſs themſelves Members of the *Romiſh* Church.

4. It is added, that the *Number of the Beaſt is ſix hundred ſixty ſix*; that is, the numeral Letters of ſome Word or Name, being computed, ſhould amount to that Number.

CHAP. XIV.

The Lamb ſtanding on Mount Sion *with his Company. An Angel preach'd the Goſpel. The Fall of* Babylon. *The Harveſt of the World. The Vintage and Wine-preſs of the Wrath of God.*

Q. WHAT *is repreſented to us in the firſt Viſion?*

A. Obſerve here, 1. What and whom St. *John* ſaw; a Lamb, by which *Chriſt* is to be underſtood, 2. The Poſture which the Lamb was found in; *he ſtood*, ſhewing thereby his Readineſs to deliver his Church, and to do every thing that was needful for her. 3. The Place where he ſtood, *Mount Sion*; that is, in the midſt of the Church. *Chriſt* ever has been, is, and will be preſent with his Church, even to the End; although his Preſence with her, is not always ſenſibly perceived, his Care is myſteriouſly exerciſed; he is then taking moſt Care of her, when the Men of the World think he is taking the leaſt.

Q. *How are his Company and Attendants deſcribed?*

A. Two Ways, 1. By their Number, *an hundred and forty four thouſand*, whereby the collective Body of the whole Church is to be underſtood; and intimates, that in the worſt of Times, even when Apoſtaſy and Perſecution moſt univerſally prevail, *Chriſt* never wants a Church, and is not without a number of true Worſhippers.

2. They are deſcribed by their Badge or Mark, *having the Father's Name written on their Foreheads*, in Oppoſition to the Mark of the Beaſt,

mentioned in the foregoing Chapter; and in Alluſion to a Cuſtom amongſt Men who put their Mark or Name on their Goods; eſpecially upon ſuch as are very precious, as Silver or Gold Veſſels, and the like; ſo that the Mark of the Father's Name upon the Forehead, denotes both the precious Eſteem which God has of his People; and alſo their open Profeſſion and owning him for their Lord and Maſter, and their faithful Adherence to his Worſhip.

Q. *How does St.* John *deſcribe the true Worſhippers of* Chriſt, *in the midſt of Antichriſtian Idolatry?*

A. 1. By the acceptable Worſhip which they perform, Prayer and Praiſe; an heavenly Exerciſe, which, like Thunder, and the Voice of many Waters, ſounds loud in the Ears of God, and is certainly heard by him; and is melodious like the Harp, and therefore as acceptable to him as the ſweeteſt Muſick is to us.

The Perſons who perform this acceptable Worſhip, are ſuch as are *redeemed from the Earth*; the Earth here is put for earthly minded Men, the falſe Church; the Meaning is, God has fetch'd this ſmall Number of true Worſhippers, the hundred forty four thouſand, from amongſt the falſe Worſhippers and impure ones; he hath reſcued them from the World of Idolaters, and from the ſuperſtitious Multitude.

The Perſons before whom this Worſhip was performed, were, *before the Throne, and before the four Beaſts, and Elders*; before the Throne, to ſhew the Reverence and Sincerity wherewith they performed the ſame, as in the Sight of the great and glorious God; *and before the Beaſts and Elders*; that is, the whole Congregation of the Saints, according to that of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* lxxxix. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the Aſſemblies of his Saints, and to be had in Reverence of all them that are round about him.*

Q. *How does he characterize the true Worſhippers of God?*

A. He ſtiles them Virgins, intimating thereby that they are the chaſte Spouſe of *Chriſt*, and the true Church, who worſhip God alone with religious Worſhip; *and they have not defiled themſelves with Women*; that is, ſpiritually committed Whoredom; they have not been inveigled by the Whore to commit ſpiritual Fornication. Idolatry is as odious to God as Whoredom and Uncleanneſs; and an idolatrous Church is unworthy of the Title of a Mother, unleſs it be the Mother of Fornications.

Again, they are ſaid to *follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes*; this is ſpoken in Oppoſition to thoſe that follow the Beaſt, and denotes their Imitation of *Chriſt*'s Example, and their firm Adherence to the Purity of his Doctrine and Worſhip, although it expoſe them to Hazard and Danger.

They are alſo called the *the firſt Fruits to God and the Lamb*; which denotes their Fewneſs, like a few Sheaves in Compariſon of the whole Harveſt; their Sanctity, the firſt Fruits were holy to the Lord, and were his peculiar Portion; alſo their Safety and Security, as the firſt Fruits were God's Portion, ſo it was both ſacrilegious and unſafe to rob God of his Portion. By calling them the firſt Fruits, which were holy to the Lord, we ſee the ſpecial Intereſt and Propriety that God has in his faithful Servants and true Worſhippers beyond all others; they are his peculiar Portion, his Inheritance, his Treaſure, which he will always take an eſpecial Care of.

Q. *What is repreſented by* the Angel flying in the midſt of Heaven?

A. This Interpreters apprehend to ſignify the Zeal and Diligence of faithful Miniſters in preaching the glad Tidings of the Goſpel to a loſt World.

The Goſpel is called an *everlaſting Goſpel*, partly in regard of its Author the everlaſting God; partly, becauſe it promiſes and offers everlaſting Life; but chiefly, becauſe it was preached from the Beginning of the World, and ſhall continue to the End of it, and never to be abrogated, as the Legal Adminiſtration was.

Note, God's ſending the everlaſting Goſpel to be preach'd, is here called *the Hour of his Judgment*; the preaching of the Goſpel is the Hour of Mercy to ſome, but of Wrath and Judgment to others, even to all Refuſers and Contemners; and and accordingly all are warned to fear God, and inſtead of worſhipping Idols and Images, to worwip the true God, according to his Will revealed in his Word.

Q. *But what is here meant by* Babylon?

A. All agree that literally *Babylon* is not here meant, but figuratively; and it is as generally agreed that by *Babylon Rome* is here intended; ſome will have it *Rome* Pagan, under the Heathen Emperors; others *Rome* Papal, under the Antichriſtian Tyranny; and that ſhe is paralelled with *Babylon* for her Idolatry and Cruelty; yea, for exceeding her in both.

Farther, her Ruin is declar'd in the preſent Tenſe, *is fallen*, as if already accompliſhed, and ingeminated; *is fallen, is fallen*; which Repetition denotes both the Certainty of her Fall, and the Joy which the Church ſhould expreſs upon that Occaſion; though *Babylon* be never ſo great, yet ſhe ſhall fall; and it is the Church's Duty to pray, that as it is in the Prophecy, ſo it may be in the Hiſtory, that *Babylon is fallen*; and to expreſs the higheſt Joy upon that great Occaſion.

Q. *The Cauſe of* Babylon's *Ruin is here aſſigned*; ſhe made all Nations drink of the Wine of the Wrath of her Fornication; *which needs Explanation.*

A. By Fornication, her Errors, Idolatries, and falſe Worſhip are underſtood.

They are compared to Wine on ſeveral Accounts. Wine is pleaſant to the Palate, ſo is Idolatry to corrupt Nature; which is mightily pleaſed with a pompous Worſhip, and ſenſual Religion. Wine is inflaming, ſo is Idolatry, *Iſa.* lvii. 5. Wine deceives, and inſenſibly ſteals upon the Drinker, and intoxicates him e'er he is aware; ſo do Error and Idolatry grow upon Perſons by inſenſible Degrees; and accordingly, the Beaſt is ſaid to deceive them that dwell on the Earth. In a Word, as Perſons drunk with Wine are wholly incapable of Counſel and Advice from their beſt Friends, ſo ſuch as are drunk with Error and Idolatry, with the Wine of the Whore's Fornication, are beſotted, and benumb'd, and will not acknowledge their Error, nor receive their Inſtruction.

Note, that this Wine, ſweet as it is, is called *the Wine of Wrath*; partly, becauſe it inflames them that are drunk with it with Rage and cruel Fury, againſt ſincere Worſhippers; and partly becauſe it brings the Wrath of God upon thoſe that drink it.

Q. *What is ſet forth by thoſe Words, Verſ.* 11. And the Smoke of their Torment aſcendeth for ever and ever?

A. The Torments of Hell are here ſet forth as moſt acute and exquiſite; they have no Reſt Day nor Night, no not a Moment's Eaſe. It is well obſerv'd by Mr. *Mead*, that there is not a more terrible Deſcription of Puniſhment in the whole Book of God, than is here denounced againſt thoſe Idolaters who adhere to the Beaſt; *The Smoke of their Torment*, that is, the Fire and Smoke wherewith they are tormented, aſcendeth up for *ever and ever*. And if the Church of *Rome*, or Papal *Babylon* be here intended, and not Pagan, (as moſt Proteſtants believe and affirm) then this ſhews that thoſe of her Communion, and living and dying in a firm Adherence to the Doctrines of Popery, and framing their Lives by them, after they have had, or might have had, ſufficient Means to convince them of their Error and Idolatry, do expoſe their Salvation to extreme Hazard and Danger. Bleſſed be God for our happy Reformation, from the Idolatry and Superſtition, from the Tyranny and Oppreſſion, and intolerable Yoke of the Church of *Rome*; God grant we may be reformed in our Lives as well as in our Religion, otherwiſe our Damnation is as ſure as theirs is great; for the holieſt Doctrine and pureſt Worſhip will be of no Avail to impure Worſhippers and unholy livers.

Q. *In the 14th and following Verſes, is a Deſcription of* Chriſt's *Coming to Judgment; the Particulars of which I deſire may be explain'd?*

A. *One like the Son of Man ſitting on a white Cloud*; the Cloud denotes the Sovereignty of the Judge, and its Whiteneſs, the Uprightneſs of his Proceedings, and both ſignifying his Speed and Swiftneſs in coming to execute Judgment; on this white Cloud he ſat as a King upon his Throne, or like a Judge upon his Tribunal.

He is alſo deſcribed by his Royal Ornament, *having on his Head a golden Crown.* Here behold the different Eſtate of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* above, from what it was here below; here crowned with Thorns, there with Gold, the Reward of his Sufferings!

He is farther deſcribed by the Inſtruments he had in his Hand; namely, *a ſharp Sickle for the reaping of the Earth.* A Sickle is a circular Inſtrument, and compaſſeth the Corn in, which it is to cut down; the Judgment of *Chriſt* upon the Wicked ſhall encloſe them all, not a Soul of them ſhall be able to eſcape; and a ſharp Sickle denotes the Quality of his Judgment, that it will be ſevere.

Thruſt in thy Sickle, and reap, for the Harveſt is ripe; that is, it is high Time to execute thy Judgments on the wicked, for their Sins are now come to their Height. The Day of Judgment is like a Day of Harveſt; when the Corn is Ripe, the Sickle is made ready, ſet to Work, and cuts down all, Wheat and Tares, Corn and Graſs, without Diſtinction; but the Lord of the Harveſt ſoon commands a Separation to be made of the good Grain from the Rubbiſh; of the Righteous from the Wicked; laying up the former in the Granary of Heaven; but binding up the latter for the Fire of Hell.

Chriſt readily anſwers the deſires of his People; *he that ſat on the Cloud did thruſt in his Sickle, and the Earth was reaped.* Behold the Ability of *Chriſt* for Judgment, as well as his Impartiality in judging; ſuch a Judge is he, as the Power of the Mightieſt cannot daunt; as the Riches of the Wealthieſt cannot bribe; as the Subtilty of the Wiſeſt cannot deceive; from whom there lies no Appeal, and whoſe Sentence is irrevocable. Behold then, and admire the wonderful Power and Dexterity of *Chriſt* in judging; that upon the *thruſting in of his Sickle, the whole Earth was preſently reaped!*

From the Metaphor of a Harveſt, St. *John* paſſes to that of a Vintage, Verſe 17, *&c.* By the former, the wicked were compared to ripe Corn, fit for the Harveſt; by the latter, to ripe Grapes, fit for the Wine-preſs; ſignifying by both, that the Wicked, by filling up the Meaſure of their Sins, make themſelves ripe and ready for Judgment.

Note, that as a true Church is called a Vine, ſo is the wicked Antichriſtian Church here called, but with this Addition, *a Vine of the Earth, cleaving to, and only ſavouring of the Earth*; a good Name will ſignify little in Judgment; to be called *Chriſtians*, Virgins, *&c.* what will it profit, without burning and ſhining Lamps?

The Grapes of the Vine are ſaid to be full ripe, to ſet forth the great Forbearance and Long-ſuffering of God towards the Wicked. But though the Patience of God towards Sinners be laſting, it will not be everlaſting; when long abuſed it turns at laſt into Fury; Ripeneſs in Sin, is a full Prognoſtication of Judgment at Hand.

This degenerate Vine, with all its Cluſters, was caſt into the Wine-preſs of God's Wrath, which is called *a great Wine-preſs*, becauſe it contains all the Wicked; and is ſaid to be trodden, that is, by *Chriſt*, denoting the Severity of that Vengeance which will be inflicted on Sinners; the Grapes, which have long hung ripening in the Sun, are ſeverely preſs'd at laſt.

The Blood which came out of the Wine-preſs (the Blood of his Grapes) was ſo much, that it came up to the *Horſes Bridles, by the Space of a thouſand ſix hundred Furlongs*; all metaphorical Expreſſions, ſignifying, that Wine is the Wrath of God, and the Cup of his Indignation; and the hyperbolical Expreſſion of its Height as high as the Horſes Briddles, and of its Length, reaching more than a thouſand Furlongs, ſhews that mighty Deluge of God's Wrath, which the Wicked in general, and all Antichriſt's Followers in particular, ſhall not only drink of, but ſwim in; and as they ſhed the Blood of the Saints abundantly, ſo God will give them Blood to drink in great Abundance.

Note, that although theſe two Metaphors of the Harveſt and the Vintage ſignify the ſame Thing, only the Viſion is doubled to ſhew the Certainty of it; yet we may conceive, that the Similitude of a Vintage holds forth greater Judgments than the Harveſt. Almighty God, in his providential Diſpenſations towards the Wicked, proceeds gradually; as they proceed from one Degree of Wrath and Vengeance to another; the Vintage follows the Harveſt, the ſharp Sickle follows the Sickle; the Harveſt is ſaid to be ripe, the Vintage to be full ripe; if the Flood of God's Anger in this Life will not waſh Sinners clean, the Deluge of his Wrath in the next will waſh them quite away. Eternal Thanks to *Chriſt* the Lamb, who has deliver'd his from this dreadful Wrath to come.

CHAP. XV.

Seven Angels with the ſeven laſt Plagues. The Song of them that overcome the Beaſt. The ſeven Vials of God's Wrath. The Temple fill'd with with Smoke.

Q. WHAT *is meant by* the ſeven Angels having the ſeven laſt Plagues filled with the Wrath of God, *Ver.* 2?

A. By ſeven Angels, underſtand the Miniſters and Executioners of the Wrath of God; by the ſeven Plagues, underſtand the laſt dreadful Judgments that ſhould be inflicted; which would make a final End of him (whoever he be) that they ſhould be poured forth upon one after another.

In them is filled up the Wrath of God; Hence learn what final Impenitency, and Incorrigibleneſs under former Judgments will produce at laſt; namely, Judgment to the utmoſt. Ripeneſs in Sin will, at laſt, make Men ripe for Ruin; and when they have filled up the Meaſure of their Sins, God will fill up the Meaſure of his Wrath; *in them is filled up the Wrath of God.*

The 1d, 3d, and 4th Verſes, ſeem to be an Alluſion to the Deliverance of the *Iſraelites* out of *Egypt*, and to the Song of *Moſes* upon that Occaſion, recorded in *Exod.* xv. As they were delivered out of literal *Egypt*, ſo theſe from myſtical *Egypt*; both Neſts of Idolatry and falſe Worſhip; a Deliverance from them deſervedly called for a Song of Thankſgiving.

Q. *What is to be underſtood by* a Sea of Glaſs mingled with Fire, *Ver.* 2?

A. That is, a great Number of pure, and zealous *Chriſtians*; their Multitude being repreſented by the Sea, their Purity by Glaſs, and their Zeal by Fire; *who had gotten Victory over the Beaſt, and over his Image*; that is, who overcame all Temptations to Idolatry, both from the Pagan and Antichriſtian Emperors, called the Beaſt and his Image.

Having the Harps of God in their Hand; an Alluſion to the muſical Inſtruments in the Temple-Service, and denoting Hearts fitted for, and tuned by the Spirit of God; to praiſe him with Chearfulneſs for preſerving them from being overcome by Temptation to Idolatry.

Q. *The next Viſion St.* John *had, was, he thought he ſaw the Holy of Holies open to him, and ſeven Angels coming forth with ſeven Plagues, as the Executioners of God's Juſtice upon idolatrous Perſons: What does this mean?*

A. Angels are but Inſtruments in the Hand of God; their Preſence adds no Strength to him, their Abſence makes the Work no more difficult unto him.

Note, theſe Angels came *out of the Temple*, out of the Oracle, more immediately from the Preſence of God; implying, that they came forth to execute Vengeance by God's ſpecial Direction, and not barely by his Permiſſion; and conſequently, that the work was very acceptable to God which they went about: *Having ſeven Plagues,* to inflict upon the idolatrous Enemies of the Church.

They were cloathed *in pure and white Linnen*, to denote the Holineſs of their Perſons, and of the Work they had in Hand. Their Cloathing was girded to them, intimating their Readineſs for, and Alacrity in their work.

Having their Breaſts girded with Golden Girdles; alluding to the Habit of the High-Prieſt, when he entered into the Holy of Holies to enquire of God, or came out with an Anſwer from God.

Q. *What is ſignified by the* Vials full of Wrath, and the Temple filled with Smoke, *Ver.* 7, 8?

A. Theſe Vials are ſaid to be of Gold, ſignifying, theſe Judgments proceeded from a juſt God, with whom there is no Corruption, no Iniquity in Judgment.

Theſe Vials are ſaid to be *full of the Wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever*; it is the Wrath of him, who ever lives to maintain his Wrath, and uphold and ſuſtain the Sinner under the Infliction of his Wrath, that he cannot run from it.

The tremendous Dreadfulneſs of this Wrath is intimated by filling *the Temple with Smoke*; thereby ſignifying, that the Wrath of God kindled againſt Enemies ſhall be unto them like a devouring and conſuming Fire, before the Flames of which burſt forth, a Cloud of Smoke appears.

Hence learn, that Almighty God is glorified in the Deſtruction, as well as in the Salvation of Sinners; *The Temple was filled with Smoke from the Glory of God, and from his Power.*

It follows, *No Man was able to enter into the Temple*; that is, to deprecate God's Anger, and ſupplicate his Mercy, or to avert the Plagues threatned, and now juſt ready to be inflicted; when Mercy has been long offer'd and deſpiſed, the Lord, at laſt, becomes inexorable, and will ſuffer none to intercede or plead with him. *Jer.* xv. *Though* Moſes *and* Samuel *ſtood before me, yet my Mind cannot be towards this People*; *caſt them out of my Sight*, &c. The Sins of a People may arrive to ſuch a Pitch, that Almighty God will no longer be intreated for them; and when we know it, 'tis our Duty to ceaſe praying for them. Woe, woe, woe be unto ſuch People.

CHAP. XVI.

The Angels pour out the Vials of God's Wrath. Three unclean Spirits like Frogs. Chriſt *cometh as a Thief, Bleſſed are they that watch.*

Q. WHAT *do you obſerve upon the firſt Verſe of this Chapter?*

A. The Command given to the Angels, the Executioners of God's Wrath, *to pour out the Vials of his Wrath upon the Earth.* The Command is given by *a great Voice*; becauſe it was the Command of a Great God, and about a great Work; and it is ſaid to *come out of the Temple*, in Alluſion to the Holy of Holies, the Place of God's exhibiting himſelf, and from whence he gave forth Oracles of Old.

Theſe are *the Vials of the Wrath of God*, intimating, that what is done againſt Antichriſt, is not the Effect of Man's Revenge, but of God's Wrath. And whereas Vials are Veſſels of large Extent, but with narrow Mouths, pouring out ſlowly; but diſtilling effectually, and drenching deeply; it imports, the Wrath of God is, though ſlow, yet ſure; it coming upon Sinners gradually; but if, upon its Approach, they repent not, it will, at laſt, like a mighty Torrent, waſh them away from off the Earth.

Q. *What Kind of Judgments were thoſe to be inflicted by the three firſt Plagues?*

A. The firſt Plague inflicted, Verſe 2. has a plain Alluſion to that inflicted of old on *Egypt*, *Exod.* ix. 9. *Egypt* had her Boil, breaking forth with Blains upon Man, and upon Beaſt; ſo the Worſhippers of the Beaſt have noiſome and grievous Sores upon them; that is, great Trouble and Uneaſineſs of Mind upon the firſt Proſpect of ſhaking their Kingdom, by diſcovering the Vanity, Blaſphemy, Hypocriſy, and Tyranny of that accurſed Religion; even as Sores and Blains do vex and torture thoſe that are troubled with them.

The ſecond and third Plague poured out upon the Sea, and the Rivers, whereby they became Blood, perfectly allude to the Plague of *Egypt*, whereby all the Waters were turned into Blood, *Exod.* vii. 19.

Obſerve farther, that by the Sea and the Rivers full of Blood, the bloody Perſecutors in the Antichriſtian Church are ſuppoſed to be meant, who by Slaughter and Bloodſhed ſeek to plant and propagate a bloody Religion throughout the Earth.

The pouring out theſe Vials gradually and ſucceſſively upon Idolaters and Perſecutors, and not all at once, but one after another, teaches us how abounding the Patience, Forbearance, and long Suffering Goodneſs of God is, even towards the worſt of Sinners.

Q. *Explain the 5th and two following Verſes?*

A. Theſe Verſes ſeem to be a Key to let us into the right Underſtanding of the Verſes immediately foregoing; and clearly ſhew, that as the idolatrous Enemies of the Church did ſhed the Blood of Saints and Martyrs, ſo ſhould theirs be ſhed; which is called their *having Blood to drink.*

Righteous art thou, O Lord, for thou haſt given them Blood to drink. The Retribution which God makes of Blood for Blood, ſhews the Righteouſneſs of God in his Judgments inflicted; and alſo declares, that Almighty God does, ſometimes, ſo ſuit his Judgments to the Sin committed, that Perſons may read their Sin in their Puniſhment. As theſe Perſecutors thirſted after Blood, ſo here they get Blood to drink.

Q. *What do you ſuppoſe ſignified by the fourth Plague?*

A. The fourth Vial is ſaid to be poured out upon the Sun; which, metaphorically taken in Scripture, uſually ſignifies ſome great Prince or Potentate. Here the Head of the *Antichriſtian* Party is ſuppoſed to be the Sun, upon which the Wrath of this Vial falls.

And Power was given him to ſcorch Men with Fire; and Men blaſphemed the Name of God, and repented not to give him Glory. Hence learn, that although God ſends his Judgments to call the wicked to Repentance, yet they will not repent of Sin, even when they lie under the wrathful Hand of God; but will rather break forth to farther Wickedneſs, even to blaſpheme the holy Name of God.

The Damned in Hell, and incorrigible Sinners upon Earth, do the ſame Thing; they are ſcorched with great Heat, the Vengeance of God comes upon them; they are mad and enraged, and blaſpheme the Holy and Juſt God, who brings ſuch Plagues upon them; but they have no Senſe of their Sins, no Thoughts of turning to God, or giving Glory to him; theſe Men have blaſphemed, but repented not.

Q. *The fifth Vial was poured out upon* the Seat of the Beaſt: *What does this allude to?*

A. *By the Seat of the Beaſt* is properly meant the Seat of his Empire, the chief Place where he appears in the higheſt Majeſty and Glory. This ſhould teach us to draw near to God at the firſt Alarm of his Judgments, before he comes nearer to us by a Succeſſion of Plagues and Puniſhments.

The Conſequence of the pouring out of this Vial upon the Seat of the Beaſt, was, *his Kingdom was full of Darkneſs*; this Vial did not deſtroy, but diſtreſs him; it filled his Kingdom with the Darkneſs of Miſery and Trouble, of Calamity and Confuſion, by the Loſs of that Luſtre, Reſpect and Reverence, which the Throne of the Beaſt had before, but was wanting now.

As an Evidence of this Diſtreſs, it is here ſaid, *They gnawed their Tongues for Pain*; they were almoſt diſtracted at the declining of their Grandeur. As Almighty God makes the guilty Conſciences of the Wicked to be their own Accuſers, ſo he can make them, whenever he pleaſes, to be their own Tormentors.

People may often ſee and read their Sin in their Puniſhment. Theſe Worſhippers of the Beaſt ſeduced others by their falſe Doctrine, and ſinned with their Tongues; and now God makes their Tongues like ſo many Scorpion-Tails, the Inſtruments of their Torment.

Q. *The ſixth Vial was poured out upon the River* Euphrates: *How do you underſtand this?*

A. This River ran through *Old Babylon*, and was a greater Defence to it than its celebrated Walls, which, for the Thickneſs and Height, were the Wonder of the World. *Cyrus*, when he took *Babylon*, cut Ditches, and let the *Euphrates* run out, and ſo he and his Soldiers entered the City (then fordable) and took it. Now, as the drying up of *Euphrates* then, was an immediate forerunner of the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, ſo the drying up of *Euphrates* here (ſignify what it will) ſhall be the immediate Forerunner of *Antichriſtian Babylon*, whenever it ſhall be. The *Romiſh Euphrates* being dried up, the *Romiſh Babylon* will haſten amain towards its final Ruin.

Q. *But, what is here meant by* Euphrates?

A. Probably the *Turkiſh* Empire, according to Dr. *Mead*, and Dr. *More*, the *Turks* firſt taking up their Habitation about this great River: So that by *Euphrates* may be underſtood the People inhabiting about *Euphrates*; and by drying up its Waters, the diminiſhing and leſſening of their Empire.

If, as ſome underſtand it, this be meant of the *Romiſh* Power, then the drying up of the Waters may ſignify and Point at the Time when *Chriſtian* Princes, who, for many Ages, have contributed to the Support of the *Papal* Grandeur, ſhall no longer ſuffer their reſpective Kingdoms to be drained of their Wealth, their Revenues leſſen'd, and their People impoveriſh'd to maintain an idolatrous Church in her uſurped Powers over the Conſciences and Eſtates of abuſed Mankind; but ſhall ſtop all the Conduits thereto, which will ſoon diſtreſs, and at length entirely ruin this *Antichriſtian Babylon.*

Q. *How do you underſtand the laſt Clauſe of Ver.* 12. That the Way of the Kings of the *Eaſt* might be prepared?

A. By this underſtand the *Jews* who inhabit the *Eaſtern* Countries, to whom God made a Promiſe, *Exod.* xix. 6. that they ſhould be made a Kingdom of Prieſts. Here then ſeems to be a Prophecy of the *Jews* Converſion to the *Chriſtian* Religion, which is chiefly hindered by two Things; namely, the Idolatry of the Church of *Rome*, and the Power of the *Turks*; both which being brought to an End, a Way will then ſeem prepared for the *Jews* receiving of the *Chriſtian* Faith.

Q. *What Effect was produced by the pouring out of the ſixth Vial?*

A. A warlike Expedition, or gathering to Battle; the Commanders named, are, the Dragon, the Beaſt, and the falſe Prophet; the Inſtruments employ'd under theſe Commanders are, *three unclean Spirits, like* Frogs. *Frogs* are bred out of Corruption, and ſwarm and croak in great Numbers in all Places, and live both in Water and upon the Earth: By all which many Interpreters underſtand Emiſſaries, Miſſionaries, Negociators, Sollicitors, Legates, *&c.* ſent forth and employed by *Antichriſt*, for the Support and Strengthening both of him and his Kingdom, by ſolliciting the Kings of the Earth to join in a Battle againſt the Church, to withſtand the Reformation of *Chriſtians*, and the Converſion of the *Jews*.

Note alſo, the Actions here ſaid to be performed by them; namely, their *working Miracles by the Power of the Devils*; that is, ſuch wonderful Things as *Satan* can ſometimes produce, or at leaſt delude People's Senſes, ſo as to perſuade them that thoſe are the real Effects of his Power.

Q. *In what Senſe may* Chriſt *be ſaid to* come as a Thief?

A. That is, ſecretly, ſuddenly, and unexpectedly, to deſtroy theſe Enemies when they leaſt expect him; and then is he at Hand to deliver his Church, when they leaſt think of him.

Q. *How do you interpret the 16th Verſe?*

A. *He*; that is, Almighty God, by his permiſſive Providence, ſuffereth the Kings of the Earth to hearken to *Antichriſt*'s Miſſionaries, who, like Frogs, hop abroad, even into Kings Palaces, and perſuade them to aſſemble, as *Jabin* and *Siſera* gather'd together againſt *Iſrael*, to their own Deſtruction.

The Place of their aſſembling together is called *Armageddon*, from the Event of the Battle; ſignifying ſuch a Place, where the Enemy of the Church ſhall be deſtroyed.

Q. *Pray explain the Meaning of the ſeventh Vial, and the Effect it produced?*

A. *It was poured out into the Air*; not that the Elements of Air, Earth, or Water, are to be underſtood in this Chapter literally; for the Vials poured forth are Vials of Wrath, and conſequently are poured forth upon the proper Subjects of God's Diſpleaſure, which the Elements are not; but it is the earthly *Antichriſtian* Church, which is thought to be here intended; ſo called in Oppoſition to the pure and heavenly Church. So that by Air here, Mr. *Mead* underſtands all the Subjects of *Satan*'s Kingdom, who is called the Prince of the Air; and the pouring out the Vial upon the Air, denotes the full and final Deſtruction of *Satan*'s Power.

It is done; that is, theſe laſt Plagues are now finiſhed; the Work of God is done, and what in his Counſel he deſigned for the Deſtruction of his Enemies, and for the Deliverance of his People; this is ſaid to be done, becauſe it was now doing, and accompliſhed, becauſe now accompliſhing. God's threatning of Judgments (except Men repent) are as ſure when denounced, as if they were already executed.

The dreadful Effects of the pouring forth of this laſt Vial were, *Thunder, Lightning, and Earthquake*; all implying, that the Storm of God's Wrath now coming upon the Kingdoms of Sin, *Satan*, and *Antichriſt*, would be very terrible and amazing.

The great City was divided into three Parts; into three Factions, ſay ſome; and that *Satan*'s Kingdom was now falling, by being divided within itſelf.

And the Cities of the Nations fell; *Heathen* Nations, and Places which withſtood *Chriſt* and his Goſpel; for all *Chriſt*'s Enemies are now to be depoſed from publick Authority.

And great Babylon *came up in Remembrance before God.* Not that God was unmindful of her, either of her Impiety or Cruelty; but as good Works are ſaid to be remember'd when they are rewarded, ſo Wickedneſs is then remember'd when it is puniſhed. God is never forgetful, either of his Church's Sufferings, or his Enemies Sins; but will puniſh the one, and reward the other, in his own appointed Time.

Every Mountain fell away, and the Mountains were not found; ſignifying, ſay ſome, that the remoteſt and ſtrongeſt Places, which owned and maintained *Babylon*, ſhall either be converted or confounded; others ſay, that there ſhall be no Place, in that Day of God's Wrath, to flie unto for Safety.

There fell great Hail out of Heaven, every Stone about the Weight of a Talent. An hyperbolical Expreſſion, ſetting forth the Deſign and Purpoſe of God to purſue *Babylon*, and the Worſhippers of the Beaſt, until they be utterly deſtroyed. A Talent, ſay ſome, was an Hundred pound Weight; if ſo, theſe Hail-ſtones were ſufficient not only to kill Men, but daſh them all in pieces: This heavy Hail ſhews, that weighty Sins bring down heavy Judgments. Yet, mark what a bad Uſe theſe obdurate Sinners made of all theſe tremendous Judgments, *They blaſphemed God.* They were ſo obſtinate in their Idolatry, that they ſtood it out againſt all God's Judgments; and when they ſhould have humbled themſelves under his mighty Hand, they opened their Mouths in Blaſphemy againſt him.

This, perhaps, is an Emblem of what the damned will do at the Day of Judgment; though their Conſciences be convinced of the Righteouſneſs of their Sentence, yet will they not ceaſe to pour out Blaſphemies againſt God, for the Severity and Eternity of their Torments. But at that Day will all the divine Attributes be conſpicuouſly glorified, his wonderful Clemency ſweetly diſplayed, his exact Juſtice terribly demonſtrated, his perfect Wiſdom clearly unfolded; all the knotty Intrigues of Providence wiſely reſolved, and the injured Honour and Glory of God viſibly cleared and repaired,

paired, to the joyful Satiſfaction of all good Men, and to the dreadful Conſternation and Confuſion of all impenitent Sinners, who, with theſe Worſhippers of the Beaſt, will gnaw their Tongues for Anguiſh, and moſt unjuſtly blaſpheme the Holy and Juſt God, for bringing upon them that Deſtruction which they have deſerved; yea, that Damnation they have choſen.

Chap. XVII.

John *is ſhewn the Great Whore. Her Apparel, Ornaments, Titles, and Bloodthirſtineſs deſcribed. The Myſtery of the Woman and the Beaſt. The ten Kings make War with the Lamb, and are overcome. The Puniſhment of the Whore.*

Q. P*RAY who, or what, is prefigured by the* Great Whore, *Verſe* 1?

A. By the *Whore*, all underſtand the City of *Rome*; only ſome will have it *Rome Pagan*, others *Rome Papal*, or the great idolatrous City and Church of *Rome*. Idolatry is often, in Scripture, called Whoredom; and Idolaters are ſaid to go a Whoring from God. A married Woman, who proves falſe to her Huſband's Bed, is a Whore. The *Papal* Church of *Rome* deſerves this Name, by moſt notoriouſly apoſtatizing from the true evangelical Doctrine and Worſhip; and ſhe is alſo deſervedly called the *Great Whore*, becauſe of her Whoredoms committed with ſo many under her Power and Juriſdiction, having many People ſubject to her; and, for that Reaſon, is here ſaid, *to ſit upon many Waters*.

The true Church is *Chriſt*'s Bride and Spouſe; ſhe is betrothed to him in Righteouſneſs, in loving Kindneſs, and in tender Mercy; and at any Time, by Idolatry, to apoſtatize from him, is ſpiritual Whoredom, which ſhall not paſs without deſerved Puniſhment. Never was Huſband more jealous of the Chaſtity of his ſuſpected Wife, than God is jealous of his Worſhip.

Q. *Who were the Perſons with whom* Babylon *committed Whoredom?*

A. With Kings, and the Inhabitants of the Earth; that is, with all Sorts of Perſons, ſmall and great, rich and poor.

Have been made drunk with the Wine of her Fornication; which ſeems to intimate, that Idolatry is like to Wine, a ſenſual ſort of Worſhip, and therefore alluring; making Perſons drunk, and therefore intoxicating.

Q. *How was* John carried away by the Spirit, into the Wilderneſs?

A. That is, he was in a Rapture, or Ecſtacy of Mind, wherein his outward Senſes being bound up, his Underſtanding was fixed, and raiſed up to the Contemplation of divine Objects, repreſented to him in the Viſion.

The Place whither St. *John* was carried, was, *into the Wilderneſs*; a Place of Privacy, ſay ſome; where he might diſcern Things freely and undiſturbed. Solitude is fitteſt for Contemplation. A Wilderneſs, ſay others, was the fitteſt Place to ſee that Church in a Viſion, which was itſelf a Wilderneſs. The Apoſtolical Church was before driven into the Wilderneſs; here the Apoſtle only follows her.

Q. *Who was the* Woman that ſat upon the Scarlet-colour'd Beaſt?

A. She is the ſame that was called Whore, *Ver.* 1. namely, idolatrous *Rome*; ſhe is repreſented as richly and ſplendidly arrayed, enticing the World to her Idolatry, ſo often called Whoredom, and ſpiritual Fornication. The golden Cup in her Hand is an Alluſion to Harlots; who with their Philters and enchanted Cups, allure and provoke Men to ſenſual Satiſfaction; and ſo *Rome*, by her outward Splendor, allures; and by ſpecious Pretences, draws Men to her Idolatries and Superſtitions.

Note farther, the Name written on her Forehead, *Myſtery*, Babylon *the Great*, the great City of *Rome*, the Mother of Idolatry, the Pattern of Cruelty, the Patroneſs of all Impiety; and propagating all theſe by her Power and Policies, who calls herſelf the Mother-Church, but is indeed *the Mother of Harlots*, and of all Manner of Abominations; that is, of all abominable Doctrines and Practices.

Q. *Why is* John *ſaid, Verſe* 6. to wonder with great Admiration?

A. Intimating, that ſo aſtoniſhing is the Cruelty of that Church, that it juſtly cauſes Wonder and Admiration to all that are not of her cruel and bloody Diſpoſition. I wondered, that God would ſuffer ſo much of his dear Saints Blood to be ſhed by her Inſatiableneſs.

Obſerve how the Spirit of God was pleaſed to open this Myſtery; which, indeed, is the only Viſion of this Nature expounded throughout this whole Book. He begins, firſt, with a Deſcription of the Beaſt, affirming, that *he was*, and *is not*, and *yet is*; as if he had ſaid, the *Roman* Empire was once *Pagan*, is now *Chriſtian*, and yet is as idolatrous, as it was of Old; the ſame it was, only under another Form. *Rome Papal* is certainly now as Idolatrous, as Cruel and Bloody, as ever *Rome Pagan* was of Old; yea, perhaps, much more ſo. Dr. *Hammond* ſuppoſes this to be meant of *Domitian*.

The Riſe and Original is declared from whence this idolatrous Church ſhould ſpring; namely, *out of the bottomleſs Pit*; becauſe her working is like that of *Satan*, with all Deceivableneſs, and with Signs, and with lying Wonders.

And as its Riſe is declared, ſo is its Ruin foretold; *it ſhall go into Perdition*, and ſhall be finally deſtroyed, never to revive again.

But before his Deſtruction, the World ſhall be under ſuch an Infatuation, that the Generality of its Inhabitants *ſhall wonder after the Beaſt*; that is, be wonderfully taken with him, and ſhall follow him with an implicit Faith, paying Homage and Subjection to him.

But theſe Admirers and Adorers of the Beaſt are only ſuch, whoſe *Names are not written in the Book of Life*; intimating to us, that in the Times of the greateſt Apoſtaſy, and moſt univerſal Defection from the Truth, the Lord wants not his true Church; he ever had, and ever will have a Number to ſtand up for his Name, and bear witneſs of the Truth.

Q. *Pray explain the Angel's Interpretation of this Viſion?*

A. In the 9th, and two following Verſes, the Angel directly unfolds the Myſtery of the Beaſt, premiſing firſt, that it requires heavenly Wiſdom in a Perſon to underſtand it, and apply the Marks accordingly. *Here is the Mind that hath Wiſdom*;

that is, the Mind that hath Wiſdom, may here exerciſe itſelf.

The ſeven Heads are ſeven Mountains; that is, ſignify ſeven Mountains; a plain Deſcription of *Rome*, as to its local Situation, being built upon ſeven Hills.

And there are ſeven Kings, ſeven Forms of Government by, and according to, which *Rome* was governed; namely, Kings, Conſuls, Tribunes, Decemviri, Dictators, *Cæſars*, and Emperors, that were Pagans. Five of theſe were fallen in St. *John*'s Time and utterly extinct; namely, the Government by Kings, Conſuls, Tribunes, Decemveri, and Dictators.

And one is, namely, by Pagan Emperors, which was then in being.

And the other is not yet come; the Government by *Chriſtian* Emperors was not yet in being; and when it came, held but a little while, before the Biſhops of *Rome* wreſted the Government out of their Hands, and took it into their own.

And the ten Horns which thou ſaweſt, are ten Kings, who ſhould employ their Power with the Beaſt, in Conjunction with his eſtabliſhed Idolatry, to uphold his bloody Reign.

Next, their wicked Unity is declared in giving their Power and Strength to the Beaſt; *they have one Mind*, they unanimouſly concur in aiding and aſſiſting the Beaſt, in uſing their Power and Authority, to maintain his idolatrous and Pagan like Superſtitions.

Q. *What was their Purpoſe in their joining together?*

A. *To make War upon the Lamb*; to ſide with Antichriſt, and oppoſe *Chriſt* in his Truth and Goſpel, in his Miniſters and Members, in his Children and Servants.

But the Lamb ſhall overcome them. Some ſhall be converted by the Power of the Goſpel, others ſhall be confounded one way or other, and brought into Subjection; *for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings*; cloathed with divine Power; *Chriſt* though a meek Lamb, yet is a mighty Lord.

The Titles here given him, ſhew his Godhead and Omnipotency; and having ſuch a Power, he knows how to fit Inſtruments for his Purpoſe; and thoſe whom he will make uſe of in this Work, ſhall be choſen Perſons and faithful in the diſcharge of the Truſt committed to them. All that are faithful to *Chriſt*, ſhall ſhare with him in his Victory.

Q. *What do you obſerve upon the* ten Horns making the World deſolate, *Ver. 16?*

A. Here is declared, what Inſtruments God will make uſe of as the Executioners of his Vengeance upon the great Whore, namely, *the ten Horns*; that is, the ten Kings who before idolized her, and committed Idolatry, and ſpiritual Whoredom with her, ſhall, at length, revolt from her, and hate her; *make her deſolate, and naked, ſhall eat her Fleſh, and burn her with Fire.* What a ſtrange, ſudden, and mighty Power has converting Grace! Theſe ten Kings, who once doted on the painted Beauty of the great Whore, when once their Eyes ſhall be opened, their Hearts will ſoon be alienated from her.

Babylon's Courts ſhall no longer be crowded with Suitors; they ſhall make her deſolate, by deſerting her Communion; make her naked, by withdrawing the Supplies they once afforded her; they ſhall eat her Fleſh, feed themſelves with her Spoils, and take her Revenues to themſelves, and burn her with Fire; that is, ſhall utterly ruin and deſtroy her. The Deſtruction of Antichriſt once begun, ſhall go on conſtantly, by Degrees, till his final Deſtruction.

Q. *Pray explain the Senſe of the 17th Verſe?*

A. Here obſerve, how the infinitely Wiſe, and perfectly Holy God can, and does ſo order Things, that all his Judgments ſhall be executed by Sinners, without his being the Cauſe of any one of their Sins. Though, by the permiſſive Will of God, theſe Kings give their Power for a while to the Beaſt; yet they never had his Approbation for ſo doing. God ſo over-ruleth the Actions of wicked Men, that when they are doing their own Will, the Lord, contrary to their Intentions, is, in and by them, doing his Will.

The Time when theſe Kings ſhall help to deſtroy this Whore, is declared, namely; *when his Word is fulfilled.* God's Word ſhall be fulfilled, in ſpite of Satan, and all his Inſtruments; yea, the wicked are then fulfilling God's Word and Will; that is, his permiſſive Will, when they are going on in their Wickedneſs, *God hath put it into their Hearrs to fulfill his Will.*

This Chapter is ſo clear a Deſcription of *Rome*, that that Church herſelf acknowledge it: For, if that be the City built upon ſeven Hills, the City that allures the Inhabitants of the Earth to Idolatry; if her Idolatries be a lively Image of the old Pagan Idolatries; if many Kings have given their Power and Strength to her; and if ſhe reigns over the Kings of the Earth, there remains no Doubt but this great City is *Rome*; is myſtical *Babylon*, which has ſhed the Blood of Saints and Martyrs without Number, and without Meaſure, and muſt be deſtroyed for ſo doing; no Pomp nor Grandeur can exempt, or ſhall ſave her from the revenging Hand of God, and his juſt Indignation.

CHAP. XVIII.

Babylon *is fallen. The People of God commanded to come out of her. Plagues come ſuddenly upon her. The Kings and Merrhants bewail her Ruin. The holy Prophets exhorted to rejoice. The Angel ſhews how* Babylon *is to be deſtroyed, by caſting a great Stone into the Sea.*

Q. *IN the firſt Verſe the Angel, who is employ'd to declare ſhe Certainty of* Babylon's *Fall is deſcribed: What is there herein worthy Obſervation?*

A. This Angel is deſcribed, 1. By the Place from whence he came, namely, from Heaven; ſignifying, that the Deſtruction of *Babylon* was there ſurely decreed, and ſhould moſt certainly be accompliſh'd.

2. By the Authority and Power by which he came; in the Name, and by the Commiſſion of the great God, *and having great Power.* A mighty Angel is employed in this great and mighty Work, to deſtroy *Babylon*, the mighty Throne of Antichriſt.

3. By the Effect of his Appearance; *the Earth was lightned with his Glory*; denoting that *Babylon*'s Deſtruction ſhould be open and manifeſt, and which would afford Matter of Joy both to Heaven and to Earth.

Q. *What is meant by* Babylon?

A. By *Babylon*, both Papiſts and Proteſtants underſtand the City of *Rome*, though in different Reſpects. This is called myſtical *Babylon*, becauſe of their Reſemblance, 1. In Sin; namely, in Pride and Self-exaltation, in Cruelty and Oppreſſion, in Sorcery and Witchcraft, *Jer.* li. 7. 2. In Puniſhment. The Deſtruction of old *Babylon* was ſudden and perpetual, *Iſa.* lvii. 9. and xiv. 20. compar'd with *Rev.* xi. 10. and xviii. 8.

It is alſo called *Babylon the great*; 1. Becauſe of its Greatneſs, of its Strength, and of its Glory. It was the ſtrongeſt and beſt fortified Place in the World. *Cyrus* beſieged it thirteen Years before he took it, and then effected it by cutting Channels, and drawing the River *Euphrates* dry. 2. In regard of her great Power and Dominion. Literal *Babylon* ſaid, *Are not my Princes altogether Kings?* And myſtical *Babylon ruleth over all the Kings of the Earth.*

Q. *Why is the Word* fallen, *Ver.* 2. *repeated*?

A. This implies. 1. The Certainty of her Ruin; it is a Speech of Faith, ſpeaking of Things to come as already paſt. 2. It denotes the Suddenneſs of her Deſtruction; *ſhe is fallen*; that is, ſhe ſhall ſoon fall; as when *Chriſt* ſaid of his Suffering-work, *It is finiſhed*; he meant, that is was very near finiſhing. 3. It denotes her utter Ruin and Deſtruction; *is fallen, is fallen*, never more to riſe; the Church ſhall never more be tormented by her, or troubled with her. And it is not only a Speech of Faith, but of Joy and Triumph; becauſe ſhe has been to the Church an old and inveterate, a cruel and bloody, and ſhall be the laſt Enemy. When *Babylon* is fallen, then ſhall all Perſecutions ceaſe; Satan ſhall be bound, and the Kingdoms of the World ſhall become theKingdoms of the Lord, and of his *Chriſt*.

Q. *In what Senſe does* Babylon *become the* Habitation of Devils, the Hold of every foul Spirit, and a Cage of every unclean and hateful Bird?

A. That is, as Devils and unclean Spirits are ſuppoſed to haunt deſolate Places; as Birds, which make diſmal and hideous Noiſes, dwell in ruinous Places; ſo theſe Expreſſions denote the entire and abſolute Deſtruction of *Babylon*; inſomuch that the Place which hath known her, ſhall know her no more; and her Habitation ſhall be an eternal Deſolation, ſo that none that paſs by ſhall ſay, *This is Babylon.*

Q. *What is ohe Cauſe of* Babylon's *final Deſtruction?*

A. 1. Becauſe *all Nations have drunk of the Wine of the Wrath of her Fornications. All Nations*, that is, very many, the Generality of the *Roman* Empire, have been allured to, and intoxicated by her Idolatries, which have brought all that Wrath upon her and them. It is called the Wine of Wrath, becauſe it excites and provokes God's Wrath againſt a Perſon and a People guilty of it.

2. Becauſe *the Kings of the Earth have committed Fornication with her*; that is, joined with her in her idolatrous Worſhip. See here the Policy of *Babylon:* She firſt draws in Kings and Princes, well knowing that the People will follow the Example of their Superiors.

3. Becauſe *the Merchants of the Earth are waxed rich through the Abundance of her Delicacies.* By the Merchants, underſtand all ſuch as Traffick in thoſe coſtly pleaſing Wares of Pardons, Maſſes and Indulgencies, by which ſo many are enriched. All Things are vendible at *Rome*; any Sin may be forgiven for Gold; and a Licence for any thing that is unlawful may be had for Money.

Q. *But why did God inflict ſuch ſevere Judgments upon* Babylon?

A. Becauſe *her Sins had reached unto Heaven*; that is, the Cry and Clamour of her Sins; *and God hath remember'd her Iniquities*; that is, hath manifeſted his Remembrance of them, by inflicting on her ſo great, ſo juſt a Puniſhment for her Idolatry and Perſecution. Although the Juſtice of God may ſeem forgetful of Sin and Sinners, yet he will take his own Time to convince them to their coſt that he has them in Remembrance.

Q. *How do you underſtand that Injunction*, and reward her even as ſhe rewarded you, and double unto her Double?

A. This is required, not from a private Spirit of Revenge, which *Chriſtianity* expreſsly forbids; but as a publick Work, and in an authoritative Way and Manner, out of an ardent Zeal for the Glory of God, and from a juſt Indignation againſt Tyranny and Idolatry; and the Command to *double unto her Double*, implies, that a double Puniſhment is due unto her, yea, a juſt one, *according to her Works.*

Here behold what bloody Perſecutors may at length expect; namely, to receive Double at God's Hand for all their Sins. *Babylon*'s Puniſhment ſhall be double, in Reſpect of what ſhe has acted; but not double in Reſpect of what ſhe has deſerved: If poſſible, let her have as much Blood again to drink as ever ſhe has ſpilt, for one Drop of the Blood of *Sion* is of more worth than an Ocean of the Blood of *Babylon.*

Q. *What is intimated by her Pride and Luxurcy deſcribed, Ver.* 7?

A. *She ſaid in her Heart, I ſit as a Queen*; I am not only in a high, but a ſure Place; I have a warm and a firm Seat. I am well ſettled; I have a great and uncontroulable Command; *I am no Widow*, no deſolate, diſconſolate Widow, for I have many Children to comfort me, many Sons and Daughters; *I ſhall ſee no Sorrow*, I neither feel nor fear any.

Note alſo, her Luxury and Voluptuouſneſs, *She lived deliciouſly*, in pompous Palaces, pleaſantly ſituated, plentifully furniſh'd; and her Judgment bears a ſtrict Proportion to her Sin, *How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, and lived deliciouſly, ſo much Torment and Sorrow give her*; the Juſtice of God will exact all the Arrears of abuſed Mercy; Sinners that now fare deliciouſly every Day, ſhall paſs from their good Things here, to the Flames which are fed and live by the Breath of God's revenging Wrath.

Therefore ſhall her Plagues come in one Day; as did the Plagues of *Sodom*, ſuddenly and unexpectedly; and the Multiplicity of her Plagues are here expreſs'd; Death, for putting the Saints to Death; Mourning for her former Rejoicing; Famine, for famiſhing God's People; and Burning, for having burnt ſo many of the Bodies of the holy Martyrs; *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and juſt are thy Judgments. For ſtrong is the Lord who judgeth her.*

True, *Babylon* has all natural Power, and all civil Strength on her Side; but the ſtrong God is againſt her; it is his Controverſy with her, and he is able to effect what he pleaſes, how incredible ſoever the Thing may ſeem to us.

Q. *Next are declared the bitter Lamentations which the Downfal of* Babylon *will occaſion to her Votaries and Admirers: But who were theſe Mourners, and in what Manner were they to expreſs their Sorrow?*

A. *The Kings of the Earth ſhall bewail her*; thoſe Kings who have adher'd to the Whore, committed ſpiritual Fornication with her, and delighted themſelves in her carnal and pompous Worſhip, when they ſee the Smoak of her Burning, and underſtand the Certainty of her Deſtruction, they ſhall ſtand afar off, like Perſons aſtoniſh'd at the Dreadfulneſs of the Judgment, and afraid to come near, leſt they ſhould be involved in it.

Alas, alas, that great City Babylon! *in one Hour is her Judgment come!* As if they had ſaid, Notwithſtanding all *Babylon*'s Grandeur, which we ſo admired and magnified, and which ſhe herſelf ſo confided in; to our Aſtoniſhment we behold, in one Hour, her Judgment come upon her; a great and mighty City deſtroy'd, a gay and ſplendid Church politically founded, powerfully ſtrengthened, on a ſudden broke in Pieces, and brought to Deſolation.

Another Sort of Perſons, who paſſionately lament, and bitterly bewail *Babylon*'s Downfal and Deſtruction, are the Merchants who traded with *Babylon*. Here is an Alluſion to the Merchants and Merchandize of *Tyre*, ſpoken of *Ezek.* xxvii. As *Tyre* was the Mart of the Earth for temporal Things, ſo was *Babylon* for ſpiritual Things; making Merchandize even of *Souls of Men*, perſuading the People that they could purchaſe the Redemption of Souls out of *Purgatory* by Maſſes. She ſells alſo the Souls of Men, by ſelling her Eccleſiaſtical Benefices and Cure of Souls; and it is a Matter of juſt Concern, that this Merchandize is not confined amongſt them, but is now to be found in more reformed Churches.

Here likewiſe are enumerated ſeveral Sorts of Wares, and the Kinds of Merchandize that *Babylon* traffick'd in; namely, *Gold, Silver, precious Stones, fine Linnen, Purple, Silk, and Scarlet*; all Things for Ornament, Neceſſity and Delight; the Pride and Senſuality of *Rome* prompted her to buy all Sorts of Commodities, and took off all that the Countries round could bring in; partly, to gratify her Pride; and partly, to ſerve her Idolatry.

Remark the bitter Lamentation here taken up; not for their Sins, their Luxury, and Idolatry, but for the Loſs of their Market and Merchandize only. In theſe *Babylonians* behold the Spirit and Temper of all natural Men; they weep not for Sin, but for Sufferings; for any temporal Croſs they can weep; but for their Sins, which are not their Croſs, but their Curſe, and their greateſt, becauſe ſpiritual, Plague, theſe they can ſpeak of with dry Eyes, and unaffected Hearts.

Note, how theſe Merchants, as the Kings before, *ſtand afar off for fear of her Torment, weeping and wailing*, pitying and condoling one another, greatly affected and ſorely afflicted, to ſee the Ruin of that Polity that ſuſtain'd them; but not able to help one another. Fruitleſs and helpleſs is the Wicked's Friendſhip one to another in the Day of Viſitation; they ſtand afar off, for fear of Torments, but can afford no Succour to each other.

The laſt Sort of Mourners for *Babylon*'s Ruin, are Sailors, and Seamen. All ſpiritual Seamen that have an Oar in St. *Peter*'s Boat, ſhall greatly lament; even ſuch whoſe Life and Livelihood depended on the Merchant-trade of that great City: Theſe, though they ſtuck cloſe to her, and traffick'd with her in the Day of her Proſperity, yet now with the reſt they ſtand afar off from her, lamenting her Ruin, and their own Loſs, in the Day when her Deſolation cometh. And as an Evidence of the Greatneſs of their Sorrow and Mourning, they are here ſaid to *caſt Duſt on their Heads*; which among the Antients was uſed as a ſpecial Token of extraordinary Grief and Sorrow, *Job* ii. 13.

Q. *But as there were ſuch a Number of Perſons to lament her Fall, were there not others who ſhould rejoice at it?*

A. *Rejoice over her, thou Heaven*, Ver. 20. that is, ye Angels in Heaven, or ye Saints of an heavenly Diſpoſition. *And ye holy Apoſtles and Prophets*; ye faithful Miniſters who ſucceed them, who are endued with the ſame Spirit, and teach the ſame pure and holy Doctrine with them.

The Cauſe of this Rejoicing is, *for God hath avenged them upon her.* The Church does not, the Saints of God dare not rejoice at *Babylon*'s Calamity as ſuch; but as an Act of divine Vengeance. God will be avenged on *Babylon*, for the Doctrine of the Goſpel corrupted by her, for the Rules of his Worſhip which ſhe has violated, and for all the Barbarities and Indignities which his Church and People have ſuffer'd from her. God will revenge the Wrongs of his People, when through Want of Ability they cannot, and through his Prohibition they may not avenge themſelves.

Q. *What is farther ſaid concerning the Ruin of* Babylon?

A. Verſe 21. we have *Babylon*'s utter Deſolation repreſented by the Type and Sign of a Milſtone caſt into the Sea; like a Milſtone ſhe had ground and oppreſs'd the Church of God, and now, like a Milſtone thrown into the Sea, ſhe ſinks into utter Perdition. Almighty God, by this Sign or Symbol, ſignified to St. *John*, that *Babylon*'s Ruin ſhould be violent, irrecoverable, and irreparable; ſhe falls never to riſe more. The caſting a Stone into the Sea was antiently an Emblem of everlaſting Forgetfulneſs.

The Ruin of *Babylon* is amplified in ſeveral Inſtances. 1. That nothing ſhould evermore be found in her that belonged to Pleaſure or Delight; *no Voices of Harpers, Muſicians, or Trumpeters.* 2. Nothing which belonged to Profit or Trading; no Artificers or Craftsman. 3. Nothing belonging to Food; no Noiſe of a Milſtone for grinding Corn, and making Proviſions for Bread. 4. Nothing to relieve againſt the Darkneſs and Terror of Night; *as the Light of the Candle.* 5. No Means for the Propagation of Mankind by Marriage; *the Voice of the Bride and Bridegroom ſhall be heard no more*; all which Expreſſions imply extreme Deſtruction, and utter Deſolation; intimating that *Babylon* ſhall be a Place utterly abandon'd and forſaken.

Q. *But to what Cauſes might be imputed this utter Deſtruction of* Babylon?

A. The Cauſes aſſigned for this, 1. Abominable Covetouſneſs; *Her Merchants were the great ones of the Earth.* Her ſinful way of Merchandizing, by dealing in ſpiritual Commodities, peculiar to *Rome*, ſeems to be here pointed at, her making Merchandize of the Souls of Men.

2. Her bewitching Idolatry, called here Sorceries, whereby ſhe enticed People to join with her ſuperſtitious Worſhip.

3. Her Cruelty and Bloodſhed; *In her was found the Blood of the Prophets, and of Saints, and of all that were ſlain upon the Earth.*

Q. *But, how can the Blood ſhed by others, be lain to her Charge?*

A. 1. Becauſe ſhe profeſs'd the ſame Doctrine which cauſed their Blood to be ſhed. 2. Becauſe her Juriſdiction gave Commiſſion to ſlay the Saints who were ſlain in other Kingdoms. 3. By the Influence of her Example at Home much Blood had been ſhed Abroad. God will charge upon others, as he did upon *Babylon*, not only the Sins which they have acted; but all the Sins they have been acceſſary unto.

CHAP. XIX.

God is praiſed for judging the great Whore. The Marriage of the Lamb. John, *offering to worſhip the Angel, is forbidden. He ſees one ſitting on a white Horſe, whoſe Juſtice and Truth, Eyes, Garments, hidden Name, Sword, and iron Rod, are deſcribed. The Fowls called to the great Slaughter.*

Q. PRAY *explain the Particulars of the Song in the Beginning of this Chapter?*

A. This Song is ſung by the glorified Saints in Heaven, for the Deſtruction of *Babylon*. They are ſaid to ſing with *a great Voice*, expreſſing their united Zeal and fervent Affection in the Duty of Thankſgiving; and they begin their Song with an *Hebrew* Word, *Allelujah*, which ſignifies, *Laud ye the Lord.*

Some think that hereby the *Chriſtian* Churches invite the *Jews* or *Hebrews* to join with them in praiſing God, and that after *Babylon*'s Overthrow *Chriſt* ſhall be ſolemnly praiſed, as by the *Gentile*, ſo by the *Jewiſh* Church; the Tenor of their Song is much the ſame with that which we had before, Chap. x. namely, *Salvation* (or Deliverance from all Evils, ſpiritual and temporal, particularly, from thoſe which the Church ſuffered under *Babylon*'s Tyranny) *and Glory and Honour, aud Power be aſcribed unto the Lord our God*; and to him alone, who is the Author of all Good, and hath manifeſted his great Power in deſtroying our Enemies.

The Cauſe aſſigned for theſe ſolemn Thankſgivings, is, the Truth and Faithfulneſs and the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of God, in the Execution of his Judgments upon *Babylon*; his Truth appeared in performing the Threatnings which *Babylon* deſpiſed, and his Righteouſneſs in ſuiting his Judgments to her Sins of Idolatry and Bloodſhed.

Babylon is here called *the Whore*, becauſe of her Idolatry, which in Scripture is often ſtiled ſpiritual Whoredom; and *the great Whore*, becauſe of her univerſal corrupting the whole Earth; ſhe made others to ſin, and cruelly murdered thoſe who would not ſin. Idolatry and Perſecution conſtantly go together, *Babylon*'s idolatrous Practices were accompanied with bloody Cruelties.

Her Smoke roſe up for ever and ever; that is, God followed her with a Succeſſion of Plagues and Judgments, until ſhe was irrecoverably ruin'd.

As the Word *Allelujah* begins, ſo it ends the Song; to ſhew thereby the Intenſeneſs of the Church's Affections, and their unwearied Praiſes to God for their Deliverance by *Babylon*'s Deſtruction.

Q. *On the Concluſion of the Song the heavenly Hoſt fall down and worſhip: What do you obſerve hereupon?*

A. Here is an Invitation to all the Saints on Earth, ſmall and great, to fear and praiſe him. Whence note how the Church triumphant and militant, the Saints in Heaven, and *Chriſtians* on Earth, jointly give Praiſe to God, and glorify him for his great Work, adoring him for his divine Juſtice in deſtroying *Babylon*, the Mother of Idolatry, the Neſt of Luxury, and the Seat of Oppreſſion and Cruelty; it is a Duty well becoming all Saints, to celebrate the Praiſes of God for the Equity of his Judgments, upon his Church's incorrigible and implacable Enemies; and here God himſelf and his Miniſters, call upon the whole Church to join in this ſolemn Work of Praiſe and Thankſgiving; *a Voice came out of the Throne, ſaying, Praiſe our God,* &c.

Q. *In the 7th Verſe is declared the Marriage of the Lamb: Pray explain the ſeveral Circumſtances attending it?*

A. *And I heard, as it were, the Voice of a great Multitude*; here we find them unanimouſly addreſſing themſelves to the Practice of the Duty juſt before enjoined.

For the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and the Wife hath made herſelf ready. By the Marriage of the Lamb, Mr. *Mead* and Dr. *More* underſtand the Converſion of the *Jews*; by the Lamb's Wife, the Nation of the *Jews*, ſo called, in regard of that Relation which they ſtand in to God, by Virtue of the Covenant; and ſhe is ſaid to have *made herſelf ready*; namely, by the Wedding-Garment of Faith, to accept of her formerly deſpiſed Bridegroom.

It is probably conjectured by ſome, that the Converſion of the *Jews* ſhall ſoon follow the Deſtruction of Antichriſt; for his Idolatry and Perſecution are great Scandals to the *Jews*, and mighty Stumbling-blocks in the way of their Converſion.

Q. *What do you note concerning the Bride's Dreſs, Ver. 8?*

A. *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine Linnen*, which ſeems to import, that the *Jews* ſhall in due Time be brought to *Chriſt*, to ſubmit to his Righteouſneſs, and be cloathed with it; and that an holy Emulation ſhould be found between the *Gentiles* and them which ſhould moſt and beſt adorn the Profeſſion of the Goſpel.

Note, how the Church here is called *Chriſt's* Wife; *Chriſt* and ſhe are here betrothed to each other, and at the great Day the Marrige will be conſummated.

Note farther, the Church's ſpiritual Nakedneſs, in herſelf conſider'd; *it was granted to be array'd in fine Linnen*; ſhe had it not of herſelf, but it was put on her by *Chriſt*; he decks and dreſſes his own Bride with the Ornaments of Grace here, and Glory hereafter; that he may *preſent it to himſelf a glorious Church without Spot or Wrinkle, holy, and without Blemiſh.*

Bleſſed are they which are called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb; that is, (ſay they, who underſtand by the Marriage of the Lamb, the Converſion of the *Jews*) who ſhall live in that happy Time, when the *Jews* being converted, ſhall, with the *Gentiles*, make up one glorious Goſpel-Church.

But the Marriage is one Thing, and the Marriage-Supper is another; the Supper follows the Marriage; ſo that the Kingdom of Glory ſeems here rather intended. Bleſſed are they that are called to it, being made meet, and prepared by Grace here, for Glory hereafter; we muſt be made meet for Heaven before we can be admitted into it.

Q. *St.* John *being overjoy'd at the good News of the Converſion of his Countrymen the* Jews, *fell at the Angel's Feet to worſhip him: But was he not herein culpable?*

A. The holieſt and beſt of Saints are not wholly free from the Infirmities of Paſſion; he would have worſhipped this Angel; yet we read not of his attempting to worſhip any of the Angels who converſed with him. This makes it probable, that he apprehended it to be an uncreated Angel, even the Son of God, who now talked with him.

But obſerve, with what Indignation this holy Angel rejected the Offer of religious Adoration, and how peremptorily he forbids it; *See thou do it not*, by no Means, upon no Terms, do it.

The Church of *Rome* asks us, why we reprove them for worſhipping the Angels, when St. *John* himſelf did it? 'Tis anſwer'd, St. *John* himſelf was reproved for it; the Angel rejected it as none of his due. How then dare Men do that which an Angel expreſly forbids to be done! Yet *Bellarmine* ſays, St. *John* did well to worſhip the Angel; then ſay we, the Angel did ill to reprove St. *John*: But whether we ſhall believe a Cardinal of *Rome*, or an Angel of God, judge ye.

Q. *But for what Reaſon did the Angel forbid it?*

A. 1. Becauſe God, and God alone, is the ſole and proper Object of religious Worſhip; *Worſhip thou God.* 2. Becauſe the Angel was St. *John*'s Equal in Office, though not in Nature, *I am thy Fellow-ſervant.* As if he had ſaid, Thoſe who ſerve and worſhip God together with you, muſt not be worſhipped by you: Thoſe who are Fellow-ſervants to one Maſter, ſhould not give to one another that Worſhip which is only due to their Lord and Maſter.

We are thy Fellow-ſervants; how? Thus; you have the *Teſtimony of Jeſus*, and I have *the Spirit of Prophecy.* Now the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Work of the Miniſtry, in teſtifying of *Jeſus*, being of the ſame Nature, and kind of Service; therefore, from thoſe that are employ'd in one of them, religious Worſhip is not due to the other. 'Tis *Chriſt* that employs us both, and therefore he alone is to be worſhipped, and neither I, nor thou; *Worſhip God*, to whom religious Worſhip is juſtly and peculiarly due.

Q. *In the* 11*th, and five following Verſes, we have a new and freſh Viſion; in which St.* John *ſaw Heaven opened, and* Chriſt *repreſented as a great and victorious General, marching forth with a glorious Army for the full and final Deſtruction of his Church's Enemies: Pray what was repreſented hereby?*

A. This great General is deſcribed firſt by the Place from whence he comes, namely, from Heaven; he is no earthly Prince or Potentate, but an heavenly Monarch. Next he is ſaid to ſit on a white Horſe, denoting Victory, Proſperity, and Succeſs. He is called *faithful, and true, and righteous*, becauſe faithful in his Promiſes, true in his Threatnings, and righteous in all his Dealings with his Enemies; he will do no Wrong. *His Eyes were as a flame of Fire*, denoting his clear and piercing Knowledge, and alſo his terror as a Judge, his Eyes being in wrath as a Flame of Fire, ready to conſume his Enemies.

Q. *What was* the Name written which no Man knew but he himſelf?

A. Underſtand his Judgments and Ways, by which he is known, as a Man is known by his Name. Others by it uuderſtand his Nature and Eſſence, which is ſo incomprehenſible and unſearchable, as that none but he who is true God, is able fully to comprehend it, nor perfectly reveal it.

This great and mighty General is likewiſe deſcribed from his *Veſture dipped in Blood*, which denotes the mighty Overthrow of his Enemies. The moſt proud and cruel of them, can expect nothing from him in the End, but eternal Wrath and inevitable Deſtruction, for they muſt all become his Footſtool.

And his Name being called, *the Word of God*, ſpeaks Dread and Terror to Antichriſt, who ſlanders, oppoſes, corrupts, and ſuppreſſes, offering all manner of Indignities to the Word of God; and exerciſing the utmoſt Cruelties on the faithful Profeſſors of it.

Q. *What follows after the Deſcription of this great and mighty General?*

A. That of his Armies, his Attendants and Followers; namely, the holy Angels, and glorified Saints; theſe alſo ride upon white Horſes, as their General did before them, and are cloathed in *fine Linnen, white and clean.* Behold the comely Conformity in Purity and Holineſs, between the General and his Soldiers, between *Chriſt* and his Followers, they both appear on white Horſes, ſuitable to one another; *Chriſt* will admit none to be his Followers, that are not like him.

Next, we have the Weapon deſcribed, which *Chriſt* makes uſe of for the Deſtruction of Antichriſt, and all his Church's Enemies; and that is *a ſharp Sword*, the Holy Scriptures, particularly, the Threatnings of the Word, with which he will ſmite all the Nations that ſide with Antichriſt againſt him and his Kingdom; dealing with his Enemies as Men do with Grapes gathered into a Wine-preſs, which they can eaſily cruſh.

Laſtly, He is deſcribed by a new Name of Royal Dignity, and ſupreme Power; being called *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords.* And his Name is ſaid to be written on his Veſture, and on his Thigh; partly, for Perſpicuity, that all might take Notice of it; and partly, for Permanency, to ſhew, that as long as himſelf laſts, which is for ever, ſo long ſhall his Kingdom and Dominion over all endure.

Q. *What was the Event and Succeſs of the Battle fought by this General?*

A. A prodigious Slaughter of the Church's Enemies. And as Eagles and Vultures, and all other Birds of Prey, attend an Army, and flock where the Slain lie; in like manner, God here invites the Fowls of the Air to ſup upon the Carcaſſes of his ſlain Enemies. Antichriſt would not ſuffer the dead Bodies of the Witneſſes to be buried, but to be caſt out, and expoſed in the Streets; and here God metes to him the ſame Meaſure; their Carcaſſes alſo ſhall be a Supper to the Fowls of the Air. *Come to the Supper of the great God,* to the Slaughter of Antichriſt and his Adherents.

Q. *What does St.* John *mean by calling this a* Supper, *Ver.* 8?

A. Probably two Things. 1. The Facility and Eaſineſs of the Victory; that *Chriſt*'s and his Church's Enemies will not put him hard to it to overcome them; as we proverbially ſay, they will be but a Supper to him, or a Breakfaſt for him. 2. The Word Supper ſeems to import, that it ſhall be the laſt Effort, the laſt great Oppoſition, that Antichriſt, and the Church's Enemies ſhall ever make againſt *Chriſt* to the end of the World, as the Supper is the laſt Meal of the Day.

Q. *What was the final Iſſue of this great Battle?*

A. The Total Ruin of all the Enemies of the Church; the Beaſt and falſe Prophet were taken, and *caſt alive into a Lake of Fire burning with Brimſtone.* Behold the Puniſhment of Idolatry and Idolaters; the falſe Prophet had cheated credulous Princes and People with his pretended Miracles into Idolatry; he had caſt others into a Bed of Fornication, and God caſts him into a Bed of Flames.

It is added concerning the Remnant, that they were ſlain *with the Sword of his Mouth*; that is, by *Chriſt*'s judicial Sentence they were righteouſly adjudged to be ſlain, and when they were ſo, *all the Fowls were filled with the Fleſh.*

Where note, that theſe Perſons were not excuſed, becauſe they followed their Leaders, and did as they bid them; for, notwithſtanding that, *Chriſt* commands that they alſo ſhould be ſlain. How vain then will the Plea of many Sinners be at the laſt Day; we followed our Guides, and did as we ſaw others do before us! But God has given us a Rule to walk by, the infallible and inflexible Rule of his Word; and neither the Example of the moſt, nor of the beſt, muſt influence us to act contrary thereunto; for if we do as the moſt do, we muſt be contented to go where the moſt go, even, *unto the Lake of Fire burning with Brimſtone.*

CHAP. XX.

The Angel comes from Heaven, and binds the Devil for a thouſand Years; then to be looſed for a little Seaſon. They that were beheaded for the Witneſs of Jeſus, *and worſhipped not the Beaſt, lived and reigned with* Chriſt *a thouſand Years. Others abide in Death. They who have Part in the Reſurrection are bleſſed. Satan let looſe again; ſeduces the Nations, and ſtirs up* Magog *to the War. Fire from Heaven devours them. The Devil caſt into the Lake of Fire. The Throne erected; the Dead ariſe; and whoſoever was not found in the Book of Life, thrown into the Lake.*

Q. *PRAY inſtruct me to underſtand the Viſion with which this Chapter opens, of an* Angel deſcending from Heaven, and binding Satan for a thouſand Years?

A. Here note, the Perſon binding, the Angel of the Covenant, *Chriſt Jeſus*; (for he only has the Keys of the bottomleſs Pit, of Hell and Death, *Rev.* i. 18.) this Angel is here come down from Heaven, and with a great Chain in his Hand, denoting his Omnipotent Power and Sovereignty over Satan, and his Ability to reſtrain him.

The Perſon bound, is Satan. *Chriſt*'s Power is ſet forth in as many Terms as the Devil has Titles; he is ſaid to lay hold on him, to bind him, to caſt him into the bottomleſs Pit, to ſhut him in, or ſeal him up for a thouſand Years: The Names or Titles of Satan are, the Dragon, the old Serpent, the Devil, and Satan; this grand Enemy of Mankind *Chriſt* will render uncapable of doing ſuch Miſchief to the World as he had done before.

By *Chriſt*'s binding Satan, ſome underſtand his deſtroying the Power of the Devil in the heathen World; his caſting down thoſe ſtrong Holds of Satan; namely; Ignorance, Superſtition, Idolatry, and lying Oracles, by the Light and Power of the Goſpel, preach'd among the *Gentiles*; his curbing of Satan, that he ſhould no more cozen the World with heatheniſh Deluſions as he had done.

Others underſtand this binding of Satan to be after the Deſtruction of Antichriſt; when the *Jews* ſhall be converted, and there ſhall follow a quiet and peaceable State of the Church for a long Time, ſaid here to be a thouſand Years; during which Time Satan ſhall be bound, and there ſhall be no Moleſtation from him.

Chriſt has a great Chain in his Hand to bind Satan; intimating, that how mighty and malicious ſoever Satan is, *Chriſt* has him as a Dog in a Chain. But obſerve, how *Chriſt*'s Power meets with, and Maſter's Satan's Power; the Devil carries Power in his Name, he is called a Dragon in his Nature; as being an Angel, in his Numbers, which are numberleſs; but *Chriſt* overpowers him, ſo that he cannot do his own Will without him; he bounds him in the Execution of his Malice, though his Malice be boundleſs. Satan is bound in a double Chain, in a Chain of Juſtice, and in a Chain of Providence; he cannot move a Foot, either to tempt or trouble us, without a Permiſſion from *Chriſt*.

Q. *What is the Senſe of the 4th Verſe?*

A. In this Verſe is conceived to be ſet forth the glorious and happy Condition of the Church of *Chriſt* here on Earth, during the Time of Satan's Reſtraint; and the Term of a thouſand Years ſhews, that it will be the longeſt happy Condition that ever the Church militant enjoy'd; for Purity of Ordinances; for Increaſe of Light and Knowledge; for the Power of Godlineſs; for the Abundance of Profeſſors; for the more open and publick Profeſſion of *Chriſtianity*; for outward Freedom and Peace; and all this for a long Continuance of Time; which happy State and Condition is here ſet forth by Thrones, ſhewing the Dignity and Dominion of Saints over their Enemies.

Q. *How do you explain that Clauſe of the ſame Verſe,* And I ſaw the Souls of them that were beheaded for the Witneſs of *Jeſus*?

A. That is, ſay ſome, he ſaw in the Succeſſion of the ſame Faith, thoſe pious *Chriſtians* who ſhould at that Time live, and in their Principles and Practices ſhould be like the holy Martyrs; theſe ſhall then enjoy a more quiet, happy, and comfortable State, during this Time, than the Servants of God enjoyed at any Time before.

Yet this glorious Condition of the Church is not abſolute, but comparative only, both in reſpect of the Purity and of Peace; for while the Church is on this Side Heaven, there will be both Corruptions and Temptations with Croſſes. Hypocrites will be; and Offences will come, though there will be a greater Freedom from all theſe than uſual; yet taking up the Croſs, and being conformed to *Chriſt* in his Sufferings, will be Duties belonging to Saints whilſt the World endures.

But obſerve, that there is no Ground from hence to expect *Chriſt*'s perſonal Reign upon Earth, or his corporal Preſence with his Church here; for it is not ſaid, that he reigned with them, but that they reigned with him; denoting, that this Kingdom is Spiritual, conſiſting in Purity and Peace, in Righteouſneſs, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

As to a perſonal Reign then of *Chriſt*, with his People here on Earth, it ſeems not probable; becauſe the Scripture is ſilent about it, and joins *Chriſt*'s perſonal Coming, and the Day of Judgment together; beſides, were *Chriſt* perſonally upon Earth, how ſhould we enjoy him, or converſe with him? 'Tis impoſſible we ſhould enjoy a glorified *Chriſt* 'till we get to Heaven.

Again; What will become of the Saints during theſe Thouſand Years of *Chriſt*'s ſuppoſed Preſence with them? Either they will live all that Thouſand Years (which is not rational to ſuppoſe) or they will die in that Time; if they die, and go to Heaven, they will go from *Chriſt*, and not to him, and muſt be abſent from him, inſtead of being for ever with him; and doubtleſs Heaven will be a melancholy Place, if *Chriſt* be out of it.

The Sum then is this, that the Saints living and reigning with *Chriſt*, holds forth the glorious and flouriſhing Condition of the Church Triumphant. The Expreſſion of ſitting upon Thrones, ſpeaks an honourable Condition that the Church will be in, after the Downfal of *Antichriſt*; and the Term of a Thouſand Years, ſhews it will be the longeſt happy Condition, that ever the Church enjoyed.

Q. *I ſhould be glad to know the true Senſe of the fifth Verſe*, But the reſt of the Dead lived not again, until the Thouſand Years were finiſhed. This is the firſt Reſurrection?

A. By theſe Words, *the reſt of the Dead*, we may underſtand, the ſubdued Enemies of the Church in their Succeſſors; who are ſaid to be dead Politically, in reſpect of their outward Condition, which will then be very low; *they lived not again* a political Life; that is, they did not regain or recover that Power to perſecute the Church, which once they had, but were then diveſted of in a great Meaſure; namely, till the thouſand Years are expired; then they ſhall have Liberty again to vent their Enmity againſt the Church, joining with *Gog* and *Magog*, as their Predeceſſors, the Worſhippers of the Beaſt, did combine together before them.

This is the firſt Reſurrection; that is, the Living again of the Saints, in that glorious Manner before deſcribed, in holy Societies, with greater Degrees of Purity and Peace.

Hence learn, that the Reformation of the Church, after the Ruin of its *Pagan* and *Papal* Enemies, is a ſplendid and glorious Reſurrection to her; and accordingly, ſuch as are Sharers in this political Reſurrection are pronounced bleſſed; *Bleſſed and Holy is he, that hath Part in the firſt Reſurrection*; that is, Bleſſed are they who ſhall have their Lot to live in this happy Time, when the Means of Holineſs will more abound, and the Meaſures of Holineſs be more extenſive and univerſal.

Q. *Pray interpret thoſe Words in the 6th Verſe*, On ſuch the ſecond Death hath no Power, *&c*?

A. That is, they ſhall eſcape everlaſting Miſery; *and they ſhall be Prieſts unto God*, to offer up, not expiatory, but gratulatory, Sacrifices of Prayer and Praiſe unto him; and as the Prieſthood is Spiritual, ſo is the Kingdom alſo. *They ſhall reign* ſpiritually, over their Luſts and Corruptions, and have greater Power to overcome Temptations, and this for a Thouſand Years; that is, during the Time of their living here, in that Part of the happy Millennium in which they ſhall live, they ſhall, in that Time, enjoy a more holy, happy, peaceful, and flouriſhing Condition, than the Church of God ever did ſo long enjoy in former Times.

Some will have all this to be underſtood of a ſpiritual Reſurrection, from the Grave of Sin, to a Life of Holineſs and Grace; over ſuch indeed the ſecond Death, or everlaſting Miſery ſhall have no Power; but, though this may be alluded to, a political, not a ſpiritual Reſurrection ſeems, here, principally intended.

Q. *In the 7th, and three following Verſes, is a prophetical Prediction; How is it to be underſtood?*

A. That when the long Time of the Church's Liberty and Peace ſhall be expired (which is here expreſſed and ſet forth under the Notion of a Thouſand Years) God will then take off his Reſtraint from the Devil, and he ſhall influence the wicked World once more, to make Oppoſition againſt his Church; *When the Thouſand Years are expired*, Satan *ſhall be looſed out of his Priſon.*

Behold here *Satan*'s reſtleſs Malice to all Mankind, and particularly againſt the true Church of *Chriſt*.

Obſerve, *Satan* is ſaid firſt to deceive the Nations, and then to gather them to Battle againſt the Saints; the ſame Saints, either in their Perſon, or their Succeſſors, who did formerly reign, will then ſuffer; but by whom? By *Gog* and *Magog*; which is probably an Alluſion to thoſe two Names mentioned in the *Old Teſtament*, who were the laſt Enemies of the *Jewiſh* Church, before *Chriſt*'s firſt Coming. In like Manner, the laſt Enemies of the *Chriſtian* Church are here ſet forth by that Name; who ſhall be deſtroy'd a little before *Chriſt*'s ſecond Coming to Judgment. *Satan*, with all his united Power, and combined Force, will attempt the whole Body of the *Chriſtian* Church, before his laſt and fatal Overthrow.

Q. *After the Deſtruction of theſe Agents and Inſtruments of* Satan's *Fury, his own full and final Deſtruction is declared; which may be called his ſecond Impriſonment in that Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, which is both Eaſeleſs and Endleſs, there to keep Company with the Beaſt, and falſe Prophet, to all Eternity: What do your obſerve upon this?*

A. Here behold the Deceiver and the Deceived plagued together; the Devil that deceived, and the Beaſt and falſe Prophet that were deceived by him, and were his Inſtruments to deceive others, are caſt together into the Lake of Fire, to be tormented for ever. *Satan*, indeed, was condemned to this before, and reſerved thereunto; but the actual and final Execution thereof is ſuſpended till the End come.

Q. *From the 17th Verſe to the End, St.* John *relates another Viſion: What is the Intent and Meaning of it?*

A. It diſplays a lively Repreſentation of the Day of Judgment; when all, both good and bad, that ever lived, ſhall be raiſed, and ſentenced according to their Works; the State of the Wicked is ſet forth, in this Chapter, and the happy Condition of the Righteous in Heaven, glorioully deſcribed in the two next.

The Judge is here firſt deſcribed, as ſitting upon his Throne, the Seat of Judgment; a Throne, to denote that this Judge is a King; and a white Throne, becauſe erected for an upright Ju and for a great Service; namely, the judging of the whole World.

The dreadful Majeſty, and glorious Power of this Judge is ſuch, that neither Heaven nor Earth are able to abide his Preſence; but are ſaid *to flee away, and that there was no Place found for them.*

The Perſons judged are here deſcribed, 1. By their Condition; all the Dead, both ſmall and great; all that ever lived, and all that ſhall be then found alive.

2. By their Poſture; they ſtand before the Judge, while he ſits, to ſhew his Authority.

3. By the Manner of Proceeding, which is repreſented as being after the Form of well ordered Judicatories here on Earth; wherein the Books are produced; namely, the Book of God's Omniſcience, and the Book of Conſcience, the Book of the Law, and the Book of the Goſpel. They who had not the written Law, ſhall be judged by the Law of Nature; they who had the written Law, are to be judged by that; and they who had the Goſpel, by that; and every one according to his Works.

The Sentence which the great Judge executes upon the wicked and impenitent World, is, *they are caſt into the Lake of Fire, which is the ſecond Death.*

From the whole learn; that it is certain there ſhall, and neceſſary that there ſhould, be a Day of Judgment; that in that Day there will be no Exemption of any Perſons from the Examination of the Judge. *I ſaw all the Dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God*; that *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is here called God (which clearly proves his Deity) ſhall come in the Clouds, to judge the World; that as the ſame Perſons ſhall be judged, who formerly lived, ſo ſhall the ſame Bodies that died, and were either buried in the Earth, or conſumed in the Sea.

The Sea gave up her Dead; by which underſtand all Places, though attended with never ſo many improbable Circumſtances of a Reſurrection, ſhall give up their Dead.

Death and Hell; that is, Death and the Grave, *gave up the Dead which were in them*; that is, by the Power of God, were made to reſtore them.

The Sentence denounced will be according to the Nature and Quality of the wicked Man's Works, ſhall his Judgment and Puniſhment be; according to the Sincerity, not according to the Imperfection of the righteous Man's Works, ſhall his Reward be. God grant that the Conſideration of this may ſo far influence us, that no Profit may tempt us, no Power embolden us, no Privacy encourage us, to do that Thing, of which we cannot give a good Account in the Day of Judgment!

CHAP. XXI.

A new Heaven and a new Earth. New Jeruſalem *deſcends from Heaven as a Bride. The Tabernacle of God is with Men. All Tears wiped away. He that overcomes ſhall inherit all Things. The Deſtruction of the Fearful and Unbelieving. A Deſcription of the heavenly* Jeruſalem.

Q. *WHAT is meant by* the New Heaven, and the New Earth, *Verſe* 1?

A. Underſtand a new State and Face of the Church; but ſome apply it to the State of the Church militant here on Earth, and others to the State of the Church triumphant in Heaven. Accordingly, they take the New Heavens and the New Earth to be the Effect of that great Change which ſhall be made by Fire at the univerſal Conflagration; and they are called New, not ſo much in regard of Subſtance, as in reſpect of Qualities, being then for Nature more ſtable, and for Beauty more glorious.

Q. *But what Uſe ſhall there be of this New Heaven and New Earth? And who ſhall dwell therein?*

A. This we know not; and muſt reſt ſatisfied with what God hath told us, that therein *ſhall dwell Righteouſneſs*; and they will be a ſtanding Monument of God's Power and Greatneſs.

Q. *But in what Manner was* the firſt Heaven, and the firſt Earth paſt away?

A. Not by an Anihilation, but by a qualitative Mutation. *And no more Sea*; that is, ſay ſome, as it was before, turbulent, changeable, ſubject to Corruption and Vanity; ſay others, no more troubleſome State of Things, which is often ſignified by the Sea. A new and glorious State of Things was undoubtedly here deſigned, relating to the Church.

Q. *St.* John *ſets off the glorious State of the Church by ſeveral Compariſons; which pray illuſtrate and explain?*

A. He compares this glorious State of the Church Triumphant, to a beautiful City, for Amplitude and Largeneſs, a compact Structure, and commodious; ſhe is called Holy, becauſe no unclean Thing can enter into her; and that Holineſs which is here begun, ſhall be there perfected.

He compares this glorious State of the Church likewiſe to an adorned Bride; no Spouſe, on her Wedding-Day, ſo adorned as ſhe was. The Church in Heaven is ſo called, to denote her Dignity, and the Love which *Chriſt* bears to her, and the Delight that he takes in her, which is ſo continual, as if it was always a Wedding-Day; and ſhe is adorned by him, and for him, with ſpiritual Beauty, Glory, and Perfection of Grace.

Great is the Variety of Expreſſions, which the Holy Ghoſt makes uſe of to illuſtrate the Excellency of the Church Triumphant. She is bleſt with God's immediate Preſence and Abode, of which the Tabernacle was a Sign; the Lord manifeſting himſelf in Heaven unto his Saints in a more immediate Way than ever he did unto them here on Earth.

Q. *In the 3d Verſe are ſeveral Privileges and Benefits of the Church declared: What are they, and how applied?*

A. *The Tabernacle of God is with Man*; and to ſhew the Permanency of this Privilege, it is added, *he ſhall dwell with them*; after an Inhabitation here by Grace, ſhall follow a Cohabitation hereafter in Glory.

Next, it is ſaid, *They ſhall be his People, and he will be their God*; which muſt not be ſo underſtood, as if that Relation did now begin between them; but the Comfort of that Relation is now perfectly underſtood, and they reap the compleat Advantage of that Covenant-Promiſe, whoſe Sweetneſs they only taſted before.

Having deſcribed the poſitive Good which the Triumphant Church ſhall eternally reſt in, St. *John* next ſets forth the private Evils which they ſhall everlaſtingly be freed from. All Sorrow, and all the Cauſes of it, ſhall be removed; they ſhall have no outward Occaſion, nor inward Diſpoſition to Weep; there ſhall be no more Death, but Immortality and eternal Life; nor any more Pain nor Sickneſs, but Pleaſure for evermore. What a Sovereign Cordial is this againſt all our preſent Sorrows and Sufferings! To conſider the Time is at Hand, when all Tears ſhall be wiped from our Eyes, all Sorrow baniſhed from our Hearts and everlaſting Joys ſhall poſſeſs our Souls, and we ſhall be with our Lord for ever; to obey him with Vigour, to praiſe him with Chearfulneſs, to love him above Meaſure, to fear him without Torment, to ſerve him without Interruption or Diſtraction, and be perfectly like unto him as well in Holineſs as in Happineſs, as well in Purity as in Immortality.

Theſe new Heavens and a new Earth are effected by the Omnipotent Power of *Chriſt*, *Behold I make all Things new*; a good Argument to encourage us to go unto *Chriſt* by Prayer for renewing Grace. Surely, he that makes new Heavens can make new Hearts; he that renews the old World, can renew us in the Spirit of our Minds, and make old Things paſs away, and cauſe all Things to become new.

Q. *What Obſervations do you make on the 6th Verſe?*

A. *And he ſaid unto me, it is done*, ſignifying thereby, that it is as certain as if it were already done; namely, whatever he had promiſed relating to his Church's Happineſs, and all that he had threatned relating to her Enemies Deſtruction; let not the Church then ever ſtagger in her Faith.

I am Alpha *and* Omega, *the Beginning and the End*; to ſhew, that as he firſt made the World, ſo he was now about to put a Period to it; and would give to every thirſty and believing Soul, an everlaſting Life in the New *Jeruſalem*, which ſhall no more decay, than the Water of a Fountain for ever ſpringing can be dried up.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of the 7th Verſe*, He that overcometh, ſhall inherit all Things, and I will be his God, and he ſhall be my Son?

A. *He that overcometh*; that is, he that is overcoming; he that daily maintains the Combat, though he has not yet obtained a perfect Conqueſt over his ſpiritual Enemies, yet he keeps the Field Sword in Hand, reſolving never to throw down his Weapon, but to die as a Conqueror, rather than be taken Priſoner.

He ſhall inherit all Things; that is, all Bleſſings and Benefits; all Joys and Comforts that are requiſite to make him perfectly, compleatly, and perpetually happy.

Note alſo, God's Way and Manner of diſpenſing the Mercy promiſed, and that is by free Gift; *he ſhall inherit all Things*, not merit any Thing; an Inheritance is an Eſtate freely given by the Father to the Children.

I will be his God, and he ſhall be my Son; that is, I will give him the Manifeſtation of his Adoption before Angels and Men; I am now his God, and he is now my Son, but the World knoweth it not; They brand my People for a Generation of Hypocrites; and ſometimes they call in queſtion their Sincerity, and their Title to the Privilege of Adoption; but at the great Day, I will publiſh them before Angels and Men; and make it appear that I love them as a Father, and they ſhall live with me as Sons for ever and ever.

Q. *In the 8th Verſe ſeveral Sorts of Sinners are reckoned up, who ſhall be excluded from Heaven: Who are they and what are their Sins?*

A. The Fearful, ſuch as dare not own *Chriſt*; or, for fear of ſuffering, have diſowned him, or apoſtatized and revolted from him: Unbelievers, ſuch eſpecially as have ſat under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, but have rejected our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and refuſed to come unto him that they might have Life; the Abominable, ſuch as live in the Practice of Sins againſt Nature, Sodomy, and Uncleanneſs, as render them Abominable in the Sight of God and Man, *Rom.* i. 26. Murderers, ſuch as deſtroy the Body, Soul, or good Name of their Neighbours, eſpecially Perſecutors; Whoremongers of all ſorts, both ſpiritual and corporal; particularly, ſuch as are guilty of Uncleanneſs in the conjugal State; Sorcerers, ſuch as exerciſe Witchcraft, conſult Devils, and trade with familiar Spirits; Idolaters of all Sorts and Kinds, ſuch as worſhip falſe Gods, or the true God after a falſe Manner; covetous Perſons, who make the World their God, and ſenſual Perſons, who make their Belly their God. Laſtly, all Liars, thoſe who lie with the Lip, and talk falſely; thoſe who lie in their Lives, as all Hypocrites do, whoſe Practice gives their Profeſſion the Lie; thoſe who are the Inventors of the Doctrine of Lies, which is no better than the Doctrine of Devils; all theſe ſhall have their Portion in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimſtone, that is, in exquiſite, everlaſting Torments.

From the whole note, how the Timorous and Fearful ſtand in the Front of all thoſe vile Sinners, whoſe Ways lead down to the Chambers of Death and Hell. Behold here God's martial Law executed upon Cowards and Renegadoes, whoſe Fear makes them revolt from *Chriſt* in Time of Danger. Think of this, all you timorous and faint-hearted Profeſſors, who cannot bear the Thought of lying in a naſty Dungeon for owning *Chriſt*; how will you endure to lye in a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone for diſowning of him? Is not the little Finger of an angry God heavier than the Loins of all the Tyrants and Perſecutors in the World?

Note farther, that although but eight Sorts of Sinners are here reckoned up, yet all others who live and die impenitently in any known Sin, without turning from it unto God, of what Kind ſoever, are certainly included, and their Damnation implied alſo, as well as theſe; for whoever lives in the habitual Practice of any known Sin, is, without Repentance, in a State of Damnation.

But we muſt not ſuppoſe that only ſuch as are guilty of all the fore-mentioned Sins, are the Perſons threatned with Hell-fire; but ſuch as allow themſelves in the Practice of any one of theſe, or in any one beſides theſe, and continue impenitently therein.

Q. *In the 9th and ſix following Verſes is a magnificent Deſcription of the* New Jeruſalem; *the Particulars of which pray explain?*

A. Heaven, called the *New Jeruſalem*, is repreſented by a great City, with magnificent Gates and Walls; and the Church, the collective Body of glorified Saints, is here called the Lamb's Wife, eſpouſed before the Marriage ſolemnized now.

Note, that as the earthly *Jeruſalem* was a Type of the Church militant, ſo the Church triumphant is called the *New Jeruſalem*, and a new City, for the multitude of its Members; and ſtiled holy, becauſe Sanctification is the ſpecial Qualification of thoſe who are the Inhabitants of it.

The Light which is found in this City, is not compared to the Light of the Sun, for that is attended with ſcorching Heat; nor to the Light of the Moon, which is variable and uncertain; but to the Light of precious Stones, which is clear and pure, and has nothing annoying in it.

The great Safety and Security of this City, and of the Inhabitants of it, is ſet forth by a Wall great and high. Walls are for Defence, and the higher the Wall, the ſtronger the Defence; God's Omnipotency is as a Wall, and will be an invincible Bulwark about his Saints in Heaven.

Here are twelve Gates of Entrance into this City on all Sides; and to give free and eaſy Acceſs from all Parts, Eaſt, Weſt, North and South, to ſignify, that the Church in Heaven will be made up from all Parts, as *Chriſt* foretold, *Matt.* viii. 11. *Luke* xiii. 29. The triumphant *Church* in Heaven is a collective Body of Believers of all Nations, Kindreds and People, Tongues and Languages.

As the Names of Workmen are ſometimes ſet upon Foundation-Stones, by which it may be known in After-ages who were the Builders; in like manner, it is here intimated, that as the antient *Jewiſh* Church was founded in twelve Patriarchs, ſo is the latter *Chriſtian* Church in and by twelve Apoſtles, *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf being the chief Corner-Stone, or the Foundation of both; teaching us, that our Faith muſt be built upon the Doctrine of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, and upon no other whatſoever.

Q. *In the 15th and ſucceeding Verſes, the Deſcription of the Church triumphant is continued; an Explanation of which is neceſſary?*

A. The Church triumphant is called a City, in Reſpect of its magnificent Building, comely Order, and invincible Strength, and its populous Inhabitants, being full of glorified Saints and Angels; and *Jeruſalem*, becauſe of that everlaſting Peace which is there enjoyed.

Farther; we have here an Account of the Meaſuring of this great City. We read of its Meaſuring before, Ch. 11. but different from its Meaſuring now; then it was meaſured by a Man, now by an Angel; then by an ordinary Reed, now by a Golden Reed; intimating the Tranſcendency of the State of the Church now, to what it was before, and repreſenting the Firmneſs, Perfection, and Greatneſs of the *New Jeruſalem*.

Obſervable is the Difference in the meaſuring of the Church militant, and of the Church triumphant; the Church militant, upon a juſt Meaſure, by the Reed of the World, is founded unequal in its Parts, ſome of which are purer and better than others; but in the *New Jeruſalem*, all Parts are equal in Perfection and Purity; the Length is as large as the Breadth, and the height equal together; the Church of *Chriſt* in Heaven ſhall be exceeding large and great, perfect and compleat; nothing ſhall be found irregular in it; all Things can there endure the meaſuring-Reed, and abide the exact Trial.

The Deſcription of the Walls and Gates of this City, by Pearls and precious Stones, Verſe 18, &c. ſome will have to ſignify and repreſent the pureſt State of the Church here upon Earth; but if there ſhall be any State on this Side Eternity anſwerable to this glorious Repreſentation, how much more will the perfect glorious Church in Heaven anſwer it? What was ſaid of *Jeruſalem* of old may be truly ſpoken of the *New Jeruſalem* above, *Pſal.* lxxxvii. 3. *Very excellent Things are ſpoken of thee, thou City of God*; her Pavement of Gold, her Gates of Pearl, and her Walls of precious Stones; denoting the Durableneſs, Permanency of the Saints Happineſs; the Delight and Satisfaction that accompany it, the reſplendent Glory of it; as Gold excels all Metals, and is not ſubject to Corruption, as precious Stones are full of Splendor and Glory, in like manner will the Manſions of Heaven be moſt glorious, the Converſation there pure and incorrupt, affording the Saints ſuch an intire ſatisfaction, as abſolutely exceeds all that the moſt rich and glorious Things of this World can afford for the Gratification of the outward Senſes.

The *New Jeruſalem*, St. *John* declares, ſhall not want either thoſe ſpiritual Supplies, or natural Advantages which the earthly *Jeruſalem* ſtood in need of; no need of any Temple there for external Worſhip and Ordinances, which it is our Duty to wait upon God in here; what need is there of an Houſe of Prayer for them, that have nothing to pray for? What need of Miniſters and Ordinances to teach them, whoſe Knowledge is perfected? What need of Sacraments, to remember *Chriſt* in and by, when they ſhall always ſee *Chriſt* Face to Face? What need of the natural Light of the Sun and Moon, where the Son of Righteouſneſs for ever ſhines, and where God is All in All? Happy they who enjoy him, for they enjoy all Good in him and by him, he being the Fountain of all Goodneſs!

The Citizens of this glorious City are declared to be, the Nations that are ſaved, all believing *Jews*, and converted *Gentiles*, called elſewhere *the general Aſſembly, and Church of tht Firſt-born*, which are a great Multitude; theſe ſhall be admitted into it, and partake of the Glory and Happineſs of it.

Kings do bring their Glory and Honour into it; that is not to be underſtood, as if there would be a Diſtinction in Heaven between Kings and Subjects; no, all the Saints there are Kings and Prieſts unto God; neither is it meant, that Kings ſhall carry their earthly Glory and Honour with them into Heaven; but that Kings, who ſhould be ſo happy as to come thither, ſhall ſee all their Honour and Glory ſwallowed up in the Glory and Happineſs of that Place and State; aud ſhall confeſs that all their Crowns were infinitely ſhort of the Crown of Glory, and that their Thrones were Dunghills compared with the Dignity of his Throne.

The Gates ſhall not be ſhut at all by Day, and there is no Night to ſhut them in; the Gates ſhall be open, to ſhew their peaceable State and ſecure Tranquillity, without Fear of any hoſtile Invaſion, or Entry of Enemies, either by Force or Fraud.

It is added, *there ſhall be no Night there*, either in a literal or metaphorical Senſe; no Darkneſs, no Interruption of Happineſs, nor Fear of Danger; nothing that can diſturb or diſquiet.

The Perſons who ſhall be everlaſtingly debarred the Enjoyment of all this Happineſs, are ſuch as have defiled themſelves with Luſt and Uncleanneſs, every Perſon that hath not, by Holineſs of Heart and Life, ſeparated himſelf from Sin and Wickedneſs, and dedicated himſelf to God and his Service; *nothing that defileth*; nothing that *worketh Abomination*; no open ſcandalous Sinner, or he that maketh a Lie, ſhall be admitted. To tell a Lie is bad, but to make a Lie is much worſe; this is the Devil's Sin in a ſpecial Manner; 'tis his by Temptation, by Approbation, by Practice; he is a Liar, and the Father of Lies and Liars; this deſerves the ſerious Conſideration of our cuſtomary Liars.

The Sum of all is this, that without Grace and Holineſs here, there is no Ground to expect Glory and Happineſs hereafter; this fits us at once for the Employment and Enjoyment of Heaven, it makes us meet for the Inheritance in Light; and if we have not our preſent Fruits unto Holineſs, our End can never be everlaſting Life.

Chap. XXII.

The River of the Water of Life. The Properties of the Inhabitants of the New Jeruſalem *deſcribed.* John *forbidden to worſhip the Angel. This Book not to be ſealed, though ſome would abuſe it. They that keep God's Commandments are bleſſed. The Wicked are curſed. A Threatning againſt thoſe that add to or take from the Words of this Prophecy.*

Q. WHAT *is ſignified by* the pure River of the Water of Life, *Verſe* 2?

A. Its an Alluſion, doubtleſs, to the earthly Paradiſe, *Gen.* ii. which was well watered, without which Accommodation no Place can be happy; the heavenly Paradiſe here, or the New *Jeruſalem*, is ſaid to have a pure River of Water in it, denoting the pure and unmixed Joys of Heaven, and thoſe *Rivers of Pleaſure which are at God's right Hand for evermore.* Here is not a Well, but a River; not of muddy, feculent Water, but *clear as Chryſtal*; not corruptible, or dead, but living Water, *Water of Life.*

This River *proceeds out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb*; and therefore can no more fail than God and *Chriſt* can fail; no River can fail, unleſs the Springs that feed it fail. The Saints in Heaven ſhall be refreſhed with ſuch Conſolations as flow from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; and ſo long as they continue, ſhall their Comforts laſt.

Q. *What is meant by* the Tree of Life?

A. As in the terreſtial Paradiſe there was a Tree and a River of Life, ſo in Alluſion thereto, both are ſaid to be in the heavenly Manſions. Here is a Tree of ſuch vaſt Proportion and Extent, that its Branches extend to both Sides, that all may have the Benefit of it. Now, with whom can this agree, but with *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is called *a Tree of Life*; becauſe from him we have our mutual, ſpiritual, and eternal Life; from this Tree bud forth all the Fruits of Grace and Comfort, and that for all Seaſons and Conditions.

In *Chriſt* our Souls have all Neceſſaries for Food and Phyſick, *its Leaves are healthful, as well as its Fruits for Food.*

All variety of Fruits, called here *twelve Manner of Fruits*; that is, Variety of Graces, and Comforts of all Sorts. In him are theſe Fruits at all Times; this Tree bears Fruit very much, Winter-Fruits as well as Summer-Fruits, even in the black Months of Sickneſs and Death. *Chriſt* is continually diſtributing his divine Fulneſs, to the Satisfaction of his People; he is all in all, in the Enjoyment of Mercy; he is all in the Want of Mercy; he is all in all, in order to his People's Salvation; and he is all in their Glorification.

Q. *But will there be any Need of Food or Phyſick in Heaven? If not, what Need of the Fruits of this Tree for Food, or of its Leaves for Healing?*

A. 'Tis anſwered, we cannot ſuppoſe that in the heavenly State there will be either Food, or Medicines, any Hunger that ſhall require Food, or any Sickneſs to ſtand in Need of Phyſick; but as Food and Phyſick are the inſtrumental Means of the Preſervation of natural Life, without which it will certainly and ſuddenly decay; in like Manner our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* not only gives ſpiritual Life to his People, but he is the conſerving Cauſe of it; he maintains and will preſerve it without the leaſt Decay, to all Eternity; thus are *the Leaves of this Tree for the Healing of the Nations.*

Q. *How does St.* John *cloſe his Deſcription of the* New Jeruſalem?

A. Thus; *There ſhall be no more Curſe*, no accurſed Perſon, nor accurſed Thing, no Sin, nor any Thing ſinful, that deſerves the Curſe; *and there ſhall be no Night there*; no Darkneſs of Ignorance or Error, or Darkneſs of Affliction, Temptation, or Deſertion; no Night of natural Darkneſs, nor of Spiritual, much leſs of eternal Darkneſs, which is the Portion of the Wicked. Farther, there ſhall be no Need of natural Light, that of the Sun; nor of artificial Light, that of a Candle; nor of the ſpiritual Light of the Word and Ordinances, all which ſhall then and there ceaſe.

Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, that the *Greek* Word, tranſlated Curſe, or Execration, is ordinarily taken for the Perſon to whom that Cenſure, or ſecond Sort of Excommunication belongs, which appears by the Uſe of it in other Places of the *New Teſtament.* Thus *Rom.* ix. 3. *I could wiſh to be a Curſe*; that is, accurſed, *from* Chriſt, ſeparate, or excommunicate from the Body of *Chriſt*, the Church. So 1 *Cor.* xvi. 22. *If I, or an Angel, ſhall teach any other Doctrine, let him be* Anathema. In all theſe Places the Word *Curſe* is put for an excommunicate or accurſed Perſon, put under the Cenſures or Execrations of the Church; and accordingly here, in all Reaſon, *every Curſe* muſt ſignify the Exerciſe of ſuch Diſcipline in the Church, in excluding all ſuch wicked Perſons out of it, and

ſo

go to the Mention of Baptiſm, by *the River*, Ver. 1, 2. and of the *Chriſtian* Aſſemblies, by *the Streets*, Ver. 3. adds the Uſe of Excommunication in the *Chriſtian* Church, for which we know eccleſiaſtical Judicatories were erected in *Conſtantine*'s Time, and ſo continued under the Favour of *Chriſtian* Emperors and Princes.

By which appears alſo what is meant by the *Throne of God and the Lamb*, in this Verſe; namely, *Chriſtian* Judicatories, for the Excommunicating ſcandalous Offenders, wherein the Power exerciſed by the Biſhops is acknowledged to be the Power of God, and of *Chriſt*, and this Throne here the ſame with that Ver. 1. the Power of Baptizing and Excommunicating, of Admitting and Excluding from the Church, being Branches of the ſame Authority, and by *Chriſt* communicated to the Apoſtles.

Next, St. *John* ſhews what ſhall be there; namely, *the Throne of God and of the Lamb*; that is, the glorious and everlaſting Preſence of God and *Chriſt*, as on a Throne of royal Majeſty, inſomuch that the Name of the City may be *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there.

It is added, that *his Servants ſhall ſerve him*; that is, the glorious Angels, and glorified Saints, ſhall continually ſtand before him, and adminiſter unto him; not ſpend their Eternity in a perpetual gazing upon God, but executing his Commands, obeying him with Vigour, praiſing him with Chearfulneſs, loving him above Meaſure, fearing him without Torment, truſting him without Deſpondency, ſerving him without Wearineſs, without Intermiſſion or Diſtraction, praiſing God, and ſinging Allelujahs to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

And they ſhall ſee his Face; which imports Fruition as well as Viſion of him, together with a ſweet and ſatisfactory Delectation in him; *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God*; that is, have a clear and apprehenſive, though not a full and comprehenſive Knowledge of him.

His Name ſhall be on their Fore-heads; that is, his holy Nature, his Image and Likeneſs, by which they ſhall be known, as a Man is known by his Name; probably an Alluſion to the High-prieſt, who had Holineſs to the Lord written on his Frontlet; or a Reflection upon the Worſhippers of the Beaſt, who have his Name on their Fore-heads; they are thankful for imperfect Lineaments here, but ſhall then and there be ſatisfied with his Likeneſs.

They ſhall reign for ever and ever; not for a thouſand Years, as the Church militant is ſaid to reign on Earth, after the Deſtruction of *Antichriſt*, but for eternal Ages; and this not partially, but completely, when all their ſpiritual Enemies, Sin, Satan, and the World, yea, Death itſelf ſhall be put under their Feet, and that for ever.

When therefore we are dejected on Account of our dark and imperfect Knowledge, or afflicted with weariſome Nights and Days of Sin and Sorrow, of Trouble and Temptation, of Miſery and Deſertion, which we have here on Earth, let this Meditation comfort us; that the happy Day is coming, when there ſhall be no Night, but an eternal Sabbath of Reſt, Light, and Life, with Plenty of all good Things, even *Fulneſs of Joy, and Rivers of Pleaſure for evermore.*

Q. *The Prophetical Part of this Book being now ended, here follows the Concluſion from Verſe 6. to the End, which is managed in a Way of Dialogue between Chriſt, the Angel, and the Apoſtle: What comes firſt under Obſervation?*

A. Here obſerve, how ſtrongly the Divine Authority of this Book is aſſerted, and its Excellency commended, *Theſe Sayings are faithful and true*; that is, all Things contained in this Book of Prophecies are certain and infallibly true; the Holy Spirit of God foreſaw that this Book would be more queſtioned than other Books of Holy Scripture, therefore he confirms the Divine Authority of it by an holy Angel, and the Truth of all Things in it, and eſpecially that which relates to the Happineſs of Saints in Heaven, the Inhabitants of the New Jeruſalem, with this frequent Aſſertion, *Theſe Things are faithful and true.* It is added, *They ſhall ſhortly be done*; this is ſpoken of the Beginning of their Accompliſhment, they ſhall begin to be fulfilled, and take Effect, and ſhall receive their full and final Accompliſhment in due Time.

In *Chriſt*'s Omniſcience behold an Evident Proof of his Divinity; he knows all Things to come, as well as all Things paſt; and whereas *Chriſt* ſays, *theſe Things ſhall ſhortly be done*; we learn, that the Time of the Church's Sufferings is limited; it is a ſhort Time, after which ſhall follow an eternal Deliverance, and a great Reward.

Chriſt ſubjoins a Promiſe of an Aſſurance of the Certainty and Suddenneſs of his Coming to Judgment, for the Support of the Church, during the ſhort Time of her Sufferings and Services; *Behold I come quickly.* Next he pronounces them bleſſed who keep the words of this Book, not only in Memory and Profeſſion, but in Practice and Performance.

Q. *In the 8th Verſe we have an Account of St.* John*'s falling down to worſhip the Angel, which is the ſecond Time he did ſo: What do you remark hereupon?*

A. Very obſervable is St. *John*'s Sincerity; he leaves here upon Record, his Relapſe into that Error into which he had before fallen, *Chap.* xix. 10. which, as it diſcovers that he preferred the Glory of God before his own Reputation, ſo it evidently declares, that a holy Man may poſſibly relapſe into the ſame Sin through Inadvertency, or the Power of a Temptation, and how much it is the Duty of every one that thinks he ſtandeth, to take heed leſt he fall.

Q. *Why is St.* John *commanded, Verſe* 10. not to ſeal the Sayings of the Prophecy of this Book?

A. Although this Book be the obſcureſt Part of Scripture, yet it is *Chriſt*'s Command that it ſhould not be concealed from the Knowledge of the People. How Sacrilegious then is the Practice of the Church of *Rome*, in robbing the common People of all the Scriptures, locking them up in an unknown Tongue, and forbidding the People to read them?

Obſerve here, how the Angel propoſes an Objection which St. *John* might make: If I ſeal not up, but make known this Prophecy, the wicked Men of the World, Perſecutors eſpecially, will be made worſe by it, they will be unjuſt ſtill, and filthy ſtill, and more ſo than ever; be it ſo, ſays he, yet the Righteous will be more confirmed in the Courſe of their Obedience, and ſuch as are Righteous, will be Righteous ſtill. There is a dangerous Perſeverance in Sin, as well as a deſirable Perſeverance in Grace and Holineſs; let him that is unclean, be unclean ſtill.

But note, this is no Permiſſion, much leſs a Perſuaſion to Sin, but a dreadful Threatning or Commination, that ſuch as give up themſelves to ſinning, ſhall be judicially given up by God to Sin and Puniſhment; ſuch a Liberty as this to ſin, is the worſt of Bondage.

Again, *he that is holy, let him be holy ſtill*; the Words carry with them not only the Force of a Command, and the Direction of a Rule, but the Sweetneſs of a Promiſe, and a gracious Privilege, that they ſhall perſevere in Holineſs unto the End.

Verſe 12. *Chriſt* begins to ſpeak, and continues his Diſcourſe to the Middle of Verſe 20. wherein he declares, it will not be long before he comes to judge the World, to give everlaſting Happineſs to thoſe who ſhall be worthy of it, and to the Wicked everlaſting Puniſhment.

Q. *In the 12th and following Verſes,* Chriſt *diſcourſes on his Coming to Judgment, which he begins with the Word* behold: *What do you obſerve upon this?*

A. The Notices of our Lord's Coming to Judgment are uſually in Scripture uſher'd in with great Solemnity, with a Mark of Attention and Obſervation; thus *Jude* vii. *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all.* So the Apoſtle *James* gives an awful Admonition, *Behold! the Judge ſtandeth before the Door,* ready to paſs a final Sentence. And St *John* in his Book of Revelation ſeldom ſpeaks of *Chriſt*'s Coming, but he breaks forth into an Extaſy of Admiration; *Behold! he cometh with many Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him.*

Note, that the ſpecial Diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments is reſerved 'till the ſecond Coming and Appearance of *Jeſus Chriſt*; *My Reward is with with me, to give every Man according to his Works.*

It is our Wiſdom and Duty to repreſent to ourſelves by actual and ſolemn Thoughts, the certain and ſpeedy Coming of *Chriſt* to the righteous Judgment of the World; *Behold I come quickly, to render to every Man according to his Works.*

Q. *What do thoſe Words of* Chriſt *import, Ver.* 13. I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the End, the Firſt and the Laſt?

A. As if *Chriſt* had ſaid, I am the eternal God, the firſt Cauſe and laſt End of all Things; I firſt made the World, and I will at laſt put a Period to it; and when Time ſhall be no more, they ſhall for ever be happy in the Enjoyment of me, who have here obeyed me, and lived in Conformity to my Doctrine and Example; they ſhall through Holineſs enter the Gates of the *New Jeruſalem*, that glorious City, having the Tree of Life in it; preſent Bleſſedneſs, as well as future Happineſs, belong to thoſe that obey God's Will, and keep his Commandments; *bleſſed are they*, and bleſſed for ever ſhall they be.

Q. *St.* John *tells us, Ver.* 15. *who thoſe are that be* without: *What does he mean by being* without?

A. Without the Gates of the City of the *New Jeruſalem*, are all filthy and unclean Sinners, all cruel and bloody Perſecutors, all raging and furious Enemies to me and my People; all Idolaters, and all Liars, theſe ſhall be ſhut out of Heaven, as Dogs are ſhut out of the Houſe, and ſhut into Hell, to be impriſon'd with Devils and damned Spirits, and that everlaſtingly.

Q. *What do you obſerve on the 16th Verſe?*

A. The Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* here owns himſelf the Author of this Revelation; the Angel did but declare it, St. *John* did but write it; *Chriſt* himſelf was the Inditer of it; which leaves all Men inexcuſable who will not believe the ſame, but queſtion its divine Authority.

☞ *I am the Root and Offſpring of* David; *Chriſt*, as God, was the Root of *David*, but conſider'd as Man, *David* was the Root of *Chriſt*, *Iſa.* xi. 1. *There ſhall come forth a Root out of the Stem of Jeſſe, and a Branch ſhall grow out of his Roots.*

Chriſt alſo ſtyles himſelf *the Bright and Morning Star*, that is, the Light of the World, enlightening and enlivening the new Creation; the Fountain of all Knowledge, Grace, and Comfort on Earth, and of all Glory and Happineſs in Heaven. As the Morning Star firſt brings Light to the World, ſo *Chriſt* firſt publiſhed the Light of the Goſpel; and now, by this Revelation, gives a ſuper-added Light to his People, by informing them what ſhall befal his Church until his ſecond Coming to Judgment.

Q. *Pray give the Senſe of thoſe Words, Ver.* 17. And the Spirit, and the Bride ſay, come?

A. By the Spirit underſtand the Holy Ghoſt, and by the Bride the whole Catholick Church in general, both in Heaven and Earth, and every true Believer in particular. Behold how the Spirit ſpeaks in the Bride, and how the Bride ſpeaks by and from the Spirit. *Chriſt* by his Spirit is preſent with her, by his Influence is aſſiſtant to her.

The Church is here called *Chriſt*'s Bride, and he elſewhere calls her Bridegroom. The Title of Bride is given to her, as a Title of Eminency and Excellency, and ſtands in Oppoſition to Adultery; ſhe is a Bride, not a Whore; the falſe Church is not a Bride, but the Whore, and ſo often called, ſhe deſires not *Chriſt*'s Coming no more than an Adultereſs deſires the Return of her Huſband, but the Bride, being a chaſte Virgin, longs for it.

The Word Bride is alſo a Word of Extenuation and Diminution, as it ſtands in a Diſtinction from a complete Marriage, it is the Bride, not a married Wife. The Saints are contracted to *Chriſt* in this World, the Marriage is near, and ſhall be conſummated in the next. A Bride is a Spouſe on the Confines of Marriage, near the Approaches of the Conjugal Solemnity. Bleſſed be God it will not be long before *Chriſt* and his Church, *Chriſt* and Believers, who are betrothed and eſpouſed, ſhall be fully and completely married, and in the perfect Enjoyment of each other.

Note, the Affection which the Bride expreſſes towards the Bridegroom; ſhe ſays, Come; ſhe paſſionately and impatiently deſires, and vehemently longs for his Coming; Come, is a Word of Invitation; I pray come, it is my earneſt Suit and Requeſt that thou wouldeſt come.

Q. *Pray explain the other Parts of the ſame Verſe?*

A. Let him that is a Thirſt come; we muſt firſt come to *Chriſt* by Faith and Repentance, before we can ever deſire *Chriſt*'s Coming to us by Death and Judgment.

The gracious Acceptance and Entertainments given by *Chriſt* is intimated, *Whoſoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely.* By the

Water of Life, underſtand all Grace here; and Glory hereafter.

The Benefit is offer'd to *whoſoever will*, to ſhew that Salvation is not forced upon us againſt our Will, but beſtowed upon us on the Uſe of our Faculties, and on the Exerciſe of our own Endeavours; we are the Subjects of this Willingneſs; but God is the Author of it; *Pſal.* cx. 3.

Note, the Offer itſelf, *let him take it freely.* Grace is the free Gift of God, as well as eternal Life. Such is God's Munificence and Royalty, that he will not ſell his good Thing if he did, ſuch is our Indigence and Poverty, that we could never buy them; therefore ſays God, *take freely*: Yet obſerve, God's Offers in the Goſpel are conditional; he proffers his Son, and all Good with him, but upon Condition of our Acceptance on his own Terms. Let none ſtraiten the Grace of God where he has enlarged it. If a Man has a Mind to keep his Sins, he ſhall have no Mercy, be they never ſo ſmall; but if he be willing to leave his Sins, and to accept an offer'd Saviour (as offered) he ſhall not be excluded from Mercy, be they never ſo great; for, ſays *Chriſt*, *Whoſoever will, let him take of the Water of Life.*

Q. *How do you underſtand the Threatning denounced in the 18th and 19th Verſes againſt thoſe that ſhall add any Thing to this Prophecy?*

A. We have here a dreadful Threatning pronounced againſt all ſuch that ſhall add any thing to the Scriptures in general, and to this Prophecy in particular; not by way of true Interpretation, but either formally, by joining any thing to be received as Scripture, which God never intended, and the Words cannot rationally bear. Almighty God here declares that he will add to ſuch his Plagues, and ſhut them out of the holy City, the *New Jeruſalem*, that is, the Kingdom of Heaven: And if ſo, learn we what great Guilt the Church of *Rome* contracts, and what a dreadful Curſe ſhe lies under, by making oral Tradition of equal Authority with the Scriptures, and by adding new Articles of Faith, new Points of Doctrine, which is, in Effect, to accuſe God of Ignorance and Inadvertency. True, the Doctrine of *Chriſtianity* is a Tradition; it was deliver'd by *Chriſt* to the Apoſtles, and by the Apoſtles to their Succeſſors; but now they being long ſince dead, we cannot receive them fro the Doctrine of Life by Word of Mouth, but muſt ſtick to the Scriptures, or written Word; for ſuch Things were written for our Sake.

Verſe 18. *If any Man ſhall add.* This Form of Speech, here uſed to conclude this Book, is, firſt, a Symbolical and Prophetical Form of expreſſing the Certainty and Immutability of this Prophecy; and, ſecondly, an Expreſſion of the Abſoluteneſs and Perfection of it in order to publick Uſe, that it ſhould be one Prophecy even to the *Chriſtian* Church, which ſhould bring divine Authority along with it, ſent with a Commiſſion from Heaven; and not only proceeding from a publick Spirit, but ſent out with a publick Charge, that (as *Joſephus* againſt *Appian* ſaith,) tho' many excellent Things were written, yet they brought not divine Authority with them, nor conſequently were ſo received or believed, becauſe there was not then a Succeſſion of Prophets, and no Body durſt add, or detract, or change any Thing in the old Canon, after ſo long a Time, ſo though there might be ſome Prophets after St. *John*, (as *Juſtin Martyr*, tells us, that the Gift of Prophecy remained in the Church 'till his Time) yet this Book ſhould be the laſt, and ſo the Cloſe and Seal of all publick Prophecy; and therefore no new Doctrine was now farther to be expected by the *Chriſtian* Church; and whoſoever taught any as a Rule of Faith and Life, and pretended Revelation for it, ſhould fall under the Cenſure denounced againſt falſe Prophets, *Deut.* xiii. and under St. *Paul*'s Anathema, *Gal.* i. 8, 9. That this ſhould be only an Adjuration of the Scribe, as in the End of *Irenæus*, in ſome Copies there is an Adjuration *not to add or diminiſh*, (and it is ſaid in *Ariſteas*, that after the Tranſlation of the Septuagint, *Demetrius* perſuaded the *Jews* to add an Imprecation on any that ſhould change, or add, or tranſpoſe or take away any Word from it) was the Conjecture of a learned Man, Mr. *Lively*; and as it may very well be received, ſo need it not to prejudge thoſe other Importances of it before mentioned.

We reject not all Tradition, becauſe Scripture itſelf is a Tradition; but we blame the Church of *Rome* deſervedly, for making her private, unwritten Traditions of equal Authority with the Scripture, and for urging that they ought to be received as the holy Scriptures. Thus they equal their Traditions with the Doctrines uf Faith; their Opinions are bad, but their Practices are worſe; for they value their own Traditions above, and prefer them before the Scriptures; they never called their own Traditions a *Noſe of Wax, a dead Letter, a dumb Rule, an obſcure Doctrine*; but thus have they ſtigmatiz'd the holy Scriptures; and how they will eſcape *Chriſt*'s ſevere Commination here before us? For adding to, and taking from the Word of God, concerns them to look to; for they muſt certainly anſwer for it at the Bar of God.

Q. *What Inſtructions does the 20th Verſe afford us?*

A. *He which teſtifieth theſe Things, ſaith, ſurely I come quickly*; that is, *Jeſus Chriſt*, the faithful and true Witneſs, from whom St. *John* received this Revelation, as he had formerly done the holy Goſpel; he ſaith, *Surely I come quickly.*

It is obſervable, that this Promiſe of *Chriſt*'s ſecond Coming to judge the World, is here left as *Chriſt*'s laſt Word upon Record; it is almoſt the laſt Word in the Bible, doubtleſs that it might be ſeriouſly minded, and frequently remember'd by us. *Chriſt* had in this Chapter twice before, Ver. 7. and 12. teſtified that he came quickly; yet he repeats it here again, to excite us to prepare for it, and to live in the continual Expectation of it.

As *Chriſt* has here three ſeveral Times in this Chapter aſſured us of the Certainty of his Coming, ſo he prefixes a *behold* before it: *Behold I come quickly*; and here he prefixes the Word *Surely* before it, *Surely I come quickly*, to awaken the Security, and leave the Incredulity of Sinners without Excuſe, who live as if they did not believe any ſuch Day would come.

To the forementioned Aſſurance of the Certainty of our Saviour's Coming, St. *John*, in the Name of the whole Church, ſubjoins an hearty *Amen*, an earneſt and paſſionate Deſire and longing for our

Lord's Coming, ſaying, *Even ſo, come Lord* Jeſus, as thou haſt promiſed, and thy People long expected.

Hence learn, that the Coming of *Chriſt* to Judgment is a Truth firmly believed, and earneſtly deſired by all *Chriſtians*. St. *John* here, in the Name of the Church, takes, as it were, the Word out of *Chriſt*'s Mouth, like a quick Eccho, and preſently improves the Prnmiſe into a Prayer. *Chriſt's* farewel-Word to the Church is, *I come quickly*; the Church's farewel-Suit to *Chriſt* is, *Come, Lord* Jeſus, *come quickly*.

Q. *But why is* Chriſt's *ſecond Coming ſo exceedingly deſired by his Church and Children?*

A. It is deſired for the finiſhing tho Days of Sinning, and deſtroying the Works of *Satan*; for accompliſhing the Number of his own Elect, for haſtening and freeing his Kingdom; for freeing the Creature from Subjection to Vanity; for manifeſting the Glory of his Juſtice and Mercy, and for putting his Saints into the full and final Poſſeſſion of their promiſed Inheritance.

Hence we alſo learn, that it is the unfeigned Deſire of God's faithful Children and Servants, to have the full fruition of *Jeſus Chriſt*; this is the habitual Deſire of their Hearts, that *Chriſt* would come, and receive them to himſelf, though they may tremble at ſome Circumſtances of his Coming; there is a Degree of ſinful Bondage, which hinders much our ſpiritual Confidence and Boldneſs; but the more holy we are, the more embolden'd we ſhall be againſt the Day of Judgment.

Q. *Pray give your Comment on the concluſive Verſe of this Chapter and Epiſtle?*

A. The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *be wit you all, Amen.* This is an epiſtolary Concluſion, uſed almoſt in all the Epiſtles of the *New Teſtament*, and ſo here, becauſe this Prophecy was in the Manner of an Epiſtle directed to the Churches; St. *John* began this Epiſtle with this Salutation, *Chap.* i. 4. and ſo he ends with it here; he knew there would be a long Tract of Time intervening between the giving the Promiſe and the fulfilling of it, between the Bride's making herſelf ready and the Day wherein the Marriage was to be ſolemnized; he well knew, that before the Conſummation of all Things there were many ſad Diſpenſations that the Churches would certainly meet with, many falſe Doctrines that would be ſpread, many Duties to be performed, many Afflictions to be endured; all which would require extraordinary Aſſiſtance, and ſpecial Grace; therefore he prays, that the Grace of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* may be with them all; teaching us inceſſantly to deſire for ourſelves, and to crave for others, the auxiliary Aids of Divine Grace, to enable us to the acceptable Performance of every Duty, and to the patient enduring of every Trial; the greateſt Mercy that can be wiſhed to any, or that any can wiſh unto themſelves, is the Grace of God, to excite and quicken them to their Duty, and to aſſiſt and help them in the Performance of it; accordingly St. *John* ſhuts up this Book, and therewith the Canon of the Holy Scripture, in theſe Words, *The Grace of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *be with you all. Amen.*

5 DE 60

The END.

The wiſdom of JESUS, *the ſon of* SIRACH;

OR,

ECCLESIASTICUS.

THE INTRODUCTION.

This Book is indiſputably the moſt excellent and moſt profitable amongſt all the Apocrypha; *which gave ſome reaſon to be of opinion, that the title of* Eccleſiaſticus *prefixed to it, which was the common appellation of all the apocryphal books that were permitted to be read publickly in the Churches, was attributed to this by way of eminency, as containing a rich treaſure of ſentences, precepts, admonitions, reproofs and inſtructions, that related to the practice of all kinds of virtues, and the avoiding all ſorts of vices, ſuited to every degree and condition of mankind, in every ſtation and circumſtance of life; written entirely in the taſte of antiquity, that is, in ſhort and popular ſentences, ſeaſoned with good ſenſe and true piety, and enlivened with the moſt amiable and penetrating ſweetneſs; and is as near an imitation of* Solomon's *divine ſentences, as the ſpirit of Man (tho' enlighten'd and ſanctified) can approach to the abſolute Workings of God in the Veſſels and Inſtruments of his divine Revelation. But as the Author was no Prophet, nor inſpired immediately by God, as other divine and ſacred Writers were, and having in ſo great a multitude and Variety of matters, mixed many Things contrary to the authentical Truth of Canonical Books, too low and unworthy the Majeſty of God's Spirit, this Book was not received by the antient* Jewiſh *Church, and in the beſt and pureſt ages of the Chriſtian, was always taken for Apocrypha.*

A Prologue made by an uncertain Author.

THIS Jeſus was the ſon of Sirach, and Grandchild to Jeſus of the ſame name with him: this man therefore lived in the latter times, after the people had been led away captive, and called home again, and almoſt after all the prophets. Now his grandfather Jeſus (as he himſelf witneſſeth) was a man of great diligence and wiſdom among the Hebrews, who did not only gather the grave and ſhort ſentences of wiſe men that had been before him, but himſelf alſo uttered ſome of his own, full of much underſtanding and wiſdom. When as therefore the firſt Jeſus died, leaving this book almoſt perfected. Sirach his ſon receiving it after him, left it to his own ſon Jeſus, who having gotten it into his hands, compiled it all orderly into one Volume, and called it Wiſdom, intituling it both by his own name, his father's name, and his grandfathers, alluring the hearer by the very name of Wiſdom, to have a greater love to the ſtudy of this Book. It containeth therefore wiſe ſayings, dark ſentences, and parables, and certain particular ancient godly ſtories of men that pleaſed God; alſo his prayer and ſong; moreover, what benefits God had vouchſafed his people, and what plagues he had heaped upon their enemies. This Jeſus did imitate Solomon, and was no leſs famous for Wiſdom and Learning, both being indeed a Man of great Learning, and ſo reputed alſo.

The Prologue of the wiſdom of Jeſus *the Son of* Sirach.

WHereas many and great things have been delivered unto us by the Law and the Prophets, and by others that have followed their ſteps, for the which things Iſrael ought to be commended for Learning and Wiſdom; and whereof not only the readers muſt needs become ſkilful themſelves, but alſo they that deſire to learn, be able to profit them which are without, both by ſpeaking and writing: My grandfather Jeſus, when he had much given himſelf to the reading of the law and the prophets, and other books of our fathers, and had gotten therein good judgment, was drawn on alſo himſelf to write ſomething pertaining to learning and wiſdom, to the intent that thoſe which are deſirous to learn, and are addicted to theſe things, might profit much more in living according to the law. Wherefore let me intreat you to read it with favour and attention, and to pardon us wherein we may ſeem to come ſhort of ſome words which we have laboured to interpret. For the ſame things uttered in Hebrew, and tranſlated into another tongue, have not the ſame force in them: and not only theſe things, but the law it ſelf, and the prophets, and the reſt of the books have no ſmall difference, when they are ſpoken in their own language. For in the eight and thirtieth year, coming into Egypt when Evergetes was king, and continuing there ſome time, I found a book of no ſmall learning: therefore I thought it moſt neceſſary for me to beſtow ſome diligence and travel to interpret it; uſing great watchfulneſs and ſkill in that ſpace to bring the book to an end, and ſet it forth for them alſo which in a ſtrange country are willing to learn, being prepared before in manners to live after the law.

CHAP. I.

1 *All wiſdom is from God.* 12 *The fear of God is full of many bleſſings.*

ALL wiſdom *cometh* from the Lord, and is with him for ever.

2 Who can number the ſand of the ſea, and the drops of rain, and the days of eternity?

3 Who can find out the height of heaven, and the breadth of the earth, and the deep, and wiſdom?

4 Wiſdom hath been created before all things, and the underſtanding of prudence from everlaſting.

5 The word of God moſt high is the fountain of wiſdom; and her ways are everlaſting commandments.

6 To whom hath the root of wiſdom been revealed? or who hath known her wiſe counſels?

7 Unto whom hath the knowledge of wiſdom been made manifeſt? and who hath underſtood her great experience?

8 There is one wiſe, and greatly to be feared; the LORD ſitting upon his throne,

9 He created her, and ſaw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his works.

10 She *is* with fleſh according to his gift, and he hath given her to them that love him.

11 The fear of the LORD is honour, and glory, and gladneſs, and a crown of rejoycing.

12 The fear of the LORD maketh a merry heart, and giveth joy and gladneſs, and a long life.

13 Whoſo feareth the LORD, it ſhall go well with him at the laſt, and he ſhall find favour in the day of his death.

14 To fear the LORD is the beginning of wiſdom: and it was created with the faithful in the womb.

15 She hath built an everlaſting foundation with men, and ſhe ſhall continue with their ſeed.

16 To fear the LORD is fulneſs of wiſdom, and filleth men with her fruits.

17 She filleth all their houſe with things deſirable, and the garners with her increaſe.

18 The fear of the LORD is a crown of wiſdom, making peace and perfect health to flouriſh: both which are the gifts of God: and it enlargeth their rejoycing that love him.

19 Wiſdom raineth down ſkill and knowledge of underſtanding, and exalteth them to honour that hold her faſt.

20 The root of wiſdom is to fear the LORD, and the branches thereof are long life.

21 The fear of the LORD driveth away ſins: and where it is preſent, it turneth away wrath.

22 A furious man cannot be juſtified, for the ſway of his fury ſhall be his deſtruction.

23 A patient man will bear for a time, and afterward joy ſhall ſpring up unto him.

24 He will hide his words for a time, and the lips of many ſhall declare his wiſdom.

25 The parables of knowledge are in the treaſures of wiſdom: but godlineſs is an abomination to a ſinner.

26 If thou deſire wiſdom, keep the commandments, and the LORD ſhall give her unto thee.

27 For the fear of the LORD is wiſdom, and inſtruction: and faith and meekneſs are his delight.

28 Diſtruſt not the fear of the LORD, when thou art poor: and come not unto him with a double heart.

29 Be not an hypocrite in the ſight of men, and take good heed what thou ſpeakeſt.

30 Exalt not thy ſelf, leſt thou fall, and bring diſhonour upon thy ſoul, and ſo God diſcover thy ſecrets, and caſt thee down in the midſt of the congregation, becauſe thou cameſt not in truth, to the fear of the LORD, but thy heart is full of deceit.

CHAP. II.

1 *God's ſervants muſt look for trouble,* 7 *and be patient and truſt in him.*

MY ſon, if thou come to ſerve the LORD, prepare thy ſoul for temptation.

2 Set thy heart aright, and conſtantly endure, and make not haſte in time of trouble.

3 Cleave unto him, and depart not away, that thou mayeſt be increaſed at thy laſt end.

4 Whatſoever is brought upon thee, take cheerfully, and be patient when thou art changed to a low eſtate.

5 For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adverſity.

6 Believe in him, and he will help thee; order thy way aright, and truſt in him.

7 Ye that fear the LORD, wait for his mercy, and go not aſide, leſt ye fall.

8 Ye that fear the LORD, believe him, and your reward ſhall not fail.

9 Y

ANNOTATION on Chap. I.

God is the fountain of all wiſdom, with him ſhe reſided in the higheſt perfection before the world had a beginning, and will be his companion when all created beings ſhall no longer exiſt. The fulneſs of her perfection is not comprehenſible by human underſtanding; and whatever traces we diſcover of her excellence ſhining in man, it is derived originally from God; by it we are inſtructed to fear him to love, honour, and glorify him. Wiſdom bringeth wit her every other bleſſing, and exalts men to honour an eſteem; whoever deſires her company, muſt be obedien to the laws of God, who dwells with the humble and fi cere ſoul, but brings down the haughty and deceitful.

9 Ye that fear the LORD, hope for good, and for everlaſting joy and mercy.

10 Look at the generations of old, and ſee: did ever any truſt in the LORD, and was coufounded? or did any abide in his fear, and was forſaken? or whom did he ever deſpiſe that called upon him?

11 For the LORD is full of compaſſion and mercy, long-ſuffering, and very pitiful, and forgiveth ſins, and ſaveth in time of affliction.

12 Wo be to fearful hearts, and faint hands, and the ſinner that goeth two ways.

13 Wo unto him that is faint-hearted, for he believeth not, therefore ſhall he not be defended.

14 Wo unto you that have loſt patience: and and what will ye do when the LORD ſhall viſit you?

15 They that fear the LORD, will not diſobey his word, and they that love him will keep his ways,

16 They that fear the LORD, will ſeek that which is well-pleaſing unto him, and they that love him, ſhall be filled with the law.

17 They that fear the LORD, will prepare their hearts, and humble their ſouls in his ſight,

18 *Saying,* We will fall into the hands of the LORD, and not into the hands of men: for as his majeſty is, ſo is his mercy.

CHAP. III.

2 Children muſt honour and help both their parents.
26 The incorrigible muſt needs periſh.

HEAR me your father, O children, and do thereafter, that ye may be ſafe,

2 For the LORD hath given the father honour over the children, and hath confirmed the authority of the mother over the ſons.

3 Whoſo honoureth his father, maketh an atonement for his ſins.

4 And he that honoureth his mother, is as one that layeth up treaſure.

5 Whoſo honoureth his father, ſhall have joy of *his own* children, and when he maketh his prayer, he ſhall be heard.

6 He that honoureth his father ſhall have a long life, and he that is obedient unto the LORD, ſhall be a comfort to his mother.

7 He that feareth the LORD, will honour his father, and will do ſervice unto his parents, as to his maſters.

8 Honour thy father and mother, both in word and deed, that a bleſſing may come upon thee from them.

9 For the bleſſing of the father eſtabliſheth the houſes of children, but the curſe of the mother rooteth out foundations.

10 Glory not in the diſhonour of thy father, for thy father's diſhonour is no glory unto thee.

11 For the glory of a man is from the honour of his father; and a mother in diſhonour, is a reproach unto the children.

12 My ſon, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth.

13 And if his underſtanding fail, have patience with him, and deſpiſe him not when thou art in thy full ſtrength.

14 For the relieving of thy father ſhall not be forgotten; and inſtead of ſins it ſhall be added to build thee up.

15 In the day of thine affliction it ſhall be remembred; thy ſins alſo ſhall melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather.

16 He that forſaketh his father, is a blaſphemer, and he that angreth his mother, is curſed of God.

17 My ſon, go on with thy buſineſs in meekneſs, ſo ſhalt thou be beloved of him that is approved.

18 The greater thou art, the more humble thy ſelf, and thou ſhalt find favour before the LORD.

19 Many are in high place, and of renown: but myſteries are revealed unto the meek.

20 For the power of the LORD is great, and he is honoured of the lowly.

21 Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither ſearch the things that are above thy ſtrength.

22 But what is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence; for it is not needful for thee *to ſee with thine eyes* the things that are in ſecret.

23 Be not curious in unneceſſary matters: for more things are ſhewed unto thee, than men underſtand.

24 For many are deceived by their own vain opinion, and an evil ſuſpition hath overthrown their judgment.

25 Without eyes thou ſhalt want light: profeſs not the knowledge therefore that thou haſt not.

26 A ſtubborn heart ſhall fare evil at the laſt: and he that loveth danger, ſhall periſh therein.

27 An obſtinate heart ſhall be laden with ſorrows, and the wicked man ſhall heap ſin upon ſin.

28 In the puniſhment of the proud there is no remedy: for the plant of wickedneſs hath taken root in him.

29 The heart of the prudent will underſtand a parable

ANNOT. Chap. II.] The pious man is exhorted to be always prepared to meet temptations; to be conſtant in ſufferings; to be patient tho' his condition ſhould be changed for the worſe, and to remember that adverſity is no more than a furnace in which God purifies his children from the droſs of their ſins and corruptions. If we want examples to encourage us, let us look into the generations of old, "Did ever any truſt in the Lord, and was con-"founded? Pſ. xxxvii. 25. But if neither precepts nor examples will make any impreſſion upon us, woe unto us; but he that fears the LORD is happy in all events, for his mercy is infinite.

ANNOT. Chap. III.) Great and manifold are the bleſſings that reward filial obedience; it procureth the atonement of ſins, and hath the promiſe of long life annexed to it: But the diſobedient ſon, who forſaketh his father in his extremities, is no better than a blaſphemer; ſince he, who could renounce his father who gave him his being, could as eaſily renounce his God, who is the common father of us all.

We are admoniſhed to be humble in our ſearches into the ſecrets of things that are above our capacity to comprehend; and to reſt ſatisfied with the knowledge of thoſe things that are commanded us: For many, by aſpiring too high, have fallen into errors, and bewildered their judgments.

Stubbornneſs is puniſhed in the end; and raſhneſs is the cauſe of its own ruin; obſtinacy is rewarded with ſorrow; and pride is not cured by correction. Prudence and attention are the characteriſticks of a wiſe man; charity atones for ſins; and gratitude will never want aſſiſtance.

parable, and an attentive ear is the deſire of a wiſe man.

30 Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement for ſins.

31 And he that requiteth good turns, is mindful of that which may come hereafter: and when he falleth, he ſhall find a ſtay.

CHAP. IV.

1 *We may not deſpiſe the poor or fatherleſs,* 11 *but ſeek for wiſdom.*

MY ſon, defraud not the poor of his living, and make not the needy eyes to wait long.

2 Make not an hungry ſoul ſorrowful, neither provoke a man in his diſtreſs.

3 Add not more trouble to an heart that is vexed, and defer not to give to him that is in need.

4 Reject not the ſupplication of the afflicted, neither turn away thy face from a poor man.

5 Turn not away thine eye from the needy, and give him none occaſion to curſe thee:

6 For if he curſe thee in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, his prayer ſhall be heard of him that made him.

7 Get thy ſelf the love of the congregation, and bow thy head to a great man.

8 Let it not grieve thee to bow down thine ear to the poor, and give him a friendly anſwer with meekneſs.

9 Deliver him that ſuffereth wrong, from the hand of the oppreſſour, and be not faint-hearted, when thou ſitteſt in judgment.

10 Be as a father unto the fatherleſs, and inſtead of an husband unto their mother: ſo ſhalt thou be as the ſon of the moſt High, and he ſhall love thee more than thy mother doeth.

11 Wiſdom exalteth her children, and layeth hold of them that ſeek her.

12 He that loveth her, loveth life; and they that ſeek to her early, ſhall be filled with joy.

13 He that holdeth her faſt ſhall inherit glory, and whereſoever ſhe entreth, the LORD will bleſs.

14 They that ſerve her, ſhall miniſter to the holy One: and them that love her, the LORD doth love.

15 Whoſo giveth ear unto her, ſhall judge the nations: and he that attendeth unto her, ſhall dwell ſecurely.

16 If a man commit himſelf unto her, he ſhall inherit her; and his generation ſhall hold her in poſſeſſion.

17 For at the firſt ſhe will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her diſcipline, until ſhe may truſt his ſoul, and try him by her laws.

18 Then will ſhe return the ſtraight way unto him, and comfort him, and ſhew him her ſecrets.

19 But if he go wrong, ſhe will forſake him, and give him over to his own ruin.

20 Obſerve the opportunity, and beware of evil; and be not aſhamed when it concerneth thy ſoul.

21 For there is a ſhame that bringeth ſin, and there is a ſhame which is glory and grace.

22 Accept no perſon againſt thy ſoul, and let not the reverence of any man cauſe thee to fall.

23 And refrain not to ſpeak when there is occaſion to do good, and hide not thy wiſdom in her beauty.

24 For by ſpeech wiſdom ſhall be known, and learning by the word of the tongue.

25 In no wiſe ſpeak againſt the truth, but be abaſhed of the error of thine ignorance.

26 Be not aſhamed to confeſs thy ſins, and force not the courſe of the river.

27 Make not thy ſelf an underling to a fooliſh man, neither accept the perſon of the mighty.

28 Strive for the truth unto death, and the LORD ſhall fight for thee.

29 Be not haſty in thy tongue, and in thy deeds ſlack and remiſs.

30 Be not as a lion in thy houſe, nor frantick among thy ſervants.

31 Let not thy hand be ſtretched out to receive, and ſhut when thou ſhouldſt repay.

CHAP. V.

1 *We muſt not preſume of our wealth and ſtrength,* 6 *nor of the mercy of God to ſin.*

SET not thy heart upon thy Goods, and ſay not, I have enough for my life.

2 Follow not thine own mind, and thy ſtrength to walk in the ways of thy heart:

3 And ſay not, Who ſhall controul me for my works? for the LORD will ſurely revenge thy pride.

4 Say not, I have ſinned, and what harm hath happened unto me? for the LORD is long-ſuffering, he will in no wiſe let thee go.

5 Concerning propitiation, be not without fear to add ſin unto ſin:

6 And ſay not, His mercy is great, he will be pacified for the multitude of my ſins: for mercy and wrath come from him, and his indignation reſteth upon ſinners.

7 Make no tarrying to turn to the LORD, and put not off from day to day: for ſuddenly ſhall the wrath of the LORD come forth, and in thy ſecurity thou ſhalt be deſtroyed, and periſh in the day of vengeance.

8 Set not thine heart upon goods unjuſtly gotten,

ANNOT. Chap. IV.] Sundry duties are here injoined relating to our behaviour to the poor; we are neither to defraud the poor man, nor to keep him long in dependance; not to add ſorrow to the diſtreſſed, nor be deaf to the cry of the afflicted; to be careful to give the needy no occaſion to curſe us, becauſe his prayer, uttered in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, will certainly be heard. We are particularly to regard the oppreſſed, the fatherleſs, and the widow, which will entitle us to the favour of the moſt high.

The bleſſings that reſult from the love of wiſdom are many; ſhe fills her admirers with joy, and her ſervants are the ſervants of the Almighty, who will love and bleſs them; though at firſt trial her diſcipline may ſeem ſevere, and her ways rugged, yet when once a man acquires a familiarity with her, ſhe will open to him all her pleaſures and her ſecrets.

We are cautioned to diſtinguiſh betwixt a falſe and culpable ſhame, and that which is true and praiſe worthy; to reverence no man contrary to our judgment and conſcience; to be bold to ſpeak the truth when occaſion offers of doing good; neither to be a ſlave to a fool, nor to flatter the great; to defend the truth; to be more active in deeds than profuſe in words; and to be as ready to give as to receive.